

THE CLIENT

written by

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A 45 minute episode

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TEASER

EXT. RED BRICK UNIVERSITY - COLLEGE GREEN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Baby blue cloudless skies overhead. Gothic sandstone architecture shrouded in a sunshine, brightening up the faded GARGOYLES and STATUES lining the masonry, warding off evil spirits from on high. Ugly things looking their very best.

O.S., we hear a muffled *blah-blah-blah* of CHATTER. As we slowly TILT DOWN from rooftop level, capturing the PLAZA below overflowing with SUNHATS and BLACK VELVET MORTORBOADS ferrying back and forth like socially adept ants.

This is GRADUATION DAY, 2008. Now, on the ground, we move among the PARENTS and GRADUATES celebrating, everyone jubilant and a little smug -- after all, you'd be happy with the payoff of three plus years hard work (and hard partying) and thousands of pounds invested leading up to a photo opportunity with a rolled up piece of paper i.e. A DIPLOMA...

... which we glance as we DRIFT past the FAMILIES posing for photographs like HEADSHOTS. Of course, there's at least one DAD struggling to work the latest DIGITAL CAMERA, and even TWO FEMALE GRADUATES posing for a SELFIE - still a novelty back then.

We hold on at least one family. Watch, as they countdown 3...2...1... Cheese! Click! The MATRIARCH drops the smile, not comfortable posing, rubs her cheeks and grabs the latest champagne from a passing WAITER, before we move on to...

Somewhere on the periphery, out of the public eye and crossing camera shots, a GRAD sits all alone in her own thoughts, not quite comfortable with this forced joviality (though, are we?), but happy enough jamming to her IPOD.

This is SOPHIE ZUCKER (21), fresh-faced, in a late-adolescent experiment/rebel stage of development, but safely middle-class bohemian. CLOSE ON: Her hair is dyed at least three COLOURS, her nose is STUDED, her choice of lipstick today? PURPLE. It matches her headphones, but clash violently with her fluorescent orange SMOOTHIE, halfway drank.

SLLLLLLURPPPPPP! This one's in a world of her own, ignoring everything around her. She has a bright future ahead on the condition its of her own choosing. Nothing has ever shaken her confidence. Nobody could ever tell her what to do.

Until one YOUNG MAN butts in.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)
Well, look who decided to show up?

REVEAL: One of the smuggest guys you could ever meet. His name is DAVID BENNETT, also 21, a little narrow, a little gaunt. Rather than hitting the gym, he's been hitting the books and to show this, his graduation robe has BLUE LINING revealing his academic distinction. Near the top of the graduating class, David has a grand destiny for his life he has spent years and years working hard to get ahead. Nothing will stop the 'materplan'.

He steps towards her but keeps a few feet distance. There's history between them, uncomfortable history.

DAVID
(concerned)
H-How are you feeling?

Sophie turns, clocking him eye to eye. Her smile is calm but measured.

SOPHIE
Like I crammed three years of
library visits inside a fortnight.

DAVID
That bad?

SOPHIE
I survived.

Beat. Awkward half silence. David thinks up something and the first thing out of his mouth is as stupid as.

DAVID
(r.e. Everyone here)
Yeah. Didn't you tell... aren't you
photo-shy?

SOPHIE
(tricky)
Yeah, I'm not.

DAVID
(scratching his head)
No?

SOPHIE
(r.e. Everyone here)
Can't stand phoenies. Fake smiles.
Fake tits. Fake all their lives.
Now they're going to fake their way
through their fake lives for
another generation of fake
phoenies.

Sophie relieves the tension somewhat, though far from entirely. Like before, David's thinking up segways.

DAVID
 (half laughing)
 Well, even with the phoenies, least
 we made it out of here together.
 (checking himself)
 Not that we're-

Sophie glares *NOPE!* That elephant in the room is trumpeting off-key and loud.

SOPHIE
 Not anymore.

In case, you need more clues, there's a romantic history here. One that's ended recently.

DAVID
 I meant...

SOPHIE
 I know what you meant. It's fine.

DAVID
 I don't... University's over and
 done with, Now, it's grown-up time.
 The real world. I just wanted to
 know, if you ever needed a place to
 stay...

SOPHIE
 Do you really think that's a good
 idea? Come on, you're supposed to
 be smart.

Long awkward beat.

DAVID
 Maybe that's how I got an
 internship at Glassworks finance.

The mood changes. This has been a long time coming. This is a prestigious firm in the heart of London. Anyone there would be set for life.

SOPHIE
 David, that's amazing!

She leaps up instinctively and prepares to throw her arms around him in celebration, but now the situation's different, she reconsiders.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Platonic friendship hug?

DAVID
Platonic friendship hug.

They embrace, leaving enough room for the Holy Spirit as religious circles say i.e. No room for accidental contact below the belt or under the brassiere. A shoulder-heavy hug.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(disheartened)
Yeah, but...

SOPHIE
What?

DAVID
It's the salary.

SOPHIE
Are they paying you?

DAVID
Yes, it's good but, uh...

SOPHIE
You know, you can still tell me things, right?

After some soul searching, David lays it out plain.

DAVID
Let me put it this way... at twenty-one years old, Steve Jobs was running his own company.

Sophie grimaces. She's seen this from him before.

SOPHIE
(disbelief)
C'mon! Not this again.

DAVID
Then there's Branson, Zuckerberg, Larry Page, all those guys, millionaires before 25, that did their own thing, never shackled up with a big company, never played the nine to five game.

Sophie sighs -- shakes her head.

SOPHIE

Okay, okay, sometimes you get fixated on other people. Plus business guys? Nobody has the same journey and they all act like they did everything all by themselves.

(beat)

You'll be fine.

DAVID

Yeah? Well, I hate fine.

SOPHIE

You'll be fine.

(beat)

Then you get better, and better, and better, and then, in your own sweet time, you've climbed a whole mountain.

In the background, someone's made some announcement to go inside, probably the graduation ceremony. Our mortortboard crowd start going indoors at their own pace. David and Sophie notice this.

DAVID

We should get going. Don't want to be late.

SOPHIE

Let's chill. You've stopped being fun.

DAVID

Have not!

SOPHIE

Career obsession -- total libido killer. You don't wanna be rich and live like a hermit cause everyone knows you're weird.

DAVID

Okay, lifestyle guru. How's this? You know when I'm obsessive, but I know when you're deflecting. What have you got going on?

Sophie plays this one coy. Ultimately, the answer is 'no' nothing, nada, no plans at all. There's a pause where she lets this information slip without words, but she's quick thinking back on her feet.

SOPHIE

We're gonna be late. Plus, this gown makes me look like Batman. Who doesn't want that?

She flaps her sleeves. David realizes he's been stonewalled. Amused he fell into such an obvious trap.

DAVID

(laughing)

I'll see you after the ceremony.

(beat, pensive)

Promise me, you'll always be weird.

David turns and walks away leaving Sophie to finish her drink which she does in a big final slurp. But here's the kicker, Sophie doesn't join them. Instead she walks away toward the horizon. She chooses not to take part.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - BAR - NIGHT

The swankiest of FIVE STAR JOINTS (Mayfair be damned) ordained in the style-ish-est of ART DECO decor. Tucked into studded leather booths, the MEN are in tailored Italian wool suits and WOMEN donned something off the latest off the page Vogue latest creation. Nothing but class.

We're in the heart of successville. Tasteful luxury, plentiful exotic drinks, like the place only winners are allowed to check into. They would turn people like me down at the door.

LEGEND "10 YEARS LATER"

ANGLE LOW on the lush decorated CARPET near the mahogany skirting board at the BAR. Something out of place, a HEMP SATCHEL (30" by 12"), sits idly on the paneling. Next to it, something very much in place, a BLACK STILETTO HEEL resting on a bar stool, tapping impatiently.

PANNING UP, we see the owner wears a sparkling little black dress until we recognize SOPHIE ZUCKER. Now in her early 30s, the hair dye has long gone but some small spark of her rebellious nature remains. Right now, she's being stood up.

Sophie checks her phone, privately sighs, and a freshly-made COSMOPOLITAN is slid in front of her, a little surprising.

This comes from a BARTENDER donned in a hotel-approved waistcoat slides her a cosmopolitan. The two exchange a glance before...

BARTENDER

You're popular, tonight.

She gestures nearby to an ALPHA DOG BANKER DUO. One of them already has a woman on his shoulder. One doesn't he winks and raises a glass to her.

SOPHIE

(disinterested)

Aren't I the lucky one?

