

CANDY CRACK

An anxious woman's efforts to help
her video game addicted husband
don't go to plan

REVISION 374
Scrapped
scrapped.com

June 22, 2013
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INT. INNER CITY TERRACE HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

CINDY, a thin woman in her early thirties, is staring at the ceiling. She is alone on a messy queen size bed wearing tatty flannel pajamas. Her phone BLEEPs loudly. She rolls over as though bitten, snatches up the phone from the cluttered side table, unplugs it and starts swiping and tapping quickly. She's done this before. A lot.

CINDY

Finally.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY (LATER)

An hour later Cindy is in exactly the same position still swiping and tapping. A reminder chimes.

CINDY

Oh shit. (BEAT) Pete!

Cindy rolls out of bed and rushes out into the corridor all flapping pajamas and messy hair. She takes her phone.

INT. STUDY

Cindy sweeps in to find her husband PETE sitting at his high tech computer. The study is lined with non fiction books. He is wearing similar tatty flannel pajamas and grimy thick stubble. He wears gaming headphones with a microphone attached and his hands are on the keyboard.

CINDY

Have you been up all night again?

PETE

(BEAT) Maybe.

CINDY

(rubbing her neck)

For fuck's sake Pete. You promised.
It's Monday. Get Ryan up.

PETE

(not turning)

Sol, use the grenade. No the
plasma!

(tightly over shoulder)

I'm not going to work. I'm taking a
sicky. Ryan's got a curriculum day,
remember?

(back to screen)

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
He's behind the oil tanker. Ben go
left. Left! Jesus.

CINDY
You promised me.

PETE
Just leave it would you?
(happily)
Shit! What a shot! Gav, you're on
fire mate.

Cindy turns on her heel and stalks towards the door.

PETE (CONT'D)
Molly called. You missed lunch with
the girls. Can you call her back?

INT. KITCHEN

Cindy rushes into the kitchen and puts her phone down on the sink. She grabs a dirty glass and fills it with water. She picks up a white prescription bottle and shakes it. She doesn't like what she hears. She sets the bottle down and tips the water out. She puts both hands on the sink and leans into it looking down at the water GURGLING as it swirls around the plughole.

CINDY
Shit. Shit. Shit.

She rubs her neck with one hand and then rubs her wrist. She picks up her phone and taps in a message.

PETE (O.S.)
Have you got a session today?

CINDY
(shouting)
Yes. At ten.

PETE (O.S.)
Don't forget to go.

CINDY
(annoyed)
I won't.
(to herself)
Like you can talk.

INT. TRAM - DAY

Cindy is sitting by the window with her head down looking at her phone. Her fingers glide across the surface, stopping only to tap and double tap. The tram RATTLES through parkland. Outside the window the trees are green and lush but she doesn't look up. An older lady is sitting beside her.

OLDER LADY
(friendly)
Lovely day. Where's that handsome son of yours?

CINDY
(surprised and
distracted) Oh. (BEAT)
He's got a day off. I'm
sorry but (BEAT) do I
know you?

OLDER LADY
(laughs kindly)
I see you often but I guess you
don't see me. Never mind. This is
my stop.

Cindy watches in bemusement as the woman gets off the tram.

EXT. CENTER FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY - DAY

Cindy walks up to the entrance scraping her hair into a bun. On a sign near the door the name of the Center is clearly visible. The names of four doctors are listed. Cindy opens the door.

INT. CENTER FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY/WAITING ROOM

The receptionist, SHELLEY, looks up from Facebook as Cindy enters.

SHELLEY
Good morning Cindy. DR STABLE is
waiting for you.

CINDY
(shamefaced)
Thanks Shelley. Traffic...

Cindy makes a beeline for a slightly open door, knocks and enters.

INT. DR STABLE'S CONSULTING ROOM

A pleasant, nondescript, comfortable room with a large desk and several low chairs wait for Cindy as she enters. Dr Stable is sitting at the desk. He is older, graying but fit and slim. He looks up from his iPad and smiling, rises to greet her.

CINDY
(agitated)
I'm so sorry I'm late.

DR STABLE
That's alright Cindy. Come in, sit down. I'm afraid I will still have to end on time. How are you?

CINDY
(rubbing her wrist)
I'm just so worried about him Doctor.

DR STABLE
We'll get to that but let's run through a few things first.

CINDY
(rubbing)
He was up all night again last night.

DR STABLE
(sitting down)
Please have a seat.

Cindy sits down but moves restlessly and taps her fingers.

DR STABLE (CONT'D)
Now, are you still taking your meds?

CINDY
Yes. At least, you know, most days.

DR STABLE
It's important that you take them every day Cindy. I can't help you if you're not taking them.

CINDY
I ran out this morning. I didn't get to the chemist but I've taken them every other day.

DR STABLE
(picking up his iPad and
taking notes)
And are you feeling any less
anxious? Are you sleeping?

CINDY
(looking guilty)
Er yes, but it's hard, you know
with him playing with his mates all
night.
(rubbing her wrist)
He's addicted. I know he is.

DR STABLE
Now last week we were talking about
your father's gambling problem. Do
you remember?

CINDY
(looking uncomfortable)
Yes.

DR STABLE
And about your mother's drinking.

CINDY
(looking down)
Yes. It wasn't so bad until
dad...you know...died.

DR STABLE
(gently)
It was bad enough though wasn't it?
And then the suicide.

CINDY
(she tears up) Yes.
(BEAT) Yes.

DR STABLE
(passing her the tissue
box)
It would effect anyone. There is no
shame in your experiences Cindy.

CINDY
(taking a tissue and
dabbing)
Thank you.

DR STABLE

You have worked very hard to have a normal, productive life haven't you?

CINDY

Yes I have. So why did I screw up and choose an addict?

DR STABLE

Why do you think you did?

CINDY

I don't know.

DR STABLE

You grew up with addicts. It was all you knew. It was familiar.

CINDY

Yes.

DR STABLE

You didn't have any other models.

CINDY

(leaning forward)

No. But I thought I'd broken away. I wanted to be anything but what they were.

DR STABLE

Sometimes we fall into the same patterns as our parents no matter how much we resist. In fact resisting can sometimes attract the things we are trying to avoid.

CINDY

How do you mean?

A subtle DING sounds from a phone on Dr Stable's desk.

DR STABLE

(shifting in his seat)

Pete came to see me this week.

CINDY

(sitting back as though struck)

What? Why? What do you mean he came to see you?

DR STABLE

(calmly)

He called me and I asked him to come in.

CINDY

(half standing)

What? How dare you! You're my doctor, not his! Why would you do that?

DR STABLE

(making calming gestures)

Please sit down Cindy. I want to help you and I have something I want to discuss with you.

Cindy stands and walks to the window. She rests both hands on the window ledge and leans in towards the window. She is tense like a coiled spring. Dr Stable turns calmly with her movement.

CINDY

What? What do you want to say?

DR STABLE

(gently)

Please come and sit down.

Cindy's phone BLEEPs in her bag. She turns and her eyes snap down. She walks quickly to her bag and, sitting down, starts to rummage inside it.

DR STABLE (CONT'D)

(firmly)

Cindy, leave the phone.

CINDY

What? No. I won't be a minute. I just have to see what it says.

DR STABLE

Cindy, can you leave the phone in your bag?

Cindy finds her phone and starts to look at it. Dr Stable puts his hand over her hand with the phone in it. She looks up at him furiously and pulls the phone towards her.

CINDY

Let go.

He resists and tries to hold on to the phone but she violently wrenches it away from him and clasps it in both hands. She looks at the doctor horrified.

DR STABLE

Can I have the phone please Cindy?

Cindy hesitates. Looks confused. Letting the doctor take the phone reluctantly, she sinks back into her seat.

CINDY

(mortified)

Oh. Oh no.

DR STABLE

Yes.

CINDY

How long have you known?

DR STABLE

I've suspected but you hide it very well Cindy. Coming here to see me, I think it means you are ready to deal with the past and ready to heal. When I talked with Pete I was sure. (BEAT) Pete's fine. He's having fun with his friends but it hasn't made him distracted and forgetful. He doesn't crave it when he's not playing. It hasn't become more important to him than seeing his friends in real life. (BEAT) Has it?

CINDY

He was up all night.

DR STABLE

Have you heard of projection? You believe you're worried about him but really you're worried about yourself. He was up all night, but it's not all the time. On some level you know it's you that has the problem.

Cindy looks down. Tears drip from her face. She shakes her head and sobs. The doctor looks on compassionately. Slowly she calms.

CINDY

I sort of knew but I didn't want to face it.

(MORE)

CINDY (CONT'D)

I still don't want to face it. I'm just like my father.

(she puts her head in her hands and sighs)

Oh god.

DR STABLE

Cindy, you are not your parents, you are yourself. You learned how to behave from them but now you're ready to learn a different way of living. You've taken an enormous step forward today. You have a partner that loves you, a son who needs you and you have support. Cindy listens and nods.

DR STABLE (CONT'D)

I want you to be very kind to yourself this week and next week we'll talk about strategies for the future. I'm not saying it will be easy but if you really want to break free there are a range of strategies we can try. I'll be here to work with you. (BEAT) Now are you alright to get home?

CINDY

I think so.

DR STABLE

Then I'll see you next week.

The doctor stands as Cindy gets up and walks uncertainly to the door. He holds the door open and sees her out.

CINDY

Thank you Dr Stable.

DR STABLE

Take care.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Shelley looks up from Facebook as Cindy comes back in from the consulting room. Shelley registers Cindy's wrecked face.

SHELLEY

(kindly)

Would you like a glass of water, or a cup of tea?

CINDY

Thanks. Um no. I might just go to
the loo.

SHELLEY

(gestures towards the
bathroom)

Of course.

Head down, Cindy goes to the bathroom door and pushes it.

INT. BATHROOM

Inside a cubicle we see Cindy from above. She is sitting on the toilet, her skirt hitched up around her thighs. Her head is down, her elbows are out. A cheerfully rising BRIIING sounds and a tinny TUNE starts playing. Cindy leans back and a twee leader board for a game is revealed. It's red and gold with little shiny gumdrops bouncing around.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

At the top of the screen is a heading, "Candy Crack". Flashing brightly at the top of the leader board is the candy colored text, "#1. Sweet Cindy".

BACK TO SCENE

Cindy rests the phone on her lap, throws back her head and raises both fists in a gesture of triumph.

CINDY

Yes!

FADE OUT.