

# Sleepwriting

An Honors Thesis By  
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(HONRS 499)

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Huer".

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## **Abstract**

*Sleepwriting* began during one of those get-to-know-you icebreaker activities that tend to occur at the start of each new semester. The question was “tell us one strange thing about yourself” – one young man’s answer caught my imagination immediately: “sometimes I write in my sleep.” This embryonic idea grew and grew over the course of 18 months, finally reaching critical mass and spilling from my brain onto the page. Initially conceived as a full-length feature screenplay, a choice was eventually made to trim it down to a 1-hour TV pilot. This format – a “dramedy” of the kind found on HBO or Showtime – allowed for the deeper character development and slower pace required to tell this particular story. This first episode ends on a cliffhanger, tempting the viewer to tune in next week...

## **That Nagging Voice: A Statement by the Artist**

I will now describe my writing process: 1) moment of inspiration 2) great excitement 3) rapid productivity 4) go eat sandwich 5) time to think 6) massive self doubt 7) watch *Seinfeld* and fall asleep. Rinse and repeat. This is why my computer has more than its fair share of half-finished short stories, outlines of novels, and character sketches, while the list of finished material is rather short. It is impossible for me to read what I have written without that nagging voice whispering – sometimes booming – in my ear. It says, “You thought this was good? This is *not* good. Nobody will like this, it’s even worse than that time you thought you could paint. Back to the drawing board, asshole.” And, usually, I have no one to tell me otherwise. Sometimes, when it’s just a whisper, I can shut him up and keep going – but other times? I hit save, close the project, and never look at it again. Except sometimes, years later, looking through old files... and I open this thing that I only vaguely remember writing. And sometimes – not often – but sometimes I have to stop: “this really isn’t all that bad.”

So here’s the question that relates to my Honors Thesis: did I fail by deciding that this story would be an hour-long (i.e. 45-55 page) TV pilot, instead of a feature film (i.e. 90-120 pages)? Did I, in the midst of writing, succumb to that nagging voice? And, if so, is that a bad thing? I think it would be dishonest to answer, unequivocally, that I did *not* fail – surely the lowering of a goal (even if an arbitrary one such as page count) must be counted as some kind of personal, if not academic, failure. There certainly was an element of self-doubt, a knowledge (whether baseless or not) that the screenplay I was

writing perhaps didn't deserve to be executed in full. But was this, and my reaction to it, a bad thing? No.

The *act* of writing *Sleepwriter's* 51 pages – as is the case with most of what I compose at this point – was more valuable than the pages themselves. I discovered a story, I created the characters that would drive it, and – most importantly – I *actually wrote it all down*. I'm very fond of something said by *This American Life's* Ira Glass, that (and I'm paraphrasing) people become artists because they have good taste... but when they first start creating, they're not yet good enough to make the things that they themselves actually like. Which is discouraging. And most people just stop. As I read over the pages that I have written, much of them don't live up to my own good taste. Sometimes I fall into the trap that Ira has warned me about: I stop writing. But that was not the case with *Sleepwriting*. I had my doubts, I still do – but I did keep writing. I became aware of better ways to convey character, to set up a plot, to invest the reader / viewer in the story – to the point where continuing with *Sleepwriter* became counterproductive, where the longing for a clean page to try out what I had learned outweighed my desire to reach the arbitrary goal I had set up for myself. Did I give up because my work didn't live up to my taste? Again, the answer is no.

*Sleepwriting* came to a close some 40 pages earlier than I had initially intended (incidentally, I think its story functions better now than it would have had it been 40 pages longer) – but I had satisfied my writerly taste buds. *Sleepwriting* is a soup into which I added too much garlic. I tasted the soup, realized my error, and for a moment I considered not making soup ever again... but I really don't like Campbell's, so I started again on a new soup – and I put in less garlic. *Sleepwriting* is a success – if you like the

taste of garlic, it can even be seen as a success in and of itself – but it is a success of process, of growth, of learning. In that spirit, I'd like to address some of the things that I felt went wrong in *Sleepwriting* and offer up some of the lessons learned.

1) Writing about a writer is a massive cliché. As much as I love *Californication*, *Adaptation*, and *Misery*, I probably should have waited on this subject matter until (and if) I have more credibility as an author than that of an unpublished undergrad – in other words, until I have credibility as an author. I know nothing about literary agents, book tours, or therapy sessions beyond what I've seen in movies. My next project will be about a young man who is about to graduate college and move to Germany and who watches too much TV and hates working out. Write what you know.

2) Understand your characters' motivations before they do... and let the reader in on it. I kept writing myself into scenes in which the characters began revealing motivations that had previously not existed. The character of Emily, for example, contrives to bring Tia and Adam together, but we don't know why. This makes for a good mystery – except that *I* didn't know why either. Adam's burning desire to become a successful writer – so strong that the thought of being unable to achieve his dream leads him to attempt suicide – has hardly any basis at all. In my next project, I'll delve deeper into the psyches of my characters and work hard to develop their motivations. I'll plan out how these motivations might bring the characters into conflict (but I'll still leave room for unexpected things to happen as I'm writing).

3) Get to the point. This is essentially why I recast my feature-length idea in the mold of an hour-long TV pilot. I realized that this story was moving too slowly to reach its conclusion in 90-100 pages – but I would hit the 50-page mark nicely with a little

cliffhanger (the effectiveness of which is up for debate: do we care that Tia is moving away?). Vastly important to screenwriting is the art of saying everything you *need* to say and nothing more – it is the pinnacle of literary efficiency. The only things that should be in the script are those things that are vital to understanding the characters in the context of the plot. In other words, every sentence must tell us something about our characters and their motivations, while simultaneously furthering the story. *Sleepwriting* contains many useless lines, wasted dialogue, and unneeded description. My next project will be written with an eye toward efficiency and great care will be placed on writing only what needs to be written.

There will be no second draft of *Sleepwriting*, at least not in the near future. At this point, my knowledge of screenwriting still in its infancy, the next draft will be another first draft. I will write more before I become bogged down in self-doubt. Eventually I'll reach the end, having overcome that nagging voice. And then I'll start on draft two.

Sleepwriting  
(Pilot)  
By  
Weston Fribley

Draft 01 - 6.6.11

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INT. ADAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

ADAM, 26, stares unblinkingly into the bathroom mirror. Expressionless, he's wearing a white t-shirt with a large hole in one armpit. His hair is half matted down, half standing on end. If he cared, Adam could clean up nice.

ADAM (V.O.)  
I'm a decently attractive guy. I'm smart. I'm healthy.

Adam opens the medicine cabinet, the mirrored door swinging to one side revealing bottles of pills, a razor, q-tips, and two toothbrushes: one BLUE, one PINK.

ADAM (V.O.)  
I'm funny enough.

Adam grabs the pill bottle, puts it on the counter.

ADAM (V.O.)  
I have it good.

Adam places the razor next to the pill bottle. He closes the medicine cabinet, again looking into the mirror.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A middle-aged man, bald and bearded, sits at a wide mahogany desk. A fake-wood name plaque: DR. TRAUMBACH.

A cross between Paul Giamatti and Sigmund Freud, Dr. Traumbach sits with immaculate posture, resting his pen on a yellow legal pad.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Welcome, Adam. Glad you came in.

Adam, clean t-shirt and jeans, sits in a leather chair, staring back at the Doctor across his desk. Adam's hair is slightly tidier, but his expression hasn't changed.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
I'm going to begin by just asking some standard questions. Is that okay, Adam?

Adam nods, absent minded.

ADAM  
Sure.



INT. ADAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

Adam has his phone to his ear, examining a pill bottle.  
MARTIN, 28, is on the other end of the line.

MARTIN  
Lunch? Remember?

Adam replaces the pill bottle, picks up a safety razor.

ADAM  
I'm broke.

Holding the phone between ear and shoulder, Adam tries to pull the blade from the razor.

MARTIN  
Do you ever pay when we get lunch?

Adam, unable to free the razor blade, throws the razor down into the sink.

ADAM  
(in frustration)  
Fuck.  
(into the phone)  
I'm staying in.

MARTIN  
I'll be there in ten.

Adam reaches into the medicine cabinet, pulling out the pink toothbrush. He tosses it into a trash can by the toilet.

MARTIN  
And if your testicles finally drop and you off yourself before I get there, I swear, I will tear those sweet new balls from your still-warm corpse and feed them to fucking Cojack.

ADAM  
You buy organic dog food. You'd never feed him my balls.

MARTIN  
Do you spray your balls with pesticide?

ADAM  
(sigh)  
No.

MARTIN  
I'll be there in ten.

Martin hangs up. Adam closes the medicine cabinet and looks at himself in the mirror.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Traumbach readies his pen.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Are you depressed, Adam?

Adam shrugs.

ADAM  
No... I mean, I don't think so.

Dr. Traumbach begins writing.

ADAM  
Are these questions relevant to--

The doctor doesn't look up from his pad.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Just standard procedure.

Adam sinks back into his chair.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Any feelings of hopelessness?

INT. DINER - DAY

Adam - t-shirt and jeans, hair slightly tidier - sits in a booth, still devoid of expression. He reads a menu.

ADAM  
I'm hopeless.

Martin sits across the table, wearing a sport jacket worth more than all of Adam's clothes put together. His hair is precisely trimmed, his thick-framed glasses crushingly stylish.

Martin doesn't look up from his menu.

MARTIN  
This is news?

Adam looks at Martin over his menu, only moving his eyes.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Adam slowly shakes his head.

ADAM  
Nothing's hopeless, right?

Adam manages a meager smile, unconvincing. Traumbach looks up from his legal pad.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
No, Adam. Some things are.

The two lock eyes for a long beat. The doctor resumes his scribbling as if he had never stopped.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Have you been having any personal problems? Relationships? Romantic troubles?

Adam answers offhandedly.

ADAM  
No, no problems.

INT. DINER - DAY

Adam looks around for a server.

ADAM  
I think Tia started seeing someone.

MARTIN  
It has been, what, six months?

Adam finally flags down a waitress. He turns back to Martin.

ADAM  
You're paying?

MARTIN  
Adam...

ADAM  
I'll go home and kill myself.

MARTIN  
Please do.

The waitress arrives at the table.

WAITRESS  
What can I get you?

ADAM  
What's your most expensive dish?

Martin shakes his head in exasperation. Adam remains emotionless.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Traumbach flips to a new page in his legal pad.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
And work? Any arguments, difficult co-workers, stressful projects? Anything like that?

ADAM  
No, no, work's fine.

Adam adjusts his collar.

INT. DINER - DAY

The waitress flips her order pad closed and leaves the table. Adam leans forward in the booth. He glowers across the table at Martin, accusing him.

ADAM  
What do you expect? I don't have a job.

MARTIN  
Don't be a dick. I'm just helping my oldest friend - you're not a client.

Martin takes a sip of water. Adam sinks back into the booth.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Traumbach finishes his writing, puts his pen down, and leans back in his high-backed leather chair.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Do you feel... like a loser?

INT. DINER - DAY

Adam nods.

ADAM  
You're right, I'm just a loser.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The doctor continues...

DR. TRAUMBACH  
...worthless?

INT. DINER - DAY

ADAM  
Absolutely worthless.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. TRAUMBACH  
...or that your life is devoid of  
meaning?

INT. DINER - DAY

Adam points to himself.

ADAM  
And my life? Utterly devoid of  
meaning.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Adam shakes his head - no.

ADAM  
No, really, I'm fine.

Adam's meager smile reappears, still unconvincing.

Traubach frowns, setting down his pen.

INT. DINER - DAY

Martin stares at Adam.

MARTIN  
Meaning? Don't forget why we're  
here, Adam.

ADAM  
Cause you'd feel guilty if your  
client - no, wait, if your friend  
killed himself?

MARTIN  
What do you do every night?

Martin knows the answer to this question.

Adam shakes his head, not wanting to respond.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Traumbach leans forward, puts his elbows on the desk,  
and interlocks his fingers under his chin.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Well, with the formalities out of  
the way... why are you here, Adam?

Adam takes a deep breath.

ADAM  
I write in my sleep.

Dr. Traumbach raises an eyebrow.

INT. DINER - DAY

Martin munches his fry.

MARTIN  
You write in your fucking sleep.

ADAM  
It's not writing.

MARTIN  
It needs work. But you write *in*  
*your sleep*.

Martin pulls a slip of paper from his inside coat pocket. He slides it across the table to Adam. Without picking it up, Adam reads: DR. TRAUMBACH, and an address.

MARTIN

He's supposed to be the best. My friend in the lit department? Told me Dan Brown went to this guy.

Adam looks back up at Martin.

MARTIN

You like Dan Brown, right? He's huge.

(points to the paper)

This guy is good.

Adam rolls his eyes.

ADAM

Who is this?

MARTIN

He's a sleep doctor. I got you an appointment in... shit, twenty minutes.

Adam GROANS like a kid who doesn't want to clean his room. Martin digs out his wallet.

MARTIN

What, you had other plans? Look, it might help. Come on.

Adam reluctantly picks up the slip of paper.

ADAM

You're such an idiot.

Martin lays down some bills.

MARTIN

And look where it's gotten me:  
buying your fucking lunch.

Martin slides hastily out of the booth.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Traumbach strokes his beard, head slightly bowed.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
(to himself)  
Somnambulism, with a fixation on  
the the fine motor tasks, typing.  
Most interesting.

He halts the beard stroking, looks up.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
And this has been going on your  
entire life?

ADAM  
Since I learned to write. Since I  
can remember.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
But because you are here, I am to  
understand that the material  
produced is... disappointing?

ADAM  
It's terrible.

Dr. Traumbach resumes the beard stroking.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
(musing)  
How tragic. Your sleeping mind  
trapped pursuing a dream for which  
it is wholly unsuited.

