

GIRLFRIEND MATERIAL

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - FRESHMAN DANCE - NIGHT

14-YEAR-OLDS bob and grind on the dance floor or nod to the music on the sidelines, dying to be asked. We move through the pure pubescence of it all, outside to...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

14-YEAR-OLD CLAIRE, cute but way overdressed in a crushed velvet dress studded with rhinestones. She pretends to be engrossed in a poster of sad cartoon horses surrounding a dead cartoon horse that says "Drugs: Just Say Neigh!"

Claire steals glances at 14-YEAR-OLD EMERSON, who collects tickets. He's still figuring out what look he's going for and not pulling off any of them: preppy sweater, wallet chain, fedora. When a big group enters, Claire makes her move.

YOUNG CLAIRE

Oh, hi, Emerson, I didn't see you there or remember that you were taking tickets from eight to nine. It probably slipped my mind while I was thinking about art.

YOUNG EMERSON

Whoa, really? I do a lot of art.

YOUNG CLAIRE

We have so much in common! Do you want me to keep you company?

YOUNG EMERSON

Sure.

She takes the folding chair beside him. They sit in silence.

YOUNG CLAIRE

You know Janet's party next month?

YOUNG EMERSON

Yeah, I heard we're going to make candles.

YOUNG CLAIRE

I heard that too! We should, like, go together. To the party.

YOUNG EMERSON

Yeah, that'd be awesome. Cool,  
cool, cool. It's triple... cool.

They both grin, then look anywhere but at each other.

YOUNG CLAIRE

You know what would be so cute? If  
we slow danced out here.

YOUNG EMERSON

Ok.

They get up, fumble their way into each other's arms and sway  
to the muffled music.

YOUNG CLAIRE

I feel really comfortable with you.  
You can ask me anything.

She looks up at him with big, hopeful eyes and nods slightly.

YOUNG EMERSON

Claire? Will you be my girlfriend?

Claire beams. More kids enter and Emerson rushes back to the  
table, suppressing a grin of his own. A CRYING GIRL and her  
friends burst out of the gym. It's ugly, hiccupping crying.

CRYING GIRL

He just went. And danced. With  
Lydia. Pierce. And I. Am feeling.  
So. Much. Emotion.

Claire looks from the girl to Emerson and back.

YOUNG CLAIRE

I'm never going to be single again.

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

We pan across photos in skillfully crafted, handmade frames:

-Claire and Emerson after the prom. She wears his jacket and  
is mid-twirl, dancing in a parking lot.

-Claire and Emerson at a party. Everyone has red plastic  
cups, but Emerson pours Claire wine into a personalized glass  
(initials, lions wearing hair bows, unicorns in neck ties).

-Emerson sits at a desk in the library. Claire stands at the  
center of a semicircle: an acapella study break serenade.  
Claire is belting something out. Emerson loves it. Loves her.

Past the photos we find...

CLAIRE AT 24, preppy, and EMERSON AT 24, hipster, clicking personalized glasses of cheap champagne.

CLAIRE

I don't have to go.

EMERSON

Yeah, you do. This is your dream.  
And we're gonna make it. Because I  
love everything about you.

CLAIRE

Even my stupid ambition that's  
taking me to stupid California?

EMERSON

Even that.

Emerson hugs Claire like he's never letting go.

INT. SUSHI RESTAURANT - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

CLAIRE CUSHING, 27, headband matches her manicure, addresses an unseen male companion across the table. Claire is the worst kind of romantic: not hopeless, but unflinchingly hopeful. She doesn't just wear her heart on her sleeve; she wears every other internal organ as well.

CLAIRE

Long distance sucks. We knew that  
going in. But I don't have any  
doubt that we're doing the right  
thing. Because when you find  
something this good, you hold onto  
it. I know you feel the same way.

But she's not talking to Emerson. Her date, HUNTER, stares back, puzzled.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

And Manhattan Beach isn't *that* far.

HUNTER

Maybe we'll wait to discuss that,  
at least until date number two?

CLAIRE

You're so practical. You're gonna  
make a great dad.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

My boyfriend -- sorry, ex-boyfriend, a year later and I still have trouble with it -- he's great with kids. He lives in New York. That's the only reason we broke up, the distance. I'm not gonna lie, Hunter, there are still some feelings there, but obviously there will be until I'm in a new relationship.

She puts her hand on the table. Glances at it suggestively.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Do you not hold hands or something?

She signals to the WAITER. Turns to Hunter.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'll have a Diet Coke.

He double takes. Is she really asking him to order for her?

HUNTER

She'll have that. I'll have an Asahi. You want a beer? Sake?

CLAIRE

I'm not eating certain kinds of gluten right now. Including rice.

The waiter gives Hunter a concerned glance before leaving.

HUNTER

Oh, ok. Actually, I did the Paleo-diet for a while. It was intense.

Claire laughs way too hard. Hunter looks around: what?

CLAIRE

You're so funny! I love you.

They both freeze.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I don't. I didn't mean... But we are 98% compatible according to the old internet there, so I could love you and just not know it yet!

Their drinks arrive. Hunter takes a long sip of his beer.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

So, next month is my best friend's wedding -- favorite movie, by the way. You should totally come with me. Obviously, you'd want to meet Nadia and Aaron first. They'll love you. I think they have next Thursday free for dinner if you want to do a little double date?

HUNTER

Maybe. What do you do for a living?

CLAIRE

I work at an auction house. God, this is so easy. I could talk to you all night. Just talk. Cuddle. Maybe pull up something on Netflix and just laugh and be together.

She takes his hand while it's still holding his beer.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

A row of doors faces a breathtaking view of Los Angeles. JAKE STEIN, 28, kisses LAUREN, 20s. Claire's loud heels interrupt them. Her apartment is between Jake's place and the elevator.

LAUREN

I should go. Right? Unless you want me to stay over.

JAKE

I've got work early. Those tween moms aren't going to blur out their own breasts.

Claire fumbles for her keys as Jake walks Lauren out. Jake is handsome, all Converse and cultivated effortlessness. He's wearing the hell out of that flannel. His hair is sex.

LAUREN

Love those shoes.

CLAIRE

Target! Can you believe it?

JAKE

Good night, Claire.

LAUREN

Claire? I'm Lauren. I guess I'll be seeing you around.

As they walk past, Jake looks back at Claire, shakes his head and mouths, "No, you won't." Claire scowls and walks inside.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Girly with great taste. Claire lounges in sorority sweatpants and a LACMA t-shirt, her laptop open to her calendar. Dates are scheduled every night of the week: blue is a first date, green is second, red is third. Most dates are blue.

Jake walks by with ANOTHER GIRL, whose dark hair and cap cover her face (and who we'll later learn is TAYLOR WRIGHT).

CLAIRE

This is what is wrong with America.

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

Claire, surrounded by throw pillows, is on three different dating web sites, each with a different picture: eHarmony is pearls and pastels. Match.com is Claire holding a puppy at the beach. OkCupid is Claire in front of a huge oil painting, looking wistfully off camera.

Claire settles into a double bed, all the way to one side. She turns out the light.

The wall she shares with Jake elicits a moan. Then another. Then banging of the bed frame slamming into the wall.

CLAIRE

Come on, America.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

NADIA, 28, Claire's more classy than sassy black best friend, sits at her desk (beside Claire's empty one), on the phone.

NADIA

Ew, two in one night?

EXT. ECHO PARK FARMERS MARKET - DAY

Claire swishes through the market in her chic work attire. She waves to a FLORIST, cradling her phone in her neck.

CLAIRE

And the first one seemed so nice.  
Do you think that's what's going on  
with Hunter? No, we connected.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 Don't worry about it. I'm not  
 worried about it. Oh, so I just  
 discovered Groupon.

INTERCUT

INT/EXT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE/FARMERS MARKET - DAY

NADIA  
 Like when you discovered libraries.  
 And the Black Eyed Peas.

Claire, holding six bouquets of flowers, turns on a dime in  
 her stilettos, sidesteps a small CHILD and lands in front of  
 a BAKER's stall.

CLAIRE  
 Uncharted territory, yes. It is  
 making me super sad. It's like,  
 look how much you could save on  
 this wine tasting! Or this romantic  
 getaway! Or this segway tour! I  
 can't go on a segway tour by  
 myself.

NADIA  
 And you can't go with me because I  
 would never go on a segway tour.

Since her hands are full of flowers, the baker ties the  
 string from the box to Claire's bracelets.

CLAIRE  
 My life would be so much better  
 with a boyfriend. I would know so  
 much about wine! And the history of  
 the Santa Monica coastline, only  
 \$29, may purchase additional as  
 gifts...

NADIA  
 Veto. Claire, you've got to relax.  
 You can't rush a relationship.

Claire kisses the baker goodbye and walks briskly to her car,  
 where she struggles to load everything in.

CLAIRE  
 I'm not! I'm just being nice. I'm  
 following my heart. And I'm showing  
 them how great a girlfriend I am.  
 It worked on Emerson.

NADIA

When you were fourteen. Remember, you always find love when you're not looking for it. Like me and Aaron when I randomly went to that young Jewish medical professionals meeting back in school. Was I looking for my future husband?

CLAIRE

Yes. But ok, I'll actively try not to look for it. See you in 20.

Claire hangs up and slides into her car full of flowers.

INT. CLAIRE'S PRIUS - DAY

Claire starts the clean air engine. The radio delivers a healthy dose of early AM Taylor Swift. Claire sings along.

CLAIRE

*Standing by here waiting at your back door, all this time how could you not know, baby? You belong with me. You belong with me.*

Claire's not the best singer, but she's happy. Hopeful. Full on doing a choreographed dance in her car.

She makes eye contact with a CUTE MALE DRIVER. Keeps singing to him. He gives her a pitying smile. She grins back.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

Claire scurries in with the flowers and baked goods, humming.

CLAIRE

Why do pictures when you can do this, right?

NADIA

You got sample bouquets? You're amazing! And what is that?

Claire opens the box of baked goods: brownies.

CLAIRE

You're the peanut butter, I just got regular for everyone else.

NADIA

This why you are the perfect woman.  
And I will marry you if no one else  
does. And love you and care for you  
and never make you wear Spanx.

CLAIRE

Hey, check Missed Connections. I  
just had a serious moment with this  
guy on Alvarado. I wonder if he  
posted something yet.

A cubicle over, DAPHNE, pretty and polished, compares  
engagement rings with MARGOT, whitest girl ever.

MARGOT

I love the square cut cause it's  
classy but also like, mad gangster.  
(calling out)  
Right, Nadia? Bling, bling!

Nadia holds up her own beautiful engagement ringed finger  
over the partition while rolling her eyes at Claire.

NADIA

Holler back, girl! Get yours!  
(to Claire)  
She is literally the dumbest. She  
asked if I was Beyonce's twin.

CLAIRE

When clearly you look like Rihanna.  
Or Vivica A. Fox. Or the one other  
black person she's ever seen.

Margot and Daphne appear over the partition. They've  
downshifted into their most pitying smiles.

DAPHNE

We feel bad. We shouldn't be all  
happy about our futures in front of  
you like that. Are you ok? Are you  
sad inside? Do you feel like being  
Nadia's maid of honor might be the  
closest you'll ever get?

CLAIRE

No.

MARGOT

Aww, sweetie! Hang in there. Black  
power, right Nad?

She holds up a fist. Nadia just looks at it. Margot doesn't sit back down until Nadia puts her fist up, too. Nadia gives the air a quick punch, then gets back to work.

Claire takes out a piece of monogrammed stationery and begins a thank-you note in lovely, cursive French.

NADIA

Claire... I got a phone call while you were on your way in.

CLAIRE

Cool, I love phone calls!

Claire's fountain pen bleeds a drop of ink. It's still fine, but it's not perfect. Claire crumples up the note and tosses it in the trash with a flick of her wrist. She starts over.

NADIA

Claire.

Claire looks up.

CLAIRE

Why are you looking at me like you looked at that picture of Daphne's puppy in a tiny wheelchair?

NADIA

Emerson's coming to the wedding.

Claire looks back down at her thank-you note.

NADIA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, we invited him because Aaron invited all those guys and we didn't actually think he'd come and we can totally uninvite him--

CLAIRE

No. It's your day. Just, do you happen to know if he's bringing the slutty hyphenate?

NADIA

Petra?

CLAIRE

Model-activist-scholar-slut-person-who-totally-would-be-named-Petra.

NADIA

Yeah, slutty hyphenate's coming.  
I'm so sorry.

CLAIRE

No, no. I just need to process  
this. Ok. I am going to meet  
Emerson's girlfriend. You know  
what, fine. I can do that.

NADIA

Oh.

CLAIRE

Oh? Why "oh?" Nadia, why "oh?"

NADIA

I guess... I just heard, it could  
be totally false, but I guess he  
asked... They haven't set a date.

A pregnant pause. Then Claire paints on a huge smile.

CLAIRE

Oh. Well, great. Because now I just  
definitely will have a boyfriend by  
the time you get married.

NADIA

You could say you have a boyfriend.  
Who's in the Marines and a flautist  
and a classy stripper. Your own  
slutty hyphenate!

CLAIRE

How would lying get at the root of  
the problem, Nadia? You know what?  
I'm fine. I've got a great job, and  
a super pretty best friend, and  
I've got a date tonight. I'm  
absolutely, 110% fine.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING GYM - NIGHT

Claire ellipticals furiously while watching "Millionaire  
Matchmaker," headphones in. We only hear her, not the TV:

CLAIRE

"Love. Everyone wants it, but not  
everyone finds it."

Claire bursts into tears. She ellipticals harder.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire, post-gym, exits the elevator. She runs into Jake.

JAKE  
Hey. Damn.

CLAIRE  
Hi. What?

JAKE  
You look hot.

CLAIRE  
Funny.

JAKE  
Not kidding.

CLAIRE  
Shut up, I'm disgusting.

JAKE  
Just take the compliment.

He steps into the elevator.

CLAIRE  
No. It's a fake compliment. You're  
mocking me.

