

CHANGES

Written by

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CHANGES

INT. EPIGEE CORPORATE MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

INTERCUT BETWEEN TIGHT SINGLE SHOTS of PHIL PEEBLES (41) and DAVE his manager, seated facing each other across Dave's big, managerial desk. The mood is tense.

DAVE

It was a tough call, Phil. But the decision came down from the top. It applies to everyone in the company, without exception - you, me, everyone, including Jackman himself. It's solid. There's nothing I can do.

PHIL

(Truly shocked)
Whoa, Dave, that's... Certainly, upper management can make exceptions without...
(Indicating himself)
I mean... There's always something.

DAVE

Not this time.

PHIL

(Dumbfounded)
But...

DAVE

You're not handicapped. There's no hardship. No special needs...

PHIL

Dave, it'll be a major difficulty for me, very major, a major hardship-

DAVE

Come on, Phil. It's going to be tough for everyone-

Phil shakes his head with an incredulous snort.

PHIL

(Temper rising)
But it doesn't make sense. How can you... do you agree with this?

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

It doesn't matter if I agree or disagree. It's a done deal. But if you must know, I do agree.

PHIL

How can you...

DAVE

The company can be far more productive with all employees co-locating. It's proven. The pandemic taught us that.

PHIL

But...

(Emotional appeal)

I just bought the house and spent a bundle on computers, Internet, setting it all up. I can be just as productive-

DAVE

I appreciate that, Phil, but how would it look to your reports if they all had to come back to the office and we let you work at home. Think about it. How could you be an effective manager?

Phil leans back, pondering his next move.

PHIL

So, if I don't come back...

DAVE

You have to.

PHIL

(Tough guy)

What if I don't?

DAVE

Well...

The looks say it all.

INT. EPIGEE CORPORATE HALL - DAY

START MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

Phil leaves Dave's office and moves drunkenly down the high-tech hall toward the CAMERA in a state of utter disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

It wasn't supposed to happen this way, with the rug so effectively pulled out from under him.

Dave appears in his doorway, locates Phil wandering away from him. He signals to a plain clothes security person approaching his office, and points him to Phil.

The security person catches up with Phil and escorts him to the elevators, presses down. Phil turns to the person and stares with his mouth agape. The person smiles pityingly. The elevator comes and the person gently guides Phil in.

EXT. DOWNTOWN AFTERNOON TRAFFIC

Cars are packed in tight approaching the freeway ramp and there's Phil's Cybertruck, stuck like everybody else.

INT. PHIL'S CYBERTRUCK

He's got that same lost-it-all look.

PHIL'S DRIVE HOME MONTAGE

HIGH ANGLE following the Cybertruck in heavy Seattle traffic over a brand new Lake Washington floating bridge, through clean, new high-density suburban towns, down a long, narrow, tree-lined rural highway and ending up in a shiny new subdivision with parks, a golf course and two-million-dollar compact ultra-modern homes.

EXT. PEEBLES DRIVEWAY

The Cybertruck rolls up the drive to Phil's upscale home, waits for the garage door to open and continues in.

INT. PHIL'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

WE LOOK around Phil's office. He did spend a bundle. Two elegant bookcases filled with tasteful, expensive-looking books and knickknacks frame a large window with a second-story view of a tree-lined fairway. There's even a high-end elliptical trainer and weight system.

A clean, shiny, mahogany desk holds two large monitors and a fancy keyboard. Behind the desk is a pricey Herman Miller ergonomic chair. Inside the chair is Phil. He sits as if he's part of the furnishings - comatose, staring, eyes focused on nothing, waiting, his world having been upended.

(CONTINUED)

Phil remains in this state as WE TIME-LAPSE gradually from early afternoon to evening. The lights are off in the room, so WE SEE Phil's world darken, until he is silhouetted against the moonlit trees out his window.

END MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

As a door suddenly opens O.S., sending in a sharp blast of light from the hall. A woman's voice...

WOMAN (O.S.)

Oh, there you are. What are you doing up here in the dark?

She SNAPS on a light. Phil comes to life and turns to her. She's SAMANTHA, his wife - the same age as Phil, currently blond, neurotically thin.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

(Slowly)

What are you doing up here-

PHIL

Sorry. I was, uh...

BEAT.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Well, dinner's ready.

She leaves.

INT. PEEBLES DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Phil is seated at the head of the table, opposite Samantha. Twin boys (TWIN 1 and TWIN 2) sit opposite each other next to them. They're barely 16, dark, attractive, thin, trouble.

They are digging into bowls of food in the center. It's quiet.

SAMANTHA

I was planning on making our favorite seafood salad today but I couldn't find the bags from the store.

PHIL

(Still in a fog)

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

I bought everything, came home, and put the bags on the counter. I thought. But then they weren't there.

PHIL

Did you check the car?

SAMANTHA

Yeah. I looked everywhere. No sign of them. Even went back to the store.

Phil stares at Samantha, trying to process the bag incident.

TWIN 1

When are you guys leaving?

Everyone turns to Phil.

PHIL

(Mouth agape)
Leaving?

TWIN 1

I thought you were going up to the cabin.

Phil looks at Samantha, cocks his head.

SAMANTHA

(To Phil)
Remember? We were going up after work Friday?

He doesn't.

PHIL

Oh yeah. Um, well. We could do that. Sure.

The twins smile at each other.

SAMANTHA

Are you feeling ok?

PHIL

Who, me?

SAMANTHA

Who else?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
I don't know. The twins?

SAMANTHA
They're fine. You seem... off.

PHIL
(Fake smile)
I'm not off. I'm on.

The twins SNICKER.

PHIL (CONT'D)
(To the twins)
What?

TWIN 1
Nothing.

More SNICKERING.

SAMANTHA
Don't listen to them. They're being
silly.
(To Twin 1)
Silly twins.

Phil half-smiles.

INT. PEEBLES ENTRY WAY - NIGHT

The front door opens, revealing the wealthy suburban street,
lit by LED streetlights.

EXT. PEEBLES FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Phil is looking out the front door. He's bare-footed, wearing
just his pajamas. He comes out and sits on the top porch
step, deep in thought, doesn't notice the two full shopping
bags next to him.

After a long moment, Samantha's legs appear at the door.

SAMANTHA
Phil? Phil honey?

PHIL
Yeah?

SAMANTHA
What are you... It's freezing.
Aren't you cold?

(CONTINUED)

She approaches him.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 (Struck by lightning)
 Good lord! My bags!

Phil turns.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 I was looking all over for these!
 Where did you find them?

PHIL
 (Shocked)
 I don't... didn't...

SAMANTHA
 But...

PHIL
 You must've set them there.

SAMANTHA
 I came in through the garage. I
 never went this way.

She picks them up.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 Why don't you come in the house?
 It's freezing.

PHIL
 Sam.

SAMANTHA
 Come on.

PHIL
 We need to talk.

SAMANTHA
 We can talk inside.

PHIL
 Please, just sit.

SAMANTHA
 I'm cold.

PHIL
 Please.

BEAT.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA
Can I get a blanket at least?

PHIL
I lost my job.

That stops her. She puts the bags down and sits.

SAMANTHA
You what?

PHIL
I lost it.

SAMANTHA
That's impossible.

PHIL
That's what I thought too.

SAMANTHA
What did you do?

PHIL
I told Dave I wouldn't go back to
the office.

SAMANTHA
That's it? He knows about your...

PHIL
Of course. He doesn't care. I told
him I wouldn't do it.

SAMANTHA
Oh, Phil.

PHIL
He's... He's being totally
inflexible. And I refused.

SAMANTHA
(Worried)
But...

PHIL
(Turning to her)
But it's ok. It's ok. I've been
thinking. I don't need that place.
I can find something better, closer
to home. There are plenty of
companies, start-ups - Redmond,
Bellevue. I just need to make a few
calls.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT

SAMANTHA
All those years...

PHIL
I know. We'll be fine.

She studies him as he looks away. Then, after a moment...

SAMANTHA
Where did you get those pajamas?

He looks down, confused.

INT. PHIL AND SAM'S BEDROOM - LATER NIGHT

The two are asleep. All is QUIET. Then, the WIND starts.

EXT. PEEBLES YARD - NIGHT

The WIND is light at first, but quickly grows, becoming more intense, punctuated by violent 60-mph gusts. In the pale light, tree branches twist and bend, autumn leaves are torn from limbs in bunches. A metal trashcan falls over and blows across the yard. Anything light becomes airborne. Everything standing is knocked over.

Then, the wind dies down and the rain starts, growing from drips to torrents, creating instant pools in every low spot.

INT. PHIL AND SAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam is sleeping. A clap of THUNDER shakes the house. She awakens, looks to her side. Phil is gone.

She sits up and looks around the room, then gets out of bed. The sound of the heavy DOWNPOUR draws her to the window. She looks out at the rain pelting the earth, dancing on the pavement under the streetlight.

Then, she sees something else through the curtains of water. A tall, thin man dressed only in pajamas is standing on the sidewalk, head down.

EXT. PEEBLES STREET - NIGHT

Phil is standing, looking lost, every inch of him soaked through. He holds his hand out and watches the water pool in his palm.

(CONTINUED)

An arm enters FRAME. It's Sam. She encircles him from behind. He turns to face her, closes his eyes and wraps his arms around her, reaches up and holds her head close to his.

The rain, the wind, the dark all disappear in their close embrace. They pull away. Then, Samantha looks down, once again confused about his pajamas.

FADE TO BLACK,
THEN IN ON:

INT. PEEBLES DEN - NEXT MORNING

LOW ANGLE PAST THE COUCH, out the sliding door. The foul weather has given way to a crisp clean dawn. The sun is rising, illuminating the more than ample backyard landscaping - garden islands, gazebo, walkways, bar-b-que, etc.

After a moment, a large golden retriever bounces into VIEW from around the couch and approaches US. It stops momentarily to pee on the expensive carpet, then continues on its way.

WE FOLLOW it across the room and up the stairs to the second floor.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

The dog makes its way purposefully to one of the bedrooms. Then, it pushes open the door with its nose and enters.

INT. TWIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The twins are asleep in their twin beds on opposite sides of the room. The dog enters and jumps up on Twin 1's bed. Then, it makes itself comfortable, lying across his legs.

Twin 1 awakens with a start and stares at the dog. Then, he frees his legs and hops out of bed, runs to his brother and shakes him.

TWIN 1
Wake up, asshole.

Twin 2 awakens, flailing his arms.

TWIN 2
What the fuck are you doing?

TWIN 1
(Pointing to the dog)
Look.

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 2
What?

TWIN 1
Just look.

Twin 2 shakes his head and focuses.

TWIN 2
What's that?

TWIN 1
It's a fucking dog.

The dog is smiling at them. It hops off the bed and comes over, wanting some attention.

TWIN 2
What are we supposed to do?

TWIN 1
I don't know. I think it wants us
to pet it.

They do. The dog reacts favorably. Then, it turns and heads toward the door and looks back. The twins take the hint and get up. The dog continues out the door, and the twins follow.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

The twins follow the dog out the door and down the stairs into the den.

INT. PEEBLES KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The dog leads the twins into the kitchen off the den. Then, it walks out of view behind the kitchen island and returns holding an empty dogfood bowl in its mouth. It approaches the twins, sets the bowl down and looks up at them.

They turn to each other.

TWIN 1
Should we get mom?

TWIN 2
I don't know. What would she do?

TWIN 1
Panic. Scream.

They SNICKER.

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 2
That might be fun.

TWIN 1
For another time maybe.

The dog YIPS impatiently. The twins try to SHUSH it. Twin 1 opens the fridge and looks inside.

TWIN 1 (CONT'D)
Do you think it likes fish?

TWIN 2
Sure, why not.

Twin 1 brings out packages of cooked seafood, unwraps a few and drops chunks into the dog bowl. The dog immediately inhales the fish and looks up for more. Twin 1 shrugs and drops a few more chunks into the bowl.

TWIN 2 (CONT'D)
Wasn't Mom saving that for the salad?

TWIN 1
Yeah. But if we give it to the dog, we won't have to eat it.

TWIN 2
I like your way of thinking.

Twin 2 looks in the fridge for more ideas. Opens a leftover container, smells it, makes a face and dumps it in the bowl. They stop and watch the dog consume the pile of food.

The dog finishes and looks up.

TWIN 1
Now what?

INT. PEEBLES BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The basement is roughly finished with barebones furnishings. The twins enter from the stairs, followed by the dog. They walk down a short hall and open the last door. Then, they enter the room to get the dog to follow, then close the door.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM

It's a spare room with a made-up bed and attractive, unused furniture. The dog immediately jumps up on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

Then the twins scramble to open the door and squeeze out before the dog figures out what they're doing.

INT. BASEMENT

As they close the door on the dog...

TWIN 1
Get some water. It'll need water.

TWIN 2
Fuck you. Get it yourself.

TWIN 1
Why should I do it?

TWIN 2
This was your idea.

TWIN 1
So? The dog needs water. Do you want it to fucking die of thirst?

TWIN 2
Get it yourself.

TWIN 1
I'm not going to get it. It was my idea to feed it and bring it down here. Why should I do all the work?

TWIN 2
Blow me.

Twin 2 heads back up the stairs.

TWIN 1
Blow yourself.

Twin 1 waits a moment by the door, then follows Twin 2 up, muttering "fuck" under his breath.

EXT. FRONT YARD BY THE STREET - LATER

HIGH ANGLE POV from second story bedroom window. The twins are waiting on the sidewalk with their backpacks on, as a school bus stops next to them. The door opens and they get in.

INT. PHIL AND SAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phil is standing at the window watching the twins O.S. He turns in with that lost look, wearing different strange pajamas and a robe.

He heads out of the room.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL

He makes his way slowly down the hall and into his home office.

INT. PHIL'S HOME OFFICE

He sits in his Herman Miller and stares at the monitor.

It's an empty email message. He clicks in the To: line and pauses. He types, "Johnson Butterly." Then, he clicks in the body and pauses. Then, types, "Dear Johnson". Backspace. "Dear Mr. Butter-" Backspace. "Hey Johnson." Backspace. "Hi John." Backspace. "Johnson."

He removes his hands from the keyboard and leans back, drops his head. He stands and wanders around the room, plays with knobs on the elliptical, slides a cabinet door open on a bookcase. Runs his hand over 5-6 small bottles of expensive liquor. He pulls out the Macallan, breaks the seal, grabs a glass on a shelf and pours a couple fingers.

INT. PHIL'S HOME OFFICE - LATER

Phil is sitting in his chair, head rolled to the side, asleep. The open bottle of Macallan on the desk is half full.

We hear distant SCRATCHING O.S., light at first, then growing. Then, we hear YIPS, then, a BARK.

The sounds awaken Phil. He sits up and listens. A YIP, a BARK. He stands and looks around. The sound continues and intensifies. It's coming from the heater duct.

