

ANNABELLE

Written by

Allan Groves

WGAw Registered #1587235

SCREEN BLACK

ADEN (V.O.)
I shouldn't be here right now. This
shouldn't be happening to me.

FADE IN:

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

Blood drips onto a dimly lit concrete floor.

The bloodied face of ADEN slams into the concrete. He is sweating and frightened, around 30; Caucasian with brown hair. He attempts to scamper away, too wounded to stand up.

Backed into a wall, he looks up. The horror of whatever it is that is attacking him, plays across his face.

V.O. ADEN
I don't deserve this. Where did I
go wrong? I've always been so
careful.

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY

The familiar sounds of an office accompany a bland cubicle. Aden sits at a desk, adorned with a telemarketer's headset and insincere patience. He speaks to a customer over the phone.

ADEN
I understand you are upset sir, my
goal is to make your experience
with me enjoyable. What can I do to
make your day a great one?

The numbers on his computer screen track the time of the phone call: 20:15. "Recording" flashes at the top of the screen.

Aden quickly thumbs through a laminate telemarketing notebook, resting on a page that reads: **Irate customer - Color no longer available.** Aden reads from the page.

ADEN (CONT'D)
I apologize for the inconvenience
sir, but we no longer carry
Periwinkle blue. However, I would
be happy to assist you in
purchasing any of our other
assorted varieties today.

(MORE)

ADEN (CONT'D)

Ultramarine has been very popular lately and a personal favorite.

At the bottom of the page in the notebook it reads: **Don't forget to smile.** Aden forces a smile.

ADEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry your experience with me has been unsatisfactory sir, however, if you would like to take our survey at the end of this call, it will assist our team in assuring that any future discontentment can and will be alleviated. It will only take a few minutes of your time, and we'll be glad to take your complaints into consideration... Hello, sir? Hello? Are you there?

Calmly Aden takes off his headset, places it on his desk and takes two deep breaths. He glances up at a piece of paper on the cubicle wall that reads: **Stick to the script!**

Aden picks up a large plastic soda cup from off his desk, tightens his lips around a straw, and slurps the last remaining drops.

EXT. CITY STREET - DUSK

Aden walks down a sparse city street. In the distance a commuter train rolls by.

An electronic red hand flashes stop on the pole at the intersection. Aden waits patiently until it flashes walk.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Aden sits in a secluded seat. Across the divide, two teenage boys adorned in black lipstick, black clothes, tatoos, and piercings sit in silence.

Aden catches himself staring and quickly turns his attention to the other side of the train car.

Three pre-teen girls dressed almost identical: Trendy skirts, white socks and all talking on their phone.

An unsightly, yet ECCENTRIC MAN, with a scar down the side of his face sits a few seats away. He's early 40's; wears bright purple shoes and holds a beautifully wrapped BOX.

ECCENTRIC MAN
You got the time?

ADEN
Uh. Yeah. It's seven sixteen.

The train comes to a stop. Among some of the new passengers to board is ANNABELLE, 24, young and pretty with a hint of innocence, introversion, and independence.

Aden stares a little too long. He looks nervously around the train. Should he say something?

Annabelle smiles. Aden gives a slight smile back and shifts in his seat. A beeping sound begins to pulsate. Above him a sign flashes the words: Stay Seated.

As the train comes to a stop, Aden watches as Annabelle stands up and walks away. The train door closing behind her.

After a moment the eccentric man bursts into laughter.

ECCENTRIC MAN
That was intense!

Aden attempts to ignore him.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)
Oh man. Woooo! That. Was. Wow!

The man continues laughing. People in the train start to notice.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm good, I'm good. But I mean, did you see that?

ADEN
Yeah, I did.

ECCENTRIC MAN
Mother of Mary! I mean the tension in the room... you could (searching for the words) cut it. What's your name son?

Aden hesitates.

ADEN
(appeasing)
Aden. My name is Aden.

ECCENTRIC MAN

Good name. Solid. Your mom give you that?

