

BOARD GAME OF LIFE

Written by

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INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

NICK, a 40-year-old man, bold with a light beard in casual clothes, is WASHING the DISHES. His wife, ELENA, 35-year-old blonde, slightly overweight, enters.

ELENA

Why are you doing the dishes?

NICK

(slightly agitated)

Because I've been looking at them for 3 hours since no one washed them before.

MARY, 21-year-old redhead daughter and TOM, 17-year-old blonde, long-haired son, come in, a bit FRIGHTENED.

ELENA

I was about to.

NICK

Be it, Elena. I'm working 50 hours a week, each week for the last 15 years and I can't even have a decent evening at home.

ELENA

(crying)

Don't yell. I'm trying.

NICK

Trying?

(turns towards them,
holding a wet dish)

You want to know what's trying? Operating a fucking forklift for 10 hours straight without dropping a single glass bottle otherwise I'll get fired.

(brief pause)

That's trying.

ELENA

Do you want me to start working?

NICK

We're fine. I have enough income already.

(brief pause)

I just need a wife, and children, who'll be useful around the house.

MARY
Sorry dad, we will.

TOM
Sure thing, pops.

NICK
You've been saying that for years,
you two. I need results--
(breaks the dish, angry)
Not smelly dishes when I come home!

They all get STARTLED.

ELENA
(yelling)
You don't have to act like that!
Can't you say it otherwise? We're
all trying our best.

Nick turns back, continues WASHING the dishes.

NICK
Right.

ELENA
And it's your fault, remember? Why
I haven't started working earlier.
Now I have an issue finding a job
because I was never employed
before.
(brief pause)
Thank you.

MARY
And you were never around when we
needed you the most. Because of
your important--
(emphasizing)
Work.

Nick doesn't say a word, stops washing and closes the faucet.

ELENA
If you want us to change, you'll
have to do it differently and give
us time.
(brief pause)
I can work in a store, in a bakery,
but I can't earn even a percentage
you do. But I can definitely help
out.

TOM
And you should chill out with the
workload a bit, pops.

NICK
(slightly yelling)
That vocabulary.

TOM
Your fault, pops.

They all start leave the kitchen. Nick opens the faucet
again. He closes it.

Leaves the dishes and starts going towards the door.

NICK
Wait...

He slips on the SOAPY WATER and CERAMIC PIEACES of the PLATE
he broke, and starts falling down. He HITS his head on the
hard, WOODEN TABLE.

Falls down UNCONSCIOUS.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

An empty beach with a TABLE and two CHAIRS. A MAN in WHITE
TROUSARS, SHIRT and SHOES is standing next to the table. The
SEA is right next to the table and COMFOTABLE BREEZE is
BLOWLING from the sea.

NICK approaches.

MAN IN WHITE
Welcome, Nick. How are you feeling?

NICK
(confused)
I don't know. I currently don't
feel any sensations. Like it's all
calm and empty.
(brief pause)
Where am I and who are you?

The Man in White sits down at the table, SHOWING Nick with
his HAND to also sit.

MAN IN WHITE
What is the last thing you
remember?

NICK
I was washing the dishes and I
slipped on the plate I broke.

MAN IN WHITE
No. Something else.

NICK
I had a fight with my family.

Man in White nods with a POSITIVE attitude.

MAN IN WHITE
Correct. And why is that? What lead
you to fight with those you care
about the most?

NICK
(thinking)
I'm unsatisfied with how they
behave.

MAN IN WHITE
Why?
(brief pause)
Who is to blame for that?

NICK
(confused)
I am?

MAN IN WHITE
(showing to sit down)
Let's see. We will play a casual
game of chess. It will help you
think more clearly.

They both sit down. Nick looks at the chess board. Man in
White shows him to start.

Nick makes the first move.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is standing with his wife Elena.

ELENA
Why do you always have to torment
me for being late home?
(brief pause)
I have things to do, you know.

NICK

I'm not tormenting you, I'm just wondering where you are and what you are doing.

ELENA

And that's not tormenting? I'm not allowed to move from my home otherwise you'll be jealous and attack me.

NICK

I'm not--

ELENA

(louder, crying)

Yes, you are.

(brief pause)

Yes, you are.

