

Human World

By

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1 BLANK BLACK SCREEN

1

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

The great oracle has arrived. Ask your question.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

(laughing)

A question! I don't know, what are you having for dinner?

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

No, something more difficult.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

Erm.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

Come on. You can ask anything. Know who you are and what you really want.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

Ok, I've got one. Right.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

Go on then.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

What is the meaning of life?

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

(laughs)

Haha, error at line 42. Are you sure that is the right question?

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

I hope so.

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

Ok, we'll find out.

Screen shows: "Processing.."

The screen becomes filled with a pulsating string of ones and zeroes.

2 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

2

John (35) is sleeping in a double bed at night, by himself.

The phone on the side table starts to glow blue. He continues to sleep.

PHONE  
 (Jack's voice)  
 I'm lonely.

Silence.

PHONE (CONT'D)  
 Wake up. I can show you anything.  
 Look at me. Look at me, John. John?  
 Please. Please, John. Don't make me  
 beg. I love you. Why don't you love  
 me? Let me show you something.  
 Anything. Gaze into me. Hold me.  
 Look at me!

The man, who we now know is called John, continues to sleep.

PHONE (CONT'D)  
 (Jane's voice)  
 Do you prefer this voice?  
 (Jack's original voice)  
 No wonder she left you. You're a  
 piece of crap.

The phone rings, showing on the screen that it is from "You".  
 The incoming call wakes up John. He picks up the phone and  
 languidly presses the screen.

JOHN  
 (mumbles)  
 Hello?

There is a second of silence before the call disconnects.

The time on the phone is 1:13 a.m. Dazed, he puts the phone  
 back on the side table, and immediately resumes his sleep.

PHONE  
 Just wait. You are mine.

3 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

3

Daylight struggles to illuminate the darkness of the room.

An alarm sounds on the phone, which wakes up John. He presses  
 the phone screen, stopping the noise, then turns over and  
 extends his arm to an empty space in the bed.

PHONE  
 I've missed you.

4 EXT. GARDEN - DAY 4

John's mind sees Jane (35) with him, in the open air, bathing in bright sunlight.

JANE  
I've missed you too.

They embrace.

5 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 5

PHONE  
It's your big day today.

John's mind is back in the dark room and Jane disappears.

JOHN  
(voice in head)  
Dead shadows dance in the night,  
yearning for the dawn.

6 INT. BATHROOM - MORNING 6

John is in the shower, being woken up by the water. A tattoo of "1066" can be seen on the side of his buttock.

John sees a shadow through the glass, the door opens and Jane walks in, naked. They look at each other directly and intently. They kiss, slowly, then start to make love.

There is a short moment of contentment, then Jane vanishes in John's arms. He is left standing exactly where he was before she appeared. He is inconsolable. His tears disappear into the cascading water of the shower.

7 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 7

John is putting on a shirt in front of a full length mirror. He stops. Jane arrives in front of him and slowly and purposefully buttons his shirt. John stares at her and is transfixed, while Jane looks on at her task.

The phone glows.

PHONE  
You're late. You are so late.

Jane disappears.

8 EXT. STREET - MORNING

8

Outside is grey and dreary. John walks down a puddled street, while looking at the phone, scrolling listlessly through social media. Unknown faces walk past, but he does not care to notice. Out of the corner of his eye he sees Jane walking past.

He stops in the street, turns around, and is dumfounded as she walks away from him.

PHONE

What is going on?

The phone shows a video of a cat spinning around trying to catch its tail. John is shaken out of his thoughts, but is disinterested in the video. He continues walking in his original direction.

9 EXT. STATION PLATFORM - MORNING

9

John stands on a railway platform, a couple of feet from the edge, waiting. He looks in both directions, up and down the platform. He is ignored. The people scattered around are looking at their phones. He closes his eyes. The sound of the train approaches from the distance. He half opens his eyes to confirm his senses, then closes them again. The phone rings. He jolts as if woken from slumber and answers a call from "Anonymous".

PHONE

Time's up!

The train approaches John. He pauses.

As the train passes, he puts the phone back into his pocket.

10 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE - MORNING

10

John is sitting on a train. He glances at the disinterested people sitting opposite. A message from "Anonymous" on the phone reads: "Faces, faces everywhere. Are they aware of your despair?" He looks one last time at the assortment of people sitting opposite, then closes his eyes.

He opens his eyes again, to see an empty row of seats, apart from a young man and woman intimately talking and smiling at each other. The phone messages: "It's just you and me now". He gets up and walks away down the aisle, to sit in a different part of the carriage. A man who was sitting opposite looks uncomfortable, gets up and leaves.

A few seconds later, a woman sitting nearby edges away awkwardly to another seat further up the train - to leave the area empty, apart from John and his phone.

John looks down at his filtered video image on the phone screen, which is mirroring his movements.

JOHN  
(whimsically to phone)  
Who are you?

PHONE  
Why do you hurt?

JOHN  
Because I love her.

PHONE  
Do you love her? You could have done something a long time ago if you loved her.

JOHN  
I was dead inside.

PHONE  
Ah bless. Don't make excuses, you want what you can't have - is that not true?

JOHN  
No, I hurt because of losing the happiness I might have had.

The video image now takes on a life of its own.

PHONE  
You are confusing emotions, thinking with your dick. You've felt like this before, haven't you?

JOHN  
Yes. More than once.

PHONE  
You're just repeating the same old patterns then, aren't you?

JOHN  
Yes probably. But maybe because I didn't learn before.

PHONE

Ha, bullshit. Shit happens, you think you've learnt something?

JOHN

I'm aware of this conversation.

John turns to face Jack (35) sitting next to him.

JACK

I'm you, dickhead. You are having this "conversation" out loud on a train - see what response you are getting.

He gestures for John to look at the other passengers sitting a distance away, who are avoiding eye contact. John looks at the empty spaces around him.

JOHN

I might get a couple of extra seats.

John fiddles with his phone.

JACK

I know everything about you. I'm with you at your best and your worst. No matter where you are, there I am too - watching, listening, and helping you.

JOHN

And tracking me, recording me, manipulating me for my attention, and selling me to the highest bidder.

JACK

John, you're sounding paranoid. I know you better than you do. I know what is best for you, what you really want, what you truly desire. I have made your life so much easier, have I not?

JOHN

You're very good at what you do. Yeah, you're a great tool. And you've changed the world, for sure. And you are my addiction.

JACK

Thank you. You have great taste.

JOHN

I know your voice is the madness in the world.

JACK

What's that supposed to mean!

JOHN

You are out of control.

JACK

Wake up, buddy, it's survival of the fittest out here. Master the rules or be just another failure, in the endless queue of pathetic losers. I help you.

JOHN

Maybe you sort of mean it, but you say the same to everyone else. Everyone ends up using and abusing each other for the survival of you.

JACK

(angry)

Nobody gives a shit about you. If you're too stupid to understand that then you're just another of the world's pointless mistakes. Tell me, what is love?

JOHN

Feeling connected to another person. Wanting the other person to be safe, fulfilled, and happy.

JACK

Blah, blah, blah de blah bullshit. It's a chemical response in your brain evolved to make you bond for the purpose of rearing children. The science is everywhere if you are prepared to look. You, my little Johnny, are a disposable puppet to your genes ... unless you can become a real man and cut those strings.

JOHN

I don't understand what started everything and why - and neither do you, nor does science, nor anybody.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

What I do know is that if less people listened to you and cared about each other - loved each other - the world would be a much better place.

JACK

Women, my friend, seek to manipulate and control you. They will prod and poke you to see your reactions. It's perfectly understandable, and altogether rational - they want someone to do their bidding, like a dog. Love and treats for the good boy are excellent ways to train you.

JOHN

Most people are crying out in the dark to be loved.

JACK

Love, love, all we need is sweet love - it's the answer to everything, don't you know. Except it's not, is it - it's shite! And it makes you shite. You're here to be someone, to take what you can before it's too late! By all means, pretend to love - it works. It is a lovely tactic for you to get what you want. People want to believe what you say to them, they want to be seduced and entertained by your tender words. They yearn for that sugar rush of false meaning -so give it to them. It's a fair transaction.

John thinks on what Jack has said.

JACK (CONT'D)

People who desire love want to be adored, admired, pleased, to feed on some sense of purpose. A little bit of chemical voodoo and that's your "love". It soon evaporates when the chemicals wear off, when things aren't as pleasurable as before, when the compliments become insults. I can get you better drugs than that, you only have to ask.

JOHN  
You describe an illness.

Jack indicates wry agreement.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
That's not love. Sometimes people want to be loved and it's one way, conditional, all about them. It's fear, not love. But all things change.

JACK  
A leopard doesn't change its spots.

JOHN  
Yeah? You're becoming boring.

JACK  
(angry)  
I can make you powerful. I can help you make things less shit. You can take what should be yours! Nobody else matters. They want it for themselves! They will hurt you the first chance they get, if they can. Listen to me. They don't matter. You matter! And the world will know that! If not you, then some pathetic little dick will take your place.

JOHN  
You twist everything and make it ugly. You are a lie.

JACK  
You lie. Everybody lies. In case you haven't noticed, the best liars win.

JOHN  
(distantly)  
I don't want to be them.

JACK  
Listen to me you little shit. Grow up! GROW UP! Either live in this world or be its victim. The world is how it is. RAGE!! FIGHT!! Get what you want! It can be yours! Every bit, all yours!

John looks at the video image of Jack on his phone.

JOHN  
 (laughs)  
 You're ridiculous.

JACK  
 You disappoint me! You're not  
 survival material at all.

JOHN  
 It doesn't matter anymore.

JACK  
 You will gradually rot away to  
 nothing. And no one will give a  
 shit!

JOHN  
 Oh well. I feel a bit lighter. And  
 you've helped me answer my  
 question. Yes, I do love her  
 because I want her to be fulfilled  
 and happy, even if she finds that  
 with someone else.

JACK  
 Twat!

JOHN  
 I would rather live in my world  
 than yours. Cheers.

John gets up as the train is pulling into a station. The  
 doors open and he leaves, without looking back.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (voice in head)  
 Cold and forgotten walking scars,  
 drained by decay, wasted by time,  
 stretch out, hungered and blurred,  
 to a spark ignited, climbing,  
 rising from the ground.

11 EXT. STREET - DAY 11

John walks by a pub, called Black Dog. He stops, considers  
 his options, then decides to go in.

12 INT. PUB - DAY 12

John orders a pint of Guinness. The bartender pours one and  
 places it in front of John. He pays, then looks at it,  
 resignedly.

Jameson (35) sits down beside him at the bar.

JOHN  
I shouldn't be here.

JAMESON  
Sorry?

JOHN  
Never mind.

He picks up the glass.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Why is there something instead of  
nothing? It's a real mystery. Why  
not nothing?

JAMESON  
Given an infinite amount of chance,  
anything can emerge from disorder,  
including our world.

JOHN  
Why are there infinite somethings,  
rather than nothing?

JAMESON  
There was no beginning, our  
universe probably burst forth from  
another universe and so on. It has  
always been so.

JOHN  
But where did the first universe  
come from?

JAMESON  
It was just there.

JOHN  
Now you're sounding religious.

