

The Fantasy Club

A full-length play

By Rachel Bublitz

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The Fantasy Club

Characters:

Frances, twenty seven, female
Samantha, twenty seven, female
Jacob, twenty seven, male
Max, twenty seven, male

Time/Place: Present time/Any town, USA.

PROLOGUE: The seven years before the play begins, starting from Max entering Frances and Samantha's lives up until Frances' first fantasy of Jacob. Each small scene based in reality has a fantasy scene after it.

ACT I

Scene 1: Max and Frances' living room, Tuesday morning. All scenes to follow are in Max and Frances' living room. It's summer.

Scene 2: Frances' fantasy.

Scene 3: Tuesday evening.

Scene 4: Jacob's fantasy.

Scene 5: Tuesday night.

Scene 6: Max's fantasy.

Scene 7: Friday morning.

Scene 8: Frances' second fantasy.

Scene 9: The following Tuesday.

Scene 10: Samantha's fantasy.

ACT II

Scene 1: Tuesday evening.

Production Notes:

Lighting:

In the fantasy scenes, there should be a dream like quality to the lights.

Acting:

In the fantasy scenes (both in the PROLOGUE and ACT I) the acting in the scenes should be melodramatic except for the person whose fantasy it is.

Setting:

There is a couch center stage, with a coffee table in front of it. SR there is a table with a phone on it. The back wall is bookshelves, which are filled with books, pictures of two small girls and the bottom shelves are devoted exclusively to toys. Off SL is the kitchen, off SR is the bathroom, and bedrooms, and UP and off SL is the front door.

PROLOGUE

The short scenes in this prologue should be quick. When the lights go up and down, it should happen as fast as possible. The set should stay the same in the background, and each small scenes should have one spot on the characters. Every other scene is a fantasy scene and the lighting should have a dream like quality to it.

Spot light up on FRANCES and SAMANTHA. They are down SL, each are twenty in this scene, and dressed young, flirty and fun. They each have a coffee cup in their hand, and walk in place, as if they're walking down the street.

FRANCES

I can't wait for you to see it. It's beautiful.

SAMANTHA

Not much for me to see, didn't you say it was only 250 square feet?

FRANCES

It's perfect. No distractions. I will only have room for a desk, my laptop, and a bed.

SAMANTHA

No TV?

FRANCES

No. Television is a waste of time.

SAMANTHA

You're crazy. Anyway, I'll come by tomorrow with Max.

FRANCES

The new boyfriend?

SAMANTHA

He's *not* my boyfriend. We're just friends.

Lights down. Spot up on MAX and SAMANTHA on the couch center stage. This is a fantasy scene of SAMANTHA's. SAMANTHA is wearing the same clothes from earlier. MAX is twenty in this scene, and dressed in a t-shirt and jeans. The both have spanish text books on their laps.

SAMANTHA

Hey.

MAX leans in close to SAMANTHA.

MAX

Ready to study?

SAMANTHA opens her text book.

SAMANTHA

Want to conjugate verbs?

MAX tosses his text book aside then picks up SAMANTHA's and tosses hers behind the couch.

MAX

That's not why I'm here.

SAMANTHA

Then why are you-

MAX puts his hand on SAMANTHA's lips to stop her from talking, and then kisses SAMANTHA. Lights down.

Spot up on MAX, SAMANTHA, and FRANCES down SR.

MAX

Nice to meet you Frances.

FRANCES and MAX shake hands.

FRANCES

The pleasure is all mine.

FRANCES takes MAX's hand and kisses it in a mocking fashion.

SAMANTHA

Don't mind her, she's an artist.

MAX

What is it that you-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) I'm a writer. I'm on a second draft of a novella right now.

MAX

Really? That's amazing.

FRANCES

Yeah, I'm a kind of amazing.

Lights down.

Spot up on MAX's fantasy of FRANCES. They are both wearing the same clothes and they are standing next to the couch center stage. MAX is close enough to the couch that if he were to sit down he would be on the couch.

MAX

Hello, again.

FRANCES pushes MAX down on the couch so that he is laying down on the couch.

FRANCES

Shh.

FRANCES jumps onto MAX and straddles him. She begins to kiss him passionately and lights go down.

Spot up on the couch. Three years have passed. FRANCES should now have a sweater or cardigan on over her costume. SAMANTHA and MAX sit on either side of FRANCES. FRANCES holds a bundle that is meant to be a baby. SAMANTHA looks over at the bundle very excitedly.

SAMANTHA

Hi Mary, I'm your Aunt Samantha. Can I hold her?

FRANCES stands.

FRANCES

She needs to eat.

FRANCES exits down SR with the bundle. SAMANTHA scoots closer to MAX.

SAMANTHA

Your baby is beautiful.

MAX

Thanks.

SAMANTHA

Are you okay?

MAX

I think so, Frances is just so different. I thought she'd go back to normal once the pregnancy was over. But, she's crazier than ever. She isn't even writing. She screams at me whenever I bring it up. I'm just trying to bring her back, ya know? I miss her.

SAMANTHA

She'll be fine, just give her time.

Lights down. Spot up on couch for MAX's fantasy. MAX and SAMANTHA haven't moved.

MAX

I'm just so lonely.

SAMANTHA

I'm here for you, Max.

MAX

I know.

SAMANTHA runs her hand up MAX's leg.

SAMANTHA

I'm really here for you.

SAMANTHA straddles MAX and begins to kiss him. Lights out.

Spot up on FRANCES SR. A year and a half has gone by. FRANCES is looking super frumpy wearing a large flannel night gown. FRANCES is holding a bundle pretending to be a baby, she is bouncing the baby to soothe it. FRANCES talking on a house phone.

FRANCES

(Yelling down stage at an invisible child.) MARY! Put that down. Right now young lady. Drop it. Yes, I'm still here Max. When are you getting home? *(Pause)* No, damnit you worked late last night. *(There is a crash off SL, yelling off SL)* MARY, GET OUT OF THE KITCHEN! I'm on the phone, you can have a snack later. I said LATER! *(Into the phone)* Fuck you, Max. Fuck you!

*FRANCES slams down the phone.
FRANCES takes a breath and picks the phone up and dials.*

FRANCES

Sam? I need you. You have to come over. *(Pause)* No, don't cancel your date. *(Pause)* Yeah, Max is working late again. *(Yelling off SL)* You need to come by tomorrow, I'm going nuts. I sat down and watched four hours of crime dramas today. God, I'm pathetic. How are things going with Bill anyway? *(Pause)* Yeah, yeah, go. *(Pause)* Don't feel bad, I'll be fine.

FRANCES hangs up the phone. We hear a baby start to cry and another crash.

FRANCES

Shit!

Lights out. Spot up on FRANCES' fantasy. FRANCES is sitting on the couch in the same clothes crying. JACOB enters from up SL. JACOB is the same age as FRANCES, twenty four. JACOB is very attractive. JACOB crosses and sits next to FRANCES.

JACOB

Don't cry baby.

FRANCES

What? What are you doing here?

JACOB

I'm here for you. Stand up.

FRANCES stands. JACOB stands and pulls off her nightgown. FRANCES is wearing a young and attractive dress underneath.

JACOB

I knew I'd find you under there.

FRANCES

What are you doing here?

JACOB picks FRANCES up and kisses her.

JACOB

I told you, I'm here for you.

Lights out.

ACT I SCENE 1

It is Tuesday, mid-morning. Lights up on a living room. There is a couch center stage with a small coffee table in front of it. On the couch are three throw pillows and a blanket. FRANCES sits on the couch. Along the back of the stage are bookcases, filled with books and pictures. FRANCES is wearing comfortable clothes. FRANCES has a pad of paper in her lap and a pen in her hand. The pad is filled with pages and pages of writing. FRANCES stares off into nothingness, not writing. There is a smile on her face. There is a coffee mug on the coffee table with a spoon, a tea bag, and hot water in it. FRANCES sips the tea occasionally.

SAMANTHA enters from UP SL. SAMANTHA is more put together than FRANCES. SAMANTHA crosses to the couch, sets her purse down next to the couch and sits next to FRANCES. FRANCES tosses the paper and pen on the coffee table.

Hey. FRANCES

Hey. SAMANTHA

How are you? FRANCES

Hot. SAMANTHA

What? FRANCES

SAMANTHA

It's about a million degrees in here, Frances.

FRANCES

It's not that bad.

SAMANTHA

Can you open a window or something?

FRANCES

No.

SAMANTHA

No?

FRANCES

People are getting raped and murdered everyday, Samantha. Do you know why that is?

SAMANTHA

Open windows?

FRANCES

Someone could just pop off the screen and climb right in.

SAMANTHA

Because that happens so often.

FRANCES

Mock me if you want, I see it on TV everyday.

SAMANTHA

You are watching far too much Law and Order, my dear.

FRANCES

I have a lot of time on my hands. (*Drinks from tea.*) Need anything?

SAMANTHA

Have any coffee?

FRANCES sets coffee mug on coffee table, then rises and stretches.

FRANCES

I'll see if Max left any.

FRANCES exits down SL.

SAMANTHA picks up the pad of paper from the table and begins to read.

SAMANTHA

(Loudly to FRANCES offstage) Forbidden lust? Frances?

FRANCES enters from down SL with a coffee mug. FRANCES crosses and sits on couch and sets coffee mug down on the table in front of SAMANTHA.

FRANCES

(Unable to repress a smile) I've been writing.

FRANCES takes the notebook from SAMANTHA and sets it face down on the coffee table.

SAMANTHA

About forbidden lust?

FRANCES

I write what comes to me. It's garbage now. I'm hoping it'll turn into something. Lord knows I need a hobby.

SAMANTHA

Good for you.

SAMANTHA drinks from her coffee mug.

FRANCES

How are you really?

SAMANTHA

Well...

FRANCES

You sounded terrible on the phone last night, I was so worried about you.

SAMANTHA

Sorry for worrying you. How are the girls?

FRANCES

The girls? They're great. But, what's going on with you? Did something happen with Bill? Another fight?

SAMANTHA

It's Bill, he...

Pause.

FRANCES

Sam, honey, you can tell me. Whatever it is. I'm here for you, you know that right?

SAMANTHA

I know.

FRANCES

I couldn't sleep after you called. I've never heard you like that before.

SAMANTHA

I was being dramatic, I'm fine. Look at me, I'm great.

FRANCES

You've done so much for me. You're as good as a sister to me. I can't stand to see you hurt like this. (*Pause*) Do you remember when I got pregnant? Not with the girls, but before? I was terrified, and then my mom kicked me out. I had no where to go. You made me come home with you. You took care of me. It was humiliating telling you I'd gotten myself knocked up. But you saved me. What would I have done if I didn't have you? I had no where. There was no other place for me.

SAMANTHA

I know.

FRANCES

Let me help you.

SAMANTHA

Really, there's nothing you could do. It's fine. I'm fine.

FRANCES

But-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting and changing the subject.) You'll never guess who I ran into.

FRANCES

Samantha, you can't change the subject-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) Jacob Johnson.

FRANCES

(Disbelief) What?

SAMANTHA

I bumped into Jacob. Do you remember him? From High School?

FRANCES

I guess.

SAMANTHA

Well, we ran into one another. He looks good. He grew about six inches. He asked about you.

FRANCES

Shut up.

SAMANTHA

I can't believe he still... After all these years.

FRANCES

You don't think...

SAMANTHA

I do. It's sweet. I invited him over here for dinner tonight.

FRANCES

No.

SAMANTHA

Come on, you're always talking about how lonely you are. And besides Bill... Bill won't be able to make it.

FRANCES

I don't know.

SAMANTHA

Seriously? We were all friends, it will be fun. I could use some fun Frances.

FRANCES

Samantha.

SAMANTHA

What?

FRANCES

Ugh.... Do you ever... Do you ever have thoughts about men? Other than Bill, I mean?

SAMANTHA

What?

FRANCES

This is embarrassing.

SAMANTHA

(*Checking her clock.*) I have to get to work, you have ten minutes.

FRANCES

Do you have fantasies?

SAMANTHA

(*Thinking*) Sure, I day dream.

FRANCES

Not day dreaming. Fantasies.... *Sexual* fantasies.

SAMANTHA

Where are you going with this?

FRANCES

I... I think about what it would be like to sleep with Jacob.

SAMANTHA

You have sex fantasies about *Jacob*? But-

FRANCES

(*Interrupting*) It's okay, Max is always dead in my... In these fantasies.

SAMANTHA

You imagine your *husband* dead?

FRANCES

Yes. Well, why else would I be... Look, it's not perverted or anything really... Only classy stuff. Comforting the grieving widow... That sort of thing.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

Oh.

FRANCES

I know.

SAMANTHA

So the poems...

FRANCES

They're nearly all about Jacob busting down the door, taking me into his arms, and fucking me against a wall.

SAMANTHA

But... Why?

FRANCES

Have you ever had sex standing up? It looks like fun.

SAMANTHA

Frances!

FRANCES

Look, all the cleaning, cooking... It's tedious. Ruth and Mary aren't exactly the best conversationalist. Plus, I never thought I was going to see Jacob again. I thought he was safe.

SAMANTHA

I'll cancel.

FRANCES

No.

SAMANTHA

Why?

FRANCES

Now I'm curious.

SAMANTHA

Great.

FRANCES

What?

SAMANTHA

It's like I opened Pandora's box or something.

FRANCES

No, it'll be fine. You're right. I'm lonely, I need friends. And, he... He's a really good guy. We'll be friends.

SAMANTHA stands.

SAMANTHA

Okay. I told Jacob 7. Try to make food we can actually eat.

FRANCES

I can't promise anything.

SAMANTHA

Hey, remember, when Jacob comes over tonight, no matter how tempting, do not have sexual intercourse him.

FRANCES

Wow, that's amazing advise. You should seriously consider switching careers.

SAMANTHA

It's a gift.

FRANCES

If you're done laughing at my nonexistent problems, promise that tonight you'll sit down and actually tell me what is going on.

SAMANTHA picks up bag.

SAMANTHA

I promise.

*SAMANTHA hugs FRANCES and exits up
SL.*

Lights fade to black.

End of scene.

ACT I SCENE 2

Lights up on FRANCES' fantasy.

FRANCES and JACOB enter from down SL. FRANCES wearing a beautiful dress with an apron over it. JACOB is dressed up as well in slacks and a shirt. FRANCES and JACOB cross and sit on the couch.

JACOB

I can't thank you enough.

FRANCES

Really, it's nothing.

JACOB

I'm hopeless in the kitchen, and I really want to impress this girl.

FRANCES

I'm glad to help, everyone should be able to enjoy my amazing food.

JACOB

You really are amazing in the kitchen.

FRANCES

What can I say? I'm a natural. So, who is this girl? I've never seen you so happy.

JACOB

She's... Well, she's completely beguiling. I can't get her out of my head.

FRANCES stands.

FRANCES

It's nice to see you in love. Well, I'm going to clear out of here, so you can enjoy your evening.

JACOB stands and takes FRANCES by the hand. JACOB pulls FRANCES into him and dips her down, like a professional dancer.

JACOB

You're not going anywhere.

*JACOB kisses FRANCES. FRANCES
breaks away.*

FRANCES

Jacob, what are you doing? Your date? What will she think?

JACOB

You're my date. You're breathtaking, and wonderful.
Frances, I love you.

FRANCES

Jacob, I'm a married woman.

*JACOB crosses to FRANCES and takes
her into his arms.*

JACOB

He's gone, he can't come back.

FRANCES

But-

JACOB

(Interrupting) He's been dead a year now. You need to move
on.

*JACOB kisses FRANCES. FRANCES
breaks away again and crosses
downstage.*

FRANCES

I fell in love with you before he died.

JACOB

I know.

FRANCES

Do you think he knew?

JACOB

I don't think it matters if he knew or not. You didn't act
on it, nothing really happened until...

FRANCES

The funeral. Oh God.

Pause.

JACOB

You need to move on. Frances, I am completely in love with you, and your girls. I want to be your husband and, I know I could never be their father, but I want to raise them as my own. It's okay to let yourself love again.

JACOB goes to FRANCES and they kiss passionately. Lights fade to black.

ACT I SCENE 3

Tuesday evening. Lights up. FRANCES is standing behind the couch. FRANCES is now wearing a dress looking significantly more attractive than Scene 1. MAX enters from down SR. MAX is in his late twenties. MAX is wearing jeans and a white t-shirt. MAX is sitting on the couch putting on his socks. There is a short sleeved button up shirt on the couch next to him.

FRANCES

I can't believe you're abandoning me.

MAX

Abandoning you? I've got to work babe.

FRANCES

I know, but we're having people over for dinner.

MAX

It's not like they are foreign dignitaries. It's Sam, and some guy you haven't see in ten years. You'll be fine.

FRANCES

But you always do this, Max.

MAX

I know, I'm sorry.

FRANCES

I miss you, you're always at the office.

MAX

I came home tonight.

FRANCES

To shower. You came home to shower and now you're going straight back to work.

MAX

I have to work Frances. I love you, and I love the girls. But, if you want to live in this nice house and send the girls to swim class then I have to work.

FRANCES

But-

MAX

(Interrupting) Shit breaks. And if our site is down, we're losing traffic. I have to go. I'll see your friends another time. I don't want to have this fight again.

FRANCES

I know.

MAX

I have to go.

Pause. FRANCES crosses to MAX and fixes his shirt collar.

FRANCES

Is it strange?

MAX

What? That you have friends?

FRANCES

You're freakin' hilarious. No, me seeing Jacob. It feels funny.

MAX begins to look around.

MAX

I told you, if you don't feel like hanging out with this guy, don't. I hate seeing people from high school.

FRANCES

You're right but-

MAX

(Interrupting) Have you seen my shoes?

FRANCES

Your shoes are in the kitchen.

MAX

No.

FRANCES

Go look.

MAX crosses and exits down SL.

MAX

(Yelling from offstage) They're here!

FRANCES crosses to couch and sits.

FRANCES

That's not it. I don't think Jacob is going to be lame or anything.

MAX re-enters from down SL with two shoes in his hand. MAX crosses and sits next to FRANCES on the couch, and puts on his shoes.

MAX

What were my shoes doing in the kitchen? And *what* are you cooking? It smells like rotten eggs and strawberries in there.

FRANCES

It's fine, I think it'll taste better than it smells. But are you even listening to me? Is it okay to have Jacob be here when you're not?

MAX puts his arm around FRANCES.

MAX

Babe, why would it not be okay?

FRANCES

I don't know, he had feelings for me. It feels so odd to see someone else who... It's just that...

MAX

It's fine.

FRANCES

He had a crush on me. I told you that right?

MAX

If you don't want to see him, cancel. I've got to go, I love you. (*Kisses her, and is turned on by the kiss*) I don't have to go right now, I have a couple of minutes....

MAX begins to kiss FRANCES' neck.

FRANCES

Sorry, I'm a very important person, and I don't have time.

FRANCES and MAX begin to kiss. We here the house phone ring SR.

MAX

I'll get it.

FRANCES

Don't you move. I'll be right back.

FRANCES crosses to the phone and picks up the receiver.

FRANCES

Hello?

MAX

Who is it?

FRANCES motions to MAX to be quiet.

FRANCES

You can't. (*Pause*) Sam, damn it. Fine.

FRANCES hangs the phone up.

MAX

What's up?

FRANCES

Sam isn't coming. Bill... I don't know, they're having a thing.

MAX

Are they okay?

FRANCES

I don't know... She won't tell me anything.

FRANCES crosses back to couch. MAX and FRANCES begin to kiss.

MAX's cell phone rings.

MAX

(Stopping the kiss) Come on! (Reaches into his pocket and pulls out his cell phone.) Hello? (Pause) I'm on my way. (Hangs up phone and returns it to pocket.) Sorry, I need go.

FRANCES

Yeah, yeah, go!

MAX

I love you.

FRANCES

I love you too.

MAX

Tell your boyfriend I say hello!

FRANCES picks up a pillow from couch and throws it at MAX.

FRANCES

Shut up, jerk!

MAX exits up SL. FRANCES stares up at ceiling.

FRANCES

Shit, shit, shit.

JACOB enters from UP SL. JACOB is also in his late twenties and is dressed casually. JACOB crosses tentatively to behind the couch.

JACOB

Frances?

FRANCES stands.

FRANCES
(Startled) Jesus fucking Christ.

JACOB
Sorry.

FRANCES
You scared the shit out of me.

JACOB
Max let me in.

FRANCES
Of course he did. (Pause) It's good to see you.

FRANCES goes and hugs JACOB.

JACOB
It's good to see you too.

FRANCES
I'm married.

JACOB
I know, I just met your husband.

FRANCES
Right. I'm sorry, I'm nervous.

JACOB
Why are you nervous?

FRANCES
I have no idea. Come on over, sit down.

FRANCES sits on the couch, pats the seat next to her and JACOB follows and sits. JACOB can't take his eyes off of FRANCES.

JACOB
You look amazing.

FRANCES
Oh, thanks. You look good too, all strong and manly.

Pause.

JACOB

Well? How have you been?

FRANCES

Oh right, um... I'm married, and I have two little girls.

JACOB

So what do you do?

FRANCES

I'm a stay at home mom.

JACOB

(Pause, expecting to hear more.) I never... Never would have pictured you as a house wife. Do you still write?

FRANCES

Kind of, I didn't for a long time. I actually just started up again.

JACOB

Oh yeah? I remember you used to write the funniest editorials for the paper. What are you working on now?

FRANCES

Poetry. Nothing amazing, just getting the gears going.

JACOB

I'm sure it's great.

FRANCES

It really isn't.

JACOB

Can I read some?

FRANCES

Not a chance in hell.

JACOB

Well, I'd love to meet your girls. Where are they?

FRANCES

The girls? Tuesday night is swim night. Max's mom takes them to swim class and then out to dinner.

JACOB

What does Max do?

FRANCES

He's a computer guy, works at a start up.

JACOB

That's funny.

FRANCES

Why?

JACOB

You refused to get an email address in high school.

FRANCES

I guess we all grow up. Email wasn't too bad. It took Max years to coerce me into getting my driver's license though.

JACOB

You can legally drive?

FRANCES

Scary huh?

JACOB

Very. It's a little sad too, I have this image of you walking and hitch hiking everywhere.

FRANCES

Hard to hitch hike with kids.

JACOB

I used to give you rides.

FRANCES

I remember.

JACOB

Do you remember our late night drives?

FRANCES

Looking for all seven bridges...

JACOB

Up and down those hills...

FRANCES

Getting lost in the dark.

JACOB

I missed you.

FRANCES

(Changing the subject.) So what are you up to now?

JACOB

Nothing exciting. This is embarrassing, but... Do you remember the poem that you wrote that ended up in the yearbook?

FRANCES

Oh God, something about leaves, right?

JACOB

"The wind is coming, To take us away--"

FRANCES

(Interrupting) You have to stop.

JACOB

I remember it. I thought it was beautiful. Beautiful and sad.

FRANCES

Well thank you. I find it incredibly embarrassing. I can't believe you remember it.

JACOB

I know the whole thing. I can keep going.

FRANCES

No! No, no, no, that's quiet all right. I'm glad Max isn't here, he'd never let me live it down.

JACOB

I'm glad Max isn't here too.

FRANCES stands.

FRANCES

I'm sorry this is too weird for me. I'd like it if we could be friends, but... I don't know it's... I'm married and I have kids, I love my husband, and you're a great guy, but-

JACOB

(Interrupting) Frances.

FRANCES

What?

JACOB

Will you sit down?

FRANCES sits.

FRANCES

Okay.

JACOB

This isn't weird for me, am I acting inappropriate?

FRANCES

No, well... Look, I'm completely nuts. Let's start over, it's so good to see you, how long has it been?

JACOB

I had a serious crush on you in high school.

FRANCES

You're not helping.

JACOB

Why are you so uncomfortable? We're just talking.

FRANCES

I might have liked you too when... When we were younger.

JACOB

You did?

FRANCES

Yes.

JACOB

You never said anything.

FRANCES

I don't know... I was a teenager.

JACOB

We would have been good together.

FRANCES

I guess we'll never know.

Pause. FRANCES and JACOB look at one another. JACOB makes a small move to touch FRANCES but stops himself.

JACOB

So, are you going to feed me or what?

FRANCES

(Remembering) Oh shit! I forgot all about dinner.

*FRANCES rises and runs down SL.
JACOB laughs at her.*

JACOB

(Yelling off to FRANCES) Did you forget to make something?

Pause.

*FRANCES enters from down SL,
looking slightly amused.*

FRANCES

Well, I *tried* to cook for you. It's a disaster, it tastes *much* worse than it smells. Feel like pizza?

JACOB stands.

JACOB

How about a late night drive?

Pause.

FRANCES

(Thrown off guard) I...

JACOB

Never mind. I think I should go.

FRANCES

Right.

*JACOB crosses to FRANCES, gives her
a kiss on the cheek.*

JACOB

I want to see you again.

FRANCES

I'm married.

JACOB

I know. It's okay, we're friends. I'll call you.

*JACOB exits up SL. FRANCES slowly
crosses CS and sits on the couch.*

FRANCES

(To self) Friends.

Lights fade to black, end of scene.

ACT I SCENE 4

Lights up on JACOB's fantasy. FRANCES looking very sexy is sitting on the couch reading a book. JACOB enters from up SL, FRANCES looks up from her book and sees JACOB. FRANCES stands up, puts her book down and goes quickly to JACOB and hugs him.

FRANCES pulls back from the hug and kisses JACOB on the cheek.

FRANCES

You're back.

JACOB

I had to see you again.

FRANCES

I'm glad you came back.

FRANCES hugs JACOB again, then grabs his hand and leads him to the couch to sit.

JACOB

Is it okay that I'm here?

FRANCES

It's fine, we'll just need to be quiet.

FRANCES begins to kiss JACOB.

MAX enters from up SL, he sets down his work bag and stares at JACOB and FRANCES. JACOB and FRANCES do not notice him and continue to kiss.

MAX

What is this?

FRANCES and JACOB stop kissing, JACOB stands.

FRANCES

Hey.

MAX

What do you two think you're doing?

Pause.

MAX

Well?

FRANCES rises and goes to MAX.

FRANCES

I'm so sorry. I am in love with Jacob, I always have been.
I can't help it.

MAX

(*To JACOB*) Jacob?

JACOB

We didn't mean to hurt you. (*Pause*) I love her. We were
just made for one another.

MAX

I see.

MAX crosses and sits on the couch.

Pause.

FRANCES

Max?

MAX

This is...

*MAX rises suddenly and lunges at
JACOB. At first his intentions
seem violent, however he just gives
JACOB a hug.*

JACOB

What the?

MAX

Thank you.

JACOB

You're thanking me?

MAX

Thank you.

MAX breaks the hug.

FRANCES

Max?

MAX

(*To FRANCES*) I think you should take a seat. (*To JACOB*)
You too.

*FRANCES and JACOB exchange a look
and then sit on the couch next to
one another.*

FRANCES

Max, what's going on?

MAX

I didn't know how to tell you this Frances... I'm... I'm
gay. I didn't know it when we were first married, but I
can't live a lie anymore.

FRANCES

What?

MAX

I'm sorry, I am so sorry. I tried to make it work, I did.
But, but you two love one another right?

JACOB puts his arm around FRANCES.

JACOB

I love her with all my heart.

FRANCES

I love you too, Jacob.

MAX

I'm going to go, leave you two alone.

MAX exits up SL.

FRANCES

I don't know why, but I'm not remotely sad that Max is gay!

JACOB

Me either!

*FRANCES and JACOB begin to kiss
passionately and the lights fade to
black.*

End of scene.

ACT I SCENE 5

Tuesday night. Lights up on the living room. MAX is sitting on the couch in CS. FRANCES enters from down SR.

FRANCES

Fifteen minutes and both girls in bed.

MAX

You are a miracle worker.

FRANCES crosses to the couch and sits next to MAX, putting her feet up on MAX's lap.

The phone SR rings. FRANCES rises, and crosses SR and answers the phone.

FRANCES

Hello? *(Drops her voice to barely audible)* Why are you calling me? *(Pause)* No, I can't talk. Call me tomorrow.

FRANCES hangs up the phone.

MAX

Who was *that*?

FRANCES crosses and sits on the couch.

Pause.

MAX

Babe? Who called?

FRANCES

(Lying) Sam, she was fine though, just calling for chit chat.

MAX

Are you sure she was okay?

FRANCES
Sounded great.

Pause.

MAX
Want to have sex?

FRANCES
I guess.

*MAX begins to kiss FRANCES. MAX's
kissing moves down FRANCES' neck.*

MAX
I could barely concentrate at work.

FRANCES
Jacob came over tonight.

MAX
Right, how did that go?

MAX continues to kiss FRANCES.

FRANCES
I don't know. I think he may still have feelings for me. Is
that horrible? For me to think that?

*MAX takes off his shirt and starts
to undress FRANCES.*

FRANCES
Are you listening to me?

MAX stops kissing FRANCES.

MAX
I don't think it matters what he feels.

FRANCES
Right.

*MAX and FRANCES kiss again.
FRANCES stops the kissing.*

FRANCES

I don't think I'll see him again. It just doesn't seem right.

MAX

Whatever you think. I trust you.

MAX pulls FRANCES down on the couch, and begins to kiss her again. After a moment FRANCES sits up.

FRANCES

It seems wrong to turn down a friendship though, you know? I really think you two would get along.

MAX

Babe, I don't care. See him, don't see him, do what you want. Do you still want to have sex?

FRANCES

Not really.

MAX stands.

MAX

I'm going to bed. And I'm opening the window in our room.

FRANCES

Max.

MAX

I'm boiling.

FRANCES

I love you.

MAX

Yeah yeah.

FRANCES

What?

MAX

Well, it's been three weeks since we-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) We're busy, we have little kids.

MAX

Who are asleep almost every night by ten.

FRANCES

You're the one at work all the time.

MAX

Don't change the subject, Frances.

FRANCES

I'm tired.

MAX

You're always tired.

MAX crosses down SR to exit.

FRANCES

Babe?

MAX

I love you too.

FRANCES

Come here.

MAX

No, I don't want to.

*FRANCES rises and crosses to MAX.
FRANCES kisses MAX, takes him by
the hand and leads him back to the
couch. MAX sits on the couch, and
FRANCES sits on his lap. FRANCES
begins to kiss MAX.*

FRANCES

It might be fun if...

MAX

What?

FRANCES

Why don't you leave and come back in and pretend that-

MAX

(Interrupting) Can we just... I don't want to drag this out.

FRANCES

Right.

MAX

I have to work in the morning.

MAX kisses FRANCES.

FRANCES

How about that late night ride?

MAX

What?

FRANCES

Shh. Don't talk.

FRANCES and MAX begin to kiss more passionately. Lights fade to black, end of scene.

ACT I SCENE 6

Lights up on MAX's fantasy. MAX is sitting on the couch wearing boxers and a t-shirt. FRANCES enters from down SR. FRANCES is wearing underwear, a tight fitting tank top, and thigh high socks. FRANCES crosses to the couch.

FRANCES

I've been looking for you.

MAX

I'm right here. Where are the girls?

FRANCES

Your mom took them to Disneyland.

MAX

Disneyland?

FRANCES

For a month.

MAX

A month? What are we going to-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) Shhhh. Don't talk. I'm going to suck your dick now.

FRANCES mimes giving MAX a blow job.

MAX

Oh God, yes, yes, yes.

FRANCES

(Pulling up) I'm yours to do whatever you want to all month long. I've been stretching.

FRANCES returns to giving MAX a blow job.

*SAMANTHA enters from up SL.
SAMANTHA enters wearing a trench
coat. SAMANTHA crosses and stands
next to couch.*

SAMANTHA

I'm here.

MAX

(Startled) Jesus, what are you doing here Samantha?

*SAMANTHA takes off her trench coat
and we see she is wearing the same
thing that FRANCES is wearing, long
thigh high socks, underwear and a
tight tank top.*

*FRANCES stops giving MAX a blow job
and stands, MAX pulls a blanket off
the couch to cover up. FRANCES
crosses to SAMANTHA and put her arm
around her.*

FRANCES

Don't be mad babe, I thought Samantha could join us.

FRANCES and SAMANTHA kiss.

SAMANTHA

Is that all right Max?

FRANCES

I don't mind sharing you Max. Not with Samantha.

*FRANCES and SAMANTHA cross to couch
and each sit on either side of MAX.
They begin to kiss and caress one
another and MAX.*

MAX

No, I guess that would be fine.

*MAX begins to engage with FRANCES
and SAMANTHA.*

MAX

Do you think...

*SAMANTHA and FRANCES stop and look
at MAX.*

FRANCES

What do you need, babe?

MAX

I was just...

SAMANTHA

What is it?

MAX

Do you think I could... Be with Samantha? Alone?

FRANCES stands.

SAMANTHA

You want to be alone with me?

MAX

If that's okay.

SAMANTHA

Frances?

*MAX and SAMANTHA look to FRANCES
for approval.*

FRANCES

I'll go make some sandwiches!

Lights fade to black, end of scene.

ACT I SCENE 7

Friday morning. Lights up on the living room. SAMANTHA is sitting on the couch. MAX enters from down SR.

MAX

Well good morning Sam.

SAMANTHA

Hey Max. Where's Frances?

MAX sits next to SAMANTHA.

MAX

Dropping the girls off at school, she'll be back soon.

SAMANTHA

Right.

MAX

What are you doing here so early?

SAMANTHA

Visiting...

MAX

Everything okay?

SAMANTHA

Of course-

MAX

(Interrupting) Sam, come on.

SAMANTHA

(Unable to lie) My marriage is falling apart, I think it's all my fault, and I don't know how to save it.

MAX

I'm sorry. Damn. I am so sorry.

SAMANTHA

Yeah.

MAX

He's an idiot.

SAMANTHA

Thanks.

FRANCES enters from UP SL. Crosses to the couch.

FRANCES

Ugh. Ruth cries so much more than Mary ever did. Mary had no problems being left at preschool. It is so sad leaving her there crying.

MAX rises from the couch, and kisses FRANCES on the head.

MAX

I'd love to stay with you ladies, but I'm already running late. Love you.

FRANCES

Love you too.

The phone SR rings. FRANCES crosses and answers the phone quietly. FRANCES hangs the phone up almost immediately and turns to MAX and SAMANTHA.

MAX

(To SAMANTHA) It'll work out.

MAX gives SAMANTHA a hug.

MAX exits UP SL. FRANCES sits down next to SAMANTHA on the couch.

SAMANTHA

Hi.

FRANCES

Hello.

SAMANTHA puts her arm around FRANCES.

SAMANTHA

How are you?

FRANCES

Fine.... How are *you*?

SAMANTHA

I'm great.

FRANCES

No you're not. What is going on?

SAMANTHA

Bill.... How did it go Tuesday night?

FRANCES

Sam.

SAMANTHA

Did Max and Jacob hit it off?

FRANCES

Max wasn't here.

SAMANTHA

Really?

FRANCES

He got called in last minute, the server crashed.

SAMANTHA

So you and Jacob...

FRANCES

We were alone. You were right, he still has feelings for me.

SAMANTHA

Then don't see him.

FRANCES

Yeah, that would probably be best. (*Pause*) But Max could care less, and I think as long as I... I think I am fine to see him again.

SAMANTHA

Max cares more than you think. And I care about Max too.

FRANCES

We were only twenty one when we got married.

SAMANTHA

I know, I was there.

FRANCES

I thought I knew what I was doing. I thought I'd marry Max and never think about another man. It felt so incredible to be around Jacob. To be wanted again.

SAMANTHA

Max wants you.

FRANCES

He wants sex. I'm just... Around.

SAMANTHA

Do you really think that?

FRANCES

Sometimes. I don't know how much we *want* one another anymore. He just looks over at me while we're watching TV and asks, "You want to have sex?" It's just boring.

SAMANTHA

And you really think seeing Jacob again is a great idea?

FRANCES

I've never been unfaithful Sam. We've been married for seven years. Maybe I've earned an-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) An affair?

FRANCES

An exception. Just one small exception.

SAMANTHA

How would you feel if Max cheated on you?

FRANCES

Max could never been unfaithful, it's not in his DNA. But, who cares? If I never knew about it.

SAMANTHA

And Ruth and Mary?

FRANCES

They deserve a happy mother, don't they? A fulfilled mother?

SAMANTHA

Frances-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) Jacob reminds me of who I used to be. He sees *me*. Not this, not whatever I am now. I don't want to leave Max or the girls. I just want-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) Frances-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) Don't you think I've earned it? Shouldn't I be allowed to fuck up every now and then? I just want to know what it would be like... To feel another man's lips, another man's hands. Jacob has this scar on his chest, I remember I could see the top of it when I sat across from him in math class. I'd spend all class wondering how long it was, where he had gotten it from... Besides, Max would never know, it could be our secret.

SAMANTHA

(Raising her voice) Frances!

FRANCES

What? You don't understand, you've only been married a year, just wait. It get old, monotonous. You could go crazy waiting for something new, something exciting-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) You can't do this.

FRANCES

You're not listening, Samantha. I have to, I have to do this. To save my marriage, don't you get it? How else can it work? You need a break. I've been with one man for the past seven years! I want Jacob, and I can *have* him. He wants me, I can feel his need-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) Damn it, are you listening to yourself? Are you really trying to justify cheating on your husband?

FRANCES

I-

SAMANTHA stands.

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) Why are you telling me this? I want nothing to do with this. And if you can't keep it in your pants, I want nothing, and I mean *nothing* to do with you Frances.

*SAMANTHA begins to exit up SL,
FRANCES goes after her and blocks
her passage.*

FRANCES

Samantha, sit down.

SAMANTHA

I won't.

FRANCES

Look, I know. I was... I couldn't, you know me, I could never... It was just talk. I got carried away.

SAMANTHA

Like hell.

FRANCES

It didn't mean anything. I'm just having a bit of fun... Harmless fun.... Just thinking out loud.

SAMANTHA

You married *Max*.

FRANCES

I know.

SAMANTHA

You can't cheat on *Max*.

FRANCES

I know. I won't.

SAMANTHA

You don't understand, when someone cheats on you... It...

Pause.

FRANCES

Sam?

SAMANTHA

Frances, if you... It would be my fault. I'm the one who brought Jacob... I can't destroy your marriage too.

*FRANCES puts her arm around
SAMANTHA.*

FRANCES

No, no. It wouldn't be your fault. You're right. I won't see Jacob again. *(Pause)* What would I do without you?

*FRANCES leads SAMANTHA back to the
couch and they sit.*

SAMANTHA

Self-destruct, I'm sure.

FRANCES

I love you Sam. You're my best friend.

The phone SR rings.

SAMANTHA

I love you too... You make it really hard sometimes, but I love you too. *(Pause)* Are you going to get that?

FRANCES

Get what?

SAMANTHA

The phone.

FRANCES

I...

SAMANTHA

Don't tell me you're scared of people getting to you through the phone lines.

FRANCES

(Lying) It could happen.

The phone stops ringing.

SAMANTHA

You're nuts. Okay, I've got to get to work. Would it be alright if I came by for dinner tonight?

SAMANTHA rises and crosses up SL.

FRANCES

Of course.

SAMANTHA

I don't want to eat alone.

FRANCES rises from couch.

FRANCES

What is going on?

SAMANTHA

It's a mess.

FRANCES

Did he-

SAMANTHA

(Cutting in) I'll tell you tonight, I'm going to be late.

FRANCES

Call in sick.

SAMANTHA

I can't. I'll be by after work.

FRANCES

Alright.

SAMANTHA exits UP SL. FRANCES returns and sits on couch.

FRANCES

(To self) Don't sleep with Jacob. Stop thinking about Jacob. I love Max. Don't sleep with Jacob. Ugh.

Lights fade to black, end of scene.

ACT I SCENE 8

*Lights up on a FRANCES fantasy.
JACOB and FRANCES are dancing a
waltz down SL.*

FRANCES

Thanks.

JACOB

For what?

FRANCES

It's just nice to do something again, it's been so hard since
Max passed.

JACOB dips FRANCES down low.

JACOB

Happy to be of service.

*JACOB kisses FRANCES, as the kiss
ends he pulls her back to standing.*

FRANCES

Fuck. I'm sorry, I can't do this.

*FRANCES gets out of JACOB's arms
and moves to couch and sits.*

JACOB

I don't understand, you're free now, he's dead. We can-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) Max isn't dead. And you're not real.

*JACOB crosses and sits next to
FRANCES.*

JACOB

I'm not?

FRANCES

You're not. You're a figment of my imagination. But there's
a real you out there. He keeps calling and calling me. I
want to sleep with real Jacob.

JACOB

Why don't you?

FRANCES

It's wrong, isn't it?

JACOB kisses FRANCES.

JACOB

Nothing that feels this good can be wrong.

FRANCES

Of course you'd say that, you're a-

*FRANCES is interrupted by an
incredibly loud knocking. After
four knocks the lights fade quickly
to black, end of scene.*

ACT I SCENE 9

*Lights up on an empty living room.
We hear knocking up SL. FRANCES
enters from off SL wearing dish
washing clothes.*

FRANCES

(Yelling toward up SL) Alright, I'm coming. I have a very large gun with me by the way in case you're here to hurt me.

*FRANCES exits up SL. Moments later
FRANCES reenters from up SL,
followed by JACOB. FRANCES crosses
and sits on the sofa. JACOB hangs
back.*

FRANCES

Jacob.

JACOB

You stopped answering my calls.

FRANCES

What are you doing here?

JACOB

I needed to see you again. I'm sorry about last week.

*JACOB sits on couch. FRANCES
crosses and sits next to him.*

FRANCES

Sorry?

JACOB

I'm sorry I left, I'm sorry if I-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) Was completely inappropriate?

JACOB

Was it that bad? It was... Seeing you was... You'd think I'd have gotten over...

FRANCES
Gotten over what?

JACOB
Shut up, Frances. You knew exactly how I felt about you.

FRANCES
(*Ashamed*) Yeah.

JACOB
You're married now.

FRANCES
I am.

JACOB
You have kids.

FRANCES
Two.

JACOB
Nothing can-

FRANCES
(*Interrupting*) Nothing can happen.

JACOB
You smell good.

FRANCES
Dish soap.

JACOB
Where are your kids?

FRANCES
Preschool.

JACOB
Max?

FRANCES
Work.

Pause.

So, friends?

JACOB

Friends.

FRANCES

JACOB touches FRANCES' face with his hand.

Friends.

JACOB

Jacob?

FRANCES

Yeah?

JACOB

My friends don't typically caress my face.

FRANCES

JACOB stops touching FRANCES' face.

Right.

JACOB

I'm happy.

FRANCES

Yeah, you seem very happy.

JACOB

I love Max. He's amazing. I really don't deserve him.

FRANCES

Pause. JACOB stares at FRANCES.

I just...

JACOB

What?

FRANCES

I've thought about what it would be like... To...

JACOB

*JACOB pulls FRANCES into a kiss.
FRANCES breaks the kiss and stands.*

FRANCES

Wow.

JACOB

I know. I don't know what I was thinking. *(Rising)* I'm
sorry, Frances.

FRANCES

I love Max.

JACOB

I know.

FRANCES

We're friends. We're just old friends.

*JACOB kisses FRANCES. FRANCES lets
this kiss go on a bit longer and
then breaks.*

FRANCES

I don't know what I was thinking, getting married so young.
Being with you is...

JACOB

What?

FRANCES

Intoxicating.

*FRANCES kisses JACOB. FRANCES and
JACOB make their way to the couch.
Things progress quickly.*

The phone rings. FRANCES stands.

FRANCES

Shit.

JACOB

Don't get it.

FRANCES

It might be important.

FRANCES crosses SR and picks up the phone.

FRANCES

Hello? (Pause) Of course, I'm on my way.

FRANCES hangs up the phone and turns to face JACOB.

JACOB

Everything alright?

FRANCES

Yeah, it's... Mary is sick, I have to go and get her.

JACOB

Oh...

FRANCES

Well...

JACOB

Can I see you again?

FRANCES

I don't know.

JACOB

I need to see you again.

FRANCES

Where?

JACOB

Not here.

FRANCES

No, definitely not here.

JACOB

My place.

FRANCES

When?

JACOB

Tonight.

FRANCES

I don't know, people are coming here for dinner, Mary is sick. I can't believe we're talking about this.

*JACOB plants a short kiss on
FRANCES.*

JACOB

I'll come by for dinner too.

FRANCES

Wait...

JACOB

It'll be fine. You're a great actor.

FRANCES

No, I'm really not Jacob.

JACOB

I want to meet him, I want to meet the man who gets you.

FRANCES

I don't know.

JACOB

I do, I'll pretend to drink too much, you can offer me a ride home.

FRANCES

But...

JACOB kisses FRANCES.

JACOB

Trust me.

FRANCES

I've got to go. Your idea is terrible.

JACOB

It will work, you'll see.

*FRANCES exits up SL, JACOB exits
shortly behind her.*

Lights fade to black, end of scene.

ACT I SCENE 10

*Lights up on SAMANTHA's fantasy.
MAX and SAMANTHA sit on the couch.
They are both wearing all black,
and they are holding hands.*

SAMANTHA

It was a beautiful service.

MAX

It was.

SAMANTHA

She would have loved it.

MAX

You think?

SAMANTHA

Well, it was fitting.

MAX

I can't believe she's gone. What am I going to do without her? It all happened so suddenly.

SAMANTHA

I know, but Frances was never a very good driver. At least it wasn't drawn out. They say she died immediately.

*MAX begins to cry, he puts his head
on SAMANTHA's shoulders.*

SAMANTHA

You're going to be okay. It's going to be hard, I know how much you loved Frances.

MAX

That's not it. I mean, yes, I love Frances. She was my wife, the mother of my children... But...

SAMANTHA

What?

MAX

I don't know how to say it...

SAMANTHA

What?

MAX

I love you Samantha.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

You love me?

MAX

I know it's wrong, but I'm completely in love with you. I always have been. I never thought I would have a shot with you, you're so much prettier than Frances... I should have asked you out.

SAMANTHA

You love me?

MAX

And now, after my wife's funeral, all I can think about is what it would be like to kiss you.

SAMANTHA

You want to kiss me?

MAX

I do. Samantha, it's all I think about.

*MAX pulls SAMANTHA into a long
kiss.*

SAMANTHA

Oh, Max, I love you too. I loved you from the moment I met you. You're... I think you're my soul mate.

*MAX and SAMANTHA kiss. Lights fade
to black. End of Act*

ACT II SCENE 1

*Wednesday evening. Lights up.
SAMANTHA is on the couch, drinking
from a glass of wine. MAX enters
with a bottle of wine and another
glass. MAX crosses to the couch
and sits next to SAMANTHA.*

MAX

No Bill?

SAMANTHA

Working.

MAX

I haven't seen him in-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) He is swamped at work.

MAX

Well, I know how that goes.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

Where's Frances?

MAX

At my mom's. Mary is sick, so Grandma volunteered to watch her tonight so we could have a vomit free evening.

SAMANTHA

That was thoughtful.

MAX

That's my mom.

SAMANTHA

When is she getting back?

MAX

Not sure, why afraid to be alone with me?

SAMANTHA

No, no. Don't be silly.

MAX

Everything alright?

SAMANTHA

Of course.

MAX

With you and Bill, I mean.

SAMANTHA

Yeah, we're.... We're figuring it out.

MAX

Good.

Pause. They both drink from their wine glasses.

SAMANTHA

Do you remember how we met?

MAX

Um... Yes, we had a class together. Right?

SAMANTHA

Yes.

MAX

Spanish class?

SAMANTHA

Spanish class.

MAX

(With a terrible Spanish accent) Mi nobmre es Mac.

SAMANTHA

(With a much better Spanish accent) Mucho gusto, mi nombre es Samanta. Me gusto el vino.

MAX

Gracias. Eres muy hermosa, te amo.

SAMANTHA

You...

MAX

I can only remember so much. It was either, "You're beautiful, I love you," or, "Donde esta el bano?"

SAMANTHA

Where is the bathroom?

MAX

It's a helpful question. But, I know where the bathroom is, this is my house.

SAMANTHA

You don't think I'm beautiful?

MAX

This is one of those trick questions...

SAMANTHA

What?

MAX

I don't think there is a safe way to answer you.

SAMANTHA takes MAX's hand.

SAMANTHA

It's safe, it's me.

MAX

I think you are beautiful.

SAMANTHA

Thank you.

Both drink from wine.

MAX

Just don't tell my wife.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

I knew you before Frances.

MAX

You introduced us.

SAMANTHA

Why did you ask Frances out?

*MAX finishes his wine and pours
himself another glass.*

MAX

Why did I...

SAMANTHA

Why did you ask Frances out, and not me?

MAX

Well...

SAMANTHA

I've always wondered.

MAX

This is a trick.

SAMANTHA

No trick.

MAX

I thought she would say yes.

SAMANTHA

No.

MAX

What? You were both cute, and smart.... And friends. I figured I had one shot, I had to make it count. You seemed...

SAMANTHA

(Something she's heard many times before) Frigid?

MAX

Frigid? No, not frigid. You were intimidating. You had your plans, your goals. No man was going to get in your way. And... Frances... Frances was... I'm not going to say easy but... Approachable.

SAMANTHA

I trust you more than anyone, Max.

MAX

Thank you Sam. That means a lot to me.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

Bill is leaving me.

MAX

What happened?

SAMANTHA

God.

