

GOOGLE PLAY

by

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SETTING

Virtually the British Empire.

TIME

2025.

ACT I

Scene 1 Online, air conditioning is blasting cold.

Scene 2 Online in Australia; air conditioning is moderate.

Scene 3 Mysore, India. The blink of an eye.

Scene 4 All getting ready to sleep in different places.

ACT II

Scene 1 Madelyn awakes.

Scene 2 Marcus

Scene 3 Martin

Scene 4 Mary

ACT III

Scene 1 Mason.

Scene 2 Matt.

Scene 3 Maxwell.

Scene 4 Melissa.

ACT IV

Scene 1 Michelle.

Scene 2 Morgan.

Scene 3 Padma.

Scene 4 Parag.

ACT V

Scene 1 Parvati.

Scene 2 Prashanth.

Scene 3 Praveen.

Scene 4 Harmony.

ACT [I]

SCENE [1]

MARCUS AND MATT

Hello! We're the 'Americans!'

MARY

Actually I'm also listed.

MADELYN

Shift-M...

MELISSA AND MICHELLE

They're how.

MARY

I have seniority.

MADELYN

The narrator's, guess what? One --

MARCUS AND MATT

(*chanting*) One of us, one of us!

MELISSA AND MICHELLE

(*nodding along*) The United States --

MARY

-- cannot reserve our title.

AVA

What can't do.

ARCHIE

(*frightened*) Who is that?

ALISTAIR, TO ANYA

Who are you?

ANYA

I suppose nobody.

MATT, TO MARCUS

(*pointing*) Those are Englishpeep -- persons.

MARCUS AND MATT

Yummy, may we --

ALISTAIR

-- eat us?

MARY

We'd get along very well.

MADELYN

Naw! Look over there?

(All follow her gesture to regard the
same point whose content will be
disclosed soon)

MELISSA

Okay. We -- we are.

MICHELLE

Looking over to where?

MELISSA AND MELISSA AND
MICHELLE

Yuh.

MADELYN

The holobyte, duh!

MELISSA

Hey, is that rhymed?

MADELYN

I must be a poet.

MELISSA

I exclaimed in parallel to your exclamation, another
modality of rhyme.

MICHELLE

Oh, you're both poets? (*throws her head back as if
[in]to the abyss*)

MELISSA, TO MADELYN ABOUT
MICHELLE

"Identity crisis"

MADELYN

(nodding in acknowledgment) Exciting albeit artistic.

(The Brits are conferencing about the
threat posed to their lives)

ALISTAIR

You're not, you -- what?

AVA

Don't want to be eaten.

ARCHIE

We all have to go sometime.

ANYA

Go where?

AVA

Exactly!

MARY

They're reticent.

MARCUS

Oy.

MAXWELL

But if you aren't here to feed us, what's your design?

ALISTAIR, ANYA, ARCHIE, AVA

(in unison) What if we are anti-American? You wouldn't
want to eat that.

MAXWELL

Does anti-American taste different?

BRITS

Then what, American? None of you have eaten each other
to know.

MARY

(peers around) I suppose *[winks]* we haven't.

MADELYN

(screams) screams.

MELISSA AND MICHELLE

(joining)

MADELYN

Hasn't anybody else seen the holobyte?!

MAXWELL

Holobyte, schmolobyte.

ARCHIE

What's a holobyte?

MAXWELL

Communication data from the neurodivergents.

AVA

Ugh you don't mean da freaks!

ALISTAIR

(nodding) The mad.

MADELYN

We aren't angry; we don't have anything about which to rage.

MARCUS

Short the machine.

ANYA

Then why are you telebyting?

MADELYN

Because those people are eating you *(she says, pointing to her confreres)*

ALISTAIR AND ARCHIE

(laughter) Them? *(emphatically pointing)* What's trust? Haven't they toast?

MICHELLE AND MATT

(screaming) Ahh! Ahh! We haven't -- have not -- toast!

ANYA, TO AVA

(giggling) They haven't met the Australians.

AVA, TO ANYA

(*nodding*) Why yes, they should eat toast every morning.

MELISSA AND MARCUS

Maybe we should get toast.

MARY

Instead of, instead of --

MELISSA AND MARCUS

Eating these Englishpersons.

MAXWELL

But they're right hair.

MARTIN

(*nodding*) And we're hungry.

ALISTAIR

Sure you are, that's why we brought toast.

ARCHIE

Sure we have.

ANYA

(*smiling contentedly*) What, of course we have.

AVA

What kind of toast could we do you for?

MORGAN

Why, hello!

ALISTAIR, ANYA, ARCHIE, AVA

Hello, hello hello, hello.

MADELYN

(*staring at her hands*) Ugh, I knew Morgan would ask for toast!

MORGAN

You'd like toast insteads?

MARY

What lass wishes not for toast?

ANYA
It gets old.

MARY
Why I never!

ARCHIE
Quite rude?

ALISTAIR
Maybe we're the ones who should eat you.

MADELYN
(*shouting*) Toast! You will not eat us, you will provide toast!

AVA
Sure, we will.

MORGAN
I'd *pay* -- pay -- for toast.

MELISSA
Toast could be fine.

MARTIN
Toast is, you say.

MICHELLE
(to no-one specifically) Cheers!

ANYA
Why bless the Queen's tongue?

MORGAN
For toast.

MARY
Nobody toasts anything in New York City.

ARCHIE
Yes, York.

ALISTAIR
Holland actually.

AVA
Reading.

MORGAN

Bread you wouldn't toast.

MICHELLE

But they mentioned Aussies.

MELISSA

Kiwi's a cat.

MASON

I want something other than toast.

MATT

Not again.

MASON

I'm not a cannibal.

MATT

We lack but toast and human flesh.

MASON

And, and, and AND --

MADELYN AND MASON

-- AND --

MASON

Crudités, crudités.

ACT [I]

SCENE [2]

CHRIS

Are you okay?

CHARLOTTE?

Dawn!

CHRIS

Me too.

CHARLOTTE

No, that's a magazine. That's **my** magazine.

(CHRIS notices a pamphlet/brochure on
the ground)

CHRIS

Why is it... sorted like rubbish?

CHARLOTTE

The British.

CHRIS

Who?

CHARLOTTE

Alistair, Anya, Archie, and Ava.

CHRIS

(*singing*) Ava Maria!

CHARLOTTE

Speak of those devils --

(The Brits apperate into the scene)

CHRIS

I'm Chris.

AVA AND ANYA

And we're bearing witness.

CHARLOTTE

Buy my magazine or forever hold your piece.

(CHARLOTTE retrieves it from the ground
and nudges it towards AVA and ANYA, who
recoil.)

ARCHIE

There's pictures?

CHRIS

Maybe.

ALISTAIR

Honestly we're heeeeere... for toast.

CHRIS AND CHARLOTTE

To, as, Tee?

ARCHIE

Quite right.

ANYA

(*sighing*) "The Americans."

CHARLOTTE

Where did the Soviets go?

AVA

(*taking the magazine from CHARLOTTE*) They're alright
readers; what's this shill?

PARVATI

"lived experience"

PARAG

"Nothing about us without us."

THE OTHER CHARACTERS

(*in unison*) Blasphemy!

PADMA TO PARVATI AND PARAG

What's that?

PARVEEN

I won't interrupt.

PRASHANTH

Thank you! (*to Padma*) Accounting.

(MADELYN emerges from a holobyte, with
MARY trailing)

MADELYN

I want natto not marmite.

MARY

That's quite. Quite! Quite. Yes. Tha -- that's
quite.

PARAG

Are you leftists?

(PRAVEEN retrieves a map. He turns it
upside-down.)

PRASHANTH

Ho, ho, ho Mister Generalizability!

PRAVEEN

L e f t i s m.

PADMA

(*to anyone*) Are you okay?

CHARLOTTE

Grrrr. Grrr. Grrr. No!

PADMA, PARAG, PARVATI,
PRASHANTH, PRAVEEN

(*in unison*) Ahhh.

(CHARLOTTE takes back magazine Dawn
from AVA)

CHARLOTTE

(*referring to Dawn*) Madelyn want this but she's
immaterial.

(All regard MADELYN and MARY)

PRAVEEN

Your garb is stange.

MARY

Oh, she's not | in costume.

MADELYN

(*looking at what she's wearing*) This is magical.

ALISTAIR

Magic's not believable.

PRAVEEN

I know.

CHRIS

Magic, what's that like?

PRAVEEN

Metaphor.

MELISSA

(*appearing*) It's a lot like love, isn't it?

MORGAN

Hello, did some of you call?

MAXWELL

Love stinks, toasts boast of joy.

CHRIS

Love is compatibility.

MICHELLE

Correspondence then, relates.

PRASHANTH

Anyway I have some bread here already.

MAXWELL

Is it toast?

MASON

Boo.

PADMA

Politely.

PARVATI, TO MASON

Why are you trying to frighten us?

MASON, TO PARVATI

Only you.

PADMA, TO MASON

Why are you frightening my sister?

MASON, TO PADMA

Because you would object to my frightening someone else, like you?

PADMA

I would not!

PARVATI

I'm not scared.

PADMA, TO PARVATI

Then why did you ask about it like that? It's like an admission.

PARVATI

He said "boo."

CHARLOTTE

I've heard that used affectionately, like --

MATT

(*apperating*) You rang?

PRAVEEN

Boo.

CHRIS

A pet name?

AVA, TO THE OTHER BRITS

We do say that kind of thing, don't we? So sing-songy: "out of sorts."

MASON

Ahem: boo.

MARY

Book right back to you, Mason!

MARTIN

(*arrives screaming*) Is that a stonemason?

PARAG

A stonemason? No --

MASON

(*extending his hand to shake MARTIN's*) I'm Mason.

PARAG

A freemason?

ARCHIE

Chah, well, freedom is good.

ANYA

And the freemasons rescue people.

MARTIN

They are sorely private.

ANYA

That's your keeping.

MORGAN

Not the Illuminati!

MICHELLE

(*gesturing at MELISSA*) She's had it with conspiracy theory.

PARAG

I know a very good one.

PRASHANTH

You must share it.

MADELYN

No thanks! No, thanks!

(MADELYN disappears)

PADMA

That was distressing.

MARY

Oh, I'm sorry, dear.

MELISSA

(*nodding*) She's entertaining anger for justice economics.

PARVATI
Calculus, I'm sure.

MICHELLE
High math.

CHRIS
Someone said they know a good conspiracy theory.

PARAG
COVID-19.

CHARLOTTE
I'm outie.

PARAG
No, ma'am, you're 'down under.'

(CHARLOTTE conjures an Audi and zooms
away.)

CHRIS
I will miss her.

MARCUS
How well did you know one another?

(CHARLOTTE returns)

CHARLOTTE
He's my boyfriend from the crib.

ACT I

Scene 3

(Characters are working out according to Iyengar and Ashtanga schools of movement, taking deep yogic breaths as if trying to get their breathing into unison between or with dialogue.)

CHARLOTTE

I love yoga.

MELISSA

Really?

MADELYN

Personally I am here only in a reporting capacity.

PRAVEEN, TO MADELYN

Reporting what to whom?

MAXWELL

There are many allegations concerning yoga, not at the
--

MASON

-- lest -- least, you know: that it's a leisure hobby exclusively practiced by capitalists.

ALISTAIR

Yoga is popular in England. Cambridge has one of those hot yoga studios installed in an inflatable balloon, with electronic dance music accompanying the meditative vibe.

MORGAN

You attended Cambridge?

AVA

(waves her hand) **You-knighted statesers** have your own Cambridge over there.

MARY

I went to Oxford.

PARVATI TO PARAG

Please spot me.

PARAG

Another time.

PADMA

ooooooooohhhhh.

MATT

Someone said "COVID-19" earlier.

CHRIS

We're not supposed to say COVID-19?

PARAG

It was me. It was.

ANYA

Me, too.

MORGAN

There can't be -- anything? Wrong! FREE SPEECH.

MARTIN

Yes, yes but keep your paws to a personal spacelike situation.

PARAG

(*en francais*) Exactement.

PADMA

I will help Parvati's posing.

(PADMA quits her yoga mat to enter
PARVATI's orbit.)

ARCHIE

They say this is good for the hips.

MARCUS

Really they also the opposite say.

CHARLOTTE

Who's they?

MADELYN

Anti-conspiratorialists.

PRASHANTH

Like me.

PRAVEEN

And me.

MARY

We're all anti-conspiratorialists here.

MARTIN

I differ.

PADMA

You dissent?

CHARLOTTE

"Dissent" is a magazine.

MELISSA

In New York City. We're in India. You're Australian.
How would you know about --

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA

-- we sent her a copy last week.

CHRIS

That was a godsend during lockdown.

ARCHIE

I knew about COVID-19 in advance.

MARY

(laughing) That would be dreadful.

PARAG

So, you know, it's not a conspiracy but it's theory.

MATT

Why wouldn't it be a conspiracy?

MAXWELL

It's not a conspiracy, it's the apocalypse!

PRASHANTH

Yoga for the apocalypse...

PADMA

(returning to her mat) What's your best pose?

ANYA

I'm only a learner.

PARVATI

Still is what you have to be.

CHARLOTTE

There's jumping.

MADELYN

I'd say 'hopping.'

ALISTAIR

(gives up the movement-based poses to sit cross-legged beside his mat) Yogic breathing is rumored to kill viruses.

MICHELLE

I feel my heart.

CHRIS

Thanks Oxygen!

CHARLOTTE

Lifetime Television for Women.

MATT

Hmm, I'd watch that.

PARVATI

Shan't.

PRAVEEN

She said "chant," it's time for chanting.

AVA

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu.

MASON

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu.

PARVATI

Yes, COVID-19 happened to the whole world.

MATT

Is Madelyn nineteen?

MORGAN

I am.

MARY AND ARCHIE

Aren't we all.

MICHELLE

To have --

PADMA

From magic or love?

MICHELLE

What?

MELISSA

Space "happened." Time.

MARCUS

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

MARTIN

Hey, that's my line!

MADELYN

I read COVID-19 could be the last virus any of us ever has to deal with.

MASON

You did?

MORGAN

But that's not -- good enough!

PARVATI

That seems okay?

ARCHIE

I'd rather not ever have another virus.

MICHELLE

Do we have to be infected with it for that?

MADELYN

No.

MAXWELL

That would be permanent.

MARTIN

And you said the pandemic would end.

PADMA

It's over.

CHRIS

Gahhh! Really?!

MADELYN

(taking the bread from Scene 2 from her enchanted carryall) That's why we toast.

AVA TO ANYA

I wish that were our toast.

ANYA TO AVA

Have some, it's for us as well.

AVA TO ANYA

It's not our gift; so it would be our toast but not for credit.

MARCUS

Am I the only one?

PARAG

Take credit for it. I don't --

PRAVEEN

He doesn't need to take credit for the toast because he introduced our conversation about COVID-19.

ALISTAIR

No that was Mason.

MARY, TO ALISTAIR

(walking to Madelyn's mat) Toast for you?

ALISTAIR

(stands up and enters a tree pose) I'd try.

(MARY brings ALISTAIR a piece of bread. ALISTAIR extends his right leg while taking a naan with his left. Then he bites.)

CHARLOTTE

(having repossessed Madelyn's store of naan without anyone noticing until now, has bread in her mouth)
Someone's chewing with their mouth full!

MELISSA, TO PRAVEEN
Is this place usually so empty?

PRAVEEN
You call this empty?

MELISSA
We're alone.

PRAVEEN
Look around. We're surrounded.

ACT [I]

SCENE [4]

PRAVEEN

It's time to break out --

MICHELLE

-- into song.

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

I never heard you sing!

MICHELLE, A SOPRANO

(singing) Tony!

CHARLOTTE

Toony?

MARY

Townie.

AVA

(brushing her teeth) Tunes.

CHRIS

I haven't remembered.

ANYA, TO CHRIS

What?

MARCUS

Okay.

ANYA

Bra!

ALISTAIR

Brassiere.

MARCUS

Brasserie.

PADMA

Everyone can hear me?

(MAXWELL nods, CHARLOTTE ignores the question.)

CHARLOTTE

Today was exhausting.

ARCHIE

(*simultaneously*) I can hear you.

MASON

We're plugged in, erm connected. That sounded "Matrix."

PARAG

But now it's "Facebook."

AVA

That's not so bad, meta --

MADELYN

-- matrix --

AVA AND MADELYN

-- used to mean something.

MATT

Language changes{,} though.

PARVATI

But names stay the same.

PRASHANTH

Unless you marry.

MARY

Who's proposing?

MARTIN, TO MARY

Are you fetch?

MARY, TO MARTIN

Are you? Offering?

MARTIN, TO MARY

Would a diamond suit?

MARY

(*finds the mirror*) You're a gem.

PARAG

Like tweet.

ALISTAIR

Chirp, chirp chirp chirp chirp...

MORGAN

Somewhere it's tomorrow already.

PADMA

In your mind!

MADELYN

Ja, guten morgen.

MELISSA

(shaking her head) Ya toh-zhe.

ALISTAIR

Homework for me?

CHARLOTTE

No, more homework ever!

MARCUS

Is your problem with work or home?

PRAVEEN

Maybe it's sleep.

MADELYN

If you're Dracula.

PARVATI

He was on to something.

MASON

Dracula was?

PRASHANTH

Is this adult content?

PADMA

(imitating a Transylvanian accent) I vant your blood!

MICHELLE

Mine!

MAXWELL

(*to the audience/reader*) That sticks her neck out
ahead of yourself --

CHRIS

-- maybe Dracula was lonely.

MATT

Like us.

PARVATI

Lonely: what that?

ARCHIE

A pessimism.

MARY AND MORHGAN

(*in unison*) Some believe love is the ultimate
loneliness.

CHARLOTTE

(*tauntingly*) Some believe love is.

PARAG

-- a word or sculpture.

MASON

Am I alone in agreement to, say -- I'm tired.

PRASHANTH

As for me, ploading an image of my pajamas to socials.

MELISSA

(*turning off the light*) Did you include an 'image
description?'

PRASHANTH

Certainly. (*reading*) "Speaker prepared for restful
slumber in matching pajama set."

MARCUS

Your pajamas are from where?

PRASHANTH

Hand-sewn.

MARTIN

I want bespoke pajamas.

PADMA

It's too early for bed.

MELISSA

For bed or sleep?

MICHELLE

Shhh, we're keeping her awake.

ANYA

No, we're going to sleep ourselves.

MELISSA

You're not acting tired.

ANYA

It's okay that I'm not.

PRAVEEN

COVID-19 wasn't okay, not for me.

PARAG

It wasn't okay, was it?

ALISTAIR

Before the newspapers said, "it is."

MATT

Now what are they saying?

MICHELLE

'There was no COVID-19.'

PRASHANTH:

What there is --

AVA

-- is us.

MORGAN

Us, or U.S.?

MARCUS AND MATT

(reprising their chant from Scene 1, but with a different mood) U.S.A., U.S.A.!

MICHELLE AND MELISSA

A+

I'd take a first. MARTIN
 That Mary. ARCHIE
 Please define COVID-19. MADELYN
 A -- ALISTAIR
 -- virus -- ANYA
 -- deriving -- ARCHIE
 -- from -- AVA
 -- coronavirus -- CHARLOTTE
 -- Sudden -- CHRIS
 -- Acute -- MARCUS
 -- Respiratory -- MARTIN
 -- Syndrome -- MARY
 -- as -- MASON
 -- epidemic -- MARTIN
 -- afflicting -- MARY
 -- exclusively -- MASON

--	China	--	MATT
--	for	--	MAXWELL
--	decades,	--	MELISSA
--	Declared	--	MORGAN
--	a	--	PADMA
--	pandemic	--	PARAG
--	by	--	PARVATI
--	the	--	PRASHANTH
			PRAVEEN
WHO; but The Who is a band.			

ACT [II]

SCENE [1]

AVA

Today's newspaper was --

ANYA

-- printed and distributed --

ALISTAIR

-- On the front page, a headline top-of-the-fold reads, --

ARCHIE

-- COVID-19 never happened.

CHARLOTTE

All the more room for you.

CHRIS

(*laughs*) To maximize earning potential?

MADELYN

(*taking a throw pillow from one side of the bed to the other*) "Attention economy."

PADMA

How can they say there was no COVID-19?

MELISSA

We shut-in at a population level.

PRASHANTH

For months, even a year!

MORGAN

Because there was news of a deadly virus.

MARCUS

How close did journalists get to the story?

MADELYN

(*holding up the pillow and smiling at it*) No more COVID-19!

PARAG

It's being voided from archives and records.

MARY

No one's ever going to cite Ovid, the Roman poet,
again.

PRAVEEN

No one ever cited him correctly in the first place!

MADELYN

(*sitting*) Who's Publius Ovidius Naso?

MASON

A writer who collected his poetry?

PRASHANTH

Recalled for narcissism.

MICHELLE

Who knows though --

MADELYN

-- his surname evokes nasal determination.

MELISSA

But he chronicled Echo.

MARTIN

Echo?

MADELYN

Poetic echo, an artistic device. Identified as a
"nymph" she is alliteratively but in no other way a
double for the pathological narcissist.

MAXWELL

What about irony?

PRAVEEN

we might ask the same of and/or about Alanis
Morissette.

MARY

Or Jim Morrison: "I'm a survivor, I'm not going to
give up, I'm going to work harder, keep on surviving."

MATT

Quebec deer were reported victims.

MASON

Some questioned domestic cat{s}...carriers.

MADELYN

But it never was. So what's today?

MORGAN

Snacktopia.

(ALISTAIR, ANYA, ARCHIE, AVA are
gathering wheat)

MELISSA

(*inside the newspaper*) There's a press conference at
the mall.

CHARLOTTE, TO MADLEYN

Would you like to borrow something?

MADELYN

Thanks but you're actually standing in front of my
wardrobe as we speak.

CHARLOTTE

To style!

MICHELLE

...suits outfit.

MARCUS

Okay

MORGAN

If you haven't press credentials, don't bother
attending a press conference.

MARY

It's at the mall!

ARCHIE

There's news from the States, now?

ANYA

(*half to Archie*) And from Windsor? **That** holds up?!

PARYATI

(*remembering*) The mirror! A mirror.

MARTIN

To my misery!

MADELYN

(*opening a door to the mall*) What's this press conference about?

MATT

They didn't hear you.

CHRIS

Is that a credential?

MORGAN

She has a credential.

MADELYN

Closures in 2020 were a function of communism.

PRASHANTH

But COVID-19 *was not*?

PRAVEEN

Sure it was, or she wouldn't have those telebytes.

AVA, TO MADELYN

You're continuing to experience those after what we talked about?

MATT

We all saw it yesterday.

MARTIN

Something I wish that was possible to unsee.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

You're talking sci-fi.

CHRIS

(*like he's in a movie theater trying to see over someone's shoulder*) What's she saying about the mall?

CHARLOTTE

Hmm?

MADELYN

Mall's owners have negotiated with a new vendor
dispatching hand-milled wheat products from England.

ANYA

What a shame, what a shame: so they won't be baked
fresh on-site before opening hours daily like a proper
French pastry shop!

PARVATI

Stalelicious! Where's Chicago?

CHARLOTTE

Pass that up for Britstol, baby!

ARCHIE

No more references.

MARCUS

I have a question.

MARY

Who knows what it is?

MARCUS

What is --

MARY

(screams) What is where?

MARCUS

-- differentiating citations and references?

ALISTAIR

Chew tea, bah.

AVA

What he's --

PARVATI

Citation connotes punitive rather than associative,
albeit Fashion Victim suffers from referentiality.

PADMA

Is "he" too like what?

MICHELLE

That's not it.

MARTIN

What is not it.

ARCHIE

Exactly. Word.

MELISSA

Word.

MAXWELL

The Modern Language Association bibliography style differentiates between the artifacts discussed by a philology as "works cited" and those referees whose letters and titles afford untenured candidate hires at universities.

MICHELLE

Lambasting a discourse of 'good works' must be included in the party!

MARCUS

Not if you're the American Studies Association.

PRAVEEN

They're okay.

CHARLOTTE

Are there alternatives?

MARTIN

The anarchy zine distro scene.

MICHELLE, TO MARTIN

You better thank Melissa for that rhyme!

MELISSA

I didn't invent rhyming.

MARTIN

She didn't invent rhyming.

MARCUS

Has she been rhyming?

PADMA

COVID-19 never happened and someone invented rhyming: is that supposed to be a status update?

ACT [II]

SCENE [2]

MARCUS

What I need is --

MARY

-- not why --

PARVATI

-- notes?

MARCUS

A song about vulnerability.

MARTIN

To play it?

PARAG

Notes like marks or --

MADLYN

(almost singing) Flowers!

ARCHIE

(like, to everyone but MARCUS) What's Marcus doing today?

ALISTAIR

Why could it be your business what Marcus is doing?

AVA

As they say --

MARCUS

(like he's leaning over to someone at the end of a bench with many people wedged between them) What are you doing today, Archie?

MELISSA

"What makes today?"

MICHELLE

Some choose to answer.

CHARLOTTE

What are Marcus and Archie talking with one another about?

CHRIS, TO CHARLOTTE

Small talk.

MADELYN

I'm going to a climbing wall.

MARCUS

I'm going to keep talking to Archie.

ALISTAIR

He's right, Archie's style is more bow-and-arrow than mountain-climbing.

MASON

I have never been mountain-climbing.

MARCUS

You should go mountain-climbing.

ARCHIE

With Madelyn...

PADMA

And me, too.

PARAG

Did she 'me too?' (*to Padma*) Are you okay?

MARCUS

What?

PARVATI

'Me too' is a new wave of feminism, in other words.

PRASHANTH

But not everyone says it.

PARAG

And we aren't sure whether she 'said it' or said it.

PRAVEEN, TO PARAG

Why not ask her?

PADMA, TO PRAVEEN

He asked!

PRAVEEN, TO PADMA

Why not respond?

PARVATI, TO PRAVEEN AND PARAG

You're asking whether she meant 'me also' or 'me too' though there was a comma in her sentence?

PRASHANTH

What, is the comma matter?

PADMA

Virtually sometimes.

PRAVEEN AND PARAG, TO PADMA

(*in unison*) Are you okay?

PARVATI

Padma is of course okay. I am not okay!

PADMA AND PRASHANTH

(*in unison*) What's wrong?

PARVATI

I am not joining for mountain-climbing today.

MARCUS

Why not?

MADELYN

Hey!

PARVATI

The climbing wall at the gym isn't real.

MARCUS

It's not?

MADELYN

It is, too. I've been there.

PRASHANTH, TO PARVATI

I am sure it is real, Parvati.

MARY

I am sure she meant it's not real mountain installed as a climbing wall at the gym.

ANYA

Which gym is it?

MADLYN AND PADMA

(in unison) The one on TV.

(ANYA seats, clicking on TV which may play in the background)

MARCUS, TO ANYA

(pointing at a seat next to her) Do you mind? *(he sits)*

MARTIN

Rock-climbing is too much of a challenge in the wild not to practice locally.

MATT

Mountains are more accessible in some places than others.

MORGAN

That's practicing locally all the same.

PADMA, TO PRASHANTH

I need to go.

PRASHANTH

Woah! *(looks around with a hands off gesture.)*

PRAVEEN AND PARAG, TO

PRASHANTH

You should apologize to Parvati.

PRASHANTH, TO PARVATI

Ah, yes. "Real."

PARVATI

In air quotes?

(PADMA takes the remote clicker out of ANYA's hand and points it at PRASHANTH. PARVATI draws his attention to it.)

PRASHANTH

(turning fully to PARVATI) I apologize.

PARVATI, TO PADMA

Give the clicker back.

PADMA

To you?

*(PADMA deposits it on a table that has
apperedated between MARCUS and ANYA)*

MARCUS, TO ANYA

(noticing the TV remote-controller) What are you
watching?

ANYA

(interrupting her focus to turn towards MARCUS)
Television.

MAXWELL, TO MATT

Is there more than one channel?

MATT

I'm not sure.

CHRIS, TO MATT

I know you watch TV.

AVA, TO CHRIS

How?

CHRIS, TO AVA

Many watch TV.

MADELYN

I never watch TV.

PADMA, TO MADELYN

Never ever?

MADELYN, TO PADMA

Well, not like mountain-climbing. If I **have** to.

MARCUS, TO MADELYN

(about what's on TV) This is called programming.

MADELYN

Gerundical.

MARCUS, TO MADELYN

That sounds like an app almost. Adverbially.

MARTIN

What would be that app's function?

MARCUS, TO MARTIN

Adverbial or Gerundal?

MARTIN, TO MARCUS

I'm not sure

ACT [2]

SCENE [3]

MARTIN, TO MARY

Padma and Madelyn went mountain-climbing.

PARVATI, TO MARTIN AND MARY

At the gym!

PADMA

(pitching with a satiric voice while traversing a climbing-wall) 'It's not a real mountain!'

MADELYN, TO PADMA

(nodding) You bet.

PADMA, TO MADELYN

Excuse me?

MADELYN

Real mountains sometimes have demon spirits captured inside.

AVA

By consequence of geological formation?

MARCUS

Shhhhh. *(pointing to what's in front of him)* This is the television.

ANYA, TO MARCUS

Quite right.

CHRIS, TO CHARLOTTE

Are they snobs?

CHARLOTTE

Probably but they're also Dawn readers.

MARY, TO MARTIN

They're friends?

MARTIN, TO MARY

Why yes, famously.

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE
I thought we were friends.

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA
Maybe we're more like role models.

MASON, TO MICHELLE AND
MELISSA
Now you're talking like a Mason!

MICHELLE
A builder, I like that.

MELISSA
Or an Illuminati from Ingolstadt! Henceforth Munich.

PARAG, TO MICHELLE AND
MELISSA
(*not about matter*) Give me that!

PARVATI, TO PARAG
What is it?

(PRASHANTH walks over to look)

PRASHANTH
Something concerning the 1818 novel Frankenstein.

PRAVEEN
Meaning over two-hundred years ago it was debuted; we
could all live to enjoy a bicentennial.

PARVATI
It says "Frankenstein" right here (*she says, pointing
to the air in front of them*)

PARAG
But the bicentennial has ended!

MARY
But its author was Mary Shelley.

MAXWELL
So, what?

MARY
Mary is my name.

MATT

Hi, my name is Matt.

MASON

And the Masons didn't figure in her plot.

MADELYN

Plot? What plot?

ARCHIE

Yes, it's not a plot-driven novel.

CHARLOTTE

You're joking, the plot of Frankenstein is brilliant.

MORGAN

(*correcting CHARLOTTE*) Was.

MARCUS

For real we're watching Frankenstein.

MORGAN, TO MARCUS AND ANYA

Is there a plot?

ANYA

Sure, I'm a "couch potato."

MARCUS (*laughs*)

A content winner required to advertise for service resources linked with tuition fees can't finish his homework.

MAXWELL

Me too.

ANYA, AVA, MADELYN, MELISSA,
MICHELLE (*gasping*)

(*one another*) Maxwell has not disclosed pronouns!

MORGAN, TO MAXWELL

Aces.

MAXWELL, TO MARCUS

And what's Victor's homework supposed to be again?

MORGAN, TO MAXWELL

(*correcting*) What was

MARCUS

Eternal life.

MARTIN

There's no legal way.

MARY

Exactly.

AVA

And would that even be desirable?

PADMA

(*from on heights*) Falling is undesirable.

MARTIN

(*looking up*) What are the seasons like in India?

PARVATI

According to Vogue, no more or less fashionable than elsewhere.

ALISTAIR, TO PARVATI

What about Elle and Harper's Bazaar?

CHARLOTTE

I read all of those.

MARTIN

Reading wasn't the only homework begged at school.

MORGAN

Yes, we had computation --

CHRIS

-- composition --

MELISSA

-- drawing --

MICHELLE

-- discussion.

MARTIN

Reading seems the strangest of them all.

ANYA

(without disrupting her view on screen) Am I reading this?

MARTIN

On some level, no.

MARCUS

Yet --

ANYA

-- I'm following a sequence that approaches narrative.

MARCUS

Whose visual design tracks grammar no differently than --

MARTIN

Any book.

PRASHANTH

Yet the visual design of a book is not.

ARCHIE

It is carceral!

AVA

Prison shouldn't be reduced to society's only exclusive form of social control.

MORGAN

Name another.

MADELYN, TO MAXWELL

Anything but telebytes, remember!

MAXWELL

(joking) Why?

MADELYN

Because television would have you forget --

MARTIN

-- by outsourcing imagination to --

PARAG

-- the culture industry.

ANYA

That's TV?

PARAG

Television, radio, film, magazines.

MELISSA

Distant strangers assuming intimacies of proximate relations by the claim of --

CHARLOTTE

-- not 'lived experience.

MELISSA

-- expertise.

PRAVEEN

Much like a cleric or professor.

MARTIN

Who are knowledgable and ignorant in turn like us.

AVA

I cannot claim ignorance.

MARCUS

Like them.

PARVATI

Negation of self-definition defines[,] too.

ALISTAIR

Are there alternatives?

ARCHIE

(miming a shot with bow-and-arrow) Exercise.

MARY

Won't physics solve woes like scheduled workouts?

MARTIN

Not without a magician.

ACT [II]

SCENE [4]

MARY

My first job collecting was at the toll road.

MADELYN

I'm never working.

ARCHIE

Everyone has to work.

PARVATI

In a war society.

MICHELLE

Was another ever known?

CHRIS

In literature.

MARY

These days I work intelligence.

MASON, TO MARY

Which agency?

MELISSA, TO MASON

Earth, obviously.

MICHELLE

The best agency.

MASON

If you could care less for spyware!

CHARLOTTE

Spyware is all around us.

PADMA

Why yes, tree leaves?

MARY

They're identified as 'spiders' for a reason...

MARCUS

Tech.com is lobbying for novel nomenclature.

MARY

"Crawlers."

MORGAN

And your truth is?

PARVATI

They're mediators between the animal kingdom and insect realm fonder of pathogens than we are.

ANYA

How did a bug get in here?

ALISTAIR

Hasn't a door policy.

CHRIS

"Spiders" is a pun, not true spyware!

MAXWELL

Agreed, where's the real proof?

MATT, TO PRASHANTH

They're talking about something.

PRASHANTH

(*nodding*) Climate justice.

PADMA

J.K. Just kidding!

AVA

(*speaking like an aside, almost conjuring parentheticals tonally*) Our discussion of witchery --

MARTIN

-- goes nowhere...

MARY

Ought, or --

MADELYN, TO MARY

He's decided.

MORGAN

Witchery's process --

AVA

-- unlike most, favors outcome not.

CHARLOTTE

I know nothing of --

MAXWELL

Witches, yes. I never met one!

MASON

Most feel so about us masons likewise.

MAXWELL, TO MASON

Then you've met a witch?

MAXWELL

Who'd care to say.

PARAG

Witchery is trending online --

PARVATI

-- yes, I've followed multiple podcasts --

PADMA

-- newsletters --

PRASHANTH

-- there is a vlogger as well.

MELISSA

Feminist academics too can specialize in witchcraft in parallel to secular specializations on the Book.

MARY

Most witches are so, passing among us like the most ordinary people because yes -- those who can, if you will, 'afford' to mention --

MAXWELL

-- witchery --

CHRIS

Might possess lesser mastery of practice.

CHARLOTTE

Makes sense.

MARTIN

It would too simple to find a witch out if the only qualification were degree of fluency in witchery, yet Charlotte must be anything except a witch.

MICHELLE

I'm a believer in astrology.

MORGAN, TO MICHELLE

Why?

MICHELLE

It's spacetime plus the cosmos; what else is there to believe?

MORGAN

Headlines.

MICHELLE

(*shocked, laughs*) Forehead wrinkles?

PRASHANTH (*laughing*)

Premature aging versus constellating stars in the heavens against actors on the red carpet... Sounds like witchcraft to me.

MARY

(*correcting*) Witchery.

PARAG

Why specifically?

MELISSA

Craft sounds conniving.

MARCUS

Is witchery a club?

MADELYN

Is love?

ALISTAIR

You don't find love a universal experience?

MARY

Something's not?

MATT

It's defined too many ways outside its own contours
for sense.

PRAVEEN

Unlike magic?

ANYA

Yes. The idea of magic's popular not accepted.

AVA

Those who reject magic are free.

MADELYN

Psychiatrists say you'd have to be a psychopath to
reject "love."

MELISSA

Patients despise us.

MICHELLE

I do not!

MASON

The rest of us despise witches.

ALISTAIR

No matter what side we fall along, there's company.

CHARLOTTE

For haters?

MADELYN

Yes, why remake geometry in all its extremes of the
social network?

MARTIN

That's good and evil, not love and hate. Recessed of
devils --

PARAG

Frees love of hate.

MADELYN
Linguistic economy's senselessness.

CHRIS
We're growing.

MARCUS
Trees tall.

MARY
For fruit, because except for that one they're
flowers.

MARCUS
What a bouquet to imagine!

MAXWELL
For which occasion?

PADMA
The weekend.

ANYA
Oh, stop counting.

PADMA
(*holds up a mirror to Anya*) No, thank you.

MARTIN
"This alphabet protects no."

MADELYN
No one was asking!

MATT, TO PADMA
Who mentioned the weekend?

PADMA
Must have been Parvati...

PARVATI
I'm busy then.

MATT, TO PARVATI
If not, you'd socialize then?

PARVATI, TO MATT
Work is social.

ARCHIE

Skipping the rituals pleasures of leisure, though --

PARAG

-- Not society!

PRAVEEN

(*listing*) Decorum, etiquette, attention:

ACT [III]

SCENE [1]

MASON

Lying's down, finally.

PRASHANTH

Top of the morning!

ANYA

Boast beauty outside --

MARY

-- boast beauty in the mirror.

CHRIS

Negating pays somehow?

PADMA

How?

ALISTAIR

No money doesn't.

MATT

Pay without money is honey.

MICHELLE

Honey is sweetest when left for bees.

PRAVEEN

Sugar stales anyway.

MORGAM

Or stolen with cake.

MASON

Let's bake-off!

PARVATI

I'll judge. No I'll be the judge.

PRASHANTH

Then what am I, a baker?

CHARLOTTE

I won't be involved so much that I wish it weren't going to occur in the first place.

ARCHIE, TO CHARLOTTE

Are you foreshadowing another joyride in the Audi?

CHARLOTTE

It's **my** Audi!

ARCHIE

Audi belongs to a publicly-traded company headquartered in Ingolstadt.

MASON

In-gol-stadt; is that "in jail, state?"

PARAG

But if the criminal hasn't been incarcerated?

MELISSA

Herald's anarchy.

ALISTAIR

Not bloody Harold!

MARTIN

(to everyone but ALISTAIR) What is he on about?

MARCUS

Harold?

MARTIN, TO MARCUS

You know Harold?

MARCUS

Alistair just said he has a friend named Harold.

AVA

Rather violently!

PADMA

Delightfully missing from this party or there'd be danger of bloody cake!

MASON, TO PADMA

You challenge me to fulfill a promise of bake-off?

PADMA, TO MASON

Or anyone.

MAXWELL

(*rolling over from his back*) I know dough.

MASON

I can lay bricks!

ARCHIE, TO MASON

(*chortling*) So, you lay it on thick?

MASON

Was anyone ever told of a mortarmason?

MADELYN, TO MASON

What about freedom?

MATT, TO MADELYN

Reserved for "all" those "men created equal" --

ANYA

-- by our pariahs?

CHRIS

Europe's first migrants to North America weren't free?

AVA

They didn't merit --

MARY

-- quality superlatives --

PRASHANTH

-- what about the invaders who arrived on eastern shores? Were they 'ladies and gentlemen of quality?'

CHARLOTTE

Are there quality people in England besides the king and queen?

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE

Your question shocks me!

CHARLOTTE, TO MICHELLE

Opportunities for journalism must not be neglected.

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE
To the political grassroots, only the royals fail
their own test.

CHARLOTTE
Meanwhile commoners are cast as invaders and
oppressors everywhere they go --

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE
Are they fleeing Britain or invited to leave?

CHARLOTTE, TO MICHELLE
"They," "they," they! Aren't we the same?

ARCHIE
Imagining occupation destiny fails consensus meeting
at the collective not individual Archimedean point --

MADELYN
-- held by no one claiming the title.

MASON
Masonry is a title in and of itself.

MATT
Titles apply on works of art, mine's secret.

PARVATI
You know me, a judge.

PADMA
Watch it or I'll join your bench and then you'll be
jury.

MARCUS, TO PADMA AND PARVATI
That's funny: you're on television all of a sudden.

PADMA AND PARVATI
(*turning to the screen and seeing themselves live*)
Who's filming?

MAXWELL
Must be the Archimedean point.

ANYA
It's wired?

MORGAN, TO ANYA

It would be.

PADMA

(thinking aloud) I hadn't agreed to judge the bake-off yet.

PARVATI

And I haven't signed a release to be recorded.

PARAG

I'll telephone 311. *(he doesn't appear to be dialing)*

ANYA, TO MARCUS

(who is through with monitoring the television indeed now standing behind the television) Did it televise the what they just said?

MARCUS

Not Parag.

PARAG

(retrieving a mobile phone and dialing three digits before speaking into the microphone) Hello, I'd like to report.

ANYA, TO MARCUS

Is it picking up his phone call?

PARAG

My friends are on TV.

MARCUS, TO ANYA

(judging) Not really.

PARAG

(on the phone) I'm in the room with them and there aren't any video cameras.

MASON

(about PADMA and PARVATI) Will it follow them if they move?

MARY

(approaches PADMA and PAVATI, standing between them)
Am I on camera?

MARTIN

(*moving to see over MARCUS' shoulder*) Almost, more like an erasure.

ACT [3]

SCENE [II]

MATT

Like a thread through the eye of a needle --

MARCUS, TO MATT

-- hmm? Surveillance is targeting Padma and Parvati.

MATT, TO MARCUS

How?

MARCUS, TO MATT

Well, video recording is rather a novel technology.

PADMA

Compared to what?

MARY

The mirror.

MORGAN

(joining Martin and Marcus' space) Mary's voice is no more audible than her visage visible, though the others --

CHARLOTTE

Get to be stars!

MADELYN

Or become transparent.

MATT

Maybe we have no choice but to destroy --

PRASHANTH

-- *(looking at the ceiling/sky)* "everything. He would destroy -- "

MATT

I would not! Selectively designating rubbish from value isn't matter's job.

MASON

(spinning a cake tier on the tip of his index finger)
I'm not the only one with a job?

CHRIS

I was in retail until:

ANYA, TO CHRIS

Plenty of shops remain open!

CHRIS, TO ANYA

I heard more are reopening.

PARVATI, TO PADMA

Should we blame about this?

PADMA, TO PARVATI

(looking at the viewing party) I wonder if they heard you.

MORGAN, TO PADMA AND PARVATI

Actually, yes.

MARTIN, TO PADMA AND PARVATI

(staring intently at the television) Only like this.

MARCUS, TO PADMA AND PARVATI

It's not online.

MATT

What how could that be?

CHARLOTTE, TO MATT

You've never heard of 'privacy?'

MARY, TO CHARLOTTE

What does that do?

MATT

(responding) I was asking how it would be possible technically.

PARVATI, TO PADMA

Yes, what's seen when we talk to one another if --

PADMA, TO PARVATI

-- they can't hear us?

MARCUS, TO PADMA AND PARVATI
Sharing space as we are though --

MARTIN, TO PADMA AND PARVATI
-- we see and hear you with our naked eyes no matter
what.

MORGAN, TO PADMA AND PARVATI
There's a viscous puddle splashed across the frame
--

PARVATI, TO MORGAN MARTIN
MARCUS
Is it stable?

PADMA, TO PARVATI
Like, does it follow us if we're silent?

PARVATI, TO PADMA
Yes.

PADMA, TO MORGAN MARTIN
MARCUS
Would you tell us if you're finding out the rules?

PARAG
(*on the phone*) You think we should leave them alone?

MARCUS, TO PADMA AND PARVATI
Ah, should we leave?

PADMA AND PARVATI
(*in unison*) Only how will we know if --

(*The sound blasts at maximum volume
like a bomb, resonating with
characters' screams from earlier*)

AVA
Something's wrong.

ANYA
It's because Mary mentioned the spiders from earlier.

MARY
What? I did -- not!

ANYA

The spiders, they always know.

ALISTAIR

Tricky creatures, much like toads: undelectable!

AVA, TO ALISTAIR

Did you say "undetectable?"

PADMA AND PARVATI

(to each other, simultaneously) That's us!

MAXWELL

No, you're here still.

CHARLOTTE, TO PADMA AND
PARVATI

Yes, I have been --

CHRIS

-- watching you und not the telly this whole time.

MARCUS

Okay, I'm getting out of here.

PADMA, TO MARCUS

When will we meet again?

MARCUS

(facing PADMA and PARVATI instead of the television)
That was weird.

PARVATI, TO MARCUS

What? What's weird?

MARCUS, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

Did you see that?

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

(looking at PADMA and PARVATI) Oh no.

MARTIN, TO MAXWELL

(watching TV) He's acting like there's something wrong.

MAXWELL

I'm not following.

PRAVEEN

I think --

PRASHANTH

-- I know what's going on here.

PARAG

(on the phone) It's broadcasting two other people now.

PRAVEEN

Can we turn the television off?

ANYA, TO PRAVEEN

The remote control has numbers on it.

MARY, TO ANYA

What? Let me see.

ANYA, TO MARY

(nodding towards the trifecta of other Ms huddling with a view on screen) Marcus has it.

MARCUS, TO MARY

Woah, I gave it away and who knows where it went. *(He nods at MORGAN and MARTIN)*

(Entering a new television frame yet obscured as viscous puddle, MARY fetches the remote)

MARY, TO THE TELEVISION WATCH PARTY

What channel are we on?

PADMA, TO MARY

It must be channel one.

MARY, TO PADMA

Why is that?

PADMA, TO MARY

Ask Anya.

ANYA, TO PADMA

No way.

PADMA, TO MARY

There were more buttons on here (*pointing at the remote*) when Anya got it.

MARY, TO PADMA

Are you implying Anya has magical powers?

PADMA

I'm not not implying so.

ACT [III]

SCENE [3]

MAXWELL, TO MARY

(*suspiciously*) Do you know what you're going to do?

MARY, TO MAXWELL

(*backing away*) What would you?

MAXWELL, TO MARY

I'd think about it over a glass of water.

MASON

(*interrupting*) Cake!

ARCHIE, TO MASON

The band?

MASON, TO ARCHIE

(*slapping him on the back*) Who knew you were married?

CHARLOTTE, TO MASON

Everyone who's read what I've published in Dawn would know.

MASON, TO CHARLOTTE

Cake?

CHARLOTTE

(*writing*) Was that a proposal?

MADELYN

Cake for me!

PARVATI, TO MARTIN AND MORGAN

She signed up for cake?

MARTIN

(*looking excited*) Perhaps there's cake for the audience.

MORGAN, TO MARCUS

Has that worked?

MARCUS, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN
 Maybe if after Parvati's judged it.

MELISSA
 I'm sensing French around here.

ALISTAIR, TO MELISSA
 That's our English.

MELISSA, TO ALISTAIR
(affecting a British accent) Rather revolting.

ALISTAIR
 For this money I'd sign a television contract myself.

PADMA, TO ALISTAIR
(about Morgan and Martin) They didn't sign anymore
 than we had.

PARVATI
 Sign, fine, no whine, must dine!

MASON, TO PARVATI
 Honorable judge, are you --

PARVATI
 -- ready!

*(MASON slides the entire cake in front
 of PARVATI)*

PARVATI, TO MASON
 You've outdone yourself.

MADELYN
 May I have a piece?

PARVATI
 Cutlery, silverware, flatware -- where are you?

MADELYN, TO PARVATI
 I'll hand off a fork and cake knife to your honor in
 exchange for one slice.

PARVATI, MADELYN
 Will you too be judging?

MADELYN, TO PARVATI

Done deal, then. (*She conjures a fork and cake knife for PARVATI*)

PARVATI

(*Holding a knife and fork*) How will she eat without a plate?

AVA, TO PARVATI

A plate's hovering --

PARVATI

(*noticing what AVA's gesturing to*) Is that appearing on camera?

MARCUS, TO PARVATI

Yeah.

PARVATI

(*still holding utensils and smiling while MASON's cake follows her she reenters the television frame now focalizing Martin and Morgan, retrieving a plate*) If anything's happening to me except this cake --

MARCUS, TO PARVATI

The plate's subsumed in that viscous liquid cloaking you from my notice in record

PARVATI, TO MARCUS

We must be blocking a view of Martin and Morgan?

PADMA, TO PARVATI

(*noticing the TV*) They're somewhat warped is all.

MARCUS

Yeah, it's aesthetic.

PARVATI

(*offering MADELYN's slice*) What will she do sans fork?

MADELYN, TO PARVATI

You need that more than me!

PARVATI, TO MADELYN

That can't be!

MATT, TO MADELYN

Can't you magick another fork?

MADELYN

(frustrated) That's not how magic works!

CHRIS

(looking up from a tabloid he's reading) Someone's employed?

PRAVEEN, TO CHRIS

Magic is...in...M-ploy.

MATT

Meanwhile Martin and Morgan are trapped --

PADMA

-- not to float the suggestion of isolating again
--

MARTIN AND MORGAN, TO PADMA

You're saying we should leave?

PADMA, TO MARTIN AND MORGAN

Or at least stop talking only to each other.

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

I talk to many people.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

I'm responding, okay?!

PADMA

(drawing the tabloid out of CHRIS's grip) Case in point.

MARTIN, TO PADMA

Is that for me?

PADMA, TO MARTIN

Okay. *(She enters the frame, throwing a look to MARCUS)*

MARCUS

100% viscosity.

PADMA, TO MARCUS

Thank you.

MARCUS, TO MASON

Have the judges reached a verdict?

MASON, TO MARCUS

There's only one judge.

MARCUS, TO MASON

They found a second utensil.

MASON

(to himself) A second opinion? That only means one thing --

PARVATI, TO MASON

I love your cake.

(MASON takes a step back to catch his exhilaration)

MELISSA

(approaching the cakefest to borrow CHRIS's tabloid from MARTIN, who is mimicking CHRIS's gesture of reading it to cover his face. With another hand she dips a finger into the cake pan and scoops up a taste of frosting) Mmm, vegan frosting.

MASON, TO MELISSA

Thank you.

MELISSA, TO MADELYN

You haven't touched your slice.

MADELYN, TO MELISSA

I'm silently affirming gratitude for the eating utensil.

MELISSA, TO MADELYN

But it'll spoil eventually!

MADELYN, TO MELISSA

You're forcing this.

MICHELLE, TO MADELYN

Hey.

MADELYN, TO MICHELLE

Are you asking for my cake?

MICHELLE, TO MADELYN
You're accusing me of stealing your cake!

MADELYN, TO MICHELLE
I asked a question.

MICHELLE
How could you, though?

MADELYN, TO MICHELLE
You've never spoken to me before this.

MICHELLE, TO MADELYN
Well, Melissa was talking to you.

ACT [3]

SCENE [4]

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

Madelyn has her cake --

MADELYN

She deserves to eat it, too.

PARVATI, TO MICHELLE

(*wielding the cake knife*) Please have the slice you marked already.

MICHELLE, TO PARVATI

May I keep the knife?

PARVATI, TO MICHELLE

The knife is mine, but if you tear of a bit from Martin's paper you'll have a napkin/paper plate-kinda thing.

MICHELLE, TO MARTIN

(*about the paper*) What were you reading, I'll give this back to you.

MARTIN, TO MICHELLE

The health section.

MICHELLE

(*tears the health section out of his tabloid and returns it to Martin*) Here you go.

CHARLOTTE, TO CHRIS

Wasn't that your paper?

CHRIS, TO CHARLOTTE

What, like Dawn is yours?

CHARLOTTE, TO CHRIS

I'm only saying you should get it back from them. (*she looks askance at the TV set*)

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE AND
CHRIS

You can't have this one. (*she waves the Health section
over her head, her slice of cake in the other*)

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE
What are you doing with the Health section?

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA
(*cake in her mouth*) Reading it.

PARVATI, TO MICHELLE
(*scoops the paper*) You were not!

MELISSA, TO PARVATI
What does it say?

PARVATI
(*reading*) "Your health status is unknown by the
masthead of our publication."

CHARLOTTE
Journalists are the best.

ANYA AND AVA
(*in unison*) Yes, they save[d] the day a bunch.

PRASHANTH
"Journal" is a multifaceted word --

MADELYN, TO PRASHANTH
-- yes, it can --

PRASHANTH
-- refer to peer-reviewed literature, private
diaries, or public record-keeping.

MADELYN
Are you blaming me for the Archimedean point?

MAXWELL
I wasn't --

MORGAN
-- I may --

MARCUS, TO MORGAN

Testing the waters of witch-hunt didn't do anything for you, my friend.

MORGAN

(crying into his palms) I'm embarrassed!

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

You'll pull through this *(in British)* chap.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

What about the viewers who aren't here?

PADMA, TO PARVATI

You see, we didn't even think about those --

PARVATI

-- "people." *(looks to or at MARTIN AND MORGAN smiling)*

MARCUS, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

I might be your only viewer.

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

We have a viewer.

MELISSA, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

Congratulations!

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

Congratulations.

PRAVEEN, TO MARY

(about the television/set) Are you sad?

MARY, TO PRAVEEN

For them?

PARAG

(on the phone) I left them alone for awhile --
mmhmm -- yeah -- no -- it didn't make a
difference.

PRAVEEN

Parag has returned!

PARAG, TO PRAVEEN

Thanks.

PRAVEEN, TO PARAG

What are they saying?

MELISSA, TO PARAG AND PRAVEEN

Who is that?

PARAG

(*on the phone*) Excuse me, may I put you on hold? --
Mmmhmm -- okay -- yes -- all right -- thank
you.

PRASHANTH, TO PARAG

Parag=, who was that and what are they saying?

PARAG

A crisis line for consumer surveillance complaints.

CHARLOTTE

Ooooh. They must suspect you --

PARAG

-- They say this has been happening a lot.

MELISSA, TO PARAG

People calling them?

PARAG, TO MELISSA

Yes --

PRASHANTH, TO PARAG

-- about telebyte-adjacent Archimedean points?

PARAG

That's not how I framed it --

MELISSA, TO MADELYN

Is telebittick data giving an origin for the
Archimedean point?

MADELYN, TO MELISSA

I'm not saying telebytes are irrelevant.

MELISSA, TO MADELYN

How did you find Mason's cake?

MADELYN

That! It's my cake now.

MASON, TO MADELYN

Thank you.

MADELYN, TO MASON

You're welcome.

MAXWELL, TO PARAG

How is the Archimedean point not the conspiracy you introduced earlier?

MARY, TO MAXWELL

(picks up the remote) I believe this will call 911 on you.

MAXWELL, TO MARY

For --

MARY, TO MAXWELL

-- stoking the flames of conspiratorial misinformation!

PARAG, TO MADELYN AND MELISSA

The telebytes and Archimedean point cooccur?

MELISSA, TO PARAG

Yes, though we can't explain why.

MADELYN, TO MELISSA

Etiology for the phenomenon is unknown to you?

ACT [IV]

SCENE [1]

MICHELLE

Unlike me.

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

You have an unlike button?

PADMA

Feeling strongly about the terabytes in any direction

--

MADELYN

-- coheres not with Archimedean perspective.

AVA, TO MICHELLE

Unlike you for what?

MICHELLE

For nothing!

AVA, TO MELISSA

She's got something wrong?

MELISSA, TO AVA

It's Madelyn.

MADELYN, TO MELISSA AND AVA

You rang?

ANYA, TO MADELYN

Hello Madelyn.

MADELYN

(*staring out into the beyond*) Fuss though --

MARTIN

-- Martin and Morgan remain --

MORGAN

-- captured --

MADELYN, TO MARTIN AND MORGAN

-- Oh, please you.

MICHELLE, TO MARTIN AND
MORGAN

Like it there.

MARTIN AND MORGAN
(*laughing*) We like being unconsensually videoed?

MICHELLE, TO MARTIN AND
MORGAN
(*nodding*) Or it wouldn't be happening to you.

(MARTIN's face falls but his arms open
to embrace MORGAN as MORGAN weeps.)

MARY, TO MICHELLE
Yes, you're very pretty.

MICHELLE
I am pretty --

MELISSA, TO MADELYN
(*her fingertips deliberating by measure of plush pads*)
Erasure...

MADELYN, TO MELISSA
Erasure?

MELISSA, TO MADELYN
Erasing the Archimedean point --

MICHELLE, TO MADELYN
You have to erase the Archimedean point for Martin and
Morgan.

MARCUS
Who?

PRASHANTH, TO MARCUS
Are you channelling a pterodactyl?

MICHELLE, TO MARCUS
A pterodactyl wouldn't know the song about me.

MATT
It would know, they couldn't sing it.

CHARLOTTE
I'm almost a pop star already.

CHRIS

She is.

MICHELLE, TO CHRIS

You know, that's me.

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

You aren't a pop star either.

MICHELLE AND CHARLOTTE, TO
MELISSA

Dare you? (*singing*) La-la-la-la, faille assembler!

MARCUS

(*looking around instead of on TV*) Who was that?

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

(*wiping away tears*) Ava or Anya --

MASON, TO MARCUS

-- who?

MAXWELL

Says Mason --

MASON, TO MAXWELL

-- clap your hands --

CHARLOTTE AND MICHELLE

-- for the pop stars --

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE

us! You S.

CHARLOTTE, TO CHRIS

Whaaat? S? I don't know 'S.'

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE

'S' is the nineteenth letter. And it's fiendish -- '

(CHARLOTTE shrieks)

MAXWELL, TO CHARLOTTE

It ssssssignifiesssss the ssssssnake.

CHARLOTTE

(*calming down*) Snakes aren't problematic.

They are. MARY, TO CHARLOTTE

Hey! -- MICHELLE, TO MARY

-- hey. MARY, TO MICHELLE

This is my zine -- MICHELLE, TO MARY

Your what? MATT, TO MICHELLE

Scene, I meant -- MICHELLE

You're mean? PRAVEEN, TO MICHELLE

I'm not mean, I mean -- MICHELLE, TO PRAVEEN

You want the spotlight? MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

I have to have it. MICHELLE, TO MELISSA

It's yours. CHRIS, TO MICHELLE

Certainly not yours to give away. PARVATI, TO CHRIS

Why? MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

Because Parvati and Padma had the spotlight; now Martin and Morgan are on TV. MICHELLE

True. We're being excluded from the Archimedean point. CHARLOTTE, TO MICHELLE

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE
I knew I'd find the conspiracy theory they were
talking about all along.

PARVATI
Can Matt sing?

MATT, TO PARVATI
Mmmhmmm I'm a triple threat: I can rat out my co-
conspirators, draw made-up connections between castles
in the air, and 'be have.'

PARVATI, TO MATT
Only one bee? Alert the queen!

ARCHIE, TO PARVATI
She's busy at the moment.

PARVATI, TO ARCHIE
Because she is me. (*bows her head in patronage*)

CHARLOTTE, TO MICHELLE
Suddenly being a pop star doesn't seems --

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE
-- - so supurb?

CHARLOTTE
Like before.

PARAG, TO CHARLOTTE
It's employment.

CHRIS
I had employment once.

CHARLOTTE, TO CHRIS
Employment! You weren't busy.

ALISTAIR, TO CHRIS
You were a sales clerk?

CHRIS, TO ALISTAIR
A cashier, in fact.

MARTIN
Someone better pay me!

PARAG, TO MARTIN

I am able to call the helpline again.

MARTIN, TO PARAG

I am able to call, too.

PARAG, TO MARTIN

Thank you.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

Asking for help is so after-school-special.

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

We're not asking for help.

PRASHANTH, TO MARTIN AND
MORGAN

Then why lie?

MORGAN

We haven't a number.

ACT [IV]

SCENE [2]

PARAG, TO MORGAN

(without giving it away) I've written the number on this sheet of paper.

MARY

More paper?

MORGAN, TO PARAG

To share or frame?

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

(laughing) I thought we were above asking for help?

MARCUS, TO MARTIN AND MORGAN

(laughing) It's the contrary: you're beneath the Archimedean point.

MORGAN, TO MARCUS

You would be so lucky.

MARTIN, TO MARCUS

Yeah, you have been sitting there the whole time.

MORGAN, TO MARCUS

I challenge you to see for yourself --

MAXWELL

-- if he or you becomes and or remains appointment viewing.

ANYA, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

You would fail Archimedean mechanics.

MARTIN, TO ANYA

I've never failed anything!

MORGAN, TO ANYA

Nor do I intend --

ANYA

(raising her eyebrows) to try.

PADMA

Archimedean mechanics dispute astronomy.

MASON

Wither astrology!

MADELYN, TO MASON

Astrology supplements astronomy.

PARVATI

Maintaining its premise, unlike --

AVA

An Archimedean point.

ARCHIE, TO AVA

Which doesn't move?

MELISSA AND MADELYN, TO
ARCHIE

(in unison) It suspends.

AVA, TO ARCHIE

Who are you calling a witch?

ANYA, TO AVA

(while pointing) You.

AVA, TO ANYA

Then are you a witch, too?

PRAVEEN, TO MASON

They shouldn't talk about witchery like this.

MASON, TO AVA AND ANYA

Yes, speak not of such --

MARY

-- hobbies and pleasures --

MELISSA

-- instead, focus on --

MORGAN

Celebrity! The stars rolled out for your viewing
pleasure on the red carpet.

MARTIN

(as if to a viewer) He's right! Stars like us, when we aren't on the red carpet, we remain your faithful companions --

MORGAN

-- so long that your television remains --

MICHELLE

-- I get it!

CHRIS

Martin and Morgan are acting like they're okay with being recorded indefinitely.

MORGAN, TO CHRIS

It's preferable to getting mixed up with that terabyte scene.

MADELYN, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

You're acting gendered.

MORGAN, TO MADELYN

We can't help acting --

MARTIN

-- but we can get help --

MORGAN

-- if we **need** it.

PARAG

Not all sentences are entirely true.

ALISTAIR, TO PARAG

You said you had a phone number.

PARAG, TO ALISTAIR

Sure, tell your friends I'm reachable by voicecall most daytime hours.

ALISTAIR, TO MORGAN AND
MARTIN

(about Morgan and Martin) They're not my friends.

MORGAN

I heard that!

MARTIN

I heard you!

MATT

Hey Parag, what's your number?

PRAVEEN

111-222-3333 --

PARVATI

or 444-555-6666.

CHARLOTTE

666 is the devil's number.

PADMA, TO CHARLOTTE

Unlike some, they're not on speaking terms.

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE

The devil chats with you?

MASON, TO MICHELLE

You said, "devil!"

MICHELLE, TO MASON

He hasn't summoned me.

PADMA, TO MICHELLE

I wouldn't respond to that summons.

ARCHIE, PADMA

Not responding to a summons could determine the verdict prejudicially against you.

PADMA

The courts are supposed to stomp out prejudice, not perpetuate it!

ARCHIE

It's not my fault.

MELISSA, TO ARCHIE

But do you agree?

ARCHIE, TO MELISSA

About what?

MELISSA, TO ARCHIE

With Padma.

ARCHIE

I'm not following.

MELISSA, TO ARCHIE

Whether or not the courts are your creation, you have a responsibility to truth!

ARCHIE, TO MELISSA

Am I being evaluated for that at the doctor's office?

MELISSA, TO ARCHIE

Maybe you should be.

ACT [4]

SCENE [III]

PADMA

Hate isn't a diagnosis.

MADELYN

It shouldn't be at all.

ARCHIE

I don't hate... anyone.

MICHELLE, TO ARCHIE

You might hate the devil and not know, even.

CHARLOTTE

Is hating the devil a thing?

PADMA

Is the devil 'a thing.'

ARCHIE

Soon I'll hear 'hate is a thing.'

MASON

We should write a song about hate. [*mimes playing a chord on the guitar*] "Haaaaaaaaaate's hateful."

AVA

Maybe for some, hate's a hat.

PADMA

Hate can't be --

PARVATI

-- healthy.

MELISSA, TO MARY

Has anyone ever hated you?

MARY, TO MELISSA

Not openly, or I haven't noticed.

MORGAN

I never realized --

MARTIN

-- that being in --

MORGAN AND MARTIN

(turning to face each another in unison) We're in!

CHARLOTTE, TO MORGAN AND
MARTIN

What are you in for?

MARCUS

Being online.

CHARLOTTE, TO MARCUS

I was saying Martin and Morgan are stranded on an interface in dual representation and visage.

MAXWELL

A description that's more like absurdism than --

PADMA

Likewise unpreferable to something else.

PARVATI

Nevermind the option.

PARAG

Whoever I spoke to at the helpline gave impermanence for our Archimedean mechanism.

PADMA

They know?

MELISSA, TO PADMA

We know. It's co-constituted between us and particle physics.

MADELYN

(dropping a cakeplate) Thus implicating telebytes.

CHRIS, TO CHARLOTTE

Is she taking responsibility?

ANYA

The telebytes aren't Madelyn's uniquely.

MAXWELL, TO MADELYN

You own telebytes?

MADELYN

Their very existence presupposes collectivity.

MARTIN

Exactly!

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

She's talking about us.

PADMA, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

You're more like *telepixels* (to emphasize the second syllable) than what's on Madelyn's agenda.

MARY

Telebytes versus telepixels, I knew --

ALISTAIR

-- you thought about that before.

CHRIS

I miss my cashier nameplate for that reason.

PADMA, TO CHRIS

You had telebytes where you worked?

PARVEEN

Perhaps telepixels?

CHRIS

It's the thinking opportunities that job afforded me.

PRAVEEN

(*laughs*) Thinking about cash; yes, that's a subject.

CHRIS, TO PRAVEEN

Or a topic, at least.

MAXWELL, TO CHRIS

You must have had more to think about than only that.

AVA

There were customers, for example.

CHRIS

Isn't it rude to think about other people?

ALISTAIR, TO CHRIS

That sounded off.

PADMA

Most say having others in mind demonstrates caring

PRASHANTH

'In mind' reminds me of a visual.

MARTIN, TO PRASHANTH

You see us, can't you?

ANYA

You aren't 'us' right now.

MICHELLE

I see two of them!

MELISSA

Better than seeing you-know-whom.

MICHELLE

(to herself yet audibly) Why can't I influence seeing the Devil to happen?

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

You mean --

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA

Seriously, stop saying I am mean!

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

-- trend.

MATT

The trend report! I was sprinting away from that phenomenon fast. Very, very quickly.

MARCUS, TO MATT

No, you're here rather than running anywhere --

MATT, TO MARCUS

-- or from anything.

PRAVEEN

Marcus is right, no Matt hasn't succeeded in evading the trend report anywhere --

MASON

Nor anyhow..

MORGAN, TO MATT

What matters is how the trend report isn't what you're watching in telepixels.

MARTIN, TO MATT

Only our telepixels convey meaning.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

The rest -- yes, the rest --

CHARLOTTE

-- is relaxing.

CHRIS, TO CHARLOTTE

Being told I'm isn't of value doesn't relax --

PADMA

-- you.

MARCUS

The reading's doubt.

ALISTAIR

Doubt's nothing worrisome.

PRASHANTH

Watching the stars.

MARY

You aren't referring to celebrities?

PADMA

There aren't many constellations visible tonight.

MARCUS, TO PADMA

And our TV remote isn't a control for visibility.

AVA

Usually the sky is high contrast between suns burning bright and the empty night sky.

PRAVEEN

Unless you're from Australia.

MADELYN

Which I'm not --

PADMA

-- no --

MADELYN

-- the telebytes weren't inviting farther than
Mysore.

MELISSA

(sitting up in excited alarm) Our solving the mystery
of Madelyn's telebytes would be mastery of the
Archimedean point!

ARCHIE

Two requirements?

MICHELLE, TO ARCHIE

(hissing) Schedule an appointment with the Devil if
you need to get out of them!

ARCHIE

Someone around here had the Devil's number?

PARAG

Disclosing the semiotics of evil doesn't fulfill
requirement's proxy-mate.

ARCHIE, TO PARAG

Thanks mate.

PARAG, TO ARCHIE

You're welcome.

MARTIN AND MORGAN

Hi! You haven't thank us yet... for anything.

PADMA, TO MARTIN AND MORGAN

You haven't done anything.

ACT [4]

SCENE [4]

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

(in a confidence being televised to their rapt viewer and innocent bystanders) She's right we haven't Parag's phone number.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

We're trying his speed-dial for the Devil, not his actual number.

PARAG, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

It's a helpline. I don't even know the Devil.

MARTIN, TO PARAG

What matters is that we accomplish... *(looks confused)* ...confiscation of your resource.

MORGAN

Only so Padma won't have to say a criticism of our TV appearances.

MARTIN

Again.

MORGAN

Again.

MARCUS, TO MORGAN AND MARTIN

You're not TV, you're vanity programming.

MELISSA

I've always liked the sound of "vanity."

PARVATI, TO MELISSA

You'd dare have cabinets in personal chambers?

MELISSA, TO PARVATI

To witch Freudian narcissism? Sure, I furnish strategy.

MAXWELL

Only Mary's been on the mirror.

PARAG, TO MARY

Would you need to borrow my phone?

MARY, TO PARAG

It's a cell-phone?

PARAG, TO MARY

It's a regular phone.

MARY, TO PARAG

I could call someone.

PARAG

(lends her his phone) You won't find the helpline's number on it, is a condition.

MARY, TO PARAG

You lost it?

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA

Would we enter a crisis without that?

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

Ask Charlotte.

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE

Can you predict the future?

CHARLOTTE

The future, the future, the future, the future, the future.

MARY

(exits with PARAG's phone) Must... solve... mystery...

PARAG

It automatically hides personal data when sensing a new set of fingerprints.

MASON

I'd buy that.

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

Where is it sold?

MORGAN, TO MARIN

And can we get a sponsorship from it.

ALISTAIR

Albeit boding sponsorship, Parag's gadget disappeared.

MAXWELL

Parag knows the sponsors.

AVA

Maybe Parag's the sponsor.

PARAG

I'm the whistleblower.

PRASHANTH

Lucky!

ARCHIE, TO PRASHANTH

No luck to it; theft occurred on the back of idealism.

MARY

(returning) I'm back.

PARAG

Nice.

MARY, TO PARAG

(returning his phone) Here's your phone back.

PADMA

What?

PRAVEEN

I know what she was going to say.

PADMA

What's a phone back.

ANYA

Somewhere on the phone with cameras but not a selfie view.

ARCHIE, TO CHRIS

A senseless sentence that was.

MARY, TO ARCHIE

It's naptime, my friend.

ARCHIE

(sitting down) Mary went to Oxford.

MARY, TO MORGAN

It wssn't an easy time.

MARCUS

Sorry about that.

MARY

(nodding) Much like Parag, I was a whistleblower.

PARAG, TO MARY

(outstretching his hand) Nice to meet.

MARY

(after shaking Parag's hand) They weren't heating the libraries during winter, contradicting the importance of studying.

CHARLOTTE

No way.

MARY

I studied at home during winter.

ALISTAIR

Half the people here have never been in winter.

PARVATI

Thermal parody has devolved into thermal parity?

ALISTAIR, TO PARVATI

(laughing) I like your name, Parvati.

MATT

(simultaneously with ALISTAIR) I'm Mexican.

MADELYN

Whereas my family's from Florida.

PADMA

"American" rarely designates Canadians universally.

MASON

I respect Canada.

AVA

I'm from Canada.

PARAG, TO AVA
A Canadian with a British accent!

AVA, TO PARAG
Canada was chilly. I immigrated.

ANYA, TO AVA
England is so much warmer than that?

AVA
Great Britain, actually.

MAXWELL
Australia matches isles.

PARAG
We should pay a visit --

MARCUS, TO PARAG
-- should we?

PARAG
It's been awhile.

MELISSA
Everyone was there yesterday.

MADELYN
Or shortly before then.

PADMA, TO CHARLOTTE AND CHRIS
Are you homesick?

CHARLOTTE, TO PADMA
Chris is homesick for work.

PRAVEEN, TO CHRIS
We should put you to work?

CHRIS, TO PRAVEEN
Definitely.

MELISSA
Kindly, socializing uninterruptedly is work!

MICHELLE
Agreed, though, if we were writers --

CHARLOTTE

Remember, I am!

MICHELLE

Whether writing's the act or pop stardom, why speak at
such a short clip?

CHARLOTTE, TO MICHELLE

(*shuffling flashcards*) Poetry, minimalism.

PARVATI, TO CHRIS

I have the job.

CHRIS, TO PARVATI

Anything!

PARVATI

Forget your state of unemployment.

CHRIS

Impossibly I wasn't asked for the possible.

MADELYN

He'd rather mine selenite?

MATT, TO MADELYN

That mine closed.

CHRIS

Alack! Never hath my misfortune --

PRASHANTH, TO CHRIS

Been... so... publicly dispensed [with]?

CHRIS TO PRASHANTH

I feel my feelings.

PRASHANTH

Leave me out!

ALISTAIR, TO PRASHANTH

Tell your confession with me, friend.

ACT [V]

SCENE [1]

PARVATI

A scoop of luck with my cake would have merited.

MASON, TO PARVATI

Criticism, finally? I remain unflinching.

PARVATI, TO PRASHANTH

Who know how.

MARY

To publish! Confession sells --

CHRIS

Yet moral culpability wasn't recommended at school.

ALISTAIR

Must I?

MADELYN, TO ALISTAIR

Yes, confess.

ALISTAIR

(ascending to a platform) I confess.

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

Must we now confess?

ANYA, TO MARCUS

He confessed or professed?

MARY, TO ALISTAIR

Before granting atonement we require that you itemize culpabilities.

ALISTAIR

Wrong!

PARVATI

Alright I confess to wishing.

MELISSA, TO PARVATI

I wish, too.

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA AND
PARVATI

Since when is wishing verboten?

MARTIN

Watching telepixels negates verbotenation.

PARVATI, TO MARTIN

Parag called to verify our alarm wasn't singular.

MARTIN, TO PARVATI

That reality hasn't been invited.

PARVATI, TO MARTIN

Perhaps if we're unaware whom Mary spoke with earlier.

MARY, TO PARVATI

One may have a phone without relying on it.

PARVATI, TO MARY

You called no one?

MARY, TO PARVATI

Maybe somebody called me.

ANYA, TO MARY

Tell us.

MARY, TO ANYA

Someone called.

CHARLOTTE

I need a phone.

MAXWELL, TO CHARLOTTE

Same.

MATT

Me three.

ARCHIE

I need one of those phone like what Parag had. (to
PARAG) Were there more special features?

PARAG, TO ARCHIE

I haven't dispensed with it.

MARTIN AND MORGAN

We need to have it away from you.

PARAG, TO ARCHIE

(*ignoring Martin and Morgan*) Besides the fingerprint user setting?

ARCHIE, TO PARAG

I'm not the type to lend.

PARAG, TO ARCHIE

It has a keypad.

PRASHANTH, TO PARAG

Buttons are much on the TV remote.

PARAG, TO PRASHANTH

Precisely.

PADMA

Maybe new buttons have apperated on the remote, by the way.

PARVATI, TO PADMA

(*retrieving the TV clicker*) I found it.

MICHELLE, TO PARVATO

Try 666.

PARVATI, TO MICHELLE

The 6s are gone.

MELISSA, TO PARVATI

It had more than one?

MARCUS, TO MELISSA

Originally?

MADELYN, TO PARVATI

May I observe?

(PARVATI dials a button with MADELYN regarding)

MADELYN

Hmmm, no telebytes appear altered.

PARVATI
Neither the Archimedean point.

AVA
Wither the weather!

MATT
Whether's perfect --

MASON, TO MATT
-- I notice --

MARCUS, TO MASON AND MATT
-- that the weather --

PRAVEEN
-- is always perfect.

PARVATI
(*lifting the TV remote like a magic wand at the set*)
Can this object, have a point?

MELISSA, TO PARVATI
It's mutable.

PARVATI, TO MELISSA
So's television.

CHRIS
Nah, television is indispensable.

MASON, TO MARTIN
I feel **so**, validated?

MARTIN TO MASON
You mean for parking?

MICHELLE, TO MASON AND MARTIN
I'm the mean one, hey!

CHARLOTTE, TO MICHELLE
Are they appropriating you identity?

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE
Not until they're communing as devil-worshippers.

CHARLOTTE
Uh-huh. Then my job's settled.

PARVATI, TO CHARLOTTE
You've been titled?

CHARLOTTE, TO PARVATI
Yet not contracted.

PADMA, TO CHARLOTTE
Two jobs you have then.

CHARLOTTE
Then I'm overworked.

MADELYN, TO CHARLOTTE
Before you've even begun?

CHARLOTTE
Oh, I've begun.

MARTIN AND MORGAN
(*in unison*) It's begun... it begins!

PRASHANTH
More news? We haven't settled the matter of COVID-19.

PARVATI
There it was matter.

ALISTAIR
Matter-of-factly, who care?

ANYA, TO ALISTAIR
About OVID?

ALISTAIR
About the novel, that VOID.

MARY, TO ALISTAIR
A VOID not caring with a name like mine.

MADELYN, TO MARY
You have a connection with Shelley?

MARY, TO MADELYN
With her mother. She was also named, Mary.

MARCUS, TO MARY
A Mary! Be merry. c: --

MARY, TO MARCUS

Well, thank you.

MARCUS, TO MARY

Just the same, what's on television concerns.

MARY, TO MARCUS

Is it the boys who are glued in?

MASON

My glued cake layers with tasty edible adhesive.

PRASHANTH

Electric images glow in pasts tensing or lumber
composed.

PARVATI, TO PRASHANTH

Slumber flew.

PRASHANTH, TO PARVATI

Me?

ACT [V]

SCENE [2]

PRASHANTH

My society calls,

MARY

I never confessed!

PARAG

(borrowing his phone from PARVATI) BeigePage retrieves any calls or activity this device was used for for me.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

Finally answering our pleas.

MASON, TO MORGAN

Parag's not not holding out on those helpline digits.

PARAG, TO MASON, MORGAN, AND
MARTIN

Why can't you Google it yourselves?

PADMA, TO PARAG

It was on Google?

PARAG, TO PADMA

The top hit! My search panned out.

CHARLOTTE, TO PARAG

Was it thanks to SEO or name-matching?

PARAG

There are tools to validate its search-engine-optimizing.

PARVATI

The link's?

CHARLOTTE

Plural?

MADELYN

Directionality maybe, otherwise chainlink.

ANYA

Then what's online is hyperactivated language.

MARCUS

Not no --

ANYA

-- you know me.

MARCUS, TO ANYA

Military and academic applications of the early Internet were studying how cancel nuclear.

ANYA, TO MARCUS

They needed help?

MATT

Modernity meets the solitary genius of Renaissance with collective effort.

PRASHANTH

Nuclear war hasn't been comforting.

MADELYN, TO PRASHANTH

I'm not responsible. For it.

ANYA, TO PRASHANTH

You are responsible!

PRASHANTH, TO ANYA

Me? Okay.

ANYA, TO PRASHANTH

Yes, but I meant Madelyn.

MADELYN, TO ANYA

Message received --

MICHELLE, TO MADELYN

(*about Anya*) She was mean to you!

MADELYN

No problem.

AVA, TO ANYA

Speaking hurts.

ANYA, TO AVA
Oh "oaf." You mean, like --

AVA, TO ANYA
-- like falling from heaven, just like us.

MARTIN, TO AVA
Speaking comes naturally to me.

ANYA, TO MARTIN
Any impact with matter **severes**.

MADELYN, TO ANYA
Speaking's not contact.

ANYA, TO CHARLOTTE
Your contract awaits.

CHRIS
Mine's continues voided.

ANYA, TO CHRIS
I'll write a new one.

PRASHANTH, TO ANYA
Anya's a barrister?

ANYA, TO PRASHANTH
Lawyers perform cons for entertainment?

MORGAN
We're entertainers.

PRASHANTH, TO MORGAN
Seemly certainly.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN
I can't dance.

MARTIN, TO MORGAN
I can't even -- sing.

MORGAN
(*opens his mouth but nothings comes out*) I lost my voice.

MARCUS
I've had it! Who has. The remote?

PARAG
I forget.

MELISSA
Anya's --

ANYA
-- got nothing.

MAXWELL, TO MARCUS
Your seat's taken.

MARCUS
By me, how the television continues.

MICHELLE
(*has the TV remote*) Yes!

MARCUS, TO MICHELLE
Repo my way.

MICHELLE, TO MARCUS
Name a trade.

MARCUS
Masonry.

MASON
Basking?

MICHELLE
I'm pressing 'power'.

MARCUS
(*leaning forward*) Hi, Morgan and Martin.

MORGAN
(*bowing*) You rang?

PRASHANTH, TO MELISSA
The Archimedean point's disappeared forever.

PADMA
Sweet! Freedom!

MARCUS, TO MARTIN AND MORGAN
Yeah, you aren't being monitored anymore.

PRASHANTH, TO MARCUS
Their body language screams, "lettuce destroy the monitor."

MARCUS, TO PRASHANTH
With what zapper?

ANYA
Destroying seems excessive.

MELISSA
They want to destroy the television?

MARTIN AND MORGAN
If we aren't being televised, the television has no point.

MARY
Other than furnishing the space.

MASON, TO MARY
Space is outside our ozone layer.

PARAG
BeigePage logs a call.

ANYA, TO PARAG
In which direction?

PARAG
To Mary.

MARY
People call to ask about Frankenstein.

PADMA
You wrote it?

PRASHANTH
Is Mary merry, Shelley?

MARY
Quite contrary, I'm --

CHARLOTTE
mary wollstonecraft godwin shelley

MARY

That was her name.

MADELYN

Then, this is a matrix.

PRASHANTH, TO MADELYN

Mary Shelley wasn't in The Matrix.

MARY

I prefer to be called Mary, simply Mary.

CHRIS

Why write such a book?

CHARLOTTE, TO CHRIS

Told you're not a cashier, you're my reporter.

PADMA AND PRASHANTH, TO MARY

Your book is.

MARY

I know. It's terrific.

ARCHIE

I admit --

ALISTAIR

-- I have read it.

MADELYN

(a confidential tone) I listened to the audiobook.

PRAVEEN

I hadn't known about it before.

MORGAN, TO PRAVEEN

It was ragingly successful before --

MARTIN

-- television.

PRASHANTH

However, Hollywood adapted it.

MARY

So? I stopped following.

ACT [V]

SCENE [3]

PRAVEEN

Is anyone here aware of where Praveen went?

PADMA

I made some cake leftover.

MICHELLE

My piece of plastic with mutable buttons claimed!

PARAG

My phone from BeigePage?

PRAVEEN

None of that while Praveen is --

ANYA

He's looking for Praveen.

MARCUS

Praveen wasn't --

MARTIN AND MORGAN

-- on --

MARCUS

-- television (TV).

MELISSA

Praveen can't be on while teevee isn't playing.

PRAVEEN

(walking over to the television, apprehends his reflection onscreen) Hey, he's here.

PARVATI

Praveen? Is that you?

CHARLOTTE

Someone found him; he's found.

MARY

I can't remember his leaving.

MADELYN

He never left.

PRASHANTH, TO PRAVEEN

You quit?

PRAVEEN

Mary stepped away earlier.

PARAG

To phone with a call.

CHRIS, TO MARY

It was someone, who was calling about the novel?

MAXWELL

Everyone talks about novels.

AVA

For once!

PRAVEEN

People were talking about novels for 200 years.

PRASHANTH

New wasn't possible before this present.

MATT

New predates novel.

PADMA

Language doesn't act predatory.

MICHELLE

Optimistically it contains its owns.

MORGAN

Was television novel?

PRAVEEN

Yes, I was part of its programming shortly ago, remember.

PRASHANTH

Inside baseball?

MARTIN, TO MORGAN

We were worried about singing and dancing when playing baseball was on the table?

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

Michelle has the TV.

MICHELLE, TO MARTIN AND
MORGAN

Ever since Parag successfully advertised his sponsorship with BeigePage when borrowing his phone to Mary, I might. Loan you my remote.

MELISSA

It's not hers --

CHARLOTTE, TO MELISSA

Who says it hasn't Michelle's name on it?

MICHELLE

It says 'Michelle' on it.

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

It speaks?

PRASHANTH

Perhaps I may corroborate your claims on mysteries.

MICHELLE, TO PRASHANTH

Improbable, we're in Parveen's scene already.

PARVEEN

Sure?

PRASHANTH, TO PARVEEN

Sure, you'll help?

PARVEEN, TO PRASHANTH

I am.

MARCUS

You have helped already?

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

I'd loan the clicker to Praveen before going anywhere near Martin and Morgan with it.

MADELYN, TO MELISSA

After your saying so, she's going the opposite.

MARCUS

(sitting back again) Watch.

MARY

It appears almost as if Michelle hadn't decided how her actions should go.

MICHELLE, TO CHARLOTTE

(whispering, pointing to MARY) It has her name.

MELISSA

Take it as a sign.

CHRIS

It's mine just the same.

PARVATI

I can't argue.

MATT

I can, thanks.

ANYA, TO AVA

(Holding the TV remote) Got precious...

AVA, TO ANYA

But have you cake?

MADELYN

I ate it all -- everything.

PADMA

Why, toast remains.

MAXWELL

Someone hasn't eaten their naan bread?

MASON

I wonder about finding crumbs.

MELISSA

We could phone our ask.

PARAG

My battery's drained.

PRAVEEN

The television says.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

Oh wow, friend returns. TV is airing somehow.

MARCUS

It's streaming baseball.

MARTIN, TO ANYA

Reboot it.

PRASHANTH

Boots again?

MAXWELL

I haven't applied myself to footwear since yoga many scenes and acts before ours.

PRAVEEN

Socks, shoes --

CHARLOTTE

Same difference.

ANYA

"My boots were made for walking" but I've been standing still.

MARCUS

And I was sitting.

ANYA, TO MARCUS

You're wearing boots like these (*models hers*).

PADMA, TO ANYA AND MARCUS

Maybe you could take a walk with those shoes.

PRASHANTH

Around this room; don't leave, please.

MARCUS, TO ANYA

I'm standing, thanks.

ANYA

I walk, except --

MARCUS

With those shoes you could further than most.

ANYA

Room's missed a square or rectangular ontology --
four sides.

MATT, TO ANYA AND MARCUS

We're in 'has.'

MAXWELL

Living structures were octagonal in utopia.

ANYA

Magic stories more floating than inhabiting octagonal
shelter.

MARCUS

Am I the only one who noticed the ceiling's redacted?

MELISSA

Yet we're sheltered.

PADMA

Outside has turned inclement.

MORGAN

Storm clouds gather.

PRAVEEN

(holding the television chord severed from its outlet)
Finally! I'm watching television.

ACT [V]

SCENE [4]

PRAVEEN

Thanks for watching --

PRASHANTH

-- "google play."

PARVATI

Co-produced --

PARAG

-- between --

PADMA

-- us.

MORGAN, TO MARTIN

I suppose we haven't much contributed.

MARTIN

We've done *much* yet not for a drop.

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

(*smiling*) Meanwhile the devil let me down.

MICHELLE

He didn't answer?

MELISSA, TO MICHELLE

I didn't call the Devil, fool!

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA

He doesn't respond to insult, witch!

MAXWELL

Outrageously devil-talk can't be worried.

MATT

Not anymore.

MASON

Watch, or it'll make sense.

MARY

Or visit the Frankenstein-inspired history-of-science collection at Minnesota's Bakken Institute.

MARTIN

I localize at Bakken.

MARCUS

I'm busy.

MADELYN

I love occupying virtual Great Britain.

CHRIS

Britain's a fabulous residence.

CHARLOTTE

the | British | empire | rather |? (the british empire rather?

CHRIS

I've visited.

AVA

Personally love I Internet civilization [, or /] the Internet's civility.

ARCHIE

Obviously some bad actors behave badly.

ANYA

But they were behaving badly before going online asked them to face our audience.

ALISTAIR

Personally I find there's too much confusion about reality online.

ANYA

Some believe with Alistair.

ARCHIE

Complaint's popular about commoners mixing with elites is pronounced 'online.'

AVA

Which is not say "novel."

CHARLOTTE

A narrative trope advertised to readers since the eighteenth-century is impeachable.

CHRIS

Luckily its vehicle, the novel-in-letters or epistolary-sentimental roman, doubled in function as a writing guide.

MADELYN

Will metaphor go away?

MARCUS

It's busy.

MARTIN

Researchers stand behind colleagues' discourse about misinformation with empiricism.

MARY

Sometimes they have better to occupy their time beyond hacking the value of their statistics.

MASON

Propagating misinformation blaming nonacademics for creating misinformation shorts jamming.

MATT

We have to create value for employers.

MAXWELL

Business is business; I rock!

MELISSA

'Farewell metaphoricity, hello cliché?'

MICHELLE

Idioms merely aren't idiotic.

PADMA

Idioms support foreign-language-acquisition.

PARAG

Other language, please.

PARVATI

Somewhere so uncorrupted it's unbelievably human...

PRASHANTH

Please, ladies, we can't boast only we do boast the healthiest democracy on Earth (wishing for accounting from elsewhere!) with, surprise! Low pharma prices.

PRAVEEN, TO PRASHANTH

(*joking*) I'm embarrassed to know you.

ALISTAIR

So? The English brag --

ANYA

-- from time to time --

ARCHIE

-- not incorrigibly --

AVA

Like the mix-up between Fort Bragg and what a YouTuber said Bragg's could be selling with their nooch, which vegans will recognise a nickname --

CHARLOTTE

(*facepalming*) -- for Nutritional Yeast.

CHRIS

I love nooch.

MADELYN

You cook?

CHRIS

I said I knew nooch, didn't I?

MARCUS

(*to Mason*) Your cake was nooched?

MASON

Nooch-y cake's too far, but we shared toast topped with nooch-sprinkled olive oil.

MARTIN

Being TV celebrities, we were absent for noochella snacktime.

MARY

You must stand on it --

MATT

Or eat your words, right or left?

MAXWELL

(ascending to the top of the television set like a cake topper) It feels like balancing.

MELISSA

The food was grateful.

MICHELLE, TO MELISSA

(drawing a line across her throat) If you mention the devil one more time --

MORGAN

Do we categorize plants as a form of intelligent life on Earth?

PADMA

Indubitably.

PARAG

Seriously.

PARVATI

You would have to be a homo sapien to disagree!

PRASHANTH

Let me test that.

PRAVEEN, TO PRASHANTH

You're asking ChatGPT?

PRASHANTH

If Parag lends a BeigePage.

PARAG

Parvati has it.

PADMA

Here you are.

PRASHANTH

(typing) 'Are plants intelligent?'

MICHELLE

Is he flattering you?

PRASHANTH

(nodding and quoting) Yes, in quotes, "a surprisingly deep question."

MARCUS

TV's cancelled.

PARVATI

I can't bear the response.

PARAG

(takes the device, reads what's on it, laughs) It's a comparison text, a comparative text, between plant intelligence, where the intelligence is placed between quotation marks, and artificial "intelligence" without qualification.

ANYA

And we were so close to donating our learning.