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BELLBOY

1

Written by

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EXT. LONDON - DAY

Grey winter light, bare trees, mist clings to the air.
COMMUTERS and TOURISTS pours from GREEN PARK station.

JEZ (V.O.)

I love London. And I hate London.
But it's my only way out.

Faces rush past, anonymous, urgent.

JEZ (V.O.)

Every face here's a mask. Crooks
dressed as bankers. Artists
pretending to be rich. The rich
pretending to be artists.

Through the crowd is ABBY (35). Jet-black hair. Sharp
eyeliner. Blood-red lips. Fur coat. Gliding effortlessly.

JEZ (V.O.)

Her? Definitely an escort. Top-
shelf. I can tell. I work at The
Royale Hotel.

Abby checks her Apple Watch, pivots towards PARK LANE.

JEZ (V.O.)

I'm a bellboy there, and it's where
I plan to make my fortune. And then
escape... to Bangkok.

EXT. THE ROYALE - DAY

OUR BELLBOY, JEZ (21). He wrestles a Louis Vuitton trunk onto
his trolley off a black cab. Uniform pristine, wide smile.

JEZ (V.O.)

That's me. Jeremy Roberts.
Professional smiler. It's in the
job description. Smile wide and
pretend you care.

He spots Abby glide into the revolving doors. She doesn't
even glance at him.

JEZ (V.O.)

See? I'm invisible. That's the
armour.

A bark of American vowels cuts across. PETER (60), Armani,
yapping into his iPhone.

CECE (55), his wife, dripping diamonds and nerves, rummaging
in her Birkin.

PETER

Ten million or we walk, Jason.
Christ!

CECE

Where's my Xanax-- oh, thank God.

She pops two, then eyes Jez.

CECE

You. Bellhop.

JEZ (V.O.)

Bellhop. That's a new one.

CECE

Champagne. And tea. Sri Lankan. Not
that Lipton swill.

Peter waves her off.

PETER

Just go, Cece. I'll pay the boy.

She scowls, zeroes in on Jez.

CECE

You stock Molton Brown, right? Not
one of those...

Behind her, WE SEE the glittering lounge, marble staircase,
chandeliers.

CECE

...budget places.

JEZ

(smile, salesman mode)
Only the finest, Madam. Black
Peppercorn. Eucalyptus. Even--

CECE

Good, good. Move it. Park View
Suite. And don't scratch the trunk.

She vanishes inside. Peter peels off cash for the CABBIE, who
groans, clutching his stomach.

CABBIE

Bloody hernia...

Jeremy lifts another suitcase. His smile wavers. Arms
tremble.

JEZ (V.O.)

This is light work. Try six cases,
a Chihuahua, and a Peruvian stick
insect with asthma.

FLASHBACK - NIGHT (A YEAR AGO)

Jeremy, younger, arms full of luggage, Chihuahua yapping, terrarium balanced precariously...

And then he trips. The terrarium SMASHES! Insect motionless. Jeremy's horrified face.

POSH OWNER in tweed, letting out a high-pitched SHRIEK...

BACK TO PRESENT

Jeremy winces at the memory, shakes it off. Forces the smile back on.

JEZ (V.O.)

Point is, always smile. Even if you're one wrong step from crushing a life. Metaphorically. Usually.

He pushes the trolley into The Royale Hotel.

INT. HOTEL LOUNGE - DAY

Roaring 20s glamour (once upon a time). Gilded mirrors, velvet drapes, crystal chandeliers. Luxury overwhelm.

Jez enters. MONTAGE begins.

JEZ (V.O.)

Being a bellboy is 'simple'. You do everything.

ON LUGGAGE

JEZ (V.O.)

Luggage porter. Of course.

AMENITIES

Jez points out the spa to two BOTOXED LADIES. They ignore him, fixated on their phones.

Jez gestures, whilst firmly massaging his neck. They look at him like an oddball.

JEZ (V.O.)

Hotel Tour guide.

WEDDING

GUESTS in tails. Jez lights candles, claps in time to the DJ from the very rear of the dance-floor.

And then he helps a totally pissed BRIDESMAID up off the floor, shepherds her by other drunkards towards the lifts.

JEZ (V.O.)
Events 'co-ordinator'...

CAR PARK / COURTYARD

Jez struggles to direct three cars into too few spaces. Two drivers HONK simultaneously.

One nearly runs over his toes. He leaps backwards and grimaces. But then remembers to smile.

JEZ (V.O.)
Traffic 'co-ordinator'...

MAIL ROOM

Jez sorts a mountain of envelopes, one labelled *CONFIDENTIAL DIVORCE PAPERS*. He double-takes then shoves it into the pile.

JEZ (V.O.)
Postal clerk.

LOBBY

Jez discreetly signals SECURITY to intercept a staggering HOMELESS MAN from stealing an expensive glass.

JEZ (V.O.)
And even security guard.

He wipes sweat off his brow, but then remembers to flash that smile.

SNAP BACK TO PRESENT (LOUNGE)

Jez steadies the trolley, cap askew, smile straining.

At the front desk, LIA (28), Italian, perfect smile, soothes an OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN mid-complaint.

A CONCIERGE beside her, intently listening in.

OLD GENT
I don't want the bloody courtyard
outside. I didn't pay for a view of
pigeons.

Lia's smile never falters. She glances at Jez as if to say 'watch and learn, bellboy'.

JEZ (V.O.)

Giulia Pisa. Champion smiler. Best in London, probably the world. Rumour is her face muscles atrophied. Permanent reflex. She's had zero complaints. Zero.

Jeremy trundles past, humming Mozart's *REQUIEM AETERNAM*.

FITZ (25), short, wiry, a BELLBOY from Glasgow, passes with a tray. They share no words.

JEZ (V.O.)

Fitz doesn't speak. At all, if he can help it. Which, frankly, is the proper way for a servant. Silent, invisible, anonymous.

HENRY (45), the manager, intercepts. Immaculate suit, the air of a pilot, Royal Air Force.

HENRY

Jeremy. Why is your smile cracking? Lack of sleep?

JEZ

No, Sir. Lack of looking miserable.

Henry doesn't laugh.

HENRY

Cut the deranged look. And stop humming. For God's sake.

Jeremy freezes. Smile widens absurdly.

JEZ (V.O.)

Henry. The most sophisticated manager you'll ever meet... with the largest insecurity complex. Giulia swears he keeps a 'smile ratings' card for the staff. She's top of the list. I'm somewhere between Fitz and the janitor.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Henry at his desk. Big office, but crammed with faux-posh clutter. A portrait of the hotel's 1927 grand opening above.

He pecks at a typewriter, bashing out a STAFF WARNING NOTICE.

INSERT FORM. *Employee - Jeremy Roberts. Offence - Caught twice with a grumpy face.*

Henry rips the page free, folds it with military precision, and places it in a folder labelled DISCIPLINE.

INT. GRAND PARK VIEW SUITE - DAY

On the surface, luxury. But UP CLOSE, peeling gilt, stained carpet, rusted window frames.

Cece paces. Peter scrolls on his phone, unfazed.

