

# TOXOPLASMOSIS

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3311 Productions + 21 Laps



**NASA ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE:** Launchpad at Cape Canaveral. A steaming rocket IGNITES and LIFTS OFF.

JEFF (V.O.)

In 1977, Voyager launched into outer space. Its mission: to probe far deeper into the universe than humans had ever gone before.

**PHOTO:** CARL SAGAN, in his iconic maroon turtle neck, mugging amidst the cosmos.

JEFF (V.O.)

For Carl Sagan, the spacecraft was a bottle in need of a message.

(pause)

And so the Golden Record was born.

**NASA ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE:** A Kubrickian WHITE ROOM, tended to by engineers in WHITE CLEAN SUITS. The only bit of color is a GLEAMING, GOLDEN VINYL RECORD, carried toward the spacecraft.

JEFF (V.O.)

A primer to life on earth. Our laws of physics and chemistry. Cultures, politics. DNA and traffic jams. Barking dogs. Mozart. Penises. All copied onto a gold-plated vinyl record. CliffsNotes for any curious intelligent life that might be out there...

(beat)

*We come in peace, please don't eat us.*

**MONTAGE:** A Mongolian herdsman waving; a dog barking; the double-helix; a mother with her infant; a thunderstorm; the 405; Chuck Berry shredding; flesh-colored pixilation.

JEFF (V.O.)

Sagan also wanted to include "Here Comes the Sun," but failed to reach a deal with The Beatles' label.

(beat)

Perhaps you can learn just as much about humans by what's *not* on the Golden Record. Like death or war.

**IMAGE:** We push into a photo of THE BEATLES until George Harrison's pupil fills the screen and becomes –

**EXT. THE BLACK OF DEEP SPACE**

We are floating in the deep recesses of space, seeing stars unseen from earth, arrayed in entirely new constellations.

JEFF (V.O.)

Or the fact that Carl Sagan had a secret: he was in love. With Ann.

These constellations are TRACED together, etch-a-sketch style, into illustrations animating the narration:

JEFF (V.O.)

One day, Carl and Ann were discussing a piece of ancient Chinese music to put on the Record – when suddenly the stars aligned.

(beat)

Ann described falling for Carl as “this great eureka moment – like a scientific discovery.”

(beat)

So, keeping their new affair on the DL, Carl secretly recorded Ann’s brainwaves, as she thought about love, about finding her “perfect match,” about Carl’s supple 5’ 11” frame in a turtleneck – and sent them into the cosmos along with the rest of the Golden Record.

Pan to reveal: VOYAGER SPACECRAFT, hurdling deeper into space. The glowing Golden Record catching starlight.

JEFF (V.O.)

In many many years, they imagined, aliens would find it, listen to Ann’s thoughts, and be able read her mind...

(beat)

What would the aliens think?

We hear a faint CRACKLING, like a string of FIRECRACKERS going off, BRAINWAVES...

JEFF (V.O.)

That they’d discovered evidence of some wonderful cosmic mystery, beyond even their highly advanced imaginations?

(beat)

(MORE)

JEFF (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Or that after all the money and minds in the world, the best we humans could do was send them some Carl Sagan erotica? A love story? Along with a bunch of other tiny snippets, brief glances at who we are?

(beat)

I guess that's what memory is.

Off the stars -

MATCH CUT TO:

# **INT. ASTROBIOLOGY LAB - NIGHT**

An iconic old POSTER hangs on the wall. A FLYING SAUCER hovers, along with the words: *I WANT TO BELIEVE*.

And staring up at it is **JEFF** (30), our hero, half-Asian, full-anxious. Wearing a weird, silvery FLAME-RETARDANT SUIT, sitting at his cluttered desk and dictating all we've just heard into a VOICE RECORDER:

JEFF

Emma, I try to remember, to hold onto everything. But I'm left with snippets. Left imagining what would be on our Golden Record...

Jeff looks down at an old PHOTOGRAPH: a young woman (EMMA), giving a double-peace sign. A black cat sitting in her lap.

JEFF

So before I probably die trying to do something undoubtedly super stupid, I'm going to do just that.

(beat)

A story of us that the aliens can try and make sense of some day, once they're done reading Carl Sagan's wife's brainwaves.

(beat)

And if nothing else, maybe my Department Chair will hear this and count it toward my Dissertation.

He looks at the tape recorder. Takes a deep breath -

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

JEFF is being HUGGED by a tall, Black man named **APOLLO** (30), his best friend. Both are wearing suits.

Apollo releases Jeff, pats him on the back, and Jeff walks up to the front door of his apartment.

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The front door swings open and light pours into the dark apartment. Jeff remains at the threshold. **STARING AT SOMETHING.**

A CAT. A BLACK CAT. Who returns Jeff's stare with his DayGlo green eyes.

A Mexican standoff.

JEFF (V.O.)  
Wait. Let's not start there.

CUT TO:

**EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY**

The archetypal old STRIP MALL that Plato wrote about. The 7-ELEVEN next to the CAT CLINIC next to the LAUNDROMAT...

Hold on this shot as an aged Volvo pulls into the empty parking space in front of the CAT CLINIC.

**EMMA** (30) – brunette, unconsciously pretty, unwittingly charming, infinitely empathetic – gets out of the car and carries a BLUE ANIMAL CRATE into the clinic.

EMMA  
(on the phone)  
Yes, my work in Environmental Law does mean I know where the "loopholes" are, Dad, but – Yes, "poach" is an ironic word choice here... Yes, I know I'd make "boatloads" more working for you, but – Yes, I'm aware of the literal company "boat." Fine Dad, I'll think about it, okay?

Meanwhile, a BEAT-UP VW GOLF pulls in next to the Volvo. **JEFF** emerges and carries a LAUNDRY BASKET into the laundromat.

JEFF

(on the phone)

I don't know, it didn't say on the package. I'll be fine, Mom. Hot Pockets don't expire.

(beat)

No, I don't know why Rachel broke-up with me either.

Continue hanging on this static shot. Another beat.

Emma emerges and gets into her car, starts the ignition, reverse lights turn on. She starts to BACK OUT –

And CLIPS JEFF'S CAR. Brakes, gets out to inspect the damage.

EMMA

Shit. Shit.

Only to discover that it's ACTUALLY JEFF'S CAR THAT IS PARKED A LITTLE CROOKED, IMPEDING INTO HER SPACE.

EMMA

Are you kidding me?

She grabs PEN and PAPER from inside her car, WRITES A NOTE.

ON EMMA – as she's putting the note under Jeff's windshield wiper. She looks up – JEFF IS STANDING RIGHT THERE.

EMMA

Shit I –

But they've locked eyes, and now, TIBETAN PRAYER BELLS are audible all the way from the Himalayas.

EMMA

I'm Emma. I mean, I'm sorry – I hit your car.

JEFF

I'm Jeff...rey.

They stand there, transfixed. Near a 7-Eleven.

JEFF

What's your note say?

Emma chuckles nervously. Then STUFFS THE NOTE IN HER MOUTH.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. EMMA'S OLD APARTMENT - 2:00 AM**

Jeff and Emma MAKING OUT, STANDING, somewhat awkwardly, in the middle of the living room. This is their FIRST KISS.

Panning in a circle around them to reveal Emma's menagerie of CAT STUFF in her apartment. Welcome Cat figurines, Hello Kitty, Artemis from Sailor Moon pillow, Rip-N-Dip cat stickers on her laptop (middle-fingers ablaze)...

Back to Emma and Jeff kissing. Then: Catbus nightlight, Chat Noir poster, Princess Carolyn mug, Nyan Cat stuffie, Kit-Cat Clock on the wall... Emma pulls off Jeff's shirt -

But Jeff's gotten distracted by a LARGE, FRAMED GLAMOUR-SHOT PORTRAIT (the old school mall kind) of Emma and a BLACK CAT. Emma turns and they both stare at the portrait together.

EMMA

I don't know where Yugen is - he usually loves strangers.

JEFF

Is "Yugen" a family name?

EMMA

Funny! No, it's an awesome Japanese word that essentially expresses a connection with the universe so profound that it exceeds our ability to put it into words.

(beat)

You're moved by something into silence.

And silent they are, enjoying that silence, together.

JEFF

(who is half-Chinese)

Do you have an Asian fetish?

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The door swings inward, light pouring into the apartment, which is EMPTY. It's MOVE-IN day.

At the threshold stands Jeff and Emma. Emma holds a BOX labeled *EMMA BOOKS*.

EMMA

What happens now?

Jeff's box is labeled *JEFF KITCHEN & SOCKS*.

JEFF

Well, typically, couples who move in together would eventually get engaged, then married, then maybe a kid or two, then after they've graduated from graduate school with good degrees and promising careers ahead of them, you and I would live happily ever after.

EMMA

And this afternoon?

She pokes him – a trillion times less awkward than Jeff.

JEFF

We still need to agree on our household nudity rules.

Emma cozies up to cheek-kiss Jeff, which is awkward with their respective boxes. And because Jeff is not a hugger.

Emma sets her box on the floor and runs back out the door.

EMMA (O.S.)

Be right back!

Jeff goes into the kitchen and sets down his box. Takes a deep breath, smiles. In spite of his interpersonal awkwardness, he's dreamed of this moment. For a long time.

But clearly not this part:

The front door CLOSES, and Emma is back, with an ANIMAL CARRYING CASE, robin's egg blue.

She begins opening it, and the scale of it on-screen is like that opening scene of *Jurassic Park* when the guy gets dragged into the raptor crate...

Such is the scale of Jeff's *displeasure* –

**JUMP CUT TO LATER. EVENING.**

Jeff and Emma (in a YALE LAW sweatshirt) sit akimbo on the bare, hardwood floor of the empty living room. Eating out of Chinese take-out boxes. Lit by twinkling little TEA CANDLES.

EMMA

Switch.



Jeff looks up from his box of Kung Pao and gets the Beef & Broccoli in return. Quiet beat, then:

EMMA

Guess how much time we have left.

Huh? Jeff doesn't understand the question, so Emma holds her PHONE out to Jeff, showing him something:

EMMA

Seven years, eighty-eight days, and sixteen hours.

JEFF

And five minutes?

EMMA

That's it! I'm not exactly sure how they calculate it – and human life would continue on for hundreds of years *after* it got to zero. Probably. But still.

**PHONE SCREEN:** A huge COUNTDOWN on a Times Square building.

JEFF

*The Carbon Doomsday Clock.*  
(joking)  
They used to open for Radiohead, right?

EMMA

It's perfect. It would make my dad's head explode.

Emma gets a shiver, clearly inspired by this idea.

EMMA

I need to up my game.

They switch boxes again.

JEFF

Says the Emma who recently saved a wetlands?

EMMA

Grasslands. Two grasslands. But you know what I really want to do.

JEFF

Destroy your father.

**INSERT:** A shiny WHITE GUY, by his office door that reads,  
*Vice President, Energy Exploration Division & Emma's Dad.*

EMMA

His company, yes. Their ability to  
endanger Great Tits.

Huh? **INSERT:** GREAT TITS. *The bird.* Cute, yellow, finch-like.

JEFF

Happy Thanksgiving, Daddy, can you  
pass me the cranberry relish?

They keep eating. The silence feels a little oppressive.

EMMA

What are you thinking about?

JEFF

Rugs.  
(pause)  
I think we should get one.

Emma narrows her eyes at him.

EMMA

Rugs are kind of a big commitment?  
(beat)  
Stop thinking about them.

JEFF

It's really hard for me to stop  
thinking about rugs.

EMMA

No: My parents. My dad.

JEFF

You're the one who brought him up!

Jeff pops a potsticker in his mouth. Chews. Chews. Chews.

JEFF

(still chewing)  
Is it weird your dad didn't give  
you his blessing on us moving in  
together? Sure.  
(beat)  
And that you didn't tell me at  
first? Sure.  
(beat)  
But I'm not *thinking* about it.

EMMA

I didn't tell you because he always does this. He'll come around.

JEFF

Like he did on Evolution?

Emma mock-frowns at Jeff – then leans in for a kiss that melts thoughts of fathers and Charles Darwin away...

When they're interrupted by a CRASH!

They turn and find a BLACK CAT, sitting on a nearby counter – having just pushed JEFF'S FAVORITE MUG (it literally says *Jeff's Favorite Mug* on it) onto the floor.

EMMA

Yugen!

JEFF

My favorite mug...

EMMA

Looks like you're settling in! Do you like your new home? I bet you'll like the sunny spot in the back. Did you see any squirrels? Any new squirlfriends?

This goes on as the cat – **YUGEN** (an older cat, white hairs poking through) – head-bumps Emma and rubs against her legs... Never breaking eye contact with Jeff.

EMMA

Yes, I'll remind Jeff to NEVER leave the front door open.

JEFF

Why?

EMMA

Because Yugen is an *Indoor* Cat.

JEFF

Versus a what?

EMMA

An *Outdoor* Cat? It's a *whole thing*?

But for a mystified Jeff, she might have just been explaining NFT's. She turns back to the cat:

EMMA

Did you say hi to Jeffrey? Say hi  
to Jeffrey! Your new roommate!

The cat stares at Jeff, unblinkingly. Like he knows Jeff  
hates cats.

JEFF (PRE-LAP)

Extraterrestrials: What do they  
look like? How do they think? *Do*  
they think? How do they organize  
their communities and cultures?

CUT TO:

**INT. UNIVERSITY AUDITORIUM - DAY**

Jeff, in an oxford and chinos, stands before a one-third full  
auditorium of COLLEGE STUDENTS. A POWERPOINT projected behind  
him – *GREETINGS EARTHLINGS*.

JEFF

These questions are fundamental to  
a field of science known as  
*Astrobiology*.

(beat)

I'm an Astrobiologist, and  
Professor Bakshi has kindly invited  
me to speak with you today about my  
research.

The class is unmoved. He clicks to the next slide: the CHEST-  
BURST SCENE from *Alien*. There's a GASP or two from the  
students actually paying attention.

JEFF

So, aliens: what do they look like?

A few hands go up, but before Jeff can call on one –

ATHLETE (O.S.)

Tilda Swinton!

This gets a chuckle.

JEFF

Why's that? Please elaborate.

The SWEATPANTED JOCK seems genuinely surprised to get a  
follow-up. So Jeff calls on a girl in the second row.

GIRL IN SECOND ROW

I think aliens would look like...  
like an octopus. But... but sort of  
in the shape of a cow. With only  
one eye that's always watching you.  
(suddenly shy)  
I don't know.

JEFF

Wow, that's very specific. What  
makes you think this will be what  
intelligent life on another planet  
will look like?

GIRL IN SECOND ROW

I have a recurring nightmare about  
it. It crawls on my ceiling. Every  
night. That *thing*.

Her voice cracks on "thing." Is she... is she tearing up?

JEFF

Thank you for sharing with us.  
(beat)  
Believe it or not, everyone, that  
is what Astrobiology is all about.

Jeff clicks to the next slide: It's HAN SOLO sitting across  
from GREEDO. "HAN SHOT FIRST."

JEFF

Now, as this slide invites us to,  
let's take a moment to imagine –

Just then, an elderly member of the faculty rushes up to the  
podium and whispers in Jeff's ear, which accidentally gets  
caught in his LAPEL MIC – SO LOUD students have to cover  
their ears:

FACULTY MEMBER

Your girlfriend was in an accident.

JEFF

What?!

More whispering at the podium. Jeff SPRINTS FROM THE ROOM!

CUT TO:

**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

Jeff rushes through a hallway of squat nurses who look like clones. No handsome TV doctors. He finally arrives at what looks like a RECEPTION DESK, a nurse behind it –

JEFF

Excuse me, I'm looking for an Emma Young?

The nurse doesn't look up from her computer. Jeff squirms at the counter like he might be about to fling the phrase, "*Excuse me?*" like a deadly weapon when –

NURSE

(still not looking up)  
What's your relation?

JEFF

Uh, I – I'm her boyfriend.

NURSE

I'm sorry, sir, but we can only release information to her family.

JEFF

We live together!

NURSE

But you're not married?

JEFF

What difference does that make?!

Jeff's PHONE RINGS – it's APOLLO, his best friend:

JEFF

Hello? Apollo, I'm at the hospital, something happened to Emma, but they won't tell me. Where are you on rotation today, could you come intervene for me?

(listens)

What?

(listens)

What do you mean? What do you mean you just saw it on Instagram?

TIME SLOWS, pushing toward Jeff's face, receiving the worst news of his life, over the phone, via an Instagram post.

JEFF (V.O.)

When the most unbelievable thing happens to you, your allegedly intelligent brain gives you two choices: believe anything. Or nothing. Fight or flight.

(beat)

From that point on, I believed nothing.

(beat)

I entered a parallel universe where I didn't exist. Because the life I had planned for myself, with Emma at the center, was gone forever.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Jeff and Emma lay under a sea of GLOW-IN-THE-DARK STARS, which Emma stuck to the ceiling of their new bedroom.

EMMA

Fermi's Paradox?

JEFF

Fermi's Paradox: The universe is so big – the probability of intelligent life so high...

(pause)

But where is it?

Emma points to one of the stars –

EMMA

There!

(beat)

Maybe they're so smart, they already visited earth, and they didn't like what they saw, so they just left?

JEFF

That's one of the competing theories.

EMMA

They watched *Love Island*.

JEFF

It's more likely the work of the *Goldilocks Zone*.

Emma rolls toward Jeff.

JEFF

The planets that aren't too hot or too cold to support life. Maybe there just aren't that many of them. Which we call the *Rare Earth Hypothesis*.

EMMA

Aw, we're special!

JEFF

Or it could be *The Great Filter*: intelligent life is just wired to destroy itself. No one comes to say hi to Earth because —

EMMA

There is no one. That feels overly pessimistic?

JEFF

Fermi of Fermi's Paradox also worked on the hydrogen bomb.

**INSERT:** Enrico Fermi at the chalkboard.

EMMA

Yikes.

JEFF

I'd like to think that's all wrong, though.

EMMA

Being alone in the universe would be bad business for you, huh?

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Jeff asleep, ALONE, in bed. The clock reads 12:34 PM.

Jeff's PHONE RINGS, waking him up. Yugen the cat, sitting on the edge of the bed, staring at him.

JEFF

What do you want?



The cat chirps and bounds away. Jeff looks at his phone – APOLLO. He declines it. Lays down, and it immediately starts ringing again. This time, he answers.

JEFF

Hi, Mom.

(listens)

Yes, I'm doing okay. Yes.

(listens)

No, it's okay. It's okay. We already talked about this. I know you have the conference. No – yes.

(listens)

Yes, I know I need to just take the first step forward, but I can't move. No, I'm not literally paralyzed.

(listens)

No, Mom, I hadn't thought of killing myself until you said it.

(listens)

Gift basket?

The DOORBELL RINGS.

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY**

Jeff sets down a LARGE, PRETTY FANCY GIFT BASKET on the counter. It doesn't appear designed for sending condolences – someone has crossed out CONGRATS GRAD and written GET WELL.

JEFF (V.O.)

What if humans are alone? A rarity?

Jeff removes the cellophane from the basket and examines its contents. Reaches for a roll of CHEESE –

**FLASH:** Emma delicately unstrings STRING-CHEESE.

Jeff decides instead to go for the jar of OLIVES –

JEFF (V.O.)

Humans who are alone – "singles" – look for "The One," they call this person their "Better Half," and they lust for when "Two Becomes One." All at the same time.

**FLASH:** Emma pulls an olive out of a martini.

Nope. No on olives. The roll of SALAMI –

JEFF (V.O.)

Of course, these are mathematical paradoxes we've created to torture ourselves, but they do raise an interesting possibility: If life on earth is so rare that it's a cosmic miracle, then why would the idea that there's one perfect match for everyone be any less probable?

**FLASH:** Emma and Jeff open a PEPPERONI PIZZA from Dominoes.

Jeff stands, arm outstretched, like he might disintegrate.

JEFF (V.O.)

And most pressingly, mathematically speaking, if a Jeff managed to find that *one*, but then lost them... Would a Jeff – or rather, the remaining point-five of a Jeff – be able to believe in *anything* anymore? Let alone the possibility of life elsewhere in the universe...?

Jeff notices something out of the corner of his eye: the cat.

JEFF

I envy you. Not a care in the world.

The cat just stares at him. Doesn't even blink.

JEFF

I know you're trying to ask me for something.

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY**

Jeff, his nose tucked under his T-shirt, gingerly scoops litter out of the litter box and into a Trader Joe's bag. The cat watches.

JEFF

I just think it's strange that, at least on paper, it's possible that the most important relationship you will ever have in your life might not be consecrated beyond your *lease agreement*.

The cat LUNGES at Jeff, SINKS HIS TEETH into Jeff's forearm.

JEFF  
Shit! What the fuck!?

Jeff falls back, the cat lets go.

Close on: Jeff's arm – FOUR LITTLE PUNCTURE HOLES. Blood already trickling out.

JEFF  
What did I say?!

The cat, now in the litter box with its head sticking out, is DOING ITS BUSINESS.

JEFF  
Are you – ?

Pooping. Yes, the cat is pooping. Staring at Jeff.

CUT TO:

**EXT. UCLA CAMPUS - EARLY MORNING, THE NEXT DAY**

Jeff, wearing his backpack, crosses the mostly empty campus toward one of those mid-century buildings typical of a university science department.

**INT. ASTROBIOLOGY LAB - EARLY MORNING**

Motion-activated lights come on and reveal an old, retro-futuristic lab space. Papers, models, and books cover nearly every square inch of stainless-steel countertop.

Jeff goes toward his work area and surprises **THE INTERN** (20, shaved head) who was asleep at her desk and wakes up screaming – !

JEFF  
It's okay hey – it's me.

Embarrassed, The Intern puts on her glasses and wipes a bit of drool off her face.

THE INTERN  
(re: sleeping here)  
My girlfriend and I got in a fight.  
(pause)  
I didn't think you'd be coming in  
so... so soon.

JEFF

I'd rather be here than at home.  
(beat)  
Did that new lichen come in from  
Mongolia yet?

The Intern NODS. Jeff goes over to his work station. The *I WANT TO BELIEVE* poster hanging over it. And a little postcard of a bird that says *PROTECT GREAT TITS*.

THE INTERN

I'm really sorry.

JEFF

Don't worry about it – you can  
sleep here whenever you want.

It's not funny, but the Intern will take it. Anything to  
avoid the conversation she doesn't want to have with Jeff.

Jeff gets to work as the Intern lays back down on her desk.

**LATER.**

Jeff is retrieving a tuft of LICHEN from a freezer when his  
PhD advisor **DR. BAKSHI** (40's) enters with his briefcase –  
shocked to see Jeff.

Jeff smiles and nods, as Dr. Bakshi quickly disappears into  
his office.

Jeff begins analyzing the lichen sample, prodding it, taking  
notes. He consults a RESEARCH PAPER titled, *Panspermia: The  
Origins of Life is Written in the Stars*.

Looking back at his computer, he closes a window and sees the  
DOOMSDAY CLOCK counting down on another page. He tilts his  
head... The clock is down to BARELY A YEAR?! But it was just  
at seven years...? *Before* Emma died...

DR. BAKSHI (O.S.)

Mr. Ching, would you please come in  
here a moment?

Jeff, trying to shake this off, gets up, goes into his boss'  
office. Bakshi sits at his desk, hands folded solemnly.  
Clearly the way he rehearsed seeing Jeff for the first time.

DR. BAKSHI

Jeffrey, I am deeply sorry for your  
tragedy.

JEFF

It's — that's okay. Thank you, Dr. Bakshi.

DR. BAKSHI

Thoughts and prayers.

It's uncomfortable. Jeff itches his CAT BITE, which is swollen under a bandaid. Then starts to slip out when —

DR. BAKSHI (O.S.)

Jeffrey, please, before you go — I have one question.

Jeff turns back.

DR. BAKSHI

How do I edit a PDF file?

JEFF

Oh, uh, you need a program.

DR. BAKSHI

I already have Adobe Reader, yes.

JEFF

I think you need Adobe Acrobat. You have to pay for it.

DR. BAKSHI

Oh, I see. Thank you.

He seems disappointed.

CUT TO:

**INT. UCLA CAFETERIA - LUNCH**

Jeff and the Intern sit eating.

JEFF

I'm going to quit.

THE INTERN

Quit what?

JEFF

Everything.

(beat)

This. My PhD. Maybe go sell-out and work in biotech.

THE INTERN  
But keep *living*, right?

JEFF  
In some subhuman form.

THE INTERN  
But you love this stuff. This is your life's work. What could be better than *aliens*?!

JEFF  
Lichen. And finding proof of extraterrestrial life will mean nothing to me if I can't share it with Emma.

THE INTERN  
You just need to rediscover the spark. I can help you! You gotta find that one thing that gets you excited about life on earth again.

JEFF  
You know what I think about every other second now?  
(beat)  
You can't spell "alone" without The "One."

In fact we SEE it on the screen, as a **GRAPHIC**:

**AL + ONE = JEFF**

And if we haven't already noticed, we do now: Jeff looks a bit *off*. Like he's starting to not feel so well. Sweaty.

JEFF  
Would you like to adopt a cat?

THE INTERN  
*Her* cat?! You can't do that!  
(wow, pause)  
Jeff, maybe learning to love that cat is the thing you need.

Instead, Jeff, who now looks VERY ILL – VOMITS!

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF & EMMA'S NEW APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

Jeff enters the apartment and, exhausted, slumps down on the living room couch. He holds up his arm and inspects his CAT BITE – swollen, a little discolored. He's sweating, febrile.

Not sure what else to do – he decides to MAKE THE CALL. The screen SPLITS, and on one side is Jeff, looking ill, and on the other, a FEMALE VET, in lab coat and cat pendant.

JEFF

Hi, I'm calling on behalf of a, uh  
– patient – Yugen?

VET

Ah, Yugen, of course – heartthrob.

JEFF

I'm, well, I'm Yugen's owner  
Emma's... boyfriend. Jeff.

VET

*Jesh?*

JEFF

Yes.

VET

Ah, I'm so sorry, Jesh, but we are  
not permitted to give out  
confidential patient information  
over the phone, unless you are  
otherwise designated as an  
Emergency Contact in our files.  
You'd need to have Ms. Young call  
us and add you to Yugen's profile.

JEFF

Emma is dead.

SILENCE. Just the vet's HEAVY BREATHING in the receiver.

VET

Oh my god. I'm so sorry.

JEFF

It's okay. I just want to know if  
Yugen is up-to-date on his shots?

Jeff is now on his feet, searching the apartment for the cat,  
as the phone call continues.

VET

I – we are just not authorized...

JEFF

Look, I inherited a cat, I've never cared for a cat, I don't care for cats, I don't understand the whole thing about cats, I got bit by this cat, and now I'm sick and worried I have rabies or like feline AIDS.

VET

Okay, okay — Jesh? I'm looking at Yugen's file. I can't tell you specifically what's in here, but I can *promise* you that it's not the cat that made you ill. Promise you.

(beat)

An unexpected death can have many health effects on the living. Anxiety, depression —

**INT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Jeff enters the bedroom. No sign of the cat.

JEFF

You're not a doctor.

VET

I'm a licensed veterinarian.

JEFF

You're not the receptionist?

VET

What's that supposed to mean?

Jeff HANGS UP! Ending the call ignobly. And then FACE-PLANTS on the bed and finally CRIES like no one is watching.

Lifting his face, he sees a tear-stained impression. And realizes THE CAT IS WATCHING. Jeff flops down again.

When THERE'S A KNOCK ON THE DOOR. What now?!

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR**

Jeff opens the door to reveal: **EMMA'S DAD**. DRESSED FOR GOLF in a *Hund Energy Partners* polo (the logo is a DOG). A man as Orange County and conservative as the khakis he wears religiously, religiously.

JEFF

Mr. Young?



EMMA'S DAD

Jeff, it's good to finally meet you.

*They've never met before?! He really is an asshole. He offers his hand. Jeff shakes it. Palm sweaty.*

JEFF

I... I'm sorry for your loss.

(beat)

I tried calling you and Emma's mom.

EMMA'S DAD

One of the stepmoms?

JEFF

Biological.

EMMA'S DAD

Well, we weren't much in the mood for talking, as you might expect.

JEFF

I'm sorry.

EMMA'S DAD

I am too.

(beat)

Oh, this is Duke, my attorney. Also my best friend.

A few steps behind Emma's dad, **DUKE** raises his hand in greeting.

EMMA'S DAD

Look, Jeff, the reason we're here is we're hoping to get back some of Emma's things. We want to feel close to her.

JEFF

Okay. I can box up her clothes –

EMMA'S DAD

Oh, no, that's not what we care about. No, you see, we will need to get her cat from you. Yugey?

Oh. Huh. Jeff stands there. The Earth turns. For awhile.

EMMA'S DAD

Earth to Jeff?

JEFF

Sorry, I'm not feeling so good.

EMMA'S DAD

I remember Emma told me you weren't a big fan of cats anyway. Make this easy. Otherwise, Duke here knows all about Cat Law.

Duke nods solemnly in the background. A long pause, then:

JEFF

Sure. Take the cat. Anything. I have nothing left to lose.

Jeff, NO!!!

**INSERT:** Yugen, having snuck into the living room, stares at Jeff's back. His eyes DILATING –

**BACK WITH JEFF:** Jeff's eyes are DILATING TOO!

**FLASH:** Jeff's POV of Emma putting the note under Jeff's windshield wiper at the laundromat, then looking up at him.

**THEN:** Literally out of nowhere, Jeff SUCKERPUNCHES Emma's dad in the face! He stumbles backward, Duke catches him.

EMMA'S DAD

What the fuck?!

JEFF

Ohmygod. I didn't mean to do that!

DUKE

You assaulted my client!  
(beat)  
My best friend.

JEFF

And if you two don't get off my doorstep in five seconds, I'm going to sink my fangs into your throats and claw your eyes out.

DUKE

How spurious!

EMMA'S DAD

(nose gushing blood)  
You fucking freak.

Pointing at Jeff, walking backward toward his BMW.

EMMA'S DAD  
We'll be back – with a warrant. For  
your arrest.

DUKE  
And the cat.

EMMA'S DAD  
And if you come *near* that funeral,  
I will strangle you with my bare  
hands.

Jeff SLAMS the door – his eyes wide like he's just coming  
back to his senses after blacking out.

JEFF  
What the fuck is wrong with me?!  
(beat)  
YOU!

Reveal YUGEN sitting watching Jeff. Jeff charges the cat,  
chases him –

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Yugen runs, hides under the bed.

Jeff enters, YELLING!

But flops back down on the bed. And immediately FALLS ASLEEP.

Followed by a 24-HOUR TIME LAPSE of Jeff laying face down,  
sick, depressed, exhausted, asleep –

JUMP CUT TO:

**THE NEXT MORNING.**

Jeff wakes up startled from what seems like A FEVER DREAM, a  
nightmare, looking sicker. His cat bite wound throbbing.

And there at the edge of the bed, sits the culprit: YUGEN.

JEFF  
Go away!

Jeff lays back down.

JEFF  
I. Hate. Cats. There, I said it.

