

MAGFEST

Written by

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INT. SEARS - DAY

1996

Christmas time in a bustling department store. Through the sea of people we close in on a young mother, TABITHA, and her three children, all boys.

COLE and REED, twins around the age of 13, playfully punch and kick each other. Their younger brother MIKE follows close behind playing his GAME BOY.

The family approaches an ESCALATOR.

TABITHA

Put that away before you get on the escalator. It's dangerous.

YOUNG MIKE

But I have to find a save point!

YOUNG COLE

You're obsessed, fucking nerd.

YOUNG MIKE

Mom! Cole said the F-word.

Tabitha sighs under her breath.

TABITHA

Well, Mike, were you being a fucking nerd?

YOUNG REED

He played his Game boy in the dugout the entire game yesterday. It was three innings until coach realized no one was in right field.

YOUNG MIKE

No one our age can hit the ball that far. They don't need me.

The family gets on to the escalator.

TABITHA

Enough. Put your Nintendo away and hold onto the railing.

Mike SITS DOWN on the metal stairs, with his back to the top.

MIKE

I'll sit down so I don't fall. Just tell me when to get up.

TABITHA  
 (exhausted)  
 Warn him to get up when it's time.

Cole and Reed both nod, mischievously. Mike plays his Game Boy, getting lost in the world.

He smiles as he ascends, his fingers tapping away at the few buttons. The faint sound of 8-bit music plays.

Mike's enjoyment is cut short when he reaches the top of the escalator. The escalator SWALLOWS the bottom of his shirt.

YOUNG MIKE  
 Help!

Cole and Reed laugh at a struggling Mike glued to the floor where the escalator ends.

YOUNG MIKE (CONT'D)  
 It's eating me!

Cole and Reed try to pull Mike up, but can't stop laughing. Tabitha breaks through and with one hand YANKS Mike up. His shirt TEARS as he comes to his feet.

Mike stands in his new crop top, embarrassed.

TABITHA  
 You wanted to play your stupid  
 game, now you got yourself a fresh  
 crop top. Give it to me.

Mike's tiny fingers grip the Game Boy tight. Tabitha grabs it from him and hands it to a RANDOM BOY nearby.

TABITHA (CONT'D)  
 Merry Christmas.  
 (to Mike)  
 It's time you outgrow this shit.  
 (to Cole and Reed)  
 Come on.

Cole and Reed smile at Mike as they walk past him. Mike follows them with his head hung low.

YOUNG MIKE  
 (to Random Boy)  
 Please take care of my Charmander.

INT. BATHROOM STALL - DAY

**24 Painful Years Later...**

A corporate bathroom is squeaky clean. GRUNTS come from the stall on the end. MIKE (35) sits on a closed toilet seat in a suit. A brief case sits at his feet.

Sweat trickles down Mike's forehead as he hunches over. A SCREEN in his lap illuminates his face.

MIKE  
(whispers)  
Come on. Take it.

The faint sound of a Japanese female can be heard coming from his EARBUDS.

MIKE  
Almost there.

It's revealed Mike is playing Street Fighter on his Nintendo Switch. THUMP.

Mike pauses the game, his body and his breathing. He slowly looks underneath the stall door for feet. He slowly slides his BAGGED LUNCH out of sight.

Nothing.

ON SCREEN: Resume. Chun Li continues kicking Ryu's ass.

INT. SHARPE INSURANCE COMPANY - MINUTES LATER

A boring office is lined with boring cubicles. Mike exits the bathroom and walks to his desk. He looks exhausted.

COLE and REED (30s) approach Mike with shit-eating grins.

COLE  
Where'd you go for lunch, Mike?

MIKE  
A bar. A sports bar. Hooters. To watch the big game.

REED  
What game is on at eleven AM on a Thursday in the middle of January?

COLE  
Is Hooters even open this early?

MIKE  
It was Chinese sports.

COLE

Always were a big sports guy.

Cole and Reed cackle. Their laughing catches the attention of DANIELLE (30s). She comes to Mike's rescue.

DANIELLE

I know brothers tease, but Jesus Christ guys. Leave him alone.

MIKE

Hi, Danielle. You look ravishing.

Danielle is oblivious to Mike's compliment.

COLE

Relax. Just three Chinese Foosball fans shooting the shit.

REED

You know it took Mike five years to pass gym?

DANIELLE

Oh, so the same amount of time it took for you to get the hint. Goodbye Cole. Goodbye Reed.

COLE

I wanna know more about Mike's trip to Hooters.

REED

You didn't go by yourself, did you?

DANIELLE

Ignore them, Mike.

MIKE

Of course I went with someone. I was with a girl. An adult girl. A woman. Who is hot. Very smoking.

Their conversation has now caught the attention of the rest of the office.

REED

Does your girlfriend know about this? Where did she live again?

COLE

Somalia?

MIKE  
It was Serbia.

REED  
Was? Oh no, did you guys break up?

COLE  
Or are you finally gonna admit you  
made the whole thing up?

Mike begins to panic. He rubs his sweaty hands on his pants.

DANIELLE  
He was at Hooters with my friend  
Camille. They met at my birthday  
party last week, really hit it off.

Cole and Reed look to Mike for affirmation. He meekly nods.

DANIELLE  
She's very pretty. She did a bit of  
modeling before becoming a dentist.

MIKE  
And she has Double D's.

Danielle shoots Mike an aggressive look.

DANIELLE  
Yes. She has Double D's.

TABITHA (50s), a bottle of repressed sexuality, enters  
holding a stack of folders. Mike corrects his posture.

MIKE  
Hello Ms. Tabitha.

TABITHA  
Drop the 'Ms.' shit already, Mike.  
You're forty years old.

MIKE  
I'm thirty.

TABITHA  
Really?  
(looking him up and down)  
Jesus.

DANIELLE  
Are those the itineraries?

Tabitha hands Danielle one of the folders.

TABITHA

Yes. Plane tickets, convention badges, schedule, all that.

Tabitha hands Cole and Reed their own folders.

TABITHA

Landing this client is huge. This guy is the richest televangelist in the nation.

She hands Mike the final folder.

MIKE

You want me to put this on Justine's desk?

TABITHA

She's not going. Doesn't feel it's "safe" to travel this far along in her pregnancy.

REED

Please tell me you're joking, mom.

MIKE

Yes, please tell him you're joking.

TABITHA

No self control, you men. You get your nut and us women harbor a parasite for forty weeks.

Danielle senses the panic on Mike's face.

DANIELLE

We need a numbers guy. Mike is a numbers guy. And he is gonna kill it.

MIKE

Why don't I prepare the numbers now and then I get to stay home and go to Hooters.

TABITHA

Since when do you go to Hooters? You told me you didn't like going there cause it was hard to swallow your food surrounded by breasts.

MIKE

And I didn't like the wings!

TABITHA

We need you there because this pitch is ever changing.

(beat)

The whole convention we do intel on the opposition. See what their pitch is, the tax cut they offer. Will they have PowerPoint.

(beat)

At the end of the weekend, we pitch. I landed us the last pitch of the weekend. Now you land me that white fucking whale.

(beat)

Mike just needs to sort the numbers out and make the graphs. Danielle is leading this one. She could sell homeowners insurance to Thoreau.

The reference goes over their heads.

TABITHA

Thoreau? The poet who lived in the woods. Wrote Walden?

(a beat)

None of you have any class.

(To Mike)

Look, if you really don't want to do this you don't have to go.

Mike sighs and begins to hand Tabitha the folder.

MIKE

Thank you.

TABITHA

Just have your desk cleared, cleaned and ready for your replacement when we get back.

MIKE

But mom!

Mike clutches onto the folder.

COLE

Why are you going if Danielle's leading the pitch?

TABITHA

To make sure none of you fuck it up. And to party. Mama still likes to hunt.



Tabitha smirks and walks away. Cole is DISGUSTED.

TABITHA

Pack a jacket everyone. It's going to be cold in Maryland.

(a beat)

Oh, and dress casually. We don't want to come off as being too uptight.

They all look to Danielle. Tabitha, now in her office, shuts the door. Cole and Reed get back to work.

MIKE

Danielle, I will mess this presentation up. I don't get people. And they don't get me.

DANIELLE

Stop it. They're going to love you.

Mike is not buying it.

DANIELLE

Trust me. Trust my trust in you.

MIKE

Alright.

(a beat)

Do you actually have a hot friend named Camille? I'm tired of the loneliness. From all the one night stands.

Danielle chuckles, gently rubbing his arm.

DANIELLE

The right one is waiting for you. Just gotta be yourself.

Danielle walks away. Mike smiles. The moment is interrupted by THE IMPERIAL MARCH from Star Wars BLARING from Mike's phone. He quickly silences it.

INT. AIRPORT - TERMINAL - DAY

Days later, Cole and Reed make their way through a busy terminal.

COLE

Mike said he was already at the gate. You see him?

MIKE

Hey guys!

Mike wears a plain, gray soft collared shirt with plain, gray pants. He has plain, gray Converse. He blends in with the chair upholstery.

COLE

Fuckin hell, Mike! Like Where's Waldo on hard mode.

REED

You pack condoms, Mike? You're gonna be swimming in trim.

COLE

Hope you brought batteries for your GameBoy, nerd.

Reed and Cole laugh and BRO FIVE.

MIKE

Hah! Joke's on you because no one plays a GameBoy anymore. Everyone plays Nintendo Switch, and that doesn't take batteries. So who's the loser now?

REED

You.

COLE

You're still the loser.

Mike clenches his fist.

MIKE

You know what? I'm about to say it.

REED

Say it. Lemme see you get mad.

MIKE

You're pushing me.

COLE

Say it, pussy.

MIKE

I called the parking attendant after your meter expired last week.

Mike smirks as if he has just dropped the mic. He walks away. He doesn't see them cackling behind him.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Cole and Reed hit on a flight attendant. A couple rows behind them, Mike watches ANIME on his laptop. Danielle plops down in the seat next to him.

Mike shuts his laptop as if his parents caught him looking at porn on the family computer.

DANIELLE

The client owns a chain of Southern Baptist Churches.

MIKE

Mhm.

JAPANESE VOICES can be heard coming from his laptop.

DANIELLE

What is that?

Mike leans on the TRAY TABLE, trying to stifle the laptop.

MIKE

I don't hear anything.

DANIELLE

It sounds like Japanese cartoons.

MIKE

I wouldn't know cause I don't watch that weirdo stuff.

The voice continues. Mike squeezes the BUTTON on the side of the laptop. It gets LOUDER. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT approaches.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Sir, please turn that off.

MIKE

Turn what off?

Mike leans harder on the tray table.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I'm in no mood to play. I just flew from Los Angeles where every white woman on the plane had a lil rat dog that yapped the whole god damn flight. Now turn that mess off!

An embarrassed Mike leans even harder. SNAP! The tray table falls, along with Mike's laptop. The noises stop.

MIKE

I'm sorry.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Oh, you just fucked up.

The Flight Attendant glares as they walk away. Mike and Danielle are both red in the face.

PING. Tabitha's voice comes on over the plane's PA system.

TABITHA

(filtered)

Attention Sharpe Insurance employees: This is your leader, Tabitha, speaking. If you need me, I will be in first class. You are not to bother me.

(beat)

This next bit is for the rest of the plane: if there are any men above the age of eighteen and under the age of thirty looking to join a certain club--

Tabitha is interrupted by a muffled voice.

TABITHA

(filtered)

Uh huh. My Mike? He did what?

(a beat)

You broke a god damn tray table? We never could take you anywhere.

Mike slouches down in his seat in an attempt to hide.

DANIELLE

Why are you so stiff? We haven't even got to the hotel yet and you're stiffer than ever.

MIKE

I'm the black sheep of my family. The ugly duckling. The end piece on a loaf of bread.

(beat)

Despite knowing I'm probably going to screw this up, I still want to prove them wrong. If I seem stiff, that's probably why.

Danielle tilts her head giving a sympathetic smile.

DANIELLE

I can't wait to see the look on  
Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum's face  
when we land this client.

(beat)

Now. I downloaded all of Chernobyl.  
If I start now, I should finish by  
the time we land.

INT. AIRPLANE - HOURS LATER

A sleeping Danielle slightly leans on a sleeping Mike.

PING. The plane intercom comes on.

TABITHA

(filtered)

Attention passengers, we have  
started out descent into DCA.

EXT. GAYLORD HOTEL - NIGHT

A mansion of a hotel can be seen through the flurry of snow.  
A van pulls up to the large round about driveway.

Tabitha, Cole, Reed, Danielle and Mike hop out. They rush  
through the revolving door into--

INT. GAYLORD HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The lobby is crowded with COSPLAYERS and NERDS. People in  
colorful and elaborate costumes are loud and playful. Mike is  
mesmerized.

Pockets of boring people in bland suits convene on the  
outskirts of the colorful cosplayers.

REED

What the fuck is this?

DANIELLE

It must be some kind of convention,  
like Comic-Con.

MIKE

It's Magfest.

COLE

Of course he knows what it is.

Mike points to a huge sign that reads MAGFEST.

MIKE  
It's on the sign.

COLE  
You getting smart with me?

MIKE  
I wouldn't consider reading a basic sign smart. But to you, maybe.

