

MIDNIGHT BURGER

Chapter 31: Welcome to the Horizon

By

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Midnight Burger

Chapter 31: Welcome to the Horizon.

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE FOREST. WE ARE BACK AT THE HORIZON
MOTEL. CLEMENTINE APPEARS IN THE PARKING LOT.

CLEMENTINE

Frank?

A CAR DRIVES INTO THE PARKING LOT AND PARKS. PETER AND
STEPHANIE GET OUT OF THE CAR MID-ARGUMENT.

PETER

I will not, not in a million years, understand your
obsession with starting over.

STEPHANIE

I'm not obsessed, that's completely unfair.

PETER

No matter what we talk about, no matter what
problem we're having, you always bring it back
around to "getting out of this town and starting
over."

STEPHANIE

We should get out of this town and start over.

PETER

But that's not the solution to everything.

STEPHANIE

I never said it was the solution to everything.

PETER

The kitchen sink backed up and your solution was to
get out of town and start over again.

STEPHANIE

I wasn't presenting it as a solution to the sink.

PETER

Of course you weren't. But you never hesitate to
bring it up do you?

STEPHANIE

No, Peter, honestly I don't. Do you know why?
Because we should get out of town and start over
again.

PETER

Our lives are here, our kids go to school here, my
sister is here, her kids are here.

STEPHANIE

That doesn't mean we have to stay here.

PETER

I realize you don't understand the importance of family because yours was so dysfunctional-

STEPHANIE

Whoa!

PETER

-But it's important. And it's important in way that nobody anticipates.

STEPHANIE

You're seriously going to stand there and accuse me of not knowing the importance of family after giving birth to not one, but TWO of your children?

PETER

That's not what I'm saying-

STEPHANIE

It sounds like that's what you're saying.

PETER

Don't put words in my mouth.

STEPHANIE

I don't need to put words in your mouth. "You don't understand the importance of family," that's what you said.

PETER

Stephanie, it's not just our kids. It's everyone. My sister, her kids, this town, we rely on these people and they rely on us.

STEPHANIE

We don't rely on these people.

PETER

Of course we do.

STEPHANIE

At least once a day someone from this town comes to you with a problem for you to clean up. Who said that was your job? There's a reason this town doesn't have a mayor, Peter. It doesn't need one.

PETER

Fine, fine. Let's hear it. Let's hear your solution, then.

STEPHANIE

What are you talking about?

PETER

Where are we moving to?

STEPHANIE

Peter-

PETER

No, no, we're going to sell the motel and then pack up the covered wagon, right? I'm sure you have this all figured out because you can't stop bringing it up, so what's the plan?

STEPHANIE

We're supposed to come up with the plan together.

PETER

Propose something to me. Anything. Pick a city in the Northern Hemisphere. Let's go.

STEPHANIE

I can't just pick a city-

PETER

No you can't. Do you know why? Because this escape plan of yours, starting over in a new town, it completely falls apart when we're confronted with a little thing called reality.... What would we do there? Could the kids walk to school like they do now? Are there even schools nearby? Can we afford to live there? Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

STEPHANIE

There are answers to all of those questions.

PETER

There are answers to all of those questions. I guarantee you this escape plan of yours will collapse in on itself as soon as you get an answer you don't like... You're in favor of leaving so long as there are no complications and everything goes our way. When, in the history of the world, has that ever happened?

STEPHANIE

... What room are we arguing in?

PETER

Seven.

STEPHANIE

... Let's go.

PETER AND STEPHANIE WALK INTO ROOM SEVEN AND CLOSE THE DOOR.

CLEMENTINE

Sheesh. Frank?

CLEMENTINE WALKS INTO THE OFFICE.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

Hey, Frank.

FRANK

Clementine.

CLEMENTINE

... How are you?

FRANK

... Just great.

CLEMENTINE

... Okay... There was kind of a crazy scene out there. I think a couple checked in to try and work out their marital problems, do you know them?

FRANK

I do.

CLEMENTINE

... Who are they?

FRANK

That's Peter and Stephanie Sturgis. My mother and father.

CLEMENTINE

... Your mother and father?

FRANK

Yes.

CLEMENTINE

Frank... Frank didn't you tell me that your father passed away?

FRANK

... Yes.

CLEMENTINE

Well what... Frank, what's going on?

FRANK

My parents were very protective. They were very concerned about fighting in front of us. They thought it would be traumatic.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

So they had this habit... When they needed to have a fight they would get a sitter and then stay here. They would fight all night long and then come back the next day like nothing had happened... I got wise to it when I was twelve... I always wondered what they were fighting about...

CLEMENTINE

That's... that's them in that car?

FRANK

What car?

CLEMENTINE

What do you mean what... The car is gone.

FRANK

Just wait.

OUTSIDE WE HEAR THE SAME CAR APPROACH AGAIN. WE HEAR PETER AND STEPHANIE GET OUT OF THE CAR AND REPEAT THE SAME ARGUMENT THEY JUST HAD.

CLEMENTINE

... Oh God... How long has this been happening?

FRANK

It started this morning.

JUNE

(In the bathroom.)
Who is that?

FRANK

It's Clementine.

JUNE

... What is she doing here?

FRANK

I don't know. Clementine what are you doing here?

CLEMENTINE

I was just...

FRANK

You know, June has a theory.

CLEMENTINE

What?

FRANK

June, you have a theory?

JUNE

... You did this, Clementine.

FRANK

As you can imagine, we're starting to go a little crazy around here.

JUNE

I'm not crazy, you're crazy.

FRANK

There was... when we first met you, when you were lying in the parking lot and we took you to the hospital, June and I waited for a while. There was this weird thing that happened. One of the nurses kept calling for Nr. Nate. She did it over and over again. June now thinks that it was-

JUNE

It was a time loop!

FRANK

She thinks it was a time loop. Which she got from a Star Trek episode.

JUNE

So what if it's a Star Trek episode!? Tell her about the car.

FRANK

And there was a car that kept driving by the motel, over and over again, she thinks that was another one. And now...

JUNE

And now there's a literal Outer Limits episode happening in our parking lot!

FRANK

And she says it's because of you.

JUNE

It all started when you showed up, Clementine.

FRANK

We've gone through several stages with this today. Shock, horror, disbelief... Here at the end of the day I think we've drifted now into resignation? I think we're just waiting for it to stop so we can start pretending it never happened.

JUNE

Why doesn't she make it stop? She's the one who made it happen?!

FRANK

June, come out of the bathroom.

JUNE

No way! Not with her out there!

FRANK

This isn't her fault, June, You're being ridiculous.

JUNE

YOU'RE being ridiculous.

FRANK

You can't just blame someone because they're new in town.

JUNE

You know I'm right, Frank!

FRANK

Nobody knows anything about anything, my dead father is arguing in the parking lot, June!

CLEMENTINE

She's right.

FRANK

...

CLEMENTINE

... She's right, Frank.

JUNE

I am?

BATHROOM DOOR OPENS.

CLEMENTINE

It's me... I did it.

FRANK

Clementine, you're a strange person but this is-

CLEMENTINE

A bar of gold, Frank? I just had that on me? I brought beer from Tokyo and didn't know it was in Japan. I disappeared from the hospital. How did I disappear from the hospital?

FRANK

And these are all strange things but-

CLEMENTINE

Fine, here's another bar of gold.

CLEMENTINE SUDDENLY HAS A BAR OF GOLD IN HER HAND. SHE TOSSES IT ONTO THE FRONT DESK.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

Is that not good enough? You want another one?

ANOTHER GOLD BAR LANDS ON THE DESK.

FRANK

...

CLEMENTINE

Still not convinced? I can make my favorite song play out of thin air, how about that?

WE HEAR STELLA SPLENDENS FAINTLY PLAYING FROM NOWHERE.

JUNE

Where is that coming from?

CLEMENTINE

I can do anything I want... Anything I want except for the thing I want to do... It's terrible.

FRANK

Clementine, look, you may think-

CLEMENTINE

Jesus Christ, do you still not believe me? Fine, there's a chicken in the bathroom now.

A CHICKEN SUDDENLY CLUCKS FROM THE BATHROOM.

JUNE

Oh fuck! Shit, there's a fucking chicken in here... there's-

CLEMENTINE

How is that? Is that good enough?... I think I broke Frank.

JUNE

Is this a living chicken, we just have a chicken now?

CLEMENTINE

Yes. Enjoy... Okay, I'm going to go outside and I'm going to put things right again. And then I'm going to go before I break something else... Or break everything...

JUNE

What are you going to do?

FRANK

Wait-

CLEMENTINE WALKS OUTSIDE JUST AS THE CAR IS PULLING UP AGAIN.

CLEMENTINE

I really am sorry, you two.