ADEN

Yeah, she did.

The man nods in approval. After a moment he folds his arms, leans back and stares at Aden, and keeps staring.

ADEN (CONT'D)

Can I help you... with something?

ECCENTRIC MAN

(lightly)

Nah, I'm good.

A moment of awkwardness.

ADEN

What's in the box?

ECCENTRIC MAN

Oh this?

(chuckling)

Comedy. Pure comedy.

The man nods to Aden like he should understand. Aden nods back.

Aden notices the man's purple shoes.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)

You like em? I stole em.

(beat)

He deserved it though, rat bastard. I'm not normally a thief, I protect the innocent. But I'll tell you what, that hob-knocker hasn't bothered me since. He knows their mine now. Same size too, go figure.

Aden nods politely.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)

You got a girlfriend Aden?

ADEN

Uh... Nope. (Backtracking) Well you know, I got a couple girls. That you know, I'm seeing.

ECCENTRIC MAN

Smart. You're smart, you know. It's good to have options, eh?

ADEN

It's easier that way. You know. Keep things simple.

ECCENTRIC MAN

(admiring the word)

Simplemente.

The train comes to a stop. The man gets up.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)

Well good luck with your love life Aden. Hope to see you around.

Aden watches the man exit the train and the doors close.

The train begins moving again, but the box is still on the seat. Aden stares at it for a long while.

He looks at the two teenagers who are staring into space, he looks at the girls who are busy on their phones.

The train comes to a stop. Aden stands up, walks toward the doors - but stops. He turns around and picks up the box.

INT. ADENS APT. - NIGHT

The front door closes. Aden enters a sparse yet tidy apartment not unlike something out of an IKEA catalogue.

Aden places the box on the counter, grabs a frozen burrito from the freezer, and throws it in the microwave.

He plops down on the couch and picking up a remote he turns on the TV.

He pours a few pills into his hand from a prescription bottle. Tilting back his head, he pops them in his mouth, quickly following it up with a swig from an old soda can resting on the coffee table.

He lays his head on the back of the couch and closes his eyes. A commercial plays on the TV.

WOMAN TV ANNOUNCER

Today for only 3 easy payments of 12.99 - that's right 12.99 you can enjoy these lovely place mats, sure to brighten any home for any occasion. With your purchase you get not 1, not 2, not 3, but 4 matching mats in an assortment of vibrant colors - and now even in Periwinkle blue! Act now by calling the number at the bottom of your screen.

The microwave beeps, Aden opens his eyes, stands up and stumbles into the kitchen.

Picking up the plate from the microwave, he passes by the BOX on the counter. He stops.

Aden puts the plate down and picks up the box. He holds the box in his hand, examines it.

Putting it back on the counter, he picks up his burrito and takes a seat on the couch and begins to eat.

MALE PASTOR

Is time running out? Secure your heavenly mansion today by calling this toll free number. Remember, if this life is bad, the next is for eternity... so protect yourself today.

Aden looks back over at the box. He stands up and walks over to the counter, picks up the box and moves it from hand to hand.

A tag on the box reads: **Open to see.** He opens the box - it's empty.

A chill comes over Aden. He looks around the room. A window is open.

Aden closes the window and returns to the couch.

He focuses on the TV.

AUSTRALIAN HOST

The scorpion is a dangerous predator, with a venomous stinger. Besides Homo sapiens, it is the only animal in the entire animal kingdom known to commit suicide.

(MORE)

AUSTRALIAN HOST (CONT'D)

Under extreme heat, the scorpion has been known to stick itself in the head with it's own stinger. Yikes! Now that's one hot day...

The TV slowly becomes less audible, its lights shine across Aden's face capturing him in a trance.

INT. ADENS APT. - MORNING

Birds chirp outside the window. Aden slowly opens his eyes and sits up. It takes him only a minute, but soon realizes that his apartment is empty. He's been robbed.

Distressed, Aden jumps to his feet. It's all gone. The only thing left is the wind blowing through the open balcony door and the couch he was sleeping on.

