

“92 DAYS BEFORE”

By

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FADE IN:

1. INT. OFFICE STAIRWAY - DAY.

DAVID is walking ELIZABETH out of his office. She shakes David's hand and walks down the stairs, ignoring Mark as she passes. MARK looks up at David who nods his head. Camera focuses in on Mark, who smiles and turns back around towards his office. He walks over to an open door and peers in.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE

DANIEL and LOUISE look up at him. He signals an "Okay" with his fingers. Daniel and Louise make victory gestures.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S OFFICE.

Mark does a little skip walk into his office. ANNIE is waiting for him.

MARK

Okay then Annie, what's the next job?

Camera zooms out as Annie walks up to Mark, her voice fading.

ANNIE

Sarah wants you to come down and check out the school quickly and the one show want you on to discuss how you came into this company.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

2. INT. MARK'S APARTMENT OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is sat in his office in his apartment, he is editing one of his books.

MARK
ANNIE!

Annie walks into the room.

ANNIE
What's up?

MARK
Did Kevin call to let me know the final preparations for the Walker show?

ANNIE
not yet but I can get hold of him now if you want?

MARK
Thank you.

Annie goes to leave but stops as Mark speaks.

MARK
Annie, when are you going to get a real job?

ANNIE
As soon as I've finished my degree.

Mark laughs.

MARK
Yeah that is never going to happen.

The doorbell rings. Annie leaves to go answer it. Mark works as he listens to Annie speak with someone.

ANNIE (O.S)
I will see if he is available.

Annie returns looking confused.

ANNIE
There is a guy here called David Williams.

Mark looks shocked.

MARK
Really? Let him in.

Annie leaves. A few seconds pass and David walks in. Mark stands up and shakes his hand.

MARK
David. This is a surprise... How's Abi?

Mark and David sit in armchairs.

DAVID
She's brilliant.

...

MARK
What brings you here?

DAVID
I've just read your book. It's fantastic, I thought I would come by and let ya know I'm really proud of you kid.

Mark smiles.

MARK
Thank you very much... What are you working on now?

DAVID
You remember Peter?

MARK
Yeah I speak to him all the time, he financed my first novel.

DAVID
Me and him have gone into business together, looking at starting a small show.

MARK
(Shocked)
Really that's brilliant, you will do great with it.

...

DAVID
I didn't just come here to congratulate you. I was wondering if you wanted to do a bit of screen writing for us.

Mark smiles and looks down.

MARK

David I would love to help you out I really would. You're a great director and you don't deserve the disrespect the industry shows you, but I've got so much going on. My next book is set to be an international best seller, I'm going over to America in a-

DAVID

I get it.

MARK

I've worked hard to get here; don't you reckon it's a backwards step doing a bit of screen writing.

DAVID

Mark I get it. I can't go five minutes without seeing you on my TV. I just thought... Well I can't get a team together. We are starting small, no network backing. I don't want to put the drab rubbish you see on TV today. I want to create something special and you know what? There aren't that many people around with the gifts to do that. I just thought that, well you are one of the best story tellers I know. You write and people just listen.

MARK

(Coyly)

Flattering me now?

DAVID

Well it was worth a try.

MARK

If I have any ideas I will let you know and I will keep my ear to the ground for any writers I run into.

David nods and stands up. Mark stands and shakes his hand.

DAVID

Peter rates you highly, if you change your mind, we could really do something special with this.

MARK

I will look into it.

David walks out the door and Annie lets him out. Mark sits down and smiles slightly.

ANNIE
What did he want?

MARK
David's a television director but he got sacked after the network made loads of changes and his show flopped. Now no one will hire him. He's gone in with Peter who financed my novel. He wants me to do some screen writing.

ANNIE
You should do it.

MARK
Why?

Annie smiles sarcastically.

ANNIE
Barely anyone reads books anymore.

MARK
Get out of here.

Mark looks down and then across at his novel that is lying on the desk. He then opens a new document on his computer. He looks up and smiles slowly before typing on his computer. "Scene One."

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

3. INT. BETTING SHOP - DAY.

ANDREW walks confidently into a betting shop where CLERK and CUSTOMER are waiting.

CUSTOMER

Hey Andrew. What's happening?

ANDREW

Not much just thought I would spend some pocket money.

Andrew walks up to the counter where the Clerk is waiting.

CLERK

How did your show go?

ANDREW

Got to love a good bit of Shakespeare.

CLERK

Better than that soap?

Andrew shrugs.

ANDREW

Not as well paid as that soap.

CUSTOMER

Hey why don't you go back into television?

ANDREW

Waiting for the right time.

CLERK

What can I do for you?

Andrew pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to the Clerk.

CLERK (CONT.)

Full spread at Exeter, Worcester and Chelmsford. Heavy day don't you think. Sure, you wouldn't want to place a few on now and come back before Worcester and Chelmsford start?

ANDREW

No, I've got an interview later and I will be stuck in the green room for most of the day. Need something to watch.

Clerk gives him a concerned look. He is even more surprised when Andrew hands him a huge amount of cash.

CLERK

I will have to lay some of these, how do you want it spread?

ANDREW

Same amount on them all. I'm feeling lucky.

CLERK

I've got a bad feeling in my stomach.

Andrew waits while the tickets are printed. He nervously checks over at the racing on the TV. A coin shaking on his hand. Finally, he nods and walks over to a fixed betting machine and begins to play.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

4. INT. HALLWAY - DAY.

Mark is stood in the hallway with Annie. She is in the process of pulling up his tie.

ANNIE

So they are going to ask you questions about the first book, about how you came up with the idea and how Peter came to fund it.

MARK

I better come up with a better story than I was sat in my room, bored, and decided to write a book then.

Annie laughs as she straightens his collar.

ANNIE

Yeah just a little bit more exciting than that. How about on the toilet?

MARK

I really don't need to put that idea into people's heads.

She steps back and then grabs some notes.

ANNIE

They are also going to ask you about your rise to fame before finishing the interview with a small talk about the next book.

Mark grabs some coffee and takes a sip out of it.

MARK

Sounds good.

ANNIE

There is a small chance that they may ask you about your political commentary but Kevin has told me to tell you, that nobody wants to hear it.

MARK

I'm known for my wit and political knowledge.

ANNIE

But the people who watch this show don't care about politics.

MARK

Actually the forty-year-old women who watch this show are probably the most active voters.

Annie nods.

ANNIE

Yeah but they aren't watching you for that.

MARK

It's my charm, isn't it?

ANNIE

I just think they want to mother you.

Mark puts down the coffee.

MARK

So no political conversation... Anything else before I disappear?

ANNIE

Afterwards Kevin asked that you speak to a journalist for the Sunday Mirror.

MARK

Seriously?

Annie smiles devilishly.

ANNIE

Seriously, you will want to take this interview.

Mark looks fed up.

MARK

Okay then.

Mark goes to leave but stops.

MARK

Who am I on with again?

Annie goes all gooey eyed.

ANNIE

Andrew Johnson.

Mark raises his eyebrow.

MARK

That young soap actor?

ANNIE

Yeah.

Mark turns away.

MARK

Okay. I will pretend that I know who he is.

ANNIE

Get me his autograph?

MARK

See you later.

Mark opens the door and leaves. Camera follows him out as he walks towards the green room, he nods and smiles at a few people before walking into the green room.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENROOM.

Andrew is in there watching racing on his phone. He looks stressed.

MARK

How are you doing?

Andrew looks up, he smiles and then stands as Mark walks up to him.

MARK (CONT.)

Mark Wilson.

They shake hands.

MARK (CONT.)

You're Andrew, right?

ANDREW

So, they tell me.

The door opens and they look towards it. LUCY is stood in the doorway.

LUCY

Ah Mr Wilson, you're here, is there anything I can get you?

Mark leans back and smiles.

MARK

No I'm fine thank you?

Andrew smiles and shakes his head.

LUCY
Lucy.

Lucy smiles back at Mark.

LUCY (CONT.)
I will get you when we are ready.

MARK
Thank you Lucy.

Lucy leaves and shuts the door. Andrew laughs.

ANDREW
I used to remember when I could do that.

Mark looks at him strangely.

MARK
Do what?

ANDREW
Stand there and turn on the charm for
the assistants.

Mark nods and looks down.

MARK
What are you watching?

ANDREW
Just a bit of horseracing.

MARK
Fair enough

ANDREW
You watch it?

MARK
(Distracted)
Not really, I've never got into it.

ANDREW
Why is that?

MARK
My parents are strict catholic, so they
don't like gambling. Plus, the press
criticise me enough as it is without
adding gambling to the mix.

ANDREW
I know what that's like.

MARK
Oh yeah, I remember about all of that.

