

# HALF WORLD

by

christiane swenson

april 2024

[xianeswenson@gmail.com](mailto:xianeswenson@gmail.com)

## CHARACTERS

### CHORUS (one, two, three)

The internet.

Any gender, any race, any type of body — avoid homogeneity. They speak frantically, sometimes on top of each other, in constant discourse.

(individual actors in the chorus play one-off characters of CUSTOMER SERVICE REP, DISSENTER, ASPIRING TV WRITER, FANDOM OLD, MICHAEL)

### ANCHORESS, later ISOBEL

30, mad prophetess, poet, your most toxic online mutual.  
white American from Norwegian farming stock.

### BIANCA

24, artsy, super intense, somewhat blunted affect  
Fat, plus-size, midsize, whatever you want to call it.

### PHIL

that guy — he was in that thing...what was it...?  
Non-threatening white guy from Buffalo, 40s, actor.

## SETTING

(almost) everything happens online

## CONTENT WARNING

sexually explicit language, online harassment, right-wing edgelord & TERF rhetoric,

- + things get a little dicey with Phil and Bianca
- + someone fires a gun

*The CHORUS all clutch their glowing phones to their breasts and cry:*

**CHORUS**



**ONE**

It's over

**TWO**

It's so over

**THREE**

Are you kidding me

**ONE**

I'm dying

**TWO**

I'm DEAD

**THREE**

How

**ONE**

Why—

**TWO**

How

**THREE**

I mean

**ONE**

Look at the numbers

**TWO**

Literally look at the numbers!

**THREE**

Look at the viewer retention

**ONE**

THE MOTHER FUCKING VIEWER RETENTION!!!!

**TWO**

A LITERAL OUTPOURING  
OF LOVE AND POSITIVITY!!!!

**ONE**

The people whose lives were changed by this show  
The people it brought together

**TWO**

After all we've been through:  
Canceled after ONE critically acclaimed season

**THREE**

And a second, critically divisive season

**ONE**

It's so over

**TWO**

They can't do this!  
We don't have to sit there and take it — we have bargaining power

**CHORUS**

**That's right! We can post about it**

**ONE**

Email the network, email everyone you know

**TWO**

Share the petition here!

**THREE**

I know—let's buy a billboard.

**ONE**

We're buying a billboard in Times Square  
which will light up for thirty seconds every hour on the hour

that's twelve minutes a day  
 just twelve minutes of our collective time  
 and you can help support us right now at GoFund—

**TWO**

GoFundMe shut us down so venmo directly to @LexiLuther1998

**THREE**

And join the Discord for updates

**ONE**

Apply to be a volunteer Discord moderator here

**TWO**

We owe them this  
 The creatives want it

**THREE**

They had the whole series arc planned out—we just need one more season

**ONE**

ONE MORE SEASON!

**CHORUS**

ONE MORE SEASON!  
 ONE MORE SEASON!

**ONE**

...ONE MORE –

**TWO**

The execs don't understand that the creatives want to keep making this show,  
 The viewers want it,  
 The stars want it,  
 The stars don't have anything better to do

**THREE**

We will push to renew  
 We just have to keep pushing and if we don't give up  
 We will be heard

**ONE**

I want to fucking die

**TWO**

I can't believe it  
Why would they take something so perfectly good  
Just an objectively good piece of television  
Something I could watch with my parents  
And still geek out over with my friends in private  
And just...kill it

**THREE**

People think we're just peddling smut; it's so much deeper than that

**ONE**

People think we don't have lives but this is our community

**TWO**

100 million viewers

**THREE**

Look at the streaming numbers  
And the viewer retention

**ONE**

I mean it's a stupid decision! There's money on the line  
There is brand legacy on the line  
There is a whole new generation of people who want to watch TV  
For three to six hours a day

**CHORUS**

Easily!

**ONE**

And they're ignoring us

**TWO**

Ignoring our loyalty and canceling our shows because...

**THREE**

Because they hate us. I'm mad as hell.

**ONE**

Everyone needs to sign up for shifts

**TWO**

We need tweets going out 24/7

**THREE**

We need to flood the customer service page

We need to mass-unsubscribe

**ONE**

Ok so when you unsubscribe there's a feedback form

When prompted to answer why

Select "other"

And answer *as honestly as possible*

**CHORUS**

Fuck you. Fuck you. You soulless Hollywood pricks

Have fun in the ground

In the literal dirt asshole

Have fun in hell

**THREE**

They never cared about us

**ONE as CUSTOMER SERVICE REP**

Hey everyone!! Former customer service rep here to say that these comments really do make a difference. They collect them in a log and they come up in our weekly quotas.

If enough people are really upset,

There's a remote possibility that they might listen.

**TWO**

Did you see this press release?

**THREE**

Yeah, I have a Google alert set for every cast member's name just in case

**ONE**

He's already moving on to be in a play???

**PHIL**

Looking forward to this next chapter. ❤️ #HeddaGabler

**CHORUS**

What the fuck is *Hedda Gabler* anyway

**ONE**

Bros...I think Phil has straight up abandoned us  
To do theater for old rich people...

**TWO**

God. It's so fucking over

**THREE**

I wonder if he actually runs this account

**ONE**

Actually it's kind of odd  
Why hasn't he shared *anything* about the show being canceled  
Not even a tagged photo on his story

**TWO**

Not even a screenshot of a story on his own story

**THREE**

You know, like, what you're supposed to do  
Thanking your colleagues  
Thanking us  
Is it possible that—

**ONE**

No

**TWO**

No  
No one wanted the show to end



They loved making it  
They all said they loved making it

### **ONE**

I blame Phil

### **TWO**

Fuck that guy anyway

### **ONE**

Pretentious asshole  
Leaving his breakout role  
literally best thing he's ever done  
and I know because I did an obsessive deep dive and watched everything he's ever  
been in including a 2009 Lifetime movie where he plays a sexy serial killer  
To do a PLAY  
NOT EVEN BROADWAY IT'S IN L.A. DUDE

### **TWO**

Leaving us  
To star in a misogynistic ass play where a woman ruins everyone's life and then kills  
herself because ~\*women b crazy\*~ am I right  
The level of male ego on display...

*the DISSENTER dissents*

### **THREE as DISSENTER**

Full offense but you're all idiots  
Latent autism and early SSRI exposure has fried your pleasure receptors and now you'll  
hork down whatever garbage they throw at you.  
You little sheep  
They know it doesn't matter if they take your stupid show away from you  
Because you'll all come back for the next thing  
You'll all keep printing money  
And Phil and Jez and all those people—  
They are profiting off you  
They don't care about you  
They can't love you back  
The show can't love you back  
They are taking advantage of you

They are basically taking advantage of your mental illness—  
 Your unquenchable need  
 The same one you have had since puberty,  
 to see two conventionally attractive white dudes  
 Stare at each other meaningfully on screen  
 Another two dudes with veneers  
 married to women  
 with kids at the finest Montessori schools in Burbank  
 As if there is some kind of dearth of queer stories by and about actual queer people  
 Yes it's fucking over  
 May it rot in hell  
 May you all move the fuck on and get some better taste

### CHORUS



*dissenter leaves*

**ONE**

ha ha

**TWO**

ha ha ha

**ONE**

ha ha ha ha

We're not losers right

**TWO**

They're a loser

**ONE**

yeah, they're a loser

**TWO**

yeah, fuck them

**ONE**

anyway we

**TWO**

We have to keep pushing  
We can't lose momentum

**ONE**

We have to keep creating content  
We have to keep creating fan content

**TWO**

We have to keep making noise  
We can't lose momentum

**ONE**

They do care about us  
We just have to remind them  
Maybe if we just —

---

*Image: a digital painting of PHIL. Not pornographic, but it's...weirdly intimate.*

*an Instagram DM between Phil and BIANCA:*

**BIANCA**

omg thank you for the like :-)

**PHIL**

I really love this.

**BIANCA**

<3

**PHIL**

I feel like you captured my aura and it's kind of creepy  
You're really talented.

**BIANCA**

whoa that means a lot

**PHIL**

I see a lot of the fan output because people tag me  
But no one has made me anything like that.  
I'm almost confused why you'd...

*(retyping)*

I'm flattered, also a little bewildered why someone  
like you would pay that close attention to me...

**BIANCA**

lmao you are?  
surely you have fans hitting your DMs all the time, no?

**PHIL**

I mean maybe but they're all like, fourteen, or they're these like sexually frustrated  
British women, they all kind of blur together —  
not like you

**BIANCA**

lol okay  
i mean, i am as much of a loser as those people just fyi  
i mean i literally draw fanart so  
i'm not pretty or anything...maybe i was at some point but then i got fat  
woke up one day and was like wow, my body and i have failed each other  
not like you !

**PHIL**

You're not fat.

**BIANCA**

you haven't seen me in person. strategic camera angles.

**PHIL**

Ah. Say no more

**BIANCA**

anyway  
 there are certain kinds of actors i latch onto  
 like...your specific type of person  
 actors have such specific features: big heads, tiny bodies. necks  
 trimmed of any flab. even the supposedly strange-looking ones  
 have this quality. even you. why is that, do you think

**PHIL**

What are you doing right now?

**BIANCA**

i'm in my room.

**PHIL**

Are you often in your room?

**BIANCA**

more often than not

**PHIL**

And

What would you do if

I was also in that room

At the same time that you were

**BIANCA**

LOL

do u do this a lot

**PHIL**

Not really, no

**BIANCA**

tbh i've already jerked off to the idea of you so this is a little uncanny

.  
 sorry was that too far omfg

.  
 .  
 .  
 .  
 okay it's been thirty minutes so i'm thinking it was too far.

peace out lol

**PHIL**

Sorry I was thinking.

**BIANCA**

you were thinking about this convo for thirty minutes straight?

**PHIL**

I got a drink and took the dog out  
But I was thinking about it  
Then I started thinking about Hedda Gabler

**BIANCA**

oh right  
what is your part again?

**PHIL**

I'm in love with Hedda and Hedda knows it.  
But I'm a failure. And a scoundrel.  
So we could never be together.  
But still, she's fond of me and so she tortures me just like everybody else.  
She tells me to destroy myself and I do. I'm happy to.

**BIANCA**

heavy

**PHIL**

And then I die in the gutter and I get to do that every night  
It's awesome.  
So what about me do you jerk off to

**BIANCA**

not actually you, Phil, the guy, to be clear  
more like a vague concept of a person who looks like you sort of

**PHIL**

But you're thinking about my face

**BIANCA**

even if i focus really hard, i don't always see a face

**PHIL**

But you're still technically thinking about me  
Me in your room. What about me? What am i doing?

**BIANCA**

i don't think you want a real answer...  
it would be weird if you were here  
i still live with my dad

*Phil starts typing*

*Phil stops typing.*

**BIANCA**

so most of my fantasies are fictional  
and most of the time uh...  
you know about all the gay stuff right, like, you've seen it  
the gay art

**PHIL**

Of course

**BIANCA**

yeah, so to answer your question  
if we were in the same room  
and you were looking at me and i was looking at you  
and we were both looking at each other  
i don't know if i'd really be able to see you  
because probably all i could see would be the like  
literal reams of fan fiction puppeteering you into different erotic scenarios  
like more words about you than the collected works of Shakespeare probably  
like, ten *Ulysses* stacked back to back  
like  
the tasteful colored pencil drawings of you getting fucked on a fainting couch  
all these people online who honestly could be making real art  
and doing real things with their lives  
like imagine if we used that energy to like, write a novel

or run for office or learn how to rock climb —

*someone interrupts Bianca*

Hey. Yeah I'm almost done.

No. No, I haven't thought about dinner.

I'll be there in a sec

*she goes back to her phone*

the whole thing used to make me super mad but now i'm just kinda...

i've accepted it?

if i think about it too long I get this hurt like a belly hurt like an old wound

i'm sad for all these people who avoid living real lives in pursuit of a fake thing,

a fake person, with your face

just like...lonely people playing pretend

so if I ever saw you, i think i would get stuck on that

**PHIL**

Kind of sounds like play therapy

**BIANCA**

idk what that is

*Phil starts to type a long message. He gets more comfortable the more he types.*

*Bianca puts her phone in her back pocket and exits.*

**PHIL**

It's this child psychology concept —

since young children can't really verbalize their feelings, or understand the significance of all the things that are happening to them, it's better to just treat them like a regular kid, and let them play.

Play can be empowering because it allows you to imagine doing things, or even re-enact things that have already happened, in a situation where you have full control.

It's like...practicing how to exist.

And I think that there are adult forms of play therapy, and that we would probably all be healthier if we engaged in them.

Acting, drama, is supposed to be productive play.

But that makes up maybe a fraction of an 80 hour work week for me.



Maybe what you're describing, retreating from reality to engage in a fictive one, is sort of a form of that...

I went to this artist's retreat once where...

*He keeps typing*

*he keeps typing*

*he keeps typing...*

*the ANCHORESS in her cell, dark except for her laptop screen.  
she is dressed in a rough-hewn nun's habit.*

### **ANCHORESS**

...sting of his own smile hurting his cheek as they laid there skin sticky and flushed from exertion air warm and thick and pleasant Jesus man said Nathaniel you're getting soft on me Peter rolled over onto his stomach chin in hand the man looking up at him from the pillow was not the one he'd grown accustomed to no he saw the raw clay parts that made up the person slicked back with sweat behind the lines of his plain and open face were the ghost etchings of an even truer rarer face

he uh

Um

um

fuck. His

...cock?

*She looks away from the screen as she types "cock."*

twitched involuntarily as he drank in the sight of the **FUCK FUCK FUCK**

*She keysmashes in frustration and pushes her laptop away.*

*Discord notification.*

**BIANCA**  
hey guess what

*She ignores the message.  
Speaks to us:*

**ANCHORESS**

I keep dreaming about the show. I dream in full length hour long episodes and I keep waking up in tears because they're not real and going back to sleep so I can finish the dream but the episodes themselves don't make any sense  
Characters getting buried alive giving birth drowning  
Wandering the circus

**BIANCA**  
no i actually want you to guess what

**ANCHORESS**

Sometimes the laws of gravity are tenuous  
Characters traveling endlessly towards a destination that does not exist  
But it's always good to see them again. I miss them.  
This is all that I do.  
I took my vow of poverty  
I took my vow of chastity  
My gown my veil my cloak my cowl:  
This is the work  
This is what I have  
All I can do is write write and relate my visions and hope  
and hope and hope the show will come back. I know it will. It has to

**BIANCA**  
message me when ur around

**ANCHORESS**

And in the meantime you will stay.  
You will stay my friend.

*A slow drip of notifications.  
Then the app starts BLOWING UP; a total cacophony.  
Anchoress goes back to her laptop and opens the chat window.  
She begins to scroll through. Dawning horror...*

---

**ONE**

Lol

Lol

So I love fandom drama right

**TWO**

Totally. I love mess.

**THREE**

Dude I LOVE mess

It's basically cultural anthropology

**ONE**

And I've been keeping tabs on the fandom of THAT show and uhhh...yyyyeeeOh Boy

It's not good

It's so bad, actually.

They did this fundraising drive and then the organizer cut and ran.

They just disappeared with like 10k.

**TWO**

WHATTTT

**THREE**

Bro literally ABSCONDED 🐼

**TWO**

I don't get it, what was the cash for?

A third season of the show?

**THREE**

They were what, going to try to make a fanmade third season in mom's backyard??

**TWO**

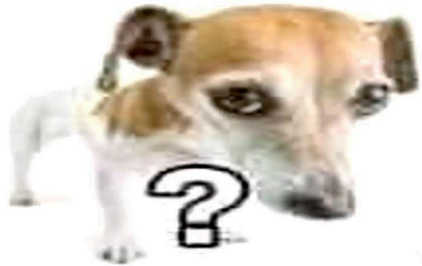
Oy yoy yoy

**ONE as ASPIRING TV WRITER**

Hey y'all, aspiring TV writer here. I've been following this too, and just thought I'd point out: even if they had procured

the millions of dollars required to produce a twelve-episode series with the same actors – who are all union btw – it wouldn't be legally possible, b/c the show became the intellectual property of Warner Bros when it was sold. The \$10,000 was for an ad campaign to "raise awareness."

## CHORUS



### TWO

Oh nooooo  
ohhhhhhhh noooooooo

### THREE

Lol that's fucked

### TWO

That's so sad  
I feel bad for those people

### ONE

I feel bad too

### TWO

I mean what, most of them are kids who are just figuring out they're queer?

### THREE

Actually it's mostly women over 30?

### TWO as FANDOM OLD

Showing my age here, but I was in the *X-Files* fandom in the '90s...

### ONE

I was in the *Buffy* fandom in the '90s...

**THREE**

I taped *Doctor Who* religiously...

*Sherlock* changed my life...

I've seen all 327 episodes of *Supernatural* at least three times...

**ONE**

I would have literally died for *Community*...

**TWO**

Wow. I really miss *Community*.

**THREE**

fuck season 4 tho

**ONE**

fuck season 4!!!

**FANDOM OLD**

I haunted all the listservs

I spent a summer building an online episode guide in HTML

(My mom begged me to put it on my college resume,  
but it was too embarrassing)

I vented, I argued with people when the show didn't go the way I thought it  
should, when there was too much romance, or not enough romance

Truthfully there was some dark shit going on in my life, and this was my outlet

When I was really angry I would accuse the creators of selling out  
(this was back when being a sellout was the worst thing you could be)

When Duchovny bailed and the show got shitcanned I was bereft

When you've invested years into something like that, and you lose it,  
it can feel like a loved one just died.

This is all to say: I get it

I understand the feeling of wanting something so so bad  
while knowing secretly it's impossible

I mean – there are even success stories! *Star Trek* is the most famous:

It would just be a piece of weird 60s esoterica

if not for the nerds who implored NBC to renew the show

People literally took to the streets with signs

Sent letters, like in an envelope, with a stamp

I don't know if people could organize on that scale again

Because we don't have mass culture on that scale anymore

I mean there were only like three channels when *Star Trek* came on in '66  
 Now there are infinity  
 it almost seems kind of silly now, to be so hung up on this one thing  
 For me it was never really about the show  
 I mean the show is part of it  
 But it's really about the community, talking to the same people every day  
 Who are just as infatuated, as alienating-ly obsessed as you are  
 Unfortunately the thing about being in a community is, a lot can go wrong

---

**BIANCA**

TODAY 🙌 IS 🙌 THE 🙌 IDES OF MARCH !!! 📅 July 17 🙄 🙄 🙄 🙄  
 Julius Caesar 🗣️ might 🗣️ have gotten 💖 the knife 😞 but I'm ❌ NOT ❌ 🙄 going to  
 stab 🗡️ 🗡️ YOU in the back 🙏 🙏 because you're my 👫 HOMIE! send this to 📱 Rulers  
 👑 of Rome that you 🚫 won't 🚫 stab in the back 🗡️ 🗡️ ET TU BROTE?? 🙄

...

hold on i just found a better one

...

THE IDES 👁️ 📅 July 17 OF MARCH 🙄 are here and im 🙄 LOOKING 👁️ for some  
 SENATORIAL SLUTS 🏛️ to 💧 CUM 😞 on DOWN to the curia di pompeo 🏛️ to  
 seriously TOSS 🗡️ 🙄 caesar's 🥗 SALAD 🍷 send this to 📱 SAUCY 😞 💧  
 CUMspirators 🗡️ that you 🍆 WOOD 🪓 give some imperial 🍑 BACKSHOTS 🗡️ to

**ANCHORESS**

Bianca I feel so sick  
 It's been a horrible day

**BIANCA**

what's going on??

**ANCHORESS**

The money's gone.

**BIANCA**

hold on  
 there's no way it's GONE gone right?  
 have you spoken to lexi at all?

**ANCHORESS**

Lexi deleted her account, she's a ghost  
It's all gone

**BIANCA**  
damn dude

**ANCHORESS**

I sent her seven hundred dollars Bianca

**BIANCA**  
damn dawg.....

**ANCHORESS**

And the worst thing is like  
Nobody wants to help us get it back — everyone's blaming us  
The Venmo people basically told me to fuck off, I tried tagging the creators,  
I even tagged Phil

*Bianca gets a notif from Phil:*

**PHIL**

Hey, I rambled on a bit last night ha

*She swipes it away.*

**BIANCA**  
...i mean, who knows if phil even runs his own IG

**ANCHORESS**

No, he does, he's been posting on his story about the stupid play  
Either everybody's hands are tied or they don't give a shit—I can't tell which is worse.

**BIANCA**  
no way Lex wont get busted  
scams like this happen all the time  
ppl get in serious trouble

**ANCHORESS**

I'm never seeing that money again

**BIANCA**

god i'm sorry :-(  
i wish i could help

**ANCHORESS**

I mean  
Where have you been?  
You're not active in the server

**BIANCA**

yeah i had to mute it!  
otherwise id get like 5000 notifications a day

**ANCHORESS**

You don't post about the renewal campaign anymore—  
you've just been like, reblogging pretty photos and old movies  
We are all sick with grief, busting our asses  
And you've kinda ghosted us

**BIANCA**

ive literally been trying to contact you for days  
i am going through some weird shit right now

**PHIL**

Hope I didn't scare you off

**ANCHORESS**

We're all going through some weird shit—

*Bianca switches conversations.*

**BIANCA**

nah LOL if anything i would think i scared \*you\* off

**PHIL**

Not at all.  
Your candor is refreshing  
Also a little terrifying

*Bianca ♥ reacts to the messages and then switches back.*



**ANCHORESS**

There are all kinds of ways you can contribute.  
 I mean your fanart is so fucking beautiful, B  
 That one you did of Phil a few weeks ago is like...museum worthy

**BIANCA**

and i love doing it but it's purely for fun and honestly  
 it makes me uncomfortable sometimes  
 like people literally beg me to draw more porn  
 i need to focus on real art, too

**ANCHORESS**

How is it not real art?

**BIANCA**

i'm trying to get a portfolio together,  
 and a lot of schools don't accept fanart

**ANCHORESS**

That is such bullshit

**BIANCA**

i mean they want to know if you can do  
 your own designs, not just from a copy

**ANCHORESS**

That's fucked up. I mean how is fan art not a valid form of art, when you spend the same exact amount of time creating it?

*Bianca starts typing*

*She stops typing.*

**PHIL**

I keep thinking about you  
 We had the first read today, and I was trying to do my job or whatever  
 But then my phone would buzz and I kept being like ooh it's a short singular buzz,  
 maybe she messaged me

*Bianca ♥ taps again.*

*A pause.*

**BIANCA**

*(spoken to herself)*

Oh god I can't.

