INT. KITCHEN

An OLD WOMAN is huddled beside the oven, peering inside through a cracked door.

NEO

Hello?

ORACLE (OLD WOMAN)

I know. You're Neo. Be right with you.

NEO

You're the Oracle?

ORACLE

Bingo. Not quite what you were expecting, right? I get to say I love seeing you non-believers. Always a pip. Almost done. Smell good, don't they?

NEO

Yeah.

ORACLE

I'd ask you to sit down, but you're not going to anyway. And don't worry about the vase.

NEO

What vase?

He turns to look around and his elbow knocks a VASE from the table. It BREAKS against the linoleum floor.

ORACLE

That vase.

NEO

Shit, I'm sorry.

She pulls out a tray of chocolate chip cookies and turns. She is an older woman, wearing big oven mitts, comfortable slacks and a print blouse. She looks like someone's grandma.

ORACLE

I said don't worry about it. I'll get one of my kids to fix it.

NEO

How did you know...

She sets the cookie tray on a wooden hot pad.

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ORACLE
What's really going to bake your noodle later on is, would you still have broken it if I hadn't said anything.

Smiling, she lights a cigarette.

ORACLE
You're cuter than I thought. I see why she likes you.

Who?

ORACLE
Not too bright though.

She winks.

ORACLE
You know why Morpheus brought you to see me?

He nods.

ORACLE
So? What do you think? You think you're the One?

NEO
Honestly? I don't know.

She gestures to a wooden plaque, the kind every kitchen has, except that the words are in Latin.

ORACLE
You know what that means? It's Latin. Means, 'Know Thyself.' I'm gonna let you in on a little secret. Being the One is just like being in love. Nobody can tell you you're in love. You just know it. Through and through. Balls to bones.

She puts her cigarette down.

ORACLE
Well, I better have a look at you. Open your mouth. Say, 'ahh.'

She widens his eyes, checks his ears, then feels the glands in his neck. She nods, then looks at his palms.

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ORACLE
Okay, now I'm supposed to say, 'Hmmm, that's interesting but...'
Then you say --

NEO
But what?

ORACLE
But you already know what I'm going to tell you.

NEO
I'm not the One.

ORACLE
Sorry, kid. You got the gift but looks like you're waiting for something.

NEO
What?

ORACLE
Your next life, maybe. Who knows? That's how these things go.

Neo almost has to laugh.

ORACLE
What's funny?

NEO
Morpheus. He almost had me convinced.

ORACLE
I know. Poor Morpheus. Without him we are lost.

NEO
What do you mean, without him?

The Oracle takes a long drag, regarding Neo with the eyes of a Sphinx.

ORACLE
Are you sure you want to hear this?

Neo nods.
ORACLE
Morpheus believes in you, Neo, and no one, not you or even me can convince him otherwise. He believes it so blindly that he's going to sacrifice his life to save yours.

NEO
What?

ORACLE
You're going to have to make a choice. In one hand, you will have Morpheus's life. In the other hand, you will have your own. One of you is going to die. Which one, will be up to you.

Neo can't breathe.

ORACLE
I'm sorry, kiddo. I really am. You have a good soul and I hate giving good people bad news. But don't worry, as soon as you walk outside that door, you'll start feeling better. You'll remember that you don't believe any of this fate crap. You're in control of your own life, remember?

He tries to nod as she reaches for the tray of cookies.

ORACLE
Here, take a cookie. I promise by the time you're done eating it, you'll feel right as rain.

Neo takes a cookie, the tightness in his chest slowly beginning to fade.

Morpheus rises from a couch as the priestess escorts Neo out. When they are alone, Morpheus puts his hand on Neo's shoulder.

MORPHEUS
You don't have to tell anyone what she told you. What was said was said for you and you alone.

Neo nods and takes a bite of his cookie.