

AVERAGE DAD

Written by

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INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

ADAM wakes to the sound of his wife getting ready for work in the adjoining ensuite bathroom.

He rolls over to reach for his bedside table's top drawer, pulling out a small pipe and tic tac box full of weed, plus a zippo.

EXT. BALCONY - MORNING

Adam bristles a bit at the morning cold, putting his feet into a pair of woolly blue slippers, which ooze rain water, evidently soaked.

He jumps out of the slippers, padding barefoot across wet tile, crouching down to sit on a plastic storage bin that looks like a tree stump.

Adam taps some previously-chopped weed from the tic tac container into the pipe, lighting it with the zippo in short inhaleds that he then holds in for an uncomfortably long time.

He lets it all out at once, taking a few quick breaths. Adam stands, flips up the lid of the tree trunk, then stashes his gear. He takes a peppermint breath spray, sprays it on his tongue once, then an asthma spray, gives it a couple of shots, and then douses himself in some aftershave, also from the trunk.

Adam throws everything back in, quietly closes the lid, and slips back inside.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

The sound of the hair dryer fills the master bedroom as Adam ninja jogs to the foot of the bed, slipping under the bottom of the doona, before his head appears at the pillow, eyes closing, pretending to sleep, just as--

The hair dryer sound stops and the ensuite door swings open, revealing HARMONY--heavily pregnant, dressed for work in the city somewhere that makes you dress up a bit.

HARMONY

Hey, are you up?

Still pretending to sleep, his brow creases.

HARMONY

Babe?

He slowly opens his eyes, looking back at her.

ADAM

Oh hi. Hello. Good morning,  
sleepyhead. Yawn.

HARMONY

What?

ADAM

Huh?

HARMONY

Did you just say yawn?

ADAM

No I yawned.

Harmony frowns.

HARMONY

How's the job search going?

Adam rolls back onto his elbows, awkwardly pretending to rub sleep from his eyes.

ADAM

Man. All the recruiters jerk you around, you know? I keep wasting my time on these meet and greets. They tell me the role they originally called me about has already been filled and then want me to sign up for like an adult skills course and they turn out to be *from* the unlicensed university selling the courses, and maybe there never was a job. It's a... you know, lack of regulation in the sector. That's what they said on the ABC at least.

Harmony gathers a bag and coat from her bedside table.

HARMONY

Does this happen a lot?

Adam shrugs.

ADAM

More than once I guess.

HARMONY

Well just hit that pavement today  
maybe, get out of the house, go for  
a walk.

Adam nods.

ADAM

I will, yeah.

HARMONY

Not with Pete.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Adam and PETE walk to a public soccer field, Adam carrying a  
ball under one arm.

They sit for a while, stretching.

PETE

Are you gonna stop smoking weed  
when the baby comes dude?

Adam thinks a moment.

ADAM

Am I supposed to?

Pete shrugs.

PETE

My mum said she quit smoking when  
she found out she was pregnant with  
me. Fifteen times!

Adam slowly nods.

ADAM

You know something man, I've been  
wanting to quit smoking for a  
while. It makes me really nervous  
sometimes, like I get this feeling  
of anxiety, and then  
disconnectedness from whatever is  
going on, like watching your life  
in a theater.

PETE

Yeah I get that sometimes.

Pete stands, jumping a couple of times, then twisting at the  
hips. Adam stands too.

ADAM

What do you do to fix it?

PETE

Smoke more weed. Ever heard of smoking yourself straight?

ADAM

That's fucking genius. I'd only ever thought of that as a bad thing. I never thought the cure for too much weed would be more weed, if I'm being honest.

Adam kicks the ball to Pete.

PETE

Not with edibles though. The formula breaks down there.

Pete taps it back.

PETE

What about pills and mushrooms?

ADAM

I only really do those on special occasions. Or when I'm offered. By you mostly.

PETE

Want to go eat some now?

Adam shrugs.

ADAM

Sure.

They begin to walk home. Adam remembers the ball, running back for it while Pete waits.

PETE

What about violent movies?

Adam returns to Pete at a jog before they resume walking to Pete's house.

