

TW: DRUGS

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

The lab is a cluttered mess, papers scattered on the floor and tables, dirty coffee cups, broken pens, and a LIQUID SOLUTION stored in vials.

A woman in her mid 40's, THE SCIENTIST, wears short sleeve shirt and drops a newly emptied SYRINGE. She has messy hair, a hunched back, eye bags, and she clutches her head tightly.

THE SCIENTIST

Gah..

A slightly younger and cleaner woman, THE LOVER, reaches out to her.

The Scientist one of her hands up to stop her, and trips forward. The Lover ignores her and grabs her at the shoulders, forcing The Scientist to look at her.

THE LOVER

Don't try to ignore me. I told you this was a bad idea.

(The Scientist tries to look away)

Hey, no. Look at me.

The Scientist dilated pupils and puffy red eyes.

THE LOVER

You look high.

THE SCIENTIST

Good.

The Lover gives her a hard look.

THE SCIENTIST

What? Drugs are meant to-to make you high. I'd have thought you'd know that.

The Scientist pries The Lover away from her.

THE LOVER

Of course I know that.

THE SCIENTIST

Then don't--you don't have to worry.
About it. Me.

THE LOVER

It isn't only supposed to make you
high. Is it--do you feel better?

THE SCIENTIST

I don't know. Yet.

THE LOVER

How will you even know if it worked? If
you've never felt something then how
will you know what it feels like?

The Scientist sits down in a chair.

THE SCIENTIST

(angrily)

I'll know.

THE LOVER

Maybe you have experienced love. Maybe
you just don't realize it. You
shouldn't be risking your--you
shouldn't make a drug that you could
get addicted to just to-to--

THE SCIENTIST

Stop it!

The Lover freezes.

THE SCIENTIST

Please. Let me have this. You haven't
lived my life. You haven't felt what
I've felt. Love is a chemical..

The LOVER

It's a feeling--

THE SCIENTIST

..Which is a chemical. If this-

She signals towards the vials of LIQUID SOLUTION.

THE SCIENTIST

Helps me feel normal, then I don't care
if it kills me. You need to understand
that.

The Lover considers this for a second, then approaches The
Scientist and puts a hand on her shoulder.

THE LOVER

I won't let it kill you.

The Scientist smiles.

THE SCIENTIST

Thanks.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING, 2 YEARS LATER

The Scientist rolls over in her bed, sleepy but visibly happier.
She yawns and taps The Lover, who is sleeping next to her. The
Lover remains asleep.

THE SCIENTIST

Hey.

The Scientist taps The Lover a few more times, and The Lover
groans.

THE SCIENTIST

(affectionately)

Wake up.

She shakes The Lover. The Lover wakes up with a smile.

THE LOVER

Alright, jeez. I'm up!

The Lover gets out of bed while The Scientist stretches.

THE LOVER

I can never understand how you wake up
so early.

The Lover walks to their shared closet and picks out some
clothes. We see that near her feet, there's a METAL BOX.

THE SCIENTIST

I was a biology major in college,
that's how. Could you get me a syringe
and some solution?

The Lover chuckles.

THE LOVER

You took an injection yesterday. You've
still got another two days before your
next dose, love.

The Scientist sits at the edge of the bed now.

THE SCIENTIST

Oh, I know. It's wearing off, though. I
think we should increase frequency.

The Lover frowns.

THE LOVER

Last week, we increased the dose
specifically so we wouldn't have to
increase the frequency.

THE SCIENTIST

My body's probably just getting used to
it. Please just go get the syringe.

The Lover bends down and opens the METAL BOX. Inside, there's
rows of covered vials filled with the LIQUID SOLUTION.

THE LOVER

I don't want you getting addicted.

The Lover picks a VIAL up, and a SYRINGE.

THE SCIENTIST

I won't. Don't worry about it.

The Lover goes back to The Scientist and hands her the VIAL and
the SYRINGE.

The SCIENTIST

Thank you.

The Scientist smiles at The Lover. The Lover frowns.

THE LOVER

I'm taking a shower.

The Lover walks away, leaving The Scientist alone.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING, FIVE MONTHS LATER

The Lover is eating breakfast by herself, typing on her computer. She has eye bags, and seems stressed and tired. The Scientist comes in, and The Lover barely looks up.

