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A PLACE WHERE BUSINESSMEN CAN DANCE

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Category A

Note on Text:

(Stage directions are in bold and bracketed)

When other people speak, it's not bold but still Italics with a line break.

The rest of the time it's just straight text from Raina, speaking directly to the audience.

A dash (-) means a scene change.

Other character's voices are pre-recorded or performed by RAINER, unless their names are capitalised: this means they are definitely pre-recorded and played. This happens mostly later in the play.

Also, a note on mis-en-scene. The scenes move mostly between day and night and depending on Rainer's position or state, whether she's sleeping or riding or whatever, the two main lighting states should be dark, red and rainy to bright and sunny.

Performer:

RAINER is in her late twenties, she works for Angel Deliveries. British-Black and highly intelligent, a film buff and introvert. She has a soft face but hard eyes. A very faint cockney accent

A PLACE WHERE BUSINESSMEN CAN DANCE

A tall apartment. Night. Rain and red neon.

RAINER stands in the room. She works for Angel Deliveries.

Her uniform is blue and there's a blue carrier box by her feet.

She holds a plastic Tupperware container.

RAINER: Hi there. Got your aubergine.

RUPERT: Mmm, great.

RAINER: ...

RUPERT: Wanna come in for a bit?

I'm just watching Bake Off with my girlfriend. Would you like to watch it with us?

RAINER: Um.

RUPERT: She's quite attractive, you know. She's a solid 8.

HELEN: Rupert, what you doin'?

RUPERT: Just getting the food.

HELEN: Why's there an atmosphere?

RUPERT: There's no atmosphere.

HELEN: Did he ask you inside?

RUPERT: No.

RAINER: Yes.

HELEN: Get inside, you freak.

HELEN: Sorry, he's got asperger's. And he's a prick.

RAINER (laughing): Right.

HELEN: Must be the weirdest thing that's happened to you!

RAINER: Nah, no... at least you weren't naked!

HELEN: At least! Hmm.

RAINER: Here you go.

HELEN: God, there's so much! We'll never finish it! Maybe you could...help?

RAINER: ...

HELEN: We're just watching a bit of Bake Off-

RAINER: Um, no, sorry, thanks!

HELEN: Course, course.

Ah, just one more thing?

RAINER: Yeah?

HELEN: You ever met a guy called, Jack?

-

First time I met him, I was eating a Meal Deal.

I was sat out In Parliament Square, with no one around, cos it was the lockdown Summer, and all the grass was dead and yellow. And everything was a bit apocalyptic.

Anyway, I was there eating my Meal Deal like a pig, stuffing tiny eggs into my mouth, eating those weird grapes, inhaling a Fruit Shoot, when this guy, this idiot guy, this Angel decides to talk to me.

JACK: ...*It's a bit apocalyptic.*

RAINER: What?

JACK: You know, the grass. Like that film...-

RAINER: Twenty Eight Days Later.

Not that I love the film but I was just thinking about it.

We talk about better films. Italian films.

We talk about the lock down and all the good stuff that's happened and how they're gonna build a statue of us, right next to Churchill.

Just to make it clear, the man is no babe.

He's blonde and gangly and basically looks like a cheese strong, but his face is nice.
And I've never found it so easy to talk.
You don't think. You just let it out. I've never had that.

We meet up all Summer.
Really pissed one night we go to Hampstead Heath and jump the fence.
We lie by that lake and watch the light go blue.
It's stupidly perfect.
He kisses me.
I lie back.
A perfect circle of trees.
The sky.

And I think. This is the moment that they told you about. The one in films. The one we dream about. The reason we even bother getting up.

And then he's gone.

He doesn't call.

Now, this is the job, people come and go.
And it's not like I spend all year looking for him.
Or thinking about him.
And those trees and the lake.

I watch the city roar back into life.
The streets fill up.
The skies pick at the sky.

Everything back to normal.

And finally he leaves a message.

JACK: I'm sorry, Rainer. There was something I had to do.

I love you.

RAINER: (to audience) Bull-shit.

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Outside their flat, I smell the sea.
Barry from Bermondsey wants some Dim Sum, so off I go.

I think about what just happened.

Basically, Mrs Creep said Jack used to work at some bar that Mr Creep used to go to. Bar called Deep Shadows in Tower Bridge.

Out on the Thames there's this party boat, filled with people screaming behind the glass. I remember him talking it, that bar. Just before he left.

Well. It's sort of on the way.

-

Deep Inside of you' by Gloria Ann Taylor plays. RAINER moves to the music.

I flash the bouncer my Dim Sum and in I go.
It's some kind of vintage place, the singer's dressed like Martha Reeves.
The cloak room girl looks anorexic but nice. I ask what it's like working here.

RUBY: Sort of horrendous. Sort of great.

She tells me that the other night they had these models in, clip-clopping the place. Then the gack comes out.

RUBY: You can always tell it's coke cos you find their shitty knickers in the loos.

I ask about the men. She says they're alright with her but they can get a bit handsy with the other girls. There was one girl, apparently...

Suddenly, there's a big sausage hand on my shoulder.

POTATO HEAD: What's going on?

It's the bouncer from the door. I notice that his head is enormous. Like a cartoon potato.

TOAD: We didn't order anything.

Next to him is a toad. The manager I think.

TOAD: We didn't order anything!

