ARTISTO-ROL

by

CJ Walley

cj@cjwalley.com
In Stanislavski's approach, by the time the actor reaches the stage, he or she no longer experiences a distinction between his or her self and the character; the actor has created a 'third being', or a combination of the actor's personality and the role (in Russian, Stanislavski calls this creation artisto-rol). Benedetti, Jean. 1998

INT. EMPTY MEETING ROOM - DAY

MAXXE, an American girl in her 20's, stares out of a window. Her face cold and emotionless but her eyes suggesting her mind is working overtime.

She somberly watches over Hyde Park from her elevated vantage point. Couples walk arm in arm, kids play, dog owners stroll and book readers relax.

She toys an old surfers bracelet, her black fingernails chewed right back.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Maxxe, are you ready to go?

Maxxe spins round and smiles brightly, wrapped in high fashion clothing, her make up and hair spectacular.

In the center of the office, an empty seat awaits, facing a camera and lights setup for an interview.

INT. DRAB CORRIDOR

LUCY, a confident older woman, walks with Maxxe.

MAXXE
I'm starting to believe my own bullshit.

LUCY
You're doing great.

MAXXE
I feel like such a fake, you know?

LUCY
You're just doing your job.

MAXXE
I should say what I really think, for once.

Lucy pauses concerned.
LUCY
It's a long way down, Maxxe. Don't
do anything risky.

MAXXE
Don't worry, this,
(sweeps hand down face)
I can play.

Lucy laughs and shakes her head.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY

The lift doors sweep open. Lucy and Maxxe exit and cross the
lobby. Maxxe keeps her head down, hiding behind her hair.
Lucy strolls boldly. Shutters click and bulbs flash.

MALE FAN (O.S.)
Maxxe! Maxxe! Hey! Maxxe! Maxxe!

Maxxe glances out the corner of her eye. A Fan slips through
a SMALL CROWD by a door and runs across the lobby. Maxxe's
eyes bulge. He sprints toward her and --

BANG! He goes down hard on the marble floor, a BODYGUARD'S
bulky arm raised in front of Maxxe's terrified face.

The Fan gazes up, his flowers strewn across tiles. The
Guard's arm drops. Maxxe glares as shutters click fast.

INT. PRIVATE CAR

Maxxe and Lucy slouch on the leather seat as bustling London
streets sweep by.

MAXXE
It's just such bullshit, you know?
What was it like to change your
hair color? My hair color?
Seriously?

LUCY
That's what people want to know,
the superficial crap.

Maxxe stares at the floor stewing.

EXT. CHELSEA APARTMENTS

A gate to underground parking slowly squeaks open, a GUARD
beside it. Maxxe watches through the car window and sighs.
INT. PENTHOUSE

A stunning apartment, minimalist contemporary luxury, pastel walls, hardwood floors and lots of glass. A Cat nudges a gap in a balcony door left ajar.

Maxxe shuts the door, picks the Cat up and strokes it adoringly. She stares at the spectacular view of London.

ADAM, a man in his 20's, confident and well dressed, moves in behind her, cradling her waist as they share the view.

MAXXE
You should be more careful, the cat could get out. You should shut the door properly.

ADAM
I thought I did. Don't worry she'll be fine, she's got nine lives remember?

MAXXE
She's got one life, she'll jump just to see what it's like.

INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

The Cat slaloms between Maxxe's legs as she cooks. She neatly chops, working fast, well practiced. Adam crosses to the counter and sniffs the air.

ADAM
Mexican again?

She looks back pensive. He shrugs. She turns back and -- 

SMASH! A jar hits the floor. The Cat bolts out the room.

ADAM
You okay?

She stares at the smeared tomato puree and broken glass and sighs deeply. She crosses to a cupboard, opens it and pauses for a moment. She slams the door hard.

MAXXE
Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

ADAM
(going to hug)
Hey calm down.
MAXXE
(ducking out of hug)
I don't have time for this!

She yanks out a dustpan and starts cleaning frantically.

ADAM
You want me to go get you another?

MAXXE
You sure you'll get the right one?

He winces. She thinks for a moment, hands him the dustpan, crosses to the front door and grabs a coat.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

Maxxe hurries across the clean white walled car park, her head down as she chews her nail. She sweeps by luxury cars and fumbles out keys. An alarm chirps.

INT. MINI

Reflected strip lights sweep across the windshield, the engine races. Maxxe stares ahead blank, bright daylight fills the interior and she narrows her eyes afraid.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

The Mini squeaks to a halt at the bottom of the exit ramp and sits idling. The Guard in a little booth glances up from a paper and opens the gate.

INT. MINI

Maxxe stares. The bustling street at the top of the ramp, people and cars silhouetted against the glaring sunlight.

She takes a deep breath and clutches the wheel. Her face strains, she exhales and runs her hands through her hair frustrated. She throws the Mini into reverse, pissed off.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK

The Mini screeches backwards and whines back down the car park fast. The Guard shakes his head and closes the gate.
**INT. PENTHOUSE**

Adam carefully brushes up shards of glass into the dustpan. The front door slams. Maxxe crosses back over, throws open the refrigerator door and fumbles out tomatoes.

**ADAM**

*I could--*

She holds up her hand and clatters out pans.

**INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - LATER**

Maxxe sorts through clothes, folding and hanging them. She pauses and sits on the bed. She jolts into stifled tears, masking any noise. The Cat leaps up and paws at her.

**INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER**

Maxxe reads by the window, the dark blue sky and lights of London behind her. The intercom buzzes. She hops up and crosses quickly to it.

**MAXXE**

*Hello?*

**INTERCOM**

(female voice)

*Dude!*

Maxxe smiles delighted.

**INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER**

The door opens to present JORDAN, an American girl in her 20's, wearing the same surfers bracelet as Maxxe but her image more rock and roll. She beams a huge smile, embraces Maxxe tightly and offers her a bottle of wine.

**MAXXE**

*What? You're an adult now?*

**JORDAN**

No, I'm totally an alcoholic now.

**INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER**

Perfectly chosen music plays. Maxxe, Adam, Jordan and Lucy sit around a table eating an impressive spread. Adam tries to top up everybody's wine. Maxxe covers her class.
JORDAN
This is so good. I swear you have a chef locked up in a cupboard.

LUCY
It wouldn't surprise me if she did.

Maxxe smiles modest.

MAXXE
It's just so hard to get good Mexican food in London, you know?

JORDAN
Aw dude, are you getting homesick?

ADAM
Ha, don't start her off. You know she hates the apartment, right?

MAXXE
We should sell. I already know the perfect advert. Five million dollar penthouse suite, pastel walls, hardwood floors, stunning view of a world you can't be part of.

ADAM
That's bullshit, Maxxe.

Adam shakes his head angry as he eats.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - LATER
Maxxe lies on the bed rigid, panting unconvincingly in the throws of passionless sex. Adam thrusts away, comes and rolls off her, exhausted. She grabs a book and reads.

ADAM
Seriously?

MAXXE
What? We fucked, didn't we?

ADAM
One of us did.

He throws himself over and covers himself with sheets.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - LATER
Adam creeps awake to find Maxxe gone. He looks at the clock
and finds it's only 6am.

**INT. PENTHOUSE**

Maxxe sits typing, illuminated by a laptop, glancing at a notebook, her Cat by her. Adam walks in wiping his eyes.

**ADAM**
Maxxe, what are you doing?

**MAXXE**
I need to work.

He crosses over. She closes the application. He rests his hands on her shoulder and gazes at the scrawled notes, morbid photos and disturbing illustrations in the notebook.

She snaps it closed. He looks at the screen. A photo of Maxxe on a website, glaring at the guy who ran toward in the lobby earlier, above a sensational headline.

**ADAM**
I thought we agreed, you wouldn't look at this stuff.

She sighs and stares at the photo of her venomous glare.

**INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY**

Adam lounges on the sofa, strumming a guitar.

**MAXXE (O.S.)**
Yes! Yes! Yes!

Maxxe walks in delighted, picks up the Cat and spins around.

**MAXXE**
(singing)
The stars, they have aligned!

**ADAM**
What do you mean? What's happened?

**MAXXE**
It has finally happened! Oh-my-god-oh-my-god! I can't believe it!

**ADAM**
What?

**MAXXE**
Oh come on, Adam.
She pushes her face up to the Cat and wiggles its legs.

MAXXE
(pretending to be Cat)
She named me after her.

ADAM
The Gwyndolen thing? No way!

He gets up off the sofa and hugs her. She clutches him tightly and smiles. He frowns concerned.

INT. PENTHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe glares at Adam, teeth snarling. He scowls back.

MAXXE
It's my dream role, Adam!

ADAM
I just thought there would be a discussion first, that's all!

MAXXE
Why? Why would we need to discuss it? I'm doing it!

He holds her by the shoulders and looks in the eye.

ADAM
Hey, calm down! Why don't you take a break? Why the hurry?

She wriggles from his hands and scowls back.

MAXXE
You know that I need this.

ADAM
Do you? She's messed up, Maxxe. She's a monster.

She looks at him for a moment and drops to her knees.

ADAM
What are you doing?

MAXXE
(unzipping his flies)
Just shut up.

He stares down surprised and delighted. She unzips his flies, the panoramic view of London behind them.
ADAM
Woah what the hell, Maxxe?

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER
Maxxe moans, riding Adam frantically, staring confidently and biting her lip as she thrusts. He gasps, coming hard as her thighs clutch him tightly.

He lies panting and amazed. She smiles down at him, gets off, and walks out the room wearing only a t-shirt.

ADAM
Do I not even get a cuddle after?

She gives him the finger, throws herself on the couch and reads a script. He lies grinning as he watches her.

INT. MEXICAN CELLAR RESTAURANT - DAY
Spanish guitar music plays, the restaurant near empty, Maxxe and Lucy sit secluded in a booth eating.

MAXXE
You're screwing with me, right?
I'll be redefined by this.

LUCY
Oh sure you'll be redefined. I read up on this Gwyndolen character. She's pure evil.

MAXXE
Exactly, cool right?

LUCY
Oh sure.
(counting on fingers)
Okay then, lets see, she's depraved, she screws over every single person she meets, she uses sex to manipulate men, she-

MAXXE
Seriously, you read the book? You're checking up on me?

LUCY
I just don't get what you're trying to prove?

Maxxe chews with a stubborn look on her face.
LUCY
Ambition is good, Maxxe, but not always for the person who has it.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Dozens of Dogs bark. Maxxe stands within an large caged kennel. She winces as she inspects rusted metal.

JAMES (O.S.)
We'll never re-home this little runt.

She rolls her eyes. JAMES, a friendly faced man in his 40's, smiles amused as he peers into the kennel.

JAMES
Not with that scraggy coat and aggressive temperament. Nope, not fit to be around people this one.

Maxxe screws up her face and jabs at him playfully.

JAMES
You checking out the damage or do you work for me now?

MAXXE
The whole thing has like, rusted right through.

JAMES
The whole place has rusted right through. You any good with a welder?

Maxxe raises her eyebrows as if that's a challenge. They stare at each other for a moment too long.

The Shelter Assistant enters with a cute little Mongrel in her arms, Maxxe swoons over it.

MAXXE
Oh my god, just look at you!

She pets the Mongrel.

SHELTER ASSISTANT
This is Jack, he just came in.

MAXXE
What is he? Three?
SHELTER ASSISTANT
Three and a half?

Maxxe pours over the him, stroking his head.

JAMES
You interested?

MAXXE
Seriously, I had to negotiate hard enough to get the cat in. I should just buy a farm.

JAMES
No, we should buy a farm.

He looks at her frank, the stare lingering before he looks to the floor and sighs worried.

JAMES
Anyway, that reminds me, I need to talk to you, one to one, sometime soon.

He crosses down the shelter to leave, a hurry to his step. She peers out the kennel confused.

MAXXE
Yeah? Good news or bad news?

JAMES
(sarcastic)
Oh come on, Maxxe! Is it ever bad news?

INT. BUDGET HOTEL CORRIDOR - LATER

Maxxe walks down the corridor hunched. HOTEL GUESTS stare as they pass, recognizing her. She avoids eye contact.

INT. BUDGET HOTEL LIFT

She stands nervous and presses a button. A BUSINESS MAN jogs to the lift and doesn't quite make it, he sighs and --

The doors open, Maxxe smiling, her finger on the button.

BUSINESS MAN
Thanks.

She shuffles to the back of the lift and busies herself with her phone. He looks her up and down. She glances up nervous.
He smiles. She shoots him a polite smile back.

The lift stops and he exits. A COUPLE run to the lift, just making it. Maxxe and the Couple stand in silence, exchanging glances and smiles. The Woman whispers into the man's ear.

The lift stops and a FAMILY bumble in. Maxxe's eyes go wide as she stares at her phone. She looks up to find the FAMILY staring back like visitors at a zoo.

The lift stops and everybody else exits. Maxxe lets out a long sigh and braces herself against the corner of the lift.

INT. BUDGET HOTEL CORRIDOR

Maxxe knocks a door and waits. Jordan opens it yawning, wearing pajamas and holding a Do Not Disturb sign.

MAXXE
Seriously, could you not book a room on a higher floor?

JORDAN
Oh hi, Maxxe. Nice to see you too.

MAXXE
Did you not get my message?

JORDAN
I just got up, I have jet lag.

MAXXE
You slept the whole flight?

JORDAN
Yeah, but you still like, get the jet lag, right?

Maxxe sighs and walks in shaking her head.

JORDAN
Right?

INT. BUDGET HOTEL ROOM

A dark hotel room. An open luggage case surrounded by a mess of clothes, a snowboard propped against it.

Jordan lies back on the bed. Maxxe tweaks the gap in the curtains closed, crashes down beside her and sighs. Jordan checks her phone and raises her eyebrows impressed.
JORDAN
Oh no way! Congratulations, dude.

