

SAM I AM

(f.k.a. "Memory Trace")

"pilot"

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN. Gradually getting lighter during:

WOMAN'S VOICE

Sadness and hope. You must hear it
all day long -- one more story of a
daughter, struck down at the peak of
her life. How can you still be moved?

The room comes into focus as it brightens. From SOMEONE'S
P.O.V., we see a ceiling, and a fluorescent light fixture.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Just crossing the street, and BAM!
Hit-and-run driver. Never looked
back. That's the sadness part. The
hope? Well, that's where you come
in -- the good people at Extreme
Makeover: Home Edition. ...Howard,
turn that TV down, or I swear to God
you'll never leave this hospital.

1 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - THROUGH A VIDEO CAMERA

1

We see HOWARD NEWLY, 60s, watching a hospital-room TV. The
unseen WOMAN TALKING is videotaping.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Her grieving father.

HOWARD

Guy on here says he has a chicken,
can lay six eggs in a day.

WOMAN'S VOICE

No one cares, Howard.

As we PAN THE HOSPITAL ROOM...

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

This is our Samantha's world. Day
and night... hooked to machines...
in a coma from which her doctors
doubt she will ever emerge.

The SHOT finds SAMANTHA NEWLY, 30s, in bed -- eyes open.

WIDER ANGLE - REGINA NEWLY, 60s. She lowers the camera.

REGINA

Well, that won't work. Howard, she
woke up! Go get the doctor.

(MORE)

REGINA (CONT'D)
 (to Samantha)
 And sweetheart, close your eyes again
 so I can do that last shot over.

Samantha, who's been looking blankly at these people -- maybe it's a dream? -- works her mouth, puckering her lips...

HOWARD
 Wait, she's trying to say something!

REGINA
 She's making a kiss. She wants to
 kiss us. Do you want a kiss, dear?
 Yes, we're so happy, we love you too!

Samantha's lips work, Regina leans close and is just about to kiss her daughter, when Samantha finally whispers:

SAMANTHA
 Who are you?

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK:

REGINA (PRE-LAP)
 Retro-what?

2 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

2

Samantha sees good-looking DR. KERRY HALL, Regina, Howard, and a nice, mousy young woman, DENA, all leaning over her.

DR. HALL
 Retrograde amnesia. The accident
 left her semantic memory intact --
 that's skills, knowledge of things
 in general -- but knocked out her
 autobiographical memory -- all
 personal facts and experiences.

REGINA
 It's your MOTHER, dear, REMEMBER?

HOWARD
 She doesn't know you, Regina.

REGINA
 (dismissive wave)
 I'm used to this, she's been pretending
 to not know me since she was nine.

HOWARD
 Samantha? I'm your father, and this
 is your friend Diane.

DENA

Dena.

HOWARD

She came every day you were out.

SAMANTHA

How long?

HOWARD

Nineteen years.

Samantha's eyes shoot wide.

REGINA

Eight days. He's kidding. Howard, honestly.

DR. HALL

Yes, please. Until she gets her memories back -- if they even do come back -- Samantha has no frame of reference, she can't recall anything about her life up to this point. Not her friends, her address, not her high school prom, not her eighth birthday party.

REGINA

(getting teary)

That's so awful. I worked my fingers to the bone on that party!

DR. HALL

Ms. Newly, your daughter has had a severe trauma. Imagine waking up erased. Starting over -- every experience, every memory, every single thing that's ever added up to make you you, is just gone.

DENA

(blurting)

Oh my god that sounds great!

(beat; off their looks)

I mean bad.

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK:

SAMANTHA (PRE-LAP)

I wanna mirror.

3 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ANOTHER DAY

3

Regina, Howard and Samantha, who's stronger and eats pudding.

REGINA

What, dear? Juan Amir? Who's Juan Amir? Miro? Joan Miro? Chairman Mao? Myrrh? More? Morrie someone? Amore?

SAMANTHA

A mirror. I don't even know what I look like.

REGINA

(whispers to Howard)

Do they let crazy people have mirrors?

Howard hands Samantha a beauty-shop hand-mirror. Samantha peers at herself, looking for clues from the stranger there.

SAMANTHA

Nothing. Might as well be a picture of Jesus on a paper fan.

REGINA

Jesus she remembers, but her own mother, nothing. Did Jesus go through twenty hours of labor? Did Jesus ever change her diaper?

HOWARD

She wouldn't remember you changing her diaper anyway, Regina.

REGINA

It was today. The nurse was late.

Samantha decides not to react to that. She closes her eyes.

HOWARD

We should let her rest.

REGINA

She just had an eight-day nap.

