UNFORGETTABLE

by

George Galanakis
FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - NIGHT
The impressive skyline glitters under a clear night sky.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT
Cars cruise down the street. A horde of NIGHTCLUBBERS wait outside a club's front doors. A pair of STREET PERFORMERS play their steel drums in a street corner.

EXT. CORAL BAR - NIGHT
A man stands a few feet from the entrance, talking on his mobile phone. He is RYAN FISHER (27, good looks, athletic, sad eyes) and by the look on his face, he seems to be on his last drop of patience.

  RYAN
  ... you're not listening to me.
  You need your space to breathe.
  (pause)
  It won't matter if we try harder.
  You're still you and I'm... me.
  I can't have the responsibility
  of someone else's happiness.

TWO BEAUTIFUL WOMEN come out of the bar and walk past Ryan.

  BEAUTIFUL WOMAN #1
  Thanks, gorgeous. Good night.

Ryan winks at them and returns to the phone.

  RYAN
  No, no, I'm here. Listen, you're
  an attractive, intelligent,
  inspirational woman, but to me
  you're an investment... with no
  return.
  (pause)
  All right, there's no need for
  that kind of language --

The sound of a phone HANGING UP. Ryan glances at the screen and smirks.

      RYAN (CONT'D)
      That ought to do it.

He pockets his phone and enters the bar.
A fairly crowded speakeasy-style bar with atmospherically low lighting. Black and white pictures hang behind the bar of RYAN’S FATHER (35, an older version of Ryan) playing a piano, taken back in the 70’s.

Ryan makes his way behind the bar where GEORGE (52, demure, hearty) is fixing some drinks. An IMPATIENT PATRON (40s, male) waits for him at the other end of the bar. Ryan goes about to serve him.

**IMPATIENT PATRON**
Get me a large beer and a scotch on the rocks.

Ryan prepares the drinks with dexterity and speed. He shares a glance with George.

**GEORGE**
You look like you just dumped someone.

**RYAN**
What makes you say that?

**GEORGE**
You got that look of superiority and disdain on your face.

Ryan laughs.

**GEORGE (CONT’D)**
What was it this time? Couldn’t handle the distance? Not smart enough?

**RYAN**
What can I say? She wasn’t right for me.

**GEORGE**
They never are.

**RYAN**
And whose fault is that?

He gets the drinks to the Impatient Patron and shoots a look at George that conveys “don’t answer that.”

**RYAN (CONT’D)**
(to the Impatient Patron)
12 dollars even.
The Patron pays and strides away. Ryan puts the money in the register.

GEORGE
I’ll be laughing my guts out when the right one comes along.

RYAN
Hate to break it to you, my friend, but a woman like that doesn’t exist.

George shakes his head disappointingly.

INT. CORAL BAR - LATER

At a table in the back, three women, CLAIRE WALKER (25, natural beauty, brunette), KADENCE (27, African/American, sexy, sardonic) and JILL (25, freckles, fit) raise their cocktail glasses in the air. They are not drunk, but nearly there.

KADENCE
Here’s to Claire!

JILL
Claire!

They down their drinks and pose for a photograph. Claire takes a picture with her digital camera.

Bored stiff, Ryan listens to a GORGEOUS WOMAN (27) on a stool across from him, while stealing looks at Claire.

GORGEOUS WOMAN
... being the owner must come with a lot of responsibilities, huh?

RYAN
Pleasing the customer is not an easy task.

GORGEOUS WOMAN
You seem to be doing all right.

She bites her lip. Sexual tension builds between her and Ryan, when --

KADENCE (O.S.)
Bartender!

Kadence stands over to the other corner of the bar.
KADENCE (CONT’D)
Shots, tequila, lime. And a new saltshaker.

An empty saltshaker is left on the counter.

RYAN
Right away, ma’am.

He lines up three shot-glasses, throws in slices of lime and fills them up with tequila.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Who’s that friend of yours? The brunette?

KADENCE
Why don’t you back off, huh? She’s not for your teeth, Ryan.

RYAN
I was just asking a question. You don’t have to get your panties in a knot.

KADENCE
With you around, all of our panties should be in a knot. Plus, I see you got yourself reserved for the night.

Her gaze indicates the Gorgeous Woman. Kadence reaches for her purse.

RYAN
Next time’s on you.

Kadence offers him a smile. Ryan smiles back. Suddenly, he becomes serious, his eyes flash with panic.

Across the bar, Claire lays on the floor, Jill bows down to her with a SCREAM. Ryan and Kadence dash to the table. He bends down besides an unconscious Claire and turns to Jill.

RYAN (CONT’D)
What happened?

JILL
She just fainted out of the blue!

RYAN
How much did she have to drink?

KADENCE
Two cocktails and a few shots!
Ryan tries to hear her breathing. He briskly rubs his knuckles against Claire's sternum. People gather round.

Ryan looks up at Kadence. His expression says it all. "Not good." Through the people, he sees George at the bar and shouts:

**RYAN**

Call an ambulance!

He takes a deep breath and preforms rescue breathing and chest compression.

All of a sudden, Claire takes in a gulp of air and a persistent cough takes over. A wave of relief on everyone's face.

**RYAN (CONT'D)**

That’s it. Let it out. Breathe.

Claire coughs up real hard. Ryan turns to the people around them.

**RYAN (CONT’D)**

She’ll be fine. Just give her a little space.

The Patrons clear the space. George is on the phone at the bar. Ryan gestures at him that "everything is okay" and he hangs up. Claire swims to full consciousness.

**CLAIRE**

Where are the shots?

Kadence and Jill burst out laughing.

**RYAN**

I think you had enough Tequila for one night.

Claire lifts her eyes to his. Ryan feels the impact of her gaze like a kick to the stomach. He raises the young woman to her feet.

**EXT. CORAL BAR – NIGHT**

A taxi waits outside the bar entrance. Kadence and Jill help Claire inside. Ryan holds the door open for them.

**RYAN**

(to Kadence)

Make her a Bloody Mary in the morning. It will help.

**KADENCE**

Thank you for everything, Ryan.
RYAN
(to Claire)
Feel better.

He closes the door and watches the taxi drive away.

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAWN

The sun is just starting to come up, bathing Manhattan in a bright, golden light.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Ryan sits on the window sill, gazing at the street from two floors above the ground. His expression dark and troubled. In the background, the Gorgeous Woman lays half-naked on the bed.

EXT. CORAL BAR - BACK ALLEY - DAY

A truck with a sign “JONAS’ ICE” on the side is parked in the back alley of the bar. With the help of the TRUCK DRIVER, George unloads a bag of ice into an open basement window.

INT. CORAL BAR - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

In the basement, Ryan takes the bag and stacks it on top of some others, trouble still on his face.

GEORGE
Last one.

Ryan receives another bag, but instead of piling it, he moves it across the dimly lit basement. He walks past a piano covered with a sheet and continues towards a refrigerator.

INT. CORAL BAR - BASEMENT - LATER

Still contorted with trouble, Ryan finishes stocking the ice cube bags into the refrigerator. He closes the door and picks his way to the covered up piano.

He takes a seat at the piano bench and slides his fingers on the dusted sheet right above the keys.

Abruptly, the door to the basement opens and George enters.

GEORGE
Ryan? You still down here?
Ryan springs up. George motions towards the young man.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
What’s taking you so long? You need help?

RYAN
No, I’m just finishing up.

GEORGE
Everything all right?

RYAN
Yeah.

GEORGE
I know you better than you know yourself. What’s the matter?

Ryan sits back down with a sigh. He opens his mouth to speak, but nothing comes out. George nods understandingly.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
It’s next week, eh?

Ryan slowly nods.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
You’re thinking about him?

RYAN
Not as often.

GEORGE
Don’t feel bad. People forget.

RYAN
Being here brings back so many memories.

George nods in agreement.

GEORGE
I remember when he first met your mother, he called me up in the middle of the night and said: “Brother, I want to tell this girl that I love her and I’m going to need your help...”

Ryan smiles bitterly.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
So me and a couple of friends carried a whole piano outside her apartment so he could play her a song...

(MORE)
GEORGE (CONT’D)
Your mother fell in love with him right then and there. They got married three months later.

RYAN
I can always picture his face when I hear that story.

GEORGE
He’d brighten up like a lightbulb when he told it. A sucker for romance he was. Unlike his son...

RYAN
Here we go again.

He withdraws to the door, clearly avoiding the discussion.

GEORGE
I didn’t say anything. You don’t have to get so peppery!

RYAN
I know what you said! Why can’t you accept the fact that I don’t need to be in a relationship? Casual sex can be very, very fulfilling. No feelings involved --

GEORGE
-- no strings attached! I’ve heard that one before. Hey, whatever floats your boat!

RYAN
Glad to see my words are finally getting through to you!

He flashes a smirk before he exits. George shouts:

GEORGE
The apple may have fallen far from the tree, but it’s still an apple!

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

A basketball court surrounded by bard-wire fencing. Two teams of four players, the majority of them TEENAGE BOYS, challenge at a half-court basketball game. Among them, Ryan and Jackson (13, African/American).

TEENAGE BOY #1
Pass the ball! I’m open!
Teenage Boy #1 receives the ball from a team player, pivots and dunks in front of Jackson. Disappointment registers on the boy’s face. Ryan tries to encourage Jackson with a pat on the shoulder.

RYAN
Keep your chin up, huh? Come on.

The play starts once more. Teenage Boy #1 passes to Teenage Boy #2, when Ryan steals the ball with lighting speed and drives to the basket. Jackson stands at the three point line. Ryan throws a blind pass to the boy. He grabs the ball and freezes.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Jackson! Shoot!

Jackson stares at the ball and goes for the shot. Teenage Boy #1 comes out of nowhere and blocks the ball, sending it over the fence. He turns to Jackson, makes a face in mockery and high-fives with his team players. Ryan goes to Jackson.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Try to be a little faster next time. And more confident.

The ball comes to stop near a pair of woman’s legs. Claire bends down, picks up the ball and heads over to the court. She throws the ball to Teenage Boy #2. Ryan is surprised at the sight of her. He calls out to the Teenage Boys:

RYAN (CONT’D)
Let’s take a time-out!

The Teenage Boys nod in agreement. Ryan grabs a towel and treads to Claire. She tries hard to mask her nervousness.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Hello, there.

CLAUDE
Hi.

RYAN
You look... sober.

Claire chuckles.

RYAN (CONT’D)
How are you feeling?

CLAUDE
Better. Much better, thank you.

As they come close, WHISTLING is heard from the side of the Boys.
TEENAGE BOY #1
Way to go, Ryan! Does she have a sister?

Ryan flickers a smile of embarrassment.

RYAN
You want to go someplace else?

EXT. DOWNTOWN PARK - DAY

Claire sits down on a bench. Ryan stands by her, drying the sweat from his face with the towel.

RYAN
How did you know where to find me?

CLAIREDI
I went by the bar. A man George, he said you'd be here.

RYAN
Right.

CLAIREDI
Look, the reason I wanted to see you is...
   (pauses)
   ... Kadence told me you had to give me first aid the other night.

RYAN
It's not that big of a deal. Don't worry about it.

CLAIREDI
You might have saved my life.

Ryan nods in mute acknowledgement.

CLAIREDI (CONT'D)
Anyway, I thought you deserved a "thank you."

RYAN
You're most welcome.

An awkward silence.

RYAN (CONT'D)
You know according to a Chinese believe, when you save someone's life, you're bond until you return the favor.
CLAIRE
I was under the impression that saving someone was supposed to be a selfless deed.

RYAN
That’s not right. Where did you hear that?

CLAIRE
Fine. What’s your price?

RYAN
Go to lunch with me tomorrow.

Claire’s face darkens.

CLAIRE
I, uh, I appreciate the offer, but --

RYAN
There’s someone else.

