

C L A R I T Y

Written by
Noah McManus

FADE IN:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

LIGHTNING strikes outside, briefly illuminating the dimly lit room. Dark, dank, and dirty. THUNDER drowns out the TV, which flickers between picture and static.

JANE (early 20's) runs a brush through her wet, untamed hair. She's an understated, girl-next-door kind of attractive.

The brush gets stuck on a knot.

JANE

Ow, ow, ow!

She bites the bullet and pulls it through. Grimaces through the pain.

She glances at the TV, to the storm raging outside the window, and back again. She frowns before grabbing the hair dryer and moving into the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM

Jane has to close the door to reach the mirror. Tiny, claustrophobic bathroom. The lights flicker.

She fumbles for the socket, tries to plug the hair dryer in, but the lights go out completely.

JANE

Shitting Hell.

She stumbles back, reaches for the door and pulls it open. She blindly searches for the light switch.

The light is so intense she quickly shields her eyes.

INT. WHITE ROOM

Jane's eyes struggle to adjust to the white. The white walls, the white floor, the white ceiling.

And then a BLURRY FIGURE, quickly approaching, SHOUTING. Jane lashes out with the hair dryer and BASHES the figure on the head.

NORMAN

OW!

NORMAN (mid 20's) recoils, holding his head. He's an average looking guy, wearing nothing but an Adventure Time T-shirt and his boxers.

NORMAN
You just hit me!

JANE
What -? What the fuck is going on
here?

NORMAN
You just hit me... with a hair
dryer!

JANE
What are you doing in my motel
room?

She raises the hair dryer in a threatening manner. He holds up his hands to defend himself.

NORMAN
Wait, wait, wait! Does this *look*
like your motel room?

She looks around. It most certainly does not. She turns to the door behind her - except there is no door.

JANE
Okay. Alright. Breathe, Jane.
Breathe.

She charges towards him.

JANE
What the cocking fuck is going on?!

He grabs for the hair dryer, they wrestle.

JANE
Get off me!

NORMAN
Just give it to me!

They struggle. Jane finally relents, steps back. Norman shakes his head.

NORMAN
Relax. I'm just as freaked out as
you are.

JANE
You don't look very freaked out.

NORMAN
On the inside. I'm freaking out on
the inside. It's a man thing.

She rolls her eyes, calms herself.

NORMAN

What's your name?

JANE

Is that really important?

NORMAN

Look, the thing is, we're probably about to be probed by some motel aliens, and if I'm getting something shoved up my arse, I want to know whose name I should scream out.

JANE

Pervert.

NORMAN

My name's Norman. My friends call me Norm.

JANE

(re: T-shirt)

Friends. Sure. I'm Jane.

NORMAN

Great. Jane, how about we find a way out of here?

Jane emphatically gestures all around her.

JANE

There is no way out of here! No windows, no doors. There's nothing in this room but -

She freezes upon turning and seeing a white table, seemingly moulded into the floor. On the table is a green button.

JANE

That wasn't just there.

NORMAN

No. No, it wasn't.

The pair cautiously approach the table.

NORMAN

Do we press it?

JANE

What good ever comes from pressing a button?

NORMAN

Sometimes the vending machine at work gives you two Mars bars instead of one if you hit the button just right.

(off her look)

This probably isn't going to give us chocolatey goodness.

JANE

So, we don't press it.

NORMAN

Yeah.

JANE

Yeah we press it? Or yeah we don't press it?

NORMAN

Yeah... I don't know! I'm not good with decisions!

Jane sighs, runs her hands through her hair. One of her hands gets stuck on a knot, which she discreetly tries to untangle. She fails, looks like she's having a fit.

She quickly tries to compose herself. Norman stares blankly at her.

NORMAN

So, um, what was the last thing you remember doing?

JANE

I was playing golf.

NORMAN

You play -?

JANE

I was drying my hair, you idiot. Hence the hair dryer.

NORMAN

Oh, right. That makes much more sense.

JANE

I opened the door and ended up in here. You?

NORMAN

I was... I was watching telly. In bed. Just, you know, laying there. Watching... TV.

JANE

My telly was throwing a shit fit.

NORMAN

Yeah, no, mine was fine. Crystal clear.

He fidgets, readjusts his T-shirt.

NORMAN

So what do we do then?

Jane looks to him and shrugs. They both slump a little, completely at a loss.

JANE

Fuck it.

She moves to the table and SLAMS her hand down on the green button.

NORMAN

What did you just do?

JANE

I'm not going to starve to death in this bloody room, waiting for some pissy aliens to arse-rape me. If they're gonna do it, I'd rather just get it over with.

NORMAN

I'd, um, I'd rather wait actually. And since when do you make the -

They both jump back as an image materialises behind the table. Norman raises the hair dryer like a gun.

NORMAN

Freeze or I'll... blow you.

Jane turns and glares at him - did he really just say that? He just shrugs apologetically.

The figure flickers in and out of existence, like static. It's a HOLOGRAM, the image of a beautiful young woman, dressed like an air hostess.

HOLOGRAM

I'm sorry for the interference. This bloody storm is... you know, what? Hold on.

(shouts to someone off-screen)

Uriel, can you just shut that fucking thing off for a couple of minutes please? I'm trying to talk!

A moment later and the Hologram stabilises. She forces a smile.

HOLOGRAM

I do apologise. It's like working with a greasy film student sometimes. Drama, drama, drama.

Jane and Norman glare at her, motionless.

HOLOGRAM

Right. So you're probably wondering what's going on here.

JANE

Fucking Hell, yes.

NORMAN

Just a little.

HOLOGRAM

Jane, Norman. There's an Armageddon occurring.

They continue to glare at her.

HOLOGRAM

I know what you're thinking. This is some kind of weird dream you're both having or it's aliens.

NORMAN

I said that!

(then)

So, you're not gonna probe us?

HOLOGRAM

Depends how good you are. But yes, the end times is upon us. Good versus Evil and all that jazz. It really is quite the spectacle out there.

She motions behind them. They turn to see a window and outside the sky is literally on fire. Everything is burning.

JANE

This is bollocks. This is fucking bollocks.

HOLOGRAM

Look, I know it's a lot to take in, but we really don't have much time. Have some clarity.

Neither react.

HOLOGRAM

Seriously, have some clarity.

They turn back to see two chocolate bars on the table, in a wrapper branded 'Clarity.'

HOLOGRAM

Go on, take a bite. It'll help you come to terms with the whole shebang.

Norman and Jane glance at each other before unwrapping the chocolate bars and taking a bite each.

NORMAN

I told you, chocolatey goodness!

HOLOGRAM

Truth of it is, we don't know how this is going to play out. We might win, we might lose. We might just all forget it and go home after a few days but until then, we've had to gather as many souls as we can, and ferry them to safety. And this is where you two come in.

NORMAN

So... you're here to save us?

HOLOGRAM

That was the plan.

JANE

What do you mean "was?"

HOLOGRAM

So, slight problem. We fucked up a little bit. Completely overestimated how much room we actually have. Turns out, not enough for the both of you.

Jane almost chokes on her Clarity.

JANE

What? You're telling us there's not enough room in Heaven for us both. Heaven. How can there not be enough room?

HOLOGRAM

It's Heaven, love, not a fucking Gym. We've never had to take this many souls there before and, quite frankly, you should be grateful we're even considering either of you two.

NORMAN

Um, okay. So, what happens to the one who doesn't go to Heaven? Do they just go back to the motel?

HOLOGRAM

You're my favourite, Norman. And you know why? Optimism. It speaks volumes about your character.

Norman smiles, stops immediately seeing Jane's reaction.

JANE

You can't say that.

HOLOGRAM

The world is ending, sweetheart. I can say whatever the Hell I want. And, truthfully, it ain't going to make a damn bit of difference. See, nobody can return to the motel, because you're both dead.

NORMAN

What? I'm not dead.

The Hologram nods sympathetically.

NORMAN

No, no. I'm not. Could a dead person do this?

He does a weird little dance.

JANE

You are so lame.

HOLOGRAM

Jane, if you do ever get the chance at another life, try not plugging a hair dryer into a socket during a bloody apocalypse.

Jane's eyes go a little wider.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - (FLASHBACK)

The lights flicker, the thunder ROARS outside. Jane tries to plug the hair dryer into the socket.

CRAAAAACK! It electrocutes her, sends her stumbling back. She bounces off the wall and head first into the toilet.

INT. WHITE ROOM - (PRESENT)

Jane grimaces, goes to touch her hair but decides against it.

HOLOGRAM

And Norman. Oh, Norman.

NORMAN

I wasn't doing anything.

HOLOGRAM

You know, there's a reason you were warned about playing with it too much. Because otherwise, you rupture that aneurysm you never knew you had.

NORMAN

I had an aneurysm?

JANE

You said you were watching telly, not masturbating!

NORMAN

Oh, because *that's* the most important thing to focus on here, isn't it? We died.

JANE

Yeah, well, some of us didn't die a wanker.

NORMAN

You know what? You can just fuck right off -

The Hologram holds up her hands for quiet.

HOLOGRAM

If we can continue? We don't have all Armageddon and I'd like to arm you with all the facts before you make your decision.

NORMAN

What facts?

JANE

What decision?

HOLOGRAM

As I said before, nobody can return to the motel because you're both dead. Deceased. Kicked the bucket. Sleeping with the fishes -

NORMAN

We were murdered?

HOLOGRAM

Right. Sorry, wrong idiom. Anyway, we can't just simply return a soul to a corpse. It's impossible. Also, a little bit gross. But the soul also can't go to Heaven.

NORMAN

So where does it go?

HOLOGRAM

There's only one other place for it to go. And it's not somewhere anyone wants to spend an eternity.

JANE

You mean Hell?

HOLOGRAM

Pain, torture, unimaginable horrors. Your eyes will bleed, your skin melt, and your toenails will curl back into your body just to escape the atrocities.

(then)

And that's just on a Tuesday.

Jane eyes Norman, everything sinking in.

JANE

But the other soul, it can go to Heaven?

HOLOGRAM

Only once you have both reached a mutual decision.

NORMAN

We... we have to decide?

HOLOGRAM

Yes. It's the only fair way of doing it.

NORMAN

None of this is fucking fair!

HOLOGRAM

No. No, I don't suppose it is. I do want to assure you though, we would absolutely take both of you if we could. But, like I said, just not enough space I'm afraid.

Jane grits her teeth, seethes. Norman is devastated.

A sudden CHEER in the background and the Hologram is passed a cocktail.

HOLOGRAM

Look, I've really got to go.
There's a lot of new souls to
welcome and it's an open bar so I'm
sure you can appreciate how messy
that's going to get.

She chuckles. Jane and Norman do not.

HOLOGRAM

Right. So, I'll save you a
cocktail, whichever one of you
makes it through. Man. Or girl.
Whatever.

(then)

I'm rooting for you, Norman.

She flickers out of existence.

A long, awkward silence.

JANE

What a cunt.

NORMAN

Yeah...

JANE

I mean, who does she think she is?

NORMAN

An Angel, probably.

JANE

Yeah, well. I wouldn't give her
employee of the month.

Norman doesn't respond. She looks to see what has his
attention - a single door has appeared.

JANE

That's it, isn't it? That goes
straight to Heaven.

NORMAN

I think so.

They contemplate this, avoid eye contact. Neither say a word,
awkwardly fidgeting, until finally:

JANE

I don't want to go to Hell, Norman.

He turns to her, her voice breaking slightly.

NORMAN

Neither do I.

JANE

So what happens? We have to make a decision.

NORMAN

I'm not good with decisions.

Jane takes in a deep breath, heads to the other side of the room and sinks to the floor. She holds her head in her hands.

Norman watches her, then eyes the door.

NORMAN

I've barely lived. My whole life, just playing on the Xbox and drinking beer. Every day. Just wasting everything.

JANE

I volunteer for a Charity.

He snaps his head around to her.

NORMAN

That makes you better than me?

JANE

That's not what I meant -

NORMAN

Yes it is. You're trying to say you're better than me cos you volunteer for a fucking Charity?!

JANE

And I work. And I take care of my Mum whenever her fucktard boyfriends dump her. And I helped my sister with her addiction to drugs!

NORMAN

Oh, oh. I didn't realise you were Mother fucking Theresa. Go right ahead, your royal highness. Go to Heaven and have your cocktails and I'll just burn in Hell for all eternity for playing the fucking Xbox!

He falls back against the wall, tries to catch his breath. He lowers himself to the floor.

NORMAN

A fucking aneurysm.

JANE

Could be worse. You could've electrocuted yourself and fell head first into the toilet.

Norman looks to her, on the opposite side of the room, and can't help himself - he smiles. And then she smiles. And then they both laugh.

JANE

I'm not so perfect. I never tip the waiter. I always leave the plastic on the pizza when I put it in the oven. And then eat it anyway... and I had an abortion.

A moment.

JANE

I was young and stupid. My main worry back then was whether or not I had the money to buy another box of wine...

(teary)

Looking back, I don't really think I had a choice. I think it was always going to end the way it did... but I say I had an abortion because... then I own it. It was my choice. My decision.

Norman takes another bite of the candy.

NORMAN

I think you're a lot more cut out for making decisions than I am.

JANE

Didn't you just hear what I said?

NORMAN

You pressed the button.

JANE

What?

NORMAN

The green button that made *this* happen. You pressed it. You made the decision to press it.

JANE

I just punched a button, Norman. And need I remind you, the prize was a stuck up minger? And, I mean... a bright green button. One of us was always going to press it.

NORMAN

But you pressed it.

Norman takes a deep breath, looks down at the *Clarity* candy wrapper, and turns back to her.

NORMAN

Go.

(off her look)

I'm not fucking around. Go.

JANE

I can't just go. That's so fucked up.

NORMAN

I've done nothing with my life. I haven't fought for it like you have.

JANE

No, no, no. I didn't tell you that so you would sacrifice yourself. Are you bloody mental? Having to deal with fucked up things doesn't make me worthier than you.

NORMAN

I think it does.

(re: wrapper)

I guess I finally found some clarity.

He rises, heads to her, pulls her up.

NORMAN

Go.

JANE

No! Fuck clarity. Fuck clarity up the arse. I already made a decision that took one life... I'm not going to do it again!

Norman tries to pull her to the door but she struggles, breaks free.

JANE

You can't decide this for me!
Nobody gets to do that!

NORMAN

She said we don't have time --

JANE

Then you go!

An awkward moment. She calms her tone.

JANE

You go. Live. Turn your life around, whatever the fuck "life" is behind that door.

NORMAN

I can't... I don't deserve it.

JANE

Why not? Like you said, you've hardly lived. You've hardly sinned.

NORMAN

This isn't about... I don't believe in that bollocks --!

JANE

Norman, we're standing in a waiting room between Heaven and Hell and the world is going to shit outside. I think it's time to start believing that *bollocks*.

She wipes her eyes. Norman shakes his head. He's not doing this. He's not doing this. And yet his feet inch closer to the door.

Jane watches him, eyes wider. He stops, screams through his teeth. Jane bites her tongue.

Norman tries to slow his rapid breathing. He looks from his Clarity wrapper, to Jane, to the door, and back again.

NORMAN

Fuck!

He throws the wrapper to the floor.

JANE

What are you doing?

NORMAN

It's a trick. It's a trick, right?

JANE

I... I don't know --?

NORMAN

How could either of us walk through that door, leaving the other to burn in Hell, and still expect to be welcomed with open arms from the old man upstairs?

JANE

Cos whoever walks through that door... is doing it out of selfishness?

NORMAN

And that's a sin, right?

JANE

Norm, a woman wearing trousers is a sin, so I'd better fucking hope so.

They glance at the door.

NORMAN

Then neither of us go through. We wait.

JANE

You think that'll work?

NORMAN

Can you go through that door and leave me here?

She shakes her head.

NORMAN

Then we wait.

Jane nods before returning to the floor. Norman lingers for a moment, then joins her.

Both stare ahead at the door.

JANE

Look who made a decision.

NORMAN

Hold the Blue Peter badge, we don't know if it's the right one yet.

JANE

How long do you think we'll have to wait?

Norman only shrugs.

JANE

I really wish I died holding my iPad.

They both laugh. It's short and sweet but the tension seeps back in. Jane's fingers crawl across the floor to meet his. They interlock.

Their eyes remain fixed on the door. They wait in silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END