

"DRAGONS AND DRESS SHIRTS"

By

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FADE IN:

INT. WILLIAM'S APARTMENT-BEDROOM-MORNING-

The movie opens with the sound of an alarm clock ringing. The camera is blurry, and staring at the face of the clock. Slowly the camera focuses to reveal the time. It is 7am. The camera cuts again to see William lying in bed. You can see textbooks, paper, and a calculator strewn about over his bed. He inhales, rolls his eyes, and reluctantly sits up. He pauses for a second, sighs and gets out of bed. The camera cuts to a panoramic view of the room; you can see many academic awards on the walls and a picture of his family at his graduation. Lying next to the picture is an opened package, with a visible note, signed by his family that says, "This is for good luck". Inside the package is a tape. William picks up the tape, puts it in a cassette deck and hits play. As the tape starts playing, William walks over to the bathroom sink and stares at his reflection in the mirror. You can hear the tape playing in the background, and realize that it is a motivational tape saying "You are a winner; you have so much potential, why waste it? There's nothing in the world too ambitious for a person to do if they just apply themselves. Everyman has the potential to succeed and only self-doubt can stop them. You too can be a successful individual, if you seize the day!" William rolls his eyes, opens the medicine cabinet behind the mirror and grabs the bottle of Advil. He pops two pills in his mouth and walks toward his closet. In his closet you can see a business suit hanging next to a lab coat, a pair of shorts and a t-shirt. He stares at the business suit for a second, grabs it and begins to get dressed for the day.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING-INTERVIEWERS OFFICE-MID DAY

The camera is over the interviewer's shoulder, and you can see him holding up William's resume. Behind the resume you can see William sitting blankly in the chair in front of the interviewer.

INTERVIEWER

Your resume certainly is impressive.
Your reputation precedes you.

At this point, the interviewer puts the resume down on the desk and slides it toward William. The camera is focused on the resume, and for a second you can see a long list of academic achievements.

WILLIAM

Thanks.

INTERVIEWER

It says here that you are currently finishing your thesis in psychology? Finding a cure for delusional fixations? That's quite ambitious.

WILLIAM

Well, it's like they always say:
(sarcastically quoting the motivational
tape) "There's nothing too ambitious for
a person to do if he or she just applies
himself or herself."

INTERVIEWER

I like your attitude son, when you
finish your research, our company will
be more than happy to have you on board.
You have a job in our office waiting for
you.

WILLIAM

Thanks.

William stands up, shakes the hand of the interviewer and
walks away. He drags his feet on the ground as he walks away
from the office towards the elevator. You can tell he is
apathetic to the whole situation. You see the doors of the
elevators close on him and another person.

OTHER PERSON

Hey I saw you coming out of the big
man's office. Are you the new guy?

WILLIAM

Well, I wouldn't say new. I haven't
finished writing my thesis yet. I'm just
lining up my options.

OTHER PERSON

Hey, that's great! Working here is
awesome; you're going to love it. You
get lots of fancy benefits. Great job
security, retirement plans, and you get
your own lab station!

At this point William looks blankly at the other person as
they remain in awkward silence until they get off. After
exiting the elevator, William looks down at his watch, and
counts down on his fingers, 3, 2, 1" and his cell phone
rings. He rolls his eyes and hits talk.

WILLIAM

Hi mom, Hi dad. Yes the interview went
well.

FATHER

That's great! That's 4 out of 5
successes. Your future is looking
brighter than ever. We are so proud.
It's like I always say..

WILLIAM

...line up your options to be safe. I know dad, my future is secure I assure you.

You hear William's mother yelling from the background

MOTHER

James, will you please call the repairman to fix that light in the bathroom?

FATHER

Not right now Mary, I am on the phone with our son. He says his interview went well!

MOTHER

Oh tell him that is great and we are proud! Ask him to come home for dinner so we can celebrate!

FATHER

Why don't you come home for dinner? Your mom is cooking your favorite foods, just for you. Let us celebrate our son and his many accomplishments. I've already invited that girl Jennifer. You remember her, the successful daughter of my co-worker from the office.

The mom yells from the background in the kitchen.

MOTHER

You two used to play so nicely together as kids! She's grown up a lot and into a very nice girl, very mature for her age...

FATHER

She's finishing up her doctorate at Harvard this semester. She should be set to graduate at the same time as you. Your mother seems to think she has taken quite a liking to you. Impressed by your accomplishments no doubt.

WILLIAM

I remember. Okay Dad, I'll be home. Just, let's not make a big deal out of this okay?

INT. WILLIAM'S PARENT'S HOME—LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

The scene opens with William standing under a banner with big letters saying "Congratulations William". There is a large gathering of people in business suits in the living room: friends of William's father. William is staring up at

the letters, and eventually looks down to a man in front of him who is in active conversation with him.

MAN

So what do you think?

William looks blankly at the man in front of him. He doesn't know what to say, because he was daydreaming.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry... what did you say?

MAN

I asked what you thought about what we've been discussing...

WILLIAM

Oh, I umm...well...

William's father interrupts the conversation by walking up behind the man and putting his hand on his shoulder.

FATHER

Don't worry; there'll be plenty of time for William to tell us all about his plans for the future over dinner. Come on; let's move into the dining room.

INT. WILLIAM'S PARENT'S HOUSE-DINING ROOM-NIGHT

The scene is set at the dinner table. All of the father's friends are sitting around the table, with William seated at the head. You can hear the dad bragging about his son's accomplishments.

FATHER

...and that's how he managed to go to college completely free on scholarships!

FATHER'S FRIEND

That's a pretty impressive track record you got there son. You have a lot of potential; you'll go really far in life. Don't you think so Jennifer?

JENNY

Oh yes father, I think it's very impressive.

FATHER'S FRIEND

You know, my little Jenny is setting up to graduate from Harvard soon. Top of her class too. After she takes the board exam this week, she'll officially be a doctor. Doctor Jennifer Collins; has a nice ring to it don't' you think? Isn't that right sweetheart...

JENNY

Dad, you are embarrassing me...

FATHER'S FRIEND

Oh don't be shy honey, kids like you and William have so much potential and such a bright future ahead of you. You shouldn't be embarrassed of your own talents.

FATHER

And can you imagine what would happen if these two kids got together. Their children would be so intelligent...

WILLIAM

DAD!

JENNY

DAD!

MOTHER

James!

FATHER

I'm just saying. Hypothetically, when two well-educated and accomplished kids get together, the possibilities are endless.

WILLIAM

May I be excused? I'm feeling a little sick.

William gets up and walks out of the room and up the stairs before anyone can say anything.

FATHER

Um, he's probably just tired. It's been a long day for him.

INT. WILLIAM'S PARENT'S HOUSE-BEDROOM-NIGHT

William is sitting on the edge of the bed in his old room. The walls are again lined with trophies and awards. His head is in his hands. Suddenly the door opens, and Jennifer enters the room.

JENNIFER

Knock knock...

William looks up.

WILLIAM

Oh hey, sorry about leaving like that, I'm just really tired and all... I...

JENNIFER

Don't worry about it. I understand. Our fathers can really get carried away talking about our future...well, not together I mean, but respectively... (Blushing)

WILLIAM

Yeah... tell me about it...

Insert awkward pause...

JENNIFER

Wow, it's been a long time since I've been in this room. A lot has changed since then.

WILLIAM

Have you changed?

JENNIFER

I was talking about the room, but for the record: nope, still the same old brainy Jenny. Bookworm extraordinaire; and hopefully soon to be Dr. Bookworm.

WILLIAM

Now that I do remember. It's good to see you again.

JENNIFER

It's great to see you too. I missed us hanging out together like when we were kids. But I guess once life became more than just playtime, I got swept up in it. We had to grow up eventually.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

Insert awkward pause. Jenny walks over to his awards and trophies, picking one up...

JENNIFER

Wow, hey, you were a National Science Foundation Fellow too? Heh, I thought the probability of having two recipients in one room together was like 1 in 250,926.

WILLIAM

You've totally done that calculation before haven't you?

JENNIFER

Brainy Jenny, remember?

WILLIAM

Point proven. Yeah, they are the ones sponsoring my research on delusional fixations. That starts tomorrow... yippee (sarcasm)...

JENNIFER

I guess we still do have a lot in common...

WILLIAM

(Under his breath) yeah, academically...

JENNIFER

What's that?

WILLIAM

Nothing. How about out of school though? I mean, what do you like to do and stuff?

JENNIFER

I don't understand. What kind of stuff?

WILLIAM

I don't know, like non-academic stuff. Stuff you do that doesn't have anything to do with planning for your future.

JENNIFER

Well, I mean, right now I don't really have time for anything else. Getting this type of jump on a career isn't easy. It's very time consuming. And I know I'm going to sound like a total loser, but right now I really don't do anything outside of academics.

WILLIAM

Aren't you tired of always preparing for the future? I mean, nearly half our lives is devoted to preparing for the other half of our lives. It just seems so redundant to me.

JENNIFER

Here's the way I look at it. These are the precious few years of our lives where everything has such heavy consequences. I mean, what you do now determines your entire life. You just need to suck it up for a few years, until your life settles down and is stable.

WILLIAM

But what if I don't want my life to be stable? It's been stable for as long as I remember.

JENNY

Well, I've always been taught that if you have a gift, you should use it to its full potential. People like us have an opportunity to change the world and shape the future. To waste that opportunity is a loss to us as well as to the rest of the world.

WILLIAM

Yeah... people like us...

INT. WILLIAMS'S APARTMENT-BEDROOM-MORNING

You see William wake up again. He walks over to his closet and stares into it. He sees his business suit hanging next to a lab coat, a t-shirt and shorts. He pauses for a second, and this time chooses the lab coat.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY-LAB ROOM-AFTERNOON

The scene opens with William sitting at a computer in his lab coat. All around him are awards again, along with a couch and a table. There is a plate of cookies on the table. On the computer monitor is a newspaper article about a girl named Sara. You can't clearly read it, but there is a picture of a house on fire in the article. William is intently reading the article. The door opens, and a girl walks in. William, completely unable to look away from the screen asks...

WILLIAM

Hey, can I help you?

SARA

I don't know. You tell me. This is where they told me to go...

William looks up from the computer and realizes the girl in front of him is the same girl as on the screen.

WILLIAM

Oh, sorry...Sara right?

SARA

That's what they call me.

WILLIAM

Have a seat. What can I do for you?

SARA

Didn't you just ask me that? I think we covered this.

WILLIAM

(Thinks for a second) Oh, well technically I asked you if I could help you, not HOW I can help you. So they really aren't the same question.

SARA

Oh, (pause for embarrassment). Well I guess that's how you won all these awards huh. Silly me thinking I could be clever and outsmart a ... (walks over to wall), National Science Foundation Fellow? Would you be totally offended if I told you I had no idea what those words meant? Although whatever they do, I'm sure you earned it. So congratulations!

WILLIAM

(Laughs quietly) Thanks. Why don't you have a seat?

SARA

Now I KNOW you've already said that twice, so HA. I'm not really sure how you can help me though, they just told me you needed a person to analyze and there would be free cookies involved. I figured it's a fair trade. You get whatever it is you want to analyze, and I...well personally I'm in it for the cookies.

Sara flops down on the couch and grabs a cookie from the plate in front of her.

WILLIAM

Oh, those cookies aren't mine; they were part of someone else's experiment on compulsive behavioral responses to new situations...