RAINER: Aren't you Barry?

TOAD: No, please, leave.

Toad and Potato shove me to the door.

RAINER: What about Jack Dekker, ever heard of him?

Toady stops.
He looks at me.

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NADIA: Leg up please.

RAINER: I've been having this weird feeling lately, like I'm not really there.

NADIA: Mild Dissociative Disorder.

Is what my councillor calls it. Nadia's small and round and has small arms like a T-Rex. It's always sunny in her office.

DOCTOR KHAN: You need to get out more. Take pictures of things. That's what people do. How's your cystitis?

I haven't got cystitis. She's always mixing me up.

DOCTOR KHAN: What about your leg?

There's nothing wrong with my leg, basically I came off my bike a while ago but nothing really happened so it's fine.

DOCTOR KHAN: And how's everything with your dad?

RAINER: Oh. Not great.

DOCTOR KHAN: Why's that?

RAINER: Well. He's dead.

-

RAINER: I can't sleep.

I lie in bed and think about Jack and the trees and the lake.

I can hear my flat mate on the other side of the wall, quietly masturbating. He's Italian I think. Well, I better get up.

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Ok. By the way. I'm not a fucking psychopath. I do have friends. Well, one.

Sunny lives in a big high rise in Lewisham. His flat is dingy and dark and smells a bit like cumin. I found him hovering over pictures of Elon Musk.

SUNNY: You know Elon Musk is trying to put nano chips into your dog's face?

RAINER: Hey, you slept.

SUNNY: Not really. Maybe. Dunno.

He hasn't. His ginger hair is especially wild.

Sunny's a DJ come caterer. He works at events down at South Gate. That's that new city they built in New Cross.

He likes to indulge in mild acts of disobedience. Pissing in the soup. Putting pictures of himself in the loos. Stuff like that.

RAINER: How are you?

SUNNY: Fine. I got piles.

He rolls very strong spliffs. Which is alright if you drink enough brandy. I tell him about last night. He lights up.

SUNNY: Deep Shadows? Yeah, there was some big scandal there, you know. This girl went missing. Involved this MP and stuff.

He says he's got this mate who knows all about it and gives me his number. Then we get very, very drunk and watch the new Blade Runner.

SUNNY: It's not as good as the first. But it's very pretty.

RAINER: Yeah.

And when I stumble out his flat at three everything looks a bit Blade Runner, you can almost see the flying ships in the distance. A huge blue woman, drifting towards you. Explosions in the distance. Rain and neon.

And when I get home there's this woman at the bus-stop. She's holding flowers and waiting. She looks up at me. I turn away.

-

JACK: Rainer, I love you.

-

Gospel music plays.

Next day on the bus I try not to puke on the woman in their Sunday finest.

Sunny's mate called, told me to meet him at this bar.

The bus stops at Vauxhall bridge cos apparently a girl has glued herself to the road. It's cos the planet's on fire, apparently.

I walk the rest of the way.

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BEARD: Hey, dude, what can I get ya?

RAINER: The bar's dingy and full of people sitting in the dark. Big man with a big old beard smiles at me.

Um. What you got?

BEARD: We have Mango Pale, Citrus Cool, Almond Bitter, Flaked Rye, Motueka Hops. Then for the ciders-

RAINER: I'll just have a lager please. Half.

Beardy man is very disappointed and he takes my fiver like it's covered in sick.
I look over at the tables. The people in the dark aren't moving. Or talking. Thought this was a bar?

BEARD: It is. Craft ales and Virtual Reality.

I look over and sure enough, everyone's wearing head sets and sipping IPAs, slowly vibrating in the dark.

BEARD: What's better than a pint?
Pint and a lovely view. Summer meadow's free, wanna try? Or there's Midnight in Paris, that's more story driven-

RAINER: Um, I just want to talk to my friend, Danny?

He points his beardy finger to a little guy near the door, wearing a t-shirt that says 'I heart chocobos'.

Yeah, that's him.

But when I tap the little guy, he barely moves. Like a cold, dead hamster.
I shake him again, and again.
I literally test his breath.

BEARD: He's been in there for hours.

Says Beardy Man. Concerned for his health, I yank off his head set.

DANNY: Shitting hell! What you doin mate?!

He squirms about the place. I tell him I'm Sunny's mate.

DANNY: I don't care who you are, I was deep in the juju.

I buy him an IPA and he cools right down. I ask him about Deep Shadows.

DANNY: It's all owned by one guy, Max Harmen.

He tells me, whisker deep in Almond Bitter. He owns this other place, the Oval Club.

DANNY: You know about South Gate, right?

That's that big city they built in New Cross. The developer who built it

DANNY: Ever wonder how it got built so quick?

Apparently, Rupert Poole, the guy who built South Gate, met with this housing Minister at the clubs. A picture got taken. Then this girl disappeared. Two years ago, in June. That's when Jack disappeared.

I stand.

RAINER: Where's that other club?

-

NADIA: Rainer. Are you listening?

-

Oxford Street.
Everyone's shopping.

Suddenly, there's an explosion.
Air's filled with white smoke and pink macaroons.

Everyone screams until they realise it's all fake.
A man with dreadlocks jumps on a bin and tells us the world's on fire.
The crowd tear him down.

I head to the Oval Club.

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POTATO: What is it?

The Potato from last night is smoking by the door.

