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Mating

"Episode 1: Caroline"

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FADE IN on JAY, 32, looking right at the camera.

JAY
"Fuck. Eat Pussy. Get urinated
on."

He LAUGHS, humiliated to be saying it out loud.

JAY (CONT'D)
I got a ton of advice when my
marriage ended, but that little
nugget... even though it came from
someone I hate, it wasn't totally
wrong. He was just trying to tell
me to live a little. Grow up.

He looks away, contemplative.

JAY (CONT'D)
It's the thing, y'know, about
women. Each one leaves a mark.
It's like you're passed from one to
the next, like a piece of clay that
can't find its shape, until one day
someone's like, "Oooh, that's an
interesting ash tray."
(a sigh)
I mean, I had to do something. I
was literally just going through
the motions when --

SMASH CUT to the episode title: CAROLINE.

INT. KINGSWOOD - EVENING - ELEVEN MONTHS AGO

A bustling Greenwich Village haunt. Jay enters in a cool Rag
and Bone jacket that looks too new, his hair neat. Lots of
pretty people crowded around a square bar. Jay looks at his
phone: A profile of a pretty girl with wavy brown hair.

He looks up, spots a BRUNETTE standing alone. Then another.
And a third by the corner of the bar. Is that her? Jay
takes a deep breath and moves in.

JAY
Are you Amelia?

BRUNETTE
Nope.

JAY
Sorry.

He turns away to find another GIRL approaching him --

GIRL
Mike?

JAY
No.

ANOTHER GUY
I'm Mike.

GIRL
Hey Mike!!

Jay looks to the SECOND BRUNETTE.

JAY
Amelia?

SECOND BRUNETTE
Karina.

THIRD BRUNETTE
Greg?

Jay spins. He's not remotely who she hoped he'd be.

JAY
No, but I can be Greg...

She rolls her eyes, heads off. It's like fucking bumper cars in here! Jay SIGHS, retreats to the corner of the bar, sits, checks his watch. He sends a text to Amelia: "At bar," then signals the BARTENDER, orders his regular drink.

JAY (CONT'D)
Hudson, on the rocks.

He looks around. People flirting, hair flipping, smiles and whispers. People looking at their phones, texting, showing off photos, taking pictures. FLASH!

There are SO many hot girls. The girl showing off her new tattoo. The girl with erect nipples poking through her t-shirt. The girl reading a book at the bar and making it look cool. The girl on coke.

The CUTS start to come FASTER... The girl with the perfect belly. The absurdly hot Lucy Liu-type. The unapproachable hottie who thinks she's better than this place (she is). The girl with... wait, is that a... a camel toe?

CLOSE ON Jay as he takes it all in, trying to figure out how he fits into this. And yes, that is a camel toe --

GIRL

Hi.

Jay turns, looks.

JAY

Amelia?

GIRL

Maura.

MAURA, 29, is not cute and not ashamed of it. She makes up for her looks with sheer enthusiasm and total honesty.

MAURA

Amelia's not coming.

JAY

You know her?

MAURA

I saw you walk through and ask around a half-hour ago. Don't come, go, then come again. It looks desperate.

(she sits next to him)

I got blown off too.

JAY

I didn't get --

MAURA

A lot of times guys show up and just HPS me.

JAY

HP..?

MAURA

Hide in Plain Sight. To see if I look anything like my picture. I don't, and they leave. I'm sure that didn't happen to you.

He's now sure it did. She signals for another drink.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Whole thing's a joke. All we do is show up to confirm if what we saw online is real.

JAY

Shouldn't be called dating. It should be called "confirming."

MAURA

Exactly.

(a smile, studying him)
Separated?

She grabs his ring finger. There's discoloration where the ring used to be, not to mention a dent.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Either you're separated, or you're an asshole who takes off his ring when he goes out.

JAY

I'm an asshole.

A badly told lie.

MAURA

How long have you been separated?

JAY

A few months. Or, a month. About.

MAURA

Sorry.

JAY

It's fine. She did me a favor.

MAURA

Okay.

JAY

She did. I've been with my... ex... since college. She set me free. It's a new world, and I'm gonna fuck it square in the ass.

MAURA

Are you drunk?

JAY

I took a muscle relaxer.

She LAUGHS. Jay slugs the rest of his drink, takes a second look at her. She's still not cute.

MAURA

Where did you "meet" Amelia?

JAY

Skout.

MAURA

So you're just looking to get laid.

JAY

I have no idea what I'm looking for.

She looks at him, thinks he's kind of charming.

MAURA

Bet you've never touched a hairless vagina?

Jay turns and looks at her a third time. Suddenly she doesn't look so bad. We SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM, KINGSWOOD - MOMENTS LATER

Jay and Maura are hardcore making out in the cramped bathroom. It's sloppy, a bit drunk, and --

JAY

Ow.

-- clunky. He just banged his head on the hand dryer. There is nothing sexy about this. She's pulling at his belt, reaching in his pants. Jay attempts to pull her shirt over her head. He catches a glimpse of her back in the mirror. She's got an ugly tattoo of... what the fuck is that? Looks like half-man, half-elk. A were-elk.

MAURA

You okay?

She means his dick. It's not getting hard.

JAY

Yeah, yeah.

A KNOCK on the door.

JAY (CONT'D)

Just a minute!

MAURA

Suck on my tits.

She undoes her bra and her breasts spill out. Jay stops. She has shockingly HUGE areolas and two ugly SCARS that stretch out below her nipples and wrap under her breasts.

MAURA (CONT'D)

Reduction. Used to be a 36DD. My back and neck were a mess.

JAY

Totally.

He takes another look at them. Not so appetizing. She keeps pulling on his dick. Nothing doing.

MAURA

Touch my pussy.

He pulls at her jeans, but they are painted on. A layer of fat hanging over her belt making it hard to get in there.

JAY

You know... I think someone out there really needs to use the facilities.

Another badly told lie. The evidence is Jay's limp penis in Maura's fingers. He's just *not* attracted to her.

JAY (CONT'D)

We should...

MAURA

Right...

She pulls on her shirt, humiliated. Jay feels awful but just wants to get out of there. They open the door and step out into --

EXT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

A line of women waiting, including the unapproachable hottie, the hot Lucy Liu and the girl on coke. They all look at Jay coming out of the bathroom with the chubby girl.

This is not remotely the way Jay imagined being single.

INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jay wakes up on the left side of a giant King-sized bed -- *his* side -- buried beneath an embroidered floral bedspread and ton of pillows. A purple orchid that never dies on the table. Vestiges of a marriage. He sits up, hungover.

WE BEGIN A MONTAGE OF JAY'S DAY, starting with...

THE BATHROOM. Jay squeezes and twists the very last bits out of a tube of organic toothpaste. A tiny dab lands on the toothbrush.

THE KITCHEN. Jay goes through the mail, finds two envelopes addressed to Katie. He TEARS them open. One is a credit card opportunity, the other an invitation to a lame BENEFIT.

JAY (PRE-LAP)

Fuck me?

PACING AROUND. Jay is on the phone.

JAY (CONT'D)

Fuck ME??

(then)

Fuck YOU, Mom.

He SLAMS the phone down.

THE COUCH. Jay reads a book about GOATS. There are FIVE other books about goats on the table.

THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR. Jay holds a guitar. A "Learn to Play Guitar" app is open on his iPad. He picks the three chords of "If I Had a Hammer." It sounds nothing like "If I Had a Hammer." Not a born musician.

PACING AGAIN. Jay leaves a series of messages for friends:

JAY (CONT'D)

Marcus? It's Jay. What are you up to?

(then again)

Hey guys! How's my favorite couple? Been too long, wanted to check in. Let's make some plans!

He hangs up, scrolls through his phone, trying to think who he can call.

THE COUCH. Jay sits. Alone. He can't bear it. END OF MONTAGE.

INT. EQUINOX - LEROY STREET, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Jay runs on the treadmill. Faster. And faster. Focused. He's watching the heart-shaped ass of a girl on the stairmaster in front of him. She's fantastic. Sweat trickles down her bare back. Jay would like to lick it.

She finishes her workout and heads for the towel rack where an OLD GUY *hits on her*. Jay can't get over it. But the girl LAUGHS at whatever he says. Man, that old guy is smooth. Then Jay double-takes.

JAY
You gotta be kidding me...

He stops his treadmill, makes a beeline for the old guy.

JAY (CONT'D)
Dad? What are you doing here?

PAUL
Kiddo!

PAUL, 61 going on 31, hugs the only son he has (from his first marriage). Jay kind of hugs him back.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Just joined. This place is great!
Brand new, right?

JAY
At least ten years old.

PAUL
New to me.

JAY
It's a gym.

PAUL
It's a nest of ass, is what it is.

JAY
Don't say "nest of ass."

PAUL
Wanna get a steam?

INT. STEAM ROOM, EQUINOX - DAY

In the mist, we can just make out father and son in conversation.

PAUL
The Front Street partners are
coming in Tuesday.

JAY
I know.

PAUL
There's still grass on the lot.

JAY
Crimson, actually.

PAUL
They just want to know we're ready
to break ground.

JAY
Got it.

HSSSSSSSSSSSS. Paul eyes his son as a new blast of steam
obscures them further.

PAUL
I'm worried about you, Kiddo.
I wish you'd let me help you.

JAY
You mean *listen* to you.

PAUL
I have been through it three times.

JAY
He says with pride.

PAUL
The only way out of this is to fuck
your way out. Eat pussy. Get
urinated on. You can try therapy.
Drugs. Pets. But nothing ever got
me over a wife faster than a good
sexual Rumspringa --

JAY
Steam is bad for your respiratory --

PAUL
Sit.

SQUISH. He sits.

JAY
I'm trying, okay? I've gone out
five nights in a row, signed up for
eight different dating sites.
Tinder is supposed to be so simple!
I accidentally right-swiped the
cleaning lady at our office.

PAUL
Lupe? Don't fuck Lupe.

JAY
I'm not planning --

PAUL
 Forget the internet. I always went
 after people I knew. It's easier.
 Who's on your list?

JAY
 What list?

PAUL
 Every married guy keeps a mental
 list of who they'd fuck tomorrow if
 their marriage ended.

No response. HSSSSSSS.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Christ. You didn't have a list?

ANOTHER GUY (O.S.)
 Debbie Howard.

That came from somewhere else in the steam room.

ANOTHER GUY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Number one with a bullet.

THIRD GUY (O.S.)
 Dr. Vasquez. My internist.

Yet another voice. Lots of opinions in the steam room.

ANOTHER GUY (O.S.)
 The barista at the Starbucks on
 68th and Lex.

THIRD GUY
 With the cheek ring? She's hot.

ANOTHER GUY
 Baristas are the most promiscuous
 workers in the service industry.

PAUL
 (beating himself up)
 I raised a son with no list...

JAY
 I'm not going to apologize for
 being in love with my wife.

PAUL
 That's the stupidest thing I've
 ever heard. Who did you think
 about when you jerked off?

JAY

Dad --

PAUL

It's a legitimate question. You gonna tell me you didn't --

JAY

Of course I jerked off!!!

Not something to really yell in the steam room. HSSSSSSSSSS.

PUSH IN on the mist until we see Jay, sweating, something coming to him. An idea. The woman he jerked off to more than any other.

WHOOSH! All the steam gets sucked out of the room by the door opening. Jay has left.

INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jay goes through the garbage to find Katie's mail he opened the other day... the benefit invitation. He scrolls down the benefit committee list to find John Lonner & Caroline Brady.

A look of determination on Jay we have not seen as we CUT TO:

INT. NUTCRACKER ROUGE - NIGHT

A contorted, half-naked woman emerges from a life-size nesting doll. Welcome to a pop-up, neo-burlesque performance of the ballet classic with the use of pasties, garter belts, bustiers and BDSM garb. It's edgy, naughty and cool. An emo/punk version of Tchaikovsky's beloved score BLASTS.

Jay stands in the back, watching a sensuous aerial acrobat dressed as a Sugar Plum Fairy as she descends into a group of gender-bending Marzipan Shepherdeses. It's sexy stuff, but he seems eager for it to be over.

INT. BACKSTAGE, NUTCRACKER ROUGE

Jay pushes through the crowd of half-dressed people to find the bohemian LEXI, 28, wiping off her Sugar Plum Fairy make-up. She can't believe he's here... again.

LEXI

Either you like seeing me naked, or you're the loneliest man on earth.

JAY
"B." But that's not why I showed
up tonight.

LEXI
Lemme guess. Katie called?

JAY
(pained)
Not for seven weeks.

LEXI
She said she wouldn't call, and she
hasn't. That's discipline.

JAY
Like the Gestapo.

LEXI
I'm sorry. I've been there.

JAY
You were married for eight months.

LEXI
Oh, so it doesn't count?

He shrugs: "Not really." She sighs, annoyed.

LEXI (CONT'D)
You can't keep hanging around here.
It's not a center for the displaced.

Jay looks around at the mix of Juilliard rejects and
strippers. Lexi glares at him. Touche.

JAY
Listen, I need a favor. Come with
me to a party.

LEXI
What party?

JAY
The Grovo for Good Summer Soirée.
It's a benefit.

LEXI
For?

JAY
(no idea)
The River Fund. So... a river.

LEXI
 (already Googling it)
 Poverty.

JAY
 Even better! I have to go for
 work. It's a big industry thing,
 and I don't want to go alone.

LEXI
 You suck.

Genuinely disappointed, Lexi packs her things in her bag.

LEXI (CONT'D)
 Did you know I moved? To a
 different borough? Had a dog for a
 year, did you know *that*? Carmello.
 Had to put him down because he bit
 a kid on the playground. Kid
 deserved it. Paid off my student
 loans, threw a party that I didn't
 even invite you to.

JAY
 I forgive you. Tuesday night,
 starts at 7 --

LEXI
 I'm serious. You've been slowly
 disappearing for ten years, and the
 last few? MIA, dude. The King of
 kept husbands. It's lame. And now
 you show up here every other night
 like everything's normal, like how
 it was... but it's not.

JAY
 I was married, Lexi. It's a
 natural thing. You don't see
 people as much --

LEXI
 I'm not *people*.

JAY
 I know.
 (then)
 Did I mention it's cocktail attire?
 I know how much you like getting
 dressed up.

She GLARES at him. He smiles, sheepishly. She's not
 forgiving him, but she'll go.

INT. BATHROOM, JAY'S APARTMENT - NEW DAY

Jay studies himself in the mirror. He grabs his toothbrush, tries to get the tiniest bit of toothpaste out of the tube of toothpaste. He *just* does. It feels like a victory.

INT. HALLWAY, BDG DEVELOPMENT - DAY

The corporate offices. Jay paces in the hallway, reading over index cards. He is distracted by the sound of VACUUMING. He looks up. LUPE, the office cleaning lady, gives Jay a lascivious glance. He quickly hurries into --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, BDG DEVELOPMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Four INVESTORS sit at the large table, Paul at the head. Jay is at the other end, giving an update.

JAY

The plans for One Front Street have officially been approved. Thirty-five luxury and mixed-income apartments to be completed by spring 2018.

The investors nod. Paul grins. Jay takes a deep breath. Here comes the pitch.

JAY (CONT'D)

I know everyone is eager to break ground, but I'd like to propose we hold off one month to do something for the community.

Paul looks up. Huh? Jay avoids eye contact, continues.

JAY (CONT'D)

As you know, The Water Street lot was once a Con Ed plant. No one wants to live on a former rat-infested electrical site, so I want to give the building a new story.

Paul's eyes narrow. You do?

