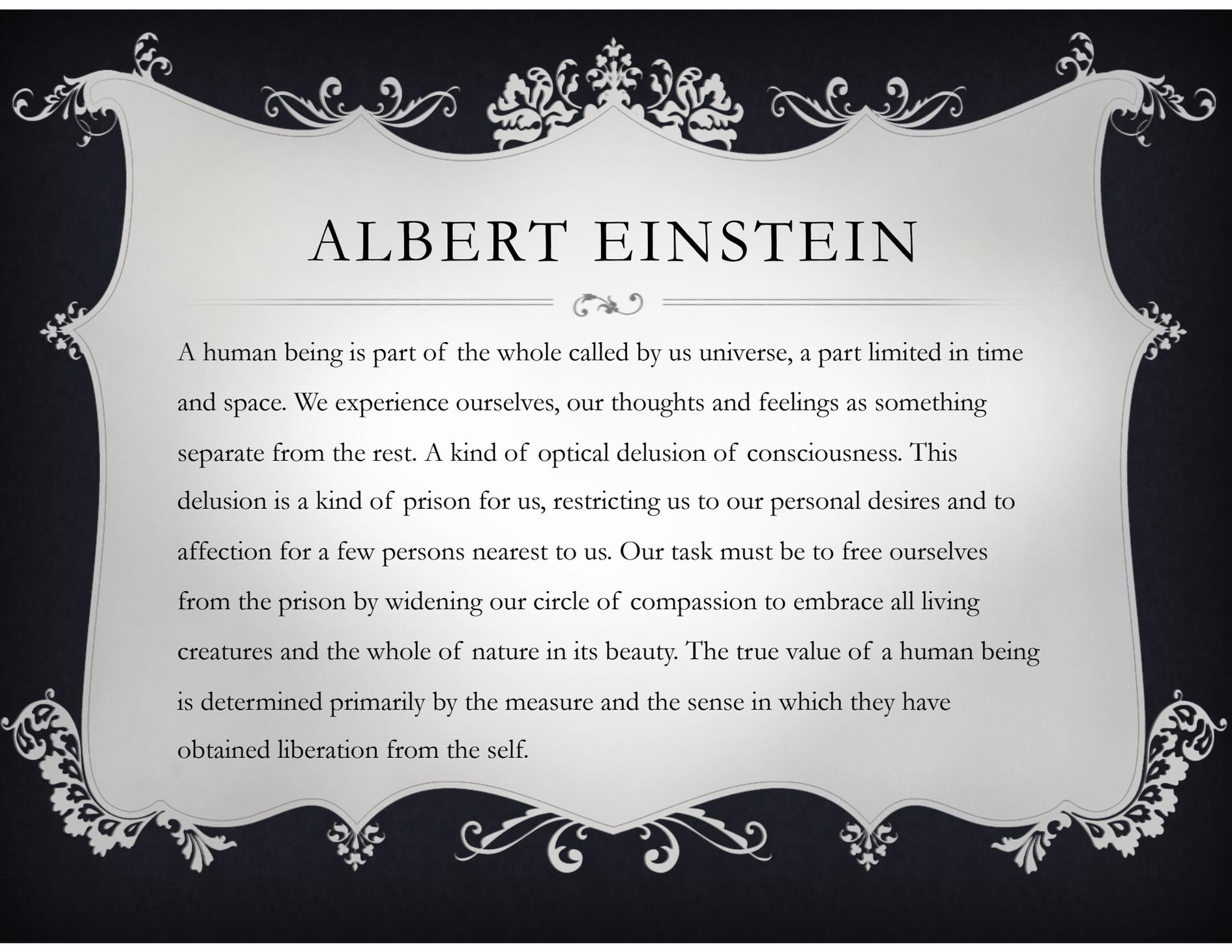


IF TWO CHARACTERS ARE  
ALIKE, ONE OF THEM IS  
UNNECESSARY

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*The sisters of Melancholia*

