

A Little Game Without Consequence

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Sans Consequence" By Jean Dell & Gerald Sibleyras
(Gabriele Muccino & Liz Tuccillo revisions)

Aug. 22,
2006

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM

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We see Claire in her bed, the camera is above. She stares at the ceiling. Next to her, in a quick montage sequence, we see several guys sleeping in different positions.

CLAIRe (V.O.)

In my twenties I was what you might have called a wild girl. I was a making a living as an actress, and spending the rest of my time, well, dating. And going to parties.

INT. ALEXANDRIA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

We see Claire make a grand entrance at a party. Everyone reacts. This party is for:

ALEXANDRIA, same age as Claire, is blowing out 31 candles on her cake. She is a cute, mild-mannered woman, appealing, but a little awkward.

Claire is next to her. People are laughing and clapping. She exchanges glances with Brad. We go in slow-motion.

CLAIRe (V.O.)

One day, out of the blue I saw him. And he saw me. And I thought to myself: it's him. He's the one I was waiting for.

INT. CLAIRE AND BRAD'S BEDROOM --

In a quick montage sequence, we see moments of their life together:

Them making fun of two talking heads on television. Claire throwing something at the television.

Claire holding up a head of iceberg lettuce and looking at Brad incredulously. Brad laughing, not getting the problem.

Claire hopping out of the bathroom, having cut her foot. Brad jumping up to help her. ETC.

TO PRESENT:

Claire is getting dressed in the bedroom.

CLAIRe

(yelling; putting on her
shoes)

Are you ready?

No answer.

CLAIRe (cont'd)
Brad!

She stands and walks out of the room

CLAIRe (cont'd)
Where are you? We're late.

BRAD (O.S.)
Almost done...

She opens the bathroom. Brad is in his robe, shaving in front of the mirror.

CLAIRe
(laughing)
You're kidding me, right?

BRAD
Five minutes and we can go.

CLAIRe
(amused)
Really, five minutes?

BRAD
Five minutes, I swear.

CLAIRe
I'm so timing you.

She looks at her watch.

BRAD
(laughing)
Fine. Then let's put some money on it!

CLAIRe
You're on!

Freeze on her.

CLAIRe (V.O.) (cont'd)
So this is us. This is how it starts.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Claire and Brad are traveling in the cab.

CLAIRe (V.O.)
We've been together for five years.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Claire and Brad are in the cab. He puts his hand out.
Claire rolls her eyes, smiling.

CLAIRe
Seriously?

Claire takes out twenty dollars and gives it to him. Brad takes it, satisfied.

CLAIRe (V.O.) (CONT'D)
After five years, I still think it.
He's my soul mate. I've never
loved anybody like him. Ever.

*
*
*
*

They smile to each other.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)
Asshole.

They both laugh.

INT. RESTAURANT, PRIVATE ROOM -- NIGHT

Claire and Brad enter the room. They are greeting by Jen, who is surrounded by a few friends.

JEN
Hey! Thanks for coming!

CLAIRe
(giving Jen the present)
Happy Birthday!!!

JEN
Thanks!
(turning to friends)
Guys -- these are my friends Claire and Brad. They just got engaged last week!

A murmur of congratulations from the friends.

JEN (cont'd)
They've been together for five years, they're still madly in love, blah blah blah, we hate them.

Some laughs and more murmurs of congratulations, as Claire and Brad roll their eyes and move into the party.

JEN (cont'd)
(pointing)
The bar is over there!

CUT TO:

Claire, by herself, is making her way through the crowd. She bumps into Lauren.

LAUREN
Hey, Claire. Congratulations about the engagement.

Claire looks at her hand, expecting to be asked to show her ring...

CLAIRe
Thanks...we're really excited because it's...

LAUREN
(interrupting, not interested)
Did you hear about Julie and Todd?

CLAIRe
No. What happened?

LAUREN
(excited)
She found out that he had this huge online gambling problem. She moved out. He's in Gamblers Anonymous.

CLAIRe
Really?

LAUREN
Yes. Can you believe it?

CUT TO:

Brad is at the bar, getting drinks. PATRICK, 36, sidles up to him.

PATRICK
Hey. Do you see that girl out there?

Brad looks out into the crowd.

BRAD

Which one?

PATRICK

The one with the white shirt.

He points out a beautiful model, who's talking to someone else, not far from them.

BRAD

Yeah.

PATRICK

I'm going to go in. I'm going to make her mine.

BRAD

Oh, really?

PATRICK

Yep. Watch me.

BRAD

(laughing)

Don't you think you should aim a little lower?

PATRICK

(not amused)

What? You don't think I can get her?

BRAD

You don't stand a chance.

PATRICK

You have no idea what you're talking about. It's all in the eyes. The gleam. The danger. The edge. I have it.

BRAD

Oh really?

PATRICK

That's what **the ladies like.**

The model is now laughing and touching the arm of the guy she's talking to.

*

*

BRAD

It looks like she's responding to that guys biceps.

PATRICK
 (so irritated)
 It's amazing -- **you've been dead**
 for five years and you still think
 you can give me advice.

BRAD
 That's not an instinct that you
 lose.

PATRICK
 Please, you couldn't pick a woman
 up now if she came with **two** handles
 and a **jack**.

Brad laughs at that.

BRAD
 (unsure)
 Of course I could.

PATRICK
 Please. That's why you convinced
 Claire to marry you. So someone's
 legally obligated to have sex with
 you.

Brad just shakes his head.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
 Seriously, big man, if Claire
 dumped your ass tomorrow? You
 would be lost. Lost.

Brad takes that in, gets his drinks and walks away.

CUT TO:

Claire is now on the terrace, talking to some people.
 Alexandria, now 36, comes towards her. She is frantic.

ALEXANDRIA
 Thank God, you're here.

CLAIREE
 Hey! What's up.

ALEXANDRIA
 He's not here yet.

CLAIREE
 The guy?

ALEXANDRIA

(a little frantic)

Yeah. Craig. He's not here yet.
Do you think he's standing me up?

Claire looks at her watch. She

CLAIRe

You don't know that...

ALEXANDRIA

He was supposed to meet me here at
nine. What time is it?

CLAIRe

Eleven thirty.

ALEXANDRIA

(freaking out)

He's standing me up. I can't
believe it! I thought he really
liked me!

CLAIRe

(a bit condescending)

Alex, if he's the kind of guy that
would stand you up at a party, then
he's obviously not the kind of guy
you want.

ALEXANDRIA

You're not going to start telling
me I have to love myself, again,
are you?

CLAIRe

(innocently)

Well, what kind of guy would tell a
woman he'll meet her at a party and
not show up?

*

ALEXANDRIA

Um. Any male in New York City
between the ages of 11 and 84?

CLAIRe

Stop it.

ALEXANDRIA

(sweetly)

Claire, has Brad disappointed you
or let you down once in the five
years that you've known him?

CLAIRe

Well, no...

ALEXANDRIA

Exactly. You're living in this little bubble of happiness. You have no idea what it's really like out there.

CLAIRe

I know what it's like...I hear your stories, I listen...

ALEXANDRIA

(teasing)

You watch reality television, I know.

CLAIRe

God. You make me sound so...I don't know.

ALEXANDRIA

What?

CLAIRe

Old.

ALEXANDRIA

(sweetly)

Not old....Just...happy.

Claire considers this.

On Claire's pensive look, we CUT TO:

Claire and Brad are now talking to a woman, Rachel.

RACHEL

So, where are you two going to have your reception?

Claire is about to speak.

RACHEL (cont'd)

The Central Park Boathouse, right?

CLAIRe

Well. Yeah. How did you...

RACHEL

Using the Lionel Trilling orchestra?

BRAD
Well, actually...

RACHEL
Thought so. Going with the
Boathouse's Southwestern menu?

By Brad and Claire's expressions, we know she's right.

BRAD
Wow.

CLAIRe
I didn't know we were
so...predictable...

RACHEL
Are you kidding? That's why we
love you! Your relationship is the
most stable thing in our lives!

As Rachel walks away, Claire and Brad just look at each other, slightly disturbed.

CUT TO:

Claire is now leaning on the balcony, smoking a cigarette and looking at the city.

A woman approaches her from behind. She's obviously upset. *

JULIA
Hey, Claire...

CLAIRe
(turns and sees her)
Hi Julia...Are you okay..? *

JULIA
(shaking her head)
I got a really bad text.

CLAIRe
I'm so sorry.

JULIA
It's okay. You are so lucky.
Really.

Claire smiles.

JULIA (cont'd)
You're done, you know?

Claire looks at her, curious.

JULIA (CONT'D)
 All this dating bullshit, the ups
 and downs, all the drama. That
 part of your life is over. You
 know how the story ends. You're
 getting married. Done. Finished.

Claire just looks at Julia, turns and walks away.

INT. BATHROOM

Claire is in the bathroom, annoyed. She stares at the reflection in the bathroom mirror. We PUSH IN on Claire's face. A moment of silence. It's a strange, pensive moment for her.

A CHEERFUL CHATTY WOMAN, **KELLY** enters from the stall. She goes to wash her hands. *

KELLY
 Claire! I heard. Congrats. *

Claire is truly annoyed.

KELLY
 So. When are you two going to have babies? *

KELLY
 Excuse me? *

KELLY (cont'd)
 Babies! When are you going to start your family? *

Claire doesn't know what to say.

KELLY (cont'd)
 Well, when you're ready, you have to use my obstetrician. Have to. *

CLAIRES
 (an outburst)
 Brad and I broke up.

KELLY
 What?

CLAIRES
 We broke up.

A look of horror passes over her face.

KELLY
You and Brad?

Claire just nods.

KELLY (CONT'D)
You and Brad!?

CLAIRe
(almost crying)
I know, isn't it awful?

KELLY
It's....it's....I'm stunned!

CLAIRe
Please, don't tell anyone. It's
so....new.

Kelly hugs her.

KELLY
Jesus, Claire...Are you okay?

Claire, again, just nods. Pretending to hold back tears.

CLAIRe
I have to go now....I'm sorry.

Kelly follows her with the glance, totally disoriented.
Claire exits -- amused.

The balcony.

CUT TO:

INT. CAB -- MOMENTS LATER

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Claire and Brad in the cab.

BRAD
You did not.

CLAIRe
I don't know what I was thinking!
It just came out!

BRAD
She's probably at that party now,
telling everyone!

CLAIRES
I told her not to!

BRAD
Yeah. That always works.

CLAIRES
It was insane. It's just...you
should have seen her face.

Brad is now intrigued.

BRAD
What was it like?

Claire re-enacts Kelly's crazy crying shocked face. Brad starts laughing.

BRAD (cont'd)
Really?

CLAIRES
Yeah. I got more of a reaction in
that one moment of break-up than
we've gotten all week from our
engagement.

BRAD
(shaking his head)
Wow. (beat) You have to tell her
it's not true.

CLAIRES
I will. I'll call her tomorrow. I
promise.

BRAD
I don't even like joking about it.

CLAIRES
(wrapping her arms around
him)
I know. Me neither.
(beat;thinking)
But my God...I wish you could have
seen her face.

She grabs him and kisses him as Brad just shakes his head and laughs.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Brad and Claire are in the bed. He's staring at the ceiling.

She looks at him.

CLAIRES
What are you thinking about?

BRAD
(he turns to her)
Nothing...

He strokes her face.

BRAD (cont'd)
I love you...

CLAIRES
I love you too...

They hug and kiss tenderly. They start to make love.

Black.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DAY.

The Knicks are playing on the court below but we're CLOSE ON Patrick and Brad in the stands. They watch the game while talking.

PATRICK
Why not?

BRAD
Because I'm not going to invest in
a start-up business.

PATRICK
It's a great idea.

BRAD
I'm not actually sure if selling
cheese online is a great idea, but
it's not the point.

PATRICK
We're family!

BRAD
Just because I'm your cousin
doesn't mean I'm supposed to let
you bankrupt me.