CLAIRE
No. I, uh, I don’t date.

RYAN
You don’t date?

Claire shakes her head.

RYAN (CONT’D)
It’s just lunch. I promise I’ll choke on a dumpling, give you the chance to return the favor.

A suggestion of a smile plays along Claire’s features.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Huh? What do you say?

He flashes a disarming smile, full of charm.

CLAIRE
I’m sorry, I can’t. It was nice seeing you again.

She marches off.

RYAN (under his breath)
Likewise.

Teenage Boy #1 shouts in the background.
TEENAGE BOY #1
Ryan, we’re playing or what?

Ryan gives a last look at Claire and strides towards the boy.

INT. CORAL BAR – NIGHT

It’s game night and the Coral is packed with cheering and screaming FOOTBALL FANS. Ryan and George are behind the counter, serving the customers.

SHANE WATKINS (39, handsome, well groomed) comes through the door with TWO FRIENDS (30’s) and a SEXY WOMAN (24) by his side. George notices him and points him out to Ryan with a light nudge on the shoulder. Shane and his company sashay past the bar.

SHANE
Good evening, Ryan. George.

George gives him the stink eye. Ryan greets him with a nod.

SHANE (CONT’D)
Is there a table for us?

GEORGE
Football nights are always packed. Why don’t you try the bar down the street?

Ryan slides under the counter to the other side.

RYAN
See if you can find something in the back.

GEORGE
If you can’t, check the alley by the dumpster.

Shane wears a smirk and feels the Woman’s bottom. Him and his Friends shove their way to the back.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
Prick.

RYAN
You want to take it easy? He’s still a customer.

GEORGE
I can’t help it.
RYAN
You're going to have to try.

George stares at him and gives him a mollifying nod.

INT. CORAL BAR - LATER

The fuss carries on as the match reaches its peak. George is at the end of the counter, talking with a couple of Football Fans. At the other end, Ryan wipes down the bartop with a rag. Shane leans on the counter.

SHANE
Ryan, get the guys another round.
And you got some time to talk?

RYAN
Sure. Just give me two minutes.

Out of the corner of his eye, George watches them suspiciously.

INT. CORAL BAR - RYAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A small, overstuffed room that barely passes for an office. Both men are seated opposite from one another at Ryan’s desk.

SHANE
Business is brisk. Well done.

RYAN
Sundays can get pretty crazy.
People go nuts about football.

SHANE
Tell me about it.
(pause)
Have you given any thought to my offer?

RYAN
Shane, we’ve been over this. I’m just going to repeat what I told you last time --

SHANE
Before you say something against your own good, let me tell you this offer won’t be around forever. Promise me you’ll do yourself a favor and give it another thought.
RYAN
There’s nothing to think about.

Shane shakes his head in disappointment.

SHANE
You’re making a huge mistake. I can make this place twice as big. Three times. It’s going to be like this every night. You and your partner get to keep 50 percent, you’re still winners.

RYAN
Why the Coral, huh? There are a dozen places around the city.

SHANE
I sort of like the neighborhood. It’s quiet and --

RYAN
Wouldn’t have anything to do with the fact that this part of town is moving up on a luxury scale, would it?

SHANE
All right, you got me! Coral’s in an upcoming strong location, but as it stands now that won’t do you any good. If you think the money is not --

The door bursts open and MIKA (23, female, attractive) rushes inside.

MIKA
Ryan! Trouble!

Ryan bolts up and turns to Shane.

RYAN
Money’s not the problem. Coral’s just not for sale.

SHANE
You’re turning your back to a great opportunity here, boy.

RYAN
Enjoy your evening.

He exits.
INT. CORAL BAR - NIGHT

A huddle has been created around two Football Fans fighting on the floor. Ryan pushes his way through the people and comes before the two men. He pulls one of them up on his feet, ending the fight.

RYAN
Break it up! Come on! Stop!
Hey, stop it!

The two Fans calm down. Ryan looks over his shoulder. Shane stands against the door to his office with a smirk on his face.

INT. CORAL BAR - LATER

Ryan, George and Mika finish closing down the bar. Ryan counts a wad of money and gives it to Mika.

RYAN
Here you go. Thanks a lot, Mika.

MIKA
See you next Saturday. Bye, George.

GEORGE
Nighty night.

Mika pockets the money and leaves the bar. George wipes a glass and approaches Ryan at the register.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
So, what did he want?

RYAN
Who? Shane? Same thing he wanted last time.

GEORGE
Did he make another offer?

RYAN
He wanted to know if I had an answer for him.

GEORGE
And do you?

RYAN
George, you don’t have to ask me that. This was and always will be my father’s joint. All right?
GEORGE
Glad to hear you say that.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY
Ryan’s car parks outside the shop. He gets out and makes his way to the entrance.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - CONTINUOUS
Ryan saunters in. Rows of tables with colorful plants surround the space. PHOEBE (40, slightly plump) goes to serve him.

PHOEBE
How can I help you?

RYAN
I’d like to order some flowers for next week.

PHOEBE
Do you know what you’re looking for? A bouquet? Basket?

RYAN
I’m not exactly sure.

PHOEBE
Please take a look around. Let me know if you see anything you like.

Ryan heads further inside the shop. Ryan looks around, turns a corner and bumps into Claire. They are both surprised. Pleasantly.

RYAN
What a nice coincidence seeing you.

CLAIRE
Yeah.

RYAN
What are you doing here?

CLAIRE
I own a little pottery shop down on 23rd. This is where I buy the plants for the pots.

Ryan nods.
CLAIRE (CONT’D)
And you? To be honest, I didn’t take you much of a flower person.

RYAN
Looks can be deceiving.

CLAIRE
Hardly are.

RYAN
The flowers are for my father. Next week will be the anniversary of him passing away.

Claire cups her mouth.

CLAIRE
Oh, my God, I am so sorry. I apologize. I feel like a total idiot.

RYAN
Don’t worry, you didn’t know.
(pause)
I’ll see you around.

With a bitter smile, he turns around and heads back to the register. Overcome by guilt, Claire thinks for a moment. Then she darts to Ryan.

CLAIRE
Listen, uh, there’s a nice cafe around the corner, if you feel like grabbing a cup. I mean, if you’re not, uh...

RYAN
I’m not.

They share a smile.

CLAIRE
Let me just drop off my list with Phoebe, huh?

INT. CAFE - DAY

Claire sits at a window table, staring at a small potted plant in front of her. Ryan crosses to her and sets a tray of filtered coffee and hot chocolate down on the table.

CLAIRE
Thanks.

She takes the hot chocolate cup to her side.
CLAIRE (CONT’D)
How long has it been if you don’t mind me asking?

RYAN
Since my father died?

Claire nods in response.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Ten years. I was 17 when he passed away.

CLAIRE
I’m very sorry. It must be terrible losing a parent.

RYAN
It is, but time heals all wounds. You slowly get back on your feet.

CLAIRE
How did it happen?

RYAN
Cancer. Lungs.

CLAIRE
Were you close?

RYAN
He practically raised me on his own. My mother died shortly after I was born, so...

Claire nods in acknowledgment. Ryan tries to lighten the mood.

RYAN (CONT’D)
How come you took this one with you?

He indicates the plant.

CLAIRE
I couldn’t wait one more day for it to be delivered.

RYAN
You really love flowers, don’t you?

CLAIRE
Flowers have the power to brighten up our day in the same way that sunshine can.
A reflective expression creeps over her features. She hides her feelings behind a smile.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Do you have any flowers at your place?

RYAN
I believe we have a small cactus in the back wall of the Coral.

CLAIRE
That barely counts! You need to get some real flowers!

RYAN
Will you help me choose some?

CLAIRE
Perhaps.

They exchange a smile.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY
Ryan and Claire stroll down the sidewalk.

RYAN
How come you don’t date?

CLAIRE
I’ve had some bad experiences in the past... and kind of reached the point where I thought “I’m better off on my own.”

RYAN
I know what you mean. Sometimes running away from the problem can be a solution.

CLAIRE
It’s not running away. It’s keeping the problem at a distance.

They reach a subway station.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
This is my stop.

She extends the plant to Ryan.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Here. It could be your first.
RYAN
Oh, no, I can’t accept this.

CLAIRE
Please, I want you to have it.

Ryan hesitantly reaches for the flower.

RYAN
I thought men were suppose to give flowers.

CLAIRE
Times change.

RYAN
So you think I can see you again?

CLAIRE
Perhaps.

She turns her back on him and paces towards the station.

RYAN
I don’t have your number or address!

CLAIRE
That wouldn’t stop someone like you, now, would it?

She joins the flow of the people heading down the station. Ryan beams, full of confidence.

INT. RYAN’S KITCHEN - DAY

The plant is left on the window sill, sunlight brightening its beautiful colors. George and Ryan are at the table, having potato-crusted chicken.

George picks up his empty plate and goes over to the counter, where the platter with the left overs is.

GEORGE
You want another piece?

RYAN
I’m full.

GEORGE
Well, I’m having one. Chicken’s excellent! That’s one of the good things about being single. You learn how to cook.

He serves himself another piece.
RYAN
Uncle, I got a question.

GEORGE
You haven’t call me that in years.

RYAN
Well... you’re always telling me to find somebody, not spend the rest of my life alone and all that. How come you didn’t?

GEORGE
That’s a good question. And the answer is, uh...

He takes his time before his next words.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
... I was a good timer. Just like you. Always living in the moment, never thought about what would come next. And look at me now, huh? Washed up, bitter and lonely --

RYAN
You’ve got me.

George gives him a weak smile.

GEORGE
I know I can be a pain in the neck sometimes, I just don’t want to see you end up...

He is on the verge of an emotional release.

RYAN
I know, George.

George nods and regains his composure.

GEORGE
What’s with the flower?

He points to the plant on the window sill. Ryan bolts up and drops his plate on the sink.

RYAN
What? I thought it would brighten up the place.

(pause)
Thanks for lunch.

He exits. George looks at him bizarrely.
EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Claire and Kadence stride down the walkways of the park.

CLAIRE
You remember Ryan from the bar?

KADENCE
Fisher? Ryan Fisher?

CLAIRE
Uh-huh. I run into him the other day...

KADENCE
Oh.

CLAIRE
... and we sort of went out.

KADENCE
No, no, no, honey. You have to stay away from him.

CLAIRE
"Stay away from him?" Why?

KADENCE
He’s bad news. You’ve got to trust me on this.

CLAIRE
He’s kind of cute.

KADENCE
I know he can be, hon, but listen to me. He will chew you up and spit you out. This is what he does.

CLAIRE
And how would you know?

KADENCE
Because he did it to me.

Claire is stunned.

INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP - DAY

Claire pulls up the switches on the electrical board and the lights come on.

The gallery store is filled with a broad selection of beautiful handmade pottery, such as vases, dishes, china.
At the back, there is a workroom rounded with dozens of unpainted ceramic bisques displayed on shelves.

INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP – WORKROOM – LATER

Dozens of plants sit on a table. Claire removes one from its plastic pot and carefully places it to the ceramic one. She covers it with soil.

RYAN (O.S.)
You’re going to have to teach me how to do that.

Claire spins. Ryan stands behind her, a grin on his face.

CLAIRE
Was I difficult to find?

RYAN
There weren’t that many pottery shops on 23rd street.

Claire half-smiles.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Which one would you recommend?

He picks up a pot.

CLAIRE
Ryan, I don’t think I can let things go any further.

RYAN
What are you talking about?

CLAIRE
Kadence told me about you two.

RYAN
Kadence was something that ended a long time ago. She was hurt and I’m sorry, but she wasn’t right for me.

CLAIRE
What about me? Am I right? Or right now?