MAXXE
You think?

JORDAN
Duh yeah? This is awesome, right?

MAXXE
At least you think so.

JORDAN
What's the matter?

Maxxe shakes her head resentfully as she chews her nails.

MAXXE
It doesn't matter.

Jordan smiles and hugs Maxxe tightly. She gets up, sits at a table and lights up a cigarette.

MAXXE
There's a party this weekend. You want to come? The director wants to meet me.

JORDAN
Er, yeah! What about Adam?

Jordan picks through clothes, already choosing an ensemble.

MAXXE
He's away.

JORDAN
(singing)
Awesome.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Maxxe types quickly at her computer while Adam dashes back and forth behind her, running in and out the bedroom.

ADAM (O.S.)
You could have got me up, you know?

She carries on consumed. He stumbles out, stamps on a shoe and tugs at a case.

ADAM
Maxxe?
She idly glances around. He stares back put out.

ADAM
I'm going.

She crosses over and wraps her arms around him sulking. He rubs her back and kisses her head.

ADAM
Enjoy your party, okay?

MAXXE
It's not a party, it's work.

ADAM
Just try not to hate it. You going to be alright?

She looks up at him and nods. They kiss.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

Music blasts. Sunlight glints through gaps in the blinds. The Cat sits on coffee table looking up confused.

Maxxe smiles back, swinging her hips and swaying her head from side to side. She struts across the floor, miming to lyrics, pointing at the Cat and pulling goofy faces.

She wiggles her waist and claps her hands, the beat infectious. She bobs her head and rocks her shoulders.

She poses, looks over her shoulder, raises her eyebrows, pouts and shakes her little booty.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Maxxe stares at her computer screen. The intercom buzzes. She snaps into reality and crosses to it confused.

MAXXE
Hello?

INTERCOM
(Jordan's voice)
Party on, dude!

Maxxe glances at the clock alarmed.
INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Jordan stands in the doorway perched on tall heels, wearing a black dress, and looking Maxxe up and down unimpressed. Maxxe looks sheepishly back in her hoodie and pyjamas.

JORDAN
Well, one of us is going to have to change.

MAXXE
Oh-my-god-oh-my-god, seriously, I'm so sorry.

Maxxe sprints to the bathroom. Jordan strolls through the penthouse, shaking her head. The shower comes on. Jordan changes the music to a rock track and opens the curtains.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Four, near identical, black dresses laid on the bed. Maxxe scans back and forth frantically between. She scrunches her hair pained as Jordan searches through the closet.

JORDAN
Woah, hello!

Jordan fishes out a tiny red dress from the wardrobe.

JORDAN
Do you still have the Barbie doll that goes with this?

MAXXE
That was a gift, okay?

JORDAN
Yeah? You should ask them to send the rest of it.

Maxxe closes her eyes and takes a soothing breath.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe's feet twist and tilt in heels. A black dress hangs to just above her knees, hugging perfectly around her body.

A diamond necklace drapes around her neck and her glossy hair cascades over her shapely shoulders. She stares nervously into the mirror, chewing her nails.
MAXXE
I look hideous, just like they all say I do.

JORDAN
Don't be so stupid.

Maxxe collapses onto a chair, her head in her hands.

MAXXE
I think I'm going to throw up.

JORDAN
Just chill out.

Maxxe takes a deep breath and stares at her reflection disgusted.

EXT. ST PANCras REnaissance LONDON HOTEL - LATER

The stone gothic frontage stares out over the street, lit by up-lights. The windows black. The gaping entrance glowing brightly. A black cab rolls up to a halt.

INT. HOTEL STAIRCASE - NIGHT

An ornate staircase sweeps under pointed arches, the carpet and walls a deep red. Maxxe and Jordan descend.

Maxxe stumbles a little, absent of any confidence, her stride unnatural. They reach the bottom. She freezes.

MAXXE
I can't, I can't do this.

JORDAN
Calm down.

MAXXE
Calm down? This isn't me okay? I'm going to fuck it up. I fucking look stupid, I fucking talk stupid, they're all going to think I am fucking stupid. Nobody is going to take me seriously.

Jordan spots GUESTS walking down. She marches Maxxe to one side, holds her by the shoulders and looks her in the eye.

JORDAN
Dude, you're hazing me with issues right now. One problem at a time.
MAXXE
Lets just go, before we're spotted.

JORDAN
No way. Look, you're a actress
right? So how about you start
playing the role of someone who
isn't a total neurotic fuck up?

Maxxe takes a deep breath and tries to compose herself.

INT. HOTEL HALL

Orchestral music plays softly in the huge open hall. Groups of GUESTS mill about under a glass ceiling.

Jordan and Maxxe walk through the grand entrance smiling. Everybody glances round for a moment and continue chatting. The Girls grab wine, cross to a corner and scan the room.

MAXXE
Oh god, there he is.

EDMUND WARD, an older thin and friendly faced thespian type, peeks his head out his group and stares back. Maxxe shoots back an awkward smile. He raises his glass to her.

JORDAN
See, he seems nice.

He raises up one finger. Maxxe smiles and nods back. Jordan downs her wine and grabs another from a passing SERVER. Maxxe gazes around and stops fixed, her jaw dropping.

MAXXE
Oh, my, god.

JORDAN
What?

MAXXE
Charlie Cane.

JORDAN
No way?

Maxxe nods across the room impressed. CHARLIE CANE, a young man stood confidently in a well cut black suit, entertaining a crowd with his charisma.

JORDAN
I didn't know you were a fan?
MAXXE
Seriously, I am borderline stalking the guy.

JORDAN
Yeah?

MAXXE
Oh yeah. Professionally speaking, of course.

JORDAN
Dude, whatever.

MAXXE
He can just do anything. You know he writes poetry right? As a side project, and it's like good, really good.

JORDAN
I wouldn't mind being his side project.

MAXXE
Seriously, he so awesome he could win an Oscar for an appearance in a leaked sex tape.

Jordan spots Edmund making his way toward them, his smile beaming and his stride confident.

JORDAN
Heads up dude, incoming.

Maxxe takes a deep breath and forces a smile.

EDMUND WARD
Maxxe! A real pleasure!

He shakes her hand and kisses her cheek. He looks Jordan up and down, swirling a tomato juice in his hand.

MAXXE
This is Jordan.

Edmund shakes Jordan's hand and kisses her cheek.

EDMUND WARD
The pleasure is all mine, I assure you, near orgasmic in fact.

JORDAN
Yeah? I usually need a few more
tomato juices to get to that stage.

EDMUND WARD
Pretty and witty, a rare treat! But alas tomato juice it has to be for when it comes to alcohol,
(turning to Maxxe)
I simply can't be one to trust around such a cruel seductress.

JORDAN
I'm like, totally the same with Ben and Jerry's.

He laughs surprised. She motions to leave.

JORDAN
I'm going to go see where I can get some of that tomato juice, okay? It's clearly a lot stronger than this wine.

Jordan tails a drinks server. Maxxe composes herself.

EDMUND WARD
So Maxxe, my contacts speak highly of you. They praise your dedication and professionalism.

MAXXE
Well, you should try your hardest, right?

EDMUND WARD
Indeed, but tell me, do you yearn to play Gwyndolen?

MAXXE
Oh my god, I'm obsessed with her. I want to play her so much.

EDMUND WARD
Want to? Or are born to?

MAXXE
I, I don't, what do you mean?

EDMUND WARD
Well I think your pondering may say it all.

MAXXE
What? No! Seriously, I know so much about her.
EDMUND WARD
But you are far from her, you must admit. Gwyndolen is confident, sexually manipulative woman, and I see you here a wallflower.

MAXXE
Look, I can do this, okay? I can totally do this.

EDMUND WARD
I do hope so, Maxxe. It would be a real shame if the only real contribution you can bring to this is your Californian accent. That would hardly be, Bodacious.

Maxxe looks back hopeless, her eyes glistening.

EDMUND WARD
Don't let me down, okay? I've got a lot riding on you.

He looks her up and down and glances across the room.

EDMUND WARD
(calling)
Tony! You elusive fat craphanded bastard, wait there!

He hurries away leaving Maxxe shocked, her chin quivering and eyes welling. Jordan walks up eating horderves.

JORDAN
Uh oh, dude, ladies room, now.

INT. HOTEL RESTROOM STALL - SECONDS LATER

Maxxe sits perched on the toilet, sniffing and wiping her eyes. Jordan crouches by her, comforting her with one hand and swigging a glass of wine with the other.

JORDAN
Well, what did he say?

MAXXE
He's a twat, Jordan, a total twat.

JORDAN
Twat?

MAXXE
He's right though, he's totally
right. I’m the complete opposite of what they want.

Maxxe sobs. Jordan grabs a glass from the floor, pulls a wine bottle from her hand bag and pours a drink.

JORDAN
Look, you are awesome, okay? Like, totally awesome.

Maxxe looks back desperate. Jordan hands her the wine.

JORDAN
So if he wants this Gwyndolen, give him Gwyndolen.

Maxxe necks it back and fondles the glass thinking. She takes a deep breath and nods determined.

INT. HOTEL HALL - MINUTES LATER

The GUESTS all pause conversations and stare. Maxxe in the entrance, her pose confident. She strides cat like down the center of the room, gliding around the groups of people.

She struts past Edmund. He watches captivated. She pauses, looks back and smiles coy. He gazes back entranced.

She crosses toward Charlie Cane as he chats in a group. He spots her and falls silent. She sweeps right by, staring into his eyes and stops to take a drink from a server.

CHARLIE CANE
(to group)
Excuse me one second.

Charlie crosses to Maxxe. She pivots round, expecting him to be there. He beams a wide smile. She smiles back confident.

CHARLIE CANE
(shaking hand)
Hi I don't think we've met?

MAXXE
I'm a big fan. I love your poetry, it's excellent.

CHARLIE CANE
Well it's hard to make each line rhyme you know?

He sniggers as his own joke. She smirks politely.
MAXXE
I write. Just stories though, not poetry.

CHARLIE CANE
(uninterested)
Yeah?

They drink in silence. He gazes around the room slowly and looks her in the eye.

CHARLIE CANE
I'm not buying the whole sexual seductress act by the way, sorry.

She stares back surprised. He leans in, smirking.

CHARLIE CANE
You just see it all the time. Spoilt actress trying to be a badass, taking on a tough role, trying to be taken seriously. It never works out. And if you can't convince me tonight, how are you going to convince all your critics?

He smirks confident. She winces hurt.

CHARLIE CANE
Look, don't get angry, I'm just telling you how it is. It's a big jump from where you are to where I am. Fame is different to respect, you have to work real hard to earn respect, real hard.

Jordan spots Maxxe clenching her jaw angry and trots over.

JORDAN
Hey, you guys, mind if I jump in? Only so long you can walk around drinking alone, right?

Charlie shoots Jordan a huge grin as Maxxe fumes.

CHARLIE CANE
(shaking hand)
Much better to do it in a group yeah? Charlie Cane, a pleasure.

JORDAN
Dude, you so don't have to introduce yourself to me, I'm like, a major fan.
Maxxe rolls her eyes.

CHARLIE CANE
Yeah? Cool!

JORDAN
Yeah, I think you're amazing. And your poetry, seriously, oh my god.

Maxxe presses her tongue in her cheek and glares.

CHARLIE CANE
Yeah? What's your favorite poem?

JORDAN
Erm, like all of them, right? How could I pick?

Charlie grins smug, looking Jordan up and down. Jordan smiles back flirtacious.

CHARLIE CANE
You living in London now too?

JORDAN
Oh no, I'm just here for a week to see my, BFF.

She squeezes Maxxe. Maxxe remains rigid and pissed off.

CHARLIE CANE
Cool, man, a week of partying in London, yeah?

JORDAN
Well, not exactly.

Jordan frowns disappointed. Charlie ponders for a moment.

CHARLIE CANE
Hey, I should totally take you out. I know all the cool places.

JORDAN
Seriously?

CHARLIE CANE
Yeah, man.

JORDAN
Oh my god, partying with Charlie Cane, just how cool am I?
CHARLIE CANE
You up for it, Maxxe?

MAXXE
I've got loads to do at the moment, you guys knock yourself out, whatever.

INT. HOTEL STAIRCASE - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe and Jordan ascend the stairs, Jordan fanning herself with her phone delighted.

JORDAN
(singing)
Charlie Cane's number, it's like so hot I might just have to store this in the mini-bar.

MAXXE
At least then there'd be something left in your mini-bar.

JORDAN
Seriously, what's the matter with you? And what was with that look you were giving him? I thought you were like, going to suck the blood from his neck or something.

MAXXE
At least I wasn't trying to suck his dick, Jordan. He's a twat okay, a narcissistic twat. He's like everybody else, thinks he knows me.

JORDAN
Dude, I still don't know what that word means.

MAXXE
What? Narcissistic?

JORDAN
No twat.

Edmund walks out the hall behind them.

EDMUND WARD
Maxxe!

Maxxe and Jordan glance round. He claps his hands as he ascends to them.
EDMUND WARD
Impressive, come by my place, okay?
Lets talk detail.

Maxxe smiles confident. He hands her a business card. She watches him leave and sighs relieved.

JORDAN
Looks like we both snagged our men tonight, right?

INT. OFFICE MEETING ROOM - DAY

Maxxe and Lucy sitting at a meeting table alone. Maxxe engrossed in scribbling notes on a script.

LUCY
Is there ever a time you're not working?

MAXXE
There's sleeping.

LUCY
I thought you had insomnia?

MAXXE
I do.

LUCY
What's up? You okay? You seem quiet today, have I pissed you off or something?

Maxxe shakes her head.

LUCY
I'm still reading the book you know. I just read the part where Gwyn decides to become a whore. Real sweet.

Maxxe sighs and rests her head in her hand.

MAXXE
You know when someone gets in your head? And you can't get them out, but you don't know why you give a shit?

LUCY
I thought getting into peoples heads was your thing?
MAXXE
Getting into other peoples, yeah, but not anyone getting into mine. Even I don't want to be in mine.

Lucy struggles a concerned smile. Maxxe shrugs it off.

MAXXE
It's no big deal.

Maxxe goes back to her notes. Lucy watches Maxxe writing fast, determined, churning out thoughts, the skin around her nails chewed red, her face consumed and eyes defiant.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER OFFICE - DAY

James angrily tosses a folder into a box labeled deceased. He sits back at his desk in the small cluttered office.

JAMES
We're running a fucking slaughter house, Maxxe.

MAXXE
Nice, James, way to put a layer of sugar on it.

JAMES
I'm sorry but there's no other way of putting it. With the way the economy is, people are saving their pennies, not their pets.

MAXXE
Seriously, if it's more money you need, just ask.

JAMES
It's a big ask this time.

MAXXE
(challengingly)
How big?

JAMES
The current setup doesn't work, you know that.

She nods understanding.

JAMES
The shelter needs a shelter. No kill, cage free, that gives us the
capacity and lifetime care. So I'm putting a proposal together, and I'm looking for a backer to lead the way, a big backer.

He stares at her hopeful. She smiles confident.

MAXXE
Well it's good I just got a big job then.

JAMES
You serious?

She nods proud. He leaps up delighted. They embrace tightly.

JAMES
You know my plan-B was to kidnap you and hold you to ransom, right?

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER SURGERY - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe closes the office door and pulls a sympathetic face at Jack the Mongrel lying on the surgery table. The Shelter Assistant inspects x-rays.

MAXXE
Oh no what's wrong with you!

Maxxe crosses over and comforts him lovingly.

SHELTER ASSISTANT
His heart rate never came down after coming in.

She shows Maxxe the x-rays of his chest.

SHELTER ASSISTANT
There's something showing on the chest area.

MAXXE
Surgery?

The Assistant nods. Maxxe cuddles the Mongrel sympathetic.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Maxxe sits reading, Cat by her side. The front door clunks. Adam enters wheeling his luggage case. She tosses her book down and crosses over. They kiss and hug.
ADAM
I am shattered.

He crosses to the bedroom.

MAXXE
Well maybe you shouldn't stay out so late partying then.

He pauses and looks back guilty. She waggles her phone in her hand disapproving.

ADAM
Checking up on me? Since when did you care about one night out?

He skulks into the bedroom.

MAXXE
I mean, hanging out with a stripper all night, real classy, Adam.

ADAM (O.S.)
Burlesque performer. She's actually really nice.

MAXXE
I know who she is. She's an attention seeking skank.

He pops his head out the bedroom amused.

ADAM
Are you jealous?

She glares back disgusted. He crosses into the kitchen.

ADAM
What are we doing for tea?

MAXXE
Take-a-way menus are right there on the fridge, dude.

He looks at her angry for a few moments and snatches up the menus, fighting his frustration as he reads them.

MAXXE
Order some fried chicken, you know, since you're so into artificially enlarged breasts.

ADAM
Sod this, I'll go somewhere with
the boys.

He storms across the room, avoiding eye contact and goes to open the front door.

MAXXE
No, wait, okay, stop!

He looks back seething. She glares for a moment. Her expression slowly changes forlorn.

MAXXE
You've not, you didn't ask me how my party went.

ADAM
How did it go?

MAXXE
It was horrible, the director was really mean to me, and there was this actor, this really famous one, who kept pestering me to go out with him.

ADAM
Really?

She nods back upset.

MAXXE
I'll fix you something to eat, okay? I'm just really upset.

He rushes across and hugs her tightly.

ADAM
Hey it's okay. I'm sorry.

She stares into the middle distance, emotionless.

INT. BELGRAVIA TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Maxxe steps into Edmund's opulent home decorated with sexual paintings and erotic trinkets. She stands confident as Edmund looks her up and down impressed.

EDMUND WARD
Please, this way.

He sweeps open a door and she struts past and --

Her face sinks. Charlie rustles a laptop into a bag.
CHARLIE CANE
I'll just get out of your hair.

EDMUND WARD
Yes, Charlie, fuck off, we have some real work to do now.

Charlie goes to leave and pauses by Maxxe.

CHARLIE CANE
Hey you missed a great night last night. Jordan is a lot of fun. You should come out with us this weekend, it's going to be wild.

Maxxe stares back uninterested.

EDMUND WARD
Stop wasting our precious time, Charlie. Blinding us with your bleached smile, talking out your bleached arsehole.

Charlie laughs and lets himself out. Edmund sighs.

EDMUND WARD
How can that over-groomed fetus in a suit hold power over me?

MAXXE
Power over you?

EDMUND WARD
You don't know? This is all his project, the monkeys are genuinely running the circus, the cunts are running the brothel.

Maxxe closes her eyes and bites her lip.

INT. BELGRAVIA TOWNHOUSE LIVING ROOM - LATER
Maxxe and Edmund go through sheets of notes.

MAXXE
It's just this one scene I have a real concern about, right?

EDMUND WARD
Yes?

MAXXE
The striptese in the whorehouse. I
want it to be amazing, okay? I want the best stripper in the world to see it and be like, oh my god, she can do this, like envy it, you know?

EDMUND WARD
Ah, I see. What you need is Faith!

MAXXE
Faith?

EDMUND WARD
Faith.

He crosses to the mantel piece and reaches to a statue of Mary. He takes an escort's calling card and hands it to her.

EDMUND WARD
She's certainly taught me a thing or two over the years.

INT. LA FAMIGLIA ITALIAN RESTAURANT - DAY

An airy restaurant, simple but classy. Maxxe and Jordan sit at a small table by a bright window giggling. Maxxe keenly refills their wine glasses.

MAXXE
I mean, just grow some balls and tell me, right? Don't go sneaking around, dancing with attention seeking skanks and think I'm not going to find out about it.

Maxxe shakes her head and gulps back her wine. She thinks for a few moments, her expression turning mischievous.

MAXXE
You know what, fuck it, seriously, if he likes to have his secret parties then I'm coming out, I'm coming out with you this weekend, fuck him.

JORDAN
Yeah! Fuck him.

A WAITER crosses over to the table.

WAITER
Was everything to your satisfaction, ladies?
JORDAN
That was delicious, thank you.

He goes to clear plates. Maxxe rests her hand on his arm.

MAXXE
That was very satisfying.

WAITER
Excellent, I am glad to hear it.

Maxxe clutches his arm tightly.

MAXXE
Seriously, I've not been so satisfied in a long time, you're very good.

WAITER
(nervous)
Thank you, thank you, we aim to please.

Jordan smiles amused.

MAXXE
I mean, I'm good at satisfying myself at home.

The Waiter looks nervously back.

MAXXE
I've got like the equipment for it, all the special gadgets, many of which were, you know, mail order.

Jordan snorts into her wine glass.

MAXXE
But that was, really, satisfying. And usually, I wouldn't put so much meat inside me, so much I'm like, stretched out real bad.

Jordan chokes, thumping her chest, her eyes streaming. The Waiter looks at her alarmed, his face bright red.

WAITER
Are you okay, madam?

JORDAN
Dude, I'm fine, I'm fine. It just went down the wrong hole.
MAXXE
Oh, she's fine.

Maxxe looks innocently at the Waiter

MAXXE
Just the wrong hole, that's okay with girls like us.

Jordan sniggers and wipes her eyes, trying to regain composure.

WAITER
(hurrying away)
I'll get you a glass of water.

JORDAN
Oh my god, this is awesome, I am so loving this new Maxxe.

Maxxe smiles confident.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB - DAY

A throbbing bassline pulses, riding up and down frequencies as rappers slur filthy lyrics over the slow beat.

Sunlight peeks through masked out windows, the carpet filthy, empty chairs scattered randomly. A lone figure writhes on stage in a t-shirt, jeans and heels.

Maxxe looks over her shoulder, a sultry look on her face. She circles her hips seductively, sweat beading on her arms.

FAITH, a pretty middle aged woman overly made up, looks at the DJ booth and draws her hand across her neck. The music cuts volume. Maxxe clutches her knees exhausted.

FAITH
I think you've had enough for one day, love.

MAXXE
I can, I can keep going.

FAITH
Look, you're alright at this actually. To be honest, I thought you'd be well shit.
INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe and Faith sitting at a table as rap plays quietly. Maxxe guzzles back a soda and gasps.

FAITH
You know what? You're a natural at this you are. I thought, fucking American, she'll be up there cheerleading like a right muppet.

Maxxe grins to herself and rubs her calfs.

MAXXE
So, how do you know Edmund Ward?

FAITH
Oh Eddie, you having a laugh? He's always in here, dirty old git. Every Saturday night, must be going on ten years now.

MAXXE
Seriously? No way.

FAITH
Soft bugger, he should save his pennies and hire prossies. But then they're weird them acting types aint they.

MAXXE
Are we?

FAITH
Well not you love, you're alright. I thought you'd be right up your own arse, but you're a proper filthy cow aint you.

MAXXE
(laughing shocked)
Yeah? you think?

FAITH
Takes one to know one.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - DAY

A humble cramped apartment, cluttered and messy. Books spilling from shelves and stacked in piles. Maxxe sits perched on the sofa. She scans around and pauses.
Lucy's collection of old photos on a table, a few of Maxxe. Lucy walks in, hands Maxxe a drink and slumps down. Maxxe nods over to a book open on the coffee table.

MAXXE
You're still reading it then?

LUCY
(shaking head disgusted)
I've given up with it.

Lucy rustles a blister pack out a box, pops a tablet out and gulps it back. Maxxe bites her nails consumed.

LUCY
What's the matter?

MAXXE
You ever felt like everyone's just out to get you?

LUCY
It's like Gandhi says, first they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win.

Maxxe nods back unconvinced. She sips on her drink, stewing. Lucy pulls her legs up to her chest and drinks.

Maxxe scrunches her face up and gasps. Tears squeeze through her clenched eyes.

Lucy's eyes bulge. She jolts up. Maxxe clinks the cup down, her hand shaking. Lucy sits beside her, clutching her.

LUCY
Hey, it's okay, it's okay, don't let it get to you.

MAXXE
(shaking head gasping)
Why does everybody hate me, Luce?

LUCY
They don't, don't be silly.

Maxxe's chin quivers, her breathes short.

MAXXE
They do, they hate me so much, don't tell me they don't. I know what they say, I'm not stupid, okay? What did I do? What did I do to hurt anybody? I'm a horrible
person, that's the only explanation.

Lucy looks Maxxe in the eye seriously.

    LUCY
    They don't know you, okay?

Maxxe sniffs back tears, wipes her eyes and shakes her head.

    MAXXE
    I've got to prove I can do this.

INT. THE PIPELINE BAR - NIGHT

Punk blasts in the dark bustling bar. ROCKERS, BUMS, BOHEMIANS, and GREASERS mill about drinking.

Maxxe, Charlie and Jordan sit around a table, Maxxe right up in the corner, clutching her bottle pensive.

    CHARLIE CANE
    What's the matter? This not your scene?

    JORDAN
    She doesn't like big crowds, they scare her.

    CHARLIE CANE
    Yeah? Like a social anxiety disorder?

    MAXXE
    No, like a being famous when you don't want to be disorder.

    CHARLIE CANE
    You don't need to worry in a place like this. The people here might know you, they might even love you, but they consider it lowering themselves to show they give a shit. Perfect, right?

    JORDAN
    You don't get it, Charlie, she can't go anywhere, without everybody being like, fascinated with her.

    CHARLIE CANE
    An actress that loathes attention.
He shakes his head as colored lights sweep over him. Maxxe stares back at him frankly. He smirks amused. She rolls her eyes frustrated and chugs on her bottle fast.

**INT. THE PIPELINE BAR - LATER**

Music pumps loud, the table now littered with empties. Maxxe sways drunk, laughing with Jordan and Charlie.

**CHARLIE CANE**
Okay, here's a question, do you make love, or do you fuck?

**JORDAN**
Why do you have to be so gross and bring sex into everything?

**CHARLIE CANE**
I'm making commentary on social behavior, I'm not being gross.

**MAXXE**
You're so full of shit, guys are always just so obsessed with sex. Seriously, that's such a cliche question.

**CHARLIE CANE**
Just like I thought, typical, valley girls, all front and no substance.

Jordan cups her breasts and jiggles them.

**JORDAN**
Hey, these are the real thing.

He raises his drink. Jordan raises her eyebrows.

**MAXXE**
It's one of those bullshit questions people ask. It's like when journalists want to know if you like cats or dogs?

**CHARLIE CANE**
What's your point?

**MAXXE**
Well, I love both, but, for some reason, that's not a satisfactory answer?
Charlie purses his lips interested.

MAXXE
They should ask me if I like animals or humans. Then I'd give them something to write about.

CHARLIE CANE
We're digressing from my original question.

MAXXE
Dude, I totally answered your question, people make love, they fuck, they like both, okay?

CHARLIE CANE
No, this isn't something you can answer with words, the only way to tell is with a kiss.

He puckers his lips. Maxxe and Jordan roll their eyes.

JORDAN
You know what, seriously, let's just get it over and done with, okay? We're all actors, right?

She leans in, kisses him passionately and sits back confident.

JORDAN
Well?

CHARLIE CANE
Well, you tell me.

JORDAN
You like to fuck, as if that like wasn't obvious enough anyway.

CHARLIE CANE
Yeah? I get that vibe from you.

Maxxe leans forward on the table, ready to kiss him.

CHARLIE CANE
Woah no way, are you kidding? You've got a boyfriend.

MAXXE
We're all we're actors, right?
CHARLIE CANE
I don't get you, man, one minute you're scared people are going to recognize you, the next you're willing to kiss a guy in public?

MAXXE
You fucker, Charlie, seriously, you're so full of shit, fuck this.

Maxxe grabs Jordan and kisses her, looking dead into Charlie's eyes, her hand clasping Jordan's neck, her lips slurping eagerly. He watches shocked.

Maxxe releases and goes back to drinking. Jordan sits stunned.

MAXXE
Well?

Jordan flicks her pupils back and forth between them.

JORDAN
I'm sorry Charlie, but I feel like she actually just genuinely fucked me, with her mouth.

Charlie dismissively shakes his head.

EXT. THE PIPELINE BAR - LATER

Charlie lights a cigarette in Jordan's mouth. Maxxe rubs her arm watching, she sighs and gestures for a cigarette.

MAXXE
Okay come on.

JORDAN
Hey, you quit.

MAXXE
Yeah well it didn't work out.

JORDAN
Does Adam know?

MAXXE
Do I fucking care if fucking Adam fucking knows?

JORDAN
Woah, get this girl a cigarette Charlie.
He hands Maxxe a cigarette. She pops it in her mouth. He goes to light it but she snatches the lighter and lights it herself. She inhales eagerly.

INT. THE PIPELINE BAR - LATER

Music pumps at an oppressive level, the chatter of drinkers a riotous din, their crowding bodies heaving. Maxxe, Jordan and Charlie jostle drunkenly to the music.

MAXXE
This is pretty fucking tame
Charlie, I thought you said we'd go wild tonight?

CHARLIE CANE
Oh this is just the tickle of my foreplay, the night is still young.

MAXXE
Whatever, I hope you have something special, like pretty fucking hardcore planned.

CHARLIE CANE
Oh I got some hardcore planned.

Charlie looks at Jordan. She smiles suggestively back.

MAXXE
Seriously, because us Valley girls, we like to party hard.

Jordan bursts into laughter.

JORDAN
You are so full of shit tonight
Maxxe, since when have we ever partied hard? Like seriously?

Maxxe shoots Jordan a glare and spots someone taking a photo on their phone. She firmly gives them the finger and smiles sarcastically. She grins back up at Charlie challengingly.

MAXXE
Okay then, maybe Charlie needs to take our party virginity then, give it to us as hard as he can.

JORDAN
Yeah Charlie, why don't you give it to us real hard, so we're like sore in the morning.
CHARLIE CANE
Girls this is London okay, not L.A, this place will ruin you.

MAXXE
You're so full of shit, my boyfriend is from here, he's a fucking pussy.

CHARLIE CANE
Okay, you asked for it.

Charlie rummages in his jacket and raises clenched fists, elastic dangling from them. The girls look at each other, then at him.

CHARLIE CANE
Well come on.

Jordan taps a hand. He opens it to reveal a black masquerade mask.

JORDAN
No way, that's totally cool.

Charlie opens his other hand and looks at Maxxe.

CHARLIE CANE
Now we can get away with anything, right?

Maxxe stares at the red devil masquerade mask in his other open hand as the band guitars thrash and bright lights sweep.

EXT. LONDON STREETS - LATER

Dance music pumps from buildings, laughing GROUPS stagger down the street. Bare thighs sweep in the moonlight under short sparkling skirts, heels click on wet concrete.

Hidden behind her mask, Maxxe stares at passing people. Drunken faces leer from steamy windows, disco lights flicker from inside.

Men shout, girls scream and a sudden violent fist fight breaks out. Maxxe struts ahead, hips taking on a seductive sweep. Glass bottles smash as they shatter into shards.

Charlie slides his hand around Jordan's waist. A group of girls shriek and leap from barking police dogs.

Maxxe crouches down to the dogs and strokes the side of
their snarling mouths as they jolt on the extents of their leads.

Passing people pause and look mesmerized. Maxxe stares right back at them through her mask, pointing and waving. Sirens echo down stone frontages and blue lights flicker by.

Maxxe, Jordan and Charlie stroll toward a small door under a railway arch, strobing red lights inside. Two BULKY SECURITY GUARDS open the door for them.

**INT. ARCADIA CLUB ENTRANCE**

Red illuminates the small room. Maxxe, Jordan and Charlie shuffle along in the queue of CLUBBERS. Maxxe hands over money and ID and lifts her mask to the SECURITY GIRL.

SECURITY GIRL
(smirking)
Knock yourself out Disney Club.

She points challengingly to a pair of doors, a bright red light glowing in the crack. Maxxe, Charlie and Jordan proceed through into darkness.

**INT. ARCADIA CLUB**

The harrowing shrill of a operatic choir hacked over a throbbing high rpm beat licked with drum and bass breaks.

The crowd heaves and writhes. Heads swing silhouetted against red sweeping lights. A DJ works a laptop, dreadlocks flicking over his face.

Bodies crash together. Suggestive glances and dominant stares exchange. Sweat stained work shirts jostle beside slashed up nylon cat suits and sweeping glow sticks.

Strong male faces in makeup wink from under flowing wigs. Maxxe, Charlie and Jordan ease to the bar. Shots are handed out. Maxxe necks hers and disappears into the masses.

Maxxe snakes through the crowd, looking into the eyes of admiring men, stroking her finger across their chests.

Charlie and Jordan stay close, glancing around for Maxxe.

Maxxe dances to the hard beat, lost in the crowd, her movement tribal like in the strobe lights.

Charlie and Jordan dance, gazing into each others eyes.
Maxxe gets onto the stage. Her body pumps hard to the relentless beat.

Charlie and Jordan cheer in surprise, pointing to Maxxe.

Maxxe works the crowd, coaxing them into a fever, directing them like a conductor commanding an orchestra.

Maxxe spots Charlie and Jordan and beckons them over. She whispers into Jordan's ear and hands over a gold credit card.

Maxxe strips her top off, dances in her bra, her sweating arms glisten as she writhes to the pounding drums.

The credit card glints as Jordan hands it across the bar.

Maxxe grabs a bottle and pours it over the feverish crowd. They bask in it and cry for more.

BAR GIRLS sweep through, a huge bottle of champaign sparkling above their heads. They hand it to Maxxe.

Maxxe shakes the champaign bottle, holds it against her crotch, pops the cork and showers the crowd below her.

Maxxe whips off her mask and grins menacingly down.

Charlie and Jordan embrace in a kiss. Maxxe watches down on them, her eyes seething and teeth gritted.

Maxxe goes back to frantically dancing, the music relentlessly pumping.

INT. LONDON BLACK CAB - NIGHT

An engine purrs. The taxi slips through the streets in the night, the protective partition shuddering over bumps.

Charlie and Jordan kiss on the back seat. She throws herself into his groping hands and climbs across his lap. She gasps, grabbing at him. He glances over her shoulder.

Maxxe sits slumped on the fold down chair opposite, her head resting against the side window, jostling with the cabs movement, staring out the glass.

She catches him looking, turns, and looks right back at him. He kisses Jordan, their lips slurping but continues to watch Maxxe out the corner of his eye.

She stares back, draws her hand to her naval and teases up her top. His eyes dart between her hand and stare. She
plunges her hand down her jeans and stares back.

He leers, running his hands inside Jordan's top. Maxxe's fingers stroke circles under the denim.

Jordan moans. He clutches at her. She rocks her hips against him. He continues watching Maxxe. Maxxe closes her eyes, lets her jaw drop and pants silently.

He gazes, body fixed as Jordan caresses him. Maxxe's lips gape, her chest heaves and she opens her eyes slowly, staring back intense.

He grips Jordan's waist hard. She moans with pleasure. The cab stops. Maxxe slides out her hand, opens the door and ducks into darkness, slamming the door behind her.

Charlie stares into the middle distance as the cab pulls away. Jordan desperately kisses his face.

**INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM - DAY**

The intercom buzzes. Maxxe's eyes creep open in the bright light. It buzzes again. She fumbles for the phone.

MAXXE

Hello?

INTERCOM

(Jordan serious)

Maxxe you've got to let me in now.

She glances around worried.

**INT. PENTHOUSE**

Maxxe crosses to the door pensive, opens it and --

Jordan stands wincing in despair.

JORDAN

Dude, please tell me you have painkillers.

MAXXE

Erm, yeah, sure.

Maxxe jogs to the kitchen and pulls at drawers. Jordan staggers across clutching her stomach. Maxxe pours a glass of water and hands it across with pills.
JORDAN
Dude you are a saint, seriously, a bone-fide saint.

Jordan swigs them back, cringes and collapses disappointed.

JORDAN
Well, you'll be pleased to hear, Charlie doesn't fuck as good as you kiss.

Jordan looks up at Maxxe and they exchange awkward smiles.

JORDAN
Can I ask you a serious question?

MAXXE
What?

JORDAN
What's going on with you two?

Maxxe turns to the sink and pours herself a glass of water.

MAXXE
You saw?

JORDAN
Dude, it was pretty obvious, okay?

Maxxe swivels round and braces herself against the counter.

JORDAN
I mean, why are you like, so aggressive around him?

MAXXE
I am?

JORDAN
Look, you don't have to like him okay? But could you at least pretend to.

Maxxe stares back at Jordan and nods sincerely.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

A knife glides through an apple. Maxxe carefully slices it thinly as she mimes along to a song, jiggling in a flowing dress.

She eagerly tops up her wine and takes a long swig. A clunk
from the front door grabs her attention and she smiles across. The door sweeps open and Adam peers in grinning.

ADAM
Hey.

MAXXE
(sucking finger)
Hey.

He discards his luggage and crosses the room.

ADAM
Now something smells wonderful.

She smiles as she cuts. He swoops in and cradles her.

ADAM
You know what smells wonderful? My wonderful sexy girlfriend.

MAXXE
Yeah?

She spins round in his hands and looks up coyly. They kiss.

MAXXE
You shouldn't distract me, I'll ruin you desert.

ADAM
Maybe I want my desert now?

She wiggles and pushes his hands down to her butt.

MAXXE
How about your starter instead?

INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Adam and Maxxe crash to the floor embraced. He rolls her onto her back. She smiles, eyes wild.

He lifts her legs up and wrestles frantically with his belt, gazing at her. She stares back, moaning as he thrusts.

MAXXE
Yes, fuck me, come on.

He strains his face in ecstasy.

MAXXE
Fuck me harder. Oh yeah. Harder.
He clutches her shoulders, grinding as hard as he can. She pants as if in the throws of an orgasm, staring impressed.

He freezes as he comes hard. She raises her face to his and stares meanly into his eyes, teeth gritted.

His arms shake and give way. He flops onto his back, panting, his eyes wide. She smiles proud, stroking his chest for a few moments. He looks back and smirks delighted.

MAXXE
I genuinely have to cook, okay?

She kisses him on the lips lovingly and gets up. He lies on the floor, a huge grin across his face.

INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Maxxe picks up Adam's coat and crosses to the hanger. She pauses and sniffs the neck. She slips a hand into a pocket suspicious and pulls out condoms. She spins round glaring.

MAXXE
You fuck. I knew it, I fucking knew it.

ADAM
What? They've probably been in there for years, Maxxe, seriously.

MAXXE
(shouting)
You sneaky little cunt. Are you telling me you'd sooner bag up, and fuck some aids infected, crystal heeled, pole tramp when you have (draws over herself)
this at home?

ADAM
(getting up)
Exactly Maxxe, why would I? Stop being so paranoid. And don't use that word, you know I hate it.

She storms to the kitchen. He points defensively.

ADAM
Check the expiry date, okay? I bet they're past it.

She pins them to the chopping board with the knife.
MAXXE
Well they are now!

ADAM
Good okay, great. Just calm down, don't get so upset.

MAXXE
Upset? I'll show you upset.

She tugs the knife out the board and flashes her wrists, shaking the glistening knife over them. He runs over, palms raised.

ADAM
Don't do anything stupid, Maxxe. Seriously okay? Give me the knife!

MAXXE
Come near me and I'll expire your fucking cock, okay?

He edges closer, his eyes focused and fingers twitching.

ADAM
Give me the knife, Max, seriously.

She snakes her body, retreating slowly, goading.

MAXXE
Why don't you come get it, big boy?

He pauses and stares angry. She raises the knife. He lunges, grabs her arms and throws her back, pinning her against the wall. She glares back impressed.

MAXXE
Come on, you fucking pussy, be a fucking man.

He smashes her hand against the wall. She drops the knife. He holds her, his face like thunder, his hands trembling.

MAXXE
Yeah, you wanna punish me?

She wriggles her hair out of her face and looks back challengingly. She raising her eyebrows and snarls.

MAXXE
Do it, fucking do it.

He sighs and stares as she looks him right in the eye.
MAXXE
You're so fucking weak, you know that?

She throws her head forward and bites him on the shoulder. He screams and backs away, clutching himself. She flops against the wall cackling. He checks his hand to find blood. He stares in shock. She licks her teeth.

ADAM
Okay, I've got to get out of here.

He grabs his coat and rushes to his luggage.

MAXXE
Whatever, run away, run away to Skankarella, you weak little Cunt!

He looks back furious and exits, slamming the door. She shakes her head amused and wipes blood from her mouth.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A chrome cylinder slides into another, turns and screws. Maxxe sits on the floor, studying parts of a stripper pole.

She swigs back wine. The intercom buzzes. She crosses over, the twinkling lights of London in the windows.

MAXXE
Hello?

INTERCOM
(Lucy's voice)
Hey free food? C'mon open the door already.

INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Lucy crosses the room and looks at the stripper pole.

LUCY
(sarcastic)
Pretty classy, Maxxe.

Maxxe rolls her eyes, grabs the tray of the deserts she was making for Adam and lazily offers them. Lucy takes one.