Andrew looks confused.

ANDREW
You remember?

Mark waves it away.

MARK
My sister Annie was a great fan of
Cooper Street, when she was younger.

ANDREW
And you weren't?

MARK
I was more into political commentary and
yelling at the news.

Andrew gives Mark a strange look that he casually waves away.

MARK (CONT.)
It got me where I am today.

ANDREW
It did strike me a bit strange why I
kept seeing you on nearly every news
segment.

An awkward silence follows.

MARK
So what are you doing now?

Andrew looks down.

ANDREW
Nothing of worth. I only got a slot on
here because I did a charity gig the
other week. Can't get my face on
anything at the moment.

Mark stops leaning on the wall and looks hard at Andrew.

MARK
Seriously why is that?

ANDREW
Well-

The door opens cutting Andrew off. Lucy is stood in the doorway.

LUCY

Mr Wilson, they are ready for you.

Mark looks over at Andrew and then back up at Lucy and smiles

MARK

Okay then, let's do this.

Marks walks out.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

5. INT. DAVID'S HOME - NIGHT.

David walks into his home. ABI is cooking dinner.

ABI

You are home late?

David puts down his briefcase and crashes on the sofa.

DAVID

Just had a meeting with one of my
producers.

Abi walks into the room with two glasses of wine, she
hands one to David who takes a sip out of it.

ABI

Did he finally have a script worth
reading?

DAVID

It was good but nothing that we want to
produce. I'm looking for something with
a bit of spark, a bit of life to it.

ABI

Did you speak to Mark today?

David nods.

ABI

And he turned you down?

David gives Abi a wry smile.

DAVID

That kid has never turned anything down
in his life. I put the seeds in his head
and I swear to god he won't stop until
he writes me something. He's just that
sort of guy. I gave him a challenge and
he will want to complete it.

ABI

I better start losing weight if I'm
going to be in a show again.

DAVID

And here I was thinking you had given up
on that game.

David kisses her.

ABI
For Mark I would come back to acting. He is just the best.

David suddenly sits up straighter.

DAVID
Talking of Mark, he is on the Walker Show today.

David gets the remote and changes the channel. Camera focuses on the TV as it shows Mark sitting on a stage with Walker

ABI
Turn it up, I love listening to him.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW STAGE.

Mark is sitting in a studio on two chairs turned to face each other. WALKER is sat in the chair opposite.

WALKER
So, after that exciting start, what do you attribute your success to?

Mark has a slight smile.

MARK
I don't put it just down to one thing. I was well financed early on which allowed me to get it out there more. I guess the main reason though is the fact that this story has something for everyone. You can relate to nearly every character and that's important when you want to escape into something. I tried to give people something that they could step into, that they could feed this story into their own world. That they could be the ones fighting for a greater cause.

WALKER
Must help when most authors don't look like you do.

Mark blushes.

MARK
Stop it.

Mark sits up straighter.

MARK

It can't be denied that my youth has had an effect. Not many authors get welcomed onto shows like this. I just hope that my use of social media and really coming from an ordinary background will get young people more involved in literature cause it really is just a pure art, an art that at times can transport you like no television or film ever could. When you read it's personal and art should be personal.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM.

DAVID

That's what I mean kid.

ABI

He just inspires you doesn't he?

DAVID

That's the spark that I am after.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERVIEW STAGE.

WALKER

A nice sentiment but it can't be denied that your story hasn't caused controversy. Your first novel faced a boycott by some young mental health groups and then there was that-

MARK

If you are going to start about those online forums threatening to kill themselves over my story, then I think we should end the interview now.

WALKER

But someone did kill themselves over your story.

MARK

Allegedly he wrote some stuff.

WALKER

And he killed five other people as well.

Slight pause. Mark's eyes go cold and a small smile creeps onto his face.

MARK

This is the misconceptions made by the media about this type of incident. To attribute the deaths of those innocent people to myself is disgusting and damn right offensive to them. There is a serious underlying social issue which relates to the isolation and loss of masculinity for a certain group of young people. Instead of trying to solve these issues they decide to blame someone like me because what politician ever got elected saying he wanted to do something to benefit the lives of young men.

WALKER

Be that as it may.

MARK

Listen. The reason people yelled at me for this thing was because they don't understand what it means to be a part of the involuntarily celibate movement. It doesn't make good news unless it's to demonize someone like me. If my story was about islamists terrorism and shortly after release a bombing happened. Do you honestly believe my name would have been mentioned once?

Walker looks stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM.

DAVID

Good answer kid.

WALKER (V.O)

I think that's time for a break.

Abi stands up.

ABI

I'm going to finish dinner.

David stands up with her. Abi begins to cough. David stands up to walks towards the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN.

DAVID
Still got that cold?

ABI
Struggling to shake it.

David grabs the wine from the table and then hands it over to Abi. She takes a sip out of it. Then she looks at David.

ABI
You look tired.

DAVID
(Tiredly)
This is it. This is my last chance at getting something out into the world. If it doesn't happen now, then I may just go back to working in a shop.

ABI
The next thing you work on will change the lives of millions.

Abi puts her fork into the food, blows on it and then feeds it to David. He smiles.

DAVID
Oh yeah that's good.

He turns around.

DAVID (CONT.)
Let me know when it is ready, I'm going to read some more of this script.

David leaves the kitchen.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

6. INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT.

Mark walks out of the green room, into a corridor where Elizabeth is waiting.

ELIZABETH
Mr Wilson.

Mark stops and smiles at her.

MARK
Yeah. You must be the reporter Annie
wanted me to speak to

ELIZABETH
I'm Elizabeth Wayne.

MARK
Mark Wilson.

Elizabeth blushes.

ELIZABETH
I know that.

Mark laughs.

MARK
Of course, sorry.

...

MARK (CONT.)
So what do you want to ask me?

ELIZABETH
My readers are dying to hear about your
next book, I was hoping we could discuss
that.

MARK
Sounds good. Let's go find somewhere to
talk.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

7. INT. BAR - DAY.

Andrew is sat at the bar front, watching the horse racing. His horse loses and he slams his fist into the bar.

ANDREW
God dammit.

Andrew turns around and sits back at the bar. BARMAN comes over.

BARMAN
Betting much?

Andrew gives him a dirty look.

ANDREW
More than I care to mention.

BARMAN
I saw you on the Walker Show tonight.
Sure, betting is the best thing you should be doing?

ANDREW
Didn't know you were paid to give me advice.

Barman smiles.

BARMAN
No, I'm here to get drinks for washed up actors. So can I get you one?

ANDREW
Cheapest whiskey.

BARMAN
I will make it a double.

GRACE walks into the bar and immediately stands next to Andrew.

GRACE
Hey sugar.

Andrew turns around and smiles at her. They share a quick kiss.

ANDREW
How was your day?

Grace grabs a stool and sits at the bar.

GRACE

Nothing sensational. I was just doing auditions for a commercial all day. I swear to god, I don't know where Hollywood finds kids that can act. London is full of prima donna parents with kids that can only speak as though they are asking a question. God child actors make me sick.

Andrew looks up at her.

ANDREW

I started as a kid.

GRACE

And look where that has gotten you.

Barman comes back over with Andrew's whiskey. Andrew reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of change. Grace looks down as Andrew begins to count it out. Andrew hands the barman the money who walks away.

GRACE

Andrew what happened to the money you got for Shakespeare last week?

Andrew grabs the glass and empties it.

GRACE (CONT.)

You didn't did you? On the horses?

Grace grabs hops off the stall.

GRACE (CONT.)

I'm going to get something to eat.

Grace storms off Andrew signals for another drink.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

8. INT. OYSTER CLUB - NIGHT.

Mark and Elizabeth are sat at a table in a full bar.

ELIZABETH

Well I think that's everything.

MARK

You sure. You don't want to ask me what I had for breakfast this morning? Who my high school crush was? What lurid things I get up to in the darkness of night?

ELIZABETH

(laughing)

No I think-

MARK

It's messed up stuff.

ELIZABETH

My readers are fine just getting hints towards your next book.

MARK

I'm sure they are.

Pause as Elizabeth puts her laptop away. Mark takes a sip out of his drink.

MARK

So you're a media journalist?

ELIZABETH

Yeah, it helps pay the bills.

Mark takes a sip out of his drink.

MARK

Go to university?

ELIZABETH

Five years for my sins.

MARK

Five years?

ELIZABETH

The first three were just studying journalism but I majored in film and media.

MARK

My sisters doing that actually. The film and media part, not so much the journalism.

ELIZABETH

Is she good at it?

Mark laughs.

MARK

Not really. Her idea of media journalism is whether an actor's hair looks good.

ELIZABETH

Sadly that does seem to be what it's all about.

