1. script

characters

0424

0811

1120

1231

## waiting in the dark

1231: if the concept of soulmates exists beyond a lonely teenager's fantasies, then you and i would have been a fated pair. i never liked the idea of destiny, fate, a pre-determined beginning-middle-end. if meeting you was a mistake, i'd rather it be my mistake. i remember writing that i didn't want you to forget about me. i wanted you to be plagued with guilt, never living a day without feeling like a terrible person. it seems kind of funny now, in hindsight. i'd much rather prefer you all forget me. sure, maybe once i was a doormat and a soft kid who wanted to make everybody happy at their own expense, but you killed that person. i'm dead to you. what's left is someone else that you don't know, and neither of you have the right to get to know me or interact with me in any capacity.

1120: morning. if the sea and the sky are two different entities, then why is it that they appear one and the same in the winter? blank white reflects white, and it is suffocating. dead silence, radio, quiet. i await an answer to my call for help. i place my number in the newspaper. hope is pulled thin, eventually. winter does not thaw into spring. it melts and decomposes and burns up. gentleness is brought forth from this fiery inferno. is this my home? i ask, and reach into the flames.

(pause)

1120: oh, if only. i wish it was. an inviting home seemed to flourish in my mind whenever i reached toward the fire but it was quickly doused with the smell of seared flesh. i was reluctant to leave. the longer i delayed my departure, the more difficult it was to tear my gaze away from the open flames to the drying sweeps of blue above. what was it about red that kept me from looking at the blue that surrounded me? what was so good about clinging to destruction?

**0424:** destruction.

**0811:** sometimes i dream of destruction, of things falling apart and disintegrating. i dream of my old high school, both intact and full of memories, and in its present state: razed to the ground, settling as dust and asbestos.

**0424:** my chest hurts suddenly.

**0811:** i dream of the me that walked through its hallways, north to south, and the you that walked down the corridor, west to east. these dreams are nonsensical, in pieces, and exist nowhere else but within us.

**0424:** (quietly) i can't say i believe in fate. i can't say i forgive you, i can't say i'll forget it, i can't promise you anything, i can't bring myself to say it—

**0811:** that day in August was fiercely sunny. i squinted and lifted my head to read the street signs, the sunshine reflecting painful white sparks. i followed his footsteps, looking down at our shadows. they were diagonal and far apart. i reached an arm out, but even then, his shadow was too far away.

**0424:** what is it called when you don't even treat your bad decisions as a mistake, but instead pursue those bad thoughts? why do i even deem them as bad when i clearly chase these half-formed realities to oblivion and back? i'm honestly beyond stupid. the only reason you're reprimanding yourself is an act! you just don't want to believe that you're the one who willingly chooses the stupid way of living. honestly, what an idiot.

**0811:** the lights were off in his room, the lamp tilted off to the side. the blinds were drawn shut, late afternoon sun forcibly peeking in through the plastic slats. long bright lines scattered across the bedsheets and my body. i opened my eyes, facing the darkness, facing him. are you cold, he asked, and i responded yes, a little bit. with the lights still off, he crept up into the bed behind me and reached out and around. is this better?

(pause)

**0811:** i closed my eyes.

1120: ever since i was little, i just wanted to exist in a world where i could play with my friends and go to each other's houses, and never have to say goodbye. that was always the worst feeling. putting your shoes on while standing at their door, scrambling at the doorknob with small hands and

looking up at your dad. holding back tears, waving with a smile, running down the hallway to the elevator. who knows when i'll see you next? one of these times will be the last time i see you, like this, as friends.

**0811:** that afternoon, he \*\*\*\*ed me. i remember nothing. perhaps my eyes were still closed. i don't know what he looked like, or what i was supposed to feel.

**1231:** in the darkness, nothing else exists.

**0811:** whatever. it's not like i believe in fate.

**1231:** if you've lived your entire life in the darkness, why would you think the light was for you? no, it's not a metaphor, it's not that i'm afraid of the dark, or the light, or anything like that.

**0424:** i think i'm heartsick. i don't know what that means. there's some stupid shit settling beneath my ribs. it's growing and bristling, and i don't think i can hold it inside for much longer. my skin's stretching thin; i see squiggly blue and purple lines overlapping, criss-crossing.

1120: when i was in my third year of university i became acutely aware of where my heart was situated within my body. at the time, i was squatting in a dirty washroom with my fingers pressed to the space between the ribs, in the centre of my chest: it was tender to the touch and pulsating strongly. i had drank a little bit that night, but since i did so all alone, i was probably more stupid than i'd normally be. i felt the beats under my fingers, and counted them, losing track between three and thirty. "huh," i whispered out loud. "is this my heart?" i asked my friend who's in a nursing program where the heart is located in the human body. was it the same spot or does it vary slightly by person? should i be able to feel it beat so forcefully?

i sent the text messages in the middle of the night, then rolled over to sleep. the next morning, she wrote back.

**1231:** "it's usually left midclavicular with the apex of the heart at fifth intercostal space."

**1120:** i see. thanks.

**1231:** "why are you asking? does it hurt?"

1120: sometimes. only late at night.

(pause)

**0424:** people don't change. at their most innermost, people remain the same. the same type of child becomes that type of adult.

**0811:** like parallel lines, you can't make them meet. no intersecting. only reflecting.

**0424:** it seems that today is april 24th.

**1120:** i wanted to say that it was fitting: i just happened to meet you. there's nothing else. i think too much, but too much also happens.

**0424:** i can barely remember what he and i looked like in the mirror, but i can remember the horror.

(pause)

1120: i sleep with my lights on now. i'm not afraid of the dark, and to be honest, i prefer it most of the time. when i was alone in Shanghai i would have all the interior lights off, and the only illumination extended from the persistent glimmer of the city life below the apartment building. the cars and summer thunderstorms cast raging waves of pulsing white and red into the living room where i slept on the couch. the thin curtains swayed gently as the fan circulated. i watched as the heavy grey of June was repeatedly interrupted.

1231: i'm disappointed in myself for replying, and angry at you for having the audacity to even call me. i hate that. that feeling of being lost in a sea of uncertainties. it bothers me that the thing i should have the most control over—myself, my emotions—is the thing that seems to ruin everything else. because i cannot trust you, i cannot trust myself. i guess the same goes for me, though. i haven't really forgotten. if that's fate, i suppose i'm resigned to it. if it's you, i suppose i have no choice.

**0424:** after he called, i went to get a haircut. it was getting long and shaggy, and i cut it really, really short again. i look like a little boy again, and somehow i feel a little better.

**0811:** i look in the mirror, and i still don't recognize my reflection. but i guess i never will.