*She tosses her phone across the room.*

*It buzzes violently on the floor with each message:*

**ANCHORESS**

Bianca are you ok???

**PHIL**

I was worried last night that I'd said something wrong

**ANCHORESS**

Dude

Are you mad at me?

**PHIL**

I'm still a little worfed

**ANCHORESS**

Because we've known each other a long time

And I'd like to think you feel you can be be forthright with me

**PHIL**

\*Worried

**ANCHORESS**

If something is wrong

**PHIL**

Should I be?

**ANCHORESS**

You can tell me

**PHIL**

You can tell me

*The buzzing grows out of control.*

*Bianca retrieves her phone.*

**ANCHORESS**

I'm sorry  
I love you  
I'm sorry

*Bianca swipes away Anchoress's messages.*

*She lays in bed on her stomach, positioning her phone just so, checking herself out in the front-facing camera, adjusting the neckline of her shirt, fixing her hair, putting it back where it was.*

*She steels herself and taps.*

*The sound of an Instagram video call...*

*Phil picks up the phone.*

**PHIL**

Hi?

**BIANCA**

Hi.  
I wanted to make sure you were real.

**PHIL**

Oh. Well. I am real.

**BIANCA**

Cool.

*pause*

**BIANCA**

I feel insane.

**PHIL**

You're really beautiful

I feel fucking insane right now.  
*(starts cackling)*

It's funny I don't know anything about—

**PHIL**

Why do you feel insane?

**BIANCA**

Because why are you talking to me? Like—

**PHIL**

Why is that so crazy?

**BIANCA**

Because actors aren't real people??

*Phil laughs.*

*Bianca is thrilled.*

**PHIL**

Okay, you got me.

*Bianca laughs.*

*Phil is thrilled.*

*They keep talking...*

*Meanwhile: the anchoress records a video of herself on her phone.*

*She takes off her veil and cowl.*

*Her hair is wild; maybe dip-dyed a bright color or shaved into an undercut.*

**ANCHORESS**

I'm really not fucking okay right now.  
 I feel really violated

**PHIL**

I was gonna say: it's funny,  
I don't know anything about you.

**BIANCA**

Ummmmm  
What's to know?

**ANCHORESS**

A lot of you have been asking,  
and I just wanna confirm that, yes,  
I donated seven hundred dollars to Lexi for the renewal campaign

**CHORUS**

Seven hundred dollars?!?!?

**ANCHORESS**

Because that's what it was worth to me!  
I'd have given seven thousand if I had it, truly  
Because we were —  
Because I *thought* we were part of a team  
We had a Slack, a structure, we built a website,  
we had backer rewards, we reached out to fan orgs,  
we went through the ordeal of trying to buy ads,  
we had an ongoing email chain about *t-shirt designs*,

**ONE**

That's insaneeee

**TWO**

That's insaneeee

**THREE**

That's insane!!!!

**BIANCA**

I'm 24, I live in San Diego, uh God I don't know

**THREE**

The entitlement of it all?!?!?

**TWO**

That's what really blows my mind.

**THREE**

I mean there are people who have to beg for pennies on this website,  
for whom seven hundred dollars is no laughing matter,  
I know how long / could stretch out that amount of money if I had to,  
and this little white girl is spending it on...funding a non-existent 3rd season of a show  
that is *not* that good? Like I'll say it, it's not that good.

**TWO**

Like girly...Mx. Thing, you already pay 7.99 a month for a subscription.....

**THREE**

There are gazillions of mid TV shows out there  
It's not worth going into credit card debt for!!!

**ANCHORESS**

We were in contact with the showrunners  
Via email, via DM

**TWO**

LMAOOOO I know youre fuckin lying.....

**ANCHORESS**

I trusted them all implicitly  
But it turned out Lexi was just using us  
And — that money is gone.  
And nobody fucking cares  
And everyone thinks we deserved it  
And you think I'm pathetic.  
I know you think I'm pathetic

**BIANCA**

So I'm gonna apply this round, but it's tough because  
my dad's a...fairly recent widower, and he's all  
freaked out about Empty Nest Round 2 I guess

**PHIL**

Do you think he'll get married again?

**BIANCA**

I think he wants to marry me.

**ANCHORESS**

And my friends aren't talking to me  
 People I've known online for years  
 are distancing themselves from me,  
 And people on Tumblr are sending me these  
 anonymous messages like—well, either they're telling me hey  
 it sounds like maybe you should "log off for a bit"  
 which is really fucking funny because THIS IS MY LIFE  
 I AM BROKEN  
 THIS IS THE THING THAT I HAVE

**TWO**

It's giving death cult

**THREE**

Death cult vibes for sure

**ANCHORESS**

Or they're just straight up telling me to kill myself

**BIANCA**

Elvis Costello is far and away the superior recording.

**PHIL**

What???

**BIANCA**

The Til Tuesday version is just so like, myeh  
 She's so Gen X, like oh, I'm too cool to be sincere  
 but too sincere to be ironic so I'm just going to be ... droll

**PHIL**

I actually know Aimee

**BIANCA**

Oh come on.

People in Los Angeles love to say they know Aimee Mann  
There is no way *all of you* are friends with Aimee Mann

**ANCHORESS**

And I don't know what I could possibly do or say  
that wouldn't make everything worse  
that would make anyone care because  
they've all made up their minds anyway

**ONE**

Wait I found this girl's Tumblr

**ANCHORESS**

so i'll say this:  
the thing is

**PHIL**

Wait, you haven't seen *Ghost World*?? You must.  
Not sure if your age bracket will "get it," but...

**TWO**

Wait, she has a link to her fanfiction...  
I want you to just take a wild guess  
as to what genre of porn she writes

**ANCHORESS**

the thing i pray to

**THREE**

Naur I can't.....

**BIANCA**

I keep thinking about you  
You know I'm really not that far away



**ANCHORESS**

is no different from the god that you pray to

**ONE**

This is too depressing  
We should leave her be, she's clearly  
thriving on negative attention.

**BIANCA**

...so, I could potentially do next week

**PHIL**

I can't wait.

**BIANCA**

I can't wait!!

**PHIL**

I'm so glad this isn't one of those things where  
we talk and we talk and things get so intense  
that nothing could ever actually happen because  
it would never live up to the thing in your head  
You know?

**ANCHORESS**

and I ask you this  
when you turn off the TV  
what's looking back at you  
because I see myself  
I see myself  
the tv turns off and I see myself—

*Anchoress falls into a BOTTOMLESS PIT.*

*Smoke belches from the abyss.*

*Everything goes dark.*

*Then, the sound of locusts:*

**CHORUS**

WE ARE THE EVIL PART OF THE INTERNET  
AND WE HAVE FOUND YOUR LITTLE POST

**ONE**

Link:

**TWO**

Lol

**THREE**

Lol

**ONE**

Lol

Me when a fangirl goes schizo mode online



**TWO**

Water is wet

**THREE**

Fork found in kitchen

**TWO**

Zoomers are so cooked man

**ONE**

I think she's like, old. Like 29.

**TWO**

Millennials are fucking brain dead

**THREE**

Wait someone scraped her IP

**CHORUS**

Oh shiiiiit

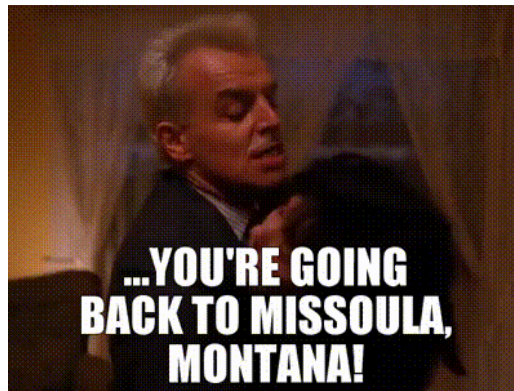
**THREE**

Her name is Isobel Jacobsen  
She lives at 527 Eddy Avenue Unit D  
Missoula Montana???

**TWO**

Ur kidding

**ONE**



**TWO**

I've never understood the like, straight women from Diddlefuck, Burgertana being rabidly obsessed with teh boy on boy action

**THREE**

I mean these aren't even hairless animu twinks either these are like lipless white men in their 40s like these dudes look like they have a mortgage and herniated discs

**ONE**

I mean most of the girls who are into this are self hating transes right?

**TWO**

Yeah I bet she'll tr00n out eventually

**THREE**

Maybe she already has  
Her voice is kind of deep

**TWO**

Oh god that fucking awful transfag voice

**ONE**

Lol

**TWO**

This generation is so cooked

**THREE**

This poor creature

**ONE**

I gave her space to repent and she repented not

**TWO**

False prophetess

**THREE**

Hypocrite

**TWO**

Whore

*We switch from the hypermasculine, hyper-cynical 4chan/Kiwifarms-style voice to something more feminine and insecure:*

**ONE**

literally theyre all p0rn addicts

**TWO**

Friendly reminder that if you regularly consume  
🌶️spicy 🌶️content you are a 🌽 addict

**THREE**

Friendly reminder that archive of our own dot org is a 🌽 site that supports child 🌽

**ONE**

So basically ur okay with hurting women

**TWO**

And people DO get hurt

**THREE**

Impressionable girls  
Damaging their bodies  
For the approval of their online peers  
You're enabling that

**ONE**

You hate your own womanhood  
So you pervert it  
You are a self hating abjection

**TWO**

You're normalizing violent behavior  
You're alienating femme people in THEIR spaces  
You're self aggrandizing and callow  
Gasp! Maybe you *are* a man after all

**THREE**

It's not just a hobby  
It's not just an indulgence

**ONE**

You are stunting yourself  
You are abusing yourself

**CHORUS**

Festering cunt  
You should literally die  
Dig your own grave

lay down in it  
and rot  
Have fun in hell  
you fuckin idiot

*the locusts chitter and clear away  
somewhere in the warm lull of a group chat:*

## **TWO**

honestly i stan...  
nevertheless she persisted (to write fanfic)  
700 is nuts tho

## **THREE**

#herstory

## **ONE**

Fucking hell  
it's people like that making us all look dumb

*Phil stands around wearing sunglasses, anxiously looking at his phone. Maybe he smokes a cigarette.*

*Bianca enters. She has on a cute outfit; a romper or a sundress or something; she carries a backpack and overnight bag. She looks great, honestly.*

*They see each other; they hug.*

*This is the first time in the play that anyone has touched.*

*They stay like that for a while. They rotate in slow motion, having a conversation unheard to us, as:*

*The anchoress in the bottom of the bottomless pit.*

## **ANCHORESS**

Bianca  
 I think maybe you hate me  
 and that's fine I probably fucking deserve it  
 But I'm really  
 really  
 really  
 horrifyingly alone right now

*She gropes around blearily.*

### **ANCHORESS**

Someone leaked my address  
 Someone sent my writing to my *job*—  
 The writing that I did *for you*  
 The fucking...sexual stuff we were talking about  
 Together  
 I don't know where to go  
 I don't know what to do  
 I don't have anyone, I—

*She rends her garments and HOWLS*

*Truly howls in pain like a bereaved person might. She starts to rip her habit off:*

### **ANCHORESS**

I FUCKING HATE THIS  
 I HATE IT HERE HELP  
 I'M BEING EXILED  
 THEYRE TORTURING ME  
 THEYRE CRUCIFYING ME  
 FOR THE SIN OF GOING ON THE FUCKING COMPUTER!!!!

*Underneath she's wearing an XXL band t-shirt and the jankiest Walmart pajama pants you've ever seen.*

*Like they have Hello Kitty on them, and at one point they were fluffy, but now they're all matted, and clearly got thrown in with the jeans...it's a mess.*

*The point is that she's not the Anchoress anymore.*

*For the rest of the play she will just be ISOBEL.*

**ISOBEL**

talk to me when you see this  
or don't  
Who gives a shit

*She puts her phone down. Returns to the fetal position.  
Picks her phone back up and dials a number.*

**ISOBEL**

Hey  
Uh

.

.

.

Yeah

ignore that

.

.

Yeah it's — yeah I know.

.

It's fucked. People keep...

These random people keep sending me pizzas?

.

.

yeah like as a...

and I don't have any cash to pay for them and uh

I was wondering if I could crash at your place

.

.

.

just for a little bit

.

.

.

okay.

---



*Phil and Bianca set up the scene:*

*A classy (yet tacky) hotel room. White duvet.  
A room service cart with the linens draped over the trays.  
A half-finished bottle of wine. Red rose in a bud vase.*

*A few hours have elapsed; the sun is still up.  
Sex has not occurred yet but seems imminent.  
We are in that weird half-place that happens before.*

*Bianca sits on the bed.  
She is doing a sketch of Phil across the room on her iPad.  
He is in a chair with his wine not posing but totally posing.*

## **BIANCA**

...and anyway she's like do you want to come over? So I go to her dorm, and when I come in she's wearing this, like, bizarre onesie, like a sexy zip up hoodie onesie thing, and I'm terrified because I had never done this before and I'm like, is this how people...do this??? So I was out of my head the whole time and I guess I didn't do a very good job at fingering her or whatever, because afterwards I left and she kind of didn't talk to me at all after that, and um.

It was kind of terrible because then none of her *friends* would talk to me either, like she was the leader of this cluster of lesbians who, I'm serious, all looked like Alison Bechdel cartoons and they were impossible to avoid because the place was so small it'd be like, me at the dining hall trying to fry a fucking egg on a hot plate just to get something in my system before my night class, and all of them would be in my space at the saute station REFUSING to make eye contact with me, just hovering over my shoulder so they could grab the shaker of nutritional yeast or whatever AND NOT SAYING ANYTHING, and it was like oh, I must have some kind of rare disease, my presence must be totally radioactive to these people,

And it brought back this OCD tic where I'm convinced that unbeknownst to me I have something shaved into the back of my skull, like, a hate symbol or something horrifying so I had to keep checking my head and touching and

it just added onto my whole list of things like oh well I'm a fuckup I don't belong here, I'm too stunted, the only lasting connections, the only profound connections I have made, have been with people online, or with other people through the language of online, because, that's what I know that's what I learned,

so, so, my friend from online, Isobel, and our other friend Lexi had been really into The Show. And they really wanted me to watch it so I did. I watched all of the first season in one sitting basically. And it was like...I mean it was exactly up my alley, it had all this stuff my life was missing:

Bright colorful worlds and queer people and sexy people and community and danger and excitement and humor and camaraderie and of course, true love.

And you, I remember thinking: he is actually kind of brilliant.

