ME & MY Shadow.

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1 **INT. DR MILLER'S OFFICE - DAY** 1

SAM (20) sits opposite DR MILLER (48), the university counsellor.

He is visibly nervous and looks ashamed of something, but you can tell there's something else going on with him - there is an attitude of high energy emanating off him. He can't stop fidgeting with his hands.

The silence drags on until Sam nervously says:

SAM
I'm not really sure what I'm supposed to talk about.

Dr Miller looks back at him. She has a friendly face. She is intrigued to know more about this young man who seems to be completely defeated by something.

DR MILLER
What do you want to talk about, Sam?

Sam stays silent, looking towards the floor, still not knowing what to say.

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
Professor Svenson told me this isn't the first time this has happened.

Sam doesn't look up but nods gently.

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
Why you think it's happening?

SAM
It just feels like another tutor's got it in for me. Again.

DR MILLER
Well maybe he's looking out for you. I mean he recommended you come here first-

SAM
(interrupting)
First.

He feels guilty about interrupting. He takes a second to compose himself.

SAM (CONT'D)
It feels more like a final warning than a symbol of care. He hates me, he's wanted to get rid of me from the start.

DR MILLER
What you did was hardly a capital crime, I doubt he hates you.

SAM
Yeah but when you do it four times? I know what happens in situations like these. I've seen it before. I'm well aware of what comes after the visit to the counsellor.

Dr Miller notices Sam's leg begins to tremble more.

DR MILLER
From that I'm guessing this isn't the first time you've felt like this.

Sam acknowledges this and knows it's true. He now looks even more upset. He tries to put up a front by saying:

SAM
I'm used to it. It's been the same since I was a kid.

DR MILLER
How so?

He takes a deep breath - he knows he's about to delve into a topic he's never been able to talk about with anyone before.

SAM
I could never sit still. My homework... none of that was ever done. I was different enough. I needed another reason for the students and the teachers to bully me like I needed a hole in the head.

DR MILLER
Did you ever see a counsellor at school about the way you felt? A psychologist?

SAM
My parents would never spring for a psychologist on their own. They never really believed in it. The school told them I had to see someone otherwise I'd get expelled. Told them I was bringing down the grade boundaries or something.

DR MILLER
That's a horrible thing to say about a child.

SAM
Mhm. Scared the hell out of them.

His leg begins to shake more.

SAM (CONT'D)
I ended up at the school psychologist by the end of the week.

DR MILLER
And?

SAM
The first one said I was depressed.

DR MILLER
The first one?

SAM
My dad didn't really like that answer.

Dr Miller looks at Sam in surprise.

SAM (CONT'D)
He made the school bring in another one who suggested bipolar and then another one who said it was absence seizures.

DR MILLER
Did you EVER manage to get a proper diagnosis?

SAM
Not really. Everyone just had their favourite go-to.

DR MILLER
Which was?

SAM
Laziness. To both my parents it was just disappointment after disappointment. "You're so much better than this, why can't you be bothered to just do your work".

DR MILLER
Do you feel lazy?

SAM
No.
(he thinks for a second)
I don't know... I mean I could do a thousand things in one day if its all stuff I find interesting.
(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
Stuff that I enjoy... or at least if it takes away from something boring. Then whenever I have to do any real tasks that matter...

DR MILLER
Nothing?

SAM
Deadlines don't matter until they've passed.

DR MILLER
So with all the missed assignments I take it you're having trouble with your studies?

The look of shame returns to Sam.

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
Do you not like what you're studying?

SAM
My parents wanted me to study medicine. I worked hard against my basic instincts studying Biology and Chemistry at A-Level and ended up barely scraping the boundaries for Biochem.

DR MILLER
Well what did <u>YOU</u> want to do?

SAM
Music. It was the only thing I ever wanted to study. But no, that was a "fools bet". In families like mine it's always the smart ones that suffer.

DR MILLER
What do you mean?

SAM
My brother was never gonna get into a place like this, so they saw the slightest bit of intelligence in me and...
(snaps fingers)
...suddenly I was set on the path to be the one with the best degree you can think of. It didn't matter what I had or didn't have, or what I did or didn't want to do, in their eyes a smack upside the head was all I needed to get moving and do my work.

