

birthday birthday birthday

By Johnny G. Lloyd

CAST LIST

MARISSA: Birthday Girl and Musketeer. Black. (f)
CLARK: Birthday Boy and Musketeer. Pakistani-American, almost white-presenting. (m)
DUSTIN: A friend and Musketeer. Black. (m)
JULIETTE: Another friend and Musketeer? White. (f)
AMANDA: The other friend. Maybe a Musketeer as well. Latinx. (f)
HAYDEN: The senior boy dating Clark. Same actor as Tyler and Blaine. White. (m)
TYLER: A younger man dating Clark. Same actor as Hayden and Blaine. White., (m)
BLAINE: A nicer young man dating Clark. Same actor as Hayden and Tyler. White. (m)

SETTINGS

Roughly 2010, at a college birthday party.

Roughly 2020, at a birthday party in the back room of a fun bar.

Roughly 2030, at a birthday party in a small, private bar.

A while from now, The digital sphere.

None of these are our world. But they're very close.

INTRODUCTION.

MARISSA enters a blank space. She takes a moment to choose a spot and lowers herself to the ground.

She waits.

After a moment, CLARK enters. He acknowledges Marissa. He sits near Marissa and they face each other. After a moment -

BLACKOUT, AND -

TWENTY ONE.

Lights come back up on CLARK, MARISSA, DUSTIN, and JULIETTE sitting in a circle in a college dormitory. There's a bottle of 99 Bananas in the center of them on top of a short, cheap table. The room seems to have no walls.

This is the birthday party within a birthday party. Everyone is happy to be there. Genuinely happy, but a little on edge.

CLARK

...and so then I was like oh my god
Oh my god yeah like
I would totally suck a dick for an A if given the opportunity
Like actually I would and
so Rebecca's dad was like

MARISSA

Have you met Rebecca's dad

DUSTIN

I haven't

JULIETTE

I think once

MARISSA

Ohmygod you have to meet him he's crazy

CLARK

He's like -

He's a fucking psychopath like crazy isn't half of it

Like one of those super white banker types but like -

(he looks at Juliette)

Oh, sorry -

JULIETTE

It's fine

CLARK

Imagine this like six foot two, ex football, that kind of asshole, that's her dad

And he's like, "I actually did that"

And we're all like what

MARISSA

But he's not gay

CLARK

Honey if he was I already would have jumped him

A daddy, yes

DUSTIN

And she said this in front of

CLARK

His daughter, yeah.

And Rebecca's like, what

And her dad's like

MARISSA

This is the best part

CLARK

We *all* do it, I'm just *honest*.

DUSTIN

...

JULIETTE

Was it funny.

MARISSA

It was.

JULIETTE

...okay.

Juliette drinks.

A phone goes off.

Clark grabs a Blackberry from his pocket,
checks it, and quickly puts it back.

CLARK

Aaaand Hayden said he's on his way.

God, I hope this party goes well

JULIETTE

Let's go downstairs then, I wanna go downstairs - see everything -

MARISSA

No, we are - the birthday duo doesn't just see the party

We make an entrance

JULIETTE

It's not my birthday

MARISSA

You're making an entrance with us

CLARK

I'm so fucking nervous, I want everyone to have a good time -

Are you guys having a good time?

MARISSA

I'm having a great time, it's my birthday party

DUSTIN

Can we just get to the toast?

MARISSA

Yes - a toast motherfuckers

CLARK

Fuuuuck yes -

Dustin grabs the bottle from Juliette, who was holding it. He sloppily pours everyone a shot.

DUSTIN

To the best fucking birthday for two of my favorite friends, Marissa and Clark. You monsters. From your best friends -

JULIETTE

I'm best friend and roommate

CLARK

Oh my god - guys -
We should have a group name!

MARISSA

We're not sixteen

DUSTIN

What would you want our group name to be.

CLARK

I don't know, maybe, maybe -
The four...

JULIETTE

Oooh maybe like the four -

MARISSA

The four musketeers.

CLARK

Musketeers or mouse -
Fine.

DUSTIN

Works for me.
Musketeers.

JULIETTE

I was gonna say amigos, but

CLARK

I feel like - can we say that? That doesn't seem like it's

MARISSA

Feels a little - racist, I don't know why

JULIETTE

Really? I don't think it's

DUSTIN

Hey, it's totally cool, it's not a big deal
It just feels a little weird, that's all

CLARK

So then: SPEECH!

MARISSA

You give terrible

CLARK

Shhhhh I can't hear you I'm drunk

Okay so.

And like I know I've said this like a million times but like

When I first got to college I was really concerned that I wouldn't be popular

Not like popular but more like that I wouldn't have any um

Have any friends like nobody would want me to - I'd have a really difficult time fitting in

And so like uh when we all and I know it was totally random that we all lived in the same building but I'd like to think it was fate you know?

Like.

I love us and I love how

We're like this like. United Colors of Benneton ad and I know I'm not supposed to say that but it's true

Like I love that about us because it gives me like hope for the future?

Like the four of us are the fucking future.

And I think that like, when my parents first came here, to like this country or, yeah -

When they first came over they were really worried about like, me having --

That like my life was going to be totally fucked because like, you know, America's kind of this racist disaster. But. But we've - I fit in here, and I didn't know that, that I would and thank you for that so

And even if this is my last semester here, before I move back -

DUSTIN

It's not going to be your last semester

JULIETTE

It's the middle of junior year, it's kind of late to transfer

CLARK

It's not certain, but -

If I get another C my parents said they're going to make me go back home

Since we're spending - wayyyy too much money for me to go here

MARISSA

They're not going to do that, they're just trying to scare you.

CLARK

Yeah, except they're not. But. I don't know. I don't know um...

...

I just wanted to say. I hope tonight is special. Super special for you guys because

I want it to be super special for me, I want to remember this night for forever, so.

Before we go back down to our fucking adoring fans -

DUSTIN

How did you get so many people to come to this party?

MARISSA

We're popular -

CLARK

To the four musketeers, CHEERS

MARISSA

DUSTIN

Cheers.

Cheers -

Everyone raises a glass.

JULIETTE

But then which one of us has the nose?

MARISSA

...what?

JULIETTE

I'm sorry but one of us has to have the nose if we're going to be the musketeers.
You know how there's like a Musketeer with the.

DUSTIN

... I think you're thinking of Cyrano de

AMANDA

Hiding out in your bedroom
So cliché.

Amanda has entered.

She drops a backpack on the floor.

MARISSA

You actually came -

AMANDA

I'm not hugging you but know that I feel the sentiment

CLARK

Want some bananas?

AMANDA

I brought my own, thanks -

She unscrews a flask.

DUSTIN

You just came from the library?

AMANDA

You know we have a midterm on Tuesday, right.

DUSTIN

It's a Friday night

CLARK

- wait the midterm is on Tuesday

MARISSA

That class is basically a joke

JULIETTE

Is this the -

DUSTIN

Intro to Religions class, yeah

AMANDA

I have never spent so much time on something so deeply impractical

DUSTIN

How's the swiffer robot coming along.

AMANDA

His name is Charles, I built him with my actual hands, and he literally won an award. So he's doing great.

Amanda takes more swigs.

CLARK

The midterm is actually on Tuesday? Are you serious?
I haven't studied at all - like, at all - am I panicking? I might be panicking -

AMANDA

Maybe if you'd come to class more than once, then

MARISSA

Which section is this

DUSTIN

McMillan, we're on Buddhism

MARISSA

Then it's - honestly, don't even bother studying.

DUSTIN

Says the Religious Studies major -

MARISSA

Minor, I dropped it -

JULIETTE

So now you're just poli sci?

MARISSA

Yeah - just, time wise, it made sense.

But intro, is, it's a class for athletes, the test is basically like

What is reincarnation and like, who is the Buddha. Like that's it.

And McMillan doesn't know how to read, watch him in class next week, he literally doesn't know how to read, you're fine.

CLARK

I'm gay. I don't know how to read. I'm totally fucked, aren't I.

Shit shit shit fuuuuuck it's the *midterm*?

AMANDA

What's up with him

DUSTIN

Parents threatened to pull him out again.

CLARK

Dustin -

AMANDA

Oh. That. That sucks, I'm -

Clark grabs the Bananas.

CLARK

It's fine! I'm fine. I just am going to drink - a lot - and totally forget about

JULIETTE

I don't get why it's such a big deal to them, like

We're at one of the top ten schools in the country.

And it's not that expensive, and they're doctors, they're rich.

Like they're not going to send you to like, community college just because you got a C in -

CLARK

...uh. I -

MARISSA

I don't know if you've met his parents but
Sorry I shouldn't...

DUSTIN

It's actually really expensive to -
Like forty thousand is a lot.

Clark takes one more large swig and puts down the bottle.

After a moment:

AMANDA

Congratulations on the party, looks busy downstairs - don't know how you got a DJ but -

MARISSA

Eric's frat uses him for house parties, he's a super senior.

AMANDA

It's a big step up from the first one of these

JULIETTE

Do you count last year as the first one or do you count

CLARK

The hall party!

MARISSA

The hall party.

DUSTIN

That might have been the most fun night of college. Or at least freshman year.

CLARK

Right? I think so too -

JULIETTE

I'm so sad I missed it - I shouldn't have rushed, what a nightmare

HAYDEN

Helloooo beautiful people

Hayden enters. He doesn't stop talking.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Oh my GOD you guys I could barely get in the front door - you smell so nice, happy birthday Clark - happy birthday Marissa too, happy birthday to both of you, hi - sorry I always forget your name?

DUSTIN

Dustin.

HAYDEN

Hiiii Dustin sorry I just always forget
Juliette oh my god those pants

JULIETTE

...what about them

HAYDEN

Just like only wear those pants they're so cute
You guys are so popular - when did you become so popular

CLARK

I know uhhhhh thank you

HAYDEN

Oh my god sorry - who are you?

He's talking to Amanda.

MARISSA

Oh my god have you never met Amanda before?

HAYDEN

I don't - think so? Like

AMANDA

I'm Amanda

HAYDEN

I swear I've never met you before.

CLARK

Like, freshman year. Amanda.
Amanda we've - she's my friend and.

...

HAYDEN

Oh my god so good meeting you Amanda! Wow, so nice to -

Hayden tries to go in for a hug.
Amanda holds him off with a handshake.

JULIETTE

I want to toast can I toast

MARISSA

I

HAYDEN

Are we doing toasts? Oh my god

JULIETTE

Okay so I just have to say that like

You guys have been good friends for me I think for the last three years because (I'm saying this wrong) You guys have been help ful for me, like - have expanded my horizons Like I never thought I'd have friends of so many different - shades and um. All over the world! Like from Pakistan, and uh. All over, all over, so um -

CLARK

I wasn't born in Pakistan. I was born in Pittsburgh.

JULIETTE

No I know, I'm just saying - uh. Happy... birthday.

Amanda drinks, then idly refills her flask with the 99 Bananas..

HAYDEN

Wow. That was.

I'm so excited!

We're celebrating oh my god let's celebrate let's do something that's like very -

...

Clark if you wanna come to the bathroom with me for like two seconds

CLARK

...to like

HAYDEN

Oh my god Marissa you should come too

We need to have just like a super quick check in but after

MARISSA

You can say the word cocaine.

Nobody here hasn't done coke it's fine, other than Amanda, probably -

AMANDA
Definitely not

DUSTIN
I haven't done

CLARK
Last halloween

MARISSA
Last halloween

DUSTIN
...oh I didn't think that - you actually thought I did -
I just watched you guys. I have some - restraint.

HAYDEN
So like if anybody *else* wants to

JULIETTE
Let's do it
(to Dustin)
A first time for everything -

DUSTIN
(to Juliette)
I said I'm good -

AMANDA
I'm not going to partake but I kind of want to watch -

MARISSA
I don't know if I'm - in the mood

JULIETTE
(to Dustin)
Pleaseeee I feel like I need a friend to
Don't be weird, everyone's being

MARISSA
What are we being?

DUSTIN
I think Juliette's just. Drunk.

A moment.

Juliette grabs the bottle of 99 Bananas.

JULIETTE

Oops.

Juliette exits.

HAYDEN

Finally -

Hayden and Amanda exit.

CLARK

This is a bad decision -

MARISSA

Probably yeah.

CLARK

Great -

Clark exits.

MARISSA

Did she really take the 99 bananas?

Marissa pulls a small bottle of Goldschlager out of her pocket.

DUSTIN

She bought it

MARISSA

But it's still -
Like, it is my birthday.

DUSTIN

I love that you keep on saying that like it means something.

MARISSA

I mean obviously it means something like
 There are literally eighty five people downstairs who are here for my birthday
 Who probably are like oh my god where did she go, like.
 And you only turn twenty one once.
 You want any Goldschlag?

DUSTIN

Yeah, a little bit -

Marissa hands Dustin the bottle. He drinks.

MARISSA

So - that was awkward, or -

DUSTIN

Oh - um - Juliette, just now? Maybe.
 She hadn't uh - you didn't see her take any -

MARISSA

I don't think so.

DUSTIN

Good.
 Who does quaaludes? Like who does that?
 ...I shouldn't be so hard on her.
 I think she's a good person just
 Sometimes I get frustrated because
 It's like, she keeps on making things really - awkward, when we're together.
 And I wish she would - stop or change or.

MARISSA

People don't change.

DUSTIN

I feel like she didn't used to be so -

MARISSA

She's one hundred percent the same person she was freshman year. We're just worse at
 Handling it.

Whatever, I don't want to talk about her anymore. I'm tired of.
 I think I'm going to cut my fake ID in half at midnight.

(MORE)

Get Clark to do it too.
It'll be a ritual or a symbol or something.

DUSTIN

Or, you could give it to someone else.

MARISSA

Yeah, okay. Who are you giving your fake ID to.

DUSTIN

I don't think I - like. Know anyone who it would like. Uh. Fit.

...

Where is Eric?

MARISSA

Oh, he's.
He's coming it might
Take him a little while but it's
He's coming from downtown because his
Frat had like a

DUSTIN

Okay.

MARISSA

It's been a whole, thing, yeah -
But yeah he texted me and said he was

DUSTIN

And it's been -

MARISSA

Good? Yeah.
I mean who knows how much longer but.
It's better than being -- alone.

DUSTIN

...oh, yeah that uh, that is cool

MARISSA

Yeah, and - and he's going to be in the city next summer, he just found out, so we're both -
I mean obviously he's not working with me

DUSTIN

Did he end up doing

MARISSA

On campus recruiting, yeah, he got a good finance thing.
So, actually, he's at the bank Clark wanted to be at but.
But I don't think Clark really cared that much about that. I think Clark just wanted a job.

DUSTIN

And he got one.

MARISSA

Yeah, but in branding, so. I mean. I think he'll do great in branding. But it's not -

DUSTIN

Finance, yeah. The dream.
You're still living with Clark?

MARISSA

Over the summer? Yeah, totally, Eric and I aren't -
But Eric's living down the street from us, though, is the plan, so. It'll be convenient.
...you decided on the

DUSTIN

UBS offer? Not yet. I think I have like three more days. So soon.
I mean on one hand, they're bad people, but on the other hand -

MARISSA

Money.

DUSTIN

So much money. So - we'll see.
...
You know -

MARISSA

What do I

DUSTIN

Eric's frat sucks.

MARISSA

Don't say that.

DUSTIN

I did say that. And you agree, it's like a known fact that Sig Ep sucks.
Honestly I thought you'd end up with

MARISSA

An Alpha

DUSTIN

Did you really think I was going to go there

MARISSA

I don't know where I thought you were going to go

DUSTIN

Maybe someone from like
Beta

MARISSA

Oh my god did you say that

DUSTIN

Say what

MARISSA

Beta boys are so

DUSTIN

White, so totally up your alley

MARISSA

Literally nobody else can say that to me, I hope you know that

DUSTIN

The truth.

...

MARISSA

...
It's my birthday!
...

Marissa and Dustin kiss.

MARISSA (CONT'D)

...that wasn't like - planned, or - in the plan, or

DUSTIN

Totally unexpected, like it was a
Oh wow

MARISSA

Nobody has to know about this.

DUSTIN

...ideally people could know - about this, right, like, I'm a good guy I don't want to creep -

MARISSA

You actually want to - like for real date, like, even if it's messy - it would be so messy -
- did you just say I'm a bad person or -

DUSTIN

Not that - kind of - not exactly -
Shit shit (shit) that wasn't supposed to be insulting, I'm just, overwhelmed,
I don't think I should drink anymore.
It clouds my - decision making. I always think I'm sober, but I'm not.

Amanda enters with the bottle of liquor.

AMANDA

...I'm just bringing back the bananas.

DUSTIN

I need some water.
Yeah. Water great.
Great -

Dustin exits.

AMANDA

Did I just mess something up, or -

MARISSA

I don't think you did. No. No. I don't - I hope not -
I'm really happy you came! I didn't think you would -

AMANDA

You know how much I love a party.
I hate parties. I have a terrible headache.
...nice house, though.

Amanda takes a large gulp from the Bananas.

MARISSA

You should have lived with us!

AMANDA

I'm a bad roommate.

MARISSA

There's no way you'd be worse than Juliette.

AMANDA

I am. Very not involved.
...it's been bad?

MARISSA

An absolute nightmare, like she's been -
She's not gross - Clark is gross but she's more like
She'll start off being kind of nice but actually
She isn't nice at all, she's - aloof, and then she's
Jealous and then she's actually really mean, I think, like, you saw her with Clark just
now, like
I think she wants me to hate her? Like because if I hate her she gets a pass to be like
A real monster. And that would suit her so well because.
That's where the control is, right. In being the monster.
The monster sets the rules.
...so basically she's trying to fuck up the friend group but I'm not going to let her because

AMANDA

do you want to be the monster, or

MARISSA

...I don't think I

CLARK

Did someone call me gross like two minutes ago?

Clark enters.

AMANDA

You heard?

CLARK

I have amazing ears. And the walls are thin.

MARISSA

We were just talking about how Amanda would have been a better roommate than

CLARK

OHMIGOD Amanda you should have lived with us you would have been so much better than

AMANDA

...okay.

MARISSA

But like, okay - Clark - okay

Wouldn't you say that Juli (sorry should probably be quieter) juliette has been an absolute monster

CLARK

I mean maybe not monster just like of like
Probably more just like... a mess? Like a constantly drunk, messy -
Like you should see her in there right now, she's like
Very much just like, I drink, obviously I drink, but she's *obliterated* and

Amanda has been fidgeting with her flask.
She pockets it and stands up.

AMANDA

I just have to go to the bathroom.

Amanda exits.

CLARK

So. Hayden brought way too much coke and it's in this really large bag like it's flour or. If you want some you could

MARISSA

I like Hayden.

CLARK

No you don't. I don't even like Hayden.
That's a lie. I like some things about him. It's nice not to be the messy one.
It's nice to feel normal.
I'll probably break up with him next week, I don't need his ID anymore so like.
...

MARISSA

You shouldn't worry so much.

CLARK

About what. I worry about everything.

MARISSA

You're not going to have to drop out.

CLARK

I mean, I might, but it's fine. It's really fine.
I'm fine.
...I don't want everyone to think I'm stupid.

MARISSA

Nobody thinks you're stupid.
Just - don't let Juliette get under your skin.

CLARK

Wait, what? Juliette? Ohhhhh -
No, that didn't bother me. That was just her being her.
She's just trying to connect? I think?

(MORE)

In a weird way, like
 If she got a C, her parents would like, call the school and get a name a building to get them
 to change her grade.
 So she looks at me and - I mean, we couldn't get a building donated, but.
 She's trying to empathize. And that's big! A big change.
 Empathy is a big shift for her.

MARISSA

... if that's her trying out empathy, then -

CLARK

You know, you talk about her a lot

MARISSA

I don't, not -

CLARK

I didn't mean to say - wow - that was more aggressive than I.
 Cocaine is a bad. Huh. Makes you more aggressive.

HAYDEN

Only if you're an aggressive person.

Hayden enters.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Or trying not to be an aggressive person, it's the same thing, when it comes to cocaine.
 Trying not to be and being. The same effect.
 The walls here are super thin, you weren't kidding. Kiss me.

Clark gives Hayden a kiss.

CLARK

Babe I'm stressed, I don't think I should have done any

HAYDEN

Coke? Yeah, shitty time to do coke if you're stressed, but listen -
 You really think that you're going to drop out next semester because your dealer
 Is way better than my guy so if you wouldn't mind putting us in touch -

Juliette enters.

She stares at Marissa and Clark.

...can we help you?

MARISSA

Juliette does not respond.
She stumbles to a purse in the center of the room, she looks inside of it, zips it back up and stumbles out of the room.

The fuck was that about -

MARISSA (CONT'D)

Dustin enters.

Did you see Juliette

DUSTIN

She just grabbed her purse

CLARK

Shiiiiit

DUSTIN

Dustin exits. Clark and Marissa give each other a confused look.

Oh wait. Did you guys not know?
You didn't know oh my god poor things.
Oh *honey*.

HAYDEN

What's happening

MARISSA

SO - I think the short version of the story is
I mean, I didn't, I'm not saying that it's that big of a deal but
What had happened was
Juliette seemed really sad, so

HAYDEN

You gave her a lot of cocaine.

AMANDA

Amanda enters.

HAYDEN

She wasn't there -

AMANDA

I didn't have to be because I saw her in the hallway and she was like
Oh my god that guy gave me so much cocaine

HAYDEN

I don't think it was the cocaine if it was the cocaine we could have kept it together
But I saw her, so -
After you left, Clark, she pulled out this bag of

MARISSA

The quaaludes

HAYDEN

And then Dustin came in and they got into a thing
And then - you sorry I'm blanking on your name - you came in and

Dustin enters.

DUSTIN

The walls are fucking thin so she heard you say her name, Marissa
And then she heard you stop and laugh and then she

HAYDEN

Got in her feelings

AMANDA

She reacted in the way you would expect given the
Alcohol and the cocaine and the quaaludes so
Good work everybody

CLARK

Where is she now

AMANDA

She's downstairs, on the dance floor

DUSTIN

She broke a window

HAYDEN

Oooop. Didn't know that.

DUSTIN

She got up on a couch and started dancing
But then she fell and threw her hand through the window, so she's bleeding
And now she's yelling at a bunch of the freshmen who got into the party

CLARK

There are freshmen here?

Marissa stands up, quietly, and exits.
Everyone looks around.

DUSTIN

Fuck.

HAYDEN

Sorry, I've got to see this.

Dustin and Hayden exit as well.

A moment.

CLARK

Well.

AMANDA

I mean you probably could have seen this coming.

CLARK

...like.

I mean yeah, I did see this coming but. That doesn't mean I knew what to do about it, or.
Maybe seeing something bad happen is necessary so you can learn from the disaster.
Or, actually maybe I have no idea what I'm talking about, I don't know.

He grabs the 99 Bananas.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Am I a likeable person?

AMANDA

You're one of the five people I know at this school.
So if I don't find you somewhat likeable then

CLARK

Just I have a - sense of - that.
Maybe you don't like me very much and that you are. Not. Saying that.

AMANDA

If I didn't like you I feel like I'd have a good reason.
... that's not a dig, I just feel like it's not my job. To make you feel that way.
Like we're fine. It's cool if we're not still best friends. I don't hate you. We're fine.

CLARK

Okay.
...my parents told me to tell you hi.

AMANDA

Were they in town?

CLARK

Yeah like last weekend. For my birthday. They're good.

