

SITUATION COMEDY

Written by

Cat Vasko

WME
Simon Faber
Solco Schuit

INT. TV SCREEN - EXTREME CLOSE UP

A pinpoint of light expands into abstract, pixelated colors. Scenes from old sitcoms move across the screen, SHIFTING and SNAPPING as if controlled by a remote, while CLEMENCE JANIKOWSKI, 29, speaks. Slurring a bit but on a roll.

CLEMENCE (V.O.)

The thing is that the problems I have aren't cute. They're not, like, you know, I have a degrading job but my boss is hilarious, or I meet the perfect guy online but he turns out to be sixteen or married or a libertarian or whatever.

We hear the THWOP of a cork emerging from a bottle, then wine POURING AND SPLASHING -- a lot of it. This girl is *drunk*.

CLEMENCE (V.O.)

But you know what I always loved most about sitcoms?

We're slowly closing in on the screen. Colors stretch and warp, become meaningless pointillism.

CLEMENCE (V.O.)

When you knew one of the actors had, like, a drug addiction or an eating disorder or whatever. Like she'd start to get really skeletal and look like she was about two minutes from death. I loved that.

We pull away again to reveal

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Clemence, a plain-looking dishwasher blonde, sits across a table from her date, an appalled and baffled CUTE NERD. She empties the last of a bottle of wine into her glass.

CUTE NERD

Why would you love something like that? That's horrible.

CLEMENCE

Hello? Have you even been listening to me?

CUTE NERD

Yes.

CLEMENCE

I loved it because the minute she walked on the set it didn't matter. All her problems were cute again. What happened to all the wine?

CUTE NERD

You drank it.

CLEMENCE

You did.

CUTE NERD

No, you did.

She glances around, embarrassed, as if he's causing a scene.

CLEMENCE

You're making this really awkward.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

JOSH FITZGERALD (FITZ), 30, plays video games in the dark. He and Clemence share a dirty, squalid box of an apartment: stained carpet, chipped walls, vertical blinds.

The front door abruptly KICKS OPEN to reveal Clemence standing unsteadily in the hall.

CLEMENCE

Honey, I'm home.

She SLAMS THE DOOR. Fitz doesn't look away from his game.

FITZ

(working the controller)
Strike out?

CLEMENCE

No. I'm across town drinking champagne in his bathtub right now. He's serenading me on the harpsichord. It's magical.

FITZ

(eyes on screen)
That's great ... Oh, fuck yes, I got the Premium Bloodshed badge! How you like the taste of dick in your mouth, GunnerBoy41?

INT. CLEMENCE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Clemence is passed out on top of the covers, still dressed, SNORING. Her television BLARES A FITNESS INFORMERCIAL:

HOST (ON TV)

I hope you're sitting down because what comes next is shocking. You're about to see her completely transformed.

Clemence SNORTS, rolls over. The TV audience GASPS IN SHOCK.

INT. COFFEESHOP - MORNING

Clemence waits behind the counter, hair unbrushed, no makeup, as a YUPPIE in his forties YAMMERS ON HIS PHONE.

YUPPIE

Keep it up. He'll change his tune soon enough, believe me. All right, dude, I gotta get my latte on. Yeah. G's up.

He slides his phone into his pocket. To Clemence:

YUPPIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, lemme get a venti macchiatto, half-caf, with sugar-free whip and caramel syrup. And double up on the cardboard sleeves. Yours are too thin and I keep burning my hand.

CLEMENCE

I'll be sure to bring that up at our next board meeting.

YUPPIE

Thank you.

INT. FITZ AND CLEMENCE'S - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Clemence sits at a battered table with a sketchpad and pen.

INSERT - CARTOON

A caricature of the douchebag yuppie customer going on and on about his latte. Underneath, Clemence adds in block script: "WHEN THE APOCALYPSE CAME, DEREK WAS THE FIRST TO DIE."

FITZ (O.S.)

That's a good one.

Clemence jerks around, startled. Sees Fitz dressed to kill in a hat, striped sweater and jeans.

CLEMENCE

Why do you look like Waldo?

He glances down.

FITZ

Shit.

CLEMENCE

Big date?

FITZ

Just some guy who hit me up online.

CLEMENCE

Let's see.

Fitz holds out his phone. Clemence examines the screen, sees a perfectly cute guy staring back at her.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

He looks like he collects Star Wars memorabilia.

FITZ

His grammar is perfect.

CLEMENCE

I bet he goes to conventions. I bet there are YouTube videos of him covering the imperial march on the theramin. Lose the hat.

FITZ

How about you? Big plans for the evening?

SMASH TO:

INT. LAUNDROMAT - EARLY EVENING

Clemence sits in a molded plastic chair, cradling her sketchpad. Her eyes rise as an ANGRY OLD WOMAN shuffles by, pushing her laundry cart. She glares as Clemence recoils.

Clemence draws. BROAD, FAST STROKES. She's good at this.

A BUZZER SHRIEKS. She loads clothes into an industrial dryer.

Back at her seat, she continues to draw. The bell on the door JINGLES as three good-looking BEST FRIENDS, a BOOKISH GUY, PREPPY BRO and GORGEOUS GIRL, come in together.

Clemence quickly shields her work from their view, but they're ignoring her anyway. As they pass:

PREPPY BRO

I've never understood why girls get everything monogrammed. What's that about?

GORGEOUS GIRL

Right. Like you've never been too hungover to remember your own name.

They LAUGH RAUCOUSLY before disappearing among the machines.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - A LITTLE LATER

The best friends KID AROUND in the background as Clemence puts the final touches on

INSERT - CARTOON

Clemence has drawn a sad, huddled cartoon version of herself. She adds the caption:

CLEMENCE (V.O.)

"It was as if she'd missed school the day everyone learned how to be happy and could never quite catch up again."

She holds the drawing away from her face. Assesses. Just then, her phone CHIMES. Onscreen, a text from someone named LIAM: "I DEFINITELY DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU TONIGHT."

She HASTILY TAPS a response: "I DEFINITELY WON'T COME BY."

EXT. LIAM'S HOUSE - EVENING

Clemence sucks in her stomach, scrunches her hair. Finally, she KNOCKS, waits. MUSIC plays from somewhere inside.

Suddenly the door HURLS OPEN to reveal LIAM, 33, Clemence's fuck-buddy. He's holding a tumbler of scotch and smoking a cigarette. Clearly pleased with the image he presents.

LIAM

Come in, come in, come in.

INT. HALLWAY

The music GROWS IN VOLUME as Clemence follows Liam inside. Black and white photos line his walls, including one especially treasured image: Ernest Hemingway talking to Fidel Castro, framed as if it's a family portrait.

INT. KITCHEN

An overflowing ashtray sits on the table next to a vintage typewriter. Liam strides about excitedly, sloshing his drink.

LIAM

I'm really onto something tonight.
I mean, I'm really, really cookin.

CLEMENCE

I can't wait to hear it.

LIAM

Okay. Here goes.

He picks up a sheet of paper.

LIAM (CONT'D)

"Later we sat on the back porch with juice glasses full of vodka. Leticia wore a simple black dress. Her legs were long and thin. Saul watched her watching me. We were tired from the sun and the salt of the sea. 'You glorious, glorious bitch,' Saul said suddenly."

CLEMENCE

Wait, which one is Leticia?

LIAM

The Brazilian nanny. Saul left his wife for her in part two, remember?

CLEMENCE

Oh. Right.

LIAM

But now she's in love with the narrator. Liam.

CLEMENCE

That's your name.

LIAM

It's a meta thing. Don't worry about it.

(continuing to read)

"I remembered the warm, wet feeling of her cunt around my hand. I remembered the papaya smell of her sweat. Something exotic, from a place I knew I could never return."

He lets that bit of brilliance land.

CLEMENCE

Wow.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Liam thrusts into Clemence from behind. His scotch glass nearby on the nightstand. She's game, but less than thrilled.

LIAM

Now my hands are exploring the hills and valleys of your body. Roaming over your topography.

INT. BATHROOM - AFTER

Clemence stands at the sink in her underwear. Pulls on her belly fat, frowns. CALLS OUT to Liam in the next room:

CLEMENCE

I didn't mean to interrupt you when you were on a roll.

LIAM (O.S.)

I needed a break anyway.

INT. BEDROOM

Liam finishes his scotch in bed, smoking another cigarette, while Clemence dresses slowly. Stalling.

LIAM

You know, if you wanted ...

CLEMENCE

(hopeful)

Yes?

LIAM
 You could take out the trash on
 your way out.
 (grins)
 I won't miss you.

INT. LIAM'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

As Clemence heads out, trash bag in hand, she notices Liam's fat billfold on a telephone table. Slides out a twenty, then two. Then, hearing him MOVING in the bedroom, BOLTS.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

A rectangle of light in the darkness as Clemence opens the door stealthily. Suddenly a light FLICKS ON. Clemence SHRIEKS and drops her laundry basket. Clothes fly everywhere.

FITZ
 Please tell me you were anywhere
 but with him.

CLEMENCE
 Were you waiting up for me? What
 are you, my dad?

FITZ
 I just got home. It's the time of
 the night when people who made sex
 mistakes come home.

CLEMENCE
 (picking up clothes)
 My laundry took longer than I
 thought. I forgot the bleach.

FITZ
 You'll need it.

She scratches at her leg through her jeans.

FITZ (CONT'D)
 Just don't get "accidentally"
 pregnant, okay? Knowing him it'll
 end with your body in a dumpster
 behind a liquor store.

She reaches down and pulls a lacy thong from the leg of her jeans. Fitz's expression screams YOU'RE AN IDIOT.

CLEMENCE
 I knew that was there.

INT. COFFEESHOP - MORNING

Clemence TAPS OUT A TEXT under the counter. To Liam: "I HAD A TERRIBLE TIME LAST NIGHT." Hesitates, then sends.

GIRL (O.S.)

Excuse me?

Clemence glances up to see a BRATTY GIRL in her twenties. The head of a French bulldog pokes up from her purse.

BRATTY GIRL

Are these scones gluten-free?

CLEMENCE

If you want them to be.

BRATTY GIRL

Are you sure? Because my herbalist says that if I'm exposed to even a molecule of gluten I'll become perilously inflamed.

CLEMENCE

We use a two-hundred-year-old English recipe adapted just for us by a NASA food scientist.

BRATTY GIRL

Really?

CLEMENCE

He was the first person to win a Nobel Prize in glutenomics.

INT. COFFEESHOP - BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clemence shoulders through the door holding an empty tray.

CLEMENCE

Jeff? I just sold out of scones.

Her manager, JEFF -- early 40s, linen shirt, turquoise jewelry, ponytail -- pops out from his office.

JEFF

Really?

Clemence SHAKES scones from a Costco box onto the tray.

CLEMENCE

I remembered the talk you gave us? About upselling?

JEFF

Don't forget dust some powdered
sugar on those so they look fresh.

As he returns to his office, she checks her phone. No reply.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Clemence sits at the table putting the finishing touches on

INSERT - CARTOON

A caricature of the coffeeshop girl blathering about gluten
while her bulldog stares implacably into the distance.

Caption: "THE TRANSCENDENTALIST ... AND HIS HUMAN."

SCAN. CLICK. TYPE. Clemence uploads the comic to her blog.
Steps back, surveys her work on the screen. Checks her phone,
frowns: her text to Liam is still unanswered.

INT. CLEMENCE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Clemence lies in bed with her laptop. The TV BLARES sitcom re-
runs. She's CLICKING DULLY when suddenly she bolts upright.

CLEMENCE

Shit!

INT. FITZ'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

FRANTIC BANGING ON THE DOOR as Fitz JOLTS awake:

CLEMENCE (O.S.)

Wake up! I'm having an internet
emergency!

Fitz SLAMS into his dresser as he staggers to the door. Hurls
it open to find Clemence frantic outside, holding her laptop.

FITZ

Jesus, Janikowski. What'd you do
with the other three horsemen of
the apocalypse?

CLEMENCE

I got ten *thousand* hits overnight.

FITZ

So? What do you normally get?

CLEMENCE

Ten.

FITZ

Let me see that.

She shows him the screen.

FITZ (CONT'D)

They're all from the same referrer.

(clicks)

There you go.

Onscreen, an LA Weekly piece with the headline "THE TEN BEST BLOGS YOU'RE NOT READING." Fitz reads:

FITZ (CONT'D)

"The Bored Barista's wry cartoons are as sharp a chronicle of LA life as we've seen. If only--"

INT. COFFEESHOP OFFICE - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Jeff finishes:

JEFF

"If only her identity were known to her loyal readers."

He SLAPS his issue of the paper down on his desk.

CLEMENCE

I didn't think I *had* loyal readers.

JEFF

Then why put it online? Why not just keep it to yourself?

CLEMENCE

That's a pretty philosophical question when you think about it. I mean, if a tree falls in the forest, and no one is there to--

JEFF

Maybe you thought this was so brilliant it'd be an injustice to hide it from the world. Is that it?

He spins his monitor around. Onscreen ...

INSERT - CARTOON

A typical Clemence caricature -- of him. He's looming over stacks of boxes labeled PASTRIES 100 COUNT. Caption: "JEFF ALWAYS REFUSED TO SHARE HIS CAFE'S SECRET CROISSANT RECIPE."

Clemence can't help giggling. At his unamused expression:

CLEMENCE

You don't think that's just a little bit funny?

JEFF

Aside from the damage you've done to the business I've worked for years to build--

CLEMENCE

Okay. You don't.

JEFF

For you to violate my trust in this way, after I put food on your table, a roof over your head--

As he speaks, he RAPS EMPHATICALLY on the table.

JEFF (CONT'D)

When I think of all the nights I lost sleep worrying about whether I'd be able to make payroll--

CLEMENCE

"Make payroll"? You drive a BMW.

JEFF

You can pick up your last paycheck at the end of the month.

CLEMENCE

C'mon, Jeff. I said I was sorry.

JEFF

No you didn't.

INT. GROCERY STORE - LUNCHTIME

Clemence is being rung up by an exhausted female CASHIER.

CASHIER

Okay, that'll be twenty-one-seventy.

CLEMENCE

That's impossible.

Clemence peers at the screen above the register.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
These Lunchables are ten for ten.