SARA

(Responding with food in her mouth) Oops, sorry. Um, do you want the other half?

WILLIAM

No thanks. It's okay. You can have them.

William gets up and walks over to a chair situated next to the couch. He is carrying a notebook and pencil.

WILLIAM

So let's start with the basics. Tell me something about yourself.

SARA

Well that's a little vague. Let's see...something about me...well, I like long walks on the beach, cuddling by the fire, and um...cookies!

William just stares at her blankly for an awkward amount of time.

SARA

But I guess by something you mean you want me to tell you about Jax.

WILLIAM

Who's Jax?

SARA

Jax is my dragon. He's my best friend, and he goes almost everywhere I go. We do everything together. He keeps me company when I'm lonely, and I couldn't ask for a better companion really. He's the only one that has ever treated me as a person and not a patient in my entire life.

WILLIAM

So this Jax character...

SARA

Dragon...

WILLIAM

Sorry, right, dragon I mean... he's been with you your whole life?

SARA

As long as I can remember.

William scribbles on his notepad.

SARA

What are you writing? I know this isn't news to you. I saw you reading that article on your computer, and I know I wouldn't be here if you thought I was perfectly okay.

WILLIAM

I know. I just wanted to hear it from

your side, that's all.

SARA

That's what everyone says, but I know that's not what they mean.

William scribbles more notes on his notepad.

SARA

See, you're doing it too...sigh

WILLIAM

Doing what?

SARA

Treating me like a patient and not a person. You know, I really hate those damn notepads. Seriously, when was the last time anyone wrote something positive about another person in one of those? I sincerely doubt it says person is "Cute, smart, and funny" in there.

WILLIAM

Well, I umm...

Suddenly an alarm goes off in the background and William looks at his watch.

WILLIAM

Holy crap, I totally forgot...

SARA

Well, don't leave me in suspense, what's up?

WILLIAM

I forgot I have another job interview today.

SARA

Another job interview? How many jobs can you possibly need?

WILLIAM

Tell me about it. You have no idea.

William takes off his lab coat, goes over to his chair and picks up his blazer out of a dry-cleaner's bag. He puts on the blazer over his dress shirt, and ties a tie. He straightens his collar, turns to Sara and says...

WILLIAM

How do I look?

SARA

I can't believe you are one of those

people. And I had such high hopes for you.

WILLIAM

What kind of people?

SARA

You look just like some dude in a suit. Just like every other dude in a suit. You see them all the time. Personally I never understood the whole idea behind suits. I mean, in a job interview, aren't you trying to leave a lasting impression? Stand out above the other guys? I don't understand why people all dress the same when they are trying so desperately to be different. It's like you are all brainwashed and just going through the motions because it's what you're "supposed" to do. But when you really think about it, it doesn't make any sense. At least not to me, but then again what do I know; I'm crazy. (Coy smile). In my world, I see dragons, and you see dress shirts...but who do you think is having more fun. (Smiles again).

William just stands there for a second thinking about what Sara just said. He looks down at his suit and just lets out a laugh under his breath. He smiles at her, and then opens the door to leave.

INT. INTERVIEWER'S OFFICE BUILDING-ELEVATOR-MID DAY

You see William standing in the elevator of the interviewer's office. You see the door open in front of him, and a look of amusement on his face as he sees a sea of people dressed in the same color business suit. He goes up to the main office and knocks on the door. Suddenly the door opens and the last candidate leaves. He is wearing the same suit as William. William looks at his own suit and at the other guy's suit, and snickers.

INTERVIEWER 2

You must be Wilford...

WILLIAM

Uh, that's William sir...

INTERVIEWER 2

Sure. That's a nice looking suit by the way...

The camera stays outside as the door closes on William and the interviewer.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COMPANY'S BUILDING-PARKING LOT-MID DAY

You see William going to his car after the interview. You can see his fingers at his side counting down from 3 to 1. His phone rings in his pocket. He rolls his eyes and looks to see who it is, expecting it to be his parents. To his surprise it is Jennifer. He picks up.

WILLIAM

Hello?

JENNIFER

Hey Will! This is Jennifer, from the other night at your house.

WILLIAM

Oh hey Jennifer. How are you doing?

JENNIFER

Doing good, and yourself?

WILLIAM

Doing fine thanks.

JENNIFER

Word is you just got done with your last job interview! That's exciting news; I bet you must be relieved!

WILLIAM

Yeah, very relieved.

JENNIFER

I know the feeling; I just finished taking the board exam. I think I did really well, but I'm just glad to be over with it too.

WILLIAM

That's great. Congratulations.

JENNIFER

Thanks! You too!

Insert awkward silence

JENNIFER

So, um, I was talking to your parents earlier. Well, I mean, my parents were talking to your parents earlier, and they thought it might be a good idea if the two of us go out and celebrate.

Insert awkward silence again

JENNIFER

...and I thought it might be a good idea

too. You know, take our minds off our futures and stuff for once like you wanted?

WILLIAM

You know, that would be a nice change. Count me in.

INT. RESTAURANT-MAIN DINING ROOM- EVENING

William and Jennifer are sitting together over a candle-light dinner. They are talking.

JENNIFER

...and so, I had no idea what the answer to number 6 was. I haven't taken organic chemistry since sophomore year! But I think it went really well regardless. I can't believe it's all finally over. And can you imagine if I pass? I'll finally get to become a doctor. That's been a life long dream of mine. But I guess you already know what it's like to reach a life goal, now that you have passed the board exams. Isn't that right...Dr. Swam. (Smiles)

William looks bored and is staring at his reflection in his knife. He doesn't respond to her question because he is lost in thought.

JENNIFER

(Realizing that she is boring him) I'm sorry, silly me. I didn't mean to go on about my life and stuff, how about you? I heard you had your first session with a patient for your research?

WILLIAM

Oh, yeah, it started this morning.

JENNIFER

So...tell me about it! How'd it go? How's the patient? Are they like totally out of it or something?

WILLIAM

Actually, it's a she, and her name is Sara Marx.

JENNIFER

Sara Marx, Sara Marx... that name sounds so familiar...

Jennifer thinks for a second...

JENNIFER

The Sara Marx? The girl that started that huge fire at Barnabey mansion?

WILLIAM

That's the one.

JENNIFER

I always wondered what happened to that girl. I remember reading something about her parents pleading insanity in her defense. Schizophrenia was it? I guess that's where you fit in.

WILLIAM

Yep. From what I understand, they sent her away to an observatory. I guess it helps out with her sentence if she participates in experiments and stuff.

JENNIFER

So, what's she like? Is she totally crazy? Like talking to herself and stuff?

WILLIAM

Hah, no. She doesn't talk to herself. However, she does talk to an imaginary friend...who also happens to be a dragon. Other than that, she seems pretty harmless and normal.

JENNIFER

An imaginary friend who's also a dragon? I think you need to revise your definition of pretty normal doctor.

William stays silent for a moment...

WILLIAM

I don't know. She's an interesting patient. For someone with such a strong delusional fixation, she seems to be relatively collected. I'm the doctor and even I don't have my life together. She acts like she has it all figured out or something. Or thinks she does at least.

JENNIFER

Maybe that's all part of her disorder. How could you possibly have things figured out, if you can't separate reality from imagination? How can you even expect to function in society if you can't see the boundaries of reality? I can't even begin to imagine how

horrible it would be to not know what was real and what wasn't. And this care-free-ness you see in her just reflects how warped her mentality is. She of all people shouldn't be care free, I mean, she's got worlds of problems including pyromania to deal with. Not even mentioning the years of psychological damage that somehow manifested itself in this dragon character.

WILLIAM

Well, if being delusional makes people happy and carefree, maybe I should be looking for a way to create it, not cure it.

JENNIFER

And maybe we should all just forget responsibility, set fire to buildings, and make up imaginary friends. Here I'll start...you can meet my imaginary walrus named Wily...hah

William looks down and lets out a slight laugh under his breath to be polite.

INT. BELLEMEADE MENTAL INSTITUTION-SARA'S ROOM-NIGHT TIME

The scene opens inside the mental hospital where Sara stays. You see the nighttime orderly walk by the door to Sara's room and say

ORDERLY

Lights out.

The light in Sara's room goes out and the camera goes inside to see her sitting on her bed in the dark. She looks into the darkness and says

SARA

Goodnight Jax!

She waits for a while in silence for a response, and then lies down and shuts her eyes. The camera goes blurry and the movie enters a dream sequence.

The first setting of the dream is a schoolyard. You see a much younger version of Sara standing in the playground waiting to be selected to play on a team. One by one all of the kids get picked to play until Sara is left standing by herself. The team captains turn to each other.

TEAM CAPTAIN 1

Ha Ha. Looks like you are stuck with her!

TEAM CAPTAIN 2

No way! How come I have to be stuck with schitzo Sara?

TEAM CAPTAIN 1

That's because you got to pick first. Besides, schitzo Sara comes with an imaginary friend too. So you get two players for the price of one.

TEAM CAPTAIN 2

(turns to Sara) Let's hope your pet dragon can catch better than you can.

The boy throws the ball for Sara to catch; she misses it and drops the ball on the ground.

TEAM CAPTAIN 1

Haha. I think you guys might be better off without the two of them. You don't want schitzo Sara to freak out, cry again and make us all miss recess too.

TEAM CAPTAIN 2

I think you might be right. (Turns to Sara). Why don't you just go and play with your freak friend.

Sara begins to cry and the dream sequence cuts to a new setting on a bus. Sara is crying hysterically and yelling at the teachers and the driver of the bus. The children are all quietly laughing at her expense.

SARA

We can't leave! He's not here yet!!

TEACHER

Calm down Sara. Who's not here yet?

SARA

Jax isn't! He's not here yet!! We can't just leave without him! It's cold outside and he'll be worried! I don't want him to be scared!

TEACHER

Dear, there is no one named Jax in the class. There is no Jax.

The dream sequence then cuts to a scene in Sara's parent's house. You can tell they are wealthy by the enormous space and the lavish surroundings. Sara is crying to her parents.

SARA'S DAD

There is no Jax Sara. I wish you would just stop this nonsense.

SARA

He's my friend daddy! My only friend!
All the other kids just tease me and
make fun of me. They call me names.
Hurtful names and I don't know what to
do!

SARA'S MOM

I'll tell you what to do Sara. Just
stop. You are bringing this upon
yourself. If you just stop all of this
foolishness, then we wouldn't have these
problems. (Turns to her husband)
Honestly Kurt, I don't know where we
went wrong.

The scene cuts to a quick shot of Sara running down a long
corridor. Rushing up from behind her is a rapidly growing
wall of fire. The fire is gaining on Sara as she races down
the hallway. The fire also has a faint resemblance to the
shape of a dragon. Sara falls to the ground and everything
goes black.

At this point, Sara awakes from her dream in a sweaty
panicked state. She is very shaken up. She stares into space
and whispers...

SARA

Jax? Are you there?

She sits in silence again for a short while and finally
sighs with relief.

SARA

There you are. I was scared.

INT. WILLIAM'S APARTMENT-BEDROOM-NIGHT

The scene opens with William sitting at his computer desk in
his apartment. He is surrounded by books about schizophrenia
and delusional fixations. He is typing away at the computer.
His cell phone is ringing in the background, but William is
so focused that he ignores it. The camera settles on the
screen of his computer so you can read what he has typed.

