

31. 12. 2025

QUEENS

1

Written by

Charlie Bury

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASH FORWARD)

SPELLBOUND by Siouxsie and the Banshees blasts at high volume.

Explosive energy. The picture swaying to the beat.

Two girls - ROSIE (15) and MONI (16) - are THRASHING around a small, messy bedroom.

It is a tornado of dishevelled books, food, tights, velvet, and, to be frank, a lot of skin and sweat.

They have bad hair, and worse rhythm - but total, ecstatic abandon. THEY SCREAM THE LYRICS AT EACH OTHER.

They collapse onto a narrow bed, lungs burning, flushed, giggling. The electric buzz of the music fades.

Leaving only the sound of their heavy breathing. As they look at each other. The laughter dies down. A shift in gravity.

As they lean into each other and fall into a KISS. Of course it may appear clumsy and desperate, but it is perfect.

ROSIE (V.O.)

They say the word *passion* comes from the Latin *passio*. Suffering. Enduring...

FREEZE FRAME ON THE KISS.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Which may explain why my first kiss felt like a car crash I never wanted to walk away from.

EXT. QUEENS COLLEGE - DAY

High up and sweeping over the lush, emerald English valley.

And rising from the mist like a stone leviathan is QUEENS COLLEGE. It is Gothic, Victorian, and imposing.

Gargoyles leer from the eaves. It looks less like a school and more a castle made to keep dragons out and virgins in.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Welcome to Queens College. A prestigious holding pen for the daughters of the vaguely aristocratic and the emotionally distant. £40,000 a year to learn how to repress your emotions and repress your hemlines.

INT. STUDY HALL - NIGHT

Silence. The hum of a radiator. A long row of girls in uniform are bent over 'Prep'.

It is a sea of highlighters, rulers, pencil cases emblazoned with quotes like 'She Believed She Could So She Did'.

Rosie sits in the middle. She is vibrating with a kinetic energy she can't release.

She doodles a sketch in the margins of her theology textbook. A T-Rex eating a Halo'd Saint.

ROSIE (V.O.)

My father is a priest. A widower who found God late in life and decided I needed *structure*. He forgot that structure is just a polite word for a cage.

JESS (15), the girl next to her, taps Rosie's arm. Jess is neat, tidy, and terrifyingly wholesome. She whispers.

JESS

Rosie. Do you have a highlighter? Mine's run out.

Rosie stares at her. She slowly pulls a yellow highlighter from her blazer. She hands it over.

ROSIE

Keep it. I'm giving up on highlighting. I prefer pencil - it's more suitable to the dark ages.

Jess blinks, confused, takes the pen, and turns back to her work. Rosie stares at the back of Jess's head.

She raises her hand and flips the middle finger.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Boredom isn't just a feeling here. It's a serious chronic condition that hangs in the atmosphere.

Rosie reaches into her pocket. She pulls out a packet of Pro-Plus (caffeine pills). She pops two dry.

ROSIE (V.O.)

I need to feel something. Even if it's just heart palpitations.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

The lights are dim. Rosie sits cross-legged on her bed, a duvet pulled over her head. She has a torch in her mouth.

She is ripping open a grey plastic parcel with her teeth.

ROSIE (V.O.)

While the other girls are dreaming of ponies and polo players, I am curating my own identity. Sourced entirely from Vinted. Fashion is a primeval language, not an afterthought.

She pulls out the treasures.

- A crushed VELVET BLAZER (men's, oversized).
- A TARTAN SKIRT, ripped and held together by safety pins.
- Knock-off DOC MARTENS, scuffed to perfection.
- She holds the boots up to the light like a holy relic.

INT. SHOWERS - DAY

Steam rises. Water hitting tiles.

Rosie stands under the shower. We don't see her face yet.

We look down at the drain, where unclear water swirls down the plug hole...

It is DARK GREEN. A whirlpool of seaweed and swamp slime.

ROSIE (V.O.)

In physics, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Queens wants me to be a royal-coloured lady? Fine.

Rosie turns off the water, wipes the steam from the mirror. Her hair is wet, slicked back, DYED A VIOLENT, SEAWEED GREEN.

She grins. It's a terrified, manic look. She can't quite believe what she has done.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Let's see how they handle the swamp thing...

INT. DORMITORY - DAY

Sunlight smashes through the curtains. It is aggressively bright. Rosie is a lump under the duvet. She groans.

Jess is already dressed. Her uniform is pristine. Her tie is a miracle. She is reading a small book of Morning Prayers.

ROSIE (V.O.)

The word morning sounds like
mourning. Coincidence? I think not.

Jess closes her book with a satisfied thud.

JESS

You're going to be late. Again.

Rosie pulls the duvet down. Her hair is a bird's nest of that seaweed green. It stains the pillowcase.

JESS

(gasps)

Oh my... sweet Virgin Mary.

ROSIE

She had enough trouble with her own pregnancy. Leave her out of it.

JESS

It's... Your hair... It's mouldy.

ROSIE

No Jess. It's bright with envy.

Rosie climbs out of bed. She is wearing an oversized t-shirt that says 'God is Dead, and so is Nietzsche'.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Envy stems from the Latin *invidia*.
To see *into* something. How
malicious can such a depth of
feeling be?

Rosie stalks past Jess to the mirror.

JESS

Miss Falconer is going to expel
you. 'Hair must be of a natural
hue.' That's clearly school rules.

ROSIE

I was never given a copy of the
handbook. Anyway, what isn't
natural about green? Trees are
green. So is vomit.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The corridor is a runway. Girls flow out of rooms in perfect navy uniforms. Rosie steps out. The flow stops.

Silence ripples down the hallway.

SASHA (15) stands by the radiator. She is pretty, glossy, and holds a Costa cup that definitely isn't allowed.

She looks Rosie up and down, smirking.

SASHA

Nice look. Going for the drowned orphan vibe?

ROSIE

Better than the 'I peaked in Year 9' vibe.

SASHA

People who dye their hair crazy colours are crying out for attention because their parents don't love them.

ROSIE

Your dad cheats on your mum with his squash partner. Everybody knows it. I've even seen them snogging off court.

Sasha's smile vanishes. She steps forward, aggressive.

SASHA

You take that back.

ROSIE

Or what? You'll scratch me with your Marc Jacobs Tote?

MISS FALCONER (O.S)

LADIES!

The crowd parts. MISS FALCONER (60s) strides down the hall. She is built like a tank commander, wears a posh tracksuit.

She radiates '80s aerobic energy, as she stops in front of Rosie. She stares at the green hair.

She doesn't blink. Never, her pupils are like pinpricks.

MISS FALCONER

Rosie Swift.

ROSIE

Miss Falconer.

MISS FALCONER

You look like a serpent.

ROSIE

Thank you, Miss.

MISS FALCONER
That was not a compliment. We are
not a place of serpents, or swamp
creatures, are we?

ROSIE
No. That would belie tradition.

Miss Falconer leans in. She smells of hairspray and
aggressive mints. She too makes a considerable effort.

MISS FALCONER
Registration. Now. And see me
after. Bring your phone.

Miss Falconer marches off.

MISS FALCONER
(shouting)
Schnell! Movement please, ladies!

ROSIE (V.O.)
Miss Falconer. Headmistress. The
only teacher who can pull off a
tracksuit like it's the meanest
uniform ever.

INT. COMMON ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The girls stand in rows. Falconer is reading the register.

MISS FALCONER
... Jessica?

JESS
Present, Miss.

MISS FALCONER
... Sasha?

SASHA
Here, Miss.

MISS FALCONER
... Rosie?

Rosie steps forward. The green hair catches the light.

ROSIE
Adsum.

MISS FALCONER
(looking up))
English, Rosie. We aren't in the
Vatican.

ROSIE
I am here, but the soul is
debatably absent.

A few girls snigger. Falconer slams her hand on a desk.

MISS FALCONER
My office. Now. Wait outside.

Rosie walks past Sasha. Sasha sticks her foot out. Rosie sees it and steps clean over it.

ROSIE
(whispers)
Squash partner.

Rosie acts out swinging a racket. Sasha fumes.

INT. FALCONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Falconer is at a desk piled in sports trophies. Rosie stands.

MISS FALCONER
You are trying to provoke me.

ROSIE
It's not personal. I am expressing
my self.

MISS FALCONER
You are expressing a lack of
discipline. And your father called.
He is concerned about your...
communion preparation.

ROSIE
You mean confirmation?

Falconer nods.

ROSIE
He should be more concerned with
his own spiritual life. He used to
hate on God. When mum was still
around...

MISS FALCONER
You will attend all the classes,
and chapel. It is the least you can
do to please your father. Now. The
phone. Hand it over.

Rosie reluctantly hands over her mobile.

Falconer drops it into a drawer full of confiscated vapes,
fidget spinners, and indeed the Satanic smartphone devices.

MISS FALCONER
You will not be attending fourth
and fifth period this morning.

ROSIE
Oh.
(hopeful)
Suspension?

MISS FALCONER
Matron is taking a group to town
this afternoon. For...
appointments. You will join them.

ROSIE
I'm not sick.

Falconer snips her index and middle finger together.

MISS FALCONER
No. But you do need a haircut.

ROSIE
No. I'm not going to the
hairdressers.

MISS FALCONER
No. You are going to the Barbers.
The one on the High Street that
smells of wet dog and sickening
spices. You are going to have
that... removed.

Rosie's eyes widen.

ROSIE
You can't shave my head. This is a
violation of my human rights.

MISS FALCONER
This is a private school, Rosie. We
are above and beyond human rights.

Falconer points to the door.

MISS FALCONER
11:20 AM. Matron's minibus. Don't
be late. Or I'll ask the
groundskeeper for his shears and do
it myself.

Rosie turns and leaves. A sudden slight grin forms.

ROSIE (V.O.)
She thinks she's punishing me with
a taste of Purgatory. But in actual
fact, she's just given me a free
pass to the outside world.

INT. TOILETS - DAY

Rosie is staring at the mirror. She traces her green hairline. The door opens. ADAM (15) walks in. He stops.

ADAM
Wrong toilet, Swift.

ROSIE
Hi Adam. The gender is irrelevant, especially today.

Adam laughs. He leans against the sinks. He has floppy hair and looks like a young poet who smokes too much.

ADAM
Is it because of the hair? Nice. Very... eco-warrior.

ROSIE
Falconer is sending me to the barbers. In town.

Adam's eyes light up. Rosie pulls a face.

ROSIE
What?

ADAM
You're going out?

ROSIE
I'm not doing you a favour.

ADAM
Can you do me a favour?

INT. CLEANING CUPBOARD - MOMENTS LATER

The hideout from morning chapel. Tight. Claustrophobic. The air smells of lemon bleach and stale mops.

Rosie and Adam are squeezed in amongst buckets and 'Wet Floor' signs. From outside comes a ghostly, out-of-tune hymn.

The muffled sound of a HUNDRED GIRLS AND BOYS singing *JERUSALEM*, filtering through the door.

ADAM
Now I am alone. O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!

ROSIE
Shut up. We're hiding in a cupboard, not a castle.

ADAM

It is appropriate though. We could be Danes, exiles, hiding from the tyranny of our corruptible superiors.

Adam shifts. A mop handle hits him in the face. He rights it.

ADAM

So. The favour...

ROSIE

I'm listening.

ADAM

You're going to town. For a lovely haircut.

ROSIE

The bloody barbers.

ADAM

Very lovely. Well, the barbers is next door to a shop called *Vinyl RIP*.

ROSIE

It's a terrible pun.

ADAM

It is a sanctuary. I need you to ask for a guy called Jonty. Tell him 'The Duke of Devon sent me'. Specifically not Somerset.

ROSIE

You call yourself The Duke?

ADAM

No, it's just a street thing. And it's the Devonian Duke.

ROSIE

It does not sound at all street. You live in a detached house in the Cotswolds. You have a real postcode.

ADAM

Just ask for Jonty. He has a first pressing of Ziggy Stardust for me.

ROSIE

That's it? A record?

ADAM

And... inside the sleeve, there might be a herbal supplement. Just a small something for my anxiety.

Rosie stares daggers at him.

ADAM

Please, Rosie? You will be a patron of the arts who happens to transport botany. And I'll write your English essay for you.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Bribery. From the Old French *briberie*, meaning to beg for alms. And that's how it felt, because I had pity for Adam, and he was genuinely a whizz at writing mind-numbing essays.

The singing outside swells to a crescendo. IN ENGLAND'S GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND!

ROSIE

Fine. But make it an A-star.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

The hymn ends. Silence falls. This is their window.

Rosie cracks the door open. The coast is momentarily clear. They tumble out of the cupboard.

PREFECT (O.S.)

OI!

They freeze. Standing at the end of the corridor is a SENIOR PREFECT (18). She wears a badge that says HEAD GIRL.

PREFECT

Why aren't you in Chapel?

ADAM

Exit, pursued by a bear!

Adam bolts. He sprints down the left corridor. Rosie tries to run right. She pivots.

But loses her footing on the polished parquet floor. She skids. Arms windmill.

ROSIE

Oh fu--

SMASH. Rosie face-plants into a rack of brooms and dustpans that Adam had knocked loose. She goes down in a tangle.

The Prefect looms over her.

PREFECT

Swift.

Rosie looks up from the floor, and swipes away a sticky dustpan.

ROSIE

I was just... cleaning. Cleanliness is Godliness, right?

PREFECT

No. Godliness is attending to God in his Church.

Rosie gulps.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

CLASSICAL MUSIC plays softly. MISS HAWLEY (45) stands at the blackboard, furiously wiping marker off of it.

She is twitchy, nervous, and wears a cardigan that screams 'I own three cats'. The class is seated.

Jess and Sasha sit together at the front, looking angelic. Rosie bursts in, dishevelled.

MISS HAWLEY

Nice of you to join us, Rosie.

ROSIE

Apologies, Miss. I was a bit detained.

SASHA

(whispers to Jess and sniggers)

By a hedgerow.

Rosie scans the room. The only empty seat is at the back, next to a perfectly composed Adam. She slumps into the chair.

MISS HAWLEY

We are continuing with Romeo and Juliet. Act 2, Scene 2. The Balcony Scene.

Miss Hawley picks up a book, holds it like it might bite her.

MISS HAWLEY

Now, most people think this scene is about love. It is not. It is about boundaries. It is about the danger of disobeying your parents.

(MORE)

MISS HAWLEY (CONT'D)

Juliet is on a balcony - a structure actually designed for safety - and she is leaning over it. Literally and metaphorically.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Miss Hawley. A woman who could turn passion into a health and safety seminar.

MISS HAWLEY

Sasha, read Juliet. Adam, read Romeo.

SASHA

(reading flatly)

O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name.

ADAM

(reading with immense passion)

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

MISS HAWLEY

Stop! Too much emotion. Adam, you sound pained.

ADAM

I am pained!

MISS HAWLEY

Romeo is a gentleman.

ADAM

A lovesick gent, Miss, dying of desire!

MISS HAWLEY

(snapping)

You play it triumphantly, when it's supposed to be disastrous! Look at the text. If Juliet had just stayed in her room and listened to her Nurse, none of this would have happened. They would have married sensible people and lived long, boring lives. Which should be the goal of all our lives!

Miss Hawley is breathing hard. She realises she's overdone it and looks like she's about to burst into tears.

She pulls a pack of something out of her pocket, realises where she is, and shoves them back in. Rosie leans to Adam.

ROSIE
I pity her.

ADAM
She needs herbs.

MISS HAWLEY
Rosie! Since you have so much to say, you can write the 'laureate essay' for next week. 'Why Obedience is the True Virtue of Verona', 2,000 words.

ROSIE
But Miss, it's normally 1000--

MISS HAWLEY
Due Monday.

Hawley strides to her desk. Just as the BELL RINGS.

Chairs scrape. Pupils chaotically flee the classroom. Rosie stands up. Adam grabs her arm.

ADAM
Don't forget. Vinyl RIP. Ask for Jonty.

ROSIE
I hope you get caught and sent to an even worse place than this.

EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY

A white MINIBUS idles, puffing grey exhaust fumes into the crisp country air.

THE MATRON (50s, school mensch, short hair, scary efficiency) stands by the door holding a clipboard.

Only 3 students wait. Rosie, wearing her PE rucksack, NATHAN (14, anxious, holding a jaw retainer).

And a cute random YEAR 7 holding a violin.

MATRON
Right. Listen up. We are going to town. You will not speak to the locals. You will not make eye contact with them. If they speak to you, you will stare straight ahead, and just think of the King and Queen.

ROSIE
The living or the dead ones?

MATRON
 (ignoring her))
 Into the van. No. Swift, you're in
 the front with me.

INT. MINIBUS - CONTINUOUS

Rosie climbs into the passenger seat. The van smells of damp upholstery, sweat, and decades of lingering fear.

MATRON
 What's in the bag?

ROSIE
 Nuclear weapons.

Matron doesn't laugh, she frowns. Let's it go.

ROSIE (V.O.)
 And so, the odyssey begins. Not
 across the wine-dark sea. But down
 the A303 in a quasi Ford Transit.

Matron crunches the gears. The van lurches forward.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

The town of Queensbury. It's not a quaint village. It's a real working town, albeit with a posh periphery.

Pound shops, vape stores, a Costa, and teenagers in tracksuits hanging around the war memorial.

The white minibus rolls conspicuously through the streets.

INT. MINIBUS - CONTINUOUS

Rosie presses her face against the glass. Her breath gradually fogs it but she still sees out.

- Two TEENAGE BOYS fighting over a bag of chips.
- A GIRL with pink hair smoking a cigarette and laughing.
- A POSTER for a gig: *SATURDAY NIGHT THE RAT KINGS & SUPPORT*

ROSIE
 Civilisation.

MATRON
 Sit back, Swift. Don't ogle the natives.

Matron pulls the van up to the curb. She points to a shop with a red and white spinning pole.

MATRON

Right. The Barber Shop. Swift, Nathan. Out. I have to take violin-face to the luthier. I'll be back in thirty minutes.

ROSIE

You're leaving us?

MATRON

Don't get any ideas. The barber is a close friend of mine. If you try to run, he'll snip you.

Matron unlocks the doors.

EXT. HIGH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Rosie steps out onto the pavement. The air smells different here. Fried chicken, nicotine. Freedom?

Matron drives off. Rosie looks at Nathan. He is still holding his retainer.

ROSIE

Listen to me, Nathan. Go inside. Get your hair cut. Don't mention me.

NATHAN

But, where are you going?

Rosie points to a shop three doors down. A faded sign in the window - *VINYL RIP*

ROSIE

I have to go see a guy about a record.

