

The Easterners; or, L.A.'s crumbling and it's all your fucking fault.

By Thomas Daniel Valls

Draft 2

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SETTING

The highest peak of Griffith Park, overlooking the crumbling city of Los Angeles, California; so there will be a lot of red glow and a lot of distant crushing sounds.

There's an oil barrel without a lid. Near that, a hiker's backpack, a duffle bag, a laptop bag, and a gallon of fuel. All of which are covered in mud, as if someone had been climbing up the mountain at all costs to get to this peak.

Dry wood is nearby too. Enough to stack into the oil barrel.

CHARACTERS

MALLORY: (24) F. Scrappy. Paranoid. Bitter. Loves Kix as much as she loves everything else that she does; with everything she knows possible.

DEAN: (28) M. Works in Soaps and has gained a lot of weight since then despite his salads and bi-weekly visits to Equinox.

PRE-SHOW

COMING DOWN by DUM DUM GIRLS.

We hear screams and crumbling roars as the city of Los Angeles falls into the desert floor.

Sirens.

There's the red glow of flames that trickles in.

We hear the sound of a woman throwing a heavy piece of wood into an oil barrel.

Footsteps.

Then we hear it again; another piece of wood into the barrel.

The glow of flames grows stronger, and stronger, until:

LIGHTS RISE:

MALLORY is throwing a giant hunk of dry wood into the oil barrel.

DEAN's there. Dressed. Everything in his arms. A backpack. A laptop bag. All covered in mud too.

She turns to see him; but she isn't startled. Instead. She's quiet. Gives it a second. Then goes to the pile of wood.

DEAN

You... **YOU.** You... **EASTERNERS. L.A. IS CRUMBLING TO THE GROUND AND IT'S ALL YOUR FUCKING FAULT!**

MALLORY

You remind me of a yeast infection.

DEAN drops his bags all at once as MALLORY hoists other logs to the oil barrel.

DEAN

You **EASTERNERS** came in **TROVES**. From New York City to *here* Los Angeles, you and your *people's* stupid fucking **EXODUS** from New York to **HERE**, to get ahead, to get in, to get placed in what all of us, the **ORIGINAL** migrants left that city initially for! We came with a dream, an *original* one; and you, *you* **EASTERNERS** brought with you **ALL OF YOU** and – and – **AND NOW IT'S GONE!**

MALLORY

Are you gonna help me get firewood into the barrel or am I gonna wait until I can find you a sippy straw that dips into a bottle of Jim Beam?

DEAN chases after her.

DEAN

This isn't FUNNY; // my city is gone, the city I left you for, the city that was my dream, you came to it with everybody else as a fucking fallback AND NOW IT'S GONE! //

MALLORY

// It's really fucking hysterical, actually, if you really wanna count the ways in which it is...
// It's not *gone*. It's right there, right below us, right below this mountain, L.A. in *flames*.

DEAN

So making a bon fire on this mountaintop's really gonna do you a lot of good, *isn't* it?

MALLORY

Well, it's the highest peak in all of Griffith Park, and if I make a fire big enough, a signal, one of those rescue helicopters in the air over there will come on over and pick me up to FREEDOM!

She tosses a huge piece into the barrel.

DEAN

You don't *deserved* to be *saved*.

MALLORY

Still telling people what you think they deserve?

She goes back for another.

DEAN

This was *my* city. New York was supposed to be yours, that's what you said was *why* you *refused* to spend the rest of your life with me when I asked you to on *this* VERY MOUNTAIN TOP those two years ago we visited to see if this is what we wanted; *this* is where I fell in love with you all over again.

MALLORY

This is where you fell in love with *yourself*.

DEAN

After New York was the next city to fall apart you could've chosen ANYWHERE else to be, you ALL could have; it's *SELFISH!*

MALLORY

My selfishness is the reason an earthquake has decided // to crumble the -

DEAN

// It is *NOT, AN EARTHQUAKE!*

MALLORY

That's right, 'IT'S THE WEIGHT!' The *weight* of 'The Easterners', 'MY PEOPLE', the second *wave* of migrants that have moved from the East to Los Angeles to settle under your shadow, the shadow of the originals, of the Easterners who proclaimed themselves as *NOT Easterners*; who have cast the responsibility of the Earth beneath Los Angeles to quake and want to take back what was *SO* rightfully *IT'S...* on US. And *DUE* to such; you've condemned all of us for moving onto your *land*, taking *your tiki bars* and red-curbed parking spaces, your coffee shops and tacquerias and bars lewd with rustic artifacts and dusted fabric to allow the illusion that people aren't *ACTUALLY* of the bourgeois sensitivity; spitting in spite of us in our faces despicable SHIT about the second home we came from, New York, a breeding ground of Connecticut craft beer conglomerates and piles of recyclable *shit* according to every thought catalog entry that pops out of Los Angelinos' metaphysical VAGINA; breaking down the city you left *FIRST* into nothing but used usage; the gall, the fucking blood that pumps through your *VANITY*, THE AUDACITY! You hate us because we had the *guts* to stick around New York City and *fight* for it until it was unable to be fought for any longer, before it sank back into the sea, before the L train flooded with blood and body and oil, before the bridges collapsed, and before the Bronx was renamed 'SoBro'! *We* stood to the very end. *We* did not *flee* before realizing and FULLY accepting that there was *truly NOT* a SINGLE ounce of room for creation and movement left in any of our boroughs, JUST like Miami, JUST like Seattle, JUST like soon LA, and soon after that, the *REST* of the United States of AMERICA.

DEAN rushes to the oil barrel and starts taking out the wood.

MALLORY

HEY!

They tug-of-war on the piece of wood.

THIS IS MY S.O.S. SIGNAL, // YOU SHIT!

DEAN

// I'M NOT LETTING YOU LEAVE THIS MOUNTAIN TOP.

MALLORY

SURE THING, *JESUS*.

DEAN

THIS WAS OUR MOUNTAIN TOP, GODDAMN IT!

MALLORY lets go of the firewood and DEAN falls to the floor.

OW!

MALLORY

Why do men assume that sentiment's the greatest weapon against women?

DEAN

After being in a relationship with you for two years, I had to learn to treat every moment with you as if you were fucking *Elizabeth Taylor*.

Dean's taken out a bottle of whiskey from his bag and has poured himself a drink.

MALLORY swipes the bottle from him and makes one for herself.

You should've left this new empire to me, that was the plan, // before it decided to crumble back into the tar pits of Hell.

MALLORY

// Oh the plan where you split up with me after two years because you figure you'd have better luck writing movies if you took a job writing for soap operas?

DEAN

It's experience underneath the belt, you gotta have experience // underneath the belt!

MALLORY

// Then *boy*, you've gained a a whole two *extra* notches on that belt of *experience!*

DEAN

I Equinox every other morning in *BURBANK* and the only thing I ever get for lunch's an Urth salad; kalamata olives on the *side!*

MALLORY

Till you're home and you drink like a fucking beaver.

DEAN

You're the *dam* stalker, you should know.

MALLORY

Was the 'damn' an allusion to a second ago when I called you a beaver?

DEAN

Absolutely.

They both instinctively clink glasses, as if to say, 'Good game'.

They swig the rest of their drinks.

They pour another for each other.

DEAN

Before I'd known you'd moved here with the rest of The Easterners, I *had* stopped drinking. My piss was clear. I only craved a smoke when I finished writing a really *great* fucking scene.

MALLORY

You *always* thought you'd written really great fucking scene.

DEAN

When I found out that you'd moved to LA after New York crumbled down I was sad for you and I actually *had* wished you the best; but it wasn't until I saw you boozing up with boys at 4100 Bar, and, and, taking up seats in my café, the one I *showed* you was *my* writing spot that I started *all* over again because you- *you* - you're fucking menses!

MALLORY

Do you even *know* what menses is like (?) // you don't know what menses is like!

DEAN

// Oh, I've written screenplays about women, // women who have had to deal with menses!

MALLORY

// Like the one you wrote about the woman who forgave her *rapist* after her father had *kidnapped* the guy---? // 'Please daddy don't cut off his fingers, I *understand* him!' you *PRICK*, *you* faux-FEMINIST.

DEAN

// That was about my cousin and I wanted to write something about redemption and forgiveness, nothing that *you'd* understand, miss fucking, what(!?), I-Write-PLAYS (PLAYS, by the way)-About-Telekinetic-Bitches-Who-Keep-Having-Flashbacks-At-Fucking-Benito's-Taco-SHOP!

MALLORY

That sounds pretty fucking original to me.

DEAN

It's trope-hand-me-down bullshit, it's *reductive*.

MALLORY

That's stretching it *thin* you try-hard-referencing-cum-flop, // I *understand* redemption; it's *empathy* and forgiveness for you // that I lack!

DEAN

// This isn't a Jean-Luc Godard film, you don't just come off // nearly as *cool* as-

MALLORY

// I've never even *seen* a Jean-Luc *Godard* movie, // you private university hipster *bullshit*. //

DEAN

// *FILM*, Jean-Luc Godard pictures are meant- // oh fuck *you* I have *taste*.

MALLORY

// What is it, Dean? Was this city too small for the both us?

DEAN pours two more and hands one to MALLORY.

DEAN

No, it's big enough. We got like 47 In-And-Out's in this city, the only fucking reason people think it's small is because everybody treats 'Animal Style' like a fucking *NOVELTY*.

MALLORY

Do you think I'm *obsessive* for choosing *here*?

DEAN

Absolutely. You *came* to this city for me.

MALLORY swigs hers down.

MALLORY

You're not as big as this city, I don't care how much you're trying to prove that you deserve owning it.

DEAN swigs his down too.

DEAN

You always were struggling over not having me in New York.

MALLORY

Why would that be so wrong if that was true?

DEAN

Is it *not* true?

MALLORY

I loved you.

DEAN

It was the hardest thing leaving you a JFK. I sobbed the whole flight over.

MALLORY

You told me that Virgin America bumped you up to first class.

DEAN

I still *sobbed*.

MALLORY

Into your whiskey gingers.

DEAN

And why is *that* so wrong if *that's* true?

MALLORY

Because you're a fucking DRUNK, Dean; when I chose not to *leave* with you to L.A, you *held* it against me, you held me *down* against me, you hit me, you'd HIT me Dean and I'd fight back HARDER than you'd ever hit me firstly and so we'd forgive each other because we figured we'd call it even; because I figured I wasn't strong enough to be on my own.

DEAN

Have you grown stronger since then?

MALLORY

Stronger or not, I've been making better decisions.

DEAN

Me too. I've been shifting my habits.

MALLORY

Have you finally learned to shift it into the right direction?

DEAN

Last I recall, you were always having trouble finding the right spot for me.

MALLORY

Because you weren't ever listening to me when I told you where to do it.

DEAN

I was only ever going the way I wanted.

MALLORY

Maybe that was the problem.

DEAN

Do you still kiss the same?

MALLORY

You don't.

DEAN

You still smell like sandpaper.

MALLORY

You still think that flatters me.

DEAN

How does it feel for you? Being close to me again? Up here?

MALLORY

Thirst and home like I've never known to need something more.

DEAN

It feels like need to me too.

MALLORY

Every ounce of this fucking city is stuck on this bit of mountain with you, Dean. You told me once that I was New York City to me, and you left me there to rot in everything we'd become and every corner was yours and every bar and bottle and fire escape and smoke stack remained yours, and *now*, now? You've become this place to *me*. You were the only reason I ever would've considered this place a home. Did you know I'd be here? Is that why you came?

DEAN

I had hoped.

She takes out a box of matches and goes to the oil barrel.

What are you doing?

MALLORY

Lighting this shit up.

DEAN

Wait.

MALLORY

I need to get out of here, Dean.

DEAN

Don't go. Don't do it.

MALLORY

Please stop stopping me just because you know how badly I want to.

DEAN

There's nothing left for us. New York and Los Angeles. They're gone. Stay with me. Let's stay together. Love me and let me love you again until the mountains finally crumble and we die. Or. Trust me enough to light that thing together and go somewhere. Anywhere. We can be migrants to a new city. Those Helicopters will take us anywhere we wanna go. Wherever we need to be so that we can hold each other the way we did in Miami before it sank. Before visiting LA and me - realizing. Before bike rides in D.C. and - and - and right after I held you and told you that you were New York to me. Before we'd wake at sunset, before we'd turn love into fifty dollars at Lucky Dog and Barcade and bodega thanksgivings. Before I left. Before me leaving - *choosing* to leave. Before it got. Messy. Don't light it. Don't send the helicopters over to us. Don't let them find us if you want to leave alone. Let's leave together, or let's die together. I know you still need me. You know you do. It's why you came here. It's why I came here, too. **Let me take you back.** Come back to me.

DEAN holds out his hand. A moment. MALLORY takes it.

DEAN

They're still soft.

MALLORY

Sharply, the futility of such a statement.

Shut the fuck up.

They chuckle.

This is like that Tommy Lee-Jones movie that wasn't a sequel to Men In Black.

DEAN

'Volcano'?

MALLORY

There's this moment where Anna Heche – who – by the way –where the FUCK is she now – goes crawling through this tunnel and there's this lava pit and her friend falls through and every time I watched that scene happen, I would always think -like- what the FUCK would I need to have on me when Lava was gonna be spew from the ground? Ever since then; I've kept everything I'd need to dump into a bag right on my desk. Just – BAM – ready to go.

DEAN

I usually just go for my wallet, phone, and keys.

MALLORY

You think the helicopters will allow us to take our stuff? What we took from our homes?

DEAN

Why? What'd you bring?

MALLORY chugs her whiskey. Then goes to her bags. As she says them all, she takes them out.

MALLORY

Well, uh. I got here uh, of course, all of my Cholula. Lara Bars. Laptop. A picture of us on the Williamsburg Bridge, one of me and my ma in Miami before she had to relocate to Denver. Then another one of us in Griffith Park. Uhm, the tickets we used to catch Real Estate at El Rey, the tickets we used to catch The Kills at the same, my family photo album, hm, OH! Journals - letters I wrote to you while I camped in Big Sur because you were filming that *bullshit* indie in Sacramento you thought was gonna take you to Cannes. Letters I wrote to you in Death Valley when I went on hikes in canyons and you stuck around the car because you said you were afraid of someone stealing the civic when really you were just scared of snakes, uh, tampons. And weed. What'd you bring in yours?

DEAN

You really keep *all* that shit on your desk?

MALLORY

Lemme see what your brought in your bags.

DEAN

Nah.

MALLORY

Oh *come oooooon*, // Dean!

DEAN

// I don't wanna take things out of their place, // the helicopters will be here soon!

MALLORY

// We haven't even lit the signal yet!

DEAN

Fine, fine, // fine.

MALLORY

// YEEES! // YESSS! YAH-HAS! YAAAS!

DEAN

// Okay, okay, okay(!), But you should know, I was in a serious rush, // a real serious one!

MALLORY

// I don't give a fuck, OPEN EM' UP IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME MOTHERFUCKER!

DEAN does.

DEAN

Well, I mean. Uh. First, I got Cholula.

MALLORY

Uh-huh.

DEAN

And uh, just some stuff; clothes, and whatever. I mean, I wanted to take what reminded me of L.A. before It was gone forever. So. Uh.

DEAN goes through his bags.

I got some Intelligentsia coffee, a couple bags worth, ticket stubs to Coachella, laptop, some clothes I bought at American Apparel, but the factory warehouse in Downtown, the pictures that were hanging around my apartment of the films that inspired me to move here in the first place, Jean-Luc Godard and uh, Sofia Coppola, and uh, my work mug. See?

MALLORY

Is that really *all* you brought?

DEAN

Oh, come on –

MALLORY

That's *SERIOUSLY ALL* the *SHIT* you brought that // reminds you of *HERE*?

DEAN

// STOP THAT. STOP *THAT*, goddamn it, you, *YOU*, you're constant- *PROSECUTING* ME for lacking any ounce of compassionate desire for you. I took what I *NEEDED*.

MALLORY

YOU DON'T **NEED** ME!?

DEAN

I *HAVE* YOU. I HAVE *HAD* YOU. I have come to love you so much that I have come to hate you and have wanted nothing but the greatest form of agony to bring you endless joy- and I don't feel, that *PICTURES* or *JOURNALS* of things I have written about you could at all further permanently solidify what I *feel* and *know* and what I feel to know and what I know to feel about *YOU*!

MALLORY

WHICH IS WHAT!?

DEAN

THAT YOU'RE AN ADORABLE *SOCIOPATH*.

MALLORY

YOU'RE A DISENGENUOUS DRUNK-!

DEAN

-WHY IS **EVERYTHING** SO GODDAMN TRANSACTIONAL WITH YOU!? Why must everything that I feel I have to say to you, about how I feel, about what I want, always about what I had felt, *always* about what I always had needed; have, *HAD*, *STILL*, are *NEGATED* by you? Are you *THAT* terrified and uncertain of your being in New York and now L.A. that for one fucking second, you are unable to consider the notion that *ALL* of your anger that you've felt the need to unleash onto me is and *was* entirely invalid; and that every ounce of accusational *BULLSHIT* that you've attacked and labeled me with, is purely fictional, and nothing but you stapling a bull's-eye onto my heart so that you could have had something to SHOOT AT!?

MALLORY lights the MATCH.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

MALLORY

I AM LEAVING YOU!

NOO! NOO! Don't!

DEAN

Let GO of me!

MALLORY

I SAID **DON'T!** // AGGGH!

DEAN

// DEAN tackles MALLORY down to the floor. He throws out the box of matches.

THOSE ARE MINE GODDAMN IT!

MALLORY

MALLORY fights him off and sits on top of him.

WE'RE LEAVING TOGETHER!

DEAN

She pins him by the collar of the shirt into the dirt.

And she gets up – looking for the box of matches.

WHERE THE FUCK DID YOU THROW THEM!?

MALLORY

DEAN scrambles for the whiskey and chugs.

You can't leave without me, // you can't stay without me either.

DEAN

*// WHY THE FUCK SHOULD I STAY WITH YOU; YOU, you, trying to RID me STILL- **NOW** - IT SUCKS GODDAMN // **IT WHERE ARE THE MATCHES!?***

MALLORY

// I never wanted to RID you! GOD, did you not // listen to a SINGLE-!

DEAN

// YOU JUST FIGURE YOU MIGHT AS WELL LEAVE WITH ME, I CAN FULFILL ENOUGH // OF YOUR NEED.

MALLORY

// WHY ARE YOU SUCH A FUCKING PARANOID PIECE OF SHIT!?

DEAN

MALLORY starts throwing all her shit into the oil barrel.

MALLORY

THERE'S the drunken spit of a soggy shout that *I* remember.

DEAN

'*THERE'S* the dramatic dialogue you feel ENRICHES your BULLSHIT SELF!' // What are you doing!

MALLORY

// YOU'RE SO TERRIFIED OF BEING ALONE YOU TRY SO HARD TO BE ALONE.

DEAN

AND YOU'RE SO DESPERATE FOR COMPANY YOU DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT WHAT ANYBODY ELSE DOESN'T NEED, // *WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?*

DEAN is trying to take the shit out of the oil barrel again.

MALLORY

FUCK OFF.

DEAN

THESE ARE OUR MEMORIES!

DEAN tries to take shit out but MALLORY pushes him onto the floor.

OW!

MALLORY

IF ONLY YOU'D HELD ONTO SOME *SHIT*, WE'D HAVE THINGS TO **SPARE**.

MALLORY is dousing the barrel with gas.

DEAN

I never needed *things* to remember you by you **IDIOT!**

MALLORY

DON'T YOU PATRONIZE MY NEEDS WITH YOUR LACK OF HAVING ANY!

MALLORY tosses the whole fucking gallon into the barrel and goes hunting for the matches again.

DEAN

HIDING THEM IS DIFFERENT THAN SHOWING THEM.

MALLORY

JERK IT IN A MIRROR, TUBBY!

DEAN
I DON'T NEED A MIRROR; I HAVE OTHER WOMEN, HOT BABES!

MALLORY
WERE YOU UNABLE TO MAKE THEM CUM TOO!?

She holds up the box of matches she's just found.

I FOUND THEM!

DEAN
I NEVER CAME WITH YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE TOO DIFFICULT.

MALLORY
BECAUSE YOU NEVER TOOK OFF YOUR FUCKING SHIRT!

DEAN
I WAS SUFFERING FROM **GYNECOMASTIA**.

MALLORY
AND I WAS SUFFERING FROM HAVING TO CONSIDER YOUR SHIRT'S A
FLAPPING COTTON FORESKIN!

DEAN
WELL MAYBE IF YOU WOULD'VE ACTUALLY MADE NOISES WHEN I WAS
DOING GOOD I WOULD'VE TAKEN OFF MY SHIRT FOR YOU YOU
MOANLESS **CUNT**.

MALLORY
WHAT DID YOU CALL ME!?

DEAN
**A MOANLESS CUNT WHO NEVER HAD THE PRIVELEDGE OF COMING
BECAUSE I WOULD NEVER LET IT SQUEAL.**

*MALLORY takes the bottle of whiskey and SLAMS it on
DEAN'S face.*

DEAN falls back.

MALLORY rips her blouse off.

DEAN is moaning from the burt of it all. He's barely conscious.

She unzips his pants and whips out his cock.

She shuffles her pants off.

She sits on top of him, (READ: His cock. She sits on it.)

She starts to ride up and down; as DEAN moans in agony.

MALLORY

Come on. Come on. Get hard for me, come on you little whiskey dick, do it. Do it. There you go. Oh. Oh god. There you go.

DEAN

...Mall...

MALLORY

...Shhhh. Shut up. Shut it.

She continues to ride him.

DEAN

Fuck.

MALLORY

I don't want you saying anything.

They continue to fuck. MALLORY loves it. But DEAN isn't entirely into it, because he's bleeding from the head.

Oh fuck.

DEAN

Yeah?

MALLORY

Shut up.

DEAN

Oh yeah.

MALLORY

Shut up.

DEAN

You gonna come.

MALLORY

I'm gonna beat the living shit out of – OOH FUCK.

DEAN

Ah.

Oh man. MALLORY

Yeah? DEAN

SHUT UP, I'm gonna. MALLORY

Fuck. DEAN

I'm gonna. MALLORY

Oh my God. DEAN

I'M GONNA. MALLORY

DEAN
AW FUCK, MY FUCKING // GOD MALLORY JESUS CHRIST-! **FUCK! FUCK! AH
FUCK – FUCK ME OH JESUS!**

MALLORY
// SHUT UP I'M GONNA COME I'M GONNA SHUT UP OH MY GOD YES. YES.
**YES. FUCK. FUCK OH GOD. SHUT UP SHUT UP AGH GOD SHUT UP SHUT
UP!**

Ooooooooooh booooy.

Give it a moment.

You're not gonna help me out? DEAN

Give it a moment.

...Nah. MALLORY

She gets off of him.

Come on. DEAN

A moment.

MALLORY

To think it took me that long to come around.

DEAN

Did you like it?

MALLORY

...Nah.

DEAN

Help me finish?

MALLORY

Nah.

MALLORY takes the matches and strikes one.

DEAN

Please don't do that.

MALLORY

How's your head?

DEAN

Please. Don't.

MALLORY

...Nah.

DEAN

Please.

MALLORY tosses the match into the oil barrel. It starts to glow.

DEAN

Come on.

MALLORY

No.

DEAN

You're leaving me?

MALLORY

Don't move too much.

My head.	DEAN
I am sorry for that.	MALLORY
Are you leaving me?	DEAN
Yeah, I am.	MALLORY
Please.	DEAN
No.	MALLORY
Come on.	DEAN
No.	MALLORY
I've changed.	DEAN
No.	MALLORY
I've changed.	DEAN
No.	MALLORY
I have changed.	DEAN
No.	MALLORY
I could change.	DEAN
No.	MALLORY

I would change. DEAN

No. MALLORY

I can change. DEAN

You can't. MALLORY

I can. DEAN

You can't. MALLORY

I can. DEAN

You can't. MALLORY

I can't? DEAN

You can't. MALLORY

I can't. DEAN

No. MALLORY

I can't. DEAN

MALLORY

No matter how hard I hoped you could... I can't change you into what you won't ever want to be.

MALLORY hands the whiskey to DEAN.

He takes it.

End of play.