Ryan stays silent. Claire smiles, getting her point across.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
This can’t go on. I shouldn’t have given you the wrong impression.
A CUSTOMER (50, female) waits on the counter with three mugs. Claire goes to her and prices the merchandise, leaving a dumbfounded Ryan.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
That’d be 18 dollars for the three.

The Customer pays and leaves. Ryan approaches the counter.

RYAN
Okay. I can’t give you any promises. Truth is I don’t know if you’re right for me or not, but I sure as hell want to find out. If you’re willing to give me the chance.

They stare at each others eyes.

MONTAGE:
-- Ryan and Claire have dinner at an elegant restaurant. Their eyes are very involved.
-- Ryan and Claire enjoy an ice cream cone at a bench.
-- Ryan and Claire walk down the street. Clair laughs and playfully hits Ryan.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BRYANT PARK - NIGHT

Ryan and Claire walk through the park, heading to the carousel.

CLAIRE
Don’t you have to be at work?

RYAN
George can take care of himself. Bar’s not that busy anyway.

CLAIRE
How long have you two been partners?

Ryan smiles.

RYAN
He’s my uncle. Him and my father owned the Coral since 1968. It was called the “88 Coral” back then.
CLAIRE
“88?” Like the piano keys?

RYAN
Exactly.

Impressed, he flickers a grin. Claire smiles coyly.

RYAN (CONT’D)
It was a piano bar at the time.
When my father died, me and George decided we needed a change.

CLAIRE
You run away.

Ryan slowly nods, overcome with a deep grief. The two fall silent for a long moment.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Come with me.

She rushes over to the closed carousel and jumps on one of the little horses.

RYAN
What are you doing?

CLAIRE
I don’t think I ever rode one of these.

RYAN
And I don’t think now is the right time. The park’s closed.

CLAIRE
They just opened! Come on! You know how to gallop, right?

Hesitantly, Ryan sits on a horse next to Claire’s.

RYAN
This is crazy.

CLAIRE
I bet it’s more fun when they’re moving.

RYAN
Let’s go. I promise we’ll come back when they’re open -- Oh, shit!

A flashlight beam shines on the carousel from a distance. A WATCHMAN approaches and calls out:
WATCHMAN
Anybody there?

Ryan and Claire jump down from the horses and hide behind a chariot. Claire stifles a laugh.

RYAN
Shh...

He puts a “quiet” finger to his lips. Ryan and Claire hold each other close as the beam sweeps around them. Their breathing mingles, their eyes connect.

WATCHMAN
Hello?

Not seeing anything suspicious, the Watchman walks off. Ryan lets out a silent sigh of relief.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT

A burst of laughter as Ryan and Claire run away from the park.

CLAIRE
That was so exciting!

RYAN
It feels like I’m back in high school, stealing the arcades down the corner.

CLAIRE
Incriminating past, Mr. Fisher.

RYAN
I was cleared of all charges. My older cousin made me do it.

CLAIRE
Is that right?

They stand in the middle of the street and come close once more. They look deep into their eyes as their lips meet in a kiss.

INT. RYAN’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the window. Ryan lays on the bed and slowly opens his eyes, happiness sparkling on his face. He turns to the other side of the bed. No one there.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Hey.
Claire gets dressed in a corner of the room.

RYAN
Good morning.

CLAIREDid I wake you?

Ryan shakes his head.

RYAN
Where are you going?

CLAIREFor the store. It’s almost nine.

RYAN
That’s why I love working nights. Sleeping in.

CLAIREDazy bones.

She goes over and gives him a kiss on the lips.

CLAIRED (CONT’D)
Last night was really special. Thanks.

RYAN
Any time.

Claire gives him another kiss and walks out.

INT. RYAN’S BUILDING – STAIRWAY – MORNING

Claire hurries down the stairs and meets George ascending.

CLAIRESHell.

GEORGE
And goodbye.

Claire exits. George gives her a quizzical look.

INT. RYAN’S LIVING ROOM – MORNING

Ryan opens the front door and George bursts in.

RYAN
Why are you here so early?
GEORGE
The liquor supplier’s coming in today. We have to go over the order.
(pause)
Was that the girl from --?

RYAN
That’s the one.

GEORGE
What are you doing with her?

RYAN
We’re just hanging out.

GEORGE
Don’t get smartass with me! She seems like a nice girl.

RYAN
She is nice.

GEORGE
Don’t hurt her.

RYAN
Why would you immediately assume I’m going to hurt her?

George shoots him a look.

EXT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP – MORNING
Freezing cold, Kadence waits outside the store. Claire dashes to her.

KADENCE
Jesus! Where have you been?

CLAIRE
Sorry I’m late.

She pulls out a set of keys from her handbag and unlocks the door.

KADENCE
Come on, I’m freezing my nuts off.

Claire drills her a look and a smirk.

CLAIRE
Oh, that’s nice.

She opens the door.
INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The women enter the shop. Claire paces to the switchboard, pulls up the switches and the lights come on.

CLAIRE
I need you to look after the store. I’ll be away for a while.

KADENCE
Where are you going?

CLAIRE
I have to go home and water the plants.

KADENCE
You forgot to water your plants?

Claire doesn’t answer.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
You’ve never forgotten to water them flowers of yours. Ever.
(pause)
Unless... you still haven’t been home since last night.

Claire tries to hide a smile of embarrassment.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Oh, my God, I’m right! Am I right? Claire...?

CLAIRE
All right, fine! I spend the night with someone.

KADENCE
You little slut! De-tails!

Claire makes a face.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Oh, no... Don’t tell me it was... Ryan, was it?
(off Claire’s look)
Damn it, Claire!

CLAIRE
I got to go.

She heads towards the exit.
CLAIRED
I wish you’d listen to me just for once.

KLADANCE
I can take care of myself.

KLADANCE
You know it’s wrong.

CLAIRED
Let me be the judge of that. See you in an hour.

Claire leaves. Kadence shakes her head disappointingly.

INT. CORAL BAR - MORNING

George sits at the bar, reading a small piece of paper. Ryan is behind the counter.

GEORGE
... two cases of Vodka, so we’re set. How many cases of Jack we got? Should be one.

Ryan is distracted, a smile playing along his features.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
Ryan? Any cases of J.D. behind the counter? Are you even listening?

RYAN
Sure, yeah. One case.

George squints his eyes in curiosity.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The space is filled with flowers, in every window, in every corner. Claire is bowed before a plant with a watering can in her hand.

She stares at the flower, her mind surging with thoughts. The water overflows the pottery. Claire realizes it and pulls the can away.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Claire walks down the street, approaching the Coral bar. A flashy car is parked right outside. She stops short, her eyes narrow with suspicion.
Inside the car, JESSIE (35, female, strikingly beautiful) talks closely with Ryan in the passenger seat. He shifts his gaze to the sidewalk.

Claire stares at him, shakes her head, disappointed, and runs away. Ryan darts out of the car and hastens after her.

RYAN
Claire, wait! Claire!

After a few yards, he catches up to the young woman. Claire whips around.

CLAIRE
What was I, huh? A challenge? Did you want to prove something to yourself?

RYAN
What are you talking about?

CLAIRE
Who was that woman?

RYAN
Jessie? She’s a supplier for the bar.

CLAIRE
It looks to me she supplies you with more than just alcohol!

RYAN
There’s nothing going on! Why don’t you believe me?

CLAIRE
Because I don’t know you! And to be honest, I’m not sure if I want to anymore.

She storms off, leaving Ryan dumbfounded.

INT. CLAIRE’S KITCHEN – DAY

Claire cooks a casserole lunch. The doorbell RINGS. She takes off her cooking glove and goes to the door. She opens it, no one there.

She looks down on her doorstep, there is a bouquet of roses. A hint of a smile creeps on her face.

CLAIRE
Flowers don’t make everything okay.
Ryan appears from the side. He picks up the bouquet and offers it to Claire.

RYAN
A girl once told me that flowers have the power to brighten up our day in the same way that sunshine can.

(after Claire’s smile)
Look, I want to know you and I want you to know me. To want to know me.

(pause)
When you figure out what you want, you know where to find me.

He moves down the stairs. Claire glares at him, then at the flowers in her hands.

EXT. CLAIRE’S BUILDING – DAY

Ryan’s car is parked by the sidewalk. Ryan unlocks the driver’s door.

CLaire (O.S.)
I figured it out.

Claire stands next to him. She throws herself at Ryan and passionately kisses him on the lips.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK – DAY

NEW YORKERS, TOURISTS, and PERFORMERS surround the Bethesda Fountain. A LITTLE BOY gives a brief kiss on the lips of a LITTLE GIRL and laughs.

Leaning on a wall further away, Claire captures the moment with her digital camera. She looks at the screen and shows the picture to Ryan standing next to her.

RYAN
Nice picture.

CLaire
Can you imagine if in twenty years they ended up together and saw this?

Ryan smiles.

CLaire (CONT’D)
Wouldn’t it mean the world to them?
RYAN
That’s a romantic thought.

CLaire
Why do I get the feeling you consider this a bad thing?

RYAN
Not bad, it’s just everyone has their own belief system.

CLaire
What’s yours?

RYAN
I choose to be more of a realist.

CLaire
Let’s hope we can remedy that.

They share a smile. Claire takes his hand, pulling Ryan away. She keeps hold of his hand as they walk. Ryan is slightly awkward.

CLaire (CONT’D)
You don’t like holding hands, do you?

RYAN
Well...

CLaire
We don’t have to if it makes you feel uncomfortable.

She pulls her hand away. A moment later, Ryan reaches for it.

RYAN
It doesn’t.

A broad grin on both their faces as their fingers intertwine.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Your palms are all sweaty!

Claire laughs in embarrassment.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - LATER

The colors of the sky are amazing as the sun sinks towards the horizon. Claire and Ryan sit down on a bench, sharing a cotton candy, still holding hands.
RYAN
When was the last time you were in a relationship?

CLAIRE
It’s been about a year since we broke up. His name was Michael.

RYAN
What happened?

CLAIRE
It’s complicated.

RYAN
When isn’t, huh?

CLAIRE
Remember the “I’m better off on my own?” It’s sort of like that. (pause)
And you?

RYAN
To be honest, I’ve never been in serious a relationship. I mean something that lasted.

CLAIRE
Really? Never?

Ryan shakes his head.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
How come?

RYAN
I guess I couldn’t see the point of complicating things.

CLAIRE
And now?

RYAN
Now... I’m holding hands with you.

They share a smile and kiss.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAWN

The magnificent skyline of the city glimmers as the spring sun is breaking over it.
INT. RYAN’S BATHROOM - MORNING

Ryan straightens his tie in front of the mirror, a bemused look across his face.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Formally dressed, Ryan and George stand before a gravestone that reads: “James Brian Fisher R.I.P.”

Ryan places a bouquet of flowers by the stone, fighting for composure. George reads a poem, his voice cracking with emotion.

   GEORGE
   ... You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

Ryan struggles inwardly with his emotions. George puts a comforting hand on the young man’s shoulder.

   GEORGE (CONT’D)
   You can remember him and only that he’s gone or you can cherish his memory and let it live on. We miss you, brother.

INT. CORAL BAR - DAY

Ryan sits in the semi-darkness, having a glass of whiskey, looking at a framed picture of his father. George stands by the exit.

   GEORGE
   Is there anything I can do for you?

   RYAN
   I got everything.

   GEORGE
   Okay. I’ll be upstairs if you need me.

   RYAN
   Thanks.

George walks out of the bar.
INT. CORAL BAR - BASEMENT - DAY

Ryan pulls the sheet to reveal a beautiful, white piano. He takes a seat, lifts up the fall and places his hands on the keyboard.

Ryan glides his fingers over the keys. He closes his eyes and plays a classic song. Stiffly and rustily at first, but then picking pace.

Suddenly, a noise distracts him. Ryan looks up. Claire is near the door.

CLAIRE
Sorry, I didn’t mean to interrupt.

RYAN
Come on in.

Claire motions to him.

CLAIRE
I had no idea you could play like that.

RYAN
That? That was terrible. I haven’t practiced in quite a while.

CLAIRE
Who taught you how to play?

RYAN
My dad. I think I must have learned how to play the piano first and then how to walk.

CLAIRE
Why did you stop?

RYAN
I felt I was doing it for him. When he died, I couldn’t find a reason to keep me going.

CLAIRE
He wouldn’t want you to quit.

RYAN
It doesn’t matter what he’d want. He’s dead.

He springs up and shuts the fall closed. Emotional, he leans against the wall.
RYAN (CONT’D)
Why do people always leave the ones that need them the most?

He hangs his head, trying to collect himself. Claire moves closer and takes his face in her hands.

CLAIRE
I’m sure he’d never leave you if he could.

Her words soothe Ryan’s sorrow.

INT. RYAN’S KITCHEN – DAY
Claire inspects the blooming flower on the window sill. Ryan sits on the living room sofa, watching TV.

CLAIRE
I see you’ve been taking good care of this little fella!

She heads to the living room.

INT. RYAN’S LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS
Claire makes her way to the sofa. Ryan grabs her hand and pulls her down on his lap.

RYAN
How couldn’t I? It reminds me of you.

They kiss. All of a sudden, the front door opens and George enters. He sees the couple.

GEORGE
Hope I’m not intruding.

RYAN
A little too late now.

GEORGE
I’ll be out your way in no time. Just dropped by to get some mozzarella cheese.

RYAN
Help yourself.
(pause)
You remember Claire, right?

GEORGE
Sure am.
He greets her with a wink and moves to the kitchen. Claire grimaces to Ryan. He shakes his head. She gives him a cold stare. He sighs deeply.

RYAN
George, would you like to join us?

GEORGE
I can’t. I’m making my famous five-cheese lasagna.
(pauses, thinks)
Hey, you guys hungry?

Claire and Ryan share a look.

INT. GEORGE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

George, Ryan and Claire are seated around the table, finishing up a lasagna lunch. Claire shines her plate with a piece of bread. George watches her and smiles.

GEORGE
I love a girl who can eat.

CLAIRE
Food was delicious, George. You should’ve been a chef.

RYAN
That’s what I always tell him.

GEORGE
It crossed my mind a few times when I was younger.
(to Ryan)
I told your pops Coral would make a nice restaurant, but he wouldn’t listen. He was like: “People may not have money to eat, but they’ll always have money to drink!”

CLAIRE
Well, it’s never too late.

George graces her with a bitter smile.

INT. RYAN’S BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

The door to Ryan’s apartment opens and Claire comes out, followed by Ryan.
RYAN
Are you sure you can’t spend the night?

CLAIRE
My parents are visiting in a few days and my apartment is a total mess.

They kiss.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
See you tomorrow.

RYAN
Bye.

Claire walks down the stairs. Ryan closes the door.

INT. GEORGE’S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Ryan paces to the sofa. George flips through the TV channels.

GEORGE
I got to hand it to you. She’s one of a kind.

RYAN
You think so, huh?

He looks away and smiles dreamily.

GEORGE
What was that?

RYAN
What was what?

GEORGE
That smile.

RYAN
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

He slowly crosses to the front door.

GEORGE
Sweet Jesus! You’ve actually been bitten by the love bug, haven’t you?

RYAN
That’s ridiculous. I don’t fall in love.
George bursts out laughing.

GEORGE
My, my, my, I never thought I’d live to see this day!

RYAN
I have to get going.

He leaves the apartment, closing the door behind him. George calls out:

GEORGE
(mocking)
Don’t you want to stay and talk about it?

He wears a smirk.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Ryan and Jackson play an intense game of one-on-one. Ryan scores a basket, but tries to encourage the boy with a pat on the shoulder.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - LATER

Jackson fires a shot from the tree-point line and misses. Ryan takes the ball and passes it to the boy.

RYAN
Make another.

Jackson shoots and scores.

RYAN (CONT’D)
See? Practice makes you better.

JACKSON
Is this how you became so good with the ladies? Practice?

RYAN
You could say that. When I was your age I didn’t know my ding from my dong! As I grew up, I learned how to play the game.

JACKSON
Can you teach me? I wanna be like you.

RYAN
Why would you want to be like me?
JACKSON
There’s this girl at school that
I really like. I want to be able
to talk to her.

RYAN
You really like her?

The boy nods in response.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Then don’t play her. Just tell
her how you feel.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claire watches TV. The HORN of a car alarms her. She gets
up, goes to the window and gapes outside. CLAIRE’S PARENTS
(50s) stand next to their car in front of the building,
waving at her. Claire waves back.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The Walker family is gathered around the table at a
friendly game of Scrabble.

CLAIRE’S FATHER
How are things at the store?

CLAIRE
Fine, dad. Like always. Me and
Kadence are doing fine.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER
Never did trust that girl.
There’s something about her --

CLAIRE
Well, I do, mom.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER
And that boy you were seeing?
Michael?

CLAIRE
We’re not together anymore.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER
That’s too bad. He seemed like
such a nice boy.

Claire doesn’t respond.
CLAIRE’S MOTHER (CONT’D)
Are you seeing anybody else right now?

CLAIRE
No.

CLAIRE’S FATHER
When do we get to meet him?

CLAIRE
Can you just play? It’s been your turn for the past 10 minutes.

EXT. CLAIRE’S BUILDING – DAY
Claire says her good-byes to her parents inside the car.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER
Come and visit us sometime. It’s been so long since you’ve been home.

CLAIRE
I was kind of busy with the store, mom.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER
That’s not an excuse.

CLAIRE’S FATHER
Your mother’s right. We can’t keep driving all the way from Jersey whenever we want to see you.

CLAIRE
I’ll try.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER
We love you.

CLAIRE
I love you, too.

The car drives away.

INT. JAMES’ LIVING ROOM – NIGHT
Ryan and FOUR FRIENDS sit around a table, playing poker. Friend #1 shows his cards. Straight flush.
FRIEND #1
And this is how the game is played, gentlemen.

He collects the pile of chips at the center of the table.

FRIEND #2
Oh, come on! He cheated!

FRIEND #1
I believe that would be your wife!

Everyone laughs. Ryan half-smiles.

FRIEND #3
Don’t you think that was a little below the belt?

FRIEND #1
My apologies. Ex-future wife!

The all laugh again, except Ryan.

FRIEND #2
Screw you, guys!

Offended, Friend #2 jerks to his feet and makes his way to the kitchen.

RYAN
(to Friend #1)
Come on, why don’t you drop it, huh?

FRIEND #2 (O.S.)
No matter what you guys say, I prefer to go to bed with the same person every night.

FRIEND #1
(whispers)
I wish I could say the same about your ex.

The men stifle a laugh. Friend #2 comes back with an open beer bottle in his hands. He pats Friend #3 on the back.

FRIEND #2
Back me up here, will you?

FRIEND #3
(unconvincing)
Yep. Being in a committed relationship is the best. Best-o all the way.
FRIEND #2
There you go. Unlike these losers looking for different prey every night. Like a hungry pack of wolves.

Friend #1 puts his arms around Ryan and Friend #4.

FRIEND #1
Me and my cubs are more than proud to offer our services to the ladies of this city. Ungrudgingly!

FRIEND #2
I’m sorry to inform you, but a little one of yours has broken from the pack. (off Friend #1’s look)
That’s right. From what I hear, our Ryan’s gone straight.

Friend #1 addresses Ryan.

FRIEND #1
What’s he talking about?

Ryan feels the eyes of everyone upon him.

RYAN
I’ve been dating this girl... for sometime now...

FRIEND #1
She must be a fireball in the sack to be keeping her around, right?

Before Ryan has the chance to answer.

FRIEND #1 (CONT’D)
That’s my boy!

RYAN
Actually, it’s not like that. This time I want to give it a shot. A real shot.

Friend #2 lets out a HOWL.

FRIEND #1
Are you kidding me?

RYAN
I think I’m ready for something more seriou --
FRIEND #1
No, no, no, don’t you even finish that sentence! No! I don’t want to hear it!

FRIEND #2
(to Friend #1)
Didn’t I tell you?
(to Ryan)
Welcome to the club!

Ryan breaks into a smile.

INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP — WORKROOM — MORNING

The workroom is surrounded with KIDS and PARENTS. Claire instructs a YOUNG GIRL how to paint a porcelain duck. She looks up, Ryan stands in front of her table. Claire is pleasantly surprised.

RYAN
I thought you owned a pottery shop.

CLAIRE
Not just “a” pottery shop. “A pick and paint” pottery shop. Have a seat.

Ryan sits down on the picnic table.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
You want to try it?

RYAN
I haven’t done this since elementary school.

CLAIRE
Just paint what’s in your heart.

Ryan considers and takes a mug from the table. He picks up a brush, dips it in red color and paints. Fleeing glances and grins between him and Claire, as he colors the mug.

After a while, Ryan shows his finished work to Claire. A house with flowers and roads around it, as well as a small sun in the sky.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
That wasn’t so hard, now, was it?

RYAN
What do you think?
CLAIRE
Honestly?
(after Ryan’s look)
Your house is surrounded by many roads, which means you’re trying to find your way out of something. A situation perhaps.

Ryan is both dumbfounded and impressed.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
And it might seem odd, but drawings that reflect happiness, say that your mood is far from joyful. The small sun and flowers suggest that you’re feeling melancholic.

RYAN
Wow, that was impressive. How do you know so much about interpreting drawings?

CLAIRE
My major in college was child psychotherapy.

RYAN
How come you’ve end up doing this?

CLAIRE
I was working with problematic children for a while, but it just wasn’t for me. All the things you see.

Ryan nods in understanding.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
This way is much better.

INT. JILL’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An 80’s theme party is taking place. Michael Jackson, Madonna, Luke Skywalker, Indiana Jones are all here. A huge banner above the entrance reads: “GIRLS (AND BOYS) JUST WANNA HAVE FUN!”

Claire and Ryan walk through the door. She is dressed as Cyndi Lauper and he wears a wig in the fashion of Flock of Seagulls.

Kadence, dressed up as a punk rock girl, and Jill, dressed up as Karate Kid, greet them. Kadence’s face falls into anger as soon as she sees Ryan.
JILL
Welcome to the 80’s!

KADENCE
It’s Cyndi Lauper and...?

RYAN
Flock of Seagulls. Good to see you again, Kadence.

KADENCE
(sarcastically)
Always a pleasure.

They enter the apartment and mingle with the PARTY GUESTS.

JILL
I’m signing you up for the breakdancing contest, right?

Claire is excited, Ryan doesn’t share her enthusiasm. He rolls his eyes and turns to Jill.

RYAN
Sure, why not?
(to Claire)
I’ll go get us some drinks.

He gives Claire a brief kiss and marches off towards the bar.

INT. JILL’S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jill and Claire have some wine while watching Ryan talking to a Party Guest. Kadence stands alone in a corner, focused on her mobile phone.

JILL
How’s it going with you two?

CLAIRE
Great. It’s going great.

JILL
I’m happy for you.

CLAIRE
He’s proven to be a lot different than I thought.

JILL
Kadence says he’ll end up breaking your heart.
CLAIRE
He’s not who he seems to be.
(pauses)
I think I’m starting to fall for him.

Jill beams and hugs her. Kadence and Claire exchange a glance.

JILL
Can I plan the wedding? Please, please, please! You won’t regret it!

A bitter smile crosses Claire’s face.

CLAIRE
Okay.

JILL
This calls for a toast. Champagne! Don’t you go anywhere!
(to Kadence)
I knew she’d be the first one to get married!

She rushes out of the kitchen. Kadence moves closer to Claire.

KADENCE
How could you let that happen?

CLAIRE
People fall in love, Kady.

KADENCE
This is a terrible idea.

CLAIRE
Can you stop patronizing me for one second? Let me live my life my way.

KADENCE
I don’t want to see you get hurt.

CLAIRE
Trust me, I won’t --

RYAN (O.S.)
What are you girls talking about?

Ryan steps into the kitchen.

KADENCE
Girl stuff.
RYAN
The contest’s about to start.  
You still up for this?

Claire nods affirmatively and goes to Ryan. He looks over his shoulder at Kadence, staring at them leave.

MONTAGE:

-- Two Party Guests breakdance. People around them laugh and cheer them on.
-- Jill breakdances on her own.
-- Ryan and Claire dance among whistling and clapping.

END MONTAGE

INT./EXT. RYAN’S CAR - NIGHT

The car is parked outside Claire’s building. Claire and Ryan are making out. Claire pulls away.

CLAIRE
I should go.

She gives Ryan one last kiss and hops out of the car. She holds the door open.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
All right, uh...

She wants to say “I love you,” but hesitates.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
... good night.

Ryan nods in response. Claire closes the door and paces to her building.

INT. CLAIRE’S BUILDING - NIGHT

Claire approaches the door to her apartment, lost in her thoughts. She puts the keys in the lock --

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Good evening, Claire.

Claire spins. MICHAEL (30, short, good looking) descends the stairway.

CLAIRE
Michael! What are you doing here?
MICHAEL
I’ve been looking for you.

CLAIRE
I thought I made it clear. I want you to stay away from me.

MICHAEL
All am asking is a chance to make things right.

CLAIRE
You don’t deserve one.

MICHAEL
Claire, listen to me --

Claire gets into her apartment and slams the door behind her. Michael bangs on the door.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
Claire. Come on, open the door! Claire!

He gives up, anger building on his face.

INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP - DAY

Claire and Kadence stack some flowers on the shelves. Claire seems abstracted by her thoughts and accidently drops a pot on the floor that shatters into pieces. She kneels down to clean up the mess.

KADENCE
You need help, babe?

CLAIRE
I got it.

She takes a broom and a scraper and sweeps the floor.

KADENCE
What’s the matter with you today? Everything all right with you and Ryan?

Claire nods slowly.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Something must’ve happened. You can’t fool me.

CLAIRE
Yesterday when I got home after the party, you won’t believe who showed up at my door.
Claire looks at her questioningly.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Michael.

KADENCE
Christ. How did he find you?

CLAIRE
I have no idea. Did he call you? Did you tell him anything?

KADENCE
Of course not! You know I’d never do that!

CLAIRE
How did he know where I live?

Kadence shakes her head.

KADENCE
What did he want?

CLAIRE
To talk.

KADENCE
Claire, don’t tell me --

CLAIRE
No! I didn’t even let him in! I just slammed the door on his face!

KADENCE
Are you going to be okay?

Claire slowly nods.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
You want to sleep at my place tonight?

CLAIRE
I’m going over to Ryan’s.

Kadence nods in acknowledgment.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Just seeing him made me so angry!

KADENCE
I know, honey. He can’t hurt you anymore.

They lock each other in a warm embrace.
INT. CORAL BAR - NIGHT

It’s closing time. Claire helps Ryan with the cleaning of the bar. He hums the melody of “Unforgettable” by Nat King Cole.

CLAIRE
What are you humming? I know this song.

RYAN
Something that got stuck in my head.

CLAIRE
What’s the title?

RYAN
“Unforgettable.” You know: “Unforgettable, that’s what you are...!”

CLAIRE
You’re not that bad of a singer.

Ryan laughs.

RYAN
It’s a great song. The first one I learned how to play on the piano.

(pause)
It’s the song my father played for my mom the night they first met. She fell in love with him because of that song.

Claire takes a step closer and looks at him straight in the eye.

CLAIRE
Play it for me.

RYAN
I can’t do that, Claire.

CLAIRE
Why?

RYAN
I made a promise.

CLAIRE
To who?
RYAN

Myself.

A glass breaks in his hands, giving Ryan a bad cut on the right palm.

RYAN (CONT’D)

Goddamn --!

Claire bullets to him. Ryan folds some napkins on the wound.

CLAIRE

Can I see that?

RYAN

It’s just a little cut. I’ll be fine.

CLAIRE

Let me have a look.

Ryan reveals his cut.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)

All right, where’s your first aid kit?

INT. CORAL BAR – RYAN’S OFFICE – NIGHT

A first aid kit is left on the desk. Seated on the side, Ryan receives medical attention from Claire. She finishes up with a band aid.

CLAIRE

All done.

Ryan stares at her for several breaths.

RYAN

You really want to hear me play?

Claire looks up and beams.

INT. CORAL BAR – BASEMENT – NIGHT

Ryan sits in front of the piano. Claire stands further away, watching him. He places his hands on the keys, bows his head. He plays “Unforgettable.”

His hand seems to hurt, but not enough for him to stop. Claire listens to the song, the melody travelling her away. Ryan finishes, Claire glances at him dreamily.
RYAN
I’m out of tune.

CLAIRE
That was beautiful.

Ryan bows his head, a little embarrassed.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
You have such an amazing gift. How could you turn your back on something like that?

Ryan doesn’t have an answer and deftly avoids giving one.

RYAN
Did you ever learn how to play?

CLAIRE
I always wanted to, but my mother thought language lessons would be a more valuable asset to my future career.

RYAN
Come here.

Claire is puzzled, but goes to him.

RYAN (CONT’D)
You’ll have your first lesson. Free of charge.

Claire sits next to him. He crosses his one leg over the bench and puts her in between his legs.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Give me your hands.

Claire holds up her hands. Ryan studies them.

RYAN (CONT’D)
You’ve got piano fingers, you know that? Sweaty piano fingers.

Blushed, Claire pulls her hands away and tries to dry them on her blouse. Ryan nabs her arms.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Let me.

He caresses her hands and brings them close to his face. He locks eyes with Claire and blows in between her fingers. Slowly. Sensually. A smile creeps on the woman’s face.
RYAN (CONT’D)
Much better. Now place your hands on the keys, level them with the floor. And relax your wrists.

Claire does. Ryan places his hands on top of Claire’s.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Try not to push the keys too hard. Just follow my lead.

He leads Claire’s fingers to the melody of “Unforgettable.” Starting a little off tune, but slowly sounding good. Claire beams.

CLAIRED’ER
We’re playing!

RYAN
No. You’re playing.

CLAIRED’ER
You’d make a good teacher.

RYAN
You’d make an excellent student.

His lips brush down her neck. Their fingers intertwine and stop hitting the keys. Claire turns her head and the two engage in a soft kiss.

INT. RYAN’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan is at his desk, surfing the net on his laptop. Reflective, he shifts his gaze to Claire sleeping on the bed.

INT. GEORGE’S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The door BANGS. In his bathrobe, George hastes to it. He passes past a clock on the wall. It’s 8:05.

GEORGE
Cool your jets! I’m coming!

He opens the door. To his surprise, Ryan blasts inside.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
What the heck are you doing up eight in the morning? Did the clock stop?

RYAN
Nope. I had to talk to you.
GEORGE
Did you even get any sleep last night?

RYAN
Not much.

He sits at the table. Confused, George closes the door and sits next to Ryan.

GEORGE
What’s going on?

RYAN
I’ve got an idea about the bar.

He reaches into his pocket and digs out a white piece of paper with listed prices of items. He gives it to George that reads it in perplexity.

GEORGE
What is all this?

RYAN
We always said we needed to give a new spirit to the Coral, so here it is.

GEORGE
"Furnishing, fitting, flooring?"
You’re talking about refurbishing the whole thing!

RYAN
And why not?

GEORGE
I’ll tell you why the heck not! Who’s going to cover this? I’m still paying the mortgage --

RYAN
George, George, George! I’m not asking you for money, all right? All I need to know is if you’re with me on this.

GEORGE
You inherited a rich uncle I don’t know about?

RYAN
I’ve got a little something saved up and I know this guy who can do the furnishing for a decent price. Hell, I’ll even get a small loan if I have to.
GEORGE
I don’t know, Ryan. It seems too much of a risk.

RYAN
I need you to trust me.

GEORGE
What did you have in mind?

RYAN
Bring back the “88.”

George looks at him, confused.

EXT. CLAIRE’S TERRACE – AFTERNOON

A small garden terrace. Seated on a futon at the balcony railing, Claire writes something on a small scrapbook. She dreamily smiles into the afternoon sun.

Ryan steps outside. He goes to Claire and plants a kiss on her cheek. She closes the scrapbook.

CLAIRE
How are the preparations at the bar going?

RYAN
Good. Workers are starting tomorrow.

He notices the scrapbook.

RYAN (CONT’D)
What are you doing?

CLAIRE
Writing on my scrapbook.

RYAN
Anything about me?

CLAIRE
It’s a scrapbook for flowers.

RYAN
What’s that?

CLAIRE
Take a look.

She hands him the scrapbook. Ryan leafs through the pages of the dried flowers, impressed.
CLAIRE (CONT’D)
All the flowers I ever had are in my scrapbooks.

RYAN
Look at all this. How did you make all of this?

CLAIRE
You dry the flowers, write down everything you can remember about them and just... close the book.

RYAN
It’s really amazing work.

CLAIRE
I’ve been doing it for years. This way I can keep their memory alive.

RYAN
You get to have them forever.

CLAIRE
Right.

Ryan bends down, takes her hand and kisses it.

RYAN
What would you write about me?

CLAIRE
Hmm... Let me think.
(pause)
Handsome, great body, gentle eyes, dazzling smile...

She takes a smell of his neck.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
... and smells like gardenias in bloom. Then I’d cut out this little nose...

She bites Ryan’s nose. They start to tickle and play. Laughter fills the air.

EXT. CORAL BAR - DAY

A TECHNICIAN on a ladder undoes the screws that hold the sign “CORAL BAR.” Ryan and Jackson stand under him.

RYAN
Did you talk to your girl?
JACKSON
Not yet. But I will.

The two grab the sign and ease it down on the sidewalk.

RYAN
Easy, easy. That’s good.
(pause)
Remember. Be honest with her.

He takes a couple steps back and glances at the empty wall. A broad smile spreads across his face.

A limousine pulls up on the sidewalk behind him. The rear window rolls down and Shane appears inside the luxurious vehicle.

SHANE
I see you’ve been saving me some work.

Ryan laughs ironically.

SHANE (CONT’D)
You got five minutes?

RYAN
It’s a really busy day.

SHANE
I won’t keep you. You got my word.

Ryan contemplates, opens the door and gets in.

INT. SHANE’S LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Ryan takes a seat opposite from Shane.

SHANE
Would you like some water?
Coffee?

RYAN
Thanks, I’m all right.

SHANE
Why are you bringing down the sign?

RYAN
We’re making a few changes.

SHANE
Ryan, why are you bothering with this, eh?

(MORE)
SHANE (CONT'D)
You’re a bartender, not a manager. There’s no shame in that.

Ryan is visibly offended by the comment.

SHANE (CONT’D)
You should let the management to the people that know how to do it.

RYAN
I’ve been running the Coral for ten years and we seem to be doing just fine.

SHANE
Let me ask you this. Is ever “just fine” good enough?

Ryan doesn’t answer. Shane pulls out a cheque from his jacket pocket.

SHANE (CONT’D)
My final offer... for 50 percent of the Coral.

He hands over the cheque to Ryan. The young man glares at the numbers in stunned silence.

RYAN
That is... very generous.

SHANE
Talk to your uncle. When you have finally decided, this will be waiting for you.

They shake hands.

EXT. CORAL BAR - CONTINUOUS
Ryan steps out of the limo. Through the open window:

SHANE
Have a good day. And don’t wear out yourself too much. It’s not worth it.

Ryan watches the limousine drive off.

