

NEW GIRL

"The Perfect Schmidt"

written by

Greg Brainos

gabrainos@gmail.com

919.824.4109

Previously, on *New Girl*:

Jess was laid off from her job as an elementary school teacher, Winston was slowly climbing the ladder at a sports radio station, and Schmidt and Cece were in the "won't they" phase. Nick was Nick.

ACT ONE

INT. LOFT. DINING ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON.

SCHMIDT sits at the table, holding a RUBIK'S CUBE. WINSTON sits beside him, holding a stopwatch at the ready. CECE and JESS spectate from the kitchen.

WINSTON

Go.

Winston clicks the stopwatch and Schmidt begins his attempt to solve the cube.

CECE

I don't understand. You're cramming for a clinical trial that starts in an hour?

SCHMIDT

A trial run by the world's leading neurobiologist-

WINSTON

Who also happens to be your friend.

SCHMIDT

Who handpicked me-

JESS

After you begged him.

SCHMIDT

After he realized I was the best candidate-

WINSTON

With nothing to do on Monday nights.

SCHMIDT

What are you guys, the *Washington Post* corrections bureau?

JESS

It's actually a "corrections desk."

SCHMIDT

Can I get one moment of silence?

CECE

To mourn the death of your dignity?

SCHMIDT

Ha ha. We'll see who's laughing when I'm on the cover of *Time* magazine. I will be- laughter is my most photogenic pose.

(then)

Oh, come on.

Schmidt slams the cube on the table in frustration. He stands up and starts to walk away, but then quickly spins around and addresses the cube as if to surprise it.

WINSTON

Did you really just try to sneak up on a Rubik's Cube?

NICK (O.S.)

That's it!

NICK enters the loft, shutting the door behind him.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'm officially boycotting the imperial system of measurements and from now on will only be using the metric system.

Everyone groans as Schmidt sits back down.

WINSTON/SCHMIDT

Oh, boy/Here we go again.

NICK

What?

JESS

Nothing, Nick. It's just that you have a history of taking these stands and then abandoning them the moment things get tough.

NICK

Me?

INT. LOFT. DINING ROOM. FLASHBACK.

Nick writes a letter of protest at the dining room table.

NICK

To who it may concern-

Nick erases the intro and rewrites it.

NICK (CONT'D)

To whom is concerned-

He erases the intro and tries again.

NICK (CONT'D)

To whoever concerning this is-

Nick crumples the paper, exasperated.

NICK (CONT'D)

Forget it.

BACK TO LOFT:

NICK

This time is different. Do you guys know how impractical it is to keep the imperial system? It's costing us, like, I forgot how much the guy said, but it's a lot of money and he was very persuasive.

SCHMIDT

I'm guessing this gentleman had a British accent?

NICK

Yeah, that's what made him so persuasive.

WINSTON

It is hard to resist a British accent.

JESS

(cockney accent)
'Ello, guv-nah.

WINSTON, SCHMIDT, AND NICK

No!

JESS

(shaking head, mocking
laughter)
Americans.

SCHMIDT

So what are you gonna do, just turn your back on the system that gave us the nautical mile?

JESS

And Fruit by the Foot.

Schmidt and Jess stare at Winston, waiting for his response.

WINSTON

(long beat)
Pound Puppies?

SCHMIDT

Really, Winston?

WINSTON

What, you guys put me on the spot. I got nervous.

SCHMIDT

(to Nick)
Not to mention, the *Die Hard* "water jug riddle," which becomes a complete mess when you try to convert it metrically.

NICK

I don't care, Schmidt, I've made up my mind. I'm adopting the metric system and implementing a full boycott of any place that sells anything using imperial measurements.

WINSTON

So, speaking of gallons, that means you're boycotting all gas stations.

Nick realizes he's underestimated the scope of his commitment.

NICK

(softly)
Yep.

Schmidt picks up the Rubik's Cube in another attempt to solve it.

SCHMIDT

This thing's broken. We've got a bad cube over here.

Schmidt sets the cube on the table. Cece walks over, picks up the cube, inspects it for a split-second, then quickly solves it and places it back down on the table.

JESS

Whoa, Cece!

Schmidt looks at the Rubik's Cube, then at Cece.

SCHMIDT
(sheepishly)
I loosened it for you.

SMASH TO MAIN TITLES.

INT. LOFT. LIVING ROOM. LATER.

Winston sits on the couch, reading a sports magazine. He's dressed like a 1950's sports reporter. Nick enters.

