

INT: Office Room. We see James sitting on a couch, clothes and hair a mess. He looks confused. We hear the words.

Voice:

Congrats James. You've Graduated.

James:

...What?

TITLE SHOT

EXT: Establishing shot of a street, it's a sunny day, but also an ordinary one. Cars and motorists pass by, A man and a woman laugh and smoke cigarettes out front. We see our main character "James" enter his home.

INT: House, homey one bedroom main floor unit. Fast cuts. James throws his jacket, uses the washroom, pisses, flushes. Throws mail on counter, looks through mail, drinking coffee, we see a heart logo on an envelope, he opens, he reads, close up on James mouth, mouthing out words. James sighs. James begins to put his clothes back on. Tries a shirt on, decides on a different one, puts his contacts in, shaves, cologne, brushes teeth. Jacket back on. James leaves.

INT: Bar. The place is dimly lit, with headlights and jazzy music in the background, it's a sweet place for homebodies and warm souls. We see James, a Manhattan in hand, waiting. He is impatient. He's been waiting for a while. He checks his letter, checks his phone. He's defeated. Bartender comes over.

Bartender:

Anything else?

James:

I'm good. Thanks.

He twirls his finger over the glass, another sigh, another drink. He gets ready to go when all of a sudden. Crash, he's on the floor. Vodka cran, spilt on his shirt. There's no reaction from anyone else in the bar. James is getting up flustered. A woman touches his shoulder. She's rattled, way more rattled than he is. He looks at his hand, there's a cut and he's bleeding.

James:

Fuck.

Olivia:

Oh my God. Fuck fuck! I'm so sorry. I--(On the verge of tears) I should go. I'm sorry.

Olivia tries to run out. A hand grabs her shoulder. She turns. There's a cold pause, a moment of vulnerability between the two of them. She can barely look into his eyes. But when he speaks she releases, like his voice lifts a weight off her chest.

James:

Are you okay?

INT: Bar Table. They are talking, she is high spirited, the signs of distress have lifted. His hair and shirt are looser, James has sunken into comfort. They both are enjoying themselves. Excited and nervous at the same time.

Olivia:

So we both get stood up, and we both bump into each other.

James:

(Interrupting his drink)

MMMM. No no no. You bumped into me. Look at my shirt. (Laughs)

Olivia:

It's a shit shirt.

James:

That's very rude Olivia. This is the only shirt I own. And I've only shit on it once.

Olivia:

(She chokes on her drink laughing)

Ew ew ew EWWW.

James:

I can see why I got stood up now.

Olivia:

Noo. (Flirty) don't say that. Would you have stood me up?

James:

Never. (A little too confidently, he takes a pause, he's tipsy) How about you?

Olivia:

(She pauses, looks at him like a cat looks at a corned mouse)

Naww... Couldn't resist fucking up your perfect hair.

(She ruffles his hair aggressively. He protests playfully. They're laughing)

INT: James' room. Quick cut. They're making out. It's drunk and clumsy, but it's fun. They're a messy pair right now, but it works. Clothes get torn off, things get knocked over. She gets thrown into bed.

James:

Hold on (laughing) hold on..I should tell you.

Olivia:

Impeccable timing. (Playfully toying at his buttons. James grabs her hand gently.)

James:

I'm a virgin..

Olivia:

(Playing with the buttons still.)

I'm a good teacher.

They both smile, and get right back to it. We see clothes getting thrown on the floor, blankets twisting, laughter and kissing. Camera keeps them in soft focus as we watch a stuffed animal sitting on the floor, amongst the mess, a bra gets thrown on him. And Cut to...

MORNING: James wakes up slowly, groggy, he turns, and sees Olivia is not in his bed. He looks around slowly, disappointment falls over his face. He puts his head back, hands over eyes, heavy breath.

KITCHEN: Shirtless James comes out, still half asleep. We see an egg fall on the floor.

Olivia:

(O.S)

Shit!

Olivia is in the Kitchen. Classic long shirt over her. She's failing miserably at cooking breakfast. It's a mess, like a child trying to do too many things at once. She barely notices James. We see two plates set out. She's trying to make breakfast for both of them. James is not good at concealing his happiness. She's cleaning the egg off the floor. She sees his stupid smile on his unkempt face. She laughs.