SAMANTHA

(eyes closed)

Oh -- and that thing they say about comas is true. Sometimes when you're out, you can hear what people say.

REGINA

You can?

She shoots Howard an apprehensive look.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, and tell the family of whoever's in that next bed. People don't seem to like that poor girl at all.

The CAMERA SLIDES OVER to REVEAL that beyond the curtain there is no bed. No one in this room but Samantha.

FADE TO BLACK:

IN BLACK:

REGINA (PRE-LAP)

Go on, kiss him.

4 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYS LATER

4

Samantha on the edge of the bed, dressed, feeling much better (physically). She looks anxiously from Regina and Howard to TODD -- boyfriend, a nice-looking, regular guy.

SAMANTHA

But I don't know him.

REGINA

You have to go home with someone, dear, it's time. The doctor said recovering your memories begins by surrounding yourself with familiar things.

TODD

And your stuff, your whole life, is at our place.

SAMANTHA

So I go with this man, alone, who I don't know at all... or with the people who raised me my whole life.

(beat)

Wow. That should be an easier choice.

REGINA

So kiss him. Maybe it'll trigger something. Like Sleeping Beauty.

HOWARD

(to Regina)

Remember that movie we saw on Starz, "Brimstone and Treacle?" This couple had a daughter, mute, pretty much a vegetable, and then this man shows up... the rock star, what's his name?

REGINA

Elton John?

HOWARD

No, with that group.

REGINA

The Beatles?

HOWARD
The Firemen, the Policemen...

TODD
The Police?

HOWARD
That's right.

TODD
Sting?

HOWARD
Yes! And he rapes her.

Silence. They all stare at him in disbelief.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Snapped her right out of it.

REGINA
Just kiss him, sweetie. Love knows.

Samantha looks at Todd... puckers up reluctantly... and Todd moves in gently for a kiss. But the closer he inches, the more she edges her lips away... then twists them away... turns her head... then she's holding him back with one arm as he strains closer... Finally:

SAMANTHA
Okay, it's too weird! I'm sorry.

5 INT. SAMANTHA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

5

The room is homey, long-lived-in. A banner is up: "Welcome Home Samantha." Samantha's just arrived, and takes in the unusual number of chicken-themed items: art, lamps, a jar...

REGINA
So this is where you grew up. Getting anything?

SAMANTHA
Just that someone likes chickens.

HOWARD
Chickens built this house.

SAMANTHA
Wow. That's a memory I wish I had.

REGINA
Your dad's a chicken farmer.

HOWARD
Was. Sold out to Zacky. Biggest mistake I ever made.

REGINA

Not by far, dear.

As Howard takes Samantha's suitcase upstairs, Samantha spots an old upright piano.

SAMANTHA

Oh, hey, let's see if I can play.

She sits, starts to PLAY -- pounding out a two-handed CACOPHONY before Regina stops her with a hand on Sam's.

REGINA

Some things you can just ask.

From the the kitchen comes Samantha's friend ANGELA, a sexy attorney and party girl, brash but fun. She drinks champagne.

ANGELA

(hugs Samantha)

There she is...! You poor dear, your mother told me all about it.

SAMANTHA

(uncomfortable in hug)

So then you realize I have no idea who you are.

ANGELA

I'm Angela, your best friend in the world. I'm sorry I didn't visit, I just hate hospitals. All those nurses in their cheap, squeaky shoes. So what is it you have? Retro-what?

SAMANTHA

Retrograde amnesia. You can't remember things you've done, who you've met, where you live...

ANGELA

That's nothing, I have that every Monday morning.

(hands her a cell phone)

Here's a new phone, I heard you've been without one since the accident. Forget that guy who sawed his own arm off, you are a survivor.

(to Regina, re champagne)

Mrs. Newly, any chance I can have a teensy little top-off...?

Regina exits to the kitchen. The second she's out:

ANGELA (CONT'D)

My car's pointed down the driveway, let's go.

SAMANTHA

Wait, why? This place is kind of cute, and the people seem harmless.

ANGELA

So is the Small World ride. Fun for a minute, but if you had to live there you'd blow your head off.

SAMANTHA

What's the problem? Do we fight?

ANGELA

Of course not.

SAMANTHA

Good.

ANGELA

How can you, you haven't spoken to them for two years.

SAMANTHA

What?

Regina enters, hands Angela a full champagne flute.

REGINA

Here you are, Angela. Be sure to switch drinking arms, you don't want to bulk up on one side.

SAMANTHA

We didn't speak for two years?

REGINA

Yes, we did. Who told you that? Her? Don't listen to her, she's drunk.

SAMANTHA

I don't think so.

