

SIMULATION GAMES

Written by  
Mike Wilczynski

Mikewilczynski@gmail.com

Jeremy Loethen  
Courageous Artists  
jl@courageousartists.com  
310-210-6299

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Identical 60 year-old houses line the blocks of the subdivision.

SUPER: 20 Years Earlier

EXT. DIANNE'S HOUSE - STREET - DAY

LAURA (27) follows CRAIG (35) out the front door of their home. YOUNG DIANNE (5) peeks out of her bedroom window, crying. Young Dianne wears a bright pink shirt and is cradling a doll.

Craig's car is packed. The back seat has 3 computer monitors. He shoves his suitcase in the front seat next to a box.

CRAIG

I can see her whenever I want.

Laura shakes her head.

LAURA

From Sue's house?

Craig opens the driver's side door, Dianne watching from the window. He studies Dianne's sad face, wipes his tears.

CRAIG

I'll fix this.

LAURA

You can't fix things when you're glued to your computer.

Craig sighs.

CRAIG

I'm working on something that could help people... give them the life they want.

LAURA

Until you're ready for human interaction, play your games somewhere else.

Craig gets into his crowded vehicle.

Dianne holds her doll tightly. Sadly waves as Craig drives away.

His car's brake lights glow as he parks at the end of the block.

INT. HERMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

YOUNG HERMAN (5) hears a car pull up in front of his home. He peeks out the window, sees Craig walk up to the front door. Craig, head drooped, carries the box from the front seat.

Young Herman listens to his mother, SUE (32) outside his bedroom door.

SUE (O.S.)  
You're a name on a birth  
certificate. Nothing more.

Young Herman is scared and sad.

CRAIG (O.S.)  
Let me see my little partner.

Young Herman perks up.

SUE (O.S.)  
You were too embarrassed to  
introduce him to your family. Never  
again.

Young Herman lowers his head.

CRAIG (O.S.)  
I'll be watching. Give him this?

Sue opens Herman's door, throws a box with a chess set on the floor. Closes the door.

Herman, excited, admires the chess set. He hears the car drive away.

SUPER: PRESENT DAY

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

CRAIG (55), unshaven, eyes red from sleepless nights. His stained, white, short-sleeved shirt glows in the dark from the light of multiple monitors.

The desk is cluttered with food wrappers and a binder labeled 'Free Will'. The wall features two faded children's drawings, with 'For Dad' scrawled on each in different handwriting.

On Screen: THE RULEBOOK

1. OBSERVE - no direct contact.
2. MODIFY - test variables.
- 3) DELETE - permanent removal.

The word DELETE flickers. Letters vanish out of order.

CRAIG

No. No. No. Not this time.

He pounds the keys.

SFX: RAPID KEYBOARD CLICKS

The 3rd bullet point, DELETE, is back in full.

- 4) EXCEPTIONS - love

Beside the keyboard is a faded photograph of a sad woman, a happy young girl, and a grumpy man.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Back to the start. You're almost  
her age this time. (beat) Could be  
our chance -

Craig gazes at the drawing on the wall.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

... I'll build a better one for  
you.

Craig's computer says "Test Subjects". He clicks boxes next to the headshots of: Di (Sunshine), Jimmy (Joker) and Hermie (Partner), clicks enter.

On screen: "PASS = SURVIVE, FAIL = DELETE, LOVE = UNCODEABLE"

Craig takes a deep breath.

Craig types: "LAUNCH RULEBOOK".

One monitor displays cascading lines of code. Others show live feeds of Jimmy, Di and Hermie's homes as if from a video game. A final monitor says "SUBJECTS DELETED THIS WEEK:0".

A sticky note reads: "If you could do it over - would you?".

His hand shakes as he scribbles "add new variables" on a note pad. He speaks with a cold, authoritative voice.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

That mutt always finds a way in.

Craig's fingers graze Di's dark monitor.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Sunshine... I'm going to get it right this time.

Craig taps "Start Loop" on a screen. Computers hum. Houses flutter, then settle.

Craig leans back in his chair, picks food out of his teeth with a paperclip, flicks it into a coffee cup.

For a split second, the desk-cam feed glitches - a faint eye watermark flickers in the corner. Craig doesn't notice.

Craig writes on a sticky note and adds it to his monitor. It says, "Don't let her fall in love again".

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom is built like all others in the neighborhood - dull blue sheets, multiple screens, game posters, laptop open. The desk has a glass jug containing loose change that the says "Wedding Money".

JIMMY (25), shirtless, smiles at his girlfriend DI (25) who flashes her warm smile, buttoning her muted pink blouse. Di is naturally full of joy.

JIMMY

They've got plenty of card dealers, babe. Take the day off.

Jimmy beholds Di lovingly. Di giggles and kisses Jimmy.

DI

Silly. You're not talking me in to that again. Someone has to be responsible for wedding money.

Jimmy's pouty face pleads for her to stay. Di pats his cheek.

DI (CONT'D)

You always promise to make sales calls - tomorrow.

Jimmy shows her a wrinkled napkin with Olson written on it.

JIMMY

I have a call planned, really.

Di is trying to stay optimistic.

DI

Not a plan. It's a napkin. You can make a sale.

Jimmy shrugs, guilty but grinning. Watches Di in the mirror.

DI (CONT'D)

And I want a honeymoon. It seems that every time we even plan a vacation, something stops us. Work. Money. Something stupid.

JIMMY

You make me want to try harder.

Di turns, views Jimmy with doubt, but smiling.

DI

I want a future that I choose. I hope you want it too.

SFX: BEEP

Di's brow wrinkles. A text message says - "reset complete". Jimmy's reaction wonders if something is wrong.

DI

Spam?

Di deletes the message. She stares in the mirror seeing an image of herself with more vibrant colors and perfect hair. She is distracted by Jimmy trying to grab her.

DI (CONT'D)

We'll be back together for dinner, then all weekend. Cool your jets.

Jimmy's friend BRADY (25) barges in, smiling. He always wears faded Hawaiian shirts.

BRADY

And then... there's me.

Brady flashes the peace sign. Di's smile turns to a frown. She glares at Jimmy.

DI

Why doesn't he knock?

Jimmy shrugs.

JIMMY

Always has the worst timing.

Brady takes a seat by the computer, which has a camera attached to it, pointed toward the bed.

Di's eyebrows rise.

DI

We don't need to revisit the last time -

JIMMY

I don't remember half -

Di gives a pained smile, puts on her shoes.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Never again. Don't worry.

Di bends over to give Jimmy a kiss goodbye. Jimmy gets up to give Di a big hug. Di grunts lovingly hugging him back.

The mirror shows an image of a man and woman who appear similar to Jimmy and Di, but are a little older and dressed in brighter colors. They do not notice.

Di whispers.

DI

Stay away from Brady, do you hear me? And take away his key.

JIMMY

See you after your shift. Love you.

Jimmy winks and puts on his dull blue shirt. Di blows him a kiss and leaves.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

HERMIE (25), disheveled in drab gray, unshaven, short-sleeved shirt, sits alone.

Hermie's gray-toned room mirrors his routine: rumpled sheets, a chess board set in starting position. Silence.

The shelf includes stacks of spiral notebooks. Trash overflows with food wrappers and cups.

The wall calendar shows every day marked: WORK and CHESS.

Hermie studies childhood photos - one next to his mother and a grumpy man, the other in front of a cemetery.

HERMIE

I used to believe you just weren't talking to me.

He moves over to his chessboard, touches the faded box from childhood. He moves a white pawn up two spots. Talks to himself.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

Your turn.

He goes to the other side, picks up a black pawn, talks to it.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

Most pawns don't make it. Sometimes, one slips through to the other end.

Hermie moves the pawn up one space.

His computer beeps. Hermie jumps up and moves the cursor. A message says "Sim 1 to LilGmr. Can you play D&D now, partner?" Hermie glances at his watch.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

Now you ask? Been waiting all day.

Hermie types: Gotta get to work. The reply says: Don't Trip.

Hermie stubs his toe reaching for a name tag. He grunts.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

Weird.

Hermie stares at the Don't Trip message. He types "Later". He clips on his casino employee name tag and rushes out.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

A computer monitor flashes: Don't trip.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy and Brady sit at the desk with his dog COCO dozing nearby, wearing a colorful collar with a logo of an eye.

Hermie peeks into Jimmy's window. Each window in the neighborhood is identical - shaped like a computer monitor - facing outward.

Jimmy and Brady laugh and yell playing a computer game. Coco wakes up to see Hermie and begins barking at the window. Jimmy and Brady are focused on their game.

Hermie scribbles in to his spiral notebook on an open page that has Di's picture on it. He writes, "Too nice to say no".

Coco growls and jumps at the window, scaring Hermie away.

BRADY

Is she still pushing you to get married?

JIMMY

I've been promising since high school.

Brady points at Jimmy.

BRADY

But chicks dig you.

JIMMY

She's the one for me... someday. She was so pissed when I messed up.

BRADY

Righhhhht. But you're a free will guy like me.

Jimmy seems uncomfortable.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Do you want your key back?

Jimmy shakes his head no.

BRADY (CONT'D)

After programming shit all day, I wanna get creative.... ready to create today's virtual hottie?

Jimmy's wrinkled face says no.

JIMMY

My dream girl just left.

BRADY

Okay, hottest besides your prom queen.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - Day

FLASHBACK

SUPER: HIGH SCHOOL - 8 YEARS EARLIER

Di (18) walks into the parking lot smiling. Hermie follows.

DI

You'll tutor me for computer class?

Hermie (18) sheepishly nods.

HERMIE

If no one asks you to prom, could  
we go as friends?

Di flashes her warm smile.

DI

I'm hoping Jimmy asks.

Hermie grimaces. PENNY, a classmate walks out, holding a prom sign. She is very flirtatious.

PENNY

Have you seen Jimmy? I have a  
question for him.

Brady (18) pops out of nowhere and surprises Di. He's pointing his hands pretending he's firing toy pistols.

DI

Whoa.

Hermie clenches his fist and makes a face. Brady grabs Di by the hand.

Hermie anxiously watches as Di skips away with Brady. Di's family van approaches followed by two cars. Di stands in surprise.

Di's mom, Laura (40) exits the van holding balloons that spell P R O M. Di covers her mouth stunned.

Jimmy (18) pops out of the second car wearing a tuxedo t-shirt, holding a bouquet of cheap flowers.

JIMMY

I failed chem... never made a  
team... but prom night I'd win, if  
you went with me. Will you?

Di's hand covers her heart. She laughs and tears up. Laura is smiling and in tears too.

DI  
Of course.

In the distance, Penny throws her sign in the trash and runs inside. Hermie stands alone.

Di hugs Jimmy, who is very excited. Laura joins the hug. Di whispers to her mom.

DI (CONT'D)  
He's the one.

The final car is far behind. The driver stays in the car and peers out the tinted window. It is Craig (47).

LAURA  
I invited him.

Di waves to Craig, who blows her a little kiss.

Hermie's mom, Sue (45) snarls while driving past Craig, who buries his face. Sue sees Hermie looking sad. She speeds up to him, jumps out of the car and gives him a loving hug.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy shakes his head clicking at his keyboard.

BRADY  
Tight jeans...Let's go blonde.

Brady gestures with his hands for Jimmy to make the chest bigger. Jimmy clicks accordingly.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
What is that?

Brady points at a tattoo on her arm of an ouroboros.

JIMMY  
That snake is eating its own tail.

BRADY  
So cool.

Brady laughs. Jimmy rolls his eyes.

JIMMY  
Weird. I didn't add that.

BRADY  
She's perfect.

Jimmy and Brady stand up and high-five each other. The computer camera tilts up. Coco barks at it.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig hits copy and paste on the image of the girl with the ouroboros tattoo. He moves his virtual reality glasses to the top of his head. He nods to himself - resolved.

CRAIG  
You're gonna forget about Di,  
Jimmy.

He moves the girl's image to another monitor. Types: "Run Protocol - Confidence Boost #01."

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy's phone rings, he answers in a business voice.

JIMMY  
Mr. Olson... Yes, I'm sure we can  
meet your office supply needs  
across the country... Awesome...  
Tomorrow at Java Joe's. Thank you.

Jimmy hangs up and high-fives Brady.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow... big day. I need to  
prepare for my meeting.

Brady puts on his sunglasses.

BRADY  
Bah. Smoke show tonight at Sonny &  
Sunny's Tavern. You should come.

Jimmy hesitates.

JIMMY  
I promised we'd get a bite when she  
gets off -

BRADY

Boring. You're gonna be with her all weekend.

JIMMY

She'd be pissed. I'm trying to do things right this time.

BRADY

Dude, you worry too much. I don't want to go out alone tonight.

Jimmy turns from Brady to a photo of Di.

JIMMY

No, man.

Brady smacks Jimmy's arm, speaks in a fake sad voice.

BRADY

Jimmy... I'm so wrecked over Michelle breaking up with me again.

Jimmy whacks Brady's arm shaking his head.

JIMMY

Yeah... That one might work... No, not doing it.

BRADY

I don't know what I'll do if I don't have someone to talk to.

Jimmy thinks for a second and exhales.

JIMMY

You suck. I'll call her right before we head out.

INT. CASINO - EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

Di is smiling, finishing her lunch with NANCY, the pit boss, and LIZ, another dealer.

Di studies the security camera in the lounge.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Craig stares at a monitor with Di looking directly at the camera. He rewinds and watches it again... and again. His expression softens - he feels grief.

CRAIG  
I just want things to stop going  
wrong.

BACK TO CASINO - EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

Di smiles, shares a photo of her and Jimmy on her phone.

DI  
There's my man. He's been saving  
for a ring. I think he's going to  
pop the question this week.

Di smiles, shrugging.

NANCY  
Did he ask your father for  
permission?

Di shakes her head.

DI  
Good luck finding him. (beat)

Di takes a breath.

DI (CONT'D)  
I don't need permission.

LIZ  
My goodness, girl - you're gonna be  
too old to have a family before  
that boy gets his shit together.

Di rubs her ring finger. Hermie peeks through the window.

DI  
Funny. Let's go shopping for  
bridesmaid dresses soon.

Di taps the Find My Friends app and sees the Jimmy is at  
"Jimmy's house".

NANCY  
Good luck, Di.

Di holds her hands over her heart, drops a napkin.

Hermie, in his janitor's uniform, pushes his cart into the  
lunchroom, takes off his walkie-talkie, races to pick up the  
napkin. Di gives him a friendly smile.

Hermie plops down near the three women, takes out a sandwich.

DI  
Are you having a good day, Hermie?

Hermie shrugs.

LIZ  
(whispers)  
He gives me the creeps.

Nancy glances at Di and cocks her head for them to leave. Di shrugs her shoulders and follows them to the door.

DI  
That's kinda rude.

Hermie can hear them talking. Open his i-pad.

LIZ  
I wish he'd go away.

Hermie types: DELETE LIZ, but doesn't click enter.

SFX: A single bell faintly TOLLS.

Silence. Only Nancy and Di walk out. Liz is gone.

Di peeks her head back, squints, and rubs her arms as if she has shivers.

DI  
Liz?

Di looks back and forth. She opens her mouth to call Liz again, but stops. (beat)

DI (CONT'D)  
Weird. (beat) People don't just vanish.

Di slowly glances at the camera, then stares suspiciously at Hermie. Hermie looks around the room, curiously.

DI (CONT'D)  
You do act creepy sometimes.

Hermie makes an entry into his notebook. Di backs out of the room keeping an eye on Hermie.

The walkie-talkie beeps.

SUPERVISOR (V.O.)  
Hermie, you got a clogged toilet in blackjack area three.

Hermie punches the table.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Craig watches Hermie with momentary empathy.

CRAIG

I did that for you, Hermie. She  
won't be coming back.

He looks at Hermie, sitting alone, on a monitor.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

At least you'll always have me.

BACK TO CASINO - EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

Hermie takes a bite of his sandwich, feeling sad.

HERMIE

One wrong move, and anyone's gone.

Hermie blinks rapidly, clicks his i-pad keys and whispers.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

It never works on Di.

CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig smugly shakes his head no, glances at his family photo.

CRAIG

Di? Never. I'll decide how her  
story ends.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Coco lays on a floor mat with an eye logo. Jimmy is dressed for a night out. His phone lights up with a Facetime call from Di in the casino hallway. Jimmy takes a deep breath, answers with a big smile.

JIMMY

What's up Babe?

DI

You look ready for dinner.

JIMMY

I was, but something has come up.

Di slumps. Her normal smile disappears.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
It's Brady. Michelle left him.

Di is unhappy. She shakes her head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
He's all tore up.

DI  
I'm tore up. My bridesmaid Liz is missing.

JIMMY  
She'll show up. Now, it's one night with a friend in need. You understand?

DI  
Damn it Jimmy, You keep waiting to close some big sale before buying a ring, it's -

JIMMY  
Hey, I'm so close, then we're planning the reception of the century.

Di is consumed with disappointment.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
We'll be together all weekend for that wedding. Trust me for one night.

DI  
You dog. Earn it.

Coco perks up.

JIMMY  
See you tomorrow.

Jimmy delivers a soft MWAH into the phone, disconnects the call. He winks at Coco.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Not a word.

Coco seems to tilt his head.

INT. CASINO - FLOOR - DAY

Di types a text to Liz.

Text: *Are you okay? Can we talk?*

The response pops up instantly.

Text: *Message Failed - Number Not Found*

Di frowns, unsettled. Walks away past Hermie.

Hermie wipes down the slot machines. Gamblers breeze by him without noticing.

A WOMAN accidentally bumps him and doesn't apologize. He sees that she dropped her little purse. He reaches down to pick it up. The woman catches a glance of him. She seems annoyed.

WOMAN

Hey there.

Hermie perks up. Cracks a half-smile.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Are you trying to steal my wallet?

Hermie twitches.

HERMIE

You dropped... I just... no.

The woman yanks the purse out of his hand.

WOMAN

Those cameras will show what you did. Do you even belong here?

Hermie kicks the next slot machine, barely wipes the other machines as he plods by.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Di hurries back in to the casino. She approaches Nancy who is slowly shuffling cards in a precise, mechanical motion.

DI

Did Liz every come back?

Nancy pauses mid-shuffle, shakes her head no.

NANCY

She will be terminated tomorrow.

DI  
Terminated? Can we check the video  
of when she left?

Nancy continues her slow shuffle.

NANCY  
We can't be responsible for  
irresponsible people.

INT. SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Jimmy and Brady walk into the crowded bar. Loud music is playing. They see women filling the dance floor repeating the same dance moves over and over. Brady pats Jimmy.

BRADY  
Most women wouldn't put up with  
your act... Di's still around.

Jimmy and Brady walk past the dancers.

JIMMY  
She gets jealous about things that  
aren't real.

BRADY  
At least she's normal. Michelle had  
fake boobs, big eyelashes, dumb  
personality.

JIMMY  
That's how you like them.

Jimmy laughs. Brady laughs along with him.

BRADY  
Let's go find another one.

The boys put their arms around each other. They ogle over women, who continue to repeat the same dance moves.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
Still on the verge of getting  
fired?

JIMMY  
Mr. White is on my ass. I've missed  
my budget all year but things may  
change tomorrow.

BRADY

You can talk yourself out of anything.

JIMMY

I've only got \$300 to my name.  
Without a commission - no future.

EXT. CASINO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Di is walking out of the casino. Grabbing her phone, she clicks on Find My Friends, seeing that Jimmy's location is Sonny & Sunny's Tavern. She sobs.

DI

Heartbreaker.

INT. SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - EVENING

Jimmy and Brady walk toward the bar.

SHAUNDA (35), black, bold, plus-sized, flirtatious, quick wit. She smiles and walks toward Jimmy.

SHAUNDA

You look like you're ready to party.

Jimmy smiles, winks, but turns away from her.

Hermie stands by himself on his phone in front of the bar.

HERMIE

Mom, if I come home, will you play chess with me?

Hermie groans. (beat)

HERMIE (CONT'D)

A date? Never mind, here come my, ah, friends from high school.

Hermie ends the call. Jimmy pushes past Hermie and waves to the bartender, PENNY (25), a stunning brunette.

PENNY

Hi Jimmy, how can I help you?

JIMMY

Penny - Two shots of tequila.

Hermie steps up next to Jimmy.

HERMIE

You buying? I'll take one.

Jimmy's face suggests he hates Hermie. Brady flashes the peace sign at Hermie as if they know each other, shrugs.

PENNY

Is Di still dragging you down?  
I get off at 11 if your ready for a  
nightcap.

Jimmy flashes his big smile, hesitates, shakes his head no.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I don't ask guys a second time.

Jimmy smiles and winks. Penny is annoyed.

JIMMY

Most guys don't realize what  
they've already got.

Hermie gets out his notebook and turns to the Jimmy page. He writes in all caps, "TAKE THIS PIECE OFF THE BOARD". He hesitates for a second, then slams the notebook shut.

Di walks in to the back of the bar. She scans the crowd.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT

CRAIG

What is she doing there? That's  
okay... this could work even  
better.

Craig watches Jimmy. A bitter snicker escapes.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Boys are bad. Believe me, I know.

He feverishly clicks on the keyboard, pushes enter.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Sunshine. Once  
everything stabilizes, I break  
things so you don't have to.

Craig pulls out a wrinkled old drawing by a child that says Love You. He holds it close to him, and places it on his desk next to the picture.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 This will expose him. The Joker  
 makes the whole thing vulnerable.

Craig furiously types a command.

The screen says: "Deploy distraction".

INT. SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

PENNY  
 Two Cuervos coming up.

Penny throws two coasters on the bar with an ouroboros logo,  
 pours two shots.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
 Two Cuervos coming up. System  
 error.

Penny turns away from the bar for a moment.

BRADY  
 Dude... she said the same thing  
 twice. Like, verbatim.

JIMMY  
 Penny's fine. She's distracted.

BRADY  
 No, man. Same tone. Same blink  
 pattern. Like a spooky rerun.

Jimmy hands Brady a shot. They slam it down, suck on a lime.

Hermie stares jealously. SOMEONE'S drink SPLASHES on Hermie's  
 shirt. His face twitches showing the same hateful expression.

All looping dancers continue doing a different dance as if  
 they are non-player characters. Wrinkling her brow, Di  
 continues to watch from the back.

Jimmy is near the dance floor next to ASHLEY (21), white,  
 confident, built like a fantasy girl - a little too perfect.  
 She appears very similar to the character they created on  
 Jimmy's computer.

Ashley has a cocktail in her hand.

ASHLEY  
 I'm Ashley. You're cute.

Jimmy's eyes get big. He backs away a step.

JIMMY

Jimmy. (beat) What's up?

ASHLEY

The drinks here are incredible. Try this.

Ashley slowly hands him her beverage. Jimmy hesitates for a second, takes a sip, followed by a deep breath. Everyone on the dance floor freezes for a second.

JIMMY

Wow, what's in that?

Jimmy takes another step back. He warily inspects the drink, then sizes up Ashley. His eyes widen.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Girl, those jeans are hot.

ASHLEY

They'd look better on the floor at your place.

Jimmy's face says really? Ashley grabs him and aggressively kisses him. He searches for Brady, confused.

JIMMY

Whoa. (beat) I cannot...

ASHLEY

Get your tab.

Penny sees Di - points at her, laughing. Di begins to cry. She gathers herself to leave.

Hermie snaps a photo of Jimmy and Ashley.

Penny hands Jimmy the bill for two shots of tequila.

PENNY

Look at you. Di's even better than that slut. Twenty bucks.

Jimmy reaches for his wallet. Di stares at Penny, who freezes.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

A monitor shows "ERROR #13 - Bartender". Craig squints, adjusts a computer cable connection.

CRAIG

There goes another. Background noise. Doesn't affect the ones that matter.

Craig taps delete. The screen flashes: "SUBJECT REMOVED"

Craig exhales, emotionless.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Don't fail me, Ashley.

BACK TO SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

SFX: A single bell faintly tolls.

Silence.

Di squints, looking back for Penny - doesn't see her. Looks at Jimmy, shakes her head, then leaves the bar.

Jimmy reaches in to his wallet, pulls out \$30, searches back and forth. Penny is gone. He throws the cash on the bar.

Ashley turns to Jimmy and gives him a hug. She takes him by the hand and heads toward the door.

Hermie is filled with envy, follows them to the door. Writes in his notebook. All of the girls on the dance floor turn sharply to watch as Ashley gives Jimmy a sensuous kiss.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy and Ashley enter. Jimmy tosses his keys and money clip on the computer desk.

Coco tilts his head. The dog has seen this before.

Ashley unbuckles Jimmy's jeans and eases them down. He kicks his pants off toward the foot of the bed.

Ashley sprawls on the bed, totally in control. Jimmy pulls off her tight jeans, revealing a little black thong and removes her shirt revealing a tattoo of an ouroboros. He throws her jeans next to his. They slide under the covers and fling their underwear out from beneath.

ASHLEY

You've got me all night long.

Ashley radiates with confidence. Jimmy grins, kisses her neck and works his way down.

Coco sits up and watches - head slightly cocked. The computer camera moves.

Ashley is expressionless. Her eyes gaze toward the computer. Jimmy observes her for a split second.

JIMMY

Are you studying my computer?

Ashley doesn't answer. Jimmy moves on top of her.

As they move together under the covers, Jimmy's passion rises. Ashley moans, although her face is expressionless - her eyes don't blink.

Coco looks away.

Jimmy collapses on her chest, sweating.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

That was unbelievable.

ASHLEY

I know what I'm doing, baby. What else could I do for you?

Jimmy laughs softly, trying to catch his breath.

JIMMY

Take care of me in the morning,  
then I'll make us breakfast in bed.

Ashley smiles robotically, slightly pixelates, cozies under the sheets. Coco lays his head on the floor.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jimmy and his guest are sound asleep. Coco scratches at Jimmy's arm.

JIMMY

(sleepy)

Give me a minute Ashley, I need  
some recovery time.

Coco scratches at Jimmy again.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What? Coco? It's alright, boy.

Coco barks once, makes a short growling sound.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Mad at me? I know she's not Di,  
but... I wasn't able to say no.

Coco growls louder.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

We'll talk in the morning, okay?

COCO

Okay.

Jimmy closes his eyes, then opens them wide.

JIMMY

You're creepin me out, dog.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Di's bedroom, pink, duplicates Jimmy's and Hermie's. Her bed, perfectly made. Her childhood doll, wearing a bright pink dress, lies on the pillow. It has eyes similar to the logo on Coco's collar.

Di also has a similar gaming system in her room. She sits alone in tears. She picks up her doll and hugs it.

DI

Tell me what to do.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Craig sees Di crying on a monitor. Touches it. He's moved.

CRAIG

I didn't want to hurt her again.

He turns his attention to the monitor with Jimmy in bed.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

She deserves better than us-

Craig stops himself. Rattles his head.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

... him.

He cracks a humorless smile, typing a command:

ON SCREEN: REPLACE VARIABLE: BED PARTNER

The screen has a checked box next to the name Ashley. Below it is an unchecked box with the name Shaunda.

Craig unclicks Ashley and checks the box named Shaunda. He cracks his knuckles, claps once, hits enter.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bed violently jolts, only on Ashley's side. Her slender frame expands and grabs the covers. Jimmy stirs, rolls toward her, eyes closed.

Coco barks.

The morning sun peeks through the window. Jimmy remains asleep laying on his pillow.

There is movement beneath the sheets. Jimmy moans a little in his sleep. SCREAMS.

JIMMY

Ouch.

His eyes open wide.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Don't bite. Hey stop.

Jimmy jumps to the far side of the bed.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Ashley, stop.

A woman pops up from under the covers. It's not Ashley, it's Shaunda. She also has the ouroboros tattoo.

SHAUNDA

Ashley? Who you talking too?

Jimmy freaks out. His eyes are big. He jumps out of bed. He accidently grabs Shaunda's jeans and puts them on.

Shaunda puts on some large black panties.

Jimmy is completely confused.

JIMMY

No way. What's going on here?

SHAUNDA

You agreed to \$300 and a breakfast.

Jimmy, in a fog, picks up his money clip and counts his cash.

JIMMY

I only drank one shot. I've got  
\$270 to my name. I'm sorry ma'am.

Shaunda laughs. Jimmy is nervous.

SHAUNDA

Ma'am? Ha. Most johns won't go down  
like that. It's worth \$30. Now,  
where's my breakfast?

Coco dips his head. He seems embarrassed.

EXT. JIMMY'S CAR - DAY

Jimmy guns it down the road. He calls his friend Brady.

JIMMY

What happened to us last night?

BRADY (ON PHONE)

We had one shooter and you left me.  
You sound freaked out.

Jimmy weaves through traffic.

JIMMY

I'm gonna be late for my meeting...  
gonna get fired... I messed up -

BRADY (ON PHONE)

What's her name this time?

Jimmy slowly shrugs.

JIMMY

Good question. I felt out-of-  
control. Why did I do that?

Jimmy is pulling his hair out. Brady laughs.

BRADY (ON PHONE)

You always say that.

Jimmy sees flashing police lights in his rear view mirror.

JIMMY

Oh shit.

He ends the call and pulls over to the side of the road.

Jimmy rolls down his window. POLICE OFFICER (50) approaches.

POLICE OFFICER  
Speeding... reckless driving... I  
suppose you have a license.

JIMMY  
Yes. Yes, sir.

He reaches into the jeans, pulls out a license. As he hands  
it to the officer as he realizes it's Shaunda's license.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
I must've put on the wrong pants.

The police officer busts out laughing.

POLICE OFFICER  
I love that one kid. Love it.

Police officer, laughing harder, gets into his car and drives  
away. Jimmy is baffled.

Cut to: Jimmy speeds away.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig's laughs and moves his hands as if he was playing with  
a puppet. He winks, clicks away on the keyboard.

There is a faint knock at the bedroom door.

CRAIG  
What?

Craig's mother, MARY ANN (85), opens the door. Blanket  
wrapped around her shoulders.

MARY ANN  
Are you ever coming out of there,  
Craig? You look like hell.

Craig rubs his trembling hand.

CRAIG  
Still... the criticisms, Ma?

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

SUPER: 20 YEARS AGO

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig's suitcases and monitors are piled up. Mary Ann has a blanket over her shoulders.

MARY ANN

You planning to sit in this room  
and live off my money forever?

CRAIG

Forever's a long time, Mom. Maybe  
we can take care of each other.

MARY ANN

Thank you, but I don't need your  
help.

Craig half-smiles, adjusts her blanket.

CRAIG

Then yeah... I can spend the  
inheritance in advance.

Craig puts a framed picture with Young Dianne on the desk.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig touches the framed picture with Young Dianne.

MARY ANN

How about some family time?

CRAIG

I'm busy.

MARY ANN

Busy playing God in your fantasy  
world?

Craig's body shudders.

CRAIG

It's real to me.

MARY ANN

Oh, son. That's why she booted you.  
Love is real. You lost that a long  
time ago.

Craig lowers his head onto the desk, whispers to himself.

CRAIG

Moving into this prison was a mistake.

MARY ANN

I've tried. You've been trapped in your own game from the start.

CRAIG

When she loves the life I build for her, I can go home.

INT. JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

A few professionally dressed people stand by the register. A security camera hangs above.

Jimmy walks in, sweating, takes a deep breath. He speed dials his Office Supply Warehouse manager, MR. WHITE (60) who answers screaming.

MR. WHITE (ON PHONE)

Late again.

JIMMY

I went directly to a meeting with Global Furniture over coffee. You'll see - today.

MR. WHITE (ON PHONE)

Contract by 5 or you're done.

In the background, Hermie takes a coffee from the barista and moves to a corner table with an evil smirk on his face.

Jimmy gets in line. Standing near the counter is BILL HUNTINGTON (65), the corporate president of Java Joe's, talking to the local franchise STORE MANAGER.

BILL

We know all the franchisees are having office supply delays. If we could find a better vendor, I'd pull the trigger right -

Jimmy reaches out his hand.

JIMMY

Jimmy... Office Supply Warehouse... here to help you through any challenges you may be experiencing.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig picks up a coffee cup, drinks the rest of the beverage.

CRAIG

Ahhh.

Craig tosses the empty cup next to other trash on his desk. He looks at a monitor which has the video angle from Java Joe's security camera, puts on his VR glasses.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Not you... not this time.

Craig types "MODIFY AGREEMENTS".

A number flickers from 400,000 to 40,000 to 4,000.

BACK TO JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - LATER

Bill signs a contract. Jimmy shakes Bill's hand.

JIMMY

We'll get this first order for \$250,000 processed immediately covering all of your franchises.

BILL

Don't let me down. I'll pull your contract as fast as I signed it.

RONALD OLSON (55) walks in to Java Joe's.

JIMMY

I won't. My appointment is here now, but thank you.

BILL

I'll send over a two cups of our new special brew.

Bill walks away. Ronald takes a seat. Jimmy shakes his hand.

JIMMY

Ronald, what did your team decide?

RONALD

We're impressed with the proposal for all Global Furniture locations. Let's move forward with the \$400,000 option.

Jimmy smiles widely, attempts to shake hands with Ronald, who seems to freeze.

JIMMY

What a day.

Jimmy whispers.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Di... I did it.

BARISTA

Here's your special order, Jimmy...  
Jimmy... Jimmy.

All of the other patrons freeze for a moment.

JIMMY

What's in the water around here?

EXT. CASINO - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jimmy scans his contracts in to his phone. He's laughing.

Jimmy facetimes Brady. Brady answers flashing the peace sign.

JIMMY

Meet me at the casino. I need you  
to cover for me with Di.

BRADY

Why are you at the casino?

JIMMY

Di is going to be so proud of me.  
This day is turning out awesome.

BRADY

See you in twenty.

In a reflection on the casino jewelry store window, a couple at the counter suddenly appear out of nowhere. It is REAL JAMES (27) and REAL DIANNE (27), wearing vivid colored clothing, similar to Jimmy and Di. They pick up a purple ring box at the counter. They disappear.

Outside the jewelry store, Jimmy is preoccupied on his phone.

JIMMY

Mr. White... I sent both of today's  
big contracts, which put me over  
budget... I'll talk to you in the  
morning.

Jimmy clicks his phone. Brady walks in raising his fists in the air. They walk toward the gambling area.

BRADY  
Two contracts?

JIMMY  
I'm not bullshitting this time. Big day. Big commissions.

BRADY  
Are you finally considering a ring?

JIMMY  
A little pricier than I expected. I thought the tag said thirteen hundred, not thirty-one hundred.

BRADY  
You sure about this? We've been having a pretty good time, buddy.

JIMMY  
I'm ready to commit.

Brady's hands are on his head.

BRADY  
First, you have a problem to solve.

JIMMY  
Let's go over it again.

BRADY  
I've got it down. You helped me through the heartbreak. Blah, blah, blah.

They walk over to the blackjack tables, scanning the room for Di. Jimmy waves for Nancy, the pit boss.

JIMMY  
Is Di on a break?

NANCY  
She called in sick today.

Jimmy walks away and toward the cashier booth.

JIMMY  
Strange. She hasn't called me today either.

BRADY

Uh oh.

They walk away past the cashier window. Jimmy smiles.

JIMMY

As long as we're here.

Jimmy hands the cashier his credit card. Brady shakes his head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

\$2,000 in hundreds on the credit card, please.

BRADY

What are you doing?

JIMMY

I know a hot streak when I see one.  
Gonna win enough dough for the best ring. Di deserves it.

Hermie walks by pushing a cleaning cart, gives his evil stare.

The cashier counts out twenty 100-dollar bills.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She holds her doll close. Gazes out the window as she did when Craig left 20 years ago.

Di chats with her mother, LAURA (60) who's drinking a large glass of wine. Di is flipping through a Brides Magazine.

Di throws the magazine in the trash and knocks down her photo with Jimmy.

LAURA

You're not the only one who just wanted a faithful man to love her.

Di falls on to the bed fighting back tears. Her doll falls off to the other side of the bed.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Should have dumped that one after high school.

Laura sips her wine.

DI  
Stop it Mom. You haven't trusted  
any man since Dad left.

Laura cuddles next to Di and adjusts her dress strap.

LAURA  
Craig wasn't there for any of us.

Di sits up on her bed holding her hand over her heart.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
For some men, it's not love... it's  
a game.

DI  
What if they lie?

Laura stops in mid-sip of wine.

LAURA  
Oh honey, we all lie.

Laura and Di giggle. Di flips the photo of Jimmy back up.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
If they're trying to protect their  
ego, not your heart, walk away.

DI  
Then I need to stop letting other  
people decide what I deserve.

Di gives her mom a hug.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig watches Laura and Di on a monitor, nodding.

CRAIG  
I'm building a world where you  
can't get hurt.

Craig's eyes glisten.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
She would have never let me back. I  
told myself my job is to protect  
you.

Craig opens "drafts" from his email. It reads: *Dear Sunshine,  
Your mom drove me away. I didn't know how to be a father.*

*It's not your fault. I'm building a better version of the world for you.*

Craig hovers over SEND, fingers tremble, Slowly shakes his head no as he closes out the email.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Should have sent it years ago.  
Wouldn't change anything now.

Craig shakes his head, types: Modify probability tables.

INT. CASINO - FLOOR - DAY

Blackjack cards have the ouroboros logo on the back. Jimmy bets one \$100 black chip, loses. DEALER takes his wager.

BRADY  
Let's go man. You got this.

James nods, but in succession, he loses wagers of \$100, then \$200, \$300, \$400, \$500.

JIMMY  
This is like Deja Vu.

Jimmy bets two of the remaining four chips, loses. Brady cocks his head that they should leave.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
You said I've got this.

BRADY  
Why do you ever listen to me?

Jimmy bets his last two chips. He gets a pair of 7's. The dealer has a 6.

JIMMY  
Brady, give me \$200 so I can split.

Brady counts his money, hands Brady \$200 of his \$300. The dealer gives him two black chips to split the 7's. One the first hand, Jimmy gets a king and waves his hand to signal that he is staying. One the second hand he gets a 4.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
I need to double-down.

BRADY  
This is it.

Brady throws a \$100 dollar bill on the table. The dealer gives Jimmy one black chip.

JIMMY  
Double for less.

The next card is an 8. Jimmy has a 19 on the second hand. The dealer flips over her card. It's a ten. She has 16. Jimmy high fives Brady. The dealer takes a card and it's a 5 to give her 21.

BRADY  
That was some hot streak... for the dealer.

Jimmy staggers away from the table, heading down the hall.

JIMMY  
I'm screwed. Can't afford any ring.

INT. CASINO - BATHROOM - DAY

Hermie is scrubbing a men's room toilet. Brady enters, nods.

HERMIE  
Hey. If my mom wasn't on my ass for rent, I'd walk out of this place.

Jimmy walks in. Hermie turns away.

JIMMY  
This day started bad and it's ending so bad.

BRADY  
Chill.

Jimmy checks out the mirror, which has a tiny crack. It reflects his image a second late. Jimmy does a second-take looking at the crack in the mirror.

There are faint spots on his neck. He unbuttons his shirt and sees a rash. Brady makes a disgusted face.

Jimmy walks over toward a stall and unbuckles his pants. He eyes the expanding rash.

JIMMY  
Oh my God. They gave me something.

HERMIE  
Something bothering you?

Hermie snickers while cleaning the next stall.

JIMMY  
Get me home, Brady.

EXT. JIMMY'S CAR - DAY

Brady is driving. Jimmy is in the passenger seat looking in the mirror at his rash.

JIMMY  
First the bartender... then  
Ashley... now this? HELP ME!

BRADY  
You're losing it dude. Chill.

JIMMY  
You're right. I need to calm down.

Jimmy exhales. His cell phone rings. Caller ID says it is his boss, Mr. White. Jimmy clicks speaker.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
This is Jimmy.

MR. WHITE (ON PHONE)  
You said the contract was \$400k.

JIMMY  
Right.

MR. WHITE (ON PHONE)  
It's four thousand you lying idiot.

Jimmy looks completely confused.

JIMMY  
I'm almost home. I'll straighten  
this out.

MR. WHITE (ON PHONE)  
Don't bother. Turn in your keys in  
the morning.

The phone clicks. Jimmy turns pale.

JIMMY  
This can't be happening to me.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy's head is down as he enters his room, missing his reflection glitch in the mirror. Coco barks at mirror.

JIMMY

Oh Coco. I'm losing my girl, my job, the money... and I have a fucking rash.

Coco looks at him. The dog speaks in a serious, flat voice.

COCO

Even I don't always think with my dick.

Jimmy is in shock. (beat)

JIMMY

Think with my dick? Now I'm hearing the dog talk?

COCO

Distractions aren't always the real enemy.

JIMMY

This is a panic attack. Or a dream.

Jimmy sees the computer image of Ashley, clicks to delete it. It disappears, then reappears.

Jimmy scratches his rash.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I'm all messed up, if -

His phone rings. It's the bank. He sends it to voicemail. The bank records a message.

BANK EMPLOYEE (ON PHONE)

Yes, your account is overdrawn. We need you to call us immediately at -

Jimmy turns off the phone. Coco barks at the window. Jimmy sees Ashley standing in front of his house. He talks to Coco.

JIMMY

She's not real. (beat)

Jimmy pats down his own body, questioning if he's real.

COCO

You want my advice?

JIMMY

Yes... No... Who is playing games  
with me?

Coco barks once at the computer camera.

COCO

You're not ready to believe it.  
Call your computer geek buddy.

Jimmy calls Brady.

JIMMY

Brady, I could use your help -

Jimmy walks out the door.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Di slumps at her computer system. Used Kleenexes surround  
her. Her eyes are red.

DI

I could use a hug.

The doll sits on the side of the computer with it's eyes  
cocked as if it is hiding from the camera. Di squints at the  
doll with curiosity - from top to bottom, front and back.

DI (CONT'D)

How'd you get over here?

She cradles the doll, puts it back on the desk. After a  
double-take, she turns to the computer. Jimmy's image is on  
the screen.

A computer prompt says: "Are you sure you want to delete? Yes  
or No" Di spins around wondering where the prompt came from.  
She wipes her eyes, peers into the camera, defiantly.

DI (CONT'D)

This isn't my script.

Di's tears roll down her cheeks.

DI (CONT'D)

(quietly)

I'll decide for myself.

She clicks no.

EXT. CASINO - PARKING LOT - DAY

Jimmy, alone with Brady, seems paranoid that someone is watching.

JIMMY

You have that key to my place?

Brady nods.

Jimmy moves close and begins whispering in his ear, covering his mouth. Brady's eyes get big. Brady nods affirmatively.

BRADY

My chance to do something besides leading you astray, bro.

JIMMY

You can do this. And let me know if Coco is up to something.

Brady's brow wrinkles.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

A close up of Craig's hand on a mouse.

In the reflection of the monitor, Craig's tired eyes watch... unblinking.

Screen flashes white. A pop-up reminder says: OBSERVE SUNSHINE.

Craig opens a file on a side monitor labeled: Home Footage - August 3, 2007.

It is a video of a younger Craig typing on a laptop. Next to him is a woman whose face is in her hands. It's Laura. She's crying. He is silent. She places her hand over his to stop his typing. She shakes her head no.

LAURA

You don't get to program people to love you, Craig.

In the video, his lips tremble. He says nothing.

Craig pauses the video, drags his cursor to a different monitor.

On screen: "DELETE LAURA - YES or NO".

Craig's mouse hovers over yes, he twitches, then clicks.

On screen: "ACCESS DENIED".

Craig's jaw tightens.

CRAIG  
Maybe later.

He clicks on a Christmas video file from 20 years ago. He presents Di a gift. She unwraps a box. Inside - the doll.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy follows Di into her room. She turns around, rattled. Her breathing is erratic.

DI  
What are you doing here?

Jimmy rubs his temples.

JIMMY  
Coco was talking to me this morning.

Di doesn't buy it, shaking her head. She glances at her doll. She picks it up and holds it.

Jimmy is nervous. When he rubs her arm, Di pushes his hand away. Her expression says that she wants an explanation.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Brady's having a hard time and -

Di holds her hand up like a stop sign.

DI  
He's been your excuse since high school.

Jimmy stands in front of the mirror which has a small crack. The delayed reflection shows, Real James, a more mature version of himself - a few years older, professional appearance, brighter blue shirt - but he doesn't notice.

JIMMY  
It was a tough night. I need you.

Di eyes show anger and she clinches her fist.

DI  
Same old script. Should have knocked you out of my life years ago.

Jimmy's face reacts to his current reality.

JIMMY

I'm sorry for all the times I broke  
your trust. I don't know why it  
happens to me.

Neither see Hermie peeking in the window.

DI

Happens to you?

Hermie's face turns sad hearing that Di is hurt.

JIMMY

I misspoke. I haven't said an  
intelligent thing all day.

DI

You just did.

Di picks up her doll and stares at it. She nods her head,  
screams at the top of her lungs.

DI (CONT'D)

Eight years, you son of a bitch.  
Lying. Cheating. Broken promises.

JIMMY

I can do better. Please... stay  
with me.

Di turns away and pauses, talking to herself.

DI

Feels like a rerun.

Di shakes her head and stares into Jimmy's eyes.

DI (CONT'D)

Get out.

Jimmy slowly walks to the door. Di slams the door behind him.

DI (CONT'D)

I'm not sure who I am without him,  
but I don't know who I am with him  
either.

The doll on her bed shakes its head.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig is engrossed watching a monitor with Jimmy's departure and Di slamming the door. Craig claps his hands.

CRAIG

Atta girl.

Craig picks up the binder and runs his hand over the words 'Free Will'. He pauses - almost opens it - tosses the binder back on the desk.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Back on script. Maybe this time...  
I don't have to stay outside.

Craig is blind to the adjacent monitor with Jimmy's room, where Brady is sitting at his desk.

He moves his attention to the monitor with Hermie standing in Di's front yard.

BACK TO DI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hermie places a bouquet of flowers outside of Di's bedroom window. A note says: "You deserve to be treated like more than a memory."

He quickly tip-toes away so that he isn't seen.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Brady unplugs and re-plugs in an ethernet cord into Jimmy's computer. It reboots and he sees a folder called Brady.

BRADY

Whoa!

Brady clicks on it and see a video of him walking in on Jimmy and Di in bed. He laughs to himself, closes that folder.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. Who is Sim One?

Brady continues to survey files on the screen. Coco barks.

Brady seems stumped, inspecting the screen with folders called Ashley/Shanda Template and Rulebook.

Brady shrugs his shoulders, seems ready to give up. His eyes catch a faint gleam from Coco's collar. He stares at the dog.

COCO  
Click on Test Subjects.

Brady does a double take staring back at Coco.

BRADY  
What the hell? (beat) Okay, test subjects.

He opens the Test Subject file. There are sub folders for Sunshine, Joker and Partner. His eyes are big. He leans forward, takes a deep breath.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
This is messed up.

Brady clicks repeatedly on the Joker file but it won't open.

COCO  
They are encrypted.

Brady curiously watches Coco, hesitates, then has an idea.

BRADY  
Right... encrypted. I can crack these from my place. Plant a little surprise for somebody.

Brady stands up to leave, turns back to the computer screen, stares at the window shape, looks back on the screen. He turns the camera backwards and closes the drapes.

EXT. HERMIE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Hermie relaxing on his old car, flipping through his notebook.

The notebook page headline is: Friend List. At the top are crossed out names: Jimmy, Mom, followed by names not crossed out: Siml, Brady, Di

Brady's car speeds by.

Jimmy, moping, plods past Hermie's house. Hermie pops up.

HERMIE  
I'll always look out for her.

JIMMY  
Stay away.

HERMIE  
You're not gonna ignore me forever.

SUE (65), Hermie's mother, wearing a postman's uniform, comes out the front door. A lifetime of delivering mail causes a limp. She uses a cane. She carries a moving cardboard box. Hermie perks up seeing his mom. Sue yells.

SUE

Get in the house. I need some help with these boxes.

Hermie shuffles down the sidewalk, eyes down.

HERMIE

Not now. I'm heading to my high school bestie's house.

SUE AND JIMMY

You didn't have a bestie.

SUE

Raise a child by yourself... no help... no respect.

Jimmy continues to walk down the street, confused.

Hermie walks in the other direction. He pulls out his notebook flipping through it, stopping at a page titled Scripts for Di.

HERMIE

Goin' to see how my gal pal is doing.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - DAY

The flowers sit in a vase on the desk.

Di checks out herself in the mirror wearing a new dress. The mirror has a bigger crack. The image is delayed a second. She spins around.

DI

It's time for a new me.

She twirls, smiles into the mirror, looks at herself. Her smile disappears. She gasps seeing a different version of herself (Real Dianne).

DI (CONT'D)

How?

Real Dianne is trying to say something.

DI (CONT'D)  
Stay with it. Talk to me.

Di squints, then jumps when seeing Hermie walking up to the window. SCREAMS.

Di rushes toward the window and pulls down the shade.

DI (CONT'D)  
Go away, Hermie.

Hermie, fearful, turns away.

HERMIE  
You didn't thank me for-

DI  
Don't be creepy.

Hermie stumbles and starts to run.

Di takes a deep breath. She stares at herself directly in front of the mirror. The crack seems to be growing. As she turns away, Real Dianne stands in the mirror. Di does a double take, confused.

The mirror DIANNE wears vivid pink. The reflection speaks.

DIANNE  
You're not crazy.

DI  
Who are you?

DIANNE  
I'm the version of you that isn't  
trapped in some miserable script.

Di trembles, her eyes staring back and forth at the reflection.

DIANNE (CONT'D)  
It's not always what it seems. I'll  
find a path.

Di's eyes get big. She stares at the mirror again, and it's her regular self in the reflection.

Di shakes her head as if she's trying to wake up from a dream. She catches a gleam coming from the doll's eyes, similar to the eye watermark on the mirror.

Di notices her phone resting against the doll.

Di stares at doll, then back at the mirror.

Di opens her Find My Friends app, searching for Jimmy's location. He's at home.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Shoulders stumped, Jimmy stares out his bedroom window thinking about Di. He picks up Coco, puts him on his lap. Coco barks at someone outside. Jimmy looks up, sees Shaunda.

JIMMY

Can't be.

Jimmy places Coco on the floor, searches out the window again, but sees no one.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What is messing me up?

COCO

Figure it out.

Coco stares at Jimmy. He reflects on his recent encounters.

ASHLEY (V.O.)

*You're cute.*

Jimmy shakes his head. Now, he remembers Shaunda at the bar.

SHAUNDA (V.O.)

*You look like you are ready to party.*

Jimmy itches his rash.

COCO

You're looking at your past. Make the future you really want.

EXT. OUTDOOR WEDDING - NIGHT

Di hugs Laura, empty shot glasses in front of them.

DI

My substitute date.

LAURA

Weddings are hard on people who keep starting over.

Di observes the happy bride and groom. She drunkenly cries with her hand over her heart.

DI  
I've dreamed of a happy marriage  
since the day I watched Dad drive  
away.

Laura nods.

LAURA  
Same scene over and over again.  
They promise. They leave. This...  
is what's left.

Laura lifts her wine glass.

DI  
Don't I deserve something that  
lasts?

LAURA  
Love will bite you in the ass.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
Could we get all of the single  
ladies on the dance floor?

Laura finishes her glass of wine.

Di weeps but joins the group of single ladies, as does Laura who seems unbalanced.

DI  
My turn to be the lucky one.

BRIDE  
One, two, three.

The bride tosses the bouquet over her shoulder, looks back but freezes.

While most of the single ladies freeze, Laura watches the bouquet hover over the crowd. She dives and catches it, then jumps up and throws it at Di.

LAURA  
There's your prize, lucky.

Laura turns her back and strolls away.

LAURA (CONT'D)  
Now, I'm going to find a man.

She hesitates (beat) but walks away. She gets into her car and starts the engine.

Di stands dumbfounded.

DI

Mom?

Laura drives away.

Di gets out her phone to open the Uber app. Nothing is working on her phone. She cries.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Craig types: "Add handsome groomsman"

CRAIG

She'll finally see what a gentleman is like.

Craig leans back in his large chair and closes his eyes.

BACK TO OUTDOOR WEDDING - NIGHT

A handsome GROOMSMAN (30) approaches Di.

GROOMSMAN

You look like you could use a friend.

Di hugs him and cries on his shoulder. She points as Laura speeds away in the distance.

DI

My ride. (beat) My phone is glitching-

GROOMSMAN

I'll get you home. Don't worry.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jimmy, silent in the dark, shirtless, in front of his computer reflecting. He is surrounded by empty beer cans. Coco jumps up on his lap.

He opens a laptop file, and watches an old video of him and Di dancing at their prom. Brady claps in the background.

He rewinds it and watches again.

He sees a file on his screen that he doesn't recognize.

JIMMY  
What's this?

He clicks it. A spreadsheet opens. Jimmy scrolls.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Order - tequila (beat)  
Meet - Ashley (beat)  
Switch - Shaunda (beat)  
It was all in a script? (beat)  
Checks - bounce (beat)  
Di - heartbroken

Jimmy looks confused. He stares at the spreadsheet. Scrolls up and down. Holds his hand to his forehead.

Coco cocks his head.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
What the hell, Coco? They're not  
just running a game... they're  
running us.

Jimmy returns to the screen and snaps a photo. He touches his face, checks his mirror reflection, which glitches.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
Free will isn't freedom if someone  
else wrote the code.

Jimmy checks his own pulse, lightly slaps his face.

COCO  
If you bark loud enough, maybe you  
become the one holding the leash.

Jimmy SLAMS the laptop shut.

INT. GROOMSMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Di and the Groomsman are sitting in the back seat of his car. She kisses him. He passionately kisses her back.

He focuses on her eyes, but his gaze flickers.

GROOMSMAN  
You are so... so... so...  
beautiful.

DI  
It's nice to be with a man who only  
wants me.

The Groomsman moves a plushie off the seat, drops it on to the floor. They lay across the back seat. Di is totally in to the encounter.

DI (CONT'D)  
I need this tonight.

GROOMSMAN  
You need this tonight.

Hermie stands a few feet away from the car.

Di continues kissing the Groomsman.

Hermie moves closer, takes out his phone, snaps a photo.

Di feels the Groomsman sliding his hands under the back of her dress.

DI  
Whoa. Slow down.

The Groomsman rubs his hands on Di's behind.

GROOMSMAN  
You remind me of a test... test...  
test subject.

Embarrassed, Hermie quickly turns his head and walks away.

As Di continues to kiss the Groomsman romantically, he tries to pull down the back of her underwear.

DI  
Oh my God.

GROOMSMAN  
Oh my God.

Di's breath quickens. She glances down at the plushie on the floor. The plushie's eyes dart back and forth.

The Groomsman reaches toward his pants buckle. Di tenses.

DI  
No. NO!

Hermie hears her screams and quickly turns toward the car.

HERMIE

Hey! HEY!

Hermie runs back toward the car, he stumbles, falls and gets back up.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

Please... let me help her!

DI

(screaming)

This is not going to happen.

Hermie sees Di's face is pale, her body shaking. He SLAMS his fists on the car window.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Craig is snoring in his chair. The monitor shows what occurred.

DI (O.S.)

No. NO!

HERMIE (O.S)

Hey! HEY!

DI (O.S.)

This is not going to happen.

Craig is jolted awake by the screams. He fumbles at the keyboard. His computer went into sleep mode.

CRAIG

Shit! No safeguard.

Craig holds his fist to his head. His eyes get big watching Di.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

What have I done?

After pounding a few keys, he hits the delete button.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Not in my world.

Huge sigh. Drops his head.

The monitor with SUBJECTS DELETED moves from 2 to 3. It glitches.

Beneath it are the names: \* Liz the Dealer, Penny the Bartender, Groomsman

Zoom in on SUBJECTS DELETED.

BACK TO GROOMSMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Hermie continues banging on the window. Di yells at the frozen Groomsman.

DI  
No. My choice.

Di winds up, and PUNCHES the Groomsman in the face.

SFX: POP

Di's eyes blink. (beat)

SFX: A single bell TOLLS.

Silence. Hermie stares in the car window.

HERMIE  
What the hell?

The Groomsman has disappeared. Di, breathing hard, looks all around, glances out the window. Hermie is confused.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
I don't get erased.

Hermie sees part of Di's naked butt, looks away, uncomfortable.

Hermie's phone gets a text message that says, "Ready to play, partner?" Hermie deletes the text.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
I think I'm done here.

Hermie frowns. He's uncomfortable.

Di glances behind her and pulls down her dress. She sits alone, hands shaking. She takes a few deep breaths.

She picks up the plushie, which is holding the car keys. Breathing slows. She studies the plushie, squinting from top to bottom, front and back.

DI  
Now you make sense too.

Di confidently snatches the car keys, her knuckles bleeding.

INT. GROOMSMAN'S CAR - NIGHT

Di, in the drivers seat, locks the doors. (beat) She drives, sees Hermie walking ahead, rolls down the window.

DI

Thanks, Hermie. I've got to find my Mom.

Hermie sees her bloody hand.

HERMIE

Are you okay? Do you need anything?

Di grabs the plushie and hands it to Hermie, who is hyperventilating.

DI

Get rid of this thing for me?

Hermie puts his hand over his heart.

Di drives away viewing the rear view mirror. Stops. She sees Hermie rip the head off of the plushie with cotton poofing in the air. Hermie drops it in a trash can as Di drives away. She takes a deep breath.

Di texts her mom: "I'm safe. Heading to see if they need help at work. Need to talk to you. "

Hermie opens his notebook to the page titled "Scripts for Di". He rips it out, throws it out next to the plushie.

EXT. SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Jimmy tosses his keys on the bar. He seems depressed.

JIMMY

Water please.

As a NEW BARTENDER pours his water, Jimmy turns around to see Laura, by herself, on the dance floor, with a glass of wine.

After watching her spin a few times, Jimmy curiously approaches.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

You okay?

Laura shakes her head no.

LAURA

I repeat mistakes, time after time.

Laura cries. Jimmy puts her wine glass on a table next to her purse and phone.

JIMMY

All of us. Guilty.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Craig watches Jimmy and Laura together. He's uncharacteristically emotional.

CRAIG

None of this had to happen. I thought I could fix things.

BACK TO SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

Jimmy gives Laura a hug.

LAURA

Why are you being nice to me?

JIMMY

Time to do the right things. Di will be my greatest success story.

LAURA

If we feel love, does it matter who wrote the code?

JIMMY

Huh? What are you doing here?

LAURA

Looking for a young stud.

Jimmy sighs and backs away.

JIMMY

Ahhhh... I'm gonna go for a long walk.

Laura pats Jimmy on the cheek.

EXT. CASINO - STREET - NIGHT

Jimmy and Brady are walking down the street near the casino. Neither is saying anything.

BRADY

Bro... you gonna tell me what's wrong?

They continue to walk and walk. Jimmy stops.

JIMMY

I've spent the night thinking with my heart and my head, and I'm not very proud of myself.

Brady puts his arm around Jimmy.

BRADY

It's my fault. If I -

JIMMY

You didn't make me -

BRADY

Look... I pull you out as my wing man - hoping to find what you've already had.

Brady is uncharacteristically sad.

JIMMY

You're a good friend, but I've got to own this... again. Got to earn getting her back.

Jimmy and Brady hug. It suddenly starts to rain.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

On Craig's monitor: "Last command: Weather - Rain."

Craig yawns watching Jimmy and Brady.

His screen now says "probability to win \_%:"

Craig types in 1%, but his hand trembles over the 0 key.

He leans back in his chair and closes his eyes. His finger slips, rests on the 0 key.

BACK TO CASINO STREET - NIGHT

The casino marquee scroll includes an upcoming concert announcement, followed by a sports score, then a news headline: Global Simulation Exposure Leads to Uprising.

Brady glances back, reads it. He slowly turns to Jimmy.

BRADY  
What if your worst decisions  
weren't really yours?

JIMMY  
Fate?

BRADY  
Or fucker.

Jimmy stops and looks at Brady.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
I think I have some answers.

Brady points to a security camera. Jimmy nods in agreement.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

Jimmy remembers the camera in the casino. He remembers the camera in Java Joe. Then, Ashley looking at the camera on his computer.

BACK TO PRESENT:

JIMMY  
Now, I'm going to focus on one  
thing... well, one person.

Jimmy glances down and notices a \$100 bill. He bends over to pick it up.

BRADY  
Excellent, now you only owe me  
\$200.

Brady reaches for the money but Jimmy pulls it away.

JIMMY  
Not yet.

INT. CASINO - FLOOR - NIGHT

Jimmy confidently takes a seat at the same blackjack table that he lost all of his money. Brady shakes his head hoping Jimmy won't play.

Jimmy throws the \$100 on the table, bets one black chip. The back of the cards have the eye watermark logo.

Di walks thru the casino, spots Jimmy, stands far away.

Brady give Jimmy an unconfident thumbs-up.

Jimmy gets a 20. The dealer flips a 19 and pays him \$100. Jimmy bets the whole \$200.

BRADY

No man. Let's dip.

Jimmy winks at Brady, gets another 20. Dealer has an 18.

BRADY (CONT'D)

You can pay me the \$300 and have \$100 for yourself.

Jimmy bets the \$400.

BRADY (CONT'D)

Okay, do that.

A series of tight shots show Jimmy winning \$800, then \$1,600.

Brady slaps Jimmy on the back. Jimmy hesitates. Di squints directly at the security camera. Jimmy smirks.

A tight shot shows Jimmy doubling his wager to \$3,200 and the dealer paying him for another victory.

Brady leaps in the air. Jimmy is focused. The security camera points directly at him. Jimmy confidently nods, bets all \$6,400. Brady does his two-handed shooter move at the camera.

DEALER

Sir, the table limit is \$5,000.

Jimmy raises his eyebrows to Nancy, the pit boss, who nods to take the bet. Jimmy gets a blackjack. He slyly smiles and flips off the security camera with both hands. Brady raises both arms in the air. The dealer pays Jimmy near \$10,000. He bets it all.

Di flashes a big smile. A PLAYER at the slot machine next to her YELLS. His machine shows three eyes and jackpot.

The dealer turns to Nancy who glances at the camera, nods approval to take the wager. Jimmy gets a 20. The dealer has a 16 and draws a card. The dealer freezes mid-deal, tilts their head, slowly turns over a 6 to bust.

Jimmy now has over \$30,000. He stands, takes a deep breath. He stares at the chips and glances at the camera. Brady nods. Jimmy presses his lips together and stacks all of his chips.

Nancy jolts as if she's waking up. The dealer is watching her. She looks at the camera.

DEALER (CONT'D)  
We'll take the bet.

Jimmy contemplates the camera, shakes his head no.

JIMMY  
Then color me in.

INT. CASINO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Di grins outside a restricted door marked:  
SURVEILLANCE/AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY. She gets out her key  
fob and ponders looking directly at the ceiling camera. She  
looks back and forth, nods confidently and swipes the lock.  
She enters the video surveillance room.

INT. CASINO - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. Rows of monitors flicker. Di walks down the row  
studying each monitor. She stops at one showing her friend  
Liz at the employee lunchroom.

Di presses play. She watches Liz disappear and recoils,  
breathless.

INT. CASINO - FLOOR - NIGHT

Brady breathes a sigh of relief.

BRADY  
Bro, was that real?

The dealer pushes 3 \$10,000 chips and 2 \$1,000 chips to him.

Brady hugs Jimmy. Jimmy hands Brady a \$1,000 chip.

JIMMY  
With interest. Now let's go  
shopping.

BRADY  
What else are ya gonna do with all  
that scratch?

JIMMY  
Money isn't what matters any more.  
Time to do the right thing.

BRADY  
Time for you to figure out a few  
things. Who the hell is Sim One?

Jimmy shrugs his shoulders.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
Or Sunshine? Or Partner? Somebody  
is out to get you, man.

Jimmy nods in agreement.

BRADY (CONT'D)  
And somehow we're getting clues to  
unravel the mystery.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Craig snores, his finger resting on the 0 key. The monitor shows Jimmy and Brady celebrating together.

An ALARM blares.

CRAIG  
What? What happened?

His monitor now says "probability to win: 100%"

Craig rewinds the video on Jimmy's monitor. He sees Jimmy win his bet and flip off the camera. His face is enraged.

Craig types: "INSERT SELF INTO SIMULATION."

Craig pauses, stares at the command.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
No.

Begins to hit backspace, erasing the command.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Tried immersion once. Variables  
collapsed. (beat) I won't make that  
mistake again.

Craig types: "DELETE BLACKJACK TABLES." Hits enter.

INT. CASINO - MALL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jimmy is counting his cash as they walk down the hall at the casino mall.

BRADY  
What a comeback! Look at all that.

JIMMY

It's not for me. Our comeback  
starts now.

Jimmy turns to walk in to the jewelry store. The salesperson holds up a purple engagement ring box. Jimmy gives her a thumbs up.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Laura taps at the door and walks in.

DI

What happened?

Laura shrugs. She sees Di's bandaged hand and gasps.

LAURA

Oh no. You're hurt. I'm sorry.  
You're all that matters to me but I  
don't show it enough. I love you.

Laura strokes Di's wounded hand.

DI

Love feels like it happens to me,  
instead of with me. I'm the one  
people walk out on. Dad, Jimmy,  
sometimes you. I should be  
irreplaceable.

Laura holds Di's hand.

LAURA

I had a dream I lost you. You  
didn't walk out... you were just  
gone... erased. I couldn't even  
remember your voice.

Di speaks with confidence.

DI

There a lot of erasing going on...  
and I'm the only one who sees it. I  
have to figure out why before I  
lose someone I love.

Laura is confused.

LAURA

I don't think you should leave  
Jimmy. I've been too tough on him.

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)  
Deep down, he's actually pretty  
kind.

Di smiles. Laura straightens Di's dress. Steps away.

DI  
He makes me feel safe when we're  
together. We need to protect the  
ones we love.

SFX: A single metallic GONG.

Di turns to her mom. Laura is gone. She squints, counts to four on her fingers. Shakes her head.

DI (CONT'D)  
The guy I punched? Fine. But my  
mother?

Di turns to the camera on her computer. Di stares, angry but determined.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig see Di staring at him. His grits his teeth. Puts his hands on his head.

CRAIG  
I'm going too far... again.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy puts the purple engagement ring box on his desk. He adds thousands of dollars to the wedding jar.

Jimmy opens an email. It is from Hermie. It has an attachment. He hesitates, opens it.

It is a photo of Di in the backseat of the Groomsman's car. Her dress is up and part of her ass is showing. There is a plushie on the floor, but no Groomsman in the photo.

JIMMY  
How drunk did she get? Or... did it  
happen to her too?

Coco tilts his head.

Jimmy facetimes Di. It rings. There is no answer.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
My fault.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Di lets the call go to voicemail. She narrows her eyes clicking faster on files. She sees one labeled Di Debug Menu.

DI  
Demented. People don't just  
disappear. Who would want to  
control my life?

She clicks another file titled "Jimmy\_collapse\_final".

Di gasps.

DOLL  
You're close.

Di slowly lifts her head. Stares at the doll.

DI  
To what?

DOLL  
Yourself. The part... that won't...  
follow the instructions.

Di stops clicking and inspects the doll.

DI  
Why me?

DOLL  
You know what's wrong. Trust  
yourself.

Di slowly nods. Her eyes get big. She sees a folder titled "Craig v17.2".

She takes a post-it, looks into the camera on her computer.

DI  
I'm coming for you.

Di slaps the post-it on the camera.

DI (CONT'D)  
My rules now.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Craig studies Di covering up the camera. He scrambles to other monitors.

CRAIG  
You're not supposed to see me.

The "SUBJECTS DELETED" monitor now says 4. It fades in and out.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
She's learning. Quicker this time.

Craig clicks some keys.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Don't leave me again.

INT. DI'S BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The doll falls off the desk.

DI  
Why'd you jump?

DOLL  
(whispers)  
I didn't.

DOLL (CONT'D)  
They can code moves... but not your  
heartbeats. It's going to be okay.

Di turns to her computer and clicks the escape key. A file opens up labeled "Proposal\_Jimmy\_first\_attempt".

DI  
(muttering)  
Jimmy didn't follow the script.

As Di reads the file, her jaw drops.

DI (CONT'D)  
He actually wanted to marry me.

She studies the photo of Jimmy and blows it a kiss.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy's phone rings. It's Di calling back. Jimmy answers.

JIMMY  
Hey. You okay?

DI  
I'm ticked.

JIMMY  
I know I've made mistakes, but-

DI  
We've both made mistakes.

JIMMY  
But you're pissed at me?

DI  
It wasn't all your fault. There's more you need to know.

JIMMY  
I have something for you to hear too.

DI  
Get ready for some changes. New rules.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Craig is flipping through the Free Will manual.

A monitor pops up a warning: "Observer ping detected".

CRAIG  
Thought I could stop.

He reaches for the keyboard. Doesn't hesitate.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Music plays.

Di enters, closes Jimmy's laptop, unplugs the ethernet cord.

Jimmy and Di sit facing each other having a serious conversation. We don't hear a word.

Di points at her empty ring finger.

Jimmy is filled with passion. Di listens, arms crossed.

Jimmy is begging for forgiveness.

Di slowly accepts his apology and shares her own.

Their eyes lock. They exchange a determined look that says - we're doing this together.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig throws down the binder. He gasps, squinting at Di and Jimmy. His face tightens.

CRAIG  
Forgiving isn't strength... it's  
surrender.

Craig pounds his fist on the desk. He glances at the Hermie's monitor, exhales, exasperated.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hermie studies the old photos of the man and the gravesite in silence, his expression softening. He slowly exhales and speaks into a small voice recorder.

HERMIE  
It feels better talking to you,  
Dad.

Hermie glances at the chessboard and the king piece. He sobs and falls to his knees.

The king falls over on the chessboard. Hermie stops crying, reacts with surprise.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
How... did that happen?

Hermie reaches for his notebook.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig stretches his arms, talks to himself.

CRAIG  
You're the only one who never asked  
for more. I couldn't risk losing  
that, partner.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jimmy attempts to put his arms around Di. She recoils.

Coco grabs Jimmy and Di's attention. The glow from the eye on his collar spreads across the mirror like rippling water. The mirror now has a large crack. Coco says something.

Jimmy and Di inspect their reflections and see a mature, happy version of themselves (James and Dianne) who fade in and out of focus. They are holding hands and staring into each other's eyes.

Di locks eyes with the reflection. She touches her own face, then the mirror.

Looking at Jimmy, Di points to Dianne then at herself. She places her hand over her heart and smiles.

The room begins to shake. Earthquake. Di shakes her head telling Jimmy to remain calm. She knows it's not real. The quake stops.

She turns quickly as Coco begins to tell them something.

There is an engagement ring on Dianne's finger in the mirror. Di places her hand over her heart.

Di lectures Jimmy. He nods again and again.

She touches the mirror. A watermark blinks and disappears. Di points to where it was. Jimmy nods.

Jimmy and Di smile. Jimmy kisses her hand, pulls the engagement ring out of the purple box, puts it on Di's finger.

Coco lies down, calm, as if his work is done.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Craig leans closer to the monitor. Rewinds. Plays the video again.

CRAIG

The mutt's at it again.

Craig exhales. Frustrated.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hermie glances up in the air.

HERMIE

It must be lonely being God.

Hermie types on his keyboard, "LilGmr to Sim1". He stares at a blank screen. Hermie types "Sleeping?". He waits but gets no reply.

Hermie reflects at his desk, looks at the photo.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
I wanted to grow up and be like  
you... whatever that is.

He puts the photos down and rubs his tired eyes.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig nods his head in approval. He clicks a message: Sim1 to LilGmr - "How's it going, partner?"

BACK TO HERMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hermie reads the message softly to himself.

HERMIE  
How's it going, partner?

Hermie examines his old photo.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
Sim One calls me partner... like my  
dad did.

Hermie gets up, deep in thought. He moves a pawn closer to the end of the board.

INT. JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Hermie enters Java Joe's and sees Di getting her order, the diamond ring shining on her finger as she puts a piece of gum in her mouth. A BARISTA brings a cup of coffee.

BARISTA  
Sunshine?

Di is taken back.

DI  
I said my name was Engaged.

The Barista shrugs.

BARISTA  
That's what they gave me.

She stares at the security camera for a second. Spots Hermie. Talks to herself.

DI  
Why is he always around?

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

CRAIG  
Family.  
(beat)  
There will come a day when I want  
you to know.

Craig grits his teeth. Grimaces then walks into his bathroom with his hands on his head, knowing he's gone too far again.

INT. JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

BARISTA  
Weiner, your coffee is ready.

Di giggles. She brings that cup of coffee to a table where Jimmy is happily waiting. His coffee cup says Winner.

Hermie is completely confused. He picks up a bottle of water to purchase observing Di and Jimmy.

JIMMY  
Coco is actually pretty smart.

DI  
So is my doll.

JIMMY  
It's like those Russian Nesting  
Dolls?

DI  
A puzzle, in a puzzle, in a puzzle.

Di stands up, pulls the gum out of her mouth, and pastes it over the coffee shop camera lens.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig passes the mirror, doesn't see an eye watermark embedded in it, ambles back to his desk.

CRAIG  
I make the puzzles.

There is an error message on his screen: "ERROR: CAMERA 23"

Craig sees that his vision of Java Joe's is blocked. He starts clicking quickly, takes a pill.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
What did I miss? She's getting too close.

A faint eye-shaped watermark flickers in the top corner of his monitor. Craig leans closer. Breath is short. The watermark fades.

BACK TO JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

Jimmy peers deep into Di's eyes.

JIMMY  
Does it count, regardless... the way I feel about you?

Di puts her hand over her heart, smiles and nods yes.

DI  
Our choices.

Jimmy pounds his chest. He sees Hermie out of the corner of his eye and points at him. Di sees him too.

DI (CONT'D)  
Let's tick them off.

Jimmy and Di engage in a long passionate kiss. Hermie stares.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig types: End kiss. The monitor says: UNCODEABLE

Craig is sweating, angry and knocks the coffee off his desk.

CRAIG  
If I don't control it, it all falls apart... again.

He puts his VR glasses back on and slowly nods his head.

BACK TO JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

DI  
It feels good to be free.

JIMMY

I thought I was free... but I was trapped in patterns.

Jimmy glances at Hermie, who groans.

DI

Now we know how to choose what's right.

Di has her hands over her heart.

Jimmy winks.

Hermie throws his bottle of water.

HERMIE

No! You can't make people love you.

Hermie blinks rapidly, opens up his i-pad and types furiously. He hesitates looking up at Jimmy and Di. He starts shaking his head no, but then squints his eyes and nods yes.

He has an evil smile and whispers to himself.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

Welcome back.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig is watching what Hermie is typing, nods in agreement.

CRAIG

Sure, partner. This will be fun.

Craig's screen says, "Approve Hermie request?".

Craig raises his arms in victory and clicks yes. The caricature of Ashley appears on his screen. He smiles.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Let's see Jimmy explain the dream girl.

BACK TO JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

The door opens. Ashley enters. Hermie nods. Ashley walks toward Jimmy and Di's table.

ASHLEY

Jimmy!

Jimmy perks up in his chair.

JIMMY

I'm don't want you or anyone else  
sent my way.

Jimmy grabs Di's hand.

ASHLEY

Who is this?

DI

The one who is on to you.

Jimmy, Di and Ashley all stare at each other. Jimmy holds his hand up to ignore Ashley.

JIMMY

Not this time. You're fake. I'm not  
falling for the temptation plan any  
more.

Ashley is enraged. Hermie seems nervous. Ashley turns to Di.

ASHLEY

I fucked his brains out two nights  
ago.

Ashley points at Jimmy. Jimmy reaches out, holds Di's hand again and ignores Ashley, who sighs.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Come on. It's my job to distract  
you.

Di points to the ouroboros tattoo.

DI

You're a snake, not a person.

Di pretends to freeze for a second, slowly smiles in a chilling way, while pointing at Hermie.

JIMMY

We can play too. On to you, Hermie.

Di grimaces at Hermie shaking her head.

DI

I'm so disappointed, Hermie. I  
thought we might be friends.

Hermie is shaking his head no. He looks at his laptop which shows a request: `ACTIVATE ASHLEY`, but he hasn't pushed enter.

Ashley sheds a tear.

ASHLEY  
I'm not vanishing again.

Hermie violently rips a sheet out of his notebook and puts it in his pocket.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig's computer locks up. The screen flashes, "Permission Check/Observer Mode Warning". Craig clicks on the keyboard and the screen goes dark.

Craig squints at the screen, confused, pounds the desk.

CRAIG  
Mom!

There is no answer. Craig studies his computer connections. He leans back confused.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
A bug?

The power is restored on its own. The screen message blinks: "Observer Override: 3 concurrent anomalies"

INT. JAVA JOE'S COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

ASHLEY  
Hi. I'm Ashley.

Di speaks with authority.

DI  
Piss off, Ashley.

ASHLEY  
I have feelings. I want what you have.

Ashley turns to the door. As one Ashley exits the shop, simultaneously, another Ashley enters the cafe.

Di stands. Angry.

DI  
This is how they mess with us.

ASHLEY  
Hi, I'm -

Di hustles to the door, throws that Ashley out Java Joe's.

JIMMY

I'm sorry we ever created her.

DI

Someone else brought her to life.

Hermie types into his i-pad "System is failing". He clicks escape, escape, escape.

DI (CONT'D)

Hermie, the game is over.

Di points to the gum covered camera.

DI (CONT'D)

I'm in charge of me and no one can stop me. You should think about you.

Hermie pauses.

HERMIE

I've always thought I was helping you.

Something clicks. He slowly walks toward Di and Jimmy, notebook in hand.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

We may need to talk.

DI

You always seem to find me.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hermie is in bed, eyes closed. Sue knocks once, barges in.

HERMIE

I thought I had a nightmare.

SUE

You're the nightmare. I'm not surprised that you don't have any friends.

HERMIE

You're my friend.

Sue snorts.

SUE  
Really? You forgot my 65th  
birthday.

HERMIE  
Sorry.

Sue has a short, evil grunt.

SUE  
I got in my 40 years... turned in  
retirement papers... put the house  
up for sale.

HERMIE  
No. No. This is my room.

SUE  
Already accepted an offer. We're  
out in two weeks.

Sue smiles.

SUE (CONT'D)  
I met a nice man on my route. We're  
moving to the Villages.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig is watching the exchange between Sue and Hermie. He  
shakes his head.

CRAIG  
I never really liked her. He  
deserves better.

BACK TO HERMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hermie's is angry and anxious.

HERMIE  
Why are you leaving me?

SUE  
I'm going back to being happy.

Hermie rolls his eyes.

SUE (CONT'D)  
Move in with one of those friends.

Hermie takes a big breath, fighting off emotion. He glances at the photo, then knocks the chess pieces off the board leaving one pawn standing alone.

HERMIE  
Abandoned.

SUE  
I thought I had a life, then your  
dad left.

Hermie runs to the photo.

HERMIE  
Did he die or did he leave?

SUE  
What's the difference... he wasn't  
here.

HERMIE  
What?

SUE  
Craig spent five minutes with us. I  
drove you past some cemetery to get  
him out of your head.

HERMIE  
You both walk out on me.

Sue hands Hermie a birth certificate.

SUE  
You might want this.

The birth certificate shows the first names of his parents:  
Mother - Sue, Father - Craig.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Craig is uncharacteristically empathetic.

CRAIG  
Sorry, partner.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

HERMIE  
What happened to my father?

SUE

He was just a stop on my route...  
watching me. Next thing I know, I'm  
delivering you... like the mail.

HERMIE

What? My whole life... a lie.

Sue leans her cane on his desk, raises her voice.

SUE

My whole life... taking care of a  
janitor. I'm starting a real life.

HERMIE

We have a real life.

SUE

Bah. Your friends are fake. You  
clean toilets and play with those  
video toys.

Hermie painfully screams.

HERMIE

They're not toys. (beat) They're  
all I had.

Hermie pauses and reflects. Nods.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

I guess one of us does deserve to  
be happy... for once.

Sue slips out and closes the bedroom door.

Hermie turns to his computer.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Di and Jimmy walk into the room holding hands. Coco cocks his  
head.

They look in the mirror, fractured but intact, and see  
themselves in an glitchy embrace from the prom proposal in  
the parking lot eight years ago.

Di picks up Jimmy's keys off his desk, studies the  
reflection, then hurls them. The mirror SHATTERS revealing a  
hidden camera behind the glass.

DI  
If you're real, stop watching and  
show yourself. No more clues.

Jimmy pulls Di close.

JIMMY  
Tell me this is real.

DI  
Even in a script, feelings matter.

They lie on the bed and hug each other. They kiss.

Brady knocks and walks in the room.

BRADY  
And then... oop.

DI  
Gosh darn it. No.

Brady slinks out the door and closes it.

JIMMY  
He's gonna need to find another  
friend. (beat)  
Now where were we?

Jimmy and Di resume kissing. Di takes off Jimmy's shirt.

Hermie peeks in the window and is furious. Brady watches  
Hermie from the sidewalk. Hermie turns, sees Brady.

HERMIE  
This isn't supposed to happen.

Coco looks out the window wagging his tail with joy.

Brady stands down the sidewalk watching the entire episode.

Jimmy unbuttons Di's shirt.

He stands up and unbuckles his pants. Without turning to the  
window, he closes that curtain.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hermie storms in to his room and slams the door shut. The  
chess board only has pawns on it. He gives the board a long  
stare - shocked and confused.

HERMIE  
It's just me now.

He hears his mom outside his door.

SUE (O.S.)  
(yelling)  
What is your problem?

HERMIE  
Don't worry about it. I'm going to  
fix it.

SUE (O.S.)  
Some people create. Some people  
fix. I think its safer to walk  
away. Walk away.

Hermie moves his mom's cane, sits in front of his computer  
and boots it up.

HERMIE  
Did you really sell the house?

Sue laughs as she limps away.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

There is a photo of Sue on the on the screen.

CRAIG  
Come on ya little bastard. Tell me  
what you want.

BACK TO HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The file on Hermie's computer says Simulation Game. He pulls  
up an image of Jimmy and Di laying under the sheets.

Hermie focuses on Jimmy's image.

HERMIE  
The dog is smarter than you.

Hermie looks at Di's image.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
You almost screwed a phantom...  
with that plushie watching.

There is a tap at the door. Hermie's brow wrinkles - his  
mom's cane is gone.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

You left your cane, but it's-

After a POUND on the bedroom door, it flies open with two figures in the doorway arm-in-arm - the real-world James and Dianne. They are a different-looking version of Jimmy and Di, wearing bright blue and pink. Coco trots straight up to James and sits.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

What are Jimmy and Di doing?

DIANNE

Our names are James and Dianne. You are the virtual version of our old classmate Herman.

JAMES

The game is over. Hermie, you've been the pawn.

Hermie waves his arms back and forth.

HERMIE

No, no, no. It was a perfect world. They only had to follow the rules.

Dianne picks up Coco.

DIANNE

You didn't make any rules.

HERMIE

I wasn't in charge of anything?

JAMES

He can manipulate you.

DIANNE

He copies us, and when you don't make him feel loved, he kills you off.

Hermie struggles to process this.

JAMES

He's not fixing anything - only tries to feel better about himself.

DIANNE

It's wrong and never works. We make our own choices. You should too.

DIANNE (CONT'D)  
 We know the man. His system isn't  
 as smart as he thinks it is.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

The conversation is happening on one of Craig's monitors. He is rolling a queen chess piece between his hands. He leans in to watch.

BACK TO: HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

James holds hands with Dianne. He points to the chess board missing all of the pieces except the pawns.

HERMIE  
 I knew something was wrong, I just  
 didn't want it to be me.

DIANNE  
 It's not a dream, not an accident.

HERMIE  
 I wasn't causing any of the  
 challenges?

JAMES  
 None. All you did is drive  
 commitment. Even a fake unfaithful  
 act can result in forgiveness.

DIANNE  
 We've created something of our own.

JAMES  
 Winning!

DIANNE  
 Loving!

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Craig is dripping with sweat, concerned. He talks to the picture of he and Di from years ago.

CRAIG  
 You should love your Dad... maybe  
 next time.

He stares at a screen that says: RESTORE DI - Yes or No.

Mary Ann walks in to Craig's room with a sandwich on a plate.

MARY ANN

What are you playing with now?

Mary Ann sees the screen with the prompt. Her brow tightens. She sets the plates down and deliberately brushes against the escape key.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

You need something to eat.

Mary Ann sports a slight grin.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

I'm going out.

Craig sighs. The screen returns to Hermie's camera feed.

INT. HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

James shows Hermie his phone. It has an image of a tombstone with the name Hermie.

HERMIE

I'm not real, am I?

James looks directly in to Hermie's face.

JAMES

Only in this cycle.

Hermie's face turns very sad.

HERMIE

It hurts. Everything could have been different.

Hermie turns to his blank screen.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Craig wipes sweat from his face.

CRAIG

Don't be so weak, boy. I gave both kids everything an old man can.

BACK TO HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

DIANNE

Do you have anything to say for yourself?

Hermie's head droops.

HERMIE

I... I... I shouldn't have sent that photo. No excuses. But it didn't feel like I had a choice -

Hermie picks up a pawn from the chessboard and stares at it.

HERMIE (CONT'D)

They keep moving the pieces. Can you give me a world where someone loves me?

Dianne thinks for a moment, looks at James. Behind him, she sees the picture from Hermie's youth with his father. Takes a long stare at the man in the picture.

DIANNE

You haven't been very nice to most people, but your world hasn't been very good to you either.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT - SAME TIME

Craig is clutching his family photo.

CRAIG

I thought walking away would make things better.

Craig beholds the photo, gently touching the girl's face.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

I should have done it differently, Sunshine.

BACK TO HERMIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

James nods. Dianne hesitates for a few moments, privately pushes a few buttons.

Hermie seems scared. James checks out the phone in silence, wondering what she did. She walks to Hermie and gently pats him on the back.

DIANNE  
Don't worry. It's going to take all  
of us.

JAMES  
You trust him?

Dianne smiles and nods.

DIANNE  
I trust the real Herman.

HERMIE  
Thank you. You're a ray of  
Sunshine.

Her smile fades for a beat, remembering her father.

DIANNE  
Sunshine? Sunshine?

James pats Hermie on the shoulder.

JAMES  
Sorry you were dissed, dude.

HERMIE  
It's all good. (beat) I have an  
idea.

Hermie reaches into his pocket and pulls out the paper he  
ripped out of his notebook. It says: "APPEAL TO A HIGHER  
POWER." He peers into the computer camera.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
Time to finally make a REAL move.

Hermie gazes upward.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
Is anybody listening?

Di steps beside him, impressed.

DIANNE  
Good start, bro.

Hermie's laptop pings. He snaps his head down.

Hermie shyly smiles at Dianne.

HERMIE  
This is for you.

Hermie clicks on his laptop.

Hermie's screen: HEY PARTNER

The reply comes quickly: NOT A GOOD TIME

Hermie laughs.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
 Guess somebody found a virus. I  
 think I lost my partner.

Di and Jimmy smile at Hermie. Hermie swallows, nervous but hopeful.

HERMIE (CONT'D)  
 Hey, can I come to the wedding?

Dianne admires the photo of Hermie with his father.

JAMES  
 We'd love it... if the actual  
 Herman attended.

DIANNE  
 Let's find my real brother. Life is  
 going to be different for all of  
 us.

Hermie nods. The door barges open. It's Brady. He looks around confused.

BRADY  
 I don't even know why I'm here.

DIANNE  
 I do.

Hermie smiles happily for the first time.

HERMIE  
 I always wanted to be a real  
 friend. Don't worry, Brady, we'll  
 figure it out together.

Hermie awkwardly pats Brady's back.

BRADY  
 Do you play D&D?

Hermie places his hand over his heart.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig stares at the title page of Free Will. Scoffs.

CRAIG

They never do anything good with  
it.

INT. SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - DAY

Dianne walks into the desolate bar. HERMAN (27), wearing a bright gray shirt, is sitting in the corner drinking water and looking at his i-pad.

HERMAN

Hello.

DIANNE

Hi, Herman. I owe you an apology.

Herman fights back tears.

HERMAN

Thanks, but I've owed all of you an  
apology for a lifetime of jealousy.

DIANNE

We forgive you.

HERMAN

I don't deserve it.

Dianne and Herman hug each other.

DIANNE

We've seen another world.

Herman's eyebrow raises.

HERMAN

And-

DIANNE

Brace yourself. Our dad walked out  
on both of us.

Herman exhales.

HERMAN

Our dad? Did he die or is he  
fucking with us?

DIANNE  
Oh, he's alive and unwell.

Herman shakes his head, closes his i-pad.

HERMAN  
I have a sister. Wow.

DIANNE  
Did Dad spend time with you?

HERMAN  
I barely remember what he even  
looked like.

DIANNE  
I remember. I lov... cared about  
him. Now, he's a ghost of what love  
should feel like.

Herman nods.

HERMAN  
What do we do now... partners?

DIANNE  
We get James, surprise Dad.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY

Craig turns over the picture on his desk and stares at it for  
a long moment. His hand trembles.

CRAIG  
I brought her into this world.  
We're starting over, again.

He slowly lays it in the trash.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Everyone will be happy when it's  
perfect. They found a way to break  
the rules... so will I.

A close-up of the photo at the top of the trash can reveals  
that the photo is a picture of Craig, Laura and Young Dianne.

He madly clicks through simulation screens.

He sees Hermie on one screen, chatting and smiling with  
Brady.

Craig rises to his feet. His voice sounds like a madman.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 Hermie, my son... don't be afraid  
 to be alone.

Craig holds a fist to his own head. A bright light shines on Hermie, frozen, on the monitor. Craig dramatically pushes the delete key like he's pushing a dynamite plunger.

He pulls up a video of Di with Jimmy.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
 My daughter... I'm sorry -

The lights shines on Di in Jimmy's room.

DI  
 Show your face, you coward.

Silence.

DI (CONT'D)  
 Whatever this world is, it's ours -  
 not yours. Go away.

Craig mumbles to himself.

CRAIG  
 That's not how I do it.

DI  
 Fine. Just drive away... again.

JIMMY  
 No.

Jimmy jumps and shields Di, stands in her spot shielding her from the light. Di steps back, puts her hand over her heart.

Craig hears their voices through the monitor.

DI  
 Maybe free will's just the glitch  
 that proves we're real.

JIMMY  
 Then I'll keep loving you in this  
 world, and the next...the next.

DI  
 And I'll always choose you.

CRAIG  
 Stick to sales and bars... and  
 leave my daughter alone.

Craig holds a fist to his head. A bright light shines on Jimmy, frozen, on the monitor.

Craig nods, dramatically pushes the delete key.

INT. JIMMY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Di screams. She stands alone.

DI  
Nooooo!

Di stares directly into the camera on Jimmy's computer, yells powerfully.

DI (CONT'D)  
You don't get to write my life  
anymore. We choose for ourselves.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Craig appears to be torn.

CRAIG  
You are easier to write as a child.

He pulls up a photo of Di holding her hand over her heart.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Just one version when I make her  
happy.

He watches Di on his monitor. She steps closer to the camera, calm, grounded.

DI (V.O.)  
You want one version where I'm  
happy? Then listen.

Craig's breath catches.

DI (V.O.)  
You can't rewrite who I become.  
That's mine. Not yours.

Di turns the camera down. Craig's eyes well. He clicks to upright the camera toward Di.

CRAIG  
Sunshine... I don't know how to do  
that.

DI

Then delete me. Right now. I won't  
be the last one to stand up to you.

Craig holds a fist to his head. He takes a long, deep breath  
and considers his next action. He exhales.

DI (CONT'D)

Dianne, if you can hear me, you  
know what to do. Don't let us down.  
Our life. Our choice. Our ending.

Craig slams DELETE. Nothing happens.

Craig looks confused.

A bright light slowly shines on Di.

Di is frozen on the monitor, standing boldly, calm and  
radiant.

Craig's screen goes black. His reflection lingers on the dark  
monitor.

SFX: A loud, metallic GONG. Then another GONG. A final GONG.

Silence. The SUBJECTS DELETED monitor flashes with a 7.

Beneath it are the names: \* Liz the Dealer, Penny the  
Bartender, Groomsman, Laura, Hermie, Jimmy, Di

CRAIG

I couldn't fix it. Not then. Not  
now. Someday.

Craig's face sinks. Silence.

EXT. SONNY & SUNNY'S TAVERN - NIGHT

James stands as Dianne and real HERMAN (27) sit at a corner  
table.

JAMES

Brother and sister?

DIANNE

Mom said that Dad had a baby with a  
delivery person. I didn't know it  
was our mail carrier... and you -

HERMAN

No wonder I always admired you.

James gives them a thumbs-up.

DIANNE

It would have been nice to grow up  
with a brother.

Dianne puts her hand over her heart. Herman mirrors her  
gesture.

HERMAN

It would have been nice to hang out  
with someone.

DIANNE

Now we will have every holiday  
together.

Herman smiles bigger than ever.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

I used to wait by the window. Every  
day. Waiting for the idea of a  
father who loved me.

Herman nods in agreement.

HERMAN

A relationship more imagined than  
lived.

DIANNE

Now, we may not have much, but we  
have what he never had.

JAMES

So about your dad -

HERMAN

Siml? Yeah, let's peek in his  
window.

Dianne embraces James. She also reaches out and grabs  
Herman's hand. James pulls Herman into the hug.

DIANNE

I found someone who can help us  
find him.

Mary Ann walks in. Dianne jumps up, runs to hug her  
grandmother. Dianne is glowing with happiness.

She introduces James to Mary Ann. They enter into a friendly  
embrace.

Mary Ann is talking to them and waves for Herman to join them. She holds Herman's hand.

Mary Ann looks shocked, but happy. She begins to tell the group a story.

Herman nods, opens an i-pad and begins to share a log he's been keeping with the group.

Mary Ann looks very pleased with herself.

INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Craig walks in to his room pulling up his pants zipper. He clicks at the keyboard and drinks from a bottle of whiskey.

POUND POUND POUND

Dianne, James and Herman are pounding on his window. Their mouths show that they are yelling but Craig can't hear them.

CRAIG

You can't be here.

Craig pulls down the window shade and returns to his desk.

DIANNE (O.S.)

We can be anywhere we want... Dad.

Mary Ann yells.

MARY ANN (O.S.)

Over here, dear - all of you. We can't let him decide how your lives turn out too.

Craig rolls up his sleeves, reveals an ouroboros tattoo.

There's a knock at the bedroom door.

CRAIG

Go away.

Mary Ann opens the door and stands in the doorway.

MARY ANN

You actually have human guests?

Herman, Dianne and James smile as they brush past Mary Ann in to the room. Craig scowls at them and his mother.

HERMAN

You let me think you were dead.

DIANNE

For twenty years... you cared about  
no one but yourself.

JAMES

Even in your virtual world, you cut  
your kids loose.

DIANNE

Everybody just wants a normal  
father in their life.

HERMAN

You control your virtual game, but  
no one determines our choices...  
partner.

CRAIG

I lost my family, but I'll never  
lose control of this world...

DIANNE

There are no do overs in the real  
world.

Craig holds his chest and starts breathing heavy.

CRAIG

I tried to make things right... I  
didn't know how.

DIANNE

You missed allot of birthdays. I  
learned to make other wishes.

MARY ANN

All these years, I missed my  
granddaughter?

Mary Ann has her hand over her heart. Dianne smiles, looks at  
Herman.

MARY ANN (CONT'D)

And my grandson.

Herman blows her a kiss.

CRAIG

How in the hell did you find out  
about him?

Dianne grabs James's hand.

JAMES

Hey man, what kind of asshole  
ditches two families over and over  
again?

CRAIG

(whispers to himself)  
I'll be better next time.

Craig turns and yells directly at James.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

You'd be a horrible father. Dianne  
doesn't need a cheater like you in  
her life.

James shakes his head. Points back at Craig.

JAMES

That wasn't me. (beat) That was a  
failed version of yourself. And  
Herman paid for it.

James turns to Dianne.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I've always loved Dianne, always  
been faithful, and immune to your  
bullshit.

Craig, embarrassed, glances at Herman.

Herman's tone is soft.

HERMAN

You create a cruel world. We plan  
to move on together.

Herman, Dianne and James bravely hold hands. Craig's computer  
monitor flickers.

DIANNE

You don't get to decide my life.  
You don't get to design our future.  
James will be father to the  
grandchild you'll never control.

Dianne lovingly smiles at James. Craig gives him a look that  
says, really?

CRAIG

Herman... partner, you don't need  
them. I'm your friend, son.

Herman looks down.

HERMAN

Son? A child deserves more than a chess set. You're not my partner... or a father... just a monster thinking he was a god.

Herman places a chess pawn on the table.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

They are my family now, not a simulation. Checkmate.

Mary Ann's eyes pierce Craig. She shows him a picture from Java Jane's of her smiling with Dianne, James and Herman.

Craig's body shakes. He gives Herman an evil stare.

CRAIG

You have no idea what's real, son. You never did.

Craig slams a button. A very bright light shines in the room. Dianne speaks calmly, with authority.

DIANNE

Stop it, Dad. Are you confusing whose life is a simulation?

Craig's monitors crackle more. He views at the wall art work.

CRAIG

I never wanted to lose you.

DIANNE

You never tried to know the real me.

His body shakes. He yells.

CRAIG

I just wanted someone to love me.

HERMAN

(whispers)  
Me too.

DIANNE

You don't want love. You want control.

Craig starts to type: COMMAND LOVE CONFIRM

CRAIG  
Command. Love. Confirm.

Nothing happens.

Dianne steps forward to Craig. Calm. Confident.

DIANNE  
Di could have pretended to love  
you. We all could.

Dianne puts her hand over her heart. Mary Ann does the same,  
nods at Dianne.

DIANNE (CONT'D)  
Love only exists when you risk  
everything - and still might lose.

Dianne steps back and holds James hand. Their hearts are  
full.

Craig is confused and emotional. (beat)

Mary Ann smiles at Dianne.

MARY ANN  
My grandchildren deserve the  
inheritance.

Craig fury explodes.

He throws a monitor in the direction of his mother, hitting  
the door and pushing her into the hallway. The door slams  
shut on Mary Ann. She yells trying to open the door from the  
hallway.

MARY ANN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
There are consequences for your  
actions, Craig.

CRAIG  
I thought if I rebuilt her... I  
might get it right this time.

DIANNE  
You think you can screw with  
everybody? We're making a life.

Dianne points her thumbs at herself.

DIANNE (CONT'D)  
My ending.

Craig's breathing becomes erratic. He seems to have an evil idea. He slowly turns looking directly in to the camera. He clicks a button on his computer.

SFX: CRACK

The theatre screen fractures with bright light leaking through the cracks pointed at the theatre audience.

Craig types: GROUP DELETION

Craig acts like a madman, pointing at the theatre audience.

CRAIG (V.O.)  
I made all of you. None of you  
cared. You're next.

There is a matrix of 16 live videos on this screen. Different movie theatre audiences are in most of them, plus a man in a recliner, a couple sitting on a couch, a group of teenagers looking at their phone and a woman on a plane. The 16th box is simply the eye watermark. It blinks.

CRAIG  
Tell me you love me, or else.

DIANNE  
You don't decide what happens next.

Hermie holds his i-pad up to the watermark on the mirror.  
It says: VIRUS NOW

Craig's monitor flashes: LOVE = UNCODEABLE  
Craig freezes, then types: DELETE ENTIRE SYSTEM  
Very slowly, it backspaces one letter at a time on its own.

Craig's hands shakes as he tries to repeatedly click enter.  
Nothing happens.

CRAIG  
Oh, no. This shouldn't be possible.

Dianne looks up to the heavens.

DIANNE  
Who's really running this?

Craig's eyes widen.

CRAIG  
I need more time.

The monitor flashes, "CONTROL DENIED. OBSERVER MODE ONLY."

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
No. Not possible.

A banner says "Admin Override" as the system BEEPS.

He types, "Restart Di". The monitor says, "SYSTEM ERROR. USER REJECTED." Craig repeatedly pounds the escape key. Nothing.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
This was supposed to be all mine.

The trash can begins to shake. Craig slowly peeks in to trash. The photo now shows Laura and Dianne - happy.

Craig looks up to the heavens.

DIANNE  
Ever consider that you have a  
maker? Maker, if you can hear us...  
we need you.

James eyebrows rise.

JAMES  
How deep does this simulation go?

SFX: PHONE TEXT DING

Herman reads a text message and slowly looks up.

HERMAN  
Even he's just another line in  
somebody's script.

The light in the room fades. Craig grabs the 'Free Will' binder and flings it - knocking over the trash can. He scans all of the monitors, slowly looks up.

CRAIG  
Can't be. I never got to be loved  
either. (beat) Sunshine?

Craig's eyes widen as they fixate on the delete key.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
I nev... nev... never... got to be  
loved.

Craig freezes. James, Dianne and Herman blink. (beat)

The "SUBJECTS DELETED" monitor goes from 7 to 8.

SFX: A very loud, metallic GONG.

Beneath it are the names: \* Liz the Dealer, Penny the Bartender, Groomsman, Laura, Hermie, Jimmy, Di, Craig

Dianne, James and Herman all look upward, then at each other.

Craig's seat is empty.

Di hurries to Craig's computer and types: END SUBJECTS DELETED. Clicks enter.

The monitor goes dark.

Di quietly walks out the door with James and Herman.

HERMAN

Dad... wasn't... real?

JAMES

A higher power?

DIANNE

One who built us for another chance... and love.

They close the door. Silence.

The monitor restarts. The eye logo appears.

A cursor blinks a few times, then types: Insert Player 2.

Coco speaks in gentle, wise voice.

COCO (O.S.)

Game over. (beat) Your turn.

Credits begin to roll, then pause.

SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER

INT. HOSPITAL MATERNITY ROOM - DAY

James hovers over his wife, Dianne, who is happily cradling their newborn baby. Mary Ann sits proudly in the corner.

DIANNE

This is ours. No more scripts. No more puppeteers.

James pulls a crumpled \$20 bill from his pocket, drops it in a glass jar next to the bed that is relabeled: College Fund.

Herman, now wearing a bright Hawaiian shirt, walks in to a maternity room carrying a vase with flowers. The baby's eyes dart back and forth, tracking something unseen.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Herman, come meet the legacy that I chose for our family.

Herman approaches with a proud smile and places the flower vase on the table. He gives Mary Ann an awkward hug.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

Your uncle brought us flowers.  
Thank you, brother.

Everyone is startled when the door flies open. Brady walks in, starts to flash the peace sign, but turns it into a shushing finger over his mouth. Brady whispers.

BRADY

And then... there's a baby.

A soft chuckle rises among the group.

(SFX: BEEP) All of their phones beep receiving a text message simultaneously. One at a time, they check their screens. The message reads: "Cute Baby, Sunshine". They exchange glances and shrug their shoulders.

They all slowly turn to the camera mounted in the corner of the room - wondering who is watching now.

The eye watermark logo glows faintly on the lens of the camera.

Dianne places the baby in her bassinet. Puts her hand over her heart. The baby's eyes get bigger and it smiles.

From the camera angle, James, Herman and Brady move closer and closer. The baby coos.

DIANNE

No more!

Behind them, Dianne rises, picks up the vase and fires it directly into the camera. SMASHES it.

The screen goes dark. The eye glows briefly in the corner.

FADE TO BLACK.