LUCY
This why you called me over, to lure me into helping you?
Maxxe sits back down, sips her wine and continues assembling. Lucy eases down, against the wall and eats as she watches.

LUCY
Do I not get a drink?

MAXXE
You can't right?

LUCY
Is this how bad things have become? Where you start lecturing me on my life?

Lucy grabs the wine bottle and swigs on it. Maxxe bursts into shocked laughter. They smile at one another. Lucy watches Maxxe wind in a screw. Maxxe pauses and looks up.

MAXXE
Luce, do you think that I know who I am, like as a person?

LUCY
Jeeze you need to stop trying to disassemble everything. You'll never do that with yourself you know?

Maxxe stares and waits for an answer, Lucy sighs and thinks.

LUCY
There's this saying right, from Shakespeare. All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players.

Maxxe concentrates on assembling the pole.

LUCY
Well it's true okay? We're all acting, all of us. We're all playing a role to satisfy somebody, our bosses, our lovers, our friends, everyone. (swigs wine)

That's why we struggle to know ourselves, we rarely are ourselves, we hardly get a chance to be. And when we do, we spend it buried in some fantasy world, books, watching movies, playing video games. Because it's a lot easier to step into someones shoes for a few
steps, than walk their entire journey.

Maxxe looks up, a frank look on her face.

LUCY
What? Well you asked the question.

MAXXE
This is why you shouldn't mix alcohol and medication.

Lucy shakes her head laughing.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

Maxxe walks out the bedroom and squints in the sunlight. She crosses to the assembled stripper pole, gathers up the baking tray, wine bottle, glasses and carries them to the kitchen.

She pours a glass from the bottle and leans on the counter sipping, looking out over London. She takes out her phone, stares at it, sighs and dials.

MAXXE
Hey. Yeah I'm fine, look, I think we need to talk, okay?

INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

A tinkling synthesized tone cycles down high frequencies as curtains blow in the breeze from open windows.

A throbbing deep bass beat thumps through the penthouse. The Cat sits confused. A rapper gruffly goads.

Maxxe clutches the stripper pole in a red chemise and heels. She sweeps her hair back and grinds against it.

She looks lost in the moment as snakes rhythmically, running a hand tenderly down her writhing chest. The intercom buzzes. She snaps into reality.

INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

The door sweeps open. Maxxe stands gyrating slowly. Charlie looks back confused. She raises a remote in the air. The volume cuts.
CHARLIE CANE
This a bad time? You said two yeah?

MAXXE
I'm just working. You want me to take this seriously right?

She leads him to the leather sofas, where a wine bottle and two glasses sit on the coffee table waiting. He looks her up and down and sits uneasily. She goes to pour him a drink. He covers his glass.

CHARLIE CANE
You got like a coke or something?

She pauses unimpressed and sweeps away to the kitchen. The Cat walks up to him purring. He strokes it keenly.

CHARLIE CANE
Cute cat, man.

She crosses back over with a coke.

MAXXE
She likes you, you should be pleased, she's very fussy about who gives her attention.

CHARLIE CANE
She can just smell mine on me.
(to Cat)
Can't you yeah? You picking up his scent?

She places the coke down. He spies her spilling cleavage.

MAXXE
Don't trust her, she's got a split personality, she can lash out at any second
(to Cat)
Hey, come here.

She teases the Cat to her and bends over to pick it up. He leers. Her chemise rising, her butt, thong and crotch. She hurriedly carries the Cat away.

CHARLIE CANE
Hey it's cool, man. I don't mind her hanging out with us.

MAXXE
I do.
She shuts the Cat in the bedroom and pauses in the kitchen to light up. She returns with an ashtray and throws herself down, legs open. She sips wine, smokes and stares at him.

MAXXE
(deadpan)
Fancy a fuck, Charlie?

INT. PENTHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Maxe's hair flicks forward. She smiles ahead out the window as Charlie screws her from behind. His hands clench her waist. Her's clench the sofa.

He pants as he stares down at her body. She gasps, trembling with pleasure and looks back at him. She smiles and bites her lip. He freezes and comes. She moans, her eyes shut and mouth gaping.

He slumps down exhausted. She gets up, crosses over to her wine takes a long drink and goes back to smoking.

MAXXE
So we're like, cool now, yeah?

He stares up at her confused. She looks back indifferent.

CHARLIE CANE
What, is this? Are you kidding me? Did you think? What the?

He shakes his head and slowly works it out. He smiles angry.

CHARLIE CANE
This is business to you isn't it?

She raises her eyebrows suggestively and knocks back some wine. He gets up and paces back and forth confused.

CHARLIE CANE
Well you did it, Maxxe, well done. You played me at my own game.

She blows smoke, and stares, shaking her head not understanding. He pauses disappointed, grabs his bag, storms to the door and points back.

CHARLIE CANE
And to think, there I was questioning if you had it in you to play this role, and as it turns out your perfect, too perfect.
(laughing to self)
The fucking irony, man.

The door slams. She chews her lip frustrated.

INT. CELLAR RESTAURANT - NIGHT


JORDAN
I just don't know what I did wrong you know? Men right, like so emotional all the time.

LUCY
Sounds to me like you got away lightly, the guy sounds like a complete arsehole.

JORDAN
He kinda is, but I like that, confidence right? He was mean to Maxxe though, wasn't he, Maxxe?

Maxxe nods awkwardly as she eats. Jordan strokes her arm.

JORDAN
He's like one of those things, what's the word? You know the word, Maxxe, what is it?

MAXXE
A twat?

JORDAN
A twat! He's totally one of those. But seriously, who cares? Because I was only ever going to be here for a week anyway, it could never have worked.

LUCY
Don't even think about it.

JORDAN
You are so right you know. Oh Maxxe, I'm sorry, I hope I haven't screwed things up for you.

Maxxe takes a long drink of wine and looks back confused.
MAXXE
Why? You know the guy hates me anyway, right?

JORDAN
It's just, what he said when he broke up with me.

Maxxe and Lucy exchange concerned glances.

JORDAN
He said, he'll maybe see us around in the future, like as if he was talking about you too. But that can't be right can it? Can it?

LUCY
Arsehole, typical arsehole, strings you along just so he can shag your best friend. I just, argh, it makes me so mad, you know? What's the point, what's the point with people like that around?

JORDAN
Oh my god, Maxxe! I'm sorry, your dream role, I'm so sorry.

MAXXE
Don't be, he hated me from day one. This was inevitable.

Maxxe shrugs nonchalantly and carries on eating. Lucy watches Maxxe hacking away at her bloody steak. Maxxe catches her staring. Lucy frowns concerned. Maxxe carries on casually.

INT. LONDON BLACK CAB - LATER

Maxxe, Lucy and Jordan sit in the back of the cab as it rattles along. Maxxe stares out the window. Jordan glumly dwells. Lucy looks worried. The taxi squeaks to a halt.

JORDAN
Thanks guys.

Jordan leans in and hugs Lucy. Lucy grips her tightly.

LUCY
Enjoy the Alps, okay? Life's too short to dwell on the negatives.
JORDAN
I will, I promise.

Jordan leans to Maxxe and hugs her. Maxxe struggles a smile.

JORDAN
I'll come round tomorrow before I fly out, dude. Don't worry, okay?

Maxxe nods pre-occupied. Jordan backs out the cab, looks at Maxxe worried for a moment and shuts the door. The cab pulls away and Lucy gives a friendly wave.

Maxxe stares ahead consumed. Lucy watches her as they travel in silence, jostling over bumps, the engine droning.

EXT. CHELSEA APARTMENTS - MINUTES LATER

The black cab purrs up to the kerb and a door opens. Maxxe steps out and staggers toward the apartments.

LUCY
Maxxe wait!

Lucy clambers out, crosses over and hugs her. She holds her, looking at her sincere Maxxe avoids eye contact, her eyes glistening.

LUCY
This isn't your fault.

Maxxe chews her lip pained and looks back, embarrassed.

MAXXE
It is, I messed up.

Maxxe wells up and looks away, ashamed. Lucy looks back shocked and upset. She shakes her head, tears in her eyes.

LUCY
No, don't ever think that, you can never fail in my eyes, never.

Lucy hugs Maxxe tightly. Maxxe clenches her eyes shut.

LUCY
Look, I know you're not that kid anymore okay? But you are still just as stubborn.

Maxxe laughs and smiles. Lucy smiles back.
LUCY
You're so strong, Maxxe, so independent, so ambitious. I'm so proud of you, don't ever think otherwise, okay?

Maxxe nods.

LUCY
Promise me you'll never think otherwise.

MAXXE
I promise.

Lucy smiles warmly. She hugs Maxxe, strokes her hair and takes a deep breath. Maxxe smiles content, Lucy kisses her on the cheek and steps back, holding her hands.

LUCY
(sternly)
Promise?

MAXXE
(smirking, nodding)
Promise.

Lucy backs into the cab smiling and shuts the door. Maxxe watches it pull away. Lucy smiles as she waves through the rear window. Maxxe smiles and waves proudly back.

INT. PENTHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The front door clunks open. Maxxe staggers through. She stumbles across the apartment, consumed with worry.

EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY

She slides the door shut behind her, lights up a cigarette and paces back and forth, traffic buzzing below. She pauses and looks out over London, biting her nails.

INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM

Maxxe stares meanly into a mirror, running bright red lipstick over her lips. She presses red fake nails onto her fingers, pauses, and stares at the scarred chewed skin.
INT. PENTHOUSE BEDROOM

She studies herself in the mirror, wearing the really tiny red dress, eyes black with eye shadow and hair ruffled.

INT. PENTHOUSE

She clumps to the kitchen in tall heels, gulps back a glass of wine and crosses to the front door.

EXT. SOHO STREET - MINUTES LATER

Music whispers from seedy clip-joints, groups of LADS laugh and shout as they pass by TOUTS and PROSTITUTES. A black cab pulls up. Maxxe steps out, lights up and glances around.

EXT. SOHO ALLEYWAY

Her heels click on the littered tarmac and splash through puddles, as she heads toward the back of Selena's Strip Club.

EXT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB

Bass pumps from inside, a BOUNCER stands under a dim bulb, barely illuminated. Maxxe walks up. He blocks the door.

Maxxe
I'm erm, I'm Gwyn?

He stares at her for a moment and opens the door.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB CHANGING ROOM

A bassline ripples through the room, rattling the mirrors and scattered cosmetics. A YOUNG GIRL sleeps on the floor, a line of bulbs glare in the faces of pruning STRIPPERS. They all briefly glance across at Maxxe.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB

The music throbs under thuggish rapping, a DANCER writhes on stage, her breasts and glittery thong sparkling under the pink and blue lights.

Maxxe peers through a curtain of silver beads into the dark crowd of PUNTERS. She scans around, searching.
Edmund Ward sits at the foot of the stage, flirting with LAP DANCERS and gorping at the Dancer. Maxxe narrows her eyes.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB BAR

The BARMAN walks past a glinting wall of bottles and cups his ear. Maxxe mouths something. He nods.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB

Maxxe passes behind the curtains, pauses and peers through. A WAITRESS places a drink by Edmund, he shakes his head, and waves his hands.

Maxxe stares. The Waitress mouths something. He nods and she leaves him staring at the drink. Maxxe disappears.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB CHANGING ROOM

Maxxe walks to a locker and tosses her bag in it. She crosses her hands over her back and wriggles out her dress.

She shoves the dress into the locker and takes her phone. She composes herself, stands in red lace underwear and stares coldly at the doorway to the club.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB DJ BOOTH

The Dancer walks off to a murmur of applause. The DJ leans forward behind the grubby perspex window. Maxxe points to her phone and passes it through.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB STAGE

A sweeping synthesized cord pulses. Edmund stares at the drink. Maxxe's red heels strut across the filthy floor.

The tone builds, a deep slow bassline drops under a tickling hi-hat. His drink ripples as a female singer groans. He glances up and --

Maxxe stares back. She sweeps her hair back under the red lights. He gazes surprised. The punters and strippers glance across. The female singer spits filthy lyrics.

Maxxe gyrates her hips to the beat. She brings her hands behind her head and thrusts her waist back and forth. she turns, looks over her shoulder and stirs her body.
The female voice breaks into a chorus of singing. Maxxe grabs her ankles and whips her hair from side to side as Edmund's head moves in synchronization.

She crawls across the floor, just out of reach of the leering audience and rolls her butt around. She smiles across and snakes onto her back, staring at him.

The bassline throbs. She thrusts her body to the beat. He reaches for the drink. She closes her eyes and runs her tongue across her lips. He knocks back a mouthful.

Sexual lyrics lick over the track. She gets to her feet, hair ruffled over her face and bites her lip. She sweeps her body back and forth and runs her hands over her smooth skin.

The music pauses. She pauses. Everyone waits on edge and --

She glides toward the pole, grabs it as the beat drops and swoops around it. He stares fixed.

She clutches the pole with her legs, circling it fast, her body bent back, her arms out stretched and --

She coasts to a halt, raising her body to the pole. He clutches the glass tightly.

She kicks her legs up, grips the pole with her thighs and spins. He raises his glass and swallows deeply.

She comes to a halt, hangs back and stops perfectly aligned with him, gazing into his eyes.

He holds the glass fixed. The chorus of female singing flows back. She slides to the floor, legs either side of the pole. She tilts her head back and --

The beat pumps hard as she rubs her crotch against the pole, staring at him, rolling her pelvis, licking her lips. He knocks back the whole drink and judders.

She casually struts off the stage to riotous applause.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB

Maxxe walks through the audience and sweeps around the tables. Punters gorp. She heads straight to Edmund, ushers him up, looks coyly back over her shoulder and leads him away.
INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB PRIVATE BOOTH

She eases Edmund down onto the seat, grabs a bottle off the table and pours it into his mouth. He loves it.

A rap track booms. Maxxe dances under the red lights. He gazes up at her, fixed and leering.

She turns her back to him and wiggles her hips. He grabs her butt. She knocks his hand away and wags her finger.

She spins back round and writhes. He grabs her waist. She pulls his hands away and looks at him like a naughty boy. He leers back petulant.

He grabs her tightly and gropes her. She fights back and falls into his lap. He grabs at her body.

She desperately wiggles free and gets up. He gets up and grabs her by the shoulders. SMACK! She slaps him.

EDMUND WARD
So the cat wants the play?

He throws her down onto the seat. She glares back up. He wrestles with his belt buckle. She tries to get up.

EDMUND WARD
Fucking stay down!

SMACK! He slaps hard with the back of his hand. She SCREAMS, falls back and slips off the seat onto the floor, peril in her eyes and --

She lunges onto him, clawing at his face. Two BOUNCERS burst in quickly pull her off Edmund and restrain her.

BOUNCER
Who the fuck are you?

MAXXE
I'm Gwyn! I work here!

The Bouncers look at each other perplexed.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB

Maxxe kicks and screams as she's carried through the club.

INT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB CHANGING ROOM - NIGHT

Maxxe writhes as she's dragged to the back door. Faith
rushes in panicked.

FAITH
Wait there, dick head! She's alright, I know her! I don't know what the silly slags messing about at, but don't kick her head in! There will be loads of trouble. Just let her go, alright?

EXT. SELENA'S STRIP CLUB

Maxxe gets shoved out the back door in her underwear, dress in her hand. The door slams behind her. She indignantly wrestles her dress back on.

EXT. SOHO ALLEYWAY

She clumps up the alleyway and pauses. She shivers, glancing down the street nervous. No traffic. No cabs.

DRUNKEN GIRLS cackle. A STAG PARTY shouts, their aggressive faces reflected in windows.

EXT. SOHO STREET

Maxxe walks nervously. DRUNK GUYS spill out a clip-joint.

BIG GUY
Oi oi, hello darling!

LEERING GUY
How much, my lovely. Just a suck and fuck, maybe some a-levels.

She pauses. Another PACK OF MEN ahead. They shout and goad. she glances around worried and trots down an alley.

EXT. SOHO ALLEYWAY

ESCORTS wait in walk-ups, some with PUNTERS. Maxxe gazes up, flinches and rubs her jaw. She reaches the end of the alley, ducks into the shadows and opens her handbag.

She rummages in her bag and realizes her phone is in the Club. She looks up and down a back street, it's empty, silent and lit by the occasional street light.
EXT. BACKSTREET

She trudges along, an urgency to her step. A car slows down and creeps behind her, the headlights glare, a window whirrs down.

KERB CRAWLER
You doin business or what, sweetheart?

She carries on, ignoring him.

KERB CRAWLER
Oi I'm talking to you? How much?

MAXXE
I'm not a hooker, okay?

KERB CRAWLER
Yes you fucking are? You got a problem with older men, you cheeky fucking tart?

MAXXE
Just fuck off.

The car races ahead and screeches to a halt. She pauses. KERB CRAWLER, a huge burly man, gets out angry.

KERB CRAWLER
What you fucking say to me, you mouthy cunt?

She turns on the spot and hurries away.

KERB CRAWLER
Oi, don't you walk away from me! I'll break your fucking neck!

She kicks off her heels, sprints away barefoot, cuts down a park alley and --

EXT. PARK ALLEYWAY

Runs toward the next street. An engine races toward the end of the alley and she freezes in the headlights.

The car sits, engine idling. She stares back hopeless. Kerb Crawler gets out and glares at her. She looks terrified. Shadows motion in the darkness behind her.

KERB CRAWLER
Fucking slag, you were lucky this
Kerb Crawler gets back in, reverses and races away. She stands staring, confused. Footsteps behind her. She glances round and --

A LANKY YOUTH and MUSCLY YOUTH run toward her. She runs for it. They chase her down, grab her and smack her against the wall. Lanky Youth covers her mouth and pulls a knife.

LANKY YOUTH
No way she is fit, bro.

Muscly Youth snatches away her handbag and rummages through it, taking what he wants.

LANKY YOUTH
You Russian, Polish? I seen you somewhere before innit?

She stands trembling, eyes wide. Muscly Youth goes through her wallet and his eyes light up.

MUSCLY YOUTH
She's well rich, I bet she one of them high class escorts.

Lanky Youth looks round at the wallet. She kicks him in the crotch, slips free and sprints into the street determined.

EXT. BACKSTREET - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe runs to exhaustion and stops, clutching her shaking knees. A car races up behind her and screeches to a halt. She buckles to the floor.

She crawls, looking back hopeless into the glaring headlights then --

Flickering blue lights, a door opens, Police radio chatter.

EXT. CHELSEA APARTMENTS - LATER

The Police Car drives away. She taps a keycode into the door lock and lets herself into the lobby.

INT. PENTHOUSE CORRIDOR

The lift doors sweep open. She trudges across to her door, pauses, stares at the lock and closes her eyes frustrated. She slumps against the door and crumples to a heap.
INT. PENTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

Maxxe snores on the floor by the door, dress barely covering her decency.

The lift doors sweep open and Adam stares shocked. He races to her, pours over her and unlocks the door.

She stirs awake confused. He cradles her, picks her up and backs through the door with her in his arms.

INT. PENTHOUSE

The Cat bounds over to them. He lays her down on the sofa, strokes back her hair and studies her bruise.

ADAM
What the hell happened, Maxxe?

MAXXE
You wouldn't understand.

He sighs angry, ducks away and crosses toward the bedroom. He spots the stripper pole, shakes his head and continues into the bedroom.

She adjusts herself on the sofa and winces. She rubs her jaw tenderly, some of her press on nails ripped off.

He crosses back with a few items, pauses and stares at her messed up slutty make up, filthy bare feet and cut knees.

ADAM
I can't deal with this right now.

She looks back forlorn, eyes glistening. He sighs looks down sympathetic.

MAXXE
Are you running away with the skank?

He shakes his head frustrated and motions to leave.

MAXXE
Do I not even get a hug? Am I that dead to you already?

He pauses, turns and leans into cuddle her. She nuzzles at his face, trying to kiss him. He pulls out of her grasp. She watches angry as he leaves. The door slams.
INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

The phone rings. Maxxe crosses across the room wearing pajama's and nursing her jaw. She picks up the receiver, sits down, puts her head in her palm and closes her eyes.

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATER

Maxxe slouched behind a table, an AGENT beside her. Across the room sit Charlie and Edmund, their faces a mixture of guilt and anger. Between them sits an EXECUTIVE.

MAXXE
Seriously, is that just a fancy way of saying you're firing me?

AGENT
They're giving you the opportunity to leave, and as your agent, I advise you do it, gracefully.

EXECUTIVE
You could say it's something like a scheduling conflict.

MAXXE
Oh there's conflict alright, why don't you ask your precious director about conflict?

Edmund rubs the scratches on his face, fingers quivering.

AGENT
Maxxe, don't turn this into a mud slinging competition okay? It'll get very messy for everybody, especially you.

Maxxe sits fuming and glares at the floor.

EXECUTIVE
Is there's a statement you want to make at all?

Maxxe stands up and goes to leave, face like thunder.

MAXXE
You know what, yeah.

Maxxe firmly gives Charlie and Edmund both middle fingers.

MAXXE
Fuck you guys.
(to Agent)
Graceful enough for you?

INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

The front door opens. Jordan raises her eyebrows surprised. Maxxe looks back dour, cigarette hanging in her mouth, a glass of wine in her hand.

JORDAN
Hey trailer trash.
(circling finger)
Not a good look on you, okay?

Maxxe rolls her eyes. Jordan wrestles her luggage into the room. They slump onto the sofas. Maxxe sighs deeply.

MAXXE
So they fired me.

JORDAN
Seriously? That is so messed up. I mean, what the fuck, right?

Jordan lights up, shaking her head in disbelief.

MAXXE
The fucks all totally hate me.

JORDAN
But how come right? I mean, you're awesome, it doesn't make sense.

MAXXE
I've not exactly been acting like myself lately.

Maxxe takes a draw, exhales and looks back frank.

JORDAN
(hand on chest)
Seriously? You're blaming me? For inviting you out for a few drinks? I'm sorry to say this, Maxxe, but you're being a bitch, okay?

MAXXE
I don't give a fuck.
(smiling challengingly)
I'm a bitch, deal with it.

Jordan stares back stunned.
JORDAN
Okay you just got upgraded to, total bitch, Maxxe.

MAXXE
You sound like such a valley girl when you're angry, it's pathetic.

JORDAN
Oh my god, whatever, I like totally do not, okay?

Jordan stands up, waving her hands, flicking back her hair.

JORDAN
You know what? I'm totally done feeling sorry for you. I'm so sorry I gave a shit about your boring little life here, okay?
(pointing)
Take a long hard look at yourself, Maxxe. You've become the spoilt miserable little bitch everyone likes to think you are.

Jordan stares furious. Maxxe shakes her head sneering.

MAXXE
Fuck you.

JORDAN
No, fuck you.

JORDAN
You know what? I have a flight to catch. Because I have like an actual life to live.

Jordan storms to her luggage and fights the pop-up handle.

JORDAN
Enjoy your life, Maxxe, with no boyfriend, and no job, just you. Just you, a fancy apartment, a shitload of money and your cat, alone together. Oh and since I'm not getting you anything from the gift shop you can have these instead.

Jordan firmly gives her both fingers. Maxxe glares.

JORDAN
You can use them to play with
yourself, now you're back on the scrapheap!

Jordan storms out. Maxxe shakes her head fuming.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER OFFICE - NIGHT

JAMES
Well we are now officially past the point of no return. The architects have come back with this, I think you'll approve.

James sweeps plans out over his cluttered desk, studying them pleased. Maxxe nods nervous, chewing her fingers.

JAMES
The builders are still busy with their quote, it takes longer then you think to pluck a number out the sky it seems.

Maxxe adjusts herself uncomfortable, her chest heaving. She swallows deep and tries to concentrate.

JAMES
It's now just a case of winning over the council, we're being ambitious with size, I may have to sleep with a few of them.

He glances at her and pauses. She stares back pensive.

JAMES
You okay?

MAXXE
Yeah just. I need to get some air.

She shirks away, gets up and crosses to the door.

JAMES
Maxxe I don't want to push but, that payment you said you wired, it hasn't come through.

MAXXE
Well it can take a few days.

She pauses and sweeps her hair back, her pupils darting around panicked. He squints at her concerned.
JAMES
Is there a problem I should know about?

MAXXE
(sharp)
Look it's none of your business
where the money comes from is it?

She stares at him angry. He stares back shocked.

MAXXE
So keep your nose out.

She sighs, shakes her head and ducks out the door.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER SURGERY

Maxxe hurries toward the exit, pauses and looks round shocked. Jack the Mongrel lies on the surgery table panting and wrapped in a blanket, the Shelter Assistant tending to him.

Maxxe crosses to him and stares down etched.

MAXXE
What's wrong with him?

SHELTER ASSISTANT
We're not sure, the vets running a blood test now. It could be a bad reaction to the surgery.

Maxxe stares down solemnly at him. James walks in and pauses awkward. She goes to leave.

JAMES
Maxxe, can we-

MAXXE
I've got to go, seriously I'll find out about the hold up.

She exits. James and the Assistant look at each another.

EXT. ANIMAL SHELTER - NIGHT

Maxxe trots out, rubbing her neck, staring at the floor worried. She takes out her keys. Her Mini's alarm blips.
INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Maxxe sits on the sofa smoking, a box on the table, new phone in her hand. She fumbles drunkenly, head swaying.

She gulps back wine, dismisses a bunch of missed calls from Adam and Jordan, finds Lucy's name and hits call.

MAXXE
(confused)
Oh hey, is Lucy there?

Her face slowly turns surprised, then horrified. She gasps. The phone tumbles to the floor. She jolts, tears flowing. She grits her teeth angry and howls pained.

INT. PENTHOUSE

She paces across the kitchen, clasping her head, gasping, sniffing and shaking her head desperately.

She slams a wine bottle onto the counter, pours a glass, gags on tears, and gulps back the whole serving.

INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

She sobs on the floor, glass toppled over, Cat by her.

INT. PENTHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe slowly staggers across the room solemn. Cat food in hand. She tops up the food bowl, picks up the Cat, hugs it, adoringly and stares at the view.

She goes to open the balcony door. A buzzing. She glances at the floor. Her phone ringing. She picks it up, see's it's Adam calling and sends it to voicemail.

EXT. BALCONY

She slides the door shut and throws herself to the fence. She clutches the rail and stares down, wind whistling.

Her phone buzzes. A message. She prods it onto speaker, tosses it onto a table and gazes over London.

PHONE
(Adam)
Erm, call me back as soon as you can okay? I just heard. I'm so
sorry, Maxxe, just hold tight. I'm here for you. Go round to Jordan's or something. I'll be back in a couple of days, we-

She gazes back at the phone. The sound of a party.

PHONE
-can you shut that please, I'm making a call.
(Female voice)
Come on get it over with already. Her face sinks and she shakes her head as tears flow.

PHONE
(Adam cont...) I'll be back in a couple of days okay? We'll talk then. Don't do anything stupid. I, I really care about you, Maxxe.

Her chin quivers, she hyperventilates, slips her feet out of her grubby sneakers and stares up into the sky.

PHONE
(Jordan) Oh my god, Maxxe, I'm flying straight back okay. Just forget everything we said today, it doesn't matter. I'll call you when I get into London, I love you baby okay, I love you so much.

She raises a foot onto the bottom rail, and looks back. The Cat paws at the window. She sighs hopeless.

She looks at the street, looks at the Cat, the street again. She places her other shaking foot onto the rail and stands, clutching on, hair blowing in the wind.

