

1 INT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY

1

A LARGE POSTER on an easel advertises "**Elise LaSalle - Outing the Inner Actor.**" Her mid-forties face is intense, beautiful, and large over the quotes: "**Unconventional**" "**Uncompromising**" "**Unequaled.**"

Next to the poster is a REGISTRATION TABLE where a FEMALE ASSISTANT breaks bad news to a LINE of EAGER YOUNG ACTORS holding HEAD SHOTS and PHOTO RESUMES.

ASSISTANT

This weekend's session is filled, but if you'd like to be on a waiting list for next month...

She looks up at a fashionably-dressed FIFTYISH MAN entering from the street, rolled-up SCRIPT in hand, his attention held firm by the large "Elise LaSalle" poster portrait as he passes.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Sir! Are you registered?

He whips around with well-practiced flourish.

BRAD

I'm Brad Silver.

ASSISTANT

And that means...?

BRAD

She knows me.

The assistant leaps from her chair to stop him--

ASSISTANT

Just... Wait, here -- "*Brad Silver.*"

--then disappears through a door leaving Brad standing among the waiting and desperate YOUNG ACTORS.

YOUNG MALE ACTOR

(whispers to friend)

He's the hip guy... The funny one on that show. The *neighbor.*

(inaudible response)

It's been a long time.

The assistant returns with a POST-IT NOTE which she extends so Brad can read it: "**NEVER HEARD OF HIM!**"

He beelines to get past her. She blocks him.

ASSISTANT

Excuse me?

He maneuvers around her.

2 INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY

2

With the ASSISTANT behind him, BRAD rushes into the studio where the statuesque ELISE prepares for class.

BRAD
We had a dog!

ELISE
And one of you was faithful.

BRAD
I apologized. I *apologize*. For Chrissakes, don't hit me with that!

ELISE
I'd prefer a lead pipe.

ASSISTANT
Do you want me to call the police?

ELISE
Don't bother. He can't get arrested.

BRAD
I can too get arrested!

Elise waves the confused assistant off. Brad waves the script.

BRAD (CONT'D)
You know my old roommate?

ELISE
Everyone knows Stevie. Not so much his roommate anymore.

BRAD
His show was picked up and there's a part practically written for *me*.

ELISE
The disgraced politician?

BRAD
You got the script!

ELISE
From every sad middle-aged actor begging for a second chance.

BRAD
But this is my part. I just need a little bit of what you do here - to shake off the acting cobwebs.

She takes his script, opens it, looks for and finds a passage.

ELISE
Shake away.

BRAD
The speech to his staff? Got it.

Brad waves away the script.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(horribly, but with
bravado)
"A decade ago, you invested your time,
your lives, and your belief in me, and
I spent it all feeding my own
insatiable weakness. When you trusted,
I betrayed. Now you've given me a
second chance to take back what I
selfishly squandered. I will draw no
satisfaction from winning again except
to repay you *everything* as yours, and
the *people's*, honorable, faithful, and
humble servant."

Elise holds back a laugh. The Assistant at the door can't.

BRAD (CONT'D)
I'll pay you.

ELISE
You'd be shocked how much. You'd
clutch your tiny heart if you were
lucky enough to receive a bill from
me.

BRAD
I'm ready to clutch my heart, Elise.

She stares at him hard (as if deciding).

ELISE
To act the part you have to feel it,
believe it, and become it. Brad...
It's too late to make up for years of
not being a *real actor*. And *that* is
why your "friend" Stevie Brock is not
returning your calls.

We stay on Brad as that sinks in.

3 OMITTED 3

4 INT. CITY APARTMENT - DAY 4

BRAD looks for a long moment, wistfully out the window.

His IPHONE BUZZES suddenly in his hand. On the screen: "*Steven Brock - FACETIME.*"

REVERSE ANGLE

reveals a BARE APARTMENT scattered with boxes and packing materials as Brad moves quickly through the empty clutter to one corner smartly furnished with an Eames Chair, a side table, a lamp, and a framed print.

He jams the iPhone into a CLIP HOLDER suction-cupped to a PLASTIC BOX head-height - makes himself comfortable in the chair - touches "ACCEPT" while holding a glass of wine.

BRAD
Stevie! Hey!

4A CLOSE ON - MOUNTED IPHONE 4A

and STEVIE BROCK, an intense middle-aged man, leaning over his phone in a bathroom.

BRAD
Are you on the--?

STEVIE
--Multi-tasking! Should I return someone else's call, Braddy-Boy?

4B BACK TO SCENE 4B

BRAD
No. No... Hey!
(holds up script)
Reading your pilot for "Second Chances," Stevie. Loving it!

STEVIE
Oh... Braddy boy. No...

BRAD
Yes! The part is me, Stevie! The bad things you had him do are things you know I did. You plagiarized my vices!

STEVIE
But this guy fucking grows up!

BRAD
I could play that.

Stevie exhales loudly.

BRAD (CONT'D)
I'm working on my craft. I talked to Elise today.

STEVIE
Really?! Has she forgiven you?

BRAD
I wasn't that bad to her.

STEVIE
Fuck if you weren't! I was there, and
you were awful!
(calming)
But she is the best. And if *anyone* can
whip your ass into shape, it's her.
(he grimaces)
Oh-fuck-all-right. Wednesday at 3:00!
Now get your sad face off my phone. I
have paperwork!

He pulls paper off the roll, disappears. Brad jumps to his feet.
He does a little dance.

BRAD
Wednesday!

5 EXT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY 5

BRAD runs down the street with a spring in his step. He tries to
open the door to the ACTING STUDIO. It's locked. He checks his
watch, runs the other way.

6 OMITTED 6

7 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRYWAY - NIGHT 7

Holding a modest ROSE BOUQUET, BRAD checks names on an apartment
directory - sees "LaSalle."

8 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT 8

BRAD steps out of the elevator with the ROSE BOUQUET. He takes
a breath, knocks hard on a door.

BRAD
Elise! I got an audition with Stevie!
(no answer - knocks again,
eye to peephole)
Open up. I saw you move!

Two NOTE CARDS slide under the door: **GO** then **AWAY**.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Oh, c'mon! I'm sorry. I was a jerk -
a sucker for flattery and opportunity.
(confessing)
Lots of opportunity. But I was young,
and they were throwing themselves at
me.
(knocks again)
Elise... I can hear you breathing.
(MORE)

BRAD (CONT'D)

I got flustered seeing you today. It was a sucker-punch after so long. "Damn! She still has it."

Silence. Brad bangs his head lightly against the door.

BRAD (CONT'D)

You probably guessed I haven't worked at all in months - nothing good for decades. I just sit and wait. I have nothing.

No answer. He appears ready to give up when a PASSERBY recognizes him.

PASSERBY

Hey.
(snaps finger)
Aren't you...?
(continues snapping)
...you know!

The door flies open, but it is not Elise. It is a pretty YOUNG WOMAN excited at seeing:

YOUNG WOMAN (SIRENA)

Brad Silver! I heard you and remembered you and *here you are!*

BRAD

Who are you?!

SIRENA

(jumping excitedly)
Your biggest fan!

The passerby gives him a thumbs-up, heads down the hall.

8A INT. SIRENA'S ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

8A

BRAD stands awkwardly in the entryway. He looks around at the apartment while SIRENA excitedly searches through papers.

SIRENA

Elise moved. I'm Sirena!

BRAD

But you know her.

SIRENA

I know her mail really well. I have her address where I send my rent.
(searches through papers)
This is so exciting! I used to watch your show. You were the best!

BRAD

Wow... Thanks.

SIRENA

You have no reason to be sorry about the way you were. You were a star. Who *wouldn't* seize the opportunity while you had the opportunity?

She hands Brad a POST-IT NOTE.

BRAD

This is her studio address. Damn!

SIRENA

You know... I used to kiss you on the screen every Friday night.

Sirena watches his face, tempted by the flattery.

SIRENA (CONT'D)

There... There! I see the old Brad Silver coming back.

He hands her the rose bouquet. She brings it to her nose with a coquettish smile.

9 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

9

Bubbling with energy, SIRENA walks backwards and dances around BRAD as they make their way down the block.

SIRENA

You must've gone to a lot of Hollywood parties.

BRAD

A few. Quite a few. Kind of a blur now.

SIRENA

Blurs are the best! Were people excited to see you? Were they like: "Wow! Brad Silver came to MY party."

BRAD

I heard that. Actually, quite a lot.

SIRENA

Tell me about this new part. No! Wait! Do something from the script! Let me be the first to hear it.

She stops, folds her arms, and pretends to listen.

SIRENA (CONT'D)

And... Action!

BRAD

(badly)

"A decade ago, you invested your time,
your lives, and your belief in me, and
I spent it all feeding my own
insatiable weakness."

SIRENA

Oh-my-God. You are soooo authentic. I
really feel it.

Brad smiles. Sirena excitedly pulls him down the street.

SIRENA (CONT'D)

My friends are going to love you! It's
so great you're still alive.

10

INT. HOOKAH LOUNGE - NIGHT

10

BRAD tentatively sucks smoke from a multi-tube HOOKAH PIPE he
shares with SIRENA sitting close to him and--

Three 20-SOMETHINGS: A HIPSTER GUY and HIPSTER GIRL, and NATE,
a hurt-looking young man seated between them.

SIRENA

Mmmm... Blueberry Muffin Tobacco.
Isn't this so awesome?

Brad grimaces as he blows out smoke.

HIPSTER GIRL

(sucking pipe looking up
on iphone)

So awesome you were that guy on TV.

BRAD

Thank you very much, I--

HIPSTER GUY

--And it was old-timey broadcast TV!

Hipster Guy turns an air-knob, makes RADIO TUNING SOUNDS.

HIPSTER GUY (CONT'D)

You're like uh historical figure, man!

BRAD

I've done a lot since then. Really.

NATE

You look very pretty tonight, Sirena.

SIRENA

Oh, God, Nate. Can you give it a rest?

HIPSTER GIRL
(looking at iPhone)
Here! Look! I found one of your
movies.

But Brad is looking at Nate on the verge of weeping.

BRAD
(whispers to Sirena)
He looks upset.

SIRENA
Never mind Nate. He thinks he owns me.
Newsflash. He *doesn't*.

HIPSTER GUY
Holy crap! You were in "Metal Face
5!" I didn't know it went past "3."

HIPSTER GIRL
Turn-around-turn-around!

10A CLOSE ON - IPHONE SCREEN 10A

showing a younger BRAD attacked from behind by a RED METAL-
MASKED KILLER.

10B BACK TO SCENE 10B

HIPSTER GUY
Too late! Man, that had to hurt.

BRAD
More than you can imagine.

SIRENA
Oh, Brad. You were always the first
one to get killed! It made me *so mad*,
one time I threw my Barbie at the TV.

HIPSTER GIRL
(looking at phone)
Oh-my-God! You got nine raspberries on
"HasBeen.com."

HIPSTER GUY
Dude, that's awesome! No one ever gets
a "ten." Nine is like the limit of
badness.

Brad looks again at Nate staring at him with homicidal
intensity.

SIRENA
(whispers re: NATE)
He's creeping me out. Walk me home.

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BRAD
Absolutely.

11 INT. SIRENA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

11

Through a FISH TANK, we see BRAD and SIRENA enter the apartment.

SIRENA
What's the big deal?

BRAD
But are you seeing him?

SIRENA
We have history.

BRAD
Recent history?

SIRENA
Why?
(touches his face
seductively)
Are writing a history report?

She pulls him onto the couch - rolls on top of him.

SIRENA (CONT'D)
Why don't we seize this opportunity
while we have this opportunity?

KEYS RATTLE in the door lock. NATE enters.

SIRENA (CONT'D)
Nate! What are you doing here?

NATE
I live here.

SIRENA
Go to your room!

NATE
But...

SIRENA
Nate! Your room!

NATE
It's *our* room. Remember?

SIRENA
Go!

He does - slowly.

BRAD
History?!

SIRENA
Well. More like "current events."
(to Nate)
And close the door! No... Wait! Make
us some Daiquiris.

Nate shuffles sadly over to a makeshift BAR near the couch.

BRAD
That's not necessary--

SIRENA
--He makes the *best* Daiquiris.
(to Nate)
With fresh limes this time!

Nate's knife comes down hard, splitting a lime, then another.

BRAD
He's upset.

SIRENA
Don't worry. He'll be gone in a
minute.

BRAD
(looking at Nate)
Sirena...

Sirena follows Brad's eyes to Nate.

SIRENA
Nate! Keep the seeds out of the
glass.
(to Brad)
Sorry. Where were we?

She moves in for the kiss. Brad doubles back.

BRAD
Hold on.

SIRENA
You're acting all like- Wait! - I get
it. It's *this* apartment. It's making
you project your *bad relationship* with
Elise LaSalle onto ours.

BRAD
What? No!
(disentangles form her)
The relationship wasn't bad!

He stands, paces, as if finally realizing:

BRAD (CONT'D)

I was.

He backs away past Nate - grabs his shoulders.

BRAD (CONT'D)

By the time she's sorry, you won't care.

He leaves. Nate still holds the drinks, looks at Sirena.

NATE

Can I have his?

Sirena rolls her eyes, blows her hair in frustration.

12 INT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY

12

BRAD waits in front of the same registration desk while ACTING STUDENTS mill around the waiting area. The FEMALE ASSISTANT appears from around the corner.

ASSISTANT

Make it fast,
(air quoting)
"Brad Silver." She has a class in five.

13 INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY

13

BRAD enters the studio, empty except for ELISE is typing on her LAPTOP.

ELISE

Dear God. And to think I was ever happy to see you.

BRAD

I had the worst night... I saw what it must've been like to be with me.

ELISE

The horror.

BRAD

I'm sorry, Elise. So sorry for not treating you the way you deserved.

ELISE

(looking at him)
I think you are.

BRAD

I couldn't sleep thinking about who I was, and what I did and didn't do.

ELISE
You're still there, aren't you?

BRAD
I'll be okay.

ELISE
Don't be. Turn towards it... Go to that place of regret. Look at everything you've lost. Imagine what you might have had and could have been.

His face transforms. He's clearly experiencing it. He takes a deep breath, but nothing comes out.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Yes... Now do the scene.

BRAD
What...?

ELISE
The speech. Do it!

BRAD
(sincere and perfect)
"A decade ago, you invested your time, your lives, and your belief in me, and I spent it all feeding my own insatiable weakness. When you trusted, I betrayed. Now you've given me a second chance to take back what I selfishly squandered. I will draw no satisfaction from winning again except to repay you *everything* as yours, and the *people's*, honorable, faithful, and humble servant."

Elise smiles slightly - nods her head.

ELISE
Well. It's a start. Stevie?! You see that?

Elise presses a remote revealing on the LAPTOP SCREEN

13A STEVIE BROCK

13A

in bed with a bowl of strawberries on his bare chest

STEVIE
A start? It's a fucking "wa-wa" moment! You're a miracle worker, Elise.

BRAD
Stevie?! Does this mean...?

STEVIE

Learn the part, Braddy-Boy, and be ready to fly out for meetings! I got a good feeling.

Stevie vanishes from the screen.

13B BACK TO SCENE

13B

Brad stands, breathless dumbstruck.

ELISE

Carol! Bring the invoice!

BRAD

Invoice? For two minutes?

SIRENA ("Carol") enters from a neighboring office with an invoice, hands it to Brad.

BRAD (CONT'D)

Sirena!

Sirena curtsies.

ELISE

Flattery, to rebuild the pride of fame. Humiliation, to remind you how hollow it is. Cold indifference, to make you feel the pain you caused.

Brad sees NATE (forcing a sad face), the HIPSTER GUY--

HIPSTER GUY

(thumbs up)
Metal Face 5!

--and the HIPSTER GIRL waving among the ACTING STUDENTS.

BRAD

You played me!

ELISE

You're a simple instrument.

BRAD

I am so incredibly... in awe of you.

ELISE

Look at the bill.

He does. His eyes bulge. He clutches his heart. He keeps his hand there and looks at her sincerely.

BRAD

Thank you.

ELISE

And it's only the first one.

Students file into the room. Brad leaves, but looks back at Elise. Their eyes meet briefly. She smiles.

14 INT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - DAY 14

As BRAD walks out past the empty REGISTRATION DESK, Elise can be heard warming up the actors.

ELISE (O.S.)
Voice warm-up, actors! All together!
Unique New York! Unique New York!

ACTORS (O.S.)
(murdering it)
Unique New York! Unique New York!

Brad disappears into the bright sunlight of the city.

FADE OUT