

HIGH MAINTENANCE

SPEC

"Angel Investors"

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

From a distance, a huge group of WOMEN (all ages) form a circular conga line together. They surround a pit of fire that gives off an ORANGE GLOW to the trees. Smoke extends past the trees towards the stars. Faint CHANTING sounds, but it's unclear what they're saying at first.

Within the circle, one of them, FRAN (62), remains quiet and stumbles as she hangs on to the shoulders in front of her.

WOMEN

(light chanting)

*Spiraling to the center,
The center of our souls!
We are the weavers,
We are the woven ones!
We are the dreamers,
We are the dream!*

The WOMAN in front of her peers over at her. She smiles and nods at Fran. Fran nods and joins in.

EVERYONE

(louder chanting)

*Spiraling to the center,
The center of our souls!
We are the weavers,
We are the woven ones!
We are the dreamers,
We are the dream!*

Fran's smile grows and she chants with confidence.

EVERYONE (CONT'D)

(still chanting loud)

*Spiraling to the center,
The center of our souls!
We are the weavers,
We are the woven ones!
We are the dreamers,
We are the dream!*

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Fran drives away from the woods. Still buzzing from the ritual, she smiles again.

INT. FRAN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Quiet. Still dark in the room like it's night time, aside from a tiny bit of light from a window. A Wiccan pentagram tapestry hangs from the ceiling.

Fran snores super loud and drools as her mouthguard starts to pop out. On a nightstand next to her lay a picture of her with her grown son, her iPhone, a candle, and a series of clear quartz crystals.

Her phone alarm BEEPS over and over. It reads "3:30 AM". Fran LEAPS out of bed. She grabs her phone. She taps with a single pinkie finger as the alarm blazes. Eventually, she turns the alarm off. She takes a deep breath and hurries to the bathroom.

INT. SHOWER - CONTINUOUS

Fran scrub-a-dub-a-dubs.

FRAN
(half-awake chanting)
*Spiraling to the center,
The center of our souls!
We are the weavers,
We are the woven ones!
We are the dreamers,
We are the dream!
Spiraling to the center,
The center of our souls!
We are the weavers,
We are the woven ones!
We are the dreamers,
We are the dream!
Spiraling to the center--*

Fran yawns wide and laughs at herself.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - EARLY MORNING

Fran, covered head-to-toe in cold-weather wear, vapes with a vape pen as she speed-walks across the huge bridge. The sun rises a bit. Cars zip past her.

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - LATER

Fran sprints towards a shockingly MASSIVE LINE OF PEOPLE, who wait against the wall by the front door. Signs scattered around on walls and propped-up on signs read: "NEW iPhone XI IN STOCK".

She lines up behind the group. She breathes a sigh of relief and vapes.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

Funky, jazzy music plays throughout.

A) EXT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY - Fran waits behind a HUGE LINE and vapes. HAPPY PEOPLE wander out with cones filled with fluffy-looking ice cream.

B) EXT. INDIE BOOKSTORE - DAY - Fran waits in line. She vapes. A sign reads "BOOK SIGNING TODAY!".

C) EXT. CONCERT VENUE - LATE AFTERNOON - Vaping Fran waits alongside hardcore-looking PUNK ROCKERS.

D) EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT - Fran in line. She makes it to the front and approaches the HOSTESS (20s).

HOSTESS
(annoyed)
How many?

FRAN
Oh, it's not for me, but it'll be four.

Hostess rolls her eyes.

HOSTESS
Tell whoever, the table'll be ready at nine-fifteen.

FRAN
That's in three hours.

HOSTESS
Yeah.

E) INT. FRAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - Fran plops down on her bed.

F) INT. FRAN'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING - The phone alarm BEEPS over and over longer this time. Fran's face down in her pillow. Her arm JOLTS up. She SLAPS the phone a ton until it silences.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Fran yawns as she waits in another line. She whips out her trusty vape. She inhales. She smacks it. Nothing left.

FRAN

No, no, no, no, no.

Fran leaves the line and speed-walks away from the crowd. She pulls out her phone. She taps on it with a single pinkie finger. She makes a call.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Hi, Fran here, I'm so sorry, but something came up, you'll have to wait in line yourself on this one. I'm so sorry. Buh-bye.

She hangs up and dials on the phone again.

FRAN (CONT'D)

Hey, are you available to hang with me?

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET CORNER - SAME TIME

A little girl, BIANCA (10), hands THE GUY a cup of hot cocoa from behind her make-shift HOT COCOA STAND. She looks downward with her hair covering her face. The set-up includes a table, a sign above it that reads: "BIANCA'S HOT COCOA \$3", and many cups of hot cocoa.

THE GUY

Yeah, same place?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

FRAN

Aw, crap, I moved to Red Hook. I'm not there right now actually. On the way. I'll text you the address. You might beat me.

THE GUY

That's okay man, I got some time. Be there in an hour.

The Guy hangs up. He hands Bianca a ten-dollar bill.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

Keep the change.

Bianca looks at him, confused.

The Guy takes a sip.

THE GUY (CONT'D)
This is delicious!

BIANCA
Really?

THE GUY
Yeah, this city better watch out.

Bianca smiles this time.

The Guy walks with his bike down the street and guzzles down the delicious hot cocoa.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

The Guy, with hot cocoa stains stuck on his face, glides past cars and PASSERSBY on his bike. He observes everything around him. A peaceful ride.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

The Guy rolls up, sets his bike down, and locks it up.

FRAN (O.S.)
Wait, wait!

Fran rushes up to him.

FRAN (CONT'D)
(out-of-breath)
I made it.

THE GUY
You ran here?

FRAN
(still catching breath)
From SoHo.

THE GUY
Whoa, let's get you inside.

FRAN
You got a little somethin'...

She reaches with her thumb at his face.

THE GUY
Don't worry, I got it.

He guides her up some steps and wipes the chocolate off his face.

INT. FRAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fran opens the door and lets The Guy in. She turns a light on. She throws down her winter-wear on a sofa. The Guy surveys her place.

A one-bedroom full of Wiccan decor. Candles and crystals on the dining table. Spiritual images on the walls. Pentagram blankets lay on the sofa across from her TV. Beside the TV, another, this time HUGE, picture of her son.

Fran turns and notices The Guy as he looks around.

FRAN

I know, I know, it's a lot--

THE GUY

No, no, I just...didn't know you were into all this.

FRAN

Well I think last time you saw me, my son officially moved out, I was trying Judaism and I went to the church of Scientology and bought Dianetics...

The Guy sets down his backpack on the dining table. He pulls out his supply box.

THE GUY

You were a Buddhist last time I saw you.

They laugh together.

FRAN

Oh my god, really? Wow. I even forgot about that phase. I just didn't grow up with a religious family. And my son thinks religion is "lame" or whatever.

THE GUY

How is he by the way?

The Guy points to the huge picture of her son.

FRAN

Jeffrey?

THE GUY

Yeah.

FRAN

Oh, uhm, he's doing well...I think.
You know, he's a big doctor now.
Very busy.

THE GUY

Sounds big...and busy.

FRAN

Very.

THE GUY

Well, I think it's cool you're
experimenting with everything.

The guy opens up the box full of weed packages. He faces it
towards her.

FRAN

Thank you. I was starting to feel
like all these religions were very
manly. I was tired of the masculine
energies I was surrounding myself
with. Being Wicca is so empowering,
you know?

The Guy nods.

FRAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, you don't care about
this stuff.

THE GUY

I'm glad you found something.

Fran smiles. She hugs him. The Guy's eyes widen, surprised.

FRAN

(whispers)

Thank you.

He joins in and embraces her. She lets go.

FRAN (CONT'D)

...Anyways...my vape pen ran out
and it was on the verge of breaking
so I really need just a whole new
one of these things.

THE GUY

Yeah I got those too.

He reaches into his backpack and looks for the pens.

FRAN

I started this new job and the hours are insane so I kinda depend on the high, you know what I mean?

THE GUY

Sounds familiar. What's the job?

He pulls out a series of pens and the little juice bottles.

FRAN

So I was surfing the web just looking for something I thought I could do and I found this site called LineAngel. Long story short, I'm a line-stander now.

THE GUY

Oh no way.

FRAN

You know about it?

THE GUY

Yeah, my uncle tried it when he retired.

FRAN

Small world, huh.

(pause)

Well, it's wild in actuality. There's so many things you have to get up for before the sun even comes out. You really need an incredible amount of patience.

THE GUY

I can imagine.

(holds up first pen)

So I've got Cotton Candy Cooler...

(holds up second pen)

Frozen Lime Drop...

(holds up third pen)

Blue Raspberry...

(holds up last pen)

And if you need some breakfast, Belgian Waffle.

FRAN

Oh, breakfast sounds delightful. Thank you so much.

THE GUY

No problem.

Fran's phone BUZZES. She pulls it out and read from it.

THE GUY (CONT'D)

So that's one-fifty.

FRAN

Oh my gosh, I don't have that much on me...But, this is great, I just got this job to go wait for a video game that's coming out at midnight.

THE GUY

Well, I could just give you the juice, or if you want, I can come back--

FRAN

This guy's gonna come pay me when I get to the front of the line. Why don't you come with me and then I'll pay you there?

THE GUY

Sorry man, I got more clients tonight too. Just call me tomorrow.

The Guy puts everything back into his backpack.

FRAN

Is there any way you can just loan it to me...?

THE GUY

Sorry, I can't do loans. Just uh, drink some coffee for tonight.

FRAN

Okay, sure, sure. I'll be fine. I apologize for wasting your time.

THE GUY

You didn't. Always good to catch up. See ya tomorrow.

FRAN

Bye.

Fran waves goodbye. The Guy waves back and leaves.

Fran sighs. She puts her winter-wear back on and heads back out.

EXT. VIDEO GAME STORE - NIGHT

Fran waits in a HUGE LINE. She taps her foot. She looks all over her surroundings. She turns around and nods at the COUPLE behind her. She becomes still.

She pulls out her phone.

ON PHONE SCREEN

Fran scrolls through her contacts.

She taps **Jeffrey (My Little Man)** and **Call**. All with her single pinkie finger.

As she calls, she moves up in the line a bit.

FRAN

Hey Honey...it's Mom...just wanted to check in. I know we haven't...

(gets choked up)

You know I'd love to hear your voice. But uhm, I'm doing really well. Got a lotta...new stuff going on in my life. Uhm, I'd love to come visit, or even better, you can come see my new place. I'm in a very hip area now I think you'd like...anywho, just...call me back when you can! Love you.

Fran hangs up and puts her phone away. She breathes a sigh of relief and smiles.

From the front door, a girl, CLAIRE (34), speed-walks out and with a video game in hand.

She runs to a LYFT sitting nearby.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The driver, JULIUS (40s) adjusts his mirror and peeks at Claire.

JULIUS

Name's Julius.

CLAIRE

Claire.

JULIUS

So uh, you got a new video game?

CLAIRE

Yep.

JULIUS

Figured with the big line out there.

CLAIRE

Yep.

JULIUS

I don't really have time to play anymore myself, but I used to love, what was it, Sonic Monkey Bros. or whatever?

CLAIRE

...Super Monkey Ball?

JULIUS

Yeah, yeah, with the monkeys.

CLAIRE

It's a classic.

JULIUS

You hear about that Twitch thing? My son watches some of these people just sittin' there playin' games. It's crazy. Untalented people gettin' paid to play games.

CLAIRE

It is pretty weird.

Silence. She gazes out the window and watches the city pass by.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

An absolute pigsty. Clothes all over the floor and couch. Coffee table covered with dirty dishes. Kitchen too. Claire barges in and rushes to her room.

INT. CLAIRE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

More clothes on the floor. Computer parts scattered on top of them. Gaming systems and controllers stacked in the corners. Posters of video games on the walls: Portal, Super Mario Galaxy, Red Dead Redemption, Uncharted 4.

Claire carries in a six-pack of Red Bull and sets it on her desk.

She plops down in a huge expensive gaming chair with buttons built into it. She turns on her state-of-the-art PC gaming rig: a tower lit up by fluctuating rainbow colors, a 40-inch monitor, huge speakers, and a funky-looking mouse.

She throws on a headset with a mic attached to it, moves a microphone in front of her mouth, and inserts the disc of her new game into her PC. She takes a deep breath.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Claire sees herself in the web-cam window. She checks herself out for a moment. She squeezes her belly in and grimaces. She adjusts the web-cam so you can only see her face.

She clicks on her Twitch account which reads:

Claire_The_Slaytress_

She starts her stream.

CLAIRE

CLAIRE

(to web-cam)

Hey guys, just about to start my third annual all-nighter stream. I went to the store and got Sony Santa Monica's new game, God of War: Ragnarok, and I'm so fucking excited for it. Sorry for cussing Mom. As you all know, I loved the last God of War, I mean, it was my GOTY of 2018, and I can't wait to share this experience with you.

ON-SCREEN CHAT WINDOW

Messages pop up from different USERS and read:

WE LOVE YOU CLAIRE!

THANKS FOR DOING THIS!

YOU'RE MY FAVORITE

I <3 U

CAN I PROPOSE TO YOU?

CLAIRE

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(to web-cam)

Aw, thanks! I love you too! I don't know what I'd do without you, honestly. Your continued support has allowed me to stop living with my mother and for that, I am grateful.

She chuckles.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Also, to the person who wants to propose, I am single, but I have a date tomorrow and I'm super super nervous...but who cares! All-nighter stream!

She grabs a Red Bull and chugs it down.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Time to kill some Norse motherfuckers.

She smushes the now-empty can and THROWS it behind her. She burps.

INT. CLAIRE'S ROOM - MORNING

The sun rises on passed-out-on-the-floor Claire.

With her game controller on her face and Red Bull cans surrounding her, she cracks open her eyes a little.

She crawls across the floor as slow as possible towards the bathroom, like a soldier in war trudging to safety after an explosion dazes them.

INT. CLAIRE'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She finally makes it to the toilet bowl and she...

BARFS all up in it.

She stops and holds herself over the bowl.

She PASSES OUT on the bathroom floor.

INT. CLAIRE'S ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Claire lays in bed sound asleep. Her phone RINGS from a short distance. Definitely in the room somewhere.

She jolts up and drags herself out of bed in a blanket burrito. She forages for it from beneath the clothes on her floor while it continues to ring.

She finds it and picks it up.

CLAIRE
(groggily)
Hey...okay, I'll meet you there...
I'm fine, I'm fine, I'll wake up.
K, bye.

ON PHONE SCREEN

A text exchange with The Guy:

SRRY 4 SHORT NOTICE...U AROUND?

...

YEAH, BE THERE SOON-ISH

CLAIRE

She breathes a sigh of relief. She scrambles through the pile of clothes on the floor and grabs a bunch. She rushes to the bathroom.

INT. CLAIRE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In her new cobbled-together outfit, she examines herself in the mirror.

On the sink below her lays an open makeup set. She grabs it and dumps it in the trash.

She pops a pimple. She feels the fat on her neck. She stretches her forehead skin back.

She stares into the mirror and practices awkward sexy poses. She stops and gazes at the makeup in the trash until...

Loud KNOCKS from the door.

She jumps.

CLAIRE
One sec!

She rushes out.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She kicks aside all her clothes. She grabs plates and throws them in the sink. She opens the door.

THE GUY
Hey, how's it goin'?

CLAIRE
Hello, Sir, welcome to my adobe.
Abode, I mean.

THE GUY
A pleasure, Madame.

He steps in and follows her.

INT. CLAIRE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Guy wanders in and scans the messy room.

CLAIRE
(pointing)
You can sit in my special chair
over there. You're the guest of
honor.

THE GUY
Thank you so much. I haven't seen
this cool set-up you got goin' on
before.

Claire lays back on her bed.

CLAIRE
Gaming finally paid off.

The Guy pulls out his stash from his bag.

THE GUY
So you built it all yourself?

CLAIRE
I'm so sorry, I'm having an out of
body experience right now.

Claire laughs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I didn't exactly acquire the
optimal amount of sleep.

THE GUY
Oh, no, don't worry about it. So,
what'd you have in mind then?

CLAIRE
I was thinking something that's a
full-body pick-me-up if that
applies to anything...

THE GUY
Uh, yeah, I think I got somethin'.

The Guy forages through his set of little plastic baggies of
weed.

Claire grabs a tissue from her desk and blows her nose. She
grabs her bag too and takes it to her bed.

CLAIRE
I apologize. Allergies.

THE GUY
Hey, do what you gotta do.

CLAIRE
Is it bizarre to you that I have
tissues? I feel like no one ever
has tissues.

THE GUY
Huh.

CLAIRE
Everywhere I go, it appears no one
feels the need to constantly have a
tissue at their disposal.
Meanwhile, I have a pack of 35 in
my closet.

THE GUY
You might be on to something.

A beat.

CLAIRE
Uhm, sorry, do you have somewhere
to be, like, in the next hour?

THE GUY
(checks his watch)
I have a little time, why?

He picks a baggy out and closes his stash.

THE GUY (CONT'D)
This one should work by the way.

CLAIRE
Sorry, I just...I have a date
really soon and I need some
help...preparing.

THE GUY
Oh, right on--

CLAIRE
I mean, *she* doesn't know about the
date, but, it's a date...

She pulls out some cash from her bag and hands it to him. He counts the money.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I mean it's really a group of us
going, like it's a group...but me
and this girl...we'll be together
more. You know when there's clearly
a mini-group within the group
that's going? A subset, I mean, a
subset knows each other and, in a
sense, relies more on each other
for social interaction...I'm
sorry...
(shakes her head)
You can go. It's stupid. I'm sorry.

THE GUY
Whoa, whoa, you're fine, you're
fine. I can help.

CLAIRE
You sure?

THE GUY
Yeah, what'd you have in mind?

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They smoke a bowl together. She sets down her pipe.

CLAIRE

Okay, so we'll walk around this area...in a circle slash square formation, and I'll try to talk to you as if you're this girl. Feel free to throw in any tips you have too.

THE GUY

Hey, I don't know how to talk to girls either.

She laughs.

CLAIRE

I'll be playing the role of Claire and you're Daria.

THE GUY

I am now Daria.

CLAIRE

Okay, here we go, we just met up before the movie and we're walking down the street...

They wander around her living room for a moment.

THE GUY

...You excited for the movie?

CLAIRE

Would you wanna come over after the movie? I could show you my gaming rig...not a euphemism!

The Guy chuckles and stops. She stops along with him.

THE GUY

That was a little fast.

CLAIRE

Ugh, okay. Lemme try again.

THE GUY

Uh--

CLAIRE

Let's restart. I'll go.

They continue their stroll around the apartment.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

...You excited for the movie?

THE GUY

Yeah. You?

CLAIRE

Oh I love movies. My mom and I would go every Wednesday to a matinee after school.

THE GUY

That's really sweet.

CLAIRE

Of course she died when I was in high school, and with that, so did a weekly tradition...

THE GUY

Wait, maybe let's--

They stop.

CLAIRE

Oh my god. Crap. As I was doing it, I knew. I think I get this now.

THE GUY

Just don't think too much and you'll be good.

CLAIRE

Okay, three, two, you start this time...one...

He nods and they stroll again.

THE GUY

...You excited for the movie?

CLAIRE

Yeah...you?

THE GUY

Definitely...I'm glad we got to hang out like this.

CLAIRE

Me too. I guess with Twitch, I stay in a lot.

THE GUY

Do you like what you do?

CLAIRE

It's definitely not something I pictured myself doing, but yeah.

THE GUY

Tell me about it.

CLAIRE

I guess nothing ever turns out exactly as you saw it...like when I do a "Let's Play" video. I always see it being a certain kind of way and then it turns into something else by the end.

THE GUY

Yeah, that makes sense.

CLAIRE

Well, what do you do again?

THE GUY

Oh, I'm a drug dealer.

Claire bursts out with laughter as they stop roaming around her place. She hits him playfully on his shoulder a few times. He smiles.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Alone, Claire stands still with her pocketbook and gazes at her front door in silence. She takes a deep breath.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Claire walks on the outside of a group of three. She hunches over, unknowingly.

She awkwardly stares at the more comfortable and well-put-together, DARIA (34), closest to her. Daria listens to the other two.

KYLE (30) and ETHAN (32) wander beside them.

KYLE

Dude, how do you play all those MOBAs and shit?

ETHAN

I like the feeling of community. I know some of them are awful--

KYLE

All of them--

ETHAN

Sure. Really all gamers, but either way, you just don't get that with single-player games.

KYLE

First of all, I call them interactive experiences. Second, what are you even talking about right now? There's a community.

Daria turns to Claire as they tune the boys out.

DARIA

So, you--

CLAIRE

Yes!

Daria looks at Claire confused.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry...I thought, nevermind--continue.

DARIA

I was just gonna ask how long you've been streaming.

CLAIRE

Oh...I guess about three years.

DARIA

Wow, that's great. Took me like, five or so to really get goin'.

CLAIRE

Honestly, it was really Kyle getting us to collab.

DARIA

Oh yeah, how do you know Kyle again?

CLAIRE

We met right before I dropped out of community college and just kept in touch ever since. A mutual love of games, I guess.