ANGELA

Little bit, yeah.

SAMANTHA

What happened? Was there a fight?

REGINA

I don't recall.

SAMANTHA

How can you not recall?

REGINA

How can you not?

SAMANTHA

I have amnesia. You're just lying.

REGINA

Well, why dwell on things? You don't remember anyway, let's skip all that and say it never happened.

SAMANTHA

No, this is my life, I need answers. Especially about my family -- this is where I came from. You made me who I am.

REGINA

(bursts into tears)

That's a horrible thing to say!

The DOORBELL RINGS, Howard comes downstairs to answer it.

REGINA (CONT'D)

It's the meanest thing you've ever said, and that is quite a feat.

HOWARD

Apologize to your mother, young lady.

ANGELA

(looking out window)

Oh look, I left my car running.

Howard OPENS THE DOOR to a good-looking, rugged sort of man in a rumpled suit: POLK.

HOWARD

Hey, look who's here! Come say hi, Sammy -- it's your brother Ned, come all this way just to see you.

SAMANTHA

Oh. Well... hi, Ned.

She goes for it, giving the guy a huge hug.

HOWARD

Kidding. He's a cop.

Exasperated, Samantha lets go quickly.

DETECTIVE POLK

Detective Polk, ma'am. I'm the one investigating your attempted murder?

Sam stares at him a beat, then smiles politely.

SAMANTHA

Would you excuse me?

(turns on parents)

This is what I'm talking about! You can't just reassemble me from pieces you choose, I need to know it all. Like the fact that I was almost murdered, I have to think that's a handy piece to have!

REGINA

But you weren't murdered.

(shrugs)

Why dwell?

Samantha sags, knowing this won't work. Angela mouths, "Run."

6 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - EVENING

6

Samantha, suitcase beside her, pounds on an apartment door. The door opens, and a guy, DAVE, who looks sort of like Todd if you've only seen Todd once, answers. In a rush --

SAMANTHA

Okay I'll live with you but in a separate room or on the couch I am not having sex with you yet so get that right out of your head, mister.

DAVE'S WIFE (O.S.)

Dave? Who is that?

DAVE

No idea.

Down the hall, a door opens, and Todd leans out.

TODD

Sam? It's this one.

Embarrassed, Samantha grabs her suitcase. As she scurries to the right apartment and Dave closes his door, we hear...

DAVE'S WIFE (O.S.)

You have no idea, but she'll have sex with you?

DAVE (O.S.)

Not have sex, Margaret. Guess lots of women don't want to have sex with me, you're not the only one!

As the couple fight...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

7 INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING 7

Samantha examines everything, eagerly writing in a notebook. Todd is in the kitchen. There are many photos in frames.

SAMANTHA

Pictures of Samantha... wow, even more pictures of Samantha.

(writing)

"Subject enjoys... charmingly high... self-esteem."

TODD (O.S.)

Subject?

SAMANTHA

Yeah. If I want to find me again, I need to treat me like a missing person -- hopefully one who's just wandered off without saying where she's going, and not one who's already dead in the back of some psycho's van.

Todd enters with a cappuccino, sees her peering at a PHOTO -- IN IT she's smiling sardonically, giving him the finger.

TODD

I took that one when we first met.

(points at another photo)

Took that one is the first morning you stayed over.

SAMANTHA

You make me look so good. Wait, are you a professional? Oh thank god -- I'm not hopelessly vain, I'm just supportive of your work.

TODD

(teasing)

Why does it have to be either-or?

(hands her cappuccino)

Here.

SAMANTHA

Thank you. What's this for?

TODD

You like a cappuccino at night, decaf, one-percent milk only. Write that down, detective.

(MORE)

TODD (CONT'D)

I used two-percent once, and you accused me of fattening you up like a Christmas ham so no other man would ever want you, and you suggested I seek help for my insecurity.

SAMANTHA

(embarrassed; lightly)

That Samantha. What a nut!

She exits to the bathroom.

8 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

8

Samantha starts going through the medicine cabinet, noting medicines, opening makeup and jars, smelling things. Todd appears in the doorway, watching.

TODD

So what's it like? Amnesia?

Pause. Samantha thinks.

SAMANTHA

Like traveling all alone in a foreign country. But one where they speak English.

TODD

Like Canada.

SAMANTHA

Yes. I'd say it's very much like being in Canada.

She exits to the bedroom.

9 INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

9

She scans the shelves of books. Todd enters.

SAMANTHA

Books strictly organized... fiction... something called "The DaVinci Code" -- guess I'm quite the intellectual... psychology... more psychology... wow, I am really into psychology.

TODD

I hope so. You're a psychologist.

SAMANTHA

No way -- Doctor Me! That's handy, I should sit down with myself sometime.

TODD

There are patient files on the desk.
 (as she looks at them)
 It's how you met Angela. She's a
 lawyer who gets rich people off so
 they can commit more crimes.

SAMANTHA

(hopeful)
 And... I'm the do-gooder partner who
 makes her see the error of her ways?

TODD

No, you consult for a cut of the
 take.

SAMANTHA

I see.
 (off notebook)
 So let's review: subject is a self-
 involved, irrational, morally suspect
 control freak who by the way someone
 hates enough to try to kill.
 (beat)
 Tell me again why we're looking for
 this woman?

TODD

Clean up the streets?

SAMANTHA

Tell me about it.

Todd takes her notebook.

TODD

Okay, you either knock off the CSI
 stuff or get a bigger notebook.
 (flips through book)
 There are key facts missing from
 here -- like her blinding attraction
 to me, I think that's quite pertinent
 information. And her fierce, dogged
 determination to finish the Sudoku
 every day, even if it's "diabolical."
 And how she'll break into a dance
 just walking down the sidewalk. And
 only eats cereal standing up... always
 sneezes three times in a row... and
 how her face softens like a cloud
 when she finally unclenches her jaw.

They have a moment of connection. Todd clearly loves her.
 Samantha smiles, but looks away shyly. Then THE PHONE RINGS.
 Samantha gets excited.

SAMANTHA

Oooh! Oooh! Maybe it's someone.

TODD

Why, I bet it is.

Samantha grabs the phone.

SAMANTHA

Hello?

INTERCUT:

10 INT. BISTRO 99 RESTAURANT/BAR - CONTINUOUS

10

A party is going on; Angela talks to Samantha on her cell, while drinking a dirty martini and eating the olives.

ANGELA

Where are you? René's birthday party is tonight, you said you'd come.

SAMANTHA

Um, Angela? You know how we talked about my complete memory loss?

ANGELA

Oh, right. Well, everyone's here, just get down to Bistro 99.

SAMANTHA

Okay. But do me a favor, don't tell anyone what happened.

ANGELA

What happened with what?

SAMANTHA

Never mind. See you.

(hangs up; to Todd)

It's Renee's birthday, she's having a party, we have to go see Renee!

TODD

Okay.

SAMANTHA

Who's Renee?

TODD

A colleague, I don't know her. You met her at a conference in Baltimore, you run into her at work things.

SAMANTHA

Well apparently "everyone" is there, it's a chance to observe Samantha in her natural environment. You can help me navigate, and I'll get Dena to come, too. Let's get ready.

She goes into the closet to find clothes.

TODD

Why can't people know what happened?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

So they treat me like they normally would. Recovering my memories depends on exposure to familiar experiences.

TODD

Then including me isn't one of them. You think I don't like your friends.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Do you?

TODD

No, I don't.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Well, you have to go. It's a birthday, it'll be fun.

TODD

Even though you regard birthdays as childish ploys for harvesting attention and gifts.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

(laughs)

God, when did I say that?

TODD

When you forgot mine.

Beat. Samantha re-enters.

SAMANTHA

Seriously, what's wrong with you? All I can say is, this Samantha better be damn good in bed.

(before he can speak)

Okay. Awkward. Sorry.

She exits to the closet. Beat, then casually...

SAMANTHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But for the record -- you know, for my notes -- was it good? Bad?

TODD

I'm a guy, it can never be bad.
Except maybe in prison, I guess.

Samantha emerges with several dresses.

SAMANTHA

So better than prison, then. You
make a girl feel all goose-bumply.
(then)
Oh my god!

She holds up a tiny black dress.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I have a daughter?

TODD

Uh, no.

SAMANTHA

(looks at dress)
Whoa.

11 EXT. BISTRO 99 - NIGHT

11

Upscale, downtown. Samantha and Todd are about to go in.

SAMANTHA

Wait, I left my notebook in the car.
I need to get it.

TODD

I'll get it.
(off her anxiety)
Just wait inside. If anyone talks
to you, just nod and laugh like you
have any idea who they are.

Todd exits. Samantha is about to go in... when ACROSS THE STREET she spots a MAN IN A CREAM-COLORED OVERCOAT. He seems to be watching her. A flicker of something -- recognition? -- crosses her face... then is gone. She gives a noncommittal smile, then enters the restaurant.

12 INT. BISTRO 99 - CONTINUOUS

12

Good-looking clientele, HIP MUSIC. Samantha takes a breath and starts across the room, passing a WOMAN.