INT. FIRST FLOOR

He's wandering around in the den. It's not coming from the dining or living rooms. The garage? He opens the door to the garage. Not there. The sound seems to be coming from all over now. He gets an idea, heads toward the stairs to the basement.

INT. PEBBLES BASEMENT

He enters from the stairs. The SCRATCHING and BARKING are clearly coming from down the hall. He listens, then opens the guest room door and looks in.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM

It's empty. He steps in, looks around. Then, he sniffs and makes a face, looks down. It's dog poop - a significant amount from a dog about the size of a golden retriever. But no dog to be seen.

He wanders out of the room, closing the door behind him.

INT. PEBBLES BASEMENT

He waits by the closed door. No more barking.

INT. PEBBLES DEN

He is turning slowly, listening for barking. Nothing.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL

He comes up the stairs and turns into...

INT. PHIL'S HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Phil immediately looks up and freezes.

Sitting, facing him with a big smile is the retriever. The dog comes over to Phil, sits and lifts her right paw. Phil stares at it a moment and then reaches down and shakes the dog's paw. He even smiles a little.

INT. COTTAGE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL HALL - DAY

The hall is flooded with students in their lockers, moving between classes, TALKING LOUDLY. The school is a modern, high-end structure - the kind you find on the affluent eastside.

WE FIND the twins making their way slowly TOWARD US. They pass a tall, beefy FOOTBALL PLAYER getting stuff out of his locker.

(CONTINUED)

FOOTBALL PLAYER
 (Calling)
 Hey.

The twins stop and turn back toward the sound. He's looking at them, twice their size.

FOOTBALL PLAYER (CONT'D)
 Are you the guys having the party
 Saturday?

Their mouths drop.

TWIN 1
 Uh, we are guys and we're having a,
 uh, get-together.

FOOTBALL PLAYER
 (Mildly threatening)
 Am I invited?

TWIN 1
 (Feeling the threat)
 We, uh, not explicitly, but it's an
 open invitation, so...

FOOTBALL PLAYER
 (Friendly now)
 Cool. Me and some of the guys are
 thinking of coming over after the
 game.

TWIN 1
 Oh, that's nice.

FOOTBALL PLAYER
 You got beer?

TWIN 1
 Well, it's pretty much bring your
 own alcohol.

FOOTBALL PLAYER
 Cool. See you?

TWIN 1
 Yeah. See you?

He slings his backpack over a shoulder and takes off in the opposite direction. The twins watch him leave.

TWIN 2
 (Alarmed)
 Do you know that guy?

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 1
I think he's in my Spanish class.

They continue walking.

TWIN 2
Did you invite him?!

TWIN 1
Are you kidding?

TWIN 2
Then, how did he find out?

TWIN 1
(Getting steamed)
Oh, I don't know. You don't think
it maybe could've had something to
do with the fucking flyers you
handed out?!

TWIN 2
I made like 10 of them, maybe 20.

TWIN 1
And what did you do with them?

TWIN 2
Gave them to a few friends, maybe
7.

TWIN 1
Well, somehow the whole fucking
football team got ahold of them!

TWIN 2
Don't look at me.

TWIN 1
We got some serious shit to deal
with now, asshole.

TWIN 2
Fuck you.

A SHORT FRESHMAN corners them.

SHORT FRESHMAN
Hey, are you the guys having the
party?

TWIN 1
(To Twin 2)
What the fuck!

(CONTINUED)

SHORT FRESHMAN
Can I invite some friends?

The twins shove him out of the way and continue on.

SHORT FRESHMAN (CONT'D)
Can I?

EXT. PEEBLES BACKYARD - AFTERNOON

Phil has purchased a ball launcher and is playing catch with the dog. The dog runs back to him with the ball and politely drops it. He launches it again and the dog runs after it.

INT. PEEBLES DEN - CONTINUOUS

Samantha is holding a bag of groceries, watching Phil out the slider, not sure what to make of the scene. She opens the slider and steps out on the deck.

EXT. PEEBLES BACKYARD

SAMANTHA
(Calling, worried)
Phil?

He turns to her, smiling.

PHIL
Sam. Hi.

SAMANTHA
What's uh...

PHIL
It's a dog.

SAMANTHA
I see.

She watches as he launches the ball and the dog runs after it. She turns and heads back into the house, confused.

INT. PEEBLES KITCHEN

She sets the bag on a counter and removes a loaf of artisan bread, keeping a wary eye on Phil outside.

(CONTINUED)

She opens the fridge and looks through the contents, then panics. She frantically checks all the produce drawers, containers, looks everywhere.

She closes the door and checks around the kitchen counters, then notices Phil standing in the den with the dog.

PHIL

What do you think of the name
Forest Whitaker?

She's worried and panicked.

SAMANTHA

I... don't know.

PHIL

Remember that movie Ghost Dog?

SAMANTHA

Not really.

PHIL

The ghost dog was played by Forest
Whitaker. I thought it would be a
fitting name.

SAMANTHA

Where, um...

PHIL

You know, this dog is just what we
needed around here. She's very
intelligent, friendly, well-
trained, except for the poop she
left downstairs.

He reaches down and pats the dog on the head.

SAMANTHA

Poop?

PHIL

Don't worry. I cleaned it up. It's
not the dog's fault. When you got
to go, you got to go.

(To the dog)

Right?

WOOF.

SAMANTHA

Phil?

(CONTINUED)

He looks at her. She searches for the right words.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
So, we have a dog?

PHIL
Forest Whitaker.

They hear SNICKERING and turn. The twins are standing in the entry to the den, listening in. They still have their backpacks on.

SAMANTHA
Do you guys have anything to do with this?

TWIN 1
Forest Whitaker is a really stupid name for a dog.

PHIL
Too long?

TWIN 1
And stupid.

PHIL
Well, do you have any suggestions?

TWIN 1
I can think of a million names that are way less stupid.

SAMANTHA
Can I say something?

PHIL
What about just Forest?

SAMANTHA
(Forceful)
Can I say something, please?!

She has their attention. Nothing comes out. They wait.

PHIL
I put the dog's food and water by the door to the garage. If it's in the way-

SAMANTHA
(Panicky, shaking)
The seafood is gone!

(CONTINUED)

The twins trade looks.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

The seafood and the lettuce and the mayonnaise and the onions and the celery and the cucumbers and the dill, basically all the ingredients I bought yesterday for the seafood salad. Gone. How could it all just go? I put it in the fridge last night. And I got some fresh bread today to go with it. And it's gone. So, I'd like to know what happened.

She refers to the twins, starts to get weepy. Phil comes over and holds her.

PHIL

It's ok. We can go to Subway or something.

SAMANTHA

You don't understand.

PHIL

What?

SAMANTHA

Listen to me. Are you listening?! Things keep disappearing! I'm not making this up! They're here one minute and then they're gone. My purse disappeared this morning and I found it, lying on some boxes in the utility room.

PHIL

These things happen.

SAMANTHA

No, they don't. No! These things don't just happen. Things don't just disappear for no reason!

PHIL

There must be a-

SAMANTHA

What! What would be the reason?

PHIL

Maybe you misplaced the-

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

I didn't just misplace a head of lettuce, an onion, mayonnaise!

(Mimicking herself)

Oh gosh, here's that lettuce I misplaced. Crazy me. I'm always leaving my lettuce in the car or the front porch.

The twins SNICKER. She gets serious, quiet.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Phil, do you know where your car key is?

PHIL

It's in my-

It's gone.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Well, it was in my pocket this afternoon.

SAMANTHA

How do you know?

PHIL

I went to Pet World. Got dog food and-

SAMANTHA

See?

PHIL

(Quiet)

It's always in my pocket.

INT. REDD'S EATERY - NIGHT

A crowded family restaurant with a cartoon bird theme. The four are seated in a booth, waiting for their food.

TWIN 1

Ok, so maybe we did give the dog some of the seafood. It was hungry.

Samantha turns to him, shooting daggers.

SAMANTHA

I knew it. It had to be you guys. You're always up to something.

(CONTINUED)

The twins appear to be contrite, possibly concerned.

TWIN 1

But we didn't touch the lettuce or mayonnaise or any of that other shit. I swear.

TWIN 2

The dog wouldn't eat it.

TWIN 1

(To Phil)

And I didn't take your key fob.

PHIL

I know.

TWIN 1

It just appeared in my shoe. I swear I don't know how it got there.

PHIL

These things happen.

SAMANTHA

No, they don't.

PHIL

How do you explain it?

SAMANTHA

I can't.

PHIL

Things happen, so they happen. You know. You can't say things don't happen if they do, just because you don't think they should, or you don't want them to. If they happen, they happen.

SAMANTHA

So you don't think something funny's going on?

PHIL

I didn't say that. We just have to relax and go with the flow.

SAMANTHA

What is that supposed to mean?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
 Whatever happens, happens.

The food comes. The four react quietly, patiently as the waiter serves them food they didn't order. Samantha gets a massive plate of nachos topped with guac, white goo and steaming taco meat; Phil gets a banana split; the twins get Caesar salads.

WAITER
 Will there be anything else?

The four poke at their food. It's all very foreign to them.

PHIL
 I'm sorry. This isn't what we ordered.

WAITER
 (Checking the ticket)
 Macho nachos, banana splitsville,
 and Hail Caesar salads with extra
 anchovies. It, it's what you
 ordered, sir. See?

The waiter shows Phil the ticket.

PHIL
 Yes. But that's not what we
 ordered. I ordered a BLT, and they
 wanted burgers... It's all wrong.

WAITER
 I see. Just a moment.

The waiter steps away to talk with a guy wearing a manager's outfit.

PHIL
 This is so embarrassing.

TWIN 1
 (Grossed out)
 Anchovies?!

PHIL
 I know.

TWIN 2
 Gross.

PHIL
 They can't get away with giving us
 food we clearly didn't order.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA
 (Sarcastic)
 But Phil. What happens, happens,
 right?

EXT. PEEBLES DRIVEWAY - DAY

The Cybertruck is parked in the driveway, while the family loads it up for the trip to the cabin. Twin 1 puts the last suitcase on the bed and Phil closes the hatch. Then, Phil gets in the driver's seat.

Samantha approaches the twins, rightly worried about leaving them alone. Forest Whitaker is standing by them.

SAMANTHA
 Alright, you two. We'll be back
 Sunday afternoon sometime. You guys
 are in charge.

TWIN 1
 (Lying smile)
 Don't worry. We'll probably just
 sit around and play games.

SAMANTHA
 Well, I don't expect you to sit in
 the house the whole time. You can
 do whatever you want, within
 reason. Just... Well, you should
 know the rules by now.

TWIN 2
 We know the rules.

SAMANTHA
 (Not so sure)
 Good. I hope you do. We'll be
 checking in. No funny stuff.

TWIN 1
 We know.

The twins smile.

TWIN 2
 Have a nice trip.

TWIN 1
 Yeah, don't do anything we wouldn't
 do.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Funny.

They lighten up a bit. Samantha senses a bum's rush. Hesitates. Then, she gives each of them a quick hug, shoots a sideways glance at the dog and gets in the passenger seat. The car backs into the street and they all wave and smile.

The car zooms off. The twins stop waving and smiling and turn to each other.

TWIN 1

We got some serious shit to deal with.

TWIN 2

Maybe we should cancel.

TWIN 1

How the fuck can we do that?

TWIN 2

If it was summer we could have it outside.

TWIN 1

But it's not, obviously.

It starts raining. They head for the house.

TWIN 1 (CONT'D)

Shit. They're going to fucking trash the house and I'm not going to feel like cleaning it up. And you're not going to be any help.

TWIN 2

You got that right. Let's make them stay in the den. We'll block off the living room and the rest of the house.

Twin 1 stops Twin 2 with an aha moment.

TWIN 1

Hey, better yet, the basement!

TWIN 2

Yeah. What could they destroy in the basement?

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 2 (CONT'D)
 We'll just like keep the door
 locked and make sure everyone stays
 down there.

TWIN 1
 Yeah, that'll work.

They high five.

EXT. CYBERTRUCK DRIVING

All is good. The clouds have parted, momentarily allowing
 some sun in, as the truck makes its way up the interstate to
 Snoqualmie Pass.

INT. PHIL'S CYBERTRUCK

As Phil and Samantha drive, they quickly go through the list.

SAMANTHA
 Did you remember your pills?

PHIL
 Yes, did you?

SAMANTHA
 Yes. Uh, snow boots?

PHIL
 It's not going to snow.

SAMANTHA
 It might.

PHIL
 I did. Ipad?

SAMANTHA
 I won't need it.

PHIL
 You always need it.

SAMANTHA
 I did. And we should have plenty of
 canned food, propane, firewood, gas
 for the generator...

PHIL
 Wine?

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Ah. We can pick some up in Roslyn.

PHIL

Good.

They exhale.

SAMANTHA

I'll bet you're glad to get away.

PHIL

I am. You?

SAMANTHA

Oh, yes.

PHIL

And don't worry about the twins.

SAMANTHA

I can't help it. They're just...
such a problem.

PHIL

They're teenagers.

SAMANTHA

I want them to stop being
teenagers.

PHIL

Well, that's not going to happen.
So, you may as well get over that.

SAMANTHA

And don't you worry about your job
situation.

PHIL

(Thinking)

I promise. I'll deal with that when
we get back.

SAMANTHA

Good.

(BEAT to process)

Phil, we need things to be normal
for awhile.

PHIL

I wholeheartedly concur. Can we do
that?

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

We can try.

PHIL

That's the spirit!

EXT. CYBERTRUCK DRIVING

They drive through the little town of Roslyn and on to the narrow highway that leads up a few thousand feet through dense lodgepole pines. The paved road ends and the Cybertruck slows as it negotiates a single-lane dirt road. Patches of snow begin to appear on the sides of the road, as the sunlight fades.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The cybertruck pulls up in front and they hop out. It's cold. They rush up the porch steps and swing the front door open wide.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Samantha switches on the light, expecting to find everything just as it's supposed to be. But it's not. Their panicked expressions say it all. The furnishings are completely different and weird, walls a distasteful color, decorations unrecognizable, design obviously not to their liking. They freeze, too dumbfounded to speak.

They step cautiously into the room, as if entering a foreign land. They move past the strange furniture, reach out and touch unknown fabric and surfaces. It feels real, but it can't be.

They look at family pictures on a shelf. One shows the family on a fishing trip they never took, another, some stranger's birthday, another, the twins cooking wienies over a campfire. It's them alright, but the locations, the events depicted, none of them are real.

They turn to the kitchen. More surprises. They move slowly past the alien counters and stove. Then, they flick on a light and turn to the small bedroom - all different and creepy.

INT. CYBERTRUCK - NIGHT

The two are huddled under a blanket, close together in the truck, staring out the front window, still in shock.

(CONTINUED)

They've opened the new bottle of wine and are taking slugs directly from the bottle.

PHIL

Well, somebody must have moved into our cabin. They took all our stuff out and moved their stuff in. They got the address mixed up or something. I mean, that's the way it looks, right?

SAMANTHA

But who would do such a thing? It's crazy. And what about those pictures?

PHIL

(Remembering)
The pictures.

She picks up her phone and starts frantically searching for something.

SAMANTHA

You hate fishing.

PHIL

But that was me - standing there with the twins, holding up a dead fish.

SAMANTHA

And you were actually enjoying it.

PHIL

That makes no sense.

SAMANTHA

Should we call the police?

PHIL

I... Yes? What would they do?

SAMANTHA

Maybe someone's playing a joke on us.

PHIL

I don't think that's very likely. Do you?

She finds it. Freezes. She turns the phone around to show Phil.

(CONTINUED)

It's the picture of him with the twins and dead fish. She flips to the next picture, the three of them fishing in a rowboat. Next, a selfie of the family relaxing in the strange living room. Next, a shot of Samantha holding up a dead fish.

That changes the conversation. Samantha sets the phone down and takes a long pull from the bottle to help her think.

SAMANTHA

(Getting spacey)

Do you think it has anything to do with the missing bags and your keys? The thing with the wrong order at the restaurant?

PHIL

You don't think they're related?

SAMANTHA

I don't know. I'm just asking.

Phil takes a swig.

PHIL

Okay. My opinion is... my opinion is random shit is happening that makes no sense and is completely out of our control.

SAMANTHA

If that's true, then what can we do?

PHIL

If that's true, there's nothing we can do, except watch it happen.

SAMANTHA

And pretend everything's okay.

PHIL

(With meaning)

Pretend everything's okay, sure, why not? It's better than trying to understand something that can't be understood.

SAMANTHA

(Waxing philosophical)

"Okay." What is it, anyway? It's so... relative, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
I suppose that's true. Pretending
is really the only thing we can
count on... at this point.

SAMANTHA
I really hate that couch.

INT. CYBERTRUCK - NEXT MORNING

The two are leaning against each other, sleeping after a
fitful night.

There's a KNOCK on the side window O.S. Another KNOCK. Phil
blinks awake and turns to the sound. It's their gay
neighbors, GENE and CARL (early 60s) - rotund, cheerful,
chatty.

GENE
(Smiling broadly)
Hey, is everything alright?

Phil rolls the window down, stretches his stiff neck.

PHIL
(Mr. Friendly)
Whoa. Hi Gene. Yeah. Everything's
fine.

GENE
Then, why did you sleep in the car?
Something wrong with the cabin?

PHIL
Well...
(He rephrases)
Now that you mention it,
everything's not alright.

GENE
(Worried)
Oh yeah?

PHIL
Yeah, it's the uh...

He makes eye contact with Samantha, then...

PHIL (CONT'D)
Come on, I'll show you.

Phil gets out and walks to the cabin with Gene and Carl in
tow.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL (CONT'D)
 We pulled in last night around...
 Hey, Sam when did we get here?

She gets out and follows.

SAMANTHA
 I think it was around seven.

PHIL
 Yeah, around seven. And we ran to
 the cabin, freezing our asses off.
 All we wanted to do was fire up the
 propane heater and hop in bed. But
 then, this...

He opens the cabin door and snaps on the front room lights.
 Then, he waits for Gene and Carl's reactions. They look in.
 Nothing.

GENE
 But then, what?

Phil turns to Samantha and they look at each other wide-eyed.
 He takes a deep breath, then...

PHIL
 Come on in. Want some coffee?

GENE
 I'm good. You, Carl?

CARL
 Maybe a splash.

The two waltz in and sit on the ugly couch, just like old
 times. Samantha runs to the kitchen.

SAMANTHA
 Cream? Sugar?

CARL
 Nah, just the way nature intended
 it.

GENE
 So, what's the mystery?

PHIL
 The mystery is...
 (Vamping)
 We couldn't get the damn heater
 started.

(CONTINUED)

GENE

Why hell, that's because you have a heat pump. You don't have propane.

PHIL

(Pretending)

Oh, yeah. I knew it was something like that.

Gene gets up and walks over to the controls on the wall. Presses some buttons and the heater springs to life.

GENE

You just turn it on. Temperature's already set.

PHIL

Well that would explain it.

Samantha has located a coffee maker and the pods, and is figuring it all out, jumping back when she presses a button that causes the top lid to pop up, unexpectedly.

GENE

Don't you remember last summer? Or was it two summers ago?

Phil pretends to try to remember. Gene sits.

CARL

Two, I think.

GENE

Anyway, you were all excited about your new heat pump and you got me to come over and check it out. Remember?

(Studies Phil)

You wouldn't let me go until I agreed to buy one too.

PHIL

Yeah.

GENE

You don't remember?

PHIL

I think it's coming back to me now. Anyway, you know... do you know what the date is, offhand?

GENE

Today? The thirteenth, I think.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
What year?

GENE
(Brow furrowed)
Year? 2025.

PHIL
Have you been noticing any strange things happening, lately?

GENE
What do you mean?

PHIL
Like things missing or moving... on their own.

GENE
Are you sure you're ok?

Samantha comes back and sits with them, smiling.

SAMANTHA
Coffee'll be ready in a jiff.

PHIL
Yes. I'm okay now. We're okay.
(To Samantha)
Aren't we, Sam?

SAMANTHA
Okay. It's so relative.

They LAUGH. Gene and Carl aren't so sure.

INT. COUNTRY STORE - DAY

It's a small rustic joint, selling camping supplies and groceries. Phil is talking with a COMPLETE STRANGER behind the counter. Samantha is watching from a distance behind them.

COMPLETE STRANGER
(Big and friendly as hell)
Say, you and Sam need to come over one of these nights, and we'll dust off the old backgammon board.

PHIL
Sounds like fun. But I think we're going to be heading back Sunday.

(CONTINUED)

COMPLETE STRANGER

Oh, too bad. I wanted to show you how the back deck turned out.

PHIL

The back deck. Oh wow. That would be fun.

COMPLETE STRANGER

You were such a big help with it last summer. Can't thank you enough. Bring the kids?

PHIL

No, we left them back in Woodinville.

COMPLETE STRANGER

Oh darn. We got a second ATV, so all the kids can ride the trails behind the cabin.

PHIL

Oh darn. Well, maybe next time.

He looks at Phil with a frown.

COMPLETE STRANGER

Yeah.

PHIL

So, where did you say the uh...

COMPLETE STRANGER

(Confused)

It's back there where it always is. You know? You need help finding it?

PHIL

No, no. Back there. Of course. Duh. Sorry, I forgot. Thanks, uh...

Phil turns and approaches Samantha.

PHIL (CONT'D)

(To Samantha, so he can be heard by the stranger)

Honey, it's back there where it always is.

He takes her arm and whisks her down an aisle away from the complete stranger.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA
Why are we going this way?

PHIL
Because this is where the can
openers always are.

SAMANTHA
(Pointing behind them)
But I thought...

PHIL
They aren't there anymore.

SAMANTHA
Who was that guy?

PHIL
Haven't the foggiest.

SAMANTHA
Are we pretending?

PHIL
Yes. We'll just have to look for
the can openers without his help.

SAMANTHA
I don't know if I can keep up.

PHIL
I think I see them.

They look through some random boxes - batteries, silverware,
mismatched gadgets.

SAMANTHA
Why can't we just ask him where
they are?

PHIL
Because he thinks we know.

SAMANTHA
But we don't.

PHIL
We're pretending.

SAMANTHA
Why?

PHIL
I really don't want to talk with
him anymore.

Samantha looks up and sees the stranger watching them at the
head of the aisle.

SAMANTHA
He's looking at us.

PHIL
Don't look.

SAMANTHA
(Smiling, waving)
Too late.

PHIL
(Beginning to panic)
We have to keep searching.

The stranger approaches them slowly, with a confused look.

SAMANTHA
He's coming.

Phil scrambles, starts to paw furiously through the utensils.
The stranger closes in. Samantha looks through items on the
opposite side. Closer. Phil looks behind boxes, on every
shelf, knocks stuff over. He's almost on top of them. Then...

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Got it.

She holds up a can opener, victoriously. The stranger stops
and stares at them with a curious look.

PHIL
Whoa, found it.

They stand, smiling, proudly brandishing the opener.

INT. PEEBLES BASEMENT - NIGHT

The twin's Saturday night party is getting underway. Hip hop
is rattling cheap speakers somewhere. A few teens are
standing around the chip table, drinking beer. Things are
sluggish, not the level of merriment the twins had
envisioned.

The twins are slouching on a couch, drinking beer with Short
Freshman and his girlfriend, who are sitting on another couch
facing them. They stare at each other a moment, then...

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 1
 (No enthusiasm)
 So, did you have any trouble
 finding the place?

SHORT FRESHMAN
 Nah. My mom Googled the address.

TWIN 1
 Any trouble finding your way back
 here?

SHORT FRESHMAN
 Just followed the signs.

TWIN 1
 Cool. Does your mom know you
 brought the beer?

SHORT FRESHMAN
 Not really. I hid 'em in my duffle
 bag and told her I was spending the
 night with friends.

TWIN 1
 Smart.
 (Distracted)
 Say, when you came in, did you
 happen to see anyone else out
 front?

SHORT FRESHMAN
 No. I think we were the first ones
 here.

TWIN 1
 Yeah. That makes sense.
 (To Twin 2)
 Hey, I'm going to do a little
 scouting out front. See if any
 guests are having trouble reading
 the signs. Stay here and...
 (Looks around at the
 disappointing crowd)
 Keep an eye on things.

Twin 1 walks out the slider to the dark backyard.

TWIN 2
 (To Short Freshman)
 So, is this your girlfriend or
 what?

EXT. PEEBLES YARD - NIGHT

Twin 1 walks out the slider and checks the sign taped to the door: "Party" with an arrow.

He walks along the back deck and through a gate leading to the side of the house. Notes another sign on the gate.

He walks up the side of the house. As the front of the house comes into view, he slows, his heart stops. The street and drive are filled with cars, parked every which way, and teens LAUGHING and TALKING LOUDLY in and around the cars and leading up the drive to the front door.

He panics. The front yard sign that was supposed to lead guests to the back has been tossed in the bushes. As he steps closer to the front door, the full extent of the party from hell is revealed.

He follows some LOUD girls up the steps and into the front entry.

INT. PEEBLES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WE MOVE through his POV as he enters the room and makes his way slowly, around people, standing in groups, dancing, making out, lying on the floor. There must be 100, 200 guests, all having a really good time, TALKING LOUDLY over the LOUD MUSIC, smoking, drinking, imbibing any number of substances.

INT. PEEBLES DEN - CONTINUOUS

The chaos extends into the den and kitchen, more problematic than anything the twins could have imagined. They're jumping on the furniture, throwing things, eating stuff out of the fridge, spray-painting obscenities on the wall, using the dog ball launcher to play catch with Forest Whitaker.

And all this frivolity is taking a toll on the furnishings - muddy footprints tracked all over the nice white carpet, lamps knocked over, drinks spilled.

Twin 1 stands by a wall in the den with a dazed expression. It appears he doesn't recognize anybody.

Then, a LOUD CHEER and WHOOPS from the living room. Twin 1 turns.

INT. PEEBLES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An entire football team, cheerleaders, girlfriends, and fans pile through the front door, holding cases of beer high. They make their way to the den in one long rowdy line.

INT. PEEBLES DEN

They shove Twin 1 out of the way and flood in. They take over the kitchen island with their ill-gotten provisions and guests crowd in and grab cans and bottles.

Twin 1 cowers against the wall.

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON the iPhone FindMy app, as two icons track the whereabouts of the twins. They appear to be safely enclosed within a shape resembling their house.

Samantha is sitting next to Phil, watching the icons on her phone.

PHIL

See, I told you. They're probably watching a movie in the den.

SAMANTHA

That's not likely. They're probably doing something with girls.

PHIL

Well, so what. They're sowing their wild oats.

SAMANTHA

Well whatever they're sowing, I'm sure they're doing it with their muddy shoes on.

INT. TWIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. Twin 1 is standing in the hall looking in the dark room.

HIS POV, two strangers are having wild, messy sex on his bed.

He closes the door.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

Twin 1 faces his door, at a loss for what to do. His phone RINGS. He looks. It's Mom. He runs to the bathroom, opens the door.

BOY ON TOILET (O.S.)
Hey!

INT. SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM

Twin 1 rushes in, trying not to look at the strange boy, closes the door.

<p>TWIN 1 (To the boy) It's ok. Pretend I'm not here. I gotta take a call. Seriously. And shut up.</p>	<p>BOY ON TOILET A little privacy? What the hell.</p>
--	---

He turns away from the boy.

TWIN 1 (CONT'D)
(On phone, smiling)
Hi Mom.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CABIN

Phil and Samantha on speaker phone.

SAMANTHA
(On phone, breezy)
Hi honey. Just checking in. What you up to?

TWIN 1
Not much.

Twin 1 looks over to the boy, who's doing something with his right hand. He winces, shakes his head. The kid shrugs.

SAMANTHA
What do you mean, not much?

TWIN 1
We're, uh, watching TV actually.

SAMANTHA
Are you with girls?

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 1

Um, yes. Emma. You know Emma, right? And I don't know the other one's name.

SAMANTHA

Well, be careful. Okay? And take your shoes off in the house.

TWIN 1

We will.

SAMANTHA

And no funny business.

TWIN 1

I swear there's nothing funny about what we're doing.

SAMANTHA

You know what I mean.

TWIN 1

Good-bye Mom.

SAMANTHA

Alright. Good-bye.

TWIN 1

It was nice hearing your sweet voice.

SAMANTHA

Funny.

Twin 1 hangs up. He turns to the boy with a disgusted look.

TWIN 1

Does your mom know you're doing that?

He rushes out.

INT. CABIN

Samantha is sitting on the couch with that worried look. Phil is looking through a cabinet in the kitchen.

PHIL

Whoever these people are they have good taste in alcohol.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Phil. Those people are us.

PHIL

You think? I don't know.

SAMANTHA

Nobody has the same taste in alcohol as us.

He walks back to the couch with a bottle of Macallan whiskey and glasses.

PHIL

Well, I'm not going to try to figure it out anymore.

SAMANTHA

Pretending?

PHIL

No more reality for me.

SAMANTHA

Don't you think we need just a little bit, a tiny skosh?

PHIL

(He thinks)

Uhhh... No.

He pours two small glasses of whiskey.

SAMANTHA

But...

PHIL

Reality just gets in the way of having a good time.

SAMANTHA

(Real surprise)

I've never heard you talk like that.

They hold their glasses up.

PHIL

Well, these are special times. Until we find a logical explanation for all this, it's the new me. Here's to the new us.

CLINK.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA
(Not so sure)
Okay.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL

Twin 1 descends the stairs slowly, taking in the breadth of the scene before him - kids crowded together, LAUGHING, YELLING, LOUD MUSIC, alcohol, every kind of mess imaginable.

And there's Twin 2 entering from the basement door, followed by the basement guests. He's floored by what he sees, turns to Twin 1.

TWIN 2
What happened?

TWIN 1
Apparently, they didn't like our signs.

TWIN 2
Do you know any of these people?

TWIN 1
No. I've never seen any of them before.

TWIN 2
Neither have I.

TWIN 1
And it appears they don't know who we are either.

The twins step into the kitchen, where a beefy jock is shot-gunning a full can of beer, as his teammates CHEER him on. They watch him with blank, detached expressions. He finishes the can and crushes it on his forehead. Then, tosses it across the room into the sink.

INT. PEBBLES LIVING ROOM

With the same detached, crazed expressions, the twins amble into the living room, where complete strangers are lounging on Mom's nice white sofa, passing a bong around, LAUGHING and spilling bong water and parking their feet on the glass coffee table.

Twin 2 picks up a crystal vase containing decorative sticks. Looks around.

(CONTINUED)

Carries it carefully over to a bookshelf and sets it down. Then, a dog ball flies in from nowhere and smashes it.

EXT. PEEBLES DRIVEWAY - LATER

The twins are sitting on the front porch steps, their heads resting in their hands, as the party rages on behind them.

TWIN 2
I don't get it. What happened?

TWIN 1
You handed out fliers, dickhead.

TWIN 2
I swear. I gave out maybe five fliers to people we know. I swear.

TWIN 1
Did you give one to the football team?!

TWIN 2
Anyway! How could five fliers account for this? There's way too many people here. We don't know who they are. We've never even seen them before. They don't even go to our school!

A police SIREN adds to the cacophony. The twins look up.

TWIN 1
Crazy shit is happening that makes no sense.

TWIN 2
Like Forest Whitaker.

TWIN 1
And all that other shit.

The cruiser finds a path through the congested street and stops on the driveway, flashers blazing.

TWIN 2
It's completely out of our control. We had nothing to do with it.

TWIN 1
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 2

And there's nothing we can do,
except watch it happen.

TWIN 1

And pretend everything's okay.

Two cops get out and march toward the front door.

TWIN 2

I wasn't going to say that exactly,
but I suppose you're right.

They stop, facing the twins.

OFFICER

Do you know who's responsible for
this?

The twins stare at him a moment.

TWIN 1

(All innocent)

No. We're just waiting for our mom
to pick us up.

The officer snorts, then goes into the house. The twins stand
and turn to watch what happens.

OFFICER

(Shouting to the crowd)

Alright! Listen up! People! I need
your attention!

The crowd quiets down a bit.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

I need to speak to the people that
are responsible for this. Please
step forward. Who is the
responsible party? The person who
owns this property.

No takers.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Ok, does anyone know who the
responsible party is? Come on,
somebody must-

Suddenly, an EXPLOSION and blast of flames from the kitchen
cuts through the chaos. Several people run into the living
room SCREAMING, one kid is on fire.

(CONTINUED)

The panic spreads rapidly and everyone starts SCREAMING and running toward the front door.

The twins step aside and watch helplessly as the crowd streams by them toward the street.

INT. CABIN - DAY

CLOSE ON an empty email message. O.S. Phil types in the To: line "Johnson Butterly." Then, he clicks in the body and pauses. Then, types, "Dear Johnson".

ON PHIL sitting on the ugly couch, staring at his laptop screen. Samantha is fussing in the strange kitchen behind him. He closes the laptop screen.

PHIL

Sam, I'm going to go for a little bike ride.

SAMANTHA

Ok, enjoy the sunshine while we got it.

EXT. CABIN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Phil is riding his bike down a dirt road past vacation cabins, spaced-out randomly in the thick coniferous forest. It's sunny, but fairly nippy.

He passes by Gene's cabin. He's outside gathering firewood with Carl. Phil stops.

GENE

(Calling)
Morning Phil.

PHIL

Gene. Carl. Need any help?

GENE

No thanks. We got it.

He waves and continues on, passes by a few empty cabins, heads over a crest and then down into a sunny treeless area.

EXT. MEADOW

At the edge of the meadow, he happens upon a small, rustic cabin, which can better be described as a ramshackle hut.

(CONTINUED)

It has obviously been there awhile, but there's something about it that grabs Phil's attention. He's never noticed it, or perhaps it's never been there. He stops and studies it.

A strange, young woman (25) comes out of the hut and makes her way to an old-fashioned brick well. She pours water from the bucket hanging over the well into a tin container and turns. She sees Phil and gives him a familiar wave. Phil waves back. She beckons him to follow her. Phil looks around and then gets off the bike. He sets it on the ground and approaches her.

They go into the hut.

INT. STRANGER'S HUT

Phil has to duck to get through the low door opening. The one-room hut has sparse, austere furnishings - an old wooden table, wood stove, cloth door coverings. The whole thing is right out of a TV western.

The woman bends down and takes something out of the oven. Then, she turns to Phil and holds it out.

It's a pan of big cookies. She nods. He smiles and takes one. He bites into it. It's soft and tasty. He closes his eyes and chews with delight.

She reaches over to a coffee pot on the stove and looks back. He nods. She pours him a big cup of steamy black coffee and sets it on the table. He sits and continues with the cookie, sips the coffee.

He can't take his eyes off her. She's beautiful, in a simple, uncluttered way. She takes a cookie, sits and nibbles on it. They continue this way in SILENCE, staring into each other's eyes, smiling.

EXT. RUSTIC CABIN - LATER

The woman is standing by the front door, waving to Phil O.S.

He is sitting on his bike, waving back, with a very serene expression. He turns around and heads back up the road. One last wave.

EXT. CABIN NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

He passes by the same empty cabins, then Gene and Carl's. But they aren't there anymore. Phil stops and watches.

(CONTINUED)

Two strange men about Gene and Carl's age are stacking wood now. They wave to Phil. He waves back. Smiles.

EXT. PEEBLES DRIVEWAY - EARLY EVENING

WIDE on the Peebles' big, happy house, as the last light of day fades. The Cybertruck drives up and parks outside the garage. The hatch opens. Phil and Samantha get out, remove their suitcases from the trunk and close the hatch.

CLOSER. WE FOLLOW them as they pick up their suitcases and carry them to the house. They pause by the front door. Phil reaches out, turns the knob and swings the door wide open. He reaches in and turns on a light, REVEALING the interior.

Their POV. Everything is clean and shiny, just the way they left it.

They walk in.

INT. PEEBLES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WE MOVE in their POV through the perfect space, everything immaculate and where it's supposed to be. The crystal vase with the decorative sticks is dust- and smudge-free and resting elegantly on the glass coffee table. The white carpet practically glows with cleanliness.

INT. PEEBLES DEN - CONTINUOUS

They enter the perfect environment and look around in awe, surprised to not find the twin's usual mess. They are drawn to the kitchen island by a small glass vase sprouting a tidy bouquet of fresh-cut peonies. Then, behind them...

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

Welcome home, guys.

They turn. It's twin girls (GIRL 1 and GIRL 2) - about 16, pretty, blonde, cheerleader-ready. Another shocker for Sam and Phil.

GIRL 1

I hope you guys had a chance to decompress?

SILENCE with fake smiles.

GIRL 2

Do you like the flowers?

(CONTINUED)

Sam and Phil turn to each other, unable to speak.

GIRL 1
Let me get your bags.

The girls grab their bags and head up the stairs. Sam and Phil are speechless. They follow the girls up.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL

While the girls carry the bags to the master bedroom, Sam and Phil stop outside the twin's bedroom. They slowly push the door open and behold the interior.

INT. TWIN'S ROOM

Sam and Phil's POV from the hall. The room is no longer a pigsty. There are posters of G-rated teen idols tastefully attached to the walls. Everything is clean and tidy, beds made, walls painted pink. Each girl has her own neat desk, adorned with flower vases and cute stuffed animals.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL

They carefully close the twin's door and look up as the girls approach them, smiling.

GIRL 1
You guys hungry?

Sam and Phil are gobsmacked beyond belief. It takes Phil a moment.

PHIL
We uh... we uh...

Phil turns to Sam. Their eyes meet. Sam nods, a tentative agreement. They're ready to proceed with the game.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Yes. I believe we are.

GIRL 2
(Big smile)
Good.

INT. PEBBLES DEN - LATER

Sam and Phil are seated close together on the couch, holding aperitifs, and watching with awe and trepidation as the girls work methodically in the kitchen, CLATTERING and POUNDING.

SAMANTHA
(Privately, dazed)
I like them.

PHIL
They're nice... people.

SAMANTHA
I wonder where the boys are.

PHIL
Are you... how are you doing?

SAMANTHA
I don't know. I'm trying. I don't know how far I can take this.

PHIL
Me either.

SAMANTHA
At some point, we'll need an explanation. Don't you think?

PHIL
But for now, we just have to...

SAMANTHA
(Fake smile)
Yes.

Phil drinks his aperitif in one gulp.

INT. PEBBLES DINING ROOM - LATER

It's dark outside. The room has been dimmed and candles set up on the table with elegant place-settings. Phil is at the head of the table next to Samantha. They are looking toward the kitchen door, waiting for the next surprise. They have finished noshing on a fancy charcuterie in front of them. Phil takes one last bite. It's good.

GIRL 1 appears at the door, smiling, holding a big dinner plate with a lobster on it.

GIRL 1
Tada!

(CONTINUED)

She enters the room followed by GIRL 2, holding an identical plate. They set the dishes in front of Sam and Phil.

GIRL 1 (CONT'D)
Lobster thermidor. Your favorite.

They stand there, waiting for the expected positive response.

SAMANTHA	PHIL
Oh my. I don't know what to say. Smells delish.	You shouldn't have. How did you... do this?

GIRL 2
We learned lobster last week.

GIRL 1
I hope you don't mind being our guinea pigs. Let us know if the seasoning is off.

The girls watch eagerly as the two take a bite and smile.

GIRL 2
Do you want more wine? We paired the lobster with a Chardonnay.

GIRL 1
The classic pairing.

GIRL 2
Do you think it's too... classic?

GIRL 1
I mean we could've gone out on a limb with a Sauvignon Blanc or even a pinot.

GIRL 2
Not a pinot.

GIRL 1
Yes pinot.

GIRL 2
You and your pinots.

GIRL 1
They go with any seafood in my opinion.

GIRL 2
Well, sometimes your opinion sucks, frankly.

(CONTINUED)

GIRL 2 heads back to the kitchen. GIRL 1 follows.

GIRL 1

I wouldn't be so rash in blithely handing out opinions, sister. I know from a reliable source, that there are no hard and fast rules when pairing with lobster.

GIRL 2

No, but there is such a thing as taste, which you have demonstrated often enough you don't have.

GIRL 1

Take that back...

They continue out of earshot. Sam and Phil look at each other.

SAMANTHA

Is lobster a shellfish?

PHIL

I don't think so.

SAMANTHA

Well, if I die, tell them I enjoyed it for a few bites, anyway.

PHIL

(Still chewing)
This is incredible.

SAMANTHA

I know. Are my lips swelling?

PHIL

You'll be fine. Who knows? Maybe we don't have allergies anymore... or get sick. Maybe we live forever.

SAMANTHA

What, like we died and this is some kind of weird heaven or hell or something?

PHIL

Never thought of that. But why not?

SAMANTHA

(Sinister smile)
I miss the twins. I really do.
But...

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

I know.

The girls come back in with their salads and sit facing them.

GIRL 1

What do you think?

They make YUMMY sounds and smile with their mouths full. Everyone smiles. It's a regular smile-fest and it goes on for an irrational length of time.

INT. PHIL AND SAM'S BEDROOM - LATER

The two are dressed for bed. Phil is looking in his closet, perplexed.

PHIL

(Alarmed)

All my suits are gone.

Samantha comes over, and checks through his clothes.

SAMANTHA

Hmm. More khaki, more casual, no dress shoes, only one sports coat...

(Checking the tag)

And it's from Penneys!

Shocked.

PHIL

My nice Hong Kong suits. What the hell. Now, everything is so...

SAMANTHA

Middle class. What do you think it means?

PHIL

Maybe I'm working at home and dressing more casually now.

SAMANTHA

(Trying to be positive)

I'll bet that's it.

His phone RINGS. He pulls it out of his pocket and looks at the screen. It's someone named Steve. He tentatively answers.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
(On phone, smiling)
Hello. Steve.

STEVE (V.O.)
(On phone)
Hey, Phil. How was the weekend?

PHIL
Not bad.

STEVE
That's good. Say, umm, I have a
favor to ask. Do you mind?

PHIL
Uh, sure.

STEVE
I hate to do this to you the last
minute, but can I pick you up like
a half-hour earlier tomorrow? I got
to proofread my slides before the
meeting.

PHIL
Sure. Uh, Steve. So, when would
that be?

STEVE
Six-thirtyish?

PHIL
(Shocked)
Fuck. Yeah. Six-thirty. Why not?
Sure.

STEVE
Thanks. I owe you one. See you.

PHIL
Yeah.

He hangs up.

SAMANTHA
What was that all about?

PHIL
(To Samantha)
It appears I'm carpooling tomorrow
at six-thirty with someone named
Steve.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA
Did he say where to?

Phil just stares at her.

INT. STEVE'S CAR - MORNING

Phil is squeezed between two large men (FRANK and STU) in the backseat of an economy car. STEVE and DICK are in the front. They are all pushing 50 and overly familiar with each other. Phil is busy trying to process.

DICK
(Squirming uncomfortably)
He said it was my prostate that's acting up.

STEVE
What's wrong with it?

DICK
It's too big or something.

STEVE
So you can't pee?

DICK
I can pee but it like dribbles out.

STU
I know someone who had that. They used this like cheese-grater thing to scrape shit out of his dick hole. He was in the hospital for two weeks. Peed blood for a month.

FRANK
Yeah and you can't stop dribbling after that. You have to wear a diaper or one of those piss bags.

DICK
How do you know?

FRANK
I know someone.

DICK
(Makes a face)
Just talking about it's making me want to pee.

(CONTINUED)

STEVE
Can it wait?

Dick bears down.

STU
You know, it could be your bladder too or maybe your kidney's are shot.

STEVE
How's your prostate, Phil?

PHIL
It's uh, you know. Not bad, I guess.

STEVE
Peeing okay?

PHIL
I think so.

DICK
Any dribbling? Erectile dysfunction? Problems ejaculating?

PHIL
Not that I know of.

DICK
Oh, you'd know it if you were dribbling!

They all LAUGH.

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE HALL - DAY

WE ARE PULLING Steve and Phil down the hall. It's a plain, no frills working class hall with offices on both sides.

STEVE
We'll have to have you and Sam over one of these nights for dinner.

PHIL
Yeah, sure.

STEVE
How are the girls doing, anyway?

PHIL
The girls? They're uh... You know.

(CONTINUED)

STEVE
They still on track for Georgetown?

PHIL
The university?

STEVE
(Chuckles)
Yeah, the university.

PHIL
Well, still on track, as far as I
know.

STEVE
They're pretty special. I'm
jealous.

PHIL
They sure are.

STEVE
Well, see you at ten.

Steve stops to turn into his office.

PHIL
Ten. Sure. Say, uh, Steve...

Steve waits for Phil to complete his thought.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Yeah. See you at ten.

Phil watches Steve enter his office, then continues down the hall, reading the names on the doors. It's a long hall. He's a little lost, starts to panic. Comes to an intersection and stops in the middle, turns around. He stops someone passing by.

PHIL (CONT'D)
(At a loss)
Say, uh, do you know where I might
find, uh...

BEAT

GUY IN HALL
What is it, Mr. Peebles?

PHIL
(Surprised)
Oh, I was supposed to, uh...

(CONTINUED)

GUY IN HALL
I think they're delivering it now.

The guy points down the hall to the right.

PHIL
Oh... good... the delivery.

GUY IN HALL
Yeah.

PHIL
Great. Thank you.

The guy continues on. Phil turns and makes his way down the hall to the right. He looks ahead.

His POV. An office door is open at the end of the hall and workers are rolling in an office couch with end tables. Phil stops behind them and reads the nameplate by the doors - "Phillip Peebles, Manager Epigee Fulfillment Center."

His jaw drops. He follows them in.

INT. PHIL'S EPIGEE OUTER OFFICE

Phil enters a small office with a single desk and waiting area. The workers continue through another door, Phil follows. An admin CLARICE (30s) is typing. Without looking away from her screen...

CLARICE
(Dispassionate)
Morning, Phil.

He stops and turns to her, sees her name on the desk.

PHIL
Morning, Clarice.

CLARICE
Want me to print the notes for your
10 o'clock?

PHIL
Yes, please.

He starts to follow the workers, then stops.

PHIL (CONT'D)
(Making conversation)
So, how was your weekend?

(CONTINUED)

CLARICE
Pretty good. How about you?

PHIL
We, uh... it was good, thank you.

CLARICE
Go up to the cabin?

PHIL
(Surprised)
Yes.

CLARICE
It's so pretty over there this time
of year.

PHIL
It is.

CLARICE
Do any fishing?

PHIL
(Curious)
No. Not this time.

CLARICE
(Looks up, sarcastic
smile)
Too bad. I always look forward to
hearing your fishing stories.

PHIL
(Smiling)
Ha. Well... You'll be spared this
time.

He goes into...

INT. PHIL'S EPIGEE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Phil enters what is apparently his office. It's big enough for a sizeable wooden desk, a wall of bookshelves and a meeting area with a new couch.

He steps behind the desk and looks out a window that runs the width of the room, providing a panoramic second-story view of the fulfillment center floor, that runs back, what seems like, half a mile. It's filled with a million tiny workers and machines shuttling packages here and there - quickly, efficiently.

(CONTINUED)

He turns in and scans his office. He's tense, close to panicking. A worker is facing him, holding out an iPad. He takes the iPad and looks it over, presses an area that asks for a signature, and hands it back.

The workers leave, closing the door behind them.

It's quiet now. Phil plops into the big chair behind his big desk and takes a breath. He stares at the nice, clean desk. Takes a look out the window. Then, he leans the chair back and swings his feet up on the desk. It feels good.

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATER

A digital clock changes from "10:16" to "10:17."

Around a dozen office workers in shirtsleeves are seated casually around a mahogany table, waiting, looking over notes on their devices, speaking quietly.

Phil appears in the hallway, looking in a window behind one of the workers. His eyes are wide. He's frazzled. He opens the door and enters carrying his device and paperwork. The group turns. All eyes focus on him, as they wait for the word.

PHIL
Sorry, I'm late.

He looks around, notes that the only empty spot is at the head of the table, next to Steve. He makes his way toward it. The eyes track his every movement.

He stands there and takes his time organizing papers, while everyone watches and waits. He presses a button on his laptop and an agenda slide pops up on the screen behind him.

PHIL (CONT'D)
(Confidently making up
stuff)
Alright, let's get started. I want to thank everyone for showing up today. We, uh, got a lot of important things to talk about that're vital to the future of our FC, as well as Epigee of course, and our customers and so on. I can't stress that enough. So... Steve, you're up.

He sits, Steve stands, taken aback by the brevity of the intro. He presses a button that changes the screen to a slide about PIT Worker Safety.

(CONTINUED)

STEVE

Since we implemented the new PIT measures, we have seen a fairly substantial drop in associate complaints, especially involving bathroom breaks.

He changes slides to one with pie charts pertaining to bathroom break times. Phil grabs a Danish, rocks back in his chair and peruses the slide with great interest.

STEVE (CONT'D)

As you can see we are fine-tuning the hiring protocols to place a greater emphasis on individuals who possess a more positive response to our BJ-4 questionnaire involving motivation around taking breaks and so on...

INT. CENTER FLOOR - LATER

Phil is walking the floor with four other managers, watching with great interest as workers sort packages and drive forklifts.

INT. PHIL'S EPIGEE OFFICE - LATER

Phil is seated behind his powerful desk listening to two managers in a heated discussion.

MANAGER 1

Phil, we have one chance to get this right. If we fail, the unions will be all over us.

MANAGER 2

I agree. But we can't rush into something that'll blow up in our face.

MANAGER 1

It's not going to blow up in our... Jesus, we've thought all this through a million times already. We need to go with the plan we have now. It's solid.

MANAGER 2

Just one more day, one day that's all I ask-

(CONTINUED)

MANAGER 1

One day will give the union a chance to retrench and we'll lose all the ground-

PHIL

(Standing, pointing)

Whoa, whoa, whoa. I get it. You want immediate action. You want another day. How about splitting the difference, half a day?

MANAGER 1

The longer we wait, I don't know...

MANAGER 2

Well, I suppose. I'll have to see...

PHIL

(Pointing)

You have until EOD to resolve this. Okay? And you, where did you get that tie?

INT. PHIL'S EPIGEE OFFICE - LATER

- Phil is doing a little soft shoe, looking at activity out his big window.

- Phil is lounging on the new couch, tossing peanuts in the air and trying to catch them in his mouth.

INT. EPIGEE HALL - LATER

Phil is walking the halls, smiling and waving managerially at passersby.

INT. PEEBLES KITCHEN - DAY

The fridge is open, filled to the brim with neatly organized containers. Samantha is looking in. She doesn't recognize anything. She opens a container. It's some brownish gourmet goo. She smells it, turns her nose up, puts it back in.

She closes the fridge and turns to the island. Toys with some of the odd-looking cooking implements hanging on the overhead rack that didn't used to be there.

She's alone and lost. She steps into the den and turns to the slider. There's Forest Whitaker, sitting, smiling at her. The dog approaches Samantha and sits, raises her right paw. Samantha smiles and shakes it.

EXT. PEEBLES BACKYARD - DAY

Samantha is playing catch with the dog using the ball launcher. She's loosened up quite a bit. The dog comes in with a ball and she kneels down and scratches her neck.

INT. PEEBLES DEN

Phil is watching her, smiling.

INT. PEEBLES DEN - NIGHT

The two are seated on the couch, holding their aperitifs, watching the girls make dinner.

PHIL

(Relaxed)

I got to say, this pretending thing is something else.

SAMANTHA

Meaning...

PHIL

I mean I'm managing a whole fucking fulfillment center! People are actually listening to me. All I have to do is make shit up and they dance around me like puppets. It's... it's the most fun I've had my whole fucking life. I swear.

SAMANTHA

Aren't you worried that they'll find you out?

PHIL

So what. What can they do? Fire me? I'm already fired! (BEAT) You should try it. Seriously.

SAMANTHA

I don't know. I don't know how far I can go with this.

PHIL

What have you always wanted to do?

SAMANTHA

Be a gourmet chef.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
Great! Do it!

SAMANTHA
Like when would I do that?

PHIL
Like now. Go over there and make
some gourmet food. Go on.

SAMANTHA
I don't know. They scare me.

PHIL
Why should they scare you? They're
your pretend daughters. It's your
kitchen.

SAMANTHA
I'm just not comfortable.

PHIL
What's the worst that can happen?

She watches the girls happily making food. It does look like fun. She stands and slowly musters the courage to approach her strange daughters.

INT. PEEBLES KITCHEN

She watches them work for a beat, then...

SAMANTHA
(Hesitating)
What can I do to help?

GIRL 1
(Without looking up)
That's okay, Mom, we got it.

Samantha looks back at Phil. He gestures to urge her on.

SAMANTHA
(Charging ahead)
Can I... I want to do something.
Anything. I want to learn. Come on.
I'm bored. You guys can't have all
the fun.

GIRL 1 looks up at her.

GIRL 1
Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Yeah. Come on.

GIRL 1

Okay, we're rolling the meat filling up in these little triangles.

SAMANTHA

Okay. What do I do?

GIRL 1 smiles and makes room for her to work.

INT. PEEBLES DEN

Phil downs his aperitif in one gulp, then hers.

INT. SAMANTHA'S CAR - DAY

She's driving the girls to school, pretending to be one of them. Girl 1 is looking for recipes online.

GIRL 1

Here's one, steamed sea-urchin custard.

GIRL 2

Ooo, exotic.

SAMANTHA

Aren't those poisonous?

GIRL 2

No that's blowfish, and only if you do it wrong.

GIRL 1

Or how about, twice-baked Roquefort soufflé with poached quince.

GIRL 2

Now that you could pair with a pinot.

Samantha is lost.

INT. STEVE'S CAR - DAY

The five men are once-again driving to work.

(CONTINUED)

DICK
(Suffering again)
I'm just going to die.

STEVE
Please don't do that.

FRANK
Wait until you get to work, anyway.
Then, you can claim workman's comp.

PHIL
I didn't hear that.

STU
I think my dog's got what you got.
He was scooting his ass on the
white carpet again.

PHIL
Anal sacs.

STU
You what?

PHIL
You got to express his anal sacs.

DICK
Yeah, that sounds like what I got.

INT. PEEBLES KITCHEN - NIGHT

Samantha and the girls are trying to figure out where to start with a sea urchin someone acquired.

GIRL 2
All we have to do is steam it and
make it into a custard.

GIRL 1
How hard could that be?

SAMANTHA
I think I'll start with the pinot.

The girls LAUGH. Then, Samantha joins in.

INT. CENTER FLOOR - DAY

Phil is speaking to a group of 4-5 workers.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

I get it. Believe me. But we in management can only do so much, right? If we don't hear from you guys, how can we make improvements? We can't just sit around and wait for accidents to happen before we do something. If you guys want things to get better, you got to step up. Let us know. Okay? Thanks.

The group nods, seems satisfied. Phil steps away and rejoins a group of managers.

STEVE

That'll hold 'em.

Phil makes a basketball dunking gesture.

PHIL

Yeah!

INT. PEEBLES DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As Girl 1 sets fire to a platter of chicken sitting on the table, to finish a Coq Au Vin. The girls, Samantha and Phil jump back when the flambe gets a bit out of hand. They LAUGH.

The flames die down and the girls hop back into the kitchen, leaving Samantha and Phil seated at the table. There's an awkward silence. She can no longer muster a fake smile.

PHIL

How are you doing with the girls?

SAMANTHA

It's getting better.

PHIL

Are you enjoying yourself?

SAMANTHA

(Taking a few beats)

No. Phil, this just isn't right. I need for it to stop. I know you're having a good time with it but I'm just not. I can't...

She gets a little shaky. He covers her hand.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I need to go back to the way things were. This isn't normal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Pretending isn't normal. I just get used to the way things are and then they change. Things keep changing. It's not right. And that's not going to work for me. It's just not.

(Turning to face him)

Have you seen Forest Whitaker lately?

PHIL

The dog?

SAMANTHA

Have you?

The girls come back in with their salads, ending the conversation.

GIRL 2

You guys haven't started your Coq Au Vin. Is something wrong?

PHIL

I'm sorry. No, we were just...

GIRL 2

It'll get cold.

She comes over and plates up their food. Phil holds on to Samantha's hand and they look in each other's eyes. Samantha motions with her head to the floor next to Phil.

He looks. Forest Whitaker is now a Yorkshire Terrier, sitting by Phil, waiting for a handout.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Therapist JONATHAN CRISP (30s), thin, dark, black-frame glasses, is sitting in a comfy office chair across from Samantha and Phil on his couch.

SAMANTHA

Well, I think we might be crazy.

JONATHAN

(A small smirk)

Both of you?

SAMANTHA

I think so.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

(It wasn't a joke)

I see. What makes you think that?

She looks at Phil, takes a deep breath.

SAMANTHA

Well, you're not going to believe this, but...

JONATHAN

Try me.

SAMANTHA

Well, things keep changing... all around us. Major things. At first I thought it was the things themselves that were changing, but now I'm thinking it might be... us. In our minds. Like we're hallucinating or something.

JONATHAN

Can you be more specific?

SAMANTHA

I brought bags of groceries home and they disappeared. Actually, they sort of moved on their own to different places and then disappeared.

The therapist's mind starts to wander.

JONATHAN

Hmm.

PHIL

Tell him about the cabin.

SAMANTHA

We went to our cabin in Eastern Washington and everything was different.

PHIL

The furniture, the walls, the appliances, the heater, everything was different, vastly different. Not our stuff at all.

SAMANTHA

Like strangers moved in and changed... everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

There was a picture with him and our boys after they caught a fish.

PHIL

And I don't fish. I've never been fishing, and there I was holding up this dead fish and smiling about it.

SAMANTHA

And our boys...

She has to stop, gets choked up. The therapist takes note.

PHIL

(With difficulty)

We came home from the trip and they were gone and twin girls were in their place.

SAMANTHA

And we've never seen them before, but they talk to us like we're their mom and dad.

PHIL

(Taking her hand)

That was the worst change. And then there's the job I have that I don't know how I got.

SAMANTHA

And people keep changing and his dog became this little terrier thing.

They look to him for some direction. The therapist is having difficulty wrangling all this information.

JONATHAN

Well... first lets not use the term "crazy." Shall we? There are more specific terms that are less stigmatizing.

They nod.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Second, it doesn't sound like a mental illness, per se, because mental illnesses typically affect individuals, not multiple people at the same time, unless it's some kind of mass hysteria, which we don't see too often anymore and doesn't sound like what you're describing anyway. So...

They need more. He's at a loss.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Let me ask you this. Do you feel crazy?

INT. THERAPY CLINIC UNDERGROUND GARAGE - DAY

Samantha and Phil exit the elevator into the garage and walk down a short aisle of parked cars. They're down in the dumps after the session.

PHIL

Maybe it's how we explained it.

SAMANTHA

Seemed pretty clear to me.

PHIL

It doesn't sound like he thinks we're crazy. But he didn't come right out and say it.

SAMANTHA

He didn't say anything really.

PHIL

Do you want to try again next week?

SAMANTHA

Not much point in that. Do you have any ideas?

Phil stops and looks around, confused.

PHIL

I'll think about it. There has to be... I mean other people must've had... the same... Where the hell is it?

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

What?

PHIL

(Losing it)

The car! Where's the car! It's pretty hard to lose a Cybertruck. Where the hell...

SAMANTHA

I don't see it. Try the pressing the key thing.

He does. They hear a BEEP-BEEP and see a flash of light and turn.

PHIL

Oh no! No!

The sound came from a puny, fire-engine red Chevy Bolt.

PHIL (CONT'D)

This can't be happening.

They walk over to it and stand, facing it. Phil is out of his mind.

PHIL (CONT'D)

What is this thing?! What the hell!

SAMANTHA

It's a Chevy-

PHIL

(Extremely distraught)

I know what it is! I know exactly what it is! It's not my fucking car! Why is it beeping? Why is it fucking pretending to be my car?! This can't be happening! This can't be happening!

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Phil. Phil. Honey, relax. It's just a car. It's just a car. We will be fine with the Bolt.

He's gone mad, paces, keeps repeating "This can't be happening," "It's not my car," etc. Samantha starts looking through something on her phone.

He plops down on the hood with his head in his hands. Sees something. Looks up. Jonathan has appeared, facing them with a very serious expression.

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN

Hey, how long have you had the Bolt? I've been hearing a lot of good things-

PHIL

It's not my car!

JONATHAN

I see. Is this one of those changes you were-

PHIL

Yes! This and a million other fucking annoying changes. You see it, right? The car? An hour ago it was a Tesla Cybertruck, now it's a fucking whatever this is.

SAMANTHA

Chevy Bolt-

PHIL

I know what it is!

SAMANTHA

Look.

She shows him a picture on her phone.

The picture shows Phil and the girls smiling, posing in front of his brand new Chevy Bolt.

Phil is devastated, buries his face in his hands.

JONATHAN

Can we talk?

INT. JONATHAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jonathan lives alone in this industrial, bare-brick-wall, converted loft in Georgetown, south of Seattle. It's quiet, echoey and dark.

Samantha and Phil are nursing espressos, sitting on barstools around his kitchen island, as he paces on a caffeine high across from them.

JONATHAN

(An ironically shocking story)

To start with, I just want to give you a heads up.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I could disappear at any time.

(He's serious)

That's right. I could just up and vanish in front of your eyes, in the middle of a sentence, out of the blue, without warning. Sound crazy? Who knows. Maybe it is. That's just sort of my "thing." Your thing appears to be stuff around you changing, while you remain the same. Is that about right?

PHIL

I'd say so.

JONATHAN

We all have our own "styles." Disappearing and reappearing is what I do. Any time, anyplace.
(Makes an explosion sound)
It can really fuck with your head. Let me tell you.
(to Samantha)
Is that too strong?

SAMANTHA

No, no. I shouldn't be drinking coffee this late, anyway. It's fine.

Setting it down.

JONATHAN

Because I can add some water and make an Americano out of it.

SAMANTHA

No, I'm good.

PHIL

So you disappear?

JONATHAN

And reappear in some crazy new environment. It seems this "phenomenon" manifests differently for each individual. Except now, in your case it's manifesting the same for both of you. Go figure. That's a first, for me anyway. I tell you, every time I encounter someone with the "phenomenon" it's different. Lots of unique manifestations.

(CONTINUED)

He finishes his coffee, grabs their cups and carries them to the sink.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

By the way, if today's session seemed a bit pointless, that's because it was. Sorry. I was instructed by the board not to talk about this with patients. It might put people off.

PHIL

That's crazy.

He grabs a stack of loose pages and sets them in front of Sam and Phil.

JONATHAN

Of course. I believe the truth will set us free. But if it's not some textbook mental illness, we can't bill an insurance company, so we can't talk about it.

He sits on a stool and points to the stack of paper.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

These are pictures of some of the people I've encountered.

Sam and Phil leaf through the pictures.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

One of them has something like out of body experiences. This one keeps misplacing the same objects over and over. She wakes up in different strange places. In her case, she gets completely lost and no one knows her - like reverse amnesia, where weeks pass by. But unlike the real amnesia or schizophrenia or some mental illness, I can't really tie any of their symptoms to a documented disorder. If they hear voices, there's no evidence of psychosis, for example. They really are hearing real voices but can't see the people the voices are attached to-

He disappears. No sound or visual effects. He's just gone. Sam and Phil look around for him.

(CONTINUED)

After a moment he reappears by the window. He looks around to get his bearings. Then, he walks back to them, continuing as if nothing changed.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Suffice it to say, it's not all in their heads. Unexplainable things really are happening. And they're caused by this "phenomenon."

He sits and waits for their response.

PHIL

What is this phenomenon?

JONATHAN

(Scattered, manic)

Glad you asked. Fuck if I know. It seems to have started about a month ago. I spend way too much time researching this stuff and I haven't found anything useful. I mean, I have this... thing, this phenomenon that causes me to disappear and I can't find anything about it. It's an entirely new problem for mankind. I've read about sunspots, quantum physics, religious apocalypse, magic, mystical this and that, transcendental meditation, Buddhism, out-of-body experiences, UFOs, alien encounters, I could go on, but nothing explains the phenomenon.

Sits and leans in with meaning.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

My closest guess is that it has something to do with the invisible fabric that holds the universe together and one object existing in multiple places in an infinite number of parallel universes and we're in some sort of time warp or cosmic mega-storm that's bending the fabric and mixing up the nonexistent particles and sort of shuffling the deck of reality. Bottom line being, we are living with multiple realities, all existing at the same time and duking it out for dominance.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

(Aside)

That was good. I'll have to remember-

He disappears again and reappears sitting next to them. He's unfazed.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

-that one. But the real bottom line is, fuck if anybody knows. This is beyond anything humans can even begin to comprehend. Random shit is happening that makes no sense and is completely out of our control and all we can do is watch it happen.

PHIL

(Obvious conclusion)

And pretend everything's okay.

JONATHAN

Yeah, like that. So if you have any interest in meeting these freaks of nature, we're having our first group session nex-

He disappears. Sam and Phil look around the space. No Jonathan.

PHIL

Damn.

INT. PEEBLES DEN - NIGHT

The two are once again sitting on the couch, holding aperitifs, watching the girls make dinner. They're pensive now, the newness of their ever-changing universe is wearing thin.

PHIL

Did you get any of that stuff about mega-storms in the universal fabric?

SAMANTHA

No. None of it. It doesn't matter anyway. Does it? Since we can't do anything about it.

PHIL

I think we're doing it, actually.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

What?

PHIL

Pretending. That's what we're doing about it. The only thing that works, that makes any sense.

SAMANTHA

But that's so... passive.

PHIL

And hopeless.

SAMANTHA

And depressing. You just get used to the way things are and then they change. The therapist has done all that research just to come right back to where he started. With nothing.

PHIL

We just have to get used to change, I guess.

SAMANTHA

I don't think I can.

INT. PEEBLES DINING ROOM - LATER

The two are in their seats, waiting for dinner. WE can hear CLATTERING O.S. from the kitchen. Phil is nibbling off the charcuterie.

SAMANTHA

I want the twins back. I need them. I miss them a lot. More than I ever thought I would. They pissed me off so much, all the time. I mean, they did everything they could to get under my skin, but they were my babies. I made them. We had stuff in common. You know?

PHIL

We complained about them all the time, but they were just little versions of us. And we were a family.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

Maybe a tad dysfunctional. But we had each other. Do you think they have a new family and they miss us too?

(Phil shrugs)

Do you think these girls had a family? Parents who miss them?

PHIL

They seem so normal, compared to us.

SAMANTHA

But they probably pissed off their parents too.

PHIL

The twins are probably pissing someone off right now.

SAMANTHA

That's what they do. That gives me some comfort. I guess.

They stop talking and listen - no more clattering from the kitchen.

Samantha gets up and heads to the kitchen. Phil follows.

INT. PEEBLES KITCHEN

Samantha and Phil come in. The girls are gone - disappeared right in the middle of making dinner. Pieces of uncooked sea urchin float in a bowl. A burner is still going on the stove.

Samantha can no longer hold it together. Her knees buckle. She breaks down and puts her arms around Phil and cries out. It's all-encompassing. All the props holding her together have fallen away and she is coming apart. Phil feels it too. They hold each other tightly and HOWL into the night.

INT. PHIL AND SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They are asleep with Samantha holding tightly to Phil.

It's very quiet. Then, the wind starts - little whispers, growing slowly to a steady breeze.

EXT. PEBBLES NEIGHBORHOOD

The breeze bends the trees and bushes, blows trash here and there. Then, it picks up. Powerful gusts up to 60, 70 mph pound against walls, knock over trash, SNAP a branch, send a stack of papers flying.

Then, the increasing power of the wind catches branches, and trees bend and scrape helplessly against each other. Loose objects are picked up and flung like bullets. Sporadic bursts of wind grab whatever they can and toss them, slam them against trees, cars, buildings. The bursts turn into a steady gale. A tall maple tree CRACKS and falls on a structure.

Then, the rain starts, LOUD and driven hard by the furious wind. It's heavy and saturates the earth in an instant. The intensity of the storm HOWLS through confined spaces and pries open vulnerable enclosures. Things CRACK and SNAP. Power lines are ripped from poles with THUNDEROUS POPS and ROARS.

It becomes the storm of the century, with an intensity never experienced by any living thing. Thick tree trunks SNAP and topple. Roads and open spaces are strewn with trees, trash, bushes, anything that can fly, anything unable to withstand the rain driven sideways by a force approaching the strength of a hurricane.

The sky is lit with the pulsating glow of fires and emergency vehicles trying to bring some control to the chaos. But WE can see by the ferocity of the wind and rain, and the vulnerability of the things they touch that the situation is far from controllable.

The storm rages amid flames in the darkness through the night.

FADE TO BLACK,
THEN BACK IN.

INT. PEBBLES DEN - DAY

LOW ANGLE PAST THE COUCH, out the sliding door. It's morning and the storm has passed. But the once-pristine backyard has been transformed into a hellscape. A Douglas fir has flattened the gazebo and part of the bar-b-que. Lawn furniture and any other loose object has been blown over or dashed against anything that couldn't be uprooted. Trash and plant litter fill in all the open spaces.

After a moment, a golden retriever appears from behind the couch. She pauses to pee on the white carpet then continues on her way.

(CONTINUED)

WE FOLLOW her as she heads toward the stairs and up to the second floor.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - CONTINUOUS

She crosses from the stairs to the twin's bedroom.

INT. TWIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She pushes the door open, hops up on one of the beds, and makes herself comfortable.

After a moment, a strange boy (8) awakens and pets the dog. He yawns, gets out of bed, and walks out of the room. WE SEE another strange child waking up in the other twin bed.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL

WE FOLLOW the strange boy down the hall. He turns into the bathroom, tries to turn the light on, gives up and heads to the toilet in the dark. As he starts peeing, WE continue down the hall into the master bedroom.

INT. PHIL AND SAM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

WE ENTER the room as a cell phone alarm goes off. Two people are sleeping in the bed. A strange man reaches out and turns off the alarm. Then, he yawns and gets out of bed. A strange man sleeping next to him awakens.

STRANGE MAN IN BED

(Yawning)

I'm not going in today.

STRANGE MAN 2

I don't think anyone is.

He looks out the window.

STRANGE MAN 2 (CONT'D)

You should see this. It's a disaster zone.

HIS POV, the downed trees and litter covering the street in front of the house.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS BEDROOM - MORNING

SIMILAR SECOND-STORY POV, trees and detritus covering a street in a middle class neighborhood.

Phil is looking out the window in this strange, undersized, ill-decorated bedroom with a sloped ceiling. He has just awakened and noticed the change, understandably disoriented and disheartened.

He explores the room, crosses to the closet and looks in, checks the tiny bathroom. Samantha is beginning to awaken. He sits on the bed next to her.

Her eyes open. She notices things have changed and closes them. He rubs her back.

PHIL

The power's still out.

SAMANTHA

(Eyes still closed)

Where are we?

PHIL

It kind of looks like North Seattle outside. But it could be Renton, Rainier Valley, Kingsgate...

SAMANTHA

The twins?

PHIL

I haven't looked yet.

SAMANTHA

I'm done pretending.

PHIL

Don't be done. It's all we got.

He kisses her shoulder, then leans in and hugs her. She turns and they hug, closely, tightly, for a long time.

PHIL (CONT'D)

I'm going to explore. You want to come? Maybe there's some coffee.

She shakes her head, then turns away and pulls the blankets over her.

He heads into the hall.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HALL

He walks down the hall, exploring in rooms. He comes to a closed door, where the children should be sleeping. Stops with his hand on the doorknob. Searches for the strength to open it.

Then, he turns away and heads down a half-flight of stairs to what should be a living room.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS LIVING ROOM

He does a quick appraisal of the room, then turns into what should be the kitchen.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS KITCHEN

He looks up with a start. The strange woman from the ramshackle hut is standing by the island, facing him with a lost look.

PHIL

Hi.

She just stares.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Is this your house?

She shakes her head, points to her ear and mouths "can't hear," without making a sound.

PHIL (CONT'D)

(Pointing to his ear)

I can't hear you either.

He pantomimes as he speaks...

PHIL (CONT'D)

Is this your house?

She shakes her head.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Where are we?

She shrugs. She mouths, "I don't know."

PHIL (CONT'D)

So, we can both talk but we can't hear each other.

(CONTINUED)

She shrugs, nods. He goes to the slider and looks out. She follows.

A tree from the neighboring yard has fallen on part of the fence and crushed it. Toys are scattered, bushes uprooted.

They look up at the sky. It's the first time WE HAVE noticed it. The sky has started glowing lime green and pulsating, like the northern lights. But the atmosphere is so concentrated with charged particles that it can be seen clearly through the clouds, casting a sickly, shadowless, yellow-green pall over the earth.

He turns and looks at her, then he heads toward the living room.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS LIVING ROOM

The power is still out but the glowing sky fills the middle class room with light. He crosses through it and up the stairs, followed by the woman.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS BEDROOM

He comes in. The woman waits outside the door. He looks down at ruffled bedding. Samantha is gone. It's like he was struck by lightning.

PHIL

Samantha.

He repeats her name as he checks the master bathroom, then runs out the door.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HALL

He looks in the rooms, calling her name over and over. He runs down the stairs.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS LIVING ROOM

He turns around in the middle of the room, looking in every corner, calling her name. Nothing. He gives up and collapses on the couch. He's lost it all.

The woman watches him from across the room as he falls apart before her eyes. Whatever magic had been keeping him away from the brink has disappeared. And reality is all he has left.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The streets are strewn with downed trees, power lines and debris, empty of cars. People are wandering about, silently trying to grok the unbelievable.

The only sound comes from a couple of distant CHAINSAWS and the sky all around. It's a SIZZLING, CRACKLING sound. The magnetic field surrounding the earth is electrified and squirming, bright and screaming with a ghoulis glow.

Phil is walking among the lost. The strange woman is walking along side him.

She comes up next to a man and woman and taps his shoulder. He turns and she pantomimes, "Where are we?"

Like everyone else, they are depressed and exhausted.

MAN IN STREET

Well, we live on Rosehill in Kirkland. I don't know where we are now.

WOMAN IN STREET

We woke up and everything was different.

She gets some of that, points to her ear and shrugs. They shrug.

MAN IN STREET

(Pantomiming)

We plan to keep walking until we recognize something. You're welcome to join us if you want. I'm Fred. This is Joanne.

The strange woman smiles and mouths, "Hi." She points to Phil.

PHIL

I'm Phil.

They shake. Then they fall in with Fred and Joanne. Phil pulls out his phone, unlocks it and takes a look.

FRED

Ha. Already tried that. Cell towers are down. GPS is probably down too.

Phil puts his phone back, looks away from them. He's deeply depressed, unable to speak, just wants to disappear.

(CONTINUED)

FRED (CONT'D)

Tried the radio this morning. Nada.
This must be one hell of a sunspot.

The man points up at the angry sky.

JOANNE

I walked in the guest room
yesterday and a strange man was
standing there, naked as a jaybird.

FRED

You never told me that.

JOANNE

Well, I didn't want to, you know...
It scared the shit out of me and I
didn't know how you'd take it. He
disappeared anyway after a couple
minutes.

FRED

Hell, we're a mixed up bunch,
aren't we?

INT. CHURCH HALL

The small local church hall has been repurposed for the
emergency. Phil, the strange woman and the two they met on
the street are seated in a group, eating scrambled eggs.

FRED

I don't remember this church being
here, do you?

JOANNE

Well, it's not as if we notice
things like churches.

FRED

That's true. The food's good
anyway. Praise the Lord, huh?

A Christian ZEALOT near them holds a Bible high and starts
evangelizing LOUDLY. As he preaches, people gather around him
and listen. They're desperate for an answer. With the pulsing
sky growing brighter and LOUDER, the crowd is ready to
believe anything.

ZEALOT

It's all there in the Bible.
Behold. "The heavens will disappear
with a roar;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ZEALOT (CONT'D)
 the elements will be destroyed by
 fire, and the earth and everything
 done in it will be laid bare."
 Anyone who doesn't see this is a
 fool, anyone who waits to act will
 perish.

The four find themselves caught up in the message.

ZEALOT (CONT'D)
 It is no longer some abstract idea.
 It is happening as we speak. How
 can anyone of us question these
 prophecies when they're appearing
 right there in front of us, right
 now? The devil is having his way,
 and this is the last chance you
 will ever have to save your souls.

Out the window, it does appear the devil is hard at work.

ZEALOT (CONT'D)
 (Reading from the Bible)
 "Get rid of all the filth and evil
 in your lives, and humbly accept
 the word God has planted in your
 hearts, for it has the power to
 save you."

A person who is listening falls to her knees in front of the
 Zealot and clasps her hands.

FOLLOWER
 Save me, please! I'm ready.

The Zealot places a powerful right hand on her head.

ZEALOT
 Do you accept Jesus Christ as your
 Lord and Savior?

FOLLOWER
 I do!

ZEALOT
 Say, I believe in Jesus.

FOLLOWER
 I believe in Jesus.

ZEALOT
 And I believe in the power of Jesus
 to save me from the ravages of
 hell.

(CONTINUED)

FOLLOWER

I believe in the power of Jesus to
save me from the ravages of hell.

ZEALOT

(Reading, fully
enthralled)

"Though you have not seen him, you
love him. Though you do not now see
him, you believe in him and rejoice
with joy that is inexpressible and
filled with glory, obtaining the
outcome of your faith, the
salvation of your soul."

FOLLOWER

Yes!

The crowd answers, "Amen!"

He pushes his hand away and she lands in a heap on the floor.
Others stand and approach him. He grabs the next one in line.

ZEALOT

Do you come before me and God today
to profess your desire to be saved
in the Kingdom of the Lord?

FOLLOWER 2

Save me! Please, God! I don't want
to burn in hell.

He grabs her head, as she tearfully yammers on in tongues.

Phil and the strange woman listen with rapt attention. Their
world is falling apart and they're ready to believe anything.

Fred is seeing his world come to an end.

EXT. HILL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The four are making their way down an old residential street,
strewn with downed trees and trash. Phil has paired up with
Fred.

FRED

That's tough. I don't know what to
say.

PHIL

She... she stopped pretending. And
that was it. She was gone.

(CONTINUED)

FRED

(Shakes his head, the
philosopher welling up in
him)

Oh, but pretending, that's
everything. That's life. That's all
life is. Without that, we have
nothing. We're born lost, all of
us. No one has the answer. No one
knows. We're all just making shit
up, forever trying to talk
ourselves into thinking everything
is okay. Searching for happiness by
deluding ourselves, trusting that
someone else has found the answer.
But we're all just as clueless.

Phil looks up. The news seems to give him some twisted sense
of hope.

PHIL

Clueless.

FRED

Pretending is the only thing that's
kept us all from jumping off a
cliff. Like the lemmings.
Pretending, it's all we ever had.
We were born to try to make sense
of something that makes no sense,
on this journey that takes us
nowhere.

He looks up as the charged sky begins to flash.

FRED (CONT'D)

But now, the truth is staring us
right in the face.

A rumble of THUNDER.

FRED (CONT'D)

(With the conviction of a
man on the edge)

Reality has taken the last bite out
of our hopes and dreams. This is
the end. We've reached the end, the
end of our search for truth, the
end of pretending.

(Pointing to the sky)

All around us is proof, scientific
proof that there is no answer.
Chaos is all we got, and it's all
we ever had.

(CONTINUED)

He closes his eyes and breaths it in.

The four turn a corner and start down a hill. Ahead, they can see a lake through the downed trees. Off in the distance, they see the tops of tall buildings.

FRED (CONT'D)
 (Rejoicing)
 That looks like Seattle. So that must be Lake Union.

PHIL
 I think you're right.

FRED
 Probably near Wallingford. What does that sign say?

PHIL
 Bagley North and 39th.

FRED
 Yup.

They continue down the hill toward the lake.

The electromagnetic sky intensifies. A lightning storm develops above them with powerful flashes of light and THUNDER.

EXT. LAKE UNION STREET - DAY

A street runs by the lake at the bottom of the hill. Only an occasional car attempts the labyrinth of parked cars, stalled buses, flooded intersections and logjams.

FRED
 We're heading home.
 (To Phil with a sly smile)
 Or maybe just pretending to. How about you?

PHIL
 I don't have a choice.

He turns to the strange woman. She pantomimes, "I'm with you. I have nothing else."

The four start their long journey down the sidewalk, AWAY FROM CAMERA.

JOANNE
 What was all that about pretending?

(CONTINUED)

FRED
Oh, nothing, nothing.

JOANNE
I need you to focus, Fred.

FRED
I'm focused.

JOANNE
And not go off on one of your tangents.

FRED
Yeah, yeah.

The conversation trails out.

The angry sky starts sending incredibly bright bolts of lightning earthward. The THUNDER CLAPS are tremendous, unlike anything WE HAVE ever experienced.

As they walk, it starts to rain. It's heavy. It glows like radium. They're soaked in an instant. All they can do is pull their coats tight, hunch over and push ahead.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - DAY

The rain has abated some. They're following the ramp connecting to the floating bridge over Lake Washington. The road is virtually empty of traffic. A line of hundred or so displaced people stretches out for miles ahead.

EXT. FREEWAY BUS STOP - DAY

The four take shelter under the covered bus stop. Fred sits, takes his soaked shoes off and rubs his feet. Phil sits. The woman stands and watches Fred.

FRED
We got another stretch of walking until we get to the other side.

JOANNE
How's your feet?

FRED
Pretty fucked up. Excuse the French.

JOANNE
Are you going to make it?

(CONTINUED)

FRED

I honestly don't know. I think the
gout's coming back. Hurts like
hell.

The woman gets an idea. She gets their attention, then points to herself and the group. Then, she points to the street, indicating the cars.

JOANNE

You think you can get us a ride?

She nods.

JOANNE (CONT'D)

Well, we'd sure be up for that.

The woman gets Phil's attention and beckons him to follow her.

They head across the bus lane and stand on the freeway shoulder. A car approaches. She tries to flag it down, but it zooms past them.

She turns and gives a hopeful thumbs up to the people in the bus shelter. They wave back.

It's bitter cold and the number of yellow-green lightning strikes continues to increase all around them.

The woman huddles close to Phil, puts her arm through his. He looks down, covers her cold hand.

Another car approaches. Phil and the woman attempt to stop it, but it continues on by.

She turns and wraps her arms around Phil, puts her head on his chest and closes her eyes. He looks down at her, unsure how to react. She holds him even tighter.

He reciprocates after a moment. They hold each other - two people standing on a freeway shoulder in the glowing rain, as the sky melts and the world appears to come apart around them.

Another car passes, but they continue their embrace.

Suddenly, a massive lightning bolt CRASHES down on the metal bus shelter. It EXPLODES. The flames and concussion from the electrical discharge immediately turn the people and everything in the shelter into a smoldering, melted heap.

(CONTINUED)

Phil and the woman stare in disbelief. Then, they shake off the shock and turn back in earnest to the task of stopping a car. Here comes one. They pull out all the stops, jumping high with arms raised, CALLING, SCREAMING.

It works. The small used Honda pulls over just ahead of them. They run to the car and get in - Phil in the passenger seat, the woman in back. The car takes off.

INT. HONDA - DAY

The driver SHONDA (30s) is still wearing her scrubs, just as freaked out as everyone else, still buzzing on high doses of caffeine and shear terror.

SHONDA

I'm Shonda.

PHIL

I'm Phil. This is... I don't know.
I can't hear her.

He looks back. The woman smiles at him.

SHONDA

What do you mean?

PHIL

She can't hear us and we can't hear her.

SHONDA

Sure, why not. I just got off work at Swedish ER. You wouldn't believe what's going on there.

PHIL

I'll bet.

SHONDA

Fucking chaos. A lot of people freakin' and having visions and disappearing and reappearing in weird places and running around with their heads chopped off. All we could do was shoot 'em up and set 'em down someplace. Where you headed?

PHIL

East of Woodinville. Whatever you can do.

(CONTINUED)

SHONDA

I can take you as far as east
Redmond.

PHIL

That's fine. Thanks.

He takes the opportunity to exhale.

An accident ahead. Shonda slows and passes the car on fire. They look in. It appears to be empty, the occupants having disappeared. More slow traffic ahead.

The lightning increases, as they start across the lake. Bolts pound the lake and send up huge waves of exploded water, dumping buckets on the floating bridge deck and any vehicle that happens to be in the way.

Shonda pours on the gas now. She swerves into the right lane, then the left and back, angling around slow and stalled vehicles. Phil holds on to whatever he can grab.

SHONDA

This is freaking me out a little,
just so you know. I don't usually
drive like this but... I'm just a
little, fuck...

She hits the brakes, wedged in by slow cars in both lanes.

PHIL

I can drive if you want.

SHONDA

That's ok. I got it. ER was such a
shit show, I'm still a little, you
know...

PHIL

I get it.

She zooms into the left lane when she's past the blockage.

SHONDA

One woman appeared in a locked
closet with no light. She didn't
know where she was, screaming her
ass off for hours before someone
came and let her out. We loaded her
up with Ativan and let her sleep it
off in the waiting room. That's the
kind of day I've had.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHONDA (CONT'D)

As soon as I get home, I'm jumping into my Lazy-boy, putting my feet up, drinking a bottle of I don't give a shit and doing nothing for a week.

PHIL

My sons disappeared. Then, my wife.

She glances at him. Sees the empty shell.

SHONDA

Sorry about that.

PHIL

I don't think I can handle any more.

SHONDA

It's tough, alright.

PHIL

I don't know how you could face all that suffering and still keep it-

End of conversation. He looks over and Shonda is gone. The car slows. Then, she's back and freaked.

SHONDA

What the fu-

Then, she's gone. Then, she's back, SCREAMING. Gone. Back. Gone. Back. She comes and goes a few more times, in quick succession, SCREAMING her ass off.

SHONDA (CONT'D)

I think you'd better dri-

Gone for good. Phil grabs the wheel and rights the car, coasts and swerves a bit until he can switch over to the driver's seat.

Lightning just ahead cooks the right lane. He hits the brakes, swerves into the left lane, cutting off a car. HONK. HONK. Then, he straightens out and continues on. Looks in the back seat.

The woman is shaking her head. She reaches up and pats his shoulder. More lightning. It's nonstop. Then, the rain starts for real.

The deluge becomes so heavy, he can't see an inch in front of the windshield. He lets off the gas, brakes to a stop and prays he doesn't get rear-ended.

(CONTINUED)

Then, the car shuts off on its own. No electricity - dash, lights, engine, everything dead.

Through the washed-out windshield, he can see the greenish sky become as bright as the sun, as if it's three feet over the car.

He feels tingling, burning throughout his body, as thin tendrils of highly-charged light, flow over the car like a liquid spider's web, enclosing them in a high-voltage electric cage. The HISS and CRACKLE of the field is unbearably loud.

He looks back at the woman. Their eyes meet. They're in this together. They watch and wait. It has to end sometime, but there's no end in sight.

They hear POUNDING and METAL STRETCHING as the car is heated and transformed. They hear rivets and tires POPPING. The car begins to glow. It's like they're being baked, but not from heat, from high-frequency radiation emanating from the atmosphere.

He looks back. She is highly distraught now and trying to talk - shaking her head, running her hands over her arms and legs.

PHIL

I can't hear you! Are you in pain?
What can I do?

She starts SCREAMING, holding her head, shaking it. But no SOUND. Phil is at a loss as she appears to melt or burn up in front of his eyes. SILENTLY SCREAMING. He can't get to her from the driver's seat. He wants to hold her, find out what's wrong, but he's afraid touching her will make it worse.

Sparks travel from her forehead and fingertips to the metal on the headrest and seatback. She contorts, folds over, grabs her legs. She holds on tight, as her body is invaded by something horrible from within. Her head rises, then falls. She is still. She slumps.

Phil does what he can but is forced to wait helplessly for the universe to give him a break. He faces forward and closes his eyes.

Then, as if someone came along and hit a big switch, the bright light turns off. Then, everything begins to contract. The web of electricity enveloping the car retreats. The rain slows. The atmosphere begins to lose its SIZZLE.

He reaches back and touches her. He can't tell for sure, but she appears to be alive.

(CONTINUED)

He can see out the windows now, at the stalled cars and trucks, the bridge deck smoldering. He tries the door handle. It's still hot. Holding a napkin, he manages to pull the handle and shove the door open.

EXT. BRIDGE DECK

Phil steps out of the car to greet the new world. The wind and rain have stopped, lightning has lost its fury. And the angry sky appears to be cooling down. He steps a few feet from the car and leans against the Jersey barrier.

From his vantage mid-lake, he can see the tall buildings of Seattle and Bellevue, the mansions in Medina, U.W. Stadium and the stalled, burned-out vehicles running the length of the floating bridge in either direction.

Then, the reality storm starts. He feels something. Not sure what. It's not physical. It's part metaphysical, part spiritual. It's nothing he can touch or see, but it's very real. He stands and allows it, has no choice.

Without moving an inch, with everything completely out of his control, the world around him begins to change, slowly at first, then faster and faster. The things he sees and hears flash rapidly from one reality to another. The bridge disappears, reappears; sky turns blue, then yellow, then green; people appear, disappear; traffic becomes fast and heavy, then light. Then, he is in different places, times, with different people - his wife, twins, Gene and Carl, the woman, Dave at work, total strangers.

Any part of his world that can change does so. And it all happens rapid-fire with elements overlapping, so a friend he hasn't seen in years is on the bridge, then he's at a baseball game, then he's gone. They aren't memory flashes. They are glimpses of his multitude of parallel realities colliding and smashing into insane disconnected pieces - something that is impossible to describe, that can only be realized as it's happening.

Then, the storm suddenly stops.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL NEIGHBORHOOD - AFTERNOON

All is SILENT. Phil is lying on the ground, leaning twisted against the trunk of a downed tree. He gets up slowly and looks around. He's lost.

(CONTINUED)

He makes his way around the tree and a tall pile of leaves and trash, and sees a street sign partially hidden behind a branch - Cottage Lake Lane. His street.

He realizes he has been lying in yard waste off to the side of someone's massive front yard. He makes his way to a clear spot on the sidewalk. All the waste has been pushed aside. Cars are running. People are walking their dogs. And there's his house a block away. He's made it.

He looks up at the sky. There is still some evidence of a charged atmosphere, but the clouds have cleared and there's definitely some blue sky smiling down.

To say he is overjoyed is an understatement. He takes a moment to appreciate the cessation of the storm from hell.

His phone starts RINGING wildly. He pulls it out and watches as the unread text count climbs rapidly, showing 257 new texts.

Then...

VOICE (O.S.)

I thought you'd never wake up.

He turns. It's the woman. She's got a refreshing ironic sassiness he hadn't expected.

PHIL

(Surprise)

Hi.

(At a loss)

It's you.

WOMAN

All over.

PHIL

And... I can, we can hear each other.

WOMAN

It's a miracle I tells yuh.

She walks up to him. They take a moment to let it all sink in.

PHIL

Wow. And here we are.

They look around.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

We made it. We're alive.

They look up at the blue sky.

PHIL

It's beautiful.

WOMAN

I've never seen anything so beautiful.

They start walking.

PHIL

Are you feeling okay? You were looking pretty bad the last time I saw you.

WOMAN

Yeah. Ever wonder how a meatloaf feels when it's being microwaved?

PHIL

Jesus.

WOMAN

Any idea where we are?

PHIL

Well, yeah. This is my street. And that's my house.

WOMAN

Cool, let's go.

PHIL

Hold on a sec.

They stop.

PHIL (CONT'D)

We got to think about this.

(Looking at his phone)

If this date is correct, we've been gone, floating around the universe for over two weeks. So I don't know...

WOMAN

What?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL

Things have changed. I mean...
Obviously.

WOMAN

Yeah, so. Come on. Let's check it
out.

PHIL

Wait. Let's just...

WOMAN

(Curbing her enthusiasm)
Are you afraid of something? Is
there something in the house you're
afraid of?

PHIL

I'm afraid... of nothing. Of there
being nothing in the house, no one,
just strangers and more crazy shit.
I know what I want to be there, but
I'm afraid it's, you know, some new
fucked-up reality.

WOMAN

Believe me, I know.

PHIL

I don't need any more of that,
right now.

WOMAN

I get it.

PHIL

Right now, I think it might be
better not to find out what I don't
want to know. Pretend everything is
like it used to be and leave it at
that. Just memories. I think that's
best.

He sits on the curb and starts getting all maudlin.

WOMAN

What are you going to do? Just sit
here?

PHIL

I don't know. I haven't got that
far yet. Who knows? Maybe I'll
start over... with a new life.
Create a whole new life for myself.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

I think you just need a little time to process.

PHIL

Yeah, process.

She sits next to him. They wait.

WOMAN

So, what are you thinking?

PHIL

I can't be the same person I was. You know. I need to stop being so fucking reckless with my life, stop assuming everything is going to be the way I want it to be, just because I want it that way. Because that's not how it works.

WOMAN

How does it work, Phil?

PHIL

It's obvious, we're not in control. And we need to appreciate that and not try to...

WOMAN

What, Phil?

PHIL

Be happy with what we got and not take it for granted. You know.

He melts into a ball.

WOMAN

(Pretend compassion)

Wow. That's beautiful. So glad you're, uh... Anyway, it was nice knowing you, Phil.

She stands and holds out her hand. He looks up. Shakes her hand, confused.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Best of luck starting your life over. Seriously. I'd like to hang out and listen to more of your tales of woe, but I need a shower and a ride back to my place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN (CONT'D)
So, I'm going to go over to that
house that used be yours and see
what I can come up with.

She starts walking.

PHIL
Wait.

WOMAN
What?

She waits patiently, as he takes a long moment to process.

PHIL
(Reluctantly)
I'm coming with you.

She smiles. He gets up and joins her, and they start walking
AWAY FROM CAMERA.

WOMAN
But what about starting over and
not being reckless anymore?

PHIL
(Under his breath)
Fuck off.

WOMAN
That's the spirit. Welcome back,
Phil.

PHIL
Who are you, anyway?

WOMAN
You already know.

PHIL
Gwenn. Priscilla. You look like a
Priscilla. Francis. Edna.

WOMAN
Not even close.

PHIL
Hildegard.

Their VOICES trail off.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

CLOSE ON door lock. A male hand reaches into FRAME with a key and easily slips it into the lock. Then, he turns the key and unlocks the door.

ON Phil and the woman. He opens the door carefully, slowly revealing the front room. To his relief, it's just the way it's supposed to be.

INT. PEEBLES LIVING ROOM

They enter the room and walk slowly through it. It's just the way he left it, down to the crystal vase with the decorative sticks.

INT. PEEBLES DEN

They cautiously enter the room. The furnishings are the same. Everything is pristine and quiet. The kitchen island is clean and empty, the sea urchin project moved to a different reality.

He turns to the den. Forest Whitaker the retriever is sitting by the couch. She comes over to Phil and raises her right paw. Phil smiles and reaches down to shake it.

He turns as the twins appear from around a corner by the stairs. Twin 1 is holding a baseball bat, ready to strike.

TWIN 1

Dad?

PHIL

Hi.

He drops the bat and the two run up to Phil and hug him. He's not ready for the sudden intense display of affection.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Were you going to clobber me with that bat?

They're excited, talk a mile a minute.

TWIN 1

No, not you. Those strange people. They were like wandering around outside and we had to like chase them away and shit.

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 2

We didn't know where you guys were. Where were you? We were just like here in this house alone with no power and you guys never came back and we thought you'd like, you know... Uh...

PHIL

Died.

TWIN 2

Or something.

TWIN 1

It sucked so bad. We were just like here by ourselves again and all this weird... you know fucked up shit was happening-

TWIN 2

Yeah. Like the sky was all green and there was like lightning all over and the wind blew over all the trees.

PHIL

I know. It was fucked up.

TWIN 2

(Surprised by the language)

Yeah.

TWIN 1

We had this party while you were at the cabin and there were like a thousand people here that we didn't invite. Total strangers. I swear. And they all totally fucked the place up. But it...

TWIN 2

It was our fault.

TWIN 1

Yeah. Our fault. Totally. But when we came back from that creepy family that had like a million cats and they all lived in this fucked up shack in the forest-

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 2

The house was like fixed. It was like a miracle.

TWIN 1

We're so... fucking glad to see you, Dad.

They hug again and the tears come.

Phil looks up and sees someone at the top of the stairs. It's Samantha. She's standing there holding on to the railing, watching them. The twins see the looks on their faces and smile.

Phil runs up the stairs and grabs her in a longing embrace.

PHIL

Where did you go? I thought I'd lost you.

SAMANTHA

Lost me?! Where did you go? I was just lying there in bed and you abandoned me.

PHIL

When I went back upstairs you were gone. I swear.

SAMANTHA

You never came back upstairs. I swear.

PHIL

Well?

SAMANTHA

That's what happened.

PHIL

I guess we have some catching up to do, obviously.

Samantha sees the woman.

SAMANTHA

Who's this?

PHIL

This is, uh... I'd like you to meet this person, this amazingly wonderful person I went on this insane journey with.

(CONTINUED)

TWIN 1

It's Tree.

SAMANTHA

Tree? It's you? How did you get here?

Samantha comes down to greet her.

TREE

I found myself in a strange house in Wallingford and Phil appeared, and we went for a little walk. That's all I know. I don't think he remembers me though.

PHIL

The babysitter?

TREE

That's me.

SAMANTHA

Remember? She watched the twins for us when we were at the cabin.

PHIL

She was so...

TREE

Fifteen. And they were six. But they felt like a lot more.

SAMANTHA

They are a handful. Still are.

TWIN 1

And you're not?

SAMANTHA

(To Phil)

Have you looked in the garage?

PHIL

(Wary)

Now what?

EXT. PEEBLES DRIVEWAY

The group is facing the garage door as it opens, slowly revealing the Cybertruck. Everything is the way it should be! They all CHEER!

EXT. CABIN - DAY

As the door swings wide, revealing the real interior. Phil and Samantha lead the CHEER, as the group enters their rustic, lived-in cabin.

INT. CABIN

The twins and Forest Whitaker run in and plop down on the well-worn couch, a trusted member of the family, and not all that ugly. Phil and Samantha walk around, checking for anomalies. But it's just the way it should be.

Tree stands by the door and watches.

The pictures on the shelf show the family hiking and cooking on a campfire.

SAMANTHA

No dead fish.

PHIL

That's the way we like it.

SAMANTHA

It's beautiful. I'm so happy.

TWIN 1

This dump is a lot of things but it's far from beautiful.

SAMANTHA

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

TWIN 1 (CONT'D)

...eye of the beholder.

TWIN 1 (CONT'D)

Whatever. It's still a dump.

SAMANTHA

But it's our dump.

PHIL

Hey, Tree. You're welcome to stay with us and celebrate with... nonexistent party food.

TREE

Thanks, guys but I'm going to head on home.

TWIN 1

Don't go!

TWIN 2

Don't go!

(CONTINUED)

Samantha calls from the kitchen.

SAMANTHA

Wait. I found a box of Ho Hos.

TREE

That's ok, I'm good.

SAMANTHA

They're unopened. I don't remember buying them. They may have been left here from a previous reality. But they're... so bad!

PHIL

Come on. We'll walk you home.

They CHEER!

EXT. CABIN NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE AFTERNOON

Just seeing a beautiful sunset helps heal. The five people and their dog are strolling down the dirt road, eating Ho Hos, as the sun sets behind a distant mountain.

PHIL AND SAMANTHA

Are walking ahead of the kids. He is on a manic high, yammering away as he scans texts on his phone.

PHIL

I think... You know what I think?

SAMANTHA

No. But I'm sure you're going to tell me.

PHIL

I think we should look at this as a learning experience.

She looks at him. He's serious. She's not surprised.

SAMANTHA

Uh huh. Well, you're going to have a tough time trying to sell that to, I don't know, every other living thing on earth.

PHIL

It was a bad experience.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA

You think?

PHIL

But that's how we learn. The next time it happens, we'll be better prepared.

SAMANTHA

It better not happen again.

PHIL

How do you know? No one knows.

SAMANTHA

Phil.

PHIL

We just got a few things wrong. That's all.

SAMANTHA

A few things wrong.

PHIL

Like pretending.

SAMANTHA

Okay, I agree. Big mistake. Next time, no pretending.

PHIL

(Raising his index finger)
No. We need more pretending. Lots more.

SAMANTHA

Oh sure. Why not?

PHIL

We need to have fun with it. Right? Not take it so seriously. Play it for comedy. Create our own reality. Embrace the inevitable.

SAMANTHA

(Flustered by the logic)
What are you... This isn't... I'm sorry. You're not allowed to make this into some wacky freakshow. It's the fucking sky exploding and people disappearing.

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
Freakshow, comedy, tragedy,
reality. It's all what you make of
it. It's all about coming to terms
with chaos!

SAMANTHA
Chaos? Where did that come from?

PHIL
I've been doing some thinking.

SAMANTHA
Oh, that's what that is.

He puts his arm around her.

TWINS AND TREE

Tree and the twins are conversing surreptitiously, keeping
their distance behind the parents.

TWIN 2
Remember when we found the liquor
cabinet?

TREE
No. That must've been some other
babysitter.

TWIN 2
You opened a bottle and just
smelled it and started coughing and
gagging. And then you plugged your
nose and drank some and kind of
barfed in your mouth a little.

TWIN 1
We thought that was so bad.

TWIN 2
(Wistfully)
Yeah. We were bad. Do you think we
were bad?

TREE
We were bad. But the green sky.
That was... Nothing we did compares
to that.

TWIN 1
Yeah. That was really fucking bad.

They're quiet for a second.

(CONTINUED)

TREE

So bad.

TWIN 1

The worst.

PHIL AND SAMANTHA

Phil sees an important text and stops cold.

PHIL

Oh shit.

SAMANTHA

What?

PHIL

It's Dave at work.

SAMANTHA

(Surprised)

Really?

PHIL

(Reading)

Yeah. He's asking if I want my old job back.

SAMANTHA

That's great. Is he going to let you work from home?

PHIL

Nah, not really.

Putting the phone back in his pocket.

SAMANTHA

What!?

PHIL

I was thinking. Maybe it's time to embrace a little chaos.

She shakes her head. He puts his arm around her and the family continues on their way. As they walk AWAY FROM CAMERA, they see Forest Whitaker run ahead of the group to smell a bush...

SAMANTHA

By the way, where did that dog come from?

(CONTINUED)

PHIL
Forest Whitaker.

SAMANTHA
Where did you get her?

PHIL
The twins brought her home.

SAMANTHA
Oh, that figures. They're always up
to something.

THE END