

[Quick beat...] So, what's the worst, most painful thing about your life that makes the thought of more endless, impossible days *approximately tragic*?

Oh right, how stupid, you can't answer that. You're all here with other people... And while you might think about telling a group of *total strangers* about the deepest, hardest part of your life, you can't admit it in front of Michael. Or Megan. Or Greg and Susie. Or Simone. Or Mrs. Finkelstein. Because you had dinner with them an hour ago and you never told them that three mornings a week you wake up in despair. Or that if you had to sum up your life in one word it would be... *disappointed*. Or *lost*. Or...

Or maybe it's just me. Maybe you're all fine, and... Tom and Tim and Terrence and Tabitha and Tariq and Tamisha and Tong Il Han already know everything there is to know about you...

Shit. Life life life, huh? Can't live with it, can't...

4.3 **EVERYTHING**

[ASTER enters...]

ASTER Hey.

VANYA Hey.

↓ **START**

ASTER So... What's going on here, pal?

VANYA Isn't it... painfully obvious?

ASTER No. So tell me: What's really wrong?

VANYA *Everything.*

ASTER Wow. That's a lot...

VANYA Yeah. But there it is. I've been taking a good hard look at my life and

ASTER ...yeah?

VANYA as far as I can tell I've done everything wrong.

ASTER *Everything?*

VANYA I think so. I think *everything*...

ASTER Not *everything*.

VANYA Yeah, I think so...

ASTER C'mon, you can't have done *everything* wrong.

VANYA Everything that *matters*. Everything *real*... Yeah, fucking *everything*.

[*Quick beat... small change of tone and energy...*]

ASTER And therefore...?

VANYA What?

ASTER And therefore.....???

VANYA I heard you, I just don't know / what you

ASTER "And therefore, my dear Doctor, I am going to do X... or Y... or Z to change my life. [*Beat. Nothing...*] "And *therefore*, my dear old friend, having now finally fully realized the depth of the wrongness of my choices over the past X many years, I now resolve to Y. Or Z. Or W. Or some fucking thing, because I gotta tell you, Vanya, with all due love and respect and genuine affection in the world, there is a limit to the amount of... self-indulgent angst-y wallowing even your nearest and dearest can endure if you don't... you know... at least try to DO SOMETHING / ABOUT IT!

VANYA What?! What am I supposed to / do? What the hell...

ASTER [*Entirely improvised...*] Move! Quit your job! Study Egyptian basket weaving or or or Hindu macramé. Buy a bike. Learn to bake. Sell all your belongings on ebay and move to Kenosha, Wisconsin or East Jabip or outer fucking Mongolia! But, Heavens to Murgatroyd, man, IF YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR LIFE, THEN FUCKING DO SOMETHING / TO MAKE IT BETTER!

VANYA I'VE TRIED! You think I haven't tried All Those Things? Trips and books and on-line dating and diets and exercise plans. Gyms rejoice when they see me coming because they know I'll pay their exorbitant fees and go exactly three times before I... get a cold or pull something in my groin or just... you know... *stop going!* Lose energy. Lose momentum. Lose... lose... *lose...*

ASTER ...what?

VANYA ...*belief*. Okay!? BELIEF!!! Lose the motherfucking BELIEF that I will ever really *change*, that I will ever be anything other than the over-educated, under-motivated, grumpy, *kvetching shithead* you see before you, trapped in the endless cycle of his own failure and... lack of will, and and and and...

ASTER Give them back.

VANYA What?

ASTER Give them back. Now.

VANYA I don't know / what you're

ASTER Don't fuck me around on this, they're prescription pills, you don't have one, I'm your friend, they'll assume I gave them to you and it will be horribly bad for me, so if you really are thinking of doing the stupidest, stupidest, stupidest, stupidest, STUPIDEST fucking thing you could ever do, you are going to need to steal a car and drive off a cliff or or or spontaneously combust or somefuckingthing, but you are NOT going to do it with pills that can be traced back to me, and you are not going to do it at all because it is ridiculous and insane and there are those of us who actually love you, impossible as you are, and would miss your troll-ish self, so give me back both bottles... take a long hot bath or go for a walk or eat a box of nutty buddies or something, and, you know... buck up.

Buck the fuck up and get on with living. This is your ONE LIFE, this is it, this is all you get, EVER. This is not a dress rehearsal for some stupid fucking play or a a a rough draft of that novel you started, the the the "Daily Turtle" or--

VANYA The "Quotidian Tortoise"!

ASTER Whatever!

This is not some placeholder for life. This is it! This is YOUR ONE, OWN, ONLY little life. And you—and *only* you—can make it better.

Surely you can do that. And I will NOT quit calling you Shirley.

So deal with that, too, bucko.

↑ END