The Scientist is drying her wet hair with a towel.

The SCIENTIST

Hey, did you move the syringes?

THE LOVER

Yeah.

THE SCIENTIST

I need a dose today. Where are they?

The Lover pauses, then closes her computer.

THE LOVER

I don't think you should be taking them anymore.

The Scientist scoffs.

THE SCIENTIST

You don't get to make that choice.

THE LOVER

I told you I wouldn't let this kill you.

THE SCIENTIST

It's not--

THE LOVER

You're addicted.

The Scientist sits down next to her.

THE SCIENTIST

I like feeling normal. That's it.

THE LOVER

If you need to take drugs to feel normal, then you're addicted to the drug.

THE SCIENTIST

Look. You just don't understand.

THE LOVER

You're right! I don't understand why you're throwing your life away over something so stupid.

THE SCIENTIST

You think it's stupid? You'd be fine with--with never loving me? Never loving your family or your friends the way you're supposed to?

The Lover rubs at her forehead.

THE LOVER

Fine. Fine, maybe it's not stupid, but it's dangerous.

THE SCIENTIST

I'm taking calculated doses.

The Lover laughs.

THE LOVER

Maybe in the beginning. But we've increased the dosage, and we've increased frequency, and at this rate you'll be dead before New Years.

A beat.

THE SCIENTIST

(almost yelling)

So you just don't want me to love you?

The Lover stabs at her food with a FORK.

THE LOVER

That's not what I said. You can still
love me without the drugs.

The Scientist slaps The Lover's hand. The FORK clatters to the
floor. The Lover stares at her with confusion and anger.

THE SCIENTIST

(yelling)

No, I can't! Don't you get it--it's one
or the other, we can't have both!

The Lover stares at her, and then at the fork.

THE LOVER

Do you even love me now?

The Scientist realizes how she just acted and regrets it.

THE SCIENTIST

Listen, I'm sorry.

The Scientist reaches out to hold The Lover's hand. The Lover
flinches away.

THE LOVER

Don't. Don't touch me and don't lie to
me. Your stupid needles are in the car.

The Lover gets up.

THE SCIENTIST

Love--

THE LOVER

I'm going on a walk.

The Lover grabs her purse and leaves.

INT. BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

The Scientist is sitting, leaning against her bed. She's holding
a SYRINGE that is full. Next to her, there is a row of multiple
equally full syringes.

The Scientist moves her arm and prepares to inject herself. She puts the SYRINGE a few inches away from her arm..

..and puts it back down again. She hits herself on the forehead a few times, breathing harshly. She doesn't know what to do.

She picks the SYRINGE up again.

The doorknob rattles for a second. It's followed by knocking.

THE LOVER (O.S.)

I know you're in there. I'm sorry for leaving so suddenly.

The Scientist freezes.

The Lover, from the other side of the door, rubs at her arm.

THE LOVER

But I stand by what I said.

(a beat)

You can't keep going like this. You're bound to get hurt. I'm bound to get hurt, too. You're--I do love you. I'll still love you.

The Scientist sets the SYRINGE down. She cradles herself. She looks like a scared child.

THE SCIENTIST

But I won't.

A beat passes.

THE LOVER

You love differently.

THE SCIENTIST

Don't try to make me feel better.

THE LOVER

Would you let me finish? You love differently. In a way that no one else does. And maybe that means you can't love me the way I want you to. But I'd rather you not love me and be alive, than love me dead.

The Scientist stares at the syringes. She gets up and opens the door. We get a good look at her face. She's nearly crying.

The Lover sees all the syringes on the floor.

THE SCIENTIST

I didn't take any. I was too scared.

The Lover hugs The Scientist.

THE SCIENTIST

You understand that if I don't take the injections, I won't love you anymore.

THE LOVER

You will. In your own way. We were friends before all this happened, and, though I'll miss what we have now, we'll be friends again after.

The Scientist hugs her back.

THE SCIENTIST

I'm sorry. For everything.

THE LOVER

It's okay. I'll be okay. We'll figure it out.

THE SCIENTIST

What if we don't?

A beat.

THE LOVER

Then at least we'll be alive.

FADE OUT.

THE END