

CHRISTOPHER BLAKE - ADAPTATION

MRS. BLAKE: Ken, please try to be sensible about this.

MR. BLAKE: Will you do me a big favor? One great big helluva favor? Stop using that word.

MRS. BLAKE: What word?

MR. BLAKE: "Sensible." Find another word, will you? Like nasty. Let's be nasty about this. I've had "sensible" coming out of my ears these last few days. I don't intend to be sensible about it - so find a new word.

MRS. BLAKE: I'm sorry, I don't know what other word to use.

MR. BLAKE: What you really mean is, why don't I stop being a heel and give Christopher up. Isn't that it? Well, I won't give him up. I want my son.

MRS. BLAKE: I do too, Kenneth.

MR. BLAKE: Sure. Only you want to punish me some more. Let's put that in, Evie, just for the record.

MRS. BLAKE: I don't understand your attitude, Ken.

MR. BLAKE: Don't you? You understand it so well you won't stay in the same room with it.

MRS. BLAKE: I won't go over the whole thing again, no.

MR. BLAKE: Well that's good and civilized - what you don't like you won't discuss. All right. Here's my contribution. I never wanted this divorce. I still don't. And I won't budge on Christopher. Oh, I understand I haven't got a leg to stand on. I also know how unreasonable I'm being - how badly I'm behaving. I want you to know I understand it all and I don't give a damn. There's only one thing I'd like to understand - and I can't. That's you Evie, you. Why -

MRS. BLAKE: Oh, for God's sake, Kenneth, stop badgering me. You never wanted this divorce. and you still don't. If you're sick of the word "sensible," I'm sick of hearing that. And I'm sick of seeing you try to play the guilty barefoot boy with straw in his hair. It's too shoddy and it's too late.

MR. BLAKE: I see. I'm still the complete sonofabitch.

MRS. BLAKE: Oh, stop it. It's your fault we're here - not mine. You've been trying to turn it around for weeks, and you're still trying even now. Well, it won't change around. I didn't take a lover. You took a mistress. There's no buckpassing on that.

MR. BLAKE: Evie - wait a minute. Don't leave.

MRS. BLAKE: Please, Kenneth -

MR. BLAKE: I have to talk to you - just give me five minutes.

MRS. BLAKE: I'm sorry, Kenneth. No.

MR. BLAKE: Why not Evie? I don't know who else to ask. Please.

MRS. BLAKE: Kenneth, I'm tired. I'm just about going to make it. I don't want to say - I don't want either of us to say - things to each other we can't ever unsay. And it's too late now, Kenneth.

MR. BLAKE: Why, Evie? Why?

MRS. BLAKE: Oh, Kenneth . . .

MR. BLAKE: Why? All right, I lived with another woman. I didn't love her. Whatever else you believe, Evie, you know that, at least, is the truth.

MRS. BLAKE: I know that.

MR. BLAKE: What is it then, Evie? Not jealousy. You know how it was over between Ruth and me the moment it came to a choice.

MRS. BLAKE: Kenneth, we've said all this.

MR. BLAKE: But you've never told me why, Evie. I'm reaching - I'm searching - I'm trying to understand. It's not jealousy. It can't be on some silly moral grounds. I don't believe it. Evie, we've had good years together - we've had Chris. We owe each other something for those years, Evie, don't we? It can't all end like this - you can't be doing this to us both with no reason. I know you too well for that. Why, Evie? Why is it too late even now?

MRS. BLAKE: Because . . . there isn't always a reason - one specific reason - even one I can give to myself - even you and Ruth. Don't you think I've tried? But then it happened - there was no going back. I knew it. And there isn't now. I can't tell you why. I don't know. It's just - true.

MR. BLAKE: And this is what you're wrecking us both for. This! This - jabber. This fine bit of feminine - nothing. Well, it's not good enough. I don't even believe you. My god, what kind of a woman are you? We - all right, I accept that - I don't understand it - but all right - but to do this to Chris - to know what its doing to him. What do you want, Evie? What could make you do this to our son?

MRS. BLAKE: How can you be so cruel?

MR. BLAKE: Maybe I'm trying to show you up. It's about time. I've tried everything else. Maybe this is the kind of talk you understand.

MRS. BLAKE: All right, if that's the way you want it you can have it. I never told you this - I never wanted you to know. It's not Ruth - it never was. It wasn't right five years ago, when we were married. It wasn't ever right. If that's what you want, you've got it.

MR. BLAKE: Five years ago and how many months.

MRS. BLAKE: What?

MR. BLAKE: Five years ago and how many months? How many weeks? Can't you put your finger on the exact day? You're so logical - so meticulous. Thank you, Evie - thank you very much. I don't suppose it ever occurred to you to tell me before this moment, did it? Just never got around to it, did you?

MRS. BLAKE: Yes. Yes. I could have told you a hundred times. Why do you think I didn't? Why do you think I used Ruth as an excuse? Yes, it was dishonest. Sure it was, but I used it to spare you this.

MR. BLAKE: Used me pretty well, too, didn't you, Evie. Food, shelter, someone to pay the bills. Not too obnoxious around the house, or you'd have moved out earlier, I guess. What happened? Get a little bored? Feel you had the full use of me? Well, this makes sense now. Only as long as you're being so damn honest - let's drag it all out. I get my turn, don't I?

