

1=2

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FADE IN:

MOLECULAR HEART.

A blue electron chases a pink one around the nucleus of an atom.

Atoms bind together one by one forming a tight knit blanket of little solar systems.

IRIS (V.O.)
(Laughing)
Spin it! Spin it!

THOMAS (V.O.)
I'm going to be late.

IRIS (V.O.)
Around and around we go, where
we'll stop nobody knows.

Atoms form a pulsing human heart.

INT. WALL CENTER- DAY

THOMAS SULLIVAN (30) follows IRIS MOON (25+) inside revolving glass door.

THOMAS
Iris. Come on.

IRIS
Are you getting old on me already?
Old man.

THOMAS
No, I just, I have to work.

Iris faces Thomas, pushing the door with her back.

IRIS
No you don't, you don't *have* to
work, Thomas.

THOMAS
It's too early for philosophy
Iris, come on.

Iris stops the doors so they're both trapped in separate sections.

IRIS

What if we were stuck in here forever and we could only look at each other through the glass but never touch?

THOMAS

But we're not?

IRIS

Yeah, but what if we were?

THOMAS

I don't know, then, then it'd be a terrible waste.

IRIS

Why?

THOMAS

Iris, I have to go-

IRIS

-Tell me. Why would it be a waste?

Thomas checks his wrist watch.

THOMAS

It'd be a waste because, because I don't like to browse, okay? It would be torture, come on.

IRIS

You think looking at me for eternity would be torture?

Thomas finds a bottle of grape cough medicine in his pocket.

THOMAS

If we could never, you know, then yeah.

IRIS

It's all in your head.

THOMAS

Touch isn't.

He unscrews the cap and swigs the cough syrup.

IRIS

Yeah, but you could always touch yourself and I-

THOMAS

-Look, masturbation, lacks the element of surprise, now I have to go, seriously.

Stuffs the bottle back in his pocket.

IRIS

Kiss me and you can go.

Iris puts her lips to the glass.

THOMAS

Come on Iris there's people watching-

IRIS

-Exactly, don't disappoint them.

Thomas quickly pecks the glass on her lips.

THOMAS

There, can I go now? Please?

IRIS

If you really really want to?

She pouts her lips.

THOMAS

You're so cute, it's not even fair.

Thomas closes his eye's.

THOMAS

Rent, hydro, phone, food, rent hydro, phone, food, yep I definitely have to go.

Opens his eye's.

Iris pushes the door to let him out.

He smiles and walks toward the elevator. She spills into the lobby after him.

IRIS

Three!

He looks back.

THOMAS

Two.

IRIS

One.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING ROOM- NIGHT

DOCTOR rubs paddles together over Iris's limp body.

DOCTOR

Clear!

Presses paddles onto her chest. Jolts her.

NURSE and Doctor check monitors. Flat line.

NURSE

She's still in defib!

DOCTOR

Charging!

Presses paddles on her again.

DOCTOR

Clear!

Iris contorts, then limp.

DOCTOR

Fuck, come on Iris! Help us out here hun!

NURSE

Nothing.

DOCTOR

(Fading out)

Charging.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM-NIGHT

Thomas stands with the Doctor.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

(Fading out)

Clear.

THOMAS

I don't understand, what do you mean she's, she's what, she's?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. She's gone.

THOMAS

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.
No! No! This is not happening.

DOCTOR

We a, I'm sorry-

THOMAS

-No, no, uh-uh, don't, don't, it's
okay. It's because, because-

Thomas walks away backwards down the hall.

DOCTOR

-Sir? Where are you going? You
shouldn't be alone right now.

THOMAS

I'm just going to, um, it's fine.
It's fine. I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm
fine. Fine.

He turns and starts jogging down the hallway.

INT. LARRY AND JACKIES HOUSE/KITCHEN- DAY

Thomas stirs a coffee at the table. JACKIE SULLIVAN (32),
frys eggs.

JACKIE

I just wish we could have met her
you know?

THOMAS

You would have loved her Jack'.
She was funny.

JACKIE

How are you holding up anyways?
You know if you need anything me
and Lar' are here okay?

THOMAS

I'm fine. Thanks.

LARRY (30's) buttons his shirt and takes a seat.

LARRY

Tom hey. Jackie, you tell him yet?

THOMAS

Tell me what?

JACKIE
Not now, Lar'.

THOMAS
What?

LARRY
Looks like you're going to be an
Uncle Tom buddy.

JACKIE
Ugh, Larry, I'm so sorry Tom.

THOMAS
Really, you're, you're pregnant
Jack'?

JACKIE
Jesus Larry, you know?

LARRY
What?

JACKIE
My brother just lost somebody, I
don't think he wants to hear our
good news right now.

LARRY
Oh shit, yeah sorry man.

THOMAS
No, no it's fine, that's really
cool, I'm, I'm really happy for
you guys.

JACKIE
Really Tom?

THOMAS
Yeah, totally, it's, it's, you're
going to be a great mother Jack'.

LARRY
See I told he'd be happy-

JACKIE
-Shut up Larry. You're so
insensitive sometimes you know
that?

Larry rolls his eyes and opens a newspaper.

Tom checks his watch.

THOMAS

Thanks for the coffee, I've a,
I've got a run.

Tom puts his coat on.

JACKIE

See now he's leaving Larry.

THOMAS

No, I'm fine, I've just got
somewhere to be.

LARRY

See he's just got be somewhere.
You can't blame everything on me
babe.

JACKIE

Are you sure you're okay, cause I
was going to wait until like it
was born before I told you?

THOMAS

Jack', it's all good, I love you
guys okay. I'm happy for you.

Tom kisses Jackie on the forehead. Leaves.

JACKIE

I told you not to say anything you
idiot he's a mess right now!

LARRY

Hey I'm sorry but I didn't kill
his girlfriend so maybe you could
stop yelling at me.

JACKIE

Ugh!

Jackie flips a scoop of scrambled eggs all over the table.

She storms out the room.

Larry forks a bite into his mouth.

LARRY

I prefer sunny side up hun! Yep,
I'm sleeping on the couch.

EXT. CEMETARY- DAY

A headstone bares the name IRIS 19??-2009.

Thomas kneels, lays flowers upon it. Sips some grape cough syrup.

THOMAS

Hey, um, I saw my sister today. She's pregnant, I'm going to be an uncle Tom. You would've loved that. This is so dumb because, you can't hear me because you're dead and when you die that's that. And I really fucking miss you.

An OLD MAN, kneels at a headstone beside Tom.

Tom wipes his eye's.

OLD MAN

You think she can hear you?

THOMAS

No. I don't know. Do you?

OLD MAN

Only if you want her to.

THOMAS

What do you mean?

OLD MAN

There are always ways around death.

THOMAS

What are you talking about, I don't understand?

Old Man hands Thomas a business card from his inside pocket.

The Card says only "1=2" in the center.

OLD MAN

Here, I think he can explain it better than me. She doesn't have to be gone.

THOMAS

You're crazy. Why would you say that to me? You're a fool.

OLD MAN
 Maybe, or maybe I'm not, even,
 here.

POOF! The Old Man vanishes.

THOMAS
 Ahh! Shit.

Tom falls onto his backside. Searching all around. Nothing.

THOMAS
 Hey? Hello? This isn't funny. Hey!
 Fuck you! Fucking liar! Fuckin',
 hey I'm talking to you! Hey!

INT. DR. KELLER'S OFFICE- DAY

DR. BRENDA KELLER (40) listens cross-legged across from Tom.
 She takes notes throughout.

DR. KELLER
 And have you had any other
 hallucinations recently?

THOMAS
 No.

DR. KELLER
 Can you see this old man right
 now?

THOMAS
 No. Do you think I'm going crazy
 Dr. Keller?

DR. KELLER
 Well under the circumstances,
 Thomas, I think what you
 experienced is a perfectly normal
 reaction to the loss of somebody
 special. You said that this old
 man said um, said um-

Dr. Keller reads her notes.

THOMAS
 -He said she doesn't have to be
 gone.

DR. KELLER
 Right, now, what that says to me
 is subconsciously you are still in
 the denial stage, searching for
 hope or some strand of Iris to
 cling onto.

THOMAS

Well, I miss her.

DR. KELLER

Of course you do. But, the mind is a very powerful, very mysterious thing and you need to be careful not to loose touch with reality. Iris is gone Thomas. And I think that she has to be gone, in order for you to move forward in a healthy fashion.

THOMAS

Yeah, I know.

DR. KELLER

Exceptance is our goal here. That's what I can offer. Whenever you're ready.

EXT. STREETS- DAY

Thomas drifts down the busy sidewalk. He pops inside a pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY- DAY

Thomas browses the cold and flu aisle. He is drawn to a bottle of grape cough syrup. He reaches for it and collides with the hand of DARLA MURPHY, (27+) humble beauty.

DARLA

Oh sorry.

THOMAS

No, go ahead, I'll get the next one.

They each grab a bottle of grape cough syrup off the shelf.

DARLA

Tom? Tom Sullivan?

He postures up to examine her closer.

THOMAS

Whoa, hey Darla, how are you, you, you look, great.

DARLA

I'm good um, how, how are you, you look, how are you?

THOMAS

I'm uh, you know alright um, yeah,
so you come here often or?

A SHOPPER looms around browsing the shelves.

DARLA

Not, really um.

She looks at the cough syrup bottle in her hand.

THOMAS

Looks like we use the same breath
freshener.

DARLA

Um, yeah, that's weird huh, your
breath can never be too fresh.

THOMAS

Yeah, this, stuff works great.

Shopper looks at them with a face of confusion.

DARLA

Yeah it's great um.

THOMAS

Listen, Darla, we're still bigger
than small talk aren't we?

DARLA

Yeah, yes, of course we are, this
is silly. We're adults now right I
mean, come on?

THOMAS

Right, exactly and listen, um, I
uh, I'm, you know the way things,
I-

DARLA

-Too big, for right now, if that's
okay?

THOMAS

Yeah, no, you're right, um, I'm
just sorry and, that's all, if
that's okay, to say.

DARLA

Okay.

THOMAS

So, um, how have you been anyways?

EXT. STREETS- DAY

Tom and Darla saunter through crowded sidewalk.

DARLA

So I don't know, you know, I was thinking about maybe taking some night classes or something, I always kind of wanted to get in psychiatry but, life happens right?

THOMAS

Yeah, but that sounds cool though, I think you'd be good at that. Getting into, into peoples heads and poking around and stuff.

DARLA

Maybe although, sometimes I wish someone would poke around in my head and tell me what the heck's going on in there you know what I mean?

THOMAS

Oh yeah. Completely. So are a, are you this guy pretty serious then?

She smile bashfully.

DARLA

Actually, yeah, he's, he's, he's just so, perfect for me, oddly, you know? In every way. It's strange too, like we finish each others thoughts and stuff it's crazy.

THOMAS

What's his name?

DARLA

Well, his name is Tyler, but I call him Taylor because I say he's been tailored just for me. Corny I know.

THOMAS

No, no, I'm really happy for you Darla. It sounds like everything worked out for the best.

DARLA

Thanks Tom. That really means a lot.

THOMAS

Listen, I uh, I better get going I've, I've got some errands to run, and Iris, my girlfriend is meeting me um, somewhere so-

DARLA

-Oh, really, but we barely got a chance to catch up. I didn't even get to hear about how you're doing?

THOMAS

Next time, you know. We'll go for coffee or something, yeah?

