



STEPHANIE DELLACOSTA

Written by

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FADE IN:

Abrupt medium close-up of IAN PANDOURIAN doing a monologue, wearing glasses, grey blazer covering a black jumper, and basketball shoes. He gesticulates as he talks to the camera. The background is stark.

IAN

You ever think about those moments where it seemed that life just stopped and *laughed* at you? Just stood there and pointed its nasty little finger...RIGHT at you, "SIMPLY" to underscore that your misfortune had been DIRECTLY planned for the amusement of somebody else?

Camera slowly zooms in on his face.

That your own personal tragedy had been ORCHESTRATED to create the perfect comedy. The Germans even have a name for it, "schadenfreude"... though German was never my personal forte. It wasn't Stephanie's either. She was Italian, if I recall...as well as the most beautiful woman I have ever known.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Living room of Dr. Ian Pandourian and KATE MCKELLAN, a dingy apartment in London, cheap flat-screen TV, old sofas and mess everywhere. They are seated next to each other on the sofa in front of the TV. We see their gormless faces.

TELEVISION

Welcome to the 89th Academy Awards...

KATE

Here we go...

Ian goes into kitchen.

IAN

Hey I'm ordering pizza.. whadya want?

KATE (BARELY LISTENING)

Think they pick them on purpose?

IAN

What?

KATE

The hosts...they're charlatans!

IAN

WHAT do you WANT? Four Seasons? The one with artichokes nobody likes:

KATE

Fuck you.

IAN

OK...I'll order

Ian goes back into kitchen.

TELEVISION (V.O.)

And the nominees are...

Tracy Edmonds for "Majestic"

Juliet Hassan for "Bride of Baghdad"

Ursula Moscovitz for "My Lover, the Agent"

Stephanie Dellacosta for "A Night at the Aquarium"

AND Claudia Rosa de Fernandez for "Blood and Death"

Ian stands in the doorway of kitchen on phone.

Ian comes back and plonks himself on the sofa next to Kate. He reaches for the popcorn and stuffs his face.

IAN

What we on now, Best Picture?

KATE

Nuh-no, we're on Best Actress

IAN

Oh right...it'll be that Russian one?"My Lover, the Agent?" See that?

KATE

NYET.

IAN

(taking a gulp) Who are the others?

KATE

Let's see Tracy Edmonds...

IAN
Oh my God she must be like 97...

KATE
Juliette Hassan...

IAN
Political vote after Iraq

KATE
Claudia Rosa de Fernandez

IAN
Never heard of her

KATE
And Stephanie Dellacosta.

IAN
(spits out beer) *WHAT?*

KATE
Stephanie Dellacosta

IAN
Wait, "WHAT" did you say?

KATE
STEPH. ANNIE. DELLA. COSTA

She takes a gulp.

IAN
I KNOW HER

Kate spits out her beer.

IAN (cont'd)
Jeez what is this, Sea World?

KATE
YOU KNOW HER?

IAN
I vaguely remember she pursued a career in acting but I had no idea she had been nominated for...

KATE
YOU DON'T KNOWWWWWWWW HER

IAN
I do! I went on a date with her!

KATE

No ya diiiiiiin't

The doorbell rings.

Wait that's the pizza

She gets up and opens the door. She leaves the room for a second, comes back with pizzas and places them on the table.

OK here we go. Pepperoni for you.
Four Seasons for me. Now where were we? Oh,yeah. Diyiiiiiint.

IAN

Listen to the story. So it's 2008...

KATE

2008? Oh yeah right, and then what happened? Financial crisis, you lost your job as a billionaire investment banker and now you're a single thirty-something psychotherapist eating pizza in South-East London with your roommate? Also known as, you returned to reality?

IAN

No! I swear! We were friends...and we could have been more...a lot more...

KATE

Naaaaaaaaaaaa - I don't buy this for one solitary fucking second.

IAN

It's true! I swear! In fact, if it wasn't for the fact the damn cinema changed the movie we were supposed to see...I'd probably be sitting here with her right now.

KATE

It never happened.

IAN

It did! (sighs) It did...

Kate is munching pizza.

KATE

I cannot (munch) believe (munch) you know her! She's up there with the most beautiful women of our era.

IAN

I know.

KATE

So, I DON'T believe you

IAN

I have evi-DEHNCE.

KATE

Well before you produce said "evi-DEHNCE" can we see if she wins and makes your life just a "little" more painful and this story just a "little" more implausible?

Camera cuts to television.

TELEVISION

And the Academy Award goes to...
(drum roll)

IAN

Please not Stephanie

KATE

(cheering) STEPHANIE! STEPHANIE!

TELEVISION

Claudia Rosa de Fernandez for "Blood and Death"

Award music and scenes of crying and happiness on TV

KATE

Oh well..

TELEVISION

Please would you welcome to the stage the Academy Award winner for Best Actress, Claudia Rosa de Fernandez...

CLAUDIA ROSA DE FERNANDEZ

(thick SPANISH accent) I am so so khappy -- really -- I would like to sank, how you say, all of za fans -- all of zem -- and in no particular order -- I would also like to thank the production team of the film.

She reads quickly.

BERNARDO JUAN DE LA COMPOSTELA TORRES
(MORE)

CLAUDIA ROSA DE FERNANDEZ (cont'd)
EULOGIO ROJAS FRAGOSO SANCHEZ
MIGUEL SAN JUAN DE LA...

IAN
(Turns volume off) Enough

KATE
You don't like Spanish movies?

IAN
Just glad Stephanie didn't win...

Camera pans to Stephanie, disappointed, hand covering mouth.

Wow...she looks so...

KATE
Unhappy? Disappointed? Like she's
having THE WORST night of her life?

IAN
Beautiful...

KATE
Oh come on.

IAN
What, she's not your type?

KATE
Meh she's fine.

IAN
She looks...like she always did.

KATE
Give it a rest, look I think we can
stream Blood and Death on Netflix

IAN
I'll just tell you the goddamn story.

FADE IN:

INT. IAN'S FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Young Ian Pandourian, around 18 in 2008. He has a beard and
glasses and combs his hair in front of the mirror.

IAN (V.O) (NARRATING)
 The story begins in 2008...I'm
 eighteen years' old, we'd moved to
 London from New York City as my
 father had been transferred for work.
 I was studying at the American
 school, and had met a beautiful girl
 by the name of Stephanie
 Dellacosta... Me, my parents and my
 older sister Gaia all lived in this
 house not far away from the school.

KATE (V.O.)
 Wait...I didn't know you had a sister

IAN (V.O.)
 Yes you did you told me she was hot

KATE (V.O.)
 Oh right *that* sister. She is hot.

IAN (V.O.)
 Anyway, I had met Stephanie in an
 afterschool class we were both taking
 on foreign literature. She liked
 French literature, Sartre...
 existentialist philosophy you know...
 being and nothingness and existence
 and essence and all that...and we
 started to form this kind of deep
 connection

Camera shows young IAN shaving.
 I was a typical Armenian-American
 eighteen year old, neither
 particularly good looking nor
 confident with women. But by some
 stroke of magic I had managed to
 entice Stephanie to come and watch a
 movie with me at the Institut
 Francais, in Kensington. I had chosen
 a movie called, Existentialism: A
 Personal Portrait...

The narration fades out.

MRS. PANDOURIAN (VOICE OUTSIDE)
 IAN...

IAN
 What?

MRS PANDOURIAN
 (knocks) IAN. Open door. IAAAAAAAAN.

IAN
What?! MA!?

MRS. PANDOURIAN, a large Armenian woman with her hair tied up, walks through the door and points her finger at him.

MRS PANDOURIAN
(Armenian, subtitled) WHERE you go?

IAN
(Armenian) Ma, I have date

MRS PANDOURIAN
DATE? YOU? (suspiciously) With who?

IAN
Stephanie Dellacosta

MRS PANDOURIAN
Wha?

He takes out his phone and shows a picture of a young woman

IAN
Here... look...

Mrs Pandourian inspects image closely and looks suspicious.

MRS PANDOURIAN
Turk?

IAN
No not Turk, Italian.

Mrs Pandourian looks again and nods her head in approval.

MRS PANDOURIAN
OK.

She kisses her son on the head and leaves the room. There is another knock at the door.

IAN
(sighs) MA! Enough! I'm gonna be late!

Door opens and we see a beautiful dark-haired girl of about 20, with long dark eyelashes, IAN's sister, GAIA

GAIA
So...somebody has a date?

KATE (V.O)
Oh my God she is hot.

GAIA
Lemme see lemme see

She wrestles him for his phone, takes it and curls up on his bed with her legs against her chin.

OH!

IAN
Would ya knock it off?

GAIA
Oh my...you go bro.Have you told Ma?

IAN
Not exactly...

GAIA
Bro she is SO. OUTTA your league

IAN
What? Why?

GAIA
Because she's a BABE. And you're a...

IAN
I'm a what?

GAIA
A NERRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRD

IAN
Hey get outta my room, what happened to Justin huh? He call ya back?

GAIA
How dare you talk about my Justin!

IAN
(chases her out of the room)
What happened to Justin hey? Nver call ya back?

GAIA
(shouting) MAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

He slams the door. He moves over to his phone and picks it up. It says one new text message. He opens it. It is from Stephanie. He reads, but not aloud - we see the words onscreen.

Hey. I'll be at the cinema in 15.
I'll meet you outside OK? S :)

We hear his thoughts as he types.

(typing) Hey Ba-(he erases) (erases)
 Hey, see you there. X. (erases) (he
 speaks) No X... smiley face. But so
 asexual. OK X. Not capital letters
 too aggressive. Two little x's. OK
 (he puts Y) NOOOOO! What the fuck did
 I just write.(looks at phone). Hey.
 I'll see you there. Y. Oh for the...
 that is the lamest message I have
 ever --

He sees the clock.

Oh my God I gotta run.

He leaps out the door and grabs his jacket hanging from the
 coat post, passing his mother and Gaia as he runs out the
 door.

GAIA

(sarcastically) GOOD LUCK! You're
 gonna need it!

Mrs. Pandourian puts hands together in prayer.

MRS PANDOURIAN

(in Armenian) To defeat the Turkish
 army he will need the support of the
 totality of our social network. May
 God give you strength in battle.

EXT. STREET FRENCH INSTITUTE OF LONDON - NIGHT

Ian is running to the cinema, Early evening. An attractive
 young brunette, Stephanie, standing outside holding a flyer.

IAN

(panting) Hey...Stephanie...I'm sorry

STEPHANIE

(giggling) Oh! You must be "Y".

IAN

Sorry I'm late. I got this for you.

He withdraws a small A5 book in an envelope from his pocket
 and hands it to her. She smiles and puts it in her pocket.

STEPHANIE

Thanks..I'll look later, we should go
 in now, it's about to start.

They stand in line. There is a gay couple in front of them.

MALE STRANGER
I've heard it's dangerously erotic

MALE STRANGER 2
Filthy even

MALE STRANGER
Risqué even for the French Institute!

STEPHANIE
(breaks out of line) Hey, I'm gonna
get some popcorn, you want anything?

IAN
Hmm? No thanks...I'll keep line.

Ian is transfixed on the conversation ahead of them.

STEPHANIE
OK

She leaves the line and queues up.

Ian taps one of the men on the shoulder

IAN
Hey...sorry to interrupt but is this
Existentialism: A Personal Portrait?

