

THE OVERCOMERS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. AMERICA - DAY - NEAR FUTURE

A VIEW FROM SPACE

America in the future has a large, translucent dome over the middle of the country. The rest is either wild forests or the deteriorated remains of uninhabited cities (NY, LA, SEATTLE).

WE MOVE DOWN THROUGH THE DOME INTO WHAT IS NOW ILLINOIS

EXT. NEW CHICAGO - SUBURB - STREET - DAY

The sidewalks are pristine in this "smart" town. There are cameras on every street lamp. KIDS can be seen in the distance getting aboard a school transport.

JOE B. (25), a sweet-faced everyman, dressed in bathrobe, business shirt, slacks and slippers, walks his slow-moving dachshund.

JOE B.
Come on, Mitzi. Make some doody so
daddy can go to work.

Mitzi looks up with sad, tired eyes.

JOE B.
What's wrong, girl? Don't feel
well?

An AI DOG WALKER, humanoid face but mechanical rolling base from the waist down, approaches, hogging the sidewalk with three poodles of varying colors: pink, white and black.

AI DOG WALKER
Excuse me. Please share the public
sidewalk!

JOE B.
Oh, sorry.

Joe scoots over so the AI Dog Walker can get by with the exuberant poodles.

JOE B.
How are Mrs. P's poodles doing?

The AI Dog Walker stops.

AI DOG WALKER
Normal health functions.
Intermediate dog agility rating.

JOE B.
Tell Mrs. P. Joe B. says hello. We
went to the same high school.

AI DOG WALKER
Yes, Joe B. Message shall be
relayed.

JOE B.
We gotta go, Mitzi. I'm gonna miss
my transport!

Joe B. turns and unwittingly steps on poop that Mitzi laid on
the sidewalk while he was talking to the AI Dog Walker.

JOE B.
Oh jeez, Mitzi! How about a
warning? Now it's on my slipper!

He takes out a high tech plastic vacuum that sucks up what's
left into a bag.

JOE B.
Why does this always happen to me?

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Joe enters in his socks, messy slippers in hand. Mitzi slowly
follows him.

THE KITCHEN

MARY B. (24) sets the table for breakfast. She's a great deal
more attractive than her husband, but she downplays her
beauty in modest makeup and dowdy apron. And bored face.

JOE B.
I think there's something wrong
with Mitzi.

MARY B.
I'll call the vet.

Joe B. sits down at the table. He picks up a book lying there
and opens it.

JOE B.
Oh boy, smell that bacon!

At this moment, a holograph message appears above the food.
LIFE LOSS WARNING!

VOICE (V.O.)
Life Loss Warning! Ingesting this
processed meat will take .5 hours
off your projected life span.

JOE B.
What's a half hour? I love bacon!

VOICE (V.O.)
Your accumulated Life Loss review
can be accessed--

JOE B.
Turn off Life Loss Warnings!

The message above the bacon disappears.

JOE B.
Can't enjoy anything in this stupid
smart house.

MARY B.
They're just trying to keep you
mindful of dangerous life choices.

JOE B.
To hear them tell it, getting out
of bed is a dangerous life choice.

MARY B.
Suit yourself. Do you want to flash
the news?

JOE B.
Nah, I got this book at the antique
store.

MARY B.
Effective farming? Retro history?

JOE B.
I guess I'm fascinated by the
simple times.

MARY B.
Whatever.

JOE B.
So what's your day looking like,
honey?

MARY B.
Shopping and then I go in for
Family Preparedness.

JOE B.
I keep forgetting it's almost time.

MARY B.
We've crossed the two year
threshold. Today, as a matter of
fact.

JOE B.
And I love you now more than ever.

He kisses her.

MARY B.
That's nice.

JOE B.
Almost as much as I love this
bacon.

He laughs and dives into his eggs. After a few bites, a
WARNING BUZZ from his smart watch.

JOE B.
Nuts! I gotta get to the transport.
Big day, honey. The Pizazz Pizza
account.

MARY B.
"Pizza pie with zazz, that's
pizzazz!"

JOE B.
That's the line that got me the
account!

MARY B.
What's zazz, anyway?

JOE B.
You know. Special... mojo makings.
Zazz!

As he gets up, the coffee spills on his pants.

JOE B.
Oh no!

MARY B.
Sorry, honey.

JOE B.

Now I gotta change my pants!

Joe races out of the room. Mary wipes down the spilled coffee and takes Joe's plate and puts it in the sink.

THE FOYER

Joe reappears with new pants, jacket, tie and briefcase.

JOE B.

Honey, I'm washing my slippers in the laundry room. Heads up.

MARY B. (O.S.)

Okay, Joe.

JOE B.

See you tonight!

MARY B. (O.S.)

Have a good day.

JOE B.

You too, sweetie!

Joe zips out.

EXT. TRANSPORT STATION - DAY

Joe's EV glides into a waiting spot. He walks to the station.

INT. TRANSPORT - DAY

Joe enters the transport, packed with BUSINESS PEOPLE. They all watch large screens that project from their phones obnoxiously, all fighting for head space. As he maneuvers to an open seat, he tries avoiding a projected basketball game.

COMMUTER

Hey! I missed that basket!

JOE B.

Sorry. Go Bulls.

He smiles weakly and then finds a window seat next to his friend, THOMAS H. (30) dark features, serious expression. Joe carefully ducks under the screen showing stock prices, hovering before Thomas.

JOE B.

How's the market, Tom?

THOMAS

Um-hmm.

JOE B.

Good morning, Thomas.

THOMAS

Right.

JOE B.

Thanks for holding the window seat.

THOMAS

Mm.

Joe reaches for his phone. But then he puts it back in his pocket and looks out the window at the scenery. Suddenly, a commercial pops up over the view.

A BUSTY WOMAN walks before a construction site as WORKERS cat call.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This view is sponsored by Treasure Chest, the first retractable bosom enhancement system.

The woman clicks a button under her arm and her chest goes flat. The construction workers moan and look away.

The woman now stands before a mirror in an evening gown at a social function.

She pushes a button and her boobs grow. Her handsome DATE enters the room, smiling. She winks at the camera.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Treasure Chest. It stays buried until you decide to open it.

JOE B.

Jeez Louise.

He waves the commercial away. And then smiles when he sees robot farms with cows lolling in the fields.

JOE B.

To be an old-time farmer...

THOMAS H.

Mm?

JOE B.
Nothing. Just fantasizing about a
different life vocation.

THOMAS H.
Ah.

JOE B.
Thomas, do you remember if it was
possible to choose-- ?

THOMAS H.
You talking life assignment, post
college?

JOE B.
Yeah.

THOMAS H.
They assigned you, Joe. There was
no... choice. Besides, the farms
are all mechanized.

JOE B.
Yeah. I know.

THOMAS H.
The Powers know what's best for
you, kid.

JOE B.
Sure, sure.

Thomas returns to his stock figures. Joe looks back out the
window with yearning.

JOE B.
Still. It sure looks peaceful out
there.

EXT. CITY - MOVING SIDEWALKS - DAY

Joe B. joins the throng jostling toward their work buildings.

INT. HIGH CONCEPT AD AGENCY - DAY

Joe B. strolls through the doors past the reception stand.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Joe B. stares at the numbers for Pizazz Pizza on his floating computer screen with a frown.

FRANCINE S. (22), thin, smart-looking in boxy glass frames, enters.

FRANCINE S.
They're assembling now, Joe B.

JOE B.
Thanks.

FRANCINE S.
Something wrong?

JOE B.
I was just looking over the
quarterly earnings for Pizazz.

FRANCINE S.
I know.

JOE B.
I'm starting to get a bad feeling
about this meeting.

FRANCINE S.
What can I do?

JOE B.
Oh nothing. You're doing a great
job, Francine. It's me.

He laughs.

JOE B.
And this is my biggest account.

FRANCINE S.
You'll figure it out.

JOE B.
Yeah.

She turns to leave.

JOE B.
Oh, can you send some flowers to my
house? It's our second anniversary.

FRANCINE S.
Already on it.

JOE B.
You're the best.

She exits. Joe takes a deep breath and gets up.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mary B. walks slowly toward a building marked "Family Preparedness." But as she turns a corner she bumps into RONALD H. (28), tall, muscular, wearing a business suit.

MARY B.
Oh, I'm sorry.

RONALD H.
Hey, is that you, Mary?

MARY B.
Ronald H.?

RONALD H.
In the flesh.

MARY B.
Wow, I haven't seen you--

RONALD H.
Since homecoming game. I lost track of you after I went into life assignment.

MARY B.
What have you-- ?

RONALD H.
Running my own sports fitness franchise.

MARY B.
Well, the vocation suits you. You look great.

She lingers on his muscular frame.

RONALD H.
So do you.

MARY B.
Well, I have to go inside.

RONALD H.
Preparing a family already?

MARY B.
Yeah. Me and Joe B.

RONALD H.
Lucky dog.

There's an awkward moment.

RONALD H.
Well, I hope I bump into you again.

MARY B.
I'm here every Tuesday afternoon.

RONALD H.
Oh. Ok.

Another awkward moment of assessing.

RONALD H.
Look, here's my card. It's got my number.

MARY B.
Thanks, Ronald!

RONALD H.
See you.

Mary looks back as he walks on, then frowns as she arrives at the front of the Family Preparedness Building. Her smile returns as she spins around and walks off in a different direction.

INT. HIGH CONCEPT AD AGENCY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Joe B. stands before the clients, REPS from Pizazz Pizza, fresh faced grads (21) already condescending in their power positions, and his boss PETER K. (45), bespectacled, worried face, overweight.

Projected on a hovering screen is a cartoon magician pulling a pizza out of a hat.

JOE B.
It's always been a traditional brand, that's why we have continued with the magician mascot.

PIAZZZ REP #1
Magicians are pre-Fall. Kids don't even know what they are.

JOE B.
Yes, but this is an old-fashioned,
fast casual--

PIAZZZ REP #2
Kids are into gaming, and sci-fi
adventures. Maybe if the mascot was
a gamer who created CGI pizza for
the point and shoot crowd?

JOE B.
Well, that's a radical move. What
about the parents who-- ?

PIAZZZ REP #1
Moms and dads are hip, too. All of
your stuff plays retro.

JOE B.
I was trying to keep tradition
alive.

PIAZZZ REP #2
Tradition is anti-lexicon, Joe B.

JOE B.
Well sure, some folks want to--

PIAZZZ REP #2
Even that slogan, "Pizza pie with
zazz," sounds corny.

PIAZZZ REP #1
Corn is not a topping, Joe B.

JOE B.
No, you're right.

PETER K.
Joe B. is more than capable of
crafting a new campaign, right,
Joe?

JOE B.
Of course!

PIAZZZ REP #1
We've already talked to another
agency, Peter K.

PIAZZZ REP #2
We're even changing our name from
Pizazz Pizza to simply, "P.P."

JOE B.

P.P.? Like I have to go p.p.?

Joe smiles. No laughter, just hard looks from the PP reps.

PIZZA REP #2

You just don't get it.

PETER K.

Wait a second! You've already consulted with another agency?

PIZZA REP #2

Yeah. We just wanted to tell you in person that we were moving on.

Peter K. glares at Joe B.

PETER K.

Oh. Well. Thank you for that.

PIAZZZ REP #1

(to Pizza Rep #2)

I love this part.

Awkward silence.

PIAZZZ REP #1

The awkward silence. And then we casually leave as they realize they've just been shitcanned.

He giggles at the other PP rep as they leave the room.

JOE B.

Sir, I had no idea...

PETER K.

You're fired, Joe B.

Joe frowns and then slinks out of the room.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

Joe puts his things into a box. Francine S. helps him.

