

Strength

By

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Will Hightower 2011 (c)

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Cast of Characters

Claire Westwood:

A young professional with an athletic background. 27

Stan Westwood:

A somber man with a muscular build. 29

Scene

Home

Time

Now

Lights up. We see an apartment that is in shambles, as if a tornado came through tossing furniture about, tearing fixtures from the walls, and a hole is punched in the upstage wall. The dust has settled; the damage is not fresh, instead ignored. Only a TV and couch remain standing and in decent working order. We see shelves lining the upstage wall supporting several impressive looking wrestling trophies. We hear the door being unlocked as CLAIRE enters with luggage. She walks in and is stunned. Speechless she takes a few steps into her home until she can muster up a sound.

CLAIRE

Stan? Stanly?

STAN calmly enters, he is dressed as if he has been wearing the same clothes for several days. He sits on the couch and turns on the TV, completely unaltered by the mess or his wife's presence.

STAN

Hey.

CLAIRE

What the hell happened? Did we get robbed or did-

STAN

I did it.

CLAIRE

You did it? Why the hell would you trash our own apartment?

STAN

Because I did.

CLAIRE

Are you--

STAN

I'm fine.

CLAIRE

That's great that you're fine but I was asking if you are--

I'm fine.

STAN

Will you let me finish?

CLAIRE

Beat

CLAIRE

I was trying to ask if are--

STAN

Yeah whatever.

CLAIRE

God dammit Stanly! What is wrong with you?

STAN

What's wrong with me is that I'm trying to watch the Olympics and you keep asking me stupid questions.

CLAIRE

Stupid questions? You don't even know what I was going to ask.

STAN

Know what I was going to ask.

STAN

See? I get it. Can you leave me alone now?

CLAIRE

I'll leave you alone all right.

Claire exits to the rest of the apartment.

CLAIRE

(Offstage)

Stan what happened to your pills?

Silence. Claire reenters.

CLAIRE

Stan. What happened to your--

STAN

I threw them out.

CLAIRE

You did what?

STAN

I don't need them anymore.

Claire looks about the destroyed apartment.

CLAIRE

Like Hell you don't!

STAN

(Roaring)

I DON'T!

There is a beat of silence as the roar echos in the room.

STAN

Those pills are for the weak.

CLAIRE

No they are--

STAN

I'm not weak Claire. I'm not some emotional pussy who needs some happy pills. I'm better than this; I am stronger than this disease.

CLAIRE

It has nothing to do with strength Stan. It's mental not muscle. You can't clench chemicals. You can't slam serotonin into submission. The medication is here to help you.

STAN

I don't need any help, I can handle this myself.

CLAIRE

Then let me help you.

STAN

I sa--

CLAIRE

Stan.

Claire moves to Stan, now touching him tenderly.

CLAIRE

I love you. Let me help you.

Stan mumbles something and shuffles away from her touch.

Stanly. I need you to do this with me. I love--

CLAIRE

Stan stands up and gets away from her.

No.

STAN

Stanly--

CLAIRE

Stop.

STAN

Stan--

CLAIRE

I don't love you anymore!

STAN

What?

CLAIRE

Stan sits on the couch and begins watching TV again.

What did you say?

CLAIRE

Silence

Stanly Westwood. What did you--

CLAIRE

I. Don't. Love you.

STAN

Claire takes a step back away from the couch. She is struggling to keep it together.

You don't mean that Stan. You are off your medication is all. You do love me Stanly. I love--

CLAIRE

Those pills made me love you. That's why you want me on them so you can continue to keep me sedated in holy matrimony. I'm not some fucking trophy Claire.

STAN

CLAIRE

That's not true, the pills just--

STAN

They just tell me how to feel. All this time, all these feelings, emotions, are just a result of chemicals shoved down my throat. Have I ever felt a real thing?

CLAIRE

You did! You do! You love me, tell me you love me.

STAN

I can't do that.

There is a beat before Claire backs off.

CLAIRE

I don't need this shit. I'm gone for 3 days, 3 days Stan! and you stop taking your medication, you trash the place and have become a total asshole!

Stan stands up and for the first time takes a step towards her.

STAN

This is who I really am. This is how I want to live.

Claire takes a step forward and gets in his face.

CLAIRE

Bullshit Stan! You know what? You are fucking weak.

STAN

Yeah?

CLAIRE

Yeah Stan, Yeah. You are a pathetic piece of shit with or without any help from those pills or from me. Fuck you Stanly.

She turns to walk away, baggage in tow. Stan grabs the her bag, ripping it from her hands and tossing it out the window/against the wall.

CLAIRE

What the fuck?

Weak huh?
STAN

Claire goes for her bag when Stan grabs her arm. She instantly reels around and slaps Stan across the face. She pushes Claire away from him, she stumbles over debris and lands against the wall/ground. Stan turns away.

Who's weak now?
STAN

Claire stands up and begins to charge him.

You are fuck-face!
CLAIRE

Stan turns around in time to have Claire jump on the front of him, wrapping her legs around him and thrashing wildly. Stan regains his balance before he finds a wall and slams her against it. There is a moment of silence/stillness as they stare deeply into each others eyes.

Claire begins kissing Stan passionately. Stan reciprocates and the violent assault turns into sexual aggression. Stan rubs her up against the wall and begins to kiss down her neck/body as Claire's hands explore Stan's back, then his head, then the wall above her. She finds a large wrestling trophy on the shelf. She lifts it carefully before giving a massive blow to Stan's head shattering the trophy. Stan falls forward unto Claire who falls unto the wall and they slide down to the base.

CLAIRE
(As if talking to a baby)
Shhh shhh, it's okay now. Everything is fine.

There is a moment of silence/stillness and Clair cuddles him and rocks back and forth. She then pulls out her cellphone and dials 9-1-1.

CLAIRE

I need an ambulance please.

Blackout. End of play.