PERCHANCE TO DREAM

written by

Scott Nelson
FADE IN

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY

RANDALL THOMPKINS (twenties to early thirties) is a tall, professional white man. He sits at his desk, his head back as he sleeps. He is clearly quite out, as a few SNORTS and SNORES are heard.

A knock at the door snaps him awake. He looks around, disoriented.

    RANDALL
    Damn it!

He pulls himself together and makes it look like he had been working.

    RANDALL (CONT’D)
    Come in.

OLIVIA (25) opens the door and peaks in. She is a vapidly pretty office worker.

    OLIVIA
    They're ready for you, in the conference room.

    RANDALL
    Ready? Ready for what?

    OLIVIA
    The presentation.

Randall seems lost.

    RANDALL
    Presentation...

    OLIVIA
    On the Peterson deal. You are such a kidder. The decks are all copied and waiting there for everyone.

Randall looks at her, responding a bit hesitantly.

    RANDALL
    And my copy?

    OLIVIA
    Right here, just like you asked.
She hands him a copy of the presentation. Randall looks at it and all the charts, spreadsheets, and numbers.

RANDALL
Crap!

OLIVIA
Is there something wrong?

RANDALL
Oh, no, no. Nothing wrong. I just... was hoping for some updated numbers. That's all.

He appears uncertain, and a bit disoriented.

OLIVIA
Are you OK?

RANDALL
To be honest, no. I'm not feeling so good.

OLIVIA
Do you want me to reschedule this?

RANDALL
YES! Yes I do. That would be super. And I am going to leave early. Maybe see a doctor.

He picks up his briefcase and blows past her. She is the one confused now.

OLIVIA
OK. I'll take care of it. You just feel better, OK?

INT. TAXICAB - DAY

Randall sits in back, looking at the street scenes as he goes by. He is in a major city. Traffic is heavy, people walk by, talking on cell phones. An ordinary city day.

He seems overly fascinated. A MAN with wild colored hair walks by and his head snaps to follow him.

He sees a sign for a risque show, and his eyes gets big as he looks at it. All in all, it is as if this were all new to him.

The CAB DRIVER (50), a stocky Hispanic man, looks back at him.
CABBIE
So you still haven't told me where you want me to take you.

RANDALL
What?

CABBIE
You just told me to drive. So I'm driving. But at some point, you got to give me a address. Unless you just want to run up the fare and pay for my daughter's college. Which is fine by me, by the way.

RANDALL
Oh, yeah, yeah. No address. Just take me...

(beat)
Take me to a nice bar. There must be one near here.

CABBIE
Starting a bit early, huh? Long day?

RANDALL
You have no idea.

INT. NICE URBAN BAR - DAY
Randall walks in. The bar is nice, but mostly empty. A few individuals are already drinking. The BARTENDER (30) is a pretty black woman. She acknowledges him as he walks in, sizing him up as well.

BARTENDER
You're new around here. What can I get you?

RANDALL
Ah, whisky's fine. Straight up.

She gets him a drink and puts it down.

RANDALL (CONT’D)
You can leave the bottle.

She raises and eyebrow but goes along.

BARTENDER
Early day?
RANDALL
What?

BARTENDER
I said, early day. You look like you left the office a bit early.

RANDALL
Yeah, I guess I did. Having a bit of a bad day.

BARTENDER
Want to talk about it?

RANDALL
Oh, believe me, you would never believe it.

BARTENDER
Try me.

RANDALL
OK, I will. Have you ever had a dream so real, that you were sure that it was really happening.

BARTENDER
Yeah, I guess so. You had that last night?

RANDALL
I'm having it right now.

BARTENDER
Right now?

Randall nods and downs a big shot.

RANDALL
Yep. All of this. All a dream. And it's a dream I keep having.

BARTENDER
So I'm not real?

RANDALL
'Fraid not.

BARTENDER
And that would mean you're not real?

RANDALL
In this dream, no.
She thinks for a moment. Without warning, she pinches his hand. He yells out.

RANDALL (CONT’D)
Ouch! What was that for.

BARTENDER
You seem real enough to me. And if this were a dream, would you have felt that?

Randall thinks about it.

RANDALL
Well, that's the only explanation I got.

BARTENDER
Now you have me curious. What are you trying to explain.

RANDALL
My life. Or I should say, this life.

BARTENDER
This life?

Randall tries to think how to say this.

RANDALL
How can I put this?
(beat)
You see, this isn't my life, my world. In reality, I am a farmer in the middle of the country.

BARTENDER
A farmer?

RANDALL
Yep. Soybeans mainly. Some corn. Got about one hundred and fifty acres. Took the farm over from my dad.

BARTENDER
Really? A farmer? You look like some sort of executive to me.

RANDALL
I know. That's what I am here. But back home, I am a farmer.
BARTENDER
So you came here for meetings or something?

RANDALL
No, you don't understand. I'm still back home, on my farm.

BARTENDER
Then who's here?

RANDALL
When I go to sleep, back home, I dream this world. This life. I am fully aware of it, and I live out a life here. Sometimes I jump multiple days, sometimes I pick up right where I left off.

BARTENDER
I see. And when you go to sleep here?

RANDALL
I am back home.

She takes the bottle away from him.

BARTENDER
I think you have had enough.

He takes it back and pour another shot, drinking it.

BARTENDER (CONT’D)
So you think this is all a dream?

RANDALL
Right.

BARTENDER
Well, let me ask you this. What if this is real, and when you go to sleep here, you dream about your life as a farmer. Maybe that's the dream life.

RANDALL
I've thought that too. It's possible I guess. I just assume this is the dream world as it seems less comfortable to me. More strange. But all I know is that only one can be real. The other must be a dream.
BARTENDER
Well, I have to admit, that is the wildest story I have ever heard. And I have heard some great ones. Had a guy come in here once claiming that a witch had changed him from a dog into a man. I thought he was going to take a piss on a bar stool. But kudos to you. This is better than that.

She makes light of it, but sees he is serious. She gets more serious.

BARTENDER (CONT’D)
Have you seen a doctor about this?

RANDALL
You mean, like a shrink? Yeah, once.

BARTENDER
What did they say?

RANDALL
I don't know. I feel asleep on her couch, and woke up in Nebraska. When I came back here I was in the middle of a budget meeting. All very confusing.

BARTENDER
Sounds like it.

He tries to stifle a big yawn.

BARTENDER (CONT’D)
You look beat.

RANDALL
Obviously, I don't sleep well.

He yawns again, and his head starts to fall forward.

WHITE FLASH:

INT. FARMHOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Randall sits up in bed, gasping. He looks around, then falls back onto the pillow and closes his eyes.

RANDALL
Oh, no...
WOMAN (O.S)
Honey? Time to get up. Breakfast is almost ready.

RANDALL
(to self)
And so it begins...again.

He rolls over and looks at the window. A field of corn is visible, with the breeze gently blowing.

Reluctantly, he gets up, puts on his robe and slippers, and heads out.

INT. FUTURISTIC MEDICAL FACILITY - DAY

STEVE and PETE look at a computer terminal. Both are twenty something, dressed in white, medical personnel. The two are in a room with monitors and readouts around. There is a PATIENT laying on a bed. It is not clear if he is alive.

STEVE
This doesn't look right.

Pete looks closer.

PETE
It doesn't. But what could it mean?

STEVE
I don't know. I've never seen readouts like this.

He looks at a cube on the table. There is a wire from the back going to the terminal. He picks the cube up and looks at it, then puts it back.

PETE
Any ideas?

STEVE
If I didn't know better, I would say that there was already someone in there.

He looks over at the patient.

STEVE (CONT’D)
The procedure went fine. All of his memories were transferred. But this looks like there is someone else in there, with him.
He looks at Pete.

STEVE (CONT’D)
This was a new memory storage cube, right?

Pete hesitates.

STEVE (CONT’D)
Pete! Tell me this was a new one.

PETE
Well, not exactly, but it should be fine.

STEVE
What do you mean, not exactly?

PETE
Well, sure, it's a reuse. But the family objected, and the courts made us release the patient's memories. So we erased it, and under protocols we can still use it. We've done it before.

STEVE
You did a level seven wipe down?

PETE
No, only level five.

STEVE
Damn it! Level five?

PETE
Well, you said you needed it right away. And I didn't have time to get a new one. The inventory is down with all the requests we've had. I figure a five was fine.

STEVE
Great, just great. I don't think you got it all. We've got two pools of memories in there now.

PETE
Really? You think so?

STEVE
That's what I'm seeing here.
PETE
That would be a nightmare for him. For both of them.

STEVE
It would. Somehow the two memories will have to find a way to coexist. I don't know how they'll do it.

PETE
Maybe we should... just erase...

STEVE
Erase Thompkin's memories? I don't think so. His family paid a lot to keep his essence alive.

He looks at the body.

STEVE (CONT'D)
We barely got this out before he passed. We can't try again.

PETE
What if we said it didn't take? Sometimes it doesn't.

Steve looks at Pete, thinking. He looks around to see if anyone is watching. His finger hovers over the delete key.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Randall sits at the table having a cup of coffee. His WIFE, a pleasant looking middle aged woman, is busy about the kitchen.

WIFE
So what's in store for today?

RANDALL
Huh? Oh, well, I was thinking about spending some time on that tractor. It hasn't been quite right. Then maybe run into town.

WIFE
If you do, could you stop at the store for me? I need some more flour.

RANDALL
Sure, sure. I can do that.
She looks at him, concerned.

WIFE
   You OK? You seem distracted.

Randall looks out of the window. As he does, the outdoors begins to fade to a whiteness, that expands to engulf the whole scene.

FADE OUT.

THE END