Mike nudges Danielle. She gives him a pity chuckle. Before Cole can fire back, a man dressed as COLOSSUS roars.

COLOSSUS  
Wroooooaaghhhhhh!

Most of the other cosplayers drop what they are doing and join in on the roar. Mike instinctively joins in.

REED  
I need to get the fuck out of here.

DANIELLE  
(to Mike)  
What was that?

MIKE  
It's from an--  
(reconsiders)  
I don't know. I don't know why I joined in. That was lame.

Mike walks away. Danielle gives a disappointed look.

TABITHA  
Michael Winnifred Sharpe!

Her voice ECHOES throughout the lobby. Mike freezes.

TABITHA  
Get to work, young man. I don't want you getting distracted by some wizard with big tits.

Mike nods and SCURRIES away, tail between his legs.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DANIELLE'S ROOM

Later that night. Mike knocks on the door. Danielle, looking stressed out, answers.

DANIELLE  
Yeah?

MIKE

Hey. Want to get a drink? There's a bar in the lobby and--

DANIELLE

I'm sorry, Mike, but this pitch is trickier than I thought. Turns out they own *multiple* Churches, each with different dimensions, value...

(a beat)

I'm sure your brothers would love to grab a drink with you though.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - COLE'S ROOM

Mike stands in the hallway. Cole stands in the door frame.

COLE

Fuck off.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - REED'S ROOM

Mike stands outside a closed door.

MIKE

Hey *bro*, wanna get a drink?

REED

(muffled)

Cole?

MIKE

No, it's Mike.

REED

(muffled)

Fuck off.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - TABITHA'S ROOM

A desperate Mike knocks.

MIKE

Hey mom.

TABITHA

(muffled)

What!

Mike scurries away.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Mike takes his time approaching the INFORMATION DESK. He admires all the costumes. He eventually reaches the desk.

MIKE

(whispers)

Hi, I was wondering what one has to do to get into the MagFest.

HOTEL WORKER

(playful)

A closeted nerd, huh?

MIKE

What? No! I don't want to go.

HOTEL WORKER

That's good, because it's full. Tickets sell out in minutes. Better luck next year.

MIKE

I said I don't want to go!

Mike runs from the desk to--

INT. LOBBY - OUTSIDE PUB

A pub inside the hotel lobby. A HOST greets Mike in front.

HOST

How many?

MIKE

Just me.

The host gives him a concerned look.

HOST

Alright, sir. Well before you head in I'm going to need to pat you down and check your laptop bag. Standard procedure.

MIKE

Really?

(a beat)

Fine.

The host gives Mike a pat down. Mike hands over his BACKPACK. The host inspects the contents, especially Mike's LAPTOP.



HOST

Sorry about that. These conventions attract a lot of incels.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

Cosplayers crowd the busy pub, drinking and playing on their Nintendo Switches. Mike sits at the end of the bar playing his Switch alone.

ON SCREEN: Super Smash Bros. fight between LINK and ZELDA. The word MIKE hovers over Link's head. The word CELESTE over Zelda. Link continues to beat up Zelda before killing her.

CELESTE (30s), Puerto Rican with red hair, sits across the bar from Mike. She is dressed as POISON IVY from Batman. She also plays a Nintendo Switch.

CELESTE

Which one of you mamahuevos is Mike?

Everyone simultaneously pauses their games and looks up.

BARTENDER

Not tonight, Celeste.

CELESTE

I wanna meet the person who enjoys playing like a little puss.

MIKE

(under his breath)  
Maybe if you learned where the block button was.

Celeste KICKS her chair out from under her.

CELESTE

You think you can talk shit cause I'm a girl?

BARTENDER

Please. I'm still finding glass shards from the last time.

Mike, emboldened by his in-game skills, barks back.

MIKE

You should think about blocking next time so you don't look like a tap dancing Magikarp.

CELESTE  
Want me to beat your ass, you  
little Weedle?

MIKE  
I'd be shocked if you could beat  
anything.

BARTENDER  
Sir! Why?

A SCARED MAN next to a fuming Celeste quickly finishes his  
drink and scurries away, grabbing his friend.

SCARED MAN'S FRIEND  
I left my Switch.

SCARED MAN  
Leave it!

Celeste slams her glass on the bar, staring at Mike.

CELESTE  
Let me get another Jolteon.

BARTENDER  
(sighs)  
Jolteon. Coming right up.

CELESTE  
What are you drinking?

MIKE  
A Vaporeon.

CELESTE  
(to Bartender)  
Make that two Jolteons.

The bartender makes two yellow cocktails. Celeste walks  
around the bar to Mike. The person next to Mike throws a  
fifty dollar bill on the table and runs.

CELESTE  
Let's be lonely together.

MIKE  
I'm not lonely. I have a ton of  
friends.

CELESTE  
I'm not talking about your ten Xbox  
Live friends.

MIKE  
I have well over forty.

CELESTE  
(impressed)  
Shit, really?

MIKE  
You said you wanna be lonely  
together. Why're you lonely?

CELESTE  
I come off too strong. So I'm told.

MIKE  
I don't think you're that tough.

CELESTE  
You don't know me then.

MIKE  
I know you blow at Smash Bros.

CELESTE  
Are you flirting with me?

MIKE  
No! I don't know how to flirt. I'm  
trying to shit talk you.

CELESTE  
Try harder.

MIKE  
You're ugly.

CELESTE  
You don't believe that. What's your  
favorite game?

MIKE  
Bioshock.

CELESTE  
Favorite anime?

MIKE  
I don't know what anime is.

CELESTE  
Don't lie to me.

MIKE  
I don't watch anime.

CELESTE

It's cute. These little walls  
you're putting up. But you're  
wasting your time. Because I see  
right through you. I see you for  
who you truly are.

(beat)

You're a nerd, just like the rest  
of us. It's OK. Embrace it.

Mike looks down at his drink, refusing to meet her gaze.

CELESTE

Favorite anime?

MIKE

Cowboy Bepop.

CELESTE

Subs or Dubs?

MIKE

Dubs.

CELESTE

Shame. I was starting to like you.

Celeste takes her drink and gets up to leave.

MIKE

Wait. No, please don't go.

CELESTE

Why are you here, Mike?

MIKE

The insurance convention.

CELESTE

Ew, why?

MIKE

I sell insurance. We have a pitch  
to land this big client. What do  
you do?

CELESTE

I'm an artist. Hentai.

Mike's eyes widen. He GULPS his drink.

MIKE

I don't know what that is.

CELESTE

Come.

MIKE

Where are we going?

CELESTE

Magfest.

INT. MAGFEST - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Magfest attendees line up to enter the convention hall. Two security guards check badges at the door. Mike and Celeste are in line.

MIKE

I'll check it out for an hour or so, but I need to be up early.

CELESTE

Up early for what? Ugh, don't say work.

MIKE

Work.

Celeste SLAPS Mike.

MIKE

What the heck?!

CELESTE

I told you not to say work.

MIKE

Well sorry! But I need to be up early to work on my presentation with my coworker.

CELESTE

Is she a girl?

MIKE

Yes. I don't see why you--

CELESTE

Is she pretty?

MIKE

(flustered)

I mean, objectively she has what most people would consider attractive features.

She SLAPS Mike again.

MIKE

What was that one for?!

CELESTE

I got jealous.

Celeste smiles. Her smile is contagious. Mike is smitten.

CELESTE

Put this on. I have an extra.

Celeste hands Mike a MAGFEST BADGE on as lanyard. The badge has eight empty circles on it. It reads 'MARCOS.'

MIKE

Who is Marcos?

CELESTE

You're Marcos, silly.

She winks. They step up to security. They pass into--

INT. MAGFEST - ARCADE HALL - CONTINUOUS

An enormous, seemingly endless room is lined with rows of arcade games. Lights and sounds echo throughout the space. Celeste leads Mike by the hands.

MIKE

There is a god.

CELESTE

You believe in god?

MIKE

I read religion should be discussed on the second or third date.

CELESTE

You think this is a date?

MIKE

No, of course not! Unless you want. I'm fine with either. Don't care, it's whatevs.

(beat)

I'm bad at this.

CELESTE

(chuckling)

Relax.

(MORE)

CELESTE (CONT'D)

We tend to rush things here at  
Magfest. Only got three days after  
all.

Celeste pulls out a FLASK and takes a swig.

CELESTE

Meet Friday. Vows by Saturday.  
Divorce on Sunday.

She offers him the flask. He hesitantly takes a swig.

MIKE

Why me? I've been catfished enough  
to know when things are too good to  
be true. The odds of you being  
interested in me, coupled with the  
risk a woman like you brings-- no  
offense.

CELESTE

(flattered)  
None taken.

MIKE

The numbers don't add up. What do  
you really want?

CELESTE

I want to be MagQueen. And I need  
someone like you to help me.

MIKE

You're going to need to explain.

CELESTE

(pointing to her badge)  
You see these circles? There are  
eight communities that make up  
MagFest. You got your rhythm  
gamers, roleplayers, etcetera.

The badge has EIGHT SMALL CIRCLES surrounding a LARGE CIRCLE.

MIKE

You need a pin from each group to  
be named Queen?

CELESTE

Or King. But yes, fill these small  
circles, you get the big one.  
You're gonna be my sidekick.

MIKE

Sidekick?!

Celeste laughs, leading the way through the arcade.

CELESTE

Baby, you didn't think you were the hero of this story, did you?

MIKE

Sidekick is just kinda demeaning.

(beat)

I prefer second fiddle. So what does the Queen, or King, get?

CELESTE

Their name etched in MagFest history. They become legend. Move over Zelda, this weekend it's The Legend of Celeste.

MIKE

You know Link is the hero in those games, right?

CELESTE

Shush. No time for your semantics.

ARCADE HALL - TMNT GAME

Mike and Celeste stand at the TMNT: TURTLES IN TIME game.

CELESTE

We'll get a couple of warmups in before we go for our first badge.

MIKE

What's that?

CELESTE

You'll see.

(beat)

Stop. I'm Donatello. Unpick him, hijo de puta.

MIKE

You can be Leo, or Raph. I'm not switching.

Celeste UNPLUGS the machine and walks off. Mike chases.



## ARCADE HALL - TIME CRISIS

ON SCREEN: Enemy soldiers take aim. One by one they are shot.

Mike and Celeste grip plastic guns. They duck and shoot.

MIKE  
(quietly)  
On your right.

CELESTE  
What?!

Mike looks around. He is surrounded by strangers.

MIKE  
(a little louder)  
There's a guy on your right.

CELESTE  
You gotta speak up, Mike! There are  
a lot of people here and this game  
is loud as fuck.

MIKE  
There is a guy on your right.

CELESTE  
(instigating)  
Huh?

Mike angrily aims at her side of the screen and FIRES.

MIKE  
TANGO DOWN!

CELESTE  
There we fuckin go! Now we're  
playin' Time Crisis!

## ARCADE HALL - DAYTONA USA

A row of DAYTONA USA RACING MACHINES line the wall. That obnoxious Daytona USA theme song plays through the crackling speakers. The plastic racing seats are all full.

Mike and Celeste race next to each other. Celeste takes her eyes off the road to look at Mike. He is laser focused.

CELESTE  
What place are you in?

MIKE

Please don't distract me while I'm driving. Very unsafe.

Celeste keeps one hand on the wheel and grabs Mike's thigh with the other.

MIKE

Stop! I can't concentrate.

She rides her hand up his thigh. Mike panics and swerves.

ON SCREEN: Mike runs over multiple pedestrians.

MIKE

That's blood on your hands!

CELESTE

Oh my god, you're in first. Win!

MIKE

I'm trying to, but you keep throwing that witch coochie at me.

Mike concentrates, bites his tongue like Michael Jordan.

MIKE

(Vin Diesel voice)

You almost had me? You never had me. You never had your car.

Celeste joins in. They both scream the last line has Mike hits the NOS TURBO button.

MIKE/CELESTE

Granny shiftin' not double clutchin' like you should!

ON SCREEN: Mike passes the finish line. 1ST PLACE!

Mike stands up in his plastic car seat. He bangs his chest.

MIKE

You can't touch me! Go back to playing with Hot Wheels!

CELESTE

(shouting)

That one's mine. I found him.

Mike quickly snaps out of it and realizes he has everyone's attention... and admiration. Mike doesn't like it. He cowers.

A man in a REFEREE SHIRT hands Mike a RACING PIN.

REFEREE

On behalf of the racing community,  
I would like to honor your daring,  
thrilling, and high score worthy  
performance with the racing pin.

Celeste grabs the pin before it reaches Mike's hands.

CELESTE

One down, seven to go.

She hugs Mike. The hug paralyzes Mike in a state of euphoria.

CELESTE

(whispering in his ear)  
Wanna go two for two, big boy?

An extremely enamored Mike nods, trying not to drool.

INT. ARCADE HALL - STAGE

Celeste and Mike approach a large Dance Dance Revolution machine with two dances pads on a raised platform. A group of JAPANESE MEN dressed in BOY BAND OUTFITS stand on stage.

The Japanese Men blindfold one of the members of their group. The blindfolded man does an INTENSE Dance Dance Revolution song flawlessly. Doesn't break a sweat.

Mike turns to walk away. Celeste grabs him by the arm.

MIKE

No way. Not Dance Dance Revolution.  
Everyone can see us.

CELESTE

I know, isn't it great?

MIKE

I'm not good at rhythm games.

Celeste gives him a 'you're full of shit' look.

MIKE

I don't do well under pressure.

CELESTE

What song? "Butterfly?" You seem  
like a "Butterfly" guy.

Celeste pulls Mike up on stage. Mike, knowing he has no chance defying her, submits.

Celeste approaches the Japanese men.

CELESTE

We wanna do "Butterfly" for the pin challenge.

The Japanese men talk and move in UNISON.

JAPANESE MEN

Get an S-Rank, the pin you take.

Celeste and Mike hop onto the dance pads. A crowd forms.

CELESTE

Be honest. How much have you actually played?

MIKE

I've dabbled.

The song begins. Mike busts a fuckin move. So does Celeste.

Mike and Celeste sing the weird song together as they dance.

Mike, quickly out of breath, jumps at the same time as Celeste. They swap dance pads and continue to kill it.

MIKE

So many people staring.

CELESTE

They're jealous of you, Papi. Now shake that ass, Mike!

Celeste reaches her hand out. Mike grabs it. They fling each other, swapping dance pads again. They continue to dance.

The song ends. Mike and Celeste stand above a cheering crowd. Celeste reaches to grab Mike's hand and raise it, but--

Mike has his hands in the air. He milks the roaring crowd. Celeste sees two women in the front row fawning. She throws her arms around Mike and goes in for the kiss.

Mike, thinking it's another hug, turns his head. Celeste grabs it and KISSES HIM.

CELESTE

You're starting to see it.

MIKE

See what?

CELESTE  
How fucking cool you are.

Celeste and Mike stare into each other's eyes. Celeste, still staring at Mike, extends her hand to the Japanese Men.

CELESTE  
Pin please.  
(to Mike)  
Let's go, I have a personal  
challenge for you.

Off Mike's confused look we cut to--

INT. CELESTE HOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike squirms in a fancy chair in the corner of the room. Celeste, in a bath robe, throws him a CONDOM.

CELESTE  
Put that on. I'm going to prepare.

MIKE  
Isn't this moving kinda fast?

CELESTE  
Magfest, Mike. There's no time to  
act like this isn't what you want.

Mike opens up the condom and examines it. He slowly unravels the condom. He continues to examine it.

CELESTE  
You've never had sex before?

MIKE  
I have! I've just never used this  
brand before.

CELESTE  
Forget it. Put this on.

Celeste throws Mike a grocery bag filled with clothing.

CELESTE HOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM

Mike stands in front of the mirror in a LINK costume. He has a green tunic, green hat and elf ears on. A fake SWORD is strapped to his side.

MIKE

Are you really going to go through with this Mike? This isn't you. Are you even capable of--

CELESTE (O.S.)

I'm ready!

Mike takes a deep breath, braces himself, and exits to--

CELESTE HOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM

Mike finds Celeste laying on the bed in a PRINCESS ZELDA costume. She wears a pink gown and blonde wig.

CELESTE

Link! What are you doing here? How did you get past the guards?

MIKE

I can't do a good Link voice.

CELESTE

Just try.

Mike pulls out his sword and twirls, swinging it in a circle.

MIKE

Hiya!

Mike knocks over the lamp. It cracks. Celeste is silent.

MIKE

I'm sorry.

CELESTE

Stop playing with your sword and play with me.

Mike complies. His heart races as he sits next to her.

CELESTE

You've killed Ganondorf, saving the kingdom. Everything is yours.

Celeste begins to remove her gown.

CELESTE

Everything.

MIKE

Zelda in the streets, Sheik in the sheets.

CELESTE

No! You just lost speaking  
protagonist privileges.

Celeste reaches underneath her pillow and pulls out DUCT  
TAPE. Before Mike can react, she wraps it around his mouth.

Celeste jumps on top of him and start undoing his belt.

BANG! The front door swings open, slamming against the wall.  
A GIANT PINK BUBBLE squeezes through the door.

MARCOS (30s), dressed as Kirby, storms into the room.

MARCOS

Who the fuck is this?

Mike squirms out from under Celeste.

MIKE

(muffled)

Who are you?

MARCOS

Her fucking boyfriend.

CELESTE

Ex-boyfriend. Jesus, Marcos.

(to Mike)

He's such a baby. We broke up like  
forever ago.

MARCOS

It was this morning!

CELESTE

(to Mike)

See what I mean?

MARCOS

(to Mike)

I'm gonna fucking kill you.

Marcos flings his MOUNTAIN DEW CODE RED bottle at Mike. Mike  
grabs the SHIELD next to the bed.

DING. The bottle ricochets off the shield and smashes into  
the OTHER LAMP.

Marcos wobbles over to Mike and grabs him by the foot. Marcos  
drags him out of the room.

MIKE  
(muffled)  
No! I'm sorry! I didn't know!

MARCOS  
I'm gonna beat your ass.

CELESTE  
Mike! Catch!

Celeste tosses Mike his plastic sword. Mike catches it and SMACKS Marcos with it. Marcos loosens his grip on Mike, allowing him to escape. Marcos throws punches, but the giant pink costume prevents him from reaching.

CELESTE  
Fucking kill him, Mike!

Mike runs out of the room into the--

HOTEL HALLWAY

Mike runs down the hallway with Marcos chasing him. Marcos wobbles down the hallway, his costume bouncing off the walls.

Mike, running for his life, halts at an EMERGENCY EXIT door at a dead end. Marcos continues to charge at him.

Marcos lowers his shoulders. Mike raises his shield, bracing for impact with his back to the door.

SMACK!

Marcos and Mike fly into the emergency door and down the staircase.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

People make way for Mike and Marcos. The two men continue to tussle and exchange blows. A couple of NERDS WITH INSTRUMENTS begin playing the SUPER SMASH BROS THEME SONG.

SQUEAK. SQUEAK. Marcos' costume squeaked every time Mike smacks it with his sword.

People form a circle around them. They cheer them on.

MARCOS  
You piece of shit!



MIKE  
(muffled)  
Wait! Stop! Stop!

Marcos catches his breath while Mike rips the duct tape off.

MARCOS  
What?

MIKE  
I didn't even stick it in.

Marcos WAILS on a defenseless Mike. ERNESTO (50s), security guard, breaks through the crowd.

ERNESTO  
How the hell am I going to describe this in the incident report.

Cole and Reed break through the group.

COLE  
Oh god, that's Mike.

ERNESTO  
Man dressed as a piece of bubble gum repeatedly struck man dressed as a Keebler elf.

REED  
Mom!

Mike stops fighting and freezes, looking around for Tabitha.

TABITHA  
This is how you represent me?

Tabitha grabs Mike by the ear and separates him from Marcos.

TABITHA  
Getting your ass beat dressed as a fucking dwarf?

MIKE  
Elf.

TABITHA  
I won't allow you to get us kicked out of this hotel. I thought it was Cole and Reed I had to worry about.

MIKE  
It's not my fault! I met this girl, we were in her room and then this--

TABITHA

You're here to crunch numbers,  
Mike. I'm not paying you to play  
dress up. You look ridiculous.

Mike looks down at his outfit. He looks up to see Danielle.

DANIELLE

Does this mean you finished running  
the numbers for the pitch?

MIKE

I got sidetracked.

DANIELLE

Sidetracked? To where? Mordor?

Celeste runs up to Mike. She gets REAL close.

CELESTE

No one has ever taken a beating  
like that for me.

MIKE

I doubt that.

TABITHA

This is the piece of ass you almost  
died for? Hardly worth it.

CELESTE

Que puñeta dijiste!

TABITHA

I know what that means, cabrona.

CELESTE

Who is this woman, Mike?

Mike looks down at the ground, allowing Tabitha to speak.

TABITHA

I'm Mike's mommy, little girl.

CELESTE

Already introducing me to your  
mother, Mike? I'm flattered.

TABITHA

(to Mike)

If you so much as sniff this nerd  
convention, I'm sending you home.

Tabitha leaves.

DANIELLE

Please don't get sent home before finishing the report.

MIKE

Danielle, none of this was supposed to happen.

DANIELLE

I know. Justine should be here.

Danielle leaves without giving Mike a chance to respond.

CELESTE

Was that the coworker you were talking about? You're right, she is pretty.

MIKE

Goodbye.

CELESTE

Goodbye? The night is young.

MIKE

You heard my boss.

Mike walks away.

MIKE

You're bad news. I may be lonely, but I'm not stupid.

Mike stumbles into the elevator. As the doors close he looks at Celeste one last time. She stares back at him.

MIKE

You're a tornado, Celeste. And I won't get sucked in.

Celeste smirks and blows him a kiss as the doors close.

INT. MIKE'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Mike sleeps on top of the sheets, still wearing the elf costume. The hotel phone RINGS. He wakes up and answers.

MIKE

Hello?

(beat)

Uh huh, thank you.

Mike hangs up. The clock reads **7:00 AM**. He gets out of bed.

He walks to the bathroom. He loads up a YouTube video of an ANIME THEME SONG. He brushes his teeth once the song begins. He finishes when the song ends.

MIKE  
(to himself)  
Time to work. Laptop. Where's my laptop? In my backpack, right. And my backpack is--

Mike realizes he doesn't have his backpack.

MIKE  
Ah crap.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CELESTE'S ROOM - DAY

Celeste stands in the doorway wearing nothing but a BATHROBE hanging off her shoulder. Mike stands in the hallway.

CELESTE  
Hello, Mike.

MIKE  
Did I leave my backpack in there?

CELESTE  
Are you asking to come inside?

MIKE  
This isn't a game. I'm screwed if I don't find it.

CELESTE  
I could help you retrace our steps.

MIKE  
No way, not happening. I agree to your help and next thing I know I'm trapped in some sex dungeon.

CELESTE  
Forgive me for caring. Maybe I want to repay you for your help. Maybe I'm just being a good person.

Mike thinks to himself for a second. Calms down.

MIKE  
Sorry. I'm being a jerk. Thank you. You're a good person.

CELESTE  
Funny, I thought I was bad news?  
No, wait, a tornado.

MIKE  
I apologize for what I said last--

CELESTE  
I don't want an apology. I want you  
to admit you loved last night.

MIKE  
Yeah, I loved getting my ass kicked  
by your boyfriend.

CELESTE  
Ex.

Mike sighs. Celeste stares at him, waiting for a response.

MIKE  
I loved last night. Up until Kirby  
burst through the door.

Celeste opens the door, inviting Mike in.

MIKE  
I'll wait out here.

CELESTE  
You're not wearing that. We need to  
disguise ourselves if we're going  
to infiltrate Magfest.

MIKE  
Infiltrate? This is a simple  
mission of retracing our steps. And  
I'm done with the costumes.

CELESTE  
You want your mommy to see you  
around Magfest? You want your  
pretty coworker to see you with me?

We hold on Mike contemplating before we cut to--

EXT. STEAK N SHAKE - MORNING

A huge line of people in costumes pours out of the  
restaurant. Mike and Celeste eat burgers and sip milkshakes  
in the parking lot.

Mike dresses as Ashitaka from Princess Mononoke. He has a blue tunic with a red hood on. A BOW slung across his body.

Celeste dresses as San from Princess Mononoke. She has red face paint on and wears a large WOLF PELT.

CELESTE

I'm gonna need a few things in return for my services.

MIKE

So much for helping just to be a good person.

CELESTE

You look really hot in that tunic.

Celeste grabs Mike's milkshake and sucks it.

MIKE

Stop. Keep your feminine voodoo away from me. What do you want?

Mike grabs his milkshake back.

CELESTE

Six more pins.

MIKE

I don't have time to play more games with you.

CELESTE

How long will it take to do your dumb work thing?

MIKE

I don't know, like five hours?

CELESTE

Great, there are twenty four hours in a day. Minus five means you're mine for nineteen.

MIKE

It's going to take nineteen hours!?

CELESTE

Not if you're good at the games.

MIKE

And you need *me* for this?

CELESTE  
You know your way around nerd  
culture, despite your best efforts  
to appear "normal."

MIKE  
What's wrong with being normal?

Mike lifts up his milkshake.

MIKE  
Vanilla is normal.

CELESTE  
Normal means boring.

MIKE  
Normal means safe.

CELESTE  
Safe is boring.

MIKE  
Then why did you want me to use a  
condom last night?

CELESTE  
Because having kids is boring.

MIKE  
Do you think I'm boring?

Celeste bites into her burger. Ketchup smears around her  
mouth, resembling blood.

CELESTE  
I think you want to be boring. But  
I won't let that happen.

INT. PUB - DAY

The pub is overrun with cosplayers. Celeste and Mike approach  
a table of people dressed as medieval characters.

MIKE  
These people have the third badge?  
What is it, a drinking game?

CELESTE  
If only it were that easy.

SERENITY (30s) scoots to the side, making room for Celeste  
and Mike. They each pull up a chair.

SERENITY

A group of fellow adventurers?

CELESTE

Serenity, this is Mike.

SERENITY

Who is this Serenity you speak of?  
I am Sylvandas the Wise.

CELESTE

Ah, so we are well underway. I am  
Dagmar the Destroyer. And this is--

MIKE

I don't have time for an entire D  
and D campaign.