On the wall, the perpetrator left his mark. Yellow shoe prints pattern the wall. Aden stares transfixed, the yellow pattern is almost a work of art. Walking towards the shoe prints, he touches the wall - the paint is still wet.

Breaking the trance he takes closer look at the apartment. Another item remains. On the counter, still open, is the box.

Looking around his apartment, he walks to the balcony. Looking over the rail, in a pile of rubble down below, is what was once his living room.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Sitting in his seat, Aden bumps along with the train. The tag from his new shirt still hanging from his collar. Taking two deep breaths, Aden looks up, and finds the blinking, beeping sign: Stay Seated.

The moving train comes to a stop. The doors open and onto the train steps Annabelle.

Rummaging through her purse, she is bumped by a passenger and her wallet falls to the ground. It slides between Aden's feet.

Aden picks it up and stands to give it to her.

ADEN

Excuse me. Miss? I think you dropped this.

Handing her the wallet.

ANNABELLE

Oh my goodness. Thank you so much.
I can't believe I just did that.
Thank you.

ADEN

Yeah, me neither. I mean, I saw you
drop that and I thought, I bet she
doesn't believe she just did that.

ANNABELLE

(laughing)
Yeah, and you would be right.

The two look at each other in silence.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

Funny. Well... um. I'm going to sit
now.

ADEN

Okay. I mean, me too.

Annabelle makes a step to move away just as the train makes a
turn, which causes Annabelle to lose her balance and grab
onto Aden.

This action, coupled with the force of gravity, sends the two
of them to the ground, in which they quickly find themselves
both horizontal and face to face.

ANNABELLE

Oh my goodness. I am... so sorry.

ADEN

It's okay. I'm okay. Are you okay?

ANNABELLE

Yeah, I think so.

ADEN

Okay... Good.

The two awkwardly stand up and brush off their clothes.
Annabelle grabs a handrail and orients herself.

ANNABELLE

Great, well. That wasn't
embarrassing.

Disheveled, Annabelle smiles.

ADEN

Nah... I don't even think anyone noticed.

They look around. All the passengers noticed.

ADEN (CONT'D)

Except for maybe, everyone.

Annabelle and Aden laugh to themselves.

A MOMENT

Annabelle finds a seat and Aden sits down on the opposite side of the aisle.

Looking up, they make eye contact and smile. Aden notices an empty seat next to Annabelle as he fidgets in his own.

Aden checks his breath, closes his eyes, and takes two deep breaths.

THE TRAIN DOORS OPEN

Onto the train step YELLOW SHOES. He who wears the yellow shoes is DEAN. He's about 30; handsome, causally dressed, and confident.

He sits down in the empty seat next to Annabelle.

Aden, frozen in his seat, watches the exchange.

DEAN

Hi, I'm Dean.

Dean extends his hand.

ANNABELLE

Hi Dean. Nice to meet you.

DEAN

And you are?

ANNABELLE

Ah... Annabelle.

DEAN

Ah-Annabelle, well that's different.

ANNABELLE

No.. It's just. There's no Ah, it's just Annabelle.

DEAN

Oh. No Ah. Just Annabelle?

ANNABELLE

Right. I'm Ah-less.

DEAN

That's too bad, I was beginning to like the Ah. It gave you a sense of wonder.

Annabelle smiles.

ANNABELLE

Funny.

DEAN

That was just the warm up. It gets better, trust me.

ANNABELLE

It gets better?

Dean smiles.

The train slows down.

DEAN

I'm sorry, but... ever since I sat down this has been really bugging me.

Dean reaches in with his hand and grabs a leaf that has fallen into her hair.

Annabelle, amused yet uncomfortable, pulls away.

Aden grows tense as he silently watches.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Got it.

He shows her the leaf.

ANNABELLE

Thank you. I had a mishap earlier.

Dean smiles, Annabelle blushes ever so slightly. The train comes to a stop.