DARIA
Can't imagine Kyle being the bright
spot of community college.

Claire chuckles. A beat.

CLAIRE
Thanks for doing that by the way.

DARIA
Doing what?

CLAIRE
Sorry, uhm, the collab.

DARIA
Oh of course. It was fun. We gotta
build each other up against the
disgusting dudes who watch us every
week.

Kyle jumps in.

KYLE
Do you guys have any idea what
absolute crap Ethan's spouting
right now?

DARIA
(to Claire)
Speaking of--

ETHAN
All I said was, I'd rather play
Minecraft than Assassin's Creed.

KYLE
I'm like two seconds away from
jumping in front of a moving
vehicle...Claire, please tell me
you think he's nuts.

CLAIRE
I think...there are people who love
Minecraft that would love
Assassin's Creed...

KYLE
(to Ethan)
See?

CLAIRE

But there's definitely a lot of people who find Kratos's toxic masculinity alienating and would find more joy in making a pig farm with friends.

KYLE

Oh my god dude, it's just a fun action game where you become an unstoppable force of power!

ETHAN

And so is Minecraft!

DARIA

(to Claire)

Well done.

Daria high-fives Claire.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE CONCESSION STAND - MOMENTS LATER

The four of them wait in a small line of PEOPLE. Our pal, Fran, gets in line behind the group.

ETHAN

Let's get two larges to share.

DARIA

One's probably enough. I won't have that much.

KYLE

No matter what I do, every time I come to the movies and decide against popcorn, I always end up getting some.

DARIA

Thank you for enlightening us.

CLAIRE

Uhm, would anyone share Raisinets with me if I got them?

DARIA

Oh, that I am so down for.

Claire smiles to herself.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

In a row close to the back, Claire sits on the end next to Daria and holds popcorn on her lap. Kyle munches on popcorn in the middle, while Ethan grabs at the box from beside him. They sit in darkness with nothing but the light from the big screen hitting them.

Claire peers over at Daria and returns her focus to the screen.

Daria doesn't notice.

Claire peers over at Daria again. And back to the screen.

Daria remains entranced by this film.

Without looking at Daria, Claire slowly extends her now-open box of Raisinets.

Daria takes the box with her eyes fixed on the screen. She pours out a handful of the chocolate raisins. She hands it back to Claire, who smiles at Daria as she grabs it. Daria smiles back.

They watch the film for a moment.

Kyle rests his hand on Daria's leg.

Claire peers over at Daria one more time. She double-takes. She fixates on Kyle's hand.

Claire returns her focus to the movie but her face says her focus lies elsewhere.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

They walk out the front doors together.

KYLE
So, barcade?

ETHAN
Barcade.

DARIA
I gotta get up early so...just for
a bit.

KYLE
Claire, you down?

CLAIRE

Uh...sure.

KYLE

Hell yeah! Party animal Claire is
out tonight!

Kyle gives Claire a noogie much to her dismay. The gang
ventures off down the street.

INT. BARCADE - LATER

A tight, dark space full of vintage arcade games. Posters of
the classics on the walls: Donkey Kong, Mario, Pac-Man and
Metal Slug. Swarms of GAMERS surround them as they approach
the bar.

KYLE

What do you guys want? I'll get a
round.

ETHAN

Whiskey-coke.

DARIA

Yeah that works.

CLAIRE

...I actually don't drink.

KYLE

Whaaat? I thought you did.

ETHAN

Really?

CLAIRE

Sorry, I know I'm a bit of a
buzzkill.

KYLE

Just one drink.

CLAIRE

I'm okay, really. You guys enjoy.

ETHAN

You sure?

CLAIRE

Yes.

KYLE

Positive?

DARIA
Guys, she's fine.

Kyle and Ethan nod. They dive into the crowded bar.

CLAIRE
(to Daria)
I'm gonna go to the bathroom.

DARIA
(shouts)
I'm deaf in this ear--what?

CLAIRE
(shouts)
Bathroom!

DARIA
You okay?

Claire nods and fights through the gamers to the bathroom.

INT. BARCADE BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

Claire rushes in and sits on the toilet.

She rubs her forehead and sighs. She unexpectedly sneezes and SMACKS her head on the toilet paper holder. She grabs her forehead and winces.

GIRL IN ADJACENT STALL (O.S.)
Bless you!

CLAIRE
...Thanks.

