

THE METAMORPHOSIS

Written by

Luke Cooper-Martin

Based on, The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

(The original work originally published in 1915, The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka, is public domain and free of known copyright restrictions.)

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

A COCKROACH crawls up, up, up a dirty white wall.

Past a poster of a BIG TITTY ANIME GIRL. Up a blackwood bookcase shelf with a figurine of a BIG TITTY ANIME GIRL. Across a bed with a BIG TITTY ANIME GIRL BODY PILLOW. Across another wall with, you guessed it, a-

CRASH! Hurtled towards the cockroach is an APPLE, smashing straight into it with deadly precision.

Feet from the impact GREGOR SAMSA (24, Black, 4chan introvert) is sitting at a desk on his laptop, and turns to see MRS. SAMSA (40s, Black, very New Age LA) by the door, putting her arm down.

MRS. SAMSA

Gregor, your room's aura positively reeks of... of...

GREGOR

Mortgage payments?

MRS. SAMSA

Death!

GRETE SAMSA (17, Black, bubbly), the younger daughter, appears in the distance at the end of the hallway, bright pink backpack on like a beacon.

GRETE

OHMYGOD GREGOR, the interview came out!

(disappears-- reappears)

... Oh and Mom I'm gonna be late for acting.

Gregor raises his eyebrows.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

A spotless, state of the art guest bathroom: all white marble, stone sink, bidet. Step outside of Gregor's bedroom and it's like you're in a different house.

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.)

I mean really Gregor, you actively have to be trying to make your room this messy.

Grete skips into it, putting her PHONE up on the sink to play a YOUTUBE VIDEO as she puts on moisturizer.

ON THE SCREEN:

A 30-SOMETHING INTERVIEWER (blue suit, chic glasses), sitting next to Gregor in the SAMSA'S LIVING ROOM.

INTERVIEWER

-here with Gregor Samsa, a Dropshipping icon. What is the formula to your millions in sales?

GREGOR

Uh, the basics. Find a cheap product to buy wholesale, sell it for more. Advertising does 99% of the work.

INTERVIEWER

(turns to camera)

And this is all digital. Dropshippers don't keep the items physically in stock, they just tell their supplier to ship it directly to the consumer. So basically, make the cheap Chinese and Indian labor do all the work for you!

Gregor doesn't say, or do, anything.

INTERVIEWER (CONT'D)

Wow. "Say less, do more", that's a lesson in my e-class, link in the descriptio-

Grete pauses the video- and SCREAMS in delight. There's a shadow-y figure in the back of the frame.

ZOOM IN: A person.

ZOOM IN MORE: Grete, walking through the background.

GRETE

That's me... on screen.

She looks at the time And jumps up, calling down the hall.

GRETE (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna grab an Uber then, okay?

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.)

For heaven's sake, make sure it's a Black!

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - BACK TO

Gregor is back on his laptop. Mrs. Samsa is eyeing the floors.

GREGOR
The door, mother.

Mrs. Samsa rolls her eyes, and shuts the door to Gregor's room.

LATER

Gregor hasn't moved from his spot. There's no lights on, the room cast in shadows from the half-drawn windowsills.

Gregor sits alone, all his things immobile and lifeless surrounding his: his rainbow BEDSHEETS splayed to the floor; Wal-Mart BOOKSHELVES filled with dusty trading cards, figurines, and video games; and floor littered with empty SNACKS.

Gregor stares sour lipped at the screen. On his LAPTOP:

A GENERIC WELLNESS ESTORE. Pictures of fit faceless models in Yoga pants adorn the sides, and then a collection of beautiful products, all selling for \$100+. In the corner, a ZOOM window, just him.

He stares at one product, an artesian collection of 14 shining white exercise equipment, laid out with Kubrick precision.

Then, on the top of the store, mouse clicks a "YOUR STORE" icon. Spreadsheets of large numbers, rows and rows of them pop up. Green SALES graphs.

The ZOOM window pops up a very grainy SUPPLIER (40s?, Chinese?) on the other side.

GREGOR
So the Antique Pearl Total
Transformation-

The Supplier tilts his head enough that even in 144p Gregor notices. Gregor sighs, pulls up an ALIEXPRESS webpage of 14 off-OFF brand plastic exercise equipment, Photoshopped together with Comic Sans font saying "\$8.79".

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Sorry, the "Exercise Bundle 14-Piece Weights Resistance Bands Booty Pads Workout Home", yeah, that one. That should be on the CSV for last week as 124 orders.

SUPPLIER

I... I don't see...

GREGOR

Brilliant. Let me help. This one Shopify gets over a million in sales a month. Even with 900% markup, I'm giving you thousands of dollars every month. So if I tell you something is there, and you don't see it... get better fucking eyesight.

SUPPLIER

Yes... yes sir.

GREGOR

So the new CSV I sent with those addresses?

SUPPLIER

I send them right away.

GREGOR

Pleasure.

Gregor hangs up. Then puts his head in his hands, and sighs.

Grete, by his door, lets out a breath she's been holding in.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Can anyone knock?

GRETE

Woah... That was really intense.

GREGOR

Yeah, sorry. But the entire family counts on me for money. If I have to be the bad guy for it, that comes easy enough.

He smiles proudly. The first real smile he's shown anyone.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Just don't get into this fucking business.

GRETE

Heh, promise. Uh, mom's got her wine... stuff.

Gregor thumbs up. Grete leaves. Before Gregor goes, he clicks across the other tabs of the web browser to check-

And stops on Facebook. A Message is there that stops him dead in his tracks:

"YOUR ADVERTISING ACCOUNT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED"

GREGOR

... Shit.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A large, extravagant living room with a hand-sewn wool rug, 100+ inch plasma TV, fine leather sofa, and tucked in the corner, a well-worn LAZY BOY. Sitting in it is MR. SAMSA (50s, Black, tough), arms crossed, watching Mrs. Samsa in the center, who has set up a table with a dozen wine bottles on it like a demonstration.

MRS. SAMSA

Good for parties, bubbly, he's a sociable wine- oh, there's my son.

Gregor walks in. He's stiff from anxiety, eyes flicking back towards his room. He SMILES at her, but it's like... a **bug**.

Grete, sitting on the couch, RAISES HER EYEBROWS IN FEAR at this.

Mrs. Samsa holds her arms out to the wine. Each bottle is labeled with a light brown paper-y strip that says "ASHES WOODS WINERY INC." and a symbol of a mermaid on the moon.

GREGOR

This is the new venture, yeah?

MRS. SAMSA

The supplier is this lovely vegan winery. Obviously, I designed the packaging... You can applaud.

They applaud.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

It's like pulling teeth! So, I buy wholesale and then market and ship out.

(MORE)

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

You know, I can beat you at your own game, Gregor. What do you think?

Gregor is silent.

GRETE

I really love it. I wish I could try some.

MRS. SAMSA

I'll sneak you some dear, wine is good for the heart.

MR. SAMSA

And what about, what the hell was the name, Smart Cookies? Where's that?

Mrs. Samsa turns to Mr. Samsa with pursed lips.

MRS. SAMSA

I'm so sorry you forgot, my dear. I stopped **Smartie** Cookies last month.

MR. SAMSA

And how much did you invest in that? To sell about as much as a Girl Scout can in 5 minutes.

GRETE

That's actually a lot, I saw a Girl Scout selling cookies with a line down the-

MRS. SAMSA

Businesses have risks. That one failed. Gregor has agreed to provide the capital to cover initial expenses for this one.

Mr. Samsa LAUGHS. It fills the room then pulls all the air out of it.

MR. SAMSA

"Agreed"... Well aren't we all so lucky to have Gregor taking care of us.

Everyone stares at Mr. Samsa as he sits, away from the expense of everything else. Away from the family.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
Well, Gregor? Quiet as vermin with
that mouth of yours?

Mr. Samsa stares right into Gregor's eyes... Gregor looks
down at the floor.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
I've had enough of this.

Mr. Samsa SWINGS his legs to get up, HURLS his body upright-
And stumbles only halfway up... staggers, and FALLS back into
his chair.

Grete winces at the crash. Mr. Samsa tries again... Then
slowly, putting both hands on one side and lifting...

MRS. SAMSA
Your back again?

GRETE
Oh no Dad, I'm coming...

Grete runs over, and PULLS Mr. Samsa.

Gregor STARES immobile, all the tension from earlier
deflating. Mrs. Samsa holds a wine bottle, oscillating
between putting it down to help and picking it back up in
anger.

With a large pull from Grete, he stands up.

MR. SAMSA
I've had enough!

And storms off. Gregor applauds.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE - NIGHT

A dark aged-oak table that could fit at least 8 in a
chandelier-lit room, though only 4 sit - Gregor and Mrs.
Samsa on one side, Grete and Mr. Samsa on the other. Engraved
china plates and silverware (all 3 spoons) are in front of
each.

Gregor yanks a gold serving spoon of salad and dumps it on
his plate. Everyone is quiet.

MRS. SAMSA
Gregor, pass the quinoa and kale
greens?

Fifteen feet away from him, she holds her hand out like a cloud. Gregor takes the bowl and leans, almost falling out of his chair... but can't make it. Mrs. Samsa blinks, unmoving.

Gregor sighs. He drops the bowl to the table and with both hands SLAMS into it, causing it to SKID across the table until it CRASHES into Mrs. Samsa's plate. She CLUTCHES her chest.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

What a beast! I... don't even want it anymore.

Gregor rolls his eyes.

GRETE

I'll have some please! Your vinaigrette is really good, Mom.

MRS. SAMSA

That's what locally grown, organic ingredients gets you darling.

Mrs. Samsa places the bowl to Grete. It's only a quarter of the distance to her.

GREGOR

Remember when 'locally grown' meant pocketing the neighbors' tomatoes?

Grete leans across the table for the salad, but can't reach.

MRS. SAMSA

If you could please refrain from bringing up my CRIMINAL past.

Grete gets out of her chair and stretches both arms towards the bowl.

GREGOR

So, your past?

MRS. SAMSA

GREGOR!

Grete is splayed out on the table, pushing her body like a worm towards the salad.

GREGOR

Fine! You know what, I need to do re-up the email marketing anyway.

MR. SAMSA

ENOUGH.

Mr. Samsa SLAMS his hands on the table. He walks over to Grete, LEANS past her with his large frame, grabs the salad, scoops it onto her plate, struts over to Mrs. Samsa and Gregor, and places it in the middle of them like a wall.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
I swear, getting through a meal
nowadays is like being
waterboarded.

He walks away.

MRS. SAMSA
You're don't want my salad?

Mr. Samsa STIFFLES a laugh.

He sits back down.

Quiet.

Just the sounds of Grete and Gregor chewing.

GRETE
So... have you guys seen the new
dance meme? It's really cool, kinda
goes like...

She shuffles in her seat, mimicking the dance. All smiles on her face, eyebrows raised for a response.

What she gets: Gregor's dead-pan munching, Mrs. Samsa's polite nods, and Mr. Samsa glaring like she's performing witchcraft.

GRETE (CONT'D)
(still dancing)
Like you know... then a woot woot!
At the end...
(extreme silence)
It... It really gets people pumped
up.

She puts her hands on her lap, and stares at the ground.

GREGOR
I can imagine the cheers...
Elsewhere.
(to Mrs. Samsa)
We're just eating leaves tonight
then?

MRS. SAMSA
(smiling)
Quinoa is a grain.

MR. SAMSA
The boy's finally saying something
sensible. Meat.

MRS. SAMSA
Meet you where darling?
(laughs at herself)
Ahh, just a joke. I know you've
resisted, but today IS Monday.
Meatless Monday.

Mr. Samsa stands up.

GRETE
Where are you going?

He walks to the door.

MR. SAMSA
Arby's.

Opens the door, and walks out.

The door slams shut. They all stare at the door in silence.
Mrs. Samsa looks devastated. Grete is opening and closing her
mouth, trying to figure out what to say.

GREGOR
I hope he gets curly fries.

Mrs. Samsa cuts to Gregor.

MRS. SAMSA
Oh just go to your room and make
your money.

GREGOR
What I'm good for.

Gregor gets up and walks to his room, leaving just Grete and
Mrs. Samsa.

A beat of silence.

GRETE
So the dance... is like a whirl at
the start...

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM

The only light in the room is Gregor's laptop, illuminating his face. Deep bags pool the light under his eyes.

On his laptop: Facebook. The message.

"YOUR ADVERTISING ACCOUNT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED"

He clicks around, then scrolls through ads. Ads featuring the same products from earlier. His ads.

Beautiful models, large "12 HOURS ONLY" images, testimonials from people holding all sorts of things.

GREGOR

It can't be fraud if everyone does
it...

Clicks back to his store. A line graph of daily VISITOR. The Y-Axis is in the tens of thousands. Steady, steady, and then a sudden RED nose dive.

Then a different store. This one colorful, knick-knacks on sale. "YOUR STORE". The same line graph. Same nose dive. Another store. Another chart. Another RED nosedive. Two, three, more.

Gregor's eyes staring at the screen, reflecting back that same RED.

He balls his fists... then lets go. And closes his laptop. Near total darkness.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

First thing tomorrow. I'll solve
this.

He gets up, and falls to bed with a SMUSH.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - HALLWAY

A art-infested hallway. Grete is outside the door worried, staring at the doorway like she can see past it. Her fist is raised and about knock- when she hears a SMUSH.

She stops. Thinks. Then turns away, and walks through the house, through the hallway-

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Past the living room, now empty of anyone, table still out,

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GRETE'S ROOM

And into her room with a flick.

Light illuminates a bright, brightly decorated bedroom. By the door is pile of CAMERAS AND EQUIPMENT. Signed POSTERS of indie bands and vintage divas adorn the walls.

But the biggest is a fresh, home-made printed poster of the SAME YOUTUBE FRAME OF HER (scrollbar still at the bottom), in the background of a shot of Gregor facing camera, from earlier.

She lies down on her bed next to her half dozen plushies, and stares at that poster. Her. Then takes out her phone.

INTERVIEWER

Wow. "Say less, do more", that's a lesson in my e-class, link in the descriptio-

Grete pauses. And looks down.

The SAME FRAME that's on the poster is there in front of her. Grete in the background, walking through, while Gregor is being interviewed in the house. In the bottom corner, the video has over 9,000,000 views.

