

FATE FANCIED

Written by

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Draft #1

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FADE IN:

A FOUR-WAY STOP - DAY

WE CAN SEE ALL THE WAY DOWN THE FLATTEST OF THE FOUR ROADS. NOTHING ELSE IS IN THE FRAME.

A car is seen very far down the road, unmoving. It reverses slightly, then goes along down the road, avoiding something in the middle of it. The car travels out of sight as we see what it was avoiding- a body.

The body is that of DONN, a relatively straight-laced guy, 18, an average Joe in many senses; susceptible to temptation, reasonably selfish, reasonably generous. He has the capacity for philosophical thought and discussion but has never found a place or reason to exercise it. A proficient thinker raised as a moderate thinker, with a mixture of traditional values and inner honesty. He is blunt when making self-judgements.

DONN gets up, seemingly quite unharmed by the events that have apparently just transpired. He walks towards the center of the four-way stop without any sort of rush. As he gets closer and closer to the middle he spies something behind the camera.

DONN

Hey!

DONN pauses slightly as he seemingly makes eye contact with someone. DONN motions for the person to come forward.

Enter THE GUIDE, a boy around the same age as DONN. The only emotions THE GUIDE can express are anger and cynicism, however he definitely seems disinterested in the current events as he enters from behind the camera and approaches DONN.

THE GUIDE

Donn?

DONN

(Tentatively) Did- did you see what just happened to me??

THE GUIDE fails to see the significance in events that may or may not have just transpired.

THE GUIDE

So?

DONN opens his mouth to say something with a mixture of disbelief and reprimand for THE GUIDE's nonchalance, but the words get trapped in his throat and he is left pointing down the road with his mouth still open.

THE GUIDE (CONT'D)
C'mon. You have a choice to make.

THE GUIDE walks toward the left of the frame, all the way to the next road, DONN follows him.

THE CAMERA WILL KEEP DONN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FRAME ALWAYS.

They come to the next path, at which stands AL, 16, an old schoolmate of DONN's.

DONN
(Surprised, disbelieving) Albert?

AL
(Sincerely, glad to see his old friend) It's been a while.

DONN
I don't-

DONN looks around.

DONN (CONT'D)
How did you get here? I thought-
last year- the tumor-

AL
Donn.

DONN
Al-

AL's eyes search DONN's face.

AL
It's so beautiful here. It's like-
It's like I know everything. I can
see everything I- It's all there.
Everything.

DONN
(Mild, jovial disbelief) The
secrets of the universe.

AL
 (Surprised DONN has grasped on to
 the heart of the matter so quickly)
 Yes! Eternal knowledge...

AL's gaze drifts off then snaps back again.

AL (CONT'D)
 Wouldn't you like that?

THE GUIDE
 Omniscience.

DONN looks from Al to THE GUIDE.

DONN
 Well how am I supposed to-

THE GUIDE
 (Impatient) He wants you to go down
 his path.

THE GUIDE gestures down the road behind AL as he says this.

DONN
 Why?

AL
 Donn, don't you get it? You can
 have it all. You can *learn* it all.
 Come down with me.

AL indicates his path with a nod.

DONN starts toward Al and the path, as if to go down, but
 stops abruptly as THE GUIDE speaks out.

THE GUIDE
 Is that what you want? What good is
 ultimate knowledge if it comes with
 ultimate helplessness?

DONN
 (Trying to convey his apparent
 revelation) Helplessness? No-
 Freedom! Truth. I'd be all seeing-
 All knowing-

THE GUIDE
 And ever powerless.

DONN
 (Annoyed) And how is that?

THE GUIDE

You can see it all. All the good in the world but more importantly- You can see all the bad. And what can you do to stop it? You think this is your opportunity to play God, but you're only getting half the deal. (Afterthought) The shorter half, I might add!

DONN

But still, the sheer satisfaction of it-

THE GUIDE

How about the sheer guilt of it?

DONN turns to Al, who has been patient, not registering the events transpiring around him.

DONN

Do you feel guilty?

AL slowly and serenely shakes his head.

AL

Not at all. I know the truth about everyone, I don't feel sorry for anyone. But that means I don't waste my time worrying about people. It's a beautiful hell.

THE GUIDE looks at DONN.

THE GUIDE

You want to sit around all the time and ponder all the awful qualities of humankind? To constantly contrast man's inevitable self-destruction versus the futility of his rehabilitation?