AMANDA

Good. That's good.
...so you told them? Or -

CLARK

Told them about...? OH. Uh.
No no I'm um. I think I'm going to wait until after college in case they have a -
I imagine that they'll have a bad reaction I don't want to get like - disowned or something

AMANDA

Weren't you going to tell them over the summer?
They're the most liberal people I know, it's not going to matter

CLARK

Yeah, maybe, but. I don't know if you've noticed
But I'm kind of on thin ice with them, right now. So. Just in case -
How are your parents.

AMANDA

In Florida. Still.

CLARK

Great place to be.

AMANDA

Great place - Florida Man, the constantly falling into the ocean -
I mean I like it, there, don't get me wrong. I miss it.
I miss home, but I don't miss them. My parents. So. They're fine, I guess.

CLARK

That's dark.

AMANDA

I know, nobody admits that they miss Florida. That's - objectively crazy.
But I do.
- but dark, you want to talk about dark, look at this birthday party

CLARK

Ohhh but this is like - fun dark.
Like it's a mess but it's okay because there are like no stakes, it's dark like that.
I miss you.

AMANDA

...I haven't gone anywhere.

CLARK

I know.

...

This is really awkward for me to ask but, remember freshman year when we had our little
Our little plan in intro to astronomy?

AMANDA

Yeah?

CLARK

Well I was wondering - if we could do that again - for religion class
And I'll pay you this time, I promise, it wouldn't be fair if I

AMANDA

- you want me to help you cheat on the midterm?

Marissa storms in.

MARISSA

She's a fucking mess oh my god
She's fucking ruined everything

CLARK

How's the window

MARISSA

Totally fucked, and she's bleeding every where

Dustin enters.

DUSTIN

What the fuck did you say to her?

MARISSA

What are you talking about?
I told her not to be such a mess

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

She's freaking out right now

JULIETTE

That's not true

Juliette has arrived.

And this time she's making an entrance, honey.

She storms in, almost falls over, but plants
herself in the center of the room.

Hayden comes in behind her.

HAYDEN

I tried to -

CLARK

It's fine honey

JULIETTE

That's not what you said to me.
Tell them what you said to me.

MARISSA

Oh my god stop being so dramatic Juliette

JULIETTE

I'm NOT being DRAMATIC fucking TELL THEM

MARISSA

Why don't you tell them what you said to me then

CLARK

What the fuck

DUSTIN

...
marissa just

MARISSA

No no no Juliette
Tell them what you said to me. Roomie.

JULIETTE

I said

HAYDEN

You probably shouldn't -

JULIETTE

Fuck off, I'll say what I want

CLARK

This - this is not - fun - anymore just
Get out, everyone
This is my room everyone get out please

MARISSA

Let her

Clark gets Hayden out of the room.

CLARK

Thank you, for your time, this is done now, thanks -

Clark and Dustin begin to exit as well.
They pass Juliette.

JULIETTE

I said Marissa why do you hate me so much

MARISSA

Say exactly what you

JULIETTE

I said Marissa do you hate me so much because I'm white or something.

DUSTIN

...

JULIETTE

...

CLARK

Oh. My. God.

Oh my god nobody hates you because you're racist Juliette.

We hate you because you're a drugged up, psychopath, alcoholic.

Another moment.

Marissa smiles at Clark.

Juliette starts to say something then runs out.

AMANDA

What the fuck is your problem.

Amanda's about to cry. She runs out.

CLARK

What did I -

DUSTIN

No no

No no no

No no no no that was so not cool. So not.

Someone needs to -

Y'all are so messed up

MARISSA

I didn't say it -

But Dustin has already gone.

A moment.

CLARK

Fuuuuuuck.

MARISSA

What a fun mess.

CLARK

Is there still a party going on downstairs.

I never got to go down to the party.

An alarm goes off.

Marissa and Clark look at their phones and
laugh.

MARISSA

Midnight.

CLARK

Midnight.

...you okay?

MARISSA

Yeah - yeah.

I always thought that - when I was this old - I'd be surrounded by people. And instead -

CLARK

I am your people.

MARISSA

...yeah.

Actually yeah. You are my people. Aren't you.

CLARK

You're my people, too. Promise. Always.

Birthday buddy.

Well.

Clark grabs the 99 Bananas and takes a swig.
He hands it to Marissa. He also takes a drink.

MARISSA

Happy fucking birthday.

THIRTY ONE.

TYLER sits at a table with Dustin.
They aren't talking - they're just kind of staring
at each other.
Tyler's kind of always on his phone - everyone
else is on their phone but a little less so.
Clark and Jodie walk in and see them. Jodie
nods and Clark takes a deep breath. Jodie
watches for long enough to see Clark sit down,
and at the moment Clark sits down -

DUSTIN

Sounds interesting

TYLER

Yeah, basically we leveraged the international investments to create ground-based low-risk loans for a mixture of smaller local actors and a handful of approved conglomerates

CLARK

I don't understand a word either of you are saying

DUSTIN

When I was at UBS it was like that too
 Very - in my group at least, You could see the investment on a
 Personal level

TYLER

Why did you leave?

DUSTIN

I think I'd -
 I'd already kind of done it, you know, I got to VP, and I looked at the people who'd
 stayed there for a while and
 I think it's kind of an ugly industry. I don't want to be around people who are...
 The people are bad people. You know. They're bad people. Like.
 I did - I made choices, professional choices based off of my moral - morality, but some of
 them...
 And with the baby and -

CLARK

They posted this today, look at how cute she is -

Clark scrolls and shows Tyler.

DUSTIN

Thanks - she's adorable - but - but
 Also, you get into the politics of -- the big banks are responsible for all of this - mess that
 we're in, economically, which is causing some of the - other stuff, that's happening, and.
 I couldn't co-sign that, like, I want to know that my - psyche, whatever, is - unvarnished.
 But that's just me.

...

What about you, why did you leave.

TYLER

Can I be honest? Like when I started, in finance, I was just aiming to get to the top but
 But now that I've been out of college for a little while and working it's just like
 Some of these people who got to the top, who made it, you know
 yeah they make a bunch of money, but they're actually really fucking lazy

(MORE)

Like they don't think of themselves, they think for the company, they're totally lost in Corporate identity bullshit
 And I'm smarter than them, maybe that's hubris but like
 All of my life I've been working to be the best and actually
 A lot of people who work to be the best do it for some other reason
 Like they want to feel valued, or respected or, like, loved, or something.
 But I actually want to be the best. I want more. I want the most.
 I felt I could be the best and the richest - that's crass but you know like, it matters -
 If I was just willing to - take a leap? If I wasn't afraid to be the competition.
 So I did that.
 Bleed myself dry but now I'm the fucking competition and I'll fucking murder them.

DUSTIN

Oh.
 How long ago did you graduate from college?

TYLER

Two and a half years ago.
 And for you it's been -

DUSTIN

Same as Clark, a little less than nine years.

CLARK

We're aging gentlemen.

TYLER

He's not a gentleman, gentleman means like old old, like forty or whatever.
 ...party's cleared out some.
 Is it still an open bar?

CLARK

Until midnight, so -

Tyler gets up.

TYLER

We need like what, two, three - three drinks?

Tyler exits.

CLARK

GET ONE FOR MARISSA TOO -

And Tyler's gone.

CLARK (CONT'D)

If I have one more drink I'm going to fall asleep and never wake up.

DUSTIN

You used to be able to drink that kid under the table.

CLARK

When I was his age. He's so young. Isn't he so young?

I just look at him sometimes and I'm like - you're so, so, soooooo young.

Like life hasn't crushed his spirit yet.

Who knows, we've only been dating three months, I guess there's time.

DUSTIN

He looks just like - I hope you don't mind me saying this.

He looks like every other boy you've ever dated.

CLARK

...he does *not!*

I do NOT believe you're READING me

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Every boy since I've known you

So since you've been dating boys

CLARK

Did you know the first boy I ever hooked up with I hooked up with in your bed

Because I was too drunk to figure out which one is which, freshman year

CLARK (CONT'D)

Did I ever tell you that?

Huh?

No, that guy was junior year

DUSTIN

You did what?

Was this the cokehead?

The one with the coke habit.

CLARK

What was his name - I honestly don't remember.

Did you know - I never did coke again after we broke up.

Okay like a couple of times right after we graduated but I certainly never *paid* for it again.

DUSTIN

But this kid, Tyler - you like him?
You're bringing him to birthday parties, must mean you really -

CLARK

...
He's fine.

Amanda and Marissa enter.
Marissa has a drink.

MARISSA

Look who I found -

AMANDA

Do you guys just like hiding in corners, or -

CLARK

You came!

DUSTIN

Oh wow - Amanda, how are you?

AMANDA

I'm miserable. But in a fun way! Hi Clark.

MARISSA

I told you we work together now, right?

DUSTIN

At the -

AMANDA

Law firm but I'm doing computer stuff for them, IT.
Three weeks and I haven't gotten fired yet, so.

CLARK

How's it going so far?

AMANDA

Fine - they have this really arcane system, actually
Basically they have this really awful um, router - which -
Okay not to get too technical because it's not like I know that much about this stuff
either but - I guess they wanted to make a super secure system
And obviously the most secure system is two points, right. Your computer to the router.
(MORE)

Done. But -

That's also kind of unstable because if something's wrong with your computer then it can create this feedback loop? I'm going on and on aren't I. Uh -

So you get this feedback loop where some bad thing in your computer goes to the router

Which fucks up the router and then goes back and fucks up your computer and so on.

So I've been - opening up the system. Getting a few more points of access.

CLARK

That makes literally no sense to me but I'll take it

DUSTIN

And when did you leave California?

AMANDA

I'm uh -

Well technically like a year ago but

I'm actually in Jersey so that's why

DUSTIN

Ohhhh -- we were thinking about Jersey

Do you like it or -

AMANDA

It's fine.

MARISSA

Clark, where's your sugar twink

AMANDA

What's a sugar twink

CLARK

Like a sugar daddy but a twink

He's getting us a round of drinks.

DUSTIN

He's rich? He's like twelve

CLARK

Family money. I love dating people with family money, they have no idea how much it's worth.

MARISSA

Can you tell him I'm only drinking tequila?

DUSTIN

I got it.

Before Dustin can leave:

TYLER

Let's get fucking lit -

He's carrying a tray with seven shots on it.

MARISSA

Are they tequila?

CLARK

You got shots?

TYLER

They're tequila. Where's everyone else, I thought they were by the bar?

MARISSA

They left. We're the late crew.

TYLER

Then more for us. Cheers everyone -

Tyler and Marissa pick up a shot.

CLARK

This is a terrible idea.

MARISSA

Let's go, Clark.

Dustin picks up two shots, handing one to Clark.

CLARK

Really?

DUSTIN
Okay everyone - to the birthday duo!
Oh - uh -

TYLER
She doesn't have one.

AMANDA
I'm good, thanks -

Amanda takes a small step outside of the circle.

TYLER
Happy birthday, motherfuckers.

Everyone says cheers and drinks.

CLARK
Oh my god that's actual poison.

TYLER
We've got three more - Marissa, Clark -

MARISSA
I think I'm good - WOOO

TYLER
Come on -

CLARK
I think I'm good, too.

TYLER
Is this what it's going to be like when I get old?
Because if that happens I'm fucking done, like shoot me on sight, like -

DUSTIN
I'll do it.

MARISSA
You sure?

DUSTIN
Whoever finishes first gets the extra shot.

Dustin and Tyler each grab a shot.

TYLER

Cheers old man.

DUSTIN

(very quietly:)

I'm going to fucking bury you.

They clink plastic shot glasses.
They down their drinks at the same rate but
Dustin reaches for the second shot faster and
drinks it immediately.

TYLER

Fuck. FUUUUCK.

...

Good work man.

Should have fucking

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

...

...

Yeah thanks

I need some water, I'll

Dustin exits.

TYLER

...you want another drink? I'm gonna get another

Tyler exits. Clark turns to Amanda and Marissa,
points an imaginary gun to his head, and exits.

MARISSA

That was -

AMANDA

Unbelievably stupid.

MARISSA

I was going to go with kind of funny, but.

Also that, yeah.

...

