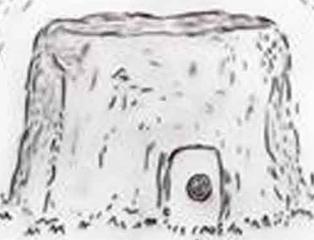


you know
I'd Love To Stay



by ALOSHA ROBINSON

ACT I

CHARLIE is down in his bunker, which could resist the explosion of a nuclear bomb. He is hanging post-it notes on the wall. The post-it notes are covered with words. The door that he's watching out of the corner of his eye is big and metal and has one of those spinning steel doorknobs that looks like a pirate wheel.

BAKER opens the door, which is a laborious process, and enters. She shuts the door, and walks in looking pretty tired.

CHARLIE

Hey, don't even ask me about all these--

BAKER

God this is a shit day. Oh god. How could everything possibly be such shit?

CHARLIE

Oh, jeez, what? Baker, I'm sorry. I--

BAKER

Me. I'm shit.

CHARLIE

No way. I don't-- That sounds terrible.

BAKER

It's fine, it is, I'm just terrible, and an idiot, and everyone else is even worse.

CHARLIE

Hey, I don't think so. Why are you--- what makes you-- sorry, one sec, I've been workin' on something.

CHARLIE puts another post-it on the wall, as if he really might have had to do that just that moment.

CHARLIE

Hey, so tell me about your day. Unless you don't want to-- but you honestly really should!

BAKER

I feel like a fat.. dirty, piggy. Waiting to get my head cut off. What do we have to eat?

CHARLIE

Hey, stop-- you don't need to eat. If-- iff that's part of your pig thing, I mean.

(looking back at the kitchen nook)

CHARLIE

Or. We have.. uh,--

You look beautiful today! What's wrong? What happened at your big 'ole meeting?

BAKER

It's nothing, nothing important happened to me, why would it ever? Just push the little piggie down the line for slaughter, since I'm too lazy to walk there myself.

CHARLIE

Uh--

BAKER

Could you be a darling and warm up some slop for the shitty stupid hog?

CHARLIE

I-- Are you actually hungry? I don't understand.

BAKER

Oink.

CHARLIE

What? That doesn't-- Help more.

BAKER

Oink-oink.

CHARLIE looks back at the kitchen nook, which by the way, it has a shelf that is half-full of cans nothing else.

CHARLIE

Um, actually, we're starting to have less cans than I want-- I liked how that shelf looked when it had just a *huge pile of cans*. Like a, fun cartoon or something, makes it safe in here. Gotta keep the soup shelf at least.. two-thirds full. One of us should buy more cans.

CHARLIE jots on a post-it.

Let's order from somewhere? Order in?

BAKER

I don't need to eat. I don't want to look at a dumbass delivery boy.

CHARLIE

What *do* you want to look at?

BAKER
Nothing.

CHARLIE gets in front of BAKER, makes her see him.

CHARLIE
Nothing?

BAKER
Especially not that.

CHARLIE kisses her somewhere. He scampers off quickly into the kitchen and grabs a soup can. As they talk, he puts the soup in a bowl and puts the bowl in a microwave.

CHARLIE
Okay sorry, but so your meeting was really terrible somehow?

BAKER
Maybe. I'm not ready to talk about it. My answer for right now is nothing.

CHARLIE and BAKER shuffle through their thoughts.

CHARLIE
I like that it's getting cold enough to drink soup!

BAKER
Are you making that for me?

CHARLIE
Oink oink.

BAKER
Thank you! Fuck. I'm starving. You're sweet.

BAKER grabs a blanket, curls up on the couch. She rubs her arms for friction.

BAKER
Jesus. How does this shithole not keep the air out better?

CHARLIE
Well actually I think it's just that once the cold air gets in, it can't get out. Because this place is pretty air-tight-- not a shithole. Really definitely just, I've definitely said something about this before-- you know, if the cold bothers you, try and do the latch all the way after you come in.

BAKER balls up and closes her eyes, groaning just about it all. CHARLIE tries and tightens the latch, but it's already all the way tight. The microwave dings. CHARLIE gets the soup bowl out.

CHARLIE

Sometimes you just forget.

BAKER

Okay.

CHARLIE brings some nice warm soup to BAKER.

CHARLIE

Heeey. Brought you some soup 'cause I like you.

BAKER

Thanks dummy, if I liked anyone it could definitely be you.

CHARLIE

I used one of the cans I didn't want to use.

BAKER

I saw.

CHARLIE

I think, I think I've got a really good feeling about today.

BAKER

Oh yeah? Good!

CHARLIE

Because *some days* I wake up and I just feel like a really bad slug, but today seems to have a lot of purpose to it, so far. Urgency. Today's a day for something to happen, you know?

Strange silence.

BAKER

...Charlie fuck I don't know how to do this but I really have to tell you this right now cause otherwise I'm worried I'll never say anything: at the meeting today..

BAKER decides to not say anything. CHARLIE waits for the possibility that she might.

BAKER

Nevermind.

CHARLIE

I'm doing this new project using these post-it notes-- or are you sure about not telling me? You seemed like it was important or, oh, what was it you were gonna--

BAKER

(interrupting)

The President is a horrible bitch and a perfect figurehead for everything wrong with our fucked-up society.

CHARLIE

Woah! Why would you--- why are you--

BAKER

(interrupting)

She is! She's an insane cunt who doesn't believe in anything! And I don't think killing is okay but wish I could kill her!

CHARLIE

She, what? She took the time to meet with you! That's considerate, or, you know? She, don't--

BAKER

You would absolutely agree with me if you knew anything specific-- but as usual you don't know *anything* specific, Charlie, and yet you're still talking down to me like *I'm* the one who knows nothing.. OK. Actually I decided I don't wanna talk about it again. Great. What were you saying when you interrupted me earlier? About your-

BAKER

-new project?

CHARLIE

--I didn't interrupt you. You stopped talking-- you, took a pause. It was an accident, I do that.

BAKER

I didn't care, I don't care when you interrupt me, Charlie, it's fine! Everything is fine! I don't know why I've ever said anything before, it's my mistake.

There is a silence. CHARLIE darts over to his post-its, writes something and puts it on the wall. He stares at it.

BAKER

So you're doing a thing with post-it's?

CHARLIE

Yeah, yup! We don't have to talk about it though I feel really guilty.

BAKER

Sure you don't want to really badly? Your jaw is clenched.

CHARLIE

(touching his face)

No, yeah-- I *really do* want to explain the post-its to you extremely bad, because-- But I feel like you, how you feel, is that you'll be pissed if I start talking about them. Or, *annoyednotpissed*. Which makes sense because my thing is stupid and yours is-- it's bullshit if she didn't like the jetpacks Baker. Is that what happened? Are you sure you don't want to say a thing about the meeting? I've been doing a bad job talking to you, sorry.

BAKER

No.. No, it's fine. I'm a smelly shit sack riding a wagon down the dirt road to hell, and no one can even smell me, is really the whole entire story. I sincerely do not want to talk about it.

Pause.

BAKER

Sorry that you're always so worried I'm gonna be pissed at you. A lot of things just piss me off.

CHARLIE

I don't think you get pissed at me.

BAKER

..You don't have to say that if it's not true.

Pause.

CHARLIE

...The post-it's, I think, are actually the best idea I've had in awhile.

BAKER

I'm intrigued. Looks like a lot of work. Tell me about them.

CHARLIE

Well um see, kind of the premise for this project is that-- like for example..

BAKER

Charlie sweet, sorry, I'm little anxious right now-- can I get an update on the nuke? Where is it? Has anyone been here today?

CHARLIE walks up to the post-it he last laid down.

CHARLIE

Like on this, I wrote "Bad Listener", because I never listen when you talk-- or I do try, it's just hard. I interrupt. And so I put that on a post-it.

BAKER decides to indulge with CHARLIE the reality in which she had not spoken her previous line of dialogue. Maybe further she invents a reality where she would have never even had to say her previous line of dialogue.

BAKER

...I. That's funny!

(back to the post-its)

I like all the different ideas you have, Charlie.

CHARLIE

There's some, um-- there's.. You could check 'em out for yourself if you want.

BAKER downs all of her soup in one nice big gulp. She gathers her strength to get up.

BAKER

Okay, gettin' up!

She stands up with a groan and heave of her body and looks at the post-it's. She takes one from the wall.

BAKER

Here we go. "Good kisser". Are you one of those?

CHARLIE

It's all my good and bad, uh, I guess behaviors? Traits-- things I notice about myself. Kind of my concept of myself, floating around me in my living space-- so I can think about myself while I live, make

CHARLIE

better decisions, live inside a roadmap, or.. That's the idea behind it. And I know this sounds stupid to say but a lot of people before, have told me I'm the best kisser they've ever kissed. It's something I like about myself.

BAKER

(walking along the wall, scanning the post-it's)
Feels like I'm walking around what you think your big brain looks like.

CHARLIE

You did even tell me that I was the best for kissing, back when we first started out, remember? Also obviously, I think you're the best kisser I've ever kissed too.

BAKER

I don't think I'd tell you something like that.

CHARLIE

It doesn't matter, we can stop talking about it but you did. You remember, it's like how things are always different during the beginning phase of a relationship.

BAKER

I remember you asking the question. Do you think things were better when we first started dating? Why do you keep saying things like that?

CHARLIE

No I didn't mean anything like that, I don't keep saying that, just people usually do more things for each other when they first start dating I think.

BAKER keeps checkin' out the post-it's. She laughs at one.

BAKER

How long is this wallpaper staying up?

CHARLIE

Oh. I guess until I learn something really important from it, hopefully.

CHARLIE, trailing behind, examines the note BAKER laughed at it, takes it and crumples it decisively and tries to erase it from existence.

BAKER

Have you learned anything.. *kind of* important yet?

CHARLIE

Well I don't know. It hasn't been long. Sorry. I feel like I'm coming off as really mentally fucked up, I don't mean to--

BAKER

Shhhhhhhh.

BAKER comes up to CHARLIE and gives him a little smooch. They hug for a good while, quiet. BAKER pulls away a bit.

BAKER

Charlie, fuck, I have to, I'm trying to pretend this didn't happen-- okay the President screamed at me today and--

CHARLIE

What? The shit? Screamed? Actually? Why?

BAKER

Why do you think? Jesus-- Charlie, fucker why do you think?

CHARLIE

I don't know. Did you scream at her first?

BAKER

No.NO.

CHARLIE

It's impossible to guess right in these situations-- why are you acting mad at me?!

BAKER

She screamed at me because of your *goddamn nuke*, Charlie.

CHARLIE

What?

BAKER

Why the fuck do you think of-course-because-of-the-nuke-TH.

CHARLIE

Oh woah woah woah, she brought up the nuke? Wow. Also let's not yell. Hm. I honestly kind of thought this would happen. I didn't want to bring it up before you did the meeting, because it'd come off as crazy.. or self-centered, but I think I *have* been on the

CHARLIE

government's radar. Just didn't know if it'd reached the top yet. But--

BAKER

She fucking dumped her lungs at me, Charlie. Loud, and, like-- spit.. pieces, hitting my face. It was SCARY.

CHARLIE

Did she say my name?

BAKER

Fuck you!

CHARLIE

What no why?!

BAKER

Are you serious?!

CHARLIE

No! I don't-- Sorry! Ah! I'm sorry!

BAKER

I don't want to talk about this again
URRRdsfsfRRGGasfasfGGaGhG!

CHARLIE

No-- don't-- *do* talk about it! Please, it seems important to you! I just couldn't believe she screamed at you, is all! She seems insane-- I'm really-- I'm starting to get that impression. And it's like, it's so interesting that not only does she *know* about me and the nuke, but she cares enough about me to get mad, to the point of screaming or..

BAKER

Don't talk Charlie. *Don't talk.*

CHARLIE

Don't--- are you-- did she like, threaten you?

BAKER

No. I'm fine. Let's drop it. Don't keep talking about it or I'll run full speed into a brick wall.

CHARLIE

Um okay

BAKER

Just-- just-- just-- tell me more about the post-its-- tell me more about your--

CHARLIE

(interrupting)

--Unpleasant conversation aside this could actually be a good thing for us. This seems like the beginning of--

BAKER

(suddenly)

The President could LITERALLY *kill you*, CHARLIE. *In over a million ways*. She doesn't give a fuck about you or your little fucking things you say.

CHARLIE

What?!

BAKER

I don't know.

CHARLIE

So she mentioned me by name? She said, she was going to--what?!-- kill me? You're saying?!

BAKER

Idiot-- I'm just saying that you weren't there-- and you're not understanding the.. *sheer presence* this woman has. It's stupid trying to explain to you--

CHARLIE

--I'm *allowed* to worry if The President is going to *kill me* which is what you just said, please don't call me an idiot for not wanting to--

BAKER

I don't mean *idiot*, when I say idiot, idiot. I mean--!

CHARLIE

What does she want from me, did she say? Did she say that she wanted to talk to me personally about the nuke, on the phone, or have dinner, or spend a day together, or why did she yell, I--

BAKER

Where's the nuke Charlie? Right now, where is it? Tell me.

CHARLIE

(yelling incredibly loud)

Let's not yell! Okay? We don't need to yell, we always yell!

BAKER

(not yelling)

We don't always yell.

CHARLIE

Sometimes we do, but that was an exaggeration, you're right. I'm just tense and anxious, I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

For exaggerating.

BAKER

I don't--

BAKER

I don't care. I don't-- Where's the nuke?

CHARLIE

The nuke is fine-don't worry about it. Wow. But shit. It's so crazy, why is The President acting all like she cares, all of a sudden? I don't get it. Was she too proud to reach out to me herself? I've sent her so many letters about it and she's hardly even got in touch with me.

BAKER

She told me you've been sending each other letters-- why have you never mentioned--?

CHARLIE

--Well Baker you have to see these things-- they're all like, form letters, on her end! I write her something really well-thought out and beautiful and with like, feeling and ideas and propositions and metaphors, and her responses: all that's written on them is our address and a computer-generated thing telling me to do some stuff. Never either of our names written out! She doesn't want me to respond to that, it's embarrassing.

BAKER

What's *actually* embarrassing is being.. *formally humiliated* in a *public place*.

CHARLIE

I-- what?

BAKER

Like I was. By her--

CHARLIE

Public? I thought you were meeting in her office?

BAKER

Public-- because she has, like guards, and delegates, and sponsors. There were like twelve people in there.

CHARLIE

Baker, I'm sorry if she embarrassed you, that's stupid, this is why she should have called me directly, and met with me 1-on-1..

So much unnecessary foreplay, bureaucratic bullshit type of government type of...

BAKER finds it hard to respond.

CHARLIE

Godyeah-- and what, and also so she like hated your presentation on the jetpacks? *That's* the craziest part of all of this-- she's so horrible. I feel like she might be secretly misogynist, like internalized.

BAKER does not respond.

CHARLIE

Or.. did she, she *did* like your pitch-- she loves the jetpacks? She loves you-- but she was just mad about the nuke?

BAKER

Why did you guess first that she hated the presentation? Did you think that was the obvious answer?

CHARLIE

No, stop! I just *don't know, at all*, what happened because you're not *saying anything*. I have to like lay your responses out for you and hope you'll choose one. And I'm not mad at all, sorry if I'm sounding mad.

CHARLIE

And it's even fine if you're mad at me, also. I'm not saying you can't be, or shouldn't be. It makes sense. Can you just tell me what to do right now?

BAKER

I'm not angry. I don't want to talk about this, and neither do you so let's just not. Doesn't that make most sense?

CHARLIE

I asked you about it like five times, Baker. You're clearly the one who doesn't want to talk--

BAKER

--three, barely. Look: I understand your thinking. You've already taken every opportunity to let me know you think my jetpacks are fucking retarded--- why would the President of the World think anything different? Right? Bet you think she's smarter than me-- but just as smart as you, right?

CHARLIE

I've never *at any point* called them dumb-- or you dumb. The worst thing I've said is you didn't *come up with them*.

BAKER

I KNOW I didn't fucking come up with jetpacks, Charlie! But what kind of sicko keeps a catalog of the worst things they've said?!

CHARLIE

Let's stop arguing.

BAKER

Guess what?

CHARLIE

What? Are we stopping now? Is this still arguing?

BAKER

Guess.

CHARLIE

I can't. Baker, this isn't how stop-- it's not possible to guess what--

BAKER

OK, here:

This is funny Charlie. You'll like this. Not *at any point-- this is the funny thing--* not in any point in our meeting did we, talk about the jetpacks.

CHARLIE

But that was how you got the meeting? Right? To talk about the...

BAKER

That was why I made the meeting! Yup. It was. You know that, don't pretend like you don't understand things.

CHARLIE

(smiling inappropriately)

So she, basically only wanted to talk about me? That's literally all the two of you spoke about?

BAKER does not say anything

CHARLIE

(no longer smiling)

God, that's bizarre-- the way she *plans* things. She seems like, calculated, and manipulative. Because I've definitely been wondering why she hasn't fucking called

CHARLIE

me yet-- but really, that's a very calculated move to do it through a cipher-- she sees me as a threat she's like a chess player clearly a very smart woman.

CHARLIE

Did you get that vibe from her at all?

BAKER

Where's the nuke you piece of shit? Show me where it is before I lose my fucking mind.

CHARLIE

Baker, we don't need the nuke, I don't--

BAKER

I'm gonna fucking blow you up Charlie, this is the day, I'm gonna really fucking blow you up!

CHARLIE

Sorry! No! Baker, let's not-- I love you!

BAKER

Don't say I love you to make people stop being upset with you weirdo!

BAKER pulls a post-it off. She looks at it, gestures with it.

BAKER

Also? This is dumb as fuck!

CHARLIE

Hey, come on! That's personal to me!

BAKER

Everything is! This-- you should have written "whiny, sociopathic fuck ass ego-bitch-idiot", you---

CHARLIE

Andseecalling me sociopathic annd then, idiot, again! That's-- you know I don't like that!

BAKER starts looking for the nuke, with visceral angry gusto.

BAKER

I know you and I *know you* understand how painful it was for me to do all that-- go through the shit of getting a meeting actually put together with that pissrag President? It took me fucking months Charlie. I had to write letters, and make calls, and fill out forms, and

BAKER

memorize statistics-- I've been waiting for this day, for months. Charlie. I worked hard on this presentation, Charlie. I cared about it.

CHARLIE

I *know*, sweetie! I think it's amazing what you did, it's so important to be willing to ask for help! And you were more industrious than I've ever seen you. Just, just because it didn't go--

BAKER

But even then, the one time--- I reach out, leave this fucking bomb shelter and breathe normal air and do the thing people do every day: I ask the human race to not crap, on my head, *one time*, I allow myself to expect something from life-- I stepped out and I stretched my arms and I screamed into the air and it turns out even then, my whole life still ends up being endlessly inescapably about *you, Charlie*, and that obnoxious fucking *everything-ending bomb* on your trophy rack!

(BAKER tears open another potential hiding spot with futile frustration)

Trophy rack! Where is it? You moved it again, hiding it from me? I *know* the spots!

CHARLIE

Not from *you*, darling--- just hiding it in general-- you won't find it I came up with a really good spot this time. Come on, let's talk. This is becoming one of those needlessly escalating things. Sit down-- or do what you want! I came off the wrong way, my intentions are all rooted in--

BAKER

Charlie I know you don't think I'm gonna do it, that I'm just *doing a.. thing, making a scene, like I'm a monster who just seeks out tragedy* but *I am*, I'm gonna do it-- I'm going to find your goddamn bomb because this stupid bunker *isn't that big! I'll find it*, and I'm going to find it and when I do I'm gonna blow it up I'm gonna use it I'm going to kill you!

CHARLIE

Baker you're not going to use the nuke and for real, it really hurts my feelings when you say that. Talking about killing me? And I don't mean this in a condescending way, but we talk about this, and we BOTH know the consequences of detonating that nuke are much, *muchmuchmuch* bigger than *you or me* and *you know that* so let's just stop pretending--

BAKER slows down-- she lingers for the first time at the new spot she has started searching. Her speech wades into a strange calm.

BAKER

Hmmm. Charlie.

CHARLIE

I love you.

BAKER

Shut up. I had an idea I've never had before.

CHARLIE

..Cool. What's up? What, um--

BAKER

The walls of this place. The bunker walls, they're the same on the inside as the outside, right?

CHARLIE

What? Or yeah or why would it be different?

BAKER

If this place can keep out a nuclear explosion; if you can stay alive inside of it, when the nuke blows up *outside of it*, then if the nuke blows up inside of it then only the people inside would die. Right?

CHARLIE

Woah. I never thought about that-- that's actually, a really clever observation, weird that I somehow totally missed... that's intuitive thinking-- abstract.

BAKER takes out the nuke; in a strange, distracted, back-minded hypnosis. Upon seeing it, an oft-repaired dam of CHARLIE's collapses, conceding a sudden immense, brass-knuckled blockade-wave of fear and rationalized self-loathing.

BAKER

You never thought about that, me neither. But it's true, right? It makes sense, like true shit always does.

(BAKER rolls the nuke in her hands sensually)

Tie you up. Lock the door. I'll sit on your lap. It'd just be you and me, as the only ones dead. And *this* thing would be gone, essentially-- all used up. Right? *That* would be noble to the world, ridding it of us two creeps *and* the world's last nuclear weapon-- one stone. A real win for humanity.

CHARLIE

Oh my god Baker.

BAKER

What? Oh my god what?

CHARLIE does not speak.

BAKER

Oh my god what Charlie?

CHARLIE

(immediately, intensely)

You're being serious, about killing me. Wow. You despise me. You're going to do it. Aren't you.

BAKER

Yes maybe.

CHARLIE

Don't respond like-- Oh god this time is different-- OHyou're being *different!*jeez! You hate me Baker, oh god.. I'm a *horrible horrible man, horrible boy--* and you want me to die, and use up my nuke.

BAKER

I do feel capable. You know?

CHARLIE

YOU KNOW, BUT YOU JUST GOT HOME!

BAKER makes a crazy sound of deep frustration because she can't think of how to even use work, and shakes the nuke.

CHARLIE

I love you!

BAKER

(quickly)

Yes I love you too.

CHARLIE

But are you going to..?

BAKER

SHUT UP!

There is a long strange pause of silence. The two move around.

CHARLIE

And why does the suicide-homicide have to be part of it? That we die together, or, you know? Don't say you're gonna kill me because that's scary but *definitely* don't say you're gonna kill you!

BAKER

The way life makes me feel Charlie, I just want to die. I'm not happy. I hate every single thing. I even hate you. I want both of us to die, I want everyone to--

CHARLIE

Don't say that, only I should have to die. I want you to know that, I-- I won't think any less of you for killing me. OK? For real.

BAKER

Charlie quiet.

CHARLIE

I want you to do it, to me. Kill me. For real, Baker. This actually is what it's-- I think you're supposed to. It was a good idea, you're so smart!

BAKER paces speechlessly.

CHARLIE

I-- I'm supposed to be a martyr, that's why I've had the nuke, all this time-- I finally understand: I'm a martyr! This is happening this way for a reason! I'll take this evil out of the world and redeem myself by dying.

There's a silence. The two are awful quiet, all a sudden.

BAKER

How do I detonate it? Is there a button?

BAKER runs her finger across the black hole birthing weapon-ball that she has to herself. CHARLIE approaches her slowly, and now she does not avert his physical presence.

CHARLIE

I'm also trying to make you understand, though Baker, this is a really spur of the moment thing and it's seriously messed up. You don't have to die because of it. I'm worthless, you're worth everything-- I want you to live.

BAKER

No. It's me dying too or I'm not doing it.

CHARLIE

Baker, I'm begging you-- for real, you don't have to do this with me. Just leave me with it and go! I'll kill me for you, if you ask me to-- you can't keep forgiving me when I keep doing the same shit over and over, someone needs to teach me a lesson.

BAKER

You just want this to be *your* thing. I'm not stupid.

CHARLIE

I know you're not stupid, you're so so smart, *genius*. I love you *SOMUCH*. I know life is fucked up for you but I think it's mostly cause of me, you could actually be happy if I was gone, I think.

BAKER looks at CHARLIE. She smiles weird.

You have to let me take care of this alone-- I wouldn't be able to live with the pain of knowing you weren't living.

BAKER

..you wouldn't have to. You won't have to. I'll kill you if you want me to, you idiot.

CHARLIE does not know what to say about that. He whimpers. BAKER waits a while, for CHARLIE to know, but he still doesn't.

BAKER

...realize how.. I couldn't even have *this*? Can't even get permission from you to ride your little cum-hail of gunfire, you won't even let me choke on your coat tails. *I'm not even good enough to die? What am I worth?* You really want to just leave me here?!

BAKER

Charlie, answer!

CHARLIE

(beginning to
cry a bit)

That's not what
this is-- you're
interpreting it
wrong. This just feels
weirdly *right* for
me right now, and
it's not easy to kill
yourself! I feel like
I'm never self-aware,
or like, conscious
of how I am or how I
act-- and right now
I know who I am and I
want to die before I
forget.

BAKER

...I thought I was just fucking with you, but you made
this so much *weirder*-- Jeez-- you made it so much
weirder and now I, I feel like I might actually have to
kill you. *Fucker!* Idiot!

CHARLIE

(crying more)

Oh god, oh god. Okay, okay! Blow me up! Just do it now,
finish me! You can stay with me, I don't care, I want
you to, let's die.

*BAKER moves decisively, legs pumped now by the
world's most overwhelming nothing, toward the
bunker hatchdoor. CHARLIE stumbles up, attempts to
disrupt her march.*

BAKER

(seriously, forcefully, stopping
Charlie)

Stop. Stop.

You've never even told me how to set this thing off,
I've asked you a couple of times. You know that-- you
know I don't how to use this. So you'll have to do this
yourself. Bye Charlie. I love you.

CHARLIE

Waitwait!!!

Baker, please don't go. Let's make this last longer.

BAKER

Life is a fucking black hole, Charlie! You might as well be in on it.

CHARLIE

Just stay, come-on stay, come on!!! I don't want to kill myself I don't want to kill either of us! I want to be alive forever!

BAKER is at the hatch, attempting to open it. Fuck she's really only kept feeling worse, it's horrible. By now she feels worse than any other person could imagine but it's not at all hard for her to imagine.

CHARLIE

I'm so sorry. I want to stop talking. Let me shut up and stop *being this way* for one second and just, *sit quietly with you in this room!* Please Baker, stay-- give me at least that? Quiet sit? Of course we're going to put the nuke away, we always do-- I'm a coward, we both know I'm a spineless dweeb-- I hate myself so much I don't know why I act the way I act I can't believe we've said any of the things we just said, I love you okay?! I don't know why I *talk so much* killme I say the most bizarre disgusting things without knowing why-- it's just horror sounds, out of my mouth, what is wrong with me???

I don't want to die I just wanna be around you Baker! The only thing I like is holding you, please! I'm sorry!

It did it. BAKER runs out of the fuel to turn the wheel, she knew she wouldshe can't leave this bunker she knewshe knewshe knew!!! she wouldn't. They are silent for damn long, and inside this slowly cooling time they realize they've had just the !shit! beaten out of them-- they're just sore all over.

BAKER

..This is horrible. I'm feeling really extra horrible lately.

CHARLIE

I know I can tell. I'm sorry. You should be the one to put the nuke away. I don't want to touch it, I don't want to look at it. That thing is a.. freaky, nightmare.

BAKER

Everything is. Things are getting seriously fucked up with us Charlie. Aren't they? Even *this* is bad now. This is like the only fucking thing I have.

CHARLIE

It's not us, it's all me. I did this to us.

CHARLIE

Hey. I want you to hide the nuke from me. Hide it, put it somewhere where I won't find it.

BAKER

Why?

CHARLIE

You're right: we need to make changes. Things are getting terrible, it's my fault they're getting insane. So stop me-- *take the nuke*, and hide it from me. I'll close my eyes.

BAKER

...You'd find it if you looked for it you goon. You can't hide anything in this place. Everything is all out and flopping around in this bunker.

CHARLIE

You could find a good spot! You're creative.

BAKER

(not having the energy)

--I hate you. I hate you-- Fuck-- I love you Charlie-- but can we just be done?

CHARLIE

No-- Baker, there. Why do you say stuff like that, when I'm trying to make things better?

BAKER

You're right. I'm the worst, I agree. I am *literally Satan*. It's clearly the root of our issue. Still not doing your chores for you.

CHARLIE

I'm not in any way mad at you-- but you just say shit is bad and then you don't want to do anything about it, Baker.

BAKER

You're right.

CHARLIE

Something has to be different when we sit down-- I don't want to live in that same world we were just in. I hated it.

I'm trying my hardest, Baker. I'm always doing that for you. Even if you think it's dumb, let this at least be a little symbolic gesture.

BAKER does not respond.

CHARLIE

What is it you're thinking, when you don't talk to me? Are you feeling sorry for yourself? How am I supposed to know what you're thinking when you won't even say anything?

BAKER does not respond.

CHARLIE

I-- like, I have reason to be mad at you. You were saying really mean things when we were talking about killing me. And I know I deserved some of it-- but I never say that sort of negative thing about you. I...

CHARLIE awaits a response, and does not get one. He quietly picks up the nuke.

CHARLIE

Okay, watching me?

I'm going to put it.. I'm going to put it right here.

He shows her how he puts it there.

BAKER

Okay. Thank you for taking care of that.

CHARLIE

..Man.

I don't know how you spend time around me.

BAKER takes CHARLIE's hands: a pacifier.

BAKER

I just keep doing it.

CHARLIE

You're amazing. I think you're so incredible, you know.

BAKER

It's hard for me to say anything, sometimes. The words don't come out. I know that sounds stupid.

CHARLIE

It doesn't sound stupid, but I just can't imagine that at all. I'm just constantly going.

BAKER

Well, sorry if my way makes me horrible to be around.

CHARLIE

Nope. Doesn't at all. I'm sorry if I'm horrible to be around.

BAKER

You're not. Let's shut-- shut up.

(BAKER kisses Charlie on the cheek)

Shut up. I just got home.

CHARLIE

Sure. Yeah.

BAKER

Let's sit down?

CHARLIE

Okay, whatever you want.

CHARLIE sits down. They sit quietly in spots not right next to each other. It's not fair if it's not at least for a while.

BAKER

Hmm.

BAKER exhales.

BAKER

You should put on some music!

CHARLIE

Yeah! Yeah, totally. What should I put on?

BAKER

Something without words.

CHARLIE

Always your favorite.

CHARLIE stands up and walks to a wall with a few dangling plugs and holes, and he plugs one of these dangling plugs in. Music without words, me personally I imagine Vltava (The Moldau) by Bedrich Smetana but LISTEN it don't gotta be that-- whatever it may be, it plays in low-resolution; somehow both sonically pixelated and with the warmth of a record player.

CHARLIE

Good?

BAKER
Yes.

CHARLIE makes his way back to sit down. He thinks about sitting by BAKER but he stands thoughtfully in front of the the place where he sat earlier, listening.

BAKER
What's this song called?

CHARLIE
(caught off guard, he opens his mouth but doesn't say anything, doesn't know)
I don't know.

BAKER
I know what it's called. And what it's about.

CHARLIE
Coolio. What's it called?

BAKER
I don't want to tell you.

CHARLIE looks directly and completely at the love of his life, BAKER.

CHARLIE
It's pretty.

BAKER pats the empty seat beside her.

BAKER
Come sit by me.

CHARLIE gets up and sits beside her. He listens harder, staring at the music attentively.

CHARLIE
Everything feels insane. I feel like I'm going crazy. I really do.

BAKER
You're not crazy Charlie. Crazy is a lot different.

CHARLIE
I don't know. You know? Who knows? I wish they'd tell me.

BAKER
Not me, dude. I don't know anything.

Pause.

CHARLIE

Everything is tangled in this immense, crazy, violently spinning---!

BAKER

You remember how you were saying earlier how you wanted to stop talking for a while?

On cue, CHARLIE demonstrates the new trick he's learned, and they again sit quietly. BAKER at a nearby moment plays with his hair in a nice small gesture. At a comparatively distant moment, CHARLIE turns to BAKER and takes her in what could only be an assertive and arousing gesture of masculinity and long-term relationship love.

CHARLIE

Baker, I wanna fuck you so bad--

BAKER

--not right now. Gross. What--

CHARLIE

Okay I just--

BAKER

-sorry, I just don't feel like it at all right now. Why would you--

CHARLIE

No, yeah, that's fine.

I-- I don't think I want to either, I just somehow thought it would maybe make things better.

NEITHER of them want to fuck. CHARLIE has no idea why he said that, so they don't talk awhile again and just listen to the music.

BAKER

Yeah. No. Actually, I really do need to tell you about the meeting, it's important. I don't.. I feel like this is the right time, I should have already-- it's gonna be. I'm just now realizing, preparing to tell this fucking story, how completely insane it all was.

CHARLIE

--oh you're gonna-- gonna talk about the meeting now?

BAKER

Yeah. Shh. This is gonna fuck you up.

OK. So, starting just with-- well when they escorted me in, she already had her feet up on the desk like, some *cool-ass cigarette teenager*--- but it didn't look stupid it was scary as hell-- the way she was leaning back in her chair. She was looking at a certain spot on the ceiling I wasn't brave enough to look up and see. I just acted as normal, like you know confident as I possibly could, and I sat down in front of her, and I told her... oh and *my chair*, bytheway *my chair* is literally, it's one of those aluminum, folding chairs, and it's tiny likeforkids my ass is hanging off it and I'm sitting there and I tell her, I said-- I told her my name, all I did was introduce myself...!

CHARLIE

Did you--?

BAKER

ShhhStopCharlieStopImActuallyGoing--

BAKER

--Comeon!ItsFine!

CHARLIE

Aw sorry!

BAKER

Honestly-- you need to let me say this to you and have you just listen, okay? Okay. Love. oh!I-- jesus, okay so right after telling her you know, my name which I guess she would have to already know, if we were meeting, but I say it formally because I can't imagine anyone would ever know my name. I remind her my name and then I reached right out to shake her *hand*, because *that bitch*, I couldn't believe how much I just *wanted to touch her hand!* First thing when I walked in the room I wanted to touch her, that sexy fucking..

BAKER laughs a little, it's funny! Someone's gotta be wondering if this story might be too exciting to deliver sitting down.

It's so funny. You wouldn't have recognized me *at all*, if you were in that room Charlie. FFFFffokay, I need to tell this story faster-- mmph,she-- she grabs my hand like someone would in a normal handshake.. but while I'm trying to look her in the eye: *intentionally!* I swear she stares |exactly| one inch above where my eyes are! And at the same second I realize she's doing *that*, she starts *she starts shaking* my hand but oh no she *squeezes it too; she squeezes my hand soooooofucking hard.. iron vice grip shit and the*

BAKER looks at NEW CHARLIE, who only nods when he wants to talk.

BAKER

Okay. You can talk now. I don't like to talk for that long, I'm not good at it.

NEW CHARLIE steps carefully back into his former life.

CHARLIE

There's more story, yeah?

BAKER

Yeah just tired of talking. I need a glass of water. Ba booma doom---baaaa okay

BAKER hops up and runs to the kitchen. BAKER hums with the music as she fills a glass of water.

BAKER

Want anything?

CHARLIE

No, thank you.

BAKER

What do you think? So far?

CHARLIE

I don't know. She sounds crazy-- *really* based off what you just said she *legitimately* sounds crazy. She's probably a sociopath, which people throw around but I think truly.

BAKER sits down in a different spot with her water, still feeling jubilant.

BAKER

She's definitely not crazy. That's not supposed to be the point of the story.

CHARLIE

It sounded like a good experience, kind of. Or at least a thought-provoking one.

BAKER makes a fart noise.

CHARLIE

The way you told it.

BAKER

It was definitely crazy.

CHARLIE

I do, at some point, want to hear about what she said about me. I'm being super neurotic about it, I really need to know that it wasn't something horrible. Haha.

BAKER

Wow, Charlie!

CHARLIE

Wow what?

Wow what?

BAKER

We were fucking *Wow, Charlie, we were fucking maniacs* earlier.

CHARLIE

Yeah. And we seem totally, *great* right now.

BAKER

(doin' a funny voice)

Heeeey okay, okay speak fa' yaself.

CHARLIE

How along ago did you even have that meeting?

BAKER

What?

CHARLIE

The meeting. My time perception is all warped.

BAKER

Mmmmmmmmmmyesterday? Yoof. I know it wasn't yesterday, FEELS LIKE it was yesterday. You want.. hours.

I don't know! Can't think right now, afternoon's been a month, I swear. *I* feel crazy, if anyone's crazy.

CHARLIE

I really.really think we're both actually crazy.

CHARLIE

I do.

BAKER

We're not crazy, the entire world is just..

CHARLIE

But.. wouldn't we like, not know? If we really were crazy?

BAKER doesn't respond.

CHARLIE

...This song is really good.

BAKER

Oh-it's amazing. This was my very favorite song when I was tiny, bright little infant child. Ugh. So good.

BAKER dances in a way that can be dumb to the music playing. She invites CHARLIE to dance too.

BAKER

When I was a blood-covered freshly born baby, I would always dance to this.

CHARLIE

Dancin' is fun. I get kind of self-conscious dancing around you, when it's just us.

BAKER

Have you noticed the way how kids dance? Where it's like, first when they're babies, they just like flail their arms-- and then they realize they can use their feet-- and they're like "oh shit! this is amazing!" and they're so excited they have feet that they totally forget they have arms now. They just like, step really fast in funny little patterns, and look down at their feet.

BAKER demonstrates.

CHARLIE

I don't think I've ever heard this song before.

BAKER

Well, you haven't heard that many songs, really. You don't listen to a very wide variety of music.

CHARLIE busts a spectacular, showstopping dance move.

CHARLIE

You seem to be taking a lot of weird jabs at me. Little insults. It's not good when we do that to each other.

BAKER

Am I?

CHARLIE

I could just be reading into things maybe.

BAKER busts her own move.

BAKER

I don't know why I've been doing that. I'll stop.

CHARLIE

You got such a good smile.

BAKER

Keep dancing.

CHARLIE

Yes ma'am. You seem really happy right now, I really like seeing you like this.

BAKER

I know, isn't it horrible? It's gotta be the music. I haven't heard this song in forever.

CHARLIE

Baker, I just want to say--

BAKER gestures towards her ears, the way one might at a bump hopping night club.

BAKER

(loudly)

I can't hear you! Music's too loud, I can only dance not have serious conversations!

CHARLIE

Come on, listen, quick: I'm really sorry about the way I act. I feel like--

BAKER

Don't worry about it. I don't want to talk about it. Are you trying to ruin the official debut of my joy?

CHARLIE

No, of course not! Consider it dropped-- drop-a-mundo. You wanna tell the rest of your awesome story?

BAKER

Soon-- I need a break to recharge first. Isn't the way I've been telling the story pretty, though?

CHARLIE

Yes. It's funny that you asked that. It's nice.

BAKER

Thank you.

CHARLIE

But, so, she didn't like say anything dangerous, about me. Right? Nothing that I would need to know right this second?

BAKER

Not right this second.

CHARLIE

How long is this song?

CHARLIE

What else did you do today? You got up early I noticed.

BAKER

I was up all night... plotting something.

BAKER begins prowling around the bunker playfully dangerously-- her lack of inhibition slightly unsettling. Great impression of an animal.

CHARLIE

Um.. huh? Joke?

Plotting for what?

BAKER begins to close in on CHARLIE.

BAKER

It's a secret. None of your business.

CHARLIE

About the nuke, you mean?

BAKER

Let's not talk about it.

CHARLIE

Baker, I think with the way things have been lately, nothing's going to surprise me. Plotting what?

BAKER approaches CHARLIE with the something of a temptress.

BAKER

Charlie, I'm so sorry.

CHARLIE

(trying to be chill)
...okay.. sorry for what?

BAKER begins stealing glances off beyond CHARLIE's shoulder, in a way that attempts to persuade CHARLIE that there's something behind him he won't believe.

BAKER
..I can't believe it.

CHARLIE
I don't understand.

BAKER begins to generate realistic sadness and tears.

CHARLIE
...Baker!

BAKER gasps with enormous drama. CHARLIE gives in and spins around to see what it is that BAKER seems to be looking at. BAKER tears down his pants, pantsing him. He spins back around on instinct, for a moment seriously freaked.

CHARLIE
Oh no!

BAKER
I can't believe how easy you are to pull the pants off of! What the fuck am I going to plot you weirdo? Idiot! HAH!

CHARLIE tries to seem less relieved then he feels.

CHARLIE
Haha!!AHH!!!!You, werejust pulling a prank on me!

CHARLIE reaches down to pull his pants back up.

CHARLIE
Nice. That was good.

BAKER kneels down in front of his wiener, stops his pants' ascent.

BAKER
Keep 'em down.

CHARLIE
Okay.

BAKER begins kissing up CHARLIE's leg. CHARLIE exhales prolonged like an electric air mattress inflator. The mood becomes sexual.

*The music suddenly malfunctions. It stops playing.
BAKER stiffens.*

CHARLIE
Weird.

*CHARLIE strokes her hair, unsure if they will keep
being intimate.*

CHARLIE
You said it's been doing that lately?

BAKER
It's always done that.

*CHARLIE runs out of his pants, over to the music
cord. BAKER lays back.*

CHARLIE
Weird. I'll fix it. You okay?

BAKER
Nope. I've asked you to fix it before.

CHARLIE
Just like that you're not okay? I have tried to fix it
but I can't figure the problem.

BAKER
Since you asked, yup, it *is* just like that.

*CHARLIE pulls the song cord out and plugs it back
in rapidly.*

BAKER
Stop messing with it.

CHARLIE
(plugging and pulling)
I'm really sorry you feel bummed like this so often.

BAKER
It's fine. You don't have to mess with the song, I
don't want to hear it anymore. Thank you.

*CHARLIE air kisses at BAKER, who catches it and
eats it.*

CHARLIE
Pants back on?

BAKER

Pants back on. Blhhhhh. Hey!

CHARLIE puts his pants back on.

CHARLIE

Hey!

BAKER

Do you want to... run an errand or something?

CHARLIE

What do you mean?

BAKER

I don't know, do you have anything you need to do out of here?

CHARLIE

Without you?

BAKER

If you want.

CHARLIE

You want me to leave? You can just say that. I get wanting me to leave.

BAKER

Not for *long*.

CHARLIE

I want me to leave all the time.

BAKER

Okaywell don't-do-that-- this isn't an angry thing. Let's not.. It's not your fault. Or, a thing anyone would be at fault for, even-- it just yeah, it feels like we've been talking in here for*FOREVER*; *GODDDDDDD!!!*

CHARLIE

..Alrighty.

BAKER

I don't want this to sound wrong, but it feels like I've been listening to your voice for a... *millennium!* I just want a little... (..break)

CHARLIE

I get it.

BAKER

Get some soup? Since you needed to.

CHARLIE

Okay.

CHARLIE goes to the hatch door.

BAKER

Didn't you say earlier we had to get more soup?

CHARLIE

..Sure did!

BAKER

Okay. I'll be here when you get back.

CHARLIE

Okey----doke.

BAKER

I love you.

CHARLIE tries to not say "I love you back". He hangs in the open hatch-doorway.

CHARLIE

Love you too-- okay, bye, I'll see you later. Be back soon.

BAKER

See you soon.

CHARLIE shuts the door behind him.

BAKER looks more relaxed when she walks over to where CHARLIE left the nuke, and looks at the nuke for a second without moving it. Then she walks over and looks at CHARLIE's wall post-it's. BAKER reads those, for a bit.

Finally, she does what she's really wanted to do, and takes her prototype jetpack out of the place where she was keeping it. She sets it on a table. It looks like a cool, unofficial jetpack.

She hums some of the song they listened to, while she tinkers with the jetpack: screwing things tighter, making measurements, using a wrench: not one thing in particular.

The phone rings. BAKER looks at the phone, looks at the jetpack. She gets up as that phone keeps on ringing, and puts the jetpack on her back. After hesitation, she picks the phone up. The voice at the other end is always locked in the bleating pleasant-tongued patter and rhythm of small talk.

PHONE

Baker, you, are just the *best* in the west!

BAKER

Fuck!

BAKER hangs up the phone. It rings again. She hates to answer it.

BAKER

Hey-- sorry for hanging up on you. I'm kind of-- um,

PHONE

(always a different voice)

Hah! Don't worry. We expect that sort of stuff from you.

BAKER

Um. So what's up?

PHONE

Mmm. I guess I'm just thinkin' about you.

BAKER

Thank you.

PHONE

You're welcome. What are you wearing?

BAKER

Uh--listen, I think I gotta go.

PHONE

You always do! Nice to hear your voice. Don't be a stranger, Baker!

BAKER

Yup-yup, okay. I'll talk to you later!

PHONE

I love--

BAKER slams the receiver down, dazed and rattled. She stares at it and yes justlikeshethought!(of course no goddamn surprise) it rings again. This time she only half-reaches, then retracts her arm.

She runs over to the wall, and as the phone begins to ring again, BAKER unplugs one plug from its hole, and plugs another in its wake; redirecting all callers to the answering machine.

Another call is immediately received and a pre-recorded message plays. It sounds heavily rehearsed.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded)

Hey there! If you called the right number, then you must be hoping for Charlie and Baker at the bunker! If I don't pick up the phone and have a long, bare-fleshed conversation with you-- I must not be home.

You can hear the phone being handed over.

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

If I didn't pick up the phone, that's my decision, and I hope you can respect that.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded, quiet and muffled)

and "don't take it personally".

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

Don't take it personally.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded, quiet and muffled)

perfect, that's so funny. one..two..three

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded)

Leave a message!

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

Leave a message.

Beep!

PHONE

Hey Baker! Wazzzzzzup?

Seems like you're probably not home-- or doin' a little eyes-closed ears-closed nap-aroni. Anyway-just calling real quick to tell you that everyone loves you and feels horrible about the way your life is! If there's anything at all we can do-- consider running it by us. We're not miracle workers,HAH but we'll try our best. There should be a sample in your mail soon, at least try that out?

Other than that-- eat a chocolate bar. Lets out endorphins in your brain. *Hey*. Hope you're staying warm. Wear a coat, would ya? Haha.

Oh, jeez. I've got a chicken in the microwave. Ok-ay, should probably go--! Baker. *Hey*. You should really get in touch!

Also-- beforeIgo: you stupid fucking piece of dirt! You are so bad bad bad bad, badbadbad bad, bad, bad bad (shouts like an animal). I wish I could crap a horrible broken brown shape on your head, you warped little trash kick! Alright, hahaha, sorry that chicken is *screaming like a little girl*. I really gotta get going! Sayonarra, compadre! Eat a chocolate bar!

Beep! BAKER calmly unplugs every plug on the wall with all the plugs. BAKER grabs, opens, pours a new can of soup.

The door hatch begins to spin and slowly open. Outside there are voices, one of them CHARLIE's, loudly sharing gratuitously caricatured merriment.

CHARLIE comes in, followed tightly by A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC and A REPUTABLE REPORTER. They carry necessary equipment.

CHARLIE

Hey sweetie, can we use the den area?

BAKER

Who's this?

CHARLIE

You wearing your jetpack?

BAKER remembers she's wearing her jetpack.

BAKER

Uh, yeah. I was working on it.

CHARLIE

Awesome! You look creative right now. And you're making some soup? You know we're running low.

BAKER

Yeah-- weren't you getting more?

CHARLIE

Ah-- shit. No. I was. Forgot.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Charlie, you didn't mention you had a lover.

CHARLIE

Yeah-- oh. Sorry, Baker: this is a prestigious academic and a highly reputable reporter!

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

The former.

BAKER

Hello.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Spelled how it sounds?

BAKER

Exactly.

(to CHARLIE)

You know, I didn't realize you'd be bringing over people who neither of us know.

CHARLIE

It was totally spur of the moment--*really exciting* though--

BAKER

I'm glad!

CHARLIE

--supernova sort of happenstance|you're mad, OK, can I talk to you privately? Excuse me for a sec.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER leans in with interest. BAKER looks at them.

BAKER

Can I make either of you some soup?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Excellent. Soup sounds excellent.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

A dream. If it could be heated up?

BAKER

Absolutely. Two soups. Go ahead and have a seat, I'll bring them to you. Charlie, would you like to talk privately in the kitchen?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER and A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC sit pleasantly. CHARLIE watches anxiously as BAKER prepares two soups.

CHARLIE

I should have called first I know this isn't good after--

BAKER

--I don't care. Who.. uh, what's their thing? What are they doing?

CHARLIE

Well, okay, do you have time for a story?

BAKER

Short.

CHARLIE

Yeah it's not long. Okay, so I was walking --after you told me to leave-- I was walking, and I was thinking really hard about what you said.

BAKER

What did I say?

CHARLIE

Just our whole conversation, today. And the yelling, and killing me, killing ourselves weirdness, it made me really freaked out. And so while I was walking, totally by chance, I happened to be walking *right past* the International Center of Remarkable Intellectuals-- the huge brick building, with the sign? And these two were standing out front, and I even from a mile away I could smell they were smoking artisan drugs, and when I got closer I could hear them talking-- super interesting stuff about molecules. And eventually we kind of coincidentally made eyes at each other, and by sheer luck I stopped, and out of nowhere we ended up talking about the nuke!

BAKER

Oh yeah? Was it because you brought it up?

CHARLIE

Yeah, and Baker, it was crazy-- because it was *just* like what you were saying about your meeting with the President; it was like my train of thought and my physical location became synchronized by some.. omnipotent puppet-string. Like I was exactly where I should be in that moment.

BAKER

(calling over to the intellectuals)
Sorry, did you want yours warmed up too?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER
Me?

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC
Could only be you. I've already asked her mine.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER
I would love it warmed, thank you.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC
Oh, and, miss, you can do that by using the microwave.

BAKER
Thanks.
(turning back to CHARLIE)
What were you saying?

CHARLIE
I was thinking-- and I think the main problem with the nuke right now is that pretty much no one even knows I have it! But these guys have connections, and they're smart-- like geniuses. They can get us news coverage, and historical documentation, and-- like, biographies and statistical breakdowns.

BAKER
As long as they don't need to talk to me about it.

CHARLIE
No, totally-- it's just about me. Thank you for understanding-- god you're amazing. Trust me, this is a pretty huge development. I feel proud!

BAKER
Yeah, yeah. Have fun! I'll just be over here, doing my thing.

CHARLIE
Yeah! Ignore us, pretend we're not here! You should work on your jetpack!

BAKER
(pointing)
Soup.

CHARLIE digs through where he last put the nuke.

CHARLIE
Afterwards! Thanks for making that by the way!

BAKER
Yeah, no problem.

CHARLIE

(to the intellectuals)
Sorry for the wait-- just one second here!

CHARLIE pulls out the nuke and holds it up proudly. He comes to the intellectuals. BAKER takes off her jetpack and sets it down; she microwaves the soups. Each time the microwave dings, she puts more time on. This humming and beeping and microwave door opening goes on in the background.

CHARLIE

Here we go!

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Oh! Very nice. Looks deadly.

CHARLIE

Yup!

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

May I hold it?

CHARLIE

Afraid not. I'm actually the only person who's ever touched it-- it's a dangerous burden to carry-- that I carry it.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Of course. May I ask?

CHARLIE

Definitely!

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

How would you articulate its significance?

CHARLIE

In the context of me? Or? I guess it's kind of a symbol of altruism-- in a broader context, a symbol of.. destruction. Um-- yeah, and if you twist *here--andI'mnotgonnadoit--* but if you twist, and then press *this* down, you have to press down hard; that's what initiates the countdown sequence.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

What number does it count down from?

CHARLIE

I don't know. I'd have to.. I bet... ten seconds, thirty seconds or sixty seconds, would be my best guesses.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

This is all great, thank you. I know you said a little bit about this earlier, but on the record now: do you want to say anything about *why* you decided to own the nuclear bomb?

CHARLIE

Sure! I--

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Apology: Do you mind if I borrow a little look around?

CHARLIE

Oh, yeah please. Go ahead.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC stands up and looks around the bunker. He raps his knuckles on the wall.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Whenever you're ready.

CHARLIE

Umm.. I guess basically, the whole idea behind it is that a nuclear bomb is this.. horrible--you know--*symbol of war.*

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER nods. He waits for CHARLIE to continue.

CHARLIE

Because this thing, people don't realize, you know-- if this was in the wrong hands, and godforbid, the detonation sequence was *initiated*.. Well. Ten seconds later, everyone in the entire world would be killed in a nuclear holocaust.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER nods. He waits for CHARLIE to continue.

And I, uh.. so I'm keeping it because, I, or, everyone needs to...

CHARLIE looks over to BAKER and the microwave, which has been humming for it seems like a really long time.

CHARLIE

Sweetie, is that soup done yet?

BAKER

Hm?

CHARLIE

Soup. Seems like it's been cooking for a while.

BAKER

Oh. Let me check.

BAKER opens the microwave. The soup has all evaporated.

BAKER

Oh, gosh. I'm sorry-- it looks like I warmed it way *too hard*, I had the heat up so unreasonably high-- the soup; it's actually funny: all of the soup evaporated! Wow, isn't that a silly riot?

CHARLIE

(turning to the reporter)

Ah, I'm really sorry about that.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Honest mistake. Is there any way you could find yourself making another?

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

I'd also still adore some soup.

BAKER

Oh, thank you-- I'd love to have another chance. I'm such a *frivolous ditz*-- I'll try to keep a better eye on it this time.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Thanks so much.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

(to CHARLIE)

You have a beautiful lover.

CHARLIE

Yes. Thank you. Thank you sweetie!

BAKER

(overly sing-song)

You're welcome, precious darling!

CHARLIE

Anyway-- sorry about that. About the inspiration for *this little guy here*--

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Please.

CHARLIE

A love for humanity, in less than 300 words, might mean--

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Sorry to be interrupting: are these post-it notes yours, or the lady's? Sorry-- your name?

BAKER

Baker.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

I own many things, but a mind for names isn't one of them, I'm afraid.

BAKER

It's so very alright-- I'm charmed you'd ever ask!

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC hovers increasingly nearer BAKER.

CHARLIE

Uh-- the post-it's are actually a newer project of mine! I can explain them if you like.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

It's fine, I don't often need explaining. Carry on.

CHARLIE

Where was I? I apologize for all of these distractions.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Don't worry a moment. I think we're actually going to shift gears here, now. This is a nuclear bomb shelter we're in right now-- yes?

CHARLIE

Yes.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

But you have the only nuclear bomb. Am I getting that right?

CHARLIE

Yeah-- I--

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Sorry, give me a second to write down.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER stops writing, looks up.

CHARLIE

Yeah, there's a pretty complicated logic behind it--
but the general thinking is--

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

May I ask why is it above ground?

CHARLIE

Huh?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Aren't most bomb shelters under the ground? Yours is
above it. You don't have to answer if you're not
comfortable.

CHARLIE

If it was... If it was above ground how would anyone be
able to find me..? I don't-- next question.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Sure. Of course. Mmmm:

Has anyone notable got in touch with you, in regards to
you possessing the nuclear bomb?

CHARLIE

I probably shouldn't even bring this up, but I actually
have been trading letters with The President of the
World these last few weeks. You probably shouldn't put
that in the story, though-- might be sensitive
information.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Understood; I'll make sure not to mention it.

CHARLIE

Well, it's up to you to mention it or not, I'll trust
your discretion. Whatever makes for a better story,
right?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

The one thing I've ever loved is a nice story.

CHARLIE

Absolutely. Hm. I'm trying to think of what else might
be interesting.

The microwave dings.

BAKER

Ohpe! Soup's ready!

*A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER stands up, begins to
pack his things.*

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Might there be a way I could take that to go?

CHARLIE stands up, too. He sets the nuke down carelessly. BAKER takes the soup bowls out with oven mitts.

CHARLIE

Oh! Going already?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Yes, yes. I think I have most what I need. The world is very busy and so so am I. The life of a public servant.

CHARLIE

Do you want my number, in case you have any more questions?

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

That'd be unnecessary but fine, thank you.

CHARLIE runs and writes the bunker's phone number on a post-it note. He hands it over to a HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER, who is struggling unlatching the door.

CHARLIE

Door is tough, sorry.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

I'm finding I simply can't get it.

CHARLIE starts spinning the latch for A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER.

CHARLIE

Sorry, I'll get it. It's tough.

The door gets opened.

CHARLIE

Oh, and, also-- you can even put my number in the story, if that's helpful? If a reader wants to get in touch? I don't know if that'd be weird. Just an option.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Would I not be able to get the heated soup?

CHARLIE

Of course you can! Let me get it.

BAKER

Oh, don't worry! I'll bring it to you!

BAKER walks carefully with one of the soup bowls, still wearing her oven mitts. They watch her slowly shuffle over as not to spill it. She offers it over to A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER, who takes it.

BAKER

Be careful, it's very hot.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER reaches out to take it. BAKER does not yet give it to them.

BAKER

It's going to hurt to hold.

BAKER hands A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER his soup.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER

Yes, very hot. Ouch, as they say. That'll be all from me, then. Have a nice evening.

A HIGHLY REPUTABLE REPORTER leaves the bunker. A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC stirs his spoon about the soup.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

I'd love to stay for my soup, if that wouldn't offend you.

CHARLIE

Please, stay as long as you like! I hope you haven't felt ignored, reporter just had a lot of questions. We can make more soup, after you're done with that one-- if you want.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Baker-- Baker? It *is* Baker, yes?

BAKER

Baker, yes.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

It's honestly a wonder I remembered at all-- this cranium is so tightly packed, it's a wonder when I manage to make space.

BAKER

Sounds like a wonder.

CHARLIE

Wonderful! Isn't it?!

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

..Yes. Baker, would it interest you to sit and chat with me, while I eat this soup?

BAKER

Oh, I'm interested in absolutely everything.

CHARLIE

Is there anything you'd like me to be doing, or preparing?

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Oh not at all, there isn't. Baker, come sit. I simply must be sitting across from you-- is that strange to say?

BAKER

Oh, I don't think anything is strange to say.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Is this your machine? I noticed you were carrying it with your back when I came in.

BAKER is taken off-guard from her performative facetiousness, which no one has picked up on anyway.

BAKER

Um-- yeah. Actually, that's mine, yes. Why?

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

I must know right this second-- what does it do? How does it function. Is it a time machine?

BAKER

No--

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Is it a *love-making* machine?

BAKER

I--

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Simply in jest. A little wordplay humor. Tell me more about it!

BAKER picks up the jetpack, which suddenly looks very dull to her. CHARLIE steps about nervously, failing not to listen. He begins to take down the post-it's on the wall as stealthily as possible. He crams them in his pockets.

BAKER

Well, it's a jetpack. It looks shitty. This one's more just a sample-- or, prototype-- is what you'd call it right? Doesn't work yet, makes this shitty noise.

BAKER demonstrates briefly. The noise is horrible, it happens when the jetpack is turned on.

BAKER

It's more of a model, to like, make more of, based off of.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Hmm.

BAKER

It's not even my idea.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Tell me more. First: Would you like a bite of soup?

BAKER

..no,thank you. The-- my idea is, I've been working on it for awhile and some of the concepts are still muddy. But pretty much, the idea is.. yeah, it's just that, I think if everyone single person in the world had their own jetpack, we would all be happier.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

That's a marvelous thought.

BAKER

Well, I didn't even explain-- do you get why? It's like.. the government spends so much money; like on bridges, and buildings, and *after-school programs*. All of this energy and money spent on bringing us closer, connecting people, making it easier for everyone to see everyone! So everyone can spend all of their time with everyone, all the time!

Which is great! I am not against people spending time with other people! Like, fuck, that's great for them! But people are so *shitty*! Which is fine, too, it's fine!-- I'm shitty too but, I don't understand why we have to act like we want to be around each other all the goddamn time. Um.

BAKER

If we're going to give everybody a million opportunities to be around each other every fucking second, doesn't it make sense that we give people at least one option to get away from people?

To just-- okay, you know? Take off and fly away and not have to be around these people if you don't want to be? No questions asked? No one's mad or disappointed you left-- no one asks why. Everyone has this jetpack. We make 'em cheap, I'm working on figuring out how to make 'em cheap enough. So everyone can use them-- old ladies, stupid children, married people. Everyone is allowed to fly away, out of any situation. And then when you feel like you're okay-- you just land. And no one says anything, no asks where you went or why you left. It's just a normal thing. Like... newspapers.

There's a pause. A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC sucks on his spoon.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Would it upset you if I told you... I now can't help but wonder the ways in which two jetpack-adorned bodies might make love in the sky?

Another silence.

CHARLIE

You should probably leave.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

An insecure man, to be unsettled so deeply by an undirected hypothetical.

CHARLIE

Shut the hell up.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

I was simply asking an intelligent, beautiful woman an appropriately intelligent, beautiful question.

BAKER

Shut the hell up.

CHARLIE

Yeah. Go somewhere else.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

..very good.

CHARLIE

You know where the door is?

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Yes. I'll see myself out.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC struggles with the door. No one helps them. They get it open.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Oh, by and by, I shouldn't forget to offer my least sincere congratulations on your prized doomsday device. I'll sleep well knowing the most dangerous object in the universe is safe in the hands of a spineless milquetoast buffoon.

CHARLIE

Okay.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

By and by further once, I should have you know that my colleague and I only wandered into your little dollhouse because we were hungry, and hate to spend money on a meal.

BAKER

OhmygodLEAVE.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC

Yes.

A PRESTIGIOUS ACADEMIC leaves.

CHARLIE

That guy sucks.

BAKER

Everyone sucks.

CHARLIE

Come on. Not everyone.

The-- the highly reputable reporter, seemed fine. He seemed nice.

Pause.

CHARLIE

Sorry for bringing them over-- you probably hated that. I don't know why I did that.

BAKER

It's fine. Today is already horrible, so you didn't make anything worse. What time is it?

CHARLIE

Only sort of late, still.

BAKER

Great.

CHARLIE

Means there's time for the night to get better, I guess.

BAKER

Great.

CHARLIE looks at the cord wall.

CHARLIE

Why's the phone unplugged?

BAKER

I didn't want to talk to anyone.

CHARLIE

What if someone wants to talk to me?

BAKER

You can plug it back in.

CHARLIE looks at the cord wall. He plugs it into the answering machine hole.

CHARLIE

I'm just going to do it straight to the answering machine for now.

BAKER

Sorry about the way today is going.

CHARLIE

It's fine, you don't need to apologize. Today's not a bad day even. We're all just tryin' our best.

BAKER

If you say so.

CHARLIE takes his nuke, sits back on the couch.

CHARLIE

I have no idea why I have this thing, Baker.

BAKER is quiet.

CHARLIE

I don't know what to do with it. You know? I have absolutely no idea.

BAKER

Yeah, what do you want me to say? Me neither.

CHARLIE

I can't-- I'm not going to use *it*, obviously. Because that would kill everyone. But if I never use it, it's not really doing anything. You know?

BAKER

You can always get rid of it.

CHARLIE

But you know, obviously we've talked about that, I've thought about it--*plenty, trustme*-- but get rid of it how? Just leave it lying around like I found it? Or, like-- give it to someone? Because at least I know, with me--with us, we aren't going to USE it. But if we let someone else have it, *who knows* what they'll do with it. That could be the end.

BAKER

The President wants it.

CHARLIE

What?

BAKER

I should have said something earlier.

CHARLIE

Did she say that?

BAKER

Yeah, I just didn't want to talk about it-- we should probably, we should probably talk about it.

CHARLIE

Okay, shoot.

BAKER

She doesn't want you to have it-- at all. She said it's not yours to have, basically, in a bunch of different ways. This was when she was yelling.

CHARLIE

What did *you* say?

BAKER

I didn't really say anything, Charlie.

CHARLIE

...so, is she going to like, kill me?

BAKER

I don't know. I don't think so. But the way our meeting ended, it seemed like...

CHARLIE

Like..?

BAKER rubs her temples.

BAKER

I don't know.

CHARLIE

Can you-- can you try to know? That's a pretty.. unfair little cliffhanger, there, Baker. Kinda shitty.

BAKER

She said order would be restored.

CHARLIE

"Order"? That's a really dramatic---!

BAKER

--which, with also her inflection, and body language and the general atmosphere.. seemed like she insinuating that something would be happening imminently.

CHARLIE

What *kind* of something?

BAKER

I just don't want to see her again. I honestly can't.

CHARLIE

Weird. You think I should call her? I'll-- I'm gonna, um..

CHARLIE picks up the phone, puts it to his ear, realizes he does not know her number, slams it down.

CHARLIE

Did she give you her number?

BAKER

No. It's a one-way number, anyway.

CHARLIE

So, what am I supposed to.. should I give the nuke to her? Or?

BAKER

I don't know. I have no idea how to make a decision like that.

CHARLIE stares at BAKER, scared. He disengages, makes a giant explosion sound with his mouth. They're quiet for a bit.

CHARLIE

Do you think she'd use it? Or, what's her plan for it?

BAKER

She didn't tell me anything.

CHARLIE

I love you, Baker.

BAKER

I love you too, Charlie.

Pause.

BAKER

Have I not said I'm sorry yet? About saying I would kill you earlier?

CHARLIE

No, you didn't say sorry yet, but it's okay. We were both thinking it. I definitely, stoked the coals, of that situation.

BAKER

Well I am sorry.

CHARLIE

Me too stinker.

CHARLIE

I don't think I'm going to give the nuke to her. If that's okay. I'm going to try to talk this out with her like adults.

CHARLIE

What are you thinkin'?

BAKER

I think that's fine. I don't care about anything.

CHARLIE

Just for now at least, I'm going to keep it-- you said yourself she was a bitch, I have to make sure we can even trust her. Also, c'mon, don't say you don't care about anything.

BAKER

Okay, I care about *everything*.

CHARLIE

(idle mouth sounds)

CHARLIE

Hey, be honest, I'm not going to get mad at any response. Are my post-it's stupid?

BAKER looks around for them.

BAKER

Where are they all?

CHARLIE pulls crumpled post-it's from his pocket.

CHARLIE

I had a Charlie-freak out, when I thought maybe you liked that highly prestigious academic better than me.

BAKER

Puh! No. He was a skeeze-o.

CHARLIE

Yeah, you were doing-- being ironic, I realized.

BAKER

Wall looks empty without the post-it's.

CHARLIE

I'm worried I'm just the hugest fucking idiot. Feels like everything I do is worthless garbage. Be honest: does everyone think I'm a faker? Like, a phony? In the way I act?

BAKER

Charlie, can we not spend this time talking about your same shit?

CHARLIE

Yeah. Sorry.

BAKER

No, you're fine.

CHARLIE

...I know this isn't true, but the way you look at me when I'm talking sometimes, I'm worried even you might hate me-- might think I'm a phony.

BAKER

..I think you should just stop caring so much what other people think of you. People are shitty.

CHARLIE

But they're really not. They're not at all. You and I are people, and we're--

BAKER

Shitty. In my opinion. I think it's good you feel different, that's just the way I see it.

CHARLIE

Thanks.

I don't judge you, by the way. For your view of things.

BAKER

Can you put on some music?

CHARLIE

Yup.

CHARLIE kisses BAKER. He switches the plugs on the wall around. The music plays. Lights fade out. END OF ACT I.

ACT II

Lights? Not up yet. A message on the answering machine.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded)

Hey there! If you called the right number, then you must be hoping for Charlie and Baker at the bunker! If I don't pick up the phone and have a long, bare-fleshed conversation with you-- I must not be home.

You can hear the phone being handed over.

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

If I didn't pick up the phone, that's my decision, and I hope you can respect that.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded, quiet and muffled)

and "don't take it personally".

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

Don't take it personally.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded, quiet and muffled)

perfect, that's funny. one..two..three

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded)

Leave a message!

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

Leave a message.

Beep!

PHONE

(it's the PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD)

Hello, Charlie and Baker. This is The President of the World. Charlie, I've sent you many letters with my stamp-printed signature. I know you have read them all dozens of times. Baker, I'm sure you remember we spoke earlier, so I'll assume you let your lover know what to be expecting, as I hate to waste words or breath. Expect me to arrive at your bunker in a short time, and know I'm expecting my visit to last only a short time.

PHONE

(different voice)

This was an official voice message courtesy The President of the World, sole leader of the globe and united country.

"The President of the World is mighty, she rules to help us, we love her. Feel proud, stand tall, our hero emanates such sweet power."

Thank you.

Lights go up! The bunker is most the same. There is much less soup on the shelf. BAKER is working with great concentration on her jetpack, with a half-eaten bowl of soup beside her. The crumpled post-it's from CHARLIE's room are back up--- the post-it's have been rearranged: they now hang in a neat, tight block in a concentrated space on the wall. CHARLIE? CHARLIE paces back and forth nervously-manically with the nuke buried between his paws.

CHARLIE

Okay, okay. Actually, no, that one was wrong. Here is the real-- the real one. I'll-- here's the plan: Me? I'll, I'm going to... I'll take the nuke. I'll take it.. and remember how you said about the walls-- I'll, when the President comes in, I'll say, "You want the nuke? Here's your nuke!" and I'll twist it, and press the button down, the countdown will come on. And you and I will, we'll run away. And we'll close the door, and then she'll be *stuck* in there with the nuke, and the explosion will *kill* her-- but everyone else will be fine. So we'll be fine, and you'll be like "I'm guessing that's not what she expected when you said she could *have* the nuke". And then everything will be fine. No nuke, no president. Dead president. In our living room just a dead body, and I'll be like "--

BAKER

They're getting better.

CHARLIE

Yeah? You're right! Main problem with that one is: I'm not a capable killer. You have to be a certain kind of person, and I think that's what's fucked me my whole life. I don't have that in my heart, I can't kill, or treat *anyone* badly, really. God, she seems so scary, though! I keep hearing her voice in my head. From the answering machine, but in my head now.

BAKER

Isn't it so strangely flat? She still goes up and down-- she still, like, inflects, but her voice sounds like a brick wall. Do you get that from it, at all?

CHARLIE

Woah! Baker. Suddenly talkative! Um, yeahyeah, it's-kinda-flat. I guess, I'd have to listen to the message again.

BAKER

Please don't.

CHARLIE

No yeah, I don't want to. How's the jetpack going?

BAKER

I can't get it to stop making this fucking horrible noise every time it turns on.

BAKER turns on the jetpack. It makes and maintains a very weird noise.

CHARLIE

Ohyeah-- that's a really bad noise.

BAKER turns the jetpack off.

BAKER

I hate it.

CHARLIE

Does it work otherwise, though?

CHARLIE

I think I realized, I just need to *relax*-- there's nothing we can do but wait-- what's stressing do? I can talk it out with her-- I'm very charming. Baker!

CHARLIE searches at length, eventually pulls a post-it off the wall which says "charming".

CHARLIE

Look that I'm charming! I wrote this out ahead of time, it wasn't planned!

BAKER

Maybe she'll talk to you! I don't know her at all.

CHARLIE

Charming in like a neurotic, smart way. Right? Without sounding pretentious, but.. you think that about me.

(so mad at his post-it wall)

CHARLIE

It's so hard to find what I'm looking for up there! My whole life is so disorganized-- *that's* why we're in this horrible situation.

BAKER

You should organize them then. Find something to do with your hands, it'll calm you down.

CHARLIE

You talked to her-- what do you think? Can I charm her-- can-- I'm not even going to need to charm her, it's, it's just gonna be *logic*. I'm going to present her with pure logic. And pathos. Boom, then bam.

BAKER

I-don't-know-what-she's-gonna-do.

CHARLIE

She's not gonna talk to me. No way, that's a joke! Who wants to talk to me talk to a joke? I'm a terrible, long meandering joke with no punchline, that someone just keeps telling, and *telling!* She doesn't care about me, she won't even put my name on an envelope. I'm just an object to her, the means to an end--

BAKER

I'm glad I'm here with you, right now.

CHARLIE

Thank you. Thanks, what?! Why are you saying that?

BAKER

I'm glad to be around you. The jetpack has really come along. I think I can finish it.

CHARLIE

What?! Baker, you're acting so weird-- completely bizarre. Do you think we're going to die.

BAKER

I don't know. No I don't think that. Hey, wait-- listen.

CHARLIE listens. BAKER fumbles with the jetpack.

CHARLIE

Wait for what? You're freaking me out.

BAKER

Just-- sit still! Okay, listen. It's gonna be silent this time. I think I figured it out.

BAKER turns on the jetpack. It makes the noise again. BAKER turns it off and makes quite the noise herself.

CHARLIE

It sounds good.

Hey-- you think we're going to be killed? She can't do that, Baker, don't worry about that. That's illegal, and also immoral-- to kill. We're staying alive! This'll be fine. This might even be a big break for me, to be in the same room as her and really get a chance to hash out--

BAKER turns on the jetpack. It makes the sound again. She turns it off.

BAKER

GoDAMnit! I hate everything.

CHARLIE

Hey, no you don't. I actually feel really good right now! Now that I've thought about it. You should feel good too!

BAKER

Oh sweetheart, *I* feel like a..: little princess-- unwrapping some.. brand new gold bars, in a lavender bath tub, and also eating my favorite.. royal meal/ and cumming!

CHARLIE

Can you-- I don't say this ever-- I always say how I understand-- but telling the truth, I don't. get. *your fucking problem*; are you biologically incapable of being positive? Do you not think I'm *freaking out* right now?

I hate that being around me apparently makes you feel so horrible-- the way you act, and talk to me, Baker, it legitimately makes me feel like a... tiny.. ugly boy with a funny hat, standing on top of a mud puddle and there's just this giant person stepping down on your head- barefoot- stepping down, pressing this stupid kid down into the mud like a.. sinking--mud ship. I can feel the goddamnGODAMN mud bubbles, bubbling up past my nostrils, and like I'm stuck in the mud, can't move, but my eyes can move I'm just looking down at the mud coming up!

CHARLIE stomps around, pissed. BAKER tries to keep working attentively on the jetpack. CHARLIE stomps up to his post-it wall, pissed.

CHARLIE

Can you say something?!?! Mud shIP?!

CHARLIE rearranges two of the post-its.

CHARLIE

When you had the nuke today; and you said you were gonna kill me. You said you wanted me to blow myself up, you told me to die already, I'm not mad, I just want you to be honest with me. People don't say things like that if they don't mean them.

BAKER begins working violently on her jetpack.

CHARLIE

There's no soup. on the damn soup nook. How is there no soup?!

BAKER

It's not your soup, idiot. It's not just your soup.

CHARLIE

Can you stop working on that thing for one second? I can't believe the President is going to walk in and kill us any second now, and this is how we have to spend our last time together.

BAKER checks the jetpack really fast but yeah it makes the noise again, she slams it down.

BAKER

Okay? Sorry, I'm horrible. I'm really terrible. I know. What else should we say? I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

...Baker, I love you.

BAKER

What? Shut up!

CHARLIE

Why? See-- this is what I mean. Why can't we just let things be happy?!

BAKER

You just said really bad things to me!

CHARLIE

I don't know why-- I'm an idiot! I'm sorry!

BAKER cannot precisely articulate her anger, not about CHARLIE really nearly as much as it should be, just about everything.

CHARLIE

I think I deserve every way you treat me. I do.

There's a knock at the door. The mood changes.

BAKER

Answer the door.

BAKER goes back to her jetpack.

CHARLIE

I think you're so amazing, I think you're so beautiful,
I really think you're perfect.

BAKER

Answer the door please.

CHARLIE

Don't be mad at me. I don't want to die with you mad if
we die. How can I make you happy, before I answer the
door?

BAKER

I'm not unhappy.

CHARLIE

Say "I love you"!

BAKER

I love you. Go!

CHARLIE

You're not happy--

BAKER

(angry mouth sound)

CHARLIE

--I can always tell.

BAKER

Answer the door, ohMYgod!

CHARLIE

Answer the door! Okay!

CHARLIE rushes to the door.

CHARLIE

Hey. Look at me-you don't have to look at me. I
promise: Everything is going to be okay.

(narrating)

I'm unlatching the door!

BAKER

I don't know why I keep eating your soup, I'm not even hungry, I feel full. Since you said not to eat it, I just keep eating it!

CHARLIE tries to not think about that and swings the hatch open. He faces the open door with so much fear but more dignity than any of us would expect. He is surprised to find nothing. He is surprised to find a newspaper.

CHARLIE

Newspaper.

Baker. Newspaper.

BAKER keeps working.

CHARLIE

Baker, it's just the newspaper!., We're fine. We're alive.,!?!

CHARLIE

Baker!

CHARLIE

There's an article. Huh! Hmmmmmm, hm hm hm hm hmmm hmmm hm.

BAKER

(looking up)

What's the article?

CHARLIE

What's what? No, what'd you say?

CHARLIE

Seems pretty interesting.. seems pretty, uh, says: "Man lives safely sheltered from future nuclear holocaust".

aaaaaaaand there's a picture of you. Making soup. There's no caption. It's not very long, not a very long article at all. More of a blurb, than an article.

BAKER

...Charlie, are you going to give the nuke to the President when she gets here?

CHARLIE

Sweetie-- you should see this picture.

BAKER

I don't care.

CHARLIE

That's fine. You look really nice!

BAKER

..is the article not good?

CHARLIE

(reading the blurb intently)

No. Those intellectuals were such assholes. I don't even want to read this.

BAKER

Don't worry about them. They sucked.

CHARLIE

Says, uh; doesn't have my name in it. It just begins with "he". Pronouns only? I feel like articles never do that---youhavetogo out of your WAY to do that!

BAKER

Do you just not want to talk about what's going to happen here?

CHARLIE shucks the newspaper.

CHARLIE

I don't understand what to say. Should I just give up and surrender the nuke to that insane woman?

BAKER

Shrug. I wonder how long it's going to be. How long has it been, already since she left that message?

CHARLIE

Is that really what's right-- to give it away? I don't know!!!, Baker. I want you to tell me.

BAKER

It's your decision.

CHARLIE

It sounds stupid.. but I just have this feeling that I really could do something amazing with this thing Baker. Think about all of the pain, and suffering this has brought us. Was it really all for nothing?!

BAKER

Well, if you die-- that doesn't get much done either.

CHARLIE

We're not gonna die. we're not gonna die ! I just need more time, to figure this all out.

BAKER

Yeah. How much time do you think we have?

CHARLIE

Does.. she-- how does she move? Does she fly, or does she drive-- or is she like, carried?

BAKER

I have no idea.

CHARLIE

It doesn't matter. We're fine. I'm ready. I'm ready to rock, rock rock and roll highschool bring it on baby.

CHARLIE rushes over and sits on the couch.

CHARLIE

Sweet? Let's sit together. I just want to sit with you, before this all happens.

BAKER

hhhhhhhhhhh.....

CHARLIE

Bad idea?

BAKER

I don't want to, and it's not because I'm upset with you-- I just want to keep doing what I'm doing.

CHARLIE

You hate me.

BAKER

No, don't hate you idiot.

CHARLIE

I'm disgusting. I'm a smelly little slop of vomit.

BAKER

Stop, Charlie.

BAKER turns on the jetpack. It turns on, it makes the sound, she turns it off immediately. She keeps working.

CHARLIE

You're not going to come sit by me?

BAKER exhales.

CHARLIE

This could be a nice moment.

BAKER

Is me sitting there the only way?

CHARLIE

No.

I want to just reset and pretend neither of us ever said anything. Is that reasonable?

BAKER

Sure.

CHARLIE

Huh? I-- Let's both just do whatever. I don't care-- work on your stuff. I'll, uh--We don't have to talk. I could play music?

BAKER

That's nice of you. You don't have to put on music-- let's just talk. You should work on something though! Don't just walk around being nervous idiot.

CHARLIE looks around nervously.

BAKER

You look like a big kid when you walk around sometimes.

CHARLIE

Hah. I like that-- I think it's good to be like a kid.

BAKER

Big kid, with the funny hat in the mud puddle.

CHARLIE

That's not funny to me.

BAKER

Sorry.

CHARLIE

It's fine! I'll-- hmm, what should I do, what should my project be? Help me.

BAKER

You can figure it out, you're smart-- right?

CHARLIE

I want to clean up. Organize everything. I don't like how dirty this place always is-- your environment totally reflects your mental state.

BAKER

Good idea. Let me just work on this for a little more, and then I'll help you clean up.

CHARLIE starts cleaning up. He puts the nuke away neatly. There's not much hub-ub. CHARLIE pulls out drugs from a place near where he was cleaning.

CHARLIE

Woah, look! Wanna do drugs?

BAKER

Nice! Where were those?

CHARLIE

In here. Wanna?

BAKER

Ummm. Sure. I'd do.. one drug.

CHARLIE unscrews the cap, throws a weird bright colored ball of a drug to BAKER.

CHARLIE

Catch!

CHARLIE does not throw it accurately. BAKER looks up from her jetpack, smiles at where it landed. She shifts the jetpack-on-off again it makes the sound but she's not mad just checking.

BAKER

One second, I'll grab it.

CHARLIE

Do you actually wanna just split one?

BAKER

That's fine!

CHARLIE

Remember when we were freaked out on these, in the summer?

BAKER

Yeah-- and you were runnin' around barefoot, yelling at the sky. What were you yelling?

CHARLIE

I can't remember. Stepped in glass.

BAKER

That was fun. I remember seeing a lot of beautiful images. We went to the food store, and the cashier I remember--

CHARLIE

--he totally knew we were on something--

BAKER

--yeah, and when I looked at his face though, I remember seeing a bunch of flowers, not like he was covered in them. It's hard to describe.

(laughin')

He just was flowers, is the best way I can put it.

CHARLIE

Cool. You never told me about that.

BAKER

And whenever anyone was talking that day it all sounded really melodic, like everyone was always singing.

They nostalgia (verb).

CHARLIE

Okay, we can both just do a whole one.

CHARLIE takes his drug. He claps. BAKER looks up, goes off and grabs her drug. She takes it. She claps. CHARLIE goes over to BAKER's half-full soup bowl.

CHARLIE

Nice. Can I put this away for you?

BAKER

That'd be great, thank you.

CHARLIE washes out BAKER's bowl neatly. He dries it and sets it aside. He steps out and looks at his post-its.

CHARLIE

I still agree with all of the things I wrote about myself up here.

BAKER

I read a bunch of them. They all seemed really accurate. You have a good sense of yourself. I admire that. I definitely don't have that.

CHARLIE

Yeah you do, dummy.

(looking at his post-it's)

I don't know why I did this, either though. What's the point of this? What does it say for these to all be here? There's no intent.

BAKER

It's like, allowing you to be consciously reminded of who you are-- or you come off as, or whatever. That's what you said earlier, that made sense to me.

CHARLIE

Everything I've ever said sounds absolutely awful when you say it back to me.

BAKER

Do we have to do these drugs?

CHARLIE

No. Let's not. Let's spit 'em out.

The two of them spit out their drug and stomp it out.

BAKER

I don't want to be on drugs right now.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I just saw 'em and thought. But me neither, especially if we might die. Sure you don't want music?

BAKER

I'm fine.

CHARLIE

Wow.

BAKER

What's up?

CHARLIE

I just keep pooping in my own mouth. That's all my life is. Pooping in my mouth and then pooping the new poop composed from the previous poop back out into my terrible mouth again. Over and over.

BAKER

(funly)

Sounds good-- how do I get in on that?

CHARLIE

The... Mouth poop... is only for me.

BAKER

No!

CHARLIE

Sorry.

BAKER

It smells so good though!!

CHARLIE, disarmed by the fun, decides to focus hard on the post-its. He starts rearranging them all, into a very precise shape made from purposeful rows and columns.

CHARLIE

I'm gonna give her the nuke when she gets here, by the way. I need to submit to my role in the universe. I don't have to be a special anything. I'm making peace with it, Baker.

There's a silence CHARLIE did not expect. BAKER looks proudly at the jetpack.

BAKER

I... am excited to try and fly this!

CHARLIE

Soon? It's ready?

BAKER

I think so.

CHARLIE

That's awesome. Wow.

BAKER

Yeah!

BAKER stands up. She comes up to CHARLIE.

BAKER

Can I help?

CHARLIE

Yeah-- I'm sorting them.

BAKER

By how?

CHARLIE

Alphabetic.

BAKER helps him move them around.

CHARLIE

I feel like I just keep waiting for someone to call me on my shit, and no one ever does. Part of me has this idea that, that's what the President is going to do, when she gets here. Is call me out on a life of bullshit.

BAKER

I don't think that's why she's coming.

CHARLIE

That's not really what I meant.

BAKER

Let's keep organizing!

They keep moving the post-it's. BAKER intentionally touches CHARLIE's hand in a way that might seem incidental. They start to touch each other. They start kissing. They kiss very intensely passionately truly. This is really important. They love each other. After awhile, it seems as though they might start having sex. They stop at a mutual cue, and instead they hold each other nicely for awhile.

CHARLIE

Are you wanting to fly that now?

BAKER

No.

BAKER

It might not even work, if we do try. It's not really done.

CHARLIE

Let's try though.

BAKER

It's not going to stop making that god-awful noise. I can't fix it.

CHARLIE

I like the sound.

BAKER

I hate it. But, yeah. Doesn't seem like I can get rid of it.

BAKER

It's done, aside from that.

CHARLIE

Cool.

CHARLIE

Do I get to watch you take off?

BAKER

Yeah, of course idiot-- think I'm going to have you not watch me fly into space?

CHARLIE

Let's go. Let's go outside?

BAKER

You think we should, right now?

CHARLIE

Hell yeah. You've been working so hard. I'm really proud of you.

BAKER is happy and goes and puts on her jetpack. The two are quiet as they unlatch the door. The door stands open.

BAKER

Also: I'm landing Charlie. I'm just going to fly now, because that's the only way to find out if this works. But I'll come back.

BAKER

Idiot-- Charlie.

CHARLIE

Sweetie, I love you so much. You don't have to say you're going to come back.

BAKER

I'm literally--

CHARLIE

I don't know if you're just going to fly straight up forever-- and I think we have a really good time together, and I'd love it if you landed one day, and came back to see me. Just allow yourself to acknowledge this situation for the variety of things it could eventually be, so there are no bad endings.

BAKER

Allowing for that: I'll be back in like, an hour.

CHARLIE

Okay.

BAKER

OK.

O.K.

CHARLIE

It's okay if you aren't.

BAKER

...let's go? I wanna try it already.

The two step outside, leaving the door open. Their voices from outside ring out loudly, unnaturally, as the voices speak quite quietly.

BAKER

I'm really excited. I'm really proud of me, too. This is fucking sweet, if this all works.

BAKER

And then after I come back, you can try it, and maybe you'll even like it, and want one too. And I'll make you one, and I'll make the President one, and we'll make ten trillion more after, for everyone.

BAKER

I'm sorry again about today.

CHARLIE

I loved today.

BAKER

Me too.

CHARLIE tries not to cry.

Don't give her the nuke if you don't want to. I trust you. Know you've got some good things going on in that dumb, 'ole weird head of yours.

CHARLIE cries.

BAKER

Okay-- bye. Kiss me-- bye, gross. Okay. Okay. Let's see if this works.

There is a pause. The horrible sound of the jetpack starts, and CHARLIE sobs.

BAKER

Holy shit-- fuck-- oh my god, Charlie-- okay! Look at me! Hahaah WOAHAH! Alright, alright! Bye! I'll see you later! This is amazing!

I love you!

The sound gets further and further away, as BAKER flies away. There's a long silence.

CHARLIE

(sobbing, shouting to the heavens)

YOU LOOK LIKE A BIRD!

The sky changes. It is far later in the night. CHARLIE enters through still open door, feeling crazy.

CHARLIE tries to plug in some music. It plays for a moment, and then it malfunctions. He pulls it out and plugs it in again, it does not play. In the moments following, the song sputters in sporadically.

He takes the post-its from the wall, and covers himself in them. He sings a song that does not exist, and it's not particularly good.

Eventually: there's a violent knocking on the side of the already open door. Two voices ring out. CHARLIE takes the nuke from its place.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD
MANAGEMENT

World Management! The law of land and our successful execution of these laws dictates that you will be expected to open your door!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD
MANAGEMENT

World Management! The law of land and our successful execution of said laws dictates that you will be expected to open your door!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Entering upon your cooperation will be the President of the World.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

If there is any sort of weapon in your hand, you will be asked to forfeit it. Force may viably be utilized as one element of a greater solution!

CHARLIE

The door is open! It's already open.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

It's open!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

We can go through!

In walks: two EMPLOYEES OF WORLD MANAGEMENT. They are armed with weapons. They immediately begin to press towards CHARLIE, backs up wildly! Their weapons are drawn, eyeing the nuke in his hands.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

He has a weapon!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

(calling back)

Stay back ma'am!

(calling forward)

Stay back, sir!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

The weapon is a bomb, he's holding a bomb!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Drop the nuclear bomb, sir!

CHARLIE looks down at his bomb. He reaches it out towards them.

CHARLIE

DROp your g!un! s! DROp 'Em!!!!

Both EMPLOYEES OF WORLD MANAGEMENT drop their guns automatically. They don't look at them, or "whoopsie!" drop them, they just drop right from their hands and then they set their hands at their sides.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

(yelling out the door)

Righteous queen! Faced with a larger weapon, we have dropped our weapons! The man in question is still armed with the small Armageddon explosive.

CHARLIE

OH I have nothing in the world to lose I am nothing in the world and so, that is how and why I have nothing and might as well do anything!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT
Stop saying things!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT
Right now!

CHARLIE
I'm nothing I'm nothing I'm nothing! IS THAT BEAUTIFUL PLEASE?!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT
Sweet President, we must advise you to not enter. Any attempt to enter this imminent-threat area would be considered unorthodox and unconventional!

CHARLIE
I'm acting completely out of control! Watch out!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD ENTERS.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT
Please don't, madam President!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT
You're making us scared!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT
Please!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD
There is no reason to be scared. Please. There is no threat in this area.

CHARLIE
Oh shit-- stand back! Hey! What's your IQ?! Huh? What is it?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD
Extremely high.

CHARLIE
Mine too! Mine is so high. Mine has way too many numbers bitch!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD
MANAGEMENT
Don't say that sir!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD
MANAGEMENT
Don't say that sir!

CHARLIE
I can only call her that because, the love of my life, was talking about you-- telling me about your meeting, and she called you a bitch today, already--

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD
MANAGEMENT
Do not say that sir!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD
MANAGEMENT
Do not say that sir!

CHARLIE

--do you know my girlfriend, Baker?! Look at me! You never believed in her dreams. You never supported her, you just talked about yourself all the time and complained about the door not being closed when it was but her but her jetpack works,

CHARLIE coughs.
with or without your help, and she's flown off to exist in some new, greater plane of existence and she has left you behind to die because you deserve it.

CHARLIE starts to cough uncontrollably.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD
Stop talking.

CHARLIE

(through his coughing)
I'm gonna stop. But do you know what I'm not going to do?!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

(with sudden scariness)
Set the bomb down, Charlie, and immediately stop talking.

CHARLIE

(holding in a cough, wiping a tear)
What?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

This is over. Now. It's time for you to submit to your failures and relinquish that horrible bomb.

CHARLIE

I'm not going to! I don't want to do that! I'm crazy!
I'm crazy right now!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Pick your weapons up. I find him to be terrible.

CHARLIE

(holding out his nuke)
Don't! Remember?!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD looks at the EMPLOYEES OF WORLD MANAGEMENT. The pick up their weapons.

CHARLIE

(shaking the nuke)

Drop them!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Don't drop them, you're safe-- that's not how those work. Hold your weapons steady.

CHARLIE

Hey, stop!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

One of you aim for his heart, the other aim for his head. I'll let you choose who does what.

CHARLIE

Oh no-- what? Scary! Can we talk? First? I think you'd *like* talk to me, I have a million things to say.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

When I give the word: fire.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

What's the word, ma'am?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Fire.

CHARLIE

Hey-- *All my-- all my qualities are on me, you see-- see how I'm covered up in-- adjectives? And descriptions? They're written on post-it notes!! That's kind of interesting huh!!!?*

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

STOP. TALKING.

CHARLIE

Who's talking you're talking!!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

I am unimaginably close to having you shot.

CHARLIE

Okay sure I'll stop!

Pause.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

He stopped!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Charlie, we both know that you have no great purpose and no grand intention. You are a weightless charade, and so you'll now surrender the nuke because it's doing nothing in your hands, and being shot feels terrible. I will not sit around waiting for rancid air and I do not listen to the sound of filth! That deadly weapon belongs collectively to the common-wealth, and you will not short-change your peers the security and danger they are both entitled to as a society.

CHARLIE

(pulling post-it from his body, hugging the nuke to his side with one arm)
 "Good vocabulary". That's one of my qualities, it's true. Baker used to love my word choice... but she's gone now.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

I am still waiting for you, and I cannot express the extent I detest that fact. I will count, as though I am speaking to a child. At the end of the count, you will be killed with two weapons. Unless you give up the nuke.

CHARLIE

Funny that I would say "good vocabulary". Why not *exquisite* vocabulary?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

1.

CHARLIE

Sorry-- listen: I have an idea what to do with the nuke.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

2.

CHARLIE

Just hear me-- listen to my--

CHARLIE

--voice.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

3.

CHARLIE

Why are you counting--

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

4.

CHARLIE

--up, stop-- why are you counting-

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

5.

CHARLIE

--counting up? Shouldn't you be counting down? How do I know what you're counting to?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

6.

CHARLIE

okay: I have this sense that I'm-- is 10 the last number?!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

7.

CHARLIE

--I have this sense that I'm here to contribute something beautiful to the-

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

8.

CHARLIE

this sense that I'm just here to accomplish something truly amazing, for everyone, I want to do something wonderful for the entire--

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

9.

CHARLIE

NOW?!

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

(confused, aiming weapon)

Now?!

CHARLIE

AHH!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

10.

CHARLIE, in a panic, twists the nuke and presses the button down. He tries to twist it back. It does not twist back. A loud beeping begins.

NUKE

Detonation sequence initiated. Please wait.

CHARLIE sets the bomb down. He is suddenly terrifyingly calm.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Our adored lionheart, the idiot man has initiated the detonation sequence.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

We must escort your immaculate presence to a safe area!

CHARLIE

Hahah. hahahah haha woaaaaaaaah--

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

We're not leaving. I don't believe that you did that. It's a trick.

CHARLIE

hahaha OH MY GOD, no! it'sumIT'S NOT! It's gonna, it's gonna, it's gonna blow. We're all gonna die. I did it. I did, I did something--- I did do that. Wow, wow wow. Crazy.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Ma'am, we need to evacuate before the massive explosion!

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Stop making us worry about you!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Quiet.

(to CHARLIE)

I didn't believe that you could do that. What's wrong with you?

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

We need to leave!

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

You're insane.

CHARLIE

Yeah, I don't know, maybe. Think so? I'm really hoping for that as an explanation.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

No you're right-- that's wrong. You're not disturbed-- you would need to know trauma to be traumatized. You're spotless, and slimy. You're a tiny.. tiny boy. With a, dreadful.. little hat on.

CHARLIE

yaaaahHH.Yeah. I guess so. Wow. okayy. ohhhh maaaaan

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

What number does the bomb count down from?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

I don't know. Aim your weapons.

They aim.

CHARLIE

okay. okay, yeah. that's fine. that's probably.. that's probably fine, that you'll do that. someone should probably kill me. it's the least you could do.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Are you trying to outsmart me? Turn the bomb off. Show me the real bomb.

CHARLIE

nope. not smartin' anyone, i might be very stupid

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD clears her throat.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

...On my count.

CHARLIE

real quick before, did you.. i like how you said you didnt believe i would do that because me neither!!! that's pretty.. pretty incredible that I did that-- first hard decision i've ever had to make. everybody in the world is gonna die, i killed everybody, this, i, and no one's even going to know why though!! fuck, or who did it. no one's even gonna know it was me, everyone's just going to blow up and be gone

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

...Nevermind. Don't kill him.

The EMPLOYEES OF WORLD MANAGEMENT lower their weapons.

CHARLIE

thanks, okay, that's fine too. is there any way we could tell everybody, about how they're going to die? and that it was me? is there an announcement system?

Pause.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Beautiful leader, I'm now coming to understand the reality that I also will be killed by this explosion. No one will escape.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

I, too, am taken back by this moment, and wonder why even in this inevitable death I find myself unable to consider mortality.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD resigns to death.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

We will leave him to die with the rest of us. I want him to sit through this.

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

Oh god.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT vomits. There is a very tense silence (other than the beeps).

CHARLIE

Do you guys, want to um, stay and hang out? Until..?

ONE EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

(sobbing)

Miss, will you die too?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

..I want to eat a wonderful meal. Where do we have time to go?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD spaces off into CHARLIE. She looks loosely at the nuke on the ground. She turns around and begins to leave slowly.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD

Where should we eat?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD slowly exits. The EMPLOYEES OF WORLD MANAGEMENT wait, and then follow behind her.

OTHER EMPLOYEE OF WORLD MANAGEMENT

(from outside)

I want a dessert.

CHARLIE stares at the empty doorway. He looks at the bomb. The beeping has gotten a little louder. He walks outside, a little bit, walks back inside, and walks around. He breathes, he looks around the

house. He realizes something. He raps his knuckles on the bunker wall, and understands that he's going to shut the bunker door tight and keep the explosion in the bunker and just blow himself up.

He picks up the nuke, and sets it down somewhere nicer than the floor. He shuts the bunker door tight. He makes sure it's tight all the way. He waits around a while, holding his breath. He straightens something up, and then digs out a short one-sided cord and plugs it into the phone hole on the cord wall.

The answering machine plays aloud.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded)

Hey there! If you called the right number, then you must be hoping for Charlie and Baker at the bunker! If I don't pick up the phone and have a long, bare-fleshed conversation with you-- I must not be home.

You can hear the phone being handed over.

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

If I didn't pick up the phone, that's my decision, and I hope you can respect that.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded, quiet and muffled)

and "don't take it personally".

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

Don't take it personally.

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded, quiet and muffled)

perfect, that's funny. one..two..three

CHARLIE

(pre-recorded)

Leave a message!

BAKER

(pre-recorded)

Leave a message.

Beep!

CHARLIE

Hey, Baker. I miss you a bunch. The President came over and I was acting like I was crazy, and I actually ended up, actually ah, setting off the nuke. Pretty nuts that I really did that. I used to have tons of dreams about me turning on the nuke, but not all of them were nightmares-- and this feels a lot like those ones, kinda. Anyway, I remembered how you said today that if this bomb shelter could keep out the bomb, it would have to be able to keep in the bomb, and so I closed the doors and I'm just going to blow myself up with the nuke and save the world.

Also, I didn't really think the President seemed like that much of a bitch. She seemed pretty reasonable, she acted a lot like a.. stern mom. But I also wasn't there for you guys' meeting, she probably treated you more harshly because you actually intimidated her.

CHARLIE begins peeling the post-its from his body, putting them on the nuke.

Also also, maybe the most insane thing is, the detonation sequence doesn't like, um, count-- really, it just, beeps. But I don't know to what number. And I thought it would have blown up probably awhile ago, but it's still just beeping.

I'm picturing that you've flown really high now-- when you left you just went straight up; I'm imagining that you probably haven't moved left or right at all you just keep going straight up.

She had like, guards with her, and one of them puked everywhere. I can't really smell it.

CHARLIE is quiet for a while, and covers the nuke entirely with his post-its.

All of the post-its are on the nuke, which I think is a pretty good idea for what to do with them. When the shell of the nuke, like, shatters in the little seconds before the explosion goes-- all of these words about me will just go off in every single direction and some of them will probably even go through me. I don't know if the shrapnel beats the explosion-- it seems like it should.

CHARLIE listens to the beeping.

I keep waiting for it to go off. Man, today was jam-packed. Super crazy day.. jeez. It's-- it's way cool that you figured out your jetpack the same day that I figured the nuke out! That seems like the kind of.. uncanny.. synchronization thing, we talked about earlier. Also, the President was here-- they were going

BOMB

10... 9...

CHARLIE doesn't want to die, oh my god! He undoes the latch as fast as he can.

BOMB

8... 7...

CHARLIE runs and grabs the nuke, with a desperate disgusting energy, he heaves it HE JUST HEAVES IT, YELLING-- he throws it out the door. He closes the door. He realizes he soon will have just killed everyone alive.

CHARLIE

Oh jeez.

BOMB

6...

CHARLIE hurriedly undoes the latch again, freakingOUT!

BOMB

5... 4... 3...

CHARLIE gets it open, he throws himself out the door, and the door slams closed. Two seconds pass. There is a giant nuclear explosion. Every single person dies.

The bunker, perhaps shaken but in tact, sits in silence for quite some time. It's quite awhile, before we hear the terrible sound of BAKER's jetpack, first quietly, but getting closer. The sound hangs steady at a peak volume for a 'lil, then turns off. After a moment, the hatch wheel begins to turn.

BAKER enters. Her feet track in an absurd amount of soot. She looks around.

She takes her jetpack off.

She opens a can of soup. There's only one left, after that.

BAKER now stands by the music cord. She unplugs it, and plugs it back in. The music sputters for a brief moment, then plays without interruption.

END OF PLAY