

Asymmetry

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Synopsis: In the wake of a past lover's suicide, a woman begins to experience mysterious apparitions whilst trying to make sense of his passing.

Characters:

- Claire
- Tom
- Karl
- Abigail
- Raven
- Knox
- The Eyeless Man/The Eyeless Woman

Plot:

*Scenes shot in **black and white** will be written in dark blue.*

Prologue

In 2026, a distressed Knox gazes at his TV where a news report announces the Soviet Union's and China's partnership to send humans on Mars. He watches the launch whilst one of his operatives carries a body bag out of his house. Knox affirms that a breakthrough is nigh, which by far supersedes sending people on Mars. The operative asks Knox how he'll deal with the present situation to which he simply replies, "I'll fix it."

Main plot

In 2029, Claire meets Karl at a nightclub. They immediately bond and when Karl shows strong interest in her, she reciprocates with hesitancy. Finally she warns Karl that she's recovering from a traumatic past relationship which ended 3 years ago and her trauma disabled her from forming new relationships. However, she feels comfortable enough with Karl to give it a try. That night, they make passionate love.

One day, Claire prepares to leave for work when someone knocks at her apartment's door. She finds a package at her doorstep but the sender's gone. She opens it and finds the book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche, a single **myositis flower**, a USB drive and some sort of suit closely resembling a slimmer spacesuit. She connects the USB to her laptop and is baffled to find it to be her ex-boyfriend Tom's suicide note.

In the video, Tom apologizes for his toxic behavior towards Claire and assumes responsibility for ruining their relationship. He apologizes vehemently but digresses into a **self-pitying** rant where he laments the persisting **loneliness** that plagues his life. He is unable to form new relationships and blames his **self-destructive** nature for the breakdown of the few ones he has. **His words are intercut with an incongruous black/white**

montage of Tom going out on a joyous date with a girl (Abigail). He claims to have stolen a suit to rectify his issues and left it to Claire because she's the only one he still trusts, even though they haven't spoken to each other for 3 years. He ominously announces that the Tom she knew will die on the day he recorded the video.

Claire falls into a despondent state of grief and guilt (**self-blame**). She reminisces on past fights with Tom and starts to blame herself for his death, feeling he would still be alive if she had treated him differently. On the next day on her way home, she notices that she's being followed and glimpses her stalker as being an apparition of Tom. She calls one of her friends who was in touch with him and the friend reveals that Tom did disappear 6 months ago but whether he's dead or not is still unconfirmed. Puzzled and overwhelmed, Claire decides to use the suit on herself to uncover the mystery of these recent events. During the process, Claire suffers from an excruciating headache and begins to experience **violent thoughts towards Tom which aren't hers**. Through these 3 years, Claire never felt vengeful towards Tom's emotionally abusive behavior which makes these newfound thoughts greatly disturbing. Before she passes out, Tom (who is actually alive) breaks into her apartment and removes the suit's helmet from her head, deactivating the suit before it attains full power.

We **flashback** to 6 months ago, Tom (who we will now refer to as Tom 1) trades some heroin with his junkie friend in exchange of sending Claire a package 6 months from now, on the very same date they first met 6 years ago. We notice Tom 1 has a different **eye color** than the Tom (Tom 2) who broke into Claire's apartment. Tom 1 sets up a dropzone-suit, in a state of quantum superposition between the matter-universe and the antimatter-universe, in the city's circumvent forest and returns home to use an anti-suit, the very same suit he gave Claire in the package.

After Tom 1's devastating breakup with Claire and as a result of his persistent self-destructiveness, Tom 1 (**denial**) has stolen the anti-suit and the dropzone-suit from where he works: Baryon Horizon Dynamics (BHD). The anti-suit uses antimatter to annihilate Tom 1's current self and results in the creation of a Tom 2 and Anti-Tom 2 pair (**note that each newly created pair of anyone who uses the anti-suit will have different eye color than their previous counterparts**) in a similar mechanism as some of **Feynman's annihilation diagrams**. Though he pondered on the implications of individual identity and its persistence after death, he believes there's a 50% chance that his subjective experience will be transferred to the anti-universe due to the **dualistic** nature of mind and body. He hoped to find a better life there. After the anti-suit's activation, Tom 1's destroyed in the anti-suit, leaving only blood in there. His junkie friend cleans it, puts it in the package and stores it in a self-storage warehouse. Tom 1's annihilation results in the simultaneous creation of a Tom 2 and Anti-Tom 2 pair.

Anti-Tom 2 wakes up near an industrial factory, the equivalent location of the forest in the matter-universe. Both are initially amnesiac but Anti-Tom 2 begins to experience memories which are not his but from the previous iteration of Anti-Tom aka Anti-Tom 1. He also slowly recalls Tom 1's life in a form of **anamnesis**. The existence of two Anti-Toms in the same anti-universe results in Anti-Tom 1 becoming highly unstable. He thus disintegrates whilst Anti-Tom 2 assumes his identity and resumes his life with Anti-Tom 1's girlfriend, Abigail.

In the matter-universe, Tom 2 regains memories of both Claire and Abigail. Due to quantum entanglement, he receives live memories of Anti-Tom 2 at regular intervals (and so does Anti-Tom 2 for Tom 2). The nature of who Tom 2 is becomes blurred since he now possesses the memories of both Tom 1, Anti-Tom 1 and Anti-Tom 2 and it becomes obvious the newly created pair are different than their original self. This is a direct result of the **effect of memories on individual identity**. Since Tom 1 selfishly left behind a mess, it is up to Tom 2 to deal with the consequences, namely the BHD who wants to retrieve the anti-suit and the dropzone-suit. While he questions who he really is, he slowly realizes he is not in a world where he belongs. His girlfriend from another world, Abigail, has no knowledge of who Tom is and she is happily married and living her own life. He leaves town and basically disappears. Alone and far away, he contemplates suicide but the emerging memories of Claire make him change his mind and return.

Back to **present**, Tom 2 has explained everything to Claire, who is overwhelmed with disbelief and astonishment. Tom 2 realizes his life amounted to nothing and he blames Claire for his condition. He brutally beats her before leaving with the anti-suit (**anger**) and her unlocked phone. He tracks down Karl, Claire's boyfriend, and runs him over with a car, nearly killing him.

In the anti-universe, Anti-Tom 2 proposes to Abigail and she happily accepts to marry him. They then spend a lovely evening together where Tom confesses that he has finally found some serenity and a cure to his depression through her.

Through the emerging memories of Anti-Tom 2, Tom 2 grows jealous of Anti-Tom 2's happier life. He uses the anti-suit again, again believing there's a 50% chance he will be able to live Anti-Tom 2's life with Abigail. This results in the creation of a Tom 3 and Anti-Tom 3 pair and the annihilation of both Tom 2 and Anti-Tom 2.

Tom 3 regains the memories of previous iterations of Toms and Anti-Toms. The power surge from the second use of the anti-suit is detected by BHD operatives who follow Tom 3 (**bargaining**) as he again heads towards Claire's apartment that night. Tom 3 is tormented by regrets of what Tom 2 has done to Claire and Karl. There, he begs a badly injured Claire to forgive him and clumsily tries to convince her to resume their relationship claiming that it will solve both of their problems. Claire calls out his **selfishness** and **narcissism** for even thinking she'd accept his conditions. Tom 3 tries to justify Tom 2's actions by claiming they aren't the same person, as demonstrated by his new eye color, and that the Tom pairs have created **dissociative** disorders within him. Claire panics and picks up her new phone to call the police. As if on cue, BHD operatives blast into the apartment. Tom 3 manages to escape and the BHD operatives (led by Raven) try to recruit Claire to find Tom and put an end to his activities since increased usage of the anti-suit might cause breakdowns in the fabric of space and time. Claire initially refuses but believes Tom should face consequences for what he's done to her and so begins her quest for justice along with a subdued desire for vengeance.

In the antimatter universe, Anti-Tom 3 begins to repeat Tom 1's self-destructive behavior. He demonstrates manipulative tendencies, possessiveness and jealousy towards Abigail. He misses Claire sorely and tries to track her down but finds that she DOES NOT EXIST in the anti-universe.

Realizing what Tom 2 has done and longing for Claire, Anti-Tom 3 becomes depressed and begins to sink into drug addiction and self-harm, neglecting Abigail in the process. He eventually tries to kill himself through a heroin overdose but is saved at the last minute by Abigail. A few days later, Abigail decides to break off their engagement, affirming she can't deal with his self-destructiveness and possessiveness anymore. Tom confesses that he somehow always knew such events would repeat themselves as if in a vicious cycle (citing Nietzsche's **eternal return** concept). He does not blame her for choosing to abandon him, saying that she has endured enough because of him.

Using knowledge obtained from the memories of the Toms, Anti-Tom 3 tries to steal an anti-suit and a dropzone-suit from EP (Elemental Perspectives, the equivalent of BHD in the anti-universe). However he is discovered and to his surprise, he is helped by Knox, leader of EP who lost his wife and wants to know if she is still alive in the matter-universe. Anti-Tom 3 uses the suit hoping to cause his own destruction and hoping that the birth of new Toms will create a better version of himself and cure his depression.

Tom 3 is obliterated and Tom 4 is born. Tom 4 regains the memories of all the previous Toms and Anti-Toms. He tracks down the whereabouts of Knox's wife, revealed to be Raven. She finds she is still alive whilst Knox from the matter-universe is incarcerated for having violently assaulted Raven in 2026.

Anti-Tom 4 confronts Knox about his discoveries concerning his wife and Knox exploits Anti-Tom 4's depression to convince him to use an annihilation-suit which will destroy both Tom 4 and Anti-Tom 4, putting an end to his mental anguish. He reveals pairs created via the anti-suit have asymmetric consciousnesses resulting in a difference in their personalities, which can be a problem. Knox cannot use the annihilation-suit himself as the Knox in the matter-universe is not as intrinsically linked to him as the linkage between the simultaneously created Tom 4 and anti-Tom 4 pair. In other words, the suit won't work on Knox.

During a dream, Anti-Tom 4 and Tom 4 meet in the **purple world**. Anti-Tom 4 blames Tom 4 for using the anti-suit and ruining his relationship with Abigail by annihilating Anti-Tom 2 and resulting in a new version of Anti-Tom 3 with a darker personality (resurgence of the **shadow**). But Tom 4 claims that was not him but Tom 2. They discuss the implications of newly created pairs on their identity and if either of them have any material and concrete connection to the original Tom and Anti-Tom. Anti-Tom 4 discusses Knox's plans to use the annihilation-suit to obtain a painless death for both of them. Tom (**depression**) initially approves this idea. They are then visited by **The Eyeless Man** and **The Eyeless Woman**, an old man and woman who have traveled many universes and choose to remain in the Purple World after having seen too much and experiencing too much. It is also only in this plane of reality can they coexist together and live their last days peacefully.

They can feel perturbations in the fabric of space and time and reveals the Tom 4 and Anti-Tom 4 pairs are already highly unstable and they are bound to annihilate each other at some point in time to restore the already fragile state of the matter and antimatter universes which could collapse at any instant. The more the anti-suit is used, the shorter the lifespans of both individuals becomes. If Knox knew about that, then why try to convince Anti-Tom 4 to use the annihilation-suit?

Tom 4 succumbs deeper into depression and begins heavy drug-use. Meanwhile, Raven trains Claire to strike back in case Tom 4 comes back. She suggests killing him but Claire is reluctant, believing there's still good in him, after repeatedly revisiting what Tom 3 told her about the successive iterations of Toms having varying personalities.

Anti-Tom 4 recounts his dream to Knox who then claims his calculations already showed the annihilation of the Tom pairs would happen. The reason he insists on Anti-Tom 4 using the annihilation-suit is that it will destroy both universes by provoking a forced convergence, resulting in the creation of a new universe and anti-universe pair where Knox hopes his wife, Raven, will still be with him. The newly created universe pairs are all in accordance with the principles behind the **Baryon asymmetry** and the return to a singularity which will end both universes whilst creating a new pair. Whilst this is predicted to happen trillions of years in the future, Knox hopes to cause this annihilation as soon as possible, hoping to be reborn in the new universe pairs as a better version of himself and pursue a life with Raven. He then admits he killed Raven in a drunken rage and his guilt pushed him to develop the annihilation-suit. He also reassures Anti-Tom 4 that no Toms or Anti-Toms will exist in the newly formed universes. Anyone who uses the annihilation-suit will forever disappear from any future iterations of matter and antimatter universes.

In another dream in the purple world, Anti-Tom 4 and Tom 4 meet and argue about Knox's plans. Anti-Tom 4 vouches that a new pair of universes without Tom will be a better place. But Tom 4, who previously vouched for Knox's plans, realizes this is not enough of a reason to justify the murder of everyone in each universe. Anti-Tom 4 tries to reassure him that everyone who will die will be reborn in the newly created universe pairs but Tom 4 claims quantum certainty at the singularity might contradict Knox's and Anti-Tom 4's affirmations. He also now believes he deserves a second chance but Anti-Tom 4 claims his self-destructiveness will only repeat itself and cause more harm, citing Nietzsche's eternal recurrence.

Tom 4 surrenders to the BHD operatives with the anti-suit and explains to Raven Knox's plans. Raven realizes the only way to reach Anti-Tom 4 is through Claire. She says she needs to use the anti-suit to create an Anti-Claire. Raven insists on knowing the location of the dropzone-suit in case the anti-suit is used again. Tom 4 caves in and gives her its location. But remembering what **The Eyeless Man** and **The Eyeless Woman** told him about the eventual annihilation of both pairs post-creation, he wants to warn Claire about using the anti-suit. Raven kills Tom 4 before he can do anything about it. But this was a big mistake since her operatives found no dropzone-suit at the location Tom 4 pointed out. He was cautious enough to not trust Raven.

Anti-Tom 4 begs Knox to use the anti-suit one last time and give him a period of 6 months before using the annihilation-suit. He aims to achieve a kind of **unio mentalis** with his matter-self aka to unite their purpose of annihilation so that he doesn't feel guilty about killing his other self. He still feels remorse for using the anti-suit previously, which he believes ruined Anti-Tom's relationship with Abigail. Knox reluctantly agrees and Anti-Tom 4 uses the anti-suit on himself.

Tom 4's corpse is obliterated, alarming Raven that Anti-Tom 4 used the anti-suit thus creating a Tom 5 somewhere, who might warn Claire against using the anti-suit. She tasks her operatives to find and kill him.

Fearing that Anti-Tom 5 will use the annihilation-suit, she tasks Claire to use the anti-suit to find Anti-Tom 5 and kill him. It's a risky move but she's out of options. Ergo, a new dropzone-suit is built and set up. Claire uses the anti-suit on herself, creating a Claire 2 and an Anti-Claire pair. Before using the anti-suit, Claire uses a series of handwritten notes to convince Anti-Claire not to kill Anti-Tom 5, believing he deserves a second chance and that he's no longer the same person who committed all these atrocious acts towards her.

After 6 months, Anti-Tom 5 and Tom 5 meet again in the Purple World. Tom 5 (**acceptance**) explains he's now living under another name in another city. He's dating a woman and has finally moved on from Claire whilst adopting an **amor fati** philosophy to his life. He also successfully vanquished his obsession with memories and the past. Meanwhile, Anti-Tom 5 has succumbed deeper into his depression and adopted **Emil Cioran's philosophy** on the futility of existence and the inevitability of death. He tries to convince Tom 5 that his relationship will not last and will end as badly as their relationships with Claire and Abigail. He is jealous and envies Tom 5's new-found serenity. Tom 5 promises he has changed but Anti-Tom 5 doesn't believe him and is adamant on using the annihilation-suit to destroy both parties so that neither can cause any more harm to anyone. He believes a new pair of universes with neither of them will be better and the concept of the eternal return, supported by Knox's calculations, will ensure no one will remain dead except for Tom.

After these 6 months, Anti-Claire has finally tracked down Anti-Tom 5 who has begged Knox to allow him to die alone in a forest. She remembers Claire's insistence to spare his life before finding him gearing up into his annihilation-suit. Anti-Claire tries to convince him not to use the suit. She manipulates him by saying they can now be together in the anti-universe and restart their lives anew. Even though it'll be relatively short, at least they'll be together. Knox, who has been observing the whole thing, shoots at Claire but Claire manages to shoot back and kill him, thanks to Raven's training.

Claire 2 tracks down Tom 5 through Raven. Raven, Claire 2 and Tom 5 face-off. Claire 2 tries to prevent Raven from killing Tom 5. She subdues Raven and Tom 5 reveals what The Eyeless Man and The Eyeless Woman told him about the eventual annihilation of pairs formed through the anti-suit at some point in the near future. Claire 2, concluding Raven only used her, shoots her dead.

Anti-Tom 5 and Anti-Claire hug but realizing everything she went through because of him, her violent and vengeful thoughts resurface. She shoots him and mortally wounds him. Claire then promptly leaves him to die, unable to cope with seeing him bleed to death before her eyes.

Claire 2 and Tom 5 reconcile, both admitting their personalities never matched and that they only dated for attention and pleasure. Tom 5's ego and narcissism could not accept that Claire moved on from him. Claire 2 admits she will never be able to forgive him for everything he's done to her and Karl but at least now, she finally understands him. They part ways but Claire 2 is hit by memories of Anti-Claire killing Anti-Tom 5 and becomes overwhelmingly distraught and angry.

Anti-Tom 5, in his dying moments, triggers the annihilation-suit, resulting in the **destruction of both universes**.

In the Purple World, Anti-Tom 5 and Tom 5 meet for the last time. They both realize they're about to die after Anti-Tom 5 triggered the destruction of both universes and the subsequent annihilation of both Toms. They're again visited by The Eyeless Man and The Eyeless Woman who explain new universes are born every time and that they found their inner-peace by feeling each life within them. They hope both Toms will attain peacefulness in an afterlife after their forthcoming annihilation and look forward to the day they will finally die as well. Anti-Tom 5 apologizes for ruining his counterpart's life but Tom 5 does not forgive him. However, he has come to accept and understand Anti-Tom 5's situation after experiencing his memories. Finally, in their last moments, the two Toms shake hands.

Similarly, Claire 2 understands Anti-Claire's motivation for shooting Anti-Tom 5 after initially lambasting her for killing Tom. Claire then begs Anti-Claire to not blame herself for Tom's fate as they both realize he was toxic and selfish. He needed psychological help which Claire would have never been able to provide and his self-pitying rants were no excuse for how he treated and harmed people. They look forward to never having to deal with him again in the newly created universe-pairs. Anti-Claire wonders if she'll have an existence in the new anti-universe since she previously didn't exist there but Claire reassures her they are both one and the same. In their final moments, they hug each other before being reborn into the new worlds whilst The Eyeless Man and The Eyeless Woman gaze at their destruction and rebirth from afar.

Epilogue

An old Claire, now married and with children, receives a package containing just a myosotis flower. Initially distressed, Claire's expression turns into acceptance and a subtle smile.

The End