SAMANTHA

(smiling)
Hi!

WOMAN

(scowling)
Hi?

SAMANTHA
 (quickly adjusting)
 Sorry?

WOMAN
Sorry? Little too late for that.

The woman storms away.

SAMANTHA
 Note to self, muffin basket there...

Suddenly a hot, sexy GUY pulls her into the coat room.

13 INT. COAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS 13

The sexy guy is very happy to see Samantha.

SEXY GUY
 You look too good tonight, I can't stand it. Tell me you dressed like that for me.

Samantha, startled, baffled, just nods and laughs like Todd said to.

SEXY GUY (CONT'D)
 Good. I was afraid you wouldn't speak to me. I know I haven't called you in a couple of weeks but I'll make it up to you, I promise. I'm sorry, and I wouldn't blame you if you acted like you didn't even know me.

And he gives her a huge romantic kiss. When they break, all she manages, stupidly now, is a nod and a laugh. Then she bolts from the coat room.

14 INT. BISTRO 99 - CONTINUOUS 14

Samantha, shaken, hurries across the room, bumps into Angela.

ANGELA
 You made it! Here, have a drink.

She gives Samantha her martini, Samantha downs it all, fast.

SAMANTHA
 Okay, just now? Some guy kissed me!

ANGELA
 How was it?

SAMANTHA
 Well... great, actually, but --

Dena comes up to them.

DENA

Hi, I got here before you , I'm always early. I can't help it, I'm always convinced the address is fake, or everyone's watching me from a window somewhere until I just leave.

ANGELA

(to Samantha)

Patient of yours? Because it's not one of your success stories.

SAMANTHA

This is my friend Dena. Listen, there was this guy --

ANGELA

(suspicious of Dena)

Friend? I don't think so. From where?

DENA

School?

(quickly, to Samantha)

So where's Todd tonight?

SAMANTHA

Getting something out of the car.

ANGELA

What? You brought Todd, are you nuts?

SAMANTHA

You don't like Todd? Because he said he doesn't like my friends, either.

ANGELA

Know who really won't like him? René.

SAMANTHA

Why won't Renee like him, Renee is --

ANGELA

Your lover.

Angela points to the Sexy Guy from the closet, who winks at Samantha from across the room. Suddenly Samantha gets it.

SAMANTHA

Oh, René...

On Samantha's horror...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

15 INT. BISTRO 99 - NIGHT 15

Samantha Dena and Angela at a table, Samantha panicked, upset.

DENA
 (slight awe)
 Wow. Two guys at one time.

SAMANTHA
 At least two! The night is young.

ANGELA
 See? How can she be your friend and
 not even know about René?

Samantha sees Todd arrive, wave, and go to the coat room.

SAMANTHA
 Oh, god, there he is.

ANGELA
 Why did you bring him here?

SAMANTHA
 Oh, I thought my boyfriends might
 like a playdate. What do you mean,
 why? Why didn't you tell me? I
 have to get him out of here.

She crosses away. Angela stares hard at Dena, suspicious.

DENA
 What?

OUTSIDE THE COAT ROOM, the ANGRY WOMAN from before is about to go in, when Samantha pushes past her and goes in first.

SAMANTHA
 Sorry. Again.

16 INT. COAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS 16

Todd hangs his coat up, starts to exit, when Samantha enters.

SAMANTHA
 Todd, hi! Ready to go?

TODD
 What? We just got here.

SAMANTHA
 And you were sweet to bring me, but
 you don't like my friends...

TODD

So? It's not about me.

SAMANTHA

I know, but... I need things to be normal to see what is normal and you being here is not normal, so Angela can help me, you can go. It's okay.

TODD

(wants to go)

I don't mind staying...

SAMANTHA

I might not offer twice.

TODD

(grabs coat)

See you at home.

Todd exits as fast as he can. The ANGRY WOMAN tries to enter --

WOMAN

I need my coat --

But Angela pushes past her, crowding the woman out again and shoving Dena into the coat room ahead of her.

ANGELA

Tell her. Go ahead.

(to Samantha)

I told you she's not your friend.

DENA

I was... up until seventh grade, anyway. And then you got in with the cool crowd and kind of never spoke to me again, but when I heard what happened to you I went to the hospital and told your mom we'd stayed friends and she was just so happy you had one that I didn't want to break her heart.

ANGELA

(to Samantha)

Want me to call the police?

SAMANTHA

Dena, how long were you going to let me think we were best friends?

DENA

I was hoping by the time you found out, we would be.

ANGELA

How about we call that cop who came to your mom's house? He was cute.

SAMANTHA

Wait, so besides Todd -- who I betrayed -- I only have one friend?