Claire grabs a bunch of toilet paper and blows her nose.

INT. BARCADE - MOMENTS LATER

She wanders up to Daria, Kyle, and Ethan at the pinball machines.

CLAIRE
Hey all, uhm, I think I'm actually gonna head out.

KYLE
Noooooo.

ETHAN
Did I do something?

CLAIRE

No, no.

DARIA

Let me walk you home.

CLAIRE

That's okay.

KYLE

We can go somewhere else?

CLAIRE

I just had a really late night. I need some sleep.

KYLE

Alright, no problem. Lemme know when you're free next week.

ETHAN

Nice meeting you.

CLAIRE

You too.

Ethan extends his hand. Claire shakes it.

She walks out.

DARIA

I'll be back, I'm just gonna walk with her.

Daria runs to the exit.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Claire wanders alone. Daria catches up to her.

CLAIRE

You don't have to--

DARIA

It's no big deal. I wanted some fresh air anyways.

They walk in silence.

DARIA (CONT'D)

I take it crowds of people aren't really your thing.

Claire chuckles.

CLAIRE

I haven't been this social in
awhile.

DARIA

Hey, I get it. Plus I know you had
a date today too. That's a lot for
one day.

Claire turns at Daria in disbelief. They stop walking.

DARIA (CONT'D)

It was today right? I caught the
beginning of your stream last
night.

CLAIRE

Ohhhh...yes, yes...right. Sorry, I
forgot I mentioned it.

They keep walking.

DARIA

So, how was it?

CLAIRE

It was...okay. I just hadn't been
on a date in awhile.

DARIA

Yeah dating's tough when your job
is mostly to be alone.

CLAIRE

I guess you could say the job
really found me rather than the
other way around.

DARIA

People think it's easy but it's
not. They're like, "It's not hard.
You're not going out to perform in
public or anything."

CLAIRE

No one ever considers my own
discomfort I experience within my
own place.

Daria laughs.

DARIA
That's why you have so many fans
online.

They walk in silence.

CLAIRE
I wish I had gotten to know Ethan a
little more.

Daria laughs.

DARIA
That's great.

CLAIRE
It just wasn't a goal going in. I
knew he was coming since Kyle
mentioned his friend was joining
us, but...

DARIA
Sometimes people get left out.

CLAIRE
I just hate that feeling of saying
goodbye to someone while both
people know they have no idea who
either person is except maybe for
their name.

DARIA
Hard to say if he even knew your
name.

CLAIRE
That's true.

DARIA
It's kinda beautiful though.

CLAIRE
Complete disconnection?

DARIA
No, like, it could be the beginning
to something. Like now he's
wondering the same thing as you,
like who is this mysterious person
I know almost-nothing about? It's
exciting.

They continue on in silence.

CLAIRE
Hold on. I have no idea where we're
going right now.

DARIA
I was gonna say...

Claire pulls out her phone and checks.

CLAIRE
Incredibly, quite close.

They turn the corner.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Just down this way.

EXT. CLAIRE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Claire and Daria stroll up to Claire's place.

CLAIRE
Well, thanks for walking me.

DARIA
No problem. Wasn't too far.

CLAIRE
...Would you wanna come up and see
the gaming rig?

DARIA
Uhm...

CLAIRE
Just since you came all this way.

DARIA
Yeah, no, sorry, it's just getting
late and I told Kyle I'd get back
to the bar for a little...

CLAIRE
Say no more. Have a good night.

DARIA
Let's hang out some time just us
though! I can come check out the
rig too.

CLAIRE
Sure.

DARIA
Awesome. I'll see you soon then.

Daria HUGS Claire.

DARIA (CONT'D)
G'night.

CLAIRE
Night.

Claire retreats to her building's entrance. Daria heads off in the other direction.

INT. CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire ambles in and shuts the door behind her. She looks down at the floor, in shock.

Still in shock, she grabs her pipe, takes a hit, and sets it down.

She stands frozen until...

She FIST PUMPS. She JUMPS UP AND DOWN. Ecstatic.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET CORNER - DAY

ROLL CREDITS.

In SLOW-MOTION, The Guy and Bianca hand out hot chocolate together to a HORDE of cold people. A new sign above the hot cocoa stand reads: "BIANCA'S HOT COCOA -- NOW 50% OFF!". The Guy and Bianca laugh as they give out the drinks.

END CREDITS.

END OF SHOW