

Cliché Break
(Short Feature)

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WIDE SHOT - PARK - AFTERNOON

A beautiful fall day. DANNY (22), a charming, sharply dressed young man kneels on a picnic blanket putting the finishing touches on an elaborate, romantic gourmet picnic spread. Among the charcuterie and wine is a book hidden strategically behind the picnic basket.

INSERT - BOOK

The Art of Breaking Up

BACK TO SCENE

SARA (21), a likable, but visibly anxious young woman, WALKS INTO FRAME. She wears casual, trendy ripped jeans and a t-shirt. She carries two cardboard coffee cups. Danny rises to his feet and greets Sara with a hug/kiss. Sara is stiff as a board. Fake smiles abound.

DANNY
(accepting coffee)
Hey, thanks.

SARA
No problem! It's your favorite -
Hazelnut. You look nice.

DANNY
Thanks! Uh, you too.

Danny's complement falls flat. He gestures for Sara to sit on the blanket. Sara is overwhelmed by the spread.

SARA
So, what's all this? I thought we
were just hanging out?

DANNY
We're coming up on our one-year
anniversary.

SARA
Time flies.

Danny breaks the awkward silence. He stammers.

DANNY

Ummm, so...? Speaking of time,
where do you see us going from
here?

Sara takes a deep breath before dropping the bomb.

SARA

Our separate ways.

Danny masks his relief.

SERIES OF CLOSE UP SHOTS BETWEEN SARA AND DANNY

SARA (CONT'D)

It's not you, it's me.

(beat)

I just need some time to work on
myself.

Avoiding eye contact, Sara looks down at her coffee. Danny discreetly glances down at the carefully hidden book.

INSERT - BOOK

Danny's hand flips to the next page of instructions. INSERT:
"SAY THIS: I've been holding you back." OR: "I'm not good
enough for you."

BACK TO SCENE

Puzzled by the lack of immediate response, Sara looks up from her coffee. Concealing the book, Danny jerks his head up and mechanically recites.

DANNY

No. I've been holding YOU back. I'm
not good enough for you.

Although taken aback by Danny's response, Sara stays her course.

SARA

I'm just not ready for a serious
relationship right now.

DANNY

You're going to make some guy
really happy one day, it's just not
meant to be me.

SARA

You deserve someone who loves you,
for you.

Danny takes a deep breath and sticks to the book's
instructions.

DANNY

If only we were meeting five years
from now.

SARA

I wish things were different.

DANNY

Me too.

DANNY AND SARA

go silent.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Do you want some hummus? I know how
much you like it.

SARA

(standing up)

If you were going to dump me, why
the big spread?

DANNY

(genuinely)

I was just trying to make this
easier.

Danny starts to put sandwiches back in the picnic basket.

SARA

So, was this fancy anniversary
celebration actually fake? Was our
entire relationship just a
performance?

DANNY

No! I was just trying to...

Danny stands up.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Sara, we really had some good times
together.

Sara's doubt is curbed by Danny's sincerity.

SARA
(softening)
Yeah, we did.

Sara holds up her coffee cup as if to say, "Cheers!" on their mutual agreement to break-up.

SARA (CONT'D)
So, friends?

DANNY
(raises cup)
Friends.

Sara and Danny "clink" their coffee cups and take a sip. Danny kneels on the blanket to finish packing up the picnic. Sara kneels down to help.

WIDE SHOT - PARK

Danny and Sara hug and go their separate ways. Danny picks up the picnic basket.

MED. SHOT - SARA

walks away FROM CAMERA then looks back over her shoulder.

SARA'S POV

Danny walks past another young couple. He hands them the picnic basket.

BACK TO SARA

She smiles. Questioning her decision, she takes a deep breath and continues to walk away.

CLOSE ON - DANNY

After handing off the basket, he looks up and searches the horizon for Sara. She's gone.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END