ANGELA

(smoothly reassuring)
But sweetheart, I'm the only friend you need.

DENA

Okay, did anyone else just feel a cold spot in the room?

The ANGRY WOMAN finally pushes into the coat room.

WOMAN

I need my coat, and I need it now.

SAMANTHA

(suddenly angry)
Okay, lady, I apologized once to you, but bug me again and I'll have something to really be sorry for!

Beat. Samantha is shocked to hear herself talk like that. Angela gives her a big, tearful hug.

ANGELA

My baby's still in there!

17 INT. BISTRO 99 - CONTINUOUS

17

Samantha comes out of the coat room, upset, followed by Angela and Dena, and crosses back to their table to get her coat.

ANGELA

Where are you going, you haven't talked to René.

SAMANTHA

I don't want to talk to René, I have a boyfriend.

ANGELA

Who you don't even know. You can start completely fresh, be with anyone you want, why choose Todd again?

SAMANTHA

I don't know. So far, he's the person who makes me feel the most like me. I like how he sees me.

ANGELA

He sees you through a lens, captures you, and puts you on a shelf. René takes you down and plays with you. He's not afraid to get you dirty.

SAMANTHA

Okay, can we stop this metaphor?
 (beat, intrigued)
 How dirty?
 (quickly)
 Never mind.

ANGELA

See? You're drawn to him. You wanted to know who you are, I'm trying to show you.

DENA

Maybe she's not the same, now. People can change.

ANGELA

No, my psycho friend, people can not change. That's just a giant myth perpetuated by the multi-billion-dollar self-help industry.

DENA

And God.

SAMANTHA

But what's the point of a fresh start if I keep doing the same things? I need to do what's right for a change.

DENA

Good for you!

SAMANTHA

(beat)
 So what is it?

DENA

Break up with René.

SAMANTHA

Right. Of course.

DENA

And tell Todd about him.

SAMANTHA

(anxious)
 What? Whoa.

ANGELA

Okay, we're going to take you back to the asylum now, sweetie, they'll be worried about you.

René comes over. He really is sexy, really does like Sam.

RENÉ

Samantha, sorry to leave you so long.

SAMANTHA

Hi. We're breaking up. Happy birthday, I got you some earrings.

She pulls a small wrapped gift from her purse, spilling some purse things on the table.

RENÉ

What? No, please don't do this. I'm leaving Barbara for good, I am.

SAMANTHA

(sees his ring)

You're married? This is the guy you choose for me, Angela? He's a cheater!

ANGELA

But so are you, sweetheart. You're perfect for each other.

RENÉ

Samantha, I love you. Let's go to Hawaii. Tomorrow. Tonight. Let's leave from here, we'll buy clothes when we get there -- although I doubt we'll need any.

He leans in close. There's definitely a sexual thing, Samantha can't deny it.

SAMANTHA

How many times in a row do I sneeze?

RENÉ

Sneeze? I don't know. Why, do you have a cold? Why didn't you tell me before I kissed you, I have a tenure meeting tomorrow.

SAMANTHA

(beat)

You're right, Angela. We are perfect for each other.

(beat)

I just don't want to be.

She sweeps stuff back into her purse... stops... and holds up a plastic chip, with writing on it.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 "One Day at a Time."
 (reads other side)
 "Thirty Days."

She looks at her empty martini glass, and at Angela, appalled.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 Angela!

Shaking her head, she exits. Dena and René look at Angela.

ANGELA
 Worst thirty days of my life.

18 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

18

An A.A. meeting. Members in a circle. One empty chair.

ALL MEMBERS
 Hi, Samantha...!

LEADER
 Samantha, you need to sit in the circle.

WIDER SHOT: Samantha is at a nearby table where coffee, cakes and muffins are set up. She's on edge, trying to stay calm.

SAMANTHA
 Sorry. I didn't eat, I just want to grab... something. What? Carrot cake, that looks good. Wait, do I like carrot cake?
 (tastes a bite)
 Blehh! No. Sorry, I'll get a muffin. What kind? Banana? No. Yes! Banana. I don't know. Poppyseed? Is there citrus in that? I don't know why I'm asking. Sorry. I can do this. Raisin. A raisin muffin, that's my choice. Wait. Bran! A low-fat bran -- no, pumpkin! A pumpkin muffin! Hey, what is that, is that apple? Yes! That's the one! Apple! Hey, are there donuts?

Agitated, she turns and sees that everyone is staring at her like she's crazy -- some even a little scared.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 What, you've never seen a girl pick a snack? Sure, it's easy for you.
 (MORE)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

You can make choices. Not good ones, that's obvious, but a muffin for god's sake. I don't know what I like. Or who I am. Just today I've learned that someone tried to kill me and there's some huge rift with parents I don't even know about and I have one friend who's mean and one who's not even a friend and I'm cheating on my boyfriend -- who's the one good thing in my life right now -- and if I go home tonight and do the "right" thing, I may even lose that! I may end up alone. I can't choose. I'm stuck.

Pause.

FEMALE MEMBER

Try the lemon squares.

SAMANTHA

(intense)

Okay, but why?

(bites a lemon square)

I mean yes, I eat the lemon square, mmm, chew chew chew, does that make me a lemon square person? Or am I actually a blueberry tart person --

(chomps a blueberry tart)

-- and no matter how much I want to become a lemon square person, how hard I try to lead a lemon square life, am I destined by my very nature to wake up day after day a freaking BLUEBERRY TART??!

She stops, blueberry on her mouth. Beat.

LEADER

Okay, get out.

Samantha, embarrassed, slinks for the door.

EVERYONE

'Bye, Samantha...!

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

19 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

19

Samantha walks alone. MUSIC: the over-dramatic "Where Do I Go?" from "Hair." Across the street, she sees, keeping to the shadows... the cream-colored OVERCOAT GUY she saw before.

SAMANTHA

Hey!

No response. Sam starts across the street after him --

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I said hey! You!

-- and is almost run down by a TAXI! The HORN BLOWS, the cab swerves -- and she's snatched away at the last second.

On the sidewalk, she turns to see her rescuer: Detective Polk, the cop from her parents' house, who's just ruggedly handsome enough to become a love interest down the line.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Wow. Thank you. I'm such an idiot,
I was trying to talk to that --

She looks: overcoat guy is gone.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

...guy. Wait, I know you, you're that detective! How weird is that, that you were... following me, oh my god you're following me. Why are you following me?

DETECTIVE POLK

Someone tried to kill you.

SAMANTHA

And? You're protecting me? You think I might know who or why? Sorry. If you want to know who'd want me dead, though, I have some thoughts. Ready? EVERYONE. Who wouldn't? I would. I need to be stopped.

DETECTIVE POLK

You're not so horrible.

SAMANTHA

Sweet-talker, now you're just flirting.

(pause)

But you probably know more about me than I do at this point. It could be anyone. Crazy patient.

(MORE)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Someone I testified against in court.

(beat)

Jealous wife.

(embarrassed)

You know about my affair?

DETECTIVE POLK

You weren't too circumspect.

SAMANTHA

I'll tell you who didn't know: my boyfriend. That's what I'm doing out here now, deciding if I should tell him.

DETECTIVE POLK

Yes.

SAMANTHA

No, seriously. What do you think?

DETECTIVE POLK

Yes.

SAMANTHA

Stop saying that. If I tell him, I can end up alone; if I don't, he never knows.

DETECTIVE POLK

You'd know. I've seen it plenty in my job -- what's the worst thing for a relationship?

SAMANTHA

Going camping.

DETECTIVE POLK

Worse. Lying. The guilt is like a splinter, that gets under the skin...

SAMANTHA

Or a grain of sand.

DETECTIVE POLK

Why a grain of sand?

SAMANTHA

In an oyster.

DETECTIVE POLK

No, that makes a pearl.

SAMANTHA

So maybe guilt is a pearl.

DETECTIVE POLK

Guilt is not a pearl, guilt is a
splinter. Who's the cop, here?

SAMANTHA

But I have nothing to feel guilty
about! I didn't do anything. Bad
Sam did it. I'm Good Sam, Bad Sam
is dead. God I sound like a TV movie,
I'm leaving before you lock me up.

She starts across the street -- and we hear A CAR HORN BLAST!
And Polk yanks her to safety yet again. When she's safe on
the curb:

DETECTIVE POLK

Maybe it wasn't murder. Maybe you
just have bad peripheral vision.

20 INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

20

Lights out. Samantha is in bed on the couch, covers pulled
up, but not sleeping. Her eyes are wide open, as she
contemplates her fear, and her choice. Finally:

SAMANTHA

Todd?

Beat. From in the darkened bedroom:

TODD (O.S.)

Yeah?

Pause.

SAMANTHA

René is a guy.

Pause. More pause. Then THE BEDROOM LIGHT COMES ON.

21 INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

21

Todd is pacing, upset, Samantha fights for her life.

SAMANTHA

I'm sorry, I really really am, but
here's the thing: I don't even know
what I did, which is very much like
not doing it at all.

TODD

So you're going with the insanity
defense.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, how's it playing?

