Tomorrow Will Be Perfect

Matt Williamson | Act One, Scene 5

At the family beach house, Liam faces the loss of his teaching work. His daughter Camile is studying with Kat, her AI tutor. Danny is Liam's father.

SETTING / STAGING NOTE

The technology is ordinary and embedded in daily life. The AIs are heard but never seen. A LumaSense is a lamp-like object that indicates an AI's presence and state.

READING THIS SAMPLE

Stage directions appear in italics. ... indicates speech trailing off or being drowned out. (CONT'D) means the same character continues speaking. (CONTINUED) means the scene continues on the next page.

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A BEACH HOUSE

Danny has a tape measure and is making up planks for the deck extension.

A car crunching on gravel, a door slams.

Liam enters with Camile. She hugs her grandfather.

DANNY

Wasn't expecting you for a while.

CAMILE

I've got to study. Streaming exams start Monday week. Sorry Grandad.

She disappears to her room.

Liam puts some shopping on the bench.

LIAM

Oscar heating up.

The LumaSense pulses.

Liam walks out to the car again, and comes back in with two poles and paper. A piece of plywood.

DANNY

Sorry it's taking so long. I'm reading a lot more than building.

LIAM

It's been half a deck for two years, I think we will cope.

DANNY

(Points to the plywood)

What's this?

LIAM

Big protest Thursday. Teachers, Public Servants, Department of Finance... heaps.

Danny nods. Liam catches a hint of disdain.

Liam stops and looks at his father.

LIAM (CONT'D)

What?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

I thought you were preparing for that job interview?

LIAM

I am.

DANNY

Mate... let it go!

LIAM

Let “it” go?

DANNY

Let it go!

(Beat.)

And by the way... no one was there to pick me up and pay me to not work after they closed down the power station!

LIAM

Ah. Okay. Did you let it go?

(Beat.)

And it was the most polluting station in the country.

DANNY

That place ran this state for nearly 100 years! So it harmed the planet! Got it.

LIAM

And you were a fucking disaster after it closed.

DANNY

I was a drunk. And you are heading that way.

Beat. Danny is considering the next bit and looks like he will pull back... but doesn’t...

DANNY (CONT’D)

(Matter of fact)

From what I’ve read, kids have been going backwards in education all over the world. Accepting that teachers might not be so hot at doing what’s on the label, might be a massive positive!

Liam is becoming increasingly angry.

LIAM

So teachers are this generation’s coal miners?

DANNY

Maybe? Perhaps?

A pause. Liam gets a beer out and hands one to Danny. Danny doesn't take it.

LIAM

A miner is the same as a teacher...

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Seems you are picking and choosing when you want to progress and when you don’t.

Camile emerges with her tablet and her LumaSense. This is KAT.

Liam grabs his tablet and lies down on the couch.

KAT (V.O.)

Camile was losing focus. I’ve suggested working out here.

CAMILE

Ordered me.

Camile settles at the table.

LIAM

The year hasn’t even started yet! Why so much pre-work?

Camile ignores him, focused.

KAT

Who were the two key rivals during Lenin’s illness, who were vying for power?

CAMILE

Define “vying”.

KAT

Denotation. Competing. Connotation. Competing with some spite or force. Sentence please.

CAMILE

The two football players were vying for the ball.

KAT

“The two players were vying for the captaincy.”

CAMILE

So about power?

KAT

That usually works better. Who were the two key rivals during Lenin’s illness who were vying for power?

CAMILE

Trotsky and Stalin... were vying for power...

KAT

And who took over?

CAMILE

Stalin. Because he stopped communication from Lenin to other people?

KAT

Yes, but now build your language. Here’s a suggestion list.

A pause. Camile checks her tablet.

CAMILE

He... used... censorship to hide information about him that Lenin wrote... that said he might be dangerous if he gained power?

(CONTINUED)

KAT

That is a solid historical interpretation. Good. Now write a structured paragraph. Camera on please.

Camile starts to write. Taps the camera on her earphones.

KAT (CONT'D)

Spelling. Trotsky ends in y as in "Sky".

Liam is getting irritated.

LIAM

Turn it off! Use the dictionary.

Camile ignores him, and taps her earphones, Kat's LumaSense changes to Grey.

Camile has put on noise cancelling.

CAMILE

Can I say "They restricted Lenin's view of Stalin from being seen?"

Kat's response is unheard.

CAMILE (CONT'D)

"Lenin's testament was... suppressed, making the party believe... causing the party to believe that Lenin supported Stalin."

Danny has been working nearby.

CAMILE (CONT'D)

So. Okay. "Stalin used the... very characteristics... Lenin critiqued, in the suppressed testament, to hide the evidence that Lenin warned about Stalin, changing the course of Soviet history in the process."

No audible response. But Camile is pleased.

Liam is frustrated.

CAMILE (CONT'D)

Grade for this element, please?

Beat.

CAMILE (CONT'D)

86%?

(Unheard response)

Oh. Okay. Got it. Meta-language list, please?

She notes something down on the tablet.

Danny walks over to the kitchen and washes his hands.

DANNY

And that's just an off-the-shelf model, right? Not even the premium subscription?

Liam moves over and picks up Kat's LumaSense and swipes it off.

CAMILE

Dad!

Liam puts it in a cupboard, grabs a dictionary from the shelf, and picks up his own tablet. He smiles and sits next to Camile.

(CONTINUED)

LIAM

You see this? It’s called a “book”, it’s a dic-tion-ary. Let’s study. Russian History. My favourite. Just gets more uplifting over time.

CAMILE

Dad. Seriously this is compulsory holiday work, it’s all due after the holidays. It’s a graded part of year 12 history!

LIAM

You won’t fail! Let's talk about the Tsar! The Winter Palace... What was their family called?

CAMILE

I don’t know, we haven’t learnt that.

LIAM

Romanov. So let’s write a paragraph about the revolution, storming the Winter Palace?

CAMILE

Dad. The essay will be on how Stalin came to power, then what he did. It won’t go into this background detail.

LIAM

The Tsar?! Background? Seriously?

CAMILE

Dad! It’s Interwar. After the revolution.

LIAM

Look! I’m here to help you.

CAMILE

Kat helps me. You confuse me.

LIAM

(Annoyed)

Just get on with it. Look up Romanov!

Camile stands and goes over to the cupboard and gets Kat’s LumaSense out.

LIAM (CONT’D)

Camile!

CAMILE

Your work “freak out” is your business. I learn with Kat.

DANNY

Camile, come on. Your Dad’s trying to help.

CAMILE

What, with a dictionary? No Grandad. Let’s be real here. I’ve sat listening to him for years of my life! He doesn't get me, or get how I learn.

DANNY

Camile.

She is furious now, clearly triggering long-held frustrations.

(CONTINUED)

CAMILE

He’s a shit teacher if I’m honest! Just ‘cause the kids at his school laugh at his stupid Dad jokes... I don’t. And I don’t get the big words you say and you never explain them.

LIAM

We have great conversations!

CAMILE

It almost feels like you only want to show the world how much you know...

(Beat, cutting)

You’re just a high school teacher!

Liam takes a deep breath.

LIAM

Calm down! You are worse than your bloody mother.

CAMILE

Oh, nice. Well, my “bloody mother” has gotten a job where she’s in charge for thousands of people. And she gets paid more than you, what, three times more?

(Beat.)

Define “misogyny” Kat?

An unheard answer. Camile stands defiant.

LIAM

(Picks up Kat’s LumaSense)

This thing is fucking with your mind.

Danny approaches Liam.

DANNY

Settle down mate. Seriously. Put it down.

LIAM

(Intense)

Do you know I’m gunna lose my job because of this bloody thing! This Rasputin!

(To Kat.)

Look up Rasputin!

KAT

Rasputin was an influential advisor and mystic who influenced Alexandra...

Liam flings Kat’s LumaSense across the room, and it smashes into bits against the shelving.

Liam stands stunned at himself.

LIAM

Fuck. Darling...

Camile starts crying and moves to gather the bits.

CAMILE

Fucking arsehole.

(CONTINUED)

LIAM

Sweetheart. Sweetheart...

DANNY

Jesus Liam! She loves that thing...

Liam sits down and puts his head in his hands.

Danny moves toward Liam.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Totally unacceptable.

(To Oscar)

Oscar, call Issy and get her down here, please?

(Points accusingly)

Not in my family.

BLACKOUT.

End of selected excerpt. Original script pages 27-36.

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