Rosie whips out the velvet blazer from her bag. Now looks less like a private school girl, more French New Wave icon.

INT. VINYL RIP - DAY

The shop smells of dust, cardboard, and teen spirit. It is a cluttered cave of musical history.

HONG KONG GARDEN by Siouxsie and the Banshees plays over the speakers. Rosie steps inside. She adjusts her blazer.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Sanctuary. From the Latin *sanctuarium*. A holy place. A refuge.

(MORE)

ROSIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Usually involving incense and a
choir or, in this case, the smell
of damp carpet and sick tunes.

Behind the counter sits JONTY (17). He wears a beanie hat and
looks like he hasn't slept in five years.

He is eating a Pot Noodle with a plastic fork. Leaning
against the counter, flipping through a magazine, is...

MONI (16). She is striking. Dark eyeliner, attitude for days,
wearing an oversized band t-shirt (Sonic Youth).

And gorgeous combat boots that have actually seen some action
or, at the least, a muddy festival.

Rosie is struck dumb for a few seconds. Moni is the coolest
thing she has ever seen.

Rosie approaches the counter. She tries to lower her voice an
octave, an attempt to sound less middle-class. It fails.

ROSIE
Excuse me. I'm looking for Jonty.

Jonty doesn't look up from his noodles.

JONTY
You're looking at him. But don't be
staring.

ROSIE
Okay. The Somerset Duke sent me.
No, wait. Devonian? Shit. I don't
remember.

Moni looks up from her magazine. She scans Rosie, the green
hair, the blazer, the posh shoes.

She smirks. Reads her like a book.

MONI
I know which Duke.

ROSIE
(flustered)
It's the... code--

MONI
It's Adam. The kid with the floppy
hair who cries over Bowie.

ROSIE
I've never seen him cry.

MONI
On the inside.

ROSIE
Who doesn't get emotional about the
heavenly chord progressions.

Moni laughs. It's a dry, husky one. But it's a connection.
Rosie's stomach starts to relax an inch.

JONTY
(Slurping noodles)
You got the cash?

ROSIE
Yes.

Rosie slides a crisp £20 note across the counter.

Jonty reaches under and pulls out a battered copy of Ziggy
Stardust. He checks left, checks right...

There is no one else in the shop... And slides it to Rosie.

JONTY
It's in the liner notes. Tell him
it's the best shit and he's a lucky
fucker to have it. Called 'Northern
Lights'.

Rosie tucks the record under her arm. She should leave, but
doesn't want to. She looks at Moni.

ROSIE
I like your boots.

Moni looks down at her feet, then back at Rosie.

MONI
Thanks. I like your... velvet. Very
last century.

ROSIE
It is vintage.

MONI
A replacement for the Queen's
College crest?

Rosie stiffens.

ROSIE
How did you--

MONI
Your perfume doesn't smell cheap
and it's kind of obvious.

JONTY
You stand too straight. Like a
dude.

MONI

Don't listen to him. Plus, I saw
you get out of your school minibus.
The one driven by the Terminator.

ROSIE

Matron. She is a bit
Schwarzenegger. For a woman.

Moni cracks a real smile.

MONI

I'm Moni.

ROSIE

Rosie.

MONI

Well, Rosie from Queens. Shouldn't
you be playing lacrosse on a pony
or something, not scoring weed?

ROSIE

I don't play lacrosse. And I don't
even ride horses.

MONI

(nods to the record)
Do you share in the good taste?

Rosie points to the speakers. Siouxsie Sioux is yelping.

ROSIE

Yeah, but I prefer this. Hong Kong
Garden. 1978. Polydor Records. They
commodified the eastern culture a
bit much for my liking, but it
still totally slaps.

Moni raises an eyebrow. She is impressed, despite herself.

MONI

Not bad.

ROSIE

I'm not actually released from
prison yet. I have to go.

MONI

Is that what the green hair is all
about? Crying out from behind bars?

Jonty laughs. He's into their convo, but pretends not to be.

ROSIE

It's just a statement.

MONI
(leaning closer)
It's a tad patchy at the back. You missed a spot.

Rosie instinctively touches the back of her head. Moni grins.

MONI
If you want it fixed, come by later. I have black dye. Black is for professionals.

ROSIE
I... I have to go to the barbers.

MONI
Shit.

ROSIE
Punishment.

MONI
Fuck that savageness.

ROSIE
It is barbaric.

JONTY
(mouth full)
I can shave it for a fiver.

MONI
Shut up.

ROSIE
No thanks.

Moni rips a piece of paper from her magazine. She scribbles a number on it with a sharpie. She hands it to Rosie.

MONI
If you survive the barber, text me. There's a party on Saturday. Good vibes.

Rosie takes the paper. Her hand brushes Moni's. Electrical current. The bell on the door jingles. Rosie jumps.