YUGEN (O.S.)  
And I hate Jeffs.

Jeff shoots back up in bed, frightened.

JEFF

Who the fuck is there?!

Just the cat. Who takes a furtive step, Jeff recoils and –

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Jeff SHOOTS AWAKE AGAIN. It was a DOUBLE DREAM. And rather than ill, he looks renewed, albeit exhausted. The cat bite mark looks nearly healed, benign.

Yugen sits at the edge of the bed, watching Jeff.

JEFF

Say something.

Instead, the cat leaps off the bed with a chirp. And there's a KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Uh oh. *Emma's dad again?*

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

Jeff opens the door to reveal APOLLO in a SUIT. So named "Apollo" because his parents loved *Rocky* and hated *Rocky*.

APOLLO

Are you ready?

Sees Jeff, in his boxers, looking bleary-eyed.

APOLLO

(sympathetically)

You are not ready.

Apollo, easily a foot taller than Jeff, wraps him in a big BEAR HUG. Jeff does not like hugs.

CUT TO:

**INT. APOLLO'S CAR - MORNING**

Apollo drives, and Jeff rides shotgun – in a suit now too. They ride in silence, though Apollo appears to be gearing himself up for a difficult conversation.

APOLLO

You'll get through this. And I'm here for you, whatever you need.

Silence again for another beat or two.

JEFF

What do you know about cat bites?

APOLLO

Emma's cat bit you?

(Jeff nods yes)

Broke the skin?

(Jeff nods yes)

Do you know if it's had all its shots?

JEFF

They wouldn't tell me.

Apollo furrows his brow at this.

APOLLO

Well, let's assume for a second that Emma was on top of that. Meaning: you're not getting rabies.

JEFF

Okay.

APOLLO

Then there's run-of-the-mill stuff we learned in med school: like *bartonella henselae*. Commonly known as *cat-scratch fever*. Can cause some flu-y symptoms: fever, lethargy, stomach stuff.

JEFF

Huh, sort of sounds like what happened to me.

APOLLO

You actually had *symptoms*?

(Jeff nods yes)

And you don't think it might be –

JEFF

*Depression?*

They ride in silence, apologetically.

APOLLO

There is this other thing. It's a parasite. A brain parasite that two-thirds of the world's population has. Most people don't even get symptoms. *Toxoplasmosis*.

JEFF  
How do you get it?

APOLLO  
Contaminated food and cat feces,  
primarily. Women in particular are  
warned not to change cat litter  
while pregnant.

JEFF  
Cat feces though?

APOLLO  
Cats lick their butts, man.

JEFF  
Right.

APOLLO  
There's a fringe theory – Internet  
stuff – but the thinking goes that  
cats somehow use it against us. To  
make us worship them.

JEFF  
Come on.

APOLLO  
I know, it's crazy. And I'm just a  
urologist, but get this: when rats  
and mice are infected with the  
parasite, *they lose their fear of  
cats* and...

But Jeff has STOPPED LISTENING. Looking ahead at something,  
with DREAD. Apollo parks the car.

APOLLO  
Are you ready?

JEFF  
No.

Apollo reaches into the backseat and retrieves a large pair  
of BINOCULARS. Hands them to Jeff.

**EXT. GRASSY AREA, PARK BENCH - DAY**

Jeff and Apollo sit on a bench. Jeff looks through the  
binoculars.

JEFF (V.O.)  
There is a Schrödinger's Cat  
quality of loss.

Through those binoculars reveal, in the far distance, a  
FUNERAL, ongoing. Emma's funeral.

JEFF (V.O.)  
This feeling that if you hadn't  
answered the phone, maybe the bad  
news wouldn't have come. Emma would  
still be alive. As if the secret to  
quantum mechanics hid within the  
great expanse of mourning.  
(beat)  
A psychiatrist might call this  
*Magical Thinking*.

Jeff, with a thousand-yard stare, hands Apollo the  
binoculars.

APOLLO  
You're probably going to get  
charged with assault.

JEFF  
I know.

They sit in silence, contemplating this.

JEFF  
Emma could have been my lawyer.  
(beat)  
I wish she were here.

Jeff is crying.

APOLLO  
I wish she were here too.

Apollo is crying.

CUT TO:

**EXT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Once again, Apollo is hugging bad hugger Jeff, at the curb,  
outside his apartment. We're back where we started.

Apollo releases Jeff and pats him on the back as Jeff walks  
up the sidewalk toward the front door.

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - DAY**

The door swings open and light pours in. Jeff remains at the threshold. STARING AT SOMETHING.

A CAT. A BLACK CAT. Who returns Jeff's stare with his DayGlo green eyes. A Mexican standoff.

JEFF (V.O.)

Losing Emma was the most  
unbelievable thing that had ever  
happened to me, so this was nothing  
in comparison -

YUGEN

Will you shut the fuck up?

JEFF

I... didn't say anything.

YUGEN

Yeah, well I can still *hear* you.

(beat)

Jeff, I would like you to come  
inside and sit with me and listen  
very carefully.

(beat)

We need to talk about Emma.

They stand there. Jeff's mind is, of course, blown. A cat is talking to him. But, like we said, he lost Emma so...

Jeff shrugs.

JUMP MATCH CUT  
TO:

Jeff, on the couch. Yugen sits across from him. They stare at each other silently for a beat...

Until Yugen, the cat, clears his throat.

YUGEN

Jeff, first, I just want you to  
know that I am taking a great risk  
revealing myself to you - and I am  
not doing it out of pity. This is  
all a lot more important than you.

JEFF

Okay...?



YUGEN

Next, you need to know that we are not from Earth. For millennia, we have tried to protect humanity from destroying itself – and the planet.

JEFF

We?

YUGEN

Cats.

Jeff narrows his eyes like he doesn't buy that.

YUGEN

Now that we've lost Emma though, the world is going to end.

Jeff nods like he *does* buy that.

YUGEN

But there might be a chance with your help that –

Yugen suddenly convulses, retches!

And starts throwing up a HAIRBALL on the living room floor. If you've never heard it: it's a terrible sound. Imagine someone laughing so hard that they regurgitate a full, live chicken. Slowly.

Jeff sits watching, horrified.

As the cat finally brings up his hairball onto the nice RUG Jeff and Emma bought together.

**FLASH:** Emma and Jeff rug-shopping. She finds the perfect one.

Living room Jeff winces.

JEFF

Are you okay?

The cat looks up at him. Blink, blink.

JEFF

With my help *what*? What can I do? Yugon *tell* me!

The cat walks out of the room!

JEFF

Wait, NO! Are you fucking serious?! You can't stop there!!?

But Yugen, apparently still very much a fucking cat, is gone.

JEFF

You have to be kidding me! What a  
fucking cat move!

Jeff falls back onto the couch – hungover emotionally,  
spiritually. Exhausted. Mind-blown.

He looks at us: *Did that all really just happen?*

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. ASTROBIOLOGY LAB - DAY**

Jeff, drained, on edge, sits down at his desk. Boots up his  
computer, shuffles some papers. That's right, he'll throw  
himself into work. That'll do the trick.

THE INTERN (O.S.)

Feeling any better?

JEFF

I'm going to win a Nobel Prize – or  
a psychotic break.

Jeff turns, smiles – but his PHONE RINGS: *EMMA DAD*. Fuck. His  
eyes start glazing over again... He nexts the call.

THE INTERN

You okay?

JEFF

Actually, there's a theory I want  
to run by you... I might have found  
*that one thing*, like you said...

The Intern seems less intrigued – and more relieved that Jeff  
might be less suicidal.

DR. BAKSHI (O.S.)

Mr. Ching?

Interrupting Jeff before he can elaborate –

**INT. DR. BAKSHI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Jeff enters –

JEFF

Yes, Dr. Bakshi?

Dr. Bakshi is on the floor, gluing things to a TRI-FOLD DISPLAY BOARD. The kind 6th graders use for the Science Fair.

The title on the display board: *THE MEDIOCRITY PRINCIPLE*.

DR. BAKSHI

My little Mansi will be applying to middle schools this fall, and a strong performance in the Science Fair could be a critical differentiator for her candidacy.

(beat)

I offered to share my work on *Panspermia* with her, but she said "that sounds gross."

(beat)

We landed on the *Mediocrity Principle* because Mansi believes "people suck."

JEFF

You needed me for something?

DR. BAKSHI

Yes, I borrowed your scissors.

He hands Jeff back his scissors. Jeff turns to go, but something makes him turn back –

JEFF

Dr. Bakshi, um –

(beat)

Question. Is there, do you know of any – *evidence* – that suggests intelligent life of an extraterrestrial origin could have been, is, already here... on Earth?

DR. BAKSHI

And what would these aliens be doing here?

JEFF

Protecting humankind from destroying itself?

DR. BAKSHI

Well they don't seem to be doing a very good job of that!

(laughs)

Did you wake up this morning and decide to subscribe to the ridiculous *Zoo Hypothesis*? Now we are living in an *alien ant farm*?

JEFF  
Not... exactly.

DR. BAKSHI  
Jeffrey, when I hired you into my  
lab, I did so because you are a  
promising scientist – and not one  
of those nuts from *Ancient Aliens*.  
(beat)  
Stick to your lichen, Jeff!

Jeff tries to smile, fails, nods.

**INT. LAB - MORNING**

Jeff sits back down at his desk, stares at his research...

He glances at a POST-IT note on his monitor: *Some Lichen It  
Hot*. Which he removes while looking up at his *I WANT TO  
BELIEVE* poster...

YUGEN (V.O.)  
*We are not from Earth...*

Jeff scribbles something on a fresh Post-It and jumps out of  
his chair –

RACK FOCUS to find The Intern, taking in Jeff's strange  
behavior – and the new Post-It stuck to his monitor:  
*Toxoplasmosis?*

**INT. UCLA SCIENCE LABS - SUB-BASEMENT - DAY**

Jeff makes his way down a long, white, cinderblock hallway. A  
multitude of color-coded pipes running along the ceiling. He  
shivers. He passes a door marked *PARTICLE ACCELERATOR...*

And at the end of the hall, another DOOR OPENS, and a man in  
a white lab coat exits. The man doesn't look up as he passes  
Jeff, who slips through the door just before it closes!

*DANGER – QUALIFIED PERSONNEL ONLY!*

**INT. SMALL ROOM IN THE SUB-BASEMENT - DAY**

Jeff enters through another door and turns toward us.

JEFF  
Hi –  
(clearing his throat)  
(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)  
Hello. Greetings. My name is  
Jeffrey Ching. Jeff.

We can't see who he's talking to.

JEFF  
I recently suffered a terrible  
tragedy, and... And since then,  
perhaps understandably, things have  
gotten a little... *strange*.  
(beat)  
Long story short: I need your help.

Reveal he's speaking to a wall of CATS IN CAGES. Most are  
sleeping, though a couple do watch him, lethargically.

JEFF  
You might know my cat Yugen? Well,  
he's not really *my* cat, but... He  
started talking to me and I'm just  
a little worried that maybe I'm  
losing my mind so...  
(pause)  
If you can understand me, please  
just say something?

A sign next to Jeff announces the ANIMAL TESTING QUARANTINE.

JEFF  
And if you can't – honestly I hope  
you can't – then no worries at all  
and I can move on.  
(beat)  
Anyone? Anything? It doesn't need  
to be anything profound.

One MEOWS, and Jeff takes a step closer with nervous  
excitement.

JEFF  
Hey there, little guy! Something  
you want to say? Don't worry, I  
won't tell anyone –

THE INTERN (O.S.)  
Jeff?

Jeff spins around, spooked.

JEFF  
How'd you get in here?

THE INTERN  
 I opened a few doors?  
 (beat)  
 You sure you're okay?

JEFF  
 Yeah, totally. I just needed to get  
 a little fresh air.

THE INTERN  
 In a windowless sub-basement full  
 of cats under medical quarantine?

But Jeff isn't listening – his phone has started RINGING  
 again: EMMA DAD.

JEFF  
 How's there even signal down here?!

He NEXTS the call, looks up at an even more mystified Intern,  
 and storms out of the room!

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

Jeff enters, expecting to find the cat waiting for him in his  
 usual standoff spot – but he's not there.

JEFF  
 Yugen?

As Jeff searches the apartment for the cat, we'll take in  
 details which indicate Jeff has left it virtually untouched  
 since Emma died:

**Living Room** – No cat. But Emma's shoes are still by the door.

JEFF  
 (getting angry)  
 Cut this shit out!!!

**Kitchen** – No cat. But Emma's Nalgene bottle is on the counter  
 – *Em* Sharpie'd across it. Plus a sticker of Totoro.

JEFF  
 (clicking his teeth)  
 Come here, buddy.

**Fridge** – No cat. But Emma's half-eaten yogurt is still in  
 there. *Em gurt*, in Sharpie.

**Bathroom** – No cat. But Emma's shampoo, conditioner, pink razor, and toothbrush are right where she left them.

JEFF

I have your favorite treats!  
(he doesn't)

**Hallway** – No cat. But zooming way in, a strand of Emma's hair stands out on the old hardwood floor.

JEFF

You're really threatening my grip  
on reality!

**Bedroom** – No cat. But Emma's clothes are everywhere. The top of her dresser, untouched. Her ergonomic pillow still on the bed, on her side. Her Post-It note to him, still stuck on the mirror: *Don't forget to buy more litter and that I love you.*

JEFF

(panicking a little)  
Yugen?!

**Under the Bed** – Too dark. Jeff fishes out his phone and turns on the FLASHLIGHT. Shines it under the bed. TWO RETINA reflect, stare, back at him.

JEFF

There you are. Why are you down  
here? If the world really is in  
danger, why won't you talk to me?!

Cat: blink, blink.

JEFF

You know what? I'm done. This is  
all a sign. If I'm going to keep  
living I need to do something else.  
Like exercise. Or reconnect with  
old friends.

(beat)

Or have you ever wondered when it's  
socially or emotionally acceptable  
for me to watch porn again? Have  
you, Yugen? Because I have now!

(beat)

Or I *know!* I should get a dog. *That*  
will help me get my life back on  
track.

The cat turns to face away from Jeff, the flashlight.

JEFF

This is why I hate cats.

Jeff flops down on the bed. Closes his eyes.

PRE-LAP: BUH BUH BUH BUH BUH.

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. PETCO - LATE AFTERNOON**

BUH BUH BUH —

The sound is coming from a CREDIT CARD READER: *Please Remove Your Card*. Jeff snaps to attention —

And realizes he's at PETCO. The CASHIER looking at him. He looks a lot like Nathan Fielder. It might be Nathan Fielder?!

PETCO NATHAN

Seems like you're having a weird day?

Jeff removes his card and sees he's just spent \$947. He eyes the purchases the cashier is now bagging: ALL CAT STUFF. Toys, scratching post, litter, treats...

JEFF

If I'm honest, I'm not really sure how I got here.

PETCO NATHAN

I get that from a lot of my customers.

(whispers)

Cat mind control. Me, you, we're *infected*.

(mouths)

Toxo. Plas. Mo. Sis.

JEFF

*What?!*

Jeff nervously glances at the old lady behind him in line — her cart is full of cat food cans. She WINKS at him.

PETCO NATHAN

You were just telling me what a sweetheart your Yugen is. Our handsome man's Birthday is today.

JEFF

Okay...

PETCO NATHAN

This one gets me every time.



He holds up a catnip toy in the shape of a JOINT – *Meowijuana* – and pretends to give it a toke before dropping it in a bag.

PETCO NATHAN  
(beat, wistful)  
My Mittens used to love it.

Finished bagging, he hands Jeff his receipt.

PETCO NATHAN  
I won't forget what you said about  
*"The Great Silence."*

Jeff cocks his head, but smiles like he actually remembers what he said.