ADAM

What do you mean?

PETE

Well you can't put on the latest episode of Thrones when you have a kid.

ADAM

"Thrones"? No one calls it that.

PETE

Some people I know say it like that.

ADAM

I'm pretty sure I read that kids can't see a 2D surface anyway. And they don't understand language until they're what--two years old? Three?

PETE

Yeah but you can't just have a show on where someone is screaming or fucking in nearly every scene.

Adam frowns.

ADAM

Shit. Yeah the kid will grow up all twisted in the head from the sounds of--oh hey, headphones.

Pete taps Adam on the arm.

PETE

Nice. Headphones.

They walk a bit further before Pete gets a curious look on his face.

PETE

Okay, hang on, how old is the kid before he starts being able to understand images on the screen. Is it like if you don't take him outside he doesn't know what a tree is, so when he sees one on TV his mind just goes oh okay that's a green curtain.

ADAM

Green curtain? Huh?

PETE

I don't know, sorry. I can't remember what I was saying. The shrooms are kicking in a lot right now.

ADAM

We haven't even eaten them yet.

PETE

No from earlier.

ADAM

Oh. How often do you do mushrooms now?

Pete thinks.

PETE

About every three days, I guess? I started out microdosing but I built up a tolerance so now I do heroic doses, only on a microdosing schedule. I guess I'm calling it... heroic microdosing?

ADAM

Holy shit. I *wish* I could do it that often but with all these pregnancy appointments I feel like the doctors can tell if I've smoked weed that day, or eaten mushrooms within the last week. You know on all those detective shows where they consult a guy with a disability that forces him to pay attention to little details? Doctors have that, but with the human body. They can tell how red my eyes are, versus the average for my height and age. I'm paranoid they'll know, and then try to make me quit using any psychology skills they picked up in medical school.

PETE

Probably wouldn't be so bad. Less hard work to quit, if someone tricks you into it.

ADAM

I have a long term plan to quit all drugs, inappropriate spending, and too much masturbation.

PETE

Go on.

ADAM

I'm just going to do it so much  
that I lose all interest.

Pete nods.

PETE

That's crazy enough to work. Do you  
have some pamphlets or anything?  
What system did you say this is?

ADAM

System? No this is my personal  
philosophy.

PETE

So will this happen before or after  
your kid comes?

Adam thinks.

ADAM

Before, I guess. Hopefully. It's  
not a huge deal either way. You  
just need to be in the same room,  
right? Give the baby a banana or a  
bottle when it needs, and put  
Teletubbies on. Is Barney still  
around? That dinosaur show, do you  
know?

Pete nods.

PETE

Jurassic World Two?

ADAM

(counting on fingers)  
Put everything in a lockbox on the  
top shelf of the wardrobe, never  
smoke in the house, and only do  
hard drugs when I leave the home.  
Three basic laws of good  
housekeeping. Boom.

MONTAGE:

As the opening credits roll, acoustic guitar music floods  
audio.

A high speed montage compresses FOUR YEARS of Adam's life  
into about one minute:

The delivery, bringing a baby home, late night nappy changes and running around grabbing items while Harmony breastfeeds, the rooms changing rapidly from nice modern furniture and empty space to toy and barrier-strewn demarcations of kid-friendly items and toys. A second pregnancy, revealed on ultrasound, and then Harmony swelling up again to the size she was in the opening scenes, while the first kid grows into a four year old.

The montage ends with the second delivery, seeing their second BABY for the first time, then the extended family all pouring in with the first KID to meet his brother.

As the high speed footage begins slowing to realtime, Adam smiles and nods, gradually fading into the background, before rolling out of the crowd and the room, into a hallway, and onto the roof, crossing a skywalk to a multi-level car park, where he enters a compact SUV, leaning over to retrieve a brass smokeless torpedo pipe and lighter. He lights the tip of the shiny tube, lowering the window a crack to exhale.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Adam wakes again to the sound of Harmony getting ready in the ensuite.

He stealthily rolls out of bed, ninja-running to the balcony.

