

FACSIMILE

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SYNOPSIS – ‘Gravity Plus’ represents a radical new idea in treatment for abuse victims—particularly younger victims. Utilizing groundbreaking research coupled with cutting-edge technology, Dr. Elliot is determined to help the nation’s youth heal from their traumas. Yarro, herself a graduate of the program, is guiding the newest cohort through the Gravity Plus experience. There is Tasha, an outspoken high school senior who must contend with the aggressive advances of their stepbrother. Callie is a college freshman locked in a dependent relationship that is prompting a dangerous eating disorder. Alicia’s trauma runs deep, and her unwillingness to share may be all too telling. While Jackson, the only male member of the group, grapples with his sexuality as well as the abuser who is taking advantage of his struggle. The question is, will Gravity Plus actually help them heal—and how relevant is the phrase “first do no harm,” given the stakes of this program?

CHARACTERS –

Cast size: 7 -13

(*Race to be determined and should reflect the diversity and cultural richness of our society.)

TASHA – 17. Nonbinary. Outspoken, yet still somewhat the frightened little kid inside. Tends to hide their insecurity with swearing and sarcasm.

YARRO – Mid 20s. Female. Still deeply conflicted, she puts on a brave front and, when it comes to Dr. Elliot, an all-too accommodating one.

CALLIE – 20. Female. Struggles with body dysmorphia and self-confidence.

ALICIA – 18. Female. Quiet and rather unassuming initially, she grows stronger throughout this journey though she still tends to harbor secrets.

JACKSON – 18. Male. Struggling with questions of sexuality.

DR. ELLIOT (voiceover) – Male. Deep, booming, authoritative voice. Kind of like the “Wizard of Oz”—but we never do get to see the man behind the curtain.

DEX – 20. Male. CALLIE’s boyfriend.

LUKE – 22. Male. TASHA’s stepbrother.

HOLDEN – 18. Male. ALICIA’s stalker.

ELECTRA – early–mid 20s. YARRO’s ex-girlfriend.

ALEX – 18. Male. JACKSON’s attacker.

WAITER – Any.

ROOMMATE – Any.

* Doubling options (there are a number of doubling scenarios possible):

- CALLIE and ELECTRA can be played by same actor
- ALEX, DR. ELLIOT and HOLDEN can be played by same actor
- DEX, DR. ELLIOT and LUKE can be played by same actor
- WAITER and ROOMMATE can be played by any combination of actors.

SETTING -

Not too distant future.

The set should be minimalistic with multiple spaces suggested on stage at any one time to ensure quick transitions between group/lounge sessions and flashback moments. Actors should simply move into their flashback and then resume the present-day scene with no blackout or formal transition suggested. These flashbacks are meant to blur the line between memory and reality. Lighting can do a lot of the heavy lifting here.

TRIGGER WARNING: There are some depictions and descriptions of abuse, both of a sexual and physical nature.

NOTES –

A slash [/] denotes where a character begins an interruption or an overlap.

Dashes [—] indicate when one word or line is *immediately* followed by the next.

Ellipses within text [...] suggest a word or thought is sustained through to the next word.

Isolated [...] suggests an unspoken look or reaction – will sometimes be followed by a parenthetical description of the character’s mood/vibe.

Last night I heard the screaming
Then a silence that chilled my soul
I prayed that I was dreaming
When I saw the ambulance in the road...

- "Behind the Wall," Tracy Chapman

I release you, my beautiful and terrible
fear. I release you. You were my beloved
and hated twin, but now, I don't know you
as myself.

- "Fear Poem, or I Give You Back," Joy Harjo

FACSIMILE

Scene 1: CALLIE is just outside the door of “Gravity Plus.” She is finishing up her final phone call before handing over her phone. YARRO looks on, not exactly approving.

CALLIE

I have to...I have to turn my phone in now...Yeah I know, but I don't...Course I want to talk to you but...No, please don't say...I gotta...Shit sorry. I really gotta go. Don't be...Don't be like that, I—Hello? Are you...Hello? (*looks as if she might cry*)

(CALLIE drops her phone in the container YARRO is holding. YARRO nods austerely. They both enter the room. JACKSON, TASHA and ALICIA are already in their seats. They are arranged in a circle.)

YARRO

Hello and welcome, I am Yarro. I will be with you here on this journey for the next six weeks.
(Beat.)

Now first, let's go ahead and get the housekeeping stuff out of the way. Your cell phones were all, I hope, checked at the door. I know it's a big sacrifice, but your socials will still be there after you complete your program here at Gravity Plus, I promise. Also, everyone was supposed to submit the name and contact info for their one emergency person. I believe I do have all of those. And finally, I hope you've all had a chance to at least see your rooms. If you are missing anything such as linens or towels for example, please let me know after this session, and I will see that it gets taken care of.

ALICIA

Um, I have a question.

YARRO

Yes, Alicia? Sorry, everyone, this is Alicia. Alicia, actually, can you quickly introduce yourself to the group first.

ALICIA

Oh, uh, sure. I'm Alicia. I'm gonna be a senior in high school. And uh, I don't know, I guess I'm here because my parents thought it was a good idea. Can I ask my question now?

YARRO

(*a bit disheartened by her answer*)

Of course.

ALICIA

What if like, we have something really important that we need to take care of, and—

YARRO

Let me stop you, Alicia. There is nothing more important than your healing. That is the reason you are here. And, to anticipate your question, no, there will be no exceptions when it comes to your phones and phone usage.

ALICIA

Fine.

YARRO

What I'd like for us all to do is go around and, as Alicia did, introduce ourselves, but with maybe a little bit more detail. 'Kay? Great. Callie, would you like to go?

CALLIE

Uh, sure. So my name's Callie. I'm from—

YARRO

Pause there. Other than first names, let's keep specific details out of our intros. Really just more about why you're here and maybe what you hope to gain from your time at Gravity Plus.

CALLIE

Oh, yeah, um—

TASHA

Why not specific details?

YARRO

Well Tasha, one of the things we've found is that those who've been victimized, like yourselves, do better with a certain level of anonymity. Research suggests that a big part of the reason for your experience, for the suffering that took place, is a complete lack of anonymity. I mean think about it, think about how vulnerable you all are. We live in a world where it seems no detail is off limits. We may as well have our diaries unlocked and opened for all to read. So, we like to begin the healing process here by enabling you to take back some of your privacy—if that makes sense.

JACKSON

Why they call it Gravity Plus? Kinda name is that anyway?

YARRO

Great question Jackson! So the name was our founder's idea, Dr. Elliot Singletary. Dr. Elliot thought that what a lot of young people in your situations were missing was a sense of grounding, a center. A center of gravity if you will.

JACKSON

And the plus?

YARRO

Well, I suppose it's because there's so much more that you will get out of your time here.

(Beat.)

Uh, let's go back to Callie. Callie, please continue.

CALLIE

So I'm Callie and I am a college freshman. I attend, er...that's probably against the rules right?

YARRO

Yeah, no specifics related to where you might live.

CALLIE

I guess I am here because, well, because, because, shit this is hard. Sorry, we can't swear right?

YARRO

Freedom of expression is central to the Gravity Plus experience. You have been stifled and silenced in so many ways. We want you to feel free to have a voice here—whatever that voice might sound like.

TASHA

Fuck yeah!

YARRO

... (*okay*)

CALLIE

Cool, um, I uh was in this relationship that, well like my friends said was toxic. And eventually my parents forbid it. And I couldn't, I mean, I don't know why, but I just kept going back. Over and over and over again. And, and, well um—

YARRO

It's okay Callie. You can stop if you want.

CALLIE

That's the thing, I wish I could...

(Crossfade to CALLIE's dorm room. DEX and CALLIE are in bed. A tiny dorm size bed. It is late.)

DEX

Was that your first time?

CALLIE

No.

DEX

Come on. Seriously? You can tell me.

CALLIE

I mean, well, I've done some stuff. It was like my—

DEX

Yeah it was. I'm your first. Look at that. (*slight pause*) Sooo, how was it?

CALLIE

It felt good, I think.

DEX

(*laughing*)

Whattaya mean you think?

CALLIE

No, I mean yeah. It felt good. It was wonderful Dex.

DEX

Good, cuz I aim to please.

(CALLIE draws the covers up to about her neck.)

DEX

You cold?

CALLIE

What? No, why?

DEX

You don't have to be so modest. I did just see like everything you know.

CALLIE

Yeah I know, but...

DEX

But what? Come on baby. Let's see what you got (*chuckles and tugs at her sheet*)

CALLIE

No, I...

DEX

What's wrong? (*somewhat mocking*) Are you being all shy on me now? You gotta great body.

CALLIE

I do?