The bartender waits for her response. Awkward.

BARTENDER

So... I mean, what shall I tell them?

Sophie casually slides the drink back to the bartender.

SOPHIE

Tell them thanks for the gesture
but... happy hunting elsewhere. I'm
waiting for someone.

The duo see this, and exchange a mean look. They move on and
leave the bar. The Bartender becomes more concerned.

BARTENDER

This someone. He's a he?

SOPHIE

Yes, male and everything.

BARTENDER

He's left you high and dry for over
half an hour, all by yourself, I
hope he's worth it.

SOPHIE

How do you know I wasn't early?

BARTENDER

Please! Anyone who looks like you
doesn't arrive anywhere early.

Sophie scowls, but the bartender's not wrong.

SOPHIE

Well, you got that right.

BARTENDER

At least, if you said yes to the
rich boys, who knows, in a few
months, you might have a new car.

SOPHIE

(sarcastic)

You sound like you know your stuff.

BARTENDER

You're not the first stood up women
I've ever met.

SOPHIE

You make me sound like an outcast.
Can't I just enjoy nice places and
my own company? Is that an
either/or choice?

BARTENDER

It's disrespectful, s'all. Where I
come from eleven o'clock means
eleven o'clock.

SOPHIE

It never does.

(beat)

Well, I'm a big girl. I'm not about to have my night ruined by little girl problems.

Sophie prepares to leave. The Bartender leans in, so only they can hear. Her mood shifts, more confident, even flirty, she prepares a speech she must have used more than once.

BARTENDER

Nobody's ever told you this before, but... you're beautiful in that special kind of way, the way everybody envies and hates, at least secretly. If you think about it, you could use someone who knows how to respect you, sympathizes, understand what you're going through.

CLOSE ON: The BARTENDER slips a hand over Sophie's.

It's a tender gesture, holds her grip for a few minutes. Sophie's not put off by this sloppy, spontaneous gesture.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

If you're curious whether I do this with all the girls, I don't. If you're think 'she's lying', I'm not. If you're expecting I'll give you that happily ever after like you're a princess, I won't. All I'm offering is not to waste your evening.

SOPHIE

(flirty)

Nice to know someone's looking out for my wellbeing.

BARTENDER

I get off in fifteen minutes.

(beat)

If you don't mind waiting a little longer.

SOPHIE

Now, I don't.

They clock eyes, something might happen. Both smile. The Bartender carries on her work and walks out to change a tap or something to get her out of there while...

At that a MAN we've never seen before but smartly dressed, rushes in. He's hurried, but immediately recognizes Sophie. This isn't David. This is a stranger to us, and to Sophie.

MAN
Hello? Sophie?

SOPHIE
(surprised)
Er- Peter, right?

MAN
Yes, sorry I'm late. Work. Do we still have an appointment?

SOPHIE
We do.

The Bartender returns and seeing this development is annoyed, but tries not to show it. Practiced smile time.

MAN
Great. Give me minute.
(to bartender)
Excuse me, where are your toilets?

BARTENDER
(pointing)
Back there.

MAN
Thanks.

He moves off, unwittingly leaving Sophie exactly where she is to confront the Bartender who looks at her somewhere between betrayal and disappointment.

Sophie shrugs *what can you do?*

In a futile gesture, this happens.

BARTENDER
Okay, but the second he does anything inappropriate, call reception. I have brothers.

SOPHIE
I know what to do. You're not my first hotel.

The bartender walks off, very much pissed.

INT. HOTEL - BEDROOM - LATER

Same hotel. Same luxury. The room offers a huge window view of the city skyline and is decorated in more deco: chrome, gold, and squares. In the centre of the room, under a large mobile, is a queen-size bed on a platform.

We see familiar sights of Central London -- Capital of capitals. Outside a thousand office lights pepper the skyline horizon providing a background for...

CLOSE ON Sophie spins and dances around in slow motion.

Pulling out we see she wears a spotless white dressing gown and nothing else. She is strutting with confidence around the room, her posture open. Her voice, brassy.

SOPHIE

Can you see me?

(beat)

How about now?

But she's not talking to us, the viewers.

REVEAL: In fact, Sophie is asking her LAPTOP. Nearby lies the hemp bag from earlier, (the laptop was inside).

The WEBCAM is ON. Recording her dancing for a voyeuristic ONLINE AUDIENCE. She leans in, reading. To her surprise...

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

(to camera)

Wow! 8,000 viewers! Thank you guys.

Thank you-Thank you-Thank you-

And jumps up and down in excitement. ON SCREEN the online message board is popping with message after message after message. Unimaginative posts like 'You're so hot', 'Show your tits', and 'I want to *** you so bad!'

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

If you wanna subscribe to my channel, click on the link below for exclusive content.

She replies on the noticeboard.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Well, you voted for it. You got it.

She adjusts the monitor, revealing the bed. The MAN from earlier, Mr lifetime gym membership with added teeth whitener, waits for her on the bed, a towel over his waist obstructing the view of his dick.

MAN
 (bragging)
 Here's my good side. Make sure you
 catch it.

Gross, right? Prepare yourself for more. He removes his towel and confidently strides over her, and starts kissing Sophie, forcefully but not criminal. (We obstruct some of this with camera angles.) Sophie reciprocates and they start groping each other. The Man keeps looking over her shoulder to look at himself on the screen.

Soon it's settled into a live sex show. But before anything close to penetration...

REVERSE ANGLE: Suddenly the screen flicks out. A POP-UP reads 'Internet disconnected'. The Cam show is over. Sophie rushes over trying to get back online, but to no avail.

SOPHIE
 Wait, wait.
 (goes to laptop)
 Shit! Wi-Fi's down.

Sophie tries to re-establish connection.

MAN
 So much for five star
 accommodation.

SOPHIE
 It's not working.

MAN
 (disappointed)
 Aw, I really wanted to be a
 pornstar.

SOPHIE
 (frustrated, but
 revealing)
 Trust me, it has it's ups and
 downs.

MAN
 (crude)
 I bet it does!

Sophie shudders. Maybe she made the worst choice tonight?

SOPHIE
 Don't be crude. I'll check out
 what's up with reception.

Sophie puts back on a dressing down, and starts to look for her slippers. The Man sits back on the bed and plays with his phone. Not concerned he's still naked.

MAN

Come on back soon. I've been
blasting my abs for this moment.

Sophie prepares to leave, but stops. Something's on her mind.

SOPHIE

I've got to ask... Most guys get
embarrassed being filmed. Aren't
you worried about people finding
out? Like-

MAN

Look, I'm getting married to some
bitch... my parents hope she can
"rein in my wild side". And... if I
go ahead and say no... then they'll
just cut me off. So... considering
how much I'm paying you, how about
you shut the fuck up? Let me decide
how to spend the last week of
freedom, heh?

What a prick! Sophie regrets asking an innocent question.

SOPHIE

Don't worry about it.
(under breath)
Everyone came to see me anyway.

MAN

Hey! Shut up... or I'll get you for
half price.

SOPHIE

Fuck off! You pay for my time and
what we do in that time is pre-
arranged.

MAN

OK, leave then! But you'll be going
home empty.

Sophie is pissed but makes it to the hotel door and tries to play the scene sweetly.

SOPHIE

Wait here, sexy. I'll go to
reception. See what's up.

MAN
(flat)
Whatever. Don't be long.

Sophie glowers and leaves him alone in the room. We follow her out into the...

INT. HOTEL - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sophie storms into the corridor, half angered. Turning a corner, she reaches the LIFTS. Presses DOWN. Beat as she waits until she looks over her shoulder.

To her immediate left, she sees her REFLECTION in a wall-fixed FULL-LENGTH MIRROR. Sophie glances, takes another, building up and eventually turning. She's confronted by her reflection.

For the briefest of moments, there's a Dorian Grey moment. Sophie is unsure the thing looking back at her is actually her. We, the audience, aren't sure either. Was it a monster?

On further inspection, Sophie looks again. A grim look falls over her face.

What the hell am I doing?

What happened to me?

She rubs her eyes, stretching out her skin. *Am I aging?*
Until...

Behind her a BELLBOY stares at her. He's concerned but before he can speak, Sophie leaves him where he stands and enters the lift.

DING. Close on her, conflicted, as she goes down.

MAN (V.O.)
I think I'm in love, probably.

CUT TO:

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

WHALE SOUNDS -- your introduction to "RELAXATION 101". We are way too familiar with this trope. It never fucking works.

We're halfway into a conversation between TWO MEN.

MAN 2 (V.O.)
 (reassuring)
 Love is... good, but is it
 relevant.

A MONTAGE OF CLOSE-UPS: a shelf laden with thick hardbacks peeling at the edges; a half-drunk coffee now cooled leaves a stain on a novelty coaster; a Beefeater teddy bear souvenir from the Tower of London on it's side lying on an Afghan rug; photographs of family; and a broken Newton's Cradle. END MONTAGE

WIDE now to reveal the office entirely where a THERAPIST, genteel and generic interviews someone sitting down.

THERAPIST
 Does it affect your performance at
 work?

CLOSE ON. Look here! The interviewee is DAVID, our former hotshot from the opening scene. It's been ten years for him too, and the cocksuredness with which he used to do things has now passed him by. He never got to be Richard Branson.

DAVID
 (distressed)
 Please! Those walls closed in long ago. I... I... I'm going nowhere fast and it's killing me. Sometimes, I feel I might go ahead and do it!

THERAPIST
 Mm hmm. And what about your sex life. Let's talk about that. Is there something... perverted? Wrong?

DAVID
 It's very normal. Too normal, I guess. I fantasize about my mother much more than my father now.

THERAPIST
 Good! Good! It's not cutting into your other activities? Possibly illegal activities?

On David, a little tetchy. He's wearing a business suit. *When would I have time for other activities?* He shoots a look.

DAVID
 I'm all day at that F-,f-,f-,f-office!

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
(tantrum)
I hate it, I hate it, I hate it!

But the Therapist is preoccupied with another thought to pay him heed.

THERAPIST
Hmm. Interesting. I'm still puzzled you said "probably" when you talked about love. Do you not feel 'in love?'

DAVID
I don't know. Since I asked her for coffee all those months ago-

THERAPIST
This would be Sophie, right?

David nods, before continuing an incoherent babble.

DAVID
Yes, him. I get these weird, oozy feelings... unusual delicate, supernatural, very horny, and violent kind of like I'm a teenager again plotting terrorist attacks.

Beat.

THERAPIST
You sound rejuvenated.

DAVID
No, restarted.... with Sophie this time everything will be better, actually better, I know what to do this time. That I can, no, I have to feel hopeful, or I will take a gun to work and shoot the shit out of everyone. Make the news. Bathe in blood.

Pardon? For reasons unknown, the therapist ignores him and writes on his notepad.

THERAPIST
Forced hope? Sounds like denial. We should be concerned about that. Promise me, you'll take an aspirin.

DAVID

No. I don't like the sensation. Normally I hate change, you know, new people, new scenarios, new regrets, new ways to fall short of previously held expectations. You know we're all naked without our clothes on. I'm crazy. Completely insane.

THERAPIST

Maybe you are, you're certainly delusional. You invent these fantasies to deliberately mislead my analytical process. You should take an aspirin.

DAVID

(tears up)

Right! is - wow, this is hard! - is because my father used to beat me with banana skins. He was a horrible man. Terrific bowler.

THERAPIST

David, your father died before you were born.

DAVID

(completely surprised)

WHAT?!?!?! Are you sure?

THERAPIST

Yes, I have the medical records.

DAVID

That explains everything, even when my uncle molested me. You know, he never calls me.

THERAPIST

No, he didn't.

DAVID

OK. He didn't. You should still pass that on to my boss though. "Wants uncle on nephew contact".

THERAPIST

It's already in the file. Do you mind if I send this to the Daily Mail? It could really spice up a slow news week.

DAVID

Just when I'm about to get in a rut, something jams up the controls, and suddenly I feel safe again. Change is crazy. I fear it.

Long, long beat. David waits for the Therapist to retort. Nothing happens, until, the Therapist finishes writing a lot of stuff on his notepad. Suddenly, he laughs out loud.

THERAPIST

You almost had me going for a second, but fear of change? Please, what psychology textbook did you pull that one from?

Tricked you, didn't I? You thought the Therapist wasn't listening and David was a nervous wreck! Nope! This has all been a mock interview, no stakes whatsoever. In fact David and Therapist are probably good friends. Rumbled, David shrugs.

DAVID

Alright, you got me.
(beat)
I'm a showman.

David stifles a yawn, but stretches nonetheless. He prepares to roll out and get on with his day.

THERAPIST

I'll tell Michaela your psyche report was above reproach. 100% partnership material.

DAVID

I owe you one.
(beat, curious)
Out of interest, how crazy was I?

THERAPIST

We'd need a new spectrum.
(remembering)
Especially since you started dating your ex.

David doesn't show his disdain for that question, but he's definitely been rubbed up the wrong way.

DAVID

Hey! I'm past statute of limitations on her. It's been almost a decade.

THERAPIST

An ex is an ex.

DAVID

Even when we broke up at nineteen.
What about all that time to grow as
people? Isn't that what psyche guys
can't get enough of?

THERAPIST

I'm just saying the past is always
greener when you don't relive it.

DAVID

Well, on that awkward mixed
metaphor, time for me to get back
to the daily grind. Take care now.

THERAPIST

Bye, bye. Crazy.

Off David, leaving the office, looking and feeling great.

INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

STOCK FOOTAGE: TV, some chat/reality show. Brain numbing
fodder about someone who did bad things to someone else, now
with added DNA!

We're in a simple 2 bedroom inner-city apartment with the
basic necessities -- fridge, freezer, countertops, and two
seater breakfast table and whole grain high fiber cereal to
aid digestion. The place a 30 something might be thinking of
leaving before settling in the suburbs.

Watching some godawful morning show, Sophie sits, oddly
bright and breezy tucking into her cereal and reading some
complicated tax forms.

No more the glamour from last night, she's in grey slacks,
make-up free, hair in a bun, taking greedy mouthfuls from her
bowl. This is her before hooking up, the 9 - 5 Sophie.

Enter ZARA, a junior doctor, older than her years but
physically late 20s, not a morning person, but works more
traditional hours than her flat mate.

SOPHIE

Morning sunshine!

Zara grunts and opens the bread bin, puts two slices of whole
grain and slips into the toaster.

It's all part of the morning routine. Also in the routine is WASHING her hands thoroughly and meticulously.

ZARA
(still washing)
Whatcha doing? Those looks
suspiciously official

SOPHIE
Taxes. Wanna head start.
(off Zara's reaction)
What?

ZARA
(out the blue)
Nothing. It's just... weirdly
responsible of you.

The toaster pops. Zara starts buttering.

SOPHIE
Yeah, well, all part of the
adulthood experience. It's how we
keep the garbage collection going
and the street lights on?

ZARA
Except, how much public service do
you think you fund when you're an
unemployed painter.

SOPHIE
(mid-mouthful)
Artist!

Zara teases her, but she really doesn't know much about Sophie's other life (which we do). How the rent gets paid between them is a mini mystery? All Zara knows is that when it's due, Sophie turns up. *Maybe she has a rich aunt?*

ZARA
Like I said, one of those non-
famous artists. Zilcho!

SOPHIE
(defensive)
I do OK.

Zara smiles. Sophie glowers at the disrespect. A little hurt.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
You're in a mood. Is there some
flesh eating virus from work
gnawing at your butt?

Beat. Zara gives in, pulls up a chair. Feeling the stress.

ZARA

(sighs)

I'm up to my neck in sick doctors
and geriatrics. This flu season
shows no signs of slowing down.

SOPHIE

(half-sincere)

Poor you.

ZARA

Poor me. I'm pulling double shifts
as is.

(checks clock)

Oh! Gotta go.

She almost leaps out her chair, breakfast barely touched.

ZARA (CONT'D)

Infectiology's mostly about
prevention anyway. Make sure you
wear a light jacket and drink
plenty of fluids. You'll be fine.

Zara rushes outside, clearly she's been off her feet.

SOPHIE

Will do. Thanks mum.

Off Sophie, she shrugs and carries on breakfasting/taxes. We see a REVERSE ANGLE - she's been doodling absent-mindedly in the MARGINS - it sort of looks like Zara.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Oh shit!

EXT. LONDON CITY - SKYSCRAPER - DAY

From the air, we see an elegant modern glass building. Below, people swarm like ants through revolving doors. It bears a grim, grey resemblance to the scene what opened this episode. The sun has set on them all.

INT. GLASSWORKS FINANCE - OFFICE BULLPEN - DAY

Overflowing with SUITS; at computers, on the phones, at the water cooler, rushing the through corridors, flirting with each other. It's the maggot pile on the rotten apple -- we have no time for slow, small-minded workers.