MAX

What?

SAMANTHA

He left on over a week ago. Last night we talked, but...
He's done. I don't know how to tell Frances....

MAX

What do you mean? You guys tell one another everything.

SAMANTHA

I know, lately she's just been...

MAX

What?

SAMANTHA

She is just so distracted, and caught up in...

MAX

Samantha?

SAMANTHA

What?

MAX

What is she caught up in?

SAMANTHA

Max.

MAX

Sam, I trust you too. You're the most honest person I know. What is she so caught up in that she doesn't see how much you're hurting?

SAMANTHA

Max...

MAX

Is Frances leaving me?

SAMANTHA

What? No, no. I'm sorry... No, don't think that.

MAX

She's just... I don't know. More high strung than normal.

SAMANTHA

Who knows with her...

Pause.

MAX

Frances *really* doesn't know about you and Bill?

SAMANTHA

She knows we've been having problems. I just haven't figured out how to tell her he left. I couldn't... I couldn't even make it a year. I don't know what I did.

MAX

You can't blame yourself, there are two of you.

SAMANTHA

Have you ever been unfaithful?

MAX

What? No, never. Is Bill?

SAMANTHA

Yeah.

MAX puts his arm around SAMANTHA.

MAX

I'm sorry, Sam. I don't know how you're still functioning. I'd... Do you need to stay here?

SAMANTHA

No, no. There's no room, I'm fine.

MAX

This couch is yours, just say the word.

SAMANTHA

Are you sure?

MAX

Of course.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

Have you ever thought of anyone else? I mean, do you ever imagine other women?

MAX

I...

SAMANTHA

I'd never say, I'm just, I don't know, Max. Sometimes I think our lives would be better if you'd have asked me out.

MAX

(Hard to admit) I know what you mean. I love Frances... But I understand you.

SAMANTHA puts her hand on MAX's leg.

SAMANTHA

Max, I... I think about you.

MAX and SAMANTHA look at one another.

MAX

Sam... I couldn't...

SAMANTHA
You've never thought about me?

MAX
Sam...

SAMANTHA
I just want to know...

MAX
Know what?

SAMANTHA kisses MAX.

*There is a loud knock on the door.
MAX stands up.*

MAX
Frances must have left her keys.

*MAX crosses up SL and exits. A
moment later MAX enters with JACOB
following behind him. SAMANTHA
rises upon seeing JACOB.*

SAMANTHA
Jacob? What are you doing here?

JACOB crosses and hugs SAMANTHA.

JACOB
Frances didn't say anything?

MAX
No.

*JACOB goes to MAX and shakes his
hand.*

JACOB
It was last minute. Nice to see you again Mark.

MAX
It's Max.

JACOB

Right. Frances didn't tell me exactly what you do, something with computers, right?

MAX

I'm a staff engineer.

JACOB

Exciting stuff. (*Gesturing to the wine*) Can I get a glass?

MAX

Sure.

MAX exits down SR. SAMANTHA and JACOB sit on the couch.

JACOB

Where is Frances?

SAMANTHA

Grandma's. What are you doing here?

JACOB

Dinner, I hear Frances is the best cook.

SAMANTHA

Watch yourself.

JACOB

Good to see you too, Samantha.

SAMANTHA

I know what's going on.

JACOB

I am sure you think you do.

MAX enters from down SL with a wine glass, crosses to the couch and hands it to JACOB. JACOB pours himself a glass of wine and takes a drink.

MAX

It has happened again. Whatever it is that Frances made it inedible.

SAMANTHA

Again? Max, I miss the days that you were unemployed.

JACOB stands.

JACOB

Let me take a look.

MAX

It's a goner.

JACOB

I'm a chef. I'm sure I can pull something together.

*JACOB exits down SL. MAX crosses
and sits on the couch and stares in
the direction that JACOB just
exited.*

MAX

Well he seems...

SAMANTHA

Like a total asshole?

MAX

Yeah.

SAMANTHA

I don't know what Frances is doing.

MAX

Sam... What happened, or almost happened when... I love you. You're one of my oldest friends. But, I'm happily married. I know you're hurting right now, but trust me, if anything were to... It would only make things worse.

SAMANTHA

I know, I just...

SAMANTHA and MAX embrace.

JACOB enters from down SL.

JACOB

Where would I find your... (*Seeing MAX and SAMANTHA*) Oh sorry.

MAX and SAMANTHA move away from one another, and MAX stands.

MAX

What can I get for you?

JACOB turns to exit back down SL.

JACOB

I'll find it, you can-

MAX

(*Interrupting*) It's not what it looks like.

JACOB

I didn't say anything. I just...

FRANCES enters from up SL. FRANCES crosses to MAX and gives him a kiss.

FRANCES

Hey everybody. Is dinner ready?

MAX

Not exactly.

FRANCES

Damn, is it funky again? What do I do wrong?

JACOB

From the smell, everything.

FRANCES

Thanks a lot. So, what are we doing? Pizza? Thai? I could be into some Indian...

MAX

Your friend here was about to cook for us.

FRANCES

No. (*Looking at JACOB*) Really?

MAX

He didn't tell you he's a chef?

FRANCES

He... I guess we didn't cover that.

MAX

What did you talk about last night?

FRANCES

Old times...

Pause.

MAX

I'll help you with dinner. Come on.

MAX exits down SL, JACOB follows him off stage. FRANCES moves to couch and sits next to SAMANTHA and put her arm around her.

FRANCES

Jacob came by after you left. I need to tell you something.

SAMANTHA

I think I already know.

FRANCES

We were alone. I should have made him leave.

SAMANTHA

But you didn't.

FRANCES

Jacob kissed me.

SAMANTHA

No.

FRANCES

I stopped him.

SAMANTHA

Good.

FRANCES

I stopped him. He kissed me, and... I stopped him both times.

SAMANTHA

He kissed you *twice*?

FRANCES

And I stopped him. I let the second one go on a bit, shit. And, I kissed him. I kissed him too.

Pause.

SAMANTHA

What are you going to tell Max?

FRANCES

Max?

SAMANTHA

Max.

FRANCES

I don't know Sam. Telling him, saying anything to him... It just doesn't seem right.

SAMANTHA

Don't you think he has the right to know?

FRANCES

It won't change anything, will it?

SAMANTHA

It might.

FRANCES

I can't imagine Max leaving me.

SAMANTHA

What is Jacob doing here?

FRANCES

He wanted to come by.

SAMANTHA

Frances.

FRANCES
I know it's stupid, and crazy, and-

SAMANTHA
(*Interrupting*) Selfish?

FRANCES
Yes. It's stupid and crazy and extremely selfish. I can't-

SAMANTHA
(*Interrupting*) What about Max?

FRANCES
I love Max. I do, I love Max.

SAMANTHA
You need to tell him. Everything.

FRANCES
Telling Max would just hurt him. I love him, I can't hurt him like that.

SAMANTHA
I can't believe you.

Pause.

FRANCES
I want to sleep with Jacob.

SAMANTHA
I hope you get caught. I hope Max finds out exactly who you are.

FRANCES
Samantha, please.

SAMANTHA stands.

SAMANTHA
No, I can't, I told you. I told you I couldn't sit back and watch you-

MAX enters from down SL.

MAX

I hope no one is starving... (*Seeing SAMANTHA*) Sam, are you okay?

MAX crosses to SAMANTHA.

SAMANTHA

Do you think you could drive me home?

FRANCES stands.

FRANCES

Sam, don't go.

SAMANTHA

I need to be alone right now.

MAX

Sure, let me get my coat.

FRANCES

She's fine. Sam, you can drive yourself home, don't be so dramatic.

MAX

Frances, our friend needs help. Can't you see that?

MAX exits down SR.

FRANCES

Come on, stay for dinner. It is going to be so much weirder here without you.

SAMANTHA

I can't.

FRANCES

Please, I need you.

SAMANTHA

I won't.

FRANCES crosses to SAMANTHA.

FRANCES

You're my best friend, I need you more than ever.

SAMANTHA slaps FRANCES across the face.

SAMANTHA
Tell Max I'll be waiting outside.

SAMANTHA exits up SL.

MAX enters from down SR.

MAX
Where's Sam?

FRANCES
She hit me.

MAX
What?

FRANCES crosses to the couch and sits.

FRANCES
She just... I asked her to stay and she slapped me.

MAX
Frances, she-

FRANCES
(Interrupting) Let her drive her own ass home, or walk.
Jesus, I was just talking to her. I need her, I'm-

MAX
(Interrupting) Bill left her.

FRANCES rises from couch.

FRANCES
No.

MAX
Last night. He left her for another woman. You need her?
She couldn't tell you Frances. She couldn't tell you.

FRANCES

She said they were working it out. She said they were trying. I'll drive her, you stay, I'll go.

MAX

She asked me. I'll be back.

MAX exits up SL.

*FRANCES moves to couch and sits.
JACOB enters from down SL.*

JACOB

Where is everyone?

FRANCES

Gone.

*JACOB crosses to the couch and sits
next to FRANCES. JACOB begins to
kiss her neck.*

JACOB

For how long?

FRANCES

I don't know.

JACOB continues to kiss FRANCES.

JACOB

Do we have enough time to...

FRANCES stops JACOB.

FRANCES

Am I a bad person?

JACOB

What?

FRANCES

Do you think I'm a bad person?

JACOB

No, you're... Frances you're amazing.

FRANCES

They (*Indicating up SL*) think I'm terrible.

JACOB

I didn't want to tell you this, but... I walked in on them earlier.

FRANCES

What?

JACOB

They were... They were holding one another.

FRANCES

No.

JACOB

I saw it. No one is perfect, Frances. No one. Everyone at some point cheats or lies or hurts the people they love. It's who we are. You can't fight it.

FRANCES

I can't?

JACOB

No. Now... I want you, Frances. You want me. Let's enjoy one another. We can do that. (*Pause*) You want me, don't you?

FRANCES kisses JACOB. FRANCES moves to sit on JACOB's lap, and the kissing continues with rubbing and touching of one another's bodies. FRANCES removes JACOB's shirt and JACOB removes FRANCES' shirt. They continue to kiss.

MAX and SAM enter from up SL. FRANCES and JACOB notice when it's too late. FRANCES rises, and grabs a shirt to hold over her body.

MAX

What?

SAMANTHA

Frances.

*JACOB quickly finds his shirt, and
puts it on.*

JACOB

Frances, I...

FRANCES

Just go! Leave, Jacob, leave now.

JACOB

No.

MAX

Jacob, you need to leave.

JACOB

I won't.

FRANCES

Just go, please.

JACOB

Frances, I love you.

MAX crosses and sits on the couch.

SAMANTHA

You're worthless Frances, do you know that?

FRANCES

Sam?

SAMANTHA

Max talked me into staying, like I have a choice. I can't leave Frances. Bill left me. He... He's at *our* house with his... He's getting his things. He asked me not to be there.

FRANCES

Sam, I'm so-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) Shut the fuck up Frances. Just stay away from me.

SAMANTHA exits down SR.

FRANCES manages to put her shirt back on.

JACOB

You need to tell him Frances.

FRANCES

Tell him what?

JACOB

That we love each other.

FRANCES

Jacob, I...

JACOB

We were made for each other.

FRANCES

Please, Jacob, just go.

JACOB

But-

FRANCES

(Interrupting, yelling at JACOB) I don't love you.

Pause.

MAX

I need to talk to my wife.

JACOB exits up SL.

FRANCES

I'm sorry.

MAX

Are you leaving me?

FRANCES
No.

MAX
Do you love him?

FRANCES
I...

MAX
Do you?

FRANCES
I love you. It was just-

MAX
(Interrupting) Just sex?

FRANCES
We never-

MAX
(Interrupting) But you would have.

FRANCES crosses and sits on the couch.

FRANCES
I am so sorry Max. I never thought-

MAX
(Interrupting) What?

FRANCES
I never wanted you to... This wasn't about you.

MAX
Not about me? You're fucking-

FRANCES
(Interrupting) We never slept together.

MAX
You tried though. You would have. Right? *(Pause)* Right?

FRANCES

Yes.

MAX

I never would have believed it. I still can't.

FRANCES

I didn't think it would matter. You'd never know, and I could, it was just going to be once. We were so young Max. Children. What were we doing? Can we really expect it to just, to not be with anyone else? He wanted me, Max. I forgot what that felt like.

MAX

I want you, Frances.

FRANCES

It's not the same.

MAX

It's not? How can you tell me, I want you everyday. Don't tell me it's not the same, that I want you less than some-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) It was supposed to be just a fantasy. I was never going to see him, and then Sam invited him over, and you told me it was okay to-

MAX

(Interrupting) You're blaming Sam and me?

FRANCES

That's not, that's not what I meant. It's coming out all wrong. I, it didn't seem so bad. You were never going to know. It was, it was just going to be once. Just one small exception.

MAX

He's in love with you.

FRANCES

I didn't know that.

MAX

You're such a fucking liar. I can't stand it.

FRANCES

I-

MAX

(Interrupting) You're not the only one who, who wants other-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) I know, I know. Temptation is a part of marriage-

MAX

(Interrupting) I want to sleep with Sam.

FRANCES

No, you-

MAX

(Interrupting) She wants me.

FRANCES

Max, she's my-

MAX

(Interrupting) We were young. Too young, maybe. You're right, maybe we should be able to-

FRANCES

(Interrupting) Max-

MAX

(Interrupting) I think about her, Frances. Constantly.

FRANCES

No.

MAX stands. Pause.

MAX

I'm going to my mom's. I'll drop the girls by in the morning.

FRANCES stands.

FRANCES

But, what about us? Are we, what's going to happen?

MAX

I don't know Frances.

MAX exits up SL. After half a moment FRANCES runs after MAX, yelling as she exits up SL. We hear her from offstage.

FRANCES

Max! Max, no. Max, I want you! I fucked up, okay? I'm sorry. Max. Come back, I need you. MAX!

FRANCES enters from up SL. FRANCES returns to couch and sits. FRANCES slouches forward with her head in her lap.

Pause.

SAMANTHA enters from down SR.

SAMANTHA

Frances?

FRANCES doesn't move.

FRANCES

What the hell are you still doing here?

SAMANTHA crosses to couch and sits.

SAMANTHA

I have no where else to go.

FRANCES

Shit.

SAMANTHA

I'm sorry, Frances. I brought Max back in the house on purpose. I was just so pissed. You can't just cheat on people. You can't. Bill is fucking some idiot. He's been fucking her on my couch, and in my bed. Apparently she's just a *great* girl. And now he's gone, and he won't come back. Why doesn't he love me?

FRANCES

Sam-

SAMANTHA

(Interrupting) Then I go and kiss Max. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, I just.... Shit. I have no one. I have no one, and I have no where.

SAMANTHA stands.

FRANCES

Sit down.

SAMANTHA

You don't hate me?

FRANCES

I do.... No. I can't hate you.

SAMANTHA sits.

SAMANTHA

Jacob is in love with you.

FRANCES

I didn't see that coming.

SAMANTHA

You didn't?

FRANCES

Maybe I knew.

SAMANTHA

Max doesn't want to sleep with me.

FRANCES

How did you-

SAMANTHA

(Cutting in) I was listening.

FRANCES

Right.

SAMANTHA

He was trying to hurt you.

FRANCES

Do you want to sleep with him?

SAMANTHA

I don't know. Maybe.

Pause.

FRANCES

Oh.

SAMANTHA

Sorry.

FRANCES

You get what you give, I guess.

SAMANTHA

What do we do now?

FRANCES

I don't know. Are you okay?

*FRANCES puts her arm around
SAMANTHA.*

SAMANTHA

No, Frances... I... I couldn't even make it a year...
He... What's wrong with me?

*SAMANTHA collapses into FRANCES and
starts to cry. FRANCES rubs
SAMANTHA's back and rocks her like
you would a baby.*

FRANCES

It's okay, it's okay. He's a total fucking asshole.

*SAMANTHA pulls herself up and
starts to laugh.*

SAMANTHA

Right.

FRANCES

What's so funny?

SAMANTHA

He's the asshole. You kissed Jacob, I kissed Max. But Bill, he's the asshole.

FRANCES

I didn't say we weren't all assholes. But Bill? I blame Bill for all of this.

FRANCES and SAMANTHA laugh.

SAMANTHA

What do we do now?

FRANCES

I know, let's watch Law and Order, it's nice and mind numbing.

SAMANTHA

Is it on now? What time is it?

FRANCES

That's the things about Law and Order... It's *always* on. And, as it turns out, it's a much healthier habit than sex fantasies. It might make you paranoid, stupid and boring, but people don't seem to mind that.

Lights fade to black, end of play.