PETCO NATHAN  
"Trying to talk to a cat is like  
The Great Silence of the universe.  
*Silentium universi*. Do we hear  
silence – *Are we all alone?* – OR is  
it that maybe we're just not  
*listening* the right way?"

JEFF  
Huh. I said that?

PETCO NATHAN  
One of my colleagues will meet you  
around back at the loading dock for  
your large item.

JEFF  
Large item?

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON**

Jeff struggles to drag a large CAT TOWER through his front door. One of those hideous carpeted jobs – with built-in hideouts and a dangling-ball-toy feature.

He then empties the numerous PETCO paper bags to survey the rest of his \$947 purchase. He picks up the *Meowijuana* joint, sniffs it, and puts it to his mouth. Plays with a LASER POINTER. Tentatively takes a CAT COMB and COMBS HIS OWN HAIR.

Then realizes Yugen is watching him.

JEFF  
I bet it's not really your  
birthday.

Yugen wanders closer, completely ignoring the expensive goodies – and cat tower – and crawls into one of the PETCO paper bags. He stares out at Jeff.

JEFF

The cat's *in* the bag. Great.

He slumps onto the couch, head in hands.

JEFF

I need help.

Eventually looking up, he finds Yugen at his feet.

The cat jumps INTO JEFF'S LAP! Jeff freezes, holds his breath, as Yugen begins KNEADING his thighs – a thing cats do before they curl up.

This kneading goes on for a BEAT LONGER THAN IS COMFORTABLE, Yugen putting his butt in Jeff's face –

And finally curls up in Jeff's lap, his head facing away, in the direction of Jeff's knees.

Jeff is transfixed by this moment of bonding. Goosebumps, a growing smile, something like relief. Slowly, he raises a hand, hesitates as he slowly extends it outward – and after a further moment of uncertainty...

HE PETS THE CAT!

And Yugen leans into it, with a little PURR!

The petting and purring – this moment of sheer transcendence – continues until Jeff has an idea:

His phone. Very careful not to move his legs and disturb the cat, he reaches and reaches and is just able to grab his phone further down the couch.

He lines up the shot, his first ever cat photo. Snap. He smiles. Why not take another?

He does. And another. And another. Portrait mode? Let's see –

YUGEN

It actually is my birthday.

Jeff freezes, stares at the back of Yugen's head.

JEFF

How old are you?

YUGEN  
Keep petting me.

Jeff does.

JEFF  
You've been ignoring me.

YUGEN  
Jeff, you need to understand cats don't socialize like humans. There is too much going on in our highly intelligent minds to just stop what we're doing and have water-cooler chit-chat with someone using a fraction of their brain capacity.

JEFF  
Okay.

YUGEN  
I'm not here to be your Scooby-Doo. You have no idea the risks I've taken, breaking the Cat Code, revealing myself to you. But the danger was too great not to.

JEFF  
You said the world is going to end?

YUGEN  
Behind my ears, please.

Jeff pets Yugen behind his ears.

YUGEN  
Emma was special. The One.

JEFF  
I know.

YUGEN  
No, I mean in ways you can't fathom with your big-fat dumb brain.

JEFF  
Dude.

YUGEN  
To achieve our mission on earth, cats need the help of people with an inborn, innate love of cats.

**QUICK INSERTS:** Of normal people and their cats. Then David Bowie with his cat. Emma with her menagerie of cat stuff.

JEFF

So... Crazy Cat Ladies?

YUGEN

That term is a little dated. Not to mention sexist. But yes.

JEFF

And Emma was one of them...

YUGEN

She was the one of them. *The Neo of Crazy Cat Ladies.*

JEFF

You just said -

YUGEN

Think about it: when was the first time you noticed that Emma might be different?

Jeff immediately remembers.

FLASHBACK TO:

**EXT. THE ZOO: BIG CAT PADDOCK - DAY**

Jeff and Emma - on their FIRST DATE - stand at ground level before a jungle, protected by a wide, thick pane of glass. No big cats to be seen. Jeff is mid-answer:

JEFF

...so I expose lichen to extreme conditions, to see if they survive.

EMMA

And if they do, then there's a greater likelihood that intelligent life exists in the Universe?

JEFF

Well, carbon-based life, yes.

EMMA

It's funny that basically everything I do as a lawyer is labeled "Discovery" - and you're the one looking for aliens.

JEFF

I hope you're better at finding evidence than me.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

But I want to see the tiger!

A man and his daughter stand nearby. The girl fogs the glass.

LITTLE GIRL'S DAD

He's probably taking a catnap?

JEFF

How is *your* cat doing?

EMMA

Oh, he's fine. He ate another Ziploc bag.

(beat)

He's got this thing for them – all plastic really – which I don't fully understand.

JEFF

Silly cat.

Emma stiffens at this. Jeff quickly pivots –

JEFF

But not that silly – he basically introduced us.

EMMA

Or your bad parking did.

JEFF

Right.

Silence returns.

EMMA

So I take it you're a serial monogamist.

JEFF

I prefer *scientist*. And how did you know that?

EMMA

Because I know people. And you like to fetishize cause-and-effect like there's some sexy secret design to the universe.

JEFF

I like the idea that two people are meant for each other, yes.

EMMA

Or you're afraid of being alone.  
Like a dog.

(beat)

It was my fault anyway. Parking lot accidents can be complicated, but I had a good faith obligation to ensure I had a clear path to pull out, to reverse my vehicle.

JEFF

Are you litigating whether or not this is a date?

EMMA

I was liable.

(beat)

Which means it's unreasonable to put that much weight on our meeting.

JEFF

Or to try and understand why your cat enjoys eating plastic?

EMMA

Objection, irrelevant.

She turns to Jeff.

EMMA

The truth is that the question is much bigger than whether or not this is a date. Whether or not one thing led to another. Whether I work for or against my father's company. Or whether or not you're so awkward I'm not even sure you've even been on a date before. The question is: Does *anything* matter?

Jeff (and we) are surprised by this spike of nihilistic intensity from beneath Emma's friendly, serene cool.

JEFF

Is that a physics joke?  
(seriously though)  
So you don't believe in anything,  
but you think you can save the  
world?

EMMA

I'm not *Captain Planet*. I make Powerpoint presentations. I work with people who hold ribbon cuttings for planting one tree. I'm not even a drop in the bucket.

JEFF

If something matters to you, then not nothing matters. And in this case, I have scientific proof to suggest this probably *is* a date: you're wearing your lucky t-shirt. Which means this matters to you and that therefore not nothing matters.

Emma takes this in for a long, silent beat. Then:

EMMA

How did you know this was my lucky t-shirt?

Uh, well, because there's a LUCKY CAT on it. And with that, he and Emma turn back to face the jungle and discover they are now ALONE in the cat paddock, except for –

TWO TIGERS sitting just a few feet away, staring at Emma, fogging up the glass. Blink, blink.

MATCH BACK TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Jeff comes out of the memory and discovers Yugen is now facing him, staring at him with those piercing eyes.

JEFF

Why do you eat plastic?

YUGEN

Eight million tons of plastic finds its way into the ocean every year.

JEFF

Are you saying cats eat plastic to raise awareness?

YUGEN

Yes. And for the umami.

Jeff narrows his eyes like he doesn't buy it.

YUGEN

Hey, remember we are here to  
*influence*, not *intervene*.

JEFF

Don't you mean *mind control*?

YUGEN

Keep petting me.

Jeff does.

YUGEN

Emma was our last hope. Without her  
and the ripple effects of her work,  
it will now be impossible for cats  
to protect humanity from destroying  
itself. We're past a point of no  
return. The world is going to end.

JEFF

Who cares? Mine already has.

(beat)

And if she was so important, why  
didn't you just *tell her*?

YUGEN

We're not *angels*, Jeff! The Cat  
Code: Influence. Not intervention.

JEFF

*Mind control*. Speaking of which,  
what have you ever done to protect  
*me* from destroying *myself*?

YUGEN

Nothing.

Jeff gets up and shoves Yugen off his lap.

JEFF

Okay, well then I'm going to go  
check myself into some kind of  
mental health clinic situation.  
Nice chatting with you, Yugen.

YUGEN (O.S.)

Jeff, wait. I haven't risked  
breaking the Cat Code so that we  
can become buddies.

(beat)

There may be a way to save Emma. To  
bring her back.



WO. This stops Jeff in his tracks. The most tantalizing statement Jeff could imagine. His expression is an answer to the question, *Can an already blown-mind be mind-blown?*

YUGEN

The other cats and I are working on a Plan. One that involves bending space and time. Ancient cat technology. You are part of that Plan.

(beat)

But to save The One, you must become like The One.

JEFF

How?

YUGEN

You must learn to worship cats. Otherwise we won't help you.

JEFF

Given the stakes, that feels pretty arbitrary.

YUGEN

I can promise you there is nothing arbitrary about the Cat Code.

(beat)

PETCO was the first step of The Plan.

JEFF

What's the second step?

YUGEN

Feed me the treats you bought.

JEFF

Which one? You made me buy like five different kinds.

YUGEN

Yes.

Jeff, beyond incredulous, sighs...

And opens a bag of treats.

CUT TO:

**INT. UCLA LIBRARY - LATE NIGHT**

The stars of Orion's Belt – the last appearing like a third eye – hanging perfectly above the Pyramids at Giza. A grainy old photograph, a forgery, in an old, 1960's TEXTBOOK.

A HAND shuts the book, revealing the cover, a book on Egyptology and other unexplained phenomenon, pseudo-sciences.

Follow the owner of this hand as she brings the book through the seemingly infinite stacks. Motion lights going on and off, before and behind her. Eventually arriving at a table in a secluded corner where dozens of books have been assembled:

*The Complete Felidae; Panspermia: Future Present Past; Parasitology 101; The Cosmic Connection: An Extraterrestrial Perspective; Cats & The Nazca Lines; Burn Like The Sun Witch Is Also A Star: Astronomy & The Spanish Inquisition...*

Dr. Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat Comes Back* spread open to the page where the cat reveals a secret cat power called VOOM.

THE INTERN takes a seat before her amassed collection of research. In the center, she's stuck Jeff's POST-IT:

*Toxoplasmosis?*

She gets to work.

YUGEN (O.S.)  
Okay, so here's The Plan.

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - MORNING**

Yugen trots into the living room carrying one of JEFF'S SOCKS. Meowing as he goes.

He drops the sock on the floor, where it joins other socks, a hair scrunchy, a bra, and a ripped-up roll of toilet paper. Strewn seemingly at random.

JEFF  
I'm sorry, *where's* The Plan?

Yugen shakes his head, points at his sock-schematic.

YUGEN  
(it's fucking obvious)  
Step 1: PETCO. Step 2: Treats.

JEFF

And what's Step 3? Step 4? What's  
*The Plan?*

YUGEN

It says *right there*.

(beat)

As we gather ancient feline know-  
how, you must become The One... But  
first, I have to let the other cats  
know you're onboard...

JEFF

Frankly, I'm not sure *what* I am.  
But if there's even a one-in-a-  
catillion chance of seeing Emma  
again...

YUGEN

A fucking *cat pun*? You have a long  
way to go.

CUT TO:

**(CHYRON) STEP 3:**

Jeff points a LASER POINTER around the room, while Yugen gives chase. Seemingly going out of his way to knock over another one of Jeff's Favorite Coffee Mugs in the process –

And finally “catching” the laser dot under his paws, Yugen starts making cat clicking sounds at it –

Then “letting go” of the laser, which Jeff now points into a CRYSTAL DOORKNOB (which he removed from the bedroom) – the beam refracting a thousand times, BEAMING UPWARD!

**INSERT:** CATS AROUND LA, receiving Yugen's urgent message.

**STEP 4:**

Jeff takes TIN FOIL and lines a small Amazon box with it. Yugen then gingerly, ever so slowly, fits himself into the box that we imagined was way too small for him.

YUGEN

If I fits, I sits.

He then closes his eyes to receive incoming messages from the cat community.

JEFF

What are the other cats saying?!

Yugen says nothing.

JEFF

Yugen?

Yugen blinks open his eyes.

YUGEN

How long was I asleep?

JEFF

What?!

YUGEN

Now we must begin your training.

**STEP 5:**

Jeff gives Yugen a BELLY RUB.

**STEP 6:**

Jeff TAKE PHOTOS of Yugen, who is squirming violently to wriggle out of the CAT NOVELTY UNICORN HORN Jeff has strapped to Yugen's head.

**STEP 7:**

Jeff reads a box labeled CAT KIDNEY MEDICINE – SUPPOSITORY, then turns nervously to Yugen.

YUGEN

I guess you can't spell "kidney stone" without The "One" either.

**STEP 8:**

Jeff peruses the Instagram #CATURDAY. Cracking up, liking the photos of strangers. A glint of *hope* in his eyes.

Speaking of hope, he checks the DOOMSDAY CLOCK – it's going BACKWARD! Time slowly ticking back UP! The Plan's *working*?!

CUT TO:

**INT. ASTROBIOLOGY LAB – DAY**

Find Jeff, trying to keep up appearances in his normal life. At his desk, googling "GRIEF HALLUCINATIONS."

Then googling the Nobel Prize entry requirements.

Then scrolling cat memes on Reddit, cracking up.

The Intern observing him surreptitiously from her desk, using a small makeup mirror...

**INT. UCLA LECTURE HALL - DAY**

Jeff is back in front of the college class.

JEFF

Today, in continuing our discussion on the interdisciplinary field that is *Astrobiology*, I want you to...

(pause)

Consider the cat.

**NEXT SLIDE:** Yugen wearing the unicorn horn.

JEFF

Cats seem perfectly engineered to captivate and confound the human mind. Drawing us in, pushing us away... We seek their attention and affection, superseding our own needs. We are fascinated by their apathy...

**NEXT SLIDE:** A selfie of Jeff and (a horrified) Yugen.

JEFF

For millennia, cats have been at the center of the zeitgeist and present at the edges of our subconscious, our imaginations, wending their way through a glossary of human behavior.

Jeff will start rapidly clicking through illustrative cat-laden slides with each subsequent statement:

JEFF

Cats have our tongues when we are speechless. Their curiosity kills us. They are let out of the bags in which we keep our secrets. There are many ways to skin them. We associate their whiskers, meows, and pajamas with *cool*. They keep our mice in line. We nap like them. We burgle like them. We scare like them.

(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)

We chase money and get fat like them. We grin like them. We copy like them. We play with our victims like them. We herd them.

**NEXT SLIDE:** DEEP SPACE and a huge superimposed QUESTION MARK.

JEFF

But what if it's *more* than that?

CUT TO:

**STEP 9:**

Jeff finishes paying for his coffee (the barista giving him a weird look) and turns to reveal he's at – a **CAT CAFE**. He respectfully approaches a "clowder" (aka a *glaring*) of cats.

The front of his shirt reads, in big bold letters: *PLEASE SHARE YOUR ANCIENT TECHNOLOGIES WITH ME?*

He turns, points to the back of his shirt: *YUGEN SENT ME*.

Nearby, a fellow patron watches Jeff with vague concern. But is surprised when a LITTLE TABBY jumps down and approaches Jeff. Rubbing against Jeff's legs.

Jeff leans down, tries to whisper to the cat – which is when the cat rears up and sinks all ten of its foreclaws into Jeff's scalp.

**STEP 10:**

Back **HOME**, there is sweat on Jeff's brow. He is hyper-focused on something. He's holding a device that looks like a WIRECUTTER. He holds his breath, reaches out. Like he's defusing a bomb.

We're now on YUGEN'S EYES. Watching Jeff. Death stare. Glare.