Olivia:

What? (Smiling)

Camera zooms in on James as he shakes his head in smiling. And then on him walking towards her. Scene change, to them eating burnt breakfast. The breakfast is scorched, but James eats

with vigor. We cut to them in a park. They're eating popsicles that look like spongebob. Olivia makes their popsicles kiss. James laughs. Cut to James' house. They're smoking weed and watching a movie. Olivia is on her back trying to see when the food will get here. James is smoking a bowl. He blows the smoke in her face, they start play wrestling. Olivia puts James in a headlock, his laughing until she won't let go, she's laughing too much to notice. He's passing out. Cut to Olivia running out of the room, to get the food. James is breathing heavy. It's comical. Cut to them making out in bed, he begins to go down on her. She's liking it, but it's not exactly right. She pulls his hair.

Olivia:

Up up up up... (Pleasure sounds)

Cut to them getting ready to go out. James is fixing his collar in his sweater. Olivia is rushing back and forth. She then starts taking stuff out of her purse she doesn't need. She looks over to James. Comes over, fixes his collar. She gives him a peck. It's cute. James is about to say something but he gets a call.

James:

Hello? Hi....Yes sir, how are you? I'm doing well! Just about to head out with Liv.
Yes....Yes...Yes I let Santiago know, a week ago, he has my report I-...Yes sir, I just thought I haven't used any of my sick days in quite some----Yes...okay, should I----I've been on this project for 2 months now sir, if you talk to the clients, I'm sure you can----Sir I----I understand.
Thank you.

Olivia is cautiously watching around the corner. She's nervous. She checks herself in the mirror before reaching out to him. She approaches.

Olivia:

Is everything okay?

James is gripping his phone. He's visibly angry. A couple breaths, before acknowledging Olivia.

James:

I'm fine. Are you ready? Your friends are probably on their way.

Olivia:

Almost.. That sounded serious. I'm sorry I feel like--

James:

Where's the chapstick? (Feeling his lip)

Olivia:

I was talking.

James:

What? (He didn't hear)

Olivia:

I said I was talking.

James:

Oh sorry. What were you saying?

Olivia:

Never mind.

James:

Naw, I'm sorry. Tell me.

Olivia:

I feel like it's my fault.

James:

(Pause)

It's not.

Olivia:

But I'm saying I feel like it is..I know logically it's not and I know you're going to say it's not. (Bringing him scissors to open the chapstick case) I just want to be honest with you, because I feel weird, and I don't want bad things to happen, especially on account of me. I really didn't plan for this.

James:

You don't have control over this. It's not like you planned for everything.
(His opening the chapstick plastic casing with scissors and struggling)

Olivia:

I want you to know what I'm feeling--

James:

FUCK

(Throws the chapstick and scissors in frustration)

Olivia:

James, be careful--

James:

Who cares!?! Who fucking cares Liv? Just stop with this apologizing, you don't have to go through all this bullshit, I know its not your fault, I know you can't change anything, I know I'm not going to blame you, so just fucking stop. Talking about something that neither of us can do fuck all about, isn't really gonna make me feel better.

Olivia:

Fine. (Picks up chapstick and stabs the scissors through, pulling out a stick. Hands it over to him)

James:

(Beat)
Thanks.

The two continue to get ready. James looks over, Olivia is frustrated but she's holding it together. She looks at James. His eyes are soft. She softens, a smile from both, but the tension still remains. That could have gone better.

INT: Olivia and James, smoking a joint, sitting on the top of the couch. Looking into the oven waiting for their taquitos to finish. They are playful

Olivia:

So tell me something special.

James:

What do you mean?

Olivia:

Y'know...something special? I don't kno--

James:

I know, but what does that even mean?

Olivia:

It's a stupid question but I just want to know something about you that's different, something that no one else knows. Like your dirty little secret or your dreams.

James:

Dirty little secret. Mmmm

Olivia:

Stop, stop you know what I mean.

James:

Uhh...I don't know, I gotta think... Can I ask you first?

Olivia:

No, I asked you first.

James:

Okay..okay...this is a very good talk to have before taquitos.

Olivia:

You are such a staller!

James:

Alright! Uhhh.. something I never told anyone..I hate coffee. Not like sweet iced coffee, I love that, but actual black coffee is awful.

Olivia:

Even like a double double?

James:

Honestly anything that doesn't have at least 4 sugars in it is just gross to me.

Olivia:

So you're just a baby.

James:

I'm not a baby! I just don't get how the first thing you can do in the morning is wake up and drink doo doo water. Like that's how I want my day to start everyday, for the rest of my life. With doo doo water.

Olivia:

Oh my god I wish I had some doo doo water right now.

(beat)

Ahem!!

James:

Uhh dirty secret! Yeah... I don't know if I have a dirty secret..or maybe if I do, I just haven't recognized that it's a dirty secret yet? (beat) I pick my nose a lot.

Olivia:

That's not a secret.

James:

Okay well that's all you get.

Olivia:
Fine. And dreams?

James:
(Breathes heavily)
Be rich?

Olivia:
Everyone wants to be rich.

James:
That's true.

Olivia:
I'm talking more like something that defines how you see your future.

James:
I...I've always thought..Well..you know how I went to Japan??

Olivia:
Yes you won't stop talking about it.

James:
I know, you know. Ok but- hey, you asked me! I went to Japan, and I didn't think too much of it. I mean I was going for two weeks, and for the first time without, my parents or my school or anyone. It was just me. And nothing blew my mind, or gave me an epiphany about anything, it was just really nice. And not like the best feeling in the world, or a life changing moment, the whole trip was just kind of a brushstroke of nice. I felt like I could really settle in. I wasn't worrying about career or future or what it means to be human or alive, it just felt like for the first time in a long time, I could feel how fresh a breath was. And it was really nice. It made me think that moments are just moments, but serenity is a breath that you keep on taking.
(Beat)

Olivia takes all this in. She's cool and collected but happy. She looks at the taquitos.

Olivia:
Almost done (pointing)

James:
Woah, seems a little unfair. Think it's your turn Liv.

Olivia:

I have too many dirty secrets to count, but I've always..I've always wanted to go to France.

James:

Ah Paris...You know Japanese people are obsessed with Paris?

Olivia:

Oh so we're back on Japan now?

James:

Sorry, sorry. Continue.

Olivia:

Paris just seems beautiful. All of France seems beautiful. I mean you went. You could actually tell me a little bit about it, if you weren't such a bum. (beat) I know it sounds cliché, but I would love to live there too. It's the city of love, and I bet it's not lovely all the time, but you can always pretend until it becomes for you. I mean, you've been there, what did you think of it?

James:

It was cool.

Olivia:

It was cool!? You go to my dream place and all you can say it was cool?

James:

Well I didn't know it was your dream place when I went, I was like 13. And yeah it was really nice, but I was young and distracted easily, I didn't really get a chance to appreciate it. To appreciate all of it. I'm sure if I went back now, knowing the things I know...it would be a lot different.

Cut to them cooking dinner together. It's sweet and romantic. They chop vegetables, fry meat and cook pasta. They eat on the couch, with wine and watch shows. It's nice, but a little dull. She pulls his ear. He kisses her. They both go back to eating. Cut to the bedroom. James and Olivia are at the climax of their late night activity and they both lie flat on the bed. A couple breaths, James gets up. Olivia looks over, she was expecting a little together time, but James is already cleaning up for bed. She calls.

Olivia:

..James?

James:

One sec.

(He comes back with a toothbrush, tap running in the back)

What's up?

Olivia:

Just going to bed now. Goodnight.

James:

(Kisses her forehead)

Love you, goodnight.

(He heads back to the washroom)

Camera on Olivia as she sinks into her pillow. It's day again, James just got home from work. Olivia is preparing to leave.

James:

Hey.

Olivia:

Did you take my headphones this morning?

James:

Yeah, my bad.

Olivia:

K well that's the third time--

James:

I know, I get it.

Olivia:

Just get your own please.

James:

Holy fuck. How was work today? That would be lovely.

Olivia:

It's just annoying to not have headphones, by the way, why are you always taking mine?

James:

I'll get my own. I already said that Liv.

Where are you going?

Olivia:

I told you, I have a work thing.

James:

Okay...I didn't know this. I was gonna order us dinner or something.

Olivia:

I can't tonight. I'm meeting with them soon.

James:

Ok can I come?

Olivia:

No it's a work thing, why would you come?

James:

Because people bring dates to work things. That's how you introduce your partner to your coworkers, and how you let everyone else know that you are taken.

Olivia:

Why do people need to know I'm with you?

James:

Why do you want them not to know?

Olivia:

That's not the point.

James:

What is the point?

Olivia:

It's just a work thing. You can come to the next one.

James:

This is so fucking stupid

Olivia:

Why? Do you want me to just cancel?

James:

Yes actually, I really do. Are you going to do it, or are you just saying stuff you don't mean now?

Olivia says nothing. She's upset and tired. James is pacing. He's thinking about saying something but he's also holding back.

Olivia:

I'm sorry..I won't go.

James:

Whatever, you could have just told me--I can order us some food, what are you feeling like then? I have a promo cod--

Olivia:

I think we should break up.

Silence. And then.

James:

Really?

Olivia:

(Visibly upset)

..Yes.

James:

(Playing with his phone in his hand)

Well fuck.

Cut to Olivia leaving. It's been a couple days. James is giving her a box of stuff. She looks apologetic, wants a hug. He closes the door on her. The teddy bear sits across the couch and he sits in and looks out at the tv. We get to see James on another day. Were back to routine and quick cuts. Door open. Jacket thrown. Coffee made. Coffee drank. Shaving. Reading texts. Shaving again. End of quick cuts. James touches his lips. Chapped. He looks for the chapstick and finds another package. Hard to open. He gets the scissors. They break in two in his hands. He's so confused. He tries opening the package with his hands. It's frustrating and he is getting angry.

James:

FUCK FUCK FUCK.

(Tears are streaming down his face.)

Stop you pathetic idiot...stop...

(He gives up)

I don't want to keep missing you.

INT: Living Room. Another day, sometime in the future. James is lazily looking at a ceiling. Phone around him, snacks nearby. It's messy but not a mess. He's not distraught but distracted. He twirls his hair. He looks at his phone. There's a long text written out to Olivia. We see words

like “I’m sorry” and “I know you’ll be fine”. He hesitates then presses send. His head droops. He yawns, and suddenly. He wakes up. It’s a new day. His phone has a notification. He checks it. Email from “The Amare Foundation”. His name, an address, a time. His face is confused. He looks around him. He has nothing better to do. He leaves.

INT: Door opens. He’s in an office. There’s a couch, a table. Some blankets and pillows on the couch. There’s an iced coffee on the table. There’s a painting of Mnemosyne behind the couch. The room looks like a therapist’s office. Suddenly a familiar voice.

Olivia:
Hi James.

James:
Olivia?...What are you doing here?

Silence.

James:
Look I miss you so much, can we-

Olivia:
I’m sorry about this James.

James:
About wha-

Olivia stabs James in the neck with a syringe. He’s gasping. We see him stare in shock and disbelief. He falls to the ground, his voice making sounds like a man being knocked unconscious in a boxing match. We close up on his fall, his eyes are changing colour. He begins to scream and we abruptly cut.

TITLE CARD: 1 year ago...or something? Same room. James is sitting in a room. But this all from his POV. The camera is fuzzy, but we get a clear idea of what’s happening. He is talking to a woman. We never see her face. But we see her hands.

Woman:
We have multiple packages available for someone in your position. Do you mind if I go over some procedural stuff before we continue with the process, James?

James:
Sure, I don’t mind.

Woman:

Now, it's okay to say no, James. Do you know how memory works in the human brain?

James:
(laughs) no not at all.