FRANCINE S.

I hope you land on your feet, Joe B.

JOE B.

Thanks, Francine S.

FRANCINE S.
You're the nicest boss I ever had.

JOE B.
Nice doesn't mean much in the
cutthroat world of advertising.

He picks up his box.

JOE B.
But thanks for your help. I hope
you like my replacement.

Francine S. pulls a hankie out and dabs her eyes.

FRANCINE S.
Goodbye, Joe.

JOE B.
Bye, Francine.

He exits the room.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Joe mopes as he carries his box to the transport station.

JOE B.
Why does this crap always happen to
me?

INT. TRANSPORT - DAY

Joe B. rides alone on the early afternoon transport. There
are a few KIDS playing hooky watch movies on the obnoxiously
large projected screens from their phones.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Joe B. walks into his house.

JOE B.
Honey?

THE LIVING ROOM

Joe puts his box down on the coffee table. Mary, a look of
surprise, joins him.

MARY B.
What are you-- ?

JOE B.
I... got fired.

MARY B.
What? But you were doing so well!

JOE B.
It's okay. I'll talk to the job
recruiter.

MARY B.
But you'll probably have to start
at the bottom of another agency.
You were working to be a partner.

JOE B.
I know. What can I do?

MARY B.
I thought they loved... "zazz?"

JOE B.
Suddenly, zazz is corny. These new
hotshot execs-- they're just kids
out of school.

MARY B.
Wow.

JOE B.
It's not that big a deal.

MARY B.
I guess I'm putting the family
planning on hold.

JOE B.
Why?

MARY B.
Things are... well.

JOE B.
No, they're not. I'll get another
job.

Mary stares at him; suppressed emotions.

JOE B.
Where's Mitzi? I'll take her on a
walk.

MARY B.
Whenever things get tough, you take
the dog for a walk

JOE B.
I don't want to argue with you,
Mary. Life is going to have its
trials.

MARY B.
It's nothing BUT trials with you.

JOE B.
Mitzi! Mitzi!

Mitzi lumbers to Joe.

MARY B.
The vet says she's just getting
old.

JOE B.
Well, she loves me just as I am.

MARY B.
Please, no pity party. Go for your
walk!

Mary storms up the stairs. Joe puts the leash on Mitzi. She
doesn't seem interested in a walk. He picks her up.

JOE B.
It's okay. I can do the walking.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Mary listens for the front door to close. She goes to her
mirror and hits a button under her arm. Her "Treasure Chest"
inflates to maximum boobage.

MARY B.
Look at you, lady.

Then she pulls out Ronald's card. She starts to dial and a
LIFE LOSS WARNING appears above the phone.

VOICE (V.O.)
The affair you are about to
commence will result in stress due
to marital tensions and take 5.7
months off your life if it lasts
longer than--

MARY B.
Turn off Life Loss Warning! Oh
hello, Ronald H.? It's Mary B. I
know this is kind of sudden, but I
couldn't stop thinking about you.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The streets are quiet as kids are still in school, housewives
are inside doing chores and everyone else is at work.

Joe carries Mitzi along.

JOE B.
Just let me know if you have to
drop a steamer, okay, Mitzi? Just
give a little bark.

Mitzi blinks slowly.

JOE B.
You aren't enjoying this, are you,
girl? I'll get you back home.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Joe B. enters and puts Mitzi down.

JOE B.
You okay, Mitzi? Wanna take a nap?

Mitzi collapses on the ground and rolls over, dead.

JOE B.
Mitzi? Mitzi? Oh my God!

He lifts up her paw but she's lifeless.

JOE B.
No, no, no. Not now, Mitzi. Not
when I need you!!

Joe starts to cry. Then he looks up.

JOE B.
Mary? Mary?

He heads for the staircase.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Joe swings the door open and sees Mary, fully buxom, staring at herself in the mirror and giggling on the phone.

JOE B.

Mary?

Mary looks back at Joe.

MARY B.

Back so soon?

She pushes a button in her armpit and the breasts retract.

JOE B.

You got a... treasure chest?

MARY B.

Look, Ronald. I'll talk to you later.

She puts the phone down.

JOE B.

Why don't you ever inflate those for me?

MARY B.

I just got them. I was, uh, waiting for the right moment.

JOE B.

Who was that on the phone?

MARY B.

Nobody.

JOE B.

Ronald?

MARY B.

Just an old friend.

JOE B.

But you talked to him with your treasure chest!

MARY B.

Look, Joe, there's something I want to tell you.

JOE B.

But Mitzi! She's--

MARY B.
Forget about Mitzi, she's just old.
I want a divorce, Joe.

JOE B.
Mitzi's dead.

MARY B.
I'm sorry about that.

JOE B.
You don't seem sorry. You seem
flush with excitement.

MARY B.
You loved that old dog more than
me.

JOE B.
We have to... we have to... bury
her.

MARY B.
And we have to bury this marriage,
just like I buried my chest.

She giggles, a guilty look after.

JOE B.
You're serious?

MARY B.
Yes. It hit me today for real. At
the family planning. I don't love
you.

JOE B.
But, but--

MARY B.
We both know I'm too good looking
for you. I bought the whole rap
about you being a partner in an ad
agency. But as we learned today,
that ain't happening any time soon.

JOE B.
But Mary-- Mitzi! Pizazz Pizza!

MARY B.
Nothing like a triple loser.

THE DOORBELL RINGS

Joe leaves the room.

FOYER

He opens the door and a DELIVERY ROBOT hands him a bouquet of flowers.

ROBOT
Happy Anniversary!!

Joe tosses the flowers on the floor and slams the door!

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK

WE SEE THIS SCENE PLAYING ON A LARGE MONITOR IN A HIGH TECH OFFICE.

INT. HIGH TECH OFFICE - DAY

A sign that reads "OBSTACLES" hangs on the wall. The room, white, antiseptic, is filled with computer banks, screens and wires. There's a single desk.

Typing notes on a computer as she watches this scene is DAWN R. (25), blonde, studious yet compassionate in appearance, wearing a white lab coat that's her uniform. She sighs.

DAWN R.
Sorry about all that Joe B. I know
it's a lot.

Dawn turns away from the screen, rubs her forehead. Then she checks her smart watch.

DAWN R.
Thank God. Day's almost over.

Her boss, SPENCER M. (45), short, mature, nerdy look, also in white lab coat uniform enters.

SPENCER M.
Good evening, Dawn R.

DAWN R.
Good evening, Spencer M.

SPENCER M.
How did events progress today? You
know every now and then I like to
monitor things.

DAWN R.
Sure. Day recap, screen two.

As instructed, a SCREEN POPS UP AND REPLAYS THE MAJOR EVENTS OF JOE B.'S DAY like a highlight reel.

DAWN R. (V.O.)
The sliding sidewalk insured dog
feces on citizen Joe B.'s slippers
at 8:47 a.m.

INT. OFFICE - EARLIER

Dawn R. hits a series of buttons with a joystick type control honed in on a map of the suburban street, focusing on the sidewalk. CAMERA ZOOMS IN FOR CLOSEUP.

The joystick subtly moves the square of sidewalk with Mitzi's feces up a foot, positioning Joe B.'s feet to land on it.

JOE B.
Why does all this crap always
happen to me?

INT. JOE'S KITCHEN - EARLIER

DAWN R. (V.O.)
The smart house was directed to
lift up the tile on the breakfast
table under the coffee cup so the
java spilled on Joe B. during
breakfast.

A tile on the dinner table lifts almost imperceptibly, causing the coffee to spill on Joe when he stands up.

JOE B.
Oh no!

DAWN R. (V.O.)
Coincidence set up the chance
encounter between Mary B. and
Ronald H.

INT. OBSTACLE OFFICE - EARLIER

Dawn paces in front of her series of monitors while talking on the phone.

DAWN R.
Hey, it's Dawn R. in Obstacles.
Were you able to put together the
coincidence?

INT. COINCIDENCE OFFICE - EARLIER

HAROLD O. (50), short, bald with mustache, checks a monitor of a city block while he talks with Dawn.

HAROLD O.
Hold on, Dawn R. Still awaiting
word from Team Chaos.

Harold puts Dawn on hold and punches another number.

HAROLD O.
It's Harold O. in Coincidence. I
put in an order with Team Chaos.
Right. Today at 2:33 p.m. Something
to disrupt foot traffic on 8th
street. Looking for target to use
alternate route onto Main in front
of Family Preparedness building.

The faces of Ronald H. and Mary B. flash on two monitors along with maps of their possible trajectories in the city.

HAROLD O.
Nothing major. Doesn't have to be
weather related. Right. As long as
it's not interfering with another
citizen's growth. Okay, minor car
accident leading to broken hydrant.
Thanks.

He pushes a button on his phone to click over.

HAROLD O.
You still there, Dawn R.? Okay,
Team Chaos has the diversion
planned. Coincidence should happen
without a hitch.

DAWN R. (V.O.)
Thanks, Harold O. I owe you one.

EXT. CITY - SIDEWALKS - EARLIER

Ronald H. struts down 8th street. He notices a roped off accident ahead. A car has crashed into a fire hydrant and a large plume of water floods the sidewalk.

Ronald H. turns right on Main Street.

Mary B. bumps into Ronald H. They exchange small talk.

INT. OFFICE - EARLIER

The couple chat on a floating screen before Dawn R.

DAWN R.
Okay, Atmosphere!

INT. ATMOSPHERE - CHEM FACTORY - EARLIER

DAVID H.(45), big boned, wearing a construction hat and goggles, checks a monitor, types on a keyboard. Then he barks into a speaker.

DAVID H. (ON SPEAKER)
Pump Pheromones and dopamine onto
Sector 5 downtown. Must land on
citizens Mary B. and Ronald H.

A WORKER near a set of plastic tubes, turns a large metal valve. He sticks his head out so David H. can see him and gives a thumbs up.

Spouts from nearby traffic poles spray Ron and Mary.

DAVID H. (ON SPEAKER)
Okay, resume spraying vaccine on
Sector 32, suburban playground.

INT. OFFICE - DAY - PRESENT

Dawn points to a monitor showing Ronald H. and Mary B. eye-balling each other lustfully.

Spencer M. nods.

DAWN R.
Atmosphere pumped Pheromones and
dopamine into the air to desired
effect, increasing lustful
attraction.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - EARLIER

Joe B. stands before the fresh-faced execs with a grimace.

DAWN R. (V.O.)
Our Pizazz Pizza execs provided the
push for job termination.

INT. JOE'S HOUSE - FOYER - EARLIER

Joe B. holds Mitzi's lifeless body.

DAWN R. (V.O.)

And the life expectancy of the
Dachshund timed perfectly for
expiration on projected date as the
blossoming affair was revealed.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLIER

Joe interrupts Mary on the phone with Ronald. She retracts
her breasts.

INT. OFFICE - PRESENT

Dawn R. turns off the playback. The floating screen vanishes.
Spencer M. applauds.

SPENCER M.

Terrific. It's nice when everything
calibrates so perfectly.

DAWN R.

Yep. I've given citizen Joe B. the
absolute worst day of his life.
Although that might be saying
something, given how much we've put
him through already.

SPENCER M.

Empathizing too much again, Dawn
R.?

DAWN R.

Today was so thickly plotted. I
wonder if we could have spread
out...

SPENCER M.

Dawn R. We chose you to work
Obstacles because of your flawless
coordination skills. But if you
need a time out, it can be
arranged. There's nothing to feel
ashamed about.

DAWN R.

No, no I'm okay. I have my shrink
to work out any guilt.

SPENCER M.
Glad to hear it.

From the surveillance monitor Joe B. lets out a loud MOAN.

DAWN R.
Therapy or no, I'll never
understand why we are making this
guy's life so...

SPENCER M.
That's for the Powers to know. We
just get the directives. Ours is
not to reason why, Miss R.

DAWN R.
Joe B. must be on track for
something really special.

SPENCER M.
Yes, he may one day be an
Overcomer. Or he may just be
someone we use to facilitate
another citizen's growth.
You learned all about this is in
your doctrinal training.

DAWN R.
Doesn't mean the Doctrine of Favor
is ever going to be easy to grasp.

SPENCER M.
We knew Joe B. would be attracted
to Mary.

DAWN R.
It fit the plan.

SPENCER M.
Citizens like Joe B. who have had a
tough childhood often try to
compensate by marrying someone more
attractive than they are.

DAWN R.
I get it. But maybe he deserved a
little happiness. The orphanage.
All those foster homes.

SPENCER M.
The marriage was designed to
expire. Mary B. was never going to
facilitate his growth. He'd never
be an Overcomer with her.

DAWN R.

Okay then, are there plans to bring someone into his life that can, actually, you know, make him happy?

SPENCER M.

Aha.

DAWN R.

What does that mean. Aha?

SPENCER M.

We shall see what we shall see.

DAWN R.

Now I do have a headache.

SPENCER M.

Go home and take a long bath and get some sleep. You really are doing exemplary work.

DAWN R.

Thanks, sir. I think.

SPENCER M.

There's talk about promoting you to Life Planning. Don't blow it.

DAWN R.

I'll try not to.

She smiles at Spencer as he leaves. Then the smile quickly fades. She looks up at a monitor showing real time surveillance of Joe B. crying.

DAWN R.

You poor bastard. Please don't blame me.

WENDY P.

How can he blame you? He has no idea you're doing this.

Dawn's evening replacement, WENDY P. (23), brainy looking, smug, has entered. Dawn watches Joe cry for another second and then turns away from the monitor.

WENDY P.

So, another bad day in the life of the put-upon everyman, Joe B.?

DAWN R.

Worse than ever.

WENDY P.

That's why we make the big bucks!

Dawn collects her things.

DAWN R.

You're lucky. All you have to do is watch him sleep. Although tonight, there may not be much of that.

WENDY P.

Oh, occasionally I send him some acid reflux. Or a barking dog. Good night, Dawn.

DAWN R.

See ya, Wendy.

Dawn leaves the office.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The sterile, futuristic building opens up to a large walking bridge to upscale government housing.

The tall, condo building affords a terrific view of the city. Dawn R. walks across the bridge and enters.

INT. DAWN R.'S CONDO - NIGHT

Dawn sits on a recliner looking out the window of her high tech dwelling. The lights of the city steadfastly glow below. She sips on a glass of wine. A peaceful moment but her face registers gnawing regret.

A screen pops up in front of her with a CHIMING BELL SOUNDING.

DAWN R.

Oh crap! Almost forgot about therapy.

She puts her wine down and sits up. She waves her hand, signaling the interface to open up the cameras. Her THERAPIST MARGO M.(45), severe face, cropped hair, smiles at her.

MARGO M.

Am I catching you at a bad time? You look surprised.

DAWN R.

I forgot it was Tuesday. Sorry.

MARGO M.
We can reschedule if... ?

DAWN R.
No, no. I have a lot to unload.

MARGO M.
Then let's proceed.

Dawn takes a deep breath.

INT. DAWN R.'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dawn paces the room, the screen following her.

MARGO M.
There's no need for guilt, Dawn.
You're merely following directives
from the Life Planners.

DAWN R.
I know. But just watching that poor
sap...

MARGO M.
But that poor sap... is growing.
This is the tension he needs to
finally break out of his shell! To
transform from fuzzy caterpillar to
sleek butterfly! To be the
Overcomer he was meant to be!

DAWN R.
I know. Hopefully, he won't see it
in tired metaphors.

Margo frowns.

MARGO M.
You've never talked about your
citizens before.

DAWN R.
Well, there was Francis N. He was
caught defrauding the bank he
worked in.

MARGO M.
But his criminal behavior was the
result of a genetic anomaly
overlooked in the planning.

DAWN R.

I know. I didn't really mind his outcome. Didn't feel responsible. This is somehow different.

MARGO M.

Are you becoming emotionally attached to Joe B.?

DAWN R.

I have been with him for a long time.

MARGO M.

Attachment is perfectly normal. As long as it doesn't interfere with the tasks you are assigned.

DAWN R.

I got a bonus rating for today's work. The perfectly crafted, absolutely most agonizing day of Joe B.'s life. Mega obstacles.

MARGO M.

Congratulations!

DAWN R.

Yaaaaaaa.

MARGO M.

Detecting sarcasm.

DAWN R.

Sorry. I'm just getting things off my chest. So I can move on to the next round of his Life Plan. Presumably bluer skies ahead.

MARGO M.

How about your personal life?

DAWN R.

Okay, I guess.

MARGO M.

Are things satisfactory with... Archie G.?

DAWN R.

Oh yeah. We have a date tomorrow.

INT. THE CONTINENTAL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant, like everything in this world, is high tech, but more fancy, given this is where the government workers dine. A large translucent aquarium sits in the center with fish seemingly swimming in the air.

ARCHIE G.(24), tall, thin, shaggy hair. Handsome in an unconventional way, chews his steak carefully. Dawn R. watches him.

DAWN R.

I got a question for you.

ARCHIE G.

Shoot.

DAWN R.

Did you fall in love with me naturally? Or was it a response to some atmospheric control? A prearranged, coincidental meeting at a vulnerable time in our lives?

ARCHIE G.

You're the one who'd know better than me. I work in Conformity.

DAWN R.

Not the response I was expecting.

Archie takes a sip of wine. She's getting serious.

ARCHIE G.

We're not regular citizens, Dawn.
We work for the Powers That Be.

DAWN R.

I was hoping deep down, you'd have a--

ARCHIE G.

A what?

DAWN R.

I don't know. A feeling of... certitude. You'd snap off a quick answer like "Of course, it was natural! Is it natural for a flower to embrace a sunbeam?" Something lamely poetic like that.

ARCHIE G.

Dawn, as government workers, we exercise total freedom of choice. So yes, I chose you. Seriously. That's why we're better than the lowly citizens we manipulate.

DAWN R.

Are we? If we're not given obstacles, how are we growing?

ARCHIE G.

We do have obstacles. They're just more subtle, more organic. But we're miles ahead. That's why we were chosen for our work.

DAWN R.

I don't know. I feel the same as I did before I was recruited. Not much growth.

Archie G. looks at Dawn R. with concern.

ARCHIE G.

Do you have... certitude?

DAWN R.

I thought I did. Then I was just watching you chew.

She mimics the methodical munching, then giggles.

ARCHIE G.

That's weird. Why are you watching me like that? Makes me self-conscious.

DAWN R.

Yeah, sorry. Occupational hazard. I do a lot of watching.

ARCHIE G.

Something wrong with the way I chew?

DAWN R.

No, no. Well, you're so deliberate; efficient. I mean-- I just don't know.

ARCHIE G.

Don't know what?

DAWN R.
If I can watch you masticate like
that for the rest of my life.

ARCHIE G.
We've been on marriage track for
six months, Dawn. Now's a helluva
time to tell me you don't like how
I chew.

DAWN R.
Or how you cut your meat.

Archie puts his fork down.

ARCHIE G.
Are you just trying to instigate an
obstacle? Like, because that's your
job or something?

DAWN R.
You've had it pretty easy, Archie
G.

ARCHIE G.
So my parents were happily married.
I didn't get into a car wreck. I'm
good at my job. So what?

DAWN R.
So what, indeed.

Dawn picks up her wine glass and takes a gulp.

DAWN R.
Now Joe B., on the other hand...

Archie stares at her with squinting eyes.

ARCHIE G.
Sorry I'm not like the mopes you
mess with.

Dawn R., rubs her eyes and sighs.

INT. OBSTACLE OFFICE - DAY

Dawn R. monitors Joe B., now in a studio apartment filled
with boxes, sitting on a cot and staring out the window.

Spencer M. enters.

SPENCER M.
How goes it with Joe B.?

DAWN R.
Sir, can't something good happen to him?

SPENCER M.
Like what?

DAWN R.
I don't know. Win the lottery. Meet a nice woman.

SPENCER M.
That's not in his Life Plan. At least not yet.

DAWN R.
Yeah, but I feel like he's going to give up soon.

SPENCER M.
Really?

DAWN R.
He seems suicidal.

SPENCER M.
And what gave you this impression?

DAWN R.
He just lies in bed all day in his little studio apartment, staring at the ceiling. Sometimes he utters, "it's not fair," or "why me?" Things of that nature.

SPENCER M.
If he commits suicide than he's not an Overcomer. But he would provide contrast for those who do persevere. Those citizens will demonstrate what it means to last through the hard times.

DAWN R.
Maybe some people aren't built for hard times.

SPENCER M.
Just keep following the Plan.

DAWN R.

Yes sir.

Spencer leaves.

INT. BREAK ROOM - DAY

A bank of mechanized mini-restaurants and coffee kiosks line the wall.

Dawn R. sits at a table on her lunch break, eating a salad. She picks up her phone.

DAWN R.

Hey, Archie. It's me. Look, I was in a weird mood last night. I just want to apologize. There's nothing wrong with the way you chew. You're just thorough, that's all. I mean, you've seen me devour a pint of Rocky Road like a peckish primitive. Who am I to talk?

She laughs.

DAWN R.

Anyway, I know you're busy at work. So... I'll talk to you when I talk to you. Okay, honey? Bye.

She puts her phone down. Flashes an uncertain smile.

INT. OBSTACLE OFFICE - DAY

Dawn R. returns to the office and nods at a temp fill-in, OSCAR P.(22), studious.

DAWN R.

I'm back. Thanks.

He nods, grabs his half-eaten sandwich and leaves. Dawn checks out the large monitor. Joe B. fiddles with a large length of rope.

DAWN R.

Hey Oscar? Where did Joe... ?

But Oscar's already gone. Dawn rewinds the footage. It shows Joe B. at Home Depot, buying rope.

DAWN R.

You're not... ?

Joe has fashioned a noose out of the rope. He looks up at a rafter.

DAWN R.

Wait! NO!

Dawn opens up her phone.

DAWN R.

I need Hover transport from
Government Center to 115 N. Pass
Ave, immediately! Official
business. Yes, I'll be out front in
a minute.

Dawn looks about the room. Should she leave her post? She sticks her head out the door.

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

No one's there. Dawn bursts out of her office, running for the stairs.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dawn races out of the building, past the fountain to a dock where Hover-plane transports wait. One lights up as she approaches. Its doors open and she enters.

The Hover lifts up and doing a U-turn, heads for the city proper.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe B. wraps the rope around a rafter. He tightens a knot, the noose dangling.

EXT. SOUTHSIDE NEW CHICAGO - APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The Hover stops in front of the building. The economically challenged CITIZENS walking by, stare at the fancy transport.

INT. HOVER - DAY

The DRIVER, an AI robot, surveys the neighborhood.

AI DRIVER

Are you sure you wish to disembark
in this dangerous neighborhood?

DAWN R.
Yes, can you wait?

AI DRIVER
I will wait.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe B. pulls a chair over to the noose. He steps up on it.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dawn R. hits a buzzer marked Landlord.

DAWN R.
Please let me in. I'm with the
government. Official business.

LANDLORD (V.O.)
Where's your badge?

She holds it up to a monitor. The door buzzes.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Dawn R. emerges atop a staircase and runs down the dark hallway.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe fastens the noose around his neck. Tears stream down his face.