DARLA

Okay, I guess. I won't blab so long about me next time I promise.

THOMAS

I like hearing about you. Um, but yeah, I'll see you later.

He holds out his hand. She looks at it and she puts hers in it.

DARLA

Take care of yourself Thomas.

They shake hands.

THOMAS

Yeah, um, you too Darla. Bye.

DARLA

Bye.

INT. THOMAS' APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thomas lays in bed holding a framed picture of Iris in front of him.

IRIS (V.O.)

What if we were stuck in here
forever and we could only look at
each other through the glass but
never touch?

THOMAS

It's torture.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

Thomas pours a cup of coffee. Reaches inside his pocket.
Pulls out the Old Man's business card.

The coffee mug drops from his hand exploding everywhere.

EXT. SIDEWALK DOWNTOWN-DAY

At a news stand Thomas buys cigarettes and a lighter.

Lights a smoke. Sips some grape cough syrup from a bottle.

He reads the backside of the business card; ONETWOONETWO
12TH AVENUE.

EXT. 1212 12TH AVENUE-DAY

A revolving glass door stares at Thomas.

A well-dressed DOORMAN waves Thomas in.

DOORMAN

Just spin it.

THOMAS

I know.

Thomas enters the door.

INT. 1212 12TH AVENUE- DAY

A sign beside the elevator reads:

1=2-Twelth floor.

INT. 1212 12TH AVENUE/TWELTH FLOOR CORRIDOR- DAY

Two doors oppose each other. One reads "1=2" the other reads
"2=1."

Thomas enters the "1=2" door.

INT. 1=2 OFFICE-DAY

An all white room. A RECEPTIONIST behind a desk. A doorway behind the desk. Thomas examines the room. Other PATIENTS are waiting reading magazines.

RECEPTIONIST

Good morning Thomas. You can go right in.

THOMAS

How, how do you know my name?

RECEPTIONIST

Everything will be explained after your analysis.

She signals to the door behind her.

THOMAS

Analysis?

INT. 2=1 EXAMINATION HALL- DAY

An endless white hallway. The floor is an escalator. A tiny soft blue light at the end. Thomas looks at the moving floor. A WOMAN'S VOICE directs him.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Welcome Thomas Shepard, please step forward carefully.

THOMAS

Hello? Who are you?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Please carefully step forward.

He steps onto conveyor and begins towards the blue light.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Thomas Shepard, thirty one year old male.

A picture of Thomas appears on the wall.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Current account active for, five years, three months and fourteen days. Checking credit.

Walls are now a slide show of Thomas.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Credit approved. Searching hard
drive.

Pictures of Iris and Thomas start to appear all around him.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Last known creation. Iris Moon,
twenty seven years of age. Female.

THOMAS

What is this? What is this place?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Current status of Iris Moon.
Terminated by Thomas Shepard.

THOMAS

No. That's not true. That's not
right! Hey! What the fuck is this?

He looks down at the blue light.

THOMAS

Fuck this.

Thomas runs towards the growing blue light. Pictures of Iris
chase him along the walls.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Please remain calm. Please remain
tranquil.

He charges into the blue at the end.

INT. DR. FAUST'S OFFICE- DAY

DR. BENJAMIN FAUST (50) sits behind a white desk.

Thomas pours into the room followed by blue light.

DR. FAUST

Thomas Shepard.

THOMAS

Who the fuck are you?

DR. FAUST

My name is Dr. Benjamin Faust.

Dr. Faust rises and comes around from his desk.

THOMAS

What is this place, how do you know so much about me? And Iris?

DR. FAUST

Five years is far too long between check ups Thomas. How have you been supplementing the medication required?

THOMAS

What medication? What, what? Tell me what's going on? Now? Is she, is she alive?

DR. FAUST

That's really up to you. You see Mr. Shepard you have come to the end of your contract with us. If you wish to continue the one equals two program, we will need you to sign a new contract.

THOMAS

What the fuck are you talking about! What contract, who are you you people?

DR. FAUST

You really don't remember? Hm. You were supposed to come in for regular checkups twice a year to maintain control of the fantasy. What we provide here Mr. Shepard is a state of conscious dilusion.

Dr. Faust points at a poster of the "1=2" logo which is two people intertwined with each other.

THOMAS

Conscious dilusion, what does that mean? Can you just speak English?

DR. FAUST

Basically it involves opening your imagination to the point where fantasy and reality are able to coexist. You work one job in reality but in your mind you're working the job of your dreams. You invent your perfect life partner. I've got a single sandwich artist who thinks he's a dj with an actress girlfriend for example.

THOMAS

This is bullshit. This, this isn't even possible.

DR. FAUST

Unfortunately you've lost sight of reality somewhere along the way. Now you've come to a crossroads. The question is, would you rather be happy, or aware?

THOMAS

Happy or aware? What do you mean aware exactly?

Dr. Faust presses a button on his desk. A picture moves revealing a TV screen. A paused image of a younger Tom in the same office appears.

THOMAS

Where did you get that? I don't remember that?

DR. FAUST

Let me ask you a question. What do you think you do for a living?

THOMAS

I'm, I'm a writer, I'm working on a novel.

DR FAUST

Really?

THOMAS

Yeah, really.

Dr. Faust presses play.

ON SCREEN

Tom sits in front of a camera in Dr. Faust's office.

YOUNGER DR.FAUST

How about your job, do enjoy your work?

YOUNGER THOMAS

No, not really. I thought I was going to be some prolific writer you know. Like Charles Dickens or Hemingway or something but, but, instead I'm stuck as an editors assistant. I type in all the corrections that my boss makes on someone elses masterpiece.

YOUNGER DR.FAUST

Not to worry Mr. Shepard, we can
fix that here.

OFF SCREEN

Dr. Faust presses pause.

DR FAUST

Now do you see Mr.Shepard? Do you
see the choice before you?

EXT. CEMETARY-DAY

Cross-legged Thomas tilts a brown-paper bag of liquor to his
lips. The flowers he left before are wilted and the name on
the headstone is different; "AGNUS BLYE(1889-1961)".

Thomas breaks down shudders with visceral tears.

INT. GROCERY STORE- NIGHT

His face is overgrown and unkept. Thomas pushes, a papered
bottle of liquor in upper basket, a shopping cart in dark
black sunglasses.

Picking through tomatoes in the produce section.

FLASHBACK.

INT. GROCERY STORE- DAY

Iris sorts through tomatoes in produce section. Thomas clean
shaven, holds onto a shopping cart.

IRIS

What else do you want with the
meat?

THOMAS

What do you feel like babe?

IRIS

I don't know, I was going to make
a little salad. We could do like
corn on the cobb or asparagus or
mashed potatoes or something.

THOMAS

Ooh corn on the cobb sounds good.

IRIS

Alright. The corns over there,
start bagging some up then, big
buddy.

THOMAS

Coolio.

Thomas moves for the corn.

IRIS

Check them this time please.

THOMAS

Yes mom.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. GROCERY STORE-NIGHT

Tom looks down at a full plastic bag of tomatoes. He leaves
the bag on the tomato pile, pushing his cart around a corner
into the...

Dairy aisle.

Swigs his liquor bottle. Then some Grape cough syrup.

Pushing faster and faster. Running with the cart, pulls his
bottle out, he lets go. Stops to watch the crash. Smash!
GROCERY STORE CLERK appears at the wreck.

Tom ducks into the...

Stationary aisle where he stops to stare at a section of
picture frames. All contain the same stock photo of a
handsome man giving a pretty woman a piggy back ride on the
beach.

INT. GROCERY STORE/CHECKOUT-NIGHT

Third in line, Thomas dumps an armfull of frozen dinners on
the moving counter. Takes a drag of a half finished
cigarette and sips his drink.

CHECKOUT GIRL notices him.

CHECKOUT GIRL

Excuse me sir, you can't smoke in
here. You can't drink that in here
either.

THOMAS

Oh yeah, how do I know, that
you're even real? Did you ever
think about that? Huh?

SHORTLY AFTER.

Two POLICEMEN tug on Thomas's waist and legs as he grasps at the pile of frozen dinners, clutching onto the counter with one hand.

POLICEMEN 1

Is this real enough for you pal?

POLICEMEN 2

Let's go buddy, let go.

THOMAS

I just want my fucking frozen
dinner, is that too much to ask?

POLICEMEN 1

Get your hands off of the counter,
buddy relax.

THOMAS

No. No, let go of me you, you
fuck.

He scrambles for a lasagna, clawing the moving counter. He grabs hold of one and let's go of the counter. The cops carry him away.

POLICEMEN 1

Nice try.

Policeman rips the lasagna box from Tom and hands it off to the Checkout Girl. Thomas wriggles, resists.

THOMAS

No, no, fuck you, fuck you!

Cops carry him through the doors outside.

THOMAS (O.S.)

All I wanted is a fucking tv
dinner, you fucking, you're all in
my head! Get out! Get, out!

INT. SQUAD CAR-NIGHT

Hands cuffed behind his back Tom in the backseat. The two Officers up front.

THOMAS

You two are nothing. Nothing. This is a taxi. This is a taxi. I'm in a taxi probably. Without me, you don't even exist. I'm, I'm-

Thomas looks out his window.

POLICEMEN 1

-Shut up.

Standing in the grocery store window is Iris pressing her hand on the glass.

As the car moves along, she kisses the glass, staring at him and then waves goodbye.

THOMAS

Just a body.

EXT. POLICE STATION- DAY

Larry and Thomas come down the front stairs. Thomas lights a cigarette.

LARRY

I didn't know you were a smoker?

THOMAS

I don't really know what I am right now.

Larry presses unlock on his key fob and his parked car Chirps.

Tom stops beside the passenger door, Larry opens the driver door, looks across the roof at Tom.

LARRY

You okay?

THOMAS

I don't know. Thanks for coming down here. Listen, don't tell Jack' I don't, with her being pregnant I, she's-

LARRY

-Don't worry about it. I won't say anything. Are you a, are you going to be okay Tom?

THOMAS

Yeah. I think I'm going to walk I a, I could use the fresh air you know?

LARRY

She must have been some girl.

THOMAS

Yeah, she was something.

LARRY

Well. Are you sure I can't drop you at home, it's on the way?

THOMAS

I'm fine. Thanks Larry.

LARRY

Don't mention it.

THOMAS

You're going be a good dad.

LARRY

You really think so?

THOMAS

Yeah, I do.

LARRY

Thanks man. You're alright then?

THOMAS

I'm good.

LARRY

Good enough, see you in a bit.

THOMAS

Take care.

INT. WALL CENTER- DAY

In a wrinkled suit unshaven, Thomas steps into a crowded elevator.

The doors close. A BUSINESS WOMAN turns to him.

BUSINESS WOMAN

Good morning Tom. How's that novel coming?

THOMAS

The novel? Oh yeah, it's uh, it's uh, it's coming to end real soon, I think.

BUSINESS WOMAN

That's good, what's it been now, like five years?

THOMAS

Um, yeah, five years. Five years.

He chugs back a bottle of cough syrup.

BUSINESS WOMAN

I can't wait to read it.

THOMAS

Me neither.

The doors open.

BUSINESS WOMAN

Huh?

THOMAS

Bye.

Thomas exits.

INT. TIMBER PUBLISHING OFFICE- DAY

A large room divided into cubicles. Thomas encounters PHIL CAMPBELL (50) on his way to his desk.

PHIL

Tom?

