

The Complex

Brooke Strand is a soap opera actress that is trying to move up in Hollywood. She has checked into The Complex to help her to lose weight, but does not realize the situation she has gotten herself into until it is too late.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM- MORNING

FADE IN:

The camera slowly moves in through a bedroom door left ajar, showing a couple in bed.

BROOKE

My God, Gol, that was wonderful
Did you learn something new?

She moves off of the man, slapping him on the chest playfully and walks to a bathroom off scene. The camera continues to PAN to the man in the bed, starting with his lower half, covered by a white sheet. It continues up to his torso- muscled with gray, plastic-looking skin.

GOLIATH

I have not learned any new techniques, but I am pleased you enjoyed it.

(Pause)

Are you hungry? I believe you have not had breakfast yet.

BROOKE (O.S.)

You may not be human, but you know how to make me happy. Eggs would be wonderful.

GOLIATH

I am here to help.

BROOKE (O.S.)

Well, you better put these on...we do have neighbors.

A pair of pants flies from offscreen. Goliath sits up abruptly and catches pants without looking.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Camera shows eggs cooking, the spatula being held by hands that are not human, with visible gaps between its joints. The camera slowly pans up his torso to his emotionless face. A female hand appears on one of his shoulders, then Brooke's face peers over Goliath's shoulder.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Those look great, Gol. You know I should have moved into the Complex

right after Bill died.
 (laughing)
 You've been worth every one of his pennies.

Brooke gets coffee and sits at the kitchen table. She's wearing a large tee shirt that says LA RAMS on it.

GOLIATH
 Here is your healthy breakfast,
 Brooke. Is there anything else you
 require?

BROOKE
 Nope. I'll see you later today,
 I've got an audition today.

Goliath walks mechanically towards the stairs to go to the upstairs bedroom. A computer screen embedded in the wall CHIMES and a female face (early 30s) appears. The options to Answer or Hang up appear on the screen below her face. Camera shows Brooke's face in the right corner of the screen, while a female fills the remainder of it.

BROOKE
 (continues to eat)
 Answer.

MELANIE
 Hey little sis, what are you
 doing? How's your new place?
 (Melanie's eyes track to
 Goliath who is still
 walking out of frame)
 Ohh, I see WHO you've been doing!

BROOKE
 Be nice, Melanie.

MELANIE
 Nice? I'm jealous! I can't believe
 you bought one of those things!

BROOKE
 Look, Bill has been dead about six
 months, and longer if you count
 our last year of marriage. He was
 no picnic. Goliath here is a
 picnic, and he came with the
 place.

MELANIE
 Wait, you said he came with your
 new apartment?

BROOKE

Yeah, it's like a club. People join it and they help you exercise, eat right, and be productive. The Good Life Complex. I have a brochure if you're interested.

MELANIE

(face grimacing in disgust)

Sounds like a cult. I hope you read the small print. How long are you there?

BROOKE

Well, either until I run out of what's left of Bill's money or I get a better acting gig.

(beat)

Mel, I can't get a better acting gig until I drop twenty pounds, and that's why I'm here for at least a year. They have a guarantee-

MELANIE

You look terrific, Boo. I wish you'd believe me.

BROOKE

I'm an actress, Sis, and I'm thirty-one. The clock is ticking on my career. I'm trying move up from the Soap Opera heiress to something else.

BROOKE's cat, Delphi, jumps into her lap.

MELANIE

Ohh, hi Delphy!

BROOKE strokes the orange tabby's head.

MELANIE

Well, it sounds like a great place, and if I hear another word about Goliath I'll be even more tempted to leave Frank.

BROOKE

Your husband? The good doctor?

MELANIE

(beat)

...Is nothing to write home about either. I don't think I need a robot because he's basically one anyway. Goes to work, comes home, goes back. I never see him. It's like a grumpy roommate, not a lover. Don't get me started on that. How's your show doing?

BROOKE

Ratings are up. They're saying I should get more lines next season,, but honestly, I hope I'm gone by then. First I have to get down to a size two.

MELANIE

I wish you'd let that go.

BROOKE

It'll happen. The Complex says if I follow the rules I'm guaranteed to hit my target weight.

MELANIE

Rules? Brooke, what rules did you agree to?

The computer screen blinks that another message is coming in. The screen shows the words TRAFFIC ALERT. Then a voice emits from the machine.

COMPUTER

Based on traffic conditions, you must leave within ten minutes to avoid being late to your audition at Paramount Studios. This call will be terminated in two minutes.