And the relationship, the highly speculative but heavily implied word-of-god canon relationship, between your character and Jeremy's character,

something about two people that wind up in the same boat and choose to stay together something about two people who are predestined and kind of hate each other for it, two people who aren't ready for love or maybe even deserve love and yet there it is two people with a history that took all these different shapes over those 55 minute episodes and I don't know, I guess because you're men,

these otherwise impenetrable men getting kneecapped by this overwhelming unabiding overpowering love for each other, love that just HAPPENS you know, not the kind you have to practice, somehow that feels more profound than your normal hetero love story, that's part of it, I guess, and—

honestly it was like this freebase hit of dopamine and pheromones directly to the skull, all these good feelings roiling around inside my brain taking me out of my body all I wanted was to live in it, so, I did. I checked right out for two weeks. And my grades slid, I started sleeping through class, I had to give this art history presentation on John Singer Sargent and it sucked, it was maybe the worst slideshow of all time, and, the professor ripped into me, I cried in front of everyone, then uhhh, COVID hit so I went home and uh, yeah, I've been there ever since.

Okay. You can move now.

*Phil goes over to see the drawing. Both on the bed.*

**PHIL**

It's nice.

**BIANCA**

Yeah?

*He kisses her.*

It's pretty good. I might post it.

**PHIL**

What are all your little internet friends going to say?

**BIANCA**

Nobody knows about this.

I haven't talked to any of those people in weeks.

Why – would it bother you, if I did post it?

**PHIL**

No?

**BIANCA**

It would bother me. I'd feel objectified. I'd feel totally mind fucked.

**PHIL**

Would you be into that?

**BIANCA**

I don't know.

**PHIL**

So that was the only time? College?

**BIANCA**

Sometimes I would do, like, e-sex. Chat rooms.

**PHIL**

So like a literal mind fuck.

**BIANCA**

I feel like I said too much just now.

*She searches his face. Can't find the right answer on it.*

Did I say too much just now?

**PHIL**

...I really hated working on that show.

**BIANCA**

Really?

*They both laugh. Discomfort.*

**PHIL**

It was almost funny listening to you describe the pleasure you got out of it, because, I mean I'm glad, glad that it helped you—

**BIANCA**

I don't think it helped me, I think it made things worse

**PHIL**

—but I really, really hated it.

Only the last season. Everything went all...I'd watch myself and think Jesus, my heart's not in this. There are these scenes that have to be enormous and I'm not there, I'm just trying to squeeze out this performance and I can't get there—

**BIANCA**

I could tell.

*Beat; maybe not what she was supposed to say.*

**PHIL**

And Jeremy is an asshole.

**BIANCA**

Well, yeah.

But I mean.

When I watched, I felt something there. It wasn't just in my head.

Something *was* there—

**PHIL**

I mean yeah but

ultimately it's just pretend.

*This is a tiny heartbreak for Bianca. But also a massive relief.*

*She kisses him. They lay down together—*

**BIANCA**

Is this pretend?

*No answer. They keep going. She starts to undress him.*

---

*Isobel eats salt and vinegar chips from a fully horizontal position on the couch. She's watching something on her laptop with headphones.*

*THREE as MICHAEL enters.*

*He's holding a freshly packed bong covered in Rick and Morty characters.*

*Isobel tucks her legs in so he can sit next to her.*

*Michael peeks over at her screen to see what she's watching. Same as usual.*

*He does a sicknasty bong rip.*

*She peels her headphones off and sits up, brushing chip crumbs off herself.*

**MICHAEL**

Doesn't watching that make you sad?

*She doesn't say anything. She hits the bong. Coughs a lot.*

**ISOBEL**

I showered.

**MICHAEL**

Congrats.

**ISOBEL**

How come you only have Irish Spring in there?

**MICHAEL**

Please don't tell me you're using that...

**ISOBEL**

It's all you have!

**MICHAEL**

It just...it goes on everything.

**ISOBEL**

Everything??

*Michael cracks up.*

**ISOBEL**

Dude.

Ugh who gives a shit

I have no dignity anymore

**MICHAEL**

That's not true.

**ISOBEL**

Maybe I'll go back to my place tomorrow, get some more clothes, my body wash...

**MICHAEL**

...you might feel better if you slept in your own bed? And not on my couch?

**ISOBEL**

I don't know.

**MICHAEL**

I mean, they stopped sending pizzas

**ISOBEL**

Yeah I'm pretty sure my address is permanently banned from Dominos.

*(then)*

What's messed up is that it wasn't even edible pizza, it's like weird unpleasant shit nobody would want to eat. Like truly evil topping combinations.

Like...like no cheese, just sauce and extra anchovies

Who would do that??

**MICHAEL**

Fucking sicko Nazis is who.

**ISOBEL**

Yeah...

**MICHAEL**

Fucking virgin nihilist asshole little boys who never grew up. Too pussy to do any real terrorism so they have to terrorize normal fuckin people online instead.

*(then)*

You could buy a gun.

**ISOBEL**

Um...no?

**MICHAEL**

You might feel safer if you had a gun.

**ISOBEL**

Michael, do *you* have a gun?

**MICHAEL**

Yes? Haven't I shown it to you?

**ISOBEL**

No???

*Michael pulls up some pictures on his phone.*

**MICHAEL**

It's a Glock 19. I keep it in a safe upstairs with my zombie knife.

**ISOBEL**

What is a zombie knife???

**MICHAEL**

IT'S FOR KILLING ZOMBIES?

**ISOBEL**

Aren't you ever afraid you'll like...

*(makes a semi-graphic “eating my gun” gesture)*

**MICHAEL**

Oh you mean like

*(an even worse one)*

**ISOBEL**

Yeah. That.

**MICHAEL**

No. No, the whole point of having a gun is like...

Like you live your entire life under somebody else’s control until something happens that makes you notice. And then you get scared. And then you get a gun and it’s like oh, I am in control now—you cannot fuck with me.

One of those 4chan guys shows up at your door to try something—you smoke their ass. Actually, you probably wouldn’t even have to, because he’d be so scared shitless— Plus we have Stand Your Ground laws so you’d basically be fine.

**ISOBEL**

I...no, I still don’t think anyone should have a gun.

**MICHAEL**

I mean yeah in a perfect world we wouldn’t have them.

But...as you know...this is not a perfect world.

*Long pause. Michael boots up his PS5.*

**ISOBEL**

Okay

I’ve thought about it and

I would like to see the gun.

**MICHAEL**

Fuck yeah.

*He goes upstairs.*

*Isobel goes to press play on her laptop again. She hesitates. Then:*

**MICHAEL**



*from off*

Oh shit.

Hey, guess what.

**ISOBEL**

What?

*He comes back holding a little-old-lady snubnose and a faded ammo box.*

**MICHAEL**

I forgot I had this.

**ISOBEL**

Jesus!

**MICHAEL**

This used to be Nonnie's. Dad let me have it when we were clearing out her stuff.

**ISOBEL**

Wh – who was she gonna shoot with this, Abraham Lincoln?

**MICHAEL**

Remember when she got mugged outside Cheesecake Factory? She was always packing after that.

**ISOBEL**

What the fuuuuuuck

**MICHAEL**

Here. It's not loaded.

*She holds it, turns it over in her hands.*

*She gets up and strikes a dramatic dueling pose.*

**ISOBEL**

*(doing sort of a [Barry Lyndon](#) thing)*

I have not received satisfaction.

**MICHAEL**

Put that down.

**ISOBEL**

Can I have this?

**MICHAEL**

You'll shoot yer eye out

**ISOBEL**

Oh whatever.

**MICHAEL**

If Mom finds out I gave you a gun she will shit. She will shit fury all across these great United States.

**ISOBEL**

I'm 30 years old for fuck's sake I AM AN ADULT

**MICHAEL**

You don't even know how to use it!

**ISOBEL**

Fine, show me.

**MICHAEL**

Fine. Get some cans out of the recycling.

**ISOBEL**

For real??

**MICHAEL**

Yes. Go.

**ISOBEL**

Fuck yeah!

*She leaves the gun with him. Michael gets his winter coat on.*

*Isobel comes back with a huge armful of Monster Energy cans.*

*Some fall to the ground as she tries to step into her slippers.*

**MICHAEL**

Izzy, before we...

**ISOBEL**

What is it?

**MICHAEL**

I just think that —

They will move onto the next thing. They always do. So will you.

**ISOBEL**

Still. Better safe than sorry?

**MICHAEL**

Not sorry. Just safe.

**ISOBEL**

I know.

*They go.*

---

*Phil and Bianca, post-coital.*

*They catch their breath.*

*Bianca checks her phone.*

**PHIL**

I'm gonna freshen up. My call time's at six, so...

**BIANCA**

Okay.

**PHIL**

Do you want to come?

**BIANCA**

?

**PHIL**

To *Hedda Gabler*.

Because I got you a comp ticket if...

**BIANCA**

Oh. Um. Sure, yeah.

**PHIL**

Do you have like, nice clothes?

**BIANCA**

*re: the clothes on the floor:*

...those were my nice clothes.

**PHIL**

Oh. Okay.

*He picks her dress up off the floor.*

**BIANCA**

Shit, it's wrinkled.

**PHIL**

I'll hang it up in the bathroom, it'll steam a bit?

**BIANCA**

That never actually works.

You just don't want me to put my clothes on yet.

**PHIL**

Maybe.

*Last kiss. He scoops up his phone and goes.*

**BIANCA**

...I'm gonna upload the drawing.

*He doesn't hear her; she uploads it.*

*A flutter of haptics from her phone:*

**ONE**

This is so lovely – r u back?!?!

**BIANCA**

haha not officially

**ONE**

I'm so serious this is gorgeous — did you use a reference pic?

**BIANCA**

just my imagination, lol

**ONE**

so have u been following the stuff with the article?

**BIANCA**

what article

*Bianca opens a link.*

*TWO as CULTURE WRITER speaks into dictation app while sipping brandy in a smoking jacket or something — very 1924.*

## **TWO as CULTURE WRITER**

I will do my best not to be too long-winded as I break down the scandal that has plagued this online *demimonde*. For where there is scandal there is speculation, which leads to editorializing, which leads to psychobiography, and if we turn down one too many of these winding alleyways we will surely lose our heads. No, I will abstain from any expository tangents on the often byzantine and self-referential world of television fandom...I will not mince my words, or soften their blow with flights of fancy...for you, brave readers of [Culture Magazine](#), are already here. And so you must have some inkling as to how these kinds of stories tend to go.

Our story begins, [as it often does](#), in an air-conditioned boardroom on the Warner lot...and ends in a 911 call in Montana.

**BIANCA**

what the hell is going on?

*The sound of the revolver going POP POP POP in the backyard.*

**MICHAEL**  
HOLY SHIT

**ISOBEL**  
That was awesome—

**MICHAEL**  
NICE ONE.

**ISOBEL**  
WOOOOOOO

**BIANCA**  
dude what is this article even about

**ONE**  
Oh god it's so long. Just skim it.

*Bianca scrolls ...*

**CULTURE WRITER**  
that spawned many [fan theories](#) regarding

*scroll*

healthy dose of homoeroticism not [uncommon](#) in

*scroll*

[purported](#)

*scroll*

[“alternate universes”](#)

*scroll*

a thwarted [GoFundMe campaign](#) and subsequent [callout posts](#)

*scroll*

**BIANCA**

okay here we go

### CULTURE WRITER

As for Alexis Luther, the fraudster and self-described “second-generation fangirl” out of Schaumburg, Illinois: Cook County judge Helen Durham has agreed to waive Luther’s parole on the condition that she never operates a charitable organization in the state again.

**BIANCA**  
seriously?

**ONE**

Dude  
It’s that serious

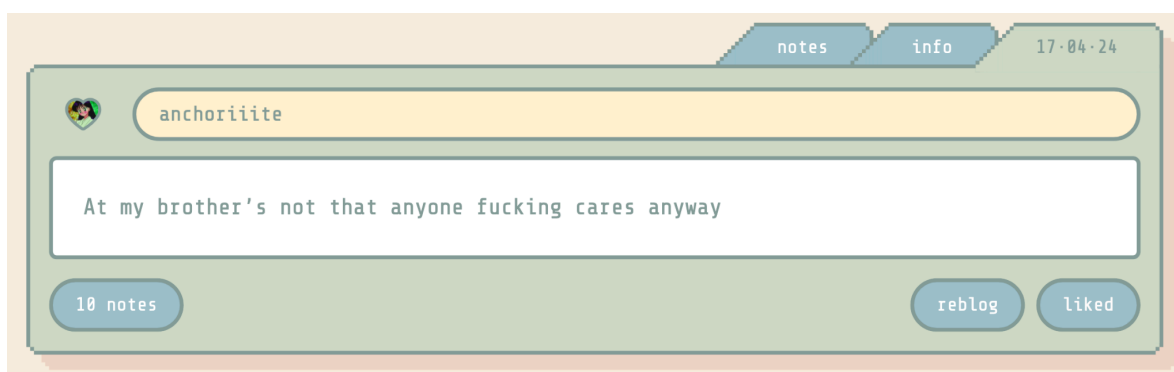
**BIANCA**  
damn

**ONE**

The only reason Lexi got busted, I might add, was because we all mass-reported her ass *and* filed a police report, but they don’t mention that It’s just like oh, look at these rubes  
And not: this person fucked us over  
The only other fan they mention by name is Isobel

### CULTURE WRITER

Jacobsen did not respond to our requests for comment, but as recently as April 17 made the following post:



[\[read Isobel’s blog\]](#)

**ONE**

Fucking Isobel who we all know is mental

**BIANCA**

:-)

has anyone checked on her?

**ONE**

She deleted her accounts after she got doxxed.

I figured you would be in contact with her

**BIANCA**

uh. no? i've been busy

literally was away from keyboard for a few weeks

and suddenly we're in the shit

*Bianca opens Discord.*

*She reads the messages from Isobel:*

**ISOBEL**

Bianca

I think maybe you hate me

and that's fine I probably fucking deserve it

But I'm really

really

really

horrifyingly alone right now

**BIANCA**

oh god

izzy—

i didn't see any of your messages

i drove to LA this morning and didn't tell anyone

my dad thinks i'm with my cousin

everything is batshit

i have to tell you about everything that's happened i

i'm so sorry dude

i love you so much

i hope you're safe and



**THREE**

User set status to "offline."

*Phil re-enters, getting dressed.*

*Bianca pulls herself away from her phone.*

**BIANCA**

I have to go to Missoula Montana

**PHIL**

What?

**BIANCA**

I ... no I'm serious, I think my friend is in trouble and I'm so sorry but I really have to go.

*Phil's face falls.*

**PHIL**

I see.

**BIANCA**

No but I. This was. I love this I really loved this and I'd really love to see you again and

**PHIL**

...how much do you need?

**BIANCA**

Um

**PHIL**

Just tell me.

**BIANCA**

Um.

Um

Seven hundred dollars?

It's not for me

**PHIL**

Montana is not close.

**BIANCA**

No, no it's not.

**PHIL**

What if your car breaks down?

**BIANCA**

Then I'm fucked.

**PHIL**

I think you just want to run away

**BIANCA**

Well.

Yeah.

*He gets in her space.*

**PHIL**

I think you're just afraid.

**BIANCA**

My friend is—

*Phil initiates something sexual again  
Sort of intense, testing the waters  
But it feels wrong and he stops abruptly.*

**PHIL**

God, is this — is this even real?

*Phil finds his pants and gets his wallet  
starts to count out hundred dollar bills  
ends up giving her the contents of his wallet.*

**BIANCA**

I don't know. I don't know, maybe I'm — I don't know.

**PHIL**

Well, the show is at eight.

**BIANCA**

Right.

**PHIL**

If you change your mind.

**BIANCA**

Okay

*He finishes dressing and goes.  
Bianca digs through her backpack.  
Puts her regular clothes back on.*

*Isobel, back in her home, on her laptop.  
Clean clothes; hair put up.  
The gun sits a few feet away from her.  
She wraps her ANCHORESS'S CLOAK around her like a blanket.*

**ISOBEL**

My brain is like a thing of play doh right now  
Just bits of dirt and carpet hair mixed in  
I kept the "queue" feature running on my Tumblr  
so it's just regurgitating all this cutesy crap  
I tried to write my fanfic this morning but I'm stuck on this one paragraph:

*Bianca drives.*

*I think it looks stupid when someone pretends to drive a car in a play 99% of the time so let's just lean into that.*

*She looks totally at peace with her decision.*

*Isobel pulls herself together and types.*

**ISOBEL**

... he felt a thousand things at once most of them shame; no there had never been anything between them; how could there be; that's what Peter believed and Nathaniel would allow him to believe it but how could there not be if one spent hours on end thinking about it thinking about it

*Bianca hits shuffle on her phone's music player  
"The Other End (of the Telescope)" by Til Tuesday [plays](#).  
This song pisses her off so bad but she tries to sit with it.*

*When Aimee Mann hits that "I KNOW it don't make a difference to you—"  
Bianca hits the SKIP TRACK button  
(conveniently embedded into her steering wheel)  
and [another song](#) starts to play.*

*Isobel writes:*

## **ISOBEL**

The big sky turned orange  
The wind felt warm on his back  
He looked at Peter

*The sun goes down*

He looked at Peter.

*Phil in his dressing room in 19th century costume  
getting ready to be in a play.*

*His cell phone starts ringing. He looks to see who it is.  
Clear disappointment.  
He answers... listens...  
Dawning horror.*

## **ISOBEL**

night picked up  
the bugs, the coyotes  
began to wake  
and stir somewhere

*The sun comes up*

*The sun goes down again*

**ISOBEL**

the world  
waited outside, impassive  
unprecious

*Isobel goes outside.*

*Sits alone, without her phone, with just her thoughts.*

*The sun comes up*

*The sun goes down again.*

**BIANCA**

527 Eddy Avenue...

*Bianca stops driving. Gets out of the car.*

**BIANCA**

...where the fuck is Unit D...

*She tries calling Isobel.*

Oh, no service

epic

*Pause.*

*There is nothing left to do except:*

**BIANCA**

Isobel?

Hellooooo

ISOBEL

*Nothing.*

*Isobel hears her name and panics.*

*Bianca wanders around,*

*then comes across Isobel.*

*Too dark for them to really see each other.*

**BIANCA**

Izzy

Oh my God I found you

*Isobel doesn't think — she grabs the revolver.*

**BIANCA**

I found your address online  
I had to make —

*Isobel fires.*

*She misses.*

*The bullet grazes Bianca's arm. She topples to the ground.*

*Pause.*

*A dog starts barking.*

*Isobel comes closer, and realizes who it is —*

**ISOBEL**

Oh my God

*Isobel switches on the porch light.*

*Bianca touches her arm.*

*Blood spreads through her shirt, down her sleeve.*

*Just a flesh wound.*

**ISOBEL**

Oh my God.

*Isobel comes to her side.*

I didn't know

I'm sorry

I'm sorry

I'm sorry —

*She weeps.*

*They cling to each other.*

*Bianca is in shock.*

**BIANCA**

What the fuck?

**ISOBEL**

...we should go inside

**BIANCA**

Dude —  
What is that, a — a six shooter or something?

**ISOBEL**  
Shhh shh shh

**BIANCA**  
You shot me with a cowboy gun???

**ISOBEL**  
Shut the fuck up.

*Isobel takes her inside, goes off for a moment.  
Bianca sits on the floor in a daze.  
Isobel comes back with a first aid kit.  
Both smeared with blood at this point.*

**BIANCA**  
...You should take me to the hospital

*Isobel starts making a tourniquet for Bianca's arm.  
(She doesn't actually know how to do this; she's just read about it.)*

**BIANCA**  
Jesus Christ

**ISOBEL**  
I didn't know. I didn't know. I panicked.

**BIANCA**  
You—

**ISOBEL**  
SHUT UP I'M TRYING TO FIX IT

*Bianca starts to laugh.*

**BIANCA**  
Isobel  
Isobel this is so classic

You can't even take accountability for trying to Kill Me—

*Isobel's phone starts to buzz.*

**BIANCA**

What is that?

*As Isobel grabs her phone:*

**ONE**

Wait

**TWO**

Guys

**THREE**

This is HUGE:

**ONE**

After negotiations with the creators —

**TWO**

Oh fuck it's happening everyone shut up

**THREE**

Oh my god

**ONE**

The Powers that Be have ordered  
A THIRD and FINAL season of THE SHOW  
Streaming EXCLUSIVELY on their EXCLUSIVE streaming platform

**TWO**

lol this is just a scam to get us to buy another fuckin subscription

**THREE**

Just pirate it like you always did

**ONE**

Guys...



I always knew our work would pay off <3

**TWO**

The numbers don't lie dude

**THREE**

Even with all the bullshit that happened  
I'm glad we stuck through it.  
I'm really glad I know you all.

**ONE**

Bro we're back

**TWO**

We're so back!!!

**CHORUS**

We're back

**BIANCA**

What is going on?

**THREE**

I love you guys.

*Isobel starts to speak—  
then puts her phone away.*

**ISOBEL**

C'mon.

*Isobel helps her to her feet.  
They go off together.*

---

INT. A DARKENED BAR - DAY.

*Phil as his character PETER*

*who is really not all that different from Phil  
drinks at a bar.*

*We're inside The Show.*

*Bianca enters as the character NATHANIEL.*

*She speaks, dresses, and carries herself like a man.*

*The show is sort of a Western magical realist neo-noir  
with some interesting ideas but, needless to say, a muddled execution*

*Nathaniel takes his time walking into the place.  
His arm is bandaged and bloody  
He is flinty and wild where Peter is melancholic and soft.  
There is a pistol in a holster on his hip.*

#### **NATHANIEL**

Well god damn.  
I reckon you thought you'd never see the likes of me again  
I reckon you thought  
that I thought  
that you thought that I was not long for this world  
After what you did

#### **PETER**

...

#### **NATHANIEL**

You know  
There's not much pleasure on this earth. Just not enough to go around.  
To have one drop of it – hurts worse than the absence. Hurts worse than the wound.  
Having to create it myself is more shameful than never having it at all.  
Having the misbegotten fuckin notion that I'd discovered love, that we'd invented it  
is more humiliating than being on my own cause now I can't even trust myself.  
I could put you out of your misery here and now  
But then who would I be?  
Who would I be  
If not in relation to *you*  
And heretofore *us*

Because we both know you are the truest friend I have in this world.  
And if you don't believe that, go ahead  
Look me in the eye and tell me so.

**PHIL**

...

**NATHANIEL**

Jesus man  
You're going soft on me.  
All soft and scared-like  
Listen, I'm not gonna hurt you.  
I just want you to look me in the eye and tell me  
Tell me there was something.  
Peter.  
Look at me.

*Moment of doubt. Is this real? Is she still Bianca?*

Look at me

*He doesn't see her.*

*End of play.*