ROSIE
Better go. Matron has a sniper on me. Bye, Moni. Bye, Jonty.

Rosie backs away, clutching the David Bowie record. She stumbles over a crate of jazz records, recovers, and exits.

EXT. HIGH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Rosie bursts out onto the pavement, breathless.

She looks at the scrap of paper. A phone number. And a drawing of a skull with a heart for eyes.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Ecstasy. Greek. Ekstasis. To stand outside oneself. I'm not even standing outside myself. It feels more like floating...

She shoves the paper in her pocket and sprints towards the Barber Shop.

INT. BARBER SHOP - DAY

Traditional. Red leather chairs. The smell of Bay Rum. NATHAN sits in the chair, looking terrified.

The BARBER (50s, heavy tattoos, arms like tree trunks) clippers his hair significantly shorter.

Rosie bursts in, panting.

BARBER

You're late.

ROSIE

Pedestrian traffic.

The Barber points to the empty chair next to Nathan. He calls for BARBER 2. His Misses. She looks uncannily similar.

BARBER

Short back and sides, the Matron said.

BARBER 2

Aye, make her look like a recruit, wasn't it?

BARBER

Aye.

Rosie nervously sits. She clutches the record bag tight.

ROSIE

(to the Barber)

Just... be careful with my ears please. I need them for lectures and worship.

Barber 2 chuckles loudly. Then she turns on the clippers. BZZZZZZT. Rosie closes her eyes and makes peace.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Hair grows back. But dignity is harder. It regenerates much slower. But I have a phone number. And for the first time in my life... since I was a fucking toddler, I feel summoned to live.

BEGIN MONTAGE

MUSIC: *EVER FALLEN IN LOVE (WITH SOMEONE YOU SHOULDN'T'VE)* by The Buzzcocks kicks in hard.

INT. MINIBUS - DAY

Matron drives. Rosie stares into the sun visor mirror. Her hair is mostly GONE. It's a jagged pixie cut.

She looks like a cross between Joan of Arc and a convicted felon. She touches it, horrified.

But then decides to just own it, she can't exactly hide it. Matron smirks in the rearview mirror.

EXT. SCHOOL GATES / BUILDING - DAY

The bus rolls in. It stops in front of the main school building, a towering, imposing structure. Rosie steps out.

A group of Year 7s stop and stare. One drops her flute case.

Rosie pulls her school collar up, channeling Bowie. She struts, and ignores everybody, including Matron.

INT. COMMON ROOM - DAY

Adam is waiting by the vending machine. Rosie slides the copy of Ziggy Stardust to him.

Adam slides a bag of Skittles back to her. He looks at her hair. His jaw drops.

ADAM

Hello, Lady Macbeth.

ROSIE

Shut up, clown face.

Adam strokes his ruddy cheeks. Not enough sleep, plus HBP.

INT. STUDY HALL - DUSK

The Girls together in their boarding house bent over Prep. Sasha keeps glancing over at Rosie and grinning.

Rosie rocks her head with her earphones in. She appears not to care, but then flips Sasha a firm standing middle finger.

Sasha backs down, huffing. Falconer bounds into the hallway and inspects the girls. She flaps her index finger at Swift.

INT. FALCONER'S OFFICE - DUSK

Falconer holds Rosie's phone hostage. She dangles it. Rosie reaches for it. Falconer pulls it back.

Falconer points to her own hair (perfectly sprayed). Points to Rosie's (disaster). And then laughs, albeit softly.

MISS FALCONER

You look a lot smarter though, don't you? Well, permit the edges a few days to settle.

ROSIE

You're a sadist.

MISS FALCONER

It's called discipline, Rosie. And you cannot survive as a grown-up without it. One day, you'll be thanking--

By God Rosie has heard enough. She snatches her mobile right out of Miss's hands, before she can hand it over.

And bolts from the office. Falconer is speechless. END MONTAGE.

INT. DORMITORY - NIGHT

Darkness, but for weak bedside lights. Jess is praying some Anglican liturgy. It is sputtery and annoying.

Rosie is under her duvet, scrolling.

INSERT PHONE SCREEN: Instagram. Profile search: *Moni_RatKing* Found. Images:

Moni smoking. Moni with a bass guitar. Moni giving the finger to a statue of Winston Churchill.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Stalking. From the Old English stealcian, meaning to move stealthily.

(MORE)

ROSIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Not as predatory as it sounds, but
a nauseatingly ubiquitous activity
of the digital age.

Rosie taps 'Message'.

TEXT TO MONI: *Survived the shearing. Total thumb look. Still invited?*

She waits. Three dots appear. Disappear. Reappear. The agony of the ellipsis...

TEXT FROM MONI: *Haha! Come to the party. From 8. 42 Oakhill Drive. Skip outside.*

Rosie grins. Suddenly, Jess sits up in the bed next to her.

