

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Character

However absurd it might sound, there's a voice in your head describing your every action. Yes, just like the the voiceover in a movie, the only difference being that this is your daily life. It knows what you think about while you wash your teeth, it knows what you want to eat and even what you dream about at night.

You aren't sure yet whether you do what it says or it narrates what you do. Most of the time you act in synchrony, but it is fundamental to discover whether your fate has already been written or not. You want to try surprising the Narrator by unexpectedly changing your life.

It doesn't talk about every single thing you do, mostly concentrating on all the little things that make up your ever-unchanging day, particularly as you go from home to work to home. If this was actually a story, it would be one of those existentialist tales, realistic enough to be pathetic. Another good reason to deal a new hand of cards.

You haven't told anybody about this delusion of yours, obviously. But one night, while half-asleep, you finally recognised the Narrator's voice: It's identical to your friend Lu's. And just as you formulated that thought, you clearly heard it say "And so Dom decided to tell Lu about it". That's exactly what you mean to do before you go.

You have no idea of how Lu might react, you just expect them to be frank with you. If that's their voice, does it mean they know your future? And if they do, will you want to know more or will you resist that temptation? It's time to show yourself and Lu that you have the guts to be the protagonist of your own story.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Sidekick

Your chats with Lu have always been a ray of sunshine in your dull routine. Every time they open their mouth, they sound like they've seen the whole world, lived through extraordinary adventures and met the greatest of personalities. Something mysterious surrounds them, and now you've finally understood: Lu is a secret agent!

You have pondered how to breach the subject with them without putting them off or getting yourself killed. You know one doesn't toy with state secrets. But how can an ordinary person like you gain the trust of someone like Lu? Simple, by doing something unexpected, something to truly prove your loyalty to the cause.

This is why you've gathered your stuff: You want to convince Lu to make you their trusted field assistant. You'll show them you're ready to change your life, to give it all up, you'll make them understand with the right dose of discretion that they just need to point you towards a target.

Sure, you'd probably do well to ask a few questions first, just to ensure that their agency is up to no evil business. Lu is doubtlessly a good fellow, but you don't want to throw yourself in this adventure completely blind. Suddenly changing your life is hard enough as it is.

In any case, Lu will surely benefit from a loyal, trusty sidekick, with their feet firmly planted on the ground. After all, how many movies feature a support agent watching over their operative's back from a distance, ready to face any blunder raw muscles and adrenaline can't solve?

Yes, you'll be a great support agent. To begin... After that, you'll see!

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Jinx

This isn't the first time you've thought about turning over a new leaf, nor the first time you've decided to actually do it. But every other effort has always been thwarted: The company offering you a new job failed, the apartment you'd just bought was destroyed and so on. Your luck has always been outlandishly bad.

None of your attempts have ever paid off, as if some invisible force was opposing you. That may well be how paranoids and conspiracy theorists begin, but you cannot deny that you're being haunted by misfortune. Will you ever find a way out?

The only solution you were able to come up with was to carry on instead of letting life beat you up. You'll move to a new town with no plans for housing or employment. If you don't have a plan, then nothing will be able to mess it up, right?

You've already given enough grief to yourself and the people around you. The only exception is Lu, always smiling and always in their place on the subway. If you don't believe your life to be a cruel joke, it's only thanks to their friendship.

For this reason you want to tell them everything, at the cost of sounding crazy. Maybe you'll get in touch with them someday, but now you really need to get back in control of your life, to know that what happens depends on you, not on the whims of fate. You want to get up one morning and feel like it will be your lucky day.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Dreamer

Whatever you dream about comes true. War, cataclysms, accidents: It's as if your subconscious held a preview of tomorrow's news. This is more than prescience, it's more like you are somehow shaping reality through your dreams. A nice trick to keep up your sleeve, if only you had any control over your own sleeping mind...

You live in terror that someone may discover your secret and try to use it to their own ends. Hypnosis, lysergic drugs, lucid dreaming techniques, you've had to discard them all because you wouldn't know how to put them to use without help.

The only option seems to be happiness. Not for selfish reasons, but to keep the worst from happening to the rest of the world. It's no wonder someone like you, frustrated by your oppressing daily life, would end up only dreaming of the most catastrophic scenarios. Who knows what lies in the deepest corners of your mind...