COMPUTER MONITOR

"Patient seems relatively collected,
almost oddly so, considering her
condition. On the surface she appears
witty and charming, but underneath it
there is sadness."

The camera settles on the blinking cursor, and then cuts to
William as he pauses to think what to write next. Finally he
begins to type again and the camera snaps back to the screen
to watch him type

COMPUTER MONITOR

"She is holding something back."

His cell phone begins to ring to indicate voice mail. William picks up the phone and decides to listen to his messages. There are three of them. The first one is from Jennifer.

JENNIFERS' S MESSAGE

Hey William, it's me Jennifer. I just wanted to call and let you know that I had a wonderful time the other night at dinner. I hope we can hang out again soon. Spending time with you reminds me so much of old times when the two of us would sneak out and play when our parents wanted us to study. We were so irresponsible back then, but those were the days huh. You seemed a little distant towards the end of the night; I hope I didn't say anything to offend you. But anyway, you probably just have a lot on your mind these days; we all do. Maybe when everything settles down, we can go out again? I'd love that. Let me know! Talk to you later.

William erases the message, and then listens to the second message. It is from his parents.

PARENT' S MESSAGE

Hi William, it's your parents. Just checking in to see how life is treating our son. I believe congratulations are in order once again for finishing your last interview. I'm sure you'll make us proud. Jennifer's parents have been telling us what a great time you two had on your dinner date last night. She seems quite taken with you. Everything is falling into place nicely. Good luck on your research, and we'll talk to you soon. Love you.

William erases the message, and listens to the third one. This message is from his friends.

FRIEND' S MESSAGE

(Noise in the background, like a party)
Yo William! What's up buddy? You got time to drag your face out from behind a book long enough to hang out with your friends? You remember friends right? Those people who distract you when you are trying to be productive but also

manage to brighten up your otherwise boring life? Or maybe you don't cause it's been freaking forever since we've seen you. Anyway, you should come out and play ball with us tonight. Dave said you can be on his team even if you do catch like a girl. Let me know. Peace out home boy.

Suddenly a notice from his computer calendar pops up to remind William that it is time to organize his references for his dissertation and iron his suit. William turns to look at a huge pile of papers on top of which his suit is lying. He sighs to himself and then looks at his cell phone. He pauses for a moment to think. Suddenly he turns to the pile of paper and suit and says.

WILLIAM

Don't look at me like that. Stop it. I got to have fun some time; maybe for just a quick break.

He smiles to himself and picks up his phone to dial.

WILLIAM

What's up home boy? Hell yeah I'm in for tonight. And slap Dave for saying I catch like a girl...

INT. PSYCHOLOGY RESEARCH LAB-LAB ROOM-AFTERNOON

The camera follows behind William as he walks down the hall of the research lab to the door of his office. He opens the doors and a smile appears on his face. Sitting on the couch is Sara, holding a box of cookies.

SARA

Hey! I baked you some cookies. You know, to make up for the ones I ate the other day. I tried to remember what kind they were, so the guy they belonged to wouldn't notice if I just replaced them. The rest are for you (smiles)

WILLIAM

Hah, thanks.

SARA

There were more, but I ate them. I had to do something while I was waiting for you. And I've been waiting here for a while. I think we all know I have a little problem with sitting in front of cookies and not cramming one in my mouth. Consider it like shipping and handling charge.

William takes a bite of the cookie, and looks down at the box that is resting in Sara's lap. The box says Little Debbie home-style cookies.

WILLIAM

mmm...you know, it's kind of funny. These cookies taste exactly like those new Little Debbie cookies you can buy in the vending machine down the hall... (Smugly smiles)

Sara, realizing he can see the box, makes a motion to discreetly hide it behind her back. William notices and laughs under his breath.

SARA

You know, that's exactly what Jax said when he tasted them. Funny how that is. But he was there when I made them, you can ask him yourself. I spent hours and hours doing it. I think if anyone is to blame, it's Little Debbie. I mean, between you and me, I think she is spying on me.

WILLIAM

Hmm...(pretends to write down notes), patient exhibits deep-rooted resentment towards fictional bakery icon...

SARA

Hah. Shut up.

Sara throws the cookie box at William. William playfully dodges it, gets up, and heads toward the seat near the couch.

WILLIAM

So today I want to talk to you about...

SARA

What? What are you doing?

WILLIAM

What? What do you mean?

SARA

I baked you cookies, and we skip the small talk? What happened to "Hi Sara, my you are looking lovely today? How can I help you?" Just because you said the same thing twice yesterday, does not mean you are exempt from saying it today mister.

WILLIAM

I thought you didn't like formalities and going through the motions.

Sara pauses for a second and thinks about it.

SARA

I should really stop trying to outsmart you. Ahem. Anyway, so what do you want to talk to me about?

WILLIAM

I was going to say...Hi Sara; my you are looking lovely today. How can I help you?

SARAH

Much better. And you don't look so unlovely yourself. As for what you can do for me...(looks a little shy)...well I'll have to think about that one...

WILLIAM

Well, how about we just start with your day. Or rather what a typical day is like for you.

SARA

Well, let's see. It's tough because every day is so different and new for me; chock full of adventure and intrigue. It's amazing I can even find time to come here, you know, and take a break from my exciting life. I'd say all in all; this is the most uneventful part of my day.

WILLIAM

Okay, sarcasm duly noted.

SARA

Bingo. I mean, what do you expect my days are like? They've been the same repetitive routine ever since I was sent to that damn observatory. The only thing really keeping me sane through all the damn monotony is Jax. Funny how that is huh? The only reason I'm still sane is the same reason they think I'm insane? Talk about irony...

William reaches behind him and takes out a piece of paper

SARA

Uh oh. Need another sheet of paper for your "notes" about me?

WILLIAM

No. I was wondering if you could draw me a picture of Jax. I want to know what he looks like so I can picture him when we talk.

SARA

Now, that I can do. But I must warn you that I am a terrible artist. Like really bad.

WILLIAM

Hah, well that's fine, it's just one more thing we have in common.

SARA

Okay, I'll do it. But only under the condition that I get to use crayons.

WILLIAM

I don't believe there are any crayons in here.

SARA

Are you serious? No crayons? What kind of a lose ship operation are you running here? I can't work in these conditions! (Pretends to throw the pad up in the air and stands up to leave)

WILLIAM

Well, will this umm... uhh... (Reaches in his pocket) mechanical pencil do? It's number 2?

SARA

5 point lead?

WILLIAM

7 point...

SARA

You're pushing your luck here.

WILLIAM

How bout you use the pencil and I buy, oh...I mean bake the cookies next time?

Sara stays quiet for a second thinking over their facetious agreement.

SARA

Okay, okay. It's a deal. But just this one time. You are lucky I like you.

WILLIAM

Heh, thanks.

Sara looks down at her paper and begins to draw. William smiles as he happily watches her sketching away.

SARA

What are you doing?

WILLIAM

(Still lost in thought while watching her). Huh? Oh nothing, just waiting for you to finish.

SARA

No, you weren't. You were staring at me! You were totally just checking me out...(smiles)

WILLIAM

I was not. There's just nothing else in the room to look at.

SARA

Well, if you insist on stalking me, the least you could do is talk. If you just stare, it creeps girls out.

WILLIAM

I don't want to ask you questions and distract you while you draw.

SARA

Who said we had to talk about me? Tell me something about yourself? What's life outside the stone walls of my prison home like?

William looks off at the wall for a second to collect his thoughts. He lets out a sigh.

WILLIAM

To tell you the truth, my life and your life aren't all that different. Every one of my days is pretty much the same too. And come to think about it, I really don't get to choose what I'm doing either. Pretty much, my whole day consists of doing nothing but essays, interviews, schoolwork, and anything else you could possibly imagine to prepare for the future.

SARA

Isn't that a good thing? I mean, for people like you that is. Isn't that what you're supposed to be doing?

WILLAIM

Supposed to be doing. People like me.
I'm so tired of hearing those phrases

SARA

That's not what I mean. I'm sorry.

WILLAIM

Its okay, I get that a lot. And I mean,
preparing for the future isn't
necessarily a bad thing, but it's like
not even my future anymore. I didn't
really get to decide what it would be.
People are always telling me what to do,
where to go, and what I should want.

SARA

Like you can't control who you are, and
what your life is like?

WILLAIM

Exactly. It's like, my life is this
train barreling at 1000 miles per hour
towards my future, and I'm not at the
controls. I don't get to choose how fast
it goes, what path it takes, or anything
else for that matter.

SARA

Who says just because a person is born a
certain way means they have to live a
certain life. Somewhere along the way
people need to stop judging and
classifying each other, according to
their differences.

WILLIAM

Everyone just assumes I like how it is,
and I don't. My parents, my teachers, my
peers all tell me I have some special
potential, and I am so lucky to have
such a bright future ahead of me. But
it's not just bright; it's blinding. I
want to stop it, but I can't because I
don't know how. I've never known
anything else.

WILLIAM AND SARA

I feel so trapped.

WILLIAM

I don't want this gift, this life, and I
sure as hell don't want to end up being
(looks over at Sara)...just some dude in a
suit.

Sara puts her hand on his leg and says

SARA

It's okay. I know how it feels to be stereotyped as something you don't want, and to be treated accordingly.

William looks down at her hand on his leg and says

WILLIAM

Thanks.

They smile at each other for a while, and don't say anything, until a beep goes off from William's watch.

WILLIAM

Oh, it looks like time is up.

SARA

I guess so...sigh...

Sara gets up and heads towards the door. But turns around before she gets there and says...

SARA

Oh, so I totally forgot that I'm finished with my picture. Actually I was finished a while ago, but I didn't want to interrupt you. I warned you I was a terrible artist. I took the liberty of taking some notes on it too, just like a real psychologist. Hope you don't mind.

Sara hands William the drawing, but the paper is folded up. She walks out of the door before he unfolds it. William opens it and sees a giant smiley face with horns and a tail. Next to the drawing there is a section labeled notes that says: "person is cute, smart, and funny". William smiles.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY-PARKING LOT-MID DAY

William is pulling out of the parking lot, and sees Sara on the sidewalk as he backs up. A white observatory van pulls up. Two men get out of the car, open the back seat and Sara gets in. William watches the car drive away. Music starts playing and the movie becomes a montage of cut scenes of William and Sara's lives. You see William driving away, and then you see Sara sitting in the back of the observatory van. You see William get out of his car and walk to the door of his apartment, and then you see Sara being assisted out of the van and into restraints. You see William walking down his apartment hallway to his door, and you see Sara being led by two observatory workers to her room. William takes off his lab coat and plops down on in his computer chair. He pulls up a website of Sara's case. He pauses at a picture of her on the screen, and smiles. You see Sara entering her

room, and sitting down in a chair at a desk. All over the room are very well made detailed drawings of Jax. She grabs her pencil and begins drawing. The camera cuts over her shoulder and you can see her sketching a picture of William. She sits back, gazes at it, and smiles. The camera pulls up, and fades out.

INT. WILLIAM'S APPARTMENT-BED ROOM-MORNING

The movie cuts to a wide shot of the city as the sun rises. The words two weeks later appear on the screen. The movie then cuts to William lying in his bed. His alarm rings and he gets up. But this time he looks excited. He merrily makes his way over to the mirror; next to it is the drawing that Sara had made for him. He looks at the picture, and then looks in the mirror and smiles. He opens the medicine cabinet, and reaches in. Inside the cabinet there is a pack of Mentos next to the box of Advil. This time, William reaches for the Mentos instead of the Advil and pops it in his mouth. He poses in front of the mirror for a moment and then laughs to himself as he puts the roll back. William then walks over to his closet and stares inside. Again, hanging in front of him is a suit, a lab coat, a t-shirt and shorts. The scene cuts.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY- LAB ROOM- MID DAY

William walks down the hall and opens to the door to the lab happily expecting Sara to be sitting on the couch. However, when he opens the door the couch is empty. A little shocked, William enters the room. Suddenly, Sara jumps out from behind the couch and says...

SARA

Surprise! Happy last day of our meetings!

A big smile comes upon Williams face

WILLAM

Thanks! You too!

SARA

So doctor, what's on the menu for today
hmm? It better be something special,
because this is how I'm going to
remember our little rendezvous for the
rest of my life. (Smiles)

William suddenly stops smiling, and looks down at his feet.

WILLIAM

Actually, I've been trying to avoid this
topic because it's a tough one, but I
have to ask before our sessions are
over.

SARA

Eep, well don't keep me in suspense
Will! You know I'll tell you anything...

WILLIAM

I know (smiles). It's about...the umm...

SARA

The fire?

WILLIAM

Yeah. How'd you know?

SARA

Hah, I may not be a licensed 12th degree
psychologist or anything, but I'm not
stupid! We've pretty much talked about
everything BUT the reason I'm here. I
thought you'd never ask.

William looks down at his feet and kind of laughs.

SARA

Okay, well here you go. Here's the
story. I was about 12 years old, and my
rich parents were attending a party at
Barnaby mansion. The Barnabeys were the
high society type, but then again, so
were my parents. I wasn't even supposed
to go to that party, but the babysitter
couldn't come for some reason or
another, and my parents were stuck with
me. Believe me, stuck with me is the
right choice of words. My parents never
were very keen on having a child,
especially one like me. And with no
brothers and sisters around, the only
friend I really had growing up was Jax.
Sure, when I was younger having a dragon
as a friend was acceptable, but as I got
older I guess I never really had any
other friends so Jax stuck around.
Everyone knew something was "wrong" with
me, even my parents' friends and I think
my parents resented me for it. They were
embarrassed of me.

WILLIAM

That's awful.

SARA

Tell me about it. So anyway, once they
got in the party, my parents pretty much
dropped me off in a corner and left to
mingle with the rest of their friends. I
was left to wander the house with Jax.

To amuse ourselves, we wandered from room to room. God there were so many rooms! We finally stumbled into what seemed like the master bedroom. It was so huge; it seemed to stretch on forever. So Jax and I decided to go play hide and seek. I hid first, and Jax went away to count. I found this amazing hiding place under the master bed, so I sat there and waited. All of a sudden, I heard this popping noise from outside. I came out from under the bed, and Jax was running toward me with this fireball chasing behind him. He grabbed me, and led me out of the room and down the hallway, but the fire was spreading too fast. Jax jumped on top of me, and everything went dark. Next thing I know, I was outside the house, watching the beautiful mansion burn to the ground. My parents were consoling their friends the Barnabeys and talking to the police. Then I noticed that everyone was pointing at me. The policeman came over to ask if I was okay, and to find out what happened. I told him the whole story about Jax and me playing hide and seek in the master bedroom. He asked again and again what had happened, or what I saw, and I tried desperately to explain to him that I was hiding. Of course he didn't believe me because why would anyone be in a room hiding from nobody; especially in the same room where a fire started. I tried to explain that I just didn't know what happened, but no one listened. I could see them all roll their eyes when I brought up Jax. The damages of the fire totaled in the millions, so the Barnabeys, being the nice friends they were, pressed charges and sued my parents for the damages. The judge didn't believe my story any more than the policeman did, or my parents did for that matter, and sentenced me to go under observation. You know, the sad thing is, I think my parents were relieved to see me go; like a giant weight had been lifted off their shoulders... or their reputation rather. I've been at the observatory ever since.

WILLIAM

How did all this make you feel? That's a

pretty traumatic experience for a young girl to go through. Were you upset? Or scared? Or angry?

SARA

I was, and still am mad at the babysitter. It's all her fault...hah.

WILLAIM

Sara, I'm being serious.

SARA

I know, I'm sorry. I mean, this whole thing sucks. It really does. I didn't do anything, but no one would believe me. I don't understand why it is so hard for people to realize that there are things in life which you can't assign blame for. But I guess that doesn't really apply to expensive things huh.

WILLIAM

Sara I...

SARA

You know, I can actually remember the day that the world decided to pass their negative judgment on me. I was in the first grade, and it was field trip day. We were all going to the zoo. It was snowing really hard outside, so that day my parents, in perhaps their only moment of kindness, allowed the chauffeur to drive me to school instead of having me walk there with Jax. We were all getting ready to leave, and Jax hadn't shown up for school yet. I was getting really worried because I didn't want him to arrive there and not know where I was. More importantly though, I didn't want him to be left there all alone in the cold. So, like any other first-grader would do, I threw a tantrum and started to cry. At first the teachers thought Jax was my little brother or something, so they went to check the roster for kids again. Eventually they realized that Jax wasn't a student, and they called home to ask my parents exactly what was going on. My parents apologized for my actions, and told them all about my situation. The teachers decided to send me home. Unfortunately by the time this all happened, it became too late for the field trip to take place and all

the other kids were sent home too. Of course the school received an onslaught of complaints from angry parents wanting to know what happened to their kid's trip to the zoo, and the school officials told them about me. Needless to say the word spread fast from the parents to their kids, and THEY were ruthless about it. By the next day at school I had earned the name Schizo Sara along with numerous other hurtful labels that would often be written on the chalkboard or chanted in the playground when I was around. They were first graders; I don't even think they knew what that word meant. They probably picked it up from their parents, which hurts even more. All they knew was that it was hurtful to say. No one wanted to become friends with the crazy girl, but it was cool to make fun of her. That damn name and the treatment that came with it followed me until the day I ended up in the observatory. I can't even count how many days I'd come home crying, and do you know what my parents said when I got there? They told me it was my fault, and that I was doing it to myself. They told me to just stop. Just stop; like I can control it. The only one who offered me any sort of comfort was Jax himself. I know in my heart that Jax exists, and I refuse to let anyone tell me otherwise. He's MY friend, and who gives them the right to tell me if he is or isn't? So after a while, after hearing everyone tell me what I think is wrong, I guess I decided that they are the crazy ones. At least this way the rest of the world and I view each other the same way.

WILLAIM

I don't think you are crazy.

SARA

I know you don't...which is sad, because I think you are a little nuts yourself.

WILLAIM

Hah. Shut up.

SARA

No seriously. I think you need extensive clinical help. It's okay though, I know

this great psychologist. He's been analyzing me for weeks.

WILLIAM

(Smiles) Oh yeah?

SARA

Yeah. But my sessions with him are almost over now. Which is good because he should have a lot of free time to help you out. Man, am I glad those sessions are over.

William knows she's kidding, but looks sad because the sessions are ending. Sara sees his frown.

SARA

Will, you know I was just kidding right?

WILLIAM

Yeah, I know.

SARA

No really. I am really going to be sad when these meetings are over.

WILLIAM

Me too.

SARA

Remember when I told you that these meetings were the most uneventful part of my day?

WILLIAM

Yeah,

SARA

I lied. To tell you the truth, these meetings were the best part of my day. And for the past two weeks, they have been my reason for waking up in the mornings.

WILLIAM

I know the feeling.

SARA

You know, other than Jax, I don't think I've ever felt so comfortable around anyone. And we've barely just met. I don't usually like non-giant reptiles...so you should feel special.

WILLIAM

I am honored.

SARA

As well you should be.

They both smile and stare at each other.

WILLIAM

Well, I guess this is goodbye then.

SARA

I guess it is.

WILLIAM

(Stands up and motions to shake her hand). It has certainly been a pleasure Miss Marx.

SARA

(Stands up and salutes). Yes it certainly has. Oh hey, and before I forget, I made you a goodbye gift!

WILLIAM

A gift huh? Heh, more "homemade" cookies?

SARA

Hah, not quite.

Sara reaches in her pocked and pulls out a folded sheet of paper.

WILLIAM

What's this?

Sara smiles and walks toward the door while William unfolds the paper. She turns around before exiting the door and says.

SARA

Something to remember me by...

William opens it up and sees an extremely well made drawing of him, Sara and Jax holding hands.

WILLIAM

I thought you said you couldn't draw!

SARA

Well I guess I lied again. (Winks) Kind of makes you wonder huh. Too bad you'll never know.

And with that, Sara walks out of the door and the camera pans to William looking sad and staring at the paper. He thinks for a second, and then picks up the phone.

EXT. RESEARCH FACILITY-PARKING LOT-MID DAY

The scene begins by showing Sara sitting on the curb waiting for the white van to pull up. You can see she's sad about leaving Will. She keeps looking at her watch. Suddenly you see William's car pull up to the curb. He rolls down his window and says...

WILLIAM

Hey, do you remember a little earlier when I said, "I guess this is goodbye?"

SARA

(Sniffles and dries her eyes) Yeah,

WILLIAM

Well, I guess you're not the only one who lied (smiles)

Sara's frown immediately changes into a huge smile, and she jumps to her feet and races over to the window.

SARA

What are you talking about Willy? The van to take me away forever is on its way!

WILLIAM

Not anymore. Let's just say I used my doctor privileges and did some magic. I sort of, checked you out of that place for the night...

SARA

You mean, like a library book? (Laughs)

WILLIAM

Well, I was thinking more like renting a movie. But whichever works for you! Come on; get in!

Sara enthusiastically jumps in the passenger seat.

SARA

But where are we going?

WILLIAM

It's a surprise.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE ZOO-PARKING LOT-MID DAY

The scene opens with Sara and Will standing underneath the huge sign that says ZOO. Sara smiles and looks at Will

SARA

So... are you trying to bring back painful memories for me?

WILLIAM

I thought it might be fun. Maybe we can make a new happy memory of this place so you can forget the old one. I used to love coming here as a kid. Plus I was kind of thinking we could find Jax a girlfriend in the reptile house. (Smugly smiles)

SARA

Remind me why we are friends again? Seriously, when you told me we were going somewhere magical, I was thinking Hawaii, or Cancun. You know some place where we could ride off into the sunset.

WILLIAM

Oh shut up, come on, it'll be fun!

And with that, Will grabs Sara's hand and the two of them race through the gates and into the zoo.

EXT. INSIDE THE ZOO-COTTON CANDY STAND-MID DAY

William and Sara buy cotton candy.

WILLIAM

Seriously, how can you not like the zoo? This place is awesome!

SARA

Hah, I was just kidding Will. I love it; this is a wonderful surprise. You know, to tell you the truth I've never made it inside a zoo before.

WILLIAM

Are you serious? I used to come here all the time as a kid. It used to be like a reward for getting good grades in school. I loved every minute of it. Just watching the animals going about their every day lives. I used to wonder what it would be like to be one of them. I mean, they are fed, given shelter, and don't have to worry about anything in the world. All they have to do is survive. Survive and be happy. It's weird how things in captivity can have so much freedom.

SARA

You used to think about all that as a kid?

WILLIAM

Yep

SARA

That's some pretty deep stuff. No wonder you turned out nuts. Hell when I was that age, I was playing with a pet dragon... oh wait... (Smiles)

WILLIAM

So...Who's the crazy one again?

SARA

Did they tell you anywhere in your extensive education that it was a good idea to make fun of your patients?

WILLIAM

I'm just playing. But that's what is so awesome about you. I've never met someone who is so spontaneous. It's kind of refreshing. I envy you.

SARA

You know, it's not really all that hard to be spontaneous. You just need to stop thinking about things so much. I mean, geeze, just relax and have fun.

WILLIAM

I don't think I know how to not think.

SARA

Well, I don't think I've ever met someone who has such a hard time trying to not do something before. Except for Jimmy the kleptomaniac from cell 5. But he's not exactly a good role model.

WILLIAM

So just do... no thinking...

SARA

That's all you got to do. Here I'll give you a demonstration.

And with that, Sara grabs a chunk full of cotton Candy and throws it at William.

SARA

See, no thinking involved (giggles)

William stares down at the cotton candy stuck to his shirt

WILLIAM

No thinking huh? Because I'm formulating a plan for retaliation as we speak. Want

to see what I've come up with so far?

William reaches for his cotton candy and Sara runs away. They lovingly chase each other around the park throwing cotton candy. Finally, they stop in front of the Reptile house, look at each other and smile.

WILLIAM

Okay okay, let's call a truce and go inside and find Jax a girlfriend.

SARA

Jax, is that okay with you? (Stares off into space for a second) Okay, he agrees. His only requirement is that she is at least 40 feet tall. Oh and not purple. He's not racist, just picky.

WILLIAM

Oh, well I'm sure we can find one of those inside. (Stares off into space and winks) Heh, come on lets go.

INT. INSIDE THE ZOO-INSIDE THE REPTILE HOUSE-MID DAY

You see William and Sara walking around the reptile house staring at the cages.

WILLIAM

How bout this one?

SARA

Did you forget the 40-foot tall rule? I mean we just talked about this two seconds ago.

WILLIAM

Well, at least she isn't purple. One out of two isn't bad right?

SARA

Are you suggesting that my dearest Jax settles for this short inadequate partner? (Looks at the lizard)... no offense; I'm sure you're a wonderful animal.

WILLIAM

No, but I think the last 40 foot lizard in existence died like 65 million years ago. So maybe he should change his criteria.

SARA

That's terrible William. You know as well as I do that you can't choose how you are. And especially change whom you

fall for. Even if they are completely different from what anyone else thinks they should be.

They stare at each other, smile, and then look down at the ground.

WILLIAM

So...ahem... what's that noise?

SARA

What noise?

WILLIAM

Listen really closely.

SARA

Hah, is this one of those cheesy lines where you say..."it's the sound of my heart beating with love?" cause I don't fall for those. I'm telling you right now. I'm on to your tricks.

WILLIAM

Hah, I was being serious. Listen. Is that rain?

SARA

I don't know. Let's go find out.

They make their way from the cages to the front of the reptile house and look out of the glass doors. It is completely pouring rain outside.

WILLIAM

Oh wow, it's pouring outside.

SARA

Yay! I love the rain!

WILLIAM

Are you serious? It's like a hurricane outside.

SARA

Of course! It's just water, it won't kill you. What, are you afraid you are going to melt? How do you take a shower in the morning? Come on; let's go play in it!

Sara goes running out of the glass doors and into the rain. She looks up at the sky and spins around in circles and turns to William.

SARA

Well? What are you waiting for?

WILLIAM

Sara I can't.

SARA

Why not? The water's great!

Sara splashes water over at William

WILLIAM

Ah! Don't! I can't go in the water,
because this is my only suit! I can't
ruin it in the rain.

SARA

Ugh, have you learned nothing from me?
What did I tell you about not thinking?
Live for the moment; forget the future.
Remember: who's having more fun?

William pauses to think for a second. He looks like he is going to turn around and go back inside the reptile house, but then he spins around throws his entire cotton candy cone at Sara. He then dashes out into the rain and lovingly chases her around the Zoo again. He finally catches up to her and holds her tightly from behind. She turns around in his arms and stares him in the face.

WILLIAM

Shhh...do you hear that?

SARA

Haha, no. What are we listening for this time.

WILLIAM

It's the sound of my heart beating with love.

SARA

Hey, remember when I told you I don't fall for those lines?

WILLIAM

Yeah.

Sara looks into Will's eyes and smiles.

WILLIAM

Yeah, we really need to work on our honesty policy from now on. (Smiles)

They gaze into each other's eyes as William continues to hold her close.

SARA

You know, I think this violates the doctor patient relationship rules.

WILLIAM

As of earlier today, you are officially no longer my patient. Actually for a while now, I haven't seen you as one. To me, you aren't a patient; you are just a person. Well, not just any person.

And with that William pulls her closer and kisses her. The camera pans away from above and closes with William and Sara embracing and kissing in the rain.

INT. WILLIAM'S APPARTMENT- BED ROOM- MORNING

The scene opens up by panning along the floor of William's apartment. You can see his ruined suit dripping wet and scattered all along the floor. The camera settles on William's face, with his cell phone in the foreground. Suddenly the cell phone vibrates and wakes William up. He reluctantly picks it up. It is his parents.

WILLIAM

(Groggy) Hello?

FATHER

Are you still asleep at this hour?

WILLIAM

That depends. What hour is it?

FATHER

It is almost noon.

MOTHER

Oh let him sleep. The boy just finished his research. He deserves a break.

FATHER

You mother is right; I think congratulations are in order once again.

WILLIAM

Thanks.

MOTHER

Why don't you come home so we can celebrate?

WILLIAM

That's okay Mom; I think the last party was enough celebration for me.

FATHER

Don't worry. No party this time. Let's just have a nice family dinner, just you and your parents.

MOTHER

And... Jennifer! Let's invite that nice girl along too. I'm sure she has things to celebrate as well.

WILLIAM

Actually, can we not invite Jennifer?

FATHER

Why not? I think you two should get to know each other better. You have so much in common and...

WILLIAM

I know, but the thing is...

MOTHER

Maybe he wants to spend time with just his family?

FATHER

She practically is family; and I hear you two had a great time on your date the other night...

WILLIAM

Dad, it wasn't a date...

MOTHER

Oh you kids...

William panics and blurts out

WILLIAM

It's because I'm seeing someone else right now!

The phone goes silent. William rolls over in the bed and you can now see Sara lying next to him. She opens her eyes because she is woken up by his outburst. She mouths the words

SARA

(Mouthing the words), who is it?

WILLIAM

(William mouthing back) My parents

Sara has a shocked look on her face, and quietly giggles to herself.

MOTHER

You are what?

WILLIAM

Yeah, I am kind of seeing this girl right now.

Sara leans over and kisses him. William playfully pushes her off and mouths

WILLIAM
(Mouthing) Sssshh!

Sara giggles again, and playfully wrestles William to put her ear up against the phone to listen.

FATHER
Well who is this mystery girl?

WILLIAM
She's just a girl I met while doing my research.

MOTHER
Can we meet her? You should bring her to dinner!

WILLIAM
I'm not so sure if bringing her to dinner is such a good idea.

Sara playfully slaps William on the arm and gives him an offended look

FATHER
Nonsense, the girl's got to eat somewhere!

Sara rubs her stomach and agrees that she is hungry

WILLIAM
(Laughs under his breath) Okay okay. I'll ask her what her plans are. But no promises.

MOTHER
Great! How about you come over around 8 O'clock; after the repairman leaves from trying to fix that stupid light in the bathroom. He's supposed to come at 2 pm, but you know these people, always late, if they even show up at all.

WILLIAM
Sounds good. I'll see you guys then. Oh yeah, and Dad, can I borrow a suit of yours for my big presentation?

FATHER
Sure, but what happened to that nice expensive suit you just bought?

William looks over to his soaking wet suit lying on the floor and says

WILLIAM

It is, umm... getting dry-cleaned.

FATHER

Okay, you can borrow one of mine then.
We will see you and your mystery lady
friend later tonight. Love you.

WILLIAM

Love you too. See you tonight.

William hangs up. He turns around to kiss Sara and she pulls
away.

WILLIAM

What? What did I do?

SARA

(Giggling) How come you don't think it's
a good idea for me to meet your parents?

WILLIAM

Hah, I didn't say that!

SARA

Yes you did! I was right next to you.

WILLIAM

I should really stop trying to outsmart
you. It's not you. It's them; they are
crazy.

SARA

Hah, says the psychologist to his
patient. You are embarrassed of me
aren't you!

WILLIAM

That's not it at all. I'm more
embarrassed of them than of you.

SARA

But you are embarrassed of me? You just
admitted it.

WILLIAM

That's not what I meant and you know it.
My parents would react the same way to
you as any other girl.

SARA

Oh yeah? What about this Jennifer girl
you apparently went on a date with?

WILLIAM

Umm...you were awake for that?

Sara hits him with a pillow

SARA

Of course I was awake for that! You mention another girl's name when I'm sleeping next to you... how I could miss that? (Smiles)

WILLIAM

Oh lord, don't get me started on that Jennifer girl.

SARA

Why? Is she crazy too? Cause apparently that's your type.

WILLIAM

Actually, she's quite the opposite.

SARA

Oh.

WILLIAM

But that's exactly what I love about you remember? Besides the fact that you are "my type". (Smiles) You know what, come to dinner with me and meet my parents.

SARA

Are you serious?

WILLIAM

Of course.

Sara pretends to think about it.

SARA

Hmm...I don't know. I'm a very busy girl; I'll have to check my calendar. Besides, meeting your parents after our first date; this is moving pretty fast.

WILLIAM

How's this for too fast...

William leans in and kisses her

SARA

You know, you are lucky I'm so "your type", or I would have totally rejected you...(smiles)

WILLIAM

You are right; I am very lucky...

William grabs Sara and kisses her again, the camera pans up and the scene ends.

EXT. WILLIAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE-IN WILLIAM'S CAR-EVENING

You see William and Sara sitting in the car getting ready to go to dinner at William's parents' house.

WILLIAM

Okay, now just remember, my parents are very...um, conservative.

SARA

What kind of warning is that? What does that even mean?

WILLIAM

You know, they are sort of overprotective. Just like normal parents, they want the best for me.

SARA

I wouldn't know what that's like. But I know what you mean. They just want a good future for their baby boy.

Sara grabs Will's cheeks with her fingers and pulls.

WILLIAM

Ow! I'm serious. Just remember that no matter what happens in there, my parents have good intentions. They love me, and hopefully, they won't hate you too much. Heh.

SARA

Geeze Will. Thanks for the pep talk. You make it sound like I'm about to go into a battle with a giant target tattooed across my chest. How bad could this be?

WILLIAM

You have no idea. Just remember; you asked for this.

SARA

Hey, if I recall correctly you invited me. And out of the goodness of my heart I managed to make time for your request.

WILLIAM

Well I couldn't have lured you into bed if I hadn't. (smiles).

SARA

Yeah? Keep this up and let's see if you can ever "lure" me again. (Smiles back)

WILLIAM

Okay, let's get this over with. The

sooner this is over, the sooner I can
accept your challenge.

They get out of the car and head toward the door. Before they reach the front door, it opens and the electrician leaves the house. He is walking away from the house as William and Sara are walking towards it. As he walks away you can hear him yelling to William's mother faintly in the background...

