

ASH

My friend Ben told me this joke on the 27th of September 2008, the (XXXXth) day of my life. Ahem. There was a man. His name was Sven. And every day he walked to work along a canal. It was quite wide, this canal. Fifty metres or so. Far enough that if there was someone on the other side you'd be able to see them but not enough to be completely clear as to who they were exactly. You couldn't be sure. So, one day, Sven was walking to work and in the distance walking to work and in the distance, walking the other way towards him on the other side of the canal was someone who looked like his old school friend Hans. "Oh, it's Hans!" thinks Sven. "My old school friend! I wish we hadn't drifted apart. I would so love to catch up with him." But Sven was a nervous and self-conscious man so he also thought "But I can't be sure that it's Hans. I couldn't call out. What if it wasn't him? I'd make such a fool of myself. I wouldn't be able to live with the shame." And over on the other side of the canal is Hans having the exact same conversation with himself. "Is that Sven? Oh, sweet Sven. I miss him so but I just could never call out. Never never never." Luckily, a bridge crossed the canal between them. So they both stepped on to the bridge, hoping to walk past the other to confirm once and for all whether they were who they looked like they were. So they passed each other on the bridge, both gave each other a thorough look up and down. And it turned out that it was neither of them.

PAUSE.

MAX

That is my favourite joke.

ANOTHER PAUSE.

MAX

*It was supposed to come much later in the presentation but let's take our cue from Doctor Who and just wave our hands and saw wibbly wobbly timey wimey and everything will be all right. So, to get back to where we were - very sorry about the, uh, erratic nature of the presentation by the way, should be fine from here on out. (Was fine in the dress/Last night/Every other night.) Ahem.*

- EPIGRAPH

PAUSE.

MAX

To quote the Matt Smith Doctor as he was about to change into Peter Capaldi: "It all just disappears, doesn't it? Everything you are, gone in a moment, like breath on a mirror. But times change, and so must I. When you think about it, we're all different people all through our lives, and that's okay, that's good, you gotta keep moving, so long as you remember all the people that you used to be. I will not forget one line of this. Not one day. I swear. I will always remember when the Doctor was me."

MAX TRIES TO LET THIS SINK IN TO THE AUDIENCE BUT--

BILL

*Bit late for an epigraph.*

MAX

*Bill! Please!*

BILL

*Stop wasting time then!*

MAX

*Everything is a waste of time!*

**- WHAT THIS IS**

MAX

This presentation that is happening now is of the results of a scientific survey I have been doing, the subject of which has been my entire life. I have done this in the hope that my findings will provide others, i.e. you, tools on how to live better. How to control the inevitable change that swamps every moment of our life.

A part of this work has been the precise noting, quantification and collation of all of my life's experiences. For example:

**- SLEEP-DISTURBING PANICS (11PM - 3AM)**

MAX WALKS BACKSTAGE. THEY RETURN WITH A LARGE BOX OF NOTEBOOKS AND PLACE IT IN THE SPACE. MAX OPENS THE BOX, GETS OUT A NOTEBOOK, TURNS TO A POST-IT FLAGGED PAGE. READS FROM IT.

MAX

READING. RAPIDFIRE.

Panic 1 - 25th of April 1995, the (475th) day of my life - I can't hear my parents. Are they dead?

Panic 47 - 3rd of June 1997, the (1245th) day of my life - Why does no one like me at school?

Panic 48 - 4th of June 1997, the (1246th) day of my life - Why do only weird kids talk to me at school.

Panic 456 - 22nd July 2005, the (4216th) day of my life - What happens when I die?

Panic 755 - 14th of January 2009, the (5488th) day of my life - Is there something wrong with me but everyone is just too polite to tell me?

Panic 1389 - 22nd of September 2013, the (7200th) day of my life - Why does everything feel meaningless?

Panic 1390 - 23rd of September 2013, the (7201st) day of my life - Why does everything feel meaningless?

Panic 1391 - 24th of September 2013, the (7202nd) day of my life - Why does everything feel meaningless?

BEAT.

THEY LOOK UP FROM THE LIST.

MAX

I have compiled similar lists for every other conceivable interaction or event in my life. I hope this stands as proof of the thoroughness of my survey. Moving on.