

Magna Mora

written by

Character Name	Brief Description	Age	Gender
Chris	A parent, out of their element, but coping.	Mid- to Late- Twenties	M
Mr Jones	Authority figure. Very Supportive, can be overly friendly. Suit, tie, and in charge.*	Agesless	F

*Although female, the name is to remain as *Mr Jones*. Think of “Mr” as a title, rather than a descriptor.

Lights rise on a nightmare, all swirls and clouds, with CHRIS panicking in the middle.

CHRIS
(terrified)
Oh, no no no NO!

A flicker and crash as an existence rushes through.

CHRIS screams, jumps out of the way, and lands on the floor.

Another reality comets through, and CHRIS cowers and starts crying.

MR JONES appears.

Crashes and bangs sound as the world seemingly collapses around him.

MR JONES
(overly familiar)
Hi, Chris! Chris!!

CHRIS looks at MR JONES as if she is part of a nightmare.

CHRIS begins to scream at MR JONES.

MR JONES
(continued)
It's me! It's me, Mr Jones. You'll be fine. Relax, you'll settle in faster if you don't fight it. Shhh... Shhh.

CHRIS
I'm safe?

MR JONES
Ah, no. I didn't say that. I'd say... Well, anything but, actually.

Another great cacophony builds as another piece of reality begins to crash away.

MR JONES stands, and holding out her hands, and commands it to stop with a snap of her fingers.

A sound like the universe stopping;
a quiet peace settles on the scene.

MR JONES
(continued)

That's better, now we can talk. Where was...
Ah, now, are you safe? Probably not, but
that's the nature of things. And, like
everything, that really depends on what you
do next. The whole of life, safety, the fabric
in people's clothing- even their breakfast
cereals- it all depends on what you're going
to do next.

CHRIS begins to get up.

CHRIS
I'm so confused.

MR JONES
Yeah, I get that a lot.

CHRIS
(bending in half)
I think I'm going to throw up.

MR JONES
Yeah, I get that a lot too. Would you care
for a glass of water?

CHRIS
Yes, please.

MR JONES
Too bad, they don't exist any more.

CHRIS
They..?

MR JONES
Right, Chris, and thank you for catching up.
We are running out of time for you to get
there on your own.

MR JONES snaps fingers.

MR JONES
(continued)
Better?

CHRIS
(suddenly fine)
Well... Yes... Much better, thank you.

MR JONES
Good, we're running out of time!

CHRIS
For?

MR JONES
For me to control it. And when that's over...

Pause

CHRIS
Control... What?

MR JONES snaps her fingers, and the flood and noise of collapsing realities rushes back.

A moment of chaos, and MR JONES snaps again.

Silence.

MR JONES
(melodramatically)
The End.

CHRIS
So... This is the end of the world?

MR JONES
Ah, astute observation! But, wrong.

CHRIS
So...

MR JONES puts finger to her pursed lips.

MR JONES
I don't get to do the big announcement voice all that often, do you mind? This is (melodramatically) The Great Pause!

MR JONES stops for a reaction.

CHRIS
I'm sorry, what?

MR JONES
The Great Pause? You know, "The Great Pause?"

CHRIS shakes his head no.

MR JONES

What, you never had to pee during a movie?

CHRIS

Sure.

MR JONES

Well, it's the same thing. We're all just waiting for you to get back from the bathroom.

CHRIS

Who's "we?"

MR JONES

Existence. (pause) Nothing? Huh, I thought that would have gotten a bigger reaction. Something like... "AHHH!!! Existence is falling apart and I'm the only one that can fix it!!! AHHH!!!!"

CHRIS

You said time was an issue.

MR JONES

Paying attention now? Good! Right, I did say that. Okay. So, Existence doesn't like being paused. Hates it, actually. That's what you've been dodging, pieces of Existence, falling apart and disappearing. That last one you jumped out of the way of? That was the Great Dimple of Dover.

CHRIS

What's the "Great Dimple of Dover?"

MR JONES

Exactly. It was fantastic, breathtaking. But now, because of your dawdling, never existed. All those family memories... never happened. Pity, their gift shop had some really nice shirts.

CHRIS

Bull! You made that up. That's so... No such thing!

MR JONES

I gave up making thing eons ago.

CHRIS

I've been in a car accident. That's what this is. In a car accident, and I'm reacting to the medication.

MR JONES

Aw, you're so cute when you're like this! You know, last time you told me that you had a small toad in your stomach.

CHRIS

You're not helping my confusion. Ok, humoring you until the drugs wear off. Let's say that Existence is paused and waiting for me to choose something, and when I do, everything then can go back to normal and keep going. Right?

MR JONES

More or less, the Dimple ain't never coming back. Hey, needle and the damage done, Babe.

CHRIS takes a long look at MR JONES.

CHRIS

I know you.

MR JONES

I told you, I'm Mr Jones.

MR JONES offers a hand which CHRIS does not take.

CHRIS

I know I know you.

MR JONES

Do you?

CHRIS

Yes, but I can't remember from where.

MR JONES

Do you believe in reincarnation?

CHRIS

No.

MR JONES

Oh, that's a pity. Reincarnation believes in you, though. So, take comfort in that.

CHRIS

How serious can this be, really? You keep letting all these one liners fly.

MR JONES

Well, *c'est la vie*, and all that. Or not. It's up to you.

B.Cern

CHRIS

Don't change the subject, how do I know you?

MR JONES

I'm in the details.

A slow realization.

CHRIS

No. Really? You're the... Are you?

MR JONES

Am I? Even a coin has two sides. And both sides are equally as correct.

CHRIS

Both sides?

MR JONES

The Alpha and The Omega, the Yin and the Yang, the Bow-Chicka-Wah-Wah.

CHRIS

(slightly disappointed)

Oh. Bit anti-climatic, don't you think?

MR JONES

Anti-climatic?!? Is it my tie? You're standing in the middle of The Great Pause and Existence is crumbling around you. And, by the way, you are the only person who can make the choice to save everything...And it's "anti-climatic?" This is why movie sequels suck. They never live up to expectations.

CHRIS

Am I supposed to take this seriously?

MR JONES

Oh, yes! Terribly seriously!

CHRIS

Do you even take it seriously?

MR JONES

More than your tiny little head can comprehend.

CHRIS

Try me.

MR JONES

Picture a new color.

A beat, as CHRIS fails the challenge.

MR JONES

Yeah, I know. But I see the ones that you can't even dream of.

CHRIS

Alright, I'm not saying that I believe you, but what's my role here? You said "choice," but what does that mean? What choice am I making?

MR JONES

That's the spirit! Moving on! Here's what you got. You know how every choice leads to another and another and another? And, for every choice you *don't* make, there is a parallel version of you that made the other choice?

CHRIS

That's what they say.

MR JONES

Well, "they" got it right. That's what this place is. That's The Great Pause.

CHRIS

I'm not following.

MR JONES

(a beat)

Imagine reality as a highway system. You spend your life rushing from one end to the other, all just go go go. But, occasionally, you need to make a choice. All of those choices, they're forks in the road. You take one, and your destination changes just a little. But, given enough tiny forks in enough tiny roads, and you can get a traffic jam. Gridlock, nothing happens until someone just decides to move.

CHRIS

Can you hurry it up, please?

MR JONES

OOO...Look who's all in a rush now! Anyway, most worthwhile things take a while. Except for the conception of your child, that was fairly quick.

CHRIS

Rude!

MR JONES

Shush! Have you ever been unable to make up your mind? Like on the big stuff? What university to attend... Should I marry so-and-do? You know, the big stuff? That's what this place is. Every choice that can be, or has ever been, or ever will be... Right here, right now, waiting on you to go first and end the traffic jam.

CHRIS

Everything?

MR JONES

The Bow-Chicka-Whah-Whah.

CHRIS

See, that's appropriately climatic. Kind of disco, but climatic. Weird thing to happen, isn't it? Existence gets stuck in a traffic jam and everything stops.

CHRIS stares out into the chaos around him.

CHRIS

(continued)

Where's my reality?

MR JONES

It's all around you, this is your reality.

CHRIS

No, I mean...

MR JONES walks beside Chris, and points into this distance.

MR JONES

Look.

CHRIS

(following his gesture)

I don't see...

MR JONES

Look closer.

CHRIS

I don't... Wait! I see... It's so faint!

MR JONES

Closer still. Focus.

CHRIS

I see my house!

MR JONES

Open the door, go inside...

CHRIS

Oh! I see! It's his birthday! Oh, I remember that day! He's wearing that special birthday jumper, and didn't know what to do with the cake! And his bear! He won't go anywhere without his bear! He was just walking! That was the last time my parents were both with us. It was so perfect.

CHRIS wipes away a tear.

MR JONES stands beside CHRIS again, gestures to the point, and begins to snap.

CHRIS

(terror)

MR JONES, NO!

Silence.

MR JONES

Now you see what's at stake. Not just for you, but for everyone.

CHRIS

(composing himself)

Fine. Existence needs me to make a choice? I will make a damn choice! *(with authority)* Existence! I understand how you're feeling! I get it! I choose... Blue! Left! Sour cream and onion! RAY NITSCHKE!!

Nothing happens.

MR JONES approaches.

MR JONES

(happily)

Well done! Well done!

CHRIS

Did I do it? Did I make the choice?

MR JONES

Yes! Unfortunately, it wasn't the choice that needed to be made, but you made a choice!

CHRIS

I guess I don't... Understand... The question.

MR JONES

Bravo. You're ready, we're there. It's time to choose. So, Chris, let me tell you about yourself. Married, a child, parents are in failing health. Money issues, some say poor...

CHRIS

We do okay.

MR JONES

Please, I get it. You have a roof over your head, and half-way decent food on your table... Blah, blah, blah. Thank Me that you are all in good health, because who knows what that would do to your savings. But, you love each other. You're happy, and you know it! (*claps hands*) The laughter is what keeps you warm until you can pay the gas bill. Or, the other option, you can want for nothing. the finest schools, the best clothes, top-flight doctors... But your child regards you as a burden. You live separate from your spouse. It's cold, but there is no worry. Wealth, power, comfort... All at your beck and call. But loveless. Now, choose.

Silence.

CHRIS

Wait, what?

MR JONES

What "what?"

CHRIS

That's the choice? Have money or not?

MR JONES

Look closer.

CHRIS

(*thinking it out*)

I can live like we are now, and be happy, but... struggle. Or, we can do well, but... not love each other...

MR JONES

That's about it.

CHRIS

Kind of a crap way to run existence, don't you think?

MR JONES

You have a better idea?

Pause.

CHRIS

Will I remember my choice?

MR JONES

Yep. Do you remember the big decisions? The university you didn't attend? The person you didn't marry? Every choice comes with a sacrifice.

Pause.

CHRIS

Why me?

MR JONES

It's always been you. Since the Alpha part. You may not believe in reincarnation, but, hey, Reincarnation believes in you. The time has come! (*full of power and authority*) So that existence may continue...
WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?

CHRIS

No.

MR JONES

I'm sorry, what?

CHRIS

I'm saying no. I can't. It's unfair! If I'm a part of Existence... Then I'm stuck in traffic too... I relinquish my choice. I mean, can I do that?

MR JONES

Wow! The often rumored, never seen, unspoken Third Choice! Impressive! Choosing not to choose! To leave it all to chance, and accept whatever is thrown your way!

CHRIS

Isn't that what Existence is, after all? Do I go here or here? Do I say "yes?" Just coin flips.

MR JONES
(panicked)

Chris? Chris, where'd you go? NOOOO!!! HE'S
GONE!!!! WHY?????

MR JONE'S panicked screams turn to
laughter.

MR JONES
(continued)

Nah, I'm just kidding, but hurry up, would ya?

CHRIS

Not funny!

MR JONES

Well, it is, a little bit. Anyway, if you're
going to do the Third Choice I get to have a
little fun.

CHRIS

I'm not important enough to have that much
influence.

MR JONES

Why not? You're his father, her husband. You
are very influential.

CHRIS

Not to the entire universe, I'm not.

MR JONES

Ugh, you're not listening. You are very
influential. You held the door for someone
carrying a huge load of groceries, you made her
life just a bit easier. She went home just a
bit less bothered, and made dinner for her
wife. They had a nice evening. You ignored the
guy honking at you, and let those kids cross
the street. You slowed that guy enough that he
was stopped by the train, instead of trying to
make it, and dying in the process. That's the
thing about those insignificant forks in the
road, they can change the course of the world.
Come on, it's time to not make a choice.

MR JONES produces a coin, passes it
to CHRIS.

A sound like the universe resuming.

MR JONES
(continued)

Heads, the money. Tails, the love. Ready?

CHRIS
I can't.

MR JONES
I'm loosing my grip; do it!

CHRIS flips the coin.

Silence.

CHRIS stares at the coin in his
hand, MR JONES rushes over.

MR JONES
Ooo! Whadja get?

Blackout.

The End.