

## NARCISSUS

LOGLINE: Placed in total isolation on his college campus after testing positive for COVID-19, a young man struggles with dissociation as he comes to terms with his sexuality and falls in love with an unexpected partner: himself.

Written by Jacob Farmer

ACT I. THE DIAGNOSIS

INT. INSIDE EMPTY DORMITORY ROOM ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. ROOM CONTAINS A SINGULAR BED, DESK, CHAIR, MIRROR, AND SINK.

MASON enters and sets several duffel bags and a backpack down on the floor beside the bed. He begins unpacking his things, setting a number of prescription pill bottles on the sink countertop in front of the mirror before retrieving a laptop from his backpack.

MASON sits on the bed and opens his laptop as the camera pans to its screen. A flurry of text messages appear at once, revealing that MASON's girlfriend, BROOKE, has broken up with him. A simultaneous email confirms MASON's positive COVID-19 diagnosis. MASON quickly closes both his messaging application and his email tab. He pauses for a moment before typing something new into an internet searchbar: "Am I gay?" MASON takes an online quiz, and the "results" come back positive as well.

MASON

(sighing and setting aside his laptop)

That was stupid. I'm not gay.

UNKNOWN VOICE

Well you certainly aren't straight.

MASON is startled and jumps to his feet. He immediately crouches down beside the bedroom desk in panic.

MASON

(breathing heavily)

Who's there?

The room remains silent for several seconds before MASON stands up slowly, phone in hand, and inches toward the bedroom door.

MASON

I'm calling campus police. Come out, I swear to God. Where are you? Are you hiding?

No one responds. MASON continues to trek around the empty room, finally reaching the bathroom and snatching aside the shower curtain. It too is empty.

UNKNOWN VOICE  
(laughing)  
I'm not in there.

MASON  
(shrieking at once)  
Jesus Christ!

MASON whips his body around to see the room is still empty. Placing his palm against his chest, MASON begins to exit the shower stall, only to see his reflection in the bathroom mirror laughing hysterically, though MASON himself does not laugh.

MASON  
(deadpanning)  
This isn't real.

REFLECTION  
Technically, you're not wrong. But you are bi. So we can either unpack all of this...  
(gesturing to himself)  
...or we can unpack that.

The REFLECTION gestures toward MASON, whose eyes are glued to the mirror. MASON does not respond, instead moving his body slowly to the left, right, up, and down to see if his actions are mirrored by the REFLECTION. They are not; rather, his REFLECTION stands motionless with his arms crossed, an amused smile creeping up the left side of his face.

MASON  
(slowly)  
What are you?

REFLECTION  
(leaning in toward MASON)  
I'm you, buddy.

MASON curses under his breath as the scene cuts to black.

ACT II. THE SYMPTOMS

INT. INSIDE ISOLATION DORM ROOM.

Camera pans from bedroom desk, where MASON's phone is lighting up with text messages, to the bathroom countertop, where it focuses on MASON's pill bottles before moving to show MASON and his REFLECTION engaged in conversation. Both are sitting in chairs, opposite one another.

MASON

I just can't believe she broke up with me. Honestly, I can't even see where it all went wrong.

REFLECTION

Do you think it was your lack of communication or the cheating?

MASON

(looking down)  
Brooke didn't know about that.

REFLECTION

Why'd you do it? If you loved her.

MASON

You know why.

REFLECTION

(getting up and walking around in the mirror)  
I don't get it with you, or me, or whatever. This is not healthy. What you've been doing to yourself, Mason, it's not healthy.

MASON

(tears welling up in his eyes)  
I'm not... healthy, right now. Really, I'm not. I'm not okay.

REFLECTION

Yeah, but that's not because of Brooke, and you know that. And it's not because you got sick, Mason. Think about how we got COVID in the first place.

MASON  
(laughing sarcastically to himself  
in an attempt not to cry)  
Searching for love?

REFLECTION  
(winking)  
In all the wrong places.

MASON  
What? You mean to say I'm not going to  
find my knight in shining armor on  
Grindr? Wow. Shocker.

REFLECTION  
Tell me about him.

MASON  
You know just as well as I do that  
there is no "him." Just nameless  
strangers I meet in the middle of the  
night to hookup with behind Applebee's  
when I'm drunk or sad. It's not my  
fault that the one time I meet a frat  
guy, he has COVID because he's an  
idiot.

REFLECTION  
That is perhaps the most pathetic and  
depressing thing I've ever heard in my  
entire life.

MASON  
You said it.

MASON and his REFLECTION both laugh.

REFLECTION  
At least tell me why you keep doing  
it.

MASON  
It's a long story.

REFLECTION  
Good thing we've got plenty of time.

Music begins to play as the camera pans away from MASON and his REFLECTION and around the room to MASON's phone, which continues to buzz with notifications. The phone's screen reveals that the day has changed.

The camera continues to move around the dorm room, from the desk to the sink countertop to the bathroom mirror, where MASON and his REFLECTION remain engaged in lively conversation. The passage of time is marked by MASON's phone, boxes of food piling up on the bathroom countertop, and the unopened pill bottles still in front of the mirror, unmoved. Finally, MASON's phone has died (as indicated by a red battery displaying on its screen), and the camera settles on MASON and his REFLECTION once again.

MASON has bags under his eyes, though his reflection does not. He is visibly exhausted, though he is in a particularly amiable mood.

MASON

(cupping his face in between his hands, leaning over the bathroom countertop)

You're a really great listener. I've never said any of these thoughts out loud.

REFLECTION

I know. I'm just happy you've come to terms with your sexuality.

MASON

I wouldn't say I've come to terms with it.

REFLECTION

What do you mean? Of course you have. Watch. "I'm bisexual." See, you just came out.

MASON

No, you just came out. It's not that easy for me out here.

REFLECTION

You are me.

MASON

You aren't me. You're this idealized version of me that's somehow secure in his sexuality and confident and happy and proud of who he is. And I love that for you, and it's nice to imagine, but that's not me. That's not who I am.

REFLECTION

You aren't giving yourself enough credit. Can't you stop it with the self-hate?

MASON

Hate? I don't hate myself. I hate my situation. And I hate...  
(gestures around the room)  
...all of this.

REFLECTION

Do you hate me?

MASON hesitates for a few moments.

MASON

I love you. You're everything I aspire to be.

REFLECTION

Then love yourself. Because we are one in the same.

A single tear runs down MASON's face.

MASON

No. We aren't.

MASON slumps onto the floor of the bathroom, fading from the view of his REFLECTION and colliding with the tile in tears as his REFLECTION bangs on the glass of the mirror.

REFLECTION

Mason? Mason? Mason?

Camera pans from the REFLECTION to MASON's face, wet with tears. Picture fades to black as the voice of his REFLECTION grows faint.

ACT III. THE RESOLUTION

INT. BATHROOM FLOOR. IT IS MORNING.

Scene opens on MASON's face as his eyes fly open. A banging on the bedroom door and the repeated shouting of his name jolts MASON upright, and he proceeds to walk toward the noise. MASON is dirty and disheveled.

MASON  
(opening the bedroom door in  
surprise)  
Dr. Swan?

A middle-aged woman stands in the doorframe, masked and dressed in professional clothing. A name tag identifies her as "DR. SWAN, M.D." She is MASON's psychiatrist. DR. SWAN immediately enters the bedroom and proceeds to worriedly embrace her patient with a hug.

MASON  
Dr. Swan, you really shouldn't...

DR. SWAN  
(interrupting him frantically)  
Mason. Are you okay? I know, I know,  
I'm not supposed to be in here. But  
I'm getting calls from your parents.  
I'm getting calls from your teachers.  
You've missed two of our Zoom  
sessions, and I'm hearing you haven't  
responded to anyone or even opened an  
assignment in six days. You look a  
mess.

MASON  
Dr. Swan, I-I'm fine.

Obviously unconvinced, DR. SWAN surveys the room. The camera follows her gaze, ultimately settling on the full bottle of pills on the bathroom sink. MASON and DR. SWAN migrate to the bathroom, where MASON's REFLECTION stands in the mirror, leaning against a wall and listening in on MASON and DR. SWAN's conversation.

DR. SWAN  
(slowly uplifting a pill bottle  
from the sink countertop)  
Oh, Mason... honey...

Camera pans to MASON's face, and he looks down as the scene



fades to black.

INT. INSIDE ISOLATION DORM ROOM.

Scene fades in to reveal MASON standing before his REFLECTION in the mirror, pills in hand. DR. SWAN is no longer in the room. A glass of water sits next to MASON on the sink countertop.

MASON

(staring at the pills but  
addressing his reflection)

We both know that once I take these,  
you'll be gone. And I'll be alone.

REFLECTION

You won't be alone.

MASON

I'll have to face Brooke, my  
professors, my friends, my parents...  
myself.

REFLECTION

Haven't you already?

MASON looks up from his hand to make eye contact with his REFLECTION. He begins to cry.

MASON

(whispering through tears)

Do you think one day I'll be able to  
love myself as much as I love you?

REFLECTION

I know that you will. One day -- maybe  
soon, maybe not -- because you'll look  
into the mirror once again, and you'll  
see me staring right back at you. And  
on that day, you'll be staring at your  
true self. You've found him in here,  
Mason.

(pointing to his heart before  
gesturing toward MASON)

Now go find him out there in the real  
world. And take care of yourself, for  
God's sake.

The REFLECTION chuckles lightly before gently pressing his palm to the bathroom mirror. MASON follows suit, pressing his own palm against that of his REFLECTION. He then drops his

hand and slowly begins to take his pills, one by one. The room remains silent for several seconds before MASON finally redirects his attention toward his REFLECTION.

MASON  
(breathlessly)  
One day.

REFLECTION  
(reassuringly)  
One day.

Camera abruptly cuts to behind MASON, revealing that his sentient REFLECTION is gone and his normal reflection has returned. MASON gasps, then, hesitantly, he presses his palm against the mirror once more, his reflection mimicking him exactly. Removing his hand and resting it on his cheek, MASON gently wipes away the tears that have begun to dry down his face. He chuckles to himself before making direct eye contact with his reflection and cursing softly under his breath.

MASON  
I'm bisexual.

Scene abruptly cuts to black as a smile creeps up MASON's face and he begins to laugh bashfully.

THE END.