

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

BARRY (40's) a chubby, scruffy but youthful man, sits in front of a computer in the corner of a messy bedroom.

The computer is optimized for gaming. Special joysticks. Fancy headphones. Ergonomic keyboard.

It's pro. The room looks like a college dorm. ANIME posters line the walls. Collectible toys line the shelves.

PAPRIKA, an Anime movie, is a popular one. Two posters. Figurines. NICOLE (late 30's) sleeps in the bed.

She's overweight but also youthful. Barry looks at the windows. Dawn breaks. He tuts cheerfully.

He clicks a video game screen closed. Something survival horror oriented.

He scrolls to a video capture software and exports a file. He brings up a YouTube page - his YouTube page.

He clicks around until the video export starts uploading. Remaining time - three hours.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Barry stands at a sink full of dishes. He holds a bowl of cereal in the palm of the hand. The spoon pokes out.

DENNIS (20's) a tall, muscular dummy whose cheeks are always red, eats an egg white omelette at the table.

He wears a polo shirt for a crappy chain restaurant. Barry wears one for a Video Game Chain.

DENNIS

Bro, would you just eat your fucking cereal already.

BARRY

I'm waiting until it gets soggy.

DENNIS

Nobody likes soggy cereal.

BARRY

I do.

He mashes the cereal further under the milk. Dennis does his best to ignore him.

BARRY

You talk to mom or dad yet?

DENNIS

I texted mom to send another check soon. I can't afford the deposit on my own place if I'm only working three shifts a week.

BARRY

You know mom doesn't do texts.

Dennis finishes his meal and drops the plate in the crowded sink. The whole kitchen has a layer of grime about it.

DENNIS

I don't know how you live like this. I really don't. So gross.

BARRY

I have to pop over to Pasadena to pick up some games today. I was thinking I could swing by the school. Maybe get you a course catalog.

DENNIS

Eat your fucking cereal, dude.

He storms out. Barry sighs.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Barry sits in the edge of the bed. Nicole makes a cranky noise at him. He puts a cup of coffee on the bedside stand.

She sniffs the air.

NICOLE

God I love you.

BARRY

Love you too.

NICOLE

I love you so much you have no idea. It makes me want to punch a mountain right in the face.

She sits up. They smooch.

NICOLE

Are you taking off?

BARRY

Yeah, in a sec. What's on the menu for you this fine morning?

NICOLE

Little bit of Minecraft. I might put one of my older accounts on Ebay.

BARRY

Which one?

NICOLE

Don't know yet. I'll do some window shopping first.

BARRY

Sounds good. Just. You know. Don't feel like you have to give up one you're really into. I picked up a couple extra shifts next week, so we'll be OK.

They smooch again. He gets up.

NICOLE

Is "The Beast" gone?

BARRY

Be nice.

She fake pouts at him.

BARRY

But yes. He's gone.

She big smiles at him.

EXT. GAMING SHOP - DAY

Barry sits on the back steps with a bag lunch next to him. He takes out each item & places them in some kind of order.

A group of THREE FELLOW EMPLOYEES sits on bench within hearing distance.

We got JULIETTE (20) a cute, slightly chubby Latino girl. She wears a MANAGERS POLO.

Up next is GIL (16) a ratty looking, short Latino kid. His Polo is unkempt, his name tag askew.

Finally there's SONJA (18) a shy, Indian girl. Her Polo and name tag are perfectly maintained.

They LAUGH.

GIL

No way. That dude is Slytherin all the way.

JULIETTE

He's not that bad.

SONJA

He smells pretty bad.

Barry perks up when he realizes what they're talking about.

BARRY

You guys talking about Malcolm? He's for sure Slytherin. But not even cool Death Eater Slytherin. He's like Crabbe or Goyle.

Their conversation halts. Juliette looks over at him. After a short but agonizing pause, she throws him a bone.

JULIETTE

What about you? What house would you be in? We figured we're all Gryffindors.

GIL

All the way.

Barry holds a sandwich in front of his face and considers.

BARRY

I'd have to think the sorting hat would put me in Huffle Puff. If I'm being honest.

They stare at him. Gil with an open mouth.

GIL

That's fucked up, dude.

BARRY

Oh, I don't know. A lot of great characters were in Huffle Puff.

Sonja shuffles her feet. Juliette shakes her head at Gil.

