

CATASTROPHE

"ISSUES"

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INT. KITCHEN - SHARON AND ROB'S FLAT - EARLY MORNING

Sharon is in her nightgown, cooking scrambled eggs and hash browns on the burner. She looks relatively tranquil. Frankie is jumping on the couch in his pajamas. Sharon smiles at him.

Rob walks into the kitchen, hurriedly tucking his dress shirt into his pants.

ROB
Good morning.

SHARON
(Beaming)
Morning.

Sharon saunters over to Rob and kisses him passionately. Rob is pleasantly surprised. Sharon goes back to the stove.

SHARON
Made scrambled eggs and bacon and hash browns. Sort of burnt the bacon, so it's like smouldered into little chunklets now, hope you don't mind.

ROB
Uh, yeah, that's okay.

ROB sits as Sharon serves his breakfast.

SHARON
Oh, and I fixed the espresso machine this morning so... hooray! Espresso.

ROB
Wow, so no more spontaneous bursting into flames? Huh.

Sharon pours the espresso into a tiny cup. Rob watches her, grinning but bewildered.

ROB
Is this all cause of Paris?

SHARON
Is what because of Paris?

ROB
Well, I mean, I figured a Parisian getaway was worth a solid two weeks
(MORE)

ROB (cont'd)
of ravenous post-vacation sex but,
a grand slam breakfast? Waking up
early to fix the espresso machine?
What's next, anal at the table?

Sharon LAUGHS. Rob lifts his espresso and DOWNS it in one
gulp.

Beat.

SHARON
(Indicating the espresso)
D'you want another one?

Rob's face flushes red, and he puts down his espresso.

ROB
Oh god. You want another kid.

SHARON
What?

ROB (CONTINUOUS)
Listen, I've been thinking about
it, and I really feel, we should
wait until these kids are, at
least, teenagers to see to what
extent they're fucked up. I mean,
we've got one boy, one girl...

SHARON
Rob.

ROB (CONTINUOUS)
...they're actually kind of perfect
test subjects, so we could *really*
get it right with a third-

SHARON
(Interrupting)
Rob! I'm not trying to sauce you up
for getting me pregnant again. I'm
just.. in a good mood for once. Or,
I was, I guess.

Rob takes a breath, coming back from red-alert mode.

ROB
(Exhaling)
Because of Paris.

Sharon shrugs, starts doing dishes.

Beat.

ROB
Well, well that's great!

He gets up, puts on his suit jacket.

ROB
That caffeine boost will come in handy--they're trying to get me to sell this new UTI treatment that might cause kidney failure.

Rob leans in tenderly to kiss Sharon.
Now I'll be ten times more productive, and only five times more diuretic--

Sharon winces and turns away.

SHARON
Ugh, espresso breath. Gross.

ROB
Oh. Sorry.

He puts his hand up to his mouth to smell his breath and sniffs.

ROB
Smells like... burnt paper.

Sharon looks behind Rob--the espresso machine is SMOKING.

The FIRE ALARM starts BLARING. Frankie, still jumping on the couch, covers his ears and SCREAMS. Muireann in her baby chair is woken up by the noise, and BAWLS.

SHARON
Oh, fucking hell.

Sharon and Rob exchange a look of resignation.

With an air of ritual, Rob races to the machine and takes off his blazer to fan the smoke. Sharon goes to try to calm Frankie down.

Opening MUSIC comes in.

TITLE OVER: CATASTROPHE.

INT. BREAK ROOM - ROB'S OFFICE - MORNING

Rob is in the break room making coffee. OLIVIA steps in and catches ROB'S glance.

Rob has already prepared a flirty comment.

ROB
Olivia, fancy seeing you here--

She barely acknowledges Rob as she strides past him.

OLIVIA
Rob.

ROB
(Stuttering)
I, uh--

Olivia goes to the table at the other side of the room, where seated eating a tuna sandwich is their schmoey colleague TED, 46.

Olivia sits down next to Ted and starts fawning over his wristwatch. Ted is stunned. Rob is distracted by this--while he tries to open a little creamer packet.

OLIVIA
It's so shiny, where did you get it?

TED
Er, got it on Amazon for cheap, actually.

CLOSE ON: ROB'S HANDS, fiddling with the creamer.

ROB
(Muttering)
Open, you stupid British milk packet.

Rob finally RIPS the container open, but in doing so KNOCKS his coffee onto the floor.

ROB
Fuck!

Olivia and Ted glance over, startled. Olivia gets up to go back to her pod.

OLIVIA
Well, bye for now, Ted.

She now has a devious grin as she strides past Rob, who is flushing red as he gets down on all fours with a handful of napkins.

OLIVIA
Looks like you spilled your coffee.
Idiot.

ROB
That's--thanks.

EXT. SUNNY PARK - MORNING

DAVE and CATHERINE are jogging through the park in full joggers' regalia.

Catherine stops at the water fountain to refill her bottle.
Dave jogs on the spot.

CATHERINE
How far have we gone?

Dave checks his watch.

DAVE
Almost ten clicks.

CATHERINE
Look at us.

DAVE
Pfft. Babe. That's nothing. When I was nineteen I took amps in Berlin and ran forty K along the Berlin Wall in less than four hours. This is pre-collapse, by the way.

CATHERINE
Marvelous.

ASH appears in front of Catherine.

ASH
Catherine! What a lovely surprise!

CATHERINE
Oh my god, Ash! Hey!

They EMBRACE warmly.

ASH

I was meditating on the grass over there. Caught you out of the corner of my eye.

DAVE

(To ASH)

Hey, aren't you supposed to have your eyes closed when you meditate? Or is that just a Tibetan thing.

Ash stares at Dave, lighting a cigarette. Awkward silence.

CATHERINE

(Indicating)

Er, Ash, this is Dave.

ASH

Ah, Dave. Catherine mentioned she was seeing an American.

DAVE

She sure is. Did she mention we met at Yoga after she caught me staring at her ass?

Catherine shifts uncomfortably. Ash takes a puff of his cigarette.

CATHERINE

(To Dave)

Dave, Ash is my old friend from Marrakesh. Remember?

DAVE

Ohhh. You're the guy who used to smuggle banana hash out of Morocco. That stuff gets you FUCKED!

(Pause.)

I mean, I haven't tried it in years, of course, but, from what I remember.

ASH

(Ignoring him)

Catherine, I meant to call you actually. Tina's having everyone over for drinks on Tuesday.

CATHERINE

Oh, lovely! Tuesday. I'll be there.

ASH
Wonderful.

Beat. Ash puts out his cigarette and begins to head back to his meditation spot.

ASH
(Calling to Catherine)
Bring the American too.

Dave forces a smile.

INT. ROB'S POD - ROB'S OFFICE - MIDDAY

Rob is typing on his computer. Outside his door, he spots Olivia and Ted. Olivia is whispering intimately to Ted, who she has pinned up against the wall like a frightened animal.

Rob stares back at his computer.

ROB
Fucking psycho.

Rob puts earbuds in his ears and blares loud music. His eyes flicker toward the doorway.

CLOSE ON: Computer screen. Rob types, "Kidney failure is only a risk factor when sex is performed..."

He backspaces, shaking his head. He retypes, "When tests are performed..."

Rob can't resist looking back at Olivia. She is now licking Ted's dopey chequered tie, slowly and sensuously, while staring into his eyes.

Rob takes a deep breath. His eyes are pulled to the photo he keeps on his desk, of him with Sharon and the kids at Brighton Beach.

ROB
Fuck you, Beach Rob. We can't all
be fucking perfect all the time.

Rob grabs the photo and SHOVES it into his desk drawer.

Rob gets up and walks to the door, staring Olivia in the face. Olivia stops licking Ted's tie to watch Rob's next move.

He stands still in the doorway for a moment, and then, in one swift move, grabs the doorknob and SLAMS the door in Olivia's face.

Olivia's face appears in the window beside the door, full of shock and fury. Rob is smiling as he goes back to his desk.

INT. CAFE - LATE AFTERNOON

Sharon sits at a table in the cafe where she met Samantha in S2E2. She taps her foot nervously.

Melissa enters, and spots Sharon.

MELISSA

Hi!

Sharon gets up, and they hug.

SHARON

Can I buy you something? Coffee?
Espresso?