JAY (CONT'D)

Last month I had the lot planted with crimson, enriching the soil with nutrients. Next? Goats.

INVESTOR #1

Goats?

JAY

To graze and clear the lot. The neighborhood can come and watch, like a public exhibit. And it will give the building its name: The Front Street Pasture.

The partners look at each other, unsure.

JAY (CONT'D)

I know time is money, but this neighborhood has been overrun with new construction. Let's put a positive spin, show them something fun can come out of it. It'll pay off in the long run.

The investors all look at Paul.

INVESTOR #2

You on board with this?

PAUL

(absolutely not)
Of course.

Jay sits back in his chair, proud of his pitch.

PAUL (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)

What the fuck was that?

EXT. EMPTY LOT - DUMBO, BROOKLYN - DAY

Paul and Jay stand beside a square, empty lot on the river.

PAUL

GOATS?!?

JAY

It's a great idea! It shows passion. Ingenuity. I thought you'd like it. It's us thinking out-of-the-box.

PAUL

What box? Those are bankers. They don't care about fun. They've bet \$30 million on this. Every day we delay just scares the shit out of them. No goats. Tractors. Immediately. Understand?
(Jay looks away, annoyed)
Hello?

Jay nods.

PAUL (CONT'D)
 Friendly reminder: this is not our
 company. Not yet.

Paul walks away. Jay seethes.

LEXI (PRE-LAP)
 I don't know why you still work for
 that prick.

INT. BALLROOM, THE DREAM HOTEL - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

A sparkling white hotel venue twenty floors above lower Manhattan with views east toward Brooklyn. It's a downtown crowd, eclectic with some Wall Street thrown in.

Lexi and Jay wind through the crowd. Without giving it away, he has his eyes out for someone in particular.

LEXI
 You know he still sexts my mother?

JAY
 Thought she got a restraining order.

LEXI
 Yeah, but she likes the attention.

JAY
 Our parents are infants. All of them. My mother called me the other day to say "I told you so."

LEXI
 What did she tell you?

JAY
 Not to marry Katie. Twelve years ago.

A passing tray of seafood. Lexi reaches for a shrimp, giving Jay a view of her backless dress. She indeed got dolled up for tonight.

JAY (CONT'D)
 You dress up nice.

LEXI
 Didn't want to embarrass you. Who we here to see, anyway?

JAY
No one. In particular.
(then)
Remember Caroline Brady?

LEXI
Sounds familiar.

JAY
She was in our wedding party.

LEXI
Katie's friend?

JAY
They're not really friends anymore.
Katie thinks Caroline is shallow and
insecure. And bulimic.

LEXI
Is she?

JAY
I think she's cool. And hot.
Katie doesn't like people that are
hotter and cooler than she is.

LEXI
Like me.

JAY
Katie liked you. She just didn't
understand our relationship.

LEXI
Whatever. She work in real estate?

JAY
Who?

LEXI
Caroline Brady. This is a work
thing, right?

JAY
Yes! Right.

Lexi eyes him, unsure why he's suddenly acting funny.

LEXI
So I've been hanging out with a
fifty-two year old.

JAY

Man?

LEXI

He's an adult. He doesn't text, he calls. He's never heard of Coachella, wears grown-up shoes --

Jay finally spots CAROLINE BRADY, 31, very beautiful, a little vain, masks her unhappiness by doing a ton of pilates.

JAY

I need to run to the men's room.

Poof! He's gone, leaving Lexi alone and confused. She decides to follow.

ON JAY as he winds through the crowd. He grabs another drink from a passing waiter -- liquid courage -- eyes locked on --

CAROLINE, looking uncomfortable beside her Clark Kent of a husband, DAVID. He's entertaining a small audience. Caroline fakes smiles, fixes a piece of hair that's barely out of place. She's bored. Then she spots --

JAY. Total surprise. And a little relief. She waves, then WHISPERS something to her husband and slips away.

CAROLINE

Jay?

JAY

Look at you. This is fancy.

CAROLINE

It's a David thing. An excuse for his Wall Street friends to act like they care about something.

(she giggles)

God, that was cynical.

JAY

Noooo. What did George Bernard Shaw say about cynicism?

CAROLYN

I have no idea.

JAY

Me neither, really. Something about accurate observation is called cynicism by people who don't have it.

CAROLYN
I love that. What were you, an
English major?

JAY
Minor. Unused, until *just now*.

They LAUGH. She looks around, a little nervous.

JAY (CONT'D)
Don't worry, Katie's not here.

CAROLINE
I invited her but never heard back.

JAY
This isn't her kind of thing.

CAROLINE
You look good in a suit.

She touches his arm. It's giving him confidence.

JAY
Sorry we haven't seen each other...

CAROLINE
Ugh. These divorce situations --
they're so awkward.

JAY
Not divorced yet, but... we can
still be friends, right?

CAROLINE
Not really. I'd love to say yes,
but it's not realistic to stay
friends with both. I mean, you can
say you will, but then you're
keeping secrets, and lying, and
it's just... Katie and I... y'know,
she's one of my best friends.

JAY
Is she?

A beat. Caroline looks at him.

CAROLINE
What's that supposed to mean?

JAY
I mean, I know you guys *used* to be
really close, but...

CAROLINE

But...?

JAY

Forget it. Forget I said anything.

Caroline's face contorts. He's touched a nerve.

CAROLINE

Did *she* say something?

JAY

No, no. I mean, there was that thing with the beach rental, but --

CAROLINE

I found the house, so I got choice of rooms --

JAY

It was a dump anyway --

CAROLINE

How is that, like, still a thing...?

JAY

Just seems like you guys have drifted, and, y'know, I always thought we had chemistry. You and me. Us.

She glares at him, trying to read the tea leaves. Now Jay leans in, ready to seal the deal.

JAY (CONT'D)

I know about Mike.

CAROLINE

Sorry?

JAY

I know. Katie told me.

CAROLINE

What exactly did Katie *tell* you?

JAY

You want me to say it right here?
(under his breath)
"Unfaithful."

CAROLINE

BITCH.

She grabs Jay's hand and drags him toward an exit. This couldn't be going better! He grabs two beers on the way.

ON LEXI. She sees Caroline dragging Jay out to...

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

A narrow balcony 20 floors over the street. Jay offers her a beer. She is too mental. He puts her beer on the railing.

CAROLINE
Why would she betray me?!?

JAY
Married people tell each other everything.

CAROLINE
No they don't!

JAY
It's cool. I'm not judging you or anything. I just thought if you were not really into it anymore...

CAROLINE
Into what? My marriage?

JAY
That.

He grins, sips his beer, feeling good about his case.

CAROLINE
Wait a sec. What are you doing...?

He shrugs, a hint of suggestion.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
We're raising half a million dollars for poor kids, and you're here to... What is wrong with you??

JAY
No. I --

CAROLINE
Mike and I are doing communication coaching and insight-oriented therapy. People make mistakes! Jesus... You want me to tell you what Katie said about you?

JAY
 (touch of panic)
 What did Katie say about me?

CAROLINE
 She said "treadmill" like a billion times, and she wasn't talking about the gym. Oh, and she thinks you're in love your stepsister.

JAY
 What?!? That's insane --

The door SLIDES open and --

LEXI
 Hi. Hey. Hi.

Lexi steps out, just in the nick of time.

JAY
 Caroline, remember my step-sister, Lexi? You met at the wedding.

Caroline is puffy, all worked up.

CAROLINE
ASS-HOLE.

She storms back inside. Lexi looks at Jay.

LEXI
 What did you just do?

JAY
 Nothing --
 (off her look)
 I just... I thought she --

LEXI
 Omigod. You can't be this dense. I can't be this dense. I mean, I busted out a vintage Lanvin dress for tonight. To help you, not be an accomplice to your insanity.

She's had it with him. She bolts for the exit. Jay turns to follow but accidentally KNOCKS the beer bottle OVER THE RAILING. Oh shit.

Silence. Listening. Jay and Lexi frozen.

More silence. It's 20 floors down.

Then a distant CRASH. Followed by a SCREAM.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - NIGHT

Jay sits in the crowded precinct, dejected.

He checks his watch. Why hasn't anyone come for him?

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAWN

Wearing unflattering bike shorts, Paul leads his son out of the station.

PAUL

They were going to charge you with a hate crime.

JAY

It didn't hit the bellhop. It hit the cart.

PAUL

Well, you got *lucky*. I was headed to a 7 am spin class, saw the message from your former step-sister. You still talk to that freak?

JAY

We're friends.

PAUL

Some friend. She wanted to leave you in the clink. She's punitive. Like her mother. Stay away from those people. Hear me?

(no response)

Hello?

JAY

(meekly)

Stop.

PAUL

Excuse me?

JAY

Just STOP. The ultimatums, the advice --

PAUL

I'm trying to help, kiddo. The end of a marriage doesn't have to be *this* dramatic --

JAY

How can you seriously give me advice about --?!? You and Mom were the worst role models ever. I never had a chance.

PAUL

Now it's our fault?

Paul tries to bite his tongue. It's never been his forte.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Let me tell you something, you little shitbag. I'm the most authentic person you know. Who are you? I don't even recognize you anymore. Spending the night in jail, hanging out with has-been siblings -- and don't get me started about the goats. You need to get your head out of your ass. Pronto. Before you burn the house down.

(takes a breath, sweetly)

Why don't you come spinning with me? Sweat it out.

Jay looks at him. A dead stare.

Paul sighs, hails a cab, leaving Jay alone on the sidewalk. He watches the taxi go, hating his father, or hating himself. Maybe both.

He narrows his eyes, and we CUT TO:

INT. U-HAUL - MORNING

Jay chugs a coffee, waits impatiently for U-Haul to open.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jay emerges from the lot behind the wheel of an 8-foot PICK-UP TRUCK, "Just \$19.95 a day!" in bold letters on the side.

EXT. NEW YORK STATE THRUWAY - DAY

Jay blasts Houndmouth's "My Cousin Greg" as he streams north on I-87, the city fading away and turning to farm land.

EXT. NETTLE MEADOW FARM - DAY

A goat and sheep farm nestled at the foot of Crane Mountain. The kind of place you can breathe.

Jay stands by a pen of goats, watching them, as LORRAINE FLANNIGAN, 48, distrustful of city folk, approaches.

LORRAINE

Can I help you?

JAY

I called earlier about purchasing goats.

LORRAINE

You're from the city.

JAY

Yes.

She eyes the dark circles under his eyes, his rumpled clothes.

LORRAINE

You planning to make your own cheese?

JAY

No.

LORRAINE

Your own cashmere?

JAY

Actually looking to clear an acre of land. Been reading a lot about goats. How they have four stomach compartments, how they're terrified of water...

A male buck mounts a female doe.

JAY (CONT'D)

How they *don't* mate for life.

LORRAINE

That one's a badass. We call him Walter White.

Jay watches the buck with a grin.

JAY
I'll take him. And three more.

Jay gets a text from his dad: "Spinning = awesome. You missed out." Jay looks back to Lorraine.

JAY (CONT'D)
Make it five.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, NETTLE MEADOW FARM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

CLANK. Jay opens the flatbed of the pick-up truck. Lorraine ushers the goats in when a car pulls into the driveway. SHIELA, much sunnier than Lorraine, climbs out carrying groceries.

SHIELA
Hello!

Jay grins. She gives Lorraine a warm kiss on the lips.

SHIELA (CONT'D)
I got gluten free bagels.

LORRAINE
Told you. I won't eat them.

SHIELA
Maybe you'll try them.

LORRAINE
No, I won't.

Shiela playfully rolls her eyes at Jay, who grins at this little taste of domestic bliss.

JAY
Ever hear of Marvis?

Shiela looks at him. Lorraine doesn't, busy securing the goats by rope to the flatbed.

JAY (CONT'D)
It's fancy English toothpaste,
tastes like glue. My... wife, she
insists we use it. Has since we
met. I can't stand it, but I
still...

LORRAINE

Congratulations. You're a better person.

SHIELA

Ignore her.

(then)

What will your wife say about buying goats?

JAY

She'll just be glad I'm doing something out of the box. That's her thing. I'm not passionate enough sometimes.

(a sad smile)

Except about her.

Lorraine eyes him, distrustful all over again.

LORRAINE

You know sacrificing a goat is a crime punishable by law.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY

Jay drives home to New York City with the goats secured in the flatbed of the truck.

His phone rings. He doesn't recognize the number.

JAY

Hello?

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Come to my apartment. Now.

JAY

Who -- ?

CAROLINE (O.S.)

It's Caroline.

A beat. Jay's eyes flash to the goats in the flatbed.

JAY

Um. I'm sort of --

CAROLINE

Fast. Before I change my mind.

Jay steps on the gas.

EXT. TRIBECA - DAY

Jay parallel parks the pick-up, checks the sign. One hour parking. That should do. But what about the goats? He gets out, considers the situation.

JAY
(firmly)
Stay.

He starts across the street only to hear a HORRIBLE bleating sound. Jay spins. Walter White is dangling by the rope from the side of the flatbed, asphyxiating himself. He tried to follow, but he's attached to the other goats and the truck.

Jay races back to save him, hoisting the goat back into the flatbed. Phew. Now what? SMASH CUT TO:

Jay loads the goats into the cab of the pick-up, pushing them individually into the cramped space as they BLEAT and resist. Ever hear of "stubborn as a goat"?

He wedges the last one in, tries to SLAM the door. It won't shut. Fuuuuck. A passerby glares at him, disgusted. Jay has no other choice but to --

Jay CROSSES the street "walking" five goats by a rope. He stops at a fancy walk-up building and rings the buzzer.

INT. TRIBECA BUILDING - DAY

Jay climbs the stairwell, stops on the third floor landing and ties the goats to a steam pipe. He looks at them, stern.

JAY
Not a word.

He slips into the hallway, hurries to a metal door. Jay KNOCKS. He fixes his hair, takes a whiff of himself. He smells like a barn.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
It's open.

INT. LOFT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jay steps inside a sprawling apartment shrouded in darkness. The shades are drawn, but afternoon light creeps in here and there, casting strange shadows.

CAROLINE
Over here.

She's sitting on an oversized chair in a robe.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 Mike's in D.C. for the day. Sent
 my kids to a playdate with a kid
 they barely know.
 (then)
 Have a drink.

A bottle of Hudson rye sits on the table.

JAY
 That's my drink...

CAROLINE
 That's why I bought it. You drank
 it that whole summer we rented.

Jay's eyes light up. The fact that she remembered is empowering. He pours himself a glass. Caroline is fidgety and insecure.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 I don't know how he lost interest.
 My husband. I mean, look at me.
 I'm a sexual person. I always have
 been. I watched porn with him,
 bought myself a G-swirl and let him
 watch. But it wasn't enough.

JAY
 G-swirl?

CAROLINE
 Dildo.

JAY
 Oh.

CAROLINE
 We're working through it. I want
 to forgive him, but I can't. Not
 unless, maybe, I do something.
 (convincing herself)
 Been thinking it should be with a
 stranger, but finding someone out
 there... it's scary. Then you, out
 of nowhere...
 (a beat)
 I just need to do this and not feel
 bad about it.

Jay nods, feels her insecurity. He summons every ounce of confidence he owns and goes for it.

JAY

Can I tell you... that summer we rented the beach house, you probably don't remember, but I was up early one morning, just came back from a run, and I'm stretching in the living room, and you walk out with your hair a mess and these pajamas... these white... silk maybe? I don't know, but you went into the kitchen to make coffee, and the light was behind you. You were, like, backlit... and I could see *everything*. Your...

(symbol for "tits")

...were silhouetted, your... nipples like...

(holds his pinkie up)

And your...

(symbol for pussy)

Was this perfect... strip... it was beautiful. I mean, I felt bad looking, but I couldn't stop. Not to be crass, but... I have... thought about it hundreds of times.

She is totally surprised by this admission. And aroused.

CAROLINE

Do it now.

JAY

What?

CAROLINE

Touch yourself. I want to watch.

She opens her robe, revealing her stellar fucking body.

Jay unbuckles his belt. He can't believe he's doing this. He reaches into his pants and starts to touch himself.

It arouses her even more. She starts to touch herself. Closes her eyes, getting really into it.

Jay takes in the tableau... two people masturbating ten feet from each other. Simply put... it's awesome.

Finally, Caroline can't stand it anymore. She jumps off the couch and --

SLAM! She backs Jay up against the wall, making out furiously... ravenously.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 Mmmm. You taste like fresh cut
 grass.

Before he knows it, she's sucking his dick. Almost too
 aggressively. Then --

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
 Here.

Caroline races for her purse and removes a condom. She TEARS
 it open, hands it to Jay. He tries to put it on, but it's
 been a while since he's put on a condom, and it was never
 that easy to begin with.

An awkward moment as he works on it.

JAY
 Amazing that condom technology has
 not changed.

CAROLINE
 Hurry.

JAY
 Really need a Steve Jobs outside-
 the-box thinker for the industry.
 The iPod of condoms.

CAROLINE
 Stop talking. Please.

JAY
 On!

Good. She drags him to the kitchen counter. She sits up on
 the marble top and pulls him between her legs. They make out
 more, he fondles her breasts. This is about to *finally*
 happen when --

CAROLINE
 Wait.

JAY
 What?

CAROLINE
 I can't look at you.

JAY
 You can't --

CAROLINE
 Your face.

She hops off the sink and turns around...

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Makes me feel too guilty.

She faces the counter so he can fuck her from behind.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Do it.

JAY
You sure you're okay?

CAROLINE
No, I'm not okay! I'm about to cheat on my husband because he cheated on me. I feel petty and stupid. But I want to do it. So just...

JAY
Right, but --

CAROLINE
Make me.

JAY
What..?

CAROLINE
Force me. Like I don't have a choice.
(turning to him)
I'm serious. Grab me -- throw me against the wall.

JAY
But that's kind of like...

CAROLINE
Not if I don't complain.
(stern)
Do it.

Um. Okay. He **SHOVES** her *lightly* against the fridge. Colorful kids magnets **CLATTER** to the floor.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Cover my mouth so I can't scream.

JAY
Really?

CAROLINE
Call me something --

JAY
Caroline --

CAROLINE
Call me a cunt.

JAY
Cuntoline!

She grabs his ass from behind and thrusts him into her.

She lets out a primal MOAN, like she can't get enough of it.

Jay is trying to get into it, but this is starting feel like an out-of-body experience when --

CAROLINE
DON'T MOVE!

Jay freezes. Caroline maneuvers her body just right, knows exactly what feels good to her. Tiny movements. Infinitesimal. In a matter of ten seconds, she... ORGASMS with the force of the Roman Army.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Holy hell. That was super hot.
Did you cum?

JAY
(no)
Totally.

CAROLINE
Mmmmm. I'll be right back.

She goes into the bathroom.

Jay catches a glimpse of himself in a full-length mirror. There he is, pants around the ankles, left standing in the middle of the room, an empty condom on his penis.

From the hallway, we hear a distant BLEAT.

INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jay comes home to his empty apartment. He washes his hands in the sink, sits down on the couch. Alone.

He goes through Katie's mail. Nothing.

Pours himself a stiff glass of bourbon. Then another.

He readies for bed in his half-empty apartment.

Jay works the tube of toothpaste but cannot get even a morsel out of it. It's truly done. He can't bear it.

He pops a muscle relaxer. Washes it down with more bourbon.

Jay on the guitar. Practicing the chords. Trying to play "If I Had a Hammer." Can't get the chords right. And he's getting frustrated. It's so basic! He's fucked up, kind of out of it, but trying to just play one damn chord.

He tries again, and it GROANS. And he loses it.

He SMASHES the guitar, then again -- all of his rage and sadness coming out -- until it splinters into a heap of firewood.

He feels a little better. Runs his fingers through his hair, and blood streaks across his forehead.

His hand is bleeding. Some piece of the guitar must've done it. A neat three inch gash that's oozing blood.

JAY

Fuck.

Jay hurries into the bathroom, starts going through the medicine cabinet searching for peroxide. He can't find it.

A little hysterical, he goes to the hall closet, pulling towels and other supplies out. Still nothing.

Into the kitchen, blood dripping on the floor, looking through cabinets.

Katie would know where it is. She totally would. He needs her. Right now. Jay grabs the phone with his good hand and dials from memory. She doesn't answer. After the BEEP:

JAY (CONT'D)

Katie, it's me. Me. Jay. I know I'm not supposed to... but I can't find... I cut myself and... where's the peroxide? You always used it to clean your ears. You used it. And now I can't find it. And I need it. I know you know where it is. Please. Call me.

He hangs up. Wishes he didn't call her. Sort of. He sits on the couch, hand wrapped in a bloody towel.

CUT TO BLACK.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OVER BLACK)
Jay? Open your eyes...

INT. JAY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jay wakes up on the couch, hair matted, mouth open, the blood soaked towel now a stain of crimson on the couch. Someone standing above him, a total haze. As the image comes into focus, he realizes it's --

KATIE. Hair in a bun, no make-up, undeniably pretty. Is this a dream? Or a total nightmare?

KATIE
Sit up. Jayson.

She is holding a small paper bag, removes a bottle of hydrogen peroxide from the bag. She also brought band-aids.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Good thing you didn't get the locks changed.

She goes to the kitchen counter to get a fresh towel, notices a pile of opened mail. Her mail. She chooses not to say anything about it, returns to Jay and sits down on the couch.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Let me see.

He holds out his hand. She delicately unwraps the towel to reveal an oozing cut.

KATIE (CONT'D)
When did you take up guitar?

JAY
Few weeks ago.

KATIE
Supposed to be the hardest of the string instruments.

JAY
Your hair is different.

KATIE
I put some red in it.

A pall of sadness. She starts to clean the cut.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Heard you've been hitting the
charity circuit.

Jay looks up. Gulp.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Caroline Brady called me.

JAY
Oh. Did she?

KATIE
I told you that stuff about her and
David in complete confidence.

JAY
That. *Yes. You did.*

KATIE
And you told her I don't like her?

JAY
You don't.

KATIE
That's *my* business. Why would... I
mean, is this how it's going to be?
You going to go to every friend we
had and say shit about me?

JAY
No.

She shakes her head, finishes wrapping his hand with gauze.

KATIE
If you're trying to hurt me, or get
back at me --

JAY
I'm not. That's not what...

It dawns on him that he totally was trying to get back at
her. That's what this whole thing was. Jay lowers his head.

JAY (CONT'D)
Are you seeing someone?

KATIE
It doesn't matter.

JAY
It matters to me.

She rises, uncomfortable, ready to go.

KATIE
No. But I will be.

She takes her key off her key ring and leaves it on the counter, then looks back at him.

KATIE (CONT'D)
There's a new bandage in the bag.
Change it in a day or so.

She exits. Jay sits, looks at his bandage. Well done.

As he starts to clean up his apartment, we PRE-LAP an emo/punk version of Tchaikovsky and CUT TO:

INT. NUTCRACKER ROUGE - NIGHT

Lexi twists and turns with elegance and grace as she descends from the ceiling of the theater. She's half-naked, and he notices how good she looks.

INT. BACKSTAGE, NUTCRACKER ROUGE - NIGHT

Lexi finishes taking off her make-up, gathers her things to go home, when she sees Jay standing by the doorway.

JAY
Wanna see something cool?

No response. She can't believe he has the nerve to show up.

JAY (CONT'D)
It's important. Please.

EXT. ROOF, CONSTRUCTION TRAILER - NIGHT

Jay and Lexi sit on the roof of a trailer with the giant, open lot, now a pasture, in front of them. The goats are grazing. Jay points to the lot:

JAY
The entrance will be there. The garage and the main lobby there.

LEXI
How many floors?

JAY
Eight. Including the penthouse.

LEXI
How long will that take to build?

JAY
Years. It's a painstaking process.
Changes a little bit at a time.

A beat. He sneaks a look at her.

JAY (CONT'D)
A long time ago we helped each
other through a rough time. We're
like... veterans of the same war.
I didn't forget, but you're right,
I lost track. Let my marriage get
in the way. I've been a shitty
friend. Or brother. Whatever I
am. And I'm sorry.

LEXI
Whatever. You didn't do it on
purpose.

JAY
That's a bad excuse. You're the
best person I know, and I need you.

That's what she wanted to hear. She looks at the goats.

LEXI
Your dad's gonna be pissed.

Jay grins, shrugs.

JAY
I'm shaking things up.

LEXI
It's great to see.

He nods, grins.

JAY
I mean, there are people out there
that masturbate in front of each
other.

She LAUGHS. He smiles, knowingly. His cell phone RINGS.

JAY (CONT'D)
You gotta be kidding me...

He shows the phone to Lexi: "Mom calling."

LEXI
She calling to apologize?

JAY
Yeah, right.
(a heavy sigh)
Tell me I'm not turning into my
parents. I've spent my life --

LEXI
You're not.
(a beat)
You're not anything. Not yet.

Jay knows she's right. As they continue to sit and watch the goats, we hear:

JAY (V.O.)
Goats don't actually graze. They
browse. Sounds like the same
thing, but it's not.

WIDE SHOT OF THE PASTURE. A HUGE view of lower Manhattan is the backdrop. It's a stunning sight.

JAY (V.O.)
They spend a lot of time
investigating, exploring. A fancy
way of saying they're picky.
Except when it comes to females.

CLOSE ON JAY, the uncertainty of his future in his eyes.

JAY (V.O.)
A buck in rut can mate up to twenty
times a day. He'll actually
urinate all over himself, let it
soak in, ferment, until it stinks
so bad it attracts does and brings
them into heat. It's a form of
madness, but, y'know...

INT. SCENE FROM THE BEGINNING - JAY TALKING TO CAMERA
He's looking right into the camera, contemplative.

JAY

...I get it. It *is* madness. Katie and I were solid. We didn't have goat sex, but... solid. I thought. Now? Well, now I'm just part of the herd.

HARD OUT.

THE END