

JANUARY 22ND

1. AM I BLEEDING?

Written by

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**BIAGIO** (early 30s, mixed-race, basketball uniform) and **ARABELLA** (early 30s, black, pink hair, baggy clothes) are outside near Biagio's car. They're waiting for an Uber. Fellow basketball players pass them, heading into training. She looks at her phone.

ARABELLA

Still says 2 minutes.

BIAGIO

Maybe we cancel and order another.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna flag down a-

BIAGIO

Uber is cheaper.

Arabella looks out to hail down a taxi.

ARABELLA

Yep.

Biagio observes Arabella's fingernails clawing at her jeans. He touches a hand to try and settle it.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Sorry.

She reluctantly turns her palm out as if waiting to receive something.

BIAGIO

You sure?

Her head nods with remorse.

BIAGIO (CONT'D)

Four days; it's really good.

ARABELLA

Sorry.

BIAGIO

Chiudi gli occhi. (All I see is you.)

She covers her eyes with both palms. Biagio goes into the pocket of his jacket. Whilst he does this Arabella peeks out of her fingers to see him. He gets out a packet of cigarettes, as he retrieves a single cigarette from it she closes her eyes again. He hands it to her.



BIAGIO

You did?

ARABELLA

Yeah twice I was drunk he never took the bait.

BIAGIO

Never? A fool.

ARABELLA

Thank you.

Biagio places his hand on her jumper.

BIAGIO

I'm happy when you come.

Arabella covers his hand with hers. Ready-to-play Basketball players pass them, oblivious. Arabella holds her gaze on him.

BIAGIO (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

Beat.

ARABELLA

Come to London.

BIAGIO

To London? No business for me in London, what am I gonna do, follow you like a bitch? I'm not a bitch.

She looks at her phone. An Uber driver draws near.

BIAGIO (CONT'D)

London is shit.

She rotates around, using her phone as a compass.

ARABELLA

It's round the corner.

BIAGIO

So we wait.

She's already gone. He goes into the back of his car, retrieves a suitcase and runs after her.

EXT. LUCCA STREET CORNER. DAY

Arabella walks to her Uber. Biagio appears from round the corner with the suitcase.

BIAGIO

In February, we don't do practice;  
one whole month, so I'm gonna have  
more time.

ARABELLA

I can't, I have deadlines.  
(to Uber Driver)  
Hi Marco, it's Arabella.

BIAGIO

Lucca life is not about deadlines -  
just show them what you've done so  
far.

ARABELLA

What I've done so far is eat  
Bolognese, gelato and semen. I  
don't know how to show them that.

Biagio loads her suitcase into the back of the car.

BIAGIO

Don't forget the sea. She's gonna  
be asking where you are.

ARABELLA

I love the sea, she's very nice.

BIAGIO

She get paranoia when you don't  
come.

ARABELLA

Well then tell her the truth, that  
we're in an overseas relationship  
and she's free to get you wet as  
much as she likes.

BIAGIO

Without paranoia.

ARABELLA

Without paranoia.

They kiss.

BIAGIO

We gonna talk everyday.

ARABELLA

Yes please.

BIAGIO

I'm like your secret diary. Don't ever keep anything from me.

ARABELLA

Terrifying.

BIAGIO

It is?

ARABELLA

Yeah, 'tell me everything' is less scary.

BIAGIO

Okay. Tell me, I don't care what it is, okay?

ARABELLA

Same.

They kiss again. She's entering the car. Biagio talks to the Uber driver.

BIAGIO

(in Italian)  
Guida veloce per favore è in ritardo per l'aeroporto, ma anche - delicatamente.

BIAGIO

(translated)  
Drive fast please she is late to the airport but also-gently.

ARABELLA

Anything and everything... Sorry.

She waves the cigarette box at him. He shrugs.

BIAGIO

Four days is good!

Arabella opens her laptop, the car begins its journey.

5

INT. CAR

5

Arabella looks at the first page in her writing book, crossed out words, diagrams, plot points, ideas. She stares into space, exhales, we tighten in on her face.

FADE TO:

- 6 EXT. BEACH. NIGHT 6
- We see a **beach**; empty save two pairs of legs, one crossed, a the other (hers) stretched out.
- Arabella and Biagio's shared POV on to the water.
- Finally a **wave** swoops in and hugs her **ankles** before retreating back into the ocean.
- We hear a familiar message tone.
- FADE TO:
- 7 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE (LONDON APARTMENT) BATHROOM. DAY 7
- Tight on ARABELLA staring into space- matching the previous shot.
- Sat on the toilet she looks through her Whatsapp; 2 unopened messages. The subject field revealing only the first 5 words of the body.
- An unread message from Simon, she ignores it. And an unopened message from
- Julia - "Hey babe, just thought I'd drop..."**
- Arabella grunts.
- "Hey babe, just thought I'd drop you a line again. How's the draft coming along?"**
- We cut on the message.
- 8 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EARLY EVENING 8
- We open on the same message and come to see it's from a different phone screen. There are two grey ticks in the corner of the message. As they turn blue we now see **Julia** (30s) and **Francine** (20s) staring at the screen. We're in a small living room converted into an office. We see the 'typing message dots' appear on the screen, they watch pensively. The dots disappear. Julia sighs.
- 9 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. BATHROOM. EARLY EVENING 9
- Arabella lights a cigarette whilst sat on the toilet seat. She looks at her phone ringing, the name 'JULIA - NEW VOICES AGENCY' flashing on the screen. She stares at it until the call ends and it's gone.

She takes a deep breath, flushes the toilet with one hand and makes a call with the other.

10 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EARLY EVENING 10

The office phone starts ringing, it is situated in the middle of the table, beside it is a half-eaten takeaway box of lasagne, and empty and half-drunk bottles of lemon water, on a table in a small office.

JULIA  
That's her, that's her.  
(into phone)  
Arabella, how are you? Was it amazing?

ARABELLA (SPEAKERPHONE)  
Yeah yeah it was good.

JULIA  
Oh, good! Really productive?

ARABELLA  
Yeah.

11 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. TOILET. EARLY EVENING 11

Arabella is on the toilet. She's smoking a cigarette, she taps the ash between her legs into the toilet bowl.

JULIA (SPEAKERPHONE)  
...Good, all fine here, good to hear your voice.

ARABELLA  
Ah okay. Cool.

Beat.

JULIA  
You wanna ping over what you've done so far?

ARABELLA  
Sure, yeah. I can do that. In the morning, I'm a bit jet-lagged.

JULIA  
Great.

FRANCINE  
 Jet-lagged? It's Italy, I think  
 it's only an hour ahead.

12 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EARLY EVENING 12

Julia tries without words to shut Francine up.

ARABELLA (SPEAKERPHONE)  
 Oh. Didn't realise there were three  
 of us on this call.

13 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. TOILET. EARLY EVENING 13

ARABELLA  
 Francine?

14 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EARLY EVENING 14

FRANCINE  
 Yeah, hi, did you see my e-mails? I  
 also called a few times to check  
 how the book was coming along?

15 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. TOILET. EARLY EVENING 15

Arabella is still on the toilet.

ARABELLA  
 Well you know I didn't go to Italy  
 to be at the end of a phone, I went  
 to work. You know? Was Virginia  
 Wolf glued to the end of a phone  
 when she was cracking on in a room  
 of her own?

16 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EARLY EVENING 16

FRANCINE  
 If she received a grant from Henny  
 House publishers, from Susy Henny  
 herself, she might answer at least  
 once.

Julia paces around the office, she starts writing on a pad.

ARABELLA (SPEAKERPHONE)

Well you know, they never had phones back then, did they? So we'll never know.

FRANCINE

Well you know, she was a successful writer and very grateful for any support she received, so she probably would have answered the phone to anyone supporting her.

Julia holds up the pad: "STOP" written in Biro on its page.

ARABELLA

Well, can't go back and time and give her a phone so we'll never know.

JULIA

Arabella... We believe in you, that's why we're here. Do you want an extension?

17 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. TOILET. EARLY EVENING 17

Arabella looks to the ceiling, unsure of what to say.

ARABELLA

An extension? Nope I'm good.

18 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EARLY EVENING 18

JULIA

Great and you mentioned sending a draft over in the morning?

ARABELLA

Yep. Anyone using the office tonight? I might do an all-nighter.

JULIA

No, no, all yours.

ARABELLA

Just to brush up.

JULIA

Sure. I'll leave the key in the lock-box, and we'll read in the morning. Pop in tomorrow for feedback?

ARABELLA

Great.

FRANCINE

I thought she was 'jet-lagged'.

As the dial tone plays Julia looks regretfully at Francine .

19 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE (SHARED FLAT). EARLY EVENING 19

Arabella watches her hands tremble as she washes them. The bathroom door knocks. She opens it; BEN (housemate, 20s-50s) smiles and dangles a bag of hash.

BEN

Welcome back! You okay?

Arabella and Ben hug.

ARABELLA

Yeah! Just like, ahh, it's good to see ya!

BEN

You sure?

ARABELLA

Yeah, just work; do you know what I mean? Might've took a bit too much on, it's a lot.

She laughs nervously.

BEN

You'll be alright. Surprise upstairs...

TERRY (early 30s) comes downstairs. They scream in excitement.

QUICK CUT TO:

20 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. FRONT ROOM. EARLY EVENING 20

A coffee table with an ash tray, the bag of hash beside it now opened. News plays in the background. Ben is sat on the sofa with his laptop drinking tea. Arabella is on the other side; they pass a spliff back and forth between them. Terry scrolls through her phone covering her face from the smoke.

TV NEWSREADER (O.S.)  
 (deep background)  
 Now, is free speech under  
 threat in universities? And  
 should a group calling itself  
 Laddism Reborn, which  
 distributes misogynist  
 literature...

ARABELLA  
 4 days is good right?

\*

TV NEWSREADER  
 ...and promotes heavy  
 drinking, be allowed to  
 affiliate to a student union?  
 These are some of the thorny  
 questions that university  
 and...

BEN  
 Yeah.

\*

ARABELLA  
 Yeah, yeah.

Terry's hand is still over her mouth and nose.

TV NEWSREADER (O.S.)  
 ...their legal duty to  
 protect free speech  
 conflicts with their duty of  
 care to staff and students...

ARABELLA (CONT'D)  
 You smoke a lot when I was  
 away?

\*

Arabella takes a toke of the spliff and hands it back.

BEN  
 Never do.

She looks at the baggy.

