

"TAKING THEM ON"

By

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FADE IN:

VOICE (O.S.)
Will you just fucking take them!

INT. PUB — CLOSING TIME

A beer is slammed down, froth is wasted. The voice belongs to PAUL, an alright sort of bloke; clean-shaven, a receding hairline and wears stylish clothes.

PAUL
It's not gonna fucking hurt you.

CHRIS (O.S.)
You don't know that, Paul.

Opposite Paul, is CHRIS. Chris has four-day stubble, disheveled hair and dresses how he feels; in all black.

PAUL
Yeah, I do actually. It's called Prozac. Not Con-zac. Cause the pros out way the cons, bitch.

CHRIS
It's called Fluoxetine because the NHS doesn't spring for the branded shit.

Chris reads the ridiculously long side-effect list.

CHRIS
Amy's amazon wish list is shorter than this. Hair loss?!

Paul laughs.

PAUL
It's a copy and paste job, will you relax? Drink your beer.

Chris' eyes drift to Paul's widower's peak.

CHRIS
What if I lose my hair?

PAUL
(sarcastic)
You'll die. Accept, you won't. Plus, you may also lose the urge to throw yourself off the Sabrina Bridge.

CHRIS
Amy would hate it though.

Paul downs the rest of his pint.

PAUL
Amy hates everything. I'm getting
another. Want one?

INT. BIRCHLEY CLOSE – NIGHT

Chris and Paul stumble home. Paul leans on Chris, he is the drunker of the two, barely able to walk in a straight line. They drunk-talk in jaded earnest.

CHRIS
She doesn't fucking get it!

PAUL
She's busy.
(with a laugh)
Busy being a cunt!

They laugh over excitedly.

PAUL (CONT'D)
No. No, to be fair to her, she's just a
girl.
(sings in 1975 style)
Cause's they're just girls!

CHRIS
(also sings)
Breaking hearts!

Paul stops and looks Chris in the eye...or in where his drunk state thinks are Chris' eyes.

CHRIS
I hate that song.

PAUL
Me too mate, me too.

INT. CHRIS' HOUSE – NIGHT

Chris lets himself into the dark hallway of his home. He chucks his keys down and kicks his shoes off.

INT. BEDROOM – DAY

Chris creeps into his room. AMY, his girlfriend, snores away contently.

Chris lies down, fully clothed, next to her. He stares into the abyss of the ceiling's peeling paintwork. Chris takes a deep breath in. He breathes out his frustrations and closes his eyes.

Amy's snoring disrupts his peace. Chris' eyes snap open.

INT. CHRIS' COMPUTER DEN – NIGHT

Chris takes the commanders chair at his awesome make-shift computer station.

Chris cracks a smile. The familiar log in screen for *World of Warcraft* (WOW) pixilates into clarity.

COMPUTER (V.O.)

For ages, the fallen titan Sargeras plotted to scour all life from Azeroth. To this end, Sargeras possessed the human sorcerer Medivh and compelled him to contact Gul'dan, an orc warlock on the world of Draenor

Chris becomes engrossed in the game.

INT. CHRIS' COMPUTER DEN – DAY

Now in daylight, Chris is now asleep with his face on the keyboard. An O.S. BANG! Wakes him.

More banging comes from the kitchen.

Chris yawns and rubs the sleep from his face.

AMY (O.S.)

(Indistinct girl-talk down the phone)

Chris stretches. He returns to where he left off on WOW.

Amy walks in, on the phone. In the daylight, we see that she is a little out of Chris' league. Brunette, chiseled features; stunning. A girl from a French beauty mag.

CHRIS
Morning.

Amy waves him off. Chris cringes at her girl-talk.

AMY
(down the phone)
OH BABE! That really is amazing! Yeah.
Yeah babe. I can't wait. Oh you too,
babe. Yeah he'll be well up for it. Okay
babe, speak soon. Love ya!

Amy hangs up.

CHRIS
(a hint of sarcasm)
Morning.

Amy looks him up and down. Chris stiffens.

AMY
Did you sleep at your desk again?

CHRIS
Was that Debbie?

Amy picks up loose items of Chris' clothing and tosses them into the hamper. She catches a glance at his screen.

AMY
Why are you playing kids games again?

CHRIS
Was that Debbie? I thought I heard you committing me to something.

AMY
Committing. What are you like? Yes,
we're having dinner with Deb and Dave.
Anyways, I'm going out now. Good luck
with the work- or whatever it is you are
doing.

Amy exits. Chris resumes playing computer games.

INT. BATHROOM — DAY

Chris strips. He smells himself. Yep, time for a shower.
He turns the water on, lets it run for a moment.

Chris takes out his tablet box from the cabinet. He reads the name, again. His eyes gloss over the description:

MAY CAUSE FATIGUE, NERVOUSNESS, POOR CONCENTRATION, UNCONTROLLABLE SHAKY MOVEMENTS ECT..

The mirror steams up. Chris thinks for a moment.

Then, quickly - as if saying 'fuck it', he pops a pill from the blister strip - it's green, yellow and intimidating.

Chris swallows it and stares at his misty reflection.

INT. SHOWER - MOMENTS LATER

The water beats down on Chris' shoulders. He stares at the stray hair and sock fluff being washed away.

INT. CHRIS' COMPUTER DEN - DAY

The now clean Chris sits back at his desk. His hair is still wet and he now looks fresh. He fires up his journal. It's an empty word document.

Chris types:

Bollocks day 1. Feel no different.

Chris thinks for a moment. He adds:

On the plus side, feel no worse.

Chris saves the document and loads WOW.

INT. CHRIS' COMPUTER DEN - LATER

A few hours later. Chris is dead to the world. He snores loudly. The doorbell chimes. The doorbell double chimes. Then chimes again. Chris stirs awake.

INT. ENTRANCE - DAY

The front door opens to Paul on the other side.

PAUL
Fancy coming for a run?

CHRIS
(with a grin)
Take a guess.

PAUL
One day you'll will.

Chris holds the door open for Paul. Paul walks in.

CHRIS
Today is not that day. And spoiler
alert, tomorrow won't be either.

INT. LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Paul takes his usual spot on the sofa and rests his feet
on the coffee table.

PAUL
How's the programming going? I was
talking to Stevo – you remember Stevo?
Steve Garson. Well, yeah, he asked what
you were up to and I said you were
building a video game. He seemed really
excited.

Paul picks up a girly magazine.

Underneath is a leaflet: *Worcester Healthy Minds*.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hey Chris, mate? What does Amy think of
this whole thing?

Chris re-enters. With two Dr Peppers – one Lite.

CHRIS
What did you say?

Chris hands Paul the Dr Pepper Lite.

PAUL
I said what does Amy think of all this?
Cheers. Not that I value what that
narcissistic fuck thinks.

CHRIS
She tries not to talk about it. You want
to watch *Bargain Hunt* or *Cash in the
Attic*?

PAUL
Cash in the attic.

CHRIS
Amy and I are going to see Deb and
Dave's new house tonight. Fun.

PAUL
See if he's still a cunt while you're at
it.

CHRIS
Hopefully his new house came with a new
fucking personality.

INT. CHRIS' COMPUTER DEN – LATER

Chris, now dressed in 'going out' clothes, plays WOW. He
is now on level fifteen.

Chris minimizes the game. Then goes onto his favorites
list. Right at the bottom is *Unreal Engine*: a game
development site. He ponders it.

Chris goes back onto WOW.

AMY (O.S.)
Chris?

Chris doesn't take his eyes off the screen.

CHRIS
You look nice, babe.

Amy stands naked accept for a towel.

AMY
So this dress isn't too revealing then
babe?

CHRIS
I'd say not revealing enough, honey.

Chris, as if sensing he's said something not right, turns
his head. He beholds the towel-clad Amy.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Should I go load the car?

Chris phone beeps. Amy picks it up.

AMY
Your boyfriend.

TAKE YOUR PILLS ASSHOLE – Love, Paul.

CHRIS
I'm really looking forward to tonight,
babe. It's been too long since we did
something as a couple.

AMY
Yeah. It will be nice to show the world
you're back to your usual self.

INT. AMY'S CAR (MOVING) – DAY

Amy drives them in her little pink car. It sort of
resembles a piggy bank on wheels.

Chris couldn't look more out of place if he dressed up as
a cactus and stood by the north pole. As Amy speaks,
Chris stares at the lines passing on the road.

AMY
I'm so happy for them! Dave is such a
sweetheart. He always buys Deb flowers
and makes her feel special- Chris? Do
you think we need a bigger house?

He shifts uncomfortably, grips his stomach, then his
throat.

AMY
What?

CHRIS
Nothing. Just...I feel like I've got
something stuck in my throat.

Chris swallows hard.

AMY
We'll get you a drink when we get to Deb
and Dave's.

CHRIS
No it feels like...can you look to see if
my throat is closing up?

AMY

Your throat is not closing up, Chris. If it was, you wouldn't be talking. Just calm down, ok? You're fine. Just try not to think about it.

CHRIS

Amy please! Just see if my throat is closing up. I can't breathe.

He breathes just fine, but swallows like he's forgotten how to.

AMY

You're still talking, Chris!

Chris composes himself.

CHRIS

Yeah. Yeah. Ignore me. Sorry.

Amy eyes him with worry. Chris continues fidgeting.

INT. DEB AND DAVE'S HOUSE – DAY

DAVE opens the door. He and DEB are those bland friends your partner has and you have to socialize with. Chris and Amy are welcomed in.

EXT. GARDEN – DAY

Chris stands by himself staring out at the lawn. He smokes a few drags on his cigarette. But then stops. Screws up his face in disgust. He texts Paul.

CHRIS: I don't feel good!

PAUL: It's normal. Don't worry ☺

INT. DINING ROOM – DAY

Chris fidgets at the dinner table. Dave eyes him like he's a Martian.

Amy and Deb carry plates of food.

CHRIS

Thank you.

Dave tucks in. As does Amy and Deb.

Chris swallows weirdly again.

DEB
You ok Chris?

AMY
He's fine, aren't you, babe? He's just a little under the weather at the moment.

DEB
Are you sure?

DAVE
How's the job, Chris? You still at IPS?

Chris shifts uncomfortably. He looks like he's going to throw up.

AMY
Chris is taking a little break from them.

DEB
I told you that, Dave. They never listen do they? I don't blame you Chris, everyone goes through phases of not being totally tuned in.

CHRIS
Can I use your bathroom?

DAVE
Down the hall.

Chris limps off.

Amy leans in.

AMY
Sorry about him. He's going through a bit of a rough spot at the moment.

Chris heard that, he winces.

INT. THE BATHROOM — DAY

Chris drops down in front of the toilet and empties his stomach. He throws up again. He cries with pain. Chris collapses onto the bathroom floor, defeated.

He takes out his phone and texts PAUL.

CHRIS: Dude I really don't think this was a good idea.

He waits a second. Taps the screen - wishing Paul would reply. He texts AMY.

CHRIS: I need to go home.

CHRIS: I'm sorry.

CHRIS: I'm so sorry.

CHRIS: Please can we go home?

CHRIS: Amy??

INT. AMY'S CAR - NIGHT

Amy drives home. Chris is passed out on the back seat. She pulls into the driveway.

AMY

Babe. We're home.

Amy helps Chris out of the car.

CHRIS

I'm sorry.

AMY

I know, I know. It's ok, come on.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris curls up in the bed. Amy joins him.

CHRIS

Can we cuddle?

Amy holds him. She strokes his hair.

AMY

Chris. I'm worried now. Maybe it's not such a good idea for you to take the pills?

CHRIS

I need to do something.

AMY

Why? You were so happy a few months ago. Then the whole IPS thing. What's going on?

CHRIS
I feel like I'm drowning.

AMY
Like the throat thing?

CHRIS
No. Like all the time. I feel like I'm
drowning. I don't want to do anything.

AMY
Well you weren't exactly outgoing
before. Unless it involved the pub.

Chris laughs weakly.

AMY
Is there anything I can do?

CHRIS
No. They are my demons. I have to take
them on.

AMY
I can help you if you like?

CHRIS
Yeah. Yeah I'd like that.

They settle into each other's arms.

AMY
I don't want to be your enabler. I want
to try and be the one thing in your life
that stays consistent and optimistic.
You don't need a buddy, you've got Paul.
I thought if I acted like everything was
ok it would be.

CHRIS
It will be. I just need more time.

INT. BEDROOM — DAY

Chris is alone in bed. He stirs awake naturally. He
glances at his clock radio. It 1pm in the afternoon.

CHRIS
Shit.

He sits up. And takes his phone.

MISSED CALL FROM PAUL (4)

IMESSAGE FROM PAUL (3)

He looks at the messages.

PAUL: Why? What do you mean?

PAUL: Bud, do you mean the pills??

PAUL: You have to feel crap before you can feel better, Chris man. Don't worry x

INT. THE LIVING ROOM – DAY

Chris watches TV. Paul walks in.

PAUL
Afternoon, sunshine.

CHRIS
Morning.

Chris shifts so Paul can sit down.

PAUL
What are we watching?

CHRIS
Tennis.

PAUL
Why?

Chris points to the remote. It's just out of reach.

Paul changes the channel to *Cash in the Attack*.

PAUL
My nan has that vase.

CHRIS
Mine did too when I was a kid.

PAUL
Fifty quid.

CHRIS
Forty.

TV VOICE (O.S.)
The bidding will start at Thirty pounds;
do I have thirty pounds?

PAUL
Dammit.

Paul leaves the room.

CHRIS
(calling to Paul)
We're out of lite.

Paul returns with drinks.

PAUL
I'm on level six of WOW.

CHRIS
Twenty-two.

PAUL
Fuck you.

The boys laugh. Chris rests his head on Paul.

CHRIS
Amy thinks I shouldn't go rushing into
another job just yet.

PAUL
Good. I agree.

Chris puts his hand on Paul's forehead.

CHRIS
Hmm. Warm. Not a robot.

PAUL
She is right. You need to focus on you.
We work to make life easier, we don't
live to work.

CHRIS
Love you.

PAUL
Love you too. Hey, when you're a famous
game designer, we'll laugh about this.

Chris chuckles.

PAUL (CONT'D)
See, you're laughing already.

Int. bedroom – day

Chris is shaken gently awake.

AMY

Chris. I'm going to work. Have a good day.

She kisses him on the forehead.

Chris stirs awake. He picks up with phone.

IMESSAGE FROM PAUL (1)

PAUL: Remember, the secret of getting ahead is getting started (Yes I'm quoting Mark Twain) G'luck x

INT. COMPUTER DEN – DAY

Chris sits down at his desk. He loads up WOW. Then, reconsiders and closes it.

He loads up *Unreal Engine*.

Chris picks up his notebook and begins to sketch a video game design. Smiling to himself, he makes the first lines of progress on the page as he takes on the getting started demon.