Again, he stops and looks at Adam.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
This doesn't depress you?

Adam is stunned. This guy is good.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Adam has his cell phone to his ear. He steps up to the  
counter and is greeted by a pointy-faced PHARMACIST.

PHARMACIST  
Can I help you?

Adam hands over a white slip of paper. The pharmacist takes  
it and gives it a look - then up to Adam.



Adam listens to a faint PHONE OPERATOR.

PHONE OPERATOR  
You've reached "Tia Miller." Please  
leave a message after the tone.

The pharmacist looks Adam up and down, then disappears into a side office... but all the drugs are on racks right behind the counter.

Adam frowns, following the Pharmacist with his eyes.

PHONE OPERATOR  
If you'd like to leave a call back  
number, press one.

Adam looks over to a BOMBSHELL BLOND looking at makeup down the aisle.

From Adam's phone, a soft TONE.

Bombshell Blond glances back at Adam. He tries a smile. She hardly bothers to hide her amused eyebrow-raise, turning back to the cosmetics. Adam sighs.

Adam realizes he hasn't hung up the phone. He yanks it from his ear, hastily pressing "END CALL."

The Pharmacist is back.

PHARMACIST  
Here you go, sorry for the wait.

ADAM  
No problem.

The Pharmacist begins ringing up the prescription.

INT. ADAM'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dressed for bed, Adam stares into his reflection in the bathroom mirror.

ADAM  
I'm a decently attractive guy. I'm  
smart.

He looks down, a pill bottle in his hand. The label reads only: ADAM MCKAY. DR. TRAUMBACH. NR 134. TAKE ONLY ONE BEFORE BED. The word "only" is in bold, red letters.

Adam looks back to the mirror. He pops a pill into his mouth.

ADAM  
I'm healthy.

He adds another.

ADAM  
I'm funny enough.

Yet another pill.

ADAM  
I have it good.

Adam pours the rest of the pills into his hand, dumps them into his mouth. He takes a long drink from a glass of water, swallows hard, wiping a dribble from his chin.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam sits on the bed, pulling off his socks. A framed snapshot sits on the bedside table.

INSERT: PHOTO

A beautiful young woman in a light blue sundress, TIA, 26, sits next to Adam on a blanket in a park. They're surrounded by the remnants of a picnic, a half-eaten apple pie.

BACK TO SCENE

From outside, a DOG BARKS. Adam frowns.

Adam slides into bed, more BARKS.

Adam pulls up the covers. Silence... another BARK.

ADAM  
(under his breath)  
Goddammit.

Adam stares up at the ceiling.

The BARKING continues... and now the sound of CHILDREN PLAYING. Adam looks to the window - the blinds are shut, it's dark outside.

ADAM  
What the fuck.

Adam throws off the covers.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adam pads up to his front door, still in pajamas.

Adam opens the door onto:

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Bright summer light, vibrant green grass, blue skies - Adam steps outside, blinking. LAUGHING CHILDREN chase a dog, a stick in it's mouth.

A few steps away, surrounded by a small picnic, Tia sits cross legged on a blanket, smiling up at Adam. Her brown hair has been tossed by the breeze, she wears a light blue sun dress - stunningly beautiful.

Adam - cleaned up - looks back over his shoulder. His house is gone, replaced by a stand of trees.

Tia munches an apple.

TIA

I can't believe I'm doing this.

Adam frowns, confused. He slowly sits down next to Tia, throwing another look back at where he came from.

ADAM

Me neither.

Adam takes in the park, still looking a bit confused.

ADAM

(to himself)

This park...

Tia smiles.

TIA

It is a good line. 'I had a date,  
she stood me up... free picnic?'

Adam looks back to Tia. He smiles... then laughs: his depression suddenly gone.

ADAM

It's true!

Tia, mouthful of apple, raises an eyebrow.

ADAM

Her name is Lily, I met her through work, we talked, I asked if she wanted to have a picnic in the park. She said she'd meet me.

TIA

What a bitch.

Adam grins.

ADAM

I'm sure she just forgot.

TIA

You called her, right?

Adam sticks his bottom lip out.

ADAM

Seven times.

Tia laughs.

ADAM

Her phone was probably on silent.

TIA

Safe to say, she's gone now.

Tia teases, giving a "hate to break it to you" shrug.

TIA

Seven calls? Kinda clingy.

Adam lifts a perfect apple pie from a wicker picnic basket, setting it down on the blanket.

ADAM

Now I really wish she'd come.

TIA

See you with another girl, get all jealous...

Adam looks up from slicing up the pie, shocked at Tia's assumption. He speaks with mock wholesomeness.

ADAM

She could help us with this pie!  
There's way too much for just the two of us.

Tia laughs.

TIA  
Three's a crowd.

They lock eyes, trying to contain their smiles.

TIA  
I should take a picture.

Adam laughs, a bit shy.

ADAM  
What for?

TIA  
My picnic with a stranger.

She rummages around in a large bag. Adam sits back, content. He looks around the park.

TIA (O.S.)  
(half to herself)  
God, I've got so much junk in here.

ADAM'S POV:

An OLD MAN reading a newspaper on a bench, a BOY and his DAD flying a kite, two TEENAGERS playing catch.

A beautiful Bombshell Blond in slick white jogging gear - the woman from the pharmacy! Her breasts bounce, she looks at Adam.

BACK TO SCENE

Adam quickly looks away.

TIA  
(rummaging)  
Fuck, where is it?

Adam looks back in the Blond's direction.

ADAM'S POV:

The Bombshell Blond disappears around a bend.

A pinch-faced man - the Pharmacist! - stands some distance away, a little terrier on a leash in front of him. The little dog hunkers down for a poo - looking right at Adam.

BACK TO SCENE.

Adam slowly turns back to Tia, still digging in her bag. She gives up, sinks back on her heels, and looks back at Adam.

Tia shrugs, hands palm up.

TIA  
No camera.

Adam raises an eyebrow.

ADAM  
Really?

Tia leans over to him, smiling.

TIA  
It's so sad: we won't have anything  
to remember this by.

She kisses him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A bright young woman, EMILY - 23, business casual and a pixie cut - sits, reading a manuscript.

She looks over the pages at the hospital bed. Adam is asleep, the blanket raised into a little tent around the pelvic region.

Emily raises an eyebrow, flashes a sly grin.

Adam GROANS awake. Emily quickly looks back down at her reading, stifling her grin.

EMILY  
Pleasant dreams?

Adam looks down his nose to the tent he's pitching... then over to the girl sitting in the corner. He quickly rolls onto his side, his back to Emily.

ADAM  
How long have you been--?

Emily doesn't look up.

EMILY  
Long enough.

Adam slips a hand under the covers, adjusting himself. Emily hides that sly grin behind her reading material.

EMILY  
Should I step outside?

Adam flips over to face Emily, keeping his stomach down.

ADAM  
Where's Martin?

Emily keeps reading.

EMILY  
He's very busy.

Adam shifts onto his side, now facing Emily.

ADAM  
Who found me?