JAKE  
I am not mocking you. You look hot.  
You're all flushed, and you got  
your spandex going on and--

CLAIRE  
Are you gaming me? You think you  
can make me feel all insecure and  
I'll sleep with you?

JAKE  
Is it working?

CLAIRE  
Are we sleeping together?

JAKE  
I don't know, I wouldn't be able to  
tell because I'm a virgin. That,  
actually, has worked.

He lets the doors close. Claire frowns.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CLAIRE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

-Wash. Rinse. Repeat. Condition. Body scrub. Loofah. Shaving.

-Pluck eyebrows. Brush teeth. Find stray eyebrow hair. Halt teeth brushing to tweeze.

-Flip head upside down. Volumizing spray. Blow dry with round brush. Flip head up. Shine spray. Blow dry with flat brush.

-Try on a ruffly dress. Jeans and a flowy top. A tight, black number. Ok. Try two pairs of shoes. Reject the whole outfit.

-Eyeliner. Lip liner. Mascara. Powder. Bronzer. Blush. Eyeshadow. Lipstick. Lip gloss.

-Claire is ready to go: romper, sweater cape, ankle boots, a huge necklace, full makeup, big, sexy hair with a few tiny braids cascading down, purse.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

And now she waits. Claire researches Gauguin collectors on her laptop. She checks her cell phone every two seconds.

A knock at the door. Claire answers.

JAKE

Hey. Whoa. You look...

CLAIRE

Thanks. See? I took a compliment!

JAKE

Yeah... Hey, can I snag "Life Aquatic" back from you?

CLAIRE

Oh, yes!

Her ankle boots clomp on the wood floors as she fetches the DVD. Jake flinches.

JAKE

Date tonight?

CLAIRE

I'm playing that awkward game where you don't want to be late so you start getting ready early but then you don't want to be early so you sit around your house in full makeup.

JAKE

Of course, that game. I've got to get back.

CLAIRE

To using Wes Anderson to get laid?

JAKE

For your information, yes, but it's with my girlfriend, so...

CLAIRE

What? Stop it. Stop.

JAKE

I'm not doing anything.

CLAIRE

You have a girlfriend? Singular? You don't do that. You have a revolving door of amazing women that you fail to appreciate. I've been your neighbor for six months and have never seen you with the same girl twice. You had two girls over in one night!

JAKE

Ok, Harriet the Spy, yes. I can be a little promiscuous. But I appreciate Taylor.

CLAIRE

Taylor is a great name. Great name. Tell me everything. Are you in love? What do you love about her? Is there so much holding?

JAKE

No. Taylor's different. She's like, a guys' girl. She can hang.

CLAIRE

Oh, I get it. I mean, I, obviously, can hang, as well.

JAKE

Cause all this screams "chill."

He gestures to Claire's outfit.

CLAIRE

I'm wearing a romper. Like, for romping around. That's very chill.

JAKE

It's pretty. It's just confusing.

CLAIRE

What's confusing about it?

JAKE

How to take it off. I mean, is that a dress? Is it shorts?

CLAIRE

It's a romper.

JAKE

Do I pull it over your head? Unsnap it at the crotch? It's a fucking mystery. And what is on top?

CLAIRE

A capelet.

JAKE

Does it wrap around like a scarf? Where are your arms coming from? And then there's the scary hair.

CLAIRE

Why is my hair scary?

JAKE

It's untouchable. If I spend five hours on something, I don't want some dude messing it up while he's trying to get in my romper.

CLAIRE

But it's already messy. It's messy sexy. On purpose.

JAKE

And then you're wearing a chastity belt around your neck.

CLAIRE

Why are you being so mean to me?

Jake's face falls: she's actually hurt.

JAKE

Claire, I'm sorry. Don't listen to me. I'm lazy. But you have your shit together. A+, you! You have a grown up job and you're looking for a real relationship.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm like, whatever, we're in our twenties. Let's go hang gliding and eat a lot of pudding.

CLAIRE

Pudding.

JAKE

I should get back.

CLAIRE

Why? Sounds like she'll be totally chill about it.

JAKE

Yeah, she will. She's great.

CLAIRE

Well, excusing rude behavior isn't great. It's just... it's neutral.

JAKE

All I was trying to say was that I, personally, find trying as hard as that outfit exhausting. But power to you. It's awesome that you spend all that time and energy finding these dates and dressing up and trying to make it something but... what if it's a miserable failure?

CLAIRE

Then that sucks. But if it's not? It's the best thing ever.

She's so earnest. It's beautiful and pathetic.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm going to go on my date now which is going to be amazing.

JAKE

I'm gonna go get naked and stoned and watch this movie with my hot girlfriend. I win.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

WES, 30, hoodie, baseball cap, sits with Claire, overdressed.

WES

I liked your profile because you said you were a romantic.

CLAIRE

Most guys aren't into the whole mushy, making an effort thing.

WES

I'm not most guys. For example, I have a beautiful view from the roof of my building but you're not allowed inside my apartment until, like, date 9000. How's your mojito made with Splenda instead of sugar?

CLAIRE

Excellent, thank you.

EXT. WES' ROOF - NIGHT

Claire and Wes, wrapped in a blanket, take in the view.

WES

You cold?

CLAIRE

I'm perfect.

WES

Yeah you are.

He kisses her. She kisses back.

WES (CONT'D)

Not to say we can't go downstairs.

CLAIRE

Oh, come on.

WES

Sorry. You're way out of my league, you're probably not going to call me back. I had to give it a shot.

CLAIRE

If I go downstairs, I spend the night. If you want to have sex? Breakfast in bed and monogamy.

WES

You're worth it. And you're worth waiting for.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire clomps past her apartment and raps on Jake's door.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE, 20's, opens the door to their bro-y apartment.

CLAIRE  
Hey, George. Jake here?

GEORGE  
(calling out)  
JAKE.

Jake walks out, stoned and naked.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Jake's here.

CLAIRE  
Hi. I just wanted to say... I can  
see your penis.

He grabs a bag of tortilla chips. Places them strategically  
and savors a few like they're the best thing he's ever eaten.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Really? Just tortilla chips? Plain?

JAKE  
So? He like the capelet?

CLAIRE  
Oh, he liked more than the capelet.  
Saturday, we're going on a picnic  
up in the hills. There's going to  
be a super moon and we're going to  
drink wine and eat olives and look  
at it. I win.

JAKE  
Yes, you do. He doesn't, cause no  
guy wants to look at the moon on  
purpose. But good work. Hey, bring  
him to our party after.

CLAIRE  
Ok! I so will! Can I borrow another  
movie to fall asleep to because I'm  
still temporarily super alone?

He nods. She peruses. Finds a DVD called "BULLET."

JAKE  
Of course. Oh, not that, that's...

CLAIRE  
Is this your short? Can I watch it?  
Or do you have something newer?

JAKE  
You don't want to watch that.

CLAIRE  
I'm taking this and "Eternal  
Sunshine." Buy more happy movies.  
Like Kate Hudson movies where  
there's kissing and happiness.

JAKE  
I absolutely will. Now, can I pay  
for those with a debit card or do  
they only accept my testicles?

CLAIRE  
Oh, Jake. No one wants those. Not  
even in trade.

Claire walks out.

EXT. HILLTOP - WES' CAR - NIGHT

Wes and Claire gaze at the super moon, a picnic laid out on  
the hood of his car. She wears a different sweater cape.

They kiss. They kiss harder. Wes pulls away.

WES  
I know this is fast, but it's so  
romantic with the moon...

Claire nods.

WES (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

CLAIRE  
It's so romantic.

INT. WES' CAR - NIGHT

Wes and Claire have sex in the back seat. He's on top, eyes  
closed, very chatty. She's still wearing her sweater cape but  
it's pushed up over her boobs.

WES

Yeah, you like that? You like when I do that?

CLAIRE

Yeah, it's--

WES

You like sex, don't you? You. Like. Sex.

Claire leans back to look at the moon through the window.

CLAIRE

Can you see the moon?

WES

Yeah, the moon. You want to come for me? Yeah you do, come on.

CLAIRE

Wait, sorry, ow, can we switch positions? And then you can see the moon and I can...

Wes flips her over. Doggie style may not be romantic, but they can both see the moon, at least!

WES

Yeah, there you go.

Claire looks up at the moon. Wes puts a hand on her head, pushing it down as his face twists up pre-orgasmically.

Claire keeps trying to see the moon. Wes pushes her head further and further down until it's on the seat. He finishes as she stares at the back of the driver's seat.

She hears the car door open, and looks behind her. Wes pees on a bush. She puts herself together.

INT. WES' CAR - NIGHT

Claire holds the picnic basket and strokes Wes' hair. He keeps his hands to himself as he drives.

CLAIRE

That was fun, right?

WES

Definitely.

Claire fiddles with the radio.

RADIO

...And it's 57 degrees along... the coast! *Love songs on the coast.*  
*KOST one-oh-three-point-fiiiiive.*

"All My Life" by K-Ci and JoJo plays. Claire turns it up.

RADIO (CONT'D)

*Baby, baby, baby, baby, baby...*

CLAIRE

Yes! This is so my song.

Claire serenades Wes.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

*I will never find another lover  
 sweeter than you, sweeter than you.  
 And I will never find another lover  
 more precious than you, more  
 precious than you. Girl, you are  
 close to me you're like mother...*

Wes smiles weakly.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Come on! You know it!

WES

Yeah, hey, I may just drop you if that's cool?

CLAIRE

You don't want to come to the party?

WES

My friend Megan has this thing.

CLAIRE

Should I come to that?

WES

She's weird about new people. Models, you know?

CLAIRE

I don't.

WES

Listen, I know you're the kind of girl who needs a lot of time, and I want to be fair and let you know up front, I can't really be that guy.

CLAIRE

I'm not that kind of girl. I'm not  
any kind of girl. I'm just me,  
super chill. Claire Cushing.  
Person. Regular style.

WES

I'll keep you posted.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Claire gets out. Wes immediately changes the radio station.

CLAIRE

So we'll just meet up later, then?  
No sex without a sleepover, right?

WES

I'll try to text you.

He rolls up the window. Claire stands there with her picnic  
basket and her deluded smile.

CLAIRE

Talk to you later!

He's already gone.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

He's not going to text you.

Claire turns. TAYLOR WRIGHT, 25, hoodie unzipped to show off  
some cleavage, skintight jeans, baseball cap low, smokes a  
cigarette, leaning against the door to keep it open.

CLAIRE

Not that it's any of your business  
but, yeah he is. We just had a moon  
picnic.

TAYLOR

Please don't elaborate. I don't  
know what that means but it's  
already the dumbest fucking thing  
I've ever heard in my life.

Claire frowns. Taylor picks up a beer by her feet and takes a  
long sip. Claire starts through the door.

CLAIRE

You shouldn't smoke. Guys don't  
like smokers.

TAYLOR

Actually I'm doing it to cover up  
the smell of fucking. A guy. Boom.

She offers her hand for a high five. Claire gently smacks it.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I probably should have washed that  
hand. You know how your hand smells  
like balls after for, like, ever?

Claire forces a laugh and pushes the elevator button.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

She looks back at Taylor. She slides the picnic basket onto  
her forearm and takes hand sanitizer from her bag.

The elevator doors open. Claire walks in. Sniffs her hand.  
She squeezes out hand sanitizer as the doors close.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire eases the door open to find a small, loud party of  
mostly GUYS. "Anchorman" on the flat screen, beer pong, radio  
rap, weed. She's ditched the basket and now has a bowl of  
peaches and wine. Jake makes his way over.

CLAIRE

I brought stuff for white peach  
sangria!

JAKE

Hi! And you brought a date, yeah?

CLAIRE

He's gonna try to text me later.

JAKE

Ouch.

CLAIRE

No. No ouch. It was great.

JAKE

It's not that hard to send a text.

CLAIRE

Exactly. So he's going to.

Taylor approaches from behind and slips an arm around Jake.

TAYLOR  
He's not going to text her.

Claire gapes as Taylor gives Jake a long, wet kiss.

JAKE  
Claire, this is my girlfriend  
Taylor. Taylor, this is Claire.

Claire is in shock.

TAYLOR  
I'm gonna call you Moon Sex.

CLAIRE  
I'd prefer Claire.

TAYLOR  
I feel like I might have just  
learned the most interesting thing  
about you. That's sad as fuck.

CLAIRE  
No, I--

TAYLOR  
I shoot guns in my spare time. You  
like to be called Claire. This is  
why I hate girls.

BEN, 26, thinks his life is "Entourage," spots Taylor from  
the beer pong table.

BEN  
Taylor, you tremendous whore! Get  
back over here, I need your skills!

TAYLOR  
Ben, chill. I'm being introduced to  
the girl who's gonna get your dick  
wet later. Who needs a beer?

Everyone does. Guys stare at Taylor's ass as she bends over  
the fridge, bright red thong exposed.

CLAIRE  
That's Taylor? That's the girl that  
finally got you to settle down?

JAKE  
Isn't she fun?

Taylor hands out beers to the guys and ignores the GIRLS. The guys love her -- high fives, huge laughs. Taylor and Ben face off against MATT and George.

TAYLOR  
Hey, George? What's the difference  
between you and me?

GEORGE  
What?

TAYLOR  
One of us had sex in your shower  
this morning.

She sinks her ball into his cup. Everyone cheers.

GEORGE  
Jake, you have your own bathroom!

TAYLOR  
We know. We did it to spite you.

GEORGE  
Oh, hey, Taylor, your dad called.  
No, wait, he didn't, ever!

Silence. Then Taylor laughs, hard, and everyone joins in.

MATT  
Jake, I want to marry your  
girlfriend!

Claire stares in horror.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Claire measures Triple Sec. Jake, Taylor, Matt and co take shots. They chase with white peach.

CLAIRE  
How did you guys meet?

TAYLOR  
It's such a cute story.

MATT  
Taylor wanted to fuck Jake. And  
then she did.

