SAM I AM

(f.k.a. "Memory Trace")

"pilot"

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN. Gradually getting lighter during:

WOMAN'S VOICE
Sadness and hope. You must hear it all day long -- one more story of a daughter, struck down at the peak of her life. How can you still be moved?

The room comes into focus as it brightens. From SOMEONE'S P.O.V., we see a ceiling, and a fluorescent light fixture.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Just crossing the street, and BAM! Hit-and-run driver. Never looked back. That's the sadness part. The hope? Well, that's where you come in -- the good people at Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. ...Howard, turn that TV down, or I swear to God you'll never leave this hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - THROUGH A VIDEO CAMERA

We see HOWARD NEWLY, 60s, watching a hospital-room TV. The unseen WOMAN TALKING is videotaping.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Her grieving father.

HOWARD
Guy on here says he has a chicken, can lay six eggs in a day.

WOMAN'S VOICE
No one cares, Howard.

As we PAN THE HOSPITAL ROOM...

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
This is our Samantha's world. Day and night... hooked to machines... in a coma from which her doctors doubt she will ever emerge.

The SHOT finds SAMANTHA NEWLY, 30s, in bed -- eyes open.

WIDER ANGLE - REGINA NEWLY, 60s. She lowers the camera.

REGINA
Well, that won't work. Howard, she woke up! Go get the doctor.

(MORE)
REGINA (CONT'D)
(to Samantha)
And sweetheart, close your eyes again
so I can do that last shot over.

Samantha, who's been looking blankly at these people -- maybe
it's a dream? -- works her mouth, puckering her lips...

HOWARD
Wait, she's trying to say something!

REGINA
She's making a kiss. She wants to
kiss us. Do you want a kiss, dear?
Yes, we're so happy, we love you too!

Samantha's lips work, Regina leans close and is just about
to kiss her daughter, when Samantha finally whispers:

SAMANTHA
Who are you?

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK:

REGINA (PRE-LAP)
Retro-what?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Samantha sees good-looking DR. KERRY HALL, Regina, Howard,
and a nice, mousy young woman, DENA, all leaning over her.

DR. HALL
Retrograde amnesia. The accident
left her semantic memory intact --
that's skills, knowledge of things
in general -- but knocked out her
autobiographical memory -- all
personal facts and experiences.

REGINA
It's your MOTHER, dear, REMEMBER?

HOWARD
She doesn't know you, Regina.

REGINA
(dismissive wave)
I'm used to this, she's been pretending
to not know me since she was nine.

HOWARD
Samantha? I'm your father, and this
is your friend Diane.
DENA
Dena.

HOWARD
She came every day you were out.

SAMANTHA
How long?

HOWARD
Nineteen years.

Samantha's eyes shoot wide.

REGINA
Eight days. He's kidding. Howard, honestly.

DR. HALL
Yes, please. Until she gets her memories back -- if they even do come back -- Samantha has no frame of reference, she can't recall anything about her life up to this point. Not her friends, her address, not her high school prom, not her eighth birthday party.

REGINA
(getting teary)
That's so awful. I worked my fingers to the bone on that party!

DR. HALL
Ms. Newly, your daughter has had a severe trauma. Imagine waking up erased. Starting over -- every experience, every memory, every single thing that's ever added up to make you you, is just gone.

DENA
(blurting)
Oh my god that sounds great! (beat; off their looks)
I mean bad.

FADE TO BLACK.

IN BLACK:

SAMANTHA (PRE-LAP)
I wanna mirror.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - ANOTHER DAY
Regina, Howard and Samantha, who's stronger and eats pudding.
REGINA

SAMANTHA
A mirror. I don't even know what I look like.

REGINA
(whispers to Howard)
Do they let crazy people have mirrors?

Howard hands Samantha a beauty-shop hand-mirror. Samantha peers at herself, looking for clues from the stranger there.

SAMANTHA
Nothing. Might as well be a picture of Jesus on a paper fan.

REGINA
Jesus she remembers, but her own mother, nothing. Did Jesus go through twenty hours of labor? Did Jesus ever change her diaper?

HOWARD
She wouldn't remember you changing her diaper anyway, Regina.

REGINA
It was today. The nurse was late.

Samantha decides not to react to that. She closes her eyes.

HOWARD
We should let her rest.

REGINA
She just had an eight-day nap.

SAMANTHA
(eyes closed)
Oh -- and that thing they say about comas is true. Sometimes when you're out, you can hear what people say.

REGINA
You can?

She shoots Howard an apprehensive look.

SAMANTHA
Yeah, and tell the family of whoever's in that next bed. People don't seem to like that poor girl at all.
The CAMERA SLIDES OVER to REVEAL that beyond the curtain there is no bed. No one in this room but Samantha.

FADE TO BLACK:

IN BLACK:

REGINA (PRE-LAP)
Go on, kiss him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAYS LATER

Samantha on the edge of the bed, dressed, feeling much better (physically). She looks anxiously from Regina and Howard to TODD -- boyfriend, a nice-looking, regular guy.

SAMANTHA
But I don't know him.

REGINA
You have to go home with someone, dear, it's time. The doctor said recovering your memories begins by surrounding yourself with familiar things.

TODD
And your stuff, your whole life, is at our place.

SAMANTHA
So I go with this man, alone, who I don't know at all... or with the people who raised me my whole life.

(beat)
Wow. That should be an easier choice.

REGINA
So kiss him. Maybe it'll trigger something. Like Sleeping Beauty.

HOWARD
(to Regina)
Remember that movie we saw on Starz, "Brimstone and Treacle?" This couple had a daughter, mute, pretty much a vegetable, and then this man shows up... the rock star, what's his name?

REGINA
Elton John?

HOWARD
No, with that group.

REGINA
The Beatles?
HOWARD
The Firemen, the Policemen...

TODD
The Police?

HOWARD
That's right.

TODD
Sting?

HOWARD
Yes! And he rapes her.

Silence. They all stare at him in disbelief.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Snapped her right out of it.

REGINA
Just kiss him, sweetie. Love knows.

Samantha looks at Todd... puckers up reluctantly... and Todd moves in gently for a kiss. But the closer he inches, the more she edges her lips away... then twists them away... turns her head... then she's holding him back with one arm as he strains closer... Finally:

SAMANTHA
Okay, it's too weird! I'm sorry.

INT. SAMANTHA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The room is homey, long-lived-in. A banner is up: "Welcome Home Samantha." Samantha's just arrived, and takes in the unusual number of chicken-themed items: art, lamps, a jar...

REGINA
So this is where you grew up. Getting anything?

SAMANTHA
Just that someone likes chickens.

HOWARD
Chickens built this house.

SAMANTHA
Wow. That's a memory I wish I had.

REGINA
Your dad's a chicken farmer.

HOWARD
Was. Sold out to Zacky. Biggest mistake I ever made.
REGINA
Not by far, dear.

As Howard takes Samantha's suitcase upstairs, Samantha spots an old upright piano.

SAMANTHA
Oh, hey, let's see if I can play.

She sits, starts to PLAY -- pounding out a two-handed CACOPHONY before Regina stops her with a hand on Sam's.

REGINA
Some things you can just ask.

From the kitchen comes Samantha's friend ANGELA, a sexy attorney and party girl, brash but fun. She drinks champagne.

ANGELA
(hugs Samantha)
There she is...! You poor dear, your mother told me all about it.

SAMANTHA
(uncomfortable in hug)
So then you realize I have no idea who you are.

ANGELA
I'm Angela, your best friend in the world. I'm sorry I didn't visit, I just hate hospitals. All those nurses in their cheap, squeaky shoes. So what is it you have? Retro-what?

SAMANTHA
Retrograde amnesia. You can't remember things you've done, who you've met, where you live...

ANGELA
That's nothing, I have that every Monday morning.
(hands her a cell phone)
Here's a new phone, I heard you've been without one since the accident. Forget that guy who sawed his own arm off, you are a survivor.
(to Regina, re champagne)
Mrs. Newly, any chance I can have a teensy little top-off...?

Regina exits to the kitchen. The second she's out:

ANGELA (CONT'D)
My car's pointed down the driveway, let's go.
SAMANTHA
Wait, why? This place is kind of cute, and the people seem harmless.

ANGELA
So is the Small World ride. Fun for a minute, but if you had to live there you'd blow your head off.

SAMANTHA
What's the problem? Do we fight?

ANGELA
Of course not.

SAMANTHA
Good.

ANGELA
How can you, you haven't spoken to them for two years.

SAMANTHA
What?

Regina enters, hands Angela a full champagne flute.

REGINA
Here you are, Angela. Be sure to switch drinking arms, you don't want to bulk up on one side.

SAMANTHA
We didn't speak for two years?

REGINA
Yes, we did. Who told you that? Her? Don't listen to her, she's drunk.

SAMANTHA
I don't think so.

ANGELA
Little bit, yeah.

SAMANTHA
What happened? Was there a fight?

REGINA
I don't recall.

SAMANTHA
How can you not recall?

REGINA
How can you not?
SAMANTHA
I have amnesia. You're just lying.

REGINA
Well, why dwell on things? You don't remember anyway, let's skip all that and say it never happened.

SAMANTHA
No, this is my life, I need answers. Especially about my family -- this is where I came from. You made me who I am.

REGINA
(bursts into tears)
That's a horrible thing to say!

The DOORBELL RINGS, Howard comes downstairs to answer it.

REGINA (CONT'D)
It's the meanest thing you've ever said, and that is quite a feat.

HOWARD
Apologize to your mother, young lady.

ANGELA
(looking out window)
Oh look, I left my car running.

Howard OPENS THE DOOR to a good-looking, rugged sort of man in a rumpled suit: POLK.

HOWARD
Hey, look who's here! Come say hi, Sammy -- it's your brother Ned, come all this way just to see you.

SAMANTHA
Oh. Well... hi, Ned.

She goes for it, giving the guy a huge hug.

HOWARD
Kidding. He's a cop.

Exasperated, Samantha lets go quickly.

DETECTIVE POLK
Detective Polk, ma'am. I'm the one investigating your attempted murder?

Sam stares at him a beat, then smiles politely.
SAMANTHA
Would you excuse me?
(turns on parents)
This is what I'm talking about! You
can't just reassemble me from pieces
you choose, I need to know it all.
Like the fact that I was almost
murdered, I have to think that's a
handy piece to have!

REGINA
But you weren't murdered.
(shrugs)
Why dwell?

Samantha sags, knowing this won't work. Angela mouths, "Run."

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - EVENING

Samantha, suitcase beside her, pounds on an apartment door. The door opens, and a guy, DAVE, who looks sort of like Todd if you've only seen Todd once, answers. In a rush --

SAMANTHA
Okay I'll live with you but in a
separate room or on the couch I am
not having sex with you yet so get
that right out of your head, mister.

DAVE'S WIFE (O.S.)
Dave? Who is that?

DAVE
No idea.

Down the hall, a door opens, and Todd leans out.

TODD
Sam? It's this one.

Embarrassed, Samantha grabs her suitcase. As she scurries
to the right apartment and Dave closes his door, we hear...

DAVE'S WIFE (O.S.)
You have no idea, but she'll have sex
with you?

DAVE (O.S.)
Not have sex, Margaret. Guess lots
of women don't want to have sex with me, you're not the only one!

As the couple fight...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Samantha examines everything, eagerly writing in a notebook. Todd is in the kitchen. There are many photos in frames.

SAMANTHA
Pictures of Samantha... wow, even more pictures of Samantha.
(writing) "Subject enjoys... charmingly high... self-esteem."

TODD (O.S.)
Subject?

SAMANTHA
Yeah. If I want to find me again, I need to treat me like a missing person -- hopefully one who's just wandered off without saying where she's going, and not one who's already dead in the back of some psycho's van.

Todd enters with a cappuccino, sees her peering at a PHOTO -- IN IT she's smiling sardonically, giving him the finger.

TODD
I took that one when we first met.
(points at another photo)
Took that one is the first morning you stayed over.

SAMANTHA
You make me look so good. Wait, are you a professional? Oh thank god -- I'm not hopelessly vain, I'm just supportive of your work.

TODD
(teasing)
Why does it have to be either-or?
(hands her cappuccino)
Here.

SAMANTHA
Thank you. What's this for?

TODD
You like a cappuccino at night, decaf, one-percent milk only. Write that down, detective.
(MORE)
TODD (CONT'D)
I used two-percent once, and you accused me of fattening you up like a Christmas ham so no other man would ever want you, and you suggested I seek help for my insecurity.

SAMANTHA (embarrassed; lightly)
That Samantha. What a nut!

She exits to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Samantha starts going through the medicine cabinet, noting medicines, opening makeup and jars, smelling things. Todd appears in the doorway, watching.

TODD
So what's it like? Amnesia?

Pause. Samantha thinks.

SAMANTHA
Like traveling all alone in a foreign country. But one where they speak English.

TODD
Like Canada.

SAMANTHA
Yes. I'd say it's very much like being in Canada.

She exits to the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She scans the shelves of books. Todd enters.

SAMANTHA
Books strictly organized... fiction... something called "The DaVinci Code" -- guess I'm quite the intellectual... psychology... more psychology... wow, I am really into psychology.

TODD
I hope so. You're a psychologist.

SAMANTHA
No way -- Doctor Me! That's handy, I should sit down with myself sometime.
TODD
There are patient files on the desk.
   (as she looks at them)
It's how you met Angela. She's a lawyer who gets rich people off so they can commit more crimes.

SAMANTHA
(hopeful)
And... I'm the do-gooder partner who makes her see the error of her ways?

TODD
No, you consult for a cut of the take.

SAMANTHA
I see.
   (off notebook)
So let's review: subject is a self-involved, irrational, morally suspect control freak who by the way someone hates enough to try to kill.
   (beat)
Tell me again why we're looking for this woman?

TODD
Clean up the streets?

SAMANTHA
Tell me about it.

Todd takes her notebook.

TODD
Okay, you either knock off the CSI stuff or get a bigger notebook.
   (flips through book)
There are key facts missing from here -- like her blinding attraction to me, I think that's quite pertinent information. And her fierce, dogged determination to finish the Sudoku every day, even if it's "diabolical."
And how she'll break into a dance just walking down the sidewalk. And only eats cereal standing up... always sneezes three times in a row... and how her face softens like a cloud when she finally unclenches her jaw.

They have a moment of connection. Todd clearly loves her. Samantha smiles, but looks away shyly. Then THE PHONE RINGS. Samantha gets excited.
SAMANTHA
Oooh! Oooh! Maybe it's someone.

TODD
Why, I bet it is.

Samantha grabs the phone.

SAMANTHA
Hello?

INTERCUT:

10 INT. BISTRO 99 RESTAURANT/BAR - CONTINUOUS

A party is going on; Angela talks to Samantha on her cell, while drinking a dirty martini and eating the olives.

ANGELA
Where are you? René's birthday party is tonight, you said you'd come.

SAMANTHA
Um, Angela? You know how we talked about my complete memory loss?

ANGELA
Oh, right. Well, everyone's here, just get down to Bistro 99.

SAMANTHA
Okay. But do me a favor, don't tell anyone what happened.

ANGELA
What happened with what?

SAMANTHA
Never mind. See you.

(hangs up; to Todd)

It's Renee's birthday, she's having a party, we have to go see Renee!

TODD
Okay.

SAMANTHA
Who's Renee?

TODD
A colleague, I don't know her. You met her at a conference in Baltimore, you run into her at work things.
SAMANTHA
Well apparently "everyone" is there, it's a chance to observe Samantha in her natural environment. You can help me navigate, and I'll get Dena to come, too. Let's get ready.

She goes into the closet to find clothes.

TODD
Why can't people know what happened?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
So they treat me like they normally would. Recovering my memories depends on exposure to familiar experiences.

TODD
Then including me isn't one of them. You think I don't like your friends.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Do you?

TODD
No, I don't.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Well, you have to go. It's a birthday, it'll be fun.

TODD
Even though you regard birthdays as childish ploys for harvesting attention and gifts.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
(laughs)
God, when did I say that?

TODD
When you forgot mine.

Beat. Samantha re-enters.

SAMANTHA
Seriously, what's wrong with you? All I can say is, this Samantha better be damn good in bed.
(before he can speak)
Okay. Awkward. Sorry.

She exits to the closet. Beat, then casually...

SAMANTHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But for the record -- you know, for my notes -- was it good? Bad?
TODD
I'm a guy, it can never be bad.
Except maybe in prison, I guess.

Samantha emerges with several dresses.

SAMANTHA
So better than prison, then. You make a girl feel all goose-bumply.
(then)
Oh my god!

She holds up a tiny black dress.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
I have a daughter?

TODD
Uh, no.

SAMANTHA
(looks at dress)
Whoa.

11 EXT. BISTRO 99 - NIGHT
Upscale, downtown. Samantha and Todd are about to go in.

SAMANTHA
Wait, I left my notebook in the car.
I need to get it.

TODD
I'll get it.
(off her anxiety)
Just wait inside. If anyone talks to you, just nod and laugh like you have any idea who they are.

Todd exits. Samantha is about to go in... when ACROSS THE STREET she spots a MAN IN A CREAM-COLORED OVERCOAT. He seems to be watching her. A flicker of something -- recognition? -- crosses her face... then is gone. She gives a noncommittal smile, then enters the restaurant.

12 INT. BISTRO 99 - CONTINUOUS
Good-looking clientele, HIP MUSIC. Samantha takes a breath and starts across the room, passing a WOMAN.

SAMANTHA
(smiling)
Hi!

WOMAN
(scowling)
Hi?
SAMANTHA
(quickly adjusting)
Sorry?

WOMAN
Sorry? Little too late for that.
The woman storms away.

SAMANTHA
Note to self, muffin basket there...
Suddenly a hot, sexy GUY pulls her into the coat room.

INT. COAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS
The sexy guy is very happy to see Samantha.

SEXY GUY
You look too good tonight, I can't stand it. Tell me you dressed like that for me.

Samantha, startled, baffled, just nods and laughs like Todd said to.

SEXY GUY (CONT'D)
Good. I was afraid you wouldn't speak to me. I know I haven't called you in a couple of weeks but I'll make it up to you, I promise. I'm sorry, and I wouldn't blame you if you acted like you didn't even know me.

And he gives her a huge romantic kiss. When they break, all she manages, stupidly now, is a nod and a laugh. Then she bolts from the coat room.

INT. BISTRO 99 - CONTINUOUS
Samantha, shaken, hurries across the room, bumps into Angela.

ANGELA
You made it! Here, have a drink.

She gives Samantha her martini, Samantha downs it all, fast.

SAMANTHA
Okay, just now? Some guy kissed me!

ANGELA
How was it?

SAMANTHA
Well... great, actually, but --

Dena comes up to them.
DEN'A
Hi, I got here before you, I'm always early. I can't help it, I'm always convinced the address is fake, or everyone's watching me from a window somewhere until I just leave.

ANGEL'A
(to Samantha)
Patient of yours? Because it's not one of your success stories.

SAMANTHA
This is my friend Dena. Listen, there was this guy --

ANGEL'A
(suspicious of Dena)
Friend? I don't think so. From where?

DEN'A
School?
(quickly, to Samantha)
So where's Todd tonight?

SAMANTHA
Getting something out of the car.

ANGEL'A
What? You brought Todd, are you nuts?

SAMANTHA
You don't like Todd? Because he said he doesn't like my friends, either.

ANGEL'A
Know who really won't like him? René.

SAMANTHA
Why won't Renee like him, Renee is --

ANGEL'A
Your lover.

Angela points to the Sexy Guy from the closet, who winks at Samantha from across the room. Suddenly Samantha gets it.

SAMANTHA
Oh, René...

On Samantha's horror...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

15 INT. BISTRO 99 - NIGHT

Samantha Dena and Angela at a table, Samantha panicked, upset.

DENA
(slight awe)
Wow. Two guys at one time.

SAMANTHA
At least two! The night is young.

ANGELA
See? How can she be your friend and not even know about René?

Samantha sees Todd arrive, wave, and go to the coat room.

SAMANTHA
Oh, god, there he is.

ANGELA
Why did you bring him here?

SAMANTHA
Oh, I thought my boyfriends might like a playdate. What do you mean, why? Why didn't you tell me? I have to get him out of here.

She crosses away. Angela stares hard at Dena, suspicious.

DENA
What?

OUTSIDE THE COAT ROOM, the ANGRY WOMAN from before is about to go in, when Samantha pushes past her and goes in first.

SAMANTHA
Sorry. Again.

16 INT. COAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Todd hangs his coat up, starts to exit, when Samantha enters.

SAMANTHA
Todd, hi! Ready to go?

TODD
What? We just got here.

SAMANTHA
And you were sweet to bring me, but you don't like my friends...
TODD
So? It's not about me.

SAMANTHA
I know, but... I need things to be normal to see what is normal and you being here is not normal, so Angela can help me, you can go. It's okay.

TODD
(wants to go)
I don't mind staying...

SAMANTHA
I might not offer twice.

TODD
(grabs coat)
See you at home.

Todd exits as fast as he can. The ANGRY WOMAN tries to enter --

WOMAN
I need my coat --

But Angela pushes past her, crowding the woman out again and shoving Dena into the coat room ahead of her.

ANGELA
Tell her. Go ahead.
(to Samantha)
I told you she's not your friend.

DENA
I was... up until seventh grade, anyway. And then you got in with the cool crowd and kind of never spoke to me again, but when I heard what happened to you I went to the hospital and told your mom we'd stayed friends and she was just so happy you had one that I didn't want to break her heart.

ANGELA
(to Samantha)
Want me to call the police?

SAMANTHA
Dena, how long were you going to let me think we were best friends?

DENA
I was hoping by the time you found out, we would be.
ANGELA
How about we call that cop who came to your mom's house? He was cute.

SAMANTHA
Wait, so besides Todd -- who I betrayed -- I only have one friend?

ANGELA
(smoothly reassuring)
But sweetheart, I'm the only friend you need.

DENA
Okay, did anyone else just feel a cold spot in the room?

The ANGRY WOMAN finally pushes into the coat room.

WOMAN
I need my coat, and I need it now.

SAMANTHA
(suddenly angry)
Okay, lady, I apologized once to you, but bug me again and I'll have something to really be sorry for!

Beat. Samantha is shocked to hear herself talk like that. Angela gives her a big, tearful hug.

ANGELA
My baby's still in there!

17 INT. BISTRO 99 - CONTINUOUS

Samantha comes out of the coat room, upset, followed by Angela and Dena, and crosses back to their table to get her coat.

ANGELA
Where are you going, you haven't talked to René.

SAMANTHA
I don't want to talk to René, I have a boyfriend.

ANGELA
Who you don't even know. You can start completely fresh, be with anyone you want, why choose Todd again?

SAMANTHA
I don't know. So far, he's the person who makes me feel the most like me. I like how he sees me.
ANGELA
He sees you through a lens, captures you, and puts you on a shelf. René takes you down and plays with you. He's not afraid to get you dirty.

SAMANTHA
Okay, can we stop this metaphor? (beat, intrigued)
How dirty? (quickly)
Never mind.

ANGELA
See? You're drawn to him. You wanted to know who you are, I'm trying to show you.

DENA
Maybe she's not the same, now. People can change.

ANGELA
No, my psycho friend, people can not change. That's just a giant myth perpetuated by the multi-billion-dollar self-help industry.

DENA
And God.

SAMANTHA
But what's the point of a fresh start if I keep doing the same things? I need to do what's right for a change.

DENA
Good for you!

SAMANTHA
(beat)
So what is it?

DENA
Break up with René.

SAMANTHA
Right. Of course.

DENA
And tell Todd about him.

SAMANTHA
(anxious)
What? Whoa.
ANGELA
Okay, we're going to take you back
to the asylum now, sweetie, they'll
be worried about you.

René comes over. He really is sexy, really does like Sam.

RENÉ
Samantha, sorry to leave you so long.

SAMANTHA
Hi. We're breaking up. Happy
birthday, I got you some earrings.

She pulls a small wrapped gift from her purse, spilling some
purse things on the table.

RENÉ
What? No, please don't do this.
I'm leaving Barbara for good, I am.

SAMANTHA
(sees his ring)
You're married? This is the guy you
choose for me, Angela? He's a
cheater!

ANGELA
But so are you, sweetheart. You're
perfect for each other.

RENÉ
Samantha, I love you. Let's go to
Hawaii. Tomorrow. Tonight. Let's
leave from here, we'll buy clothes
when we get there -- although I doubt
we'll need any.

He leans in close. There's definitely a sexual thing,
Samantha can't deny it.

SAMANTHA
How many times in a row do I sneeze?

RENÉ
Sneeze? I don't know. Why, do you
have a cold? Why didn't you tell me
before I kissed you, I have a tenure
meeting tomorrow.

SAMANTHA
(beat)
You're right, Angela. We are perfect
for each other.
(beat)
I just don't want to be.
She sweeps stuff back into her purse... stops... and holds up a plastic chip, with writing on it.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
"One Day at a Time."
(reads other side)
"Thirty Days."

She looks at her empty martini glass, and at Angela, appalled.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Angela!

Shaking her head, she exits. Dena and René look at Angela.

ANGELA
Worst thirty days of my life.

18 INT. COMMUNITY CENTER – NIGHT

An A.A. meeting. Members in a circle. One empty chair.

ALL MEMBERS
Hi, Samantha...!

LEADER
Samantha, you need to sit in the circle.

WIDER SHOT: Samantha is at a nearby table where coffee, cakes and muffins are set up. She's on edge, trying to stay calm.

SAMANTHA
Sorry. I didn't eat, I just want to grab... something. What? Carrot cake, that looks good. Wait, do I like carrot cake?
(tastes a bite)

Agitated, she turns and sees that everyone is staring at her like she's crazy -- some even a little scared.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
What, you've never seen a girl pick a snack? Sure, it's easy for you.
(MORE)
SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
You can make choices. Not good ones, that's obvious, but a muffin for god's sake. I don't know what I like. Or who I am. Just today I've learned that someone tried to kill me and there's some huge rift with parents I don't even know about and I have one friend who's mean and one who's not even a friend and I'm cheating on my boyfriend -- who's the one good thing in my life right now -- and if I go home tonight and do the "right" thing, I may even lose that! I may end up alone. I can't choose. I'm stuck.

Pause.

FEMALE MEMBER
Try the lemon squares.

SAMANTHA
(intense)
Okay, but why?
(bites a lemon square)
I mean yes, I eat the lemon square, mmm, chew chew chew, does that make me a lemon square person? Or am I actually a blueberry tart person --
(chomps a blueberry tart)
-- and no matter how much I want to become a lemon square person, how hard I try to lead a lemon square life, am I destined by my very nature to wake up day after day a freaking BLUEBERRY TART??!

She stops, blueberry on her mouth. Beat.

LEADER
Okay, get out.

Samantha, embarrassed, slinks for the door.

EVERYONE
'Bye, Samantha...!

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE
Samantha walks alone. MUSIC: the over-dramatic "Where Do I Go?" from "Hair." Across the street, she sees, keeping to the shadows... the cream-colored OVERCOAT GUY she saw before.

SAMANTHA
Hey!

No response. Sam starts across the street after him --

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
I said hey! You!

-- and is almost run down by a TAXI! The HORN BLOWS, the cab swerves -- and she's snatched away at the last second.

On the sidewalk, she turns to see her rescuer: Detective Polk, the cop from her parents' house, who's just ruggedly handsome enough to become a love interest down the line.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Wow. Thank you. I'm such an idiot, I was trying to talk to that --

She looks: overcoat guy is gone.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
...guy. Wait, I know you, you're that detective! How weird is that, that you were... following me, oh my god you're following me. Why are you following me?

DETECTIVE POLK
Someone tried to kill you.

SAMANTHA
And? You're protecting me? You think I might know who or why? Sorry. If you want to know who'd want me dead, though, I have some thoughts. Ready? EVERYONE. Who wouldn't? I would. I need to be stopped.

DETECTIVE POLK
You're not so horrible.

SAMANTHA
Sweet-talker, now you're just flirting. (pause) But you probably know more about me than I do at this point. It could be anyone. Crazy patient.

(MORE)
SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Someone I testified against in court.
(beat)
Jealous wife.
(embarrassed)
You know about my affair?

DETECTIVE POLK
You weren't too circumspect.

SAMANTHA
I'll tell you who didn't know: my boyfriend. That's what I'm doing out here now, deciding if I should tell him.

DETECTIVE POLK
Yes.

SAMANTHA
No, seriously. What do you think?

DETECTIVE POLK
Yes.

SAMANTHA
Stop saying that. If I tell him, I can end up alone; if I don't, he never knows.

DETECTIVE POLK
You'd know. I've seen it plenty in my job -- what's the worst thing for a relationship?

SAMANTHA
Going camping.

DETECTIVE POLK
Worse. Lying. The guilt is like a splinter, that gets under the skin...

SAMANTHA
Or a grain of sand.

DETECTIVE POLK
Why a grain of sand?

SAMANTHA
In an oyster.

DETECTIVE POLK
No, that makes a pearl.

SAMANTHA
So maybe guilt is a pearl.
DETECTIVE POLK
Guilt is not a pearl, guilt is a splinter. Who's the cop, here?

SAMANTHA
But I have nothing to feel guilty about! I didn't do anything. Bad Sam did it. I'm Good Sam, Bad Sam is dead. God I sound like a TV movie, I'm leaving before you lock me up.

She starts across the street -- and we hear a CAR HORN BLAST! And Polk yanks her to safety yet again. When she's safe on the curb:

DETECTIVE POLK
Maybe it wasn't murder. Maybe you just have bad peripheral vision.

INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lights out. Samantha is in bed on the couch, covers pulled up, but not sleeping. Her eyes are wide open, as she contemplates her fear, and her choice. Finally:

SAMANTHA
Todd?

Beat. From in the darkened bedroom:

TODD (O.S.)
Yeah?

Pause.

SAMANTHA
René is a guy.

Pause. More pause. Then THE BEDROOM LIGHT COMES ON.

INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Todd is pacing, upset, Samantha fights for her life.

SAMANTHA
I'm sorry, I really really am, but here's the thing: I don't even know what I did, which is very much like not doing it at all.

TODD
So you're going with the insanity defense.

SAMANTHA
Yeah, how's it playing?
TODD
Great for you, bad for me, since I don't have the benefit of memory loss!

Samantha
I can fix that, where's our frying pan?
(Off his look)
Not funny. I know that.

Todd can't look at her. They've gone as far as they can go for now. Samantha is resigned -- she knew what was coming.

TODD
(with difficulty)
Sam... telling me the truth, though... that was a good thing.

Samantha
(starts to bedroom)
We'll see. Who knows, maybe you'll call me some day, we'll get some coffee.

Suddenly she stops, her face gets a weird, excited look.

TODD
Sam?

Samantha
That's how we met.

22 INT. STARBUCKS - DAY - FLASHBACK

Samantha -- Old Samantha, impatient, frowning -- waits in line, a couple of people away from placing her order. At the pick-up counter, a Barista puts down a cup.

Barista
Decaf latte!

No one claims it. Samantha looks at her watch. She glances around. Then she steps out of line, as --

Barista (Cont'd)
Decaf latte --!

Samantha
Got it. Mine. Thank you.

She takes the cup, starts to leave with it -- when Todd comes up. He has a camera around his neck.
TODD
Sorry, I was outside, is that mine?

SAMANTHA
No. It's mine.

She starts to go.

TODD
So can I take your picture sometime?

SAMANTHA
No. But only because I can't allow that line to ever work.

TODD
Are you worried I'll steal your soul?

SAMANTHA
What makes you think I have one?

TODD
Because you feel a little bad about taking my coffee.

SAMANTHA
(beat; eyes him)
You like the bad girls, huh?

TODD
No. But I'm a sucker for the scared and the hurt.

His frankness throws her. She quickly recovers, and as she exits, she turns and gives Todd a sardonic smile, and the finger. He raises his camera, clicks -- WE FREEZE ON THE PHOTO -- the one Sam admired back in Act II -- and MATCH TO:

23 INT. SAMANTHA AND TODD'S APARTMENT - END FLASHBACK

Samantha holds the framed photo. She and Todd both smile a little bittersweetly at the small victory.

SAMANTHA
It's a start, anyway. Ironic, though -- I was just thinking on the way here: you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.

TODD
Yeah...

(then)
That's a song, by the way.

SAMANTHA
Really? Crap, I was kind of proud of that one.
A doorman outside: FRANK, African-American, 50s, uniformed. Samantha comes out of the building, carrying her suitcase and a few file folders from her desk. Frank nods.

SAMANTHA
(re suitcase)
He's just going to need some time.
(beat)
Sorry, I don't remember your name.

FRANK
No reason to. Only word you've said to me in five years is "Taxi."

SAMANTHA
Okay, yes, I'm a bad, bad person, can we move on now, thank you!
(pause; embarrassed)
Sorry. Hard day.

FRANK
I'm Frank. Sorry for your troubles.

Sam reaches for his hand, and drops her folders. As they scramble to pick them up, WE SEE A PHOTO in one: the OVERCOAT GUY. Sam sees the photo, stands, staring at it.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Ms. Newly, if I can say...
(as she looks up: hm?)
I know a fair amount of people, given the chance you have, that would love to go back and change things about their life. Seeing what I have of yours... I hope you'll avail yourself.

SAMANTHA
I hope so, too, Frank.

FRANK
So where do you go from here?

SAMANTHA
God, that's the question, huh? Get back to work... find out who tried to kill me... undo the damage I've done, make up with Todd, and in general try to win what I fear will be a daily battle with my own nature.

FRANK
I meant uptown or downtown.

SAMANTHA
Oh.
She looks left and right, trying to get some sense, some pull, one way or another. Frank feels badly for her.

FRANK
There's a Tom Waits song. "If you get far enough away, you'll be on your way back home."

SAMANTHA
(nods at the wisdom)
Wow...
(them)
Okay, what does that mean?

FRANK
That if you're trying to tell a story, you'd best start at the beginning.

Samantha thinks... then gets it, and moans. PRE-LAP DOORBELL:

25

EXT. SAMANTHA'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Samantha stands outside the door, suitcase and files in hand. The door opens. Her mom, Regina, is there.

SAMANTHA
You don't have to tell me why we fought, yet, but at least tell me this: are you the one who tried to run me down?

REGINA
Don't be silly.

She stands out of the way for Sam to enter.

SAMANTHA
That's not an answer.

REGINA
(calling)
Howard! She's back!
(as Samantha enters)
You can use your old room -- you remember where that is, don't you?

SAMANTHA
Well, no, I don't.

REGINA
Just guess. It'll be fun.

And as the door closes, we imagine we can hear Samantha sigh.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR