Scene 1

(Lights on over LOGAN's bathroom. He has a fish tank that houses a brightly colored snake named ZORA. And a computer on a desk. The bathroom operates as his office. He is conferencing with someone over the computer. We can hear her, but we can't see her.)

LOGAN:

So, it's not that there's something wrong with me. Or that I need help. It's just that ... I've changed. She's changed me. And I don't know what to do now.

CONSTANCE:

Yes. I see. And you said she's your neighbor.

LOGAN:

She lives right above me. I hear her footsteps. And I hear them talking sometimes.

CONSTANCE:

And she's changed you because...of the elevator.

LOGAN:

Well, even before the elevator. I could hear her. She sings. From there. (He points to the vent behind him.) But then, I saw her. On the elevator.

CONSTANCE:

Did you guys talk?

LOGAN:

...No.

CONSTANCE

How did you know it was her?

LOGAN:

She was checking her mail, and she was humming. So I looked at the names on the mailbox and I googled them. She's a singer. She has her own website. I'm friends with her on Facebook. Do you know Facebook?

CONSTANCE

Of course. So, you're friends with her on Facebook.

LOGAN:

Well, I'm not really friends with her. But Phillip and Timothy are. And I made Phillip and Timothy. So, in a way, I'm friends with her twice.

CONSTANCE:

What do you mean, you made Phillip and Timothy? ... Remember. This is a private session. I'm bound by law from repeating anything you tell me during this session, unless you give me reason to fear that you pose a danger to others or to yourself. In which case, I would be obligated to report you.

LOGAN:

How would you report me? You don't even know my name.

CONSTANCE:

Oh, believe me. There are ways of finding out. But, really, you can tell me anything. And I won't tell anyone. We're not even in the same room. I barely know what you look like.

LOGAN:

I collect profiles. I'm a profile collector. Creator. Collector.

CONSTANCE:

What do you mean?

LOGAN:

Sometimes I'll find a picture of someone online. Or an unusual name. And I'll take that person's picture and I'll make him a profile. And I'll give him a job, and hobbies, and friends, and their friends will write on their timelines, and take pictures with them, and sometimes they'll get married, or have kids, or start vegan recipe blogs.

CONSTANCE:

You mean you steal identities.

LOGAN:

No, no. Not at all. The opposite of that, really. I — I gift identities.

CONSTANCE:

I see. Is it like...what do they call it?...are they tulpas?

LOGAN:

No. Absolutely not.

CONSTANCE:

Okay.

LOGAN:

You can't make tulpas based on real people. That would create an identity crisis. I just — I give people alternatives. I give them the possibility of another life. Like, when my mail girl left for law school, I gifted her a profile, where she's a mail delivery scout, and she dates this guitarist, Mickey, who needs a kidney transplant, because he was born with only one. One kidney. I wonder how he's doing now.... Anyway, she doesn't live here anymore. She moved away, for law school.

CONSTANCE:

You said she was your mail girl?

LOGAN:

She'd get my mail and drop it off for me, so I wouldn't have to go outside. I have a new mail guy now, but I found him on Craig's list. Do you know Craig's list? Yeah. It's not the best. I don't like this guy as much. I think he reads my magazines. The pages always feel...fingered.

CONSTANCE:

How often do you typically get outside?

LOGAN:

I like being inside my home. I have a great home. It's a very self-sustaining system. I have everything I want inside my home. And if I don't have it, I can get it shipped. Usually for free, if I spend more than twenty-five dollars.

CONSTANCE:

So what were you doing on the elevator? When...things changed?

LOGAN:

It was the MiceDirect guy! Do you know MiceDirect? They ship mice, and they're usually very good. I've never had a problem with packaging or the freezing. But I told this guy to bring the mice upstairs and I waited for him by the door and he never came and he left the mice downstairs, in the lobby. And I couldn't wait for Craig's list guy because I already messed up Zora's feeding schedule, and I forgot about Sunday, and she was starving, and I didn't want another dead snake. So I put on my shoes and I got them for her.

CONSTANCE:

And what happened when you went outside?

LOGAN:

I saw her.

CONSTANCE:

Besides that.

LOGAN:

What do you mean?

CONSTANCE:

How did you feel? When you were outside?

LOGAN:

Fine, I guess. I tried to hurry, but, I was fine.

CONSTANCE:

So you were outside in the elevator for like, ten minutes? And nothing happened. You were safe. What are some more small, achievable steps you could take toward your larger goal of leaving your house?

LOGAN:

No. No. I don't want to leave my home. I like my home. I just — I want to stop wanting to see her. I was perfectly happy before I saw her. I want to be perfectly happy again. That's my goal.

CONSTANCE:

I see. Well. What is it about her that has so entrapped you? How has she...grabbed your goat, so to speak?

LOGAN:

She has the most incredible voice. Like, every morning, at eight, she'll wake up, and she'll start singing. Scales, first. Just scales. Really softly. And then, like, half an hour later or something, she'll come back, and she'll just, burst into song. Like, her voice will explode into my bathroom.

CONSTANCE:

From those vents.

LOGAN:

Yeah. Sometimes, I feel like — it's like she decides what kind of day I will have, by the emotion encapsulated in her song. And it's never very clear or straightforward. It's not like that chart you use with the smiley faces — do you know that chart? "Today I feel sad," "Today I feel anxious," "Today I feel lonely" — and it's not like, "I am 83 percent bored and 17 percent excited." Or maybe it is like that, except without math. Because even when she sings a song that's supposed to be happy, she's got — she sounds sad. Or maybe music is just always sad. Like it taps into this sadness that words, when they're spoken and not sung, can't reach because they don't have long enough soundwaves.

CONSTANCE:

... Let's talk about your childhood. How would you describe your relationship with your mother?

LOGAN:

It's just that, I never thought that the music was from her, you know? Like, from a person. It was more like, from God. Or like, the perfect algorithmically generated soul of every great composer and soprano who ever lived, combined in equal portions and programmed to release a new song every morning.

CONSTANCE:

It must be a very exciting bathroom you occupy.

LOGAN:

Sometimes she sings at night, too. Not every night, but some nights. If you wait for like, another half an hour, you could hear her, maybe. If you're lucky.

CONSTANCE:

I've got another session coming up here. But I'm sure it's lovely.

(LOGAN nods.)

CONSTANCE:

So, a transaction will be made on the account information you provided within the next three days. Shall we go ahead and schedule for next week? Same time? I think we've got a lot to excavate here.

LOGAN:

I'll put it on my Google calendar.

CONSTANCE:

Great. I like to end my sessions with a visualization exercise. So, please close your eyes now, empty your mind, and take three cleansing breaths....Good. What color is the inside of your mind?

LOGAN:

[Improv it]

CONSTANCE:

A door appears inside the space of your mind. You open it. A cold and cleansing wind sweeps by you, blowing all the scattered bits of debris out of your mind, until only the essential essence remains. What do you see?

LOGAN:

[Improv it]

CONSTANCE:

Yes. Your brain is an expansive space. It can hold so much. And yet, and yet you look up and around you and you see the shell of your cerebrum. Transparent, first, but growing more and more solid, closing in on you. What is the shell that encloses your understanding? What keeps you from reaching your full potential?

LOGAN:

[Improv it]

CONSTANCE:

Wonderful. I think we've had a very successful session. I look forward to seeing you next week.

LOGAN:

I'll see you — (CONSTANCE signs off.) — next week.

(The bathroom is empty. LOGAN looks around the emptiness. He crouches down by the vent and waits for the music. Soon, it comes, softly, then louder, and we move upstairs to...)

Scene 1

(EVAN and OLIVIA’s bedroom. Olivia undresses and gets ready for bed, rehearsing a song as she does so. Evan steps in and watches her. This is the last night he will spend with her while she is alive, but he has no idea. There were no signs.)

OLIVIA:

[MUSIC]

EVAN:

New tune?

OLIVIA:

Old tune. Lasciatemi morir. The only song remaining from Monteverdi's Arianna.

EVAN:

Sounds like a riot. (Evan gets into bed.) Hey, did you send out the invitations today?

OLIVIA:

Mmhmm. Post office didn’t have any roses or ring stamps, so we got Snoopy instead. It was that or Abraham Lincoln.

EVAN:

You chose a cartoon dog over a former president as the image that will forever brand our envelopes?

OLIVIA:

Lincoln — victim of assassination. Snoopy — proprietor of the happy dance. I thought it was more celebratory.

EVAN:

Good point. What's Lincoln doing on a stamp anyway? Snoopy it is.

So, invitations are sent. The world is alerted. No more backing out now.

OLIVIA:

Cancel that one-way ticket to Peru.

EVAN:

Throw out that Carmen San Diego disguise.

OLIVIA:

Two more months.

EVAN:

Two more months.

(Beat.)

EVAN:

When we’re married, do you think we should get our initials carved into some kind of rubber stamp? We could get some fabric paint and some glassware paint. That seems like the easiest way to monogram all our dishtowels and wine glasses, right? We should have our own seal, you know. All the properly married people do.

OLIVIA:

(Distracted.)

Uh-huh.

EVAN:

How were rehearsals?

OLIVIA:

They were good.

EVAN:

After the show is done, maybe we can take a trip somewhere.

OLIVIA:

We’re going to Paris in two months.

EVAN:

Just a small trip. A day trip. It’d be nice to spend a day with you.

OLIVIA:

Yeah. I guess that would be nice.

EVAN:

We could go back to that inn, in Port Townsend.

OLIVIA:

You hated Port Townsend.

EVAN:

And you found dusty flea markets and lopsided pottery unequivocally charming. I’ll never know why.

OLIVIA:

Thank you.

(She kisses him and gets into bed.)

EVAN:

How was the rset of your day?

OLIVIA:

Good. I walked around town a lot. I smelled hot dogs everywhere. Coming out of doughnut shops and up the sewer grates. You wouldn’t believe how much I wanted a hot dog. I salivated for hot dog.

EVAN:

Was today the day you gave up being vegetarian?

OLIVIA:

I had a lettuce tofu wrap instead.

EVAN:

Ahh, so you’ve only increased in your martyr status. Another pig has lived to see tomorrow. All because of you.

OLIVIA:

How was your day?

EVAN:

Uneventful. As per usual. Adulthood's exciting the first five years. Then the tedium set in. At least there's free bagel Fridays.

OLIVIA:

Sounds pretty bleak.

EVAN:

It’ll be different for you. You’ll be famous. You'll steal the show every night.

OLIVIA:

I don’t care about being famous. I just want to sing. And I want them to listen.

EVAN:

And that’s why you’ll be famous. (Kisses her.) When you’re famous, I’ll be all like, hey, my towels are monogrammed with her towels. We share monogrammed towels.

OLIVIA:

Does the tedium never end?

EVAN:

No, but sometimes the sunlight breaks through. And I get to marry you. (Takes her hand and kisses it.) Have children with you. (Kisses her elbow hollow.) Watch you sing and see you own the crowd. I get to do all of that, so I am pretty damn lucky.(Moves goes in for the sexual kill.)

OLIVIA:

Not tonight, please. I’m tired. It was a long day.

EVAN:

Okay.

OLIVIA:

I’m sorry. I love you.

EVAN:

I adore you.

OLIVIA:

I’ll see you in the morning.

EVAN:

Sleep well.

OLIVIA:

You, too. Can I tell you something? I did eat a hot dog today. In fact, I ate three.

EVAN:

How was it?

OLIVIA:

They tasted so good. I didn’t know a hot dog could taste so good.

EVAN:

Did you get toppings? You got toppings, right?

OLIVIA:

Everything I could.

EVAN:

Good. That’s good. I’m happy for you.

OLIVIA:

I’m going to dream of hot dogs tonight.

EVAN:

You could dream of worse.

OLIVIA:

I’ll dream of you and I, eating hot dogs by the Arc de Triomphe.

EVAN:

Like Lady and the Tramp? With Django Reinhardt playing guitar in the background?

OLIVIA:

Precisely.

EVAN:

Leave the onions off of mine, please.

OLIVIA:

Will do.

EVAN:

Hey. Tomorrow’s Third Wednesday. Can you run to the bank?

OLIVIA:

Sure. No problem.

EVAN:

Okay. Thanks, love. Good night.

OLIVIA:

Night.

(Lights off until the middle of the night. Lights up on Olivia as she sits up in bed and ponders Evan’s sleeping form.)

OLIVIA: I love you so much, baby. Will you please please remember that?

(She kisses him.)

(Olivia gets up and walks around the stage. She takes a gun out of a drawer and then curls up in a fetal position on the floor. It takes a while for her to press the trigger, but she does it, she puts that fucking bullet inside her brain. The sound of it jolts Evan awake.)

End of Scene 1.

Scene 2

(Living room of Evan’s apartment, in some happy-sad, past-present mishmash. The lighting is a little bit off. Evan and Olivia are seated close together with their laptops out. Beth sits a little bit off to the side, a little bit separated from them.)

EVAN:

Okay, so, the dance floor is here, tables are back there, and the cake can go … here?

BETH:

Thanks so much for letting me make the cake. I’m so excited. I’ve been testing a whole bunch of recipes. I think I’ve got some good ones.

OLIVIA:

Do we have to meet with the caterers on Monday? I have rehearsals all afternoon. And two private lessons in the morning. I can’t wait till this is all over.

EVAN:

Come on, Liv. You get to choose the ice sculpture.

BETH:

(Excited.) You’re getting an ice sculpture?

OLIVIA:

Of course not. What would we get an ice sculpture of? A castle?

EVAN:

I was thinking we should get one of my penis.

BETH:

(Laughter, then the fear that she has laughed too loud.)

OLIVIA:

It would just keep shrinking all night.

(She and Evan make a face. Then she gets up to check on something else.)

BETH:

So, did you guys go look at those houses downtown?

EVAN:

No. Things are just too busy right now. Looks like we’re going to hold off the homeowner thing another year.

BETH:

Oh! Good! I mean, maybe not good, but I’m happy. I like having you guys across the hall.

EVAN:

Well, even if we did move, you’d still be the Protector of our Spare Key.

OLIVIA:

(Comes walking by with a stack of envelopes in her arms.)

We’ve got a fun stack of envelopes to address.

EVAN:

Olivia doesn’t want to move anyway. She’s far too attached to her precious bathroom.

OLIVIA:

It’s got great acoustics! (Her phone beeps.) Ugh. My agent wants me to audition for these plays and little musicals. I keep telling him I just want to sing. I mean, like, really sing. Hey, Beth, are you still looking for auditions? I could send him your headshot.

BETH:

Oh, no. Please don’t. I’m not — I’m not really trying to do the acting thing anymore. I — I like baking.

EVAN:

You could do both! Why not? You totally should.

OLIVIA:

(Gets another message. Laughs but is also exasperated.)

EVAN:

What’s that about?

OLIVIA:

Just a student of mine. He’s ridiculous. I need to turn this thing off. Oh nothing. It’s just ridiculous. I need to turn this thing off.

EVAN:

Wait a minute. (Checks his computer.) You said Monday was out? What about … Wednesday evening?

OLIVIA:

I can’t. I have a thing.

EVAN:

Really? I thought Wednesdays were off days.

OLIVIA:

Oh. Something came up. Let’s do Thursday! Can we do that?

EVAN:

Ooookay. I’ll let them know tomorrow.

BETH:

Do you guys need any help? I can write envelopes.

OLIVIA:

Oh. Don’t worry about it. I’ve got it.

(She picks up a pen and scrolls through her address book. She puts the pen to paper but she doesn’t write.)

EVAN:

So, let’s hear more about the cake. What’s going on with the cake?

BETH:

Okay, so I made three different kinds last night.

EVAN:

Three different cakes? Beth, you’re a baking machine! We aren’t even paying you. Seriously, you can make it with a box mix.

BETH:

Oh, it didn’t take very long. This is my first wedding cake. And it’s for you! I just want to make sure it’s good.

EVAN:

It’s gonna be great.

BETH:

I was thinking three layers, with another small bride and groom cake on top, and every layer will be a different flavor. Yesterday, I made a coconut cream, a red velvet, and a double chocolate raspberry.

EVAN:

Double chocolate raspberry? What do you think of that, Liv?

OLIVIA:

(Startled, looks up.) Sounds great.

BETH:

It’s got double chocolate stout in it. I froze them all. And I think after I try a few other flavors, and experiment with the frosting, we should do a cake-tasting.

EVAN:

Hell. Yes. Cake-tasting! When should we schedule that, Liv?

(Olivia gets up and starts walking away.)

EVAN:

Olivia? Where are you going? … Come back here.

(The scene changes as Olivia walks away. Perhaps there is a moment where she glances back, and they share a look, but then she fades away. As Evan continues looking in her direction, mourners step onto the stage and bring food and flowers. Beth cries and grabs Evan's hand, but he continues to look in the direction of Olivia.)

EVAN:

Come back.

End of Scene 2

Scene 3

(Beth and Evan remain in the same place in Evan's apartment, which is now in shambles. Evan wears a bathrobe.)

BETH:

That was the last time I saw her. … I have all this … cake, but she’s never coming back.

EVAN:

(Scoffs and takes a swig of whiskey.)

BETH:

I’m so sorry, Evan. That’s … all I can say.

EVAN:

Uh huh.

(Takes a sugar cube out of the box and puts one in his tea. Considers another one.)

BETH:

I called the church and the caterers, and I picked up your mail. Your work sent an orchid. There’s a card. Do you want to look at it?

EVAN:

Nope. Those bastards can eat their heads.

BETH:

(Opens the card anyway.)

“Dear Evan, We’re so sorry for your loss. We hope you’re recovering from this unfortunate incident and we know we’ll see you back in the game soon. Please let Sally know how soon exactly. The sofa company is on our ass right now. It's catalogue season. All our condolences.”

EVAN:

Yep. Bastards.

BETH:

Oh I almost forgot. I brought a beef stroganoff, too. (Bends down and takes the plate out of her bag.) I thought you’ve probably had enough eggs and baked goods now.

EVAN:

Nonsense. Eggs are great. Want an egg, Beth? This one’s got celery and dill. Here we’ve got original, with a dash of chili pepper. And THESE. These sick looking things have crab meat! They look green, but don’t be alarmed. It’s just the avocado. Avocado deviled eggs! Can you believe it?

BETH:

That's a new twist.

EVAN:

You’re not kiddin’, sister. The world's just full of twists. One day you’re planning a honeymoon to Paris. The next you’re mopping up the pieces of your dead girlfriend’s brain. Never stop twisting, world.

BETH:

I have to tell you something, Evan.

EVAN:

What’s that?

(He tries piecing two sugar cubes together.)

BETH:

Olivia’s dad and step-mom have stayed in town. They want to know what happened.

EVAN:

(He pieces together some sugar cubes.)

Don’t we all.

BETH:

I mean, they hired someone. He came by my place this morning to ask me questions. About you.

EVAN:

Did you tell him all about my wit and my charm?

BETH:

I told him you would never hurt anybody. But then he asked me why you owned a gun.

EVAN:

(Leans his head back and squeezes his eyes shut for a long time.)

How does the sugar stay in such a perfect cube, do you think? Look at this thing. Just look at it. This is geometry.

BETH:

Did you know she was depressed? Did she ever…say anything?

EVAN:

Olivia wasn’t depressed, Beth. She was just a rotten bitch.

BETH:

Don't say that.

EVAN:

Can I get you some tea? Coffee? Are you sure you don’t want an egg?

BETH:

Evan, have you…thought about seeing someone?

EVAN:

What do you mean?

BETH:

My aunt died a few years ago. She was really young. But she had problems with drugs. My mom took it really hard. She was really angry at my aunt. She ended up going to this grieving group. It really helped her a lot.

EVAN:

I don’t need to go to a group, Beth. I’m fine. I’m great. And I’ve got you.

BETH:

(Pleased but uncertain.) I’d do anything to help you…. Evan, I’m really worried about this detective. Do you think Olivia wrote anything down, said anything ever? She must have left something behind.

EVAN:

She left a lot of things behind. Look at all this crap she left behind. We should have a garage sale.

BETH:

The memorial fund's been set up. Donations are being made to the music school downtown. They do musical therapy there, and give free lessons.

EVAN:

Great!

BETH:

I thought that would make you feel better.

EVAN:

I couldn’t be happier.

BETH:

Evan, I have to get to work. Will you make sure you eat something? Eat the beef stroganoff, okay?

EVAN:

Of course. Of course.

BETH:

I’ll come by tomorrow, okay? Or, tonight, if you want? (She's hopeful, but Evan doesn't respond.) If you need anything, you can just knock. I’m right next door. So, if you need anything at all.

EVAN:

(Building onto his sugar cube castle.) Beth. You are the best. I will build you a turret.

BETH:

(Smiles a little.) You’ll build me turret?

EVAN:

I’ll build a castle. It’ll have turrets. And a dungeon.

BETH:

Okay. I’ll see you later. Have a … a goodish day.

EVAN:

And a good night to you, Madame!

(He toasts her and she exits. After struggling with the placement of a sugar cube, Evan loses interest in his castle. He picks up a robe of Olivia’s and smells it. He lies down with the robe crumpled over his face. Then he sits up and flings the robe across the room onto the area where Olivia died. A sudden beep from Olivia's computer makes him look up. He goes to the computer and finds a note sent to Olivia.)

NOTE 1:

(On screen in text. Perhaps Evan reads it aloud in a mimicking voice.)

Dear Olivia. Your death has rendered a hole inside my soul. The world burned brighter with you in it. All that is left to fill me are the hollow sounds of your notes trapped in plastic and polish.

EVAN:

Who the fuck is this guy? ... Who the fuck's writing all these notes?

NOTE 2:

Olivia! I love your voice so much! I think you’re the best American soprano in the world! I would like you to visit my organization and perform. We are a retreat center for top business executives hoping to take a restive from the daily stressors of life. .... Can’t pay very much .... Welcome to our cleansing mineral hot springs and our detoxifying sweat lodge..... Happy Mountain Retreat and Recovery Center!

EVAN:

Someone missed a memo at the sweat lodge.

NOTE 3: Dear Ms. Holland-Pryce, I write from the Cremona Institute in Bulgaria, as I have heard from colleagues that you will be making extended travel through Bulgaria. I have also heard that you are a rising star with great talent, and so would like to correspond with you regarding teaching and performing opportinunities with the Institute...

EVAN: Blah, blah, blah.

(He pulls up a large image of Olivia from her web site and studies it. Then he presses play on a video.)

OLIVIA’S VIDEO:

Hi, friend. Thank you so much for stopping by my page. I’m so glad you’re here. I hope you've been able to listen to my pieces and explore my work. Please, feel free to e-mail me or to leave comments.

Music is my passion, and my dream is to share this passion with the world. I believe that music has the power to transform and to heal, to unify and to transcend the petty banalities of everyday life. I suppose you can say I am a little bit dramatic, too.

For now, I will leave you with one of my favorite poems, which I believe is expressive of the mystery and depths of great music. This is Sonnets to Orpheus 9, by Rainer Maria Rilke.

EVAN:

I gave you that poem!

OLIVIA:

Only he who has raised

his lyre among shadows

may find his way back

to infinite praise.

Only he who has eaten with the dead

from the stores of poppy

will never again lose

the softest chord.

And though the pool's reflection

often blurs before us:

Know the image.

Only in the double realm

do the voices become

eternal and mild.

(The video freezes on a still image of Olivia, and Evan lingers on it for several minutes. Then he hits the Replay button. He forwards to the parts he wants to see. He knows how her movements fall to each second of video. As he watches, more notes arrive to Olivia.)

EVAN:

You’re a beautiful wretched conniving transcendent stinking deceitful slut. I hope you know that.

(He toasts her with a swig of whiskey and then puts on a CD of her singing. He lies down on the couch to go to sleep. When the song ends, the computer suddenly lights up again. There is a rustle at the side of the stage as the robe tossed over the area of the death begins to move. It fills out and Olivia stands up, dressed in the robe, or in her performance gown. After taking some time to adjust back to the physical world, she steps her way over to Evan’s sleeping form. She crouches down so that her face is level with his. She studies him lovingly.)

OLIVIA:

I never meant to lie to you, darling. I thought I always told the truth. But I didn’t recognize the truth, until it crawled into my skull.

There’s a pounding in my skull, baby. It echoes like a metronome. Clack. Clack. Clack. Clack. Every second is a half note.

Please help me. Oh, baby, please help me.

(She crawls on top of him and places her head over his chest.)

OLIVIA:

Please help me. Please help me. Please help me.

End of Scene 3.

Scene 4

(Detective Samuels clears off a spot for himself to sit. Evan is overall not very impressed with him. His computer is on and he is more interested in the images of Olivia.)

DETECTIVE:

This is a very difficult situation for you, I’m sure. It’d be a difficult situation for anyone. I don’t mean to come here and make things worse for you. I hope you know that. I brought you a sandwich.

EVAN:

You take sugar in your coffee?

DETECTIVE:

Just cream.

EVAN:

Of course. (Under his breath.) Fucker.

DETECTIVE:

I got a roast beef hoagie and a Portobello eggplant. I wasn’t sure if you were veggie or not. I know your wife was.

EVAN:

She was my fiancée.

DETECTIVE:

Right. You had about two months till your wedding, didn’t you?

EVAN:

(Hands the guy some coffee and sits his ass down.)

DETECTIVE:

(Shakes his head.) A real shame, buddy. It’s a real shame. A tragedy.

EVAN:

Some people would see it that way. Shakespeare, for instance.

DETECTIVE:

How do you see it?

EVAN:

What do you mean?

DETECTIVE:

Well, what do you think happened? What’s your perspective?

EVAN:

Do I get a perspective?

DETECTIVE:

I’m going to be honest with you, buddy. Because I feel your pain. Some people see this like a tragedy. But others, they see a murder mystery. And after investigating Olivia’s contacts, there aren’t too many suspects in the pool.

EVAN:

She didn’t make it onto too many hit lists.

DETECTIVE:

How did you and Miss Holland-Pryce meet, bud?

EVAN:

(Considers his answer.)

I was walking in a rainstorm, looking for shelter. Found a bus stop, and there she was, drenched within an inch of her soul. Or rather, she was on the balcony of a manor on the lake. I saw her from the garden below and after that I was a lost man. Or try this one on for size. We were children together, living on opposite sides of the shire. Our fathers tried to keep us apart but we still found each other. We went on an adventure and scaled a mountain in the moors.

DETECTIVE:

You enjoy telling stories, Mr. Anderson?

EVAN:

We met the usual way. On the Internet. She was still a student then and I was still a writer.

DETECTIVE:

How long have you been together?

EVAN:

Something tells me you already know.

DETECTIVE:

I’m trying to help you out here. I’m on your side.

EVAN:

Who’s on the other side?

DETECTIVE:

This isn’t a pretty picture for you. And you’re not painting yourself well. Eat your sandwich. You look like you could use a balanced meal.

EVAN:

Balance. Right. (Takes a bite.)

DETECTIVE:

The gun that killed your fiancée — it was registered in your name. You don’t seem like the type to own a gun. When was the last time you shot a gun?

EVAN:

Haven’t shot one in my life.

DETECTIVE:

Your print was on the trigger. Interlaid with hers.

EVAN:

I bought that thing when I was eighteen. At a gun show with my grandfather. Almost forgot I had it.

DETECTIVE:

But Olivia knew you had it.

EVAN:

She said she didn’t want it in the house. She said that knowing it was close made her feel like we were in danger.

DETECTIVE:

But you forgot you had it.

EVAN:

(Studies the detective a moment.)

It’s not something that often saw the light of day.

(They partake in a stare down. Evan goes back onto his computer, flipping through photographs of Olivia.)

DETECTIVE:

She was a beautiful lady.

(Evan plays a video of her singing.)

OLIVIA:

[Music]

(They sit in silence for a moment, soaking in the residue of her voice.)

EVAN:

What do you want to know, detective?

DETECTIVE:

There are pieces that are missing to this. I’m just trying to puzzle it out.

EVAN:

Pieces that are missing.

(He picks up a sugar cube and studies it before dumping it into his coffee.)

DETECTIVE:

What do you want to know? What’s eating you up?

EVAN:

I want to know how to go back in time. How to stop myself from waking up to a dead body.

(Olivia, dressed in an outfit from her younger days, with no injuries apparent on her body, steps onto a corner of the stage, unseen by the men.)

DETECTIVE:

What would you do if you could go back in time? Tell her you love her? Keep yourself from picking a fight? Swallow your temper and count to ten, or wake yourself up before she does?

(Evan doesn’t answer. Olivia sits down and takes out her computer, plugging in the charger and getting comfortable.)

DETECTIVE:

Whatever you do different, the results will remain the same. That’s the problem with digging in the past.

OLIVIA:

(Reciting her thoughts as she composes e-mails.)

Hi, Evan!

Thanks for your note, as well as your poem. Smiley face. I would love to grab coffee but my schedule is a bit full this week. But I am heading downtown to the symphony on Sunday, and would not mind having company, if you would like to….. if you are not bored by orchestral instruments. The Frankfurt Philharmonic will be performing Bach, so it will be a classic, and I am friends with one of the violinists....Does he need to know that? It's not like we’re GOOD friends.... There is also decent coffee…. There is also a great wine bar around the area that I’ve been told to check out.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

DETECTIVE:

That’s the problem with my job. I go through the past picking up stray pieces, but for all that I collect, I can’t do a thing to change the present.

EVAN:

Are you trying to compare your mid-life crisis with my quarter-life apocalypse?

OLIVIA:

There is never enough time in our lives to do what we love and what we must. That is the biggest dissatisfaction, isn’t it? I know that what you want to do in life is to write poetry, just like what I want to do in life is to sing, and what we both want is to love each other, but then there are the things we must do, like go to work, buy groceries, eat, sleep, commute. If only time were limitless, I would spend ten thousand years just loving you....

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

DETECTIVE:

Sometimes though, what I find is that the past isn't what it seems. There is no solid thing we call the past. The past is fluid. It's constantly repeating, constantly changing.

EVAN:

What are you? A philosophy major?

DETECTIVE:

I was, actually.

EVAN:

Is that what all philosophy majors do? Become private investigators?

DETECTIVE:

The past can sneak up on you. That's all I'm saying. Sometimes it'll surprise you.

OLIVIA:

Do you know what I love about art? I mean, what it is about art that makes it necessary and impossible to live without? The thing about art is that there is truth in it. Even if it is just a tiny tiny kernel hiding somewhere inside the highest, most difficult, most unpleasant note. Underneath all the makeup, and the costumes, and the stage lights, and the interviews, and the posturing, and the smiling, there is truth. And that is the only time I can ever, ever tell the truth.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

DETECTIVE:

Listen, kid. I'll leave you alone. I just want to ask you two questions, and I want you to tell me the truth.

EVAN:

Hit me. What have you got?

(The detective ruffles through his papers.)

OLIVIA:

I just want the world to shut up sometimes. I want there to be a still point, a silence. I just want things to stop sometimes. How can we ever think, to know our thoughts, to feel our bodies, if we aren't ever able to stop? I just want to stop. I want to stop.... I want to curl up inside the curve of the fermata.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

DETECTIVE:

How would you describe Olivia's mood these past few months leading up to her death? Did you notice anything unusual?

OLIVIA:

Birds stop in flight. I want to watch the sparrow stop in flight. I want to watch the sparrow fall out of the sky. There are thirteen ways of watching a sparrow fall out of the sky.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

EVAN:

Unusual? No. Was she indescribably happy? No. Did she give the slightest indication she was about to fuck it all and off herself? No.

OLIVIA:

Stop talking about me. Stop looking at me. Stop thinking about me. Stop wanting me. Stop waiting for me. Stop masturbating to me. Stop re-naming me. Stop manifesting me. Stop creating me.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

DETECTIVE:

Were you aware that Olivia was seeing a psychotherapist named Dr. Candie Silvester, as an outpatient at Hillcrest Hospital?

OLIVIA:

Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

EVAN:

I was not aware of that. No.

OLIVIA:

Goodbye, little bird. I'll miss the flutter of your wings as you fly next to me.

(She prints this letter out and puts it in an envelope.)

DETECTIVE:

Thank you for your time, Mr. Hamilton. I know it's been hard on you.

EVAN:

Wait. You're just going to leave now?

DETECTIVE:

I understand and respect your need to be alone.

EVAN:

You didn't even eat your sandwich.

DETECTIVE:

You take it. You can use it more than me.

EVAN:

Why was she seeing a doctor?

DETECTIVE:

I don't know. A patient's rights can't be violated. It's HIPPA.

EVAN:

Why do you think she was seeing a doctor?

DETECTIVE:

I think your girlfriend had more secrets than you realized. I think maybe in this case it's best to leave the past alone.

EVAN:

You're full of bullshit, you know that? You asked me what I want to know. This is what I want to know.

DETECTIVE:

Knowledge isn't an easy pill to swallow. Just remember. I'm on your side.

(Detective exits. Evan is confounded by his sandwiches.)

OLIVIA:

(Who has been watching this exchange.) Poor little bird. You never liked surprises. What a shock, when the wind knocks you off-course.

EVAN:

(Asking the emptiness.) Why were you going to the doctor’s?

(He gets up and goes over to her computer, pushing her out of the way and taking her seat. Olivia stands and looks over his shoulder.)

OLIVIA:

Look at that. The pictures for our slideshow. You were such a cute baby. Look at those chubby little cheeks. Did you know I was making a slideshow? I had to ask your mom for those pictures….Mmm, okay. That might not be your cup of tea. I get it.

EVAN:

(Browsing, browsing, browsing.)

OLIVIA:

Internet history? You don’t think I clean that up? Oh, don’t go for that folder, baby. Not that one. There, that’s better. That’s a good one.

EVAN:

(Pauses and smiles at the screen.)

OLIVIA:

We were so young then, weren’t we? So young and poor and hopeful. Where did we take those pictures? Were we at the beach?

(Shadows of them playing at the beach run across the wall.)

OLIVIA:

There were seagulls at the beach. You held French fries above your head and they all came swooping down at us. I thought they were going to bite off your fingers.

EVAN:

I laughed at you for being scared of birds, and you said, “God damnit. They have talons.” And then…(He gets up and gets closer to the shadows)…and then, one of them brushed by your hair.

OLIVIA:

Nooo. It landed in my hair. It was going to build a nest and make a tree out of me. Or….wherever seagulls sleep.

EVAN:

You screamed, “Get it off! Get it off!” It was a full soprano scream. Probably scared the birds off for weeks.You grabbed me by the neck.

OLIVIA:

No. You took me by the hands. You touched my face.

EVAN:

You kissed me.

OLIVIA:

Liar. You kissed me first.

EVAN:

You didn’t want to go home. You wanted to stay out there all night.

(He sits down in the place of the male shadow. Next to the female shadow, who makes dramatic conversational gestures.)

OLIVIA:

You thought we were going to have sex. But I made you listen first.

EVAN:

We made a fire and watched it burn out. You told me the stories of all your favorite heroines.

OLIVIA:

You asked me why they all died such gruesome deaths.

(The female shadow stills and quiets down. As if she too is listening.)

EVAN:

There was Carmen, the untameable one. You liked Aida, who saved her country, but wouldn't save herself. And then Floria Tosca, an opera singer, too, made an exchange to save her lover, but she was tricked. You didn’t have a favorite role, though. You didn't want to be any of them.

OLIVIA:

I wanted to be a new role. A woman who survives.

EVAN:

You trained so hard you made me feel guilty. Writing was so…capricious.

OLIVIA:

I told you you just had to do the work. And be ready for anything that came up. And be ready to give up everything when anything did.

EVAN:

I asked you what the hardest part was. You said it was all hard, but ...

OLIVIA:

... but you just had to remember how much you want it.

EVAN:

And then you lay down. And you pointed at the sunrise. (He turns to look at the female shadow.) Even then you were hiding things from me, weren’t you? Why couldn’t you tell me?

(The female shadow fades away, and Olivia exits the stage as well. Evan goes back to Olivia's computer. He begins composing a note.)

EVAN:

Where are you? Where the fuck are you? ... Please come back. I just want to talk to you. I just want to see you. Please. Please come back? I need to talk to you.

End of Scene 4.

Scene 5

(Beth and Evan hang out in Evan's apartment. Evan is in an increasingly confused place. Beth tries to clean Evan's apartment.)

EVAN:

Beth, I will not allow you to clean my dishes. Please don't clean my dishes.

BETH:

I'm beginning to think that there are things living in your sink.

A mini kraken. Borne out of food bacteria.

EVAN:

I'll battle it down tomorrow.

BETH:

Should we throw out some of these eggs? I think that they're the main cause of the smell.

EVAN:

(Sniffs himself and smiles deprecatingly.) That's kind of you, Beth.

BETH:

(Goes to throw a few things out and picks up Olivia's robe from the ground. She takes it and uncovers the blood stain. It unnerves her for a while.) We should clean…

EVAN:

(Looking through Olivia’s computer.)

BETH:

(Keeping her voice cheerful.) Evan, should I call a carpet cleaner, do you think?

EVAN:

Olivia wanted to clean the carpet once. She thought she was allergic to it. Like it was making her throat itchy.

BETH:

Oh. (She sets the robe aside and goes to sit down by Evan, again forcing cheerfulness into her voice.) So what are you looking at?

EVAN:

Oh, I’m just…going through fan mail. They keep coming in.

BETH:

Yeah? What do they say?

EVAN:

Here’s one from the cat guy. He used to send these postcards, with pictures of his cat. There was one with the cat sitting on top of the piano, with this caption, "Meow! I love your mew-mew-mew-sic.” Olivia and I would say, hey, let’s change the mew-mew-mew-sic for weeks. This one — this one’s just the cat, looking super sad. I didn’t know cats could look sad.

BETH:

I never thought about that part of her life. The fans. It must have been hard sometimes. I never thought about what it’d be like to be her. I was just jealous of her.

EVAN:

You were jealous?

BETH:

(Nervously) Um. A little bit. Because she was so successful. And (Unsaid: She had you.)... yeah... I was jealous.

EVAN:

You didn’t have reason to be. (Beth looks up at him.) I mean, you’re just as good as she was. She just got lucky.

BETH:

Thanks.

EVAN:

Look. She took these pictures for her CD jacket. She wanted me on there too.

(He submits Beth to pictures of him with Olivia.)

EVAN:

Was I a good man to her?

BETH:

(Startled.) What do you mean?

EVAN:

Was I good?

BETH:

You were wonderful.

EVAN:

But. Not good enough.

BETH:

You were wonderful.

EVAN:

How did I not know then?

BETH:

None of us knew. No one in their wildest dreams would ever have imagined it. Look at how shocked everyone is. Her parents hired a detective!

EVAN:

What did I do wrong?

BETH:

You didn't do anything wrong. You didn't.

(She raises a hand to touch him, but then changes her mind. It is not her place to touch him.)

BETH:

It's not your fault, Evan. I swear to you. None of it is your fault.

EVAN:

She never told me. She never told any of it to me.

BETH:

Maybe she just couldn't.

EVAN:

Maybe I didn't listen. That was all she ever wanted. For people to listen.

BETH:

Evan, don't be so hard on yourself, okay? It's not your fault.

(Evan starts to cry. Beth is uncertain how she fits into this particular moment. She squeezes his hand, but there is like a force field preventing any further intimacy.)

BETH:

I should go. I'll come back tomorrow, okay?

EVAN:

Wait. Please don't go. I'm sorry. Please? Stay?

BETH:

("Do I get myself into this?") Okay. I'll stay.

EVAN:

Thank you.

(She sits down next to him again. Neither knows how to proceed.)

EVAN:

Do you want to play cards?

BETH:

(At the same time.) Let me clean up a little.

(Beth gets up and engages herself in sweeping or some other cleaning activitiy. Evan watches her, then watches his hands and feet. Beth eventually finds herself standing in front of The Stain. She doesn't know what to do about it.)

EVAN:

Sometimes I hear her, you know? Singing in the bathroom. She's all over the place.

BETH:

Maybe you should have that garage sale. Or, you know, start to get rid of some of her things.

EVAN:

I know. I'm just, so tired.

BETH:

Go to sleep, then. I'll be here.

EVAN:

You will?

BETH:

Yeah. I won't leave you.

EVAN:

Thank you, Beth.

(Some time passes and Evan is asleep on the couch. Beth covers him with a Navajo blanket. She sits down on the ground next to the couch, or maybe on a loveseat. Soon she is asleep as well. Some unearthly, but also not very digitally manipulated, music begins to waft into the air. Evan wakes and sits up. A light appears in the bathroom. Water begins to run. The singing gets louder. Evan walks over and opens the door, careful not to wake Beth. When he does, he sees a female profile shadowed behind the shower curtain. The voice in the music becomes clearer. Evan watches but does not disturb her. After a while, a male figure springs up from behind the shower curtain as well. The two figures begin to talk and kiss, but their voices and the sound of the water seem to bounce across the whole space, not confined to the country of the tub.)

MALE FIGURE:

Let me soap you. You're so lovely. How did you get so lovely?

FEMALE FIGURE:

It took a lot of hard work and dedication. No dithering around here.

MALE FIGURE:

I love being with you like this. Nothing between us. Everything washed off. No makeup, no costumes. You're just you.

FEMALE FIGURE:

I don't even know who I am anymore.

MALE FIGURE:

You're just you. I love you.

FEMALE:

I love you, too.

MALE FIGURE:

(Begins kissing more aggressively.)

FEMALE:

When I was little, I loved watching my mom put her makeup on. She called it making her face. Sometimes she put makeup on me, too. But once we were at the beach, it was hot, and her makeup started to melt. She used surgical makeup. A lot of it. And it started sliding off her face, like ice cream dripping down. It was horrible. I dream about it still. My face sliding off. And nothing underneath the makeup but a dark hole.

MALE FIGURE:

Your face isn't going to slide off. Your face is beautiful. I'd lick your face if it were ice cream.

FEMALE FIGURE:

Oh! Stop that.

MALE FIGURE:

What flavor ice cream would you be? Something sweet, but tangy.

FEMALE FIGURE:

Mango?

MALE FIGURE:

Passion fruit.

FEMALE FIGURE:

You'd be pistachio. Or pecan. Something nutty.

MALE FIGURE:

Hmmm.

(He gets on his knees to eat her out. Then kisses his way back up.)

MALE FIGURE:

I can't get enough of you.

FEMALE FIGURE:

I want you inside me.

(Sloppy shower sex ensues.)

MALE FIGURE:

I want to stay like this forever.

FEMALE FIGURE:

(Something changes in her voice.)

You can't. You have to go back to where you belong.

(A beat.)

MALE FIGURE:

That doesn't belong here.

FEMALE FIGURE:

Neither do you.

MALE FIGURE:

Don't talk. No more talking. Just touching. Just feeling.

(He renews this escapade with vigor, gaining in momentum and pleasure as she becomes more and more detached.)

FEMALE FIGURE:

You can't stay here. There's no place for you here. No place for either of us.

MALE FIGURE:

I don't care. I just — uhnn.

FEMALE FIGURE:

They're trying to scrub me out. Rub me down with bleach and alcohol.

MALE FIGURE:

Oh God. Oh God. Stop talking.

FEMALE FIGURE:

The metronome is clicking. One two three four. One two three four. You have to count the note to the very end. There's no coda in this one. There's no break. There's no —

MALE FIGURE:

Be quiet. Just be quiet. (Covers her mouth with his hand.)

FEMALE FIGURE:

(Shrugs his hand off. Whispers.) We're almost at the end again... one... two... three...

MALE FIGURE:

Ah ... ahh ... ah ...

(A gun explodes. Blood splatters over the shower curtain. The female figure slumps against the male figure.)

EVAN:

Don't! No!

(Olivia creeps up behind him.)

OLIVIA:

It's okay, darling. I got out.

EVAN:

(Whips around at the sound of her voice. Shock and disbelief slowly turn into joy.)

You're home.

(Lights out.)

End of Scene 5

SCENE 6

(Logan sits inside his bathroom, waiting for his session to begin. The floor of the bathroom is full of red rose petals and half-burned candles. He plays with them as he waits. Finally, his Skype phone rings.)

CANDIE:

So sorry I'm late. I'll be happy to extend our session by ten minutes today, for no extra charge, to make up for this delay in our start time. How are you?

LOGAN:

I can see your boobs.

CANDIE:

Oh! Oh. (Adjusts her surprise to a professional suaveness.) And does this bother you?

LOGAN:

(Considers it. Shrugs.)

CANDIE:

This camera...got a little off-center. There we go. That's better.

LOGAN:

Your bra is pretty.

CANDIE:

Thank you. So. Last time we met, we dipped into some of the obstacles preventing you from optimizing your selfhood. How would you like to direct today's session? Where would you like to go?

LOGAN:

Nowhere. I like my home.

CANDIE:

What would you like to talk about?

LOGAN:

(Sweeps a hand across the petals.) Afterlife.

CANDIE:

What do you mean? Afterlife?

LOGAN:

I don't believe in heaven. And I definitely don't believe in hell. I don't know if I believe in ghosts, but I think, maybe. I think we all leave something behind, but I don't know what it is. It's like dark matter. Do you know dark matter?

CANDIE:

Yes. I've heard of it.

LOGAN:

It's like, the opposite of matter. It's not really there, and they didn't know about it for a long time, but then they said that if you listen carefully in space, you can hear it scream. You know how we're all made out of atoms? I think, maybe, when we die, we create the opposite of atoms. Like, negative space. And it works like a magnet, drawing the positive space we used to know as close as we can, until there's no more room to breathe.

CANDIE:

... Do you keep your windows open at home? Fresh air and sunshine are great analgesics for emotional pain.

LOGAN:

No, I don't open my windows that much. It rains a lot here. Like, all the time.

CANDIE:

That can be depressing for some people.

LOGAN:

It can be dangerous for some people. I just...I don't like water. I don't like being outside. In case it rains.

CANDIE:

So, let's talk about the girl again. Your neighbor.

LOGAN:

She doesn't sing anymore.

CANDIE:

No?

LOGAN:

No. She, um, she went away. She got this fellowship to sing in Bulgaria. So she packed up and moved away. But the guy, he's still here. She's going to become very famous. The director of the symphony — his name is Claude? He's...he's really good.

CANDIE:

It sounds like you're keeping up with her Facebook feed and all that.

LOGAN:

Phillip and Thomas are.

CANDIE:

And to what purpose, may I ask?

LOGAN:

I can see your boobs again.

CANDIE:

You got me onto the edge of my seat, I guess.

LOGAN:

Do you do all of your sessions undressed?

CANDIE:

It depends on the type of session, but here. I've got a sweater.

LOGAN:

Do you do a lot of different sessions?

CANDIE:

I'm very diverse in my approach toward helping clients achieve personal fulfillment. Speaking of which, let's get back to you. What's your purpose in burying yourself inside her profiles? You say you want to stop wanting her, but what do you get from trailing her on the Internet?

LOGAN:

I get...to see what she's doing.

CANDIE:

How does that make you feel? Watching her life evolve as yours, in effect, stagnates?

LOGAN:

What do you mean, stagnates?

CANDIE:

You willingly become a passive observer, rather than an agent.

LOGAN:

That's not true.

CANDIE:

How so? What do you do, lurking behind your computer monitor, that creates any impact on your interpersonal relationships?

LOGAN:

I have a lot of friends.

CANDIE:

When do you see them?

LOGAN:

When I go online.

CANDIE:

But that's not the same as being in an elevator, is it? Standing next to someone, breathing the same air, almost touching, trapped together.

LOGAN:

I don't want to talk about the elevator.

CANDIE:

Okay. Well, now that she's no longer here, you can't run into her in the elevator anymore, can you? It would seem you no longer have to wrestle with wanting or not wanting to see her.

LOGAN:

It doesn't matter where people go. They're always here. You can always see them.

CANDIE:

You mean, on the Internet. Don't you think you should stop trying to see her? It's like scratching a mosquito bite, isn't it? You only make it worse.

LOGAN:

Not scratching is the worst.

CANDIE:

I'm confused about what you want from this woman. What do you hope to get from her?

LOGAN:

Nothing. I don't want anything from her.

CANDIE:

Yet I sensed some codependency last time we talked. You seem to have taken her departure rather hard.

LOGAN:

It's okay. I think...(listening for music)...I think she'll come back.

CANDIE:

But what will be different when she comes back?

(The music begins to come out of the vent again. But it sounds more like a tortured whistling, like the whine of machinery.)

LOGAN:

Everything.

End of Scene 6

SCENE 7

(Evan and Olivia sit next to each other on the floor of the bathroom. The blood on the shower curtain has been washed away. Beth, unseen, sleeps in the living room.)

EVAN:

Does it hurt?

OLIVIA:

(Touches the wound on the right side of her head.)

Not really. It's just uncomfortable. It's like I've got a splinter in there, and I can't dig it out.

EVAN:

It went in deep, huh?

OLIVIA:

I guess so.

EVAN:

I could get tweezers. Do you want to try tweezers? That's how they do it in hospitals, right?

OLIVIA:

Calm down. I'm fine. You don't have to worry.

EVAN:

I don't have to worry? You — you just — do you know what you did?

OLIVIA:

I can't stay long. Let's not fight.

EVAN:

Why can't you stay? Where are you going?

OLIVIA:

I don't know. London. France. Bulgaria?

EVAN:

Why did you leave me?

OLIVIA:

(Staunchly.)

It wasn't intentional. It was just — it was just a mistake.

EVAN:

It can happen to anyone.

OLIVIA:

Exactly.

EVAN:

I missed you.

OLIVIA:

I missed you so much.

EVAN:

Seventeen days. You've been gone seventeen days.

OLIVIA:

Those days made some lines on your face. I'm so sorry.

EVAN:

Why did you do it?

OLIVIA:

(Shakes her head.) I don't know. I'm like a song that got misarranged, and half the notes went missing. They're lost underneath the couch.

EVAN:

You're keeping things from me. You always were. I found your letters. Were they for me? Did you leave them for me?

OLIVIA:

I used to write a journal. But then I realized that no one would ever read it. So I started writing letters, instead. Sometimes even e-mails. I never addressed them to anyone, though.

EVAN:

What did they even mean?

OLIVIA:

Do you remember Port Townsend? The crooked pottery and dusty flea markets? Do you know why I liked it so much? We had a fight there.

EVAN:

That's why you liked it?

OLIVIA:

You don't remember. It was when we were walking by the marina, and you told me I should try pottery, and I said, I didn't have time for anything but music. And we argued about the place of art in our lives. You said I revered it too much, and I said you couldn't be a poet and a copywriter both, and that a serious poet would never have children, because they wouldn't want to bring their children into such a cruel world. And then you said I was full of romantic bullshit, and we fought, and in the end you said, "Let's just stop. None of this will change the fact that I'm doomed to love you." And then you pecked my cheek like a little bird.

EVAN:

I do remember that.

OLIVIA:

That was the first time you told me you loved me. (Laughs.) I'm such a silly girl. A stupid, silly girl.

EVAN:

You're not stupid. Sometimes you're stupid.

OLIVIA:

I couldn't breathe. I would get so scared. Out of nowhere. This fear would curl up in me.

EVAN:

Why didn't you tell me? I would have helped you. What were you afraid of?

OLIVIA:

Of the future.

EVAN:

Of us? Of the wedding?

OLIVIA:

No. Just the unknown. The door that hasn't been opened. Do you know I have this dream? I had it the night before my first audition. When I was, like, sixteen. And it hasn't gone away since. I'm about to get on stage, and I have my sheet music, and I'm wearing my grandmother's white dress. So I step onto the stage, clutching my music, and the audience starts laughing at me. Everyone is laughing. (Insert bizarro laugh track and strange stage music.) The auditorium is endless. It stretches forever. I try to run away, but I can't move, because suddenly there are strings attached to my arms and legs. I'm a puppet. And everyone is pointing and laughing. (Another wave of bizarro laughter). And that's the future.

EVAN:

No. The future is us, together. Our marriage. Our kids. Our mortgage bill and family vacations and retirement plan. Our condo in sunny Florida. Is that what you're afraid of? Normal, mundane life creeping its normal pace forward?

OLIVIA:

Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.

EVAN:

What is so bad about tomorrow? What is so fucking bad about tomorrow?

OLIVIA:

Sometimes I didn't even want to sing. I hate stepping onto the stage. Did you know that? I hate that moment in between, when I’m still me but I’m not me, and I’m about to be someone else, but it’s not just anyone, it’s —

EVAN:

Answer the question.

BETH:

Evan? (Evan turns around and finds Beth peering in.)

Is everything okay? I heard you...shouting.

EVAN:

I ... (He looks back at Olivia.) I'm just losing my mind.

BETH:

It's okay, Evan. I know this must be so hard for you. You can — whatever you need, you should just do it.

OLIVIA:

You're in the audience, too. You've got a box seat. And you're sitting next to her.

EVAN:

None of this makes any sense.

OLIVIA:

You talk to her so loudly I can overhear what you say. "What a waste," you say. "Did you know she's been waiting for this her whole life?" And then you laugh. And you say, "I just can't stop laughing. I'm crying!"

BETH:

Maybe it will never make sense.

OLIVIA:

No, it doesn’t make sense, does it? But isn’t it nice? Isn’t it nice to be able to talk like this?

EVAN:

(Laughs.)

BETH:

Evan?

EVAN:

I just can't stop laughing. I'm crying.

OLIVIA:

In my dream, you shout up to me, "Is this what you've worked for?" "Is this what your life is about?" And then you turn to her again. "What a waste," you say. "Did you know she's been –"

BETH:

Come on, Evan. Get up from there.

OLIVIA:

"Did you know she's been waiting for this her whole life?"

BETH:

Get up. Let's get you back to bed. (She touches his shoulder, and he grabs onto her hand like it's the rope on his lifeline.) It's okay. It's going to be okay.

EVAN:

How will it be okay?

BETH:

You just...you just have to stop looking behind you. And slowly it'll become part of the past.

OLIVIA:

We don't have a future, Evan. One little bullet blew it all up. All we have is history. But didn't we have a beautiful history?

BETH:

Come on. Stop reliving it. Stop looking back. It wasn't your fault. And you couldn't have done a thing to change it.

OLIVIA:

Remember Port Townsend? Remember the vineyard? Remember busking? Remember Chopin? Remember Pioneer Square in the rain?

BETH:

She wanted to leave. So let her go.

OLIVIA:

Remember Christmas?...Remember sunrise on the coast?... Remember...?

(Beth leads Evan back outside. They walk past the stain on the carpet.)

BETH:

Let's clean this up.

(Together Beth and Evan make a mound of dirt over the blood stain. They plant the various flowers strewn around the house into the dirt.)

BETH:

May she rests in peace.

(\*Note: This would be a good place to include more reaction from Evan to judge what his state of mind is, and to see how he would respond to having his computer stolen or taken.)

End of Scene 6.

Scene 7

(Beth sits at the detective's office, holding Olivia's computer to her chest.)

BETH:

I don't think she was ever as happy as everyone thought she was. You'll see, if you look in her computer.

DETECTIVE:

You're really fighting for this guy.

BETH:

He's a good guy. He doesn't deserve this.

DETECTIVE:

I'm not trying to convict him of anything, Miss. I'm just trying to find some understanding for two mourning parents.

BETH:

I think I hate her. I've never hated anyone, but I think I hate her.

DETECTIVE:

She was your friend, wasn't she?

BETH:

Kind of. But I don't think she was anyone's friend. Evan...he's so nice. He helped me move into the building, when I didn't know a single person in the city. And now he's....I don't care how desperate she was. How could she do this to him? I will never understand, and, and I won't even try to forgive her.

DETECTIVE:

So...you've brought me her computer.

BETH:

(Uncomfortable about violating her privacy.) I thought you could use it in your investigation. There are things in there...You'll see. She was troubled.

DETECTIVE:

(Takes the computer.) Did you look through it already?

BETH:

Well, I — she — It's not like she's here to stop me.

DETECTIVE:

How well would you say you knew Miss Holland-Pryce?

BETH:

Well, we weren't like, close confidantes, like I said, but, I guess, I guess I saw her fairly often. With Evan. Although sometimes we'd go shopping, and she asked me for cooking lessons.

DETECTIVE:

And you moved to the city to become an actor, is that right?

BETH:

(Embarrassed.) Well, I really just wanted a change, but yeah, I acted in college, and my professor said I was good. But I mean, that was in Iowa. I mean, I'm just a baker now.

DETECTIVE:

The reason I'm asking is because I may have a gig for you, Miss Beaseley. To be Olivia.

BETH:

What?

DETECTIVE:

It's come to our attention that since her death, there is still ongoing activity within some of her accounts. Particularly on one account, there seems to be someone trying to reach her.

BETH:

Is it Evan?

DETECTIVE:

No. But we'd like you to help us figure out who it is.

(Lights on in the other side of the stage.)

Scene 9

(Logan sits naked on his bathroom floor, eating lo mien takeout. He is mid-session with Candie.)

LOGAN:

Have you ever been to a midnight tea party?

CANDIE:

I don’t drink tea. I drink coffee.

LOGAN:

There’s no tea at the tea party. No one brings tea. Some of the vampires will bring blood, but they don’t really drink it or anything. They’re not really vampires.

CANDIE:

Good to know. That will take care of some things on DSM-V.

LOGAN:

Last night, at the tea party, Marie Antoinette was there, Joan of Arc was there, Benjamin Franklin was there — He was totally boring. He didn’t know anything about lightning — and Elvis Presley was there. Did you know Marie Antoinette was a vampire? Not that vampires are real.

CANDIE:

Doesn’t surprise me.

LOGAN:

I’m glad we’re doing this session all deshabille. I think I’m really getting to know you.

CANDIE:

Yes. I thought this would be a good step. By discarding our layers, we allow ourselves more freedom and openness to sense and to speak. I’m interested to see what we explore in this state. You seem more cheerful.

LOGAN:

Yeah. I am more cheerful, I think.

CANDIE:

Did your neighbor return from Bulgaria?

LOGAN:

No. No, she didn’t. But … I’m not the only one who misses her, you know?

CANDIE:

So you found solidarity? Collusion?

LOGAN:

Immortality. I found immortality.

CANDIE:

… We did agree that vampires were fantasy, correct?

LOGAN:

Oh, yeah. For sure. I’m not talking about vampires. I’m talking about … Yesterday, I got a letter from beyond the grave.

CANDIE:

Did you?

LOGAN:

You know? I like those glasses on you. The rest of you being naked … it really brings out the glasses. Those are nice horn rims.

CANDIE:

Thank you. I got a good deal on these.

LOGAN:

Right. So, I got this letter. From this girl, who died. And it was like, suddenly, everything made sense for me. I understood my purpose. And I felt like … a man. A man beast.

CANDIE:

A discovery of manhood….

LOGAN:

I wrote back, but she hasn’t responded yet. I hope she does. I told her I was super super super excited to talk to her.

CANDIE:

Do you think this discovery comes about as a result of stepping into a societal role? Or is it … a primal victory over latent desires and fears?

LOGAN:

Where did you get your degree again?

CANDIE:

I earned my own degree. Through iTunes University and the Kaplan Academy. The self-directed nature of my study has allowed me to be quite diverse in my work. I have some very high profile clients.

LOGAN:

Huh. I thought maybe you studied with Freud. Do you know Freud?

CANDIE:

Yes. He’s a quack. A self-masturbating quack.

LOGAN:

When you say diverse, do you ever….

CANDIE:

Yes. Yes I do.

LOGAN:

Great.

CANDIE:

It will cost you more.

LOGAN:

I assume it’s the Silver package?

CANDIE:

You would be correct.

LOGAN:

What are you doing?

CANDIE:

Transitioning.

LOGAN:

Oh. What should I do?

CANDIE:

Whatever makes you comfortable. Whatever you want.

(Logan looks around his bathroom. He goes to her web page and plays Olivia’s music. He makes himself spiffy.)

CANDIE:

Okay. Are you ready?

LOGAN:

I’m ready.

CANDIE:

Good. Now, take three deep breathes. I’ll do them with you. We’ll do them at the same time. It’s very important.

LOGAN:

Okay.

(They take three deep simultaneous breaths.)

CANDIE:

All right… Close your eyes… What color is the inside of my cunt?

End of Scene 9

(Lights fade but the music that Logan turned on continues playing. It is coming out from Beth’s computer.)

NOTES:

A sense of a Frankenstein story, as Evan rebuilds Olivia. The ghost lives in the Internet.

The reason why she committed suicide might be a key to why she

Perhaps a line from Evan or the Detective that shows he’s been searching through the Internet. Something that’s like, “I’ve looked at everything. I can’t find anything that explains it.”

What if the first time Olivia returns, it’s more connected to the Internet. More going on….

**Detective Evan scene** –

Take out all that extra stuff on the gun, please.

He could have already looked at all the computers and searched for everything – express this to the Internet. The mood of this scene is kind of repetitive because his personality is the same. Also, then the reading of the letters can be a sign of them repeating in his mind.

Maybe don’t even need to mention the Doctor/Psychotherapist thing

When Olivia talks to him from over his shoulder, she can be more aware of the things he likes and doesn't like to look at.

This memory might be too early. Too happy? It should come when the stakes are higher. When does he come to the point where he actually needs this memory.

There’s a lot of set-up for some kind of revelation or to find some deep dark secret. It feels like everything is being put into place for us to realize this dark thing. It feels like a thread is getting introduced, also around the gun and the threat of Evan, but the thread is never goes anywhere.

The detective steps back just when he reaches his objective (of getting Evan to talk to him), so maybe he wields the power strongly before he leaves. Like, now that I’ve got your attention, you’re going to call me.

**Evan – Olivia – First return conversation**

Why can’t she stay? What is her metaphysical state? A projection of her from the Internet. Everytime we see her now it has to be something pulled off the Internet.

It feels very much like his creation of her based on his memories.

The Internet is also aware of the fact that her physical self is dead, but that also contributes to her state of existence on the Internet.

We need something to clue us in on her metaphysical state. Like, “London, France, Bulgaria.” More on that.

Maybe we need to establish some conventions to establish her metaphysical state.

Maybe she talks about the things she’s been doing in her Internet existence?

Maybe Logan is writing reviews for all her performances?

Pre-death Olivia: Constantly summoned by the Internet. Things are constantly changing her image that she has to respond to.

The spectrum: Is there some kind of key or clue that is given to the audience that she digitalized? Costume? Sounds? Have to construct a clear relationship with her connection to the Internet.

Maybe the detective gives him the letters? …..

If the letters are coming in a succession, looping the letters?

Would he think about losing his mind? Or would he ask Olivia for guidance?

Why would he go with Beth? Why would he sit

When Beth enters, Olivia gets a little twisted. It feels increasingly mean. Maybe when Beth appears it becomes more of a reality. Like, it verges onto nightmare. This is when the wound begins to make more of an appearance.

The beginning has a new kind of

Something too on the nose. The action and the language becomes too on the nose. Mostly Beth’s line, telling him what he has to do, instead of delving deeper into the conflict.

It feels that Olivia is too connected. She’s too present. Also thinks about how much she can relate back to her digital persona. Maybe that persona can be used to represent her digital ghost.

She also does this “remember all this stuff” that’s not on the Internet anymore.

He can also pull in his own memory to create this.

What we need from Logan then is a sense of what Olivia is on the Internet. More of Logan relating to the ghost of Olivia as well.