(To herself.)

Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river that sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me... but I am the fire.

TWO MORE OF THE EXACT SAME CAR PULL INTO THE PARKING LOT. PETER AND STEPHANIE GET OUT OF THOSE CARS AS WELL AND BEGIN TO HAVE THE EXACT SAME ARGUMENT THEY'VE BEEN HAVING. WE ARE NOW HEARING THE EXACT SAME ARGUMENT FROM THEM OVERLAPPED THREE TIMES.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

JUNE

What the hell?!

FRANK

Clementine this doesn't look like "fixing things".

CLEMENTINE

That's not supposed to happen.

FRANK

None of this is supposed to happen!

CLEMENTINE

I don't understand.

JUNE

There's three of my aunt and uncle now. There's not supposed to be any of them.

CLEMENTINE

Okay wait, wait just wait... Let me try again...
Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river that sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me... but I am the fire.

THREE MORE IDENTICAL CARS PULL INTO THE PARKING LOT, PETER AND STEPHANIE EMERGE FROM THOSE CARS AS WELL. WE ARE NOW HEARING THE SAME CONVERSATION SIX TIMES.

CLEMENTINE (CONT'D)

No... no no no.

FRANK

What the fuck?

CLEMENTINE

This isn't supposed to happen.

JUNE

What isn't supposed to happen? What exactly is happening?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know... I don't know what's happening... I can't control it.

FRANK

Clementine, tell me what you're doing!

CLEMENTINE

I don't know what I'm doing! I don't understand any of this, it's gotten out of my control... I need to get help.

FRANK

What?

JUNE

From where?

CLEMENTINE

I... I'm going to go. I'm going to go get help. Frank, listen... I'm so sorry... I thought I could control it... I thought I was in control... I'll be back, I promise.

CLEMENTINE VANISHES.

JUNE

What.

FRANK

Oh Jesus.

JUNE

What.

FRANK

She just vanished.

JUNE

What.

FRANK

Where the hell did she go?... What's that sound?

JUNE

What.

THERE IS A CRACK IN THE AIR AND MIDNIGHT BURGER SUDDENLY APPEARS IN THE PARKING LOT.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Whaaaaaaaaaaaaat?

FRANK

The fuck is that?

CASPAR

Hey there, folks, you must be Frank and June.
Strange times, am I right? Give us just one second
we'll be right with you.

TERRIC

That was different.

GLORIA

What the fuck is happening here?

AVA

Whoa.

LEIF

(On the roof.)
No such thing as a time loop, huh?

GLORIA

Leif, where are we?

LEIF

New timeline, this isn't Clementine's.

GLORIA

Ava?

AVA

I'm thinking.

GLORIA

Effie?

EFFIE

Gloria, even if I had feelings about what I'm
seeing I wouldn't know what to say.

ZEBULON

They all appear to be the same person.

GLORIA

Yes, I can see that, Zeb.

ZEBULON

How are we to know which ones are the real ones?

AVA

I think they're all the real ones, that's the problem.

ZEBULON

I miss the farm.

AVA

Clementine, tell me exactly what happened.

CLEMENTINE

There was one car, it kept showing up. That's Frank's mother and father in the car. His father passed away, this is a scene from their past.

AVA

And then how did it become six cars?

CLEMENTINE

I tried to fix it, it usually works when I try to fix things.

AVA

How did you try to fix it?

CLEMENTINE

There's this thing I say. I say it when I need to focus.

AVA

What is it?

CLEMENTINE

"Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river that sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me... but I am the fire."

AVA

Borges?

CLEMENTINE

What?

AVA

Jorge Borges. He's a writer, you were reciting Borges?

CLEMENTINE

I don't know who that is. It's something my mother taught me to recite when I was panicking. It seemed to work when I needed to focus on something.

AVA

Well, guess what, it's not working.

FRANK

What is happening?

CASPAR

Okay. It's a lot. Sure. Don't panic. First of all, let me say that I really love your motel. Very mid-century modern, very Lost Highway.

FRANK

What is happening?!

CASPAR

Okay, let's just first-paragraph-of-wikipedia this, shall we? We're Midnight Burger, a time-traveling dimension-spanning diner. We've been trying to hunt down a mysterious red-headed woman who has been fucking up the cosmos. Sound familiar?

JUNE

Clementine?

CASPAR

Yes. Turns out, when she was taking a break from destroying all of existence she liked to hang out here. I mean, why wouldn't she? It's lovely. Where are we, Washington?

JUNE

Oregon.

CASPAR

Great. So, the problem is, Clementine eventually destabilizes everything around her, including this place.

FRANK

Destabilizes how?

CASPAR

Well, you know how things have a tendency to... exist?

JUNE

We're aware.

CASPAR

She tends to make them stop doing that.

JUNE

You guys are going to stop that though, right?

CASPAR

Yes.

FRANK

How is a diner going to stop that?

CASPAR

Well, we don't know yet, BUT we've got two very smart people, a 700 year old man, two baptist ministers and a very competent restaurant manager so the answer's got to be in there somewhere, right?

JUNE

What do you do?

CASPAR

You know, I used to work at the DMV and now I'm trying to figure it all out, it's a process.

GLORIA

Hi there.

CASPAR

Hey, this is Gloria, she's runs the place.

GLORIA

Nice to meet you. Welcome to the weirdest day of your life.

JUNE

I mean, I hope it is.

GLORIA

It's a lot. Sure. But I think you'll find that your capacity for weird shit is way higher than you think it is.

FRANK

What... what happens now?

GLORIA

Well, we've got about a half dozen temporal anomalies don't we? Who are the two people in these cars?

FRANK

It's... it's my mom and dad.

GLORIA

And is this them in the present?

FRANK

No. My dad passed away. My mom lives in New Mexico now.

GLORIA

Okay, so they definitely shouldn't be here and there definitely shouldn't be six pairs of them, right?

FRANK

Correct.

TERRIC

Clementine.

CLEMENTINE

You've got to stay away from me... How are you even here?

TERRIC

It's a long story.

CLEMENTINE

What did I do to you... did I... did I make you American?

TERRIC

Clementine, no, I've-

CLEMENTINE

It's the pillars of salt all over again. You've got to stay away from me.

TERRIC

Wait, listen-

CLEMENTINE

I can't, Terric, please.

CLEMENTINE RUNS OFF.

AVA

Okay. Let's not make this too complicated. If we get all the Moms and Dads inside the diner, that should solve the problem, as long as we can keep them in there long enough.

GLORIA

It seems like they can't even see us, though.

AVA

We've got to make them see us. Also, the hard part is, we can't just drag them in here, we've got to convince them to go into the diner.

GLORIA

Why?

AVA

Just trust me.

GLORIA

Fine. So, mom and dad had some marital problems?

FRANK

Uh, I mean, they never split up but they did fight a lot.

JUNE

My mom said she never understood their relationship.

FRANK

She did?

JUNE

Yeah. Did you?

FRANK

No, I guess not.

GLORIA

Okay. We've got six rooms. Everybody take a room and try to convince them to have a cup of coffee at the diner that just appeared in the parking lot.

LEIF

Gloria, are you seriously asking this particular group of people to help them work out their marital problems?

GLORIA

Yes.

LEIF

Show of hands, who here feels comfortable being a marriage counselor?

GLORIA

...

AVA

...

CASPAR

...

ZEBULON

Well, both of our hands are up.

GLORIA

Leif, we're never the right people for any situation we're in, we're just the only ones around.

LEIF

Fair point.

AVA

I'm going to hate this.

GLORIA

Everybody pick a room. Let's go.

TERRIC

Gloria, I'll take a room.

GLORIA

You should probably talk to Clementine.

TERRIC

She ran off somewhere. I think maybe we should fix whatever problem this is first.

GLORIA

Are you sure, it could get pretty weird in there.

TERRIC

Because of the temporal anomalies?

GLORIA

Because you have to help someone with their marriage.

TERRIC

I have a degree in Psychology.

GLORIA

You do?

TERRIC

I'm a seven hundred year old scholar, Gloria, I've got a degree in pretty much everything.

GLORIA

Really?

TERRIC

University of Copenhagen, 1932.

GLORIA

1932?

TERRIC

It's been a while, but I'm sure it'll come back to me.

GLORIA

Okay, uh, lobotomies are bad now.

TERRIC

Great, I'm updated.

GLORIA

Get in there.

CASPAR

Hey. I'm about to go help someone with their marriage.

GLORIA

I know.

CASPAR

Which should be the beginning of a joke.

GLORIA

Yes.

CASPAR

But instead it's a real thing that's happening.

GLORIA

Caspar, I'm about to get in there as well and the word marriage makes me literally start packing a suitcase for no reason.

