

# **THE GENTLEMAN AND THE THIEF**

An original work by Jarryd Bendall



**CAST**

**DAMIAN** Mid twenties, tall and calm, with a distant manner that hides his lack of self-confidence.

**RICHARD** Mid twenties, slim and shortish, his demeanour jumpy and overenthusiastic, such nervousness disguising an incredibly self-assured personality.

**CHARLOTTE** Mid twenties, tall and curvaceous. She is totally aware of her sex appeal, and exploits it, teasingly, in an almost arrogant manner. She is somewhat aloof, and demands attention is always on her.

THE STAGE IS SET AS A LIVING ROOM. THERE IS A COUCH TO ONE SIDE, AND A KITCHEN TABLE AND CHAIRS TO THE OTHER.

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**SCENE 1**

IT IS THE AFTERNOON AND DAMIAN IS SITTING AT THE TABLE, READING A NEWSPAPER.

**ENTER RICHARD.**

RICHARD Well, that's it. I'm done. It's all over.

DAMIAN Uhuh.

RICHARD I'm serious Damian!

DAMIAN You're always serious.

RICHARD But this time I mean it. I really do! It's all over!

DAMIAN Dick, when you had appendicitis last year, you barely complained, for three days. You nearly died, and you thought you just had a stomach ache. If you had come in and said "everything's totally fine and with me today", I would've leapt out of my chair and demanded to know the problem. As history goes, your worrying seems totally unjustified.

RICHARD You really think so?

DAMIAN I do. So?

RICHARD So what?

DAMIAN Well if you forget it that quickly, it can't be too much of a worry.

RICHARD Oh right, of course! Well you'll never guess. Completely out of the blue-

DAMIAN (Immediately) It's a problem with a woman isn't it.

RICHARD ... No it's not.

DAMIAN We've been living together for three years man. If you're not worrying about uni, or money, it's women.

RICHARD Alright, fine. It's Charlotte. I get home from Uni today and there's a voicemail message from her. Do you know what it said?

DAMIAN Call me back, we need to talk?

RICHARD It said call me back, we need to talk!

DAMIAN Well, obviously, because you didn't answer your phone. You should probably call her back, sounds like she needs to talk to you.

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RICHARD No, no. No no no no no! It's way worse than that! Much worse. Don't you know what it means when women say they need to "talk".

DAMIAN I really think it just means they need to talk to you.

RICHARD What would you know about women? You haven't been out with a girl in a year and a half!

DAMIAN I just haven't found the right girl recently, ok? That doesn't mean I'm a complete idiot when it comes to women.

RICHARD You're right, you've probably had plenty of time to study them from a distance. Like David Attenborough. Trust me man, if a girl says "we need to talk", it's only ever about two things. Either she's going to dump you, or she's going to tell you she loves you.

DAMIAN So Charlotte's going to break up with you?

RICHARD That's pessimistic.

DAMIAN You wouldn't be worried if she was going to say "I love you".

RICHARD What? Of course I would! Don't get me wrong, both are horrible outcomes, but I'd much rather be loved than dumped.

DAMIAN Because you don't love her?

RICHARD No, because I do love her!

DAMIAN This sounds confusing...

RICHARD See, I told you you didn't get women. It's just way more serious when you love each other. I don't think I could handle the... responsibility... of her loving me. And me loving her back.

DAMIAN So let her break up with you then. Less pressure!

RICHARD No way man! I want to do completely the opposite. Didn't you just hear me say I love her?

DAMIAN I've heard you say you love a lot of girls...

RICHARD Yeah, but not like this man. This time it feels different. Do you know we've been dating for nearly a year now?

DAMIAN That is the longest you've ever been with one girl.

RICHARD Yeah, I know. I really thought I was onto something good, too.

DAMIAN So stay with her.

RICHARD I guess I could...

DAMIAN You just said you loved her!

RICHARD I do, really, I do. It's just... (Pause) She's just been so clingy recently! She wants me over there all the time. Doesn't she understand that I've got a lot on my plate? Between studying and working, I barely have time for her.

DAMIAN I don't think that's really how you're meant to think about having a girlfriend man. She's not meant to be a chore.

RICHARD I know, I know. And I should make more time for her. But even when I do, she's always complaining. She wants to go to boring foreign movies instead of the ones I think are awesome. I just want to relax and watch some explosions, not have to concentrate and read subtitles, but she never gets that, you know? And she's always turning her nose up at the restaurants I take her to. Did she ever think that maybe I can't afford anything else because I'm trying to save up to take her on a trip or something?

DAMIAN Are you?

RICHARD No, but I could be. She doesn't know that. But she doesn't even consider that could be the reason.

DAMIAN Yes, but, she's right. That's not the reason.

RICHARD You're missing the point! Having a girlfriend is meant to be easy, and fun. And it's definitely meant to make me happy. It shouldn't be annoying to have to go and see her. I shouldn't have to suffer through dates. Otherwise, what's the point of even dating someone?

DAMIAN Well, it's not all about you. Maybe she's calling to break up with you because she's not having fun either.

RICHARD So you do think she's going to break up with me?

DAMIAN I believe I said that earlier, yes.

RICHARD You might be right... I don't think I want that.

DAMIAN Even though you're really unhappy with her now.

RICHARD Yeah, exactly. It sucks, but it would be even worse to not be with her. So much worse. And that's love, isn't it? It doesn't really make sense, you just know how you feel?

DAMIAN I guess. But what would I know, I haven't been with a girl for a year and a half.

RICHARD A fantastic year and a half... and now it's all over, just like that. Why does she want to talk now? We never talk! I mean, we talk, of course. But we've never needed to "talk" talk!

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DAMIAN     Maybe you do.

RICHARD    What do you mean?

DAMIAN     Well, from everything you've said there, I mean I'm sure she's not going to break up with you because you have different tastes in films and restaurants, but there's still a lot of stuff you should probably talk to her about.

RICHARD    You reckon?

DAMIAN     Absolutely. Relationships survive on communication. If you're not going to resolve those issues, you might as well break up now.

RICHARD    I guess I never realised it was that big of a problem.

DAMIAN     Lucky you've got the chance to make it right. Perhaps by calling her back...

RICHARD    Yeah! Yeah. Hey, do you think you could talk to her for me?

DAMIAN     That really defies the purpose-

RICHARD    Come on man. You're way better at talking about that stuff than me.

DAMIAN     I thought I didn't know anything about girls?

RICHARD    We both said a lot of crazy things in the past. Point is, you and her have a history.

DAMIAN     Wha... what?

RICHARD    Yeah, you guys are friends from way back. Went through high school together and everything. Didn't you?

DAMIAN     Oh, that kind of history...

RICHARD    Look, she'll listen to you man. And she trusts you, a lot. You set us up, remember? She went with what you said then, and she will now, if you tell her to stick with me.