THOMAS

Good morning Mr. Campbell.

PHIL

Jesus Tom, what the hell happened to you? You look like shit.

THOMAS

Yeah, I'm sorry, I'm not really myself-

PHIL

-Water under the bridge. Listen, I need the "Free Will" edits in by five today. Do you think you can pull that off for me?

THOMAS

What "Free Will" edits?

PHIL

The book, the same book we've been on for six months come on now Tom?

THOMAS

Oh, that's the book I'm editing right now?

PHIL

You're pulling my leg aren't you. You son of bitch, that's why you're my guy Tom.

Phil walks off laughing.

PHIL

You're my guy Tom.

Tom sits at his desk. Photo's are pinned up on the cubicle walls. They are stock photos of a Handsome Man giving a Pretty Woman a piggy back ride on the beach.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

A HOMELESS WOMAN rocks to and fro beside the doorway cross legged. Thomas steps out with a paper bagged bottle. He twists off the lid a fills his mouth.

HOMELESS

And Molly is so pretty with her freckles today. I had toast with jam and we played hide...

Thomas moves down the sidewalk lighting a cigarette.

A BUSINESS MAN passes by with bluetooth earpiece.

BUSINESS MAN

Hun I can't do it, I've got clients coming at seven. You know I want to be there. That's why you're the best sweetie...

Thomas fills his mouth with more booze moving along.

A DRUG DEALER has a JUNKIE pinned up against a brick wall.

DRUG DEALER

Don't make me start taking fingers Frank. You hear me? I don't like doing that but I will.

JUNKIE

This is my head. You're not supposed to be in here. Do you hear the triangles? Smell the circles.

Thomas passes by them.

DRUG DEALER(O.S.)

Tommorrow Frank or it's eenie meenie time, you listening to me...?

Further down the street a MAN and WOMAN holding hands. Homeless people cower in doorways. Junkies dance to silence.

MAN

This city's such a shithole.

WOMAN

Look at all the junkies. Holy cow.

Thomas staggers towards them swigging his paper bag.

MAN

Look at this drunk. Working hard buddy.

WOMAN

Don't.

MAN

What? Our fucking taxes pay these losers welfare. Hey buddy, you like that free liquor I bought you.

THOMAS

Huh?

MAN

Why don't you get a fucking job you scab?

WOMAN

That's enough.

MAN

Relax babe.

THOMAS

Are you real?

MAN

You see this babe, it's people like this that exist purely to make us normal people feel better about ourselves. Yeah pal, I'm real.

THOMAS

Oh. Good.

Thomas swings his bottle of booze Smash! into the mans head.

WOMAN

Stop! No!

MAN

Ugh!

The Man falls to the ground unconscious. Woman kneels to attend to him.

Woman looks up at Thomas.

THOMAS

I used to be real once too. I'm sorry.

Thomas drunk runs away down the street.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Help someone help me.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN/DINING/LIVING- NIGHT

Empty liquor bottles scatter the apartment doubling as makeshift ashtrays. Thomas looks at a framed picture on the wall of a man giving a woman a piggy back ride at the beach.

Bottle of vodka in hand, smoke in his lips he staggers around the room. Every picture frame contains the same stock photo of the beach couple.

He rips a frame of the wall, throws it across the room, it Smashes to bits. He sweeps the mantle clear with his forearm. Frantically clears the walls of all pictures, littering the floor with glass and splinters.

He opens a cupboard door. Inside is hundreds off bottles of grape cough syrup. He digs at them, pouring onto the counter floor.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM- NIGHT

On his way into the bedroom he continues his carnage destroying any frame on the way to the bed.

Kneels down and slides three photo albums out from under the mattress.

He opens one and flips through it. All photos are either scenery or Thomas posing by himself.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM-NIGHT

Piled in the bathtub are pictures and frames and photo albums.

Thomas splashes liquor over top of the mess.

He starts to sobb. Flicks his lit cigarette into the tub igniting the fuel.

The flames grow and grow.

A sprinkler activates overhead, fire alarm sounds. Thomas leaves.

EXT. THOMAS'S BUILDING-NIGHT

People pour out of the building in pajamas and robes.

Firemen rush out of a flashing firetruck and into the building.

Thomas steps out soggy and drifts down the street.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S APARTMENT- DAY

CARTER MURPHY (6) watches cartoons. Toys litter the floor.

DARLA MURPHY (27+), humble beauty, marches in applying an earring.

DARLA

Carter, hunny, go get your lunch
for mom okay sweetie?

CARTER

Okay mommy.

Carter rushes into the kitchen. Comes back and flops onto the floor in front of the tv again with a lunch bag.

Darla paces into the bathroom.

DARLA (O.S.)
Five more minutes babe.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM- DAY

Darla brushes her hair in the mirror.

DARLA
I think Riley's taking you to the
aquarium today with little Jack
and Natalie, that'll be fun hey?

CARTER (O.S.)
Natalie hits me all the time.

DARLA
Well, that's probably just because
she likes you sweetie.

She applies eyeliner.

DARLA
(To herself in
mirror)
Something good will happen to you
today. Okay.

EXT. DARLA MURPHY'S BUILDING- DAY

Darla steps out of the old four floor walk up holding Carter by the hand. Thomas is slumped, in dirty and wrinkled clothing at the bottom of the stairs with a papered liquor bottle.

Darla and Carter step around him.

DARLA
Excuse me, come on Carter.

Thomas perks up. Darla and Carter wait at the curb.

DARLA
Come on Riley, where are you?

THOMAS
Darla?

She turns.

DARLA
Sorry?

THOMAS
Darla, hey, you look, great.

Thomas tucks bottle in his coat. Wipes his furry face,

fingers his hair.

DARLA
Tom? Thomas Sullivan?

THOMAS
Um, yeah.

A minivan pulls up and stops. RILEY(27+) driving . NATALIE (6), and JOHN (8) are strapped in the back seat.

DARLA
Uh, one second, Tom

Darla takes Carter to the minivan.

RILEY
Hey.

DARLA
Hey.

RILEY
Sorry I'm late, John was having an issue with his eggs and decided to do a Jackson Pollack piece all over the floor. You ready to go to the aquarium Carter?

CARTER
Yep.

RILEY
Okay hop in. Natalie open the door for Carter.

Darla kneels down to Carter and fixes his coat.

DARLA
Okay so what are we going to do if Natalie hits you?

CARTER
Tell Aunty Riley.

DARLA
That's right. And what are we not going to do?

CARTER
Hit her back.

DARLA
And why is that?

CARTER

A'cause hitting people is wrong,
especially people that's a girl.

DARLA

Why especially girls?

CARTER

A'cause all girls are beautiful.

Darla wraps her arms around Carter.

DARLA

Mommy loves you so much, you know
that? You have a really fun time
today okay?

She kisses her boy and he gets into the van.

DARLA

I love you.

CARTER

I love you too mom.

Natalie closes the rear door. Darla leans in passenger
window.

RILEY

That guy over there looks sort of
like Tom Sullivan. Remember him.

DARLA

I'm pretty sure that is Tom.

RILEY

No way, you're not, you two
didn't-?

DARLA

-No, no, no of course not.

RILEY

Well what's he doing here?

DARLA

I don't know, he just showed up.

RILEY

Looks like he needs a bath, or a
hose.

DARLA

I really don't need this right now.

RILEY

Yeah well good luck with that sweetie.

DARLA

Thanks. Bye.

The mini van scoots away. Darla turns around.

DARLA

So um, Tom, what are you um, doing here?

THOMAS

Is that your kid?

DARLA

Yeah, yes. His name is Carter.

THOMAS

You had a kid. Hm. Are you married?

DARLA

No, but I am in a bit of a rush, what's, what's up.

THOMAS

Nothing, I just, my girlfriend sort of died recently, and I was just wondering if you would have that coffee with me but if you're-?

She closes the gap.

DARLA

-Jesus, Tom, oh my god, what, what, um, oh my god, I'm so sorry. Uh, uh, look um, I've just got this job interview to go to, and I really need this job, but after that I'm free all afternoon. We could meet or you could come and wait for me if you want, I geuss.

THOMAS

Yeah? Uh, uh yeah, sure I'll wait with you.

DARLA
Um, okay, we should go.

INT. OFFICE/WAITING ROOM- DAY

A RECEPTIONIST fields calls at a desk. Men and women dressed for business read magazines and newspapers.

Tom sits across the room from Darla. He swigs some grape cough syrup.

RECEPTIONIST
Julie Newell?

JULIE NEWELL (25+) rises from her seat.

JULIE
Present.

RECEPTIONIST
You can go in now dear?

THOMAS
Good Luck Julie.

Julie looks at Tom puzzled.

Julie heads around a corner behind the desk.

LATER.

Julie comes out and leaves the office.

RECEPTIONIST
Darla Murphy?

Darla rises. Shoots to the desk awkwardly anxious

DARLA
Um, present, present.

RECEPTIONIST
Go right in dear.

THOMAS
Good luck Darla.

Darla looks back. Other hopefuls glance at Tom strangely.

DARLA
Thanks.

Darla disappears around the corner.

Tom pulls out his liquor bottle, swigs it and then tucks it away.

A HOPEFUL gives him a dirty look.

Tom turns to him.

THOMAS

(Whispers)

Don't worry, I'm not your
competition or anything, I'm not
here for an interview.

The Hopeful nods and rolls his eyes.

HOPEFUL

Oh, well that's a relief.

THOMAS

Tell me about it. I'm in no shape
for an interview.

INT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

Darla sits alone in a booth. She checks the time on her cell
phone. A SERVER comes around with a coffee pot.

SERVER

Are you ready for that coffee yet?

DARLA

Oh, no, sorry not yet, I'm just
waiting for someone.

She looks out the window. Server walks away.

Thomas lumbers passed towards the entrance. A Passerby hands
Thomas some change, Tom waves it off.

He comes inside and joins her.

THOMAS

Sorry, I had to wait long enough
so they wouldn't think we were
together.

DARLA

Oh, thanks.

THOMAS

Sure.

Server comes back.

SERVER

Is this the uh, friend you were
waiting for?

DARLA

Yes, he is my friend, we'll just have coffee please.

SERVER

Alright then.

Server walks away.

SERVER(O.S.)

(Under her/his
breath)

And I'll just go and book that trip to Hawaii.

DARLA

So, how have you been doing?

THOMAS

You look really great. Your kid looks really great. That's great.

DARLA

Thanks, he's my world.

THOMAS

I've been um, I've been drinking, mostly. A lot. Pretty much all the time.

DARLA

Oh Tom. Are you, um, are you like, are you homeless?

THOMAS

I don't know, I haven't checked that yet. I had a little campfire in my bathroom a couple nights ago. I have sprinklers though so, you know, it should be okay.

DARLA

Oh my god, Tom. Who, I'm sorry.

THOMAS

No it's okay.

DARLA

Who, was she?

THOMAS

She was, she was everything I imagined she'd be. The one, you know, if you believe in that sort of thing. She was, she was so

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

funny. We were even talking about, kids. Wow, I am such a lunatic, you know that?

DARLA

Why, what?

THOMAS

No, I just, we couldn't have had kids anyways, it's a long story. Can I ask you question?

DARLA

Of course, what?

THOMAS

If you had to choose between being truly happy, and being aware, what would you choose?

DARLA

Being aware? What do you mean by that Tom?

THOMAS

Okay, like what if you could trick yourself into, into, into believing something, no, you know what, it's a stupid question. Nevermind. How have you been?

