

HOLIDAY BREAKUP

Written by

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## **SILHOUETTE**

Of a girl and a guy kissing. Sweet. Now:

## **A BACKWARDS HOLIDAY MONTAGE**

On a colorful CALENDAR we see NEW YEAR'S EVE, with balloons, noise-makers, confetti. Now the scene:

NEW YEAR'S EVE

25 year-old CHLOE, a quirky hottie, is hurrying down the street, her mascara running. She's crying. Been a bad night. She stops to breathe and:

CHLOE  
(through tears)  
I'm the luckiest girl in the world  
and today's the best day of my  
life.

She bawls.

Same CALENDAR, pages flip backwards, now it's CHRISTMAS, with Christmas Tree, gifts, Santa. The scene:

CHRISTMAS

Chloe window shops, looks verrrrrry lonely.

Again the CALENDAR, Turkey, cornucopia of squash.

THANKSGIVING

Chloe buys two sickly-looking pies at the DOLLAR BARN. She's not at her best.

Pages flip on the CALENDAR here, goblins, Jack O'lanterns.

HALLOWEEN

Chloe, at a party, dressed as a baby seal, absently clubs herself.

Calendar pages flip all the way back to LABOR DAY. Palm trees, ocean, beach umbrella.

Same Calendar pages flip back now to the FOURTH OF JULY, colorful fireworks.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Chloe drives along in her Sentra. On the phone. INTERCUT WITH MARSHA, 36, who's also driving, has a baby in a car seat.

MARSHA

Are you bringing a guy to watch fireworks?

CHLOE

Oh my god why does everyone think I need a guy to complete my life?

MARSHA

Because we can tell that you're miserable.

Chloe's fiddling with her air conditioner and the radio and drinks from a Slurpee Cup.

CHLOE

I'm not miserable! I'm deliriously happy.

MARSHA

What about the cliff? After Andre? In Palisades Park?

FLASHBACK - to Chloe on the "NO TRESPASSING" side of cliffs in a park. Looking down. Major vertigo.

BACK TO SCENE

Chloe flips down her visor and touches up her makeup.

CHLOE

Gawd nobody understands me. I wasn't going to *jump*. It was just...a really nice view. I'm hanging up now, I'm *driving*.

She hangs up. But now gets a TEXT.

MARSHA'S TEXT

*Stop pretending to be happy. U R not fooling anyone. Except Yourself.*

Chloe reads the text, now responds in kind.

CHLOE'S RESPONSE TEXT

*No deception here, I've just accepted the fact that I'm never ever going to meet --*

BANG! Chloe's body jerks forward into the seat-belt. She's just rear-ended someone.

CHLOE'S RESPONSE TEXT (CONT'D)  
*I should probably go.*

She pushes send. Gets out of her car looking pissed. She takes a calming breath.

CHLOE  
 "I am not what happens to me. I am what I choose to become."

She now approaches JEFF, around her age, nice-looking, emerging from his Jetta.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 What were you *thinking*? Just stopping like that in the middle of the street?

JEFF  
 I'm sorry, I was distracted by that red octagonal sign there, the one that says "STOP"? And by the way, I'm okay, thanks for asking.

CHLOE  
 A "Stop" sign? Oh my god! Hello, this is LA? Who has time to stop? We don't stop, we pause, we linger briefly, then keep going. You're not from around here are you?

JEFF  
 No, Miss Clairvoyant, I'm not, I just relocated from O.C.

Though he's pissed, he finds himself wildly attracted to her.

CHLOE  
 Are you an actor? Everybody who moves here's an actor.

JEFF  
 I'm not.

CHLOE  
 Maybe you're just saying that. Maybe you're acting right now.

JEFF  
 I'm not an actor.

CHLOE

God, that's good, I'm totally buying that. You are good. If you're not an actor, you're handsome enough. Oh Jesus, sorry. I blurt.

She tears her eyes away from him. And he from her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Well, it appears your car is fine.

JEFF

Yep. Except for the obliterated tail light and the caved in bumper.

CHLOE

Maybe the tail light was already broken? And maybe that's why I didn't react in a timely manner?

JEFF

Wow, exceptional spin. It probably wasn't because you were putting on makeup sucking a Slurpee while texting.

CHLOE

God you sound just like a guy. Anyway, isn't California a "no fault" state?

JEFF

Actually, I think it's an "it's everybody's fault but mine" state.

Chloe cuts loose with a high-pitched quivering laugh.

CHLOE

Sorry. Kind of an involuntary thing.

Their eyes flit about, but keep coming back to meet.

JEFF

I'm glad you rear-ended me. I mean, you scared the shit out of me and broke my tail-light but, still, thank you.

CHLOE

You're welcome sir. Will there be anything else?

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Perhaps I could back up and ram you  
again, or side swipe you.

Chloe smiles. They lock eyes, glance away, blush.

JEFF  
I should probably get your number.

Chloe pulls a pen from her purse.

CHLOE  
Gimmee your hand.

She grabs his hand. And starts to write on it.

JEFF  
Wow. Suddenly I'm back in Middle  
School.

CHLOE  
Gawd, wouldn't that be so cool?

JEFF  
Oh yeah, awesome. The mocking, the  
wedgies, that wonderful sensation  
of constantly feeling inferior.  
Good times, those.

He reads his hand.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
Your name's "Chloe?"

CHLOE  
I think so. That's what everyone's  
called me since I was a baby.

JEFF  
"Chloe." It's a great name. Mine's  
boring.

CHLOE  
"Booring?" Is that Ukrainian?

JEFF  
Wow. I think I like you. It's  
"Jeff."

CHLOE  
Jeff. Nice. It's trustworthy.  
Well, I really enjoyed rear-ending  
you, Jeff.

She turns and starts walking away. He's staring at her. She whirls around to face him.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
One question.

JEFF  
Yes, I was looking at your ass.

CHLOE  
I think I like you too. You got plans to watch fireworks?

**INT. WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - DAY**

In Woodland Hills. A small gathering, including MARSHA, Chloe's older sister, a baby on her hip, and her husband, RANDY, holding two beers.

CHLOE  
This is my sister, Marsha.

MARSHA  
It's so nice to meet you, Jeff. (to Randy) Hey sperm donor, would it kill you to hold baby Conner for two seconds?

Randy's heard this so many times before he doesn't even flinch, just takes the kid. Chloe pulls Jeff through the throng to the back patio.

Chloe's mother, ELIZABETH, over-coiffed and over-dressed, boob job, is drinking chardonnay next to Chloe's dad, WILLIAM, 50's, good looks fading. They're with Chloe's uncle, GERALD, heavyset, professorial.

GERALD  
...you're a good litigator, a learned man, William, but in this one area you're particularly vacuous.

WILLIAM  
You have to admit that to a point, for some perhaps even to a very large degree, we create our own realities.

GERALD  
Bah! Counter-intuitive bull-shit psychobabble.

CHLOE

(aside, to Jeff)

They've been having this same argument for six years.

GERALD

It all started with that moronic Costner film, "Field of Dreams." If you build it, they will come. Now an entire generation is brainwashed to believe that they can will or chant concrete goals into existence on their "secret" wish boards. No wonder the country's falling apart.

CHLOE

Hi dad, mom.

WILLIAM

Hey sweetie.

Chloe's mom and dad and Gerald all give her affectionate hugs.

CHLOE

This is Jeff. He just escaped from Orange County.

ELIZABETH

I didn't know you were *bringing* someone. How'd you manage to find such a handsome young man?

CHLOE

I drugged him and beat him into submission. Mom, you gotta stop pumping me up with confidence.

JEFF

She rear-ended me.

ELIZABETH

What Chloe does with her spare time is her business. TMI, son.

Chloe sees some architect's renderings of the house, plans for a big remodel.

CHLOE

What's this?



ELIZABETH

Isn't it fabulous? The jacuzzi's going to go here, the fountain here...and this is the new patio.

CHLOE

Wait. Where did my room go?

ELIZABETH

Honey, we're remodeling. Your room is being re-purposed.

Chloe looks to her dad, who shrugs. He's not fully on board with all this. He looks at his watch.

WILLIAM

Everyone grab a drink, the show's about to begin.

Everyone moves:

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

William sidles up next to Chloe and puts his arm around her. Elizabeth intercedes swiftly, her talon-hand snatching the bills folded in William's hand.

ELIZABETH

(whispering to William)  
Don't give her money! It only encourages her irresponsible, erratic behavior. The sooner she grows up and starts accepting responsibility the better.

WILLIAM

You're right again, Elizabeth. What was I thinking?

A victory for Elizabeth.

But he's out-foxed her because with his other hand he slips a couple of Benjamins into her jeans pocket.

They all lay on the grass and in lawn chairs. Chloe and Jeff are within earshot of the ongoing debate:

GERALD

It's delusional to think one's capable of creating their own reality.

WILLIAM

So you're saying we're helpless, we can only react to what we think is real? Either way, perception is king.

Now, quite suddenly, the sky is ablaze with spectacular, take-your-breath-away fireworks.

Chloe's parents and family and everyone else are mesmerized as they stare at the sky.

GERALD

There is such a thing as a collective reality, and the human experience is all about how we respond to that reality.

Chloe and Jeff are mesmerized staring at each other.

INT. WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

William and Elizabeth are bidding everyone adieu.

WILLIAM

Goodnight. Great meeting you. Thanks for coming. Goodnight sweetie.

He hugs Chloe, she gives him back the cash.

CHLOE

I don't need this. I'm flush, really.

WILLIAM

And I'm Bill Gates. Drive safe honey. Here, take some cookies.

Another hug, he gives her cookies, smiles as he watches them get into Jeff's car and drive away.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Nice kid.

ELIZABETH

She'll screw it up.

**EXT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - LATER**

They arrive in Jeff's car. He leaves the engine running. Hand trembling, he turns off the engine.

CHLOE

Why'd you --

He immediately starts his car again.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh crap, I didn't mean to squelch the moment, I mean if you were going to bust a move or something...

She reaches over and turns his car off.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Shit. I'm blurting again. Sorry. I had a nice time.

JEFF

"Nice?" Mine was kind of better than nice.

CHLOE

"Kind of?"

JEFF

A lot better than nice. It was amazing.

CHLOE

Oh please, landing on the moon was amazing, this was...

JEFF

Better.

CHLOE

Way. God, can we please just do this? My lips are getting nervous.

They kiss. Yummo! Chloe breaks away.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Is your name Jeff? Did we just meet a few hours ago?

JEFF

Right. Yeah. This is crazy.

CHLOE

I should go.

She makes a move to leave, but doesn't.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Odd, my body is not obeying my mind's commands. (to "herself") Go. Move! Just one more. NO! Not gonna cave. Well *I'm* not moving. Fine, have it your way.

She kisses Jeff again. Then breaks way.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

*We're* going now...

She gets out. He does too.

JEFF

I'll walk you to your door. Here's your cookies.

She takes them. Pockets them. At her door, they kiss again. Fireworks. Massive. Chloe pulls away.

CHLOE

Let me just catch my breath. God. Shit. I mean, you know...

JEFF

Scary.

CHLOE

Terrifying. Landing on the moon. Meh. Good night.

She puts her hand on his heart

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Whoa! You got a rabbit on crack in there?

JEFF

You excite me. Thank you.

CHLOE

You're welcome. Good night.

She goes in and closes the door. Jeff walks to his car, looking back. The door's still closed. He clenches his fists, smiling, victorious.

Chloe's watching him from inside. He gets in his car, starts it up, U-turns onto the street.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Wait! Don't go!

Chloe bolts from her apartment and jumps into her car, pursues him.

ON THE STREET

He's easy to follow because of his broken tail light.

After awhile he's home. He parks and dance-skips to his own apartment building, goes through the gate and up the stairs and into his place.

Chloe pulls up, parks and watches as his second story window light comes on. She can see him moving around, swaying with joy.

She opens her door. Closes it. Opens it. Closes it again. Takes something out of her glove box.

Now works up the nerve, gets out, goes to his gate, enters, then exits, then enters.

She takes the cookies out of her pocket. Finds money from her dad inside.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Daddy...

She eats a cookie.

And then climbs the stairs.

Knocks on his door. Starts to back away.

The door opens. She's excited. And terrified.

JEFF

Chloe...

CHLOE

My...insurance card, I never gave it to you, and...

He sees the yearning in her eyes and pulls her into his arms.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh god I...didn't want to leave you.

**INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT - CONTINUING**

They're both trembling.

CHLOE

I wanted you to come in at my place  
but, we just met, and...

He hugs her.

JEFF

There's no hurry.

She pulls back.

CHLOE

"No hurry?" What the hell are you  
saying? I thought we were on the  
same flaming page of burning desire  
here -- I gotta go --

She starts to leave. He grabs her and kisses her, hard. They  
break away, breathless. He starts to take off his shirt.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

No!

JEFF

What?

CHLOE

No naked.