MELANIE

Who the hell was that?

BROOKE

See Sis, they're here to help. They won't let me be late.

MELANIE

Call me later!

BROOKE

Will do!

INT - APARTMENT DOOR - LATER THAT DAY

The camera shows Brooke sitting on a couch, looking depressed. She has a carton of ice cream on the coffee table in front of her. The doorbell rings and she gets up to answer it. A young man is holding a pizza box. He appears nervous.

PIZZA BOY
Hey lady, here's your pizza.

BROOKE
Thanks let me pay -

PIZZA BOY
No need lady, I already got your account information

BROOKE
You do?

PIZZA BOY
You haven't lived here long have you ?

The boy looks over both shoulders. Brooke follows his glance to a window across the complex courtyard. There a female quickly closes the curtain.

PIZZA BOY
(nervous)
Just take your pizza lady.

BROOKE
Oh...okay.

Brooke closes her apartment door and places the pizza on the kitchen table, grabs a piece and returns to the couch. A popup appears in the middle of her screen.

"Dietary Violation - Level One Penalty Assessed- \$50.00."

BROOKE (CONT'D)
What the hell? Complex, explain.

COMPLEX (O.S.)
(computerized voice)
There are no fattening foods allowed according to your dietary profile and goals. See Section 32 Paragraph F for more details.

Brooke angrily bites her pizza, and her cat Delphi joins here.

BROOKE

Well, Delphi, this is a very expensive pizza, so we better enjoy it. After today's horrible audition it's time for us to get on some Netflix.

Brooke and the cat Delphi are nearly asleep as they bathe in the flickering blue light of the television. The pizza box lays empty next to her. A dialogue box comes on and the text appears:

"The minimum amount of cardiovascular exercise has not been met according to your Complex agreement. Override cost = \$50.00

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Dammit! Fifty bucks again. It's 10:30 P.M. Complex this isn't fair!

BROOKE hits the Override button angrily and starts to watch the show.

EXT. PARKING LOT DAY

The next day Brooke is getting home from the set of her soap opera. She has a coffee and a donut in her hand, and begins to head to her apartment. She gets on the sidewalk and turns to her right and sees a form in front of her. It looks like a female, but much larger than her. She has a mask on, and a baseball bat in her hand.

BROOKE

I have no money!

ASSAILANT ONE

We don't want your money. You must follow the plan. No more donuts. No more pizza!

The assailant charges Brooke, who SCREAMS and turns to run and is met by another assailant who punches her in the stomach. Brooke hits the ground with a thud, coffee spilling everywhere. The larger woman kicks her in the gut. Brooke WHEEZES in agony. Assailant One points the bat at Brooke's face.

ASSAILANT ONE

You sat on that couch for five hours after eating pizza. You that's not permitted. You better shape up or next time it'll be

your pretty face.

ASSAILANT TWO
We are here to help you!

Assailant Two kicks her right as she says the words, and then they run.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE NEXT DAY

Brooke gets out of her car and storms into the police precinct. She was introduced the OFFICER FRANKLIN, an older cop, who looks weary and bored.

BROOKE
Officer...Franklin....is it?

OFFICER FRANKLIN
What would you like to report... I see you've got trouble with your landlord?

BROOKE
Problem? They're trying to kill me!

OFFICER FRANKLIN
How is that?

BROOKE
I was assaulted by two women I'm almost sure lived in that complex. They knew things about me!

OFFICER FRANKLIN
I called up the security guy. They didn't get anything on security recording. Are you sure you weren't simply drunk?

BROOKE
Stagger! Of course I was staggering, they nearly broke my ribs. Look, I had several threatening messages. I mean they're watching me, and taking money from my account.

OFFICER FRANKLIN
Isn't that the entire idea behind this Complex? I mean we hear this all the time from people from there. But dear, it's in your

contract. What did you expect?

BROOKE

I didn't expect to get extorted!

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Miss, you've extorted yourself by signing up for that place. Either get yourself a lawyer or just wait out the year of your contract. This isn't a police matter.

Brooke picks up her purse and storms out of the precinct and drives home.

INT APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT

Brooke enters her apartment, she throws her keys on the table.

GOLIATH

Welcome home, Brooke. I've made your favorite, surf-and-turf.

BROOKE

I'm starving. It smells wonderful. Thank you, Gol. I think you're the only thing in my life that makes sense now.

She starts eating.

GOLIATH

What did you do today to make you so upset?

BROOKE

This is delicious. What is it?

