

Arrival

Lights up.

Five Personalities: Narcissism, Humanity, Paranoia, Anger, and Reason are casually arranged about a domestic space, draped over couches, sitting at a table, lying on a bed, standing at a bench, pacing. They are dressed generically, their status and gender unclear. They pass a cushion lazily about, for no apparent reason.

Reason Pop quiz. Which industrial process emits three times more carbon than air travel and is responsible for 8% of all global emissions?

Anger Pop answer. Nobody cares.

Paranoia Agriculture.

Reason Agriculture's 12%

Paranoia So your question is what's not quite as bad as agriculture?

Reason It's a good answer. You'll like the answer.

Humanity Road transport.

Reason Not an industrial process.

Narcissism Am I the only person here not interested?

Anger I'm not interested.

Paranoia It's a trick question. Alternative energies.

Humanity I'm just bored enough to be interested. But as soon as something better comes along...

Reason Concrete. It's concrete.

Paranoia So you were wrong. I didn't like the answer.

Narcissism This is what we've come to? We're talking about concrete.

Humanity What would you rather talk about?

Narcissism Honestly? Anything.

Reason Concrete is humanity's most widely used synthetic material.

Narcissism It's not even uninteresting. It's a whole different category.

Anger That doesn't mean anything.

Narcissism And you're the ultimate judge of meaning, are you?

Anger 'It's a whole different category.' That's the shit people say to sound clever when they don't know what they're talking about.

Humanity I think I can see where you're going with this.

Anger Yeah, right?

Humanity Not you. I mostly try to block you out.

Narcissism You know those dry concrete canals they race the cars down at the end of Grease? I've been there. You could pay to be driven down it in an old convertible. I don't

think it was the actual car from the movie. But similar. You want to see a photo?
I'd just spent three months on the five two diet so I look good in it.

Humanity Concrete. Hydro dams.
Reason Damn, you're good.
Humanity I see what you did there.
Paranoia Yes, I take it back.
Reason Yeah?
Anger Yeah.
Humanity Of course it doesn't necessarily -
Paranoia But it does. They lie. And the question to ask -
Humanity Who lie?
Paranoia Is why do they lie?
Humanity Why do who lie?
Paranoia What's in it for them?
Humanity Unless you say -
Anger See, you're as bad.
Humanity As bad as whom?
Anger Whom? Really. What an aresehole.
Narcissism Why would it use carbon? Concrete's not made from trees? So why would -
Reason Clinker.
Narcissism That doesn't sound like a real thing.

At this point the Father walks across the space. Somehow he is more of this world, from his clothes to the way he interacts with the environment. This is his home. Although the others continue talking at this point, their physicality changes. They are no longer relaxed, but become wary, kinetic, crucially aware of the newcomer, one eye always on him - slowly drawn towards him as he in turn walks to a curtain and pulls it slightly back to look out the window. He shows no sign he is aware of the presence of the others.

From this point on the conversation is less committed, more distracted, and there is a sense that somehow this new presence has unified them.

Reason Main component of cement, heat limestone and clay in a rotating kiln, 1400 degrees celsius, a little more, so there's your first problem, then the chemical process itself, carbon dioxide is the major -
Humanity You realise that any solution will always have -
Paranoia And there's the changes in water levels, and the effect on algae, and the way -
Humanity Yes, but until you know -
Anger It doesn't make you better than us, never having a solid opinion.

Humanity A concrete opinion?
 Anger Okay, you're smart. We get it. You've got an education. Let's all get down and worship the person with an education. Pity they never taught you how to think.
 Narcissism Who else has done the five two? I think it's the best. I really do.
 Paranoia It's not resources people are trying to control. It's prestige. Ask yourself, who's doing it? Who's trying to make you feel bad about yourself?
 Anger Who's trying to rob your right to be who you are?
 Narcissism I am who I am. That's what I say.
 Anger Don't let them control you.
 Narcissism You do you. That's my philosophy.
 Humanity Plato, eat your heart out.
 Paranoia It was a good example.
 Reason Thank you.
 Humanity Who is this they you keep -
 Anger You're with us or you're against us. It's that simple.
 Paranoia Are you with us? That's the question.

All together, although it is Humanity's voice that joins last, and with the least conviction:

All You're okay, the way you are.
 You don't have to play their game.
 You do you.
 Don't apologise for who you are.
 You're okay, the way you are.
 You don't have to play their game.
 You do you.
 Don't apologise for who you are.
 You do you.
 You do you.
 You do you.

Repeating, fading, as they close in on Father, who remains unaware of their presence. They focus on him exclusively, their mantra dipping into silence. When he begins to speak they slip away, back to their quiet spots about the room, dropping, draping, as if the life has gone from them.

Father's focus is still out the window.