PATRICK

Why not for once take a chance?
Why not for once do something a
little daring?

BRAD

You're not going to manipulate me
into investing in your company.
How many jobs have you had? How
many businesses have you started
that failed?

PATRICK

At least I'm sticking my neck out.
At least I'm out there, taking
chances. Doing shit.

BRAD

What is that supposed to mean?

PATRICK

Are you kidding me? Name for me
the last risk you took on anything.
Anything. Name it for me, please.

BRAD

I built my business from scratch.

PATRICK

Yeah. Medical software. What a
rebel.

Brad doesn't even answer him.

PATRICK (cont'd)

Just admit it. You're a thirty-
five-year-old guy and you're life
is exactly the way it is now, as it
will be in forty years from now.
No risk or change whatsoever.

Brad thinks about this.

BRAD

You really think you have me all
figured out, don't you?

PATRICK

Cuz. Anyone who meets you for two
minutes has you figured out.

Brad looks at Patrick, thinks and then...

BRAD

Well. News flash. Claire and I
broke up last night.

Patrick almost has a heart attack.

PATRICK

What?

BRAD

Yeah.

PATRICK

You and Claire broke up?

BRAD

You heard me. Kind of shocking,
isn't it?

PATRICK

No way. No way! I was with you
guys last night! You looked happy!

BRAD

Just goes to show -- you can't be
too sure of anything, can you?

Brad takes a sip of his beer and smiles. Satisfied. Patrick
is literally devastated.

INT. METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART - DAY.

Claire is in the Rockefeller Wing, overseeing the
installation of some framed drawings.

Her cell rings. She checks the display and sees Alexandria's
name flashing on the display.

CLAIRe

(answers)

Alex...hey...

ALEXANDRIA (O.C)

Hey. Are you free for dinner
tonight?

CLAIRe

Yeah, I think so. Is everything
alright?

ALEXANDRIA
(probing; annoyed)
Yeah. I guess. I don't know. Is it?

CLAIRES
(confused)
What? Yeah.

ALEXANDRIA
(not believing)
Alright, then. La Ronde at 8?

CLAIRES
Perfect.

They hang up.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - DAY.

The crowds are streaming out. Patrick is going through his own crisis about this break-up.

PATRICK
I just don't get it. Who broke up with who? Did you guys have a fight? Are you moving out? Did you tell your mom?

BRAD
I haven't really...

PATRICK
How come you seem so calm?

BRAD
I don't know I just..

PATRICK
You're in shock. That's why. Remember how you were when Franny broke up with you? You were a basket case.

BRAD
(embarrassed)
That was like eight years ago.

PATRICK
Sobbing, moping. Threatening to kill yourself. It was pathetic.

BRAD
(really embarrassed)
I never threatened to..
(enough's enough)
Okay. Listen, when I said Claire
and I broke up...

PATRICK
You were confiding in me, I know.
And now it's my job to make sure
you don't go nuts on me again...

Brad just shakes his head. Patrick stops, puts his hands on his shoulders.

PATRICK (cont'd)
(very serious, too
earnest)
Brad. This break-up is the best
thing that's ever happened to you.

BRAD
Do you really think so?

PATRICK
No. You and Claire were great
together. But from now on, that's
what I'm going to tell you.
(beat; he continues
walking)
I mean, you were getting a little
soft.

BRAD
What?

PATRICK
With Claire. Soft. Settled. Like
a housecat.

BRAD
A housecat?

PATRICK
A flabby housecat.

BRAD
A flabby housecat.

PATRICK
Yeah.

BRAD
(unmoved)
Okay.

PATRICK
And I think she made you nervous.

BRAD
What?

PATRICK
You know. Like always a little
worried she was going to leave you.
So you became more stable. To keep
her. That must have been a drag.

Brad thinks about this.

PATRICK (cont'd)
(beat)
But see? Now you don't have to
worry about that. You don't have to
be boring, safe guy for Claire.
You can do whatever the hell you
want.

Brad is speechless.

PATRICK (cont'd)
(proudly; beat)
See? I'll get you through this,
don't worry. I love you, man. I
love you!

Patrick hugs Brad, who remains stiff.

EXT. THE WEST VILLAGE - SUNSET.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY.

Claire and Alex are sitting at the table of a nice Italian
restaurant.

ALEXANDRIA
I don't want to make this about me,
but I can't help feeling so hurt
that you didn't tell me about you
and Brad.

CLAIRE
What?
(getting it)
Oh.

ALEXANDRIA

Why did I have to hear it from Kelly? Did you think I wouldn't be able to understand? Because I'll be able to understand.

CLAIRe

No. I can explain.

ALEXANDRIA

What happened?

CLAIRe

You mean with Kelly?

ALEXANDRIA

Kelly. Brad. All of it.

CLAIRe

Oh. Okay. Well, last night, at that party, everyone was talking about our engagement. And they all seemed so... Sure of us. You know?

ALEXANDRIA

Well, yeah. We all thought you two were the perfect couple.

CLAIRe

Exactly. So perfect in a way, that it felt like we almost didn't exist.

ALEXANDRIA

I get it.

CLAIRe

Like it almost didn't matter if we actually lived our lives, because everyone already knew what was going to happen.

ALEXANDRIA

I see. So you were feeling a little bit suffocated?

CLAIRe

Yes.

ALEXANDRIA

Like you had lost yourself in the relationship?

CLAIRe

Ah...no...

ALEXANDRIA

(not listening)

Well, I totally get that.

CLAIRe

What?

ALEXANDRIA

Brad is pretty perfect, but I can see how you might feel he's controlling.

CLAIRe

Really?

ALEXANDRIA

Yeah. The great thing about Brad is how sure he is about everything. But sometimes that makes him kind of a bully.

CLAIRe

A bully?

ALEXANDRIA

Yeah. But in a nice way. I mean, he just always seems to get his way. About **everything**.

*
*

Claire just thinks.

ALEXANDRIA (CONT'D)

So I can see now, how you might need some time to just remember who you are. Without Brad telling you what to do.

Claire just thinks.

CLAIRe

Hmmm.

ALEXANDRIA

It's really sad. But I understand.

Claire just looks at Alexandria, disturbed.

CLAIRe

But I don't get it. I thought you said we were the perfect couple.

ALEXANDRIA

I did. But now you broke up. So that puts a whole new perspective on things.

Claire just looks at her. Speechless.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- EVENING.

Claire is sitting on her sofa, staring into space. The door opens and Brad comes in. They are both still thinking about what just happened...

BRAD

Hey...

CLAIRe

Hey...

He stops and realizes something's the matter.

BRAD

What happened?

CLAIRe

Alex heard we broke up.

BRAD

She did...

CLAIRe

Yeah.

BRAD

Did you set her straight?

CLAIRe

(joking)

Yeah, but not before she gave me an earful.

BRAD

(very curious)

Really? What did she say?

Claire looks at Brad, realizing what she just got herself into.

CLAIRe

Nothing.

BRAD

No. Tell me.

Claire just shakes her head, smiling.

BRAD (CONT'D)
C'mon. Tell me.

CLAIRe
(teasing)
No. It's none of your business.

Brad jumps on the sofa and wrestles her.

BRAD
Tell me!!!

Claire looks at Brad.

CLAIRe
No!

BRAD
Yes!

CLAIRe
She said you were the best thing
that ever happened to me and I was
an idiot to ever let you go.

He lets her go and stands up. Arms in the air. Triumphant.

BRAD
Yes! I knew it!

CLAIRe
(looking at this display)
You're pretty sure of yourself,
aren't you?

BRAD
That's right!

Brad sits down on the sofa with Claire. Remembers his news.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Oh yeah. By the way. I told
Patrick we broke up.

CLAIRe
What? You didn't.

BRAD
(smiles)
Yes, I did.

CLAIRe

Why?

BRAD

I don't know. He was being a jerk.
I wanted to shut him up.

CLAIRe

Did it?

BRAD

Yeah. He was stunned.

CLAIRe

What else did he say?

Brad looks at Claire.

BRAD

That you were the best thing to
ever happen to me and I'm an idiot.

CLAIRe

(skeptical)

Really?

BRAD

Really.

CLAIRe

This is fun.

BRAD

It is.

Claire looks at Brad. Thinks. Then says it.

CLAIRe

Should we do it one more day? Just
to hear some more of the nice
things people are saying about us?

Brad thinks about it.

BRAD

I don't know. The news is going to
travel fast.

CLAIRe

I know. But then we'll just tell
everyone we got back together.

Something about this Brad enjoys.

BRAD
One more day?

CLAIRES
One more day.

By his silence, we know he's agreed.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Brad walks into office. The receptionist is answering the phone "Diagnostic Solutions." She looks up at Brad, and gets a very, very sad expression on her face.

BRAD
Good morning, Nadia.

NADIA
(sympathetically)
Good morning. (beat) Can I get
you anything? Coffee? A bagel?
Would you like me to cancel your
meetings this morning?

Brad, first doesn't understand. Then, he quickly pretends to be sad.

BRAD
(mock-glum)
No. I'm fine...

NADIA
Okay...

CUT TO:

Brad walks through his hallway. A guy, LARRY, sees him and comes out of his office.

LARRY
Dude. Don't you worry about a
thing, this weekend I'll get a
bunch of guys and we will do some
major partying...okay? Okay??

Brad just nods, putting a thumb up in the air.

BRAD
Definitely!!

Just as he gets to his door, an older women, Lila, in her 60s, hands him a piece of paper.

LILA

My daughter's number. When you're ready to date again.

Brad smiles awkwardly. Takes it. He goes into his office. He closes the door. He smiles with amusement.

INT. BRAD OFFICE. BATHROOM - DAY.

Brad is washing his hands in the bathroom. JAKE, his business partner, 40s, walks in and approaches him.

JAKE

Hey. Sorry to hear about the break-up.

BRAD

(amused)

Yeah, well, you know how these things go..

JAKE

She cheated on you, right?

Brad stops washing his hands.

BRAD

Uh...what?

JAKE

You don't have to be embarrassed, it's happened to all of us at least once.

BRAD

Um. No. No. She didn't cheat on me...

JAKE

If a woman decides to break up out of the blue it means only one thing: there's somebody else.

BRAD

That's not how...it's not...we decided together...

JAKE

She was a cheater anyway.

BRAD

What?

JAKE

At last year's Christmas party, I handed her a glass of champagne, and just the way her fingers overlapped on mine, for a little too long, I just knew.

BRAD

Because of your overlapping fingers?

JAKE

My infidelity radar is impeccable. Did I not call Paula's divorce?

BRAD

That's because you were sleeping with her.

JAKE

Still. I could tell if I made a pass at Claire, she would have cheated on you.

BRAD

(very flustered)

No way. No. No. She's just friendly. She's, you know, polite.

JAKE

Brad, I know these things. Didn't you tell me she used to be a little wild?

BRAD

Yeah. But that was before...

JAKE

People don't change. They just become better liars.

BRAD

Claire? No. No way.

Jake shrugs and looks at him like "I know these things." Brad just looks at him. Stunned. Jake exits the bathroom.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

Claire sips her wine in a restaurant. She's lunching with three of her girlfriends.

CINDY

I know it's hard to sum up an entire relationship in a few words - but -- can you try?

ELISA

What happened.

CLAIRe

Well, you know.
(fishing)
Sometimes...he can be so....?

No one says anything. She tries again.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

I was just feeling so...?

Not a bite.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

(irritated)

Things were just getting really...

CINDY

(trying to be helpful)

Irritating?

CLAIRe

Irritating, yes Because...?

ELISA

Well, he could be irritating, sure. But that's no reason to throw away five years...

CLAIRe

(jumping in)

Really? How could he be irritating?

ELISA

You know. The way he could go on and on about things and not let it go.

CLAIRe

(actually agreeing)

Right. (to herself) I didn't know anyone else noticed...

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Brad is by his desk. He's extremely tense. A FEMALE CO-WORKER, VAL, is with him

VAL
If she's cheating, that's the place
you'd find out.

BRAD
I'm not going to break into her
email. No way.

VAL
Please. I do it all the time.
Caught three boyfriends cheating
and one buying really bad music. Do
you think you could figure out her
password?

Brad thinks about it for a moment.

INT. RESTAURANT -- DAY

The ladies continue with their lunch.

AMY
But still, Elisa's right. People
get irritated with each other.
That can't possibly be the reason.

CLAIRE
You're right. You're right.

CINDY
...It's just so hard to imagine.
You two were so close. It was like
you were the same person.

Not the best thing for Claire to hear.

ELISA
Yeah. Or like brother and sister.

CLAIRE
What?

ELISA
You know, how comfortable you were
around each other.

CLAIRE
Comfortable?

CINDY
Yeah. Like family.

CLAIRe
That doesn't sound very hot.

The ladies don't know what to say. Reading a lot from the silence:

CLAIRe (cont'd)
You didn't think of us as hot?

Silence.

CLAIRe (cont'd)
You know. Like "Oh, look, there's Claire and Brad, the hot couple?"

Silence. Then.

LADIES
(overcompensating)
No, we totally did/Absolutely/Yeah,
you guys are really hot/Of course
you're hot/Hot, really really hot.

Claire just looks at them. Scowling.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Brad sits at his computer, thinking. PAN IN to see a hotmail account on the screen -- with the name "Claire Masters" in the box for "name" and an empty space where the "password" should be. He types in the name "Peppy." Doesn't get him in. Then he tries "1971." Nothing. Then, he has a thought. He types "Brad." Nothing.

INT. GYM -- NIGHT

Brad is running on the tread mill. Next to him, another man is running.

MAN RUNNING
When my wife left me I spent six months devastated. After eight I resurrected. I met somebody else and I understood that my previous life had been a huge mistake. I was finally in love again.

BRAD

(running)

How's that going now with this new
one?

MAN RUNNING

She left me too. So I learned one
more thing: love doesn't exist.
It's all bullshit. The best we can
do is jump from bed to bed and
enjoy life as it comes. You'll
find out. You'll see how unhappy
you used to be.

BRAD

So. Are you happy now?

Man running ignores Brad's question and keeps running.

INT. GYM - DAY.

Brad is getting ready to leave the gym. His phone rings.

INTERCUT with

INT. NEW JERSEY HOME

His mother Babs is pacing in her kitchen.

BABS

I can't believe it. I had to hear
it from my sister?

BRAD

Aunt Patty told you?

BABS

Of course, Patrick told her.

BRAD

Oh...right...Listen mom...

BABS

This is horrible news. Absolutely
terrible. It's not true is it?
You two are going to work it out?

BRAD

Of course we will.

Beat. Decides to take this opportunity.

BRAD (cont'd)
That's what you want, isn't it?

BABS
Well, of course it is. I mean,
unless it's not what you want...?

BRAD
No. That's what I want. But I
mean...Did it come as a shock to
you? This break-up?

BABS
Of course it did.

BRAD
You never had any suspicions about
Claire...anything you never told me
about because you didn't want to
hurt my feelings?

BABS
No. (beat) And if I did, I
wouldn't tell you. I'm not going
to be one of those mothers that
says bad things about the ex and
then you get back together and
never speak to me again.

BRAD
That won't happen, I promise. I
just want to know if you ever --
were suspicious, about anything...

BABS
(thinking)
Well.

BRAD
(curious)
What?! Tell me.

BABS
It's nothing.

BRAD
No, really. Tell me.

BABS
No. It's really nothing.

BRAD
Tell me. Please.

BABS

She didn't seem to eat enough.

BRAD

What?

BABS

I was worried that she never seemed
to eat enough.

BRAD

(defensive)

Claire eats enough. Claire eats
all the time!

BABS

And one time I think I heard her
throwing up in the bathroom after
dinner.

BRAD

What? Are you saying you think
Claire has an eating disorder?

BABS

I never said that. I just said it
worried me a little, that's all.

BRAD

(really irritated)

She eats all the time! All the
time! Meat, fish, potatoes, garlic
bread, everything!

BABS

See? I should never have said
anything. I'll see you tonight.

She hangs up.

*

INT. CAB - EVENING.

Brad is travelling in the cab. He looks out of the window.
Troubled and concerned.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT / STAIRS - EVENING.

Claire is walking up the stairs of their apartment building.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM/BEDROOM - EVENING.

Brad is taking off his jacket and tie. He walks into the
bedroom. He looks around the room.

He saunters over to Claire's dresser. He starts looking through her things...her underwear...her perfume...He hears the door open...

CLAIRe (O.S.)

Brad...?

...and he darts into the living room.

BRAD

Hey!

Claire enters the apartment. They both look at each other, both with a lot on their minds.

Claire runs to him and start kissing him. At first he's a little surprised.

CLAIRe

I missed you so much today.

BRAD

You did?

CLAIRe

Yes, baby, I did.

She's taking off his clothes, kissing him, trying very hard to be hot.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

Did you miss me? Did you miss me at work today, baby?

BRAD

(kissing)

Uh-huh.

Brad starts kissing her, matching her passion. He starts taking off her clothes.

CLAIRe

Did you tell them?

BRAD

(busy)

Huh...?

CLAIRe

About us? Did you tell them about us at work today baby?

BRAD

Uh-huh.

More clothes are being taken off.

CLAIRES
What did they say? What did they
say, baby?

More kissing.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
Come on. Tell me. Tell me.

More undressing. More kissing. They are on the sofa now.
It's very passionate.

BRAD
(breathing heavy)
They said that you **cheat**.

*

Thinking that's hot...

CLAIRES
Oh yeah...?

BRAD
That you're a cheater.

*

CLAIRES
That's right baby, I'm a cheater.

*

Brad opens his eyes for a moment.

BRAD
You are?

CLAIRES
(looking right at him)
That's right baby I am. With so
many guys.
(kissing him)
Sometimes when you go jogging, I
call up my lover...my french lover.

He's back to being very involved with what he's doing and
yet...

BRAD
And...

CLAIRES
I have sex with him in our bed.
And I don't even clean the sheets.

BRAD
(breathing hard)
No.

CLAIRES
Then there's the guy from the deli.
We did it in the back room.

Brad groans with...pleasure?

BRAD
(breathing hard)
No. No. Who else?

He is on top of her right now, half-naked...etc. It's very hot.

CLAIRES
I was just with someone right now.

BRAD
(really excited)
No.

CLAIRES
A guy I met.

BRAD
(louder)
No!

CLAIRES
(louder)
In the elevator.

BRAD
No.....!!!

CLAIRES
We stopped on the third floor
and...

BRAD
And...

CLAIRES
And...

They climax at the same time, loudly. Their breathing slowly gets back to normal.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
Oh my God, that was so great.

Brad is a little stunned.

CLAIRe (cont'd)
Wasn't that great, baby?

Brad nods. Unable to speak. But he's not quite sure.

EXT. DOORSTEP, KATONAH HOME -- NIGHT

Brad rings the bell to his mother's home. Claire and he wait.

CLAIRe
So, once we sit down for dinner,
we'll explain everything.

BRAD
Okay. (beat) What are we going to say?

Claire thinks about this.

CLAIRe
I have no idea.

INT. BAB'S KATONAH HOME -- NIGHT

Brad's mother, Bab's, opens the door to see her son...and Claire.

BABS
(surprised)
Oh. Claire. Hello.

Claire hands her a bottle of wine, and kisses her on the cheek.

CLAIRe
It's great to see you, Babs!

Bab throws her son an inquisitive look, as they all walk inside.

BRAD
(whispering to her)
We'll talk about it at dinner.

INT. BAB'S DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Everyone has sat down to eat -- Patrick, Claire, Brad and Babs. The food is on the table but hasn't been served yet.

BRAD

(clearing his throat)

So. Um. Claire and I wanted to talk about what's been going on with us.

CLAIRe

We know you both care about us so much, so we felt you deserved an explanation.

The doorbell rings.

BABS

Oh. That must be Stuart.

Brad looks concerned.

BRAD

What?

BABS

Stuart Fetter.

BRAD

Stuart Fetter is at the door?

BABS

I bumped into him in the supermarket, he's out for the day visiting his parents.

BRAD

You invited him to dinner?

BABS

He just broke up with his wife. I thought it would be nice.

Brad and Patrick exchange looks. Patrick just shrugs. Brad and Claire share a look -- there's a change of plans. Babs goes to the door.

CUT TO:

STUART FETTER, late 30s, with dark features, a strong jaw line and easy confidence, is sitting down, next to Claire at the table. Babs carries a beautiful vase filled with flowers that she sets on the table.

BABS (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Stuart these are beautiful.

STUART

I'm glad you like them.
 (to the table, Claire in
 particular)
 I'm still trying to buy her
 forgiveness. **Your** brother and I
 caused a lot of trouble around here
 when we were kids.

*

Everyone is passing the food around. Brad notices the
 incredibly small portions of food Claire is taking. He is
 not pleased.

BABS

(smiling; amused)
 Brad, do you remember that? They
 were terrible.

Brad stops staring at Claire's plate.

BRAD

(not so amused)
 I remember once Stuart and Danny
 put me in the dryer...

Babs laugh.

BABS

Oh God, I remember that too!

STUART

(laughing)
 We were young...

Stuart notices Claire. Brad notices Stuart noticing Claire.

STUART (cont'd)

(to Claire)
 I'm sorry. You are..?

BABS

Oh, Stuart, I'm so sorry...this is
 Claire, my son's...

She doesn't know what to say.

PATRICK

Ex-girlfriend.

STUART

(surprised)
 Oh.

PATRICK
It's amicable.

Claire and Brad are immediately uncomfortable.

BRAD
You also threw me into the pond.

STUART
What?

BRAD
You also threw me into the pond.
When we were kids.

STUART
I believe I remember you jumping
into the pond.

Brad keeps his mouth shut. He looks at Claire's plate again.

BRAD
Honey. Would you like some more
potatoes?

CLAIRe
(mid-mouthful)
What?

BRAD
Would you like some more potatoes?

Claire looks at her plate, confused at the odd question.

CLAIRe
No, thank you.

BRAD
Okay. Chicken?

CLAIRe
No. Honey. I'm fine.

BRAD
Okay.

Brad continues to eat, obviously bothered.

BABS
(changing the subject)
Stuart, tell everybody why you're
back living in New York...I think
it's pretty exciting.

STUART

I'm putting the finishing touches
on a film financing fund.

PATRICK

You're going to be a movie
producer?

Claire looks at Stuart with interest.

STUART

I'm more the money guy. But it's
really exciting just to be a part
of the whole film-making
experience...

PATRICK

It's your company?

STUART

Yeah...I started it this year.

PATRICK

It takes a lot of guts to go out on
your own. Take a big risk like
that.

Patrick gives Brad a look.

STUART

Yeah - but it's really been worth
it. It's an exciting world --
films, filmmaking.

Brad is extremely irritated.

BABS

Brad has his own company.

STUART

Oh really?

BRAD

Yeah. Medical software.

No one knows what to say to that.

BRAD (cont'd)

(trying)

I work with a lot of doctors.

Silence.

BRAD (cont'd)
(to Stuart)
Why would I jump into a pond?

STUART
I don't know...you were hot...?

BRAD
Do you remember that pond? It was
disgusting. Filled with moss and
bugs...

CLAIRE
Brad...

BRAD
What? I just don't understand who
jumps into a pond.

CLAIRE
(trying to keep him quiet)
I know. But it's okay...
(to the group)
Sometimes Brad doesn't know how to
drop things.

BRAD
What is that supposed to mean?

Everyone is uncomfortable.

BABS
Tell us more about your company
Stuart.

STUART
Well, I just went to Denmark and
raised about five hundred mil
Kroners, and it looks like I'm
going to get some matching funds
from the States, which was really
great news.

CLAIRE
Wow...do you travel a lot for work?

