

ASPIRATIONS OF ECCENTRICITY

Written by

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INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

CAT (30) lies in bed. Bags under his red eyes. Shaggy hair splayed over the pillow. The clock reads: "5:23 AM".

He scrunches his eyes and tries to return to sleep.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat slouches on the sofa in his sweatpants, hand outstretched holding the remote. He watches TV for a few seconds.

CAT

That alibi is an obvious misdirect.

He switches to Netflix and picks a random film. A rom-com.

LATER

CAT (CONT'D)

Come-on... Where's the close friend she'll end up with?

On the TV, a wimpy guy's shopping bags split, spilling the contents on the pavement.

CAT (CONT'D)

Bam. There he is.

Back to Netflix. Picks a super hero movie.

LATER

CAT (CONT'D)

Oh no, he's lost his powers - now he'll need to rely on his ordinary friends for help...

He switches the TV off and wanders around the living room. Pulls back the curtains and winces at the light.

He closes the curtains and scans the apartment, searching for a reason to do something. Anything.

He drags his fingers across the dusty spines of books on a shelf. Picks a hard-back copy of Treasure Island.

He opens it and tilts it so the pages flop from one side to the other, then holds the book upside-down so the pages dangle freely.

There's a hole in the spine between the bindings and the cover. He moves it to his eye and peers through like a telescope. He scans his apartment through it.

He looks at a print of a beach on the wall. There's an OLD MAN sitting in a large wingback chair on the beach.

Cat frowns and moves his eye from the book's spine. The beach on the print is completely empty. He looks back through the spine and the Old Man is much closer, staring back through the telescope.

Cat drops the book onto the

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The book THUDS onto the sand.

OLD MAN

Hello.

Cat looks around in panic.

CAT

Where am I?

OLD MAN

I don't know...

The Old Man strolls along the beach. Cat looks around again and then follows.

He hoicks up the waistband of his sweatpants and reties the draw-string.

EXT. DICKENSIAN BACK ALLEY - DAY

He looks up from his sweatpants. Sickly people squat in damp corners. One gaunt woman has a familiar, ambiguous smile.

He looks back behind him. No beach, just more street.

He continues to follow the Old Man, stepping awkwardly across the wet cobbles in his bare feet.

Above them, a tiger wheezes as it flies over. Its breaths accompanied by the gargling, popping sounds of fluid.

CAT

Who are these people?

OLD MAN
They're the forgotten muses.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

THUD. Cat whips his head around to the window.

A dazed pigeon flutters away.

He looks down at the book on the floor and the print on the wall.

He picks up the book and peers through the spine at the beach. It's empty.

He pads back to the sofa and sits, his hand reaching instinctively for the remote. He looks at his hand as if it wasn't his own, then places it on his lap.

SCRATCHING at the front door. Cat looks around.

CAT
Damn dog!

He springs up and wrenches the door open. A white tail disappears around a corner. He jogs after it.

Turns the corner to see a white rabbit looking at him. It bounces off.

A neighbour's letter box flips open and two old eyes appear.

OLD MAN
Don't force it. Follow it.

He gingerly steps down the corridor and around the next corner, onto the deck of

EXT. GALLEON - TWILIGHT

It cuts through the purple seas as giant wings on masts beat the ship forwards. They're chasing a yellow whale with a hatch on top so crew can climb inside.

The Old Man finishes scrubbing the deck and tosses his brush into a bucket. The bucket deforms as if it's digesting the brush. His knees creek as he stands.

CAT
Who are you?

OLD MAN
I am Old Man.

CAT
Why are you here?

OLD MAN
Because you want me here.

CAT
Here being?

OLD MAN
Daydream.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat turns his hand over in his lap.

CAT
I'm daydreaming?

Cat plods to the fridge, rubbing his stomach.

He looks inside. Pulls out the cheese and gives it a sniff. He does the same with the milk, then puts it back and makes himself a sandwich.

CAT (CONT'D)
Forgotten muses...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Dimly lit, with rows of desks. Software developers' heads are just visible behind their banks of screens.

Cat's face is lit by a screen-full of faces on video chat. He speaks into his headset.

CAT
That won't work with our authentication.

BIG PICTURE GUY
We can think about authentication later.

CAT
No. We can't.

BIG PICTURE GUY
Well, what will work?

CAT
Depends what you're trying to do...

LATER

Cat, head in hands, headset on desk.

A message pops up on his screen:

BOSS (MESSAGE)
You free for a chat?

Cat wipes his face and types back:

CAT (MESSAGE)
Yep.

A video chat starts immediately and Cat pulls on his headset.

BOSS
How are you doing, Cat?

CAT
Fine.

BOSS
How are you really doing?

CAT
Oh, don't do that, please?

BOSS
I have to - it's my job.

CAT
Demotivated.

BOSS
OK, that's good. Why do you think that is?

CAT
Because I don't think any of this really matters.

BOSS
This...?

CAT
This. This app. We're making an app that specifically tracks the usage of apps that track app usage.

BOSS

No one's done that before. We're pioneers.

CAT

No ones built a life sized replica of the Taj Mahal using lemons, but that doesn't mean it's a good idea.

Boss lets out an involuntary chuckle.

BOSS

It's a job Cat. We have people that want this, so we do it, and they pay us.

CAT

Yeah.

BOSS

I've noticed your performance hasn't been great lately.

CAT

Yeah.

BOSS

So what can we do about that?

CAT

I'll focus on the critical tasks and chase up reviews.

BOSS

Great. Let's see how that goes for a week.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat stares at the beach, tapping the book against his head.

He rubs his eyes and walks to the kitchen. Pours himself a glass of water.

Some spilled water drains down the plughole, glinting light as the last drips drop away. The glinting drips transform into a blinking eye. Cat locks his eyes on it.

CAT

Here we go...

The eye becomes drips once more.

CAT (CONT'D)
What did he say?

He runs the tap some more, then stops it.

CAT (CONT'D)
Don't force it. Follow it.

The water drains and drips away.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat looks out through the window. A large smudge marks the outline of the body and wing of the pigeon that hit it.

Cat traces his finger along the wing.

He grabs a pad of paper from his desk and traces the wing onto it. Then he draws a mast beside it, and a ship beneath.

CAT
Of course.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat enters through the front door carrying a box. He sets it down and takes out: Lava lamp, magic eye picture, dashboard hula girl, fairy lights and a brightly coloured toy xylophone.

He sets them up in front of the sofa and sits on the floor between them.

CAT
Just follow your thoughts, Cat.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cat has a blissful look on his face. Every few seconds he strikes a random note on the xylophone.

He slowly opens his eyes.

CAT
What the hell am I doing?

He gets up and moves to the door. Puts on boots and a jacket and leaves.

EXT. HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Cat strolls past brightly lit fried chicken and kebab shops of a mid-sized English town. Drunk people inside the shops struggle to articulate their order.

A car with a loose fan belt screeches down the road. Cat watches it. As it drives off it bursts into a flock of twittering birds.

The twittering becomes ringing. Cat reaches into his pocket and retrieves his phone. The screen says: "Neighbour".

He answers as the car screeches away.

CAT

Hello?

NEIGHBOUR (V.O.)

Is that Cat?

CAT

Yes.

NEIGHBOUR (V.O.)

Your smoke detector's been going off for twenty minutes.

Cat sprints off.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cat jogs down the corridor to his apartment as two FIREFIGHTERS leave through the smashed door.

FIREFIGHTER

Is this your place?

CAT

Yeah, what happened?

FIREFIGHTER

Electrical fire. You're lucky, it didn't spread far.

Cat passes into the apartment. The sofa and objects laid out in front of it are a black mess.

FIREFIGHTER (CONT'D)

It's all safe now. Be more careful next time...?

CAT

Thanks.

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Cat scrubs the floor to make a clean route through to the kitchen. He's covered in soot.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Cat washes the soot off in the steaming shower.

CAT

Stupid, stupid -

EXT. DESERT - DAY

CAT

- stupid.

Dunes stretch as far as the eye can see. The Old Man sits in his wingback chair. Cat jogs over to him.

The Old Man stands and they trek across the sand.

CAT (CONT'D)

What does this all mean?

OLD MAN

Oof - that's a biggie. I can't answer that.

CAT

What can you answer?

Old Man stops and looks at Cat.

OLD MAN

Daydream is not a place of answers, but a place of questions.

CAT

What question should I...
(trails off)

Old Man smirks.

OLD MAN

Why are *you* here?

CAT

I'm... Bored. I've seen it all before. I'm stuck on a carousel that's been going round and round, and the same blurry scene keeps whooshing by me.

He looks around.

CAT (CONT'D)

Kinda expected to be on a carousel by now...

OLD MAN

Why not get off?

CAT

(stunned)

I... I...

Cat frowns.

The sand shifts beneath his feet. He's dragged down into a swirling vortex. The Old Man is gone. Cat is sucked down into a dark black hole.

INT./EXT. BIRD BOX - DAY

Cat peers out through the hole.

He turns to look inside. The Old Man is sat in the nest, resting his arm on an egg.

CAT

How do I get off the carousel?

OLD MAN

The carousel is just a metaphor.

Cat thinks for a second.

CAT

How do I find something new?

The Old Man gets up and steps over to Cat. He steps past and peers through the hole.

OLD MAN

Maybe look out there.

Cat peers over the man and sees

INT. POKER ROOM - NIGHT

Lady Godiva, a dragon, a vampire and a sphynx are sat around playing poker.

CAT
That's not new.

OLD MAN
Are you saying Lady Godiva
actually...?

CAT
No, but that's just a trite mix up
of old ideas.

OLD MAN
Then I guess you need to look
closer.

Cat looks at the table. His vision zooms in on the stacks of chips on the poker table baize. The baize turns white.

The chips morph into giant snowflakes that hurtle toward him.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cat jumps out of the shower gasping and shivering. He rubs himself with a towel to warm himself and gingerly reaches back in to turn off the freezing water.

CAT
Brrr.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Cat is at his desk. He's got his head in his hands. His eyes are closed and drool drips from his mouth onto the desk.

EXT. SPACE

Cat and the Old Man are riding a giant biscuit through the galaxy.

CAT
Tell me about the muses.

OLD MAN
Muses are a source of inspiration.
They are the creative spark that
sets the imagination aflame.

CAT
Why are they forgotten?

OLD MAN
Why are they forgotten?

CAT
Because people aren't seeking
inspiration.

The Old Man nods.

CAT (CONT'D)
But how can people come up with
something truly new when muses are
things that already exist.

Old Man ponders thoughtfully.

CAT (CONT'D)
How did someone come up with
talking animals in the Jungle Book,
Wonderland, Elves and Ziggy
Stardust?

OLD MAN
Are those things really new?

CAT
Well... No. Not entirely.
(looks at Old Man)
So if I want to discover something
new, I need to find my muse? Some
source of inspiration?

OLD MAN
That sounds more like an answer
than a question.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Cat looks up at his screen. There's a message waiting.

BOSS (MESSAGE)
Hey, you free for a chat?

CAT (MESSAGE)
Sure.

The video call starts.

BOSS
So, it's been a month now. How are things going?

CAT
Pretty good I think.

BOSS
Hmm. Your performance numbers haven't really improved.

CAT
That can't be right.

BOSS
I'm looking at them now.

CAT
I can try harder this month.

BOSS
How are things at home, Cat?

CAT
Fine.

BOSS
Been feeling OK?

CAT
Sure. Little tired maybe.

BOSS
I think I'd like for you to see an occupational health professional, to check everything's OK.

CAT
Is that really necessary?

BOSS
Just to make sure. Maybe you should speak to your GP too, about your tiredness.

CAT
OK.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat sits at his desk with his pad of paper. He writes the word "Muse" on it and underlines it.

He taps his pen on his teeth.

He writes the word "Muesli" underneath. He looks at it for a second, then crosses it out.

He gets up and goes to the door. Puts on his jacket and boots. Before he leaves he glances back at the burned sofa in the living room.

He checks the oven is off in the kitchen, switches off the multiway power adapter behind the TV, then leaves.

INT. GREASY SPOON - DAY

Cat sits alone. The table has a brown paper table cloth and a pot of crayons for children to draw on it.

He studies the drawings: Houses, cars, stick people. In one corner is an excellent portrait of a man in a flat cap. He takes a photo of it on his phone.

INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

Cat stares at a wall of costume hats.

He holds up a pilot's hat and a cowboy hat.

CAT
Flying cowboys...

Then a nun's veil and a pirate hat.

CAT (CONT'D)
Pirate nuns...

Then a Peter Pan cap and a police hat.

CAT (CONT'D)
Peter Pan police?
(sighs)

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Cat stands in front of a bookshelf. GIRL (25) comes over.

GIRL
Can I help you with anything?

CAT
I'm trying to find a book I'm not
looking for.

GIRL

Um. Wow. OK... I've got some old Nineteen-ninety-three road atlases out back. We use them to mop the floor when the roof leaks. I bet you weren't looking for one of those?

CAT

I was not. Fine, I'll take one.

GIRL

Just one? I've got a few left.

CAT

No, one'll do thanks.

He chuckles. Girl goes out back.

Cat browses the bookshelf while he waits.

CAT (CONT'D)

Jeez. Feels like a scene from a cheesy rom-com.

(tilts head)

Cute though.

GIRL

Ahem.

She hands him the road atlas and smiles.

CAT

Oh, I meant...

He pulls out a random book. It's a book about flags.

GIRL

Mmm. Cute flags. I'll take this to the till.

CAT

Wait, are you going to charge me for that?

GIRL

Sure, eventually these will run out, and then I might actually have to buy a mop.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat sits at his desk and opens the road atlas.

CAT
Now what...?

He takes it to the kitchen and sets it down by the hob. He starts making pasta.

He looks at the map.

EXT. MAP - DAY

Cat walks along the yellow lines that mark the roads in the road atlas.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat shakes his head and stirs the sauce.

EXT. MAP - DAY

Old Man pulls up in an old Ferrari.

Cat and Old Man speed along the lines of the map and the paper folds up to create a landscape around them.

OLD MAN
Let's say you find a muse. Then what?

CAT
Maybe I'll come up with something truly original.

OLD MAN
I see. You going to paint it, sculpt it, write about it?

CAT
I could.

OLD MAN
Could you?

CAT
I could learn.

OLD MAN
- Will you?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The smoke detector BEEPS loudly. The sauce in the pan is black.

Cat dumps the pan in the sink and grabs a towel to fan the detector.

NEIGHBOUR hammers on the front door.

CAT
(shouts)
It's OK, I got it!

A door SLAMS in the hallway.

INT. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH OFFICE - DAY

Cat sits across from OCC HEALTH WORKER.

OCC HEALTH WORKER
How are you feeling today?

CAT
I know why I'm here...

OCC HEALTH WORKER
What do you mean?

CAT
I looked it up. Before a company fires someone, they need to make sure there aren't any health reasons.

OCC HEALTH WORKER
(smiles)
That's not why we're here, Cat.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Cat stands by his desk with an empty box. The only things on his desk are company property: Monitor, mouse, keyboard, headset.

Cat tosses his ID badge onto the desk, puts his hands in his pockets and SECURITY escort him out.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat comes in through the front door. He goes to his desk and opens the screen of his laptop without sitting down. He clicks a bookmark to a website.

A job posting website pops up. He bulk-selects a bunch of software developer jobs and hits "Apply".

He walks back out. A cheap Ikea futon has replaced the burnt-out sofa.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cat lies on the grass, still in his work outfit. He stares at the sky.

His hand lifts up in front of him, holding his phone. He taps a news app and flicks through stories; war in Ukraine, shootings, global warming.

He drops his hand back to his side and continues staring at the sky.

After a moment, his hand lifts up again and he opens Instagram. He scrolls through videos: cats, dogs, life hacks, sports and people dancing.

The videos scroll out of his phone and wrap around him, trapping him in a small space surrounded by the videos.

The videos morph into disturbing mash-ups: cats and dogs dancing, buildings working out, astronaut life hacks. He bursts through a wall and into a

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

An ear of corn grows in time-lapse, but when the corn opens, there are teeth instead of kernels. The teeth fall and clatter on the floor of the

INT. SMALL SPACE

More memes - they're much more sinister than before.

Sirens blare. A sound of a GUNSHOT transitions into the ringing of a school alarm bell.

Cat falls backwards into a pool of money. He's drowning. He fights to the surface, where the whole pool is on fire. He coughs and splutters in the smoke.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Cat leans on an examination table. He coughs.

The DOCTOR appears from behind him and removes his latex glove.

DOCTOR

Well, there's nothing physically wrong with you.

CAT

Is it normal to be daydreaming this much? It's affecting my work, and I'm worried I might be going nuts.

Cat turns to look at the Doctor.

The Doctor is no longer there. In his place is a giant cashew in a lab coat.

CAT (CONT'D)

Ah.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Cat trudges down the street and stops at the bookshop.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Cat places two books on the counter by the till: One on storytelling and one on writing novels.

GIRL

Not as cute as the flag book...

Cat smiles.

GIRL (CONT'D)

You finished the atlas already?

CAT

Yeah, it turns out the Orkney Islands did it.

Girl chuckles.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

He opens the curtains, dumps himself on the futon and starts reading the books.

He continues reading into the night.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat is on a Zoom call with INTERVIEWER. He's had a hair cut and his shaggy hair is now short and tidy.

INTERVIEWER

We'd love to have you come join us
Cat. How soon could you start?

CAT

I'd like to leave it a month if
that's OK, so I can take a break?

INTERVIEWER

I totally understand, that's fine
with us.

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

Cat patiently waits.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Cat sits opposite DOCTOR #2.

DOCTOR #2

I can't see that there's anything
physically wrong with you...

Cat stares at the doctor, then pinches himself.

The doctor looks back warily.

DOCTOR #2 (CONT'D)

Are you OK?

CAT

Yeah, just... Never mind.

DOCTOR #2

I'd recommend getting some
exercise, as that will increase
your dopamine and serotonin levels.

CAT

Exercise?

DOCTOR #2
If your mood improves, it might
help you focus.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cat stands at the gates in brand new running shoes. He starts jogging down the path. Determined.

LATER

Cat stops, panting. He bends over and grabs his knees to support himself.

He glances back to the park gate, two-hundred yards behind him.

EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

Cat sits outside in his sweat-drenched sweatshirt, drinking an iced-latte.

He watches the bookshop across the street. Girl is in the window, rearranging the display.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Cat and Old Man sit around a campfire. Indistinct shapes move in the darkness, rustling the leaves.

OLD MAN
Don't worry, they can't harm us
here in the light.

CAT
How do you know?

OLD MAN
(shrugs)
It's your daydream...

CAT
It doesn't feel like it.

Cat throws a log onto the fire and the flames change colour.

OLD MAN
You found your muse yet?

CAT
Maybe...

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat writes the words "BOOKSHOP GIRL" in the middle of a page in his pad and draws a circle around them.

He draws a line and then writes "Uses maps as mops".

He gets up and paces around the apartment, thinking.

He sits back down and adds more lines: "Newspaper curtains", "table made of books", "Encyclopaedia teapot?"

He slams the pad shut and leans back in his chair.

EXT. DAYDREAM - DAY

Cat reclines in a deck chair under an oversized cocktail umbrella. Old Man reclines next to him. They're floating on a giant sponge in an enormous bathtub.

OLD MAN

How would an encyclopaedia teapot even work?

CAT

I don't know.

OLD MAN

The pages would get wet...

CAT

Maybe I need another muse.

OLD MAN

Or...

CAT

(sighs)
Or I could find out a bit more about her.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Cat stands in front of a bookcase. Girl comes over.

GIRL

You know, we have some hard-core flag books we keep in a special adults-only room.

Cat chuckles.

CAT

Not many people would try to sell a
30-year old road atlas.

GIRL

Not many people would actually pay
for one.

CAT

Can I ask you something?

GIRL

He said, asking me something.

CAT

(smiles)

Would you like to hang out some
time - just to chat.

Girl considers his request for a second.

GIRL

You seem a bit weird, so yeah, why
not. But on one condition - you buy
two more road atlases.

CAT

No way!

GIRL

Damn. Worth a try. OK, we close at
five.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Cat walks over to Girl, who's waiting in front of the
bookshop holding a viola case.

They walk off down the street.

CAT

You play the violin?

Girl smirks and opens the case. Inside is a lunchbox, some
snacks and a water bottle squeezed into the neck. She shuts
it again.

GIRL

(hushed)

It's also great for smuggling book
tokens.

CAT
Do people even use them any more?

GIRL
No, but they're a great size for
writing a shopping list on the
back.

Girl leads them to a picnic bench outside the

EXT. CAP AND WHISTLE PUB - DAY

She gestures inside.

GIRL
What do you want?

CAT
It's OK, I'll get the drinks.

GIRL
I've got to use the loo anyway.

CAT
How come you didn't go at the
bookshop?

GIRL
Dude, we use road atlases to clean
the floor - what do you think the
toilet situation is like?

CAT
Lager please.

Girl leaves her voila case and hops inside.

INT. SPACE STATION 21-LIMA

Cat and Old Man are chased by killer robots. They duck into a
side room, and the door snaps shut with a hiss.

CAT
She's definitely the muse.

OLD MAN
What are you doing here then?

CAT
You're right!

Cat turns, smashes a button on the wall and is sucked out through an air lock.

EXT. CAP AND WHISTLE PUB - DAY

Girl comes back out with two lagers as Cat snaps out of it.

GIRL
You looked pretty intense.

CAT
Nah, I was just thinking about something.

Girl places the pints down and sits.

GIRL
So Cat, what do you do?

CAT
Literally the most boring job in the world.

GIRL
(frowns)
A tax lawyer for a convent? No, wait - you work in a screw factory checking the little cross-bit on top of each one? No, wait -

CAT
I'm a software developer. I write apps.

GIRL
That doesn't sound so bad.

CAT
I'm writing an app to track tracker apps. Or at least I was.

GIRL
Out of interest, how to you track your app tracker tracker app?

CAT
Actually, our apps could track our own apps too.

GIRL
Wow, you guys really thought of everything.

She takes a sip.

GIRL (CONT'D)

You said you were writing the app.
You moving onto something else?

CAT

Yeah, I quit that job. Soon I'll
start working on a new app to
analyse app usage.

Girl grimaces.

GIRL

The polite thing here would be to
ask what that means - but I really
don't want to hear the answer...

CAT

No you do not!

LATER

There are a couple of empty pint glasses on the table and the
pub is busier.

GIRL

So what's with the books on
writing?

CAT

I want to create something that's
truly new. Everything has become so
predictable. Seems like there was a
time when anything was possible and
people dreamt up lots of weird new
things. Maybe we've forgotten how
to do that.

GIRL

Aren't all new books and films
something new, by definition? Even
a twist on a classic is new...

CAT

Not really new. Way-out-there new.
Like when The Matrix first came
out.

GIRL

Blew. My. Mind.

CAT

And now?

GIRL
Now we have multiverses...

CAT
Ugh.

GIRL
(chuckles)
Not a fan?

CAT
Done to death.

They both drink.

GIRL
So what's your book about?

CAT
I don't know... Maybe you.

GIRL
(confused)
Me?

CAT
Well, maybe not exactly you, but
I'm looking for a muse.

GIRL
Don't you think that's a bit
creepy?

CAT
(sighs)
Yep. But a lunchbox in a violin
case is probably the most
interesting thing I've seen in ten
years.

Girl looks down at her case.

CAT (CONT'D)
Sorry. I've weirded you out haven't
I?

GIRL
A little bit, but you know, why
not? I've never been a muse before.

CAT
(smiles)
OK.

GIRL

So what's next? You're not going to ask me to get naked are you?

CAT

No. I don't think so. I actually have no idea.

INT. PALACE - NIGHT

Cat and Old Man stroll through glistening crystal and glass corridors.

CAT

I want to see the forgotten muses.

OLD MAN

OK.

Old Man steps back. He pulls out a pouch and throws dust up into the air. He claps his hands and the dust sparkles and flashes.

They're still in the palace.

CAT

Why didn't it work?

OLD MAN

It's *your* daydream Cat.

Cat closes his eyes and steps forwards.

EXT. DICKENSIAN BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

His foot hits the cobbles and he opens his eyes.

He steps over to MONA LISA, who is sitting on a stool knitting. He sits on a packing crate.

CAT

Hello.

Mona Lisa smiles.

CAT (CONT'D)

What are you knitting?

Mona Lisa shrugs.

CAT (CONT'D)
 (to Old Man)
 Can't they speak?

OLD MAN
 Do you know what they would say?

CAT
 I guess not.

Cat walks down the street.

Rodin's THE THINKER peers from an open window, his head propped up on his arm on the window sill.

SMALL BOY in a green cap sits with his back to a fire, watching his shadow dancing on a wall.

CAT (CONT'D)
 I was hoping to learn more about
 how muses... work.

OLD MAN
 Muses just are. You have to make
 them 'work'.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat taps his pen on his empty pad.

He looks up at a sticky note attached to his lamp: "NEW JOB - 3rd Aug"

He looks at his phone screen: "7th July"

He writes the words "Violin case?"

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Cat walks in and up to the till.

CAT
 I think I've got something. You got
 a moment?

GIRL
 Sure.

They walk to a reading corner and sit.

Cat looks around.

CAT

You never seem to have any customers here...

GIRL

Nah, most people buy books online. We're just a glorified warehouse for when the orders come in.

CAT

That's kinda sad...

GIRL

Picks up at Christmas, but that's just biographies and bestsellers.

CAT

Hmm.

Cat pulls out his notepad. It's a mess of scribbles.

CAT (CONT'D)

So, you are going to travel into stories to rescue forgotten muses with your magic violin case.

Girl pops her eyebrows.

GIRL

It's actually a viola case.

CAT

What's the difference?

GIRL

You'd never fit a lunch box in a violin case.

CAT

OK, viola case. There's a combination lock on it, and when you change the numbers there are different things inside.

GIRL

Like a TARDIS, or Newt's briefcase?

CAT

No - it can't hold anything larger than a violi- A viola.

GIRL

OK, seems fair. Who am I rescuing again?

CAT
 Forgotten muses, the real people
 that inspired the characters in the
 book.

GIRL
 And I suppose I fly into these
 stories riding my viola case?

CAT
 No, no, no.

He grabs a hard-back book from the shelf and opens it
 horizontally so the pages hang down.

GIRL
 If you break the spine - you've
 bought it.

CAT
 You travel through the hole in the
 spine.

He holds the book up to her face so she can look through.

EXT. DICKENSIAN BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Girl stands in the street. It's completely empty.

GIRL
 I thought you said this street was
 full of muses?

CAT (V.O.)
 It was...

Mona Lisa's knitting is on the floor. The fire has gone out.

Girl sets down her viola case and rotates the numbers of the
 combination lock. Opens it and pulls out a torch. She picks
 up her case and walks down the street, searching.

INT. BOOKSHOP - SAME

Sitting as before.

GIRL
 Ooh, intriguing. Then what?

CAT
 I guess you -

EXT. DICKENSIAN BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

She turns a corner and faces a theatre, brightly lit with old filament bulbs. The lights suddenly go out.

She scans the rest of the street with her torch and then reluctantly steps inside.

INT. THEATRE

Girl searches backstage and finds a large knife switch. She pulls the switch and the stage bursts into light beside her.

She steps onto a stage that is set for Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene.

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Girl steps into the dressing room. Juliet's costumes hang on a rail.

Girl holds a dress against herself to see how she looks. A faint GHOST JOSEPHINE appears at the dressing table.

Girl jumps back in surprise, dropping the dress. Josephine vanishes.

Girl cautiously picks up the dress again and Josephine reappears. The ghost's lips are moving but we can't hear.

GIRL

Ugh. I guess this is happening.

Girl puts the costume on over her clothes and pulls the wig over her head. Josephine is talking to GHOST ROBERT.

GHOST JOSEPHINE

I'm sorry Robert, but your father's butchers has taken half of our customers. I can't see you any more.

Josephine storms out.

GHOST ROBERT

Josephine?

INT. BOOKSHOP - SAME

As before.

GIRL
 You think Shakespeare was inspired
 by Robert and Josephine, whose dads
 had rival businesses?

CAT
 He might have been.

GIRL
 Alright...

INT. DRESSING ROOM

Robert sits in the chair, head in hands.

Mysterious GREEN-EYED LADY steps up to him.

GREEN-EYED LADY
 Come with me, Robert. I'll hear
 your story. Make sure everybody
 gets to know your pain.

Green-Eyed Lady leads Robert from the room. Girl hitches her
 dress and follows.

INT. PROP STORE

Girl follows them into a store, stacked high with props.
 There's just enough room to squeeze through.

Lady and Robert round a corner. Girl pursues but reaches a
 dead-end. Props have been cleared from the area, where water
 drips from a pipe onto a large damp patch on the floor.

Lady and Robert are nowhere to be seen.

INT. BOOKSHOP - SAME

As before.

GIRL
 Where did they go?

CAT
 That's for you to find out. Story-
 you, not you-you. Which means me. I
 need to work that out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cat strolls down the street.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Instruments and amps are set up for a rock band. Cat picks up the electric guitar. The neck of the guitar is a mannequin leg. Cat plays a rock riff.

Old Man sits at the drums. The stands for the drums and cymbals are also made of bits of mannequin. Old Man inspects the clothes hanger drum sticks, unsure what to do with them.

When Cat finishes the riff, Old Man taps the cymbal.

 OLD MAN
So now what?

 CAT
Now the girl saves the forgotten
muses.

 OLD MAN
From?

 CAT
... From my biggest fear.

SCREECH.

EXT. STREET - DAY

CAR HORN blares as Cat is hauled back onto the pavement by BYSTANDER.

 BYSTANDER
Idiot.

Cat catches his breath as Bystander walks off.

 CAT
Come on Cat, keep it together.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat is dressed for exercise again. He bounces from toe-to-toe punching his fists like Rocky while holding two cheap dumbbells.

He takes a big swing, and the dumbbell flies out of his hand. He tumbles to the floor trying to catch it, but it crashes into a pot plant.

He picks up pieces of the shattered ceramic pot, looks at the edge of the fracture and runs his finger along it.

INT. PROP STORE

Girl inspects the dead end. She spins the combination on her viola case, opens it, and retrieves a polaroid camera. She snaps some pictures of the area.

She replaces the camera, closes the case and spins the lock once more. This time when she opens it, there are a few old books inside.

She takes one, opens it and peers through the gap in the spine.

EXT. MEDIEVAL VILLAGE - DAY

May Day celebrations in full swing. A May pole is set up with people dancing and music playing.

Girl steps through the jolly crowd as SMALL CHILDREN run past in green caps, holding toy bows made of wood and string.

Targets are set up, and people compete to shoot real arrows at them. Girl picks up a bow and stretches the string, as if to shoot.

GHOST ROBIN

Come all! Come see! Extraordinary
feats of archery.

GHOST ROBIN holds out his green cap to a GHOST CROWD, who toss coins into it. A GHOST BOY IN RAGS has nothing to offer. Robin tosses a coin to the boy.

Girl steps closer to the apparition and his translucent crowd, who are unseen by the Medieval May Day Revellers. They become more solid as she approaches.

Robin gets down on one knee and aims his bow directly upwards. Girl moves so she's standing right next to him.

Robin lets loose the bow string and the crowd look up in amazement. Girl looks down at Robin. She can see the arrow concealed in his sleeve.

After a few moments Robin snaps his hand out in front of him, clutching the arrow. Robin's crowd clap and cheer.

Robin and his crowd are completely solid now, and the May Day Revellers fade away.

Robin pulls another arrow from his quiver and nocks it to the bow string. Girl takes a close look at the arrow. It is split down most of the shaft. Robin squeezes the arrow and resin seeps from the split.

He shoots the arrow at a target and immediately shoots another. The second impacts and the first splits in two and falls from the target. The crowd roars.

THUNDER CLAP and rain starts to fall. Girl opens her viola case and takes out an umbrella. As the crowd disperses in search of cover, two GUARDS spot Robin.

GUARD

There he is! Stop that man!

In the commotion, the guards knock over some large pots holding market goods. The shards of broken pot glint.

Girl picks up a piece, and sees a message written along the fracture in gilt cursive: "Beware green eyes."

Robin ducks through the crowd and sprints from the village into the forest. Girl chases after him.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Robin and Girl sit under the shelter of a tree as the rain continues to fall. Girl spins the combination and takes a sandwich from her case. She tucks in.

Robin retrieves a straw doll from his pouch and rubs it wistfully.

Green-Eyed Lady gracefully descends the bank opposite them and approaches Robin. Neither can see Girl.

GREEN-EYED LADY

I saw you in the village. You're very talented. I could help you reach a much larger crowd.

Robin stands and takes her hand as she leads him away.

Girl spins the combination and retrieves her camera, then snaps the Lady and Robin leaving.

Green-Eyed Lady stops abruptly and snaps around to look back at the tree. Girl freezes, petrified. The lady, still unable to see Girl, turns back and continues with Robin.

Girl follows at a distance. The lady and Robin step out into the middle of a glade as the rain pours down. They disappear.

Girl moves into the glade, tracking their footsteps in the flattened grass. The footsteps stop. She scans around the glade and takes more pictures.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat finishes writing a paragraph and sits back in his seat.

The sticky note with his job start date now has thirty boxes on it. Nine have been filled in. He checks his phone and fills in another.

The cursor blinks on the screen where he was typing. Cat stares at it.

He picks up his notebook and taps his pen against it, then he taps the pen against his head.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Girl packs some books into a small box and tosses in a small bag of sweets. She closes the box, tapes it up and sticks an address label on it.

Cat bounds into the shop.

CAT

I need more inspiration. I want to see where you live.

GIRL

Is this a muse thing?

CAT

Sure.

GIRL

If you want to come over, you need to pay the toll.

CAT

Toll?

GIRL
Yeah. Chow mein with chicken balls
should do it.

She smiles.

INT. GIRL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Cat stands outside with bags from the Chinese takeaway. He
KNOCKS. Girl answers.

GIRL
Come on in.

She leads him through a very normal apartment. White walls,
basic furniture.

CAT
Hmm, I was expecting something a
little more...

GIRL
A little more...

CAT
I dunno, you keep your lunch in a
viola case.

GIRL
Oh, well, I do store all of my
toiletries in a coffin.

CAT
Really?

GIRL
(chuckles)
No.

She sets up the table and then brings in a pot of sauce.

CAT
Ooh, what's that?

GIRL
Just some extra sweet and sour
sauce. They never give you enough.

She's getting a little irritated.

GIRL (CONT'D)
So, how's the story coming along?

CAT

Well, you met the real Robin Hood -
a travelling con-man.

GIRL

And the Green-Eyed Lady?

CAT

She took him away.

GIRL

To?

CAT

Ah, you'll have to wait.

LATER

Cat looks around Girl's flat. He looks through her shelves
and peers in the fridge.

GIRL

You go ahead, I'm going to watch a
film.

Cat opens the bin and takes a look inside.

GIRL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

If you find a green bangle, let me
know. I've been looking for that
for ages.

LATER

Cat drops onto the sofa next to Girl.

GIRL (CONT'D)

Find anything interesting?

Cat tosses her a green bangle.

CAT

Nah.

GIRL

Sorry I'm not weird enough for you
dude.

Cat watches the film for a few seconds.

CAT

I bet the nurse's mum has an
accident on the ski trip and they
bond while she's in hospital.

Girl rolls her eyes and hits Cat with a plush toy horse that's next to her on the sofa.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Cat and Old Man ride the back of a giant moth under a bright moon.

CAT

What if she's not interesting enough?

OLD MAN

I think you're missing the point.

CAT

What's that?

OLD MAN

If she lives such a normal life - why the viola case?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat stares at his notepad.

CAT

Why the viola case?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Cat walks to the bookshop. As he approaches, Girl leaves - walking in the other direction, carrying the case.

Cat is about to call after her, then he stops himself. He follows her instead.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Girl cuts through the cemetery on a narrow path. She stops by a grave and sits on the grass.

Cat stops, watching.

Girl takes a miniature Warhammer figure from her viola case and inspects it while talking to the headstone.

GIRL

I still can't get the highlights right.

(MORE)

GIRL (CONT'D)
 I tried the dry brush technique,
 but, I dunno, I must have done it
 wrong. I don't know how you did it.

She sniffs and looks up, turning away to dry her eyes. She spots Cat standing by a tree and freezes for a second. She packs the figure in her case and marches off.

Cat steps to the grave. The headstone is for a twenty-six year old man.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Girl is behind the counter, morose, preparing another order of books.

Cat comes in and goes straight up to her.

CAT
 I'm sorry.

GIRL
 (angry)
 Were you following me?

CAT
 I had some questions about the
 viola case. I came here to ask, but
 I saw you leaving.

GIRL
 So you just followed me!?

Cat opens his mouth and closes it again.

Girl leaves the counter and strides to a door marked "Private".

GIRL (CONT'D)
 Since it's so important - the case
 was his. He had a magnifier on a
 stand for his model painting and it
 wouldn't fit in his bags. He's the
 quirky one. He's your real muse.

She slams the door behind her.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat stares blankly at his desk. He checks off another box on the sticky note.

EXT. ANCIENT GREEK AMPHITHEATRE - DAY

A play is performed on stage. All the seats are full.

PARIS is on stage.

PARIS

Ha! The Greeks run, with their tail
between their legs. No Greek army
will ever breach the walls of Troy!

The ancient Greek AUDIENCE boo and jeer loudly. Girl is sitting with them. She smirks.

A large wooden horse is pulled onto the stage.

PARIS (CONT'D)

What is this? So feared are they of
our retribution that they leave us
a gift! We shall display it as a
permanent reminder of their
cowardice.

The horse is pulled to the middle of the stage and Paris steps to a bed. He climbs in and sleeps. ACTORS walk sleepily onto stage and sleep on the floor.

Other actors in black raise painted golden stars and a moon at the back of the stage.

Two GREEK SOLDIERS climb out from the horse and stab the sleeping actors. They set light to small bowls of oil placed around the stage.

Paris wakes and stares at the scene in shock.

PARIS (CONT'D)

Treachery!

The audience cheer and applaud. They throw bits of bread at Paris.

Girl takes the opportunity to borrow one of the audience's cloaks and fastens it with a safety pin from her case.

She looks around for a ghost. Peering out from the high banked seats of the amphitheatre she sees a shimmer coming from the road leading from the city.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

As Girl approaches, tents come into view and GHOSTLY SOLDIERS take a more solid form. Further away is a large and much more ornate tent. Girl heads over.

SLAVE (40s) stands holding her cleaning supplies, talking to a soldier guarding the tent.

SLAVE

I must clean the body, or it will start to smell.

GHOSTLY SOLDIER

Start to smell? It hasn't stopped smelling.

Slave nods politely.

GHOSTLY SOLDIER (CONT'D)

(shakes head)

I've buried a dozen soldiers on the battle field. They didn't get any proper rites. But some aristocrat's prize war horse gets its own tent and servants?

Slave stands patiently.

GHOSTLY SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Get on with it then!

Slave hurries inside and kneels beside the decorated corpse of a horse. The soldier spits at it, then leaves to patrol the other tents.

Slave closes the tent, removes a knife from her supplies and cuts down the middle of the horse. She hurriedly removes the organs and pushes them into a sack.

Girl watches and recoils at the sight.

GIRL

Ugh, you're not going to get into that?

Slave looks directly at Girl, terrified.

SLAVE

How did you get in here?

GIRL

What? I'm... You can see me?

SLAVE

You need to get out, now!

GIRL

I think I need your help.

SLAVE

I can't help you. Go. Please.

GIRL

No. I'll stay and help you, but you need to help me too.

Slave shakes her head and continues removing organs.

EXT. GREEK ESTATE - DAY

The Greek soldiers march with a convoy to a large walled estate. ARISTOCRAT'S SOLDIERS guard the gate. Their colours are brighter and different than the Greek soldiers'.

Greek soldiers hand over the cart bearing the dead horse. The Aristocrat's soldiers haul it into the compound. Girl watches.

INT./EXT. GREEK ESTATE - NIGHT

Girl hides in bushes. The soldiers at the gate are replaced and the new soldiers watch outward vigilantly.

Girl unfastens the safety pin and removes the ancient Greek cloak.

The compound and soldiers vanish, replaced with ruins scattered among the scrub of the hillside.

Girl steps cautiously inside, studying the shapes of the battered walls and debris. She settles in a corner and puts the cloak back on.

The estate reappears around her. She searches and finds a grand room. The horse is on a plinth surrounded by candles.

She taps the horse.

GIRL

The coast is clear, you can come out.

Nothing happens for a second, then a knife bursts through the horse's stomach and Slave launches out. She points the blade at Girl, then recognises her.

SLAVE
How did you get in here?

GIRL
Don't worry about that. I help you,
then you help me, right?

SLAVE
OK.

GIRL
So what's the plan?

SLAVE
I need to find my son.

LATER

Slave wipes the blood from her body as best she can and quickly puts on a stolen robe.

Girl and Slave find the room. She wakes SON.

SON
Mummy?

SLAVE
Shh, I've come to take you home.

Girl, Slave and Son slip through the corridors of the villa and out into the grounds.

SLAVE (CONT'D)
We can't get past the guards.

GIRL
Leave that to me. Meet me in the
square, by the large olive tree.

EXT. ESTATE OUT BUILDINGS - NIGHT

Girl darts behind out buildings and finds some large stoneware jars. She opens one and dips her fingers inside.

GIRL
Oil.

She spins the combination and opens the case. Cramped into the tight space is a large firework. Girl grins.

EXT. GREEK ESTATE - NIGHT

A huge explosion throws flaming oil onto the buildings.
ARISTOCRAT stumbles from the building.

ARISTOCRAT
Fetch the water. Everyone!

The soldiers leave their posts to help out. Slave and Son
escape through the main gate.

EXT. GREEK SQUARE - EARLY MORNING

Slave and Son wait on a bench under a large olive tree. Girl
joins them.

GIRL
Now I need your help.

Girl opens her case and takes out a reel of thread. She ties
the thread to the bench and hands the reel to Slave.

GIRL (CONT'D)
I want you to wait here. Soon a
lady with green eyes will come. Go
with her and leave a trail of
thread so I can follow.

Slave nods.

Girl slips away and hides behind some barrels outside a
nearby shop. She waits.

Green-Eyed Lady drifts into the square, heading straight for
Slave. She speaks with her, and then Slave and Son follow the
lady. They pass around the back of a tall, elaborate
fountain, but don't emerge on the other side.

Girl watches, then slowly stands. She creeps into the square
and checks around. Slave and Son are nowhere to be seen.

She darts to the bench and carefully locates the thread. She
follows it to the fountain. The end is cut, and floats in the
pool under the fountain.

Girl reaches in and tests the bottom of the pool. She climbs
in and feels the fountain carvings, searching for buttons or
levers.

She sits on the edge of the fountain, drenched by the spray.

She spots a glint coming from the small assortment of potted flowers by the fountain. She picks up the pot and looks around. The square is empty. She drops the pot.

Gilt letters along the edges of the pot shards glisten brightly in the morning sun. The message reads: "She passes through falling rain."

Girl looks up. She spins the combination and retrieves the polaroid pictures:

INSERT - POLAROID PICTURES

In the PROP STORE - a dripping pipe.

In the GLADE - rain.

BACK TO SCENE

She turns and looks at the droplets of water falling from the fountain behind her.

She picks up another shard of fractured pot. Another message reads: "She's found you. RUN."

She spins the combination and opens the viola case.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Where is it?

She rummages through a couple of books in the case and then tries another combination. More books.

She peers up from the case to see Green-Eyed Lady, gliding straight toward her.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Oh crap.

She jumps up and runs from the square, fumbling with the case - trying new combinations and searching through the books. She turns a corner and is confronted by the lady.

GREEN-EYED LADY
Another muse...

Girl grabs a book and opens it. She peers through the spine.

Just as she disappears, the lady bats the viola case out of her hand. Girl vanishes and the case drops to the floor. The combination ticks over due to the impact, and the case shuts.

Green-Eyed Lady bends down and opens the case. Inside are a couple of books, including a plain red one with a pen attached. The lady opens it at the bookmark - it's a handwritten journal.

She peers through the spine, smiles, then snaps it shut.

EXT. LAVA OCEAN - NIGHT

Cat sits with Old Man atop a stone tower that's sinking into the lava. Swirling smoke clouds above them form into giant beasts that collide and fight. Cat stares at the lava.

CAT

She won't speak to me.

OLD MAN

Muses don't need to speak to be inspiring.

CAT

I don't feel very inspired right now.

Old Man looks up at the beasts. THUNDER booms and lightning flashes as they clash.

OLD MAN

In that case, you'd better get her to talk to you again.

CAT

How?

OLD MAN

How?

Cat thinks.

CAT

By proving to her she's more than just a muse.

Old Man opens his mouth to speak, but the tower suddenly starts accelerating upwards. Old Man and Cat hold on.

Beneath them, a giant stone face emerges from the lava.

CAT (CONT'D)

(shouts)

How do I prove it?

Old Man's lips move, but Cat can't hear over the grinding of the stone.

The tower keeps rising, and a head and arms rise from the molten red sea. One arm is holding the base of the tower like a sword. The cloud beasts stop fighting and look down.

The stone giant pulls the tower back, then swings it at the beasts. Cat and Old Man hang on for dear life.

CAT (CONT'D)

(shouts)

How do I prove she's more than a muse?

OLD MAN

(shouts)

Show her!

The stone sword cuts through the cloud beasts, which dissipate, revealing a blue sky.

Old Man smiles and pops his eyebrows.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Cat enters. Girl is nowhere to be seen. He searches the shop and finds her at a bookshelf.

She spots him and her face sours.

He pulls a white flag from his jacket pocket and waves it. She fights a smile - she still wants to be angry with him.

CAT

I'm sorry.

Girl takes books from a trolley and inserts them on the shelf.

CAT (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have followed you.

Girl continues ignoring him.

CAT (CONT'D)

That must have been a very private and personal moment, and I can't imagine how you feel right now.

Girl moves to the next shelf.

CAT (CONT'D)
 If you'd like someone to listen,
 not as a muse, but a friend, I'm
 here.

Girl flicks a glance at him, then continues placing books.

CAT (CONT'D)
 We could go to the pub. I'll even
 let you get the first round so you
 can use the loo...?

A smile twists the corner of her mouth.

GIRL
 You'll be buying all the drinks!

CAT
 Deal.

INT. 1930'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - BLACK AND WHITE

Door with a glass panel. Lettering on the other side is just visible through the frosted glass.

Girl bursts through the door and shuts it behind her. DICK, an American private detective, sits behind the desk.

DICK
 Now what would a broad like you be
 doing in a place like this?

GIRL
 Ah. I forgot the slang from this
 era was a bit... Problematic.

Girl looks around desperately.

GIRL (CONT'D)
 My case!

DICK
 You got a case for me honey?

GIRL
 OK, let me stop you right there.
 I'm not taking any of this
 misogynistic crap while I'm here.

DICK
 OK, OK. Miss?

GIRL
That's fine.

She steps into the corridor searching for her case.

The dial above the elevator at the end of the hall is ticking upwards.

A FEINT GREEN GLOW comes from the elevator, cutting through the black and white scene.

GIRL (CONT'D)
I need a place to hide.

DICK
Most of this floor's empty. The depression's hittin' the whole city hard.

Girl sprints down the corridor, Dick tailing.

DICK (CONT'D)
Now wait a minute miss...

Girl looks into empty offices as she passes. No place to hide. A green glow lights the corridor behind her.

Girl reaches the end of the corridor. Opens the window and climbs onto the fire escape. They are very high off the ground.

Next to her is JOHNNY. He's staring out at the horizon. He loosens his tie.

DICK (CONT'D)
Johnny, pull yourself together.

JOHNNY
I've lost it all Dick.

DICK
Get a grip man!

A tear rolls down Johnny's nose as he steps to the edge of the escape.

Green-Eyed Lady drifts down the corridor. Girl looks up and down the escape hopelessly. She looks at Johnny and the light glints through the tear that hangs from his nose.

She quickly looks back at the corridor then intently stares at the tear. It drops, and she dives off the escape.

DICK (CONT'D)

Missy?

Johnny watches in shock, unable to grab her. He steps back from the edge, shaking.

Girl streamlines her body as she falls - fingers of one hand outstretched ahead of her.

She catches up with the tear, and when the tip of her finger makes contact with it she's instantly sucked into it.

Green-Eyed Lady watches from the escape.

GREEN-EYED LADY

Get me some water, now!

DICK

Sorry hon- Miss. They cut off facilities to save money, you'll have to go to the lobby.

GREEN-EYED LADY

Ugh.

She spins around and rushes back to the elevator.

EXT. CAP AND WHISTLE PUB - DAY

Cat and Girl sit outside drinking.

CAT

How long ago did he, you know?

GIRL

Four months now.

CAT

He used to paint miniatures?

GIRL

Yeah, for a table-top war game. Barely ever played the game itself but spent hours painting each figure. Drove me nuts.

CAT

You never played?

GIRL

No - never had the patience. Seemed like it was more about rulers and geometry than war.

CAT
Yeah. It is.

GIRL
You played?

CAT
Once. That was enough.

GIRL
He was so good at painting them.
Even down to the highlights on the
buckles on the tiny straps.

They take a sip.

GIRL (CONT'D)
I guess I wanted to paint one to
get a bit closer to him.

CAT
I can put you in touch with the guy
I played against if you like - he
might have some tips...

Girl brightens up.

GIRL
Sure. Thanks.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH

Girl falls and hits the floor of a dark corridor. The walls blink with tiny green lights. Way above is another floor, and green pulsating light glows down through gaps.

Girl gets out her phone and uses the torch. She follows the corridor, which splits into more and more - all the same.

She takes a closer look at the walls. Each panel is a server (computer) rack. The flashing lights are the status lights of computers inside.

There's a glass pane between her and the servers. As Girl gets closer, her breath fogs up the glass.

A small digital display blinks on with a message: "Moisture detected. Maintenance required."

Girl backs off and wipes the glass. The message persists.

CLATTERING sounds from above. Girl ducks away and hides around a corner.

A large spider-like robot skitters along the tops of the server racks, then straddles the top of the corridor. A arm emerges from its underside, opens the glass panel and then reaches into the rack.

RED
(whisper)
Follow me.

Girl spins around to see RED, in a red cloak, behind her.

RED (CONT'D)
Quietly.

Red leads Girl away.

They enter another identical corridor and stop. Red lifts the grating on the floor and they drop down into a tunnel below.

The tunnel is completely dark, except the light from her phone. The walls are covered in complex but organised cables.

RED (CONT'D)
Stick to the walls. If you block
the air flow too much it'll trigger
another maintenance request.

Red finds a spot where the cables are more sparse and taps the wall. The wall slides away, and Red and Girl squeeze through the cables into

INT. HIDEOUT

Wires have been spliced into the main cabling outside to provide power to the room. An assortment of LEDs and server displays attached to the walls light the room.

WATCHMAKER (70s) sits at a desk with broken shards of concrete and some watchmaking tools.

WATCHMAKER
Is this her?

RED
Who else?

GIRL
Where am I?

RED
We call it The Machine.

GIRL
What does this machine make?

RED
It's easier to show you...

WATCHMAKER
Not yet. I need to get this message
out.

Girl walks over to Watchmaker to see what he's doing.

Has a piece of broken concrete in a clamp. Using his tools,
he scrapes metal from a clockwork gear and lays it onto the
fracture in the concrete. He spells out a word: "Beware".

GIRL
You were sending the messages. Why?

WATCHMAKER
To warn the muses.

LATER

Girl sits with Red.

GIRL
The Green-Eyed Lady - I think she
has my viola case.

RED
Forget about it. It's gone.

GIRL
It can't be! I need it. I need to
find it.

RED
A viola won't help you here.

GIRL
The case didn't have a viola in it.
It contained... memories.

RED
Memories?

GIRL
Of someone I used to know.

EXT. CAP AND WHISTLE PUB - EARLY EVENING

Empty plates and pint glasses on the table.

Girl returns with more drinks. Cat finishes jotting something in his notebook and slips it into his bag.

CAT
Tell me more about him.

GIRL
Where do I start?

CAT
Tell you what, you think about that while I nip to the loo.

GIRL
They're around to the right.

Cat gets up and heads inside.

Under the table, his bag flops over and the notebook drops out.

Girl picks up the book and looks inside. Her mouth drops open.

LATER

Cat comes back out and Girl is fuming. She waves the book.

GIRL (CONT'D)
Is that was what this was all about? Just more fodder for your story?

CAT
No. You don't understand.

Girl slams the book down, gets up and storms off.

GIRL
Don't come back to the shop. I don't want to see you again.

CAT
Wait!

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cat stands at the gate again, more determined than ever. He sets off.

He jogs around the park with a strained look on his face. He stops to walk for a few paces, shakes his head and forces himself back into a jog.

EXT. HIGH STREET - LATER

Cat walks past the bookshop in his sweaty clothes. There's a "Closed" sign on the door, but Girl is inside packing books for delivery.

He stares inside for a moment, then leaves.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat sits at his desk. He checks off another day on the sticky note. There are two days left. He picks up and starts reading a programming book and programs some code on his computer.

After a while he sits back, content. His eyes glaze over and his jaw goes slack. He shakes himself out of it.

He steps into his living room, picks up some weights and starts exercising with them.

LATER

He sits back on the futon and rests his eyes.

INT. CLOCK

Cat is inside the clockwork mechanisms and gears of a clock.

CAT

Crap. Wake up, Cat. Come on!

He starts exercising in the daydream.

OLD MAN

Hello.

Cat ignores him.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

Haven't seen you in a while.

CAT

Because I need to stop coming here.

OLD MAN

Ah, so you finished your story?

CAT

No...

OLD MAN

But you made a new friend.

CAT
(sighs)
You know she won't speak to me.

Cat clammers over the gears and dodges a pendulum.

CAT (CONT'D)
I have to stop daydreaming. This is what cost me my job and the reason she won't talk to me.

OLD MAN
So how do you stop daydreaming?

CAT
That's the question I need an answer to, but this is a place of questions, not answers, right.

Old man nods sagely.

OLD MAN
Why did you start in the first place?

CAT
Because I wanted something new.

OLD MAN
Which you haven't found yet...

CAT
Are you saying I need to finish the story?

OLD MAN
Do you still think about it? About her?

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Cat turns his head and looks across at his laptop on the desk.

INT. HIDEOUT

Girl and Red sit against a wall while Watchmaker works.

GIRL
I think I know your story - at least the one they tell.

RED
Yeah, but that's not my story. Mine
is fairly boring.

GIRL
Can't have been that bad - most
people have heard of you...

RED
I just delivered food to remote
houses on the mountain. The wolves
were just normal wolves.

Girl nods at Watchmaker.

GIRL
What's his story?

RED
He won't say. He's afraid of what
will happen if he does.

Watchmaker stands.

WATCHMAKER
OK. The switchover is starting. If
we're going to show her The
Machine, we should head out now.

He goes to a wall and picks up a defunct robot spider, like
the one Girl saw before. He places it over his head and
operates the legs from below. He switches on its lights.

RED
(to Girl)
Stay in his shadow.

Watchmaker leads them out.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH

Watchmaker, Red and Girl move along the tops of the server
racks. Other robot spiders scurry around them at a distance.
They leap to an adjacent rack.

Above them are metal gratings. Through them they can see
large glowing green tubes.

Occasionally the tubes flash brightly and the flash travels
down conduits to the servers. The servers beneath burst into
life with twinkling green lights.

A robot spider moves toward them from one side.

WATCHMAKER

Keep moving, it'll pass behind us.

Another robot spider climbs out of the racks directly ahead.

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)

Stay still.

The closer robot looks directly at them. A large spinner starts spinning on its display as it inspects them. Girl and Red hide behind Watchmaker in the shadow of the light from the robot.

The first robot gets closer and also stops. A large spinner appears on its display. Girl and Red are visible in its light as it inspects them.

RED

Don't move. Not yet.

The closer robot's display turns green and a message appears: "Recalculating". It skitters off on a different route around them.

The first robot's display flashes orange and a message appears: "Retrying...". Red and Girl quickly shift around to the shadow.

The spinner turns green and "Recalculating" appears. It too plots a course around them.

They reach a vertical conduit. Watchmaker checks there are no more robots around, then moves the defunct spider onto his back. He climbs the conduit. Red and Girl behind.

They pop up through a grating into the floor above. Here they can see the tubes more closely. Each has a person inside; a pirate, a cowboy, a Dickensian street urchin.

Red leads them past the banks of tubes. They reach a large hole in the floor. Beneath them, in the centre of the labyrinth is a large open area.

Green-Eyed Lady sits on a throne in the middle, surrounded by a bank of screens. Text appears in sequence on the screens:

"Dark Comedy" "Romance"

"Pirates" "Nuns"

"Normality for Pirate Nuns is..."

"Act One Turning Point is..."

Spinners appear after each incomplete sentence.

RED (CONT'D)
This is what the Machine makes.

Green-Eyed Lady studies a map of the labyrinth.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH

Red, Girl and Watchmaker creep away from the centre of the labyrinth. Girl looks at the people in the tubes.

Above these tubes are smaller tubes with objects in them: An oil lamp, ornate boxes and scrolls.

GIRL
Is my case here?

RED
It might be.

Red looks at the conduits.

RED (CONT'D)
New items tend to generate more stories.

Many green pulses emanate from one particular area. They head in that direction.

Girl spots a small tube with lots of green pulses bursting out from its conduits. It contains her case.

Bright orange spinners appear in the shadows around them.

WATCHMAKER
Go. Now. They're waiting for us.

The spinners turn red and messages appear on displays:
"Urgent Maintenance Response."

Red, Girl and Watchmaker run.

Robot spiders emerge from the darkness, chasing them.

One drops down from a high tube and lands on Red's trailing cloak. She's pulled backwards.

Red takes off her cloak, but the other robots catch up too quickly. Watchmaker and Girl watch in horror, helpless.

RED
Stop her!

The robots drag Red away. Watchmaker and Girl escape while the robot spiders are distracted by Red.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH - LATER

Watchmaker is wearing the defunct robot spider. He shuffles through the corridors between the server racks, holding on tightly to Girl.

Robot spiders skitter above, occasionally inspecting them until their spinners turn green.

INT. HIDEOUT - LATER

Watchmaker and Girl return. Watchmaker throws the defunct spider against the wall.

GIRL

We have to get her back.

WATCHMAKER

We can't. Not once she's hooked up to the Machine.

GIRL

Have you tried?

Watchmaker looks at the floor.

WATCHMAKER

Yes.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cat shakes out his grey skinny jeans and inspects them. He lays them over the back of a chair. He takes his brown hipster boots from a cupboard and some rags to clean them.

He places his boots by the kitchen sink. He looks back at his desk with the laptop on it.

AT DESK

He opens the laptop and begins typing.

INT. HIDEOUT

Girl paces.

GIRL
This is stupid. What am I even
doing here? This is just make
believe.

WATCHMAKER
Then leave.

GIRL
OK. I will.

She heads to the gap in the cables.

WATCHMAKER
You'll need that.

Watchmaker gestures at the defunct robot. Girl snatches it
and heads out.

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)
We're under bank E-one-seven, B-
nine-F.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH

Girl strides along the tops of the server racks wearing the
defunct robot.

On the tops of the racks are ID markers. The first part of
the ID counts up in hexadecimal as she walks in one
direction: "E17", "E18", "E19", "E1A".

LATER

She can see the edge of the server racks. Beyond it is
complete darkness.

She continues to the edge. The last rack has ID "FFF".

She reaches out and her hand is enveloped by a thick black
substance. She pulls her hand back and it comes out cleanly.

She sets down the defunct robot and reaches further in, up to
her shoulder. She huffs and pulls her arm back. She takes
some steps back, then sprints into the darkness.

She is completely absorbed by the black and disappears.

MOMENTS LATER

The blackness slowly ejects her back onto the top of the
server racks.

She looks to either side, then up and down. Just more black.

INT. HIDEOUT

Girl squeezes through the cables into the hideout. Angry.

GIRL
Why didn't you tell me?

WATCHMAKER
Would you have listened?

Girl squats down in frustration.

GIRL
I need to get my case. Then I can
use my journal to travel back. Get
the hell out of here.

WATCHMAKER
That won't stop her.

GIRL
(scoffs)
Yes it will. I'm from the real
world, I'm not a muse.

Watchmaker looks pityingly at her.

WATCHMAKER
Could she see you?

GIRL
What?

WATCHMAKER
Green Eyes.

GIRL
Well, only recently.

Watchmaker sighs and sits at his desk. He puts on his magnifier and starts scraping more metal messages onto fractured concrete.

GIRL (CONT'D)
I can't be a muse, I'm too...
Ordinary.

WATCHMAKER
Like an ordinary girl who delivered
food in the mountains? Or a poor
watchmaker?

Girl stands speechless.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cat pours himself a strong black coffee and yawns.

EXT. DARK LABYRINTH

Girl and Watchmaker sit on a tangle of conduits high above the server racks. Robot spiders skitter across the labyrinth below. The top of each rack is lit with green lights.

A spider stops on a rack. The rack's lights flash red for a few seconds, then the rack goes dark. The neighbouring racks glow bright orange, then fade back to green.

The racks further away then glow, but less brightly, and the glow spreads out from the spider like a ripple in a pond. Several other racks do the same, creating circular ripple patterns beneath Cat and the Watchmaker.

GIRL

You tried disconnecting someone?

WATCHMAKER

Yeah. A long time ago. There were more of us then...

When we got her out, she was just a husk. Her mind was still in the Machine.

We tried to turn the servers off. We turned off as many as we could as quickly as we could, but they eventually reset and came back on.

They captured half of us.

GIRL

Sorry.

WATCHMAKER

We tried recruiting more, but she gets to them before they get our messages.

They stare out at the ripples.

GIRL

What's happening down there?

WATCHMAKER

From what we could tell, the servers run at eighty percent capacity. That's green. When they take a server offline for maintenance, the server sheds it's load onto its neighbours and the system spreads that load out so everything goes back to green.

GIRL

What happens if a server reaches one-hundred percent?

WATCHMAKER

They overload and reset. But even if you shut off two servers right next to each other, they'd dissipate the load before any other servers overload.

Watchmaker watches the ripples. Girl looks out to the blackness in the distance.

GIRL

What about the corners.

WATCHMAKER

Same situation.

GIRL

Sure, but the corner servers only have three neighbours.

Watchmaker sits up straight and looks out to the distance. He perks up.

WATCHMAKER

The neighbours could be overloaded. Then those would only have three neighbours too. It could cascade right across the labyrinth...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Cat grabs fistfuls of sand and squeezes them tightly. Old Man sits in his wingback chair.

OLD MAN

Don't make it too easy...

CAT
I'm running on fumes. I feel like
I've exhausted every creative
thought in my head.

OLD MAN
Take a break.

CAT
No. I can't risk another job.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cat stands in the living room ironing a checked shirt. He glares at the laptop as though it's taunting him.

He finishes the shirt and marches to the laptop. He shakes his hands out and lets out a cathartic yell.

Neighbour bangs on the wall.

CAT
Sorry!

INT. DARK LABYRINTH

Watchmaker and Girl swiftly leap across the server racks to a corner of the labyrinth.

As they near the corner, Watchmaker slows.

WATCHMAKER
The servers. They're not as bright
here.

He drops into the labyrinth and inspects a server through the glass. Girl watches from above.

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)
No!

He looks at another. The display reads: "72% Capacity".

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)
They're running at lower capacity
here.

He rushes to the corner server. Its display reads: "60% Capacity". Watchmaker collapses to the floor.

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)
It's not enough. I'm so stupid.

He hits the machine.

Girl looks back toward the centre of the labyrinth. She can see ripples in the distance.

GIRL
What if we boosted them?

WATCHMAKER
(shakes head)
We can't change their algorithms.

GIRL
Not directly...

The servers glow slightly as a ripple reaches them.

Watchmaker stands and looks up at Girl.

WATCHMAKER
You never give up do you?
(smirks)
You remind me of... My daughter.

GIRL
(surprised)
Is she here?

Watchmaker nods solemnly.

WATCHMAKER
All my children are.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH - LATER

Girl stands by a machine. Watchmaker yells from somewhere else in the labyrinth:

WATCHMAKER (O.S.)
NOW!

Girl presses the reset button and the server goes dark. Glowing ripples spread to the nearby machines.

She runs through the labyrinth and stops at another server.

As the ripples approach, Watchmaker yells again:

WATCHMAKER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
NOW!

They continue towards the corner, each resetting servers on the way. The wave of ripples glows brighter and builds as it is funnelled towards the corner.

They reach the corner server as the glowing red wavefront approaches. They exchange a glance and Girl hits reset just as the wave crashes into the corner.

The server goes dark. As the wavefront retreats from the corner, each machine glows bright red, then goes dark.

Darkness rapidly spreads out into the rest of the labyrinth.

INT. CENTRE OF LABYRINTH

Green-Eyed Lady spins and looks up. Red alerts fill a screen.

INT. DARK LABYRINTH

Watchmaker and Girl stand on top of the servers and watch.

WATCHMAKER

Come on - we need to get ready.

They sprint towards the centre of the labyrinth as robot spiders scatter to the resetting machines.

They climb the conduits to the upper floor. Girl looks back toward the corner.

GIRL

They're coming back online.

WATCHMAKER

Don't worry. The cascade is spreading out faster than they're resetting.

Girl looks across the rest of the labyrinth. As the cascade spreads, the remaining machines slowly transition from green to yellow, then orange.

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)

We just need to take out enough that the rest can't handle the load.

They scurry across the upper floor.

The servers below get more and more red, then black. The whole labyrinth goes dark. The tubes on the upper floor stop producing pulses of green light.

They reach the centre of the labyrinth.

WATCHMAKER (CONT'D)

On the far side, there's a lever switch. Pull it hard.

GIRL

OK.

WATCHMAKER

From now on, you're on your own.

Watchmaker diverts to the side, clanking a tool against the pipes and conduits as he passes. Girl stops in surprise, then sprints to the switch.

Green-Eyed Lady snaps her head to look toward the noise.

GREEN-EYED LADY

Get them!

Robot spiders emerge from the shadows and hunt Watchmaker.

Girl sneaks around the upper floor in the other direction until she reaches the other side of the hole down to the lower floor and Green-Eyed Lady's throne.

She touches the lever switch. Green-Eyed Lady senses it and snaps her head back around to look at Girl.

GREEN-EYED LADY (CONT'D)

Don't do it.

Green-Eyed Lady produces the viola case from behind her throne.

GREEN-EYED LADY (CONT'D)

Step away and I'll give you this.
I'll leave you alone to live out
your life.

Watchmaker is dragged towards the centre of the labyrinth by the robot spiders.

WATCHMAKER

Don't!

GIRL

You don't understand what that
means to me...

WATCHMAKER

I do... The memories you think are
in that case - aren't. You have the
memories. You remember.

Girl pulls the lever switch.

Green-Eyed Lady's mouth drops open in horror.

Robot spiders freeze. A message appears on their display:
"Recalculating."

The tubes all open and dazed muses step out.

Watchmaker darts through the tubes - he knows exactly where
to go. As he approaches, WATCHMAKER'S CHILDREN run up and hug
him.

WATCHMAKER'S CHILD

Daddy!

Girl watches as muses reunite. Robin steps up to an ELDERLY
LADY. He empties his purse into the lady's hands. He takes
out the straw doll and she touches it fondly.

Slave and slave's Son find each other and look for a way out.

Girl races down to the centre of the labyrinth. Green-Eyed
Lady is nowhere to be seen. The viola case is propped up in
her throne. Her journal is resting on top.

She opens her journal and breathes a sigh of relief.

Slave steps up to her.

SLAVE

How do we get home?

GIRL

Hmm. Let me see.

She spins the combination and opens the viola case. She takes
out a copy of the Iliad and peers through the spine. She
passes the book to Slave and slave's Son.

They look through the spine and disappear. The book drops to
the floor.

INT. CENTRE OF LABYRINTH - LATER

Muses gather around the throne as Girl retrieves books from
her viola case and sends the muses home.

She stops and faces the remaining muses.

GIRL

I don't have your books with me -
so for the rest of you, you're
going to have to follow me home.
I'll be able to find all of your
stories there.

She opens her journal and passes it to the muses.

LATER

Watchmaker approaches Girl. He's next in line to travel
through the journal.

GIRL (CONT'D)

You're going to have to tell me
your story if I'm to get you home.

Watchmaker smiles. He gestures to his children.

WATCHMAKER

These are my 'elves'. The shop was
losing money, so they used to sneak
into the workshop while I slept to
finish off my watches.

GIRL

I think I know the story.

INT. BOOKSHOP (STORY) - DAY

Like the bookshop in the real world, but brighter and more
colourful.

Curious SHOPPERS peer through the windows of the packed
bookshop as Girl flits from shelf-to-shelf taking books. The
crowd of muses inside gradually lessens as they return home.

INT. BOOKSHOP (STORY) - LATER

The shop is empty, except for Girl. She picks up the books
she took from the shelves and stacks them on a trolley.

She wheels it through the door marked "Private".

She pushes it into the back room, where a frail old lady is
sitting on a box.

GIRL

Sorry - I must have missed you.
What's your story?

As the frail lady looks up, we see it's Green-Eyed Lady. Her eyes are not as bright as before and she looks weak.

GREEN-EYED LADY

I am Mamu - Keeper of dreams.

Girl stands frozen, unsure whether she should run or stay.

GREEN-EYED LADY (CONT'D)

The muses used to visit me often.
Ever since the dawn of
civilisation. We'd chat about their
lives and weave dreams and stories.

They'd come and go, and I'd create
beautiful worlds for them to enjoy.

She folds her hands on her lap.

GREEN-EYED LADY (CONT'D)

Then the demand for stories grew,
and I couldn't keep up. Billions
more people. More pressure for the
next new tale.

I got lost in it. Swallowed by the
lure of technology. I forgot what
dreams are all about.

(looks at Girl)

They cannot be forced - they must
be followed.

I've been trying to keep up for so
long, I didn't even realise what I
was doing.

Girl looks down at her viola case on the floor.

GIRL

I'm beginning to realise that when
you hold onto something for so long
- the act of holding on becomes
more important than the thing you
were afraid of losing.

The time to let go is much sooner
than any of us want to admit.

Green-Eyed Lady solemnly nods.

A drip falls from a wet patch on the roof of the store room. Green-Eyed Lady turns and vanishes into the drip, which then splatters on the floor.

INT. CENTRE OF LABYRINTH

Green-Eyed Lady slowly walks back to her throne and sits.

Girl emerges from the racks, clutching her journal.

GREEN-EYED LADY
What are you doing here?

GIRL
Apparently I'm a muse... So I
thought I'd come visit.

Green-Eyed Lady's face brightens. The labyrinth around them dissolves away and is replaced by

EXT. RURAL HILLSIDE VERANDA - GOLDEN HOUR

Green-Eyed Lady offers Girl a plate of fruit as they sit looking out at the rolling hills in the distance.

GREEN-EYED LADY
This was one of my favourites.

GIRL
I bet you've entertained some
pretty interesting people in your
time.

GREEN-EYED LADY
(smiles)
One or two...

GIRL
Maybe I'll be one of them.

GREEN-EYED LADY
Unquestionably.

Green-Eyed Lady tilts her head back to feel the sun on her face. She smiles contentedly.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cat blows dust from the top of an old printer. He sets it up next to his laptop and starts printing the manuscript.

He stumbles into the living room and flops onto the futon, falling immediately asleep.

INT. APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Cat wakes up on the futon. He jumps up and plods to the bathroom.

LATER

He pulls on his skinny jeans and checked shirt, then grabs the manuscript from the printer.

EXT. BOOKSHOP - MORNING

Cat pushes the manuscript through the letterbox.

INT. OFFICE #2 - MORNING

Very similar to his former office. A dim room, with rows of cubicles and developers' faces lit by the glow of their screens.

Cat is shown to a desk. He sits and prepares for work.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cat eats his sandwiches on a park bench. He closes his eyes.

INT. ART GALLERY - DAY

A portrait of Cat is on the wall. His face turns in the painting and looks sideways. The painting repaints itself, revealing a zoomed-out scene with Cat and Old Man in his chair. Patrons walk by, admiring the painting.

CAT

So. Who are you?

OLD MAN

I'm just a wise old man you dreamt up to give you the answers, when in fact, I just had to listen until you came up with the answers yourself.

CAT

So in a way - you're me?

OLD MAN
This is all you Cat - It's your
daydream.

Cat smiles.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Speaking of which, you should get
back to work...

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cat opens his eyes and packs away his lunch.

INT. OFFICE #2 - DAY

Cat is speaking on a video call.

CAT
Out of interest, have you thought
about authentication?

DEV
Not yet - but we will.

Cat politely smiles.

INT./EXT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

Cat walks past the bookshop. The sign says "Open".

He gingerly walks through the shop looking for Girl. He finds
her seated in the reading area. She has a pencil and is
making notes on the manuscript.

He knocks on the bookshelf. She looks up.

GIRL
Not bad...

She stands, holding the manuscript.

GIRL (CONT'D)
You know - he would have loved
this.

CAT
He must have had great taste.

GIRL
 Careful dude. You don't want this
 ending like one of those cheesy rom-
 coms.

He chuckles. She passes him back the manuscript and goes to
 the back room.

She returns with her viola case.

GIRL (CONT'D)
 If it were, you would have
 presented me with some poignant,
 yet quirky gesture of peace by now.

Cat grins guiltily and nods at a large box by the door where
 he came in.

GIRL (CONT'D)
 Oh, come on!

She goes over and opens it.

GIRL (CONT'D)
 Nineteen-ninety-four road atlases?

CAT
 Sorry, they were all out of mops...

She laughs.

GIRL
 Come on.

She grabs his arm and drags him out of the shop.

CAT
 Where are we going?

GIRL
 First - they've got a sale on at
 the music shop. I want to see how
 much stuff I can fit in a trumpet
 case.

CAT
 Then where?

GIRL
 Then... How about you take me
 somewhere new.

Girl locks up and they walk off down the street.

We see the empty shop. Sitting in the reading area, in a wingback chair is Old Man. He watches Cat and Girl leave with a smile, then turns and looks directly AT THE CAMERA.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Exactly as we saw in the first scene:

Cat lies in bed. Bags under his red eyes. Shaggy hair splayed over the pillow. The same smile as Old Man. The clock now reads: "6:41 AM".

Cat huffs. He rolls over, curls under the duvet and tries to get back to sleep.

FADE OUT.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Cat rolls back over, casting the duvet aside.

CAT

Screw it.

He steps over to his desk.

There are posters on the wall: Beatles - Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, Queen - Jazz album.

His desk has a toy galleon on it. He takes a flag book off his laptop and smells it before setting it aside. He opens the laptop.

A notification pops up: "App Tracker service down. IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED"

He dismisses the notification and opens a new document. Across the centre of the first blank page he writes the words: "ASPIRATIONS OF ECCENTRICITY"

A smile creeps across his face.

THE END