

PLATO'S *THE AFTERS*

Written by

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Based on, Plato's *The Symposium*

FADE IN:

EXT. AGGIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

We hover over a street, staring at a suburban house. A handful of teenagers stumble out onto the street. They walk off into the night. But we remain on the quiet house.

Slowly we move towards the front door and pass into-

INT. AGGIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Where we find a rampaged living area.

A party has just occurred. Red solo cups litter the floor. Empty and half-empty bottles of liquor cover tabletops.

Passing through the kitchen we find beer cans and shot glasses filling the counters and spilling over puke-filled trash. It's a repulsive sight.

We carry on into the

TV AREA

where we can hear voices. Slurred speech and coughing.

ALEX

Try this.

**ALEX** (20), a careless mess of a young adult currently slumped on a couch and high out of his mind passes a joint to **PAUL** (16). A much smaller and more innocent looking kid.

Paul reluctantly takes it not knowing what to do with it.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Put it to your lips and pull. Like a cigarette.

PAUL

I've never smoked a cigarette.

AGGIE

Church boy's as fresh as they come. Didn't y'know?

We slyly pan past Paul to find **AGGIE** (19) lighting a cigarette. His affable, relaxed posture tells us he is the party's exhausted host. This is *his* house.

AGGIE (CONT'D)

You don't have to smoke that thing,  
Paul. Alex is just being a bad  
influence.

ALEX

And Aggie just loves making me look  
like a douche.

PAUL

No, it's fine-

Paul puts the joint to his lips, looking from Alex to Aggie  
for cues. With their help he takes a puff. Immediately  
coughs. Harshly. Continuously. Smoke everywhere.

AGGIE

Somebody get him a drink or  
something.

Alex just laughs.

Another figure stands up from the floor across the room. A  
female figure. This is **THE OBSERVER** (late-teens). She walks  
off to the kitchen to find Paul some water.

ALEX

(making note of the turned  
over house)  
What a fucking mess, eh?

AGGIE

Ehh, nothing new.  
(to Paul)  
What'd you think, buddy?

PAUL

(still recovering)  
Yeah, no, it was good. It was my  
first party.

ALEX

No shit.

PAUL

Never drank that much before.  
Grandma only ever lets me have wine  
every now and then.

AGGIE

...Fun?

PAUL  
It's cool that I stay here for the  
night, right?

AGGIE  
Yeah, of course champ. We are  
what's known as *the survivors*.

RANDOM  
(slurred)  
Survivors!

The three get startled by another member in the room. A guy  
lays inebriated in the distant corner at the edge of the  
room. He's completely wasted.

AGGIE  
(laughing)  
Jesus.

ALEX  
Who the fuck is that?

AGGIE  
No idea.

PAUL  
Is he real?

ALEX  
Looks like it.

He mumbles and snores. For the rest of the scene this  
character will only be known as the **RANDOM**.

The Observer walks back in. Hands Paul a cup of water and  
sits back down, across from the three on the couch.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
You know, I'm not tired.

AGGIE  
Same.

PAUL  
Me too.

ALEX  
So what should we talk about?

Alex shrugs his shoulders, blowing raspberries.

PAUL  
(the high kicking in)  
What about the meaning of life?

AGGIE  
 (a chuckle)  
 Now you're talking. Hmm, let's see.

ALEX  
 I need a moment to think.

AGGIE  
 You can think all you want, Alex,  
 but nothing's gonna give YOU the  
 answer to the meaning of life.

They all laugh. Even Alex.

ALEX  
 I mean I don't think anybody's got  
*that* answer.

They sit for another moment in deep, escaping contemplation.

An idea comes to Aggie.

AGGIE  
 Hey, Random.  
 (Random rolls over)  
 The meaning of life. Go.

RANDOM  
 Life...  
 (eyes closed, horribly  
 mumbling)  
 Life's about...

AGGIE  
 Uhuh?

RANDOM  
 Life's about...

ALEX  
 He's almost got it.

RANDOM  
 Life's about...

PAUL  
 He's gonna do it.

THE OBSERVER  
 About what?

Simultaneously, the three shush her. Attention goes back to the Random.

RANDOM

...Love.  
(and he's out cold, again)

The four sit in silence.

Solid answer.

AGGIE

That's actually...interesting.

We hear a nearby toilet flush.

The others aren't startled by it. Instead they genuinely think about the Random's response.

A new figure walks into the scene.

SALVATORE

What'd I miss?

**SALVATORE** (22), a speckled, pompous-looking young man looks down to the transpiring scene. His straight posture emphasizes the judgement in his expressions.

AGGIE

We're thinking about how the meaning of life could be love.

SALVATORE

Well that's rather ridiculous.  
(just now notices the  
Random)  
Who's that?

ALEX

No clue.

Salvatore shifts to the Observer.

SALVATORE

Who are you?

She stares back, attempts to speak but trips over her own tongue. Instead of waiting for her to find the words Salvatore just moves past and sits next to Alex.

ALEX

You know I once thought I loved someone.

PAUL

Really? Whoaa...

AGGIE

So what happened, huh?

ALEX

Oh, you know. We just realized our lives were just going different directions. Couldn't merge lifestyles, I guess you could say.

AGGIE

You mean she wasn't going down the road of being a failed engineering major with a crippling drug addiction?

(more laughs)

ALEX

Yeah whatever man. Like you know what love is.

AGGIE

You're right. I don't. I only go for the pretty ones.

(a look to Paul)

If it works, it works. But love? Not my forte.

SALVATORE

It shows.

Alex and Paul sneak a snicker. Aggie only notices Paul's laugh.

AGGIE

And what about you, church boy?

(Paul)

What do you know about it?

PAUL

(taking his time)

Hmm...Well...

(too long now)

Well, I...

SALVATORE

Spit it out already.

PAUL

Can't fucking think.

ALEX

Relax, Sal. He just smoked a doobie. He'll be like this for the rest of the night.

SALVATORE

Then why don't you go join that  
Random over there-?

AGGIE

Nah, nah, nah. I wanna hear this.

They focus up on Paul.

PAUL

Well...God says-

They all groan together.

AGGIE

I don't wanna hear about god this,  
god that. What do YOU think?

PAUL

No, no. It's something I  
like...actually agree with though.

Aggie lets out a long, heavy sigh.

AGGIE

Out with it, I guess.

PAUL

No, yeah. He like says something  
about first focusing on oneself, or  
something. Your like virtues and  
other stuff. It's really  
complicated.

AGGIE

Clearly.

SALVATORE

That's it?

ALEX

Shit that was lame.

AGGIE

He's still young.  
(to Paul, soft)  
You'll learn.

Sal's attention turns to the Observer.

SALVATORE

What about you? You got something  
to say?

Again, she stutters. Simply unable to utter any sensible word.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)  
 (to the guys)  
 Why is she even here?

ALEX  
 Relax, Sal.

AGGIE  
 Yeah just leave it. She ain't  
 bothering no one.

Sal scoffs it off.

SALVATORE  
 What about that guy?  
 (Random)  
 Can he answer?

ALEX  
 Doesn't look like it.

SALVATORE  
 He's not staying the night is he?

Aggie shrugs his shoulders uncaringly.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)  
 Hey! Random.  
 (surprisingly, he rolls  
 back over)  
 What're your thoughts on love?

The Random thinks now. Eyes closed, head still up.

RANDOM  
 All about order, man.

And back down he goes.

SALVATORE  
 Well that was just stupid.

AGGIE  
 Yeah I don't know what that was.

PAUL  
 What about you, ...?

Realizing Paul doesn't actually know Salvatore, Aggie jumps in.



Surprisingly everyone listens, feeling struck by a mixture of wonder and confusion, dumbfounded even. But doubtful.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)

Instead, Love is something more ambiguous. It is this kind of, in between force, that guides man forever in search of that elusive *something*.

(beat)

That something that we can never achieve, that itching, omnipresent *need*.

ALEX

...Omnipresent need?

AGGIE

Yeah you've lost me, I can't lie. You're saying that love is like this mysterious presence, like *The Force* or something. And that it makes you want stuff?

SALVATORE

What? No! You're not paying attention. I'm saying that love is not the "object" of which you gain feelings for, but the *relation* between you and this "object" ...Basically the connection that you form with this other person.

ALEX

I'm trying to hear you out but you're just making no sense.

SALVATORE

Shut up, Alex! Everyone here knows your ears are just for decoration. Just sit there and stare at the wall or something. To everybody else, what I was saying was that-

PAUL

You know, I read a book once. Plato's something something. I think it'd really help you hone in on what you're trying to say-

SALVATORE

I don't need to read a book!  
(he breathes out slowly)  
And don't interrupt me.

Everyone looks around, uncomfortable. Awkward.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)

This clearly shows that, if anything, love can never truly be experienced by people like you. It takes people like me, people like...*Philosophers*, to truly understand love. Love attaches us to this object because we want something from this object. We require something from it. Be it... happiness, a cure for our loneliness...wisdom-

AGGIE

Big fan of wisdom. Can agree with you there-

SALVATORE

We are urged to form this connection because we lack something. In this way you could visualize it as a sort of ladder. We climb this ladder because we want to gain something from our partner-

A loud RING interrupts Salvatore mid-sentence. It's coming from his phone. He hangs it up before they make note of it.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)

(slight hint of irritation)

-we want to almost...ascend past our previous self-

Another LOUD RING! Now everybody's aware of it.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)

(hangs up, now visibly annoyed)

We want to...impregnate ourselves, so to speak, with the wisdom of the other...To birth a new self, immortalized in the pedagogy of this love-

Yet another RING! It almost seems like it's even louder.

AGGIE

Oh shit, is that- ?

SALVATORE  
 (hangs up again)  
 Nobody.

Slowly they put the pieces together. The only one's left confused are Paul and the Observer.

ALEX  
 Impregnate? Ascend? Give birth? Man  
 what the fuck are you talking about-

SALVATORE  
 Like I was saying-

His phone RINGS AGAIN! For the last time. He can't ignore it anymore.

SALVATORE (CONT'D)  
 (under his breath)  
 Fuck.

He gets up and leaves, taking the call.

The unlit cigar has been left disregarded on the couch. Snuffed out.

Aggie and Alex looking to each other knowing who it is.

In the kitchen, just a short distance away, we notice that he is quietly arguing with someone on the phone. A loud, almost sobbing voice. We can't hear much but we can single out Sal's voice saying "sorry" and "please" a number of times. Though it sounds angrier than it should.

THE OBSERVER  
 Who's he talking to?

PAUL  
 Why's he so wound up?

ALEX  
 She usually has this affect on him.

THE OBSERVER  
 She?

AGGIE  
 Sal's ex. Been like this for weeks.

PAUL  
 Yikes.

Sal comes back in, attempting to smile it off as if it were nothing.

SALVATORE  
Anyways, like I was saying-

AGGIE  
Honestly, no need to say...anymore.

THE OBSERVER  
(quietly to herself)  
Yeah that said plenty.

Sal's heard it. Not quiet enough.

He steps hard at her. Towers over her seated position.

SALVATORE  
What was that?!

AGGIE  
Relax, Sal.

ALEX  
Yeah, chill Sal.

Paul just sits, breath stuck in his throat as he watches wide-eyed.

The Random rolls over one last time.

RANDOM  
Chillax dude.

And he's out for the count.

Sal looks at each of the members, one after the other.

SALVATORE  
Yeah, whatever. This is stupid  
anyways. You're all idiots!

Sal grabs a coat before walking off.

PAUL  
Don't forget your cigar-

Sal flips the kid off and leaves.

Bewilderment contorts Paul's face.

The five are left in silence. Except for the loud snoring coming from the Random.

AGGIE  
Well...that was confusing.

Aggie gets up, stretches.

AGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm headed to bed. You guys can sleep here or whatever. Just be gone by noon or something.

And with that Aggie leaves.

Alex and Paul start a mundane simple conversation. One that the Observer zones out of. Instead she gets up and finds the cigar on the couch.

After dusting it off she carefully places it between her lips and grabs her lighter. With ease she evenly ignites it and puffs it sequentially. Perfect.

FADE TO BLACK.

END.