DAMIAN     Still, I really think-

RICHARD    Come on, please? Talk her 'round, just a little. Even if you just see how she's feeling, try to put her in a good mood so I can fix it. I really need you to do this for me, as a friend.

DAMIAN     Alright, as a friend, I guess I could suss her out a bit for you. But I'm not making any promises.

RICHARD    Great! Thanks man, I really owe you one. She'll be here in a few minutes, so get cracking on some sort of convincing speech.

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DAMIAN Wait, what? She's coming over tonight? Right now?

RICHARD Yeah. She said if I didn't call her back she'd come over tonight to see me. Apparently our talk can't wait.

DAMIAN ... Oh.

RICHARD "Oh"?

DAMIAN No, um... nothing.

RICHARD No, you said "oh". What do you mean "oh"? Before you said everything was going to be fine, and now there's an "oh"?

DAMIAN Well before the "oh" you didn't say she was coming over straight away to "talk".

RICHARD Why does that make a difference!?

DAMIAN Because no one leaves a voicemail to come over and work it out! The only reason she'd be coming over straight away is because she's been brooding on breaking up with you for a while, and finally worked up the courage to do it! What can I possibly say to change her mind now?

RICHARD Come on man! Don't you get shaky on me now! You said you'd talk to her for me, and I really need you to talk to her.

DAMIAN When I agreed I didn't know-

RICHARD You'll be fine. I have complete faith in you. She's already charmed by you.

CHARLOTTE (Off stage) Hello? Anyone home?

RICHARD Right, I'll duck out the back and come in the front again once you've had enough time. Good luck man.

DAMIAN Wait! Just tell me, why her? When you haven't worried about breaking up with any other girl before, why all this for Charlotte?

RICHARD It's like I said man. Love. It doesn't really make sense. Trust me, when you love someone like I love Charlotte, you'll know how it feels, and then all this will make sense.

**EXIT RICHARD**

DAMIAN Don't worry, I think I know exactly how you feel about Charlotte.

**ENTER CHARLOTTE**

CHARLOTTE What about me?

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DAMIAN      What? Oh, ah, nothing about you.

CHARLOTTE I definitely heard someone talking about me.

DAMIAN      Nope, no one talking about you.

CHARLOTTE Well someone definitely should be talking about me.

DAMIAN      Oh, how could they possibly talk about anyone else? I have to try extra hard to stop talking about you all of the time.

*She hugs him warmly and gives him a long kiss on the cheek, then moves to sit on the couch.*

CHARLOTTE I've missed you! I feel like I haven't seen you in ages! How have you been?

DAMIAN      Quite alright. Nothing's changed with me.

CHARLOTTE No beautiful women suddenly entering your life that I should be jealous of?

DAMIAN      (Laughs) No, you're still the only one for me. I'm sure she'd never be as beautiful as you anyway.

CHARLOTTE Oh you, you always know exactly what I want to hear.

DAMIAN      And how are you?

CHARLOTTE Oh, you know. I'm alright.

DAMIAN      Nothing new?

CHARLOTTE Nope.

DAMIAN      Alright then...

CHARLOTTE Just the two of us tonight?

DAMIAN      Yes, Dick's, ah, gone for a walk. He'll be back soon enough.

CHARLOTTE That's fine, I much prefer talking to you anyway. So...

DAMIAN      So.

CHARLOTTE (Pause) He told you didn't he.

DAMIAN      You know he tells me everything.

CHARLOTTE (Sigh) I suppose he asked you to talk to me, didn't he.

DAMIAN      No.

CHARLOTTE Don't you try and lie to me Damian, I can always tell what you're thinking, even when you think you've got it past me.

DAMIAN Fine. He did ask me, yes.

CHARLOTTE Can't you just say we talked about it? He'd never know, and I really don't want to discuss it all with you. It's going to be difficult enough to talk to him.

DAMIAN He's my best friend. I'm not going to lie to him like that.

CHARLOTTE So you always do what your best friend says?

DAMIAN Of course not. But I always try and do right by him, and this is something I should do for him.

CHARLOTTE Even when it's not right for you? Or if it upsets your other friend? (Seductively) Come now Damian, you wouldn't put poor old me through something like that, would you?

DAMIAN Help me out here Charlotte. I'm caught in a really bad positio between you two. You know, it could actually be good for you to talk about it. Maybe you don't actually want to break up with him.

CHARLOTTE Oh no, I definitely do.

DAMIAN Why is that?

CHARLOTTE (Hesitant, but then-) Oh fine, if you're really not going to give this up.

DAMIAN I thought you two were happy together?

CHARLOTTE We were. I used to be so happy with him. I remember when we first started going out.

DAMIAN So do I.

CHARLOTTE Of course, you introduced us! You and I were walking on the beach, and up saunters this dazzling young man, full of confidence, and he starts talking to me like I was already his.

DAMIAN That's how he does it.

CHARLOTTE Well I certainly don't mind being treated with that kind of attention.

DAMIAN I could tell. You seemed so taken with him. You were laughing at his stupid jokes-

CHARLOTTE (Laughs) Oh, they were such bad jokes. I was such an awful flirt!

DAMIAN Absolutely. But you were sizing him up all the same.

CHARLOTTE Well he was cute! He asked me out the very next day, and when I said yes, it's hard to remember now, but I think it's the happiest I've ever been. We

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really were good together, for a while. He treated me so well. I really don't know where we went wrong. But now... he's so busy with his study, and work on top of that. So I'm always sitting at home, waiting for him to come and see me, or call me. And he never does. And when we are together, he always takes me to a film I don't like, or a restaurant where I can't stomach the food.

DAMIAN      Opposites attract.

CHARLOTTE People say that, but it's not really true. At least I don't think it is. People have to have something in common, or they just couldn't stand each other. And I don't have anything in common with Richard. I don't find anything he likes interesting. Half the time I don't even know what he's talking about. And I can't be bothered faking an interest anymore.

DAMIAN      But you must have had something to start with?

CHARLOTTE Perhaps, once. Whatever it was, I can't really recall now. Maybe he was never right for me, and I just never noticed, because I was so happy. You know, even when Richard was around, I always had much more fun talking to you.

DAMIAN      Me?

CHARLOTTE Absolutely. Remember how we used to go for long walks, and just talk for hours? Or we'd go to those fantastic art shows-

DAMIAN      And not talk at all.

CHARLOTTE (She laughs, a little too happily) Yes of course. And you'd always leave me little notes in the mail, or flowers on the doorstep, or something to make me smile. You were always making me smile. I think, if I remember all the most enjoyable times I've had with Richard, you've always been there as well. I'm sure my dates with him were fine, but the way you made me laugh when we were all having dinner or going to parties together, all three of us-

DAMIAN      Don't say things like that. You ended up with the right guy.

CHARLOTTE You really think so?

DAMIAN      Well... until now, I mean.

CHARLOTTE (Sigh) Yes. I really don't want to break his heart. But it's best, I think.

DAMIAN      I suppose, if that's the way you feel...

CHARLOTTE I do. I'm absolutely not happy. You wouldn't make me stay with him if he was making me unhappy, would you?

DAMIAN      I could never do that to you.

CHARLOTTE Even if it hurts your best friend?

DAMIAN He'll just have to understand, I suppose. Sometimes other things, people, take priority. You're really certain it's over?

CHARLOTTE Yes, I think so. He's a nice guy, but the whole thing has just fizzled out. Like I said, I'm not sure I'm having fun with just him anymore. I'm always happier when I'm out with friends, and I find myself thinking, if only I were single... They share a chemistry for a brief moment, realising the implications, before springing apart when interrupted by -

**ENTER RICHARD**

DAMIAN Dick, hi...

RICHARD Hey.

DAMIAN I'll give you two some space...

**EXIT DAMIAN**

*The couple stare at each other tensely for a short while. Charlotte in particular is uncomfortable, knowing what she has come to do, and looks away first.*

RICHARD I, ah, went for a walk.

CHARLOTTE Yes, so Damian said.

RICHARD How have you... sorry I haven't been around lately.

CHARLOTTE Mmmmm...

RICHARD I'll make it up to you though, I promise. How about on the weekend we-

CHARLOTTE Richard.

RICHARD No, please, just listen. We could go to an art show, maybe. Or why don't you choose a restaurant, any restaurant you want, I'll take you, I will. Or we could just go on a long walk-

CHARLOTTE Richard!

RICHARD What?

CHARLOTTE It's not something you can do in bursts, ok? You're meant to be there for me all the time.

RICHARD Haven't I been there when you needed me?

CHARLOTTE The important times, yes, of course you have. But it's the in between times. The little moments. It's like you only love me when you have to. You put a

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little money in the meter to keep it running. But never too much. The rest of the time you're just bored with me.

RICHARD What? That's ridiculous!

CHARLOTTE It's not. You're just not looking at it properly now, because you're scared.

RICHARD You're being unreasonable!

CHARLOTTE Please don't yell at me like that.

RICHARD I can change. The restaraunts, the movies, I can do it all differently. Just give me a chance, I know I can.

CHARLOTTE No. I can't.

RICHARD You can't or you don't want to? (Pause) Just give me a shot, please Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE *Shakes her head.*

RICHARD What are you trying to say?

CHARLOTTE (Pause, then quietly-) I just don't feel it any more.

RICHARD Feel what? (Pause) Feel what any more Charlotte? Christ, at least have the grace to say it out loud.

CHARLOTTE I don't feel the same way about you anymore! I don't love you any more. I want to break up.

RICHARD So that's it? I don't even get a chance to plead my case?

CHARLOTTE It won't matter. You won't change my mind.

RICHARD This isn't fair! Not fair at all! I should at least get a chance... You can't just spring this on me and not give me a chance to-

CHARLOTTE A chance? You're meant to be able to realise when your own relationship is falling down around you! You're meant to notice when I'm upset because you're not treating me right! I don't have to give you any more chances!

RICHARD But to cut it off, cold turkey, just like that?

CHARLOTTE I know it might not make sense to you now. But it's just how it is. (Pause) I'll come by tomorrow and collect my things. Maybe it would be best if you weren't around. (*She goes to leave.*) I'm... sorry. I am.

RICHARD No. Don't you pull that on me. You're not sorry, not even a bit. Don't pretend this is anything other than you doing what you want, and letting everyone else deal with the consequences. How many boyfriends have you dumped? You listed them all to me once. And none of them have ever broken

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up with you, right? This is what you do. When it gets hard, you run, and you never try and work it out. Not in the slightest. I bet you've never had your heart broken in the same way. Don't you...

## EXIT CHARLOTTE

RICHARD Charlotte! Charlotte, please!

*He sinks onto the couch in anguish and frustration.*

## SCENE 2

EVENING, THE NEXT NIGHT. RICHARD IS SITTING ON THE COUCH, DAMIAN IS IN HIS REGULAR SEAT AT THE TABLE. THEY ARE DROWNING THEIR SORROWS.

RICHARD A week ago, jeez!, only seven days ago, I didn't see this coming. Not at all. We were lying in bed and she said she was ready to spend the rest of her life with me. Just like that, out of the blue, like it had only just occurred to her! Can you imagine? Said she'd seen enough of life, that I was it, all she needed, and she was ready to settle down. And what did I do? I freaked out. Couldn't handle it. Didn't want the responsibility of someone loving me that much. She's thinking of marriage, and I'm too busy thinking of all the things I haven't done in my twenties. I don't want to be tied down, not yet! I want to travel, and play video games, and go between shitty jobs, without having to worry about taking care of anyone but myself. And I want to party. Really party hard, wreck myself, like, every day. And then I thought of all the people I haven't had sex with. I was especially thinking that. I reckon that's what cold feet is, you know, before a wedding. A man realises he's only going to have sex with one person for the rest of his life, and he can't stop thinking of all the hot single girls that must be out there, just waiting for him. Not that that could be true, but still, it's what he thinks. Christ, doesn't matter that my girl was hot enough already! Damn Charlotte was gorgeous. Wasn't she beautiful man?

DAMIAN You're meant to be trying to forget her.

RICHARD And here's me, thinking she'll wait while I cross all this other rubbish off my list. What an idiot. A selfish idiot. I should've given her everything she wanted, without a second thought. I really should've. I should've worked harder at it, should've tried to-

DAMIAN It wouldn't have made a difference.

RICHARD Don't say that.

DAMIAN No. Stop beating yourself up about it. You did what you did, and it couldn't have gone any differently. Even if you had done better, worked harder, it wouldn't have mattered. It would've come apart at some point, eventually.

RICHARD What makes you so sure?

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DAMIAN Because it just wasn't right between you two. That's just the way it goes sometimes.

RICHARD Doesn't feel that way right now. I think I have to try and win her back, Damian, I know it.

DAMIAN I don't really think you should, Dick. She sounded pretty reluctant. I don't think you've got much of a chance.

RICHARD What? What the hell man? What kind of encouragement is that?

DAMIAN It's not encouragement, it's rationalisation.

RICHARD Damn right it's not encouragement-

DAMIAN Did you hear the other bit that I said?

RICHARD You're my best friend, man, and you're meant to encourage me, no matter the odds.

DAMIAN Listen, you asked me to talk to her, and now I'm telling you I don't think you've got much of chance. She's already written you off. It's my job as your friend to try and make you see that.

RICHARD But it's also your job to have my back, no matter what. Even if we both know I'm being an idiot, you can't be rationale or logic or objective, because you're my friend, and you're meant to always support me.