DR MILLER
It seems like your parents expect a lot from you.

SAM
And I don't even know what the hell I can give them. I can't do anything. I feel like I CAN, it's not that I don't understand the material. I just... I just can't do it. It's like my brain won't allow me.

Dr Miller is intrigued by the remark about his brain but decides to brush it aside for the moment.

DR MILLER
Well just because one shows academic intelligence it doesn't mean they're required to use it constantly.

SAM
I wish someone could tell them that because I KNOW I'm here because I'm ABLE do the work... but how can I do something I don't enjoy when it feels like I'm always arguing with my own brain?

DR MILLER
Sam can I ask you a question?

He shrugs again.

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
Have you ever heard of something called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

SAM
Not really.

DR MILLER
Well looking at your history in combination with what you're describing today it sounds like you've been subjected to multiple years worth of misdiagnoses.

SAM
Does that happen a lot?

DR MILLER
More than one would imagine, unfortunately. You caught my interest with something you said twice now, though.
(MORE)

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
I don't know whether you've noticed you've been referring to your brain in the third person. What makes you think it's so separate from who YOU are?

SAM
(shrugging)
I don't know.

DR MILLER
Listen, the reason I ask is that people I've seen in the past that have been diagnosed with ADHD have often told me it sometimes feels like having a constant argument with their logical self.

He looks back up at her - he finally feels understood.

SAM
That's it! It's like...
(pointing at his head)
like there's another person in here. Like some sort of... shadow. An irritating THING that dictates everything I do.

She smiles, interested in the way that Sam thinks.

DR MILLER
A shadow?

Sam's energy begins to build now. You can see him getting more interested in talking about this.

SAM
Yeah. I mean, imagine you're fully aware of the consequences of not getting something done. That you KNOW how much trouble you'll be in if you don't do it - and yet it feels like there's something in there, something at the back of your head arguing with the logical thoughts you have.

DR MILLER
Hm.

SAM
And it's not just that.

Dr Miller can see that Sam is beginning to not only get more and more stressed, but more energetic just talking about all of this.

SAM (CONT'D)
I can never concentrate on one thing at once. I'm always thinking of or doing half a million things. And right as I start something else, when I have the SLIGHTEST bit of doubt that I'll be able to keep everything balanced, I think... "Just go for it, Sam. You're lucky, you're able to multitask. You can do all this, easy". And like an idiot I fall for it EVERY TIME. So I take on more, and more, and more, and then suddenly I realise it's all to much and it all comes crashing down.

She gives Sam another sympathetic look.

DR MILLER
That sounds very tiring.

Sam laughs gently, purely out of a desire to laugh instead of cry.

SAM
It's exhausting. It is absolutely...

Sam tries to find another more powerful word to describe his situation but due to the rush he can't.

SAM (CONT'D)
I can't think of another word to describe it.

Dr Miller finishes taking some more notes down in her notebook and puts it down on her desk.

DR MILLER
Look, talking to you even for this short amount of time I can tell you may have ADHD but I just want to get a little more information about the way you think about things.

SAM
How's that gonna help?

DR MILLER
Every little bit of information you could give me could help, Sam.
(MORE)

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
Trust me I know the tutors here can be a bit rough - I can't officially diagnose you either but by knowing more about the way you think I can at least help them understand a bit more - and even point you in the right direction so you can get a proper diagnosis.

SAM
I guess.

She smiles, glad they've come to an understanding.

DR MILLER
So tell me, what's the Shadow like?

SAM
Excuse me?

DR MILLER
Well if this really were a sentient being living in your head, what would it do on a normal day? What would it say to you? What would it do to change your actions?

SAM
I don't know... it would be different every day I guess.

He tries to think but draws a blank.

SAM (CONT'D)
Sorry I can't think when I'm put on the spot.

DR MILLER
It's okay.

She thinks to herself for another brief moment.

DR MILLER (CONT'D)
Take me back to the day of the assignment deadline. What did you do at the hands of the Shadow on that day?

He shakes his head and gently laughs, thinking that describing the way he truly feels about the Shadow might sound ridiculous.

SAM
It's gonna sound stupid.

DR MILLER
Humour me.

He sighs, knowing the explanation will be incredibly long.

SAM
I barely get any sleep.