NICK
Look at this getup. You look like...
like-

Nick struggles to recollect.

WINSTON
You're trying to think of a famous
writer, aren't you?

NICK
Hold on... The guy Corey Stoll played
in *Midnight in Paris*.

WINSTON
Seriously? That was easier for you
than Ernest Hemingway?

NICK
IMDB was the default homepage on my
computer when I got it and I don't
know how to change it.
(then)
What's with the suit?

WINSTON
The radio station's giving me a trial
run hosting the primetime slot to see
how I do. I thought I'd dress like a
real journalist to get into the right
mindset.

NICK
Nice. So, you're going in early
tonight?

WINSTON
Yeah.

NICK
Cool, can you give me a ride to work,
then? Schmidt was gonna take me, but
he already left for his study.

WINSTON

Oh, no.

NICK

What?

WINSTON

I'm not gonna be your loophole for your stupid boycott, Nick.

NICK

Having four different measurements for length is stupid. I'm fighting the fight of the everyman.

WINSTON

Until you give up on it in the next day or so.

NICK

You don't think I'll stick it out? Fine, let's make a bet. I'll stick to this boycott longer than you keep your new primetime slot.

WINSTON

If I win, you have to hug Schmidt once every day for a week. Full hug.

NICK

What, are you trying to murder me?!
(then)

Okay, deal. But, if I win, you have to chauffeur me around for a week. I'm talking whole package- chauffeur hat, tiny waters, and a folded-up morning paper that I can slap over my knee when I get angry at all the damn traffic.

WINSTON

You have no chance of winning, so, deal.

NICK

You're probably right. Oh, by the way, this new primetime slot means a lot more listeners, right? Probably about a million people. Just hanging onto every. Single. Word.

Winston breaks into a cold sweat.

WINSTON

That's not cool, Nick. I'm not gonna let you get in my head.

Nick creeps up close to Winston.

NICK

I must already be in your head. You just called me "Winston."

WINSTON

Did I really?

NICK

(backing off)

No, but the fact you had to ask means that I'm definitely in your head.

Nick walks away.

WINSTON

You are a psycho.

NICK

(loudly)

Psycho. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock,
Costume Design by Rita Riggs.

INT. COFFEEHOUSE. SAME TIME.

Jess enters, looks around, and spots TANYA LAMONTAGNE, elementary school Vice Principal and Jess' former employer. Jess' eyes light up and she waves across the packed but quiet coffeehouse.

JESS

Tanya!

Patrons look up from their laptops and books to shoot disapproving stares. Jess shrinks within herself.

JESS (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Sorry.

Jess sits across from Tanya, who smiles.

JESS (CONT'D)

(playfully)

How's my favorite ex-employer doing?

TANYA

Good. I have a job for you if you want it.

JESS

Am I getting my teaching job back?
I've been keeping sharp by practicing
my "I'm disappointed *with* you, but not
in you" face in the mirror every day.

TANYA

No, I can't give you back your
teaching job yet.

Jess flashes her the "disappointed" look.

TANYA (CONT'D)

This is kind of close to that, though.
I've been writing children's books...
Actually, I've been having someone
ghostwrite them up until today, when
he quit to take his dream job writing
Snapple Facts.

(then)

Which is why I called you. I want you
to ghostwrite this book for me.

JESS

What would I write?

TANYA

That's up to you. I just need it by
Friday.

JESS

Four days to write a book?

TANYA

I know it's short notice, but this
would mean a lot to me and I'll owe
you one.

Tanya's winks a few times at Jess.

JESS

Oh, I gotcha.

Jess winks back.

TANYA

Sorry, my contacts are acting up.

Tanya fixes her contacts and her winking stops.

JESS

(trying to play it off)
Yeah, mine too.

Jess removes her eyeglasses and pretends to fix the contacts she's not wearing.

TANYA

You wear contacts with your glasses?

JESS

I like to have a backup.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY. SAME TIME.

Schmidt sits at a table with several puzzles in front of him and a SPORTS BOTTLE full of yellow-green liquid beside him. Sensors are taped to his head, monitoring his brain activity. Running the study is CALVIN, wearing a personalized lab coat and holding a clipboard.

CALVIN

Okay, Schmidt, you're going to solve these puzzles while you ingest this liquid, alright?

SCHMIDT

Let's do this, Calvin.

CALVIN

You can go ahead and start.

Schmidt takes a swig from the sports bottle, picks up a Rubik's Cube, and instantly solves it. He looks back at the sports bottle with pure astonishment.

SCHMIDT

(to bottle)

Oh, this game has changed.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET. LATER.

Nick rides his bicycle to work, utilizing the bike lane. He's wearing a boy's helmet that just barely fits him.

NICK
This isn't so bad.

A car whizzes by.

NICK (CONT'D)
Nope. It's bad. I take it back.

Nick struggles to pedal, like a kid riding a bike for the first time. Another car speeds by.

NICK (CONT'D)
(yelling)
What, is there a fire or something?

A FIRE TRUCK passes Nick at an even faster speed, lights and sirens engaged. Nick falls off his bike.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY. CALVIN'S OFFICE. SAME TIME.

Calvin escorts Schmidt into his office. Schmidt takes sporadic sips from the sports bottle.

CALVIN
That was very impressive, Schmidt.

SCHMIDT
You know, I never get tired of hearing that. Especially from other people.

Calvin sits at his computer, as Schmidt picks up a RESEARCH PAPER off the desk and scans it.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
You're studying the singularity?

CALVIN
Yes. You're familiar with it?

SCHMIDT
Am I familiar with the merging of man and machine into a superintelligent, immortal human vessel? Do I look like a guy that hasn't watched Tron? I can beatbox the entire soundtrack, original and Legacy. Name a track.

CALVIN

I'll take your word for it.

Schmidt finishes his sports bottle, but keeps sipping.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I've got some extras you can take home
if you want.

Calvin points to a cardboard box full of sports bottles.

SCHMIDT

These are the same drinks from the
study?

CALVIN

Indeed.

Schmidt lets a high-pitched shriek escape, then clears his
throat.

SCHMIDT

(nonchalantly)
Yeah, I'll take a couple.

INT. LOFT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

An exhausted Jess leans against the counter in her pajamas,
eating GRAPES. Schmidt enters, wearing a polo shirt and
athletic pants, and occasionally sipping from his sports
bottle.

SCHMIDT

You can't sleep either, huh? I mean,
it's not that I can't sleep, it's more
like I don't really need to anymore.
I'm basically part machine now.

JESS

What are you talking about?

SCHMIDT

Calvin's studying the singularity,
Jess! He picked me to be his test
subject, then gave me these drinks
from the study and I've been hitting
on all cylinders. I'm finally becoming
the perfect Schmidt.

JESS

Good, maybe the perfect Schmidt can
help me find a way to get to sleep.

Schmidt pops his collar and makes a move towards Jess.

SCHMIDT

Yeaaaah, it was only a matter of time,
girl.

Jess instinctively recoils.

JESS

Eww, no, Schmidt!

Jess throws a grape at him and then, after a beat, a second grape. Both hit him.

SCHMIDT

(trying to play it off)
It was a joke. Ironic collar pop, what
up?

JESS

I'm looking for a solution way down
the list. And fix your collar, you
look like an Austrian serial killer.

INT. LOFT. MOMENTS LATER.

Jess sits cross-legged on the couch. Schmidt sits behind her,
using a WOODEN ROLLING MASSAGER on her neck and shoulders.

SCHMIDT

You're ghostwriting a children's book?

JESS

Tanya said she'd owe me one if I did
it for her, which will come in handy
when a teaching job opens back up.

SCHMIDT

What are you gonna write?

JESS

(stressed)
I have no idea. I can't sleep because
I'm stressed out over what to write
and I can't think of what to write
because I'm too tired. I'm catch-22'd.
(then)
Caught-22?

Schmidt accidentally rolls too far up Jess' neck and rolls
over her ear.

JESS (CONT'D)

Ow!

Schmidt puts the roller down.

SCHMIDT
(insistently pleading)
Let me use my hands.

Jess gets up and turns around to face Schmidt.

JESS
No!

Jess slings another grape at Schmidt and hits him.

INT. LOFT. MORNING.

Jess eats breakfast at the dining room table, still in her pajamas. Winston comes out of his bedroom in shorts and an undershirt to join her.

JESS
(playfully)
There's our famous radio star. Hands off, video, I'm the only one that gets to kill this guy.
(then, dryly)
I'm kidding, Winston, I would never do that to you.

Winston sits down, dejected, but could be mistaken for sleepy.

JESS (CONT'D)
How'd it go?

WINSTON
You know that video where the baby panda sneezes?

JESS
Awww, I love that one-

WINSTON
It was nothing like that.

JESS
Oh.

WINSTON
It was a train wreck. I was inside my head, couldn't focus, just all over the place for three hours straight.

JESS
Been there, brother.
(then)
So sorry, I haven't slept at all.

WINSTON

Where's Nick and Schmidt?

JESS

Nick's sleeping and Schmidt left for work, like, four hours ago. He hasn't stopped since he started drinking those drinks he brought home from his study.

Winston looks over at the cardboard box full of Schmidt's sports bottles.

JESS (CONT'D)

It's pretty remarkable, he's like James Caan in Scott Caan's body. Caan within a Caan. Incepti-Caan.

(then)

I have got to get some sleep.

INT. SCHMIDT'S JOB. LATER.

Schmidt confidently struts down a hallway that separates cubicles and conference rooms, in full view of his colleagues. He's looking sharp. He non-verbally acknowledges a couple of co-workers as he sips from his sports bottle. He peeks into one of the conference rooms to talk to DIANE, a human resources colleague.

INT. SCHMIDT'S JOB. CONFERENCE ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

Schmidt takes a sip from his sports bottle.

SCHMIDT

Diane, if we're doing a "Diversity in the Workplace" seminar, we have to make sure we offer more than one type of donut this time. Otherwise, it just sends mixed messages.

INT. SCHMIDT'S JOB. BOARDROOM. MOMENTS LATER.

Schmidt talks to a small group of WELL-DRESSED EXECUTIVES about a project. He takes a sip from his sports bottle.

SCHMIDT

When you're branding a service product, you want to give it a name that's sexually suggestive in verb form, like "Google," or "Bing," or "Dogpile." This is why AltaVista never took off.

INT. SCHMIDT'S JOB. COLLEAGUE'S CUBICLE. MOMENTS LATER.

Schmidt sits on a FEMALE COLLEAGUE's cubicle desk as he sips from his sports bottle.

SCHMIDT

I'm just saying, before she was the girl with the dragon tattoo, she was the girl with the temporary dragon tattoo so she could try it out for a while. Where are you thinking of getting it?

Female Colleague half-turns in her seat and touches the lowest point on her back.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

Gimme a call when you get it and I'll come check it out.

Female Colleague smiles and nods as Schmidt leaves.

EXT. UKRAINIAN BODEGA. LATER.

Nick coasts up to the run-down bodega on his bike, jumps off, puts his helmet on a handle and rests the bike against the wall. He pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket and looks down at it, then back up at the bodega to confirm the address.

NICK

(rubbing hands together)
Alright, let's see what we've got.

Nick enters the bodega.

INT. UKRAINIAN BODEGA. CONTINUOUS.

Nick looks around the sparsely-stocked bodega and approaches the CASHIER.

NICK

Where can I find your meat?

The cashier points to a SMALL FREEZER between him and Nick. Nick slides the top open, grabs a wrapped CHUNK OF MEAT, and gives it a glance.

NICK (CONT'D)

Not bad. What about fish?

The cashier points to the frozen chunk in Nick's hand.

NICK (CONT'D)
No, sorry. Fish.

The cashier points again to Nick's chunk.

NICK (CONT'D)
This. This is meat... and fish.

The cashier nods.

NICK (CONT'D)
That's... Hmm. Okay, what about cereal?

The cashier points to Nick's chunk.

NICK (CONT'D)
(exasperated)
Come on.
(then)
This has to be a language barrier thing. Cereal?

CASHIER
(Ukrainian accent)
Cereal. Breakfast cereal?

NICK
Yes!

The cashier points again to Nick's chunk, then mimes chopping it up and scooping it out of a bowl.

CASHIER
(Ukrainian accent)
Meatfish cereal. Very good.

NICK
Unbelievable.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

INT. LOFT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Schmidt, Jess, and Cece sit at the dinner table together. An empty sports bottle is slammed down next to Schmidt. He looks up and sees Winston, wearing a cream-colored three-piece suit with matching tie.

WINSTON

(frustrated)

What is in this?

SCHMIDT

You stole one of my singularity drinks? I knew I was missing one.

WINSTON

I drank it right before going on air and got so jacked up, I ran through every topic in 15 minutes. I'm the first sports talk show host to ever discuss squash on-air.

JESS

Is that the same as racquetball?

SCHMIDT

Those flailing, wannabe gadabouts wish they could squash. As for you, Winston, of course this drink didn't have the intended effect, your body's like an old, haunted coal mine. When's the last time you thought about doing a push-up? Just even *thought* about it?

WINSTON

This drink is a citrus-flavored rabbit hole.

SCHMIDT

I understand the case you're trying to make, Atticus Finch, but all I hear is a lot of Boo-hoo Radley. To kill a mocking BURN!

Schmidt raises his hand for a high-five. Jess obliges.

WINSTON

Et tu, Jess?

JESS
(feeling guilty)
Sorry, I just appreciate a good Harper
Lee burn.

Winston leaves.

CECE
So, Jess, I have a bit of a problem—
Schmidt perks up and takes a sip from his sports bottle.

SCHMIDT
I can help. Let me help.

CECE
(kindly)
No, Schmidt.

SCHMIDT
Come on, I've been in the zone all
day.

CECE
Schmidt, no.

SCHMIDT
What, you don't believe me? At lunch,
I had an idea for a company to compete
with Kickstarter and then funded it
through Kickstarter. I'm the perfect
Schmidt, I can do this.

CECE
Whatever. You asked for it.

Schmidt smiles and pumps his fist.

CECE (CONT'D)
I'm going on a date tomorrow night
with the photographer that's been
doing a lot of my shoots and I'm
nervous because I really like him and
I want to make sure he doesn't just
see me as some object he's always
taking pictures of.

Schmidt is heartbroken. He attempts to clear his throat, then
slowly takes a sip from his sports bottle.

SCHMIDT
Okay. Well. Tell him you want to turn
the tables and photograph him on the
date.

(MORE)

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

It shows your fun side and balances
the power in the relationship.

CECE

That's actually a great idea.

SCHMIDT

(softly, mockingly)
The perfect Schmidt.

INT. BOOKSTORE. LATER.

Jess and Cece browse through the bookstore's children's
section.

JESS

You know what I always liked about *The
Emperor's New Clothes*? Its classic
example of snitches *not* getting
stitches.

CECE

I'm aware I asked you this two hours
ago, but how close are you to being
inspired-

Jess picks up an ANIME BOOK sealed in cellophane and shows it
to Cece.

JESS

Oooh, Cece, look - a children's book
about models. They forgot to open it
before they put it on the shelf.

CECE

Jess, I don't think-

JESS

Good help is so hard to find these
days.

Jess takes the book out of the cellophane and realizes it's a
misplaced pornographic anime.

JESS (CONT'D)

Oh my god! Not a kid's book.

She attempts to hide the book on one of the shelves.

JESS (CONT'D)

(traumatized)
So many tentacles.

Cece intervenes once it's almost tucked in between books.

CECE

(anxiously)

Don't put it back in the kid's section.

JESS

I can't just hold it.

Jess gathers herself.

JESS (CONT'D)

(to herself)

What would Goofus and Gallant do?

Jess reclaims the anime book from the bookshelf. As she turns to take it to another section, she bumps into Tanya, who's disguised in sunglasses and a silk head scarf. Tanya tips her sunglasses down to get a better look at Jess.

JESS (CONT'D)

Tanya!

Jess quickly hides the anime book under her shirt.

INT. LOFT. DINING ROOM. SAME TIME.

Nick sits at the dining room table with several goods from the Ukrainian bodega spread in front of him, including a TIN OF TEA, from which he's brewed a cup. He miserably struggles with an abnormally large slab of GRAY BEEF JERKY.

WINSTON (O.S.)

How's the boycott going, Nick?

Winston stands in the kitchen, drinking from a mug.

NICK

Great, I've got this entire spread of both Ukrainian food groups.

WINSTON

I noticed in the bathroom that you ran out of toothpaste.

NICK

They don't sell it at the bodega, so I've just been eating knock-off thin mints. The cardboard container breaks down so you can use it to get the gristle out of your teeth, so, hey, I'm finally flossing.

Winston takes a seat across from Nick. He picks up the tin of tea.

WINSTON

I recognize this tea! I used to drink this in Latvia before games to calm my nerves. I haven't been able to find it in the States.

Nick snatches the tin from Winston and holds it close.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Nick, you've got to tell me where you bought that. Tomorrow's my last chance to keep the primetime slot.

NICK

So now you want me to be your loophole, Winston?

WINSTON

I want you to be my friend.

NICK

And I want to be able to enjoy the most important meal of the day, but I can't. So you know what I'm gonna do tomorrow? I'm gonna get up, eat my meatfish cereal, then take a mandatory three-hour fever nap, because the human body doesn't digest meatfish, it has to sweat it out.

INT. BOOKSTORE. CONTINUOUS.

Jess stands face-to-face with Tanya.

TANYA

Hey, Jess.

JESS

Why are you wearing a disguise?

TANYA

I can't be here.

CECE

Tell me about it.

TANYA

No, I mean I'm banned from this bookstore.

JESS

It's okay, Tanya, all great authors have their books banned at some point.

TANYA

My books aren't banned. I am, personally. I used to blow off steam by coming here and hiding all the self-help books in other sections.

JESS

Every journey begins with a single step.

TANYA

That's what *I* told them!
(then)
So, how's our book coming along?

JESS

Really good. It's got... so much stuff in it.

Cece shoots a puzzled look at a panicking Jess.

TANYA

Amazing! Tell me what it's about.

JESS

Oh, I don't want to ruin it for you. Let's just keep it a surprise.

TANYA

I hate surprises.

JESS

Uh-

Cece points at a random area behind Tanya to distract her.

CECE

Security guard!

Cece grabs Jess and runs as Tanya runs in an opposite direction.

INT. BOOKSTORE. MOMENTS LATER.

As Cece and Jess run out the door, the ANTI-THEFT DETECTOR'S ALARM is set off by the anime book underneath Jess' shirt. Jess runs back in and flings the book, which lands in a KID'S arms as Jess is running back out. She runs back in as the kid looks down at the book. Jess snatches it out of his hands.

JESS

Sorry, kid. This book portrays women in a bad light.

Jess runs back out the door, setting off the alarm again. A SECURITY GUARD runs after her.

JESS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(yelling)
I'm just gonna leave it outside!

INT. SCHMIDT'S JOB. CONFERENCE ROOM. MORNING.

BARBARA, a senior manager, screams in frustration over a jumbled schedule pinned across a CORK BULLETIN BOARD. Schmidt pops his head in, carrying his sports bottle.

SCHMIDT
Everything okay, Barbara?

BARBARA
Look at this mess.

SCHMIDT
I know. Maple frame. How does this bulletin board manufacturer not have a single mahogany contact? Even I have a mahogany guy.

BARBARA
I was referring to what's pinned onto the board.

SCHMIDT
Oh.

BARBARA
Our budget for the New York trip was slashed, so we have to condense three full days of meeting with prospective clients into one day. I've spent the entire morning trying to resolve all these overlapping conflicts, but I don't think it's possible.

SCHMIDT
Hmm.

Schmidt momentarily studies the makeshift matrix of employees, meeting times, and clients.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I know this is a management sort of thing, but would you mind if I took a crack at it?

BARBARA
Be my guest.

Barbara steps aside. Schmidt approaches the bulletin board. He takes a sip from his sports bottle, then puts it down and swiftly pins all the client index cards into place until a full, conflict-free schedule is formed.

SCHMIDT

There.

Barbara is pleasantly stunned.

BARBARA

Wow.

SCHMIDT

Can I quote you on that?

INT. LOFT. LIVING ROOM. SAME TIME.

Jess sits on the couch, studying the RED GUMMY BEAR she holds in her hand. Winston sits on the other side of the couch, eating cereal.

JESS

(looking at gummy bear)
You ever look at a red gummy bear and just know, "He gets me?"

WINSTON

You still haven't slept, have you?

JESS

No. This book thing is killing me. Maybe I'll just write a "choose your own adventure."

WINSTON

That's a terrible idea.

JESS

What do you have against the choosies?

WINSTON

You ever pick up a book as a six-year-old, ready to relax and lose yourself in this magical world and then, two pages in, the author's just gone and now you have to drive plot and narration? I didn't sign up for this. It's not my fault this guy blew his advance in Atlantic City. Why are you leaving these life-and-death decisions with me? I'm six. I just wanted to read a damn book.

Winston looks traumatized. Jess gives him the red gummy bear. He looks at it and nods his head as if it relayed a wise, empathetic message.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Oh, he definitely gets me.

INT. RESEARCH FACILITY. CALVIN'S OFFICE. LATER.

Calvin sits at his desk, typing on his computer. Schmidt knocks on the open door. He's carrying his sports bottle, from which he occasionally sips.

CALVIN

Hey, Schmidt, what's up?

Schmidt takes a seat and leans forward towards Calvin.

SCHMIDT

I just wanted to stop by and tell you that I really appreciate you choosing me for this study.

CALVIN

Sure, no problem.

SCHMIDT

Listen, obviously the press is going to get ahold of this soon- what angle are we going with? "Area 51 cover-up" situation or like an *X-Men* "Yes, mutants do exist, but this is one of the good ones?"

Calvin stops typing and expresses his confusion.

CALVIN

I don't think I follow.

Schmidt flashes a sly smile.

SCHMIDT

Area 51 cover-up. Dope.

CALVIN

I don't think we have to cover up an energy drink study.

Schmidt's smile is gone as he sips from the sports bottle.

SCHMIDT

(long beat)

What do you mean, "energy drink study?"

CALVIN

I'm confused, what did you think this study was about?

SCHMIDT

The singularity. Merging of mind and machine.

CALVIN

(laughing)

No.

SCHMIDT

But what about the research paper that was on your desk?

CALVIN

That's a different study I'm working on. All the test subjects in that one are rats.

SCHMIDT

Rats get all the good studies.

(then)

I thought this drink had nanobots in it. I drank all but one bottle.

Calvin becomes concerned.

CALVIN

You only have one bottle left from all the ones I gave you?

SCHMIDT

Yeah, I've been drinking them nonstop. I haven't slept at all.

CALVIN

Schmidt, that's an absurd amount of caffeine and sugar. Your system is in for a huge crash as soon as you stop drinking that.

SCHMIDT

I thought I was going to be the ninth wonder of the world.

CALVIN

Aren't there seven?

SCHMIDT

I count the fact that RadioShack is still in business as the eighth.

EXT. GROCERY STORE. SAME TIME.

Nick rests his bike and helmet against a chain grocery store's wall and presses his face against the window. He salivates over all the food he misses. Nick spots CHICKEN.

NICK
I miss you, chicken.

Nick spots FISH.

NICK (CONT'D)
Fish fish! Don't ever change, fish
fish.

Nick spots CEREAL, being carried by a LITTLE GIRL. She's holding her FATHER's hand.

NICK (CONT'D)
Cereal! Oh, cereal.

Nick kisses at the cereal, arms pressed against the window. The little girl's father sees Nick and instinctively shields his daughter from Nick.

NICK (CONT'D)
You're misreading the situation, but
smart move.

END OF ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR

INT. LOFT. SCHMIDT'S ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON.

Schmidt lays on his bed, sipping from his last sports bottle. Jess sits beside him, still unable to sleep.

SCHMIDT

I was gonna throw the best Nobel Prize afterparty since the legendary '02 Jimmy Carter blowout. I arrive fashionably late atop my new pet elephant, Babar O'Riley. Everyone asks me which of the 36 Tilda Swintons walking around is the real one and I say, "None of them." They're disappointed, but I smile, because I know Tilda Swinton *is* there, and she's dressed like Sigourney Weaver. And she's gorgeous.

JESS

I *thought* Sigourney Weaver looked familiar.

SCHMIDT

I'm sorry I couldn't fix your sleep problem, Jess.

JESS

It's okay.

SCHMIDT

I just wanted to tell you that before I ran out of this-

Schmidt looks at his sports bottle and his face lights up.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)

Jess, I can fix you!

JESS

Schmidt, it's really okay. I'll just explain everything to Tanya and hope she understands.

SCHMIDT

No, listen. Calvin said the sugar from this energy drink is gonna make me crash as soon as I stop drinking it. If we load you up with sugar, we can make you crash, too.

Schmidt gives the sports bottle to Jess.

SCHMIDT (CONT'D)
I'll go see what candy we have.

Schmidt exits for the kitchen.

JESS
(celebrating)
Crash party!

INT. LOFT. MOMENTS LATER.

Jess jumps up and down on the couch as Schmidt fuels her sugar high.

JESS
Su-gar! Su-gar! Su-gar!

Schmidt reaches into the plastic bag of candy and pulls out a fun-sized candy bar.

SCHMIDT
There's not much left, Jess, I don't know if we're gonna have enough. I'm gonna call Nick.

EXT. GROCERY STORE. CROSS CUT.

Nick is still looking through the grocery store window.

NICK
(into phone)
Hello?

SCHMIDT
(into phone)
Nick, I need you to get some candy and bring it home for Jess.

NICK
(into phone)
Okay, I'll be home later.

SCHMIDT
(into phone, urgently)
We need it now, Nick.

NICK
(into phone)
Fine.

Nick hangs up.

EXT. GROCERY STORE. MOMENTS LATER.

Nick stands by the entrance, flashing CASH, trying to persuade customers to buy candy for him. His bike and helmet rest nearby. He approaches a WOMAN.

NICK
Help me get some candy, ma'am?

WOMAN
Sorry, I don't have any cash.

The woman quickly walks past Nick, who shakes his cash at her.

NICK
Right here.

Nick approaches a MAN.

NICK (CONT'D)
Sir? Can I ask you to buy some candy for me?

The man adds a DOLLAR to the stash in Nick's hand and keeps walking.

NICK (CONT'D)
I appreciate it, but that's basically the opposite of what I was asking.

A PASSING STRANGER yells at Nick.

PASSING STRANGER (O.S.)
Get a job!

NICK
(softly, to himself)
I have a job- why does everyone think I'm homeless?

Nick walks over to a GROUP OF TEENAGERS hanging out near the entrance.

NICK (CONT'D)
Hey, I know this may sound weird, but could you guys buy some candy for me?

The group of teenagers laugh at Nick and leave. Nick sighs in frustration. He looks at his bike and shakes his head.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET. MINUTES LATER.

Nick pedals his bike as fast as he can.

EXT. UKRAINIAN BODEGA. MINUTES LATER.

Nick jumps off his bike and runs into the bodega.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. UKRAINIAN BODEGA. MOMENTS LATER.

Nick exits the bodega with a plastic bag.

INT. LOFT. MINUTES LATER.

Nick bursts into the apartment with a BAG OF UKRAINIAN CANDY. He's drenched in sweat. Jess is wearing 3-D GLASSES and is still jumping up and down on the couch, but not as enthusiastically.

JESS

Nick, look, I'm wearing 3-D glasses so when I fall asleep, my dreams will dream me.

Schmidt feeds Jess the last piece of candy from his bag and takes the bag of Ukrainian candy from Nick.

SCHMIDT

Just in time.
(then)
What is this? It looks like orphanage candy.

NICK

It's a grab bag of Ukrainian knock-off candies.

Schmidt pulls out a green Twizzler and gives it to Jess, who eats it.

NICK (CONT'D)

Oooh, Grizzler, nice choice.

JESS

Is it supposed to burn?

NICK

That depends- does it taste like green apple or old grass?

JESS

Old grass.

NICK

Then, yes.

Schmidt pulls out what looks like a piece of coal and gives it to Jess, who pops it into her mouth.

JESS
(disgusted)
Okay, I think this one is just a piece of coal.

NICK
I'd say it's fifty-fifty.

JESS
I don't mean to complain. I really appreciate it, Nick. You're a good friend.

Nick looks down at the tin of Ukrainian tea on the table. He knows what he has to do.

NICK
Dammit.

INT. RADIO STATION. LATER.

Winston sits, prepping for his show. He's still dressed like an old-school journalist. Nick knocks on the booth's open door. He's sweaty and still wearing his bike helmet. Nick holds the tin of Ukrainian tea and smiles weakly.

WINSTON
Did you bike all the way here?

NICK
I wanted you to have this.

WINSTON
Really?

NICK
Yeah.

Nick hands the tin of tea over to Winston.

NICK (CONT'D)
And I'm sorry for being a jerk.

WINSTON
I shouldn't have called your boycott stupid.

NICK

No, you guys were right. It is stupid and I do always quit everything I ever start- like my petition for a Pottersville theme park... or when I tried to invent a shirt made out of club soda so it would never get dirty-

WINSTON

Well, that was just a dumb idea-

NICK

I gave up almost immediately on organizing that 10k \$5k winner-take-all "Race for Gambling Addiction"-

WINSTON

So what? If you try something and it's not for you, you're supposed to quit. It's stupid not to. And you certainly don't stop trying new things because one or two don't work out. You have to keep trying until you find something you want to keep doing.

NICK

Thanks, Winston.

(then)

Do I still have to hug Schmidt?

WINSTON

Only if you want to.

NICK

(beat)

Nah.

INT. LOFT. LIVING ROOM. SAME TIME.

Jess and Schmidt are crashing on the couch. Jess is writing on a PAD.

SCHMIDT

What are you writing?

JESS

Just a story. About a boy that thinks he's a robot, and he does all these amazing robot things, but it turns out he's really just a boy with a great, big heart.

SCHMIDT

Does he find out that he's just a boy?

JESS

He finds out that he's perfect.

Schmidt puts his arm around Jess. After a beat, she nonchalantly reaches behind the couch to grab a handful of grapes and chucks them all at Schmidt, who pulls his arm back.

END OF SHOW.