CASPAR

This is going to be ridiculous.

AVA

I'm taking room seven, come do this with me.

CASPAR

What?

AVA

Terric's going to help so we can double up.

CASPAR

I'm not going to help your success rate in there.

AVA

I know but when it goes wrong I can blame you.

CASPAR

Okay.

GLORIA

Frank, June, you can probably be a lot of help here because you actually knew them. I know you think you're going crazy but we really need you to pick a room and try and make something happen.

FRANK

Uh...

JUNE

Uncle Pete died not too long ago now, it's... it's a lot.

GLORIA

Jesus. Right, um... Well, here's something that I've learned in this completely nuts situation that I'm in... It's all happening. It's all happening right now. The past, the future, they're all just pages in a book. But the whole book is right in front of you. There's an opportunity here. Because you've read the book. Which means you can go back to the beginning and see the story in a completely different way. You get to talk to the past from the future. Maybe since you know the end, you have something to say about the beginning.

JUNE

... You're a restaurant manager?

GLORIA

I prefer Taquera, but that's fine.

FRANK

What if none of this works? Are we going to be stuck like this forever?

GLORIA

I've never seen anything last forever. But how about we don't think about failure right now?

FRANK

Okay.

JUNE

Which room are we taking?

FRANK

Let's go with number one, I guess.

ROOM 9. TERRIC IS IN SESSION.

PETER

This is ridiculous. We're just going around in circles again.

TERRIC

I hear you, Peter, let's try and start again. Stephanie, you mentioned wanting to move to a new town, and Peter, you have strong ties to this community. Can you both share your perspectives?

STEPHANIE

I've been feeling the need for a fresh start. This is a small town. A VERY small town, I can walk across the entire town in an afternoon.

PETER

That's not true, the town is much bigger than that-

TERRIC

Peter, please, you'll have your turn, let's hear from Stephanie right now.

STEPHANIE

We're trying to raise kids. Kids need to be exposed to things. There's only so many things they can be exposed to in a town that only exists because of an onslaught of skiers every winter.

TERRIC

Peter, can you understand her position?

PETER

Exposing them to things cuts both ways. There's a lot going on in bigger cities, maybe things we don't want to expose them to.

STEPHANIE

This is what he does, every time we talk about this he imagines we're moving to some urban hellscape that he saw in a movie one time.

PETER

We saw Death Wish in the theater and it was very disturbing.

STEPHANIE

It wasn't a documentary, Peter.

TERRIC

Peter, you seem to have deep roots in this community, can you tell me what these roots mean to you?

PETER

I grew up here, my parents still live here, and I've built strong relationships here. It feels like home, and leaving it behind feels like abandoning a part of myself.

TERRIC

And Stephanie, I'm sure you can understand that.

STEPHANIE

Sorry, his parents living here is not the selling point he thinks it is.

PETER

She just doesn't understand that because she doesn't get along with her parents.

STEPHANIE

Or your parents, but who's counting?

TERRIC

Okay, we're not going to get anywhere by disqualifying each other's feelings.

STEPHANIE

You're right, I'm sorry.

TERRIC

This is good, though. I feel like we're moving in the right direction. Now we need to try and look for some common ground, okay?

STEPHANIE

(Coming from the neighboring room.)
Oh Jesus Christ you're as rigid as a fucking cadaver!!

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Yikes. Glad we're not those two.

PETER

I don't know who they are but they sound like a mess.

ROOM SEVEN. CASPAR AND AVA. IT'S A MESS. CASPAR AND AVA LISTEN OUTSIDE THE DOOR.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh really? A cadaver? Well that's a new one!

STEPHANIE

There's no room to breathe with you!

PETER

I'm sorry, which one of us isn't breathing, I thought I was the cadaver.

CASPAR

That was a good one.

STEPHANIE

Everything, EVERYTHING Has to be a certain way. From the laundry to the lives of our kids.

PETER

Well I'm sorry that I don't want to spend our lives like its unstructured "me time" at some sort of Dutch primary school!

AVA

What?

STEPHANIE

What does that even mean?!

PETER

I've done everything I can to make us a life here! Nothing makes you happy!

STEPHANIE

Who could be happy here, Peter? Who in their right mind?

PETER

I'm happy here.

STEPHANIE

Exactly.

AVA

Ooh, got him.

CASPAR

Nice.

PETER

So we've raised our children in a town that you think is full of idiots.

STEPHANIE

Yes. It's perfect for them because they're idiots too.

AVA

Heh. Kids are dumb.

CASPAR

Did my moms talk about me this way?

AVA

I sure hope so.

CASPAR

How come they're not noticing each other or noticing a huge diner in the parking lot?

AVA

The mind does some pretty crazy things to keep operating. I imagine they're tuning out a lot right now.

CASPAR

They should tune each other out, they sound like they're about to kill each other.

AVA

Let's get in there.

CASPAR

Okay.

THEY OPEN THE DOOR.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

Hey there!

PETER

Excuse me, can I help you?

CASPAR

Sorry, we were next door.

AVA

We were next door and we couldn't help but hear the shouting.

CASPAR

Yeah, everything okay over here?

STEPHANIE

Does it sound like it's okay?

AVA

It sounds hilarious.

CASPAR

It sounds like you're having some trouble.

PETER

We're fine, alright? We just need some privacy.

CASPAR

Hey, when I'm having troubles sometimes I like to have a cup of coffee.

STEPHANIE

A what?

CASPAR

A nice cup of coffee. Nothing makes a wrong situation right like a cup of coffee, you know what I mean?

AVA

Are you doing a Sanka ad?

CASPAR

Maybe you should head over to that diner there and have a cup of coffee?

PETER

Diner?

STEPHANIE

You're wasting your time, this man has no vices. He's like a Mormon without the magic underwear.

PETER

Do you see what I have to put up with?

CASPAR

Look, it looks like a lot.

AVA

Getting obliterated by your wife is a full time job.

CASPAR

But every marriage has it's challenges right?

AVA

Think how challenging it is for her to come up with sick burns all the time.

CASPAR

What I'm saying is... look, you obviously care about each other very much and it's confusing because she-

AVA

Is hilarious.

CASPAR

-Has an odd way of showing affection. I mean, you both do, you're both attacking each other-

AVA

She's just better at it, and I'm sure that's rough for you.

CASPAR

Are we helping or are you having a little comedy festival over there?

AVA

Both?

PETER

It's difficult when this happens. I feel like I'm trying to talk about the issue and she's just trying to win some sort of contest.

CASPAR

Well I don't know if that's entirely fair, Pete, but I hear what you're saying. I mean, it's tough. You obviously care about her very much but also she appears to be covered in tiny poisonous barbs.

STEPHANIE

Excuse me?

CASPAR

Speaking metaphorically. Metaphorical poisonous barbs.

STEPHANIE

That's not much better.

CASPAR

And you get it. Right? Some people cover themselves with a spiky personality to keep the shitheads away but the spikes do not retract, that's not how tiny poisonous barbs work. They're always there, which puts you in the position to just keep getting stung, and develop an immunity to the poison spikes.

STEPHANIE

Can we get away from the poison spikes analogy?

CASPAR

Because you know you can't help yourself. You can't help but reach out to her, you feel compelled to, call that whatever you like. You come to get used to the fact that getting close to her involves a certain amount of injury to yourself.

AVA

And Stephanie, you're over there saying "Really? Him?"

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)

This is the guy?" Because you had already imagined the guy who would keep coming back, and you imagined he would be, I don't know, better? You've created this person in your mind and they're this great combination of the genius of Marie Curie and the unbridled hotness of Michael Faraday.

STEPHANIE

What?

PETER

Who?

AVA

But he does keeps coming back... And you admire that a little and then you also hate him because you admire it. And then there's this other terrible moment where you realize that it's nice to be wanted. And you also hate THAT. Which makes you even more mad. And it's made even worse by the fact that he SUCKS. And he has fucked up so many times, especially that one time, you know the time I'm talking about.

STEPHANIE

I don't.

CASPAR

And you've apologized, Pete. You really have, you've tried to make up for that one time when you fucked up really bad but, y'know, that doesn't matter because apologizing doesn't mean that your apology has been accepted. It doesn't mean that she's under any obligation to accept your apology, all you can really do is apologize and hope for the best, and try to do better right? That's how you feel.

PETER

I'm not sure-

AVA

You spend a lot of time studying the universe, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

I don't.

AVA

And in your studies you've come to terms with chaos. You can't control what the universe brings you. You're an island.

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)

All you have at your disposal are the trees and tiny creatures that live on your island, and whatever the ocean washes up on your shore. What washes up on the shore is mostly garbage, but sometimes it's useful and sometimes it's something you didn't know you needed.

STEPHANIE

And I'm not sure if I need this.

PETER

Are you sure you're talking about us?

CASPAR

We're absolutely talking about you.

AVA

Definitely.

PETER

Okay.

STEPHANIE

Uh...

PETER

You said there was coffee across the way?

CASPAR

Yes! Go have some.

AVA

It's great coffee.

STEPHANIE

Maybe they'll be gone when we get back?

PETER

Good idea.

STEPHANIE

Okay, well, nice to meet you.

CASPAR

You too!

PETER AND STEPHANIE WALK OUT.

CASPAR (CONT'D)

I feel like we nailed it.

AVA

God, it must be so hard to be disconnected from reality like that.

CASPAR

Tell me about it, it looks terrible.

ROOM 3. LEIF TAKES A SWING AT IT.

PETER

I have tried everything at this point.

STEPHANIE

Yes. Everything except one thing. Are you giving up yet?

PETER

I don't appreciate how callus you're being about this.

STEPHANIE

I'm at my whit's end, Pete.

THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

PETER

What is this now?

DOOR OPENS.

PETER (CONT'D)

Yes?

LEIF

Hey there.

PETER

Can I help you?

LEIF

Sorry to disturb you. I'm uh... I'm with the motel staff and we've been getting some complaints about the noise.

PETER

You're with the motel staff.

LEIF

Yes.

PETER

I'm the owner of this motel.

LEIF

I'm sorry?

PETER

I own this place.

LEIF

You do?

PETER

Yes.

LEIF

Huh. Okay, well I just started, the manager must not have told you.

PETER

I am also the manager of this motel.

LEIF

Huh.

STEPHANIE

What is happening?

LEIF

Look, I was next door and I was hearing a lot of yelling and I thought I would say something before somebody complained.

PETER

Complained?

LEIF

Yeah.

PETER

Complained to who?

LEIF

The... manager.

PETER

Which is who again?

LEIF

... You.

PETER

I'm trying to have a conversation with my wife.

LEIF

Okay, well, manager or not, that's not a conversation, that's a shouting match.

PETER

Honey, the conversation police are here.

STEPHANIE

I'll hide the contraband.

LEIF

I'm not trying to be the cops, I'm just trying to be a neighbor.

PETER

Well, howdy, neighbor. How about I head over to your room and tell you how you should be living your life?

LEIF

C'mon man, I'm just letting you know what it sounds like from my perspective.

PETER

Thanks for letting us know.

STEPHANIE

The opinion of some random guy next door really means a lot to us.

LEIF

For fuck's sake.

PETER

Are you going door to door?

STEPHANIE

How do we rank compared to the other rooms?

LEIF

You'd be surprised how similar it is.

STEPHANIE

Okay, well thanks for stopping by, this was fun.

PETER

Closing the door now.

LEIF

Wait a minute, hey, do you guys want to go grab a cup of coffee?

STEPHANIE

Do we what?

PETER

A cup of coffee?

STEPHANIE

Who are you?

LEIF

I'm Leif, I'm you're neighbor, I'm trying to be neighborly!

STEPHANIE

Did we just move into a 1950s housing project? Are you going to bring us a casserole?

LEIF

Jesus Christ, this sucks.

PETER

It does suck, maybe consider that next time you decide to knock on a stranger's door and elbow your way into their life.

STEPHANIE

Nobody's named Leif anymore. Were you parents Scandinavian cheese makers?

LEIF

This is your last chance, do you want a cup of coffee?

PETER

Uh oh. Honey, it's our last chance for a cup of coffee.

STEPHANIE

Forever? There's no more coffee after this?

PETER

Apparently.

LEIF

Okay. Fine. You both suck. Could you hold this for me, please?

PETER

What is it?

WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A VIOLENT ELECTRIC SHOCK AND THE MUSIC FOR A NIGHT TIME RADIO TALK SHOW FADES IN.

EFFIE

Welcome back to "Not Too Late", I'm Dr. Barbara. Frank it is SUMmertime out there.

ZEBULON

It's really heating up.

EFFIE

Do you have any tips for beating the heat? What's your secret weapon?

ZEBULON

You know, this time of year I like to make sun tea.

EFFIE

Ooh, that sounds nice.

ZEBULON

I make a nice pitcher of sun tea all morning and then it keeps us all nice and cool for the rest of the day.

EFFIE

I love it Frank, I love it so much.

ZEBULON

How about you?

EFFIE

Well you know, I don't do air-conditioning.

ZEBULON

That's right, because of your pores.

EFFIE

Because of what it does to my pores. So what I like to do is, early in the morning, after I do my Ashtanga vinyasa, I open up all the doors and windows in the house and I let that morning air in, I release all that stale air that I've been breathing all night. It's wonderful, I breathe in that air and I can smell the mesquite groves all around the house, it's really a gift.

ZEBULON

It sounds nice, Doc.

EFFIE

But speaking of the heat, let's not keep people heating up by the phone, let's get to it.

ZEBULON

Alright, I had Pete and Stephanie on the line with marital troubles but we got disconnected, let me see if I can get them back.

EFFIE

Let's track them down.

WE HEAR A PHONE RINGING. PETER ANSWERS.

PETER

Yes, hello?

EFFIE

Pete, how are you? You're on with Dr. Barbara.

PETER

I'm what with who?

EFFIE

Pete, I hear that you and your wife are going through a bit of a time right now, is that safe to say?

PETER

What? Who is this?

EFFIE

You know, Pete, there's nothing more complicated than a marriage. Nothing in the world. You can talk to me about the human nervous system or weather patterns or particle physics, but no, it's two people trying to make a life long commitment to each other, that is the final frontier if you ask me.

PETER

I don't believe I am asking you.

EFFIE

Pete, I'm going to perform a little test. I'm going to ask you what the root problem is with your marriage and you're going to try and answer, are you ready?

STEPHANIE

Who are you talking to?

PETER

I don't know, apparently I'm on the radio.

STEPHANIE

Why?

PETER

How would I know?

EFFIE

Is that your wife, Pete? She can help with the test if you like.

STEPHANIE

What test, what is she talking about?

PETER

Well, she's asking me what the root problem is with our marriage.

STEPHANIE

Ha! Well, that's some fun serendipity, isn't it?
What'd you say?

PETER

I haven't said anything, I just picked up the
phone.

STEPHANIE

What's your answer?

PETER

I'm not going to answer her question.

STEPHANIE

No, go ahead, I'd like to hear this. What's her
name?

EFFIE

It's Dr. Barbara, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Dr. Barbara. Perfect. Come on, Pete. Let it rip.

PETER

I will not let it rip.

EFFIE

Stephanie, would you like to go first?

STEPHANIE

Absolutely not, I want to hear this.

PETER

Restlessness.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry?

EFFIE

Well, then.

PETER

You heard me.

EFFIE

Did you hear what he said, Frank?

ZEBULON

Yeah, I heard him, he said restlessness.

EFFIE

That's so interesting, isn't it Frank?

ZEBULON

I know I'm interested.

EFFIE

Tell us more about that word you chose, Pete.
Restlessness.

PETER

We have a good life here. It may be a small life,
it may be in a small town on the side of a large
mountain but it's a good life. Good lives are hard
to come by and I think we should be grateful for
the one we have rather than leaving it because we
think another one might be better.

EFFIE

And Stephanie, do you have anything to say to that?

STEPHANIE

I think a good life is subjective. I think what's
good for one person is not necessarily good for
another. He's talking about it like it's this
objective truth that I just don't understand.

EFFIE

Okay, do you see what I mean about the complexity,
Frank?

ZEBULON

I've got a headache just thinking about it.

EFFIE

Every human being is a story, kids. Frank, do you
remember our first show together?

ZEBULON

I sure do, Doc. You stopped the whole show and said
"Frank, what's your story?"

EFFIE

That's right.

ZEBULON

Somehow it ended with me giving the audience my
chili recipe.

EFFIE

Oooh I remember that chili, so spicy!

STEPHANIE

What's happening?

PETER

They're talking about chili now.

EFFIE

Kids, I think the most important thing to remember right now is that all of this fighting is good. Conflict is just a relationship trying to grow, and the longer you talk, the greater the chance of the other person making sense. Everybody makes sense if you listen long enough.

STEPHANIE

We can't seem to do that without it turning into a shouting match.

EFFIE

I see, Frank what do I have to say to that?

ZEBULON

Time to take it on the road.

EFFIE

That's right Frank, take this conversation to a public place. Maybe go have a cup of coffee. It'll be harder to scream at each other if you're worried about your server calling the police.

STEPHANIE

That's actually not a bad idea.

PETER

It's completely unsolicited advice but it's not bad advice.

EFFIE

Good. I'm excited you two. I'm excited what this next phase will bring and I know Frank's excited too.

ZEBULON

I'm excited.

EFFIE

Good luck, kids. Frank, we are on a roll, let's take another call.

OUTSIDE THE DINER. GLORIA HAS ROUNDED UP A COUPLE OF ANOMALIES.

GLORIA

Okay, head on inside you two, we'll get you some coffee, okay?

WE HEAR TWO UNCONSCIOUS BODIES BEING DRAGGED ACROSS THE GRAVEL PARKING LOT.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Leif!

LEIF

What?

GLORIA

What the fuck?!

LEIF

What?

GLORIA

They're unconscious!

LEIF

I had to give them the Secret Handshake.

GLORIA

Goddamn it, the what?

LEIF

It's an old trick. Ninety nine times out of a hundred if you toss something to somebody, they'll try and catch it. It's a steel ball that shocks you when you catch it, AKA, The Secret Handshake.

GLORIA

Leif, Ava told us we have to convince them to come in.

LEIF

Well, sorry. I tried to get in there and... they both reminded me too much of my dad. The Secret Handshake was my only hope.

GLORIA

You can make a force field around the diner but you can't sit through a marital dispute?

LEIF

Yeah, yeah, oh, the irony. I got them, didn't I? Don't tell Ava.

DOOR CHIME.

AVA

Don't tell Ava what, Leif?

LEIF

Goddamnit.

CASPAR

Leif, what the fuck, man? That's cheating.

EFFIE

Leif, what on God's green earth are you doing?

ZEBULON

Perhaps he sung them to sleep?

LEIF

I don't understand, why can't we just drag them in here?

AVA

I don't need to explain my instructions to you.

CASPAR

Leif, you can't just treat people like cargo; you're not Southwest Airlines.

LEIF

Whatever. They're in the parking lot. That's good enough.

EFFIE

Is it, though?

ZEBULON

We managed to round ours up without even going in the room, didn't we, dear?

EFFIE

I'm calling it a personal best, myself. Far and above Mr. Drop Them Off in the Parking Lot over here.

CASPAR

How did Terric do?

GLORIA

Terric was the first one in, that guy's a machine.

AVA

Well, look at that, first day at the diner and he's already pulling his weight, how does that feel Leif?

LEIF

So we're just forgetting when I saved our asses a couple of days ago?

AVA

You know what Janet Jackson would say?

GLORIA

What have you done for me lately?

LEIF

You're all terribly ungrateful and I regret saving any of you.

CASPAR

Are you talking to us or your baseball card collection?

LEIF

Is that everybody?

GLORIA

No. Frank and June are still waiting outside the room. I'm going to give them a hand.

CASPAR

I'm going to go coffee the anomalies.

GLORIA CROSSES THE PARKING LOT TO FRANK AND JUNE. THEY ARE LISTENING AT THE DOOR.

GLORIA

Hey, you two. How are we doing?

JUNE

Uh. Frank how're we doing?

FRANK

I don't even know how to answer that question.

GLORIA

Yeah... Just to give you an update, it's going well. We've got everyone in the diner except for yours.

FRANK

Ours?

JUNE

Yeah, it's my Uncle Pete and Aunt Stephanie and his mom and dad. They're kind of all "ours."

GLORIA

I hear you...

FRANK

I can't go in that room, I can't do any of this. What are we even doing?

GLORIA

I know. But trust me this is going to work.

JUNE

What's going to work?

GLORIA

We're just trying to make things like they were.

FRANK

You're asking me to go in there and talk to someone who...

GLORIA

Who died. I know.

JUNE

I mean, the weirdest thing that's ever happened to us is when we saw a UFO one time.

GLORIA

Uh huh.

JUNE

So, this is up a few notches for us.

GLORIA

I see.

JUNE

And that was just a yellow triangle hovering above the town for a few minutes. I don't even know what it was.

LEIF

(Calling from the diner.)

It's a Toferian mapping drone. You see them all the time.

GLORIA

Leif.

LEIF

Sorry.

GLORIA

Look, I've been exactly where you are right now. I was down on my luck in Phoenix and then I stepped through those doors over there. That was that. Here I am now. I've stood in that parking lot and stared down a black hole. I met Space Pirates. I went back to the end of the Ice Age. I think what kept my brain from breaking is... what's the real thing? What's the real thing that's happening? There's a lot going on right now. A diner's appeared in your parking lot, but what's the real thing? Maybe the real thing is, you going in there and saying some things to your dad that you didn't get to say.

FRANK

I don't think that's my dad in there.

GLORIA

And that's fine too, Frank. Because it's not actually about him. This is for you. Give it a shot.

JUNE

Fuck it, Frank, let's get in there.

FRANK

Fine. Okay.

THE DOOR TO THE MOTEL ROOM OPENS AND PETER AND STEPHANIE ARE MID-ARGUMENT.

PETER

We've been through the options a million times. Charleston, Boston, Madison, Santa Fe, Austin two times.

STEPHANIE

You're just listing the names of cities now, this isn't helpful.

PETER

You're right. None of this has been helpful.

FRANK

Okay, can you two just stop please?

PETER

Who are you?

STEPHANIE

Please, come on in, don't bother knocking.

JUNE

This is weird.

FRANK

We can hear you arguing across the parking lot.

STEPHANIE

Which isn't an invitation for you to come on in.

PETER

Can you give us some privacy, please? Whoever you are.

FRANK

I came in here to say that this is ridiculous and both of you need to just knock it off, okay?

STEPHANIE

This is none of your business.

FRANK

You two do this all the time. Why? What are you doing? Do you even know what you're doing?

PETER

Again, trying to have a private conversation.

FRANK

It's not working. I... I stay here at this motel a lot and you two always show up, go into a room, and scream at each other for hours. Just stop it.

PETER

I think how we choose to spend our time is none of your-

FRANK

You're stuck with each other. Okay? You come here and you argue all night long about the same thing: Moving out of town or not. But it's not about that is it? It never was. It's about getting a divorce.

STEPHANIE

That's not true.

JUNE

Yes, it is, guys.

STEPHANIE

How do you know?

JUNE

Because everybody knows. We live here in town, everybody knows. Especially your kids.

FRANK

Especially your kids.

JUNE

Did the two of you know that there's a running bet down at the Sheep's Eye? The Pete and Stephanie divorce pool. Like, that's the official name. There's an envelope in the cash register that says Sturgis' Divorce on it. Minimum bet is twenty dollars. They've been collecting for years. Who keeps joking about it?

FRANK

Celeste.

JUNE

Celeste. Celeste Joos keeps saying she's going to retire as soon as her Sturgis divorce money comes in. She's in deep actually, we're a little worried about it.

STEPHANIE

Is this true?

FRANK

Yes. It's true. And it's ridiculous. Do you want to know why? Because you're never going to break up.

JUNE

Yeah, it's kind of like wondering if your cat is ever going to start talking to you.

PETER

How do you know anything about us?

FRANK

Guys. When you break into several arguments several times a month at various public places all around town, everyone is going to know everything about you. Your marriage is a spectator sport.

JUNE

But not like a baseball game where you don't know who's going to win. It's more like pro wrestling. It's loud and it's entertaining, but it's very obviously fake.

FRANK

Because you are never going to break up.

STEPHANIE

Do they really talk about us like that?

PETER

How do you know any of this?

FRANK

There are billions of people in the world, Pete. So many fish in the sea. But I swear to god, no matter how many people are out there, the only one out there for you two weirdos is each other. There is literally no one else on God's green earth that will put up with your weird bullshit.

STEPHANIE

We don't have weird bullshit.

JUNE

Stephanie, are you banned from shopping at Fred Meyer?

STEPHANIE

... Yes.

JUNE

Why?

STEPHANIE

... Because they were incorporating the weight of their packing material into the price of their meat and seafood, which is illegal.

JUNE

And that got you banned from all their locations why?

STEPHANIE

Because I filed a complaint with their head office.

JUNE

Uh huh. Keep going.

STEPHANIE

And they ignored me.

JUNE

We're almost there.

STEPHANIE

... So I started stealing salmon from the meat section.

JUNE

There we go. Super normal reaction.

STEPHANIE

They were stealing from us, I can't steal from them?

JUNE

Well obviously not, because they had you arrested.

FRANK

Pete, what was it like to get that call? "I'm sorry, you've arrested my wife for what?"

JUNE

Who was in the holding cell with you, some grizzly bears?

STEPHANIE

I'll have you know that the State Attorney General eventually investigated them and they got fined a million dollars.

JUNE

What's it like to be married to the Rosa Parks of line-caught salmon, Pete?

STEPHANIE

Ok, ha ha, everybody laugh at the fish thief, fine. What's the point you're trying to make?

FRANK

The point is, you two didn't fight about that. He had to bail you out of jail for the most ridiculous crime in the history of the state of Oregon and you didn't fight about it.

PETER

Of course we didn't, she was right.

STEPHANIE

I was right.

FRANK

See? You think that's a typical response? It's not. You are the only person who would steal fish from a grocery store as some sort of ridiculous social protest and HE'S the only guy who wouldn't get mad about it.

JUNE

Okay, let's do Pete now.

FRANK

Pete, we should probably talk about Boodles.

JUNE

Oh my God, I forgot about Boodles.

FRANK

You adopted a dog named Boodles, didn't you Pete?

PETER

... Yes, I adopted a Dog named Boodles.

FRANK

A fan of dogs, Pete?

PETER

... I've never really been a pet person.

JUNE
Stephanie, how do you feel about dogs?

STEPHANIE
Not really a fan.

FRANK
And yet Pete came home with a dog.

STEPHANIE
Yes.

FRANK
What gives, Pete?

PETER
He was going to be euthanized, he had stayed at the shelter too long.

FRANK
I see, that's very noble. Can you think of any reason why Boodles had been at the shelter too long?

PETER
... There was a smell.

FRANK
"There was a smell."

STEPHANIE
Saying that dog had a smell is like saying the Beatles were fairly well known.

JUNE
You gave him a bath five times, Pete.

PETER
I did.

FRANK
Did it work?

PETER
It did not.

FRANK
Now, Boodles was a very old dog. But he did hang in there for three years, didn't he? All the while stinking up the whole house.

JUNE

It was the kind of smell that felt like punishment from God or a fairy's curse or something. It was not a natural smell.

PETER

It was bad.

FRANK

You had to keep the windows in the house open in the winter time.

PETER

Not all of the windows.

JUNE

It was a tough time in the house.

PETER

It was.

FRANK

And through it all, you never argued about the dog.

STEPHANIE

No.

PETER

... No.

FRANK

The point I'm trying to make here is... Can you knock it off please? Can you stop it with the arguing all the time? All you're doing is playing around with the idea that you're going to break up, but you're never going to. Because you both drive each other crazy, but on the important stuff, on the salmon stealing and the stinky old dog stuff, that's the stuff you couldn't find somewhere else... So, stop it.

JUNE

What we should probably also say is, people really love you guys. They love to gossip about you but, I don't think they would know what to do without you.

FRANK

Guys. Go home. You don't have to do this anymore. Go home. Your kids already know you're here fighting. Go fight in front of them. They already know you're not breaking up. They might appreciate the honesty.

PETER

Do you talk to your parents this way?

FRANK

No... but I should have. Go home.

JUNE

I mean-

FRANK

Oh right. Don't go home, go over there and have a cup of coffee at that diner.

PETER

At the what?

JUNE

Don't worry about it, here we go!

UP ON THE ROOF. CLEMENTINE IS HIDING.

TERRIC

Not a bad spot to hide.

CLEMENTINE

... What are you doing here? How did they find you?

TERRIC

I'm not sure how they found me. I'm not sure they know either.

CLEMENTINE

Why are you talking like that?

TERRIC

...They found me after I'd left Jerusalem.

CLEMENTINE

That doesn't make any sense... What did I do to you?

TERRIC

I don't think we should talk about that right now.

CLEMENTINE

Terric.

TERRIC

... They found me after I left Jerusalem... about seven hundred years after I left Jerusalem.

CLEMENTINE

...

TERRIC

Their theory is... That morning when we were in bed. I told you about the elixir of life... and that's what did it... Time stopped for me, Clementine.

CLEMENTINE

Oh God...

TERRIC

Maybe there was a better way to tell you that, I'm not sure.

CLEMENTINE

You've been here the whole time?

TERRIC

Yes.

CLEMENTINE

You've been watching me destroy the world. The whole time.

TERRIC

I didn't know it was you. But yes.

GLORIA

(Down on the ground.)
Okay, that's the last of them.

LEIF

Let's bag 'em and tag 'em.

GLORIA

Don't say bag 'em and tag 'em.

CLEMENTINE

They picked you up because they thought you could convince me to stop?

TERRIC

They picked me up because they thought you were about to wave the white flag and would like to see a friendly face.

CLEMENTINE

Terric, do you understand how seeing your face right now has only made it a thousand times worse?

TERRIC

The thought crossed my mind.

CLEMENTINE

I destroyed my planet, Terric. Our planet.

TERRIC

I know.

CLEMENTINE

Terric, I didn't mean it. I didn't mean to.

TERRIC

I know that too.

CLEMENTINE

And now you have to be here to see it. You have to see what I turned into.

TERRIC

Clementine-

CLEMENTINE

Do you think I wanted you to see me turn into a monster? Why would I want that?

TERRIC

Clementine, calm down-

CLEMENTINE

I didn't mean it, Terric! I'm so sorry, I didn't mean it!

TERRIC

Just breathe.

CLEMENTINE

I destroy everything I touch!

TERRIC

Clementine!

THERE IS A CRACKLE OF ENERGY AND DOZENS OF CARS BEGIN POURING INTO THE PARKING LOT. THE CARS PARK AND STEPHANIE AND PETE GET OUT OF EACH ONE OF THEM, PLAYING OUT THE EXACT SAME ARGUMENT AGAIN.

CLEMENTINE

Oh God. Oh no.

MEANWHILE, ON THE GROUND.

GLORIA

Ava?

AVA

Oh, fuck.

GLORIA

What's happening?

AVA

How many are there?

LEIF

I count at least twenty.

CASPAR

They're backed up all the way to the main highway, though.

EFFIE

Ava, I don't think I've got to tell you, I have a bad feeling about this.

ZEBULON

It's as though a dam has broken but it's spilled out automobiles instead of water.

FRANK

I thought you were going to fix this?

JUNE

This is not what fixed looks like.

AVA

Caspar, go down to the entrance from the highway, see how many cars there are.

CASPAR

Okay.

AVA

It's an appreciating anomaly.

LEIF

Oh, fuck.

GLORIA

What does that mean?

AVA

It's replicating itself like a virus.

GLORIA

How fast is it replicating?

CASPAR

The entire highway is jammed with the same car! It stretches all the way around the mountain!

AVA

That was fast.

GLORIA

We can't get all of them in the diner.

AVA

No, we can't. What the hell happened? Where is she?
Clementine?!

TERRIC

(From the roof.)
We're up here.

AVA

What happened?

TERRIC

She got upset and then all of a sudden we're
standing in a car dealership.

AVA

Shit.

GLORIA

That's the opposite of what we wanted you to do,
Terric.

TERRIC

Sorry.

LEIF

We should get Clementine in here. Eventually the
diner will sap her powers.

GLORIA

That's a good idea.

AVA

No, it's not.

GLORIA

Why?

AVA

We may be able to fix her, but that wont fix the
anomaly.

GLORIA

Won't it just go away?

AVA

No, it'll continue.

GLORIA

For how long?

AVA

Indefinitely. Pete and Stephanie and their shitty car is going to keep replicating itself over and over again. The cars will eventually fill up the entire freeway. Then the entire state, then the country, then the world. Gloria, given a long enough timeline, this entire universe we're in will be filled with copy after copy of Pete and Stephanie's Hyundai Sonata.

GLORIA

That's impossible.

AVA

Not anymore.

GLORIA

Well, what the fuck are we supposed to do?

ZEBULON

My friends, I fear all that's left is to solve the problem at it's source.

AVA

I just said, that's not going to work.

EFFIE

Perhaps the problem is not for us to fix, Ava. But for somebody to start cleaning up their own messes.

AVA

... Okay I have an idea.

GLORIA

Great!

AVA

It's an idea that will either work perfectly or erase all of existence including us.

GLORIA

... Fantastic.

CASPAR

There's not a third option?

LEIF

What do we do?

AVA

Nothing. Terric!

TERRIC

Yeah?

AVA
Is she up there?

TERRIC
Yeah.

AVA
Keep her there, I'm coming to you.

TERRIC
Okay.

GLORIA
What are you going to do?

AVA
The way I see it. Clementine is like heavy artillery. She just needs someone who knows how to aim her. Caspar, if I don't come back, just remember: I hate you.

CASPAR
I know.

AVA WALKS TOWARD THE MOTEL.

GLORIA
... All of existence, huh?

CASPAR
I mean, really, were we doing that great of a job with existence anyway?

LEIF
An old shake of the Etch-a-Sketch never hurt anybody.

GLORIA
Do we get to pick what we come back as?

LEIF
If so, it's sixteenth century boatwright for me.

GLORIA
Chocolatier.

CASPAR
Host of Family Feud.