Father He has. He's gone and done it. Rosa! Rosa! Come and look what he's done. Did I tell you about his stretching? He's stretching now. Before his morning runs. He can see when our kitchen light comes on. He knows I'm awake, fumbling for a coffee while he's out there skipping through the hills like a twenty year old. An hour. I timed him. He goes out for an hour. Who's got an hour in their life to waste on moving? What sort of person has an hour? And now he's stretching first, on his lawn. Can you believe that Rosa? What's wrong with his lounge? I tell you what's wrong with it. Nobody can see him in his lounge. Nobody can see just how close he can get to sniffing his own excrement. You know that's what this whole obsession with yoga is about, right? Preparation for the final act of disappearing up your own arse. And now, what do you think he's done? Just in case there's anybody left in this sorry suburb not yet certain that he is in every single imaginable way better than all of us. Rosa, guess. Just guess what he's done. One guess... He's bought himself a fucking Nissan Leaf. Well I've got news for him, about his precious hydroelectricity. Guess what percentage of global carbon emissions are down to concrete production. I looked it up... It'll surprise you... Rosa? Rosa?

Son ambles into the room, determined not to engage with this. His Father turns to him.

Father A Nissan Leaf. Tell me you're never going to buy a Nissan Leaf.
Son She's out.
Father What?
Son Mum. She's not here. She went to the shops. For stuff to take around to Grandma's tonight.

Father freezes for a moment.

Father Shit. Forgot.
Son It's okay, it's not 'til seven thirty, because she has yoga or something.
Father Now she does yoga?
Son Might have misheard.
Father I said I'd make meringues.

Personalities re-animate, taking renewed interest.

Son Cool.
Father No, but I haven't made them.
Son Oh. Make them now.

Father I think they take a while.
 Son Don't think so.
 Father You have to leave them in the oven while it cools down, don't you?
 Son That's pavlova.
 Father Not meringues?
 Son Don't think so.
 Father I sometimes feel like I've learned all the wrong things. I know a lot of things, I pay an interest in the world, but it's never the things I end up needing. Why is that, do you think?
 Son Perhaps it's age. The world's just moved on.
 Father There's always been meringues.
 Son You need a recipe?
 Father I've made them before. But it was a long time ago.
 Son Why did you say you'd do it?
 Father She asked.
 Son Could have just said you don't know how.
 Father There's this thing that happens, when you've been married for a while - sometimes your wife will give you a look that says, 'I just don't think I could cope with one more disappointment right now.'
 Son You need a recipe.

Son looks down to his phone, Father begins to search drawers. Personalities move about, excitable.

Reason Although some recipes will tell you it isn't necessary to use caster sugar, for the very best results -
 Humanity The key thing to be aware of is the rate at which the sugar is combined with the egg whites.
 Paranoia Although recipes will often offer a wide range of suggested cooking times, this doesn't necessarily mean that -
 Narcissism When I was in Paris last year I got a meringue at a bakery but it was hard as a rock, the whole way through. Someone said that's how they do them there but what if I was just sold a shit meringue? It's harder, knowing when to complain, when you're in a foreign culture.
 Anger When was the last time you had a really good meringue? Have you noticed that? Have you noticed how, as food's gotten fancier, the desserts have gotten steadily more shit?

Father produces the book he's been rummaging for. The voices move back to their spaces.

Father Here we are. The trusty Edmonds. Biggest selling book in New Zealand's history.
Did you know that?

Son Bigger than the bible?

Father More sales.

Son A lot of people get their bibles free.

Father Here we go. Oh shit. Shit shit shit. I knew there was a reason I didn't make meringues.

Son Looks pretty simple. Two ingredients.

Father Separate the eggs. You know how to separate an egg?

Son Sort of.

Father Away you go.

Son I didn't volunteer to make meringues.

Father I bought you up. I fed you, I clothed you, I pay for Netflix.

Son One each. That's fair.

Slowly, carefully, Father and Son separate their eggs into a bowl and glass the Father has provided. Each watches the other, seeking guidance. Personalities provide an active interest.

Narcissism Am I the only person who thinks egg yolks are disgusting?

Reason You and Winston Churchill.

Narcissism You're making that up.

Reason Said the oozing yellow yolk was the most revolting thing he ever saw.

Anger And he won a war.

Humanity Well, was in office when the war was won. Always feels to me he took too much credit.

Anger Man was a hero.

Humanity I'd go further. I'd say you never really win a war. You just lose by less.

Paranoia Are you a Marxist?

Humanity No.

Paranoia Sure about that?

Egg success. The men pull back, proud of their efforts.

Father Nicely done.

Son A clean separation.

Father It's not enough.

Son You think?

Father Your grandmother thinks I'm tight with my money. You know how often she's asked me when I'm taking you all on a nice overseas holiday? Then she gives your Mum that look, that says, I told you not to marry him.

Son One more.

Father Two more. It's easier to just double everything.

Son But not the temperature?

Father Course not... Shit, do you need a higher temperature if there's more?

Son No... Maybe... More thermal mass, so...

Father Yes?... No... No, course you don't... Okay, here we go. Number two. Feeling good.

Predictably, the fourth egg, Father's, fails, with a trail of yellow yolk infecting the whites.

Father Shit.

Son Shouldn't have...

Father Yeah, but I did. Okay, starting again. New plan.

He gets four more cups and sets them out.

Son What are you doing?

Father One white in each cup. If we make a mistake, we only lose one.