MALE STRANGER
Indeed young man.

IAN
(Sheepishly laughing) I couldn't help
but overhear you describe it as,
"dangerously erotic"...That wouldn't
be...that wouldn't be the MAIN take-
away from this movie, would it now?

MALE STRANGER 2
Well, there is a lot of Foucault...

MALE STRANGER
And you know what Jean-Pierre de la
Tour's like, his films are
DELICIOUSLY erotic.

They laugh together.

IAN
(looking anxious) No...I am not
familiar with Jean Pierre de la...

MALE STRANGER

Wait a minute..aren't you...didn't we
see you last week at G-A-Y?

Beat.

IAN

Come again?

MALE STRANGER 2

That's right. You couldn't keep your
hands off Eduardo!

Beat.

IAN

(exasperated) Who is...I don't
know...you must have me confused with
someone...

MALE STRANGER 2

Oh yeah I remember, aren't you the
lascivious Bulgarian of the night?

IAN

What are you talking about?!?

MALE STRANGER

That's right! It's Oleg!

IAN

Oleg?!?

Stephanie returns with popcorn and drinks.

MALE STRANGER

Hello darling, this your boyfriend?

Ian scratches his neck over his head.

IAN

Me? (points to himself) no...we're
just...

STEPHANIE

(directly) Potentially.

KATE (V.O.)

"POTENTIALLY?" Fuck off! POTENTIALLY?

IAN (V.O.)

I swear to God she said POTENTIALLY.

KATE (V.O.)
Oh my God Ian this is huge!

IAN (V.O.)
I know let me get on with the story.

MALE STRANGER 2
So! The lascivious Bulgarian goes
both ways...who knew?!

Stephanie looks skeptically at Ian.

IAN
(Embarrassed) No..you must have me
confused with someone else...I'm
ARMENIAN, not Bulgarian...not that
there's anything wrong with...if you
were born that way...some of my...my
doctor is Bulga...we've come on a
long way in affording rights to
Bulgarians...

Stephanie looks preoccupied and nudges Ian.

STEPHANIE
Ian! I think the movie's starting
let's just go. (she nods to the men)
Have a pleasant evening.

INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

Camera pans across the audience as loud sexual male groans emanate from the screen. The two gay men are sharing popcorn, smiling and laughing. Stephanie looks horrified as she eats each piece of popcorn piece by piece. Ian has his head in his hands and slides further down his chair.

STEPHANIE
(Nudges him) Did you know this was...

Ian whispers and looks blankly at the screen, his hand grasping the side of his face as he looks mournfully through his fingers.

IAN
Swear to God

STEPHANIE
(looks annoyed) OK

IAN
(whispers) You wanna go?

STEPHANIE
It's nearly finished, I hope...

The groans continue and Ian closes his eyes.

IAN (V.O.)
It was the longest ninety minutes I
have ever endured. Longer even than
when Dad took me to see the Armenia
vs. Moldova soccer match in 1998.

The film comes to an end and we see the two gay men leave,
followed by a gaunt looking Stephanie and exasperated Ian.

MALE STRANGER
Sooooooooo, what did you guys think?

IAN
(politely) Can't wait for the sequel
Sure we'll see you guys there...OK
BAH-bye now enjoy your evening.(turns
to Stephanie) I'm so sorry...I didn't

STEPHANIE
No...don't worry about it...it's not
your fault...seriously...it's fine

IAN
You wanna...you wanna get a drink?

STEPHANIE
(looks at watch) I should get going.
It's getting late.

IAN
OK

STEPHANIE
Thanks though, this was..interesting.

Ian leans in to kiss her. She responds with a handshake.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)
G'night, Ian. I'll see you...around.

IAN
...can I walk you home?

STEPHANIE
No it's fine, there's a direct bus...
wait, here i- Gotta run! Thanks

IAN
Oh OK...

Stephanie is running and shouts over her shoulder.

STEPHANIE
And thanks for the book!

It begins to rain. Ian stands there and gets soaked.

IAN
You're...welcome.

CAMERA zooms out to show him looking defeated in the rain. Stephanie gets on bus and sits. She looks disappointed and takes book out of bag. It is *The Second Sex*. She looks at it with indifference and puts it in her pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

KATE
Oh my God Ian that is so...

IAN
Sad? Tragic? The worst thing that has happened to anyone EVER?

KATE
Hilarious

IAN
Wait...hilarious? Were you even *LISTENING* to the story?!?

KATE
Oh come on Ian!

IAN
It's like the saddest thing that has ever happened to any creature in the history of the universe. Makes Bambi look like he won the fucking lottery.

KATE
Come ON Ian! You were a kid! She was a kid! The movie sounded...well interesting, what was it called --

IAN
FOCUS ON MY PLIGHT

KATE
Right...but I'm speechless

IAN

Why?

KATE

Cause she said potentially!

IAN

I know!

KATE

Wait, the book! What was the book?

IAN

The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir

KATE

OH my God, IAN, that is so CUTE! So intellectual...so sensitive so... wait, did she read it?

IAN

I dunno! I never spoke to her again!

KATE

(laughing) Oh Ian...this is too much

IAN

Stop laughing and show me SYMPATHY.

KATE

You need to track her down.

IAN

That's ridiculous...

KATE

Why?

IAN

Because it's crazy! She's like the hottest actress in the world!

KATE

So?! She's still a PERSON. A person you ALREADY KNOW.

IAN

Already *KNEW*. I don't know her now, it's been like 15 years since I last saw her. And anyway, what could a guy like me possibly have to offer a star like her?

KATE

Why does it matter?

IAN

Because she's a cross between Sophia Loren and Princess Diana, whereas I'm a cross between Sigmund Freud and Kermit the Frog.

KATE

She knew you THEN and she liked you THEN. Besides...it's not exactly like you gotta lot going on here. Here, let me quote your dating profile:

IAN

Wait don't you...how do you even --

KATE

(reading in a monotone voice) Ian, Psychotherapist, 37. Under weirdest gift you've ever given or received, you put: CHLAMYDIA

Ian shrugs.

KATE

Ian! Wake up! It's not working for you! Modern dating -- IS NOT WORKING FOR You. You gotta do something drastic. I haven't seen you with someone since...wait...what was her name...

IAN

This might be a good point to remind you that my last three girlfriends were called ANXIETY. DEPRESSION and IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME.

KATE

What about all those dates you've been going on?

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

We see Ian's face looking disappointed and defeated and hear various women speaking.

WOMAN 1 (V.O)
I dunno...I just think you're kinda boring...maybe you're too intellectual for me...

IAN
Did you like the book I gave you>

WOMAN 1 (V.O.)
Oh! I was supposed to *read* that?

IAN
So you don't find me attractive?

WOMAN 2 (V.O)
You're just not...sexy...I dunno...
I'd rather just be friends...friends
who don't call each other often.

IAN
What is it you don't like about me?

WOMAN 3 (V.O)
You don't have any money! And your
voice is...really annoying.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

IAN
Eh...

KATE
What about the one last Friday?

IAN
With *KAREN*? That was like an episode
of *Sex and the City* directed by Leni
Riefenstahl...

KATE
Oh come on Ian LOOK at yourself!
You're clever, sensitive, hard-
working, FUNNY...well some of the
time...You're like the smartest, most
caring guy I know! She must never
meet anyone like you in her
circles...

IAN
I dunnno...

KATE

Seriously! She's probably dying to meet someone like you again...someone whom she knew when she was pure and unspoiled by the superficial world of Hollywood bullshit. You gotta get back into her life.

IAN

You know what? Maybe you're right. Maybe this is the call to action I've needed for the last few years. I'm gonna get back into her life. But how would...what kind of dates do you think she goes on nowadays?

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The camera is focused on Stephanie today, mid-thirties, beautiful on a dinner date at a restaurant. We hear a montage of male voices but do not see him.

We see Stephanie's face, she looks pained.

MAN 1 (V.O)

So, like I was saying...I'm like, rich. Really rich. In fact, I probably could produce like twenty of your movies a year. Thirty. Easily.

FADE TO:

We see Stephanie's face, she looks initially optimistic and interested, but it soon fades to looking unimpressed and withered.

MAN 2 (V.O)

I'm the guy who makes it rain in this industry...y'know? All I'm asking... is a little something from you...

FADE TO:

We see Stephanie slowly sliding down her chair looking completely exasperated as she listens.

MAN 3 (V.O)

Like...Angelina was OK, but so needy! And as for Cameron...

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stephanie collapses on bed, sadly, alone, exasperated and falls asleep.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLLYWOOD DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Stephanie Dellacosta, looks tired. looks at herself in the mirror and pouts. Her assistant, LISA, is wearing a mic, frantically making sure Stephanie's hair looks good.

LISA

Miss Dellacosta - ten minutes.

STEPHANIE

(posh British accent) My God, do I look OK? Please tell me I look OK...

LISA

Like the cover of Vogue magazine

STEPHANIE

They called again?

LISA

They will do after this...trust me.

STEPHANIE

(sighs) I just need ten minutes

LISA

That's fine...what's up??

STEPHANIE

(sighs) Nothing.

LISA

Come on...what's wrong Stephanie?

STEPHANIE

Oh it's just...men

LISA

(confused) Men in general? Men in Black? Men in Black 2? Cause Men in Black 2 was *JAHST* terrible.

STEPHANIE

Men in my life! Why can't I just find someone clever, caring and FUNNY!

(MORE)

STEPHANIE (cont'd)
Why does everyone just want to come
along and "sweep me off my feet" like
I'm just a prize to be won? They
don't care what's inside here

She points to her head.

LISA
Because you ARE a prize to be won,
Stephanie. You're one of Hollywood's
most sought after actresses!

STEPHANIE
OK fine maybe I am now. But I was
somebody before all that. Am I am
still that somebody. These Hollywood
men, they're just so... (ugh)

LISA
(tensely) *SO?*

STEPHANIE
Dull!

LISA
Maybe...but they're so HANDSOME

STEPHANIE
Handsome doesn't care what novel
you're reading. Handsome doesn't calm
you down when you're worried...

LISA
Really? Well if I were having a
meltdown and offered a choice between
Xanax and Brad Pitt I hella know
which one I'd choose

Stephanie reaches for a cigarette.

STEPHANIE
Handsome is overrated. Or is it? I
dunno...maybe it's just this current
one...Mark...

LISA
Wait as in *Mark* the guy you've been
seeing on and off? As in MASCULINE
MR. PERFECT MUSCLES MARK?? *THAT* Mark?

STEPHANIE
The very same.

LISA

But he's goooooooooooooooooooooorgeous!

STEPHANIE

(pauses) Yes I know, he IS gorgeous. But we don't really...connect. It's not authentic. He doesn't really get who I am....he's always just playing that overly chivalrous but terribly boring leading man...like our whole relationship is just another role... just another movie where he can be the handsome tough guy and I can be Stephanie Dellacosta, one of the most beautiful...

LISA

THE most beautiful...

STEPHANIE

He just wants to be another guy who wants to be seen with Stephanie Dellacosta. And that seems absolutely fine. Which worries me.

LISA

But the sex is good right?

Stephanie takes a drag of her cigarette.

STEPHANIE

Meh.

LISA

"MEH?" Muscle Man Mark is MEH???

STEPHANIE

What is good sex without authentic connection? Why do you think Marilyn Monroe never found lasting love? Why do you think Carrie Fisher never found lasting love ? Probably 'cause she ran out of time sifting through the thousands of men who were in love with Princess Leia...and who didn't give a damn about her.

LISA

Oh come on Stephanie! Listen to how *precious* you sound! You're the envy of women the whole world over!

(MORE)

LISA (cont'd)
Half of LA would trade organs to be
you, to look like you do, to be
ADORED like you. Look on the bright
side! You're STEPH-ANIE DELLA-COSTA!

STEPHANIE
Sure, they might kill to have
Stephanie Dellacosta's life. But they
wouldn't kill to have my life. Like
Marilyn once said, "a career is
wonderful, but you can't curl up with
it on a cold night".

LISA
Wait..I don't follow...

STEPHANIE
Oh you wouldn't understand

LISA
Why?

STEPHANIE
Because you're just normal.

Lisa looks hurt. An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR opens the door.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Hi - Miss Dellacosta in five minutes.

He closes the door.

STEPHANIE
(Looks sadly) But underneath it
all...I'm exactly the same as them.
This is just a job. A mask I wear.

LISA
I think you're overthinking.

Stephanie gets up from her chair.

STEPHANIE
Love should make you FEEL something.
Something inside, something real,
something passionate. Sure, there's
physical attraction, but I haven't
felt that raw, strong, emotional
attraction in ages...

LISA
Are you still seeing your therapist?

STEPHANIE

Darling, the day you never see me again...is the day I stop seeing my therapist.

LISA

What does he say?

STEPHANIE

I don't wanna talk about it

LISA

C'mon you can tell me anything...

STEPHANIE

Well...I'm pretty sure he's gay...and I'm just not sure if he really GETS me. I'd love to have a therapist who doesn't know me..who just sees a neurotic woman with regular concerns and doesn't try to infer everything from my movies into their assessment of who I am or what I'm like.

LISA

Wait...Carlos is gay?

STEPHANIE

Were you even LISTENING to me?

LISA

Want me to find you a new therapist?

STEPHANIE

No...I just need a break. Maybe I'll go away for a while. Thanks.

Assistant Director enters.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Miss Dellacosta? One minute.

EXT. MARYLEBONE HIGH STREET - DAY

We see Ian walking down the street in overcoat. Weather is cloudy. He looks sadly at a picture of Stephanie Dellacosta on cover of Vogue in a kiosk.

He sees her picture on a movie poster outside the cinema. He goes to the kiosk but we do not hear him. He talks to the seller and buys a magazine, shuffling in his jacket pocket for some spare change. He receives a copy of Vogue and sits down on a bench.

We see him reading it and looking serious, flicking from page to page. He walks sadly with the magazine tucked underneath his arm as he approaches his apartment.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - EVENING

We see Stephanie walking down the street with her head down looking depressed. She walks past a billboard with her picture on a movie poster. She walks past a kiosk selling Vogue Magazine with her picture on it and immediately looks down at the floor. She walks sadly to her door.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN & KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kate smoking a joint and sitting on the sofa. The doorbell rings. She hastily waves away the marijuana smoke and gets up. She is in her underwear, wearing a Japanese nightgown.

KATE
(to the intercom) Who is it?

IAN
It's me. Forgot my keys

KATE
Oh.

She buzzes him in and hastily covers herself.

IAN
Wow, I just miss Bob Marley & the Wailers?

KATE
Sorry, thought you'd be out a while.

IAN
It's fine.

He plonks himself down on the sofa and sighs.

IAN (cont'd)
Jeez it's like Cheech and Chong had threesome with Bill Clinton in here...

KATE

Ian...come on...what's up? You haven't been the same since we watched that stupid ceremony...

IAN

I know it's just...what the FUCK is my life? I feel like such a loser. I'm 37 years old, single...and my recent dating record...I can't even pair with my Bluetooth speaker... (sighs) Just thought I'd have more to show for my life by now ...my sister was right all along...

KATE

What do you mean?

IAN

That I'm just a...NERD.

KATE

Oh come on Ian...you're a great guy...And you're a great therapist... don't put yourself down! You gotta look forwards. I'm still adamant you should try and find Stephanie!

IAN

Aren't there laws about stalkers...

KATE

Yes. Restraining orders.

IAN

Right I am not bringing one of those into this situation.

KATE

Honestly, you just need to get the ball rolling on your life again!

IAN

I guess so. I just feel like...

CUT TO:

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Stephanie sitting on a reclining chair with her therapist, Carlos, a dapper, intellectual looking man, late 40s, receding hairline and glasses.

STEPHANIE
...such a LOSER

CARLOS
Come on. You are not a loser.

STEPHANIE
Well I'm not a *WINNER*. Because if I
were a *WINNER* I would be the Best
Actress! I wouldn't be here with you.

CARLOS
When did you last go home?

STEPHANIE
Home, like to where I live?

CARLOS
No home, home. Where you grew up.

STEPHANIE
You mean London?

CARLOS
Yes, London. When did you last go?

STEPHANIE
Oh not in like a year.

CARLOS
Maybe you should think about making a
trip. Could be good. Change of scene.
See some new things. Fresh air.

STEPHANIE
I know but what about Mark...

CARLOS
Leave him behind. He'll understand.

STEPHANIE
I don't know...

CARLOS
Stephanie, I've known you for quite a
long time. You need a break. Go home.
Be with people who know you.

STEPHANIE
Maybe that's not such a bad idea...
but what about Lisa...the team...

CARLOS

I'm sure they will survive without you. Stephanie, I am your doctor. I think you should take a theatre role or something and go spend a month or so in London. Maybe longer. You need it. It's your life. Take control.

STEPHANIE

Thanks, hey...how's your love life?

CARLOS

(He looks surprised) My love life?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, any nice...g...people?(pauses)

CARLOS

People?

STEPHANIE

Yeah! Any nice peeps?

CARLOS

I have started seeing Deborah, if you must know.

STEPHANIE

Oh. Deborah. But that's a girl...

CARLOS

Yes...?

STEPHANIE

But I thought you were...

CARLOS

Argentinian? (smiles)

STEPHANIE

Well...you did take two weeks off to go see Elton John in Florida...

CARLOS

But Elton is a genius!

STEPHANIE

Right but you're also, forty-seven, not married, you like leather...

CARLOS

(A beat) I grew up on a cattle ranch.

STEPHANIE

All right! I thought you were gay.

CARLOS

(surprised) Really!

STEPHANIE

Yes.

CARLOS

Because I never came onto you?

STEPHANIE

Wait...what...no...that's not...

CARLOS

In any case Stephanie, we must keep things strictly professional. I have a life outside this room.

STEPHANIE

I want that.

CARLOS

What?

STEPHANIE

A life outside this room. Outside sycophants and kiss asses. Outside "pretty privilege" and performance. Outside sexual attraction as CURRENCY. A life where people stop telling me I'm the most beautiful woman they've ever seen without even stopping to listen to me

CARLOS

(takes off his glasses) Stephanie, I'm sorry if this is too personal a question...but have you ever...

STEPHANIE

No go ahead...

CARLOS

Have you ever...

STEPHANIE

Slept with someone to get a role? Of course. A few times.

CARLOS

I was going to ask if you had ever been in love?

Stephanie looks stunned.

CARLOS (cont'd)
Well? Have you?

STEPHANIE
No. I don't think I have.

CARLOS
(Surprised) Really?

Tears start to fall down Stephanie's face as she looks at the floor.

STEPHANIE
No.

CARLOS
It's OK. But to be honest (takes off glasses) it's a little surprising...

STEPHANIE
I mean I have been loved. I have had many lovers...I have made love...but have I ever been IN love?

CARLOS
That's what I asked you.

STEPHANIE
No -- And I don't really know why.

CARLOS
Maybe because you never got the opportunity to be in love.

STEPHANIE
What do you mean? I've had tons of boyfriends. I can't remember the last time I didn't have a date...

CARLOS
It's not the same thing. Being in love...it's a feeling. You're just accepted totally for who you are. Maybe that's why you feel so..

STEPHANIE
(hopefully) Empty?

CARLOS
I was going to say unfulfilled.

Stephanie starts to cry more.

STEPHANIE

Oh Carlos...it's true. I just want someone to make me feel normal again. I just want someone to listen to me. Someone authentic. Someone real.

CARLOS

You deserve someone real. Go to London. Stay with your family. Just go. Allow yourself to be real.

STEPHANIE

But what'll I do for therapy?

CARLOS

I have a friend who works for a very respectable practice in Central London. I'll see if he can take you on while you're there. They're discreet, I'll brief him before you go so he has your file...

STEPHANIE

Thank you, Carlos.

CARLOS

That's about time. I hope was useful. Book your trip to London when you get home. And let me know how long you'll be away for, and I'll put in a call.

STEPHANIE

Thank you...Carlos.

She stands up and collects her jacket and stands next to the door. She looks at the bookshelf and spots a number of gay titles and looks at him with some confusion)

Deborah...you said?

CARLOS

Yes..?

STEPHANIE

(pauses) Really??

CARLOS (ANNOYED)

I am not GAY!

STEPHANIE

Right! *Jussssssssst* checking!

She closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

IAN
How's your love life going?

KATE
Meh...met this Iranian chick...

IAN
And?

KATE
Feel I'm getting a bit old for wild parties and drugs and raw intense sexual chemistry

IAN
Allow me to quote the late, great Silvio Berlusconi: "One is never too old for raw intense sexual chemistry."

KATE
But we don't like hang out like you and I do. With you, you've got all these philosophies, ideas, musings...

IAN
Maybe ask her about her country's politics and see what comes out

KATE
Do you ever like...have patients who you start falling in love with?

IAN
No that would be a major violation of the doctor - patient code...we cannot do that. Ever.

KATE
But surely it happens all the time? I mean patients open up to their therapists...they want to be liked by their therapists...

IAN
I prefer the familiar comfort of involuntary and enforced celibacy. Think of it like being a priest...though without children and stuff.

KATE

Oh come on Ian.

IAN

No seriously...it's true. I mean, *My people* have been EXPELLED from each and every country they have arrived in, and yet, for some peculiar reason, I can't get anyone to expel me from the location where I have now lived the longest portion of my life...the FRIEND ZONE.

KATE

Ian, ENOUGH

Ian gets out the Vogue magazine and points to Stephanie on the cover.

IAN

Look how depressed she looks. Look at her eyes. They look like they haven't seen joy in like 15 years. They look...dead.

KATE

What do you actually want, Ian?

Ian sighs and throws the magazine down.

IAN

I don't know, Kate...I just...I guess I just liked myself more back then. I had stuff going for me. I was smart. I was cultured.

KATE

You're still smart! You're still cultured!

IAN

Yeah but it doesn't matter! Women want money and status and stability...I don't have any of that.

KATE

That's nonsense. People want different things. And there are plenty of women out there that want smarts, sensitivity, authenticity... maybe even a sprinkling of neurosis, who knows?!

She smiles at him.

KATE (cont'd)
But why her? Why specifically her?

IAN
I just remember...feeling something.
And I'm pretty sure, she felt
something too. I've never felt that
way about anyone since.

FADE IN:

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Lisa is slouched eating cereal, looking in the mirror,
slightly puzzled and sad. We hear her thoughts.