CECE

Aspirin! Where-- damn you, Peter.
It's in your case!

She claws open a suitcase. Silk blouses explode. Other cases topple. CRASH.

Jez rushes to help. Amid the chaos, a firearm case tumbles open...

Revealing A PEARL-HANDLED PISTOL.

FREEZE FRAME on Jez's face, alarm breaking through the smile.

JEZ (V.O.)

I expected corruption. But not of
the artillery kind.

Peter swoops in, snatches the pistol.

CECE

Why!

PETER

You know I'm licensed.

He shoves it in the large WARDROBE.

PETER

Mike wants to go to the range
later.

JEZ (V.O.)

Note to self. Some guests come with
talons. Often *les américains*.

CECE

Boy. Hopper!

JEZ (V.O.)

Hopper. That's new.

CECE

Room service menu.

Jez produces a leather-bound menu. Cece sniffs it.

CECE

At least it's not one of those
vulgar app menus.

JEZ
Many of our guests prefer to--

CECE
Apps ruin the experience.

She thrusts the menu back.

CECE
Read it. My eyes are tired from
looking at him.

She glares at Peter, who gestures wildly on a phone call.

JEZ
Our oscietra caviar--

CECE
I want wine, you idiot. And why is
there no champagne waiting for us?
Just some crummy cookies. This
isn't a Hilton! There had better be
good lotions.

Peter covers his phone.

PETER
For God's sake, call the bar.

CECE
You call!

PETER
I'm on a call.

She storms to the window, jabs at the rust.

CECE
Two grand a night for rusted
windows. Peter!

He stares at his wife.

CECE
What happened to our Platinum
status?

PETER
(aside to phone)
It's a suite. With a park view.

CECE
There is no bloody park in winter!

Jez's smile tightens.

JEZ (V.O.)

It can be like birdwatching. Keep one's distance. Note peculiar habits.

Cece wolfs down a cookie in one angry bite and circles the room.

JEZ (V.O.)

Category A: neurotic and wealthy. Appetite feral. Plumage trembles when threatened by cheap things. No eagle here, but one can never be too cautious.

CECE

(startling Jez)

Well? Can you do anything besides grin like a serial killer?

JEZ

Oh, I can assure you--

CECE

Red wine!

Jez whips out his notepad.

JEZ

Our finest reds. The Pomerol 2015, notes of blackcurrant--

PETER

(steps into frame)

Your most expensive under a grand.

JEZ

Five hundred, Sir.

PETER

Fine. Six bottles.

CECE

Six? He doesn't need six. Four.

PETER

Six.

CECE

Four!

They glare at each other. Jez scribbles, Cece grabs his pad.

CECE

No. Four!

Shoves it back at him. Jez flicks the nib of his fountain pen and writes 4 *GIRONDE*.

CECE

You can go.

JEZ

You are most welcome.

Jez exits, smile plastered on. Peter hangs up. Frowns.

PETER

Tip him extra.

CECE

What? Why?

PETER

He's less likely to steal your
Regent.

Cece gasps, clutches her necklace. Peter falls onto the bed, chuckling to himself.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

Jez taps his temple, a tic.

JEZ (V.O.)

I grew up in service. My foster
father preached fellowship while I
washed the cups.

FLASHBACK - DAY

A METHODIST CHURCH HALL. Within, a bustling post-service coffee and cake gathering. Parishioners laugh, sip tea.

In the corner, YOUNG JEZ (10), tiny and earnest, sleeves rolled up, scrubs mugs and stacks cake plates high.

His FOSTER FATHER, genial, chatty, stands with a group of men, oblivious.

JEZ (V.O.)

Second nature to serve until I was
wobbly in the knees.

YOUNG JEZ lifts a tower of crockery that nearly topples. A parishioner thanks the father for his 'helpful boy'.

Foster Dad smiles, taking credit. YOUNG JEZ forces the same wide smile we know too well.

BACK TO PRESENT

Jez passes Reception and catches Lia's eye. A micro-expression of despair flashes between them.

Her smile is being tried by a restless MODEL (20s), face-deep in her phone. Model shoves a credit card across the desk.

MODEL

Just like authorise it? Or not? I'm late.

(under her breath)

I can't believe I'm doing another collab shoot.

JEZ (V.O.)

I don't envy Lia. Centrepiece of The Grand Delusion. Good job bellboys are outcasts. Seeing everything. Indeed, as a clandestine messenger is how I think of myself.

Jez hovers by the computer.

JEZ

System overkill?

LIA

Too many credit cards.

JEZ

Ah, too little credit.

MODEL

Excuse me!

Lia's smile returns. Jez flees.

LIA

Madam, you're... 'ShakePay Bitcoin' card isn't accepted by the Celestial Hotels Group. I'm very sorry.

A tongue-tied stare off between them...

INT. BAR - DAY

MATT (MATTHIEU DANIEL BOLAND) (38) a true cocktail technician, precise, joyless, and very handsome.

An actor in another life. Jez approaches, and puts on his Parisian accent.

JEZ

Ça va Matthieu! Quatre bouteilles du raisins de Pomerol, s'il vous plaît. Pour les désespérés de la suite vue grandiose.

(Four bottles of Pomerol, please.

(MORE)

JEZ (CONT'D)
*For those desperate ones in the
grand view suite.)*

Matt hides a grin.

MATT
(cute Gironde accent)
A thousand pounds of wine? Who is
murdering who tonight?

JEZ
(accent dropping)
Nobody. Not yet.

They meet eyes. Matt notices Jez blush slightly.

MATT
Are you OK?

JEZ
Never better.

MATT
Relax.

JEZ
There's a rave in my nervous system
today.

MATT
Dis-moi...

JEZ
Je ne peux pas faire ça. Ou je
devrais perdre ma magnifique tenue.
*(I can't do that. Or I'll lose my
beautiful outfit.)*

MATT
Garder les rêves vivants.
(Keep your dreams alive.)

Matt checks stock.

MATT
And stop running around here like a
headless chicken.

JEZ
OK. Need a spare hand later?

MATT
No.

JEZ
Good. I'm a bit shaky... Did I tell
you about when I tended the wake at
my Uncle's funeral?

MATT

No, but let me guess. You're glad the guests were wearing black, and not white.

FLASHBACK - DAY (THE FUNERAL)

Jez serving behind a stall at the wake of his Uncle's funeral. Most people in black, though some in smart casual.

One girl dressed like a punk but in a white cut top. She comes up to be served. Jez is overwhelmed from all the work.

Pouring pints, pouring bottles from a wine keg. He passes her a too-full wine glass and knocks his elbow on another drink.

They all topple forward over this poor girl, who gasps, in absolute horror. Jez surrenders an apology.

BACK TO PRESENT

JEZ

I'm sure glad I didn't deflower the bride though.

MATT

Maybe see a doctor?

JEZ

No point. I tremble in my being.

MATT

OK, Sartre. Just don't get stuck there.

JEZ

Huh?

MATT

You can change if you really want to.

JEZ

Or just keep moving through the endless labyrinth between heaven and hell.