JOE B.
To whom it may concern. The life of
Joe B., horribly unfair as it has
been, as endlessly painful as it
has been, ends today. You have to
admit, Powers That Be, I kept up a
good front and did my best. I tried
not to hurt anyone. But I have no
family, no wife, no Mitzi. So if
you've got something to say, say
it.

(beat)
Nothing? Okay. Sorry, but I've just
reached the end of my newly
purchased rope. And so, goodbye.

Joe lifts up his right foot. Then stops. He looks out his window. Outside kids can be seen playing stick ball in the street. He hears a bird SINGING.

He pulls his head out of the noose.

JOE B.
I... I can't.

He steps off the chair.

JOE B.
No matter how hard it gets.

At this moment, there's a KNOCK at his door. Joe's eyes go wild. He exhales a breath.

JOE B.
Go away. I'm busy.

DAWN R. (O.S.)
Joe B., I know what you've been through! Please don't hang your self!

JOE B.
Who? How do you know-- ?

DAWN R. (O.S.)
Please, don't.

JOE B.
Why? WHY SHOULDN'T I?

EXT. DOOR - DAY

Dawn thinks.

DAWN R.
Because. I... I have some good news for you.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

JOE B.
You do?

Joe considers for a moment, then he slowly goes to the door.

JOE B.
Finally, something good in the life of Joe B. It sure has been a while.

Joe opens the door. Dawn R. stands there, tears streaming down her face.

DAWN R.
Oh, I'm so glad I got here in time.

Joe stares at Dawn for a moment. She can't help herself-- she gives him a hug. He slowly pulls her back.

JOE B.
Do I know you?

DAWN R.
I'm just a person who was walking by... and I heard you in there.

JOE B.
You heard me?

DAWN R.
You were... tying your rope loud.

JOE B.
You heard that? I guess it was a complicated knot.

DAWN R.
No, that's not true. I've... I've known you for years.

JOE B.
What?

Joe searches about. Then he grabs the chair from underneath the noose.

JOE B.
Please, sit down.

She looks at the noose and then sits down. He grabs a couple of boxes and sits down on them.

DAWN R.
My name is Dawn R.

JOE B.
I'm--

DAWN R.
I know. Joe B.

JOE B.
I'm sorry. I just don't understand.

DAWN R.
I want to help you.

JOE B.
The white coat-- I get it now. You
want to take me to the laughing
academy.

DAWN R.
I'm not with the mental institute.

JOE B.
You going to arrest me then?

DAWN R.
I'm not with law enforcement.

JOE B.
But even so, how would you have
known I was... ?

DAWN R.
It's a long story. But I know
things about you.

Joe rubs his forehead, he's overwhelmed. Awkward beat.

JOE B.
You said you have good news.

DAWN R.
Oh, yeah.

JOE B.
What is it?

DAWN R.
I wanted you to know... you have a
friend.

JOE B.
That's the good news?

DAWN R.
A real friend.

JOE B.
Who?

DAWN R.
Me!

JOE B.
The only real friend I had was
Mitzi. But she--

Joe fights back a sob.

DAWN R.
Yeah, she conked out. She was a
pretty old dog, Joe B.

JOE B.
I had her before I even met...

DAWN R.
Mary. I know. Your wife wasn't
faithful.

Joe gets up, angry.

JOE B.
How do you know all this? Am I
under some kind of surveillance? Do
you have cameras in my room?

He looks about for a camera, but can't find one.

DAWN R.
I... can't say.

JOE B.
I knew it! But why? I'm not some
kind of subversive! My record's
clean. I conform to the laws like a
good citizen. I don't curse out the
Powers. Once, I was a litterbug,
pretty bad one I'll admit, but I
broke that habit. I'm not even--

DAWN R.
Listen, I just came to say... I'm
your friend. And I know things look
tough. They look worse than tough,
they're awful. Horrible. Have been
since you were a kid.

JOE B.
How would you know about my
childhood? I don't believe you!

Dawn R. produces a mini-drive that flashes a screen that
hangs before them.

It plays all the major events of Joe B.'s childhood. We see
in quick montage:

-Joe's PARENTS swerve off the road, smashing their car into a telephone pole. In the backseat, FIVE-YEAR-OLD JOE sits unharmed in his special seat.

-Five-year-old Joe tearfully at their funeral.

-Five-year-old Joe in an orphanage lying in a bunk in a room full of other ORPHANS.

-TEN-YEAR-OLD JOE in a foster home being beaten with a broom by an ANGRY STEPMOTHER.

-FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD JOE being jumped by bullies at school.

She stops playing the quick childhood recap and puts the drive back into her pocket.

JOE B.
Geez, Louise. You people have been following me since... ?

DAWN R.
I've seen all you had to endure.

JOE B.
At least there were a few happy years at the agency and with Mary. And then...

DAWN R.
It was bad again. But Joe, I just wanted to say...

JOE B.
Yeah?

DAWN R.
Hang in there! Strange as it sounds, this is all for the best.

JOE B.
What?

DAWN R.
All things work together for good to those who follow the Powers That Be.

Dawn looks at her smart watch.

DAWN R.
Damn, I have to go.

She gets up and walks to the door.

JOE B.

Wait!

DAWN R.

What?

JOE B.

We're... friends now?

DAWN R.

Yes. But please, take down the noose. Don't try--

JOE B.

I won't. It was stupid.

DAWN R.

I meant what I said. Now, I have to run!

JOE B.

Okay, bye.

She opens the door and races out.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Joe sticks out his head as she makes her way to the staircase.

JOE B.

Will I see you again?

She stops.

DAWN R.

Why?

JOE B.

I don't know.

DAWN R.

Do you want to?

JOE B.

Yeah. I mean, you're nice. No one's ever told me to hang in there. Although, that was kinda weird with the noose still up.

He laughs. Dawn looks around for an atmospheric spray nozzle on the ceiling. There aren't any.

DAWN R.
You're saying that... naturally?
You don't feel... artificially
prompted?

JOE B.
No. I just felt like saying that. I
mean, I think so. You're really
cute. And kind.

DAWN R.
I gotta go!

She heads down the stairs.

JOE B.
Okay. Well. You know where I live!

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe slowly closes the door. His head conveys a variety of
expressions, surprise, confusion and then a glow of
affection.

JOE B.
Whoever you really are, pretty
angel, thanks.

He walks over and starts taking apart the noose.

EXT. CITY - DAY

Her hover zooms through the traffic.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dawn races past the sign-in desk, barreling for the
elevators.

INT. OBSTACLE OFFICE - DAY

She enters the office and slams the door shut. She looks
around. Her coffee is right where she left it. Nothing looks
different.

On the monitor, Joe tosses the rope into the trash. She
sighs.

DAWN R.
Thank you, Joe.

Spencer M. enters.

SPENCER M.
Dawn R., you're back!

DAWN R.
Sir?

SPENCER M.
I came by a few minutes ago and you weren't at your desk. No one was monitoring Joe B.

DAWN R.
Just... getting a snack from the break room.

SPENCER M.
Ah.

DAWN R.
I guess I was enjoying that pudding pop longer than I should have.

SPENCER M.
You can always get Oscar P. to cover for you.

DAWN R.
I know. Just lost track of time.

Spencer checks the monitor.

SPENCER M.
Dawn R., you said our citizen was suicidal.

DAWN R.
He seemed to be.

SPENCER M.
Well, he's humming a tune as he irons a work shirt. I understand, he has a job interview coming up.

He turns and smiles at her.

SPENCER M.
And you were so doubtful! I haven't seen the endgame to his Life Plan but something tells me, Joe B. is going to be a major Overcomer!

DAWN R.
Yes sir. He's doing better than we--
I-- expected.

He walks to the door. Then stops.

SPENCER M.
Feeling it?

DAWN R.
Feeling what?

SPENCER M.
The teachable moment.

DAWN R.
I was taught something in the
moment? Let me think... Oh.

SPENCER M.
Aha!

DAWN R.
You mean to trust the Life
Planning? Yes sir.

SPENCER M.
Good work, Dawn R. I remain
impressed. That promotion becomes
clearer on the horizon.

DAWN R.
Thanks.

Spencer M. looks again at the monitor.

SPENCER M.
Is that rope in his trash
container?

DAWN R.
I didn't notice.

SPENCER M.
Probably used it to tie up boxes
when he moved in. Good day, Dawn R.

DAWN R.
Good day.

Spencer leaves. For the first time we see Dawn smile. A real,
relaxed, authentic, happy-to-be-alive smile.

DAWN R.
See, Joe B? All you needed was a
little encouragement.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe stops ironing and looks up at the ceiling.

JOE B.
Maybe I have entertained an angel
unaware. Angels can see everything.

Joe walks about in a circle as he looks up.

JOE B.
If you're watching, Dawn. Just want
you to know. I'm not giving up.

He stops and returns to his ironing board.

JOE B.
In it for the long haul, I guess.

INT. DAWN R.'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dawn's shrink, Margo, follows her around as Dawn paces her
condo.

MARGO M.
I don't like to hear this. You and
Archie are on marriage track.

DAWN R.
Then why do I feel less than
certain about him? I mean, yes, I
still have feelings. But enough for
a commitment?

MARGO M.
It's this Joe B. He's got you
playing the Clara Barton savior or
something.

DAWN R.
Nah. Joe's just a nice guy who's
endured a lifetime of crummy
obstacles. He's got, I don't know,
character.

MARGO M.

And Archie G. doesn't? He's a prime mate who matches with you in every category--

DAWN R.

I don't want my marriage to be driven by analytics and algorithms!

The DOOR BELL RINGS. A tiny monitor shows Archie standing outside.

DAWN R.

Speak of the devil. It's Archibald. Gotta go.

MARGO M.

Be patient with him.

DAWN R.

I'll be how I want to be with him, Margo.

MARGO M.

So next week, same-- ?

DAWN R.

I think I need a break from the analysis, Margo. I'll get in touch when I'm ready to resume.

MARGO M.

But Dawn R.--

DAWN R.

Bye.

Dawn waves away the screen and it disappears. She opens the door. Archie hands her flowers and smiles.

DAWN R.

This is a surprise.

ARCHIE G.

I got your voice message from the other day. And thought I'd show you how I feel.

DAWN R.

Impromptu. I like it. And those flowers are lovely.

ARCHIE G.

Had dinner yet?

DAWN R.
As a matter of fact, no.

ARCHIE G.
Then let's go. I've got
reservations at the Cafe Curious.

DAWN R.
Give me a sec.

She runs into the other room. Archie puts the flowers in a vase.

EXT. DAWN R.'S CONDO - NIGHT

Archie opens the door to a hover. Dawn climbs inside.

EXT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

They enter the fancy dinner club, which is in a high tech adult playground area of the city, VR gaming arcades, casinos, live theater, robotic theater, holograph concerts.

INT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

Dawn laughs while Archie enjoys their pre-entree soup by loudly slurping.

DAWN R.
It was so exhilarating in a way. I mean, Spencer had no clue I was gone for twenty minutes! He's supposed to be this genius IQ and he couldn't tell--

ARCHIE G.
Yeah, but...

DAWN R.
What?

Archie slurps from his spoon again, loudly. Dawn R. looks at him, obviously peeved, but restrains herself.

ARCHIE G.
That was against the rules. You're not supposed to leave like that without a sub.

DAWN R.
I know. But if you knew the reason
why.

ARCHIE G.
Must've been a good reason.

DAWN R.
It was.

ARCHIE G.
So... where did you go off for
twenty minutes?

Archie resumes his slurping.

DAWN R.
Well, to tell you the truth. It was
a matter of life or death.

ARCHIE G.
Your mom sick?

DAWN R.
No, no, mom's okay.

ARCHIE G.
Your sis?

DAWN R.
No, she and her baby are doing
fine. My brother-in-law is the
best. You met him.

ARCHIE G.
Yeah.

Archie slurps the last of his soup.

ARCHIE G.
Then why did you leave your post?

DAWN R.
You don't have to be so
authoritarian about it.

ARCHIE G.
I take our work very seriously.

DAWN R.
I do too.

ARCHIE G.
So why... ?

DAWN R.
It's really nothing I can talk
about.

ARCHIE G.
So it is about a citizen?

DAWN R.
Maybe.

ARCHIE G.
We're not allowed to get involved
with the citizens in our care.

DAWN R.
I don't like your tone of voice.

ARCHIE G.
Well, we're not. Sorry, am I
chewing too meticulously?

DAWN R.
I said I was sorry about that.

ARCHIE G.
It's this Joe B. you're always
talking about.

DAWN R.
What about him?

ARCHIE G.
You're obsessed with him.

DAWN R.
I'm concerned. Look, he was
suicidal and about to hang himself.

ARCHIE G.
So?

DAWN R.
What do you mean, so?

ARCHIE G.
Maybe that's his Life Plan!

DAWN R.
Death isn't a Life Plan, hello!!!

ARCHIE G.
I can't believe it.

DAWN R.
Can't believe what?

ARCHIE G.
He'd be dead now if it wasn't for
you. And I wouldn't have to hear
about him constantly.

DAWN R.
Did you just say that?

ARCHIE G.
Yeah, I did! He's just another hard-
luck citizen.

Dawn stares up at the ceiling. She can't believe her ears.

DAWN R.
You know what? I can't see us going
on any fur--

ARCHIE G.
Waiter! Check!

DAWN R.
But Archie, I--

ARCHIE G.
No, no, no, no, no. I'm dumping you
before you get a chance to dump me.
We're finished!

The WAITER comes over. Archie flashes a barcode on his hand.
The check is paid instantly.

ARCHIE G.
And wrap my filet mignon to go.
I'll be eating it later.
Methodically.

Archie gets up and follows the Waiter. Dawn sits, stunned.
She thinks for a moment. Then pulls out her phone.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joe sits at a table reading his antique book on farming. His
phone rings.

JOE B.
Yes?

DAWN R. (V.O.)
Joe B.?

JOE B.
Yes. Is this... Dawn?

DAWN R. (V.O.)
Yeah.

Joe stands up, excited.

JOE B.
Hey, I just got back from my
interview. It went really well! I'm
not sure I'm crazy about the job,
but work is--

DAWN R.
That's great, Joe.

INT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

Dawn pushes her soup bowl away when the Waiter returns.

DAWN R.
Listen, I know this is weird. And
kind of sudden. But the night's
early and my date just abandoned
me.

JOE B.
Oh, I'm sorry.

DAWN R.
So, I was wondering... ?

JOE B.
You were won-- oh! Well, yeah. I
mean, I could be ready in a few--
of course that depends on where
you're at.

DAWN R.
I'm at the Cafe Curious.

JOE B.
Oh. Swankadero District. I know
where that is. Never been. Never
invited.

DAWN R.
I mean, you don't have to.

JOE B.
No, no. I'll be there. Give me fifteen.

DAWN R.
I shouldn't be doing this but tonight I'm in a what-the-hell mood.

JOE B.
It's okay. This will be good. I have a ton of questions. I'll see you soon.

Dawn R. puts down her phone. Then waves the Waiter back.

DAWN R.
Can you bring me a martini?

WAITER
Yes, ma'am.

DAWN R.
I'm expecting someone so, no trouble at the door please.

She hands him a large digi-coin.

WAITER
Oh, thank you. His name?

DAWN R.
Joe B. He's a Level B citizen but he's good people.

WAITER
I understand, Miss R.

DAWN R.
I'm not sure he's allowed and I'm probably--

WAITER
You have freedom of choice.

DAWN R.
Yes. I do. Thank you.

The Waiter smiles at the coin and rushes away.

EXT. CAFE CURIOUS - LATER

Archie G. stands outside waiting for his hover, talking on his phone.

Suddenly, an old EV cab pulls up. Joe B. climbs out. He pays off the driver with his code and goes to the DOORMAN, a snooty looking guy with a clipboard.

JOE B.

Hi.

DOORMAN

Hold on.

JOE B.

Oh. Uh. Am I allowed inside?

DOORMAN

Level B citizens usually aren't.
But Dawn R. has arranged otherwise.

JOE B.

Great.

DOORMAN

Please conduct yourself in a manner
worthy of the establishment.

JOE B.

Sure, sure.

Joe B. enters. Archie G. walks over to the Doorman.

ARCHIE G.

Is that Joe B.?

DOORMAN

Level B citizen given special
clearance.

ARCHIE G.

Son of a bitch! She's been cheating
on me! I knew it!

At this moment, Archie's hover pulls up. He leaps inside.

INT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

Joe B. looks about and then sees Dawn R. He waves broadly.
She smiles and looks down, a little embarrassed.

JOE B.
Hey, Dawn.

DAWN R.
Glad you could make it, Joe.

JOE B.
Wow, this is pretty snazzy. I mean
I used to take my wife out but in
our little suburb, it was more of
an Applebee's kind of deal.

Joe B. looks at the AI bartender.

JOE B.
AI mixologists!

DAWN R.
It's one of my favorite dinner
clubs.

JOE B.
And you... you look sensational!

DAWN R.
Thank you, Joe.

JOE B.
I mean. Wow. Great without that
white coat.

DAWN R.
I hate that coat.

JOE B.
Work uniform, I suppose.

DAWN R.
Yeah.

The Waiter approaches.

WAITER
May I bring you a drink?

JOE B.
Oh boy. Yeah, I sure could use one.
A scotch and water, please.

He leaves.

JOE B.
So...

DAWN R.
You said on the phone, you had
questions.

JOE B.
Sure. A ton.

There's an awkward moment.

DAWN R.
I'm ready to answer anything.

JOE B.
Okay. When you showed up yesterday.
You were like an angel. Just coming
at the exact moment when I needed
someone. Is that who you really-- ?

DAWN R.
How are you feeling, Joe?

JOE B.
Oh, so much better. I can't believe
I got so down that I even
considered-- I mean, that's not me.
Not usually.

DAWN R.
I know.

JOE B.
That's right. You know about me.
Tell me... exactly how do you know
about me?

DAWN R.
It's my job to know you.

JOE B.
So this is a government spy thing?

DAWN R.
Not the way you think.

JOE B.
How should I think about it?

DAWN R.
I know this sounds crazy, but we've
been planning your life. The
Powers. The Planners.

JOE B.

I don't get it. Who'd plan the dumpster fire, epic fail, flopperoo of a life I've had to endure? Not sure that guy should get a raise.

They both laugh.

JOE B.

I mean, it's been a regular pilgrimage of suffering.

DAWN R.

I know. It doesn't make much sense to me either.

JOE B.

Can you try to explain?

DAWN R.

I'll try.

She sips from her drink.

EXT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

As it gets late, a line forms in front of the club. Dancers want in.

INT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

Joe and Dawn laugh, their hands occasionally touching across the table.

JOE B.

I just don't peg you for an elite gov worker. That is to say, you don't look like you'd be involved in sabotaging someone's life to the point--

DAWN R.

I don't sabotage, Joe. I'm in obstacles.

JOE B.

Okay.

DAWN R.

The obstacles contribute to the trials which beset you... for your growth.

JOE B.
How much growth can a guy take?

DAWN R.
I get the feeling they have big plans for you, Joe. I mean, more than just becoming an Overcomer.

JOE B.
Really? Me?

DAWN R.
You're resilient. And decent. And humble. And positive despite--

At this moment, the dance floor opens up. The DJ plays a romantic song.

JOE B.
I like this one.

DAWN R.
Me too.

JOE B.
Wanna?

He gets up and waves her along.

DAWN R.
Sure.

They approach the dance floor and slow dance to the sultry song.

OTHER COUPLES join them.

As Joe and Dawn take the center of the floor, the DJ pushes a button. A large bubble comes down and envelops them.

The bubble lifts up with them inside, dancing, hovering above the dance floor. On a large screen behind the dance floor, images of the starry sky emerge.

Joe and Dawn appear to be floating in the universe. Joe stops dancing and holding Dawn's hand, looks at the stars.

JOE B.
This is beyond wonderful.

DAWN R.
I feel so... I don't know. Alive.

Joe looks at her, takes her in his arms and kisses her.

DAWN R.
What are you... ?

JOE B.
What comes natural.

As they tenderly embrace, the bubble floats even higher through the starry backdrop.

EXT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

A government hover lands in front of the club. Archie gets out followed by Spencer and two ARMED SECURITY STAFF. They march past the Doorman who steps aside.

INT. CAFE CURIOUS - NIGHT

Archie barges to the edge of the stage and points upward. Spencer and the SECURITY MEN join him.

ARCHIE G.
Get 'em!

From their bubble, Joe and Dawn look down.

DAWN R.
Looks like the fun's over.

JOE B.
It's not over for us, I hope.

DAWN R.
I'm afraid it is, Joe. I'm not allowed to fraternize with you.

JOE B.
This isn't fraternizing. This is something more.

DAWN R.
I know.

The bubble starts to descend.

JOE B.
I hope it's not good bye but...

She kisses him again. The CROWD APPLAUDS.

DJ (ON SPEAKER)
Looks like the Powers are about to
terminate true love! Must be
forbidden fruit!

As the bubble lands, it pops. Archie, Spencer and the
Security detail approach.

SPENCER M.
I'm so disappointed in you, Dawn R.

DAWN R.
I'm sorry.

ARCHIE G.
And our marriage track has been
sidelined permanently! Hope you're
happy.

SPENCER M.
Citizen Joe B., Security will
escort you back to your dwelling.
Wait there until further orders.

JOE B.
She didn't do anything wrong. We
were just--

SPENCER M.
I know what you were just doing.
Throwing your future away. You
could be an Overcomer.

Joe B. looks down.

JOE B.
I don't even know what that is.

SPENCER M.
Now you may never know, sadly.

Joe follows the Security Men.

SPENCER M.
You're coming with me, Miss R.

ARCHIE G.
I don't ever want to see you again!

DAWN R.
I shouldn't have led you on.

ARCHIE G.
No, you shouldn't have!

SPENCER M.

Take the situation for what it's worth, Archie G. This is good for your growth.

ARCHIE G.

I'm growing so high, I'm towering over you, Dawn R.!

Spencer leads Dawn out of the club. Security takes Joe B. away. Archie G. grabs a drink off the bar and starts scoping out the ladies.

EXT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Security Detail pushes Joe B. toward his lower income building.

SECURITY

Stay away from government elite, citizen.

JOE B.

Okay, okay. Jeez. I don't think we were doing anything--

SECURITY

You know nothing; you say nothing. Now get inside and resume your life.

The Security Men climb into a hover and leave.

JOE B.

I know plenty. But I don't understand any of it. That's the problem.

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

The Command Center is immense, like a war room. Monitors float on large banks on the wall. There's a BUZZING of activity.

MINIONS work satellite surveillance, take calls from sub departments and chart citizen's life paths on a wall to wall map of New America.

SPENCER M.

Now, Miss R., please sit down.

Dawn R. takes a seat in a floating reclining chair. He points to a hovering screen.

SPENCER M.

A history lesson in brief. After the Fall, the world was in complete chaos, then the Powers That Be took over and tried to build a better society. The people were obviously confused. They needed help. Direction. Centuries of self-destruction took its toll.

The screen plays images of war, of destroyed cities.

A riot breaks out in front of the White House. Fires rage.

SPENCER M.

Sadly, we were the only country to build a dome Before the Fall. We're Earth's last chance.

Workers begin construction of the Dome. We see the placement of the dome from an outer space vantage. A large crane hovers and then drops it over the country.

SPENCER M. (V.O.)

The Powers that Be decided that the only answer was to control every aspect of the citizens' lives. Left to their own devices, the pattern would repeat. So communities were built. Citizens lived in smart homes. Businesses sprang up. Life resumed.

CITIZENS enjoy the technology in their homes. Breakfast is made by robots. Gliding walkways lead them from the kitchen out the door.

CITIZENS take transports to their jobs in the city.

CITIZENS walks their dogs in dog parks. CHILDREN play baseball in sand lots.

CITIZENS enjoy museums and other amusements/art facilities.

SPENCER M.

The Life Planning bureau was formed. But how do you fundamentally improve a race of people that had become lazy, self-destructive, devoid of purpose?

YOUNG PEOPLE are brought into the large LIFE PLANNING building.

Inside an auditorium, they are given white coats.

The large complex features offices filled with computer banks, and intricate technology. Life Planning is conducted via various departments: OBSTACLES, COINCIDENCE, TEAM CHAOS, DOCTRINE OF FAVOR, etc.

SPENCER M. (V.O.)

Trials and hardship were the answer. The obstacles that help form character. Much like body builders embrace the weight resistance that makes human muscles grow and expand, we used the tension of ordinary life, to build up humanity. Soon, we had a bustling society. All went according to plan. That is until you broke the status quo last night.

DAWN R.

I know.

SPENCER M.

Surely, you realize the import of the situation?

DAWN R.

Yeah. But you don't understand! I had to! Joe B. would've died otherwise. And all that work--

SPENCER M.

Wait a second, Dawn R. You didn't stop him from killing himself.

DAWN R.

What?

SPENCER M.

Your interruption was completely unnecessary.

He waves at a screen and it replays the scene in Joe B.'s apartment:

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe lifts up his right foot. Then stops. He pulls his head out of the noose.

JOE B.

I... I can't. No matter how hard it gets.

He steps off the chair.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Spencer turns to Dawn R.

DAWN R.

But, I thought I had to--

SPENCER M.

You underestimated Joe B. He has the perseverance it takes to be a real Overcomer. He's an optimist nonpareil.

DAWN R.

So, I didn't...

SPENCER M.

No, you didn't save his life. He owes you nothing. But you may have ruined our whole operation in Sector 12. If word gets out about your interruption, the citizens will become restless. They won't want the obstacles in their lives. They'll resume the previous soft existence that led to humanity's downfall.

DAWN R.

I guess I don't understand.

SPENCER M.

Don't understand what?

DAWN R.

In this perfect society, why do we need things like divorce? Car crashes? Crime?

SPENCER M.

People need to make mistakes in order to learn.

(MORE)

SPENCER M. (CONT'D)

That's why we have things like divorce... and crime. There have to be criminals so the virtuous can know who-- what they are. There has to be contrast.

DAWN R.

Okay. How can this be utopia when there's a class structure?

SPENCER M.

Nobody said we'd arrived at Utopia. We are creating Overcomers, m' dear!

DAWN R.

Okay. So... We're a work in progress.

SPENCER M.

Some people will rebel against their life plan, even though it's there for their own good. They'll never grow. They will resort to drugs, alcohol, suicide.

DAWN R.

Free will still exists even though their lives are planned.

SPENCER M.

To some degree. If they can't grow then they help provide friction for those who can.

DAWN R.

Their lives controlled to that purpose.

SPENCER M.

Everything is for growth. A piano falling down some stairs, stepping into a deep puddle of mud, an annoying neighbor. You should know this. You work in obstacles.

DAWN R.

Yeah, I do intellectually. But getting a handle on it all...

SPENCER M.

You've seen the misery when the Life Plan doesn't take hold.

(MORE)

SPENCER M. (CONT'D)

But if growth does blossom, then the plan continues. And there's hope for another Overcomer.

DAWN R.

And then when you've got all your Overcomers... what then?

SPENCER M.

Aha!

DAWN R.

I hate when you say that. Means I won't get an answer.

Dawn R. gets up.

DAWN R.

I'll resign my position. I didn't have sufficient faith.

She walks to the door.

SPENCER M.

I don't know if that's entirely necessary. Your case will come up before review and your excellent work history might mitigate things.

Dawn R. looks up.

DAWN R.

But I blew it. Big time. And I even scared off Archie over a stupid infatuation with--

SPENCER M.

Archie G. would take you back. Of that, I'm certain.

DAWN R.

And Joe B.?

SPENCER M.

We'll schedule a memory drain next week. After we bring him in for some tests on him. See how this intrusion of circumstance effected his psyche.

DAWN R.

You'd wipe out his memory of me?

SPENCER M.

Of course. Along with all the new thoughts and conjectures your discussions provoked.

Dawn R. looks up at the monitor at Joe B.

DAWN R.

When would that be?

SPENCER M.

In a day or so. Give him some time to recoup from the shock of all of this.

DAWN R.

I'd hate to think I stopped him from Overcoming.

SPENCER M.

Go home. Get some rest. Tomorrow will take care of itself. And Dawn R.?

DAWN R.

Yes?

SPENCER M.

Never doubt the Powers That Be.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Dawn R. walks slowly across the pedestrian bridge linking the government building and her condo tower.

She looks up at the speckled sky. She imagines she sees the bubble from the dance floor. Imagines she sees herself and Joe B. dancing inside of it among the clouds and stars.

DAWN R.

It felt... real.

INT. DAWN R.'S CONDO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dawn makes dinner, another salad. A BUZZING SOUND.

VOICE (V.O.)

Dawn R.? You have a video message from earlier.

DAWN R.

Play it.

A screen hovers before her. It's Archie G.

ARCHIE G.

Hey Dawn. Listen, Spencer M. told me about the situation. And that you want to get back together. I'd be open to it. But first, you'd have to listen to some of my demands. First of all, no criticism of how I eat. Second--

DAWN R.

Delete!

VOICE (V.O.)

You haven't heard the full message.

DAWN R.

I've heard enough.

VOICE (V.O.)

Very well.

The screen disappears. Dawn walks to the window. She waves at a digital audio setup. It PLAYS the same song that she and Joe danced to at the Cafe Curious.

She sways and then dances to the song. Then she waves at the audio center and it stops.

She picks up her phone, punches a button.

INT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joe B. looks uncertainly at the phone. He answers it.

JOE B.

Hello?

DAWN R.

It's Dawn.

Joe hesitates. Should he even speak to Dawn?

DAWN R. (V.O.)

If you don't want to talk to me, I get it. It could mean more trouble.

His eyes flit about in thought and then he plants the cell to his ear.

JOE B.

I do want to talk to you.

DAWN R. (V.O.)
I'm glad.

INT. DAWN R.'S CONDO - NIGHT

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

DAWN R.
Look, I need to see you. I have a plan.

JOE B.
Okay. But they're watching me.

DAWN R.
I know. Meet me at the Mecha Mavericks football game tomorrow. I'll have a ticket for you at the box office.

Dawn pulls up another hover screen. She wiggles her fingers and tickets are purchased.

JOE B.
Oh terrific! I love the robot games.

DAWN R.
Great.

JOE B.
What's the, er, nature of the discussion?

DAWN R.
It's about... our future.

JOE B.
Like, as a couple?

DAWN R.
Well, yes. But also as people. You should be living with total freedom of choice, too, Joe.

JOE B.
I guess.

DAWN R.
I'll send you the ticket codes.

JOE B.
Oh. Okay. Uh, I'll see you
tomorrow.

DAWN R.
I'll be waiting in the stands at
2pm.

JOE B.
Okay. Nice to hear from you.

DAWN R.
You too, Joe. See you then.

She puts the phone down. Joe B. looks up at his ceiling in
worry.

INT. OBSTACLE OFFICE - NIGHT

Luckily, Wendy P., the night time fill-in for Dawn R.,
snoozes in her chair.

Inside the monitor, Joe B. turns off the light and goes to
bed.

JOE B.
Hope you didn't see that, whoever
you guys are that are planning my
life.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

FANS of mechanized football fill the stadium parking lots,
enjoying the tailgate activities.

EXT. STANDS - DAY

Dawn sits in the very middle of a crowded seating area.
There's an empty space for Joe.

She looks about at the various drone cameras hovering above.

Finally, Joe enters at the bottom steps. He waves with a big
gesture at Dawn, who shrinks a little in embarrassment. Joe's
like a human golden retriever. She gives a tiny wave back.

Joe works his way to her, pushing past the other SPECTATORS
before sitting down.

JOE B.
Thanks for the ticket!

DAWN R.

It's okay.

JOE B.

I hear the Mecha Mavericks are going to slaughter the other team. Their AI coach has the highest rating--

DAWN R.

Joe, I need to ask you something.

JOE B.

Sure.

Joe looks around.

DAWN R.

The Powers are more concerned right now with crowd control. They aren't looking for us. And I left Obstacles early, so no one is watching us.

JOE B.

What did you want to ask, Dawn?

DAWN R.

Well, do you like your life? I mean, do you like living in your situation in the world?

JOE B.

I had a call-back on the interview. Looks like I'll be working again. So... it's not too bad.

DAWN R.

But what would make you happy?

Joe looks down as the two ROBOT TEAMS take the field.

JOE B.

I don't want to freak you out, but you would make me happy.

Dawn smiles.

DAWN R.

And I wasn't sure before, but I think you would make me happy.

JOE B.

Really?

DAWN R.

Yeah. See, I waffle a lot in my job. Sometimes I think it's great, I'm doing something meaningful. Other times, I think it's awful, bothering and hurting people. And the idea of the Powers and all of that--

A touchdown! Half of the CROWD CHEERS. The other half BOOS. There's some tension directly in front of Dawn and Joe's section. Gas from spouts sprays down from the overhang.

JOE B.

Things are getting a little chippy.

DAWN R.

Atmosphere will handle it. They'll be tranquil in seconds.

A little higher up to the left sits Mary H., Joe's ex-wife, and her new husband, Ronald H. Mary watches the action with binoculars.

MARY H.

Hey!

RONALD H.

What, honey?

MARY H.

That's my ex-husband down there.

RONALD H.

Oh yeah? Wonder if he's a Mavs fan.

MARY H.

And he's with an attractive woman.

RONALD H.

Let the bastard enjoy himself.

MARY H.

She looks smart.

RONALD H.

How can you tell?

MARY H.

She's got that elite look.

RONALD H.

You sound jealous.

MARY H.
Me? Hah! I just don't like to see
him so happy after our divorce.

RONALD H.
It's been weeks.

MARY H.
Wait until she sees Joe's studio
apartment.

RONALD H.
Dunzo.

MARY H.
You know, he's late with the
remainder of my divorce settlement!

She gets up and makes her way through the stands.

RONALD H.
Mary! Don't!!

JOE AND DAWN'S SEATS

JOE B.
I don't know. If I had to, I'd
probably live off the land. Sounds
corny but raise livestock, have a
ranch or a farm.

DAWN R.
No, that's great. Organic. Simple.
Real.

JOE B.
Whoa, another touchdown! Those bots
are wired tight!

DAWN R.
Listen, Joe. We don't have much
time.

JOE B.
Okay.

DAWN R.
Do you want to escape with me?

JOE B.
Well, I... where to?

DAWN R.
Outside the dome.

JOE B.
But, it's wild country.
Radioactive.

DAWN R.
Actually, it's not, Joe. It's just
abandoned. Fields, empty cities.

JOE B.
So what are we going to do?

DAWN R.
I don't know. But out there, we
could live our lives without the
government telling us what to do.
Controlling us.

JOE B.
Okay.

DAWN R.
Look, my skillset is all about
obstacles. I know how to overcome
them. I can coordinate under
extreme pressure. That plus your
optimism and resilience--

JOE B.
We'd make a great team. For sure.

At this moment, Mary H. approaches their row.

MARY H.
Hey, Joe B.! You're late with my
divorce payment!!!

JOE B.
Oh jeez.

MARY H.
I can scan your code with my phone.

SPECTATOR
Shut up, lady! I'm trying to watch
the game.

A security camera drone flies toward them.

It registers Dawn and Joe. A red square forms around the
image of them sitting together. UNAUTHORIZED FRATERNIZING
flashes on the screen.

DAWN R.

We have to leave now, Joe. She's going to create a disturbance and cameras will spot us.

MARY H.

JOE, DID YOU HEAR ME?

DAWN R.

Meet me at Gate J. I have a hover waiting.

Dawn gets up scrambles down the stairs.

MARY H.

Ha! I figured she'd dump you when she found out you don't have a job!

JOE B.

Go away, Mary! You'll get your money tomorrow.

MARY H.

Cheapskate, loser!

Joe gets up now and loses himself in the crowd. Mary H. smirks and walks back up to her seats with Ronald H.

MARY H.

She took off in a hurry, didn't she?

RONALD H.

Yeah, now can we watch the game?

MARY H.

Sure, sure.

Mary H. smiles her contemptuous smile.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

Joe races out of the exit and looks around. He sees a Hover-plane with Dawn inside. She waves him over.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

A WARNING BUZZER flashes on Spencer's screens. Then we see footage of Joe and Dawn at the mecha-football game.

SPENCER M.

Dawn, you are so predictable.

He sighs and picks up a phone.

SPENCER M.

Send out a security dispatch for
Dawn R. and Joe B. at the Carlson
Sports Arena.

INT. HOVER - DAY

Joe and Dawn breath heavily.

JOE B.

Where are we going?

DAWN R.

We have to get to the edge of the
Dome which means we'll be traveling
for a bit in this hover. But first,
I have to deactivate your citizen
surveillance to stop cameras from
recording your moves.

JOE B.

So, we're going to-- ?

DAWN R.

My office.

JOE B.

But--?

DAWN R.

It's the last place they'd expect
me to go.

JOE B.

Can we stop at my apartment? I need
to get--

DAWN R.

Rather we didn't.

JOE B.

Okay but... This is all so sudden.

DAWN R.

This is how life works. Real life.
Are you ready for it?

JOE B.

With you? I'm ready for anything.

They share a smile.

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dawn R. flashes her badge and hustles Joe B. into the building.

INT. OBSTACLE OFFICE - DAY

Dawn sticks her head inside. Oscar P. sits up.

OSCAR P.
Hey! You took off early!

DAWN R.
I know, Oscar. Here's a coin for
your trouble.

She hands him a gold digi-coin.

OSCAR P.
Whoa. Okay.

DAWN R.
Now please leave.

Oscar exits. Dawn waves Joe from the hallway inside.

Joe walks over to her desk.

DAWN R.
I need your hand for the code.

She takes his hand gently and places it over what looks like a sun lamp. As his code is hit by the laser, it glows. She pushes some buttons on her computer.

DAWN R.
Okay. You're a member of the elite.

The monitors covering Joe flash off.

DAWN R.
No more tracking. Let's go!

INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Dawn leads Joe down the hallway. Spencer M. turns a corner and sees them.

SPENCER M.
DAWN R.! JOE B.! STOP RIGHT THERE!

DAWN R.
Sorry boss! We have other plans.

She grabs Joe's hand and they race in the opposite direction.

SPENCER M.
Security! Security! Floor ten!

They race toward the elevator. One opens and a SECURITY TEAM brandishing weapons emerges.

DAWN R.
This way!

Dawn pulls Joe down another hallway and then through a door.

STAIRCASE

They race down the stairs.

JOE B.
Ten floors!

DAWN R.
It's okay. We can do it.

The Security Team bangs through the door moments after them. A chase ensues.

One team member pauses and aims a shot at Joe. The laser glances off the wall.

JOE B.
Hey!

DAWN R.
Through this door, Joe. I've got an idea.

They bang through a door on the fifth floor.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

They bolt down an industrial-looking corridor. Then into another door.

INT. ATMOSPHERE - LARGE ROOM - DAY

She heads toward an area filled with pipes and high tech controls. Joe bumps into a large MAN wearing a construction hat.

JOE B.
Sorry, sorry.

David H. spies Dawn.

DAVID H.
What are you doing here, Dawn?

DAWN R.
A little emergency, David H. Where
are the gas masks?

DAVID H.
Over there, but--

She goes to a cabinet and pulls out masks for her and Joe.

DAWN R.
Put it on!!!

David H. approaches her.

DAVID H.
Dawn, what's going on?

DAWN R.
It's just a drill. Part of... your
life plan! An experiment. What
happens when you screw up on the
job!!!

DAVID H.
Me?

DAWN R.
Trust me, David H. You'll grow from
this.

She pushes past him and goes to a computer console. She types
away.

DAWN R.
Release sleeping gas into the
building. Now!

The spouts all over the room turn on and blast gas. Hard hat
WORKERS fall to the ground.

INT. BUILDING - VARIOUS ROOMS, HALLWAYS - DAY

Spouts release gas and the GOVERNMENT WORKERS all collapse
and fall quickly asleep.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The various WORKERS slide to the floor. Spencer struggles, holding his breath and waving the gas away.

SPENCER M.

Dawn... you are a crafty one!

He falls down.

INT. ATMOSPHERE - DAY

Dawn and Joe, both wearing their masks, step over the bodies. She motions for the elevators.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Through their masks, Dawn and Joe smile at each other. This is exciting and fun.

DAWN R.

They'll be out for a while. Gives us a huge head start!

EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - DAY

Dawn and Joe toss their masks aside and climb into their hover which is waiting. It takes off.

INT. HOVER - DAY

They sit looking out in the sky.

AI DRIVER

Where are we going, Dawn R.?

DAWN R.

As close to the rim of the Dome as we can. I'll program the coordinates.

AI DRIVER

That is forbidden area.

DAWN R.

Not for a government elite.

AI DRIVER

Yes, Dawn R.

JOE B.
Wait, before we get going. Can I
stop at my apartment

DAWN R.
Joe, we have to make time!

JOE B.
I just want to pick up something.
Take a second.

DAWN R.
Driver, take us to the city.

JOE B.
115 N. Pass, please.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Spencer comes to consciousness. He gets up and reaches for
his phone.

SPENCER M.
Get me, Communications Desk! Send
out a bulletin...

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Mary H. and Ron H. stream a show on a screen when it's
interrupted. An alert flashes with pics of Dawn R. and Joe B.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
If you see citizens Dawn R. and Joe
B. please alert the Powers. They
are fugitives of conformity and
last seen at the Government
Building in Major City! There is a
million digi-reward for any useful
information leading to their
arrest.

MARY H.
You hear that Ronald?

RONALD H.
A million digis! Where would they
go?

MARY H.
I bet his studio apartment!

They both leap off the couch.

EXT. JOE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Joe and Dawn enter quickly.

DAWN R.
Quick, quick.

Joe grabs his book.

DAWN R.
A book?

JOE B.
The basics of farming.

She smiles at him. They rush out of the room and down the hall.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Joe exits the front door when he's punched hard by Mary H. in the face.

MARY H.
Gonna skip town without paying me,
eh, Joe? Don't worry, the million
digis will be plenty.

Dawn R. emerges and knocks Mary H. over with the door.

DAWN R.
You were cruel to Joe. You deserve
nothing.

Dawn and Joe move to the hover but Ronald H. stands in front of it, clenching his muscles in a body building pose.

RONALD H.
That wasn't a nice thing to do to
my wife. Now just stand against the
wall until the authorities arrive
and no one gets hurt.

DAWN R.
Driver! Open door!

The AI Driver opens the hatch door and it knocks Ronald H. over. He rolls to his wife on the ground.

Dawn and Joe enter the hover and speed away into the sky.

RONALD H.
Honey, are you okay?

MARY H.
Never mind me. Phone in. They're
heading East.

INT. HOVER - DAY

Dawn looks over the bruise on Joe's cheek from Mary's punch.

DAWN R.
How does it feel?

JOE B.
Humiliating. But I'm going to be
okay.

DAWN R.
Driver, take us up 10 thousand feet
and go to maximum acceleration.

AI DRIVER
Yes, Dawn R.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Spencer paces before the large map of New America and his
bank of screens, talking on his phone.

SPENCER M.
Yes, yes. We know they're heading
East in a government hover. But
they've got a head start. And no
tracking codes. Get me Team Chaos.

INT. TEAM CHAOS OFFICE - DAY

The office shows screens with catastrophes playing all over
the Dome State. PAUL M., tall, thick, wearing glasses,
answers his phone.

PAUL M.
Paul M. Yes, Spencer M. I heard
about that. Foul weather in the
east? You got it!

Paul M. hangs up his phone and yells into a microphone.

PAUL M.
Listen up, Team Chaos. I need
everyone to look at Grand Sector C.
(MORE)

PAUL M. (CONT'D)

I need any kind of extreme weather
that can force a government hover
brand 2X down to the ground.
Tornados, hurricanes, snow. Bring
it on, everybody!

EXT. SKY - DAY

Dawn and Joe's hover zips along the sky.

INT. HOVER - DAY

Joe snoozes while Dawn works on a tablet.

DAWN R.

Driver, how much longer?

AI DRIVER

Another hour until we arrive at the
forbidden area at Dome border. Dawn
R., I'm getting orders from Master
Control to turn the hover around--

DAWN R.

Disregard orders.

AI DRIVER

Yes. But they will eventually be
able to override.

DAWN R.

I know. But not until we have
reached our destination. Hey,
what's that?

Dark clouds appear ahead. Lightening flashes. Rain like
bullets flying from the clouds.

AI DRIVER

Heading into major weather event.
Strap in!

DAWN R.

Joe, Joe, wake up.

Joe sits up. Dawn puts his seat belt on. Just as she does,
the hover does a 360, tossing up and down, through a dark
rainy turbulence.

JOE B.

Hey!!! What?

DAWN R.
Team Chaos!

EXT. SKY - DAY

The hover manages to right itself and dropping altitude regains a steady course.

INT. SPENCER M.'S OFFICE - DAY

Spencer M. zips up a bag. A call BUZZES on a hovering screen. It's Paul M.

PAUL M.
Sir, we're blasting the eastern sector. But no word of any downed Hover-plane.

SPENCER M.
Keep on it. I'm going to be incommunicado.

PAUL M.
Where shall I say you're going?

SPENCER M.
The accelerated tunnel tram.

PAUL M.
Okay, Spencer M.

SPENCER M.
Keep pounding them! If they land, work with Obstacles and Atmosphere. Force their immediate environment to stop their escape!

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Spencer emerges from an elevator into the basement. He rushes down a staircase.

Before him lies a track leading to a tunnel. A small transport pod sits on the track. It opens when he waves his hand. Spencer climbs in and closes the lid. The transport pod takes off at incredible speed into the tunnel and zips down into the ground.

EXT. SKY - DAY

The storm has gotten worse. Now the winds are at incredible speeds. The hover tries valiantly to stay on course but it's tossed up and then sent spiraling downward.

INT. HOVER - DAY

Dawn reaches into a side panel and produces two parachutes.

DAWN R.

Get it on. Hurry! We'll have to jump. Luckily, this is a more rural area.

Joe puts his on.

DAWN R.

Count to three and pull your cord. Find me when you land.

AI DRIVER

Crash in two minutes. Ejecting passengers!

EXT. SKY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Joe and Dawn flip out of the hover. Their chutes almost automatically open up, but that sends them flying into the sky just as chaotically as the hover.

The hover lands on a rain-drenched street, crashing on impact.

Joe's chute sends him near some power lines. The silky billow tangles on the lines and sends Joe rotating over and over like a gymnast on balance bars until he finally stops, hanging several feet from the ground, just over a sidewalk.

Dawn's chute still has her flying about this way and that. Finally, she flies close enough to a water tower, floating for a second above it. She releases her chute and lands on top of the tower. The chute flies off.

THE WATER TOWER

The storm's blasting rain almost sends her off the side, but she manages to grab onto a metal ladder and crawl down the side of the water tower.

STREET

Joe pulls a Swiss Army knife out of his pocket and cuts the straps of his chute. He lands into a muddy puddle of water.

He wanders onto the flooding street, looking about.

JOE B.
DAWN!!! DAWN!

He looks about and sees her chute in the distance. He runs to it. Once he picks it up, he spies Dawn in the distance running from the water tower.

JOE B.
Over here, Dawn!

She waves at him. He races to catch up to her. Soaked, they hug.

JOE B.
You're okay?

DAWN R.
Yes. You?

Joe nods.

JOE B.
This must be the last town before
the...

Dawn looks about, then checks her smart watch which, with a click turns into a compass.

DAWN R.
Two miles east.

She points toward a street.

DAWN R.
That's a dead end that will take us
to the woods. Then we find the Dome
border. Come on.

He takes her hand and they run down the slippery street, the wind and rain pummeling them.

Lightening flashes into a tree, splitting it. Half of the tree lands just behind them as they run.

DAWN R.
They'll find our coordinates. This
is going to be tricky.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Harold O., Senior Operative in lieu of the departed Spencer M., barks orders from the master command center.

HAROLD O.

The downed hover and the fugitives
have been located. They are heading
east on Sycamore in the town of
Bradbury. Obstacles, proceed.

EXT. STREET - DAY - CONTINUOUS

As Dawn and Joe run, the street suddenly starts to quiver.
The sidewalks around them explode.

DAWN R.

Obstacles!

The asphalt beneath their feet cracks open. A fissure grows.
Dawn pulls Joe back and they roll onto the grass of a home
nearby.

JOE B.

What do we do?

DAWN R.

We need to find a route away from
public streets and sidewalks.

As they run down the street, it continues to tear apart.

DAWN R.

We'll travel through the yards of
the homes!

SUBURBAN HOMES

Dawn races toward a front yard fence and leaps over. Joe
follows her. They run into the backyard of the home.

As they continue through suburbia, the fences collapse,
planks of wood fly at them. They dodge the flying planks.

DAWN R.

The smart homes have built-in
security. So we have to fool the
tracking now that they've found us.

JOE B.

How?

DAWN R.

Zig zag. Makes our path harder to anticipate. They hurl obstacles based on a projected path.

They quickly climb over another neighbor's chain link fence to the left. The metal unsnaps and rolls into itself like a carpet, attempting to catch them but they both leap over it before it can.

They race past a swimming pool that suddenly creates a mini-tidal wave that splashes just behind them, flooding the back yard.

DAWN R.

Ha! They can't keep up!

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

The tram containing Spencer M. rockets through the bowels of the earth.

INT. TUNNEL TRAM - DAY

A small map on the console blinks at the destination, the town of Bradbury.

Spencer M., his face flab fluttering from the immense speed of the tunnel tram, tries to open his eyes, to watch the progress, but can only squint.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Climbing over one last fence, Joe and Dawn now enter the wooded area behind the small town.

DAWN R.

Another mile to the Dome border.

JOE B.

And then?

DAWN R.

Then. We improvise.

They race into the thicket of trees. As they do, the ground below them convulses and tree after tree falls just as they pass them.

JOE B.

That's too close.

DAWN R.
We need to vary our speed. The
obstacles are timed but if we go
slow, then fast, it throws them
off.

Dawn stops and a tree falls. They step over it and slowly
down the path.

JOE B.
Slow now?

DAWN R.
Yeah. Okay. Now, run!

As they run, another tree falls behind them.

DAWN R.
Zig zag!

JOE B.
Zig zag!

Dawn continues to lead Joe as they maneuver their way deeper
into the woods.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Harold O. bangs his fist on his desk.

HAROLD O.
Obstacles can only reach the first
hundred yards of the forest. Alert
Team Chaos to stop the storms. Tell
atmosphere to pump in heat. Maybe
thirst will stop them.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The sun now out and blazing, Joe and Dawn visibly sweat as
they work their way to the Dome border.

DAWN R.
Shoulda packed some water.

JOE B.
Perhaps they're will be some water
beyond the Dome.

DAWN R.
If we can find a way out. Team
Chaos and Obstacles know our
location. No doubt, a security
detail is hot on our course.

EXT. SKY - DAY

In the sky an armada of security hover-planes race toward the East.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

As Dawn and Joe reach a clearing, they finally see it: the end of the Dome.

JOE B.
Holy crap, we made it!

They run to it and stop. Joe puts his hand out, touching the translucent wall.

JOE B.
It's solid, all right.

DAWN R.
There's supposed to be a secret
exit here. I've seen the maps.

She finds a rock to sit on and then wipes the sweat off her brow, and checks her tablet.

At this moment, a WILD MAN, age indeterminant, long hair, long beard, wearing a kind of toga made of rags, leaps out at Joe B., pointing a spear at his neck.

WILD MAN
Don't move!!

Joe puts his hands up on the surface of the Dome.

JOE B.
Take it, easy!

WILD MAN
Whatchoo doin' here on my land?

DAWN R.
Please, don't hurt him.

JOE B.
We didn't know this was your land.

WILD MAN

You ain't sent from the government,
are you?

JOE B.

No, we're escaping the government.

DAWN R.

We're fugitives. Like you.

The tip of the spear pokes into Joe's neck.

JOE B.

Mister, could you please pull your
spear back?

WILD MAN

How do I know you're not lying?

Joe turns quickly and knocks the spear out of the Wild Man's hands. Joe runs and grabs it, pointing it at his feral opponent.

JOE B.

Because if we were trying to get
you, I would've thrown this spear
into your chest already. But I'm
not.

He tosses it aside.

WILD MAN

I guess I was wrong. Can't be too
careful out here. Especially when
you want to be left alone.

DAWN R.

We understand.

WILD MAN

You look parched.

The Wild Man walks to the side of a hill into a cave. He comes out with water skins. He hands one to each of them.

DAWN R.

Thanks.

WILD MAN

You trying to escape the Dome?

DAWN R.

I've heard there's a secret exit.
But that Dome is solid.

WILD MAN
That's cause you keep lookin' up.
Need to look down.

Joe looks at the ground.

JOE B.
A tunnel?

The Wild Man lets out a laugh.

WILD MAN
Yep. And I know where it is.

JOE B.
We have nothing to offer you.

DAWN R.
I have a digi-coin?

WILD MAN
Don't need it. Happy to help
fugitives of the Planners!

Suddenly, Security hovers can be seen in the sky.

JOE B.
They're here.

WILD MAN
You better get skedaddling.

He waves them into his cave.

The hovers land in a clearing. The SECURITY TEAM leaps out
and scrambles to the cave.

INT. CAVE - DAY

The Wild Man lights a torch and leads Joe and Dawn through a
labyrinth of tunnels in his cave.

WILD MAN
They'll get lost trying to find
you.

EXT. CAVE - DAY

The Security Team races into the cave.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Now deep in the bowels of the earth, the Wild Man stops before a smaller tunnel. Joe and Dawn catch up to him.

WILD MAN
Well sir, this is it. But you gotta
crawl through to the other side.

JOE B.
You go first, Dawn.

Dawn crotches down and slides into the tunnel. Joe follows her.

WILD MAN
Good luck, now.

JOE B.
Thank you, sir!

WILD MAN
Don't mention it, boy.

EXT. DOME - DAY

A small door on the other side of a hill opens. Dawn crawls out, followed by Joe.

DAWN R.
We did it, Joe!

They stand up and look back at the dome. Security Men fire their weapons at the clear wall, but to no effect. Then they beat their fists on it.

JOE B.
But they'll find the tunnel.
Eventually.

DAWN R.
We can still get a head start.

Just as they turn to run, the first of the Security Team sticks his head out along with his laser rifle.

SECURITY MAN
Freeze!

Other Security Team Members crawl out in swift motion.

DAWN R.
 You can't arrest us. You have no
 jurisdiction on this side of the
 Dome.

SECURITY MAN
 We have special orders. You're
 coming with us.

They move quickly; Dawn and Joe are handcuffed.

Now the Wild Man emerges.

WILD MAN
 Halt!

SECURITY MAN
 What the hell?

WILD MAN
 Let those prisoners go.

SECURITY MAN
 Are you crazy?

SECURITY MAN #2
 Yeah, why should we listen to a
 homeless freak like you?

WILD MAN
 Because I'm... your boss.

The Wild Man pulls off his beard and wig. Then he scrapes
 away the face mask and we see it's Spencer M.!

DAWN R.
 Spencer M.! But-- ?

SPENCER M.
 Congratulations, Joe B. and Dawn R.
 You have pleased the Powers That
 Be. You are officially Overcomers,
 good and faithful servants of a new
 order.

DAWN R.
 I don't get it.

SPENCER M.
 Sorry we had to keep you in the
 dark, Dawn, but it was for your
 growth.

DAWN R.

You mean, I didn't have freedom of choice? There was a life plan for me too?

SPENCER M.

As there are for all government elite. They just don't know it. But you and Joe B. overcame. Welcome to Haven!

JOE B.

Haven?

SPENCER M.

That's what we call it. Fertile farm land. Plenty of livestock. There's a stream of pure water over that hill. And an abandoned farm just a half mile ahead. What you do with all that is up to you.

JOE B.

But the land was contaminated by war--

SPENCER M.

It's been a hundred years, Joe B. With our decontamination technology and hard work, the Earth has finally returned to its pristine glory. And you two are the first to enjoy it.

JOE B.

Okay, so... why us?

SPENCER M.

You both had the drive. And you're the first Overcomers to fall in love naturally. In fact, you are here because of love. Now you can serve that higher ideal, moving the human race in a new direction.

DAWN R.

Hey! Wait a minute. You could've killed us with the hurricane!

SPENCER M.

Yes, but you overcame!

JOE B.

Barely.

SPENCER M.

Nothing is worth having unless you
fight to the limit to get it.

Spencer M. motions and the Security Team crawls back into the
tunnel. Suddenly, a dachshund puppy emerges from a bush.

JOE B.

Hey! Look!

She leaps up into Joe B.'s arms.

JOE B.

Now, I know I'm in the right place.
Look, Dawn. Just like Mitzi.

DAWN R.

What will you call her?

JOE B.

How about... Maxi?

SPENCER M.

That's apt, Joe. Means "greatness."
Seems like you're all set then.

JOE B.

The land sure looks ready for us.

He takes a step onto a cow patty.

JOE B.

Dang! Why does this always happen
to me?

Joe rubs his foot onto the grass, trying to remove the cow
dung.

SPENCER M.

Watch where you're going, Joe B. I
know I'll be.

Spencer M. turns to leave.

SPENCER M.

Remember, no one will control you
here. Enjoy freedom. Bye!

Joe and Dawn smile as big a smile as they can muster. Spencer
M. climbs into the tunnel.

DAWN R.

Let's find that stream!

JOE B.

Sure thing. But first... let's lay
a foundation.

Maxi barks as they kiss. Then slowly, pulling apart, they
walk into the beauty of the pristine meadow.

THE END?