

## **A Girl in Black, Part VII**

Michael Cacoyannis, Dir. (1956)

The next scene opens in church, with a close-up of an ornate candle holder. As the congregants sing a hymn, Pavlos lights a candle, adds it to the others and crosses himself.

He looks all around the church for Marina. Ah! There she is, her hair tied back, standing next to her mother.

Marina leans over to hear something Froso is whispering. Glancing over her shoulder, she catches sight of Pavlos and their eyes meet.

He catches sight of Christos and his gang with their family members. Naturally: everyone in the village is at church.

Christos leans over to Panagos. "I hear Mitso's off to Athens tomorrow." They notice Pavlos. Panagos replies, "The Athenians are leaving too. Aristeides told me." Pavlos observes them warily.

In a beautiful composition, we see Antoni: checkerboard tiles lead the eye down a long passageway that extends to the back of the shot, lined by slender columns. Antoni is seated on a ledge near the front of the shot, drawing. The church bells ring and he looks down to his left: he sees two girls in white dresses leave the church, holding hands. The mass is over. As the bells continue to ring, more people appear. There is Mitso, walking by himself as usual.

We see Pavlos come out. He lights a cigarette and leans against a column. On the other side, Froso and Marina walk by. Froso notices Pavlos. She excuses herself and goes to talk with a friend. Aware of Pavlos' presence, but not daring to speak to him, Marina walks on. He follows close behind, watching her. The camera shows us her guarded, troubled face.

In a low voice, he says, "I must see you, I'm leaving tomorrow."  
"Not tomorrow!" she exclaims.

At a sudden burst of loud laughter, they look to their left and the camera pans along with their eyes: we see Christos and Panagos, dressed in their dark suits for church. The stairway and white arches of the churchyard give elegant structure to the shot with people in motion.

When Pavlos turns back, Marina has gone. He sees her running out of the churchyard. Light shines through the latticed arch above the exit.

Pavlos starts to follow her, but Christos takes his arm.

"Got a light?" he asks. When Pavlos offers the tip of his cigarette, Christos grips his wrist, hard. Standing close by, Panagos laughs. His laughter no longer sounds so good-natured.

"Is it true you're leaving us?" ask Christos, still with a firm grip on Pavlos' wrist. Pavlos seems to take that as a challenge. "No, I'm not. I'm staying."

In a quick cut to the next scene, we see Antoni, outraged, replying, “Staying to do what? Tell me!” They’re in their hotel room.

“I don’t know. But...”

“But what?”

“I can’t leave.”

“I refuse to stay and watch you fall flat on your face. There’s a limit to everything. Even friendship.” He walks away, saying, “Isn’t that right?” Continuing his exceptional work, cinematographer Walter Lassally uses a mirror to array Pavlos, his reflection, Antoni, doors, windows, and shadows in a complex and beautifully balanced composition.

Pavlos says, “Of course.”

Retreating to his bed, Antoni picks up his pad and pencil and starts sketching furiously, while Pavlos paces in their small room. “Can’t you see that no good can come of it?” insists Antoni.

“And can’t you see that I love her?” pleads Pavlos.

“Like Dora, Lia, Sofia and the rest?” Antoni slams the pad down on the bed.

“This time it’s different!”

“Who are you trying to fool? It’s just more difficult. You’re obstinate and she’ll be the one to pay.” By now, Antoni is standing very close to Pavlos as he confronts him.

“Stop! I can’t put up with you tearing me apart!” Collecting himself, Pavlos continues, “I may have been stupid... I may have not achieved anything... But I’m not a bastard.”

“If you were, I wouldn’t talk to you this way,” replies Antoni, more gently. “But staying on isn’t being brave. It’s madness.”

“If you were in love with her, what would you do?” asks Pavlos.

“That’s a pointless question. You beat me to it, as usual.”

“Yes, but if...”

“I’d probably marry her.”

“I’ve thought of that.”

Antoni had walked away. Now he whirls around and says accusingly, “And you rejected it, of course.”

“I know that it’s difficult at first sight.”

“At first, second and last... it’s impossible.”

Antoni walks up behind Pavlos. “At the risk of ruining our friendship, shall I tell you why?” He pauses for a moment. “First, because you live in totally different worlds. Secondly, you’re financially dependent.”

“You mean: supported by my mother.”

“That’s right. A socially ambitious, domineering lady. She adores you and you her and she’ll never say yes.”

“What if I get a job?”

“A monthly salary, a two-room apartment and romantic walks in the park? If you really mean it, I’ll guarantee you a job. So, call your mother and tell her.”

Pavlos has placed a phone call. Through the window behind him, we see the sunny island with its white houses stacked up on the mountain. Antoni listens from outside the telephone room.

“Hello? Is that you, Mother?... Yes, fine.” Sweat glistens on his face; he’s frowning. He goes on,

“Antoni’s leaving today. I’m staying a little longer.” It must be a bad connection, because he practically yells, “I’ve got to stay on because... because... What did you say? I can hardly hear you!... I called to tell you that... that...” He swallows hard and pauses, searching for the words. But finally he gives up. “I’ll tell you when I see you... No, nothing important. Don’t worry. I’ll be back soon. Love to everyone.”

“Goodbye.” Embarrassed, he sets down the phone and hangs his head. Arms crossed, leaning in the doorway, Antoni is plainly disappointed.

Pavlos looks over his shoulder at the busy little port. He leaves the telephone room and joins Antoni who is waiting for him. Pavlos, hot as hell and under a terrible strain, wipes his face with a handkerchief. He walks out of the building and Antoni follows. Neither man says anything.

Back at the hotel, the men pack their suitcases. They’ve changed into fresh clothes for the trip. “Ready?” asks Antoni. “Ready,” replies Pavlos.

Pavlos walks to the window. Mitso is walking by with a suitcase. He must be going somewhere... Antoni picks up his bags. “Let’s go.” “I’ll take tomorrow’s boat. Don’t worry. I won’t do anything rash. I just remembered something... a promise about a walk. I’d like to keep it.”

“Very well then.” Antoni accepts his friend’s decision. He walks to the door, stops and turns to say, “Take care.” And he departs for Athens, leaving Pavlos on his own.

The ship’s horn blows, very loud. And it is off, cruising past the houses with their tiled roofs, out to sea.

Standing in her window, Marina hears the horn and thinks that Pavlos has departed. In a matching shot, Pavlos stands on his balcony by the water, thinking of Marina. He watches the ship depart without him.

From inside her room, we see Marina turn toward the camera, tears in her eyes.

Hands in his pockets, Pavlos leaves the hotel. Outside, tables and chairs await the evening crowd. The street is all but deserted. He heads up the stairs toward Marina’s place. It’s a route he knows very well by now.

Meanwhile, Marina leaves her house, a basket on her arm.

She turns the corner and begins to walk down the stone stairs. When she sees Pavlos, she stops, frozen in place. Their eyes meet.

After a moment, she runs a few steps toward him, but then stops and looks up. Abruptly, she turns and runs away.

In pursuit, Pavlos runs up the stairs and through narrow passageways.

He turns and stands for a moment, then dashes into an alcove.

At the very end of the passageway, we see a young girl approaching, bouncing a ball. From the alcove, we hear Marina and Pavlos' voices.

"I thought you'd gone," says Marina.

"Not till tomorrow. So we can take that walk."

"We'll meet at the chapel," Pavlos continues, as the little girl stops, ball in hand, observing them. "I'll row to the cove and climb up. I'll set out early. No one will suspect."

Her back is to the wall, her hand in his. They're face to face, very close. "I'm afraid," she says.

Then they notice the girl. She's standing against a wall with her ball, staring at them curiously.

"Tell her to go away!" Marina whispers to Pavlos.

We hear a voice calling, "Yannoula!" An older girl approaches from the end of the passageway. She asks her friend, "What are you doing there?"

"Go away! Go!" whispers Pavlos.

The older girl says, "Come, we're going down to the beach." She takes Yannoula's hand. "Come on, sweetie," she says, and they run off.

Marina breathes a sigh of relief. She turns to Pavlos. "I must go."

"What time will we meet?"

"Five o'clock."

A dissolve brings us to the church tower at the waterfront, where the clock strikes four. The camera pans down to Pavlos, who is walking over to Ari. Boats float in the calm water. On the dock, huge wooden barrels huddle together, as if conferring.

Ari, wearing his white shirt and hat as usual, asks, "Where do you want to go?"

"To Kaminia."

"I'll get you a boat."

"I'll pop over to the hotel and be right back."

Ari strides away, looking back at Pavlos as if pondering a question.

At the coffee house, Ari encounters Christos, Panagos and two friends playing cards at a table outside.

"The Athenian wants a boat to go to Kaminia," says Ari. While his intent is simply to find a boat for his client, his report also reveals Pavlos' plans. He leans over the table, checking out the game.

"Mine's taken," one man says. "Take Christos'."

"I was going to sink it," says Christos. "It's warped."

That gives him an idea. He leans forward. "He's a good swimmer, right?"

"Sure," answers Ari.

"Get ready for a laugh, guys!"

They chortle with glee at the idea of the Athenian struggling in the water.

“You’ll pull out the cork?” asks one of the guys.

“That’s right.”

Concerned, Ari leans towards Christos, pleading, “No, guys, that would be shameful.”

“He’s caused enough trouble,” Christos replies. “Why didn’t he go with his friend?”

“Nothing will happen to him,” Panagos reassures Ari. “By the time he reaches Kanoni, the boat will be full of water and he’ll jump. Big deal.”

Christos jumps up with excitement and reaches across the table, instructing one of his friends, “When you see him coming, you remove the cork. We’ll be at Kanoni watching out for him.” Ari looks on unhappily.

Christos slaps his friend's back, says, “Let’s go!” and they all take off.