EMILY  
You didn't answer your phone,  
Martin got worried.

ADAM  
How cute.

Emily finishes a page. She looks at Adam as she pulls out her cell phone.

EMILY  
He does want to talk to you.

Emily walks to the bed, dialing a number, the manuscript still in hand.

EMILY  
(on the phone)  
He's awake.

She puts the phone to Adam's ear.

ADAM  
Hey.

Martin sounds excited.

MARTIN  
(though the phone)  
You brilliant fucking idiot.

ADAM  
(deadpan)  
Yeah, glad I'm alive too.

MARTIN  
You shoulda done this years ago.

ADAM  
You kept stopping me.

MARTIN  
You wrote while you were on all those pills, Adam. Did Ems show you?

Emily holds up the manuscript.

ADAM  
I just woke up.

MARTIN  
Well fucking read it. Emily?

Emily pulls the phone back, putting it up to her ear.

EMILY  
Yeah... I'll bring him.

She slips the phone back into a pocket holds out the manuscript. Adam takes it, rolling onto his back.

Emily's eyes glance down toward Adam's waist - he catches her looking.

ADAM  
It's involuntary.

Emily quickly looks back at Adam's face, speaking bluntly.

EMILY  
The writing or the erection?

Adam flips open the first page of the manuscript, rolling onto his side - away from Emily.

INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE - DAY

A mid-sized office, windows, sparsely decorated, just big enough for a small couch.

Martin sits behind his desk, phone to his ear - on hold. Adam slumps on the couch.

The manuscript sits on a glass-topped coffee table.



ADAM  
It's just one chapter.

MARTIN  
It's enough. I can get you in with  
this.

The door opens - Emily walks in, over to Martin's desk, not a single look over to Adam. She hands some papers to Martin.

MARTIN  
(to Emily)  
Thanks.

She heads for the door.

ADAM  
(to Martin)  
It's not that good. And what if  
that's all I've got?

Emily stops at the door, looking back at Adam.

EMILY  
It is that good, Adam. And you  
wrote it.

ADAM  
I just have to put myself in the  
hospital to get each chapter.

EMILY  
Or make it voluntary.

She closes the door behind her. Adam watches her go.

MARTIN  
You're not going to OD again. The  
last thing I need is a dead fucking  
client.

Adam looks back over to Martin.

ADAM  
Client? I'm a client now?

MARTIN  
You just wrote the best first  
chapter since Genesis. I want my  
ten percent, it'll get me back for  
lunch.

ADAM  
You're a great friend and a  
wonderful human being.

Martin glares at Adam.

MARTIN  
(into the phone)  
Jerry! Sam told you? I got  
something for you.

Martin moves the receiver from his mouth, covering it with a hand.

MARTIN  
(to Adam)  
Hey, I saved your life and I'm  
getting you a job.

ADAM  
This is really going to happen?

Martin nods, giving a "can you believe it?" smile. He puts the receiver back to his mouth.

MARTIN  
(into the phone)  
He told you right. It's  
in-fucking-credible.

Finally, the slight shimmerings of smile on the corner of Adam's mouth.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

An empty pill bottle sits on Dr. Traumbach's desk.

The Doctor sits in his chair, his eyes on the bottle. Adam stands opposite Dr. Traumbach, a satchel hung over one shoulder.

ADAM  
You were right.

Dr. Traumbach arches an eyebrow, quizzical.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
I just wrote you that prescription.

Adam pulls a chair up close to the desk, sitting down.

ADAM  
I took them all. At once.

Dr. Traumbach looks up from the pill bottle to Adam, concerned.

ADAM  
And I wrote this.

Adam pulls the manuscript from his satchel, tossing it onto the desk.

ADAM  
I need a new prescription.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
I'm not here to mask your symptoms, Adam. We have to cure the disease.

ADAM  
I write in my sleep, it's hardly a disease.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Somnambulism-- your unconscious motor control is not our concern. But there is an underlying illness.

ADAM  
And what would that be?

The Doctor moves his jaw, his head tilts - he has no answer.

ADAM  
All I know is that I took a bunch of pills and wrote the first chapter of--

Adam puts his hands on the Doctor's desk, leaning down.

ADAM  
I did something I'm proud of. That doesn't happen to me very often. Just give me the prescription.

Traumbach leans back in his chair, biting his lip in thought.

Adam raises his eyebrows: "yes?"

Traumbach looks back at Adam.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
Under one condition.

Adam frowns, confused.

INT. TRAUMBACH'S LAB - SLEEP CHAMBER - NIGHT

Adam - his head cleanly shaven - sits up in a hospital bed, electrodes attached to his bare scalp. In a hospital gown, an IV extends from Adam's forearm up to a bag of clear liquid hanging above the bed.

Dr. Traumbach calibrates a monitor. Martin wheels a bedside table - a laptop its only cargo - into place within Adam's reach.

ADAM  
This is ridiculous.

Martin scowls.

MARTIN  
Doctor's orders, suicide boy.

Adam glares.

Traumbach turns from the monitor, making some final notations on a clipboard.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
I will be monitoring you closely.  
(to Martin)  
No need to worry.

The Doctor slips his clipboard under his arm.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
(to Adam)  
Comfortable?

The Doctor doesn't wait for a response, moving to the IV bag as Adam paws at the wires coming from his head.

ADAM  
Not really.

Traumbach is paying no attention. Adam gingerly sinks back onto his pillow.

ADAM  
But I'll manage.

Martin pushes the laptop in closer, still apprehensive.

MARTIN  
Write me something worth the good  
doctor's time, ok?

Dr. Traumbach places his hand on the IV control.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
I'm going to begin the drip.

Martin stands up.

MARTIN  
And don't die.

Dr. Traumbach steps back from the IV, nods to Martin.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
(to Adam)  
We'll be right outside.

The Doctor turns to leave. Martin gives Adam a shallow  
"it'll be ok" nod - Adam manages a meager smile in return.

Martin joins the Doctor at the door - as they leave the room  
Emily appears in the doorway, cell phone in hand. She  
whispers something to Martin.

Adam watches the hushed exchange with concern.

Martin nods to Emily, she enters the room - Martin lets the  
door swing closed behind her.

Emily walks up to the bed.

EMILY  
There's a call for you, Adam.

Adam is confused.

ADAM  
Now?

EMILY  
She said it's urgent.

Emily hands the phone to Adam - he continues to look up at  
her.

ADAM  
She?

He puts the phone to his ear, quizzical.

TIA (V.O.)  
(angry)  
Adam? Adam, where are you?

Adam's attention is turned immediately toward the phone conversation, forgetting Emily.

ADAM  
I had a doctor's appointment. So  
sorry, I should have told you - I  
didn't think it would go this long.

Emily knows she's being ignored. She slowly backs out of the room, giving herself a half-hearted "he doesn't like you, but that's ok" smile.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

Tia sits at table under an umbrella, an ice tea half gone in front of her. She's on the phone, and none too pleased.

TIA  
I've been sitting here for twenty  
minutes... you couldn't have just  
texted me?

INT. TRAUMBACH'S LAB - SLEEP CHAMBER - NIGHT

Adam sits up in the bed, shoving the laptop table aside.

ADAM  
I'll be there in five minutes. I  
promise. Okay? Okay? Five minutes.

He slams the phone closed, leaping from the bed, ripping the electrodes from his head. He bolts to the door, his hospital gown flowing behind him.

Ripping the door open, Adam rushes out into...

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

A bright sunny day, a bustling urban sidewalk. Adam quickly takes stock of his new surroundings - his gown replaced with normal clothes, his hair returned.

Adam isn't confused this time, just in a hurry. He looks both ways down the street, trying to get his bearings - a quick decision and he's off, running down the street.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

Tia puts her phone down on the table, sighing in anger. She shakes her head: "why do I put up with this?"

TIA's POV:

Down at the end of the block, Adam appears around a corner. He catches sight of her, jogging down the sidewalk, dodging pedestrians.

BACK TO SCENE.

Tia sits back in her chair. She fiddles with her phone, refusing to acknowledge Adam as he scrambles into the seat opposite her.

ADAM

Tia, I'm so sorry.

She works her jaw, angry, not looking up.

ADAM

I was in the little doctor's room,  
I couldn't answer my phone.

Nothing.

ADAM

Tia. I have cancer.

Tia's fingers stop, she looks up from her phone - anger gone, she looks deep into Adam's eyes.

TIA

Adam.

Adam stares back, very somber.

ADAM

There's good news and bad news. The  
bad news is that I have cock  
cancer. The good news is it'll make  
it twice as long.

Adam can't hold it any longer, he starts laughing.

Tia's mouth opens, shaking her head, looking away from Adam.

TIA

You are such a--

Adam reaches over the table and takes Tia's hand - he's still chuckling.

ADAM

Hey, I know. And I am really sorry  
I'm late.

She looks back at him, he's almost cracked her.

Adam kisses her hand, supplicating himself before her.

ADAM

I love you.

Tia pulls her hand back, crossing her arms - but she's back  
in his camp.

TIA

I hate you. So much.

Adam waves over a waiter.

WAITER

Can I help you?

ADAM

She'll have the chicken parmesan  
ceaser salad. And another long  
island.

Adam looks at Tia expectantly. She speaks with mock  
reluctance, allowing a little smile.

TIA

I love you, too.

INT. TRAUMBACH'S LAB - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Martin and Dr. Traumbach stand in front of a large  
observation window -- inside, lit by the glow of the laptop  
screen, Adam types furiously, his eyes closed.

Emily stands back, behind the two men. She sips a coffee.

Martin watches Adam through the glass, transfixed.

MARTIN

This is so fucked up.

Dr. Traumbach places a comforting hand on Martin's shoulder,  
giving me a paternal look.

DR. TRAUMBACH

You're a good friend, Martin.

Martin looks up at him.



MARTIN  
I'm a good agent.

Martin looks back at Adam.

MARTIN  
If there wasn't a pot of gold at  
the end of this... well.

Emily wants to disappear, chewing the lid of her coffee cup.

The Doctor removes his hand. Martin snaps back into business mode, turning to Traumbach.

MARTIN  
Can we do this every night?

Traumbach considers it.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
I don't see why not.

Martin looks to Emily. She pauses, slowly bringing the coffee cup away from mouth.

EMILY  
I'll stay with him.

Martin nods.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tia, in her underwear, stands in front of a full-length mirror - she wishes her boobs were a bit bigger, her stomach a bit flatter.

Adam, in the bathroom, speaks through a toothbrush.

ADAM (O.S.)  
You hear back from them yet?

Tia primps her hair.

Tooth brushing over, Adam walks into the room - shirtless, he hops into bed, sitting up against the headboard. He looks at Tia.

ADAM  
How many times have I told you  
you're beautiful?

Tia turns, studying her ass... meh, she thinks.

ADAM  
You'll never believe me, will you?

Tia tears herself away from the mirror, walking over to sit next to Adam on the bed.

TIA  
Probably not. But that's not your fault.

Tia smiles, almost patronizing.

INT. TRAUMBACH'S LAB - SLEEP CHAMBER - NIGHT

A dim bedside lamp illuminates Adam, asleep, sitting up in the bed. His arms are out in front of him, typing away.

Emily pulls a folding chair up to side of the bed, watching Adam's sleepwriting, fascinated.

Leaning over, Emily cautiously waves a hand in front of Adam's face - no reaction. She looks at the laptop - fingers are flying, words flowing.

Emily stands upright, casting a cautious look around the room. She looks back at Adam.

Slowly, Emily leans in... delivering the lightest of kisses to Adam's cheek.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tia kisses Adam on the cheek, slowly leaning back. Adam smiles softly.

ADAM  
Someday, some boy will tell you  
you're beautiful and you'll believe  
him.

TIA  
Maybe.

Adam scoots himself closer to Tia, touching her face with his hand.

ADAM  
It'll happen.

He kisses her.

INT. TRAUMBACH'S LAB - SLEEP CHAMBER - NIGHT

Emily pulls back from her peck on the cheek - suddenly Adam turns from typing, pulling Emily into a hard mouth-to-mouth kiss.

Emily's eyes go wide with surprise, startled, she pulls away.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tia pulls away from Adam.

TIA  
But not with you?

Adam sinks back onto the bed.

ADAM  
I think that's your choice.

INT. TRAUMBACH'S LAB - SLEEP CHAMBER - NIGHT

Adam remains asleep, sinking back down onto the pillows, his arms at his sides, done writing.

Emily, still a bit stunned by the kiss, takes a half step backward. She looks from Adam to the laptop screen...

The last line reads: "Those words caught in the air between them. Without an answer, she kissed him on the forehead and turned out the light."

Looking back to the peacefully sleeping Adam, Emily is slightly unnerved. But she leans in, slowly, carefully... quickly planting a kiss on Adam's forehead before snapping back upright.

Adam does nothing... Emily backs up, sits down on the folding chair, keeping an eye on Adam. Noticing the lamp, she quickly turns it off.

INT. MARTIN'S OFFICE - DAY

Adam sits on the couch, Martin stands behind his desk.

MARTIN  
Ems'll get you from place to place.  
And you're taking the good doctor.

Adam furrows an eyebrow: "why?"

MARTIN  
You're still on suicide watch.

ADAM  
Fuck you, man.

MARTIN  
Traumbach doesn't think we should  
stop the... therapy. He says we  
shouldn't break routine.

ADAM  
I'm gonna keep writing while I'm on  
the road?

MARTIN  
You've gotta do something about  
that ending, right?

Adam sighs.

ADAM  
Wasn't really my choice to leave it  
like that.

MARTIN  
It came out of your fucked up head,  
didn't it?

Adam shakes his head, knowing Martin's right, just wishing  
it actually felt that way.

Martin comes out from behind his desk, going over to Adam.

MARTIN  
You'll be fine.

Adam looks up.