RAINER: Hey mate, got some spring rolls for Lola?

Which is true. Got a tip from another Angel.
Potato grabs at my bag.

RAINER: Actually, mate, do you think I could use your toilet? It's a bit of an emergency.

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He says no and grabs at the bag.

RAINER: I'm gonna shit my pants mate, I'm gonna shit all over your door!

He says no.

RAINER: I can't digest yeast, mate! I bought this sandwich and they said there was no yeast, but there was yeast, and now-

POTATO: Fuck-sake, fine!

He throws his fag down.

POTATO: Two minutes.

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'World that's Not Real Plays' by Gloria Ann Taylor. RAINER looks up, slightly in awe of the place.

It's bigger than Deep Shadows.
Covered in mirrors. Like the bottom of the sea.

A beautiful woman sings on stage. A man sits beneath her. He's crying, I think.
She starts to move and so does he. .

The song kicks in and RAINER dances.

There's a lovely looking guy at the bar. He smiles at me. He asks me what I got there.

RAINER: Spring rolls for Lola.

MICHAEL: Oh, yeah, she loves her spring rolls.

He nods to the beautiful singer. He says he'll miss her. Where's she going?
He breathes on the glass. It goes blue.

MICHAEL: Everyone leaves.

I ask him about Jack. He stops.

MICHAEL: ...I need to clean the coffee machine.

I tell him he hasn't got one.

Big crash.

The crying man falls into a table full of Russians and they are not happy. I grab Michael's hand and tell him if he doesn't tell me, I'll tell his boss he tried to grope me.

MICHAEL: Go on, then.

He nods to the crying man who is now just lying there, covered in glass. Russians, screaming at him.

RAINER: That's Max Harmen?

Lola has stopped singing and cradles Max's head in her arms.

MICHAEL: I never knew Jack.

He got fired before his time. There was this guy Rupert Poole. Property developer. He was always hanging round this girl called Elena. Everyone liked her. He even has a blurry picture. She looks just like Lola. Tall, black, hard features. Then one day she disappeared. Then Jack came in one night, screaming about this other place.

RAINER: What other place?

MICHAEL: Some place they take people.

RAINER: Where?

Sausage hands on my shoulder.

POTATO: What you doin out the toilet?!

It's Potato and Toad.

TOAD: Hold her, Kevin.

RAINER: (audience) Kevin?

TOAD: What you doing here? I spend half my life throwing you fucks out!

He starts grabbing at my boxes and throwing them about the place.

TOAD: If I see you hear again, I'll rip your fucking face off. You hear?-

He stops.

Everyone's looking.

Including Max Harmen.

I break free.

RAINER: Where's Jack, you fuck-head? Where's this other place? Where's this other place?!

-

In the morning I eat a huge bowl of Weetabix in the kitchen.

My Italian flat mate comes in and even though my face is literally bleeding, he just dumps a load of dishes in the sink and goes for a piss.

There's an email from the landlord. Rents going up. One from mum. Asking where I am. And one from...

JACK: I wish I could be close to you, Raine. I feel so far away. I love you.

-

SUNNY: Bull. Shit.

RAINER: Why is it bull shit?

Sunny's been up all night having a party for one. Plates of powder and coco pops lie everywhere.

SUNNY: Why would he send you that? After pissing off for two years. He's a psycho.

He's mangey dressing gown flaps about, threatening to expose his balls at any minute. I tell him about last night.

SUNNY: So you think there's this secret place where they take girls and Jack because he knows too much?

I nod. He tells me that's mental, even for him. He collapses back into his massive sofa

SUNNY: You still seeing that doctor?

He looks at me, weirdly. I have a brandy.

SUNNY: I think you need to go on dates, you know. You know, do things. You need to get out.

I literally snort. He's one to talk.

SUNNY: Yeah, but I hate people. That's well known.

He gives me that weird look again. My neck goes red.

SUNNY: Rainer-

Shit, he's about to console me. This isn't in our contract. Feel like I'm gonna piss.

SUNNY: I care about you, Raine.

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Yup. A little bit of wee literally rolls down my leg. I stand up.

RAINER: Well, you shouldn't. Cos I got a date.

-

I actually do. Girl's gotta eat.

He takes me to the BFI cos on my profile it says I like films.

It's this Chabrol film about a maid who murders her employer with a shot-gun cos he's a big French prick.

I love it.

My date does not.

He tries to hide his intense boredom by groping me.

Not in a horrible way.

I'm just so fucking dry.

In the bar after he says that was the best French film he's ever seen. He always wanted to make films but there's no money in it. So he became a property developer.

DATE: But don't hold that against me.

Five negronis deep, he's looking very nice. I ask about South Gate.

DATE: Oh, yeah, we wouldn't touch that with a 10K pole. It was well dodgy. Really dirty money. You have to have some principles.

-

His flat smells at Potpourri.

I want to have really horrible, banker sex, you know? Just awful. And we start off well enough, pounding away. Then he kind of...wilts. Stops. Shuffles over to me.

RAINER: What's wrong?

His head's on my knee.

DATE: I dunno. I guess I just... like you.

-

On the bus back I see that junction where I came off my bike. Someone's put flowers.

-

SUNNY: Mate, can you help me it? It's urgent!

Sunny calls me the next day, sounding very shrill.
Hamster Danny didn't come in for work and they're a man down.

SUNNY: You'll love it, it's well arty. It's at the Cross.

-

The Cross Gallery is on the edge of South Gate.
It's opening night.
Beautiful people swarm around the fountains, taking selfies.
There's a protest nearby.
I meet Sunny near the bins.

SUNNY: Please don't embarrass me.

Inside, a man shoves a tray into my hand.

TOAD: Give these out, come back.

The Toad doesn't even recognise me! I'm well hurt. I look round the room and sure enough, there's Potato Kevin, trying to make sense of some geometrical shapes strewn across the wall.

The floor is covered in purple sand.
A corrugated sheet stands above it.

The beautiful people observe.

An angry woman with fake lips asks me where the toilet is. I point vaguely to the left.

PURPLE HAIR: These are rather lovely.

A not so beautiful person has taken one of my tiny burgers. She's round with purple hair. She asks me if I like the art. I say it's a mixed bag. She finds this very funny. Fake lips is back. Fuming. Apparently, I pointed her to the bins. I don't know where the toilet is.

FAKE LIPS: So, what's the point in you then? What is the point?!

PURPLE HAIR: Oh, stick it up your cunt, Cassandra.

Fake lips shrieks and disappears.

PURPLE HAIR: Absolutely hate that bitch.

I'm in love. She asks me if I make art. Not really. My dad did though. Why did he stop?

RAINER: Well, he... he, um...killed himself.

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Oh.

She does a strange thing. She takes my hand and holds it.

PURPLE HAIR: Keep going, Rainer.

A glass pings.

DIRECTOR: Friends. Friends? I'd like to thank you all for being here tonight. It's been a long road. With much sweat, and tears, but now we are hear. In this place. A place that embodies our vision of the future. Where fashion, art, love and sustainability, work as one.

The beautiful people erupt.

DIRECTOR: And we couldn't have done it without our friend, our patron, Rupert Poole!

I lurch around. I see a tall man with long, dark hair. Standing next to him, looking glum, is Max Harmen. I make a dive for them but the crowd is split in two.

DIRECTOR: Let the show begin!

The room is filled with strobe lights and models, wearing bin bags and tree bark.

DIRECTOR: Claire is wearing Tunisian Cedar, whereas Elena here-

I lurch again. Elena. Her face is covered in compost bags but it's definitely her. I shout her name but Tree bark Claire suddenly grabs the mic.

CLAIRE: You are all liars! All of you!

The beautiful people stop. I smell smoke.

CLAIRE: How dare you talk about the future, how dark you talk about justice. How dare you take money from *this man*!

She points to Rupert Poole. Kevin Potato stirs. Max looks down.

CLAIRE: A man who build a house while the rest of us burn! But you will burn with him. You will burn in this house!

Potato man tries to drag her gently from the stage.

CLAIRE: You can't sustain this future. You can't just build! Build until there's nothing left. Your house will burn too! Your house will burn.

The place is filled with smoke. Everyone screams.

-

Outside, me and Sunny share a fag and watch the fire.

During the show, some protestors burnt some portfolios near the road. It's all quite pretty, really. The beautiful people are rushed into taxis.

One of them slowly rolls past me and Sunny. I see Max Harmen's face in the mirror. And then I remember. I remember!

-

NADIA: What do you remember?

RAINER: ...Not much.

NADIA: Can you feel that? When I press there?

RAINER: Not really.

NADIA: We're gonna have to get you on crutches.

RAINER: But there's nothing wrong! There's nothing wrong with my leg!

RAINER unrolls her trouser leg to expose her leg. It's badly bruised. She looks up. Lost.

-

MRS MAX: Hello, who's that?

Max Harmen lives at the top of the Elephant Estate. That posh new block of flats.

MRS MAX: Hello?

I remember now. I delivered here before. I drew his face in my journal. Ramen for Harmen. Ramen for Harmen.

RAINER: Ramen for Harmen.

MRS MAX: We didn't order any, Ramen.

RAINER: Would you like some anyway?

She doesn't. Intercom goes dead.

This is a stupid. This is a very stupid idea.

Intercom croaks back into life.

MRS MAX: Do you know anything about plumbing?

-

'Deep Shadows' by Little Ann plays quietly. RAINER moves slowly to the music.

Their flat is covered in eggy, shitty water.

MRS MAX: I don't know where it's coming from!

Mrs Harmen is blonde and very pretty. English with a touch of something else. Her ankles are covered in grey sludge.

RAINER: I mean I'm no expert. But I think it's your Rigid Coil.

Absolute bull shit, but Mrs Max laps it up. Just having someone in a uniform, bent down, fiddling with her taps, is enough to set her at ease.

I twist.

A man runs in, gives her a kiss.

MAX: Sorry, M, traffic was vile.

Max Harmen, knee deep in bilge and holding his brown brogues aloft.

She offers me something. I ask for a sandwich. Haven't eaten all day. She squeaks with excitement and runs away. Max bends down next to me.

MAX: So... the Rigid Coil?

He tells me he should know more about it. He owns a few bars. I ask which one.

MAX: Deep Shadows. I named it after this record.

He points to an ancient record player.

I tell him I've heard of it.

RAINER: Yeah, my mate worked there. Jack Dekker?

His smile disappears.

I keep twisting.

MAX: Oh...yes...how is he?