MARK

Do you read a lot of scripts?

ELIZABETH

Mostly pre-views for finales, that sort of thing.

Mark reaches into his rucksack and pulls out some sheets.

MARK

This is something I've been working on. Would you mind having a read?

ELIZABETH

Sure.

Elizabeth begins to read the script. Smiling every so often.

ELIZABETH

This is incredible. Adapted from your book I'm guessing?

MARK

I've found you have a lot more freedom to develop the story on a screen play.

Elizabeth puts it down and looks up at Mark.

ELIZABETH

How long have you been working on that?

MARK

Since about ten o'clock this morning.

Elizabeth looks shocked.

ELIZABETH
You are a freak.

MARK
So they tell me.

Elizabeth looks at him and smiles.

ELIZABETH
You know I half expected you to be some
Eton snob but the whole crazy background
is true isn't it?

MARK
I might have been an Eton snob had my
parents lived long enough

ELIZABETH
(stunned)
Oh, I'm sorry.

MARK
I'm joking. I don't really remember
them. It's nice to not need to play the
intellectual though. People expect me to
behave in a certain way, talk a certain
way and if I'm honest that's not the
real me.

Elizabeth picks up her glass and clinks it onto Marks.

ELIZABETH
Well here is getting to know the real
you.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

9. EXT. STREET - NIGHT.

Andrew is stumbling home. Singing quietly to himself. He stumbles into LAD 1, LAD 2, LAD 3, who all look angry.

ANDREW

Sorry.

LAD 1

You will be.

Andrew puts his hand up and walks away from them.

LAD 1

Freak.

Andrew turns around.

ANDREW

I'm sorry?

LAD 1

I called you a freak mate. Deaf as well are you?

LAD 2

Leave him, he's half cut.

LAD 3

Got any money mate?

ANDREW

You need to learn some manners.

Lad 1 takes a step towards Andrew.

LAD 1

Respects earnt, not guaranteed. You don't look like you even have a pound to your name.

LAD 3

Not worth our time then.

LAD 2

(concerned)

Seriously leave him be.

Lad 1 nods.

LAD 1

Not worth it mate.

ANDREW
Pussy.

Lad 1 faces Andrew off.

LAD 1
What did you say?

Andrew swings a punch that catches Lad 1 sweetly knocking him over. Lad 3 goes to rush in, but Andrew reaches down grabs a bottle and throws it at Lad 3. Suddenly Andrew stops. Blue lights flash up from a car nearby OFFICER 1 and OFFICER 2 step out.

OFFICER 1
What's going on?

LAD 2
This guys pissed up officers. Started over nothing.

Officer 1 helps Lad 1 off the ground and takes the other three away. Officer 2 stands beside Andrew.

ANDREW
You tell them to run.

OFFICER 2
Sir we just witnessed you assault this individual.

ANDREW
They deserved it.

OFFICER 1
This guy's got a concussion, I'm going to call for an ambulance.

Officer 2 smiles.

OFFICER 2
You looked good on the Walker Show today. It's a shame you didn't stay there.

Andrew pushes officer 2.

ANDREW
Oh, piss off.

Officer 2 spins Andrew around and pins him up against the wall.

OFFICER 2
Right that's it. You are under arrest.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

10. INT. MARK'S APARTMENT OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is sat at his desk typing away. It is still dark outside, and he is illuminated by a lamp on his desk. The light turns on and Elizabeth comes into frame wearing a robe.

ELIZABETH
You are up early.

Mark doesn't stop working.

MARK
I couldn't sleep.

ELIZABETH
Can you ever?

MARK
Not once my mind starts working.

Elizabeth walks over and kisses Mark on the neck.

ELIZABETH
There I was thinking I was all that was
on your mind.

Mark smiles and gently squeezes Elizabeth's hand.

ELIZABETH
Can I make myself a coffee?

Mark shoots up.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S APARTMENT KITCHEN.

MARK
I will do it.

He walks into the kitchen, Elizabeth follows him.

ELIZABETH
What are you working on?

MARK
A problem to do with power.

Mark begins making the coffee.

ELIZABETH
Power?

MARK

Is it human nature to try and grasp things above our station, or is just simple animal need? Like an ape trying to reach the tallest branch or the bird after the fattest worm. We who strive for perfection and strive to better ones self, do it often under the name of Gods or idols, like it is something above ones natural nature, that humanity itself at its heart is selfish or lazy but I believe that it is not God like to strive for goodness or power, for a God is born with those things. They do not look towards the heavens and see the untamed beauty of the stars or seek to find a cure to the worst of ailments. The capacity to do good is stored within all of us, put there by God's wisdom, for only in our ability to do good and reach for something greater than how we started, is our creation proved beautiful.

Mark runs a hand through his hair.

MARK (CONT.)

Or something like that.

ELIZABETH

Your catholic, aren't you?

Mark walks over and hands her a mug of coffee.

MARK

Yeah, I'm going to have to go to confession over what we did last night.

Elizabeth blushes.

ELIZABETH

Or you could marry me?

Mark smiles coyly. Elizabeth's phone rings. She puts down the coffee and answers it.

ELIZABETH (INTO PHONE)

Yeah... Really, you're joking? ... I will start work on an online editorial at once.

Elizabeth hangs up and begins hastily writing on her phone.

MARK
What is it?

ELIZABETH
Andrew Johnson, the actor you were on with last night, was arrested for fighting.

MARK
And you're going to write about it?

ELIZABETH
Of course I am. There is nothing our readers love more than an icon involved in a scandal.

MARK
(Frustrated)
Did you hear yourself just then? The guy can't get an acting job because people like you drag his name through the mud all the time.

ELIZABETH
Then he shouldn't keep getting himself into trouble.

MARK
I'm begging you. Please don't write about it?

ELIZABETH
You don't even know him.

Mark nods

MARK
I've got to go.

ELIZABETH
What? Mark it's my job, don't be shitty with me.

Mark walks up to her and gives her a quick kiss.

MARK
I want to help Andrew. Do your job if you have to but I don't want you to write it. The door locks by itself so let yourself out when you're ready and I will talk to you tonight.

Mark grabs his laptop and rucksack before storming out of the door. Elizabeth looks down and starts typing away again.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

11. INT. RESTAURANT - DAY.

David and HUGO are sitting in a restaurant looking over some scripts. David places his down.

HUGO
So it's a no?

David also places it down.

DAVID
It's a no.

HUGO
Can I ask why?

DAVID
It's got no drive, no passion and I've got to be honest, the final episode twist is just moronic.

HUGO
It subverts expectations.

DAVID
Only because it makes no sense.

The SERVER walks over.

SERVER
Can I get you some food?

DAVID
I will have a full English, without the beans.

HUGO
Just some fried eggs on toast.

SERVER
(Smiling)
I will bring that over shortly.

HUGO
Big breakfast.

DAVID
I won't eat again until Abi cooks me something

Hugo taps on the script.

HUGO

Sure you don't want to take another look? We could always amend it.

DAVID

That's the issue. I don't want a script that we are constantly having to amend. I want the writers to be good enough to do their job.

HUGO

And I thought we had a winner there with that one. Why not film a pilot? We don't need to hit it out of the park first show, build up slowly.

DAVID

In this game there are no third chances, I've had my first, I need this one. Anyway, I'm betting on something else.

Hugo sighs.

HUGO

You still think you can tempt him over don't you?

DAVID

The kids young, he's fresh and he's got more talent than any script writer we could hire.

HUGO

And he's also making a fortune doing talk shows. He's hardly going to want to turn that down to come work for us.

DAVID

You don't know him like I do. He wants to change the world and he will be frustrated to hell that it isn't happening fast enough. Trust me he will come on board.

HUGO

What do we do about actors then?

DAVID

I've hired Beth Powell to start us some work on casting. She is in the know and can tell us who will soon be out of contract. Of course we can't get any actors without the role.

HUGO

I've worked with Beth before, she is
good.

Server comes over with their food and places it down in
front of them.

DAVID

Damn I'm going to enjoy this.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

12. INT. BETTING SHOP - DAY.

Andrew is sitting in the betting shop, watching greyhound racing. Mark walks in and nods at Clerk.

MARK

Andrew?

Andrew turns around and looks strangely at Mark

ANDREW

Mark? What the hell are you doing here?

Mark walks over and takes a seat next to Andrew.

MARK

I went to your house and your girlfriend said you would probably be down here.

ANDREW

That doesn't answer the question.

MARK

I came to see you.

MARK

(Whispering)

What happened last night?

Andrew rubs at his head.

ANDREW

I got drunk, I upset some police and now I'm going be spending the next three months doing charity events.

MARK

I'm sure that will cover it then.