DAMIAN I'm not a mindless sheep following you around and telling you what you want to hear. If you're not going to listen to what I have to say-

RICHARD No, it's just... I really need you on this one. Couldn't you talk to her-

DAMIAN I've already talked to her enough.

RICHARD Come on Damian. I really want her back. I'd trade anything to have her back.

DAMIAN I'm sorry, Dick. But she's gone. She told me there wasn't a chance. I know how hard it must be to hear that-

RICHARD (Overwhelmed) No, you don't really understand a break up like this. I feel like I've lost a whole lifetime. She said she wanted to get married and suddenly I had a whole future, and it was real. There was kids, and a house, and growing old together. I knew exactly what I was going to be doing until I died. But we break up, and it's not just her that's gone; I feel like I've lost 60 years. It's not until you get a girl like Charlotte, you realise it's the real thing. You're not just some dumb kid thinking this is what love feels like. When you find a love like this, and it comes with everything else- a life, or at least the promise of one. When you're in love like that, and suddenly it gets taken away, crushed, destroyed. Then you realise you haven't had a break up like

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this yet, and you might not ever again. It's the one big one, man, the first big heartbreaker that wrecks you and stays with you forever. So it felt right, you see? It doesn't feel like it was meant to come apart.

DAMIAN (Long pause) I don't know if there's anything I can say to help.

RICHARD It's ok. I'm just glad you're here. Thanks.

DAMIAN Any time. You know that.

CHARLOTTE (Off stage) Hello? Anyone home?

RICHARD Oh, shit. I can't see her like this. I can't deal with her at the moment.

DAMIAN It's alright.

**EXIT RICHARD**

**ENTER CHARLOTTE**

*She sees him go.*

CHARLOTTE Is... is he ok?

DAMIAN Well to be honest, he's a bloody wreck. He can barely function. Spent all day lying in bed, staring at the ceiling with dead eyes. Only came out so he could tell sad stories about you.

CHARLOTTE I didn't come here for you to make me feel guilty, Damian.

DAMIAN You asked.

CHARLOTTE You could've lied!

DAMIAN What would be the point? I'm not going to coddle you if you're not feeling guilty about it.

CHARLOTTE Why should I feel guilty? I made the right decision, and I'm much happier for it. But that doesn't mean I'm not upset that I've just broken up with my boyfriend. Even if I know I'm better off, it doesn't stop me feeling lonely, and upset, and a little cruel, at least for a while.

DAMIAN Ok, I'm sorry, I didn't think about that. It's just, I had to tell him you wouldn't take him back, and it broke his heart. So I'm not too happy about hurting him, especially since it's meant to be your dirty work.

CHARLOTTE Thank you so much for still doing it, though.

*She hugs him and kisses him on the cheek, which seems to appease him. She then starts moving around the room, picking up her clothes and things and putting them into a basket.*

CHARLOTTE And he hasn't told you to hate me, or banned you from speaking to me?

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DAMIAN Not yet, but I can make up my own mind about things like that anyway. Besides, you and I are friends, and you're upset too. Can't I just be sympathetic towards both of you, since you're both hurting?

CHARLOTTE It doesn't usually happen like that. Friendships and their loyalties get in the way.

DAMIAN Well they shouldn't. That sounds pretty foolish to me.

CHARLOTTE I bet Richard would disagree with you. I bet he'd want you to back him, no matter what

*Damian avoids her eyes, is noncommittal. Charlotte stares him down.*

CHARLOTTE I'm right aren't I?

DAMIAN He wanted me to help him get back to you, no matter how stupid an idea I knew it was.

CHARLOTTE You didn't help him? That doesn't sound like best friend behaviour.

DAMIAN No, but it's something a friend of yours would say.

CHARLOTTE Well you are playing both sides of the net, aren't you?

DAMIAN I'm not playing either. I'm not playing at all!

CHARLOTTE Shush, it's ok, you don't have to justify it to me. I'm just very glad you picked my side on that one. I'm much happier being single. I'm so looking forward to all the adventures I can have now!

DAMIAN Oh people always say that. I've been single for a long time, trust me, it's never true. There's no adventures to be had. When you're in a relationship, you might be tied down, but at least you're not lonely every night.

CHARLOTTE That's all your own fault. You could've found someone by now, if you were looking hard enough.

DAMIAN Nope. I've been looking, don't worry. She's not out there.

CHARLOTTE Who?

DAMIAN The right girl. The you for me, so to speak. The way you were for Dick.

CHARLOTTE The me for you, huh?

DAMIAN That's right. No use dating anyone if she's not you - I mean, the equivalent of you.

CHARLOTTE I see...

DAMIAN You're not going to leave now, are you?

CHARLOTTE Leave? What makes you think that?

DAMIAN Well, you said you want to have a lot of adventures while you're single, and now that Dick isn't tying you down here.

CHARLOTTE You think he's the only reason I'm still here?

DAMIAN Isn't he?

CHARLOTTE There are a few others... He wasn't even the main reason. Why are you so worried that I'm going to leave?

DAMIAN Because I'd hate to loose you.

CHARLOTTE What's that?

DAMIAN I like having you around, and I like hanging out with you, a lot. So if you left, well I would really not be happy about that.

CHARLOTTE Damian, we were friends long before I started dating Richard, weren't we?

DAMIAN Yes.

CHARLOTTE And we're still friends after I've broken up with Richard, aren't we?

DAMIAN Yes, clearly.

CHARLOTTE Arg, but why? You must hate me just a little, especially after you've seen what it's done to him. I don't care if you're friends with me, somewhere deep down you must think I'm a bit of a bad person.

DAMIAN Nope, I can't do it. Not even a little. People do mean, hurtful things sometimes, but I can see why you did it. And I know you're not that kind of person. So I could never see you as the bad guy.

CHARLOTTE Well, thanks. Even I'm not impressed with myself. It's nice to know I've still got someone who doesn't totally hate my guts for what I've done. I really appreciate that.

DAMIAN It's, ah, no problem.

CHARLOTTE No, I really appreciate it. For a while, with Richard, it really was amazing. I'm being honest when I say that. It did work, and I was happy for a short time there. He'll never believe that, if I try and tell him now. That's what really hurts, that he thinks I'm such a bitch. So it's nice that you can see me as something else.

DAMIAN It's fine, really.

CHARLOTTE Well, looks like we're going to be friends for a long time yet!

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DAMIAN I hope so.

CHARLOTTE Just friends?

DAMIAN Um, really close friends?

*She is suddenly very close, and there is amicable tension between them. She chances a kiss, and although he is surprised, and kisses her back a little, until suddenly breaking away from her.*

DAMIAN No, wait.

CHARLOTTE What is it? Don't you want this?

