

**DENİZ KELEŞ**

**Human  
Condition Inc.**

## *Characters*

**CAINE**

**AGNÈS**

**MAN IN A BLACK COAT**

**MAN IN A LAB COAT**

**ABLETON**

*Two actors, a man and a woman are seated in the middle of the stage, woman is looking at the man fiercely. There are sign boards on the background titled "ONLY SPEAK WHEN YOU HAVE THE BALL IN YOUR HAND." on the left; "LEAVING YOUR SEAT WILL TERMINATE THE EXPERIMENT IMMEDIATELY." on the right; "THANK YOU FOR YOUR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION." in the middle and on top of all "DO NOT ADDRESS WITH NAMES ON ALL CONDITIONS.". A man speaks in a distorted voice from a loudspeaker.*

**SPEAKER:** PHASE ONE. BEGIN.

The woman has a ball in her hand, she throws it to the man.

**MAN:** Just so we are clear, I find this utterly absurd.

*Woman gives the Man a furious look asking for the ball with her eyes. Man throws the ball back.*

**WOMAN:** Just so you are clear, your opinion doesn't matter, so just play it along would you.

*Throws the ball back to the Man.*

**MAN:** Well, can I leave then?

*Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** No, of course not.

*Woman throws the ball.*

**MAN:** Why?

*Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** Because we should not.

*Woman throws the ball.*

**MAN:** Why?

*Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** *(Annoyed by his questioning.)* Stop! If you aren't going to utter more than a single word, don't speak at all.

*Woman throws the ball.*

**MAN:** *(Sits still in silence, looks at the ball, looks at the Woman.)*

*Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** *(Throws the ball at the Man, but misses, the ball goes off stage.)*

*A figure in a black coat brings another ball and gives it to the man.*

**MAN:** That was... intense. I guess they really want us to go through with the experiment. Now, if I throw the ball back to you, will I receive it back at my

face or will you talk to me instead? *(He looks at her, she looks back and extends her hand, asking for the ball.)*

*Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** *(Exhales with the ball in her hand. Her anger will go into a crescendo as she speaks.)* First of all, it was you who was annoying me with his line of one word questions at the first place but, okay, I am sorry about that, I am not mad or anything, I mean, it's fine, it's just, *(getting angrier and angrier as she speaks.)* well, there are seven billion people in the world you know, but somehow- somehow, I sign up for this- this research and I end up with the one that cheated on me and didn't consider it necessary to make an explanation about it whatsoever, no, of course not, he simply left the town and never called me nor answered my calls like a decent human being would probably do after leaving someone they loved! *(She is furious.)* Why! Why in the hell, can't you just leave me alone, why do I have to bear your presence nine months after the shit you did! Well, I guess you never really loved me or didn't even know what love was, cause acting like you do requires a stone-hearted, self-centred, pathetic excuse for a human being, you disgusting prick! *(She throws the ball back at the Man faster than the last time, hit his leg, ball rolls on the stage.)*

*A figure in black coat comes, looks at the two in disappointment, takes the ball and leaves.*

*Another figure, wearing a lab coat brings another ball, approaches the Man to give it but stops halfway through, turns back and gives the ball to the Woman.*

*Man looks in dismay at the Woman and tries to take cover.*

**WOMAN:** Fine. Obviously, neither of us could know with whom they would end up in here. So, if you ask me something meaningful now, then maybe my answer won't be a ball at your face.

*Woman throws the ball.*

**MAN:** Oh, don't worry, I intend to keep the ball for a while this time.

*Woman squints in disapproval.*

**MAN:** Well, if you are wondering, I would rather spend my day with someone else as well, but, as it turns out, that isn't an option. So, let's complete the task and get out of here so we can continue to live our lives without the other.

*Woman looks confused at the man when he mentions "the task" and begins to ask for the ball with her hand.*

**MAN:** Okay now, I will give you the ball, when you start to speak, please try not to end up throwing it at my face.

*Woman gives a quick nod; Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** What task? I wasn't told about anything like that. *(She looks around her to see if someone will answer her.)* Hello? Is this normal? Am I supposed to go on

without it? Can someone talk to me please? *(She finally looks at the man upon receiving no answer.)*

*Man looks at the Woman, extends his hand similar to how she did it before asking for the ball.*

*Woman throws the ball in discontent.*

**MAN:** Well, perhaps they just told it to one of us. One that they trust will be able to convey it to the other.

*Woman asks for the ball with her hand she is a bit irritated by the Man.*

**MAN:** Well, allow me to explain it first, would you.

*Woman lowers her hand reluctantly.*

**MAN:** Good, I was told our task was going to be to create an instant of emotion, but not any emotion, the emotion that my partner in this research, which means you in this case, has stated in their interview. So just let me know what emotion they might be referring to and we'll give it a go.

*Woman gets uncomfortable towards the end of his sentence recalling her interview.*

*Man throws the ball.*

**WOMAN:** *(Looking at the ball rather anxiously.)* Oh, we are fucked. *(She continues talking while looking at the man.)* They didn't ask me to specifically refer to an emotion during my interview if you're wondering. But now that you mentioned it, yes there was an instance that we talked about my fears, I remember telling them that I considered feeling afraid of something as the worst thing in my life. I guess that's what they meant by an emotion, fear.

*Man looks at her then looks at the ball and asks for it with his eyes.*

*Before the Woman throws the ball, the speaker is heard again.*

**SPEAKER:** PHASE TWO. BEGIN.

*The figure in the lab coat comes with another ball and gives it to the Man.*

**MAN:** Well, I guess the first phase was being able to move to the second one.

**WOMAN:** It seems.

**MAN:** So, what do we need to do now, to scare you I mean?

**WOMAN:** Did they tell you that only I must exhibit that instance of emotion.

**MAN:** They did not specify that part, we just need to create the instance, but I thought since...

*(Woman interrupts him.)*

**WOMAN:** *(Remonstrant.)* Since it was me who considered the worst thing in her life to feel afraid, it should be me who faces it? Right, such a gentleman aren't you, very typical though, thanks.

**MAN:** You know that's not what I meant.

**WOMAN:** Yeah? Do go on please, what is your pathetic excuse this time?

**MAN:** You are being impolite.

**WOMAN:** Screw you.

**MAN:** Oh, come on! Yes, maybe I thought since you are the one who is so easily hurt out of nothing, for once we could make use of that brittle nature of yours!

**WOMAN:** (*Furious.*) You cheeky asshole!

*Woman throws the ball at the Man; it hits the Man and hurts.*

**MAN:** Stop that! What are you 5?

*Ball roll down on the stage, no one comes to take it, no one brings another ball.*

*The Woman stares at the Man in anger.*

**MAN:** (*Looks around to see if another ball is being brought.*) Well, I guess honeymoon is over.

*Woman looks at the ball the Man holds and points to it with her eyes.*

*Man does not throw the ball.*

**MAN:** Okay, now that I can put some sense into our conversation without further interruption.

*Man smirks a little at the Woman, she inhales and exhales slowly.*

**MAN:** Good, good, you try to cool yourself down a little while I explain my plan. As much as you find it rude of mine, I believe it is obvious that you are the more viable candidate for being afraid of something.

*Woman begins to slowly stomp her foot to reserve her anger.*

**MAN:** Okay, I know it sounds infuriating to you but, you can't be not seeing that it makes sense.

*Woman looks elsewhere and her stomping gains pace.*

**MAN:** Hey, (*waving his hand.*) I am here, you can at least give me a nod or something and act like an adult for once in your lifetime, could you?

*Woman turns back at the Man sharply and looks directly to his eyes.*

**WOMAN:** I fuckin' hate you.

*Woman is electrocuted at her back; she is shocked and shaken by it.*

*Speaker is heard again.*

**SPEAKER:** ERROR ONE. 10 mAs<sup>1</sup>.

*Woman blinks her eyes repeatedly and comes back to her senses.*

**MAN:** Wow, you just got electrified, didn't you, wait don't answer that. Is it electrified or electrocuted I wonder, never mind, well I suppose rules are a bit harsher now. So, you see, perhaps you should learn playing along, you know, unlike how you usually act.

*Woman looks at him in confusion and antipathy.*

**MAN:** Well if you look on the brighter side, we can actually use this to frighten you now. This and something else that just came into my mind, you know, since this is more or less a psychological experiment, perhaps I can add up a few things myself. You see, I am starting to understand the importance of speech thanks to you. The lack of it I believe, may lead one to as far as a delirium. This experiment, in a sense, allows one to restrain the other in a very delicate way. (*Looking at the ball in his hand.*) It's an interesting power, to control someone like this, preventing their expression.

*Man looks at the Woman, he sees her looking at him in curiosity and doubt.*

**MAN:** Of course, it's possible to read through some facial expressions and gestures but, it never really compensates for actually talking does it? Obviously, you can't answer that but, evidently, I am right. I see how our species are unique now in self-expression, we crave for it don't we. It is seen in everything we created, an urge to say something, pressure of being unable to do it, the demons that haunt us in the night when we are unable to utter what is in our mind. I mean look at everything we did, we built trains because we wanted say that we can go faster, we wrote poetry because we wanted to say that we are sad or happy or hateful or everything; we launched rockets to say I hate you, to say I can end this all or to say that we can go beyond this rock, we wanted to say something and in the smallest or the most extravagant way, we've said it, we couldn't keep it inside, we wanted it known. You want to have me know things right now, and hence my plan is to keep the ball, as long as I need to until you can't bear your lack of expression and once the silence begins the fill you up with fear we may then have our instance of emotion I suppose. Or alternatively, you can try to talk, they'll shock you again, and eventually you'll start to show fear for something.

*Woman turns her head away from the Man, silently breaths in and out looking in front of her almost absent of motion.*

**MAN:** Well, I can wait. As a matter of fact, I can wait, and I can talk. Unlike a certain someone who seems to prefer staying here and not talking. real mature of you by the way, as always.

*Woman suddenly turns back to him and shouts in rage and rebuke.*

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<sup>1</sup> mA (milliampere or milliamp) is the "basic unit of electrical current [...]"

**WOMAN:** Are you an imbecile Caine!

*She gets electrocuted again for two consecutive times, she passes out after the second one.*

*Speaker is heard again.*

**SPEAKER:** ERROR TWO. 20 mAs.

**SPEAKER:** ERROR THREE. 30 mAs.

**CAINE:** (*Curious.*) Agnès?

*Caine is shocked, he passes out. The ball falls of from his hand.*

**SPEAKER:** ERROR FOUR. 40 mAs.