STUART
Well, for my old job, I was in
international finance, so I have a
lot of European connections still.

Everyone is impressed.

CLAIRe

I used to be an actress.

STUART

Really?

CLAIRe

Before I met Brad.

STUART

Really? I'm sure you were great.

CLAIRe

Well, I worked. Plays. Small parts in movie. I got a pilot. It didn't get picked up, but...

STUART

A pilot. Wow.

Getting insecure...Brad jumps in.

BRAD

(too cheerful)

But then she met me and everything changed.

CLAIRe

Yeah...

BRAD

(proudly)

She decided to get serious with her life and started working at the Met.

Claire looks at Brad, irritated.

BRAD (cont'd)

(proudly)

That was her major in college. Art.

CLAIRe

You know, honey, being an actress was serious, too.

BRAD

Yeah, I know...you're right. I didn't mean to...

CLAIRe

Acting's just like every other job, but much harder. Stuart -- tell him. Being an actress is a very serious profession.

STUART

It is, it's very competitive, so you have to be serious about it.

CLAIRe

Thank you.

Claire touches Stuart in some way when she says that. Brad notices.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)

I was very serious about my career and acting. I trained, I worked hard on my auditions. I took scene study classes...

BRAD

Claire...

CLAIRe

I just don't know if you knew that... Did you know that?

BRAD

Yes, I knew that...

CLAIRe

I was really serious about it. I loved it. It was my whole life. It was a whole chapter of my life...that you just seem to casually dismiss...

Everyone is uncomfortable again.

BRAD

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

CLAIRe

As if everything that happened in my life before you means nothing.

BRAD

Okay, Claire, I'm sorry. God, talk about someone who doesn't know how to drop it.

BABS

Would anyone like seconds of anything?

PATRICK

I'd love some more chicken.

CLAIRe

Nothing for me...

BRAD

Will you eat something please! You ate like nothing!

CLAIRe

Brad!

BABS

Dear...

BRAD

What? I never noticed how little you eat!

CLAIRe

Now you want to control how much I eat?

BRAD

What is that supposed to mean? I don't tell you what to do.

CLAIRe

No, it just works out that way.

BRAD

What are you talking about?

CLAIRe

Well, it's not like you made me give up acting, but when I was having doubts, you were always the first to encourage me to find something else I liked to do...

BRAD

You were barely acting at all when I met you!

CLAIRe

...you wanted me to be more like you, steady, predictable. Less of a risk.

BRAD

Maybe I'm being so predictable
because I thought that made you
happy!

BABS

Maybe we should all just...

BRAD

It's really interesting how
suddenly I'm not good enough for
you. Suddenly you have all these
complaints. Like maybe you've been
thinking that there's something
better out there for you...? Is
that it?

CLAIRE

What? What are you talking about?

BRAD

Is there anything you want to tell
me? Is there?

Claire just looks at him and stands up.

CLAIRE

I'm going outside to smoke.

BRAD

Fine.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Patrick and Brad are now in the living room.

PATRICK

I don't know a lot about
relationships, but I don't think
this whole "amicable" thing is
working out too well.

Brad doesn't say a word.

BRAD

It's a lot more complicated than
you know.

PATRICK

Maybe, but here's a thought -- now that you two have broken up, maybe you shouldn't be bringing her to your mom's house for dinner.

Brad just sighs, it's too hard to explain.

PATRICK (cont'd)

Seriously. You need to make a clean break from her.

BRAD

You don't understand.

PATRICK

Okay, I might never had the kind of relationship you two had, but I saw what just happened. That is not a good situation to be in.

BRAD

It was just a fight.

PATRICK

That wasn't just a fight. That was five years of resentment served right up on our dinner table.

EXT. BACK YARD -- NIGHT

Claire is out smoking. Stuart comes out and lights up one of his own.

STUART

How many times have you tried to quit?

CLAIRe

Three. I hate it.

STUART

I love it.

He smiles at her. She holds it a moment. They go back to smoking in silence.

STUART (cont'd)

It's amazing how one person can get you so angry, isn't it?

Claire sort of gives a half-laugh in agreement.

STUART (cont'd)

With me and my ex-wife it was all about money. I never made enough. She spent too much of it. Then she met someone with more.

CLAIRe

It was that simple?

STUART

No. Of course not.

Claire shakes her head at the sadness of it all.

CLAIRe

You seem so okay about it.

STUART

Now. Not six months ago. Now that the worst part is over, I get to make little lists -- "Ha, I don't have to have a television in the bedroom anymore!" "I can eat pasta again!" "I can actually do what I want for a living!"

CLAIRe

(sadly)

That's so bleak. Underneath every relationship, is it always just two people compromising and resenting each other?

STUART

Doesn't that describe most of the marriages you know?

Claire laughs.

CLAIRe

That's so bleak.

STUART

No. I'm hopeful. I believe you can find someone who let's you be who you are. Give or take a few minor details.

CLAIRe

Yes. But unfortunately the compromises don't happen all at once. They happen slowly, year by year.

STUART

Ah -- spoken like someone who's in
the middle of a break-up...

Claire is brought out of her thoughts by this remark.

CLAIRe

No, I mean. Brad is great. He's
great.

Stuart isn't convinced. Perhaps neither is Claire.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Brad and Patrick are in the living room.

PATRICK

Listen, there's only one thing you
need to do.

BRAD

Please, the last thing I need is
your advice...

PATRICK

Forget about trying to always be
the guy Claire wanted. Be the guy
who doesn't give a shit. Go out
and be a little dangerous.

BRAD

Dangerous?

PATRICK

Yep. Go out and prowl. Meet other
women.

BRAD

Prowl?

PATRICK

Yeah. Like a hungry wolf. Get
that gleam back in your eye.
That's the only way you're going to
get her back.

BRAD

Why do you suddenly care so much
about my social life?

PATRICK

Because Stuart gave me tickets to a big movie premiere and I don't have anyone to go with.

Brad considers this.

BRAD

When did your new friend Stuart give you tickets to a movie premiere?

PATRICK

After Claire went outside, we went to his car and got his cigarettes. He gave me two invites.

BRAD

Is he out back smoking with Claire, now?

PATRICK

I guess.

Brad starts to fume.

BRAD

That guy is unbelievable. Did you see how he looked at her?

PATRICK

Yeah. I did.

Patrick gives Brad a sideways look.

PATRICK (cont'd)

Kind of like a hungry wolf.

EXT. BACK YARD -- NIGHT

Stuart and Claire are still sitting there, smoking.

STUART

Well, think on the bright side. Now, you're free to do whatever you want to do.

Claire doesn't answer that.

STUART (cont'd)

You can go out, you can start acting again, if you want to.

(MORE)

STUART (cont'd)

You can see all those friends that
he never liked that you
conveniently lost touch with...

Claire smiles.

STUART (cont'd)

You can go out with other men.

Claire raises her eyebrows.

STUART (cont'd)

You can go out with me.

Claire turns and looks at him.

CLAIRe

Excuse me?

STUART

Friday night, I have a really great
party to go to. In Tribeca.

Claire laughs nervously.

CLAIRe

You're asking me out with my
boyfriend and his mother in the
next room?

STUART

Ex-boyfriend, right?

Claire half-nods.

STUART (cont'd)

C'mon - it's going to be a lot of
fun.

(sweetly)

And I promise -- you can be
yourself. No compromising.

Claire smiles. But suddenly, it's all too real.

CLAIRe

I'm sorry. I can't. I really
should...go.

STUART

Are you sure?

CLAIRe

(not sure)

Yeah. Yeah.

EXT. TRAIN STATION -- NIGHT

Claire and Brad are sitting on a bench, silent. Claire is smoking.

CLAIRES
I'm sorry.

Brad just looks at her.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
I don't know what happened to me.

BRAD
That was the first time we've
fought like that in our lives.

CLAIRES
I know.

A silence.

BRAD
Did you mean what you said? About
your acting?

CLAIRES
No. I was just -- I don't know.
It just came out.

They are quiet together.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
Did you really mean what you said,
about feeling like I didn't think
you weren't good enough?

BRAD
No. I just...

Neither of them really knows what to say for themselves.

BRAD (cont'd)
...you and Stuart seemed to get
along...and I guess I started
thinking things...

CLAIRES
Oh please...

BRAD

It just made me wonder. I can understand, if you found him attractive. He's handsome. He travels.

CLAIRe

Oh please.

BRAD

But there must be guys that you've met, that you're attracted to.

CLAIRe

Well...sure. But there must be women that you've met that you're attracted to.

Brad doesn't say.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)

(teasing)

Like Linda from the Met.

Brad is busted.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

You so think she's hot.

He laughs.

BRAD

What about Jake?

CLAIRe

Jake? No way. No offense, too sleazy. (beat) But that guy that fixes our computer?

BRAD

Cyrus?

CLAIRe

So hot. But that's not the point.

BRAD

It's not.

CLAIRe

No. None of them are any temptation.

BRAD

No?

CLAIRe

No. Because none of them come even close to being as good as you.

Brad appreciates this.

BRAD

Really? Not even fancy film guy Stuart?

CLAIRe

He's way too arrogant.

BRAD

Are you sure?

CLAIRe

Yes. And he pushed you in a pond.

BRAD

He did. The bastard.

CLAIRe

Asshole.

They both look at each other and smile. They kiss.

BRAD

Patrick's going to be so disappointed.

CLAIRe

Why?

BRAD

He asked me to go out "prowling" with him.

CLAIRe

(laughs)

Prowling?

BRAD

Yeah, for women. Friday night.

CLAIRe

(amused)

Friday night?

BRAD
Friday night.

CLAIRES
(it register)
This Friday night?

BRAD
Yeah. Can you imagine? Me and
Patrick, prowling?

Claire laughs a little too loudly at this.

BRAD (cont'd)
What. You don't think I could pick
up women?

CLAIRES
Of course I think you could pick up
women.

BRAD
Because, no matter how long it's
been, I still have killer game.

CLAIRES
(laughing)
Honey, I'm sure you have mad killer
game.

A long silence. The train arrives.

INT. TRAIN -- NIGHT

They're sitting next to each other.

CLAIRES
I mean, if you want to go with him.
Just for fun. You can.

Another long pause.

BRAD
Really?

CLAIRES
Yeah. If you want to go out
and...buy women drinks...dance...
just for fun.

BRAD
(surprised)
That's okay with you?

CLAIRe

Well, it's not like we're ever
going to be broken up again, right?

BRAD

Definitely. So, two more days?

CLAIRe

Yes. Two more days.

INT. THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART -- DAY

Claire is at her desk, working. She looks up to see her mother, ELLEN, standing there. She knows it could only mean one thing.

CUT TO:

Claire and her mother are sitting at the cafe inside the museum.

CLAIRe

Babs called you?

ELLEN

She was very upset. She thought I knew. Could you imagine how embarrassed I was?

CLAIRe

(sincerely)

Mom, everything's fine, trust me.

ELLEN

Fine? How can you say things are fine?

CLAIRe

You don't have to worry, about any of this, I promise.

ELLEN

Really? I don't have to worry?

CLAIRe

No.

ELLEN

(misunderstanding)

You think that's how easy it is?
You break up with someone you love,
who loves you and you just go out
and find someone new?

CLAIRe

That's not what I meant...

ELLEN

Is that how easy it is for you, to throw away five years with someone?

CLAIRe

No, I was just trying to tell you...

ELLEN

That was always your problem, Claire. You're careless.

CLAIRe

What...?

ELLEN

...always so impulsive. Thoughtless.

CLAIRe

Here we go.

ELLEN

And then you met Brad.

CLAIRe

Yes, I know, I know. Then I met Brad. And everything got better.

ELLEN

You became serious. Grounded. He was the best thing that ever happened to you.

CLAIRe

Mom. Stop it. You make it sound like he saved my life.

ELLEN

He did. He did save your life. He gave you love.