CUT TO:

2 **INT. SAM'S FLAT - MORNING (TWO DAYS AGO)** 2

The voices of Sam and Dr Miller are overlayed on top of shots of Sam's apartment - it's a complete mess.

-- Textbooks with hundreds of bookmarks all over his desk, complete with the obligatory notebook full of the textbooks' contents, of course.

-- Musical instruments in the corner of the room collecting dust

-- Tapes scattered all over the living room

-- The sink is piling up with dirty dishes.

Sam is in bed sleeping and looks completely out of it.

SAM (V.O.)
I mean it's one thing to burn the midnight oil every once in a while but its a completely different thing to be kept awake every night thinking about stuff thats completely pointless.

DR MILLER (V.O.)
How many hours of sleep did you get that night?

SAM (V.O.)
Three. Maybe four. And considering we were given a month to write the fucking thing and I had barely made a dent in it you'd think I had spent the previous night doing my assignment, right? No. I spent five minutes writing and the rest of the night cleaning up my apartment - I don't even care how it looks because at least I can find everything.

DR MILLER (V.O.)
Organised chaos.

SAM (V.O.)
Exactly. But when you're in uni and you're still constantly being nagged to clean up by your mum, what are you gonna do?

DR MILLER (V.O.)
So is that amount of sleep normal for you?

SAM (V.O.)
It's more than I usually get. I'll be kept up by a stream of haphazard thoughts until about 5am, which gives me just enough time to get some peace and quiet... until a couple of hours later when it all comes back.

3 **INT. SAM'S FLAT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 3

Sam's ALARM RINGS. He snoozes the alarm and goes back to sleep.

Just as he does, an ECHOED VOICE is heard distantly.

SHADOW (O.S.)
(echoed)
Sam? Eh, never mind.

Instantly we see the phone sound the ALARM again - just like that, twenty minutes have passed. The voice is also heard again, now slightly louder but still echoed.

SHADOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(echoed)
Saaaammm?

SAM
(tiredly)
Hm.

SHADOW (O.S)
(echoed)
Eh, it's okay I'll let you sleep.

Sam snoozes the alarm again.

Instantly we hear the ALARM go off now for a third time - an hour has passed.

We suddenly hear the VOICE summoning Sam out of his sleep, now at full volume with NO ECHO.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
(normal, no echo)
SAM!

Sam suddenly wakes up and manages to muster an angry grunt.

SAM
Hmm!

SHADOW (O.S.)
Now you've actually gotta get up.
Come on.

Sam picks up his phone to look at the time - he sits up just a little bit.

SAM
Huh?

Suddenly we see the voice is in fact SHADOW, a figment of Sam's imagination and a product of all the most irritating parts of Sam's intrusive thoughts and impulses caused by his ADHD, dressed in brightly coloured, VERY LOUD clothing.

He gets up from the bed, full of energy.

SHADOW
Yeah. I thought I'd let you sleep
in for a little longer.
(suddenly really fast)
But we're running late and we've
got loaaaads to do today so come on
let's go, let's go, let's go!

Sam lets out an annoyed growl and stamps his feet down into the ground.

MUSIC: "Puttin' on the Ritz" - Ella Fitzgerald

BEGIN MONTAGE

He gets up and walks out of frame. Shadow follows him.

CUT TO:

4 **INT. SAM'S FLAT. KITCHEN - MORNING** 4

Sam hits the button on the coffee machine to make himself an espresso.

QUICK CUTS:

-- coffee machine being turned on

-- brew button pressed

-- coffee pouring into cup

-- brew button pressed again

-- more coffee pouring into cup

Sam sits down at the kitchen table with his full cup - he already looks exhausted.

SAM
Right - what have we got to do today?

Shadow, like a loud puppy, starts excitedly talking almost immediately.

SHADOW
I told you! A lot. There's a LOT to do today. Loaaaads of stuff.

SAM
Remember I've gotta hand in my essay by 8.

SHADOW
(offended)
I would never forget something like that!

Sam gives Shadow a side eye.

SAM
(sarcastically)
Mhm.
(back to normal)
So what's first smart-arse?

SHADOW
Launderette!

Shadow tries to run off, Sam is about to follow before he realises Shadow's gotten all his priorities wrong again.

He reaches out and pulls Shadow back over to him.