JESS
Who are you texting?

Rosie startles. Locks her phone.

ROSIE
Who do you think? My dad just sent me night prayers with a weird combiner emoji.

JESS
You never smile at your dad. But that is kind of funny.

ROSIE
Not as funny as a parable he sent me earlier about a donkey.

JESS
Oh, really?

ROSIE
Yes. Balaam's humble donkey in Numbers. Don't you know it?

Jess reddens. She has not a clue.

JESS
Let's go to sleep.

ROSIE
Night then.

Jess lies back down, but she doesn't switch off the light. She watches Rosie with one eye open.

EXT. HOCKEY PITCH / ASTRO - DAY (SATURDAY)

Grey, foggy skies. Freezing wind. Twenty girls in short skirts and shin pads are shivering. They look miserable.

Miss Falconer blows a whistle. It's deafening.

MISS FALCONER
Move it, ladies! Get warm!

Rosie stands on the wing, despairing. Her new haircut leaves her neck exposed to the elements.

ROSIE (V.O.)
Saturday. The first day of rest.
Unless you go to Queens, which
makes it the last day of hell. And
an afternoon of ritualised violence
with a stick.

The game starts. A ball of hard plastic rockets across the mud. Rosie is still pondering her existence.

A player sprints past her.

MISS FALCONER
Swift! Mark your player!

Rosie spots Sasha running towards her, stick raised like a claymore. This is her chance to escape. No more.

Rosie doesn't move. She waits for her opponent.

ROSIE (V.O.)
In drama, we call this 'taking the
hit'.

Sasha swings. She hits the ball. She follows through.

CRACK. The stick clips Rosie's shin. It's barely a tap.

But Rosie throws herself into the bristly astroturf with the dramatic commitment of a Premier League footballer.

She SCREAMS. It echoes through the valley.

ROSIE
MY LEG! OH GOD!

She rolls around, clutching her shin, covering herself in sand. Miss Falconer blows the whistle. She marches over.

MISS FALCONER
Get up.

ROSIE
It's broken, Miss! I heard
something, like a snapping sound.

MISS FALCONER
(prodding Rosie with her
foot)
It's a bruise. Walk it off.

ROSIE

But I can't even feel my toes!

Falconer rolls her eyes. She signals to the bench.

MISS FALCONER

Bench. Now.

Rosie moans and limps off the field, dragging her leg. Sasha snarls after her.

As soon as Rosie reaches the dugout, and Falconer turns her back, the limp vanishes. She grabs her kit bag, preplanned.

She checks the coast, and sprints towards the woods.

EXT. WOODS / PERIMETER FENCE - DAY

Rosie pushes through the dense rhododendrons.

The school sounds fade. The thwack of hockey sticks, the shouting, the boys playing rugby.

She reaches the perimeter wall. It's high. Victorian stone.

For a moment, she considers simply leaving via the school driveway, or the hedgerow, but those options are too boring.

She throws her bag over. She finds a foothold. She climbs.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Escape. From the Vulgar Latin *excappare*. Literally: to get out of one's cape. Leave the institute behind.

She reaches the top. She looks back at the school building looming in the mist. She jumps.

INT. MONI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chaos reigns supreme. The house is a standard suburban semi-detached, but tonight it is a hedonistic temple.

TEEN AGE RIOT by Sonic Youth shakes the floorboards. The air is thick with smoke (tobacco and otherwise) and cheap cider.

TOWNIE KIDS are everywhere. Sitting on stairs, making out in the kitchen, dancing in the hallway.

Rosie enters. She wears the velvet blazer, ripped tights, and has applied eyeliner with a heavy hand.

Her short hair actually looks punk now, spiked up with sugar water. But she is on edge, exhilaratingly out of place.

She pushes through the crowd.

JONTY (O.S.)
(drunk and swaying)
It's the Green Goblin!

Rosie turns. It's the guy from the record shop. He is wearing a traffic cone on his head like a complete tool.

ROSIE
It's Rosie. And can't you see the green hair is gone, or are you too shit-faced?

JONTY
(laughs)
I dig it. You want a cider? Free ciders in the kitchen. Hurry.

ROSIE
Cool, thanks. Where's Moni?

Jonty waves up the stairs. Rosie squeezes past him.

She climbs the stairs. The music gets louder. She feels the bass vibrating through her chest.

But it doesn't panic her, somehow it even relaxes her...

INT. MONI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door is open. Moni sits on her bed, legs crossed. She is holding a bottle of vodka and laughing. She looks magnetic.

Around her are her *CREW* of cool kids, musicians. Rosie stands in the doorway. Moni looks up. Her eyes lock onto Rosie.

She stops what she's doing. She gets up and walks through her friends like they're now invisible to her.

Rosie and Moni gaze into each other for an electric beat.

MONI
You made it. And your hair.

ROSIE
I had to scale a wall and, yeah, I know. It's bad.

MONI
Whoa. No, it's fucking A.

ROSIE
I'm a total thumb.

MONI
Majestic.

Moni reaches out and touches the short spikes of Rosie's hair. Her touch is gentle.

MONI
And dangerous.

Rosie stops breathing for a second.

MONI
Come in. Drink this.

Moni hands her the vodka bottle. Rosie takes a swig, burns.

ROSIE
(coughing)
Smooth, Rosie.

Rosie looks up. The room looks back.

MONI
(to the room)
Everyone, this is Rosie. She
escaped from Alcatraz to be here.

The room cheers. Rosie blushes, but through her excitement.

ROSIE (V.O.)
Inclusion. To be enclosed. Usually,
I hate being enclosed. But this...
this actually feels like being
included.

The track changes. A slow, grinding post-punk beat. *SHE'S IN PARTIES* by Bauhaus.

MONI
I love this song.

Moni grabs Rosie's hand.

MONI
Dance with me.

ROSIE
I'm more of a thrasher.

MONI
Of course you are.

They start to move. At first, Rosie is a tad stiff and awkward. But Moni is fluid, hypnotic.

Soon she pulls Rosie in. The room fades away. The smoke swirls. Rosie loosens up.

They are close. Moni leans in. Her lips brush Rosie's ear.

MONI
Why are you dancing?

Rosie realises she's supposed to be thrashing.

ROSIE
Not enough booze.

Rosie swigs Moni's vodka.

MONI
What's it like at Queens?

ROSIE
Scary.

MONI
What are you afraid of?

ROSIE
Expulsion.

MONI
I thought you were going to say
hell's angels.

ROSIE
Yeah, it's either a heaven or a
hell... but it depends.

MONI
(grins)
You're here now. Time to thrash.

Moni pulls back. She looks at Rosie's lips. Rosie feels her stare.

She leans back into the room and loses herself in the sway of the growing crowd. She rocks her head and begins to thrash.

Moni joins in.

They drift towards each other, gradually mimicking each other's lively, impromptu moves. Until...

BANG. A loud CRASH from downstairs. The music cuts out.

VOICE (O.S.)
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!

Everybody freezes, then scatters like sheep.

MONI
Shit.

ROSIE
Police?

MONI
Worse. My mum.

Moni grabs Rosie's hand.

MONI
Hide.

INT. LANDING / STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Moni drags Rosie out of the room. They peer over the bannister.

In the hallway below, the party is dying a rapid death. Kids are scrambling out the back door.

Standing in the doorway, wearing a beige trench coat over a date-night dress, is a WOMAN. She is furious. She is shaking.

It is MISS HAWLEY. The English Teacher. Rosie gasps.

ROSIE
Oh. My. God.

She ducks behind the bannister.

ROSIE (V.O.)
Catastrophe. From the Greek
katastrophe. A sudden overturning.
Like this one. Usually with
negative implications, because
humans hate change.

Below, Hawley screams up the stairs.

MISS HAWLEY
Monica! I know you're up there! I
LEFT YOU ALONE FOR THREE HOURS!

Moni heads to the top of the stairs and looks down at her mother with pure, teenage disdain.

MONI
You were supposed to be out all
night with 'Gary'.

MISS HAWLEY
Gary has a nut allergy! We had to
leave the restaurant. GET THESE
PEOPLE OUT OF MY HOUSE!

Hawley starts marching up the stairs. Rosie is trapped. If Miss sees her, she is *dead*. *Expelled*. Game over.

Moni looks back at Rosie. She points to the bathroom window.

MONI
(mouthing, then with a
huge grin)
Go. See you later.

Rosie scrambles into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rosie locks the door. She hears Hawley on the landing.

MISS HAWLEY (O.S.)
The house is a pigsty. THREE HOURS!

Rosie climbs onto the toilet. She opens the small frosted window. It's a big drop onto a flat roof.

ROSIE
(to herself))
I have never had to *defenestrate*
myself before, but screw it. I am
throwing myself out of a window.

She squeezes through.

EXT. MONI'S ROOF / GARDEN - NIGHT

Rosie lands on the flat roof of the kitchen extension. She rolls. She slides down a drainpipe. It rattles dangerously.

She hits the grass. Other kids still loiter about, pissed.

Rosie is covered in mud. She looks up at the window. She sees Moni's silhouette arguing with her mum.

Rosie pulls her blazer tight. She starts to run. Through the garden, over the fence, and into the dark suburban street.

She is alone now, and cold. But she is smiling.

ROSIE (V.O.)
The problem with adolescent dreams
is that you eventually have to wake
up. But tonight... is not about
waking up. And I'm only just
getting started on the dreaming...

She runs into the darkness.