MRS. BLAKE: Ken -

MR. BLAKE: Oh, let's, Evie, let's. We've gone too far to stop now.

MRS. BLAKE: No.

MR. BLAKE: Yes, Evie. Because there are a few things I'd like to know myself. Such as was it ever right - once - ever - in the beginning. I'd like to fill in a few details. Well, was it? When you married me?

MRS. BLAKE: Yes. Yes, it was.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you. When did it stop being all right?

MRS. BLAKE: A year - two years - I don't know. I thought Chris was the answer. I thought Chris would make everything all right.

MR. BLAKE: But it didn't.

MRS. BLAKE: Yes, it did for a while.

MR. BLAKE: But all those years, Evie - those years when I thought we were happy - you were just grinning and bearing it. Is that right?

MRS. BLAKE: No, that's not right.

MR. BLAKE: Why not?

MRS. BLAKE: Because I was happy with you - sometimes, Kenneth. Those were the times that would make me try again - make me believe it could work - give me new hope it would. I kept trying because of those times and because of Chris. And you, too. And myself. That's true whether you believe it or not.

MR. BLAKE: But you never told me.

MRS. BLAKE: No.

MR. BLAKE: Why not?

MRS. BLAKE: Because I wanted it to work.

MR. BLAKE: What did I do? Where did I fail? Go ahead, Evie. Tell me - I want to know.

MRS. BLAKE: If anyone failed, it was I.

MR. BLAKE: Let's leave out the nobility, Evie. I just want to know.

MRS. BLAKE: What do you want me to do? Put into a few words something its taken me years to come to? I can't. It isn't that simple.

MR. BLAKE: Make a stab at it, Evie. Maybe I'll understand. I'm understanding a lot right now.

MRS. BLAKE: I thought it was Chris we were concerned with Ken.

MR. BLAKE: This concerns Chris. It concerns him right down to the ground. Go ahead. I want to know.

MRS. BLAKE: Ken, I couldn't stand what was happening to me - I'd seen it happen before with my mother and father. It didn't happen all at once - but I could see the kind of woman I was turning into - false and carping and petty. My mother was like that - that's the kind of home I grew up in - that's what I came to New York to get away from - bitterness and pretense and dishonesty - and I saw it all happening to us.

MR. BLAKE: Why didn't you do something about it? Why didn't you bring it out into the open?

MRS. BLAKE: Because I didn't want to believe it. Because I wouldn't admit I'd make the same mistake my mother made. She stuck it out. Her marriage was a failure - they both knew it - but she decided to stick it out - for "our" sakes - and oh, the price my father and I paid for that. It wrecked him - and I know now that I didn't escape either, just by getting out and running away from it. And when I saw the same thing repeating itself - when I knew what it would do to me and you - yes, and to Chris, too - I made up my mind, Ken. I didn't come to this without pain, believe me. I know what this has been for you, and now for Chris - but, Ken, pain isn't always destructive. Maybe this is right for us. Think about it for a minute, Ken, please.

MR. BLAKE: Don't you think most people grow apart after a while? Don't you think every marriage has its own crisis?

MRS. BLAKE: Yes.

MR. BLAKE: What do you think most women do, Evie? They get through it somehow. They compromise - they don't destroy it. Why can't you?

MRS. BLAKE: Because I've faced it, Ken. Part of all this fight you're putting up is not just for me - You may think it is, but it isn't. You like the way your life is now - the way its arranged and run and settled. You don't want it changed - You don't want all this smashed up, no matter how we put the pieces together again, but we don't belong together anymore, Ken. We haven't anything to share anymore.

MR. BLAKE: Share? Like what?

MRS. BLAKE: Everything.

MR. BLAKE: Like what? Like Chris - our home - our friends - the whole life we had together?

MRS. BLAKE: Yes. And a thousand things that you don't care about, don't think about, even have contempt for. Things that make it impossible for you to understand what I'm trying to say to you now. Listen, Ken. When we started out we did share something together - our loneliness - our need for someone to cling to - our need for a home and a life together.

MR. BLAKE: What's wrong with that?

MRS. BLAKE: Nothing. Oh, Ken. It isn't a question of different tastes and different opinions. It's more than just growing apart. It's what a person lives by - what makes him whatever he is. Don't you see that we've been leading separate lives? We're really strangers, Ken. Our whole life now is a compromise to safety and security and the goodwill of people I don't give a damn about.

MR. BLAKE: You're right. We have grown apart. Terribly. And yet Ruth gave me everything you didn't - and it was no good. I'm afraid it will always be you, Evie. Do you think I can change, Evie? I know the kind of guy I am - you're right - I've always needed that little island of safety and security - always - I guess that's what I grew up with - That's what I brought into it on my side - afraid to break any of the rules - stick to the game and play it safe - That's what I took along with me. After a while it gets good and safe - and smug. I'd like to be - the person you want me to be, Evie. I'd like to try. We've never really faced it like this - together. I'd like to try.

MRS. BLAKE: Ken, oh Ken, dear - why does this happen to us. Why isn't your loving me enough? What can I say? I have no answer. I don't know. Oh, Ken, I don't know.