

The Living Do Not Improve

Written By

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INT. CHARLIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

CHARLIE, early thirties, sits on a couch in his living room, impatiently waiting for his girlfriend, Eliza, to come join him from the kitchen. He yells for her

CHARLIE
Hey! I have a surprise for you!
Come in here already!

ELIZA (O.S.)
Just a sec, hun.

CHARLIE
What's the hold up?

ELIZA, mid twenties, enters the living room, holding a drink.

ELIZA
Sorry babe, I was making you a gin
and tonic.

Charlie takes the drink with a smile as Eliza sits down next to him.

CHARLIE
My favorite!

ELIZA
(winking)
I know.

Charlie takes a sip of the drink and nods in satisfaction. He looks at Eliza.

CHARLIE
You're too good to me.

ELIZA
You're worth it.

Charlie laughs and drinks more.

CHARLIE
You always know what to say. It's
almost impossible to find a girl
that's witty like you, ya know?

ELIZA
You flatterer! I'm just a regular
girl. Now what's the big surprise
you keep hollering about?

CHARLIE

Oh, right!

Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Well, you know how I was talking to you about Twin Peaks last week?

ELIZA

Your favorite TV show?

CHARLIE

Yeah. And also how you wanted to go on a trip sometime? To somewhere unexpected though, not a normal tourist spot. Just the two of us, right?

ELIZA

Of course! That would be so nice.

CHARLIE

Well I got us tickets to go to North Bend next week! In Washington. It's where they filmed the diner scenes for Twin Peaks.

ELIZA

Oh! How nice. I...can't go.

CHARLIE

Sure you can! You were going to stay over here the whole three-day weekend anyway right? We'll be back in two days, so it's all good!

Eliza stares at Charlie in silence, then blinks repeatedly.

CHARLIE

Eliza? I know we've only been seeing each other a couple months, but I thought you said you wanted to go on a trip like this...

Eliza continues to be unresponsive.

CHARLIE

Hey. Are you okay? Eliza? We don't have to go if you don't want to...

Eliza spasms and goes stiff, then slacks staring blankly at

the ground, unblinking.

CHARLIE

Eliza?!

Charlie shakes her, she's unresponsive.

CHARLIE

Hey! No, no, no. Please be okay.

He goes to feel her pulse, but jumps as he hears KNOCKING at the door.

Charlie looks toward the door, then back at Eliza. He gets up and runs across the room and peers through the peephole on the door to see FRANK, early thirties, staring at him from the other side.

FRANK

(yelling through the door)

You realize you're blocking the light that comes through the peephole when you put your eye over it, right? So that I totally know you're there, defeating the entire purpose of using the peephole? Dipshit.

Charlie creaks the door ajar enough to peak his head through.

CHARLIE

Frank this...not a good time. Something's wrong with Eliza.

FRANK

Of course there is.

CHARLIE

No, I'm serious. I need to get her to the hospital, call an ambulance of something.

FRANK

No you don't.

CHARLIE

What?

FRANK

She doesn't need medical attention.
That's why I'm here.
(kicking lightly at the
door)
So open up.

CHARLIE

Frank, I'm serious.

Frank pushes the door open and pushes his way past Charlie.

FRANK

I'm serious too Charles, which is
why I don't have time to waste
arguing with you.

CHARLIE

What are you doing?!

Frank stands over Eliza, ripping off part of her skin at the
base of the back of her neck.

CHARLIE

Stop that!

FRANK

(to Charlie)
Relax.

The skin Frank rips at on Eliza doesn't bleed or pull all
the way out -- instead it opens like a hinged hatch,
revealing an electronic input of some sort. Frank pulls out
some kind of original, portable tech device that he plugs
into Eliza's neck.

Charlie staggers back as if queasy.

CHARLIE

What the hell? What is this?

FRANK

What do you think, Charlie? She's
obviously a robot.

CHARLIE

What the fuck?! What are you doing
with her? In fact, how did you even
know to come here?

FRANK

Because I built her, you jackhole.

CHARLIE

Seriously? Then why the fuck is she dating me?

FRANK

Because you were fucking miserable, dude! You were wallowing in your own self-pity after Kay dumped you, and you've just been kind of a downer since. Like a real, pessimistic dick.

(beat)

Also I needed lots of trial runs to make sure she had the processing code necessary to interact on every level without malfunctioning. Obviously we've hit another bug to fix here.

CHARLIE

Come on! You've been using me for data?

FRANK

Yes, Charles. We've worked out a lot of kinks. You almost blew out her system when you tried to explain Twin Peaks to her last week. Luckily nobody understands that fucking show so you didn't try to push her too far. Any further and it would've blown out her processing right there and then.

CHARLIE

Jesus, Frank! You drop this...fucking bomb on me that I've been dating a robot for your trial run, and now you're gonna shit on Twin Peaks too?

(beat)

And what happened? Why did she break down?

FRANK

She wasn't programmed to travel too far outside the area yet. Unfamiliar territory would destroy her ability to adapt and react to situations.

CHARLIE

Then why the fuck did you have her keep bringing up the idea of going on a trip together?

FRANK

I needed to test the long-distance capabilities of her at some point! I was just planting the seed so you'd consider it when her programming was ready for travel.

CHARLIE

Planting the seed? Jesus, how long were you planning on keeping me and her together?

FRANK

(beat)

A long and happy marriage.

CHARLIE

Seriously?!

FRANK

I'm kidding. I just need a few years of data from marriage response. I would've killed her off in a car accident or something.

CHARLIE

What?!

FRANK

I wouldn't keep you locked in a lie of a marriage forever, Charles. I'm not a monster.

CHARLIE

Yeah, you're a real saint.