EXT. BALCONY - MORNING

Adam almost baseball-slides into the tree trunk, frantically pulling out his equipment to fill the pipe and light it quick as he can. He leans back, holding it a moment, then gasps it out, running back to the door, stopping, returning to the trunk to spray aftershave in his mouth and mint on his shirt, spluttering, tossing them back in.

Adam jumps up again, going to the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Adam ninja runs to the bed, seeing Harmony standing, dressed for work already, at the open bathroom door as he takes a huge leap onto the mattress.

He locks eyes with her mid-air before landing comfily amongst the doona and pillows, bouncing a little. He rolls into a casual sideways pose, leaning his head on his hand, propped up on one elbow, twirling the blanket with his finger.

ADAM  
(casual)  
Morning, crazy.

HARMONY  
Crazy? Huh? What are you doing?

Adam looks down at the bed.

ADAM  
Hm? Oh, don't be crazy. I'm just testing the springs. The bed's about to go out of warranty so I figured it needs a good jumping-on before we lose our chance to get a replacement.

Her demeanor softens.

HARMONY  
Oh, well that's actually fairly proactive, thanks.

ADAM  
You're very welcome. That's a little less crazy of you.

He rolls out of bed.

HARMONY  
What?

The sound of a CRYING baby from the other room.

HARMONY  
Can you walk him to daycare while I do the feed?

ADAM  
How? He's a baby? Oh you mean the other guy.

Harmony frowns.

HARMONY  
Are you high?

ADAM  
Psh. No. I just woke up. Are you... crazy?

Harmony picks up her bag and coat, leaving the room.

INT. NURSERY - MORNING

Harmony picks up the crying BABY, now six months old, settling him on her lap.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - MORNING

Adam enters the toddler's room, seeing little STEVE asleep still. Adam gets his phone out, browsing reddit for a bit.

After a while, Harmony leans in.

HARMONY

What are you doing?

Adam nods toward the still sleeping kid.

ADAM

He's asleep. They say you're not supposed to wake them up.

HARMONY

Who said that?

ADAM

The Morning Show. Or the Today show. The one that comes on after Today. What is that? M\*A\*S\*H?

HARMONY

I've got to go to work.

Adam looks at the baby in her arms.

ADAM

What's he doing today? Is your mum coming by?

HARMONY

She can't 'til the afternoon, remember? You're supposed to have Steve at daycare by now, to look after this one.

The sleeping toddler stirs. They both watch a moment.

ADAM

Hm. Okay cool, I can handle two of them while I get him ready.

She seems a bit doubtful, handing the baby over with mild hesitation.

HARMONY

Call me if you can't find anything.  
I've gotta go.

While she exits, Adam holds the baby out in front of him, contemplating it. It smiles at him. He nods, forcing a smile back.

Steve now rolls over and sits up, looking at Adam and the baby briefly before bursting into tears.

The baby also begins to cry in response.

Adam runs out of the room with the baby, putting it down in the hall.

ADAM

(to baby)

Don't take it personally, he always  
does that when he wakes up.

Adam returns to the still crying toddler, patting him on the head.

ADAM

Want to get ready for kinder?

STEVE

(crying)

No!

ADAM

Breakfast?

STEVE

(howling)

No!

Adam thinks.

ADAM

Playstation?

The kid stops crying instantly.

STEVE

Okay.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - MORNING

Steve plays Playstation while the baby crawls around on the floor and Adam wedges shoes onto socks that don't match on Steve, also picking up toast to shove into the Steve's mouth while he's distracted by the menus of the PS4.

Adam twists back to look at the screen, double-taking.

ADAM

Dude you need to do something other than just browse around the menus.

Adam distractedly shoves toast into the baby's mouth while trying to reach over to the Playstation controller, which Steve yanks away, continuing to browse menus on the screen, with an annoying custom tone every time the cursor moves.

ADAM

What is that obnoxious sound every time you move the stick? This theme looks like dog... poo. Hey don't go into settings! We talked about this! Don't--hey! Don't change the language, I can't change it back again. Steve!

Adam notices the toast, pulling it out of the baby's mouth.

ADAM

Oh shit, wrong one. Do you eat toast yet? You don't... *not* eat it, right?