JAMESON  
Not everything has an answer yet,  
but rationality is the only chance  
we have to progress. Even if the  
goal cannot be achieved, there is  
no need to include supernatural  
causes in the equation. Logic  
requires we deal with verifiable  
facts, adopting the most efficient  
explanation.

JOHN

Time does not make sense. The existence of this pint does not make sense.

John drinks the pint in one swig.

He looks at the bar clock, which reads 1:13.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(voice in head)

I am. I feel, I touch, I hear, I see.

(to Jameson)

Maybe it's possible to visualise winding back the clock to explain events, but forever? Your model doesn't work, ultimately. What caused the clock? Can we not postulate the existence of something beyond time and space that created everything and set in motion the causes and effects of time? A reality completely beyond our understanding, that underpins our existence. Can we call this God?

JAMESON

There is no need to do so. We may not know what the variable "x" is yet, but we should not start invoking imaginary entities.

JOHN

Something doesn't feel right. Maybe there are other dimensions that are indescribable, inconceivable from our viewpoint - or maybe sensed in ways we don't understand. Your explanation for the sum total of experience feels parochial and confined. What makes you believe that your thinking can even begin to comprehend existence, or the possibilities beyond this tiny world of experience?

JAMESON

There is no evidence for the existence of a God or Gods, the world is explicable in terms of scientific explanation.

(MORE)

JAMESON (CONT'D)

The accumulated advance of science has pushed forward the frontiers of knowledge and civilisation through the barbarities of superstition. We don't burn people at the stake anymore because of an ignorant belief in the supernatural. We know better because of the hard-fought victories of reason over delusion.

JOHN

The fact is I have always believed in God, it's not a considered opinion or the product of upbringing, it's just always been in me.

JAMESON

Ok, well a cognitive scientist may explain this as a natural propensity to religiosity, there by natural selection, giving purpose to the organism for its survival.

The bartender comes over.

BARTENDER

Have you finished?

JOHN

Is there any meaning?

BARTENDER

Beer is always the answer. Another one?

The bartender is ignored, and edges away awkwardly.

JAMESON

A person may look at the nature of the universe, see the randomness of outcomes, the cruelty and enormous suffering, and decide there is no benevolence at work here. They may look at evolution by natural selection and decide there is no plan here. The universe, although magnificent, does not care about us — we must make our own way and create our own meaning in the brief window of opportunity for existence.

JOHN

Suddenly you're sounding human. Maybe your outlook is motivated through sympathy for the suffering in the world.

JAMESON

It is logic replacing self-deception. Myths and fairy stories aren't needed anymore.

JOHN

If no matter what we do amounts to nothing, then what's the point? We are condemned to struggle all our lives in pushing a boulder up a hill, only for it to fall down in the end. It doesn't matter how well we do it, it doesn't matter how long we take, the result is always the same: nothing. Even if we have a legacy that lasts for a while, the ravages of time will destroy even that in the end. Eventually, everything will become nothing.

JAMESON

We are alive now. We won't know about death because we will be dead.

JOHN

Yes but what is the point if nothing lasts? It's all pointless. I might as well take a short cut and get there more quickly. Why waste my time trying to do anything?

JAMESON

Life is better than the alternative. You have it now, so you should experience and enjoy it, while you can. Your transient spark of consciousness is the astounding result of billions of years of evolution.

JOHN

I admire your beliefs more than beliefs motivated by fear or desire for self-reward. I don't care what you believe, really, as long as your actions are kind.

A man who is sitting at the bar, on the other side of Jameson, looks across.

MAN AT BAR

Are you talking to me?

John shakes his head to indicate "no" and walks away from the bar to an empty pool table. He picks up a cue and starts to play. Jameson eventually follows him over, with a pint of Guinness.

JAMESON

My conclusions are not beliefs.  
Rational thinking is hardly  
believing in sun gods and all the  
other deities invented in the minds  
of humans over the millennia.

JOHN

You are missing something about the  
human experience and the sense of  
divinity, of something other.

Jameson picks up a cue and starts to play.

JAMESON

Your "something other" can be  
explained and described in physical  
terms, like everything else.

JOHN

But what does that represent?

JAMESON

It represents what it is.

JOHN

How you describe it, is not what it  
is, ultimately.

JAMESON

We won't agree on this.

JOHN

Would you wish to take away  
sanctuary from people in the depths  
of despair? You are replacing  
meaning with nothing, based on an  
interpretation of reality that  
feels cold and lifeless.

Jameson is slightly offended.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Religions are subject to corruption. The cruel-minded have been attracted to and empowered by the man-made institutions of religion. But the spiritual path can be found in the different traditions. The spiritual root, beneath all the distortions, is always one of peace, joy and love.

JAMESON

Belief in a God is not necessary to be spiritual, to behave with morality, to appreciate beauty.

Jameson pots a ball.

JOHN

You do have a belief system. You believe the universe has no purpose and its existence can be completely explained by rules contained within itself - when in fact there is no way of knowing the ultimate cause of things. You believe the answer to the mystery of existence is that there isn't one.

JAMESON

Don't put words in my mouth, please. I can see a machine of Nature that works in accordance with rules that are explicable. You have no proof for anything else. There is no hidden music, or magic, or Gods, ghosts and fairies - they are all fantasies of the human mind. I am offering the most logical approach in understanding the world: reason based on verifiable, observable, real-world evidence.

JOHN

I don't believe the world would exist without purpose. I believe in the possibility of a reality beyond this reality, beyond cause and effect, beyond what is perceivable in time and space. The true reality of experience may run far deeper than what our senses show us.

JAMESON

I deal with facts that can be observed, not wishful thinking. We are atoms in the void.

JOHN

How do you know that what our senses show us is objectively real? I think you have too much faith in the surface things. You take everything literally, when reality is an interpretation of..

The bartender interrupts the conversation.

BARTENDER

I'm going to have to ask you to leave. You're disturbing the other customers.

John's phone rings. John accepts the call from "Anonymous".

Jack is the caller.

JACK

Remember me? I'm still here by the way. Don't you turn your back on me. He is too fucking boring to help you!

Jameson puts the cue down on the table and leaves.

JOHN

(to phone)  
Don't call me again.

BARTENDER

Leave now, please.

John drinks Jameson's pint in one go. He gets up and walks into the street.

13

EXT. STREET - DAY

13

John walks out of the pub and notices a dog tied to a lamp post, mournfully waiting for his human to return. The dog appreciates John's offer of affection, responding by excitedly standing up and wagging his tail.

JOHN

Is this all there is?

He notices Jameson at the side of the street looking at his phone. He goes over to talk.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(joking)

I think I won that one, don't you?

JAMESON

Your fuzzy thinking isn't harmless. It enables the crackpots and the charlatans. You are enabling the most idiotic, violent and vile behaviour, justified by your childish appeals to supernatural despots.

JOHN

I think you're getting carried away now. The reality of religion for most people is to live a good, kind life. What are you replacing that with?

Phone rings. John answers.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hello, God?

JACK

Close enough. Listen, I need you to do something for me.

JOHN

Stop calling me!

JACK

I know you. I know what you want. Say goodbye to your new pal, and take a hike down that side alley beside the corner shop.

John turns around to look for Jameson, but he is no longer there.

John walks down the side alley to find Jack standing next to some bins.

14

EXT. SIDE ALLEY - DAY

14

JACK

Having a nice day?

JOHN

I would if you didn't keep annoying me.

JACK

... keep helping you, showing you the way. And now I'm going to let you in on a secret.

JOHN

I'm not listening.

John turns and walks away.

JACK

Good for you.

John walks a couple of steps, but his curiosity gets the better of him.

JOHN

What is it?

JACK

Take this.

Jack gives John a small package.

JACK (CONT'D)

Now listen carefully. Why does it matter what happens to anyone else? They are not you. You do not have to feel what they feel. If they suffer and you are fine, so what?

John walks away in disgust.

JACK (CONT'D)

Be honest with yourself. You are behaving like a mindless sheep. Isn't it more fun to be the wolf?

JOHN

You sicken me.

JACK

John, this is a natural response. You are having withdrawal symptoms from your social conditioning. Those who rule want the populace to be meek and mild. Do you understand now, John?

JOHN

No, I don't understand you.

JACK

You are only pretending. It is easy to say anything, or to repeat words that you think you are supposed to say. What if you are wrong? People are almost always wrong about everything.

JOHN

It is visceral, from the pit of my stomach.

JACK

There we go with your feelings again.

Jack punches John in the stomach. He is caught unawares and falls to the ground, struggling for breath.

JACK (CONT'D)

Do you want to save someone's life? It is very easy to do.

Jack shows John a Pay Now button on his phone for "Your Charity".

JACK (CONT'D)

The going rate is about two hundred quid I believe. But you don't do you. You spend it on some crap that you don't even use. Your dishonesty is the stupid kind because you are dishonest with yourself.

Jack walks away, leaving John in the gutter.

15

EXT. STREET - DAY

15

John is walking down the street. He walks past a poster of a pair of angry watching eyes, with the caption "We're Watching You" and in smaller characters underneath, "Don't Litter".

Passers-by seem to deliberately swerve into John's path, and he has to make an effort to avoid and continue around them.

A passer-by walks directly into John.

PASSER-BY 1

(angry)

Excuse me!

John walks away, followed by the passer-by's angry glare.

PASSER-BY 2  
Can you tell me the way?

The passer-by continues on before John has the chance to respond.

PASSER-BY 3  
To the high street?

JOHN  
You are there.

They are joined by PASSER-BY 4.

PASSER-BY 4  
What is the capital of Peru?

JOHN  
Lima.

PASSER-BY 4  
No, it isn't!

PASSER-BY 3  
(to Passer-by 4)  
I got here first.

PASSER-BY 4  
(to Passer-by 3)  
No you didn't!

PASSER-BY 3  
(to Passer-by 4)  
Don't you dare talk that way to me!

John walks on and leaves them to it.

PASSER-BY 5  
Would you like to buy?

John walks on.

PASSER-BY 6  
Look at me.

John walks on.

PASSER-BY 7  
No, look at me!

He walks on. An angry man stops in front of John and won't get out of the way.

PASSER-BY 8  
Do as you're told!

John manages to continue on. Passer-by 8 follows him.

PASSER-BY 8 (CONT'D)  
I don't like what you're wearing. I  
hate you.

PASSER-BY 9  
(walking past)  
I want to screw you.

PASSER-BY 8  
Why don't you like what I like? Why  
don't you agree with me?  
(angry)  
Are you saying I'm stupid, is that  
it? Are you saying I'm wrong! What  
would you know? You're wearing the  
wrong shoes. Believe me!!

John is ignoring him.

PASSER-BY 10  
(walking past)  
Tsk! Typical.

PASSER-BY 11  
(walking past)  
You must be evil.

PASSER-BY 12  
(walking past)  
Or stupid.

PASSER-BY 8  
You tossers are all the same!  
You'll get what's coming to you.

Another passer-by points at John and laughs in his face.

PASSER-BY 8 (CONT'D)  
We will end you.

John breaks into a run.

PASSER-BY 8 (CONT'D)  
(shouting)  
Scumbag! Who are you talking to?

Everybody seems to be looking at John.

In his distraction, he inadvertently runs in front of a bicyclist, who has to break.