INT. GEORGE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY
George and Ryan sit at the table.
RYAN
So what do you think?

GEORGE
That son of a bitch!
(pauses; thinks)
It’s a lot of money. We could start a new life. Both of us.

RYAN
Are you seriously thinking about this?

GEORGE
I’m just saying it could be a chance --

RYAN
A chance for what? This was my father’s bar!

GEORGE
And mine.

RYAN
Yeah, but you’re here and he’s not! It’s all I have left of him, George.

George nods solemnly.

GEORGE
You’re right. Come here.

He puts his arms around Ryan.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
I don’t know what got into me. I’m with you whatever you decide to do.

MONTAGE:

-- Ryan steps out of Shane’s office and a grin spreads to his eyes. Shane shakes his head, disappointingly.

-- George watches a few WORKERS refurbishing the bar. Floors, furniture, walls.

-- Claire and Ryan paint mugs in the workroom.

-- The piano is in its original place at the back of the bar. Ryan stares at it, a wave of memories coming back to him.

-- Claire and Ryan play one-on-one basketball.
-- Ryan waters the flower in his kitchen that has grown considerably.

-- The sign: “EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR” is set outside the bar. Ryan and George stand under it with wide smiles on their faces.

-- Ryan teaches Claire how to play the piano.

-- Ryan plays the piano alone. George stands in the doorway and studies him, a wisp of gratification at the corner of his mouth.

END MONTAGE

INT. RYAN’S BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Claire stands outside Ryan’s apartment and KNOCKS on the door. No answer. She sighs in disappointment. George’s door opens.

GEORGE
How are you, sweetness? Looking for Ryan?

CLaire
We were suppose to meet, but he’s not home.

GEORGE
(clears throat)
He, uh, he told me that he’d be running late in case you asked.

CLaire
Why didn’t he call me? Anyway, I’ll go to the store and come back later.

GEORGE
Let me drive you.

CLaire
I don’t want to trouble you, George. I’ll take the subway.

GEORGE
Nonsense! There’s no trouble at all.

He grabs his jacket from the coat rack and shuts the door.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
I also want us to have a little chat.
Claire watches him move away with mild curiosity.

INT. GEORGE’S TRUCK - MOVING - DAY

George is behind the wheel of his pickup truck, Claire in the passenger seat.

GEORGE
Claire, we’ve known each other for sometime now, but we never had the chance to talk. Just you and me.

CLAIRE
That’s true. What did you want to talk about --?

GEORGE
I wanted to thank you.

CLAIRE
For what?

GEORGE
For what you’ve done with him. Before you, he was a ghost. No purpose, no goals, but then you came along. You’ve changed him. I’ve never seen him happier.

Claire smiles coyly.

CLAIRE
I don’t know about that.

GEORGE
Take my word for it.
(pause)
Has he told you he loves you?

Claire shakes her head.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
You have to give him time. He might not say it, but he does. He really loves you.

Emotion surges within Claire.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
And I see that you love him, too. You’re going to be so happy together.
Claire stifles a smile and shifts her gaze to the window. An OLD COUPLE strolls down the street hand in hand. Sadness passes over Claire’s face.

INT./EXT. GEORGE’S TRUCK – DAY

Still contorted with sadness, Claire peers out the window. The truck has stopped outside the Pick and Paint.

GEORGE
Sweetheart, we’re here.

Slightly disoriented, Claire looks around.

CLAIRE
Sorry, I didn’t realize.

GEORGE
Are you okay?

CLAIRE
A little dizzy, that’s all. Thanks for the ride.

She gets off the car and goes to the store.

INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP – CONTINUOUS

Claire saunters in. No one in sight.

CLAIRE
Kadence? Hello?

All of a sudden, PEOPLE in party hats jump from their hiding places around the store and shout:

PEOPLE
SURPRISE!

Claire stands petrified. Her parents, Kadence, Jill, Ryan, they are all here. Claire gazes back at the doors. George walks in with a grin on his face. Kadence and Jill hurry to their friend.

KADENCE
Happy birthday, honey!

They hug and kiss Claire. Ryan stays at a distance and waves at her. Claire flickers a smile. Her parents approach her.

CLAIRE
Mom! Dad! I can believe you came --
As they move to her, Michael is revealed in the background. Immediately, Claire's face darkens. She embraces her mother and father, her eyes never leaving him.

INT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP - WORKROOM - DAY

The party is in full swing. People are dancing, chatting, having a good time. Claire and Kadence talk in a corner. Claire is clearly upset, staring at Michael conversing with her father.

CLAIRE
What the hell is he doing here?

KADENCE
He came with your parents! What was I supposed to do?

CLAIRE
I’ll go talk to him.

KADENCE
Come on, hon, don’t make a scene. It’s your birthday.

CLAIRE
I don’t care. This has to end once and for all!

She darts to Michael, brushing past Ryan coming towards her. He addresses Kadence.

RYAN
Where’s she going?

KADENCE
She’ll be right back.

On the other side of the room, Claire approaches Michael and her father.

CLAIRE’S FATHER
There’s the birthday gal! I was just telling Mike, about the ant farm we got you for your eighth birthday. Remember that?

(to Michael)
We come home the next day, the house is full of ants! She said they had to be free!

He laughs. Claire whispers to Michael’s ear.

CLAIRE
I want to see you. Outside.
Michael nods. Across the room, Ryan confers with Jill. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees Claire and Michael head to the back door.

JILL
So when’s the big opening?

RYAN
Next week.

JILL
We won’t miss it for the world.

RYAN
Thanks. I’ll be sure to save you a spot.

EXT. PICK AND PAINT POTTERY SHOP - BACK ALLEY - DAY

Claire and Michael come out of the store.

CLAIRE
Why are you here?

MICHAEL
Your parents invited me.

CLAIRE
They never would, if they knew what piece of work you are!

MICHAEL
Claire, when are you going to forgive me?

CLAIRE
How can I forgive you? Is there a way I can do that? Because I don’t see one!

MICHAEL
I’m a changed man.

CLAIRE
What you did can’t change! You can’t take that back!

GEORGE (O.S.)
Is everything all right here?

George stands a few feet away, having a cigarette.

MICHAEL
Why don’t you mind your own business, huh?
CLAIRE
George, please. I need you to stay out of this.
(to Michael)
I don’t want you in my life anymore! You understand that?
It’s over!

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL
I know I screwed up, but there’s too much between us to just throw away! I love you.

George puts his hand on Michael’s shoulder.

GEORGE
Look, why don’t you just go? You’re clearly not welcome.

MICHAEL
I said mind your business, old man!

He shoves George away, sending him to the ground. Ryan bursts through the door and grabs Michael. Claire’s eyes widen in alarm.

CLAIRE
No, Ryan!

Ryan falls on top of Michael and punches him repeatedly. Claire pulls him away with a SCREAM. Kadence, Jill and Claire’s parents emerge from the store, frightened.

Claire stands there stupefied, her eyes dart to the people around her. All of a sudden, she storms back inside.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Everyone is around the living room, concerned expressions on their faces. Ryan waits near the bedroom. The door opens and Kadence steps out.

KADENCE
She had a long day. She just needs to rest.

Ryan tries to get in the room. Kadence cuts in front of him, but sees the determination in his eyes.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Don’t be too long.

Ryan nods and enters the room.
INT. CLAIRE’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire is in her bed, the color has drained from her face, her eyes are cried out. As soon as she sees Ryan, she quickly wipes her tears. He goes to Claire, sits on the side of the bed and takes her hand.

CLAIRE
I wish you hadn’t seen me like that. I should have explained how things were between me and Michael.

RYAN
It’s okay. Don’t worry about it.

CLAIRE
We were together for two years. It started off good, but he was becoming possessive.

RYAN
Claire, you don’t have to do this.

CLAIRE
Yes, I do.

Ryan nods.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
He wouldn’t even let me go out with my friends. He thought I was going to cheat on him.
(pauses)
And this one day, we were arguing quite heatedly and he, uh... lost control...

She turns her head and moves a bang of hair to uncover a three-inch scar. Her eyes fill with a storm of emotions. Ryan is shocked. He touches the scar, leans down and kisses it gently.

RYAN
He’s not here anymore. I am.

He tucks her hair behind her ear and plants a soft kiss on her forehead. Claire closes her eyes. When she opens them again, a gift-wrapped present waits on her lap. She eyes Ryan.

RYAN (CONT’D)
You didn’t get to open your presents.
Claire breaks into a smile and tears open the wrapping paper. It's an elegant crystal rose.

RYAN (CONT'D)
You can keep this one forever.

Tearful, Claire smiles to him.

CLAIRE
It's beautiful. Thank you so much.

RYAN
Try to get some rest.

He rises and crosses to the door. He stops for a moment, wanting to say something, but no words come out. He exits.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Everybody is leaving the apartment. Kadence shows them out.

KADENCE
She'll call you when she feels better. Take care.
(to Claire’s parents)
She'll be just fine. Have a safe trip back.

Ryan is left last.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Go home. I’ll stay with her.

RYAN
Not a chance.

KADENCE
I think it might be better if you gave her a little space.

RYAN
If you don’t want me to wait in the apartment, I’ll stay out in the hall, but I’m not leaving her.

Kadence smiles.

KADENCE
Fine. How about I stay with her for now and you can come back in a few hours?

Ryan ponders his options.
RYAN
Okay. Call me if you need anything.

Ryan exits and Kadence closes the door. Claire steps out of her bedroom and motions to the middle of the living room.

CLAIRE
Is everyone gone?

KADENCE
Yeah.

Kadence picks her way to one of the windows.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
I can’t do it anymore, Claire.

CLAIRE
Don’t back out on me. I trusted you.

KADENCE
It’s gone far enough. You have to come clean.

CLAIRE
I’m not ready. Not yet.

KADENCE
It’s not fair to anyone. Especially him.

Claire just stares at her friend.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
You have to put an end to all this... or I’ll have to do it for you. I’m sorry, honey.

Claire nods in acknowledgment.

INT. CLAIRE’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emotionally numb, Claire sits in a corner, curled up in a ball. The crystal rose is in her hands.

Abruptly, she throws it at the wall across from her, shattering it to pieces. She bursts into tears.
INT. CLAIRE’S BEDROOM - LATER

The door opens slowly and Ryan creeps into the room. Claire is in the same position as before, her eyes swollen from crying.

RYAN
Claire?

CLAIRE
Where’s Kadence?

RYAN
She went home. I’ll stay with you.

CLAIRE
No, I don’t want you here. You should go.

Ryan paces to her side and spots the broken glass on the floor. He kneels down to pick up the pieces.

RYAN
How did this happen?

Claire launches to her feet.

CLAIRE
Nothing lasts forever, Ryan. You should know that. Everything has to end... sooner or later.

RYAN
What are you saying?

CLAIRE
I can’t see you anymore.

Ryan takes a few steps towards her, grabs her arms and gazes into her eyes.

RYAN
I understand that you’re upset and if you want to be alone --

CLAIRE
That’s exactly what I want! This was a mistake. All of it.

RYAN
Why would you say that? What’s going on, Claire?
CLAIRE
There are things about me you
don’t know!

RYAN
Then why don’t you tell me? Why
won’t you let me in? I want to
know you inside out.

CLAIRE
No, you don’t! You don’t want to
know me!

She turns her back to Ryan.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
I need you to leave.

RYAN
Claire...

CLAIRE
LEAVE!

Ryan nods solemnly and slowly walks out of the room.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ryan treads along the living room and suddenly stops in his
tracks. He rushes back into the bedroom.

RYAN
I’m not going anywhere and you
want to know why?

INT. CLAIRE’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ryan barges into the room.

RYAN
Because I love --!

His eyes widen. Claire is crumbled down on the floor.
Ryan rockets to her, bends down and clasps her in his arms.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Claire? Talk to me! Claire!
CLAIRE!

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Claire rests on a hospital bed, connected to a heart
monitor and an IV.
Ryan stands against the window, staring at her through the pane of glass. Kadence comes running down the corridor.

KADENCE
What happened?! Where is she?!

She follows Ryan’s gaze into the room.

RYAN
The doctors are waiting for the results. They said she’ll be out for a few hours.

KADENCE
Oh, God. Oh, God, I knew this would happen.

Ryan looks at her dead in the eye.

RYAN
Kadence... please tell me the truth.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - LATER
Ryan and Kadence sit down on a bench.

KADENCE
When that sack of shit cracked her head open, the bleeding and infection caused a brain damage.

RYAN
“Brain damage?” What’s, uh --?

KADENCE
A permanent form of dementia. Gradual memory loss.

Ryan is speechless, uncertain of what to think or say.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Six months from now, a year at best, she won’t have recollection of anything or anybody in her life.

Ryan’s expression melts to chagrin. He rises and paces back and forth.

RYAN
All this time, she seemed...

KADENCE
I know.
RYAN
Who else knows?

KADENCE
Nobody. Just me. She made me promise not to tell anyone.

Devastated, Ryan walks off without a word.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Kadence emerges through the hospital doors. Ryan is seated on a bench a few yards away. She goes to him and comes before him.

RYAN
It’s not fair.

KADENCE
When has anything in life been fair?

RYAN
How could she keep this from me?

KADENCE
The same reason she kept it from everyone else. She didn’t want people to look at her differently.

RYAN
I wasn’t “everyone else.”

A silence settles between them.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Is there a way to --? Some kind of treatment?

Kadence shakes her head.

KADENCE
She tried, saw dozens of doctors. They all said the same thing.

RYAN
Why would she get involved with me if she knew one day it will be over?

Kadence shrugs.
At first, I thought she was just looking for a fling, but that wasn’t it. She saw something in you.

Ryan nods slowly.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Does she know?

RYAN
What?

KADENCE
That you love her.

RYAN
I hope she does.

They both smile.

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - DAWN

A spectacular view of the Manhattan skyline. The sun kisses the horizon.

INT. HOSPITAL - CLAIRE’S ROOM - MORNING

Claire slowly opens her eyes, completely disoriented. Her vision goes in and out of clarity. Bright colors all around her.

As her sight regains, she realizes the room is filled with flowers and plants. Ryan sleeps on a chair next to her bed. She glances at him for a while.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER (O.S.)
She’s up! She’s waking up!

Her mother rockets into the room. Ryan wakes up with a jolt and turns his gaze to Claire, her eyes still on him. Her father, Jill and Kadence also hurry inside the room. Claire’s mother hugs her daughter.

CLAIRE’S MOTHER (CONT’D)
Why didn’t you tell us, Claire? We would’ve understood. We’re your parents for God’s sake!

Her husband pulls her away.

CLAIRE’S FATHER
Now is not the time.
KADENCE
How are you feeling, hon?

CLAIRE
Exhausted. Like I’ve been out running.

She notices the flowers.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Who did all this?

JILL
It was Ryan’s idea.

Claire and Ryan lock eyes.

CLAIRE
Can you give us a minute?

Everyone leaves the room. Claire and Ryan are left alone. They stay silent for a moment.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry. I don’t know what else to say.

RYAN
How could you do this?

CLAIRE
There’s no excuse for what I did, but try to understand --

RYAN
What I don’t understand is “why.” Why spend the time you have left with someone like me?

CLAIRE
People spend their whole life searching for what I found in you.

In mute anger, Ryan bolts up and goes to a window.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Every day, every single day, I wanted to tell you, I tried to tell you, but I couldn’t.

RYAN
You should’ve tried harder! If I knew right from the start, I wouldn’t have bothered!
CLAIRE
What? Sleeping with me?

RYAN
Falling in love with you.

Claire is near tears and tries to sit up. She lets out a painful gasp. Ryan darts to Claire’s bed, kneels next to her and takes her hand. Their eyes are very involved.

CLAIRE
I feel the same way... that’s why I have to let you go.

Ryan stares at her in surprise.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
And if you really love me, you’ll do the same.

RYAN
No. Never. We’ll find a way to make this work.

CLAIRE
There is no way, Ryan. I beg you, don’t make things any harder.

RYAN
Don’t run away.

CLAIRE
I have to.

Ryan stares at her for a long moment. Suddenly, he springs up and storms out as a DOCTOR enters the room, a patient chart in hand.

DOCTOR
Good day, Ms. Walker.

Claire’s family, Kadence and Jill hasten into the room. The Doctor reads the chart.

DOCTOR (CONT’D)
We just got your test results back and we have some good news for you...

Everyone listens with rapt attention, except for Claire. Her gaze is fixated on Ryan walking away.
EXT. CLAIRE’S BUILDING - DAY

Claire’s mother and Kadence help Claire out of a taxi. Her father opens the door to her building.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claire waters her plants. Kadence stands in a corner watching her.

KADENCE
Your parents are on the way. I have to go back to the store. Do you need anything before I leave?

Claire shakes her head.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
Keep in mind what the doctor said, huh? Try to save your strength.

CLAIRE
My flowers need more care than I do.

KADENCE
Nothing can change you one bit.

Claire shakes her head once more.

KADENCE (CONT’D)
I’ll call you later.

She heads for the door.

CLAIRE
Kady?

Kadence turns around.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry for everything I’ve put you through.

Kadence acknowledges with a smile.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

A three-on-three basketball game is on. Ryan tries his best to hold defence. Despite his efforts, Teenage Boy #1 scores a basket in front of him and tosses him a wink in mockery. Anger flushes over Ryan’s face.
As the play continues, Ryan’s team is again on defence. A shot is made, Ryan and Teenage Boy #1 both jump for the rebound. Ryan sends an elbow on the Teenage Boy’s face and gets the ball. The Boy is pushed across the court. He lifts his head up, blood dripping down his nose.

The rest of the players stare at Ryan with judgmental eyes. The Boy wipes his nose and looks at the blood on his palm. He turns to Ryan.

TEENAGE BOY #1
What the hell’s the matter with you?

TEENAGE BOY #2
I think you better go, man.

Ryan throws the ball away and storms off. As he exits the court, crosses paths with Jackson.

JACKSON
Ryan, I got to talk to you.

RYAN
Not right now, Jackson.

JACKSON
It will take two minutes.

He follows Ryan.

JACKSON (CONT’D)
The girl I was telling you about? I did what you told me and she --

Ryan halts and spins.

RYAN
Look, you’re going to have to learn how to deal with your own problems. I can’t keep doing it for you, okay?

He rushes away leaving Jackson with a stunned expression on his face.

INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR - DAY

Halfway drunk, Ryan sits at the piano, an empty bottle of wine by his feet. George slowly approaches him.

GEORGE
I heard what happened. I’m sorry.

Ryan stays silent.
GEORGE (CONT’D)
Will you see her again?

RYAN
She broke up with me.

GEORGE
That’s a shame. I thought you two would --

RYAN
Well, you thought wrong!

He bangs his hand on the keys.

GEORGE
It’s better to have loved and lost...

RYAN
And how would you know, huh? You were too selfish to love anyone besides yourself and you want to talk to me about love?

GEORGE
That’s not true and you know it.

RYAN
Then why don’t you tell me what is true?

GEORGE
Some people go through life never finding someone.

RYAN
You didn’t find anybody so you threw in the towel? You let life pass you by without even --!

GEORGE
All right, that’s enough. I think you better get upstairs.

RYAN
Goddamn it! Stop treating me like I’m a child! Like I’m your child!

GEORGE
I’ve been taking care of you as if you were mine. Since day one.

RYAN
Nobody asked you to.
GEORGE
You little punk. And you’re calling me selfish? I never loved anyone besides myself? What do you think I did you, eh?

RYAN
You weren’t my father and never will be.

He rises and staggers out of the bar.

INT. RYAN’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Ryan stands by the window, peering outside. Dark clouds swirl in the sky. A tear flows down his cheek. Heavy rain starts to fall.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Claire leans against the wall, looking at the raindrops tapping on the window.

INT. RYAN’S KITCHEN - MORNING
Ryan steps into the kitchen and gazes outside the window. On the sill, the flower is almost dead, rained down from the previous night.

Ryan darts to the window, opens it and takes the half-dead plant inside. He tenderly touches its leaves.

INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR - DAY
The final preparations of the opening day are on the way. A crew of WORKERS hangs paintings on the walls. George and Ryan set up their bar. There is ice in the air. They exchange a brief glance.

GEORGE
We have to talk.

RYAN
If it’s about the other night --

GEORGE
It’s not about that. Something has come up.

He makes his way to the exit. Ryan follows him.
EXT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR - DAY

George fires up a smoke. Ryan stands next to him, a puzzled look on his face.

RYAN
Okay, what’s going on?

GEORGE
This might sound a little out-of-the-way, but I’ve been discussing with Shane...
(pauses)
...about selling my share of the Coral.

Ryan cannot believe his ears.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
I just want to make sure you’re okay with it first.

Ryan smiles in disbelief.

RYAN
You’re messing with me, right?
Because I know you wouldn’t do something like that.

George stares at him, a slight embarrassment in his eyes.

RYAN (CONT’D)
I don’t believe it! For God’s sake, how can you do this?

GEORGE
You were right. It’s time for me to pick up the towel. I found a nice, little restaurant uptown just enough money of my share from the bar.

Ryan shakes his head disbelievingly.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
This isn’t easy for me either. I hope you can understand.

RYAN
How can I, George? When you’re selling my father? ‘Cause that’s what you’re doing! You’re not selling a bar! You’re selling your own blood --!
GEORGE
Don’t speak to me like that! I
would have given my own soul to
save his!

RYAN
Then how can you give up all
that’s left of him?

GEORGE
When are you going to realize
these are only things? Your dad
is not these walls, or floors, or
tables! He’s here...
(touches his head)
...and here...
(touches his heart)
Keep him alive inside of you.
Everything else don’t matter.

Both men are bent with emotion and they hug.

RYAN
I’m so sorry.

GEORGE
I’m sorry, too.

INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR – NIGHT

The piano bar is literally packed with people. Mika whirls
around the bar, serving drinks on her tray. So does Ryan
behind the counter. Shane talks to George at the end of
the counter. He motions to Ryan’s side and offers his hand
to him.

SHANE
I shouldn’t have doubted you.
You’ve done a terrific job.

Ryan shakes his hand.

SHANE (CONT’D)
Ryan, I don’t want you to see me
as the enemy. I knew your father
and I respected him as a person
and as a manager. And you got my
word I’ll respect the Coral.

RYAN
I appreciate that. Thanks.

Shane leaves. Jill and Kadence approach the bar. Ryan’s
eyes scan the place for Claire, but never find her.
JILL
Congratulations, Ryan! The place looks superb!

KADENCE
Really. Good for you.

RYAN
Thanks a lot, girls. Thank you.
(pause)
Where’s Claire?


RYAN (CONT’D)
I’ve got your seats right here. What can I get you?

INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR – NIGHT

The patrons are having an excellent time. Abruptly, the lights go out and the SOUND of a PIANO fills the bar. The piano is spotlighted. Ryan plays an marvelous tune, his notes amaze people. George glances at him, more proud of him than ever.

INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR – LATER

Ryan finishes another song. People clap enthusiastically. He beams and looks up. His gaze goes from Jill to Kadence, to Mika and finally to George. To all the people, but the one he truly wants to be there.

EXT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR – NIGHT

Mika strides away from the bar. The neon sign is turned off.

INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR – NIGHT

George pulls down some switches and a few lights come off. Ryan is still at the piano, hitting a few keys with one hand. George sees him and sighs. He crosses to him and stands above him.

GEORGE
Look, don’t take this the wrong way, but maybe it’s time for you to forget about her and move on.

Ryan turns his gaze to him, immerse pain in his eyes.
GEORGE (CONT’D)
I know, but it’s probably for the best.
(pause)
Let’s get some sleep, huh? It’s been a long night.

He pats Ryan on the back and makes a few steps towards the door.

RYAN
George...

The old man spins.

RYAN (CONT’D)
I want to tell this girl that I love her and I’m going to need your help...

George breaks into a grin.

GEORGE
Can’t it wait ‘till tomorrow?

Ryan grins.

INT. CLAIRE’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire rests sleepless on her bed. MUSIC from a PIANO playing in the distance. She sits up, trying to hear a little better. The song is familiar. “Unforgettable.” She rolls out of bed and rockets to the living room.

INT. CLAIRE’S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire dashes to a nearby window and peers outside. Ryan sits at his piano in the middle of the sidewalk, playing the song.

EXT. CLAIRE’S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Ryan’s Friends and George stand by his truck parked further away. Through the glass, Claire’s eyes meet Ryan’s. They hold a moment.

Suddenly, the woman moves away from the window. Wondered, Ryan looks at his Friends and George.

A few moments later, the door of the building opens and Claire steps out. She makes her way to Ryan, her eyes glued on him. Ryan stands up and meets her half-way.
RYAN
I know you’re scared... but you
don’t have to fight this alone.
We’ll find a way... if you let us
try. Yeah?

Emotion overtaking her, Claire gives him a grin and nods
emphatically. They kiss.

EXT. BOTANICAL PARK - DAY

Ryan and Claire stride among the colorful flowers.

RYAN
So you want to talk about it?

CLaire
(faking memory loss)
Talk about what? Hey, who are
you again?

RYAN
Come on, cut it out. It’s not
funny.

CLaire
It’s a little funny.

They share a look and a smile.

CLaire (CONT’D)
What? There isn’t that much to
talk about.

RYAN
Don’t put me on the sideline,
Claire.

Claire
What can I say? My life turned
upside-down in the blink of an
eye. Everything I have now, one
day will be taken from me. And I
know that...
(pause)
... I’m just trying to deal with
it.

Ryan nods understandingly and takes her hand.

RYAN
You’re not alone.

Claire’s face is suffused with tenderness. The couple
engages in a deep kiss.
RYAN (CONT’D)
You want to do something fun?

CLAIRE
Like what?

RYAN
I’ve made you a promise I didn’t keep.

Claire’s eyes squint curiously.

EXT. BRYANT PARK – DAY

The carousel is now open. Claire and Ryan ride one horse each, seeming radiantly happy. Claire takes a picture.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT – DAY

Jackson and some Teenage Boys sit on a bench, taking a time out from their game. Their talks and laughs are loud.

A few yards away, Ryan approaches the door of the bard wired fence. He makes eye contact with Jackson, but the boy carries on with his conversation as if he never saw him. Ryan is disappointed and moves a bit closer. He addresses Jackson.

RYAN
Hey. Can we talk?

The boy ignores him.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Jackson, come on!

Jackson wears a look of distress, stands up and paces to Ryan. Teenage Boy #1 shouts:

TEENAGE BOY #1
Tell him, he ain’t playing!

Jackson comes before Ryan.

JACKSON
What do you want?

RYAN
Spend some time with you.

JACKSON
You managed to fit me into your schedule?
RYAN
I’ve been a jerk. You know I
didn’t mean what I said. I’m
sorry if I hurt your feelings.
Friends?

He extends his hand for a handshake. Jackson glares at it
for a while, then grabs it.

RYAN (CONT’D)
I’ll be there whenever you need
me. No matter what.

The boy nods.

RYAN (CONT’D)
So what about this girl?

Shyly, Jackson looks over his shoulder at the Teenage Boys.
He moves further away to a more discreet spot.

JACKSON
I did just like you said. I
finally told her how I feel.

RYAN
And what did she say?

JACKSON
She walked out on me and we
didn’t speak for a week.

Ryan frowns.

JACKSON (CONT’D)
But then yesterday, she came over
and told me she was into me since
ninth grade, but was too scared
to say anything. I got a
girlfriend now!

RYAN
Wow! That’s great! I knew you
could do it.

JACKSON
Me? It was you all along. If
you hadn’t pushed me to tell her
the truth, things could have been
different.

RYAN
Nah. Love always finds a way.

Ryan considers these words.
RYAN (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
It always finds a way.
(to Jackson)
I’m proud of you!

They shake hands again.

INT. RYAN’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire sleeps on the bed in the half-light. With his clothes still on, Ryan spoons behind her and wraps his arms around her.

RYAN
(whispers)
We’ll always be together. Love will find a way for us.

He plants a kiss on her bare shoulder. Claire opens her eyes, both moved and unconvinced.

INT. GEORGE’S RESTAURANT - DAY

George walks among the few tables of the restaurant, leading the tour of the place to Ryan and Claire. The space is small, but cozy and friendly.

GEORGE
... this the main restaurant. It’s seven tables in this area and another three at the back. Let me show you my favorite part.

INT. GEORGE’S RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - DAY

A huge kitchen, almost as big as the main restaurant itself.

GEORGE
The kitchen!

Enthusiasm takes over him, as he darts from counter to counter showing the cookware to Claire and Ryan.

GEORGE (CONT’D)
We keep all the pots, pans and ladles up here! Over there we have the trays and the bake liners --!

RYAN
George, take it easy.
George stops to catch his breath.

    GEORGE
    This is what I’ve always wanted!

    CLAIRE
    The place is just lovely. We wish you all the luck in the world, George.

    RYAN
    Yeah.

Ryan and George hold a look.

    GEORGE
    It’s a nice, little restaurant, nothing showy, but I guarantee you the food’s excellent!

They all smile.

INT. GEORGE’S RESTAURANT - DAY

George and the couple have lunch, happy faces on every one. George is in the middle of a story.

    GEORGE
    ... and without a second thought he punches the man right in the face!

Claire drops her jaw.

    RYAN
    He wouldn’t pay!

    GEORGE
    He was drunk as a log!

Ryan lowers his head in embarrassment.

    GEORGE (CONT’D)
    Later that night, he confessed to me he had regretted it and tried to find the man to apologize.

    RYAN
    I’m not sure about that.

    GEORGE
    You did.
    (to Claire)
    He did. Although a troublemaker, he always had a heart of gold.
Claire and Ryan share a look. She touches his hand.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What about you, Claire? Any stories you wouldn’t be too embarrassed to share?

CLAIRE
There’s always a little something to dig up.

GEORGE
Let’s hear it.

Claire tries to remember.

CLAIRE
I had just opened the store, it wouldn’t be more than four or five days, and a man walks in and tells me he wants flowers for his partner’s birthday...

Her eyes blink in nothingness.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
He comes in the store... He, uh...

Claire seems not to be able to put a sentence in order.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
... I wouldn’t even considered going there...

Suddenly, she stops talking and gazes around her as if she never been there before.

RYAN
Claire? Claire, look at me, please. Look into my eyes.

The woman stares at him blankly. Him and George share a concerned glance.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Claire?

CLAIRE
Ryan...

RYAN
Yes.
(pauses; smiles)
Are you tired? You want me to take you home?
Claire tries to continue where she left off.

CLAIRE
... And when he says “partner” I immediately assume it’s a woman. Let me save you the suspense, it wasn’t!

George and Ryan smile in awkwardness.

RYAN
I think we should be heading back.

CLAIRE
Why can’t we stay? Is there something wrong?

RYAN
No. Everything’s fine.

He shares another look with George.

INT. RYAN’S CAR - MOVING - DAY

A skeptical Ryan drives his car through the streets of New York. Next to him, Claire glares at him with concern.

CLAIRE
You haven’t said a word since we left the restaurant. What’s the matter?

RYAN
I got a little headache.

CLAIRE
Did anything happen?

RYAN
Let’s just forget about it, okay?

CLAIRE
What? Tell me.

RYAN
You honestly don’t remember?

Claire shakes her head.

RYAN (CONT’D)
You blanked out for a moment. It seemed like you didn’t know where you were or who we are...

Claire is stunned.
CLAIRE
I didn’t even realize.
(pause)
It’s starting to happen, isn’t it?

Ryan takes her hand.

RYAN
It’s going to be all right.
We’re in this together.

Claire slowly nods, doubt in her gaze.

EXT. CLAIRE’S TERRACE - NIGHT

Claire sits out in the terrace, admiring the glimmering view of the city. She seems troubled by her thoughts.

Ryan comes through the door with a blanket in his hands and covers the young woman. He takes a seat behind her with his legs wrapped around her.

RYAN
What are you doing out here?
It’s getting cold.

CLAIRE
I couldn’t sleep.

RYAN
Is there something I can do to help?

He kisses Claire’s neck. She closes her eyes, feeling every touch.

RYAN (CONT’D)
Come on. Let’s go back inside.

He stands up, pulling Claire’s arm, but she won’t move. Ryan gives her a quizzical look.

RYAN (CONT’D)
All right. I’ll wait for you in bed.

He lets go and goes for the door.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
You want to know what my worst fear is?

Ryan halts and turns around.
CLAIRE (CONT’D)
That one day I’ll close my eyes
and when I open them you won’t be
there.

Ryan stands still.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
You’re the most important thing
in my life and just the idea of
losing you --

Ryan rockets to her and falls on his knees in front of her.

RYAN
You won’t. You won’t lose me,
okay? You can’t.

CLAIRE
But I am. Moment by moment.

RYAN
Don’t say that, Claire.

CLAIRE
I know we don’t want to, but it’s
time for us to start facing the
truth.

RYAN
We still have so much time
together. Don’t give up on us.

CLAIRE
I’m not. I’m giving us a chance.
I may not be able to remember
you, but you can remember me.
And this is the memory I want you
to have of me. All that I am
right now.

Ryan frowns as he ponders all this.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Please, Ryan, try and
understand...

RYAN
God. This can’t be the end.

Claire caresses his cheek.

CLAIRE
True love stories never end.
They fall into a kiss. A last kiss. They pull away and take each other in. They stare at one another for a long moment.

RYAN
What now?

CLAIRE
Now, it’s time to close my eyes...

Ryan nods understandingly. He runs his hand over Claire’s face and closes her eyelids. He leans closer and whispers in her ear.

RYAN
Write in your book about me.
Like you do with your flowers.
Keep me forever.

CLAIRE
I will.

RYAN
I’ll always love you.

The feeling of the moment wells up in Claire’s eyes. A second later, she opens them. No one in sight.

CLAIRE
(under her breath)
I’ll always love you.

INT. WALKER LIVING ROOM - DAY

Claire’s mother opens the front door and Claire with Kadence stand on the doorstep. Full of joy, the mother hugs her daughter tightly.

INT. GEORGE’S RESTAURANT - DAY

Ryan walks through the door to the busy restaurant. George stands at the back, talking to a few CUSTOMERS. He spots Ryan and signals to him. The young man smiles and makes his way towards his uncle.

EXT. UPTOWN STREET - DAY

Claire, Kadence and Jill past by a hotel entrance decorated with gardenias. Claire smells the scent of the blooming flowers that remind her of Ryan and a flood of warm memories seizes her.
INT. EIGHTY8 CORAL BAR - NIGHT

The Coral is filled with people. Ryan and Shane on opposite ends of the counter, raise their glasses in salutation and then drink.

INT. CLAIRE’S BEDROOM - DAY

Claire writes something down on a scrapbook. On the page, there attached pictures of her and Ryan. She finishes and stares at the pictures, choking back emotions. She closes the book.

INT. RYAN’S KITCHEN - DAY

On the window sill, the flower is in full blossom, its colors are striking in the autumn sun.

FADE OUT.

THE END