DARLA

No tell me, Tom, please? It's not a stupid question.

THOMAS

Yeah? Well like, what if you could be happy for the rest of your life, but to do that, you had to live in sort of a fantasy land, uh this is silly-

DARLA

-It's not silly. It's easy, I would choose to be aware.

THOMAS

You'd rather be miserable for the rest of your life in reality than happy in lala land?

DARLA

Carter is my life now, I'm a mom. So yeah I'd rather be conscious for him than in some dream. Besides reality is what you make it. Who says you have to be miserable?

THOMAS

Right. I geuss that makes sense.

DARLA

You're talking about the drinking right?

THOMAS

Um, yeah, yeah, exactly, about the drinking.

DARLA

There are programs that can help. I know it's not what you want to hear Tom, but you can't drink it away hun. Sooner or later you'll have to deal with it and yeah it will be hard but you won't be miserable for the rest of your life. You won't, I promise you.

THOMAS

What happened to us Darla?

DARLA

Life, time, things you know?

THOMAS

No, I mean, like, what happened to us, you and me? Why didn't we work?

DARLA

I don't know, we were six years younger, we were kids. I don't think we really knew what it is we wanted yet. What we needed from one another you know? I think as you get older you start keeping a list of the things you don't want in a relationship until eventually by process of elimination, you know exactly what it is that you need. Then you search for it.

THOMAS
Do you have a list?

DARLA
Yeah, sure I do.

THOMAS
Do you think anyone ever really
finds what's on their list?

DARLA
I think you have to prioritize it,
but yeah the lucky ones get real
close.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S APARTMENT/LIVING/KITCHEN/DINING- NIGHT

Tom sits on the couch watching a cartoon. Carter comes
dancing into the room in pajamas.

DARLA (O.S.)
Got your pjs on babe?

CARTER
Yep, yep, yep, yep, yep.

DARLA (O.S.)
Ten minutes and then bedtime okay
buddy?

CARTER
Okay mom.

Tom reaches into his coat and finds his mickey bottle. He
walks into the kitchen.

He spins the lid off. Darla comes into the kitchen.

DARLA (O.S.)
I'm sorry, but you can't drink
around my kid.

He shakes his head.

THOMAS
No, I-

DARLA
-Just don't.

He pours it down the sink.

THOMAS

This is what I came over here for.
I'm a mess, but I'm still Tom. I'm
not a scumbag.

DARLA

I'm sorry, I, I just swore that
after Tyler, I would never let
another drunk in here around
Carter and-

THOMAS

-I don't have to stay here, I can
go home probably now, it's totally
fine Dar'-

DARLA

-No, you need a friend right now.
Besides I'd like Carter to meet my
old friend Tom. I'll introduce you
tomorrow formally after we clean
you up a bit.

THOMAS

What you don't like the beard?

DARLA

No.

THOMAS

I was going to go for the whole
rugged look.

DARLA

Yeah, it's not working for you
buddy.

THOMAS

Are you sure that you're
comfortable with me staying here,
I mean it's kind of random isn't
it?

DARLA

Hey, random was the thing we did
best together. No sense in wasting
talent.

THOMAS

Thanks, you are a dear friend.

Darla chokes up, she turns to hide it.

DARLA

I a, I have to put Carter to bed,
I put some linens out for you, the
a, sofa pulls out.

THOMAS

That's really great, thanks Dar'.

DARLA

Okay, I a, I'm going to bed too
so, um, I'll see you in the
morning. Goodnight.

She picks up Carter and takes him to bed.

CARTER

Goodnight mister.

THOMAS

Goodnight guys. Three.

DARLA

Two.

THOMAS

One. You remember?

DARLA

That was our thing. Goodnight Tom.

THOMAS

Yeah.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S-APARTMENT/LIVING/KITCHEN/DINING- DAY

Tom opens his eyes to Carter hanging upside down from a
recliner watching cartoons.

He stretches, listens to Darla talking in another room.

DARLA (O.S.)

He's a mess, I don't know, a few
days maybe. I know. I know. I know
Riley jesus what was I supposed to
do?

THOMAS

What are we watching big guy?

CARTER

Tom and Jerry.

THOMAS

Oh those guys are my favorite.

CARTER

Really? Me too.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM- DAY

Darla sits on toilet lid talking on her cell phone. She fiddles with a diamond engagement ring on her finger.

RILEY (V.O.)

Tell me you did not sleep with him Darla?

DARLA

Of course not what do you think I am?

RILEY (V.O.)

I think your heart is too big for your own good babe. You've got to take care of your child and yourself first this time.

DARLA

He'll be up any minute, I should go.

RILEY (V.O.)

You don't owe anybody anything Dar'.

DARLA

I know, I love you, bye.

RILEY (V.O.)

Love you too.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S - APARTMENT/LIVING/KITCHEN/DINING- DAY

Thomas sits on the floor with Carter watching cartoons. Darla watches from the hall for a minute.

DARLA

Good morning.

Tom turns around. Stands up.

THOMAS

Oh, hey, um good morning, um, Tom and Jerry's on, uu-

DARLA

-Um, there's some mens shaving stuff in the bathroom and a there's a box clothes in the closet by the front door that I've

(MORE)

DARLA (CONT'D)
been meaning to get rid of so, um,
help yourself.

THOMAS
Yeah, okay, um, thanks.

He passes her to the closet. She follows him into the short hallway.

DARLA
Listen, um, a shoot, look um, the
thing is that we've both just come
out of some pretty heavy
situations and, I just don't want
either of us to get the wrong idea
here you know what I mean.

THOMAS
Yeah, I think so, hey I really
appreciate your hospitality, and-

DARLA
-You can't like live here though,
okay? Oh my god, was that really
harsh, I'm sorry it's just-

THOMAS
-Darla, Darla, Darla, it's okay, I
was planning on going home today
anyways.

DARLA
Oh. I feel like idiot now.

THOMAS
You're not an idiot, you're just a
good mother.

DARLA
You know, you don't have to leave
like today. You could-

THOMAS
-No, really, I should go home and
examine the damage. Besides, I was
thinking about what you said and I
think you were right.

DARLA
About what?

THOMAS

I think I want to try being aware
for a while.

She wraps her arms around him.

THOMAS

What's this for?

DARLA

It's just nice to be right about
something. Stay for breakfast at
least.

THOMAS

Okay.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM- DAY

Thomas, face covered in cream, wearing only a towel, brings
a shaky razor to his face in the mirror.

Darla peeks in.

DARLA

You okay?

THOMAS

I think I'm sobering up.

She takes the razor from him.

DARLA

Sit. Let me do this for you.

He sits on the toilet lid. She wraps a towel around his neck
and starts shaving him.

THOMAS

Thank you. So, what's your story
anyways, how have you been?

DARLA

I don't know, you know, I think
for the first time in my life I
feel totally independant, which is
good, but scary too.

THOMAS

That's good.

DARLA

It is, last week I finally paid off the last of the debt from Tyler and it was really liberating.

THOMAS

Who was this Tyler guy, anyone I'd know?

DARLA

No, you wouldn't know him. I met him at a nightclub which, you know is always the best place to look for love.

THOMAS

Of course.

DARLA

Yeah, and so anyways, everything was fine at first but then we decided to move in together and it turned into a total disaster. Everyday he'd come home and get smashed in front of my kid.

THOMAS

I'm sorry.

DARLA

It should have ended long before it did but I think I was too scared to be alone like I couldn't do it by myself. But, I couldn't let my kid be around him anymore so I told him he had to stop drinking and he gave me a black eye. Nice guy hey?

THOMAS

Jesus, did you call the cops.

DARLA

Yeah, and he cried and cried and told me how sorry he was, and how he was going to change but, you know, I watched my mother go through the same bullshit with my father and those types of guys live their whole lives being sorry for all the cruel things they do. Forget that man, I'm not reliving that for anything. I'd rather be alone for the rest of my days.

THOMAS

Nobody deserves that kind of behavior.

He notices the engagement ring on her finger.

THOMAS

Looks like you at least got a nice ring out of the deal.

DARLA

Yeah, no, this, this is from someone else.

She shaves the last bit away.

DARLA

Okay you're all done I'll go fix breakfast.

She puts the razor down and races out of the bathroom.

THOMAS

Thanks, Darla.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S - APARTMENT/LIVING/KITCHEN/DINING- DAY

Thomas steps out of the bathroom clean and groomed.

Darla comes in.

DARLA

Wow. You still clean up real well, how do the clothes fit?

THOMAS

Thanks, um, they fit, they fit, perfect actually.

DARLA

Carter come here I want you to meet somebody.

Carter comes racing in the room.

DARLA

Carter, this is my um, this my old friend, Thomas Sullivan.

CARTER

I know mom, he likes Tom and Jerry jeez.

THOMAS

It's a true story, I love Tom and Jerry.

Tom kneels down to Carter. They shake hands. Darla's jaw quivers with emotion.

THOMAS

It's really nice to make your acquaintance Carter.

CARTER

I have lots of dinosaurs in my room, do you want to see them?

THOMAS

You know what I actually love dinosaurs too, but I have to get going right now how about next time buddy?

Tom looks at Darla who is holding her emotion in.

THOMAS

They'll be a next time right?

She just nods.

CARTER

Okay, I'll go set them up so that they are ready.

THOMAS

Good idea, I'll see you later little buddy.

Carter hugs Tom and then runs to his room.

CARTER (O.S.)

By buddy.

Darla turns into the kitchen where she loses her her composure to tears.

Thomas follows her delicately.

THOMAS

Hey, are you okay? What's going on? Did I do something?

DARLA

(To herself)

This is too much.

He moves closer.

THOMAS

Did I say something wrong here
Darla?

DARLA

No. Just um, I have a lot of
things going on today so.

THOMAS

Oh, okay um-

DARLA

-Yeah I have this date tonight and
it's the first one in a while for
me you know and I've never seen
Carter hug a man like that before
and I'm very confused right now so
I think it would be best for you
to just leave for today and, and
um we can talk again soon okay?

THOMAS

Um, yeah. Yeah, of course. That
sounds, hey look I just want to
say before I leave that um, I'm
glad you're doing so well and your
kid's great and, and um, I'm
really lucky that you remembered
who I was the other day. Thanks
for bringing me back to life.

DARLA

You're, welcome.

THOMAS

Good luck with the date, I hope
everything works out.

DARLA

Thank you.

THOMAS

Bye.

Thomas leaves the apartment. Darla sobs into her hands.

EXT. DR. FAUST OFFICE/BALCONY- DAY

City spreads out twelve stories below. Thomas leans on the
railing smoking. Dr. Faust sits in a chair behind him.

THOMAS

It's amazing you know. So many little people crammed into this tiny spot on the planet. All trying to connect to everything except each other. What's wrong with us?

DR. FAUST

Well, we're scared Thomas.

THOMAS

Scared of what? We're all just people.

DR. FAUST

We're scared that we'll never get the things we desire. The things we need so desperately. Like love. Self fulfillment. Meaning.

THOMAS

And what? You think this, what you do here is somehow the answer to everyone's problems?

DR FAUST

No, it's not for everyone. I simply want to provide an option where there was none before. An alternative to a life full of envy and jealousy.

THOMAS

Why is my apartment full of cough syrup?

DR FAUST

So that's how you've been supplementing.

Receptionist pokes her head out.

THOMAS

What?