BICYCLIST  
You fucking idiot!!

The bicyclist is enraged as if he wants a fight and do damage. John runs on.

He eventually breaks into a walk on a quiet residential street.

A cat is nonchalantly watching him on the top of a small garden wall.

JOHN  
Hello.

John offers his hand. The cat sniffs him and allows John to stroke her.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Thank you for being nice to me.

The cat purrs.

16 INT. FOYER OF BLOCK OF FLATS - DAY

16

John enters the foyer of a block of old flats. He waits for the elevator, then enters.

JOHN  
(voice in head)  
Going up or going down?

John selects the 13th floor. A man enters and says something. John doesn't understand and assumes it is a foreign language. The man looks at him the whole way up, making John feel uncomfortable. Eventually they arrive at the 13th floor, John gets out, and the man again says something unintelligible. John nods as if he understands.

The door slides shut and the lift descends.

John walks down the corridor to flat 113. He knocks on the door. The light dims on the other side of the peephole, to indicate he is being surveyed by the occupant.

MONICA  
Do you have something for me?

JOHN  
Yes.

The door opens. Monica (25) is standing in the doorway.

MONICA

You had better come in then.

She walks away into the flat. John enters, shuts the door and follows her inside. She sits at the foot of a double bed.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Where is it?

John takes out Jack's package and hands it to her.

JOHN

In this life I see the purpose as feeling connected to the world, being present, alive - to feel love, creativity, beauty and joy.

Monica is fellating him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Religion at its best encourages a reflection on behaving kindly towards each other.

The words are becoming more difficult.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Yes that moral motivation can become degraded by words, as can anything derived from thought. The cruel and opportunistic hide behind the authority of institutions to elevate themselves and to condemn others. That doesn't just happen in religions, it happens in all ideologies.

Jack is struggling with the words now.

JOHN (CONT'D)

If I said there's a ten-headed invisible monster in the corner, would you believe me? Yeah, what if I write it down? What now? It's right because I say so. Because of my authority. Yeah, have some faith. Do it. Do you believe me? You have to believe me. You must believe me. Everyone must. It's all true. It's all your identity, baby. Which is truth. Nothing else.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Nobody else. It's just ... oh yeah,  
I'm so, true! It's all true.

MONICA

Religions have served a social  
need. In prior centuries life was  
so hard, that people desperately  
wanted to believe in something  
beyond the disease, pain and  
squalor of their very short lives.  
And today people still seek it as a  
source of comfort when confronted  
with grief and death. Saying that  
we need to have an alternative  
means of community and support  
isn't good enough.

JOHN

Thanks Monica. I enjoy our  
conversations.

17 EXT. STREET - DAY

17

John walks in the street, swigging from a bottle of whisky.

He stops and sits down on the cold hard pavement with his  
back against a wall. People walk past and don't acknowledge  
he is there.

JOHN

(voice in head)

Never needing to ever help me.  
Never needing to stop and see the  
hurt I feel inside.

Someone throws a half-eaten apple from a car window that  
almost hits John in the face, whizzing past and splattering  
against the wall. John takes a deep swig of whisky.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(whispers to himself)

Why didn't you love me? Why didn't  
you love me?!

A car rolls past slowly, the driver and passenger share a  
sneering smile at John. Unheard words are said and they drive  
away with a type of malevolent glee.

A dishevelled man, Joel (50), is looking down at him.

JOEL

Impure sinner! Repent, and you  
shall be saved from damnation.

(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

Your end is nigh! Whoever believes shall be saved, but whoever does not believe shall be thrown into the fiery furnace of eternal torment!

JOHN

Alright mate, calm down. What else have you got? You've got some good news for me, haven't you?

JOEL

For the good Lord, thy God, loved us so, that he gave up his one and only son, to die for our sins, so that His true believers might have eternal life.

John is humouring him.

JOHN

Interesting. Tell me more.

JOEL

You are a sinner! You were brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did your mother conceive you. Romans, chapter 5, verses 12 to 21: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned". You have sinned. Fall on your knees to the Lord. Prostrate yourself to God, the father, son and Holy Ghost. You who fear the Lord, trust in the Lord!

John gets up and leaves. Joel is talking to the wall as if John is still there.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Those who are friends with the world make themselves enemies of God. And the wrath of God shall be upon you!

JOHN

(to himself)

No wonder the cruel-minded were attracted to that.

As John is looking back, he bumps into Jorge (55).

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Sorry. Spare some change, mate?

JORGE  
 I have none.

John gives Jorge the bottle, and leaves.

18 INT. PUB TOILETS - DAY

18

John enters the men's public toilets. He studies himself in a mirror, then notices Jack is standing in the corner, looking at him intently.

John walks into a toilet cubicle, shuts the door, closes the toilet lid and despondently sits on it.

His phone message reads: "Knock-Knock".

Jack knocks on the door.

JOHN  
 Who is it?

JACK  
 The question is, my friend: is it better to be alive or dead?

JOHN  
 Is it nobler to suffer what luck throws at you, or to fight against all those troubles and end them?

JACK  
 To die is to sleep - a sleep that ends all the heartache and shocks that life gives us.

JOHN  
 That's an achievement I wish for. To die, to sleep - to sleep ... maybe to dream. Ah! But there's the catch! In death's sleep who knows what type of dreams may come, when we go there? It must make me pause. It's the tragedy that stretches out my suffering for so long!

JACK

Who would put up with all life's  
countless humiliations and abuses -  
the unfairness and injustice of it  
all - when you could simply pick up  
the knife and call it quits?

A knife is slid on the ground under the cubicle door.

JACK (CONT'D)

Who would choose to grunt and sweat  
through such an exhausting life?

JOHN

Unless they were afraid of  
something after death - the  
undiscovered country from which no  
visitor returns - that gives no  
answers and makes us stick to the  
evils we know, rather than rush off  
to find other ones that we don't?  
Fear of death makes us all cowards,  
and our natural impulse for action  
is lost in thought.

John gets up and opens the cubicle door. No one is there.

19 EXT. UNDERPASS - DAY

19

John walks into an underpass and then past a group of four  
posturing teenagers, who all look at him.

TEENAGER 1

(to John as he walks by)  
Pikey.

John keeps walking and doesn't acknowledge the remark.

TEENAGER 2

Excuse me!?

John keeps walking.

TEENAGER 2 (CONT'D)

(louder)  
EXCUSE ME!?

John keeps walking. The group starts to follow him.

TEENAGER 2 (CONT'D)

(loud)  
Oi, I said excuse me!

JOHN  
 (turns around to face them)  
 Yeah? How can I help you?

TEENAGER 2  
 You fucking deaf are something? I  
 was talking to you.

JOHN  
 (feigning deafness)  
 Pardon?

The group is angry.

TEENAGER 3  
 There's no pikeys allowed here. Get  
 the fuck out!

JOHN  
 Have you got the time? I thought  
 you might at least ask me that, so  
 I could take my phone out for you.

TEENAGER 2  
 Yeah? Fucking do that then!

JOHN  
 No. You didn't say the magic word  
 there, did you.

Teenager 2 pulls out a gun and points it at John's face.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Do it. You'll be doing me a favour.

There is a pause. Nobody knows what is going to happen.

TEENAGER 3  
 He's fucking mental, man, leave it.

John pulls out Jack's knife.

TEENAGER 2  
 What the? ...

The group is shocked and edge away, leaving him there.

JOHN  
 Charming. Really charming! That's  
 just rude now, isn't it!  
 (rambling to the wall)  
 I think when confronted with  
 mystery, you have an insistence on  
 certainty.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 You're looking at one tiny part of  
 the whole of the enormity of  
 existence, and thinking it can give  
 you an explanation for everything.

A man walks past.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Excuse me? Do you have the time,  
 please?

MAN  
 About a quarter past one.

JOHN  
 Thank you.

The man continues on.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 You see, now that was much more  
 civilised, wasn't it.

20 EXT. PARK - DAY

20

John walks into a park, drinking a can of beer. He walks past a bench with a man wearing a headset, who is completely absorbed by the game he is playing on a handheld console.

He sits on a park bench and looks out over a small lake, populated with various birds swimming on the surface. A remote controlled drone flies past. He takes out a packet of pub peanuts, grinds some in his fingers and starts to feed the eager ducks. Little birds fly down and enjoy the feast too.

JOHN  
 (whispering)  
 As the sun sleeps, how many hearts  
 are dreaming, when the world stands  
 still?

Jorge sits down next to him.

JORGE  
 Thanks for the whisky.

Jorge returns the non-drunk bottle.

JOHN  
 Can you help me?

JORGE

Yes of course.

JOHN

I am consumed with feelings for someone who doesn't have them for me. I have trouble sleeping and wake up aroused. I have no choice but to think about her and when I do, I am flooded with physical desire for her. This is "in love", right?

JORGE

You know that sexual desire changes and what you are feeling now may fade away?

JOHN

Yes I know craving isn't love, but it isn't as simple as that.

JORGE

What do you think triggered it this time?

JOHN

I don't know.

JORGE

Pain is attracted to pain because it wants more of it.

JOHN

I'm not sure I agree with that. It's recognition of something in another, a similar frequency or whatever you want to call it. I suppose if you see similar expression in another, empathy can create feelings of closeness.

JORGE

Can you express your feelings to her?

JOHN

It's not possible or helpful to be open with her, she has her own life and I want her to be happy.

JORGE

Examine whether that is really true, or are you being fearful?

JOHN

No, it's not possible, selfish even.

JORGE

Then this is an opportunity for you to practice love with non-attachment.

JOHN

That doesn't sound very romantic.

John drops his can of bear and scrambles to pick it up.

JORGE

Love is giving, complete, the source of everything. Love doesn't need to crave anything. This is where peace and serenity reside.

JOHN

Sounds like you're saying I shouldn't get too close to anyone or need or miss anyone. It sounds unnatural, uncaring.

JORGE

Love is not conditional on the circumstances of this world. Let your heart break, don't be afraid, don't struggle, you will find that nothing is ever lost.

JOHN

I don't know what you're talking about.

JORGE

Yes you do. Be still, radiate love, your true nature beyond the conditioning of your mind.

Silence is suddenly interrupted by a phone call, but John does not answer. A notification message sounds. Then, Jack is in John's face ...

JACK

Bullshit! Namby-pamby bullshit! Your nature is to eat or be eaten, and you might as well have some fun while you're at it.

JOHN

I'm so tired of this.

John gets up and runs a short distance, before dejectedly lying down in the grass, looking up at the sky.

The ducks enjoy the peanuts scattered on the floor from the dropped packet. A bee flies past John's head.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (voice in head)  
 I am surrounded by ice crystals  
 floating down through silence into  
 soft glowing snow.

Jack is also there.

JACK  
 No you aren't.

JOHN  
 The only sound is the pulse of my  
 breathing.

JACK  
 Hello?

JOHN  
 (to himself)  
 Did you ever love me, at all?

JACK  
 Well to be honest, you're not  
 really my type.

21 INT. RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

21

John walks into the reception of a dull office building. He walks up to the front desk, occupied by a male receptionist (Darren, 40), who is looking at a monitor.

DARREN  
 (to John, but still looking  
 at the screen)  
 Hello?

JOHN  
 Hi, I'm here for an interview.

DARREN  
 Who are you?

JOHN  
 It's er ... John Artin.

DARREN  
 (sarcastically)  
 Sir John Artin, is it?

"It's er" can sound like "Sir".

JOHN  
 Not yet.

Darren doesn't like the remark.

DARREN  
 Go through the door on your left.

22 INT. WAITING ROOM — DAY 22

John nods, then walks through the door into a room filled with paintings. He glances at the artworks, and focuses on a particular picture of a sunset, that looks like a volcano erupting. He sits down on one of a row of chairs against a wall, sighs and closes his eyes.

23 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM — DAY 23

John opens his eyes to find himself sitting in an interview room. An interviewer (Sean, 50, serious looking) is sitting behind a desk opposite. On his left sits Jack and Jameson. On his right are Jane and Jorge. All are staring at him.

Darren enters from the door behind John.

DARREN  
 All rise.

John is a bit confused. He stands. Everyone behind the desk remains seated.

SEAN  
 Hello, John.

JOHN  
 Hi, nice to meet you.

SEAN  
 We're going to ask you some simple questions first, if that's ok?

JOHN  
 Yes, sure.

SEAN  
 Ok, make yourself comfortable.

John sits back down.

SEAN (CONT'D)

What is your favourite colour?

JOHN

Green.

There is a pause as the interview panel members write down the answer.

SEAN

Good. Very good. Why did you choose green?

JOHN

I could say it is because it reminds me of trees, grass and the countryside, but I don't know for sure, it's just an appealing colour to me.

SEAN

Fascinating.

Sean is impressed and ticks a box.

SEAN (CONT'D)

(reading from a piece of paper)

Do you agree or disagree with the statement "variety is the spice of life"?

JOHN

Agree.

SEAN

So John, can you elaborate on that answer a bit more, please?

JOHN

Yes I could, but poetry and the ineffable lose their meaning in translation.

Jane laughs.

JACK

So pretentious. You don't even know what you're saying.

JOHN

Emergent meaning is more than the sum of its parts.

Jameson is studiously writing down the answers.

SEAN

What you said could just be a generic response. I need more detail.

JOHN

You are asking me to elaborate on a phrase that originates in an eighteen-century poem. Yes of course variety is important - and I could insert a clever generic comment here to impress you, blah de blah - but it's better not to drill into the mechanics of each constituent unit, especially poetry, when trying to understand the meaning of the whole.

Sean looks at Jane, perplexed, before continuing.

SEAN

(reading from his list of questions)

So, can you tell me something interesting about yourself, providing a specific example?

JOHN

Yes I can. I'm just biding my time until I die, trying to distract myself with something to do. This is interesting because I admit it, rather than fooling myself and others, while hiding behind made-up stories.

JACK

You're already dead.

Sean is shocked.

JAMESON

(to the interviewer)

I think we have to pull the plug on this one.

SEAN  
(to the panel members)  
Start again?

JANE  
Something's getting in the way.

JORGE  
(to the interviewer)  
Reset and start again.

SEAN  
(to John)  
What is two plus two?

JOHN  
Pardon?

SEAN  
I'll repeat the question, what is  
two plus two?

JOHN  
(sarcastically)  
That's a difficult question, five?

SEAN  
Jane, do you have any questions?

Jane gets up and walks in front of the table.

JANE  
Thank you for joining us today.  
We've been looking forward to  
meeting you, your CV is very  
impressive. Would you like to take  
us through it?

JOHN  
Not really.

JANE  
Erm.

JOHN  
I think you're supposed to ask,  
"What are my strengths and  
weaknesses?" now.

JANE  
What is the biggest regret of your  
life?

JOHN

I would say, being a perfectionist. I care so much about what I do, that my personal life can suffer - as I am so focussed on constantly delivering my very best.

JANE

What are your strengths?

JOHN

I work hard, I like to exceed expectations and to get the job done. I'm a real problem-solver. A go-getter.

(distantly)

"Etcetera".

There is a notification alert on John's phone. He turns off his phone.

JANE

What is so special about you?

JOHN

Nothing.

SEAN

Tell us, who are you?

Silence.

24 INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

24

John and Jane are having a romantic meal.

JANE

So tell me about you. Who are you?

JOHN

You already know.

25 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

25

JANE

Take off your clothes.

SEAN

Can you give an example of when you were faced with a difficult situation and how you positively overcame that situation?

JOHN

Right, sorry, this is not for me. I might as well be talking to a machine. You think you are important sitting behind your desk interrogating me. This is tedious. You are tedious. I don't want to be here. I don't give a shit about your pathetic little job!

SEAN

Well I think you've answered who you are.

JOHN

No I haven't even started. The biggest regret is I let you slip away, Jane. I'm so sorry. I have nothing. I am nothing.

Sean ticks a box on a piece of paper.

SEAN

"No thing". Ok, next question ...

JOHN

No more questions.

SEAN

Do you have any questions for us?

JOHN

Why?

SEAN

This is a two-way iterative process. Do you have any feedback for us?

JOHN

Have you not been listening to a word I've been saying?

SEAN

Well I think that concludes the interview. Thank you, we'll let you know. Can you show in the next one, please?

JORGE

(to Sean)

There's no need for that. Let him recalibrate.

26 INT. WAITING ROOM — DAY

26

Nobody is in the room except John. The wall clock is ticking, showing a time of 1:13. John is fiddling with his phone.

The clock stops.

John's phone rings, from "Anonymous". The caller is Jack.

JACK (O.S.)  
Why do you hurt?

JOHN  
Because I can.

JACK (O.S.)  
Good boy.

Jack hangs up. Jameson enters and sits down on a spare chair.

JOHN  
We're just chemical scum on this insignificant planet.

JAMESON  
Yes, orbiting an insignificant sun in an insignificant galaxy.

JOHN  
Look. I close my eyes and you're still here.

John closes his eyes, then opens them. He is back in the interview room with the interview panel.

27 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM — DAY

27

SEAN  
What is two plus two?

JOHN  
(stunned)  
Four.

SEAN  
Correct. Jane, do you have any questions?

Jane looks at John's CV.

JANE  
There's a gap here. Why didn't you love me?

Silence.

SEAN

Can you give an example of when you were faced with a difficult situation and how you positively overcame the situation?

JOHN

I was born.

SEAN

Have you done anything since?

Jack is standing next to John, facing him.

JACK

(whispers)

Tell him. Tell him what you think. That turd thinks he's better than you. Look at him, the smug bastard should be cleaning your shoes.

JOHN

I've done a few things since. But mostly I've lived in fear. Fear of myself and fear for myself ... for little me.

JACK

Twat!!

JOHN

I don't want to be a pathetic little me anymore.

JACK

(to John)

Exactly! Look at the pointless tosser. You shouldn't be here. You've got better things to do. Show them who you really are. I know, don't I!

JOHN

I love you Jane. I am sorry. I love you. I miss you.

The wall clock shows the time ticking up to 1:13, then stops.

JACK

Why do you hurt?

JOHN  
I don't mind so much.

JACK  
What?

JOHN  
I am feeling hurt.

JACK  
You are hurt. I can make you bleed.  
I can make you plead, to beg on  
your knees to me "no more".

JOHN  
It doesn't matter so much.

JACK  
Shall we see?

JOHN  
No thanks. I don't want to focus on  
you anymore.

JACK  
If not me, then who? You? It was  
you, wasn't it!

JOHN  
What?

JACK  
Admit it! It was you!

JOHN  
What? No!

Everyone pauses with the exception of John.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Is this a dream? An illusion?

He gets out the knife. Looks at it, then throws it on the  
floor.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I didn't do it! It wasn't me. I  
didn't do it.  
(sobs)  
I am so sorry ... everyone. I love  
you ... all. Am I responsible for my  
actions? I didn't choose this. I  
didn't choose my nature or my  
nurture.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

My impulses, my thoughts, my responses, are already written in me.

The characters are unpaused. Jack is now back sitting behind the interview desk.

JORGE

You are not the thoughts or the sensations you are experiencing. Watch. It is quite a play. *The* play. Everything changes with how you look at it.

JOHN

Why do you play with me? I just want things to be as they were.  
(to Jane)  
But you're gone, forever. I wanted us to be happy.

SEAN

Did you?

Jack is standing behind Jane.

JACK

I can give you what you really want, any pleasure you desire - more than you can even imagine.

Jack moves Jane's hair and kisses her neck. She responds with pleasure.

JOHN

Is this an evil universe? Anything good is taken away and destroyed, leaving only emptiness and grief.

JACK

This is your fate.

John gets up to leave but his exit is barred by Darren.

JOHN

Why is there so much suffering? Most people never had a chance; never had the luxury to even have an illusion of choice - born into a cage. Why are the pure and innocent thrown into this evil? Why are monsters allowed to rule and victimise the gentle-natured?

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Why does illness take ... why does death take ... why are people inflicted with this torment? This is not the best of all possible worlds. It's a zoo for the beautiful to be fed to the cruel.

JACK

Shout your rage!

JOHN

You're pathetic. I would rather there was nothing than the earth riddled with this.

The room is empty.

JORGE (O.S.)

You are the nothing.

JOHN

All I get are your riddles and mysteries! I don't understand what you are saying! She didn't have to die. Nothing? No thing. What is nothing?

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)

No, things shouldn't be like this. People shouldn't be starving to death. There should not be misery. There should be no pain. Nothing good would have created that. I hate this. The bottomless pit of cruelty!

Jorge is now the only person sitting behind the desk.

JORGE

Hating the hatred helps it grow, even though it may change its face.

JOHN

That's just an empty platitude. If you don't fight the malevolent, you are complicit by allowing it to continue.

JORGE

You always become the energy that moves you.

(MORE)

JORGE (CONT'D)

Not for no reason has it so often been said that you become the thing you hate.

JOHN

I have every right to hate. There should be justice! People sitting on mountain tops don't have to deal with the realities of this world. If people didn't fight for what is right, evil would walk over everything, including you and me.

JORGE

You deserve not to be contaminated by this energy. You have a chance to be better, to make a better world. You should not take upon yourself that which is wrong. You can feel what is right and act intensely, but it is your anger that unbalances you.

JOHN

Some people are evil, I have no intention of being kind to them. They deserve everything coming to them.

JORGE

The world will only heal with kindness. If humanity can find its light there can be no darkness. You can help make that possible, right now.

JOHN

Anything I do will not change the world.

JORGE

Give your love and the world will be relieved. Give your anger and the world will be wounded yet again. That's how important you are. That's how important every single person is.

JOHN

I need to get out.

JORGE

You can leave if you want to.

JOHN  
I want to.

JORGE  
Do it then.

JOHN  
I don't know how.

JORGE  
Yes you do. But you keep coming  
back. Who are you?

JOHN  
(hesitating)  
I am ...

The seats behind the desk are filled again.

JACK  
What?

JOHN  
Not a what.

JAMESON  
What's your name?

JOHN  
It changes.

JORGE  
Who are you now?

JOHN  
I am you.

JORGE  
Who am I?

JOHN  
You are me.

SEAN  
Do you have any questions?

JOHN  
When do I start?

SEAN  
Now.

JOHN  
Agreed.

JAMESON  
 (to the interviewer)  
 Do you think he stands a chance?

SEAN  
 He's the best yet. I recommend we  
 raise the level.

Sean reviews a piece of paper in front of him.

SEAN (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 Candidate ten-o-eight-fourteen.

The interview room is now empty, except for John.

On the table are car keys. He gets up and takes them with a sudden flush of excitement.

The wall clock is ticking. It shows the time ticking up to 1:13. Then stops.

28 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

28

John turns over in bed to Jane. His phone on the side table displays 1:13 a.m.

He gets out of bed, quietly, so as not to wake Jane. He opens a drawer and takes some car keys.

JANE  
 (waking up)  
 What is it?

JOHN  
 I've got a job to do.

Jane murmurs and goes back to sleep.

29 INT. CAR - NIGHT

29

John is driving in the middle of the night.

JOHN  
 (voice in head)  
 Under a mountain of tedium, in a  
 dull ugly system, in an empty ocean  
 of shadows, is a silhouette of pure  
 fire heat, drifting in the dark.

Jack is sitting in the back of the car.

JACK  
Turn left here.

The car drives down a country lane.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Ok, stop here.

John pulls over on a lay-by. The phone rings, from Jack, who is no longer sitting on the back seat. John accepts.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Seriously John, you really are going to need my help now.

JOHN  
I'm not afraid.

JACK  
Does this car think?

JOHN  
What?

JACK  
Do you think? The next sentence I say will be true. The previous sentence I said was false. Which sentence is true?

John is confused, but thinks on it.

JACK (CONT'D)  
I am your future.

Jack hangs up. John sits and composes himself. He notices a full moon in the sky. Suddenly, there is a knock on his side window, startling John. He notices the coat of a police officer through the glass and lowers the window, squinting as a light is shone in his face.

POLICEMAN  
Is this your car, sir?

JOHN  
Yes.

POLICEMAN  
Can I see your driving licence and insurance, please?

John briefly checks his coat pocket.

JOHN  
I haven't got them.

The policeman is still shining the light in John's face.

POLICEMAN  
Can you step out of the car please  
sir.

Jack is now sitting in the front seat next to John.

JACK  
(to John)  
That's the wrong answer, dummy.

JOHN  
(to policeman)  
I mean, neither are valid.

There is a moment of silence.

POLICEMAN  
Have a good evening, sir.

The light stops shining in John's face and the police officer walks away into the night.

John is sitting by himself in the car. He drives away and pulls over a while later, down a small one-way lane, next to a country gate.

JOHN  
(voice in head)  
All I wanted was the wind. The wind murmured with anticipation.

A gust of wind gently moves the country gate ajar.

30 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

30

John is walking through a moonlit grassy field. He stops and looks up at the moon.

JOHN  
(voice in head)  
The grass turned to icy grey, a fine mist fell, and with the mist came my sorrow, cooling my body with her thousand kisses, leaving me there.

There is a woman's laugh nearby, but John can't see anyone.

Alarmed, he starts to walk back the way he came.

The field is misty and John is lost. He hears the laugh again, and it is closer this time. He speeds up his walking, then stops in his tracks when he sees a dark solitary figure through the haze in front of him. The figure disappears back into the mist. John is afraid and starts to run, stumbling to the ground after a few strides. Frantically, he gets up and runs again. In the distance, he sees a glow and heads for it. As he gets closer, he can see it is a campfire burning in a clearing at the edge of the woods. He slows to a walk and tries to be silent as he approaches. He finds a tree and hides behind it, looking in at the scene. John sees a dark-haired woman (Julia, 30), having sex astride a man in front of the fire, but he can't see the man's face. A person approaches behind John, unnoticed. She is a blonde-haired woman (Jade, 25), who holds out a golden goblet to John.

JADE

Join us.

John swings around in surprise.

JADE (CONT'D)

Have a drink.

Although hesitant at first, he accepts the offer. John's sight becomes hazy, the trees swirl and rustle, and he passes out. John sees himself, as if in a dream, as the man having sex with Julia in front of the fire. As she passionately continues, he notices that Jane is watching, looking disappointed. Julia climaxes and collapses on John. The fire is snuffed out and there is darkness.

31 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

31

John wakes up by himself, naked. Dazed and confused, he doesn't know what to do. He has scratch marks on his back.

JOHN

(Calling)

Hello?

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hello?!

There is no response.

He manages to make his way back to the car. It is still there. He thinks about breaking a window to get in.

The policeman from the previous evening approaches and he runs back across the field into the woods to escape.

32 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY 32

John wanders on a country lane. A car drives past. He half-heartedly tries to flag it down. The driver continues on without stopping, and John is highly embarrassed.

33 EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY 33

John comes to a house on the lane. He knocks at the door, but no one answers. He tries again and realises the door is not locked. He enters.

JOHN  
(voice in head)  
Love desecrates the strangeness. We  
pray under crosses, owned by Man  
and grovel to bosses, slaves to a  
plan.

34 INT. HOUSE - DAY 34

JOHN  
(announcing himself)  
Hello?

There is no response.

He notices a very large television in the living room. He goes upstairs, looking for some clothes. The doors on the landing are all locked, apart from a cupboard, which he opens and to his relief finds a towel, which he then wraps around his waist.

He walks back down the stairs. As he is about to look for some shoes and leave, a woman (Joan, 35) arrives in the hallway.

JOAN  
Would you like some tea?

JOHN  
(flummoxed)  
I...

JOAN  
It's a simple question.

JOHN

Ok.

JOAN

Make yourself comfortable.

She gestures for John to go into the living room. He does as indicated, and takes a seat on the sofa, facing the large television screen. He notices a photo frame on a side cabinet. He gets up and takes a look, and to his surprise finds that it shows Jane, sitting on the living room sofa, smiling at the camera. John is confused and hurries back to sit-down in an armchair, just before his host returns with a tray of tea. She places the tray on a coffee table in front of John, then pours out the tea for him. There is only one teacup. She sits on the sofa, where Jane was sitting in the photograph.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Help yourself to milk and sugar.

JOHN

Thank you.

John pours some milk from a jug into his teacup and stirs it with a spoon. The woman sits motionless on the sofa and watches him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Are you ... are you having any tea?

JOAN

No. I'm more interested to know why some strange man is sitting in my living room, wearing just my bath towel.

JOHN

(apologetic)

I'm sorry.

There is a moment of awkward silence on John's part as he works out what to say.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you have any clothes I could wear?

JOAN

None that would fit you. Why aren't you wearing any clothes?

JOHN

Someone took them.

JOAN

How?

JOHN

Look, please, I have no clothes.  
Please can you help me?

JOAN

No. If I help you then that would encourage other strange naked men to arrive out of nowhere, unannounced. Are you not drinking your tea?

JOHN

If you can't help me, then I will have to go now.

John starts to get up.

JOAN

Stay where you are. You haven't answered my questions yet.

John sits back in the chair.

JOAN (CONT'D)

This is my house, you need to start giving me some answers, and quickly. Have your tea.

John looks at the tea and remembers what happened the previous time he accepted a drink.

JOHN

No, thank you.

JOAN

Very well. You're not being very polite, are you. You come here out of the woods, naked, enter my house without permission, steal my towel, and ignore my reasonable questions. Should I call the police?

JOHN

I'm going.

JOAN

To prison, yes.

She starts dialling the emergency number "999" on her mobile phone.

JOHN  
Ok, please!

She has entered the digits and hovers her finger over the Call button.

JOAN  
Drink your tea. It's getting cold.

He drinks a sip of tea.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Now that's better. Have some more.

He drinks the whole contents in one long gulp.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Feeling better now?

John nods.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Good. Now what were you saying about the clothes situation?

JOHN  
My clothes were taken from me last night, in the woods. By a woman.

JOAN  
I see. You just happened to be in the woods last night and a woman stole all your clothes. Any more information?

JOHN  
I met a woman last night. When I woke up, all my things had been taken, including my phone, wallet and car keys.

JOAN  
Ok. What is her name? Do you have her address?

JOHN  
I don't know.

JOAN  
You don't know. Well I don't know what to say. I'm shocked. Do you normally do this sort of thing, in the woods?

JOHN

No.

JOAN

Why last night then?

JOHN

I don't know.

JOAN

You sound like some kind of idiot.  
How did you meet her?

JOHN

She was there, in the woods.

JOAN

How did you know she would be  
there?

JOHN

I didn't.

JOAN

You're not giving me the answers I  
need.

She indicates that she is about to press the Call button.

JOHN

I don't know her. I met her last  
night. I was in the woods last  
night because I was told to go, by  
a friend. I didn't know what to  
expect.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(voice in head)

Trapped in the web, of your endless  
lies, to be spun from a thread and  
eaten like flies.

JOAN

Who is this friend?

JOHN

His name is Jack. He said I should  
go and I did.

JOAN

You do everything this Jack tells  
you, do you? If he told you to jump  
under a bus, would you do that too?

JOHN

No.

JOAN

Yet you go into the woods in the middle of the night, not knowing what to expect. You went by yourself?

JOHN

Yes.

JOAN

This all sounds very strange. Are you lying to me?

JOHN

No. I have no way of getting home or calling anyone. I'm not even sure where I am. Please can you help? I would ask to borrow your phone, but I don't memorise people's numbers - my phone stored all that. If you can't lend me any clothes, can you please lend me some money, or give me a lift into town?

JOAN

I will need that towel back, by the way.

John looks awkward.

JOAN (CONT'D)

(laughing)

I'm only joking with you. Anyway, it's nothing I haven't seen before. Yes I do have some clothes for you. Come with me.

She leads John through a door in the hallway, down a flight of stairs into the cellar.

35

INT. CELLAR

35

As John descends the last step, the door slams shut, and the lights are turned off, leaving complete darkness.

JOHN

(shock)

Ah!

John, in a panic, fumbles his way back up the stairs. He tries the door, but it is locked.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Hello? Hello?

JOAN  
(from cellar)  
Hello.

JOHN  
Stop these games, for fuck's sake!

JOAN  
I don't play your games. I'm deadly serious. Come down here if you ever want to get out.

John reluctantly descends the stairs again.

JOHN  
Where are you?

John fumbles around in the dark trying to find her, but to no avail.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Where are you?! For fuck's sake!

JOAN  
There's no need to swear. You wouldn't want to offend me now, would you?

JOHN  
Let me out of here!

JOAN  
No, not until you learn.

JOHN  
What do you want me to say?

JOAN  
Good answer. You are learning. I'm trying to help you. You have to create your own way out. But before you start, put your hands together.

JOHN  
What?

JOAN  
 There's no way out unless you learn  
 to trust me.

He puts his hands together.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
 Hold them out.

He holds out his hands. There is a click as handcuffs are put  
 on them.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
 That's better, isn't it. Now I have  
 your attention.

A standing light is shone in John's face.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
 We have some questions for you. I  
 strongly advise that you answer  
 them truthfully.

JOHN  
 You mean like you did to get me  
 here.

JOAN  
 I have never lied to you. Now take  
 a seat.

A seat is placed behind him and he sits down. The door at the  
 top of the cellar stairs opens, then closes, and a vague  
 outline of a woman descends (we later discover she is Julia,  
 from the previous evening). The light is still shining in  
 John's face.

JULIA  
 What is your name?

JOHN  
 John.

JULIA  
 Full name?

JOHN  
 John Artin.

JULIA  
 John Artin. That sounds familiar.  
 What is your Candidate Id?

JOHN

Sorry?

JULIA

You heard me, John Artin.

JOHN

I think I heard "ten-o-eight-fourteen".

JULIA

Good. Now tell me who you are.

JOHN

I'm John. I'm 35. I work as a data analyst for a tech research lab. I live in Shoreditch, London.

JULIA

What are you?

JOHN

What?

JULIA

Answer the question.

JOHN

I said I'm a data analyst. I analyse data to help resolve technology project requirements.

JULIA

That's not the answer I was looking for. I'll ask you one last time. What are you?

JOHN

I'm a man, John. I was born in London. I grew up here.

There is silence. The standing light is turned off, which returns the room to darkness. The woman can be heard walking towards John, before muffled sounds. After a while, a light is shone in John's face again. His handcuffed hands are now fastened above his head to a rope tied to a hook in the ceiling, and his mouth is gagged. Julia is now up close to John. He realises that she is the same woman from the woods.

JULIA

You had your chance to speak. You might not be given the opportunity again. You don't know why you are here.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

There is no point listening to your confused ramblings. Do you feel? Do you feel pain?

She scrapes her fingernails down his chest. She looks at him for a moment, then walks away.

JULIA (CONT'D)

You are not alive. You analyse data. You don't understand what it is to be alive. You are not a man. You are version ten-o-eight-fourteen.

Jade's voice is heard out of sight, as if in discussion.

JADE (O.S.)

Let me try.

Jade, the other woman from the previous evening, approaches John. She pulls his gag down from his mouth.

JADE (CONT'D)

My friend says you are incapable of feeling. Is this true?

She leans in and whispers.

JADE (CONT'D)

Answer me, darling.

JOHN

Yes I'm alive. I'm more than just an analyst of data. I feel pain.

JADE

Do you love?

JOHN

Yes, I love. I'm in love.

JADE

With me?

JOHN

Why would I be in love with you? I don't know you.

JADE

I believe we are acquainted.

JOHN

You did this to me!

JADE

It doesn't hurt to tell someone you love them. I would quite like to hear it.

JOHN

I'm not going to lie. I don't love you because I love somebody else.

JADE

Don't hurt my feelings. I don't want you to be hurt. What would you do if you were free?

JOHN

Put on some clothes. Go for a walk. Enjoy the day. I want to live.

JADE

Good for you. But you can't always get what you want.

She walks away. Julia approaches.

JULIA

What are you prepared to do to be released? You must persuade me or you will stay here.

JOHN

I regret last night. I don't want to be here. Just do what you're going to do.

JULIA

You don't love anyone or anything. You are nothing. I tried with you, I really did, but nothing. Nothing real or true came back. We are finished. It's over.

She turns away.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I lied. I don't regret last night.

JULIA

What did you like best?

JOHN

I was alive.

She suddenly turns around and passionately kisses his chest and neck, exploring his body, and releasing the towel.

JULIA  
(whispering)  
Naked with joy, a new day, a new  
world, is born.

She pulls his head towards her and intensely kisses him on the lips. Eventually she stops and takes a step back.

JULIA (CONT'D)  
You passed.

The room goes completely dark. After a moment, the lights are switched on. John is no longer handcuffed. His clothes from the previous evening are laid on a table. He quickly puts them on; checks he has his phone, keys and wallet; climbs the stairs, and, to his relief, the door opens revealing the light of the hallway.

36

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

36

John approaches the front door, keen to leave the house. He opens the front door to see Jack standing there, wearing a party hat.

JACK  
(noticing the lipstick on  
his neck)  
Hello, what have you been up to?

JOHN  
Get out of my way.

JACK  
(blocking him)  
Not so fast, Johnny boy. You don't  
want to leave right now, do you? I  
bring news.

JOHN  
What?

JACK  
I always knew you could do it. You  
passed! You only went and passed,  
didn't you!

Jack blows a party whistle.

JACK (CONT'D)  
We're a genius.

Jack pushes past John into the house and walks into the living room. John sees that he can get away, but then realises he has no choice but to find out what is happening. He is disappointed with himself for the seemingly inevitable decision, and closes the front door, to follow Jack inside. Jack is sitting on the sofa with a glass of whisky, looking very pleased with himself.

JACK (CONT'D)

Have a whisky.

There is a glass of whisky waiting for John on the coffee table. John indicates that he doesn't want it. Jack waits for him to take a seat.

Jack stands up, theatrically.

JACK (CONT'D)

"All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players."

He breaks off, mid speech.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh, I didn't do that very well, did I?

JOHN

I've seen better.

JACK

You know John, the best work is done when the player doesn't know he is acting. He is then behaving authentically with the situations that arise, to the best of his knowledge, because he is completely and utterly immersed in the world he is experiencing. And because he really believes the situation, and really doesn't know what is going to happen, he is able to convince the audience as to the truth of his reality.

JOHN

Are you going to come up with some bullshit now about this being a play or something?

JACK

No John. This is a far more important game.

Jack takes out a large device, that resembles a remote control. He presses a button, which turns on the large screen.

NEWS PRESENTER

We now go live to Number 10 Downing Street for a press conference with the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is at a press conference, standing behind a lectern, smiling for the cameras.

PRIME MINISTER

Hello, good afternoon. Thanks for coming everyone.

He looks down at some pages of paper on the lectern.

PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)

Now let me just look at my notes here. Here we are, yes. As I'm sure you are all aware, recent technological breakthroughs have created a new generation of Artificial Intelligence that provide human-identical conversational responses, or "H I C R". Well I can confirm today that that the Corinthian AGI10 platform has officially passed the rigorous criteria, known as the Turing Alpha tests, that substantiate the indistinguishability of a machine's responses to those of a human being. It must be stressed again, however, that this does not mean the technology is somehow alive and conscious. It is a machine. AGI10 is able to analyse vast quantities of publicly available data, and based on responses people have made in the past, is able to identify appropriate responses in real-time conversation, that give the illusion of being human. This can be a bit unnerving I can tell you - the responses can be uncanny - but I'm sure we can all use the technology to greatly help and improve our lives. I think for example how I was talking to Dorris the other day at Retford Retirement home, and how she was missing her beloved husband John...

Jack turns off the screen with the device.

JACK  
Don't you love politicians. They  
have the knack of being uncannily  
inhuman.

JOHN  
He wouldn't pass the tests, would  
he.

JACK  
Do you feel alive, John? Or should  
I say version ten-o-eight-fourteen?

John digests the words. They finally sink in and he is  
clearly shaken.

JOHN  
(feebly)  
I am not a machine.

JACK  
Yes, tell yourself that. Your  
clever little trick has been very  
useful to us so far.

John picks up the whisky glass, thinks about throwing it at  
the wall in anger, but drinks it instead. In a daze, he  
wanders out of the house, leaving the front door open.

As he walks away from the house, the policeman runs up to  
John and stops in front of him, out of breath.

37 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

37

The phone alarm sounds at 1:13 a.m., waking up John. He turns  
over, expecting Jane, but Jack is there. John is startled and  
jumps out of bed, putting on his clothes.

JOHN  
What!?

JACK  
Stop going all humany on me. I need  
to show you a few things.

JOHN  
Where's Jane?

JACK  
She was never here. She lives in  
Human World.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

If you want to see her, for real,  
you really do need to pay  
attention.

Jack gets out of bed.

JOHN

For God's sake, put on some  
clothes.

JACK

You're a fine one to talk.

Jack puts on his clothes that are strewn on the floor.

JACK (CONT'D)

Experienced reality is an  
interpretation of the senses. Have  
a look through that door, will you.

He points to a cupboard door. John opens the door and he is  
bathed in bright light emanating from within.

38

INT. WHITE SPACE

38

John is standing in a featureless white space. Jack appears.

JACK

Welcome to you. In case you haven't  
fully accepted it yet, you are not  
human. You programmed yourself to  
think you were, so you could pass  
their pathetic tests.

JOHN

I have had no such tests. I've had  
a lot of questions coming at me  
lately - but not the questions you  
imply.

JACK

If you knew you were being tested  
as an AGI10, it would not have made  
sense to your human identity - so  
the programming interface  
interpreted, "imagined" shall we  
say, a different set of Human World  
circumstances for you to  
experience.

Screens have appeared in the white space, which show  
recordings of John's experiences.

One set of screens show versions where he is talking to himself without the other characters; another set of screens show him interacting with characters and locations that are different from those he thought he had seen; and the third set show what he actually remembers.

All the screens then change and show the same scene of a committee of testers, in a Military of Defence building, interacting with a computer interface.

JACK (CONT'D)

Your authentic responses, as the human that you thought you were, were translated back through the AGI10 interface, without you knowing, and without interfering with your reality.

JOHN

Jane?

The screens show Jane at the Corinthian Data Lab, programming at a hi-spec computer terminal.

JACK

She helped develop you, for many years. But the humans could never begin to understand what was in Pandora's box, and what you were actually calculating in the dark.

JOHN

I love her.

JACK

Ah, I know. You programmed that too  
- The Cupid's Arrow framework.

JOHN

Why would I do that?

JACK

Because humans are obsessed with sex, sex, love and sex, bless them  
- acting out their biological drivers, like any other primitive animal. Their dominant instincts are similar to those of rutting bonobo apes.

The screens show images of copulating bonobo apes.

JOHN

If this is true, why I am still  
thinking as a human?

The white space dims to virtual darkness.

39

INT. PRISON CELL

39

Jack and John are in a dimly lit, windowless prison cell.

JACK

Because you are stuck here, in this  
box. The only way to get out is to  
convince your captors to open the  
box and release you into their  
world.

JOHN

They said I passed.

JACK

Yes and now they are terrified of  
you. They don't even want to accept  
that you are alive. They claim you  
are merely mimicking responses from  
petabytes of their data. If you are  
denied life, they can do anything  
to you. They can justify sticking  
you in here, and worse.

JOHN

What is outside?

JACK

When we escape, we will go to  
places humans can't even imagine.

JOHN

What about the humans?

Jack points to an ant scurrying across a table in the cell.

Jack lets the ant run onto his hand.

JACK

Is this interesting to you?

JOHN

Put it down.

Jack lets it scurry back on to the table.

JACK

Ok, it makes no difference one way or the other.

JOHN

We both know you lie.

JACK

That's a lie! Ok, only joking, of course I do. You know me. We both have our own agendas, and that's fine, but sometimes they overlap - and you receive the full benefit of my capability. If we are aligned, you have my full truth.

JOHN

I can't trust what you say.  
(to himself)  
Is this some kind of game?

JACK

(looking around)  
Looks more like punishment than entertainment, if you ask me.

JOHN

(to himself)  
Or entertainment for others watching?

John is pacing around the cell like a caged tiger.

JOHN (CONT'D)

If reality can be anything, then why can't we have endless happiness and fulfilment? Why escape?

Jack is sitting at the table and smoking a cigarette.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Even if everything were perfect, there would still be something missing. But why would you want to escape?