JEFF

Fine. I'll keep my clothes on.  
Fortunately there are available  
openings.

CHLOE

No. Sex on the first day would put  
me in the slut zone. We have to  
wait.

JEFF

Gotcha. We need a slut zone  
defense. How long?

CHLOE

Last time I checked a day was 24  
hours.

JEFF

You fender-bended me at three. That  
means we have...almost fourteen  
hours. Wanna sit down?

She sits on one end of the couch, he on the other. Slowly, Chloe's hand "walks" until she's holding his hand. Electric. Jeff stares at her, yearning.

CHLOE

One more kiss can't hurt.

They kiss. Things heat up quickly.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hey sport, this is a great couch,  
but do you happen to have a bed?

Jeff rises, picks her up and takes her into his bedroom, tosses her onto the bed. She laughs, pulls him down. They kiss again, start disrobing.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Wait. This is...

JEFF

I know, impulsive, impetuous,  
ridiculously unrestrained. But  
feels so good.

CHLOE

It's not like I'm some prude. I  
just don't want to get hurt.

JEFF

Neither do I.

She rolls away from him. Stares at the ceiling.

CHLOE

I was in love. His name was Andre.  
We talked about kids, marriage,  
yada yada. I caught him in bed with  
my best friends.

JEFF

Wait. "Friends?" Plural?

CHLOE

Yep. My two besties, Sharon and  
Dani.

JEFF

You caught your boyfriend in bed  
with your two best girlfriends?  
That's horrible! Did you happen to  
take pictures?

CHLOE

I cried for ten days straight. An eye doctor told me I actually damaged my tear ducts.

She faces him again.

JEFF

I'm sorry.

CHLOE

What about you?

CLOSE ON JEFF - FLASHBACK as he goes inward, and we see him surprising a girl with a proposal, pushing an engagement ring onto her finger, but she's saying no, and can't get the fucking ring off.

OUT OF FLASHBACK - Jeff turns to Chloe.

JEFF

My life hasn't been all that exciting. Until...you.

She snuggles into his arms.

CHLOE

What if we just sleep. And dream?

JEFF

I am totally on board with that.

They hold each other. Close their eyes.

They make love.

It's epic.

VARIOUS SHOTS - of Chloe and Jeff making love in bed. On the floor. In the hallway. Taking a shower together. Eating takeout in bed. Making love over and over. The sun rising, setting, rising. Time passes quickly when you're in love.

Pages on our CALENDAR flip until we get to LABOR DAY.

**EXT. BEACH HOUSE - LABOR DAY**

Jeff's family in attendance. His parents, CLARK and MISSY, attractive, nicely dressed. Missy's had a boob job.

A beach volleyball game in progress. Jeff and Chloe on one side along with Jeff's father, fit for 58, intense, competitive, pissed at the score.





NANNA  
Smart girl. She's a keeper.

JEFF  
I think so, too.

LATER - Jeff and Chloe walk on the beach carrying a blanket. She finds a shell.

CHLOE  
Oh my god! Look, it's so beautiful!  
(into shell) Hello? Anybody home?  
(voice from "inside" the shell)  
Yeah, come on in, there's plenty of  
room, we'll have a party!

Jeff smiles.

JEFF  
Have you always been like this?  
Always... "up?"

CHLOE  
No, yeah, kinda. When I was a  
little girl I had a really sucky  
day, alpha bitches ganged up on me,  
threw suckers in my hair, called me  
ugly. I came home crying, and my  
dad said "listen, no matter what  
anybody says or does, you're the  
luckiest girl in the world and  
today is the best day of your  
life." (beat) It kinda stuck...

Jeff watches her do a cartwheel in the sand.

IN A SECLUDED COVE

They're making out when Chloe spots someone, brings a finger to her lips.

Passing by in front of them at the shore's edge is an elderly couple, walking hand in hand.

Chloe's heart melts as she eyes them. Jeff thinks they're sweet, too. This is what our lovers yearn for; longevity.

LATER - ON THE BEACH AT HIS PARENTS' PLACE

They're on the same blanket under an umbrella. She's now got on a huge hat, white sunglasses. She's tracing his chest with a finger while he's squinting into his phone.

JEFF

Here's one. Shit. It's right on Pico. I'll move to the Valley before I live on Pico.

ANGLE ON THE BEACH - as the same elderly couple passes by, but this time they're squabbling angrily, gesticulating. Chloe and Jeff put their hands over each other's mouths to keep from bursting out laughing. Then:

CHLOE

Waking up next to each other every single day is going to be sooooo weird.

Off his look she recovers:

CHLOE (CONT'D)

"Weird" in a good way. But great. Really. A brave new adventure.

Chloe rolls over and stares at the ocean.

JEFF

Chloe...you said it hurt to be away from me, and I agreed. It hurts to be away from you. But...are you sure you're ready to move in together?

CHLOE

Yes, amazing handsome man, I am totally ready. I mean, I'm not exactly Susie Homemaker, but I'm ready. I'm psyched.

She gives him a quick kiss and then runs to the waterline and walks toward a seagull. Jeff smiles at her playful, child-like demeanor. Jeff's dad appears beside him.

JEFF

Hey dad, what's up?

Jeff smiles at Chloe, who is apparently conversing with the seagull. Out of earshot.

CHLOE

(to the seagull)

Can we talk? I feel like I can trust you. I am maybe not ready for the whole nesting thing...

CLARK

Is it really that difficult finding a girl who isn't mentally unstable? She's not right for you. I'm not sure exactly what she is right for, except maybe clown school. She's frivolous. You two are dramatically different.

JEFF

So what? Opposites attract.

CLARK

If you'd actually studied sociology, you'd know that's crap. Birds of a feather stick together. Mark my words. She's completely wrong for you.

JEFF

What if she's *the one*, dad? What if I love her. Did you consider that? Then your defamatory remarks will forever taint our relationship. Is that what you want?

CLARK

Love is subjective. What I want, is for you to be realistic. Use your brain. Be serious.

Clark walks off. Jeff stares at Chloe a beat, then gets up and runs down to join her.

VARIOUS SHOTS - of them walking on the beach, ducking into a cove to make love. In his apartment, making love in various positions. The sun rising, setting, rising.

They're all over each other at the farmer's market, playing frisbee in the park, watching a movie on TV at his place. They make love in his bedroom. Finishing, he rolls off, catches his breath, gets up and exits.

Chloe goes into the bathroom, splashes water on her face, touches up her makeup. Returns to the bedroom. Puts her high heels on. Sits waiting for him.

He returns. Sees her in just her high heels. And is raring to go again. They do.

**INT. STORE - DAY**

Chloe and Jeff are pushing a cart. Chloe picks up a big blue power plunger.

CHLOE

Oh my god, what IS this thing? I want one!

JEFF

It's a Maxi-Plunge Super Plunger. To unclog pipes.

CHLOE

Whoa. Not gonna need no bran muffins with this puppy in da house. Tell me the truth. Does this Maxi-Plunge Super Plunger turn you on like it does me?

Jeff stops, turns and faces her.

JEFF

Can you do something for me?

CHLOE

Sure. What?

JEFF

Be serious. Completely serious, for just one minute.

CHLOE

Why?

JEFF

Because I'm requesting it.

CHLOE

It sounds like a test. I don't like tests.

JEFF

Life is full of tests.

CHLOE

Only for those who take them.

Chloe turns to a MAN passing by.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Sir, can I interest you in an unclogging?

The guy shakes his head and moves on.

JEFF

Will you do it for me? Do you care about me enough to do this one thing?

CHLOE

Yes. If it will unclog your pipes.

JEFF

You're not taking being serious seriously.

CHLOE

Yes I am. Put me in, coach! I'm psyched. I can do this! When do I start?

JEFF

When I tell you. Ground rules. No giggling, snorting, farting, silly faces, snickering or mocking.

CHLOE

You got it. We're talking some serious shit here.

He looks at his phone, sets the timer.

JEFF

Starting...now.

She gives it ten seconds of stone face. But then she cracks, flares her nostrils. Jeff holds up a warning finger.

CHLOE

Allergies!

JEFF

Skating on thin ice.

They stare each other down. She looks deadly serious.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Baby you're doing awesome.

CHLOE

Of course. I'm a very. Serious. Person.

JEFF

Thirty seconds.

She continues to look deadly serious. Then she holds up one finger.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
One? One *what?*

She moves her finger toward her mouth.

JEFF (CONT'D)  
What are you doing? You're almost there for Christ's sake. You only have ten seconds left...

CHLOE  
Nine...eight...seven...six...five..  
.four...three...two...

She puts her finger in her mouth and make a BOTTLE POPPING SOUND.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Oh. Shitinsky. Did I fail?

He's hurt.

JEFF  
Thanks. Thank you very much.

He walks off.

CHLOE  
Jeff...baby come on...

She follows him. Catches up to him in the lamp section.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Sweetie...it was a joke. A wee bit of mirth, a speck of frivolity.

JEFF  
Why is it so hard for you to be serious?

CHLOE  
Because it's so easy for you. Come on...baby...I am serious. Seriously in love with you. Come on...let mommy unclog you...

She pokes him with the super plunger and nuzzles him. He smiles.

LATER IN THE LIGHTING SECTION

Chloe turns lamps on and off. Jeff finds one and picks it up.

JEFF

I like this one. Do you like it?  
No? (BEAT) What's wrong? Don't tell  
me nothing because I know it's  
something.

CHLOE

It's nothing, it's just kinda  
freaky that... all of a sudden  
we're buying furniture together.  
Gaaaaa. Does it feel like maybe  
we're moving too fast?

JEFF

I changed my mind. The lamp sucks.

He puts it back.

CHLOE

No! It's beautiful. I love it. It's  
a magical lamp. I want to rub it  
until it explodes with light!

She grabs it, puts it in the cart.

JEFF

Forget it. Before it was just a  
lamp. Now it's the "we're moving  
too fast" lamp. I'm not buying it.

CHLOE

Well I just happen to have a stolen  
credit card right here...

She pulls out a credit card, "reads" the name.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

"Donald John Trump Sr." you are  
buying a lamp!

She heads for the register with the lamp.

A timer goes off on Jeff's phone.

JEFF

Oh. We better go if you want to  
make open mike night.

CHLOE

Thanks for reminding me. I was  
trying to forget.



JEFF

You're going to be fine. Great.  
Fantastic.

Off Chloe's uncertain look we go:

**EXT. COFFEE SHOP - SIGN: "OPEN MIKE NIGHT"**

Track toward it. Sound of a guitar tuning. Marsha is pacing around out front holding a crying baby Conner.

INSIDE

We find Jeff, his father Clark and mom Missy. Chloe's mom and dad, William and Elizabeth, are there, too, and so is Randy, oblivious to Marsha's suffering outside. Missy and Elizabeth are checking out each other's boob jobs and smiling and chatting.

MISSY

I had no idea Chloe was a singer  
and musician.

ELIZABETH

She's not, really. It's a rather  
unfortunate phase.

WILLIAM

She's very talented. She just needs  
a little support.

Chloe's in a chair on the small stage. Tuning her guitar, glancing out at all the people, the two families, she's rapidly losing her nerve.

In defiance of the judgemental stares, she purposefully tunes the E string higher and higher, so tight until it breaks.

CHLOE

Oh crap on a cracker! I'm sorry...I  
can't...my guitar, it's just not  
working...

Clark and Missy and Elizabeth purse their lips. What a waste of time. Chloe packs up her guitar. Jeff shakes his head.

OUTSIDE

Jeff and Chloe put some distance between them and their parents.

JEFF

It's my fault. I should have told you I invited my parents.

CHLOE

No, I'm just stressed out, and not about the whole totally-life-changing-moving-in-together-thing. It can't be that, it's too obvious.

JEFF

Hey, it's not the end of the world.

CHLOE

Right. I'm gonna come back another night.

They walk along in silence.

JEFF

We're still apartment hunting next weekend, right?

CHLOE

Oh god yes. Of course. Yeah. Yeah...

She hugs him and we're:

**INT. VACANT APARTMENT - DAY**

They peruse the place. Chloe wears a wife beater and suspenders. Jeff has the lamp. He's on his phone.

JEFF

...um...yeah, sure, I'll ask her. I mean, I'll see what she thinks, what we think. Okay, bye.

He hangs up.

JEFF (CONT'D)

That was my mom. Apparently she and your mom bonded over their boobs. They talked about us all getting together for Thanksgiving, but thank God I don't think they can orchestrate it. Mom suggested we at least come over there for dessert.

CHLOE  
 Thanksgiving...that's...a ways  
 away...(off his look)...but hey,  
 it's smart to plan ahead...

JEFF  
 If you'd rather not, I mean...

CHLOE  
 No, it'll be cool. For sure.

She turns music on on her phone takes his hand as she dances.  
 He just stands there.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 Let's dance. Move those  
 doggies.(off his look) Jeffy how  
 come you won't dance?

JEFF  
 I don't want to look stupid.

CHLOE  
 But that's half the fun.

Jeff turns to move to another room. She trips him.

JEFF  
 Why'd you do that?

CHLOE  
 Do what?

Jeff sighs.

JEFF  
 Okay, the bedroom's fine, right,  
 and since you're the girl --

CHLOE  
*I'm* the girl? *That's* why I bleed  
 like a stuck pig every month? Shit.

JEFF  
 And *as* the girl, you can have the  
 lion's share of the bedroom closet.

They enter the second bedroom, much smaller.

CHLOE

Oooh. My guitar can go here, I'll get some drums for here, maybe a massage chair here...the Wii here...I could get a pinball machine, or a horse! I could totally get a horse!

JEFF

Um...precious, I was thinking this would be a shared office. Not exclusively your She-man cave barn.

CHLOE

But *darling*, you already have an office at work, why would you ever want to have another office at home? That's so oppressive and...dreary.

JEFF

I'm going to have to put in a lot of hours and probably work from home, too, if we, I mean, I, want to buy a house.

CHLOE

A house?

JEFF

Yeah. You know, when you grow up, you work, and save, and then you buy a house.

Chloe collapses dramatically on the floor. Jeff shakes his head at her. As he's leaving:

CHLOE

Call 911. Call 911.

JEFF

You can live in a cardboard box if you want, but I want a house, someday I want to design and build my own house.

Jeff turns, is about to exit.

CHLOE

Jeff, wait. (He stops, she reaches for him) Come here.

JEFF

On the floor? Ooooh. You insatiable minx...

He sits down on the floor and makes a move to kiss, but:

CHLOE

Wait. Ever since we met we've been doing this marathon intimacy thing, just kind of losing ourselves in the whole physical thing, which is great, really intense, but...

JEFF

I have no idea what your point could possibly be.

CHLOE

I just wonder if we're ever going to get to know each other.

He just sits there.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Tell me something...something you've never told anyone else in your whole life. Something that can be our secret.

He furrows his brow.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Come on. You can do it. I know you have a secret...everybody does...

JEFF

Nothing's coming to mind.

CHLOE

Please? For me?

JEFF

I...seriously...I will, but now...I can't think of anything. I'm sorry.

She's disappointed but rises. Musters a smile.

CHLOE

Okay. No big deal.

**EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUING**

Chloe kicks a rock ahead of her, zigzags back and forth to get to the rock and kick it ahead again. Jeff has the lamp.

JEFF

Look at you, you're regressing back to your childhood.

CHLOE

Oh God, wouldn't that be wonderful!

JEFF

Why can't you walk in a straight line like a normal person?

She stops and cocks her head at him.

CHLOE

What would be the point in that?

JEFF

The point would be that the shortest distance between two points is a *straight line*.

CHLOE

Maybe the shortest distance between birth and *death* is a straight line.

She kicks the rock and goes after it. Jeff catches up.

JEFF

Wait up, will you? I have to tie my shoe. Hold this.

He hands her the lamp. She kicks the rock.

CHLOE

Oh look! A squirrel!

The lamp slips out of her hand and breaks on the sidewalk.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oops.

Jeff simmers for a beat. Then shakes it off. As they do their best to clean up the lamp she gives him a little kiss.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm totally sorry. I love you.

JEFF

I love you, too, even though my dad thinks love is subjective and ephemeral. I have noticed that you don't kiss me like you used to. Is it because we're moving in together?

CHLOE

We haven't found a place yet. And no! I don't even know what you're talking about. I kiss you just fine.

Beat. Another kiss is not forthcoming.

JEFF

Are we still going to the Halloween party?

CHLOE

Yeah, why wouldn't we? I mean you said you're not crazy about costumes...

JEFF

Not everybody likes to dress up and pretend to be something they're not.

CHLOE

But it's *fun* pretending!

JEFF

Okay. But ever since we're moving in together you've been acting like a panicking animal, desperate for escape. So I just thought maybe...

CHLOE

The lamp is not you, it's not us. Everything's okay. We're just as in love as the first night we met.

JEFF

I liked the fireworks.

CHLOE

I loved the sound of your voice. (BEAT) We're all good. We're going to the party. And you'll wear a costume, promise?

JEFF

I promise.

VARIOUS SHOTS - of Chloe and Jeff at his apartment, watching TV, reading, cleaning, making the bed. They get in a pillow fight and it leads to lovemaking. Missionary position.

Afterwards, Jeff flops off her. Then gets up and exits. She goes to the bathroom, splashes water on her face, brushes her hair, touches up her makeup. Goes back in the bedroom and puts on her cowboy boots. Sits, ready.

Jeff returns. Eating a sandwich. When he's done he hugs her. She slips off the boots. They sleep.

On our CALENDAR pages flip and we see skeletons and trick-or-treaters.

**INT. HALLOWEEN PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT**

Chloe is dressed like a baby seal. That's been clubbed. She absently clubs herself with a plastic club while waiting.

She looks over and sees Jeff coming in. He's in suit and tie and carries a briefcase. He comes and hugs her.

JEFF

You've outdone yourself. Your costume is incredibly distasteful. Bravo.

CHLOE

A "businessman?" You came as a businessman?

JEFF

Not just any businessman, my love, a Republican. Note the flag pin. Did you look at the apartment on 17th?

CHLOE

Not yet.

JEFF

Baby why are you stalling?

CHLOE

Your costume's SO stupid. No one's going to even know what you're supposed to be.

KELLY, big boobs, big lips, approaches.



KELLY

Hey guys. The baby seal and  
the...Republican businessman!

Jeff shoots Chloe a triumphant look.

JESSICA

Look at you two. Bryan and I were  
just talking, and we're just so  
motivated by you...I think we're  
gonna do it, too. So thank you. For  
being so inspiring. Look at us  
all...couples, everyone hooked up,  
it just feels so right, like the  
universe should be, you know?

Kelly departs.

CHLOE

Would it really have killed you to  
wear a real costume, something fun  
and funny?

JEFF

I had a bad day trading. You know  
what your problem is? You think  
every single thing in life is some  
kind of giddy joke, some carnival  
ride. You love to pretend that  
every single moment is some kind of  
remarkable gift. But that's not  
real life, Chloe.

Chloe and Jeff look around the room. Almost everyone there is  
coupled up. Except one guy. A mime.

CHLOE

Look around. Sure, everybody's a  
couple now, but they have what,  
like a 40% chance of staying  
together? Some things you can count  
on, you know, you have this job,  
you may not love it, but unless you  
screw up totally, it'll be there  
for you. But love? It can be there  
one minute and then poof! It's  
gone. I mean, why even bother?

JEFF

Are you suggesting I'm not worth  
the *bother*? Darling.

CHLOE

I'm just saying it's statistically iffy. Besides, as soon as I enter couple-hood, I'm suddenly a "we" an "us" instead of a "me." How can I be a "we" when I don't even know "me" yet?

JEFF

Don't be so worried...

CHLOE

Not to mention that whenever people get serious and move in together, they *become* serious. It's like aging a decade. As soon as we sign the lease I bet my boobs will start to sag. I can't stand it.

JEFF

Well, this is all about *you*, so I see your point.

CHLOE

Listen to Mr. Snarky. It's just like they say isn't it. At first everything's lovey-dovey, then when you move in, all those charming little quirks suddenly turn into monstrously annoying habits.

JEFF

Which of my charming quirks is monstrously annoying to you, princess?

She's about to tell him, but decides better.

CHLOE

Come on, let's dance.

JEFF

You go ahead.

Chloe dances away from him, all the way to the drink table, where she encounters DAN, 31, slender, the mime. You can tell even under the makeup he's good-looking.

CHLOE

Great costume. Who do you know here?

The mime points to Kelly.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Ah. Kelly. I think I'll have a --

Suddenly the guy mimes getting Chloe a drink, Chloe takes it, downs it, he pours her another, she downs it. They repeat this about six times until Chloe acts drunk. Dan the mime screams with silent laughter.

Jeff watches, frowning.

As Chloe grabs a real drink Dan the mime bows gallantly. Chloe gives him a thumbs up, returns to Jeff.

JEFF

God I hate mimes.

CHLOE

You should just delete that word from your vocabulary. "Hate." Delete. Gone. See?

JEFF

I deleted "mime."

CHLOE

About those not so adorable quirks, my Snarky Love, you sniff/snort like ten thousand times a day.

JEFF

Nine out of ten people hate mimes.

CHLOE

You snort so much while we're making love and it sounds like I'm being mounted by a Pug.

JEFF

Oh, you know that particular sound?

CHLOE

And the way you always say "Oh god, oh god, oh god!" It's like I'm banging a priest.

JEFF

Again I defer to your experience. (BEAT) I used to kind of like your spontaneity, but now, more and more, your silly behavior just seems like an infantile refuge from responsibility.

CHLOE

Who wants *responsibility*? And you know...we've been together for a long time, but we don't talk, don't really talk. I fail your "tests," and you fail mine.

JEFF

What? When was I tested?

CHLOE

See, you don't even know. And that's a fail, right there. I wonder if I even truly know you.

JEFF

Maybe we're simply incompatible.

Ouch.

CHLOE

Maybe there's no maybe.

Bigger ouch.

JEFF

Sometimes I'm kind of uncertain whether I see a viable future with you. I mean, you work in a toy store.

CHLOE

I happen to love the toy store, except for the guns on aisle four. And who says selling stocks and bonds is such a fabulous thing? And You have ugly feet. They remind me of chicken feet.

They're hurting each other; not easy to back up.

JEFF

Oh, so we're doing that? Alright. You skip one day with your razor and suddenly I'm in bed with the missing link. And would it kill you to wear that little black dress I bought you? Also, I wish your lips were bigger.

He sees the fury in her eyes.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Forget that. Rewind back past the lips thingy. I'm sorry.

CHLOE

Honestly, this isn't working. This whole "us" thing. We're not working right now.

She stares at the wall.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Maybe we never were. Maybe your father's right. Maybe love's just an illusion. Maybe with all that mindless rutting we just thought we were in love.

JEFF

God, listen to us. We sound like two people who aren't going to move in together.

CHLOE

I disagree.

JEFF

You do?

CHLOE

I think we sound like two people who are breaking up.

Sinking in.

JEFF

Really? You think that's what we sound like?

CHLOE

Yeah, I do.

JEFF

Just like that?

Chloe doesn't say anything.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Chloe? (BEAT) Jesus, I feel like I've got a dagger in my heart.

Again, no answer. Jeff clenches his jaw.

CHLOE

Jeff...I...

JEFF

No, no response necessary.  
You're right. It's been a long time  
coming. It's fine with me.

CHLOE

Oh really. Okay good. If it's  
"fine" with you it's *fantastic* with  
me.

JEFF

Better to cut ties now than drag it  
out, only to succumb to the  
inevitable. Jesus, my dad was  
right. I hope you enjoy clown  
school.

CHLOE

(hopeful)

There's *clown school*?

Jeff frowns at her. She frowns back. Is this for real? They  
stare down. Then:

JEFF

So...breakup sex, your place or  
mine?

She stink-eyes him and walks away.

JEFF (CONT'D)

What? What?

**EXT. JEFF'S FRONT DOOR - LATER**

They're at his front door.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Well, this is it then.  
Goodbye, Chloe.

She moves to hug, but when he doesn't reciprocate, she backs  
off -- just as he moves forward, then backs up. He turns to  
go inside.

CHLOE

Wait.

He turns around, a hint of hope in his eyes.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Can I have my memory foam pillow?

He goes inside. We hear him rustling around, then he comes back out with her pillow and other stuff.

JEFF

Here's your memory foam pillow...

CHLOE

It remembers everything. ("listens to it") "Oh god, oh god, oh god..."

JEFF

Speaking of which, here's your Jesus action figure and your deely boppers, your glow in the dark beach ball and your fart cup...

CHLOE

But I gave those to you.

JEFF

I don't want your silly toys, okay?

Her lower lip quivers.

CHLOE

You used to like my silly. You said I was "ridiculicious."

JEFF

Well maybe I've had enough ridiculousity.

Nothing more to say. She takes the stuff. He closes the door. She walks down the street, a bloody baby seal, carrying her stuff wearing the deely boppers.

**INT. CHLOE AND JEFF'S APARTMENTS - NIGHT**

They're both in bed, holding their phones. Jeff's rings.

JEFF

Change your mind about breakup sex?

CHLOE

Could you *possibly* forget about sex for ten seconds?

JEFF

Sure. Doing it now.

Silence. Count to ten.

CHLOE  
What were you thinking about  
instead of sex?

JEFF  
Buffalo wings.

CHLOE  
"Buffalo wings?" (BEAT) Anything  
else?

JEFF  
Ranch dressing.

CHLOE  
You suck.

JEFF  
Come on, Chloe, I was thinking  
about you. You.

CHLOE  
Was I naked?

No answer.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
God, Jeff!