GOLIATH

Do you know that you've eaten too many calories this week? You are gaining weight, which is against Complex policy.

BROOKE

What is this, Goliath?

GOLIATH

I'm afraid you've broken too many of the rules Brooke. You need to be punished.

BROOKE
Where...where is Delphi?

She SCREAMS her cat's name. Goliath gets up slowly from the table.

GOLIATH
Hopefully this will create an aversion to food that you clearly require to attain your goal.

Brooke runs upstairs to the bathroom and THROWS UP in the toilet. When complete she emerges and Goliath is sitting at the edge of the bed.

BROOKE
I'm out of this place, you crazy robot!

Goliath moves with astonishing speed and grabs her by the neck. Brooke GASPS, squirms and fights, but ultimately loses consciousness.

Brooke wakes up and she's bound and naked on the bed. There's a mirror over her head showing her body. Goliath is standing there staring.

GOLIATH (CONT'D)
Brooke Strand you signed the Complex agreement. You agreed that we should do untying to help you lose weight. Now you will lay there for twenty-four hours, staring at your overweight body. No food, no drink. No one will hear you scream. If you decide to do scream anyway, the system will add one hour for each violation.

BROOKE
You cannot do this! Brooke cries turn into a whimper.

EXT. THE APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Weeks later, Brooke's sister Melanie drives to the Complex and parks in visitor parking. She walks to Brooke's door with a concerned look on her face.

MELANIE

Brooke, it's me, Melanie. Can you open-

The door opens slowly. Brooke appears gaunt, with a vacant smile on her face.

BROOKE

Hello big sis! I'm happy to see you.

Brooke doesn't open the door, but Melanie pushes her way into the apartment.

MELANIE

You haven't answered any of my calls.

Melanie looks into the corner. Goliath is standing there, motionless, with a mechanical smile.

GOLIATH

Hello Mrs. Williams it is so nice to-

MELANIE

Yeah yeah stuff it, tin man. Boo, can we get rid of this guy for a few minutes?

BROOKE

Gol, can you go upstairs for a minute? My sister and I are going to have tea.

Goliath moves slowly and walks upstairs, looking back at Melanie once.

MELANIE

That dude freaks me out. It's been six weeks since you've answered any of my calls. I had to fly out from Minnesota, Boo! What's going on?

Brooke is quiet and serene. She pours hot water in each cup, and brings the cups steaming over to the kitchen table.

BROOKE

Why are you worried?

MELANIE

You look so thin. And what is this

bruise on your wrist?

BROOKE

It's nothing!

Brooke covers her left wrist with her right hand.

MELANIE

I'm getting you out of here. We can pay any fee they want.

BROOKE

Melanie, you're getting worked up for no reason.

Brooke rips open a third teabag. Tea leaves scatter on the table. Her finger starts tracing a word in the spilled tea leaves. The message is "GO!"

Camera zooms into Melanie's face, with rage and anger filling her face.

MELANIE

We're getting the hell out of here.

She grabs Brooke's other wrist, and Brooke cries out in pain. Melanie rolls up Brooke's sleeve and there are bruises up and down her arm.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Oh my God, Brooke. I'm calling the cops!

Melanie runs to the door and opens it, only to find Goliath standing there. She SCREAMS and falls backward.

GOLIATH

Melanie, did I tell you that the Complex is running a special this month on new tenants? It's the first and last month off of the lease and no security deposit.

MELANIE

I'm not staying in this prison!

Goliath slowly closes the door.

GOLIATH

Did I also mention that we have the right, per Complex contract,

to record all the transactions
that come in and out of this
establishment? We know all of your
secrets as well.

Melanie's eyes open wide as she crawls backward. He reaches
his hand out to Melanie. She hits is away and skitters to
against the dishwasher. Goliath produces a tablet and
pushes it very close to Melanie's face

GOLIATH

Here's a lease agreement. An
apartment has recently opened.
Congratulations-

Suddenly a smash against Goliath's head. Goliath crumples
to the floor, a massive spark jumping out of his split open
skull. But the robot continues to operate, despite the
massive damage.

GOLIATH

Brooke that's going to cost you.
That's going to cost you dearly.

BROOKE

Please, no.

GOLIATH

That is, unless your big sister
agrees that its time or a change.
Time for her to get control of her
life, to leverage fear as an ally
rather than an opponent. This is
the best time to sign up with the
Complex, because we're here to
help.

Goliath hands the tablet to Melanie, who has tears dripping
from her eyes. The camera zooms in on one of her eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.