ANNABELLE (CONT'D)

This is my stop.

Dean stands up.

DEAN
That's funny.

Dean and Annabelle stand up and begin to file out of the Train.

Aden watches in distress.

As Dean is about to step out of the train, he stops, turns and takes a long look at Aden.

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY

Adorned with his headset, Aden speaks to another customer as he follows his script.

ADEN
Yes sir, we can easily take that in three easy payments of 12.99. If you like I can take that credit card number now.

Aden types the numbers into his computer. As he types, a loud noise, like someone banging on a door, jostles his concentration.

ADEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry sir could you repeat those last four numbers. I have 4328.

Aden begins typing. Again the loud banging sound jostles his concentration.

ADEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry sir, I didn't catch those last numbers. Could you please repeat that again... please?

Aden begins typing.

ADEN (CONT'D)
Thank you, and the expiration date?

The banging begins once again, loud, quick and repetitive. Frustrated, Aden waits for the banging to stop.

ADEN (CONT'D)
I do apologize once again sir. But I seemed to have missed that. Can you please confirm that again? Thank you for your cooperation.
(MORE)

ADEN (CONT'D)

Now if I could just repeat that
back to you, I can get that sent
out. I have 4367 49

The banging begins again. Aden is annoyed. This time it
doesn't stop. Finally Aden just hangs up the phone.

The vibrations of the banging cause a coffee mug to begin
moving across Aden's desk. Aden watches it crawl to the edge.

The banging stops. Aden takes two slow breaths and stands up.

OTHER OFFICE CUBICLES - CONTINUOUS

Aden walks down the line of cubicles. Everyone busy on their
phones. No one seems to notice.

CO-WORKER CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Aden approaches a CO-WORKER talking away. Aden interrupts.

ADEN (CONT'D)

Hey, do you know what that banging
sound is?

Annoyed, the co-worker covers her mouth piece.

CO-WORKER

No. Just ignore it.

(beat)

I'm sorry, the extended protection
plan is a wonderful way to protect
you and your family...

Aden starts back to his cubicle. The banging continues.

Frustrated, Aden follows the sound.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Aden steps into the lobby of the office building. Stopping
for just a moment, he listens to where the noise is coming
from.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALL - CONTINUOUS

Aden follows the noise down a hallway. At the end of the
hallway is a door. The source of the banging.

Nervously Aden stares at the door. Summoning his courage, he
opens it.

EXT. DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

A sunny day. Grass extends for a few hundred feet before trees take over the view. In the distance someone rides by on a bike, and a couple lay on a blanket.

Aden takes a step outside. He looks to his left. He looks to his right - Nobody.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALL

Aden comes back in and closes the door, not noticing -

DEAN HIDING BEHIND IT

Aden begins walking back down the hall, Dean follows, flipping open a knife.

Aden stops. Dean stops. Aden slowly turns around.

Seeing Dean, and the knife in his hand, Aden stands frozen.

A MOMENT

ADEN

What do you want?

Silently Dean takes a step closer, Aden takes a step back.

ADEN (CONT'D)

You can have her if you want. I don't even know her really. I just met her.

DEAN

(laughing)

That's cute. Really.

ADEN

Listen I'll give you all I got. It's not much, I mean I was robbed last night, but... I don't really have anything left... really.

Aden notices the yellow shoes. After a long moment, he slowly raises his eyes back to Dean.

Dean winks.

Aden runs.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Aden bursts out of the office building, Dean hot on his tail.

A CAR HONKS

Aden runs across the street, making a mad dash for anything that can put distance between him and Dean.

PEOPLE SCREAM

Aden bursts through a group of people, Dean right behind him.

A CAR COMING OUT OF A PARKING GARAGE

Aden almost gets hit, but continues running. Dean slides across its hood.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

THE LONG NARROW STREET WITH THE TRAIN IN THE DISTANCE

Aden runs down the middle of the street as hard as he can. Dean right behind him.

The red hand flashes stop at the intersection... this time Aden ignores it.

EXT./INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Running out one door and in another, Aden attempts to lose Dean through the chaos of people and train doors.

INT. TRAIN

Dean right on his heels. Aden runs down the aisle of the last train car.

THE DOORS CLOSE

Trapped, Aden turns around and screams. Dean is gone.

The passengers whisper to themselves as Aden finds a seat. He slouches to hide his face from the window.

The train slowly begins to move.

Coincidentally, the eccentric man sits right in front of him. He leans over and whispers.

ECCENTRIC MAN
Who are you hiding from?

Startled, Aden jumps. Surprised to see him.

ADEN
No one. I'm not hiding from anyone.
I just sit like this sometimes.

The man nods his head.

ECCENTRIC MAN
If you keep running, he will kill
you.

Aden takes a long moment for the wheels to turn.

ADEN
The box? You left it there on
purpose didn't you?

ECCENTRIC MAN
In my defense, it's a lot funnier
from my perspective.

Nervous and trapped.

ADEN
Who is he? Why are you doing this
to me?

ECCENTRIC MAN
I'm not doing anything to you. I
didn't open the box.

ADEN
What is that suppose to mean? Come
on, give me a break. You're totally
screwing with me aren't you? What
do you want from me?

ECCENTRIC MAN
Nothing. I don't want anything from
you, Aden. Quite frankly, this has
nothing to do with me. I'm not the
one trying to kill you, am I?

Aden scoots back in his seat.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)
Am I?
(beat)
You invited him. You opened it.
(MORE)

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)

Where once you were blind, now you can see.

ADEN

You're crazy. You're a nut bag. I didn't do anything. He's chasing ME.

ECCENTRIC MAN

And what are you going to do about it?

ADEN

What?

ECCENTRIC MAN

What are you going to do about it?

ADEN

What am I going to do about it? Nothing. This is your fault. You fix it.

ECCENTRIC MAN

He's going to kill you, Aden. I can't fix that.

ADEN

Then I'll go to the police.

ECCENTRIC MAN

The police? By the time you go the police, you'll already be dead.

ADEN

Great. Thanks. Thanks for making my day a great one.

(to himself)

I should never talk to strangers.

The man leans back against his seat. The two sit in silence for a moment.

ADEN (CONT'D)

I don't know. I don't know what I'm going to do. You tell me. You seem to have all the answers. What can I do?

ECCENTRIC MAN

There is always something you can do.

ADEN

Really. Thanks. Like what?

ECCENTRIC MAN

He's going to kill you Aden. At least look him in the face when he does it.

The scar on the eccentric man's face is more noticeable now.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)

I did.

EXT. TRAIN - SOMEWHERE

We watch the train speed by from left to right.

INT. TRAIN

Aden stares at the eccentric man.

ADEN

He tried to kill you too?

ECCENTRIC MAN

Not him, but someone like him.

The train comes to a stop. The TRAIN CONDUCTOR makes an announcement through the loud speakers.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

End of the line. Returning to Salt Lake City.

Passengers begin to file out. The eccentric man stands up and looks at Aden.

ECCENTRIC MAN

Good luck with your love life Aden.
Hope to see you around.

The man begins to walk away but stops and turns back around.

ECCENTRIC MAN (CONT'D)

Did you know that under extreme heat scorpions will sometimes stick themselves in the head?

(beat)

Fascinating.

Aden watches as the man walks off the train, still wearing his bright purple shoes.

Aden puts his hands behind his head and leans forward. Moving his hands to the back of his neck he notices the tag still on his shirt collar. He rips off the tag and holds it in his hand. He looks around the train, how embarrassing. He throws it to the ground.

In his seat, he watches the passengers begin to file on. The doors begin to close... his last chance to run.

The train begins to move again. He's going back.

EXT. TRAIN - SOMEWHERE

We watch the train speed by from right to left.

INT/EXT. TRAIN

The train rolls into the station. Aden stares out the window, searching for Dean.

There he is, getting out of a train car.

Dean takes a moment to look at the train windows... Aden ducks.

Aden peeks his head back up. Dean is walking away.

EXT. STREETS - DUSK

Aden quietly follows Dean as he hides behind a number of items lining the street; a garbage can, a parked car, a corner building.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING

Dean enters an old concrete abandoned building. Aden hesitantly follows.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

It's dark. Too dark. Only the light from the street lamps outside give him any clue of footing.

He quietly tip toes through the black. The sounds of Dean's footsteps guide his way.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Descending, he hugs the wall, careful not to make a sound.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

He steps into the dark... into a puddle. A sound.

Deans footsteps fall silent.

DEAN

You shouldn't have followed me.

Aden tenses up. Dean's location becomes hard to place now.

DEAN (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter I guess. You're going to die either way.

Aden attempts to silently step backwards.

Suddenly from out of the darkness Dean's fist connects with Aden's face knocking him to the ground.

Aden scurries to get up but he is punched again, and again.

Blood from Dean's fist drips onto a dimly lit concrete floor.

The bloodied face of ADEN slams into the concrete. He is sweating and frightened. He attempts to scamper away, too wounded to stand up.

Backed into a wall, he looks up. The horror of Dean approaching him, plays across his face.

Aden closes his eyes waiting for certain death.

ADEN

You're going to kill me. Why?

DEAN

That's a stupid question. You already know why.

Aden opens his eyes.

ADEN

I'm sorry I opened the box. I'm sorry. I didn't know.

DEAN

You're sorry? I think it's a little late for sorrys, don't you?

(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)

The box is the best decision you ever made. Not everybody gets to see what's coming for em.

ADEN

Then what did I do? I... I don't deserve this.

DEAN

It's not what you did Aden. It's what you didn't do... and left for me to do for ya. You add up enough of those and I mean, come on, eventually you had to know I was going to come for ya? I mean what did you expect? It's not what you are, it's what you don't become that will kill you.

SILENCE

Dean sniffs the air and cocks his neck. He looks around the room, wiping sweat off his brow. He smiles.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Man, is it just me? Or is it getting really hot in here? I think maybe, it's about time someone put you out of your misery.

Aden gets a good look at Dean now. The black pants. The white shirt. The tag on his collar. Dean smiling down upon him. The yellow shoes.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Good bye Aden. Thanks for all the fun.

Dean lunges towards Aden with the knife. Aden throws his hand out to stop the knife.

The knife goes through Aden's hand, but misses his body.

Aden pushes Dean, who falls backwards into a puddle of water. Aden stands and looks at the knife sticking out of his hand.

Dean slips as he attempts to stand, and falls back to the ground. Aden realizes he has the advantage. He painfully pulls the knife from his hand, as Dean watches in horror. Aden stands above him.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Now wait a second, you might want to think about this a little.

(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)

I mean, this isn't as simple as it looks. I'm not that easy to get rid of. You can kill me... but that doesn't mean I'm going away.

ADEN

Dean, right?

DEAN

Yeah, that's right.

ADEN

I know who you are. Stop following me.

DEAN

I can't.

Aden nods, Dean looks down at his yellow shoes, Aden catches the glance and pauses for a moment.

Aden turns around, and begins walking away.

Dean stands up slowly and suddenly runs towards Aden.

From the shadow on the wall we see Aden stab Dean in the neck. He holds onto Aden as he winces and falls.

Aden watches as Dean gasps his last breath. Aden bends down and writes the word DEAN in blood next to his fallen body.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

Aden stumbles out of the abandoned building. He throws the knife into the nearby crumbling rubble.

After a few steps he stops and admires the hole in his hand... and the yellow shoes he's wearing.

Aden looks to the road in front of him with a new sense of confidence. A slight nod. He did it.

Aden gets further away as he walks down the street.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING

The word DEAN painted in blood is still fresh on the concrete. But there is more: Dean's body is gone and under the word DEAN is another word written in blood. ADEN.

THE END