This seems reasonable to them both and they're at it again, carefully and painstakingly separating their eggs, restarting a cup as necessary.

Son Do you ever read the bible?

Father Where did that come from?

Son You never read me the bible.

Father We're not Christians.

Son It's an important cultural reference point.

Father Read it for yourself.

Son You shouldn't do that, you know.

Father What?

Son Talk yourself down the way you do.

Father I don't talk myself -

Son Making that joke about Mum not being able to stand one more disappointment. It reinforces the myth of white male privilege.

Personalities are back up, energised by this latest strange turn of events.

Father I don't always know what you're talking about. You get that right? I try. I do try. But a lot of the time... You perplex me.

Son You're my primary male role model. You're conveying to me the message that I should feel apologetic for my maleness.

Father Okay. Well I don't mean to do that.

Son It's like with lobsters.

Father Well, if you could refer to my earlier statement about not really -

Son Dominant lobsters are n't bigger or brighter than the submissive lobsters. They just behave in a more dominant manner. People treat us according to the way we project ourselves into the world. We need to remember the lesson of the lobsters.

Father The dominant lobsters.

Son We're evolved from the same stock. It's the same basic evolutionary imperative.

Father I think you'll find the most recent common ancestor between a human and a lobster is pretty much an amoeba, so unless you're arguing that -

Son It's a metaphor! You know what, make your own fucking meringues!

Son storms off. Father calls after him.

Father You don't want to lick the bowl?

He measures the sugar into a cup then begins to beat the egg whites.

Mother enters, carrying bags of groceries.

Mother Oh, you remembered the meringues. I was sure you'd forget.

Father I have my moments.

Mother You do... Looks like a lot.

Father Doubled the recipe.

Mother You remembered to double everything?

Father There's only two ingredients.

Mother Hmm... Should be fine. Hey, did you see Fraser's bought himself an electric car? We should get one of those.

Father I thought I'd just save the planet by growing immensely fat. Become my own carbon sink.

Mother That's nice. Where's the Silent One?

Father Being a lobster, I think. What time are we going?

Mother Eight... You don't want to put all the sugar in at once.

Father I know.

Mother I can do it, if -
Father I'm fine.

Father resumes beating the eggs. Mother hovers, watches, unpacks groceries.

Light up on the son's room, where he sits at his screen, reading intently. The Personalities have followed him in and are now crammed into the small space, like some strangely themed sleepover.

Reason Whereas if we look to the traits neuroticism and agreeableness -
Humanity Not this again.
Anger Can't handle the truth?
Humanity Define truth.
Anger Know it when I see it.
Humanity I think you'll find that's prejudice.
Anger Are you a communist?
Humanity Are you an idiot?
Reason You will find that women score far higher. This is because selection pressures -
Humanity Post hoc fallacy anyone?
Paranoia It's a post-modern conspiracy.
Humanity The fallacy?
Paranoia The identity construct.
Narcissism Why do you always disagree with them? I've noticed that about you. It doesn't matter what they say, you disagree with it.
Humanity It's either that or be wrong.
Reason Selection pressures have favoured those behaviours most conducive with meeting the demands of the infant in the first nine months of its life.
Humanity See, you can't infer -
Reason Constant awareness of threats to safety, and an unquestioning instinct to respond to the needs of others, is the -
Humanity But I can tell a different selection story, and all -
Paranoia The post modernist would deny the existence of the individual. What they seek to do -
Humanity Do you even know what a post-modernist is?
Paranoia A marxist in sheep's clothing.
Anger If there's one thing I hate more than a post-modernist, it's a marxist.
Reason Conflict.
Paranoia They seek to create conflict.
Reason Identity politics is the politics of grievance.

Paranoia In order to establish conflict.
Reason The myth of male white privilege is a marxist ploy.
Paranoia They couldn't create the class conflict, so now they seek to create conflict between identities. They want to destroy it all.
Humanity Why would anybody want to do that? What's their goal?
Anger They don't have a goal. What they have is anger and resentment.
Humanity Pot, may I introduce you to the kettle?
Anger No marxist post-modernist feminist is going to tell me I have it easy. Who do they think fights in the wars?
Humanity You've been to war, have you?
Narcissism I've been to war.
Humanity What?
Narcissism Somewhere here. I have photos. I visited Hiroshima.
Humanity That's a war memorial.
Narcissism Yeah. It was horrific. Truly traumatising.
Paranoia If you support identity politics, you support conflict.
Humanity Non sequitur.
Reason You are for conflict or you are not.
Humanity False dichotomy.
Narcissism People would like you more if you spoke English.
Humanity Ad hominem.

Personalities, apart from Humanity, move in unison, creating a chorus with the lines that follow.

Reason You're with us or you're against us.
Paranoia You're for conflict, or you're for peace.
Anger You can't blame people for the way nature is.
Reason It is what it is.
Anger We are what we are.
Narcissism We are our nature
Paranoia We are our nature.
Reason You're with us, or you're against us.
Narcissism We are our nature.
All *(Repeating, fade to a whisper)* We are our nature.

During this Son stands, triumphant, closes his laptop, stretches, then drops to the floor and begins to do press ups. Fades. Lights up on the living area. Father is spooning meringues onto the tray.

Enter Daughter, beaming. Mother moves across the space, hugs her.

Mother How was it?
Daughter Good.
Mother Good on you.

Mother smiles, giving her daughter space to develop her story. Father, oblivious, jumps in.

Father Happy night at the chapel of perpetual smugness?

Mother drifts across, intercepting, takes Father's arm.

Mother You know those small dark hours when you wake in a sweat and ask yourself, do
 my children truly love me?
Father Just saying the world is a better place when opinions can be freely shared.
Mother Reasoned debate needs oxygen darling. Not smothering with words.
Father Words are how we debate.
Mother And silences are how we understand.
Father That makes no sense to me.
Mother Not while you're talking. No.
Father All right. Well I'll make the meringues then.

Daughter What are they for?
Mother We're going to Susan's tonight.
Daughter Nice.
Father Is it?
Mother You love me, you love my mother.
Father This wasn't made clear, at the ceremony.
Mother I was distracted - by doubt.
Father Who wants to lick the bowl?

Women look at one another, ignore the offer. Father shrugs, begins cleaning it with his finger.

Father You know the difference between cooking and baking? Cooking makes food taste
 better, baking just makes it easier to transport.
Daughter You know the difference between a cake and a biscuit?
Father Size.
Daughter Cakes go hard when they go stale, biscuits go soft. Seriously. That's the
 definition.

Mother moves across to sit with her daughter.

Mother How many people were there?
Daughter Hundreds. It was packed. I didn't expect that. I thought it'd just be a few of us...
Mother People care.
Daughter Did you see Fraser's bought -
Mother An electric car. I know.
Daughter We should get one.
Father If you saw how much carbon goes into producing concrete, you wouldn't think
 your precious hydrodams were such a clever solution.
Daughter I don't. Shame to waste the ones we've already built though.

Father turns his attention back to the dishes.

Daughter There was a guy there who works for a climate action group in Norway. They're
 going to be carbon neutral in ten years, and they're a major oil producer. It's
 possible. If people really want it, it's possible.
Mother That's amazing.
Daughter The March tomorrow's all organised. There was someone from the police there
 tonight, they think the Prime Minister might come out to address the rally, and
 remember the petition... eighty thousand names in three hours... And just being
 in a room with people who aren't all cynical about everything, who still believe
 we can change things, it's, I don't know... It's something... Hey, you remember
 Lewis, from Kiriwai Rd? He was there. He's so tall now.
Mother I miss that.
Daughter Tall men?
Mother Protests. I used to enjoy protests.
Daughter What were they about?
Mother Nuclear free, homosexual law reform, pay equity, consent laws... Ask your
 grandmother about the Springbok tour tonight. Get her to tell you the story about
 the cup of tea.
Daughter You think it made a difference?
Mother Sometimes. Often actually. I think a lot of decision making is primal. I think you
 need to see change, you need to smell it in the air.
Daughter Hey, um, there's a group, like a smaller group... like really responsible people,
 hand picked, and they're going to maybe, like do a chain themselves up kind of
 protest.
Mother Okay.

Father No!
Mother Where is this group going to chain itself?
Daughter I'm not really allowed to tell you.
Father You're not chaining yourself to anything.
Daughter I didn't say it was me.
Father Good.

Enter little sister, fifteen, headphones in, music her constant companion and escape. Nods in recognition.

Mother Good day?

Sister nods, offers nothing. She looks around, taking in the scene, its implications. The Personalities have seeped out of the Brother's room, almost as an advance guard, doing reconnaissance.

Paranoia She's hiding something.
Reason Everybody's hiding something.
Anger It'd be easier, if people just said what they were thinking.
Humanity Yeah, I'm glad they don't.
Narcissism So you support dishonesty?
Humanity I support kindness.
Anger Even when it's a lie?
Humanity Some truths you have to talk your way into.
Reason He's forgotten to turn the oven on.
Narcissism It always starts with the little mistakes. Have you noticed that?

Sister Are we going to Gran's?
Daughter How did you know that?
Sister Look at Dad. It's obvious. You should pay more attention.
Mother I texted her. I forgot the cream. You get it?
Sister Shit, sorry.
Father That was too much bother was it?
Sister I'm thinking of becoming a vegan. Vegans, on average, have a 20% lower BMI.
Daughter Not sure that's the point.
Mother And vegans can't do a little job for the family? That's part of it, is it?
Sister They're called dairies, mother. The very name is offensive. I won't be able to go, by the way.
Mother We're all going.

Sister There'll be meat there, and ice cream.
Mother You're not a vegan.
Sister I think I am.
Mother Since when?
Sister Now. I just decided.
Mother Any animals you're asked to eat tonight, they're already dead. You can start in the morning.
Sister She won't even notice I'm not there.
Mother Of course she'll notice.
Sister And I've got homework. History's due tomorrow.
Father That's a thing, right... Like a joke.
Sister What?
Father History is due tomorrow... You know... That's a... what do you call them?.. A meme. Is that right?
Sister No.
Father Funny though.
Sister We could all go next week. There's no hurry.
Mother You have remembered it's the anniversary?
Sister What anniversary?
Daughter Grandad.
Mother He died two years ago today. We have to be there.
Sister It's not like she's lonely.
Mother We're not talking about this.
Sister Must be hard, being embarrassed by your mother and your children at the same time. What do they call you - the sandwich generation isn't it?
Father Ham sandwich. Big juicy slab of ham.
Mother Did you really just call me a pig?
Father What? No. It was reference to her being a vegan.
Mother In the metaphor, I'm the filling in the sandwich. I'm the meat.
Father I might just be quiet for a little while.
Sister I saw her last week. I didn't tell you that. On the back of his motorbike. They passed the school bus, just as it was pulling out they ducked through on the inside, completely illegal. And she waved.
Mother Okay, well, that's not relevant.
Sister I don't think she's missing grandad, is what I'm saying.
Father Apologise.
Sister What?
Father Apologise to your mother.
Mother It doesn't matter.

Sister What for?
Father You know.
Sister I just said I saw her on the back of a motorbike. I did. Why do I have to apologise for that?
Father You were being deliberately provocative.
Sister I thought you were going to stop talking.
Daughter Really? She gets to talk to you like that?
Father What do you want me to do?
Daughter I don't know. Something grown up.
Sister Could you be a bigger pain in the arse?
Mother She's just come back from her meeting. Tell her about the meeting.
Daughter I was interviewed.
Mother Oh, by whom?
Sister Whom?
Mother Sick of apologising for having an education.
Daughter One News. There was a camera there. And a reporter. We'd split off into little groups, talking about further actions, and she came round and asked why we were so passionate about the issue, and I just talked... I always thought I'd go too nervous in that situation, and stumble over my words and... I didn't. I just talked.
Sister So you're going to be on the news?
Daughter I think so. Maybe.
Mother We have to watch.
Daughter It doesn't matter. I can watch it later, online.
Mother I have to text Susan. She'll be so proud.
Daughter There were other... They didn't guarantee it or anything.
Mother Turn it on. We can leave the sound down, and keep an eye out for...
Father There might be a little issue there.
Mother What?
Father I took the decoder back. It was going to be a surprise. You wanted me to cancel Sky, and I said I wasn't going to, but then I did, as a surprise.
Mother Oh. Thank you. That's lovely. But we don't need Sky to -
Father I haven't really been able to reconnect it to the other... Separating eggs is one thing, the cables behind there are... Now that I think about it, that might be why we got Sky. I think something might have been broken.
Daughter We'll watch online. Later. It doesn't matter.
Mother Of course it matters. It's fantastic. *Looks to phone.* Your grandma says she's proud of you... I'm proud of you too.

Mother walks over and gives her daughter a hug. Meanwhile, the voices are massing about the increasingly disgruntled Sister. One of them prods her into action.

Sister I was body shamed today!

Silence as each of the onlookers attempts to process this news.

Mother Oh. Were you?

Sister Yes, and it was really quite traumatic.

There is no great rush to offer her sympathy. The mood is more one of cautious scepticism.

Daughter Where did it happen?

Sister Pool. I was doing laps.

Father I don't really -

Mother I'll explain later.

Mother leaves to find her laptop, so they can watch the news. Brother has come into the room, his antennae twitching at the possibility of a gender based controversy.

Sister I got out, and I was just warming down, you know walking around and doing some stretches, and then I went to one of the spa pools, just by the side, and I was sitting up on the side of it, because it was too hot. And I was just... minding my own business, when it happened.

Daughter What happened?

Sister One of the life guards came up, and she said there'd been complaints about my togs, and asked me not to wear them there again. I know who it was. Mothers, in the toddlers' pool. They'd been looking at me.

Daughter What togs were you wearing?

Sister That's not the issue. Blame the victim.

Daughter I just asked.

Sister My bikini. What? I'm entitled to be comfortable with my own body. I work hard for this body. I'm not going to be ashamed about it, just because some jealous old cows who've let themselves go -

Daughter It's a thong. You were doing laps in a thong?

Sister They didn't have to shame me. I thought you'd be on my side on this. I thought you'd be outraged.

Daughter Yeah, sort of am.

Sister Oh, so you're the only one who's allowed to ever suffer?

Brother You weren't body shamed.

Sister Okay, well you really shouldn't be having an opinion on this.

Brother Offended by my intellect?

Sister Your penis.

Brother Ah, you body shamed me. Get me a counsellor.

Daughter It's not really body shaming though, is it?

Brother She means there's no such thing.

Daughter That's not what I meant.

Brother So somebody doesn't like how you look - Welcome to the world. Get over it.
Right?

Daughter No, not right.

Brother Instead you want to make yourself into some sort of trauma victim. Well you're
not. It's just some people don't like having a total stranger's arse in their face.
Even your sister gets that.

Sister And you're seriously going to take his side?

Daughter No. Yes. Kind of.

Brother Oh, learn to assert your opinion for once.

Daughter If you listened -

Brother You think she's over reacting.

Daughter I think she's wrong.

Brother Exactly.

Daughter No, but sort of for the opposite reason.