DAMIAN Yes, I do, so much, it's just-

CHARLOTTE Because I've like you for a long time, did you know?

DAMIAN No. I mean I hoped, but I never guessed-

*She kisses him again.*

CHARLOTTE Then what's the problem?

DAMIAN It's just Richard-

CHARLOTTE Forget about him. I want you now.

DAMIAN But he's my best friend.

CHARLOTTE Which means he'll understand.

DAMIAN I know - well, maybe. But it's not really something I'm meant to do to him. He wanted my help getting you back, because he's still desperately in love with you, and now if he finds out about this, he'll think I was tricking him-

*She swiftly breaks away from him, and starts to leave.*

DAMIAN Wait, where are you going?

CHARLOTTE This was a mistake. It's pretty clear whose side you're really on.

DAMIAN Charlotte, please, consider the position you're putting me in.

CHARLOTTE I'll collect my things tomorrow. I think it might be best if you're not here.

DAMIAN Charlotte! Charlotte, please!

*Damian sinks onto the couch, confused and upset.*

**EXIT CHARLOTTE**

**SCENE 3**

AFTERNOON. DAMIAN IS SITTING AT THE TABLE, READING A NEWSPAPER, AGITATED ABOUT THE EVENTS OF LAST NIGHT.

**ENTER RICHARD**

RICHARD Hey man.

DAMIAN What? Oh, um, hey, how's it... hey.

RICHARD Ok... Are you feeling alright?

DAMIAN Yep. Totally fine. Awesome even.

RICHARD Alright then. How'd last night go?

DAMIAN Last night? Nothing happened last night.

RICHARD Didn't Charlotte come by?

DAMIAN Oh, right. I guess, yes, maybe she did, I don't really know.

*Richard looks around. Her clothes and what not are evidently still draped around the house.*

RICHARD All her stuff's still here.

DAMIAN Is it? Oh, ah, I guess she said she'll pick it up tonight then.

RICHARD So you did see her then.

DAMIAN Um, I guess, but I don't know why she didn't, I mean I didn't talk to her, much, we didn't do anything...

RICHARD Hey, slow down man, it's ok. I don't care, I don't want to know. In fact I don't know why I even asked in the first place, I don't want to talk about her.

DAMIAN Ok.

RICHARD Wow, she really rattled you, didn't she?

DAMIAN No. What do you mean? I'm fine, totally.

RICHARD (Laughs) Relax man! You thought I'd be mad at you for talking to her?

DAMIAN Something like that.

RICHARD Well, stop worrying about it. I know she's your friend, and I'm not going to tell you what to do when it comes to her. I mean, hate her if you want, that would be fine by me. In fact that would be great! But if you want to hang out

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with her, talk to her, go ahead, I'm not going to stop you, if that's what makes you happy. Just keep her far away from me.

DAMIAN Right...

RICHARD (Laughing) For a second there, I thought you were going to say you messed around with her last night.

DAMIAN What?

RICHARD I know, right. It's just the kind of thing she'd try to get back at me. But what am I even thinking, I know my best friend would never screw up our friendship by doing something stupid like that.

DAMIAN (Laughs nervously) Right.

RICHARD Not that you'd ever get the chance.

DAMIAN I'm sorry?

RICHARD Well it's just, someone like her, going for someone like you? Christ, it'd be like you'd won the jackpot!

DAMIAN Excuse me?

RICHARD Come on man. I've seen the girls you pick up, and she's hardly your type.

DAMIAN I could pick up Charlotte, if I wanted to.

RICHARD I'm not saying she's out of your league, man, I'm just saying you were friends before she met me, right?

DAMIAN Yes, so?

RICHARD So you had your shot then. And she wasn't into you.

DAMIAN You don't know that.

RICHARD (Pause) Um, alright man. Why are you getting so defensive about my girl - I mean, my ex - not hitting on you, anyway?

DAMIAN I wasn't. I'm not. It's just... remember when you came to me, after I introduced you two at the beach?

RICHARD Yeah. I wanted you to be cool with me asking her out. And you said it was fine.

DAMIAN I'm just saying, maybe she was into me back then. And I was interested in her. Maybe I gave her to you. Have you ever thought of that?

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RICHARD Yeah, ok. I guess it could've gone that way. I'm sorry, man, I didn't realise you felt that way.

DAMIAN It's fine.

RICHARD How'd she look?

DAMIAN Really good actually.

RICHARD Not upset at all?

DAMIAN You just said that you didn't want to hear about her! Can we just drop it please. I don't want to talk about her either.

RICHARD Ok. Sure man.

**ENTER CHARLOTTE**

*The three share an incredibly awkward moment.*

RICHARD Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE I didn't get all of my things last night.

RICHARD No, that's fine, I've actually been wanting to talk to you-

DAMIAN Dick, I thought we agreed-

RICHARD I know, man, but I can't let her go without trying, no matter what you say. Charlotte, I love you. I really do. And I think you should take me back just so you can see-

CHARLOTTE It's too late, Richard. You can't say things like that now. It's too late.

RICHARD But it took me this break up, this horrible, painful break up, to make me see-

CHARLOTTE I said no, Rich! I'm not going to change my mind just because you've had an epiphany about how much you miss me.

RICHARD This isn't fair! I deserve a chance to prove myself-

CHARLOTTE How many times do I have to say it before you get it? I don't want you back! Ever.

*Richard is upset, baffled, but can't come up with a reasonable argument, so storms out.*

**EXIT RICHARD**

*Charlotte begins determinedly gathering her things.*

DAMIAN Wasn't that a little harsh?

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CHARLOTTE He keeps saying I'm being unfair, like I'm not following some relationship rule book that doesn't even exist! Well how long does his book say this is meant to drag on for, because I'm sick of it. People fall in and out of love just like that all the time. That should be that, chop it off with an axe, done.

DAMIAN Well maybe love isn't meant to be like that. Maybe it's meant to mean something a little more, you know, something deeper.

CHARLOTTE Why are you even still here? I definitely told you I didn't want to see you.

DAMIAN Why are you suddenly so mad at me? I thought last night-

CHARLOTTE Well that was last night, wasn't it. And you made it pretty clear you weren't comfortable with me, so...

DAMIAN What? What makes you think that?

CHARLOTTE Because of all that stuff you said! He's your best friend, you're not going to screw him over, fine, I get it. But if you're going to take his side, at least have the decency to hate me to my face. Don't stick around, pretending to be my friend.

DAMIAN Sides? What are you talking about, there aren't any sides.

CHARLOTTE Of course there are. I told you last night, remember? You can't be friends with both of us. And it seems you've made your choice already.

DAMIAN That's not right at all. I spoke to him this morning, and he said he was fine with us hanging out.

CHARLOTTE Just hanging out?

DAMIAN That's all he said, yes.

CHARLOTTE Well I don't think I want to be just friends with you.