Grete strokes the spot where she is... and then flicks the light off.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Stars twinkle above four bedroom single-family houses. All is peaceful. All is right.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

Light peeks in through the drawn windowsill onto the empty snack wrappers.

A low, guttural GROAN rumbles. A cockroach scurries out from the wrappers and runs away.

GREGOR'S POV: The ceiling. Dark, motionless. The desk. His laptop. GROANS. The night table. Water. Nodding. Kind of a weird nod, too large. Anyway. Water. Reaches out to grab it. Insect hands. INSECT HANDS.

Instead of a human in Gregor Samsa's bed, there is a 5 1/2 foot diameter, six legged, two antenna'd, dark brown, armored back, bulging eyed, GIANT COCKROACH.

A grotesque metamorphosis has occurred.

GREGOR'S POV: Gregor (COCKROACH) moves his head, examining his new form, moving each of his six legs in front of his eyes.

GREGOR

It's too early for this shit.

He rolls over and closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK:

LATER

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on the door. Gregor's desk, unoccupied. The lights, still off. A groan from the bed.

GREGOR (O.S.)

I'm getting up, I'm getting up.

A Giant Cockroach swings onto it's belly, and starts crawling (literally) out of bed. Gregor is getting up.

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.)

Opening the door dear, I made granola.
Well, not made, Charity made it. I supervised.

Gregor's new body CRASHES into a bookshelf, causing figurines to rain down on him.

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Are you okay in there?

The door jingles. Gregor's legs stumble on the floor, wobbling. The door opens.

A shriek PIERCES THE HEAVENS.

GRANOLA falls, 360 rotating in slow-mo as it plummets to the ground. Glass shatters. Mrs. Samsa's mouth is open, her eyes stare in abject horror, her hands rising to her face to grab her head like it could stop it from falling to madness.

GREGOR

Okay, okay, I'll clean my room.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MRS. SAMSA'S POV: A SIX FOOT COCKROACH ROARS IN TONUGES as it ADVANCES ON HER.

She stumbles back, falls, and pushes back on hands and knees.

MRS. SAMSA
Charity! Mr. Samsa!!!! MOTHER
MARY!!!!

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gregor stares up at his desk, laptop barely visible.

GREGOR
I guess just take this one... to
six steps at a time.

His thin cockroach legs all begin to move at once, hugging the leg of the table. He climbs vertically up, and peeks his head out to the laptop. The closed laptop.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mrs. Samsa RUNS from wall to wall as she enters the kitchen gasping for breath, where Mr. Samsa is deciding on a snack. The kitchen is large, all white stone, new appliances, a cast iron-

MRS. SAMSA
WHO CARES ABOUT THAT! THERE'S A
DEMON IN GREGOR'S ROOM.

Mr. Samsa puts down the beef jerky, raising an eyebrow.

MR. SAMSA
There's always a demon in Gregor's
room.

MRS. SAMSA
Oh for heaven's sake... This time
it's something you need to KILL.

Mr. Samsa lights up at this. He looks around the kitchen. Sharp glistening knives. Twenty pound black iron pans. A basket of apples.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM

Gregor has gotten onto to the desk, and his whole body is hunched over the laptop. Two legs are wacking at the screens to open, two are pushing it around, and the last two are balancing him.

GREGOR

They really couldn't make this a one touch...

His bug-body aches in concentration... WHIZ!

An APPLE flies past him and CRASHES into the wall.

Gregor's father stands there, tossing an apple up to catch, his mother holding the basket, tears in her eyes.

MRS. SAMSA

Tell us what you've done to Gregor.

GREGOR

I appreciate the compliment, but do you really not see any resemblance-

Mr. Samsa throws apple after apple at Gregor. Gregor takes off, down the desk, across the floor, up the wall, and to the ceiling. Apples rain after him like machine gun fire. Mrs. Samsa SCREAMS, Mr. Samsa LAUGHS, Gregor HISSES, and apples CRASH.

EXT. SAMSA HOUSE - DAY

Grete gets out of a UBER BLACK, her pink backpack on one shoulder, and walks towards their house. A 4 bed/5 bath beauty.

From deep within, there's slight RUSTLING/CRASHING/SCREAMING sounds.

Grete tilts her head, and walks faster.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM

The apple brigade continues: Granny Smiths, Galas, Northern Spies all exploding against wallpaper. Gregor whizzes LEFT as apples fly RIGHT. Some hit his back and bounce off, harmless. He's on the ceiling, scurrying back and forth.

Then, one SLAMS onto his antennae. Gregor wobbles, and FALLS to the ground with a CRUNCH.

Another SLAM as an apple hits the other antennae. Both are now bent in horrible zig-zags. Mr. Samsa takes the last apple, a blood red, and aims right for Gregor's belly-

MRS. SAMSA
WAIT. NOT THE SEKAI ICHI.

MR. SAMSA
But-

MRS. SAMSA
Put it down before I hurt you.

Mr. Samsa teeth FLARE... then throws the apple back into the basket. He cracks his knee and walks towards Gregor, black work boot pounding against the floor-

GRETE (O.S.)
WHAT IS GOING ON?!

Grete stands in the hallway, taking the scene in. She runs to her parents, and sees Gregor. Covers her mouth at the sight.

GRETE (CONT'D)
That's Gregor?

MR. SAMSA
What, god no!

GREGOR
(whimpering)
Finally.

MRS. SAMSA
It's one of those... super rats.
From New York.

MR. SAMSA
... When is the last time you saw a rat?

Grete runs to Gregor, and leans down.

GRETE
So if it's not Gregor... where is Gregor?

MRS. SAMSA
He never left his room. I can only assume the super rat -

MR. SAMSA
Cockroach.

MRS. SAMSA

- ate him.

Gregor shakes him head.

GREGOR

Wow. Look. Sometimes people wake up, they have a bad zit. Or their hair has turned white. Me, I woke up, I'm a cockroach. Is that the worst thing I've woken up to? No. Remember those three months I had to share a room with you all? Yeah. Waking up to-

(from the Samsa's perspective)

**ASIODUYASUDLJAKDASIDHAUSDASDHASHDIU
ADHUIADSHUIASUIUFHIEFUIHFEUHIFUDUFI
FDSUHSDI!!FSJSDUUSFUDSFU!!!!!!!**

Mrs. Samsa's eyes have gotten to the size of planets staring at this cockroach HISSING and SCREECHING... and she FALLS TO MR. SAMSA, unconscious.

Grete looks from Gregor to Mrs. Samsa. She nods to Gregor, and backs away slowly.

GRETE

See! Only Gregor could agitate Mom that much. I'm gonna do some WebMD on this, okay Gregggy? Just don't eat too much poop while we're gone.

Grete smiles and waves. Mr. Samsa SLAMS the door on Gregor, leaving him in darkness once more.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Samsa's sit on the couch, pressed together with posture so straight they could crack at the slightest touch. Mrs. Samsa is back awake. Grete is on her phone.

MRS. SAMSA

Charity! Can you please clean Gregor's room?

CHARITY (O.S.)

Of course Mrs. Samsa.

CHARITY (White, 30s, housemaid uniform), walks past them, warm smile as she passes. The Samsas all study her in one synchronized head movement. Charity walks down the hall. Grete puts her phone down. They listen. A test.

The rustle of a door knob. The squeak of a door opening.
Footsteps.

A SCREAM.

A CRASH.

DUST floats down into the living room from the hallway.

Grete gets up.

GRETE

Mom?

Mrs. Samsa follows her out of view. The squeak of a door closing.

Mrs. Samsa and Grete pull an unconscious Charity into view. Drag her onto the carpet, and then sit back down on the carpet, as upright as before.

Quiet.

MR. SAMSA

So there's still the bug -

MRS. SAMSA

There's still the bug.

Mrs. Samsa's posture collapses to tears. Grete rubs her back with one arm, looks on her phone with the other.

After a moment, Mrs. Samsa sits up and wipes her eyes.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

Let me see what TaskRabbit has.

CUT TO:

LATER

FOOTSTEPS. Time has passed. Grete is lying on the couch, her laptop having dozens of tabs open, all MEDICAL related. Mrs. Samsa is lying next to Charity's passed-out body, staring at the ceiling. Mr. Samsa is pacing with a large bowl of snacks.

The NEW MAID (30s, Hispanic, large-bodied) walks in, up to the shoulders in cleaning supplies. Her mouth opens with a smirk she immediately hides.

Mrs. Samsa lifts a war-wary finger to Gregor's room.

New Maid nods.

Steps. Door opening. The Samsa's all stop and turn, waiting.

SCUTTLES, CLANGING, HISSES, YELPS, A CRASH, RUMBLING, COUGHS, and MANIACAL LAUGHTER comes from the room.

New Maid comes back, wiping dirt from her brow.

NEW MAID

You wanted to give the bug a bath,
yes?

From behind her, Gregor scuttles out, dripping water. He rustles his back-wing, eyes so totally over this.

Mrs. Samsa SCRAMBLES to the edge of the room faster than a bullet. Mr. Samsa puts down his bowl for attention.

Grete sits up, clasping her hands together.

GRETE

Gregor! So I found out a lot...
actually nothing, but the history
of colon cancer medication is SO
fascinating.

NEW MAID

Ah, you named him? There was a
mouse once in my apartment, I
failed to kill it for months. So
finally one night I said, look guy,
here's a treaty, you sign it, and
Steve and I haven't had issue
since.

Mr. Samsa picks up his bowl just to slam it AGAIN, louder.

MR. SAMSA

Enough! So we're sure that's
Gregor?

Mrs. Samsa moves fingers from her eyes, and stares at Gregor. Really, REALLY stares. Gregor look back, giving a slow nod.

MRS. SAMSA

I know my own son. That rat is
Gregor.

MR. SAMSA

DAMN IT! I knew we shouldn't have
drank that fucking organic almond
"milk".

From his bowl he holds up an ALMOND.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
How do you get milk from this?!!

GREGOR
And with that plot-line wrapped up,
I have work. If someone could
please open my laptop, I might save-

Mrs. Samsa SHRIEKS at Gregor, shaking her head in pain.

Gregor looks from one blank face to another.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
You all can't understand me, can
you?

OPERATOR (V.O.)
9-1-1, what's your emergency?

MRS. SAMSA
I didn't know whether to call this
or Pest Control...

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

The Samsa's all sitting next to each other in a crowded hospital: Mrs. Samsa, Mr. Samsa, Grete, and a BRIGHT PINK COMFORTER. The bright pink comforter wiggles.

GRETE
Just a little longer. I can give
you some of my hair to snack on?

The bright pink comforter RAMS into her. Grete giggles.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)
Samsa?

INT. HOSPITAL - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

A DOCTOR (40s, White), stares at the uncovered Gregor. The Samsa all wait, Mr. Samsa tapping his foot.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry, this isn't covered under
your insurance.

MR. SAMSA
What?!

He points to a WHITE PERSON passing by.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)

If he came in as a cockroach, you'd pay his treatment, wouldn't you?

DOCTOR

No Sir, we... we wouldn't.

She smiles. Nervously. Lying???

MRS. SAMSA

So what can my family and I do?

DOCTOR

Therapy?

MRS. SAMSA

To BRING MY SON BACK.

The Doctor inspects Gregor, lifts a leg, another leg, opens his mouth to look in. And smiles with her teeth.

DOCTOR

If I find out anything, I'll let you know.

INT./EXT. TESLA MODEL X - NIGHT

The Samsas driving back, Grete sitting next to Gregor.

MRS. SAMSA

Western medicine is useless anyway. I'll go to Dr. Soothe Life, get some oils, Gregor you'll be back to your true self by Friday.

GREGOR

Thanks.

Mrs. Samsa grimaces at the sound. But Grete looks over at Gregor, head tilted in a concentrated LISTENING. No one else notices.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

So I can say whatever I want huh? Grete, that time I told you Spot ate your Barbie? I flushed it down the toilet, just for fun. Dad - you make Genghis Khan look like father of the year. Mom -

Mrs. Samsa throws the bright pink comforter on top of Gregor.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor is still over his UNOPENED laptop, panting as much as a cockroach can.

He stops, and just collapses. In the dark room, alone. Lifeless furniture.

THE CLOSED DOOR. Distantly, whispers of moving or talking. Clattering of plates.

Family.

Gregor stares at the door. Fixated on the sounds.

His six thin legs heave himself up, and he scuttles down the desk up to the door. Staring at the door knob. Opens his mouth - no teeth - and inches it around the knob. Tries to thrust his head back and forth... the knob kinda wiggles. Another try--

And then he COUGHS back, shaking his head in disgust. Staring at the slimey knob. And SIGHS.

Vertical to the door, Gregor stays there. Leaning his head on the wall...

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM / HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gregor in darkness on one side of the room,

the hallway bathed in glowing life just inches on the other side.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

KNOCK KNOCK. The door SWINGS open with Grete holding a stainless steel DOG BOWL bejeweled with "GREGOR" on it.

CRUNCH.

Grete looks to her right, where the crunch came from. A single INSECT LEG sticking out from the pushed in door.

GRETE
OH MY GOD, GREGOR!

She runs in, closes back the door-

Gregor HOPS out, leaning his head at her like "SERIOUSLY?"

GRETE (CONT'D)
I brought water?

Gregor is unmoved.

GRETE (CONT'D)
Oh, and I checked for you: Boku No
Afterlife: Girls, Volleyball,
Death! got renewed for season 2 on-

GREGOR
You're forgiven.

Grete tilts her head curiously again at the sound... then puts the water bowl down. Gregor tries to sip it like a glass... take bits of water in his legs... plunge his face in...

As he struggles, Grete walks over to the bed, turns on one small light - Gregor HISSES offscreen - and waits.

He crawls up to the desk.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
I know this is completely useless
since you can't understand me but-

GRETE
In the car with Mom... You said
"Thanks", didn't you?

Gregor stops. He nods. Grete bursts into a smile and almost jumps out of the bed.

GRETE (CONT'D)
I knew I can understand you!
Everyone else just hears a monster,
but underneath that... you're still
you. You've changed overnight, and
change scares people, things that
aren't beautiful scare people. Our
society is so focused on looks and
dollars- and you're so much more.

GREGOR
Please god delete my internet
history.

GRETE
(beaming)
I know that was you thanking me.

GREGOR

I am going to psychically send you signs to delete my internet history.

Gregor walks over to his laptop.

At that, Grete jumps up and runs over to the desk.

