

FOOL'S PARADISE

Written by

Logan Stringer

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan, early 20s male, looks around his room. Everything is colorful and vibrant. AUTUMN, early 20s female in a futuristic orange suit, is sitting at his computer, and looks over when he wakes up.

AUTUMN  
You're awake!

RYAN  
Who are you?

AUTUMN  
I'm AUTUMN.

Ryan looks around the room with confusion.

RYAN  
Am I dreaming?

AUTUMN  
Maybe, but isn't this so much  
better than real life?

Ryan doesn't respond and keeps looking around.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)  
Do you want to play games with me?  
I'm pretty good at Underseeker.

Ryan reaches out and takes the controller.

RYAN  
Ok.

A holographic screen suddenly turns on and the two sit side by side on his futon. Ryan and Autumn play games for several hours. Ryan looks more pale and sickly the more they play. Autumn turns to Ryan and notices how bad he looks.

AUTUMN  
What's wrong?

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan wakes up suddenly in cold sweat and looks ill. His clock indicates it is 6AM.

He clutches his stomach and falls back into his pillow. His vision blurs, fading in and out. Ryan gets out of the futon and stumbles into his bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ryan looks into the mirror and sees the bath in the reflection. Autumn is sitting in the bath reading a book and looks up at Ryan. Ryan spins around and sees that there is in fact nothing in the bath. Ryan throws up from the nausea and grimaces in pain.

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan sips his water next to his bed, his body trembling. He clutches the blankets around himself and shuts his eyes as the world spins and fades.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ryan wakes up to see his room is filled with sunlight. His clock indicates it is 2PM. Ryan groggily moves to his computer and boots it up. Ryan looks at his phone and sees missed call and voicemail from his doctor. Ryan scrolls past it when he sees a missed call and message from his dad. Ryan opens the voicemail.

JOHN (V.O.)

Hey Ryan, its Dad. Work is having me stay a couple more days at the conference, so I won't be back until Wednesday. Have you applied to that job I sent you with Steve yet? Bye.

Ryan closes the voicemail and opens another from DR CHELSEA.

DR. CHELSEA (V.O.)

Hi Ryan, it's DR. CHELSEA calling to check in about your medication. Don't stop Zoloft without talking to me first. Let me know if you experience any side effects or have any questions about the medication.

(MORE)

DR. CHELSEA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Please call me when you get the  
chance. Bye.

Ryan closes the messages and puts his phone down. He looks at the open bottle and sees the side effects on it. Ryan hesitates, then takes a pill. Ryan logs into his computer and launches Underseeker. He looks at the character select screen and focuses on the one that looks like Autumn. Ryan stares at the screen as a flashback of Autumn turning to look at him from his desk fills his mind. Ryan shuts his eyes.

FADE TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ryan is walking down the street and sees Autumn looking at a river. Autumn is in regular streetwear, not her usual futuristic attire. Ryan walks up to her and looks into the river with her.

AUTUMN  
Hello, Ryan.

RYAN  
(turns toward Autumn)  
Hello, Autumn. Would you like to  
walk with me?

AUTUMN  
(smiles and turns toward  
Ryan)  
Yes I would.

The two begin to walk down the street passing by city lights and the faint sound of distant traffic can be heard. Autumn looks over at Ryan and grabs his hand. Ryan looks down at their hands and then over at Autumn. Autumn smiles and Ryan smiles back.

Ryan and Autumn get food at a food truck, and eat on a bench together.

CUT TO:

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

Ryan and Autumn walk towards a pier. As they walk, Ryan picks a flower from a stand for Autumn. Autumn smells the flower and smiles as they continue.

The two make it to the pier and stand under the stars as they watch the waves pass by.

RYAN  
Would you like to dance?

AUTUMN  
(smiles and looks at Ryan)  
I would love to.

Ryan and Autumn begin to slow dance on the pier. They stumble awkwardly as Ryan has no idea how to slow dance, and Autumn begins to show him the correct steps.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)  
Relax your muscles and move with  
the flow. I'll help guide you where  
you need to step.

RYAN  
Ok.

Ryan looks down at his feet as Autumn guides him. He looks back up at her and smiles.

The two slow dance for a moment as the sound of waves gently crash against the pier.

AUTUMN  
Tonight has been wonderful Ryan,  
thank you.

Ryan pulls slightly back and looks at Autumn.

RYAN  
Autumn, I think I love you.

Autumn's eyes widen and she looks at Ryan in shock for a moment before the expression disappears.

AUTUMN  
Ryan, I, I think I love you too.

The two slowly breath and look into each other's eyes. They slowly begin to move in for a kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan snaps out of his daydream and looks around. The clock indicates it is 3AM.

Ryan looks up and sees he had been staring at the victory screen of Underseeker featuring Autumn. Ryan powers off his PC, takes off his headset, and rolls into bed.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan wakes up once more in his dream world. Autumn walks into his room and sits next to Ryan. Autumn smiles at Ryan.

AUTUMN  
I'm glad you're back.

RYAN  
Of course! I'm so glad to see-

AUTUMN  
Let's play Underseeker!

Autumn shoves a controller at Ryan and boots up the game. Ryan looks at Autumn confused as to why she cuts him off. Autumn is completely focused on the game and Ryan shrugs it off as the game begins. The two play video games together, play board games, and drink energy drinks all night. Autumn looks over at the clock and sees it is 6:28 AM. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a necklace.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)  
I made this for you. It's so you will remember me and when you see it, you'll think of me.

Ryan takes the necklace from Autumn.

RYAN  
Thanks Autumn. Its not like I'm going anywhere though. I want to stay here with you-

CUT TO:

INT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan wakes up suddenly.

RYAN  
No!

He grasps for the necklace that was around his neck and sees it's not there. He is sweating and looks pale.

Ryan pours a couple of pills into his hand and with the water next to his bed, takes them all. He lays down in bed and shuts his eyes as he falls back into dreams.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Ryan wakes up this time outside in the woods. The world is shifting and blurs as he struggles to stay upright.

RYAN

Autumn!

Ryan stumbles and falls as Autumn catches him from behind. Ryan turns around in relief as Autumn scowls and drops him.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Ow! What the hell did you do that for?

AUTUMN

Look at you! You can hardly stand and what are you doing in the middle of the woods?

RYAN

I guess I wanted a change from the video games and-

AUTUMN

Well you don't always get what you want.

Autumn picks Ryan up and pushes him. Ryan stumbles into his bed and jolts more alert and confused by the sudden change of location. Autumn puts the controller in his hands and Ryan's hearing begins to fade into a faint sound that gets louder and louder as Autumn scowls at him.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ryan's phone is ringing as he slowly wakes from his slumber. He is on the ground and the blankets are half dragged off of the bed with him. He picks up his phone and sees the caller ID is Chelsea. Ryan sits up quickly and drinks some water, trying to collect himself from his still drugged state.

RYAN

Hello?

DR. CHELSEA (O.S.)  
Hello Ryan. Are you ok? You don't sound so great.

RYAN  
Oh I'm fine. Just didn't get great sleep last night.

DR. CHELSEA (O.S.)  
Have you not been getting sleep since starting Zoloft? You haven't checked in yet and you were supposed to two days ago.

RYAN  
Oh, no I'm really ok. The medication hasn't given me any problems.

There is a moment of silence.

DR. CHELSEA (O.S.)  
Is your father home? Can I speak with him? I know you said he is gone often, but I think someone should be checking on you daily.

RYAN  
His business trip got extended until Wednesday.

DR. CHELSEA (O.S.)  
It sounds like the medication isn't working well for you, and I can't have you continue it unmonitored. I'll just switch you over to Prozac. I'll have your father pick it up for you when he gets home and he can monitor your progress. Don't keep taking Zoloft, okay?

RYAN  
Yeah, I'll stop taking it.

DR. CHELSEA (O.S.)  
You know what? Call me again tomorrow. I want to make sure you are still feeling ok until he gets back.

RYAN  
Ok. Thank you. Bye.



Ryan hangs up quickly. He sees another voicemail from his dad and opens it.

Hey Ryan, its Dad again. Please respond when you get the chance, I expect you to have applied to Steve by the time I get back tomorrow morning. I know you don't want the job, but you don't always get what you want.

Ryan opens several drawers collecting tools and materials and piles them on his desk. He gingerly fashions loops and ties together a necklace. He fashions together the necklace that Autumn gave him and puts it on. Ryan decorates his room the way it was in his dream and looks around.

He pours a handful of pills into his hand and swishes it down with water.

Ryan looks into a mirror in his room and holds his necklace. Autumn walks into his room and sits on his bed. Ryan turns around and no one is there. Ryan looks back in the mirror and no one is there. Ryan opens his door and looks out into the hallway.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
Autumn? Are you there?

There is no response. Ryan shakes his head and blinks a couple of times to clear his head. Ryan begins to stumble and the world spins as he falls onto the ground.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DARKNESS NIGHT

Ryan wakes up and his room is noticeably more decorated and colorful. Autumn walks in and looks up to see Ryan. Her eyes widen and she looks away.

RYAN (CONT'D)  
Autumn, listen I, I'm sorry I upset you.

AUTUMN  
Ryan, just listen to what I say ok?  
And then we can be ok.

RYAN  
Autumn, no offense, but all you want to do is play video games. I mean, I'm 22. Shouldn't I get a job? Maybe an education?

AUTUMN

Is that what you want? To live a boring 9 to 5 like your dad? Never travel the world or pursue your dreams because you settled down and how are you supposed to try now?

There is a moment of silence as Autumn and Ryan look at each other.

AUTUMN (CONT'D)

I'm just trying to make you enjoy what you want to do.

Autumn holds out a controller, and Ryan hesitantly accepts it. The two begin to play games and there is a noticeable tension in the air. The tension is broken when there is a knock at the door.

JOHN (O.S.)

Ryan! Can you pause the game for a second? Ryan! Listen to me!

The bedroom door opens, and JOHN walks in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Did you apply to that job with Steve-

A loud bang cuts off John as Autumn fires a bullet into John's chest. Autumn fires the entire clip into him, and John crumbles to the floor. Ryan looks at Autumn in disbelief.

RYAN

(loudly)

What did you do? What did you do?

AUTUMN

He was going to ruin your life. Your dad was going to push the same miserable life he lived on you. You don't want a 9 to 5. You don't want to live with regret like him.

RYAN

He's my dad. I don't want to live whatever life you are trying to push on me either.

Autumn raises her smoking gun.

AUTUMN  
That's not like you Ryan.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Ryan wakes up to see his dad over him looking concerned. Ryan is in a cold sweat and feels sick. He runs to the bathroom and throws up. Ryan hears a knock on the door.

JOHN  
Ryan? Are you ok in there?

RYAN  
I'm ok Dad.

Ryan opens the door and his dad is standing in the doorframe.

JOHN  
I talked to your doctor and she told me you might not be feeling well. I'm sorry that medication make you sick. I got you the new medication and I can check on you now.

John holds the bag out to Ryan and Ryan accepts it.

RYAN  
Thanks Dad.

JOHN  
And Ryan?

RYAN  
Yeah?

JOHN  
I'm sorry if I've been nagging you too much about jobs and school. Take your time and let me know if you need help.

Ryan hugs his dad, his eyes shut tight.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I'll make lunch. Come sit at the counter with me and tell me about your day.

RYAN  
Thanks Dad.

John helps Ryan into the kitchen and begins making lunch.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ryan sits at the counter and stares into space. He feels his neck and touches the necklace. He takes it off and looks at the pendant. Ryan hesitates with the necklace in his hand, and then drops the necklace into the trash.