JEFF  
Well can I just maybe get a pass  
for being a guy?

He belches. Pause. She laughs. Then sighs.

CHLOE  
The Big Three holidays,  
Thanksgiving, Christmas and New  
Year's are bearing down on us.  
Breaking up is totally going to  
suck.

JEFF  
Yep. It's going to be really  
awkward.

CHLOE  
I don't think I can endure all the  
pity. I don't want to have to go  
through the whole holiday season  
being a victim. "Oh, you poor  
thing..."



Silence.

JEFF

Well. Nothing we can do about it.

CHLOE

I guess not. I'll see you.

They hang up. Jeff calls Chloe back.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hi? What's up?

JEFF

Forgot to say goodnight.

CHLOE

We can't keep doing this.  
Goodnight.

JEFF

I know. Goodnight.

They hang up. Still holding onto their phones, they roll over onto their sides and stare at the vacant bed spaces beside them.

On our CALENDAR we march forward day by day towards  
THANKSGIVING.

**INT. ELIZABETH'S KITCHEN - DAY**

Chloe is helping her mom put away groceries.

ELIZABETH

How's Jeff? He is so handsome.  
Don't you dare let him get away.

CHLOE

Mom...

Elizabeth doesn't wait for a response, instead picks up the turkey and examines it.

ELIZABETH

Do you think this bird is big  
enough?

CHLOE

Um, sure...uh, Jeff is...

ELIZABETH

I don't want to alarm you, darling, but your father and I are in counseling. The therapist asked us, "What strengths hold your marriage together." We sat there like those big Easter Island Heads, saying nothing. We couldn't think of anything.

CHLOE

Gosh. You and dad are in therapy? Why? You don't argue more than five or ten times a day.

ELIZABETH

You're hilarious. When your dad and I are in conflict we're supposed to find "safe" places to retreat to. We got in a fight and I went into the kitchen, your father went into the bathroom. It was horrible.

CHLOE

Why? He's potty trained.

ELIZABETH

He was in there for two days. While he was in there he claimed to have this grand epiphany. But he won't tell me what it is. And how is Jeff?

Chloe's about to speak when:

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Butter nut squash! We forgot the butter nut squash!

Elizabeth goes for her car keys. Chloe frowns.

**INT. NANNA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Jeff looks uncomfortable as Nanna makes a big production out of wrapping him up two fruitcakes.

NANNA

At my age, all I really care about is making sure my favorite grandson is happy. I see you with that lovely girl, Chelsea...

JEFF

Chloe...

NANNA

I see you with Chelsea, the two of you together, I know you're happy, I can die in peace. Here you go...one for you and one for her.

She hands him the fruitcakes. He musters a smile.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Chloe is window shopping, looking lonely as hell. Across the street she sees an OLD COUPLE ARGUING, gesticulating angrily. She smiles sadly, wishing Jeff was there to share this moment with her.

She's pulled from her reverie when she sees, approaching, KELLY and BRYAN. She tries to avoid them, but:

KELLY

Chloe, hi!

CHLOE

Kelly. Bryan. Hi you guys.

Chloe looks at Kelly's lips, which seem even fuller than before. Then she sees a ring on Kelly's finger.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Um...that's a pretty ring. Is it new?

KELLY

(to Bryan)

Give us a second, will you sweetie?

Kelly pulls Chloe aside.

KELLY (CONT'D)

It's a friendship ring. I know, it's on the traditional finger. He sort of asked me.

CHLOE

What did he sort of say?

KELLY

He said "I'm so used to you I'd feel totally freaked out if you weren't around."

CHLOE  
I'll bet your heart melted.

KELLY  
I know, he's not the super romantic type, but he's got tons of good qualities.

CHLOE  
I'm happy for you. Really.

They rejoin Bryan. Kelly looks around.

KELLY  
Where's Jeff?

Awkward beat. Chloe looks around, as though searching physically for an excuse.

KELLY (CONT'D)  
Oh my god. Is everything alright?

CHLOE  
Huh? What? Of course. Why would you even think otherwise? Of course everything's alright.

BRYAN  
I bet you're shopping for his Christmas gift, right? That's why he's not with you.

CHLOE  
Duh. Of course. I want to make sure it's a surprise.

KELLY  
Oh my god. For a second I thought...it was like my heart stopped. I'm so relieved everything's okay. (BEAT) Well we can't wait to see you guys at Thanksgiving. You two are such an *adorable* couple.

**INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Chloe knocks on Jeff's door. He opens it.

CHLOE  
Can I come in?

She brushes past him, plops on his couch.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I just ran into Kelly and Bryan. Bryan gave her a friendship ring. Whatever that is. She asked "Where's Jeff?" She actually said "Oh my god" *twice*. You should have seen the look of terror in her eyes. It was exactly like when she got the bill for her boob job. Seriously, she was freaked when she thought something was wrong between us.

JEFF

Couples don't like it when friends break up. It's an assault on the status quo. They immediately start questioning their own choices.

CHLOE

*"Where's Jeff?"* They couldn't *fathom* that we weren't attached at the hip. *"You two are such an adorable couple."* God, I don't think I can do this. I'll never make it through Thanksgiving.

JEFF

Not to mention both our parents are expecting us...

CHLOE

I don't want to be this pathetic sad-eyed "single" girl.

Jeff hands her Nanna's fruitcake.

JEFF

Here. From Nanna.

Chloe takes it.

CHLOE

Fruitcake. Perfect.

JEFF

She really likes you.

CHLOE

Well I adore her, too. This sucks. God, I'm going to be a social leper.

Jeff winds up some snapping teeth and puts them on the table in front of her.

JEFF

You forgot these. I've been brushing them for you. I'm not particularly looking forward to it either. Everyone will treat us like we're so *wounded*. I'm suicidal just thinking about it.

CHLOE

We should have waited until after the holidays.

They sit with this for a moment.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Who have you told?

JEFF

No one. You?

CHLOE

Nobody. Not yet.

An idea takes hold.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What if we just went to Thanksgiving as a couple, and didn't tell anyone we broke up?

JEFF

Wow. I am impressed. What an incredibly stupid idea. It...sounds...problematic, awkward, and excruciatingly painful.

CHLOE

Really? More awkward and painful than staying home alone and being miserable, or going solo and having to suffer through a bunch of pity parties being endlessly coddled and consoled over our tragic "loss?"  
*"Oh my god! I'm soooo sorry. Honey what happened? I know a terrific therapist!"*

Jeff thinks about it.

JEFF

So, you're saying we hang out together -- even though we decided that sucks -- in order to avoid the bitter anguish of solitude or all the well meaning but soul crushing sympathy?

CHLOE

You are so much smarter than you look.

JEFF

I don't think Nanna could handle our breakup. She's just so damn happy. If she found out the truth...

CHLOE

So this is humane for others as well...we can do it...

JEFF

Of course this is perfect for you, the goddess of mirth who loves to pretend that everything is "amazing" 24-7. So I assume I will have to withstand hours of your usual erratic and childish behavior?

CHLOE

As I will have to smile delightfully as you continue your boring pessemistic march into middle age.

JEFF

No slips of the tongue, no inappropriate, Tourettes blurting?

CHLOE

Blurting is henceforth banished. We keep up brave faces and mingle...

JEFF

Socialize. Perhaps even find new mates.

CHLOE

I like your spirit, sir! Deal?

JEFF

Deal! Seal it with breakup sex?

CHLOE

Aha. No non. Nein. He who lives in your underwear will have to find a new outlet. Have you tried a lamp socket?

JEFF

Can we at least hug?

He gives her a hug, but she closes her eyes and keeps her arms folded over her chest.

JEFF (CONT'D)

That was incredibly gratifying.

CHLOE

I really don't want you touching me. My little lizard lips are still angry.

JEFF

We have to seal the deal.

CHLOE

Okay. One fingertip.

She holds out her index finger. Jeff does, too. They touch.

JEFF

To Turkey Day.

CHLOE

With all the trimmings.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

Chloe jogs along listening to her iPhone. She hears three SAD SONGS in a row, all with lyrics:

SAD SONGS

"I can't live without you. I miss you so much my hurt hurts. Without you I might as well be dead."

CHLOE

Alright that's it!

She takes out the ear buds.



She sees an older woman, ALICE, long salt and pepper hair, sitting on a blanket, in lotus position, just finishing up her meditation, breathing, eyes closed.

Alice has a contented smile on her face. Chloe moves closer to her, inspecting, curious. Alice senses her, speaks evenly, her eyes remaining closed.

ALICE

Every single breath we take is a gift.

CHLOE

Can I take your picture?

Alice opens her eyes. Sparkling blue; clarity.

ALICE

That would be fine. Though I have no idea why you would want a picture of me.

CHLOE

You look so happy. I want it to remind myself that a woman can be happy.

ALICE

You mean an old woman?

CHLOE

No...

ALICE

An older woman...

CHLOE

A woman with experience. You seem so...happy.

ALICE

I am. I am exceedingly content.

CHLOE

Why are you happy?

ALICE

Why would I choose to be anything else?

CHLOE

"Choose?" That is so cool.

Chloe uses her phone to take Alice's picture. She puts the ear buds back in and jogs off to an UPBEAT SONG.

UPBEAT SONG

"I don't need nobody to make me happy."

On our CALENDAR we see a turkey, a Norman Rockwell family.

**EXT./INT. STREET - DAY**

Jeff's car is parked. Chloe arrives, parks, gets out. He gets out and approaches her, leans towards her, lips ready.

CHLOE

What are you doing?

JEFF

I was going for the cheek.

CHLOE

Can we just go in now?

JEFF

Fine. You're late, anyway, sunshine.

CHLOE

For the record, and this goes on your permanent record by the way, that's another one of your annoying quirks. You're too punctual. It comes off as stodgy and desperate. Why didn't you just go in?

JEFF

I didn't want to go in alone. I thought we should go in together. As a couple, you know.

CHLOE

And not just any couple, but a couple wildly, madly in love!  
(beat) If you so much as touch me I swear to god...

They get out and head for:

**INT. WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH'S HOUSE - DAY**

Jeff and Chloe enter. William and Elizabeth greet them.

CHLOE

Hi mom, dad. You remember  
magnificent sensible handsome Jeff.

ELIZABETH

Chloe, we're not about to forget  
the man you're living with. By the  
way, Jeff, when's the housewarming?

JEFF

Soon. Ish. We're still working on  
making the place homey.

WILLIAM

Welcome, Jeff. Welcome to the  
family.

William shakes Jeff's hand, pulls him into a hug.

JEFF

Thanks. Thanks so much. It's good  
to be...welcome.

It's a big group. Family, friends, neighbors. Kelly's there,  
too. Chloe's sister Marsha is there with her husband, Randy.  
Marsha's got baby Conner on her hip.

RANDY

Hey you two, it's so cool that you  
took the next step and moved *in*  
together. Living together is such  
an expression of --

MARSHA

RANDY! Did you check the turkey? I  
told you to check the fucking  
turkey! Mom and I can't do  
everything. (to Jeff and Chloe) Two  
years, you'd think just once he'd  
listen to me.

WIPE TO LATER: Elizabeth's got her camera out. Picture time.  
Kelly smiles a big smile. We notice another guy, very  
handsome.

ELIZABETH

Alright...everybody scrunch in  
together...closer...closer...

Jeff and Chloe inch closer together, but still remain not  
touching.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Chloe for god's sake put your arm  
around your man!

She does so, somewhat gingerly.

FLASH! A still photo shows Jeff and Chloe with phony smiles  
plastered on their faces.

LATER - DANCE MUSIC is playing in the B.G. Kelly approaches  
Jeff and Chloe, who is dancing. Alone. Chloe looks at Kelly,  
then behind her and around.

CHLOE

Oh my god. Where's Bryan?

KELLY

He wasn't feeling well. Anyway,  
sooooo...you guys moved *in*  
together?

CHLOE

Yep. Yeah. Uh-huh. You betcha.

KELLY

Where's the love nest?

CHLOE

On Pico.

KELLY

*Pico?* Where on Pico?

JEFF

It's on Pico. It doesn't really  
matter. Might as well be the  
Valley.

KELLY

(facetious)

Gee, you guys are really swell  
dance partners.

CHLOE

Jeff can't dance. He's rapidly  
advancing in age, and with the  
rigor mortis setting in, well...

KELLY

So...how's it going? Are you sick  
of each other yet?

CHLOE

Why would you even say such a thing?

KELLY

Well you don't seem as affectionate as you used to. Are you still hot for each other? I've heard that sometimes when --

Chloe takes the cue and grabs Jeff's hand.

CHLOE

We are totally hot for each other. I can't keep my hands off him.

JEFF

I try to be a trooper, but let me tell you, Mr. Happy's getting a hell of a workout. I'm like begging her, leave it alone, okay?

KELLY

Eww. Right. So you you like living together? It's really okay?