MELISSA

No need. Now you insisted we meet here today, there must be something up. Am I right?

SHARON

(Pause.)

It's Rob. He, he thinks the kids are gonna be fucked up, or something.

MELISSA

Why does he think that?

SHARON

I dunno, because their parents are bloody alcoholics who switch from fighting eachother to fucking eachother about once per minute?

Beat.

MELISSA

Sharon... is this really about Rob?

SHARON

I dunno. No. I just... now he's got me worried about the kids. I mean, what if Muireanne grows up thinking it's normal to drink 3 glasses of wine per day, you know? Or, for that matter, to go home with some Yankee fuckboi and conceive a child

(MORE)

SHARON (cont'd)
with them before you've even
exchanged contact information?

MELISSA
(Wincing)
Sharon...

SHARON
That's why I called you. I mean,
you raised two kids on your own.
They're smart, well-adjusted, they
smell good--

MELISSA
Sharon. Every family is different.
I have my flaws. My kids have made
their share of mistakes.

SHARON
Of course, but--what if Rob and I
raising kids is just one giant
mistake?

Melissa studies Sharon's face.

Beat.

MELISSA
Sharon, you know what I thought
when I first heard you were
pregnant?

SHARON
I can't believe she's
pre-menopausal?

MELISSA
No. I thought, "She's going to
raise the most self-confident,
passionate children in the world."
And I still believe that. I can see
it in all your pupils.

SHARON
Really?

MELISSA
Definitely.

SHARON
 (Smiles)
 Thanks.

Melissa checks her watch.

MELISSA
 Shoot, it's almost five, I've got
 to go pick up Morgan from his dance
 class.

MELISSA starts getting up to leave.

MELISSA (CONTINUOUS)
 (Leans in, whispers)
 For the record, I was a *little*
 surprised that you were still
 making eggs.

Sharon takes a sip of tea, self-conscious.

INT. CATHERINE'S APARTMENT - MIDDAY

Dave, still in his jogging gear, is sitting anxiously on Catherine's couch. He spots a copy of *Ecologist Magazine* on the coffee table. He picks it up and examines the strange object, mystified.

Catherine opens the door to the bathroom and peeks out at Dave. She's got a towel wrapped around her, and nothing else. She runs her finger along the doorframe, invitingly.

CATHERINE
 Shower's heating up.

DAVE
 Is it now.

CATHERINE
 (Nods)
 It's a big shower.

DAVE
 I'll bet it is.

CATHERINE
 Room for two.

DAVE
 (Laughs.) You know, I was thinking
 I'd shower at home actually. I like
 my shower, it's got one of those
 concentrated jet stream heads--

CATHERINE

You lunkhead, do you want to fuck
me in the shower or not?

Dave is silent. He lets out a sigh.

Catherine, sensing Dave is troubled by something, shuts off
the water and goes to sit beside him, still wrapped in her
towel.

CATHERINE

Okay, what's wrong?

DAVE

Well, um... listen, uh, are you
fucking Marrakesh guy?

CATHERINE

I'm sorry, what?

DAVE

Marrakesh, Ash, or whatever the
fuck his name is.

CATHERINE

Am I fucking Ash?

DAVE

Well, are you?

CATHERINE

(Indignant)

No, I am not fucking my oldest
friend Ash.

Beat.

DAVE

Good. I trust you, just had to make
sure is all.

CATHERINE

(Gulps)

We did... have a thing, a very long
time ago--

Dave jumps up, furious.

DAVE

Oh, uh huh, I fucking knew it! Oh,
I saw the way you were looking at
him, and he was looking at you, and
you had your cute little

(MORE)

DAVE (cont'd)
friends-who-like-to-fuck hug. I
called it from a mile away!

CATHERINE
Dave.

DAVE
Don't you do that to me, don't you
"Dave" me. I invented that!

CATHERINE
Dave! Will you just let me explain?

Dave pauses. He gestures, "go ahead."

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I was at rock bottom when I met
Ash. I was surrounded by people who
exploited me and treated me like
rubbish, and Ash was the first
person who really, truly gave a
shit about me. He got me out of
Marrakesh, he... he saved my life!

DAVE
(Pause.)
So?

CATHERINE
So... whatever happened between us
is in the past. Ash will be my best
friend until the day we die, but
he's just that. He's a friend.

DAVE
Just a friend.

CATHERINE
Yeah.

Beat.

Dave takes a deep breath.

DAVE
So, is shower sex still on the
table?

CATHERINE
(Smiles)

Catherine gets up, unwraps her towel and THROWS it in Dave's
face.

CATHERINE

Last one to the shower is a jealous American.

She bolts toward the shower, and Dave, rejuvenated, rushes after her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHARON AND ROB'S FLAT - EVENING

Rob and Sharon are cuddled together on the sofa, watching English Premier League football.

SHARON

Hah, look at the little guy run.

ROB

Yeah. His comparatively short legs make him look like a gerbil.

Sharon laughs.

Beat.

SHARON

Why are we watching this, again?

ROB

Because you wanted to watch a show that I was sure had no babies in it.

SHARON

Oh yeah.

ROB

Your nipples still burning from Muireanne's dinner?

SHARON

Um, yea, but... it's something else.

ROB

Okay, then why did you insist we ban babies from our movie night?

SHARON

Because... Listen you really set me off this morning. That thing about the kids being fucked up when they're older.

ROB
That's what's bothering you?

SHARON
Yes, that's what's bothering me!

ROB
Honey, look I don't think our kids are going to be fucked up. I'm sorry for saying that.

SHARON
You don't?

ROB
No. If anything they're gonna have an advantage. You know, we're giving them a lot of life experience right off the bat.

SHARON
Okay, what does that mean?

ROB
It means, we're an unconventional couple. Our marriage is the happy result of gross negligence leading to conception. So if we can make our marriage work, anything is possible.

SHARON
(Sarcastic)
Well, thank god I married a romantic.

ROB
I think it's true. Along the same lines, haven't you ever seen a movie about high school? All the coolest kids in school have fucked up families. Now Frankie, he gets to tell chicks that his parents conceived him in a stairwell. Do you have any idea how many blowjobs that'll earn him?

SHARON
Great, well that's lovely for Frankie. But I'm actually less worried about his blowjob tally than, you know, like, how it will affect him that his mom drinks like a fucking sailor?

Rob tenses up.

ROB
Okay, then... stop.

SHARON
(Pause.)
What?

ROB
Just... stop drinking. I did it. I was ashamed of what I was doing to the people who loved me, so I stopped drinking. So could you. You could stop tonight.

SHARON
You can't be fucking serious, Rob.

ROB
You're the one who wanted to be serious.

SHARON
Great, so you think I'm a fucking alcoholic.

ROB
Well, what do you want me to say. It takes one to know one, and I am one, so--
(Points in her face)
There's one.

SHARON
(Getting up)
I can't fucking believe you.

ROB
Alright fine, we don't have to talk about it. But if you don't want to play Spot The Alcoholic, then don't bring it up!

SHARON
There's the fucking asshole!

ROB
(Stammers)
Child-ruiner!

SHARON
Absent father!

ROB
(Getting up)
Fuck you!

SHARON
(Pushing forward)
Fuck you!

Beat.

They stand face-to-face, seething with passion, mouths inches away.

ROB
I am very turned on right now.

SHARON
I'm practically coming.

They attack each other with lust. Their mouths and bodies collide. Rob throws Sharon onto the couch.

SHARON
I haven't been this turned on since the first time we had sex.

ROB
Shut up and fuck me.

Sharon gets on top of Rob. She attempts to pull Rob's turtleneck sweater over his head but it gets stuck.

SHARON
Ugh, this fucking sweater-

ROB tries to pull it off, but runs out of patience. He literally rips the sweater and t-shirt combo off his body.

ROB
Yaaaaghhh!!

He tosses the sweater and t-shirt aside. Sharon looks at the decimated turtleneck on the floor.

SHARON
I really liked that sweater.

ROB
I know, I already regret doing that.

Sharon takes off her top, leaving her bra on, and starts riding Rob. She immediately starts groaning with pleasure.

SHARON

Yea, yea... oh God, I'm coming.

ANGLE ON: Frankie, standing in the doorway near the staircase.

Frankie starts bawling his eyes out. Sharon sees this with horror but doesn't stop grinding on Rob.

SHARON

Oh God, look away Frankie, look away!

Rob stares at Sharon, his face half in bliss and half in hell. They both groan loudly as they reach orgasm together.

ANGLE ON: Frankie, still crying.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - SHARON AND ROB'S FLAT - NIGHT

Sharon lies in bed on her side with a glum expression on her face. Rob enters, closing the door quietly so as not to wake Frankie.

Rob joins Sharon in bed, sidling up next to her.

ROB

Hey.

He kisses her tenderly on the cheek.

SHARON

How's Frankie?

ROB

He seems okay. I kept whispering the words "Forget this" into his ear, so hopefully he'll bury it deep in his subconscious.

SHARON

(Turning to face the ceiling)
We're awful parents.

ROB

Will you cut it out? Every kid sees their parents having sex and gets traumatized by it. It's a rite of passage.

SHARON

Well I'm traumatizing them every day. You said yourself, I'm an alcoholic.

ROB

I'm sorry for saying you're an alcoholic. You're not, you're just going through a rough time, and you use alcohol to smooth things out.

(Shifts closer)

All I'm trying to say is, that smoothness comes at a cost. Like that shower sponge we bought.

SHARON

Ugh God, I can't believe we paid thirty quid for that thing.

ROB

It may be soft and incredibly soothing, but--

SHARON (INTERRUPTING)

Definitely worth it, though, with the little ridges and--

ROB (INTERRUPTING)

Okay. The sponge was a bad example. But, you see my point?

SHARON

Yes, I see your point.

Beat.

Sharon shifts toward Rob.

SHARON (CONTINUOUS)

Ugh, I dunno why I drink, I guess it just helps to sort of, clear my head, or something. I get so anxious at home by myself.

(Pause.)

My therapist thinks it's connected to you.

ROB

Well, maybe we should go together.

SHARON

To therapy? Oh God, I don't want you to see me in that state. I'll

(MORE)

SHARON (cont'd)
probably just be bawling my eyes
out...

ROB
You mean, like you do on most
weeknights.

SHARON
(Laughs)
Ugh. Okay, *fine*.

Sharon wiggles her way under the covers. Rob does the same.

SHARON (CONTINUOUS)
But you have to cry too so it's
less embarrassing.

ROB
(Yawning)
Okay, I'll just think about Bambi.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE ICE CREAM SHOP - NIGHT

Dave holds the door for Catherine as they step out of a hip ice cream shop in downtown London. They are both holding ice cream cones.

DAVE
I can't believe you're a rum raisin
chick!

CATHERINE
But have you ever actually tried
it?

DAVE
(Laughing)
No, come to think of it, I don't
think I ever have.

CATHERINE
(Handing over her cone)
Here. Eat.

DAVE
Try my almond sesame, it's divine.

Catherine takes a seductive lick of Dave's ice cream cone. She spots something on the street behind Dave and her face goes pale.

CATHERINE

Oh my god.

DAVE

It's incredible, right?? The combination of flavours is--

CATHERINE (INTERRUPTING)

Oh my god. I need to sit down.

DAVE

Catherine? What's wrong, baby?

DAVE supports Catherine as they go over to a bench on the street.

DAVE

Look at me baby, what's going on?

CATHERINE

(In tears)

Why is he here, I can't...

DAVE

Who, who's here? Talk to me baby.

CATHERINE

Erich. I saw Erich, my pimp. From Marrakesh.

DAVE

No fucking way.

CATHERINE

I don't know... I mean Ash did say he might...

DAVE

Fuck.

Beat.

DAVE

Where is that fucker?! He should be arrested, he should be in prison!

CATHERINE

Dave. He's gone... I'm not even certain it was him.

DAVE

Are you fucking kidding me, if he's, I mean if that's the guy, we gotta find him and get him.

CATHERINE
No, please. I just... I need some
space.

DAVE
Space? Baby, what does that mean?

CATHERINE
I'm gonna call Ash.

DAVE
You're gonna call Ash.

CATHERINE
Yea, I... I think I want to be with
Ash right now.

DAVE
(Pause.)
Okay. And what am I supposed to do,
just sit here and lick my fucking
almond sesame cone?

CATHERINE
(Sniffs)
Yea.

DAVE
Why?

CATHERINE
Because you care about me.

DAVE
(Taken aback)
Uh. Pfft, okay.

CATHERINE stares at him.

DAVE
Okay, fine, call Marrakesh guy. Who
cares.

Beat.

Catherine pulls out her phone to call Ash. She gets up. Dave
rises without looking at her.

CATHERINE
I'll see you tomorrow?

DAVE
 (Shrugs)
 I dunno!

Catherine smiles. She kisses Dave on the cheek, and walks off down the street dialing her phone.

Dave stares as she goes, still awkwardly holding two ice cream cones.

DAVE
 (Wincing)
 Fuck!

Melted ice cream has dripped onto Dave's hand. He tosses the cones in a nearby garbage bin. Then walks off in the opposite direction from Catherine.

ANGLE ON: Dave's face, a contemplative smile forming.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - MORNING

Rob and Sharon sit next to each other in silence. Sharon is staring out the window. Rob is staring straight ahead with a forced smile on his face.

Eyeline match to Dr. Radley's stern face. She and Rob are staring at one another.

Rob shifts in his seat, clears his throat.

ROB
 Dr. Radley, I have the utmost admiration for the work that you do, helping people. And I don't mean any disrespect when I say this.

(Pause.)

But just so we're absolutely clear on what's happening right now, you haven't said anything since we greeted one another, nor have I, and we've been making eye contact now for about thirty seconds.

DR. RADLEY
 Am I making you feel uncomfortable, Rob?

ROB
 (Deadpan)
 No, not at all.

Dr. Radley shifts forward in her chair.

DOCTOR RADLEY

Perhaps we should start with the incident that led Rob to join us today. There was a conflict related to the children, is that right Sharon?

SHARON

I'm sorry?

DOCTOR RADLEY

You mentioned an argument about the children.

SHARON

Oh, yes, them being fucked up.

ROB

(To Doctor Radley)

I said the children might be fucked up.

DOCTOR RADLEY

Do you still believe that to be true, Rob?

ROB

In a word, yes.

DOCTOR RADLEY

And so how did that argument conclude?

Sharon and Rob exchange a look.

SHARON

We, um, we had sex.

ROB

Sexual intercourse.

SHARON

On the couch.

ROB

Frankie saw us.

SHARON

We didn't stop.

ROB
No one took the initiative to stop.

SHARON
So we just... you know...

ROB
Came... together...

SHARON
On the couch.

Doctor Radley looks at them both, slightly alarmed.

Beat.

SHARON
(To Doctor Radley)
I'm sorry to ask this but, is there
any way we can maybe, get to the
punchline sort of thing, 'cause,
you know, on the clock...

DOCTOR RADLEY
Rob, tell me about your
relationship with your father.

Rob is inordinately thrown off by this question.

ROB
(Flushing red)
My... Um, my father, uh... In what
capacity?

DOCTOR RADLEY
I'll tell you why I'm asking. A lot
of patients, I find they really
struggle with a fear of becoming
their own neglectful parents. It's
incredibly common. So I'm curious
what your relationship was like
with your father.

ROB
(Barely able to speak)
My... my father was a man, a,
drinking man, just, asshole fucker
who left me and my mom alone when I
was twelve years old.

DOCTOR RADLEY
What was that like for you?

ROB
(Rapidly breaking down)
Pain, and hatred, and resentment,
and blame, blaming myself for
making him go away.

DOCTOR RADLEY
It sounds like you never resolved
those feelings.

ROB
(Crying)
No.

DOCTOR RADLEY
You're afraid that you'll become
your father if you're not careful.

ROB
Yes.

DOCTOR RADLEY
And you project that fear onto your
children by prophesying their
personal issues in the future.

ROB
I do, don't I.

Beat.

Rob is now fully bawling. Sharon starts rubbing Rob's back.

Doctor Radley pushes the kleenex box on the small table
towards Rob. Rob takes three sheets of tissue.

ROB
Thank you.

SHARON
(Tapping her watch. Mouths
words to Doctor Radley)
Can we... end early?

CUT TO:

CUE TITLE MUSIC AND CREDITS.

END OF EPISODE.