ELECTRICIAN

And remember, don't use that switch for
at least another 12 hours; and sorry
again for being late Ma'am.

William, Sara and the repairman pass one another and exchange greetings. Finally William and Sara make their way up to the front door where William's mother is waiting.

MOTHER

Welcome home William!

WILLIAM

Hi mom.

The mother looks over at Sara and says

MOTHER

And you must be William's new lady
friend whom he's been hiding from us.
Ahem. He always gets forgetful when it
comes to matters like this. Sometimes I
think it's on purpose.

WILLIAM

Mom...

SARA

It's very nice to meet you Mrs. Swam.
You have raised a delightful boy, and
I've been looking forward to meeting the
people responsible for making him the
way he is. (Smiles)

MOTHER

I don't believe I caught your name...

SARA

Oh you didn't miss it. William didn't
introduce us. William...

MOTHER

William...

Both ladies pretend to scowl at him

WILLIAM

Okay okay, Mom this is Sara, Sara this is Mom.

SARA

He is delightful, but I can see where you are coming from on the forgetfulness.

MOTHER

I'm telling you, it's on purpose. Since waiting for William to do it takes too long, I'm going to go ahead and ask you what your last name is...

SARA

No problem. It's Ma-

You see William panic and quickly interrupt before Sara can finish her sentence.

WILLIAM

Can we move this William bashing fest inside so Dad can join too? Besides it's freezing out here.

MOTHER

Okay dear. Let's go inside.

The door closes behind William and Sara as they walk in the house.

INT. WILLIAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE-DINING ROOM-EVENING

The scene opens with William, his Father, and Sara all sitting around the dinner table. Suddenly William's mom walks in holding a roast duck and exclaims...

MOTHER

Dinner is served.

SARA

Oh misses Swam, it's beautiful. I don't think I've ever seen such a wonderful looking feast before. And you have no idea how long it's been since I've had something home cooked.

FATHER

Why is that Sara? Don't you see your parents a lot?

SARA

Oh boy, don't get me started on my parents. Well the thing about them is-

William quickly and frantically interjects.

WILLIAM

Her parents are the very rich and aristocratic type, so they have servants to cook for them. When she says she hasn't had home cooked food in a while, she really means food prepared by someone close...

Sara darts William a dirty look

MOTHER

Servants to cook for them huh? Hear that James? How come we don't have a cook? Then I wouldn't have to spend hours slaving in the kitchen. (Smiles at her husband). I hope this dinner doesn't disappoint you Sara, I'm no professional, but we make do with what we have.

SARA

There is no possible way this dinner could disappoint me Mrs. Swam. It's already been such a wonderful experience to be around a family who so obviously loves each other very much. I can see where William gets his sensitivity from (looks at the mother) and his good looks (looks at the father).

MOTHER

I like this girl William. At least someone appreciates me. (Smiles at Sara)

FATHER

Hey, I like her too. She appreciates my good looks.

WILLIAM

Well I am glad you guys approve.

FATHER

So Sara, how'd a nice girl like you end up with a knucklehead like my son?

SARA

Well we met—

WILLIAM

Knuckleheaded? Now that I defiantly inherited from you. (Smiles at his father). Like I told you guys over the phone, Sara and I met while I was doing my research. She was there a lot while I was there, and so we spent a lot of time together and just clicked. She also

helped me a lot with my research, so I am greatly indebted to her.

Sara looks furious and hurt at Will's reluctance to let her speak.

FATHER

So you hang around the research lab a lot? You must be a bright young lady. What are you doing there?

WILLIAM

Well you see, Sara does...

MOTHER

Oh William stop being so rude. Let Sara answer for herself.

SARA

Well, I umm...I...sigh.

Sara begins to tear up and quiver...

MOTHER

Sara darling, are you feeling okay?

Sara begins to cry uncontrollably at this point

SARA

I'm sorry Mr. And Mrs. Swam, I can't keep this up any longer. I am not who you think I am. Thank you for the wonderful dinner. Everything was absolutely lovely, but I can't keep pretending to be someone I'm not.

WILLIAM

Sara I...

SARA

No Will, you've done quite enough talking for me for one day. (Stands up to speak and is crying and shaking and turns to Will's parents) My full name is Sara Marx. For as long as I can remember, I've been locked away in a mental institution where my parents put me away. That's why I haven't seen them or eaten home cooking since forever. William and I did meet in the research lab, but not because I worked there, but because I was his case study. I am his patient. Thank you for the lovely dinner and the wonderful company. I'm sorry to disappoint you and embarrass your son...

And with that, Sara runs away and locks herself in the

bathroom after slamming the door behind her. William's parents turn and look at him in shock.

MOTHER

Sara Marx? The girl who set that fire?

FATHER

You got involved with your patient?

William remains silent. His parents then turn to each other for support and to look for a solution.

MOTHER

(Shrugs) James?

FATHER

(Turns to William and shrugs) William?

William slams down his napkin and stands up to chase after Sara in the bathroom

WILLIAM

Sara! Sara! Please open this door.

SARA

I'll open this door when I've collected myself, and then I'm leaving!

WILLIAM

Just come out and finish dinner with us Sara, it will be okay.

SARA

How could this possibly be okay? First you lie to your parents because you made it very clear you are embarrassed of me, and then you make me embarrass myself. Thanks for making me feel worthless. I haven't felt this good about myself since I was sent to the institution.

WILLIAM

Sara, I didn't lie about anything.

Sara doesn't answer because she is crying too hard

WILLIAM

Sara! Come on; open this door.

SARA

You know, this is what I get for trusting anyone other than Jax. I thought you were different, Will. I thought for once someone understood me and loved me for who I am. But you are just like everyone else. You are embarrassed by me and ashamed of me just

like my parents were...

Sara flicks on the mirror light in the bathroom and there is a huge pop and sparks go everywhere. A fire breaks loose in the bathroom. Sara goes running out of the bathroom racing past William and into the dining room. She makes eye contact with Will's parents still sitting in shock at the table, and then races out the front door in tears without saying a word. William runs out of the bathroom hallway after her and stops in the dining room to exclaim to his parents.

WILLIAM

Call the fire department!

EXT. OUTSIDE WILLIAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE-SIDEWALK-EVENING

Sara is standing on the sidewalk sobbing uncontrollably. It is pouring rain, and she is trying to hail a cab. A cab finally pulls up as William comes running down the sidewalk. He grabs her by the arm and spins her around.

WILLIAM

Christ, Sara! What the hell did you do?

SARA

William, I didn't do anything! It wasn't me...

WILLIAM

What then Sara? What? Are you going to tell me that Jax started the fire in my parents' house? Is that what he does? Set fire to people's houses, those who upset you??

SARA

Don't bring Jax into this Will...

WILLIAM

How can I not? Jax is you, and you are Jax. Unfortunately you are the one who has to face the consequences for your collective actions. I can't SEE the Dragons out there Sara, and I wish I could, but I can't. We live in two different worlds and my life is very black and white. I'm not like you... I'm not...

SARA

Not WHAT William? Go on... finish your sentence. What, you aren't crazy like me? Go on; say it. It's what you were thinking anyways.

WILLIAM

Sara, that's not what...

As Will tries to finish his sentence, the fire truck pulls up and interrupts him.

FIREMAN

There was a report of an arson fire in this area. Where is 9145 Mockingbird Lane?

WILLIAM

It's right down the street about four houses that way. I'll be there in a second.

The fire truck drives away. William turns around to talk to Sara again but it is too late. She has already gotten into the cab and it is driving away.

EXT. INSIDE THE CAB-BACK SEAT- EVENING

You see Sara sitting inside the cab, staring out the window at the rain, tears streaming down her face. Emotional music is playing.

CAB DRIVER

Ma'am if you don't mind me asking, are you okay?

SARA

(sniffles) You know, to tell you the truth, not really.

CAB DRIVER

My guess would be man troubles. Man troubles or family troubles. Nothing else is worth getting that upset about.

SARA

Actually, it's a combination of both a man and his family.

CAB DRIVER

Want to talk about it?

SARA

No, not really.

Silence for a few seconds

SARA

I swear to god; I am never trusting another person ever again. I mean where does he get off being embarrassed by me? And then he lets me make an idiot of myself in front of his family. UGH.

Sigh, and they were such nice people too. It was the closest I've felt to home in a long time. Maybe he's right though. Maybe I am not made for that type of life or happiness.

CAB DRIVER

You shouldn't base your self worth on the opinions of others. People who don't love you for who you are, are not worth your time. If you ask me, you are better off without him and his family. You need to be happy with who you are; not embarrassed by it. In the end, that's all that really matters.

Sara remains silent

CAB DRIVER

So um, where exactly are we going anyway?

SARA

Bellemeade mental hospital.

CAB DRIVER

Oh. Do you work there or something?

SARA

I umm...well...

Sara remains silent again, and ponders the idea of lying about whom she is. She finally decides not to be ashamed of who she is.

SARA

You know what, I live there. I'm a patient. It's where I fit in, and it's where I belong. It's my home.

EXT. WILLIAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE-LIVING ROOM-EVENING

William is sitting in a chair with his head in his hands and his parents pacing around behind him. In the background you can see firemen walking around.

FATHER

What were you thinking William? You completely crossed the boundaries of professionalism. And what about your studies? What if people find out? It could invalidate your whole thesis and revoke your scholarship!

WILLIAM

Dad, you don't understand...

FATHER

Oh I understand. What I understand is you brought a convicted arsonist into our home. And look what happened.

At this point a fireman walks into the living room holding a burned switch.

FIREMAN

Actually sir, the fire was not caused by arson; it was caused by faulty wiring in the bathroom light fixture. From what your wife told me, a repairman was here earlier to examine the problem. Someone must have flipped the switch before the insulating jacket had time to dry on top of the exposed solder. This wasn't pre-meditated; it was just an accident.

William exclaims under his breath

WILLIAM

Just an accident? Oh no.

William shakes his head, rolls his eyes, and slaps himself on the forehead.

FATHER

Accident or not William, it is still a bad idea. Getting involved with a girl like that could destroy your whole future.

WILLIAM

Girls like what Dad? You and mom loved her before you found out she was my patient.

MOTHER

She has a nice personality...

FATHER

Personality is fine, but that's not the point...

WILLIAM

And what Future? I mean seriously. My whole life I've been preparing for this awesome future everyone is always talking about. Someone please fill me in on what it is! For the past twenty one years, all I have done is build up my options so I can have a head start getting there. I've spent all my time climbing this mountain of potential, and now I'm finally ready to jump off the

edge into life. And do you know what I realize as I gaze over that edge? I realize that I've built up my safety net so high, that when I finally do take the plunge into life... well, it isn't much of a fall after all. I don't want my life to be only a few seconds of free fall. I want to tumble and fall, take risks and explore. If I can't live out my own life, then what's the point?

FATHER

You are compromising your future, your dreams, and everything you've worked for over some girl!

WILLIAM

No, I am compromising YOUR dreams dad. And this isn't about you, and it isn't about her. This is about me. It's about me realizing that I don't like the way my life is going. It's about me realizing that this isn't what I want. And Sara is not just some girl. She showed me what it's like to be free and to do things without having to think about my future, or my career; heck I'm not even thinking with my head. I'm thinking with my heart. And deep down inside, I know I am right.

MOTHER

You know deep down in our hearts we are only trying to do what's best for you too.