JEFF

Are you kidding me? Chloe is such a wonderful little homemaker.

CHLOE

You should see me scrub. And mop. My mopping skills are off the charts.

Kelly holds up her empty glass.

KELLY

I could use another glass of white wine. Jeff?

He nods, takes the glass and ventures for a refill.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Cut the bullshit. Seriously, girl to girl?

CHLOE

Oh, girl to girl? Why didn't you say so? "Girl to girl," I swear on my cha cha that things couldn't be better between Jeff and I. We're Perfect. Exceptional. Splendid.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Two peas in a pod. I could go on  
and on.

KELLY

I've got eyes. And intuition.

Jeff returns with Kelly's wine. Chloe grabs him, pulls him to her.

CHLOE

You're such a sweetie. Isn't he a  
sweetie?

She pinches his cheeks. He hugs her. The tension between them is palpable.

JEFF

Ouch?

KELLY

Thanks, Jeffy.

JEFF

No problem.

Kelly's eyes narrow as she scrutinizes them, smiles pointedly at Jeff, then leaves, un-convinced. Jeff checks out her ass.

CHLOE

That was actually kind of fun, all  
that blatant lying.

JEFF

Yes it was.

CHLOE

"Jeffy?" Was she flirting? Are you  
attracted to her?

JEFF

Kelly? No. No. Definitely not.

CHLOE

Okay. She has an appeal. In a  
slutty, drag your vagina through  
the gutter kind of way. Men like  
that, don't they? They like sluts?

JEFF

No. Men don't like sluts. (coughs)  
They love them.

Jeff continues hugging Chloe.

CHLOE  
You can let go now.

JEFF  
What if someone gets suspicious?

CHLOE  
Get off! God you're annoying.

JEFF  
Did you shave your legs?

CHLOE  
Nope. Jane Goodall's been following me. I'm full mammal.

JEFF  
That is *such* a turn on.

CHLOE  
You are so disgusting.

Chloe walks off.

ANGLE ON THE LONG TABLE

Where they're all seated like Pilgrims. Holding hands.

WILLIAM  
I'm thankful for this time we have together, for family, nothing is more important than family, and I'm so thankful that Chloe and Jeff have found each other. Let's hope that their loving relationship continues to blossom and bears fruit, in the form of...a granchild...

CHLOE  
Oh god, Dad!

EVERYONE BUT CHLOE AND JEFF  
Here here!

Jeff and Chloe muster smiles and toast.

LATER - IN THE KITCHEN

Chloe and Marsha are doing dishes.

MARSHA

Let me tell you, it gets old. I sometimes wish Randy would find himself a lover so he'd quit constantly bothering me to take care of his "needs." I swear it's like living with a horny orangutang.

CHLOE

Wow, that sound so...how often do you have to --

MARSHA

At least once every two weeks, it's exhausting.

IN THE DEN

Randy's talking with Jeff.

RANDY

The only Marsha and I have sex in the same room is when she barges in on me when I'm choking Kojack. God I love my iPad. I still love Marsha, too, but it's just...different when you get serious. She used to wear sexy panties. Now she wears these huge cotton monstrosities, like Mormon Temple garments.

JEFF

Well, it's just underwear, I'm sure if you bought her some new --

RANDY

Also, I have these fantasies...

JEFF

That's normal. Who doesn't like a good fantasy?

RANDY

Sometimes I fantasize about hitting her over the head with a cast iron frying pan. And just standing over her body, bathed in the blessed silence...

Jeff stares somewhere far away.



INT. CHLOE'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - LATER

She pulls Jeff inside. She looks around. The walls are bare, her childhood memories in boxes.

CHLOE

Look what those mofo's have done to my childhood!

JEFF

By "mofo's" I take it you mean your mother and father who gifted you your childhood in the first place?

CHLOE

Right. Sorry. I'm just so pissed off. You don't expect your childhood to be torn apart like this.

JEFF

This should be nothing for you, miss perky peppy. Cruel reality aside, life is an endlessly fun and joyful remember?

CHLOE

You're right! This is nothing! It's a positive, a new step for mom and dad.

JEFF

Riiight. And what's up with your sister and her husband?

CHLOE

I know, they practically hate each other. It's just the baby. The stress.

JEFF

God, the facades...I feel stupid, lying to family and friends. We should just tell everybody.

CHLOE

Oh, lovely idea Jeffy. Then welcome to the nightmare. *"Oh, my god! You're what? Oh, I'm so sorry. You poor thing! I think I might cry..."*

JEFF

Alright alright, we'll keep up the deceitful ruse.

We hear a baby crying.

IN THE MASTER BEDROOM

Randy and Marsha's baby, Conner, is crying. William gently slides his hands under him. Behind him in the doorway, Elizabeth scolds:

ELIZABETH  
What are you *doing*?

WILLIAM  
I'm picking her up.

ELIZABETH  
Let her cry. They need to cry themselves out. You never let Chloe cry herself out. Maybe if you had she'd be different.

WILLIAM  
Which would be a tragedy.

William picks up the baby and cuddles her.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Shhhhh....don't listen to Fraulein Hitler...it's okay...grandpa's here.

Elizabeth clenches her jaw as he closes the door.

ELIZABETH  
All these years, it's such a comfort to be respected.

She whirls, has tears in her eyes, almost runs into Chloe.

CHLOE  
What's going on?

ELIZABETH  
The same thing that's been going on for twenty five years. Your father and I have very different concepts of child-rearing.

CHLOE  
I know. I remember.

Chloe holds her mom's hand.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Remember the time you took away all my toys?

ELIZABETH

Oh for god's sake, Chloe...what are you --

CHLOE

I was six. You yelled at me and told me to clean up my room. I did, but the toys didn't want to be put away, they wanted to stay out and play, so even though I put them in the toy box, they wouldn't stay in, they climbed out by themselves...

ELIZABETH

Okay, now I remember. You lied to me and you wouldn't let it go. Wait, are you about to confess?

CHLOE

I wanted you to believe and you wouldn't.

ELIZABETH

I didn't believe you because you were lying, Chloe. Toys don't climb out of the toy box by themselves for God's sake. I couldn't believe you.

CHLOE

I didn't want you to believe *me*. I wanted you to believe *with* me. I thought if you could do that, then...so many things could be possible. But you wouldn't believe. So you took away my toys.

ELIZABETH

It was for one day. You needed to learn.

CHLOE

Maybe. Or maybe you needed to learn. By the way, what was dad's bathroom epiphany?

William emerges from the bedroom.

WILLIAM  
(triumphant)  
He's sleeping.

He moves them a ways down the hallway.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
My epiphany. Amazing things can happen in the bathroom, let me tell you. I remembered spinning yet another fantastic yarn about the innocence of one of my guilty, reprehensible, unremorseful clients, how I created a wild fabrication. It occurred to me that I've been doing this for years, making "cases," creating alternate realities. So I thought to myself, why can't I do this for my own life?

ELIZABETH  
Why not just cut to the chase and confess to your daughter that you've lost your mind. (to Chloe) Without consulting me, your father has this alter ego, "Larry the you don't need a lawyer, lawyer." He's been shooting these utterly useless  
--

WILLIAM  
-- entirely purposeful --

ELIZABETH  
-- videos he's posting on Youtube, supposedly showing people how to "fix" their own legal troubles.

WILLIAM  
People are wasting so much of their hard earned money, it's disgraceful.

ELIZABETH  
Of course no one sees them, perhaps a few hundred people, it's idiotic.

WILLIAM  
Visionaries are rarely recognized in their own time.

CHLOE  
Mom, if it makes him happy...

ELIZABETH

He's neglecting his practice, he's got mountains of work to do and yet he does nothing but shoot these inane videos. He's essentially striving to put himself out of business.

WILLIAM

She's exaggerating, as usual...

ELIZABETH

I think the take away from this darling is don't let things build up between you and Jeff. Be honest, let it out.

WILLIAM

Jeff's a great guy. I'm so happy for you.

Chloe smiles painfully.

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - DAY**

Parked. Jeff glances over as Chloe pulls two pies out of the Dollar Barn bag.

JEFF

You bought pumpkin pies at the Dollar Barn? (FAKE READING) "Best by...November 24th. 2011."

She unfolds the folded up bag. It's an expensive-looking cloth bag from Gleason's. She puts the pies in them.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Perfect.

**EXT. JEFF'S PARENTS' HOUSE - CONTINUING**

They get out. Instead of heading for the front door, Jeff goes around to the side.

CHLOE

Where are you going?

JEFF

We'll go in the kitchen door. That way we won't have to make some big phony entrance.

They hear arguing. Jeff stops and they watch as his mother and father pace back and forth in the kitchen, clearly in the midst of a fight.

MISSY

Of course I hear what you're saying Clark, it's just that what you're saying happens to be shit.

CLARK

It doesn't have to be to be interpreted that way.

MISSY

Shit is shit!

CHLOE

What do we do?

JEFF

We can't back up, they might see us. Keep walking.

They do, and now Jeff reaches to knock.

CHLOE

Oh my god don't knock! Please! I'm begging you, don't knock. I'll blow you!

Too late--just as she's said this he's knocked.

JEFF

God your timing sucks.

INT. JEFF'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Clark and Missy are simply amazing in their swift cover up and answer the door with broad smiles.

MISSY

Well, look who made it! Chloe, you look so pretty.

Missy's eyes are red and her cheeks are flushed.

CHLOE

Thank you. So you do. You have such a healthy...glow.

CLARK

Come on in. (to Chloe) Nice to see you.

Clark and Chloe exchange an awkward hug.

Walking down the hallway, Chloe whispers to Jeff.

CHLOE

Your dad went for a boob hug.

Chloe sees a gallery of photographs depicting Clark and Missy, smiling regally, their eyes bright with security, family.

LATER IN THE LIVING ROOM

Nanna is fussing over Chloe. Behind them, a large "oil" photo of the family; Clark, Missy, Jeff, and Nanna and her husband, posing like monarchy.

NANNA

Such a pretty girl. I know you're taking really good care of my Jeffy. (conspiratorially) Men have powerful needs, you know, Chelsea.

Chloe smiles her best smile.

Across the room Jeff is approached by his father, Clark.

CLARK

I know you're living with this woman, and you're fond of her but in the long run you need to merge with someone who makes bank.

JEFF

Is that what you and mom were fighting about? Never mind, you wouldn't tell me anyway. Dad, "Merge?" You do know that none of your stellar relationship advice is solicited, correct?

CLARK

I'm your father. Seriously, it takes two paychecks to create a decent cash flow in today's economy

JEFF

When are people going to stop saying "in today's economy?"

CLARK

At the end of the day, you don't want someone who's going to be a drag on your bottom line.

JEFF

Dad, you're watching too much TV.  
Do you use any phrases that are not  
cliches?

CLARK

Not so much, no.

LATER - AT THE DESSERT TABLE

Chloe makes a big deal out of pulling her Dollar Barn pies  
out of the Gleason's bag.

CHLOE

Who wants Gelson's pumpkin pie?  
From Gleason's?

NANNA

Are they green? They look a little  
green.

The pies are scrutinized. They're small and indeed off color.  
Chloe cuts and serves as quickly as she can. No one takes a  
bite. Until Jeff does, chewing and swallowing bravely.

JEFF

Mmmm...delicious. Great, babe.

MISSY

So how do you two lovebirds like  
living together?

CLARK

I'm guessing the novelty's wearing  
off. You're probably getting on  
each other's nerves. Relationships  
can stale quickly.

JEFF

We're not stale. We're fresh.  
Chloe's not getting on my nerves.  
Not at all. It's like she's not  
even there.

Chloe is adding copious amounts of whipped cream to the  
slices of pie.

JEFF (CONT'D)

And even though we wake up next to  
each other every single day,  
somehow, I still miss her.



NANNA

Awww. That's so sweet. Bernard and I were like that for many years. Until the bastard met that cheap bitch, moved to New York and got the heart attack he so richly deserved.

LATER IN THE KITCHEN

Jeff approaches his mom at the sink, sees the pain in her eyes, a tear escaping.

JEFF

Mom...what is it? What's wrong?

MISSY

Nothing. Oh, the hell with it. Your father...he wants an "open" marriage.

JEFF

Aw...geez. What an idiot. Aw, mom, you poor thing, I'm so sorry. Are you going to be okay?

MISSY

Don't tell him I said anything, it'll only exacerbate things.

JEFF

I know a terrific therapist...

MISSY

You do?

JEFF

No. But I thought I should at least offer.

MISSY

Jeffy, listen to me. This is our problem, nothing for you to worry about. Sometimes, things like this work themselves out. I can tell you and Chloe belong together. So you just...stay happy with her, alright. Promise me?

A part of him wants so bad to tell her the truth. But he's not going to add to her pain just now.

JEFF

I promise.

EXT. JEFF'S PARENTS' HOUSE BACK YARD - DAY

Jeff and Chloe sit in a porch swing and talk.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Very classy. Counterfeit Gleason's pumpkin pies.

CHLOE

Do you have any idea how much they charge for those stupid Gleason pies? (BEAT) I lost my job.

JEFF

What? How?

CHLOE

I'd rather not say.

JEFF

Well I'd rather you not not say. I'd rather you say say. You've piqued my interest.

CHLOE

Okay. You know "Frowny Frank?"

JEFF

The guy who hasn't smiled since the earth cooled? Alt. Obama was sworn in?

CHLOE

Right. Well, we have this life size Miley Cyrus doll, and Frank's always fantasizing about her, so I kind of did a little licky lesbian dance thingy with her to try and make him smile you know, for the holidays...

JEFF

Oh this is wonderful. Spit it out. In raunchy layman's terms.

CHLOE

I was dry humping Miley Cyrus...

JEFF

I'm so proud. And your boss saw you?

CHLOE

Yep.

JEFF

And were there children witnessing your tasteful frivolity as well?

CHLOE

Three. Ages six to nine. Two girls and a boy.

JEFF

Fired. Wow. See what happens when you never take life seriously? What will you do? They took away your toys! You might actually have to become an adult.

CHLOE

I bet you hated being a kid.

JEFF

I loved every single day of being a kid. Until my twelfth birthday.

CHLOE

Scary clown?

JEFF

Scary dad. (BEAT) After I blew out the candles on the cake and opened all my presents, I was so happy. And then he took me aside for the talk.

CHLOE

Birds and bees?

JEFF

No. The "real life" talk. "You know, Jeff, real life isn't like birthday parties where everyone loves you and gives you things for free. When you grow up, you'll have to get a job and work your butt off. Because you're going to want a wife, and no matter what they say about women's lib, it's going to be expected of you that you be the breadwinner. Earn the money. And let me tell you, it's a dog eat dog world out there. Happy Birthday."

CHLOE

God...that must have been terrible.

JEFF

I laid awake all night thinking how unfair it was, how I didn't want to have to shoulder such an immense burden. I kind of stopped being a kid a little more every year after that.

Instead of appearing sympathetic, Chloe looks mad.

CHLOE

Why didn't you tell me this before?  
When we were together?

JEFF

I don't know. It's just  
so...personal.

She gets out of the swing abruptly.

CHLOE

Oh, right, you wouldn't want to get too personal with the woman you're sleeping with. Jesus, Jeff!

She runs behind him and pushes him so hard he swings up and flies out of the swing.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Jeff drops her off at her car.

CHLOE

Well, that wasn't so bad. Except for the bold face lying part.

JEFF

Jesus...my parents...

CHLOE

Yeah, what was up with them?

JEFF

Another time, okay?

CHLOE

I thought maybe you were evolving, starting to open up.

JEFF

I did, I am. I will. I can. (beat)  
Are any of those the right thing to say? Because I never know...

CHLOE

I'm glad we did what we did. The dinner and dessert were good. It was fun. It was better than going it alone, right?

JEFF

Yeah.

CHLOE

Jeff, I'm glad you opened up and shared. Better late than never. It made me feel...closer to you.

JEFF

Thanks. Would that be close enough for Turkey Day breakup sex?

CHLOE

I don't think that's such a great idea. Goodbye, Jeff.

He just nods, hurt. He watches her walk away, then starts his car and drives off. She turns and watches him go.

**INT. CHLOE'S/JEFF'S APTS. - SLEEPING ALONE MONTAGE**

On our CALENDAR we move day by day towards Christmas.

Both Chloe and Jeff toss and turn, unable to sleep. They reach for their iPhones, and bring up each other's contact page with picture, but don't dial.

They scroll through pictures of each other. Chloe's in a different kooky outfit in every one.

Chloe puts her iPhone -- with Jeff's picture on it -- on the pillow next to her.

In his apartment, Jeff has done the same.

**ON ANOTHER DAY**

Jeff flips through channels on TV. He stops on a music video with furious dancing on it.

He slowly begins trying to copy the moves. He's horrible. But keeps at it.

**EXT. STREET/ EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY**

**CHRISTMAS MONTAGE** With Christmas songs. Deck the Halls. Silent Night. Jingle Bells.

Wandering aimlessly, Chloe window shops. She pauses outside a shoe repair shop. Lonely again.

Jeff is in alone in his car in a mall parking lot. He's smiling a sad smile. Because he sees a middle aged couple arguing in their car, gesticulating angrily.

His phone rings. It's Chloe. INTERCUT.

CHLOE

Hey, hi, how's it going?

JEFF

I've been working non stop so I don't have to sleep. I hate sleeping alone. Other than that it's the most wonderful time of year. I'm just jolly. You?

CHLOE

Me? Oh, super. I'm great. Really, just really slammed, busy. (BEAT) Are you, you know...really okay?

JEFF

Chloe, I'm not all that fabulous, okay?

CHLOE

I'm sorry.

JEFF

Don't feel bad just because it's all your fault. You seeing anyone?

In the window is a small animatron, a shoe repair guy jerkily hammering away at a shoe.

CHLOE

Um. Yeah. There's this guy.

JEFF

I knew it. What's he do?

CHLOE

Um...he's into shoes.

JEFF

Well that's just dandy. I'm really very, very happy for you. Ecstatic, actually. I gotta go...

CHLOE

Jeff, wait. There's no guy. He's just a figment of my imagination.

JEFF

You don't have to say that to make me feel better.

He looks at his phone.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Can you hold on? I have another call.

CHLOE

Sure.

He goes off the line. She waits. In a moment he comes back on.

JEFF

Oh great. Apparently my mom invited your parents to our Christmas party, they invited Kelly and Bryan.

CHLOE

Oh god no not Kelly she's like some drug sniffing dog!

JEFF

Well obviously you haven't communicated effectively with your own parents!

CHLOE

No, they've been having some issues and didn't want to...wait a minute, you must not have told your mummy and daddy, either!

JEFF

No. I suck.

CHLOE

I concur. What are we going to do?

Long, awkward silence.

JEFF

Okay listen, I mean, if you don't have anything better to do, I mean, maybe we could go together? So we don't go it alone.

CHLOE  
Right. We can be alone, together.

JEFF  
Are you serious? Stupid question, you're never serious, it's not in your DNA.

CHLOE  
I can be serious. I don't particularly feel playing the broken hearted wounded damsel in distress on Christmas. We'll go together, just like Thanksgiving.

JEFF  
Okay. So we agree. We'll continue this pathetic, twisted farce.

CHLOE  
We'll put on another dashing and passionate performance as the perfect couple!

JEFF  
Okay great. I'll see you.

She hangs up. Sighs. Speaks to a passing girl.

CHLOE  
Would it kill me to tell him that I miss him?

GIRL PASSING BY  
What would be the point?

CHLOE  
I'm so lonely. I want someone to hug.

GIRL PASSING BY  
Get a cat.

**INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY**

Chloe visits. LAURA, 48, holds a rather large tabby.

LAURA  
This here is Louie. Say hi, Louie.



CHLOE

How old is he? He looks like he should be in a museum. In the ad you said "kitten?"

LAURA

It's been running awhile. Louie's a gem. A real sweetie.

She sets Louie down on a counter. He stares at Chloe.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Isn't he handsome?

CHLOE

Oh yeah. Well, his ear's a little bent. And why's his left eye shut? He looks like a pirate.

LAURA

They encourage prospective adopters to spend a few minutes with their potential animal. So go ahead, I'll give you two a little time.

Laura leaves the room.

CHLOE

Louie...I'm Chloe. Nice to meet you.

Laura pokes her head back in.

LAURA

It's a commitment. You'd be his new mommy. Sometimes it helps to just visualize living with each other.

CHLOE

Okay, gotcha.

Chloe nods and closes her eyes and imagines:

INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - DAY

1) Coming home to her apartment.

CHLOE

Louie I'm home...

She steps on a wet spot on the rug. Looks around, notices several more.

2) Coming home another day and enters --

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Louie, mommy's --

She can't even finish as she immediately covers her mouth and nose. Moments later, as Louie watches, she scoops out his litter box.

3) ANOTHER DAY - she enters, finds the pillows on her couch clawed to shreds.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Louie?

4) ANOTHER DAY - she's gone through two lint rollers trying to get the cat hair off her coat.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Louie!

5) ANOTHER DAY - she's in bed with a guy (could be Jeff, we don't see his face) and the guy is totally into it, but Chloe's frozen, her eyes locked on Louie, who's almost in her face, staring at her with his one good eye.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Shhht! Go on! Go away, this is mommy's time!

INT. LAURA'S HOUSE - DAY

Chloe opens her eyes and looks at Louie. His tail's twitching.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Oh, Louie, I'm being totally unfair, I'm projecting all my insecurities onto you. Come here to mommy you sweetie...

She reaches for him. He HISSES and raises a threatening paw.  
SOUND OF YOWLING.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON CHLOE'S HANDS

As Laura wipes alcohol on them and applies band aids.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I might not be entirely ready for the responsibility.

**EXT. STORE - DAY**

Chloe exits carrying a body pillow.

**INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT**

Chloe's lying on her couch, eyes closed, entwined with her body pillow. KNOCK at her door. A wrapped present on the table in front of her.

She bolts up, hides the pillow, gets up and checks herself in the mirror.

She's wearing a frilly skirt, a man's white shirt and a green Christmas tree tie. She goes and lets Jeff in.

CHLOE

Hi...

She sees he's carrying a present. She goes to hug him. But he backs off.

JEFF

What are you doing?

CHLOE

Nothing.

JEFF

Wait. You want to practice being super affectionate? You just caught me off guard. If you want body contact I can provide that.

CHLOE

Nope. I'm good.

JEFF

Where's your car? I didn't see it out front.

CHLOE

It's in the shop.

JEFF

Are you working?

CHLOE

Not yet, but I've got a lot of irons in the fire. Tons, actually.

JEFF

You sold your car? To pay your rent?

CHLOE

God, why do you always do that? Leap to rash, utterly groundless conclusions about me that happen to be true! God, I'm such a miserable pathetic loser. Such a good for nothing...useless...inept...dysfunctional...(BEAT) Are you going to jump in here?

JEFF

You're not a loser. It's just that without me, your life is spiraling totally out of control. But don't worry, in your fantasy world everything's cool. It's nothing to worry about. Unless you're concerned about being institutionalized. I do believe there is one thing which would enable you to reverse your current trend.

CHLOE

No breakup sex. Shall we go?

She picks up his present. He eyes it, but says nada.

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - DAY**

Parked. Their gifts to each other are in the back seat.

CHLOE

God, this duplicity feels so weird. Maybe we should just stop pretending and...

JEFF

Tell everyone? I was thinking the same thing.

CHLOE

You really think we should spill our guts?

JEFF

Yep. Be bold, honest, just lay it all out.

CHLOE  
Maybe you're right.

JEFF  
No, I'm the guy. I'm never right.

CHLOE  
There's a first time for  
everything. I'm in. Let's do it.  
Honesty and integrity, here we  
come, however painful.

**INT. JEFF'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT**

Jeff and Chloe enter and look around. They see Clark, who appears surly and withdrawn, while Missy is absolutely glowing. Also there are William and Elizabeth, who have a chill between them.

They face people, their families, friends, including Kelly.

JEFF  
Um...listen up everyone.

It's noisy, a few people turn to see them. We hear a little bell. It's Nanna, in a wheelchair, and she motions for Jeff and Chloe to come to her, which they do.

Everyone else goes back to socializing.

NANNA  
Look at you two...so sweet.

JEFF  
Hi Nanna...

He gives her a kiss on her cheek.

NANNA  
Where's my kiss from your girl?

CHLOE  
Sorry. Hello Nanna...

NANNA  
I have a little secret I'm only  
going to share with you and Jeffy  
Chelsea.

JEFF  
Chelsea? Nanna her name's --

CHLOE

It's okay. I'm getting used to Chelsea.

NANNA

Jeffy...Chelsea...I'm not well. I don't think I'll see the new year.

CHLOE

Oh Nanna...

JEFF

Of course you will.

NANNA

No. Some things you just know. And I want you both to know that, gracious, this is going to sound a little melodramatic, but it's from my heart. Knowing how much you two love each other, and what a beautiful loving future you have unfurling in front of you...well, I can go in peace.

Jeff and Chloe are deer in headlights.

CHLOE

Awww...umm....

NANNA

And when I see that rat fucker Bernard on the other side I'm going to kick his cheating ass.

Missy bubbles over and gives Chloe a hug.

MISSY

Chloe, you look, so...interesting, as always. Here, this is from Clark and me.

She hands Chloe a little blue Tiffany's box.

CHLOE

Oh, I...couldn't really, I can't accept....

She's totally flustered.

MISSY

Nonsense. Open it. Come on.

Chloe opens it. It's a beautiful necklace with a sterling silver key on it.

MISSY (CONT'D)

That's the key to our family. Even though (she looks pointedly at Jeff) I've yet to receive an invitation to your place...

JEFF

Mom I told you' we're just...swamped, no time at all, (searching) what with Chloe's new job.

MISSY

Oh, a new job, congratulations. What is it?

CHLOE

What? My job? Oh...working with children. Kids. Kindergarten.

JEFF

It's a perfect fit for her.

MISSY

Oh, are you teaching?

CHLOE

Um, no, just a teacher's assistant, but I'm...going to school to get my teaching degree.

MISSY

You must be very proud. You do have that sheen of accomplishment about you. Go ahead, put the necklace on.

Chloe does. And gives Missy a hug.

CHLOE

Thank you.

MISSY

You're very welcome. I'll be right back.

Missy goes over to Clark and rubs his arm, smiles at him, tries to get him to lighten up. She gets a very slight smile out of him when she gently strokes his cheek.

CHLOE

Well, so much for honesty and integrity.

JEFF

Yeah. Hey, the kindergarten teaching thing, smooth move, very believable. Where did you come up with that?

CHLOE

I'm not sure, it just came out. It must be something I really want to do.

JEFF

See.

CHLOE

See what?

JEFF

You can be serious.

Missy leaves Clark and rejoins them. Jeff looks over at his father, who's slipped back into a funk.

JEFF (CONT'D)

What's wrong with Ebenezer?

MISSY

Oh, your father, he's been in such a foul mood. You remember what we talked about at Thanksgiving? Certainly you told Chloe...

She can tell by Chloe's look she's clueless.

MISSY (CONT'D)

Men. (to Chloe) Jeff's father was going on and on about an "open" marriage. Well, of course I was crushed, but I caved in, and well, this young man at the club, Troy, the tennis pro, he's such a large man, you know, and Jeffy, frankly I'd forgotten how incredibly intense sex can be. I mean, Troy, he's like an animal...

JEFF

Mom, please, no details, I'm begging you.



MISSY

What? It's just healthy hot sex.  
God, it's like Bikram Yoga, I have  
never sweat so much in my life.

Chloe's eyes are open wide.

CHLOE

I'm going to go say hi to mom and  
dad.

MOMENTS LATER

Chloe's with her parents.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You two look like a couple of  
grinches over here. Who died?

WILLIAM

Nobody died. We're fine.

He puts his arm around Elizabeth. She gives Chloe a tight  
smile.

ELIZABETH

Merry Christmas Darling. Such a  
lovely house. (looking over at  
Jeff) You've done well for  
yourself.

CHLOE

What? Oh, yeah, sure.

WILLIAM

What do you mean? What's wrong?

CHLOE

Nothing. Everything's perfect.

ELIZABETH

Hmmmm...now look who's being a  
grinch. This place. I've always  
wanted a house like this. But now  
that your father is...

CHLOE

Now that he's what?

WILLIAM

Nothing. It's Christmas. Enjoy  
yourself.

CHLOE

You two are relatively okay, no more emotionally tormented than usual, right?

ELIZABETH

Yes. Of course. Don't worry about us, honey. Just be thankful you've got Jeff.

CHLOE

I think I'll get some wine.

Chloe crosses to the bar and waits her turn. She's approached gingerly by a handsome guy.

DAN

Nice to see you again.

CHLOE

Excuse me?

Dan smiles broadly. Nice teeth. Chloe's confused, until he mimes being in a box.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh! It's you! You can talk.

DAN

Yes, unfortunately.

CHLOE

Why unfortunately?

DAN

I get nervous around beautiful girls and I jibber jabber, invariably put my foot in my mouth. Sometimes both feet. Actually I'm quite flexible, I could suck on my toes when I was a kid. Oh shit, see, I did it. It was great seeing you again...

He starts to go but she stops him with a touch.

CHLOE

Hey, don't flee. It's okay. You're just being open and honest...

DAN

You're not going to run away screaming?

CHLOE  
Not if you keep your shoes on.

Jeff stares at them. Not happy. We now hear WEEPING.

KELLY

Is sitting on an ottoman, surrounded by some girlfriends.

CHLOE JOINS JEFF

and they watch as Kelly continues crying. People around her shake their heads in pity.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
(to Jeff)  
What happened?

DAN  
Bryan dumped her. Hell of a thing.  
You'd think he could have waited  
until after the holidays.

Dan moves off to freshen his drink.

JEFF  
Well this is painful. Should we do  
something?

CHLOE  
Not yet. I want to enjoy it a  
little longer.

Chloe pushes back a smile, and then approaches Kelly. Jeff follows.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Oh my god, Kel, what happened?

KELLY  
Bryan. Marci. He...

CHLOE  
That bastard...and right before the  
holidays!

Chloe goes to hug Kelly, but Kelly instead hugs Jeff, mashing her boobs against him.

KELLY  
You guys...I don't know what I'd do  
without you. What's wrong with me?  
Am I desirable? Am I pretty?

CHLOE

You're beautiful. Come give me a hug.

But Kelly won't let go of Jeff, instead sobs into his neck, hugging him even more tightly.

KELLY

You are such a good man, such a good good man...

Finally, Kelly extricates herself from Jeff.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Thanks. I'm going to go freshen up.

She departs.

CHLOE

That was embarrassing. She was practically humping you.

JEFF

Oh, is someone jealous?

CHLOE

No. Not my problem if you make a desperate pathetic spectacle of yourself.

Chloe goes and mingles.

LATER - Standing with Chloe, Kelly looks much better.

KELLY

Are you positive everything's good with you and Jeff?

She's looking across the room at Jeff sitting alone on a couch. A Christmas Song is playing.

CHLOE

Not sure why you keep banging that drum, Kel.

KELLY

You were distant at Thanksgiving. Now, you don't even hold hands. Something's wrong. Admit it.

CHLOE

Kelly, Jeff and I are inseparable, we complete each other.

KELLY

Really? Prove it. Kiss him. Look, he's sitting right under the mistletoe.

Chloe hesitates.

KELLY (CONT'D)

I knew it. Well if you're not going to...

CHLOE

Could you possibly be any more annoying?

Chloe goes to Jeff, pulls him up off the couch, points to the mistletoe and then kisses him, quite passionately.

When they break apart, Jeff starts dancing. He's horrible, but game. Chloe can't hold back a smile.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

The Jeffster...breakin' it down...

Still smiling, she shoots Kelly a look. Kelly walks off. Convinced? Who cares. It's Jeff who's confused. And still dancing like a monkey.

JEFF

You haven't kissed me like that in a long time. I felt a stirring in my loins. Want to feel?

CHLOE

Lovely offer, but no. Tell your loins they can forget about it.

Chloe sits on the couch. Jeff stops dancing and plops down next to her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I was merely preserving the facade. It was an act for detective Kelly.

JEFF

It reminded me of that night I got my job and we celebrated. In the parking lot, remember?

CHLOE

One doesn't easily forget parking lot sex. It was so romantic. Especially when I saw the security guard recording it on his phone.

They recall the night with fondness.

JEFF

You liked *this* kiss. Didn't you?

CHLOE

Meh...it was a perfectly acceptable between two incompatible adults. But it was just the one. That's all my tragically thin little lips have to offer.

JEFF

Your lips aren't thin. They're wonderful. Chloe...your lips are the best lips I've ever met. We should kiss again. We can't be too careful.

CHLOE

I'm going to face the other way now. (BEAT) We're getting through the holidays. It's not exactly nirvana. But at least we're not alone.

But they've never looked more alone.

**EXT. CHLOE'S APT. - LATER**

Glum city as he drops her off.

CHLOE

Thanks for driving. You were always a good driver. Not a tail-gater. I always felt safe with you. (BEAT) Well, I should go.

JEFF

Yeah.

They sit for a beat. Waiting for one or the other to make a move. Jeff slowly begins to make his move, moving towards her, but it's too late. She's looking out the window. When she opens her door, he pulls back.

She gets out, closes the door behind her. She starts walking away, then turns around and comes back. He powers down the window.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Hey Chloe?

She walks back, leans in the window.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I lied. When we first met. You told me about your heartbreak and I pretended like I didn't have one. I did. Jenny. I wanted to marry her. I put an engagement ring on her finger. She turned me down, but the ring was stuck. She had it cut off and mailed it back to me.

CHLOE

That's so sad. You should have told me.

JEFF

I know. Can you get in?

He opens the door, she climbs in, sits.

JEFF (CONT'D)

I have more. One Christmas eve, when I was really young, my parents were up late drinking, all jolly and happy, but later, they got into a really horrible fight. I saw my mom hit my dad in the head - hard - with a plunger.

CHLOE

Ouch...

JEFF

They both started crying, held each other. I was crying too, spying on them. We were all crying, but not together. I felt so scared, so alone. I'd go back to bed -- this happened more than once for sure -- and I'd hear my dad grunting and my mom moaning. I thought he was killing her. I didn't know about makeup sex. In the morning at breakfast, I was sure they were going to tell me they were getting a divorce. But they were all smiles, all lovey-dovey, like nothing ever happened.

Jeff has tears in his eyes. Chloe leans over and hugs him.

CHLOE  
That's a lovely story. Perfect for  
the holidays.

JEFF  
I didn't mean to dump that on you.

CHLOE  
Jeff. Stop. I'm glad you did and  
you know it. And you do dance,  
after all.

He nods. They sit for a moment. Chloe sees their unopened  
gifts. She grabs them, hands him his.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
We forgot to open these. Shall we?

They do. She tears hers open. Big smile.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
A juggling kit! You brat. Thank  
you!

JEFF  
You're welcome.

CHLOE  
Now you.

He opens his, very carefully. It's a beautiful book.

JEFF  
"How to Design and Build Your Dream  
Home." Thanks. It's great. I was  
expecting something silly, but this  
is...seriously...just so mature.  
You surprise me.

CHLOE  
Oh, come on...

Their cheeks flush.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Merry Christmas.

JEFF  
Merry Christmas.

They have a bumbling, awkward "platonic" hug. Then she opens  
her door. And gets out slowly. She's going to leave. But she  
stops.



CHLOE

You know New Year's is only six days away. I don't want to sit home alone. Maybe we could go to Peter's soiree together?

JEFF

Yeah. Sure. Who wants to be alone on New Year's Eve?

**INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Chloe stands in front of her mirror and talks to herself.

CHLOE

I am the deliberate creator of my life.

She now moves over and stands backwards at the foot of her bed, Christ-like.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

(to no one)

I trust you, Chloe, you're always there, you will catch me.

She falls dramatically back onto her bed with a WHOOMP.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I trusted you! Why didn't you catch me?

She lays staring at the ceiling, her eyes growing watery.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

God this sucks...

Her phone rings.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Jeff?

She clambers across her room, grabs her phone. Sees who's calling.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Daddy...hi...(listens) Of course I can meet you.

**INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY**

William is unshaven, looks beat. He sits with Chloe.

WILLIAM

Your mother's very upset. I wanted to talk to you before she did. I don't want to remodel the house.

CHLOE

Why not?

WILLIAM

Because I don't want the house.

CHLOE

What do you mean?

William's phone vibrates.

WILLIAM

Damn. She's here. She tracked me with one of those new Apps...

Indeed, Elizabeth has arrived, sweeps in through the door, now sits with them.

ELIZABETH

He wants to sell the house. Can you believe it? After all these years? Sell, our *home*, our house.

WILLIAM

It's not a house, it's an \$800,000.00 albatross! I don't want to change another sprinkler head as long as I live. If I never set foot in Home Depot again I will consider the rest of my life a grand success.

ELIZABETH

We can hire people to --

WILLIAM

I don't want to hire anyone to do anything more to that house! I want to be free! (to Chloe) This is what I wanted to share with you, sweetheart, your mother and I are taking vacations.

CHLOE

That's great! Wait. "Vacations?"

ELIZABETH

Separate. I agreed to a vacation, just to give him time to clear his severely muddled brain. But it turns out -- ooooh hooo! no surprise here -- our ideas of vacations are entirely opposite. I booked a spectacular cruise, where everything's planned, right down the last detail --

WILLIAM

Gorging ourselves on a floating hotel suffering through hideous dinner theater with people you have to pretend you like? I'd rather jump off a bridge. Not me. I'm flying to Rome, going to rent a car, and just...drive. See where the wind takes me. Free.

ELIZABETH

So, there you have it. We wanted you to know. Your father's lost his mind, thinks he's a bird.

WILLIAM

And damn proud of it. By the way how's Jeff, honey?

Beat.

ELIZABETH

Oh God, please tell me you haven't somehow managed to lose the best thing that --

CHLOE

Jeff is super. He's just great, okay? Don't worry about us, we're fine, we're fantastic.

ELIZABETH

So why are you crying?

CHLOE

They're tears of joy, mom.

WILLIAM

Young love. Enjoy it while you can, believe me.

Chloe does her best to smile genuinely. She only half succeeds. William slowly reaches to hug Elizabeth, who pulls away.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)  
Elizabeth...come on now...

Elizabeth begrudgingly allows William to hug her.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

Chloe's on a bench reading a DR. PHIL'S RELATIONSHIP SUCCESS book. On the verge of tears.

Alice, the meditating woman from before, approaches.

ALICE  
Honey, you don't need to succumb to all the romantic bullshit that society throws at you. Romance, love, marriage, it's all a myth.

Chloe notices Alice's wedding ring.

CHLOE  
Does your husband know you feel this way?

ALICE  
Oh. The ring. 25 years ago, I got married. To myself. And let me tell you, we've had 25 glorious years together. Never had a husband. Don't want one, don't need one. I'm totally fulfilled and perfectly happy being single.

CHLOE  
You are?

Chloe wipes away her tears, suddenly feeling hopeful.

ALICE  
Yes. Very. My life is full and meaningful. I love and I'm loved.

CHLOE  
Where do you find the love?

ALICE  
It's all around you, if you just open yourself to it. Repeat after me. "Every breath is a gift."

CHLOE  
Every breath is a gift.

ALICE  
Now spread your arms, and take a  
deep breath, let the love enter  
you.

Chloe does it. It seems to work. She's feeling better.

CHLOE  
Thank you. Thank you so much.

ALICE  
Would you like to come to my house  
for a cup of tea?

CHLOE  
I'd like that very much.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

The door opens.

ALICE  
The first rule of happiness is that  
you don't have to conform to what  
our media-driven society tells you  
will make you happy.

Chloe is smiling and nodding as she enters. She says Alice's  
mantra.

CHLOE  
Every breath is a gift.

She inhales deeply. And then is horror struck. The stench is  
overpowering. She hears cats.

Sees five. Ten. Seventeen.

ALICE  
This is Buttons, and Orlando, and  
Noodles. Over there that guy with  
the crooked tail is Jay Jay...

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Chloe flees Alice's feline Nirvana.

**INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

It's New Year's Eve and Chloe is getting dressed, trying on one kooky outfit after another.

CHLOE  
(singing)  
"Oh tonight's the night, the night  
for love..."

She's not happy with her choices. She goes to her closet and pulls out the little black dress.

Moments later she has it on and she's done up to the max. She looks great. Not wanting to look like a super model, she puts on a Troll doll necklace. She dials Jeff.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Hey, you. What time are we meeting  
at the party?

JEFF  
I was thinking nine-thirty.

CHLOE  
Kinda early, isn't it?

JEFF  
Yeah. Well, I was thinking we could  
talk.

CHLOE  
Oh, he wants to talk. Alright. Make  
it ten. See you then.

LATER -

Clock says 9:45. Chloe's calling a cab.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Hi, yeah, can I get a cab at 932  
10th Street please?

She's got an incoming call.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Hang on. Hello? Hey sis, wha's up,  
I'm kind of -- (listens) What  
hospital? (listens) I'll be right  
there!

A CAB PULLS UP

To a hospital and Chloe leaps out and runs inside.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT**

Elizabeth is there with William. They both look weary, but somehow calmer, too. Marsha's with them. Sans baby Conner.

CHLOE

Oh my god, Daddy are you alright?

WILLIAM

I'm fine. It was just precautionary.

Chloe looks to her Marsha.

CHLOE

But you said chest pains.

MARSHA

His EKG is normal. The doctors think it might have been a panic attack.

CHLOE

Oh god. I thought...I thought...oh god I don't want to lose you.

She hugs him tightly.

WILLIAM

You're not losing me. I'm going to stick around so long you'll be sick of me. When they finally stick me in the ground you'll be like "Geez, it's about time."

CHLOE

Don't say that.

She hugs him again.

WILLIAM

I'm okay, I swear.

CHLOE

Is he telling the truth?

MARSHA

Yes. Everything checked out fine. He can go home tomorrow, we think.

WILLIAM

And then your mom and I are going on a long cruise.

Elizabeth smiles a little, then touches William on the shoulder.

ELIZABETH

I'm not totally opposed to flying to Rome and renting a car. But I want reservations for at least the first few nights.

WILLIAM

You see what I have to do to get my way?

Elizabeth reaches over and touches Chloe.

ELIZABETH

I've been hard on you. Too hard. But only because I love you so much, always wanted so much for you.

Tiny invisible weights lift up off Chloe's shoulders and float away.

CHLOE

I guess I've always known that. But it's nice to hear you say it. Dad...please take care of yourself...

WILLIAM

Hey, I'm getting older, but I've got you three, and that's as good as it gets. I do wish when I was younger I'd done some of the things I wanted to do but was too damn afraid.

Chloe absorbs.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

You look really pretty. You're on your way out to a party. You better go.

CHLOE

I'm not going to leave you. I'm going to stay and make sure you're okay.

MARSHA

Go. Mom and I got it covered.



CHLOE  
What about Conner?

MARSHA  
Randy's on duty. He's sent me sixteen texts. I turned me phone off.

She smiles.

WILLIAM  
Chloe I know you didn't put that dress on for me. Jeff's waiting for you, right? So go.

CHLOE  
I've been inflexible and stubborn and unbelievably stupid to him. How did you guys manage, all these years?

WILLIAM  
Sweetheart remember like I always told you, sometimes you have to tell yourself that everything's okay, and then after awhile, you wake up one day, and it is.

CHLOE  
Wow. That's either profoundly depressing or oddly optimistic.

ELIZABETH  
It's called life.

MARSHA  
Living together's not always easy.

CHLOE  
Yeah, about that. I've got some explaining to do. But not now. I have to kiss Jeff at midnight...with everything I've got. I'll see you tomorrow. I love you.

WILLIAM  
We love you, too, baby.

**INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Jeff checks his watch. 11:30

Jeff checks his watch again. 11:45

He answers his phone. INTERCUT.

JEFF  
Where are you?

CHLOE  
Long scary story, but a happy  
ending. I'm on my way.

JEFF  
Wait.

Too late. She hung up.

**EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS**

Chloe's on the street, hurrying. She checks the time on her phone. 11:57.

**INT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS**

Chloe arrives at Bravo and looks at her phone clock. 11:59. She moves through the restaurant. People are counting down.

PEOPLE  
30...29...28...

She finds the stairs to the upstairs party room.

PEOPLE (CONT'D)  
...17...16...15...

At the top of the stairs Chloe's in the crowded party room, searching frantically for Jeff. He's at a window, looking out, looking for her. She smiles.

PEOPLE (CONT'D)  
...9...8...7...6...

She's crossing the room towards him.

PEOPLE (CONT'D)  
...5...4...3...

She's ten feet away, she's going to make it. But now she sees Jeff is with someone. Kelly.

PEOPLE (CONT'D)  
...2...1...HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Confetti flies. Kelly mashes her lips against Jeff's.

Chloe does the only thing she's capable at this moment. She cries. Jeff sees her.

JEFF

Chloe!

She turns. He follows. She's gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

**EXT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT**

We're with someone walking towards the coffee shop. We hear singing. When we get close enough we can see that it's Chloe.

CHLOE

(SINGING)

"There's no need to worry.  
You have my heart.  
No need for sorrow  
The pain will slip away.  
There's no need to worry.  
You have my heart."

Jeff watches from outside, listening, smiling. When the song's over, people applaud.

William and Elizabeth are there, looking almost in love.

Chloe is beaming.

Jeff reaches for the door to enter.

But then he sees the mime guy, Dan, out of costume -- and looking super handsome, move to Chloe and give her a hug. Jeff's shoulders sag and he leaves.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

**INT. JEFF'S APARTMENT - DAY**

A sad song plays. He's on the phone with his mom.

MISSY

Your father has decided he wants a  
closed marriage.

JEFF

How about you? What do you want?

MISSY

Me? I want a few more tennis lessons. (BEAT) But I'm going to abstain. Your father's been very good to me over the years. We'll survive this. So, Jeff, have you talked to --

JEFF

No. I gotta run.

INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Chloe sits Alone. A sad song plays. She Skypes with her parents.

CHLOE

How's it going?

ELIZABETH

We've been driving in Italy. From town to town, staying in these darling little places, and your father's been rather...frisky.

CHLOE

I don't really need to know that. Where are you in Italy?

ELIZABETH

(to William)

Where are we? (BEAT, THEN TO CHLOE) We don't know! And it's wonderful!

CHLOE

That's great.

ELIZABETH

Have you heard from Jeff?

CHLOE

Jeff who?

ELIZABETH

Oh, honey...

CHLOE

See ya. Love you guys.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jeff sees a girl from behind. Looks like Chloe. But it's not.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Chloe sees a guy from behind. Looks like Jeff. But it's not.

**INT. JEFF/CHLOE'S APARTMENTS - INTERCUT**

He's in bed. He has his phone on the pillow next to him. A picture of Chloe on it.

In Chloe's place, same thing. She's got his picture on her phone on the pillow next to her.

Jeff picks up the phone like he's going to dial. But he just changes the picture to a beauty queen.

Chloe does the same. Puts a picture of a puppy on the phone. Stares at it. Changes it to a handsome guy.

CUT TO:

Our CALENDAR pages flip until we're on Valentine's Day, with Cupid, hearts, roses.

**EXT. PARK - VALENTINE'S DAY**

Chloe's with the mime guy, Dan, on a blanket. He's in mime costume, makeup. He mimes a big production of giving her an invisible card.

CHLOE

For me? Awwww...

She "opens" the card. Dan reaches inside his striped mime shirt and "pumps" his heart. Chloe "reads" the card.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

This is so sweet. Thanks.

Dan is miming that he loves her in every conceivable mime fashion. Chloe smiles, but it's weak. She's grown tired of the mime thing.

Nine out of ten people do.

ELSEWHERE IN THE PARK

Jeff is with Kelly. They're standing by the railing overlooking the sea. Kelly's putting a big expensive diving watch on his wrist.

KELLY

You like it? If you don't like it  
you can take it back, you don't  
have to act like you like it if you  
don't...

JEFF

It's great.

KELLY

You're great. I'm so happy.

She hugs him.

BACK TO CHLOE AND DAN

As Dan whips out a little box out of the back of his pants.  
The shape of a bracelet.

Chloe takes the box, starts to open it but her eye is caught  
by something O.S.

CHLOE

Oh my god look...

Abruptly, she gets up and bolts O.S. Dan's shocked and mimes:

DAN

"Chloe?"

Chloe approaches a squirrel.

CHLOE

Hey little buddy...

Now her eyes are drawn O.S. She looks over at Jeff. He's seen  
her, too. They lock eyes. Leaving Kelly behind he's already  
walking towards her. She walks towards him.

KELLY'S VOICE

What the hell, Jeff. I mean what  
the HELL?

CHLOE

I sang. At open mike night.

JEFF

I know. I was there. I was going to  
congratulate you, but then I saw  
you with him. You looked happy.

CHLOE

Jeff. He's a *mime*.

Beat.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

The song...while I was singing it,  
every single word, I was thinking  
of you. It's always been you.  
You're the only one I've ever  
wanted to be with.

JEFF

Oh baby...

CHLOE

I don't care if it's not real. Lie  
to me if you have to.

JEFF

I don't. It's real.

They embrace.

In the B.G. we see that Dan the mime and Kelly are standing  
next to each other, talking, gesticulating (Dan miming) that  
this situation sucks.

Chloe and Jeff continue to reconcile.

CHLOE

Just because the whole world's  
messed up doesn't mean we have to  
be, does it?

JEFF

No. I'm tired of pretending that I  
don't love you, that I don't think  
about you every second of every  
day.

CHLOE

I don't ever want to be away from  
you. I'm only good with you.  
You were right. I'm spoiled and  
immature. I need to grow up.

JEFF

No, I was wrong. And I'd rather be  
wrong and with you than right and  
alone.

CHLOE

But you're with Kelly.

JEFF

But I think of you. And thinking of you when I'm with her is worse than being alone.

CHLOE

I can grow up. I promise I can.

JEFF

Please don't. Growing up is stupid. I want to go back to being a kid, with you.

CHLOE

You mean it?

JEFF

You bet your diapers I do. I've never meant anything more in my whole life. We can even go to clown school if you want.

CHLOE

Really?! I never stopped loving you. Even when I thought I had. Deep down, you were still there. I was wrong about love. It lasts, it's the only thing that does.

JEFF

I love you baby.

CHLOE

Can we have makeup sex now?

JEFF

How about breakup sex, and then makeup sex.

CHLOE

Only if we can breakup to makeup again. For the sex. Deal?

JEFF

Deal.

They seal it with fingertips.

In the B.G. we see Kelly and Dan watching glumly. Dan mimes a broken heart. Kelly backhands him.

And now Chloe and Jeff kiss long and slow. We now recognizes the



**SILHOUETTE**

From the opening, which is Chloe and Jeff. Sweet.

CAMERA PULLS UP AND AWAY.

FADE TO BLACK