Andrew turns around to look sharply at Mark.

ANDREW

Are you sure you really want to be here?
You're not afraid you might get photographed?

MARK

I told you before, the press has ago at me enough.

Andrew nods and smiles.

ANDREW
So what do you want?

MARK
I was going to ask why you can't get on TV anymore, but I think I know that now.

ANDREW
I'm the height of employability.

Mark goes into his bag and pulls out his script.

MARK
I'm working on something.

He hands it to Andrew, who immediately begins to read it.

ANDREW
I always thought your book would make a good TV show.

MARK
Just need a good actor to be in it.

Andrew puts the sheets down.

ANDREW
(dismissively)
You're joking, right?

MARK
You're the perfect age for the lead, you've done serious roles like this.

ANDREW
In a minor capacity.

MARK
This will be a small production. I can't get a big name actor but I can get a good one out of the hole he's dug for himself.

Andrew looks down.

ANDREW
You will be dooming it before it even begins.

MARK
I have a plan for all that.

...

ANDREW
What studio is it with?

MARK
None at the moment. In fact I've not even shown it to the production team yet.

ANDREW
Typical, a role comes around for me and it doesn't even exist.

MARK
If I can get you a meeting with the director, would you consider it?

Andrew smiles.

ANDREW
Sure but after my example yesterday, I wouldn't hold your breath.

MARK
I have some conditions.

ANDREW
I thought as much.

MARK
Kick this habit, it's no good for you and get yourself to the gym. Can't have my Tony Lockheart carrying twenty stone can I?

Andrew smiles sarcastically.

ANDREW
It's a deal.

MARK
Great.

Mark stands up sharply and points at his script.

MARK
You can keep that; I've got some people to go and see.

Mark leaves the store. Andrew looks down at the script.

CLERK:
Fancy anything else Andrew?

Andrew sighs while grabbing the script.

ANDREW
No. I think I'm done for the day.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

13. INT. SMALL OFFICE - DAY.

Mark knocks on the door. David is sat at his desk it
disturbs him from his work.

DAVID

Hey kid.

Mark walks into the office.

MARK

I like the office.

DAVID

It's only temporary until things get on
the move. What can I do for you?

MARK

You knew didn't you? That if you came to
see me and told me about your problem, I
would write something.

DAVID

I had faith.

Mark sniggers.

MARK

Well, I may have something for you.

DAVID

(Smiling coyly)

Brilliant. What is it?

Mark reaches into his rucksack and pulls out a copy of
his book and throws it onto the table. David smiles.

DAVID

Now that's more like it.

MARK

Can you get funding for a project like
this?

DAVID

Sure. It might limit us on actors
though.

MARK

Yeah, I've had a thought about that as
well.

DAVID
Oh really?

MARK
You know Andrew Johnson.

DAVID
Yeah, I was reading about his mishap
this morning.

MARK
That's your guy.

David stares and then laughs.

DAVID
You are joking right? Rumour has it, he
has both a drinking problem and gambling
addiction. You want us to put our necks
on the line just like that.

MARK
I'm asking you to give him a chance.

DAVID
And your role?

MARK
I'm working on a pilot for you, see if I
can get you up and running and give you
some notes for how the rest of the
series will go.

DAVID
No.

MARK
No?

David gives Mark a wry smile.

DAVID
You want me to go out on a limb and hire
Andrew Johnson without your career being
on the line as well. Now I know you're
not that stupid.

MARK
David listen.

DAVID
Mark I can hear it to the cows come home
but honestly, I don't care. You have a
good gig here, going on talk shows but
it's not what you want to do. If it was,

you would have blown me off entirely,
now I'm betting you've already written
two scenes. Am I wrong?

MARK
Four.

DAVID
Four and it's been what less than twenty
for hours? Nah I think you're in for the
whole hog.

Mark grabs his cheeks and stretches them.

MARK
You will hire Andrew as well?

DAVID
I will, if you can guarantee he won't do
anything stupid.

Mark looks down and when he looks back up he smiles and
shakes David's hand.

MARK
Let's see what we can do.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

14. MARK'S HOME - DAY.

Mark walks back into his home. Annie is sat down smiling at him.

ANNIE

Good day.

Mark looks strangely at her.

MARK

Same as usual.

ANNIE

Good night then?

Mark goes and picks up some papers.

MARK

I have no idea what you are talking about.

Annie stands up and goes and stands next to Mark.

ANNIE

Told you the interview would be worth taking.

MARK

Don't you have work to do or something?

ANNIE

No. Kevin called me to take everything off your schedule.

MARK

Yeah.

Annie looks confused.

ANNIE

Any reason why?

MARK

I've taken David's offer.

ANNIE

To screen write?

MARK

Yeah, for a bit.

ANNIE

What does that mean for me?

MARK

I will still need you to answer my phone calls and you know, whatever else I pay you to do.

ANNIE

I could do press work for the show.

Mark smiles in disbelief.

MARK

No chance.

ANNIE

So, I'm stuck answering phone calls for the rest of my life?

MARK

Yes. Or you know, you could get a real job.

ANNIE

You wouldn't know what to do if I did.

MARK

Talking of your job, do I have any phone calls?

ANNIE

Elizabeth called, she wanted to know if you were available for another interview.

MARK

I will call her later.

ANNIE

You should call her now Mark. She seems really nice and that must be strange because she likes you.

MARK

I'm a lovely person.

ANNIE

A lovely person with a detachment disorder, meaning you push everyone away.

Mark scowls.

MARK

Hasn't worked with you though.

ANNIE

Seriously Mark, give her a chance

MARK

Okay enough of that Jeremy, back to work.

ANNIE

I will call her and say you will meet her somewhere tonight.

MARK

Go away.

Annie walks out, Mark sets to work.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

15. INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY.

David and Andrew are sat across from eachother at the table.

DAVID

You understand that this is small time,
we won't be able to pay you an
extortionate fee.

ANDREW

No I get that, I'm just happy to be
given the chance.

DAVID

You wouldn't be if it wasn't for Mark.

ANDREW

I know and I appreciate it.

David looks down and runs a hand through his hair.

DAVID

I'm sorry that was rude.

David smiles.

DAVID (CONT.)

I'm not usually this miserable I swear,
this just means everything to me.

Andrew nods.

DAVID (CONT.)

First of all you will stop that nonsense
gambling, it clearly puts you in a bad
place from what I was reading this
morning. I'm going out on a limb here as
well, my last shot at doing something in
this industry and I won't have it ruined
by a prima donna.

ANDREW

I understand.

DAVID

Alright then, I won't mention it again.
Secondly, I don't want you playing big
shot actor on us. This isn't something
for you just to use as a platform.

David reaches down and pulls out a small folder.

DAVID (CONT.)

That's why we want you on a three-season contract.

Andrew smiles coyly as he takes the document and begins reading it.

ANDREW

Are there even three seasons written?

DAVID

We are working on that.

ANDREW

David I understand my past and I won't lie I've been in some bad places over the last couple of years but I want to be a part of this until the end.

DAVID

I'm glad to hear it.

They shake hands.

DAVID (CONT.)

We are going to write a new chapter in both of our lives.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. MARK'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING.

Mark is sat his desk on the phone.

MARK (INTO PHONE)

David is certain trust me ... I can assure you ... Peter please, Andrew is a good actor, he just needs a break like the break you gave me... Peter you get me as well that's got to account for something. If it all goes wrong, you can tell the press it was all my fault.

The doorbell rings. Mark turns around in his chair.

MARK (INTO PHONE. CONT.)

Listen Peter someone is here, me and David will come see you tomorrow, see what you think of the start to this script. See ya tomorrow, goodbye.

Mark puts the phone down as the doorbell rings again. He stands up and walks towards the door. Opening it to reveal Elizabeth.

MARK

(Confused)

Liz, what are you doing here?

Elizabeth looks nervous.

ELIZABETH

I was just in the area.

MARK

Come in.

Elizabeth walks in, Mark shuts the door and they both walk into the apartment proper.

MARK

You were in the area?

Elizabeth runs a hand through her hair.

ELIZABETH

I don't ever really do this. I mean I'm not usually a desperate person.

MARK

I wonder what would give the impression
that you were?

ELIZABETH

It's just I had a great time last night
and this morning and then that Andrew
thing happened and I knew that annoyed
you. I tried to apologise and who I'm
guessing is your sister, said you would
phone me back later but when you didn't,
I don't know. I just thought last night
worked and I wanted it to be more than
one night.

MARK

So you walked all the way to my door?

ELIZABETH

You should use it in a novel.

MARK

That's too cheesy. That's only made for
television.

Elizabeth smiles.

ELIZABETH

So are we all good?