ARABELLA  
 Oh, well then can I have that? For  
 work?

She stuffs the hash in her bag. Terry privately scrunches her  
 face up.

BEN  
 Yup, course, it's for you.

TV NEWSREADER (O.S.)  
 ...it comes just after Warwick  
 University drew criticism for  
 lessening the punishment of  
 students who admitted their  
 involvement in a group chat that  
 threatened rape after an appeal.  
 However the...

ARABELLA

Urgh, god, right, offskees. Fuck.

BEN

You did your last one in the blink of half an eye remember? And you got that.

He points to an award on a shelf in the living room.

ARABELLA

Yeah but that was for the internet you know, not for 'the man'.

BEN

Who made the internet?

ARABELLA

Rah. 'S deep.

BEN

Yup, stand there and pick it up.

ARABELLA

No.

He shoots Arabella a parental look. She picks up the award.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

I can do it.

BEN

You've already done it.

ARABELLA

'Cos I've done it before.

BEN

Thassit lass.

ARABELLA

My G.

They spud fists. Arabella hugs Terry.

TERRY

Gotta head as well actually.

Terry checks her phone whilst Arabella hugs her from behind and kisses her cheek.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Gotta prep.

ARABELLA  
Yeah, for what?

TERRY  
Audition tomorrow.

Terry shares the audition e-mail with Arabella.

TERRY (CONT'D)  
Advert.

She retrieves foil-packaged pills from her pocket/bag and pulls two capsules loose.

ARABELLA  
Ahh, cool! Dove! Soap or lotion?

TERRY  
Shampoo.

Terry has shaven hair.

ARABELLA  
Cool.  
(to Ben)  
Do you mind?

Arabella swallows the pills down with his tea.

BEN  
What are those?

ARABELLA  
Ask Google.

She throws a set of 8 onto the coffee table; it lands about where the hash was.

TERRY  
Oh have you not seen Bella with her little concoction of consciousness?

BEN  
Hm...

He picks it up and types the word printed upon the foil into his phone.

ARABELLA (O.S.)  
Take it before work! It'll be good for the bitcoin thing.

BEN  
Blockchain thing.

He sips a cup of coffee and looks into his phone

BEN (CONT'D)  
*...increasing mental function such as memory, creativity, motivation, and attention. Hmm. The influence of 'nootropics' in the brain has been studied widely...it's not speed. Hmm. Might be good for band*

Terry flicks through television channels.

TERRY  
 Ben, please, enough of the liberalism. You know them pills ain't good for shit.

21 INT. SIMON AND KAT'S HOUSE. EVENING

21

KAT  
 Ooo.

Kat (late 30s) wears business clothes, she takes off her heels, and scrolls the screen of a phone; we see pictures of a woman (early 20s), in her underwear, on the beach in a bikini, etc. Kat's other hand is held out. Simon (early 30s) puts a cup of tea inside it.

KAT (CONT'D)  
 Mmm. Well done. She's very pretty. What's her name?

SIMON  
 Alissa.

KAT  
 How long you been talking?

SIMON  
 Couple days.

KAT  
 And she knows there's two of us?

SIMON  
 Yep.

KAT  
 What's your friend gonna do?

SIMON  
 I've got him a detour.

KAT

Who?

SIMON

Arabella.

KAT

Oh, perfect. Let me see again.  
(looks at photo of Alissa)  
My my, she's gorgeous. Happy?

He doesn't give much away.

KAT (CONT'D)

(mocking)

What? Not too young is she?

She grins at him, clasps her acrylic nails around the front of his neck. Simon rolls his eyes.

KAT (CONT'D)

Might even help.

SIMON

What do you mean?

KAT

Well, she's young, maybe this time you won't feel as much... pressure.

Simon retreats.

KAT (CONT'D)

Sorry.

SIMON

When your partner of eight years is sat gawping in a chair, like some kinda supervisor... Giggling...

KAT

No, I know...

SIMON

... while you try and...

KAT

Well pardon me for having something to get used to, I've never seen you with another body...

SIMON

How's gawping gonna...

KAT

I was hoping you'd ask me for help.

SIMON

I don't think it works like that, I don't think I say 'Honey, please help me get it up with the lady'.

KAT

Okay so we'll just take it slowly, and I promise I won't gawp.

Kat walks toward the doorway.

SIMON

Why do you wanna do this?

KAT

What do you mean?

SIMON

I hope it ain't about control.

KAT

You keep saying that.

SIMON

Yeah, you seem insecure sometimes.

KAT

I'm not insecure, I love you.

SIMON

If I was gonna cheat I would have done it already innit.

KAT

If you were gonna cheat--

SIMON

You'd have to be there--

KAT

I hope you'd be honest with me, is what I was gonna say actually.

She exits out.

22

EXT. LIVERPOOL STREET STATION. EVENING

22

Arabella walks **quickly and efficiently** through the busy station. She flips her phone in the air and taps it on the scanner; the barrier opens.

She skips long queues by swinging under barrier bars and heads down the escalators, interweaving through the standing and walking side.

She gets on the train, sits down and gets out her laptop. She quickly scrolls down the few pages she has written and begins to type:

"The day we heard the news, we were"

She looks at the screen and exhales.

23 EXT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EVENING 23

She puts in the pin code to a lock-box; it opens.

24 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY, EVENING 24

Arabella sits in the same room we saw Julia and Francine in earlier.

There is a **hamper on the table**: brand new towels, a flannel, shower gel, lotion, toothpaste. A sandwich.

"Happy Writing! Julia xx"

Arabella smiles, sets up her station. **She selects a track** and connects her Bluetooth speaker; it becomes our score.

MONTAGE

25 INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. EVENING/NIGHT 25

Quick cuts that should give us the feeling hours are passing. She Googles "writing for dummies". She refers to the notepad beside her laptop. She retrieves a can of Febreze, rizzla, a cut of Hash, weed, and a lighter. She assembles them together whilst looking at her notepad.

She repositions her laptop extender and is now standing smoking and writing.

Her phone rings. She ignores the call. We see her scroll through Instagram. She smiles fondly at pictures of Simon and Kat.

She takes two more of the pills.

We chop and change between typing smoking spliffs, scrolling through social media, typing, and Febrezing the room.

She Googles: "life hack writers block". Her phone rings again.

26

INT. WHISKEY LOVEBAR. NIGHT

26

Simon looks at Derae with the phone to his ear. Kat is sat beside Derae showing him pictures of Alissa.

SIMON

(into phone, to Arabella)  
Nah it's not a mad one. Yeah, and Derae. Remember the basketball player. From Chicago. Who likes them pics of you?

Derae waves at Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Yeah, *that* Derae. He just waved. You got big hands Derae, I'd never noticed that before my brother.

We now see Kat is showing Derae pictures of Alissa.

DERAE

(at photos)  
Damn.

KAT

Ssh!

Kat nudges Derae.

SIMON

Pass through on your break. What, come on, man. You have to eat. We're even thinking to go karaoke. You'll be-- Aight. Sorry, I love you too.

He hangs up and smiles. Derae is still scanning pictures of Alissa, Kat drinks.

DERAE

You might have to apologise for me I'm tryna see her.

KAT

I can't stop looking.

DERAE

I mean to be honest I think you're equally if not more stunning.

KAT

Ahh, Derae, don't leave, stay! And rub off on him.

She sips her drink and chuckles nervously.

DERAE

(to Simon)

A bird in the hand is better than two in a bush is all I'm saying and you got a very nice bird. Do you remember the tricks we had to pull just to get one? (Each, of course) I'm talking 2010 grad...

Simon shows embarrassment.

DERAE (CONT'D)

...so this a long time ago but damn, you still Skinny McSimples with the triceps over there...

Kat gets up and sits next to Simon.

KAT

You're perfect.

DERAE

... So I'm curious to see how this works.

Derae and Simon stare at each other knowingly.

KAT

Oh well, you know, there's a mastermind behind it all.

SIMON

A sexy mastermind.

KAT

A sexy one?

SIMON

Oh yes and hugely powerful.

She smiles at Simon flirtatiously. Simon smiles at Derae.

DERAE

How many times y'all...you know..? This just a regular weekend for y'all or what?

KAT

We're hoping three's a charm.

DERAE

Three? Ha, ha, ha, my bro; you've come a long way.

KAT

Well neither have exactly been-

SIMON

Yeah that's true, but the one in Barcelona tops it.

KAT

Oh god. We hit it off with her in some bar, he's making her laugh, breaking ice, I'm flirting, being horny, waiting for the green light so we can leave and... you know.

SIMON

I can never tell.

KAT

She's twiddling hair doing cute shit but something felt off so I activated exit plan, but this--

DERAE

Hold up hold up hold up, did we just migrate to Star Trek? What is 'activate exit plan'?

KAT

Pop to the loo, text a friend to call one of us in 60 seconds; phone rings we pretend it's the babysitter and our son fell down the stairs.

DERAE

You have a kid?

KAT

No.

No

SIMON

\*

KAT

But when the phone rings, this one ignores the call completely, doesn't even look at his phone, just--

SIMON

It was going well, she was--

KAT

He ignored me- We take her back to where we're staying, and the minute we get inside she starts crying, she's had a hard few weeks. Something like her dad was dead, or he was dying, she just didn't wanna be alone for the night, so we're like cool, you know--

SIMON

Give her the couch--

KAT

She wants cuddles, we go with it, put her in the bed. We wake up, she's stolen both our fucking phones!

ALISSA

Kat? Hey!

They look up to find Alissa in front of them.

KAT

Hi!

27

INT. NEW VOICES AGENCY. NIGHT

27

The montage continues. **No music.**

The repetitive work pattern we see picks up pace: TYPE, SMOKE, FEBREZE. **We hear only the rhythm of her breath, the sound of fingers tapping on keypad. The sound of fire crackling as her lips suck on the spliff.**

We see her word count has progressed slightly:

"She looked in the"

She backspaces and deletes.

Simon's name is flashing across her screen. She looks at the call. She ignores it.

Simon sends a picture of himself and Derae, captioned "hi". She sends one back captioned "I wish I could!!"

Alissa is sat with Kat and Simon, Derae is slouched on the couch deep into his phone pretending not to eavesdrop. There is an opened bottle of champagne on their table.

SIMON

Eight years, man.

KAT

Eight long years.

ALISSA

Don't say it like that. Eight years is amazing, I'm not built for that.

KAT

What are you talking about?

She notices Simon is scrolling on his phone, she nudges him.

ALISSA

Hang around me too long I'm irritating as fuck. I'm good in small doses, I know my lane.

They laugh at each other and continue to drink. Alissa throws a look to Simon.

ALISSA (CONT'D)

Can I ask, is this easy for you?

KAT

Uhhh.

Alissa looks at Simon.

ALISSA

It's not easy for me, that's all. I don't know if I'm built for this.

KAT

Oh, but you're here?

ALISSA

Well I'm trying, you never know. I wouldn't wanna share you. Look at her, what are you doing?!

KAT

You're adorable.

Kat looks at Alissa lovingly. Alissa's phone starts to ring.

ALISSA  
 Hello? Oh hi--  
 (to Kat and Simon)  
 One sec--

As Alissa moves away to take the call, Kat smiles at Simon. Derae starts laughing. Alissa returns.

ALISSA (CONT'D)  
 My mum's had an accident so I've  
 gotta get her to the hospital. God.  
 Such a shame, you guys are so  
 lovely.

KAT  
 I hope she's okay.

ALISSA  
 I'm so sorry.

KAT  
 Maybe we can...uhm...

ALISSA  
 I'd love to see you guys again, I  
 have to go, he's got my number.

Alissa is gone. Beat.

KAT  
 Why were you so quiet?

SIMON  
 What?

KAT  
 Nothing.

SIMON  
 I don't even care she was basic  
 anyway.

KAT  
 God, hello Ego, do you need a cold  
 press?

SIMON  
 What?

Kat tuts and sips her drink. She looks at the exit and sighs.

KAT  
 What do we do now then?

SIMON

Why you acting like you've been left alone on the dance floor, I'm still here, am I not enough?

KAT

Oh shut up, Simon.  
(to Derae)  
I don't go out often, that's all.  
Sorry.

DERAE

Oh it's okay man.

KAT

No, it's not. I'm so sorry, it's your final night.

Beat.

KAT (CONT'D)

I think I'll just leave you guys to it

DERAE

No, no, don't do that.

Simon secretly nods passionately to Derae.

KAT

Yeah I'll just be a bore, seriously. It's my ego, not his! It was so nice to finally meet you though.

DERAE

You too, I'm so happy I met you.

KAT

Yeah, you too!

As Kat leaves, Simon is silent and satisfied and goes into his phone.

29

INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY OFFICE. NIGHT

29

Arabella looks to her clock, her page, then around the office. She sets an alarm on her phone for 90 MINUTES. It rings; that "Uber" kind of number.

ARABELLA

Hello John, you outside?

She runs out, leaving an open laptop and all her belongings save her phone and purse.

30

EXT. OUTSIDE WHISKEY LOVEBAR BAR. NIGHT

30

Arabella sees Simon, beside him is Derae flirting with ANA (mid 20s, German).

SIMON

Yo, my G, in the bits, welcome back.

They hug.

ARABELLA

What you saying G?  
(to Ana)  
Hiya, my name's Arabella.

Arabella gives the woman a kiss on each cheek.

ANA

I'm Ana.

ARABELLA

And this must be Derae, hiya.

She greets Derae identically and they begin to walk.

DERAE

Oh, whassup? Damn I thought you was tall, you kinda short.

ARABELLA

Thank you.

SIMON

Sorry.

ARABELLA

It's cold.

Simon takes his coat off and gives it to Arabella.

SIMON

That should do it.

ARABELLA

Alright, Mister Chivalry, safe, where's Kat?

SIMON

Tired.

ARABELLA

Pissed her off again?

SIMON

Yeah.

ANA

(background)

Where are we going?

31

EXT. KARAOKE KINGDOM. WEST END. NIGHT

31

They arrive outside a building that says '**KARAOKE KINGDOM**'.  
Arabella eats her sandwich quickly.

Derae follows Ana inside, Simon passes security and disappears. Arabella stuffs her mouth until there is no more food in her hand. The security guard (40s, larger than most security guards) looks at her mouth, barely containing the food.

SECURITY GUARD

No food.

ARABELLA

(mouth full)

Seriously?

SECURITY GUARD

I'll reconsider if you give me a hug.

Arabella stops chewing. After a beat she lunges at him, wrapping her arms around him. He lifts her up and squeezes her.

ARABELLA

Hello hello, missed ya.

SECURITY GUARD

Missed you too, where the fuck ya been?

Pull up/Reload sound effects burst into the score along with the sound of a loud, energised crowd. She bares her open mouth to prove it's empty, he lets her through.

MC (V.O.)  
 THIS IS KARAOKE KINGDOM, HIP HOP  
 EVERY FUCKIN' THURSDAY NEXT UP--

CUT TO:

32

INT. KARAOKE KINGDOM. WEST END. NIGHT

32

The barely lit room is tiny and rammed with people. Arabella is on stage rapping Lil' Wayne ft. Nicki Minaj- "Truffle Butter". Perfectly.

ARABELLA  
*LOL to the bank, check in my  
 account*

We see Simon filming Arabella for his Instagram story.

*Bank teller flirtin' after checkin'  
 my account  
 Pretty ladies, are you here?  
 Truffle butter on your pussy  
 Cuddle buddies on the low  
 You ain't gotta tell your friend  
 That I eat it in the morning  
 Cause she gonna say "I know"  
 Can I hit it in the bathroom?*

Simon looks at his phone, we see an Instagram Direct Message 'whosthatgirlldn: where are you..?'. Simon smirks and replies: "side near toilets" . He receives a reply "okay babe, coming".

ARABELLA (CONT'D)  
*Put your hands on the toilet  
 I'll put one leg on the tub  
 Girl, this my new dance move  
 I just don't know what to call it  
 But bitch you dancing with the  
 stars*

We see Ana enjoying and cheering Arabella, Simon and Derae are close by, they smile at each other, then back to the stage. **Alissa taps Simon and stands in front of him, they greet each other with a familiar kiss.**

ARABELLA (CONT'D)  
*I ain't nothin' like your last dude  
 What's his name?  
 (MORE)*

## ARABELLA (CONT'D)

- Not important  
 I brought some cocaine if you  
 snortin'  
 She became a vacuum  
 Put it on my dick like carpet  
 Suck the white off white chocolate.  
 (she stops rapping)  
 That's all you're getting.

She hands the mic to the MC while the crowds scream and slam the walls; the Karaoke Kingdom language of applause.

## MC

YO, this queen right here, is the  
 reason- YO FUCKING PULL UP. Clap  
 for the goat, thump for the fucking  
 goat.

Arabella puts her hands together in prayer position, pulls her tongue out, and bows repeatedly in different directions of the crowd. They clap profusely.

## MC (CONT'D)

The walls are falling down oh shit.

CUT TO:

33 INT. EGO DEATH BAR. WEST END. NIGHT

33

A bar in the middle of soho. From its inside we see the glass walls and the city surrounding it. Lit by street lights, candles and cars. In our foreground Simon and Derae beside Ana on a table. There are now additional members of their group now forming a table of five people laughing and flirting. In the background, on the other side of the glass we see Arabella smoking a cigarette.

34 EXT. EGO DEATH BAR SMOKING AREA. WEST END. NIGHT

34

Arabella looks inside the club. From her POV one of the new additions (later identified as Tariq) appears to be leading the conversation. **He takes Alissa's hand and puts it over his left pec.** He says something; the group start to laugh hysterically. **He takes Simon's hand, Simon laughs and snatches it back.** Arabella looks at her phone, the countdown says "30 mins". The keen-eyed may also see her battery is low.

She stubs her cigarette and enters the bar.

35

INT. EGO DEATH BAR. WEST END. NIGHT

35

Arabella approaches a BARMAN. In the deep background we see the group at their table.

ARABELLA

Sorry can I charge my phone  
anywhere back there?

BARMAN

Yeah sure, what *is* it?

TARIQ

Here hold on to that.

**TARIQ** (early 30's, black) appears, handing her a portable charger.

ARABELLA

Oh, uhm, thank you I'll be leaving  
soon though I don't wanna steal it.

Tariq hands over cash for the drinks. Simon, now drunk, puts an arm around Tariq.

SIMON

This our new friend, what's your  
name again? tari- Tariq. And  
David's... somewhere. You been out  
catching cancer with the cancer  
crew we been catching joke, come  
on, we're over there.

Simon takes a tray of drinks from Tariq.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Silver tequila? These guys are  
commoners.

ARABELLA

Who's that then?

Arabella nods toward Alissa.

SIMON

Who? Oh, I just met her at karaoke.  
She's feeling the kid.

ARABELLA

I'm going work before I see  
anything I don't wanna see.

SIMON

Whatdju meeeean?

ARABELLA

Simon I don't wanna be in trouble  
with your girlfriend!

SIMON

Kat loves you more than me, come  
on.

He heads off toward the table. A man wriggles out from the  
bar line and approaches Tariq, **DAVID (late 20s)**

DAVID

We got enough?

TARIQ

Nah, one more for the lady.

ARABELLA

Thanks.

David barely registers her before disappearing back into the  
queue to pick up the remaining drink.

TARIQ

That's David. What's your name?

They head to where the rest are seated.

ARABELLA

Arabella.

They smile at each other.

SIMON

COME ON!

TARIQ

Nice.

He hands her the charger, she takes it.

ARABELLA

Thanks.

SIMON

(background)

Did you get gold? No, seriously!

As Tariq and Arabella approach the table.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Right, to friends, some old, some  
new, some fucking strangers.

David sets down drinks.

ALL  
Cheers. Eyes eyes eyes eyes.

They drink.

ANA  
Great. I love your name.

ARABELLA  
Ah thanks.

ANA  
Is it Ghanaian? Like Arabena?

ARABELLA  
Mmm.

ANA  
Yeah I thought so, born on  
Tuesday..?

ARABELLA  
Yeah.

ANA  
Never heard 'Bella' at the end of  
it.

ARABELLA  
Oo, you're clued up. My mum really  
wanted me to have a Ghanaian name  
but my dad thought an African name  
would make assimilating into  
England harder. So she compromised  
and they essentially colonised my  
name by adding 'Bella'.

ANA  
Bella's not English, it's Italian.

ARABELLA  
Yeah. And where are you, do you  
live here?

ANA  
I'm visiting from Berlin. This is  
my last night.

Tariq places a drink in front of Ana.

ARABELLA  
Love Berlin.

ANA

Oh yes it's my favourite hell.

Beat. Ana's speech distorts. Arabella looks around the room.

ANA (CONT'D)

Ah I'm drunk.

ARABELLA

I don't know.

The sound of a piano seeps in to sound. Ana looks around the room.

ANA

But you know you're really  
beautiful too, sorry I'm terrible.

Everything is now from Arabella's POV. Our score (It's Gonna Rain - Marvin Winans TCS Feat Delores Powell -Harrington) creeps up and takes over the club music. We look around.

SCORE

*Can't you see the clouds gathering?*

Derae is texting, bored on his phone.

SCORE (CONT'D)

*Don't let it be said too late*

Alissa stumbles toward Simon, dependent on him to stay upright.

SCORE (CONT'D)

*There's a brand new feeling in the  
air*

Simon stumbles toward us. A smiling Ana stumbles onto a chair for balance. Simon is talking to Arabella; it's distorted and incomprehensible.

SCORE (CONT'D)

*You better run, in the arc, before  
the rain starts.*

Arabella stumbles toward the exit. She looks at the door and slowly attempts to grab the handle. The door handle floats a foot above her head.

SCORE (CONT'D)

*Better run, in the arc, before the  
rain starts.*

We fade to black as the music stops.

- 36 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - OFFICE. MORNING 36
- Arabella is back at her desk typing. There's an entire page of words we focus on.
- "in the dark, in constant communication and complete isolation" . She continues typing. Simon's coat is on folded over a chair.
- We see a tiny trail of dried blood on one side of her forehead.**
- She briefly looks down at her keypad and then to her phone beside it- the screen is completely smashed.
- She continues typing. A message from BIAGIO "Bellllaaa"
- Arabella smiles for a selfie, "miss you baby".
- 37 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - BATHROOM. MORNING 37
- A bathroom just about big enough for a toilet cubicle, sink and shower. The bathroom door opens, through the mirror (opposite the door) we see Arabella enter, without looking at her reflection she walks straight to the toilet bowl. As she pulls down her jeans past her knees she winces for a moment. She urinates.
- 38 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY OFFICE. MORNING 38
- The sound of water running as we focus on the gift hamper, now only containing deodorant and a mini tube of toothpaste.
- 39 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - BATHROOM. MORNING 39
- Water falls from the shower head to hers. Within seconds the trail of blood is gone.
- Arabella's feet. **Blood and water run into the drain.** The shower stops. She steps out, each footprint leaves water in its trail.
- 40 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - OFFICE. MORNING 40
- Arabella approaches the hamper. She has a towel wrapped around her, and a wetted flannel in her hand. She chucks the used flannel over her back and rummages through the hamper. She stops and grunts.

41 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - BATHROOM. MORNING 41

She picks back up the flannel, puts toothpaste on it and scrubs her mouth and tongue aggressively, this time looking in the mirror.

42 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - OFFICE. MORNING 42

Arabella is typing as before.

She sees the time on her laptop; 7:59am. She quickly e-mails Julia and Francine the attachment of her project.

43 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - OFFICE. MORNING 43

Julia and Francine each hold a few sheets of paper in their hands.

JULIA

Well, well done. I really enjoyed reading this.

FRANCINE

Really strong.

Beat.

JULIA

How are you feeling about it?

ARABELLA

Yeah, good.

FRANCINE

You okay?

ARABELLA

Yeah. You?

JULIA

Yeah. So, well done. Really strong. Very good, surprising. Good, good and surprising. Very observational; the boogie monster metaphor. Great, really. How do you think it could develop? Is this--

ARABELLA

Sorry can I just... check where...

She takes the few pages and reads from the beginning...

FRANCINE

Did you send the wrong file? Maybe  
an error..?

ARABELLA

Uhm, sorry. Uh, just...

She flips the page, reads, flips them back over, and places  
them on the table.

FRANCINE

Is there (more?)

Julia nudges Francine to forbid her from speaking.

ARABELLA

Need to go toilet.

She takes her phone with her. As she leaves Julia holds her  
head in her hands.

44 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY - BATHROOM. MORNING 44

SIMON (PHONE)

This is the voicemail of Simon  
Ramsey. Sorry I can't--

Arabella hangs up the phone. She sends a text "why am I  
bleeding?". She makes another call.

45 INT. JP MORGAN - TOILETS. MORNING 45

Simon exits a cubicle, cancelling a call on his mobile. He  
slides it back into his blazer. He washes his hands  
vigorously and looks into the mirror. He splashes cold water  
on to his face. We hear the sound of his phone vibrating. A  
colleague enters.

COLLEAGUE

You alright?

SIMON

Yeah.

46 INT. NEW VOICES TALENT AGENCY OFFICE. MORNING 46

JULIA

Mmm, and how does that link in with  
the adoption?

ARABELLA

...yup.

She flips back and forth between the two pages.

JULIA

Yes I mean there's a few avenues  
you could go down, just curious how  
it all loops back to this idea of--

FRANCINE

Boogie monsters.

Arabella nods. She begins miming as she scans the words. We see perhaps see a few; *'We lay on either side and we don't dip our toes'*.

Blood starts to slowly trickle from her forehead. Julia and Francine stare.

JULIA

Oh dear

FRANCINE (CONT'D)

You've cut yourself.

\*  
\*

**Arabella rubs her knee rather than her head.**

ARABELLA

Yeah, I have. I'm feeling a bit...

Arabella winces and sighs.

JULIA

Why don't we call it a day? You get  
that cleaned up.

ARABELLA

Oh okay.

FRANCINE

Yeah, we've got bits and bobs to...

CUT TO:

47

EXT. SOHO STREETS. MORNING

47

Outside the office Arabella orders an Uber from her phone. 2 mins away. The trail of blood is still on her forehead.

She roams the streets trying to find the car. Again- nothing like her management of the app in the first scene in Italy.

She cancels it and books another one. She looks around.

This sequence chops and changes, allowing moments to breathe then fading cutting in and out to another.

She stares at the map, she walks around. She approaches a stranger and shows them her phone.

ARABELLA

Can you help me? I'm trying to find-

CUT TO:

48 EXT. SOHO STREETS. AFTERNOON

48

She searches the streets. She finds a stranger.

ARABELLA

Sorry, do you know where Tottenham Court Road is?

STRANGER

This is it.

ARABELLA

The train station?

STRANGER

Oh- walk down, third right opposite the McDonalds.

She walks. She can't find it. She stops and gags. Nothing comes out. She goes to the bus stop and looks at the map.

We should feel time has passed. She gags a little.

She watches someone flag down a black cab. She does the same to the next cab passing.

ARABELLA

7 Artillery Passage please.

49 INT. TAXI. AFTERNOON

49

Arabella calls Simon. It rings.

50 EXT. OUTSIDE JP MORGAN. AFTERNOON

50

Simon is on a lunch break. He drinks coffee on the benches outside a typical London banking building. Many suited women and men walking in and out of it. He is sat on a bench outside the building. He watches Arabella's name flashing on his screen. He inhales.

Simon springs up to his feet and brings the phone to his ear.

SIMON

Yo.

51 INT. TAXI. AFTERNOON 51

ARABELLA

Hey. Yeah, you alright?

52 EXT. OUTSIDE JP MORGAN. AFTERNOON 52

Simon is pacing back and forth with his coffee.

SIMON

Yeah man, yeah. Good night, good night, mad, tired though, at work like, I'm tryna be in bed haha, yeah. My break is done in a couple minutes so... Nah nah, it's cool, you good though?

53 INT. TAXI. AFTERNOON 53

ARABELLA

Did you get my text? Why am I bleeding? My phone's smashed and--

She winces and touches her knee.

CUT TO:

54 EXT. OUTSIDE JP MORGAN. AFTERNOON 54

He listens a while.

SIMON

Ah yeah, yeah you fell. Yeah, you fell, ah nah man it's all good.

Pause.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Where is uhm- where are you bleeding? Is it bad? Well that's good then, that's --

CUT TO:

55 INT. TAXI. AFTERNOON 55

ARABELLA  
Ah, nah long as you were there coz  
I was like 'what the fuck?' for a  
second, like 'whaaat?'.  
Oh no no, it's not bad. I was just  
like...

The cab pulls up at her flat.

56 EXT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE. AFTERNOON 56

Arabella exits the cab.

ARABELLA  
I just needed to-- okay, bye bye  
bye, hope you survive!  
(to driver)  
Thank you.

CAB DRIVER  
You haven't paid?

ARABELLA  
Oh.

She hands him cash.

CAB DRIVER  
That's Uber, that is; turning the  
common man into a thief.

57 EXT. OUTSIDE JP MORGAN. AFTERNOON 57

He stands for a moment, looking into the bustling corporate world in front of him. He throws his coffee in the bin behind him and continues walking till he disappears through the revolving doors.

58 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE (SHARED FLAT). AFTERNOON 58

Arabella walks through the hallway up the stairs. Her phone rings.

ARABELLA (INTO PHONE)  
Terry, was good bae, how was the  
audition? Oh good. Yeah just smelly  
need to shower I'll call you back.

She hangs up and continues upstairs.

59 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE BEDROOM. AFTERNOON 59

A very messy bedroom. The knob of its door turns, opens, and Arabella enters through it. Her room. She fishes for a towel amidst the mess on floor and exits.

The sound of a shower starting to run. It continues for a few beats. A poster falls from her window.

The sound of the shower stops. After a beat the knob is turned and Arabella reappears in the doorway, the blood is washed away again, her towel is wrapped around her, and her previously worn clothes are in her hand. **Her hand remains on the door knob**, almost stroking it. As she stares at it she reflects...

FLASHBACK:

60 INT. UNKNOWN TOILET CUBICLE. 60

We are suddenly inside a toilet cubicle painted a loud shade of red. Loud atmospheric sounds of music, heavy bass, crowds shouting, all together- abrasive and incomprehensible. We are looking up at a pale pink shirt half undone at the bottom.

The red cubicle door behind the shirted torso is being thumped, it shudders rhythmically, the sound rises through the atmosphere.

CUT TO:

61 INT. ARTILLERY PASSAGE ARABELLA'S BEDROOM. AFTERNOON 61

The thumping sound continues. Arabella looks to her feet.

A sound in the rhythm of the door banging continues. She removes her hand from the door knob as one would a hot frying pan. The sound immediately stops.

ARABELLA

Hmm.

The hand once on the knob is now clutched firmly into a trembling fist. She looks at it, bewildered. She drops her clothes, walks to her bed and sits. Her body begins shiver, confusion almost births a smile.

**END**