

Ben, and Mrs. Robinson

[Reverse-Commentary for the Camera, for the Sense, for the angel Ultima-Script, from which all scripts are born]

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At first he's bored, because nothing speaks; everything is dull and dim in such boredom; his chair is already rendered invisible before he even sits on it; the room is all darkness, and indistinguishable. He can hardly see beyond his feet, both in back and front. As for the vision of his sensations, a fog swells within him. It's damp.

He doesn't quite recall how exactly he got here. The evening, including driving, was somewhat a blur. It was because of a favor of some kind. He was unsure why or what else. The word "plastics" flitted across his mind, but just as quickly went away. He was currently absent-mindedly nursing a bourbon.

He was already slightly uneasy from just moments before when she had asked him what he had thought of her growing up. He was hardly bothered enough to answer anything more than that he had thought her to be a nice person. This was all well and good, the typical half-formed sentimentality of cheap suburban life. This, he was used to, and it glanced off him like one wet wind in a season of dreary weather.

However, what suddenly rung him out - like a beaten rug - were her heels, clacking against the wood floors. There was an opening, a sudden flash of light, a diversion in the long dark hall of boredom: a suggestion: when she turned her head, took notice of something, got up, and walked behind the counter.

Some elements had begun to click. They formed a message, seemingly on their own accord, and he merely received them, reading the pieces as they came along, like the scrolls of fortune cookies somehow forming a coherency between them. They even formed the sentences of a cogent explanation.

He also began to notice that her hair bun had begun to shine, and, from it, the rest. Her neck and her wrists and her breasts appeared. She bloomed, as though first existing at all, a shadow become flesh sprung, exciting - in the room of characterless monotony, stood: him - and her, like two brilliant rival billboards facing off in the sterile darkness of the Midwest highway.

But it would not stop at that. No, the distance of a gaze shared between them was electrified, and, in that, erected, perhaps ostensibly. Contact was made between spaceman and earth. By what? -

She turned her head.

And the music began to play, sharply. It booms, and then is cheery. Swings - fresh out the gate, it swings. It startled him.

He turned his head. Sharply. He grips his glass. He holds it close. He gulped.

He may have gulped, or not at all, his memory, as though startled, too, began to self contradict; his eyes deepened. They became depths. Things swam in them, and only some of them fears; a great deal were fears, a great deal were not. The colors of the depths arose; his eyes, as much as they became full of storm clouds, also became full of the darkness that swells in sunken ships on the seafloor. And in such deepening, which was made possible by this whole encounter (this whole message is spoken *between and even underneath* the words and gestures, *filthy mole talk and shark dances*) - he knows: it's *something*. This is no curious superficiality, no mere funny quirk of suburban nonsense. And for that, he's curious. But is this good? But - and perhaps to no effect on his destiny at all - for, if *it is* what *it is*, what other option is there? He is leafless, plucked, without reference or experience. Simply, what is there to do? But *what else is there to do?* But - all that said - he's terrified, incredibly.

But, then,

She turns her head.

And now even the behavior is distorted. This is no trick of whiskey and language, jazz and exhaustion. When two people certainly approach mysterious outcomes, though personally unsure, their behavior, as a sign, a feeble gesture, loosens - constantly, the question, "what are we doing?!" - but too, with fear, recoils and tightens, like a belt made taught by two fists - it refines, emboldens, steels, sharpens. And then loosens. The behavior - it *fluctuates*. It's *free*. That's the basis of the thrill: *freedom*.

But not without **conscience**. There's necessity in that, too. Hence the bead of sweat forming on his nose, and the white tightness of his knuckles, and his lip, and the odd bridge of nerves between those two regions of his body, synthesizing in his consciousness - knuckle, lip, tightness - white, grit teeth - a bite?

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Her eyes become infinity in focus. A brown infinity, like amber and its imprisoned jade beetle, like his whiskey which burns his stomach as though something were scratching it, as though a piece of its barrel were ignited in his throat and he was goaded into swallowing. The smoke irritates his eyes, but pricks his ears. His mouth is salivating.

