

A Very Bad Day

by

Michael Andrew Arscott

michaelarscott76@yahoo.com  
(863)399-0219

INT. AVERY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's still night outside.

Avery lays in his bed, face down, but somehow still breathing with his arms at his sides.

WE HEAR his cell phone ringing, but can't see it.

He opens his eyes wide, searching the surroundings in a lucid state.

AVERY

Hello?

The RINGING continues.

He turns over onto his back and starts searching the bedsheets.

The RINGING continues.

He finds the phone in the bedsheets. He looks over at the clock: '1:17'

Although with a look of disgust, he clears his throat and answers the phone.

AVERY

(groggy)

Hello?

INGRID (V.O.)

(phone voice)

Are you disappointed?

Avery falls back in his bed and sighs.

AVERY

Mom, please tell me you didn't call  
to argue at one in the morning.

INGRID (V.O.)

(phone voice)

Actually, it's about Thursday.

Avery says nothing.

INGRID (V.O.)

(phone voice)

You know, the day I actually get to  
see my son?

Avery is blank. He has no response.

EXT. SNOWY HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY

Crisp, blue skies.

A red SUV drives down a long stretch of country road that cuts through two feet of white, glistening snow.

A dog jumps out in front of the SUV.

The vehicle skids, but slams into the dog.

The dog slams to the ground, and slides a few meters out. The vehicle finally stops.

The dog breathes for its life, but doesn't move.

The SUV driver's door opens. The sounds of an old Beatles tune spills from the SUV radio.

A MAN of average height, steps away from the vehicle. He's dressed for the cold air. We can't see his face. He walks over to the dog. Red drops spatter the icy road.

He watches the dog struggle for its life, but can't move. Finally, the dog breathing stops.

The tip of a shovel drops into the icy road by the man's boot. He grips it tightly, but doesn't move. We hear him breathing fast.

CUT TO:

INT. AVERY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

AVERY BOYD DAY, 22, opens his eyes to the sound of his alarm clock.

He reaches over to his night-stand and slams the snooze button.

He's groggy, but turns in his bed to get up.

The bed, dresser/mirror, and night-stand furnish the room. He gets up and walks to the vertical blinded window. He opens the verticals and lets in the morning light.

He stares out at a wooded area behind the house and nods.

AVERY

Today's gonna be a good day.

Snow flurries fall before him.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

1: INT. AVERY'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Avery shaves with a straight razor. Moving carefully.

2: INT. AVERY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Avery mixes pancake batter on the kitchen island. Polska Kielbasa sizzles in a pan.

The NEWS plays on TV, which forecasts sunny weather on a five day forecast chart, but temperatures are in the mid-20's.

3: INT. AVERY'S LOFT - MORNING

Avery sits at his computer desk. He taps a few keys on his desktop. At the side of the desk, a printer spits off page after page of some large report.

He looks over a banking statement on his monitor.

COMPUTER MONITOR

Avery's finger traces down the banking statement and stops at an entry, marked 'Auto-Debit-Electric ... \$132.89'.

END MONTAGE

INT. AVERY'S LOFT - MORNING

Avery rushes to his ringing cell on the arm rest of his couch. He picks it up and checks out the number. He sighs and answers.

AVERY

I already know about tomorrow.

(pause)

You told me a dozen times.

(more upset)

Look, I said I'd be there. When have I not been there.

(pause)

Of course not.

He drops the phone from his ear, ready to shut it off. WE HEAR an older female voice speaking on the other end, but can't make out the exact words.

A BEAT.

Avery closes his eyes and shakes his head. He brings the phone to his ear again.

AVERY

Look mom, I've got class in an hour. I have to go, okay? I'll be there tomorrow.

He snaps the phone off. He presses the phone to his forehead and takes a deep breath.

INT. AVERY'S LOFT - MORNING

Avery, dressed in warm clothing and a jacket, tucks his expensive lap-top into his backpack. He straps on the backpack and heads out the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. UNIVERSITY BLVD - DAY

Sunny and bright. Avery's red SUV turns into a University lot.

I/E. RED SUV - DAY

Avery drives into the multi-level parking garage.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - TOP LEVEL - DAY

Sunlight shines down on Avery's SUV. He turns into one of the parking spaces on the empty top-level.

Avery steps out of the vehicle, grabs his back-pack, and walks to the nearby stairway.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - STAIRWAY - DAY

Avery takes moderate steps down the stairs. Downward he goes as the sounds of his shoes echo all the way down.

A cute OLDER WOMAN drops her keys as Avery passes.

He stops, picks up the keys and hands them over.

OLDER WOMAN

Thank you.

AVERY

No trouble.

He continues on his way down.

The older woman smiles.

BOTTOM FLOOR

Avery gets to the exit door and opens it.

There before him is the smart-ass, smiling face of JERRY RICHARDS, 22, a grunge fiend in winter clothes and hat.

JERRY

Greetings Earthling. Welcome to the last week of school.

Avery smirks at the attempted humor. Jerry gestures various Star Trek Alien salutes.

EXT. UNIVERSITY WALKWAY - COLLEGE OF BUSINESS - DAY

Snow borders every walk way in sight.

Avery and Jerry walk side-by-side toward the brick building.

JERRY

The girl just wants to party.  
Besides, it's formal.

AVERY

In what possible way could this party be formal?

JERRY

In a really romantic, my kind of way.

They enter the building.

INT. COLLEGE OF BUSINESS - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

STUDENTS!

Avery and Jerry come in. They head to the stairs at the center of the wide open area.

JERRY

Look, it all comes down to simple mathematics. You are the variable, 'S'. Lisa is the variable 'E' and the party is 'X'.

They start up the stairs.

JERRY (CONT'D)

'S' plus 'E' equals 'X'.

Avery shakes his head.

AVERY  
Outstanding.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
Sorry, man, I know tomorrow's the big day and all.

AVERY  
Please don't remind me. I've had four reminders in the past day. I don't need anymore. Besides, it's not about that.

JERRY  
Oh no? So you aren't going, again, this time, right? Like you didn't last year? Oh yeah, that's right. You did.

Avery stops walking up the stairs. Jerry confronts.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
It's the same thing since I met you. You can't tell me it's not about that.

AVERY  
Your point is taken. Over-analyzed, but taken.

JERRY  
I missed my calling.

Jerry gives him a friendly pat him on the shoulder.

INT. COLLEGE OF BUSINESS - ROOM 225 - DAY

Professor CLARK LAWSON, 47, a somewhat heavy built, but well dressed/groomed male in seamless eye glasses lectures at the head of the class.

LAWSON  
The next time we meet, you will be greeted by the hardest exam you've ever taken.

Avery sits beside Jerry. He doodles on his study guide page. It's some decadent form of the letter 'L'.

LAWSON (O.S.)  
Rest assured, it's not a trick.  
I've given you the answers.

Jerry glances over at Avery's art work. He shakes his head. He starts doing a doodle of his own.

LAWSON (O.S.)  
However, in a good business  
fashion, I feel it only fair to  
entertain questions of any kind.

Jerry takes his doodling job and flips it over on Avery's desk.

LAWSON  
Perhaps our outspoken prince would  
like to ask a question?

Jerry snaps his attention to Lawson, who returns a sarcastic smile.

LAWSON (CONT'D)  
The floor is yours.

JERRY  
(smart-ass)  
Actually, I was just gonna make a  
comment, sir.

LAWSON  
Sir? Well, please, Lieutenant  
Richards. Comment.

Jerry clears his throat.

JERRY  
You're the only professor that  
doesn't give any kind of grade  
curves. Why is that?

The CLASS chuckles quietly.

Avery frowns, but is amused.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
No, seriously. I've been in about  
five classes with you, Mr. Lawson.  
Never once do you ever utilize that  
crazy curve.

LAWSON  
Well, that's an interesting  
observation. The explanation,  
although not necessary, is simple.  
Grading curves are not for business  
majors. Especially to those with a  
great professor like me.

The CLASS laughs.

Jerry nods like it's a victory.

JERRY

I just thought you'd want to give  
all my classmates a chance to match  
my score this time. It's lonely at  
the top.

Avery smirks with his hand at the side of his face. The class  
gasps and smirks along with him. Mr. Lawson offers a slight  
smile.

INT. AVERY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Avery is combing his hair before the grand mirror.

His cell phone rings on the counter.

He quickly answers.

AVERY

Hey.

A sweet sounding, mellow female voice flows over the line.

LISA (V.O.)

Hey Avery. Just wanted to let you  
know I was on my way to the 'U'.

AVERY

I'm almost out of here. I think  
Jerry's going to meet us.

No response, but a sigh.

Avery turns away from the mirror and leans back on the  
counter.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Is everything okay?

LISA (V.O.)

It's nothing.

AVERY

(pressing)

Lisa. It's Avery.

LISA (V.O.)

(evasive)

It's just nerves. With all the  
exams and everything.