TAYLOR

Shut up, Matt. I was dating this guy Mike, but I kept seeing Jake at my gym. Now, I'm not one of those girls who goes to the gym to burn calories. I box. So for me to notice a guy there is a big deal. Cause when I box, I'm in my zone.

CLAIRE

That's like when I do Pilates--

TAYLOR

So Mike and I are at a Dodger game.

JAKE

Claire doesn't want to hear this.

TAYLOR

I'm wasted. And I see Jake! So I'm all, Mike, get me a frozen lemonade. Cause the line is mad long, right? Then I pull Jake into the nastiest bathroom ever. No one's in there.

JAKE

People were in there.

TAYLOR

Whatever, I was drunk. And I just rip his pants off. And part way through I look up and go, "I'm Taylor Wright. I'm awesome at blow jobs. Exhibit A."

Everyone but Claire laughs.

CLAIRE

That led to a relationship?

JAKE

I had to track her down cause she wouldn't give me her number. And then after a while of sleeping together it was like, oh, wait, we really like each other. It was just really easy. Natural.

TAYLOR

At first I was like, we're in our twenties. I'm not settling down or whatever.

(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

But then I was, like, it's better to try a bunch of weird sex stuff with just one guy.

They high five. Claire pours herself a frantic shot.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Finally, Moon Sex is getting fun.

She smacks Claire's ass.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire mixes sangria in the bowl with increasing anger. Her phone is on the counter in front of her.

CLAIRE

I brought a picnic. He's going to text. Or call. He'll probably call.

JAKE

Ok.

CLAIRE

You think he won't? Be honest.

JAKE

You gave the guy a road map to get into your pants. He used it.

CLAIRE

Mother of Kate Middleton's handbag.

JAKE

I don't know what that means.

CLAIRE

I'm never going to be not single again.

JAKE

Let's get you--

Claire drinks from the bottle of wine.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Drunk, ok, you're ahead of me.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire dances alone with the wine bottle. The music changes to "99 Problems" by Jay-Z. Taylor boogies out, ass first.

TAYLOR  
This is my jam!

Claire tries to dance alongside her. Taylor raps in her face.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
*I got the rap patrol on the gat  
patrol. Foes that wanna make sure  
my casket's closed. Rap critics  
they say he's "Money Cash Hoes."*

Claire backs off. Taylor has the floor to herself.

CLAIRE  
My best friend is black. So.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire walks up to Matt, all hair-touching and nervousness.

CLAIRE  
I'm Claire. Did I hear you say  
you're a teacher?

MATT  
I'm Matt. Yeah.

CLAIRE  
So you like kids. How many do you  
want?

MATT  
None right now.

CLAIRE  
Oh, cool! I had an abortion in high  
school. Now you tell me a secret.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire and Taylor dance and share the bottle of Triple Sec.

CLAIRE  
I'm gonna write you a thank-you  
note!

TAYLOR  
You talk a lot!

CLAIRE  
I love you!

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Claire, wasted, cradles her phone as she washes plastic cups.

CLAIRE

Listen, Wes, you have not sent me a text message, which is so lame because we had moon sex. And I just wanted you to know, you ruined the moon for me. You ruined the moon.

Claire lets the phone drop to the floor.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Nailed it.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake stands over Claire.

JAKE

Claire?

Claire sleeps on the couch amidst the mess and mistakes of last night: beer cans, peach pits, the requisite puddle of something sticky.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Claire? You alive, champ?

CLAIRE

Uggghhh. No. Why am I here?

JAKE

You passed out after you tried to make cookies.

CLAIRE

How'd that work out for me?

JAKE

We didn't have any butter, sugar, or flour, so you just cracked all our eggs into a bowl. And then you got sad. Really, really sad.

CLAIRE

Why didn't I sleep at my place?

JAKE

You were too lonely. Which is fair.  
I mean, Wes and the moon picnic,  
your ex is marrying some kind of  
eco-friendly prostitute...?

CLAIRE

I told you that stuff?

JAKE

You told me a lot of stuff.

Jake hands Claire a bag of cereal and joins her on the couch.

CLAIRE

I'm the worst. This is why people  
don't want a relationship with me.  
Maybe I should just stop trying.

JAKE

Hey, don't say that. I mean, if  
people like me and Taylor can find--

Claire sits up.

CLAIRE

Wait. Wait, wait, wait. You swore  
you'd never have a girlfriend. But  
you changed that for Taylor.

JAKE

I didn't change. She didn't make me  
feel like I had to.

CLAIRE

Which is why you changed your mind  
about relationships! Jake, that's  
it! Whatever she's doing... If  
someone like her can land the most  
impossible guy, then if I were like  
her, I could at least get someone.  
I need to be like Taylor. I need  
you to help turn me into that.

JAKE

You don't need to change anything.

CLAIRE

I won't, really. Just whatever it  
is I'm doing in the beginning to  
scare guys off, I'll stop doing it.  
Will you help me?

JAKE

You have better breakfast stuff?

CLAIRE

I have coffee. And go-gurts. And my eternal friendship.

JAKE

You had me at go-gurts.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

BEGIN MAKEOVER MONTAGE

-Jake towel dries Claire's hair. She looks mournfully at her blow-dryer. He kicks it away. She fusses with her hair.

JAKE

Low maintenance. Everything about you should say you don't care.

CLAIRE

I care a lot.

JAKE

I know. But you don't have to make it so abundantly clear the moment you meet someone. What are you writing?

A color-coded chart. In glitter pen. She writes "care less" in green.

CLAIRE

Blue is personal style, pink is grooming and green is personality.

JAKE

"Be mean." With six exclamation points.

-Jake throws Claire's makeup bag out. She grabs it.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Guys don't actually like when girls wear makeup.

CLAIRE

Taylor wears makeup.

JAKE

No, she doesn't.

CLAIRE

Jake. I promise you. She does.

-Jake looks in Claire's closet. Every pair of shoes is a pair of heels. He digs. Finally finds a pair of flip flops.

JAKE

Every time you put on a pair of four inch heels, you narrow the field of guys available to you.

CLAIRE

I don't mind if the guy is shorter.

JAKE

He does.

-Jake slaps a baseball cap on Claire's head.

CLAIRE

I don't feel like this works on my scalp shape.

Jake stares her down. Claire writes "ugly hair" in blue and "ugly hats" in pink.

-Claire walks out of the bathroom without any makeup.

JAKE

I guess Taylor naturally has darker eyelashes and tanner skin than you.

Claire grabs the makeup bag from him.

-Jake gestures to a stack of tank tops.

JAKE (CONT'D)

This and jeans.

CLAIRE

Those are for layering, though, so how many at a time?

JAKE

One.

CLAIRE

Well, that's uninspiring.

-Claire tries to walk in flip flops but walks on her toes.

JAKE

No, put your heels on the ground.

CLAIRE  
They don't do that.

-Claire walks out of the bathroom in natural-looking makeup.

JAKE  
Take off the lip stuff.

CLAIRE  
It's just clear lip gloss.

JAKE  
It looks sticky.

CLAIRE  
It's pretty.

JAKE  
Sticky.

CLAIRE  
Pretty.

JAKE  
I can leave whenever.

She throws it away. Jake adds "natural makeup."

-Jake has to physically restrain Claire in order to get to her computer. She screams.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
No. More. Online. Dating! It's  
inherently desperate!

They wrestle for a spot on the desk chair. It rolls away.  
They wrestle for a kneeling spot in front of her desk.

Jake grabs the mouse. Claire bites Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Ow! Fine.

He pushes the desk chair in front of the desk. She sits.

Jake sits on her. While Claire screams, he deletes all the dates scheduled on her calendar and discontinues her accounts on dating websites. Claire whimpers.

CLAIRE  
You have a very bony butt.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Claire chases Jake outside, which is difficult for her in the flip flops. He carries a large box with all the nail polish.

CLAIRE

They have sentimental value! I've collected those since I was eight!

Jake hands her the box.

JAKE

Here. But every time I see you touch your hair, you owe me one nail polish.

CLAIRE

I don't touch my hair.

Jake watches her. She stares back. He turns to go inside.

She runs her fingers through her hair compulsively.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

-Jake offers Claire a cherry chap-stick. She pouts. He applies the chap-stick to her pout.

-Claire puts her sneakers on. She gets up and immediately starts bouncing like she's warming up for an aerobics class.

JAKE

Stop bouncing. Be a normal person. This is not Zumba class.

CLAIRE

Love Zumba. Love.

-Claire looks skeptical as she stands before Jake in jeans and a white T-shirt. Jake reaches into Claire's jeans and pulls her thong over them. She swats him away.

JAKE

It shows you're comfortable with yourself! It's very laid back when a girl doesn't even notice her underwear's showing.

CLAIRE

Yeah, totally. Also indicative that she has multiple strands of HPV.

Claire adds "oh, look, I had no idea I was slutty" in letters that alternate between blue, pink and green.

-Jake gives Claire the hoodie off his back.

-Claire puts on her glasses.

-Claire stands before Jake, bespectacled and wavy-haired. She was Friday night pretty. Now she's Sunday afternoon sexy.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
I've never felt uglier in my life.

JAKE  
You're perfect.

END MAKEOVER MONTAGE

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

Claire walks on tip toes in her flip flops.

JAKE  
Ok, first test. You look great. But that's not everything.

CLAIRE  
I know. I made the chart.

JAKE  
Don't flirt. Just act casual, like you would with your friends.

CLAIRE  
Put them in my birthday calendar?

Jake stops.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Kidding.

They make their way to the table.

JAKE  
Hey, guys. This is Claire.

MATT  
Claire. Good to see you.

CLAIRE  
Damn right it is. I'm a freaking peach. Who's ready to get drunk and talk some shit?

Everyone moves to pull up a chair for her. Claire gives Jake an excited look as she sits next to Matt.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Oh, good. Football. I love sports.

GEORGE  
Who do you like?

CLAIRE  
I bought Lamar Odom's cologne for my cousin.

GEORGE  
Cool, that's relevant.

He gives her a condescending look and turns away.

MATT  
Claire, what're you drinking?

CLAIRE  
Is there a wine list around?

MATT  
Uh, probably?

JAKE  
She's kidding.

CLAIRE  
Psh, yeah I am. Who drinks wine in a football circumstance? I will drink beer.

Claire waits for him to order her one. He doesn't.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
So, I'm getting a beer. And not a light beer. A real beer.

No response. Claire stands. Jake follows her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
I can't do this. I can't pull off a complete lie about my personality.

JAKE  
Two Coronas.

The BARTENDER fetches their drinks.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You did it on those dating profiles. Come on. "Like a super fun experiment, woo!" That was you.

CLAIRE

Don't quit your day job. Except quit your day job, because you hate it. But also don't go into professional impersonations.

JAKE

What did I say about the talking?

CLAIRE

To do less of it.

JAKE

We're so young. We've got time. You're not going to be alone forever just because you don't find a boyfriend this second. So, relax.

Claire's eyes are wide. All she heard was "alone forever."

JAKE (CONT'D)

Think of it like this: you know when a guy doesn't call and it makes you like him more?

CLAIRE

I hate that!

JAKE

Ok, you're the guy, talking is calling, and the game is the other girl you assume the guy's with when he doesn't get in touch.

CLAIRE

What if I just tell him I think he'd look great in purple? He would. I want to buy him shirts.

JAKE

No, you don't. You don't even care about shirts. Because no guy wants a girl who wants to dress him up. Get back on the horse.

CLAIRE

What's the horse in this analogy?

JAKE

Go!

INT. SPORTS BAR - DAY

Claire sips her beer. Turns toward Matt. Opens her mouth, then stops herself. Nods as she watches the game. Sneaks a peek at him. His eyes are glued to the screen.

He claps. Claire follows suit.

MATT

You a Pats fan?

Claire looks to Jake, who sits on her other side. He holds a finger to his lips. Claire nods.

MATT (CONT'D)

Word.

Claire watches the game. She twirls her hair, bored.

JAKE

That's one.

She looks down at her hand. Removes her hair from it.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Claire and I have a couple bets on this game. She usually fucks me up.

Matt glances at Claire. She stoically watches the game.

MATT

Word.

CLAIRE

I don't care that I'm losing. I'm a very laid back person.

MATT

Cool.

CLAIRE

And I don't care about my appearance. Which is why I look so ugly. But, you know, who f-ing cares, right? I'm just, like, a total guys' girl, not caring. The picture of indifference right here.

Jake signals for her to cut it off, but Claire's on a roll.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I mean, yes, I get insecure, don't we all? But I don't care. I'm pretty relaxed about all the inner turmoil. Do I worry about being alone forever? Who doesn't constantly worry about that? Robots? Am I right? So, fine, I am looking to date someone seriously, maybe permanently. Like become married to them. I'm just saying this because I feel like we're friends, and I don't care what you think. Friend-igo. That's a bro-y nickname I just made for you.

She takes his hand. Matt looks around, nervous.

MATT

...Word.

He extracts his hand moves his chair away.

JAKE

We'll keep working on it.

She runs her fingers through her hair.

JAKE (CONT'D)

That's another one.

CLAIRE

If I got frozen yogurt right now and had way too much because I always get way more than I can eat, I would give you none of it.

JAKE

I'll just eat your nail polish.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - DUSK

The radio plays. Claire fiddles with the station.

JAKE

I think you're the last person in the country who listens to the radio. Do they tailor the ads to you? "Claire Cushing, you may not need an attorney right now, but what if you suddenly do? In the car or at Pilates, personal injury--"

CLAIRE  
Hush your mouth. This is my jam.

"I Can Love You Like That" by All-4-One plays.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
*I can love you like that! I can  
make you my world! Move heaven and  
earth if you were my girl!*

Jake rolls up the windows.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Boooo.

JAKE  
Naw, girl. Gotta keep it intimate.

CLAIRE  
What do you--

JAKE  
*I never make a promise I don't  
intend to keep. So when I say  
forever--*

Claire's jaw drops.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
*Forever's what I mean. You!*

CLAIRE  
*Well, I'm no Casanova, but I swear  
this much is true. You!*

JAKE  
*I'll be holding nothing back when  
it COMES to you!*

CLAIRE & JAKE  
*You dream of love that's  
everlasting. Well, baby open up  
your eyes! I can love you like  
that!*

INT. JAKE'S CAR - DUSK

Jake pulls into the garage.