EFFIE
Dear, let's be vintners.

ZEBULON
Wine makers?

EFFIE

I want to get into one of those barrels with my bare feet and smash grapes.

ZEBULON

That's very fancy. I could grow a mustache.

EFFIE

No.

JUNE

Could I play the saxophone?

FRANK

What is wrong with you people?!

UP ON THE ROOF.

CLEMENTINE

(Repeating over and over to herself.)

Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river that sweeps me along, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me... but I am the fire.

AVA

How's she doing?

TERRIC

She's repeating this over and over again.

AVA

Terric, I'm getting the sense that seeing you again was not the instant solution we were hoping it would be.

TERRIC

I probably could've told you that. What's happening down there?

AVA

The universe is filling up with cars.

TERRIC

Cars?

AVA

And to make it worse, it's all Hyundai Sonatas. Not even a cool car.

TERRIC

The entire universe?

AVA

I know. Here you were thinking "I'm seven hundred years old, I've seen it all." Guess what?

TERRIC

Can you do something to fix this, please?

AVA

Yes. Although what I do may actually obliterate us all so, apologies in advance.

TERRIC

What?

AVA

Clementine? Hey, Clementine. Clementine!

CLEMENTINE

Don't yell at me, something bad might happen.

AVA

It *might* happen? Seriously?

CLEMENTINE

Please make it stop.

AVA

Okay. Clementine, I have to say, I've enjoyed our time together a little bit. I like breaking things. And you're really good at breaking things. But you're starting to really fuck with these universes, Lady. And that's a problem, because these aren't your universes, Clementine... They're mine. These are my universes and you're fucking them up and I don't like it when people mess with my shit.

CLEMENTINE

Make it stop!

AVA

Okay. Try and stay calm. This is going to get weird. Close your eyes and don't open them until I tell you to, okay?

CLEMENTINE

Okay.

AVA

Imagine there is a pice of paper in front of you. Let's make it a really nice piece of paper. I'm talking Japanese calligraphy level quality. The kind of paper that's so beautiful you almost don't want to write on it.

(MORE)

AVA (CONT'D)

One person spent hours mulching wood and drying it on a screen so that you could be presented with this beautiful blank sheet. Do you see it?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA

Now everything else is going to fade away. Every sound you hear is going to fade into the background until it's completely gone.

EVERY SOUND FADES AWAY. THERE IS COMPLETE SILENCE.

CLEMENTINE

Where did everything go?

AVA

Don't open your eyes.

CLEMENTINE

Where is it?

AVA

The only thing that exists now is you and me and the sheet of paper in front you.

CLEMENTINE

Why is it all gone?

AVA

Because we're starting from scratch. You have an ink brush in your hand. Do you see it?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA

It's wet with ink. Reach out with the brush and make one single dot on the paper. Do you see the dot on the paper?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA

That dot is a universe. At its very beginning. Unformed. Everything that could be is in that one dot. Do you see it?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA
Reach out to the piece of paper. With your thumb, I want you to smudge the ink. Smear it across the page.

CLEMENTINE
Okay.

AVA
Did you smear the ink across the page?

CLEMENTINE
Yes.

AVA
Good. Your universe now has two dimensions. Can you feel it growing?

CLEMENTINE
Yes.

AVA
We don't need the paper anymore, do we?

CLEMENTINE
No.

AVA
I want you to imagine the paper disappearing, but when it disappears the ink spot stays. That trail of ink you made on the paper, your universe, is now floating in front of you. Do you see it?

CLEMENTINE
I see it.

AVA
Now, with each hand, just your first finger and thumb, I want you to pull the ink spot apart like it's silly putty. Keep pulling and expanding it until it's the size of an egg.

CLEMENTINE
Okay.

AVA
Do you see it?

CLEMENTINE
Yes.

AVA
You just created a third dimension.

CLEMENTINE

... There's so much inside it.

AVA

I know.

CLEMENTINE

It's beautiful.

AVA

I know. But we're not done. A new universe floats in front of you like a cluster of Cottonwood seeds. Reach out with both hands and cradle it in your palms. Everything that exists is in your hands. Now, very gently move the universe from the left side of your vision, to your right, and then slowly bring it back again... Did you do it?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA

You just created time. How does it feel?

CLEMENTINE

I love it so much.

AVA

You created it, of course you do. But now you've given it four dimensions, which means it can grow by itself. Is it getting bigger?

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

AVA

It's the size of a baseball, then a globe, then a beachball, then a house, a mountain, a planet, a solar system, a galaxy... and then it's the size of everything. We're now inside it, floating through it all. We can go anywhere you want. In the long arms of a particular galaxy you can see a familiar blue dot. You float towards it, through the clouds and down towards a small town on a mountainside. You float down onto the roof of a Motel.

THE SOUNDS OF THE FOREST FADE BACK IN. WE NO LONGER HEAR THE SOUND OF PETE AND STEPHANIE AND THE CARS.

LEIF

Whoa.

GLORIA

All the cars are gone.

CASPAR

Holy shit, Ava.

AVA

Open your eyes.

CLEMENTINE

What happened?

AVA

We started over. Kind of. Are they all gone down there?

GLORIA

Yeah, everyone.

AVA

Well, I guess I didn't obliterate us.

FRANK

What the hell just happened?

CASPAR

Okay, for real though, did Ava just do magic?

CLEMENTINE

Thank you.

AVA

You're welcome, dummy.

CLEMENTINE

What did you do?

AVA

I didn't do much of anything. I just told you what to do.

CLEMENTINE

How did you know what to do?

AVA

I'm really smart, Clementine. The more power you have the more knowledge you have to have. The more you can do, the more you need to know what you should do. If you don't you get a universe full of Hyundai Sonatas.

CLEMENTINE

... Is it over?

AVA

Not yet. The next part is the most important part. You and Terric are going to go down to the diner, sit at a booth and you're going to drink coffee and eat pancakes until we've sucked all the terrible bullshit out of you. It could take a while, you're full of a lot of bullshit.

TERRIC

What's that going to do to her?

AVA

Honestly, I'm not sure.

CLEMENTINE

It doesn't matter. I'll do it. I have to.

AVA

Okay. Let's get off this roof then. You need to go down and apologize to literally everyone.

CLEMENTINE

Okay.

EFFIE

Dear, we've got to put some music on because that was a whole dang experience.

ZEBULON

Agreed, dear.

SONG:

LEIF

... Anyway, you'll see these triangular yellow drones from Toferius sometimes. They hover for a minute or so, grab some data and then they're gone, it's no big deal.

JUNE

What kind of data are they grabbing?

LEIF

They make maps. They're nuts about maps, the whole planet, it's weird.

CLEMENTINE

Hey Leif, do you mind if I talk to Frank and June for a second?

LEIF

No problem. Nice to meet you two.

FRANK

Sure.

CLEMENTINE

Hey, guys.

JUNE

Hey... So... Apparently Leif used to be a Space Pirate.

CLEMENTINE

Yes.

FRANK

Normal shit.

JUNE

I mean, it is the most normal thing we've heard today.

FRANK

That's true.

JUNE

And the radio?

CLEMENTINE

Uh, I don't think anyone actually knows the story there.

FRANK

They're telling us that you were just trying to get home.

CLEMENTINE

I was. I could travel anywhere I wanted except back home. So, I kept changing things in my past, hoping it would lead me back there. In the process I... caused all this. Now I'll never get back there.

FRANK

And home was in the future?

CLEMENTINE

Not your future. Another future of another Earth. It's hard to explain.

JUNE

No, I get it.

FRANK

You do?

JUNE

Yes. Because I watched Star Trek. Who's laughing now?

CLEMENTINE

I'm so sorry.

FRANK

I guess now I understand why you were never honest with us.

CLEMENTINE

Yeah.

JUNE

I mean, in a strange way I guess it all makes sense now.

FRANK

I mean, it doesn't make SENSE sense.

JUNE

Oh no.

FRANK

But it makes sense.

CLEMENTINE

Thank you both for being so nice to me this whole time. I really did like it here.

FRANK

You know, Clementine, you may not ever get home but that doesn't mean you'll never "be home" y'know? You heard my mom, she hated it here, but she made us her home. Sometimes home isn't a place.

AVA

Hey there. Mind if I butt in? I need to debrief the motel people before we go.

CLEMENTINE

Yeah. I need to make a bunch of apologies anyway.

JUNE

Bye Clementine.

AVA

So. Hi.

JUNE

So you're, like, the doctor of the ship right?

AVA
It's not a ship.

JUNE
But you're like the smart person with the ideas.

AVA
Sure.

JUNE
See? Star Trek again. I'm lapping you.

AVA
I wanted to mention something before we go. Uh...
We may have fixed things here but there's actually
no such thing as a fixed thing.

FRANK
What do you mean?

AVA
Well, some weird shit went down. We fixed it but
there may be some... residual effects.

FRANK
Residual effects?

AVA
Things may still be a little weird around here.

JUNE
Things are always weird around here.

AVA
Right. This would be a new category of weird.

FRANK
What exactly does this new category of weird look
like?

AVA
Really no idea. Just keep a look out for that,
okay?

JUNE
...Okay.

AVA
Oh and, Frank? Clementine told me that at one point
she... disintegrated your body... and then she
reconstructed your body from ambient molecules in
the atmosphere?

FRANK

She... I'm sorry she what now?

AVA

Reconstructed your body after disintegrating it.

FRANK

Uh huh.

AVA

But you look like you're doing great so just...
keep a lookout for that as well.

FRANK

... Okay.

CLEMENTINE

Hi.

TERRIC

Hi.

CLEMENTINE

Okay. When I look at you I literally feel every
human emotion and it's overwhelming so I just need
to say something.

TERRIC

Okay.

CLEMENTINE

... Actually I think I already said the thing I
needed to say, it was the every human emotion
thing. I put the cart before the horse. I guess I'm
trying to say-

TERRIC

Clementine. I'm going to stand here in this parking
lot until this place starts traveling through the
space time continuum because it's really an amazing
thing to see. Then you and I are going to go inside
and have pancakes. Okay?

CLEMENTINE

... Okay.

CASPAR

This parking lot was full of cars and then you
talked to Clementine and all the cars disappeared,
what kind of Kriss Angel nonsense is that?

AVA

I've told you for years that I am a sorcerer and you don't listen to me. But I shouldn't be surprised because you never listen to me.

CASPAR

I listen to you all the time. It's not my fault that I only understand thirty percent of the things you say.

AVA

Thirty percent is generous.

CASPAR

It's tricky with you physics people because you have these cool names for things that turn out to be super boring like Monstrous Moonshine.

AVA

Monstrous Moonshine is fascinating.

CASPAR

Does it involve either monsters or moonshine? No, it does not, it's a total misnomer and I think the physics community should watch itself.

AVA

Okay, stop for a second.

CASPAR

What?

AVA

I want to talk to you about something.

CASPAR

Ok.

AVA

I'm concerned with some things you've been saying lately.

CASPAR

What things when?

AVA

When we were in the deep freeze...

WE BEGIN TO HEAR A FAMILIAR SOUND IN THE DISTANCE.

CASPAR

... Ava?... Ava, what's happening?

AVA
That sound.

CASPAR
What?

AVA
Do you hear that?

CASPAR
Uh, maybe. I think I hear something.

AVA
Leif?

LEIF
I hear it.

CASPAR
What is it?

GLORIA
It's Chuck.

CASPAR
It's Chuck? 4th dimensional being Chuck? He has
theme music now? Like Foxy Brown?

AVA
There's a sound we heard the last time he showed
up.

GLORIA
And the time before that.

CASPAR
Okay. Well, he's the one who sent us on this wild
ride looking for Clementine, maybe he wants to
congratulate us now. Maybe this is the loot chest
at the end of the adventure.

EFFIE
Gloria.

GLORIA
What?

EFFIE
We must go. Now.

CLEMENTINE
Ow!

TERRIC
Clementine?

CLEMENTINE
Ow, FUCK Ow!

TERRIC
Clementine, what's wrong?

CLEMENTINE
I don't know. OW! Goddamnit!

GLORIA
What's happening, Terric?

TERRIC
I don't know.

EFFIE
Gloria. We've been deceived.

CLEMENTINE
(Voice transforming.)
OOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWW! Ahh! What's happening?

AVA
It's Chuck.

CASPAR
He's killing her.

GLORIA
Why? It's over, we won!

LEIF
The point wasn't to stop her. He just wanted us to wear her down and then flush her out so he could-

CLEMENTINE
PLEASE MAKE IT STOP!

TERRIC
Do something!

CASPAR
We were his fucking hunting dogs.

LEIF
He's going to kill her right in front of us.

CLEMENTINE
Terric?! What's happening?!

GLORIA

Somebody give me some options!

AVA

Uh... Leif! Go up on the roof and turn on the wind chimes.

LEIF

Why?

AVA

I think it may distract him, it may buy us some time.

LEIF

Okay, I'm going.

CASPAR

This was his plan the whole goddamn time. We can't let her just die.

GLORIA

We're not going to.

CLEMENTINE

FUCKING STOP IT!

LEIF

(On the roof.)
Wind chimes are on!

GLORIA

How long until we jump?

LEIF

We're a ways off.

GLORIA

Fuck. Clementine? Clementine, what's happening?

CLEMENTINE

(The pain easing off a bit.)
I don't... I don't know... it's like I'm having my insides ripped out.

GLORIA

Clementine, you teleported the diner to get us here, can you do it again?

CLEMENTINE

I can't... I can't I'm too weak.

ZEBULON

We've been pawns this entire time. We must protect her, Gloria.

GLORIA

How?

ZEBULON

I am not asking you to pray, but to find the closest thing you can.

CLEMENTINE

Oh God, it's starting again. OOOOOW!

AVA

He's finding a way through.

GLORIA

I am officially sick of this. Frank, June.

JUNE

Is she going to be okay?

FRANK

What's happening?

GLORIA

I'm sorry you two. Best of luck, now get off the parking lot.

FRANK

What?

GLORIA

Leif, can you get more power to the wind chimes?

LEIF

I can try.

CLEMENTINE

Gloria!

GLORIA

Clementine, you've got to hang in there, okay?

CLEMENTINE

What's happening to me?

TERRIC

We've got to do something, what's attacking her?

GLORIA

Hang on.

CASPAR

What are we going to do?

GLORIA

Stay out here okay?

CASPAR

What's happening?

GLORIA

... I'm going to go get mad.

CASPAR

Mad?

GLORIA WALKS INSIDE THE DINER AND MAKES A B-LINE FOR THE KITCHEN. SHE PICKS UP A SPATULA AND REPEATEDLY BANGS IT ON THE GRILL.

GLORIA

Hey! I'm talking to you!... There's a girl out there that's about to be killed while you're just sitting here. Are you listening to me?!... I know you're listening to me. I know you listen to us all the time. I know we talk about how this place is random and just pops up in random places, but it doesn't. You don't do that do you?... In fact, I'm guessing nothing you do is random... I know you're listening. I know you're paying attention. There are guajillo peppers in that walk-in that you put there and I'll bet my life you didn't start doing that until I showed up. You're listening. I'm guessing you have some sort of plan that we'll never know, some great mystery, right? Well, I'm sick of it. I'm getting batted around by two forces out of my control: Chuck the 4th dimensional asshole... and you... Whatever you are... And frankly, getting batted around by forces out of my control? I had enough of that back home and I'm not doing it again. So here's the deal. Whatever it is you're up to? You need me. I know you do. You need all of us. And none of us are going to stand for you letting a girl die in the parking lot... You need us, so you need to start acting like it... Move... Now... Take this girl home.

OUTSIDE WE HEAR A CRACK AND THE DINER IS TRAVELING AGAIN. LEIF COMES IN THROUGH THE BACK DOOR.

LEIF

We jumped early. What happened?

GLORIA

I think I used my get out of jail free card.

LEIF
What do you mean?

GLORIA
You were saying that this place is listening to us
right?

LEIF
Yeah.

GLORIA
So I yelled at it.

LEIF
Holy shit.

GLORIA
I'm guessing I get about one of those per lifetime.

LEIF
Nice work.

GLORIA
Let's check on the problem child.

IN THE PARKING LOT.

TERRIC
How are you feeling?

CLEMENTINE
I'm okay. God that was terrible.

ZEBULON
I'm disappointed in myself that we were deceived.

EFFIE
We all are, Zebulon.

TERRIC
Deceived by who? Who are you talking about?

CASPAR
Someone sent us after you, Clementine.

CLEMENTINE
Who?

CASPAR
I don't know how to describe it. An entity. We
named him Chuck.

AVA
We didn't know he was going to try and kill you.

CASPAR

We did not.

TERRIC

Now what happens?

DOOR CHIME

GLORIA

Looks like we're in the clear for now.

CASPAR

How did we jump early?

LEIF

Gloria yelled at the diner.

CASPAR

Yelled at it?

GLORIA

Yes. So, watch yourself.

CLEMENTINE

Gloria, what's happening?

GLORIA

Looks like we've all got a lot of explaining to do,
but for now we're fine. I somehow convinced the
diner to take you home, Clementine.

CLEMENTINE

... Oh God... I wish you hadn't done that.

THE END