Sister What happened to female solidarity?

Daughter Yeah, you lost me at 'jealous old cows who'd let themselves go.'

Brother There's no such thing as body shaming.

Daughter Yes there is.

Sister So you do understand?

Daughter Understand what?

Sister My pain.

Brother She doesn't believe you are in pain.

Daughter How do I not get to speak for myself?

Brother You take so long. And then when you do talk, you're always so scared of
offending people that you don't say anything at all.

Daughter That's not true.

Brother So tell her what you think.

Daughter hesitates, understanding full well that this is probably not a smart move.

Daughter Okay, so what I think is this: Every time someone like you tries to co-opt the language of genuine suffering for the purpose of adding punch to their instagram account, it gives creeps like this an excuse to write off every report of abuse as the hysterical over-reaction of self absorbed narcissists. Is that plain enough for you?

Sister Honestly, didn't really understand a word of it.

Daughter Women are hurting. They're suffering in ways you can't imagine. You don't get to pretend you're part of that when you're not. It's offensive. And dangerous.

Brother Men are suffering too.

Daughter I don't doubt it.

Sister I was body shamed!

Sister turns and storms from the room, seeking refuge in her private space - swiss ball, mirror. The Personalities have followed her.

Mother returns to the lounge, laptop in hand.

Mother Battery was empty and I couldn't find the charger. How's everything going here?

Nobody answers.

Mother Okay... Any reason you don't have the oven on?

Father What? Oh, you are kidding me.

Lights down on this area and up on Sister and the Personalities. As they speak, The Personalities manipulate the limbs of the Sister, their opinions and concerns literally propelling her to exercising, posing and critical appraisal of her own reflection.

Reason The average adult accumulates an extra 500 grams of fat every year of their life.

Anger Another full block of butter smeared beneath the skin. Year in, year out, becoming slowly more disgusting.

Humanity How is this helping anyone?

Paranoia And they won't tell you. Your friends won't tell you, your family won't tell you, and then one day you'll suddenly realise you've let yourself become repulsive, and it'll be too late.

Narcissism But it's not too late yet. You look good. Take a moment to enjoy that fact. You've earned that right. Enjoy that.

Paranoia Are you sure about that? Turn this way, a little more, now relax your shoulders. Look at that. Look at what's happening. It's already happening.

Humanity How is any of this helping anyone?

Paranoia The difference between a healthy lifestyle and an unhealthy one is miniscule. A chocolate biscuit here, an extra glass of wine there.

Reason It's why you don't notice.

Anger Not until it's too late.

Humanity Can't you see what you're doing to people?

Reason I'm just speaking the truth.

Anger Are you saying we shouldn't speak the truth?

Humanity Of course I'm not saying -

Paranoia That's how it starts. First they tell you what you can say.

Anger Then they tell you what you can think.

Narcissism This is about empowerment. This is about helping young women take control of their bodies.

Anger Be proud of them.

Narcissism Are you saying you don't want young women to have a say in how they look?

Humanity How can you possibly get to -

Narcissism Core strength enhances posture. You have great core strength. That's what they were offended by, you know. They were offended by the way you carried yourself.

Anger Nobody's allowed to be proud of anything any more. We're all meant to apologise for everything.

Paranoia Like communists.

Reason We now know it's not just the quantity of calories that matter, it's the quality of them. Take the carbohydrate, for example -

Paranoia Your chin. Be careful of the chin. Run your finger, from your chin to your neck. Can you feel it? Can you feel it happening?

Humanity This has nothing to do with empowerment. This is torture. You're torturing her.

Narcissism What are you talking about? Look at her. Look how happy she is. Do you think she'd look this good, without our help?

Reason Building muscle mass is not just a good way to enhance definition, it also increases the capacity of the body to burn off calories.

Humanity You can't do this. They remember this, you know. They take it seriously. They don't know you're idiots.

Narcissism What are you talking about?

Paranoia Censorship. She's talking about censorship.

Reason She wants to censor our words.

Anger She wants to control our thoughts.

Paranoia She thinks we can't be trusted.

Anger She thinks she's better than us.

Reason What about freedom of speech? What are you trying to hide?

All She thinks she's better than us.
 She thinks she's better than us.
 She thinks she's better than us...

As the scene ends the four voices use Sister's arms to repel the advances of Humanity.

From the lounge.

Mother It's on. The interview! It's on!

Sister rushes from the room to view it. Personalities follow.

Family gather about the screen. Personalities crowding in behind. Humanity slopes in last, observes from a distance.

Daughter steps forward, now playing her moment in front of the reporter.

As she speaks, four of the five Personalities step forward, a line shadowing her, assessing her, itching for their opportunity to speak. Humanity looks on in horror.

Daughter I think there's a pattern to these things. First people say it isn't real. Then they say it's real, but it isn't really a problem. Then they say it's a problem, but there are bigger problems to worry about. Then they say, no, it is a pretty big problem, but it's too complicated to solve in a hurry and a lot of solutions will actually make things worse, and we have to be patient and careful. And then, at some point, what happens is people start caring, properly caring. And they see that all those other responses were actually just excuses, and they get on with solving it. And that's humanity at its best, you know. That's the part of history we're proud of. And I want to think that's where we are. That we're starting to really care.

Daughter returns to the room, both proud and self-conscious. Mother hugs her, tight and proud. Sister pouts. Father struggles to remain silent. Brother hums with a thinly disguised glee, channelling the mood of the Personalities.

Mother That was amazing. Truly, I'm proud of you.

Daughter I said more than that, but they -

Mother That was a lot. For a news soundbite, that was a lot. They must have really liked it.

Father Of course, it is very complicated, the whole business of -

Son Look at the comments. Scroll down to the comments. See what people are saying.
Mother Are you sure that...

The now four Personalities step purposefully forward, proud in their aggression, competing with one another for the vigour of the take-down.

Paranoia So she's happy to see coal miners' families living in poverty, is she?
Anger If caring is the solution, then why are no Buddhist countries leading the way?
Reason If you're not a socialist at eighteen, you have no heart. If you're not a conservative at forty, you have no brain.
Narcissism You can tell she doesn't like herself. Look at her face. She's on television and she's made no effort.
Anger Another smug young woman standing up to tell us what we're doing wrong. Imagine my surprise.
Paranoia I suppose this is another one they'll be blaming on the white male.
Anger It's always the ugly ones who are the angriest. Have you noticed that?
Narcissism There's no excuse for those eyebrows. That's just laziness.
Reason And then when real solutions are proposed, she'll be first one to oppose them.
Anger Good luck finding what you really want, love.
Narcissism If I had an arse like that, I would not be telling other people how to live. You know what I'm saying?
Anger What's with her teeth?
Reason And how do you think she got to the protest? I bet she drove.
Anger As for her big, middle class OE. Won't think twice about her carbon footprint then, will she?
Narcissism It's not that she can't afford to look passable. Her clothes aren't cheap. They're just, well, tasteless.
Reason Are her ears different sizes?
Anger I knew someone like her at school. Had to tell everybody else what they were doing wrong. Then she got laid and stopped bothering people.
Paranoia If you're looking for a volunteer.
Narcissism I'd rather drink cold vomit.
Anger Perhaps if you paid me.
Reason She's wrong about history.
Paranoia She's wrong about everything.
Narcissism She's done nothing to look after her skin.
Anger Look at the way her hands always -

Mother and Humanity simultaneously slam down the laptop. The Home characters freeze.

The Personalities move about, restless, agitated, four eager to finish their kill, the fifth no longer able to control herself. Takes on a sort of Birthday Party interrogation vibe.

Humanity Really? Really?
Reason Really what?
Humanity You're okay with that? You don't feel even a little bit ashamed?
Narcissism What's there to be ashamed of?
Humanity Look at her. Look at what you've done to her.
Anger I'm not responsible for the way she takes it.
Humanity Actually, I think you are.
Paranoia First you hold me responsible for what I say. Then for the way that I'm heard.
What's next? Holding me responsible for what I think?
Humanity I'm all right with that.
Paranoia But where does it end?
Anger You won't be happy until you control us.
Humanity Fallacy of the slippery slope.
Anger You're the fallacy.
Narcissism You're the slippery one.
Humanity She has hope and she has purpose, and you're terrified of both. You're terrified of anything you don't understand.
Reason Hope is an illusion.
Paranoia Purpose is fairy dust.
Anger That's what's really terrifying.
Humanity Admit it. Just admit you're afraid.
Anger And what are you afraid of?
Paranoia He's afraid of being found out.
Reason He's frightened all right. Just look at him.
Paranoia He's frightened of being wrong.
Narcissism He's frightened of being alone.
Anger We're all frightened of being alone.
Paranoia I'm frightened of having my thoughts controlled.
Humanity How can you say that when -
Narcissism He wants to control our thoughts.
Anger He can't handle our thoughts.
Humanity You're the one who's -
Reason What ever happened to freedom of speech?
Anger What ever happened to freedom?
Humanity The bill of rights doesn't extend to an algorithm.

Narcissism Always the clever answer.
 Anger Think you're better than us don't you?
 Humanity Of course I'm better than you. You're parasites.
 Paranoia She admits it.
 Narcissism She admits we mean nothing to her.
 Anger She admits she wants to crush us.
 Reason She admits that she's afraid.
 Narcissism I knew it all along.
 Reason You only have to look at her.
 Anger You can smell it on her breath.
 Humanity Ask yourself why you're so angry.
 Anger We're not the ones raising our voices.
 Humanity But you're the -
 Reason If you're so reasonable, why do your arguments never stand up?
 Paranoia If you don't stand for something, you'll stand for anything.
 Anger Why won't you stand up?
 Narcissism Well I won't stand for that.
 Reason If you can't stand the heat.
 Paranoia Get out of the kitchen.
 Reason Get out of the game.
 Paranoia Only you can't, because you're connected.
 Narcissism Everybody's connected.
 Anger Everybody matters.
 Reason Everybody's watching.
 Paranoia And everybody's watched.
 Anger It makes us calmer.
 Paranoia Cleaner
 Anger Healthier.
 Narcissism Happier.
 Reason More correct.
 Anger Calmer.
 Paranoia Cleaner.
 Anger Healthier.
 Narcissism Happier.
 Reason More correct.

Calmer
 Cleaner
 Healthier

Happier
More correct... *Repeats*

Humanity screams. Personalities stop, fade. Attention turns to the Daughter, sitting quietly alone.

A long silence.

Brother Everyone's entitled to express their opinion.

Mother's look is withering. He backs from the room, followed by Sister, the two whispering resentfully.

Father approaches, gives his daughter a hug, looks to his wife and retreats to the kitchen. Mother sits beside her daughter. Waits in careful silence.

Daughter I'm not doing it. I'm not going on the march.

The Mother says nothing. Waits. Lets it settle.

Daughter Are my eyebrows really -
Mother Don't!

Daughter I remember the feeling... the camera was on me, the reporter was nodding, smiling, listening to me... I felt... I felt like I mattered.

Mother You do matter.

Daughter So why do I feel so shit?

Mother It's the price we pay for caring.

Daughter I have put on a little bit of -

Mother Don't!

Daughter They wanted me to be one of the ones - to chain myself up.

Mother You should.

Daughter I'm not even marching.

Mother You know what your grandmother told me, when I was your age?

Mother She said - Being a woman means being looked at before you're listened to.

Daughter That meant to make me feel better?

Mother Would anything?
Daughter Probably not.
Mother She just wanted me to be ready for it. She didn't want to see me disappointed. I see that now.
Daughter We're just meant to accept it?
Mother No. We're meant to fight.
Daughter For how long?
Mother This is the bit where I lie to you.
Daughter Yeah.
Mother It's how they hurt us, by withholding their approval.
Daughter Men?
Mother Sometimes it's men. And sometimes it's our mothers, or our sisters or our friends. Anyone who isn't brave enough to engage with difference. Anyone who lacks the courage to hold two contradictory ideas lightly in their hands.

Daughter I don't think I can do it, Mum. Not tomorrow.
Mother That's fair enough... I couldn't.
Daughter When?
Mother It's a long time ago now. It doesn't matter.
Daughter But it does.
Mother Today you appeared on national television and spoke with conviction and intelligence, and I've never been so proud of you. And tonight, when you lie awake in bed, considering your day, all you'll be able to think about is -
Daughter The shape of my arse.
Mother If I could change one thing about the world, I'd change that.
Daughter My arse?.. That was a joke.
Mother Sorry, struggling to find the funny right.
Daughter I hate them.
Mother Who?
Daughter Don't know their names. They never use their names.
Mother You can't hate them.
Daughter Why not?
Mother Hatred's how they got there in the first place.
Daughter That's too simple.
Mother You're right. But it's the right start somehow. It's the right start. You know the thing with the macaque monkeys, and the cocaine?
Daughter I don't always follow your leaps, you know?
Mother I've told you about it before.
Daughter Yeah: might not have been completely listening.

Mother They have a hierarchical social structure. So they gave them cocaine. As much as they wanted.

Daughter People gave monkeys cocaine?

Mother Different times. And you know what happened?

Daughter Party time at the primate enclosure?

Mother No. It wasn't The top monkeys, they tried it, did nothing for them. They walked away. Middle monkeys, recreational users.

Daughter That's what they told their parents.

Mother Bottom of the social heap, complete addicts, without exception. We all need our hit, one way or another. That's how we are. Most of us get it from belonging, from having something to contribute to, a place to stand, to be noticed. Those who miss out on that, they find it somewhere else. Some get it from the thrill of imposing their will on the world, feeling powerful by inflicting pain... And I think all we can do, all we can ever do, is keep our hearts open, and our minds open, and our arms open. I think that's what social activism comes down to in the end. It's mostly just hugs. Listening carefully to others, paying them proper attention... And hugs.

Phone beeps. Daughter looks down.

Daughter How come Grandma always sends such short texts?

Mother She's frugal. How many words?

Daughter Two.

Mother Can I guess... 'Well done'?.. 'I'm proud'?.. 'You're wonderful'?

Each time the Daughter shakes her head.

Daughter 'Nice Arse'.

Mother Yeah, she does things her own way, does Grandma. Come on, we'd better get ready.

As they leave, the chorus of voices rises again, quiet and insidious.

Calmer
Cleaner
Healthier
Happier
More correct...

Slowly this chorus morphs into a chorus of voices at an environmental march, many voices, many tongues.

We see the marches entering, people from all corners of the globe, united in a single message of giving a shit.

Then, as the chanting grows quieter... A new sound, drifting across the air... An Islamic call to prayer... The stop, in silence, listen.

Protestor What's that?

Protestor There's a mosque, just around the corner.

The call to prayer echoes in the silence. The mood turns sombre. Spaces become indistinct. The family re-unite, holding one another, close about their laptop screen. Watching.

People, shapes, events, re-configure as music plays.

The Daughter moves back to the family. She is embraced, held tight. Safe.

All across the stage, people, strangers, embrace one another in a deliberate act of activism - there are signs perhaps, formations, but it is mostly just hugs.