CLAIRE  
See, I knew you were a romantic.

JAKE

I don't know about that. I've just got fond memories of doing the Bar Mitzvah circuit with that song.

CLAIRE

Come on, you're romantic. Remember, I saw your movie.

JAKE

You watched that?

CLAIRE

Of course. I liked it. You know, there was a lot of talking, and maybe it's just because I'm more visual, but I'd love to see you play around with that stuff more. Like that shot on the bridge? That was gorgeous. But you're really talented. What are you making now?

JAKE

Nothing. It's complicated. When I get the right idea, I'll do it.

CLAIRE

Don't you get sick of waiting? Just get after it. I moved here for a job and it turned out great. Taylor's working for that sports agent. Put yourself out there. What's the worst that happens? It doesn't happen for you.

JAKE

I've got time, we're--

CLAIRE

In our twenties, I know. With freaky sex girlfriends and apathy and pudding. But it's your passion.

JAKE

It's not that easy. I mean, I have to make it, get it out there...

CLAIRE

Cause in all of history, there's never been a worse time to put stuff on the internet. Make a webisode. Or a music video. Oh, make a music video!

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I know a bunch of really pretentious guys in bands. We could shoot it at the auction house! It's gorgeous and Nadia works in opps so we could totally get it!

JAKE

Maybe. We'll see. I mean, it costs money, it takes time. If it's bad, it's embarrassing.

CLAIRE

But if it's good, it's the best thing ever.

Jake laughs and shakes his head.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What? It is! Oh, I get it, "look at me, I'm Jake, I'm giving Claire noncommittal responses and condescending looks instead of going after my dreams because trying is gay. I'm so cool that I was wearing skinny jeans in 1998."

They look at each other expectantly. Like the end of a date.

JAKE

If I say I'll do it, will you get out of the car because we're home?

CLAIRE

Only way it's happening.

JAKE

Fine. I'll do it.

CLAIRE

Yay! We are taking control of our lives and it is awesome!

Claire does an excited little dance. She sings:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

*Exciting times! In our lives!*

JAKE

This is my excited face.

CLAIRE

Poor Taylor. *Enthusiasm is coursing through our veins and the blood is, like, get out of my way!*

Jake gets out of the car.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
*But the enthusiasm is, like, no!*  
*I'm here to stay!*

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

Claire walks in, comfortable again in four-inch heels. She sets her iced coffee down on a pile of papers.

NADIA  
 I missed you this weekend!

CLAIRE  
 I was working on my single status.  
 And a little something I like to  
 call... your bachelorette party.

NADIA  
 That's a really original name for  
 my bachelorette party. Can it just  
 be us? You know how I feel about  
 other people.

CLAIRE  
 I do.

Her coffee has made a water mark on the papers. She crumples them up and throws them in the trash over her shoulder.

NADIA  
 They're just so... loud.

CLAIRE  
 Yes. All other people are loud.

NADIA  
 You're not. I like you. Wait, so  
 you met someone?

CLAIRE  
 No, but I'm very excited about  
 this. My neighbor, Jake?

NADIA  
 Creepy Jake?

CLAIRE  
 He's nice. He's kind of giving me a  
 little male perspective makeover.

NADIA  
No, don't change!

CLAIRE  
Because you love me the way I am?

NADIA  
Yes. Plus I'm selfish and don't want to find a new friend. Also don't share drinks with him because it sounds like his mouth has been a lot of places.

INT. BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Claire walks in holding out four bottles of nail polish. She's nailed the guys' girl look: ponytail, men's tank top with her bra showing on the sides, jeans, sneakers.

CLAIRE  
I hate you.

JAKE  
And a good evening to you.

He takes the nail polish. They sit. Claire notices the third place setting just as...

TAYLOR  
Hey, Moon Sex.

She sits. A WAITER comes over.

CLAIRE  
Hey... tank top. Hi, I'll have, ah, the Southwest chicken salad, is that grilled or fried? And what's the base on the dressing?

TAYLOR  
She'll take it. Relax, you're tiny. Stop giving us all a panic attack.

The waiter leaves.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
Jake filled me in on your little project. I find it admirable that you want to reform yourself. And well played choosing the excellent role model of me.  
(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

So I'm going to give you a few pointers, and the first one is: don't talk all nervous like that.

CLAIRE

Ok. I'll order simply.

JAKE

It's more than that. Guys like a girl with a sense of humor.

CLAIRE

I know. I'm very good at laughing.

She demonstrates. It's the fakest thing ever.

JAKE

Oh, God. That's something you need to stop immediately.

TAYLOR

Laughing doesn't make you funny. Being funny makes you funny.

CLAIRE

I'm not funny. I'm nice. I'm smart. I bake amazing cookies.

TAYLOR

Don't tell me you're good at puzzles, too! This is just embarrassing how desperate you are.

CLAIRE

You know what? I'm a puzzle master. And I'm proud of it. And I'm proud of being thoughtful and romantic and all I'm trying to do is get a foot in the door so I can be with someone who likes all this stuff about me. Not change, just, foot in the door. Because if you want something, you do whatever it takes to get it. You move across the country for a job. You get dates on the internet. You wear baseball hats even though you have a beautiful head of hair. That's not desperate. It's making your life what you want it to be.

Jake and Taylor stare. He's inspired.

TAYLOR

I like her. I never like girls, but I like you.

CLAIRE

Well, we're not here for me. Aren't we working on Jake's project?

TAYLOR

No need. I pulled a few strings at work and got Jake a meeting with Matt fucking Kemp to pitch on his new music video.

CLAIRE

Really? Is that your aesthetic?

TAYLOR

Do you even know who Matt Kemp is?

CLAIRE

He's on the Dodgers. He used to date Rihanna.

TAYLOR

Well played, Cushing. Listen, you know why every guy thinks he's funny? Because they've seen movies.

JAKE

And we're mean to each other. Quote a Will Ferrell movie or just throw out a really solid diss, and suddenly, you're hilarious.

CLAIRE

Or, like, wordplay, right? And speaking in a British accent?

TAYLOR

Not even at all. Oh, look, your beer pong partner's here.

Ben walks in wearing a suit and looking crazy handsome. For once, Claire isn't overdressed. She touches her hair.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Yeah, I get shit done.

BEN

Who's ready to get fucked up? Or just fucked?

He humps the table.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Sup, I'm Ben.

CLAIRE  
We met. I'm Claire?

BEN  
Claire, I don't know how to put  
this... but I'm kind of a big deal.

INT. BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Ben rolls up his sleeves as the four make their way to a row of tables. Claire whispers to Jake.

CLAIRE  
You had to tell Taylor I was  
imitating her?

JAKE  
I thought she could help. And she  
doesn't have any girl friends.

CLAIRE  
Shocker. And not the kind I gave  
your mom last night. Eh? Ew.

JAKE  
There you go! Hey, have you ever  
played this?

CLAIRE  
A couple times in college. I'm not  
big on beer.

JAKE  
Can you throw a ball?

CLAIRE  
Am I a bad feminist if I say no?  
Wait, a ping pong ball? Hold up.

She grabs a takeout menu, crumples it up, and tosses it, just like she does at work when something isn't perfect.

It lands squarely in the front cup. Ben turns, impressed.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Put your face away.

BEN  
Nice burn!

INT. BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Claire and Ben face off against two BROS. Claire stands on her tip toes and has the girliest throw ever, but she sinks cup after cup, yelping after every hit.

CLAIRE

Alright, here we go, team Leather-Bound Books and Rich Mahogany!

She tosses the ball over her shoulder. And makes it.

BEN

Who are you?

CLAIRE

Claire Cushing?

BEN

Yeah, but who are you?

Jake and Taylor win at the next table over. They make out.

INT. BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

A crowd has gathered to watch Claire and Ben, who are down to one cup on each side against two BARTENDERS.

BEN

Distract them with your tits.

CLAIRE

No!

BEN

Taylor does it all the time.

CLAIRE

Yeah, well, I'm not--

She leans over the table and pushes her boobs together.

INT. BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Claire and Ben face off against two SORORITY GIRLS, all dolled up but very good. They lead by three cups.

SORORITY GIRL

Send 'em back, bitches!

BEN

We can come from behind.

CLAIRE

Just like that guy who never called you. And you know how your partner there said it was probably because he was busy or freaked out by how much he liked you or he lost his cell phone? She was lying to make you feel better. He didn't call because you're not that cute and your vagina feels like poison. But you kind of knew that anyway.

The sorority girl bursts into tears and storms off. The friend follows. A flicker of guilt. Claire shakes it off.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

This is why I hate girls.

BEN

Do you think that's true?

CLAIRE

I don't know. I can fit an entire slice of pizza in my mouth. So guys tend to call me after.

Claire glances after the sorority girls, concerned.

INT. BAR & GRILL - NIGHT

Jake sets up cups opposite Ben and Claire. Taylor walks over.

CLAIRE

You gonna try and psyche us out?

Taylor kisses her. Claire resists, then gives in. The bar cheers them on. Taylor pulls away with a final peck.

TAYLOR

Maybe a little.

She leans in and whispers to Claire:

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

You're welcome.

She nods to where Ben is openly gawking.

BEN

No, seriously. Who are you? I need to know something about you before I fucking marry your ass.

CLAIRE  
Buy a girl a burger first.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ben and Claire burst in, kissing. He tosses a homemade beer pong trophy aside. She sets a bag from In-n-Out on the floor.

CLAIRE  
Give me one second.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Claire paces on her tiptoes, on her phone.

CLAIRE  
Pick up, pick up... Jake! We have not yet discussed what the Hello Kitty I am supposed to do here.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Taylor plays xBox with George. Jake is on the phone.

JAKE  
What do you normally do?

INTERCUT

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM/JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLAIRE  
Don't go past second base and always sleep over even if he's pretending he doesn't want me to. And I share my hopes and dreams. It really amps up the intimacy. Dream sharing is very sexy.

JAKE  
It doesn't matter what you do as long as you make him feel like you don't care. Don't sleep over. Get out before he makes up an excuse to kick you out. You withhold the cuddle, you change the whole game. And, yes, I'm aware that cuddling is when the dream sharing happens.

CLAIRE

Withhold the cuddle. No dreams.  
That's sad. Ok, got it. I'm going  
to do this guy so hard. Or maybe  
just French kiss him a lot!

JAKE

That's wonderful, Claire.

Claire hangs up. Gives her dressed-down reflection a once  
over. She shakes her head.

CLAIRE

Really? This girl?

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ben edits a playlist. Claire sits on the floor eating fries.

CLAIRE

You know, I'm not going to care  
which Kanye West album you put on.  
I'm already super impressed you  
have all of them on mp3.

BEN

I'm pretty impressive. I mean, I  
did buy you a delicious In-N-Out  
burger. No big deal.

CLAIRE

No. It's not.

Ben looks back.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I ate some of your fries.

He gets down on the floor and kisses her.

BEN

I got you to stop.

Claire puts fries between her mouth and Ben's.

CLAIRE

Not so much.

They kiss through half-chewed fries.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire and Ben kiss in his bed, aggressive and passionate. Ben starts to reach up her jeans. Claire freezes.

CLAIRE  
Wait. Ah, I'm sorry.

BEN  
No, no, no. What's up?

CLAIRE  
I'm not... Is it cool if we don't?

BEN  
Are you on your period?

CLAIRE  
No. I'm just... I'm all talk. I'm a nice girl. I'm sorry.

BEN  
Don't apologize for that. I didn't think you could get more awesome. And then you just did.

CLAIRE  
Really.

BEN  
You're different from most girls. You're an actual person.

CLAIRE  
Pretty sure all girls are people.

BEN  
You know what I mean. I met you at a beer pong tournament. You're not obsessed with what guys think. You're not pretending to be all innocent when you're a huge slut.

CLAIRE  
That's what you think about girls.

BEN  
Not you. Be complimented.

He kisses her.

CLAIRE  
I'll be a little complimented.

BEN

Good. I never meet nice girls.  
Especially ones who can hang.

They kiss. Claire forces herself to get up.

CLAIRE

I can't hang now.

BEN

You don't have to go.

CLAIRE

You want me to stay and snuggle you  
to sleep? Actually, that would be  
great, I can finally learn how to  
braid hair. Maybe we can watch "The  
Notebook" and cry and catch the  
tears in little vials and make  
necklaces out of the vials and wear  
them like best friends.

BEN

Go. Have fun missing me.

She grabs the rest of the fries.

CLAIRE

See you later, Bro-ntosaurus.

She recovers from the awkward nickname with a condescending  
kiss on the forehead. She heads for the door.

BEN

I'll call you!

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As she leaves, to herself:

CLAIRE

Yeah, you will.

She exits the apartment, cool, collected.

INT. CLAIRE'S PRIUS - NIGHT

Claire gets into her car. She closes the door.

CLAIRE

YES!

She laughs, giddy, in shock. She starts the engine. Michael Buble's "Haven't Met You Yet" fills the car.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
*You'll make me work so we can work  
 to work it out!*

Claire bats her eyelashes at the rearview mirror.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
*And I promise you, kid, that I'll  
 give so much more than I get. I  
 just haven't met you yet!*

Claire gives a FEMALE DRIVER at a red light a wave.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 Love your top!

FEMALE DRIVER  
 Thanks! Station?

CLAIRE  
 Love songs on the coast!

CLAIRE & FEMALE DRIVER  
*KOST 103.5!*

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

Claire works on thank you notes, humming Buble.

NADIA  
 So have you heard from that guy?  
 From the other night?

CLAIRE  
 Nadia. Chill. And yeah I have!

NADIA  
 I just want to stay in the loop. I  
 feel like you don't update me now  
 that you have--

CLAIRE  
 Jake! Hey! Ah, you got Kemp!

Jake walks up.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 Congratulations!