CASHIER
Where'd you see that?

CLEMENCE
Back there. It was marked.

CASHIER
It's not in the system.

CLEMENCE
Go see for yourself.

CASHIER
Sure. I'm free to wander around the store whenever I want, if some random white lady tells me to.

CLEMENCE
Can't you just help me out? Please? I'm poor. I eat these things for dinner every night. Dinner.

CASHIER
Oh yeah? I have two boys at home. You know how much food little boys go through in a week? You want me to feel bad for you? Last night for dinner I had a can of corn. And it was *expired*.

CLEMENCE
Jesus.

CASHIER
And I'll tell you something else. I'm not allowed to leave this register for four hours at a time. You got that? Last week I bled straight through my favorite pair of jeans because I couldn't take a break to change my tampon. To *change my fucking tampon*.

Her soliloquy has drawn the attention of the man in line behind Clemence.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
(to the man)
You got a fucking problem?

Clemence is distracted by the sight of a CUTE COUPLE. Viewed from behind, they look like a catalog photo, his beefy arm encircling her delicate shoulders. In his other hand he hoists a bag with leafy greens and a baguette poking out.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
 (to Clemence)
 Are we done here?

The man's wallet SLIPS from his pocket; he turns to retrieve it. We are punched in the gut by the realization: it's Liam.

Clemence looks sick as he collects his wallet, unaware of her presence, and puts his arm around his MODEL date. They exit.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
 Hello?

CLEMENCE
 Forget it. I'm not hungry anyway.

She drifts to the door as if in a trance. From behind her:

CASHIER
 Bitch, were you listening? I can't just go re-shelve all this shit!

EXT. PARKING LOT

Clemence trails them to Liam's funky vintage MG, spying from two cars over as they put the groceries in the boot.

MODEL
 ... won't be over until at least eight-thirty.

LIAM
 And you're sure you wouldn't rather be at home with me.

He nuzzles her neck. Clemence clutches the back of the car she's standing next to as if about to faint.

MODEL
 (pouty)
 You know how cranky I get when I skip SoulCycle.

Liam moves toward the driver's side. Clemence squats to hide as his car SPUTTERS TO LIFE. People stare as they walk by.

A LOUD, IDLING ENGINE SOUND forces her to turn around, only to see Liam hanging out the window of his car.

LIAM

Clem?

CLEMENCE

(turning away)

No. It's someone else.

LIAM

Clem, I know that's you.

She stands, dusts herself off. Smiles bravely.

CLEMENCE

Liam! Hello! I dropped my purse.

LIAM

Were you *following me*?

CLEMENCE

Yes, but only from in there to here. Not since this morning or anything. Nothing weird.

Liam's date is agape.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

I realize the fact that I even thought to say that makes it seem like that's exactly what I've been doing--

MODEL

Who is this?

LIAM

Clem, meet Fiona. My girlfriend.

Liam's expression dares her to say something. Clemence is about to, but suddenly crumples, losing her nerve.

CLEMENCE

Sorry for bothering you.

Liam gives her one long last look of disgust, then PEELS OUT, leaving her standing in a cloud of exhaust.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S - EARLY AFTERNOON

Fitz continues his video-game vigil as Clemence KICKS open the door, SLAMS it shut behind her.

CLEMENCE

Honey, I'm home.

FITZ

It's one in the afternoon.
What happened to work?
(realizing)
Oh.

CLEMENCE

Yeah.

He pauses the game.

FITZ

Did they at least give you some
kind of severance?

CLEMENCE

Yes. The coffeeshop where I slung
croissants for minimum wage gave me
a golden parachute. You know, to
quell concerns among stockholders.

FITZ

What the fuck, Janikowski! How are
we going to pay our fucking bills?

This is not the sympathetic reaction Clemence was expecting.

CLEMENCE

Excuse me?

Fitz jumps off the couch and paces. Agitated.

FITZ

How could you be so fucking
irresponsible?

CLEMENCE

You haven't worked in six months!

FITZ

Because the restaurant closed down!
I couldn't control that. You had a
job and you stuffed it down the
garbage disposal! Fuck, Clemence.
What the fuck are you going to do?

CLEMENCE

Well, right now I'm going to do my
laundry. My only job interview
outfit has been at the bottom of my
hamper since 2009. But thanks for
the support.

Fitz blinks as, O.S., Clemence SLAMS the door to her bedroom.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - AFTERNOON

The bank of windows behind Clemence reveals a grim afternoon. The JINGLING of the bell over the door alerts her to the entrance of the best friends from the other day. She stops what she's doing to watch. The girl is MID-ANECDOTE:

GORGEOUS GIRL

It was beyond humiliating.

PREPPY BRO

Chin up. Everybody goes on a bad date once in a while.

GORGEOUS GIRL

Or in my case, once a week.

The two guys LAUGH APPRECIATIVELY. Bookish puts an arm around the girl -- affectionate, comforting. Preppy ruffles her hair. She rests her head on Bookish's shoulder for a moment.

Clemence gazes on with envy as they pass by. An extra-wistful look aimed at Bookish. But, as always, no one notices her.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - A WHILE LATER

Clemence watches from behind her sketchpad as the friends pack up their laundry. Looks over her work so far.

INSERT - CARTOON

It's a caricature of the three friends: huge smiles, shiny hair. Cartoon Clemence watches from behind them, wide-eyed.

Clemence roughs in a caption:

CLEMENCE (V.O.)

"They seemed to have wandered in from some very different world. She wondered if she could follow them back there."

As the friends walk by on their way to the door, Clemence quietly grabs her bag, slips the sketchpad inside.

GORGEOUS GIRL

So I said, they're not that bad. I use them to unwind before bed.

BOOKISH GUY

You didn't know the difference
between bath salts the drug that
makes you eat people and bath salts
you use in an actual bath?

GORGEOUS GIRL

Did you?

BOOKISH GUY

I do now.

They leave. Clemence slips off her seat to follow them.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Clemence follows them at a distance down a street that has
seen better days. They're oblivious, continue BANTERING.

GORGEOUS GIRL

... and he never called me again.

BOOKISH GUY

Well, don't give up just yet. Text
him and let him know you'd like to
have him over for dinner.

LAUGHING, They open a gate in a tall wall, let it SWING SHUT
behind them. Clemence grabs it just in time, steps into ...

EXT. COURTYARD

[From here forward, underlined scene heads let us know we're
in a world ever so slightly different from our own ...]

A LUSH COURTYARD hidden from the street. Greenery and river
rocks encircle a BURBLING fountain. The most shocking change
is the light: suddenly the sun is shining, warm and yellow.

As we watch Clemence taking in this golden-hour wonderland,
we realize she's transformed. Instead of her former rumpled
self, she has perfect hair and makeup, is thinner, taller.

She doesn't realize anything has changed. The group presses
on, laundry baskets in hand, and climb stone steps to a
walkway. They enter the first apartment, marked 201.

EXT. WALKWAY

Their door is slightly ajar. Clemence peers through the crack at a cavernous apartment with gleaming floors. Tall windows frame a stunning city view.

Clemence pushes the door open further. It CREAKS LOUDLY.

GORGEOUS GIRL (O.S.)
Did you guys hear that?

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

The preppy guy, otherwise known as HARRIS, late 20s, jock-ish and confident, appears in the living room.

HARRIS
No one's here. Did you stay up all night watching Nancy Grace again?

GORGEOUS GIRL (O.S.)
Don't bag on N-Gray. Without her I would have no idea how dangerous everything is for white girls.

Clemence pushes the door open all the way, revealing herself.

CLEMENCE
Hi. Sorry.

The gorgeous girl, ANNIE (wide-eyed, naive, ditzy), enters.

ANNIE
You must be our new neighbor!

HARRIS
We've been wondering when they'd finally get that place rented. Welcome to the building. Harris.

CLEMENCE
Clemence. But I'm actually not ...

Her voice TRAILS OFF as she notices her reflection in a big decorative mirror. Astonished, transfixed by what she sees.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
(staring)
... sure what's happening here.

The sound of RAUCOUS LAUGHTER, DEAFENINGLY LOUD, echoes through the apartment. Clemence is startled.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
 What the hell was that?

But neither Annie nor Harris seems to notice.

ANNIE
 Let's see your place!

EXT. WALKWAY

Clemence follows Annie to the next door down, marked 202.
 It's just a few feet from their door.

CLEMENCE
 These apartments seem a lot smaller
 from the outside.

HARRIS
 It's this Andalusian design. It
 plays tricks on the eyes.
 (grins)
 I'm an architect.

ANNIE
 And I'm a wedding planner. What do
 you do, Clemence?

Clemence follows them into ...

INT. APARTMENT 202 - LIVING ROOM

Apartment 202 is a perfect girl's apartment. Immaculately
 decorated, flowers on every surface, shelves full of books.

CLEMENCE
 This actually isn't--

She spots a row of framed cartoons on the wall. They're
 clearly hers, but have been clipped from real publications.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
 --isn't something I like to brag
 about, but I'm a cartoonist.

CANNED LAUGHTER ERUPTS again. Clemence jolts. Harris doesn't
 seem to hear it, yet waits until it TAPERS OFF to ask:

HARRIS
 How'd you get that gig?

CLEMENCE
 I just sort of wandered into it.

ANNIE

Why don't we let her settle in
before we interrogate her?
(to Clemence)
Come by for a drink later. The guys
are going out to watch the game.
It'll be just the two of us.

HARRIS

You sound like you're trying to
lure her into the back of a van.

LAUGHTER. This time Clemence watches Harris and Annie
closely. Notices that they don't seem to hear anything.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

(to Clemence)
She's just excited because she's
sick of us.

ANNIE

I wouldn't say that.

HARRIS

You wouldn't?

ANNIE

Well, not to your face.

They exit to UPROARIOUS LAUGHTER. Clemence wanders into the

INT. BEDROOM

Where she finds an impossibly fluffy bed, a nightstand with
beautifully stacked books, and a gleaming high-end computer
on the desk. Framed photos of new, improved her on vacation,
at a wedding and so on decorate every surface.

Suddenly she realizes:

CLEMENCE

My laundry. Sh--

A shrill BLEEP fills the room. Clemence covers her ears.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

What the fu--

BLEEP.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

I can't say fu--

Insistent: BLEEEEEEP.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
So I can't say sh--

PUNISHING NOW: BLEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
What about all my clothes?

A CREAKING SOUND alerts her to a closet, the door to which is ever so slightly cracked. She opens it, revealing an immaculately organized walk-in full of clothes, bags, shoes. She shuts the closet door and wanders into

INT. BATHROOM

The bathroom has a clawfoot tub and a big mirror. Clemence inspects her new, prettier face for a moment before sliding down her jeans to pee. She sits next to the sink, where the toilet should be, but PLUMMETS ASS-FIRST to the floor.

CLEMENCE
What the fu--

BLEEEEEEEP. She stands and examines the place where the toilet should be. There's a tank covered in artfully arranged products, but it goes straight to the floor. There's no bowl.

Rubbing her tailbone, she passes into

INT. BEDROOM

She tries to turn on the computer. The monitor remains black. Finally she checks behind it and discovers: no wires.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Clemence approaches the framed cartoons. Traces the signature on one with her finger:

CLEMENCE
Clemence Jane. Who's Clemence Jane?

Fully freaked out now, Clemence grabs her bag and walks quickly to the door. Checks: there's no lock.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE GATE

As Clemence bolts through the gate, she turns dull instantly.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Clemence enters to find Fitz waiting on the couch, his game BLARING. The squalor of curb-surfed furniture even more depressing than before. He pauses the game.

FITZ

I'm really sorry about what I said earlier.

CLEMENCE

Can this wait? I have to pee.

FITZ

Let me make it up to you. I'll cook us up a feast and we'll have an old-fashioned TV marathon. Anything you want. Made to order.

Clemence surveys the room. Visibly disgusted.

CLEMENCE

Actually, I have plans.

FITZ

Who with?

CLEMENCE

Annie.

FITZ

Who's Annie?

CLEMENCE

You know, my friend Annie. God, Fitz, I talk about her all the time. Annie.

FITZ

I guess I've been kinda preoccupied with my own shit lately.

CLEMENCE

Don't beat yourself up over it.

EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

Clemence steps through the gate slowly. Watches herself transform inch by inch. Fascinated, she draws her body in and out, back and forth. Bright to dull. Dull to bright.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

Clemence enters to SHOUTING and the TV at FULL VOLUME. A crowd of ATTRACTIVE GUYS are on the couches watching basketball. Annie approaches Clemence, apologetic.

ANNIE

The guys decided to stay in.

Score! The guys CHEER RAUCOUSLY, CLINKING their beers. Harris peels off from the group and approaches the girls.

HARRIS

It's the girl next door! Sorry we ruined your lady date.

ANNIE

He's nervous about us hanging out.

HARRIS

I know what girls are like when they get together ...

CLEMENCE

Don't worry. Neither of us has seen it, so we can't talk about it.

More LAUGHTER. Clemence is pleased.

ANNIE

I know a place we can go.

HARRIS

Have fun walking the streets, my little ... streetwalkers.

CLEMENCE

Or we could go with the second nickname you come up with for us.

The LAUGHTER is ECSTATIC. Clemence can't get enough.

EXT. COURTYARD

Annie pushes open the gate. Clemence stops short.

ANNIE

What's the matter?

CLEMENCE

I'm afraid. Of rapists.

ANNIE

It's a pretty safe area.

CLEMENCE

Yeah but I read this article that said a woman our age is more likely to get raped than married. Well, not so much an article as an e-mail forward from my aunt in Michigan.

Clemence is radiant at the LAUGHTER that rewards her joke.

ANNIE

You'll be safe with me.

Clemence follows her through the gate to the

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE

Clemence quickly pats herself down, discovers that she's still her new and improved self.

CLEMENCE

Guess so.

INT. WINE BAR - NIGHT

Clemence and Annie sit at the bar alone with glasses of wine.

CLEMENCE

This bar is well lit. And quiet.

ANNIE

Is it?

CLEMENCE

You know, there's actually something I really need to--

But she's interrupted by Annie grabbing her shoulders.

ANNIE

Oh my god. My ex.

CLEMENCE

Where?

ANNIE

He just walked in. What do I do? I do not want to talk to him. Oh god. He's coming over here. Oh god.

CLEMENCE
What happened between you two?

ANNIE
It's a long story.

CLEMENCE
He dumped you?

ANNIE
Okay, it's a short story.

WILD LAUGHTER! These two are on a roll.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Here he comes. Pretend we're having
a meeting so he'll go away.

CLEMENCE
What?

ANNIE
Just be a hysterical bride.

A handsome man, MICHAEL, approaches from behind Clemence.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Michael! Hi! I'm just in the middle
of a business meeting.

CLEMENCE
Yes. We are meeting regarding
business.

Anticipatory GIGGLES from the audience.

MICHAEL
Hi, I'm Michael.

CLEMENCE
I'm hysterical.

Annie frantically gestures for Clemence to kick it up a notch
as Michael leans in to order a drink.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
If I can't have Swarovski-encrusted
tulips imported from Geneva, my
perfect day will be ruined!

Michael raises an eyebrow.

ANNIE

There are some local florists who could do an amazing--

CLEMENCE

Don't you know who my father is?

ANNIE

We should go, Ms. ... Nordstrom.

Annie begins dragging Clemence out by the arm. As they move toward the door:

CLEMENCE

I am Astrabella Nordstrom, and this business meeting is over!

Clemence HURLS HER WINEGLASS at Michael's feet.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Clemence and Annie burst out the door, LAUGHING HYSTERICALLY. Clemence steadies herself on Annie's arm.

ANNIE

You think he bought it?

CLEMENCE

Are you kidding? Stuff like that only works on ...
(realizing)

TV.

But Annie is already walking away.

EXT. WALKWAY - LATER

Annie and Clemence mount the stairs. At the top:

ANNIE

See you tomorrow?

CLEMENCE

Yeah. Maybe. I'm not sure.

Annie goes inside. Clemence cracks open the door to 202 and peeks in: as perfect as before. She shuts the door. PACES.

The door to 201 CREAKS OPEN. It's the BOOKISH GUY: NATHAN. He's thirty-ish, handsome, a little rakish-seeming.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
Oh. Hello. I'm just out here for
... regular reasons.

LAUGHTER. Nathan appears surprised, impressed.

NATHAN
So you're the new neighbor Annie
won't stop going on about.

CLEMENCE
Clemence. Nice to meet you.

NATHAN
Nathan.

He pulls a pack of cigarettes and lighter from his pocket.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Hope you don't mind.

CLEMENCE
You know, some studies say smoking
might actually be bad for you.

LAUGHTER! Nathan eyes her as he lights up.

NATHAN
That so.

CLEMENCE
Yeah, but I think it's all a
scientist conspiracy. Like climate
change. Or evolution.

This time Nathan LAUGHS with the laugh track. Clemence beams.

NATHAN
What's the tattoo?

He points to a symbol on her exposed midriff. She blushes.

CLEMENCE
It's a Japanese character.

NATHAN
What's it mean?

CLEMENCE
"Drunk teenage idiot."

NATHAN
Yeah. I've got one of those.

He rolls up his sleeve to reveal an embellished black circle around his upper arm.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
It's tribal. The tribe being
Florida trailer trash.

More LAUGHTER.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
It's nice, having someone else
around here with a sense of humor
about themselves.

CLEMENCE
Most of the time it's more of a
sense of despair.

No laughter this time. She's disappointed, but he grins. A definite spark between them.

NATHAN
Either way, I'm glad you're here.

He goes inside before she can respond. As his door shuts:

CLEMENCE
Me too.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Clemence tiptoes across the darkened room.

INT. BATHROOM

She pees for a long time. Thinks she's done. Pees some more.

INT. HALLWAY

Clemence attempts to carry a suitcase down the hall quietly, but loses her grip. It rolls into the wall with a THUD.

As she grabs it, Fitz emerges from his bedroom, sleepy.

FITZ
Going somewhere?

From behind him, in the dark bedroom, a male voice CALLS:

DAVID (O.S.)
Fitz?

CLEMENCE

Is there a guy in there?

FITZ

(shutting the door)

I don't go into hibernation just because you disappear for a week. I have a life outside of you, believe it or not.

CLEMENCE

What do you mean, a week?

Clemence pulls out her phone to check the date and sees that the battery is dead. Shakes off her confusion:

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

So do you like him?

FITZ

He could suck the rust off a tailpipe if that's what you mean.
(off her reaction)
You asked.

Clemence starts down the hall, dragging her suitcase.

FITZ (CONT'D)

Any idea when you'll be back?

But she doesn't respond. The front door SHUTS behind her.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - BEDROOM - LATER

Clemence unpacks her meager things: a few books, art supplies, underwear. Passes into the

INT. BATHROOM

And finds the tub overflowing with suds. A full glass of wine sweats on the edge.

CLEMENCE

You're the boss.

She strips eagerly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - MORNING

The sun rises over Clemence's new home.

INT. CLEMENCE'S BEDROOM

BLARING MUSIC jolts Clemence out of bed! It seems to be coming from the apartment next door.

EXT. WALKWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Clemence finds the door to 201 WIDE OPEN. As she enters, the theme music WINDS DOWN, perfectly timed to her arrival.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

Clemence enters to see the three roommates seated around a table covered in breakfast foods. They're cheerily passing cereal boxes and BANTERING.

[From here on out, LAUGHTER FOLLOWS THE GANG'S JOKES as a rule, unless otherwise noted.]

HARRIS

(to Clemence)

Come on, get in here, we've got way too much food.

(to the rest)

Anyway, I wanted to impress her, so I took her to this Thai place. It got a C from the health department so you know it's authentic.

Annie GROANS.

CLEMENCE

Who were you trying to impress?

HARRIS

The junior accountant at our firm finally agreed to go out with me.

ANNIE

Harris can't pick restaurants. It's like a disability.

NATHAN

Yes, I can't imagine why the government doesn't send him checks.

HARRIS

I'm taking her out again tonight. Do you think she'll like Ethiopian?

NATHAN

You're taking a date to a place
where you eat with your hands?

ANNIE

Why don't you just do it here?
It'll be intimate. Romantic.

HARRIS

Really? It's only the second date.

CLEMENCE

She means dinner. Do dinner.

HARRIS

I'm not much of a cook.

ANNIE

I'll cook.

NATHAN

Yeah right. You can't even make
birthday cake from a box.

ANNIE

They should say you need measuring
cups and a bowl. That one's on
Duncan Hines.

CLEMENCE

I'll help. We'll do it together.

NATHAN

And what am I supposed to do while
this Kitchenaid de Bergerac
scenario goes down?
(after a beat)
Cyrano de Bergerac? Anyone?

HARRIS

Nathan's a recovering drama major.

NATHAN

I take it one play at a time.

ANNIE

You can find somewhere else to be.
You're always disappearing anyway.
Clemence, you in?

CLEMENCE

What should we make?

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S - HALLWAY - LATE MORNING

Clemence BANGS FRANTICALLY on Fitz's bedroom door. Finally, he opens it, bleary-eyed.

FITZ
Can I help you?

Clemence, remembering her bladder, doubles over.

CLEMENCE
Oh, fuck.

MOMENTS LATER

Fitz talks to Clemence through the bathroom door.

FITZ
Let me make sure I have this straight. Some guy told some girl he'd cook her a romantic dinner. You told him you'd cook and he could pretend he'd done it. So now you want me to cook so you can pretend you did it, so he can pretend he did it.

CLEMENCE (O.S.)
Can we talk about this when I'm done?

INT. LIVING ROOM

Fitz and Clemence sit on the couch.

FITZ
Everyone's perfect when you first get to know them. I'm sure they have flaws like everyone else.

CLEMENCE
They do everything together!

FITZ
They're codependent.

CLEMENCE
They're always making jokes!

FITZ
Codependent and annoying.

CLEMENCE
But I'm different with them too.

FITZ
Different how?

CLEMENCE
Funny. Pretty.

FITZ
You're funny and pretty with me.

CLEMENCE
No. I mean really.

Fitz rolls his eyes, gets up and walks away.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
So is that a hard no on the
cooking, or do you want to--

His bedroom door SLAMS.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
Shit.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Harris and PAULINE (blond, pretty) sit at the table with bowls of some kind of pasta in front of them. As she chews, she struggles to control her reactions.

PAULINE
This tastes ... different from
anything I've ever eaten before.

HARRIS
(mouth full)
Thank you.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - KITCHEN - SAME

Clemence's kitchen is completely destroyed. She and Annie stand in the middle of the insane mess.

CLEMENCE
What now?

ANNIE
Harris said he'd text us with the
all-clear.

(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)
 (sniffs)
 Uh-oh. What smells?

Annie begins picking up ingredients and sniffing them, then dropping them. Seizes a bag of shredded cheese, triumphant.

CLEMENCE
 I just picked that up today,
 there's no way it's--

Annie flips the bag over to the clear side. Their eyes widen.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
 That's the last time I buy
 groceries at the gas station.

Their eyes meet as they simultaneously realize:

ANNIE
 Harris!

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Harris and Pauline sit on the couch with glasses of wine.

HARRIS
 You look really beautiful.

He leans in to kiss her, but she abruptly turns away.

HARRIS (CONT'D)
 Or we could just cuddle.

Annie and Clemence BURST IN, SHOUTING.

CLEMENCE
 Don't eat the--

She sees the empty bowls.

PAULINE
 I'm gonna be--

She leans forward and PUKES EVERYWHERE. Clemence grimaces, but the audience is ECSTATIC.

ANNIE
 We're so sorry. The cheese we used
 for the pasta was--

PAULINE
 You said you were going to cook for
 me yourself!

HARRIS

It was all their idea. Oh god.

He leans forward and PUKES. Clemence is getting visibly nauseated, but the LAUGHTER IS WILD. Pauline jumps up.

PAULINE

I'm out of here.

The front door SLAMS behind her.

ANNIE

Could anyone else see her nipples through that shirt?

HARRIS

Yes. And you ruined it.

He CHOKES BACK VOMIT, bolts for the bathroom, SLAMS the door.

ANNIE

Can I ask you a personal question?

CLEMENCE

Sure.

ANNIE

Do you really know how to cook?

INT. APARTMENT 202 - KITCHEN - LATER

Clemence enters, stops in shock. The kitchen is spotless.

INT. BATHROOM

She enters the bathroom to find her nightly bath drawn and waiting. Candles lit, glass of wine at the ready.

CLEMENCE

I love it here.

FADE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - MORNING

The courtyard is peaceful. Birds CHIRP; the fountain BABBLES.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - BEDROOM

The THEME MUSIC BLARES LOUDLY, jolting Clemence awake.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

Clemence enters to find the gang gathered around the table for breakfast. The music TAPERS TO AN END.

CLEMENCE
So you all do this every morning.

ANNIE
Of course.

Clemence seats herself at the table and makes a plate. Notices that Harris is unusually well dressed.

CLEMENCE
Who died?

NATHAN
I thought pocket squares had, but I guess I was wrong.

ANNIE
He's got that big interview today. And he's really nervous, so everyone leave him alone.

CLEMENCE
Are those pinstripes?

HARRIS
Are they that noticeable?

CLEMENCE
Yes, but only because I have eyes.

Nathan LAUGHS along with the laugh track. Clemence glows.

HARRIS
It's this amazing firm focused on environmentally friendly design. The only thing is ... You know what, it's nothing. Forget it.

The gang waits.

HARRIS (CONT'D)
It's just that it's a boutique company, only three partners, and they're all ...

CLEMENCE
In the Cosa Nostra? I still don't understand why you're dressed like John Gotti.

NATHAN

He's hoping they'll make him an offer he can't refuse.

They're cracking each other up. But Harris is not amused.

HARRIS

I really want this job.

ANNIE

And you're qualified for it. Don't worry so much. Just be yourself.

NATHAN

And for the love of god, change clothes.

ANNIE

I'll help you pick something out.

They leave. Clemence and Nathan are alone. After a moment:

CLEMENCE

Can I ask you something? What's the deal with Annie and Harris?

NATHAN

Whatever do you mean?

CLEMENCE

I mean, have they ever ...

NATHAN

Oh, god, no. They're just longtime opposite-sex platonic friends. You know, the kind everyone has.

Something about his tone catches Clemence's attention.

CLEMENCE

So they insist? Way too often?

He laughs.

NATHAN

There's something different about you, you know that?

CLEMENCE

Yeah. I get that a lot.

NATHAN

Something I like.

CLEMENCE

I get that less.

NATHAN

I hope this isn't too weird, since we're neighbors-- I don't want to make you feel uncomfortable and I promise not to make it awkward if you say no-- but do you ever-- I mean, if I were ever to ask you--

CLEMENCE

Yes.

He smiles. A beat of sexual tension between them.

Annie and Harris re-enter. Harris wears a sweater and khakis.

HARRIS

Better?

Nathan and Clemence hold each other's gaze just a bit too long before Nathan turns away, saying:

NATHAN

I'd hire you.

Annie looks back and forth between them. Clemence blushes.

ANNIE

Everything okay in here?

NATHAN

Whoa, look at the time! I'm late for that thing. Um, Annie, good job with the, you know, sweater thing, and Harris, good luck, and Clemence, good ... day.

He jumps up, walks out the front door.

ANNIE

What was that all about?

CLEMENCE

We've just both had too much ...

She grabs a cereal box off the table.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Lucky Charms.

HARRIS
They are magically delicious.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - BEDROOM - A BIT LATER

Clemence surveys all the beautiful clothes in the closet.

EXT. COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

All dolled up, Clemence eagerly struts through the gate ...

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE

... and GASPS FOR AIR. Post-transformation, her chic clothes are chokingly tight; her expensive heels dig into her feet.

EXT. COURTYARD

She steps back in. GULPS IN AIR.

INT. FITZ AND CLEMENCE'S - BATHROOM - LATER

Clemence struggles to unzip her skintight jeans.

CLEMENCE
(out of breath)
Come on. This is just cruel.

FADE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

Lights come on in the building as darkness falls.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

Clemence and her new best friends are mid-dinner.

CLEMENCE
He posted about his grandmother's
funeral and you responded LOL?

ANNIE
I was being supportive!

HARRIS
What do you think LOL stands for?

ANNIE
Lots of love.

The gang DOUBLES OVER with laughter. Annie is baffled.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
That's not what it stands for?

Clemence starts to open her mouth. Nathan shushes her.

NATHAN
Nobody tell her.

ANNIE
What's that noise?

HARRIS
Don't change the subject.

ANNIE
No, seriously. You guys don't hear
that scratching?

Silence. A FAINT SCRATCHING echoes through the apartment.

NATHAN
That's the plumbing.

CLEMENCE
Doesn't sound like plumbing.

NATHAN
It's definitely nothing.

ANNIE
(standing, listening)
It's coming from your room!

Annie disappears down the hallway. Nathan quickly follows.

NATHAN (O.S.)
Don't go in there--

O.S., Annie SCREAMS. Clemence and Harris JUMP UP.

HARRIS
What the--

Nathan and Annie re-emerge. Nathan, shamefaced, is holding a huge orange cat in his arms.

ANNIE

How long has this *thing* been here?

NATHAN

Relax. It's not a gremlin.

HARRIS

You allergic or something?

ANNIE

Allergic? Yeah, I'm allergic. I'm allergic to getting the breath sucked out of my lungs by one of nature's serial killers.

Right on cue, the cat nuzzles Nathan's face, PURRING LOUDLY.

NATHAN

I found him outside. Someone abandoned him on the street. He was scared to death. Weren't you, Pounce de Leon?

CLEMENCE

Pounce de Leon? Really?

NATHAN

You don't like it?

CLEMENCE

It's not that. I just would've thought you'd go for some kind of theatrical reference.

NATHAN

Like what? The Clawed Soprano?

CLEMENCE

The Purr-chant of Venice.

Annie is not charmed by this banter.

ANNIE

Get rid of it. Now.

NATHAN

Oh, come on. Look, he already loves you. Do you love Annie? Do you?

Annie takes in all of their PLEADING FACES.

ANNIE

Just until you can find it a new home. Then it's out of here.

NATHAN
Pinky swear.

He deposits the cat in his room, shuts the door.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Well, now that that's settled I'd
better be on my way.

He leaves. The front door SLAMS.

CLEMENCE
Where is he always going?

HARRIS
It's some big mystery. My theory is
he's going on auditions and doesn't
want to jinx them.

ANNIE
And mine is that he's a superhero.
(taps head)
Think about it.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE COURTYARD - LATER

Clemence eases through the gate, wincing as her clothes
tighten, only to see a TOW TRUCK REMOVING HER CAR from in
front of the building.

CLEMENCE
Stop! Wait!

The truck brakes as she HOBBLER to catch up with it,
BREATHING HARD. She grabs onto the window frame.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
Where are you taking my car?

DRIVER
Back to the repo man.

CLEMENCE
What? Why?

DRIVER
Because that's what happens when
you don't make the payments.

CLEMENCE
I'll take care of it first thing
tomorrow. I promise. Just please
don't take my car.

DRIVER
I already loaded it up.

CLEMENCE
I know and I'm really sorry to put you to the trouble, but I swear I've never been late with a payment before, I've just been--

DRIVER
What is it with you kids? You all think everyone's so interested in whatever your personal story is.

CLEMENCE
I thought it was germane to this particular conversation, yes.

He rolls his eyes. Clemence digs in her purse.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
I think I have a couple bucks--

DRIVER
Sorry.

He PEELS OFF. The bumper of Clemence's old car SCRAPES THE ASPHALT, sparking, as he whips around the corner.

CLEMENCE
Great.

FADE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - EARLY EVENING

The setting sun turns the light in the courtyard pink.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

Annie and Clemence sit at the table together drinking coffee. Nathan is on the couch reading. Harris enters carrying grocery bags and everyone immediately REACTS.

ANNIE
How'd the second interview go?

NATHAN
Did you bring me anything good?

Harris sets the bags down, grinning.

HARRIS
I got the job!

Annie rushes to hug him.

HARRIS (CONT'D)
And the partners will be here in
twenty minutes!

ANNIE
Wait. What?

HARRIS
After they offered me the job I
said 'I wish I could do something
to thank you.' And James responded,
'Cocktails are at your place
tonight,' and for some reason I
said, 'You're on!' and he seemed
happy about it so ...

He pulls a handle of vodka from the bag.

HARRIS (CONT'D)
The only thing is, all of them are
in couples, and I kind of gave them
the impression that--

ANNIE
(eager)
I'll get dressed.

CLEMENCE
I'll help you find something.

Clemence and Annie exit. Harris looks expectantly at Nathan.

HARRIS
You're not going to change?

NATHAN
What do you care what I'm wearing?

HARRIS
I just think it's nice to look
nice.

NATHAN
Fine. But I'm not straightening my
hair.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The gang and the partners -- JIM, JAMES and JEFF -- sit
around the coffee tables with cocktails. A seemingly
delightful time. Harris sits between Annie and Nathan.

JIM

And I said, 'Prefab? Honey, this place is going to be pre-fabulous!'

Everyone LAUGHS OBEDIENTLY. Annie puts her arm around Harris, playing the role of the girlfriend.

ANNIE

We're all just so excited for Harris to start working with you.

Harris quickly shrugs her off and grabs Nathan's hand. Nathan shakes it away.

Annie looks at Clemence: *what's going on?* Clemence shrugs.

JAMES

And how did you two meet?

Harris grabs Nathan's hand again.

HARRIS

I spotted him from across the room at a party. I could never resist a pair of beautiful blue eyes.

NATHAN

Um, honey? A word?

INT. KITCHEN

The girls LAUGH with the partners in the background while Nathan and Harris CONFER IN WHISPERS over a cheese plate.

NATHAN

So when you said they're all in couples, you meant ...

HARRIS

I thought I was making myself perfectly clear. Why does this bother you so much, anyway? Are you some kind of homophobe?

NATHAN

No. Just a regular dude who prefers to be warned before his best friend tries to hold his hand.

HARRIS

What about this situation did you not understand? It's an *environmentally friendly* firm.

NATHAN
I was supposed to get gay from
that?

HARRIS
Um, *yeah*.

NATHAN
Who's the homophobe now?

HARRIS
It's not homophobia when you're
saying something nice!

NATHAN
You're a bigot.

HARRIS
You are.

It's a standoff.

SMASH TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Quite the change from before: now Annie and Clemence are relegated to the end of the couch, while Nathan is practically on Harris' lap. The partners are uncomfortable.

JAMES
You two seem very ... intimate.

Nathan kisses Harris on the cheek.

NATHAN
I can't get enough of this big lug.

Harris licks Nathan's face. Nathan fights a reaction.

HARRIS
I could swear he's made of sugar.

JIM
(standing)
Well, it's getting late.

NATHAN
Oh, no, stay! After another drink
who knows what might happen.

HARRIS
Indeed. I'm very open-minded.

NATHAN

But I'm more open-minded. In fact, between the two of us I think it's clear who's the most open-minded.

JAMES

We'll just be going. But thanks for the ... mind-opening night.

They EXIT HASTILY. Nathan and Harris quickly leap apart.

ANNIE

What was that all about?

HARRIS

He called me a homophobe.

CLEMENCE

So you decided to lick the wrong out of him?

Harris' cell phone RINGS.

HARRIS

That's weird. It's one of the partners. Maybe he left something.

He answers. Everyone listens to his end of the call:

HARRIS (CONT'D)

(into phone)

We had a fabulous time as well ... Why would you say that? No, James, I think you misunderstood. I'm not ... no, I wasn't ... of course. I'm sorry to have wasted your time.

He hangs up. The gang waits expectantly.

HARRIS (CONT'D)

James just fired me.

ANNIE/CLEMENCE

Oh my god! What? Why?

HARRIS

He said we all have to work closely together and he didn't think it would be right to subject Jeff and Jim to my 'deviant lifestyle.'

NATHAN

Not open-minded.

HARRIS
Right? What a bigot.

EXT. COURTYARD - LATE NIGHT

The yellow lights of the building glow in the bluish dark.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

A QUIET KNOCK brings Clemence to the front door. It's Nathan, grinning, holding the bottle of vodka from earlier.

NATHAN
Nightcap?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clemence NOISILY MAKES DRINKS in the kitchen while Nathan examines the row of cartoons on the wall.

NATHAN
Are these from the LA Times?

CLEMENCE
Some of them, yeah.

NATHAN
How'd that happen?

She enters, carrying two glasses. Hands him one.

CLEMENCE
Um, well ... I was doing these cartoons about my job at a coffee shop, and the right person saw one, and the rest was history.

NATHAN
That's unbelievable.

CLEMENCE
Yes, it is.

NATHAN
So show me how you do it.

CLEMENCE
Really?

NATHAN
Yeah. I'd love to see.

CLEMENCE

Wow. Okay.

She gets her sketchpad and pencils from her old bag, which sits slumped and forgotten in a corner.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Nobody's ever asked to watch me work before.

NATHAN

Does it make you nervous?

CLEMENCE

A little. But I like it.

She sits down next to him, opens the sketchpad. Holds the pencil to the clean page. But something stops her.

NATHAN

Go ahead.

Clemence starts to sketch, but her strokes are childlike, clumsy. It's like she doesn't know how to hold her hand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

CLEMENCE

I don't know.

She FLIPS THE PAGE, starts over. But this attempt is even worse: now her hand shakes too much to even draw a line. She STABS AT THE PAGE with the pencil, frustrated.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

I don't understand. I've been doing this for as long as I can remember.

Nathan stiffens suddenly. Narrows his eyes.

NATHAN

When was the last time?

CLEMENCE

A couple of weeks ago, I think?

NATHAN

No. When exactly.

CLEMENCE

Three weeks ago. Four. It was definitely sometime in March.

NATHAN

What month do you think it is now?

Clemence is befuddled. Like she's never had to think about what month it is ever before.

CLEMENCE

April?

NATHAN

Was the last time you drew anything before you moved in?

CLEMENCE

Come to think of it, yeah.

(laughs)

You know what's weird? Until you brought it up a minute ago I'd completely forgotten about it.

A beat as Nathan takes this in. Suddenly he stands.

NATHAN

I should be getting to bed.

CLEMENCE

You just got here.

He walks to the door. She follows him, holding out his glass.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

You didn't finish your drink.

NATHAN

I don't think I want it anymore.

He SLAMS THE DOOR in her face. She blinks. Shocked.

INT. FITZ AND CLEMENCE'S - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Clemence lets herself in. Tiptoes toward the bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY

Clemence sees Fitz's door is ajar. Pushes it open to reveal his empty, unmade bed. His nightstand clock reads three a.m..

INT. BATHROOM

Clemence picks up a magazine from a stack on the floor, LEAFS THROUGH IT while peeing, drops it as she's flushing.

Just before it lands, we see a pink NOTICE OF RENT PAST DUE underneath. She doesn't notice, washes her hands, leaves.

FADE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - MORNING

The courtyard is dewy. Birds chirp loudly.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

Harris and Nathan sit at the table eating toast as Annie and Clemence enter carrying coffees. Annie is near tears.

ANNIE

This is going to destroy my rating
on Finally Dot Com. Destroy it.

Nathan hastily hides his face behind an open book.

CLEMENCE

What's Finally Dot Com?

ANNIE

Only the number one wedding
planning site for women who pushed
their boyfriends into proposing.

HARRIS

What happened?

CLEMENCE

Some shipment didn't come in.

ANNIE

Three hundred bordeaux glasses with
"Fawn and Amadeus Forever" printed
on them in calligraphy. Apparently
customs turned them into gravel.

CLEMENCE

Don't panic. We could get three
hundred glasses and decorate them
ourselves. With both of us working
on it it couldn't possibly take
that long.

ANNIE

You're a genius.

NATHAN
 Playing it kinda fast and loose
 with that word, aren't we?

CLEMENCE
 Your book is upside down.

Nathan rights the novel. Clemence waits for a response, but he won't take the bait to banter. Her face falls.

EXT. COURTYARD - EARLY EVENING

Night descends on the building.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

The girls write on glasses with paint pens as a movie BLARES. Nathan is on the couch, still hiding behind his book.

CLEMENCE
 That's nice calligraphy.

ANNIE
 Thanks. Yours is ... really
 special.

Nathan SNORTS. Clemence shoots him a glance: *what's your problem?* But he ignores her.

Harris ENTERS NOISILY, bouncing a basketball.

HARRIS
 Still at it, huh?
 (looks at TV)
 When you said you were going to
 watch chick flicks while you worked
 I didn't realize you meant the same
 one over and over again.

NATHAN
 Is this movie still on?

ANNIE
 I'll turn it off.

NATHAN
 Don't. I want to see who wins.

ANNIE
 Who wins what?

NATHAN

Cameron Diaz and Julia Roberts.
They're going to fight at some
point, right?

CLEMENCE

Yes. The movie culminates in a cage-
match to the death between two of
American's sweethearts.

NATHAN

I wasn't talking to you.

An AWKWARD SILENCE. Harris and Annie glance at each other
questioningly; Annie shrugs.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Annie and Clemence lug overflowing grocery bags.

ANNIE

I can't explain it. Something about
cats just makes my skin crawl.

CLEMENCE

You have to appreciate how happy he
makes Nathan.

ANNIE

Seems like you have the
appreciating all locked down.

A MALE VOICE cuts in before Clemence can respond:

LIAM (O.S.)

Clemence? Is that you?

He jogs across the street to join them.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I barely recognized you.

Clemence can't seem to figure out how to respond.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Been a while, huh? What have you
been up to?

ANNIE

She draws cartoons for the
newspaper. And The New Yorker.

LIAM

No shit. Really? Like, the ones for the caption contest?

CLEMENCE

Sometimes.

ANNIE

All the time.

Liam can't stop looking Clemence up and down.

LIAM

I don't know what to say. I'm awestruck. It's like you're a completely different person.

CLEMENCE

Really? You seem the same.

Liam doesn't know what to make of her coolness. Finally:

LIAM

Well, I definitely won't call you. I really do not want to catch up.

But Clemence doesn't pick up on their old inside joke.

CLEMENCE

Sure. See you around.

Liam starts to say something, then thinks better of it. He closes his mouth and walks away.

EXT. COURTYARD - LATE NIGHT

One last light winks out downstairs.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - HALLWAY

In her pajamas, Annie emerges from her bedroom and walks into the bathroom. As her door swings shut, the cat slips inside.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - BATHROOM

Clemence is relaxing in the tub with her nightly glass of wine when she hears a BLOODCURDLING SCREAM.

INT. ANNIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan and Harris come running in. Nathan wears only a T-shirt, Harris only boxers.

HARRIS
What happened?

ANNIE
It's. On. My. Pillow.

NATHAN
Not this again.

HARRIS
Fourth time this week.

Clemence rushes in wearing a skimpy nightgown.

CLEMENCE
I heard screaming!

HARRIS
Annie caught an intruder.

CLEMENCE
What? Oh.

She approaches the bed and scratches the cat, who PURRS.

ANNIE
Do not encourage it!

Nathan scoops up the cat; everyone GROANS as he bends over.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
Dude, where are your pants?

NATHAN
People sleep in T-shirts all the time. It's comfortable.

HARRIS
Not for us.

ANNIE
Get your cat and penis out of here.

INT. HALLWAY

CLEMENCE
Wow. She really doesn't like cats, does she, Mister Pounce?

NATHAN

Don't you live somewhere else? Why are you always over here?

Clemence winces, leaves. When they hear the front door SHUT:

HARRIS

What is your problem?

NATHAN

Can we have this conversation when you're wearing a shirt?

HARRIS

I'm making *you* uncomfortable.

NATHAN

A little, yeah.

HARRIS

You have issues.

NATHAN

I know.

INT. FITZ AND CLEMENCE'S - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Fitz is surrounded by stacks of mail, head in hands. At the sound of the DOOR UNLOCKING, he looks up. Clemence enters.

FITZ

No "Honey, I'm home"?

CLEMENCE

What?

FITZ

Just something you used to say.

CLEMENCE

Did I?

FITZ

Only like four times a day.

CLEMENCE

I'm actually in a rush, so if there's any way we could--

FITZ

When I call your cell it says the number's been deactivated.

CLEMENCE

I sort of stopped paying the bill.

FITZ

That's not the only bill you sort of stopped paying.

He gestures at the towering pile of mail.

FITZ (CONT'D)

We're four months behind on our rent. I just barely have enough to cover my half in savings.

CLEMENCE

Four months? Already?

FITZ

I need your half or we'll get evicted. *Evicted.*

CLEMENCE

Okay. I promise I'll figure something out. I promise. But right now I really have to--

FITZ

Pee. Right.

INT. BATHROOM

Fitz continues talking to Clemence through the door.

FITZ (O.S.)

This Annie person must have the world's most comfortable couch. That or you've gone lez and didn't bother to tell me.

Clemence FLUSHES, stands.

CLEMENCE

If that's the only explanation you can think of you're even more self-absorbed than I thought.

FITZ (O.S.)

Then what is it? What can possibly be happening that's so exciting you won't even come home to sleep?

She THROWS OPEN the door, startling him.

CLEMENCE

I just like her. You know? I like her in that way where I like myself better when I'm with her. And it's not just her, it's Harris and Nathan, too. And then when I'm away from them I start to feel like myself again, and it *sucks*.

FITZ

You sound like a junkie.

CLEMENCE

I don't give a fuck.
(realizing)
Fuck. Fuck. *Fuck!*

FITZ

What's wrong with you?

CLEMENCE

You know what your *fucking* problem is? You're a *fucking* loser. You sit in here *all fucking day* with your video games and your computer and then you get *so fucking jealous* because I don't want to be a part of it. Maybe if you had anything at all happening in your life you could sound like a *fucking* junkie too, and then we'd both be happier.

Fitz is stunned into silence. Clemence pushes past him into the

INT. HALLWAY

She turns back before leaving:

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

I won't forget about the rent. I swear. But right now I have to go.

She leaves the door standing wide open behind her.

EXT. WALKWAY - A BIT LATER

Clemence mounts the stairs, limping, to find Nathan standing on the walkway, about to light a cigarette.

CLEMENCE

Oh. It's you. Hi.

He quickly shoves the pack in his pocket, turns away.

NATHAN

Yeah.

He moves toward his apartment.

CLEMENCE

Where are you going?

NATHAN

I forgot something.

CLEMENCE

Please talk to me. Please.

She holds the door to her place open invitingly.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

I still have that vodka.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - LIVING ROOM

Nathan follows Clemence inside. She shuts the door behind them. He doesn't seem to know what to do next.

CLEMENCE

Okay. Let's hear it.

NATHAN

Hear what?

CLEMENCE

You tell me. One minute you're asking me out. The next minute it's like you hate me.

NATHAN

This isn't about that, okay? I really did forget something.

CLEMENCE

Isn't about what? You hating me?

NATHAN

Exactly.

CLEMENCE

So you do.

NATHAN

I don't want to have this conversation. It's too real. You're being too real for me right now.

CLEMENCE

Come on. Just tell me. Whatever it is, I can take it.

NATHAN

You have a bunch of photos of yourself on your shelves. Don't you already know what you look like? Do you need to be reminded all the time? You don't own a single book that doesn't have pictures in it. You're supposed to be this big deal artist but you draw like a toddler. Your apartment is too perfect and you're always dressed up. Why are you always so dressed up?

Clemence is gobsmacked.

CLEMENCE

I read real books.

NATHAN

That's what you're taking from this?

CLEMENCE

Annie has pictures of herself.

NATHAN

Annie is weird.

CLEMENCE

Harris doesn't think so.

NATHAN

Yeah, well, he's weird too.

CLEMENCE

If we're all so weird, how come I'm the only one you hate?

NATHAN

I don't hate you. I just don't want to be around you.

CLEMENCE

But you said-- you were the one who asked me--

NATHAN
That was before.

CLEMENCE
Before what?

NATHAN
Before I realized what a bad idea
it would be.

CLEMENCE
What's so bad about it? It's just a
date. Just dinner and a movie.
What's the worst that could
possibly happen?

NATHAN
(incredulous)
You really don't know, do you?

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Nathan walks to the gate. Clemence follows closely behind.

NATHAN
Here goes nothing.

He swings the gate open, holds it for her as she steps onto
the sidewalk. He follows, lets the gate close.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Clemence does a double-take. Seeing her through Nathan's
eyes, we realize she's changed back to her old self. But
she's not the only one:

CLEMENCE
You!

Nathan is different too. Shorter, chubbier, unkempt, he's
barely a shadow of who he was inside the gate.

NATHAN
Me? What about you?

CLEMENCE
This whole time?

NATHAN

Yeah, this whole time. What do you think? I knew it, by the way. I knew I'd seen you out there somewhere, I just couldn't place where. Now I can't believe I didn't see it right away. You're the laundromat girl.

CLEMENCE

But-- How did you--

NATHAN

Same way you did. I followed Annie and Harris home. That was five years ago.

CLEMENCE

You've been here five years?

NATHAN

It goes by fast. As you might have noticed.

CLEMENCE

Where do you pee?

NATHAN

That's your first question?

CLEMENCE

I sneak out whenever I can, but it's not often enough. I think I may have permanently damaged my bladder.

NATHAN

It didn't give you a bathroom?

CLEMENCE

I have a tub, but no toilet. I thought nobody had one.

NATHAN

Of course we have one. You can't have toilet humor without a toilet.

Clemence is flabbergasted. Tries to collect herself:

CLEMENCE

So if you're not a character on the show, who are you?

NATHAN
Who are you?

It's a standoff. They both wait.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Okay. Count of three. Three, two,
one ...

CLEMENCE
I'm an unemployed former
barista with no friends or
boyfriend and I'm about to be
homeless.

NATHAN
I'm a failed actor with a
drinking problem and before I
came here I was one web
series audition away from
trying crack.

Nathan's last words catch Clemence by surprise.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
It's not as addictive as people
think.

CLEMENCE
(with significance)
We're both broken.

She pauses. Awaits an audience reaction.

NATHAN
Don't bother. Outside the gate you
have to be with one of them. I
figured this shit out on my first
day. Get with the program.

CLEMENCE
Goddammit! I just want to feel
something real for once!

NATHAN
Do you still want to get dinner?

CLEMENCE
No, I don't want to *get dinner*.
What would be the point?

NATHAN
I'm pretty sure there's no law
against two somewhat attractive
people sharing a meal while having
a less than sparkling conversation.
I think it can even get moderately
awkward before the SWAT team is
called in.

Clemence hesitates.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Who knows, maybe we'll enjoy not having to quip every three seconds. It'll be like a vacation.

CLEMENCE

It's just ...

NATHAN

(realizing)

You like me better on the other side of the gate!

CLEMENCE

I didn't say that.

NATHAN

This is exactly what I was afraid of. Why couldn't you just leave well enough alone?

CLEMENCE

I'm sorry! I can't help it! You're just so-- so different out here.

NATHAN

What about you, laundromat girl? We used to laugh about you on our way home. We called you "that sad girl with the sketchpad. We made up stories about what must have happened to you in your pathetic life. There you were, every week, with your haunted eyes and your little drawings. Even your laundry was fucking sad. Why were you always washing your sheets? Don't you own an extra set of sheets?

CLEMENCE

Why are you saying all this to me?

NATHAN

Oh, cut it out, Clemence. No one's watching now, don't you get that? You can say anything you want.

CLEMENCE

Fine! *Fuck you.*

NATHAN

Yeah. Yeah!

CLEMENCE

You guys were judging my fucking laundry? Who judges someone based on their laundry? The laundromat is a sacred no-judgment zone.

NATHAN

Oh yeah? Then who sits there drawing and glaring at everyone the whole time like they've got some magnificent fucking insight into human existence but they're too artistic and above it all to actually speak to anyone?

CLEMENCE

I'll have you know that my blog once got ten-thousand hits in a single weekend!

NATHAN

You were doing those drawings for a *blog*?

CLEMENCE

If Jane Austen were alive today she'd have a blog.

NATHAN

Not Jane Austen again. When did Jane Austen become the go-to literary reference for all you girls? Is there anything about you that's not a cliché?

CLEMENCE

That's low.

NATHAN

Low? You think you know something about low? I grew up in a fucking doublewide in East Jesus, Florida--

CLEMENCE

Oh, so now I'm supposed to--

NATHAN

Do you know what it's like to be that kid? The one everybody just knows is going to get out? Star of every school play. Test scores in the stratosphere. The one everyone hangs their hopes on--

CLEMENCE

I get it. You're special.

NATHAN

Special? I won the fucking lottery. Somewhere in the middle ages one of my idiot ancestors got lucky and fucked a genius and that gene sat there unexpressed for centuries until I came along. I was supposed to be it. A guaranteed success. And then I made some shitty fucking choices. And then there weren't as many choices to make, and then, one day, all the choices were gone.

CLEMENCE

You're still young.

NATHAN

As young as you are.

Clemence is frustrated, close to tears.

CLEMENCE

But here--

NATHAN

Here I can be the person I was supposed to be. And you can too.

CLEMENCE

This place is doing something to me. I say awful things to people who used to be my friends because I can't stand how *regular* they are. I can't keep track of time or remember the most basic things. I realized the other day that I have no idea who the president is. I used to be smart. Now I start thinking about the color blue and the next thing I know four hours have gone by. *Four hours*. What the fuck is that?

NATHAN

You're losing your mind.

CLEMENCE

None of this happened to you?

NATHAN

No. All of it did. I meant that literally: you're *losing your mind*. Everything about who you used to be is fading away, and the longer you stay the worse it will get.

CLEMENCE

Is that what you're doing when you disappear by yourself for hours? Spending time outside?

NATHAN

I want to stay me.

CLEMENCE

Why?

NATHAN

Honestly? I'm not even sure anymore. I'm in a Mobius strip where I've become too stupid to know why I don't want to be stupid.

They're quiet for a beat.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What do you think would happen if we fucked in there?

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM

Nathan and Clemence hastily disrobe from opposite sides of the bed. As Clemence drops her dress:

NATHAN

God, you're beautiful.

CLEMENCE

I'd be flattered if this was what I really looked like.

Nathan strips to his boxers. They climb under the covers. A moment of uncertainty about how to proceed.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Are we gonna do this or what?

NATHAN

This is good pillow talk.

CLEMENCE

Shut up.

She leans over and kisses him.

FADE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - THE NEXT MORNING

The sun rises over the roof of the building.

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM

Clemence bolts upright in bed, waking Nathan.

CLEMENCE
What time is it?

NATHAN
(grabbing the clock)
It's morning.

CLEMENCE
What happened?

NATHAN
We kissed, and then ... you know, I
don't really remember.

CLEMENCE
(hissing)
I think it blacked us out before we
could do it!

NATHAN
Are you sure?

CLEMENCE
Look at me! I'm wearing my bra!

NATHAN
We could have ... with you wearing
your bra. Girls do that sometimes.

CLEMENCE
What girls?

NATHAN
... Girls on TV.

CLEMENCE
Well, great. That's just great.
(realizing)
Oh god.

She stands, starts pulling on her dress.

NATHAN
What's the matter?

CLEMENCE
I have to go.

INT. CLEMENCE'S CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Clemence frantically grabs anything she can -- dresses, purses, hats, shoes -- and stuffs it all in a laundry bag.

EXT. CONSIGNMENT SHOP - LATER

Clemence lugs the bulging laundry bag through the door.

INT. CONSIGNMENT SHOP - COUNTER

A SALESGIRL RIFLES EXCITEDLY through the clothes and accessories that Clemence pulls from the garbage bag.

SALESGIRL
Chanel, Diane von Furstenburg,
Herve Leger, Marc Jacobs ...
(hyperventilating)
Oh in the name of all that is holy.
Are those Ferragamo flats?

CLEMENCE
You want those?

SALESGIRL
Um, yeah.

CLEMENCE
I have them in like five more
colors at home.

SALESGIRL
I'll give you a thousand now and
five hundred later if you come back
with the rest today.

EXT. SIDEWALK

Clemence counts a fat roll of bills, WHISTLES as she walks.

EXT. COURTYARD

Clemence opens the gate and steps inside, stashing the roll of bills in her pocket. Suddenly:

ANNIE (O.S.)
Thank god you're here!

Annie runs down the steps from the walkway.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I need you.

CLEMENCE
I'm actually a little busy--

ANNIE
It's an emergency.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - HALLWAY

Annie frantically leads Clemence to her closed bedroom door. A SQUEAKING sound emits from inside.

ANNIE
Is that what I think it is?

CLEMENCE
If you think it's a mouse, then yes. Yes it is.

ANNIE
There are *mice* in my bedroom?

CLEMENCE
Maybe it's just one.

ANNIE
There's no such thing as one mouse. That's like saying me saying one glass of wine, or a meth addict saying one ... meth.

CLEMENCE
(ear to the door)
If it's any consolation I think Pounce is taking care of it.

The squeaking CUTS OFF. An OMINOUS SILENCE follows.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
See?

INT. LIVING ROOM

The gang sits around the table. Harris and Nathan pass a bag of chips back and forth.

HARRIS
(crunching)
Someone has to go in there.

NATHAN
Not it.

ANNIE
It's your cat.

NATHAN
It's your mouse.

ANNIE
I don't have a mouse. I don't even
have a plant. Give me the chips.

Harris hands her the bag. Annie turns it upside down: empty.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
I just bought these yesterday.

HARRIS
Shoulda bought more.

CLEMENCE
She did. I've never seen someone
buy so much junk food in one trip.
Even the cashier looked like she
was judging us.
(off Annie's reaction)
It was all in the eyebrows.

HARRIS
So where is it?

INT. ANNIE'S ROOM

The door SWINGS OPEN to reveal the friends. Pounce sits on the bed, satisfied. No sign of the mouse.

Annie nods at the closet. Harris steps forward decisively and swings the door open, revealing a fairyland of junk food. It spills off every shelf: chips, cookies, crackers. Everyone turns at once to stare at Annie in shock.

ANNIE

Everyone's always eating my stuff!
I had no choice!

NATHAN

How were you planning on finishing
all this?

CLEMENCE

You don't finish this much junk
food. It finishes you.

HARRIS

Wait a minute. If you've had this
stash the whole time, then why
don't we have a bunch of morbidly
obese mice on our hands?

They all turn to Pounce, then back to Annie.

ANNIE

Fine! He can stay.

Harris, Clemence and Nathan all exchange a look.

HARRIS

Guys, she's been through a lot
today. I think now's the time.

CLEMENCE

I agree.

NATHAN

Who's going to do the honors?

Clemence raises a hand. Solemnly:

CLEMENCE

LOL stands for Laughing Out Loud.

Silence. Annie's eyes widen.

NATHAN

Is this you trying to remember
every single time you've ever said
it to someone?

ANNIE

Yes.

HARRIS

(patting her shoulder)
LOL. LOL.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The four friends sit on the couch. Chip bags, cookie boxes and candy wrappers from Annie's stash all around.

ANNIE

You know what I realized today?
Somebody has a birthday coming up.

Clemence glances around before realizing Annie means her.

CLEMENCE

I do?

ANNIE

The big three-oh is just three weeks away! I think we should have a party to celebrate.

HARRIS

Great idea. We can have tapas.

ANNIE

And make it black tie so I can wear a fancy dress.

HARRIS

And do a signature cocktail!

ANNIE

And keep the ingredients top-secret so everyone tries to re-create it at home and can't.

As they continue PRATTLING ON, Clemence turns to Nathan.

CLEMENCE

(whispering)
What is happening?

NATHAN

They do this every so often.

CLEMENCE

But my birthday is in November.

NATHAN

Not anymore. Now it's anytime things are slow around here. I didn't have one for two years and then I had three in eight months.

Annie continues talking a mile a minute:

ANNIE

--and we can string Edison bulbs
from the rafters and we'll invite
everyone we know.

She stops to catch her breath. Harris rises, stretches.

HARRIS

Well, I have work in the morning.

ANNIE

And I have to get up early to start
hand-lettering the invitations!
Would it be overkill to emboss
them? Or I could do gold leaf!

She CHATTERS ON as they leave; their doors SHUT. Nathan and
Clemence look at each other. Then, at the same time, they
eagerly jump up and bolt for his bedroom.

MONTAGE - NATHAN'S BEDROOM

A dizzying succession of attempts at sex streams by us:

--They make out passionately, until Nathan's hand goes for
her breast. Blackout. They wake up. Frustrated.

--They make out passionately, until Clemence tries to unzip
his jeans. Blackout. They wake up. Pissed.

--She comes in wearing only a bathrobe. He's waiting in the
bed. As she unbelts it, he grins: maybe they've finally
cracked the code! She drops the robe. Blackout. They wake up
screaming in frustration.

--They climb in bed fully clothed, try undressing under the
covers. Blackout. They wake up. Getting resigned to it.

--They sneak into his closet, stealthily slide the door
closed. We hold on it for just a few seconds -- is this
working? Then: blackout.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. NATHAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Nathan and Clemence sit together in bed. Exhausted from their
efforts.

NATHAN

You know, in a way this isn't so
bad.

CLEMENCE

Are you kidding? This is the worst.

NATHAN

How often does anyone have really great sex, anyway? I think I've had it three times. Maybe four. There was that night in Tampa with the strip--

(off her reaction)

Stripper of paint. But more often than not, she's too clingy, wants it to be a deep and meaningful experience every single time. Or she just lies there like it's some kind of torture she has to endure--

CLEMENCE

Or he's a bad kisser, or he does that soft touch thing that men's magazines are always saying to do even though women hate it, or he accidentally puts it in the wrong--

NATHAN

Okay. We have enough examples now.

CLEMENCE

Sorry.

NATHAN

Some women like soft touch.

CLEMENCE

I shouldn't have said anything.

NATHAN

The point is that this is different. We wake up every morning still liking each other.

CLEMENCE

No weirdness, no humiliation, nothing accidentally going in the wrong--

As the LAUGHTER RESOUNDS, she shakes her head to clear it.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Are we being funny as ourselves? Or as our characters?

NATHAN

Does it matter? Somewhere around the tenth time I woke up next to you I realized I like it this way. I like this life. And I like you.

CLEMENCE

But do you like real world me, or this me?

NATHAN

I don't know. And I don't care. What's so real about being in the "real world," anyway? Maybe this is the real us. Maybe this is what's underneath, after you take away all the bad decisions and the failures and the exhaustion and the constant worrying about paying the bills--

At that last word, Clemence's EYES WIDEN.

CLEMENCE

Oh, sh--

The SHRILL BLEEP fills the room.

INT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Clemence rushes in, finds the living room full of boxes.

CLEMENCE

Fitz? You here?

She heads into the

INT. KITCHEN

To find Fitz loading dishes into a box. He doesn't look up when she enters.

FITZ

Go away, Clemence.

CLEMENCE

I have the money.

FITZ

It's a little late for that.

She hands him the roll of bills. He eyes it suspiciously.

FITZ (CONT'D)

What'd you do, knock over a convenience store?

CLEMENCE

I sold some clothes. Nice designer clothes. And they weren't easy to give up, either, not that that's the main issue right now, but--

FITZ

Shut up.

CLEMENCE

If it's too late to use it for the rent then just keep it. Consider it an apology.

FITZ

I don't want your fucking money.

He throws the roll at her. It bounces, lands on the floor.

CLEMENCE

Have you found a new place?

He begins taping the box, refuses to meet her eye.

FITZ

Not yet. It's kinda tough when you have an eviction on your record.

CLEMENCE

What if there was a way I could help?

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD

Clemence pulls Fitz through the courtyard, gesturing wildly.

CLEMENCE

See? Isn't it like I told you?

FITZ

The sun came out. So what?

CLEMENCE

Look at me! Look at yourself!

For the first time, Fitz takes in Clemence's transformation before looking down at his own body.

FITZ
I can see my toes!

CLEMENCE
I can see a lot more than that.

She nods at his crotch. Realizing how tight his pants have become, he pulls at his waist.

FITZ
What am I wearing?

CLEMENCE
It gets better.

INT. APARTMENT 202 - LIVING ROOM

Fitz gazes around the apartment, awestruck.

FITZ
I guess I can't blame you for
liking it better here.

He swipes a finger along a shelf, examines it.

FITZ (CONT'D)
It's remarkably clean.

CLEMENCE
When I leave, it's trashed. When I
come back, it's perfect again.

FITZ
So there's a maid.

CLEMENCE
No. No maid.

FITZ
She'd have to have been maid in
Mexico to deal with your mess!

SCANDALIZED LAUGHTER EXPLODES! As it dies down:

FITZ (CONT'D)
Why did I say that?

He's flapping a wrist as he speaks. He grabs it with his other hand to stabilize it.

CLEMENCE
Just give in. Let it wash over you.

FITZ
 (new, feminine voice)
 Your dad washed it over me last
 night! OMG, is that a new handbag?

More LAUGHTER. Fitz is horrified, covers his mouth.

FITZ (CONT'D)
 (through his fingers)
 What's happening to me?

CLEMENCE
 The laughter comes when you do
 something right.

FITZ
 So I'm doing something right by
 being a racist, classist, oversexed
 stereotype? In *skinny jeans*?

CLEMENCE
 Exactly!

FITZ
 Why did you bring me here?

CLEMENCE
 Because, Fitz! I can help you. I've
 got a second bedroom, and you can
 move in today. Plus, look at you!

She grabs his shoulders, faces him toward a mirror. He's
 horrified at what he sees: new and "improved" Fitz is
 uniformly orange-tan, with gelled hair and bleached teeth.

FITZ
 Am I wearing mascara?

CLEMENCE
 See how perfect this is? You can be
 my fabulous gay roommate! And
 you'll make me cocktails and help
 me choose outfits and--

FITZ
 I have a life of my own.

CLEMENCE
 No you don't.

FITZ
 Yes I do! I'm almost as busy as
 that cardigan!

LAUGHTER. He covers his mouth again.

CLEMENCE

You're doing great! This cardigan sucks! Say more gay stuff!

FITZ

No!

CLEMENCE

Why are you fighting this? Don't you see it's the life you've always wanted? You'll always have your dream job, everyone will always love you for exactly who you are--

FITZ

No they won't. They'll love me for being an asshole. I once dated a guy who--

Fitz tries to cover his mouth, but his arms burst outward into jazz hands.

FITZ (CONT'D)

I once dated a guy who loved me for my asshole, but never one who loved me for being one!

SCANDALIZED LAUGHTER.

CLEMENCE

They love you! Keep it up!

FITZ

No, goddammit! You think I couldn't be this asshole if I wanted to? I don't need you, or this place, or anyone here to be this asshole. If I wanted to live my life as a hilarious accessory to self-involved straight girls, I would.

The audience responds with a LOW MURMUR OF SHOCK.

FITZ (CONT'D)

You can be a lot to take sometimes, but I love you. And this *thing* standing next to me isn't you. Oh, sure, she looks a little like you, and she sounds a little like you. But you care about things.

(MORE)

FITZ (CONT'D)

You care about your art, and your friends, and what happens next in those terrible vampire books you made me read. All *she* cares about is putting on a frilly dress and flouncing around, waiting for a laugh track to tell her she's cute and quirky enough for an audience that *doesn't exist*.

CLEMENCE

They're out there. Somewhere, there's an audience watching and rooting just for me.

FITZ

You're insane.

CLEMENCE

I'd rather be insane in here than be sane out there with you.

A beat as they both realize what's happening.

FITZ

You don't have to do this. Let's just go. Let's walk out of here right now. We'll do it together.

CLEMENCE

I can't. I'm sorry.

Fitz walks to the door.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Where will you go?

FITZ

I'll figure something out.

CLEMENCE

Aren't you scared?

FITZ

The only thing I'm scared of is those hideous shoes!

He claps his hands over his mouth once more, shoots Clemence a pitying look and then exits, **SLAMMING** the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE COURTYARD - EARLY MORNING

Clemence exits the gate. An expert now, she pauses to let the transformation takes effect, then starts walking.

EXT. CLEMENCE AND FITZ'S APARTMENT BUILDING

Clemence finds her old door standing wide open. Inside somewhere, workers are SHOUTING BACK AND FORTH in Spanish.

INT. LIVING ROOM

She steps inside tentatively. The room is bright, freshly painted, empty.

CLEMENCE

Hola?

A PAINTER, college-aged, emerges from the hallway.

PAINTER

Yes?

CLEMENCE

I'm sorry to bother you. Uh, lo siento de tu molestar.

PAINTER

I speak English.

CLEMENCE

Right. Sorry.

PAINTER

Don't be. It's an asset to be bilingual in this job market.

CLEMENCE

Of course. Um, the thing is that I used to live here, and I thought maybe I could take a quick look--

PAINTER

Yeah, yeah. Come on in.

INT. CLEMENCE'S OLD BEDROOM

The CLICKING OF CLEMENCE'S HEELS echoes on the floors of the empty room. The painter comes in behind her, carrying a box.

CLEMENCE
It seems so small.

PAINTER
How long ago did you live here?

CLEMENCE
I'm not sure. A while.

He doesn't know how to take this.

PAINTER
Any chance this stuff is yours?

She turns around to see him holding out the box. Inside are a dozen of her old sketchpads. She pulls one out.

CLEMENCE
What are these?

PAINTER
Beats me. One of the guys found them on the shelf in the closet.

Clemence opens the sketchpad to a random page, revealing

INSERT - CARTOON

A mother and her young daughter stand in line at a coffee shop, identically dressed in makeup and miniskirts. The mother lectures the child about the hidden calories in coffee drinks. Behind them in line is a depressed-looking alien.

Caption: "LATER THAT SAME DAY, ZAGRON TOLD HIS OVERLORDS TO GO AHEAD AND VAPORIZE EARTH AFTER ALL."

The painter peers at it over Clemence's shoulder. LAUGHS.

PAINTER (CONT'D)
Hey, that's pretty good.

She traces the bold lines of the drawing with her finger.

CLEMENCE
I remember this. I used to draw these all the time.

PAINTER
Why'd you stop?

She flips through comic after comic. Almost to herself:

CLEMENCE
Because I'm happy now.

Suddenly she SLAMS the sketchpad shut.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
You can just throw this stuff out.

She walks out quickly, heels CLICKING as she goes.

EXT. WALKWAY

Clemence walks up and finds Nathan stubbing out a cigarette.

CLEMENCE
Oh. I didn't expect you to be up so early.

NATHAN
You look nice.

CLEMENCE
I should. It's my fake thirtieth birthday, after all.

NATHAN
Where were you?

CLEMENCE
Nowhere.

NATHAN
You were outside! Weren't you?

CLEMENCE
Only for a little bit.

He sighs.

NATHAN
This has to stop.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE COURTYARD

Nathan and Clemence stand over a sewer grate right outside the gate, holding their wallets.

NATHAN
Here goes.

He pulls cards from his:

NATHAN (CONT'D)
 Driver's license, debit card,
 library card, punchcard for free
 Subway sandwich--

Clemence is pulling things from hers as well.

CLEMENCE
 ID, debit card, AmEx, Visa, Ralph's
 Plus membership, metro pass.

Nathan straightens up. An air of ceremony to him.

NATHAN
 This is it. Everything that links
 us to the past is about to
 literally go down the drain. You
 sure you're ready?

CLEMENCE
 I'm ready.

NATHAN
 Okay then. Three. Two. One.

They drop the cards through the sewer grate, then push the
 wallets through too. Listen to them SPLASH somewhere below.

CLEMENCE
 Goodbye, old Clemence.

Nathan pushes the gate open.

NATHAN
 Good riddance.

She passes through into the courtyard. Transforms. Nathan
 follows her, SLAMMING the gate.

FADE TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - EVENING

A festive set of string lights on the second floor winks on.

INT. APARTMENT 201 - LIVING ROOM

The party is in full swing: a room full of stylish,
 attractive people CHATTING AND LAUGHING. Nathan and Harris
 take shots by the kitchen. Clemence stands alone, until Annie
 approaches her with a drink in each hand.

ANNIE

So does it feel different?

CLEMENCE

(startled)

Does what feel different?

ANNIE

Being thirty! I always tell my brides that fifty is the new forty, forty is the new thirty and thirty is the new twenty. I used to say that twenty is the new ten but then someone pointed out that that would make their wedding a felony.

Clemence doesn't respond.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Didn't you hear me? Make their wedding a felony?

CLEMENCE

Sorry. I heard you. Ha ha.

ANNIE

Oh, I almost forgot! I ran into that friend of yours at the store. What's his name. Liam.

CLEMENCE

Liam, Liam ...
(remembering)
Oh. *Liam*.

ANNIE

He wouldn't stop asking about you.

CLEMENCE

What did you tell him?

ANNIE

Oh, just the basics. That you're beautiful and wonderful and talented. He's awfully dashing, isn't he? He reminds me of a Disney prince. Like you'd see him on a boat and three days later you'd marry him and leave the mermaid kingdom behind forever.

(sighs wistfully)

Those were simpler times.

CLEMENCE

You didn't invite him, did you?

ANNIE

That's what made me think of it. He just walked in.

Clemence wheels around to see Liam bearing down on them, bottle of champagne in hand.

LIAM

Clem.

He kisses her on each cheek, then does the same for Annie, who SQUEALS delightedly. Handing Annie the bottle:

LIAM (CONT'D)

This is for you.

ANNIE

I'll just go put it on ice.

She gives Clemence a teasing glance before walking away.

LIAM

And for you ...

He pulls a wrapped, rectangular box from inside his jacket.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Happy thirtieth.

Clemence notices that Nathan is watching them.

CLEMENCE

May I speak with you privately?

INT. APARTMENT 201 - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clemence pushes Liam inside and quickly shuts the door. He eyes a framed cartoon decorating the wall: one of Clemence Jane's masterpieces.

LIAM

I never knew you were so -- I guess I didn't realize your comics were like a real thing to you. I thought you were just messing around.

She's confused for a moment. Then it comes back to her:

CLEMENCE

You never once asked to see one.

LIAM

You should open your gift. It's art pencils. Eighty of them.

CLEMENCE

That always hurt my feelings.

LIAM

It's the most expensive set they sell. Caran d'Ache Luminance. Three hundred bucks.

Details are coming back to Clemence bit by bit:

CLEMENCE

That's right. You're rich.

LIAM

I don't know if I'd say that.

CLEMENCE

You have a really nice house.

LIAM

Thank you.

He smiles. Ratcheting up the charm.

LIAM (CONT'D)

You know what I've always liked about you?

CLEMENCE

No.

He advances on her. Moves his face in close to hers.

LIAM

That you have absolutely no idea how sexy you are.

He goes in for a kiss, but Clemence pushes him away.

LIAM (CONT'D)

What's the matter with you?

CLEMENCE

I don't want to do this.

LIAM

I don't understand.

CLEMENCE

There's somebody else.

LIAM
A boyfriend?

CLEMENCE
A person.

LIAM
Where'd you meet him?

CLEMENCE
At ... work.

LIAM
You know what I think? I think
you're still mad about the whole
Fiona thing and you're just trying
to turn the tables on me. Any
chance that's what's going on here?

CLEMENCE
Believe me, you don't have the
faintest idea what's going on here.

She moves toward the door. Puts her hand on the knob.

LIAM
I thought you were smarter than
this. I really did.

She stops. Sensing he's found a chink in the armor:

LIAM (CONT'D)
I thought you got me in a way Fiona
never could.

Clemence turns back to face him.

CLEMENCE
What do you mean?

LIAM
You know I could never be serious
about someone like her. Come on!
With the macrobiotics? Ayurvedic
chanting? And all of her petty
jealous crap.

CLEMENCE
She's just young.

LIAM
Too young. I felt like the
babysitter. But with you...

CLEMENCE

You always do this! It's always how I'm different from other girls. It's like you care more about what I'm not than what I am.

Liam puts his arms around her waist. Pulls her in close.

LIAM

So what are you?

She stiffens. He runs a hand up her back, murmurs in her ear:

LIAM (CONT'D)

There at the end I kept having this feeling about you, you know?

He unhooks her dress. It puddles at her feet.

LIAM (CONT'D)

This feeling of disappointment. Like you weren't turning out to be who I thought you would. But now--

CLEMENCE

Okay. That's it.

She shoves him into the sink. He YELPS. Rubs his back.

LIAM

If this is some kind of foreplay it's not exciting anymore.

CLEMENCE

You didn't like who *I* was turning out to be.

LIAM

Oh, come on, don't take it like that. You know what I meant.

CLEMENCE

The word "disappointment" doesn't leave much room for interpretation.

LAUGHTER RESOUNDS. Liam swivels his head in a panic.

LIAM

What was that sound?

But she doesn't notice. Memories are flooding back to her:

CLEMENCE

Your novel sucks.

LIAM

What?

CLEMENCE

It *sucks*. I used to feel stupider after reading it. It sounds like it was written by a *caveman*. "Me smart. Woman pretty. Much sexing."

LIAM

It's primal.

CLEMENCE

It's terrible.

LIAM

Okay.

CLEMENCE

You're selfish in bed. And that thing you do where you narrate the whole time isn't as sexy as you think it is.

Liam reels from her sudden about-face.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

You let people think you bought that house but I know your mom paid for it. And your car is just silly.

LIAM

I love that car.

CLEMENCE

Remember when we went to see that movie last year and you kept laughing during the rape scene?

LIAM

I'm pretty sure the filmmakers intended for it to be taken humorously--

CLEMENCE

Ever since then I've thought there might be something seriously wrong with you. Like, in your brain.

He holds up a hand defensively.

LIAM

Okay, okay. Enough. Uncle.

CLEMENCE

I wasted so much time on you! Why'd I do that? What was I thinking?

LIAM

Well, you won't have to waste your time anymore.

He throws open the door to find Nathan, arm raised to knock.

LIAM (CONT'D)

(to Nathan)

Enjoy.

He pushes past him and disappears into the party. Nathan stands there for a moment, agape. Realizing she's still in her underwear, Clemence grabs a men's bathrobe off a hook.

CLEMENCE

Sh--

BLEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP. Nathan SLAMS THE DOOR as she covers herself.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

It's not what it looks like.

He gets out a cigarette.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

No joke?

He lights it. Takes a long drag.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

How about this: "It looks like he was checking you for skin cancer, so if it wasn't that, then you must have been having sex with him."

He's still silent.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

You're right. It needs work. What if I were to set you up better? How about I say "It was a mistake," and then you can say--

NATHAN

I know you didn't have sex with him.

CLEMENCE

Good. Because I--

NATHAN

Not because you didn't want to.
Because you *can't*. Next time you
want to cheat on me you're going to
have to leave the building.

CLEMENCE

(realizing)
That's why this happened!

NATHAN

What?

CLEMENCE

I was outside for too long today.
Yesterday I wouldn't have even
remembered that guy's name.
(remembering)
Oh god. I think old me might have
let him do some weird stuff to her.

NATHAN

Why would you tell me that?

CLEMENCE

I can't help it! Stuff from before
just keeps flooding back to me!

NATHAN

Don't try and blame this on before.
You chose to do ... whatever you
were doing. I watched you drag him
in here! So what is it? Huh? Am I
not giving you something you need?
Did you want to show off your new
body? Or did you just miss him?

CLEMENCE

I don't miss him, I miss the person
I was when I was with him.

NATHAN

Why?

CLEMENCE

Annie thinks mermaids are real. Did
you know that? She thinks they used
to exist. In the past.

NATHAN

So what?

CLEMENCE

Do you ever think about what it actually means to be happy?

NATHAN

What are you *talking about*?

CLEMENCE

Liam made me unhappy. All the time. But that's how I knew I was happy when I found you.

NATHAN

You're hysterical. Everything you're saying is gibberish. I can barely even understand you.

He takes her hands, tenderly pushes her hair from her face. Gentle, soothing, as if dealing with someone unhinged.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I know how hard it is. I held on to the old me for years. But this is never going to work if we don't both let go. Can you let go?

Clemence thinks for a moment. Finally, with determination:

CLEMENCE

Give me a cigarette.

NATHAN

Good idea. Fortify yourself.

He lights a cigarette and gives it to her. She takes a drag. Then, slowly and deliberately, she walks to the trash can and drops the lit cigarette inside.

At first it seems like nothing will happen. Then flames BURST from the wads of tissue paper.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Are you *insane*?

Clemence kicks the trash can toward the window. Fire begins to lick at the curtains.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

You'll burn the place down!

CLEMENCE

However awful we are, I want us to be that awful together.

NATHAN

You don't know what you're saying.

CLEMENCE

So you're a mess. I don't care! I'm a mess too. We can be a big fat ugly mess together.

NATHAN

We'll have nothing. *Nothing.*

CLEMENCE

At least we'll be people! People who can get naked and swear as much as they want and make the same mistakes over and over and over even though they should really know better. Maybe we have nothing out there, but in here we *are nothing*. And that's worse.

The bathroom is filling with smoke as flames touch the ceiling. Clemence COUGHS AND TEARS UP, but won't budge.

NATHAN

We had a plan! We agreed!

CLEMENCE

I want the real you. Not some punchline generator with washboard abs and no personality. Just you.

The FIRE ALARM begins to sound.

NATHAN

We have to go.

EXT. COURTYARD

Annie, Harris, Nathan and Clemence run down the stairs. Their guests funnel through the gate. Smoke billows wildly as the roof of the building catches flame.

NATHAN

I can't believe this is happening.

ANNIE

What will we do?

CLEMENCE

I'm sure *you'll* be fine.

NATHAN
Will they?

HARRIS
What are you two talking about?

NATHAN
Ask her. This is all her fault.

ANNIE
Guys, look. It's the neighbors.

As the watch, the other apartments' doors open and confused people wander into the courtyard.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
It's weird, but I don't think I've ever seen any of them before.

A woman in her mid-thirties, pantsuit, BARKING into a cellphone, approaches them: a FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST.

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST
I'm finding out right now.
(to them)
What's going on here? They need me at a crime scene five minutes ago.

A middle-aged DOCTOR in a lab coat joins them.

DOCTOR
Is anyone suffering from smoke inhalation?

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST
Who are you?

DOCTOR
(suave)
Dr. Lawrence Kilcannon. Surgeon at Los Angeles General.

CLEMENCE
That's not a real hospital!

But no one is listening to her. A college-aged guy (KURT) and girl (MARINA), attractive in a soap-y way, approach.

MARINA
Oh, Kurt. First my father lost our fortune in the stock market, then Paolo seduced with my stepmother, and now we have nowhere to live!

KURT

Don't worry, Marina. We'll be okay
as long as we're together.

DOCTOR

(to the pathologist)
I bought my car with the earnings
from my investments. You ever ride
in a Maserati?

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST

I don't have time for this, I've
got to prove myself to the chief!

The last of the neighbors, a well-dressed POLITICAL WIFE,
approaches. A regal air of authority even in a crisis.

POLITICAL WIFE

Everyone come with me. My ex-
husband is the mayor.

MARINA

Can he help us?

POLITICAL WIFE

I've kept his secrets for five long
years. If he wants me to keep them
for five more, he'll do what I say.

DOCTOR

I met him at a ribbon-cutting for
our new pediatric oncology unit.

FORENSIC PATHOLOGIST

My department recently received the
key to the city from him after I
solved the McClusky murders.

KURT

My father knew him well ... before
his *speedboat exploded*.

ANNIE

I think we'd better go with them.

HARRIS

I agree.

Annie, Harris follow the neighbors to the gate. Nathan grabs
Clemence's arm, but she shakes him away.

NATHAN

Come on. We're going with them too.

CLEMENCE
You cannot be serious.

NATHAN
I'm sorry to break this to you
after you've already *set fire to
our home*, but we don't have
anywhere else to go.

Flames illuminate their faces. In the distance, SIRENS sound.

CLEMENCE
That was like channel surfing with
a schizophrenic! They all think
they're the main character in ...
whatever they're in. They're
talking about four different mayors
in four different realities!
They'll implode before they hit the
end of the street!

NATHAN
Can't be any worse than us
imploding on our own.

Annie and Harris are holding the gate.

ANNIE
The fire department is here!
Everyone's leaving!

Nathan takes a step backward.

CLEMENCE
So that's it? You're just going to
abandon me in front of a burning
building?

NATHAN
I'm not a hero. I'm not even a
Harris.

He turns, walks to the gate. Glances back:

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Maybe I'll see you in some
laundromat somewhere.

The gate CLANGS SHUT behind him. Clemence waits.

CLEMENCE
Come back. Come on. Come back.

Nothing.

Firemen rush into the courtyard, SHOUTING. Clemence watches the building CRACKLE and burn. As their sprays of water hit the inferno, SIZZLING, she dissolves into her old self.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - BUNKS - THE NEXT MORNING

Clemence sits on a cot. Her bathrobe is torn, her face smudged with soot. Around her, HOMELESS WOMEN wake from the night; she blends right in.

As she stares straight ahead, dazed, we hear Fitz's voice.

FITZ (O.S.)
We're here for Clemence Jane.
Sorry. Janikowski.

Clemence's face lights up.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - FRONT DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Fitz and his boyfriend DAVID stand with Clemence across the counter from a SOCIAL WORKER filling out paperwork.

FITZ
I thought for sure I'd get down here and find out your message was some kind of practical joke.

CLEMENCE
Not a joke. Can't you tell? There's no laughter.

Fitz jerks his head around furtively. As a MAN passes them:

FITZ
I think that guy had a switchblade.

DAVID
Calm down.

FITZ
I can't believe you slept here.

CLEMENCE
I wouldn't call what I did sleeping.

The social worker glances up.

SOCIAL WORKER

Okay, Mr. Fitzgerald, just a couple details for the release paperwork. Relationship to admitted?

Fitz hesitates.

FITZ

Acquaintance.

Clemence winces.

SOCIAL WORKER

Address where admitted can be reached by her caseworker.

CLEMENCE

I have a name, you know.

SOCIAL WORKER

Address?

FITZ

Twenty-one-twelve Hayworth, apartment eleven.

Clemence looks at David questioningly.

DAVID

Our place.

CLEMENCE

As in yours and Fitz's?

DAVID

It's just a one-bedroom but we can make up the couch for you.

SOCIAL WORKER

Okay, you guys are good to go. Can I just say something? It's really good of you to take her in. We have a hard time making living arrangements for so many of the homeless women we see--

CLEMENCE

For the last time, I'm not homeless. I'm just displaced.

SOCIAL WORKER

You and everyone else here.

Fitz, David and Clemence walk away from the desk. As they go:

CLEMENCE

I know I don't deserve anything
from you.

FITZ

No. You don't.

CLEMENCE

But I'm really glad you're here.

As they exit, a second SOCIAL WORKER approaches the desk.

SOCIAL WORKER 2

Get ready. We got seven coming in.

SOCIAL WORKER

Seven? At once?

SOCIAL WORKER 2

Cops nabbed 'em in front of city
hall causing a ruckus, demanding to
see the mayor. Carol thinks maybe
they're fucked up on something.

SOCIAL WORKER

Must be something good.

SOCIAL WORKER 2

Yeah.

(sighs)

It's gonna be a long day.

INT. FITZ AND DAVID'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Clemence trails David and Fitz through the front door. Their apartment is homey, pleasant, comfortably furnished. French doors open to a balcony overlooking a tree-lined street.

CLEMENCE

This place is amazing.

FITZ

It's all him.

CLEMENCE

I figured.

David LAUGHS good-naturedly, but Fitz is less amused.

DAVID

We'll go get some sheets for you.

Fitz follows David down the hall. Clemence leans back to watch them go and catches them WHISPERING, clearly about her.

EXT. FITZ AND DAVID'S - BALCONY - THAT NIGHT

Fitz and David sit across from Clemence, who is wrapped in a quilt like a trauma patient. A couple of bottles of wine and glasses on the table between them.

DAVID

This is all just a little difficult
to swallow.

Clemence starts to make a joke, but Fitz catches her:

FITZ

Don't.

CLEMENCE

Sorry. Habit.
(to David)
Fitz saw it. He'll tell you.

David looks skeptically at Fitz, who nods, shrugging.

DAVID

Okay. Say this magical sitcom world
did exist. Now what? Is it just
gone forever?

CLEMENCE

I don't know.

DAVID

What will happen to all of them?
Can they survive in the real world?

CLEMENCE

Nathan seemed to think they were
just characters. That they'd only
ever existed there. But now I'm
wondering if they were once real
people themselves. Maybe they just
stayed for so long they completely
forgot who they used to be.

(shrugs)

For all I know they have family or
friends out here. People who will
be excited to see them again.

She steals a hopeful glance at Fitz. He ignores it.

DAVID
And Nathan?

CLEMENCE
He had the same choice I did.

She turns her head toward the street. To hide that she's crying? David quickly breaks the tension:

DAVID
Fitz showed me your website. Funny.

CLEMENCE
Thanks.

Fitz and David exchange looks. Fitz's expression: *I'm warning you*. David's: *It's worth a shot*. Clemence notices:

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)
What's going on?

DAVID
I have this friend who works in the art department at the LA Times. I'm sure she'd be happy to meet you.

Clemence bolts upright in her chair.

CLEMENCE
Really?

DAVID
I'm not sure she can do anything for you, but she can at least--

CLEMENCE
How soon can you set it up?

INT. CRAMPED OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Clemence sits across a desk from AMY, mid-40s, kind-faced. Print-outs of her old cartoons are spread out between them.

AMY
These are really funny. You definitely have a voice.

CLEMENCE
Thank you.

AMY
They put me in mind of Gary Larson.

CLEMENCE
I love Gary Larson.

AMY
(sighing)
I wish it were ten years ago. I'd
hire you freelance to do some
illustrations.

CLEMENCE
What?

AMY
Well, nobody just jumps to being a
cartoonist. You have to start
small. Unfortunately we're just not
big on illustrations these days.
It's all about infographics now.
Any chance you have experience
using InDesign?

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - AFTERNOON

Clemence trudges toward a metro station. At the top of the
escalator, she dumps the print-outs of her cartoons in a
trash can, then descends into the underground.

FADE TO:

INT. FITZ AND DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Fitz unlocks the door, enters to find Clemence asleep on the
couch. Her unwashed hair says she's been in bad shape for
days. An empty wine bottle rests on the coffee table.

FITZ
Okay. That's it.

He turns on a light. Clemence lifts her head groggily.

CLEMENCE
What time is it?

FITZ
Six.

CLEMENCE
In the morning?

FITZ
The fact that you even have to ask
me that should tell you something.

CLEMENCE

My mouth tastes like a toilet.

FITZ

Better than how you look.

CLEMENCE

Give me a break. I've been through a horrible trauma, remember? I need time to recover.

(picking up bottle)

Who drank all my day wine?

FITZ

It's been a month. A month that you've been hoboing all over my long-suffering boyfriend's Danish modern sofa. And for the last time, day wine is *not a thing*.

CLEMENCE

Agree to disagree.

FITZ

I picked something up today that I think is going to help you.

CLEMENCE

Is it drugs?

Triumphantly, he pulls a sketchpad and pencils from his bag.

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Those are some big rolling papers.

FITZ

You know what these are for.

CLEMENCE

Yeah, well, you can forget about that. I'm not doing it anymore.

FITZ

Look, I'm as sorry as you are that the LA Times thing didn't work out, but it's not a reason to give up.

CLEMENCE

Why bother when I know I'm just going to fail?

FITZ

This is what you chose.

CLEMENCE

I think I made a mistake.

FITZ

Yeah, well, that's the tricky thing about arson. It's kind of irreversible.

A beat as he realizes:

FITZ (CONT'D)

That's why you did it.

CLEMENCE

Did what?

FITZ

Burned it down. You wanted to make sure you could never go back.

CLEMENCE

Do I seem like I'm capable of that kind of thinking ahead? Now please go away. I have a big night of feeling sorry for myself planned and your cheerleader bullshit is making me late for it.

FITZ

It's not like your hand was amputated. If you'd just give it a try I'm sure you'd be back at it in no time.

CLEMENCE

But then what? I'll draw my little cartoons and eventually some of them will be good enough to show people and everyone will say they're so funny and I'll feel great. But I can't eat my warm and fuzzy feelings. So I'll get some minimum wage job, but when I come home after ten hours on my feet I'll just want to drink and watch that wedding dress show. I'll wind up with some loser guy who works in a cubicle and lives for Game of Thrones, but one day even he'll leave me for someone cooler.

(shrugs)

Try or don't try. Doesn't matter. It still comes out the same.

FITZ

So you try and you fail. And then you try and fail some more. That's what's supposed to happen.

He thrusts the sketchpad at her insistently.

FITZ (CONT'D)

You wanted to be a person again. That's what being a person is.

Clemence hesitates, then reaches out and takes it.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

--INT. FITZ AND DAVID'S - EVENING - CLICKING AND TYPING as Clemence uploads a new comic. In this one, cartoon Clemence walks away from the rubble of a burning building. Caption:

CLEMENCE (V.O.)

"Sometimes the only way to move on is to burn the past to the ground."

Comments quickly accumulate underneath: "Where've you been?" "DARK!" "So glad to see this blog come back to life."

--INT. CHAIN COFFEESHOP - DAY - Clemence stands behind the counter. Smiles, MAKES SMALL TALK with customers. She notices how BEST FRIENDS laugh at each other's every expression; spots a LITTLE BOY in a worn superhero outfit; watches an ELDERLY COUPLE fix each other's coffees just so.

--INT. FITZ AND DAVID'S - EVENING - Clemence works on a new comic. Panels show the coffeeshop from the SUPERHERO LITTLE BOY'S perspective: he wards off threats his mom doesn't see to make sure she gets her coffee safely. SCAN. CLICK. TYPE.

Commenters love it: "So sweet." "This reminded me of my nephew! Sent it to the whole family." "More like this please!" "Have you ever thought about doing a graphic novel?"

--EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY - Clemence walks home from work with a bouquet in hand.

--INT. FITZ AND DAVID'S - EVENING - Puts it in the center of the table, adds plates with food elegantly arranged on them.

--INT. COFFEESHOP - DAY - The daily activity of the coffeeshop WHIZZES AROUND HER, increasing in speed and intensity until it's just a series of zippy blurs, with Clemence holding still in the center.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. FITZ AND DAVID'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Fitz and David are headed out. Fitz carries a casserole dish, David a bottle of wine. Clemence sits on the couch.

DAVID
You sure you don't want to come?

CLEMENCE
I won't know anyone.

DAVID
They're nice. You'll like them.

CLEMENCE
I wouldn't be good company.

FITZ
You think you're going to be busy staring balefully out the window all night but you'll be bored in five minutes.

CLEMENCE
I'll take my chances.

They leave. She turns on the TV, lands on a sitcom re-run. At the sound of CANNED LAUGHTER she shuts it off in disgust.

As she leans back with her sketchpad, she hears a CRAZY PERSON SHOUTING from the street below.

MAN (O.S.)
I'm an ugly motherfucker!

Clemence rolls her eyes.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ugly! You hear that?

The voice is GETTING LOUDER.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Can you hear me?

CLEMENCE
(shouting)
Go away or I'll call the cops!

MAN (O.S.)
Clemence?

Clemence bolts upright on the couch.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Clemence? Are you up there?

CLEMENCE
Yeah?

MAN (O.S.)
It's me!

EXT. FITZ AND DAVID'S - BALCONY

Clemence runs onto the balcony to see NATHAN, back to his old self, standing in the quiet street below.

CLEMENCE
What are you doing here?

NATHAN
I have some things I have to say to you.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Shut the fuck up! Some of us have to get up early!

NATHAN
You shut the fuck up! I'm trying to do something romantic out here!
(deep breath)
Okay, here goes. First off, I'm losing the hair on the back of my head, and if my dad's any indication it'll be gone in ten years. I can't grow a beard, either, because my facial hair comes in in these ugly little patches. I have acne on my back and sometimes I forget to wash my bellybutton for embarrassingly long periods of time.

Clemence is baffled by this rant.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
I did sleep with a Tampa stripper once. I think she might have given me HPV but I'm too scared to get tested. That's not even true. I'm just irresponsible.

CLEMENCE

I've had HPV since college! But I call it slut cancer.

WOMAN (O.S.)

I CAN STILL HEAR YOU!

NATHAN

Shut your window, bitch!

Somewhere nearby a WINDOW SLAMS SHUT. Nathan continues:

NATHAN (CONT'D)

My testicles are weird-looking.

CLEMENCE

All testicles are weird-looking.

NATHAN

I haven't read half the books I say I have.

CLEMENCE

Sometimes after the weekend I tell people I went to the farmer's market and then for a long hike but really I laid in bed all day watching reality shows.

NATHAN

I put Miracle Whip on everything.

CLEMENCE

I hate shaving my legs.

NATHAN

I snore.

CLEMENCE

I pee in the shower.

NATHAN

I do that too!

CLEMENCE

I shoplift bras.
(off his reaction)
Bras are expensive.

NATHAN

I'm a terrible person. The worst person I know and possibly the worst person anyone knows.

A long silence as Clemence takes this in. Then:

CLEMENCE
(grinning)
Me too.

EXT. STREET

Clemence runs down the stairs, breathless, then catches herself before getting too close to him. Hesitates.

NATHAN
What's wrong?

CLEMENCE
I feel like we're supposed to kiss.

NATHAN
So?

CLEMENCE
I'm worried it won't be as good as
it was. You know. Before.

NATHAN
I didn't even think about that.

He considers, then suddenly grabs her, pulls her in close.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Fuck it. I can't wait anymore.

He kisses her. At first it's awkward; then they really dive into it. Finally Nathan pulls away, grins.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Not bad.

CLEMENCE
Eh, I've had better.

He laughs.

NATHAN
I like you out here.

CLEMENCE
You do?

NATHAN
Yeah.

CLEMENCE

Do you want to go get some food, or something?

NATHAN

Oh. There's one more thing I have to tell you: I don't have a car. Or any money. I dropped everything I had down that drain.

CLEMENCE

I did too.

A beat. Nathan is embarrassed. After a moment:

CLEMENCE (CONT'D)

Let's just walk.

He's surprised.

NATHAN

It'll take us forever to get anywhere.

CLEMENCE

Yeah. I know.

They start down the block, their backs to us. After a few moments, Nathan reaches down to take her hand.

MATCH TO:

INSERT - CARTOON

The same image, drawn. Clemence's hand adds a quick final touch or two. After a pause, she roughs in the caption:

"AND THEY LIVED SLOPPILY EVER AFTER."