CLAIRe

Well, maybe I feel like there's something missing. Maybe I feel like I've lost something...

ELLEN

Oh, please...

CLAIRe

Maybe I want to start acting again.

ELLEN

(horrified)

You can't be serious...

CLAIRe

I had a whole life before I met
Brad, mom, and if I want to, I can
have a whole life after him. And I
don't need you or Brad or anyone to
tell me what to do. I've got to
go.

Claire walks away. As she goes, we see from her face that
she's not sure what she just argued about.

INT. DALE'S OFFICE -- SUNSET.

Claire is sitting there with an effeminate man, DALE, her
agent. She's a little nervous.

DALE

The minute I heard, I knew you were
going to call. I just knew it.

CLAIRe

(confused)

Well, it's been such a long time...

DALE

Bullshit. You and your boyfriend
break up and suddenly you call your
agent? It's not a coincidence.
You want me to send you out on
auditions again.

CLAIRe

(a pause)

Well...

DALE

Just say it.

CLAIRe

Maybe.

DALE

(nodding his head)

I always knew he was the one who
made you stop.

CLAIRe

No. He didn't. I just knew...he
didn't really like it.

DALE

Well, this is fantastic news.

CLAIRe

Really? Do you think I can just go
back out there and start again?

DALE

Please. It's perfect. You're
heartbroken, miserable, devoid of a
personal life --
(looking her over)
-- and very thin. You must start
acting again.

Claire just looks at Dale, silent.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Claire is putting her make-up on in front of the mirror.
Reflected in the mirror she watches Brad getting ready and
walking towards the door.

Brad joins her and kisses her on the mouth. He looks at her
for a moment.

BRAD

Wow. You look great.

CLAIRe

Thanks.

BRAD

(a little suspicious)
Who are you going out with tonight?

CLAIRe

Alex.

BRAD

Okay...where are you going?

CLAIRe

I don't know. Dinner?

BRAD

Have a great time.

CLAIRES
You, too. Prowl away!

He exits and we stay on her face which loses the smile, and becomes troubled.

BRAD (V.O.)
Every relationship has it's own set
of borders that you should never
try to cross. It seemed Claire and
I wanted to see if we could cross
those borders -- and still come
back.

*
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EXT. TALK TO ME ABOUT LOVE PREMIERE - NIGHT

The Ziegfeld. Media. Screaming fans. Barricades.

Brad meets Patrick out front by the red carpet.

PATRICK
Isn't this cool?

Looking around...

BRAD
It's okay. Why didn't Stuart come?

Patrick shrugs.

PATRICK
Guess he had something better to
do.

Brad looks around. Limos. Screaming fans. Movie stars.

BRAD
(sarcastic)
Better than this?

INT. TRIBECA LOFT -- NIGHT

A phenomenal loft. Five thousand square feet, indirect lighting and exposed brick. This is a cocktail party, filled with beautiful, successful, New Yorkers. Claire is here, with Stuart, standing next to another HANDSOME FINANCIER, and another WOMAN.

CLAIRES
So do you find your investors
internationally as well...?

HANDSOME FINANCIER

I go to New Zealand a lot. That's where most of my contacts are.

CLAIRES

Really?

HANDSOME FINANCIER

-- ever since the Rings movies, they've gotten the film bug. Now they all want to be film producers.

CLAIRES

Really.

HANDSOME FINANCIER

And the investors there - they care about the quality too. They're actually interested in taking risks. Making great films.

Claire just smiles, impressed.

HANDSOME FINANCIER (CONT'D)

But now, Stuart here, makes finding money look easy.

STUART

Now, now...

HANDSOME FINANCIER

Truly, I've seen this guy in action. When he believes in something, when he's passionate -- he can talk anyone into anything.

CLAIRES

(smiling)

Oh, really?

Stuart raises his eyebrows at Claire. She almost blushes.

INT. MARQUEE NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

A huge warehouse of a nightclub. The movie posters of "Talk to Me" of Hugh Grant and JLO are lining the walls.

Patrick and Brad hug the bar. Brad has to shout to be heard.

BRAD

It's really loud in here.

PATRICK

What?

BRAD

It's too loud to talk to anyone.

PATRICK

You don't talk....you get drunk and dance.

Brad accepts that. Takes in the place.

BRAD

I haven't been to a nightclub in years.

PATRICK

It's good for you man, you're getting out there.

Brad looks around. A young, tall man in glitter hot pants, platform boots and a feathery jacket walks by. Patrick and Brad watch him walk by.

PATRICK (cont'd)

Sometimes I feel a little old, but the odds are so much better to meet women here than doing that online shit.

BRAD

Yeah? How many women do you normally meet in a night like this?

Patrick thinks about it for a beat, but doesn't answer.

PATRICK

(ignoring the question)

This is awesome. We need to **prowl** like all the time!

*

INT. LOFT -- NIGHT

Claire and Stuart are now in a different part of the loft, in a deep conversation with four or five other people.

WOMAN #1

It's a risk, his last three films were so dark.

MAN #1

But I think this adaptation would be right for him.

STUART
It's an odd choice.

MAN #1
I know, but I just have this
feeling.

CLAIRES
You know, he actually wrote a few
comedies earlier on.

MAN #1
Really?

CLAIRES
You can rent them. One is called
"The Lovely Rose" that's the
translation anyway, and the other
is called, I think... "Time to Go."

Everyone looks at her, impressed.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
So you're instincts were right --
he can do comedy.

*

MAN #1
(enchanted)
Stuart, who is this woman? You
must bring her around more often.

STUART
(gazing at Claire)
I'd be happy to.

Claire smiles, happily.

INT. MARQUEE NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

Patrick points out a girl with large breasts, blonde hair and
a very, very, tiny t-shirt on, right near the dance floor.

PATRICK
What do you think about that?

BRAD
Besides that she's nine?

PATRICK
I'm going in.

BRAD
You're going where?

PATRICK
(pointing at her)
There...

BRAD
How do you even talk to someone
like that? She's a child.

PATRICK
You just ignore the age thing and
power through. Watch -- and learn.

Patrick swigs down a huge gulp of courage and heads over to
the BLONDE.

PATRICK (cont'd)
Hey.

BLONDE
Hey.

PATRICK
I'm Patrick.

The blonde looks him over.

BLONDE
How old are you?

PATRICK
A stockbroker.

A little louder.

BLONDE
How old are you?

PATRICK
Upper West Side.

Now shouting.

BLONDE
How old are you?

He points over to Brad.

PATRICK
With my friend, Brad.

She walks away. Patrick re-joins Brad. Stands next to him
and looks at the crowd having fun.

PATRICK (cont'd)
(to himself, but loud)
I feel old and ugly!

BRAD
What?

Patrick doesn't reply and stares at the crowd.

INT. LOFT -- NIGHT

Stuart and Claire sit down on a couch, cozily.

CLAIRe
I can't believe it. Everyone here
is so interesting. And nice.

STUART
It's a great party, isn't it?

CLAIRe
It reminds me of when I was in
acting school. Everyone working on
projects, excited about what they
were doing...

STUART
It's great to be around people who
love what they do.

CLAIRe
It is. It's inspiring.

Claire just nods, in agreement. Stuart looks at her,
probing, maybe stroking her hair for a moment.

STUART
So. What do you want to do,
Claire?

Claire doesn't answer.

CLAIRe
You mean -- with my life?

Stuart smiles at her.

STUART
No. With me.

Claire just looks at him, unsure.

INT. MARQUEE NIGHTCLUB - MEN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Brad is peeing in a stall. Progressively, he starts hearing someone banging against the wall of the next stall. He stands still for a few seconds. He realizes someone is definitely having sex in there. Bam bam bam. That sound increases more and more.

Brad leans down to see under the wall of the stall and sees four feet. A man and a woman. Having sex.

He exits the stall and sees his image in the mirror. While the banging continues, other people, much younger than him, enter the bathroom. No one even notices the sound.

After a moment, Brad exits the bathroom. Squeezing among the crowd he joins Patrick, who's now talking to SALLY, an innocent-looking woman.

*

BRAD
I need to leave now.

PATRICK
Brad, this is Sally.

Sally offers her hand. Brad shakes it.

PATRICK (cont'd)
Sally's pregnant.

BRAD
Congratulations.
(back to Patrick)
I need to leave now. I feel like a
total idiot here.

PATRICK
She doesn't know who the father is.

SALLY
It's one of two guys...but neither
of them are worth telling.

PATRICK
She's going to raise it on her own.
Isn't that brave?

Brad regards her. Blank. Doesn't even know how to respond.

BRAD
We're going!

PATRICK

I think I'm going to stay here with
Sally a little longer.

Patrick gives Brad a look like -- don't mess with my rap.

BRAD

(shrugging)

Okay. Then I'm going to go. Good
luck to you, Sally.

INT. 4 WEST 21ST STREET -- NIGHT

Claire and Stuart step into his well-appointed two-bedroom.
She's nervous.

CLAIRe

Wow -- what a great place.

STUART

It's just a rental. Month by
month. Since the divorce. I'm
giving it up soon to move to LA.

Claire is surprised. Maybe disappointed?

CLAIRe

Oh, LA. I didn't know that.

He leads her out onto the

BALCONY

As they take in the view of Downtown. Claire sighs at the
sight of it.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)

And give up all this?

STUART

I love New York, but I have to face
the fact that all the work's in LA.

Claire nods.

STUART (cont'd)

Besides, I like moving around. It
keeps things interesting.

Claire thinks.

STUART (cont'd)
(flirtatiously)
And I like to keep things
interesting...

Stuart leans in and kisses Claire.

CLAIRES
Hey -- you just kissed me.

STUART
Yes, I did. (beat) You're a
beautiful woman, Claire.

EXT. MARQUEE NIGHTCLUB -- NIGHT

As Brad tries to hail a cab, he makes a call.

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.S.) BRAD AND
CLAIRES
Leave a message after the beep!

BRAD
(into the phone)
Hey baby...you're probably asleep.
I'm coming home. I never want to
break up with you again.

VOICE (O.S.)
Brad...?

He turns to see HOLLY, a stunning woman in her twenties,
dressed to the nines. He hangs up the phone. *

Brad doesn't quite recognize her.

HOLLY
Holly...from Tabla. The hostess?

BRAD
(in recognition)
Holly, hi.

HOLLY
You and Claire haven't come in
lately.

BRAD
We've been cheating on you.

HOLLY
No!

BRAD
Surya.

She shakes her head in mock disapproval.

HOLLY
How is Claire?

Brad just lets out a sigh.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
Don't say you two broke up.

Brad thinks for a moment. A big moment. Then -- he nods. It wasn't a big nod, but it was a nod.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
You're kidding.

Brad just shakes his head, sadly, "no."

HOLLY (cont'd)
So now you're hitting Marquee?

BRAD
My cousin dragged me.

HOLLY
Bachelorette Party.

BRAD
It's horrible in there.

HOLLY
Painful.

Impatient, the cabbie looks over to Brad.

BRAD
Where do you live?

HOLLY
Chelsea.

As Brad opens the door.

BRAD
Get in.

Holly smiles...and does.

INT. 4 WEST 21ST STREET -- NIGHT

Claire and Stuart sit on the couch, kissing. It's starting to get hot and heavy. Claire stops him.

CLAIRe

Wait. Wait.

STUART

What...

CLAIRe

Brad and I...

STUART

Broke up. You don't have to feel guilty about enjoying yourself Claire.

He starts kissing her again. She lets him.

CLAIRe

But...

More kissing. She stops him.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

I can't do this. I'm sorry. It's too soon.

STUART

It's not too soon. It's never too soon to have fun.

CLAIRe

It's not that it's...

STUART

Claire. Do you remember the first Gulf War?

CLAIRe

What?

STUART

Doesn't it seem like yesterday? Well it was fifteen years ago, did you know that? In fifteen years I'll be fifty five and it will be way too late for any regrets. We will get there faster than we think.

CLAIRe

So that's why we should be making
out on your sofa?

