

A GUY, A GIRL, A GUN

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INT. PAUL AND ELENA'S APARTMENT - LOS ANGELES - MORNING

ELENA, 20s, enters the one bedroom apartment she shares with PAUL, also in his 20s. She puts her keys on the hook beside the door, slides her shoes off, puts her purse down; all while making as little noise as possible.

Elena walks into the kitchen area that's divided from the rest of the front room by a counter. She opens up the fridge and looks inside. She's anxious and indecisive, moving things around. She settles on a bottle of water, takes it out, and closes the door. She opens up the bottle and drinks.

Elena hears movement coming from the bedroom. She caps the water bottle - her body tenses into a ready position. The bedroom door opens, and Paul comes out.

The two move around each other with quiet anger. Elena moves to the living room area and sits down on the couch. She takes out her phone and scrolls. Paul is in the kitchen area making coffee. They look over at each other, then turn away when they see the other person is looking.

PAUL

Where did you sleep last night?

ELENA

Is that an accusation?

PAUL

Did you do something you feel bad about?

ELENA

I have nothing to feel bad about.

PAUL

Really? Nothing?

ELENA

If you think I fucked someone last night, then ask me.

PAUL

Did you?

ELENA

Did I what?

PAUL

Nevermind.

ELENA

You can't do it, can you?

PAUL

Why are you so angry at me?

ELENA

You just accused me of fucking someone else; how should I react?

PAUL

You haven't answered the question.

ELENA

You haven't asked it.

PAUL

Fine. Who did you fuck last night?

ELENA

So you've passed the whole did or didn't I, right to I know you did, and I want to know who. If you've got it all figured out, then you tell me who it was.

PAUL

You're impossible.

Elena gets up off the couch and walks over to where Paul is standing so they're face to face.

ELENA

A crazy bitch border lining on a desperate attention whore is what you called me last night.

Paul angles his body away from Elena.

PAUL

I needed a follow-up to your pathetic man-child who will chase after any woman who gives him the tiniest bit of attention because I'm so fucking insecure.

ELENA

What hurts more, me saying it or it being true?

PAUL

Maybe if you weren't so hostile, I wouldn't feel so insecure.

ELENA

And if you didn't constantly make me feel horrible about myself and accuse me of things all the time, I wouldn't be so hostile.

PAUL

Back to this endless bullshit loop.

ELENA

We never actually deal with the problems.

PAUL

Here comes the therapy talk again.

ELENA

You're hostile towards any kind of change.

PAUL

I don't want to listen to a stranger blame me for everything.

ELENA

Because nothing is your fault.

PAUL

Not everything.

ELENA

I'm exhausted. I can't do this right now.

Elena lowers her head, turns away from Paul, and withdraws in disgust to the bedroom.

INT. PAUL AND ELENA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

After giving Elena time to herself, Paul entered the bedroom. He is standing at the foot of the bed. Elena is sitting on the bed, looking at Paul.

ELENA

What do you want?

PAUL

You.

ELENA

Oh, fuck off.

PAUL
It's true. More than I've ever
wanted anyone.

ELENA
Really? Right now.

PAUL
Always.

Paul climbs onto the bed and kisses Elena's foot. He moves toward her on all fours like an act of contrition. Paul kisses his way up to Elena's lips.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I do truly love you.

ELENA
I know.

Paul kisses Elena deeply. Elena slides down the bed. Paul moves on top of her. The ritual continues.

INT. PAUL AND ELENA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Paul and Elena are lying in bed after having had sex. Paul is trying to be affectionate, cuddling and kissing Elena. Elena keeps her back to Paul and isn't responding to his touch or kisses. Paul becomes agitated.

PAUL
Why are you being distant?

ELENA
Because nothing has changed.

PAUL
What do you mean?

ELENA
What we talked about before we
ended up fucking. It all still
applies.

PAUL
Come on. You can't be serious.

Paul goes back to kissing Elena on the neck and shoulders.

ELENA
Stop.

Elena shrugs Paul off of her.

PAUL

It doesn't have to end like this. We've worked it out before. We always make it work. It's what we do.

ELENA

Exactly. It's always work. I just want an easy, healthy relationship.

PAUL

Easy would make you crazy. You'd get bored with easy then act out.

ELENA

No, I wouldn't.

PAUL

You do it all the time.

ELENA

That's not because I'm bored, it's because sometimes I hate you.

PAUL

Is that why you fucked that Chilean guy?

ELENA

I did that because you were cheating on me.

PAUL

I didn't sleep with her until I found out about you and that dude.

ELENA

I only fucked him after discovering that you'd been having a whole damn affair.

PAUL

What?

ELENA

How many times do we have to relive this? You were clearly having an emotional relationship with Gwen.

PAUL

Whatever. Believe what you want.

ELENA

You still can't admit to it, or when you do, you act like it didn't count because you didn't have sex with her until after I had slept with Mateo.

PAUL

Fuck Mateo!

ELENA

I did; that's why we're once again fighting about it.

PAUL

Jesus, it's like you enjoy tormenting me.

ELENA

Like how you take joy in constantly gaslighting me.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

ELENA

All your underhanded comments. The ones you call jokes that you think are so funny, but they're mean-spirited and hurtful.

PAUL

They wouldn't be if you had a sense of humor.

ELENA

This is what I'm talking about; you always turn it into being my fault or my problem. I can't do this with you anymore. We're really done this time.

PAUL

Don't say that. We love each other. We'll figure it out. We're talking, getting it all out. Isn't this what couples do?

ELENA

Yes...

Paul kisses Elena before she can finish her thought.

INT. PAUL AND ELENA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN AREA -
EVENING

Paul and Elena are once again sparring in the front room. They are sitting directly across from each other at the dining table.

PAUL

You hate my insecurities, but it's not like you do much to alleviate them.

ELENA

I'm always encouraging you, telling you how wonderful and intelligent you are.

PAUL

All the while playing your twisted fucking games.

ELENA

What games?

PAUL

The thirst traps, for starters. Not to forget the other men.

ELENA

This again. One man. Five fucking years ago. NO ONE ELSE! Just your dick and only your dick. Does that make you feel better? Does that help you with your insecurities?

PAUL

I'm not talking about you fucking anyone. I'm talking about the crushes. The platonic affairs you constantly get into.

ELENA

They're meaningless fun. They're just guys I connect with on some level. Don't pretend like you are never attracted to other women or develop feelings.

PAUL

But I don't act on it or throw it in your face.

ELENA

Neither do I.

PAUL
Bullshit.

ELENA
What are you talking about?

PAUL
The way you got flirty with Drew
right in front of me.

ELENA
Wait... seriously? That was like
three years ago. You've been
carrying that around with you that
long.

PAUL
Looks like it.

ELENA
Wow.

PAUL
What? That's all you can say.

ELENA
This is a nightmare.

PAUL
It's not paradise for me either.

ELENA
This has got to end now. Tonight.

Elena gets up and storms into the bedroom. Paul stays at the table, listening to Elena tearing things apart in the closet. Paul is agitated but remains seated, expecting Elena to come out with a bag packed.

Elena enters the front room from the bedroom. She's carrying a .38 caliber handgun.

Elena sits down across from Paul and sets the gun down on the table.

PAUL
Where did you get that?

ELENA
The closet.

PAUL
You know that's not what I meant.

ELENA
But that's what you asked.

PAUL
Fair enough... But in all
seriousness, when did you get a
gun?

ELENA
Long before I got you.

PAUL
And it's been hidden in our
apartment the whole time.

ELENA
Yes.

PAUL
Is it real?

Elena picks up the gun, points it away from Paul, and
casually pulls back the hammer.

ELENA
Very.

PAUL
Is it loaded?

ELENA
Of course. Why would I have an
unloaded gun?

PAUL
Key chain.

ELENA
Really?

PAUL
I can do better. Let me try again.

Elena uncocks the hammer and puts the gun back down on the
table. They both stare at it intently.

PAUL (CONT'D)
So what was the point of bringing
that out?

ELENA
It's the solution to our problem.

PAUL

I don't want to know where this is headed.

ELENA

We've been through it all. The highs and lows. Everything. We're just replaying it all over and over like it's some purgatory film of our lives together. This has to end. The only way it's truly going to end is if one or both of us is dead.

PAUL

That's insane. You're insane.

ELENA

You said earlier that it's not over between us, that it's never over. We always come back to each other. That's insane.

PAUL

So... our love is insane.

ELENA

And toxic. This has to stop, and if we're always going to get back together, this is the only solution.

Paul stares hard at Elena, trying to figure out if she's serious.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Pick up the gun.

PAUL

No way. This is your idea. If one of us is pulling the trigger, it's going to be you.

ELENA

Are you afraid I'm going to shoot you?

PAUL

Yeah, who wouldn't be?

ELENA

Stop being a coward and take the gun.

At the word 'coward,' Paul tenses. His face turns stern and angry. Elena knows his triggers.

Paul takes the gun then starts playing eenie meenie/duck duck goose maniacally. He's afraid but exhilarated by the power.

He lands on Elena. Pulls back the hammer. The tension is incredible. Everything around them goes deathly still.

Then the room begins to shake – deep, rattling tremors. Everything in the apartment is shaking. Cabinets open, dishes fall out breaking on the floor. Nick knacks fall off shelves.

After a few moments, it slows, then stops.

PAUL

Fuck! That was an earthquake! I've never felt one like that before.

ELENA

And you were about to kill me.

Paul looks at his hand and sees that he's still clutching the gun and pointing it at Elena

PAUL

Fuck!

Paul sets the gun down on the table and gets up from his chair.

ELENA

You were going to do it, weren't you?

PAUL

No... I mean... of course not.

ELENA

Yes, you were.

Paul and Elena stare at each other.

ELENA (CONT'D)

Well, then what were you going to do?

PAUL

I don't know. I wasn't thinking at all.

ELENA

We're over for real this time.

PAUL

We definitely are. I'll come back later for my things. I can't be here.

ELENA

I'll start packing for you.

PAUL

Thanks.

Paul grabs his keys, wallet, and phone and leaves the apartment.

Elena picks up the gun and lets out a deep sigh. She opens the cylinder and shakes the bullets out.

The sound of the brass hitting the table and the rolling of the bullets makes Elena smile.

Elena corrals the ammunition remaining on the table between her hands.

Elena laughs.

ELENA

Fucking earthquakes.