So you absolutely need to change your life, to find something that pushes you towards more positive thoughts. The only thing you regret leaving behind is Lu's friendship. If your meetings weren't confined to five meager minutes on the subway, maybe you wouldn't need to go so far to find a smidgen of peace of mind.

Maybe you should tell them about your dreams. Faith in your fellow man seems like a good starting point for a new life and this thing is so much bigger than you.



## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Chosen One

Everyone wants to be special, but it's hard to come to terms with it, especially when you lead a mediocre life. People who go around blabbering about being Chosen are either sports superstars or slated to end up in a mental hospital very soon: Another good deterrent to admitting the state of things. So you can't really blame yourself for taking so long to realise you are the Chosen One.

How do you know? Well, from many small things. It's surprising how many senseless slogans, graffiti and catchphrases take on new meaning when you read them the right way. Someone was leaving you an endless stream of messages, as if your name was written in some ancient Prophecy. And you even know who that is: None other than your friend Lu. Why else would they keep their eye on you every day on the subway? They were waiting for you to realise your purpose.

Now you are ready. You're almost done with the preparations to leave your old life behind and fulfill your destiny. What destiny? This is actually the question that gives you pause. Once you're out of your routine, you have no idea what to do.

But Lu will likely step in at that point, right? They will be your Virgil, your Gandalf... Gosh, you hope they aren't your White Rabbit, because that guy sure has a few loose screws in his head. In any case, it's Lu you need to turn to if you want answers, although you need to do so with due discretion- you're in public, after all.

Let them know you are ready to uphold your responsibilities and steadfast in your intent to leave your mediocre life behind. Being special is all you've ever wanted.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Beatle

You are the reincarnation of John Lennon.

You understood that in the most mundane and most unlikely of ways: Humming Blackbird under the shower. You know perfectly well that Paul McCartney wrote it; in fact, your realisation came through a sense of annoyance, as if you suddenly understood what was wrong with a song you'd always liked up until that instant. Crazy.

It's not like you began to grow out your hair and started wearing round glasses at all times. You are John Lennon, you don't need to impersonate yourself. Instead you let your horizons widen and secretly began plotting your return to the scene. After all, if the Beatles were greater than Jesus, this Second coming is no laughing matter.

You're not worried about a solo career, you've already done it before, but the first step is always the hardest. You need to leave this miserable town and this miserable job to finally take flight. So you thought to ask your friend Lu for help: Having a roadie to take care of you during tours is always a good thing and you won't be able to keep your identity a secret for long. Music needs you.

Moreover, you must admit that times have changed and not always for the best. Yes, Lu's help will really benefit you, they can be your interpreter to help you face the modern age. You need to plan out the right moves for your new musical direction, you don't want to tie yourself down with a pathetic nostalgia operation, like some of your friends and colleagues have been doing for years with the same old songs.

The Smart One is back, and the world had better get ready for it!

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Replacement

You are not Dom. You met Dom years ago, they were a tormented soul that only wanted to leave everything behind but couldn't find a way out. So you offered to take their place, adamant that you were immune to the force of habit that wore them down. How wrong you were.

It's no easy matter to stop being Dom. Every time you try to do something like changing jobs or moving to a new home, something comes up that makes your efforts meaningless. It must be some kind of curse, or a persecution by who knows who.

Long have you looked around in search of someone to pass on the torch, but Dom's life is a lonely one. Until your prayers found an answer in Lu. They remind you of your former life: They look like a wayward traveller filled with stories, with their head in the clouds and feet in sore need of taking root. Why would they take the subway with you everyday, if they didn't want a constant in their existence? They need rules, just like you needed them before you stepped into Dom's shoes.

You don't feel guilty about asking them to take your place. It will do them good, like it did you, but you don't need it anymore. You want to get back on the road, to put the wisdom you matured to good use, to have the chance to be happy again. And to leave you need a replacement yourself: There's no other way. Most of all you want your name back: you are not Dom, but Jo.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Slave

Yours is no ordinary day job, it's a hard labour sentence. Ever since megacorporations got permission to do as they pleased with contracts and non-disclosure agreements, the term "corporate slave" has become depressingly literal. When priceless patents are on the line, what importance can your lust for freedom have? You know too much, and that's that.

For a long time you even suspected Lu to be on your company's payroll. What other reason could they have to talk to you every day on the subway? But you were wrong about them, they're probably the only real friend you've ever had.

So now you're determined to ask for their help, since you can't even begin to imagine an escape route alone. You want to leave, no, you need to leave. At any cost. The shadow of the company will always loom over you, but Lu has always seemed like a smart fellow and, more importantly, a free spirit, somehow able to slip past the grasping fingers of so-called civil society. Yes, they're your only hope.

You don't want to think about your contract and its remaining thirty years of active service, with its already-defined curve of promotions and retirement plans. How could you exchange freedom for some job security? They made you think it was the best thing to do, no, that it was your absolute responsibility. Propaganda be damned, now you want your life back.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Infected

This is what happens when you complain about your boring life. For once, just once, you indulged in some late-night partying... And this happened. You don't even know how to better define it: Truth is you were drunk, you took the wrong turn at the wrong time and something or someone bit you. It's been a few days now and you feel like something's wrong. There's something different about you. This is no ordinary hangover.

You didn't have the courage to go to a doctor. It feels nothing like a simple infection, the point is you feel damned strange. Hungrier, more aggressive, in a way more demanding and more alive than you've ever been. If you're lucky, it might be something like rabies or a hormonal disease, if not... Well, it could be anything. From a case of lycanthropy to an alien parasite infesting you.

Calm down. Calm down. Maybe you just watched too many horror movies, but something inside you, in this new instinct of yours, is pushing you towards caution and secrecy. You don't really trust a stranger to believe you, so the only thing left to do is to ask for Lu's help: They're the closest thing to a friend you have. They're a worldly fellow, they'll understand.

In any event, even if they do take you for a loon, you'll skip town as soon as you can. You've always wanted to, now you understand how much, perhaps thanks to the weird restlessness that seems to be devouring you from within. Of course, it might just be the infection toying with your synapses to get a chance to propagate... But if that's the case, do you really have a choice? A chance to fight it?

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Compulsive

Your home and the subway station are two hundred and thirty-four paces apart. In order, two, three and four. That's why you only open and close your front door once before you go out, while you do it five times when you get back. One, two, three, four, five. Regular and orderly.

Nobody knows, naturally. Nobody looks your way at work and they all believe you're just an anal fellow. Who could ever imagine that you know exactly how many times you brush your teeth before going to bed? Yet it's so easy to keep count: Three hundred and sixty-four, thirteen for each of your twenty-eight teeth.

Others may not know, but there's a part of you screaming that none of this is healthy. None of this is normal, obviously, nobody else does it. None of the one hundred and eighty-six workers on your floor, none of the eight hundred and seventy-nine employees of your company and probably none of the inhabitants of this town. No, you haven't counted those and you don't trust the estimate on the city guide.

Normal or not, you still can't do anything about it. Another part of you is a hundred-percent sure that, if you gave up your routine and your rituals, something terrible would happen. Thus you've decided to ask for Lu's help.

You need one last push to leave everything behind and start over from scratch, without your compulsions. You need to hear it to your face, from someone who cares about you: You're not okay. Alone, you won't do anything but count the number of times you've thought about leaving.

Twelve thousand, three hundred and fifty-six.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Prophet

Up until a few days ago, your life dragged on miserably and unchangingly, like a dog biting its own tail. Everything felt like it had already been seen, done and redone, so much so that déjà-vus had become your natural condition. So you underestimated them, and it took a lot of time to receive enlightenment about the Eternal Return.

You were eating your usual breakfast, when you suddenly understood. You are not the first, nor certainly the only Dom. There have been many before you, and there will be many after you- maybe some are living at the same time as you. Since time is infinite, while human actions are finite, it seems obvious that there are other individuals that have made or will make the same choices as you. Be it reincarnation or genetic memory, the fact is that many of the things you could decide to do, you've already done in some other time.

Nietzsche had got there already, but the hope you mean to bring to the world is that there is nothing bad about it. Why would we all need to be superhumans? Would it not be better to learn to appreciate life for what it is? You are ready to do it!

But if you keep your daily cycle as it is, you will never bring your message to the world. Nobody is a prophet in their own home. So you need to start a new routine, as a 24-7 Prophet, and you will bring your first follower along. Who better than Lu? They will surely love the idea.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Prisoner

You look at the people around you and you still cannot believe it. All of your life is nothing but fiction. You still haven't figured out whether you're the protagonist of some kind of city-wide reality show or the scheme is even wider. Of one thing you're sure, though: Whatever the audience, you won't be their laughingstock anymore.

All your attempts at leaving have been countered by an unlikely parade of setbacks. This offers you further proof, but it is still an obstacle. What's more, none of your coworkers have given up the charade, in spite of your efforts to press them, and their integrity is nothing short of surprising: If they're all such good actors, why is your life anything but spectacular? Ah, the mysteries of trash television.

The system is too well-oiled for you to throw a wrench in it, not without a white rabbit or someone to offer you a red or blue pill. You can't imagine someone other than Lu pointing you towards the exit.

Although you only cross each other's paths for five minutes a day, there's something genuine about them. Maybe they're just a bad actor, or a ruse made up by whoever is writing the script, but what alternatives do you have left?

You need to evade, you need Lu's help. If they're in on the farce, you'll find a way to bring them around. They can't just have pretended to be your friend for such a long time. There must be some truth to it, right?

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Objector

You've always been told that a cogwheel has no responsibilities, that it can't make a difference. And you let yourself be convinced, it was the only way to come to terms with your conscience. But now you cannot lie to yourself any longer. Your job is not just boring: It is unequivocally evil.

The big company you work for is criminal, in the full meaning of the word. It's not just about tax evasion or shady transactions: They lay the foundation for new wars, hiding behind profit and the free international market. You've already seen it happen, the cycle keeps repeating. You're sick of the blood on your hands, you can't even look at yourself in the mirror anymore.

Part of you just wants to run and hide, while another wants to do something to break this vicious cycle. At least the first step is clear: You need to leave the city, to distance yourself from your job and find a way out of the company's long reach. But you haven't missed a single day of work in years and it would be dumb to expect your absence to go unnoticed. You need an accomplice, someone to move in your stead to prepare everything and watch your back. But who?

The only name you could think of was Lu. Yes, they're little more than a stranger you chat with on the subway, but this is the price you pay for a lonely life. They always seemed like an honest fellow and the situation is desperate. Yours is a good cause anyways, and anyone with a conscience should be more than ready to help you. You just need to find the right words to appeal to Lu's sense of morality, after you took so long to awaken your own.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Android

Ever since the world was born, technology has been making giants leaps. First it replicates nature, then it makes it better. It goes for transportation, for entertainment and even for human beings, in spite of every pretty word about the uniqueness of life or the eternity of the soul. Androids, perfect replicas of their carbon-based counterparts.

Like any sensible person, you used to spice up your routine with late-night shows about the so-called "Silicon Conspiracy". Machines are infiltrating us, indistinguishable from normal humans and ready to take up crucial positions in society. Androids so perfect as to pass every conceivable test, but fitted with a directive of sacrifice to the Cause that goes beyond human imagination. An android cares not about their happiness, nor, when you think about it, survival. It just wants to fulfill its duty.

Once you said that to a coworker, and they answered that you might as well be an android yourself, loyal as you are to your job. Actually, although it has never made you happy, you have never seriously thought about leaving it. It's like you were born for it, or perhaps programmed. And so the seed of doubt took root in your mind.

You are a person, one with the gift of free will. You don't exist just to bring about the Silicon Conspiracy, you strive for your own happiness. To demonstrate it, you intend to put yourself through a sort of Turing test with Lu, the most authentic human being you have ever met. They travel often, they could bring you along. Anything to show yourself that you can have fun, that you can improvise... That you can live.

## ALTER EGO - Dom, the Agent

The routine you've led over the years is nothing more than cover. You needed to keep your eye on Lu, to check that every day at the same time they would get on the same subway ride. Why? Because you are an Agent of the Order and as such you protect the stability of the parallel dimensions that make up the universe, while Lu is a Pillar, a monodimensional creature, oblivious to the existence of multiple worlds, but essential to the continuity of reality as we know it. If for any reason Lu forewent their subway ride, all worlds could end.

This makes them a sort of prisoner, locked up behind walls of habit, and you are their jailor, condemned all the same to live in a single dimension, when you could roam all possible worlds, by way of your multidimensional nature. What a ripoff.

You never thought you would desert, but you have no other choice. You feel the urge to set Lu free and you've begun to hate this limited existence. According to what you were taught, your decision might lead to the end of all things. But can the Apocalypse be worse than your unhappiness and that of your loved ones? Can it be an excuse or a valid motivation?

Telling Lu the truth about the universe goes against the Regulations and it would burden your friend with responsibilities, so you'll simply tell them that you're going to leave and they should start thinking about it as well. Yours is just friendly advice.