MARK

We are good. Would you like a drink? I
just opened a bottle.

Elizabeth nods.

ELIZABETH

Please.

Mark walks into the kitchen.

MARK (O.S)

You can leave your coat anywhere.

Elizabeth removes her coat. Mark returns and gives her a
glass of wine. They both sit on the sofa.

MARK

Do you want a better exclusive than
Andrew Johnson getting into a fight?

ELIZABETH

What have you got?

MARK
What do I get in return?

ELIZABETH
The thanks of a grateful journalist.

Mark doesn't look convinced.

MARK
Me and David Williams.

ELIZABETH
The director?

MARK
Yeah. That script I showed you, I was writing it for him. We've got some backing and we are going to adapt my novel.

Elizabeth looks shocked.

ELIZABETH
You are going into screen writing full time?

MARK
Cancelled my press tour and everything.

ELIZABETH
This is incredible, I can't wait to report on it.

Mark thinks for a second.

MARK
Do something better.

ELIZABETH
Sorry?

MARK
Help shape it.

ELIZABETH
You mean?

MARK
Come manage our press.

ELIZABETH
I haven't done press for shows since my uni days, now I only ever report on them.

MARK

Then you know what's coming, what people are going to say. You have contacts, you can get us into the papers. It's perfect actually.

ELIZABETH

I like my job.

MARK

(Cooley)

Don't just comment on the world. Shape it.

ELIZABETH

And what will I get in return?

MARK

The thanks of a grateful author.

Elizabeth creeps closer to him

MARK (CONT.)

And you know a salary and other benefits.

They both become face to face.

ELIZABETH

Not good enough.

Mark and Elizabeth kiss.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

17. INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY.

David is stood in his new office, when SOPHIE walks in.

SOPHIE

Is there anything else you need?

DAVID

Yeah, can you let me know when Mark gets here.

SOPHIE

Will do.

Sophie goes to leave but stops as David speaks.

DAVID

What else do I have today?

Sophie checks over her notes.

SOPHIE

Staff meeting at nine and then you are interviewing staff for the rest of the day.

DAVID

I want time to sit down with Mark.

SOPHIE

You know that's something you should probably have told me yesterday.

DAVID

Will there be time?

SOPHIE

Because I always plan your schedule for the next day.

DAVID

You just want to control me.

SOPHIE

That is kind of my job.

DAVID

And?

SOPHIE

I will find time.

Sophie leaves, she is followed in by BETH and Hugo.

DAVID

Beth will you sit in with me during these interviews, I want to make sure I have another person to suffer with me.

BETH

No worries.

DAVID

Hugo, Mark is going to be here later, I want you two to work together for the day, see if we can get the message synced.

HUGO

No problem, it will be a pleasure.

DAVID

You ever spent five minutes with a genius? I'm telling you, it won't be.

Sophie re-enters.

SOPHIE

Mark is here.

DAVID

Excellent, tell Annie that I want to see him in here for a staff meeting.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE ENTRY WAY.

Mark walks into the building. He looks around and then heads up the stairs towards his office. Annie is waiting for him.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S OFFICE.

MARK

Now this is more like it Annie.

Mark grabs some sheets of paper and checks out his computer.

MARK (CONT.)

No more working out of my small apartment. Now I have a real office.

ANNIE

But I don't.

MARK

Why do you need an office?

ANNIE

The office next to yours is free.

MARK

That's an office for screen writers.

ANNIE

We don't have any screen writers.

MARK

Then someone else will use it.

ANNIE

I think I should have it

Mark rolls his eyes.

MARK

What do I have?

ANNIE

David wants to see you.

MARK

Okay brilliant, I need you to get me some research pieces on modern day military fire arms.

ANNIE

You got it.

Mark walks out of the office then quickly comes back in.

MARK

Where is David's office?

ANNIE

The next floor up.

MARK

Thanks.

Mark leaves.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

18. INT. OUTSIDE DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mark walks up to Sophie who is organising her desk.

SOPHIE
Hi Mark.

MARK
Hi .

Mark looks confused.

SOPHIE
I'm Sophie, David's assistant.

MARK
Great. Pleasure to meet you, do I just?

Mark points at the door.

SOPHIE
Just go in.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE.

Mark walks into the office. David, Beth, Hugo and SARAH stop their conversation

DAVID
Hey kid.

MARK
I like your office; I mean this whole place is really nice.

Hugo walks towards Mark.

HUGO
We are going to make some art with it.

MARK
You must be Hugo.

Hugo nods. Mark and Hugo shake hands. Beth comes forward.

DAVID
This is Beth Powell; she will be handling casting.

MARK
Pleasure.

Mark and Beth shake hands. Then Sarah comes closer.

DAVID
Sarah here is our set designer, she's
going to be working out of the studio.

SARAH
I can't wait to work with you.

MARK
And you.

David points towards the large table.

DAVID
Shall we?

They all go to sit down.

DAVID
Mark, what are you working on today?

MARK
I've got two scenes to work through.
Andrew is coming in later so I'm going
to work some lines with him.

DAVID
Show him around, then work with Hugo. We
need to sort out the tone of the show.

MARK
You got it.

DAVID
Okay what's next?

Everyone sits around David's desk.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

19. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is sat at his desk looking at his screen, with Hugo.

MARK

So we are happy about mixing in some humour?

HUGO

It's a dark series, we need to add some levity.

MARK

Perfect.

Annie walks in.

ANNIE

Sorry but Sophie just sent a message over. David wants to talk to everyone in the atrium and Andrew is here.

Mark stands up.

MARK

Excellent. Hugo, I will bring Andrew up with us.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE ENTRYWAY.

Andrew is stood in the main entrance looking around. Mark comes running down the hall.

MARK

Hey.

They shake hands.

ANDREW

Nice offices.

MARK

Yeah, not that you are going to see much of them, apart from maybe a few of the conference rooms for script reading.

ANDREW

Right.

Beth walks passed, Mark quickly points at her.

MARK

Beth.

Beth starts walking over and smiles at Andrew.

MARK

Andrew this is Beth, she's going to be handling the casting.

ANDREW

We've worked together before.

BETH

I started off on Cooper Street as well.

MARK

I did not know that.

BETH

Actually Andrew, I have a list in my office of a few of our casting prospects, would you like to have a look?

ANDREW

yeah sure, anything I can do to help

Beth walks off

ANDREW

So going to give me the tour?

MARK

No time, David's coming down to give us all a pep rally I think. Down here is the press area, you are going to want to avoid that. Upstairs is my office and the floor above that is where the producers meet.

ELIZABETH (O.S)

Mark, I need a statement.

Elizabeth appears but stops as she spots Andrew.

ELIZABETH

Mr Johnson.

MARK

This is Elizabeth, she's heading our press office.

ANDREW
(Confused)
Elizabeth. You wrote the article about
me getting arrested?

Elizabeth looks mortified.

ELIZABETH
I'm sorry.

ANDREW
It's fine you were doing your job.

ELIZABETH
If you want we can spend an hour today,
work out a statement and interview about
how excited you are to work for the
show.

ANDREW
Sounds good.

Elizabeth turns back to Mark.

ELIZABETH
I'm going to need that statement?

MARK
Yeah, Annie has it.

ELIZABETH
You didn't upset anyone in it did you?

MARK
Me... Never.

ELIZABETH
I will see her after this. Any idea what
David is going to say?

MARK
I'm sure it will be some folksy wisdom.

ANDREW
So you didn't write his speech for him?

MARK
I offered but you know, he wants to do
it himself.

Elizabeth shakes her head and walks off camera.

ANDREW
She's cute.

MARK
Eyes off superstar.

Beth returns.

BETH
There you go.

ANDREW
Cheers, I will have a look later.

MARK
Here we go.

Entrance begins to fill with people. David stands on one of the steps.

DAVID
Well here we all are. For some of us this has been a long time coming, for others it is just your first day but we are all here for a common purpose, to create something brilliant that will enhance the lives of so many people, no more than those who work here. Those who have made mistakes or have felt lost or who have something more to give to the world. Today the works starts so, time to get to it.

Round of applause.

MARK
He should have let me write it.

ANDREW
It lacked a little flair.

BETH
Guess he's a director for a reason.

They laugh and walk off together.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

20. INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is sat at his desk, looking frustrated. He angrily throws a piece of paper on the floor. Annie walks in.

ANNIE

We do have a bin you know.

MARK

It's full.

ANNIE

What's put you in a sour mood?

MARK

I can't get this scene right.

ANNIE

I thought you were doing set plans.

Mark picks up a piece of paper.

MARK

I am, I'm also trying to finish this scene for the pilot. While also responding to the concept artists and trying to write an article for some magazine that Elizabeth keeps bothering me with.

ANNIE

You should take a break.

Mark stands up

MARK

I'm going to get something to eat.

ANNIE

Good.

Phone begins to ring, Annie answers it while Mark puts on his coat.

ANNIE (INTO PHONE)

Thanks.

Annie hangs up.

MARK

I'm going to get some food, have an hour break and get into the mood.

ANNIE
No you're not.

Mark looks frustrated.

MARK
Why?

ANNIE
David needs to see you.

Mark slouches.

MARK
Okay.

ANNIE
I will get you a sandwich.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE.

Mark walks into David's office. Elizabeth and David are waiting for him. David looks hard at Mark.

DAVID
You look terrible.

Mark points at Elizabeth.

MARK
She keeps me up at night.

Elizabeth smiles.

DAVID
That's something I don't need to know...
But seriously kid, are you sleeping?

Elizabeth shakes her head.

MARK
Only when I get finished.

DAVID
Maybe I should soften up your schedule.

Mark sits down.

MARK
We don't have anyone else to do the work.

DAVID
A discussion for another day I guess.

...

MARK
What's the discussion for today?

ELIZABETH
You are not going to like it.

Mark smiles coyly at her.

MARK
If the press are involved then you're probably right.

An awkward silence follows.

MARK
Someone start.

ELIZABETH
We need to talk about the school scene.

MARK
This again?

DAVID
She's sold me.

ELIZABETH
We really need to consider altering it.

MARK
We alter it and we lose half our audience.

ELIZABETH
I hardly believe that.

David puts his hand up.

DAVID
Can it be done?

MARK
I've finished the scene and if I'm honest it's the only one I'm truly happy with.

Elizabeth rolls her eyes.

MARK (CONT.)
If I'm going to change it, there should be a valid reason why.

ELIZABETH

Because when it was in your book and that guy got killed in the store. Not that it was your fault.

MARK

Sounds like you're saying it is.

DAVID

Hear her out.

ELIZABETH

We don't need a PR disaster. Let's be honest we could be one day away from that with the actor you chose to cast. When details of the pilot leak, which you will want me to start doing soon, any wise news director will find footage from that day and run it all week long.

MARK

I'm sure they are done with that.

ELIZABETH

You are a beloved genius. The press will never be done with trying to tear you down.

DAVID

I'm not sure we want this negative press.

MARK

We need to ride it. Any negative press we get will be outweighed by the positives. If I stay on this project, then the scene stays.

David and Elizabeth look at each other.

ELIZABETH

If you have a press officer, you should listen to them.

MARK

A press officer should be helping the show, not hindering it.

ELIZABETH

Trust me that's what I'm trying to do.

MARK

David listen. This show needs that scene. The people who want to see the

show won't care and those that don't already hate it without us giving them a reason.

David nods.

DAVID
You know your art.

MARK
Are we done?

He looks sadly at Elizabeth who turns her gaze away from him.

DAVID
For now.

MARK
Great.

Mark stands up and leaves the room.

ELIZABETH
That was a mistake.

DAVID
I hope I'm not stepping onto anything personal?

ELIZABETH
You're not.

DAVID
He is your boyfriend.

ELIZABETH
Doesn't mean I can get through to him. David trust me when I say this scene will cause trouble. I was paid to write about things just like this. Mark might pretend he's shrugged all that stuff off from his first novel, but I think that might be the reason behind his stubbornness.

DAVID
We will keep on him.

ELIZABETH
Good.

DAVID

Go take a break. I can tell you are pissed at him best not to take that home.

Elizabeth stands up.

ELIZABETH

Thank you.

She leaves.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

21. INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David is at home on the phone.

DAVID (INTO PHONE)

No listen, we need to push forward... I
don't care how much it costs I'm not
filming every scene inside a studio...
Listen just get the scouts out there.

David hangs up.

ABI (O.S.)

(Raspy)

What was that about?

DAVID

Hugo is worried about scouting
locations. He's afraid we won't be able
to afford multiple real-life sets.

ABI (O.S.)

If you film everything in a studio,
everyone will be able to tell.

DAVID

I know that, and you know that, even
Hugo knows that but he is so worried
about money.

Abi appears in the doorway.

ABI

Any luck with a network?

DAVID

Me and Elizabeth are sweetening the deal
tomorrow.

ABI

You will get it sorted.

Abi disappears. David begins writing suddenly he can hear
coughing coming from the kitchen. He stands up and runs
into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN.

Abi is bent over the sink coughing profusely David
quickly runs her a glass of water.

DAVID
That's it Abi.

ABI
(Gasping)
I'm fine.

DAVID
You are not fine, look at you. This
isn't a cold Abi. I'm booking you in for
an appointment and I'm taking you
myself.

Abi shakes her head.

ABI
No. You have your meeting tomorrow.

DAVID
It can wait.

ABI
No, it can't. I will make the
appointment just to prove to you that it
is just a cold.

David looks unsure.

DAVIDO
Okay then. Let's get you into bed, the
dishes can wait.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

22. INT. MARK'S APARTMENT OFFICE - NIGHT.

Mark is on his laptop. Elizabeth walks in with a glass of wine.

ELIZABETH

Is there any point me being here if you are going to be working all night.

Mark sighs.

MARK

I thought you were watching the soaps on TV?

ELIZABETH

Mark it's ten o'clock.

Mark looks at his watch in amazement. He quickly shuts the laptop.

MARK

Is it? I don't know where the time goes.

He spins around to face Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Are you coming to watch something with me then?

MARK

Yeah, I just need to...

ELIZABETH

Need to?

MARK

There is just one more thing.

ELIZABETH

You're pissed at me?

MARK

No I'm not.

ELIZABETH

Yes you are. You only ever act this distant when you are angry with me. I can't believe it.

MARK

I wish you would get off my back about this scene.

ELIZABETH

I thought we decided that we will leave work at work.

Mark grabs his laptop.

MARK

This is my work, look around you, all of this is my work.

ELIZABETH

Then take a break and forget about it.

MARK

Why don't you ever back me up? It seems like every time I make a decision; I have to go twelve rounds with you. I'm your boss.

Mark stops and looks down. Elizabeth wipes away a tear.

ELIZABETH

And there I was, thinking I was your girlfriend.

MARK

I'm sorry, we shouldn't do this now.

ELIZABETH

No, I think we should. I argue with you Mark because you're an amateur playing at being pro. You think you know everything and as soon as anyone else tells you otherwise, you get defensive and threaten to quit. Does all this mean so little to you?

MARK

This means everything to me.

ELIZABETH

Then start acting like it and for god sake act like I mean something to you as well.

MARK

Liz?

ELIZABETH

Leave it Mark, I'm tired I'm going up to bed.

Elizabeth walks off camera. Mark turns around slowly and opens his laptop. Slight pause as he looks at the screen. Suddenly he shuts it again and walks towards the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S BATHROOM.

Elizabeth is in the bathroom running the tap. Mark walks in and had a muted conversation and then they hug.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

23. INT. TABLE READ ROOM - DAY.

David and Elizabeth are in a meeting with MR HARTWELL, who is sat across the table from him.

ELIZABETH

I'm telling you now, it's a dream sell.

DAVID

We can have the pilot filmed in a few months. Leak out a few details.

ELIZABETH

And we can give you full press coverage. Let you run the table on trailers.

Mr Hartwell taps at the table and looks between them.

MR HARTWELL

I can't say I'm not intrigued, I am a big fan of the book and it has been dying for an adaptation.

DAVID

And what a better adaptation than having the author himself working on it. I can tell you now, the feeling behind the project it's like nothing I've ever felt before.

MR HARTWELL

You have to understand my concerns though.

DAVID

We understand them.

Elizabeth looks around then pulls her attention back onto Mr Hartwell.

ELIZABETH

Actually I don't. This is a once in a lifetime show. You've got Mark Wilson working on adapting his bestselling novel. That alone buys you huge viewing figures.

MR HARTWELL

But it won't be Mark they will be seeing on their TV's.

DAVID

We've seen Mark act, trust me you don't want to see that.

ELIZABETH

Forget about Mark for a second. Don't believe everything you read in the paper. I've worked on a fair few shows and I've never seen a director better than David here, and the production team are incredible.

MR HARTWELL

I appreciate that. I just need to make sure that my concerns are properly expressed.

DAVID

Then list them and we will see what we can do.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

24. INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is pacing around the office.

MARK
I should be in there.

ANNIE
They have it sorted.

MARK
I should be in there.

ANNIE
Would you sit down.

MARK
I can't sit down. Right now, in the room just across the hall, our future is being decided and I can't be there because I am taking interviews.

ANNIE
Actually you are walking around the office pacing.

Mark slumps into his chair.

MARK
Don't you reckon I could find an excuse to sneak in there?

ANNIE
I think David would actually kill you.

Mark thinks for a second.

MARK
You do it.

Annie looks shocked

ANNIE
I can't go in there.

MARK
Why not?

ANNIE
Because I'm just your assistant.

MARK
Exactly, go in there and tell them I need to speak to them about something

and then when you are in there, get a look at their notebooks.

ANNIE
You really are not very clever.

There is a timid knock at the door where LOUISE is stood.

LOUISE
Hi I'm looking for Mark Wilson.

Annie stands up

ANNIE
I'm going to get some water.

Mark stands up.

MARK
You are Louise right, after an assistant writing role?

LOUISE
That's right.

MARK
Have you worked on anything before?

LOUISE
Only things at university.

MARK
Okay. Listen I'm having a bit of mental episode and I think if I start interviewing you, I may ask you to do something completely stupid and walk into a private meeting with a very large network executive to get the job so why don't we focus on the writing.

LOUISE
Sounds good.

Mark offers her a seat and she gingerly takes it. He then chuck's a notebook in front of her and offers her a piece of paper.

MARK
This scene leads up to a conflict. I need you to write me a script with no fewer than forty character interactions and you need to slowly ramp up the tension. When you're done, I will read it.

LOUISE
I don't have a pen

Mark hands her a pen, she looks over it.

LOUISE (CONT.)
This is a nice pen.

MARK
It was given to me by the Royal poet laureate.

LOUISE
There are bite marks in it.

MARK
Ignore that.

Annie walks back in with some bottles of water.

MARK
Well?

ANNIE
What?

MARK
I thought you were going to sneak into the meeting.

ANNIE
I went to get water.

MARK
I NEED INFORMATION!

He looks timidly at Louise.

MARK (CONT.)
Sorry.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

25. INT. TABLE READ ROOM - DAY.

David is rubbing his eyes. Elizabeth is tapping at the notebook.

ELIZABETH

So really your only concern is Andrew?

MR HARTWELL

He's a risk to take on a project like this, especially in such a substantive role.

DAVID

It was Mark's choice and it got him along for the ride.

MR HARTWELL

Trust me, I understand loyalty but I'm sure there are other roles for him instead banking everything on a guy who nobody trusts or knows. We have a lot of very good actors in our network and if you're worried about money, we will front the bill.

DAVID

Money isn't our concern. I've seen Andrew act out these scenes that Mark is writing. The pair of them, they are like two cogs in a machine. They understand each other and the audience will pick up on that.

ELIZABETH

How about this. We get Andrew on TV and in the papers. He does a full tell it all spread on everything that's happened since Cooper Street. He's extremely sorry for the hurt he's caused but he's turning his life around. Then he says how grateful he is to yourself for giving him this chance when no other network would.

DAVID

Imagine it. Andrew has the charm, the wit and the talent to be an A lister and he will be forever grateful to you and so for that matter will Mark Wilson.

MR HARTWELL

If it wasn't for the fact that I love the book and see money to be made, I would have laughed you out of the room but I need other assurances.

DAVID

Thirty percent merchandising.

MR HARTWELL

Seventy.

DAVID

The property belongs to Mark's estate, I only have so much I can offer. Let's say forty.

MR HARTWELL

Sixty.

Elizabeth rights on a piece of paper and slides it over to David who nods.

DAVID

Forty plus you keep ninety percent of advertisement money made during the show.

Mr Hartwell smiles.

MR HARTWELL

I will get the lawyers to work out an agreement.

FADE OUT:

FADE OUT:

26. INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is sat at his desk, tapping his fingers while Louise continues to write her book. Suddenly Annie comes in.

ANNIE

They are done.

Mark stands up.

MARK

Really?

ANNIE

Yeah just finished.

Mark quickly walks out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. TABLE READ ROOM.

Mark walks into the table read room. Elizabeth is sat reading while David paces the other side of the table.

MARK

How did it go?

David walks over to the Mark

DAVID

It looks like a done deal kid.

Mark quickly shakes his hand

MARK

Great. What did they ask for?

ELIZABETH

Andrew not to be in it.

Marks face drops.

MARK

But you talked him down right?

ELIZABETH

We had to sell our souls though.

DAVID

But it will all be worth it when we get his money.

David suddenly looks around at Elizabeth.

DAVID

Liz can you give me a minute.

Elizabeth stands up

ELIZABETH

Sure, I need to work on leaking some points of this meeting. I will see you at home Mark.

MARK

Actually I need to go and see Andrew tonight, I will see you in the morning.

Elizabeth looks sad and nods and walks away.

DAVID

Listen, I need you to hire another writer.

MARK

I've just met with Louise. I've only read some of her stuff, but she seems like a bright kid.

DAVID

You need someone else?

MARK

Why?

DAVID

I'm promoting you.

MARK

(Confused)

What?

DAVID

Executive producer.

MARK

What about Hugo?

DAVID

Hugo is heading our editing team, I want you on the ground. Keeping an eye on Andrew and making sure this product is as close to your book as everyone will want it to be.

MARK

I get the choice of writer though?

DAVID
If you insist.

David suddenly looks down like he's worried.

MARK
Are you okay, you don't seem yourself?

DAVID
Yeah... No but it's nothing... just the
stress of the meeting.

Mark nods and goes to walk away but he turns quickly.

MARK
We got them.

David punches the air.

DAVID
Yes we did.

Mark leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S OFFICE.

Camera follows Mark as he goes back to his office. Louise has stopped writing.

MARK
Done?

LOUISE
Yeah, I think so, if I had more time I
could make it better.

Mark grabs the script and skim reads it.

MARK
This is good, very good.

LOUISE
Thank you.

Louise stands up.

MARK
I'm going to read this but I think you
have what it takes. Annie will ring you
in the next couple of days.

Louise smiles and leaves. Annie walks in.

ANNIE

Was that one of those real I will ring
her later or a fake one?

MARK

Real, she's good. Can you do me a favour
and pull up some fan fictions of my
book?

ANNIE

Why?

MARK

I need someone who writes like me.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

27. INT. INSURANCE OFFICE - DAY.

Daniel is sat behind a desk answering phone calls.

DANIEL (INTO PHONE)

Yes, don't worry we cover all of that for you... Trust me you won't find better coverage than us.

NICOLA walks over and stops at Daniel's desk, leaning over towards him.

DANIEL (INTO PHONE)

I will just pass you over to another member of our sales team.

Daniel presses a button on his phone and then turns towards Nicola.

DANIEL

What do you need?

Nicola looks shocked.

NICOLA:

Mark Wilson, the author, he is in my office and he wants to speak to you.

Daniel looks shocked.

DANIEL

What? Why?

NICOLA:

He wouldn't say

DANIEL

(Nervously)

I think I know why.

Daniel looks gutted. He stands up and walks between a few desks and stops by Chloe's desk. CHLOE turns around to look at him.

DANIEL

Mark Wilson wants to see me.

CHLOE

Who?

DANIEL
The author, the one I wrote the fan
fiction about

CHLOE
Ah.

DANIEL
Why would he want to see me?

CHLOE
Probably upset that you are a better
writer than he is.

DANIEL
I better go and see him.

Daniel walks away from Chloe and opens a door into an
office.

CUT TO:

INT. NICOLA'S OFFICE.

Mark is stood in there flicking through some sheets.

DANIEL
Mr Wilson.

Mark turns around and quickly shakes Daniel's hand

MARK
You are Daniel Hart, author of this fan
fiction?

DANIEL
Yeah, listen I'm sorry, I know I
shouldn't plagiarise your work.

Mark puts his hand out and smiles.

MARK
It's fanfiction you are meant to
plagiarise. You know I started by
writing fanfictions.

DANIEL
Really? How old were you?

MARK
Twelve.

Daniel nods nervously.

DANIEL

I'm sorry to be rude Mr Wilson but what are you here for?

MARK

As you know I'm working on a television series.

DANIEL

Of course, it's been all over the news.

Mark laughs slightly.

MARK

It has. Well I'm moving up and becoming a producer and I need a screen writer who understands my work.

The realisation seems to dawn on Daniel.

DANIEL

Mr Wilson, I'm no screen writer.

MARK

Not yet but you have potential.

DANIEL

Seriously, this would be like a serious thing and I only write fan fiction.

MARK

Exactly. What do you think this show is but fan fiction of my novel. You will be perfect for it.

DANIEL

No.

MARK

Listen this is like some cliché movie thing going on here, but this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. You have a chance here to help me write and I'm going to be honest not every average Joe gets that chance but I did once so I'm offering it to you.

...

DANIEL

I have a job, a life, I can't just run away from it. I mean I will have to speak to my girlfriend.