She turns her head -

inward, for a taste of a shadow babbling in her neck. She laps at it like a cat who eyes sideways at the bird.

As though a response to a call, he imagines what the shadow of her neck tastes like.

He reproaches himself, as though it were an inappropriate thought - which it is, - but not unprompted.

She turns her head.

She asked if he knows that she's an alcoholic.

She's wry. They're waking up to their tongue-writhing, finger wagging future, which is only vaguely intimated here, like a blurry photograph; or, rather, in specks, like the sparse glimmer of gold fillings in a mouth thrown back in laughter.

She smiles.

He, still, resists - but this is only the due process. A soul has to be woven into a fate, it can't merely be tossed into the fray and expected to stick. Especially a *good soul*.

He questions - *but only that question*, despite how much he says otherwise; he stutters, he suggests going home, but he's circling, both the room and, within its atmosphere, the one single question, for the both of them - **how could he?** The question that formulated a future, a terrible future, an overwrought future! How could he? Well, *actually*, he could, he very well could, what stopped him? Loyalty? To what, a stuffy plastic bourgeois class that perpetually got his drink wrong, much less his sense of belonging and increasingly erratic emotional state? Pah! And what else? What else has even **demanding this much conscience** from him **with such personable concern** and **interest** - *and with such alluring eyes?* With something that, perhaps for putrid reason, at the very least demanded *him, with clear and honest desire!* *Him!* Eyes like his whiskey, *his correct whiskey!* *His bourbon!* - and he says - no! For what is this moment but to define his law, what he stands for! He says no! - though he also knows - this "no" stands as the anxious gesture towards what is a pure, pure, blinding - really, only a matter of policy, a curt digression, a roundabout way to that uncompromising, unyielding yes that she possesses, holds between her teeth and balances on her tongue

(sharper than a razor, and yet, no blood. What food for the imagination.)

Ah, but is this even real? What is all this fuss? It's nothing, really, just a big joke. Impossible. Possible - but - impossible!

He teases further. It's undecided. What are her thoughts, really? It's a misunderstanding, perhaps. A big misunderstanding, and a waste of time, thought, and effort, and blood pressure. A waste of good sweat.

Ok, well, face it, he thinks. *He* could, but *she* couldn't. She's married, for Christ's sake! No, he should go home, really, it was a nice fantasy, a little projection, a little make-believe, a little fun. No, she wouldn't. He's set to apologize, to backtrack. But,

She turns her head.

She's laughing. Giggling to herself. More and more, as though someone still insisted on more water in the bath and refused to ease up on the handle for the hot water. He questions. This can't be. Of course not. But these words racing about, are not directly communicated - but there's no need! it's the same thoughts; they stand in the air as an anxious third guest, a non-partisan player in this wry and drying game, who sits in a chair between them, who feels the intensifying heat, and the moisture that builds up on their skin - he eyes them, with wide eyes, with one hand grasping his knee with one leg crossed over the other, chewing his fingers of the other hand, tearing his head from side to side, nervously gawking - what is this warmth! It's still growing! This spectator - he's adjusting his tie, he's pulling in his collar, shifting his coat. Oh, god, so uncomfortable! Oh, god! but he won't! she can't! But they must! What a fever pitch! They've been ensnared by the lull of

- impossibility. Ah, there is no worse intoxication than an *impossibility*, especially if that impossibility directly calls upon a person for desperate and imploring help, like a helpless man on death row begging to his audience through the glass for intervention.

No, really, this cannot go on any longer. It'll meltdown, a fire will start, their minds will boil over. It would be insanity, a woman laughing for no reason and a man as tight and petrified as a mausoleum engraving.

This spectator looks at the door, and wonders if he should leave - it's clearly over, which it is, it's done for, settled, they both know it. He goes to open the door, to break apart into the fresh night - but, as the spectator goes to twist the knob, he looks back - the woman's laughing, and, the man, he -

He turns his head.

And it seems like it won't. The spectator tightens his grip on the knob. He states it, outright.

"You're trying to seduce me, aren't you."

And immediately, everyone thinks: why would you say such a thing - even her, who, of course, appreciates this most of all, who finds it reaching her ears through the muscles of her stomach rather than the air between them, as though she anticipated it, and housed it. It's doubtful she even heard him say it at all in her shield of laughter.

But her laughing is now subsiding, though still quite haughty. With her leg, so cavalier, the garter peaking, the fertile shadow of her pubis, like a nestled flower in a pocket, gestures, almost like a young girl's flirtations, her waving hand in the coffee shop window towards her Romeo. Her underwear, it perhaps is pink. He only somewhat notices; her laughter, though now low, is very demanding, almost panther-esque, grumbling with the light rustle of shifting leaves and claws on linoleum floors. It challenges. It has a certain gravity. It distorts in rings, in her laughter, as sound tends to do in these rare, thrilling catastrophes, where consciousness is grasping at its fundamental bonds, trying to keep itself from tearing in half under its own pressure, or spontaneously combusting. And *she's laughing like a little girl*. Perhaps there's something about it, about all of this, the event, the proposition, the arrangement, the *affair*, and it's not for him - but her. It's an image far behind whatever has made her now. It's a deep level of the earth come aground. A shadow that produced a body, instead of the usual. This sense of irruption seems incomprehensible for him. Yes, for him, it's something else entirely, something that this is merely an episode he must endure, and pass through; a trial, almost. A tribulation. For what, exactly? He does not know yet what. Perhaps she sees it, from her privileged position, but certainly that's not why she laughs. She laughs for the same reason he gawks and gulps and falters. She laughs for the matter at hand, which, for their respective reasons, may have them coming from different directions, and eventually exiting just as differently. But, nevertheless, they are here at the station, unable to avoid the other's eyes. They know, this is beyond their will. They're both being dragged by the end by the tempo of the craze. This is the fate, come face to face- oh, it's come in from everywhere. There is no place where their eyes are not alerted, and surely, he tests its omnipresence, and averts his gaze again and again - the smoke of her cigarette, the swish of his drink, the rhythm of the music, especially those ornery drums, the pressed feel of his suit, which seemed to be begged to to be torn up into oblivion. Why? Why does this fate harass him so! Why this? Of all things, this?

Because of who they are, what they choose to be.

But, then,

She turns her head.

And she denies it.

But, they both know, "sobered up", cold-flushed, god-smacked - walking away, climbing the stairs - under the ostensible pretense of subduing that awkward "misunderstanding," that "nonsense;" under the ostensible pretense of only observing a portrait this late at night in her daughter's room (of course, her daughter's room), there is no doubt. This is fate. Regardless of how long they tarry in their nervous bumbling, frantically dancing in a daughter's pink room, flying up and down the stairs, tossing purses, naked ambushes and the like - simply, it is unavoidable.

Of course, it is worth a moment of thought about why the question of freedom lingers in their breasts like still warm words of a seal, a brand pressed upon the ribs - warm to their secret self-grasping touch - but the allure needs just that - touch. Let's not deceive ourselves: they are *free* - there's no other way to think the human being without some denial or incredible deception - but out of that freedom - really, anything could happen; nothing is set in stone; but, too, really, it is! Because, well, they want - a touch.

The roles assigned by fate cannot be assumed headlong, in reckless and thoughtless abandon.

Even fate - perhaps most of all! - needs ceremony. It needs a little elaboration in its subjects, a little upbuilding and some theatrics. It needs dance. It needs circling. It needs suspension. It needs levitation, like the material of a planet jettisoned into space after a collision. It needs silliness, a silliness like a weapon to what is forever grave and serious, like laws and morals and consciences. It needs predation, and it needs prey. It needs battle. It needs - *drama*. For where was fate first properly named? A little clue - the name. Her first name was -

- *Moir*a.