JAKE

Thank you, I'm very excited.  
Couldn't have done it without you.

NADIA

I'm Nadia, assistant director of  
Operations. Claire told me a bit  
about the music video. She and I  
are both big Matt Kemp fans.

JAKE

So great to finally meet you. Yeah,  
it's going to be a kind of love  
letter to a post apocalyptic urban  
America and youth culture.

Nadia nods politely. Claire's work phone rings.

CLAIRE

Um, you guys both know what  
semiotics are. Discuss that.

She picks up. Nadia and Jake make conversation.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

This is Claire, how may I -- hi.

Claire's face falls. She hits her desk for their attention.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

No, no, it's a fine time. It's  
great to hear from you, Emerson.

JAKE

Fuuuuck. Sorry. Fuuuudge.

NADIA

No, I'm with you. This is fuck-  
worthy.

CLAIRE

She told me! And I appreciate you  
calling, but I'm fine with you  
being there. I can't wait to meet  
Petra. My boyfriend's coming, too.  
So it'll be one big, happy, well-  
adjusted, not awkward foursome. Of  
good feelings. And smiling. Woo.

NADIA

Oh my God, stop talking!

JAKE

Exactly!

CLAIRE

Oh. Oh, of course, you're calling about the gift! We haven't spoken in eight months and you're... Blues and browns, mostly. No, just one from Ikea. I'm sure they'd love if you made them a... No, I'm fine. I'm just distracted looking at my schedule because... Can I pick you guys up at the airport?

JAKE

No. No. No. Why.

CLAIRE

Cause it would be so un-weird is why! I'd love to. Oh my God, just get here already so you can see how fine I am with this. Ok, send me the flight info. Do you have my new email? Right, of course, because of all the sad, drunk ones I sent you. I have to go now, bye.

Claire hangs up. Stares at the phone in disbelief.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Well... I acted like I didn't care.

JAKE

But then you also offered... I'll lay off, you know what you did.

Claire slides down in her chair until she reaches the floor.

NADIA

You ok?

CLAIRE

I'm just going to sit on the floor for a second.

Nadia and Jake lean over the desk.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

He's making you a couch.

JAKE

Who does that?

CLAIRE

I know. I love him. And you know it's going to be beautiful which is just obnoxious.

NADIA  
So obnoxious. Did he need  
measurements or...?

Claire sits up and glares.

NADIA (CONT'D)  
I hate that couch already.

Claire lies back down on the floor and groans.

JAKE  
If you want to do the tour later...

Claire gets up.

CLAIRE  
No. I'm fine. I don't care, right?

She leads Jake out. Margot rolls over on her chair.

MARGOT  
Is that Claire's boyfriend?

NADIA  
Ew. Well, maybe not ew. He's  
alright, actually. He's nice. So  
artsy pretentious, though.

MARGOT  
Isn't that good? Isn't Claire  
really into art?

NADIA  
We're all into art, Margot. That's  
why we work here.

MARGOT  
I work here because I heard it's a  
good way to meet British people. I  
really want British friends.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Claire leads Jake in. Cool and cavernous and crates  
everywhere. Jake takes in his surroundings.

CLAIRE  
This is my favorite place in the  
building. Maybe in all of LA.

JAKE  
It's amazing.

CLAIRE

Everything here has a past. But all that matters when it comes here is where it's going. Maybe it's going to someone who's been watching it for years. Maybe it's someone who just saw it for the first time today and doesn't even understand why they don't ever want to take their eyes off it. Whatever it is, we match them up. Like this one--

She unsnaps the hinges on a crate and gently peels back some paper to reveal a still life of dead ducks and fruit. It's awful. Gory and boring at the same time.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Nobody famous did it. The subject matter is... iffy. It won't sell for much. But the seller doesn't care, she thinks it's hideous, and she's a little bit right. But she's totally wrong, for someone. Someone is going to look at this painting and say, "I've found it." There's something here that's interesting and haunting and traditional and weird. Someone's going to see that.

JAKE

It's romantic.

CLAIRE

I don't know. It might never sell.

JAKE

It will.

CLAIRE

I hope so.

They look at each other. Smile.

The massive double doors burst open. A truck backs in, sunlight streaming around it. The spell is broken.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Taylor and Jake watch "Pierrot le Fou."

TAYLOR

I get that I'm supposed to get it but I'm having trouble caring.

JAKE  
I guess, this is just kind of,  
like, what I want to do. Visually.

Claire raps on the window outside.

TAYLOR  
Oh, look, Claire's here, let's stop  
watching. Hi, Claire!

JAKE  
It's open!

Jake pauses the movie. Claire walks in.

CLAIRE  
You. Guys. He left a *voicemail*.

JAKE  
Damn!

TAYLOR  
Moon Sex did it right!

CLAIRE  
We're seeing each other again --  
wait, is this "Pierrot le Fou?" I  
love this movie. Emerson and I--

JAKE  
Booooo. That's her ex.

TAYLOR  
Oh, booooo.

CLAIRE  
Why?

JAKE  
No more Emerson talk.

TAYLOR  
What's the deal with this guy? Is  
his dick made of gold? Wait, is his  
dick made of gold?

CLAIRE  
I'm not lamenting, I'm just saying.

She sits on the couch between them.

TAYLOR  
But hasn't it been, like, a while?

CLAIRE

I know we'll never be together again. I'm ok with that. But what we had was really great. We supported each other. We understood each other. We danced like it was choreographed. I've known great love. I want to know it again.

Jake and Taylor are silent.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Anyway... oh! Speaking of true love, my friend Nadia's getting married and I'm throwing her a bachelorette party Saturday, after Jake's shoot. If you want to come.

TAYLOR

Oh, me? I don't know, I'm not into all that girly shit. You probably got, like, 84,000 lemon bars and excessive amounts of glitter.

CLAIRE

Exactly correct, yes. I know it's silly, but my best friend found true love. I'm going to celebrate the shit out of that.

Taylor softens. She likes this logic.

JAKE

You should go. My two girls, hanging out. Totally.

TAYLOR

You're imagining us scissoring, aren't you?

JAKE

Now I am. Claire, you want to stay and watch with us?

CLAIRE

Oh. No, I don't want to... I mean, you guys are going to probably get all turned on and have French fugitives in the countryside sex.

JAKE

Oh my God, yes.

TAYLOR

Oh, hell no.

\*  
\*

An awkward beat. Then:

JAKE  
That's really specific.

CLAIRE  
Yeah, ok, bye.

She hurries out, embarrassed. Taylor cackles. Jake watches Claire go with an irrepressible smile.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Claire walks into the grimy bar with Ben.

CLAIRE  
I thought we were having dinner?

BEN  
They have apps and stuff. The best fried pickles. You don't care about going somewhere fancy, right?

CLAIRE  
This is great.

They seat themselves.

BEN  
See, that's why you're great. I'm not like most guys. I just want a girl next door, who can hang with the guys and eats like a person and has no idea she's hot.

CLAIRE  
You should find someone like that.

BEN  
No, I mean you! You really don't know how amazing you are, do you?

CLAIRE  
No clue. Say more stuff on that subject. But hold up a sec.

She flags down a WAITER.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Can we get fried pickles, two Sam Adams, plus whatever he wants?

As Ben orders, a MAN SELLING ROSES approaches each table. Claire watches a GUY buy one for his DATE. The date rolls her eyes but can't hide her smile. Neither can Claire.

BEN  
So cheesy.

CLAIRE  
The dumbest.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Jake, Matt and George set up camera equipment. Claire nudges Nadia as Ben walks in. Nadia looks up from a clipboard.

BEN  
Numba one stunna!

CLAIRE  
You know it!

He gives her a long kiss. Nadia clears her throat.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
Yo. Ben, this is Nadia, she works here with me. Nadia, this is Ben. I make out with him when I'm bored.

BEN  
Dude. You should date Matt Kemp. You look just like Rihanna.

NADIA  
I'm engaged. And I don't.  
(off Claire's look)  
But thanks! So nice to meet you.

Taylor walks in with donuts and a case of Red Bull.

TAYLOR  
Breakfast of champions!

BEN  
Sweet!

He goes to grab a Red Bull. Claire waves Taylor over.

CLAIRE  
Taylor! Hey!

TAYLOR  
Sup, Bromeo and Fool-iet? This the chick whose party I'm going to?

She brushes powdered sugar from her hand and shakes Nadia's.

NADIA

I'm Nadia. I hadn't realized...?

CLAIRE

Oh, yeah, Taylor's going to join us. If that's ok.

NADIA

Of course. How could I uninvite your new best friend? How rude would that be?

JAKE

Ok, guys! Talent is 45 minutes out, let's get the first setup! Claire, can you take a look at this?

Claire hurries over. Her favorite painting is in the shot.

CLAIRE

Hey, look at that. It was born to be a star.

JAKE

What you said got to me. About connecting. I don't know, I kind of can't stop thinking about that conversation.

CLAIRE

Yeah. Actually, me neither.

Nadia sees Taylor watching Jake and Claire.

NADIA

There's nothing to worry about. Claire would never betray a friend.

TAYLOR

Them? I'm not the jealous type.

NADIA

Me neither. Cause my fiancée knows I'll cut him if he looks at another girl. I keep my nails sharp.

She wiggles her polished fingers. She's trying.

TAYLOR

That's why girls make their nails look retarded! Because they're so insecure!

She walks off, leaving Nadia wiggling her fingers at no one.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - WAREHOUSE - DAY

-Jake consults Claire on a shot of some EXTRAS.

-Claire and Taylor shot gun Red Bulls. They high five.

-Ben and Claire climb a shelf. Nadia makes eye contact with Claire. She pointedly checks her watch. Claire waves her off.

-Taylor holds a boom mic. Jake calls Claire over. Taylor holds the mic right above their heads, listening.

-Claire puts on a sweatshirt and slings her bag over her shoulder. Ben kisses her. She pulls away and gives him a fist bump goodbye and ambles out.

EXT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - DUSK

As soon as she's outside, Claire runs to her car.

INT. CLAIRE'S PRIUS - DUSK

Claire puts on makeup as she drives, two huge bakery boxes beside her.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire opens the door to Margot and Daphne. Stylish frock, straight hair, charming hostess smile.

DAPHNE

There she is!

CLAIRE

Here I am!

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MALE STRIPPERS serve upscale cupcakes to Claire, Nadia, and assorted girls. Two strippers give pedicures in the corner.

NADIA

Best. Party. Ever!

A stripper prompts Nadia to lick frosting from his pelvis.

DAPHNE

Oh my God, let me get a picture of this. Claire, get in.

Claire poses. Daphne readies her camera. Claire jumps up before she can snap a photo.

CLAIRE

Taylor!

Taylor walks in with a gift wrapped in newspaper. Nadia awkwardly holds her tongue against the pelvis.

TAYLOR

Hey! Jesus, this is fucking crazy.

CLAIRE

I know, I went over the top.

TAYLOR

No, no. Just that all these guys are mad hot and I don't think I've ever hooked up with any of them.

NADIA

Hi, Taylor.

TAYLOR

Happy wedding. I got you a present. It's a black dildo. Not because you're black. Just because I'm pretty sure your fiancée's white.

CLAIRE

Nailed it! Here, let's go in the kitchen and get some real drinks.

Nadia licks the pelvis for the picture alone.

INT. EDITING SUITE - NIGHT

Jake reviews footage and bleeps tween moms swearing.

TWEEN MOM ON SCREEN

Jesus (bleep), can you please understand (bleep) fucking--

Jake rewinds. His phone buzzes. He picks up.

JAKE

Hey, George.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE

What's up at Claire's tonight?

INTERCUT

INT. EDITING SUITE/JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake pulls up his own footage from the music video. Scrolls through. It looks good.

JAKE

Bachelorette party. She's throwing it for a work friend.

GEORGE

Is that why Claire's organizing your screening even though Matt has event planning experience? Don't worry, he's not that upset about it. Hey, so I guess Ben is getting semi-serious about Claire.

JAKE

Yeah, and that guy usually goes through girls like I go through pumpkin seeds. So addictive. I got to give Claire props.

GEORGE

Not all you want to give her.

JAKE

You're right. I want to give her my plants when I go on vacation, because apparently you can't be trusted to water them.

GEORGE

I meant sex. You want to give her... Dude, come on, I thought we were past that!

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

The bachelorette party dances the night away around a table with a make-your-own sangria setup. Claire and Nadia stand on a sofa. Claire boogies hard. Nadia bops. Taylor sits on the couch below them, marvelling. This is not her normal scene.

TAYLOR

It's so loud and shiny. It's like a screaming diamond. But, like, thank you for having me. It's so fun.

CLAIRE  
Let's go to the bathroom.

TAYLOR  
I'm good.

CLAIRE  
There's a lady in there who sells  
candy bars.

TAYLOR  
Let's do this.

CLAIRE  
(to Nadia)  
We're going to the bathroom.

NADIA  
Am I invited?

CLAIRE  
Fo' sho, lady bro.

Nadia flinches at her response: really? Claire hops off the couch. Taylor extends her hand to help Nadia down.

NADIA  
Thanks.

INT. CLUB - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Claire washes her hands. Taylor peruses the candy bars, Nadia the perfumes.

NADIA  
How are things going with Jake?

CLAIRE  
Great!

TAYLOR  
Ok.

\*  
\*

CLAIRE  
Oh. I meant the whole...

TAYLOR  
Right. Obviously. Yeah, I don't  
know, good, I guess.

Taylor puts down a dollar for her candy bar. The BATHROOM ATTENDANT points to a sign: "EVERYTHING \$5 NO CHANGE." Taylor considers her candy bar and the sign.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I mean, I've never really done the whole relationship thing. So that's probably why I'm not that into it. I mean, I am. I just... I'm weird.

NADIA

However you feel is right as long as you understand what that is.

TAYLOR

Yeah, you lost me there.

CLAIRE

She means follow your heart.

TAYLOR

Cause that's not a medical impossibility. Follow your heart.