STUART

Yes. Life is too short. We have
the right to try and be happy every
moment of our lives. Happy.

He kisses her.

STUART (cont'd)

Inspired.

More.

STUART (cont'd)

Excited.

And more. Things begin to really heat up. There may be some
undressing, until

CLAIRe

I can't do this.

She collects herself.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

I can't do this. I really like you
a lot, but...I should never have
come here, I'm sorry.

STUART

Why, what's so wrong?

CLAIRe

Brad and I didn't really break up.

STUART

What?

CLAIRe

No. We told people we did. It's
hard to explain. It was
just...sort of...a game.

STUART

How is lying to your friends and
family a game?

CLAIRe

I'm not quite sure. I know it
sounds crazy.

(MORE)

CLAIRe (cont'd)
But...I said it to one person and
then... everyone found out...

STUART
So why didn't you stop it?

CLAIRe
I don't know -- there was just
something fun about pretending...

STUART
Pretending that you broke up?

CLAIRe
I know, it doesn't make any sense.

STUART
Well, I'm impressed. You really
are a great actress.

Claire is ashamed. She grabs her purse.

CLAIRe
I'm sorry.

She pecks him on the cheek.

STUART
I really did have a good time.

And she goes...leaving Stuart there alone.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Brad and Holly are traveling in the cab.

HOLLY
And he chews up everything but you
should see his face when I try to
yell at him. It's priceless.

BRAD
I've always wanted a dog but
Claire's allergic.

The cab stops.

HOLLY
(she interrupts him)
This is it.

He looks out the window.

HOLLY (cont'd)
Want to meet him?

He looks back at her.

INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Newly renovated. Small. Clean. Studio.

Rilke, Holly's puppy, attacks Brad with kisses.

She pours two glasses of wine, hands him one and sits.

HOLLY
Good boy Rilke! I named him after
my favorite poet.

BRAD
He's awesome.

She takes a big sip. Turns to him...

HOLLY
Can I confess something?

BRAD
Sure.

HOLLY
I loved it when you and Claire
would come in.

He smiles.

HOLLY (cont'd)
Even though I was really jealous of
Claire.

BRAD
Really?

She confirms.

BRAD (cont'd)
Holly, you're insanely beautiful,
you have to know that.

HOLLY
It's not that. It was the way you
treated her. The way you looked at
her. And I'd catch little sound-
bites of your conversations when I
sat other people.
(MORE)

HOLLY (cont'd)
You always seemed so interested in
what the other had to say. I don't
know if I'm ever going to find
that.

She leans forward and gives him a kiss. Just a little one on
the corner of his mouth. Then...

HOLLY (cont'd)
You guys were really in love. And
trust me, I seat forty couples a
night...I know it when I see it.
And it's rare.

He holds her look. She kisses him again. He pulls away and
says...

BRAD
I have to go.

Genuinely disappointed.

HOLLY
Why?

BRAD
Because you're right.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Brad is in the cab. He's looking out of the window,
troubled.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Claire cries silently.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- STAIRS -- NIGHT

Brad is running up the stairs of the apartment building. He
reaches his main door, opens and enters. Claire is in the
living room. She's been crying.

BRAD
Baby...

CLAIRe
Honey...

He hugs her tightly.

CLAIRe (cont'd)
It was a big mistake.

BRAD
Stupidest idea we've ever had.

They start kissing each other.

CLAIRES
I got so scared...Please say we'll
always be together.

BRAD
We'll always be together. Forever
and ever.

CLAIRES
No more games. No more lying.

BRAD
No more lies. Us. This. It's too
important.

CLAIRES
That's right. It's too important.
It's not a joke.

BRAD
No baby. It's not. Let's just
start over again, okay?

CLAIRES
Yes. Please. A new start.

They fall all over each other, kissing. Perhaps a little
desperately.

INT. BRAD APARTMENT -- NIGHT

We reveal Brad and Claire having fun in the bath tub.

They're tickling each other, laughing and spilling water all
over the place.

BRAD (V.O.)
It seemed like Claire and I made it
home in one piece. Stronger than
ever.

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*

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Brad is eating his cereal. Claire just watches him, as she
stand by the sink. She comes over and kisses him on the
head.

CLAIRe

Alexandria and Patrick said they'd
be at the party around 8.

BRAD

Great. We'll tell them all, there.

She sits down.

CLAIRe

I can't wait.

BRAD

Me neither.

They kiss.

INT. ROOF PARTY -- NIGHT

A large gathering of their friends again, on a rooftop.
Claire and Stuart go through the crowd. They see Alexandria
and Patrick talking to each other. Alexandria waves to them.

CLAIRe

Hi.

ALEXANDRIA

Hi - What are you two doing here
together?

CLAIRe

Well...

Just then, Stuart comes over, carrying drinks for Patrick and
Alex.

STUART

Hey!

BRAD

Hi, Stuart.

CLAIRe

(nervous)

Oh hi -- what are you doing
here...?

PATRICK

I called him up -- thought he might
want to go out and do some
prowling.

CLAIRe

Oh...

PATRICK

So what are you guys doing here?

BRAD

Well, Claire and I have an announcement to make.

Claire clings to Brad's side.

BRAD (cont'd)

We're getting back together.

Claire gives a quick glance to Stuart.

*

ALEXANDRIA

Really?

BRAD

We decided to give it another go.

Through a plastic smile.

ALEXANDRIA

That's so great.

PATRICK

Alright! That's awesome!

Patrick hugs Claire. And then Brad.

PATRICK (cont'd)

I knew you two couldn't bear to be apart! I knew you guys were the real deal!

As Stuart takes a sip of his beer...

STUART

Of course they never actually broke up...

Claire's eyes go wide.

ALEXANDRIA

What?

STUART

They lied. They told everybody they broke up...but they didn't. Isn't that right, Brad?

Confused, Brad glares at Claire.

BRAD
How does he know that?

STUART
She told me.

Claire glares at Stuart.

CLAIRe
You shit.

Incredulous...

BRAD
Why did you tell him? When did you tell him?

ALEXANDRIA
I don't understand.

STUART
They were pretending.

PATRICK
You guys never broke up?

Back to the question --

BRAD
Claire --

CLAIRe
Okay. I went to a dinner party with Stuart.

Brad pulls away -- shocked.

BRAD
You what?

CLAIRe
Nothing happened.

STUART
We kissed.

CLAIRe
Like for a second.

BRAD
(furious)
Are you fucking kidding me?

Claire reaches for Brad but he pushes her hand away.

CLAIRe
I couldn't do anything with him.
That's why I told him we weren't
really broken up.

BRAD
And I'm supposed to believe that?!

STUART
That's all actually true.

ALEXANDRIA
(to Claire)
Why would you lie about something
like this? To your friends? To
me?

PATRICK
(to Brad)
You let your mother think you guys
broke up. Was that whole fight at
the table an act? Some like freaky
role-playing shit to spice up your
relationship?

Brad, back to Claire.

BRAD
You lied to me. To my face.

CLAIRe
(to Brad)
It's not what you think...

ALEXANDRIA
(hurt; to both of them)
I can't believe both of you. Why
would you lie to us?

CLAIRe
(to Alex)
I'm sorry, there was just something
great about hearing the truth...
what people really thought of us.

ALEXANDRIA
(angry and hurt)
Well, if you want to know the
truth, Claire, I slept with Brad.

Brad dies inside.

CLAIRe
(in disbelief)
You what?

Now, people at the party are noticing a commotion.

BRAD
It was a long time ago. Before we
met.

CLAIRe
When was it?

ALEXANDRIA
When I was dating Thomas.

CLAIRe
(shocked)
Why didn't you tell me?

ALEXANDRIA
We weren't as good friends back
then. And by the time we were, it
seemed a weird thing to bring up.
"Oh by the way, I slept with your
boyfriend."

CLAIRe
I can't believe it. You two slept
together? You two saw each other
naked and...and had sex...and you
never told me?

BRAD
You went out with him this week and
didn't tell me!

CLAIRe
She told me that she thought you
were controlling!

BRAD
Controlling?

ALEXANDRIA

Claire!

(to Brad)

I didn't mean it. I was just
trying to make her feel better.

BRAD

Well, Patrick said you turned me
into a flabby housecat!

*
*

CLAIRe

What?

PATRICK

He's lying. A hundred percent.

BRAD

I'm out of here.

CUT TO:

Brad is walking through the crowd on the roof. Claire is following fast right behind him.

CLAIRe

I can't believe you kept that from
me all those years. Making me look
like a fool!

BRAD

I made you look like a fool? Do
you think I really believe you just
kissed him?

CLAIRe

I did!

BRAD

Right. And how many other guys
have there been?

People are starting to look over as they fight and walk.

CLAIRe

What are you talking about? I
never cheated on you! Ever! I
made a mistake, I'm sorry.

BRAD

What am I supposed to believe? A
week ago the Claire I knew wouldn't
even consider kissing a guy that I
hated.

CLAIRe

Well, a week ago I thought I was in
love with a guy who hadn't slept
with my best friend!!

Brad walks to an elevator.

BRAD

I can't trust you! How can I be
with someone I can't trust?

Claire gasps in pain. The elevator door opens. He gets in.

CLAIRe

What are you saying?

BRAD

I'm saying go. Go to your new
boyfriend. You two deserve each
other.

CLAIRe

Brad!!

The elevator doors close. Leaving Claire...shattered.

EXT. ROOF PARTY -- NIGHT

*

Claire crosses the roof, troubled and upset. She's back
where the fight started. She picks up her bag that she left
there. Stuart is still there. He comes up to her.

CLAIRe

I left my bag here.

She turns around to go. She turns back.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

Why would you do that? Why would
you tell everyone?

STUART

Because. It was obvious. Nobody
gets engaged and then pretends to
break up unless they're seriously
unhappy.

Claire takes this in.

STUART (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I just ripped the band-
aid off for you.

CLAIRES
Am I supposed to thank you?

Stuart softens.

STUART
(sweetly)
No. I did it for purely selfish
reasons.

Claire walks away.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Brad is just walking. Angrily. He hails a cab.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Claire walks along the street for awhile, thinking.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Brad is sitting in the back, deep in thought, looking out the
window. He looks up and sees he is passing right in front of
Tabla Restaurant.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

The cab stops a half a block away. Brad gets out. He walks
up to Tabla. He looks through the window, and sees Holly
hostessing. He takes a moment to watch her, and then turns
away. Just as he does, Holly sees him.

Brad walks down the street. Suddenly he hears:

HOLLY (O.S.)
Brad - is that you?

He turns around and sees Holly standing there -- looking
beautiful.

INT. SUBWAY -- LATE NIGHT

Brad is in an empty subway car staring at nothing.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Claire sits on the couch, smoking.

Brad heads in. She follows him with a glance, for a few
seconds, in silence.

CLAIRES
Where have you been?

Brad doesn't answer.

Brad still doesn't answer.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
Please. Tell me.

BRAD
Claire...stop. Please.

She takes a new angle.

CLAIRES
(gently)
Why didn't you ever tell me you had
sex with her?

BRAD
What would have been the good of
you knowing? It would have just
made you uncomfortable.

CLAIRES
Because it was the truth.

BRAD
(a little bitter)
Well, maybe there's such a thing as
too much honesty.

CLAIRES
No. I don't want to believe that.

Brad doesn't know what to say.

CLAIRES (CONT'D)
(now crying)
I'm sorry about Stuart. I'm so
sorry. I don't want to lose you.
Please.

He sits down on the sofa.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
All I want is for us to be
together. That's all I want.

Brad brushes back her hair...wipes away her tears.

BRAD
Shhh...it's okay.

She's shaking like a little girl. He squeezes her tighter.

BRAD (cont'd)
You're not going to lose me.

CLAIRES
I'm not?

BRAD
No. No. It's going to be okay.

CLAIRES
Thank God....

BRAD
It's okay...

CLAIRES
(frightened)
We're still engaged, aren't we?
Do you still want to marry me?