RECEPTIONIST

Sorry to interupt. Do you want to go over the lists for spring flyer before I send it out or Dr. Faust.

DR FAUST

I don't have time.

RECEPTIONIST

So just send it then?

DR. FAUST

Um, um, I don't know, let me think for a second. Um, you know what yeah, it should be fine. Send it out.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, thanks, sorry.

She goes back inside.

DR FAUST

Um, oh, dextromethorphan.

THOMAS

Huh?

DR FAUST

Or DXM, it's a hallucinagen. It can be found in most over the counter cough medicines. It's also the chemical half of the equation that is "One equals two." You're supposed to be receiving proper doses from us at your check ups but-

THOMAS

-But I didn't come.

DR FAUST

Right well, it seems you've found another means anyhow. Look our window of opportunity is getting smaller. You're going to have to make a decision here. Do you want to be immersed again?

THOMAS

I don't think so. Five years is long enough of a sleep for me.

INT. LARRY AND JACKIES HOUSE/KITCHEN- DAY

Larry at the table in his underwear reading the paper. Jackie loads a dishwasher sporting a baby bump.

LARRY

Ha, listen to this one Jack'.

JACKIE

Can you put some freakin' clothes on already please my brothers going to be here any minute?

LARRY

Relax it's your brother, he's not the Dhali Lhama. Just listen-

JACKIE

-Come on Larry I can smell your sour ass from here, ugh nasty, why don't you go have a shower at least?

LARRY

I had a shower last night, give me a break, just listen for a second.

Thomas arrives in a suit and tie all clean.

JACKIE

Larry! Oh hey Thomas, wow, you look fantastic.

Tom and Jackie greet with a hug and cheek kiss.

THOMAS

Hey, thanks.

LARRY

Got a court date Tom? Kidding. Hey can you smell any sour ass in here?

Tom whiffs the air.

THOMAS

Um, I don't think so, why?

JACKIE

Ugh come on Larry, really?

LARRY

This pregnancy has given your sister a nose like a bloodhound. Hey Jack' where's Hoffa?

Tom has a seat. Jackie brings him a coffee.

JACKIE

So, Tom, how's work going?

THOMAS

Oh it's horrible, I actually have a really horrible job.

JACKIE

What, I thought you always loved that job?

THOMAS

So did I, but it turns out I don't, I'm actually looking for something different right now.

Larry reads a news article.

LARRY

Tom listen to this, you'll appreciate this one. Okay, you know how these days they got all these different ways for lonely people to meet each other. I mean like the real loser fest stuff like web dating, speed dating and date nights and all that bullshit?

THOMAS

Um, yeah, yeah.

LARRY

Okay right well now this one takes the cake, listen to this. "Living in the city breeds a people that are in dire need of human connection. For all those souls who urn for a little human interaction, we have the solution." Okay what I'm about to say next is probably the most ridiculous thing you've ever heard-

Tom fidgets nervously.

JACKIE

-Okay Hitchcock, spit out already.

LARRY

Okay, this new thing is called, you're so not ready. Okay it's called, cuddle parties. That's cuddle, parties.

JACKIE

What the hell is a cuddle party?

THOMAS

Let me see this.

Tom breathes relief.

Tom looks at the ad in the paper.

LARRY

I'll tell you what it is my love. Okay so you go to their office or whatever, you pay, how much does it say Tom?

THOMAS

Uh, thirty bucks.

LARRY

Thirty bucks and then you're supposed to state your boundaries, like what you're willing to do I geuss. And then, you just start cuddling.

JACKIE

What do you mean and then you just start cuddling? With strangers?

LARRY

Yeah. You rub each other and cuddle and I don't know.

JACKIE

That sounds like an orgy to me.

LARRY

The world's getting pretty weird babe. Lucky you snagged old sour ass here while you did or you might be going to cuddle parties.

JACKIE

You'd be the one going to cuddle parties pal, playing dink tag.

THOMAS

It sounds reasonably priced at least I guess.

LARRY

What compared to a hooker? Come on.

JACKIE

Anyways, so? Have you talked to Darla again recently?

THOMAS

No, I think she's seeing this guy and I don't know, I've left a few messages but, she's got her own life to live right? I mean we hadn't seen each other in like six years or something like that. And then I just show up on her doorstep looking like death. I mean if I wasn't drunk I probably wouldn't have gone over there so, you know, what's she supposed to do.

JACKIE

You two were always so good together.

LARRY

He doesn't need to hear that Jesus. Why do women always pick at the wound until it's gushing all over again?

THOMAS

It's alright.

JACKIE

I'm not picking at the wound okay? Women actually like to reflect on their choices in life, there underwear boy. We need to know that we are making the right decisions to get what we really want out of life.

LARRY

No, women like to beat themselves up about all the bad choices they made so they can build up the lush green grass behind the fence that separates reality and fantasy land right Tom?

THOMAS

I'm Switzerland here man.

LARRY

Oh you dirty sell out and you know it's true too.

THOMAS

I just know how to choose my battles.

JACKIE

We don't do that Larry, and don't try and recruit my brother okay?

LARRY

Whatever women totally do that okay but it's not your fault. It's North American culture. We're pounded in the face since birth with absurd images of what a man and women should be. Look at tv shows even, like that crime scene show. Okay you really think detectives show up to pull a semen sample off of a filthy mattress in a low cut blouse and stielletos? No, they fuckin' don't.

THOMAS

True, that show is totally out to lunch, that main dude only talks to people on weird angles, you ever notice that?

LARRY

Yeah, that Horace guy, he can't face anyone straight on.

JACKIE

What does a tv show have to do with anything we're talking about here?

LARRY

Because it raises our expectations as human beings Jackie. That's why so many people get divorced. It's like if your wife doesn't look like Angelina Jolie or your husband doesn't look Brad Pitt you have failed or settled. Studies have proven that most people feel that they are inadequate in someway. I mean look at me okay? I'm not the most handsome guy in the world, and I'm sure you feel like you settled.

JACKIE

No I don't. Do you feel like you settled? Do you feel inadequate?

LARRY

No, but I'm different. I just don't give a shit. That's the secret. The sooner you stop caring about what other people think you should be or who they think you should be with, the sooner you can actually figure out what you want. You're lucky you found a guy who's comfortable enough with himself to just hang out in his underwear babe.

THOMAS

Wow, I think that was the most insightful thing I've ever heard from a man in briefs.

LARRY

Thank you Tom.

Larry postures up properly, flicking the newspaper straight.

JACKIE

That whole speech was just to justify your undies wasn't it?

LARRY

No. Yeah, pretty much.

JACKIE

Never marry a lawyer Tom. Never marry a fucking lawyer.

EXT. BUS STOP- NIGHT

Pouring rain.

Tom smokes a cigarette under the bus shelter.

A bus splashes to a stop. He flicks the butt and boards.

INT. BUS- NIGHT

Tom walks down the aisle toward the back. All ears on the bus are filled with headphones.

He slumps at the back of the bus.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM- DAY

Laying in bed, an open laptop lights Tom's face from his lap.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A dating website called ONE CALL. Pictures of attractive women and a phone number.

OFF SCREEN

Tom paces beside his bed with a cell phone to his ear.

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
Welcome to One Call and how are
you tonight?

THOMAS
Hi, um, I'm, I'm fine um-

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
-Good and what's your name sir?

THOMAS
My name um?

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
Yeah, we need to create a profile
for you so we can help you get
connected with a potential one. We
start with your name.

THOMAS
Sure, sure, okay my name, my name
is, is Larry.

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
Okay Larry, great, now what is
your online user name?

THOMAS
Oh, uh, uh, lonely guy thirty one.

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
Okay, let me just pull that up on
my screen here one second.

Thomas opens his top drawer of his dresser. Inside is a half
burned photo album. He flips through it.

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
 Okay so it looks like you've
 provided us with your credit
 information so we're all ready to
 make your voice recording now
 okay?

THOMAS
 What voice recording?

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
 Well how this works is I'll
 transfer you to an automated
 system where you can make a voice
 profile that other potential ones
 can listen to in order to decide
 if they'd like to be connected
 with you.

THOMAS
 Oh, so I won't talk to anyone
 tonight because I was sort of
 hoping that I could you know get
 the ball rolling?

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
 I can't promise that you'll get a
 call tonight, it really depends on
 our volume and how interesting
 your voice profile turns out okay?

THOMAS
 Yeah, I guess so.

ONE CALL OPERATOR(O.S.)
 I'll transfer you now.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN- NIGHT

Thomas pulls a frozen dinner out of the freezer and plops it
 on the counter. Cell phone to his ear.

THOMAS
 Hi, my name is Larry and, and,
 and, fuck.

He presses a button on the phone.

AUTOMATED VOICE responds.

AUTOMATED VOICE(O.S.)
 To start your recording again,
 press nine, now.

He presses nine.

THOMAS

Hi, my name is Larry and I'm uh, I'm a lawyer and I'd like to just talk to somebody and you know see where it goes I guess, you know, nothing too serious, just talk and, and so if you'd like to, if you'd like to talk to a complete lunatic who just got out of five year relationship with himself give me a call, I can't do this.

He presses a button.

AUTOMATED VOICE (O.S.)

To start your recording again, press nine, now.

He pushes nine.

THOMAS

Hi my names Larry, I'm just looking to talk so give me a call if you're interested to know more bye.

He presses a button on the phone.

AUTOMATED VOICE (O.S.)

To make this message your voice profile, press three, now.

He presses three and then hangs up.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT/KITCHEN/DINING/LIVING- NIGHT

Thomas peels the lid off of his steaming lasagna dinner box sitting in front of him on the coffee table.

He switches the tv on with a remote.

Takes a bite of lasagna.

THOMAS

(Mouthful)

Awe, shit.

He spits the boiling food back into the rest.

THOMAS

Ow, shit.

Phone rings! beside his lasagna.

He answers it.

THOMAS

Hello?

ASHLEY responds from the other end.

ASHLEY(O.S.)

Hi, is this Larry?

THOMAS

Uh, yeah, who is this?

ASHLEY(O.S.)

Hi, Larry I'm Ashley. I heard your recording on One Call and I just had to call you, I hope that's okay?

THOMAS

Um, no yeah, that's fine, I just, I thought it would take longer to get a response um.

ASHLEY(O.S.)

Oh good, good, yeah I really liked your profile.

THOMAS

Oh yeah, um, which part?

ASHLEY(O.S.)

Um, everything. So Larry what are you up to right now?

THOMAS

Right now, well, I was just burning my mouth with lasagna um, why?

ASHLEY(O.S.)

Well, you know, I was seeing if you wanted to meet up tonight?

THOMAS

Meet up? Tonight? Uh, uh I don't know, is that what we're supposed to do or?

ASHLEY(O.S.)

Yeah, for sure.

THOMAS

Oh okay um, well do you want to meet for a coffee or something or-
?

EXT. COFFEE SHOP- DAY

Pouring rain.

Tom smokes under an umbrella. He checks the time on his cell phone.

A taxi pulls up and stops. ASHLEY (25+) pretty, steps out in a long black coat and high heels.

She moves to him.

ASHLEY
You must be Larry?

He tosses his smoke.

THOMAS
I'm quitting soon, uh, yeah I am,
you must be Ashley, hi?

ASHLEY
That's me.

THOMAS
Wow, you look, you're really, uh,
you look great.

ASHLEY
Thanks.

THOMAS
So should we go in, I guess?

ASHLEY
No, I'm not really thirsty. So um,
okay so it's four hundred for
everything. You can pretty much do
anything you want until you know,
the happy little end.

THOMAS
I'm sorry, what-?

ASHLEY
-If you only want me to give you
head that's two hundred. You have
to provide the place so we can
either go to hotel or your
apartment or whatever, but I need
to be paid first.

THOMAS

What, what, hold on, hold on what are we talking about here?

ASHLEY

Come on man I don't have all night you know, I've got other calls so do you want to go somewhere and make that sound or what?

THOMAS

Jesus. You're a. You're a, you're a prostitute? A hooker?

ASHLEY

For four bills I can be whoever the fuck you want me to be sugar-?

THOMAS

-Look Ashley, I'm sorry but I misunderstood the, I thought this was a dating service so-

ASHLEY

-It is.

THOMAS

No, I mean like a real dating service.

ASHLEY

Oh you mean like the type of dates where you take a stranger out for a coffee or dinner and then they never call you again?

THOMAS

I guess so, look I'm sorry okay? I'm just not comfortable paying for, you know?

ASHLEY

Whatever look, they're going to charge you card the minimum hundred dollar fee anyway so, I can offer you a handy in the alley if you want.

THOMAS

A handy in the alley?

ASHLEY

Yeah, a hand job, you want it or not.

THOMAS

Um, no, fuck no, what the fuck is going on in this city?

ASHLEY

Fucking prude. Who do you think you're kidding? Haven't you realized by now that one way or another we all pay for sex. Welcome to reality.

Ashley turns to the curb. Raises her hand.

ASHLEY

Taxi!

EXT. HUMANECTION BUILDING- DAY

Thomas pulls a newspaper clipping out of his pocket. Reads it then and then approaches the front door.

Sign above door reads "HUMANECTION."

INT. HUMANECTION/CUDDLE ROOM- DAY

Half of the room is shag carpet the other half is a massive mattress covered in blankets and pillows.

On the carpet Thomas holds hands in a circle with seven other CUDDLERS and the GROUP LEADER(dressed in yoga wear).

GROUP LEADER

I want everyone here to know that this is a very safe environment okay? Everyone is here for the same basic reasons so we need to feel like we can all trust each other before we can start our journey. That's why we are holding hands. Now, some ground rules, um, this isn't about sex people. So no touching each others delicates please. Accidents are accidents and that's fine but, let's just be respectful of each other through this process and we can all share in a very powerful experience. So, um, let's start off by stating our personal boundaries.

A FEMALE CUDDLER nods in.

FEMALE CUDDLER

I just don't want any dry humping okay? I don't want a massage from someones crotch.

GROUP LEADER

Okay, I think that falls under the no sexual behavior category so-

FEMALE CUDDLER

-Okay but I was here last week and this really lonely guy was dry humping me really really slowly and it made me uncomfortable.

GROUP LEADER

Okay, that's understandable thank you-

FEMALE CUDDLER

-And don't rub my ass for more than like five seconds at a time because I don't like that either.

GROUP LEADER

Okay then. Anyone else?

LATER.

Piled on the mattress Thomas is woven into the other Cuddlers arms and legs. Bodies all squirming and massaging each other. Thomas massages the Female Cuddlers back in a very clinical manner.

Cuddlers moan, and breath relief.

FEMALE CUDDLER

(Whispers)

What are you doing back there?

THOMAS

Uh, massaging you.

FEMALE CUDDLER

It feels like I'm being examined.

Group leader lifts his head from the mattress.

GROUP LEADER

(Whispers)

Try putting some more emotion into your finger tips Thomas. Let's truly connect here. Let the love just pour out of you until we are laying in a big pool of love together.

FEMALE CUDDLER

Yeah, that sounds nice.

THOMAS

I'll, um, try that.

Thomas closes his eyes and rubs her down. Lower and lower down her back. Then onto her rear. The pile of humans pulsing and moaning.

FEMALE CUDDLER

(Panting)

Mm, ooh, yeah.

She moans. He opens his eyes. He stops massaging.

FEMALE CUDDLER

What happened? Why'd you stop?

THOMAS

I'm sorry, I can't do this, this is too weird for me.

Tom unwraps himself from the tangle of limbs and slides off the mattress to his feet.

GROUP LEADER

Don't you want to feel connected to someone Thomas? Don't you want to be loved?

FEMALE CUDDLER

We can love you. We are all here to love each other.

THOMAS

Not like this. This isn't real. I, I can't fake it anymore. I can't. You're just a bunch of waitresses smiling at me while you take my order.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT

Thomas spins the lid off of a bottle of liquor fills his mouth. He lights a cigarette. Glances around the streets focusing on an all night pharmacy.

INT. ALL NIGHT PHARMACY- NIGHT

Three bottles of aspirin and a bottle of grape cough syrup are placed in front of a CLERK.

Thomas counts out money.

CLERK
Is this everything?

THOMAS
This is it.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT

Drinking and smoking Thomas saunters along the busy streets. Two guys pass by holding hands. Further and another couple pass by, boy and girl, her head on his shoulder.

FLASH BACK.

EXT. STREETS- NIGHT

Iris rests her head on Thomas' shoulder as they stroll the sidewalk people watching. A senior couple passes by.

IRIS
How long do think we'll make it?

THOMAS
Forever.

IRIS
No we won't nothing lasts forever.
Seriously.

She stops and turns to face him. Straight faced.

IRIS
How long are you going to keep
this up?

THOMAS
What do you mean?

She cracks a smirk.

IRIS
Nothing.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. THOMAS' BUILDING- NIGHT

Thomas stops at the door and tilts his liquor bottle to the sky, swallowing mouthfuls. He chases it with cough syrup.

THOMAS' COAT POCKET

His hand flips the lid off of a bottle of aspirin.

EXT. THOMAS' BUILDING- NIGHT

Thomas lowers the half empty bottle. Takes out a handful of aspirin. Darla comes from behind him and swats his hand sending little white pills scattering all over the street.

DARLA

No!

Thomas spins around.

THOMAS

Darla? What are you doing here?

DARLA

What are you doing Thomas? What were you going to do to yourself? Why would you even think that Thomas? How could you do that-?

THOMAS

-You don't understand Darla! Okay? It's all a lie. I'm a lie. I'm a fucking lie, lie, liar. Fucking liar!

DARLA

What are you talking about Thomas?

THOMAS

Just. Just go home Darla. Go and be happy. Can you do that for me? Please? That's all I want. That's all I want, because people don't get to be happy that much anymore.

DARLA

What are you saying?

THOMAS

I'm saying, look, I'm a disaster and, you don't need that you know? You've got Carter, and he's so great and you've got love with that guy you're seeing and, and I'm just crazy Darla-.

DARLA

-Tom-?

THOMAS

-I did something after we broke up okay? I don't remember doing it, but I did it. One equals two Darla. You know what that is?

DARLA

-Tom-?

THOMAS

-It's a place that desperate losers like me go to to make deals with the fucking devil. And I'm so drunk and I'm so tired of being drunk and confused all the time you know what I mean Darla-?

DARLA

-Tom listen to me-?

THOMAS

-No Darla listen okay, you have to do this favor for me. You have to be happy for Carter, and for me. You have to-

DARLA

-Don't you ever shut up Tom? I want to be happy with you. I want to be happy with you Thomas. There is no other guy, I was confused too. You came out of nowhere you know?

THOMAS

You want to be with me? Why? Look at me, I mean-.

DARLA

-I am looking at you. I still love you. I always have and I always will. You're a part of who I am Thomas. Can't you see that?

THOMAS

I've missed you. We wasted so much time, Darla.

DARLA

That can all stop now. Listen I have to tell you something. I should have told you before but I didn't want to hurt you.

THOMAS

You can tell me anything. What?

DARLA

Thomas, Carter is. Carter is your son Thomas. He's our little boy.

THOMAS

But, but, how I mean we, wow. I thought we, wow. So I have a little boy. I'm a father.

DARLA

Yes. Do you hate me?

THOMAS

Hate you? Are you kidding me. Darla, I've loved you since I the second I found out that you existed. I'm a dad.

Thomas wraps his arms around and picks her up swinging her around.

THOMAS

I'm a dad, I'm a dad, oh my god, what took us so long?

Thomas stumbles.

DARLA

We're slow learners, maybe you should stop spinning us, that bottle looked pretty much empty.

He stops sets her free and stumbles himself steady.

THOMAS

Good call. So, what do we do now my love?

DARLA

Let's go home.

She extends her hand. He slips her hand into his and they disappear down the street.

INT. DARLA MURPHY'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

The front door swings open. Tom kisses Darla firmly backing her into the hallway. She kicks the door shut as they strip each others shirts off.

DARLA
Shh, Carter's asleep okay?

THOMAS
Okay?

Their mouths reconnect stumbling together into the...

BEDROOM

She falls back onto the bed. Thomas lays on top of her kissing as they wiggle to the center of the bed.

Darla reaches between her legs and unbuckles his belt. She slides it from the loops and tosses it onto the floor. She loosens the button and unzips the fly.

DARLA
(Whispers)
Take them off.

He pushes off the bed to stand and removes his pants.

DARLA
Come here.

He moves back onto her.

DARLA
Take my clothes off.

Thomas unbuttons her fly and rolls her pants down her legs and off her feet.

DARLA
Connect us.

THOMAS
I love you Darla.

DARLA
I love you.

INT. HOTEL ROOM- DAY

Sunlight beads onto Thomass' closed eyes. He lays asleep on a tossed about mattress. The quilt is a big lumpy mound behind him.

He squints his eyes open. Turns over toward the quilt mound. A woman's hand is peeking from under the mound.

THOMAS

(Whisper)

Oh. Hey babe, Darla are you awake?

The quilt moves.

WOMAN

(Yawning)

Uh, you were an animal last night baby.

Thomas lays on his back looking at the ceiling. He breathes a sigh of relief itching his stomach.

THOMAS

Uh, for second I thought it was a dream Darla, you believe that? No more drinking for me. That's it, I mean I'm a dad now. A dad. I can't believe. Hey do you know if Carter's up yet?

The hand bats the quilt flat and Ashley sits up from under the covers naked.

Thomas falls back off of the bed kicking himself back until he hits the wall.

ASHLEY

Who the fuck is Carter, man? Look Larry I'm all for roll playing and everything but give it rest already. All night, Darla this and Darla that. It's a little dehumanizing even for a call girl-

THOMAS

-Shut up. Shut up! What, what, what are you doing here? Why are you here?

ASHLEY

You're a freak.

She steps out of bed searching for her clothes which are littered around the room.

THOMAS

Why are you here? Why are you here?

ASHLEY

Where are my fucking panties Jesus.

THOMAS

Hello, what are you doing here? What did you do to Darla?

She finds her undies and slips them on.

ASHLEY

Okay I need to be paid now so I can leave.

THOMAS

Where's Carter? Where's my son? I have a son don't I? I'm a dad right?

ASHLEY

Not with me I can tell that. You owe me eight hundred bucks buddy let's have it.

She puts her skirt and shirt on. Straps her shoes on.

THOMAS

I have a son! Don't you know that? I have a fucking son!

ASHLEY

You know what pal, fuck it. You're way to loony toons for me. I'll just get Tracy to pull it off of your credit card. whatever.

Thomas buries his face in his arms sobbing. Ashley puts her coat on. She grabs the door handle. Thomas springs up and wraps his arms around her.

THOMAS

You can't leave.

He spins her to face him and shakes her with each word.

THOMAS

Where's Darla!? Where's my son!?

ASHLEY

I don't know what you're talking
about! Now let go of me you fucked
up son of a bitch!

She slams her knee between his legs and he crumbles to the
ground.

Thomas curls up balling. Ashley storms out.

ASHLEY(O.S.)

You're a fucking dead man Larry.
Freak.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY- DAY

Thomas buttons his shirt speeding passed the front desk. A
HOTEL STAFF stand up behind the counter.

HOTEL STAFF

Will you be checking out today
sir?

Thomas stops and looks over with a tear soaked face.

THOMAS

How long have I had that room for?

HOTEL STAFF

Oh, let me check here. You're
first night was, three monthes ago
sir.

Thomas swallows hard.

THOMAS

I won't be needing it anymore.

Tom smiles at him.

HOTEL STAFF

Very well sir.

INT. 1=2 OFFICE- DAY

Thomas the wreck bursts into the office startling waiting
clients. A Receptionist rises.

THOMAS

Where is he?

RECEPTIONIST

Oh hello Thomas how are-

THOMAS

I want to see that fucking guy
right fucking now! Or I'll fuck up
your head like you did mine.

He eyes a door behind her.

RECEPTIONIST

Thomas relax. You're scaring the
other patients-

THOMAS

-Is he through there?

RECEPTIONIST

Well yes but-

Thomas blows passed her into through door.

RECEPTIONIST

-You can't go in right now he's
with a client Thomas.

Receptionist turns to the frightened patients.

RECEPTIONIST

Not to worry everyone, he's one of
our original clients from before
the change over. That's why we
stress the importance of the
biannual check ups. It's all there
in your orientation package.

INT. DR. FAUST'S OFFICE-DAY

Thomas kicks his way in the room. Dr Faust stands up at his
desk. A CLIENT jerks around.

CLIENT

Jesus Christ!

DR. FAUST

Excuse me, oh, Thomas, what's
going on here? What's wrong?

THOMAS

You know. You know what you do
here.

Dr. Faust addresses the Client.

DR. FAUST

I'm sorry but I'll have to take this so we'll continue a little bit later okay?

CLIENT

Um, sure.

The Clients steps gently passed Tom.

THOMAS

Don't let them do this to you.

CLIENT

Hey just don't hurt me, buddy.

The Client leaves.

DR. FAUST

Thomas come on, that's not right now.

THOMAS

He's scared of me. You believe that? Me. I had a son Dr. Faust. I had love. Why would you give that to me and then take it away? Why would you do that Dr. Faust? Why?

DR. FAUST

Oh, shit. Shit. The spring flyer. I'm terribly sorry, Thomas. Shit. I forgot to take you off the outgoing list you see?

THOMAS

Spring flyer?

DR. FAUST

Yes we send a sample of our new updates to all of our regular clients once a year. I've just been so busy lately that I forgot to remove your name from the list. I'm sorry. I imagine I'll have a few other irate visitors. Shit.

THOMAS

So it's all been bullshit.

Thomas slumps into a chair.

THOMAS

Business is good is it Dr. Faust?

DR. FAUST

It is a very lonely world Thomas you know. What we offer, it's, it has a high demand. It's as real as you let it become.

THOMAS

What you offer is a fucking lie. A boat load of bullshit. You breed quitters. You prey on desperate people. But they're people Dr.Faust. Human beings, I mean don't you think they deserve to be happy in reality?

DR. FAUST

Thomas, Thomas, you seek us out. Our procedures are elective. We barely advertise, I mean, every one of our clients is thoroughly informed about what it is that we do here. We're not criminals-

THOMAS

-But it's a lie.

DR. FAUST

I prefer to think of it as an exaggeration. Everyone already has a little voice in their head to keep them company. We just give that voice a personality of it's own. We make it a little more attractive. A little more appealing. Everything from stubbing your toe to reaching orgasm, they're all things you experience by stimulating receptors in your brain. We simply have the technology to manipulate those receptors to bring a little more sunshine to such a cloudy world. What's so wrong with that Thomas.

THOMAS

You know what they call that? Schitzophrenia.

DR. FAUST

Yes. Exactly, schitzophrenia is the very foundation of our research. That was all in your orientation package. Don't you remember coming here at all.

THOMAS

I don't know what memories to believe anymore. I want you to undo whatever it is you did in my head?

DR. FAUST

Well, Thomas, that's not exactly possible you see. You have one of our older designs in your head and the way it's wired, well, if we try to remove it now after being there for so long, you could die.

THOMAS

There's actually a device inside my head?

DR. FAUST

Well yes, some electrodes and a little micro processor. It's very small. We're not magicians you know. It's technology.

THOMAS

How are you allowed to perform brain surgery.

DR. FAUST

Loop holes Thomas. There are always loop holes.

THOMAS

So what, I'm, I'm going to be crazy for the rest of my life now?

DR. FAUST

No, no, no, we can destroy it from the outside using micro waves. We just can't remove it.

THOMAS

Is it dangerous?

DR. FAUST

Well, I don't know. We've never tried it before.

THOMAS

You've never tried it before what do you mean.

DR. FAUST

All of our other original clients requested immediate re-immersion. Thomas, you're the only client who's ever chose reality over happiness. What if you never find happiness out there on your own? If we disable that implant, that's it. You can never be immersed again.

INT. 1=2 OFFICE/OPERATING ROOM- DAY

Dr. Faust flicks switches and turns dials on a control panel from behind thick glass.

Thomas is strapped to a chair. A microwave helmet lowers over his head coming to a rest upon his shoulders. A tiny glass window shows his face.

Dr. Faust communicates over an intercom.

DR. FAUST

(Intercom)

Okay Thomas, now are you sure you want to do this?

THOMAS

(Inside helmet)

I'm sure.

DR. FAUST

Alright. I am going to activate the microwave emitter for six seconds. That is the maximum amount of time your brain can handle before we start doing serious damage.

THOMAS

This going to work right?

DR. FAUST

I hope so, hm, I mean yes. I think so.

THOMAS

Okay.

DR. FAUST

Alright, here we go then. Three.

THOMAS/DR. FAUST

Two. One.

INT. WALL CENTER- DAY

Tom pushes through the revolving glass doors into the lobby.

Boards a crowded elevator adjusting his tie.

A BUSINESS WOMAN turns to Tom in the elevator.

BUSINESS WOMAN

How's your novel coming?

THOMAS

Well actually, the truth is, I haven't been writing a novel.

BUSINESS WOMAN

Oh?

THOMAS

Yeah, but, I think that's what I wish I was doing. I think I always wanted to be a writer.

BUSINESS WOMAN

So what have you been doing here all this time?

THOMAS

Well.

INT. PHIL CAMPBELLS OFFICE- DAY

A desk separates PHIL CAMPBELL(40) from Thomas.

PHIL

I thought you were happy here Tom.

THOMAS

I probably was Phil. But you wake up one day and realize, hey, I'm doing data entry for eight hours of everyday of my life you know? Where does that lead?

PHIL

So, what are you going to do?

THOMAS

I don't know. I was thinking about writing a book, maybe. A novel.

PHIL

Well, alright I guess. Are you sure you don't want to stick it out for your last two weeks?

THOMAS

I don't even want clear out my cubicle Phil. And hey, I totally understand if this voids my severance or whatever.

PHIL

Come on Tom. I'm not a monster here. I'll make sure you're compensated. You're my guy here.

THOMAS

Thanks Phil. Well, I better get a move on.

They stand and shake hands.

PHIL

What's the plan for today?

THOMAS

I'm going to look for an old friend.

PHIL

I hope you find her.

Phil smiles. Thomas smiles back.

INT. LARRY AND JACKIES HOUSE/KITCHEN- DAY

Larry sports a fat lip and a black eye eating breakfast.

Jackies stomach bulges out of he shirt. She shovels eggs down her in mouth. Tom picks at his food.

LARRY

A writer huh? I could see that. You'll get paid in compliments instead of money but.

JACKIE

I always thought you had wild imagination Tom. Are you sure this is what you really want to do?

THOMAS

No, at this point I'm only sure of the things I don't want. It's a start though. Are we going to talk about your face Larry? What the hell happened to you?

LARRY

Some disgruntled clients sucker punched me.

JACKIE

Out front of the court building, can you believe that.

FLASH BACK.

EXT. COURT BUILDING- DAY

Larry donning a suit and tie carrying a briefcase, exits the courts and walks across a large courtyard toward the parking lot.

LARRY (V.O.)

Yeah, it was insane, I had just finished the first day of this new case I'm on and I'm walking to my car when I look over my shoulder and see these four huge guys behind me.

Larry looks over his shoulder. Ashley and DANNY march toward him.

LARRY (V.O.)

I'd never seen these guys in my life before but you know you hear stories about pissed off clients getting revenge on their lawyers all the time. But I know how to fight, right, so I turned around to face these four monsters.

Larry starts running towards his car. Ashley and Danny give chase.

LARRY (V.O.)

I look at them and say. You got a problem?

LARRY

I don't want any trouble.

LARRY (V.O.)

I could tell they were kind of nervous you know, cause they weren't expecting me to just confront them like that.

Larry gets to his car. Fumbles in his pocket for keys.

LARRY

Come on, come on, fuck.

Ashley and Danny catch up and corner him against his car.

LARRY (V.O.)

So we're looking at each other. Sizing each other up and I decide that I better just start hitting the biggest guy first.

DAN DILLY

Are you Larry?

LARRY

Y-yeah, what, what can I do for you man?

DAN DILLY

Is this the guy Ashley?

ASHLEY

I was wasted but I think so.

LARRY

You think so? What do you mean you think so-

DAN DILLY

-Shut the fuck up!

LARRY (V.O.)

As soon as I knew that there was no way to resolve this thing peacefully, I just wound up and punched the big guy in the face.

Danny slams Larry in the mouth several times.

DAN DILLY

See what happens when you don't pay your bills pal. You see what happens? You don't fuck Dan Dilly you got me bitch?

Thomas crumples into a ball beside his car protecting his head.

LARRY

I got you, I got you, who the fuck are you?

ASHLEY

You know what you did Larry! You know what you did to me!

Ashley and Danny stand over Larry kicking him spuratically

DAN DILLY

And you never fuck Dan Dilly's girls. That's my property. Bitch ass lawyer.

LARRY

I swear to God I've never seen this women before in my life. Help me! Help.

LARRY(V.O.)

I must have hit him fifteen or twenty times before they all ran off.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LARRY AND JACKIES HOUSE/KITCHEN- DAY

Larry takes his plate to the sink.

JACKIE

Those people should be locked up.

THOMAS

Um, wow, yeah that's crazy man.

LARRY

Yeah, anyways, how are you doing?

THOMAS

Well, actually, there's something I need to tell you guys.

Jackie looks over at Larry.

THOMAS

Five years ago, after me and Darla broke up, I had a procedure done at this, clinic called one equals two. Have you ever heard of it?

Larry opens a drawer under the counter and takes out a manilla envelope.

Larry flops the envelope in front of Tom. It has the 1=2

logo on it. (Logo is two people wound around each other).

JACKIE

We know.

Larry sits back down.

THOMAS

You know?

LARRY

We were your sponsors for the program.

THOMAS

Why didn't you tell me?

LARRY

Legally we couldn't.

JACKIE

You had us sign contracts Tom.

LARRY

You had me draw them up, don't you remember.

Tom ponders. He opens the envelope. Inside are signed confidentiality contracts.

THOMAS

You let me live a lie for five years. I almost killed myself Jackie. I killed my imaginary girlfriend for Christ sakes and you just went along with it?

JACKIE

Those were your wishes Tom.

LARRY

You were a mess after Darla-

Thomas bursts out of his chair.

THOMAS

-What do think I am now!

Tom leaves out the back door.

THREE MONTHS LATER.

INT. SKYTRAIN- DAY

Curled up on a bench seat Thomas writes in a notebook. Periodically gazing out of the window at the passing city scape.

THOMAS (V.O.)

Looking back now I don't regret my decision to see Dr. Faust. Even though the microwave therapy was ineffective and I am now at the mercy my thoughts and desires.

He glances at a woman seated across the train smiling. It's Iris. She waves. He smiles at her and looks back to his notebook.

THOMAS (V.O.)

I am aware. I am alive. Iris didn't die. I needed to kill her off to wake me up. To remind me of all the things I had given up for this idea of happiness.

He looks back at Iris. She dissolves, vanishes before his eyes. They share a silent giggle as she disappears.

THOMAS (V.O.)

Only now do I understand, that true happiness needs to be shared. A connection needs to be made. An exchange.

EXT. MURPHY HOUSE-DAY

A two story suburban home. Thomas climbs the stairs and knocks on the door. The door opens. MRS. VERA MURPHY (50) answers wearing a headband with a card reading "BOOGER".

MRS. MURPHY

(Talking over
her shoulder)

Don't you even think about cheating, I'll just be a second.

She looks at Tom.

MRS. MURPHY

Hello, can I...Thomas? Thomas Sullivan?

THOMAS

Yeah, hey, Mrs. Murphy, how's it going?

MRS. MURPHY

I don't believe my eyes. What are you doing here Thomas?

THOMAS

Um, uh, I uh, I didn't know how to get a hold of Darla and well-

Mrs. Murphy takes Tom's arm and tugs him inside.

MRS. MURPHY

-Where are my manners, come inside and have a coffee. Are you hungry at all?

INT. MURPHY HOUSE- DAY

Around a round kitchen table Tom sits with, Mrs. Murphy, CADEN (4), LILY (5), all wearing head bands. A manilla envelope bearing the 1=2 logo peeks out from under a stack of papers on the counter.

Toms reads "Poo."

Lily's says "Chocolate."

Caden's says "Giraffe."

THOMAS

Is it a thing?

The kids grin and nod.

THOMAS

Okay, can you eat it?

The kids giggle and look at Grandma.

MRS. MURPHY

No, I don't think that would be appropriate.

THOMAS

Okay, okay, um, hm.

He looks at "Booger," on Grandma's head.

THOMAS

Is it yellow?

CADEN

Nope.

LILY

It's bown.

CADEN

Lily. You're not a supposed to tell him that.

MRS. MURPHY

It's a secret Lily.

LILY

Okay Grandma.

THOMAS

Do I have poo on my head?

The kids burst out laughing. Grandma chuckles.

THOMAS

There's poo on my head isn't there?

They all nod.

LATER.

Kids are playing in earshot in another room. Thomas and Vera drink coffee.

MRS. MURPHY

You like kids Thomas?

THOMAS

Uh, um, yeah, kids are awesome.

MRS. MURPHY

You want some we're having a sale?

THOMAS

Yeah? So, how is Darla?

MRS. MURPHY

She's, she's good.

THOMAS

Is she um, married or?

MRS. MURPHY

My poor little girl. She just recently became a widow.

THOMAS

Really?

MRS. MURPHY

I never even met the poor lad can you believe that.

THOMAS

How are the kids holding up?

MRS. MURPHY

We haven't told them.

THOMAS

Oh.

MRS. MURPHY

Well, they've never met the poor soul either so why upset them?

THOMAS

They never met their father?

MRS. MURPHY

Oh dear, these are Julie's children. You remember my other daughter Julie don't you?

THOMAS

Oh. Yeah, Julie not Riley. Do you know where I can find Darla?

MRS. MURPHY

She's a bit of a mess right now Thomas. Her head's out of sorts. She's checked in at the hospital.

Thomas gets up from his seat. He kisses her on the cheek.

THOMAS

Thank you very much, for, for, for everything.

MRS. MURPHY

Tell her to call her mother okay dear.

THOMAS

Of course Mrs. Murphy.

He races out of the house.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP- NIGHT

Thomas trades money for a bouquet of roses. He speed walks down the street weaving through human traffic.

INT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT

Thomas walks down the corridor toward reception desk with roses.

THOMAS BRAIN

A tiny micro processor with branches of electrodes sparks.

INT. HOSPITAL- NIGHT

Everyone Thomas sees is Darla now. He stops at the reception desk. Three RECEPTIONIST DARLA'S look up at him. He is smiling.

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 1
Those for me?

THOMAS
Sort of, but no.

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 2
We're not that lucky.

THOMAS
Do you know what room Darla Murphy is in.

They check the computer.

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 3
Oh isn't that the girl we just had sedated?

THOMAS
No way, really?

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 1
Come on he brought flowers and everything. Don't pick on the good guys.

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 3
You guys are no fun.

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 2
No one's been sedated. That's just a little reception humor. Darla Murphy you said right?

THOMAS
Yeah, yeah.

RECEPTIONIST DARLA 2
 Okay yeah, she is in room three
 sixteen. Now it's a little tricky
 to find, but okay here I'll draw
 it out for you.

INT. HOSPITAL/THIRD FLOOR HALLWAYS- NIGHT

Thomas paces down the long corridors. A DOCTOR DARLA passes by smiling. Then he passes a NURSE DARLA, a JANITOR DARLA, another NURSE DARLA. He looks into a patient room and sees a PATIENT DARLA, every room he passes, he looks in and sees another PATIENT DARLA looking back.

FLASHBACK-FIVE YEARS AGO

EXT. STREETS DOWNTOWN-NIGHT

Teary eyed sobbing Darla marches backwards down the sidewalk.

Thomas watches from across the street.

She turns her head.

DARLA
 (Crying)
 Fuck you, Tom.

THOMAS
 I feel like shit every time I'm
 around you!

She marches backwards until she is directly across the street from him.

DARLA
 I don't even know who you are
 anymore Tom. Why are you being
 like this?

THOMAS
 Just so I said it to you in person
 and there's no confusion. We're
 done. I'm single as of today.

She paces backwards across the street until she is beside him.

Her mascara is running with tears.

DARLA

You know fuck off Tom. I'm out of here. I don't have to listen to this shit.

THOMAS

Because that's what sluts do Darla, they fuck around when they're bored.

DARLA

I've never cheated on you, why would I cheat on you?

THOMAS

It's only a matter of time before end up at some strange guys apartment Darla come on.

DARLA

What is you're problem Tom!

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HOSPITAL/THIRD FLOOR HALLWAYS- NIGHT

Thomas turns a corner. A light flickers from out of a doorway at the end of a long corridor. Still he peeks in each passing room seeing PATIENT DARLAS.

FLASHBACK.

EXT. STREET DOWNTOWN- NIGHT

Thomas and Darla walk backwards toward a nightclub entrance.

DARLA

You're such a fucking drama queen man. Fucking buzz kill God. This is why I don't like going out with you.

THOMAS

Why do you lie to yourself? He had his hand all over your ass Darla.

DARLA

We were just dancing okay man, like, relax. I'm an adult Tom.

THOMAS

How bad did you want to fuck that guy on the dance floor?

DARLA

What?

THOMAS

But you have to be honest.

DARLA

What?

THOMAS

Can I ask you a serious question?

END FLASHBACK.

INT. HOSPITAL/THIRD FLOOR HALLWAYS- NIGHT

Tom grows closer to the flickering doorway.

FLASHBACK.

INT. NIGHTCLUB- NIGHT

Tom sits in a booth drinking. He watches Darla dancing with a handsome man on the dance floor.

The Handsome backs away from Darla. She walks backwards toward Toms booth. She turns and looks at Tom.

DARLA

Suit yourself, I'm sure someone will want to dance with me.

THOMAS

I don't dance you know that.

DARLA

Do you want to dance or what?

INT. HOSPITAL/THIRD FLOOR HALLWAYS-NIGHT

Tom reaches the glowing doorway. The room number is "Three sixteen."

He enters to find a tossed about bed and a TV left on in the dark. On the floor are cut up pieces of photographs. He picks some larger pieces up and assembles them in his hand.

They form a stock photo of a Handsome Man giving a Pretty Woman a piggy back ride on the beach.

He drops them to the ground and notices a trail of the clippings leading out the door. He follows them into the...

STAIRWELL

More shards of pictures lead him up the stairs five floors

to the...

FLASHBACK.

INT. NIGHTCLUB- NIGHT

In the booth Darla sips her drink. Tom is slumped in the booth bored. She looks at Tom like a puppy.

THOMAS

I hate this place.

DARLA

You hate everything that I like to do.

THOMAS

That's not true.

DARLA

Okay Tom.

THOMAS

It's just like, why are we even here? This where single people come to meet other single people.

DARLA

You'd rather just sit at home every night and watch tv?

THOMAS

Sure.

DARLA

That's not enough for me Tom. I'm not ready to just die and disappear from the world because I'm in a relationship with a fucking hermit.

THOMAS

Whatever.

DARLA

Come dance with me please? Please?

THOMAS

I don't even like this music.

Darla gets up and faces him from the other side of the table.

DARLA

Do you want to dance or what?

THOMAS

I don't dance you know that.

DARLA

Suit yourself, I'm sure someone
will want to dance with me.

She turns and walks to the dance floor. A Handsome Man approaches her and they start dancing together.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOF- NIGHT

Darla stands on the edge of the eight story buildings roof crying. A pair of scissors lays next to the end of the photo trail.

Thomas bursts through the doors onto the roof with the bouquet.

Darla turns to face him. They stare at each other for a moment.

THOMAS

I want to dance.

DARLA

Thomas? You're not really here are you? It's all a joke.

THOMAS

I'm here. I'm just really really late. And I'm really really sorry.

DARLA

Are those flowers for me?

THOMAS

Yeah, but you have to come and get them.

DARLA

I did something really stupid you know. I tried to fall in love without you.

THOMAS

I know. So did I. It didn't work. Come here.

Darla steps off the ledge and marches towards him. They wrap their arms around each other tight.

DARLA
 (Whisper)
 You're real.

THOMAS
 (Whisper)
 Yeah. You too.

They kiss with passion and dance on the spot under the moonlight.

THOMAS
 Three.

DARLA
 Two.

THOMAS/DARLA/FAMILY
 one.

ONE YEAR LATER.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

FAMILY crowds the backyard. Carter (1), sits in a high chair with lit birthday cake in front of him.

DARLA
 Blow out the candle Carter.

Carter just digs his hand into the cake.

THOMAS
 Help him out babe.

DARLA
 Okay, mommy help okay.

She blows the candle out. The Family all cheers.

Tom and Darla meet for a hug in the middle of all the family.

DARLAS BRAIN

A spark in the processor.

THOMAS BRAIN.

A spark in the processor.

EXT. BACKYARD- DAY

Hugging Tom, Darla looks over his shoulder and instead of family members she sees a crowd of Toms.

Tom only sees Darlas over her shoulder.

THOMAS

(Whispers)

I can only see you.

DARLA

(Whispers)

Good.

THE END