Through the fray, we PAN finding the coveted corner office - 'DAVID BENNET: ACQUISITIONS EXECUTIVE' printed clearly on the glass door - reminds everyone the pecking order. And looking through, feet on the desk, David watches them all with contempt.

A FIGURE barges into his office breaking his concentration.

INT. GLASSWORKS FINANCE - DAVID'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Newspaper under his arm, this figure is BOBBY WATERHOUSE, early 30's, child-like optimism with a jock-like swagger, the world hasn't crushed him yet (it could be the opposite) -- there's always hope. In a way, the opposite of David.

BOBBY

Hey buddy boy! Have you seen this?

Bobby hurls the paper on David's desk. Headline reads about some major tragedy - Japanese Tsunami, Congo civil war. Middle East You know the kind. David peers, not touching it.

DAVID

No-

BOBBY

What about these?

CLOSE ON Bobby peels back his jacket sleeves to the cuff, showing his brand new personalized "BW" cufflinks, and yes, that's real diamond.

DAVID

(mock surprise)

Oh! You're being stupid! I thought you wanted me to join you in the donkey for the fun run fundraiser.

Bobby helps himself to a seat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I have a feeling... today's gonna be a good day.

BOBBY

How so?

DAVID

Today, the foretold prophecy comes true. The chosen one reveals himself. Today, I'm finally going to make partner. Plus hot date tonight.

BOBBY

No way, me too.

DAVID

Do you think we're dating the same woman? What a movie that would be!

BOBBY

Well, every night is date night with Emily and the kids.

DAVID

I know. Karma's a bitch.

David flashes the newspaper. Their lives are good so someone else, somewhere else, is suffering.

BOBBY

(sincere)

but I'm also going for that partnership.

News most unwelcome to David, who stifles his disappointment.

DAVID

(disbelief)

We're competing? Again? You remember what happened last time.

He gestures to the office door. Bobby acknowledges David's past triumph.

BOBBY

Actually, there's at least three vacancies on the board as far as I know, maybe four if Fenway resigns.

DAVID

Plenty of room at the top. It's enough to make you ravenous.

BOBBY

So, anyway, I thought I'd pay you a visit to say I'm doing this. Everything's above board and reproach. There's no need for sabotage. We can reach the top together without any bad blood.

DAVID

You're denying me some mutually assured destruction? Spoilsport.

BOBBY

Family comes first. Also, I've started taking aspirin on a daily basis. Heart care. My Machiavellian party days are over.

This is weird for David. A long time rival has thrown in the hat. What's worse is they are the same age. What does this reveal for David's ambition from that time ago?

DAVID

Well, I wish you luck.

He rises, they shake hands.

BOBBY

You too, buddy. And good luck with the date tonight. Fingers crossed, it's the one.

Another blow for David. His relationship with Sophie is far from a definition, and thoughts of 'settling down' once seemed so far away.

DAVID

We'll see if she makes the cut. There's always the chance I'll have to go back to my little black book of hall of fame lays.

Bobby smirks. A little of the younger Bobby remains.

BOBBY

Well, time to reel someone in. Emily's been busting my balls trying to set up double dates, and I'm sick of having no married friends to take her up on it.

Bobby exits. Off David, the shine taken off his morning.

DAVID (V.O.)

OK! Let's talk about the elephant in the room.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT (A FEW HOURS LATER)

Sophie sips at a champagne flute, uncomfortable. Opposite her sits David. Before this not much has been said between them for some time. It's not a great date.

SOPHIE
 (looking through glass)
 I see no elephants.

DAVID
 What we have needs a definition.

SOPHIE
 Are you sure? I don't think so.

DAVID
 It's been over three months, every
 two weeks, you can't still be a
 blast from the past.

Sophie isn't in the mood. Deflecting again.

SOPHIE
 Meanwhile, you started to sound
 like a girl.

She's irked him, but is quick to slip a hand over his, grips
 it tentatively, reassures him.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 (playful)
 Well, how's this? As long as it's
 not too uncomfortable, how about
 you call us old friends... with
 benefits.

DAVID
 (suggestive)
 Except we stopped being friends a
 long, long time ago.

SOPHIE
 So we're a little on-again, off-
 again what's wrong with that?

David is perplexed. She's not understanding the subtle
 meaning of his probing.

DAVID
 10 years, and now you're back. It
 might not be wrong, but it's
 certainly not right.

SOPHIE
 (defensive)
 I was having adventures. You had
 your work. We were in a different
 space.

(MORE)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Would it be so strange to think we
weren't right for each other then,
but now

(beat)

We're perfect together.

She offers her flute. David reciprocates half-heartedly.

DAVID

You're a truly special woman,
Sophie Zucker.

SOPHIE

There's more about--

Just then, a WAITER, fresh-faced, the smell of mother's milk
still on him approaches not understanding remotely what's
he's interrupting.

WAITER

(rehearsed)

Good evening, madam. Sir. Tonight's
special is the lobster risotto and
that comes with a selection of
spring vegetables and red wine jus.

Sophie, annoyed at being interrupted, plays along lovey dovey
with David. She bats her eyes like a 10 year old girl, hopped
up on lemonade, trying to secure a Porsche from daddy. It's
all too much and that's the joke.

SOPHIE

What would you recommend for a ten
year anniversary?

DAVID

(subdued protest)

WAITER

Congratulations.

(beat, half joke)

Tin.

Beat. Sophie looks as David, Slack jawed, eyes popping,
feining over the top surprise.

SOPHIE

(to David, semi-sarcastic)

I like him. He's funny.

(to waiter)

How did you get so funny?

WAITER
 (uncomfortable)
 All part of the service.

SOPHIE
 (ire showing)
 Well, we were having an important conversation, but I guess now's a good a time to order as any.
 (to David)
 What will you have, honey? Lobster? I could murder lobster.

DAVID
 As long as you're happy, I'm happy.

WAITER
 You're a wise man.

SOPHIE
 We're a great team. Speaking of *accoutrements*? Does it come with ketchup?

WAITER
 (half-hearing)
 Eh?

DAVID
 She's kidding. Try to ignore her-

David gives her a wry smile. She's a mischief and that's what he looks for -- a minor chaos.

SOPHIE
 Yes, ignore me but make sure you get my order.
 (menu)
 Actually, forget seafood. I'm now interested in your grill selection. Can you ask the chef to cook my steak a little less than raw? I'm on a 'no wedding dress required' diet.

This has jostled the waiter, no longer that friendly. He decides to play the safety option.

WAITER
 I can come back later.

SOPHIE

I hope so.
(to David)
You're paying, right? Lover?

DAVID

Sure... dear.

Sophie fingers the menu again, greedily.

SOPHIE

In the meantime, make mine another
bottle of your reddest wine. My
companion will have tap water, and
like it.

WAITER

(concerned)
Sir?

DAVID

It's fine. At least one of us can
afford it.

Sophie shoots an angry glance. He's not playing fair.

WAITER

Very good. One bottle of the house
red and one tap water.

The waiter leaves.

SOPHIE

See? He didn't seem to mind *what* we
called each other.

DAVID

We'll be lucky if he doesn't piss
in your drink.

SOPHIE

Why do you have to be so
'official'?

DAVID

(pointed)
I grew up. Well, I'm trying.

Off Sophie. Self-examining herself and then, all of a sudden.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophie sits alone in an upmarket bed, wearing elaborately detailed lingerie. We pause on her, almost voyeuristically. Suddenly we hear a FLUSH from the ensuite. Enter David in his underwear. He joins her.

SOPHIE

Well, that killed the romance.

DAVID

You're giving me grief over bodily functions? A few minutes ago, you were applauding them.

For once, David scores a point.

SOPHIE

(sincere)

Did you enjoy yourself?

DAVID

It was... different.

SOPHIE

Good different?

DAVID

Yes.

(beat)

How was I?

SOPHIE

Different.

Bang. Sophie scores one back - this is the way of things. David pauses, we see into the insecurity of his soul.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I'm joking! You were a revelation, truly manly in every way.

(beat, lock eyes)

You have a very effective penis.

David feels played and tries to hit her with a pillow.

DAVID

Watch yourself or I'll become one of those guys who starts bringing food to bed.

SOPHIE

You can have me for dessert.

Pause. It's a bad pun.

DAVID
(can't keep a straight
face)
Wow! That is so unsexy. You're so
bad at the basic art of seduction.

SOPHIE
Shut up!

