

DISCONNECT

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EXT. ROOFTOP - PERFORMATIVITY

Camera faces higher roof ledge.

\$LEFT

Here, I want you to check this part out!

\$LEFT climbs into view from lower level of roof onto a higher one. Camera frames her climbing, and the back of one leg once she's turned around to help \$RIGHT up.

\$RIGHT

This is awesome. Got a nice dingy feel to it.

\$LEFT

Right? Gotta make up for the rent somehow. Come on.

Legs walk off screen. Camera delays before panning towards them and following proximally behind. \$LEFT leads \$RIGHT to roof edge, sits upon it leg over. \$RIGHT follows suite, cautiously looking over before sitting down, both legs roofside. Brief silence while \$RIGHT looks intermittently at and away from \$LEFT as she looks off before turning to him.

\$LEFT

(With mischievous grin)
Hey. Can I tell you something?

\$RIGHT

Yeah?

\$LEFT

(Laughing)
You are so full of shit. Please tell me you're not still like this around other people.

\$RIGHT

Full of shit? That's quite the accusation!

\$LEFT

(Still laughing)
Ugh you're trying so hard to be all, like, brooding and, artsy, and shit.

\$LEFT

(Eye roll)
Dude. You know they all, like, know who you are, right?

\$RIGHT
 (Feigning indignance)
 Well excuse me, \$LEFT. First of
 all, screw you.

Laughter from \$LEFT

\$RIGHT
 I may be full of shit but so is
 everyone else. So perhaps I may
 not have changed in that respect.

\$RIGHT
 (Gets up, takes theatrical
 stance as if doing an
 ASIDE)
 But all the world's a stage, right?-

\$LEFT
 (Feigning disgust)
 Oh no not this shit.

\$RIGHT
 No, no, listen: what difference does
 it make? Why not live it up a little
 and have a little fun? I'm probably
 not gonna see these bozos again, so
 who gives an absolute damn if I
 alienate or impress them?

\$LEFT
 Well, clearly you give an "absolute"
 damn about these "bozos".

\$RIGHT
 Yes, yes I do. I didn't think I'd
 get crucified for it. Anyways, I
 wasn't lying about anything back
 there. I'll concede to your charges
 of performativity but I'm a man of
 my word.

\$LEFT
 Bullshit. You were yapping on and on
 about their "normie" beer. You don't
 even drink beer. You're literally
 sipping a Natty right now.

\$RIGHT
 (Feigning defeat)
 Well, that much is true. It appears
 you still get off on trying to get
 a rise out of people.

\$LEFT
 No, just you, but yes! I probably
 (MORE)

\$LEFT (CONT'D)

haven't changed as much as you'd hoped. But also, before we drop this, I think it's important to point out that you're totally just projecting. I don't think anyone else at that table was trying as hard as you were.

\$RIGHT

(Drawing out inflection)

Fuck that.

\$RIGHT

You only saw through my... charade because you know me as well as you do.

\$LEFT

(Overlapping \$RIGHT)

Because I know you better than them yeah yeah. I'm still saying you're pretentious as ever. Anyways how's-

\$RIGHT

(Knocking over beer as they say this)

Hey now, I'm not dropping this. The difference between... reunions, first dates, interviews, is only of degree: no one's "themselves" except around their like 3 best friends. You perform too, you just haven't ever listened to yourself speak.

\$LEFT

Dude, that's just straight up not true.

\$RIGHT grabs the beer.

\$RIGHT

Hey watch out!

\$RIGHT takes a sip before handing it back with shit-eating grin. \$LEFT punches \$RIGHT in arm

EXT. MOMS

Camera follows both, facing their profiles as they walk towards another side's ledge.

\$LEFT

You know, I like never learned how to be nice to my mom the way you were. She really liked you but
(MORE)

\$LEFT (CONT'D)

that's probably because you
constantly validated the shit out of
her.

\$RIGHT

I mean, I'm just a nice person.
Perhaps you could learn a thing or
two from me.

\$LEFT

You? You're the fucking Grinch,
dude, with literally anyone else,
including me. And your own mom. But
anyways, yeah she's doing ok despite
her daughter never picking up.

