MOMENT OF CRISIS

By

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INT. OFFICE ROOM - DAY

A man in a nicely tailored suit MR. PLUMMER is standing in his office looking outside through his window, talking to someone on phone.

MR. PLUMMER
(angrily)
We wouldn’t have lost the contract if Laura Inc. didn’t know the details of our tender.
(beat)
That’s right. I am going to file a lawsuit against you.

Mr. Plummer slams the phone down in anger, turns around his desk and sits on chair. Someone knocks on the door.

MR. PLUMMER
Yes.

A lady dressed elegantly opens the door.

THE LADY
Mr. Plummer, Ryan Davis is here for the interview.

MR. PLUMMER
(has forgotten about the interview and he is just realizing it)
Oh yes...Send him in.

He looks at the wall clock in his room that shows 9:00 am.

INT. OFFICE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The wall clock in the room shows 9:15 am. Mr. Plummer and Ryan are sitting across the table, both leaning forward towards each other.

RYAN
That’s why, I am extremely interested in being your accountant.

MR. PLUMMER
Tell me about your strengths Ryan.

RYAN
Well, I have strong problem solving skills, I am a good communicator, and I am very honest.

(CONTINUED)
Mr. Plummer leans back, takes in a moment.

    MR. PLUMMER
    Can you tell me about an occasion
    where you displayed that you are
    honest?

A phone rings.

    MR. PLUMMER
    Sorry, give me few seconds.

Mr. Plummer picks up the phone.

    MR. PLUMMER
    Hello.
    (beat)
    Yeah you heard about it...

Ryan leans back and reminisces.

    NICK (V.O.)
    So, how was your Christmas?

INT. CLASS ROOM - DAY

    RYAN
    It was ok, working most of the
time.

    NICK
    Well at least you get a good staff
discount.

    RYAN
    umm..yeah well...

Nick looks around casually, then turns to Ryan and...

    NICK
    I was thinking if you can
    (beat)
    buy a...buy me a laptop at a staff
discount.

Ryan is about to react.

    NICK
    Now before you say no, hear me out.
    (emotionally)
    (MORE)

    (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NICK (cont’d)
My father’s 50th birthday is coming. You understand, 50th birthday. I wanna give him a really really good gift. Now a decent laptop will at least cost $800. You know I can’t afford that. So I need your help this time.

Ryan leans back, looks around, looks at Nick and...

RYAN
(equally emotionally as he leans forward)
Nick I understand. I really do. But you know I will not cheat my company.

NICK
It’s just this one time!

Ryan exhales and looks away.

NICK
(seeing Ryan’s reaction)
That’s ok.

Ryan looks at Nick. Nick smiles apologetically.

NICK
Don’t worry about it.
(beat)
Oh by the way, what happened to your interview the other day?

RYAN
(still in the sadness of denying his friend)
Yeah I ah...
(realizes that its all good now and smiles)
Oh I am joining as soon as we graduate.

NICK
(with a big smile)
Wow man congratulations! Collins and Partners.
(nods)
Wow that’s great.

(CONTINUED)
A teacher in his 50s enters the room and everyone stops talking and takes their places.

EXT. SAME CLASS ROOM – LATER

Ryan comes out of the classroom and sees Nick talking to someone. Nick points Ryan to wait for a second. Ryan nods. Nick finishes his conversation and joins Ryan. As they are walking...

RYAN
What do you think about this course?

NICK
It’s alright.

RYAN
Yeah, it’s ok.

NICK
I am really worried about French this semester.

RYAN
Why are you taking a language? Take something else.

NICK
I can’t! Nothing else fits in my schedule.

RYAN
(chuckles)
Don’t worry I will help you out.

NICK
(exited)
Thanks man. I knew I can count on you.

RYAN
Yeah no problem.

Ryan spots that a girl JEN is talking to a male student.
CONTINUED:

RYAN
Alright, I’ll see you in Econ.

Nick leaves. Ryan walks towards Jen as the student talking to her leaves. As Ryan approaches her...

RYAN
(with a smile, as he points towards the guy leaving)
I hope you are not leaving me.

JEN
(with a smile)
I’m thinking about it.

Ryan and Jen laugh. Ryan is now standing in front of her. Jen looks over Ryan’s shoulder as his teacher comes out of classroom and goes away in the opposite direction. Seeing her, Ryan also looks back and as he turns towards her...

JEN
So, what do you think?

RYAN
Was he nice to you as you were growing up?

Jen is surprised.

JEN
(smiles)
Yeah.

Ryan shows an exaggerated expression of deep thinking. Jen frowns.

RYAN
no no no he is good.

Jen relaxes as they both laugh.

RYAN
(smiling)
Alright lets go.

Ryan and Jen leaves.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.
INT. SAME CLASS ROOM

There is a hand drawn clock on the blackboard. The class is writing intently and quietly. Ryan is upset as he gets up and hands the paper to the teacher and so does other students in the class. He walks out of the class with Nick. Nick has a smile on his face.

EXT. SAME CLASS ROOM

As Ryan and Nick are walking...

NICK
How did you do?

RYAN
The questions were too tricky for a quiz.

NICK
There were similarities with the questions he did in the lectures.

RYAN
(with a sarcastic smirk)
Lectures? Yeah they were great.

NICK
Did you read the detailed lecture notes he posted online?

RYAN
I prefer the textbook.

NICK
Did you do the last year’s quiz?

RYAN
Yeah, but he didn’t post any solutions.

(beat)
How did you do?

NICK
I did good.

Ryan and Nick walks away.
INT. A MODEST HOUSE - LATER

Ryan enters the house. He hears the ARGUMENTS coming from his parents’ bedroom regarding buying a new car. His father comes out of the room by SLAMMING the door. Hearing the slam Ryan turns back towards the door, quickly opens it, and pretends to close it as if he is just entering.

FATHER
(seeing Ryan)
How was your day?

RYAN
It was good.

FATHER
Sorry about that.

RYAN
About what?

FATHER
Nothing. Your mom and I were -

RYAN
Actually, I have rented this DVD today.

Ryan pulls his bag from his shoulders, takes a DVD out and hands it to his father.

FATHER
(looking at the DVD of Empire Strikes Back)
Nice.

RYAN
We can watch it tonight after dinner.

FATHER
Yeah sure! That will be great.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.
INT. SAME CLASS ROOM

There is a hand drawn clock on the blackboard. The class is writing intently and quietly. Ryan is upset as he gets up and hands the paper to the teacher and so do other students in the class. He walks out of the classroom with Nick.

EXT. SAME CLASS ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

As Ryan and Nick are walking...

  NICK
  (carefully)
  How was your quiz?

  RYAN
  (sadly)
  Not good.

  NICK
  (seeing that Ryan is upset)
  Actually, there were some unexpected questions.

  RYAN
  How did you do?

  NICK
  (pauses)
  Not as good as last time.

  RYAN
  Ya but, its not like you are gonna fail.

  NICK
  Well, as long as you didn’t leave anything blank.

  RYAN
  I did what I could.

  NICK
  We still have a midterm and a quiz before the final exam.

  RYAN
  I don’t think things are going to be any different.
INT. LIBRARY

Ryan is intently studying at a table. Jen comes there. Ryan gives her a quick glance and then continues studying.

JEN
Hey, would you like to go out tonight?

RYAN
I have to do these questions.

JEN
(casually)
Just do it later.

RYAN
(upset)
I have already lost 10% by failing those two quizzes. I have to make sure that I score in the midterm.

JEN
Relax. I am sure you will do good.

RYAN
Relax? This is a core course. If I fail I won’t graduate this year.

JEN
I was just--

RYAN
Also I don’t wanna lose Collins and Partners.

Jen nods.

JEN
You can ask Dad for extra help.

Ryan looks away.

JEN
What happened?

RYAN
(while looking away)
His one-on-one sessions were no different than his lectures.
JEN
(firmly)
Well then, maybe it’s just you.

Ryan looks at Jen. They share a moment while looking at each other. Then Ryan says while looking at her.

RYAN
I am busy.

Ryan looks down at his books and settles to a studying position. Jen sits there for a moment looking at him hoping that he will look up but he does not. So she stands up and leaves.

INT. ANOTHER HOUSE - NIGHT

There is a T.V. noise in the background. Jen comes out of her room. She looks into the living room and finds out that her Dad is watching T.V. She sneaks into her Dad’s room. Goes to his desk. Flips around papers as she is trying to find something. She finds what she needs. She takes a blank paper, picks up a pen and starts to write something down. After a while, her father enters the room. She gets tensed and turns the paper on which she is writing and starts to scribble. As her Dad approaches her...

JEN
Do you have a black pen?

Her dad picks one pen out of a pen stack and hands it to Jen.

DAD
Try this.

He then picks up his glasses and walks out. Jen relaxes.

EXT. ANOTHER CLASS ROOM - DAY

Ryan comes out of the classroom and sees Jen waiting for him there holding some papers.

RYAN
Sorry about last night.

Jen holds his elbow and takes him aside. Ryan finds it funny as he starts to laugh a bit.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
(smiling)
What?

JEN
Here.

Jen hands him some papers. As Ryan is looking at them...

RYAN
(smiling)
What’s this?

JEN
Midterm questions.

Ryan’s smile goes away as he looks up. Seeing his reaction Jen says...

JEN
I know you are going through a rough time.

RYAN
(shakes his head up and down)
Yes I am certainly going through now.

JEN
(surprised)
Don’t you wanna join Collins and Partners?

RYAN
Thank you for your confidence in me.

Jen takes in a moment.

JEN
You know this wasn’t exactly a cakewalk, nor was last night.

RYAN
(pointing to the papers)
So this is what your opinion is on me?

Jen looks away as she folds her arms. Ryan takes a moment to think. Then he holds her by her arms. Jen continues to look away.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Look, don’t worry I have been making really good progress. I am sure I will be prepared by the time midterm comes. So now...
(smiles as he tries to look her into her eyes)
If you will excuse me I have to get to my next class.

Jen chuckles and looks at him.

JEN
(smiling and rolling her eyes)
That’s all you can think of.

As Ryan hands the papers to Jen...

RYAN
Here, you keep this. I will see you later.

JEN
(smiles)
Bye.

RYAN
Bye.

Ryan starts to walk away. Jen stands there seeing him leave. Ryan turns around the corner and goes away. Jen glances at the papers, squeezes them, looks up, slightly nods with a little smile, turns and leaves.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. SAME CLASS ROOM

There is a hand drawn clock on the blackboard. The class is writing intently and quietly. Ryan is upset as he gets up and hands the stapled papers to the teacher. The teacher puts those papers on a stack of papers that reads MIDTERM. Other students also start to return the papers. Ryan storms out of the classroom.
EXT. SAME CLASS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick comes out of classroom and as he is walking in the same direction as Ryan.

NICK
(shouts)
Ryan!

Ryan does not respond and walks away.

INT. RYAN’S HOUSE - LATER

A pressure cooker WHISTLES. A lady turns off the stove. Ryan comes home. The lady is his mother. She is putting dinner on the dining table. It seems that her makeup has washed away in tears. His father is sitting on the couch watching T.V. with an upset face, who does not look at Ryan when he gets home. Seeing that, Ryan goes to his mother.

MOTHER
How was your exam?

RYAN
I tried my best.

His mother puts food on the dining table.

MOTHER
(looks at his father)
I have heard that before.

She goes in the kitchen. Ryan spots some open papers with an envelope below them. He steps up, picks them up and it reads TERMINATION DUE TO POSITION ELIMINATION on the heading. His mother brings some plates, Ryan steps back, and she puts them on the table. She starts to prepare the dining table while glancing at his father...

MOTHER
You’ll always be a failure if you remain content with "I tried my best".

In the background there is a noise of Foosball and its increasing.

MOTHER
No one will want to stick around with a failure.

CUT TO:
INT. UNIVERSITY ROOM FOR FREE FOOSBALL

The ball is hit back and forth as Ryan and Jen are playing Foosball.

RYAN
I am sorry I was a bit hyper when you gave me those quiz questions the other day.

JEN
I shouldn’t even have done it.

RYAN
You were only trying to help me.

JEN
I didn’t realize that you would rather fail.

RYAN
Not everyone has guts to take such a risk.

JEN
I can be quite stupid at times.

The ball is hit back and forth. The ball enters the slot couple of times as they keep scoring.