TODD

Great for you, bad for me, since I
don't have the benefit of memory loss!

SAMANTHA

I can fix that, where's our frying
pan?

(off his look)

Not funny. I know that.

Todd can't look at her. They've gone as far as they can go
for now. Samantha is resigned -- she knew what was coming.

TODD

(with difficulty)

Sam... telling me the truth, though...
that was a good thing.

SAMANTHA

(starts to bedroom)

We'll see. Who knows, maybe you'll
call me some day, we'll get some
coffee.

Suddenly she stops, her face gets a weird, excited look.

TODD

Sam?

SAMANTHA

That's how we met.

22 INT. STARBUCKS - DAY - FLASHBACK

22

Samantha -- Old Samantha, impatient, frowning -- waits in
line, a couple of people away from placing her order. At
the pick-up counter, a BARISTA puts down a cup.

BARISTA

Decaf latte!

No one claims it. Samantha looks at her watch. She glances
around. Then she steps out of line, as --

BARISTA (CONT'D)

Decaf latte --!

SAMANTHA

Got it. Mine. Thank you.

She takes the cup, starts to leave with it -- when Todd comes
up. He has a camera around his neck.

TODD

Sorry, I was outside, is that mine?

SAMANTHA

No. It's mine.

She starts to go.

TODD

So can I take your picture sometime?

SAMANTHA

No. But only because I can't allow that line to ever work.

TODD

Are you worried I'll steal your soul?

SAMANTHA

What makes you think I have one?

TODD

Because you feel a little bad about taking my coffee.

SAMANTHA

(beat; eyes him)

You like the bad girls, huh?

TODD

No. But I'm a sucker for the scared and the hurt.

His frankness throws her. She quickly recovers, and as she exits, she turns and gives Todd a sardonic smile, and the finger. He raises his camera, clicks -- WE FREEZE ON THE PHOTO -- the one Sam admired back in Act II -- and MATCH TO:

23 INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - END FLASHBACK

23

Samantha holds the framed photo. She and Todd both smile a little bittersweetly at the small victory.

SAMANTHA

It's a start, anyway. Ironic, though -- I was just thinking on the way here: you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.

TODD

Yeah...

(then)

That's a song, by the way.

SAMANTHA

Really? Crap, I was kind of proud of that one.

A doorman outside: FRANK, African-American, 50s, uniformed. Samantha comes out of the building, carrying her suitcase and a few file folders from her desk. Frank nods.

SAMANTHA

(re suitcase)

He's just going to need some time.

(beat)

Sorry, I don't remember your name.

FRANK

No reason to. Only word you've said to me in five years is "Taxi."

SAMANTHA

Okay, yes, I'm a bad, bad person, can we move on now, thank you!

(pause; embarrassed)

Sorry. Hard day.

FRANK

I'm Frank. Sorry for your troubles.

Sam reaches for his hand, and drops her folders. As they scramble to pick them up, WE SEE A PHOTO in one: the OVERCOAT GUY. Sam sees the photo, stands, staring at it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ms. Newly, if I can say...

(as she looks up: hm?)

I know a fair amount of people, given the chance you have, that would love to go back and change things about their life. Seeing what I have of yours... I hope you'll avail yourself.

SAMANTHA

I hope so, too, Frank.

FRANK

So where do you go from here?

SAMANTHA

God, that's the question, huh? Get back to work... find out who tried to kill me... undo the damage I've done, make up with Todd, and in general try to win what I fear will be a daily battle with my own nature.

FRANK

I meant uptown or downtown.

SAMANTHA

Oh.

She looks left and right, trying to get some sense, some pull, one way or another. Frank feels badly for her.

FRANK

There's a Tom Waits song. "If you get far enough away, you'll be on your way back home."

SAMANTHA

(nods at the wisdom)

Wow...

(then)

Okay, what does that mean?

FRANK

That if you're trying to tell a story, you'd best start at the beginning.

Samantha thinks... then gets it, and moans. PRE-LAP DOORBELL:

25 EXT. SAMANTHA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

25

Samantha stands outside the door, suitcase and files in hand. The door opens. Her mom, Regina, is there.

SAMANTHA

You don't have to tell me why we fought, yet, but at least tell me this: are you the one who tried to run me down?

REGINA

Don't be silly.

She stands out of the way for Sam to enter.

SAMANTHA

That's not an answer.

REGINA

(calling)

Howard! She's back!

(as Samantha enters)

You can use your old room -- you remember where that is, don't you?

SAMANTHA

Well, no, I don't.

REGINA

Just guess. It'll be fun.

And as the door closes, we imagine we can hear Samantha sigh.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR