

A CONVERSATION ABOUT MORNING CIGARETTES AND COFFEE

S: Good morning.

D: Good morning.

S: How are you?

D:I'm doing fine. I just woke up here in Dubai. Its eleven in the morning.

S: You slept in late.

D: Yeah. I am sitting here with you, smoking my morning cigarette and drinking my cup of coffee.

S: You do that every single morning.

D: Yes.

S: The first thing you can do before you do anything else. Sometimes you forget to kiss me 'good morning' or say 'good morning'. You just hop right out of bed, have your cigarette and your coffee.

D: That's true.

S: When did you start having this ritual?

D: I mean it's a really unhealthy ritual. I mean I've been smoking for a couple of years now and it's just something that I've grown to do every morning. Maybe for five years. I know it's disgusting. Since my early twenties.

S: Since your early twenties. What does it bring you?

D: It brings me an energy boost because I think that if I don't do it, I feel tired and then I wake up really slow.

S: Isn't it nice to just wake up slow sometimes?

D: Oh yeah yeah yeah. It is. I just feel like a little boost.

S: I also feel like you use it as a little moment to start the day. You sit in our apartment patio in Amsterdam. It's a time to sit and think.

D: Yeah, and organize myself with my thoughts.

S: Sort of meditate before the day.

D: Yeah, I agree.

S: Actually, now, coffee and cigarettes make me thinking about waking up near you.

D: But I mean also the smell of coffee in the morning can even boost my energy level.

S: Yeah. Same.

D: You smell it and you just feel different.

S: That's something that we both have in common. Coffee is a staple morning ritual. If I miss my coffee in the morning then I'm not super nice to be around... usually. If I don't get it at home, though, I usually get it at school. I don't relate to the smoking. Maybe because I am American.

D: Yeah. I don't know. For example, David Lynch, he is American.

S: But he's old.

D: He's old. That's true. But his morning ritual is also cigarettes and coffee.

S: I think a lot of people's morning rituals are cigarettes and coffee. You're meeting my mom today. She won't like that you smoke.

D: No, but I won't smoke in front of her.

S: But you'll still smell like smoke.

D: You think so?

S: Yeah.

D: But after we go into the water...

S: Okay. Does your mom like your morning ritual.

D: No. No she does not. I don't think anyone likes that their children smoke.

S: Why do you do it?

D: Because it's a part of my morning ritual. Because I love it. I really love it.

S: To smoke?

D: In the morning? Yeah.

S: I'm just trying to figure out why you love it.

D: It's such a good tool to wake up with.

S: Does it bring you peace?

D: It sure does. It creates an order in the chaos.

S: I feel like most people I know who aren't dating you or living with you, don't realize that actually, there is a lot of chaos in your brain.

D: Yeah. I mean... do you think that?

S: I know that. Well, I don't know, obviously, but that's the impression I'm left with. I'm like, "Yeah Daniel, sometimes he just needs to calm down and be with himself," and people are like, "Really?! But he is just so nice to be around." Do you think you will always have a cigarette and coffee for breakfast?

D: Well I hope not. It is just a way of dealing with things. How do you stop smoking?

S: You don't know yet.

D: I don't know yet. I'm really open to do it but I don't think I have the courage.

S: You're so dependent on it.

D: I guess so. Part of me knows I have to deal with it.

S: Do you think it's part of your identity?

D: I wouldn't say identity. It's how I work. I use it as a tool because I am creative as well. It's nice, it's quick to get fresh, to get your thoughts.

S: It give you what?

D: A quick, fresh mind.

S: But because why?

D: Like creativity or just my thoughts, because if I crave a cigarette and I don't have an opportunity to smoke it, it can be distracting.

S: Yeah. It sounds controlling.

D: Yes, probably, controlling. I would say yes but it's also a button where I push 'fresh/ restart'.

S: There is something very poetic about that. You know? There is something very poetic about the fact that you wake up and have a cigarette and coffee. It feels almost... it's just something a character in a movie does. Like the tortured artist.

D: Yeah. I hate that it does make me uncomfortable in social situations, like, do I smell like cigarettes. Because in reality, I think all cigarette smokers know they are stupid because of it.

S: I don't think you're stupid...

D: No. I don't think really addicted people are proud of it. Nobody is proud of it.

S: I don't think it defines you. I just hate the prospect of lung cancer. But I mean, it is also part of you I have romanticized a little bit, even though it is nasty... biologically. You also get super mad even we are ever at a party or something and I smoke a cigarette. You never let me.

D: That's because I want to protect you in that way. I know the bad side of smoking.

S: Let's go swimming. What's this water called again? Look at all those people. They look like ants. What's this bay?

D: I don't know.

S: Let's go swim.