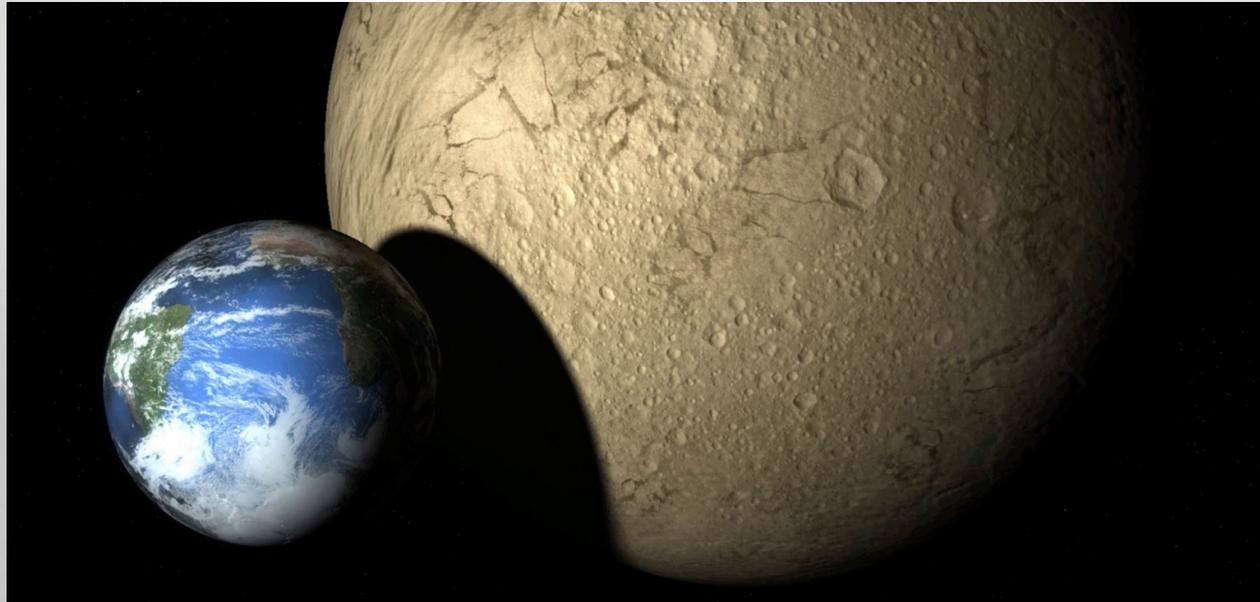


# ALBERT EINSTEIN

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A human being is part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self.

MELANCHOLIA, THE STORY OF TWO  
APOCALYPSES





# PART I, JUSTINE

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We observe two sisters: Justine, a young woman, overwrought with self-awareness and debilitating depression. We learn that Justine abhors pretense and is unable to feign complacency -- especially not on her wedding day, and especially not while everyone dearest to her demonstrates that living a life that is untrue, and unfit for one's truth, is not worth living at all. We also meet Justine's sister, Claire, the seemingly older and wiser sister. We learn that Claire hides behind her bourgeois lifestyle, with its material comforts and lavish pleasures. Claire lives in her castle-like home, affording herself the luxuries that buffer confrontation with the true pain of existence.



## PART II, CLAIRE

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In part II, we learn more about the sister's complex relationship. We see Justine barely able to function as her illness debilitates her capacity to eat or even wash herself. We observe Claire, as she takes time to tend to such pointless rituals, as leaving her sister a piece of chocolate on her bed to commemorate her arrival, a detail that a person in Justine's deprived condition would neither notice, nor care about. We learn that Claire cares deeply and unconditionally for her sister despite Justine's refusal to choose empathy over truth.

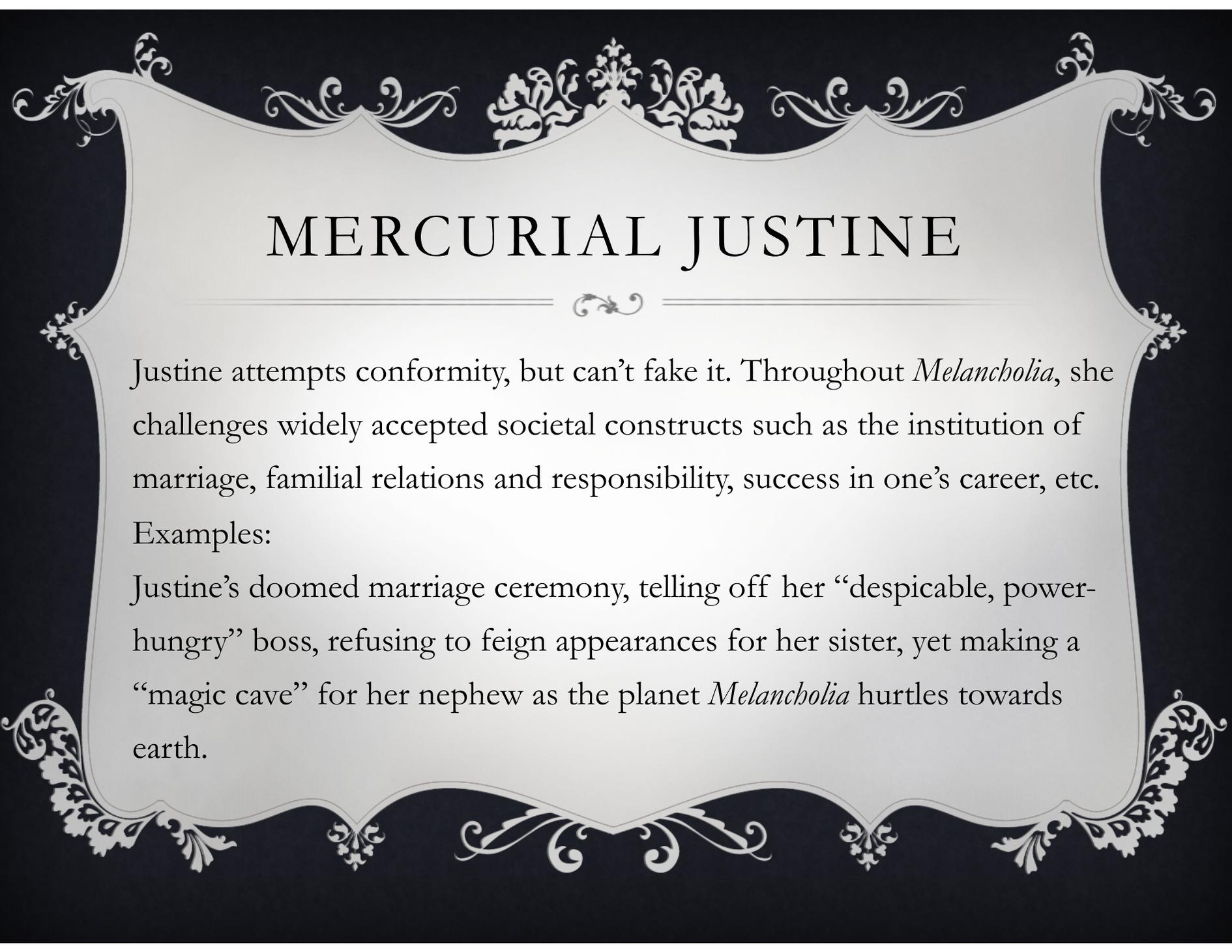
# PROPHETIC JUSTINE



# DEPRESSED JUSTINE



“I’m trudging through this grey, woolly yarn. It’s clinging to my legs. It’s really heavy to drag along.”



# MERCURIAL JUSTINE

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Justine attempts conformity, but can't fake it. Throughout *Melancholia*, she challenges widely accepted societal constructs such as the institution of marriage, familial relations and responsibility, success in one's career, etc.

Examples:

Justine's doomed marriage ceremony, telling off her "despicable, power-hungry" boss, refusing to feign appearances for her sister, yet making a "magic cave" for her nephew as the planet *Melancholia* hurtles towards earth.



# NIHILISTIC JUSTINE

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Justine finds meaning and purpose in truth; while equating rituals with deceit, distortion, and death of spirit.

Example: When Claire attempts to distract Justine from her illness by making her favorite Meatloaf dish, the emaciated Justine, after taking just one bite, cries out, “It tastes like ashes.”





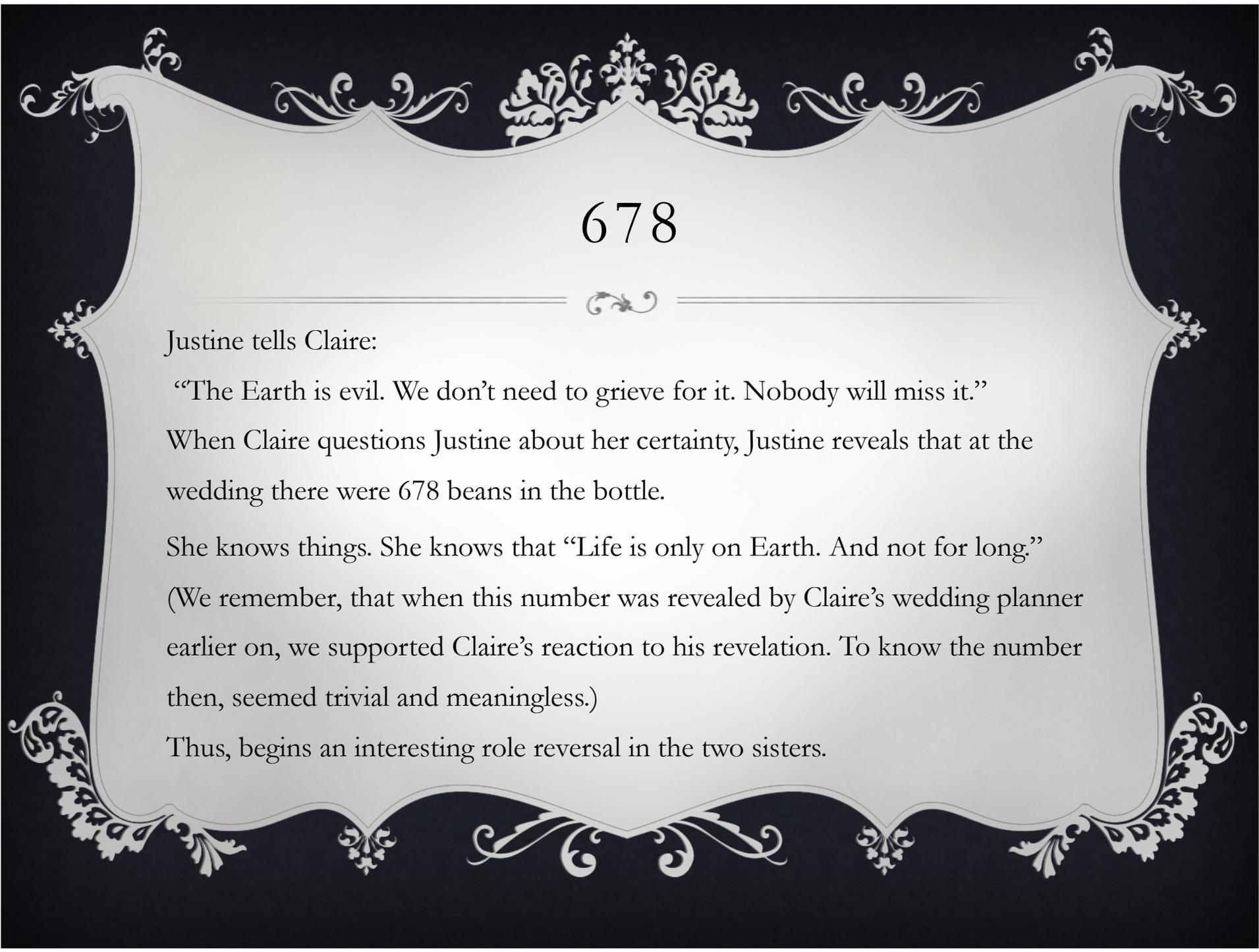
# CLAIRE, THE CAREGIVER

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- Claire is rooted in earthly attachments: her son, her husband, her home
- Claire clings to myths and appearances; adheres to societal constructs
- Claire finds comfort in being able to control situations; maintains her composure as Justine's depression makes her completely dependent on Claire.
- As the notion of *Melancholia* colliding with the earth appears more plausible, Claire takes to the internet, deluding herself, thinking that what she seeks is the truth, when in fact, it is distortion that she desires.
- Claire becomes increasingly neurotic as she faces a reality she can no longer manipulate, nor exchange.

THINGS ARE NOT  
AS THEY APPEAR





678

Justine tells Claire:

“The Earth is evil. We don’t need to grieve for it. Nobody will miss it.”

When Claire questions Justine about her certainty, Justine reveals that at the wedding there were 678 beans in the bottle.

She knows things. She knows that “Life is only on Earth. And not for long.”

(We remember, that when this number was revealed by Claire’s wedding planner earlier on, we supported Claire’s reaction to his revelation. To know the number then, seemed trivial and meaningless.)

Thus, begins an interesting role reversal in the two sisters.

# LIBERATED JUSTINE

“Our task must be to free ourselves from the prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which they have obtained liberation from the self.”





“SOMETIMES I HATE YOU  
SO MUCH”

Justine demonstrates the full magnitude of her liberation (and stark indifference to Claire’s feelings) when she no longer allows Claire refuge from the truth. It is when Justine declines to play out Claire’s doomsday fairytale on the terrace, Claire begins to unravel. Confronting her own “shadow,” Claire falls deeper into neurosis, as she is forced to come to terms with the truth of her mortality.



# WHY DON'T WE MEET?

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“You want me to have a glass of wine on your terrace? How about a song? Beethoven’s 9th. Something like that? Maybe we could light some candles? You want us to gather on your terrace, sing a song, have a glass of wine, the three of us. Do you know what I think of your plan? I think it’s a piece of shit. Why don’t we meet on the fucking toilet?”

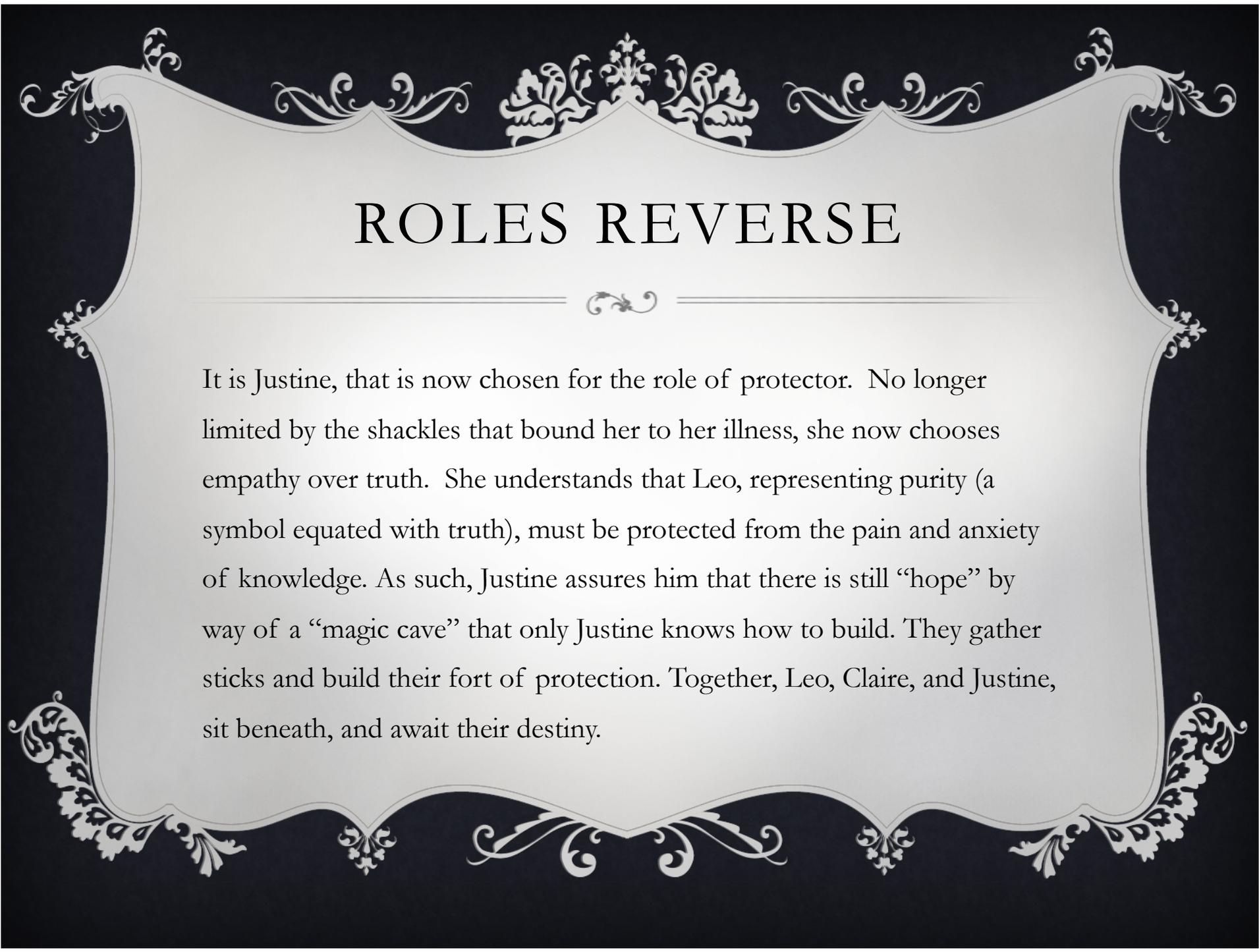




# ROLES REVERSE

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Claire's near hysterical reaction to *Melancholia* makes her unfit to nurture and support her son Leo. She attempts to go to the village for help, but despite how powerful our civilization has become through the feats of modernity, technology is unable to prevail over nature. Meanwhile, Leo senses that there is something very wrong. He is frightened about the catastrophic event that now seems inevitable. His father is physically not there, his mother is emotionally absent.



# ROLES REVERSE

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It is Justine, that is now chosen for the role of protector. No longer limited by the shackles that bound her to her illness, she now chooses empathy over truth. She understands that Leo, representing purity (a symbol equated with truth), must be protected from the pain and anxiety of knowledge. As such, Justine assures him that there is still “hope” by way of a “magic cave” that only Justine knows how to build. They gather sticks and build their fort of protection. Together, Leo, Claire, and Justine, sit beneath, and await their destiny.