RYAN
For the next quiz, I was thinking... only if it is not a big deal for you...

JEN
What?

RYAN
(reluctantly)
I kind of want to look at the questions for the next quiz.

Jen is surprised and her grip on the handle loosens. Ryan stokes the Foosball handle, the ball enters the slot, and Ryan looks up to find that Jen is surprised.

RYAN
It’s just that I want to make sure that I have prepared as well as I could.

Jen nods reluctantly. Then she glances at her watch.

(CONTINUED)
JEN
Alright I have a class.

Jen picks up her backpack.

RYAN
Aren’t we catching a movie?

JEN
I forgot, she is going to start a new topic today. It’s important.

RYAN
Well ok. I guess I will call you tonight. We will go for dinner. How about that?

JEN
I’ll see you later.

Jen leaves. Ryan watches her leave.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ryan is studying with his laptop and books opened up and papers on his table. He checks his email, and sees that Jen has sent him the scan of the quiz questions. He calls her through his cell phone, she doesn’t pick up. The phone goes into answering service.

RYAN
Hey Jen, thanks for the questions. I hope that your father has not suspected you. Alright, I will talk to you later. Bye.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. SAME CLASS ROOM - DAY

Ryan and Nick come out of the class. Ryan has a smile on his face. As they are walking...

RYAN
Oh man...How was your quiz?

NICK
It was...
(smiles as he sees Ryan happy)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NICK (cont’d)
It was good.

RYAN
Ya ya ya...It was, it was great.

NICK
I am glad that you figured it out.

RYAN
(nods)
Oh yeah. I have.
(beat)
Got it figured.

NICK
Now as long as you do good in the final you should be good.

RYAN
Yep.
(gestures of hitting baseball with a bat)
I am gonna hit a home run.

Ryan and Nick laughs.

RYAN
Oh I gotta call someone.
(picks out a cell phone)
I will see you in class.

Nick leaves. Ryan makes a call. The phone goes in answering machine.

RYAN
Hey Jen. The quiz went awesome. We gotta meet. Call me as soon as you receive this message.

Ryan puts the phone in his pocket and walks away happily.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. SOME OTHER CLASS – DAY

Ryan is leaning on the wall. He sees Jen coming out of a her class. He walks towards her. Seeing him, she turns away and starts to walk hurriedly. Ryan stops as he is surprised. Then he catches up to her and while walking with her...

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
I have been trying to contact you.
I called you so many times.

JEN
(Unapologetically)
Well I have been busy.

RYAN
My quiz went really good, by the way.

JEN
If you don’t mind, I have an appointment to keep.

RYAN
What happened? Did your father find out?

JEN
Don’t you think you would have find out by now if he did?

Jen then hurriedly walks away. Ryan stops as he is surprised by her behavior.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT. SOMEWHERE NEAR THE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Ryan is going home as he spots Jen with the same male student as previously. She is laughing at what he is saying. Ryan becomes furious. He hurriedly walks up to her. She does not look at him.

RYAN
(to Jen)
What’s wrong?

JEN
(looking at the other student)
I am in the middle of a conversation.

RYAN
You have to tell me what’s wrong.

(CONTINUED)
THE OTHER GUY
(politely)
I think you should leave.

RYAN
(firmly)
You go away. She is my girlfriend.

JEN
(to the other guy)
I will talk to you later.

The other guy leaves. Jen turns and starts to walk away. Ryan follows her.

JEN
I did what I could for you.

RYAN
Is that why you have been ignoring me?

Jen does not answer. Ryan holds her arm and makes her stop.

RYAN
You don’t understand, I would be foolish not to make use of the opportunity I have.

Jen takes her hand away from his hand.

JEN
(sarcastically)
Yes, you are very smart.

RYAN
You are the one who offered it to me in first place.

JEN
And you rejected it, what happened then?

RYAN
I see.

(beat)
You know that I will be needing you for the final exam questions. And so that’s why--

Jen rolls her eyes and starts to walk away. Ryan follows her.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
You showed me a way out of my problem and now you are putting me in even worse condition.

JEN
Do you think I stole without being under pressure?

RYAN
But there is nothing wrong in it. I already tried my best, and I will continue to study hard. This is more like a backup plan.

Jen stops, turns towards him and...

JEN
You think there is nothing wrong in it?

RYAN
If it is wrong, tell me why would fate have it that my girlfriend will be the daughter of the teacher, whose class I have trouble in?

Jen looks away.

RYAN
(pleadingly)
Final exam is worth 65%.

Jen looks at him in disgust, and then walks away.

RYAN
(coldly)
Alright then go. I don’t need you.

Ryan doesn’t follow her.

EXT. SAME CLASS ROOM - DAY

Ryan comes out of classroom. Nick comes from behind and catches up to Ryan. As they are walking...

NICK
Hey Ryan, what you up to?
RYAN
Nothing, I’m just going to the library.

NICK
I was thinking if you can help me out with French today?

RYAN
I have to prepare for this course.

NICK
How about tomorrow then?

RYAN
I really need to study hard for the final.

NICK
(surprised)
You did so well in the quiz. I thought you had a good grasp on the material.

RYAN
I was lucky last time.
(beat)
And my luck is not with me anymore.

NICK
If not tomorrow well then when?

RYAN
I told you I don’t have time.

NICK
You said you will help me out! I was relying on you. Now if you don’t help I will fail the course.

Ryan stops, turns towards him and...

RYAN
Well then now you will see how it feels to suck at something.

Ryan walks away. Nick is taken aback by Ryan’s behavior, so he does not follow.
INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ryan is sitting on a table with books open and writing something on a paper. A hand with some papers comes in front of his face. He looks at the papers, then looks up to find that it is Jen.

JEN
Here it is.

Ryan smiles and takes them from her hand.

JEN
I could have emailed them to you, but I wanted to see your face when you take them.

Ryan’s smile fades away.

RYAN
(firmly)
You don’t understand what I--

Jen turns and walks away.

INT. RYAN’S HOUSE - LATER

Ryan gets home. He sees his father sitting at a table, filling in some papers.

RYAN
(casually)
Hey, what are you doing?

FATHER
Nothing just filling in tax papers.

Ryan thinks for a moment and...

RYAN
You know my teacher once showed me a way around taxing.

FATHER
(while looking at the papers)
Meaning how to cheat the government?

RYAN
A way to save a lot of money, I can show it you.
FATHER  
(while looking at the papers)  
No Ryan that’s ok.

RYAN  
It’s a completely secure method.

FATHER  
(while looking at the papers)  
I don’t care if it is.

RYAN  
(slightly upset)  
I am surprised...Who in this world wouldn’t want to make some extra money?

Ryan waits for a moment for the reply, but his father does not reply and continues to work.

RYAN  
(Restless)  
Mom is always complaining. This will give you a chance to--

FATHER  
(while looking at the papers and annoyed)  
It’s between me and her.

RYAN  
(calmly)  
Aren’t you tired of having financial issues all the time? What’s wrong in taking the opportunity you have?

His father doesn’t reply and continues to work. So Ryan turns around furiously and starts to go to his room.

FATHER (V.O.)  
Ryan.

Ryan stops and turns around. His father stops working, takes off his glasses and looks at him.

FATHER  
Look...I know you are trying to help me, I appreciate it. You have been witnessing arguments between me and your mom, I know that’s upsetting. But I also know that I wanna be able to face myself in the mirror.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: 23.

Ryan is stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN’S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

Ryan takes out question papers given to him by Jen from his bag. He goes up to the garbage bin in his room. He brings the papers almost to the eye level, then slowly lowers them down, then again raises them back, thinks for a moment. He then turns and starts to walk away, when he sees his face in the mirror in this room. He looks at his face in the mirror for a moment. Then his eyes drop as he turns around and drops the papers into the garbage bin.

MR. PLUMMER (V.O.)
So Ryan.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE ROOM – DAY

Mr. Plummer takes his hand up from the phone placed on the receiver. Ryan turns his eyes towards Mr. Plummer.

MR. PLUMMER (O. S.)
Do we have an occasion where you displayed honesty?

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING

Jen is waiting in a car in the parking lot. Seeing Ryan she gets out. Ryan has a smile on his face as he walks towards her. She too smiles, runs towards him and hugs him.

FADE OUT.