BRAD
Yes, yes, I still want to marry
you.

She looks up at him with big, crying eyes.

CLAIRES
Really?

BRAD
Yes.

She hugs him. For a long time. They break apart. Just when
everything's peaceful...

CLAIRES
Where **were** you tonight? *

BRAD
Claire...

CLAIRES
What?

BRAD
Please... *

CLAIRe

Why?

BRAD

Because it's not... Let's move
forward.

*

CLAIRe

Okay. But first tell me what
happened tonight.

BRAD

Nothing happened.

Claire looks at Brad. Her entire demeanor changes.

CLAIRe

Oh my God. You just lied to me. I
just saw it.

BRAD

What? No...

CLAIRe

Is this one of those times when
it's better not to know the truth?

BRAD

Stop it.

CLAIRe

No, I want to know the truth!

BRAD

No, you don't!

Claire gasps at the meaning of that. She suddenly calms
down.

CLAIRe

(very calm)

Okay. Okay. Please, tell me what
happened and I won't be angry. I
promise. I'll understand. I just
need to know the truth. I can't
move on unless I know what
happened. I can't be in the dark
again.

(beat)

Did you **have sex with someone**
tonight?

*

*

BRAD
(a pause)
Yes.

Claire starts screaming.

CLAIRe
Ahhh!

She slaps him.

CLAIRe (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Who? Who? *

BRAD
You don't know her! *

CLAIRe
I don't know her? I don't know
her? What are you talking about? *

BRAD
You wanted this! You wanted all of
this!! *

CLAIRe
How could you do that! How could
you do that!! Are you a monster?
Is that what you are?

BRAD
This is all your fault. You
trapped me into this. You did
this!

CLAIRe
Don't you dare blame me! Don't you
dare! You couldn't wait -- could
you? To have your freedom. You
fucked someone else! You fucked
someone else!!! You bastard!!!

BRAD
"Just one more day! It'll be fun!"
And looked what happened! Are you
happy? Are you? One week
destroyed five years of our lives.
FIVE YEARS.

CLAIRe

(at the top of her lungs)
WELL THEN I GUESS THOSE WEREN'T A
VERY IMPORTANT FIVE YEARS, WERE
THEY? Claire and Brad, happy
couple. Perfect couple. We're so
lucky. We're such bullshit!
You're bullshit.

She's slapping him. She calms down and just starts crying.
She gets more composed and sits on the couch.

BRAD

I'll go to Katonah until we figure
out what to do with the apartment.

CLAIRe

No. You take this place. I don't
want to be here. I don't want to
be here!

Claire weeps even harder at this.

CLAIRe (CONT'D)

I can't believe this. How did this
happen?

Misery. Absolute misery.

EXT/INT. STREET. CAR - DAY.

Brad exits their building. He stands in the middle of
street. Pacing, he kicks something in frustration.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRe'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Claire is crying on their bed, grabbing the pillow. Desperate
and speechless.

INT. PATRICK'S APARTMENT - DAY.

Brad enters Patrick's apartment. He looks terrible. He's
pacing all around.

PATRICK

What happened?

BRAD

(shaking, quiet)
We broke up.

Patrick looks at him. Doubtful.

PATRICK
For real this time? Or is this
still pretend?

Brad shakes his head.

BRAD
Real.

PATRICK
What happened?

BRAD
I slept with **someone else.**

*

PATRICK
What? **Who?**

*

BRAD
**It doesn't...it was a
mistake...Claire and I. We were
happy. Just a week ago...Just a
week ago.**

*

*

*

PATRICK
Sit. I'll get you a beer. Don't
go crazy on me. Okay? Don't go
crazy.

BRAD
I won't. I won't.

Brad follows Patrick into the kitchen. He's pacing like a
crazy person. While Patrick is looking in the
refrigerator...Brad takes a jar of pills off the counter and
pours them all in his mouth...

PATRICK
Dude -- it's vitamin C!

Brad spits them out.

PATRICK (cont'd)
Shit. You're going crazy on me.
Just calm down. Breathe.

Brad tries to calm down. Patrick tries to get all earnest.
He puts his arms on Brad's shoulders, just like last time:

PATRICK (cont'd)
You have to remember -- this break-
up is the best thing that could
ever have happened to you.

BRAD

Ah!!

And Brad runs out the door.

EXT. STREET - DAY.

Brad crosses the street and stops in front of a cab which hits the brakes and stops only a couple yards from him. Brad's expression is transfixed. People on the street stare at him. He walks away and disappears in the crowd.

INT. CLAIRE'S MOTHER'S SUBURBAN HOME -- DAY

Claire is sitting at the kitchen table, like a little girl in trouble.

CLAIRe

It was a game. We were just pretending.

Ellen is standing there at the counter, cleaning, upset.

ELLEN

You pretended to break up? Why would you do that? Why?

CLAIRe

(tortured)

I don't know.

Her mother turns her back to Claire, starts wiping or scrubbing.

ELLEN

Careless. Foolish.

CLAIRe

Stop it.

ELLEN

You didn't deserve him anyway. If you had to pretend you didn't want him -- you didn't deserve him.

*

CLAIRe

(an outburst)

Will you please stop it! For once! I feel bad enough, don't you see that?

Ellen is quiet.

CLAIRe (cont'd)
 (crying)
 Can you for once, comfort me?
 Please. Just once. Make me feel
 better.

Ellen sits down next to her daughter.

ELLEN
 (gently)
 What do you want?

A pause.

CLAIRe
 I don't know. That's the problem.

ELLEN
 There's been way too many voices in
 your head. It's time you only
 start listening to yours.

Claire's mother just looks at her. She takes Claire's hand.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brad lies on the floor of his apartment. He is holding a framed photograph in his hand, which we can't see.

INT. ELLEN'S HOUSE/CLAIRe'S OLD BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Claire is lying on her old bed. Staring up into space.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

The phone rings. He answers.

INTERCUT: INT. ELLEN'S HOUSE/CLAIRe'S OLD BEDROOM

CLAIRe
 (gently)
 Hey.

Brad sits up.

BRAD
 Hey.

A long pause.

CLAIRe
 How are you?

BRAD
Bad. How are you?

At this, Claire almost smiles.

CLAIRe
Bad.

A long pause.

BRAD
(tentatively)
So...?

Another long pause.

BRAD (CONT'D)
If we're both feeling bad...

Claire sits up now. But doesn't say anything. We think this could be a peace offering. Finally:

CLAIRe
I just don't know how you could have done it, how could you have slept with

BRAD
(overlapping)
Claire..

CLAIRe
(overlapping)
It just wasn't like you. It was cruel.

BRAD
(overlapping)
Are we going to keep going over this...

CLAIRe
(overlapping)
I'm sorry. But I just keep picturing you **with some women...**

BRAD
It's not like you were innocent here. You lied to me.

*

CLAIRe

(now angry)

...You know, I don't need to get into this with you.

BRAD

Well, then why did you call?

CLAIRe

I don't know, I thought I missed you, I thought we could...but forget it. Forget it.

Claire hangs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRAD OFFICE. BATHROOM

*

Brad is washing his hands in the bathroom of his office. He gets approached by Jake.

JAKE

You know what you have to do. You have to go and have sex with somebody else as soon as possible. Only thing that's going to do it.

INT. BABS HOUSE - DAY.

Brad is leaning his forehead on the glass of his window. Outside it's raining. His mother is next to him.

BABS

It takes time. If she's yours she'll be back. If she won't come back it's because she'd never been yours.

Brad looks at her.

BABS (cont'd)

I'm sorry, that's what my mother always told me.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM --MORNING.

FROM ABOVE Brad and Claire are lying in bed together. Spooning. He moves his body in, to get even closer.

CLOSE-UP on Brad. He wakes up. Next to him is the pillow he has been clutching. He shudders in pain.

INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT. *

Holly opens the door and finds Brad. He tries to smile. *

INT. STUART'S APARTMENT - NIGHT *

Claire now lies on Stuart's bed, smoking a joint.

STUART
What if he comes back to you?

Claire looks at him for a second, exhales the smoke.

CLAIRe
He won't come back.

EXT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - DAY. *

Brad is in the bed with Holly. She's leaning her head on his * chest.

BRAD
She won't be back. *

DISSOLVE TO:

CLAIRe (V.O.)
So....I tried to move on. We both
tried to move on. And time went
by.

The camera tilt down toward the tunnel of the park. The season changes. It's now winter. Some snow on the borders of the curb.

EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY.

It's Christmas time. Snowing. Claire walks among the crowd. She looks lost in her thoughts.

CLAIRe (V.O.)
I thought I was feeling better.

INT. STUART APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire is getting dressed. We hear Stuart's voice.

STUART (O.S.)
Are you ready?

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM.

Holly opens the door. He is in his robe, shaving. *

*

HOLLY
(not so amused)
Brad...

BRAD
I'm almost ready.

She looks at him, annoyed.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

The windows are frosted. It's still snowing outside.

A party is in progress. A very cheerful Patrick with his arm-draped around Sally...who's now very pregnant and showing.

They are talking to a few people in a group.

PATRICK
We're expecting in a month.

Sally just beams.

WOMAN #1
How wonderful. How long have you
two been together?

SALLY
Five months.

Now Patrick beams. Everyone does the math in their head and are confused.

CUT TO:

Brad and **Holly** are at the party. They immediately see
Patrick and Sally.

HOLLY
Oh my God, look at you!

She touches Sally's belly. Brad is distracted.

HOLLY (cont'd)
You look beautiful. How was your
last sonogram?

SALLY
Great. Everything's perfect.

HOLLY
Brad -- doesn't she look amazing?

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

BRAD
(roused)
Yeah. Sally -- you look great.

HOLLY
(still touching her belly)
I can't imagine what it must feel
like.

Brad looks at **Holly** -- and really takes in this picture. He
looks away for a moment and sees Claire with Stuart. Their
eyes make contact, only for a couple seconds. **Holly** keeps
talking to Sally.

*
*
*
CUT TO:

Claire is now pouring some wine in her glass at the buffet.
Brad joins her from behind.

BRAD
Hey.

CLAIRe
Hey.

Awkwardness.

BRAD
It's been awhile.

CLAIRe
Six months. Almost seven actually.

They stand together in silence.

BRAD
So. How are you?

CLAIRe
Great. And you?

BRAD
Great.

Claire looks at him.

CLAIRe
Are you happy?

BRAD
Why?

CLAIRe

Nothing. It's just, I don't know.
If you're happy, that makes me
happy.

BRAD

Well. Then be happy. Because I'm
happy.

CLAIRe

Great.

BRAD

Are you happy?

CLAIRe

Yeah. I am.

BRAD

(sarcastic)

Well, great then.

CLAIRe

(defensive)

What? What did I say?

BRAD

"Are you happy?"

CLAIRe

What's wrong? It was a simple
question.

BRAD

Not really. "Is this an open bar"
is a question. "Are you happy" is
a connotation.

*
*

CLAIRe

A connotation.

BRAD

Yes.

CLAIRe

(getting annoyed)

Of what?

BRAD

Of not being happy.

CLAIRES
(getting really annoyed)
You're insane.

BRAD
Like you were so worried that I was unhappy. Why would you assume I was unhappy?

CLAIRES
(can't take it)
I don't know, because your girlfriend looks really boring? *

BRAD
Well, if we're judging our happiness on the quality of our mates - then you must be fucking suicidal.

CLAIRES
Really, you're still going to be mad at him? Do you want to bring up the pond while you're at it? *

BRAD
I don't know. Do you want me to bring up the lying while I'm at it? *

CLAIRES
(pissed; hurt)
You know. We don't need...Let's just stop. Okay? *

BRAD
Fine.

She walks away. Then she walks right back up to him. Speaking very intensely, but quietly.

CLAIRES
(tears in her eyes)
Is this how it's going to be. Is it?

BRAD
What?

She almost can't speak.