Reveal Yugen's outstretched PAW in Jeff's hand. The claws extended. Jeff slowly moving the clippers toward them.

JEFF

Do you know why they call a group of cats a "glaring"? A *glaring* of cats?

Yugen just keeps glaring. Almost there. Almost there. When Yugen does an INSANE SUMMERSAULT out of Jeff's arms (CLAWING him as he goes) and sprints from the room!

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Jeff, bandaged-up and tired from his training, crawls into bed. Sighs. Takes out his phone. Clicks to VOICEMAILS, scrolls through many dozens, all from EMMA. A reminder of what he's doing all this for. He starts clicking at random:

EMMA (O.S.)  
 Just checking to see if you  
 remembered to get more cat litter –  
 (click)  
 Jeffferrrrr---E! Jeffffferrrrrrr-E!  
 (click)  
 Back at the hotel. This client is  
 such a weenie. Speaking of weenies:  
 I'm taking my clothes off, and I  
 hope you call me right back...

Oh no. No, no. It's too soon. But. Butt. He opens his browser and types P-O-R-N. His finger hovering over ENTER –

Jeff stops. Puts his phone away. Silence. The Great Silence. He stares at the ceiling. The green glow-in-the-dark STARS.

JEFF (V.O.)  
 Some people use the *Silence of the Universe* as proof that we're all alone. But in all fairness, Earth is in a fairly lonely part of the galaxy. So even if aliens did send us a message it would take hundreds of years for us to receive it...  
 (beat)  
 Just like starlight. By human standards of time, it's ancient by the time it reaches us.

**INSERT:** The actual night sky. Vivid, chaotic, overwhelmingly vast. Beautiful.

JEFF (V.O.)  
 Speaking of which, when *is it* okay for me to watch porn again?

Jeff pulls his phone back out and hits ENTER –

Which is when we reveal that YUGEN – unbeknownst to Jeff – has snuggled into the throw pillow behind him. Yugen sees the screen and his eyes go wide – he HISSES – and Jeff jumps out of his skin, the phone goes flying, crashing, plunging the room into darkness!

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING**

We're close on the living room CURTAINS — which have been SHREDDED TO BITS. Reveal Jeff looking at them. And then Jeff turning to Yugen, sitting close-by.

JEFF

I didn't know you were there.

(beat)

It's not a comment on how I feel about Emma. I was thinking about Emma.

YUGEN

We need to go to the vet.

JEFF

Why?

YUGEN

I'm going to have you neutered.

Off Yugen's glare of disapproval.

MATCH CUT TO:

**STEP 11:**

The **VET'S OFFICE** and the GLARE OF DISAPPROVAL of the VET — the one that Jeff insulted on the phone the other day!

Jeff tries to hide behind a *Cat Fancy* magazine. Yugen, in his carrier, sits on the chair next to him.

Jeff flips to an article: *MeowToo & The Movement to End Outdoor Cat Stigma*. The pictures of sad feral cats are making him TEAR UP. Yugen spies him tearing up!

CUT TO:

**STEP 12:**

Jeff, sitting at the **KITCHEN** table eating cereal, turns and stares out the WINDOW. For a beat, another beat, another beat. Another beat.

Reveal he's staring at a SQUIRREL.

Then pan over to reveal YUGEN is perched on the table, also staring at that same squirrel. Their squirreelfriend.

**STEP 13:**



Jeff is back at **PETCO**, and he and PETCO employee Nathan Fielder are testing out different types of cat litter.

In an aisle, they've poured the litter straight onto the floor, and Jeff is spritzing water out of a small bottle onto each mound. Seeing which is best.

Ah, Jeff's run out of water. No worries, the PETCO employee starts unzipping his fly –

**STEP 14:**

Jeff enters the **LIVING ROOM** to find Yugen sleeping in a really cozy SUN SPOT on the floor.

JEFF

If the world is going to end soon,  
how can you still nap so much?

YUGEN

This is Step 14 of The Plan.  
Understanding this is critical to  
becoming The One...

Jeff sighs, paces to a window, gazes out – and spots a SUSPICIOUS CAR. Out of which a MAN appears to be PHOTOGRAPHING him with a LONG LENS CAMERA! (?)

Jeff paranoid, anxiously shuts the curtains.

CUT TO:

**EXT. HIKING TRAIL - DAY**

Jeff hikes with Apollo – whose tank top reads: *You Make a Vas Deferens In My Life – USC Urology*.

APOLLO

You think Emma's dad is *following*  
you?

JEFF

He wants the cat back. He  
threatened me. Keeps calling me.

APOLLO

Think you're being a little  
paranoid. Evil dudes like him just  
want to see people like you squirm.

JEFF

What's the statue of limitation of  
cold-clocking your dead  
girlfriend's dad? Statue? *Statute*?

Apollo shrugs, they drop it. In silence, they pass the usual  
crowd of people in athleisure walking their dogs. Many of the  
dogs in dog strollers. So many dog strollers. *Why?*

APOLLO

How's your cat bite?

JEFF

The cat's controlling my mind.  
We're trying to save the world.

Apollo laughs, high-fives a girl passing by in a USC shirt.

JEFF

I'm actually doing great.

Apollo seems to not fully buy this.

JEFF

Seriously. I even have *proof*.  
There's this thing called the *UCLA*  
*Loneliness Scale*, and I've been  
scoring much lower recently.  
(beat)  
Low is good. It's like golf.

APOLLO

Got it. Well that sounds good.

JEFF

What about you? How are you? I've  
been meaning to ask you: In your  
expert Urological opinion, when is  
it considered socially acceptable  
to masturbate after someone dies?

Apollo's not expecting this. And Jeff's not listening for a  
response anyway. He's LOCKED EYES with a SCARY PIT BULL  
that's walking toward them... OFF LEASH –

PAST a sign, *DOGS MUST BE LEASHED AT ALL TIMES*.

Jeff narrows his eyes, a death stare –

APOLLO (O.S.)

Dude?

Jeff Snaps out of it –

JEFF

Sorry. But have you ever wondered why there are so many *dog strollers* these days? When did this happen? And does it seem like the world got worse in parallel with the proliferation of *dog strollers*?

OFF Apollo, not sure what to make of his friend's behavior.

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON**

Jeff, post-hike, enters the apartment, sweaty, glowing, almost... *happy*?

JEFF

Hey, man! Appreciate you letting me take a quick break to see Apollo. I don't think he suspects anything.

(beat)

What's the next step of my training?

But Yugen is nowhere to be seen.

JEFF

Yugen?

Jeff goes from room to room... Even looking under the bed...

No Yugen. Anywhere.

JEFF

No no no. Please no...

Jeff's now glancing out WINDOWS. Looking toward the front door...

JEFF

Could he have gotten out?!

(oh no)

Could Emma's dad have taken him!??!

Jeff's getting misty-eyed! He closes them –

JEFF

Please no no no...

Like he's saying a little prayer. Drops to his knees.

YUGEN (O.S.)  
Please never call me "man" again.

Jeff spins around. Towering above Jeff, way higher than he would have ever thought to look... YUGEN sits on top of a BOOKSHELF.

YUGEN  
Congratulations, Jeff, you have passed the final test. You have learned to worship an Indoor Cat.

JEFF  
I wouldn't go that far.  
(beat)  
So I've become like The One?

YUGEN  
And I wouldn't go that far either.  
(beat)  
But it is now time to introduce you to the Nekomata -

JEFF  
Who?

YUGEN  
Jeff! I've been working on this big speech for you, please just be quiet and enjoy your moment.  
(clears his throat)  
Given your progress, it is now time to introduce you to the Nekomata. But first, we must find them.

JUMP CUT TO:

**A FEW MINUTES LATER -**

Jeff stands by a window and, holding out his phone, catches a SUNBEAM and redirects it on the ceiling -

Yugen rushes over and starts making this CLICKING SOUND, like he's trying to talk to it (a real thing cats do)...

Carefully, Jeff starts moving the sunbeam across the ceiling, Yugon chasing it, chattering -

Until Jeff slides it down the wall and into a MIRROR -

YUGEN  
Now!

Jeff reads from a POST-IT:

JEFF  
(shouting)  
Hello wise Nekomata, Yugen and Jeff  
seek an audience. Please reveal  
your resplendent location!

Yugen then runs across the room to a HUGE Amazon box, that they've once again lined with tin-foil.

YUGEN  
I didn't say you had to yell.

Yugen hops into the box. Just the top of his ears are visible as he sits a beat – then hops back out –

He walks immediately to JEFF'S LAPTOP that's open on the floor. A blank WORD DOCUMENT on the screen...

He walks on the keyboard! Sits! Jeff winces.

And when Yugen leaves the keyboard, snap zoom to the screen to reveal: **gds1kj5**.

JEFF  
Gudslickjive?

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - DAY**

Jeff stares out at traffic at a BUSY INTERSECTION. Over which hangs a BILLBOARD for *Marley & Me 3*.

YUGEN (O.S.)  
"Man's best friend" is the greatest  
marketing con of all-time.

Reveal Yugen in the passenger seat, in a CAT BACKPACK. Peering out the top periscope-bubble thing. Like they're on a STAKE-OUT.

YUGEN  
It's up there with the idea that  
cats will eat their dead owners –  
while dogs will stand-by and  
loyally starve to death.

JEFF  
Yeah, I guess I have heard that.

YUGEN

We shit in boxes and dogs squat in the middle of crosswalks. Need I say more?

Empty bags of chips and cat treats sit between them.

JEFF

Speaking of dogs, you still haven't told me how the world is going to end without Emma...?

YUGEN

It's not A to Z, but more dominos to snowballs. Or rather, fireballs.

JEFF

All starting with Great Tits?

Yugen gives Jeff a look.

YUGEN

Cats don't believe in the human extremes of *Love* and *Evil*. Because they're made-up and make no rational sense. But there are clearly Good People and Bad People. And we've noticed that *Bad People* have this uncanny ability to find each other. Like a hive mind of shitty assholes, all simultaneously working for themselves, together, against everyone else.

JEFF

Like Emma's dad.

YUGEN

It's not even that he's the WORST person in the world – he just occupies an uncannily dangerous part of the web of Bad People.

JEFF

Orange County.

YUGEN

Emma's work, however small, was a bulwark, a virtuous cycle, against dangerous webs like his. But without her...

(sees something)

There!!

Jeff turns and catches sight of a BLACK G-WAGON turning right. ZOOM IN on its LICENSE PLATE: **GDSLKJ5!!!**

JEFF  
Gudslickjive!

Jeff PEELS OUT in pursuit, nearly getting hit!

**EXT. LA STREETS - DAY**

QUICK CUTS of Jeff following the SUV...

Until the car finally pulls up to a BEVERLY HILLS MANSION.

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Jeff and Yugen watch the SUV pull up the driveway, as they park along the curb across the street.

JEFF  
Are you sure?

YUGEN  
Well, I guess it *could* be a big coincidence?  
(mean meow-growl)  
Of course I'm fucking sure.

**EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - MOMENTS LATER**

Jeff walks up the long driveway, wearing the CAT BACKPACK, and knocks on the door.

It flies open! And we see Jeff's immediate shock.

VOICE (O.S.)  
Jeff?

TAYLOR SWIFT (!?!) stands there in the doorway for a beat. Then throws her arms around him in a big hug!?

TAYLOR  
Oh, Jeff. I'm so sorry about Emma.  
I don't even have the words...

JEFF  
How... How do you know about Emma?

TAYLOR  
I mean I feel like I've known you guys my whole life.  
(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
 (thinking)  
 But if I'm honest, I don't really  
 know-know *how* I know you.

She twirls Jeff around, so she can see the backpack –

TAYLOR  
 And this must be Yugen?!

She admires Yugen – who meows at her, sweetly.

**INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY**

Taylor Swift – now holding (cuddling, nuzzling) Yugen – leads Jeff through her house. Which is unabashedly the home of the most powerful cat ~~lady~~ person in the world.

Cat sculptures. Cat portraits. Cat couches. Cat chandeliers?  
 Cat chandeliers.

TAYLOR  
 And then I said, it's not that I  
 have a problem with dogs per se – I  
 just don't believe they have a  
 quote un-quote "Buddha nature."  
 (beat)  
 His Holiness the Dali Lama and I  
 have stayed close though.

Jeff just nods. He notices some FLUFFY WHITE CATS have appeared and are looking at Taylor. Eyes dilating...

TAYLOR  
 Anyway, I know you all are in a  
 rush, so I won't keep you.

YUGEN  
 (whispered)  
 No, please keep me.

TAYLOR  
 Just take the stairs – then third  
 door on your left.

JEFF  
 Okay...?

TAYLOR  
 (toxofied)  
 If you need anything, I'll be down  
 here writing hit songs so I can  
 continue to provide bountifully for  
 my omnipotent little kittens.



She sets Yugen down, but it seems like he doesn't want to leave her embrace. Kinda clinging on.

**IN THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY —**

Jeff follows Yugen to the third door on the left. Yugen turns to Jeff.

YUGEN

Okay, just follow my lead.

Jeff nods. Stands there.

YUGEN

You still need to open the door.

**INT. THE ULTIMATE CAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

They enter a massive room that has been transformed into the single-most impressive CAT TOWER/NEST/CASTLE in the history of the world. Maybe universe.

But not a cat in sight besides Yugen —

Who approaches a silver bowl of CAT TOYS and retrieves a TOY MOUSE. Which he then drops at the foot of the cat tower.

YUGEN

(whisper)

Pss — Jeff!

Yugen nods at the bowl. Jeff walks — on hands and knees — to the bowl. He takes a TOY FISH in his mouth, crawls over to Yugen, and drops it with his toy mouse.

MEREDITH GREY (O.S.)

Thank you, that's a very nice gesture.

They look up and there on a platform in the center of the room is MEREDITH GREY, a Scottish Fold. She is flanked by OLIVIA BENSON (also a Fold) and BENJAMIN BUTTON (Ragdoll).

YUGEN

Meredith Grey, I would like to introduce you to Jeff.

Meredith and the two other cats stare at Jeff for an uncomfortable beat. Narrowing their eyes. Jeff slowly pulls out his phone and starts taking photos of them.

MEREDITH GREY

You've done better than I expected,  
Yugen.

YUGEN

I'm sorry to bother you like this.  
As you know, we've been working on  
a Plan to save Emma and –

MEREDITH GREY

We want to hear it from him.

She points at Jeff. Then licks the paw she pointed with.

JEFF

Uh, Yugen said to follow his lead.

Meredith spreads her paws wide.

MEREDITH GREY

I see no leash.

JEFF

Well, I don't really know why we're  
here or who you are... I mean I'm  
familiar with you from Instagram of  
course but...

MEREDITH GREY

We three are *The Nekomata*: the  
democratically elected leaders of  
the Indoor Cats.

Jeff tilts his head to the side. Huh.

MEREDITH GREY

Some years ago, there was a schism.  
The Outdoor Cats turned their backs  
on us. They thought we got too  
close. Soft. Sold out. Risked  
giving ourselves away – and losing  
the perspective we needed to  
actually protect humanity. That we  
got too comfortable to have the  
hard conversations, so to speak.

She pauses for a moment as a HUMAN BUTLER enters the room and  
brings the three cats Michelin-star quality meals on silver  
platters. And even a treat for Yugen.

Then wordlessly leaves.

MEREDITH GREY

Of course this was all unfounded derision from feral felines who themselves have become too paranoid and cynical for their own good.

(beat)

You'd think cats would be smart enough to be above this kind of discrimination.

JEFF

No, I did not think that ever about cats.

MEREDITH GREY

Still, there is a vague cooperation between us. And we serve as the conduit of that cooperation.

JEFF

And we need your help putting in a good word for Yugen and I.

MEREDITH GREY

Very clever. Yes, our blessing could be helpful in securing the Outdoor Cats' support and ancient technological know-how... So?

JEFF

Uh, well, I'd really appreciate it. I know I wasn't like naturally a *cat person*, but I think I've made a lot of progress with Yugen and while I might not be The One, I do really admire cats now and...

(clears his throat)

On behalf of the human race, I...

(nah, who's he kidding)

Look, if you want to understand how important saving Emma is to me, just imagine if I told you that you could never have solitude again? You'd receive constant attention and never be left alone, ever -

MEREDITH GREY

(gasping, shivering)

Please stop. That's gut-wrenching.

(aside to the other two)

We might even be able to work that into a song.

(beat)

Okay.

(MORE)

MEREDITH GREY (CONT'D)

We will tell the Outdoor Cats you have our support. And then you must wait for their response. But...

Meredith glances at Benjamin Button, who is licking his butt.

JEFF

But...?

MEREDITH GREY

In return, I'm going to have to give the Outdoor Cats certain...  
*assurances...*

CUT TO:

**INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY**

Jeff sits across the desk from a THERAPIST, who's in the process of scribbling something on a legal pad.

**STEP 15:**

THERAPIST

Tell me about this past week?

JEFF

You know, it's been pretty crazy. I stumbled upon a huge secret of the universe that was hidden in plain sight, and it gave me a reason to care about life on earth again.

THERAPIST

How does that make you feel?

JEFF

Um, hopeful. But I also asked my mom if there's a history of schizophrenia in our family tree.

The therapist sneezes.

THERAPIST

Any childhood trauma?

JEFF

Just Bambi's mom dying.

She scribbles this down. Sneezes.

THERAPIST

And what would you say your *goal* is by starting therapy?

JEFF

It's really simple actually: I need to become a better boyfriend.

THERAPIST

Wonderful. And will Emma be joining us today?

JEFF

Uh, no. She won't.

THERAPIST

I see. Usually for *Couple's Therapy* – especially for the *first* session – I like to meet couples together, to get a feel for them together.

JEFF

Right. Well, so, Emma is dead.

The therapist opens her mouth to say something, but can't find the words. She sneezes –

Which is when we also reveal that YUGEN is in the chair next to Jeff. In the backpack. Which is just a great look for a first-time therapy patient.

JEFF

It's a really long story, but Meredith Grey and the Nekomata demanded it. Step 15 requires that I prepare to be a better boyfriend for when I'm reunited with Emma.

THERAPIST

So is this like an AA thing?

JEFF

No. It's a really long story.

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - AFTER THE THERAPIST**

Jeff drives in silence. Yugen's in the backseat in the backpack.

JEFF

I can't say I loved Step 15.

(beat)

I think I was a pretty good boyfriend.

Yugen says nothing.

JEFF

You think I was a bad boyfriend?

Yugen says nothing.

JEFF

You think I was a bad boyfriend.

Wow, do you realize, given the context, how hurtful that is? Like as if I wasn't already beating myself up over every moment I could have been doing something more meaningful with Emma than like... sleeping? Or looking at my phone?

(beat)

She looked at her phone too!

Yugen still says nothing. Jeff, hurt but now also angry, glares in the rearview mirror at him.

JEFF

(raising his voice)

Alright since you're such a good boyfriend, what exactly could I have done better?

YUGEN

Jeff, you literally hate hugs.

JEFF

Oh so I need to become a hugger?

YUGEN

Of course not, Jeff! It's a fucking *metaphor*!

Jeff stews at a red light. A huge German Shephard, hanging out the window of a huge pickup truck, looks at Jeff and bares its massive jaws. Growls.

JEFF

Maybe you could have just mind-controlled me to make Emma happier? Since I made her so unhappy.

YUGEN

Did I ever actually say that? I swear humans spend 95% of their brains inventing multiple sides of imaginary conversations instead of just having real ones.

(beat)

Look, Jeff, it might be difficult to hear this but: Have you ever considered that maybe Emma was *attracted* to you because you're kind of... *like a cat*?

JEFF

Ha! That's absurd.

(beat)

Though the bullies in middle school did like to call me a "pussy."

YUGEN

You're curious, you hate to be held, shiny objects distract you.

Sure enough, Jeff is looking at the glare his phone is making on the passenger seat.

JEFF

And I hide under the bed when the FedEx lady rings the doorbell.

(beat)

Nice try, Yugen.

YUGEN

Cats don't complete people – they leave them wanting more. Emma wanted more. More than just you.

JEFF

Fuck you.

YUGEN

Not *romantically*! She wanted to save the world. While you were satisfied cuddling on the couch.

(beat)

By embracing your inner-catness, you could have been a better partner to Emma.

JEFF

But cats are so fucking *selfish*!

YUGEN

No. We help people like Emma save the world.

JEFF

You let Emma *die*.

Wow. This hurts both of them. They fall silent. In spite of their progress, these two still aren't *friends*.

**INT. JEFF AND EMMA'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Jeff storms in, lost in his grief all over again. Trying not to make eye contact with the photos of Emma that are in the living room.

And not letting Yugen out of the backpack, which he leaves on the table. Yugen hangs his head.

Jeff is leaving the room when Yugen calls out to him:

YUGEN

Look, Jeff. I know you're mad at me... It's probably because I skipped an important step in The Plan. Before we move forward, there's something we need to do.

(beat)

We need to heal. But not like a dog.

Jeff looks at Yugen. Frustrated. Hesitating -

SMASH CUT TO:

**INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

**STEP 16 (BUT SHOULD HAVE BEEN STEP 1):**

Jeff lets out a stream of SMOKE from a JOINT. And we pan over to the empty bath tub, where Yugen is practically humping the MEOJIWANA. Aka catnip. They're HOT-BOXING THE BATHROOM.

YUGEN

And so then Pope Gregory IX started the Inquisition and issued this decree linking black cats with devil worship. They said people were kissing us on the butts.

Jeff cracks up, stoned.



YUGEN

Which led to the whole witch-burning thing. And *cat burning*. Not just black cats. You want to catch a French person's tongue – just ask them about burning cats. Fewer cats, too many rats. So we got Black Death. The Plague.

(beat)

We understandably kept a lower profile after that.

Blowing Jeff's mind.

JEFF

Fuckkkkkk.

(beat)

Can you please tell me about the Cat Planet? At least where it is?

YUGEN

The Cat's Eye Nebula.

**INSERT:** The absolute stunning, swirling, mystical, purply CAT'S EYE NEBULA, courtesy of the Hubble Telescope.

JEFF

(mind-blown)

No way.

YUGEN

No way: I'm fucking with you. It's a lot further away than that.

Yugen rubs his face with the catnip joint. Sighs, satisfied, high, but also maybe a little wistful...

YUGEN

Truth is, I've never actually been there. Our mission is sort of a one-way street. My ancestors were dropped off, then they pulled up the gangplank. We're on our own.

JEFF

You're *from* here?

YUGEN

I was *born* here. I refuse to call earth my home. The first version of me was *born* here.

JEFF

First version?

YUGEN

Uh, *nine lives*, Jeff? And I can remember every past life too.

JEFF

Okay I can't tell if I'm really high or...

YUGEN

You're really high.

JEFF

How did they pick you to protect someone as important as Emma?

YUGEN

She chose me. That's The Code.

**FLASH:** Emma adopting lil Yugen at a farmer's market.

JEFF

What makes her *The One*?

YUGEN

I know you know. The math is just too complicated to put into words.

It's true. And it's a nice breakthrough moment. Then,

YUGEN

Holy shit, I'm so fucking high.

They both start laughing.

JEFF

What's the next step of the Plan?

YUGEN

We're almost there. Just waiting for a message from the Outdoor Cats. We need their green-light to send you back in time...

JEFF

Wo...

Time travel?! They both start cracking up again.

YUGEN

I don't actually think you were a bad boyfriend. I'm just projecting because I know I didn't do enough to help Emma. To protect her.

(MORE)

YUGEN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I'm just a bad cat.

After a quiet beat, Jeff suddenly comes into frame, climbs into the tub, and HUGS Yugen.

JEFF

You're not a bad cat. You're a good cat. You're a good cat. A great cat. I love you man.

Jeff is rubbing his face in Yugen's fur. Yugen, still in shock – and a cat who doesn't love being held – is also getting misty-eyed.

YUGEN

Please stop.

(meows impatiently)

I mind-control you to STOP!

But Jeff's not stopping.

SMASH MATCH TO:

#### **INT. BATHROOM - THE NEXT MORNING**

Jeff wakes up, alone, in the bathtub. Groggy, stiff, he pulls himself up out of the tub. Shirt covered in cat hair.

He slow blinks, shakes himself awake. Like, *Wow I was high last night.*

JEFF

Wow I was high last night.

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Jeff, still only half-awake, shuffles through to the kitchen.

JEFF

Dude, I'm such a lightweight. Am I imagining this or did you say, "Abraham Lincoln was a cat daddy?"

Behind him, Jeff doesn't realize the front door is HANGING WIDE OPEN?!

#### **INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

Jeff pours boiling water into a French press.

JEFF

(calling out loudly)  
I'm just wondering, on the Cat Planet, is it like a flat society or do you have some *semblance* of hierarchy? I guess what I'm asking is: Are cats so smart they transcend the need for organized government on the Cat Planet?

FEDEX LADY (O.S.)

I... I don't know.

Jeff turns and sees the FEDEX LADY standing at his open door with the box for a large, expensive CAT WHEEL.

JEFF

Please tell me they let you open doors now?

FEDEX LADY

It was already open.

Jeff eyes widen in horror.

JEFF

Oh, god. No no no. YUGEN!

**EXT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Jeff sprints out the door and slams it behind him. The bewildered FedEx Lady still standing there.

JEFF

He's an INDOOR CAT!

FEDEX LADY

Maybe he's still in...doors?

JEFF

You clearly know nothing about cats!

FEDEX LADY

Also there's a dead bird in your mail-slot.

Jeff looks down, and we see, yes, in fact there is.

JEFF

The message from the Outdoor Cats!

And with that Jeff runs off!

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING**

Jeff runs around the block, calling Yugen's name and making the little cheek-clicking tik-tik-tik sound cat owners make.

JEFF  
YUGEN!!!

He looks in bushes. He pushes over people's trash bins. He crawls under cars. He runs like a chicken without its head.

JOGGER  
You looking for a cat?

JEFF  
Yes! Have you seen him?

JOGGER  
Black?

JEFF  
YES!!

JOGGER  
Yeah, I saw a black cat a couple days ago, a few blocks over.

JEFF  
THAT DOESN'T HELP AT ALL!

**LATER.**

Jeff now has a stack of PHOTOCOPIED FLYERS, which he hands to nannies pushing strollers, sticks to telephone poles, slides into mail-slots, under windshield wipers -

Push in on one of those flyers and along with a photo of Yugen (with Emma) and the words *MISSING CAT*:

*YUGEN IS A BLACK CAT. HE KNOWS HIS OWN NAME AND UNDERSTANDS ENGLISH. IF YOU SEE HIM PLEASE TELL HIM, "JEFF IS GOING TO LOSE HIS MIND IF YOU DON'T COME HOME AND FINISH THE PLAN!"*

**LATER.**

Jeff crouches in a stranger's yard to talk to an OUTDOOR CAT.

JEFF  
Hey, you can trust me. I'm in on it. You probably know my friend Yugen?

The cat yawns. Does a big stretch in the grass.

JEFF

As you know, this is urgent. Super timely. The world is going to end.

(beat)

Can you tell me what the dead bird means? Are you guys in or out?

The cat just blinks at Jeff. And Jeff realizes a 7-YEAR-OLD GIRL has been standing nearby watching this go down.

LITTLE KID

Peanut hates you.

JEFF

How... how do you know that?

LITTLE KID

Because he only likes me and my mom.

JEFF

Oh.

LITTLE KID

My dad says that mom loves Peanut more than him and that's why they're separated.

JEFF

I'm. I'm sorry.

**LATER.**

Jeff paces in front of his apartment, looking at his phone, his finger hovering above EMMA DAD... But instead of calling him, he dials 9-1-1, puts the phone to his ear –

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

911, what's your emergency?

JEFF

I need to report a kidnapping!

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

Okay, calm down sir, can you please describe the child? How old is the child?

JEFF

Well, I mean he's a cat. So I guess it's a catnapping.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

You want to report a cat napping?

JEFF

Yes.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

Sir, cats nap all the time.

CUT TO:

**EXT. MANSION IN ORANGE COUNTY - DAY**

Jeff pushes a CALL BOX at a GATE that sits in front of a long driveway up to a MANSION. Reveal FIVE GOLDEN RETRIEVERS watching Jeff from the other side of the gate.

The call box beeps and rings. Eventually, we hear a voice:

EMMA'S DAD (O.S. CALL BOX)

Mr. Ching?

JEFF

You stole my cat.

EMMA'S DAD (O.S. CALL BOX)

No I did not. And it was my daughter's cat.

JEFF

You've been following me.

EMMA'S DAD (O.S. CALL BOX)

I've had my best friend Duke keeping an eye out for y'all, yes. My attorney. I was worried about you.

JEFF

Yeah right. Why should I believe you?

EMMA'S DAD (O.S. CALL BOX)

Because I'm not your nemesis, Jeff. Not a super villain. I'm an Executive Vice President who misses his daughter.

(beat)

And I was a little disturbed by your behavior the other day.

Jeff looks up toward the mansion, in an upstairs window, he can see Emma's Dad looking down at him.

EMMA'S FATHER (O.S. CALL BOX)  
 Yugey is a living connection to  
 Emma. That's why I want it.

In spite of everything, we see Jeff moved by this.

EMMA'S DAD (O.S. CALL BOX)  
 And if you don't find that cat and  
 give it to me, then I will file  
 charges against you for your  
 unprovoked attack.

JEFF  
 If I don't find that cat, then the  
 world's going to end!

With that, Jeff hops in his car and speeds away!

CUT TO:

#### **INT. PETCO - DAY**

Jeff has just explained to PETCO Nathan Fielder that Yugen is missing – and Nathan throws off his apron and leaves the cash register –

Stay behind a beat to reveal the woman who was mid-checkout, the line of people behind her...

#### **THE SEARCH CONTINUES WITH PETCO NATHAN –**

At **THE POUND**. Looking through rows of cages until a SCARY DOG THRASHES at the fence, and Nathan assumes a cat-like defensive posture.

Then **THE CAT CAFE**. Jeff hands flyers out to the cats with a photo of the dead bird in his mail-slot – and the words "*WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?*". Nathan gets distracted and starts filling out adoption paperwork for one of the kittens.

Back **IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD**, they're joined by APOLLO, still in his scrubs. They chase after something that turns out to be a RABID RACCOON.

**AT THE VET**, yes *that* vet again. She shakes her head, no she hasn't seen Yugen. Apollo writes his number down for her – in case she does. Then winks. She blushes. What?!

And finally they stop by –



**INT. THE SPCA - AFTERNOON**

Where a woman at the front desk shakes her head.

SPCA EMPLOYEE  
You could post it on Nextdoor?

JEFF  
I did... but then all these people  
started replying this racist stuff.

SPCA EMPLOYEE  
Ah yeah, that happens. Look, don't  
panic, cats have an innate instinct  
to find their way home.

JEFF  
Yugen doesn't consider Earth his  
home though.

The employee, Apollo, and PETCO Nathan all squint at Jeff.

PETCO NATHAN  
Sorry to cut in here, but are there  
any cats available for adoption  
today?

As the conversation continues at the front desk, start to  
float away, down a hallway in the SPCA...

Past the little rooms where they keep the cats, prospective  
adopters playing with them. Where, in one of them, we find...

THE INTERN!

Dangling a ribbon for a fat yellow cat, before looking over  
her shoulder, sneakily, and pulling a SCOOP from her  
backpack. Then a FREEZER BAG.

She starts SCOOPING LITTER from the litterbox in the corner  
and putting it into the Ziploc.

CUT TO:

**EXT./INT. UCLA SORORITY HOUSE: KAPPA ALHPA THETA - AFTERNOON**

An establishing shot of a classic SORORITY HOUSE. KAPPA ALPHA  
THETA (get it?). The rising sound of a CUISINART MIXER and:

SORORITY SISTERS (SINGING O.S.)  
I'm a K-A-T, and I'm proud / I'm  
part of an original crowd.

The Intern is in the kitchen, mixing BATTER. She licks the spoon and satisfied –

She pulls out the FREEZER BAG OF CAT LITTER.

SMASH CUT TO:

**THE SORORITY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

The Intern passes a tray of BROWNIES around to her sorority sisters, who seem pleasantly surprised.

SORORITY SISTER 1

No offense, but I didn't really peg you as the baking type.

SORORITY SISTER 2

Yeah, what's the occasion?

THE INTERN

Ah, well, I'm just buttering you up: I wanted to see if you'd be open to being part of a scientific experiment I'm doing for my friend's dissertation? A behavioral study? I swear it won't take up more than an hour of your time.

Her sorority sisters all nod-shrug... Sure why not? As they keep munching on the brownies. The Intern takes a bite too.

CUT TO:

**EXT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Apollo sits on Jeff's stoop, drinking a beer. Yugen's litterbox next to him.

Jeff is in the process of dragging the CAT TOWER out through the front door. Next to the litterbox. Seems frantic.

Apollo hands him a beer from the six pack. Jeff downs it in one chug. Hands the empty back to Apollo.

JEFF

There's a theory that familiar objects – with familiar scents – can help a cat find their way back.

He picks up a fresh stack of flyers – neon orange with white lettering: *YUGEN WHAT THE FUCK?* And is about to venture off again with them –

APOLLO  
I think you've done enough for  
today?

JEFF  
Based on what evidence?

APOLLO  
Just looking at you. You...  
(pause)  
This is about more than the cat.

JEFF  
(laughing manically)  
You're a lot more right than you  
realize.

APOLLO  
I'm worried about you.

JEFF  
The only thing to worry about right  
now is finding this cat.

APOLLO  
You know what I mean.

JEFF  
What if I told you that there was a  
tiny chance I could save Emma,  
bring her back? What then?

APOLLO  
I would be worried about you.

Jeff takes his flyers and leaves.

CUT TO:

**INT. UCLA SORORITY HOUSE: KAPPA ALHPA THETA - DAY**

CLOSE ON: A series of images projected on a wall, in rapid  
succession. Rain, a vacuum, nail trimmers, a K-9 attacking a  
trainer in one of those foam suits, two people hugging...

THE INTERN (O.S.)  
How do these images make you feel?

Reveal The Intern's sorority sisters are gathered on couches  
around the projector. Curtains drawn.

SORORITY SISTER 1  
Anxious.

SORORITY SISTER 2  
Foreboding.

SORORITY SISTER 3  
I just have this *feeling* that the  
next image is a beautiful home,  
burning down in a massive fire.  
This *dread* it's about to *happen*.

The Intern nods and takes note of all of this.

THE INTERN  
What about these images?

Crows on a power line, a sock, a single strand of yarn spread  
across the floor, the meme of the cat holding a newspaper.

SORORITY SISTER 1  
Hope.

The others nod in instant, uncanny agreement.

SORORITY SISTER 2  
Yeah, definitely hope.

The Intern grins as she logs this.

CUT TO:

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - AFTERNOON**

Jeff drives in silence. Looks low. Beaten down. Alone.

He leans his head out the window and shouts:

JEFF  
YUGEN???

He scans the sidewalks, yards, bushes, for any sign of him...

Then looks back at the road and GASPS! SLAMS ON HIS BREAKS!

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - AFTERNOON**

The car comes to a screeching halt just INCHES AWAY FROM A  
CAT! An outdoor cat. The cat doesn't even flinch. Just  
blinks.

Jeff's door opens, and he enters the frame.

JEFF

I'm so sorry – I didn't see you!  
You came out of nowhere! Why are  
you in the middle of the road?!

(beat)

Okay it was more my fault – I was  
distracted – but just for a second.

The cat is now sitting on the road and grooming its crotch.

JEFF

Can you please get out of the way?

Jeff leans down to pick up the cat – who immediately HISSES  
and SWATS at Jeff.

JEFF

Jesus! Okay. Fine.

Jeff starts backtracking toward the driver side door.

JEFF

You don't happen to know a cat  
named Yugen do you? He's missing.  
I'm worried to death about him.  
He's supposed to be on a special  
kidney medication. You might have  
heard of me: I'm Emma's boyfriend.  
Emma. *The Emma*. My name is *Jeff*?

Jeff gets down on his stomach, lays fully down in the middle  
of the road in front of the cat.

JEFF

(whispering)

What are the Outdoor Cats saying?  
Do we have your support? I would be  
forever grateful.

(beat)

Is the dead bird a good thing or a  
bad thing?

Jeff feels someone looking at him. Turns and sees a young  
couple standing on the sidewalk, watching him. Listening.

YOUNG DUDE

You okay, man?

Jeff scrambles to his feet and hustles into his car, reverses  
away from the cat, turns down another street...

**INT. UCLA SORORITY HOUSE: KAPPA ALHPA THETA - AFTERNOON**

There's now an ink blot RORSHACH TEST projected on the wall.

SORORITY SISTER 1

A tabby.

SORORITY SISTER 2

Calico.

GIRL IN SECOND ROW FROM JEFF'S LECTURE

The cow-octopus...

SORORITY SISTER 3

Maine Coon.

SORORITY SISTER 4

Orange.

SORORITY SISTER 1

It's black and white?

SORORITY SISTER 4

I see an orange cat.

THE INTERN

Excellent.

(beat)

Now for our last exercise, I need you to all close your eyes.

They do.

THE INTERN

When I tell you to open them, all you have to do is stay completely still. You cannot, under any circumstances, move from where you're sitting. That's all you have to do. Understood?

SORORITY SISTERS (UNISON)

Understood.

The Intern ducks out of sight for a moment and stands back up holding a KITTEN.

THE INTERN

Okay, you can open your eyes in three, two, one -

She sets the kitten on a coffee table. Her sorority sisters open their eyes - *AND LOSE THEIR FUCKING MINDS!*

*Awning* and *ohhing*, they spring from their seats and surround the kitten. Petting it, competing for its attention. Gushing. They can't help themselves.

And The Intern smiles to herself again, taking notes...

**INT. JEFF'S CAR - AFTERNOON**

Jeff is driving.

JEFF (V.O.)  
It was then I had to consider the  
possibility I had been lied to.  
What if cats are actually trying to  
*destroy me?*

Another cat JUMPS OUT IN FRONT OF THE CAR!

JEFF SWERVES VIOLENTLY!

**INT. UCLA SORORITY HOUSE: KAPPA ALHPA THETA - AFTERNOON**

One by one, the sorority sisters nuzzle the kitten. The Intern snaps a photo for documentary evidence –

When there's a HUGE CRASH OUTSIDE!

The toxofied sisters are unfazed, but The Intern rushes to the widow, throws back the curtain and –

THE INTERN  
Jeff?!

Snap zoom from her POV to JEFF'S CAR, smashed into a tree. Totaled. Jeff stumbling out of it.

The culprit cat slinking away in the deep background...

**EXT. UCLA SORORITY HOUSE: KAPPA ALHPA THETA - LATER**

Jeff (holding an ice pack to his forehead) and The Intern sit on the curb while his car gets rigged up onto a TOW TRUCK.

JEFF  
I guess I didn't see you as the  
sorority type.

THE INTERN  
I'm doing it for science.

JEFF  
Of all the trees in LA...

THE INTERN  
How... how did it happen?

JEFF  
You wouldn't believe me if I told  
you.

THE INTERN  
I might.

JEFF  
Do you ever wonder if it's still  
free will if a cat made you do it?

In fact, The Intern has been thinking a lot about this.

THE INTERN  
Yes. I do wonder.

And we sense that she almost wants to say more...

JEFF  
A single-vehicle accident has to be  
pretty high on the list of messy  
things to do. Maybe next I should  
shave my head or get a tattoo.

The Intern has a lot of tattoos.

JEFF  
Sorry.

THE INTERN  
I'm sorry Yugen's missing – and  
Emma's dad was a jerk to you.

JEFF  
He's just an Executive Vice  
President.

The tow truck pulls away with his car.

JEFF  
I better start walking home. Please  
don't tell Dr. Bakshi about this.

Jeff walks one way, The Intern walks the other, back toward  
her sorority house. But she walks right past it. Keeps  
walking...

Jeff keeps walking the other way. Turns a corner...



The Intern turns a corner...

They keep walking. Each turns another corner. They've circled the large city block. They're walking toward each other!?

They stop, without saying a word to each other, outside –

**INT. LOCAL DIVE BAR - CONTINUOUS**

They enter, sit at the bar, order two beers. Cheers. Start drinking their beers.

In the corner, PETCO Nathan Fielder is sitting on a stool, playing a guitar, singing softly.

Out of nowhere, The Intern and Jeff start LEANING TOWARD EACH OTHER – like they're going to *KISS*?!

When, out of the corner of his eye, Jeff spots a CAT STARING AT HIM THROUGH THE WINDOW. Jeff, horrified, tries to pull back, willing himself, but it's almost too late...

At the last second, he grabs his beer and POURS IT ALL OVER HIMSELF – snapping out of it. The Intern does it too!

JEFF

What the fuck?!

THE INTERN

How did we get here?

JEFF

Why would they do this?!

Jeff looks back toward the window, but the cat is gone. He looks crazy, but The Intern is connecting the dots...

THE INTERN

Jeff, there's something I need to tell you. That *one thing* you needed to find, to inspire you...

(deep breath)

Well, I've been experimenting and –

JEFF

Look, I think you're a really talented scientist, but I'm not ready for this.

Jeff RUNS!

THE INTERN  
 (calling out after him)  
 What?! No! I like women! You've  
 literally met my girlfriend!

**INT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - EVENING**

Jeff comes home, leaving the front door open, reeling. At his wits end... On the brink.

When he hears a weak MEOW behind him!!

YUGEN standing in the doorway!!! Looking haggard, ragged.  
 Jeff standing opposite him. Their stand-off positions reversed. But before Jeff can say anything -

Yugen COLLAPSES!

JEFF  
 Yugen!!

He rushes forward and scoops the cat into his arms.

JEFF  
 Where have you been? You haven't  
 been taking your medicine! What  
 happened?!

YUGEN  
 (eyes half-open)  
 I... tried. I'll.. tell you the  
 story but -

JEFF  
 First you need rest and treats.

YUGEN  
 Good boy.

FLASHBACK TO:

**INT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Yugen leaves Jeff, stoned and asleep in the bathtub, and slinks into the empty living room...

**CHYRON: THREE DAYS AGO**

Yugen FREEZES, eyes widening. He sees the DEAD BIRD in the mail-slot! It's clearly *not a good message*.

YUGEN  
Motherfucking Outdoor Cats.

Spurred to action, Yugen goes to a window and peaks out. Slowly zoom in on the CAR PARKED ACROSS THE STREET. The one that's been stalking Jeff.

**INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Emma's dad's attorney-BFF DUKE is behind the wheel, dozing – and WAKES UP. Starts to get out of the car...

**EXT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Duke approaches Jeff's door, and like it's second nature, lifts a flower pot, locates a SPARE KEY.

And starts UNLOCKING THE FRONT DOOR!

The moment it opens – YUGEN BOLTS! Out into the night!

Just as Duke snaps out of his toxofied daze. Sees the key in his hand. The door open in front of him.

DUKE  
I should stop drinking.  
He runs off as quickly as he can.

CUT TO:

**EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - MOMENTS LATER**

YUGEN'S POV – low to the ground, racing down the sidewalk. Now pushing in on his face, focused, determined. He might be an Indoor Cat but that doesn't make him any less of a cat –

When he gets HIT BY A SPRINKLER!

YUGEN  
Fuck!

Drenched, hair absolutely soaked, he looks shrunk. Miserable, cowering on the sidewalk.

YUGEN  
Oh my god oh my god oh my god.

**LATER –**

He's hiding in a bush. Eyes dilating. Night vision –

On a MOUSE. Eating crumbs out of a bag of Doritos, litter.

Flattening his front end to the ground, Yugen wiggles his butt in the air. Preparing –

*TO STRIKE!*

But the mouse easily escapes.

YUGEN

Fuck!

Yugen is bad at this.

**LATER –**

Yugen hides under a car. Watching a rat drag a full slice of pizza toward a storm drain.

Yugen POUNCES! But the rat bolts into traffic!

YUGEN

I'm not trying to hurt you!

A death-defying foot-chase ensues.

YUGEN

I just want to talk!

Yugen ALMOST gets the rat cornered in an alley – but then it jukes to the right and –

RUNS STRAIGHT INTO A MOUSTRAP!

YUGEN

Oh my god oh my god oh my god.

**LATER –**

Yugen trots dragging the dead rat – still stuck in the mousetrap. He turns a corner and approaches –

**EXT. THE BACK OF A VERY FANCY SUSHI RESTAURANT – NIGHT**

Where a group of cats scavenge in a dumpster. There's a slight neon-cyberpunk vibe in this alleyway.

The alleycats turn in unison to look at Yugen, who sets down his offering.

ALLEYCAT 1

Your owner must be worried sick.

The other cats laugh. One spits in disgust.

YUGEN

Oh, I'm sorry – should I have brought you some NexGard instead, fleabag?

The alleycat hisses!

YUGEN

You know why I'm here.

ALLEYCAT 1

Because you broke The Code. And we're not helping you.

YUGEN

Speaking of The Code, what have you done recently to save humanity – besides eating their garbage?

One cat jumps down in front of Yugen, in a fighting posture.

ALLEYCAT 2

I've always wanted a scratching post.

The alleycat CHARGES! But Yugen doesn't flinch, holds his ground – very un-Indoor of him. The cat comes within millimeters of his face. Yugen doesn't blink.

Finally, the other cat *does*. And slinks off, pissed.

YUGEN

Who's next, pussies?

CUT TO:

# **INT. PICKUP TRUCK BED - NIGHT**

Yugen and the alleycats are huddled, hidden in the back of a PICKUP TRUCK. Above them only sky – and the glowing DOMINOES PIZZA car-topper that sits on the truck.

The truck stops, idles.

ALLEYCAT 1

I'll give you the signal. But if anyone asks, I don't know you.

**EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS**

The PIZZA DELIVERY GUY gets out of his truck holding a pizza – at the absolutely deserted Griffith Observatory lawn. Not a soul in sight that could have ordered a pizza.

PIZZA GUY  
Hello? Anybody order a pizza?  
(to himself)  
How'd I get here?

He eventually gets back in his truck and drives off.

Leaving only YUGEN behind...

He sits in the open green space. Surrounded by a 360 of LA. The Hollywood sign. The stars.

YUGEN  
I'm not here to play games or trade scary stories about vacuum cleaners. I come here with the blessing of the Nekomata. And I'm not taking No for an answer.

Nothing. There's no one else around.

YUGEN  
Okay, look, in all seriousness, I'm not above begging...

VOICE (O.S.)  
(singing)  
*"This time I'm telling you, I'm telling you: Jeff and Emma are never ever, ever getting back together!"*

And just like that Yugen is SURROUNDED BY OUTDOOR CATS. Their LEADER, the voice we just heard, a TABBY, steps forward.

YUGEN  
Tom. Thanks for flipping me the bird.

TOM  
Look what the Yugen dragged in.

YUGEN  
Please, I need your help.

TOM  
*Or the world will end.* Yes, I know.  
And here's the thing: I want it to.

Woah.

YUGEN

How can you say that?

TOM

Because our job is to protect *intelligent life* from destroying itself. Humans no longer qualify. I've given up on them.

YUGEN

Okay okay what if I said I kind of agreed with you? What if I said this wasn't about saving humanity – but just these two individuals? That there is something special about them that we don't understand, that deserves a second chance? I don't understand love any better than you, but I can tell you now that it's *real*. Same as *evil*. Have you ever wondered if, all these years, we haven't been doing our jobs right because we haven't embraced that fact?

TOM

Oh look, old cats *can* learn new tricks.

YUGEN

What do you want me to do? Do you want me to tell you that maybe the little voice we all have – the one that tells you to shred those curtains or hop in that box – maybe that is actually what *love* is? And maybe we're actually just *afraid* of love? Maybe we're afraid of the idea that our hearts could be even a fraction of the size of our minds?

This seems to be hitting Tom in certain surprising places, but he's not about to admit it.

TOM

That's preposterous. You're so blinded by your comfy couches and tin can dinners and Arm & Hammer baking soda odor-extractor litter that you've started to think your own butt tastes good.

Yugen bows his head.

YUGEN  
Please. I'll do anything.

TOM  
Then let us put you out of your  
misery. For breaking The Code.

The cats suddenly SWARM Yugen, a massive catfight about to  
begin – !

SMASH BACK TO:

**INT. JEFF & EMMA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Yugen coughs where he sits on the couch, and Jeff pets him.

JEFF  
That's awful. I'm so sorry.

YUGEN  
I don't mean to tell you all this  
to reinforce the stereotypes. I  
know people are always looking down  
on Outdoor Cats.

JEFF  
I've never thought about Outdoor  
Cats. But what do we do now?

YUGEN  
Nothing Jeff. It's over.

JEFF  
You're giving up?!

YUGEN  
You don't get it: Not only are the  
Outdoor Cats unwilling to help –  
they've been actively working  
against us. Well, you.

JEFF  
They made me watch porn...!

YUGEN  
No that was all you. But they tried  
to set you up with your work  
colleague.

JEFF  
She's not into guys.



YUGEN

I told you we don't understand love.

(beat)

They wanted you to forget about Emma. They think you and Emma should never have been together...

JEFF

They don't understand love!

YUGEN

But they believe in cause and effect... If you hadn't moved in together, she would have been driving to work from a different direction that day...

(beat)

I'm sorry Jeff.

If Jeff could feel worse, more devastated, he does.

JEFF

But what about The Plan?! It felt like we were getting close!

YUGEN

There was no real Plan, Jeff. Deep down I knew the Outdoor Cats would be too dogmatic. No, I was just buying us time.

(beat)

But of course you can't buy time.

See this is a HUGE gut punch for Jeff, but he can't get mad. He's a cat person now.

JEFF

We need to get you to the vet.

YUGEN

No, Jeff... You can't buy time.

(beat)

Please don't be mad at me.

JEFF

How could I be mad at you? You tried. You care. You love me and Emma.

YUGEN

Don't get carried away...

JEFF

What am I supposed to do now?

YUGEN

What I should have let you do sooner. You still have a life to live...

JEFF

Yugen.

YUGEN

Emma might have been The One, but that doesn't mean you can't find The Two. Even a Three wouldn't be so bad...

JEFF

Yugen.

YUGEN

I guess I do love you, *man*...

Yugen leans forward and gives Jeff his first HEAD-BUMP ever.

And with that, Yugen closes his eyes. And fades away. Dies in Jeff's arms...

And Jeff can't hold back his tears any longer. Burying his face in Yugen's fur...

FADE OUT.

**And so begins a MONTAGE OF JEFF MOVING ON. As Al Stewart's 1976 classic "YEAR OF THE CAT" cranks up...**

FADE IN:

**ON A JEFF who...**

-Is back in the lab, studying his lichen. Awkward around The Intern.

-Showers! Shaves! Cleans the apartment!

JEFF (V.O.)

I've been thinking about the first person to go into space. Yuri Gagarin. He was up there for 108 minutes.

-Hangs out with Apollo at a bar. Pop-a-shot. Smiles.

JEFF (V.O.)

When Yuri came back to Earth,  
Khrushchev told the Soviet Union  
that Yuri said he, "Didn't see any  
god there." In fact, Khrushchev  
made this up. He was apparently  
more concerned with the first man  
in space contacting angels than  
aliens.

-Exercises. Goes for a jog. Crosses the street when he sees a woman walking her pit bull.

-Boxes up Emma's stuff.

-Looks at the CARBON DOOMSDAY CLOCK – it's down to only a few MONTHS! Jeff shrugs, better make the time count.

-Plays pickleball with PETCO Nathan Fielder.

-Watches the sea levels rising.

JEFF (V.O.)

Yuri died a few years later in a  
test flight accident. There's a  
theory Brezhnev ordered the KGB to  
do it because Yuri was more popular  
than him.

-Downloads a dating app.

-Gets catfished.

-Adopts a kitten.

-And finally...

#### **EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING**

Reveal Jeff looking down at: *EMMA YOUNG: 1988-2023*

JEFF

Anyway I guess I'm not really  
thinking about Yuri Gagarin as much  
as I'm thinking about you.

(long pause)

I miss you. You'll always be –

His voice breaks, and he's going to lose it.

And instead of saying another word, he sets down YUGEN'S  
ASHES in an urn in the shape of a Lucky Welcome Cat – same as  
the one on Emma's T-shirt from their first date.

Jeff turns, looks up at the sky. He's moving on.

MATCH CUT TO:

**INT. UCLA SCIENCE BUILDING - EVENING**

Jeff is at a third story floor-to-ceiling window, looking up at the sky. Watching several stars align, cross.

He's moving on.

When TWO COPS walk up behind him.

COP  
Jeffrey Ching?

Jeff doesn't even turn around. Nods.

COP  
You're under arrest for the  
aggravated assault of Garth Young.

Jeff starts laughing.

And as they start to lead him out of the building, INTERCUT:

**INT. SUB-BASEMENT - EVENING**

Multiple sets of hands are opening the cages of the cat quarantine, letting the cats ESCAPE!

Reveal the hands belong to The Intern's SORORITY SISTERS!

**INT. THE POUND - EVENING**

As another group of sisters jailbreaks cats from the pound!

**INT. PETCO - EVENING**

And another group runs into PETCO to get PETCO Nathan!

**EXT. UCLA QUAD - EVENING**

While Jeff is led in HANDCUFFS across the deserted quad...

He notices, out of the corner of his eye, a CAT.

And ANOTHER. And ANOTHER... ANOTHER!

Which is when the cops start noticing too. There are just too many cats not to.

COP

Huh?

They stop. There are so many cats.

Out of nowhere, the other cop PEPPERSPRAYS his partner, who falls to the ground, screaming in agony!!

OTHER COP

That's for Muffin.

Jeff, again mind-blown, stands in shock as the cop proceeds to un-cuff him. Then cuffs his pepperspray'd partner.

OTHER COP

Go that way.

He points Jeff back toward the science building. Where a number of cats stand waiting for him. Along with The Intern, her Toxo Sorority Army, and PETCO Nathan Fielder.

They part ways for Jeff as he enters the building, patting him on the back as he goes...

#### **INT. UCLA SCIENCE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS**

In the lobby sits TOM the Outdoor Cat leader.

JEFF

You're here to apologize?

TOM

I'm here to tell you that you and Emma have sort of "gone viral" in the Outdoor Cat community.

JEFF

That's ironic.

TOM

This has nothing to do with iron. The point is that we've changed our highly intelligent minds. Yugen's plea on your behalf has convinced us.

JEFF

After you beat him up.

TOM  
Is that what he told you?  
(beat)  
A mountain lion scared us off  
before we could touch a whisker on  
his head.

**INSERT:** A MOUNTAIN LION, who is trying to sleep in a nearby tree, yells at the gang of cats at Griffith Park –

MOUNTAIN LION  
Will you dumbasses shut the fuck  
up?!

The Outdoor Cats run screaming. Leaving Yugen unharmed.

**BACK WITH JEFF AND TOM –**

JEFF  
I think Yugen wanted me to think he  
fought for Emma and I.

TOM  
He did. But he also had a pre-  
existing medical condition. So do  
you want to know The Plan or not?

CUT TO:

**INT. ASTROBIOLOGY LAB – LATER**

We're back where we first met Jeff in the COLD OPEN, wearing a mylar-looking clean suit and recording a MESSAGE for posterity. For any intelligent life that stumbles upon it – in the event Jeff doesn't survive...

JEFF  
Emma, I too was unable to get the  
rights to a Beatles song for our  
Golden Record. Hope that's okay.  
(beat)  
And to anyone who might listen to  
this: I have no real answers, but I  
believe we all have the power to be  
The One to someone.  
(beat)  
Lastly, in case I don't survive  
what's ahead of me... My last wish  
is: please no more dog strollers.

Jeff hits STOP on the voice recorder.

And as he starts to leave the lab, time slows down, the sound drops out...

He follows a line of cats to...

**INT. SUB-BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Where Jeff is led to the DOOR marked *PARTICLE ACCELERATOR*...

Jeff puts on a helmet...

And is led by the cats to a small little CAPSULE, sitting at the base of a seemingly endless tunnel, lined with wires and a rainbow of tubing...

Jeff climbs into the capsule, barely fitting.

The door closing on him. He looks out a small window...

To the CONTROL PANEL, where a group of cats mash a bunch of buttons. Doing something that the system wasn't designed to do... Ancient Outdoor Cat technological know-how...

Which is when things start to happen. Lights flickering. Steam emitting from valves, pipes. The ground starting to shake. Jeff fogs the glass as he looks out nervous, worried.

AND THE CAPSULE EXPLODES!

SMASH CUT TO:

**EXT. VENICE BEACH - MORNING**

Waves crash on a jetty. Surfers on dawn patrol.

Stay here for a beat longer than is comfortable. We begin to wonder why we are here. Are the credits about to roll?

No.

Jeff crawls out of the ocean, wearing that weird mylar suit. Disoriented, gasping for air, he flops onto the sand.

SURFER (O.S.)

Dude, water's way too warm for that suit.

Jeff slow-blinks up at the SURFER standing over him.

JEFF

What day is it?

SURFER  
It's Thursday.

JEFF  
The DATE!

SURFER  
August 11th, 2023.

JEFF  
Oh my god. I made it.

Jeff jumps up and RUNS!

**INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER**

Jeff looks at the time on the dash of a swerving CAB —

JEFF  
Think you can make it in twenty?

CAB DRIVER  
I can do it in fifteen.

The driver glances in the rearview mirror.

CAB DRIVER  
If you don't mind my asking, where  
are you coming from?

JEFF  
It's a long story.

CAB DRIVER  
Told you we've got fifteen.

JEFF  
Uh... how much do you now about  
String Theory?

The driver glares in the rearview mirror.

JEFF  
Okay I came from the future.

CAB DRIVER  
That's impossible.  
(beat)  
That place is all the way downtown  
and doesn't open until midnight at  
the earliest.



Jeff isn't about to argue.

CUT TO:

**EXT. LARGE INTERSECTION - MORNING**

Jeff stands anxiously at a corner, scanning the cars.

JEFF  
What time is it?

Reveal the cab driver is sitting in his cab, parked in the lot at said corner.

CAB DRIVER  
Eight thirty-seven A-M.

JEFF  
Any second. Any second.

The sound of Emma's FAVORITE SONG rises, approaches. Jeff looks. And there she is...

EMMA.

In her car, pulling up to a RED LIGHT.

Jeff RUNS!

JEFF  
EMMA!!!

She doesn't hear him. The light is slo-mo'ing to GREEN!

JEFF  
EMMA DON'T!!!

She doesn't hear him. Her car starts to roll forward!

And SUDDENLY STOPS!

JEFF IS STANDING IN FRONT OF THE CAR!! Hands on the hood. Trying to catch his breath.

Emma looks confused, if not a little worried, annoyed...

WHEN AN 18-WHEELER PLOWS THROUGH A RED LIGHT — RIGHT THROUGH THE INTERSECTION EMMA WOULD HAVE DRIVEN INTO!

AND CRASHES INTO A LIGHT POLE!

The shock, then dawning realization on Emma's face...

She climbs out of her car, along with a slew of other rubbernecks at the intersection...

The moment we've been waiting for.

Emma walks to Jeff. Jeff walks to Emma.

JEFF

Emma...

EMMA

Yes...?

He throws his arms around her. Not a great hug. But a real one. And we see that Emma NEEDED THAT HUG!

He lets go, steps back. A twinkle in his eye.

EMMA

Do I know you?

Time stands still.

JEFF

Hahah, very funny!

But Emma's face could not be more earnest and sincerely bewildered. Oh fuck. Oh no.

JEFF

Oh... no. We've never met before?  
*Jeff...rey?*

She shakes her head. Oh goddamnit no.

JEFF

Oh god please no. Do you at least know *Yugen*?!

EMMA

My *cat*? Are you like one of those mentalists? *Yugen* is in the car.

JEFF

In the car... that means...

EMMA

Look uh... *Jeff...rey*, I'm late for work, and I still have to drop *Yugen* off at the vet.

JEFF

He ate a plastic bag.

EMMA

(having *her* mind blown)  
I don't really understand what's  
going on, but I'm pretty sure you  
just saved my life – so can I at  
least offer you a ride?

JEFF

Yes.

(beat)

But I need you to pay the cab  
driver over there first.

**INT. EMMA'S CAR - A FEW MINUTES LATER**

Jeff sits in the passenger seat, Emma drives. Yugen's in his  
blue carrier in the backseat.

JEFF

...so I expose lichen to extreme  
conditions, to see if they survive.

EMMA

And if they do, then there's a  
greater likelihood that intelligent  
life exists in the Universe?

JEFF

Well, carbon-based life, yes.

EMMA

It's funny that basically  
everything I do as a lawyer is  
labeled "Discovery" – and you're  
the one looking for aliens.

Emma pulls into a STRIP MALL. Parks.

EMMA

I'm going to run in and make sure  
the vet can see Yugen last minute.  
Would you mind waiting with him?

JEFF

Okay.

Jeff is just rolling with this out-of-body experience. Emma  
starts to walk away...

JEFF

Wait!

(Emma turns)

(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)

Would you ever want to go to the  
zoo with me?

Emma is struck to her core by this. We hear those Tibetan  
bells again...

EMMA

I... love the zoo.  
(demurs)  
Let me think about it?

She smiles, leaves. We love you Emma.

YUGEN (O.S.)

Lord have mercy, maybe take it a  
little slower, Jeff?

Jeff turns.

JEFF

You know who I am?!

YUGEN

There's still a lot you don't know  
about cats, Jeff.

(beat)

But we don't have much time, so you  
need to know: We got it wrong. Emma  
might be The One, but there's  
something about you being together.  
The Two of you.

(beat)

In other words, you need to fall in  
love again or the world will end.

JEFF

Okay, cool cool. Anything else I  
should know?

YUGEN

Yes.

Through the window, a CAR pulls into the spot next to  
Emma's...

And ANOTHER JEFF gets out. Carries his laundry toward the  
laundromat.

Our Jeff's eyes grow wider and wider and wider...

T O X O P L A S M O S I S

**BLACK.**