RAINER: Dunno. Thought you could tell me.

His brogues slip through his hands.

MAX: ...What is this? Who are you?

I tell him I know about the clubs and the girls and everything.

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Mrs Max shouts from the kitchen. Something about mustard.

MAX: You need to leave.

RAINER: I'll tell her, Max. I'll tell her everything.

MRS MAX: Tell me what?

She stands there the doorway, holding a bag of sour dough bread, smiling.
Max looks at me. Please.

RAINER: Oh, just... I reckon I can fix it. Tonight.

She squeaks and runs back into the kitchen.
Max sinks back against the wall.

He tells me everything.

When he opened Deep Shadows, he tells me, it was all about the music. Wasn't private. But they were losing money, fast. Then he met Rupert.

MAX: He was nice at first. Then he just took control. Wanted the staff to be more...

Fuckable. It became a hangout for pricks. And if they liked the girls, they'd give them this card. He hands me one. A white card with a weird red symbol.

MAX: It's some kind of code... gets you into that...place.

RAINER: Where's this place?

He says he doesn't know.

RAINER: Max, I will tell your wife. I will tell her everything.

MAX: I don't know, alright?! Think I know anything? All I did for the last ten years is sit in that little office and sign things. All I did...was disappear.

His hands drop into the grey water. He nods to the window.

And the only thing that stopped me from jumping out of that. Was there was nothing left to throw off.

Something bobs against my leg. A plate.
Mrs Max stands in the doorway, her pretty hands shaking.

I look down.

-

JACK: Keep going.

-

(RAINER drinks a can of lager and sits).

Obviously, I'm fired after that. So I get a few tinnies and sit in London Fields.

London Fields.

Everyone's wearing t-shirts, even though it's March.

I watch some beautiful people eat sandwiches from brown, paper bags.

RAINER stands slowly and starts to move to the music: 'Losing You' by Solange. Strobe lights fade in and flash.

Sunny's DJing at this place in Hoxton.

Warm bodies and arms.

He takes a break and sits with me. And gives me some of his special drink.

I show him the card that Max gave me. His eyes widen.

SUNNY: I've seen it somewhere.

But I don't hear.

I don't hear.

RAINER dances slowly to the music, enjoying the warmth around her. Eventually she stops.

On the night bus back, I cross the river. The city breathes.

The chicken shop's open so I buy some chips and sit at the bus stop.

That woman's still there. Holding her flowers. Waiting for the bus.

RAINER: I don't think it's coming. You should go tomorrow.

WOMAN: ...I can't go tomorrow. I need to see my daughter.

-

JACK: Keep going.

-

RAINER lies on the floor, hungover as hell. She lies there for a while, holding her head until there is a violent knocking at the door. Confused and worried, she stands up slowly and peers through her keyhole. She opens the door.

RAINER: Outside my door is a very sweaty man holding a small black cat.

DERICK: You ain't half got stairs.

He's wearing a red uniform and seems to be dying. He catches his breath, sort of, and hands me the cat and something to sign. I tell him I didn't order one.

DANNY: This Fairlawn Mansions?

Yes. He thrusts it into my hand.

RAINER: Mate, that's not my name. I don't even like cats!

DERICK: Fuck-sake! I came all the way from Ilford!

I don't want him to die so I invite him in and give him a big tea. He sits on my battered coach and blows on his tea.

I ask him about the cat renting business.

DERICK: Oh, it's booming. No one's got time to own one, do they.

And it's not just cats. Derick works for Useful People. He's amazed I haven't heard of it. I am too.

DERICK: You got something useful, you put it up. Skills or things. You know that place, South Gate?

I do.

DERICK: I went to rent this lady my cat while this woman cleans her knickers, some bloke massages her son's feet, and a Priest blesses their garden. That's the future. Everyone's got a use.

I tell him I don't. He looks at me, and smiles, leaning in. Suddenly, I'm not sure I like him.

DERICK: Everyone's got a use, Rainer. Everyone.

...

The phone rings loudly.

-

NADIA: What do you remember?

Max Harmen calls me. Asks me to meet him near his flat, near the junction. A police screams by in the rain.

MAX: We need to talk.

He sounded desperate on the phone, I hear Mrs Max crying in the back. He's late. A crowd has gathered outside his door.

NADIA: Rainer.

This is where it happened. The Junction. Where I came off my bike. Someone's laid fresh flowers. There's a picture of the guy who died here but it's blurred. Suddenly, a familiar face.

POTATO KEVIN: Hello, Rainer?

Potato Kevin, big bald head in a black kagool. He grabs my neck and pushes me down. Incredible pain.

POTATO KEVIN: He's not coming, Max ain't coming, Raine.

His breath smells like petrol.

NADIA: Try and remember.

POTATO KEVIN: Wanna know what happened to him, wanna know what happened to Jack?

I look into his horrible eyes and nod, trying to stop the tears as he crushes my neck. He drags me to the flowers at the junction, to the picture above. The picture of the guy. It's all blurred and covered in rain. He wipes it with his sausage finger and shines his phone.

It's Jack.

I scream.

I scratch and rip at his face but he holds me down like an animal.

I scream.

RAINER: That's not Jack, that's not Jack!

He shoves my face in it.

POTATO KEVIN: I did it, Rainer. I mowed him down with my truck. Made it look like a hit and run. That's what fucking happens. See? That's what happens!

He drops my body like a bag.

I lie there, crumpled.

When I look up he's gone. Just that picture of Jack. Smiling.

I tear it, rip at it.

And there, just as I thought, is another picture. Someone else. A woman.

MRS MAX: Rainer.

Mrs Harmen. She's standing there in a white dress. Her ringlets dirty. Her hands are red. Her eyes, hollowed out. Bare feet.

A police car screams past.

She says nothing but hands me a small plastic thing, then walks back towards her flat. The crowd has grown. Something in the middle. A brown brogue.

The crowd backs off as she approaches. I see a leg. A face. A body. Max Harmen.

She holds my hand. We look at him.

-

JACK: I feel so far away.

-

(From this point, recordings are played from other characters)

RAINER: He was pushed.

SUNNY: Not necessarily.

Sunny sits on a cushion. His laptop on his knees, burning. Rain pounds at the window.

I tell him about the call, Kevin, Mrs Harmen outside in the rain. I show him what she gave me. A thin USB.

RAINER: Stick it in.

He doesn't want to.
So I do it.

SUNNY: Rainer...

In a single folder with thousands of pictures.

Men, women, old, young, sitting by themselves in a small dark room.
Beneath the pictures, there's symbols. Emojis. Smiley face. Aubergine, red rose.

RAINER: Where's that card I gave you, the one with the red rose?

He finds it in some grubby tin. I ask him what's the connection.

SUNNY: It's some kind of database. Of profiles.

I scroll through the pictures.

SUNNY: The symbols are some kind of stat, maybe. Or maybe... a price? Or maybe...

Faces flash by. Faces I know.

SUNNY: Maybe what they're willing to do.

Then a face I definitely know.

The air gets sucked out of the room.

SUNNY: What's wrong?

RAINER: Elena.

It's her. No mistake. She sits in the same dark room as the others. On a white chair. Staring up. I've never seen her face up so close. I stare. So does Sunny.

SUNNY: Could be your sister.

He's ride, she could.

Beneath her face is a black rose.

Sunny closes the laptop.

SUNNY: I gotta go to work.

RAINER: You fucking serious?

They're opening South Gate tonight, he's late. What about the pictures? What about everything?

SUNNY: Whatever it is, Raine, it's too big. It's too big for us.

He takes my hand.

He says he knows a journalist guy. Small fry but maybe he could use the pictures.

SUNNY: It's too big for us. It's a fucking nightmare. We have to wake up.

I throw his hand back. He drifts sadly to the toilet. I go to the window.

The city's grown.

Sky's covered in lights.

There are protests. Sirens screech in the rain.
There's music, too.

I think about the pictures and the people, all taken in the same place.

RAINER: But where's big enough to keep them all...

A firework erupts over South Gate.
Everyone's going to South Gate tonight.

RAINER: Where's big...?

-

South Gate.
Service entrance.
Sunny's black shirt smells like wet dog.
I flash his ID card and in I go.

It is a city.
Long lines of buildings stretch out for ever.
Condos, malls, temples, schools.
But all unfinished. Waiting to be filled.

Thousands of people drift around in excitement. Peering into empty shops fronts. Parks with dry fountains. Rolls of astroturf, ready.

The main boulevard is lined with elm trees, and police. It leads to some kind of stadium. The music.
The flood lights.
A long line of black shirts and ties leads to a huge stadium.
Someone touches my shoulder.

TOAD: You lost?

Mr Toad, in a tuxedo. Blinking. I stare. He clicks his fingers.

TOAD: Josie!

A small girl with brown bushy hair appears. Holding a tray.

TOAD: Take her to the kitchens. Then come back.

Josie smiles at me and I follow her. She's a painter but can never find the time. She leads me past restaurants and swimming pools, clubs and depots. All empty.

JOSIE: That's gonna be a graveyard, can you imagine?

We arrive at the kitchens, hundred of swinging doors and black shirts and ties. I ask her about basements, or private rooms, big spaces...

She points over to a stairwell near the kitchens. I run off. She shouts but I'm already leaping down the stairs. Down, down, down. Down, down, down. Past empty rooms and car parks. All open.

I feel heat. I get to the bottom. Big black doors.
Inside the furnaces.

Rows and rows of black mouths and burning rubbish.

There's nothing here.

SUNNY: Rainer, wake up.

I feel tired. Heavy.

I drag myself back upstairs.

I find Josie at the kitchens, holding a bottle of champagne and a cooler. Confused. I tell her I ran to the loos. I've got cystitis.

JOSIE: So have I!

Her knees are quivering now, in fact.

JOSIE: Please, could you take this up, I'm desperate!

She shows me a list of private guests on a tablet. Hundred of rooms. Names.

JACK: Keep going.

I grab the tablet and search a name. And there he is. Rupert Poole. Room 802.

JACK: Keep going.

I take her cooler and she squeaks with joy, pointing to a lift near the stairs.
Before I go, I find a small, sharp knife from the kitchen and pocket it.

'Tears in the Rain' by Vangelis plays.

The lift shaft is glass. I can see the whole city.
The whole thing is red and blue and glows like diamonds.
Explosions.
Something's on fire in Battersea.
Red neon and rain.
The lift stops.
Rows of blue doors.
Outside Room 802, there's an older woman cleaning a jar or orchids with damp cloth.
She looks at me.

