

THE BREAK IV: HOT MESS

By

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EXT. ALLEYWAY - EVENING

We meet ELLIE (25) as she's wriggling out of the window of a restaurant bathroom.

ELLIE

Y'know I think this is the best
date of my life. He. Is. Perfect.
Hot, funny, nice, normal. And
tonight's date three, so you know
what that means - I need to get the
fuck out of here.

She gives herself a final push and slips out of the window
and out of frame, letting out a throaty yelp.

We cut to Ellie lying on her back in the alley behind the
restaurant. It was a short drop but she's snagged her top on
the window before landing in a puddle. Her hair is a birds
nest. She rubs her face, smearing her makeup.

ELLIE

Our first date was good. Three
years of office flirting in the
making and I wanted the whole
boujie rom-com treatment. We went
ice skating. Also to A&E. Date two
was better, he even got me a book.

Ellie stands up, dripping. There's gum on her skirt and a rip
in her t-shirt.

ELLIE

(picking at her skirt)

Granted it was a medical textbook
that says my sriracha intake
qualifies as "potentially lethal".
Even tonight, and this is fully
disgusting, we are wearing matching
t-shirts. I liked his and he bought
me this one.

(gesturing to her shirt)

His is Jerry Seinfeld and mine's
Elaine. We're each other's teenage
crushes.

(about the skirt)

I can't convince people it came
like this, can I?

She starts walking around the corner to the front of the
restaurant, towards the street.

ELLIE

He doesn't even care that I'm fit.
It's nice to have someone tell you
that you're funny or accomplished
or you know a lot about ant farms
and Chrissy Teigen. It means
they're listening. There's probably
an Audre Lorde essay about that.

Ellie looks through the window of the restaurant. She sees her DATE (male, mid-twenties) sitting alone at the table. A waiter is trying to lift her plate as he's gently holding it down, looking around for her. Her gaze softens for a moment.

ELLIE

I should text him, right? He really
wanted to try this place. He's like
a "foodie" but for soups. Tonight
it's cream of spiced hazelnut.

Ellie side-eyes the camera. She reaches down to where a pocket should be. She turns to look back inside.

ELLIE

My bag. Shit. Keys, phone,
highlighter, meds. Meds. My mum's
started counting the pills now.
It's like I'm five. But y'know
without the serotonin production.

Ellie looks down at her bracelet that reads "W.W.E.W.D". She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

ELLIE

What *would* Elle Woods do?

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Ellie steps to the door, pushes it open and is immediately thrust into the restaurant's wall of sound. She's flustered, even making an attempt to run her fingers through her hair. She seems to have become part of the queue. There are couples in front of a sign waiting to be seated. A woman in the restaurant's already glaring at the state of her. She joins the group and grabs a menu, peering over it.

ELLIE

On reflection, Elle Woods would
probably not do this. This is not
an Elle Woods plan.

Ellie spies her bag on the floor. With her date's back to her she watches him.

ELLIE

Well I'm not just gonna go over there. What am I gonna say? "Hey sorry I jumped out the window after a panic attack because you're great and I'm not, so do you want kids?"

He tries with no avail to straighten a lone drooping flower in the vase in on the table.

Her focus shifts to the couple in the queue holding hands, giggling. Ellie's eyes drop, her jaw stiffens.

Then she hears it. Her phone is ringing on the table. It's a loud alarm sound. She flinches.

ELLIE

(resigned)

That's Mum. Shit.

She tries to shrink behind a menu as it continues to ring. As she peers out from behind the menu several customers are staring as her date sits still, pretending he can't hear it and not making eye contact with the waiter.

The couples in front of her move to be seated and she tries to blend in with them. As a tray glides past her she grabs a burger off a plate without thinking. She bites in and sighs with relief. She follows the group to lurk near their table.

ELLIE

(wiping sweat from her hairline)

I'm still doing that "pretending I have no body hair or negative emotions" date-y thing.

Ellie drops the burger into a nearby plant pot. The phone starts ringing again, there are audible groans from nearby tables. She winces at the sound.

ELLIE

I mean I know date three is when you're supposed to ease out of being a fake bitch and start being a massive hoe. But at what point are you supposed to tell someone you're -

(interrupting herself)

Seriously what kind of restaurant serves hazelnut soup.

Ellie pulls up a chair at the table of people she's been following. They stare at her but she ignores them.

Glancing at the table she spies her bag on the floor and her phone beside her plate. Ellie anxiously straightens the cutlery in front of her.

ELLIE

I know it's her.

We cut to a shot of Ellie's phone furiously vibrating on the table, her mum's smiling face shining out of it.

ELLIE

I turned on "find my friends" so she knows I'm not dead in a ditch. Or some guy's shed or basement or mobile torture van. Men love murdering women.

Ellie stares into space for a moment, clearly lost in cautionary tales of women made into skin suits.

ELLIE

(snapping out of it)

I don't think he'd murder me though, he cried at A Bug's Life. Once I thought he was going to murder me when he started writing down things I said but it's just so he can remember what I like. Like the shirt! It kind of makes me feel like I'll live forever.

Ellie notices the rest of the table staring at her.

ELLIE

What makes you think that this is any of your business?

Ellie wipes her mouth on the table cloth and peers around the head of the man next to her. Her date's gone, there's no one at their table anymore. We linger on her for a moment. Her face falls, she doesn't know where to look.

Ellie stands, walks over to the table and grabs her bag. She notices his meal is untouched -

ELLIE

Oh. He didn't start without me.

She sinks into his chair, for a few moments she's miles away. Other customers are staring at her, the dishevelled woman on the verge of tears eating leftovers.

ELLIE

I mean, what would've happened?
I could've just let him fall in
love with whoever he thinks I am.
We could buy plants together and
argue about who makes breakfast
while I slowly kill both of us
instead of myself... let it be *my*
fault he never really knew me.

She catches the camera with her eye for a moment, then looks away, almost ashamed. After a beat someone coughs behind her.

Ellie turns, it's him. He has his hands full with an extra large bottle of sriracha.

ELLIE

(to herself, soft)

Sriracha -

He stares at her, clearly concerned at her appearance. Ellie takes it from him, she cracks a smile as she sets it on the table. Uncapping it, they fall into their seats.

ELLIE

(to us)

Ok

Ellie takes a breath. She clocks the bottle dripping on to the table, the Seinfeld t-shirt staring at her. He reaches across the table, his hand in her hair pulling out a discarded hubba bubba wrapper. It's intimate, with an almost romantic tension.

Their bodies jerk closer. His watch is caught in her hair. He untangles himself and pulls the wrapper out of her hair. As he opens his mouth to speak Ellie cuts him off.

ELLIE

(blurting it out)

I'm crazy. I am manic. And I am
depressive. And a bunch of other
things that no one ever wants to
talk about. I climbed out a window
tonight to avoid you and that
doesn't even crack my top 5 bad
decisions of the week. Right now
things are perfect. You're perfect
and you think I'm perfect but I'm
not. And the longer that this -

She realises her phone is ringing again and switches it off.

ELLIE

That's my mum, she calls me three times a day because - I scare her. She thinks I'm gonna breakdown. Again. Hurt myself, again. Do whatever it takes to make things stop for a second. And that's why whenever you ask me what I'm thinking I have to make a joke because I'm scared too. Don't get me wrong this isn't a cry for help, I'm learning how to take care of myself. I'm trying to be ok. I'm trying.

After a beat Ellie becomes self-conscious again, smoothing down her hair and outfit.

ELLIE

I'm sorry. I ripped Elaine.
(Her eyes well up)
I ripped her. I'm such a mess and you're - you. You're perfect, an hour into the date and you're not even covered in crap.

Suddenly he smiles, standing he reaches to a table beside them and grabs a bowl of soup. Without breaking eye contact he pours the soup all down the front of his shirt.

He sets the empty bowl upside down on his head. Ellie stands, wipes at her eye and then straightens the bowl like a hat.

ELLIE

Let's get the fuck out of here.

Beaming, Ellie reaches into her purse and slams some cash on the table. She grabs his hand and resolutely they strut out of the restaurant, taking their Sriracha with them as they go while several other diners stare with alarm.

FADE DOWN

ELLIE (O.S.)

Is that soup burning your eyes?

THE END