SAM
Nooooo.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

We quickly cut to Sam pouring his cereal and his milk into a bowl.

QUICK CUTS:

-- cereal pouring into bowl

-- milk pouring over cereal

-- bowl being slid out of frame

Sam sits at the kitchen counter to eat.

SHADOW
Buying some of that sugar-free stuff wouldn't kill you.

Sam angrily throws his spoon into the bowl.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
What? I'm just trying to help.

Sam stares at Shadow while he says:

SAM
I don't need your help. I need you to go away so I can get my work done.

SHADOW
Oh you've got HOURS to do that, we've got better things to do get your coat come on, come on, come on!

Shadow runs off towards the door. Sam has a concerned look on his face.

He already knows today, like every day, is going to be wildly productive in all the wrong ways.

CUT TO:

5 **EXT. HIGH STREET - LATER (MORNING)** 5

As Sam trudges along the high street looking for a gift for his mum. Shadow excitedly follows behind.

SHADOW
A gift for Mum... a gift for Mum... Where does one find a good gift?

Suddenly Shadow sees Book Bar - Sam's local bookshop.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
Ooh, Book Bar!

SAM
I'm not getting her a book for her birthday!

SHADOW
Yeah but there's loads of other stuff we can get for you.

SAM
I don't need anything!

SHADOW
Yeeesssssss you do now come on.

Shadow pulls Sam off screen into the bookshop.

CUT TO:

6 **INT. BOOK BAR - MOMENTS LATER** 6

Sam is looking at different things to buy his mum in the narrative book section while Shadow is in the background excitedly picking through all the music books.

SAM
Mum likes romantic books, right?

SHADOW
(not paying attention)
Yeah, yeah. Any of those will do.

After a few moments, Shadow finds something interesting and takes a good exaggerated look at it.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
"The History of the Jazz Musician",
this is <u>PERFECT</u>!

SAM
She'll hate tha--

SHADOW
(interrupting)
It's not for her, you idiot, it's
for you.

Shadow runs off toward the payment counter. Sam rolls his eyes and in the rush, grabs only the book SHADOW chose and heads for the counter.

Once they arrive at the counter, Sam and Shadow look at the SHOPKEEPER and say in unison:

SAM
Just the books please.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
Just the book please.

Sam slowly and annoyedly looks over at Shadow.

The camera tilts down from the shopkeeper to the counter revealing only one book. Sam hasn't clocked the fact that he's forgotten his. The camera tilts back up to the shopkeeper, now well and truly creeped out.

SHOPKEEPER
Uhh... £8.75 please.

Sam pulls out his wallet and gives the shopkeeper £10. Shadow immediately remembers something...

SHADOW
Oh my GOD we need to collect the dry-cleaning!

Shadow hurriedly runs out the shop. Sam grabs the book off the shop counter.

SAM
Thanks!

He runs off.

The shopkeeper realises Sam has forgotten his change, and while waving it in the air, yells:

SHOPKEEPER
Your change, mate!

CUT TO:

7 **INT. TUBE TRAIN - LATER (MORNING)** 7

Shadow and Sam are sitting next to each other in the tube on the way to their next destination: the launderette.

As Sam is slightly frustrated and begins to look drained, his hand begins to tap on his thigh from the high amount of energy.

Shadow is sitting almost like a cartoony well-behaved school boy with his hands resting atop his legs - but his eyes keep darting around the train carriage looking for something to distract Sam.

CUT TO:

8 **INT. LAUNDERETTE - LATER (MORNING)** 8

The bell dings as the door opens and the pair stroll in.

DRY CLEANER
Hello!

Sam gives his ticket to the dry cleaner as Shadow looks around the shop at all the different clothes.

DRY CLEANER (CONT'D)
Ah, yes. Mr Sam.

The dry cleaner walks over to the clothes rack to find Sam's clothes. As he does, Shadow has made his way to one of the washing machines and is having a look at peoples' outfits.

SHADOW
Sam! Look at me! Look!

Sam looks over at Shadow. He is suddenly wearing flared jeans and a flowery shirt.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
Do I look like someone out of the '70s or do I?

Shadow takes a second to look down at the trousers.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
Who dry cleans denim?!
(dreamily staring off into space)
If only we had that much money.

The dry cleaner grabs Sam's clothes off the rack and gives them to him. Shadow follows the clothes as they leave the rack and are given to Sam.

Shadow, yet again, shows up right next to Sam and remembers something very suddenly.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
God, I am FAMISHED. Time for some lunch I think.

Shadow runs out the shop again. Sam sees him running out but sees he can't do much about it. He bites the bullet and decides to run after him and leave.

SAM
Cheers, mate!

The dry cleaner looks up at Sam, realising he forgot to pay.

DRY CLEANER
Hey! It's £15!

9 **INT. TUBE TRAIN - LATER** 9

Sam and Shadow are once again sat on a tube train on their way to get lunch. While Sam looks more tired, his leg begins to shake and Shadow appears even more energetic than before - still sitting properly but he keeps looking at and getting distracted by everything.

CUT TO:

10 **EXT. PARK - LATER (AFTERNOON)** 10

Sam and Shadow are now in a park in central London having a picnic on the grass. As Sam eats his sandwich, Shadow shows high level of interests in what's inside.

SHADOW
What's in that sandwich?

Sam looks into the sandwich.

SAM
Chicken, tomato-

SHADOW
Tomato! Did we get tomatoes from the supermarket the other day?

SAM
Yeah I think we-

SHADOW
(interrupting)
GOD look at the time, what the hell are we doing out here? You should be studying you piece of shit.

Shadow runs off. Sam angrily looks over at Shadow running off and throws his sandwich onto the floor saying:

SAM
For fuck's sake!

He gets up and walks off following Shadow.

CUT TO:

11 **INT. TUBE TRAIN - LATER (AFTERNOON)** 11

For the third time, Sam and Shadow find themselves in a Tube train.

Sam, now completely controlled by Shadow, is exhausted. He sits looking angry in the tube train as Shadow swings from the poles and acts like a child high on sugar.

CUT TO:

12 **INT. MUSIC SHOP - LATER** 12

Of course, Sam and Shadow have not gone home. They got sidetracked once again and are in an old electronics shop looking at tape players.

CUT TO:

13 **INT. TUBE TRAIN - LATER** 13

Once again we're in the train.

Shadow continues to be more energetic as Sam tries to read the newspaper in peace.

CUT TO:

14 **EXT. MUSIC SHOP - LATER** 14

Shadow has now dragged Sam to their final stop on the way home - a music shop where they're leaving with a bag of cassette tapes.

CUT TO:

15 **INT. TUBE TRAIN - LATER** 15

We're in the train for a final time.

Sam is reading his newspaper like before... but suddenly Shadow has gotten less energetic and is sitting beside Sam again, looking almost like a normal passenger on the train.

CUT TO:

16 **INT. SAM'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM - LATER (EVENING)** 16

Sam and Shadow enter the flat - Sam is holding not only the bag from the bookshop, but also his dry cleaning, a tape player and a bag of cassette tapes. He drops them all onto the floor.

SHADOW
Whew! What a day!

Sam picks up the book he bought from the bookshop - surprise, surprise, he bought the book Shadow chose, forgetting the other one at the bookshop.

He breaths a sigh of relief and frustration, but the relief is all taken away just as Shadow says:

SHADOW (CONT'D)
Now all that's left is for you to hand in that assignment.

Sam's face goes from relief to immediate terror as he legs it into his bedroom and sits down.

17 **INT. SAM'S FLAT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 17

QUICK CUTS:

-- Sam rapidly moving his finger over his laptop trackpad to wake it

-- Sam rapidly smashing the keyboard trying to wake the laptop

-- Sam staring at the computer screen in terror

The screen says:

“DEADLINE PASSED. YOUR SCORE WILL BE CAPPED AT 30%”.

The text on the screen makes his stomach churn. He begins to hyperventilate.

SAM (V.O.)
That’s all just ONE DAY. An AVERAGE day...

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

18 INT. DR MILLER’S OFFICE - PRESENT DAY 18

SAM
...of feeling like the world’s most productive person, who can’t get ANYTHING done.

The camera tracks back to see that Shadow has been sitting right next to Sam the whole time he has been in the counsellor’s appointment staring at him.

END OF MUSIC: “Puttin’ on the Ritz” - Ella Fitzgerald

THE END