I knock.

26

RUPERT: Come in.

MUM: Rainer...

RUPERT: It's open!

-

RUPERT: Oh, yeah, cheers mate. Put it on the side.

He's sat on a big cream coach, watching a film, the Maltese Falcon, I think. His walls are made of glass.

RUPERT: Love these old movies. So much emotion, you know?

He asks me to open the bottle and join him.
I do. He takes the glass. He says he knows my face.

He lowers the glass.

RUPERT: Oh. Right.

He smiles.

The sky suddenly erupts. The Old Kent Road is on fire. He laughs.

RAINER: Aren't you worried?

RUPERT: No. They'll burn out that horrible fucking road and I'll buy it all up again for cheap. Couldn't have planned it better myself. Fucking idiots.

RAINER: Where's this other place?

He laughs.

I tell him I've got pictures.

RUPERT: Of what? Some emojis? Few faces?

For the first time I notice a dark room behind, door slightly ajar.

RAINER: Where's Elena?

RUPERT: Elena's a modern girl. She made a deal.

When he met Elena, she wanted to be a famous singer. But her dad was sick. So Rupert paid for his care, and kept her in the money, kept her singing. But she wasn't happy. Tried to talk to this journalist about the South Gate contract business. But he caught her.

RUPERT: Ungrateful cunt.

SUNNY: The sky erupts.

He couldn't let her leave after that. So he made her a deal. He's keep paying for her dad. After she was gone.

RUPERT: The black rose.

The door of the dark room is slightly ajar.
I grab his hand.

RAINER: But where'd you do it? Where's this other place?

RUPERT: There is no other place, don't you get it? It doesn't exist!

SUNNY: The sky erupts.

RAINER: It's just a database. You put yourself up. You get a call. You come round. That's it! There's no place. That's it.

...

...That's it.

MUM: Rainer...

He leans in close.

RUPERT: That's the future. That's what those fuck-heads don't get. Everyone's got a value. A worth. You either live in South Gate. Or you don't.

You got lovely skin, you know that?

He kisses my neck.

RUPERT: You could live here, Rainer? There's plenty of space. You'd fit in, I reckon.

I feel his breath.

RUPERT: Cos you're better than them, aren't you, Rainer? Those fuck-heads. You're better than them. And you've always known it. That's what this is about. You've always known it.

I turn to him. I smile. He touches my face.

RUPERT: What do you say?

I bring my hand up to his.
My lips, close.

I stick it in.

28

He looks at me.
His eyes, wide.

His face, white.

I stick the little kitchen knife, deep in his stomach. I press it in. Slowly. Feeling the blood pore out over my hands. I twist it. I twist it. His eyes go white.

I let him fall to the ground.

SUNNY: She stands up.

JACK: Keep going.

I stand up.

SUNNY: She walks over the dark room.

I walk over to the dark room.

SUNNY: She slowly opens the door.

I slowly open the door.

NADIA: Rainer?

SUNNY: Inside there is a bed. A body.

RAINER: A white sheet.

SUNNY: She removes the sheet.

RAINER: I...remove...-

SUNNY: She removes the sheet.

RAINER: No..

SUNNY: She removes the sheet.

RAINER: NO, NO, NO!

RAINER recoils and refuses to remove the sheet. She covers her eyes. Sound of oncoming traffic gets louder and louder

MUM: Please. Rainer.

NADIA: Rainer. You have to look. You have to remember.

29

SUNNY: The body is broken.

JACK: Rainer. I'm here.

MUM: I love you.

The traffic gets louder. RAINER slowly removes the sheet, her eyes wide in horror.

SUNNY: The body is broken.

RAINER: ...the...the body is broken.

SUNNY: She looks at her face.

RAINER: No!

SUNNY: Her own face.

RAINER: NO!

SUNNY: Her own face.

RAINER screams but she is drowned out by a huge truck, beeping louder and louder as she won't get out the way.

The truck, the bus, the explosions outside, the music, her screams: everything merges together as she spins and spins.

Blackout.

*A bright and sunny hospital room.
Beeps. Birdsong.*

*RAINER lies on a bed, sleeping. Her body is covered in sheets. She doesn't move.
These next sections are mostly the same, a – indicates lights fading out and in for next scene.*

-

The same. RAINER sleeps.

-

She sleeps.

-

She sleeps

-

NADIA: Rainer?

-

MUM: ...I'll just leave these here, OK?

-

She sleeps

.

SUNNY: Just gonna find somewhere to smoke.

-

She sleeps.

-

NAIDA: Let's try and sit up.

-

RAINER's lies in her bed, her eyes slightly open. She looks at someone sitting in the room. She stands in the room.

RAINIA: ...You look tired, mum.

MUM: ... I am tired. Lots of stairs.

RAINIA: Mum?

MUM: Yeah?

RAINER: Where's Jack?

-

NADIA: Much better colour today, much better.

RAINER: What's that, out there?

NADIA: Oh, it's a little park. Lovely little park.

RAINER: Is there a lake?

NADIA: ...Rainer.

RAINER: We can go walking there, can't we?

NADIA: ...

RAINER: What's happened to my leg?

NADIA: Rainer...

RAINER: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY LEG?

-

She sleeps.

-

She sleeps.

-

SUNNY: 'We are alone. We are always alone. We live together, act and react, but we are always alone-

32

RAINER: What the hell are you reading?

SUNNY: Fucking hell.

RAINER: What is that?

SUNNY: Doors of Perception. Aldous Huxley.

RAINER: Why you reading me that?

SUNNY: You're meant to read to people.

RAINER: Yeah, like a magazine, not fucking Huxley!

SUNNY: Alright! Jesus Christ! You're even an arsehole when you're bedridden!

She smiles at him.

RAINER: Have you got anything to drink?

SUNNY: You want a juice?

RAINER: No, like a real drink!

SUNNY: No.

RAINER: I know you got one!

SUNNY: ...Fine.

RAINER: Knew it!

SUNNY: Just a little one! Better not die on me. Don't want your mum on my back.

She takes a drink.

RAINER: So. Did you show him?

SUNNY: What?

RAINER: Your journalist mate. Did you show him the pictures?

SUNNY: Oh...

RAINER: What did he say? Can he run with it?

SUNNY: ...Yeah. He can run with it.

33

RAINER: I knew it! I told you. I fucking told you! They're close South Gate. They'll get Rupert Poole!

SUNNY: Rainer...

RAINER: What?

SUNNY: ...Nothing.

-

She sleeps.

-

NADIA: We haven't removed the leg, Rainer, but we might have to.

-

RAINER: Where's Jack?

-

She cries. Heavily.

-

NADIA: But there's a chance. There's a good chance!-

RAINER: Where's Jack? Where's Jack?!

-

She sleeps.

-

RAINER: They're nice flowers, Mum.

MUM: Oh yeah. They're from this little place. They take a long time to die.

RAINER: ...Did you mean it? What you said in that email?

MUM: I never sent no email.

RAINER: So, you didn't.

MUM: ...

Rainer. Why'd you do it?

RAINER: Mum.

MUM: You could've spoke to me.

RAINER: ...

MUM: I read your diary.

RAINER: What?

MUM: We had to know-

RAINER: Fuck-sake.

MUM: You really think all them horrible things? About me and dad? That I drove him to it!

RAINER: Yes.

MUM: You never knew. He only showed you the nice side. You never knew what it was like...

Was that why you rode out in front of that truck?

RAINER: ... He did show me the bad side, mum. He did. Cos I got it. Cos I spoke to him. I listened.

MUM: ...I'm gonna listen now, Rainer. I swear I'm gonna listen.

RAINER: And I did mean it. That email.

I love you.

-

She sleeps.

-

She sleeps.

SUNNY: Hey, you know they're going to build that statue? The one of the Angels? In Parliament Square?

-

MUM: I think she's ready.

-

NADIA: Rainer. I've got some good news. .

-

RAINER stands. Every so slowly, carefully, she crosses the room, using crutches. Helped by NADIA.

NADIA: Steady.

SUNNY: Go on, Raine.

MUM: Thought you were gonna be an invalid! Thought I was gonna have to get one of them stair-lifts! So expensive.

RAINER: Cheers, mum.

SUNNY: I was kind of looking forward to it. It's kind of cool having an amputee mate. Makes you more interesting.

NADIA: And break.

RAINER sits on the floor.

MUM: Well done, baby.

NAIDA: It is quite remarkable. Considering. You'll be able to go home in a few days.

RAINER: ...Right.

NADIA: Are you ready?

RAINER: ...Yeah.

MUM: You don't have to.

RAINER: Send him in.

NADIA: We'll leave you to it.

They exit except for RAINER who sits on her bed.

Some time passes. She looks down. Anxious. Someone enters. A pause.

JACK: ...Hi, Raine.

RAINER:... Jack.

JACK: ...Sorry. Sorry... I didn't come before, just-

RAINER: I know. It's alright.

JACK: ...Got you this weird dog teddy from the shop? Obviously it's really ugly but I thought it could be...kind of funny.

RAINER: ...They said you were here a lot.

JACK: Yeah.

All the stuff you were saying when you were out. All that stuff about riding round. Looking at those clubs. Looking for me. It's just funny cos... that's exactly what I was doing. After you... sort of disappeared. Then I heard about the accident-

Sorry.

RAINER: It's alright.

JACK: You wrote quite a bit in your diary. It's a kind of story.

RAINER: It's disgusting.

JACK: It's not. You should finish it.

RAINER: I'll burn it.

JACK: Rainer-

RAINER: How can you say it's beautiful? How can you even be hear?

I meet you. In Summer. Everything was going well. Everything was perfect.
And what do I do?

I run away. I lock myself up. I through myself in the road.

Because I'm a loser, Jack.
I don't deserve any of this.
Loser's don't deserve it.
And you should go.
Cos there's nothing beautiful about it. About me. Nothing.

JACK: Rainer.

RAINER: Anything good... got taken away.

JACK: I'm not going away, Rainer. I'll never go away.

RAINER: ...

You really like it? The diary?

JACK: Stop fishing for compliments.

(JACK kisses her and she presses her face against his shoulder)

NADIA: It's time, Jack.

JACK: I'll see you Saturday, yeah?

RAINA: Yeah.

JACK leaves.

RAINA smiles and watches him go.

She looks to her side.

She slowly picks up the diary.

She picks up a pen and opens the pages.

She holds the pen to her lips.

She looks up.

She thinks.

END