

LIFERS

A feature film script presented for the award of MA by Research
in Screenwriting.

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I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

All sources are acknowledged as references.

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INT. FUNCTION ROOM. EVENING

A dimly lit, small function room. The narrow windows near the ceiling are dark. Underneath them are a selection of anniversary banners, celebrating ten years. One is a repurposed tenth birthday banner. Roughly twenty people of various ages, dressed in a mixture of casual and smart clothing.

ALISON enters. She is a 22 year old woman, dressed in dark jeans with a leather jacket. The sleeves are pushed up to just before her elbows, revealing a tattoo of a bat wrapped in its own wings.

SIMON approaches her. A 38 year old man, wearing a checked shirt with rolled sleeves and dark grey chinos. He has a thick beard and thick rimmed glasses.

SIMON

Hello? Sorry, this is a private party.

ALISON

Oh, I know. Sheryl invited me; I'm new.

SIMON

Oh, you're Alison?

ALISON

That's me.

SIMON

Simon, I'm your boss. Well one of them anyway.

ALISON

How many bosses are there?

SIMON

I stop keeping track years ago, could be up to twenty by now or back down to two. I do the nights.

ALISON

I'm going on to nights, so I guess I'm with you.

SIMON

A potential lifer then!

ALISON

Well, hopefully not. No offense, but this isn't my idea of a permanent job.

SIMON

That's what Henry said when he started. Now we're throwing him this little shindig. Henry! Get over here!

HENRY, a tall slim 28 year old dressed in faded jeans and a grey shirt half-jogs to Simon's side. His hair is messy and he is sporting a scraggly beard.

HENRY

What's up boss?

SIMON

Introduce yourself to Alison.

HENRY

Hi, I'm Henry.

SIMON

Wow, sparks are flying already. Drinks?

ALISON

/Yes

HENRY

/God yes.

Simon heads over to the bar and leans against it, raising a finger to the barkeeper.

ALISON

So, you've been at Spend Saver's for 10 years?

HENRY

Yeah. I keep telling myself that I'll get out eventually but that seems less likely with every passing year.

ALISON

Well, keep the faith.

HENRY

That died after four years.

ALISON
Can I ask you something? Why are you
still here?

HENRY
I like my job.

ALISON
Do you really?

HENRY
Well, no, but everybody hates their
jobs, it pays the bills at least.

ALISON
Does it?

HENRY
Well, my flatmate helps, but it pays
my share.

Simon returns from the bar carrying four glasses of whisky.

SIMON
And here we are, drink!

HENRY
I didn't want a whisky.

SIMON
Yeah, you did.

HENRY
Yeah I did.

Simon places the glasses on the nearest table and sits.
Henry and Alison follow his lead.

Simon distributes the glasses, keeping the fourth for
himself. He raises one of his glasses.

SIMON
To Henry!

Alison and Henry raise their drinks in unison.

ALISON
To Henry.

HENRY
To me, I guess.

Alison and Henry sip their drinks. Henry winces as the whisky hits his throat. Simon sinks his first drink, and begins to sip on the second.

HENRY (cont'd)

Jesus alive! You never heard of mixers?

SIMON

No.

ALISON

I usually start off a bit slower like.

SIMON

If I wanted concerns about how I choose to drink I'd call my mum. Except I can't cos she never figured out how to use the telephone. And also she's dead.

ALISON

Who doesn't know how to use a telephone? They've been around for centuries.

SIMON

Hey, lay off my dead mum. She was a bit slow on the uptake. Which is probably why she didn't realise you couldn't cross the motorway on foot.

HENRY

Jesus, again!

ALISON

The motorways have been around for quite a while too. How old are you?

SIMON

Ha, I know right?

HENRY

He doesn't like to talk about it. But he's at least 40.

SIMON

Don't mince your words, Henry.

HENRY

Alright, he's old as fuck and the highest he can count is 40.

SIMON

And this is why I drink. You miserable lot.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. DAY

Alison is asleep on the small sofa in her living room. There is a small pine coffee table in front, on which somebody has placed a glass of water and half a packet of aspirin. A sliver of sunlight shines through the crack in the curtains, casting light into Alison's eyes as she groggily wakes up.

Her phone buzzes on the floor, near the corner of the table. It reads "Missed Calls: Mum (4), Voicemail: Mum (1)". Alison dismisses the notifications and sits up.

ALISON

Thanks for the water!

KATE

(off screen)

No worries!

Alison's housemate KATE enters the living room carrying two mugs of tea. She is a woman in her early twenties, with light brown hair pulled back into a bun. She is wearing a striped dressing gown and pug slippers.

KATE (cont'd)

Can't have you hungover for your first day of work can we?

ALISON

I think that ship has sailed. Those people drink like their already dead.

KATE

I thought you'd fit in with that sort of crowd?

ALISON

So did I. At least I've got making a tit of myself out of the way.

KATE

It's good to get that in early. What did you do?

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. FUNCTION ROOM. NIGHT

Alison and Henry taking shots at the bar. Alison challenging Simon to a chugging contest. Alison trying to climb onto a table. Alison on the floor beside a broken table. Alison limping to the bar. Alison taking more shots. Henry and Simon carrying Alison home. Alison removing a shoe at her front door, vomiting into it, and placing it gently beside the door step. Henry and Simon looking disgusted.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. DAY

Alison is gazing into the distance. She shakes her head, and regains her focus.

ALISON
Nothing too bad. By the way, I lost
your shoe.

KATE
I only got those the other week!

ALISON
I'll get you back. One day.

Alison drains the glass of water along with two aspirin and picks up the mug of tea.

KATE
Shouldn't you be getting ready?
You're already a state you can't also
be late.

ALISON
I do so hate to rhyme.

KATE
Excuse me?

ALISON
Never mind, what's the time?

KATE
About quarter past nine.

ALISON
Oh, then I should be fine.

Alison and Kate sip their tea in unison.

INT. SHOP. DAY

Henry is wearing a brightly coloured fleece, with a name badge pinned to his chest on the left. On the right, he wears a "CHALLENGE 25" badge, along with several other badges he has collected over his time in the shop. He is talking to a customer, a woman in her 60s with grey hair and a red raincoat.

HENRY

No, I understand that, but there's very little we can do about it at the moment.

CUSTOMER

But it isn't right! I've been overcharged! Your other store is cheaper!

HENRY

Well, that's a larger store. We have different prices. We have a lot of products here that are actually cheaper than the other stores.

CUSTOMER

I want my money back! It's illegal to overcharge customers.

HENRY

That was the price on display, we charged you the advertised price. If you weren't happy to pay that you could have chosen a cheaper product or gone to the larger store.

CUSTOMER

Well I don't have my glasses! How was I supposed to know what the price was? You've stolen an extra five pence from me!

Simon approaches the scene. He is wearing a navy coloured shirt with a blue and white striped tie.

SIMON

What's going on here?

HENRY

This customer is upset about a difference in price between different stores.

CUSTOMER
I'm not upset! You're being very
flippant!

SIMON
What's the difference?

CUSTOMER
Five pence!

SIMON
Oh. Who cares? It's 5p. See you
later!

The customer steps back and gasps

CUSTOMER
Who cares? I care! You've stolen five
pence from me-

Simon interrupts the customer with a wave of his hand

SIMON
Let it go, go home, have a lovely
day, and come again.

The customer says nothing, but turns and walks towards the
exit.

HENRY
Thanks, Simon. What was that, some
Jedi mind trick?

SIMON
Something like that. Anywho,
Alison'll be here soon and Sheryl
wants you to train her. Do you know
what you're doing?

HENRY
I think so, I have trained roughly
one person per month for the last 10
years.

SIMON
We let you train new staff in your
first year? But you were so shit
then.

HENRY
I've always been good at my job!

Simon laughs

SIMON
I wouldn't go that far. We've had worse.

HENRY
I thought Alison was a transfer anyway, won't she already know what she's doing?

SIMON
Take it up with Sheryl, I'm just the messenger. Don't shoot me... It doesn't work.

The door slides open and beeps, as Alison walks in wearing the same uniform as Henry. She does not have any extra badges attached to her fleece.

SIMON (cont'd)
Ah, here she is.

Alison approaches Simon and Henry.

ALISON
Hello boys, how's it going?

HENRY
It's going as well as usual.

ALISON
Shit, already?

SIMON
You're with young Henry here today, Alison. He'll take care of you.

HENRY
That makes it sound like I'm going to kill her.

SIMON
I don't care how, just make it look like an accident.

Simon walks away laughing to himself.

HENRY
I'm really not going to kill you.

ALISON
I should hope not. What kind of shop have I walked into here?

HENRY
Probably one of the weirdest ones.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Kate is reclining on the sofa when Alison comes home, still wearing the same dressing gown. Alison throws her coat onto the chair beside the sofa and slumps down on top of it.

KATE
How was work?

ALISON
Strange.

Kate sits up

KATE
How so?

ALISON
It's just a really weird store. Like everything seems normal but it just isn't.

KATE
What, like it's all pirates in disguise?

ALISON
No the staff are normal. Except Simon, but most of them seem normal. Well, I mean they did keep sneaking up on me but that could have just been me.

KATE
So what's weird about the store?

ALISON
It feels... wrong. And there's these black slime patches that I couldn't clean up no matter how hard I tried. I went through an entire thing of blue roll on one and it didn't even shrink.

KATE
come on, I let you move in with me for the gossip! Spill!

ALISON

And the rent.

KATE

Well, of course, the rent was a factor. And friendship, and gossip.

ALISON

I only agreed to the rent, I don't know where you got those other two from.

KATE

Well if I'm not your friend then I don't know who is.

ALISON

No, there are others. I just can't think of their names right now.

KATE

Close friends then, these unnamed persons?

ALISON

Absolutely lovely, they are.

Kate stands up and collects a blanket from behind her.

KATE

Well if you're not giving me the goss then you're on your own. Goodnight.

ALISON

No, wait, stay, I want to goss.

Kate sits back down and stretches out, grinning.

KATE

I knew it. Go on then.

Alison sighs

ALISON

Alright, get me a cuppa first.

EXT. STREET. DAY

It's almost noon. Henry is walking down the street with a dark coat buttoned over his bright uniform, and headphones in his ears. He is sipping a can of energy drink in between drags of a cigarette. His usual pre-work ritual.

Across the street, Alison is also walking to work. She wears a dark leather jacket, and keeps her head low. She has headphones in and is trying to ignore everybody around her.

Henry bops his head a little in time to the music in his ears. As he does this, he spots Alison across the road. He removes one headphone and shouts out to her

HENRY

Alison!

Alison does not look round. She shows no signs of having heard him.

HENRY (cont'd)

Alison!

Still nothing. Henry checks for traffic before briskly jogging across the road. He is right behind Alison now.

Alison still has not shown any signs of having notice Henry. He reaches out and taps her on the shoulder, smiling.

Alison turns around, glaring. One headphone flings itself out of her ear as she does so.

ALISON

WHAT?

Henry stutters a little

HENRY

H-Hi?

ALISON

Oh, sorry, Henry! I was in my own little world.

HENRY

No problem. Just saying hello.

ALISON

Maybe don't sneak up on women walking by themselves though, eh? Just in future.

HENRY

I didn't sneak, I shouted you.

ALISON

Maybe send a text next time? You know "hey it's me Henry from work across the road"

HENRY

Why would I text you from across the road?

ALISON

Never mind. Just... never mind.

They continue walking to work together. A silence has settled in.

As they walk, Henry whistles to himself.

ALISON (cont'd)

Uh... how are you?

HENRY

Oh, I'm good. Just... going to work. You?

ALISON

Oh, yes, same.

HENRY

Cool cool cool...

ALISON

Can I ask you something?

HENRY

Well you just did so I guess-

ALISON

Oh, piss off with that.

HENRY

Sorry, I've been told that I'm a bit pedantic at times but I prefer to say particular. Others prefer asshole.

ALISON

Right then, asshole, can I ask you something about work?

HENRY

Fire away. I am a vestibule of knowledge.

ALISON

I don't think you're using that word right.

HENRY

No, not a vestibule... a repository?

ALISON

Why not? Anyway, trying to keep on track for a minute, have you notice anything weird about the shop while you've been there?

HENRY

you mean recently, or any time in the past decade?

ALISON

Well, whatever you've got.

HENRY

Yeah, a shitload. Have you seen any weird slimes about? Other than Jake?

ALISON

Who's Jake?

HENRY

Doesn't matter, just a slime. But the slime I'm talking about is different. It's /black and impossible to clean up?

ALISON

/black and impossible to clean up?

HENRY

That's the stuff, you've seen it too?

ALISON

How could I not, it's practically everywhere?

HENRY

It's everywhere now? I guess I didn't notice the spread. Simon told me that I was imagining things and it was regular stains that definitely cleaned up but...

ALISON

It definitely definitely isn't regular. And it definitely doesn't clean up. I must have thrown the entire cleaning cupboard at it!

HENRY

Wow, that thing's heavy, you're really strong.

ALISON
Don't worry, I put the door back on
it.

They reach the door to Spend Saver and pause before heading
in.

HENRY
Well, I should finish this.

Henry waves his cigarette at Alison.

ALISON
Actually, we've got a few minutes,
you don't happen to have a spare do
you?

HENRY
Alison, a smoker, I never would have
guessed.

ALISON
Former smoker. So this never
happened.

Henry reaches into his pocket and pulls out a packet of
cigarettes, which he opens and extends towards Alison.

Alison takes a cigarette, which Henry lights for her.

HENRY
Tell you what, I see anything weird,
I'll let you know.

ALISON
That would be a huge help. Also, any
mistreatment of staff or conflicts
that you happen upon you can bring to
me as well. I'm your new rep.

HENRY
What's a rep?

ALISON
For... the union.

HENRY
We have a union?

ALISON
How long have you worked here?

Henry pauses to think.

ALISON (cont'd)
That was rhetorical, I was at your
ten year party the other night.

HENRY
Oh is it that long already? Time sure
does slip away into nothingness when
you're working in a dead-end job.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Simon is sitting in a spinny chair in front of the CCTV monitor. The camera showing Alison and Henry talking outside is enlarged, taking up a quarter of the screen. Beside him stands BETH, a woman in her mid 20s wearing the shop uniform. She also has a large collection of additional badges. There is a long service badge, but the year it displays has worn away.

SIMON
Look at those two gossipy geese.

Beth peers at the screen.

BETH
They're onto us.

SIMON
What makes you say that?

BETH
It's true. "Black slime", "weird
stuff". What else could they be
speaking about?

SIMON
Is that what they're saying?

BETH
Oh yeah. Now they're talking about
you.

Simon swivels his chair around to face Beth.

SIMON
No they're not... what are they
saying?

BETH
It's a little hard to hear... "fat
alcoholic... no idea what he's
doing... moron." Yeah, that's you.

Simon gasps

SIMON

I am not fat!

BETH

You're not slim.

SIMON

I will get you for that. Why would Henry be so mean? He's always been such a sweet lad. It's this Alison, she's a bad influence on him. We should do something about her.

BETH

We could, if it was true.

SIMON

So you don't think I'm fat?

BETH

No, I do. I was messing with you. They're just talking about the slime mainly.

SIMON

Well that doesn't mean anything.

BETH

It means they're comparing weird stuff. They're onto us. It's just a matter of time.

SIMON

It is his time.

BETH

Yeah, it's not Henry I'm worried about. It's Alison. You know the union sent her?

SIMON

I thought she transferred for her studies.

Simon rolls over to a filing cabinet, and slides open a drawer.

BETH

Maybe that's just a cover. Or maybe she did that too, but the union wanted her in this store in particular.

Simon pulls out a file labelled "Marston, Alison"

SIMON

That's ludicrous. Nobody here is even in the union.

BETH

Maybe they found that suspicious. There's usually at least one.

Simon opens the file.

SIMON

Here we go, her application. Reason for transfer request: Moving for studies.

Beth looks at the file.

BETH

Yeah, and right there... union member since 2014, rep since 2016.

SIMON

Oi, this is confidential you know. And besides, you can't just take a rep gig with you. They have to send a letter to the management and gives us time to object.

Beth picks up the file and holds it sideways. An envelope slides to the ground. Simon bends and picks it up.

BETH

When was that sent?

Simon looks at the date stamped on the envelope.

SIMON

Two weeks ago.

BETH

Did anyone read it?

Simon turns the envelope over. It is still sealed.

SIMON
Fucking Sheryl.

BETH
We are screwed.

SIMON
There's nothing illegal or untoward
about what we're doing.

BETH
Do you want to explain that in a
tribunal?

SIMON
It won't come to that.

BETH
You better hope not. If we get
exposed under your stewardship He'll
come for you first.

SIMON
He isn't going to know.

BETH
He already knows, He always knows.
The only reason you're still here is
'cos He thinks you can fix it.

SIMON
Shit. Do you want to take over?

BETH
Fuck no, I'm not putting my neck on
the line for your fuck up.

Simon places Alison's file back into the filing cabinet and
slams it closed.

SIMON
I've got it. Go and wait for Henry
downstairs. I'll join you when I can.

BETH
Oh come off it, he's not that close
yet.

SIMON
He will be. Go and wait downstairs.
I've got it. I've got it. I have got
it.

BETH
You don't have it.

Beth leaves the office.

INT. BASEMENT. DAY

Beth enters the basement, and flicks on the lights. They flicker as they switch on, casting dim light into the center of the room that does not quite reach into the corners.

She swats away cobwebs as she makes her way down the stairs. The main chamber of the basement is completely empty. There is a thick level of dust on the concrete floor. As she walks, she leaves footprints behind her. The dust quickly settles back into place, leaving no trace. The walls drip with black slime, pooling onto the floor below.

Beth crosses through the main chamber and into an even darker area to the side.

There is a scraping sound, which grows louder.

Beth re-enters the main chamber, followed by a large wooden table with ornate carved legs. Her hand is outstretched towards the table, and she is squinting with concentration.

The table settles in the centre of the room. Beth waves her hand in a circular motion, and three chairs slide into the room from the darker area. Two of them place themselves on one side of the table, facing towards the entrance to the basement. The third chair slides to the other side of the table facing the other two.

Beth nods to herself and goes to sit in the right chair on the two seated side of the table.

She pauses, and waves her hand once more. From another corner of the basement, a large silver candlestick with one red cylindrical candle floats to the middle of the table. As Beth takes her seat, the candle lights itself.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Simon is spinning idly on his chair. The outside monitor is still enlarged despite the fact that nobody is shown on it.

He taps a pen against the desk and swivels towards the door.

He watches the door for a moment and then resumes his idling.

Through the tinted window of the office door, Henry is seen hanging up his coat.

Simon swivels towards the door once more, spotting Henry.

He leaps to his feet and pulls the door open.

SIMON
Henry? A word.

Henry turns to face Simon.

HENRY
Sure, let me just punch in first.

Alison comes from around the corner and hangs her coat next to Henry's.

ALISON
Hi, Simon.

SIMON
Evening Alison. Henry'll be right with you, I just wanted a quick word.

ALISON
Ooh, looks like someone's in trouble. Call me if you need union representation, Henry!

SIMON
Recruit on your own time.

ALISON
You know you have to give me paid leave to do that, right?

SIMON
Yeah, that ain't gonna happen.

Henry enters the office and closes the door behind him.

Alison heads towards the shop floor.

INT. BASEMENT. DAY

Beth is still seated at the table. The candle continues to burn in the centre.

Beth checks her watch, and sighs.

She pulls a book out of her back pocket. It is too thick to have fit into the pocket. She begins rapidly turning the pages, her eyes flitting from side to side as she speed reads.

She checks her watch once more, and sighs again.

She begins to read at a normal pace, already nearing the halfway point of the novel.

The candle flickers a little, before stabilising.

In the window of the basement, Alison peers through. She cannot see Beth at her table, but the flickering of the candle illuminates the stairs leading up to the door. Alison holds her phone up to the window and takes a photograph.

INT. WAREHOUSE. DAY

As Alison closes the door, Henry and Simon exit the office.

They meet in the middle of the warehouse.

SIMON

What were you doing out there?

ALISON

Calling Neil. The area organiser.

SIMON

On work time?

ALISON

It's permitted. You should brush up on policy.

SIMON

They keep changing it. Well, back to work you two. And Henry, think on what I said.

Simon heads into the basement.

ALISON

What was that about?

HENRY

I'm not too sure. Pretty sure he mentioned Egypt. Or Greece. He used the word ancient a lot.

ALISON
What's he doing down there?

HENRY
Probably getting some shelving or something. We'll see him about soon. Anywho, training again. Time to learn how to clean the floors.

Henry leads Alison out of the warehouse. She glances back at the basement door as she goes.

INT. BASEMENT. DAY

Simon descends the stairs, and walks towards Beth at her table. He glances around the room for a moment.

BETH
Where's Henry?

SIMON
He'll find us soon enough. Move over. It looks better if I'm on the right.

Beth doesn't move.

BETH
You'll be on the right from Henry's perspective.

Simon sighs and takes the unoccupied chair facing the entrance.

SIMON
I wanted the grey candle.

BETH
We don't have that one anymore.

Simon looks around, searching for his preferred candle

SIMON
You're going to ruin this.

BETH
The red's better.

Simon glares at Beth

SIMON
It's not what I wanted.

Simon folds his arms across his chest and slumps in his chair.

BETH
You better not be doing that when he gets here.

SIMON
I won't.

Simon doesn't move

BETH
Good. It looks bad.

SIMON
It's comfy.

BETH
No it isn't, you're just in a mood.

SIMON
I'm not.

Beth glares at Simon.

BETH
Stop it.

SIMON
I'm not doing anything.

Beth continues to glare.

Simon sits upright.

SIMON (cont'd)
I'm supposed to be in charge here.
Don't undermine me.

Beth stands up.

BETH
Fine, take the pissing chair.

Simon moves to her vacated seat, and Beth sits in the chair Simon was previously in.

BETH (cont'd)
Baby.

Simon says nothing, sitting upright and puffing out his chest.

INT. WAREHOUSE. EVENING.

Henry and Alison enter the warehouse from the shop floor.

ALISON
I never knew there was so much that
went into cleaning the floors.

HENRY
Well, someone's got to keep that
black slime away from the fridges.

ALISON
But never remove it entirely.

HENRY
Don't even try, it's a fool's errand.

Alison glances at her watch.

ALISON
Jesus, that took four hours?

HENRY
Oh good, a new record. You're a
natural. At driving back, but never
fully removing, strange black slime.

Alison peers around the room. She notices the amber glow
coming from the basement.

ALISON
That's weird.

HENRY
What is?

ALISON
That light was on earlier. I thought
Simon would switch it off when he
left the basement.

HENRY
Maybe he's still in there?

ALISON
Four hours later?

HENRY
He can be quite slow.

A puddle of black slime slides under the basement door,
unnoticed.

ALISON

Do you really not think there's a lot of weird shit going on here? I mean, the slime moves. I've seen it move.

The slime halts in its tracks

HENRY

I think that's the rats.

Alison looks around wildly, trying to find any trace of rats

ALISON

Why are there rats? There should be no rats. Never rats.

HENRY

Well, you can't get rid of them completely.

Henry takes a seat on an upturned bucket

ALISON

Yes you can. There are entire companies dedicated solely to the complete removal of rats. This is a food shop. It's unhygienic. And regardless, it was definitely the slime I saw moving.

HENRY

Still think it's rats.

Alison upturns a second bucket beside Henry and sits down on it.

ALISON

Well, find the rats then.

HENRY

Hang on, you're not in charge of me.

Henry stands up

ALISON

True. Maybe I should look for the rats.

HENRY

I think I'm well equipped to locate a tiny little rats nest.

ALISON

Be my guest.

HENRY

I will. Where do you think I should start?

Alison stands up, and walks over to the basement door

ALISON

Well, if it was me looking for the rats rather than someone as well equipped as you, I'd probably start with the basement. But I'm sure you have your own system.

HENRY

That's right, I have my own system for locating rats. I'm going to start in the basement, because that is coincidentally also where I would start using my own unique system.

Alison sits back down

ALISON

Let me know how you get on.

HENRY

Okie dokie.

Henry walks over to the cleaning cupboard. The door is hanging on by a single hinge as he opens it. He pulls out a mop, with a dented handle. He attempts to close the broken door, giving up as quickly as he started when it proves a difficult task.

HENRY (cont'd)

See you on the flippy flop.

Henry opens the basement door and descends the stairs. The door closes behind him. More slime eases itself under the door.

Alison sighs and pushes the cleaning cupboard door closed.

ALISON

Hey, Simon, I'm off on my break. If you object say "Nay".

Nobody responds, as there is nobody else in the warehouse.

ALISON (cont'd)
Excellent.

Alison pulls her coat on, and pulls a twenty pence piece from the pocket, which she slips into the pocket of Henry's coat.

ALISON (cont'd)
You don't mind if I buy another
cigarette do you Henry?

Once more, she gets no response.

ALISON (cont'd)
Thought not.

INT. BASEMENT. EVENING.

Henry climbs down the stairs, mop in hand.

He turns the corner, and spots Simon and Beth at their table. He cocks his head.

HENRY
Uhm... hello?

SIMON
Ah, Henry, come on in. We've been
expecting you.

HENRY
You have?

SIMON
We've been waiting for some-

Simon turns his head and notices Beth is snoring, her head back. He taps her on the shoulder.

SIMON (cont'd)
(shouting)
Bethany! You're ruining it!

Beth exclaims as she is suddenly awakened.

BETH
Ah, Henry. We've been waiting for you
for some time.

Simon fully turns towards Beth.

SIMON
I was going to say that!

BETH
Well you didn't.

SIMON
Yes I... never mind.

HENRY
What's happening?

SIMON
Take a seat, young man. It's time you
knew everything.

INT. WAREHOUSE. EVENING.

As Alison returns from her break, she glances once more towards the basement window. It is illuminated in a constantly shifting array of colours. She moves close to the door and tries to listen.

As she moves closer, the black slime forms a seal around the cracks of the door. The sound is muffled to the point of near-silence.

As Alison waits, the slime slowly begins to cover the window. Before she notices, the window is completely obscured by the slime. She can no longer see anything through it.

She pulls her phone from her pocket and types a note, before leaving the warehouse.

The basement door opens, and Henry exits, followed by Simon and Beth.

HENRY
Is this permanent?

SIMON
Yes, Henry. You're one of us now.

BETH
And it has to remain a secret.

HENRY
What happens if it doesn't?

SIMON

As the newest member, we would have to sacrifice you to appease His wrath.

HENRY

Who is this He or His or Him you keep mentioning.

Beth and Simon share a look.

BETH

He doesn't have a name.

SIMON

Or a corporeal frame.

BETH

Or a confirmed presence.

SIMON

And nobody has ever claimed to have seen Him.

BETH

Or heard from Him.

SIMON

But He's bloody terrifying.

HENRY

Are you sure he's real?

SIMON

You mean "is He real?". We capitalise it.

HENRY

How can you possibly tell in speech?

BETH

A sense of reverence. And yes, He's most definitely real.

SIMON

And deadly.

HENRY

But you've never seen him?

SIMON

No, nobody's ever seen *Him*.

HENRY
I said it with reverence.

BETH
Not enough.

SIMON
Nowhere near enough. He can tell,
Henry, He can always tell.

HENRY
HE.

Beth and Simon share another look.

HENRY (cont'd)
What?

SIMON
You'll get there. Hopefully.

Simon and Beth head towards the office as Alison reenters the warehouse.

She walks towards Henry, who turns as she approaches.

HENRY
Ah, hello Alison.

ALISON
So, did you find any rats?

Alison moves in closer to Henry

HENRY
Oh no, the traps are empty. Like I
told you, there's no rats here.

ALISON
Okay, well what about the other weird
stuff?

Henry steps back from Alison

HENRY
Oh, that. Yes, we did have a good
laugh about that didn't we? But it's
probably not appropriate to joke
about paranormal goings on in a
workplace. We're here to work not
establish a new world order.

ALISON

I never said paranormal. Or New World Order.

HENRY

Well somebody did. Anywho, that's enough joking around with it for now. We have a lot to do.

Henry exits towards the shop floor.

Alison sighs. She heads towards the coat racks and takes her change back from Henry's pockets.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Alison opens the front door and kicks off her shoes. She closes it behind her and slumps down into her chair.

On the sofa, Kate is wrapped in a blanket, with a laptop perched on her knees.

KATE

Okay, mum, Alison's home so I've got to go. Talk soon, love you.

Kate closes her laptop and places it on the ground in front of her.

KATE (cont'd)

Cuppa?

ALISON

Actually, could you grab me some wine?

KATE

Oh shit, that bad?

ALISON

Henry's gone weird.

KATE

Is this the man nearing his 30s who's worked at the same store for a decade?

ALISON

Yeah.

KATE

So... weirder?

ALISON

Weirder.

Kate stands up and throws her blanket back onto the sofa.

She walks off towards the kitchen.

KATE (O.S.)

How so?

ALISON

I thought he'd be like, an ally or something. Like he knew something was up.

Kate returns with two glasses and a bottle of red wine. She pours the glasses and passes one to Alison, settling back onto the sofa.

KATE

So what went wrong?

Alison takes a large sip.

ALISON

Ugh, red?

KATE

It's the last bottle.

ALISON

Balls. Yeah, so he went into the basement for a weirdly long time, after Simon had already been in there for a weirdly long time and then he came back he was all...

KATE

Weird?

ALISON

Yeah. He was acting like nothing was going on and claimed he was just joking. Then he seemed proper eager to get back to work.

KATE

That doesn't sound like Henry. From what I know of him from you telling me about that one shift you had with him. Are you sure he wasn't just joking before and having an off day at a job he actually enjoys?

ALISON

Maybe. But no, he called it a dead-end job just this morning.

Alison finishes her glass, and refills it.

Kate takes a small sip.

KATE

Well, you know what they say about dead ends.

ALISON

No, what?

KATE

That sometimes the only way through a dead end is to end up dead.

ALISON

Who says that?

KATE

I've heard people say it.

ALISON

Never has anyone said that. Never.

KATE

That's not true, I just said it.

ALISON

Yeah, but that's not a people saying. It's just you being strange.

KATE

People like when I'm strange.

ALISON

Name one person.

KATE

You?

ALISON

No. Plus, Neil practically begged me to transfer there instead of the other one and now he's acting like he doesn't even know who I am. And nobody's even in the union there, so I don't know what I'm even doing.

KATE
Not for the first time.

ALISON
Wow. Rude.

KATE
Anything else of note?

ALISON
Yeah, actually. He mentioned
paranormal goings on and something
about a new world order.

KATE
Is that odd?

ALISON
Yeah, cos we never even suggested
that before. Something's going on in
the basement for sure.

KATE
Maybe you should probably
investigate.

ALISON
That isn't a bad idea.

Alison stands up and finishes off her glass of wine.

KATE
I didn't mean now.

ALISON
No time like the present.

KATE
Yes there is. There's the near
future. It's like the present but you
get to sleep first.

Alison pulls her shoes on and heads back out the door.

Kate shouts after her

KATE (cont'd)
THIS IS A REALLY BAD IDEA!

EXT. SHOP. NIGHT

Alison approaches the front door of the shop. There are no lights inside, and the shutter is down. She looks around, and spots a light still on in the alley beside the shop.

EXT. ALLEY. NIGHT

Alison opens the gate and enters the alley. She walks past the fire door, and further down past the bins. She spots a rickety ladder leading up to the roof. She begins to climb it slowly.

EXT. ROOF. NIGHT

Alison pulls herself up onto the roof. She looks around once more. Her phone begins to ring. She answers it.

KATE

(phone)

Where are you?

ALISON

I'm at the shop.

KATE

(phone)

You're not going to get in, it's shut.

ALISON

Yes I am. I'm on the roof right now.

KATE

(phone)

And how do you think you're going to get in from there? Down the chimney?

Alison says nothing

KATE (cont'd)

No, Alison! You can't go down the chimney!

ALISON

Why not?

KATE

(phone)

You're not Santa Claus!

ALISON

I could be.

Alison hangs up the phone and runs towards the chimney.

She gently lifts up the chimney pots and places them beside the brickwork. One slips and rolls off the roof. Alison pauses.

Smash.

Alison winces and freezes for a moment.

A dog barks in the distance.

Alison pulls herself up the chimney and slides down.

INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

There is a loud crash.

ALISON

(O.S)

Shit!

A thumping noise is heard. Eventually, Alison breaks through the plywood covering the fireplace in the corner of the basement. She crawls out, covered in dust.

Slime moves away from the fireplace and out of the basement.

Alison pulls out her phone and begins to record her surroundings.

The table is still placed in the middle of the main chamber, the candle now extinguished.

ALISON (cont'd)

If anyone finds this, I'm dead. Or showing it to you as evidence. I can't see anything weird. Except an ornate table. But something really... fucky... is going at Spend Saver. And I know it's got something to do with this basement.

She wanders around the basement.

In the corner of the main chamber, the flash from her phone illuminates a sizable collection of cylindrical candles, in a variety of colours. There is, in fact, a grey candle.

ALISON (cont'd)
Nothing too strange about that.
Except we don't sell candles here.

Alison reaches into a backpack that she has brought with her. She retrieves a small square camera with a camouflage pattern.

ALISON (cont'd)
I'm leaving hidden cameras down here
to get eyes on the room. Whatever
they're doing is centred down here.

She places the camera behind the candles and rearranges them to better obscure the camera.

As she finishes, the window to the warehouse is illuminated. Black slime begins to climb down the stairs.

HENRY
(O.S)
Where? Down here?

SIMON
(O.S)
That's what it says. After you.

Alison sprints back towards the fireplace and holds the plywood in place behind her.

Henry and Simon enter the basement.

HENRY
There's no one here.

SIMON
Must be a false alarm. No need to
bother Him.

HENRY
Won't he already know?

SIMON
Reverence, Henry. And who knows?
Nobody knows what He knows and
doesn't know. Is He omnipresent?
Could be. Is He asleep? Could be. Can
He sleep? Beats me. But I can. And
I'm going back home to bed. I'll run
through some more Lifer training with
you tomorrow.

Henry and Simon turn and leave the basement.

Alison pulls her phone from her pocket as she slides back out of the fireplace.

ALISON

I don't know if you caught that, but whatever's happening, Henry and Simon are definitely involved. And it's something to do with something called Lifer training.

Alison peers back up the chimney.

ALISON (cont'd)

Also, I'm stuck down here. Fuck, I'm not even in tomorrow. This is going to be tricky.

EXT. ROOF. MORNING

There is a slow scraping noise, and a heavy panting.

After a pause, a backpack emerges from the chimney stack, and falls softly beside it. The backpack is blackened from old soot.

There is more panting, as hands appear around the rim of the chimney, also covered in black soot.

Another pause, then groaning.

Alison hauls herself out of the chimney and rolls over the side. She lays motionless for a moment, breathing heavily. Sweat breaks through the soot that has coated her face.

Alison raises her hands to her face and wipes away the sweat and soot.

PAN DOWN TO

EXT. SHOP. MORNING

Simon and Henry are opening the shop. From the roof, there is a scrambling sound.

HENRY

Did you hear that?

SIMON

What?

HENRY
Sounds like someone's up there.

SIMON
Oh, what, Santa Claus? Come on Henry,
the only thing you're getting is
coal.

HENRY
It's November, of course it isn't
Santa.

SIMON
Right, that's why.

Simon turns his key in the door as he raises the shutter
with a fob.

A tile falls from the roof and shatters on the ground in
between them.

HENRY
See?

SIMON
Wind.

Henry looks towards the trees on the other side of the road.
The leaves hang motionless.

Simon notices him looking at the trees.

SIMON (cont'd)
Wind from last night. Let's get to
work, Ric Flair.

HENRY
Ric Flair?

SIMON
Is he not still going by Nature Boy?

HENRY
I think he's dead.

SIMON
Shame. I always liked him.

HENRY
Give up your powers and meet him
then. I can run the show round here.

SIMON
You wait ten years for a bit of
ambition and it all shows up at once.

Simon enters the shop.

SIMON (cont'd)
Time to work, Ric.

HENRY
I don't like this bit.

SIMON
Stop staring at trees like they owe
you money then.

Henry enters the shop.

INT. SHOP. MORNING

Simon locks the door behind Henry, and sits down on the
packing area of the till beside him.

SIMON
Ready for a long one?

HENRY
Since when did you do mornings?

SIMON
Since I need tonight off for planning
and its best Sheryl doesn't think I'm
off out.

HENRY
Surely that's a better excuse?

SIMON
No, she'll want to join us.

HENRY
Why hasn't she? The Lifers, I mean.
She must have done enough service by
now.

SIMON
That's not how it works. It has to be
at this store. And I also never
asked.

HENRY
So what's the plan tonight then?

SIMON
Finish work at about 4, get relieved.
"Leave", sneak back in, head to the
basement. You prove yourself, then
you're in.

HENRY
I thought I was already "in"?

Simon laughs

SIMON
No. You're one of us but you're not
one of *us*. Get me?

Henry pauses and squints slightly

HENRY
No.

SIMON
Course you don't. Get to it.

HENRY
What?

SIMON
Working. At the shop where you work.
Are you always this slow?

HENRY
Only in the mornings.

SIMON
Better get you a coffee then. Two
sugars?

HENRY
Just the one, I'm almost sweet
enough.

SIMON
Alright, Turkish.

Simon begins to walk towards the back.

Henry follows him.

HENRY
In this context, you'd be Turkish.

SIMON

Oh yeah. Well, I don't remember the other guys name. Maybe we should try to have a conversation that isn't dominated mostly by pop culture reference.

HENRY

Pretty old references from you mate. Even for somebody who claims to be 40.

INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

Henry, Beth and Simon are seated at the table, a red candle burning in the centre. Simon reaches into a beaten leather satchel at his feet, and pulls out a stack of papers.

He places the papers on the table, and flips to a photograph of a rival store.

SIMON

Are you ready for your test, Henry?

HENRY

Is that Quick and Buy from down the street?

Simon nods

SIMON

Correct.

HENRY

Is that the test?

Simon nods

SIMON

Correct.

HENRY

So I passed?

Simon turns to Beth, puzzled

BETH

He was asking if identifying the shop was the test, Simon.

Simon squints at Henry.

SIMON

No, the store is the test.

Simon flips the papers over. On the next page are two bar charts, one showing a steady rise and the other mostly consistent.

SIMON (cont'd)

These are their sales figure

He taps on the rising bar chart

SIMON (cont'd)

And these are ours.

He indicates the consistent chart.

HENRY

How did you get these?

SIMON

From the computer.

HENRY

How did you get the other ones?

SIMON

Some sort of computer thing,
probably.

Henry peers closer at the charts.

HENRY

Is this legal?

BETH

Probably not, but neither is what's
coming next.

Henry stands up.

HENRY

I thought this was some sort of super
powered social club. Now we're going
to do a crime?

Simon stands up and approaches Henry.

SIMON

We're going to do what I say we're
going to do. Are you one of us or
not? Because you don't want to find
out what happens to traitors.

Henry backs up towards the wall.

HENRY

No, I love doing crime. Give me a weed, I'll smoke it right now.

BETH

Nothing like that. We're doing sabotage.

Beth puts her feet up on the table.

BETH (cont'd)

You know, destroy the stock, fudge the figures, psychologically torment the staff. That sort of thing.

PAN DOWN TO UNDERNEATH THE TABLE.

There is a large canvas bag, filled with cans of spray paint and knives. Nestled between the items are two books: Accounting for Dummies and 'How to Psychologically Torment People for Profit'.

Simon reaches into the bag and withdraws a baseball bat, too large to have actually fit inside of the bag.

SIMON

Harmless fun, really.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Alison is sat on her sofa, dressed in dark jeans and a leather jacket, ready to go.

On the table in front of her, her laptop is open and displaying footage from the camera she planted in the basement.

SIMON

(O.S.)

Harmless fun really.

Kate enters the living room

KATE

You going out?

Alison sighs and picks up her backpack from in front of her. It is still greyed from soot.

ALISON

Guess so.

Alison stands and pulls on her backpack, heading towards the front door.

Kate sits down on the now empty sofa, closing Alison's laptop. She places a mug of tea on a coaster beside it.

KATE

Have fun.

Alison opens the front door, and turns back toward her friend.

ALISON

I always do.

EXT. SHOP. NIGHT

Simon, Henry, and Beth exit the shop, locking the door behind them. Beth is carrying the bag from under the table. Poking out of Simon's front pocket is the handle of a baseball bat.

As the trio turn around from locking the door, Alison approaches from the nearby bus stop.

ALISON

Alright gang? What are you all still doing here?

Simon blinks and turns to Henry.

Henry looks to Beth.

Beth looks between Simon and Henry, and glares.

BETH

Working late. Fridges broke.

Alison peers past them into the shop. Through the gaps in the shutter, the fridges are just visible, fully stocked.

Beth follows Alison's gaze, before turning to Simon.

BETH (cont'd)

(mouthing)

What now? Do something!

Simon looks blankly at Beth

ALISON
They look fine from here.

SIMON
We fixed it. Henry's very good with technology.

Alison turns to Henry.

ALISON
You never mentioned that. Maybe you could help me with my laptop? It's fried.

SIMON
Henry's busy.

Alison turns to Simon

ALISON
I thought you'd finished now?

Henry stutters, but masks it with a cough

HENRY
We need more fridge bits... to fix it proper.

Alison turns back to Henry

ALISON
What fridge bits?

HENRY
A new... fan.

Simon shakes his head slightly, then looks at Alison as though he has just noticed her.

SIMON
What are you doing here?

Alison glances at the bag Beth is carrying, and the handle in Simon's pocket.

ALISON
Oh, I was just out for a jog.

Beth stares at Alison's jacket.

Alison follows her gaze, and tugs at her lapels

ALISON (cont'd)
Getting a proper sweat on.

Simon and Beth exchange looks.

BETH
Well, I should be getting home.

ALISON
Not to the fridge shop?

SIMON
Yes, Henry and I might need help
carrying back the... fridge bits.

ALISON
Proper heavy, those fans, huh? Will
that bag even be big enough?

Beth holds the bag closer to herself

BETH
I think we'll get what we need with
this.

Alison turns to leave

ALISON
Well, I'll leave you to it then.
Night all.

Simon watches her leave

SIMON
Good night, Alison.

Beth pulls them into a huddle

BETH
We can't do it tonight. I told you
she was on to us.

SIMON
What? She said she was out for a jog!

BETH
In a leather jacket?

SIMON
For sweating. I don't know, sounds
like a youth thing.

HENRY
She wasn't very sweaty looking.

SIMON
Well the rest of us don't spend all
our evenings staring at sweaty women.

Henry says nothing.

Simon sighs

SIMON (cont'd)
Fine, tomorrow. But we can't delay it
much longer. According to my data,
that little git will overtake us in
sales soon.

Henry breaks the huddle

HENRY
How soon?

SIMON
Could be a week, could be a year.

BETH
Could be never.

SIMON
I've done my research. Mostly.

Simon takes the bag from Beth, and withdraws the baseball bat from his pocket. He eases it into the bag, knocking out Accounting for Dummies. A bookmark labelled 'Simon' falls from the pages. He places it back, close to the start of the book.

Henry stares at the book as Simon shoves it back into the bag.

SIMON (cont'd)
Away with you! Meet on the roof in 24
hours.

BETH
Better make it 23 and a half. She'll
never see it coming.

They leave.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

Henry is walking home, his black coat buttoned up to his neck. He is passing a park, and the street is lined with hedges. The streetlights illuminate his face periodically.

As Henry comes towards the end of the street, Alison rounds the corner.

ALISON

Henry.

She stops directly underneath a streetlight. Henry stops in his tracks, just outside the light.

HENRY

Alison?

ALISON

I know.

Henry looks around.

HENRY

No. Know what?

ALISON

Henry, I know what's going on.

Henry scoffs

HENRY

Okay, Alison, what's going on?

Alison lights a cigarette.

ALISON

I know that when I came here, barely a week ago, you were a friend. And now you can't stand to look at me. I know that Simon's doing something potentially illegal. And I know he's got you wrapped up in it out of some twisted sense of loyalty.

Henry steps forward, still outside of the light.

HENRY

You're wrong. And if I was you, I'd leave it alone.

Alison steps back, away from Henry.

ALISON

Are you threatening me, Henry? What's he done to you?

HENRY

You don't even know me.

ALISON

Henry, I'm your friend. I'm not against you.

Henry steps forward again, the light seeming to bend away from him. Alison steps back further.

HENRY

If you're coming after one of us, you're coming after all of us. If you're my friend, you'll listen to me. There's nothing you can do here. Leave it alone.

Simon appears, as if from nowhere.

SIMON

He's right, Alison. There's nothing you can do.

Alison backs away from Simon. She is stood against the hedge now, as the streetlight overhead burns out.

Simon approaches.

Henry places his hand in front of Simon to stop him. He leans in to whisper to Simon.

HENRY

What are you doing?

SIMON

What do you think?

HENRY

You can't kill her.

SIMON

It's either her, or you. And then her.

HENRY

I can handle this.

SIMON

You'd better.

Simon glares at both Alison and Henry in turn, before turning to walk away. As quickly as he had arrived, he is gone.

Alison is breathing heavily.

HENRY
Please, leave it alone.

ALISON
He can't do this to you, Henry.

HENRY
What makes you think I'm not exactly where I want to be?

ALISON
You told me you wanted to leave.

HENRY
That was wrong. This is where I belong.

Alison steps closer to Henry. The streetlight fizzes back into life.

Henry winces as the light hits his eyes.

ALISON
Bullshit.

HENRY
Leave it alone, or he'll kill us both.

ALISON
I can help you.

Henry walks past Alison

HENRY
No. You can't.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Alison enters through the front door. Kate is reclining on the sofa, watching a film on the television. She sits up when Alison walks in

KATE
Alison, you're back early!

Alison flops down into the armchair besides the sofa, letting her head fall backwards onto the cushion, staring up at the bare light fitting on the ceiling.

ALISON

Yeah.

Kate edges closer to Alison

KATE

Everything alright?

Alison stares at the bulb, flickering slightly. It is on its last legs. Half of the room is lit by the light of a standing lamp in the corner, the only light in the brief seconds where the ceiling light goes completely dark.

ALISON

Yeah.

Kate leaves the sofa and approaches the chair where Alison is seated. She perches on the arm of the chair, and places one arm around her friends shoulders.

KATE

Was that a lie?

Alison breaks her gaze away from the ceiling light, but does not make eye contact with Kate straight away. Instead, she focuses on the table in front of her.

Kate has tidied away all of the loose stacks of paper that Alison was always adept at accumulating. The coasters that have taken their place bear photographs of the two of them on various trips together, grinning widely.

Finally, Alison lifts her head, looking at Kate as if seeing her for the first time. She smiles weakly.

ALISON

Yeah.

Kate pulls Alison into a tight hug. Somewhat uncomfortable with the gesture, Alison loosely places one arm around her friend's back and pats her twice.

Kate breaks away, and stands to her feet.

KATE

Right then, we're gonna need some toast, and some tea, and a long chat.

Kate walks away into the kitchen.

Alison turns towards the arch between the rooms, and calls to Kate.

ALISON
What if toast and tea isn't enough?

From the kitchen, Kate laughs

KATE
That's why we have wine!

EXT. STREET. DAY

Alison is walking down the street, holding her phone in one hand. The other hand is holding a clear plastic bag. Inside the bag, she is carrying a bottle of pink wine, a box of Yorkshire Tea bags, and a loaf of bread.

She is texting, and narrating her texts as she does so.

ALISON
To Kate.... home later... L... 8...
R... don't wait up... W 8... send.

Her phone beeps as she sends the text to Kate.

ALISON (cont'd)
To Henry... coming over... need to
talk... what's your address... U R...
question mark, question mark....
send.

Her phone beeps once more, and she slides it into her pocket.

She continues walking down the street, the clear plastic bag swinging at her side.

Her phone beeps from her pocket, and she pulls it out. On the screen, there is a text from Henry, displaying a pin on a map.

Alison opens the map, and looks around. She turns around, and walks the way she was coming from.

ALISON (cont'd)
To Henry... C U in ten...

She pockets her phone once more, and pulls a pair of wireless headphones from her other pocket. She places them into her ears and walks.

INT. HENRY'S FLAT

The living room is a mess. There are takeaway boxes and menus scattered between empty mugs on the table. An abandoned games controller sits beneath them.

There is a knock on the door. On his way to answer it, Henry notices his table.

He grabs an empty plastic bag and begins sweeping the detritus into it.

There is another, louder, knock on the door.

Henry opens a cupboard door and stows the bag behind it and half-jogs to the door, pausing to smooth his hair.

He opens the door. Alison is standing on the other side, plastic bag in hand. She holds this aloft.

ALISON

Hungry?

Henry stares at the bag for a moment

HENRY

Ravenous.

He steps back and Alison enters the flat.

Alison removes her shoes and places them gently by the front door. She takes off her jacket, and hangs it on an empty hook above the shoes.

HENRY (cont'd)

That was going to be for a painting.
I never finished it.

Alison walks into the living room

ALISON

I didn't know you painted.

Henry follows Alison and sits down on the sofa.

HENRY

I was getting into it. I'm not very good.

Alison places her bag on the still-half-cluttered table.

ALISON

Where's the kitchen?

Henry points to the left.

Along the wall, an oven and a fridge are separated by two cupboards with faux-marble worktops. Tucked into the corner by an overflowing bin, there is a kitchen sink.

ALISON (cont'd)
Well, that's convenient.

Alison approaches the kitchen area and pulls a toaster away from the wall.

She opens her loaf of bread, and places four slices into the toaster.

She depresses the lever, and the toaster clicks on.

Retrieving two mugs from beside the sink, she prepares to make cups of tea for the both of them, beginning to boil the kettle

HENRY
One sugar please. No milk.

ALISON
You don't take milk?

HENRY
No I don't have any. In the fridge.

Alison opens the fridge. It is nearly bare, although she is able to locate a nearly-empty tub of butter, which she places beside the toaster.

She closes it again.

ALISON
Black tea it is.

Alison places a tea bag into each mug, followed by a spoonful of sugar.

ALISON (cont'd)
What's going on, Henry?

Henry coughs

HENRY
I've just not been shopping for a bit.

Alison places two plates beside the mugs, waiting for the kettle and toaster to finish their work.

ALISON

I meant with you. You've been off with me for at least a week now.

Alison turns to face Henry, leaning against the counter with her hands pressed along its edge.

Henry does not return her gaze.

HENRY

I don't know what you mean.

Alison scoffs

ALISON

We were friends. Then you changed. Now we're...

Alison pauses, searching for the words. She doesn't find them.

HENRY

What? We're what?

Alison waves her hands about the room, emphasising all of the space between the two.

ALISON

This. All of... this. What changed in you?

Henry slowly raises his gaze towards Alison, immediately darting his eyes away again. He opens his mouth, about to speak.

There is a click, as the kettle finishes boiling. Barely a second later, the toaster pops and pops again, one side being slightly delayed.

Alison maintains her focus on Henry for a moment, and then turns to finish preparing their toast and tea.

Henry looks at Alison, and sighs.

HENRY

You're right.

Alison does not respond.

HENRY (cont'd)

You're right, I have changed.

Alison scoffs again

ALISON

Yeah. I know.

Henry stands.

HENRY

But it's for the better.

Alison turns around again, two plates of buttered toast in hand, a steaming mug of tea balance on each.

She approaches the table, moving her bag of wine from it and replacing it with the plates.

ALISON

How is it for the better? You don't talk to me. You won't even look at me. At any of us. It's like you think you're better than us. You and Simon both do it.

Henry takes a step towards Alison.

HENRY

Maybe not better than you. But more than you. More than you can even imagine.

Alison steps back, slinking against the counter, hands held out ever so slightly in front of her.

ALISON

What's going on, Henry?

Henry laughs

HENRY

It's hard to describe. Maybe it's better if I show you.

Henry takes another step towards Alison.

She raises her hands in front of her, covering her stomach.

Henry stands taller, stretching out. He seems to grow taller by the second. Alison takes in the scene.

PAN DOWN TO THE FLOOR

Henry's feet have left the ground. He isn't growing, but floating. Gradually, he rises higher and higher from the floor. One inch. Two. Six. Eight. One foot from the ground, he halts.

He drifts backwards, levitating around the room.

Alison stares, mouth agape.

Halting on the other side of the room, Henry extends his hand.

From the table, a slice of toast leaves its plate. It flies towards Henry. He catches it in his outstretched hand, and takes a bite. He releases his hand, and the toast flies back to the plate.

It hits the mug as it approaches the plate, spilling tea on the floor

HENRY (cont'd)

Shit!

Henry breaks his concentration, and falls to the floor.

He runs to the kitchen side, grabs a roll of kitchen paper, and begins to mop up the spilt beverage.

Alison exhales, and lowers her hands.

ALISON

How'd you do all that?

Henry looks up from his cleaning.

HENRY

Simon taught me. And that's not all I can do. He's showing me hypnosis after I prove myself tonight.

Alison kneels next to Henry and helps him mop up the tea.

ALISON

Henry, what's happening tonight?

Henry doesn't answer.

ALISON (cont'd)

Does it have anything to do with what you were doing at the store last night? With the bag and the bat?

Henry scrunches up a ball of kitchen paper, and stands as he throws it towards the bin.

HENRY

It's nothing. Just dealing with a little competition. Nothing serious.

Alison stands, and leans once more against the counter.

ALISON

Henry, I think Simon isn't telling you the truth. Whatever you're doing isn't legal.

Henry sits on the sofa.

HENRY

Well maybe not entirely, but nobody's going to get hurt. And I have to do this. If I prove myself I'll be as powerful as Simon is.

ALISON

He's a supervisor! He isn't even a full manager! He has authority over four people at a time!

Henry laughs

HENRY

Yeah, and he's been a supervisor for forty years.

Alison pauses.

ALISON

What?

HENRY

He's not 39. He's 89.

ALISON

Don't be stupid, Henry.

Henry reclines on the sofa.

HENRY

I've seen the evidence. He was born in the 30s. He's immortal. And now, so am I.

Alison sits down next to Henry.

ALISON

There's no way that's true. You've been had mate.

Henry pulls his phone from his pocket, and shows Alison a series of photos, swiping across the screen.

HENRY

Believe it or don't. It won't matter in a century or two when I'm running an empire of undead retail workers and you're... a dead former retail worker.

Alison pulls back from Henry. Whatever he showed her has convinced her. She is pale now.

ALISON

Why would you want that? That half life? What has it cost you already?

Henry stretches his arms out across the back of the sofa.

HENRY

Nothing. Except servitude to spend saver. But think of all the things I can do in an eternity.

Alison picks up her plate and carries it to the kitchen side. She begins to eat the toast as fast as she can.

ALISON

Henry, this isn't the you I met when I got here.

HENRY

This is the new me. I'm not going back to who I was.

ALISON

You had ambitions. You wanted to leave retail.

Henry laughs

HENRY

No I didn't. I had memories of ambitions. Now I have something better. A goal.

ALISON

Spend Saver's goal. Not yours.

Henry stands, and extends his hand. Alison's coat and shoes drift into the room.

Henry drops his arms, placing the items at Alison's feet.

HENRY

Now they're one and the same. And
it's time for you to leave.

Alison pulls on her coat, and slips her feet into her shoes.

ALISON

Promise me you'll call me when you
come to your senses.

Henry flicks his wrist, opening the front door from afar.

HENRY

Promise you won't call me. There's no
evil plan at work, Alison. You're the
one who's deluded.

As she heads towards the front door, Alison stops and turns
to face Henry. A single tear falls.

ALISON

Goodbye, Henry.

EXT. SHOP. NIGHT

Simon and Beth are waiting outside the locked doors of Spend
Saver. The lights are off inside. Simon is carrying the bag
from the previous night.

Henry strolls over, wearing a light blue puffer jacket.

SIMON

Henry. You're late.

Simon passes the bag to Henry. Henry takes it, and nearly
drops it immediately. He adjusts his grip

HENRY

Jesus, this thing's heavy. What have
you got in there?

BETH

Tools of the trade.

Simon notices Henry's jacket

SIMON

What the hell are you wearing that
thing for?

Henry tugs at the side of his jacket.

HENRY
What, my coat? Cos it's cold.

Simon flares his nostrils

SIMON
It's not exactly subtle.

HENRY
Yeah, but you said we weren't going to do anything too bad so I figured it'd be fine.

Simon and Beth trade a glance.

BETH
Did you deal with Alison?

Henry smiles

HENRY
She won't be a problem anymore.

Beth pats Henry on the back

BETH
Congratulations, Henry. Now we know you're one of us. Not many would kill for the team so early on.

Henry steps away from Beth

HENRY
Why would I have killed her?

BETH
To preserve our secretive nature, of course.

Simon looks to Henry

SIMON
Hypnosis?

Henry stutters, and tries to mask it with a cough

HENRY
Uh... yeah. I hypnotised her.

SIMON
Hypnotised.

Simon pauses for a moment, trying to read Henry's face.

SIMON (cont'd)

Well done, son! That's a tricky one to master by yourself. I just hope you didn't accidentally slip her into a murderous trance and point her in my direction.

Henry laughs

HENRY

Why would I have done that?

SIMON

It happened with your predecessor. What was his name again, Beth?

Beth thinks for a moment.

BETH

Uh... Mark?

Simon claps his hands together

SIMON

That's the fella. Well, was the fella. Shall we?

He extends an arm, pointing down the street. Beth walks in the direction indicated, followed by Simon himself.

Henry lingers where he is for a moment, then sets off behind the group. As he walks, a small red light is visible flashing on the back of his jacket.

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Alison is on her sofa, laptop open in front of her.

Kate enters the living room, carrying two large glasses of wine.

KATE

He said that?

Alison takes one of the glasses from Kate and takes a big gulp.

ALISON

Yeah. *He* called *me* delusional. Can you believe that?

Kate sits down in the chair by the sofa.

KATE
I mean, you have been kind of
obsessed recently.

Alison looks over to Kate, incredulous.

ALISON
He fucking floated, Kate. And he
thinks that's normal.

Kate peers at Alison's laptop screen

KATE
What's this?

Alison swigs from her glass once more before answering,
looking away from Kate and back to her screen.

ALISON
Tracker.

Kate shifts closer

KATE
A tracker of what?

Alison glances at Kate, then back to the screen

ALISON
Henry.

Kate pulls herself to the edge of her seat, closer to
Alison. She places her glass down on the table.

KATE
You put a tracker on Henry?

Alison pulls her laptop closer to herself

ALISON
Yeah. Why?

KATE
Don't you think that's a little...
weird?

Alison looks at Kate, squinting slightly.

ALISON
Weirder than... literally fucking
floating a full on foot above the
floor?

Kate sighs

KATE

Eff that.

The tracker on her screen beeps. Henry is on the move again.

Alison stares at her laptop screen a moment. She quickly grabs her phone from beside her and opens the map app.

She scribbles a name down on a postit note beside her, locks her phone and closes the laptop.

ALISON

Got the fucker.

Alison stands, pulling on her leather jacket as she does so.

She picks up what remains of her glass of wine and finishes it off.

KATE

Need me to come with?

Alison picks up Kate's glass of wine and finishes that too.

ALISON

Nah, no point you leaving the house for the first ever time. Catch you later.

Kate stares open mouthed at her now empty wine glass as Alison leaves the house.

KATE

Finally.

Kate grabs a blanket, and the TV remote and settles down on the sofa, flicking through the channels.

Landing on the channel she is looking for, Kate places the remote down and pulls a bottle of wine from under the sofa. She refills her glass, and fully reclines as she begins to sip.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

Simon and Beth lead Henry down the street, stopping outside of a small corner shop named "Quick and buy". Simon grabs the bag from Henry and passes it to Beth.

Beth places the bag on the ground and unzips it, pulling out a can of black spray paint.

The lights inside the store are clicked off, as the owner steps out of the door.

SHOP OWNER
Oh hello, sorry I've just closed.

Simon steps closer to him.

SIMON
It'll just take a minute.

The shop owner takes half a step back.

SHOP OWNER
No, I'm sorry, I need to be getting home.

From a pocket that is far too small for such a thing, Simon pulls his bat. The shop owner barely has time to gasp before...

Simon brings the bat swinging down on his head. The shop owner falls to the ground, knocked out cold.

Henry gasps

HENRY
I thought you said nobody would get hurt?!

Simon shrugs

SIMON
It wouldn't have hurt me.

Henry kneels to check the shop owners pulse

HENRY
He's still alive.

Simon steps over the shop owner, pushing the door open.

SIMON
Good. Drag him in here, we don't want anyone seeing.

Beth reaches up and sprays black paint over the lens of the security camera by the door.

BETH
Any others?

Simon holds the door open as Henry drags the unconscious owner into his shop, mouth agape.

SIMON
Presumably. Take a look around.

Once everybody is inside, Simon places his bat into the door handles, preventing anybody from opening it.

EXT. BUS STOP. NIGHT

A bus pulls up to the stop, spewing black fumes from its exhaust. Alison steps off the bus, smiling to the driver as she does so.

ALISON
Cheers mate. Get that exhaust looked at, yeah?

DRIVER
Will do ma'am, you have a nice evening.

ALISON
Sure will!

The doors close behind her, and the bus pulls off once more, spewing fumes as it goes.

Alison reaches into her pocket and retrieves her phone. She taps the screen, calling Kate.

Kate picks up after three rings

KATE
(phone)
Hi Alison!

ALISON
Kate, where is he? On the screen.

KATE
(phone)
Oh, Henry? One second.

Through the phone, the sound of rummaging can be heard.

ALISON
Kate, what are you doing?

More rummaging

KATE

(phone)

Sorry, I put it away. Looks like he's... at a shop called Quick and Buy?

Alison smiles

ALISON

Thanks Kate. What would I do without you?

Kate laughs

KATE

(phone)

Probably have to check your own tech before you leave the house.

Alison slips her phone back into her pocket.

She walks down the street, heading towards Henry and the Lifers at Quick and Buy.

EXT. QUICK AND BUY. NIGHT

The doors are closed when Alison arrives, but the lights are still on. She peers through the glass, seeing nobody.

She pushes on the door. It moves about an inch, before being blocked by Simon's bat.

Alison looks around her, looking for any means of entrance.

As Alison searches, a figure approaches from inside the shop. As it gets closer to the door, it becomes clear that it's Henry.

He looks a lot different to when Alison last saw him. He is paler, and his eyes are wide, but dark. He taps gently on the glass.

Alison looks up, and jumps backwards.

ALISON

Henry! Henry let me in!

Henry shushes her.

HENRY
Not so loud. Simon and Beth are here.

ALISON
What's going on?

Henry glances behind himself

HENRY
I'm not too sure. It's not good.

Alison glances behind herself

ALISON
Open the door, let me in.

Henry glances behind himself

HENRY
I can't. I think they're going to
kill him.

Alison glances behind herself.

ALISON
Who?

Henry glances behind himself

HENRY
I didn't get his name. The owner.

Alison glances behind herself.

ALISON
Call the police then.

HENRY
I'm part of this now. I can't call
the police on myself.

Alison glances behind herself.

ALISON
You absolutely can! You can report a
crime as you're doing it if you want
to!

HENRY
I want out, Alison. Simon isn't who I
thought he was.

Alison glances behind herself.

ALISON

Yeah, I tried to tell you that.

Henry glances behind himself, then quickly turns back to Alison and waves downwards at her.

Alison ducks just in time, as Simon approaches the door.

SIMON

Anybody about?

Henry gulps

HENRY

No, boss. Just keeping watch.

Simon heads back inwards.

Alison pokes her head back up.

ALISON

Let me in. I'm gonna put a stop to this.

HENRY

How?

Alison shrugs.

Henry shrugs in response, and slides the bat from between the door handles.

He pulls the doors open, slowly.

Alison eases through the narrow gap, and Henry closes the door behind her. He attempts to stow the bat in his pocket.

It doesn't fit. He opts to carry it instead.

INT. QUICK AND BUY. NIGHT

Alison shares a look with Henry as they head towards the back of the store.

The door to the warehouse is unlocked and ajar. They slip through it.

In the warehouse, the lights are dimmed. A crack of light is visible from the basement door.

ALISON

This looks a lot like our store. But without all that black slime.

Henry looks around

HENRY

Practically identical. Aside from the ominous slime that turns people undead.

ALISON

Is that what that is?

HENRY

I don't know, I think it was involved. It's a fuzzy memory.

Alison approaches the basement door, and places an ear against it.

A muffled groan is heard from the basement.

ALISON

Are they down there?

Henry looks towards the door.

HENRY

I put the owner down there. I guess they wanted to pay him a visit.

Alison slowly pushes the door open.

Henry raises his hand, and the bat drifts over towards Alison.

She takes it from the air, and holds it aloft, resting on one shoulder.

Henry pivots his arm towards a corner of the warehouse. A frying pan, still in its plastic packaging, floats into his hand.

He grips the handle of the pan tightly.

ALISON

Let's do this.

As Alison begins to step through the door, Henry places a hand on her shoulder.

HENRY

Are you sure about this?

Alison swallows.

ALISON

No. But we have to do something,
right? And you want out?

Henry makes eye contact with Alison. His eyes appear even more sunken than ever before.

HENRY

I want out. I just don't know how.

Alison nods, and steps through the door.

Henry rolls his shoulders, and raises the pan like a bat. He follows Alison through the door.

INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT

The Quick and Buy basement is much smaller than Spend Saver, just the one room with no additional chambers or dripping pipes. No ominous table, but still very little lighting.

In a darkened corner opposite to the door, the shop owner is tied and gagged. His eyes grow wide as Alison and Henry enter the room. He shakes his head slowly.

Alison crouches low, and approaches the man.

She raises a hand to remove his gag.

Before she is able to make contact, her hand is knocked aside by some unseen force.

Alison whips her head around. In the other corner, Beth is stood. She has her hand stretched towards Alison.

Beth flips her hand over, and Alison is thrown back against the wall.

BETH

Hello, Alison. Henry, why is she
here?

Henry stutters.

Pressed into the wall, Alison maintains her grip on the bat. She speaks through a clenched jaw

ALISON
I'm... ending this... Beth...

Beth slowly walks over to Alison.

BETH
No. We're ending this. Henry?

Henry stutters once more.

BETH (cont'd)
Oh for Christ's sake, Henry, don't
tell me you've switched sides again?
After all we've done for you?

Henry swallows

HENRY
Let her go, Beth. This isn't you.

Alison laughs

ALISON
No... I think... she's always been a
bitch.

Beth drops the telekinetic grip she has on Alison, opting
instead to lunge at her.

Hand outstretched, Beth grabs Alison's throat and pins her
back against the wall.

Alison drops her bat.

HENRY
Let her go! It's over!

Beth does not respond.

Alison begins to kick her legs, trying to connect with
anything.

The bat begins to roll across the floor.

HENRY (cont'd)
BETH!

Beth turns her head, still holding Alison aloft.

Henry swings the bat.

CRACK. It collides with Beth's skull.

Bethe falls to the floor, followed by Alison.

Alison struggles to her feet, coughing.

ALISON

I had it.

Henry passes her the bat.

HENRY

Sure thing.

Alison swings the bat once more towards Beth. A much more gentle tap is heard.

Suddenly, Beth rolls over, eyes wide and sunken in much the same way as Henry's.

BETH

Wait!

Henry kneels beside her.

HENRY

Beth?

Beth nods, slowly.

ALISON

Where's Simon?

Beth sits up, groggily.

BETH

I think he went to the office.

Alison nods towards Henry, and moves away from Beth

ALISON

What's going on here? Is she cured or something? Is the cure a smack on the head?

HENRY

I don't know. I did trip over on my way here and hit my head, maybe that broke Simon's hypnosis or something.

Alison looks towards Beth.

ALISON

How do you feel, Beth?

Beth looks up at Alison

BETH
I'm not going to lie to you, I do
have a bit of a headache. And also I
feel like Simon is a twat.

Alison and Henry share a look.

ALISON
Good enough for me. But if you betray
us I'll finish you off.

Beth rises to her feet.

BETH
For the first time in decades, I'm
thinking clearly. You're right, it's
over.

Beth notices the shop owner in the corner.

BETH (cont'd)
Jesus fucking Christ, I was straight
up going to murder this guy!

She hits Henry in the forearm.

HENRY
Ouch! Why?

BETH
You came to your sense on the way
here and still let us do all this?
What's wrong with you?

HENRY
You threatened to kill me if I
didn't!

Beth blinks

BETH
Oh yea. We did do that. Simon's fault
though.

There is a creaking on the stairs, as Simon enters the
basement.

SIMON
What's my fault, Beth?

Everybody turns to face Simon. He is a dark silhouette on the stair case.

SIMON (cont'd)
How lovely to see you here, Alison.

Alison grips her bat tighter.

ALISON
Simon, we know this isn't you. I bashed these two in the head and now they're them again. If you hold still, I'll give you one swift wack and you'll go back to normal.

Simon continues down the stairs, stopping just in front of Alison.

SIMON
Well, that isn't an entirely unreasonable suggestion. Let me think.

Simon pauses, and exaggeratedly strokes his chin.

SIMON (cont'd)
No.

Simon waves his hand, knocking the three of them the the ground. They slide rapidly into the unoccupied corners of the room.

HENRY
Simon, why are you doing this?

Simon kneels in front of the shop owner.

SIMON
I told you. It's about the business. This little guy right here...

Simon lifts the shop owner to his feet, and pins him telekinetically against the wall.

SIMON (cont'd)
Was going to overtake us in sales.

Simon turns to face Henry.

SIMON (cont'd)
We serve the business, Henry.

In the opposite corner, Beth rises to her feet. She stretches a hand towards the shop owner, and begins to lower him gently back to the ground.

BETH

Not anymore Simon. It's got a sick hold on you. Give it up.

Simon jerks his hand upward. The shop owner shoots upwards, cracking his head on the ceiling. For the second time in an hour, he is knocked out cold.

Still holding onto the shop owner, Beth is knocked off her feet.

Simon drops the shop owner, and floats over to Beth.

SIMON

Why would I do something like that?

Behind him, there is a flash as Alison raises her bat.

She brings it down on the back of his head, hard.

Simon staggers forward slightly. He round on Alison.

ALISON

Simon?

SIMON

Yes, it's still me.

Simon smiles at Alison, and flicks his hand. She shoots backwards, slumping next to Henry.

He floats back towards Beth.

Henry helps Alison to her feet. They stay in their corner, crouching.

HENRY

It's useless. Let's just get the guy and get out. Call the cops.

ALISON

No, he'll kill Beth. Let's try something new.

In the other corner, Beth stands on her feet, defiant.

Simon lowers himself to the floor, and reaches out towards Beth.

Beth swats his hand away.

BETH
Not anymore, Simon. This. Is. Over.

Simon smiles. It does not reach his eyes.

SIMON
It's over when I say it is.

Simon raises both of his hands, lifting Beth from the ground.

Behind him, Alison and Henry draw closer, one on each side of him.

Beth slides up towards the ceiling, as Simon continues to raise his arms.

Henry and Alison are right behind him now. Holding their sporting equipment and cookware like weapons.

They bring them down upon his arms. There is a crunching sound.

Simon roars in pain, dropping his arms.

Beth falls to the floor, catching herself in time.

Simon spins around, glaring at everybody.

SIMON (cont'd)
You've broken my fucking arms!

Beth stands upright.

ALISON
Heads!

She swipes the bat at Simon's head.

Before Simon has time to react, Henry swipes his frying pan at his head as well.

Simon shakes his head, attempting to shake off the pain.

Alison tosses the bat over his head.

Beth catches it in the air and brings it down on the back of his head.

Simon is knocked to the ground.

Suddenly, the shop owner appears, carrying an empty filing cabinet.

Simon rolls onto his back, seeing the shop owner. He raises his hands

SIMON

No, wait!

The shop owner drops the filing cabinet onto Simon. It bounces off, deeply dented.

Simon slumps back against the ground. Now it is he that is knocked out cold.

Black slime pools around Simon in place of blood. It begins to flee, bubbling angrily.

Alison snaps a photo of the slime on her phone.

ALISON

I told it moved, Henry!

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

EXT. QUICK AND BUY. NIGHT

There are two police cars out front of the shop, flashing blue lights. Radio static and buzzing, as officers stand ready.

Beside the front door, an officer stands talking to the shop owner. Next to him, another officer is talking to Alison and Henry.

Two more officers emerge from the shop, carrying Simon. They have one arm each, dragging his feet along the ground. He is still unconscious.

Beth follows behind them, guided by a final officer. Simon is placed into one of the cars. Beth steps into the car behind him.

The shop owner approaches Alison and Henry, shaking their hands and offering his gratitude.

PAN TO ALISON AND HENRY

Henry stares as the police cars begin to drive away, blue light flashing on his face. His eyes are less sunken now, and he is less pale than before.