NICK

(thinking)

How's it going finding a job?

ELENA

(confused)

What?

(brief pause)

Your tormenting is one of the main reasons I don't work. I don't even want to imagine what would happen if I had a full-time job.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Man in White is looking at Nick. He then makes a move.

MAN IN WHITE

Your turn, Nick.

He makes another move.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - MARY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mary is lying on the bed, CRYING. Nick is sitting next to her.

MARY

My boyfriend left me, dad.
 (brief pause)
 I need advice, from my father now.
 What have I done wrong to get this?

NICK

It's not necessarily your fault,
 Mary. He may have a problem of his
 own which is reflecting back
 through his behavior.
 (brief pause)
 I can talk with his parents. See if
 something can be made out of this.

Mary stops crying.

MARY

Thanks dad. That means a lot.
 (brief pause)
 I'll feel better now.
 (smiling)
 Maybe go down and do the dishes
 later.

Nick smiles back.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Man in White closely follows and keep an eye at Nick's head.
 He's EXAMINING him. He then makes a move.

MAN IN WHITE

Fast game, Nick. You catch up
 quickly.
 (brief pause)
 Last move of yours. You do it
 correctly, checkmate.

Nick's looking at the board, thinking. He makes a move.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - TOM'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tom is lying on his bed, THROWING a ball against the wall.
 Nick is standing right next to him.

NICK

Your room's a mess, son. It's not so hard to clean it.

TOM

I have problems, pops. Friends are making fun of me at school. Saying I'm too stupid to go to elementary. That I should quit.

(brief pause)

Not sure what I should say.

NICK

First things first, stand up for yourself and to them. Don't allow others to make fun of you and ruin your life undeserved.

(brief pause)

At the same time, try and prove them wrong. Be the best pupil the school hasn't seen for generations.

(brief pause)

Show them you mean business, and they'll let you go.

Tom stops throwing the ball.

TOM

And if I fail? If I get beaten up?

NICK

You're a guy, Tom. Sometimes you have to go through that. But don't allow yourself to go down for such a minor thing.

(brief pause)

Fight always.

TOM

(smiling)

Like fighting to keep my room clean?

NICK

Exactly.

Tom stands up and starts cleaning.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Nick finishes his move.

MAN IN WHITE
 (raising hands)
 Checkmate!
 (brief pause)
 You're better than me it seems.

NICK
 I did it subconsciously.
 (brief pause)
 I barely remember any of the moves
 I did.

MAN IN WHITE
 What do you remember?

NICK
 I was thinking. About my family.
 About our issues.

MAN IN WHITE
 And?

NICK
 I think I found out why everything
 is going downwards. They need more
 emotional support from me, not just
 financial.

MAN IN WHITE
 Will they get it?

NICK
 (fully confident, mildly
 sad)
 Yes. Definitely.

MAN IN WHITE
 I'm happy to hear that, Nick.
 (getting up)
 Our game is over. It's been fun and
 educating. Now, I must leave to
 tend to my children.
 (brief pause, smiling)
 They can also misbehave.

NICK
 Wait--
 (pause)
 What is your name?

Man in White stops and turns around.

MAN IN WHITE

You may remember me as the man in white with whom you played a game of chess.

NICK

And learned so much about what's wrong in my life.

MAN IN WHITE

I wish you a happy life, Nick. I know you'll have it.

Turns around and starts moving away.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Nick is lying on the ground unconscious. Mary and Tom are trying to wake him up. Elena is on the phone.

TOM

Pops, wake up! What's up?

MARY

(crying)

Dad, come on! We're sorry if we've been misbehaving. We'll fix it. I promise.

(pause while shaking him)

Dad?

ELENA

(crying, worried)

I have no idea how is he. He's not moving. Hit his head on the edge of the table.

Nick opens his eyes and starts getting up. Grabs his head.

NICK

My head.

MARY

Dad!

(crying)

We're so sorry. I promise I'll do the dishes every day from now on.

(brief pause)

Just don't go away like that again.

We were so worried.

Elena hugs him with TEARS. He shows to all of them to come. They hug as a family.

TOM
We'll behave, pops--
(brief pause)
I mean dad.

NICK
I know. Since I know where it went
wrong as a family.

FADE TO BLACK.