

BACK TO GRAY

written by

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INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

PSYCHOLOGIST

What would you like to talk about today?

QUEUE sits in the plush recliner across from the therapist. Her statement socks are mismatched, but still manage to "go" with her muddled green Vans and vibrant hoodie. She brushes her pixie cut bangs across her face.

QUEUE

I miss being depressed.

PSYCHOLOGIST

I'm sorry?

QUEUE

Has a patient ever told you that before?

PSYCHOLOGIST

Has a client ever told me that they miss being depressed?

QUEUE

Yeah.

PSYCHOLOGIST

No. A client has never told me that.

QUEUE pushes back the cuticles on her fingernails.

QUEUE

I want to go back.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Good idea. Let's start over. What would you like to talk about today?

QUEUE

No, I want to go back to being depressed.

PSYCHOLOGIST

I'm not sure what you mean.

QUEUE

The medication, the therapy, the mindfulness, I want to be done with all of it.

PSYCHOLOGIST

You want to go back?

QUEUE

Last week, my car wouldn't start. And it was frustrating. So I pop the hood and poke around, and nothing. Which was frustrating. I wait a few minutes and try again, still nothing. Which was frustrating. I call a tow-truck and they say they'll be there within an hour, which was -

PSYCHOLOGIST

Frustrating.

QUEUE

Exactly. I didn't know if "within" meant 5 minutes or 55 minutes. So I sat there, frustrated, hopeless, helpless. For 52 minutes. You know how I know it was 52 minutes?

PSYCHOLOGIST

Because you kept track.

QUEUE

Because I watched every fucking minute tick by on that stupid dashboard clock - which was working, so I thought that meant the battery was fine.

PSYCHOLOGIST

The battery wasn't fine?

QUEUE

The battery WAS, apparently fine. Fine enough to power the teeny tiny clock on the dash but apparently not fine enough to start the car with a loose connection. So I wasted my whole fucking morning waiting for this tow truck guy - who fixed the issue in about 15 seconds.

PSYCHOLOGIST

And that was frustrating.

QUEUE

Yes! Ruined my day. The whole day.

PSYCHOLOGIST

That seems like a relatively normal human response.

QUEUE

Exactly. It was awful. I want to go back.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Go back where?

QUEUE

A year ago, you know what I would have done if my car didn't start? Gone back to bed. I would have turned the key, heard the clickity-clickity of the thing, gotten out, probably not even locked the door - since, you know, it won't start - and gone back to bed.

PSYCHOLOGIST

But that wouldn't have solved the problem.

QUEUE

Yes! Yes it would have. Because the problem isn't the car not starting. Who gives a fuck about a car? It's a thing. The problem is me having these "relatively normal human responses" which ruin my whole fucking day. I want to go back to not giving two shits about whether or not my car starts in the morning. Back to before medications and appointments and all this crap.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Well I can't make you come here. Or make you take your medication.

QUEUE

Sure. But what's going to happen if I don't?

PSYCHOLOGIST

What do you mean?

QUEUE

My -- my brain is not going to explode or anything, right?

PSYCHOLOGIST

You might have some withdrawals for
a few days, but your brain
certainly won't explode.

QUEUE

Perfect.

Queue stands up and walks out the door.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Queue walks briskly down the street, smiling - almost
skipping. The skies are gray. Dirty water streams down the
street and into the gutters. She rips her hoodie on a chain-
linked fence, but keeps walking.

She passes a wine shop - then backtracks and goes in.

INT. WINE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

She enters and begins browsing the selection.

CASHIER

Hello. Welcome! Are you looking for
anything in particular?

QUEUE

I'm celebrating.

CASHIER

Oh fun. What are you celebrating?

QUEUE

A return to sobriety.

Puzzled, the cashier picks one bottle up off the shelf.

CASHIER

Well, this one has a nice, full
body and notes of-

QUEUE

Perfect.

Queue grabs it from his hand and walks up to the counter to
pay for it. He begins the checkout process.

QUEUE (CONT'D)

Do you have a corkscrew?

CASHIER
Yes, along that wall over there is
our selection of-

QUEUE
No no no. Not to buy. Just to use.

CASHIER
Um, I guess, I think so ...

He finds one in a drawer and hands it to her. She removes the foil from the neck, plunges the corkscrew in, and deftly removes the cork. She slams a \$20 down on the counter and then holds up the bottle.

QUEUE
Cheers!

She takes a big swig straight from the bottle as she walks out the door.

FADE OUT.

INT. QUEUE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Queue is sleeping, sitting upright on the couch, wrapped in a comforter.

WYATT, Queue's twin brother, enters through the front door.

WYATT
(into the void)
Queue?!

Queue groggily begins to wake up.

WYATT (CONT'D)
Why haven't you been answering your
phone?

QUEUE
(groggy)
Wyatt! Heeeeey ... what do you
mean?

WYATT
Look at your phone.

Queue picks it up to see 47 missed calls.

QUEUE

That doesn't seem right. We just talked on the phone like 5 minutes ago.

WYATT

That was Thursday.

QUEUE

How far past Thursday are we now?

WYATT

It's the Sabbath.

QUEUE

Fuck ... wait, are we Jewish?

WYATT

No.

QUEUE

Fuck.

Wyatt plops down on the couch next to Queue. He looks around the apartment to see fast food wrappers, trash, and several empty wine bottles.

WYATT

You stopped your meds.

QUEUE

I stopped my meds.

WYATT

Was it because of the car?

QUEUE

52 minutes, Wyatt! 52 minutes of my life, wasted!

WYATT

And since we last talked on Thursday, how many of your minutes have been productive?

Queue motions to an easel in the corner with a canvas on it.

QUEUE

I painted that.

The canvas is one solid color of dark gray.

WYATT

You couldn't find any other colors?

QUEUE
(melodramatically)
There ARE no other colors, Wyatt.
There are no other colors.

WYATT
Go get ready. We don't want to be
late.

Queue stares blankly.

WYATT (CONT'D)
For the race.

Queue continues to not react.

WYATT (CONT'D)
Today is the 5k.

QUEUE
Uuuugh, that's today? I thought you
said it was a half marathon.

WYATT
No, 5k.

QUEUE
That sounds awful.

WYATT
You know a 5k is shorter than a
half marathon, right?

QUEUE
How long is a half marathon?

WYATT
About 13 miles.

QUEUE
How many Ks is that?

WYATT
(mental calculations)
Uh, 21ish?

QUEUE
I can't run 21 Ks.

WYATT
You're not. We're running 5.

QUEUE
I can't, anyway. Too many
endorphins.

WYATT
What?

QUEUE
I made a decision to limit my
endorphin output.

WYATT
I don't know what that means. Get
dressed. We leave in 5 minutes.

Wyatt pats Queue on the head a few times.

EXT. 5K REGISTRATION TABLE - MORNING

Queue and Wyatt are at the registration table. Wyatt gets his
bib number and walks away to do some light warmups and
stretching. Queue steps up to the front of the line.

QUEUE
Yes, Queue Wilmot.

ATTENDANT
And what does the Q stand for?

QUEUE
Just Queue.

ATTENDANT
Yes, what's it short for? I'll need
to look up your first name too.

QUEUE
No, not Q like the letter. Queue
like the line.

ATTENDANT
I don't understand.

QUEUE
Like, "queue up". Or "jump the
queue".

The attendant looks Queue up and down.

ATTENDANT
Miss, you don't look well. Is "jump
the queue" slang for drugs?

QUEUE

Yes, that is drug slang. Last name:
The Dragon, first name: Chase.

The attendant looks through her papers.

ATTENDANT

I don't have anyone named "Chase"
here.

Wyatt comes back to the table.

WYATT

Her first name is spelled Q-U-E-U-
E. Last name W-I-L-M-O-T.

ATTENDANT

Oh there she is! Q-U-E-U-E! Kuay-
way. Is that Hawaiian?

EXT. 5K STARTING LINE - CONTINUOUS

They wait with the other runners at the starting line. Wyatt notices an older, fit man with a prosthetic leg in the group, warming up.

WYATT

Look over there.

Queue looks.

QUEUE

What?

WYATT

That man, with the prosthetic leg,
that's inspiring.

QUEUE

Not really.

WYATT

What do you mean not really?

QUEUE

Well, 3 Ks into this race, MY legs
are going to hurt.

Queue gives a big, cheesy smiles and lifts her hand up for a high five. Wyatt does not reciprocate.

WYATT
(sarcastically)
Mom would have been so proud of
you.

QUEUE
Mom would be mortified. Dad would
have laughed.

The starting gun fires. The race begins.

Wyatt and Queue keep pace with each other for a while, with Wyatt slowly pulling ahead. He stops at the first water table, grabs two cups and hands one to Queue once she catches up - but they keep running

WYATT
You need to drink, but don't drink
too much or you'll get waterlogged.

Queue drinks the water, and holds up the cup.

QUEUE
What do I do with this?

WYATT
Just throw it on the ground.

QUEUE
That doesn't seem right. How is
that not littering?

WYATT
It's just how it works.

Queue has a moment of pause, but ultimately tosses the cup on the ground, with a satisfying "huh!"

As the race progresses, Queue grabs a cup at every table, and becomes gradually more elaborate with how she gets rid of them.

She tries to kick it up in the air once or twice before missing it and letting it drop.

She pretends it's a basketball and does a behind-the-back pass to no one.

She puts the bottom of the cup in her mouth and then quickly breathes out, trying to blow the cup up in the air.

She eventually sees a sign that says "1/2 KILOMETER TO GO!" Wyatt, by this time, is long gone.

QUEUE

Finally.

At the last water table, she stops, grabs a cup, downs it, and then starts doing the Cup Song, singing "When I'm Gone" as she uses the cup for percussion. After a few moments, she tosses the cup behind her.

Just then, the man with the prosthetic leg - HAROLD - runs by. His prosthetic steps directly on the cup Queue just threw. He slips, and his fake leg flies off his limb and gets crushed by a passing service truck.

Several runners and workers rush to his side. He's a bit dazed, but fine.

HAROLD

Thank you. Thank you, I'm fine.
What happened?

Everyone crowded around Harold turns and looks at Queue. She stammers for a bit.

QUEUE

Well, uh, um ... doesn't matter!
You and I are going to finish this
race together!

Two first aid responders are approaching, but Queue stops them and dramatically pushes them aside.

QUEUE (CONT'D)

No!

Queue goes over to Harold, helps him get up, puts his arm around her neck and shoulder.

QUEUE (CONT'D)

We got this.

They hobble toward the finish line.

As they turn the final corner of the race, everyone sees this inspirational scene of Queue and Harold. The applause from the whole crowd gradually grows. It's the last 10 yards of the race and hundreds of people are yelling and jumping, it is raucous.

They cross the finish line and everyone explodes in cheering.

The local TV news affiliate is there and the REPORTER and CAMERAMAN rush the two.

REPORTER

Can you tell us what happened?

QUEUE

Well, I was, uh, I was running, and then I was, uh ...

HAROLD

My prosthetic broke. I've had it for years, I should have known it was on its last leg.

A crowd had gathered. Everyone erupts into cheesy laughter. Queue's eyes dart around, confused.

QUEUE

Yeah.

HAROLD

I've never let being an amputee stop me from doing what I love -- and this young lady wouldn't let me stop either.

An "awwww" from the crowd.

QUEUE

Yeah.

HAROLD

She just happened to be there, and helped me get through this last stretch.

REPORTER

So you two don't know each other?

QUEUE

Uh, no. We just met half a K ago.

REPORTER

And because of you, he was able to finish the race. You must feel very proud.

QUEUE

I definitely feel feelings.

The reporter turns back to the camera.

REPORTER

A local hero -- helping a stranger finish a race -- and in her own way, helping the human race.

Queue rolls her eyes.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
This is Liza Littleton, reporting
for ABC 11.

Harold turns to Queue.

HAROLD
(putting out his hand)
I'm Harold.

QUEUE
(shaking hands)
I'm Queue.

The reporter is feverishly taking notes.

REPORTER
Q? What does Q stand for?

QUEUE
No, not Q like the letter. Queue
like the line.

REPORTER
(confused)
Like the line?

QUEUE
Oh for fuck's sake!

Wyatt runs up and joins the gathering crowd.

WYATT
Queue, hey, what happened? Sir, are
you okay?

Harold sits down in a chair. The first responders have caught
up and are checking out Harold while they talk.

HAROLD
I am fine. Thank you.

WYATT
I was telling Queue earlier, we saw
you at the starting line and you
are such an inspiration.

HAROLD
Oh, I don't think so. Halfway
through this race, YOU were the
ones whose legs were hurting.

Queue looks at Wyatt, incredulously.

INT. DINER - LATER

Wyatt and Queue sit across from each other. We join them mid-conversation.

WYATT

It's a portmanteau.

QUEUE

Right.

WYATT

A portmanteau. A combination of "breakfast" and "lunch".

QUEUE

I know what a portmanteau is.

WYATT

But yet you don't know what brunch is?

QUEUE

It's inconsistent.

WYATT

It's a meal that includes both breakfast and lunch options.

The WAITRESS walks up.

WAITRESS

Can I get y'all anything else?

WYATT

(to the waitress)

Help us out. Queue is pretending to not know what brunch is.

QUEUE

So far, I've heard it's a meal that includes both breakfast and lunch options.

WYATT

Right.

QUEUE

So let's all go to brunch tomorrow.

WYATT

Great.

QUEUE

At McDonald's.

WAITRESS

Wait, does McDonald's serve brunch?

WYATT

That's not brunch.

QUEUE

That's my point. So what is brunch?

Another CUSTOMER turns around from his seat at the bar.

CUSTOMER

(to waitress)

What are they on about?

WAITRESS

This gentleman doesn't know what brunch is.

CUSTOMER

(to Wyatt)

You don't know what brunch is?

WYATT

(pointing to Queue)

SHE doesn't know what brunch is.

WAITRESS

She said it's a meal that includes both breakfast and lunch options.

CUSTOMER

That sounds about right.

WYATT

No. I said that.

CUSTOMER

And you still don't know what brunch is?

WYATT

Queue was pretending to - you know what? Nevermind.

(to Queue)

Why do you do this?

WAITRESS

Hey, aren't you that girl from the news this morning?

CUSTOMER

Yeah! You helped that man cross the finish line.

QUEUE

(sheepishly)

Yup. That was me.

WAITRESS

That was quite something, wasn't it?

Queue slinks into her chair -- attempting to disappear into it.

CUSTOMER

And did I read somewhere he was a Veteran? Good thing you were there to help, huh?

QUEUE

(more slinking)

Yup.

WAITRESS

You are just such an inspiration, young lady.

QUEUE

(whispering to herself)

I hate everything so much.

WYATT

She's had a wild morning guys, I think we're just going to finish up our meal here.

The customer and waitress go back to what they were doing. Queue and Wyatt pick at their food.

WYATT (CONT'D)

So how are you?

QUEUE

Fine. But I bet I'll be pretty sore tomorrow.

WYATT

No, I mean, how are you doing? Can we talk about this week?

QUEUE

What is there to talk about?

WYATT

Well, you were AWOL for 3 days, you've stopped your meds, I'm assuming you're not going back to see Bob?

QUEUE

Bob assured me my brain would not explode.

WYATT

Is all of this a joke? The painting? The empty wine bottles everywhere? Harassing me about what brunch is? Is this performance art?

QUEUE

Avocado.

WYATT

What?

QUEUE

I think there has to be some sort of avocado-based dish for it to qualify as brunch.

WYATT

That's it, I'm done.

Wyatt stands up. Gets out his wallet. Starts counting out cash.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Putting aside the fact that you're, you know, a fucking adult, let me remind you that mom and dad aren't here to take care of you. You obviously can't take care of you. And you're not letting me take care of you.

QUEUE

Wyatt--

WYATT

No, shut the fuck up and listen. You know what you need to do: eat right, exercise, take your meds, see your therapist, get your 8 hours of sleep. Did I miss anything?

Queue doesn't respond.

WYATT (CONT'D)

Did I?

QUEUE

You know, this is my whole point. I was actually feeling pretty decent after that race, and pretty decent with the banter we were all having. And now I feel like shit. I feel more bad right now than I felt good two minutes ago. And it's not fucking worth it. Why work so hard -- why run and sweat and interact with other people when it all just leads to this?

WYATT

Because that's life. There are highs and there are lows. That's how it works.

QUEUE

Life doesn't work.

(beat)

Not for me.

Wyatt puts down a wad of cash, grabs his things, and walks out the door. All the diner patrons are silent, processing what they just saw.

QUEUE (CONT'D)

Mimosas! You guys need to serve mimosas. Then you'd DEFINITELY be a brunch place.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - LATER

Queue sits in the plush recliner across from the therapist. Her gray socks go perfectly with her muddled gray Vans and gray hoodie. She brushes her pixie cut bangs across her face.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Do you want to go back?

QUEUE

Yeah. Let me start over.

FADE TO BLACK.