MATT

Chasseur, tu es à l'esprit mal tourné.
(*Bellboy, you are a mischievous spirit.*)

JEZ

Tu as raison, Monsieur Daniel Boland.

MATT
Just call me Matty, OK. Jezza?

JEZ
Sure.

Jez's hand jerks. A bottle tips. Matt catches it before it falls. Jez gulps.

MATT
Can I trust you to wait here?

Jez nods. Matt goes underground.

Jez's gaze shifts ACROSS THE BAR to where Peter spats with Abby and grips her wrist. She doesn't flinch.

The background noise drops out. Jez's hearing is almost superhuman, as whispers are cut clear to his ears...

PETER
I said 9. You call me at 6? Are you dense.

ABBY
I come here whenever I want.

PETER
Not with me.

ABBY
Not my problem. I can come back tomorrow.

PETER
Stay. Drink.

Peter drops cash on the table. He whispers to Abby.

PETER
It's been a year and I've thought about you every time I have sex.

ABBY
Your poor wife.

PETER
I don't have sex with my wife.

ABBY
Then what are you afraid of?

Abby tries to kiss his cheek. Peter backs away.

PETER
Don't come near me in public or I'll report you to the home office.

ABBY
I'm British.

PETER
A little smile then?

Abby's smile snaps on. Peter turns, catches Jez watching.

PETER
Damn bellboy.

Peter nears. His posture betrays unease.

PETER
Where's my wife's order?

JEZ
Sir, our best mixologist is well on the case.

PETER
I didn't ask for any damned mixologist.

JEZ
My apologies, Sir. *Bartender*. Our finest wines are stored in the cellar. Remarkably, three floors down.

PETER
What floors?

JEZ
(mock American)
Storeys... Sir.

Peter stares ahead. There's a hideous modern painting on the wall, late expressionistic.

JEZ
Admiring the abstract art, Sir?

PETER
(scoffs)
No!

Peter heads for the lifts. Abby watches him go. She senses Jez staring. Turns.

Their eyes lock. Jez cracks, looks away first, coolly back at the art.

JEZ (V.O.)
Fake Picassos. An insult to all the good taste around here...

Abby swigs her drink. Jez gently taps the bar, pensive.

JEZ (V.O.)

Some days I just don't have the patience to be perfect. I feel of *l'esprit mal tourné* persuasion... In all honesty, the dream of escaping to Thailand just won't let me be, and the charm of living out of a suitcase of 50s until the end of my days... No demands. *Rien...*

Matt returns with the loot.

INT. LANDING - DAY

Jez climbs the grand staircase to the first floor. He's drawn in by the melancholy Chopin drifting through the hall.

JOHN (45) hunches over the Steinway in residence. On the lid, an empty tip jar and a few short-stemmed roses.

JEZ (V.O.)

John. Our resident genius. Plays like an angel. To an audience of exactly fuck all, except for me. Usually.

JOHN

Hey pal.

JEZ

Any requests?

John plays a dissonant chord, then stops.

JOHN

Naught.

JEZ

Something more... vivacious?

JOHN

You don't like the requiem for lost souls?

JEZ

No, I love it.

JOHN

Scarlatti?

JEZ

Domenico?

JOHN

Yessir. K. 141.

JEZ
I love that, too.

Jez drops a quid in the jar. The volume shift is admirable, and Jez smiles his true appreciation. A fan of the baroque.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Jez waiting near the lifts. Massages his temples.

A frivolous LADY (70) materialises suddenly (MARGARET FITZWILLIAM). Her mink stole sheds like a haunting spirit.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
Bellboy! I'm hydrating!

JEZ
Beg your pardon--

She thrusts an empty porcelain milk jug at him.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
Do you comprehend that I have a milk crisis?

JEZ (V.O.)
Lady Margaret Fitzwilliam. Silver member. Milk hoarder. And in all likelihood, a smuggler of hotel mini-fridges. Nephew owns the Times.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
My nephew owns the Times, did you know? I've waited three hours!

JEZ
I'm sorry.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
For milk!

JEZ
I do apologise--

LADY FITZWILLIAM
And now I need three jugs, chilled. I can't surely wait another ten hours for a drop of milk!

Jez's smile twitches.

JEZ
Room 212? I'll send up more... milk... immediately. We have the best dairy in all of London.

He scribbles on his notepad.

LADY FITZWILLIAM

Don't placate me. Yesterday they sent Tetra Pak! UHT in The Royale, it's unthinkable, an abomination. God have mercy on this establishment!

JEZ

God have mercy, Madam... Fresh semi-skimmed. Or I'll travel to Dorset myself.

She's mollified. Jez retreats. But then--

LADY FITZWILLIAM

And bring Digestives. Not your lavender-infused biscuit abominations - how base!

JEZ (V.O.)

Gourmet cookies never did impress the English. But Henry refuses to listen.

Henry rounds the corner.

JEZ

Bonjour, Seigneur.

HENRY

Why are you speaking french again? And what on earth are you handling that wine-load for?

JEZ

Grand Park View Suite.

HENRY

Are room service too busy at this hour?

JEZ

Indeed.

Henry knows Jez is fibbing. Lets it go.

HENRY

Assure me that you've stopped speaking french with the guests.

JEZ

I do pledge myself an assurer of the finest RP, Sir.

HENRY

Praise be to that. Now don't leave
me out on a limb.

Henry strides on.

INT. GRAND PARK VIEW SUITE - DAY

Jez enters, at a pant. The air reeks of Chanel No. 5. A
kryptonite for Jez's neurotype.

Cece jabs a finger at the four wine bottles.

CECE

Open. Now. Please. Before I divorce
him and sue this hotel for damages.

Peter stands at the window and attempts to force it open.

PETER

It's sealed.

CECE

We're entombed.

Cece flings a cushion at him.

CECE

Stop touching the windows, you'll
get cancer! Just uncork my wine,
the hopper is hopeless!

Jez fumbles with a corkscrew. His hands tremble, somewhat
pathologically.

The foil finally uncoils. Cece looms into his space.

CECE

In America we have machines for
this.

JEZ

It's just... *artisanal*, Madam.

CECE

It's defective.

Peter abandons the window, jabs at his phone.

PETER

Jason? Yeah. Tell Dubai 10 million
is my final-- What? They want 12?
Fuck! Well, that's good news!

Cece whirls. Kicks a suitcase in excitement.

CECE

They want 12 million? Does that finally mean Claridges?

PETER

(ignoring her)

Of course we'll take 12. Get some Dom Pérignon in that boardroom tomorrow.

Jez stabs the cork awkwardly.

CECE

(turns back to Jez)

Don't Cambridge teach you how to uncork a bottle?

JEZ

Pardon me--

CECE

What did you read? Politics? Philosophy?

JEZ

Not all English boys go to Cambridge.

CECE

Shame. But you are educated?

JEZ

Most certainly. I was educated at the University of Bradford, but I...

Cece is glazed over. Jez extracts the cork, slowly.

PETER

(still on phone)

No, Jason! Not the '99! The '08! Christ, is everyone incompetent?

Cece gestures wildly at Peter.

CECE

Get off the damn phone!

Peter hangs up.

CECE

Are you coming to the Opera tonight? It's Joyce DiDonato. She's singing *Rosenkavalier*!

PETER

No. I can't listen to that screeching.

CECE
Screeching! Take that back, you philistine.

Jez ducks, cork halfway out.

PETER
It is screeching. I'm meeting with Jason.

CECE
You'd trade world-class culture for champagne with your chums. You sad bastard. Lacking a soul.

PETER
If you insist.

POP! The cork rockets past Peter's head, shatters a cheap replica vase. Silence.

Cece snatches the bottle, glugs from it. Wipes her mouth.

CECE
Finally. Now get out.

Jez retreats.

JEZ
I will call for cleaning immediately.

CECE
Tell *room service*... send more vases, not just a replacement one. I want red roses by my bedside. They were in the photo.

JEZ
Of course, Madam. I'll see what I can do.

Jez closes the door behind him.

CECE
See what he can do. Huh. What a disgrace.

Peter collapses on the bed. Cece stares at the windows.

CECE
I HATE THESE WINDOWS!

Jez hears her scream from the corridor. He ponders for a moment, sympathising with her.

JEZ (V.O.)

Poor Cece. She's driven nutty by an adulterous husband. Richard Lewengard. And *who* doesn't like Strauss, especially as sung by Joyce? ... Would it be more merciful if Cece didn't find out about Peter's lechery? No, I doubt it. She deserves to know for certain.

EXT. CAR PARK - NIGHT

Rain slicks expensive hoods in a car park belonging to The Royale. Jez handles a Brioni suit carrier, arms extended.

JEZ (V.O.)

My first rule. Rich people's fabrics bruise easier than their egos. Never fold. Never crease. Especially not when...

Jez looks at the suit's owner, the spitting image of a RUSSIAN MOBSTER.

JEZ (V.O.)

... the owner looks like they might shank you over a wrinkle.

Beside a BMW, Jez counts tonight's tips - all banknotes.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jez, hands in pockets, a tidy smile locked on, stands still.

Except his nose quivers slightly from the smell of floor polish burning his sinuses.

JEZ (V.O.)

My second rule. Never beg. Just stand very still and look... 'vulnerably kind'. Oh, and the dying ones pay best. Morbid, I know.

An ancient BACHELOR (SIR NEVILLE NEWBURY) (84) floats towards him on a cloud of tuberose and decay. And a Savile Row suit.

BACHELOR

(raspy)

The luggage... impeccable, boy...

JEZ

Very welcome, Sir.

BACHELOR

And you're a fine dresser.

JEZ

You speak for yourself, Sir.

The Bachelor presses BANKNOTES into Jez's palm. Jez's smile widens as he pockets them.

BACHELOR

Buy yourself something nice.
Life... it expires faster than
you'd--

A wet cough racks him suddenly, and he shuffles away. Jez stares at his hand, contaminated in mucus from the handover.

Then Grand Park Suite View door bursts open. ABBY slips out and adjusts her coat. She freezes seeing Jez. Eyes lock.

The smile glitches. Jez lunges sideways, directly into a WALL SCONCE, that doesn't explode.

JEZ

Thank God.

Abby stares at Jez. He brushes an angsty palm back through his slick hair. She passes by.

ABBY

Hiding from something?

Jez shakes his head, then follows. They arrive at the lift.

INT. LIFT - NIGHT

They enter. Jez stabs the GROUND button. The lift shudders. Abby watches herself in the mirror.

Jez gets a whiff of her jasmine perfume and something chemical, covers his nose.

ABBY

You smell.

JEZ

Sorry. I'm hyper-sensitive to
perfumes. Please don't take it
personally.

ABBY

Take what personally?

Jez registers her height. She towers in six-inch stilettos.

JEZ

You look gorgeous.

ABBY
What's it to you, bellboy?

JEZ
Just a nod of appreciation. But perhaps a little less perfume next time.

Abby scoffs. Then her phone BUZZES.

ABBY
(into phone)
Yeah. Tell him double or nothing. No discounts...
(cracks slightly)
That's not my problem!
(she hangs up, eyes on Jez)
Problem?

JEZ
No, Madam. I was just hoping that you are having a pleasant stay.

ABBY
Cut the crap. You know who I am.

JEZ
(swallows)
It's possible that I may have--

DING. Abby strides out, flustered. A PURPLE CARD flutters from her pocket. Jez snatches it from the floor.

CLOSE ON CARD: *PURPLE VINE ESCORTS - DISCRETION GUARANTEED*. A lipstick smear design stains the cover.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Giulia is zombified. Jez walks up to her desk.

JEZ
Can I get you a drink?

GIULIA
With what card?

JEZ
Tips.

He splays some cash.

GIULIA
It's not fair.

JEZ
I'm going to tip you.

GIULIA

Go on then.

Jez gifts her a fiver.

GIULIA

Really? That's so sweet. *Grazie mille.*

They share a real smile. Jez exits towards the bar.

GIULIA

Wait... is Henry off duty?

JEZ

Most certainly is.

Giulia lights up.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Giulia drinks a scotch, listening to Jez and Matt debating over the bar.

JEZ

But my Mum got a divorce, and I'm glad for it. My Dad's a gypsy.

MATT

So you're saying if she hadn't found out about your Dad sleeping around they'd still be together?

JEZ

And totally miserable, precisely.

MATT

What do you think, Giulia?

She sits up. Backtracks the conversation--

GIULIA

I think Jez's right to snitch. But...

MATT

Toeing the line.

GIULIA

Only if he doesn't--

MATT

Make a complete fool of himself.

GIULIA

(nodding)

Si!

Matt sighs. Drinks up.

JEZ

And if I do make a total moron of myself? What's the worst that could happen?

MATT

You get fired and end up living in your Dad's caravan. And your dreams of Thailand buried in the sand.

JEZ

Touché, mon ami.

GIULIA

(to Jez)

Madonna. Sei divertente, fattorino.
(*You're funny, bellboy.*)

JEZ

(exaggerated Italian
accent)

Fattorino, si, mio!

Giulia laughs. Then, in a coquettish manner, a WOMAN'S VOICE O.S. shrieks.

Jez turns and sees Peter engaged in chatter with a CURVACEOUS WOMAN at table.

She pushes his hand away from her butt, that he surely hath just slapped.

JEZ (V.O.)

I have no idea how a man can be so 'hungry'. They say money corrupts. Not me. No. I still believe that money buys freedom. Total freedom...

Peter buys the woman another round. He rests his bankcard on the bar, distracted by her.

Jez glances over with his razor-sharp vision. He reads the digits on the card, a mental note.

EXT. PARK LANE - NIGHT

Jez emerges from work. His own jacket, Oxford shirt, long scarf, wearing an upper middle-class fantasy.

He doesn't break stride, as he passes a TOURIST vomiting into a £5000 Birkin.

A HONEYMOON COUPLE scream at each other in Romanian.

JEZ (V.O.)

Midnight in Tourist-land. All the masks come off and shame burns bright. But I hardly have time to stop and observe. Because tomorrow I must do it all over again, at the *Royale*.

Now Jez does stop. He stares at the purple escort card.

Pulls out his phone. Photographs the card, then returns it to his pocket.

EXT. GREEN PARK STATION - NIGHT

Jez descends into the tube's yellow-lit throat. A POLICE SIREN wails past overhead.

NIGHT TURNS TO DAY OVER LONDON'S WEST END

EXT. HYDE PARK CORNER - DAY

Jez exits the station on his way to work.

JEZ (V.O.)

Green Park station is closer than Hyde Park Corner. But I like to walk past the *Wellington Arch*. I'm not a patriot, but what a day that must have been - 25,000 french dead and wounded, Napoleon defeated.

Jez stands beside the arch and looks up.

JEZ (V.O.)

They even built a bronze four-horsed Chariot of War for thousands of tourists to flock to every year in awe of the fallen.

WE SEE THE ANGEL OF PEACE and her minions.

JEREMY (V.O.)

The Angel of Peace descends upon her terror stricken equines. I see her more as the Angel of Death, not Peace. People find destruction more stimulating. Or sensuous even. Somewhat perturbing...

Jez ducks out the way of TOURISTS taking selfies. Desperately trying to capture themselves in-frame with the statue.

EXT. THE ROYALE - DAY

Justin blocks Zombie Model's path as she tries to bolt toward an Uber. Her designer sunglasses hang crooked.

JUSTIN

House car policy, Miss DuPont. You must have accepted the Ts & Cs?

ZOMBIE MODEL

Move!

Justin's gloved hand taps the Uber's window. UBER DRIVER does not want any trouble.

A single look at the model and he speeds off. She looks up from her phone, outraged.

MODEL

Do you have any idea how this is going to affect my rating!

JUSTIN

I can assure you of a better experience with us, Miss.

She hurls her red suitcase at his feet. It bursts open, spills sex toys, protein bars, lingerie, a mess.

Justin repacks it. She fights him off. Jez arrives.

JEZ

Morning Justin.

JUSTIN

Morning, Jez.

JEZ

Trouble in paradise?

JUSTIN

Aye.

Justin hands the Model a claim ticket for her ride, free of charge. She gapes at it and groans frustratedly.

JUSTIN

Your vehicle arrives at 10 a.m., Miss. As per your request, and clause 7b.

Jez enters the hotel.

INT. STAFF CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Jez changes amid locker photos: wedding shots, backpacking adventures, a group staff photo at a dull bowling alley.

Jez studies himself in a cracked mirror. Pulls his wide smile on and off, discontented by what life's become.

JEZ (V.O.)

Mischief is decidedly a matter of survival. Dad's caravan, my box-room in Acton, or Thai beach chalets? ... Morality is a luxury I can't afford.

He pops a beta-blocker dry.

INT. LANDING - DAY

John has resorted to *Fly Me to the Moon*. Jez passes. The tip jar holds a single rotting orange peel.

JEZ

Morning, John.

JOHN

Morning, Laddy. I hope you're not stirring things up. Save some for the rest of us.

Jez's stride hitches.

JEZ

Pardon me?

JOHN

Last night Matt told me about the moral crusade.

JEZ

I know of no such medieval thing. I'm just trying to keep order in this hotel.

JOHN

There is no order in the universe, Laddy, least of all this please. Except for music. And a woman's orgasm, of course.

Jez pulls a face.

JEZ

Who left their orange peel in your tip jar?

JOHN

It's mine. The scent helps keep me sane.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The Ancient Bachelor in a silk robe opens his door sipping a tea. Jez exits the room.

BACHELOR
Perfect job with the delivery,
Sirrah.

JEZ
Perfectly welcome, Monsieur.

Bachelor presses a £10 note into Jez's palm, then watches him go. Cece's voice shatters the quiet in the corridor.

CECE
Harrods is gauche! It's where all
the oil princes go.

PETER
They can't be avoided. We're in
London.

Peter strides towards the lifts, Cece in pursuit waving some pamphlet at him.

CECE
Fortnum & Mason's is the only place
for the best pork pies.

Jez's eye twitches. The couple spot him.

CECE
Bell-hopper!

PETER
He's a damn bellboy.

JEZ
I am fine by nicknames, Madam...
(turning to Peter)
Good Sir.

CECE
Bellboy. Settle this! Fortnum's or
Harrods?

His French slips out again.

JEZ
Pour les palais distingués, Madame?
(*For distinguished palates, Madam?*)

PETER
Did I book a hotel in bloody Paris?
Why are you speaking that slimy
language.

JEZ
Apologies, Sir. A slip of the
tongue.

(to Cece)
You wish for Pork pies?

CECE
Yes!

JEZ
Très bien.

Jez's hands flutter at his sides, a nervous stim.

PETER
Cece, it's not Kosher! My
grandmother--

CECE
Your grandmother haunted delis in
Manhattan for pastrami! And she
wasn't Jewish. Not with a surname
like Disney.

PETER
My family were Jews from Normandy,
originally.

CECE
I will eat pig. Call me a civilised
heathen if you have to!
(to Jez)
Which store?

JEZ
Fortnum's.

Cece yanks a tissue from her sleeve, blows her nose
violently. Shoves the damp ball into her handbag.

JEZ
Champagne for this evening?

Peter claps Jez's shoulder.

PETER
Get lost.

The lift DINGS. Cece and Peter enter. The doors close on her
dead-eyed stare, and his rictus grin.

JEZ
(gulping)
And fresh towels...? Or how about a
memento mori?

Henry appears behind him, arms crossed.

HENRY
What kind of memento mori exactly?

JEZ
(startled)
Perhaps... a miniature skull?

Henry knits his brow. Not amused. Jez smiles his best.

HENRY
Fitz is taking over Grand View
duties.

JEZ
Why? They're just starting to like
me.

HENRY
Precisely.

Jez stings.

INT. LANDING - DAY

Jez descends the staircase, tapping on the banister.

JEZ (V.O.)
Help Cece and profit from her at
the same time? There's no harm in
that, is there? Kill two birds with
one stone, or three, as Dad once
said.

INT. STAFF CHANGING ROOM - DAY

Jez pulls out his phone, agitated. Navigates to Purple Vine
and opens the escort booking page.

He types: *ABBY - 9PM. PETER LEWENGARD.*

His thumb hovers over CONFIRM. He massages his temples. He
CLICKS it.

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

Jez paces, the card crumpled in his sticky palms. He dials.
Put on hold. He stims with a coin: flip, catch, flip, catch.

JEZ
(into phone, simulating
Peter's voice with
relative ease)
Purple Vine? Yes. The Lithuanian
Valkyrie? ... Abby? Marvellous
cheekbones. Yes, that's her ...
(MORE)

JEZ (CONT'D)

No, not a client. I'm her
clergyman. She requested last rites
at 9:30.

Jez hears a laugh on the line and joins in. The charm worked.

CUT TO THE PIMP'S BEDROOM IN A TOWER BLOCK OF FLATS

It's a DUDE with long hair at his desk with 3 monitors. A
tech geek who is bored stiff by life, living in a total mess.

DUDE

(mumbling into the phone)
Peter Lewengard... Suite 712...

CUT BACK TO JEZ

The coin FLIES from his unsteady hand. He scrambles after it.

JEZ

How much? Ten grand? Jesus wept!
For that you'd want me
assassinated! It's two or no deal.
Don't mess me around.

A FERRARI ROARS into the car park.

Jez ducks behind a Bentley. Through the windshield WE SEE A
YOUNG COUPLE mid-atomic fight.

JEZ

(whispering harshly)
Fine. Five! Yes, put it on the
card. It's ending 6651. No
callback. I'm busy with exorcisms
all day long.

He hangs up. Wipes sweat with the card.

YOUNG WOMAN

(storming out)
Fifty QUID? To PARK? This is
FASCISM!

Her partner tries to hug her. She elbows him in the ribs.

YOUNG MAN

(wheezing)
Darling, no swearing... vacation
rules...

YOUNG WOMAN

EAT MY ENTIRE ASS, BEN! That's not
even swearing!

Jez materialises beside the Ferrari, smile dialled up.

JEZ

Welcome to the Imperial Royale. May
I assist with your luggage?

The Woman glares at the parking sign like it shot her puppy.

YOUNG WOMAN

Who the fuck designed this
extortion?

(looks Jez up and down)

You? Figures. You look like a
parking fine incarnate.

Ben opens the trunk. A whole host of luxury goods in shopping
bags neatly arranged. Jez doesn't blink.

YOUNG MAN

She's hangry. We drove from
Stonehenge. The druids were... a
little anticlimactic.

Jez lifts luggage, nodding.

JEZ

Stonehenge? Lovely. I take it then
that you did not sacrifice
anything?

YOUNG MAN

Not besides our sanity.

Jez laughs with the guest. The Woman storms off. He presses a
£50 note into Jez's hand.

YOUNG MAN

Another 50 if you can make her
happy. No, make it 100.

Jez pockets the bribe. His smile ignites.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Chaos: champagne corks pop, a baby wails, Giulia's smile
starts to falter. Jez approaches, wringing his hands raw.

GIULIA

(through teeth)

If you ask about the Lewengards
again, I'll have you audited.

JEZ

Who? No! I just... locked my
trolley in 712. With Mr.
Lewengard's... dreaded novelty bow
tie?

Giulia doesn't look up. An ANCIENT DAME (90) inches through revolving doors at glacial speed.

Behind her, Fitz carries a TAXIDERMIED PEACOCK. He locks eyes with Jez and makes subtle gun-to-head gesture.

Giulia forces a smile at Jez.

GIULIA

Rimy has keys. And Henry has security footage of you lingering outside the Park View Suite this morning. Move.

Jez backs away. Fitz mouths something unintelligible to him as the Dame shoulder nudges her bellboy for attention.

INT. LANDING STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

John plays a funeral dirge. The orange peel is now rotting.

JOHN

Heard you booked the Valkyrie.
Bold. Stupid. But bold.

Jez double-takes. How does everyone know?

JEZ

Sonic Tony stealing your crowd tonight? Maybe try... jazz hands?

John slams a discordant chord. Jez winces.

JOHN

They prefer Tony's antics to escape from their existential despair. While I play for...
(gestures at empty lounge)
...the integrity of the banisters.

ABBY strides past. 45 minutes early to Jez's mind. Her stilettos strike marble like gunshots.

JOHN

(lowering voice)
She's the one. Run, laddy. I'll set the mood with some Chopin.

Suddenly Lady Fitzwilliam materialises, dragging a hotel laundry cart overflowing with MILK JUGS.

She blocks Abby's path.

LADY FITZWILLIAM

YOU! Are you room service? Where's my semi-skimmed?
(MORE)

LADY FITZWILLIAM (CONT'D)
I've calibrated the fridges to 3.8
degrees precisely!

ABBY
(trying to pass)
I don't work here.

Lady Fitzwilliam SNIFFS Abby's coat.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
You smell just like that harlot who
stole my husband in '78!
Management! I demand management!

Abby shoves past. Lady Fitzwilliam turns on Jez, milk
sloshing from her cart.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
This place is turning into a
BROTHEL! I want the Times! And
lactose-free biscuits! And why not
the Archbishop!

Jez's smile glitches. His eye twitches in triple-time. Her
cares not for this mad woman.

Abby enters the lift. Jez takes the stairs three at a time,
their race framed by John's deliberately chequered Chopin.

INT. GRAND SUITE - NIGHT

Jez frantically rearranges Cece's discarded lingerie on the
sofa as the door clicks open. Abby enters, scanning the room.

ABBY
Where's Peter?

JEZ
(pouring flat champagne)
Running late! Champagne? It's...
aerated a little.

Abby eyes the glass like it contains cyanide. Jez's hands
tremble, liquid sloshes on Cece's fur stole.

ABBY
I don't drink with strangers.
Especially not sweaty young
bellboys.

JEZ
(stimming with his tie)
I'm Jez! I booked you... as a
surprise for Peter! Because he's
such a valued guest and I know
you're his favourite and--

ABBY

Bullshit. Peter books through his lawyer. Who are you really? Pimp, pervert, or Paparazzi?

She steps closer. Jez retreats into the sofa, cornered.

JEZ (V.O.)

Words evaporated. My brain short-circuited like a dodgy lift. All I could think: she smells like jasmine and gunpowder.

ABBY

Last chance. Why am I here?

Jez blurts, accent slipping into Yorkshire:

JEZ

To blackmail him with me. Fifty-fifty split. He's cheating on his wife!

Silence. Abby stares. Then bursts out laughing.

ABBY

You? Blackmail? Sweet Christ. Who cares about the cunt wives of rich bastards?

Jez flinches at the foul language.

JEZ

Cece deserves to know! She's an opera lover. She loves culture. Not... not whatever this is!

He gestures vaguely at Abby. Bad move.

ABBY

(steely calm)

What am I? A plastic fuck doll? I pay my mum's rent. I study theology at Birkbeck.

JEZ

Really?

ABBY

Interfaith dialogue.

JEZ

Christ alive.

ABBY

This? This is just a gig.

She picks up Cece's discarded Xanax bottle, shakes it. Empty.

ABBY
 You think truth helps her anyway?
 Look at her. She's one dime away
 from swallowing glass.

Jez opens his mouth, but keys turn in the lock. They freeze.

PETER (O.S.)
 (tipsy)
 ... best damn production of *Cats*
 I've ever seen!

CECE (O.S.)
 Cats? Peter! You really are drunk!

Jez lunges, grabs Abby's wrist. She nearly breaks his nose
 with her elbow.

ABBY
 Don't fucking touch me!

JEZ
 Wardrobe!

Her eyes flash, but she allows herself to be shoved towards
 the massive walk-in.

Jez trips on a throw rug, face-planting into her back.

ABBY
 (through gritted teeth)
 If you grope me again, I'll remove
 your jaw.

INT. WARDROBE - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black. Silhouetted by slats of light. Jez PUFFS on his
 asthma inhaler. Abby's perfume mixes with mothball stench.

ABBY
 (whisper)
 You're hyperventilating on my neck.

JEZ
 Sorry. Demons. They love confined
 spaces.

Cece dumps shopping bags outside. A Manolo Blahnik box cracks
 against the wardrobe door.

CECE (O.S.)
 Harrods pork pies were a
 disappointment. You know I wanted
 Fortnum's!

PETER (O.S.)
 You said 'Harrods'! I recorded it!

CECE (O.S.)
I said 'hate Rod's'! My first
husband! God, you're useless!

Jez shifts. His belt buckle snags Abby's dress. Fabric RIPS.

ABBY
£2000 dress. You just bought half.

JEZ (V.O.)
Her breast pressed against my arm.
I prayed to a God I don't believe
in: please let Peter spontaneously
combust.

Cece leans against the wardrobe. The doors creak.

CECE (O.S.)
Do I look pretty tonight? Or just
'fine'?

PETER (O.S.)
For Christ's sake, Cece...

CECE (O.S.)
ANSWER ME!

Jez flinches at the volume. His arm prods Abby's ribs. She
bites her lip to stifle a yelp.

PETER (O.S.)
You look expensive. Like always.

CECE (O.S.)
Expensive? I look expensive? I
might as well be a fucking lamp
then!

A pill bottle shatters against the wall. Cece storms into the
bathroom. SLAM. Peter sighs, picks up the champagne glass.

PETER
(sniffs)
Who opened this? That weird bellboy
I expect.

Cece emerges, eyes wild.

CECE
Why? Planning to accuse me of
fucking the help now?

ABBY
(whisper to Jez)
He's escalating. Classic cheater
playbook.

Jez nods, but she can't see him. His forehead bumps hers.

ABBY
Christ! Are you seizing?

JEZ
Just... nodding.

PETER
I know someone was here! It smells
like that...

Cece stops in her tracks. Jez feels Abby tense.

CECE
(quietly)
What, who... Peter?

He realises his mistake. Backpedals.

PETER
No one! Figure of speech!

Cece grabs her clutch. Jez spots the pearl-handled gun inside
as she passes the wardrobe.

CECE
I need air. Before I do something
biblical.

She exits. Peter pours champagne with shaking hands. Spills
on his shirt.

ABBY
Now. I'll say he booked me. You
stay hidden.

JEZ
No. Extort him. Ten grand. Tell
him... tell him Big Manny sent you!

ABBY
Who the fuck is Manny?

JEZ
My foster dad's Doberman! Just say
it!

Abby shoves the door open. Jez sneezes violently, a dry,
wheezing sound. He pulls the wardrobe shut after Abby.

PETER
(jumping)
Abby?! What the---

ABBY
You booked me. Big Manny...
confirmed.

Peter stares, champagne dripping down his wrist. Then the bathroom door bursts open. Cece didn't leave after all.

She takes in the scene. Abby by the sofa, Peter soaked in champagne, Jez half-crawling from the wardrobe.

CECE
(icy calm)
Manny? Your Frankfurt secretary has
a pimp?

PETER
No! It's a set-up!

Cece pulls out the pearl-handled gun. Clicks off the safety.

CECE
Everyone. Out. Now.

Abby coolly collects her coat. Peter opens his mouth, but Cece aims the gun at his crotch.

CECE
You stay, darling. We're
redecorating.

The door slams. But Abby decides not to leave.

CECE
(raging through tears)
Tissues! Where are my-- OH GOD NOT
AGAIN!

Abby steps in. She retains her confident smile, but it's pitying. A look reserved for doomed men.

PETER
(positioning himself
between the two women)
Wrong room! Total stranger!

CECE
You lying cockroach. I know that
perfume. Chanel No.5, and the
stench of despair. Same as yours in
Frankfurt.

She LAUNCHES a tissue box at Peter's head. He ducks. It explodes against Abby's shoulder, a cloud of lint.

ABBY
(calmly brushing off)
Madam, let me assure you--

CECE
DON'T SPEAK! He's using you!
(to Peter, trembling)
(MORE)

CECE (CONT'D)

Thirty years I have counted your
lies! This time I'll—

Peter lunges and intercepts, wrestling her away as the gun
clatters to the floor. It slides under the sofa.

ABBY

(backing towards the door)
Payment's cleared. I'll email the
receipt.

Cece breaks free. She SPITS at Peter.

CECE

Keep your whore! I hope she gives
you the clap you deserve!

She flees. Peter slumps. Abby unbuttons her coat, unshaken.

ABBY

The fee was five thousand.

Peter checks his banking app. Pales.

PETER

FIVE GRAND? Last night was two!
Where's the loyalty discount?

ABBY

Inflation. I should charge you
hazard pay. Your wife was armed.

Abby drops her coat and reveals her silk dress. She whispers
seductively to Peter.

His anger evaporates. He touches her bare shoulder.

PETER

Just... tell me I'm your favourite.

Jez watches all this through the slats. He desperately needs
fresh air.

JEZ (V.O.)

Lesson: never bet on human decency.
Husbands choose sex. Escorts choose
survival. And bellboys? We don't
normally choose anything, and I'm
beginning to understand why...

Peter pulls Abby onto the bed. Jez covers his eyes, then
peeks through fingers.

JEZ (V.O.)

Though objectively... she has
magnificent--

Abby's heel kicks the wardrobe door. Jez jumps.

He tumbles out, uniform askew. Peter leaps up, naked from the waist down.

PETER
YOU! How long--

JEZ
(snapping to attention)
Champagne delivery! And... No moths
in the wardrobe! All complimentary!

He gestures at the half-empty bottle. Abby covers herself with a pillow, shielding her amusement.

PETER
GET OUT! BEFORE I CALL THE COPS!

Jez backs towards the door. Hears Cece SCREAMING IN THE CORRIDOR. Stops.

JEZ
Sir... your wife. She may be in
some distress....

Peter's face goes slack. He scrambles for pants. Abby catches Jez's eye. A faint shadow of respect.

INT. LOUNGE STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Cece sways over the banisters.

She doesn't jump. But she does perform a deranged ballet along the banister, wailing an off-key aria.

Below, DOORMEN form a safety net with a Persian rug.

CECE
(singing)
ROBERT! WHERE'S MY ROBERT?!

Giulia watches stone-faced. Fitz crosses himself. Jez arrives as Cece PRETENDS to lose balance.

The crowd GASPS. She laughs hysterically.

JEZ (V.O.)
Performance art. Zero stars. Would
not recommend. It's a cultural con.

Cece spots Peter rushing down the stairs. Her face twists.

CECE
YOU! YOU RUINED EVERYTHING!

She hurls herself down the staircase, not jumping, but slide-tumbling onto the marble below.

Doormen dive. She somehow rolls past them.

CECE
OUT OF MY WAY! I NEED AIR!

She bolts towards the basement doors. Peter gives chase.

INT. VICTORIAN CHAMBER - NIGHT

Candlelight flickers on SONIC TONY's sequined cape.

He holds a glass of milk aloft before a rapt audience, including Lady Fitzwilliam front-row centre.

TONY
Observe. The nectar of life. Soon
to become... the fabric of dreams!

He gestures dramatically. Cece BURSTS through the doors, hair wild, one shoe missing.

CECE
ROBERT! MY LOVE!

She tackles Tony. The milk soars, arcing directly into Lady Fitzwilliam's open mouth.

Gasp-choke-sputter!

LADY FITZWILLIAM
(standing and dripping)
MY GOD! THAT WAS... UHT. I TASTE
THE UHT!

Tony struggles as Cece kisses him violently. His wig slips, revealing a bald head.

TONY
Bloody hell. Security!

Doormen grab Cece. She sobs, clawing at Tony's face.

CECE
Robert... why won't you sing to me
anymore?

Lady Fitzwilliam marches onstage, shaking milk from her fur.

LADY FITZWILLIAM
(furious)
This 'magician' is a fraud! And I
bet you that milk was stored at 5
degrees! I demand--

TONY
(snatching his wig back)
Full fat organic, from Dorset!

LADY FITZWILLIAM

The viscosity of liars! And the unfathomable aftertaste! You... common scum!

She upends Tony's 'milk urn'. Gallons flood the stage, disclosing EMPTY UHT CARTONS. The crowd BOOS.

Tony slips in the spill. Falls into the disused fireplace, ASS FIRST, bumping into a stolen mini-fridge on his way down.

A SPARK FLIES. Lights FLICKER. Henry rushes in, appraising the damage. Cece restrained, Tony wedged in fireplace.

Lady Fitzwilliam waving UHT evidence like a prosecutor before passing out. He rushes over to catch her but is too late.

Then turns to the crowd.

HENRY

(icy calm)

Everyone... complimentary chamomile tea, and many other herbal offerings. If you please.

His eye lands on Jez in the doorway, still holding his smile.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jez carefully manoeuvres luggage. Henry's polite as ever.

HENRY

Our deepest apologies for the... theatricality.

PETER

(avoiding eye contact)

We overstayed our welcome. Literally.

Cece sways, doped to the gills. Her clutch hangs open. No gun. Jez notes this with relief.

CECE

(slurring)

Claridge's has... bigger windows...

PETER

(shoving her onwards)

We'll upgrade to Siberia if necessary!

Henry blocks their path, oozing faux concern.

HENRY

Our on-site medical specialists specialise in... all sorts of--

PETER

Don't be concerned. She has her
Xanax and Chardonnay. Now, move.

EXT. PARK LANE - CONTINUOUS

Jez loads the last suitcase into the cab. It clinks. The
Cabbie groans, rubbing his hernia. He winds down his window.

CABBIE

This lot heading to rehab or
divorce court?

HENRY

Simon. That's not funny.

Peter slams the passenger door.

PETER

Drive!

As the cab pulls away, Cece presses her face to the window.
She mouths after Robert still.

Henry appears beside Jez. Rain slicks his pilot-cap brim.

HENRY

Never seen a meltdown quite so...
operatic. You seem unscathed. Odd.

JEZ

(smile tightening)
Bellboys are shockproof, sir.

Henry's finger taps Jez's name tag. A threat.

HENRY

Morning shift tomorrow? No? Good.
Sleep with one eye open. Reviews
like this...

(he taps a bulky object in
his inside pocket)

...tend to have collateral damage.

He walks off. Jez's hands shake.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jez flees upstairs.

INT. GRAND SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Jez slams the door. Leans against it, gasping. He bolts the
window. The rusted latch cuts his finger.

ABBY
 (voice from darkness)
 Shockproof?

She emerges from the bathroom, reapplying eyeliner in a shattered mirror. Her laugh is startlingly genuine.

ABBY
 You look like they ran you through
 a spin cycle.

JEZ
 You... are still here. Do you have
 the gun?

ABBY
 No. It's obviously just a kinky
 prop.

Abby snaps her compact shut. Tosses Jez a wad of £50 notes.

ABBY
 A few grand. Your cut, plus my
 sympathetic hazard bonus.

Jez stares. The bills smell like her jasmine perfume.

JEZ
 But... the blackmail failed.
 Spectacularly.

ABBY
 Peter panic-transferred before Cece
 pulled the gun. That's initiative.
 (grins)
 Also, this has been the funniest
 shit I've seen since College.

She peels off her dress. Jez freezes out of panic.

ABBY
 Your move, bellboy.

She reclines on the bed. The moment stretches. Jez's eye twitches triple-time again.

JEZ
 Hypothetically... if one were to
 engage services... is gonorrhoea
 included or an add-on?

Abby sits up, incredulous.

ABBY
 Are you... serious?
 (cools off and plays
 along)
 (MORE)

ABBY (CONT'D)
 STI packages will cost you top
 dollar.

JEZ
 (blurting)
 Joking! Of course. I'm gay. Also
 possibly germaphobic...

Abby snorts, but is also full of unexpected laughter.

ABBY
 Jesus. And here I thought you were
 just bad at blackmail, not a
 complete loser.

JEZ
 You are very welcome.

She stands, reassembling her armour: coat, stilettos, and the
 money composure of sex on ice.

ABBY
 Tell you what. Next scheme? If you
 fancy your wallet.

JEZ
 You mean...?

She passes him a card - not Purple Vine, but her personal
 one.

ABIGAIL SHAH Theology Dept, Birkbeck

ABBY
 I'm in on Tuesdays.

She winks and leaves. Jez exhales for what feels like the
 first time in an age.

Picks up Cece's abandoned champagne glass. Toasts the rusted
 window and knocks back the alcohol.

EXT. GREEN PARK STATION - NIGHT

Jez descends into the tube's yellow throat. Rain blurs the
 Purple Vine card as he drops it down a drain.

JEZ (V.O.)
 Disaster averted. Job intact. And a
 hell of a lot richer. Still...
 (beat)
 ...why do I feel so dreadful? If
 she thinks I'm going to be her
 partner in crime, then...

He checks Abigail's card. The train rumbles ahead.

JEZ (V.O.)
She may just be a lot smarter than
I am.

EXT. IMPERIAL ROYALE CAR PARK - NEXT DAY

The Stonehenge Couple's Ferrari idles. The Man loads bags whilst the Woman shoves sunglasses over puffy eyes.

YOUNG WOMAN
(tossing Jez an envelope)
For yesterday. My apologies.

Inside: £200 and a photo of their pets. Jez pockets it.

YOUNG MAN
(to Jez)
She cried all night, and then
agreed to book couples therapy.
Amazing progress.

The car peels out. Jez counts his cash. Henry watches from a top-floor window.

He holds Cece's gun his palm.

Jez spots Henry. His smile doesn't falter this time. He winks up at his boss even.

WE FREEZE FRAME ON JEZ'S DEFIANT GRIN.

JEZ (V.O.)
Still. Thai beaches aren't going to
fund themselves.