They wrestle each other. Soon, they are wrapped in each
other's arms. There is a silence.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Are you ok? You know... seeing
where this goes.

David's face looks conflicted until he pulls this one out.

DAVID
You bet.

ACT II

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY WARD - THE NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON: a POLYSTYRENE CUP being ferried at a quick pace.

SFX: Heels on Linoleum.

Widen to show, Zara, in her white coat, storms the ward. She looks beyond weary, like she's been doing this for way too long and overworking too.

Surrounding her in a inertia haze, a much higher than average ratio of PATIENTS over DOCTORS. One PATIENT (teens) is hooked up to a VENTILATOR in a private room. Another looks like she's in the tent-version of THE BOY IN THE PLASTIC BUBBLE. She waves at Zara and Zara politely waves back but doesn't break stride.

Anyone who ends up here has serious problems. But, it's a very overwhelmed place of healing, uncommonly so. As a patient COUGHS loudly and restrained by an ORDERLEY, Zara opens a door on to the-

INT. HOSPITAL - EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where waiting for her sitting up in bed is MRS WHITLOCK, 60's, the kind of old lady who looks like the poster child for some large pie-baking corporate enterprise.

ZARA
Mrs Whitlock?

WHITLOCK
(confused)
Hello?

ZARA
Sorry for the delay, we've been a little overwhelmed. I'll be your doctor today.

WHITLOCK
(concerned)
Where's Dr Pederson?

Whitlock reacts defensively as Zara closes the door.

ZARA
He's a little under the weather. Whenever a physician so much as sneezes, we send them home.
(MORE)

ZARA (CONT'D)

Can't afford the risk in a place like this.

WHITLOCK

I'd prefer a doctor I trust.

ZARA

As I said, I'm your doctor today. You can trust me. You wanted to report a change in symptoms.

WHITLOCK

It's these, I'm getting these bad... these... tickly coughs.

ZARA

(mild disbelief)

A tickly cough?

MRS WHITLOCK raises her neck, which is uncomfortable to do when you're sitting in bed. Zara looks and examines her briefly.

WHITLOCK

Usually I'd take everything you should: paracetamol, fruit teas, honey, and I get an early night. I asked a nurse but-

ZARA

That's good. Very wise.

WHITLOCK

Yes, it's all online. But I just don't know what to do about this.

Whitlock starts to undo her blouse, but stops. Zara goes to assist and notices she's HANDCUFFED by her left hand which has been kept under the blankets and out of our sight.

ZARA

(half-joke)

Oh! So you're an escapee?

WHITLOCK

(disdain)

I- I hate being kept inside like some invalid.

Whitlock says it in a way that shuts Zara down. No love lost.

WHITLOCK (CONT'D)

Are you sure Dr Peterson isn't available? I'd be more comfortable.

ZARA
 (mild-frustration)
 I don't know if it's my age or
 something completely different, but
 I doubt there's anything you have I
 haven't seen before.

Mrs Whitlock fidgets, still unsure.

ZARA (CONT'D)
 OK. Well, as I said, there's a lot
 of patients today, so...

Zara goes to leave. Whitlock rolls up her blouse with her
 free hand. All up her LEFT FLANK is an aggressively spread
 LILAC RASH. It looks almost alien, ready to bleed, rancid.

WHITLOCK
 It started a few days ago.

ZARA
 That's more than a cough.
 (concerned)
 Have you fallen over recently? Is
 that why-

Zara implies the handcuffs are because of this.

WHITLOCK
 No. It happened spontaneously.
 (half laughing, smug)
 Looks like I'm as stumped as you
 are.

Meanwhile Zara examines her, still stumped by her pending
 diagnosis. This is almost consuming her torso like a greedy
 parasite that looks like a Rorschach Test.

ZARA
 Have you been losing weight? Fever?

WHITLOCK
 No.

ZARA
 Then we can probably rule out
 Leukemia.

Beat. She probes again

ZARA (CONT'D)
 Forgive me, this might be personal,
 but, are you... washing yourself?
 Are you getting regular care?

WHITLOCK
 (outraged)
 My personal hygiene is above
 reproach, thank you very mu-

Zara pinches the rash when Whitlock is distracted (or does something to take Whitlock off guard).

ZARA
 (concerned)
 Does it hurt?

WHITLOCK
 (miffed)
 No.
 (beat)
 Should I be worried?

Beat. Zara's puzzled stare.

ZARA
 (sighs)
 I'm don't know.
 (wrapping up)
 I'll put you on a dose of
 antihistamines, will check in the
 next few days to see how you're
 progressing.

Zara exits. Off Whitlock's "still not trusting her" expression.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Zara reports to the reception where a team of NURSES wait, going around their business in the background, overworked.

ZARA
 This isn't supposed to take longer
 than fifteen minutes.

NURSE
 Yeah, it's supposed to be fifteen
 minutes for everyone, but you're
 complaining to the wrong person,
 doctor.

Zara sighs, defeated. Another Doctor, VIHAAN SINGH, sidles up to the desk focused on his own thing, half-making conversation.

DR. SINGH
 I see you picked up Room 12.

ZARA
Tell me about it, I'm up to my
elbows in mysterious rashes.

DR. SINGH
(mock disbelief)
Metaphorically, I hope.

A NURSE arrives at the desk. Zara gives her a meds order.

ZARA
Hi. Can I get some hydrocortisone
steroids and a round of
antihistamines? Room 12, please?

Beat. Dr. Singh is still hanging around.

ZARA (CONT'D)
(curious)
I'm sorry. Did you want room 12?

DR. SINGH
(not me gov!)
Oh no, no, no, no.
(concerned)
Didn't you hear about Peterson?

ZARA
(disgruntled)
I've heard about Peterson every day
this week. Everyone over fifty is
besotted with him. He might kick
off a religion.

DR. SINGH
He was attacked.

ZARA
(shocked)
How?

DR. SINGH
This place is a madhouse. Clue, you
survived her.

Zara looks back. No! He can't possibly mean?

ZARA
(disbelief)
What? Mrs Whitlock?

DR. SINGH

I know, right? You missed the handcuffs? Not very observant of you.

ZARA

I thought she'd wandered into the basement or something.

DR. SINGH

One of the juniors told me. Apparently, when he ran a simple blood pressure test, all of a sudden this little old lady starts sweating buckets and thrashing around in a frenzy. Next thing being the next thing, Peterson's fainted on the floor covered in vomit.

ZARA

Isn't tying her to the bed a little extreme? Could be anxiety. You know she's getting terrible bedsores.

DR. SINGH

Either way, the incident put him out of commission for an entire week. How's that for extreme? Rumours are she gave him the 'plague'.

ZARA

No, it's not a plague, Vihaan. There's no trace of contagion or infection..

DR. SINGH

Famous last words.

ZARA

(flashes file)

Severe rash on left flank. Now does that sound like an aggressive bed sore or the black death?

DR. SINGH

You saw it. That's no bedsore. That's something new.

ZARA

You're hoping it's something new. The next publication.

DR. SINGH

All I know is eight years a dermatologist and I haven't seen anything remotely close to it. And with her recent history...

ZARA

Last I heard, skin complaints didn't cause psychotic episodes

DR. SINGH

do you think a few over the counter meds you can get on the high street are going to do the trick?

Boom. I guess not.

ZARA

Well, so long as its not fatal, I'm going to solve this mystery.

DR. SINGH

Maybe if you find a cure we can call it "Singh Syndrome".

ZARA

I knew it! But change the name. Sounds like a talent show for Indian doctors.

DR. SINGH

Make sure you call me in for a consult next time.

(sigh)

Well, onto the next one.

ZARA

I'll bare that in mind.

Dr Singh walks off. Off Zara's worn down expression.

INT. GLASSWORKS - BOARDROOM - AFTERNOON

The large table in the boardroom is uncommonly empty, except for MICHAELA GLASS, CEO of GLASSWORKS, and David's direct boss. She talks on the phone.

MICHAELA (ON PHONE)

... under review. I think we can agree that's the type of forward-planning that cements you to the Forbes 500.

(MORE)

MICHAELA (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
So if another deal goes on hiatus,
you won't be able to hold me
responsible.

She gestures, smiles. David sits.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)
Look! That's old rope and you know
it! You'll be able to see reports
in my handwriting before the next
quarter ends. Until then, you worry
about your underperformances and
I'll take care of everything else.
Alright? Ciao.

She hangs up and re-fixes a shit-eating grin.

DAVID
It's a little before 3, but I'm
here for our meeting.

Remembering.

MICHAELA
Oh yes. The...

DAVID
Senior partner. I've raised my
deposit. Time to prove my loyalty
to this firm.

David puts a receipt on her desk. Boss isn't impressed.

MICHAELA
Oh yes... that.

DAVID
(intuitive)
Am I about to be disappointed?

MICHAELA
(uneasy)
There's been a development.

DAVID
I'm listening.

MICHAELA
The vacancies on the board, well
they are already reserved.

DAVID
There's no way this happened
overnight.

MICHAELA

Not exactly, no. You know our partners in Dubai?

DAVID

Of course.

MICHAELA

Well, they're going to be our... overseers.

DAVID

We're being bought out?

MICHAELA

We're expecting an initial offer next week. It was paramount we kept this hushed.

DAVID

So they'll be bringing in their own people.

MICHAELA

Yes.

(beat)

But, this is out of my hands now, do you understand?

David shifts uncomfortably. Michaela slides back his receipt.

DAVID

Loud and clear. No new partners.

MICHAELA

(indignant)

Did you honestly think you were the first person to slide £500,000 across my desk today? You're actually the fourth.

DAVID

Spare me.

MICHAELA

What did you think was going to happen? A buyout means one thing. "WE-WILL BE-BOUGHT-OUT". And they want the car exactly as it was advertised in the magazine.

DAVID

There's no need to be so condescending.

MICHAELA

I don't care, David. They can do whatever we want. I can't, and neither can you. That's the way things go when you're a company man.

Outraged, David leaves. Michaela looks indignant.

INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Sophie sketches something in her notebook. It's good, an abstract etching. We see her other artwork. It's impressive. She has talent. Her phone vibrates.

She picks it up quickly. Maybe it's David. It isn't. It's only her alarm for 15:00 with a note reading "Insta-update"

SOPHIE

(to herself)

Oh! Almost forgot!

She sighs. No reply from David and puts down her pencils before pouting and taking a sexy selfie, flashing some PG cleavage.

Beat. SOPHIE POV: Her Instagram wall is loaded with SEXY PHOTOS, much lingeries, much close up selfies with suggestive poses, some of which could be construed as 'artistic', but it's largely targeted to randy old men. She's taking her hooking 'business' into the 21st century.

Beat. She returns to drawing. Her phone vibrates. Instagram comment simply reads 'URGH'. She calmly 'blocks' him, and puts the phone down.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Asshole.

Zara returns from a long shift and leans around the door. She's chipper but there's grey under her eyes.

ZARA

Hey Picasso! What're you scribbling there? Another masterpiece?

SOPHIE

Something abstract. It's a little old-fashioned.

ZARA

Well, as long as you make your side of the rent.

SOPHIE

I take it the hospital kept you busy.

ZARA

Something like that.

(beat)

Come on, you, it's not good living like a hermit. I bet you haven't been outside today.

SOPHIE

You're not wrong.

ZARA

Come on, I've got a hankering for lasagna, but I'm out of beef and cheese.

(beat)

You know what? I don't think I've ever seen you sell one of those pictures.

Sophie freezes. Does Zara know?

SOPHIE

Sometimes I use a pseudonym.

ZARA

Yeah, what pseudonym?

SOPHIE

If I told you, it wouldn't be much of a pseudonym, would it?

ZARA

Whatever. Why don't you be a little more vague? You'll give away all your trade secrets.

Zara flashes a bag for life.

ZARA (CONT'D)

Come on. I'm hungry.

SOPHIE

Can't. Out tonight. Gallery opening.

ZARA

Come out. I could use the company
for a bit.

SOPHIE

Fine. Guess I'll play big sister,
again.

ZARA

You're the best, and you're old.

Sophie flashes a glare, while Zara laughs.

ZARA (CONT'D)

Just kidding.

Sophie rises.

INT. SUPERMARKET - AFTERNOON

Sophie and Zara wander the aisle looking at a wall of milk.

SOPHIE

No soy this time. I'm tired of
undrunken cartons hogging fridge
space.

ZARA

You only put them in the fridge
after they're open

Zara picks one up, examines and shakes it. Looks at Sophie,
but puts it in the basket anyway.

In the background, a MIDDLE-AGED MAN shaggy and unkempt
stalks them - obviously as fuck. An uneasy sensation comes
over the women. Sophie suggests they move on, evasive creepo
maneuver number #1

SOPHIE

(to zara, cheery)

Do you have anything against
muesli?

Sophie leads Zara down another aisle, but creepo follows them
from a safe distance. Sophie gets wise to this: he's clearly
following her and SCRATCHING himself awkwardly -- creep.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey! What are you doing?

He turns and tries to escape but Sophie grabs him by the
wrist and twists violently. She restrains him.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
 Did you get a good look? Touching
 yourself in public? You perv.

MAN
 (surprised)
 Sorry. I-

He feebly tries to escape but Sophie has secured a wristlock.

ZARA
 I'm getting the manager, creep.

Zara walks off, but notices a PURPLE RASH on his cheek which
 he's scratching awkwardly. It's the exact same as MRS
 WHITLOCK. She pauses, perplexed, distracted.

SOPHIE
 (seeing her)
 Well?

ZARA
 (confused sound.)

Zara leaves anyway. Sophie is left alone with him.

MAN
 Sorry. I didn't mean to stare. It's
 just, I'm ...
 (beat, looks down)
 I'm a fan.

Sophie takes a second look.

SOPHIE
 (oh yeah?)
 I've heard that one before.

MAN
 (Appealing)
 No. You're Sophie Zucker. I know
 you. You're an artist.

SOPHIE
 Nice try, pervo. No-one's come to
 my exhibitions for five years.

MAN
 (confused)
 What? No, I follow your Instagram.
 Have you ever met Luscious in Lace?
 She's my favourite.

He flashes his phone. Sure enough there's Sophie doing what she does. The real one here is mortified.

MAN (CONT'D)

Come on. You must get this from fans all the time. Can I get a photo?

This encounter has taken Sophie completely by surprise.

SOPHIE

Er... sure.

He leans in and takes a selfie. Zara returns with the MANAGER.

MANAGER

Sir. You're going to have to leave this store. We've got complaints.

MAN

It's ok?
(to Sophie)
Right?

Beat. The staff wait on Sophie's reaction.

SOPHIE

No.

The man looks betrayed as he's marched out the store. Confused mutterings as he's frogmarched away. Sophie is conflicted and shocked at the same time. She stands like a statue causing Zara to ask-

ZARA

What's wrong?

SOPHIE

I'm just shaken. I'll see you later.
(calls back)
Be back late.

Sophie walks away leaving Zara holding the groceries. As she walks away, off Sophie's conflicted expression and Zara's confusion.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - EVENING

David returns home, completely defeated and, all alone. He browses his phone. He thinks of dialing SOPHIE, but after some inner conflict and insecurity he decides not to.

Instead, he sees the time and, later than he hoped, starts to hurry up.

INT. BEDROOM - TIME LAPSE - 15 MINUTES

David leaves the shower in nothing but a towel. A shirt is laid out on his bed. He gets a phone call from 'MIKE'.

DAVID

Mike! How's it going boy?

MIKE (OVER PHONE)

Something's come up. I'm going to have to reschedule.

DAVID

What the hell, Mike? Again? Why does this keep happening? You're rescheduling rescheduling.

MIKE

(indignant)

Look, I'm sorry David, my kid's sick.

DAVID

So, you have a partner, tell her to share responsibility.

MIKE

(sterner)

My kid is sick, David. Unless you know a cure for the worst itching of her young life, then you can keep your opinions on family life to yourself.

DAVID

My mother used to just talc the problem away. Isn't that all you need for an under five? Then you don't have to risk blow off your friends at the last minute.

MIKE

You're immature. If you ever settled down, we could do playdays together.

DAVID

That's the trepidation of the pussy whipped British male.

MIKE

Fuck you, David. Fuck you very much.

Mike hangs up. David sighs.

He thinks of phoning Sophie again, hovers over the call button, and chooses not to again. Instead, he phones up a pizza place.

DAVID

Yes, can I order a meat lovers pizza please?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (A FEW HOURS LATER)

TIGHT FOCUS on an out-of-shape middle-aged man panting heavily, red-cheeked, sweat pouring out every pore - almost about to have a humongous heart attack. He jolts forward and back and (off screen) in and out.