Woman:
Well that's quite alright. Let me explain. In the past, scientists used to think that memories were stored in one specific spot, like a neurological file cabinet, but they've since realised that every single memory we have is locked up in connections across the brain. To explain it easily, a memory is formed when proteins stimulate our brains cells to grow and form new connections - literally rewiring our minds' circuitry. Is this getting lost on you at all? If it is you can tell me to slow down or restart.

James:
I think I'm getting it.

Woman:
But memories are not films or pictures. They're more malleable, and whenever we revisit or try to access a long term memory, it's susceptible to being altered and changed by our very brain. Like a dream James, it's hard to remember a dream, even if you just woke up correct?

James:
Correct.
(James is looking around the room, the pov is fuzzy and for some reason there's a picture of a fat cat in the foreground)

Woman:
That process is called reconsolidation.

James:
Recon- what?

Woman:
Reconsolidation. Research has shown that by blocking a chemical called norepinephrine in the brain, we can dilute or change our experience of a memory. To put it simply, through science and innovation, we have the technology to erase and alter memories. (Pause) For this process to be successful James, we are going to need to suppress the memory of this meeting. We record everything in our offices for legal reasons and work hand in hand with the ministry of legal health practices to ensure that no one is being swindled in any way whatsoever. If we continue with this, James, your memory of today's meeting will be suppressed, and we will alter your memory for you to have believed you spent your money on an overdue payment of some sort. We find with proper memory alteration, our clients don't even stress about the lost money, as it seems like something that was planned for them to pay off all along. Many clients actually

find relief after. We then will set you up with one of our "personal instructors" of your and our choosing and you will be ready to get the process started. Would you like to continue, James?

James is looking around the room, the fat cat has turned into a goofy looking dog and there is a large purple plant in the room as well.

James:
I'm ready.

The woman brings out a binder.

Woman:
We've pre-selected some of our instructors, based on your personality, likes and interests.
(She gives him the binder to look at)
You can take your time choosing, all of them are highly train--

James:
Her.
(He's pointing to Olivia)

Woman:
Oh! Very good, May I ask why you chose her?

James:
I don't know...she just kind of...stuck out.

PRESENT DAY: Back in the room. It's the exact same scene as the one in from the beginning of the film: We see James sitting on a couch, clothes and hair a mess. He looks confused. We hear the words.

Voice:
Congrats James. You've Graduated.

James:
...What?

Olivia:
It means you've completed the program. The text you sent me, is an indicative response of someone who has developed maturity within relationships. The time we spent together in the simulation, along with that text, are all prerequisites for Graduation. So congrats.

James rubs his eyes and his face. He feels his neck, there's a bandage there now.

Olivia:

That's the fastest way we found for unearthing the suppressed memories, sorry if it's a bit surprising, we--

James:

It's fine.

Olivia:

(Pause)

I'm sure this must all be confusing and--

James:

No. (Gets up) I get it. (He seems poised) I got what I paid for. (Light smile)

Olivia:

We are thankful for choosing our program. Do you have any other questions?

James:

I think I'm good. Thanks.

Olivia:

Take care.

James is leaving, we see Olivia watching him from her chair. Her fingers ever so slightly scratching her hand. James gets to the door and while the camera is on Olivia O.S we hear James.

James:

Was any of it real?

Olivia:

(With meaning but also comfort)

No.

He nods. He reaches for the doorknob and we see the scar on his hand from the glass cut at from their first date.

Olivia:

I am sorry about that.

(Referencing the scar)

I never meant to leave a scar.

James:

(Reflecting)

I suppose we never do.

Soft acoustic music plays as James walks out. We follow him, out the door. On the street. To his door. To his house. Fade.... TITLE: 5 years later at some bar. EXT: Same bar as before. Establishing is a guy smoking alone outside. James is leaving the place with an iced coffee that says Black on it. He's with a new woman. They seem relatively new, but comfortable. They begin to leave and James sees out of the corner of his eye Olivia. She's wearing the same dress he met her in. He looks over and there is a nervous young man checking his phone. He looks back at her. Olivia sees him. She smiles, he smiles. She leaves, and James leaves. We follow him outside, camera on James face. His smile, fading. In the slightest way, showing that no matter what, "It still hurts", and the camera pans up towards the sky. A sunny day.

FIN.