DEX

Yeah, of course you do.

CALLIE

Thanks.

DEX

I like that you have some curves. You're not just like 75 pounds soaking wet er whatever. Girls think guys want these like super skinny model types. Not true. We like the feel of you, you know, all of you.

CALLIE

...

DEX

So come here babe. (*abruptly pulls her to him*) Let me feel all of you. There is a lot to feel.

CALLIE

Yeah...okay.

(Crossfade back to group session.)

YARRO

Jackson, why don't you go next.

JACKSON

Nah, let her go. (*gestures to TASHA*)

YARRO

Fine. Okay then, Tasha, would you like to go?

TASHA

I'm Tasha. What's up. *(to JACKSON)* My pronouns are they/them. I'm here because I had nothing else to do with my summer break. And I figure, what the hell. 'Cept I thought Gravity Plus was like a space camp. *(laughs)* No y'all, seriously, I uh, got some shit to work on—and that's the truth right there.

YARRO

Okay, Jackson would you like to—

(JACKSON stands, walks out of the room and slams the door behind him. They all just look around silently.)

YARRO

So we'll um...Let's just jump right in, shall we? First, I would like us to try an exercise. We're going to go around the circle and all say a color, literally whatever color pops into your head at that moment.

CALLIE

So like turquoise?

YARRO

Any color.

TASHA

I got one, indigo.

YARRO

Not – I mean, wait til we start the exercise, okay?

ALICIA

Then what? After we say our color?

YARRO

Well Alicia. Then we go around again, but this time we say a character.

TASHA

Hold up. Is this like some writing class assignment? Where we create a story using the colors and characters and like an object they're holding or something? Cuz I didn't sign up for no creative writing er whatever seminar.

YARRO

Not exactly. Let's just start okay, then I'll explain as we go along. Callie, why don't you go first.

CALLIE

Uh, red, no too boring—

YARRO

Red is fine—

CALLIE

Navy blue. I pick navy blue.

YARRO

Okay great, Tasha?

TASHA

Charcoal.

YARRO

Wonderful. Pretty dark palette, but let's go with it. And Alicia?

ALICIA

Sunrise.

TASHA

That's not a fuckin' color.

YARRO

Maybe something a little more definable, Alicia.

CALLIE

I think sunrise is a beautiful color.

TASHA

And what color is it? Sunrise?

CALLIE

Like purpley pink with some gold.

TASHA

See there, you just listed off three colors. Sunrise is not a color.

ALICIA

It's okay; how about lavender?

YARRO

Great! Now, we have navy blue, charcoal and lavender. Okay, can we all name a character.

TASHA
What kind of—

YARRO
So, let's stick with fictional characters from books, TV shows, or movies.

TASHA
How 'bout cartoons?

CALLIE
What are you like five? And cartoons are on TV, right? Duh.

TASHA
Why don't you shut the fuck / up.

YARRO
Okay that's enough. Yes, cartoons are acceptable. Callie, start us off.

CALLIE
Um...um...lemme think, um...

TASHA
Jesus just name anybody. There's like a bazillion fictional characters you can choose from.

CALLIE
I'm thinking, okay! How about...Rachel.

YARRO
Rachel?

CALLIE
From Friends.

YARRO
Oh, okay, great. Alicia?

ALICIA
Can I do barbie? From like the barbie movie?

TASHA
Or like the doll?

YARRO
Barbie will work. And Tasha?

TASHA
Big fucking Bird.

YARRO
Big Bird from Sesame Street?

TASHA
Is there another Big Bird?

YARRO
Fine. Um, now for this next part, I would like you to select one of the characters mentioned—somebody else's, not the one you offered to the group. And then go ahead and select a color, also not the one you offered to the group. I want you to then take a couple of minutes and jot down how that character exemplifies that color—from an emotional standpoint.

(They all look at her like, *huh?*)

So for example, let's say someone said green and another person had chosen, oh I don't know, Hannah Montana.

(They laugh.)

TASHA
Hannah Montana - how old do you think we are?

YARRO
Okay, then uh, Leia from the Star Wars movies.

ALICIA
Ooh that's a good one.

YARRO
So I might for example, jot down something about how Leia embodies the strength inherent in the earth. Because green can like stand for the earth. And because she represents this strength, she carries a great deal of weight around with her—as she feels so much responsibility for her people. The entire burden of the earth, let's say. Just keep it brief. Whatever you first think of.

TASHA
Yeah but that one was super easy. Like green, what else is it gonna be but the earth?

CALLIE

She's right. I mean what the hell we 'sposed to do with charcoal?

TASHA

What about navy blue bitch?

YARRO

Okay, okay look. Let's just try it...okay? See what happens.

TASHA

Whatever.

(YARRO passes out pencils and paper.)

TASHA
(*chuckles*)

We get pencils?

YARRO

Of course you get—what do you mean?

TASHA

You're not afraid these pointy objects aren't like too dangerous for us?

(ALICIA softly laughs.)

YARRO

Okay, we ready? Remember, it's got to be a character and color you did not suggest. And go.

ALICIA

How much time again?

YARRO

Just take like a couple minutes.

(ALICIA looks panicked like she might not finish. CALLIE finishes quickly and TASHA writes nothing. After a few moments...)

YARRO

Okay, ready to share? Tasha, did you—

TASHA

I got something, don't you worry.

YARRO

Do you want to start then?

TASHA

What the hell. I picked Rachel from Friends and the color lavender.

YARRO

Okay, great. And what do you have to say about Rachel and lavender?

TASHA

Well, lavender's like a mellow color, right? It just does its thing and chills there. And Rachel, as far as I can tell, is just kinda chill too. Like she stands outside the craziness, like when Monica's all on hyperdrive and she's puking out all her manic shit everywhere, Rachel's just like whatever bitch. And that's why everyone likes her the most. Because she's laid back and all mellow.

YARRO

Well that's um...

CALLIE

What exactly is the point of this?

TASHA

That's my question.

CALLIE

I mean, I don't get it.

YARRO

Well Callie, why don't you tell us about yours.

CALLIE

Sure, fine, whatever. I picked Big fuckin' Bird (*grins at TASHA*) and charcoal.

YARRO

Wonderful, and that brought you to...

CALLIE

It brought me to Big Bird's the opposite of charcoal, right? So like, his yellowness—it's a he right?

ALICIA

I don't think Big Bird has a gender.

TASHA

Bird's a dude.

CALLIE

But like how do you know? You can't actually see its...you know.

TASHA

It talks with a dude's voice.

ALICIA

I actually think a woman voices Big Bird.

TASHA

A woman does not voice—

YARRO

You know what, doesn't matter. Just...go ahead Callie.

CALLIE

So like suddenly he's not yellow anymore. He's all covered in this charcoal color, like his feathers are now charcoal. And it fundamentally goes against who he is. He's Big Bird and yellow and sunshiney and he sings and makes kids happy. But a 9 foot charcoal colored bird, like some kinda nasty crow or raven, isn't making anyone happy. So he gets depressed but eventually that turns into anger. And he becomes Big Bird's like diabolical alter ego. And yeah...so that's what I came up with.

YARRO

Okay that's great. And it's interesting that used the phrase "diabolical alter ego" (*jots something down*)

CALLIE

What are you writing?

TASHA

That you shouldn't be left alone in the same room as a pointy pencil.

YARRO

Don't worry about it...Alicia, you go now.

ALICIA

Um, I picked barbie.

TASHA

Dumbass, you weren't allowed to pick—

YARRO

It's fine and please let's refrain from using derogatory names; okay go on Alicia.

ALICIA

So I went with navy blue.

YARRO

Great, and what do you have to say about barbie interacting with the color navy blue?

ALICIA

So it's like navy blue, er any kinda blue, are the opposite of pink.

TASHA

Blue and pink are not opposites.

ALICIA

Yes, they are, pink's for girls and blue's for boys.

TASHA

Is it lonely up there on planet binary?

YARRO

Alicia keep going.

ALICIA

And barbie is all about like fighting the patriarchy, right, and so, the navy blue like upsets her. And so, she's angered by it cuz it just reminds her of how she's a plastic little barbie who men can control.

TASHA

You just fuckin' rehashed the movie.

ALICIA

No, I didn't.

TASHA

That was the fuckin' movie! You even used the word patriarchy. That was said in the movie about 900 times.

YARRO

Thank you Alicia. I see your point and I appreciate it. Now—

TASHA

No, no.

YARRO

Tasha, what is the—

TASHA

She just like gave you the plot of the barbie movie instead of coming up with something real, and you're all just like, (*mocking her tone*) "good job Alicia." I'm done. This is stupid. I don't even—pssh.

(TASHA exits.)

CALLIE

And then there were two...dun, dun, dun.

(Flashback: Crossfade to TASHA's dad's house. LUKE is there. TASHA is just getting home from school.)

LUKE

You're home early.

TASHA

Yeah.

LUKE

Dad knows you're gonna be here?

TASHA

Yeah. I called him. And he ain't your dad.

LUKE

Course he is.

TASHA

He didn't give birth to you—

LUKE

No, my ma gave birth to me. Jesus.

TASHA

You know what I mean.

LUKE

Yeah well he's been my dad since I was 12. And that's a long fuckin' time.

TASHA

And he's been my dad since I was born and that's a longer fuckin' time.

LUKE

But, you do gotta point.

TASHA

I do?

LUKE

Yeah, like (*sits on the couch next to her*) if he isn't my actual dad, then we can, you know.

TASHA

What the fuck are you talking about?

(LUKE tries to touch her. TASHA jumps up.)

TASHA

Hell's wrong with you?

LUKE

You know you're curious. I see you looking.

TASHA

At what?

(LUKE grabs his crotch.)

LUKE

Wondering what it looks like hard...Come on. (*tries to force her hand*)

TASHA

No I...I said fucking stop.

(LUKE stares her down. She runs into her room, slamming the door. LUKE jiggles the handle.)

LUKE

Come on Tash, I'll play nice, I promise.

TASHA

Go away. Stay the hell away from me.

LUKE

You gotta come out sometime. Gotta eat. Gotta pee.

TASHA

I'll pee in a fuckin' bucket first.

LUKE

Gotta come get a bucket. And I'll be waiting. We live in the same house, remember?

Scene 2: JACKSON is sitting in his room at Gravity Plus. YARRO knocks on the door.

YARRO

Jackson, may I come in?

JACKSON

Uh sure.

YARRO

You left pretty early. Part of your journey here is being present at all of the—

JACKSON

I made a mistake, my parents made a mistake. I don't belong here...with them.

YARRO

What do you mean by them?

JACKSON

Girls. They're all girls.

YARRO

Well Tasha's nonbinary.

JACKSON

Whatever. I obviously do not have a vagina.

(Pause.)

YARRO

Just because you're—

JACKSON

I don't belong here as part of this whole MeToo vibe you have going on.

YARRO

Jackson, this isn't...Everyone here is here to heal. And it is not about gender, and it is not about the specifics of what you experienced per se. It is about overcoming any such experience on a path to healing.

JACKSON

(mocking) On a path to healing...Look, that touchy feely crap may work with the girls—sorry and Tasha, but...I don't belong here, okay?

YARRO

Do me a favor?

JACKSON

What if I don't wanna?

YARRO

Do it, and if you don't see things differently, I'll call your parents to come get you.

JACKSON

What's the favor?

YARRO

Grab a pen and paper...ready?

Scene 3: Next group session. They are all back sitting in a circle—including JACKSON.

YARRO

I trust everyone had a good night's sleep.

TASHA

Slept like shit. All the money our parents pay, can't get any softer beds in here?

ALICIA

Yeah they were pretty...

(TASHA eyes her like shut up.)

YARRO

Sorry about that Tasha, something to write about in your end-of-treatment review. (*smirks*) Now, Jackson, I'm glad you're with us this morning.

JACKSON

Yeah well.

YARRO

Jackson, since you were the first to do the activity we're going to be working on today, would you like to demonstrate for the others.

JACKSON

Um...I...Sure...I guess.

YARRO

Wonderful. Thank you Jackson. So, we're gonna read this together. Do it just like we did last night, okay?

CALLIE

The hell did they do last night?

TASHA

Seriously.

YARRO

The point of this is to say the first thing that comes into your head. So go with your gut instinct. And then I'll explain part two when we're done. Ready Jackson?

(JACKSON nods and takes out a folded piece of paper from his pocket.)

YARRO

Love is...

JACKSON

(will read these answers)

Fucking stupid.

YARRO

Good. My dream is to...

JACKSON

To get the hell outta this place, er, where I like live, and never look back.

YARRO

Home to me is...

JACKSON

...

YARRO

Home to me is...

JACKSON

Home to me is my dad always yelling and my mom listening to some 80s music or some shit like that, tuning everyone out.

YARRO

The future is...

JACKSON

Doesn't exist.

YARRO

Last one. Love is...

TASHA

You already asked him / that.

YARRO

Ssh. Love is...

JACKSON

Something that can kill you whether you see it coming or not.

YARRO

Okay that was excellent. Now, what I am going to have Jackson do—which he’s already done, so he’ll actually just be reading—is to answer those questions again, but this time using the opposite feeling. *(to group)* Do you understand?

(They shake their heads “no.”)

So instead of love is stupid...

TASHA

He said fucking stupid.

YARRO

Thank you Tasha. This time around, he’ll express the opposite idea or feeling about love. We’ll just go ahead and do it, so you can see. Okay, Jackson, ready, Love is...

(JACKSON again reads his answers—this time though there’s a hesitancy to his tone.)

JACKSON

Love is something you put hope in.

YARRO

Good. My dream is...

JACKSON

To find happiness wherever I am.

YARRO

You’re doing great. Home is...

JACKSON

Where, where my mom sings and it makes me feel like familiar er safe or something. Because her voice reminds me that she’s real.

TASHA

The hell’s that mean, she’s real?

YARRO

Tasha. Okay, next one, the future is...

JACKSON

Something that is wide open for me.

YARRO

And, love is...

JACKSON

Something that can lift you up no matter how low you get. *(takes a deep breath)*

YARRO

Thank you. You did a terrific job.

(Beat.)

Tell me, you're obviously still here. You must've taken some time to think about it and decided to stay. Why?

JACKSON

I don't know.

YARRO

Try again.

JACKSON

I just...the mom one. The mom question. Okay.

YARRO

You mean "what is home?"

JACKSON

Yeah. I just like heard her singing, and I didn't wanna let her down.

YARRO

That's a terrific reason to stay. *(slight pause)* Okay, we got the gist of it now? Callie, you want to try it?

Scene 4: Flashback: JACKSON is in a bedroom with ALEX. ALEX has JACKSON in a headlock.

ALEX

You fucking faggot. You god damn fucking homo, cock-sucking, shit dick faggot!

(He lets him go. JACKSON struggles to regain his breath.)

JACKSON

What are you...I don't...Alex, please, I don't understand! (*crying*)

ALEX

Don't you ever fucking...What? You gonna cry now, you little faggot. Stop it! Okay, just fucking stop!

(JACKSON tries to control himself but can't stop crying.)

ALEX

Fuck you gotta make me do this to you? Huh?!

(ALEX walks over to JACKSON and shoves him to the ground. JACKSON falls.)

JACKSON

Ow, ow....please. please don't.

ALEX

Don't you ever do that again. Ever! You hear me you fucking queer?

JACKSON

But I...I thought that...The other day, at your house, when we were...

ALEX

You see, Jackson, this is what I am talking about. You don't know when to Shut. Your. Fucking. Mouth. If you ever whisper a hint of...

(He kicks JACKSON.)

ALEX

Alright get up. I said get up!

(ALEX goes to the door, looks around and locks it. He returns to where JACKSON is lying. And unzips his pants.)

ALEX

Get on your knees Jackie boy. Now come on, get to it. You know how I like it.

(JACKSON, pretty battered, lifts himself up and starts giving ALEX a blow job.)

(Crossfade to TASHA and CALLIE in the lounge.)

TASHA

Who the hell is this Dr. Elliot anyway? Is he like, like Dr. Phil or Dr. Oz, or the other people Oprah anointed doctors.

CALLIE

I don't think Oprah anoints doctors.

TASHA

Yeah, she does.

(They sit for a bit. Ponder. The silence is okay. ALICIA enters. Hesitantly.)

ALICIA

Mind if I...

TASHA

Just sit if you're gonna sit.

(Pause.)

TASHA

You know, I can see why you're in here.

ALICIA

...

TASHA

See, right there. You got no backbone. You got no fight. Someone tells you take a hammer and beat yourself over the head with it, you're gonna do it, aren't ya?

ALICIA

I wouldn't...I mean, no I'm not...I have a backbone.

TASHA

Whatever you say.

(Beat.)

Let's play a game. Might as well do something to kill time til lights out or whatever.

CALLIE

What kinda game you have in mind?

TASHA

How about we play...who's the saddest shitshow in this joint?

CALLIE

Huh?

ALICIA

I don't think that's a good idea.

TASHA

No, no. Listen, we may as well get real because Miss Yoda is gonna make us get real about everything sooner or later.

ALICIA

Her name's Yarro, right?

TASHA

Whatever. And you can't tell me she doesn't have some skeletons hanging out in her closet neither. She's got that look.

CALLIE

What look?

TASHA

The look. The look that says, please hit me harder, I deserve it.

CALLIE

Damn you're dark.

TASHA

Nah, just, whatever. Alright, so the rules of "why're you in here"—We each take a turn. When it's our turn, the other two get to ask one question each. And then we keep going around. But the hard part is, there can only be one-word answers. Make sense?

ALICIA

Not really

TASHA

(*sighs*)

So like I'll be on the hot seat first. Alice—

ALICIA

Alicia.

TASHA

Alicia then. So you ask me a question about why I am in here, but I can only give you a one word answer. So don't ask something like, I don't know, 'describe the worst thing you went through.' Obviously, I can't do that in one word. Get it now?

ALICIA

Uh, sure.

TASHA

Okay then, you start. Go.

ALICIA

Um, uh...sorry, it's hard to think of a question with one word. Um...oh, okay, was it a boy or girl?

TASHA

Good question. Boy. Callie now you go.

CALLIE

Did it hurt, physically?

TASHA

Um, hmm, I'm gonna say no. Okay, now Alicia, it's your turn in the hotseat. I'll ask first. Did you have a relationship with the person?

ALICIA

Sorta.

TASHA

That's two words.

ALICIA

No it's not—

TASHA

And what do you mean sorta? How do you not know whether or not you were with someone?

ALICIA
(*mumbles*)

I don't know.

CALLIE

This is dumb.

TASHA

What do you mean?

CALLIE

Our therapy "sessions" consist of us sitting in a circle playing like these cryptic games. Why not just talk about our shit? Real talk, you know.

TASHA

Fine, you go first.

CALLIE

Why me?

TASHA

This is your idea Miss Real Talk. So talk bitch.

CALLIE

Fine bitch, what the fuck ever, I'll go.

(Flashback: Crossfade. DEX and CALLIE are sitting in a restaurant. It is an "anniversary" date.)

DEX

This is a pretty swanky place, isn't it?

CALLIE

Oh my god yes.

DEX

Do you like it?

CALLIE

I love it, thank you. Thank you for this evening. Thank you for...for being you.

DEX

Happy one year anniversary baby.

(They kiss.)

DEX

I don't know about you, but I'm stuffed.

CALLIE

Yeah me too.

(WAITER comes to their table.)

WAITER

Can I interest you in our dessert menu or just the check?

CALLIE

Well I...

DEX

She doesn't need dessert. *(to CALLIE)* Right?

CALLIE

Oh yeah, um, I guess not. Just the check, thanks.

DEX

Actually though, I've got a little room. Let's see the dessert menu. Thanks.

DEX

You'll thank me babe. I like you curvy and all, but you know. There are limits. And when you reach those limits, you go from hot to definitely not. You get it right? I'm not like being mean or a body shamer or whatever. I just...I care about you.

CALLIE

I know you do Dex.

(WAITER returns.)

WAITER

Have we decided?

DEX

Uh, yeah. I'll go with the molten lava cake.

WAITER

Very good.

(WAITER exits.)

DEX

Tell you what, I'll give you a bite of my cake. Okay? (*smiles*)

(Crossfade back to lounge. CALLIE can stay where she is in the flashback moment and answer from there throughout this section. She's essentially inhabiting both worlds.)

TASHA

That's fucked up. But, no offense dude, you're here because some guy told you you like can't have dessert?

CALLIE

No...Not just...

(Flashback: CALLIE's dorm room. Her ROOMMATE is packing up her backpack getting ready to go to class. CALLIE's sitting on her bed working, eating a granola bar.)

ROOMMATE

I'm taking off.

CALLIE

Cool.

(ROOMMATE pauses.)

ROOMMATE

Hey, um, I was gonna go check out the band they got in the quad tonight. Some people from the hall are going. Would you wanna come with?

CALLIE

I um...No, I'm good, but thanks.

ROOMMATE

Cool. I'm out. If you change your mind, we'll probably go about 7:30.

CALLIE

I won't. But thanks.

ROOMMATE

Kay.

(ROOMMATE leaves. CALLIE stands in front of her mirror, looks at her granola bar.)

CALLIE

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

(She tosses the bar, grabs her shower caddy, dumps the contents and then proceeds to make herself vomit into it. Once finished, she heads toward the door holding the puke-filled caddy. Her ROOMMATE enters, stops and looks down at what CALLIE is holding.)

ROOMMATE

What the...

CALLIE

I...I got sick. I...I wasn't gonna make it all the way to the bathroom. Besides those toilets are gross.

ROOMMATE

Whatever. I forgot my air pods. *(grabs her air pods, shakes her head and leaves again)*

CALLIE

FUCK.

(Lights back up on the lounge.)

ALICIA

You were bulimic?

TASHA

No she had a fucking tapeworm. Course she was. Jesus.

CALLIE

(to ALICIA)

It got worse.

ALICIA

Why'd you puke in your room? I mean, couldn't you have gone to like the bathroom?

CALLIE

The toilets *were* super gross. And last thing I needed was for everyone to know my business. I just...I wanted some privacy. And you know the fuck of it all?

ALICIA

Huh?

CALLIE

I would kill for my phone right now. Even...even after it all. I would give anything to just hear his voice.

(Flashback: CALLIE's dorm room. She and DEX are in bed. They've just had sex. He is leaning over her, seemingly inspecting her body. He then grabs a hold of some of her flesh—her love handles.)

DEX

Don't know why they call them love handles. This ain't nothing to love. (*laughs*) I know, how about, tomorrow morning we go for a run.

CALLIE

You run?

DEX

I'm gonna start. I wanna stay in shape. Come with me. It'll be like a, like a couple's thing we do. Running together.

CALLIE

I'm not really a—

DEX

Callie, I didn't wanna say nothing, but, damn you're starting to look, you know, and, I'm just not as...

CALLIE

Not as what? Not as what Dex?

DEX

Sometimes it's hard for me to, to like, well, how do I say this...to like get hard, and...I mean don't get me wrong, there's nothing and I mean absolutely nothing wrong in that department. I just...I'm not finding you as...you gotta work on yourself Cal. At least do it for me, if you want us to...

CALLIE

Oh, oh wow...I didn't...I mean I didn't know that you...

DEX

Alright, just calm down.

(CALLIE is definitely getting agitated.)

DEX

Just calm the fuck down Cal. It's not, it's not like a lost cause. I mean... You can lose the weight. Just, you know, run with me. Have a salad for dinner instead of like a 10 piece McNugget. And, and like skip lunch. Humans don't need all the food we eat, you know. Do you realize we can fast for up to 12 hours a day and still survive—be healthier even?

CALLIE

Dex I'm...I'm so, so sorry. I didn't think that you saw me like—

DEX

Don't be sorry, just do something about it. It's not too late. I'm still here. Just, work on it, okay?

(CALLIE returns to lounge.)

TASHA

What a fuckin douche. So what'd you do?

CALLIE

I started throwing up after every meal—not even a meal, after every time something went in my mouth. Like, a piece of gum even. Dex was proud of me. I was losing weight. I looked like he always wanted me to, that's what he said.

ALICIA

Oh man.

CALLIE

Finally, I got scared. I started throwing up pure blood. I went to the medical office on campus. They called an ambulance. You ever have blood sucked outta your stomach through a tube in your nose. That tube going in, hurts like a motherfucker. And now I'm here. My parents I guess had seen enough.

ALICIA

I'm sorry you went through that.

CALLIE

Thanks.

TASHA

And you still wanna call that motherfucker?

CALLIE

Sometimes a lot.

(Beat.)

Someone else's turn.

TASHA

Fine, I'll go. Except it wasn't any dude. It was my brother, Luke.

(Flashback: Crossfade to TASHA's bedroom. She's changing. On the other side of the wall, kneeling on the floor, is LUKE. He's cut a peephole through the shared wall between their bedrooms. As he's watching he's jerking off. TASHA walks around her room in her underwear as she figures out what clothes to put on. LUKE finishes, loudly.)

TASHA

What the... (*throws sweats on quick.*)

(LUKE knocks on her door. TASHA opens it.)

TASHA

Yeah?

LUKE

You got a nice ass—for a trans whatever you are.

TASHA

I'm nonbinary, shit for brains. And what the hell you talking about?

LUKE

Oh...nothing. Nothing at all. Uh, so like no one's home yet. We could a...

(TASHA goes to shut the door. LUKE pushes against it and keeps it open.)

LUKE

Come on Tash. Just a quickie. I can get there again pretty fast. See. (*grabs her hand, holds it to his crotch*)

TASHA

Let...go...you fucking...

(LUKE twists her around so that he's behind her and has her in some sort of head lock.)

LUKE

Tasha, Tasha, Tasha. You know this only turns me on more, right? I like it rough.

(He starts sliding his hand down into her pants. TASHA stomps hard on his foot. When he releases his grip, she knees him in the nuts. LUKE goes down and TASHA runs...Crossfade back to the lounge.)

CALLIE

Jesus Christ, you're brother? Seriously?

TASHA

Stepbrother. But yeah, right?

ALICIA

So what did you do? I mean like, to get away from him.

TASHA

I came here. *(laughs)* My mom, uh read my journal. She got worried, like real worried. Funny thing is, she didn't say anything about doing anything to Luke, just found this place for me. I think she's still hoping some day she might get my dad back. They've been divorced for like 10 years. Didn't want to rock the boat I guess by reporting his creepy AF stepson.

(Beat.)

(to ALICIA) And that leaves you jellybean. Why are you here?

ALICIA

I...I don't think I'm quite ready to, you know, talk about it, like out loud.

TASHA

Are you fucking kidding me? We both shared. Now just—

CALLIE

It's okay Alicia. When you're ready. That's fine.

TASHA

No, it's not fucking fine. This is bullshit. I sat here and told you all about...This is bullshit.
(walks away)

CALLIE

It's okay. I understand.

(Crossfade to YARRO sitting in her room. She's on Facetime.)

YARRO

I got the recording, doctor.

DR. ELLIOT (V.O.)

Great job. That wasn't difficult at all. Bring a group of young people facing similar circumstances together and well...Excellent work, Yarro.

YARRO

I still need Alicia and Jackson, but—

DR. ELLIOT

They'll talk, soon enough.

YARRO

Will this be sufficient, between the group exercises, their phones and the recordings?

DR. ELLIOT

Perhaps. Though, I'm not totally certain yet. We want to ensure that the IFTMs are flawless and thus elicit the exact response we need...to really show the investors. Everything's hinging on this particular cohort.

YARRO

I'm not sure what else we can—

DR. ELLIOT

Let's add a video diary component. Give them each an iPad—no Wi-Fi, just for recording purposes—and have them log in one entry per night. I believe that should give us enough.

YARRO

But what if they don't necessarily talk about...

DR. ELLIOT

We'll give them prompts. It'll work, trust me. I understand human behavior all too well.

YARRO

Yes doctor. Thank you Dr. Elliot.

(Beat.)

Oh, doctor, I um, one more thing.

DR. ELLIOT

Yes?

YARRO

Can I just...Tonight please, can I, just for a minute. I promise, just for a minute.

DR. ELLIOT

Yarro, this is not advisable given—

YARRO

Please. I just...please. I am begging you.

DR. ELLIOT

Very well, but...just for tonight.

(They end the call. YARRO's door opens a few moments later. ELECTRA walks in.)

YARRO

(seems ecstatic despite herself—but tries to rein it in)

Hi.

ELECTRA

Hi.

YARRO

I...Hi.

ELECTRA

You said that.

(YARRO slowly approaches ELECTRA—kisses her.)

YARRO

Sit. Please stay for a minute. I missed you. How have you been?

ELECTRA

I don't know Yarro. You're the one who wanted me to come here. How do you think I'm doing?

YARRO

I didn't mean to...

ELECTRA

Didn't mean to what? Huh?

(YARRO winces.)

ELECTRA

Come on—don't start with that. You can be really pathetic sometimes, you know.

YARRO

Please I didn't...

ELECTRA

(mocking) Please I didn't... Say something new. This is getting old. Why am I here? Why do I need to be here? You have some sort of fucking masochistic need, er... for this?

YARRO

I can't listen to... I mean, I don't have to listen to...

ELECTRA

Ooh look at that, she's trying to sound tough now. You were never strong Yarro. Not ever. I don't even know why I began hooking up with you in the first place. And you're a lousy lay. *(scoffs)* You know I had to get myself off after you fell asleep. That's right. I faked that shit. Just so it could be over.

YARRO

No, no that's not—

ELECTRA

True? It sure as hell is true. You can't do anything right... especially that.

YARRO

No. No. NO!

ELECTRA

Watch out, she's getting louder now.

YARRO

I was a great girlfriend—

ELECTRA

You fucking sucked as a / girlfriend.

YARRO

I gave you everything. Everything! And you just, just shit on me. All the time!

ELECTRA

Come on, cry now. Cry for me Yarro. You know you want to.

YARRO

Shut up! Just shut up Electra! You are nothing. You don't exist for me anymore. You are nothing.

ELECTRA

Keep telling yourself that.

YARRO

I was a good partner. Anybody would be lucky to have me. You are nothing. I was a good partner.

(ELECTRA walks out. YARRO takes a deep, relieved breath.)

YARRO

You are nothing. I was a good partner.

Scene 5: Another group session. They are all in the circle.

YARRO

Okay, you probably all noticed that there is a table set up in here with some random objects on it. So today, we're gonna utilize these things in our exercise.

TASHA

That there's a fucking old lady hairbrush. I am *not* putting that thing in my hair.

YARRO

No, we're not...No, actually, you're right Tasha. That's kind of the point.

JACKSON

What's the point?

YARRO

We have this table full of common items. Hairbrush, book, flashlight, and so on. You are each going to take a turn to come up to the table, choose an item and then use it in a way it is *not* intended to be used.

CALLIE

What?

YARRO

For instance, let's say I go over. (*walks to table and picks up a baseball glove*) Now, obviously this is meant for playing baseball. But I am not going to use it for that.

(YARRO pretends to put the baseball glove on like a shoe and then proceeds to "ice skate" around the room. She seems to really get into it.)

TASHA

What in the literal fuck is she doing right now? Should we call someone?

JACKSON

Like who?

TASHA

1-800-Psych Ward.

YARRO

Baseball glove has now become an ice skate. And that's all there is to it. Select an item and do something with it that it was not intended for. Okay? Um, Tasha wanna try it first?

TASHA

I uh, yeah sure...whatever.

(They saunter over to the table and select a cell phone. Instinctively they try to scroll—it's a dead cell.)

YARRO

Doesn't actually work.

TASHA

Got that. (*pause as they think*) Okay um,

(TASHA winds up, like they would with a baseball and then pitches the cell across the room.)

You can skate with a catcher's mitt, I can pitch with a cellphone.

YARRO

Thank you Tasha. Good work. Jackson?

(JACKSON now walks over to the table. He picks up the hairbrush. Starts walking around the room swatting at things. It's all a bit strange, no one is sure what he's doing.)

YARRO

Okay, um, and you are...

JACKSON

Swatting at flies! It's a fly swatter.

YARRO

Ah, good. Very good. Callie you go now.

(CALLIE selects a book. She examines it for a moment. She then sits back down in her chair. She thinks for a second, then points her finger upward as if hitting upon a brilliant idea. She gets up, puts the book in her chair and sits on it. Then she stands and takes a bow.)

YARRO

You'll have to explain that performance.

CALLIE

I was in class. Way in the back and I like couldn't see the professor, so I sat on my book. Then I could see him.

YARRO

Very inventive. And Alicia, your turn.

(ALICIA pauses. She then gets up and selects the fork. She looks at it—seems to really ponder the object. Her face changes. An almost sinister-ish look takes over. She holds the fork as she would a knife. ALICIA then walks over toward YARRO and points it at her like she’s threatening to stab her. ALICIA’s hands are shaking. YARRO seems a little nervous. Everyone is definitely caught off guard here.)

YARRO

Uh, great. Thank you Alicia. That was um...that was good. (*takes the fork, slowly*) Okay, you all did great. Now I want to talk about—

TASHA

Again, I have to ask, what the hell was the point of that?

YARRO

Well, when you understand Dr. Elliot’s methodology a little better, then you begin to connect the—

CALLIE

I don’t get it either.

JACKSON

Me either. I mean, how is this supposed to make us better, er heal us or whatever? It’s just like these stupid role playing games.

(YARRO writes the following on the white board: “Inverse Mind Modeling.”)

YARRO

Does anyone know what this means?

(They all just shake their heads “no.”)

YARRO

So, according to Dr. Elliot’s research, the mind is responsible for creating our reality. We take in the sensory world but then we distort it to fit our own immediate needs and wants. And with victims of abuse particularly, what we are seeing is a dramatic distortion of these sensory experiences. You tend to make everything, and I mean everything, fit the toxic pattern you’re imposing upon reality. What Dr. Elliot is calling for is a radical re-visualization of experience.

TASHA

A radical what now?

YARRO

A re-visualization. Like, like with this exercise for example. A brush became a fly swatter. A book became a seat cushion. A, a cell phone became a baseball.

TASHA

And a fork became a fucking knife. How is this helping us?

YARRO

We are disconnecting the wires that are sending the wrong signals to the wrong places and giving you the tools to reconnect your own wires and thereby send the right signals to the right places. We're inverting all that you know to be true and, in that way, allowing you to invert those behaviors that brought you here.

CALLIE

I still don't understand...

TASHA

My behaviors aren't what got me here.

YARRO

The behaviors that force you to position yourself as less than. When you give somebody the ability to experience things in a completely new way, given a whole different context than what they previously knew, you also give them access to brand new behaviors. So then, the bullied become the brave. The stalked become the soldiers. The, the victim suddenly has a voice. It's brilliant if you really think about it. *He* is brilliant.

TASHA

Gotta thing for Dr. Elliot, do you?

YARRO

No, I...I was a resident here—about 3 years ago. When Dr. Elliot was first working with inverse mind models.

ALICIA

So you also...?

YARRO

Yes Alicia, I also...And I got strong. And I got better. And I got away. And now I'm here. To help all of you get away. But first *you* have to get strong.

Scene 6: JACKSON is in his room. He's getting ready to record his video diary. We can either just watch him record, or if possible, his recording can be projected onto a screen.

JACKSON

So yeah, I gotta do this stupid video now. Whatever.
 Today's prompt, (*reads*) "recall one incident in which you felt powerless against your abuser."
 Uh, hmm. One incident...
 Lemme think.
 Oh, so Alex, the guy who...He uh, would...well anyway, Alex.
 Alex liked me to blow him. He liked it a lot. I liked it a lot. I liked Alex a lot.
 He was good-looking and confident and nothing bothered him, you know. Not like me.
 Everything bothered me. Still does.
 But he wasn't ya know, gay. He told me that. Every time.
 "This doesn't mean I'm gay you fucking faggot."
 He liked that word, faggot. Said it a lot. It made him feel powerful, I think.
 So yeah, the one time, I remember we were in his house.
 His parents were gone...somewhere, I don't know.
 He said come over. No one's here. I almost didn't go. I was tired of
 But I...
 my body wanted his, needed his and...
 So I get there and there's another guy. I'd never seen him before.
 Older, I think. Yeah definitely older.
 Alex says "this is Macon." I don't know any Macon.
 "Macon likes to watch," he says.
 But Macon didn't just like to...Macon also liked to
 I'd never...I mean I'd just...with Alex.
 But Macon he, uh, while I was uh
 I wasn't ready. I didn't know it'd feel like
 I wasn't ready. It hurt...a lot. I screamed I think. It was
 Yeah, I was pretty powerless then.

Scene 7: Another group session.

YARRO

So today is the final in-group re-visualization session before the last meeting. That's the big one, but more on that later. Anyway, today we are using this. (*pulls out VR goggles*)

TASHA

Nah, I ain't putting that shit on. Talking about inverting my mind. I don't even wanna know what you have planned with *that*.

YARRO

It's nothing scary. It's just...Part of realigning your behaviors is understanding all of the "w's" associated with why those behaviors get activated in the first place.

ALICIA

The W's?

YARRO

The who, what, why, where, when. Today, we're gonna dive into the where. Our environment can be just as culpable for our victimization as any other factor. So that is what this is for. We are going to put you into a known environment, and then, change things up a bit. Who'd like to go first?

CALLIE

How do you know what a known environment or whatever looks like for us?

YARRO

Your parents.

TASHA

Huh?

YARRO

We asked them to send photos of your rooms. And then we converted those photos into VR experiences.

TASHA

Yeah this is some Black Mirror shit right here.

YARRO

It's not as dystopic as it sounds.

TASHA

Mm-hmm.

YARRO

Remember, radical re-visualization. We have to retrain your brain. Alicia, you wanna start this one?

ALICIA

Oh, uh, sure, I guess.

YARRO

Great.

(YARRO fits ALICIA with the VR goggles.)

Okay, you ready?

ALICIA

Sure.

YARRO

Are you in your bedroom?

ALICIA

Yeah. Wow, holy shit it looks exactly like it. You even got my...you even got my squishmellows in here.

YARRO

Okay good, so now we're gonna remove those.

ALICIA

What? Where'd they go?

YARRO

What else is different?

ALICIA

Wait. But...My bed is on the ceiling. How can... (*meanwhile, she's reaching around etc. trying to get her bearings*)

YARRO

Now, look out the window.

ALICIA

But, where's the window? It's gone.

YARRO

Nope, just moved.

ALICIA

Whoa, that's weird. It's on like the floor. I almost stepped on it.

TASHA

You haven't even moved. *(laughs)*

(YARRO shoots TASHA a look.)

YARRO

What's in the window?

ALICIA

I...I can't quite...Wait, it's my front door. It's the downstairs.

YARRO

Good, what else?

ALICIA

My mom, she, she's answering the door. But I didn't...I didn't hear the doorbell.

YARRO

Keep going.

ALICIA

I can't tell who...Huh? What? No, it can't...

YARRO

Stay in the room; what do you see?

ALICIA

I...no. Please I wanna come out. Please. I don't wanna stay here.

YARRO

Who's there Alicia?

ALICIA

No mom, what are you...Mom stop! It's him, it's him, it's him! *(rips the VR set off; breathes heavily)*

YARRO

Okay, okay. Good work Alicia.

TASHA

Okay this right here—this is a fucking mind fuck. What did you do to her? I sure as hell ain't putting that thing on. I'll tell you that right now.

CALLIE

Yeah, I don't know. She seems pretty shaken up.

YARRO

Alicia, are you okay?

(ALICIA nods hesitantly.)

YARRO

This isn't a...mind fuck, Tasha. This is a way to help you reclaim your past through a cutting-edge revisualization technique.

TASHA

You know what I think. I think Dr. Elliot, IF he's even a real person, watched one too many sci-fi movies. And now he's trying to bring that shit into therapy for teens because we're like more impressionable and our minds can be fucked with easier—that's what I think.

(TASHA storms out.)

CALLIE

I'm gonna... (*goes after her*)

Scene 8: Later that night. In the lounge. ALICIA, JACKSON, TASHA and CALLIE are all sitting around.

TASHA

Man that was fucked up. I'm sorry I left y'all but...Damn I was not putting those things on.

CALLIE

Yeah, I was totally with you.

JACKSON

After you two left, Yarro just had us do a journaling exercise for the rest of the time. She seemed weird.

TASHA

She's just weird normally. I'm sorry but...

(Pause.)

TASHA

(to ALICIA) You feel like going now?

ALICIA

What?

TASHA

You know, real talk, telling us your story. Why you're here.

ALICIA

I um...

CALLIE

Might help.

ALICIA

Okay. I'll go next. I'll tell you.

(Flashback: Crossfade to ALICIA in her bedroom; she's at her desk working. Her phone buzzes. She looks at it, her stomach sinks. She hangs it up. The buzzing starts again. Again, she ends the call. And again... This is repeated 4-5 times. Finally, on the sixth call she picks it up.)

ALICIA

Why are you calling me?

HOLDEN

(we can see him as he's talking on the phone)

I just wanna / talk to you—

ALICIA

I don't want to talk to you! I don't want to talk to you ever again.

HOLDEN

Just listen to me, please.

ALICIA

No. I'm done. I mean it Holden. Don't call me, don't try to talk to me in the halls /

HOLDEN

/We belong together. You could see that if you—

ALICIA

This is fucking insane! You are fucking insane!

HOLDEN

Is it JT? Is they who you're blowing now? Is it? You goddamn whore.

ALICIA

Wow. You need psychological help! Get some!

(She hangs up. The phone buzzes again. She puts her head on the desk and cries.)

(Blackout. At rise: ALICIA is in her car. She's leaving work. All of a sudden, HOLDEN pops up out of nowhere and slams his hand on the hood of her car. She quickly goes to lock the doors. He tries opening them. Slams his hands against the window. ALICIA starts the car.)

ALICIA

Leave me alone Holden! Go away. Just go!

HOLDEN

Not until you open the door and talk to me.

ALICIA

No!

(HOLDEN runs in front of the car.)

ALICIA

I'm gonna drive. I swear I'm gonna drive.

HOLDEN

Fine. Drive over me. It's what you want to do anyway.

(ALICIA lays on the horn.)

ALICIA

Leave!

HOLDEN

If this is what it takes...

ALICIA

What *what* takes?! What do you even mean?

HOLDEN

(*screaming now*)

You belong to me. I will not let you go. You are mine Alicia. You will always be MINE! Nothing will change that, you hear me?!

(ALICIA throws the car into reverse and gets the hell out of there. HOLDEN's screaming something unintelligible.)

(Back to the lounge.)

ALICIA

There was more. A lot more. He'd come to my house late. Finally, my dad said he was gonna call Holden's parents if he didn't stop. So then he started climbing up to my bedroom window. Two, three in the morning he'd knock on it. Like some fucking horror movie face staring back at me.

CALLIE

That sounds terrible.

ALICIA

It was. It...I never thought it would stop. I figured that was it. This was the rest of my life. My parents sent me here. I don't know why. Maybe, yeah, I do. I don't know.

TASHA

We're all fucked up, aren't we?

CALLIE
We're all something all right.

(Pause.)

JACKSON
Whattaya think the big finale is?

TASHA
Shit, I don't even wanna know.

ALICIA
Maybe it involves like a blood transfusion.

CALLIE
That actually wouldn't surprise me.

TASHA
Maybe like a brain swap, like in Get Out.

JACKSON
Ooh, that movie creeped me the fuck out.

TASHA
Right?

ALICIA
I don't want my brain in someone else's body.

CALLIE
They can't put our brains—

TASHA
You have no idea what these motherfuckers can do. Dr. Elliot probably some talking squirrel with a computer chip brain who's decided to take over the world and he's gonna used fucked up teenagers to do it.

CALLIE
(*laughing*)
A squirrel?

TASHA

Uh-huh. You ever see the guy? I've heard his name like 267 times since we've been here, but I've never seen him once. He's probably the fucking squirrel hopping from tree to tree outside our windows.

JACKSON

I'm gonna go with alien.

ALICIA

I could see that.

TASHA

Nah, squirrel.

CALLIE

Well, I think Dr. Elliot is one of those people who were like stolen from their parents as a kid and then he was forced to grow up in a basement chained to the furnace and fed like moldy bread. And one day, like eight years later, he rubbed his wrists against the chains til they were raw and bloody and he slid them out and then climbed through the basement window and was so struck by like the daylight that he almost got caught again by the kidnapper, but fortunately a policeman happened to be driving by and saved him. But then, when he got back to his real parents, he had a hard time like assimilating, although eventually he did. And he vowed that he would dedicate his life to helping young people in need.

(They're all just staring at her like *wtf?*)

TASHA

You just come up with that?

CALLIE

It's a...theory.

JACKSON

So alien, squirrel or chained in the basement kidnap victim...I really can't wait to meet this guy.

(Pause.)

ALICIA

Did this help? Do you think?

CALLIE

Hard to say, I...I still want to make that call sometimes. And sometimes not.

TASHA

But we're not done yet. Maybe that finale's gonna kick our asses once and for all.

JACKSON

I don't feel any stronger. Not really.

TASHA

But do you feel like a victim still?

JACKSON

I don't know. I feel different. But that could just be cuz this food is like totally fucking with my digestion.

CALLIE

Tell me about it.

(They laugh.)

TASHA

Guess we find out tomorrow. The big reveal.

ALICIA

(movie trailer voice)

Will a power-crazed AI implanted squirrel come out from behind the curtain and reveal his plans for world domination?

TASHA

That's pretty funny.

ALICIA

Hey, if nothing else I think I've developed a better sense of humor.

(Crossfade to YARRO's room. She's on a call with DR. ELLIOT.)

DR. ELLIOT

I think we're set. We ran preliminary tests today and the IFTMs actually performed better than anticipated.

YARRO

That's good.

DR. ELLIOT

Something the matter?

YARRO

I'm worried. What if they're not—

DR. ELLIOT

They are.

YARRO

These are kids who've been through...They've suffered...a lot, and I just don't want to see—

DR. ELLIOT

This is the final step in their recovery. Don't you see that? We are helping them—beyond any kind of help they'd receive anywhere else.

YARRO

But it's just, I...I've been there. In that final phase. And I...

DR. ELLIOT

We hadn't yet worked a lot of the kinks out during your cohort. This time it's different. The IFTMs have been perfected. This is going to change the world—it will end a specific kind of suffering. I guarantee it. And these kids are going to prove how good this treatment really is. Then we'll get the funding we need, and sky's the limit. We will heal the world, Yarro!

YARRO

I understand.

DR. ELLIOT

Good. Now get some sleep. Big day tomorrow.

Scene 9: Final group session. The “big reveal.”

YARRO

Welcome. Welcome to your final group session here at Gravity Plus. I am very excited. Particularly as we have Dr. Elliot himself looking on today.

TASHA

Wait he’s here? (*looks around*) Here little squirrel, I got some nuts for you.

YARRO

What?

CALLIE

Never mind her.

TASHA

No. I wanna see this dude.

YARRO

Dr. Elliot is a very private individual. He will be observing from a closed-circuit television.

TASHA

Sure he will. (*points outside*) I don’t remember that tree being here last time.

YARRO

What?

(CALLIE gives her a look, like just ignore her.)

YARRO

Now, before we get into the final exercise...

ALICIA

I like my brain in this body, thank you.

YARRO

Huh?

JACKSON

(*to YARRO*) You had to be there.

YARRO

Oh-kay. (*slight pause*) Well, I want to first take a moment to thank all of you. You came here, you put in the work, you opened yourself up to some uncomfortable situations. //

TASHA

/You ain't shittin'./

YARRO

You should be extremely proud. Just because you were victims, that does not mean that you have to remain in that victim role all of your life. Each and every one of you are here because you dealt with an abuser, an abuser who did everything they could to make you feel small and weak and insignificant. That is *not* who you are. You are so much more.

(Beat.)

Dr. Elliot's groundbreaking treatment for young victims has been cited in scientific journals, it's been used in pioneering treatment facilities across the world. And now, here, today, he is rolling out the final phase. This will change the game.

TASHA

I fucking told you. "Final phase." That is not something you want to hear while sitting in a room like this.

YARRO

Trust me, Tasha, you will be stronger for it.

CALLIE

I have to agree with Tasha; it does sound like kinda ominous.

YARRO

It's not. Take it from me. I have been through the experience.

(Okay, now they're all looking around wondering wtf is about to happen.)

JACKSON

Yeah, I'm not exactly feeling that word "experience."

YARRO

It will be okay Jackson. Before we begin, Dr. Elliot would like to say a few words.

TASHA

Here we go y'all. Twenty bucks on robotic squirrel.

CALLIE

I'm sticking with kidnapped kid.

YARRO

Dr. Elliot.

DR. ELLIOT (V.O.)

Hello. I want to welcome all of you, and I want to say how excited I am to be a part of your incredible journey. I began Gravity Plus to help young people who thought they had no other way...no escape from the bullying and the stalking and the abuse. I know we can't solve all of the world's problems. And I know we can't even address all the problems centering on abuse in today's society. But hopefully, we can help those who seek the kind of healing we can offer. Thank you. And God's speed.

TASHA

We don't get to ask no questions? Just like hello and goodbye?

JACKSON

Yeah, like, dude should take our questions at least. And why he say God's speed? That's not something you say when something good's about to happen.

CALLIE

I'm gonna have to agree with Jackson.

YARRO

It's fine. Everybody, it's fine. Dr. Elliot just wanted you to know he's nearby and he's got your best interests always in mind.

JACKSON

(sarcastically)

Yeah, that's what I took away.

YARRO

Okay, *(deep breath)* are we ready? This is just so...This is going to be wonderful—for all of you.

TASHA

Final phase here we come. *(crosses herself)*

YARRO

Tasha, would you like to go first?

TASHA

Why me?

YARRO

I just thought...

TASHA

Okay you know what, let's just do this shit. I'm ready, let's go. (*beats her chest as if about to go into the ring*)

YARRO

Okay Tasha, come stand by me.

(TASHA slowly walks up to YARRO.)

YARRO

Now, what you are about to experience is only a simulation. So you needn't be afraid, however, the more real you treat this process, the more you will get out of it, and the faster your healing will be. Do you understand?

TASHA

Not even a little bit. But's let fuckin' go.

YARRO

Dr. Elliot, she's ready.

(A door opens. LUKE enters.)

TASHA

What in the literal fuck? How did... Why is he... Explain this.

YARRO

Tasha, that is not Luke. That is your IFTM.

TASHA

The fuck's an IFTM?

YARRO

Individualized Facsimile Treatment Model. It's like a, well, sort of like a 3D printed version of Luke.

TASHA

That's the one! We're in Westworld! I knew it had to be some creepy ass sci-fi show.

YARRO

This Luke has been programmed based on your perceptions and memories.

TASHA

The fuck you get my memories?! (*feels her head for like some sort of memory-sucking device*)

YARRO

You gave them to us.

TASHA

Like hell I did.

YARRO

The exercises, the video diaries. All of it was information that we put together to create a more fully realized picture of your attacker.

TASHA

Attacker. That is the key word here. Why on earth would you recreate my attacker?! Huh!

(Beat.)

But...wait, no, no, no, no, no. How do you know what he looks like? You can't get a picture just from shit I say. You couldn't have made...

YARRO

Well that's—

TASHA

Our fucking phones! You hacked our damn phones, didn't you? Didn't you?!

CALLIE

Wait. You unlocked our phones?

JACKSON

Seriously?

YARRO

There are a number of techniques that we use to get to this stage in your treatment. Your phones were just a small piece of the...your parents also provided the information necessary to fill in gaps. Without the IFTMs, the treatment module would not be complete.

TASHA

I don't give a flying fuck how these LMNOPs fit into our treatment module, er whatever. You don't go into my phone without my fucking / permission!

YARRO

If we could continue—

TASHA

With what? What is this sick Westworld piece of shit gonna do to me? Gun me down?

YARRO

It's not what he's going to do to you. It's what you are going to do to him.

TASHA

Huh?

YARRO

All of the things we've done here have been about realigning your behavior. In the past, when faced with this, your instinct has been to cower, to allow yourself to be the victim, to submit.

TASHA

I didn't allow anything. He fucking did it.

YARRO

Okay, so now *you* get to do it. You can put it all together, everything you've learned, every exercise, and you can stand up to him. It's not a real person. He can't hurt you. But you can hurt him.

(Beat.)

Your IFTMs are fully controlled by Dr. Elliot himself. They are here for radical revisualizing purposes. That is their sole function. This gives you the chance to be the dominant one. No longer a victim! (*semi whispers to her*) You can do this Tasha. I know you can. Especially, here, supported by this group. You can do it.

TASHA

(*pauses*)

Okay, okay. Let's just do this.

CALLIE

Tasha are you—

TASHA

I wanna do it.

YARRO

Let the simulation begin.

(Spotlight on TASHA center stage. LUKE saunters over to her.)

LUKE

Hey, dad ain't gonna be home for like another hour, maybe longer.

TASHA
Yeah, so?

LUKE
I read your diary Tash.

TASHA
You did what?!

LUKE
I didn't know you liked girls. I mean, like *liked* them. I knew you were nonbinary or whatever you call yourself, but I didn't know it was for real. I didn't actually think you were a clit licker.

TASHA
You're a piece of shit, you know that.

LUKE
Give me a chance to turn you back.

TASHA
Turn me—? The fuck are you talking about?

LUKE
Be with a real man. I got something here for you...(*sing songy*) you're gonna like it.

(He makes a move toward TASHA.)

LUKE
Come on now Tash. You're gonna leave me with blue balls? Hm?

TASHA
Stay the fuck away from me.

YARRO
Good Tasha.

(LUKE moves in even closer. It is ominous. He has that look. TASHA is visibly shaken.)

TASHA
Get away. Get away!

LUKE

You can yell all you want. Daddy ain't here to help you now is he?

TASHA
(starts running away)

No. No.

YARRO
Don't run away Tash. Stay. Stay right there. Face him. Rethink it.

TASHA
(to herself)

I can do this. I can do this.

(Beat.)

You don't control me, Luke. You have no power over me.

LUKE
Ooh big words. You think you're tough all of a sudden?

TASHA
You're a nothing. You're a piece of shit 22-year-old who gets off messing with teenage kids cuz no woman his age gonna even look at him.

LUKE
You wanna see getting off?

(LUKE with his back to the audience, unzips.)

CALLIE
What the hell?

(TASHA starts laughing.)

LUKE
What's so funny bitch?

TASHA
That. What a fuckin' joke. No wonder you gotta come knocking on your 17-year-old sister's door.

(LUKE zips back up.)

TASHA
What's wrong Luke? You embarrassed, of your tiny little micro dick?

LUKE

Shut the hell up!

TASHA

I am done playing this with you. I am done looking at your stupid face. I am done breathing the same fucking air as you.

LUKE

Yeah, what you gonna do?

TASHA

I'm gonna live at my mother's. And you, you are eventually gonna end up in jail. Where they will see that itty bitty hummingbird dick and make you their bitch, bitch.

(LUKE snaps back into "robot" mode and then exits. YARRO starts clapping. The rest of them clap as well, though far less assuredly.)

YARRO

Well?

TASHA

That...felt...good.

CALLIE

But what did it, like do for them? They just yelled at a robot.

YARRO

They confronted their abuser and while that it not a cure per se, it is a path to healing. Hearing your own voice in that context is sooo liberating. Trust me. Who wants to go next? Jackson?

JACKSON

No. No. I'm glad for you Tasha and all. But no...I...

YARRO

This is the capstone to your journey. It is imperative that you all—

ALICIA

I'll go next.

YARRO

Alicia. Thank you.

(ALICIA walks up and stands next to YARRO. Alicia is ready for her IFTM. Door opens, HOLDEN walks through much as LUKE had.)

YARRO

Okay. You good?

ALICIA

I'm ready.

(HOLDEN "turns on." Spotlight on ALICIA, center stage.)

HOLDEN

I knew you'd come back.

ALICIA

I'm not *back*, Holden.

HOLDEN

Yeah? Cuz it looks like you're standing right here.

ALICIA

This isn't...

HOLDEN

Just...Just give me a chance. You know that we belong together.

ALICIA

Holden it's over. It has been over for a year now—

HOLDEN

No, no. Remember, remember our first date, remember?

ALICIA

I am not doing this with you.

HOLDEN

And, and, and you, I mean, we went to the movies. And we held hands. But it wasn't like weird or awkward. We just reached for each other. And our hands rested on your knee. And it felt so warm and—

ALICIA

Okay, Holden, that's enough.

HOLDEN

And remember we went to the football game. And we sat all the way in the back row. And it got cold, but you forgot your jacket, so we shared mine. Remember how close we were.

ALICIA

Yeah, and remember you smeared dog shit all over my locker after I left you. Remember that?

HOLDEN

No, that was—

ALICIA

And remember, you tore all your clothes off and were running around my house naked at three in the morning screaming some nonsense, until my dad called your parents and—

HOLDEN

I just wanted to—

ALICIA

And remember, how at Shelby Haelstrom's party you put something in my drink, and I blacked completely out; thank god, my friends were there.

HOLDEN

You were all over that guy who—

ALICIA

Remember it? Do you? Because I do.

(Beat.)

You have to stop, this has to stop. We are over. I am not coming back to you. I will not—

HOLDEN

(screaming almost like a wounded animal)

Nooo! No! No! No! We were meant to—

ALICIA

We were NEVER meant to be, Holden! Never! NEEEEVVVEEERRR!!!

(HOLDEN appears lost, confused. Then, a creepy diabolical look spreads across his face. He looks around frantically—his movements here should walk the line between distraught teenage realism and runaway robot. He smashes a vase or some decorative ceramic/glass item. Grabbing a shard on the floor, he menacingly makes a move toward ALICIA. Everyone is stunned into silence.)

YARRO

Dr. Elliot?

HOLDEN
(softly now)

No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

ALICIA
Holden, what are you doing? *(to YARRO)* What is he doing?! Make it stop now. *(yelling to an unseen DR. ELLIOT)* Turn it off! Turn the fucking thing off!

(HOLDEN moves in closer, wielding the shard as a knife.)

ALICIA
Please don't. Please...TURN IT OFF!

(He makes a final desperate lunge. Blackout. Everyone screams etc.)

Scene 10: It is a week or so later. Spotlight on YARRO. She is on a call.

YARRO

Um, no comment.

(...)

No comment.

(...)

No comment.

(...)

Yes, it was a tragedy. But that Gravity Plus was shut down...uh-huh, yes but...but the work we were doing there was vital to helping young people who've spent so much time being victims.

(...)

Dr. Elliot? No he has not tried to contact me. I wouldn't venture a guess as to his whereabouts.

(...)

No comment.

(...)

The death of Alicia Frederickson was certainly tragic, yes. And it definitely should be investigated, but people also need to look at the deeper causes. She wouldn't have been there in the first place if...

(...)

Fine, I'm not sure I can really give you much more but...

(...)

Yes, I myself went through the program. And I would not trade the experience for anything. I am much stronger for it. I'm better now.

(YARRO hangs up. Lights up. She is in her apartment. ELECTRA is standing off to the side. YARRO picks up some sort of controller, hits a few buttons. ELECTRA "turns on.")

ELECTRA

(laughing)

You think you're important all of a sudden, just cuz a few people want to talk to you?

YARRO

...

ELECTRA

Yeah that's what I thought. Pathetic. Oh, what's wrong, you gonna cry now?

END OF PLAY