\$RIGHT

Ah the mommy issues have yet to be
resolved eh?

\$LEFT

Not in the year since I heard your
last mommy issue joke, no.

\$RIGHT

How's the card making venture?

\$LEFT

Tanked. She's running a bakery now
though. Dad's ok footing the bill,
as long as she's not home.

\$RIGHT

(Overlapping
As long as she's not bored or
depressed.

\$LEFT

Yeah. That. She's actually doing
well. Her bubblyness comes out
better baking than in her Christmas
greetings I guess. She keeps trying
to get me to work there when I visit
but fuck that.

\$RIGHT

Oh wait I left my beer back there.

\$LEFT

Hey uh, Kim told me about your Mom.

\$RIGHT

Yeah

\$LEFT

Yeah. I'm sorry. I wish I was there around then.

\$RIGHT

No it's ok. It's all good. She was honestly doing Ok. By the end she had, ya know, accepted everything, and made her amends, and she was surrounded by people who loved her and all her friends. My dad came down and stayed with her and for a while it was the closest we'd been as a family for a while. She wasn't exactly looking forward to dying but she wasn't heartbroken. I guess that's the sort of thing you feel when you're first diagnosed I suppose. After a few months it's a little easier to accept things. Maybe by the end you start enjoying

EXT. INDIE ROCK FESTIVAL

\$RIGHT

Remember how we'd talked about making the trip to Penn to see that Plumbum, Kissers and Rosemary Hearse festival?

\$LEFT

Haha yeah that shit, did you end up going?

\$RIGHT

Yes I did end up going to that shit, thank you very much.

\$LEFT

Awesome. I mean I can just like tell you now I was never actually gonna go but hey I'm glad you saw them.

\$RIGHT

That's not quite the reaction I was expecting.

\$LEFT

Oh right you want me to kiss your feet and apologize for not liking your hipster indie music enough to go to a 6 hour concert with you, right?

\$RIGHT

Yes I'd like that but since I won't
(MORE)

\$RIGHT (CONT'D)
get it your edginess will suffice.
Anyways I made the trip-

\$LEFT
By yourself?

\$RIGHT
Yes by myself. And so I went right.
It's absolutely pouring, and, my
car- I rented this hourly thing- is
the most hideous shit and has
absolutely no space. and saw them and
it was fucking excellent.

\$LEFT
That's awesome!

\$RIGHT
Yeah and you won't believe who
opened for Plumbum.

\$RIGHT
(attempted dramatic pause
Fucking Dirty Socks.

\$LEFT
Oh shit! I haven't even seen them!
Dude how were they!?

\$RIGHT
Not as good as Plumbum, but the
singer dude crowd surfed for like 10
minutes.

\$LEFT
Yeah?

\$RIGHT
He yelled something about catharsis
and jumped off at the end of You've
Got a Thang Goin On.

EXT. AUTOMATION

\$RIGHT
You're gonna be personally
responsible for the downfall of
human society.

\$LEFT
I wish. If I had that much influence
I'd probably be paid more.

\$RIGHT
You're paid pretty well.

\$LEFT

That's true. Anyways, we're at the point of no return, dude. It doesn't matter what one company or engineer does, most repetitive jobs are going to be automated. The question is of time.

\$RIGHT

But what are people supposed to do? What's gonna happen?

\$LEFT

I can't tell you that and I don't think anyone can. Nothing has changed since the last time we had this exact conversation. You're probably safe dude, even if we have AIs that can generate "art" people are unlikely to trust or give value to them.

\$RIGHT

It's not just me. People like you don't have to worry about this stuff but there are so many people out there who are gonna get fucked-

\$LEFT

People like me? Dude when was the last time you read the news? Engineers are losing jobs left and right to outsourcing and machine learning. The number of engineers and CS grads is fucking exploding dude. I have to prove myself at work every day so I don't get replaced by every fucking teenager who walks in with an online diploma asking for half my pay. You don't have to deal with that. You've already established yourself. No AI is going to steal your job or any of your friends-

\$RIGHT

Look, I'm sorry. You're right, you're right. I don't know about the climate of your industry. I'm just saying that it's not about me, its about the other people in the world, in this country.