CELESTE

(whispers)

It's not an entire campaign, just a  
dungeon. Beat dungeon, get pin.

SERENITY

Shall I add you to our tale? What  
is thy name?

MIKE

Gurk. He's an orc.

SERENITY

Thoust does not sound like an orc.

CELESTE

Yes, thoust does not.

Mike eyes the other strangers around the table. He speaks in  
a half-ass orcish accent.

MIKE

I am Gurk, the orc barbarian.

Celeste once again whispers into Mike's ear.

CELESTE

If you're not going to give me one  
hundred percent, I will bench your  
ass. Good luck getting into Magfest  
and finding your laptop alone.

(beat)

Look at these people. Do they look  
like they're fucking around?



The nerds in costumes patiently, and harmlessly, wait. Mike takes a deep "fuck it" breath.

MIKE

(orcish accent)

Me Gurk. Me Smash. Me Barbarian.

CELESTE

What are we killing today?

OLD WIZARD

We are preparing to embark through the Tomb of Horrors.

KNIGHT

Bollocks. Quest isn't for the weak.

Mike SLAMS his fist on the table.

MIKE

(orcish)

Gurk slay Dragons. Gurk slay Demons. Gurk slay them by himself due to lack of friends for party.

KNIGHT

Wait, you play DnD by yourself?

MIKE

It's not as lonely as it sounds.

KNIGHT

It sounds fucking rad. Solo-ing campaigns. You must know your shit. Welcome aboard, you crazy bastard.

Mike smiles and takes his seat among his fellow nerds.

### **MONTAGE**

- The group take turns rolling dice
- Pretend sword fights standing on the tables
- Sneaking/Crawling around the bar

TWO HOURS LATER

Celeste and Mike stand back to back with their pretend weapons drawn. The rest of the players are on the ground or slumped over, playing dead.

SERENITY

Death curse targets Dagmar.

Celeste runs over tot he table and rolls the dice. She rolls a 2.

CELESTE

Fuck!

SERENITY

Dagmar tries to reverse the curse, bu fails. She succumbs to the spell. Her soul slowly drains.

CELESTE

(dying)

Gurk. Kill him. Save my soul.

The bartender, not reading the room, walks over.

BARTENDER

How we doing over here? Can I get you anything more to eat, drink?

Celeste collapses into Mike's arms.

MIKE

(orcish)

My sweet Dagmar. I will avenge you.

BARTENDER

I'll come back.

Mike takes a deep breath and walks over to the table.

MIKE

I lunge at the enemy Acererak, swinging my blade for his head.

Mike violently tosses the dice onto the table. He walks away while the dice still spins. He calls his shot like Kobe.

MIKE

Twenty.

The dice finally stops spinning. 20.

SERENITY

Twenty!

The 'dead' players shout in celebration.

SERENITY

You successfully chop his head off, lifting the curses, and completing the campaign!

The players embrace.

MIKE  
(orcish)  
Welcome back, m'lady.

SERENITY  
For clearing the Tomb of Horrors,  
here is your reward.

Serenity hands Mike a PIN. Celeste, naturally, takes it.

CELESTE  
I forced you into having a kickass  
game of D and D. How awful of me.

MIKE  
Thank you. For real.

OLD WIZARD  
Gurk, we're heading to the tavern  
to celebrate. Grog, music, lusty  
maids and strumpets to your heart's  
content.

MIKE  
I'm sorry, but we have five more  
pins to collect.

KNIGHT  
You would not partake in the spoils  
of war? You spit on my honor, Gurk.

CELESTE  
We don't want to spit on his honor.

Mike look into Celeste's eyes. They coax Mike to stay.

MIKE  
(orcish)  
First round on Gurk!

THREE DRINKS LATER

CLANK! Mike and the Knight start chugging beer out of large  
PINT GLASSES. Celeste dances on the bar, drinking out of an  
IVORY HORN. The Old Wizard plays a LUTE and sings.

OLD WIZARD  
Gurk swung strong, decapitating  
Acererack. Gurk told that vile  
thing to suck his monstrous--

EVERYONE

Ayyy!

The bartender is off to the side of the bar. A MAN IN A SUIT drinks alone.

MAN IN SUIT

You let them do whatever they want?

BARTENDER

Nerds tip really well.

KNIGHT

You're a good time, Gurk.  
(breaking character)  
I'm glad to have met your  
acquaintance, Mike.

CELESTE

Don't break! We aren't done yet.

Celeste runs over to the table and grabs DICE.

CELESTE

I put my hand on Gurk's hand.

MIKE

I allow her.

CELESTE

I kiss Gurk.

SERENITY

Charisma check.

Celeste rolls the dice. She rolls a 1.

CELESTE

Dammit.

Mike surprises Celeste with a KISS.

CELESTE

That was... unexpected.

MIKE

I'm sorry! I thought because your  
character wanted to kiss me that  
maybe you actually wanted to so--

Celeste kisses Mike.

A group of STAR WARS COSPLAYERS enter.

SERENITY

Shit, is it time already?

Serenity puts on a JEDI ROBE and flips the hood up.

SERENITY

Thank the stars you're here. The Empire has launched a full assault and you're our only hope.

MIKE

Guess that means it's time for the next pin?

CELESTE

To the next pin!

INT. DANIELLE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Danielle gives a mock presentation using the hotel TV. She wears silk pajamas that look like a suit. Tabitha sits in a chair watching Danielle.

TABITHA

(under her breath)

Even your pajamas? Do you own any casual clothing?

DANIELLE

Then I talk a little bit about how trustworthy we are, experienced, yadda yadda, all that stuff.

Danielle clicks taps her laptop, thumbing through the slides.

TABITHA

Why are these all blank?

DANIELLE

This is where I'd go into the numbers. But I don't have the graphs from Mike yet.

Tabitha stands up, panicking.

TABITHA

Where is he?

DANIELLE

I'm not worried. After last night, he's probably triple checking everything.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - SUITE - DAY

Mike and Celeste stand in front of a set of double doors.  
LOUD MUSIC can be heard coming from the room.

The door opens. A FURRY dressed as a RACCOON greets them.

RACCOON  
Welcome, humans!

MIKE  
Nope.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - FURRY PARTY - DAY

An elegant room filled with FURRIES. A COLORFUL LION dances  
with a PINK GORILLA. A GREEN TIGER passed out.

Celeste sits on the couch between a ZEBRA and a WARTHOG. She  
pets the Zebra while the Warthog playfully snorts.

Mike awkwardly stands by himself near the minibar. He sips a  
CAPRI-SUN. DUNCAN (40s), dressed as a RED FOX, approaches.

Duncan makes himself a cocktail. He struggles to get the cap  
off of the vodka. His giant paws can't get a grip.

DUNCAN  
Help me out here?

Mike complies.

DUNCAN  
First time around furries?

MIKE  
Is it that obvious?

DUNCAN  
You're acting like we're weirdos.

MIKE  
I don't know the etiquette. Like,  
do I call you red fox?

DUNCAN  
Duncan. My fursona is named Duncan.  
You are?

MIKE  
Mike. I don't have a fursona.

Duncan finishes pouring his drink. he lifts his FOX HEAD slightly to expose his mouth.

DUNCAN

Cheers.

(beat)

Wanna see me fuck that warthog?

MIKE

God no! Not that it's weird. It's cool if you want to. I don't think it's weird. Sure, I'll watch.

DUNCAN

Relax, I'm messing with you. Not all furies wanna fuck each other.

MIKE

But there are furies who like sex with each other?

DUNCAN

Sure. Just like some people like red heads. Some like feet. Some like dressing up as Link and getting beat by a Kirby.

Mike SQUEEZES his Capri-Sun, embarrassed. Juice squirts out of the top of his thin straw.

MIKE

Can I ask: what do you like about being a furry?

DUNCAN

You ever wanna be someone, or something, you're not? Get away from the restrictions society, your job, family, all that put on you? Being a furry allows that.

Duncan pours another drink. Mike pops another CAPRI-SUN.

DUNCAN

Talking to people is much easier without the fear of embarrassment.

MIKE

Amen to that. That's why I tried online dating. You're rejected without ever knowing it.

DUNCAN

You on Tinder?

MIKE

I downloaded it, but I just wasn't getting any matches.

Duncan stands awkwardly, not sure what to say.

MIKE

Not even the bots wanted me.

DUNCAN

An online dating profile is just another mask.

MIKE

I could never have gotten someone like Celeste on a dating app.

Duncan wraps his furry arm around Mike's shoulders and points to Celeste, the Warthog, and the Zebra.

DUNCAN

You know the difference between her and those animals?

MIKE

Hooves?

DUNCAN

You can cage warthogs and zebras.

MIKE

You're saying she's a free spirit. Couldn't agree more.

DUNCAN

I'm saying be careful, Mike. You don't need to conceal your face to wear a mask.

Celeste, the Warthog and Zebra stand up.

CELESTE

Mike, wanna watch them yiff?

MIKE

(whispers)  
What's yiff?

DUNCAN

(whispers)  
Fun game that furries play.



MIKE  
 (whispers)  
 That's probably how we get the pin!  
 (to Celeste)  
 Sure, I love yiffing.

INT. INSURANCE CONVENTION - DAY

A hotel ballroom converted to an exhibit hall. Card tables line the room. They're covered in boring bulletins boards.

Cole and Reed sit at one of the card tables. They are bored out of their minds. Tabitha and Danielle approach.

COLE  
 Where the hell is Mike? It's his turn to work the table.

REED  
 We've been here for five hours. We wanna take a nap, mom!

DANIELLE  
 He's working on our presentation.

TABITHA  
 You saw him working on it?

Danielle hesitates. Tabitha takes out her phone and dials.

TABITHA  
 (through gritted teeth)  
 This mother f--

HOTEL SUITE - FURRY PARTY BEDROOM

Celeste holds Mike's hand as they watch the Warthog and Zebra jump onto the bed.

MIKE  
 (whispering)  
 When do we get the pin?

Celeste shushes him. The Warthog rips off a PATCH on his groin, revealing a hole. Mike's eyes WIDEN.

INSURANCE CONVENTION

REED  
 It's not fair we suffer while Mike gets to be party animal.

Tabitha tightens her grip as the phone continues to ring.

TABITHA

Mike has, once again, ruined my vacation. This is Six Flags 99 all over again.

She **THROWS** the phone on the ground. It shatters.

TABITHA

He *ruined* that dress!

An **INSURANCE SALESMAN** at a nearby table chimes in.

INSURANCE SALESMAN

I hope you had that insured.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - FURRY PARTY

Mike runs out of the bedroom with a laughing Celeste close behind. Duncan stands at the minibar with his **FOX HEAD** off.

MIKE

I thought you said you guys weren't into fucking?

DUNCAN

I said *I* wasn't into fucking. They definitely are.

Mike runs out of the hotel room.

DUNCAN

Wait! Did you want a pin?

CELESTE

I'll take it.

Duncan hands Celeste the pin. He maintains his hold on it.

DUNCAN

He's a nice guy, Celeste.

He gives her a concerned look. She playfully flicks him off.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Mike and Celeste hold hands in the lobby. They squeeze their way through the crowd.

MIKE

Please tell me the next pin involves some level of skill. No more discomfort.

CELESTE

First off, you do what I say.

Celeste smiles, letting him know she's joking. Kinda.

CELESTE

Second, I'm pretty sure you will be very comfortable with what's next.

They make it through the crowd and come face to face with a WHITEBOARD on an easel.

ON WHITEBOARD: A drawing of RYU and KEN with the Street Fighter logo. The word 'TOURNAMENT.'

CELESTE

Winner gets the pin.

MIKE

They only have one pin?

CELESTE

No, they run tournaments all weekend. But if you want more time for your work thing, I suggest you win the next one.

MIKE

I don't have my fight pad though.

CELESTE

Not to worry. I know a guy.

MIKE

Is this one gonna kick my ass too?

INT. MYSTERIOUS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

A dark room. TOMASO (20s), wannabe mobster, sits in a leather chair. Two GOONS stand next to him. All three men in suits. Tomaso smokes a cigar while playing THE SIMS on a laptop.

Mike and Celeste sit across from Tomaso. The mobster puts on a thick Tony Soprano accent.

TOMASO

You come into my house on the day my Sim daughter is to be married.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN: Two Sims, bride and groom, are at a wedding. A Sim that looks like Tomaso cries in the front row.

TOMASO

What is it you request of me? A PlayStation 4? An extra Wii remote? Perhaps you want to kick it old school with a Sega Genesis?

As Tomaso lists off the devices, his goons pull them out and hand them to him.

MIKE

A fight pad. Sir.

TOMASO

What make?

MIKE

Mad Catz.

TOMASO

Model?

MIKE

T.E. 2.

TOMASO

A fine with fine taste.  
(to Celeste)  
He's a proven fighter?

Before Celeste can answer, LIGHT fills the room. The tiny hotel is not menacing at all. SAM stands at the door.

TOMASO

(dropping his accent)  
The fuck, Sam! Shut the door!

SAM

Tomaso. Your tone.

TOMASO

Baby, you know not to interrupt when the sign is on the door.

SAM

I waited at that cafe for thirty minutes so you can play mobster?

TOMASO

It's Magfest, Sam! The one time a fucking year where--

SAM

What did we say this morning?

Tomaso bites his tongue and takes a deep breath.

TOMASO

We said we would be more mindful.

SAM

Are we being mindful?

TOMASO

No.

SAM

Does someone want to apologize?

TOMASO

I'm sorry.

SAM

For?

TOMASO

For taking a nasty tone with you.

SAM

One hour. Then you're mine.

Sam smiles, blows Tomaso a kiss, and shuts the door. The darkness returns and so does Tomaso's accent.

TOMASO

I've got a long list of fighters who want a shot, and only a limited number of fight pads.

Tomaso leans in close, menacingly.

TOMASO

You best no wast my fucking time.

Mike postures, meeting Tomaso's bravado.

MIKE

Stop wasting *my* time and give me your terms.

TOMASO

If you win the tourn--

MIKE

When I win. Go on.

TOMASO  
Winner gets a pin and a poster. I  
want that poster.

MIKE  
Hold on. That's it? All of this for  
a poster?

TOMASO  
Limited. Edition. They only printed  
fifty of them.

Mike now understands the gravity of the situation.

MIKE  
I will win you that poster.

CELESTE  
(under her breath)  
This is so hot.

Mike and Tomaso shake hands.

TOMASO  
That's good to hear.

Tomaso pulls Mike in close.

TOMASO  
Because if you don't, I might not  
be so kind.

MIKE  
Wait, what?

Everyone gets up to leave the room. Mike stays seated, scared  
out of his mind.

TOMASO  
You best be off. The first round  
starts in ten minutes.

INT. ARCADE HALL - STAGE - DAY

The Dance Dance Revolution stage from earlier has been  
converted into a Street Fighter Tournament. A MONITOR sits on  
a small table with two chair in front of it.

The Street Fighter game on the monitor is projected onto a  
large CLOTH SCREEN raised above the stage. Rows of seats face  
the stage. The crowd is packed.

Mike stands on the side of the stage holding a FIGHT PAD.

CELESTE

Don't worry about the crowd.

MIKE

I'm not. Surprisingly. I'm more worried about being a good sport.

CELESTE

Being a good sport won't win us that prize. I need you to let out that deep seated dog in you.

MIKE

Fighting games have a way of bringing out the worst in me. I don't like who I become.

CELESTE

Tough titty.

Celeste shoves Mike onto the stage. An ANNOUNCER approaches. He shakes Mike's hand and talks into a microphone.

ANNOUNCER

This must be Mike. I believe we have our first contestant here, folks. Let's meet his opponent.

JIMMY (6) climbs the stage with a TINY FIGHT PAD.

ANNOUNCER

Little Jimmy! His first tournament.

JIMMY

Good wuck mister.

Mike panics. He looks over at Celeste. She slashes her throat with her finger. Mike nods. He knows what he must do.

MOMENTS LATER

Jimmy cries. Mike calmly unplugs his fight pad.

JIMMY

My mom would never do those things!

INT. MAGFEST BOOTH - DAY

An information and registration booth. GUNDAM (20s), super nerd, sits behind the booth. Tabitha storms toward him with Danielle, Reed and Cole close behind.

TABITHA  
I need four badges for this stupid convention. Now.

DANIELLE  
We don't know for sure that Mike is even here.

TABITHA  
He's here. I can sense it.

GUNDAM  
I'm sorry, but we're at capacity.

Before Tabitha has time to go off on Gundam--

GUNDAM  
But for someone has bewitching as yourself, I can make an exception.

Gundam reaches for Tabitha's hand to kiss it. She slaps him.

TABITHA  
You are beneath me.

GUNDAM  
This one is set to hard difficulty.

Gundam winks. The group winces. He pulls out FOUR BADGES.

GUNDAM  
Name?

TABITHA  
Tabitha.

GUNDAM  
Like the super mutant in Fallout:  
New Vegas!

TABITHA  
I don't know what the fuck Fallout is.

GUNDAM  
Fallout is a popular video game--

TABITHA  
Give me the fucking badge!

Gundam quickly and quietly hands Tabitha the badges and pen. She angrily writes their names on the badges.



GUNDAM  
My parents named me after their  
favorite Gundam character.

DANIELLE  
That's cute. What is it?

GUNDAM  
Gundam.

INT. MAGFEST ENTRANCE

Tabitha, Danielle, Cole and Reed get past security.

TABITHA  
Split up. Find him.

Cole and Reed both nod.

TABITHA  
Bring me his fucking head.

Danielle, worried, runs off determined to find him.

INT. MAGFEST - EXPO HALL - DAY

Cole and Reed survey the crowded area. They spot a GIANT TENT  
in the corner. A BOUNCER stands outside of it.

COLE  
I bet he's in there.

REED  
What is it?

COLE  
I don't know, but it looks lame.

The bouncer open the door to the tent for Cole and Reed.  
JAPANESE VOICES can be heard inside.

REED  
They're watching cartoons. Mike has  
to be in here.

COLE  
Are those tentacles?

The tent door shuts behind Cole and Reed. The door has a sign  
that reads 'HENTAI - ADULTS ONLY 18+.'

COLE (O.S.)  
(muffled)  
What the fuck!

INT. ARCADE HALL - STAGE

Mike plays against an OVERWEIGHT NERD.

OVERWEIGHT NERD  
Stop turtle get in the corner. All  
you do is sit there and wait.

MIKE  
You wanna talk about weight?

The crowd GROANS.

ANNOUNCER  
That was low.

MIKE  
I was just trash talking!

CELESTE  
There are lines, Mike.

OVERWEIGHT NERD  
For real. Listen to your bitch.

CELESTE  
What did you say, Jabba the Fuck?

INT. MAGFEST - EXPO HALL

Tabitha shoves cosplayers out of the way.

TABITHA  
Here, piggy piggy! Come out, Mike!

Gundam runs up to Tabitha holding a SKETCHBOOK.

GUNDAM  
Finally. I've found you.

TABITHA  
Don't you have a desk to sit at?

GUNDAM  
My shift is over. Please, you must  
pose for me.

TABITHA  
Find someone else.

GUNDAM  
None of these common whores will  
do. I want you. Your intensity.  
Your beauty. Your passion. The fear  
your presence thrusts upon men.

Tabitha slowly comes around.

TABITHA  
Go on.

INT. HENTAI TENT

Cole and Reed stare at the screen. JAPANESE PORN noises.

REED  
This is disgusting.

COLE  
My mind is telling me no.

Cole looks down at his penis.

COLE  
But my body is telling me yes.

REED  
Wanna grab a seat?

COLE  
Uh huh.

They both sit, mesmerized by the screen.

INT. ART ROOM - DAY

A hotel room turned art studio. Gundam sketches furiously on  
his CANVAS.

Tabitha sits on the THRONE OF SWORDS from Game of Thrones.  
She dresses in SKIMPY ARMOR.

GUNDAM  
My magnum opus.

ARCADE HALL - BACKSTAGE - DAY

The crowd fills the seats. Behind the stage, Mike and Celeste prepare for the next match.

CELESTE  
Don't let him psyche you out.

MIKE  
I'm in the zone, nothing can take me out. Not even--

Marcos approaches with his posse.

MARCOS  
Fate has placed us in the final round, my friend.

MIKE  
It would appear so.

Marcos gets up in Mike's face, like two boxers at a weigh in.

MARCOS  
Let's make things interesting. Winner gets Celeste.

CELESTE  
I'm not a fucking trophy.

MARCOS  
(whispering)  
Please take me back, baby.

CELESTE  
You're embarrassing yourself.

MARCOS  
(posturing)  
Whatever, you're old news anyway.

CELESTE  
Find someone else who is willing to stick Mike & Ike's up your--

MARCOS  
That's a joke! She's joking. I'm normal, nothing but missionary.

Marcos looks back to his posse. They're weirded out.

CELESTE  
He once cried so much during sex that he made *my* makeup run.

MARCOS

We had just watched Bridge to Terabithia!

His posse looks away, embarrassed for him.

MARCOS

She was his only friend and she fucking drowned!

ANNOUNCER

Boys! Enough! Save it for the ring.

MARCOS

(to Mike)

You'll pay for this.

MIKE

I didn't say one word!

Marcos spits out he ground near Mike. Marcos snaps his fingers. Him and his posse exit.

CELESTE

Looks like you're gonna fight another one of my battles.

(leaning in)

Bury him.

Celeste kisses Mike.

INT. ARCADE HALL - STAGE

The crowd goes WILD as Mike takes the stage. People hold MAKESHIFT POSTERS rooting for Mike. He keeps his head down.

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gentlemen! You may know him as 'Big Rig Boomer' on Xbox. 'Hold the Salad' on PlayStation.

The announcer reads off a NOTECARD. Mike gives a meek wave.

ANNOUNCER

Or 'Flipper Whipper' on Pornhub.

Mike is terrified. He gives the announcer a confused look. The announcer, also confused, points to Celeste.

CELESTE

Whoo! Yeah! Flip her whip, Mike!

ANNOUNCER

(reading)

And now, his opponent. The man who  
cried at the end of Alvin And The  
Chipminks: Chipwrecked.

Marcos shouts across the stage at Celeste.

MARCOS

The Chipmunks and Chipettes do a  
dual performance at the  
International Music Awards! It was  
beautiful, Celeste!

The crowd is SILENT.

ANNOUNCER

Um. Please welcome Marcos!

A CLAP here or there. His posse starts CHEERING obnoxiously.  
Mike extends his hand. Marcos shakes it, leaning in close.

MARCOS

I suggest you throw this match if  
you want to see your laptop again.

MIKE

(speechless)

Wha-- How--

MARCOS

You left it in my hotel room last  
night, dumbass.

Marcos smirks. He throws Mike's hand down. Mike stands  
speechless. He looks to Celeste for answers. She gives him a  
thumbs up. Mike clenches his fist.

A COUPLE ROUNDS LATER

Marcos throws his hands up. Mike bites his nails.

ANNOUNCER

And we are all tied up now, folks!

MARCOS

End of the line. Time to lose.

MIKE

Come on, man. I need my laptop for  
a presentation. Can we leave my  
work out of this?

MARCOS

I don't know, can you? All you  
gotta do is lose.

Mike looks offstage where Celeste gives Mike a reassuring thumbs up. He looks behind him to face a nervous crowd.

Mike scans the crowd full of people rooting for him. He sighs, acknowledging his loss. He goes to turn, but sees--

Danielle standing in the back of the crowd. She stares at Mike with a blank expression. Mike hangs his head

MIKE

(under his breath)  
I'm sorry.

ANNOUNCER

Three. Two. One. Fight!

The match begins. Mike is hurt, as if he can feel the beating his character is taking.

MARCOS

That's right. Good boy.

The crowd is stunned and disappointed. Mike lazily presses a couple buttons to appear competitive.

His life bar quickly draining, on the verge of defeat when--

CELESTE

Let's go, Mike! Kill this puta!

Celeste begins chanting 'MIKE!' The crowd joins in. Mike smiles, grips his fightpad, and gets to work.

MARCOS

Don't do anything stupid, Mike.

MIKE

Everything I've done this weekend  
has been stupid.

Faster than lightening, Mike starts entering combos.

ANNOUNCER

Mike showing some signs of life!

Mike's fingers fly across the fightpad.

ANNOUNCER

All of these combos are frame  
perfect! Flawless! This is unreal!

MARCOS

Stop! It's not fair, I can't block.

MIKE

Funny. Celeste said the same thing  
when I met her.

Mike leans forward as he enters his final combo.

MIKE

Don't worry, I'll teach her how.

Mike SMASHES the last button. He stands, throwing his hands  
in the air. The crowd goes WILD.

ANNOUNCER

Flipper Whipper wins! Ladies,  
gents, we have a new champion!

Mike turns to the back of the crowd to look for Danielle.

She's gone.

Celeste LEAPS into Mike's arms. She kisses him.

CELESTE

I knew Marcos ain't shit. Where is  
my mother fuckin pin?

Marcos walks offstage, glaring at Mike.

MARCOS

You shouldn't have done that.

Mike puts Celeste down and walks to the edge of the stage. He  
waves to the adoring crowd.

MIKE

We did it!

CELESTE

Mike, look out!

Marcos THROWS his FIGHTPAD like a Frisbee at Mike.

ENTER SLOW-MO: Mike bends backwards, Matrix-style, to dodge  
the fightpad. He appears to do it--

Mike falls off the front of the stage. Marcos laughs, walking  
toward our fallen hero.

MARCOS

That's what you get for stepping up  
to me. There are consequences for--



Marcos stops.

Mike LEVITATES up onto the stage. The crowd underneath Mike lifts and pushes him up.

MIKE

It appears I've respawned.

Marcos CHARGES at Mike. Mike waits til the last second before KICKING Marcos in the gut.

CELESTE

Give him the Stunner!

Mike combos his gut kick with a STONE COLD STUNNER. Mike wraps his arms around Marcos' neck and drops to the floor.

Marcos lays on the ground. Mike lifts Marcos up. He holds Marcos upside down.

CELESTE

Bury him!

Mike TOMBSTONES Marcos, a belly-to-belly piledriver.

ANNOUNCER

Folks, I am only qualified to comment on virtual fighting.

(beat)

But this is fucking insane!

Mike stands over a dazed Marcos. Ernesto and two SECURITY GUARDS break through the roaring crowd.

CELESTE

Adjust his fucking attitude!

Mike bends over and gives Marcos the ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT. Mike lifts Marcos up over his shoulders and SLAMS him down.

CELESTE

No mercy to our enemies!

Celeste FLIPS the TABLE on he stage. Mike KICKS a CHAIR off the stage. The chair SMACKS Ernesto in the head.

The room freezes.

MIKE

Ah, fiddlesticks.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - HOURS LATER

A broom closet turned interrogation room. Mike sits at a small coffee table. ZIP TIES bind his hands.

Ernesto sits across from Mike filling out paperwork. He has a tired look.

ERNESTO

I'm eating my Wheaties and she tells me she's leaving. My kid tells me he wishes Mr. Clarkson, his tennis instructor, was his dad. And then I come to work and gotta deal with you and your child's play.

MIKE

I didn't do anything!

ERNESTO

You're saying someone else--

Ernesto reads off of the REPORT.

ERNESTO

Stone Cold Steve Stunned--

Ernesto puts the page down.

ERNESTO

That man into a neck brace?

MIKE

He started it.

ERNESTO

(under his breath)  
And I started a family. Doesn't stop her from tearing it apart.

Ernesto breaks into tears, in his own world now.

ERNESTO

I'll have to convince a jury to let me see a kid who hates me.

Mike is uncomfortable.

ERNESTO

And now I gotta fill out this paperwork. This is hands down the worst birthday ever.

Ernesto composes himself

ERNESTO  
Reason for fight?

MIKE  
I took his girlfriend.

ERNESTO  
A woman. Should've known. My wife  
is leaving me for Jared Clarkson.  
It makes sense now. She always  
wanted me to role play as a tennis  
instructor named Jared Clarkson.

MIKE  
So can I go?

ERNESTO  
Everybody else is. Why not.

Mike stands up, anxious to leave. Ernesto, tears pooling in  
his eyes, looks up at Mike.

ERNESTO  
Please stop being bad.

Mike notices a PHOTOGRAPH of Ernesto's family without Ernesto  
in it. The man in the photo has his arm around the woman.

MIKE  
Is that Jared Clarkson?

ERNESTO  
No, that was our ski instructor in  
Aspen last year.  
(beat)  
Why, you think she was having an  
affair with him too?

Mike is suspiciously quiet.

ERNESTO  
Leave. You're girlfriend is waiting  
for you outside.

MIKE  
Girlfriend?

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Mike exits the security office. Danielle waits on a bench.

MIKE  
Danielle?

DANIELLE  
Expecting your friend?

MIKE  
What friend?

Danielle motions for Mike to sit next to her. He does.

DANIELLE  
We're here for a reason.

MIKE  
I'll get it done.

DANIELLE  
Will you? I realize your mom is unfair, and that you deserve a little fun. But you need to realize she is not fucking around. Your job is on the line.

Mike hangs his head.

DANIELLE  
I hope you have some awakening one day where you learn to not give a shit if your family thinks you're a huge fucking nerd.  
(beat)  
But this weekend is not the time.

Danielle glares at Mike, demanding the right answer.

MIKE  
I'll get it done. Promise.

DANIELLE  
There's a reason I asked Tabitha to put you on this with me.

Mike is speechless.

MIKE  
You're the reason I'm here?

DANIELLE  
Thought we'd make a good team. I hope I'm not wrong.

Danielle leaves. Mike sits with his thoughts for a bit. Celeste hides behind a corner across the lobby, smirking.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - CELESTE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mike bangs on the door.

MIKE  
Celeste! I need you.

Celeste opens the door wearing a BATH ROBE.

CELESTE  
Hello, my champion.

MIKE  
Call Marcos. I need my laptop.

CELESTE  
I still need three more badges.

MIKE  
I've given you enough of my time,  
this isn't a game anymore.

CELESTE  
(maniacal laugh)  
Everything is a game.

MIKE  
My job is on the line. I'm not  
going to throw it all away for a  
weekend of fun.

CELESTE  
This isn't just a weekend of fun,  
Mike. This is your awakening.

Mike rolls his eyes.

CELESTE  
You can have both, you know? Work  
and play.

MIKE  
I want just the work right now.

CELESTE  
No you don't.

Mike opens his mouth to disagree, but doesn't. Celeste grins,  
waiting for Mike's inevitable response.

MIKE  
How long will it take to get the  
last three?

## INT. INSURANCE CONVENTION - NIGHT

Tabitha stands on one of the card tables in the convention hall. People in suits gather round, listening to her. Cole and Reed stand beside the table acting as guards.

TABITHA

My son, Mike, has gone rogue. He is a liability. Bring him to me.

RANDOM INSURANCE PERSON

Why would we help you?

TABITHA

Whoever brings him in will get a large order of pens with their names on them.

RANDOM INSURANCE PERSON

(scoffs)

A pen with my name printed on it?

TABITHA

Engraved.

The nonbelievers go silent. The Random Insurance Person runs out of the room. The others follow suit.

## INT. HOTEL SUITE - PARTY - NIGHT

A small house party in a hotel suite. Mike talks with a group of cosplayers while snacking on some COOKIES.

MIKE

I knew if I hesitated, I'd bait him into attacking. Then, a quick block, counter, combo. Bam!

An ADORING FAN hands Mike their PHONE.

ADORING FAN

Flipper Whipper, that was legendary. Can you add me on Steam?

Celeste enters from the other room.

CELESTE

Alright, figured out how to get the pin. First, we need to get high.

MIKE

Higher than the thirtieth floor?

CELESTE  
Marijuana, Mike. Jesus.

MIKE  
Mari- Marijuana?

Mike's eyes get wide. He shoves another cookie into his mouth to hide his slight panic.

ADORING FAN  
You smoke often?

MIKE  
Hell yeah, man. Total pothead.  
(to Celeste)  
Why do we need to smoke?

CELESTE  
You have to be high to go where  
we're going. Where the pin is.

MIKE  
I don't know, Celeste. I'm not sure  
I'm in the mood to smoke. My  
asthma, poor lung capacity--

CELESTE  
We aren't smoking. They have  
edibles. Like a whole bowl.

Mike freezes with a half eaten cookie in his hand.

MIKE  
(to the fan)  
Why didn't you say anything?

ADORING FAN  
I'm not gonna tell you how to live  
your life, bro.

MIKE  
You saw me eat like five!

ADORING FAN  
Ha! Yeah I did. You're gonna be  
floating.

MIKE  
What do I do? Am I going to die?  
How long until I die?

CELESTE  
Ugh, great. I'm gonna have to carry  
your dead weight.  
(MORE)

CELESTE (CONT'D)

I'd give it about ninety minutes  
until you think you're in a Tim  
Burton movie.

TITLE CARD: 90 Minutes Later

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

Your typical space. Planets, stars, etc. Mike floats by.

MIKE

Space is quieter than I thought.

INT. VIRTUAL REALITY ROOM - NIGHT

Mike is hooked up to a virtual reality machine. He is  
surrounded by rows of people also hooked up to VR.

Celeste tinkers with Mike's machine.

CELESTE

That's because I haven't plugged  
your sound in yet.

Mike giggles with his arms stretched.

MIKE

Sorry, what was that? I wasn't  
listening. I *spaced* out.

Mike giggles even harder. Celeste rolls her eyes.

MIKE

Can I have another cookie?

CELESTE

You've had enough. Once I get  
hooked in, we'll join everyone  
else's game.

MIKE

What are they playing? I hope it's  
nothing too intense.

EXT. IRAQ - DAY

BLUE SOLDIERS stand at attention in a ruined village. They  
listen to Mike give a speech. Celeste by his side.



MIKE

So, soldiers, I'm the leader this round, apparently. I've never given a motivational speech... or an unmotivational one. It will probably be tough, I imagine. We might lose? But hey, we might win.

Celeste pulls Mike aside.

CELESTE

This is tragic, Mike.

MIKE

I don't know how to lead men!

CELESTE

Haven't you seen Lord of the Rings? Game of Thrones? That movie where Mel Gibson has the long hair and his face is covered in blood?

MIKE

The Passion?

CELESTE

Yes! Exactly. Channel those.

Celeste returns to the group of soldiers.

MIKE

The men outside these walls want to murder you. Try not to let them do that. That would be bad.

Silence.

CELESTE

We're gonna get fucked.

RED SOLDIERS pour into the village. The blue soldiers charge toward them. The sound of GUNFIRE. Screams. Blood.

INT. VIRTUAL REALITY ROOM - NIGHT

The "blue soldiers" are hooked up to virtual reality machines. Mike and Celeste in the front of the room.

A CURTAIN splits the large room in half. On the other side are the "red soldiers" on virtual reality machines.

DYING NERD screams, before falling to his knees.

DYING NERD

Tell me wife I fought with honor.

The Dying Nerd lays down. He waits a couple seconds before removing his VR HEADSET. People without headsets wait nearby.

DYING NERD

I died. Who had next?

EXT. IRAQ - DAY

Celeste continues to shoot down red soldiers. She EXECUTES one by slitting his throat. She stands over his dying body.

INT. VIRTUAL REALITY ROOM - NIGHT

Celeste stands and crouches, TEABAGGING nothing.

One of the red soldiers throws his VR HEADSET off and leaves.

RED SOLDIER

You're an asshole!

CELESTE

Mike, where the hell are you?

Celeste DUCKS and FIRES.

EXT. IRAQ - DAY

Mike stands with a ROCKET LAUNCHER at the base of a ladder.

MIKE

How do I climb?

CELESTE

Guess I'm soloing this shit.

Celeste moves like an assassin. She murders every soldier she sees. Sniper. Shotgun. Throwing Knife. She uses items she finds off of the ground, improvising every kill.

BANG! Celeste is shot in the leg. She falls to the ground. Down, but not out.

CELESTE

Mike! I'm shot. He's the last guy!

The enemy soldier stands over her body, chuckling.

ENEMY SOLDIER

Time for you to--

BOOM! The man EXPLODES. Smoke from the explosion can be followed back to Mike standing on top of the ladder holding his rocket launcher.

MIKE

And boom goes the dynamite.

CELESTE

Great, you got a kill. Now come pick me up.

Mike runs over to Celeste and bends down to pick her up.

INT. VIRTUAL REALITY ROOM - NIGHT

Celeste's virtual reality helmet CLANKS off of Mike's.

MIKE

Ah, fuck.

Mike and Celeste stand inches apart. They talk with their headsets still on.

MIKE

Seeing you wipe their entire squad was...  
(searching for the word)  
Dope.

CELESTE

I should've had the last guy too.

MIKE

I love you. I think.

Celeste 'shoots' Mike with her controller.

MIKE

What the hell?

She grabs him. Turns him. Puts her 'blade' to his throat.

CELESTE

There can only be one.

Celeste pretends to slit his throat. She licks her blade. Mike whips off his helmet in frustration.

CELESTE

I won! Give the Queen her pin!

MIKE

Do you ever get motion sickness  
from VR?

CELESTE

No, why?

Mike vomits.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Tabitha and a group of INSURERS search the lobby. Tabitha  
sees a sign that reads: VIRTUAL REALITY ROOM with an arrow.

TABITHA

Let's split up. Search every one of  
these game rooms.

INT. MAGFEST - CARD GAME ROOM - NIGHT

A room filled with card tables and MAGIC! THE GATHERING  
matches. In the back corner, GAMBLERS huddle around a table.

Tomaso sits across from Celeste. MAGIC CARDS and WADS OF CASH  
sit in between them. On top off the pile of money sits a PIN.  
Mike stands over Celeste.

TOMASO

I'm going to end this soon. My kids  
are probably getting worried.

MIKE

You have kids?

CELESTE

(to Mike)

His Sim kids.

(to Tomaso)

Your money is mine, puta!

The gamblers all SHUSH her.

TOMASO

(whispers)

You trying to get this game shut  
down? Shut the fuck up.

CELESTE

(whispers)

I'm trying to win that pin from  
you. You shut the fuck up.

MIKE

(whispers)

Can you both shut the fuck up? I can't afford getting in trouble again.

TOMASO

(whispers)

Don't tell me to shut the fuck up.

CELESTE

(whispers)

Yeah, Mike. Shut the fuck up.

MIKE

(whispers)

I am shutting the fuck up, you're the one not shutting the fuck up.

TOMASO

(whispers)

How about we all shut the fuck up?

CELESTE

(whispers)

Shut the fuck up! I'm drawing.

Celeste draws a card. Mike smirks.

CELESTE

Should I do it?

MIKE

I think you should. Prepare for carnage, Tomaso.

CELESTE

Mother effing Carnage Tyrant!

Celeste throws the DINOSAUR CARD on the table. Tomaso throws his hand onto the table in defeat.

INSURERS, members of Tabitha's army, enter.

INSURER

Over there. At the back table.

TOMASO

Scram, it's the pigs!

The gamblers SPRINT in different directions. Mike frantically scoops their earnings. Celeste grabs the pin.

They run for the exit.

INT. TATTOO ROOM - NIGHT

A hotel room turned tattoo parlor. Gundam prepares the TATTOO GUN. Mike sits on an EXAM TABLE. Celeste by his side.

Hand drawn PORTRAITS of a woman who looks exactly like Tabitha hang on the wall. They catch Mike's attention.

MIKE

Hm, she looks oddly familiar.  
(to Celeste)  
Pin number eight, here we come!

GUNDAM

You ever get inked before?

MIKE

Nope. No tattoos. To be honest, I'm kinda terrified of needles.

GUNDAM

You know what you want?

MIKE

Not really. Something small. I'm only doing this for the pin.

GUNDAM

Pin?

Gundam turns on the tattoo gun. It BUZZES. Mike passes out.

CELESTE

I know what he wants.

TATTOO ROOM - LATER

Celeste SLAPS a passed out, shirtless Mike. He wakes.

CELESTE

All done, big guy.

MIKE

But I didn't say what I wanted.

CELESTE

I picked for you.

Celeste points to Mike's wrist. He has a tattoo of TWO CHAIN LINKS and the words "A man chooses. A slave obeys."

CELESTE

Know what it's from?

MIKE

Of course. Bioshock.

CELESTE

You like it?

MIKE

I love it. Thank you. I never would've had the balls to get this without you. But I love it.

CELESTE

Glad to hear. Now put your shirt on, we still have one more pin.

MIKE

One more?! I thought this was for the pin?

CELESTE

Nah, that was just for you.

Mike hops down from the table. His back has a CRUDE TATTOO of a PENIS DRAGON, a dragon with a penis for a body. Celeste smiles at Brett. He winks.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

A hotel conference hall turned concert venue. A JAZZ BAND performs for a large crowd.

The band begins playing VIDEO GAME MUSIC. The crowd goes wild. Mike and Celeste wade toward the stage.

MIKE

This last pin, the band has them?

CELESTE

They toss them out to people in the crowd. Just need them to notice us.

MIKE

What if you crowd surf? I can lift you up.

CELESTE

I don't want a bunch of horny incels groping my ass.

MIKE

I'll do it.

CELESTE  
Grope my ass?

MIKE  
No, I'll crowd surf for the pin.

CELESTE  
Well, well. Look who is finally out  
of his shell.

Celeste turns to a group of men behind them.

CELESTE  
Hey! He wants to crowd surf. Can  
you launch him into the air?

The men shrug and begin to grab Mike.

MIKE  
Launch? Wait, hold on.

ON TOP OF THE CROWD

Mike's voice is lost in the noise. He is THROWN into the air.  
He closes his eyes, embracing for impact when he is--

CAUGHT. He begins to float atop the sea of people. Mike  
begins to enjoy it, fist bumping in the air.

MIKE  
Fuck yeah!

Mike loses Celeste in the crowd as he surfs to the stage.

GUITARIST  
Looks like we got a crowd surfer!  
Come get your ass on stage.

The crowd speeds it up, rushing Mike to the stage. He reaches  
the stage in no time and is propelled up onto it.

GUITARIST  
That was rad, dude. What do y'all  
think, does this guy deserve a pin?

The crowd goes WILD.

GUITARIST  
You wanna pin?

MIKE  
Yes please.



The guitarist reaches into his pocket and hands Mike the FINAL pin. Mike holds the pin up to the crowd looking for Celeste. Mike GRABS the microphone.

MIKE

Celeste! I got the pin! We did it!

He can't find her. But he does find INSURERS.

GUITARIST

Enjoy your well earned pin. You can exit to either side, bro.

Mike sees both exits are BLOCKED by insurers. He panics. Looks out into the crowd and FINALLY sees Celeste at the very back of the crowd. She motions for him to join her.

Mike JUMPS into the crowd. They catch him.

MIKE

Take me to the back!

The crowd complies, pushing him to the back of the room. He finally reaches Celeste, but isn't put down.

MIKE

Insurers. They're here. My mother must have sent them.

Mike tries to get down but can't.

MIKE

Hey, let me down!

The crowd ignores him and continues to carry him. Celeste PINCHES the hands holding Mike.

SMACK. Mike drops to the floor. Mike and Celeste run out to--

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is crowded with ZOMBIES. Mike and Celeste squeeze their way through the moaning crowd.

MIKE

What's with the zombies?

CELESTE

Humans versus Zombies is starting.

Mike and Celeste make it through the zombie horde.

MIKE

Where are the humans?

SOLDIERS decked out in NERF WEAPONS and NERF ARMOR turn the corner. Mike and Celeste stand between humans and zombies.

MIKE

Ah sh--

SOLDIER

Attack! Clear the horde!

The zombies SPRINT toward the soldiers.

MIKE

These zombies can sprint?!

Mike and Celeste run from the horde. The soldiers OPEN FIRE.

NERF BULLETS pelt and squeak off Mike and Celeste. She uses Mike as a shield as he powers through the barrage of bullets.

An insurer, close behind, is hit in the eye with a NERF BULLET. When he comes too, Mike and Celeste are gone.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hallway is quiet. Mike and Celeste run. Laughing.

MIKE

That was like something out of a video game.

Celeste puts her hand over Mike's heart.

CELESTE

You feel that? No video game can replicate this rush.

MIKE

You think we lost them?

CELESTE

Yeah. Just to be safe though.

Celeste opens an EMPLOYEES ONLY door.

MIKE

Should I even bother protesting?

CELESTE

Aww, you're learning.

EXT. HOTEL ROOF - NIGHT

Dark. Snow falls. Strong winds.

Mike and Celeste walk to the edge of the roof.

CELESTE

Magfest, as amazing as it is, can  
be a lot.

Celeste walks behind a LARGE AC UNIT. She picks up TWO LAWN  
CHAIRS.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

I come up here to get away when I'm  
feeling overwhelmed.

MIKE

Hard to imagine you being  
overwhelmed.

Silence. They admire the view of the snowfall.

CELESTE

Well, we got all eight badges. I  
guess this is it for us?

MIKE

I still need my laptop.

CELESTE

Right, of course. I'll get that  
first thing tomorrow morning. Give  
Marcos time to cool off.

MIKE

My presentation is at noon, I need  
it now.

CELESTE

Do you love me?

MIKE

(panicking)  
Where did that come from?

CELESTE

When we were in VR, you said you  
loved me. Did you mean it?

MIKE

We were playing a game.  
(hesitant)  
Do you love me?

CELESTE

Right now?  
 (beat)  
 How can I not?

Mike lets out a childish squeal and smile.

MIKE

That's so cool.

Celeste snuggles close to Mike for warmth.

CELESTE

My life sucks 352 days a year. I hate my job. My apartment. My boyfriend. I'm trapped by my own safety net.

MIKE

What about the other ten days?

CELESTE

(ignoring him)  
 But for these three days here at Magfest...  
 (beat)  
 My life is perfect.

MIKE

You haven't really talked about your life back home.

CELESTE

For good reason.

More silence. Celeste leans her head on Mike's shoulder.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Wouldn't it be nice if the Sun forgot to rise?

MIKE

Like if the Earth stopped rotating? Then we would all die, because the rotation of the--

CELESTE

I was being romantic. Jesus.

MIKE

Crap. Uh, if I could, I would stop time. Like Clockstoppers.

CELESTE  
Fucking Clockstoppers? I'm over  
here being fucking Wordsworth and  
you reference Clockstoppers?

Celeste breaks away from Mike.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
You still need work.

A beat.

MIKE  
So what now?

CELESTE  
I dunno, Mike. You wanna talk about  
Spy Kids while I suck your dick?

INT. MIKE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Mike and Celeste cuddle in bed. They watch the anime movie  
'Your Name.' It's at the sad part. Celeste rubs up on Mike.

She realizes Mike is SOBBING.

CELESTE  
You ok?

MIKE  
Across time and space, their love  
knows no bounds.

Celeste smiles, kisses him.

CELESTE  
Let's have sex.

Mike perks up, wiping away his tears.

MIKE  
What costumes were you thinking?

CELESTE  
No costumes. No props. No  
characters. Just you and me.

Mike pauses the movie. Celeste and Mike make out. She slides  
her hand underneath the sheets while kissing his neck.

Mike GRUNTS then SIGHS.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
Are you serious? Already?

MIKE  
You're really good at it! Like  
forty minutes, I'll be ready.

Celeste grabs the REMOTE and resumes the movie.

CELESTE  
You better be at attention by the  
time the credits roll.

Mike cracks his knuckles and stretches his neck out.

MIKE  
I'll be ready.

MIKE HOTEL ROOM - 43 MINUTES LATER

CELESTE  
Better.

MIKE  
Thank you.

CELESTE  
Ew, please don't thank me for sex.

MIKE  
Thank you for everything. Since I  
was a kid, I always thought this  
stuff wasn't in the cards for me.

CELESTE  
What stuff?

MIKE  
I don't know. Fun? Having someone.

CELESTE  
You don't have me.

MIKE  
I didn't mean it like that.

CELESTE  
You can borrow me, though.

Celeste and Mike kiss.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
Take me to prom tomorrow.

MIKE

Prom? Wait, how old are you?

CELESTE

Magprom. Everyone dresses up.  
Dancing. Drinks. Take me. It's well  
after your work thing.

Mike gets on top of Celeste. They giggle and kiss.

INT. MIKE HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Sun peaks through the blinds. Mike and Celeste fast asleep.

KNOCKING at the door. The knocking gets louder. Mike wakes.

MIKE

What the--

BANG. The door BREAKS off its hinges and falls. Celeste and Mike now wide awake. Tabitha stands in the doorway with a BATTERING RAM. Ernesto stands next to her.

ERNESTO

I have a key! What is wrong with  
you people?!

Tabitha enters. Danielle, Cole and Reed stand in the hallway.

TABITHA

I knew I'd find you with this  
harlot.

CELESTE

(to Mike)

What is she doing here?

TABITHA

Ending this shit. Mike, your flight  
leaves in two hours.

MIKE

But the presentation. We just need  
to get my laptop back. Give me two  
hours max and I'll--

DANIELLE

You mean this laptop?

Danielle reveals a BUSTED LAPTOP in a grocery bag.

ERNESTO

Someone left it with the front desk. It's got your name on it... somewhere in there.

DANIELLE

You lied to my face. You said you would get it done. You failed to mention you didn't even have your fucking laptop.

MIKE

There's still time. I just need to find a laptop, download a couple programs, import our--

DANIELLE

Your flight leaves in two hours.

TABITHA

You have fucked this family for years. You've always put your weird hobbies and fetishes above being normal for the sake of the family.

(beat)

But the minute you fuck my employees is the minute I fuck back.

MIKE

Danielle--

TABITHA

No. Don't talk to her. You're done twisting the knife in her back.

DANIELLE

I thought if I let you have your fun--

REED

Nerds like Mike will never grow up.

TABITHA

Zip it. The women are speaking.

REED

Yes ma'am.

DANIELLE

He's right. You'll never grow up.

Mike hangs his head. It stings.



MIKE

None of you get it. None of you grew up alone, knowing your family was-- is ashamed of you. Pretending to hate the things I love. Doing whatever it takes to fit in. Every day thinking of new ways to make friends. Every day failing. Every day coming home and losing myself in a video game, a comic, a cartoon, a world that didn't care who I was. Or who I wasn't.

Mike grabs Celeste's hand. She breaks away to grab her shoe.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Magfest is the first place to reward me for being me. Celeste is the first person to like me.

DANIELLE

I liked you.

MIKE

You don't know me.

DANIELLE

You never let me know you.

TABITHA

Sorry you were a fucking loser growing up. But your little sob story doesn't change the fact that you fucked us.

MIKE

What I have with Celeste means more to me than any presentation or job.

TABITHA

Marcos.

Marcos enters. Mike takes a defensive position.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Marcos here is the one who found your laptop.

MIKE

He's the one who broke it!

MARCOS

Those are strong accusations.  
(to Celeste)  
(MORE)

MARCOS (CONT'D)

Your fling ends now. You've had your fun. Let's go.

MIKE

She's done with you. Get over it.

MARCOS

How did you imagine this playing out? You two leave Magfest together? I'm trying to help you, dude. She constantly plays this game. You took it to far this time, Celeste.

CELESTE

I'm sorry, Mike.

Celeste continues to get dressed.

MIKE

You're seriously going back to him?

CELESTE

This was always how it was going to end.

MIKE

But this weekend.

CELESTE

Was great. But this is Magfest. The real world isn't like this. You of all people should know that.

Celeste, now fully dressed, leaves with Marcos

TABITHA

Pack your shit.

Tabitha turns to leave. She grabs Mike's INSURANCE BADGE off the counter.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Did you even use this?

Tabitha catches a glimpse of Mike's back. She walks over and turns him around. She sees his awful tattoo.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Where the fuck did I go wrong?

Everyone leaves the hotel room. Danielle is the last one out.

DANIELLE  
Have a safe flight.

MIKE  
Danielle, please. I can explain.

Danielle does not wait. She leaves Mike to pack by himself.

EXT. HOTEL ENTRANCE - DAY

Snow falls. Mike stands next to his bags waiting for his Uber. Ernesto approaches.

ERNESTO  
After wreaking havoc all weekend,  
you're finally leaving, huh?

MIKE  
Mhm.

ERNESTO  
Thank god.

Mike hangs his head. Sniffles.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)  
Did you have fun?

MIKE  
You don't have to patronize me.  
I'll be out of your hair soon.

ERNESTO  
You seemed lonely. Sure you've been  
a pain in my ass, but I don't hate  
you. I thought you were  
interesting.

MIKE  
Interesting? You mean weird.

ERNESTO  
What's the difference? You're  
passionate about stuff is all I  
meant.

MIKE  
Passionate about nerdy stuff. About  
dumb stuff.

ERNESTO  
And I cry every time Cuba doesn't  
qualify for the World Cup.

Mike cracks a smile.

MIKE

I don't think that's dumb at all.

A CAR pulls up. Mike looks at his phone.

MIKE (CONT'D)

This is me. Goodbye, uh--

ERNESTO

Ernesto. Ernesto Gutierrez.

Mike loads his bag into the car.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Although I guess I'm not Gutierrez anymore now that my wife is gone.

MIKE

You took her last name?

ERNESTO

I took her name, she took my heart. Guess that makes us even.

Ernesto bursts into tears.

MIKE

Hang in there. It'll get better.

ERNESTO

Really? Look how it turned out for you.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Danielle stands in front of a a packed conference table. Tabitha, Reed and Cole sit among the strangers in nice clothes. Danielle delivers her presentation. She's nervous.

DANIELLE

That brings us to all you really care about. The numbers.

She gets a few chuckles from the meeting. She clicks to a slide that just says THE NUMBERS.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(stalling)

We can all agree that saving money is good, right? We like money.

The people around the table give confused looks. Danielle, panicking, grabs a DRY ERASE MARKER and draws on the board.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)  
This is your standard bar graph.

INT. CAR - DAY

Mike sits quietly in the backseat. His UBER DRIVER keeps his eyes on the road.

UBER DRIVER  
There's water back there is you get thirsty.

Mike grabs a worn WATER BOTTLE from the cup holder.

MIKE  
Has this bottle been used?

UBER DRIVER  
Yup. Don't worry though, I ran it through the dishwasher and refilled her with fresh water. Good as new.

Mike puts the bottle back.

MIKE  
Do you have any new bottles?

UBER DRIVER  
This one hasn't been opened.

The Uber Driver hands MIKE a DASANI.

MIKE  
Dasani? No thanks.

UBER DRIVER  
Figured. Been trying to get rid of this thing for months.

Mike hands the DASANI back. The Uber Driver looks at Mike's wrist tattoo.

UBER DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Cool tattoo. What does it say?

MIKE  
A man chooses. A slave obeys.

UBER DRIVER  
Hah. That's clever. Which are you?

Mike stares out the window, hanging on the question.

UBER DRIVER (CONT'D)  
I'd like to think I'm a man, but  
I'd do anything for a five star  
rating.

The Uber Driver locks eyes with Mike in his rear view mirror.

UBER DRIVER (CONT'D)  
Anything.

MIKE  
Please stop the car.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM HALLWAY - DAY

Mike sprints down an empty hallway. Danielle paces back and forth, biting her nails.

MIKE  
Danielle.

DANIELLE  
Why are you here?

MIKE  
Is the meeting over?

DANIELLE  
I told them I had to step out. I'm  
delaying the inevitable face plant  
I'm about to make. Without the  
numbers, I can't substantiate shit.

MIKE  
Let me present the numbers.

DANIELLE  
You've fucked us enough--

MIKE  
Let me do this. What have you got  
to lose at this point?

Danielle, in a moment of desperation, gives a 'fuck it' sigh.

INT. INSURANCE MEETING - DAY

Mike enters with confidence. Danielle follows.

TABITHA

No. No. Who let this worm in?

MIKE

Hello. I'm Mike. I'm the numbers guy who is also a huge nerd. I got caught up in the total kick ass convention next door and dropped the ball on--

Mike locks eyes with the pastor at the head of the table.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Duncan?

DUNCAN

Oh shit. Mike.

Duncan, the guy from the furry party, sits next to his WIFE.

WIFE

Duncan, you know this man?

MIKE

Your name is actually Duncan?

DUNCAN

(hesitant)

Yes, we've met.

MIKE

We met while praying in the garden outside. By the *furry* plants.

TABITHA

(whispers to Cole)

What the hell are furry plants?

MIKE

After talking about the Catholic--

Duncan shakes his head.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Baptist--

Duncan shakes his head.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Presbyterian--

Duncan nods.

MIKE (CONT'D)

--faith, we realized we both had a lot in common. He said he wanted to sign with Sharpe Insurance because he admired my honesty, but also my willingness to keep him safe, his properties and identity.

Danielle bumps a bit on the pitch, but let's Mike continue.

WIFE

Is this true?

DUNCAN

Mhm. I trust him.

WIFE

Then let's see the numbers. If they check out, we can sign whatever we have to sign and get out of this unholy room. Not a cross in sight.

MIKE

I'm not good at presenting. I'm not good with people. I'm going to do the math and hope you follow. Cool?

Everyone nods, not quite sold. Danielle buries her head in her hands. Mike begins scribbling numbers and equations on the board. He randomly shouts out insurance terms.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Deductible.

(beat)

Premium would be--

(beat)

If face amount is this, primary benefactor would get--

(beat)

Hurricanes, tornadoes, pandemic--

(beat)

There.

Mike takes a step back. The board is COVERED as if a mad scientist just built a time machine.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Understand?

Everyone is lost.



WIFE

So we'd save about fourteen percent  
and have a slightly lower  
deductible over a ten year period?  
Netting about seventy grand in  
savings over the same period?

MIKE

Precisely.

WIFE

Perfect. Well the numbers look good  
and Duncan trusts you, so draw up  
the papers and fax them over.

Duncan, his wife, and their people leave. Duncan shares a  
slight nod with Mike on his way out. Tabitha hyperventilates.

TABITHA

Oh sweet Jesus. God fucking bless  
us, every one.

Tabitha pauses for laughter. There is none.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Dickens? Come on, people.

DANIELLE

Was any of that true? Praying in  
the garden and all that?

MIKE

Nope.

DANIELLE

Then how did you know him?

MIKE

Magfest. You're welcome.

Mike has a wide smile.

TABITHA

Fuck you. You did what I pay you to  
do. Continue to do so and I will  
keep paying you. That's how a job  
fucking works.

Mike nods, quickly put back in his place.

TABITHA (CONT'D)

Our flight leaves in four hours. Go play Trek Wars or whatever it is with your little friends. Your work is done.

Mike looks to Danielle for approval. She gives him a cold shoulder.

DANIELLE

There's plenty of time to talk about how much you fucking suck on the plane. Enjoy yourself til then.

Mike gives a gracious nod before exiting.

INT. MAGFEST ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Cosplayers in FANCY DRESSES and SUITS walk past security. Mike attempts to sneak through. A security guard dressed as ROBOCOP grabs him.

MIKE

Celeste! Celeste!

ROBOCOP speaks in a robotic voice.

ROBOCOP

Dead or alive, you're coming with me.

MIKE

Give me a break, Robocop.

ROBOCOP

My friends call me Robocop. You call me--

(drops robotic voice)

Wait. Hold on. Say that again, but call me Murphy.

SERENITY (O.S.)

Unhand him, Murphy. He's with me.

Serenity approaches. Robocop releases his grip on Mike.

ROBOCOP

Of course, Ms. Serenity.

MIKE

How? Why? He just listened to you?

SERENITY  
Who do you think runs Magfest?

MIKE  
Oh, shit!

SERENITY  
Yes, oh shit indeed. You're  
searching for Celeste?

MIKE  
How did you know?

SERENITY  
You were screaming her name thirty  
seconds ago.

INT. MAGPROM - NIGHT

The ballroom is BUMPING. Music. Lights. Dancing. Drinks.  
Serenity experts Mike into the prom to find a sea of people.

MIKE  
We're never going to find her.

SERENITY  
Come with me.

Serenity leads Mike around the crowd and up on stage. She  
taps the DJ on the shoulder.

SERENITY (CONT'D)  
We need to borrow the floor for a  
second.

DJ  
Of course, Ms. Serenity.

SERENITY  
(into microphone)  
Hey! Everyone, listen up! Gurk has  
something to say.

Serenity steps to the side, allowing Mike to take over.

RANDOM NERD  
It's Flipper Whipper!

MIKE  
(into microphone)  
Um. Hello. Yeah. Is Celeste here?

Nothing.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Celeste?

Still nothing.

SERENITY

Dagmar! Where are you?

Silence.

MIKE

I don't think she's here.

The crowd parts. Tomaso emerges.

TOMASO

Well. Well. Well. You got a lot of balls showing up to my Sim daughter's wedding.

MIKE

Wasn't her wedding yesterday?

TOMASO

I started a new game.

MIKE

I'm looking for Celeste. I don't want any trouble.

TOMASO

This fuckin' stronzo thinks he owns the place. I know where she is thanks to my little birdies. But no way I'm tellin' you.

MIKE

You have to tell me where she is.

TOMASO

Oh yeah? Says who?

MIKE

It's the day of your Sim daughter's wedding. You can't refuse my request.

Tomaso angrily stares at Mike. He drops his Sopranos accent.

TOMASO  
Whatever, she's at Steak N Shake.  
(putting on accent)  
You're a clever man, Big Mike.

INT. STEAK N SHAKE - NIGHT

DING. DING. Mike enters. A few customers here and there, but mostly empty. A SERVER greets Mike.

SERVER  
Welcome to Steak N Shake. How many?

Mike looks around the restaurant. Celeste sits by herself in the back corner. She's dressed as SAILOR MOON.

MIKE  
I'm with her.

SERVER  
I'll get an extra menu. Sorry, she said she was dining alone.

MIKE  
It's fine. I won't be eating.

Mike walks to Celeste. He sits across from her in the booth.

CELESTE  
Let it go, Mike.

MIKE  
I'm not here to get you back.

CELESTE  
Don't bother scolding me. I doubt there's anything you can say that Marcos didn't just tell me.  
(a beat)  
He ended things between us. For good. I don't know the life I'm returning to after today.

An awkward silence.

MIKE  
I'm not here to scold you.

CELESTE  
One last fuck, is that it? Alright.

Celeste wipes her hands and mouth with a napkin.

CELESTE (CONT'D)  
Bathrooms here are pretty clean.

MIKE  
I'm not here to fuck you.

CELESTE  
Then why are you here? To bother  
me? To try and make me feel guilty?

MIKE  
I wanted to say thank you.

CELESTE  
Don't patronize me. Please. I get  
it, I fucked you over. My bad. Can  
I drink my milkshake in peace?

MIKE  
Thank you for getting me to realize  
my value.

CELESTE  
Stop.

MIKE  
My time with you changed me.  
Changed my life. The way I view  
things, people, myself. All that  
shit. Forever. For the good.

CELESTE  
Fucking stop. I'm not Mother  
Teresa, ok? I'm a bored little girl  
who toyed with you. Admit it. Admit  
you think I'm a shitty person.  
Admit I suck. Tell me you hate me.

Celeste on the verge of tears.

MIKE  
You're an incredible person who  
helps other because you're afraid  
to help yourself.  
(beat)  
But you're also an agent of chaos  
who'll end up getting me killed.

Mike stands. He tosses her a large MAGPROM badge.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
The Legend of Celeste lives on. I  
sincerely hope it was all worth it.

Celeste keeps her head down, staring at the badge. Mike gets one last look at her and heads for the exit.

CELESTE

It was.

DING DING. Mike is gone.

Celeste sits happily. Alone. With her milkshake and badge.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Half the plane filled with insurance people. Half the plane filled with Magfest people. Tabitha sleeps in first class. Gundam sits next to her, staring in awe.

Cole and Reed read HENTAI MAGAZINES.

Mike sits next to Danielle. It's tense.

MIKE

I'm sorry for all the trouble--

DANIELLE

If we didn't land that client, you would've been dead to me.

MIKE

But because we did?

DANIELLE

I'm still pissed at you.

(beat)

But, less pissed.

Mike smiles, turning his attention to his phone.

MIKE

I'm just going to keep to myself and watch my anime then.

DANIELLE

You do you, Mike.

They share a smile.

FADE TO:

TITLE CARD: ONE YEAR LATER

EXT. GAYLORD HOTEL - NIGHT

Quiet. Snow falls. Hotel lights illuminate the night.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

The hotel is POPPING. Cosplayers everywhere.

Mike and Danielle walk through the crowds. Mike has a BIOSHOCK T-SHIRT on.

DANIELLE

Go grab us a table. I'll check in.

MIKE

Alright, sounds good--

COLOSSUS

Wroooaaaghhh!

Everyone, including Mike, joins in.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

The pub is packed. Mike talks with the hostess.

HOSTESS

I think we have a table in the  
back. Is that ok?

The hostess escorts Mike to an empty table. The Bartender and Mike share a familiar nod. Mike sits down. He studies the menu. Past his menu he notices--

A LONELY NERD sitting by himself at the bar. He plays on his NINTENDO SWITCH.

CELESTE (O.S.)

Which one of you fuckers is Brad?

Celeste stands at the other end of the bar.

BARTENDER

Please. Not again, Celeste.

Mike smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.

**THE END**