

PERFECT LIFE

Written by

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**1 INT. MARK'S HOUSE EARLY MORNING****1**

We hear birds softly chirping, and we see Mark tying his running shoes onto his feet. When he finishes tying his shoes, we see his dog (Thor) come into frame, and he gives him a little pat on the head.

MARK

Hey buddy, I know you wanna run too, but you always end up tripping me silly little guy. I promise I'll walk you tonight.

As he stands up, we match cut to a side shot on his right side (he was tying his shoes while sitting on the chair in my room), we follow Mark as he walks over to the dresser to pull out his sweatshirt that he puts on (Nike Indoor Nationals sweatshirt maybe??), as he is doing this, we can see off to his side the rack of all the bibs and medals from his high school running career. The camera focuses in on this until Mark walks out of frame as he's leaving. We cut to a follow shot from behind Mark as he's walking out the door of the house.

We cut to Mark running outside in the cold, then cut to a closeup of his breath coming out of his hood.

We cut to a wide shot of Mark finishing his run, and panting in front of his suburban house.

we see him fill up a glass of water to take some vitamins/medication, we see him stretch, and then we see him getting dressed in a collared shirt. In every aspect, mark resembles the model human. Healthy in every way, always making the right choice.

**2 INT. MARK'S WORKPLACE****2**

As Mark arrives at his workplace we see him get greeted by everyone there, he fakes a smile and greets them back (although we cannot see his smile).

RECEPTIONIST

Good morning Mark!

MARK

Morning Charlene.

As he walks through the door, he is greeted by Rey walking by in a playful tone

REY

Heyyy how's it goin' Mark?

MARK  
Honestly, I've been bett-

REY  
oohh what pace did you hit this morning?!

MARK  
5:30

REY  
Holy Cow Mark!!! For three miles!!!  
You're getting really fast, you  
should definitely think about doing  
a race sometime

MARK  
yeah, for sure

REY  
Man, I'm so jealous, I wish I could  
be like you. Sheesh 5:30 mile...

Blurts Rey as he's walking away.

MARK  
Sure you do

Mutters Mark under his breath.

Mark slowly walks away. We cut to Mark at his desk, we get an  
OTS of him pulling up his bank account or something, showing  
that he has some serious money. we see him texting someone

MARK  
Hey Ashley, I've been feeling kinda  
lonely lately

MARK  
Do you have time to talk?

We see her almost instantly reply with:

ASHLEY  
You? Lonely? You are the most  
popular mfer I know, if you're  
lonely then what am I?? 😂😂

We see Mark switch tabs and look up, "what can you do when  
you have no one to talk to?" As Mark is scrolling through the  
results of the search, MARK quickly closes the tabs as we  
quickly pan to the door as one of his coworkers comes to the  
door,

COWORKER

Heyyy, Mark you are the man!!!! You were hilarious at dinner the other night!! So funny!!

He audibly starts laughing, as he walks away.

3 EXT. MARK'S WORKPLACE

3

We see Mark leaving the office, it is dark now. We cut to an OTS side-shot of mark lighting up a cigarette in his car, in the distance you can see one of his coworkers walking towards him, he doesn't notice her until she knocks on the window of his car. Mark panics and throws the cigarette on the ground

MARK

Shit!He yells. He rolls down the window,

COWORKER

Was that a cigarette?

MARK

I..I..I don't normally smoke, it's just been a long week

COWORKER

Dude, chill, it's fine. Don't worry, I won't tell anyone, it'll be our little secret. I was just coming to ask if you got the reports done yet?

MARK

Yeah, yeah I did, I just sent them in a few minutes ago

COWORKER

Ok, cool

The COWORKER turns around to leave and says

COWORKER

Don't smoke too much, you wouldn't want an addiction to ruin that perfect image you have, haha

MARK

I'm not addicted...I'm not addicted

MARK looks down at the pack of cigarettes in his hand.

We cut to him pulling into his driveway as the door closes. As the garage door closes behind him, we see an OTS of Mark groan and slam his head into the steering wheel, we hear the horn blare. We cut to a head-on view of Mark's head against the steering wheel, from outside the car, we flash the title card for the short film.

We cut to Mark collapsing onto his couch with a humph. His head leans back, and you can feel the relaxation creep into his body, Thor jumps onto the couch as well, and Mark puts his arm around him.

MARK

Hey buddy, how was your day? Hmm?

\*ding\* we hear his phone give a notification. He pulls it out and his shoulders instantly drop.

MARK

Fuuuuuuucckkk.

MARK

The dinner party is tonight.  
Uggghhhh.

MARK

I'm sorry buddy, no walk tonight

We cut to a closeup on the dog's pitiful face.

MARK

I'm sorry buddy, I completely  
forgot about this dinner. I gotta  
go, but I promise I'll make it up  
to you with a double-walk day  
sometime this week.

We hear Mark saying this as he quickly scrambles to his feet and leaves the frame.

We cut to Mark getting dressed in nice clothes in his room, we see an OTS of Mark as he is getting ready, and we see him notice an old picture of him and his dad on his dresser. The camera zooms in on the photo, and we transition to a flashback of MARK as a chubby child complaining to his father.

CHILD MARK is curled up in his bed, eyes filled with tears, clutching a stuffed dinosaur. MARK'S FATHER enters the room carrying two mugs of steaming hot chocolate.

MARK'S FATHER

Hey buddy what's wrong?

CHILD MARK

\*Sniff\* They were mean again.

MARK'S FATHER sits down on the edge of the bed, and nods for MARK to sit next to him. MARK slowly crawls over and plops himself down next to his father.

MARK'S FATHER

\*Sigh\* I'm sorry buddy.

CHILD MARK

I try to ignore it like you said  
\*Sniff\* but it still hurts.

MARK'S FATHER

Yeah, words can hurt a lot. They carry a lot of power, even when they're not true. But, there can be a happy ending to this story buddy. It doesn't actually matter what people think of you. The words of others don't define you. You are more than what people say about you.

CHILD MARK

But what if they're right?

CHILD MARK says as he looks up from his mug at his father.

MARK'S FATHER

They're not. Plain and simple.

CHILD MARK

Then why do I look different than everyone else?

MARK'S FATHER

Everyone is unique son, but if you're not happy with something, you will always have the power to change it. If you work hard enough, you can do anything you put your mind to.

CHILD MARK

How?

MARK'S FATHER

Well, for starters we can start a workout program. It will be fun. We'll play some basketball, go on some runs together, just you and I!

CHILD MARK  
OK. Will it be hard.

MARK'S FATHER  
At times, it will be hard. But  
that's how you grow. Difficult  
things make us better in the end.

We cut back to real time and we see MARK sigh and gently flip the picture frame over.

**4 EXT. DINER NIGHT**

**4**

We cut to Mark in his car, parked in a parking lot. We hear a long sigh, and see him looking at himself in the small mirror in the visor of the car.

MARK  
You're happy. You have everything  
you have ever wanted. Life is good.  
I'm glad to be here. Alright let's  
go, let's get this over with.

We hear Mark prepping himself and hyping himself up for the dinner party.

**5 INT. DINER NIGHT**

**5**

We see Mark as he walks into the small diner. He flings his arms out and exclaims:

MARK  
What is up party people!

Everyone around the table erupts, cheering at the mere sight and sound of his voice. We see everyone eating and drinking. They have a full-on feast. Wine is being passed around, and everyone is laughing. We cut to an OTS slightly to the side of Mark, we see the person next to him offer him some wine, Mark shakes his head and says:

MARK  
You know I'm still not drinking.

The friend, TIM, responds with:

TIM  
C'mon, you have the most willpower  
out of anyone I know, one glass  
won't hurt you.

MARK

I can't Tim, I don't want to end up  
like my father, besides, I don't  
need alcohol to tell a good story.

Mark really emphasizes that last sentence. After this, a  
particularly drunk individual yells:

DRUNK INDIVIDUAL

Yeah!!!

Everyone else joins in cheering. We cut to an OTS of Mark as  
he is telling a story. Everyone is listening intently, some  
with their mouths slightly agape. Mark is gesticulating  
wildly, flailing his arms around. Everyone except for Mark is  
noticeably drunk, MARK is still completely sober.

MARK

I'm telling you, I have never seen  
anything like it. That man had more  
makeup on than a Sephora Store. He  
honestly looked like Pennywise, I  
am not trying to be mean when I say  
this, but whoever did his makeup  
needs to be hired by Warner Bros,  
because he looked *FRIGHTENING*.

At this, everyone bursts into laughter. We see close-ups of  
everyone dying of laughter. We cut to an overhead shot of the  
table, showing the empty plates, and everyone leaning back,  
with some with their heads down on the table.

MARK

I am stuffed.

We cut back to an OTS of Mark "ugghh," we hear a collective  
moan of agreement from everyone.

MARK

I got the bill tonight guys, my  
treat.

We hear everyone collectively moan

EVERYONE

NOOO!!!

We see everyone bolt upright.

ONE OF THE FRIENDS

No way Jose, you always pay.

MARK

I insist, trust me...I can pay for  
it.



We cut to Mark walking to his car, he waves off camera saying:

MARK  
Goodnight!

Someone from off-camera responds

ONE OF THE FRIENDS  
'Night Mark.

**6 INT. MARK'S HOUSE NIGHT**

**6**

We cut to an OTS of Mark sitting on the edge of his bed, holding an in memoriam pamphlet for his late father (who died from liver failure due to alcohol. This pamphlet has been seen earlier sitting next to a photo of his father on Mark's dresser). We see him let out a few soft whimpers, and we cut to a closeup of tears dropping on the pamphlet. We cut back to the OTS and we fall to his knees. We cut to a different angle as we see Thor come into frame to attempt to comfort him. We hear Mark whimper a few more times, and then slowly get up, the camera focuses on the crumpled up pamphlet Mark left lying on the ground.

**7 INT. MARK'S HOUSE EARLY, THEN OFFICE MORNING**

**7**

We cut to the soft sounds of birds chirping and a black screen, we hear a click as Mark turns on the light. We just see him in the corner of the screen walk into the bathroom and yawn. He bends over and picks up the shoes from in front of the camera. We cut to Mark tying his shoes again, then cut to him running from behind (hood on), then cut to him panting in front of his house again (these are the same shots as from the earlier sequence, but they are different, not literally the same). We cut to him filling up a glass of water, then stretching, then putting a collar on Thor, then him buttoning his shirt. Same sequence from earlier, just faster edits of the shots.

We then see him at work typing on a computer: "How to deal with addiction" we see that there are other tabs open as well for, "How to tell if you have an addictive personality," and "How to tell if you are addicted," with a pack of cigarettes noticeably in his hand. We cut to a coworker coming to his door to say:

COWORKER  
I just sent over those quarterly reports, just letting you know.

In the middle of this sentence, we cut to an OTS of Mark, with the coworker in the background, we see Mark quickly throw the cigarette box in a drawer, and delete the tabs, pulling up his bank account instead. Then we see the number in his bank account go up.

This sequence repeats, each time it repeats it gets slightly faster: tying shoes, panting in front of his house, filling a glass of water, stretching, putting the collar on Thor, typing at work, bank account goes up. Every so often put in a shot of people laughing at a dinner party, some of them saying, "One glass won't hurt," "Just take a sip," "Have a little fun once in a while." This sequence repeats for a few cycles, getting faster and faster, until we break the cycle by cutting to an OTS of Mark silently sitting in his car in the garage for a sec, until he goes apeshit, screaming and pounding on the steering wheel. We cut to a side shot of this shot.

## 8 INT. MARK'S HOUSE NIGHT

8

We cut to a shot behind Mark hunched over sitting at his kitchen table at night. We then cut to a close up of a small bottle of Jack Daniels that he is holding in his hands. He is holding it gently, slowly turning it around in his fingers, showing that he is unsure of it, showing him examining it. We then see him quickly get up from the table, and walk with a sense of urgency to the kitchen.

Along the way, we see him walk past a plaque that's hanging on the wall. It says Valedictorian Award -- Middleview High school. MARK slows down for a second to look at it.

We cut to a flashback of him in high school.

We cut to an insert of him putting ice in a glass. We then see him sit down on the couch and begin to pour the brown liquid into the glass.

## 9 INT. MARK'S HOUSE MORNING

9

We cut to a shot in the morning of a close-up of the bottle, with several other bottles strewn about on the small table, we hear a soft alarm sound in the background. We rac focus to reveal Mark passed out on the couch, he shifts violently, then bolts upright and runs to the adjacent bathroom. We hear him violently puking into the toilet. We then cut to him turning off his phone alarm which was set for early in the morning.

We cut to a high-angle follow shot as MARK walks into the bathroom. We see him stop and look at his running shoes on the ground. We cut to a close-up shot of the running shoes as we hear him say:

MARK  
\*Sigh\* for the first time in a  
while...not today...not today.

We then see him walk out of frame, and out of the bathroom.

**10 INT. MARK'S WORKPLACE MORNING**

**10**

We cut to a high-angle follow shot of MARK walking into his office. His tone is defeated, and we can noticeably tell that he is not happy. Something is obviously wrong. When others greet him, he responds, but barely.

CHARLENE  
Hey Mark!!!

MARK  
Hey.

REY  
What's up Mark!!! What pace did you  
hit this morning?

MARK  
Didn't run.

We see a look of confusion fall over Charlene and Rey as Mark talks to them.

**11 EXT. MARK'S HOUSE NIGHT**

**11**

We cut to Mark sitting on the couch leaned over the table, looking at something, we Cut to a side view to see that it's another bottle of Jack. We then cut to a closeup of Mark's lips (extreme close up being careful not to reveal much of Mark's face) saying:

MARK  
Fuck it.

We then cut to Mark pounding back bottle after bottle (potentially in a timelapse). This time as soon, there's a camera distortion effect, the colors change, and we cut to a POV camera. We see Mark examine his hands, flex, and then say:

MARK

Oh yeah baby!

We hear a ding and see MARK checking his phone. We see that it is a text notification from his boss.

MARK  
Fuck this guy!

We then see him text back: "fuck that and fuck you." "I am not doing that right now."

We then see a blinking visual effect, this then cuts to him grabbing tape, then another blinking effect and we see him printing off a photo, then another, and we see him taping the photo onto a mannequin. After this we see him propping up the mannequin in a chair and serving him a glass of Jack.

MARK  
You know boss...I don't fucking like you. Yeah \*chuckle\* I know, it's hard to believe, but, you're kind of a piece of shit.

We cut to a shot of a fire in a trash can with MARK asleep on a couch in the background. We slowly zoom in on one of the papers that is hanging on the lip of the trashcan, we see that it is a report from his office.

## 12 INT. MARK'S HOUSE MORNING

12

We then cut to him waking up on the couch, this time, he checks his phone and it's mid-day.

MARK  
Shit! I guess I'm not going to work. We cut to him on the phone, hey, I'm sorry, I won't be making it in today, I am feeling so sick. Yeah I know, this is the first sick day I've taken in the 5 years I've worked for you. Yeah, haha, I was starting to think that I was invincible too.

As soon as he gets off the phone, we see him reach over and immediately pour himself another drink.

## 13 INT. MARK'S HOUSE NIGHT AND DAY

13

We go into a sequence of the same (similar but different) shots of Mark from behind drinking, falling asleep, waking up, getting up, coming back with a pile of junk food, and another bag of bottles. As time goes on, he doesn't change or shower, so he looks more and more disgusting, and the bottles and junkfood wrappers, etc. pile up. (Be cognizant of lighting here, as this is supposed to have happened over several days, potentially even weeks).

**14 INT. MARK'S HOUSE MORNING**

**14**

We see Mark's phone light up in his hand and ding with a notification saying, "Taxes!!!" Mark slowly shifts and groans and wakes up. We cut to an overhead shot of him waking up and reading the notification.

MARK

Shiiiiittt...

We cut to a following shot of him walking through the doors of the office building. The receptionist looks up and exclaims before trailing off before a look of disgust come over his face

CHARLENE

Mark! You're Baaaaa...

As he continues to walk through the building, everyone else stops and stares, not saying anything, but all having a look of disgust on their faces.

**15 EXT. PARK**

**15**

We cut to an OTS of Mark sitting on a park bench with a cigarette in one hand and a bottle in a brown paper bag in the other. He looks mangy, homeless, and overall terrible. Somebody walks by and puts a dollar bill in the empty cup he has next to him. Mark doesn't say anything. We see him finish the bottle, throw it on the ground, get up and walk away, we follow him, as he stops to look at a poster for an AA group. He slowly reaches up and pulls one of the tabs of paper with a number on it and continues walking. The camera stays focused on the AA poster, and the screen fades to black as the credits roll and a sad song plays.