GRETE

Right! The laptop.

GREGOR

Oh my god am I psychic now?

Grete stares right at Gregor, half frown and hand on her chin.

GRETE

The business is in trouble, isn't it?

GREGOR

Oh. Right. More important.

Gregor moves away so Grete can sit down. She opens the laptop on "PASSWORD" and looks over to her giant cockroach brother.

GRETE

This is so exciting! I feel like James Bond, but the new one, the one with - did you watch that one?

(no reply)

We'll do a, uh, movie night.

GREGOR

The password is "Q G W V 1 3 D S Q
6 9 F Q."

GRETE

I think you said... "puppies".

Her fingers bob to each letter, bounce off enter... And Gregor is shaking his head.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Say your password.

GREGOR

"Q G W V 1 3 D S Q 6 9 F Q."

GRETE

DON'T CALL ME THAT!

GREGOR

I- Oh my god this is pointless.

Gregor wobbles as close as he can to the laptop, reaches out one leg, pushes it onto the Q-

And CRUSHES THE KEY.

Their eyes reflect the white screen in HORROR.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I HAVE APPLE CARE.

Grete's tooth shows as she bites her lip, leaning inches from the keyboard, lifting back up the key... and pops it back into place.

They both slump back with a sigh.

GRETE

So Q... Query... Quacked...
Quandong... Q-Anon, OH that's
probably it!

The blur of twig-thin legs as Gregor leaves the desk without a word/hiss.

He's on his way to his bed when two purple socks block his path. Grete stares down at him, hands on her hips.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Look. I could understand you saying that word in the car. If we continue, maybe that's the path to you becoming human again. And we'll need to understand you because the business is in trouble, isn't it?

GREGOR

(nodding)

Yes.

GRETE

How much time do we have?

GREGOR

Mortgage payments on the first of every month, and without ad revenue sales are down 90%, if we could get Mom to cut spending maybe that'd buy us an extra month, without it we're struggling to last-

GRETE

(holds hands together)

This is a day.

(holds hands out far)

This is a year.

Hiss when to stop.

She slowly brings her hands together from feet and feet apart. Quarter of the way, half way, 3/4th of the way... pauses at Gregor to make sure... Her hands are inches from touching-

GREGOR

HiSS hiSS.

GRETE

Oh god. That's like... three seconds from now. The... house-

She crouches down next to the door. Shaking her head. The light shines in her eyes. She shuts them and SLAMS the door shut, darkness taking her over.

Gregor stares at her. And walks over, resting next to her.

GREGOR

I promise. There's nothing on Earth that will stop me from taking care of you.

Grete opens her eyes, and turns.

GRETE

You... promise?

She's smiling at Gregor. A look of confusion, only a scrap of understanding, but still, a scrap.

Gregor nods.

They sit for a moment. Grete's chest rising and falling.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Okay, let's-

MRS. SAMSA

Grete!! Please, DoorDash has glitched the past hour and I'm famished beyond belief.

Grete sighs. She pulls herself up. Opens the door. Light shines in.

GRETE

Tomorrow.

GREGOR

Tomorrow.

And leaves Gregor alone in the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

The dirty white of the ceiling blinks back and forth into focus.

Gregor (still cockroach) is lying face up in bed. His room is somehow even dirtier than before.

LATER

An open manga book featuring girls playing beach volleyball.

Two cockroach legs pressed on one end, two on the other, one shaking as it turns it. Gregor is balancing on one leg, tilting wildly and eyes shifting back and forth to read.

KNOCK KNOCK. The door opens, and Grete comes in, backpack on and carrying a large PICNIC BASKET.

GRETE

Sorry I'm late! I bought all your favorite foods, top ten foods cockroaches like, and just so many ways to get your password you're gonna freak.

GREGOR

Lemme just finish... this page...

GRETE

I got an "age" sound... YES, I'll get the aged cheese!

She nearly jumps at the opportunity. Gregor focuses on reading. One manga girl to another: "How are we going to defeat them?" The other manga girl: "Time-travel, duh!"

He closes the book and a three point turn. Another three point turn. Another three point turn. And is facing Grete.

On the floor, a royal picnic blanket with two sections of food: one with delicious foods like CHICKEN WINGS, CHOCOLATE, RASPBERRIES, and MEAT LOAF; the other with things like MOLDY CHEESE, a PILE OF SUGAR, BOOK BINDINGS, and DUSTY HAIR.

Gregor waddles up to the pile, staring at a ripped off "HARRY POTTER AND THE ORD-".

GREGOR
Book bindings. YUM.

Grete bites her nails as she watches. Gregor sniffs both sides... and then two of his legs GRAB A CHICKEN WING.

He munches around the bone. Grete sighs in relief, her face relaxing as she grabs Gregor's laptop.

GRETE
For a second I thought you were
really gonna want-

She looks down and sees Gregor about to DEVOUR THE DUSTY HAIR whole. Her breath STOPS.

GREGOR
I'm just fucking with you.
(off nothing)
That'd work better if you could
understand me.

Grete backs away slowly, trying not to show fear in her smile.

GRETE
Meet me outside when you're done?

Gregor goes back to the chicken wings, shaking his head.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

On the carpet, Grete is surrounded by notebooks, a laptop, craft supplies, and more.

Gregor comes from the hallway, hitting the dusty hair like a soccerball to her.

GREGOR
See? Didn't touch it. Joke. Hahaha.

Grete stares at her cockroach brother...

Trying to understand...

GRETE
I'll bring you a bigger helping
tomorrow.

GREGOR
Oh for fucks sake.

Grete opens Gregor's laptop. The static log-in screen glows.

GRETE
We have a genius, and a future
award winning actress. This can't
take too long, right?

START MONTAGE:

- A PRINT-OUT OF A COMPUTER KEYBOARD is tacked to the wall. Grete holds a meter-stick and inches across each letter. She stops at "G". Gregor hisses. She marks it with a "2".

- A TWISTER BOARD has been laid out, each circle written over with a letter or number instead. A PAINT BUCKET is by Gregor. Grete sits on the couch, clasping her hands together in delight. Gregor dips one leg in paint, then scuttles over to "W"

- The KEYBOARD PRINT-OUT. Gregor yawns (no teeth; weird) as Grete inches past each key. He looks at the T.V. in longing. Then snaps back.

The ruler is crossing the border of "V" and "B". He hisses and SHAKES his body. The ruler stops... and she writes a "4" on "B".

Gregor SHAKES his head "No", hisses again. Grete stares... and writes a "5" on "B" as well.

- On the T.V., an OLD SURVIVALIST is on screen, going over the dots and dashes to spell in MORSE CODE. Gregor is trying to hide his eyes with his legs, but Grete already has a flashlight and is shining long and short blasts on the wall.

- A cartoon picture of a FOX. Grete holds this FLASHCARD in front of Gregor.

GRETE (CONT'D)
Fox.

GREGOR
Fox.

GRETE
No, say **fox**.

GREGOR
I SAID FOX!

She folds her arms, disappointed at him.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
Fox. FOX. FOX FOX FOX, **FOX YOU**, YOU-

- Gregor and the TWISTER BOARD, marking another spot.

- Grete's finger on the "G" key. Her eyes on Gregor, his eyes on the keyboard. He turns his head left. She moves her finger one key to the left.

- Charity, broom in hand, turns into the room, and FAINTS on the spot.

Gregor and Grete turn to see her... and then turn back.

- Gregor walks back across the TWISTER BOARD, and throws his leg in the paint bucket, turns back to the board-

And his leg is STILL IN THE BUCKET. Grete jumps in horror too late

The paint CRASHES down like a broken dam onto the floor, the board, the carpet, and Gregor. All over the spots he made.

- Grete on the "1" key. Gregor opens his mouth. Grete pushes it down.

- Grete and Gregor sitting close, a stack of flashbacks in her hands. Gregor's mouth opens, inaudibly says a word, she nods and throws the flashcard down. Gregor says another, the process continues. Quick, and gaining speed.

- Grete on the "RETURN" key. Enter. Gregor opens his mouth.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
Yep.

Grete presses the key-

END MONTAGE

CLOSE-UP: GREGOR'S LAPTOP

Mac OS shines in gorgeous Retina HD. The cursor goes down to Chrome, opens it.

Facebook. Cursor refreshes.

The log-in page. Password NOT autofilled.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Grete stares at Gregor. There is TOTAL. SILENCE.

GRETE

You... didn't save. Your passwords?

Gregor blinks.

All around them: the paint stained carpet, paper and flashcard littered floor, still buzzing T.V., and flashlight shining to the wall.

Grete BURSTS INTO LAUGHTER. Gregor makes happy hissing sounds.

LATER

CLOSE ON: Facebook.com

"YOUR ADVERTISING ACCOUNT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED"

GRETE (O.S.)

Okay, so this is the problem. How do I fix it?

Back on: Grete and Gregor sitting on the couch. Around them is several more montages worth of password solving:

Flashcards coat the floor so much it's like tiling, the Twister board is somehow stuck to the wall, the T.V. has fallen over backwards, and there's dozens of MULTICOLORED PLATES stacked in columns.

GREGOR

We fight it or... just make a new one and start over. Start over...

Gregor looks past the paint stains, past the mess, to the house. A patch of untouched rich wallpapered walls. His roach head tilts in a wistful sigh.

GRETE

"Start over." You said start over.

Grete's face is half obscured under the laptop, typing and clicking away. Gregor stares, shocked.

BUZZ. From Grete's pocket, she takes out her phone and looks.

GRETE (CONT'D)

"Dinner's ready. I'm saving my voice for prayers." Let's go!

Gregor raises as much eyebrows as he can and shakes his head. Grete nods. Motions to go. Gregor shakes. Grete motions. Gregor shakes.

GRETE (CONT'D)

... okay.

She leaves the room. Gregor stares at the chaos... and then walks back towards his bedroom.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

ON THE LAPTOP: "PASSWORD: **"

The Mac keyboard, illuminated in the dark.

A single spiny leg swaying above it, dangling between the "W" and "E" keys.

Gregor, face scrunched in intense concentration, millimeter... by... millimeter... lowering one leg towards the "W" key.

KNOCK KNOCK, door open, torrent of light, and Grete's inside. Up to her eyeballs with flashcards and books.

GRETE

Aww, you wanted to start early?

GREGOR

Netflix... **Need**... Netflix...

Grete sits next to Gregor and in the space of three seconds deletes his work, enters the password and pulls up Facebook.

GRETE

Okay, tell me again what I need to do. I'm REALLY listening.

GREGOR

Make. New. Advertising. Account.

Grete stares at Gregor... and just keep staring, lost at sea.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE - DAY

A different day, Grete wearing a different outfit. Grete typing rapidly, looking over at Gregor, seated upright at the dining room table like a dog with its belly out.

GRETE

So if we make a new Facebook advertising account...

GREGOR

We can remake all the ads. Profit comes back.

GRETE

"Re-bake the"... Is that one of those Dropshipper phrases?

Grete keeps typing, totally focused on the screen. Footsteps and the soft HUM of Mrs. Samsa. A dark motion and SCURRYING.

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.)

Please don't get metal on the table.

GRETE

But me and Gre-

Grete turns. Gregor is gone. Mrs. Samsa raises her eyebrows, swirling a wine glass.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor sits on his bed. The white wall seems brown against the dark. The only noise is from outside.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Different day? Same day? Gregor is under the desk.

The door opens to BLINDING LIGHT and Gregor's mouth opens to a HISS- before he stops himself.

Grete, new outfit. Different day.

GRETE

Sorry I'm late. If I use AP Calc in real life even ONCE. Anyway, let's work in the kitchen or something.

Gregor stares at Grete. Unmoving. Under the desk, masked in shadows, the body of a giant roach, and for a second, the eyes of one too.

Then, he sighs.

GREGOR

Let's just do here.

Grete stares down at Gregor... and then sits on the bed, sighing.

GRETE

I still can't totally understand you Gregor. Let's just do here, okay?

She pulls out the laptop, and step by step, Gregor hauls himself to her.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A new day, different Grete outfit, she's holding flashcards in front of Gregor.

Mr. Samsa suddenly walks in, taking a sip of a can. Eyes locked down on Gregor.

MR. SAMSA

I need this room.

GRETE

"Agoraphobic". What? Oh, um, can you wait like an hour?

Mr. Samsa stares at his children... and CRUSHES the can in his hands.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Different day, Gregor and Grete on Gregor's bed with the laptop. Grete's hair is a mess and she's not helping it by constantly twirling her fingers through it in frustration.

GRETE

Please can we work anywhere else? This doesn't make any sense and I need AIR.

Gregor gives a little uncomfortable shake of the head.

GRETE (CONT'D)

UGH!!!!!!

Grete collapses onto the mattress.

GREGOR

Maybe for extra money we could reach out to Buzzfeed for an interview.

GRETE
 Huh? An interview?
 (sighs)
 No, they already interviewed a
 giant centipede.

Gregor collapses on the mattress too.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Different day, Gregor and Grete are sitting across from each other, staring into each others eyes, totally focused.

GREGOR
 The quick brown fox-

GRETE
 "The quick brown fox"...

GREGOR
 Jumped over the... slow... white...
 tortious... I totally forget-

GRETE
 JUMPED OVER THE SLOW WHITE TORTIOUS
 I TOTALLY FORGET, GREGOR I CAN
 UNDERSTAND YOU!!

She picks Gregor up and WHIRLS HIM AROUND until they collapse with the weight onto the bed, LAUGHING. Staring at the ceiling glowing with plastic stars and rainbow Christmas lights.

And then on the wall-- the jumbo poster of HALF OF GREGOR'S FACE (and Grete's shadowy figure). Gregor's head tilts.

GREGOR
 Uh... what is that?

Grete suddenly gets red in the face. She locks her lips.

GRETE
 What?

GREGOR
 Seriously Grete... GRETE THIS IS
 NOT THE TIME TO BE CUTE THAT YOU
 CAN'T UNDERSTAND M-

GRETE
 Okay, okay! Look, I was just,
 excited. That was... my first time
 on screen.

Grete can't help smiling from each to ear looking at it.

GREGOR

I could've payola'd you into something much cooler than a finance YouTube video.

GRETE

I'll be in more soon. Bob - my coach - says I'll make casting agents fill their diversity quotas and like it.

GREGOR

Good god... At least my money is doing one good thing.

GRETE

You don't really believe that right?

Grete turns from the poster to Gregor, and stares at him.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Gregor... you saved us.

Gregor is silent.

KNOCK. Gregor SCURRIES AWAY like an actual cockroach.

CHARITY (O.S.)

Mrs. Samsa says dinner is ready Grete. She also says she would've texted, but she's going to send you an article you need to read about cell phone waves.

In the back of the closet, Gregor pokes his head out to Grete, arms crossed, unable to be talked down.

GRETE

Come on. Dinner is ready.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE

The dining room table, packed with posh CATERING BOXES of food. Grete rests at her chair, and at Gregor's chair, Gregor sits upright nervously. Two legs wiggle for a fork.

Mrs. Samsa walks in draped lacy satin jacket in a beautiful and SCREAMS- covers her mouth- MUFFLED screams.

GREGOR

Hi Mom.

MRS. SAMSA

Why is... How could... Grete...
 (failed whispering)
 I didn't get B-U-G FOOD.

GRETE

Mom, he can still spell. Besides...

Grete sees Gregor staring at Mrs. Samsa. At Mrs. Samsa's
 HAIR?!

GRETE (CONT'D)

He's NOT HUNGRY. You're not hungry.
 RIGHT Gregor?

Gregor opens his mouth to defend himself... and then just
 crosses his bug arms (3 times, 6 arms).

Mrs. Samsa and Grete take steak, spinach salad, potato salad,
 as FOOTSTEPS get louder and louder.

Mr. Samsa enters into the dining room. He looks at Gregor.

MR. SAMSA

No.

He walks towards Gregor, pulling up his sleeves-

GRETE

What are you doing?

MR. SAMSA

That's a bug.

GRETE

THAT's your son.

MR. SAMSA

I didn't give birth to that.

MRS. SAMSA

You didn't give birth to anything!

Mr. Samsa grabs Gregor's chair.

MR. SAMSA

If he eats here, I don't.

GRETE

DAD!

GREGOR

I really don't get a say in this do I?

MRS. SAMSA

You're going to crush the gold lining dear, now calm down.

GRETE

Dad, calm down!

GREGOR

Dad... ple-

MR. SAMSA

No, NO, NO!

Mr. Samsa KICKS the chair- Gregor TUMBLES from it to the floor, SCURRING out of the way as it CRACKS to the ground right next to him.

Mr. Samsa seems 50 feet tall as he stares down at Gregor.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)

I deserve more than this. More than a family like this. When was the last time a child of mine said "Yes Sir" to me? When's the last time my own wife did anything I told her? We, I, let Gregor, and the money, turn me into a dog. And now, he's turned into a roach. Well if this is a sign, it won't pass me by.

Mrs. Samsa has taken off her jacket and inches towards Mr. Samsa with her arms out. A fake smile on her face so different from the one she usually wears.

MRS. SAMSA

Okay sweetie... I hear you... What's the plan?

MR. SAMSA

Whatever money Gregor had is gone. So I'm going back to work.

MRS. SAMSA

I hear you. But how's that money gonna cover all this?

MR. SAMSA

It... I'll make it.

GRETE

Dad you couldn't even work last tim-

Mr. Samsa's face SNAPS to Grete with fire and he closes his fist-

MRS. SAMSA

GRETE. Let Mommy handle this, okay?

(to Mr. Samsa)

What if I help you with the money?

My winery inc-

Mr. Samsa just LAUGHS. It kills any other sound until it's just his laugh, seconds of it.

MR. SAMSA

Don't make me bring up your past right now.

Mrs. Samsa's feet stop.

And she puts her hands down.

A hint of a smirk appears on Mr. Samsa's face.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)

And Grete's "acting" classes. I'm not gonna let my daughter become a whore to Hollywood. You're not going to them anymore.

Gregor HISSES.

Mr. Samsa ADVANCES ON HIM--

GRETE

WAIT, DAD!!

All eyes on Grete.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Gregor told- showed, I saw Gregor's finances. And there's enough money there to last... MONTHS. Like, literally a year. You don't have to go back to work now. You can! But maybe if you rest your back, and prepare, it'll be better when you need to.

Mr. Samsa stops.

GRETE (CONT'D)
 And... I'll stop going to acting
 classes. Okay?

Mr. Samsa calms down.

MR. SAMSA
 Heh. Okay.

He walks back to his seat and sits down. Panting. Looking the
 happiest he's been.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
 But Gregor doesn't leave his room.

GRETE
 That's insane!

GREGOR
 No issue there.

MR. SAMSA
 I've made my decision. And I'm
 getting a drink. Is there nothing
 but water in this damn house?

Mr. Samsa HEAVES himself up and leave. The food sits
 untouched on the table. Everyone else sits, unmoving.

A BREATH releases from Mrs. Samsa. She takes her jacket and
 wraps it around her body, the fabric stretches so tight it
 looks like it might snap. And she holds it there, like a
 blanket around herself.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor, too big to fit walking straight in, walks half on the
 doorway to get into his room. Grete stomps behind and SLAMS
 the door.

GRETE
 Reason eight zillion fourty three
 the patriarchy sucks... You are so
 leaving your room.

GREGOR
 And you're going to acting school.

GRETE
 Gregor... Don't make me pretend I
 can't understand you again.

GREGOR
 (points to Grete)
 YOU.

(MORE)

GREGOR (CONT'D)
 (Shakespearean motions)
 ACTING.
 (runs in place)
 GO.

GRETE
 NO! Dad... I mean...
 (to herself)
Beyonce, Independent Woman part two
 (to Gregor)
 You're right. But you're going with
 me.

GREGOR
 Wait, what?

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. UBER CAR/DOWNTOWN - DAY

Grete and Gregor in the backseats of a stylish black suburban. Gregor's upright, bug arms wiggling, seatbelt against his exposed belly.

Grete is on Gregor's laptop, phone next to her (tethering).

ON THE LAPTOP: Facebook.com. HELP PAGES scrolling by.

GRETE
 Okay, I remade these ads, but
 they're performing TERRIBLY.
 Gregor, I need your help.

GREGOR
 Have you checked the keywords?

Grete nods her head... and then shakes her head.

A red light. The UBER DRIVER (30s), watches in his mirror a girl and our giant cockroach.

He takes out his phone and taps.

ON THE PHONE: Google.com. "NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES"

INT. ACTING STUDIO - DAY

A posh acting school, clean and angular. Set furniture is placed, and there's even a camera to the side.

BOB (40s, White, acting teacher), is surrounded by mostly TEENAGERS (mostly White, upper class) in a circle.

They're passing a ball to each other, making RANDOM LOUD NOISES each time they catch it.

Grete walks in with Gregor.

GRETE

Bob, everyone, I'm really sorry-

BOB

Darling we don't apologize, we conceptuali- WHAT is that?

GRETE

It's my brother.

BOB

Oh... I can't wait to meet your parents.

Dozens of eyes all staring down at Gregor.

Scared. Disgusted. Judging.

Gregor looks up at Grete. Opens his mouth. And just looks away.

GRETE

I promise they're nice. You can't live in that room forever.

Grete walks to the group, motioning for Gregor to follow. As she enters it a BOY (16) throws the ball to her. Grete catches it-

GRETE (CONT'D)

Zoop!!

She tosses it to Gregor where it just kinda rolls onto his back and starts falling off.

GREGOR

Uh... kamehameha?

BOB

"Hiss", very good!

Another ACTOR reaches down to pick the ball up.

INT. ACTING STUDIO - LATER

An artificial balcony scene with fake plants and a window to a wall. Grete and FELICITY (17, White, ombre bleach blonde hair) are standing near each other, holding sheets, ACTING.

FELICITY

(bad)

I never wanted -to tell- you but...
I was there THAT NIGHT.

GRETE

(not bad)

Damn it! My political future, the
cowbell factory. All of it is in
jeopardy now.

Gregor's eyes sparkle watching. This is Tony worthy to him.

All around him there's... no one. A circle of 6 feet is
between Gregor and anyone else, isolating him in an invisible
bubble.

A SNICKER to the right. Gregor doesn't acknowledge it.

FELICITY

Please.

GRETE

Tell me Adrian didn't see.

Another snicker. Gregor turns.

Two BOYS (one emo, one prep), are looking at Gregor with
their PHONES out recording. They giggle in excitement as he
turns to face them.

The black lifeless eye of the camera stares at Gregor.

He stares back.

EXT. ACTING STUDIO - PARKING LOT - DAY

The actors head out of the studio. Walking with Grete, Gregor
squints at the light, and looks for any sort of shade.

GREGOR

So let's check those keywords for
the ads on Facebook, h-

FELICITY

Grete!

Felicity is waving by a BLACK ROLLS ROYCE. A DRIVER (50s)
stands waiting.

Grete looks at Gregor... then Felicity... then Gregor.

GRETE
This'll be fun, I PROMISE.

INT./EXT. ROLLYS ROYCE - DAY

Grete, Felicity, and Gregor sit in the backseat. The windows open, Felicity on her phone as far away from Gregor as possible, Grete with her backpack on her lap, Gregor staring at the car wall.

FELICITY
You should upgrade that backpack
Gee. It's giving public school
vibes.

GREGOR
That cost \$3000!

Felicity SQUEALS at Gregor. Grete gives him the SIDE EYE as Felicity turns around and puts the phone in selfie mode.

FELICITY
Recording.

Grete smooths her hair, curves her body towards camera, and gives Kylie Jenner eyes.

FELICITY (CONT'D)
We're on our way to pick up the
exclusive Nike purse drop. Grete's
brother is coming too. Any bug-ist
slurs in chat will be deleted! He's
very clean for his breed, and
DOESN'T like twinkies. As an ally,
I have to be his voice since, duh,
can't talk.

GRETE
He can talk. I can understand him.

FELICITY
Oh... Okay. Make him say something
Grete!

Felicity turns to Grete, nodding her head impatiently.

GREGOR
Get fucked cunt.

GRETE
He said, "Make sure to like!"

Felicity puts her phone down with a huge grin. The car stops at a stop light. It's a poor neighborhood, rundown apartment buildings and pay-day loan shops. A HOMELESS PERSON sits on the side of the road.

Felicity SNAPS a photo of her, then rolls up the window.

EXT. NIKE STORE - DAY

Dozens of INFLUENCERS stand outside the store's two doors, and through the glass we can see at least a hundred more. Grete gets out of the car, and turns around to Gregor, not moving.

GRETE

I won't lose you. Promise.

INT. NIKE STORE - DAY

A sea of feet STOMPING on the ground, and Gregor is alone.

The noise is like a drum line washing over. Loud. Chaotic. Gregor looks left, right. Sees a flash of pink, and tries to move-

Feet TRIP into him. Gregor CRIES out in pain.

GREGOR'S POV: A MAN gasps in shock, stumbling back. He mouths "I'm sorry" to Gregor, and hurries on. Another VLOGGER rolls their eyes, pulling their handbag tight.

INT. FELICITY'S HOUSE - DAY

A white MANSION, 7+ bedroom, fully gated, at least one LAWN WORKER in sight at all times.

Felicity and Grete walk towards the house, Felicity tapping things on her phone.

FELICITY

You NEED this. You don't have this?!

GRETE

Um I will I just... Gregor?

Gregor is dozens of feet behind them.

The mansion towering over his vision like a skyscraper.

Pure white reflected in his eyes. Growing and growing.

FELICITY
 (whispering)
 Is he trying to poop? Tell him he
 can't do that here.

INT. FELICITY'S HOUSE - DAY

Felicity, Grete, and Gregor enter the house. A HOUSEMAID
 smiles at Felicity, taking her and Grete's things.

The houses walls and floors are pure white, with every piece
 of furniture wooden.

FELICITY (O.S.)
 He commented but didn't like...
 please tell me that's good.

Gregor looks down- the Housemaid is back, tiny scrubs on each
 of her fingers, and is rubbing down each of his legs.

GREGOR
 You could have asked.

MR. FOREMAN (O.S.)
 Hello dear.

MR. FOREMAN (60s, tall, \$1600 Tom Ford T-shirt), walks down
 the stairs. Felicity rolls her eyes, ignoring him. Grete
 nods.

MR. FOREMAN (CONT'D)
 And what's your name, sir?

Gregor looks up from his 6th foot being scrubbed, the
 Housemaid bowing away. Mr. Foreman is staring at him.

FELICITY
 Only Grete can understand him, Dad.

MR. FOREMAN
 Dear, I had an Alaskan Bullworm as
 a client.

FELICITY
Humble brag.

She grabs Grete's hand and leads her away. It's just the two
 men, alone on opposite sides of the two-tone room.

GREGOR
 Gregor.

Mr. Foreman raises his left eye brow, and the right side of his lip.

MR. FOREMAN
Gregor. Follow me.

INT. FELICITY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gregor sits on a wooden sofa with white cushions. Beyond him, the living "room" extends out a hundred feet into a open-air patio with a negative-edge pool, palm tree, and electric fire pit.

Mr. Foreman clicks on the wall-to-wall T.V. to the football game, sits across Gregor, and bites an Oreo.

MR. FOREMAN
I thought I'd at least get one son... Some people are just born lucky.

Gregor stares at the 4 unoccupied wooden cabanas by the pool.

MR. FOREMAN (CONT'D)
Do you want a beer?

GREGOR
I'm gonna leave, actually.

MR. FOREMAN
God, did I say some PC shit wrong?
I don't have a meeting for an hour,
I need something to do.

Gregor stares at 2 unoccupied TVs next to a bookshelf of every console from the NES to the PS5.

GREGOR
Do you enjoy any of this?

MR. FOREMAN
Huh? Oh, most of that's for parties.
(beat)
Ah. THIS. When you get to a certain level, it all becomes just another piece of clothing you wear. And I look damn good in all of it.

ON THE TV: A touchdown is scored. Mr. Foreman looks at the screen.

MR. FOREMAN (CONT'D)

It's what they say. People treat you differently. Even strangers. They'll lower their head, or take a half step back. Unconsciously submitting to your power. Your wealth.

(pause)

You must know what I'm talking about?

Gregor is silent.

ON THE TV: The kicker sets up for a field goal.

MR. FOREMAN (CONT'D)

You don't, do you?. New money. Small. You. Your whole family. Just so... *small*.

GREGOR

We have enough.

MR. FOREMAN

This country was never built on "having enough".

ON THE TV: The football flies towards the goal posts... and misses.

Mr. Foreman shakes his head. Then turns to Gregor.

MR. FOREMAN (CONT'D)

If you ever need help... Just ask me.

GREGOR

We. Have. Enough.

MR. FOREMAN

(smirks)

I can't understand a word you just said.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor bustles into his doorway, him too big to fit walking straight in. Roach-antennas bent like furrowed brows. A few seconds later, Grete comes in behind him, putting the Nike purse on the bed.

GRETE

Don't worry, I'll return the purse.

She takes out the laptop: FACEBOOK ADS CAMPAIGNS.

GREGOR

I need more.

GRETE

What?

GREGOR

We were nothing to those people out there. Your friend, random fucking influencers. I thought I'd gotten us to the top, but we just moved up to the lowest rung of the next level.

GRETE

(putting laptop down)

Gregor, I don't care about money.

GREGOR

You don't? Once you graduate, how are you going to support yourself until you make it big? How will you maintain what you have now? How will you take care of Mom when she gets older?

GRETE

I didn't mean it like- I meant we have enough. You did good.

GREGOR

No. NO. I'm... THIS! Everyone looked at me like...

Gregor stares at himself in the wall mirror.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Like that.

Grete bites her lip.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

They can't understand me. They can barely see me. Alright. But I'll get money. WE will get money. And we never deal with that again.

He turns and crawls up the bed to Grete, and stares at the laptop screen.

GRETE

Look, I'm sorry. It was too much to take you out so soon.

GREGOR

The click-through on these ads are awful. Sales are still nonexistent. You're not good enough.

GRETE

I... Can we talk about something else?

GREGOR

What, do you miss my lovely sarcasm? You're doing fucking GREAT!

Grete's eyes start to well up.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Your acting career easily outperforming nepotism. Tens of thousands of dollars on lessons, and what? That IMDB page almost has a second worth of frames.

GRETE

(whisper)

I said I was sorry...

GREGOR

You think anyone else in that classroom is going to play fair? People like you aren't supposed to succeed.

(beat)

You're too good to leave acting to chance.

GRETE

It's not to chance. I'll get roles because of my ability.

GREGOR

The only ability money cares about is the ability to make more of it.

Grete shakes her head.

GRETE

Go fuck yourself.

She gets up and grabs the laptop.

GREGOR

Grete-

GRETE

I'm taking over the business-

GREGOR

GRETE--

GRETE

Just...

GREGOR

GRETE!!

GRETE

LEAVE ME ALONE!

Grete SLAMS the door behind Gregor.

Darkness.

Gregor's legs shake uncontrollably.

He stares at the mirror. At himself.

And BASHES into it.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

Dried water stains from Gregor's bowl are hard against the musty wooden floor. Gregor walks over to the bowl, and plunges his face in.

LATER

Gregor balancing on his six legs trying to read his manga. He struggles with one finger (foot) to turn the page...

And the whole book closes.

SIGH. He looks towards the book and pushing his head forward, throws it to the ground.

LATER

The water bowl is empty. Gregor is staring at the door like a dog.

Then, a RUSTLE of soft steps outside. They stop right beyond the door.

GREGOR

Grete?

(no answer)

Look. I'm sorry. You were right. I was upset, and I took it out on you.

Still no answer. It's so dark.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

There's this thing inside me. I don't know when it got there. When I was younger I remember being happier, but now... It's like a demon gnawing away at me. And I lash out at people. Sometimes... I think if I can't feel real happiness, no one else should either. Please, just know-

Soft SOBS from the other side of the door.

Gregor stops.

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.)

I can't, I can't! That sound can't be him...

Steps LABOR away.

LATER

The room seems less colorful. More grayscale.

A RUMBLING in the room. Gregor's stomach? He looks around. Under the bed, there's a clump of DUST AND HAIR.

He puts it in his mouth. And chews. Chews. Chews.

Swallows.

LATER

Light STREAMS INTO THE ROOM, BLINDING Gregor-

GREGOR

GRETE?!

NEW MAID

Well doesn't this smell like my exes armpits.

New Maid stomps in, brooms and mop in hand. Gregor SHUTTLES under the desk, HISSING (straight up hissing).

NEW MAID (CONT'D)
Shut it, I'm not giving a bath.

New Maid begins to sweep.

NEW MAID (CONT'D)
Huh, less dust and hair than I'd think.

Gregor BURPS.

New Maid stops... then continues for a minute, and then puts the cleaning supplies away and walks out.

Gregor peeks out. The light still streaming in like liquid.

Then, she returns, carrying a bowl of water. She places it down on the floor.

NEW MAID (CONT'D)
There you go. You might not see me around after this. I'm gonna take up surfing again. I finally saved enough money. You know, I was the state champion three years running.

New Maid beams. She turns to go. Then, when she has the door knob in her hand-

NEW MAID (CONT'D)
Oh, and Grete sent me.

GREGOR
Wait, tell her-!

But the door's closed.

LATER

GREGOR'S POV: The gray ceiling of his room. The black bookshelves. It's like color is completely gone. Gregor sits up, puts his hands on his knees, and sighs.

Knees. Human knees. **Human knees.**

Gregor, human Gregor, is sitting up in his bed like he's always been there. Head tilted, eyes focusing on his hands and knees.

Legs move then dangle over the bed. Toes on tile. Walking to his bookshelf. From a bird's eye view, Gregor is so much more compact. It's like the rest of his body is hidden by his head.

He takes a manga and flips through the pages as a violinist bowing strings. Turns to the mirror.

Human. Gregor. He's back.

GREGOR

Wait... is this the dream... or-

CUT TO:

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - MRS. SAMSA'S ROOM - DAY

A crowded studio space. Piles of old half-opened boxes line the perimeter, with each containing one LOGO'D product - WINE BOTTLES, LEGGINGS, WATER BOTTLES, etc. peeking out.

Across the house, a SQUEAK of a door.

MRS. SAMSA (O.S.)

Hello? You're there? Just follow me. I'm keeping my eyes closed so whatever you do don't touch me.

Steps. Scurrying.

Finally, Mrs. Samsa walks into view, a silk bandana over her eyes. Gregor (Cockroach) walks behind her.

Mrs. Samsa stands in the middle, then takes her bandana off, but stares away from Gregor.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

Ashes Woods, my wine label... I had to shutter in a few days ago.

He stares at all the boxes. Boxes and boxes of wine bottles.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

Supple chain issues, the market is oversaturated right now. And I never really liked wine. It was like when I did crypto or water bottles, I was just in it for the money.

In a far corner, there's a dusty easel, dozens of faded canisters, and nothing on the canvas.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)
 But I found my true passion this
 time. Essential oils.

She wraps the bandana around her hand over and over again as she slowly turns to face Gregor. Her chest is tight. As her eyes lower down, and finally make eye contact with him--

A tight, ear to ear smile on her face. And her hand pulling so hard on the silk you can hear each fabric tearing.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna use the last of the money
 in the account for this. But it's
 gonna work. I just need you to tell
 me it's okay Gregor.

She waits.

The dusty easel in the corner.

GREGOR
 Why did you never paint? Even when
 I made enough money you could do
 exactly what you always said your
 dream life was if you became a
 millionaire. You still just...
 tried to become a millionaire.

Mrs. Samsa takes quick breaths in and out, a high pitched laugh.

MRS. SAMSA
 I don't know what you're saying.
 Just nod yes. Tell me it's okay.

Gregor doesn't.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)
 My sweet little boy. Nod your head
 for me. Please.
 (waits)
 It's been so quiet without our
 bickerings.

Gregor stares at his deteriorating mother.

And NODS.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

Mrs. Samsa walks behind Gregor to his room. Gregor easily walks through the doorway, and Mrs. Samsa follows. She stares up at the ceiling, not making eye contact.

They stay like this for a moment.

MRS. SAMSA

Okay.

She turns to go.

GREGOR

Don't-

Mrs. Samsa flinches-

The door shuts.

LATER - NIGHT

The door CREAKS OPEN.

Gregor is staring at the door, covering himself with a blanket.

GREGOR

Mom?

A figure walks through the door. Silhouetted by the light from the outside and the dark of the room. It's Grete, clutching her laptop to her chest.

Puffy eyed.

She walks in, flicking the lamp on, and sits up on the bed.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Grete.

He crawls out to her.

She puts her hand on his back.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. I, this whole time...
 (gets good look at her)
 Are you okay?

GRETE

Will you help me with the business?

Gregor nods.

Grete opens her laptop. It's filled with overlapping applications, each with 10+ tabs. Completely overwhelming and impossible to focus on.

Grete's legs sway by the bed, her feet curl in anxiety.

GREGOR (O.S.)

Okay, show me the monthly sales numbers...

(beat)

The MONTHLY, no the daily. Oh... oh.

GRETE (O.S.)

Yeah.

Underneath her feet, the water stains by Gregor's bowl have started to mold.

GRETE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

If you help with this, you have to promise me something.

GREGOR (O.S.)

What? Anything.

GRETE (O.S.)

You'll leave this house-

GREGOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

No.

Grete's feet hit the floor and walk off frame.

GREGOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Grete, wait, Grete... **WAIT!!**

Extreme close up of Grete's face. Her brown eyes staring right at Gregor. At us.

GRETE

You know I idolize you, right?

(wipes eyes)

You protected me. All of us. You sacrificed so much. Staying in here, working day in, never seeing friends. Yet you never complained. And the whole time I thought, there must be so much pain you were going through. There must be so much in your head going on that you never let anyone else know.

(beat)

(MORE)

GRETE (CONT'D)
Don't tell me all this time it was
just an empty shell.

GREGOR
Grete I...

There's nothing in this room.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
I'll try.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Grete in ultra-fashionable running-wear looks through the kitchen for snacks, as Gregor is by her feet eyeing from side to side with anxiety.

GRETE
Hmm... Kind Bars? Or something more
soft for you? I think we're out of
hair.

Grete laughs and playfully bumps Gregor with her foot. Gregor doesn't react. She grabs something, and they head out through the doorway.

Gregor easily walks through the doorway, and Grete follows. And then stops. And stares.

GRETE (CONT'D)
Wait... Didn't you used to have to
walk up the side to fit through the
doorways?

Gregor doesn't react. Grete stays... and then continues on.

EXT. DOWNTOWN AREA - DAY

A small downtown area, think just smaller than a town center.

Grete walks and snaps selfies on her phone. Gregor is sticking close, walking in her shadow.

GRETE
Isn't exercise amazing?

GREGOR
I don't think my body was meant to
do this.

GRETE

Fine, let me find shade.

(pulls up Maps)

But seriously Gregor, I'm not going to do this business if you or I have to sacrifice our humanity. Imagine you didn't have to work. What would you do all day?

GREGOR

Certain things aren't appropriate to tell your sister.

GRETE

JESUS CHRIST GREGOR.

GREGOR

Okay, okay... I... don't... know.

Gregor stops. Lost in thought. Grete turns to him.

GRETE

You like manga, right?

GREGOR

I don't want my gravestone to read "Read a bunch of comic books."

(beat)

Least problem being they'd think it was superficial kids books, not the art that actually is... anyway, sidetrack.

GRETE

No that was good! For a second I felt you actually caring about something.

(beat)

Okay, bench is around the corner.

They turn.

GREGOR

Everyone says to achieve happiness you need a purpose. Every character in every story wakes up and knows their goal in life. But I wake up and I just survive.

GRETE

That's why I act. To leave a legacy. All my roles I'm gonna get will live on beyond whatever time I have on this beautiful, crazy rock.

(MORE)

GRETE (CONT'D)

I won't truly die until the last
reel of me on film is burnt away by
the sun.

GREGOR

And you deserve to feel that way.

They sit. Grete's arms crossed. Silence for a beat.

GRETE

You're more than the money you can
make Gregor.

GREGOR

My capitalist capabilities ARE my
capabilities. That's the definition
of capitalism.

GRETE

Art doesn't have to be about money.
Relationships aren't about money.
Love isn't about money.

GREGOR

You're in a industry that ties who
you know to what job you get, what
job you get to how much health care
you deserve, in a country that ties
art to stock price, in a society
that ties marriage to tax codes and
alimony.

(beat)

Everything is about money.

GRETE

That doesn't mean I have to agree
with what I'm living in! I have the
freedom to think however I want.
And you're right, maybe this
country wasn't made the way I want
it, or made for me at all. But I'm
here, and I won't change to fit an
ideal that was never meant to
include people like me.

The sun starts to poke into their shade.

GRETE (CONT'D)

You're not alone anymore. I'm
running the business too. So start
living for yourself.

She smiles. Gregor looks at her.

GREGOR

As soon as I figure out how, I'll
let you know.

Grete EXPLODES into a SIGH, and gets up.

GRETE

I'm going to yoga. Don't come home
until you've... found a self help
group or something. I need to sweat
out the Doomer.

She starts to stomp away, hands in her pocket.

Gregor CALLS. She turns back.

GREGOR

I could be wrong! I mean... it'd be
better if I was, right?

GRETE

Get help!

She sticks out her tongue, then waves.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Gregor wanders the streets aimlessly, guided by the street
lamps. Then, something swaying in the wind catches his eye:

CLOSE UP: POSTER

"LIFE BUGGING YOU?"

LEGS ANONYMOUS

/□/\(□□□○-○□ □□□)/\□\

to get a leg up on life

Weds. 9pm @ 14th Street & Beverly

~ a self help group ~"

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT - BACK TO

GREGOR

Self help group, huh?

EXT. 14TH STREET & BEVERLY - NIGHT

Cars whiz by closed shops as Gregor looks around the darkness. But nothing's open. Then, near the ground, there's another FLIER... right in front of a Gregor-sized tunnel.

He walks to it. It leads under a parking lot, no light except a dim red glow at the exit. He crawls in.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

A claustrophobic tunnel, dark, dirt falling from the top onto Gregor as he crawls through. Closer to the light, then out-

EXT. ABANDONED LOT - NIGHT

And into the warm glow of crackling fire.

Brick walls rise up like a skyscraper on two sides, a blue recycling bin the third wall. In the middle is a make-shift bonfire of twigs, cardboard, and trash. And all around Gregor...

BUGS. GIANT BUGS. Like him, in a circle around the fire. A three-foot ANT, a curled up MILLIPEDE, a WASP roasting a smore, a BEETLE cuddling against a LADY BUG.

An ARMORED CRICKET (air of authority) turns to Gregor.

GREGOR

What is...

The Armored Cricket puts his hind leg by Gregor's mouth in a silent "shh".

No one is looking at Gregor. They're all looking at a BUTTERFLY, who is staring at the fire.

BUTTERFLY

And that's when the booze really took over. I was lapping up tablespoons at a time.

Gregor crawls over to an open spot in the circle and sits next to a BEDBUG about half his size.

BEDBUG

(lady)

First time?

(off Gregor)

You'll get it by your turn...

CLOSE UP: SILKWORM

A snow-white SILKWORM (female, soft-spoken), takes bites of lettuce between words.

SILKWORM

When I was human, it was strange.
Working for a billionaire who says
he cares about you. But then I'd
say "maybe we could" or "is it
alright if" and he looks at me like
"why is this thing talking?" Every
hour I wasn't by his side, I
worried how I could better myself
for him. When I transformed, my
first thought wasn't "how am I
going to hold my daughter anymore?"
It was "How am I going to get him
his coffee on time?"

CLOSE UP: WOLF SPIDER

Hairy, wood colored WOLF SPIDER (male, Southern) with two bulging eyes and at least four smaller ones.

WOLF SPIDER

I fucking cried. There I was.
Probably like, a dozen eyes. Too
many legs to count.
(smiles)
No one could stop me now.

CLOSE-UP: FIREFLY

The FIREFLY's rear glows on and off with a rhythmic lull.

Guiding shadows of her face onto the stone wall and back off to the ground.

FIREFLY

It's a gift. The transformation is
a gift. Can you imagine going back?
To a world where everything was so
small.

CLOSE-UP: BEDBUG

The Bedbug (female, youthful) that's next to Gregor is speaking.

BEDBUG

When I was in college, I was a radical communist. Obviously. I had my little red book, I chained myself to ALL the monuments. Oh, the Chicago Bean! Well, long story...

(beat)

Then I graduated. And I got my graphic design job. 150k. Yeah. I was gonna live off 14 and donate the rest. But a few months in I thought, it's a lot safer to live alone, and can I really sacrifice my safety? And then, I'm working so late, I **need** to eat out tonight. And then, it's better for the environment if I buy a new electric car. And then, no one will take me seriously if I don't get the newest designer clothes.

(beat)

Yeah, I was living off 14. A month. When I woke up transformed, I knew immediately. "This is my punishment."

She looks down at the ground, and smiles sadly.

EXT. ABANDONED LOT - NIGHT

The Bugs clap/rustle their wings/shake their feet, as the Bedbug finishes, and all eyes turn to Gregor.

The camera goes close-up on Gregor. He opens his mouth-

Then stares over at other bugs. Camera breaks from him to follow. When it comes back to him, it's wider. Shaking like he is.

GREGOR

Hi, I'm Gregor.

He waits for the response.

Nothing.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I turned, er transformed, into a cockroach... Wow. A month. Two? No.. Yeah.

(dry mouth)

(MORE)

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I just want my family's finances
back to normal. Everything back...
Sorry, I was stupid to come here, I
went to this acting class and-

ANT

WHAT THE FUCK?! How can there be so
many of us, yet no one is talking
about a cure!?"

Gregor is shocked to silence. Everyone stares at the fuming
Ant.

Then, LAUGHTER. Uproarious laughter like the punchline of the
century. Gregor watches silently.

BEETLE

When things happen to people like
us, no one cares. Look around.
There's, no, money. Maybe start an
ice bucket challenge next time.

The fire crackles, reflecting orange flames back.

LATER

Dead embers fall onto white twigs of a dead fire.

Gregor watches all the Bugs talking to each other. Each one
at peace. His antennae shudder, and he turns to go--

SLAMMING into the Bedbug, which falls over from his
overwhelming size.

GREGOR

Shit, sorry.

BEDBUG

Jerry, you-!

(realizes)

Oh. You're the new guy, right?

Gregor nods, and tries to wiggle his way around her to the
exit.

BEDBUG (CONT'D)

I'm Alice. ...

... Now you tell me your name.

GREGOR

Gregor.

Alice (aka the Bedbug) nods encouragingly. Gregor eyes the exit, but then he sees her eyes...

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I don't think you were wrong. To spend money. On those things.

ALICE

It's too late to change it either way now.

(beat)

And hey, this means I get to meet you.

GREGOR

Um... I mean... Well, I guess...

ALICE

Hey. I'm making a commune with other post-humans like us. It's gonna be a completely post-money society. Just total equity and freedom. Oh, and this earworm Bob is making a slide! You should join. I want you to join.

She's glowing, even in the dying light. Eyes free of malice or other motives besides hope.

GREGOR

Wow. I-- need to think about it. There's some things I have to do.

ALICE

Sure. But just think about who you really are now.

Her eyes follow Gregor as he goes away from the dying fire, and disappears into the darkness of the tunnel.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Late night, and the only light is the glow of the TV illuminating onto a captivated Grete and Gregor.

FROM THE TV: Gunshots, stealthy music, the click click click of a safe being twisted.

Popcorn kernels are thrown into Grete's mouth with wild abandon. She passes one to Gregor, who opens his mouth out of politeness, then secretly spits it out onto the floor.

GRETE

Okay, okay, here it is...

GREGOR

It's just a James Bond movie, who could they have possibly-

The BURST of a door splintering open.

Gregor's eyes go WIDE and his whole body WIGGLES.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

OH MY GOD, THEY GOT-?! THEY GOT-!!?

Grete doubles-over LAUGHING, popcorn spilling everywhere. Gregor's almost hopping on his many legs.

LATER

A quieter scene. Grete's lying on the couch, watching Gregor watch the movie.

GRETE

You seem... brighter.

GREGOR

... Yeah. I went to- I had a good night.

STEPS from the other room. Both their eyes flash to the doorway, MOVE-

Mr. Samsa walks in. It's like the room cooled 20 degrees.

He inspects the scene: Grete, lying on the couch, a Gregor-sized pillow covered by a blanket, and a phone by her face.

MR. SAMSA

You need to go to bed.

GRETE

Okay. I'm streaming this with my friend on-

MR. SAMSA

Go to bed.

Remote in her hand. The glow of the screen evaporating the room to silent dark. Footsteps thump away.

And then in the dark, Grete and Gregor giggle like they've just robbed a bank.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GREGOR'S ROOM - DAY

For the entire scene: One fixed camera angle. Low to the ground, pushed in the corner of the room opposite to the window, pointing at Gregor's bed. Like an iPhone left to record on the floor.

Gregor sits up in bed, his wild black hair illuminating against the light of the window. Human again.

Human again.

Unsurprised, he looks around the room. Gets up. His feet are larger from our view, head smaller. Looks out the window. It's so quiet, it could be serene.

Then he turns and makes eye contact with the camera.

The whole room seems to shudder the tiniest amount.

Not letting any emotion show, Gregor walks towards us. Each step THUNDERING more and more as it grows nearer. Until his feet are half we see, his face completely gone from view.

Then, he leans down. And with dead eyes, STARES right at us.

The WORLD SHAKES.

His left hand reaches beyond our view. And then he picks.. us.. up...

CAMERA CUT:

In Gregor's human hand, is a tiny, normal sized cockroach. Shaking in his palm.

EXT. SAMSA HOUSE - NIGHT

GREGOR (O.S.)

Help.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bright colors bursting with light in Grete's room, as she lies surfing the web on her laptop. Next to her is Gregor's laptop pointed vertically playing ANIME, and up up up the wall, Gregor stuck to the wall, looking down and watching.

GRETE

Ooo, this role sounds perfect for me! Help me set up the living room tonight?

GREGOR

Sure, I can stick the light to the ceiling and- NO, senpai! Not the elevator...

Grete rolls over and sighs in contentment.

RAISED VOICES from beyond the room break through the atmosphere. Both Grete and Gregor turn and look towards the noise like they could see through the wall.

Grete pauses the show. The voices get LOUDER. Dangerous.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Two feet and 6 bug-feet race across the floor as the voices-

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE - CONTINUOUS

of Mr. Samsa and Mrs. Samsa ERUPT across the dining room table.

MR. SAMSA

You really thought you could hide this from me?!

He's clutching something in his hand, shaking it too fast to see.

MRS. SAMSA

It wasn't me, it was- Gregor!

She sees Gregor and Grete standing in the entrance. She walks over and stands in front of Grete like a shield, and looks at Mr. Samsa.

MRS. SAMSA (CONT'D)

Gregor- he always did it. I'm sure, you could just, show him, and he'll... nod and say it's a mistake.

MR. SAMSA

(smirks)

Alright. Here you go "Gregor".

Mr. Samsa walks over, paper CLUTCHES in his hand. He gets to Gregor, and Gregor braces himself as a FIST hurls towards him-

And opens up to reveal a document full of text. One line is all that matters:

"NOTICE TO ACCELERATE"

GREGOR

They're trying to foreclose us?
But, that's impossible. It's too soon, we should've only missed one payment.

GRETE

Wait. Gregor, the mortgage isn't autopay?

GREGOR

No but I said it's too soon it's only been a month-

GRETE

You've been a bug for four months!

GREGOR

... what?

MR. SAMSA

What is he saying?!

MRS. SAMSA

He said it's a mistake, right Grete?

GRETE

He said, Mom look, okay just-

All the Samsas are jammed into the entrance of the kitchen, Mr. Samsa pushing in, Mrs. Samsa in front of Grete, Gregor nearly stepped on by 3 pairs of feet.

MRS. SAMSA

Just nod Gregor-

GRETE

Oh my god...

GREGOR

Look, it's not too late.

MR. SAMSA

WHAT IS HE SAYING?!

GREGOR
It's just a notice.

MRS. SAMSA
Mr. Samsa, you're hurting me!

GREGOR
We can pay everything back.

GRETE
(stepping back)
I was so stupid...

MR. SAMSA
Grete tell me what he said and come
HERE!

Mr. Samsa GRABS at his daughter.

Grete SCREAMS

Stumbles back---

And FALLS to the ground.

Mrs. Samsa YELLS and SHOVES Mr. Samsa-

A RED FIRE in her eyes

Two forces DEADLY serious

GRETE
IT'S TRUE, OKAY?!

They both stop.

GRETE (CONT'D)
He didn't pay. Whatever this
means... it's real.

GREGOR
Grete... I need you to tell them
it's just a notice. We can pay it
back and nothing will happen. And I
know we have enough to do it.

GRETE
(to Mr. Samsa)
But, it's just a notice right? And
Gregor says there's enough money
left to pay it back.

Mr. Samsa is considering this. Just the act of thinking
calming him down from where he was.

GRETE (CONT'D)
I'll get the computer! We'll pay it
right now and... please Dad don't-

She looks at her Mom, and can't even finish. Just tears in her eyes. She runs to her room.

Mrs. Samsa stands, just as defensive. Gregor notices a FLICKER passing them. And his breath stops-

GREGOR
Wait...

GRETE (O.S.)
I have it!

She runs into the kitchen past Gregor and opens his laptop. Mr. Samsa staring down. Her fingers gliding over the password.

GREGOR
Grete... don't...

GRETE
Okay Gregor, tell me the pass-

She turns- and sees Gregor's face. And understands, at least enough to pause.

MR. SAMSA
The password. NOW!

We see Gregor's mouth move. See Grete's fingers across the keyboard. Then see all their eyes stare at the screen.

Gregor's eyes close in resignation.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
There's nothing left.

And he and Grete turn.

Mrs. Samsa has moved as far away from everyone else as she can.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
What did you do?

MRS. SAMSA
There's always risk in business.

MR. SAMSA
What. Did. You. Do?

Mrs. Samsa puts on her fake smile, curls her arms close to make herself small.

MRS. SAMSA

Baby, I love you so much. I just wanted to take care of you baby. If I just tried a business one more time-

MR. SAMSA

YOU FUCKING CUNT!

Mr. Samsa SEIZES the laptop and HURLS it against the wall. It SPLINTERS against the wood into pieces, metal and plastic flying across the floor.

Grete SCREAMS.

MRS. SAMSA

PLEASE BABY! I'll fix it!

Mr. Samsa advances towards the corner of the room Mrs. Samsa is in.

MR. SAMSA

Fix it?

Mrs. Samsa back against the wall...

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)

How many times is history going to repeat itself?

eyes the hallway to the kitchen...

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)

I mean... the reason my son even turned into that THING in the first place is because-

She RUNS.

Silence. Everyone is frozen.

Mr. Samsa PUSHES the table back and CHASES HER.

Grete cries out, covering her mouth.

GRETE

I'M CALLING THE POLICE!

She runs in the opposite direction, THROWS the doors open--

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - HALLWAY

As Mrs. Samsa SKIDS through the hallway, cold sweat---

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - KITCHEN

And into the kitchen. Her eyes frantic. Dashes to the counter, one hand on the knife rack.

Mr. Samsa appears behind her.

MRS. SAMSA
DON'T HURT ME!

He smiles.

MR. SAMSA
I'm not gonna hurt you.

And lumbers towards her.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
We're going to do what we should
have been doing this whole time.
I'm going to take care of you. And
you're going to SIT THERE AND-
AHHHHHHH!!!

Mr. Samsa stumbles back in pain, clutching his leg.

Gregor is chomping on it (teeth-less).

Mr. Samsa KICKS him off with his other foot, and falls to the ground.

Gregor's head spins, barely able to see anything.

GREGOR'S POV:

The world is hazy, colors far apart and slowly coming together.

MR. SAMSA (CONT'D)
(hard to understand)
Look what ... have to ... my own
son...

Gregor looks up.

A glistening KNIFE IS COMING DOWN ON HIM.

The world turns RED.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - HALLWAY

Gregor stumbles.

Brown fluid is GUSHING from him.

Behind him, SHOUTING.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - DINING ROOM TABLE

His eyes, in and out of focus.

The door, left open.

Moves towards it.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's POURING RAIN.

Gregor breathes heavily.

Rainwater falls off him and leaves a sickly brown on the white sidewalk.

The red of a stoplight.

LATER

Honking.

Gregor opens his eyes.

EXT. STREET INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Blinking white light beaming onto Gregor.

He looks around.

He's in the middle of a 4 way intersection. Pick-up truck right in front of him, blaring their horn.

The car is blue. Brown?

Gregor pushes up and moves towards the sidewalk.

He keeps walking... and then...

collapses.

BLACK.

LAWNWORKER (O.S.)

I found him in the... No Sir. I don't know Sir. Yes Sir, I think so Sir. He mentioned your... Mumbled it, Sir.

(pause)

Yes Sir.

Silence. Footsteps.

MR. FOREMAN (O.S.)

If you're going to die, do it off property, alright?

INT. FELICITY'S HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Gregor opens his eyes.

Mr. Foreman is leaning down, smiling at Gregor, lying helplessly on a bear carpet. There's a fireplace roaring, two leather chairs turned away facing the night.

GREGOR

Please... help me.

The stab-wound on Gregor's back is visible, at least 4 inches wide. It's stopped bleeding, and is surrounded by a deep-brown foam-like substance.

MR. FOREMAN

Fine. I know a good hitman who owes me a favor.

A MAN chuckles offscreen.

GREGOR

Please. We're getting foreclosed. I'll pay you back. That's all we need, just a loan.

The smile DROPS from Mr. Foreman's face.

MR. FOREMAN

Lawnworker! You left a bug here!

GREGOR

Wait, but-

MR. FOREMAN

I said for you to come for me for help.

(MORE)

MR. FOREMAN (CONT'D)

I never said for you to bore me. If I wanted to stoop to that, I could open ten pay-day loan shops tomorrow.

MAN (O.S.)

Tell him what you REALLY want!

The MAN (40s, Asian, swirling craft beer in a glass) walks over with a smile.

GREGOR

Who is...?

MR. FOREMAN

So, do you want revenge?

Gregor is silent for a second. He closes his eyes...

And shakes his head.

MAN

What he wants is-

MR. FOREMAN

Let him get there. The squirming eyes are more fun. Besides, for now we have oil to discuss.

MAN

Of course. You should come visit my plants yourself. I'll pull up some pictures. It's true what they say about the sky.

The two men stand by Gregor, ignoring him.

Gregor watches. The figures seem impossibly tall.

GREGOR

Please... I want to help my family.

The fireplace crackles. The Man takes a sip from his glass, then shows his phone to Mr. Foreman. A picture of AURORA BOREALIS OVER SNOW.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I need money.

The foreman inspects the picture. Gregor stares at the men. Their riches. He CLOSES HIS EYES to DARKNESS.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

I want freedom.

Mr. Foreman stops looking at the Man, and looks back at Gregor, a smirk emerging.

MR. FOREMAN
There. You want freedom, I have
money. That's America.

GREGOR
But I'm... this.

MR. FOREMAN
Oh Gregor...
(beat)
Didn't I tell you I had a client
who was an Alaskan Bullworm?

The Man next to Mr. Foreman GRINS.

And in his hands, the photo of AURORA BOREALIS OVER SNOW.

Everything stops.

GREGOR
He-

MR. FOREMAN
Yes.

GREGOR
And-

MR. FOREMAN
So can you.

Gregor breathes quickly.

GREGOR
Please-

MR. FOREMAN
Don't bore me when I already said I
would.
(beat)
You'll only need to cover the entry
fee. I'd think... 30 million?

Gregor is speechless.

MAN
God, inflation! Mine was only 25.

MR. FOREMAN
Fuck inflation. 25 then.

Mr. Foreman and the Man toast and drink.

GREGOR

I don't... We can't afford our mortgage.

MR. FOREMAN

Didn't we already discuss your mortgage?

(to the Man)

Now, about the new drilling facilities...

The Man and Mr. Foreman walk away from Gregor to their chairs.

EXT. SAMSA HOUSE - DAY

The Samsa House. It's quiet.

Gregor crawls on the driveway towards the door.

INT. SAMSA HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY

The door opens, and Gregor pokes his head into view.

New Maid is in the doorway, wearing gray and black. The spring in her step gone.

NEW MAID

Oh, buggy. No more baths. Your family's at Rodeway Inn at Santa Fe and Gage, didn't you hear?

GREGOR

Is Grete okay?

NEW MAID

... Why I'm back? I did quit. Those few weeks surfing... You should've seen me. I was the first one out and the last one back. Then my Mom called, said she was hit with a medical bill. She can't be on Medicare, you know? So... there my money went.

She shrugs. Looks at Gregor a moment more.

GREGOR

What am I going to do to save myself?

She squints, trying to understand.... Then closes the door in his face.

EXT. RODEWAY INN - NIGHT

A 1-star motel outside of L.A. proper. Faded paint is chipping onto brown grass. A few SMOKERS lean against the wall by the parking lot.

Gregor gets out of a taxi and hobbles towards the Inn. Stops to pant. Then keeps hobbling.

EXT./INT. RODEWAY INN - OUTSIDE SUITE/INSIE SUITE - NIGHT

Gregor moves his head down from an open window, sighing. Hobbles to another-

Sees Mr. Samsa and Mrs. Samsa inside. It's a small master bedroom. Mr. Samsa asleep on faded yellow flower sheet bed on an all carpet floor. In the single wooden chair, Mrs. Samsa sits knitting, redoing a single stitch over and over.

Gregor raises his eyebrows. He crawls to the next window. Grete is there, wearing all pink on a pink sheet thrown over her bed, her lying on top of it with her laptop out, two extension cords plugged together to reach the one wall outlet behind the bulky early 2000s flat-screen TV.

Gregor narrows his eyes. Focuses closer on the laptop to see what webpage it's on... it's blue...

With a WHIP, the laptop closes, Grete SCRAMBLES off her bed-

Gregor backs away, one leg gives out-

The door THROWS open-

Grete stands, looking down at her brother. Tears in her eyes.

GRETE

I thought you were dead.

GREGOR

I-

(beat)

Are you okay?

GRETE

Come on, if Dad sees you, you still will be.

Grete leads Gregor inside.

GREGOR (O.S.)
 If you thought I was dead... why
 aren't you wearing black?

GRETE
 Really??

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Besides Grete's bed, there's an end table, and two large suitcases open in a corner. A closed door leads to the Samsa's room.

GRETE
 (quiet)
 And I'm not okay, thank you for asking. Full-ass traumatized for life. Malcolm says my memoir will be fire but... is it even worth it?

Gregor tilts his head in confusion.

GRETE (CONT'D)
 Malcolm. Classmate. I stayed with him- his family, that night.
 (beat)
 Anyway. Basically, Dad's renting the house out so we can make payments, and going back to work. We're living here. Everything's in storage, we all thought you were dead, Mom's a MESS, and Dad CAN'T know you're alive.

GREGOR
 You stayed over at a boy's house?

GRETE
 That's really what you got from all that?!

Murmured GROANS from the other room. Grete freezes. Gregor DASHES towards her bed- but his leg catches. Footsteps towards them.

Grete SCOOPS Gregor up- the knob turns- Flings him under the bed-

Mrs. Samsa stares inside.

MRS. SAMSA
 Gre-

Grete is lying on the ground, staring up at the floor.

GRETE
I'm doing yoga.

MRS. SAMSA
I thought I heard...

She swallows, something deep in her throat.

VIEW FROM UNDER THE BED: Gregor watches as Mrs. Samsa slowly closes the door, eyes looking around desperately until the last moment.

Then, Grete appears in front of Gregor's face.

GRETE
(whisper)
Okay... Lemme get you some
blankets.

GREGOR
No... I need to teach you as much
as I can about the Dropshipping
business. Now.

GRETE
Gregor, I'll handle that, you can
barely walk, le-

GREGOR
I- We need money, now. A lot of it.

Grete is still for a moment. Then nods in agreement.

LATER

Deep night. Gregor and Grete are huddled around a computer screen, the only glow in the darkness.

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor wakes up. He's under the bed. The sun is blazing in full through the window.

No one else is in the room.

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

A different day? Gregor is in a different spot under the bed. The door opens, and Grete walks in. Gregor is about to open his mouth-

When Mrs. Samsa walks in behind her.

LATER

Mrs. Samsa walks out.

Gregor crawls out, and walks towards Grete. She smiles wearily.

GRETE

You're not good at European history right?

(off nothing)

I'll put an iPad on with Crunchyroll.

LATER

Night. Grete SIGHS, opens the door, and walks out.

GRETE

Come on Gregor, let's do the Dropshipping out here where we can see the stars.

Gregor follows her, walking easily through a doorway that's twice his size.

Grete stares at him, then fixates on the doorway.

GRETE (CONT'D)

This place... must really have big... doorways, huh? At home, you had to squeeze through ours.

GREGOR

Sure.

Gregor stares 100% focused on the screen. Above them, stars twinkle beautifully in the sky.

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor sits alone under the bed. In the corner, he's scratched a "\$25 M" and stares at it in a trance.

Barely audible sounds from the other room carry over with the sound of knives and forks on plates.

MR. SAMSA
And school?

GRETE
Yeah. Good.

Gregor closes his eyes...

The door OPENS, SHUTS. Gregor pulls himself up, ready to move-

Grete pushes a BOWL under the bed.

GRETE (CONT'D)
(whisper)
Acting class, sorry.

Then bolts out.

Gregor is alone.

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor is chewing on a bowl of bread in disgust. Finally, spits it out. Looks at a pile of dust. And starts to chew that, face melting in pleasure.

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor lying in a different place, the door to the suite open. Then hears muffled, deep SOBS.

He peaks his head out. Grete isn't home.

Crawls slowly out of bed. Onto the wall, so everything is below him. Then, upside down, crosses over from the ceiling to the other suite.

INT. RODEWAY INN - SAMSA'S SUITE - MASTER BEDROOM -
CONTINUOUS

Mr. Samsa is alone. Holding something in his hand, and CRYING.

Gregor doesn't dare move. Just stares, trying to focus on whatever he's holding. Mr. Samsa moves it, and for a moment it reflects enough in the light.

It's a well-loved PHOTO of a small black BOY (9), sitting on the lap of a YOUNGER MR. SAMSA in his JANITOR uniform.

Gregor is frozen. Mr. Samsa puts it back in his pocket, WIPES HIS EYES. Gregor moves back to the other room. Breathing heavily.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor stares at the "25 M" on the floor. Leg tapping. Again. And again. And again. Faster-

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor stands on the wall, leg tapping, staring at Grete, who's writing in her notebook.

SCRATCH, SCRATCH of the pencil. Leg TAP TAPPING.

Then the pencil erasing.

SCRATCH. TAP.

Finally, she looks up at him.

GRETE

Can you... go under the bed? It's just, I really need to focus.

Gregor stares at her.

Then nods, and begins to move down the wall.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

A rustle from outside.

Gregor stares at the door.

GRETE (O.S.)

Malcolm, literally you don't have to walk me to the door. Nerd.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Worth for five more seconds with you.

GRETE (O.S.)

Whatever, now leave before someone sees!

Grete opens the door, and walks in, an ear to ear smile on her face, and throws off her coat onto the bed.

Then, she looks down where Greg is. And her smile stops.

GRETE (CONT'D)
Don't look at me like that.

Gregor is staring up at her, a blank expression.

GREGOR
Like what?

GRETE
It was just an hour okay? We can still get all the Dropshipping done for tonight.

GREGOR
I didn't say anything.

GRETE
Well it's just... I have a lot on my plate, okay? I feel like I have THIS many things to do, and this much time. Just getting to school I have to wake up at 4:30am. So I'm sorry if I don't have the time to take care of you like I used to.

GREGOR
Grete... I didn't say anything.

GRETE
Your eyes do though.

Grete GRABS her coat from the bed, then turns around and walks back out the door.

Gregor stares, shaking his head.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Grete is on her laptop while Gregor is on the doorway.

He's in the center, two large planks of wood on either side.

Grete YAWNS, stretching her arms. Then looks at Gregor. And freezes.

She gets up. Cold. Stiff as a plank. Like she's seen something horrible.

GRETE

Gregor... Walk through the door.

Gregor gets down from the door, and she opens it. Then he walks through.

He's not even a third of the size of the doorway.

Grete motions for him to get back.

As he does, her breath comes in faster and faster.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Gregor... why are you shrinking?

Tears are in her red eyes.

Gregor looks up at her face. It's so big, like there's a FISH EYE LENS on the entire world. Dizzying.

GREGOR

I don't know.

Grete tries to swallow, but can't.

GRETE

We need to stop- Please Gregor.
What can I do?

GREGOR

I... don't-

GRETE

TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

MR. SAMSA (O.S.)

What's going on?

GRETE

DON'T COME IN!
(to Gregor)
Please.

GREGOR

We'd need money.

GRETE

I can do that.

GREGOR

Millions.

GRETE

... I can do that.

MR. SAMSA (O.S.)
I'm coming in!

She smiles to Gregor, and wipes the tears from her eyes.

GRETE
It's my turn to save you. Okay?

Gregor scrambles towards the bed as the door opens-
Two work boots walk in.

MR. SAMSA (O.S.)
What was that?

GRETE (O.S.)
Nothing.

MR. SAMSA (O.S.)
Heh. You know how much I've been
working, and you want to keep
secrets?

GRETE (O.S.)
There's no secr-

MR. SAMSA
I know you've been talking to
someone.... A boy, isn't it.

GRETE
... Fine. Yes.

MR. SAMSA
I'm not letting my girl turn into a
slut! This door is open 24/7 from
now on! And that's final.

GRETE
Dad-!

The work boots leave.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor lies under the bed.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor lies under the bed.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Gregor lies under the bed. His feet STRAIN to open a dusty MANGA BOOK in a corner... But he falls back, too exhausted to even open the page.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor lies under the bed.

GRETE (O.S.)
Gregor? It's safe.

Gregor peaks his head out. He has GREY SPOTS all over him now.

The fluorescent lights seem BLINDING on Gregor. Grete stares at the open door, laptop in hand.

GRETE (CONT'D)
Dad's working an extra shift and I skipped acting classes.

GREGOR
Acting... What, NO-

GRETE
Please. We only have a few hours.
What else can you teach me?

Gregor sighs.

LATER

Grete and Gregor are sitting on the bed, laptop near them. Grete is stiff, but Gregor nods, trying to keep his eyes open.

GREGOR
That's it.

GRETE
You sure there's nothing else?

GREGOR
Remember when you couldn't even match ad keywords to customer niches? Now you're finding them better than I ever did.

Grete BEAMS at whatever the hell Gregor said.

GRETE

We're still only getting \$250k in sales per day.

GREGOR

Part of it's luck, part is ramp.

GRETE

I know I just... We can't afford to wait.

GREGOR

Hey. Soon you'll be done with this and back to acting.

GRETE

I don't care about acting now.
 (off Gregor's glare)
 Maybe. Look, I care about you.
 Acting won't save you. At least say
 I'm really good at this?

Gregor just GLARES.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor lies under the bed. His water bowl is half full. He stares up.

GREGOR

(whisper)
 You're really good at this.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor lies under the bed. His water bowl is empty. Noises from the other room. SHATTERING GLASS.

MRS. SAMSA

THAT'S IT! I'M GONE!!

MR. SAMSA

THANK FUCK! THAT'S TWO ROACHES
 KILLED.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor lies under the bed. His water bowl is empty. No noises. Leg TAPPING uncontrollably.

Finally, he gets up. Peaks his head out. There's no one around.

Gregor crawls out, looking around. The bathroom door is open. He walks over.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Four legs on the faucet, yet nothing is turning...

Gregor GRUNTS in frustration.

After a few moments, he looks up. The window to the bathroom is open. Gregor stares at it.

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

A dirty suburban street. Gregor hobbles down the sidewalk, having to move his legs twice as fast to move the same distance.

A PERSON moves by him, not even aware he exists. The foot is almost as large as Gregor's body.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

A run-down fountain, broken and still.

Gregor gulps his head up from it, GASPING in relief.

Cars whiz by. He looks around. Unsure what to do.

EXT. ABANDONED LOT - DAY

Out of the shadows of the tunnel, Gregor looks around the Abandoned Lot of the Legs Anonymous meeting. The fire pit is cinders, not a single insect in sight.

Gregor SIGHS. Disappointed.

Then, a rustle from a MILDREW PILLOW.

Alice (still a bedbug) pokes her head out from the pillow. Makes eye contact with Gregor.

They both smile.

GREGOR
I didn't realize THIS was the
commune.

Alice laughs, walks over to him. Stops, and looks down.
She's twice his size.

ALICE
I know I haven't been growing...

Gregor opens his mouth... then glances away from her.
Her eyes soften.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Hey... let's take a walk?

The tunnel awaits them.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

They're walking down the street, a 3 foot bed-bug and a 18
inch cockroach side by side.

ALICE
And Bob actually has made a slide,
but oh god, it's SO slimy.

Gregor laughs, then COUGHS. His legs are moving so fast to
keep up with hers.

Alice stops.

GREGOR
What's wrong?

ALICE
There's this way I found of getting
places fast.

A red light ahead. A stopped FORD F-150. Alice GRINS.

EXT. FORD F-150 - DAY

Wind flies past Alice and Gregor as they sit in the CARGO
BED. A BUMP nearly causes Gregor to LEVITATE. Alice giggles,
grabbing him.

GREGOR
WHERE ARE WE GOING?!

ALICE
Who knows! I call this Unsolicited
Hitchhiking!

Gregor laughs again.

GREGOR
SGYFASJD JIDFJHUIASDOFDSJID FEO
KAHSDJASKDH FIUEAKF JSJ ADKAS.

Gregor is no longer understandable to us.

ALICE
He's not that bad when you get
to... I actually love that.

GREGOR
ADUIRQI GUFISDFI EIUHSEIFD
SFIJEUFSJEF SDFDFJKD KJFDSFSF
SKJFDSFJSEFEJ.

ALICE
(laughs)
And twice as bright.

GREGOR
DJNAISD.

Alice rolls her eyes, but smiles.

ALICE
When we get there, you'll help me
find stuff for the commune, right?

GREGOR
I... have nothing else to do.

And like nothing happened, his speech is back.

ALICE
Just what I love to hear.

GREGOR
What? Want me to say, "If I had one
day left on earth, I'd want to
spend it with you"?

Alice nods.

Gregor sighs... and opens his mouth-

EXT. BEACH - PARKING LOT - DAY

The sun is starting to set, an orange haze in the sky.

Alice and Gregor and walking side by side out of a parking
lot, FORD F-150 in the background.

Alice is staring at Gregor. Gregor notices: the scar on his back.

GREGOR
It's from my Dad.

ALICE
... I'm sorry. They're still human?

EXT. BEACH - SAND - CONTINUOUS

Gregor nods.

They walk on the beach, eyes scanning for items.

ALICE
Do you want to talk about it?

GREGOR
He...
(beat)
I went to college to be a CGI
artist. My Mom was the only one who
knew. She said don't worry about
the money. She'd figure it out. I
got a call six months in. She
always had get rich quick schemes,
and this time... They were gonna
get evicted. I quit school and
became a Dropshipper. That was
enough to save the house, and
eventually, so much more than
anything they'd ever done.
(beat)
Anyway, I was always a shit artist.

Gregor stops at a partially buried ITEM, and DIGS.

Sand hits his face as he stares down, legs pushing himself
further and further into the ground.

The SUNSET is turning blood red.

He's PANTING. Heavy. It's too much. Digging faster. And then
STOPS, gasping for breath.

Bits of sand cover his face. He spits.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
All I had to give to them was
money, and now I see the money just
destroyed them.

ALICE
 Never apologize for loving broken
 people.

Alice stares at Gregor, trying to make him look at her. But he won't.

Finally, she walks over, and looks down at the hole.

Inside, there's a clear plastic case of PLASTIC EXERCISE EQUIPMENT.

Alice's head tilts. She puts her body half in the hole and PUSHES the case out. As it tumbles onto the sand, the case breaks open, and the PIECES inside, spill out.

Inside the exercise equipment is all WHITE, and already cracked half-broken. On the front are Chinese characters, and then large and garish:

"Exercise Bundle 14-Piece Weights Resistance Bands Booty Pads Workout Home Exercise".

ALICE (CONT'D)
 God, this is worthless. You know
 this will outlive us all, right?

Gregor is staring in realization. A mix of horror and disgust on his face.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 Shit, have you bought one of these?

GREGOR
 Yeah... I sort of have.

ALICE
 Do you still want it?

The plastic equipment litters the beach.

Gregor shakes his head.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Gregor and Alice crawl off the back of a broken and half-open Camry truck, and back to the tunnel of Legs Anonymous. Gregor stays, staring at Alice. Alice moves to go when she turns back-

Gregor's legs are wobbling under his own weight, eyes sagging from something that isn't lack of sleep.

ALICE

Come join the commune. Please.

GREGOR

I already went to that parking lot.

ALICE

The REAL commune. It's a barely legal tree right now, but we're getting funds together. And when we reach a million dollars, we'll buy land and freedom for a hundred post-humans. Well... a hundred and one, if you'll let it.

(beat)

I can't heal you. But... You said you'd want to spend your last day with me. So... I'll be there.

GREGOR

What about my family?

ALICE

From what you told me, they never were.

GREGOR

Just a million dollars huh?

Gregor chuckles.

It's like ice cut through Alice.

Gregor walks away from Alice.

Then, he turns to her.

GREGOR (CONT'D)

Maybe you were right the first time. Maybe this is a punishment.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Dark and still, the window open. Gregor wobbles halfway in, and then his legs CRUNCH and give way-

He FALLS, crashing into the sink.

GREGOR'S POV:

The world spins, a horrible swirling dark void.

Grete runs in, her figure angling wildly in the dizzying view of the world.

GRETE

Oh god... Gregor... I thought...

GREGOR

It's okay Grete, I just lost track of... everything.

GRETE

Gregor, you're mumbling, I can't understand you. Just relax.

GREGOR

I said it's okay. It's...

GRETE

You're mumbling...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. RODEWAY INN - GRETE'S ROOM - DAY

Gregor's eyes blink open.

He's on the bed next to Grete. He used to take up half the bed, now he's the size of a large plushie. Back stained with gray dots. He looks at Grete with hollow eyes.

Grete nearly drops her laptop in surprise, and squeezes the hand of MALCOLM (17, fellow high-schooler), who's sitting close to her, arm wrapped around her.

GRETE

Gregor... eat. Please.

She points to a bowl next to Gregor. It's filled with delicious hot CHICKEN WINGS topped with CILANTRO. Gregor stares at it.

GREGOR'S POV:

The chicken wings are tainted a SICKLY BLOOD RED color, the cilantro a sickly MOLD color.

GREGOR

I'm... not hungry.

A held in cry of pain comes from the bed. Looking up, Grete holds a hands over her mouth. There's tears behind her eyes.

GRETE
You're still mumbling.

GREGOR
I... said...

END GREGOR'S POV

Gregor wobbles on the bed as Grete watches.

GREGOR (CONT'D)
AUDIHASDH AFAHSD DFDSF!!

Gregor ROARS unintelligibly.

Grete closes her eyes. Malcolm holds her.

MALCOLM
It's okay. I can't understand him
either.

GRETE
Gregor, you need to eat. Eat.

She points to the bowl.

Gregor looks down at it.

GREGOR
AGRGS I ASDHH AHHHH!!!

He's like a monster.

Grete stares.

GRETE
Please. You just need to eat more.
And maybe you'll be okay.
(beat)
Maybe... my brother will be okay.

Gregor stares at her. The bowl.

He starts to chew on the food.

Malcolm kisses Grete on the cheek.

MALCOLM
I'm gonna get you some water Grete.
You haven't drank anything in a
day.

He gets up to leave. Grete holds his hand for as long she can, never breaking eye contact from Gregor.

INT. RODEWAY INN - NIGHT

A dim glow of a laptop screen. Grete working, typing and clicking fast. Eyes sagging from exhaustion.

Malcolm's hand on her shoulder as he moves away.

MALCOLM

I love you.

GRETE

Malcolm-

MALCOLM

I know. Un-kosh. But like... still true tho.

GRETE

You know I'm, my whole family is like, I literally have no time?

MALCOLM

Is it bad that's part of the reason?

The door closes with a loud SQUEAK.

Gregor blinks awake.

Grete sits alone, all her things immobile and lifeless surrounding her: unwashed pink sheets half thrown off the bed, cluttered books by the bedside table, a stack of ACTING BOOKS, TRI-POD, and CAMERA in the corner collecting dust.

He takes it all in. Moves each leg up to move to her like starting a broken down car.

She turns to him.

GRETE

Don't... I got this.

GREGOR

Rawqweugh udsahd asjdh...

GRETE

Like I said, I cancelled acting classes. For good. If Dad doesn't need to work maybe they'll stop fi-

GREGOR

ARR HDAS JKDAJ!!!

GRETE

Maybe they won't, okay?! I know you don't think I'm good enough. That I was never good enough. And you were right. I can't make it as an actress when all they want is someone who's already famous.

GREGOR

AHASHAHSDH!!!!

GRETE

WHAT?! WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME!?

(beat)

I'm trying, okay?

(beat)

I'm trying so, so hard.

Gregor stops.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Money's gonna make you come back.
Money's gonna make Mom come back. I just need to remember what my brother taught me so I do it in time.

She stares at the screen... Eyes... fighting back sleep...
Face cold and hardened.

LATER

A dim glow of the laptop.

Grete is ASLEEP, still upright with her computer in her lap.

Gregor is still staring at her.

He PUSHES himself up, and walks to her.

GREGOR'S POV:

She's huge now compared to him.

Asleep, her hardened face has reverted back to the soft, kind one so familiar.

On the screen, it's filled with eCommerce windows, sales graphs, advertising bars, and more.

He looks at Grete, taking his sister in one more time.

GREGOR

Please, just do one thing for me...
forget.

END GREGOR'S POV.

A 12 inch cockroach scurries across a motel bed, and towards the bathroom window.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A rundown park. Grete and Malcolm walk by, holding hands. She holds herself a bit more carefree, a bit lighter. Smiling, pointing at things off in the distance.

MALCOLM

Now that the play's done -stunning performance, duh- is your weekend finally free?

GRETE

It's my Mom's week, so would you want to stay over?

MALCOLM

As long as you're okay with calls about the game all weekend from my brother.

GRETE

Brother...

Grete stops, her face caked in confusion.

GRETE (CONT'D)

My brother... Sorry, I, don't have a brother.

Malcolm stares at Grete with concern. Watching her try to piece together a puzzle that doesn't make sense.

MALCOLM

I'm here. Is it happening again?

Grete smiles.

GRETE

Yeah. I wished my family was whole for so long-

MALCOLM

Your mind is pretending it was.

GRETE
Let's keep going.

Grete walks, letting Malcolm lead. And slowly, her face is carefree again. They get to a patch of grass, and Boy steps back in disgust-

MALCOLM
OH GROSS! Wait, lemme just-

Below them is a COCKROACH. Normal sized, but with gray spots all over, and, actually, a tiny little foam scar on its back-

A MAMMOTH SHOE comes down on it to crush--

The cockroach scurries. But it's far too slow.

GRETE
WAIT!!

Grete pushes Malcolm back. She stares at the Cockroach.

The Cockroach stares back.

MALCOLM
What?

GRETE
I don't know...

MALCOLM
Did you want to do it?

Malcolm puts his shoes in a right angle, boxing Cockroach in. And pushes it towards Grete.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
You'll feel better. Crush it.

Grete stares down at Cockroach.

Blinking back something. And nods.

She lifts her shoe up.

And slowly pushes it down onto the Cockroach.

Black shadows descend.

Slowly, until it's ALL BLACK and,

we hear

a . . .

C

R

U

N

C

H.

The BLACK PUPILS OF GRETE'S EYES EXPAND, realization---

She shakes her head, FALLS back, down on her knees, and SCOOPS up the Cockroach.

Runs away from Boy to a wooded area, and puts it down onto a field. There are other BUGS visible.

It's still okay.

Tears are in her eyes.

GRETE

I'm sorry for squishing you.

(beat)

Back then, in your room.

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Grete, are you okay?!

GRETE

(to Malcolm)

YEAH!

She holds a breath.

GRETE (CONT'D)

You just left. Why? You left, and none of us got a choice in dealing with it. You decided for me if you were worth the pain or not.

The Cockroach stares up at Grete, noiselessly.

GRETE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna forget you again, aren't I?

Silence.

A huge lump in her throat, she nods.

Then gets up, and walks away.

Then turns back to look one more time, smiling like she remembered an inside joke.

GRETE (CONT'D)

Hey Greg-

Stops. Eyes searching. The ground is so dense, so many insects, and he's so small. Just a sea of green and brown.

He's lost somewhere in the forest.

Gone.

Malcolm runs up to Grete, placing a hand on her shoulder.

MALCOLM

You good?

Grete bites her lip.

THE END.