LISA (V.O)
You're just normal. Just normal.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Stephanie looks at her face in the mirror doing eye make-up,
getting frustrated.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)
Why can't I just be normal. Just
normal.

Her phone beeps, it's a new message from Mark.

STEPHANIE (READING, NOT ALOUD)
Hey. Just thinking about how
beautiful you are. Call me later. M x

She sighs. The phone rings, it's Felix, her agent

FELIX
Hey...Stephanie? Is everything OK?

STEPHANIE
Hi...Hello Felix.

FELIX
Hi. Listen, I've been making some
inquiries about theatre in London

STEPHANIE
(interested) Oh?

FELIX

There's a role which could be interesting. An adaptation of The Second Sex by Simone de Beauvoir... you know it?

Stephanie walks over to her bookshelf and locates the copy of the book Ian gave her. She takes it out.

STEPHANIE

Yes, I think I do...

She opens the book. Handwritten message from Ian dated May 2008 in the front cover says "Dear Stephanie, I hope you enjoy this book as much as I've enjoyed your company in our French Literature class. Ian"

FELIX

Stephanie are you there?

STEPHANIE

Yes...hi...sorry...I was just...yes I know the book, I actually have it...I read it years ago. I think...I think that could be great. Details?

FELIX

It's a monologue by Lionel Vincent, He's world renowned. He's dying for you to consider the part.

STEPHANIE

Oh yes...yes...I've heard of him. Thanks Felix, this sounds interesting. OK...

FELIX

They're holding auditions next week. In London. Can you make it?

STEPHANIE

Next week? Um...sure. I'll call Lisa and see if she can book me on a flight so...you too...bye.

She hangs up and looks in mirror again, slightly smiling.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We see Ian trying to sleep and tossing and turning, seemingly preoccupied. He lies on his back and looks at the ceiling and lets out a long sigh. We hear his thoughts.

IAN (V.O.)

I could have been rich. I was easily one of the smartest guys in my class. Maybe even THE smartest. If only I'd spent less time reading Russian Literature and more time networking and backstabbing, maybe I'd be the boss of my own clinic in Harley Street right now - not some lowly state-aid therapist working for peanuts in a crumbling public system. (sighs) I used to like myself back then. Back then, sensitivity used to mean something. But now? Now it's all about money and looks and...

CUT TO:

INT. CAR ON WAY TO LOS ANGELES AIRPORT- DAY

Stephanie in back of car with Lisa, doing make-up in a pocket mirror.

LISA

I still think this is a big mistake. How much money are they going to pay you? How is it gonna make you look?

STEPHANIE

No...I need a break from movies.

LISA

Will you at least take me with you?

STEPHANIE

No...it's fine, I'll handle it.

LISA

Take care Stephanie

Stephanie leaves taxi and enters the airport. Lisa watches her go from the taxi window.

STRANGER 1

Wait is that...Stephanie Dellacosta?
Ma'am...would you mind signing...

STRANGER 2
Stephanie...I love you!

STRANGER 3
Are you dating Antonio Banderas?
Please I'm a journalist I'd love to..

STEPHANIE
Thank you...thank you

She moves to the check-in and hands over her passport.

FEMALE PASSPORT OFFICER
How is your skin so fresh?

Stephanie frowns.

FEMALE PASSPORT OFFICER (cont'd)
(checking her in) Have a safe flight.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN'S THERAPY STUDIO - DAY

Sparse room with blinds and a solitary flower. He is sitting on an armchair while his patient, a Middle Eastern man with a long beard dressed as a woman, is on a black leather recliner with his back to Ian. Ian has a notebook and a pen.

IAN
Let's see, first you thought you were
a cloud...now you don't think you're
a woman?

MIDDLE EASTERN MAN
No.

IAN
What do you think you are now.

MIDDLE EASTERN MAN
A rabbi.

The bell rings.

IAN
I... (standing up) We shall come back
to that. Excuse me one second.

He goes to the door. Kate is at the door.

IAN (cont'd)
 (whispering, irritated) What are you
 doing here? Kinda in the middle of
 something...

KATE
 (peering) Oh you're with cloud woman?

IAN
 (holds door) *MIDDLE* of something.

KHALED (VOICE)
 You see...I have begun to notice
 beauty in Talmudic scriptures...

KATE
 I just had a great idea

IAN
 Can it wait? I'm done in ten.

KATE
 Sure, see you at Panini Cafe in ten.

CUT TO:

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

Ian sitting opposite Kate having a sandwich

KATE
 Rough day?

IAN
 (shrugs) My transsexual Arab thinks
 he's a rabbi.

KATE
 I'm so happy for you.

IAN
 (takes a bite) You?

KATE
 I got news for you...

She gets out a newspaper from her pocket and plonks it on
 the table in front of Ian. We see a picture of Stephanie
 alongside an article with the headline "BEST ACTRESS NOMINEE
 RUMOURED FOR NEW SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR LONDON THEATRE ROLE.

IAN
 Wait - that's the book I gave her!!!

KATE
EXACTLY. THIS IS YOUR CHANCE. She's
coming to London!

IAN
But she doesn't have the part yet

KATE
She'll get the part. No theatre in
the world would turn her down.

IAN
You're right. This IS my chance. My
second chance! I'm sick of living in
mediocrity. I had a date with a
Hollywood star and I'm going to get
myself another one!

KATE
That's the spirit! Except for maybe
the mediocrity bit...I spent a long
time choosing those curtains.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Stephanie is in the theatre talking to the Director of the
Second Sex, Lionel Vincent. Lionel is thin, British,
awkward-looking with a nasal voice wearing a tight black
rollneck. He paces up and down the stage as he talks.

LIONEL
You do "realise" what I'm trying to
do with this piece, correct? I'm
trying to expose the claustrophobia
of being a woman, the *intensity* of
the feelings behind trapped
passion...the prison of being a woman
in an oppressive, patriarchal,
masculine world.

STEPHANIE
Yes...I do.

LIONEL
Because that's really important to
me.

STEPHANIE
Yes...of course.

LIONEL

Well in that case Miss Dellacosta,
I'd like to inform you that we really
liked your auditions and that we
would like to offer you the part of
Simone de Beauvoir. Congratulations.

STEPHANIE

(Smiling) Oh thank you...thank you so
much,can't wait to work with you all.

LIONEL

Now I want you to bring everything
you can to the role...anger...
intensity...I want it to be a
theatrical orgasm of anger...think
you can handle it?

STEPHANIE

(Smiling) I'll give it my best shot.

LIONEL

(Smiling) Perfect. How about we
celebrate over dinner tonight. 8pm?

Her face falls slightly.

STEPHANIE

Um...yeah, sure. Of course.

LIONEL

Great. Carlo's in South Kensington?
Meet there at 20:00?

STEPHANIE

Um...yeah...great. Until then.

Lionel exits. Stephanie takes out phone. Calls Felix.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)

Hi Felix? Yeah...I got it...thanks...
yeah it all went well...starting
rehearsals on Monday...no they didn't
say anything...mm-hmm...yeah...just
what I wanted...call you later.

She puts down the phone. It rings again.

Hi Lisa? Yeah I got it...yeah
thanks...starting on Monday...yeah
..can you tell Carlos to give me a
call...tomorrow is fine...just have
something to ask him...thanks...you
too. Bye...

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stephanie is in the restaurant with Lionel.

LIONEL

So would you prefer red or white?

STEPHANIE

Oh...I'm trying not to drink...

LIONEL

So white (smiles) Bottle of the Chevalier please. It's light!

STEPHANIE

Thank you...

LIONEL

Well I must say that I'm delighted you will be coming on board with us for this production.

STEPHANIE

Thank you.

LIONEL

I'm an enormous fan of your work. You were always my top pick for the role. In fact, I even made inquiries to see whether you would be interested.

Stephanie takes a sip of her water and looks uncomfortable. Lionel reaches out and touches Stephanie's right hand.

LIONEL (cont'd)

May I take the opportunity to tell you that you are the most beautiful woman in the world.

Stephanie freezes and looks uncomfortable.

Lionel is smiling as he continues stroking Stephanie's hand.

LIONEL (cont'd)

I can open doors for you here...I know a lot of people...

Lionel leans in to kiss her. Stephanie turns away

STEPHANIE

Sorry...I'm seeing someone

LIONEL

Oh. (Disappointed). Here in London?

STEPHANIE

No...back in America.

LIONEL

Oh...well they don't have to know...

He leans in to kiss her again. Stephanie goes stiff and pulls her hand away.

STEPHANIE

Sorry. I'm in a relationship already.
I'm very happy.

LIONEL

OK. As you wish. But if I might say
one thing...

STEPHANIE

Hmm?

LIONEL

You don't look very happy.

STEPHANIE

Um...it was a long flight...listen,
I'm tired...can we just talk about
the logistics and finish the meal.

A pause.

LIONEL

Certainly.

They sit in awkward silence for a few moments.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Stephanie leaves restaurant looking flustered and rings
Carlos.

STEPHANIE

Hi Carlos...is this a bad time?

CARLOS

Stephanie...of course not...

STEPHANIE

I'm in London...I got the part...

CARLOS
Congratulations, that's what you
wanted...right?

STEPHANIE
Yeah I guess but...the director...he
kind of...it doesn't matter...I think
I'm gonna need to talk to someone
while I'm here in London.

CARLOS
Sure...I'll put in a call.

STEPHANIE
Thank you.

INT. CARLOS'S OFFICE - DAY

CARLOS (ON THE PHONE)
Robert! How are you? Yes it has been
a while. I have a request for you.
See, a patient of mine is spending
some time in London...she's quite a
famous...she's a special case...she
could do with some assistance while
she's there. I can brief you on her
over the phone, do you think you
might be able to take her on? You'll
see what you can do? Perfect. Thanks.
I'll call you later. Take care. Bye.

CUT TO:

INT. KATE & IAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kate bursts into the room with a newspaper

KATE
She got it! Yeah baby she got it!
Stephanie Dellacosta will be Simone
de Beauvoir at the Palace Theatre.
Starting next month

IAN
Huh...wow. That's...something.

KATE
Ian, this is your shot. You're going
to see her again. This is *fate*.
We need a plan. When do you go?
Opening night? Too obvious. Maybe
mid-run, less pressure.

IAN
Slow down. I can't just show up
and...ask her out.

KATE
Why not? Brazen is good. We like
brazen. More brazen, less neurosis.

IAN
I need...to think.

Kate tosses The Second Sex from the bookshelf at Ian.

KATE
Do your homework Be a man.

IAN
Right. Thank you, Mr. Miyagi.

KATE
Do you want a wing-man or do you not?

IAN
Fine...I guess I could use a wig-wam

KATE
A WING-MAN! Not a wig-wam.

IAN
Guess I could use one of those too.

Kate stares.

KATE
What you doing tomorrow?

IAN
Lunch with some therapist friends.
Y'know, the usual - psychosexual
jokes over noodles.

KATE
Any hot lesbians?

IAN
(shrugs) I'll keep my third eye open.

She exits. Ian looks down at the book, thoughtful.

CUT TO:

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Ian is having lunch with two other therapists, Yin and Ravi at a Chinese Restaurant in Covent Garden.

YIN

So how you guys feeling about the move away from the chaise longue? We cool with that? I mean, I was with a Japanese patient the other day -- he suggested a tatami mat! And I'm like -- I'm fine! I'm fine with that if you're fine with that bro!

Over the top, corporate laughter.

RAVI

Totally understand you, but I raise you this one. What about having them lie down on a bed of nails, huh? HUH?

Loud corporate laughter. Ian arrives at the table.

IAN

Hello children.

RAVI

Been a while dickhead!

IAN

Dickhead is not a recognised term of endearment in my lexicon...

YIN

So I hope you all like this restaurant, its Szechuan Chinese...

RAVI

(Picks up a beer) AS IN.. let's go for Sesh 1...sesh 2...

IAN (LOOKS AT THE CAMERA)

I don't like Ravi. No one likes Ravi.

YIN

Guys, this is my pal Robert...he's (whispers audibly) one of us.

ROBERT, a tall dark-haired and dashing British gentleman lifts his hand up and greets the table,

RAVI

Welcome to the club, DICKHEAD!

IAN

Nice to meet you. Dr. Ian Pandourian.

ROBERT

Dr. Robert Davidson. I'm a specialist at the Listening Clinic in Harley Street. Here...(hands card) that's me.

RAVI

Harley Street, eh? Fancy. Somebody making big bucks!

YIN

Robert and I did our doctorates together. He's particularly interested in the psychology of eating disorders.

ROBERT

But it won't stop me from enjoying the meal! (nervous laughter)

YIN AND RAVI

(forced corporate laughter)

IAN

Interesting. What made you pick that?

ROBERT

Seemed to be a growing area...plus it's actually pretty interesting. What's your area?

IAN

Mainly psychosexual issues... relationships, intimacy...those kind of things. Y'know, the fun stuff...

ROBERT

How delightful! (smiles) Well your wife must be one lucky woman.

IAN

I'm...I'm not married.

ROBERT

Well your girlfriend must...

IAN

I'm not...

YIN
(interrupting) So anyone got any interesting new patients? Without breaching the code, know what I mean?

ROBERT
Actually come to mention it, I've been referred an interesting case from my friend in Los Angeles. Seems like a pretty big star is coming to London and she needs some help.

Ian drops his cutlery onto the plate.

IAN
What?

YIN
Are you OK Ian?

IAN
I'm fine. What...what is her name?

ROBERT
Oh I'm not sure yet, I haven't had the briefing. Besides even if I knew, I couldn't possibly tell you...that would be an obscene breach of trust.

RAVI
Like this guy! Real professional.

YIN
Good luck...celebrities are tough. Nobody understands the immense degree of claustrophobia they live in all the time. It's like they're cut off from basic emotions and reality. Constantly living in a bubble...

IAN
(looks at watch) I gotta go.
Gentlemen, was a pleasure...Robert, Yin, Rocky...

RAVI
Ravi.

IAN
Yeah whatever. Goodbye, DICKHEAD.
Catch you guys later.

He picks up his jacket and walks out the restaurant. He gets his phone out and dials Kate.

IAN (cont'd)
C'mon pick up pick up pick up...
Hello? Can you speak --

Kate is in Hampstead Heath talking to a woman flying a kite

KATE
Hello? Hey Ian. What's up?

IAN
Think I just met Stephanie's
therapist.

KATE
Wait, what? How do you know she has a
therapist?

IAN
So I was at this lunch and there was
this new guy here...he said he'd been
referred a patient from Los Angeles
and I put two and two together and
think it might be Stephanie!

KATE
Oh. Wow. That's interesting. Hey --
let's talk about this later I'm kinda
in the middle of something.

IAN
What do I do?

KATE
Kill him and take his clothes? I
dunno, what the fuck do you think you
should do?

IAN
I dunno. I need to think about -- you
really think I could kill him and
take his clothes?

KATE
I gotta go (puts down the phone)

An elderly woman who has been listening to the whole
conversation looks at him in a frightened way.

IAN
And you have a pleasant day Ma'am.

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Stephanie stands on stage. Lionel paces.

STEPHANIE

One is not born, but rather becomes,
a woman. When she does not find love,
she may find poetry.

LIONEL

More anger. Try again.

STEPHANIE)

(firmer) One is not born, but rather
BECOMES, a woman. When she does not
find love, she may find poetry. If
the feminine issue is so absurd, it
is because the male's arrogance made
it a "discussion".

LIONEL

Very good! That's the fire I want.
That's it for today.

Stephanie gathers her things and exits.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Stephanie walks briskly. Checks her phone. Arrives at a
building marked, "THE LISTENING CLINIC" in Harley Street.
She rings the bell. Robert answers.

ROBERT

You must be Stephanie. Do come in.

He ushers her in.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian is on the sofa. Kate enters the apartment with her
girlfriend, Mathilda.

KATE

(closes the door) Honey, I'm home...

IAN

And...who are you?

MATHILDA

Mathilda. Means "mighty in battle"

IAN
In...what language?

MATHILDA
German.

IAN
(pause) Yeah...I can see that.

Kate sits, serious.

KATE
Ian I hope you don't mind but I've kinda told Mathilda everything. So, Stephanie. You really think this Robert guy is her therapist?

IAN
He says he has a new patient - famous, from LA. Just fits too well.

MATHILDA
Let me help. I'll book a session with him. Pretend I'm the patient.

KATE
Mattie...don't feel you have to.

IAN
Yeah maybe I should just call...I mean out of all of us who's most likely to make a mistake, me or you

KATE & MATHILDA (TOGETHER)
YOU

IAN
Alright fine...wait he gave me his card... (he rummages in his pocket) Here (he hands it to her)

Mathilda dials the number.

MATHILDA
Hello? Yes, I'd like to book a session with Dr. Davidson. Mathilda Hoffman. Tomorrow at 6? Perfect.

She hangs up and smirks.

MATHILDA (cont'd)
£350. I take cash or compliments.

IAN
Do you also accept doubt and
desperation?

INT. ROBERT'S OFFICE - EVENING

Mathilda sits elegantly on a couch. Robert studies her.

ROBERT
What brings you here?

MATHILDA
Oh where do I start? My girlfriend
says I'm too intense. My mother says
I was born crying. My last therapist
moved to Peru.

ROBERT
And how can I help you today?

MATHILDA
I think I have an eating disorder.

ROBERT
Let's continue...I have some questi--

MATHILDA
I actually have some questions for
you. I got your number on a referral
and I hear you have some pretty
famous patients. Can you tell me who
some of them are?

ROBERT
(stern) Miss Hoffman, that would be
an explicit breach of patient-doctor
confidentiality. I'm not at liberty
to share the identity of my patients.

MATHILDA
I know...but like...any clues?

ROBERT
Why are you asking me this? Do you
really have an eating disorder?

MATHILDA
I don't know, but if YOU don't know,
might I ask if YOU really have a PhD?

ROBERT
(takes off his glasses) I...

Camera shows them talking for a while and Mathilda gesticulating madly and Robert scribbling down notes while we see the camera zoom out and Stephanie approach the building and enter the waiting room. After a few moments we return to the scene of Robert and Mathilda.

ROBERT (cont'd)
I think we're out of time. Thank you...Mathilda, that was... interesting. Please do get in touch if you'd like to book a follow-up.

MATHILDA
Oh thank you Doctor thank you...

He ushers her to the door and opens it. She walks through the corridor and immediately spots Stephanie reading a magazine. Her jaw hits the floor.

STEPHANIE
Good evening

She stands up and walks towards the office.

Mathilda's jaw drops obviously.

ROBERT
(irritated) Thank you Miss Hoffman.

STEPHANIE
It's all right. I get that a lot.

Robert closes the door and ushers Stephanie in.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Kate is walking down the street, frantically grasping her phone. She dials IAN.

KATE
IAN! IAN!

IAN
What?

KATE
SHE SAW HER. IT'S HER.

IAN
WAIT?! WHAT?! WHERE?!

KATE
He's her doctor! It was her!

IAN
You're kidding me...so I was right!?
Did she speak to her?!

KATE
No...I don't think... Where are you?

IAN
Heading home now, wanna get dinner?

KATE
Yes I'll see you back home

FADE IN:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

KATE
...so she comes out the room and
there she is...sitting right there
all ready for her appointment.
Stephanie Dellacosta herself.

IAN
I...that's incredible. So he IS her
doctor. We were right.

KATE
I know...so what do you think of her?

IAN
Of who? Stephanie?

KATE
No! Mathilda!

IAN
Ehhhhh.

KATE
What you're not a fan?

IAN
Teeny bit irksome...

KATE
(angry) Wait...IRKSOME? You're
describing my girlfriend as IRKSOME?
She's doing you a service! She went
on a FUCKING mission for you!

IAN

Not in a bad way...just a teeny...

KATE

(angry) Just because she's not perfect like your made-up actress girlfriend whom you supposedly fell in love with when you met her *once* like twenty years ago when you probably had more hair on your face than you did down there.

IAN

HEY! MY HERITAGE HAS ALWAYS GIVEN ME AN EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF FOLIAGE.

KATE

You know what, Ian? Maybe this whole obsession you've got going on is nothing more than a narcissistic fantasy where you can't own up to the fact that the moment's passed...she's gone and your life is meant to be boring just like the rest of us...

IAN

Narcissistic fantasy...I thought you were on board with this whole plan?

KATE

I mean, she SUPPOSEDLY liked you twenty years ago! Her pre-frontal cortex was probably only like 10% formed...I dunno...I just think maybe it's distracting you from actually getting your shit together.

IAN

Right, YOU have your shit together?

KATE

Y'don't think I've got my shit together?

IAN

You are the patron saint of not having your shit together.

KATE

I thought that was Judas

IAN

Judas wasn't a Saint! He betrayed Jesus Christ!

KATE

Exactly! Maybe if he'd had his shit together he would have been in line for a Sainthood!

The doorbell rings. It is Mathilda.

MATHILDA

Hey...what's going on? You guys OK?

IAN

Hi. I think I owe you a thank you...

MATHILDA

And £350.

CUT TO:

INT. CLARIDGE'S, MAYFAIR - DAY

Stephanie is having coffee with her friend, AMANDA

AMANDA

Stephanie darling, it's been so long! You look fantastic.

STEPHANIE

Thank you Amanda, you look wonderful too.

AMANDA

I hear you're working with Lionel... fantastic director, did a show with him last summer.

Stephanie sips her water.

STEPHANIE

Mm-hmm

AMANDA

So? What's new in the love life of Miss Dellacosta?

STEPHANIE

Oh...nothing ...there's someone in the picture but I'm not sure...

AMANDA

(laughing) When's your leading man turning up.

STEPHANIE

I don't know, Amanda..., I guess I'm not inspired...

AMANDA

Really? Well that is surprising. Then again, you've always been picky... ever since our RADA days...what exactly are you looking for in a guy?

STEPHANIE

I guess...someone authentic. Someone I feel connected to...that connects with my mind and my soul through depth and sensitivity, through literature and poetry...who is attracted to what I have to say, not to the face that says it...maybe it's better here for us actresses...

AMANDA

Well, you're here now. But you may be being a little unrealistic, Stephanie. I mean...have you ever dated anyone who comes close to corresponding to that description?

CUT TO:

Flashback of Stephanie going into the cinema with Ian as a teenager and him giving her the book. Then it cuts to them in the cinema watching the gay movie and IAN sliding down his chair.

STEPHANIE

It would never have worked.

AMANDA

Well who knows, darling. Perhaps the man of your dreams is out there right now...skilfully concocting a plan to meet the most beautiful actress in Hollywood...

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

IAN

So we kill Robert and take his place.

MATHILDA

We cannot kill him.

KATE

We don't have to "kill" him, we just need to find a way to make him leave the country for a while. Then you can take his place as a stand-in and be Stephanie's therapist for a session or two, you can kiss her, then this whole merry but slightly absurd and twisted thing will come to a happy conclusion.

IAN

MAKE HIM LEAVE THE COUNTRY? What are we gonna do DRAFT him? I mean, can you seriously imagine him with a rocket launcher in Afghanistan? (imitates ROBERT) Oh look, a katyusha, how delightful!

MATHILDA

He said he has relatives in Canada. I think his sister's there. We could make up a story...maybe she has an illness

IAN

No that won't work... he could just call his sister and our cover would be blown. We need something else.

KATE

Oh! Oh! I've got one...WHAT if we invite him to speak at a fake psychotherapy conference for a week

IAN

Hey...that's not such a bad idea...

Kate gets out her laptop.

KATE

OK we are so doing this. (she types)
Dear Dr. Davidson, We'd like to
invite you to a conference...

IAN

No not conference...SYMPOSIUM

KATE

(imitates IAN) A "SYMPOSIUM" on...

IAN

Psychoanalysis Post-Freud

KATE
(stops writing) What, do YOU wanna go
to this SYMPOSIUM?

IAN
Trust me it sounds legitimate.

KATE
(typing) We would be honoured if you
would address the SYMPOSIUM on Day 1
and give some insights into your
field of practice and your work.

IAN
Where's this conference taking place?

MATHILDA
Somewhere close enough for him to
bother going but far away enough for
him not to come back on the same day.

IAN
(immediately) Bucharest, Romania.

KATE
Wow that was fast.

IAN
It'll work. Trust me. Oh wait...it
needs to come from a professional
sounding email address.

KATE
You're right...OH! We can just create
a false email address and a fake
domain. I'll be the administrator
and.....done.

IAN
Wow.

KATE
OK, so here's the plan. I'm gonna
write a few different emails later
today inviting Robert to the
conference. Then you've gotta find a
way of covering Robert's session.

IAN
Oh! I'll call him to ask for lunch.

KATE
OK well let's make it in two weeks.

IAN
OK. Good. That gives enough time...

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Ian and Robert are having lunch

ROBERT
Ian! How delightful! Good to see you again. I'm glad you called.

IAN
Likewise...so..anything new?

ROBERT
Well funny you should ask actually, I've just been invited to speak at a symposium in Romania of all places... taking place in two weeks...

IAN
Oh my God, you should DEFINITELY go.

ROBERT
Um...sorry?

IAN
I mean...I've heard...you know Dracula and the forests...you'll have a great time...and the SYMPOSIUM

ROBERT
You've...heard about the symposium?

IAN
Have I HEARD about the SYMPOSIUM? But of course, it's only like one of the greatest symposiums in psychoanalysis today,

ROBERT
Will you be going too?

IAN
I...who me? (points at himself) Oh no...I'm not important enough...

ROBERT
Sure I can get you invited, let me --

IAN
(bluntly) NO

ROBERT
No?

IAN
I've got stuff I need to take care of
here...patients you know...

ROBERT
Oh. Well that's a shame. You see, I'm
very interested in going but I have
this new patient who I'm seeing
pretty much weekly...she's rather...
well how can I say...she needs
intensive attention...it's just the
regular stuff you know...listening,
feedback...I just...I don't want to
let her down...but the conference
seems like such a good opportunity

IAN
OH opportunity of a lifetime!

ROBERT
And her concerns...well, they seem to
be increasingly veered towards
relationships...her lack of
fulfillment ..see she's an actress

IAN
I know.

ROBERT
You know? How do you know?

IAN
(covers himself with napkin) Well I
don't *know*, I mean what is knowledge
at the end of the day...can one ever
really KNOW anything?
I just "inferred" she must be an
actress because she was famous...you
know

ROBERT
Here's what I'm thinking. I'll only
be at the conference for a few days
tops... but I'll need someone to
cover intake at the clinic while I'm
away...

IAN
Oh well when I said "busy" I didn't
actually mean "inundated"

ROBERT
Think I could put you down in case of
emergency? Could you be a mate?

IAN
(flustered) I mean...yes of course...
anything to help...the people of
Romania...

He gets up from the table and Ian starts pumping his fists
and cheering to himself. Robert almost catches him and he
starts waving and grinning sheepishly.

ROBERT
You're a strange man Ian, but you're
doing me a big favour. Thanks

CUT TO:

INT. IAN & KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian bursts through the door

IAN
It worked! It worked! You're a
genius! The idiot is going to
Romania! And I'm seeing Stephanie on
the 18th at 18 hundred!

He hugs Kate

KATE
Really? This guy's a qualified
therapist?

IAN
What is for sure is that he is a
qualified MORON. You, however, are a
genius thank you thank you thank you
so much...mwah mwah mwah...

He kisses her.

KATE
Found a peripheral university about
two hours outside Bucharest. Sent the
address in the email. Hopefully our
friend will arrive completely lost.

IAN

Poor guy. But then again...

KATE

Ian. This is your one moment to shine. You cannot fuck this up. So you're covering his session?

IAN

Only if she calls.

KATE

But what are you going to say to her?

IAN

I don't know...guess I'll...guess I'll have to think about that...

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Stephanie is rehearsing with Lionel.

LIONEL

Not angry enough. I need it angrier. Let's have another go...LIGHTS

STEPHANIE

No...I have a therapy appointment.

LIONEL

A *therapy* appointment? No, sorry. We don't have time for your therapy.

STEPHANIE

(angry) Don't have time for my therapy? Are you FUCKING insane?

LIONEL

Yes! That's good! Do it again!

STEPHANIE

(angrier) No one is more arrogant toward women, more aggressive or scornful, than the man who is anxious! Her wings are cut, then she is blamed for not knowing how to fly.

LIONEL

Perfect! That's perfect!

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian is wearing slip on trainers, about to leave.

KATE

No. No way. You're gonna go out, wearing those? You look like a retired basketball player. No wait - you look like a basketball player that technically would still like to be playing basketball, but has begrudgingly accepted an early retirement package due to being surplus to requirements and for having a poor attitude.

IAN

You got all that...all that from sneakers? Purposelessness... expiration AND inadequacy?

KATE

And ugliness! Now go back to your room and change your goddamn shoes.

IAN

What would I ever do without you.

KATE

Probably analyse yourself to death and then be sent back from heaven on account of your neurotic whining.

CUT TO:

INT. ROBERT'S THERAPY CLINIC - DAY

Stephanie enters. BEATRICE, the receptionist, greets her.

BEATRICE

Good afternoon Miss Dellacosta.

STEPHANIE

Hi there.

BEATRICE

I understand that Dr. Davidson has explained that he's unable to cover your intake today

STEPHANIE

Yes...don't worry...he told me...he said that he'd have someone cover.

BEATRICE

Yes, nothing to worry about. If you go down the corridor on your right, Dr. John Papadopoulos is waiting for you in Room 5.

STEPHANIE

Great. Thank you so much.

INT. ROOM 5 - ROBERT'S THERAPY CLINIC - DAY

Ian is looking in the mirror, rehearsing awkwardly.

IAN

Stephanie... (more confidently)
Stephanie...(more deferentially)...
Stephanie...

There is a knock at the door and Ian is startled.

IAN (cont'd)

Come...come in!

STEPHANIE

Hello...you must be...

IAN

Yes...I'm...

STEPHANIE

Dr. John Papadopoulos.

Ian stops for a moment and looks confused. Then he looks at her and it's clear she hasn't recognised him. Then she looks back at him awkwardly.

IAN

Yes...that's right...Dr John?

STEPHANIE

Papadopoulos?

IAN

Exactly! And you must be...

STEPHANIE

Stephanie Dellacosta. Sorry I'm late.

Stephanie composes herself sits down. Ian still looks confused as to why she hasn't recognised him.

IAN

Yes...I'm a friend...well, a
colleague of Dr. Davidson.

STEPHANIE

Well I'm so glad you could cover for
him. Dr. Davidson is a very good
therapist and he spoke highly of
you...you see I just...I'm only here
for a few months and I really value
being able to speak to someone in
person.

IAN

Yes...yes I understand.

STEPHANIE

It's funny but...you look...you
remind me of someone I haven't seen
in an awfully long time.

IAN

(nervously) Really? Who might that be?

STEPHANIE

(she looks down at the floor) You
look...you sort of remind me of
someone I nearly dated when I was
much younger...a really intelligent
guy...someone who I've completely
lost touch with...the kind of person
I never meet nowadays.

IAN

(intrigued) Really? In what way?

STEPHANIE

He was this super smart...funny...
sensitive...emotional guy...I really
liked him...but then...we went to see
this movie...and I'd got it all
wrong...I...I didn't realise that...

IAN

That what?

STEPHANIE

That he was gay.

IAN

(blurts out) He wasn't GAY - I mean,
"How do you know he was GAY?"

STEPHANIE

Well he took me to see this movie and it was just so homoerotic...I hadn't really guessed but...he was so sensitive and intelligent...he really understood my emotions...and he gave me this book, this feminist book... the Second Sex...I just...I got so disappointed when I realised we'd never have a sexual connection...

A beat.

IAN

(looking annoyed) IS THAT SO?

STEPHANIE

Yeah...but now, I can never meet anyone like that. All my connections with people are just so superficial...I get hit on pretty much every day...I'm so numb to flattery...I'd love to have a connection like that with someone again...obviously someone straight...

IAN

Well...maybe you will...but I think you need to be honest with who you are and what you want Stephanie. What your needs are. You don't have to pretend to be anyone that you're not...you've got to a stage now where you can pretty much take any role you ...you don't owe anyone anything.

STEPHANIE

Maybe you're right...

IAN

You deserve...someone real.

STEPHANIE

That's so funny...that's what my therapist in LA said to me. I recently discovered he wasn't gay.

A beat.

IAN

(annoyed) REALLY. (pauses for a moment) Would you rate your gaydar as above-average, Miss Dellacosta?

STEPHANIE

Oh I don't know...I just...I'm so used to men being forward and direct with me...it's all I've ever known... I guess...whenever I meet a sensitive man who doesn't do that...who doesn't immediately kiss my ass...or worship the way I look...I guess I just don't really see them in the same way...but then...I'm so unfulfilled romantically...maybe I need to go for more of these guys...

IAN

Might be an idea...

STEPHANIE

I think I am a victim of emotional conflicts...

IAN

No Stephanie...you're just human.

The camera zooms out and we see them talking for a while but we can't hear anything that they're saying. It shows that they are building some kind of intellectual connection but she hasn't clocked that it is Ian.

STEPHANIE

Thanks you Doctor. Thank you so much.

IAN

Call me Ian.

STEPHANIE

(puzzled) Why would I call you Ian if your name is J--

IAN

(hurriedly) Iaaaaaaaan two days. Call me IN two days. We can arrange a follow-up appointment.

STEPHANIE

(looks a bit sceptical) OK.

INT. ROBERT'S THERAPY CLINIC - DAY.

Ian is leaving the building.

IAN

Um...Beatrice?

BEATRICE

Mhmm?

IAN

Can I just check something with you?

BEATRICE

Of course.

IAN

You did put my name down as, *Dr. Ian Pandourian* on the system...correct?

BEATRICE

(checking) Yep. Pretty sure I (gasps)
Oh no!

IAN

"Oh no"?

BEATRICE

There was someone who used to work here called Dr. John Papadopoulos. I must have clicked the wrong button when I entered you into the system! I'm so sorry...

IAN

No no! No harm done! Often get confused you know...Pandourian... Papadopoulos...Patel... Papawasarollingstone...

He leaves the clinic.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Split screen. We can see On left, Ian is walking talking on his phone. On right, Stephanie is talking on her phone.

IAN

(talking) so then they got my name wrong at the clinic, and I was too scared to correct her...so now she thinks I'm Dr. John Papadopoulos.

STEPHANIE

And I arrived so late and I don't think he knew who I was and I didn't want to tell him that I worked in Hollywood I just spoke freely and it was so authentic.

IAN

But as we talked, it was like I was
falling in love.

STEPHANIE

And as we talked, it was like I was
falling in love.

IAN

No she didn't know it was me.

STEPHANIE

No he didn't know who I was.

IAN

Yes I felt such an attraction

STEPHANIE

Yes I felt such an attraction

IAN

But I'm worried that, if she finds
out that it's really me...she won't
like what she finds out

STEPHANIE

But I'm worried that, if he finds out
who I really am, he won't like what
he finds out

IAN

I don't know if she feels the same

STEPHANIE

I don't know if he feels the same

IAN

It just felt so natural

STEPHANIE

It just felt so natural

IAN & STEPHANIE (TOGETHER)

ASK HER OUT?

ASK HIM OUT?

TOMORROW NIGHT?

TOMORROW NIGHT?

WHAT JUST CALL?

WHAT JUST CALL?

YOU THINK SO?

YOU THINK SO?

BUT WHAT IF SHE
OK

BUT WHAT IF HE
OK

They hang up the phone.

STEPHANIE

(dialling IAN)

Hey...Dr. Papadop...John...it's me,
Stephanie...we just had the...yeah...
listen, I know this sounds a little
forward but...there were...no...I was
just wondering if...you might want to
have dinner with me tomorrow night...
yeah...no just as friends...yeah...I
just had some follow-up questions...
would that be...yeah I know this
place in South Kensington...it's
discreet...yeah...OK great...tomorrow
at eight? Thanks...see you then

CUT TO:

INT. IAN & KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ian bursts into the apartment gleefully and rushes to
embrace Kate.

IAN

(punching the air) GUESS! WHO! HAS!
A! DATE! WITH! STEPHANIE!

KATE

(jumping up and down) YOU DID IT!

KATE (cont'd)

Wait...she knows it's you now, right?

IAN

Um...no...not exactly...

KATE

(angry) What?! You gonna tell her?

IAN

I mean...eventually?

KATE

You HAVE to tell her

IAN

NO...let's see how it goes first...
wait...have you heard from Robert?

CUT TO:

INT. BUS IN ROMANIA - DAY

Robert is trying to make small-talk with an elderly ROMANIAN WOMAN sat next to him.

ROBERT

Hello there! I must say...they said this was the Woodstock Festival of modern psychotherapy but I'm yet to see anyone I recognise...I hope they'll be there when we get there!

The elderly woman makes a disgusted looking face at him and he looks awkwardly into the window away from her.

ROMANIAN WOMAN

(in Romanian) Yeah and I could be Jimi fucking Hendrix but I still wouldn't give you my autograph.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stephanie is looking worried as she enters the restaurant, looking around to see if anyone recognises her. She walks into the restaurant and sits down, still looking around.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A waiter smiles at her and offers her a menu. She sits down.

Ian walks in, looking worried for no particular reason. He spots Stephanie and starts breathing deeply.

IAN (TO HIMSELF)

OK...OK Pandourian...
slowly...1...2...3...this is your
chance...this is the biggest chance
of your life...don't screw this up...

Stephanie smiles at him as he walks in.

STEPHANIE

Well hello there, Dr. Papadopolous.

IAN

Ah...hello, Miss...Dellacosta...it's
"Miss"...right?

STEPHANIE

(drinks some of her wine) Like
permanently...

IAN
Never married?

STEPHANIE
No...you?

IAN
(looks down) Not. Even. Close.

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry. Listen, this seems a little forward but I...as you know... I'm very emotionally...fragile...and ...some of the things you were saying in our session today...well...they moved me very deeply...they made me feel...very special...like I felt for the first time that someone was really listening to me, rather than just looking at me...

IAN
I...well that's...

STEPHANIE
It's just...I feel like I know you already...like we've met before... could we have...did you...

IAN
What...us? Noooooooooo...we did no--I would certainly remember meeting somebody as beautiful as you

STEPHANIE
(flatly) Hmmm...

IAN
In truth Stephanie I...I also really enjoyed our session today...

STEPHANIE
Are you...seeing anyone?

IAN
At present...no I am not...are you?

STEPHANIE
(looks down and sighs) Potentially.

IAN
Potentially?

STEPHANIE

John...I'm *always* seeing someone. I'm always being pursued. But I'm very... I'm rarely...I'm never in love...I've never...I've never been in love.

She looks on sadly.

IAN

Have you...have you not...?

STEPHANIE

(looks down). No.

IAN

Oh.

STEPHANIE

I mean, I think I have been loved. I think I have been BE-loved. Gosh that sounds so arrogant...but I...no...I don't think I have ever been in love. Have you...been in love...?

IAN

I...well...once...once I think I...I think I may have been in love

STEPHANIE

Who was she?

The waitress comes in and interrupts.

WAITRESS

I just wanted to come and check that everything was all right?

STEPHANIE

Was until you showed up.

The waitress leaves in a huff.

IAN

Wait...why were you so mean to her?

STEPHANIE

Mean? Was I mean? I didn't even...

IAN

I mean...

STEPHANIE

I guess it's because she has something that I don't have

IAN

What's that?

STEPHANIE

She's normal. I'm jealous of that. I just want to be normal. Is that...is that too much to ask?

IAN

No...of course not...

He stares into her eyes.

STEPHANIE

It's so strange John, somehow...it feels like I've known you for years. You transport me back to a time when I really used to feel things...when I used to feel like myself...when I didn't have to perform... (she stares into his eyes) I just want to find someone who I...who I can trust...who gets the way I think...who cares about that more than the way I look...I just want someone that I can feel safe with. Safe in the arms of...

We see Ravi at the next table with three friends He recognises Ian instantly, rises and smacks him on the back.

RAVI

DICKHEAD!

IAN

Oh no...no...no...no..

RAVI

And his...beautiful friend...well how are you doing my...wait...aren't you...were you in a movie..,

IAN

Can you excuse us for one second...

He gets up from the table and walks over to the waitress.

IAN (cont'd)

Hi I want to pay now...right NOW.

He walks over to Stephanie

IAN (cont'd)

We need to leave now.

STEPHANIE

Why...is everything all right?

IAN

I hate...this guy...can we just go...

STEPHANIE

Sure...have we paid...?

IAN

Yes...can we go somewhere...

STEPHANIE

Well...I'm staying at my parents' house about five minutes away from here. They're...they're out of town this weekend (looks suggestively)

IAN

Uh...great...that sounds great...

RAVI

Come on! Let's have a few drinks! Sesh one! Sesh two!

IAN

(ushers Stephanie out) We're fine... maybe tomorrow...I'll call you...

RAVI

Looks like somebody's going to get LUCKY! Ahhhhhhhhhhh love that guy.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They walk together down the street towards Stephanie's house. She takes his arm and they arrive at the door. It is a large terraced house in South Kensington. She lets them in.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

STEPHANIE

I...do you mind if I go and freshen up...if you'd like a drink there's a cabinet in the living room...please take whatever you'd like

She leaves and Ian looks around. There are pictures of Stephanie with her parents as a child, framed photographs of her movies. He looks around and mumbles to himself.

IAN
Took you 19 fucking years Pandourian
but you finally got into her place...

He pours himself a whisky and sits down looking at the photos. Suddenly, Stephanie enters. She has taken off her jacket and is wearing a slim, revealing black dress.

IAN (cont'd)
Uh...wow...gosh I...

STEPHANIE
(sidles over to him) Oh I look so
daft in those old photos...
honestly...I was about eighteen
then...I looked like such a dork...

IAN
No...you looked beautiful...I think
you looked beautiful

There is a pause as they look into each others' eyes and begin to kiss, first gently, then more passionately. After a few moments, Stephanie breaks the embrace and whispers.

STEPHANIE
Let's go upstairs...

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The two of them in bed together, passionately making love.

FADE TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The two of them are lying next to each other.

STEPHANIE
So I still have to call you...Doctor?

IAN
At this point I've no idea what you
should call me...

STEPHANIE
Hmm...oh...John....that was amazing

IAN
It...really was...

STEPHANIE
(looks at her phone) Oh my God. Oh
shit. Oh fuck.

IAN
What? What is it?

STEPHANIE
Mark. You have to go.

IAN
Mark? Who the fuck is Mark?

STEPHANIE
My boyfriend.

IAN
Wait your BOYFRIEND? But you said
POTENTIALLY?

STEPHANIE
I know, I know but he just messaged
me to say he's in London and he's
coming here...you have to get
dressed...you have to get out of
here...we have to make this look like
we were just having a session...he
could be here any moment.

IAN
Ok...ok...But...you're gonna break up
with him right? Please...it was...

STEPHANIE
I don't know...I don't know...I don't
even know what I'm...what I'm
doing...what I'm thinking...I just...
please put your clothes on...he could
be here any moment.

EXT. MARK IS WALKING DOWN STEPHANIE'S STREET - DAY

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ian hurriedly puts clothes on, scowling. Stephanie puts on
exercise gear and hastily does makeup.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE, MARK RINGS THE DOORBELL - DAY

MARK
(KNOCKING) Stephanie? Steph? Honey?
It's me. I'm here! Can you let me in?

STEPHANIE
(to Ian) Go to the lounge and sit

IAN
What so he can crucify me there?

STEPHANIE
Hey baby...what a surprise...thanks
so much for coming

Mark tries to kiss her intensely, ready for action.

MARK
I couldn't miss my baby's opening
night! Tomorrow night right?

STEPHANIE
Oh that's so sweet...Mark there's
someone I'd like you to meet this
is...this is Dr. John Papadopoulos

Ian waves his hand and looks decisively pissed off.

IAN
PLEA-SHURE.

MARK
Good to meet you. Stephanie, who is
this odd little man?

STEPHANIE
Oh he's the therapist Carlos put me
in touch with...he's really good...we
were just having a session...

MARK
On a Sunday morning?

IAN
I like to align my sessions to the
worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

MARK
(doesn't laugh) OK well...you've
finished now right?

IAN
(under his breath) Wouldn't let me...

STEPHANIE

Yes. Dr. Papadopoulos was just leaving, weren't you?

IAN

Why yes...I am delighted with the progress you have made. We have delved into the depths of deceit and disappointment, next time perhaps we will cover pain, suffering and the breaking of hearts.

STEPHANIE

I'll call you later for the next appointment.

MARK

(annoyed) Hey. Buddy. She'll call you later. Time for you to...(whistles)

IAN

Sorry what was that? Couldn't hear with all the muscles.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

He leaves and looks at the house sadly. Then he closes his eyes and starts hitting himself.

IAN

Mark! MARK! MARK! FUCKING! MARK!

His phone beeps. It's a text from Kate which says "How was it?"

IAN (cont'd)

Beautiful and painful in every fucking measure. Like my damn life.

His phone beeps again. It's a text from Stephanie which says "I'm so sorry. I'll fix this. Last night was amazing. S xx

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

KATE

SO? AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

IAN

It happened

KATE
IAN...THIS IS INCREDIBLE...I'M SO...

IAN
No...she has a boyf...MARK arrived

KATE
Wait Mark? Who the fuck is...there's
no MARK...we don't need a MARK

IAN
I know...I know...but he was there
and she was there and it's all...
ugh...I'm so fucking stupid...I
should have never...I never had a
chance with her...

KATE
When's her show?

IAN
What do you mean?

KATE
Her show. The Second Sex. When is it?

IAN
Tomorrow night.

KATE
We're going.

IAN
But he's gonna be...

KATE
Doesn't matter. She'll have to choose
between Muscle Mark and Dr. Ian
Pandourian, her soulmate and the love
of her fucking life.

IAN
Well there is one little...

KATE
OH MY GOD YOU DIDN'T TELL HER

IAN
IT DIDN'T COME UP

KATE
YOU HAD SEX WITH HER

IAN
YEAH BUT I DIDN'T SHOW HER MY ID

KATE
OK IAN...THIS IS BAD. THIS IS REALLY
BAD. YOU NEED TO COME CLEAN...YOU
NEED TO TELL HER EVERYTHING.

IAN
WHEN? Shall I arrange a Microsoft
Teams call with me, her and MARK?
(imitates) IAN has raised his hand.
CUPID has left the meeting. THE GRIM
REAPER is in the WAITING ROOM.

KATE
No. You need to call her and tell
her. She needs to know the truth.

Ian sighs.

IAN
You know something, Kate? When I set
out on this crazy plan, it was all
about me. I wanted to feel good about
myself by proving to the world that I
once went on a date with a Hollywood
star, and that I could still go on a
date with a Hollywood star. I was in
love with the image. But now? Now
it's not about me. It's about her.
I've fallen in love with her. The
real her.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie is with Mark. Mark is hugging her from behind,
ready for action, but Stephanie looks uncomfortable.

MARK
Honey, I'm just going out to buy some
cigarettes...you need anything?

STEPHANIE
No...it's fine...thanks

Mark leaves the room.

Stephanie looks at her phone. There is a new voicemail.

IAN (V.O.)
Hi...it's John...can we meet later?

STEPHANIE
(hastily dials) Hello...John...Hi I
got your message.

IAN
Oh Stephanie...I've been so...listen,
I need to talk to you about something

STEPHANIE
Listen...it's not a good time...
but...I'll be at the theatre for the
show later tonight...why don't you
come watch it there...I'll be there
around 5, maybe we can talk then?

Mark comes back.

MARK
Hey babe. Everything all right?

STEPHANIE
(looks down) Mm-hmm. Just nervous
about later.

She kisses him awkwardly.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATRE - DAY

Ian arrives and spots her. He runs up to her.

IAN
Hi.

STEPHANIE
Hi.

IAN
Listen...I need to tell you something

LIONEL
(from inside) Stephanie! I need you.
We need to discuss a few things.

STEPHANIE
(hurriedly) Yes...I'm sorry I don't
have a lot of time. What is it?

IAN

Listen I...

LIONEL

(comes outside) Stephanie! Come on!

IAN

My name is not John Papadopoulos. My name is Ian Pandourian. We took a class together at the American School on existentialist French literature. I invited you to the cinema when I was seventeen to watch a movie which turned out to be homosexual pornography. I gave you a book of the play you are currently starring in, right here in London. And the other night, I realised a life-long dream by making love to you, as you are the most beautiful woman I have ever laid eyes on, and the most spectacular soul I've ever known.

STEPHANIE

Oh my God! Ian...Ian from...I knew I ...I knew I'd met you before...

IAN

Stephanie...I'm so...I'm so sorry

STEPHANIE

You're an imposter...you lied to me...how could you...?

IAN

No...it was just a role I was playing. Just like you...just like you do...just like you always do

STEPHANIE

You betrayed my confidence...as a professional...how could you...?

IAN

I was going to...

STEPHANIE

I can't have this conversation now... I'm going onstage...

As she turns away. It begins to rain.

IAN

I love you Stephanie.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

Stephanie is onstage. She looks at the audience and spots Lionel, Mark and Ian.

STEPHANIE

One is not born, but rather becomes,
a woman. When she does not find love,
she may find poetry.

She looks at Lionel.

(more angrily) If the feminine issue
is so absurd, it is because the
male's arrogance made it a
"discussion".

She looks at Mark.

What would Prince Charming have for
occupation if he had not to awaken
the Sleeping Beauty?

She looks at Ian.

"On the day when it will be possible
for woman to love not in her weakness
but in strength, not to escape
herself but to find herself, not to
abase herself but to assert herself –
on that day love will become for her,
a source of life and not of mortal
danger. In the meantime, love
represents in its most touching form
the curse that lies heavily upon
woman confined in the feminine
universe, woman
mutilated, insufficient unto herself."

MUSIC CUE: JOE COCKER - YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL TO ME

Curtain falls and there is a standing ovation. She isn't happy but looks at Lionel and smiles, seriously. She looks at Mark and smiles again. Then looks at Ian solidly for several long moments. We see the flashback of them as teenagers at the cinema. Of them meeting outside the cinema. Of them in the cinema. Of him standing in the rain. Of her on the bus with the book. Of them talking together in therapy. Of them in the restaurant together. Of them in bed together. She doesn't smile. Ian is distraught.

IAN

(mouths) Potentially.

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - NIGHT

The music continues. We see the crowds gathering to see Stephanie leave the theatre. A sad looking Ian watches her embrace the Director and then Mark, though she avoids kissing him. She is whisked away into a taxi. Kate comes up to Ian and puts her arm around him.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN & KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ian is sitting in his pyjamas, unshaven, miserable as he drinks a beer. He looks at TV and barely registers anything.

KATE

Ian...you gotta move on...I'm sorry.

IAN

I'm just a loser. I was born a loser and I'll die a loser. Can't believe I went ahead with this. Can't believe I actually thought a movie star would fall for me.

KATE

A movie star *did* fall for you, Ian. But maybe for the first time in her life it's her that fell in love with the avatar and not the reality.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MARK

You were marvellous, baby.

STEPHANIE

Thank you.

MARK

But y'know, I didn't come all this way just to see your play...I came here to do this...

He reaches into his jacket pocket and takes out a ring.
Will, you, Stephanie...Dellacosta...
the most beautiful woman in the
world...will you...marry me?

She looks surprised, then embarrassed, then pauses.

STEPHANIE

I...

MARK

Will you?

STEPHANIE

(pauses) No.

MARK

No?

STEPHANIE

No.

MARK

What the fuck? No???

STEPHANIE

No...I need something real...

MARK

Something REAL? Listen, you gotta know something -- you're like, one of the most beautiful women I've ever dated but you're also so...selfish.

STEPHANIE

Selfish? Why?

MARK

You only care about yourself. You don't appreciate how much I need you by my side to make me look like the Hollywood leading man everyone wants to cast and how much further we could get ahead in our careers if we were an item. You just can't see that because you're so damn selfish.

Mark angrily picks up his jacket and begins to storm out.

MARK (cont'd)

For Christ's sake.. precious little bitch...think you can have it all don't you? Well you can't mess with people's feelings. Call me when you change your fucking mind.

He storms out the restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Stephanie is doing Sudoku. The phone rings. It's Lisa.

STEPHANIE
Hello...Lisa?

LISA
Hi...Stephanie

STEPHANIE
What is it Lisa? Not a good time.

LISA
Stephanie I quit.

STEPHANIE
Wait, what?

LISA
I quit.

STEPHANIE
WHAT? WHY?

LISA
I don't like you. You're not real.
You make me feel like shit. And I
don't want to feel like shit anymore.
And you complain so much even though
you have it all. When are you going
to just accept that you can take
charge of your own happiness and stop
taking it out on other people. I quit
Stephanie. Goodbye.

She hangs up. Stephanie is stunned. She sits on bed and
thinks for a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. IAN AND KATE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kate is alone. Ian is out. Ian's phone rings. Kate answers.

KATE
Hello? No he's not available right
now. Yeah he left his phone behind...
he sometimes does that...who should I
say is calling? Oh my. Of course.
This evening? Six thirty? Yes. I'll
tell him.

Ian comes through the door.

IAN
Forgot my phone.

Kate deletes the call record.

KATE
Yeah, here.

IAN
Thanks.

KATE
How are you feeling?

IAN
(sarcastically) Never better.

KATE
I'm sorry. Listen...you wanna catch a movie tonight?

IAN
Not like I've got much else to do.
What time?

KATE
Six thirty.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Stephanie picks up the Second Sex and re-reads Ian's message at the front. Camera zooms in on the page.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSTITUT FRANCAIS - DAY

Ian and Kate are walking to the Institut Francais.

IAN
What are we going to see?

KATE
Wait a moment.

They walk. Stood in an overcoat as it starts to rain is Stephanie, waiting outside the Institut Francais just as she did in 2008. Ian catches her eye and looks exasperated, then looks at Kate who gives him a quizzical look.

Stephanie looks as though she has been crying.

STEPHANIE

Ian.

IAN

Stephanie I'm so sorry...

STEPHANIE

No...I should say sorry. You were just playing a role. Just wearing a costume. What I've been doing all my life. Why didn't you just tell me?

IAN

I was gonna. I promise I was gonna.

STEPHANIE

I guess we both just wanted to be released from prison. Me from the prison of external validation, you from the prison of nostalgia.

IAN

I'm sorry I betrayed your trust...I had no other option...

STEPHANIE

Can't believe we're here again after all this time. I'd been looking forward to that date for weeks when you asked.

IAN

Really?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, if only I'd known...right?

IAN

That I wasn't gay? Or I wasn't smart enough to trick you?

STEPHANIE

(pause) No... that it'd take me so long to get a second date.

IAN

Stephanie...I...

STEPHANIE

"When it will be possible for woman
to love not in weakness but strength,
not to escape herself but find
herself, not to abase herself but
assert herself – on that day love
will become for her a source of life"

IAN

"and not of mortal danger."

STEPHANIE

Thank you for helping me find myself

IAN

I love you...Stephanie...

STEPHANIE

I think I love you too...Ian.

They kiss as the rain pours. A long kiss.

MUSIC CUE: JOE COCKER - YOU ARE SO BEAUTIFUL TO ME (REPRISE)

IAN (V.O.)

What could a guy like me possibly
have to offer a star like her? That's
the way I used to think. But then I
realised, every star is just an
ordinary person, and every ordinary
person is a star, if they decide to
look at their own life like it's a
movie, that is. Sometimes the worst
tragedies of our love lives occur
when we become so caught up with the
roles we're playing, we expect people
to fall in love with them, then get
disappointed when we haven't even
given them a chance to fall in love
with us. So if you're still watching
this, and think life once pointed its
finger at you and started laughing,
maybe it's a sign to go take off the
mask and stop taking yourself so
seriously. Who knows? Someone might
even fall in love with you.

THE END

ROBERT (V.O.)

There was no FUCKING symposium!