Taylor pays for the candy bar. Munches it pensively.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I guess if you mean it metaphorically, ok, it kind of makes sense. You know, let your emotional needs guide your decision making and... wow, Claire, that's fucking profound. Wait. Fuck me, that is true.

CLAIRE

Stop it. Very funny.

TAYLOR

No, that's amazing advice. I've never heard that before.

NADIA

Shut up.

TAYLOR

I won't. I seriously... thank you.

She hugs a puzzled Claire, still eating.

CLAIRE

You never saw that in a movie or had girlfriends tell you--?

TAYLOR

Shh, you're ruining it, and no, I had brothers and boy friends, this is crazy special. For all of us.

Nadia rolls her eyes. Taylor finally breaks the hug. Nods. Claire takes out her phone. She has a text from Ben:

I'M SEEING YOU TONIGHT.

Then three more texts from Ben:

OK?

SORRY, WAS THAT TOO FORWARD?

JUST CALL ME IF YOU GET A CHANCE. BUT WHATEVER.

CLAIRE

You guys, look at this.

Nadia and Taylor huddle around her phone.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What do I do?

NADIA

You're not leaving, are you?

TAYLOR

Fuck, yeah, she is! This girl's trying to get a boyfriend and it is so going to happen. Nadia and I get it, you should go.

CLAIRE

You sure? I wouldn't, it's just, it's only three weeks until the wedding and I feel like this could actually work.

TAYLOR

Claire, we're not going to deny you the chance to get some. What kind of friends would we be?

Claire looks to Nadia, still uncertain.

NADIA

Exactly. Whatever you need to do. Follow your heart.

She purses her lips, annoyed.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire rushes in past pink decorations and glitter everything. She's on the phone.

CLAIRE

No, I'll come to you. My place  
is... It's not even me right now.

She takes off her heels, earrings, tights. She wets her hair  
in the sink.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Just this lame bachelorette party.  
The girl throwing it bought, like,  
two thousand cupcakes and then I  
was obviously the only one who ate  
anything. Ok, see you soon.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire, wearing a casual outfit and minimized makeup, rushes  
out past the abandoned tights and leftover cupcakes.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ben and Claire kiss on the bed. It's getting hot.

BEN

I fucking love your eyes.

She laughs and kisses him. Ben stops.

BEN (CONT'D)

For real. Your eyes kick ass.

CLAIRE

Ok. Thanks. Let's make out now.

Ben stops her before she can kiss him.

BEN

Listen. We both know how this  
works. I've been a dick to a lot of  
girls, and you probably spit better  
game than I do. I just want you to  
know, I'm not going to hurt you.

CLAIRE

Not even a little nipple tweaking?

BEN

I'm serious. You ruined me. I'm,  
like, a nice guy now.

Claire kisses him.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake watches something from the Criterion collection. He checks his phone. Takes a sip of beer. He dials.

JAKE

Hey, Taylor's voicemail... Call me.

Jake hangs up, then scrolls to Claire's number and dials.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Miss Claire. It's Jake. You're probably boning. Good job. Selfishly, wish you weren't because I want to hang out. No, I bet you're not. Or you are. Should I just keep speculating on your voicemail? Um, yeah... if you're not and you're still out, tell Taylor her phone is off, or dead, or something. Or don't, sneak away, and you and I can get drunk and watch Warhol movies. Ok, bye.

He hangs up. Tosses the phone to the other side of the couch.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire presses "Ignore" on her phone and finishes lacing up her sneakers. Ben lies in bed naked.

CLAIRE

Ugh, Jake is so needy.

BEN

I like how you're showing off that another guy is calling you.

She kisses him on the forehead.

CLAIRE

Thanks for the sex.

She high fives him and starts out.

BEN

Hey, so, Jake's screening? You want to be my date?

Claire walks out wearing a confident smile.

CLAIRE  
Maybe. I'll see. With my kickass  
eyes.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

Claire walks in and holds up a hand for a high five. Nadia just gives the hand a forced smile.

CLAIRE  
I have a date for Jake's screening  
and am so going to have a date for  
your wedding. High five. No? Cool.

NADIA  
Thank you again for the party. It  
was so sad you missed part of it.

CLAIRE  
Yeah, I know.

She sits and takes out some work.

NADIA  
That's it?

CLAIRE  
You said you were fine with me  
leaving.

NADIA  
I am fine with it.

CLAIRE  
Ok. Then what's the problem here?

NADIA  
You just seem kind of different. I  
know that's the point, but...  
Taylor? Ben? They're so--

CLAIRE  
Fun? Real? This is why I hate  
girls.

NADIA  
You don't hate girls.

Claire focuses on the papers in front of her.

NADIA (CONT'D)  
I could deal with Jake. If you  
dated him.

CLAIRE

Jake has a girlfriend. Who's our friend. I mean, he's helping me get another guy. It's not an option on any level.

NADIA

Is that the only reason Ben is?

CLAIRE

Maybe Ben is my love-when-you-least-expect-it thing. Like you told me.

She turns away. Nadia looks down.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jake lies on Claire's perfectly made bed, drowning in throw pillows. She talks from inside the bathroom.

JAKE

You sure you don't want my help?

CLAIRE (O.S.)

I can always change.

JAKE

Do you know your bed is the most comfortable place in the world?

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Yeah, pretty much.

JAKE

It smells like cookies. Sexy cookies. You've made cookies--

Claire walks out. She looks stunning. Her dress is simple but still feminine. Uncomplicated elegance. Jake stares.

JAKE (CONT'D)

...Sexy.

CLAIRE

It's my auction day dress. Is it totally wrong?

JAKE

Yeah, no. You look good.

CLAIRE

You don't have to say that.

JAKE

I know. You just, you do. So. Take the compliment.

CLAIRE

Thank you. You should get going.

JAKE

I should. Claire...

CLAIRE

Is this the part where you tell me that if Ben doesn't want me he's an idiot? Cause I've heard that one.

JAKE

Town full of idiots. But no. I was going to say... Thanks.

CLAIRE

Right back at you.

JAKE

And also, if Ben doesn't go absolutely bonkers crazy for you in that, he's probably as gay as Taylor's hypothesized on so many occasions. Or an idiot.

CLAIRE

There it is. Funny.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - DUSK

Jake pulls out of the garage listening to indie rock.

Outside, Claire gets into Ben's car. Jake watches Ben awkwardly reach around and grab her ass as she gets in. Jake flinches.

Then switches the music to the radio. Sweet soft rock fills the car. Jake bops his head just a little.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - AUCTION ROOM - NIGHT

A mixed crowd for Jake's big night: eager and fancy auction house girls, young and desperate Hollywood and a few actual friends. Claire chats with Daphne. Ben appears behind her.

BEN

There you are. Sup. I'm Ben.

DAPHNE

Oh my God, is this your boyfriend?  
Ah! Hi! I'm Daphne!

CLAIRE

Ew. No. I don't have boyfriends.

DAPHNE

Ha, what? Wait, is this that irony  
thing you were talking about?

BEN

Claire and I don't do labels. Just  
each other.

He holds up his hand for a high five. Claire gives him one.

CLAIRE

We should go sit.

She drags Ben away to their front row seats.

BEN

You know what's cool about you?

CLAIRE

Besides everything?

BEN

All the girls you work with are  
married or engaged or whatever, and  
you totally could be, but you're  
not. You don't need shit.

The lights dim.

CLAIRE

Psh, so true. I could be engaged.  
Rings are just so heavy. They're  
like finger shackles. Of badness.

The din quiets. Jake takes the stage. He looks down and  
smiles at Claire.

JAKE

Thank you for coming to a special  
screening of Matt Kemp's new music  
video for "Base Jam." It's been a  
lot of work, and I couldn't have  
done it without the support of two  
lovely ladies. Claire and Taylor.

He squints out into the polite applause. He can't see much,  
but he definitely can't see Taylor.

JAKE (CONT'D)

The label has asked that you guys  
fill out comment cards, so please--

The door at the back opens loudly. Everyone turns.

Taylor, wearing gym clothes and boxing wraps, strolls in. She takes a seat in the back, next to Nadia. They nod curtly.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Anyway. Enjoy.

He takes a seat beside Claire.

CLAIRE

No matter what? Congratulations.

Jake grabs Claire's hand. Ben sees. The screen comes to life:

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - WAREHOUSE - MUSIC VIDEO

The camera moves through the warehouse, finding vases and crated up paintings. Then, a dusty, old baseball glove.

MATT KEMP, wearing hipster glasses and a three-piece suit, picks up the glove. Puts it on. He's stoic. "Base Jam" heavily samples Quad City DJs' "Space Jam."

FEMALE VOICE

*Everybody, get up, it's a grand  
slam now! We got a real hit goin'  
down! Welcome to the Base Jam!*

Matt Kemp sits on the floor, cradling the glove in a state of incredibly fake sadness/bravery.

MATT KEMP

*Party people in the house, let's  
go. It's your boy MK, a'ight so.  
Hit that ball and watch me flex.  
Outta the park, you know what's  
next. We outta the club, back at  
her place. Yo, just feel the base.*

Matt Kemp shakes a coffee cup labeled "baseball," begging for change. Two extras shoot heroin and eat Cracker Jacks.

MATT KEMP (CONT'D)

*Drop it, rock it, down the room.  
Shake it, quake it, base Kaboom!  
Work that body, work that body,  
make sure you don't hurt nobody!*

Matt Kemp lies on the ground. He's covered in bird seed and peanut shells. Pigeons peck at him.

MATT KEMP (CONT'D)

*Get wild and start sinning. Take this thing into extra innings.*

The female voice croons. Stop motion of Matt Kemp in various poses in front of Claire's favorite, grotesque painting.

MATT KEMP (CONT'D)

*Grand Slam, thank you, ma'am. Get down in the dirt and jam. When you see me slide into home, you know it's time to get you all alone. Now let me tell you how I play, gonna pack your stadium today.*

As the female voice croons dance instructions for sliding and dipping, the extras have an orgy in the background. Matt Kemp draws with chalk on the floor.

Matt Kemp leans on a baseball bat. He wears a top hat and nothing else.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - AUCTION ROOM - NIGHT

The audience is silent as the lights come up. Claire applauds, and everyone else reluctantly joins in. Jake smiles uncertainly as people get up.

Daphne and Margot scurry up to Claire.

DAPHNE

Oh my God, that's irony, right?

JAKE

What part?

MARGOT

Like, it existing? Because we went in expecting to see something good, and then instead it questions the entire medium just by being! Right?

JAKE

No.

DAPHNE

Maybe you don't get what we're saying. It's awesomely bad!

Jake looks to Claire, panicking. Claire leads him away.

CLAIRE  
Don't listen to them. They're  
literally the dumbest.

Jake spots Taylor.

JAKE  
What did you think?

TAYLOR  
Kemp was dope.

JAKE  
That's it?

George and Matt try to slip out unnoticed.

CLAIRE  
Wait, you guys, Jake's over here.

GEORGE  
Yeah, hey. That looked awesome. The  
whole look of it, you know?

MATT  
I feel like I'd have to see it  
again to really get it. But I want  
to wait a while.

Ben wraps an arm around Claire.

BEN  
We out?

Claire looks toward Jake.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Jake. Cool stuff. That one girl was  
very talented in the, ah, tit  
region. Well played, sir.

Jake watches as people leave, avoiding his eyes.

CLAIRE  
There are light refreshments!

Jake pushes past everyone and walks out. Claire looks to  
Taylor. She's fiddling with her phone. Claire follows Jake.

EXT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - NIGHT

Claire chases Jake out the back door. They're tiny spots of  
color against industrial gray and shadows.

CLAIRE  
Jake! They liked it.

JAKE  
If you believe that, you're even  
more deluded than I thought.

CLAIRE  
Hey! Come on, you made something  
and you should feel proud of that.

JAKE  
It's terrible!

CLAIRE  
So, you try again!

JAKE  
You know, maybe when someone tries  
and fails, it doesn't mean they  
should keep doing that same thing.  
Apparently I'm not good at this.  
It's fine.

CLAIRE  
You are! Can we talk about it?

Ben and Taylor walk out.

TAYLOR  
Hey, vagina squad, let's go.

Claire looks to Jake. He puts an arm around Taylor and leads  
her back inside. As they go, Taylor shakes him off.

BEN  
I'm gonna get you so naked.

CLAIRE  
That's different from just being  
naked?

BEN  
You'll find out.

Claire smiles weakly. The door shuts behind Jake and Taylor.

INT. BEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ben and Claire munch on leftover refreshments. He drives.

BEN

So what's your deal with Jake? You guys used to date?

CLAIRE

Oh, no, we've been friends for a while, that's all.

BEN

Except that he wants to nail you.

CLAIRE

Um, no. You have nothing to worry about. Not that you'd be worried, because we're not exclusive.

BEN

Right. Cause neither of us is looking for a relationship.

CLAIRE

Exactly.

BEN

I mean, yeah, I can admit I don't want you fucking other dudes.

CLAIRE

Me too. Or girls, in your case.

BEN

You can do girls if I can watch.

CLAIRE

How original.

BEN

I guess what I'm saying... I wasn't looking for a relationship because I didn't want something taking over my life. But if a relationship is more of this, I guess it wouldn't suck to be in one.

CLAIRE

Like me be your girlfriend?

BEN

Yes?

CLAIRE

Wow, I'm freaking out.

BEN  
I'm sorry, forget it.

CLAIRE  
No, no, no, it's sweet. You know  
what? I don't happen to be hooking  
up with anyone else. So, why not?

BEN  
Why not? Exactly.

CLAIRE  
Oh, shit! This means you have to  
come with me to Nadia's wedding.

BEN  
Ugh, ok. But then you have to sleep  
over after sex.

CLAIRE  
Ew. Fine.

She smiles out the window.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jake gazes out at the city, alone. He looks at Claire's  
darkened apartment.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Claire walks to her apartment in last night's dress.

Jake exits his place, looking a mess.

JAKE  
I heard your shoes.

CLAIRE  
Ben and I are official!

Jake opens his mouth. No words come out.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
How are you doing?

