

No one else remembered the memory. It was a corruption of a very unpopular commercial, for during the death of the real boy's (test subject's) stepmother, this commercial acted as a surrogate. The middle aged woman's voice was thought to be a real person, but it was just a narrator in a commercial.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZchkP43avXg>

sad 80s japanese pop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvoNHP5ylu4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnC9LatYjpk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv0iedgT1ig>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4kdwUOlhDA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsE8tllxR0Q>

"If only I could share this moment with you"

The main character couldn't relive this moment because he thought he was searching for a person to relive it with. But this person never existed, so in the end, he laughs, having found the actual memory, even though being the only one who knows it contradicts the memory itself of needing "two people" to share it.

The MC was searching for the only other person who knew of it, but no one else did.

The researcher's memories are all corrupted too, encoded into commercials, just like how farmer in Wizard of Oz became a scarecrow. The researcher's talk about corrupted memories becomes a commercial, which the MC watches on TV and in his dreams. The MC never reacts to any of this because he doesn't know how- he's just an AI- but the audience knows. A specific researcher laments about his life, while everyone else on a talk show treats him as being happy and completely ignores his problems. The talk/game show audience and host are all kind and happy, but the guest in the show is distressed and shaking.

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As I sat in front of the TV, the darkly lit room barely illuminating my face, I took the remote and tuned in to the late night showings.

"And now we'll be heading over to our guest here, the wonderful yet quiet Tobias!"

Tobias: Please, I beg you. I need some time alone.

Game show host: Ah, sure you do, Tobias. [Audience laughs]. Well, don't be so shy. We're all here to support you.

Tobias: No, you don't understand. I can't have anyone around me right now. I can't. I just want to be alone.

Game show host: No worries, Tobias! We're all here for you! And now let's begin the show:

[Audience chants] BAG. OF. TRICKS.

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Tobias is not a recurring name, but the person itself is, under different names in different commercials/shows. The reader immediately knows it's based on the same person.

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Person in show: "Do you ever wonder what actually happened? What the real was like?"

Other person in show: "No. Never."

"They're not our memories, you know."

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"Your wish can come true, too."

Her voice was haunting, yet soft and pleasant.

I wanted it. I wanted to remember where it was so bad.

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The pool was crystal green, created by white tiles all around. An artificial light shone through. Rotating, translucent aqua triangular prisms floated above the waters. I dipped my feet in and fit myself into its pleasant liquids.

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The test subject had an abusive biological mother, and his parents divorced. He spent time with both of them, until the end when a restraining order was put on his mom after she tries to kidnap him. His stepmother, who treated him well, died, and left him with his absent father who spent most of his time gambling or sitting on his couch drinking, sleeping in front of late night infomercials and game shows.

With no parent left, the kid spent all his time in front of the TV. It was there that he formed his most potent memories.

A fantasy commercial. A dark voice of a woman, narrating a young girl in a garden dress lost in the woods. She comes across a strange tea party, ala Alice in Wonderland. In the end, she finds an apple, and escapes on horseback next to a gallant masked knight.

"You, too, can find a way out."

"Lost Fragrances. For those who seek to imagine."

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Military show, like MASH, which briefly appears as the MC is flicking through channels. This hints that the simulation is meant to build a map of the real world for some reason:

"Soldiers! We need you in top shape! Get off your lazy asses and get to work!"

"Yes sir!"

The general had a map.

"It's no good. We need more scouts. Get them

[later, in another segment...]

"You're saying you gave wrong info? You dense idiot! You trying to sabotage us?"

"No, sir! I, I just remembered it wrong!"

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The MC has brown hair. In his dreams, he sees a young boy with blonde hair, and his stepmother.

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Store employee: "You ever wonder what the original people's memories were like?" [this line is nearly word for word, as seen later, from a TV show's emotional scene]

MC: "No. Never."

"But... just think about it."

"Rather not."

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"If only I could share this moment with you."

Her voice faded away.

"I'm so glad to

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I followed Linda through the seaside sidewalk, watching her face stuck in an eternal smile the whole trip.

Commercial: "Come on, John. Don't be such a downer."

"Tony. TONY. I'm talkin' to you!"

"Huh? Oh right."

"Why are you like this? Come on, Tony. I feel so lonely."

"It's just... never mind."

"Why? What's wrong? Tell me what's on your mind."

"You ever have those feelings you can't quite pin down? They just linger."

"You mean like... memories?"

"Yeah."

"Well Tony, everyone has memories."

"Not just any memories.

...

"No. It's not quite like this."

"Then what is it? I don't understand."

"It's hard to explain."

"Then explain it."

"I can't! And even if I can, you just won't get it?"

"Hmph. Yeah, maybe I won't. I won't ever get it."

"Linda, wait..."

She stormed off.

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"Tony. You're my one and only one, Tony."

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"What's up, Tony?"

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I pushed my hand through the glitching wall, and pushed myself out of the office. I found myself in a plain hallway with white walls, a grey carpet, a prism face gazing at me so intensely on the wall, potted plants, and smooth plastic office desks.

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"You've GOT to buy the new deluxe personal computer! It's made just for you!"

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Jarring sounds

A glitching head

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Futari no Kioku

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMCNTjKIA-Y>

disney commercials: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4s-hxY80pA>

eyes flickering up and down, in and out

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The AI have actual lives, but it's said they live for thousands or even millions of years, so they're forgetful of their actual memories. Their memories are different than the real world memories, which are corrupted into the generative simulation.

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One of the actual commercials is about a child who escapes at night

The real life memory is spliced with abuse: the test subject is disfigured, yelled at, waits in his bed for his abusive biological mother to come upstairs and take him away (yelling at him to come down) while no one else is home, burned with cigarettes. The biological mother has a big smile, drives a nice car, and the people at school think she's safe. The teachers are angry at the test subject for not getting in the car with her.

The commercial is spliced with real world memories. The test subject couldn't substitute real world with commercial, and he breaks down. This further ruins his marriage, his relationship with his daughter, his office job, etc. But the AI is under no such obligation. The AI is able to create false memories and know they are real ones, as the AI lives in a simulation of corrupted memories

The test subject's memories are filled in a vat and mixed with a bunch of other test subject's memories; they are used as training for the AI to generate things. The AI live in the 'hidden layers' of a neural network, though this is not explicitly mentioned.

The AI remembers a trip to a carnival that was cut short by the biological mother entering and arguing with the stepmother. The child gets lost in the carnival and sees a bunch of horrific nightmarish imagery, with clowns and others who ask where he is and who he knows, and to drunk adults who don't care about him and laugh at him. The strangers are a vilified aspect; teachers tell him never to talk to strangers, etc. The way everyone ignores him and doesn't try to help him sticks with him, about how alone he is.

So when the boy sees a commercial about a young girl wandering through a carnival- the commercial is meant to sell vain jewelry and nothing more- the boy wishes that could've been substituted into his memories instead. The guiding narrator voice belongs to a famous actress who enters the commercials, smiles at the young girl, and the two go to the carnival together, ending with the two watching a sunset on a beach while eating ice cream, with the actress flashing her jewelry to the viewers. At the end, the famous actress says to both the girl and the viewers, "Your wishes can all come true, too. You just have to believe."

The memory is corrupted of course, so the ending is much grandiose than it originally was. Originally, it looks so flat. But in memory, it looks so real and enveloping, so vast and nesting.

The corrupted memory leaks out and the AI sees horrifying images of clowns, dolls, faceless people. The clown runs up to Tony and Tony tries to scream to escape, but can't. They never get all the way to him, though. This is the real memory of the test subject (whom we'll call David) which he tries to replace with the fake ones from the commercial. As Tony tries to get lost into the aesthetics- the superficial emotions of the memory- he begins to fade from the aesthetics when he focuses on finding the wrong things. He tries to find the logical timeline of what happened, but the more he delves into the logic, the more contradictions he finds, and the more he pieces together what happens. This is where the clowns

appear, as who said the phrases that pieced together all the disparate memories? Tony remembers David's clowns. This corrupts the pleasant memory Tony had, as he doesn't remember clowns at all. They never existed in Tony's life. Tony was an AI who just lived through the false memories.

Tony finds the actual memory when he realizes it can't live in a logical timeline of his past. His past is inherently illogical- all the AI's lives are. Tony has to accept contradictions as 'true' in order to find his true memories- which are false memories of the real test subject. So AI do have contradicting lives, because the simulations allow them. The contradiction IS the truth- Tony doesn't ignore the truth, but rather has to discern what is his life vs what is David's life. Note that Tony is NOT a replica of David; Tony learns from MANY test subjects, but David's traumatic+pleasant data was considered unimportant, so only few AI nodes received and held onto it. The AI nodes were programmed to be highly varied though, as the variation allows data to be processed differently. This is seen in the music video "Celebrate our differences!" which discusses how variety helps people interpret things in different ways, but it's all masked in colorful flashy pop music and dances outside in neighborhoods, parks, etc. The lyrics include the line "We can't all be the same, and that's okay! We each see the cloud in our own different way!" This is like a Michael Jackson music video. In the video, kids all grab onto parts of a falling cloud, and one kid gets one part that no one else has, and wonders why he is the only one who has that piece.

The entire story appears to be about an AI learning from data- abstracting what matters. His journey is one that goes through training data and learns what to ignore. The AI also learns from its own memories, a form of experience replay (this phrase is blared out in a commercial but is not explained)

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Corrupted memory:

Child (David) is replaced by a doll, as David disassociated during when he was missing for several hours

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CHANGE: The AI has no dreams. Only watches commercials. There is a commercial of a young blonde boy who sees himself in a mirror when he's brushing his teeth; this is David. Tobias is also blonde, as are the other representations of David.

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David (whose name is never explicitly mentioned) has a failing marriage because of a lack of trust. It is the same with his close friends. He is always worried that his wife and friends have hidden intentions, like his biological mother who burned him with cigarettes and locked him in a room forgotten for nearly an entire day while tied with tape (after misbehaving) but who had a big smile in public.

David is overprotective of his daughter, but is too lazy to help her, as this was how his dad was with him. This causes arguments with his wife, who says to David that he's doing nothing and is always lost in that stupid TV of his, watching pointless game shows and betting. David tries to get himself to change, but he feels a lack of control in his life, and thinks everyone will just end up leaving him alone anyways. His best memory with his wife is that of their marriage, so it always replays in his head. With Tony, this manifests as a wedding commercial that ALWAYS replays on TV. David doesn't do anything because nothing he does works. Tony sees this happening with a soap opera in which the husband says the exact thing to his wife. David can't substitute his unpleasant memories with the commercials, so he tries to force them

together. He is stuck with his unpleasant memories, so he fears being alone and abandoned, and is unable to sufficiently live independently or as a parent. He hates crowds of people, and has social anxiety, making him unable to fulfill his job as a salesman.

There is a commercial of a stuttering salesman who is made fun of by his peers, and a more valiant salesman comes in to take his place and sell the product. Tony, oblivious to who David is (only the reader pieces these commercials together), laughs at this.

In the end, David's worst fears come true, and he's unable to prove his old memories wrong. He's unable to focus on the happy memories, and delves all the way deep into the scary ones. His outlook on life becomes grim and doomed.

Tony never meets David, nor does he ever realize someone named David exists.

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The potato people. The potato sack puppet people commercial. Farmers.

Like a thanksgiving with soft, plain and not exited voices.

"Come on down to Farmer Cory's. We have squash, and fun activites for kids of all ages."

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When the MC tunes into the TV, commercials just play one after the other with no interruption (or few) from the viewer- the MC doesn't even reflect or think- similar to Interdimensional Cable in Rick + Morty

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Write the actual commercial+backstory, then build in the details and story outline from that ending. Once you have a bunch of isolated scenarios (Eg office scene, Linda) rearrange them in an order that works

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Tony sees a young boy talking to the demonic, smiling being

"I'm your ACTUAL mother. Your birth mother"

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Ending: Tony learns that the logical memories are false ones, and that logic doesn't exist in the simulation, as contradictions happen all the time. He's reminded that contradictions are allowed to happen, and this allows him to accept the truth of his own memory: that there were no clowns, no dolls. What actually were the "dolls"? Instead of dolls, they were stuffed animals. It was the toy that was the true memory. Instead of looking for a carnival and a beach, which both lead to horrifying glitches in the simulation (voices tell him DON'T GO THERE, YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO LEARN THAT), Tony searches through old VHS tapes. He finds the actual memory, instead of being mislead by false yet similar ones involving clowns, etc.

The TV kept on playing.

That's it?

This whole time, the memory was just a short and plain commercial. Tony laughs. It was a commercial meant to sell ice cream (spliced with parts of another that sells vain jewelry). Tony goes to the shop that he and Linda visited before, where he didn't order anything because he 'wasn't hungry' and 'couldn't decide'. By himself, he buys ice cream that the girl was eating in the commercial. It was an old, discontinued flavor not on the menu anymore, so the shop owner is surprised as no one had ordered it for a long, long time. He goes to the beach nearby the ice cream parlor on the boardwalk, and it's sunset. There are very few beach goers, and each minds their own business. Tony finds a place by himself. The weather is nice; it's like a hot pink, violet Miami.

The ice cream was a limited time offer to promote a new cartoon, but it was unpopular so it was quickly discontinued and forgotten. But it had a unique taste, one that was hard to replicate. Creamy, yet fruity. And a hint of watermelon with salt.

Warm voice

"Make a wish"

I found myself a nice place to sit on the warm sands of the red violet beach. Pink waters wash upon the shore. It was all there. The sun hat floating with the wind in the distance. The 3 sails far from the ocean shore. Carson Darson's big, stupid horse face flying as a kite. What was missing was this ice cream, and now it was all here.

In the end, Tony is able to recreate a memory about a real event- watching the commercial- but in which the event never actually existed.

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Tony revisits many places that he ACTUALLY went to in the past, and is starting to remember. But these all lead to nowhere; he conflates them with the memory of the commercial. The AI in the simulation can't go anywhere they want; it's a big world, and with many cities. So Tony drives around, visiting far off places.

Tony conflates his actual tasting of the ice cream (which was when free samples were handed out) with the commercial (which has ice cream on the beach, which is much more pleasant). His conflated memories mislead him, and he tries to base them on a logical tale, which is David's actual life. This, however, is not Tony's life. Both saw the same commercial, but it's hard to tell which (in David's life) what is commercial vs what is actual experience, since both become commercials AND experiences in the simulation.