MARTIN  
And tonight, we celebrate.

Adam shakes his head: "please, don't make me."

INT. CLASSY L.A. BAR - NIGHT

A party in Adam's honor - the bar is filled with suave suits  
and beautiful dresses.

At one end of the bar, Adam sips a beer with Martin.

ADAM  
Have any of them even read it?

MARTIN  
We just announced the deal. No  
one's seen it outside Random House.

ADAM  
So why are they here - it could  
suck, they don't know.

MARTIN  
But the bees have been buzzing.

Martin juts his chin at a group of suits away down the bar.

MARTIN  
They're from Warner Brothers.

Martin pivots, indicating another group at a table.

MARTIN  
And that's the Mouse contingent.

ADAM  
But none of them have read it?

MARTIN  
They smell honey.

Adam shakes his head, sips his beer.

Emily walks up, sitting on a bar stool next to Martin. She doesn't let herself look at Adam, instead keeping her eyes on the Bartender.

EMILY  
(to Martin)  
Shouldn't you mingle?

MARTIN  
Just stirring the honey pot.  
(to Adam)  
Em's right, let's go.

Emily frowns - "honey pot?" She catches the Bartender's attention.

WITH ADAM AND MARTIN -

Stepping up to a group of well dressed party-goers, Martin breaks into their chit-chat.

MARTIN  
Ladies, Gentlemen.

Adam hangs back.

An OLDER SUIT steps aside, noticing Adam, ushering him up into the group with a pat on the back.

OLDER SUIT  
The man of the hour.

A round of "Congratulations" sounds off.

ADAM  
(uncomfortable)  
Thank you. But maybe you should  
read it first... it could suck.

Polite laughter. Martin sends a covert elbow into Adam's side.

MARTIN  
Adam's just a modest man.

Awkward pause. A middle-aged woman in a BLACK DRESS breaks the silence.

BLACK DRESS  
Now that you've got your first book  
published, given any thought to  
what's next?

ADAM  
Well, I sorta just moonlight as a  
writer now...

Martin gives him a stern look: "watch it."

ADAM  
So making that my day job, that's  
as far ahead as I'm thinking now.

OLDER SUIT  
With what I've been hearing, that  
shouldn't be a problem.

Adam shrugs.

ADAM  
Well I don't know... I seem to do  
my best work at night.

A bad joke? ...polite smiles. Martin steps in.

MARTIN  
Everyone taking advantage of the  
open bar?

Martin pokes Adam.

MARTIN  
It's coming out of your paycheck.

A round of polite laughter.

INT. CLASSY L.A. BAR - LATER

Adam leans with his back against the bar, sipping a bottle of beer. Martin stands an arms-length away, chatting with more party-goers.

At the other end of the bar, Emily sits alone, sipping a whiskey coke while texting. She shoots a sidelong glance down toward Adam.

Adam catches sight of a red dress, across the room, standing with TWO MEN. She shifts her weight, bringing her face into view - it's the BOMBSHELL BLOND.

Martin gets a tug on his shirt, turns back to Adam.

ADAM  
Who is that?

He's looking toward Bombshell Blond. Martin doesn't see her.

ADAM  
In the red dress. Do you know her?

Martin finds her.

MARTIN  
No, she must've come with Jeff or  
Ryan.

Martin sees Adam's interest.

MARTIN  
You want me to introduce you to  
them?

ADAM  
No, just curious.

MARTIN

Come on.

ADAM

Martin, I'm not her type.

MARTIN

How the fuck do you know that?

Martin pulls the beer from Adam's hand, setting it down on the bar. Grabbing Adam by the shoulder, Martin pulls him up.

Martin and Adam walk toward Bombshell Blond - someone enters the bar, Adam turns to look: it's Tia.

Adam grabs Martin, stopping him in his tracks. Martin turns.

MARTIN

What?

Adam's clearly distraught.

ADAM

(re: Tia)

What is she doing here?

Martin looks, sees Tia, suddenly understanding Adam's change of mood.

MARTIN

I have no idea.

Adam accuses Martin.

ADAM

You told her about this?

MARTIN

No way. I swear.

Tia has spotted them, she heads their way.

ADAM

Fuck.

MARTIN

Don't be an emo puss.

Tia reaches them, the warmest of smiles.

TIA

Hey.



MARTIN

Tia, how are you? Glad you could  
make it. I've gotta go schmooze.  
Open bar, you two go catch up.

And he's gone, leaving Adam to fend for himself.

Emily watches from a distance as Tia and Adam step over to  
the bar. She downs the rest of her drink.

WITH TIA AND ADAM -

They both lean up against the bar.

TIA

This is amazing, I'm so happy for  
you.

ADAM

How did you know... ?

TIA

I heard you wrote a book, that it's  
gonna be big - someone said you  
were having a little party here.

ADAM

Martin told you?

TIA

No.

Adam looks at her, eyebrows raised: "then who?"

TIA

A friend of a friend, does it  
matter?

Emily surreptitiously watches the two talk from the other  
end of the bar.

Back with Tia and Adam, the Bartender steps up. Adam orders  
instinctively.

ADAM

She'll have a gin and tonic with  
lemon. And just get me another  
beer.

The Bartender nods, going to prepare the drinks. Tia studies  
Adam.

TIA  
You know, that might not be my  
drink anymore.

ADAM  
Is it not?

The drinks arrive. Tia picks hers up, takes a sip.

TIA  
It is.

Tia arcs an eyebrow, a provocation?

TIA  
But I could have gotten it myself.

ADAM  
I'm sorry, just assumed--

TIA  
(smiling)  
Don't worry about it.

ADAM  
Old habits, I guess.

TIA  
It's fine.

Adam sips his beer, Tia stirs her drink. They both speak at once.

TIA  
This is amazing though--

ADAM  
So are you still seeing--

Tia smiles.

TIA  
No, no... it was never serious or  
anything.

Adam nods, stopping himself from smiling.

TIA  
But this book, I can't wait to read  
it. I've heard it's really good.

Adam shrugs, playing it off.

ADAM  
That's what they keep telling me.

TIA  
You don't think so?

ADAM  
I don't know.

He takes a long pull.

ADAM  
I'd love to hear what you think of  
it. I'll have Martin send you a  
copy.

TIA  
I'd like that.

They pause to drink.

ADAM  
So how's work?

Tia smiles.

TIA  
The same, unfortunately. I've  
actually applied for some other  
positions in the firm, something  
different.

ADAM  
Yeah?

TIA  
Yeah... I mean, we'll see if it  
happens.

ADAM  
That's good though, right? You used  
to just grin and bear it all the  
time.

Tia's smile goes wry.

TIA  
Which you hated.

Adam smiles in return.

ADAM

I did.

Another pause as Adam sips his beer.

TIA

It's good to see you again.

Adam, looking down, nods slowly, deeply.

ADAM

Yeah... it's good to see you, too.

Tia cracks a smile in the corner of her mouth.

TIA

Really?

Adam looks at her.

ADAM

Really. Whoever told you about this little thing... Well. Glad they did.

From down the bar, Emily watches Adam and Tia. She stands up, gathering her purse, dropping her phone into it.

Emily walks along the bar toward Adam and Tia - she stops beside them.

EMILY

(to Adam)

Your flight's early tomorrow...

Emily swings a look in Tia's direction - back to Adam.

EMILY

Gonna make it?

ADAM

I'll make it. Thanks Em.

Emily turns to Tia, speaks tersely... but was that a wink?

EMILY

Thanks for coming.

Emily moves past them, headed for the door.

Tia and Adam share a look: "what was that?"

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Adam - suited, his hair quaffed, looking good - spins slowly on the dressing room chair, looking at his feet.

Emily sits on a folding chair to one side. Dr. Traumbach leans against a far wall, stoic, slowly stroking his beard.

EMILY  
(to Adam)  
Nervous?

Adam doesn't stop spinning.

ADAM  
Yep.

Dr. Traumbach strokes his beard.

INT. BOOKSTORE BACK ROOM - DAY

Adam sits on an office chair, his foot bouncing.

Emily opens the door, leaning in.

EMILY  
They're ready.

Adam quickly stands, smoothing his shirt.

EXT. BOOKSTORE ENTRANCE - DAY

A line has formed, people holding hardback copies of "A TYPICAL DREAM by ADAM MCKENTIRE."

The first person in line, a BIG-BONED FAN turns to the small WOMAN behind him.

BIG-BONED FAN  
What was your favorite part?

The Woman doesn't quite know how to answer...

BIG-BONED FAN  
I liked all of it. The ending was a bit confusing. You think he'll just sign it or will he write a little message in it?

The Woman shakes her head: "I have no idea." The Fan is all smiles.

BIG-BONED FAN  
I've never gone to a signing  
before.

And, as abruptly as he began the conversation, he ends it,  
spinning back around.

INT. EAST COAST AIRPORT - DAY

Emily, Adam, and Dr. Traumbach leave the check-in counter.  
Traumbach carries a large briefcase.

Emily hands the other two their boarding passes.

EMILY  
(checking her watch)  
We've got... half an hour. Hungry?

ADAM  
I'd rather nap.

Adam looks to Dr. Traumbach.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
(nodding)  
That's fine.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

The door opens, a PRODUCTION ASSISTANT leans in.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT  
We're ready for you.

Adam stops spinning, Emily stands. Adam looks to Dr.  
Traumbach.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
You'll be fine.

Adam nods, stands up - Emily and Adam follow the Production  
Assistant out of the room.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Emily leads Adam through past racks of books, to a small  
signing table. Adam takes a seat.

He looks to the front of the store - a WORKER unlocks the  
door, letting people in. The Big-Boned Fan eagerly leads  
them.

Emily pats Adam on the back before stepping back, leaving him to fend for himself.

INT. EAST COAST AIRPORT - DAY

Emily, Adam, and Dr. Traumbach wait in the terminal - Adam dozes in his seat.

Emily speaks softly to the Doctor.

EMILY  
Six more cities... is he gonna make it?

Traumbach shrugs.

DR. TRAUMBACH  
His nightly output is dropping.  
We'll see.

EMILY  
I'm more concerned about, you know, his health. Can he keep this up?

DR. TRAUMBACH  
We'll see.

He regrips the briefcase, resting on his lap.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

A Charlie Rose-esque set, all black with a lone table under the lights. Adam sits down, makeup and hair people fluttering about, giving touch-ups.

Across the table, a middle-aged host, HENRY HOLLIE smiles invitingly, superficially.

HOLLIE  
First time on TV?

ADAM  
Yep.

HOLLIE  
It's not live, so don't worry about messing up.  
(indicating the crew)  
And forget they're here, we're just having a chat.

Adam manages a smile.

ADAM

Can do.

Hollie sits back, looking over some notes. The makeup/hair people finish with Adam.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Ready?

Hollie looks up at Adam, his face echoing the question.

Adam nods, smiling, smoothing his shirt.

ADAM

Yep.

Hollie turns to the side, addressing the crew. Emily, from behind camera, quickly catches Adam's eye, they share a deep breath before the plunge.

HOLLIE

Good to go.

Hollie turns back to Adam, speaking softer.

HOLLIE

I really did like the book, by the way. Good job.

ADAM

Thanks.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

And we're up.

Pasting on his biggest TV smile, Hollie turns to the camera.

HOLLIE

Welcome to the Henry Hollie Show,  
I'm here today with first-time  
author Adam McKentire to talk about  
his break-out best seller, A  
Typical Dream.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Adam finishes signing an inside cover, handing the book back to its owner - the Big-Boned Fan.

BIG-BONED FAN

Thanks. It was a good book.



ADAM

Thank you.

Big-Boned Fan doesn't step aside... Adam smiles, awkward.

BIG-BONED FAN

What about the ending? You gonna write a sequel?

ADAM

I'm gonna try.

The Fan frowns.

BIG-BONED FAN

What do you mean?

ADAM

Well, I'm going to try to write another book.

BIG-BONED FAN

But you're an author.

ADAM

Yeah...

BIG-BONED FAN

So you write books, right?

ADAM

I wrote a book, yes.

BIG-BONED FAN

So you'll do another?

Adam tries to hide his exasperation - something's just not clicking with this guy.

ADAM

I'll try.

Big-Boned Fan holds his frown, nodding slowly, trying to understand.

BIG-BONED FAN

But you wrote this one, right?

ADAM

Yes.

BIG-BONED FAN

So if you did it once, can't you  
just do it again?

ADAM

Um. I hope so.

Big-Boned Fan shakes his head, doesn't get it. He steps away from the table.

BIG-BONED FAN

Well thanks again. I really liked  
the book.

Adam smiles back, as congenial as he can manage.

EXT. WEST COAST AIRPORT - EVENING

Emily, Adam, and Dr. Traumbach step outside, pulling wheeled luggage to the terminal's curb. Emily flags down a taxi.

Adam looks exhausted, Dr. Traumbach - carrying his large briefcase - is as stoic as ever.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The bathroom - Adam stands in front of the mirror, carefully removing a wig... underneath he's still completely bald.

Walking from the bathroom to the bed, Adam passes Emily - typing away on her cell phone - sitting on a chair in the corner. Dr. Traumbach stands at the bedside, his briefcase flat on a nightstand.

ADAM

Let's do this.

He flops into bed. Traumbach CLICKS open the briefcase, revealing a small monitoring device connected to a hydra of electrodes on thin wire leads.

Emily looks up from her phone.

EMILY

(to Dr. Traumbach)

It should be on now. Can we watch  
while you wire him up?

DR. TRAUMBACH

Go ahead.

Emily grabs the remote control from atop the TV. Sitting on the end of the bed, she flicks on the television.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Adam and Hollie are in the middle of their interview. Emily watches from behind the large TV cameras.

HOLLIE

Now, there's been some speculation in regards to the final chapter of this novel. A lot of people are hoping for a sequel of sorts. Is that in the cards?

ADAM

Of course I'd love to keep writing, as long as people want to keep reading.

Emily, looking on, bites her lip.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Emily, watching the TV from the edge of the bed, bites her lip. Adam watches as well.

Traumbach ignores the television, concentrating on preparing Adam for sleep - he has pulled an IV bag from the briefcase and is busy hanging it from a lamp moved into place above the bed.

On the TV it's the Henry Hollie Show, a closeup of Adam answering a question.

ADAM

(on TV)

And I knew that some people would have trouble with the ending, in that it's...

HOLLIE

Ambiguous?

Adam smiles, trying so hard to be comfortable in front of the cameras.

ADAM

I was going to say non-existent, but I'll agree to ambiguous.

HOLLIE  
Will we see these characters  
return?

Adam pauses... looks straight into the camera for a moment -  
then back to Hollie.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Adam, looking across the table at Hollie, gives a solid nod.

ADAM  
I am working on a second book.

Hollie grins.

HOLLIE  
And that's all you'll say?

Adam gives a little laugh.

ADAM  
That's all I can say. Unless I've  
been writing in my sleep, I haven't  
committed anything to paper.

Behind the cameras, Emily rolls her eyes.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

As Hollie wraps up the TV interview, Emily turns to Adam -  
now almost fully wired up, electrodes on his scalp, IV in  
his arm.

EMILY  
(snide grin)  
You think you're so clever.

ADAM  
I flying all over the country,  
getting no real sleep -  
(points to the electrodes)  
- and answering the same questions  
over and over. Can't I have a  
little fun?

Emily stands, turning off the TV.

EMILY  
You're giving Martin an ulcer.

ADAM

And ten percent. Which keeps you employed, by the way.

Dr. Traumbach starts the drip.

DR. TRAUMBACH

Drip's on.

EMILY

Well. Thanks for mainlining dangerous drugs in order to mine your subconscious for the words that pay my kingly salary.

Adam nods approvingly.

ADAM

You're welcome.

Emily shakes her head, exasperated - she goes for the door.

Dr. Traumbach makes a final check of the briefcase monitoring system before moving to a chair in the corner.

Emily stops at the door.

EMILY

What happened to making this voluntary?

Adam points to the silent television set.

ADAM

You heard the guy on TV, says he's writing another book...

Adam lightly slaps his arm, above the IV line.

ADAM

And this is how he does it.

EMILY

For now?

Adam drops the humor, gives a little shrug.

ADAM

Yeah. For now.

Emily holds Adam's gaze for a moment before turning, closing the door behind her.

INT. L.A. BOOKSTORE - DAY

Adam sits behind yet another signing table. He finishes with a book, handing it back to it's owner - a SKINNY TWEEN.

Next in line - it's the Big-Boned Fan. He holds out his book. Looking up, Adam recognizes him, cocking his head to one side.

ADAM

Didn't you come to a signing in--

BIG-BONED FAN

Minneapolis. I'm visiting my sister here and saw your bit on Henry Hollie.

ADAM

That's great.

BIG-BONED FAN

You are doing another book. I told you, you could do it again.

ADAM

I appreciate your confidence.

BIG-BONED FAN

Oh, no problem.

Adam starts to sign the book.

BIG-BONED FAN

Oh, could you make it out to my sister? Her name's Veronica.

Adam looks up to the Fan, back down.

ADAM

Yeah, yeah. Sure thing.

BIG-BONED FAN

Thanks, man.

Adam hands the book back, that same forced smile of congeniality on his face.

The Fan steps away, the line advances.

INT. L.A. BOOKSTORE - LATER

The line of readers gone, Emily stands by the door, shooting anxious glances through the glass storefront out onto the street.

Two book store EMPLOYEES clear off the signing table and book displays.

Adam, back in the rows of books, has a phone to his ear.

ADAM  
(on the phone)  
But I'm saying, each night there's  
less and less.

Adam paces up and down an aisle.

ADAM  
No, I'm feeling great. Tired, but  
seeing all the fans, talking about  
the book - no, I'm... It's like I'm  
in love again.

Adam listens.

ADAM  
No, he doesn't know why either.

Adam reaches the end of the row, stops, looks across the store at Emily standing by the door.

ADAM  
Well they already offered it,  
right?

He turns to continue his pacing, shaking his head in disbelief - yet unable to squash a widening grin.

ADAM  
Who gets a fifty thousand dollar  
advance? ...I know, I know.

Adam nods.

ADAM  
I've only got one more chapter to  
go. It's in the bag.

WITH EMILY -

Finally recognizing someone, Emily quickly unlocks the bookstore's door.

It's Tia, book in hand - she quickly slips inside.

TIA  
Sorry I'm so late.

Emily tilts her head toward the back of the store.

EMILY  
He's back there.

WITH ADAM -

Adam stands with his back to the front of the store, pausing between rounds of pacing.

ADAM  
I'm not worried. Are you worried?  
...I'm not worried.

Adam turns - Tia is at the far end of the aisle, leaning against the shelves.

ADAM  
It's fine. I'll see you at dinner.

Adam hangs up quickly, walking toward Tia.

ADAM  
Hey.

Tia holds out the book, giving a hopeful smile.

TIA  
I know I'm late... can you sign it?

INT. L.A. BOOKSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam hands back the signed book. Tia reads the inscription.

Emily, still near the door, types away on her phone.

TIA  
(heartfelt)  
Thanks, Adam.

Adam smiles, shrugs.

ADAM  
I'm just glad you made it through  
the whole thing.



TIA  
I couldn't put it down. God, that sounds horribly cliché, but it's true. It's really good.

Adam gives a little laugh.

ADAM  
I guess if I'm going to believe anyone, it should be you.

TIA  
I was an English major.

ADAM  
You're also, you know... well...

Adam trails off, only to interrupt himself. Tia looks a bit confused.

ADAM  
Hey, so me and Martin are getting dinner, celebrating the end of the book tour - you should join us.

TIA  
I've got some celebrating of my own to do.

Adam starts for the door.

ADAM  
Yeah?

Tia follows.

TIA  
But if you've already got reservations somewhere...

Adam stops next to Emily, tapping her on her shoulder - she looks up from her phone.

ADAM  
Sorry, could you call the restaurant? It's three now.

Emily's eyes shift quickly to Tia, then back.

EMILY  
Sure.

Adam smiles in reply, turning for the door, opening it for Tia.

ADAM  
(to Tia)  
What's your occasion?

TIA  
You know how I was trying to get  
out from under Simmons at work?

Adam understands the good news.

ADAM  
Yeah? That's great.

Tia turns in the doorway, grinning.

TIA  
With a pay bump and everything. And  
the best part?

Adam plays along, happy to see Tia's excitement.

TIA  
The new job is in the London  
bureau. You know I always wanted to  
live there!

And with that, Tia spins triumphantly back toward the  
street, stepping outside.

Adam's smile melts, the door slips from his fingers. It  
slams closed.

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED...