

STRIVE TO SURVIVE

Written by

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EPISODE ONE: THE LOTTERY

INT. A DARK HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dust floats through the air in a claustrophobically thin hallway. A SCREAM pierces through the silence.

TOM (20), a young White man with his hair painstakingly styled to look like he just got out of bed, sprints down the hall in a panic.

He fumbles with the doorknob at the end of the hall. Locked.

He looks over his shoulder. A SCRAPING noise begins around the corner, just out of sight.

He pulls out a lock pick and hastily goes to work on the lock.

The SCRAPING gets louder.

The lock pick snaps.

TOM

No!

The SCRAPING stops.

Silence.

Tom slowly turns around.

Right behind him-

A HIDEOUS CLOWN SCREECHES at him and raises a rusty hook.

TOM

AAGH! Flipping crapdangit, you
stupid clown.

INT. STRIVE TO SURVIVE STAGE - DAY

DIRK (28), dressed like he spent a million dollars on his clothes, sits on a cubic couch on a stage decorated with brightly colored foam cubes.

DIRK

Oooh! You were pretty frustrated
about that death, weren't you Tom?

Tom sits in an armchair next to Dirk. He smiles.

TOM

Sure was, I was soo close! That killer clown really gets on my nerves.

DIRK

Haha, I sure will miss you on the show! Tom Masterson, everyone! And be sure to tune in tonight to see the premiere of our brand new season!

A cheering audience surrounds the stage. Tom waves at them, smiling brightly.

COMMERCIAL BEGINS

The Strive to Survive title sequence plays.

ANNOUNCER

Get ready for the newest season of Strive to Survive! Each week, our twelve new season contestants-

Twelve people with question marks over their heads stand in a row.

ANNOUNCER

-will fight to survive a new virtual world-

A MAN puts on a VR headset.

ANNOUNCER

-of terror!

A DARK FIGURE with a knife chases the man down an alleyway.

ANNOUNCER

At the end of the season, only one will win the 10 million dollar prize!

A golden suitcase opens to display that it is full of cash.

INT. PEPPER'S PIZZA - DAY

The commercial for Strive to Survive, on silent, continues playing on a TV on the wall of a run-of-the-mill pizza restaurant.

EMILIA (21), a young Hispanic woman with hand-me-down shoes and a waitress uniform, watches the TV pensively.

AUDREY (20), a young White woman made up like a movie star, but also in a waitress uniform, watches next to her.

AUDREY
How many times did you enter?

Emilia looks away.

EMILIA
I didn't.

AUDREY
Not even once? Why not? I thought
you loved that show!

She looks back at Audrey fiercely.

EMILIA
It's statistically equivalent to
throwing your money into a dumpster
fire.

AUDREY
You just have no hope.

A huge party group comes in. Emilia grimaces and rushes off
to serve them.

*
*

MONTAGE

-Emilia comes up to their table and smiles.

-Emilia brings their food.

-The clock reads 6pm.

-Audrey waves goodbye to Emilia as she leaves for the day. A
COWORKER, a young Hispanic man, comes in to replace her.

-Emilia refills the large group's many drinks.

-The clock reads 8pm. It is now

NIGHT

-They leave, leaving a ton of dirty dishes.

-Emilia picks up the receipt they left. Instead of a tip,
they've left a note- "Get a real job."

INT. BACK ROOM - PEPPER'S PIZZA - NIGHT

Emilia walks in quickly and sits down in the corner. Tears begin to roll down her face.

She pulls out her phone- an old one. The screensaver is a photo of her family. Her FATHER is in a wheelchair.

Almost immediately, her Coworker pops his head in.

COWORKER

You've got another table waiting
for you.

He pops back out.

Emilia wipes her tears away and walks back in, putting on a bright smile.

INT. PEPPER'S PIZZA - NIGHT

Emilia walks up to the new table, where an OLD LADY and OLD MAN sit.

EMILIA

Hi! What can I get for you today?

The Old Lady looks surprised and nudges the Old Man.

OLD LADY

Look dear, it's the woman from TV!
(to Emilia)
Excuse me, young lady, are you
famous?

Emilia laughs warmly.

EMILIA

I'm sorry, you must be confusing me
with someone else.

The Old Lady points to the TV screen behind Emilia.

Emilia turns around.

Her face is on TV under the Strive to Survive logo and the caption: NEW CONTESTANTS.

Emilia's coworker notices too.

COWORKER

Emilia! You won! You're going to be
a Strive to Survive contestant!

EMILY

But I didn't- enter . . .

Her words are drowned out by the celebrating people around her.

Emilia stands there in shock.

THE SOUND fades around her.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD ALLEY - OUTSIDE EMILIA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Emilia steps out the door holding a garbage bag and using her phone as a flashlight. Her family celebrates inside a run-down house too small for Emilia's Father, MOTHER, and BROTHER, let alone Emilia too.

Emilia sighs and closes her eyes and sighs, relaxing.

She walks down the alley slowly, looking at the sky.

She opens the garbage can at the end of the alley-

And a DARK FIGURE pops up out of the garbage can.

Emilia SCREAMS and shines her phone light at the figure.

-It's SUNGLASSES MAN (27), a young man wearing pitch black sunglasses and a black suit coat that looks spotless despite the fact that he just came out of a garbage can. He doesn't flinch for a second when the phone light shines in his face.

EMILIA

What the heck?

SUNGLASSES MAN

(calm and cool)

Good afternoon, Emilia.

EMILIA

Who are you? How do you know my name? . . . Why are you in my garbage can?

SUNGLASSES MAN

Well, I must confess I thought it was a recycling can.

Emilia is speechless.

SUNGLASSES MAN

But my current location is beside the point, Emilia. I've come to give you vital information.

EMILIA

Information?

SUNGLASSES MAN

I bet you were wondering who entered you in the Strive to Survive contestant lottery. You know **you** didn't do it.

EMILIA

I figured it was a friend who wanted to stay anonymous or-

SUNGLASSES MAN

It was us.

Emilia's eyes widen.

EMILIA

Who . . . is "us"?

SUNGLASSES MAN

I'm not authorized to divulge that information at the present. Rest assured that we are the good guys, that your entrance to the competition was entirely legal, and that you will only be allowed to enter the show if you do exactly what we tell you.

EMILIA

What?!

SUNGLASSES MAN

I warn you, not all is as it seems with Strive to Survive. This could be dangerous. But it's also a chance to do some good in the world, plus, hey, compete on your favorite game show for a chance for 100 million.

Emilia takes a step back.

SUNGLASSES MAN

So . . . are you in?

Emilia looks at the sky.

SUNGLASSES MAN

Emilia?

INT. VR ROOM - STRIVE TO SURVIVE STAGE - DAY

Emilia looks at the ceiling.

STS CREW MEMBER

Emilia?

Emilia, startled, looks at the crew member. Emilia is sitting on a fancy reclining chair with a VR headset connected to it.

STS CREW MEMBER

It's time to enter the game. You ready?

Emilia nods.

The STS Crew Member lowers a VR headset over Emilia's head.

END OF EPISODE ONE

EPISODE TWO: ENTER THE GAME

INT. GAME WORLD - DAY

A pure white background surrounds Emily, who is wearing her VR headset.

Large black text leaps out at her from nowhere-

THE GAME BEGINS

IN THREE

TWO

ONE!

The whiteness turns to blackness.

INT. A DARK BEDROOM - A DELAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Emilia wakes up suddenly. She's lying on the ground beside a torn-up bed in a bedroom that looks like a hurricane hit it.

She looks around. She sees a cell phone under the cabinet next to her.

She pulls it out. No service. She fiddles with the phone.

MAN

Hi!

Emilia jumps. LUCAS (20), a young White man with a grin on his face and another on his T-shirt, peeks around the bed.

LUCAS

Sorry! Didn't mean to scare you!

Emilia stands up slowly.

EMILIA

No . . . problem. It's fine.

LUCAS

So hey! Do you wanna team up and be survival buddies? I-

They catch sight of a JAKE (24), a White guy who looks like he could stop a truck with his bare hands, walking by outside the window. He's holding a crowbar.

LUCAS
Actually, I think I'm gonna go team
up with that guy.

Out of nowhere, the KILLER, dressed all in black except for a CREEPY MASK, leaps at Jake, stabbing him in the shoulder before he can react (no blood is seen, and it never will be in the game world).

Jake shouts and swings his crowbar, but the Killer uses the momentum to flip Jake over and stab him in the stomach.

Jake stays down.

LUCAS
Crapola!

The Killer turns his head towards the house Emilia and Lucas are in. Emilia shushes Lucas.

EMILIA
(whispering)
Get under the bed.

Emilia presses something on the phone and slides it down the hall before joining Lucas under the bed-

The second before the Killer walks into the bedroom.

The Killer turns towards the bed-

LUCAS (O.S.)
Hi!

The Killer whips around towards the hall.

INT. HALL - A DELAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

The phone plays a recording of Emilia and Lucas talking.

INT. A DARK BEDROOM - A DELAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

The Killer walks down the hall.

Under the bed, Lucas looks confused.

EMILIA
(whispering)
Out! Now!

Emilia sneaks out from under the bed and out the door the killer came in. Lucas follows.

EXT. A DELAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

Emilia and Lucas sneak around the house.

EMILIA
Okay, let's run.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They jog down the street, staying in the shadows.

LUCAS
Wow, that was amazing! **You** were amazing.

EMILIA
Thanks. What was your name?

LUCAS
I'm Lucas! How 'bout you?

EMILIA
Emilia.

LUCAS
Great to meet you, Emilia!
(brightly)
Is it cool if a newbie like me sticks with a pro like you?

Emilia laughs.

EMILIA
Of course. Except . . . I'm not a pro.

LUCAS
Whaddya mean? This clearly ain't your first rodeo.

EMILIA
(uncomfortable)
Well...

LUCAS
Don't tell me you haven't practiced at all!?

EMILIA
Sort of.

LUCAS
 (playful)
 Sort of? Be honest; what level are
 you in the StS videogame?

EMILIA
 I . . . haven't played it,
 actually.

LUCAS
 What! Why not? Aren't you a fan of
 StS?
 (puzzled)
 How did you sort of get practice if-

EMILIA
 Yes, it's just- complicated, okay?!

Lucas is surprised and shuts up. They walk along silently for
 a while.

LUCAS
 Sorry if I was talking too much.
 Some people say I talk too much.

EMILIA
 You're fine.

A beat.

EMILIA
 It's just- I never could afford the
 StS videogame.

LUCAS
 Oh! No, I understand that. I can't
 afford a new 8K HDR TV and I'm
 going to stop talking now.

*

Emilia smiles slightly.

*

Lucas is mortified.

*

INT. A MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

*

SUPER: 4 years ago.

*

A 16-year old Lucas hops out of his bed in a panic. He's
 wearing goldfish pajamas.

*

*

His room looks like a cross between the rooms of a mad
 scientist and a preschool kid. Various wacky inventions line
 the shelves.

*

*

*

He dodges through a maze of hamster tubes and sprints out the door into the

HALLWAY

LUCAS
I forgot I forgot I forgot I forgot-
!

He slams through a doorway into an

OFFICE

Where he looks eagerly at the computer.

It shows a line of text: TEST SUCCESSFUL

LUCAS
YEEHAA!

Footsteps outside the room.

LUCAS
Look, dad, I made a videogame!

BILL (39) walks up behind Lucas. He squints at the screen.

On the screen is the text: STRIVE TO SURVIVE.

LUCAS
I'm so happy I could fly!

Lucas runs into the

HALLWAY

Onto the

STAIRWELL

And slides down the banister.

LUCAS
Whieee- Oops.

He topples off the banister and smashes his head into the wall.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Emilia looks up.

EMILIA

Hey look, there might be some good survival supplies in that building.

She points at a large brick building.

LUCAS

Wow! I have no clue how you know that.

Emilia points at the sign on the building. It reads, "Survival Supplies."

LUCAS

Oh.

INT. SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia and Lucas walk into the dark shop. The shelves are empty. One single light flickers one and off.

LUCAS

Spooky!

The light starts flickering more.

LUCAS

Hey Mister Light, don't fail us now!

The light goes out.

LUCAS

Dang it, Mister Light.

Emilia looks at Lucas strangely.

EMILIA

Um, there still might be some supplies in the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia and Lucas walk into a large, empty concrete room.

Too late, they notice that it's not actually empty.

MAN

HEY!

Emilia and Lucas jump and turn to see the man- DARNELL (19), a young Black man, dressed in jeans with a purposeful hole in the knee and sporting a casual red suit jacket.

He points a gun at them wildly.

DARNELL

Get back against the wall!

They stagger back into the wall, where they notice HOLLY (23) a young White woman with expensive-looking earrings and dyed blonde hair.

An old radio in the corner is on a loop.

RADIO

(crackly)

One contestant is a traitor. One
contestant is a traitor.

END OF EPISODE TWO

EPISODE THREE: THE OLD WEST

INT. BASEMENT - SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia, Lucas, and Holly are backed up against the wall.
Darnell continues to aim his gun at them.

DARNELL

Everyone, stay right there until I
figure this out!

RADIO

One contestant is a traitor. One
contestant is a traitor.

*

INT. LARGE HOUSE - DAY

*

Darnell is chilling in his room listening to music on
headphones- rock band posters line the walls.

*

*

FRANK (50), looking out of place in an expensive suit, leans
his head in the door.

*

*

FRANK

Hey son, there's something I need
to tell you real quick.

*

*

*

Darnell takes one ear of the headphones off.

*

DARNELL

What?

*

*

FRANK

I'm secretly the boss of a massive
crime syndicate.

*

*

*

Darnell throws his headphones off.

*

DARNELL

What?!

*

*

FRANK

Also, I've been shot.

*

*

Frank staggers into the room and falls against the wall

*

DARNELL

WHAT?

*

*

FRANK
So the leadership of this crime
syndicate passes to you now. I'm
sorry, you've got no choice.

DARNELL
WHAT?!?!?!?!?!?

INT. BASEMENT - SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Darnell looks suspiciously at the others.

HOLLY
Can you turn that thing off?

DARNELL
Sure.

He kicks it and it lands in the corner. A few sparks fly.

LUCAS
That was excessive.

DARNELL
You're excessive.

HOLLY
This whole thing is excessive,
Darnell. Just put the stupid gun
away.

DARNELL
No way! One of you could be the
traitor!

HOLLY
How do we know **you're** not the
traitor?

DARNELL
How do we know **you're** not the
traitor?

EMILIA
How do we know there's a traitor at
all?

Everyone pauses for a second.

DARNELL
Hmm?

EMILIA

We know the designers of each game
like to leave false clues sometimes
to mess with the survivors.

HOLLY

We do?

EMILIA

How do we know this isn't one of
them?

Darnell ponders this.

EMILIA

Besides, if we don't work together,
then traitor or no traitor, the AI
Killer is gonna kill us all first
anyway.

DARNELL

You've got a point. *

HOLLY *

Wait- how the heck does she know so
much? *

EMILIA *

I'm- uh- *

Darnell wavers and turns his gun on Emily. *

EMILIA *

I'm just a really big fan. *

HOLLY *

(simultaneously) *

Ha! Like we're supposed to believe
that?! *

DARNELL *

(simultaneously) *

Makes sense. I trust you now. *

He lowers the gun. *

HOLLY *

The heck? You trust her just like
that, but you don't trust me? *

LUCAS *

Why don't we all just get along,
hey? *

HOLLY
And who are you? Have you even
talked before?

DARNELL
Yeah, he said "that was excessive".

LUCAS
That's true, I did say that.

EMILIA
If we don't stop fighting amongst
ourselves, we'll be the first to
die!

HOLLY
Did she just say, "amongst"?

LUCAS
I don't know, I wasn't listening.

DARNELL
Did you say "amongst"?

HOLLY
Whatever! Can I just get away from
this stupid wall now?

DARNELL
Can you stop it with that attitude
now?

HOLLY
You pointed a gun at me!

DARNELL
A digital gun!

HOLLY
It's the thought that counts.

DARNELL
What?

LUCAS
I've never heard that phrase used
that way before.

MAN
Glad y'all got that settled.

Everyone jumps and turns around.

Out of the one corner that was in shadows steps SNAKE EYE (26), a young White man with his head shaved bald who walks like a cowboy. He takes a bite of an apple from the top down, core and all.

LUCAS

Were you here this whole time?

*

SNAKE EYE

Suppose I was.

DARNELL

How did we not see you?

SNAKE EYE

Back in the Old West, everyone got trained for stealthy standin'. Good skill to have.

EMILIA

The old . . . west?

SNAKE EYE

The name's Snake Eye. And my game—well, I suppose that right now it's survivin'.

DARNELL

I'm Darnell. That's Holly. Don't know your names—

EMILIA

I'm Emilia, and that's Lucas.

He looks everyone over.

SNAKE EYE

I'm guessing y'all aren't doing too well supply-wise. Looks like you got a gun and that's it.

He shrugs, drawing their attention to large pack of supplies on his back.

EMILIA

How'd you get all that so fast?

SNAKE EYE

Just looked around. I'm thinking you all better find some more weapons fast. I can help with that.

He takes a couple of hunting knives out of his backpack and throws them to Emilia, Holly, and Lucas.

Emilia is shocked, but grabs the knife in mid air.

Holly barely catches her knife.

HOLLY
(angrily)
Careful!

Lucas screams and jumps out of the way when the knife comes his way.

It clangs to the ground, and he picks it up sheepishly.

SNAKE EYE
Let's start planning our escape
then, shall we?

Everyone sort of nods.

SNAKE EYE
Great. I saw a line of tire tracks
headed south on my way here, so I
would head thataway to find a car
which we could use to get away from
the killer, assuming we can find
some oil and the keys.

Lucas' jaw drops.

SNAKE EYE
Based the screams from other
survivors I heard on my way here,
the killer is probably headed in
our direction, so we better get
going if we want to get to that car
in time.

He walks towards the room's exit.

SNAKE EYE
You all coming or what? Off we
go...

He steps out the door-

Right into the KILLER, who stabs him in the stomach before he can react.

Holly and Lucas SCREAM.

SNAKE EYE
Whoops. Didn't see that one coming.
Ya'll better get on out of here.

He falls to the floor, "dead". The killer looks at Emilia.

END OF EPISODE THREE

EPISODE FOUR: THE PROJECTOR

INT. BASEMENT - SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia, Holly, Darnell, and Lucas stare at the Killer for a moment.

The Killer charges.

Everyone leaps in different directions.

Darnell points his gun at the Killer and fires- or tries to.

DARNELL
Oops. Safety's on.

The killer charge him and he bolts out the door.

HOLLY
Wait, don't leave us alone,
Darnell, you idiot! You have the
gun!

Lucas throws his knife at the killer. It misses completely.

LUCAS
Whoops.

Lucas hides behind Holly.

Emilia rolls behind the table that the radio was on and notices a trapdoor under the table.

She struggles to get the trapdoor open.

Holly tries to hold off the killer with the knife.

HOLLY
Stay away, you stupid-

The killer twists the knife out of her hand with his own knife.

HOLLY
Oh, crap!

EMILIA
There's a trapdoor over here!

Holly screams as the killer charges her and runs towards Emilia.

Emilia jumps down the trapdoor first, and Holly jumps down second.

Lucas trips on the table and accidentally closes the trapdoor before he can get in.

LUCAS

Oh boy.

Snake Eye is still laying on the floor.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Snake Eye rides a horse over a hill of sand.

Another horseman comes to meet him- RICK (30). Rick looks as awkward in a saddle as Snake Eye looks at home.

SNAKE EYE

So this is the place where you
tracked those bandits, eh?

Rick speaks in an extremely modern American accent.

RICK

Uh, yeah.

SNAKE EYE

Then I suppose we'd better get out
our six shooters, just in case.

Snake Eye pulls out an Old West pistol.

RICK

I'm actually gonna use this machine
gun.

Rick pulls out a modern automatic rifle.

Snake Eye sneers.

SNAKE EYE

Suit yourself.

They charge on horseback towards-

A MODERN ART GALLERY

INT. A MODERN ART GALLERY - DAY

Snake Eye charges through the door on horseback. He glances to the left.

A group of black-clad, heavily armed men with a Toilet with a smiley face drawn on it freeze.

SNAKE EYE

Put your hands on the air,
buckaroos. The OLD WEST is here!

They drop the toilet and start SHOOTING.

Snake Eye FIRES back-

INT. BASEMENT - SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Snake Eye is still lying in the same place.

INT. TUNNEL - UNDER SURVIVAL SUPPLIES BUILDING - NIGHT

Emilia and Holly land in a puddle of very dirty water in a small dark tunnel.

HOLLY

Gross!

EMILIA

Where's Lucas?

HOLLY

Who? Oh, that dumb guy? I think he closed the trapdoor on himself.

EMILIA

He's not dumb!

The trapdoor opens above them.

They look up to see the Killer looking at them.

EMILIA

Run!

They sprint down the tunnel.

They come to an intersection and happen to run different ways.

Emilia realizes she is alone. She hears footsteps approaching.

She notices a crevice in the wall and stops suddenly.

She hides in the shadows in the crevice.

The Killer strides by. He stops near her and listens.

Emilia holds her breath.

The Killer keeps walking.

Emilia lets out her breath slowly and peaks out, looking the direction the killer went.

A hand grabs Emilia's shoulder. Emilia jumps.

Holly is behind her.

HOLLY
(whispering)
I found a way out, let's go.

Emilia smiles.

EMILIA
Thanks.

They turn and head down the hallway away from the killer.

INT. OLD ROOM - NIGHT

Emilia and Holly step out of a tunnel through a door into a room that looks like it is from the 1920s.

Emilia locks the door.

EMILIA
Thanks for coming back to get me.

HOLLY
It's whatever.

They notice a Projector in the center of the room.

HOLLY
Huh. What's that about?

EMILIA
Maybe it's a clue about how to
escape?

Emilia turns on the projector.

It whirs and starts displaying grainy images.

-Text: IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK

-Hands type on an old keyboard.

-Different weapons display in a sequence.

-A man smiles at the camera.

-Someone in a VR headset clutches their head and falls over.

Emilia's eyes widen.

The whole world dissolve into static and a single line of text appears:

ERROR. TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES.

END OF EPISODE FOUR

EPISODE FIVE: THE PLAN

INT. VR ROOM - STRIVE TO SURVIVE STAGE - DAY

Emilia takes off her VR headset, scared. She sees some CREW MEMBERS rushing around.

Emilia recognizes Holly and Lucas taking off their VR headsets as well in other parts of the large spherical room.

Emilia is about to stand up, when Dirk rushes in with a CAMERAMAN following him.

DIRK

So sorry about that, contestants!
Seems like we had a few technical
difficulties on our end! Nothing to
worry about!

Emilia turns around and catches sight of-

*

JAKE (the buff man who was first killed) being pushed out on
a rolling bed, looking extremely PALE.

*

*

The Announcer holds his hand up to his ear.

*

DIRK

In fact . . . It sounds like the
glitch has been resolved already!
Back to it, then! And good luck!

He gives them a winning smile.

Most contestants shrug and put their headsets back on
immediately.

*

Emilia hesitates.

The crew member at Emilia's table turns to her.

CREW MEMBER

You'd better get back in, it's
about to start again.

Emilia looks worried, but nods and puts the headset back on.

INT. OLD ROOM - NIGHT

Emilia and Holly are back where they were standing in the Old Room.

But room looks entirely different. It looks like it is from the 50's instead of the 20's.

And the projector is gone.

Emilia looks suspiciously at where the projector used to be.

EMILIA

Why did they change the room?

HOLLY

They probably just reloaded it because they realized it was a room designed for another game, not this one.

EMILIA

Is that enough of a reason to crash the whole game?

HOLLY

I don't know and I don't care.
Let's get back to surviving, okay?

*

EMILIA

I saw- I thought I saw-

*

*

HOLLY

What?! Spit it out!

*

*

EMILIA

I saw one of the contestants being wheeled out- he didn't look so good.

*

*

*

*

HOLLY

Maybe he got motion sick.

*

*

EMILIA

Don't you think *any* of this is at least a *little* suspicious?

*

*

*

HOLLY

Oh, don't tell me you're one of those conspiracy theory type people. I can't stand them.

EMILIA

No, I just mean-

The lock on the door they came through breaks and the door flies open.

Lucas falls through and lands on ground.

LUCAS
Aghh! The killer is right on my
tail!

HOLLY
Well thanks for leading him
straight to us, you idiot.

LUCAS
You're right, I'm sorry. I'll go
back out there.

HOLLY
Wait, what that won't help-

Lucas walks out the door and gets instantly stabbed by the
killer.

HOLLY
Whatever.

EMILIA
Lucas!

Holly and Emilia turn and run out the door on the other side
of the room.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Holly and Emilia dash down the street of a dark, empty
neighborhood.

Emilia turns and looks behind her.

The Killer is only 20 feet behind them and closing.

EMILIA
He's catching up to us!

HOLLY
Well what are we supposed to do
about that?

They round the corner of a house-

And Darnell throws open a door to the house.

DARNELL
In here! Hurry!

Holly and Emilia gratefully run through the door.

INT. A DARK LIVING ROOM - A HOUSE - NIGHT

Darnell closes and locks the door behind Holly and Emilia.

They all crouch against the wall quietly.

The Killer walks by the window-

But he keeps going.

They watch until they can't see him anymore.

HOLLY

Thanks for abandoning us back
there, idiot.

DARNELL

I just saved you, and you start
yelling at me?

HOLLY

You ran away like a coward even
though you had a gun!

DARNELL

The safety was on! And I- Well, I
didn't how to turn it off.

HOLLY

You didn't look that up before?
Didn't you think that would be
important in a game show about
survival?

DARNELL

Would you shut up?

HOLLY

You want me to push you out there
with the killer? I'll do it!

EMILIA

Hey! None of us are going to get
anywhere if you keep fighting like
this!

DARNELL

But she's-

EMILIA

Just drop it, both of you. We need
to come up with a plan. The
Killer's going to find us here
eventually.

HOLLY

Fine.

DARNELL

Fine.

EMILIA

We should search the house for supplies.

A MOMENT LATER

Emilia, Darnell, and Holly spread out the supplies they've found on the floor.

EMILIA

So the knife Snake Eye gave me, some pliers, a rake, and a few gallons of vegetable oil.

DARNELL

Plus my gun.

HOLLY

Well, I have no clue what to do.

*

INT. HOUSE - DAY

*

Holly walks into the living room, screaming.

*

HOLLY

I hate you so much!

*

*

ROB

But do you hate me enough- to kill me?

*

*

*

HOLLY

(overdramatic)

You know I would never do such a thing!

*

*

*

*

ROB

Then why'd I see you put poison in my cranberry juice?

*

*

*

Holly is shocked.

*

HOLLY

Well then I guess I'll have to do it the old-fashioned way!

*

*

*

She pulls out a gun.

*

MAN

CUT! Cut!

Holly turns around. They're actually on a

SOUNDSTAGE

Surrounded by a film crew. The DIRECTOR shakes his head.

DIRECTOR

You delivered that last line all
wrong, Holly. It's- Well then I
guess I'll have to do it the old-
fashioned way!

It sounds the same as the way Holly did it.

HOLLY

I did it that way!

DIRECTOR

Did you just disagree with me
again?

He begins shooting.

DIRECTOR

I AM THE DIRECTOR. Who? THE
DIRECTOR. No one disagrees with me!
How many times do I have to tell
you?!

HOLLY

At least one more.

DIRECTOR

That's it. You're fired.

HOLLY

No no no, please, I didn't mean it!

DIRECTOR

That's the last time I let you into
one of my production because your
dad owns Strive to Survive! Get out
of here, entitled brat!

Holly flushes and walks out. Tears begin to fall.

INT. A DARK LIVING ROOM - A HOUSE - NIGHT

Emilia thinks for a moment.

EMILIA

Do you remember that guy- Snake Eye, said he thought there was a car to the South?

*

DARNELL

Yeah.

EMILIA

Well, if it's empty, which cars usually are in StS, then we could use the vegetable oil to get it running.

HOLLY

Really? How would you know that?

EMILIA

I just saw it in a YouTube video once.

DARNELL

Well, that sounds like it could go terribly wrong. But I'm up for taking some chances right now. Let's do it.

Suddenly, the Sunglasses Man leans out of the kitchen cabinet.

*

*

EMILIA

Whoa! What the heck are you doing here?

*

She notices that Darnell and Holly aren't reacting to the Sunglasses Man.

EMILIA

Darnell, Holly, do you see-

SUNGLASSES MAN

I'm afraid they cannot hear you at the moment, nor see me.

EMILIA

What? But how? They don't see me talking to no one?

SUNGLASSES MAN

We have that all taken care of. A bit of technology we've managed to whip up to infiltrate the game.

EMILIA

Infiltrate the game? It doesn't sound right now as if you're doing everything legal.

SUNGLASSES MAN

I never said we do everything legally; only that you became a contestant legally. But I assure you, you are on the right side, morally, ethically-

EMILIA

The second I start suspecting you're lying about that, I'm out.

SUNGLASSES MAN

Fair. Now, why did I come here again?

EMILIA

Seriously?

SUNGLASSES MAN

Oh yeah. I came to warn you.

EMILIA

About what?

SUNGLASSES MAN

An anomaly has been detected nearby. Your life may be in danger. Your real life.

END OF EPISODE FIVE

EPISODE SIX: THE ANOMALY

INT. A DARK LIVING ROOM - A HOUSE - NIGHT

Emilia is stunned.

EMILIA
My real life?

SUNGLASSES MAN
I did tell you this could be
dangerous.

EMILIA
What is the anomaly?

SUNGLASSES MAN
We don't know.

EMILIA
How could it hurt me?

SUNGLASSES MAN
I'm afraid I can't tell you that.

EMILIA
(exasperated)
Well, is there anything at all you
can tell me to help me face
something that could put my life in
danger?

SUNGLASSES MAN
Yes. Watch out.

He closes himself back into the kitchen cabinet. *

EMILIA
I can't believe you.

DARNELL
About what?

Emilia looks up to see Holly and Darnell looking at her.

EMILIA
Um, nothing. *

INT. A SMALL APARTMENT - DAY *

The Sunglasses Man wakes up to no alarm. *

He's wearing sunglasses and his suit in bed. *

He gets out of bed methodically and walks to the *

BATHROOM *

He brushes his teeth. *

He walks to the *

KITCHEN *

Where he opens the fridge and takes out a plateful of fast *

food fries. *

He cooks them in the microwave. *

He sits down to eat. The fries are absolutely rubbery and *

look terrible. *

His phone RINGS. *

He looks down and picks up his phone. *

It says- UNKNOWN. *

He stares at it dramatically as it rings. *

He begins to press the "talk" button- *

INT. A DARK LIVING ROOM - A HOUSE - NIGHT *

DARNELL

What's up with you, Emilia? I
thought we were about to put our
plan into action and then you go
off into another room and then come
back talking to yourself.

EMILIA

Um, let's just go with the plan
now. I'm fine, I promise.

HOLLY

Oohkay.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Emilia, Holly, and Darnell sneak down the street.

HOLLY

You'd think there would be more cars than, like one, in a neighborhood.

DARNELL

Except then escaping would be easy.

EMILIA

Unless only one car had the keys in the ignition.

Emilia glances up.

EMILIA

A note for the level designers, if you're listening.

Darnell snorts.

DARNELL

Like you're talking to God or something. Guess in this game there really is someone listening.

Emilia looks at Darnell.

EMILIA

There always is.

Darnell looks back at her. Then up to the sky.

DARNELL

Then, hey, God, can I have a million dollars? Thanks.

He pauses a moment.

DARNELL

No million dollars? Looks like He's not listening after all. Or if He is, he doesn't care about me.

EMILIA

Did your dad give you everything you asked for when you were a kid? Whether it would actually be good for you or not?

Darnell frowns.

EMILIA

But he loved you. Well, so does God.

Darnell is about to retort, but-

HOLLY

There's the car. Well, glad that means that discussion's over.

She points to a four door sedan sitting in a garage.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Emilia pours vegetable oil into the engine. Darnell searches all around inside the car. Holly waits awkwardly nearby.

EMILIA

Well, it's not exactly good for the engine, but- hopefully it will be enough to get us out of here.

Emilia glances over her shoulder fearfully.

Darnell hops out of the driver's seat.

DARNELL

No keys. No luck.

HOLLY

Crap!

EMILIA

Did you find anything at all? Maybe the level designers left us some sort of clue?

DARNELL

Just found a water bottle and a wallet. Guess if we can find a vending machine we can use this ten bucks to get a virtual snack.

EMILIA

Does the wallet have a driver's license?

DARNELL

Uh, yeah. For some fictional character named "Bob Cobb". So?

EMILIA

What's the address on it?

DARNELL

Oh, I see where you're going. It's 101 North Beaver Lane.

Emilia runs and peeks out the garage window.

EMILIA
That's the street we're on! Come
on, let's go find that house!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Emilia, Darnell, and Holly walk along the street.

HOLLY
Why couldn't it have been the house
we were in? That would make more
sense. Why would Bob Cobb drive his
car to another person's house?

EMILIA
Maybe he was visiting a friend.

DARNELL
(frustrated)
It doesn't matter! He's a fictional
character!

EMILIA
Right.

She looks at the numbers on a nearby house: 101.

EMILIA
We're here!

They see a shadow dart by through the house window.

HOLLY
Oh boy. And it looks like, so is
he.

INT. HOUSE 101 - NIGHT

A window opens slowly. Darnell peaks in.

EXT. HOUSE 101 - NIGHT

Emilia and Holly stand against the wall at the window.

EMILIA
(whispering)
You sure about this plan?

DARNELL
(whispering)
Shhh! Sure I'm sure.

Darnell sneaks around towards the front of the house.
Suddenly, he turns the corner and sprints into the street.

DARNELL
Hey! Killer! Come and get me, you
dumbo!

The Killer suddenly leaps out of the house's second story window.

Darnell shouts as the Killer lands right next to him.

He pulls out his gun, but he presses the wrong thing and the ammo goes flying out onto the ground behind the Killer.

DARNELL
Stupid gun!

He tries to shoot at the Killer, but the Killer knocks the gun to the side with his knife.

DARNELL
Come on!

Darnell sprints off into the darkness, the Killer close behind him.

INT. HOUSE 101 - NIGHT

Emilia and Holly frantically search drawers and cupboards for the keys.

EMILIA
I found them!

HOLLY
You're kidding.

Emilia takes the keys out of a cupboard and holds them up triumphantly.

EMILIA
Let's go!

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Emilia jumps in the driver's seat of the sedan and puts the keys in.

The engine revs.

EMILIA

Yes!

Holly jumps in the front passenger seat.

HOLLY

Go! The killer's going to hear the engine!

EMILIA

I know!

Emilia guns the engine.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Emilia drives the sedan out onto the street.

They immediately see Darnell sprinting towards them.

EMILIA

Right on time, Darnell!

But the killer is right behind him.

Darnell waves his hands frantically.

DARNELL

Start driving! Start driving!

Emilia starts driving faster, but she still keeps the overall speed slow so that Darnell can catch up.

HOLLY

He's not going to make it! Just leave him!

EMILIA

I'll lose points if I let him die!
He can make it!

Darnell manages to catch up to the vehicle.

HOLLY

Open the back!

Emilia opens the trunk.

The trunk almost hits Darnell in the face.

Darnell raises his arms in the air in frustration at Emilia.

Emilia winces and mouths, "sorry".

Darnell manages to run a little faster, and jumps into the back of the car.

DARNELL
(out of breath)
Go! GO!

Emilia speeds up.

The killer catches ahold of Darnell's foot, which is still sticking out the back of the car.

Darnell almost gets dragged out of the car-

But he manages to kick the Killer off at the last second.

Darnell gets in the car further and closes the trunk as they leave the killer in their dust.

DARNELL
Oh man, that was intense.

Darnell climbs into the backseat, exhausted.

DARNELL
Well, hey, guess what?

EMILIA
What?

DARNELL
I managed to grab a map I saw in
one of those houses I ran through.
It'll probable show us the best way
to an escape route.

EMILIA
Great!

Darnell sits up slowly and unfolds the map.

DARNELL
We're on this street, so it looks
like if we head left pretty soon up
here-

HOLLY

I don't trust you with that, let me see.

Darnell holds up the map obnoxiously in front of his face and points at what he's talking about.

Holly looks over her shoulder and squints at the map.

Suddenly, Emilia sees a GLITCHY CREATURE in the road right in front of the car. The edges of the creature seem to be always moving- the only things that stay constant are a humanoid form and a creepy black smile on its face.

Emilia screams and swerves the car.

END OF EPISODE SIX

EPISODE SEVEN: THE CRASH

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT

Holly and Darnell shout in surprise. Emilia screams as the sedan careens off the road-

Right into a MAN walking by.

He flies over the car and the car crashes into a tree, stopping it.

Darnell looks out of the backseat window.

DARNELL
Dangit, you hit Fred.

FRED (19), a young man with blonde hair and a red-and-white-striped shirt, lies on the ground. His eyes are still open.

FRED
Crap, man.

Fred's eyes close.

EMILIA
Oh my gosh I'm so sorry! You knew him?

DARNELL
Yes, I knew him.

INT. STS STAGE - DAY

Darnell and Fred are standing in a check-in line.

FRED
Hey, dude, what's your name?

DARNELL
Darnell. You?

FRED
Fred.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD - NIGHT

DARNELL
And then we never spoke again.

HOLLY
Was that really worth telling us?

*
*

DARNELL
Welp, either way, he's dead now. He might have a grudge against you in the next game, though.

*

HOLLY
What's wrong with you? Why'd you hit Fred and crash our car? Can't you drive?

EMILIA
You didn't see the creature in the road?

Holly shakes her head.

EMILIA
Darnell?

DARNELL
Nope. Wasn't looking.

EMILIA
There was this scary creature in the road that seemed, like, glitchy, and he had-

DARNELL
I thought there was only one Killer on this level.

EMILIA
I guess we just didn't meet the other one yet- or . . .

She looks back at the road fearfully.

She tries to start the car's engine again, but it won't start.

HOLLY
Great, you broke the car.

EMILIA
We have to get out of here.

HOLLY
Yeah, we know. The first Killer wasn't that far behind, plus your second Killer might come, our whatever.

Emily and Holly get out. Darnell seems to be having difficulty getting out.

HOLLY

Darnell? Are you coming or what?

DARNELL

Well, great, looks like you broke my legs too. Thanks for that. Oh, and my hand too.

EMILIA

Oh no! I'm so sorry!

HOLLY

Gross! What is that like?

Darnell holds up his hand. It looks perfectly healthy, except it flops around lifelessly.

DARNELL

Just can't move it. This show is TV-PG.

Emilia looks at Darnell regretfully.

EMILIA

Do you- uh, want us to carry you?

DARNELL

No no no, I'm good. Go on without me, I'll just take the death.

EMILIA

Are you sure? Because it was my fault-

DARNELL

No, yeah, I'm sure. Go on. Ohp. Looks like you'd better hurry.

EMILIA

Why?

DARNELL

The killer is coming up behind you.

Emilia and Holly turn around and SCREAM as they see the Killer (the first one) running up behind them, about 10 feet away.

DARNELL

Take the gun!

He throws the gun to them. Emilia catches it.

Emilia and Holly dart away towards a nearby cabin.

The Killer keeps coming - straight for Darnell.

DARNELL

Come on, scaryface. You don't scare me. Come on, come at me. I can take you.

INT. OLD CABIN - NIGHT

Holly and Emilia run in the door, close it, and lock it.

DARNELL (O.S.)

What, are you scared? Come on, come at me! Co-

Sudden silence.

DARNELL (O.S.)

(shouting)

Yeah, he got me. I'm dead.

Emilia and Holly look out the window only to see the Killer staring back at them. They SCREAM.

HOLLY

How did he get here so fast?

The killer smashes the glass of the window with his knife. Emilia and Holly SCREAM again.

Emilia pulls out the gun as the Killer LEAPS through the window, landing in between Holly and Emilia.

But the Killer SLASHES Emilia's arm, sending the gun flying into the corner. There's no blood, but now Emilia's arm hangs limply at her side.

The Killer raises his knife.

END OF EPISODE SEVEN

EPISODE EIGHT: THE FIRST WINNER

Emilia backs away and grabs a golf trophy off the fireplace mantle and hits the Killer in the head with it. It bounces off.

EMILIA

I'll distract him! Get the gun!

Holly rushes towards the corner.

Emilia dodges another slash from the Killer's knife.

Holly reaches the gun and points it at the Killer.

EMILIA

Yes! Get him!

Holly smiles mischievously and points the gun at Emilia.

EMILIA

Wait. Wha-

Holly SHOOTS Emilia.

Again, no blood. Emilia falls to the ground.

HOLLY

Yeah. It turns out, I was the traitor.

The world goes black except for some text: You were killed.

INT. VR ROOM - STRIVE TO SURVIVE STAGE - DAY

Emilia takes off the VR headset. She sighs with relief. She looks around. Everyone else has already taken their headsets off besides her and Holly.

As she's looking at Holly, she sees Holly take off her headset and wink at her.

Dirk's voice can be heard from the main stage.

DIRK (O.S.)

And we have our first winner!
Holly!

The crowd cheers.

DIRK (O.S.)
Now, let's get our contestants
onstage to see their scores!

A Crew Member walks up to Emilia.

CREW MEMBER
If you could join the other
contestants in a line in the middle
of the room, that would be
fantastic.

EMILIA
Okay, thanks.

Emilia joins the line. Lucas ends up behind her.

LUCAS
Hi again, Emilia!

EMILIA
Hi, Lucas! Sorry you died so soon.

LUCAS
I'm surprised I lasted as long as I
did!

CREW MEMBER
Let's go!

INT. STRIVE TO SURVIVE STAGE - DAY

Emilia, Lucas and the rest of the team walk out onto the main
stage.

Emilia squints against the bright lights.

DIRK
Let's see the results!

Emilia watches in awe as her score climbs higher and higher.
They display clips from the game world filmed with virtual
cameras on a big screen behind the stage.

Soon, Emilia tops the scoreboard.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Looks like it's a big win for
Emilia, but unfortunately-

The big screen shows Emilia driving the car into Fred.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Ooh. We had a pretty bad teamkill
there. That's a big deduction.

Emilia drops to fourth place in the scoreboard.

EMILIA
(to herself)
What? But what about the-

Suddenly the spotlight turns on Emilia.

DIRK
Looks like Emilia has something to
say!

Emilia gulps. The gulp plays on the loudspeakers for everyone
to hear.

EMILIA
Um, I was just saying- I, I wasn't
trying to hit Fred, I, was, uh,
swerving to avoid that creature in
the road.

DIRK
Creature? What creature?

The audience starts murmuring.

EMILIA
There . . . was . . . a creature in
the road that I- swerved to avoid
and-

DIRK
Let's take a look at the replay
from Emilia's perspective.

The screen now shows an over-the-shoulder view of Emilia
driving the car.

Suddenly, she swerves.

NOTHING IS VISIBLE ON THE ROAD.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Uh-

Dirk chuckles.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Maybe we missed something? Let's
take another look.

The replay plays again, this time from an angle over the hood of the car.

Still, nothing is visible on the road.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Well, that's a little awkward for Emilia, isn't it?
(playfully)
You did know we could change camera angles on those replays, right?
Haha.

EMILIA
I- uh-

Emilia's mic shuts off.

DIRK
So it looks like our top three are now Darnell in first place, Barry in second place and Holly in third!

The crowd cheers.

Emilia is stunned. She turns red and look down.

LUCAS
Why'd you say that, Emilia?

Emilia is speechless. *

DIRK
Also, we're going to have to dock Emilia *quite a bit* for dishonesty- *

Emilia watches helplessly as her score drops even lower- to the bottom. *

DIRK (CONT'D)
Which means Emilia is the one who is first out. So sorry, Emilia. *

Emilia shakes her head, on the verge of tears. *

She looks off into the audience, many of whom are staring at her.

And suddenly they begin CHANTING- *

CROWD
EMILIA! EMILIA! EMILIA! *

DIRK
But oh! What's this?

CROWD
EMILIA! EMILIA!

DIRK
Looks like Emilia is a fan
favorite! So that'll give Emilia a
a good chunk of points-

Her score climbs up to the middle.

DIRK (CONT'D)
Just enough to keep her in, at
least for a little while, eh?

The crowd cheers.

DIRK (CONT'D)
What do you say?

Emilia blushes and smiles. She is overwhelmed.

She looks like again into the cheering crowd-

And in the back of the audience-

SHE SEES THE GLITCHY CREATURE.

It smiles at her.

END OF EPISODE EIGHT