

Lucid

by

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230114b

FADE IN:

DAY - EXT. CEMETERY

Damien soberly regards a headstone.

HENDRICKS

(voice over)

Have you spent any time with  
friends recently? Family?

DAMIEN

(voice over)

Lunch with my sister last week.  
We did that new Indian place. She  
was worried it was gonna be too  
spicy. You tried it yet?

HENDRICKS

(voice over)

Not yet. Are you still having the  
dreams?

Damien walks away from the grave.

DAMIEN

(voice over)

The goat curry's good. I think  
it's the coconut milk. Family  
place. Good people.

DAY - INT. DR. HENDRICKS'S OFFICE

DR ALTHEA HENDRICKS sits with her ankles crossed in a comfortable armchair facing her client. If her office furnishings and wardrobe are any indicator, Dr. Hendricks's services don't come cheap.

HENDRICKS

What about the dreams, Damien?  
How long since the last nightmare?

Slouching, Hendricks's client, DAMIEN, manspreads to fill a similar armchair facing the doctor. He thumbs backward through a ragged composition notebook, as if consulting a journal.

DAMIEN

Let's see... Could be... looks like...  
the twelfth. Yeah. The twelfth.

In truth, the notebook is a jumbled scree of doodles, sketches and words. The word "Alex" appears often, virtually carved into paper by an angry ballpoint pen. One page features a sketch of two men, shoulder to shoulder. Daytime in the forest. Both are grinning, outfitted for hunting.

HENDRICKS

Well that's just a few --

DAMIEN

Of February.

Hendricks nods, gently impressed. She uses a smart pen to make a note on the iPad in her lap.

HENDRICKS

Six weeks, then.

DAMIEN

Pretty good, huh?

HENDRICKS

There's no set schedule, Damien.  
Grief has its own timetable.  
Especially for a friend as close  
as Alex was.

DAMIEN

Yeah, but it's still pretty good,  
right, Dr. Hendricks? Not having  
them nightmares no more. That's  
what we're aiming for, right?

HENDRICKS

Does it feel good?

DAMIEN

I'll tell you what feels good:  
getting a solid night of sleep.

HENDRICKS

How much sleep are you getting  
these days?

Damien digs a phone from his pocket.

DAMIEN

Got that healthy app thing you  
were talking about.

HENDRICKS

To track your sleep.

DAMIEN

Yep.

HENDRICKS

How's that going?

He swipes the phone's screen a couple of times.

DAMIEN

'Bout six-and-a-half, seven-  
something hours most nights.

Damien looks at the phone in his palm. The screen displays, not a sleep-tracking app, but a photo of Damien, shoulder to shoulder with his best friend, ALEX. Daytime in the forest. Both are grinning, outfitted for hunting.

HENDRICKS

Without interruption? Is that  
enough?

DAMIEN

What?

HENDRICKS

You're sleeping without  
interruption?

Begrudgingly, Damien wrests his attention from the phone back to the doctor.

DAMIEN

I mean... sometimes I get up to pee,  
but...

HENDRICKS

So the Lunesta... that helped you?

Damien shakes his head.

DAMIEN

Kinda made me dizzy. I took it a couple of nights, but... you ever done any carpentry? Framing crew's always on ladders. Up and down all day.

HENDRICKS

So you just stopped taking... anything?

DAMIEN

Pretty much.

ALEX

(voice over,  
slightly distorted  
by the phone's  
speaker)

Why don't you tell her about the Benadryl you been knocking back with Fireball?

Damien's gaze snaps back to the phone in his palm. The screen displays a still photo of Alex. Daytime in the forest. Grinning, alone, outfitted for hunting.

HENDRICKS

That's a remarkable turn-around, Damien.

Damien tries to disguise a hasty double-take, looking at Hendricks, then back at the phone. The screen displays a moving image of Alex. He might well be Face-Timing from the forest. Grinning, alone, outfitted for hunting.

ALEX

(not quite mocking  
the doctor)

That's a remarkable turn-around, Damien.

HENDRICKS

So... at what point... how far beneath  
the surface...

Dazed, Damien looks back toward his therapist.

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

At what depth in the ocean do you  
suppose the pressure would be so  
intense that you couldn't fart?

DAMIEN

Wh- What?

HENDRICKS

At some point your butthole  
wouldn't be able to keep the water  
from rushing into your body,  
right?

Alex's raucous laughter jerks Damien's gaze back to the  
phone.

ALEX

Man, you should see the look on  
your face! I swear to God, man,  
take a selfie. I just want you to  
see it!

DAMIEN

(to Alex)

Fuck you.

ALEX

C'mon! That was golden, man!  
Classic!

DAMIEN

Fuck. You.

HENDRICKS

And the horse you rode in on.

Damien looks up from his phone

DAMIEN

What?

DAY - EXT. FOREST

Hendricks and Damien are seated in the armchairs, facing each other, exactly as before. But the chairs and their occupants have been relocated to the forest.

HENDRICKS  
(Alex's voice  
emerges from  
Hendricks's moving  
lips)

You heard me. And the horse you  
rode in on.

Damien looks around, stricken, disoriented. Barren  
branches hold up the gray winter sky.

DAMIEN  
Dammit. Dammit!

Disgusted and angry, Damien jumps up and chucks his  
trucker's hat into the chair.

DAMIEN  
(to Hendricks)  
I thought we were done with this!

But it's Alex - grinning, outfitted for hunting - not  
Hendricks who's sitting in the therapist's chair.

ALEX  
Apparently, we're not done until  
you say we're done. Until you  
just. Let me. Go.

Damien whirls to face away from Alex's chair and almost  
runs into Alex, now standing in another part of the  
clearing.

DAMIEN  
Is that it? Is that all I have to  
do to finally get a good night's  
sleep?

ALEX  
Just click your heels, man.  
"There's no place like home."

DAMIEN  
Seriously?

Alex is in yet another location.

ALEX  
(Alex's voice)  
Okay, I lied. It's not that easy.

(seamless switch to  
Hendricks's voice)  
There's no set schedule, Damien.  
Grief has its own timetable.  
Especially for a friend as close  
as Alex was.

Damien puts his hand on Alex's trapezius. Squeezes it twice. Slowly. Damien rests his forehead on Alex's for a long silent beat.

DAMIEN  
(exhausted but  
earnest)  
Especially for a friend as close  
as Alex was.

Damien pats his buddy's upper arm. Starts to walk away, heavy with resignation. After only a few steps, he pauses without turning.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)  
Can you just tell me... was it an  
accident? Did you mean to —?

A single, ringing GUNSHOT cuts Damien off, mid-sentence. He spins suddenly back toward the clearing. Empty. No chairs. No Alex. Damien lifts his hand to his forehead...

INT - NIGHT. DAMIEN'S APARTMENT.

...and drags his palm slowly down his face. Alex is in bed, looking up at the ceiling. His eyes shine with moisture.

DAMIEN  
Fuck.

FADE OUT



FADE IN

These words appear on screen for several seconds

"If you or someone you know is experiencing suicidal thoughts or a crisis, help is available. Dial 988 for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline."

FADE OUT

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