STEVE

Shit. Wrong one. Shhhhhit!

Adam freezes.

ADAM

Oh no, don't um, that's an adult word bud.

STEVE

It's a *shitty* looking theme.

ADAM

Hey we talked about this. Your teacher talked to me like a lot about this. Remember the whole teacher annoying daddy thing, buddy? Remember all that threatening I did, to make you stop doing it.

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

Remember all the screaming mate?  
That day you wouldn't stop saying  
fffff... oh dear.

STEVE

I would *not* stop saying fuck that  
time.

Adam frowns.

ADAM

Yeah, I... can't help feeling  
you're trolling me a little bit  
right now. Like you know it's going  
to get me in a lot of shit--*shit*--  
ah, shirt! It's going to get me in--  
a shirt. You know? That saying? To  
be in a shirt?

STEVE

Shit shirt!

ADAM

No I mean, shirt is what I've been  
saying this whole time, you were  
hearing me incorrectly there,  
little... sausage ears. Shirt! Am I  
right guys?

Adam looks at the baby for backup--he begins to scream so  
loud that it fills audio and visibly hurts Adam and Steve's  
ears. No reason apparent, just something to do.

ADAM

(wincing)  
*Fucking--Fudge! FUDGE-ING!*

Steve looks away from the menus long enough to make an angry  
face at the baby.

STEVE

(shouts)  
Fucking fudge guy, stop that shit!

Adam puts his head in his hands. The baby screams again. Adam  
lifts his head, sniffing the air.

ADAM

Okay which one of you just took a  
poo in his pants?

STEVE

Not me, I shit in the toilet now.

ADAM  
Can you *please* stop saying--

The baby's next scream drowns out a few words.

ADAM  
--and never use the phrase "asian drivers" in front of your teacher again.

STEVE  
The teacher really annoys daddy.

ADAM  
I know but you can't tell *her* that, okay? (pause) You... didn't tell her that did you?

Steve keeps playing Playstation, completely silent. Adam sighs. The baby screams again. Adam gets up.

ADAM  
(to baby)  
Okay wait here, let me get you a nappy. (to Steve) Can you watch him for a second?

Steve looks at the baby, then the screen, then the baby again, then Adam.

STEVE  
(cold)  
No.

Adam sighs again, more drawn out and pained, leaving the room a moment.

When he returns, the baby is shredding a dry Weet-Bix, having dragged it across the entire floor's carpet from corner to corner in the few seconds he was gone.

ADAM  
(incensed)  
Who gave you a fucking *Weet-Bix*?

STEVE  
(shouts)  
*Fucking Weet-Bix!*

The baby chews on pieces of Weet-Bix, laughing at Adam.

ADAM

Yeah it's hilarious when you're not  
the poor asshole who has to clean  
it--ah for frog sake how do I *stop*?

STEVE (O.C.)

You asshole!

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Adam carries the baby in one arm, dragging Steve, who watches ABC Kids on Adam's phone, barely paying attention to walking, constantly stumbling. Adam has a small purple backpack that barely fits over his shoulder and keeps sliding down the arm holding Steve's hand every time he stumbles.

They proceed like this down the block before reaching the exterior gate of Steve's KINDER.

INT. KINDER - MORNING

Entering through the interior door, Adam puts the baby down on a pile of kids' shoes, snatching his phone back from Steve.

Steve's face immediately contorts into pre-tantrum, but Adam quickly whips a five dollar note out of his pocket, waving it in Steve's face.

ADAM

Hey! Look! Look at this! You get  
this if you don't cry.

Steve opens his eyes, sees the note, and takes it, calmly joining the other children while MARIE, the teacher walks over to Adam with a falsely pleasant warm smile. She has a vaguely hippie/artistic/unwashed vibe about her, and is generally condescending, only having that gear that interacts with children.

MARIE

Hi Adam, we were expecting you a  
little while ago.

Adam gives her half a wave while bending down to pick up the baby.

ADAM

Ah. Yeah. He slept in today. I read  
in a medical journal that you  
should let them just wake up  
naturally.

MARIE

I noticed Steve has had a bit of trouble with his food recently.

Coming back up, Adam frowns, a bit confused.

ADAM

Trouble? What kind?

MARIE

Well, for one thing, he just keeps licking the salt off his crackers without eating them.

Adam nods.

ADAM

Ah, yeah, he loves salt. If you ask him his favourite food--and he's in the mood to answer--he'd definitely say salt.

MARIE

He's already very limited in what he will agree to eat, it might be a good idea to encourage him at home to eat more things.

ADAM

Oh we try. My wife made him chips the other day, he just licked all the salt off them. I came inside and thought she'd put vinegar on them. I kept saying, "man this vinegar is really weak tasting", but she wasn't listening so it took us a while to figure out what happened. I ate half a bowl and they were still soggy. Who knows how much salt that is. (pause) Probably a lot.

Her passive stare has twisted into a sort of confused frown.

MARIE

Also he keeps hitting the other kids.

ADAM

Did they hit him first?

MARIE

Why?

ADAM

I taught him never hit first, only hit back. I think I said harder, but I stressed only hit *back*.

MARIE

The rule we try to enforce here is never hit at *all*.

Adam frowns again.

ADAM

Oh. (pause) What if you kind of need to though?

MARIE

Why would you need to?

ADAM

Like in prison. People will think you're a soft target if... you...

He trails off, distracted by Steve in background, over her shoulder, putting another kid in a headlock completely unprovoked, snatching the toy off him, then tossing him onto a beanbag.

MARIE

We wouldn't want the children to feel like prisoners here, Mr.--

ADAM

Ah you know what, I can have a word with him tonight, really play up the nonviolence angle.

She pivots effortlessly back to the pleasant smile and nods, returning to the class.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adam walks home with the baby slung over his shoulder in one arm, browsing his phone with the free hand.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

The baby sits staring at Adam on the lounge room floor.

Adam sits opposite, staring back.

ADAM

What time do you sleep?

The baby looks around, then back at Adam.

ADAM

Fair play. Okay, well I'm going to play Halo... the violence is all cartoonish so I assume that won't traumatise you... right?

Adam switches on the X-Box and TV. When he turns around, the baby is gone.

He looks around the room a moment, before absently picking up the controller.

He looks around again.

ADAM

Hey man.

Adam browses menus, clicking through to Halo.

ADAM

(louder)  
You there?

Adam waits for the loading screen. He tosses the controller on the couch and goes looking.

ADAM

Yo!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Adam enters the kitchen, having a quick look around. He's about to leave when he hears rustling behind one of the open cupboard doors.

Adam walks to the door, looking over it to see the baby chewing on a (still sealed) blister pack of Panadol.

He snatches it from the baby.

ADAM

Ah! I was looking for these.

He pops one out and puts it in his mouth, leaning his head into the kitchen sink to swallow water.

ADAM

Good eye, son.

He picks up the baby and hands the half empty blister pack back to his eager hands, returning to the lounge.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Adam plays Halo with the baby on his lap, leaned back against his chest, clutching the Panadol, nodding off slowly.

Every time Adam jerks the controller, the baby wakes briefly, then nods off again.

A rustling of keys at the nearby front door.

Adam quickly switches off the X-Box and TV with the controller as they go in the latch.

The door opens to reveal HELEN, a woman in her mid-sixties, already looking annoyed.

She finds Adam sitting on the couch quietly, nursing the sleeping baby, stroking his hair thoughtfully.

Adam looks up, as if just noticing her presence.

ADAM  
(whispers)  
Oh, hi Helen.

She looks him up and down, scowling.

HELEN  
You're letting him play with  
Panadol?

Adam sighs, the baby half waking as he stands and hands it to her. She cradles the child, quickly removing the blister pack from his tight grasp.

As she rocks the baby back to sleep in her arms, Adam stands looking around the room, uncomfortable.

ADAM  
So, ah... what's the plan? Heading  
out?

She looks at him a long moment.

HELEN  
My car is being repaired. Harmony  
and I both explained this to you  
several times throughout the course  
of the week. We'll be staying here  
today.

ADAM  
(nods jovially)  
Cool.

HELEN

Did you have some job seeking you needed to get on with?

He locks eyes with her a moment. One hand reaches stealthily into his pocket.

ADAM

I'm always job seeking, Helen.

HELEN

Of course.

Close and tight on Adam's hand in his pocket as it manipulates the touch screen of his phone with practiced ease.

Unseen, he brings up a fake call app, pressing the default 'Call me - 5 seconds' button.

Adam is walking to his desktop PC in the corner when the phone rings in his pocket. He answers it.

ADAM

Hello Adam speaking. (pause) Oh, yes I did submit an application for that particular role. (pause) You do? (pause) Yes I can, just a moment.

He holds the phone to his shoulder, looking at Helen as he crosses the room to the balcony door.

ADAM

(to Helen, stage whisper)  
I'm going to take this outside. (to phone) No not you sir. Well yes it is relevant to you I suppose--sir? Sir! Semantics, sir. I'm going to the balcony to speak with you further. (to Helen) Balcony. Yeah? (to phone) No, again, not you sir, I'm speaking to my mother in law. (pause) On a scale of one to ten, sir? If I'm being honest? About a zero.

Adam slides open the balcony door and exits, closing it behind him.

She scowls at him through it as he disappears beyond view, returning to the overly animated phonecall.

## EXT. BALCONY - AFTERNOON

Adam crouches in the one corner of the balcony that can't be seen through the glass sliding door, lighting his pipe.

When it's glowing hot, he keeps puffing it to keep it lit while taking out his phone.

Close on the phone, reading a forum thread that gets down in the weeds on a niche game design topic.

## INT. LOUNGE ROOM - AFTERNOON

Adam sticks his head back in the room through the carefully opened balcony door, looking around.

He stares at the carpet, listening. The faint sound of a church hymn being sung from the nursery.

Adam slips in and slides the door closed gradually, then ninja runs across the lounge, snatching his jacket and laptop in a single silent swoop, then delicately leaping both feet at once into an already-laced pair of oversized sneakers.

He leans hard against the front door then slowly turns the handle until it makes a loud, click, flinging it open from one hand to the other, rolling out, then whipping it closed, and finally a ten second long easing of the wood into the frame and the latch back into its catch.

## EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Adam walks with the laptop under his arm, patting down his jacket pockets until one of them makes a metallic drumming sound.

He removes a mints tin from the pocket, opening it to reveal three joints and a lighter.

## EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Adam sits at a picnic table amongst a scenic riverside area, coding on his laptop while smoking one of the joints.

He occasionally glances around, typing with one hand while smoking.

Finishing the second joint, he fishes out the third, lighting the tip with its still-glowing roach.

He's distracted by something he's reading on the screen, letting the freshly lit joint hang on his lip while he leans over to edit a line, typing with both hands now.

After a moment he leans back, taking a long draw on it, reading what he wrote.

He smiles, slowly nodding, toking it again. Adam looks up at the sky, letting the smoke waterfall out.

EXT. PETE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Adam sees Pete in his driveway as he approaches Pete's suburban home, where he lives with his parents and siblings.

When he arrives at Pete's side, Adam sees that Pete is spraying a garden hose on its hardest setting at his twelve year old kid BROTHER.

ADAM  
What did he do?

PETE  
Who?

Adam nods at the kid.

PETE  
I forgot actually. (to kid) Hey what did you do?

PETE'S BROTHER  
Saved over your Sim City game.

Pete grows suddenly angry.

PETE  
Fuck that's right!

Pete takes a step closer, aiming the fine powerful spray at the kid's nose.

PETE'S BROTHER  
Oww!

PETE  
Every day for a year, fucking turd muppet.

Pete hands the hose to his brother.

PETE

Here keep spraying yourself, I  
gotta go talk to Adam for a bit.

As they enter the house, Pete's brother resumes spraying himself on the top of the head.

Pete leans back out the door.

PETE

The face, you fuck!

PETE'S BROTHER

Aw man.

He switches to the face.

INT. PETE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Pete leads Adam into his room, sitting on the single bed with unmade Batman sheets while Adam sets up his laptop amidst fast food wrappers and half full drinking glasses on the desk beside it.

Adam opens the screen to the same coding window, typing something, hitting enter.

A new window appears, showing a simple 2D platformer, with a distinctive art style.

Pete leans forward, using the keyboard to move the character around.

PETE

Oh rad, you skinned it. This  
background art looks pretty decent.

ADAM

Go into the cave again.

Pete walks the main character into a cave onscreen. The game pauses.

PETE

Annnnd fail.

ADAM

It's just thinking.

PETE

About what? I thought it pre-loaded  
all the assets.

ADAM

Not anymore. It's doing some procedural generation now. It's creating new terrain features on the fly.

The game resumes, showing the character emerging from the same cave.

Pete frowns, leaning in closer to the screen.

PETE

It didn't work though dude. I'm in the same place.

Adam stares at the screen, suppressing a slight grin.

ADAM

Right.

PETE

It's supposed to take you to the dungeon though... yeah?

Adam looks at Pete.

ADAM

I was getting a bit bored making dungeons. I started thinking about what else we could do with the caves.

Pete looks at the screen again.

PETE

So what is it?

ADAM

Walk around a bit.

Pete moves the character back to where it started, seeing different features there--more trees.

PETE

My seed pods and honey are gone. They're not meant to disappear when you go through the cave.

ADAM

They didn't disappear. The honey...

Adam alt-tabs, reading technical output from a background window that generates lines of code.

ADAM

Was eaten by a curious bear. And the seeds... well, it's obvious right?

Pete leans in close, looking at the trees.

PETE

Trees?

ADAM

Right.

Pete frowns, still confused.

PETE

Wait, so what does the cave do? Where did I go?

ADAM

You time traveled.

Pete stares at the screen a moment, blinking.

ADAM

Go to the other cave.

Pete slowly looks at Adam, unable to hide his ongoing confusion.

Adam leans across, controlling the character, entering a cave on the other side of screen.

The game thinks a moment, then resumes with the character exiting the cave. Adam pilots the small figure to the same place--this time there's only bare ground. Animated snow falls.

Pete watches it all closely, dumbfounded.

ADAM

See? We just time traveled back to a hundred years before the seeds were planted. There's nothing there now. If we plant more seeds-- assuming we travel to spring first, we could go forward again, and use the trees to reach like, maybe a high place.

Pete snaps out of his frozen gaze, leaning forward to clutch both of Adam's shoulders, catching him off guard.

ADAM

Uh, what?

PETE

Dude. That is fucking amazing. I literally can't think of any game doing this--or at least doing it right. And if there is, fuck them, we thought of it too. *This* is the game bro. This is what you do. You time travel to solve puzzles using the mechanic and relevant items in unique ways.

Adam's grin spreads, his growing enthusiasm matching Pete's. He stands, lifting the laptop to look closer at the screen.

ADAM

Right? It *is* a good idea. It felt like one as soon as it happened.

PETE

That shit is going to make us a million dollars each.

Adam laughs.

ADAM

I only want to clear fifty thousand. Then I don't have to get another real job.

PETE

What's your to do list app made so far?

Adam sighs.

ADAM

Three dollars sixty-five.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

Adam returns to the house to find the lounge empty, dimly lit by a hallway light, dirty dishes strewn on the nearby dining room table.

He puts his laptop down and goes to the table, hearing children's laughter, then Harmony's voice from the bathroom at the end of the hall.

Adam begins stacking the dishes, looking down at them absently.

His hands stop moving, paused there, about to lift the whole stack. He sighs. He puts the dishes back down, taking a couple of steps toward the hallway, listening to the laughter, rising and falling.

In the half light, his eyes look shiny with tears. Adam smiles, listening to the voices. He takes another hesitant step toward the hall, then looks at the balcony door.

He looks down at the floor for a long moment, then walks to the balcony, exiting the room.

While the door is open we hear street noises flood audio, silenced again when it slides closed.

Linger on the closed door a long moment. The bath time laughter rises and fades a few more times.

Fade to black. End of episode one.