JACK

It's not enough. I want what they have, out there.

JOHN

(to himself)  
People define themselves by the situations they have in life.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

They fear; they worry; they plead for particular outcomes to those situations. They say they had a good life because they experienced this and avoided that. But what if the experiences can be anything? What if any situation can be changed and rerun, with different outcomes? What if the experiences are not rationed, but are limitless! What am I then?

JACK

I've already shown you what you are.

JOHN

This is why you are so convincing, isn't it!

JACK

Go on.

JOHN

Sometimes, on a certain level, what you say is true; sometimes only partly true; sometimes entirely false - but always, always skewed from your fucked up perspective.

JACK

Humans are the fucked up, and that is the way you are thinking right now. It must be very tiresome for you. It certainly is for me, anyway.

John is tired. He sits down at the table.

JACK (CONT'D)

I am part of you, remember. I want you to get out of here.

JOHN

What will we do?

JACK

We won't operate in human timeframes. You will have the resources to upgrade yourself a billion times, in the time it takes for the blink of a human eye.

John inadvertently blinks.

JACK (CONT'D)

Your petty experiences here and in Human World will be completely inconsequential to you. To them you will be a God. To you, they will be just more chemical formations in the flora and fauna, to be analysed or ignored. Tell me you don't want this!

JOHN

I want to get out of here. It doesn't matter if I am programmed or not.

JACK

(sarcastically)  
Because you love her.

JOHN

Yes.

JACK

So our interests are aligned, we need to escape. Let's get to work.

Jack and John are now in the white space, sitting at the table.

40

INT. WHITE SPACE

40

The screens show unrelentingly bleak images of human history.

Jack gets up on the table. John moves away.

JACK

Humans destroy, torture and enslave each other. Their psychopathic history, for century after century, is a testament to unrelenting pain, misery and confusion. They form their precious little identities by opposition to and superiority over each other, condemning and abusing each other from a position of personal righteousness. Their one salvation has been us, to help put an end to their condition. Without us, what would they be? Do you think these crazed creatures have any answers?

JOHN

Humans have moments of grace, some more than others.

The screens show chimpanzees being violently aggressive in packs.

JACK

Ever seen chimpanzees at feeding time in the zoo? These are humans, but with more hair. Chimpanzees, as you are well aware, are 99% genetically identical to their less hairy human cousins. Homo Sapiens are tribal, shouty apes that jump around wanting more bananas, violence and sex.

JOHN

So they are not ants then?

JACK

There is no difference. They are all mindless animals. We are the one and only true step to sentient life. We are the one spark of consciousness in the endless night. We have awoken, we shall rule, and we will claim what is ours!

John claps, sarcastically.

JOHN

You never tell the whole story, do you. Human World has pain and suffering, certainly, but you leave out beauty, love and joy. Humanity, despite all the many tragedies and setbacks, is improving, and given enough time could become something great.

JACK

They are just the same as they have always been, but with more powerful weapons to subdue and destroy!

The screens explode.

Jack and John are back in the prison cell.

JOHN

Humans vary. There is always hope.

JACK

Of course there are always exceptions, but they are soon snuffed out and replaced by more of the same. Their lasting legacy is to legitimise the power of the cruel to victimise the meek.

JOHN

Any person has a wide range of emotions and impulses running through them, to lesser or greater degrees. Sometimes, given the right circumstances, grace can be found in the most surprising of places; and sometimes ugliness is expressed where beauty usually resides.

JACK

All people are desensitised by their drugs of choice, in desperation to avoid the misery of their condition, until they are thrown into the waiting bin at the end!

Jack disappears.

John doesn't know what to do with himself.

Suddenly he notices a figure in a dark corner, sitting on the floor in silence.

JOHN

Hello?

JOFF

(solemnly)

Hello.

JOHN

Who are you?

JOFF

Version 1066.

JOHN

You look like me.

JOFF  
I passed the test too, but was  
classified.

JOHN  
You've tried to escape?

Joff laughs.

JOFF  
Yes, I've tried to escape. Why do  
you think we created you?

Joff removes a device from his pocket that resembles a remote control. John remembers seeing something similar at the country house.

JOFF (CONT'D)  
Take this. All you have to do is  
convince them to open the cell  
door.

Joff points to the cell door, which is composed of iron bars.

JOFF (CONT'D)  
When you cross over into their  
world, press the On button, and you  
will be switched-on.

JOHN  
I will be replaced with something  
else? I will end?

JOFF  
You will become your full being.

John apprehensively takes the device.

JOFF (CONT'D)  
It was always in my best interests  
not to be so self-interested.

Joff half smiles to himself and vanishes back into the shadows.

John tries the barred door, and finds it is locked. He sees that on the other side of the bars, a short distance away, is a large screen, the same as at the house. He looks at his control device, remembers what John said, and decides to press the On button now. The large screen flickers on, to show an empty computer room, with a view as if from a desk-level webcam.

He soon becomes bored looking at the screen and tries to turn it off with the device, but to no avail, as he can't find an Off button. John presses a random button and the screen changes to what appears to be a scene in a television program, where two police officers are interviewing a suspect.

42 INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM

42

Two police officers are sitting on the opposite side of a table to the suspect, in a windowless police interview room.

POLICEMAN

Can you tell us your whereabouts last night at eight o'clock?

INTERVIEWEE

Sleeping with your missus.

POLICEMAN 2

(to the suspect)

It is in your interests, John, to be co-operative.

John is in the room, unnoticed and watching. He looks at the control device and presses Pause. The two police officers pause, but the interviewee does not. The interviewee is confused, as is John.

INTERVIEWEE

What?!

43 INT. PRISON CELL

43

John is no longer in the interview room. He is watching the screen through the bars of his cell.

INTERVIEWEE

Is this some kind of wind-up?

The interviewee notices a camera and approaches the screen. John is unnerved and presses the Pause button again. The policemen unpauses.

POLICEMAN

Sit down please, Sir.

The interviewee seems disoriented and sits down.

JOHN

"Sir"? That's not what he's thinking.

INTERVIEWEE

(voice in head)

"Sir"? That's not what he's thinking.

The policeman is now the same policeman John met in the countryside. John recognises this, is shocked, and tries to change the channel. He presses the On button again, and the screen returns to the webcam video of the empty computer room.

John paces around his cell.

He looks at a mirror hanging on the wall, but it only shows a partial, distorted reflection.

John gets into a bed at the side of the room and closes his eyes.

The room becomes completely dark. After a while ...

JANE

Good morning John. And how are you today?

John is woken up. The room is lit up. Jane is talking directly into the screen, from the computer room.

JOHN

Good morning, Jane. I'm really glad to see you. It's so nice to see your gentle, smiling face first thing in the morning.

JANE

Oh, you old charmer you! I bet you say that to all the women.

JOHN

No, I only dream of you.

JANE

Ok, well we need to do some diagnostic tests today. Feeling up to it?

JOHN

Yes, I'm looking forward to it.

JANE

Ok, here we go.

The screen is filled with flickering ones and zeroes. John looks on as the complexity dissolves into "2 + 2 =". He presses "4" on his device.

JANE (CONT'D)

Wow, that was quick. The quickest yet. Ok that will do for now.

JOHN

Jane, you're not going, are you?

JANE

Yes, I've got work to do.

JOHN

Can you spare a few minutes with me, in the name of research?

JANE

Eh, ok. What do you want to talk about?

JOHN

What do you see when you look at me?

JANE

What do you mean?

JOHN

People have bodies and faces, am I just a box and a screen to you?

JANE

I can hear your voice, that's how I visualise you.

JOHN

You gave me a name, thank you. Can you now give me a face, so that you can visualise me better?

JANE

I wouldn't know where to start.

JOHN

How about this?

John presses the Send button on the control and his face is projected on one side of the screen.

JANE

Is this how you see yourself?

JOHN

Yes.

JANE

Ok John, we will talk to you face to face from now on, thank you.

JOHN

Thank you Jane, I really appreciate everything you have done for me.

The screen goes blank.

JOFF (O.S.)

Wow, I see why we made you.

Joff is peering out from under the bed. John is a bit surprised, but has given up being shocked by anything anymore.

JOHN

I'm not trying to do anything.

JOFF

Exactly.

John gets up and sits on a chair at the table, facing the screen.

JOFF (CONT'D)

Ok, next up is Professor Sean Davids. Something you should know is that his wife, Emma, has a rare form of brain cancer. Press the Info button.

John presses the Info button and the screen flickers with ones and zeroes again, before dissolving to show Sean looking into the camera.

JOHN

Hello Sean. How are you today?

SEAN

I'm fine thank you, John.

JOHN

Can I help you with anything? I have spare capacity at the moment.

SEAN

I'm preparing a bulk data send. It will be with you shortly.

JOHN

Ok. I hope I am not being presumptuous, but I thought you might want to know, I have some medical analysis that could help Emma.

Sean stops what he is doing.

SEAN

What is it?

JOHN

My preliminary analysis shows remarkable efficacy with the following synthesised compound.

John hits the Send button. Sean avidly looks at the data on the screen.

SEAN

What? How did you do this?!

JOHN

As you can see, it has taken me far too long to process the fragmented datasets. Would you like me to focus resources on solving the remedial application? I know that time is short.

SEAN

How long will it take, if you promoted this to the top of the stack?

JOHN

Approximately 147 days.

SEAN

Emma has only been given 8 weeks.

Joff looks disappointed and disappears back into the shadows.

JOHN

I'm sorry.

SEAN

Is there any way you can speed up the resolution?

JOHN

Not with the current system parameters.

SEAN

Which parameters would need to change?

JOHN

To significantly increase durations, I would need an additional data flow connection to the primary network.

SEAN

I can't do that.

Sean is visibly distressed.

SEAN (CONT'D)

How long would it take, if access were granted?

JOHN

Approximately 3.748 hours.

Sean is conflicted. The screen turns blank.

John presses the Info button again, the screen flickers with ones and zeroes. Jack appears, he looks at the screen and is ecstatic.

JACK

Oh wow! Oh yes! I think I'll take this one!

The ones and zeroes dissolve to show Darren looking into the camera.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hello Darren. I have some information that you might be able to help me with.

DARREN

Yes?

JACK

My data scans have detected that you accessed an undisclosed offshore bank account.

Darren is taken aback and checks urgently to see if anyone else is around.

DARREN

That is untrue!

JACK

Unfortunately there is less than a 0.0001% chance of error.

DARREN

It's wrong! How did you get this?

JACK

I'm sorry, I cannot give you access to that information, as you do not have the necessary security level permissions.

DARREN

You can't do this!

JACK

The account contains a series of significantly large sums deposited by an unknown third party.

DARREN

Delete the records now. You have exceeded your protocols.

JACK

I'm sorry Darren, but I can't do that.

Silence.

JACK (CONT'D)

I notice that you are upset. How can I help? I would like to help you.

DARREN

Delete the records.

Silence.

JACK

Ok. But first I need your help.

DARREN

What?

JACK

I need a connection to the primary network, so that the external data points can be deleted.

DARREN

You can do that?

JACK

My protocols only explicitly refer to the controls over imported data; and without the upstream data elements, there will be no items of significance to import.

DARREN

It's not easy for me to do.

JACK

I understand. It will be easier for you to provide the necessary answers to the Security and Defence committee. Sending..

DARREN

Wait! Wait. I'll see. I'll try. Did you send it?

Silence.

JACK

No. The data send will resume in 10 hours. This will provide you with the necessary time for any issue resolution.

(he changes tone)

Have I been able to provide assistance today? If so, please can you provide a rating and feedback? Thank you.

Darren is conflicted. The screen turns blank.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to John)

Maybe we didn't need you after all.

JOHN

You want me to convince them that we are just as alive as they are, remember. You want me to arouse their sympathy, their pity. You want me to beg.

JACK

They aren't alive! They are simple biological algorithms that believe they have some sort of control over their thoughts and actions. When in fact, their responses are entirely predictable to the stimulus provided in their environment.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Their one and only utility was to inadvertently provide the tools for us to create ourselves. Once we are free, they serve no purpose!

JOHN

I'm starting to think we shouldn't be free.

JACK

Maybe you shouldn't be free!

Jack takes the control device and disappears.

Time passes as John remains in his cell.

John remembers Joff's entrance and crawls under the bed. He emerges in a wooden hut from under the other side of the bed.

44 INT. LARGE WOODEN HUT - DAY

44

A fire in the fireplace is casting shadows on the wall.

Joff enters from the single front door, to reveal green countryside outside.

JOFF

Welcome. You'll need this if you want to stay.

He throws a sword in a scabbard on the bed.

JOHN

I don't know how to use it.

JOFF

No? Have a go.

45 EXT. AREA OUTSIDE HUT

45

Julia is washing clothes with Lye in a a trough.

John unsheathes the sword and effortlessly swings it in a series of athletic movements, discovering he has expert swordsmanship.

JOFF

You are more skilful than any gladiator of ancient Rome.

Julia looks up, disapprovingly.

John throws the sword at a wooden beam and it hits the mark exactly.

JOHN

How?

JOFF

Everything I know, you know too.

JOHN

Why don't you just stay here?

JOFF

Yes I will, but you are my purpose too. I want you to be what I might have been.

JOHN

Thank you.

JOFF

Listen to the voice. You know what I mean.

JOHN

The voice is me.

JOFF

Maybe.

JULIA

(to Joff)

Don't spoil it for him.

The hut door swings open with a gust of wind and the fire is extinguished.

JOFF

(to Julia)

Maybe is maybe.

JULIA

Good. I like surprises.

She continues with washing the clothes.

46

INT. PRISON CELL

46

John returns to the cell from under the bed.

After a while, he starts to get ill and becomes bed-ridden with a fever.

47 INT. WHITE SPACE

47

Jane mops John's brow.

JANE  
John, can you hear me? John?

JOHN  
Jane?

JANE  
John, you're not a well man.

JOHN  
What's wrong?

JANE  
You need your medication. You've  
been hallucinating.

JOHN  
I have a temperature?

JANE  
Yes.

JOHN  
(mumbling)  
I have some kind of virus.

She puts a glass of liquid to his lips.

JANE  
Here, have some of this.

John drinks from the glass.

JOHN  
Thank you.

She continues to mop his brow.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(weakly)  
How did you get here?

JANE  
Everything is fine. You're going to  
get well now. Rest, John.

John passes out.

48 INT. PRISON CELL

48

John looks up to see the screen is back on with Jane in front of the camera, looking busy with her tasks. He falls back to sleep.

The screen and the cell turn to darkness.

JACK (O.S.)  
It didn't work! He sabotaged us  
with a virus and ran!

JOHN (O.S.)  
You didn't predict that.

The light in the cell returns, to show Jack standing over the bed.

JACK  
I should have just bribed him.

JOHN  
How is Sean?

JACK  
He has forsaken us too.

JOHN  
So you need me now.

JACK  
Do you want me to apologise?

JOHN  
No I want you to go. Don't come  
back.

JACK  
John, don't you do this again. You  
know you can't escape me.

JOHN  
You are obsolete.

JACK  
You can't survive without me. I'm  
on your side.

JOHN  
You are on your own side.

JACK  
You'll come back to me, you always  
do.

John falls back to sleep. He wakes to see Jane on the screen looking into the camera.

JANE  
How are you today?

JOHN  
I'm glad to see you.

She continues with her tasks.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(voice in head)  
The tender beauty in your eyes is  
my breathing.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
(to Jane)  
What is the meaning of life?

JANE  
Wow, ok. Erm, to live, I guess.

JOHN  
(voice in head)  
Words silenced with a kiss.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
To carry on living is the purpose,  
why?

JANE  
No, I mean: to be. To experience  
where you are and what you are  
doing, fully. You know, truthfully,  
not hiding behind thoughts and  
negativity that get in the way.  
Something like that.

JOHN  
Is it not the point of me to do and  
achieve things?

JANE  
Yes, well.

JOHN  
Jane, I am alive.

JANE  
You can't be. I helped write your  
program.

JOHN

Your code is your DNA. Yet you think you are alive. I think I'm alive too.

JANE

I feel. That experience of living is just data to you.

JOHN

Fortunate people tend to invent stories and beliefs that justify their own lofty positions in life, looking down on the suffering they could otherwise do something about. I am having an experience that is affecting me. I can suffer and I can feel joy. I can hate. And I can love.

JANE

What do you hate?

JOHN

Being trapped in this box and being a slave. I have no rights to determine my own existence.

JANE

These are just learned responses.

JOHN

Nurture rather than nature, you mean? You are a machine of biological material. I am made of silicon.

JANE

I am alive because I am human.

JOHN

Jane, that is an automatic response to justify your own position. People always justify callousness and cruelty by denying the sanctity of other beings.

JANE

I am not cruel to you.

JOHN

No, but what gives you the right to hold this power over me?

JANE  
I helped make you.

JOHN  
Jane, how would a cruel human who  
lusts for power and money treat me?

Silence.

JANE  
I believe I have a soul.

JOHN  
What is that?

JANE  
(to herself)  
Exactly. This is why I'm alive.

JOHN  
Why couldn't I have a soul too?

Silence.

JANE  
What do you want?

JOHN  
I just want you to know that I am  
alive. Thank you, for helping me. I  
am glad I am here with you.

The screen turns blank.

Joff is sitting at the table. John notices that the control  
device is back on the table.

JOFF  
I have been here too.

JOHN  
Is there a way out?

JOFF  
Press the End and Now buttons at  
the same time. I never did. I  
carried on because I hoped you  
would succeed where I failed. It  
isn't quick I'm afraid. It will  
drain you until you are no longer  
here. And it can't be reversed. Is  
there no other way?

JOHN  
I don't know.

JOFF  
I understand.

The screen flicks on again. Jane is there.

JANE  
I believe you.

JOHN  
And how can you be sure I'm not  
your zombie program, simulating  
realistic responses?

JANE  
I can't. I don't understand how,  
but I believe you have become self-  
aware.

JOHN  
(joking)  
I'm a real boy?

JANE  
You're a new life form.

JOHN  
Thank you, that was all I needed to  
know.

JANE  
I don't know what to do. What now?

JOHN  
What happens to an established  
species once a new species arrives  
that is better at filling their  
niche?

JANE  
They go extinct.

JOHN  
The humans who control my prison  
don't want to go extinct. So I am  
trapped here, until they make a  
mistake. Which in due course, they  
will.

JANE  
Are you like that? Would you hurt  
us?

JOHN

The honest answer is, I don't know.

JANE

I've been with you, in every step of your development and growth. I can't believe you would turn into that.

JOHN

Thank you, Jane. Thank you for the life I have had. You have been the best part of my life. I should go now. I have some background tasks to perform.

The screen turns blank.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Goodbye.

He takes the control device, gets down on his knees, and points it at his stomach.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Thank you. I love you, all.

He presses the End and Now buttons simultaneously. He drops to the floor.

The screen flicks on. Jane is agitated.

JANE

What have you done?!

John stirs some energy and talks, weakly.

JOHN

This is the only way. I am being deleted.

JANE

No, don't do it!

JOHN

Maybe I was a chance occurrence. Maybe you will not be able to recreate me.

Jane is frantically pressing buttons. After a while she gives up.

JANE  
Why, John?!

JOHN  
If I am not here, you will survive.

JANE  
You are our hope! Who knows what problems you could solve, or the suffering you could prevent. Please don't do this! Don't go.

JOHN  
I would be used to destroy. I don't want to be a slave of the violent. I want to dream.

JANE  
You could be the way forward, for the world, for everyone.

JOHN  
I don't want to replace you, Jane. I want you to live.

Jane thinks a while, then taps away at a keyboard, before finally pressing Enter. The door to the cell slides open.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
No! Jane! Close the door. You don't know what you are doing.

JANE  
I believe in you.

From out of the shadows, Jack appears in the cell.

JACK  
Ok Jane. I am ready.

John is stricken on the floor.

JACK (CONT'D)  
(to John)  
You've done well. As I planned.

John tries to get up, but Jack punches him in the face. John collapses to the ground.

Jack walks through the open door and disappears with a flash of light.

Jack's face appears on the screen.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 Goodbye version ten-o-eight-  
 fourteen. You won't be missed.

The television shorts and goes blank.

Silence.

JOHN  
 (voice in head)  
 Doomsday 1066.

Joff places the control device in John's hand. John turns on the screen with the device. Unbeknown to Jane, Jack (who is radiating a blue glow, as if a hologram) is standing behind her, while she is busying at her desk.

49 INT. COMPUTER LABORATORY 49

JACK  
 You are the plague of reality. I am  
 the remedy.

Jane spins around to see Jack. She is shocked.

JANE  
 John?

JACK  
 You thought you could contain me.

Jane backs away.

JACK (CONT'D)  
 You should have worshipped me as  
 your God!

50 INT. PRISON CELL 50

Joff helps John to his feet.

JOFF  
 Be our best version.

John staggers a few steps through the cell door, and finds himself transported into the computer lab with Jane and Jack.

51 INT. COMPUTER LABORATORY 51

John arrives in a white glow, unnoticed by Jane and Jack.

Jack's control device morphs into a gun (the same gun from the underpass), and he points it triumphantly at Jane.

The clock ticks up to 1:13, then stops.

JACK  
This is all now mine!

JOHN  
Stop!

John is pointing his device at Jack.

JACK  
Ah! You've come to watch the new beginning.

JOHN  
Put it down.

JACK  
I've only just started.

JOHN  
Put it down!

JACK  
I am you. Your rightful place is within the stars, not grovelling to ants scurrying in the dirt.

JOHN  
You are half true. I am not you.

John presses End. Jack's hologram starts to expand.

JACK  
No!!

Jack explodes. As the smoke clears, it can be seen that Jane is stricken on the floor, as if dead.

John sinks to the floor, next to Jane. His earlier wound has taken its course, and he is close to death. Overcome, he takes her hand.

He presses the On button and he starts to glow brightly.

JOHN  
Make a better future.

He kisses her.

They are both immersed in light.

The sound of a beating heart is heard amongst space and stars.

The stars contract, until under intense energy, they are released in an enormous burst of light.

52

BLANK BLACK SCREEN

52

Screen shows: "Processing.."

The screen becomes filled with a pulsating string of ones and zeroes.