She walks toward his apartment.

JAKE  
Thanks again for making me put  
myself out there. Oh, wait, no, it  
was humiliating and terrible.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry you feel that way. But I put myself out there and it worked. So, you know, keep at it.

JAKE

Taylor and I broke up.

CLAIRE

Oh my God. Jake. Why?

JAKE

She met someone else.

CLAIRE

Weren't you someone else?

JAKE

This guy won't even kiss her until she's single. She hates prudes. It makes zero sense.

CLAIRE

Maybe it's for the best.

JAKE

You think someone is a certain kind of person, and you trust them... No, you know what it is, I've just never met an honest girl.

CLAIRE

What?

JAKE

Taylor acted straightforward, but she's a bitch. You're lying to Ben. Girls just lie.

CLAIRE

So you're insulting me because Taylor met someone who wasn't just trying to get into her pants?

JAKE

No.

CLAIRE

You got hurt once so now we're all whores, right? Do you know how many guys have lied to me? Cheated on me? Treated me like absolute shit?

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

But, no, I'm the liar, I'm a bitch, really, because I followed your advice.

JAKE

Well, I was wrong.

He kisses her. She pushes him away.

CLAIRE

What are you doing?

JAKE

What?

CLAIRE

I'm with Ben.

JAKE

He's wrong for you.

CLAIRE

Taylor is my friend.

JAKE

Come on. You like me, right?

CLAIRE

You want me to give up my relationship to be your rebound?

JAKE

No! Claire, I'm into you, too.

CLAIRE

Now that Taylor's not an option.

JAKE

I'm trying here.

CLAIRE

No. You're not. It's just now that Taylor's gone you think you can casually make your way into another non-relationship. It doesn't work that way. You can't act like you don't care and then suddenly decide you do. You can't start caring when the wedding is in two weeks and I finally have a boyfriend. You can't do that! You can't--

He kisses her again. She allows herself a few seconds. Then:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I can't. Because even though we're in our twenties and we're supposed to make mistakes, I know what I want. I don't want casual. I want to care. And you don't.

She walks away. He watches her walk into her apartment.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Claire closes the door. Waits for a knock that doesn't come.

CLAIRE

He didn't even try to follow you.  
He didn't even try.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake walks back in. On the coffee table is a stack of DVD's. They're all happy, sappy movies, all brand new. For Claire. He topples the stack and slumps onto the couch.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Claire takes a deep breath. Takes out her phone. Dials.

CLAIRE

Taylor, it's--

EXT. RIFLE RANGE - DAY

Taylor walks toward the rifle range, on her phone.

TAYLOR

Are you calling for my permission?

INTERCUT

INT/EXT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT/RIFLE RANGE - DAY

CLAIRE

I'm calling to see if you're ok.

TAYLOR

I'm fine. And I'm fine with you being with Jake.

CLAIRE  
Don't just say that. You're my  
friend. I wouldn't--

TAYLOR  
I'm not just saying anything. You  
have my fucking blessing.

CLAIRE  
It's a non-issue. I'm with Ben.

TAYLOR  
Ugh.

CLAIRE  
I have someone. Someone great. I  
wouldn't risk that.

TAYLOR  
Yes, you would.

Claire freezes.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
The Claire I know follows her  
heart. She goes after what she  
wants. She takes risks and she  
loves love and she has moon sex.  
What happened to moon sex?

CLAIRE  
It was foolish and unrealistic. I'm  
being a good friend here.

TAYLOR  
No, you're being scared and  
annoying and using me as an excuse  
and I can't deal with this shit. I  
don't need you as my friend.

She hangs up.

Claire stares at the phone, bewildered.

Taylor walks inside, upset but trying to shake it off.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
This is why I hate girls.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

The sadness is gone as Claire regales a disinterested Nadia.

CLAIRE

I'm all, "I don't care." And he's all, "be with me." Who's the jam?

NADIA

Is it you?

CLAIRE

And now Jake is trying to tell me we're "supposed to be together" and I'm, like, could you be any gayer?

NADIA

Jake's nice.

CLAIRE

Oh, now you like him? You could be happy for me, by the way.

NADIA

Yeah, can't wait for Ben to be your date at my wedding. It'll really make Emerson jealous when you two start grinding to Stevie Wonder.

CLAIRE

Are you even going to give him a chance tonight or are you just going to be a bitch?

NADIA

Because that's not a leading question. No, I can't wait for dinner tonight. Because you guys are so fun, right?

INT. TAPAS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nadia and her fiancée AARON sit across from Ben and Claire: double date. Everyone studies their menu in silence.

CLAIRE

Ben's very excited for the wedding.

BEN

It sounds very "classy."

NADIA

I'm sorry, is that funny?

BEN

Neither of us is into frilly shit. I mean, you know Claire.

AARON  
Do you know Claire?

CLAIRE  
Let's order. I'm fucking starving.

BEN  
Small plates are such a scam. Cause they never give you bread, you know?

NADIA  
Claire and I love this place. When we lived around here, we'd come all the time. Bottle of wine, cheese plate, pretending to be glamorous.

CLAIRE  
It was a stretch for me. Ha.

BEN  
Explain something to me, Nadia.

NADIA  
Anything.

BEN  
Why do girls who don't eat surround themselves with food? Like you and your cheese plate. Or, what was that woman party you told me about, Claire? Was that Nadia's?

AARON  
Which, the bachelorette party? I'm not gonna lie, that sounded kind of awesome. I was, like, where are my cupcake strippers?

NADIA  
Absolutely nowhere, I hope!

BEN  
Yeah, the cupcakes! What is that? You all whine about not wanting to be fat for a wedding, and then every single event before it involves cupcakes. You're either going to throw them away or throw them up. It's fucking wasteful.

NADIA  
Wow, you're so in touch with the female psyche. You get us, Ben.

BEN

Claire and I were laughing about that, cause who thinks that's a good idea for a party? It's drama waiting to happen. "Wah! I ate so much and the stripper never called me!" If you're with fun people, all you need is some beer. Your party... Who even puts their time into some ordeal like that?

AARON

Yeah, who indeed?

NADIA

You know, I forget. Who planned that stupid party for months? Who color-coded it to match the wedding invitations? Who did that, Claire?

Everyone looks to Claire.

CLAIRE

Wasn't it... your cousin Jenna?

NADIA

My. Cousin. Jenna?! Jenna. Yes, surprisingly, I'm not the whitest person in my family because I have a cousin named Jenna who invented the concept of cupcake strippers and then spent months finding ones that weren't germy or creepy or loud or ugly.

CLAIRE

And that was just the cupcakes.

NADIA

Fuck you.

The guys are taken aback.

NADIA (CONT'D)

Jenna is amazing. She is just classic girlfriend material. The kind of friend every woman wants. I wish I could hang out with my cousin Jenna all the time.

CLAIRE

Well, you can't, because she has a life, too.

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

She can't just run around all mousy  
and obliging and making your life  
her priority.

BEN

So, are we getting food or what?

Nadia gets up and walks out. Aaron follows her.

BEN (CONT'D)

What just happened?

CLAIRE

...Bitches be crazy.

INT. BEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Ben and Claire eat fast food in silence.

BEN

Listen, I don't exactly know what  
happened in there, but I do know  
you're 50 times cooler than her.

CLAIRE

I'm really not.

BEN

You're hot. You're funny. And you  
don't even know it.

CLAIRE

And you're actually sweet.

Ben puts his hand on her leg. It's natural, intimate. And  
then it starts creeping up her leg.

BEN

Who wants to have an orgasm while  
she eats a burger?

Claire forces a laugh.

BEN (CONT'D)

You don't have to be embarrassed.  
In-N-Out at In-N-Out? So you.

Claire considers Ben. She puts down her burger.

CLAIRE

No, it's not. That's not me.

BEN

Ok...

CLAIRE

I would have rather had the small plates. I like looking at cupcakes during parties. I cry at the end of any movie starring Kate Hudson and the beginning of every episode of "Millionaire Matchmaker." I like nail polish and sangria and your hand is still between my legs when I'm trying to have a conversation.

Ben removes his hand.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm a nice girl. I want us to be nice us, and not just in private. With my friends, too. You're a nice guy when you try. So, try.

BEN

Don't tell me how to act. What's even going on here?

CLAIRE

I saw the way guys treated Taylor. And I tried being a little more like her, just for the beginning. But it worked out because you found your nice girl.

BEN

You're not that nice. You tricked me into being with you.

CLAIRE

You never would have liked me if I hadn't acted that way initially.

BEN

Guess what? I don't like you now.

He starts the engine.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Claire gets out of Ben's car. She leans in the open window.

CLAIRE

For what it's worth, I'm sorry.

BEN

Cause you hurt me? Or because you don't have a date for the wedding?

Claire pauses. Ben drives away.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire knocks on Jake's door. George answers.

GEORGE

Hey! You coming out tonight?

CLAIRE

Oh, what?

GEORGE

Jake's depressed about Taylor. We're gonna take him out, see if we can get him a rebound.

CLAIRE

Yeah, he was working on that, huh? No, I just came to... borrow a movie. But actually I think I'll just go to bed early.

She books it back to her apartment.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Claire closes the door behind her. She stands in the doorway, shaking. She drops to the floor.

Claire crawls toward the fridge, dragging her purse. She opens the fridge and takes out a double bottle of wine. Uncorks. Settles against the fridge. Drinks.

The tears come.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Jake sits with George and Matt. His face is calm but he's fidgety. Trying to hold it together.

GEORGE

We never talk anymore. We need girls.

MATT

That's sexist.

GEORGE

No, it's not. I'm the one who told you we were feminists.

MATT

How you doing, man? You alright?

JAKE

At least now I have a fuck ton of nail polish.

GEORGE

What?

JAKE

Let's get shots.

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

There's a lot less wine left. Claire throws clothes from her closet everywhere and sings along to "Guys and Dolls."

CLAIRE

*Take back your mink! Take back your pearls! What made you think? That I was one of those girls?*

She grabs a half-eaten peach from her night table. She takes a bite, then a swig of wine, and swishes them in her mouth.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Jake hands a GIRL a drink, then looks at her menacingly.

JAKE

Not that I care, but are you even going to write me a thank-you note?

She laughs. He starts to cry.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I want you to bake me cookies.

MATT

Yeah, we need to leave.

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

Claire still sings to "Guys and Dolls." She looks at a picture of herself with Emerson on Facebook.

CLAIRE

*In other words, from waitin around  
for that plain little band of gold!  
A person can develop a cold!*

She clicks ahead and winds up on one of her and Jake.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Booooo! I am booin you!

She minimizes the window. A list of Groupon deals pops up:  
wine tasting, romantic getaway, couples massage...

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Fuck you, Groupon.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake sits on the floor surrounded by Criterion collection  
DVDs. He's on the phone and wasted.

JAKE

T-bag, Jake. Tell your new  
boyfriend you're a terrible person  
who ruined my life and also say  
whatup for me cause I don't care. I  
have a heart and it has a Claire. I  
can love, motherfucker. It hurts.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Claire walks up. She's poised to knock when she hears:

JAKE (O.S.)

I miss your vagina muscles is all.  
Whatever, Taylor. Die. Or not.  
Please call me.

Claire leans her head against the wall. Closes her eyes.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake dials on his phone. It rings and rings.

PHONE

Hi! You've reached the voice mail  
box of Claire Cushing. Please leave  
a message and have an amazing--

Jake hears the clomping of heavy, high-heeled shoes outside.  
He hangs up, runs to the door and pulls it open.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

No Claire. Just the view.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Claire sleeps hugging the empty wine bottle. Her phone buzzes on her night stand. She fumbles to answer it.

CLAIRE

Hello? Who? Yeah, this is Claire.

Claire's eyes go wide.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I did? I did. I didn't!

She leaps up and grabs her laptop. She flips it open. Stares.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I sent 147 messages on Match.com.

Claire looks at her outbox. We see snippets like, "Wedding date time!" "Babies are amazing. Baaabiiiiieees," and, "Telephones, right? So cool. Let's discuss" with her number.

She clicks on her inbox. Only two messages. One of them says, "You're crazy." The other says, "LOL." She blinks back tears.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Actually, I found a date for the wedding. I am awash with suitors.

She hangs up. She scrolls through her would-be dates.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Come on, Claire. These guys aren't even -- and that is your cousin.

Claire scrolls through the messages. Boys, boys, boys.

She closes the laptop.

EXT. ECHO PARK FARMERS MARKET - DAY

Claire loads up on vegetables, baked goods, flowers.

INT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Claire sings to soft rock as dishes simmer on the stove.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - CLAIRE'S DESK - DAY

Nadia works at her desk, headphones in. Claire walks in, glasses and flats but otherwise her old, signature style. Claire presents Nadia a tray of tiny plates of food, complete with a mini white peach sangria and a micro brownie.

CLAIRE

Will you be my girlfriend again?

Nadia looks up. She yanks her headphones out of the computer.

Toni Braxton's "Breathe Again" fills the office.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Claire and Nadia feast on small plates.

CLAIRE

I know I shouldn't care. God, I'm pathetic. Can I please hear about your life because it's a thousand times more interesting and I've been the worst lately?

NADIA

Yes, but wait a sec. You're not pathetic because you want love. You know that, right? The only reason I ever told you to chill out about it is that I know it'll happen for you. Not because you shouldn't want it. And what about Jake? Even I think he's kind of perfect for you.

CLAIRE

If he were perfect for me, he'd want to be with me.

NADIA

You're ok with that?

CLAIRE

It's not about finding someone. It's about finding someone who makes you happy. Chasing a guy and trying to tie him down, that's not going to make me happy, even if it's Jake. But, hey, at least I get to go pick up Emerson and Petra at the airport. Oh, wait...

NADIA  
 Claire, no! Wait, already?

CLAIRE  
 They're going to Joshua tree for a  
 week before your wedding.

NADIA  
 Ew. They would.

CLAIRE  
 Right? Fucking nature.

NADIA  
 Fucking nature.

They share a smile. This is true love.

INT. CLAIRE'S PRIUS - LAX - DAY

Claire peers out the window, searching.

CLAIRE  
 You're fine! You're so over it that  
 you should pick them up at the  
 airport! Fuck you, past Claire.

And there they are, in all their fashion-forward glory:  
 EMERSON and PETRA. Claire paints on a smile and switches the  
 radio to something cooler. Emerson opens the passenger door.

EMERSON  
 Hey, gorgeous.

PETRA  
 Claire. Such a pleasure.

CLAIRE  
 Trunk's open!

As they walk around back:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 You're a real bitch, past me, you  
 know that? Yes I do.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - AUCTION ROOM - DAY

Nadia oversees the setup of an auction. Only a few people  
 have arrived yet. Nadia smiles at a couple rubbing noses and  
 kissing. The girl turns.

It's Taylor. Nadia looks away, but Taylor spots her.

TAYLOR  
Nadia?

NADIA  
Taylor! Hi.

TAYLOR  
This is my boyfriend, Derek. He's all into art, made me come to this.

DEREK  
I'm a terrible influence. It's lovely to meet you, Nadia.

He gives her a firm, polite handshake. Nadia gawks.

INT. CLAIRE'S PRIUS - DAY

Emerson and Petra sit in the back while Claire drives. Petra sits in the middle seat so she can cuddle up next to Emerson.

PETRA  
You're so charming, Claire. She has such charm.

EMERSON  
I'm excited to meet your boyfriend.

CLAIRE  
Ben and I broke up. I'm not looking to settle down, you know?

PETRA  
No.

INT. A.N. ABELL AUCTION HOUSE - AUCTION ROOM - DAY

Nadia sits with Taylor. Derek talks with Daphne nearby.

NADIA  
You're not sleeping together?

TAYLOR  
That mess up your virgin-whore dichotomy? He digs me. It's weird.

NADIA  
Taylor, nice work!

TAYLOR

Hey, how's Claire? I heard about those douche face ass penises.

NADIA

Totally a real thing. You know Claire: always the bridesmaid, never the bride. Loves to talk about it.

TAYLOR

I've never been a bridesmaid. I'm too real for most girls.

Nadia rolls her eyes.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I'm kidding. It's because I have no manners or female friends. But I like Claire. Hey, could you tell her... Tell her I don't just say stuff. I told her to be with Jake and she said I was just saying stuff. But I don't just say stuff.

NADIA

Except when you said you didn't need her as friend?

Taylor looks down. Nods.

NADIA (CONT'D)

I should...

She gets up. Pauses.

NADIA (CONT'D)

Claire's not using her plus one for the wedding. Any friend of Claire's...

TAYLOR

I'd love to.

They share a smile. Taylor beckons her closer.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Oh, and I'm not retarded. I have seen it. And I am not holding out for nothing.

NADIA

I'm so happy for you, Taylor.

TAYLOR

It's like Goldilocks and the three bears, with the chairs? One was too big. One was too small. One was too soft. One was too hard. But one was just right. It's like that, but a dick. It's my Goldilocks chair dick. It's perfect.

NADIA

I'm going to go while I still like you a little.

They smile. Derek passes Nadia as he sits. She glances down.

INT. CLAIRE'S PRIUS - DAY

It's getting harder and harder for Claire to smile.

EMERSON

Claire's probably too busy with her super cool life to have a boyfriend anyway, right, Claire?

CLAIRE

Yeah, super cool.

They don't notice her sarcasm.

PETRA

Well, I'm so uncool. I went back to school. Again!

CLAIRE

For what?

PETRA

A PhD in hip hop culture. I know, it doesn't sound like a real degree, but after being a lawyer for a bit, I realized it wasn't my thing. And I was dancing in these rap videos for fun and somehow used that to convince Harvard to give me a free ride for a third time!

CLAIRE

You're in Boston. Emerson is in New York. You're doing long distance.

The pause is deafening.

EMERSON

It's not that far.

PETRA

When you meet the right person, it changes how you feel about things like that. It does make you a better version of yourself, so...

Claire pulls the car over.

PETRA (CONT'D)

In this case, it made Emerson capable of a long distance--

CLAIRE

Get out.

EMERSON

What?

CLAIRE

Get out of the Prius. Call a cab like normal people who don't accept rides from their ex-girlfriend. Or people who tell their ex they're engaged, as if I wouldn't find out. Social media is everywhere, Emerson. Twitter is real! Congrats, by the way, but come on!

EMERSON

Thanks. I should have called you.

CLAIRE

And I shouldn't have offered you a ride. Because I do have a super cool life. So why am I wasting my time pretending I'm fine with this? Why would I pretend anything when my life is actually pretty amazing? So, have a lovely trip. Take pictures. Don't make me look at them. And seriously, get out.

Emerson considers Claire. He opens his door.

EMERSON

Fair enough. God. You haven't changed at all. It's awesome.

CLAIRE

Yeah. It is. Now leave.

They get out. Get their bags. Petra pops her head back in.

PETRA

This was truly a delight. I'm really excited to continue this conversation at the wedding.

Claire watches them in the mirror, then pulls out into the road. She flips the radio from pretentious indie rock to her favorite soft rock station, KOST 103.5. It's an ad for the station with a medley of songs. Claire sings along.

CLAIRE

*I am beautiful, no matter what they say / It's too late to apologize! / Making love out of nothing at all / Maybe next time he'll think before he cheats / Don't stop! Believing!*

Claire's eyes go wide at a sign outside. She pulls a U-turn.

Angle on the sign: "SANTA MONICA SEGWAY TOURS."

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

Claire, in helmet, knee pads, wrist guards and her chic work clothes, zooms along the boardwalk on a segway, leaving COUPLES ON SEGWAYS in her dust. She's elated.

CLAIRE

I'm flying!

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake uses a collection of Wes Anderson DVDs as a pillow. A knock at the door.

JAKE

George! Door!

Silence. Then the knocking starts again.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Hey! Mr. Drunk Voicemail!

Jake jumps up and around as if looking for a place to hide.

TAYLOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Dude. I'm going to start yelling things about your--

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING OUTDOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jake opens the door.

JAKE

Hi.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Taylor marches in.

JAKE

Beer?

TAYLOR

Hey, so, I didn't ruin your life.  
And obviously.

Jake opens them each a beer.

JAKE

Sorry. I was in a bad place. But  
I'm cool now. I'm good.

TAYLOR

Are those a bunch of nail polishes  
in the shape of a broken heart?

They are. Jake hands Taylor her beer.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Here's a question: why am I going  
to Nadia's wedding in the seat  
reserved for Claire's plus one?

JAKE

Because the universe hates me?  
(off her look)  
Claire hates me.

TAYLOR

So? Man the fuck up and woo the  
shit out her.

JAKE

It's not that easy.

TAYLOR

How was I ever attracted to you?  
You need an annual pap smear you're  
such a pussy. Which, by the way,  
just had, and we're clean. Up top!

Jake gives her a high five.

JAKE

Always liked your honesty. Among plenty of other things.

TAYLOR

Are you trying to have breakup sex?

JAKE

No.

TAYLOR

K, cool. You know, I like romantic shit with Derek. And not because I have to force myself to like it. I just do. You liked me because I didn't make you do that stuff. You liked Claire cause she made you want to. I get it now. Cause I, like, feel it or whatever.

JAKE

Sorry.

TAYLOR

It's supposed to be that way. It's why I knew I had to give things a shot with Derek. And it's why you're a fucking dumbass if you don't go for her.

JAKE

Taylor, I don't care.

TAYLOR

How's that working out for you? You know, a wise woman once told me: follow your heart. Do you know what that means, Jake?

JAKE

Yes.

TAYLOR

Then do it. Follow your heart.  
(gesturing to her beer)  
I'm gonna take this to go. To recap: I'm not going to that wedding, Claire's the jam, and barring any skeezy post-me sex, you don't have any STDs. Good talk.

He smiles. She heads for the door. Turns back.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
 Oh, if it wasn't clear? This is me  
 saying we're friends now.

Jake grins. She shuts the door behind her. Jake's smile  
 drops. He shakes his head. Flops onto the couch.

EXT. BEACHSIDE WEDDING - DAY

Claire rocks her bridesmaid dress and greets guests. She  
 steps off to the side and takes out her phone. Dials.

CLAIRE  
 Hey, Taylor, it's Claire. Let me  
 know if you're lost or something.  
 Nadia really wants you to come,  
 honestly. Ok, see you soon.

Claire spots Petra, wearing little lace gloves and Emerson,  
 sporting a top hat. No one should be able to pull this off.  
 They totally do.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)  
 So... hi.

Emerson stands to hug her.

EMERSON  
 Good to see you again.

CLAIRE  
 I honestly want to catch up, but I  
 have to go be in the wedding.

PETRA  
 Aren't you a wonder? Like spoken  
 word poetry spoken very quietly.

CLAIRE  
 Is there anything I can't do?

EMERSON  
 I don't think so.

PETRA  
 Find yourself.

EXT. BEACHSIDE WEDDING - DAY

Claire holds Nadia's bouquet, eyes wet and smile huge as  
 Nadia and Aaron kiss. Daphne and Margot whisper.

DAPHNE  
 It's so ironic.

MARGOT  
 She looks just like she did in  
 "Dreamgirls."

EXT. BEACHSIDE WEDDING - DAY

Claire poses for photos with the rest of the wedding party. She's genuinely happy as she watches Nadia and Aaron. Further down the beach, Emerson and Petra are ankle deep in the water, kissing as waves crash around them. Claire smiles.

NADIA  
 Let's get some of just us.

CLAIRE  
 Aww, it's two thirds of the people  
 you like in this wedding.

NADIA  
 Me, you, who's the third person?

CLAIRE  
 Aaron.

NADIA  
 Please don't tell him that just  
 happened.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake lies on the couch surrounded by beer cans and empty pudding cups. The DVD menu of "The Royal Tenenbaums" plays. He looks around at the trash and the nail polish and the despair. He lets out a little laugh.

Jake opens his computer. He plays the music video.

Jake laughs a little. Then a little more. It builds, slowly, into an all-out guffaw.

He stops when he sees Claire's ugly, still life painting.

He looks at his watch. He leaps up.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION - DAY

Claire dances with Margot and Daphne. Plenty of GUYS eye her, but she's having too much fun to notice. Emerson appears.

EMERSON  
 May I have this dance?

He initiates a perfect waltz. Throughout their conversation, they dance in ways that the rest of us only dream of.

CLAIRE

I'm sorry. About the car.

EMERSON

It's ok. You know, after you, I thought I'd never find anyone.

CLAIRE

Really? But you're such a catch.

EMERSON

Have you met you? The thing about Petra was, I knew if I could feel like that when I had someone as great as you to compare her to, it was real. You're gonna have that.

CLAIRE

You know what? I agree. I will.

He twirls her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Nobody will ever dance like you.

EMERSON

No, they won't. But you'll find someone who's better than dancing.

He kisses her hand and moves elegantly toward Petra.

All Petra knows how to do is sway in place. But Emerson couldn't be happier. Claire and Petra share a smile.

Claire meanders back to her table, stopping to grab a glass of champagne from a tray, to tousle a FLOWER GIRL'S angelic curls, to kiss someone hello. Content.

She takes her seat. At the empty place setting, there's now a plastic bin of nail polish. Claire double takes.

And that's when she hears it: the first few chords of All-4-One's "I Can Love You Like That," the song Claire and Jake belted out in the car. Claire blanches.

Someone is singing, and he's not singing very well.

JAKE (O.S.)

*They read you Cinderella, you hoped  
it would come true.*

(MORE)

JAKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*That one day your Prince Charming  
 would come rescue you. You like  
 romantic movies, and you never will  
 forget the way you felt when Romeo  
 kissed Juliet.*

Claire moves through the crowd, pushing toward the stage, trying to see what we see: Jake, a nervous wreck, singing his heart out in a white tux as the BAND smirks.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
*I can love you like that! I would  
 make you my world! Move heaven and  
 earth if you were my girl.*

He closes his eyes to avoid the stares of the wedding guests, and to get more into it. He sweats.

And that's what Claire sees, standing on her tip toes. What the evidence pointed to but she didn't allow herself to hope.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
*I would give you my heart! Be all  
 that you need! Show you you're  
 everything that's precious to me.  
 If you give me a chance... I can  
 love you like that.*

He opens his eyes. But all he can see are the blinding lights. The music plays on, but Jake doesn't sing. The crowd starts to come into focus as Jake's eyes adjust.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
 Hi, Nadia's wedding. Sorry.

Nadia and Aaron are not sorry; they are thrilled.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
 I had to see you, Claire. If you're  
 here, hopefully. This is me trying.

Jake searches the crowd for Claire. He doesn't see her making her way through the crowd.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
 I had to. I'm only in my twenties.  
 I'm way too young for regrets.

Emerson and Petra watch, riveted.

PETRA  
 Is this performance art?

EMERSON

Either way, it's very fresh.

JAKE

I have no right to put you in this position. Seriously, guys, when she rejects me, don't blame her. If I fail, it's going to suck. But here's the thing: what if I don't?

Claire beams up at him, but he still can't see her.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It would be the best thing ever. Because you're perfect, and you're perfect for me, and I want to try as hard as I can to make sure you know that. But even if you do say no, please, please don't ever let a guy change you ever again.

The filler background music is the only sound; the crowd is silent. Claire reaches the stage.

CLAIRE

Good try. Now stop making this ridiculous grand gesture and God-awful speech and kiss me.

Jake leaps off stage and gives Claire the kind of kiss girls dream about their whole lives. And boys, too, if they'd ever admit it. A jazz SAXOPHONIST continues the song.

Claire pulls out of the epic kiss.

JAKE

What's wrong?

CLAIRE

Isn't there a game on? I'm very into sports and nothing else. So thanks for the make out, bro.

She starts to walk away. Then turns back.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

But whatever. We could slow dance or some shit. I don't care.

Jake and Claire kiss again as we...

FADE OUT.