PHONE
(Lucy) Hey erm, it's Lucy. She glances round shocked.

PHONE
(Lucy) I've called you like a dozen times already, stop being so busy all the time. I need to tell you something. I guess it will be better as a message, at least now I can always lecture you right?
Her eyes light up. She quivers laughter through her tears.

PHONE
We were talking the other night
about knowing ourselves, don't
forget what I said okay, Maxxe.

She listens intently.

PHONE
Just put on your own shoes and walk
your own journey.

She drops back down. Drosses to the phone and clutches it.

PHONE
And do it as soon as possible. I'll
be waiting at the end okay, Maxxe,
waiting to hear how it went.

She jolts and stands thinking. She looks at her shoes and
looks at the Cat pawing the window.

INT. PENTHOUSE

She dashes in, picks up the Cat and spins around, hugging
it, smelling it, nuzzling it, and tickling it. She stares at
the wine.

INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Music blasts. The Cat sits on the kitchen floor confused.
She pours wine bottles down the sink.

The bin lid pops open. A packet of cigarettes are tossed in.
She stares at the script, tears it to shreds and shoves it
in bin. She glances around. Her eyes narrow --

The stripper pole.

INT. PENTHOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Maxxe walks out the bedroom, face deadly serious, Adam's
classic black electric guitar hanging from her hand,
dragging along the wooden floor.

She sizes up to the stripper pole, guitar held like a
baseball bat and swings, eyes clenched, teeth gritted. The
guitar smashes, the pole buckles and --

She swings again. Metal dents, fiberglass shatters, wood
splinters and strings coil. She glares triumphant as the pole falls and crashes to the floor.

**EXT. BALCONY – MINUTES LATER**

She walks out to the balcony edge, coils back and throws the tiny red dress over, watching it ripple through the air to the wet, glistening sidewalk.

**EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT – DAY**

Jet engines whistle. A plane descends behind dull concrete and glass buildings.

**INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT TERMINAL 3**

Announcements echo. TRAVELLERS mill around. Shoes and luggage clatter. MILITARY POLICE stroll along, their machine guns cradled and radios squawking.

Maxxe stalks them furtively, head down, hair hiding her face. They cut left. She glances up at the direction signs.

She watches them stroll away, looks the other way at the busy check-in lobby and she cringes.

**INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT RESTROOM**

Maxxe bursts through the door and cuts past GIRLS, face straining. She dashes into a stall and locks the door. Guttural choking echoes from inside. The Girls wince.

**INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT TERMINAL 3**

Polished black shoes stroll across the tiles as rumbling luggage wheels roll behind. Maxxes tattered sneakers pace along with them.

A BULKY BUSINESS MAN'S broad shoulders and long black coat shield Maxxe as she follows closely. She glances up at the departures screen.

She spots a GIRL nudge a GUY with her elbow and nod toward her. Maxxe ducks her head down, heads for the arrivals gate and clutches the steel barrier tightly.

She takes a deep breath, her hands shaking. An announcement echoes and she looks up hopefully.
Jordan walks out the gate dragging luggage and beams a huge surprised smile. Maxxe crosses to her fast, eyes glistening and hugs her tight, her fingers clasp into her back.

JORDAN
Oh my god! I don't believe it!

Maxxe pushes her face into Jordan's shoulder, her eyes clenched/ Jordan strokes her back and head.

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT SMOKING AREA

Maxxe and Jordan sit in a quiet corner smoking as Jets roar overhead. Jordan smiles and Maxxe sighs deeply.

MAXXE
Look, just, listen to me okay? I have, I have to tell you something. But seriously, just don't get angry.

JORDAN
I don't even have the energy to be angry. I've been dragging this thing around for the past twenty four hours. And I have like, major jet lag.

Jordan kicks her luggage case hard. Maxxe goes wide eyed, looks at Jordan nervous.

MAXXE
Okay, I had sex with Charlie, the day after we went out, I'm so sorry.

JORDAN
(reeling tired)
Okay, wow, dude, wow.

Jordan sits stunned as she smokes. Maxxe waits for an answer.

MAXXE
Well? They sit silent for a few moments.

Jordan ponders, reaches into her luggage and pulls out a small plush dog.

JORDAN
I thought about what I said the other day, about how you like, only
had a cat for a friend. And I thought about how you like cats and dogs, so I got you a dog, like, to go with your cat.

Jordan hands it across. Maxxe smiles touched.

JORDAN
And I'm still your friend too.

Maxxe smiles and sniffs back tears. Jordan watches her toy with the dog, stroking its little nose.

INT. LONDON MARRIOTT HOTEL MAIDA VALE - LATER

CUSTOMERS eat and chat in the bar. Maxxe sits perched on a leather chair, tapping a pack of cigarettes.

Adam crosses through the bar searching, beer in hand. He spots her, they exchange awkward smiles and he crosses over.

ADAM
You're smoking again?

She shakes her head and hides the pack away.

MAXXE
Seriously, this is my last pack.

He glances around, eyes searching for a moment.

ADAM
You want to get away from these people?

She thinks for a moment and shakes her head. He smiles, eases down into a seat and toys with the condensation on his pint.

ADAM
So you wanted to talk right?

She nods surely, her pupils darting around as she thinks.

MAXXE
I'm sorry, okay, sorry for going all weird.

ADAM
Look, Maxxe, don't beat yourself up, okay?

He puts his pint down and meshes his hands together nervous.
ADAM
I kinda of need to apologize too, well, I need to come clean. You were right, right to be suspicious.

Adam rubs the back of his neck wincing.

ADAM
I have been seeing somebody else.

MAXXE
The Skank? Skankarella?

He looks back frankly. She shakes her head vengeful.

MAXXE
That bitch.

ADAM
Honestly, I'm genuinely sorry. I guess we've both been acting out of character lately.

MAXXE
So, what? Are you saying you want to get back together now?

ADAM
(cringing)
I'm not so sure what I want.

MAXXE
Oh I get it, she dumped you, right? So you're keeping me on the line, until you see what happens, is that it?

ADAM
You know what, sod this, you invited me here, Maxxe.

He necks his beer and gets up to leave. She grabs his arm and looks up pleading.

MAXXE
Wait, just wait. Look, I have to come clean too. This is going to make me sound such a hypocrite. I cheated on you too, okay?

(ADAM holds up finger)
Like, just once.

ADAM
Yeah? You regret it?
She nods surely. He sits back down and stares at her for a few moments, fighting anger and acceptance.

**ADAM**

So you know exactly how I feel? And yeah, you don't just sound like a hypocrite, you are a hypocrite.

He stares at her judgmental. She shakes her head and runs her hands through her hair frustrated.

**MAXXE**

Look, let's just cut the bullshit, right? Where are we? Where are you and me right now? Is it over between us? Are we rebuilding? What do you want, Adam?

She swallows deeply and looks back hopeful.

**ADAM**

The thing is, I'm struggling to really narrow down who you are.

He looks at her, studying her confused. She adjusts herself in her chair awkward.

**ADAM**

It's like, you've been so caught up pretending to be other people for so long, I don't know if I've ever seen the real you. And, I just, I just can't help but wonder, this Gwyndolen, if this character has stuck with you for so long. Maybe that's who you want to be? No, that's not what worries me. What worries me is, maybe that's who you actually are?

She reels stunned and stares back.

**EXT. BROMPTON CEMETERY - DAY**

Ancient weathered tombstones lie part buried in tall grass. Maxxe and Jordan trudge along a path, dressed in black. Maxxe wipes her eyes as Jordan rubs her back.

**MAXXE**

I should have seen it coming you know? I should have done something.
JORDAN
Nobody saw it coming, okay?

MAXXE
But I should have. I knew she was depressed. But why didn't I realize it had gotten that bad?

They walk in silence. Maxxe pauses and stares at Jordan.

MAXXE
I'm a selfish bitch aren't I?

Jordan stares back frankly. Maxxe flinches, reaches into pocket and pulls out her humming phone.

MAXXE
What the?

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATER

MAXXE
Seriously? You're kidding me right?

Maxxe sits at the meeting table with her Agent, her face incredulous. Across the room sit the Executive and Charlie. Maxxe glances at Charlie. He glares back.

EXECUTIVE
Given Edmund Ward's, complication (motions drinking) We feel it would be mutually beneficial to both parties if you, came back on board.

AGENT
With substantial compensation?

The Executive waves his head around coy.

EXECUTIVE
It's something we're maybe willing to discuss.

AGENT
Are you willing to discuss figures? Now?

The Executive purses his lips, giving his best poker face. BANG! Maxxe slams her fist down on the desk.

MAXXE
For crying out loud!
They all stare at Maxxe shocked. She stares down at the desk fuming, jaw clenched.

AGENT
Maxxe, do-

MAXXE
Shut up! Just shut up! Please!

They all sit in awkward silence, Maxxe seething.

MAXXE
(slowly)
Fuck the money.
(staring at agent)
You want to compensate me? Get my life back. Seriously, because I haven't got one anymore.

Maxxe rests her head in her hands.

EXECUTIVE
We're sorry, Maxxe, we can't do anything about the attention. You know that.

Maxxe runs her hands through her hair to her neck and looks at the executive.

MAXXE
Yeah well, you don't get to read the small print when you sign your life away to fame do you?

Maxxe stares at the Executive. He frowns back concerned, Charlie shakes his head disappointed. Maxxe sighs deeply, gets up and gathers her things.

MAXXE
I'm sorry, look this isn't your fault, I gotta get out of here.

INT. DRAB CORRIDOR

Maxxe exits the office and paces down the corridor.

CHARLIE CANE (O.S.)
Maxxe!

She stops and glances back. Charlie approaches glaring. He opens an office door, checks it's empty and nods inside.
INT. EMPTY MEETING ROOM

Maxxe crosses through the door fuming. Charlie shuts it and stands glowering at her.

CHARLIE CANE
Just what is your fucking problem?

She stands silent, avoiding eye contact.

CHARLIE CANE
(pointing)
You think I want you around after what you did?

He looks at her with contempt.

CHARLIE CANE
They've sent me running after you because they think I can bring you around, because they know you look up to me.
(sneering)
But I am done with you and your crazy attitude.

She reels hurt, cradling herself defensively.

CHARLIE CANE
And you know what's funny? You actually had just what you wanted in the palm of your hand.

He smirks. She runs her hands through her hair, chest heaving.

CHARLIE CANE
But you had to throw it all away didn't you? Because you're nothing but a spoilt brat.

She clutches at her hair tightly. He smiles amused.

CHARLIE CANE
You're just a hack who got a leg up the slippery pole of fame and you'll do anything to stay clinging on.

She coils, glaring venomously, teeth gritted, her hand up high pointing back at him. He reels back shocked.

MAXXE
(screaming)
You think I want this? I hate my life okay! I hate it! All I want to do is challenge myself, get some respect and be entitled to a scrap of privacy! But you don't see that, nobody see's that! I live in a prison and I hate it! I fucking hate it!

She stands seething. He shakes his head disappointed.

CHARLIE CANE
Well it looks like you're getting what you want, you're over, Maxxe, you're done. They might want you back, but I sure as hell don't, and I'll get my way.

She clenches her eyes shut as tears eek through. She crosses to the window and stares down at Hyde Park, the heavy wind rustling the trees.

CHARLIE CANE (O.S.)
Enjoy being a nobody, Maxxe.

The office door slams shut. She jolts into gasping tears.

EXT. LONDON OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Maxxe exits the building and hurries down the street lined with parked cars, sniffing and wiping her eyes.

MALE FAN (O.S.)
(shouting)
Maxxe! Maxxe! She pauses and looks back confused.

The Fan who got taken down in the hotel lobby marches toward her pointing.

MALE FAN
You slag! You fucking slag!

He starts jogging, his red face glaring. She stands frozen and looks around, eyes wild. Nobody around. He looms toward her. She gasps and --

Bolts away from him, her hair blowing back. She clutches her bag, heels clicking.

MALE FAN
Wait there!
She rustles her keys out her bag. The Mini alarm chirps. She throws open the door. Gets in. He's right on top of her. He reaches for the door. She slams it and --

He pulls it part open. She SCREAMS as she clutches at the door desperately.

MAXXE
Just leave me alone!

MALE FAN
I want a fucking word with you!

She smacks the wheel. The horn echoes down the street. He backs away. She slams the door, locks it and searches around for the keys as he glares through the window.

MALE FAN
I want to talk to you!

She finds the keys down the side of her seat, fumbles them into the ignition and cranks. The Mini lurches and stalls. She glances around confused.

The Mini lurches forward again and cuts out. He pounds on the window hard. She looks back terrified.

MALE FAN
(amused)
Where'd you think you're going aye?
Where'd you think you're going?

He braces himself against the Mini and rocks it. She jostles from side to side. Her eyes well with tears. She looks around the dashboard hopelessly and realizes it's in gear. She puts it in neutral, fires it up and --

The Mini screeches out the space and races away up the street, the little engine whining. He watches her dart down a side street.

INT. MINI

Maxxe sits staring ahead, eyes bulging as white stone buildings rushing by. She wipes her eyes and clams down.

MALE FAN (O.S.)
Oi!

She glances round. Male Fan bursts out between cars and sprints down the street behind her, closing in.

She floors it, sits up and peers ahead worried. A lumbering
refuse truck ahead. She shakes her head and --

**EXT. LONDON SIDE STREET**

The Mini peeks down the sides of the refuse truck, lights flashing, not enough room to squeeze by.

**INT. MINI**

She glances in her mirror. He closes in fast, sprinting, head down, right on her. She cringes, hits the brakes hard and ---------------------------------------- THUD.

He squeaks down the rear window.

She sits shaking, staring, the engine idling then --

He LUNGEs to his feet, his face in his hands. She slams the Mini into gear and --

**EXT. LONDON SIDE STREET**

The Mini screeches away, roaring down the street fast.

**INT. PENTHOUSE**

Maxxe and Jordan sit side by side on the sofa. Jordan smoking. Maxxe sitting perched and anxious.

MAXXE
So there's nothing to worry about?

A COMMUNITY OFFICER sits smartly opposite, placing an empty mug carefully on a side table. The Cat sniffs his boots.

COMMUNITY OFFICER
The guys a proper nuisance, he's getting banged up all the time for carrying on like this. Don't you worry, and remember.
(wagging finger)
Technically he crashed into you alright? He just wasn't in a car when he did it.

He smiles and eases up. Maxxe walks him to the front door.

MAXXE
Thanks.
COMMUNITY OFFICER
No problem.

Maxxe shuts the front door and sighs relieved. She picks the Cat up and crosses back to Jordan stroking it. Jordan sits puffing smoke, shaking her head.

JORDAN
Dude this is getting serious.

Maxxe frowns and sits thinking. Jordan watches her worried.

JORDAN
I can't fly back, not with you like this.

MAXXE
Don't be ridiculous, I'm fine.

JORDAN
Then come back with me.

Maxxe smirks and stares out the window at the cloudy sky.

MAXXE
It's ten times worse back home, you know that.

JORDAN
But who'll look out for you?

Maxxe ponders for a few moments and looks back unsure.

MAXXE
Adam?

Jordan winces unconvinced. Maxxe frowns, grabs the Cat's front paws and wiggles them.

MAXXE
Then it will have to be Gwyn. I'll just have to stop trimming your claws won't I?

Maxxe shoots a forced smile. Jordan smile back amused. Maxxe gets up and crosses to the kitchen. Jordan sits worried.

INT. PENTHOUSE - LATER

Maxxe and Jordon cook, pans sizzle, the radio plays. Maxxe's phone rings and she grabs it. Adam calling. She shows it to Jordan. Jordan cringes. She answers it.
**MAXXE**

(into phone)
Hey. I'm fine, you?, I can be, Yeah, Okay, see you then.

**JORDAN**
Urgh, what does he want?

**MAXXE**
He wants to meet up later. (shaking head) Like go for a meal, whatever.

Maxxe paces consumed, chewing her nails.

**JORDAN**
Is he taking you somewhere fancy?

Maxxe nods surely. Jordan frowns.

**JORDAN**
It better not be the old, ditch her in a fancy restaurant so she feels she can't make a fuss trick. (waving spatula) Because, let me tell you, if you never want to go back there again, you can totally cause a scene, oh hell yeah.

Maxxe sighs worried.

**INT. THE WOLSELEY - LATER**

DINERS murmur. Stone walls arch to the ceiling, decorated with black gloss and gold decor, classical music serenades.

Maxxe sits at a table, dressed smart but her nerves showing. She spots Adam entering, dressed like a gent. He crosses to her.

**MAXXE**
Hey.

She stands and smiles. He kisses her on the cheek.

**ADAM**
You look amazing.

**INT. THE WOLSELEY - LATER**

Maxxe and Adam laugh and joke as they eat.
INT. THE WOLSELEY - LATER

A WAITER takes away finished deserts. Adam sips coffee. Maxxe eats his chocolate mint and smiles.

MAXXE
This has been nice. We didn't used to go out enough.

He smiles back awkward.

ADAM
We didn't do a lot of things really did we?

She stares back concerned, toying with the wrapper.

ADAM
I've been thinking about how things were, you know, before. I mean, before before.

He glances around, thumbs his napkin and shakes his head.

ADAM
It isn't going to work, Maxxe, you and me.

He looks her in the eye. Her face sinks.

ADAM
I mean I love you, I really love you to bits.

MAXXE
I love. (choking)
I love you too.

He smiles pleased and wipes a tear from his eye. She struggles a smile back and clutches her neck.

ADAM
And that's why I have to give you the freedom to work this all out.

MAXXE
So you're just going to throw everything we have away?

ADAM
(shaking head)
No I'm turning a page, okay? Starting a new chapter.
MAXXE

With her?

He shrugs and looks back guilty. Her face screws up. She puts her head in her hands, trying to stifle her sobbing.

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT TERMINAL 5 - DAY

Announcements echo down the huge check-in floor. TRAVELERS mill around with luggage. Maxxe and Jordan walk to the security gate, look at each other smiling and hug.

JORDAN
I'll come back as soon as I can, I promise, don't run anybody over while I'm gone, okay?

Maxxe smirks, they release and hold outstretched hands.

JORDAN
Are you sure you're going to be okay?

Maxxe nods surely and looks at the security gate. Traveller's queuing up, loading security trays for SECURITY GUARDS. Some glance up at her. Jordan hugs her tightly. Maxxe cries. Jordan cries.

JORDAN
You sure you're going to be okay getting back to the car on your own?

Maxxe nods defiantly. Jordan makes her way into security.

JORDAN
Remember Lucy's watching over you, smiling, okay? See you soon, thanks for having me.

Maxxe smiles warmly as Jordan strolls backwards.

JORDAN
(calling)
And thanks for teaching me what a twat is.

Maxxe slowly shakes her head smiling. Jordan looks back amused. An unimpressed SECURITY GUARD leads her away.
INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE

Maxxe hurries through the parking garage, wiping her eyes. She tugs out her keys and blips the alarm.

INT. MINI

She slams the door shut and sits clenching her eyes tightly. Tears squeeze through. She jolts, teeth gritted and shakes. She breaks down into her hands sobbing, tears flowing fast.

She howls pained and looks around hopelessly. Saliva clings to her lips, snot runs from her nose. She gasps and sits back, panting hard, her eyes wild and --

She stops and sits shivering, staring into the middle distance thinking. The bright wide band of sunlight framed by the solid concrete walls of the parking garage ahead.

She shoves the keys into the ignition, fires up the engine, slams it into gear and --

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE

The little Mini squeals away, scurrying across the car park, engine buzzing.

INT. MINI

Maxxe stares meanly ahead, cars whipping by. She cuts the wheel and --

INT. HEATHROW AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE

The Mini ducks down the exit ramp, crashes down to the next floor, turns hard, tires screeching and dives down the next ramp.

INT. MINI

Maxxe focuses intense, leaning into the turns, jolting as the Mini bumps down onto each floor.

EXT. M4 MOTORWAY

Traffic bustles down the motorway. The Mini blasts down the outside lane.
INT. MINI

Maxxe revs the engine hard, staring ahead determined. She clips the rev limiter as she snatches the next gear.

EXT. LONDON OFFICE BLOCK

The Mini screams down the street and screeches to a halt outside the office block. Maxxe gets out and marches to the entrance.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY

Soft music plays. The elegant lobby peaceful, decorated with movie advertising and awards. A RECEPTIONIST sits idly behind the desk at a computer.

BANG The receptionist jolts up.

Maxxe crosses through, feet clumping on the marble floor. She goes to pass the desk --

    RECEPTIONIST
    Hey, excuse me, do you have an appointment?

    MAXXE
    (giving her the finger)
    Yeah right here.

    RECEPTIONIST
    Hey you can't go in there!

Maxxe goes to open a door. It's locked. She glares back.

    MAXXE
    Open the door please!

    RECEPTIONIST
    Miss you're going to have to calm down okay or I'll call security.

Maxxe crosses to the desk and stares down shaking.

    RECEPTIONIST
    Okay, I'm going to need your name and see some I.D.

Maxxe stares back dumbfounded.

    MAXXE
    You don't know who I am?
The Receptionist shakes her head worried. Maxxe pats her pockets and looks up and around. She crosses to the reception sofa and climbs up onto it.

RECEPTIONIST
(grabbing phone)
Miss, I'm calling security now.

Maxxe heaves a framed movie poster from the wall, ripping it from its fixings. The Receptionist stares back stunned, phone receiver by ear.

Maxxe struggles the poster over and crashes it down onto the desk. She flicks her hair back, points at the enormous picture of herself over her name and imitates the pose.

The Receptionist stares stunned and hits the door buzzer.

INT. MEETING ROOM

Charlie and a group of EXECUTIVES talk. A knock at the door. They stop and look round. Maxxe in the doorway nervous.

EXECUTIVE
Maxxe? Are you okay?

MAXXE
I have to ask you guys something.

They narrow their eyes intrigued. She points at Charlie.

MAXXE
If you had to choose between him and me, who would it be? Seriously, if you had to choose.

The Executives wince awkward and exchange furtive glances. Charlie sits back shakes his head in disbelief.

CHARLIE CANE
You're unbelievable, un-fucking-believable.

MAXXE
(narrowing eyes)
I wasn't asking you.
(looking round room)
Well?

EXECUTIVE
(laughing nervously)
We can't really answer a question like that, Maxxe. Are you okay? Do
you want to sit down?

CHARLIE CANE
I can answer that question, and you
know what? I will.

EXECUTIVE
Charlie don't-

CHARLIE CANE
No I'll say it. Not one person at
this table would chose you over me,
Maxxe. I've told you before, it's a
long way from where you are to
where I am. Aint that right?

Charlie glances round for support. The Executives look
around the room, refusing to respond, mainly because he
wouldn't like the answer. Charlie tosses his pen down angry.

CHARLIE CANE
Oh you're fucking kidding me!

Charlie throws his head around, wincing with humiliation.

CHARLIE CANE
Fine, fuck it then. You win, Maxxe.
I'll go if that's what you want.

MAXXE
No wait. I don't.

They all look back intrigued. She takes a deep breath.

MAXXE
Another role has come up, it's more
important to me right now.

CHARLIE CANE
Who?

MAXXE
Who do you think?

INT. DRAB CORRIDOR

Maxxe walks solemnly down the corridor alone, her head down.
She glances around and fights tears, smiling conflicted.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY

Maxxe crosses the lobby, passing SECURITY GUARDS trying to
rehang the pulled down movie poster. The Receptionist watches over them and spots Maxxe skulking out.

RECEPTIONIST
Miss, excuse me.

Maxxe looks back over her shoulder.

RECEPTIONIST
Sorry I didn't know who you were.

Maxxe thinks for a moment and smiles back pleased.

MAXXE
Don't be.

Maxxe solemnly crosses to the bright sunlit entrance.

EXT. ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

A tatty old tennis ball bounces across concrete and rolls to a halt by a wall. Jack the Mongrel dashes to it, scampers round and sprints over to Maxxe as she crouches beaming.

She takes the ball and rubs the his head lovingly. Something catches her eye. James walking to the entrance.

MAXXE
James!

He pauses and spots her. He sighs as he frowns and crosses through a gate, looking her up and down.

JAMES
You okay?

She nods.

MAXXE
I wanted to apologize in person.
You know, about the money, I messed up.

He sighs disappointed and shakes his head angry.

JAMES
You don't get it do you? You think that's what bothers me? She winces confused.

JAMES
You bother me.
    (nodding at Dog)
Him I can help. You, I don't know where to start.

He stares at her sympathetic. She reaches into her pocket, slides out an envelope and offers it to him.

MAXXE
I want you to have this.

He takes it from her and studies it concerned.

JAMES
Is this your resignation? You know you can't quit this job right?

She smirks, and looks at him sincerely.

MAXXE
I'm a writer now, so I wrote you something.

He stares back confused. She rubs his arm and leaves.

MAXXE
Look, I gotta go.

She crosses through gate, carefully closes it behind her and smiles back through the bars. They stare for a few moments, she waves to Jack the Mongrel and strolls backward.

MAXXE
Just keep a space free, okay? I may need to move in.

He smiles confused. She crosses to her Mini. He tears open the envelope, peers in and frowns shocked. He snaps round looking for Maxxe and fumbles through gate after her.

JAMES
Maxxe! Maxxe!

The Mini races away. He stares up the road and shakes his head. He looks back at the envelope and smirks to himself.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

Maxxe sits on the sofa, gazing around and rubbing her arms. She grabs her tattered old sneakers and pulls them on.

The Cat nuzzles the balcony door. She picks it up, picks up the small plush dog and lets the Cat sniff it.

She ushers the Cat into a carrier, pops in the dog and
closes the door. The Cat settles and looks out. She picks up her laptop and notebook and stuffs them into a rucksack.

She picks up a picture of Lucy, slides it out the frame and looks at it. She smiles and slips it into her pocket.

She slides the rucksack onto her shoulder, picks up the carrier and crosses to the front door. She looks back at the apartment, empty of all belongings, boxes stacked up.

**EXT. CHELSEA APARTMENTS**

She walks out the building. A gust ruffles her coat and blows back her hair. She winces as she hails a cab.

**INT. LONDON BLACK CAB**

She sits on the back seat gazes out nervously, rubbing her neck. She wiggles her finger at the Cat, playing with it. The cab squeaks to a halt, she takes a deep breath and --

**EXT. PARK LANE**

She steps out. The cab pulls away. She stares ahead scared, the wind rushing around her. The grand white monumental arches and pillars of Queen Elizabeth Gate tower overhead on Hyde Park Corner.

**EXT. HYDE PARK**

TOURISTS snap photos. Huge trees rustle in the breeze. Grass shimmers in the wind. Maxxe walks into the park tentative, drawing up her scarf around her neck.

She passes a COUPLE walking arm. They smile warmly at her. She draws a shy smile back.

Children's voices call. She glances across at KIDS playing with PARENTS. One stops, points at Maxxe and smiles. She smiles back and gives a brief wave. The Kid waves back grinning.

She passes a DOG OWNER. He smiles at her. She smiles back. He spots her Cat and chuckles. She smiles to herself. Maxxe places the carrier on an empty bench, slips off her rucksack and sits down. She gazes up, tweaks her hair out of her face and stares.

A dark window in an office block in the distance.
She gazes around, takes a deep breath and smiles nervously, exactly where she knows she needs to be.

THE END