WILLIAM

I know mother. And that is why I love you and Dad very much. But for the first time, I need to do what I think is best for me and what makes me happy. And I've just made a terrible mistake.

INT. WILLIAM'S APARTMENT-BEDROOM-NIGHT

You see the door to Williams's apartment burst open and Will runs inside soaking wet. He races over to the telephone, trampling over his suit still lying on the floor. He picks up and dials the mental hospital.

WILLIAM

Uh yes. Hello, this is Dr. William Swam. I need to speak to Miss Sara Marx.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry sir. The records here show

that Miss Marx is no longer a patient of yours. Is this correct?

WILLIAM

Yes.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, I am afraid that Miss Marx has refused to accept any phone contact.

WILLIAM

Will you please let me speak to her? It's very important.

RECEPTIONIST

I am sorry sir; my hands are tied. Unless you are her doctor, I can't connect you.

WILLIAM

Can you at least deliver a message for me?

RECEPTIONIST

What message?

WILLIAM

Tell her...tell her I'm sorry. Tell her I am embarrassed, but not by her; I embarrass myself. Tell her, I love her, and I'm not afraid who knows it anymore.

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, if I may; this is a very inappropriate message for a doctor to send to a patient.

WILLIAM

I know, and I don't care. I am not her doctor anymore, remember. Please just deliver the message. Please.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll do what I can. Goodbye.

WILLIAM

Bye.

William hangs up the phone and lowers his head in his hands. He picks up his suit off the floor and goes to put it in the dryer. On his way to the laundry room, the picture that Sara drew of him falls out of the pocket. William looks at it and smiles. He then walks over to the window and stares out into the rainy world. The camera zooms in to a close up of the moon.

INT. BELLEMEADE METNAL INSTITUTION-SARA'S ROOM-NIGHT

The camera backs out of the close up of the moon, and goes through a window into Sara's room. You can see her sitting in her room staring out her rainy window and at the moon as well. Suddenly there is a knock at her door. She walks over to the door and opens it. The receptionist is standing there holding a piece of paper.

RECEPTIONIST

Miss Marx?

SARA

Yes?

RECEPTIONIST

I have a telephone message for you. I know you requested no contact, but he said it was urgent.

SARA

Okay, thank you. Just leave it over there on the table; thanks.

The receptionist leaves. Sara paces around the table and debates on whether to open the letter. She looks up into space and speaks to Jax.

SARA

Well, what do you think I should do Jax?

(Silence)

Yeah, A lot of help you are.

(Silence)

I know he hurt me...but...

(Silence)

sigh, I don't know...

(Silence)

The guy in the taxi did have a good point...

(Silence)

But what if it's good news?

(Silence)

What if it's a package of cookies?

(Silence)

What? It could be a singular cookie... flattened...and folded.

(Silence)

Maybe Will abandoned his family and future and everything he's ever known to be with his pathetic mental patient girlfriend...

Sara slumps down in her chair and looks up at one of her drawings of William.

SARA

Or maybe I'm just wishfully thinking.
Sigh.

Sara picks up the piece of paper, crumples it and throws it in the trashcan without looking at it.

INT. WILLIAM'S APPARTMENT-BEDROOM-NIGHT

You see William sitting on the edge of his bed waiting by the phone. He is constantly staring between the clock and the telephone. He finally looks at his watch and sees that it is 4:30 am. He sighs to himself and drops his head in his hands again. He leans over, turns off the light and rolls over into bed. You see him lying there with his eyes open. A single tear falls from the corner of his eye. He squeezes his eyes shut, and tries to sleep.

INT. WILLIAM'S APPARTMENT-BEDROOM-MORNING

You see the sunlight stream through William's window and his alarm goes off. He rolls over to check his messages on his cell phone, and sees that there is none. He sighs to himself and reluctantly gets up. He makes his way over to the mirror and glances from his image in the mirror to the first picture that Sara drew for him that is still tacked up next to the mirror. He sighs and pulls it off the wall. William opens the medicine cabinet and takes two pills out of the bottle of aspirin and downs them. You see him pull his suit out of the dryer, and hold it up. He stares at it and sighs.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER-RECEPTION AREA-MID AFTERNOON

You see William walking up a flight of stairs in his suit. When he reaches the top, he passes a sign that says, "National Science Foundation Research Dissertation Speaker William Swam on Delusional Fixations". As he approaches the doors, many people including his father's friends, his parents, Jennifer and the interviewer from earlier, greet him.

INTERVIEWER

Nice to see you again William. I am anxious to see what you have accomplished. The job offer is still on the table now that you are done with your research.

William shakes his hand.

WILLIAM

Thank you sir.

William's parents and his father's friend approach him

FATHER'S FRIEND

Ready for the big day William?

WILLIAM

Yes sir.

FATHER'S FRIEND

That a boy. Don't be nervous. Everybody already knows how great your work is. All you have to do now is tell us all about it.

FATHER

Well, he only has the floor for 50 minutes, so I doubt he can say EVERYTHING that went on. Just tell the important and relevant things and you'll do great son. Make us proud.

WILLIAM

I'll do my best.

FATHER

That's all I ask.

William's father and his friend walk away, but his mother stays behind.

MOTHER

Any word from Sara dear?

WILLIAM

Nope.

MOTHER

I'm so sorry honey.

She hugs him.

MOTHER

At least after today, this chapter of your life is over. You can move on. But I promise this time it'll be your own choice where and what to move on to. Just do what is in your heart, and you'll make us both proud.

She hugs him again and whispers

MOTHER

You always do.

Will's mom runs off to join his father and his friend. William begins to head into the auditorium when he hears a voice from behind.

JENNIFER

Well hello there stranger!

William turns around and sees Jennifer

WILLIAM

Hey.

JENNIFER

Well, long time no see champ. What have you been up to?

WILLIAM

I know, I am really sorry. I've been really busy. You know, with the umm...the research and all.

JENNIFER

It's okay. I completely understand. Who has time for anything these days? Remember, I'm the girl with no life...

WILLIAM

I am sure that's not true.

JENNIFER

Heck the last time I did anything fun was going out to dinner with you, and that was nearly a month ago! I never got to thank you for that in person either. I had a great time.

WILLIAM

Yeah, it was nice.

JENNIFER

I really hope we can do it again some time, soon. You know, now that your research is done and all. (Blushes)

WILLIAM

Sure.

Insert awkward silence

JENNIFER

So, umm, you must be excited to finally be done with this project huh. All ready to jump off into the real world?

WILLIAM

As ready as I'll ever be.

JENNIFER

You are pretty set from what I understand. I was talking to this guy over there (she points towards the interviewer) and he said he had already offered you a job. I did my best to put in a good word for you, you know, to get you some of those fancy benefits, maybe your own lab station.

WILLIAM

Thanks.

JENNIFER

And then he asked me what I do, and we ended up talking for a while. I think I may have landed myself an interview. It's funny how these things happen. Who knows, we might end up working together!

WILLIAM

That would be nice. But hey, I should really go get ready for my presentation.

JENNIFER

Okay, well good luck! I'm sure you'll knock our socks off. I'll be watching!

William walks into the auditorium and the doors close behind him.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER- AUDITORIUM- MID DAY

William is standing on stage watching everyone get seated. He sees the interviewer sitting down in the front row. He looks above and sees his parents, Jennifer, and his father's friend all getting seated. The lights dim; it's Williams turn to speak.

WILLIAM

Hello everybody and thank you for attending the presentation of my research results on delusional fixations. I would like to thank the National Science Foundation for funding my research, and also thank my parents for guiding and supporting me in my endeavors. I'll start by offering a brief exposition explaining exactly what delusional fixations are, their causes and their symptoms. I will also propose possible ways that society can help individuals afflicted with delusional fixations come to grips with reality.
(Slide change)

A delusional fixation describes the phenomenon under which children and grown adults cannot separate reality from imagination. This results from an extreme case of schizophrenia where the voices in the head of the patient actually take on a physical appearance indistinguishable to the patient from reality. Often times, in extreme cases the individual may even develop intense

and involved relationships with these figments of imagination. A well documented case of this phenomenon occurred in mind of the famous mathematician and the father of modern economics John Nash. If any of you have seen the movie A Beautiful Mind, then you have some concept of the level of entanglement between imagination and reality for these individuals.

(Slide change)

Delusional fixations generally occur in individuals who are raised in broken environments. Feelings of neglect and unwanted-ness provoke the creation of these imaginary characters in order to compensate for the lack of attention generated from the real world. These characters provide the individual with the feelings of acceptance that they do not receive from their environment, and therefore the individual generates a stronger bond with these imaginary creations than with real people. The feelings of non-acceptance from the real world may build a wall between the individual and the rest of the world. They may grow unwilling to trust people other than those they have created themselves. Some times these feelings of resentment can turn dangerous.

(Slide change)

In the course of my research, I chose to do a case study on an individual who exhibited this phenomenon. Her name is Sara Marx, the individual best known for her involvement in the fire at the Barnabey Mansion years ago. She fits the description of delusional fixation perfectly. She is the product of a neglectful home, and creates for herself an imaginary companion by the name of Jax; who also happens to be a dragon. According to her, Jax is her best friend and companion who follows her around. He provides her with the comfort and understanding that the real world does not provide. In a world where she is constantly confronted with overbearing individuals who stubbornly refuse to accept her for who she is, Jax is her salvation. He is her safety net. He is the only thing that keeps her sane. He accepts her for who she is, and unlike

the real world, is not ashamed of her or embarrassed by her. He loves her with no reservations; something she has not received from anyone in reality...

William pauses at this point and thinks. The auditorium is silent. He looks up at the slide displaying a picture of Jax and Sara, and then glances over to his mother.

WILLIAM

I am sorry; I cannot continue this presentation. The findings in my research are invalid.

There is a gasp from the audience. William's father's friend looks over at William's father in shock. William's father shrugs his shoulders and looks over at William's mother with a shocked and angry look on his face. William's mother does not respond and continues to watch William and smiles.

WILLIAM

During the course of my research, I developed a personal relation with Sara Marx that extends far beyond the patient-doctor relationship boundaries. I apologize to the people who relied on me, and funded my efforts: but I have no regrets for what happened. During my time with Sara, I learned more about myself than I did about her. She taught me about life by showing me the world through her eyes. A world that is unfettered and un-corrupted by the constraints of society and the expectations accompanying it. Who are we to tell these people that their world is wrong? Who are we to tell them their friends aren't true? Their world is full of people who love them and appreciate them for who they are. Friends who do not judge them. Imaginary or not, few of us can claim to have that type of devotion. If you ask me to choose between their world and ours, the choice is simple. At least for me it is. Again I am sorry.

William jumps off the stage and races towards the doors of the auditorium. The interviewer stops him on his way out.

INTERVIEWER

Um, in light of recent developments, I regret to inform you that our company...

WILLIAM

...Is no longer interested in my services.
I figure as much. But I have a friend
you should seriously consider for my
position. I believe you spoke with her
earlier. She is more than qualified, so
make sure to throw in those fancy
benefits. Now if you'll excuse me, I
have a future to secure...

William runs past the interviewer and down the stairs,
leaving the interviewer and the audience in disbelief.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CONVENTION CENTER-SIDE WALK-MID DAY

You see William standing outside the convention center
desperately trying to hail a cab. Finally, one pulls up and
rolls down the window. It's the same cab driver that picked
up Sara from William's parents' house earlier.

CAB DRIVER

Come on; get in.

INT. INSIDE THE CAB-INTERIOR-MID DAY

William sits down in the cab and stares out the window
looking very distraught.

CAB DRIVER

Let me guess...women problems

WILLIAM

Hah, that obvious huh?

CAB DRIVER

Yeah. There seems to be a lot of
relationship problems going around these
days. Must be the weather.

WILLIAM

Tell me about it. Hey, can we just stop
over at that grocery store for a second.
There's a little something I need to
pick up.

CAB DRIVER

Sure thing chief.

The Cab leaves the convention center and drives over to the
grocery store.

EXT. GROCERY STORE-PARKING LOT- MID DAY

The cab pulls up to the curb of the grocery store. William
turns to the cab driver and says

WILLIAM

Can you just hang tight for a few minutes, I need to run in and grab some things.

CAB DRIVER

You are the boss.

WILLIAM

Thanks a lot. I'll be right back.

William pats the cab driver on the shoulder and runs out of the cab and into the grocery store.

INT. GROCERY STORE-CHECK OUT LANE -MID DAY

You see William standing in a huge line waiting to be checked out. Calming elevator music is playing. He is holding items but you can't see what they are. He is constantly looking at his watch and back at the line. He looks very frustrated and lets out a sigh.

INT. THE CAB-INTERIOR-MID DAY

The cab driver is jamming to music and waiting for William to get out of the store. Finally William comes running out of the store and jumps in the cab.

WILLIAM

Sorry that took so long. There was this old woman in front of me that had like a million items and of course she forgot her checkbook. I wonder how many important events in history have been thwarted because of neglectful old ladies.

CAB DRIVER

Its okay, I don't mind. The meter was running. (Smiles) I hope your historically important plan was worth the um (checks the meter), extra 14 dollars and 50 cents.

WILLIAM

Believe me, if this all works out according to plan I'll give you 15 dollars, and you can keep the change.

CAB DRIVER

So what did you get?

WILLIAM

A box of crayons and some cookies.

CAB DRIVER

That's an odd combination.

WILLIAM

I'm in an odd situation.

CAB DRIVER

Cookies and Crayons huh? Sounds like the name of a bad movie.

WILLIAM

Story of my life.

CAB DRIVER

So where exactly am I taking you?

WILLIAM

Bellemeade Mental Institution.

CAB DRIVER

Did you say Bellemeade Mental Institution?

WILLIAM

You got it.

CAB DRIVER

Okay, now that's too coincidental to just be the weather...

The camera cuts to a far away shot of the cab as it drives down the street and enters the mental institution gates. The camera re-enters the cab to rejoin the conversation...

WILLIAM

You told her what??

CAB DRIVER

I'm sorry! How was I supposed to know you were the guy she was talking about! I was just trying to help her out. I mean; you should have seen how upset she was. You really did a number on her...

WILLIAM

Yeah, I know...sigh

CAB DRIVER

But on a good note, you also know that she wouldn't have been that upset unless she really cared about you. The people you care about the most have the ability to make you the most miserable in your life, but also the happiest. Giving someone that type of influence over you...that's love. And that's something that doesn't fade quickly.

WILLIAM

I just hope it's not too late.

CAB DRIVER

Go get her. Hey if it helps, since she seems to take my advice anyway, let her know that I approve of you two.

WILLIAM

Thank you. You know, for a cab driver, you sure do know a lot about how people think and interact. You ever think about being a psychologist?

CAB DRIVER

I get that a lot. My whole life actually. You are talking to the holder of a bachelor degree in psychology from UCLA.

WILLIAM

Really? What happened?

CAB DRIVER

It just wasn't my thing.

William smiles at the cab driver and then gives him money.

WILLIAM

Thanks again.

William rushes up the stairs of the mental institution. The cab driver rolls down the window and shouts at William

CAB DRIVER

Let me know how it turns out!

William looks over his shoulder and smiles at the driver again. He then continues running up the stairs.

INT. BELLEMEADE MENTAL INSTITUTION-RECEPTION DESK-MID DAY

William bursts through the doors and runs up to the reception desk. The lady sitting at the table is the same lady who spoke to William on the phone the other night.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

WILLIAM

Yes, I'd like to see the patient Sara Marx please.

RECEPTIONIST

And your name is?

WILLIAM

William Swam.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh. It's you again. Look, I'm sorry, but

you can't see Miss Marx.

WILLIAM

Look lady. I understand that you don't approve of what I am trying to do here, but you are standing in the way between me and the love of my life. My entire life is riding on this, and it's not a place you want to be. I have already sacrificed my family, my career, and my future to get this far. You have no idea what I'm willing to do.

RECEPTIONIST

Well, that was quite a speech Mr. Swam, but the fact remains you cannot see miss Marx because she isn't available. She was checked out under the custody of a new doctor just a little while ago, and is en route to a new location for treatment.

Williams face goes white. He lowers his head and shakes it.

WILLIAM

Another location...sigh...where'd she go?

RECEPTIONIST

You know as well as I do that I can't disclose that type of information. It's illegal, and I could lose my job. And like you so aptly observed, I do not approve of what you are doing. I'm sorry.

The receptionist slams the window closed.

EXT. BELLEMEADE MENTAL INSTITUTION-OUTSIDE STAIRS-MID DAY

You see the doors of the institution open and William slowly slumps his way down the stairs with his head hung low. He walks over to a trashcan and throws the grocery bag with the crayons and cookies in it. He is interrupted by a voice.

CAB DRIVER

What happened to your princess?

William looks up and sees the driver.

WILLIAM

What are you still doing here?

CAB DRIVER

Figured I was already pretty invested in this drama. I got 15 bucks riding on the outcome. I just want to stick around and see how the story plays out.

WILLIAM

Yeah well, sorry to disappoint you, but this bad movie doesn't have a happy ending. I was too late.

CAB DRIVER

What do you mean too late? You are just giving up like that? You've come way too far to give up that easily. You have to fight for the woman you love! Don't make me get out of my cab and do it for you, cause I will.

WILLIAM

She's gone. She left. She packed up and moved without saying goodbye. How can I fight for someone if I don't know where she is? How can I fight for someone if she's already given up on me?

CAB DRIVER

I'm sorry to hear that man. Want me to give you a ride home, or to the nearest bar? The ride is on the house.

WILLIAM

No thanks. I think I'd rather walk home and figure out how I managed to lose everything good in my life in the span of a few hours.

CAB DRIVER

Good luck man. Just remember, everything happens for a reason. Love doesn't die easily. She may not be here, but I have a feeling her heart is still with you.

WILLIAM

Yeah.

The cab drives away, and leaves William standing at the steps of the mental hospital. William begins to walk slowly down the street.

EXT. THE CITY-SIDEWALK-MID DAY

You see William walking slowly with his head hanging low down the sidewalk of the streets. Dramatic and emotional music is playing. Hundreds of people pass by him, but he doesn't look up. He eventually ends up walking by the zoo and looks up. A look of sadness comes over his face, and he decides to go inside. He walks around the zoo with the same sad expression on his face. He sits down on a bench outside and watches the animals play care-freely in their cages, but that doesn't cheer him up at all. He gets up and walks around again until he reaches the reptile house. Tears begin

to stream down his face. You see the sun go down over the zoo and the rest of the city. William walks slowly back to his apartment in the darkness.

INT. WILLIAM'S APPARTMENT-LIVING ROOM-NIGHT TIME

You see William open the door to his apartment with his head still low and looking at the ground. He is sniffing and wiping the tears from his face. Suddenly he is startled by a familiar voice.

SARA

Why so sad doc?

William immediately recognizes the voice and turns around to see her standing there. He is in shock.

WILLIAM

Sara??

SARA

I know everything William. I know all about your speech. I love you so much.

WILLIAM

But how? How do you know? How did you get here? They said you were gone...they said you had left with another doctor!

SARA

I did.

WILLIAM

Sara, I don't understand...

Suddenly William hears another familiar voice. He turns around to see Jennifer coming out of the bathroom.

JENNIFER

Say hello to Sara's new doctor. I checked her out for you.

WILLIAM

Okay, now I'm officially confused.

JENNIFER

I passed the boards Will. Guess that organic chemistry couldn't stop me. I'm officially a doctor now. I was waiting to tell you the good news when we went out to dinner again, but in light of current events this way seems more appropriate.

WILLIAM

But why...

JENNIFER

That speech you gave back at the convention center was the dumbest career move I have ever seen in all my years. It was also the most romantic and heartfelt confession I've ever heard. Few people would have had the conviction to stand up for what they believe like you did. It would have been a shame if it were for nothing...

WILLIAM

But I thought that you...umm...

JENNIFER

Liked you? I did, I do. I've had a thing for you ever since we were kids. But I liked you because I thought we were the same William. I always admired you and respected you for your accomplishments. Chasing you was like chasing the person I wanted to be. See, I learned something today too. I learned that just because two people have the same capacity, doesn't mean they want the same thing. Our lives are headed in very different directions. You and her however, you two are the same. You share something special. You belong together.

WILLIAM

I don't know what to say. I don't know how to thank you.

JENNIFER

It's okay. Don't feel bad for me. I got a job out of it. You know, the same job you threw away in the most romantic display of career suicide known to man. So it looks like we both came out ahead. Our futures are looking brighter than ever, but in very different ways. And it couldn't be more perfect.

Jennifer leans in and kisses William on the cheek. She then turns to Sara and says

JENNIFER

He's all yours now.

She then heads towards the door. William quickly turns around and says...

WILLIAM

Wait, there's still one thing I don't understand.

JENNIFER

What's that?

WILLIAM

How did you know where I live, where to find Sara, and how to get in here?

JENNIFER

You can thank your mother for that part.
(Smiles)

William smiles back and watches her walk away. He then turns around and sees Sara standing there.

SARA

So, what took you so long? (smiles)

Sara is holding and waving the telephone message she threw away from earlier in her hand.

WILLIAM

Sara I...

SARA

I think you've said enough today
William...

She then runs over to him and they kiss and embrace.

SARA

You know, that Jennifer is a quite a girl. I won't be mad if you say her name in bed anymore...

WILLIAM

(Laughs) Oh yeah?

SARA

Yeah. I might even start saying her name in my sleep too. I've taken quite a liking to her.

WILLIAM

Hmm...two girls...

SARA

Eww. Stop thinking about it you freak!

Sara lovingly tackles William on to the bed.

SARA

So...where do we go from here? What do we do now?

WILLIAM

You know, for the first time in my life, I have absolutely no idea what to do or where to go. That scares me a lot. But I

do know that no matter what the future holds for me, I want you to be there with me. With you by my side, I feel like I can do anything. And with that the possibilities are endless.

SARA

You don't have to worry about that.

WILLIAM

Good, cause other than that I have no clue.

SARA

It's okay; I'm not big on thinking about things...just doing.

WILLIAM

That's what I love about you.

SARA

As long as the "doing" includes something a little more magical than just a trip to the zoo. That may have worked before, but after all this you are going to have to do much better to lure me in again. (Winks). Maybe some place where you can wear something like this.

Sara jumps out of bed and pulls the t-shirt and shorts out of Will's closet. William stands up and walks over to her.

WILLIAM

Don't worry, this time around I promise to take you to a place where we can ride off into the sunset.

William pulls her in close and the camera pans away from the two of them along the wall and finally stops on their shadows as they kiss. On the side of Sara you can see a faint shadow of Jax.

END.