DAMIAN Maybe you should've thought about that before you chose him in the first place!

*She stops.*

DAMIAN (Pause) Did you mean it? About the kiss? Were you really waiting all that time to kiss me?

CHARLOTTE Why would I make up something like that?

DAMIAN Then why'd you choose him? If you were waiting for all this time, and you always enjoyed spending time with me more, then why'd you choose him that day at the beach?

CHARLOTTE Because he was there. Because he was cute, and he was keen, clearly. And you, well, you weren't. You just weren't.

DAMIAN I was building up to ask you, couldn't you see that? I was going to do it that day at the beach, actually.

CHARLOTTE So why didn't you?

DAMIAN Because when we ran into Dick, you completely forgot about me.

CHARLOTTE Well I thought you were never going to make a move. So when he asked me out, it seemed like a good idea at the time. You didn't seem overly fussed, and I was happy. So I just forgot you ever cared. It was easier for me that way.

DAMIAN Well I did care. And it's been torture ever since.

CHARLOTTE So do something about it now. Fix it! I made a mistake, ok. I made a mistake not waiting for you, not choosing you to begin with. But I'm trying to make it right now, and you have to let me. Please.

DAMIAN Ok then. Yes. Let's do it.

CHARLOTTE Really?

DAMIAN Absolutely.

CHARLOTTE Why?

DAMIAN What do you mean why? Because of everything we've just said.

CHARLOTTE But what about Richard?

DAMIAN Screw him. He said this morning that I could never get you, so won't he be surprised when-

CHARLOTTE So this is just to get back at him now is it? I'm just some competition between the two of you?

DAMIAN What? No!

CHARLOTTE I should've guessed. Swapping from one asshole to the other.

DAMIAN No, listen to me! I don't care what he thinks anymore. If he's going to be a dick, well I mean he is Dick, but if he's going to be a jerk about it-

CHARLOTTE What are you trying to say?

DAMIAN He thinks I can't get you, but he made me realise that I can get you. For once I actually can get what I want. And I do want to get you.

CHARLOTTE I want to hear you say it.

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DAMIAN I want you. You're the most beautiful woman I've ever seen. I want you, and I don't care what anyone else wants, because I am going to take you.

CHARLOTTE Good boy. I'm glad you want me. She kisses him, then takes him by the hand and leads him to bed.

**EXIT DAMIAN AND CHARLOTTE**

### **SCENE 4**

MORNING. DAMIAN IS SITTING AT THE TABLE IN HIS PYJAMAS, READING A NEWSPAPER AND DRINKING A MORNING COFFEE.

**ENTER CHARLOTTE.**

*She goes up to damian and drapes her arms around his shoulders.*

CHARLOTTE Well, good morning. The last time I had that much fun in bed was... well actually, I don't think I've ever enjoyed myself that much. For a guy whose nickname is "Dick", he sure does have a tiny one.

*She laughs cruelly, tries to kiss Damian, but he jumps away.*

DAMIAN Ah, no! No no no! I don't want to hear about any of that.

CHARLOTTE Any of what?

DAMIAN Any of you and him in bed.

CHARLOTTE Why not?

DAMIAN Because it's, blerg, no, it's just gross to think about. As far as I'm concerned, you were a virgin until last night. A virgin who was stunningly good for her first time, but a virgin nonetheless.

CHARLOTTE But Damian, I've had a lot of sex-

DAMIAN No.

CHARLOTTE - especially with Richard -

DAMIAN No!

CHARLOTTE - You must have heard us!

DAMIAN Stop, please! Of course I heard. Every night, how could I not hear! I just don't want to imagine him touching you like that. It makes me uncomfortable to think about him having been there.

CHARLOTTE Are you intimidated? (Laughs) How cute. I just told you, you were much better.

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DAMIAN This isn't about performance anxiety. It's just, he's like some terrible ghost that's still lingering around you, except he's also my roommate and might walk in on us at any moment.

CHARLOTTE So you're still afraid of him finding out? (Annoyed) I thought we were done with this last night.

DAMIAN No. I told you I don't care what he thinks, and I don't. But I'm still worried about how he'll react when he finds out. He's already miserable, and this might just finish him.

CHARLOTTE He had to know I'd move on soon enough.

DAMIAN But so quickly? And with his best friend?

CHARLOTTE It's no different to any other two people getting together.

DAMIAN Except that it is, and so it will hurt him all the more.

CHARLOTTE But it shouldn't be! You're not any worse of a person just because you're his best friend. It could've been you, or his brother, or some guy in the bathroom of some club, but it would've happened eventually. We can't help that you and I happened to find each other now. We aren't to blame for whatever's gone on just before our time, and I'm not going to let the past, however recent, affect what we've started now, just because our time happened to be a little inconvenient for some others. I love you now, not Richard. So you don't have to go and ask him for his permission. I'm his ex-girlfriend, ok? I'm not his to give away as he sees fit, or to keep an indefinite claim on. I want you now, and if you want me, then no one else gets a say in it. Especially not Richard. So do you want to go out with me?

DAMIAN If you're ok with calling it that-

CHARLOTTE No! Just am I your girlfriend or not? Don't ask me. I want you to tell me I'm yours. I want to hear that you want to be with me.

DAMIAN Then yes, yes of course! If it's up to me, then of course you're my girlfriend.

CHARLOTTE Good. Because I'm not going to a silent part of your life. If I'm going to be your girlfriend, you have to be proud of me. You can't keep hiding me.

DAMIAN Hiding you? I'm not ashamed of you-

CHARLOTTE Yes, you are! Maybe you don't realise it, but you still think you're doing something wrong. But if we're going out now, properly, or so you say, you can't be embarrassed about that. You can't go around pretending like it's not happening! Even to Richard. Especially not to Richard. You can't be worried about him walking in on us.

DAMIAN Fine.

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CHARLOTTE No! Not fine! Not just ok. I want you to be proud of having me.

DAMIAN You know I am.

CHARLOTTE Well then go and tell Richard. Tell him how much you love me, tell it was more than he ever loved me, and that we're going out now.

DAMIAN I can't, Charlotte. Not yet. It's too soon, it'll wreck him.

CHARLOTTE He'll understand. He'll have to. Once he sees how much it means to you, if he's really your friend, he'll have to be happy for us.

DAMIAN I don't think I can.

CHARLOTTE Then you have some choices to make, because I'm not sticking around if you're going to kick me out every time he's coming home.

*She gets up to leave.*

DAMIAN Alright! I'll do it! I will. You've just got to trust me to handle it.

CHARLOTTE You have to promise you'll do it.

DAMIAN I promise. I'm not going to let you go just after I've got you.

CHARLOTTE Good boy. She kisses him, and starts dancing out happily, but runs into

### **ENTER RICHARD**

CHARLOTTE Oh. I was just leaving.

*Richard immediately looks at his feet and roughly brushes past her, ignoring her. He makes himself busy, leaving Charlotte and Damian to quickly talk privately.*

CHARLOTTE Did you see that? He won't even look me in the eye.

DAMIAN I tried to tell you. He's really that upset.

CHARLOTTE I know, but, I didn't expect him to be so bitter. He gets to be all callous and insensitive, just because he was the one who got dumped? I'm hurting too. How unfair.

DAMIAN Fair? Who are you to complain about fair? He probably thinks he can respond any way he wants, after the way you...

CHARLOTTE And you agree with him do you?

DAMIAN Ah, no... Look you're just both upset, ok? Which is why you have to let me find the right time to tell him. Please?

CHARLOTTE Alright. Make sure you do, though. You promised. I'll see you tomorrow night.

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**EXIT CHARLOTTE**

RICHARD (Immediately) What's she doing here man? I thought she got all of her stuff out ages ago.

DAMIAN She did.

RICHARD Then why's she here? She should know better.

DAMIAN We were just hanging out. You said that was cool.

RICHARD Yeah, I know what I said, alright? But I didn't think you'd actually... Look, it's hard for me. It's still really hard seeing her. You have no idea what it's like to see her in a room and not be able to talk to her, to hold her like you once did, because she hates you now. You can't stop feeling the way you do, but it hurts even more knowing that's how she feels now. And then you get mad at yourself for making her uncomfortable, but then you're mad at her for making you feel like that. Arg! Look, you're meant to be helping me get over her. I'm relying on you. Instead you're bringing her over all the bloody time! I know what I said, but she's not your friend anymore, she's your best friend's ex.

DAMIAN That's how I'm meant to see it now, is it? You know, maybe if you weren't so bitter about it, you could see that she's hurting too.

RICHARD Did anyone actually ask you to be diplomat between the two of us? Because I'm getting pretty sick of you sticking up for her! You're meant to be on my side.

DAMIAN Sides? Always with the sides! Man, why are you still so hung up on her anyway? Why don't you go out and find some girl to get your mind off her? It's not like you couldn't do it.

RICHARD Nah, man, you can't do that just after you've broken up with someone.

DAMIAN Why not?

RICHARD Because it wouldn't be respectful.

DAMIAN Why do you care what the rebound thinks of you-

RICHARD Not some bimbo I'm picking up! You can't going doing that because it wouldn't be respectful to the relationship, or the girl you've just broken up with. You've got to give it time between girls. Let it settle. Otherwise, there'd be too much cross over between relationships.

DAMIAN It's just some random rebound man. What about Jane? Easy pickings, she's always had the hots for you.

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RICHARD That's exactly what I mean! What if it's someone we know, and Charlotte finds out? She'll think there's been something going on between us while I was still dating her. Investing in the future while enjoying the present type thing.

DAMIAN Yeah but that's not true.

RICHARD Doesn't matter if it's true man. It matters what it looks like.

DAMIAN Can't you just let her go? I'm sure she doesn't care.

RICHARD I can't, Damian. Sorry. I just can't.

DAMIAN You still love her?

RICHARD Yep.

DAMIAN What if I told you she's dating someone new?

RICHARD So soon?

DAMIAN I should've guess that's what you'd say.

RICHARD Well it's what I've just been talking about, isn't it. Jeez, she just doesn't want to follow any of the rules.

DAMIAN She doesn't believe in your stupid rules! What rules anyway? I'm a man, and I've never heard of them! Is this just some bullshit you've got from books and films, about tragic lovers and friends til the end? That's not real life man.

RICHARD Maybe I just try to lead my life in a different way.

DAMIAN A better way? You're better than her, than me, because of the way you deal with all this?

RICHARD I didn't say that. This is just one of those things I think I should do. It's important that I keep a bit of honour and dignity, no matter how she acts, ok? And at the very least, she should know it's not polite to come over here anymore. Tell her, please, Damian. Promise me she won't come by here anymore.

DAMIAN Yeah... I'll talk to her later.

RICHARD Seriously?

DAMIAN Yes, I promise Dick.

RICHARD Alright I just can't handle it anymore. And, be honest, she's not dating anyone else is she?

DAMIAN (Pause) No. She not.

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RICHARD     Alright. I trust you Damian. I know you wouldn't lie to me.

**EXIT RICHARD**

**SCENE 5**

**ENTER CHARLOTTE**

RICHARD     I thought I told you I never wanted to see you in this house again!

CHARLOTTE I don't care what you think. I'm here for Damian.

RICHARD     I definitely told him I didn't want to see her!

DAMIAN     I know, I know, both of you calm down.

CHARLOTTE You're really going to let him speak to me that way?

RICHARD     Why would he care? Tell her to get out man!

DAMIAN     Come on man, you're being a little unreasonable.

RICHARD     What? What the hell is this? Last night, I thought we agreed you'd get rid of her?

CHARLOTTE You haven't told him, have you?

RICHARD     Tell me what?

DAMIAN     I didn't get the chance, the right opportunity didn't present itself...

CHARLOTTE You promised, Damian. We're not leaving until you tell him.

RICHARD     Tell me what?

DAMIAN     It's nothing-

CHARLOTTE Nothing? I mean nothing to you now? You looked me in the face and you promised, Damian. And now, if I mean nothing to you-

DAMIAN     No, no! It's not like that at all. I'll tell him.

RICHARD     Yeah, tell me Damian. It's about time you were a man about it.

*Damian is shocked, confused.*

RICHARD     You think I haven't figured it out by now? I saw the way you used to look at her, whenever she came into the room. It's the same way I used to look at her. And I noticed how you turned away everytime we used to kiss. You're quick, you are, but I caught it once or twice.

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DAMIAN I was just embarrassed...

RICHARD No, you were jealous. Always have been.

DAMIAN She was just a good friend back then.

RICHARD Maybe she was, at the very start. But as soon as I had her, you couldn't stand it, could you? You missed your chance, and you spent the whole time trying to win her back. The way you drop everything when she calls? And go running? Why do you think she does that?

CHARLOTTE Stop it, Richard, please!

DAMIAN Maybe she knew that if she called you, you'd be too busy to help out.

RICHARD That doesn't change the fact that those are my jobs, man. They're my jobs because I am her boyfriend.

DAMIAN Was.

RICHARD So they're yours now, are they? Officially?

*Damian nods, but looks at the floor, embarrassed.*

CHARLOTTE Don't be ashamed about it!

DAMIAN Yes, Rich, I'm dating Charlotte now.

RICHARD I trusted you man! When we were having troubles, I told you everything. And now what, you've learnt from my mistakes? She broke up with me and I confided in you. I was broken, and you were meant to be there for me! Instead you don't waste two seconds to stab me in the back?

CHARLOTTE We never cheated on you!