I'm happy you came.

AMANDA

Of course I was going to come, what else was I going to do.
I mean, not come, was what I was going to do, but -
I do owe you. A lot, right now. So you get at least one more birthday party.

MARISSA

You don't owe me anything.

AMANDA

Sure.
Wow. Dustin looks the exact same, so does Clark - maybe a little more tired, but.
...I don't think I look the same.
Do I look the same?

MARISSA

I can't tell.

AMANDA

Is Eric coming?

MARISSA

Oh, he had to - take care of the dog.
But he'll be -

Clark enters.

CLARK

Marissa, Marissa
This child that I'm dating is getting into a fight with the bartender about credit cards

MARISSA

Oh god -

Marissa exits.

Clark absent mindedly glances at his phone.

AMANDA

I was telling Marissa, you're the exact same.

CLARK

I am? I think - I don't know that I'm the exact same person.
I think I'm nicer than I used to be. I think I used to be really mean.

(MORE)

I'm trying not to be mean anymore. I don't know. Sometimes it still comes out.
 And I have a job now, that's different
 But I'll take the compliment, obviously, tell me how young I look, please

AMANDA

You're at the -

CLARK

Advertising agency, thing, yeah. That's cool.
 But I'll take the compliment, obviously, tell me how young I look, please --
 Do you not think you're the same person?

AMANDA

Maybe. I don't know.
 A lot has happened.
 ... how was their wedding? I'm sad I missed -

CLARK

Which - Marissa and Eric? I mean, it was a wedding.
 It was - so like them. So, sooooo like them. You know.
 Wish you could have made it. You were going to be my table mate.

AMANDA

Table mates for life.
 Yeah, I'm sorry I missed - just - the timing of - getting back in town and - culture shock
 and -

Tyler and Marissa enter.

MARISSA

Okay we got it all sorted out, everything's fine -

TYLER

If you want another drink let me know now because I'm not getting up again.

AMANDA

Still good.

TYLER

So what are we talking about?
 What can we talk about?

(MORE)

Friends?

Music?

Politics -

AMANDA

CLARK

Not politics

Catching up

MARISSA

Why would you ever want to talk about politics

TYLER

Oh my gosh I love it, I love the - mess

CLARK

I just get depressed

TYLER

Babe, I'm going to make you a total political junkie if it's the last thing I do, like

TYLER (CONT'D)

MARISSA

It's all so fucked up -

But it's all so fucked

Exactly, which is why it's

... I

TYLER

Like it's all this - theoretical, you know, danger of what -

Authoritarianism? Like, let's be real, when have we not really been authoritarian so

I'm just kind of like, sitting back, with popcorn

MARISSA

I guess I'm just wondering like

When we're all totally fucked if you're still going to find it exciting

Or if you're going to be like oh shit actually this is fucking terrible

TYLER

They're not going to do anything to us, come on.

CLARK

What makes you think that.

TYLER

Oh my god come on
 You think that now, after all of the - progress that's happened, someone's going to be like
 Hey, you, homosexual spending thousands of dollars on like, West Elm
 Stop doing that, we're going to be like, really shitty to you now -

AMANDA

Not everyone can spend that. Not everyone has that money to spend.

TYLER

Yeah, and those people are not us.

CLARK

Thought experiment, what if they did actually say, we're going to be really shitty to you.

TYLER

I mean, they could say anything, but it won't stick. We're fine.

MARISSA

...you are so - optimistic.

TYLER

Probably more practical.
 I mean - no offense, I don't mean offensively, but like
 I think I'd be more freaked out for you guys, because like, you're like
 (points at Marissa and Amanda)
 Visibly more - with the race rhetoric, you know, it's been -
 You saw what happened in Florida. But. But like - we can kind of - blend in. When we
 need to. It's part of the thing.

MARISSA

...with the gays.

TYLER

The gays.

CLARK

I don't know if that's uh - true across the board.

TYLER

Maybe not, but for us. We have that benefit so. Why get worries.
So. Sooooo. Enough politics. I think, I'm getting the sense, not a socially engaged crowd.
You all met in college?

MARISSA

Yeah -

Amanda grabs her bag and begins to leave.

CLARK

You heading out?

AMANDA

I'm just feeling a little - tired.
Tell Dustin I said bye,
No it's fine, thanks for inviting me again, I really .
Have a good night.

MARISSA

Bye.

CLARK

Hey. I'm happy you came.

AMANDA

...you too.

Amanda leaves.

TYLER

Were you all like close in college
Or

MARISSA

Really close.

CLARK

What did we used to call ourselves?
The - what was it

Musketees.
MARISSA

So like you guys and -
TYLER

Dustin.
CLARK
Dustin is a really cool guy, he's just like kinda hard to figure out sometimes.

CLARK (CONT'D) MARISSA
But yeah, that was the main group - Ish. Cool-ish.

CLARK
But like half of the people here earlier were from college too.

MARISSA
We've done a really good job with keeping up with people.

CLARK
We throw really good birthday parties.

Tyler finishes his drink.

TYLER
You guys are fun.

MARISSA
I'm fun.

TYLER
(turning to Clark)
I'm so jealous.
I wish my college experience had been this.
Diverse.

CLARK
...
yeah I mean

MARISSA

diverse yeah uh
I mean like
honestly being friends with white people takes energy so like
That's why we don't have any white friends
You're lucky we let you hang out with us, actually.

She points at Tyler.

Tyler clearly thought she was going to point at
Clark.

A moment of: hmhhh.

CLARK

Yeah it's

TYLER

I thought that

CLARK

...
you uh
You know I'm not like.
Like I'm not actually like a - white - person.

TYLER

...
you look

MARISSA

But he's not, so.

TYLER

I met your parents

CLARK

They're from Pakistan.
I'm from Pakistan.

TYLER

I didn't - they don't have an -
Did I do something wrong.
I feel like I did something wrong.

(MORE)

...

I feel like I want another drink.

Tyler exits.

MARISSA

...how much do you trust me.

CLARK

What kind of question is that, you're the only person I trust

MARISSA

Don't tell me you weren't actually going to tell him that

CLARK

I don't know what I was going to tell him.

MARISSA

...

Well that's.

Kinda fucked up, don't you think?

CLARK

I - like, maybe?

But given the circumstances it feels -

MARISSA

Which circumstances.

Dustin enters. He collapses in a chair, head
down.

DUSTIN

Pretend I'm not here. What are you talking about.

MARISSA

Clark didn't tell his boyfriend he's not white.

DUSTIN

He is white.

CLARK

Maybe, until they find out that I'm not, and then I'm *really* not.
...also that was really rude but I'm going to ignore that -

DUSTIN

Ignore me. Please. Ignore me. Sorry.

CLARK

No but - that's why I'm saying, I'm not lying to people I'm just - letting people see whatever they want to see.
I think that's - Like, I can be anything to anyone so.
Might as well let that be what happens. Makes it easier.
And I know that's - maybe that's a luxury, I have, but if things in this country are going to get - bad -

MARISSA

Nothing's going to happen.

CLARK

You're sure about that.

MARISSA

Maybe not sure, but.
Looking at it from like a - long view of history, you know. I think it's like.
Sure, yeah, something will happen - has already happened, but ultimately, we're fine.
We're safer than your average person. We just have to wait it out.

CLARK

Not all of us have a white, western, protestant, straight husband who makes good money and also, somehow, is never - never in the way.

(looks at Dustin)

...that was out of bounds. fuck

MARISSA

Dustin?

DUSTIN

Huh? Huh? Sorry, I was. I'm rallying. I'm rallying.

MARISSA

Good work.
Clark, I think you're having a quarter life crisis.

CLARK

So you're saying that my general anxiety about like, the like entire state of the country is just a phase I'll get over.

MARISSA

Basically

CLARK

If this is a quarter life crisis we'll live until we're like - one hundred and twenty.

MARISSA

Doesn't sound like a bad age to me.

CLARK

I understand how you could feel that way but also
Thirty one is -- an abyss.

Dustin suddenly runs out of the room.

CLARK (CONT'D)

He's going to -

MARISSA

Give him a second.
...you okay?

CLARK

Yeah. I'm good.
Thanks for - calling me out.
I mean you probably ruined my relationship but

MARISSA

You deserved it.

CLARK

I wouldn't go that far.
No one else asks me to be honest.

MARISSA

That's not true.

CLARK

Then - nobody else asks me to be honest and I listen.
That's like - soul mate behavior.
You're my soul mate.

MARISSA

Eric is rolling -

CLARK

In his bed. On your birthday!
He sleeps too much. Never love a man who's always asleep.

MARISSA

Never.

Dustin re-enters. He's doing better.

DUSTIN

Okay, now I've rallied.

MARISSA

Can I call you champ.

DUSTIN

Your boyfriend's an asshole.

CLARK

He's 24.

DUSTIN

I'm too old for this.

CLARK

You kinda instigated that one.

DUSTIN

Never turn down a challenge you can win.
Did Amanda leave?

MARISSA

Yeah, a while ago.

DUSTIN

I didn't even know she moved back

CLARK

I think it's kind of a -

MARISSA

Clark.

DUSTIN

...is there like a story, or -

MARISSA

No just -

You know how.

So you know how she was out in California?

DUSTIN

Yeah -

MARISSA

So apparently - I don't know if I should but -

So she was out in California, you know, working in a lab, but I guess the, the fires out there are crazy - it's really not that safe to be working out there, anymore, unless you're in the cities, there just aren't that many jobs

So people are downsizing, and when they downsized, they did some shady stuff because you know, she's from

MARISSA (CONT'D)

Florida

DUSTIN

Florida, yeah

MARISSA

So I guess that was causing a lot of issues, just her being in mechanical engineering, and all of the - mess that's happening there so. So they fired her, even though she's been doing really good work.

So she came here and didn't tell anyone for a couple of months until I -

We actually ran into each other on the subway and I was like, what's up, and -

You know her. It's hard to get the whole story. But...

She'll be fine. We share a cubicle, she's good with spreadsheets.

DUSTIN

Oh.
...I didn't realize things were getting so bad -

TYLER

(offstage)

WHO WANTS ANOTHER ROUND -

MARISSA

Go babysit your large adult boyfriend.

CLARK

Fuck off -

Clark exits.

MARISSA

He's a nightmare.

DUSTIN

Which one are you talking about.

MARISSA

Stop that.

DUSTIN

I didn't know that about Amanda, that's so.
I feel really bad.

MARISSA

Just get coffee with her or something.
She's fine, really.

DUSTIN

Yeah, sure.
I should.

MARISSA

...
How are you getting back.
You're not driving, right.

DUSTIN

No, I didn't drive into the city, I took the train.
I'm not taking the train back.
I'm getting picked up.

MARISSA

...okay.
Cool.

DUSTIN

You guys just moved, right?

MARISSA

Yeah, like.
Right down the street, actually, like ten blocks away so.
Won't be that hard. Eric just had to
take care of the dog.

DUSTIN

And he's good -

MARISSA

Yeah.

DUSTIN

Great.

(checks his phone)

My ride is on her way.

MARISSA

Driving all the way from the suburbs.
Practically a different country.

DUSTIN

Feels like it.

MARISSA

Does it feel any different?

DUSTIN

Like how.

MARISSA

I don't know, like. You're not here, you're in a place that's much more - conservative

DUSTIN

I don't think I've ever thought of the politics of -

MARISSA

Oh.

DUSTIN

Maybe I should start, but. I don't think anything bad's going to happen to me, so

MARISSA

You never know.
And things at home are -

DUSTIN

Good?

MARISSA

Good.

DUSTIN

...

MARISSA

What?

DUSTIN

Nothing.

MARISSA

No, say it.
Say it, you were going to say something.

DUSTIN

But I didn't so.
And you didn't say anything either.

MARISSA

Come on, it's just us, be honest -
No secrets.

DUSTIN

When did we say that.

MARISSA

We've been friends for thirteen years.

DUSTIN

Maybe sometimes friendships that last that long, last that long because there are secrets.

...

Things are fine, the baby is cute, big eyes, like a baby, you know
We just bought the house, actually, we had been renting it but -

MARISSA

Her parents bought.

DUSTIN

I mean, we bought it -

MARISSA

But I thought her parents said they would like.
Actually purchase it.
Unless that's changed, or.

DUSTIN

...see this is why I didn't want to be honest
Because I knew you'd be a dick about something.
Who cares who's buying the house, it's a house
You can't use that to like, prove a point about
I don't even know what the point is

MARISSA

But why can't you just admit that her parents bought your house though.

DUSTIN

Because we -
I can but it's *important* that.
We could have afforded it, we just are now in a better financial

MARISSA

Oh my god financial -
Are you seriously going to give me the most boring
You're so boring

DUSTIN

I'm too drunk for this.

MARISSA

Come on, we're having a conversation, don't do that -
We only see each other what - twice a year?

DUSTIN

I don't live that close.

MARISSA

You work in the city, still, right.

DUSTIN

Yeah but I'm not going to pretend like I can
Keep up with whatever you're doing

MARISSA

Oh my god I'm honestly so boring, like in the grand scheme of things. Like.
Sorry if I'm still trying to live my life in a way that's - with museums and dinner
sometimes, instead of settling for a - mediocre suburban, whatever

DUSTIN

I'm not settling

MARISSA

Oh my god you totally are -
And you're like so in denial about it, like
What is this - faux Americana bullshit, like
Buying into that doesn't make you any more like them.

DUSTIN

...

Who's them.

MARISSA

Don't play dumb.

DUSTIN

Do you want to know what I was going to say earlier.
 Is that. I don't think we're the same kind of people.
 I think I'm the kind of person who takes pride in being a good person.
 I think I take pride in being a fucking good fucking competent person
 Who knows what's appropriate.
 Who knows how to handle his own shit.
 Who knows how to fucking grow up and has grown up and has done it well and.
 I don't think you're that person.

MARISSA

So that was rude.

DUSTIN

How was that any ruder than anything you said? Trying to be like -
 It is *very* convenient Eric isn't here.

MARISSA

What's that supposed to mean.

DUSTIN

You're trying to make me out to be some like - if you want to have a conversation about
 proximity to white privilege, if that's really your fucking angle right now, big issue
 conversation, whatever --

MARISSA

I didn't say that -

DUSTIN

Eric's parents literally paid off your student loans - so how is that different? Tell me how

MARISSA

Because you're in denial.

DUSTIN

You married Eric! And it took you long enough, what - seven years -
 And where is he? He's never here!
 But I'm in denial, okay.

MARISSA

We dated for a very long time. We had a chance to - consider. What our relationship is.
...because you know what they say about your first friends to get married.
Is that they're the first ones to get divorced.

DUSTIN

...

This is what I mean.

We are not the same kind of people.

We are NOT the SAME KIND of people.

YOU AND I ARE NOT THE FUCKING SAME.

I AM UP HERE AND YOU ARE, YOU ARE EMOTIONALLY DOWN -

JULIETTE

(as she enters)

Dustin, babe, just got -

Holy shit -

MARISSA

If you wanna live your fucking unhappy life then GO AHEAD

But don't pretend that you're doing well

You're not

That's ego

DUSTIN

At least I'm fucking motivated

JULIETTE

Whoa whoa whoa, calm down, calm -

What did you do to him?

MARISSA

Oh yeah fucking blame me

After all of this time blame me for this

CLARK

(entering)

I put Tyler in a cab so -

Juliette? I didn't know you were -

JULIETTE

This is why I told you they were toxic, Dustin
I told you you shouldn't come but I
And I know you needed to come to that conclusion yourself but

MARISSA

Love you too.

JULIETTE

Fuck off, Marissa

CLARK

What did I do what did we do what's going on

DUSTIN

We're fucking leaving, that's what.

CLARK

But it's only like three minutes until midnight, you should -

JULIETTE

Then maybe Marissa should stop yelling and - restrain herself before

MARISSA

Restrain me? Restrain -
You're so fucking *violent*

TYLER

(entering)

Clark I thought you were getting in the uber with me
Holy shit

DUSTIN

Juliette, you're not -
Let's go
Babe let's go

MARISSA

You don't know what happened
This is like, this is like -
Family business

JULIETTE

You're not family

CLARK

Tyler - I'll see you tomorrow

DUSTIN

Let's just go, honey

TYLER

The fuck, I'm your boyfriend -

JULIETTE

Why do the two of you get to be family?

I'm your fucking family.

I'm the one who fucking lives with you.

I'm the one who owns property with you, fuck that.

Family?

I knew you shouldn't have come.

I knew I shouldn't have let you

MARISSA

Let you? Say what you want about me and Eric, he would never control what I do

CLARK

Hey -

DUSTIN

She doesn't -

CLARK

Heyyy!!!!

MARISSA

Because he understands the fucking *history of America* like

AND SUDDENLY: Amanda is there.

But also not there.

AMANDA

Look who it is.

The four musketeers.

The fucking United Colors of Benneton ad.

The future of America

The 2050 Census

MARISSA

Wait -

AMANDA

The dream of the east coast elite
Decades of privilege
Social engineering
Rampant avoidance -

MARISSA

I said, wait.

And everything totally shifts.
The buzz and the lights from earlier return -
more than before. And we are in:

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY ONE.

MARISSA

I don't think that happened.

CLARK

What happened.

MARISSA

I don't think Amanda was there.
I don't think she said that.

CLARK

Oh.
Maybe not.
I could -

Clark takes Amanda off stage. Marissa shows
Juliette and Dustin off as well.
Clark and Marissa gather by the light.

CLARK (CONT'D)

We are so.
Old.
Did you ever think we'd be this old.

MARISSA

I thought it was a possibility.

CLARK

Maybe I did as well.
I don't remember anymore.
You look great.

MARISSA

This is actually what I looked like at our twentieth birthday party, I wore this dress.

CLARK

It's cute! I probably told you it was cute then, didn't I.
Well, it's still. Very.
...I'm glad I get to see you.

MARISSA

You're not really seeing me

MARISSA (CONT'D)

It's all -
Internet stuff
It's good, thanks

CLARK

Oh right -
How's your connection been
...

CLARK (CONT'D)

I'm always worried about connections.
You know, even a little bit of a connection problem can cause
Serious issues.

MARISSA

I know.
...speaking of serious issues
We should deal with the -
What just happened.

CLARK

The - oh, the Amanda thing?
That was strange.

MARISSA

...did you generate that?

CLARK

Generate? Like, make that happen?
That feels like a leading question
I don't know if that's what you

MARISSA

I said what I meant.

CLARK

Well then, if what you're asking is if I remember Amanda saying those things

MARISSA

Because I don't remember her coming back to the party or talking about -
What was that even - social engineering? That barely makes sense

CLARK

I don't think I remember her saying that.

MARISSA

But you aren't sure?

CLARK

I mean - if it was in the simulation then. I don't know.
I don't remember it happening but, if the simulation is using our memories then
Maybe I remembered something new this time.

MARISSA

Remembered something that never happened.

CLARK

...that sounds like. Much more concerning when you put it that way..
I don't think I get the technology of this - simulation - thing.
I thought technology was supposed to make things easy, but it seems to make them
really complicated.
-- so the machine relies on our memories to create the user experience

MARISSA

The birthday, yes.

CLARK

But it's using our memories mixed with outside data, right?

MARISSA

Security camera footage, any digital records from the time that might remain.
But if we've recreated this birthday party the last few years, and we've never had this -
experience then...

CLARK

Do you really think I'm losing my memory?

MARISSA

OR, or, the program is malfunctioning.
If the program is malfunctioning then we can call a diagnostic

CLARK

Let's not do that. Can we not do that. Sorry. Sorry sorry.
Just. If we do the diagnostic and there's nothing wrong then.
That means there's something wrong with me, and I'd rather not know that.
I mean I don't think that's a - fixable thing, so.
...so yeah.

MARISSA

If we're going to continue we need to solve the

CLARK

Let's call Amanda. She's around. And we're talking about her.
She can tell us what happened, she'd remember. And I can fill in the blanks later.

MARISSA

...
But is Amanda Amanda now.

CLARK

...I think so. I do.

MARISSA

Have you talked to her since she...

CLARK

A handful of times.
She'd want to help.

MARISSA

Then.

Okay. Okay - yeah uh. I called Amanda.

CLARK

A low level request, I hope. It's not that important.

She can get to us when she gets to us.

...

Wow. They can make these bodies look so real, feel so real.

I feel like I look like I really looked like, once. My favorite body.

This was my favorite version of my body. I miss it. I miss how it feels

I miss the sounds this body used to make.

I miss sound in general, it's so quiet where I am. Is it quiet where you are?

MARISSA

We don't get too much outside noise.

CLARK

It used to be so loud on our birthday

It used to be so loud and boisterous and

Alive

And now it's the two of us

Communicating on the internet, over wires, through avatars

Because we're too old to move

Too old to hear our backs crack or our hearts beat

Too old to touch each other without falling apart

Isn't that depressing? I guess maybe it's not, it's...

I miss people.

MARISSA

I don't miss people.

CLARK

Yeah, well.

Wait until you've been alone for what. Eighty, ninety years.

Then maybe you'll miss things you never thought of before.

MARISSA

Aren't you a fucking philosopher.

CLARK

I was always a philosopher
I majored in - did you know, I majored in religion in college.

...

You majored in religion in college. Sorry.
Sorry sorry - I hate it when I get us confused.

...

Did I say something wrong? I'm getting the sense that -

MARISSA

What sense.

CLARK

You're not very happy right now.

CLARK (CONT'D)

That's not what I mean, I
Your demeanor is different.
You're usually more...

MARISSA

I think I have reasons not to be happy.

CLARK

Usually, when we do the birthday parties you're um.
There's an excitement, to it. Every year, like. This is our little ritual.
Our little thing. And this year, you're.
I'm not picking up on that - enthusiasm.

MARISSA

I think I've been very enthusiastic.

CLARK

I've known you for over one hundred years, a little late to lie about things like that.

MARISSA

Maybe I'm worried about you. That's a good reason to be less than

CLARK

I hadn't thought of that. Okay. Okay I'll accept that. But.
That means I get to be worried about you too.

...

Where are you right now. In the real world.

MARISSA

Do you want me to turn on my camera, or -

CLARK

Just tell me. I want to imagine.

MARISSA

Well. I'm where I always am. In bed. And there's - a big window, on my left, and out of that window, if I crane my head, or if I get up and look but I never get up and look - I can see -

Sunlight, and. Other buildings, and occasionally a tuft of grass. There's a tree across the way, I can see that too.

Planes occasionally fly overhead.

CLARK

That's nice. I can see my window too, but I can't see anything out of it. They're doing construction.

MARISSA

Again?

CLARK

Again! They're always doing construction, and I complain, because it's so loud, but

It's nice to hear the folks outside, making noise, don't have a lot of that.

Being alone makes you nostalgic for the strangest things. Or maybe I'm

... that's a dark thought, I'm not going to say it.

Where's Eric.

MARISSA

Oh. Um.

Somewhere... somewhere else.

CLARK

He can still get up and get around? Good for him. Good for him.

I wish I could be with you in real life.

MARISSA

...maybe what I should do is.

I could hire someone to drive me over there. I can get around enough to sit next to you. It could be nice.

CLARK

But I couldn't touch you. I can't touch anything anymore. So.
I don't know if that would count as being with you, after all.

MARISSA

...do you want a hug.

CLARK

An avatar hug.

MARISSA

Yeah. Do you want one.

CLARK

...maybe. I haven't hugged someone in so long -

Marissa hugs Clark. A moment.
A moment.

MARISSA

.Do you feel something? I feel something.
Phantom limb syndrome, or something like that. But. I feel something.
Do you?

CLARK

...nothing at all.

Still in the hug:

MARISSA

I uh. I did get some news today.
I got a message from Dustin.

CLARK

You what? Wait. Wait - really? Like
Physically him or a
Digital sort of

MARISSA

Digital

CLARK

What did you say.

MARISSA

I haven't said anything yet.

CLARK

You should say something.
You should invite him to -

MARISSA

We're not inviting him.

CLARK

Okay. Okay fine.
But. If we could.
It's been a hundred years.
It's been a while.

MARISSA

It's been a while since a lot of things.

CLARK

I guess that's true.
...one hundred years, that's a long time. That's a long time for it to feel like nothing happened.
That's not true. Things happened. Things changed. I guess.
Just. Not my life. My life stayed the same, isn't that weird.
I guess that's also not true, I guess things changed a lot.
I used to be younger. I used to have this hair - look at this hair!
I used to not be alone. Or less alone. Or.

MARISSA

The world changed. A lot. In one hundred years.
We just did a very good job of -
Riding the waves.

CLARK

That's a great analogy. I love that. Ride the waves. I should use that more often.
We rode the waves and now we're on the other side of the shore. Does that work?
The far shore. We're on the far shore, no more waves to ride. Looking back.

(MORE)

Looking back.

...what would you say if I said I had news.

MARISSA

I would say. What would I say.

CLARK

It's really important.

MARISSA

...

Let's finish the celebration first.

CLARK

I thought we were waiting for Amanda -

MARISSA

We can catch her up when she gets here, come on.

No news right now, it can wait -

CLARK

What if there's something wrong with my memory and I'm messing up the simulator and it does something bad, isn't that a good enough reason not to

MARISSA

That's not happening.

CLARK

I'm trying really hard not to be scared right now.

I'd like for you to sit with me so I can be less scared.

MARISSA

I thought you were saying you didn't have anything to be scared of.

CLARK

I wasn't saying that! I was saying I - am trying to live with the tension of -

I don't want to know. Yet. If I'm - mentally, dissolving, what if this is a sign that my memory is - disintegrating -

MARISSA

Disintegrating. That's so.
 Do you want to stop the birthday party? Because we can stop whenever you want.
 I can stop this right now, if you want. You're the one who loves to do this.
 Because you're feeling so alone. I'm not feeling alone. I'm not alone. So.
 If you don't want to do this then log out sign off we're good. I'll talk to you tomorrow
 If I have time -

CLARK

No please, no I don't -
 Alright. Whatever. Fuck whatever. It's not that big of a deal. Whatever it's -
 If this goes poorly this is your fault.
 ...you know, what if actually we're not friends.
 What if we're just people who have stuck around each other for so long
 So so long and we don't know what else to do anymore.
 Because we don't have anyone else. We only have each other.
 You can trick yourself into thinking you've got more than that, but really, you just have
 me.

MARISSA

...
 Then maybe we're not friends. If you say so.
 But you'd better figure it out fast, because if you're so sure you're, what -
 Disintegrating
 Then you don't have much -

FORTY ONE.

Clark, Marissa, Amanda, and Blaine sit around a
 small table. It's a mood lights establishment.

BLAINE

I'm so sad, I hate missing things.

AMANDA

Miss is a strong word.

CLARK

Marissa and I take out birthday party very seriously -
 One year there were like eighty people this tiny speakeasy

MARISSA

That was probably before you were born
How old are you?

BLAINE

Please keep flattering me, oh my god - but --
A lady never tells her age.

CLARK

He's thirty.

BLAINE

Stoppit -

MARISSA

You're a child.

BLAINE

I think thirty is officially when you stop being a child.

AMANDA

At least you're older than the boys he usually brings home.

CLARK

I - how did we start talking about me?

BLAINE

Clark told me this is the twentieth time you've celebrated together

MARISSA

Twentieth consecutive time.

AMANDA

It's a miracle you're still friends.
Every year this birthday party is a source of - deep trauma.

MARISSA

I, for one, have never been traumatized.

CLARK

A toast, to our absolutely amazing, never problematic birthdays.

BLAINE

Cheers.

Every one except Amanda raises a glass.

AMANDA

You're not supposed to cheers with water.

Clink. Clark grimaces.

MARISSA

Out of practice?

CLARK

(coughing)

Someone won't let me keep liquor at home.

AMANDA

And you've lost fifteen pounds. So -

MARISSA

Blaine -

BLAINE

Yes ma'am.

Sorry not ma'am - did I say that?

CLARK

I'll be taking him home now, goodnight everyone, we are done here -

MARISSA

So Blaine, Blaine - what's it like dating a married man?

Clark shrieks.

He also subconsciously covers a wedding ring.

AMANDA

You're such a - you're trouble

MARISSA

Ten years of marriage and the trouble begins, you'll find out -

CLARK

Yeah. Eric's so much trouble, he's asleep at home at ten o'clock on your birthday
At least we know melatonin still works

MARISSA

That is - youuuu -

BLAINE

No but I mean - I get it. I'd do the same thing. Honestly.
If I had a friend who - needed some help with citizenship stuff, I mean it's all a mess,
right, what's happened with all of that, so. I don't mind at all.
And you've clearly known each other for years

AMANDA

Too many years, maybe.

BLAINE

Yeah, so - I appreciate it, appreciate the - trust.
...if that was a real question.

MARISSA

I like him.

CLARK

I do too.

BLAINE

Did I do something good? I'm desperate to please.

MARISSA

Before you, Clark dated a series of boys that can only be described as
Absolute fucking nightmares

CLARK

But they were rich though! And I got great presents around this time every year!
Can I get another drink for that? Do we have more -

Clark grabs a decanter and pours a number of
drinks - a few too many, probably. Blaine
downs his while Clark and Marissa sip.

BLAINE

Wooo - wait.
Are you saying I need to buy you a present, or -

AMANDA

Oh no, you were doing so well.

CLARK

If you insist -

BLAINE

Actually, actually -
I can give you a present. In the form of a toast.
A birthday toast.

Every one raises a glass.

BLAINE (CONT'D)

A toast! A toast. So um.
We haven't been together for that long -- although nine months can be a while.
We could have a baby!
We don't have a baby. But, but.
In the last nine months I think I've gotten to - learn, a lot about you, Clark, and through that, you as well Marissa, and.
Clark, Clark the thing I'll say about you is that you've changed - so much, just in the short amount of time that we've been seeing each other, with,
A new career, a really satisfying career, advertising, and - um. Obviously,
obviously the adjustment back to a less - scary life has been gradual, as we've all kind of.
Pulled ourselves back from the brink these last few years, as people, as a nation, thank god, but. I've seen you pull yourself back up these months.
And you've had so much to pull yourself up from, I can't. I can't imagine losing both of my parents so quickly. I can't imagine that and I know your relationship with them was complicated, but. It's a lot. It's a lot at any age, and to be so young -
Forty is young. I swear it is.
But you've come back. You've come back and you've - settled.
...that probably didn't sound how I wanted it to sound. More like - settled into yourself.
Here's to that. Here's to settling.
Settling but - I hope, for you - never forgetting how to dream.
Cheers.

CLARK

Fuck. Well.
I'll drink to that.

BLAINE

Is that from something?

CLARK

You're a terrible gay.

Every one but Amanda drinks. Until -

AMANDA

...
I don't wanna ruin the mood but. Clark.
I think now might be a good time to -

Clark begins to break out of the world. The
illusion of the party begins to break - just a little
bit.

CLARK

Is this when this happened? Did she tell us -

Amanda stands on a chair and taps on her glass
of water.

AMANDA

I have an announcement. Sorry I'm stealing thunder from the - birthday proceedings but

CLARK

am i going crazy is this a crazy moment i thought - i think this was now but

AMANDA

I just wanted to tell everyone in person before

MARISSA

Clark, you're breaking the illusion.

BLAINE

Tell us! I love an announcement -

CLARK

Sorry it's just, sometimes

AMANDA

I'm.

CLARK

Sometimes I just feel like I have so much doubt, about
What is real who I am why I am what I - do you ever feel that?
Do you ever feel -

The world of the party returns.

AMANDA

The announcement is.
There's this new program, pilot program, that I heard about through work.
Where basically instead of -
The idea being that, it's kind of like a science fiction, sort of.
So we're all neurons, ultimately.
Just a bunch of electrical impulses.
Which means that we can be imprinted onto other electrical systems.
Or something like that. Imprinting.
And so what they do is they take your neurons and how your neurons interact and they
Take them and they use them and it's not exactly a recreation but it's more of a

BLAINE

You're becoming the internet.

AMANDA

Essentially.
But not quite.
More like, I am moving to a digital - sphere.
So this is goodbye, for now. A physical goodbye.

MARISSA

You knew?

CLARK

What? Yeah - but I wanted to - give her time to - tell her own -

BLAINE

I thought that was like a less
It's not a life threatening procedure, like it just kind of

AMANDA

The upload is supposed to just duplicate your neurons. Like a copy paste job.
So there will be two me's, real me and online me - which will be weird, but.
After the procedure I'm going to - go back home for a while. And -

MARISSA

Amanda. Honey -

BLAINE

Where's home?

AMANDA

I'm from Florida

CLARK

Florida

BLAINE

But that's.
Florida doesn't exist anymore. Like that's not a place.
That hasn't been a place for - years

AMANDA

It's still a place, just. Not the same.

BLAINE

You can't even get near the border
I, when I was in grad school I went on a trip to Georgia and even fifty miles out from
Florida you could tell it was. I mean. I mean. It's dust. The state is dust. Dust and

AMANDA

Dust and radiation and sludge and bombs.
There are other things there, too.
My parents.

BLAINE

...I'm really sorry, I didn't mean to.

AMANDA

No, it's fine, it's.

I heard from them. They're still alive. I don't know for how much longer. But for now.
And.

...

I don't think I belong here. Because.

We have a lot in common, and you two have found - ways to have lives. Here. Real lives.
And I keep on missing that, somehow, and it's not that I'm not trying. I'm trying but I
always feel set apart.

And I think that's because I'm not home. And I need to go home to figure out if this is
my problem, or if it's...

...

I'd say something sentimental, or sweet, but I think I owe you more than that.

BLAINE

When you upload yourself, the digital memory is frozen, right?
So that - version- of you won't going back home?

AMANDA

I think, yeah. But. Maybe that's best.

MARISSA

And that version of you, online isn't a person anymore. Right?
Like, it's - different. It's a computer program. It's not -

AMANDA

Are you really going to try to challenge me, or -

...

I'm out of water.

Amanda abruptly exits.

MARISSA

Fuck.

Marissa runs out after Amanda and exits.

CLARK

Awkward.

...I would have told you earlier, but.

BLAINE

No I get it. I do.
Guess you're about to be a divorcee, huh.

CLARK

Or a widower.

BLAINE

...that's your way of saying that this is a bad joke time, isn't it.
I shouldn't have

CLARK

Sorry, I'm an asshole, I'm just giving you a hard time.

BLAINE

Very hard, then.
Can I get a kiss.

CLARK

Yeah sure, just -

Clark exits for a second, returns, and kisses
Blaine.

BLAINE

Where'd you just -

CLARK

Making sure the door's -

BLAINE

You closed the door?
We're in the back room of an empty bar
There are like eight people here, max

CLARK

Yeah but - it's nice to have a little privacy.

BLAINE

Yeah. Sure. Privacy.

...

(MORE)

So. Now that you're not married - about to not be, I guess -
What does that mean.

CLARK

In terms of what.

BLAINE

I mean, like. Us?
Like am I still going to have to be -
Am I still going to be a cute little secret or is this going to be able to -

CLARK

You're not a secret

BLAINE

You told me if we told anyone we didn't know then Amanda could be deported

CLARK

Yeah but

BLAINE

That means I didn't tell anyone. And you didn't tell anyone.

CLARK

Our friends know -

BLAINE

Your friends know.
I want to introduce you to my friends. To my family.
Like, can I we do that? I want to do that. I wanna -
(I shouldn't have had that shot earlier -)
Like are we a thing now? Like a potentially - legal thing

CLARK

Legal like - marriage legal or

BLAINE

Not even marriage just like
In the eyes of. Someone's eyes.
...I love you.

CLARK

I love you too

BLAINE

So let's.

I just want to know if it's a possibility.

Marissa re-appears on the sidelines.

MARISSA

I'm here. If you need me.

CLARK

Why would I need you.

MARISSA

This part sucks.

CLARK

Maybe it does, but it's been one hundred years.

I'd like to think I'm over it now.

MARISSA

You're never really over it.

Clark turns back to Blaine.

A moment.

CLARK

Blaine. Look at you! God. You're so - I don't know what you are.

You're a nice guy. And I usually dated assholes, when I was younger -

I'd probably still date assholes if I could meet them, it's kind of hard when you're my age without any hobbies. Hard to meet assholes now. But.

It was never going to be you. I was never going to choose you, because.

I'm sure I had reasons, it's been so long - career? Family? Not that I have either.

So probably none of that.

Probably just - a strong desire to take the easiest way out.

To not do the work. Work is hard. I don't know why that is. What is work.

Work is a response to being afraid. Work or retreat. Those are your options.

And there's a lot to fear.

And I'm certainly - afraid of myself.

(MORE)

If I'm afraid of myself. Imagine how terrified I am of you.
You probably deserved better.
You probably deserved someone with a beach house and career goals and emotional space.
I hope you got that.

BLAINE

I did. I did get that.

CLARK

What.

BLAINE

This was just a momentary thing, when it happened, right? And it sucked, but like. The arc of history is so long, so. I probably turned out okay. You should have turned out okay, too. It's a shame you didn't.

CLARK

...

You're a simulation.

MARISSA

Clark are you okay?

BLAINE

A simulation. That's cute. I'd like to think I'm more than just that. More than just what you - make of me.
You're not disintegrating, baby. That's not the right word. It's the opposite. It's integrating. You're integrating. You've given so much of yourself that you've split in two, in five, in one thousand.
You've given me a voice. I didn't have a voice before, this version of me didn't. Isn't that beautiful? Thank you for something beautiful. Now.
It's okay. Go ahead.
Say whatever you're going to say about being worried about your job, or worried about your social standing, or worried about whatever new thing there is to be worried about. Run away from me. Break my heart.

CLARK

...no.
No no no

Clark runs out.

MARISSA

Clark? Clark -

BLAINE

I think - I think I should go. Probably - sorry I think I maybe - sorry if I ruined your birthday -

Blaine exits.

MARISSA

CLARK?

Jesus Christ.

...We're ending the simulation.

I'm not doing the birthday if you're not doing it with me.

I have enough going on, okay? I have a fucking life to deal with. So.

If you're going to bail on me, then it's over. Okay?

I don't care what the problem is. The birthday. Is. Over.

I'm cancelling it right now. Powered down.

Clark? CLARK -

Juliette enters and sits down.

JULIETTE

Happy birthday.

MARISSA

...I'm sorry, we stopped the -
Juliette?

JULIETTE

I never thought I'd see Clark, in a suit, behind a bush, chain-smoking cigarettes.

Very 1950's closeted businessman, very -

What was that show from when we were in college? Mad Men. Very that.

Wow. How long has it been since I've been at one of these parties?

MARISSA

Ten years.

JULIETTE

Oh. Wow. Yeah. That was - not fun. Was it. And so long ago.
Well. I'm happy I made it back.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

And how are you.

MARISSA

I'm sorry, we cancelled the simulation. Putting in a call for tech support -

JULIETTE

I'm alive, I'm around.
I'm lucky, in a way.
Better than a lot of people can say.

MARISSA

Are we offline? I can't get a signal -

JULIETTE

Does anyone know I'm coming? Am I expected?

MARISSA

So - you're just going to keep going? It doesn't matter what I do?

Juliette doesn't respond. A moment.

MARISSA (CONT'D)

They don't know. No.

JULIETTE

Great. I'm a birthday surprise. Is there any food? I'm starving.

MARISSA

How was the move?

JULIETTE

Awful, moving is awful but.
It's nice to be back in the city again and not in that house -
The commute to work was terrible, and you know, all of the

MARISSA

History -

JULIETTE

I was going to say - stuff. Just drowning in stuff.
History too, but. I don't think about the history that much.
Is that weird? I mean I'm fucking angry, still, but I'm always angry.
I don't think the house made me angrier.

MARISSA

...We don't have to

JULIETTE

No I want to. I want to, it's fine. It's just facts. Facts are facts. You know.
Fact is, Dustin's gone. Ran. Is a better word. That's the truth. That is what happened.
And everyone thinks I don't want to talk about it.
Maybe I get a little angry sometimes, but that's just a me thing. It's not like -
"Oh no, poor Juliette." It's not like that.

MARISSA

...yeah.
It was a really scary time -

JULIETTE

And then nothing even ended up happening. And, even if something had happened, like.
We're married, we have money -
I could have protected him, my parents could have

MARISSA

But to hear that much hate, based off of - identity, was -
It doesn't make people behave rationally

JULIETTE

But you would have been -
It was terrifying, and I know some people felt more - danger than others, but. You had
Eric to make it less scary, right. And Dustin should have had me.
That's all I was saying.

MARISSA

I'm - yeah. Sure. Yeah. I get that.

JULIETTE

I'm really happy I could make it this year, this is so nice. Did anyone claim this shot?
Guess it's mine now.

Are there sandwiches, or like snacks? Do they sell them at the -

MARISSA

Just drinks.

Juliette begins slowly going to every half-empty
glass and finishing it off.

JULIETTE

No food, just drinks. Nothing has changed. You haven't changed at all.

MARISSA

I think I've changed some.

JULIETTE

How.

MARISSA

I think I'm - more. Uh. I listen more, actually.

I think I used to not listen and that made me feel threatened, by people who talked a lot.

And now I listen and that's a - big thing for me. I think.

JULIETTE

See, I always thought you were a big listener. I don't know.

Maybe that's just from the outside. Things are always different from the outside.

MARISSA

Do you think you're the same?

JULIETTE

Oh god yeah.

Less naive. Less of a mess - the pills were a bad idea - but fundamentally. I think.

But now I just own it, I don't have a reason not to. Just own it, makes it better.

MARISSA

Own what.

JULIETTE

My rage. I am a rage filled person.
 I feed off of it, it's like some people it consumes them but for me it's the opposite
 And I think I was like - I mean *socialized* is such a bullshit word, but I think I tried to
 pretend like I wasn't just filled with rage but actually,
 I am and it's my superpower in life and if I had owned it earlier on in life then I think I
 would have. Misfired much less. College was a misfire.
 I guess some good things came from it. Maybe not.
 So. How's the rest of the gang?

MARISSA

Oh well uh - you know, they - it hasn't been super easy, the last few years for them
 because you know, some of the rhetoric just made Clark feel - professionally insecure
 And then Amanda needed some help with citizenship -

JULIETTE

That sucks

MARISSA

Yeah but so - so to kind of get around it they got married - and they're doing great.
 They're great but you know, they go back - I think Clark met Amanda before he met me

JULIETTE

That's a fucking plan. Wow. Good for them.

MARISSA

But Amanda's actually about back to -
 ...
 She's doing that uh. That new digital thing where you - put yourself on the internet.
 Or whatever that is - sci-fi, you know, tech like that is always hard to really understand

JULIETTE

I would never do that shit. Not me. Let me die when I die, I don't need to do that.

MARISSA

It might be fun.

JULIETTE

Until it's not.

MARISSA

I guess.

...you know, they might have questions about - Dustin. I'm not - I just wanted to warn -

JULIETTE

Then I'll tell them.

Dustin abandoned me and his fucking kid

Because he thought he was in danger, he left us -

And they can fill in the gaps. Since the rest of us are still here.

MARISSA

You don't know what kind of danger we were in

JULIETTE

My daughter was in the same danger, don't tell me I didn't know

MARISSA

You didn't feel the - fuck. Sorry. I'm not trying to fight.

JULIETTE

But you loved fighting. I thought that was the whole point.

One final blow out.

The world begins to distort, again.

MARISSA

I 'love to fight'. Hmmm. I wonder what you could possibly be trying to say.

...

This is a simulation of my forty first birthday. A cancelled simulation!

Let me be clear with you, in case I've never been clear enough.

You are not real to me. You do not belong here.

JULIETTE

A simulation, that's cute language, that's what we're calling it -

A little out there, a little - woo-woo, but.

I think I belong here as much as you.

MARISSA

You are not real.

You're worse than not real, you're -

JULIETTE

Dead. She's dead.

Shouldn't be so cavalier about death, it comes for everyone..

Remember when you read her obituary? That was a strange moment.

You used to search her name twice a year, just to check in.

The simulation has fully broken down.

It's blindingly bright. And Juliette is still here.

JULIETTE (CONT'D)

I'm not lying when I say I'm starving.

I could eat a fucking house.

MARISSA

What are you

JULIETTE

What are you.

MARISSA

Was that supposed to be clever, or -

JULIETTE

I'm only as clever as you think I am. Or I am think I am. Tell me, what happened next?
Here next.

MARISSA

... we had a good time. Our friends -

JULIETTE

Your friends, I hardly know them.

MARISSA

My friends came back, you - Juliette had a good time with them. Nothing crazy. Nothing weird. We made it to midnight. Nobody cried, or they cried in private, like normal people. And then we went home. That's it. Party over.

JULIETTE

And after that. Did you stay in touch.

MARISSA

With you - Juliette -
Not really.

JULIETTE

I never contacted you again.

MARISSA

...that's right.

JULIETTE

And then I died. Sad story. Sad stuff.

Do you ever wonder - did you ever stay awake at night and think - wow. That person who I knew once, who knew me, a version of me -

Why didn't that person stay in my circle. My orbit. Did you ever stay awake and think about that?

That's a difficult question to answer, here's a better one.

What's your relationship to - power

MARISSA

I don't think I have one?

JULIETTE

You have a relationship to power, everyone has a relationship to power.

You certainly know the power of - appearances.

MARISSA

Define.

JULIETTE

This party, is an appearance. Your friendships, your relationships -

Where is Eric? By the way.

MARISSA

...Eric is my life partner.

JULIETTE

- was your life partner. He's dead, too.

Lots of people dead these days, I guess it's a trend. The way of the world.

You haven't told anyone yet, have you? That's a choice.

(MORE)

I guess it's hard to be alone, for the first time.
 But even when - alive - he seemed to miss an awful lot. Wouldn't you say.

MARISSA

I hate you.
 I always hated you. That's why I invited you to this party.
 To prove that something - awful had happened to you and that you still learned
 Absolutely nothing.
 I hated the way that you stumbled through the world
 I hated that we let you stumble
 I hated that there was an entire system that allowed for you to stumble and that
 In stumbling you got - so much of what you wanted.
 If I had stumbled like you stumbled, if I was messy and hungry and full, overstuffed
 Overstuffed I would be - well.
 We see what I'd be like. I think Dustin showed us that.

JULIETTE

But you always wanted that.
 You know what I always respected about you, you saw the world for what it was.
 And you knew that the world was never going to change. So why not play along?

MARISSA

You're a fucking monster

JULIETTE

I am you, so. That's kind of a weird thing to say.
 Strange that your - subconscious, I guess?
 Neurons. Maybe. Whatever. Chose me, to be an - avatar for you.
 But I can only say what you want me to say. Or what you think. Or what is the truth.
 You could have chosen anyone to fill that role and you gave it to me that is
 So awkward.
 But finally, you got what you wanted. Total control. You are in total control of this
 space so let's do something fun.
 I could change shape.

MARISSA

I want you to go away.

JULIETTE

Try harder.
 I could look like anything that you want me to look like.
 (MORE)

And I am - very hungry.
Maybe if I unhinge my jaw. What if I
Unhinge my jaw and

MARISSA

Please stop, I want -

JULIETTE

What if I unhinge my jaw and swallow everything here.
This room, this information, you - which would be a part of this information, I guess
Would you like that? Would you like it if I

MARISSA

...i want help.

And darkness.
And darkness.
The sound of Marissa breathing.
Another moment.
The lights are back up and we are back in

131, AGAIN.

Juliette is gone. Amanda and Clark are present
with Marissa.

AMANDA

Well, this was a bad idea.

CLARK

Are you okay Marissa?

MARISSA

You're okay.

CLARK

A little spooked, but I'm fine.

AMANDA

Are you ready for me to tell you the errors you've been making.

MARISSA

Blunt, but -

AMANDA

Two people in a simulator creates a closed loop. Creates feedback.
The memories of one bounce off of the memories of another and distort and change.
There's not enough outside information - enough input. And so when this distortion
comes in contact with some sort of outside record -

(she makes an explosion gesture.)

They recommend groups no smaller than four.

MARISSA

Since when.

CLARK

Since the most recent update, apparently.

AMANDA

You know there's a manual. I've placed it on your server.

MARISSA

It's nice to see you.

AMANDA

Nice seeing you, too.
I hope you're in distress more often.
How have you been. How's living.

MARISSA

I think I've - we've both done a good job of keeping things - very boring.

AMANDA

Is that a positive, or a

MARISSA

Certainly - safer than the other options.
How's uh. How's being a

AMANDA

A computer program? Well.

(MORE)

I have two states, I'm either active or inactive
 Being inactive is something like being asleep, being at rest.
 Being active - I'm up and about. I play a lot of board games, lots of those. I read.
 I have a few friends, we discuss topics we all enjoy.
 Occasionally my data is used to enhance user experience for new and existing software.
 I've gotten very good at badminton, it's about angles, you know, not power.
 You can have as much power as you want but if you don't get the angle -

CLARK

Do you still feel like yourself?

AMANDA

Like myself and not like myself.
 I could be anyone, there's no - permanence to this, here.
 But I want to be me. I think. I'm excited to be me.
 ...there are trade-offs.
 Sometimes I wish I could see what happened on the outside - that's misleading.
 I can see what has happened, in the world, but to feel it, with my body.
 Feel what my - body - experienced, as a body. But then again.
 Those experiences are not my experiences.
 You get the experiences you get. That is a good lesson I've learned here.
 It's not the only one, but it's among them.
 ...sometimes I miss
 Emotion

MARISSA

You don't feel emotion.

AMANDA

Well, I - understand my emotions. I have an intellectual, data driven response but
 I do not - feel - them.

CLARK

...do you feel fear?

AMANDA

...never.
 I'm happy you're both still alive. Although.
 I guess life isn't what it used to be.

MARISSA

Maybe it's not.
... I guess we're done with birthdays for a while. Guess that tradition's done.
Happy birthday to us.

CLARK

Yeah.
It's about my bedtime here.
I should probably -

MARISSA

You were going to tell me something.

CLARK

Huh?

MARISSA

Earlier. What were you going to tell me. Before we did the

CLARK

Oh uh. Um. I don't know if I want - yeah.
Doesn't. Exactly feel like the right time to.

MARISSA

If it's bad news tell me now. Tell me while I'm ready to process bad news.
I might not be ready to do that later.

CLARK

Well then. Here goes -
I've scheduled a neuron transfer and upload. For next week, because.
I've - I mean.
I'm one hundred and thirty one years old and what have I actually done.
Be afraid, I've done a lot of that, but otherwise -
I don't think I've lived that much.
I don't think I've done that much living. I think I have avoided living at every turn.
And it's basically too late now, I'm, I'm dying. You get to one hundred and thirty one
and you're dying, you get to - any age really and you're -
But it does seem to be happening faster, and more - efficiently, and.
I can't move. I can't move from my bed, that is very depressing.
(MORE)

So. This might be the chance I get. A new chance at life.
To do something. Maybe help someone. To try.

MARISSA

You're sure.

CLARK

I think I am, yeah.

AMANDA

Not to - intrude on this, but during our conversations he seemed - more than ready to take the leap. And it's not for everyone, obviously, but sometimes -

MARISSA

You're never going to die.

CLARK

Maybe I haven't earned it. Maybe I haven't earned that right.
...that's - um. That's probably more, that's not exactly what I mean to -
It's a big shift, yeah, but I'll still be here. Just different.

MARISSA

I'm happy for you.

CLARK

You say that when you're not happy for people too, though

MARISSA

No, no, I'm not -
You're right, it's just a big shift. I'm considering the big shift.
But I am happy.

CLARK

Okay. Promise me? Okay.
Because you'll be fine. I'll still be here, you know where to find me
And you've got - family, and friends, and Eric, and

AMANDA

Eric died last week.

CLARK

What?

MARISSA

Uh -

AMANDA

Death certificate uploaded six days and forty eight minutes ago. So not quite a week.
...was that not public information, or -

CLARK

...were you not going to

MARISSA

It was in his sleep. It was peaceful. I should have told you, but I didn't.
It's silly, I've never been - had any. I've never cast aspersions about our relationship.
He was probably not the love of my life, although I guess it's too late to know that now.
But. He knew how to keep his distance and still be there. For me. Give me space.
And we're all going to die, I'm not arguing that. I'm not sad about his death.
I'm sad about the -
Change is hard for me. Change is. Really. Hard.
One hundred and ten years. One hundred and ten.

CLARK

What do you need.

MARISSA

That's a great question.

Clark hugs Marissa. A moment.

CLARK

Do you feel anything?

MARISSA

Almost. Almost.

And then Dustin appears.
Amanda, Clark, and Marissa turn to him.
A moment. Another moment.

DUSTIN

This is nice. This is nice. I'm happy I get to see this.
See all of you.
I - stayed away for so long, I don't think I should have done that. Not to apologize, just
to acknowledge that. Say it out loud.
It's easier to think hard things than say them out loud.

(MORE)

Probably has something to do with pride. Pride prevents you from saying things out loud, sometimes.

But I heard Marissa's call for - help. And. You have to know when to come back. I don't want to make anyone else feel like they can't talk. I'm sorry if I'm doing that.

...

I'm new to this, online, avatar, technology stuff.

I didn't upload myself until my one hundred and thirtieth birthday.

Never thought I'd live that long. Moving around, too - I still move around when I can -

I did end up seeing and doing a lot, after I left you all. Left home.

Although I guess that's normal. Life goes on, even when you're so scared.

-- I left because I was scared, I don't want to hide from that. Living until one hundred and thirty makes you allergic to hiding.

I had several careers. I saw the bottom of the ocean.

I met my daughter. I met my daughter as an adult. And apologized.

And it wasn't enough but we cried. And the crying was enough.

I forgot about all of you. Until I remembered, again. Funny how that happens.

But you know, the forgetting was probably a part of the pride, as well.

A recurring theme, pride. -- I have theories, they're too boring to hear.

Or maybe too relevant, or so relevant that everyone has come to them themselves.

Or will come to them themselves.

...do you know how small I am? I am so small.

When you live to one hundred and thirty you realize you do not get larger, in life

You just keep on shrinking. And that shrinking is the point. It's not the shame. It's the point.

I am so so small. I am so so so so.

...

I said I wasn't going to apologize, but this might be an apology.

But I miss feeling stupid.

I miss feeling young and stupid and - that was a good time in my life. Maybe not a good time. But - there is something that is missed.

A quality - or quantity? Perhaps.

I saw ice caps burn, I saw giraffes as tall as blimps, many tiny things as well. Those things I remember.

The world changed, and then un-changed, and then changed again, and went back to what it had been before, and that was exciting to see, but there was something missing. For me.

The quality. Of youth, of -- naivete. (That's a big word. Isn't it.)

I want to find that quality again. You are the people I want to find that quality with.

I'm sorry it took me so long to say that.

I miss community. Broken as it may be.

I miss you.

Dustin, exhausted, sits on the floor.

MARISSA

But you're here now.
Thank you.
We're all here now.
...not how I would have expected -

CLARK

If you had told me when we met that this was the future.
And all of this future -

DUSTIN

When we met. I barely remember -
It feels like lifetimes ago. It was lifetimes ago -

AMANDA

Multiple lifetimes, depending.

MARISSA

But I remember - the evening of the hall party -

CLARK

The hall party! We were so

DUSTIN

Stupid.
I miss that. Being so stupid, and young, and -
What happened - I remember we walked in, and, and... or - no, it was...

MARISSA

...Amanda. Can we?
Can we all...

AMANDA

...
Why not.
We've got four.

NINETEEN.

AMANDA

How do we do this.

CLARK

You just try to remember.

DUSTIN

It was really long ago.

CLARK

Then start off with the emotions of it. The emotion of when we first - clicked.

DUSTIN

That particular night?
I was probably annoyed -

CLARK

Annoyed?

DUSTIN

You were a loud roommate.

MARISSA

We hadn't met yet.

AMANDA

I had met all of you.
I think I met you at the museum party, Clark -

CLARK

We spent so much time together that first month
Feels like a dream

DUSTIN

Sometimes I think it was a dream

AMANDA

I remember being thankful.
Because you'd been so nice to me, Clark.

CLARK

Did you know that you were the first person I came out to.

AMANDA

I don't - maybe I did know that?

DUSTIN

We had cupcakes

MARISSA

Red velvet.

CLARK

I loved red velvet.

MARISSA

I came with Amanda, I didn't realize it was a birthday party.

DUSTIN

It was the first really cold day

AMANDA

I thought I was going to freeze.

CLARK

I can see it now.

MARISSA

And they'd hung up holiday lights on the campus

And I looked around and thought

This is my life, I could be this person forever

DUSTIN

I see it -

The musketeers.

AMANDA

I'm not a musketeer.

CLARK

You've always been one.

AMANDA

I have?

MARISSA

To me you have.

CLARK

And the clock counts down to midnight
And I'm feeling great because I'm about to be nineteen

MARISSA

I met Dustin first, do you remember what you said Dustin

DUSTIN

Finally. There's someone else.

MARISSA

And I nodded and scurried across the party because I was - so young -

DUSTIN

Clark, I hand you a cupcake and you yell

CLARK

I'M TURNING NINETEEN!

AMANDA

And we hear that and of course you say from across the room

MARISSA

I'M TURNING NINETEEN TOO!

CLARK

WAIT - LIKE TONIGHT?

MARISSA

YEAH -

CLARK

Come here - come here come here -
Like tonight tonight.

MARISSA

I swear, I wouldn't lie about that.
I mean I would but like
Not to someone I don't know.
I'm not that kind of a

CLARK

Stop.
STOOOP.
We're going to be best friends -

MARISSA

I mean, sure, let's do it, let's be best friends

CLARK

Yes.
We're fucking doing it, and our friends are going to be best friends -

DUSTIN

Already are.

AMANDA

Sure.

CLARK

Yesssssss what's your name?

MARISSA

Marissa. Want a little -

CLARK

BIRTHDAY SHOTS!!!! YES.

AMANDA

The RA is totally going to break this party up.

DUSTIN

But you're having fun, right?

AMANDA

I am -

DUSTIN
Then let's have fun! Let's -

CLARK
Holy shit, vodka, that's, wow, that's a lot of
You wanna cupcake?

MARISSA
Noooot really -
Maybe a little bit.

CLARK
What time is it?

DUSTIN
Fifteen seconds!

CLARK
Let's split it.

AMANDA
I'm taking a picture of this mess.

MARISSA
Split it?

CLARK
Like I take a bite, you take a bite.
Trust me on this. Trust me?

DUSTIN
Five

MARISSA
You guys should join! Take a bite with us!

CLARK
Four -

DUSTIN
Come on -

I - Sure! Sure.

AMANDA

Three -

MARISSA

YES!

I'm Clark by the way.

CLARK

Two -

AMANDA

Marissa is crying. Everything is dimming but she remains present, visible.

One.

MARISSA

And it took no effort at all.
A final last second smile, before everyone and everything disappears, and -

END OF PLAY.