GIL

Yeah but. I mean. All the main heroes are in Gryffindor. If you can choose, why wouldn't you be the hero of your own life?

BARRY

There are different kinds of heroes.

He's friendly but not naive. He knows his part of the conversation is done. He bites in to his sandwich.

INT. BARRY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Barry eats pudding out of a pudding cup between his legs. He eats it with his fingers.

A box filled with used video games sits in the back seat. Barry opens a second pudding cup with his teeth.

He drives the car down a long, bland stretch of highway. The SPEAKERPHONE RINGS, interrupting a song on the stereo.

BARRY

Hello, love of my life. What, pray tell, brings the pleasing sound of your voice to my ears on this fine afternoon.

NICOLE (O.C.)

You better get home. Fast. It's Dennis. He got in a fight at work and he's all fucked up. He's really freaking out about it. I'm kind of freaked out too.

He takes a second to respond.

NICOLE (O.C.)

Barry?

BARRY

Sorry, hon. I'm on my way.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Dennis sits at the kitchen table. Barry inspects his face. His eye is swollen and there are cuts and scrapes.

Barry offers him a bag of frozen peas. He snatches it. He gulps air so Barry won't know he's been crying.

BARRY
Can you tell me what happened?

DENNIS
I'll kill that little shit. He sucker
punched me. On the roof!

BARRY
Who did?

DENNIS
This twerp who works at the
restaurant. Over some bitch.

BARRY
Don't use that word. OK? At least not
around me.

Barry sits across from him. Dennis still tries to hide the fact that he's been crying. His eyes dart around.

They land on the box of used video games. A pamphlet for a community college pokes out of the top.

Dennis immediately looks at Barry.

BARRY
I just thought. Don't even think
about it. I went before Nicole
called. You don't even have to think
about that right now.

Dennis stands up so fast he knocks over his chair.

DENNIS
You're a fucking fat pathetic loser
who should mind his own business. The
second I find another job I'm out of
this shit-ass dump.

He storms out. Barry wipes a little stain of blood off the table. He exhales a huge sigh.

EXT. GAMING SHOP - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Barry sits on the hood of his car with a six pack of JOLT COLA next to him. He holds one in his hand.

Gil peeks around the corner with a devilish grin on his face. It's like Christmas Eve, he's so giddy.

Juliette comes up behind him. She looks from the expression on Gil's face to the can in Barry's hand.

She slaps Gil's shoulder.

JULIETTE

Jerk.

SPLOOSH. Barry opens the can. It's contents explode all over his shirt and lap. Gil explodes with laughter.

Juliette jogs over to the car.

JULIETTE

Shit, Barry. I'm so sorry. My little cousin thinks he's hilarious. The rest of the world not so much.

BARRY

Don't give it a second thought. He's just a kid. Kids mess around.

JULIETTE

You're sure?

Barry shrugs it off.

BARRY

Yeah. I like Gil. He's a little rambunctious, but working with him is never dull.

JULIETTE

OK. As long as you're cool.

He nods as he mops himself up. She takes a step away then stops. She looks at him, cleaning soda off himself.

JULIETTE

Hey. Can I ask you something?

BARRY

Shoot.

JULIETTE

What house do you think I'd be in? I mean really. Be honest.

A wide smile crosses his lips.

BARRY

Gryffindor. Obviously.

She smiles.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barry and Nicole lie on their backs. Post-Coitus breathing fills the air. They smile a sweaty smile at each other.

She reaches for an ice cream container on the bedside stand. It's half full and completely melted.

NICOLE
Ice cream soup?

Barry sits up and pulls on a robe.

BARRY
No way. That's for my sweetie.

She smiles and tilts the container to her lips to drink it all in one sip. He moves to his desk.

She pulls the sheet around her shoulders and grabs her laptop off the floor. She puts on a pair of headphones.

He sits. The MUFFLED SOUND of a video game comes from her headphones. He looks at her reflection in his monitor.

CLICK. His computer HUMS to life. It opens right on the YouTube screen. His LETS PLAY VIDEO uploaded successfully.

It has OVER A MILLION VIEWS and A FEW HUNDRED THOUSAND LIKES. He scrolls down to the comments.

The most recent one is from "SerenaTennis96." It reads -

"I can't believe you beat this in under three hours. You're my hero" - followed by a lot of cute emojis.

CLICK. He minimizes the window.

CUT TO BLACK: