

Handbook of the Agency of Transcausal Couriers

48 Hour Film Challenge (May 2025)

Written by: Zachary Zohar, Sean Davies

LOOP 1

EXT. BUS STOP

Max sits alone framed against a brick wall smiling happily with a bunch of flowers.
Francine walks in and sits on the bench. Max proffers the flowers.

MAX

Hey, You look-

FRANCINE

What's with the flowers, Max.

Francine sighs and sits next to him. Max places the flowers down on the floor beside him.
They sit in silence. COLD HARD CONTRAST.

MAX

The bus. It got delayed. We can cut through the park.

FRANCINE

Can we just take a cab?

MAX

Yeah, I guess you were never a walk in the park. It's just as quick
Francine. C'mon.

Max stands up and reaches to take Francine's hand. She ignores it.

FRANCINE

Let's go Max.

She walks off. He reluctantly follows.

EXT. PATH

Max and Francine walk in cold silence with distance between them.

MAX

Do you remember coming here for our first date?

FRANCINE

Don't.

MAX

Well Francine, this is productive. I am glad you reached out for us to talk.

Francine doesn't respond right away and lets the silence hang. They continue to walk.

EXT. ARGUMENT BRIDGE.

They arrive at the bridge where Francine turns suddenly.

FRANCINE

Max. I can't do this, I can't make pretend anymore. We're *divorced*...I need the Compass back.

Max acts like he was slapped.

MAX

You *gave* it to me.

FRANCINE

I gave it to my *Husband*. You aren't him anymore.

MAX

It's back at OUR home. Please just come back with me.

Francine

You made that place a prison Maxie. I'm not going back there, and certainly not with you.

Francine storms off ahead.

MAX

Wait!

KIRK NORDENSTROM (O.S)

Ah, This is where it happens. Time to reset.

A pen CLICKS.

Colours and wacko shit happen as Kirk resets the timeline.

LOOP 2

INT. BUS STOP.

Open on Max again, same framing a little closer.

Kirk is sitting on the picnic bench next to him.

KIRK NORDENSTROM
Gotta ditch the flowers pal.

MAX
Yah and who are you.
KIRK
You'll forgive me, I swear.

Kirk steals the flowers and runs.

BEAT AND HOLD ON MAX

Max stands about to follow but gets distracted as:

Francine walks in.

FRANCINE
Hey Maxie. It's good to see you.

MAX
Hey Fran, You kinda caught me with my pants down. I swear I got you -

FRANCINE
It's alright Max. Im glad you understood that this isn't a date.

MAX
Oh yah, definitely. Hah, The bus. It got delayed. We can cut through the
park.

FRANCINE
Can we just take a cab?

MAX
It's just as quick Francine. C'mon

FRANCINE
Patience was never your strong suite was it?

BEAT

FRANCINE
Fine. Let's go Max.

She walks off. He reluctantly follows.

EXT. PATH

Max and Francine walk in LUKEWARM silence with less distance between them.

MAX

Do you remember coming here for our first date?

FRANCINE

Max don't torture yourself, we already signed the papers.

MAX

I know. I know. I'm glad you reached out for us to talk. I just wish you could hear everything that's going on inside my head.

Francine doesn't respond right away and lets the silence hang. They continue to walk.

EXT. ARGUMENT BRIDGE.

They arrive at the bridge where Francine doesn't turn and leans against the bridge looking at the water.

FRANCINE

Max. STOP. We've been through this. We're *divorced*. You're clinging on to smoke, nothing. The shadow of what we felt. **BEAT**
And I need the Compass back.

Max acts like he was slapped.

MAX

You *gave* it to me.

FRANCINE

I gave it to my *Husband*. You aren't him anymore.

MAX

It's back at OUR home. If we had more time Francine we could-

FRANCINE

You made my life a prison Maxie. I can't. I'm not going back there with you.

Francine storms off ahead.

MAX

Wait!

KIRK NORDENSTROM(O.S)

Damn it Max! Why can't ya realize the compass is what's keeping ya stuck here?

BEAT

KIRK NORDENSTROM (CONT)

Hmm. We gotta get it back to her, something's gotta budge.

Kirk flips through his notebook and finds an address.

KIRK NORDENSTROM (CONT)

Where are we? Ah there you are.

Stabs the address with his pen.

Colours and wacko shit happen as the courier resets the timeline again.

LOOP 3

EXT. BUS

SAME FRAMING AS LOOP 2

Except Kirk is standing, not sitting and holding the compass.

Kirk walks over to Max and slips the compass into the flower bag.

KIRK NORDENSTROM

Gotta ditch the flowers pal.

MAX

Yah and who are you.

KIRK NORDENSTROM

You'll forgive me, I swear.

Kirk steals the flowers and runs leaving the bag.

BEAT AND HOLD ON MAX

Max stands about to follow but gets distracted as:

Francine walks in.

FRANCINE

Hey Maxie. It's good to see you.

MAX

Hey Fran, You kinda caught me with my pants down. I swear I got you -

FRANCINE

It's alright Max. I'm glad you understood that this isn't a date.

HARD CUT TO

EXT. PATH

Kirk is walking the path thinking out loud while still holding the flowers.

KIRK NORDENSTROM

This has got to be the one. I took his flowers. I put the compass in the bag. I haven't told him what's happening. We are both going to get out of here and I get to keep my job. The only thing left is to make him reveal the compass.

Cut to:

EXT. ARGUMENT BRIDGE.

They arrive at the bridge where Francine doesn't turn and leans against the bridge looking at the water.

FRANCINE

Max. STOP. We've been through this. We're *divorced*. You're clinging on to smoke, nothing. The shadow of what we felt. And I need the Compass back.

Max acts like he was slapped.

MAX

You *gave* it to me.

FRANCINE

I gave it to my *Husband*. You aren't him anymore.

MAX

It's back at OUR home. If we had more time Francine we could-

Kirk, panicking throws the flowers onto the bridge.

FRANCINE

What the hell is that? Did you plan this Max? Getting me to reminisce about our first date and then ambushing me with flowers? Is there another surprise for me in that bag? Chocolates for our "*date*".

Francine snatches the bag and opens it revealing the compass inside.

FRANCINE

You selfish son of a bitch! This is the last piece I have of my father and you're trying to keep it from me. You've had the compass on you this entire time and lied to my face! You SNAKE!

Francine turns away. Unbelieving.

MAX

It's the last piece I have of you.

A Dejected and numb Max snatches the bag back and looks down at it
Francine yanks on the bag and tries to reclaim it but fails

FRANCINE

You are a prison Max. Choking the life out of me. I thought I'd stopped letting you *get* to me. But you, you, just ignore everything. Everything anyone tells you. You're a vampire.

Pause. Kirk Stabs his pen into the notebook from under the bridge and takes a long sigh.

Flip to the page that his assignment is.

Transcausational Courier: Smoothing out the Creases.

KIRK NORDENSTROM (O.S)

Okay... That wasn't right. Christ I messed up. To fix this he just gives her the compass right? Screw it. I'm already toeing the line. The Agency'll have to forgive me too. This can't go on much longer.

Colourful mambo jumbo again.

LOOP 4

EXT. BUS

Open on Max again with Kirk walking into frame holding the compass.
Kirk sits next to Max and places the compass in his hands.

KIRK NORDENSTROM

Hey Max. It's nice to meet you. Name's Kirk, Kirk Nordenstrom,

MAX

I'm s'posed to know who that is?

KIRK NORDENSTROM

Look around you Max. How many times have we been here now, huh? It's time to give it up.

Max deflates

MAX

I won't. It's my last piece of Franny. My wife.

KIRK NORDENSTROM

Y'know I'm not supposed to be talking to you. I'm just supposed to nudge you into getting yourself out of this pickle. I'm a courier, I move things. And I'm trying to move you out of this loop Max, but to do that, *you* gotta face the fact that you lost her. You bent it all out of shape... It's your desire to fix all that's trapping you in here, when all you have to do is walk away.

Max sits, looking as if he finally understands but doesn't want to accept what's happening.

KIRK NORDENSTROM (CONT)

The least you can do is leave with dignity.

Kirk stands up and extends his arm.

KIRK NORDENSTROM

Trust me. Give me the flowers. Give *her* the damn compass.

They exchange objects and Kirk leaves.

BEAT

Francine walks into frame and notices the compass.

FRANCINE

Hello Max. Finally done with your temper tantrum.

MAX

It doesn't take a genius to realize when he's wrong. You were my world Francine. I'm a lost man without you. I felt like all I had was this compass holding your bearing. I know I'm drowning Fran. I'm clinging to smoke aren't I. But, just because I'm drowning doesn't mean I need to take you with me. I've decided to smooth out the creases. Here take back your father's compass.

Max slowly hands over the compass.

FRANCINE

I don't forgive you. But I can accept that you're changing. Thank you Max. We aren't gonna be together again. But I'll let you know when we don't have to be strangers.

He gives a stifled chuckle

MAX

Sounds good to me... I'm sorry

A pen clicks.

KIRK NORDENSTROM(V.O.)

Perfect