RICHARD I think it's pretty fair to wonder whether there was a little cross over, because it looks like you couldn't even control yourself enough to give me a fucking grace period.

DAMIAN It wasn't like that. We were going to tell you, we really were, but we wanted to wait. We wanted to see how it went, make sure it was real, and not some accidental rebound. No point hurting you if we weren't going to be serious.

RICHARD Oh, well good job on that. Cos I'm not hurt at all! Just admit that if you hadn't got caught, you never would've told me.

DAMIAN What did you want me to do, Dick? Come to you and announce that I'm finally having sex again, oh and by the way, what was she like for you? It's my personal business man, and you've never had any say in it, so why start now? The way I see it, I didn't need to have any sort of discussion with you. I still don't. And even now that I am, there's nothing you can say to change my mind, because we're happy together. Can't you see that? We're really

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happy. Why should you feeling a little betrayed, a little offended, get in the way of that? Can't you just be happy for us too? Can't you let me have this?

RICHARD No. No way. You're not allowed to tell me I'm being unfair, or that I should be mature about this. Don't you make me feel guilty about being broken up with, and then betrayed by my best friend. You're not going to make me sit here and smile, and pretend this is all fine, when you've done a terrible thing, both of you, and you just won't stop hurting me. Every time she walks into a room, it destroys me all over again. Hell, even when I think I see her on the street. It kills me just to imagine that I see her. (Laughs again) You know that's how I feel, and you're still standing here and telling me you're going to bring her into this house, like everything's fine? Like I shouldn't be upset, I should just put it all aside because you're happy?

DAMIAN I don't... I can't...

*Charlotte steps in and slaps Damian, hard.*

CHARLOTTE Don't you dare compromise with him. I thought you wanted me. I thought you didn't care about him.

DAMIAN I... it's more complicated than that...

CHARLOTTE It's not. It's dead simple. You tell him you love me, and he's going to hear us having sex every night, just like you had to when he loved me.

*Damian looks to Richard.*

RICHARD If she's in here, I'm out. Simple as that man.

DAMIAN Can't you both get along? Can't you just both... I don't want to loose either of you.

RICHARD You should've thought of that before you took her.

CHARLOTTE Damian, you want me. You do. You always have. Don't ruin it now.

RICHARD I'm not going to fight her, man. I'm done with fighting. I'm done with all of this. Please just let her be gone, one way or another.

DAMIAN Then, I'm sorry, Dick, but... I do love her. I do. And I have to go with what makes me happy.

RICHARD Sometimes there are things more important than just you being happy. Important things.

DAMIAN They're just ideas, Dick. Ideas on how to live the perfect life, which never help when you hit reality. And they're only your ideas. I don't follow them.

*Damian turns to Charlotte.*

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CHARLOTTE Prove it.

DAMIAN What?

CHARLOTTE If you really love me, more than you love him as a friend, then you shouldn't have any trouble proving it. Kiss me.

DAMIAN Kiss you?

CHARLOTTE In front of him. If you really don't care what he thinks, then you should be able to kiss me like you love me, without being ashamed that you're showing him.

*Damian turns to richard.*

RICHARD You've already betrayed me in spirit, if not in body. Don't let me stop you now.

*Damian kisses charlotte slowly, very tentatively, and too briefly. She stands with her eyes closed for a long while, then slowly begins to shake her head.*

DAMIAN Don't say it. Don't. You won't really mean it.

CHARLOTTE Nope. I don't feel it. Maybe you never loved me.

DAMIAN Charlotte, that's not true. It's not. Just give me another chance.

CHARLOTTE If you can't do it in front of him, without feeling embarrassed and guilty, then that's how it's going to be forever. It's going to haunt our relationship until the end. And I just can't do that. I'm sorry. I just don't feel it with you anymore.

DAMIAN Just like that? You love me, then you suddenly don't, within the space of a kiss.

CHARLOTTE I told you it could happen like that. Goodbye, Damian.

**EXIT CHARLOTTE**

RICHARD You idiot. You'd already lost me, why did you have to mess it up with her as well? (Laughs bitterly) She doesn't feel it anymore, huh? I've heard that one before.

DAMIAN You could've warned me, that she'd be like this.

RICHARD I'm not going to give you advice on how to steal my girlfriend!

DAMIAN Steal her?

RICHARD I loved her first, man.

DAMIAN Listen to yourself! What are you, a teenager?

RICHARD I told you, there are just some things you're not meant to do. This is one of them. You're not meant to date your best friend's ex.

DAMIAN Give it a rest, won't you? I'm sick of your morals. I'd rather be happy with her than lonely and loyal to you.

RICHARD Well, now you're neither.

DAMIAN We're in the same boat now I guess. I'm sorry man, I really am.

RICHARD It doesn't matter.

DAMIAN What?

RICHARD I'm sure you are sorry, but I don't care. Look, maybe you're right. Maybe one day, after it didn't hurt so much anymore, maybe I would've been fine with you dating her.

DAMIAN How can you say that?

RICHARD Because I really wanted her back. More than anything in the world. Even after all this, I still kind of want her. Isn't that messed up?

DAMIAN How long was that going to be though, Dick? How long before you were over her, and ok with me? Weeks, months? A year?

RICHARD I can't tell you that.

DAMIAN Well, we weren't going to wait.

RICHARD I know. But that's not really the problem. Maybe, after all that, I would've been ok with it, with you. But not now, no way. Because it's not what you did, Damian, it's how you did it. You betrayed me, but what's worse, you were a coward about it. That's why I can't be friends with you ever again. Because I don't trust you, with anything. I asked you last night, when I was suspicious enough, I asked you right to your face whether she was dating someone new and you lied to me. Lied straight to me. I can't have you around anymore, not the way you are.

DAMIAN This is it?

RICHARD It is.

DAMIAN I'll... I guess I'll see you... at parties or something.

RICHARD I don't think so. If you do, I'll ignore you.

*Damian stands, offers Richard his hand. He doesn't take it.*

## The Gentleman and The Thief

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DAMIAN You know she wasn't worth it, right? Maybe one day you'll realise that, once all this has cooled off. You'll realise you screwed up, and maybe I did too, but she did most of all, but getting rid of her was the best damn thing to happen to you. And you'll regret that you let something as petty as loving a woman get in the way of two best friends. After you realise it's all her fault, you'll be angry that you let her steal a friend away from you forever.

RICHARD I won't. Because she didn't make you act the way you did. I'll hate her for a long time, that's true, but I'll eventually forget her. You, though, I'll never forget what you've done. We're not friends because of what you did. She didn't orchestrate this. Whether you started it or not, you'll walk out that door, and I'll never talk to you again.

**EXIT RICHARD**

*Damian seems about to argue, thinks about leaving, then finally realises it's all collapsed around him, and sinks to the table with his head in his hands.*