CLAIRe

Five years? And now we're just two
people saying nasty things to each
other at a party?

Brad softens.

CLAIRe (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Some people break up. And they're
nice. They're...they're...

BRAD

Amicable?

CLAIRe

Yes. Out of respect. For all
the...time.

Brad wants to touch her arm, to comfort her, but he doesn't.

BRAD

I'm sorry. You're right.

CLAIRe

(a pause)

I'm sorry, too.

There's a truce.

CLAIRe (cont'd)

Because we did have nice times.

BRAD

We did.

CLAIRe

We did.

A long pause. Brad looks at her. Smiles.

BRAD

Name one.

CLAIRe

What?

BRAD

Let's be nice. Name one.

Claire looks at him. This is odd.

BRAD (cont'd)
(good-naturedly)
Come on. Think of it as a game.

Claire smirks at him. She thinks.

CLAIRES
(thinking)
Okay...that time at that weird
place in Sheepshead Bay...?

It was a funny memory. Brad laughs. He thinks.

BRAD
(an easy one)
Our trip to Montreal.

CLAIRES
An obvious choice, um...when we got
thrown out of that fish and chips
store?

Brad laughs. He thinks,

BRAD
(looking straight at her)
Okay.
(mischievously)
Your uncle's sailboat. 4th of
July.

She blushes. Awkward pause, she can barely speak.

CLAIRES
(softly)
That was nice.

Then she thinks...

CLAIRES (CONT'D) (cont'd)
(sweetly)
When you proposed.

They both look at each other and smile.

BRAD
Thank you. For all the wonderful
times.

CLAIRES
Thank you...for making me -- a
better person.

The mood is broken when Stuart comes over.

STUART

Hey, Brad, how ya doing?

BRAD

Great. Great.

STUART

You guys just catching up?

BRAD

Yeah. Just...talking.

STUART

Did Claire tell you?

BRAD

No.

STUART

We're moving to LA, next week.

BRAD

(surprised)

Oh. Great. Congratulations.

STUART

We heard you and **Holly** moved in together.

*

BRAD

Yeah. We did.

STUART

Well, good luck to you.

BRAD

Yeah, you, too.

Brad and Claire look at each other, before they both part.

INT. BABIES R US -- DAY

Alex and Brad are pushing a cart around this large baby store.

HOLLY

We should definitely get them a really big present, right?

Something like a stroller or a bassinet...

*

Brad just nods, absent-mindedly. He connects eyes with a baby sitting in another cart...who just stares at him.

*

HOLLY (cont'd)

Only certain people can keep the attention of a baby.

Brad snaps out of it.

BRAD

What?

*

HOLLY

*

*

It's true. It has something to do with the symmetry of their faces.

BRAD

Babies always stare at me.

She leans over and kisses him.

*

HOLLY

*

*

You're going to make a great father.

He keeps pushing the cart.

*

HOLLY (cont'd)

*

*

What about that thing that you put babies on when you're changing their diapers?

Brad just looks at Alex.

CUT TO:

BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- DAWN

The sun is barely up. Brad is in his running clothes.

*

HOLLY

*

(half-awake)
What are you doing?

CUT TO:

EXT. RESERVOIR -- DAWN

Brad is out running. Hard.

DISSOLVE TO:

PALM TREES AND A VIEW OF LOS ANGELES.

EXT. LAUREL CANYON HOME - SUNSET

Contemporary, white and impressive. A beautiful warm Southern California evening. A party by the pool. The Los Angeles basin a carpet of lights below.

As Stuart introduces Claire to various people.

STUART

Claire this is Simon Wenders... he wrote "Pass Break." Claire just moved out here from New York.

Claire shakes his hand.

CLAIRe

Nice to meet you.

INT. BRAD'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Holly is stirring something on the stove while she's talking on the phone. It's snowing outside.

HOLLY

I'm serious. He refused to give me my money back. (beat) He ruined it. Absolutely ruined my shirt, and wouldn't admit it. He said it came in like that. Can you believe it?

Brad just stares at her.

HOLLY (cont'd)

I know. But who has the time for small claims court, you know? How pathetic is that. It would serve him right though.

She sees Brad staring at her.

HOLLY (cont'd)

Hold on.

She pulls away from the phone.

HOLLY (cont'd)

What?

BRAD

Nothing. I'm just watching you.

HOLLY *

Talking on the phone and cooking dinner?

BRAD

Yeah.

HOLLY *

(teasing)

Does it turn you on?

He half-smiles, unsure, then heads into the other room.

EXT. GYM -- NIGHT

Brad is punching a punching bag, very hard and with great determination.

EXT. L.A. CLUB - NIGHT. *

Different party Stuart introduces Claire to...

STUART

Wendy Fines... she produced "The Illusion Of Control."

WENDY wears glasses and has short black hair.

CLAIRe

Hi. I loved that film. It's fantastic to meet you.

WENDY

Well then it's lovely to meet you.

STUART

Claire just came from New York.

CLAIRe

(good-natured)

That's my big credit. "Claire from New York."

WENDY

(nicely)

Are you an actress? *

CLAIRe

Yes. How did you know? *

WENDY

Easy guess. Oh, Sorry! *

As Wendy gets pulled away, Claire turns to Stuart who now notices that something is wrong with her.

STUART

What?

CLAIRe

Nothing...

She walks away. He looks at her for a moment. Then he turns toward the other friends he was chatting with.

She walks to the border of their patio. A wonderful view of the city of Los Angeles. A terrible sense of loneliness in her face.

EXT. WEST SIDE HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Brad is biking hard. He slips on the road. Wipes out completely.

INT. STUART AND CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stuart is sleeping, mouth open. Claire's awake and observes him silently.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY

Brad and Alex sit with Patrick and Sally on a blanket. Sally is breast-feeding the baby. Brad has his arm in a cast.

HOLLY

Can you believe it? Bike-riding.

PATRICK

You are out of control, man.

BRAD

Just don't want to get soft.

HOLLY

Ever since we got together. It's been amazing.

Brad doesn't say anything.

HOLLY (cont'd)

(proudly)

He's so determined. So motivated.

Brad just smiles.

INT. STUART AND CLAIRE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT *

Claire can't sleep. *

INT. LAUREL CANYON HOUSE. BATHROOM - NIGHT

She goes into the bathroom. She looks into the mirror. *

EXT. BRAD APARTMENT. BATHROOM - NIGHT.

Also Brad is staring at his image reflected in the mirror.

He leans his forehead on the mirror and stays like that for a few seconds, still.

INT. STUART AND CLAIRE'S HOME -- KITCHEN TABLE -- MORNING

Stuart are sitting in the kitchen eating breakfast. Claire looks at him, unable to eat.

STUART

What's the matter? *

Claire smiles. *

CLAIRe

(brightly)

Nothing. *

Stuart doesn't believe her. He looks at her closely. *

STUART

Are you unhappy here? *

Claire shakes her head. *

CLAIRe

(lying)

No. *

Stuart stops eating. *

STUART

(out of the blue)

Do you miss him? *

Claire looks at him, surprised. *

CLAIRe

(lying)

No. Why would you ask that? Of course not. *

She walks away from the table.

EXT. VENICE BEACH -- DAY

Claire walks along the beach towards the ocean. She sits down in the sand. She is having a hard time breathing. She watches two surfers come in with a wave. She sees that it's a man and a woman. They laugh together. And she begins to cry, unable to stop.

CUT TO:

EXT. VENICE BEACH BOARDWALK - DAY

Claire walks down the boardwalk, crying. The wave of people -- all laughing, talking, eating -- are walking towards her. She is alone in a sea of people.

INT. CHURCH - DAY.

A PRIEST.

PRIEST
You may now kiss the bride.

And they turn. We see them. It's Patrick. He lifts Sally's veil and kisses her.

Find Brad. He's The Best Man. He looks over to see Holly. *
She smiles at him, filled with love.

INT. BRAD AND CLAIRE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Brad is sitting at the kitchen table, eating Rigatoni and sauce.

HOLLY *
So Sunday, we're going to have dinner with my mom and dad -- they're in town -- remember?

Brad looks at her and nods. He finally says it.

BRAD
I can't do this.

HOLLY *
What?

By Brad's expression she knows what he means. Tears start to form in her eyes.

BRAD

I just don't want this to go on any longer if I don't...

He stops himself.

HOLLY

Love me. Say it. If you don't love me.

Holly starts to cry. This kills Brad.

BRAD

I'm sorry. I just have to be honest.

Holly starts pacing. Shaking her head. Crying. Almost hitting herself.

HOLLY

Don't. Don't be. I knew. I knew. Shit!

She keeps pacing.

HOLLY (cont'd)

I'm such an asshole! Shit. I knew. I knew how you felt.

She sits down in a chair and starts to cry.

HOLLY (cont'd)

But I loved you so much. I was trying not to notice.

She looks at Brad and starts to cry again.

HOLLY (cont'd)

Shit! Shit!

INT. STUART AND CLAIRE'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM - DAY.

STUART

What? Did I not support you? Did I not encourage you? Give you your space?

She looks at him.

CLAIRe

You did everything right.

Claire looks at Stuart.

CLAIRES (CONT'D)
I just want to go home.

*

Stuart just sighs. He knows he's defeated.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MORNING.

It's spring. Brad sits on a bench. He watches the crowd in front of him.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY.

Claire is in the plane, looks out of the window.

CLAIRES (V.O.)
After going so far away, I was
trying to find my way home.

*

*

*

INT. CAB - DAY

*

Claire is on her way into the city.

*

CLAIRES (V.O.)
After having realized what a thin
line two people in love have to
walk in order to stay together...

*

*

*

*

EXT. CENTRAL PARK -- DAY

Brad is running and running, like his life depended on it.

CLAIRES (V.O.)
I wondered if two people can ever
be happy enough not to need to test
their own borders.

*

*

*

*

INT/EXT. STARBUCK'S - DAY.

*

Brad sits with Patrick, Sally and their baby on a bench.

SALLY
Brad...

He looks at her.

SALLY (cont'd)
Have you noticed how she can't stop
looking at you? It's unbelievable.

CLAIRES (V.O.)
 And I wondered if there was any way
 not to be consumed by the routine,
 that is so natural in any
 relationship.

Brad looks at Patrick. Behind his shoulders, over the
 window, he sees Claire. He locks eyes with her. Patrick
 knows exactly what Brad is seeing.

PATRICK
 (smiling)
 You can thank me later.

Brad realizes he's been set up. Looks at Patrick. Then back
 to Claire.

He takes the hint and stands up. Crosses the cafe, followed
 by the camera. Walks out. She's there, waiting for him.

CLAIRES
 But they were questions I hope to
 be able to answer one day.

INT. STREET -- DAY

Brad walks up to Claire. His expression shows he's filled
 with questions. She is nervous. So is he.

CLAIRES
 I came back two weeks ago.

A long pause.

BRAD
 How was it?

CLAIRES
 (lying)
 Great.

BRAD
 (lying)
 Good.

CLAIRES
 Actually. It was awful.

BRAD
 You weren't happy there?

CLAIRES
 No. I wasn't.

A long, long beat.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
I was happy here.

They look at each other.

CLAIRES (cont'd)
It's the only thing I know for
sure.

They embrace.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE NEBAGAMON - SUNSET.

Pure country. A still lake. Trees line the shore.

It's placid and peaceful.

Claire and Brad sit in a rented fishing boat.

No rumors, no lies, no secrets, no confessions, no little games...

Just total silence... that they bask in.

Brad and Claire sit in their boat. Floating with the current. A boat glides by with an old couple in it. Maybe eighty years old. He's rowing and she's looking at him lovingly.

And they row on their way.

Their boat keeps floating away, in silence. Brad and Claire sit quietly watching the old couple.

BRAD
We'll still be together at their
age?

A pause.

CLAIRES
It's up to us.

We widen to reveal the entire lake with both Brad and Claire and the old couple in the distance. Silence, still water.

FADE TO BLACK.

END CREDITS