AVERY  
Are you sure?

LISA (V.O.)  
Yes, I'm sure.

Avery still looks worried.

INT. THE STUDENT UNION - CAFETERIA - DAY

A large area with vendors on the far wall. Students move in and out of the multiple glass door exits and sit at the many round tables across the room.

Avery and Jerry sit at a table filled with business books and two large sandwich meals. They're deep into the studying.

JERRY  
Siblitz isn't even mentioned in this book. Is this really on the exam?

Avery shakes his head and takes a sip of his drink.

AVERY  
Page 52.

JERRY  
No, it's not, I've studied this book cover to cover.

Jerry flips to the page and searches it.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
Page 52. Shit.

AVERY  
It's not cover to cover, Jerry.  
It's page by page. There's a difference.

JERRY  
You soak up information by osmosis.

Jerry's banter gets lost and becomes inaudible as Avery looks up at an approaching figure, marred in the rays of light coming through the glass doors in the background.

Avery freezes as the figure steps toward him.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

## 1. EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The heat of the summer reigns down on LISA ABBOTT, 20, attractive with her light freckles and dark hair. She leans against her hoisted up blue sedan on the road side.

She looks down at Avery.

He tightens a lug nut on her tire. He stands up and they smile at each other.

## 2. EXT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - DAY

At the large front entrance of the library, Lisa bumps into Avery on the way inside.

## 3. INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - DAY

In a study booth way at the back, Lisa and Avery look over some papers.

Avery looks at her, intently.

She brushes her hair away from her face and looks up at him with a smile.

## 4. EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Lisa falls back in the thick snow and starts fanning her arms and legs.

Avery does the same thing right beside her.

## 5. EXT. HILLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Two perfectly laid snow angels in the snow.

Above them, entangled in each other, are Avery and Lisa. They embrace each other.

END MONTAGE

BACK TO:

## INT. THE STUDENT UNION - CAFETERIA - BACK TO SCENE

Lisa's figure comes out of the light, books in hand.

She steps up to Avery and Jerry's table and lays down a golden name tag with her name on it.

JERRY  
The prodigy returns.

Avery stands and leans over to kiss Lisa. Smiles. They exchange affectionate glares.

AVERY

Hey.

LISA

Hey.

They just stare into each other.

Jerry taps his fingers on the table.

JERRY

(sarcastic)

Hi, I'm Jerry and I'm an alcoholic.

Avery and Lisa both smirk at him.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I've been sober for several minutes, but I may start again any second.

LISA

Hi Jerry.

Jerry starts gathering his stuff.

LISA (CONT'D)

Don't leave on my account.

JERRY

It's more of a matter of being late, actually. Ms. Hyde is tuning her vocal chords for me.

LISA

Sounds kinky.

Jerry stops for a moment, putting on his smart-ass look.

JERRY

Lisa? That's just uncalled for.  
She's three times my age.

AVERY

And you let that stop you?

Snapping his back pack shut, Jerry stands, ready to go.

Lisa sets down a golden name tag.

## NAME TAG

'Lisa-Beth Abbott---MEDICAL TECHNICIAN'

JERRY  
(sarcastic)  
Is it real gold?

AVERY  
Does that mean?

LISA  
Yep.

JERRY  
(jokingly)  
Congratulations, girlie. You've  
joined the HMO's of America.

AVERY  
(enthusiastic)  
That's really great, Lisa.

Jerry rounds the table and steps between the couple. His arms around them.

Avery and Lisa look a bit disenchanted.

JERRY  
This calls for a celebration. You  
know, to unwind and relax.

AVERY  
(agitated)  
Jerry.

LISA  
When and where?

JERRY  
Oh, the ol' F-T. Say about 8pm.  
Friday. However, there remains a  
catch.  
(more intense)  
Every guy must bring an enchanting  
woman of supple beauty with them.

LISA  
Does that include yourself, Jerry?  
Guys bringing guys doesn't count.

JERRY  
(more sarcastic)  
Oh my. She's the funniest nurse.  
(MORE)

JERRY (cont'd)  
Sorry, Medical Technician in  
America.

(back to business)  
This is formal. Guys in suits and  
ties, girls in the sweet office  
heels and skirts we love to chase  
so much. Please match.

LISA  
How many people are supposed to  
show up to this party?

JERRY  
Only as much as last time. A  
hundred or two.

Avery puffs.

Jerry starts walking away.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
I shall leave you with images of  
coupling in these final days of  
college-hood.

He swiftly turns about, nearly hitting a PASSING STUDENT,  
whom he pats on the shoulder.

JERRY  
Party's at the old F-T, tomorrow  
night, man.

The Passing Student nods. Jerry's out the door.

Avery starts packing his books up.

LISA  
Where do you find'em?

AVERY  
I swear, Lisa. I have no idea who  
that guy was.

Lisa giggles like a little girl.

LISA  
Any idea where you'll find an  
enchanting girl of supple beauty?

Avery stops and looks to Lisa.

AVERY  
Seriously? You want to go?

LISA  
Oh, come on. It's always fun. Maybe I'll wear that blue dress.

AVERY  
You mean with the--

LISA  
--Yes.

AVERY  
And the--

LISA  
--And without the--

AVERY  
--You had me at that blue dress.

LISA  
I have my moments.

Avery closes his book bag and turns to Lisa. They walk arm in arm toward the front entrance.

LISA (CONT'D)  
So, about tomorrow.

A BEAT.

Avery shakes his head. Lisa frowns.

AVERY  
I should probably just leave that alone.

LISA  
Leave it alone? Will it leave you alone?

AVERY  
Are you trying to counsel me again?

LISA  
It's the only chance you'll have to see your family.

AVERY  
Family?

LISA  
Your mom, Avery. She's your mom. You don't even go home to see her anymore.

AVERY  
She doesn't want me there.

LISA  
I wonder.

They reach the doors and step out.

EXT. STUDENT UNION - CONTINUOUS

Lisa and Avery walk into the cold.

LISA  
I'm being your friend right now.

AVERY  
I know what you're trying to say.  
Really, I do, but I just need Lisa.

They stop walking and look to each other. She takes his hands with piercing eyes looking into him.

LISA  
Number one. I'm always me. Number 2. Go see your mother, one time out of the entire year. Ace that final. Then, Friday... meet me at Jerry's party.

AVERY  
Is that what you want?

Shaking her head.

LISA  
It's not what I want that matters.  
I do know one thing though, Avery.  
If you lose touch with your mother,  
you lose touch with your family.

Avery sighs and looks away.

LISA  
If you do that, it's gonna eat you up inside forever. Trust me. I know.

She rests her face against his chest.

AVERY  
You said you wanted to tell me something.

A BEAT.

Her eyes close. Something's bothering her.

LISA  
I think I just said it.

AVERY  
Are you sure?

She looks to Avery and fakes a smile.

AVERY (CONT'D)  
Lisa?

LISA  
It's okay. I don't even remember  
what it was about.

AVERY  
Really?

She kisses him.

Lisa heads off by herself.

He watches her intently.

EXT. SNOWY HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY

Crisp, blue skies.

Two feet of glistening snow covers everything, except for a narrow roadway, where Avery's RED SUV makes its way through the wooded area surrounding.

I/E. RED SUV - DAY

AVERY, in heavy clothing taps his thumbs, uneasily, on the steering wheel as he drives.

He turns the radio on to some old BEATLES SONG. For some reason, the song startles him and he turns it off.

THE ROAD

A large GERMAN SHEPPARD bursts through a snow-bank and in front of the vehicle.

Avery looks up and his eyes fly open when he sees the dog.

AVERY  
Shit!

He slams the brakes.

The car slides over the roadway, swerves and slams into the dog.

The vehicle stops.

The dog violently tumbles along the road before slamming into the icy pavement.

Avery, totally stunned, buries his head in his hands on the steering wheel, breathing heavily.

AVERY

Damn it, this isn't happening.

He looks out into the roadway again. The dog's body is still out there.

He gets out of the vehicle.

THE DOG

Squeals. Avery takes careful steps up to the broken body, barely breathing. Barely alive.

AVERY

He watches the dog's last breaths.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ICE SKATING GROUNDS - DAY(FLASHBACK)

Several PEOPLE pull a 12-year-old boy from freezing water.

Screams cry out.

The marred sounds of a Beatles Song play in the background.

BACK TO:

EXT. SNOWY HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY

THE DOG

Avery watches. The dog stops breathing.

AVERY

A tear rolls down his cheek, off his face, and plummets into the snow, just by his boot.

He walks back to his SUV, but passes the driver's side. He opens the hatchback of the SUV and digs through some supplies.

He emerges with a shovel, closes the hatchback, and walks back to the dog.

He starts digging into the snow bank, beside the dog. More forcefully with each dive of the shovel.

AVERY

He digs like there's no tomorrow.

He drops the shovel and moves back to the dog again. He lifts the dog's body up and gently lowers it into the hole.

Standing, he grabs the shovel and scoops up snow he just dug up.

A squealing sound, like a dog's whining, startles him. He looks at the dog in the hole. It's not moving at all. No breathing.

Avery drops the snow over the dog, then moves for another scoop.

WIDE

Avery buries the dog.

He gets to the SUV hatch back, opens it, and tosses the shovel inside.

Snow starts to fall all around him. He stops and looks about.

He looks up through the tree branches at a completely blue sky and sunlight.

With some confusion, he gets into the car and shuts the door.

I/E RED SUV - CONTINUOUS

QUIET. Just the lite engine humming.

Avery's breath vaporizes in the air.

A/C CONTROLS

The control knob is set in the red.

Avery reaches for the gear shift, but stops cold. He holds his breath.

He opens his hand and sees the dog's collar. He frowns at it, even more confused than before.

He looks out at the snowy grave ahead of the car. The snow suddenly stops.

His breaths become less and less visible.

Avery reaches over to the glove box and tosses the dog's collar inside. He shuts the glove box, puts the car in gear, and drives away.

EXT. ICE SKATING GROUNDS - DAY

Crisp blue skies overlook a desolate frozen pond.

Avery and INGRID, 45, a weathered and depressed looking woman stand near the edge of the pond.

Ingrid takes drags from a cigarette, blowing out the thick smoke.

Avery looks completely uncomfortable, squinting and fidgeting his fingers together.

INGRID  
It's fuckin' cold.

With a look, Avery displays noting but scorn.

INGRID (CONT'D)  
Don't think I'll ever get used to it.

AVERY  
I won't.

A BEAT.

She looks to him and sees him standing upset.

INGRID  
I shouldn't drag you out here,  
should I?

AVERY  
You aren't dragging me out here.

INGRID  
You don't have to come.

#### FLASHBACK

EXT. ICE SKATING GROUNDS - DAY(FLASHBACK)

YOUNGER INGRID, 35, looking much less weathered, stands and looks out over the huge frozen pond.

People, young and old, male and female, skate all around the rink.

DAVID, 40, a tall, dark, and handsome male, JEFFREY, 10, laughing his head off, and YOUNG AVERY, 12, skid to a stop on the ice.

JEFFREY

Come on, mom!

David stops near Ingrid and she walks over.

YOUNG AVERY

Mom, where's your skates?

YOUNGER INGRID

(joking)

They're still at the store.

DAVID

They can't stay there forever. You know I'll have you skating in two minutes.

YOUNGER INGRID

Oh, no thanks. I have way more fun watching.

DAVID

Well, how do you know until you try? Don't you try everything once?

Ingrid chuckles.

YOUNGER INGRID

You know I try everything at least once.

DAVID

Do I?

YOUNGER INGRID

Don't I? Maybe you need another demo tonight?

DAVID

That sounds like a promise.

A kiss.

Screams from the opposite end of the pond.

David looks across and sees Avery trying to help Jeffrey up from his butt. They both slip and fall.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
We are lucky, aren't we?

Ingrid laughs.

David skates off across the pond.

Ingrid walks along the edge of the frozen pond, looking down at patterns in the snow.

More SCREAMS.

Ingrid looks across the ice pond and sees a small crowd gathering around a single spot.

A look of horror.

She tears off across the ice, through the other skaters.

She falls to the ice, but quickly recovers.

She runs for the crowd. Breathing erratically and red faced.

Prying through the crowd, she's finally held back by two MALE SKATERS.

Just before her, a large hole in the ice, gapes up at her.

Splashing out of the hole are two bodies, DAVID and YOUNG AVERY.

Ingrid screams, but is held back.

Another skater, this one female, moves in to help Avery out of the water. She grabs him and others pull them both away from the hole to safety.

Ingrid breaks free and reaches out for David, but he sinks into the water again.

YOUNGER INGRID  
David!

Terror. Tears streak down from her eyes.

Four MALE AND FEMALE SKATERS try to help a convulsing and seizing young Avery.

SKATER 1  
Someone call 9-1-1!

People start grabbing their cell phones.

Ingrid is still at the edge of the hole, looking inside.

INGRID  
David? Jeffrey?

The water settles.

YOUNG AVERY  
Mom.

Ingrid looks over at her son.

She crawls on her hands and knees to Avery, grabs hold of him and holds him close.

Everyone around them watches.

YOUNGER INGRID  
It's okay, Avery. I have you.

Her eyes fix on the gaping hole in the ice.

END FLASHBACK