\$LEFT

Ok, fine. It'll be tough. Our dumbass government is completely
(MORE)

\$LEFT (CONT'D)
 ill-prepared for this colossal
 industrial revolution that's going
 to do who knows what to our economy.
 I really don't think it's fair that
 you're pinning it on me.

EXT. AI HATE YOU

\$RIGHT
 What the fuck? You've had your
 fucking robot lover listen in on our
 conversation?

\$LEFT
 I didn't have him listen it's just
 always-

\$RIGHT
 Always on? Of course you keep it
 always right by your ear yeah? Does
 it get jealous too? You ever fuck
 her, you robotic fuck, do you know
 what that feels like? Do you even
 know what it feels like to- to know
 that I did?

\$AI
 This isn't nec-

\$LEFT
 R, what the fuck are you doing?
 Stop.

\$LEFT
 (Turning off ai)
 He's muted now. What is your
 problem? Are you so threatened by
 some fucking code?

\$RIGHT
 You replaced me with some fucking
 code?

\$LEFT
 Replaced you?

\$LEFT sighs

\$LEFT
 Of course.

\$RIGHT
 No don't give me that of course
 shit. I'm not jealous. I just think
 it's pathetic. That you'd go from
 being with real flesh, blood, tears-

\$LEFT

You're not jealous? You just tried to outman an AI. Dude, you're a trope.

\$RIGHT

No. I'm not. But you know why you are? You're so- so desperate for validation and this bullshit self security- this fucking bubble of-

\$LEFT

Before you give me your fucking spiel about weakness and artificial validation- about buying a worshipper - yeah right? - so- so I feel good about myself - which I'm honestly not gonna lie is a part of why I'm dating C-

\$RIGHT

You're not dating-

\$LEFT

Dude save it. I have a question for you: why does it bother you so much? Why does it-

\$RIGHT

It doesn-

\$LEFT

It absolutely does, dude. You were yelling at me like a second ago for doing something with my life that has nothing to do with you. You haven't seen me in a year and you're getting your balls twisted over who I'm dating, dude? What- you're paranoid about being listened in on, yeah?

\$RIGHT

Yes th-

\$LEFT

Shut up. You know full fucking well all the other shit on my phone is listening anyways, and yours too. No, you're very specifically scared about something else

\$RIGHT

I'm not scared. This isn't about being scared. You don't have to project - not everyone goes around
(MORE)

\$RIGHT (CONT'D)

being scared of being alone in the
big bad wo-

\$LEFT

Oh my god you're impossible. Just
because you're some cynical
performative pseudo artistic fuck
doesn't mean that I'm projecting
when I'm- ugh - you're so painfully
ironically fucking oblivious how
much you're projecting... what's
your problem with C?

\$RIGHT

I... think it's pathetic that you
just go around inflating your ego
by- by having this programmed
thing just whisper how great you
are into your ear all the time. It's
like some... middle aged fuck paying
prostitutes to- to listen to his
shitty marriage problems.

\$LEFT

Dude, what the fuck are you on
about?

\$RIGHT

You said so yourself: you want to
feel good about yourself-

\$LEFT

Yes! Like everyone else, and?

\$RIGHT

Debatable- but you're avoiding the
challenges of a real person - a real
human who's not always gonna treat
you the way you think you want-

\$LEFT

You mean an asshole, you mean like
you

\$RIGHT

No I don't. They don't have to be an
asshole to challenge you. And you
know that, which is what makes this
kind of... disgusting

\$LEFT

Disgusting?

\$RIGHT

Yes. You never challenge yourself,
(MORE)

\$RIGHT (CONT'D)

L. You- you always like tiptoe through your life. You project this... aggressive confidence but you're really just so insecure.

\$LEFT

Dude. What is wrong with you? How do you get off on saying shit like this? Who the fuck do you think you are?

\$LEFT

(Laughing)

No, seriously. You heard literally a sentence from my boyfriend and suddenly that opened up your fucking soap box- what, you're my Dad now? You're gonna pretend this has nothing to do with your constant tragedy, your self-pity? I just don't understand what you're so afraid of. Being replaced? Becoming obsolete? Being spied on? Being oh so more obviously imperfect?

\$RIGHT

Yes. It's all of those fucking things. If you knew, you didn't have to ask.

\$LEFT

No, you'd never admit to anything if I didn't. You- you complain and you- you perform vulnerability. But I've never seen you cry out of a sadness that wasn't this theater of self loathing as if anyone was a fucking paid patron your bullshit mime show. And maybe the fucking AIs I create, if I could, I'd - I'd program the whole fucking gamut of human emotions, ok, but I'd be sure as hell to make sure no AI of mine fucking cries themselves to sleep feeling vindictive at the whole fucking world because they have no outlet for their emotions beyond some fucking lowest common denominator stock photography and their endless shopping list of flaws they seek out in everyone else around them and their fucking cliché ass mommy issues and-

\$RIGHT

Stop it. You... don't get to talk to me that way.

\$LEFT

Yeah I... probably don't. But you pick these fights better than anyone else does. I guess you know how to bring the worst out of people huh?

\$RIGHT

Maybe I'm feeling a little more inspired to. That was messed up, L.

\$LEFT

(Sighing)

Yeah. You're - you're right. I'm sorry.

\$RIGHT

I'm not hurt by what you said. I'm more hurt that you tried.

\$LEFT

As if. You know you're upset as fuck because everything I said was the fucking truth, dude.

\$RIGHT

Yeah yeah you got a lil riled up and you felt like playing psychologist or wife or something.

\$RIGHT shrugs

\$RIGHT

I guess you have the ovaries now to bite back.

\$LEFT laughs snidely

\$LEFT

Well, looks like all that validation is working.

\$RIGHT

Well if it works for you I suppose you're entitled to feel a little empowered. But what you did was still pretty fucked up.

\$LEFT

Okay... but I feel like you're forgetting that you just attacked me for my fucking boyfriend like a minute ago?

\$RIGHT

I don't like you talking about me
like I'm a child

\$LEFT

I know you don't

\$RIGHT

But... that's your point. I'm a lot
more sensitive than I let on. But I
suppose I do let it on and I'm not
really very good at hiding it.

\$LEFT

Yeah. And I was never good at not
taking everything you said
personally-

\$RIGHT

I'm sorry I-

\$LEFT

I know I know. Part of what's nice
about time, is that even though I
had too much ego and was probably as
sensitive as you were, the thing
about time is that it allows me
to-to retroactively know better and
know that it was just you and I
being big fucking babies. And I
don't feel that same way when you
try to put me down anymore-

\$RIGHT

\$LEFT I don't think that's a fair-

\$LEFT

R, you know... what you do. It's
just what you do. I'm not saying you
haven't stopped doing it or that you
won't but from tonight it seems like
there's at least a part of you still
there.

\$RIGHT

\$LEFT I feel like you're really
painting me in this unfair way like
I'm some big fucking asshole and I
already feel that way enough right
now, I don't need you to keep
reminding me. I get that I'm being
defensive but I'm being attacked so
what else would I do?

\$LEFT

No, that's understandable. My point
(MORE)

\$LEFT (CONT'D)

is that I was trying to bring you down too. And I know you knew that. I totally on purpose just ignored your feelings and your fucking obvious calls for help- attention- whatever. And I mean here I am

\$RIGHT

With your scripted lil attention bot, right.

\$LEFT

Yeah, my fucking attention bot. I was never good at that- letting people get what they want- being the bigger person or whatever. I'm... sorry I couldn't be better even when I could have been.

\$RIGHT

It's just funny that you're apologizing to me, when I was clearly the bigger asshole. I get that you were the, like, meta asshole or whatever, knowing better and all that but that went my way too. I've known I was a piece of shit my whole life or at least since my mom-

\$LEFT

Yeah

\$RIGHT

Or honestly probably before that too. I'm not like saying I'm destined to be an asshole I mean I just... I guess, I don't know

\$LEFT

No dude I get it.