DONN

(To AL) You're satisfied?

AL

I'm informed.

DONN

Maybe that's not enough for me.

DONN glances at the next pathway then looks back at AL, then back at the pathway. He is visibly very emotionally affected by what he sees and has the beginnings of tears in his eyes.

AL
Donn wait-

THE CAMERA PANS TO THE LEFT, TRACKING DONN AS HE AND THE GUIDE WALK TO THE NEXT PATH.

At the head of the second path is FELICITY, DONN's mother. FELICITY's only defining aspect is her "motherly" appearance.

DONN slowly approaches FELICITY, misty eyed and amazed at the sight before him.

DONN
Mom?

FELICITY raises her hand to DONN's cheek and experimentally caresses it.

FELICITY
(Quietly) Hi.

DONN
How- (briefly speechless) How are you?

FELICITY talks more to herself than anyone else.

FELICITY
It's so beautiful.

DONN
(Whispers) What's it like mom?

DONN is still very visibly moved by this reunion.

FELICITY
I'm just so... Happy all the time!
No matter what happens, we can always see the bright side of things.

THE GUIDE
Bliss.

FELICITY now fully notices DONN's presence.

FELICITY
(Dreamily) Nice to meet you.

FELICITY extends her right hand to DONN.

FELICITY (CONT'D)
I'm FELICITY.

DONN unthinkingly shakes her hand.

DONN

I- Mom? Don't- don't you know who I am?

FELICITY looks at DONN with blank confusion, the kind someone inflicted with Alzheimer's gives when they want to look like they know what's going on.

FELICITY

I-

FELICITY struggles to form a reply.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

I'm just so happy.

DONN looks at his mother with great concern, never taking his eyes off her as he speaks to THE GUIDE.

DONN

What's wrong with her?

THE GUIDE looks at DONN steadily.

THE GUIDE

She's happy Donn. To her that was worth her memories. It was worth her *children*.

THE GUIDE cynically shrugs.

THE GUIDE (CONT'D)

They say ignorance is bliss.

DONN is understandably upset his mother doesn't recognize him.

DONN

[Yells] Bliss?! She's practically comatose!

THE GUIDE

[Raises voice] I don't think she cares.

DONN

What's the point? To be so doped up all the time you can't even recognize your own son? She's been erased!

THE GUIDE

She knew what she was getting into.
She wanted to be happy.

DONN waves THE GUIDE's last statement away.

DONN

But what even *IS* happiness?

THE GUIDE shows the slightest bit of enjoyment from DONN.

THE GUIDE

NOW you're thinking!

DONN

Is there some sort of a stimulus in our consciousness, do we all have a sort of- inherent capacity for happiness?

THE GUIDE

Can you fake the feeling? And if you think you're happy, aren't you?

DONN

It's a selfish decision, knowing you'll be taken care of but never knowing anything else.

THE GUIDE

But guaranteed satisfaction; *that's* the desirable end. You could lead an existence that feels fulfilled!

DONN looks back at FELICITY, who has been staring blankly at nothing this entire time.

DONN

I could be with mom. I've been so long without her.

FELICITY

Nice to meet you!

FELICITY extends her right hand to DONN.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

I'm FELICITY.

DONN is overcome with sadness for his mother.

DONN

Oh, mom!

He embraces FELICITY, burying his face into her shoulder while he starts to weep. This continues for a few moments.

FELICITY
Come down my path sweetie.

DONN abruptly stops his sobbing and looks up upon hearing this. He then ends the embrace and takes a few steps back in order to look at her.

DONN
What?

FELICITY
Honey you'd be so happy... And we'd love to have you. Come on.

FELICITY takes DONN's hand and tries to pull him down her path, but DONN quickly rips his hand away from her and starts towards the next path, still facing her.

DONN
No. No! I'm not going anywhere with you.

FELICITY
Oh don't-

DONN breaks away and leaves FELICITY.

THE CAMERA PANS TO THE LEFT, TRACKING DONN AS HE MOVES TO THE THIRD AND FINAL PATH.

At the head of the third path is JEFFERY, any size, a young man with an age that could range from 18-25.

DONN apprehensively approaches JEFFERY, THE GUIDE in tow.

DONN
Who are you?

JEFFERY
(Knowingly) Don't you recognize me DONN?

DONN
No I- No.

JEFFERY shrugs smugly, never ceasing eye contact with DONN.

DONN (CONT'D)
Well, anyway, I suppose you want me to go down here.

DONN indicates the path with a gesture of his hand.

JEFFERY nods.

JEFFERY
That's right.

DONN
And what is this one gonna make me
feel?

JEFFERY
What?

DONN
WHAT WILL I *FEEL*?

JEFFERY
Anything. Everything.

DONN
What?

JEFFERY
Donn don't you ever feel like you
did it wrong? Like you can do it
better?

DONN
What are you offering?

JEFFERY
A chance to start over.

DONN
What you mean- you mean I might not
even end up here again?

JEFFERY
Well, *you'd* stay here. But new
people are made every day.

DONN looks confused.

THE GUIDE
Reincarnation, Donn.

There is a brief silence.

DONN
Would- would I still be, you know,
me?

JEFFERY

No. No memories of your past existence. You can start fresh.

DONN thinks the situation over.

DONN

Fresh...

THE GUIDE

You aren't seriously considering this are you?

DONN

(Defensive) Maybe I am!

THE GUIDE

You realize you'd completely nullify your current existence?

DONN

Maybe a second chance would be worth it. I could do so much more with another try.

THE GUIDE

You could also do a whole lot worse. Don't you understand wiping out all that makes you you doesn't get you off to a better start- you're back to square one with the same chances as anyone else. Who's to say you'll be *anything* like you were before. And you know what? I don't care how little you feel like contributed to society, or how low of an opinion you have on yourself, labeling your actuality as utterly irrelevant is a pretty messed up thing to do.

DONN

I know but- all the extra time I would have...

DONN acts as if he can see all the possibilities and implications of reincarnation in front of him, when suddenly his eyes widen as if he has reached some ultimate conclusion.

DONN (CONT'D)

So what if- what if I "start over" and, you know, I end up right back here again... Couldn't I just- choose this again?

(MORE)

DONN (CONT'D)

And again and again? Couldn't I keep going? Wouldn't it equate to some sort of... Indirect immortality?

THE GUIDE

What is immortality? A string of sectioned, seemingly unrelated awarenesses? You feel defined enough in your current character to make this decision, but every aspect that influences your choice, every *facet* of your identity has been established on your memories-experiences- environment- and you're willing to throw it all away just like that.

DONN

Oh come on! It's not like I'm throwing away a legacy. I don't have some great story I'm wasting-

THE GUIDE

Yeah but it's *your* story. *Your* legacy, I mean, doesn't that mean anything to you? Doesn't nonexistence scare you?

DONN

It's not nonexistence, it's new existence! Besides... Why do you care what I do? You've shot down every single one of these choices. What's the point? What's your end game here?

THE GUIDE

To provide you with a voice of reason! Trust me, you need as much guidance as you can get. I want you to be informed when you choose your path.

DONN sputters for a moment.

DONN

Well- according to you, *none* of these options seem good for me.

THE GUIDE

Maybe they aren't. But you've got to choose one. There's no right answer Donn.

DONN
Well maybe I don't want to go down
any of these.

THE GUIDE sputters for a moment.

THE GUIDE
You have to.

DONN
No. No I don't. I don't have to do
anything.

JEFFERY steps out and stands on the left of the frame,
blocking DONN, who is on the right side of the frame, from
moving past him.

JEFFERY
Donn wait. Think about what you're
saying.

DONN turns and starts walking the other direction.

JEFFERY (CONT'D)
No Donn wait-!

THE CAMERA TRACKS DONN AS HE WALKS BACK PAST ALL THE OTHER
PATHS.

FELICITY and ALBERT both speak out as DONN passes them,
beseeching him to take their paths.

THE GUIDE
Donn!

FELICITY
Wait!

THE GUIDE
Donn!

AL
Donn!

THE GUIDE
Donn!

THE GUIDE whips DONN around to face him.

THE GUIDE (CONT'D)
Donn you can't do this!

DONN

Watch me.

DONN shoves THE GUIDE away and THE GUIDE, exasperated, gives up.

DONN CONTINUES HIS TREK, THE CAMERA TRACKING HIM ALL THE WHILE, UNTIL THE SHOT FALLS BACK TO THE FIRST SHOT OF THE PATH DONN ENTERED ON.

DONN walks down the original path.

As DONN is halfway down the center of the path from whence he came, the same car that presumably hit DONN appears from behind the camera.

The car is heading straight for DONN, and is gaining on him quickly.

CUT TO BLACK.