

EXPIRATION DATE

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1 INT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT 1

We trace a long and complex equation on a whiteboard. It lands on an equals sign leading to... a blank space. Nothingness.

A beat, and a "?" is drawn in the space with red marker.

2 INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT (TITLE: 22 DAYS AGO) 2 *

Sitting on the end of a bar past a half-dozen smiling couples is MAX FELDMAN, a male in his early 30's. He has a scruffy beard that trails down his neck and he wears a spiffy fedora. He talks a little too fast, trying to come off as confident. *

He is courting an irritable HIPSTER GIRL in her mid-20's. *

MAX
I already know how it ends.

Max presents a series of numbers scribbled on a cocktail napkin. Max reads off the numbers just before they're called out on television behind him: a perfect match. *

HIPSTER GIRL
Are you gonna buy me that drink? *

MAX
I thought that would impress you... *

The hipster gets up to leave, shaking her head. *

HIPSTER GIRL
And I'd sleep with you? *Asshole...* *

MAX
I'm sorry if you think I offended you! *

But she's already out the door.

DUKE (50's) the seen-it-all bartender smirks at Max: this isn't the first time he's blown it. Max tears up the napkin. *

MAX (CONT'D)
You told me to be more direct; it didn't work! *

DUKE
It's love: it never works the way you think it will. *

MAX

Well when I have a formula, I expect it to work every time. That's mathematics.

*
*
*
*

DUKE

Well Professor, in the real world you still need tact.

*
*
*

MAX

Real? I've told you, I've got it figured out. This world is no different from a computer program; a game.

*
*
*
*
*

STRANGER

Who do you think is playing it then?

*
*
*

A bewitching woman (early 30's) in a red form-fitting dress takes the seat next to him. Max composes himself.

*

MAX

(suave) I haven't seen you around here before.

CASSIE

No, you wouldn't have.

MAX

Do you have a name?

*
*

CASSIE

I'm Cassie I've been looking for you. Did I miss your trick with the lottery?

*
*
*
*

MAX

That's.. How do you know about that?

*

CASSIE

I know a lot about you Max. I know that you quit your job teaching theoretical physics to secretly pursue a unified theorem of the universe. I also know your shoe size.

*
*

Max's world begins to spin.

*

MAX

I don't know who you are or what
you think you know but I'm not
selling my formula--

*

Cassie restrains his hand with a firm but gentle grip.

CASSIE

Max, your formula is the thing that
can save us all. But we are going
to have to leave now.

*

*

*

Max looks at the bartender for support. Duke indicates
Cassie, mouthing, "Do it."

*

*

Max takes a big swig for courage and turns to Cassie.

*

MAX

Can you drive?

3

INT. STORAGE LOCKER - LATER

3

The locker is spare, but for a tryptic of whiteboards with a
long, complex equation written on them. A blank space
following the equals sign stands out conspicuously.

MAX

So far it's been good for some high-
level parlor tricks, but it only
works up to a certain date, like
the Y2k bug.

CASSIE

Like there's some kind of missing
variable.

*

*

MAX

Yeah... the world, it's like a
computer program we're influencing
simply through observation!

*

*

*

Max edges closer to Cassie, drawn in by her technobabble.

*

CASSIE

But probability is running out. In
three weeks if we fail to find a
way to solve the halting problem...

*

*

She draws a Ω on the board in the blank space.

MAX

The computer crashes.

CASSIE

And the program ends. Precisely.

*

Max's romantic pretenses vanish with this revelation.

*

MAX

Oh God. And you want me to use the probability formula to find it.

*

*

*

CASSIE

That's correct. And I don't expect you'll want me around.

*

*

*

MAX

No! Yes-- I mean, it could be distracting. This is too much!

*

*

*

Max looks ill. Cassie hands him a card with a phone number.

CASSIE

Keep me updated.

*

While Max is examining the card, Cassie leaves.

MAX

Wait, why me? Where do I start?

Max runs outside to find her, but she's already gone. Vanished into thin air. He look around: this is impossible.

4 INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - MORNING

4

Max is sitting on the edge of his bed. Was it all a dream?

He approaches his desk: Cassie's card is there.

His eyes scan a cork board above the desk with the label "Vision Board". On it are photos of wealthy men, nuclear families, fancy dinners, sports car.

Max holds the card and considers it.

5 INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

5

MAX

Do you think God could be a woman?

DUKE

Might explain some things. Hey, so how did your date go?

*

MAX

She's beautiful. I can't stop thinking of her, and she wants to see me again.

DUKE

That's great! Glad you took my advice.

MAX

She also told me the world is going to end.

DUKE

The end of the world? Jeez, should I quit my job?

MAX

I think I can stop it though. I'm scared: what if I fail? I'm lost.

DUKE

It's just nerves -- you two are perfect for each other! Listen, Professor, as long as you're in love, what's the worst that can happen?

Max considers what's been said.

6 EXT. MAX'S APARTMENT - DAYS

6

A nasty cold wind blows. Feels like stormy weather.

7 INT. APT - DAY

7

Max is on a cordless phone. He dials in Cassie's number and pockets the card.

After a second, she picks up. Max paces throughout the call.

MAX

Hey, Cassie, hi. How're you doing?

Max can hardly believe how idiotic he sounds.

CASSIE

It's been a couple days Max. Are things progressing?

MAX

I--I was wrong before, I do need
you to be here. We should get to
know each other better-- I hope
that didn't come out weird.

*
*

Silence on the other end.

MAX (CONT'D)

You know what never mind.

CASSIE

No, I was just thinking.

MAX (CONT'D)

8 PM, Giovanni's?

CASSIE

If that helps motivate you, fine.

She hangs up. Max does too, looking surprised with himself.

8

INT. GIOVANNI'S ITALIAN BISTRO - LATER

8

Cassie is already sitting down at a booth, dressed a little
less formally than the night they met.

*

Max works up his nerve and seats himself across from her.

*

MAX

Based on the breakthroughs I made
this morning, I'm close to done.

*
*

CASSIE

That's amazing,

*

MAX

Cassie, knowing there's a world
beyond ours, will you take me there
when this is all over?

*
*
*

Cassie gives a little laugh.

CASSIE

I'm curious Max, when exactly did
you figure out you live in a
simulation?

Max gets up and sits next to Cassie.

*

MAX

I'm glad you asked. It happened
last Winter when I was driving home
from classes.

*
*

8A FLASHBACK - SUBURBAIA 8A

Max is driving slowly through a middle-class neighborhood.

MAX (V.O.)

There was this guy walking his dog. *

We see a MAN IN A PUFFY RED JACKET taking his dog for a walk. *

MAX (V.O.)

Nothing strange about it, but on
the next block there was another
man, exactly the same. *

Sure enough, an identical looking dog walker is on the
sidewalk with an identical looking dog.

MAX (V.O.)

I drove for hours after that,
looking for others like him.

8B END OF FLASHBACK 8B

MAX

I think I counted more than two-
dozen in the end. All the same. *

Cassie takes off Max's hat. *

CASSIE

But you're unique, I think it's
safe to say. *

After a moment of hesitation Max gives Cassie a little kiss. *

For a moment they even forget about the apocalypse. *

START OF MONTAGE

9A EXT. GIOVANNI'S - LATER 9A

Max and Cassie leave the restaurant, a little giddy. *

9B INT. STORAGE LOCKER - DAY 9B

Max shows off the latest adjustments to the equation. Cassie
nods her approval. *

9C INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT 9C
Max & Cassie clink drinks together in a celebratory mood. The bar is filled with tacky Christmas decorations. *

9D INT. CAR - DAY 9D
Max is driving Cassie around, she spots the red jacketed dog walker and they both crack up.

9E EXT. PARK - DAY 9E
Max and Cassie are walking through a verdant park together. She extends her hand and Max holds it. *

END OF MONTAGE

10 INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 10
Max sits on the couch while Cassie stares thoughtfully at the steady rain outside. *

MAX
I never met anyone that understood me as well as you. *

CASSIE
Same here. *

Cassie looks away.

MAX
Is something wrong?

CASSIE
The last few weeks have been wonderful, but how will we tell when you've solved the equation? *

MAX
Cassie, I never solved it. *

CASSIE
What?! Are you kidding me? We're in serious trouble. *

MAX

We're not. Worse-case scenario, you
can take us out of the simulation
before it collapses. Right?

*

Cassie can hardly bear to look at Max.

Max springs off the couch and studies Cassie. He's put it
together:

MAX (CONT'D)

Oh no.

*

CASSIE

I'm sorry! I'm not who you thought
I was, but that didn't give you the
right to be so cavalier.

*

*

*

MAX

You-- You came out of nowhere! You
made me think that you were some...
5th dimensional avatar. I thought
that you were special!

Cassie gets up, flustered.

CASSIE

I'm just a systems analyst, Max. I
saw the flaws in the simulation
too. All I determined is that it
would end; I couldn't stop it.

*

*

*

As she talks, we see flashbacks of Cassie in the recent past:

*

10A INT. CASSIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

10A

*

A much frumpier Cassie than we've seen before struggles with
a math equation.

*

*

10B EXT. STORAGE LOCKER - NIGHT

10B

*

The nerdier version of Cassie adjusts her glasses as she
spies on Max outside of the storage locker.

*

*

10C INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

10C

*

Cassie in her plain street clothes observes Max as he
desperately hits on a woman in the bar.

*

*

CASSIE

I didn't have the skills, and no one would believe me! But when I found out about you and your equation I knew that you could do it.

*
*

MAX

I believed you, and you lied right to me!

*
*

CASSIE

And you didn't? All of your courting shit. Was it just insurance for when things went to hell?

*

MAX

Did you ever love me?

*
*

CASSIE

Yes. Did you?

*
*

Cassie stares Max down, then walks out into the rain and slams the door.

*

11 INT. MAX'S BEDROOM - DAY

11

Max is sitting at his desk with his head in his hands.

Slowly they peel back. His eyes are bloodshot.

He sneers at the inspirational photos still up on his cubical. His hands grab at them, tearing them off roughly.

12 INT. STORAGE LOCKER - LATER

12

Max goes up to the Ω and hastily erases it with a dry erase marker. After a beat he replaces it with a red question mark. We've come back to where we started.

Max curls up in the middle of the room, overwhelmed by the enormity of his unsolvable theorem.

Then he feels something in his pocket.

He pulls out a crumpled photo of a couple dining.

MAX

I did love her.

*

13 INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

13

Cassie sits alone at the busy bar, looking worriedly at the clock. Only minutes before the end.

In the background a television is turned to the national lottery. The aging host smiles with his youthful female co-star. A motionless lotto machine sits between them.

Suddenly, Max appears. He pushes his way through the crowd.

MAX

Cassie!

Cassie turns, but doesn't smile. He makes it in front of her.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I've been a selfish
jerk.

*

CASSIE

Thanks for the honesty, but we
didn't make it. We're out of time.

*

MAX

There's still time.

Max gets down on one knee.

MAX (CONT'D)

I promised myself I was saving this
for the right person.

He presents a lottery ticket to her like a wedding ring.

MAX (CONT'D)

You were the one.

Cassie is flattered, but sad. She takes the ticket. On the television, the host calls out to start the lottery.

MAX (CONT'D)

Cassie, will you spend the next 60
seconds with me?

Cassie smiles sadly.

CASSIE

(beat) Yes.

Time seems to slow down in the bar. We catch glimpses of:

The lotto balls popping in their machine.

A crowd of excited people unaware of what is to come.

The smiling, clapping television hosts.

And the clock ticking ever closer to the end. *

As the numbers are called out, we see the corresponding digits on the lottery ticket. They've been a perfect match--

LOTTERY HOST

And the final number... 54!

Cassie looks down at the ticket, confused.

MAX

What? What is it?

CASSIE

The last number -- it's different.

Cassie shows him the ticket: sure enough, it is.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

We did it. *

MAX *

We did it? We did it! *

Max and Cassie start laughing and jumping up and down. *

MAN'S VOICE *

Hey! *

A hand reaches over and taps Max's shoulder. It's the red-jacketed dog walker. He points at the ticket. *

DOG WALKER *

Did you win? *

Max and Cassie turn to each other. They have. *

They embrace in a kiss. *

FADE TO WHITE