Underneath him is Sophie taking whatever he's giving in the missionary position. She locks eye contact with him and tries to be encouraging. Suddenly, the Man starts slowing down, the pressure is too much. Seeing this, Sophie pushes harder, taking over the majority of the work, thrusting up and pulling him incredibly close, taking him by surprise.

All of a sudden the Man shudders. This is his "O-face". We PAN OUT revealing the hotel room behind him. He cums and immediately collapses on Sophie, totally spent.

MAN

(exhausted)

Th-thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

He rests, trying to catch his breath. Sophie delivers some post-service positivity to her client.

SOPHIE

You are really something, big guy.
I like my men strong and powerful.
Entirely dominating.

MAN

Tch. You're being nice, I can tell.

Sophie smiles, half knowing, but she double's down on the ego boost.

SOPHIE

Maybe, I am, but you're definitely not the worst I've ever had.

(MORE)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Phew, I definitely lost a few calories there. You know what? Right now, I could really go for a big juicy steak swimming in a thick whisky sauce with some little mushrooms and a salad on the side.

(strokes his arm)

You've worn me down, tiger.

MAN

(defeated)

You're lying... but that's OK. This is as good as it gets for me. I don't deserve any better.

He rolls over. They lie on bed side to side. A long beat transpires as they stare at the ceiling.

MAN (CONT'D)

Can I hold you?

Sophie is uncomfortable with this, but...

SOPHIE

Only if it stays cuddling.

He rolls on his side and shuffles over to her side of the bed. Sophie turns and they embrace, inches apart and staring into each other's eyes. It replicates the intimacy this man wants although everything is fake.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Can you feel my breasts?

MAN

Yes. They're soft.

(beat)

I never had someone to cuddle, sometimes I wanted to hold my pillow all night-

SOPHIE

Shh. Relax now. It'll be OK.

Beat.

MAN

What's your name? Your real name?

SOPHIE

Now, that's not how this works.

MAN

Come on, please?

SOPHIE

(stern)

I can leave anytime I want. Our hour is more or less up.

Beat. This time more awkward.

MAN

OK, but there's one thing I really want to know. Let's call it one of my fantasies.

SOPHIE

Just one?

MAN

Sure.

SOPHIE

Go ahead.

MAN

How can you keep doing this? Selling yourself.

SOPHIE

(offended)

Excuse me, but who are you to judge.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

What's there to say? I like sex and people pay me.

MAN

That's no life.

SOPHIE

What are you social services? What are you fishing for? My father never groped me inappropriately, in fact, both my parents supported my life decisions, a little too much-

The MAN holds her tighter than comfortable.

MAN

It's OK. I'm here for you.

SOPHIE

(offended)

No you're-

MAN

You must know I have money. I can
take care of you. Take you away
from this life.

Sophie pushes off, in fact kicking him in the ribs and
kangarooing out. She flies out the bed.

SOPHIE

OK. I'm done here.

Sophie starts getting dressed and packing her things up.

MAN

We could-

SOPHIE

Stop right there, Lancelot. That
your game isn't it, you're no white
night and I'm no damsel; no wonder
you insisted being on top. There's
no 'we'. This is a service, nothing
more.

MAN

(desperate)

Look. I'm sorry. Please, don't
leave me!

(beat)

I'm all alone.

He starts tearing up, completely pathetic. Sophie looks at
him in disdain. For a moment, Sophie pities him.

SOPHIE

You've got a problem I can't solve.
What's wrong with you cannot be
fixed by cumming inside a stranger.
Strangers always leave.

MAN

(distraught)

I'm so, sorry.

SOPHIE

(firm)

Don't call again.

Sophie slams the door, leaving him outcast, and she's now in-

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sophie takes a few angry breaths, punches the door in rage.

She checks her phone. Calls. Nothing from David. Then suddenly, she realizes.

SOPHIE
 (to herself)
 What am I doing?

Off her woke moment to--

INT. ZARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Zara meditates on the bed. Lotus posture in a deep trance. CLOSE ON her as she breathes in and out. In and out. Deep in thought, slightly stressed, but looking very far inside her soul for answers.

ZARA
 (talking to herself)
 Psoriasis. Eczema. Impetigo.
 Intertrigo Atopic dermatitis.
 Contact dermatitis. Stasis
 dermatitis. Pityriasis rosea. Drug
 rash. Miliaria. Ringworm. Shingles.
 Scabies. Autoimmune. Toxic shock
 syndrome.

PAN the room: Candles burn in the background, revealing mystic shit on her walls like dream catchers and the like. Zara's taste in decoration is suspect - looks like a "hippie chick".

ZARA (CONT'D)
 Acrodermatitis.
 (realizes)
 Now I'm just guessing.

CLOSE ON: Zara's eyes open. She has an answer and reaches for her PHONE. She dials and we wait a few rings.

ZARA (CONT'D)
 Hello?

ACT III

INT. SUBURBIA - HOUSE - DAY

DING DONG! Tight on a GLOVED HAND ringing a doorbell. As we wait for the door to be answered, we reveal Zara. A few beats as the door unlocks. DR PETERSON answers, mid 60s, wrapped up in a dressing gown and looking like hell.

ZARA

Dr Peterson?

DR PETERSON

Yes

ZARA

Hi, I'm Zara. We talked on the phone.

DR PETERSON

(but not caring)

I suppose you'll want to come in.

He gestures inside.

ZARA

(shit-eating grin)

Thank you.

She enters, practically smelling the hostility.

INT. PETERSON'S HOUSE - 30 MINUTES LATER

Zara sits sipping tea. She sits behind Peterson, tapping on his shoulder taking in his airwaves. No sign of blockage.

ZARA

This is unusual.

DR. PETERSON

Don't you think I don't know that?
Sick as a dog. Sick as a dog I've
been. I'm practically wedded to
this bucket!

We flashes his PUKE PAIL, the vomit bucket. Inevitably he's gotten worse since he was at work.

ZARA

Are your symptoms-

DR. PETERSON

Yes, worsening!

(tcch!)

Honestly, standards of juniors
these days. Where did you get your
medical degree?

REVERSE ANGLE: Peterson's torso is almost entirely RASH and from it is sprouting clumps of orange hair. His body is beginning to resemble a peat bog.

ZARA

This is a very severe case of... I
don't know. Tumours don't present
like this.

DR. PETERSON

I've started to suspect it was
neurofibromatosis.

(pointing to lumps)

Here. And here. Appeared inside the
last two days. Almost jagged.

ZARA

I doubt you're not the elephant
man. Surely, these growths would
have shown up sooner and thirty
years ago.

Here's the kicker. While Zara is examining the clumps of body hair...

Production Note: Depending on budget here, I'd like an EYEBALL opens on his back, staring at and terrifying Zara. But it it's too much moolah, the desired effect here is that his symptoms are completely alien and Zara discovers this. It's a little creative hurdle, but I think the director/props can sort this out.

BEAT. On Zara's terrified expression.

ZARA (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Oh my god!

DR. PETERSON

What? What have you found?

Zara is speechless. Instead she stands there frozen. Peterson loses patience with her and finds the nearest mirror.

DR. PETERSON (CONT'D)

Honestly! Juniors. You'll have to
toughen up sweetheart, I.

And now he's seen it too. The eyes stare at each other.

DR. PETERSON (CONT'D)

I, eh-

And he VOMITS into the bucket, but this time it's blood, in volumes. Something's gone horribly wrong as he falls onto the floor continuing to wretch. Suddenly, he's stiff as a board.

Zara climbs over him, checks his pulse. It's not there.

She dials the phone, lodges it in between her cheek and shoulder and starts chest compressions on Peterson. Beat until answer.

ZARA

Hello. I need an ambulance right now. 42 Lampers Lane. Right. Thank you.

She drops the phone and continues pressing, but Peterson looks deathly pale, blood streaks foaming at the mouth. And just like that, he dies.

Zara is traumatized, but investigates by turning him over. Sure enough, the eye has disappeared. No trace of it remains. Zara rocks back and forth, muttering to herself. Her story in this series arrives with a bang, but back to the A plot--

INT. DAVID'S WORKPLACE - NIGHT

London's skyline shines on behind David working overtime.

David thumbs through his papers. Michaela walks past his door, casually looks in but carries on walking. Beat, she reappears at the threshold.

MICHAELA

OK David, what's the big idea?

DAVID

Is there a problem, Michaela?

MICHAELA

No problem. None whatsoever. I'm just puzzled, that's all.

DAVID

Is it my working late? I thought the boss would appreciate a little hard work and initiative, even secretly. What's better than a proactive employee?

Michaela enters inside the room, careful to make sure they're both alone.

MICHAELA

I made it clear, inescapably clear that you future at Glassworks is... well... imaginary.

DAVID

You did.

MICHAELA

Hell, I have no future here and my name's on the side of the effing building. Been like that for over ten years... in large lettering.

DAVID

I'm sorry for your loss. Trust me, from what I've heard, building something by your lonesome takes a significant amount of time, investment, people skills, goof fortune and the rest, but when push comes to shove, I've got work to do, deadlines that need satisfying. I'll see you tomorrow, boss.

Michaela is annoyed. David goes back to ignoring her.

MICHAELA

Fine! Fine! Throw your petty passive aggressive tantrums, like the lackluster child you are. Those accounts are worthless now anyway. You know what, even if a bigger fish hadn't eaten us, I would have never made you partner. You are still far too immature.

DAVID

Funny. Once I'm officially done with this chapter in my career history, I think I'll set up my own business. Wouldn't that be ironic?

(pointed)

Eating first when I'm too immature for second best.

He shoots Michaela a look, hostility and wounds resurface.

MICHAELA

I'm supposed to be celebrating. In three months, I will be almost eighty million pounds richer. Where will you be?

Michaela goes to leave, but doesn't want to leave things on a bad note.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

David. You've been an asset to this company, truly you have. I, personally, value how much you have given over the years. It has not passed unnoticed. Let's not let all that time be tainted by a few minutes rashness.

She offers her hand. David takes it and they shake.

DAVID

Enjoy your retirement. I can't think of anyone who deserves it more.

MICHAELA

Good luck finding whatever you're looking for. Shame it can't be here.

And Michaela's gone. We watch her go, who gets back to work.

INT. GLASSWORKS FINANCE - OFFICE BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

Michaela wanders through the empty bullpen. Largely dark, except from the light out of David's office. She inspects the fruits of her labours, a hugely successful company, but nobody's home anymore. In her mind, she is saying goodbye to everything she's built, but nobody's left to say goodbye to.

One deep breath and she turns and heads to the elevators, going down one last time.

OUTSIDE the ELEVATOR, Michaela hits 'DOWN' and waits. DING! The elevator door opens and inside stands SOPHIE. The two women are confused by the other's appearance.

MICHAELA

Hello? Can I help?

SOPHIE

Glassworks finance?

MICHAELA
(knowing)
Yes. You're a little late.
(beat)
Are you here for anyone?

SOPHIE
David Bennet.

MICHAELA
Are you...

SOPHIE
I'm his girlfriend.

She's actually said it and proud she did.

MICHAELA
At the back. Only light on.

Sophie walks out. Michaela walks in. Doors close.

INT. GLASSWORKS FINANCE - DAVID'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sophie enters without knocking.

DAVID
(not seeing her)
What? You can't get enough of me?

David raises his eyes. Sophie's appearance takes him by surprise.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

For a moment they're both speechless, and feeling this, Sophie decides to take the initiative.

SOPHIE
(hitting her stride)
Is that the Gherkin? Sweet! I
always knew you'd be rich, David,
but nothing like this.

DAVID
I'm busy. Can't we just-

SOPHIE

What? Wait for you to call me?
Maybe next time I visit you, I
should come bearing a freshly-baked
pie. Cherry? Or perhaps something
savoury? What's your preference.

DAVID

(blushing)
Sophie...

SOPHIE

No David, If there's one thing I
can't tolerate, it's bullshit,
especially from a banker.

DAVID

(foot down)
Not the best time.

SOPHIE

You know what, I can't remember,
were any bankers punished for the
last financial crash?
(suggestive)
Guess, I'm here to punish you.

David leans back in his chair. OK. Let's play.

DAVID

OK. What's my crime?

SOPHIE

You've been charged with complete
mismanagement of a mobile device.

DAVID

(rumbled)
Ah. Can I get the chance to
explain? Is that fair?

SOPHIE

This should be fun. Go ahead.

He gestures for Sophie to sit down in a visitor's couch and
joins her.

DAVID

It's... I got some bad news.

SOPHIE

(concerned)
Let's hear it.

DAVID

I guess it sounds petty now, but...
I can't tell you.

SOPHIE

How embarrassing could it be? We've
seen each other naked.

DAVID

Before the year is out, I'll be
unemployed.

SOPHIE

Weren't you going to be partner?

David nods weakly. Beat.

DAVID

I was going to be a feature on the
Fortune 500. Now I'll be the best
dressed on the dole line. How
messed up is that?

He's truly depressed, Sophie steps up her game.

SOPHIE

Well, messed up is good. Messed up
takes your life and shakes it
around like gold-panning. The more
sudden and violent, the more you
lose the dirt and see the gold.
When I was eighteen, and living in
a decadence my parents condemned
but wished they had again, I met a
boy. This boy was quiet, sweet,
almost never said what he was
thinking. It was infuriating
because I'm nothing like that and
he was always thinking to himself,
and studying by himself, working to
be something better than he thought
he was. Never enjoyed the moment.
So I chose to shake up his life for
him. For the next few years, he
built and I shook, we were in
different motion but inseparable,
until it ended one day.

(beat)

David, it's time to shake up again.

Sophie rests her head on David's shoulder. There's something
tender and reassuring about the moment. It's all the comfort
her could ever need.

DAVID
Am I still in trouble?

SOPHIE
More than you'll ever know.

Sophie leans in and kisses him. Passionate lovemaking begins moving from gear one and up. Sophie takes the lead and starts pulling at David's tie, using it a little like a dog leash.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Come on. I want to do it on your desk.

David stops her.

DAVID
No. I- Follow me.

INT. GLASSWORKS FINANCE - MICHAELA'S OFFICE.

David leads Sophie in. Sophie removes her dress in one easy swoop and tosses it aside. Surveying her new surroundings, she gradually realizes where she is.

CLOSE ON: A photo of Michaela. Sophie recognizes her from the elevator and puts two and two together regarding David's working relationship with her.

SOPHIE
Chip on your shoulder?

DAVID
Something like that.

David pulls her down to the floor with one swift tug, catching Sophie off guard. She giggles, a little impressed by his impulsiveness. They resume kissing.

INTERCUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY

Boss is walking back home. A sinister force follows her.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DAVID'S WORKPLACE - CONTINUOUS

David and Sophie make love. We see them naked and totally doing it.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - ALLEY

Boss senses something is wrong on her walk home. Speeds up. Something UNGODLY is following her. She throws something and starts sprinting.

BOSS
Help! Help! Help!

But nobody's around to help, and before the story continues. She is attacked and torn to pieces.

CUT TO:

INT. GLASSWORKS FINANCE - MICHAELA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sophie and David rest, their nudity covered by couch cushions and discarded clothing. A post-fuck glow illuminates their faces. The world's problems seem so far away.

David looks at Sophie, a tired but loving expression all over his face. He's thinking.

SOPHIE
(reacting to David)
What?

DAVID
It's all perfect.

SOPHIE
No. It's pillowtalk.

DAVID
Funny thing about reunions. They're never what you expect.

DAVID (CONT'D)
So says hallmark.

END CREDITS

POST CREDITS EPILOGUE - ALLEY - THE NEXT MORNING

Two POLICE OFFICERS have cornered off the alley. A PEDESTRIAN or TWO walks past, peering down the alley wondering what the commotion's about.

We see for a split-second the mangled body of MICHAELA GLASS, or specifically what's left of it, which isn't much. The corpse is lacerated in wounds, carved up like a turkey, slaughtered by some wild creature, almost unrecognizable, before a tarp is put on it, obstructing our vision.

PARAMEDICS escort the body away.

POLICE OFFICER #1

What do you think of this, sergeant?

POLICE OFFICER #2

Unless London Zoo's reported the escape of a particularly large tiger, we should be very concerned.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Look! I'm serious. This isn't your average attack. There's no evidence of sexual assault,

POLICE OFFICER #2

Plus, none of her belongings appear to be missing. Purse, keys, all there. I'm just as confused as you.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Oh well, let's start rounding up her nearest and dearest. No doubt somebody didn't care for her.

Police officer 2 starts scratching his neck, revealing to us a developing purple

POLICE OFFICER #2

Stop by the chemist first. I think I've got an allergy to this new uniform.

POLICE OFFICER #1

Must be this nylon bullshit. I swear, there's cutbacks, then there's this nonsense.

The police walk away. Bring on episode 2 of this spiel.

END OF PILOT