MARK

(Excited)

You have two seconds. Come on, when you were writing didn't you at least dream for a second that you would be able to work on something like this?

DANIEL

Yeah, but that's a game.

MARK

Now it's reality.

Daniel looks horrified but finally he smiles.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

28. INT. DAVID'S OFFICE - DAY.

Beth, David and Hugo are sat in an office.

BETH

Did Mark say who he had hired?

DAVID

Some kid who wrote a fan fiction of his work.

BETH

Seriously?

HUGO

David, don't you think you are giving Mark a bit too much free reign on this project?

DAVID

It was one of the agreements when he took it over and let's be honest do you really think he is just going to let this kid write?

BETH

Exactly it's a stunt so Mark can keep control of the writing. No good will come of it.

DAVID

I've read some of the kids work, it's not bad and with a bit of training he might make something

There is a knock at the door, Mark and Daniel walk in. Mark walks up to the desk and looks at some sheets that Hugo hands him. Daniel hangs back.

MARK

Everyone this is Daniel; he is going to be working on our screen writing team.

DANIEL

Pleasure.

MARK

When did these come through?

HUGO

Last night.

MARK

I will get Annie to send them over to the studio.

DAVID

We need to discuss shooting locations when you have a free minute. The shopping area isn't going to work

MARK

Why not?

BETH

Because everyone will be shopping for Christmas by then.

HUGO

They don't look too comfortably on being shut around that time.

MARK

We will sort something.

Daniel steps forward.

DANIEL

I'm sorry is there something I should be doing.

DAVID

Right yeah. Mark take him to go and see Louise, get the pair of them working on scene twenty three for the pilot, we need the first draft done for casting next week.

MARK

Yeah.

Mark leaves.

MARK

Follow me.

Daniel timidly follows him out.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE STAIRWAY.

They walk downstairs towards the writer's office. Talking as they walk.

MARK

Strange thing about this place is you need to be ready to have meetings in the hallways. When you are in your office you will want that to be a meeting free zone. People never come and see you when you're in your office. Well apart from me probably.

DANIEL

Right.

They stop at the office and Mark opens the door.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENWRITER'S OFFICE.

Louise looks up.

MARK

This is Louise, she is going to be your writing partner.

DANIEL

Hi.

LOUISE

Yeah, we spoke the other day.

MARK

Of course.

DANIEL

So do you have any notes for me for scene twenty three?

MARK

Don't worry about that I will be in to work with you through that later. Why don't you two get to know each other, work on some small things and get the juices flowing.

Daniel walks over to his desk and taps on it.

DANIEL

Okay yeah, sounds good.

MARK

Your desk is there, if you need me my assistant Annie is just next door. Welcome to the team.

Mark leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY.

Suddenly Elizabeth grabs him.

ELIZABETH

Hey.

MARK

Hi.

ELIZABETH

I'm just going to get some lunch fancy
it?

MARK

What for?

ELIZABETH

To eat Mark. come on.

MARK

Oh I can't I need to finish this work.

ELIZABETH

(Annoyed)

I meant me and you go and have something
to eat together, like boyfriend and
girlfriend.

MARK

I know what you mean, it's just I can't
leave this stuff right now. Tonight
though.

Elizabeth looks down sadly as Mark disappears.

ELIZABETH

Yeah tonight.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE.

Daniel sits down at his desk and smiles nervously at Louise.

LOUISE

Build up scenes.

DANIEL

Excuse me?

LOUISE

That's all we ever write here. Scenes that build up to something else. The stuff most likely to get cut.

DANIEL

Then who writes the rest?

LOUISE

Mark and then we get the fun of editing it.

DANIEL

If you don't like it, why are you here?

LOUISE

Because no matter what, my names going to be on the credits as a screen writer and if that isn't great for the CV, then nothing will be, am I right?

DANIEL

(Sighing)

Yeah, you're right.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

29. INT. MARK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

Mark is sat in the kitchen working, Elizabeth walks in and places a bag on the floor.

ELIZABETH

Mark?

Mark places the sheet down and looks at the bag.

MARK

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

I can't do this anymore.

Mark looks confused and starts walking slowly towards her

MARK

(Confused)

Do what?

ELIZABETH

This.

She shrugs.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)

We work together and we don't speak. We come here, and we don't speak. It's not what I imagined when we first got together.

MARK

Where has this come from?

ELIZABETH

It's been building for weeks Mark.

Elizabeth reaches her hand out and strokes at Mark's face.

ELIZABETH (CONT.)

You have the world inside your head Mark. At the moment you are focusing on this thing, you don't have the place for me or for anyone. You need to do this.

MARK

What? You want us to go to work and pretend we never happened? That isn't going to work Liz.

ELIZABETH

No, I couldn't do that. I love this job
Mark, I really do and I appreciate you
letting me come on this journey with you
but for my sanity, I'm going to have to
leave.

MARK

(Getting angry)

You can't leave now we are this close to
getting things going.

Elizabeth's hands shoot in the air.

ELIZABETH

(Frustrated)

This, this is what I mean. God show some
humanity Mark. I just said I'm leaving
you and your calm. The bit you get angry
about is that I'm leaving the show. This
is exactly what I mean.

MARK

I care about-

ELIZABETH

You care about your ego and your work
Mark. That's all it ever was. You were
with me because I smiled and giggled
over every word you said. Now I don't
boost your self-esteem, you don't talk
to me. I'm pretty sure that's all Daniel
is as well, just someone else to tell
you how good you are. You're right
there is more to you than just being a
genius, you're a workaholic, un-feeling,
recluse.

Mark nods.

MARK

Yeah.

Elizabeth shakes her head slowly, tears welling up in her
eyes

ELIZABETH

I loved you Mark.

Mark's jaw tightens.

MARK
You're right, I can't work with this.

Elizabeth nods and walks away, grabbing her bag she walks towards the door and slams it. Camera focuses on Mark as he breathes rapidly.

MARK
Dammit.

End scene with Mark picking up his laptop and going back to writing.

FADE IN:

FADE IN:

30. INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - NIGHT.

David is at home with Abi who looks ill.

DAVID

I'm telling you now, it couldn't have gone any better. They were practically eating out of my hand.

ABI

I knew you could do it.

DAVID

We will start shooting in a few months' time and then have the pilot ready for circulation.

ABI

I told you this time it would work out.

Abi coughs.

DAVID

What did the doctors say?

ABI

They have taken some blood and they want me to have a scan next week. They think my thyroid is swollen. They have given me some tablets.

DAVID

I will make sure I come with you next time. Network meeting or not.

David looks up as the doorbell rings. He stands up and answers it to Elizabeth. Her eyes are red, and her mascara is down her cheeks.

DAVID

What's wrong, do you want to come in?

ELIZABETH

No I need to get back to my apartment but I didn't want to do this on the phone.

DAVID

Do what?

ELIZABETH

I can't work on this show anymore.

DAVID
(Shocked)
Why? It's Mark isn't it. I will talk to
him I will.

ELIZABETH
No David, for my sanity you won't. He
has no place for me in his life and you
don't need me now either.

DAVID
That's not true.

ELIZABETH
I need to do this David. Please.

Suddenly Abi coughs more violently. Elizabeth looks in.

ELIZABETH
Is everything okay?

DAVID
It's fine. There is nothing I can do to
talk you out of it?

ELIZABETH
I'm sorry David. I just can't.

DAVID
I get it kid. You need to look after
yourself.

He looks behind him.

DAVID (CONT.)
Projects like these have a way of giving
you tunnel vision. That's what Mark's
got at the moment, but the project is
only a fleeting thing. Those around you
are what's important. I'm going to miss
the hell out of you Liz, but you go make
the best out of your life while you can.

Elizabeth puts her hand on David's shoulder.

ELIZABETH
David are you sure everything is okay?

DAVID
I'm positive.

ELIZABETH
I will send some notes to the team, make
sure you still have some cover.

DAVID
I will miss you kid.

Elizabeth gently kisses David on the cheek. David looks out the door as Elizabeth walks away.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

31. INT. SCREEN WRITERS OFFICE - DAY.

Mark walks into the screenwriters office. He looks like he has not slept.

MARK

Hey.

LOUISE

Good morning.

DANIEL

(Excited)

Hey I wanted to show you this.

Daniel grabs some sheets of paper off his desk and hands them to Mark. Mark looks at them his face dropping.

MARK

This is scene twenty-three. Who told you to write scene twenty three?

DANIEL

David came and saw me yesterday.

MARK

(Frustrated)

You don't write scenes without me.

LOUISE

We are screen writers.

MARK

I don't care. This is my show, you write what I tell you to, not David.

DANIEL

(Stunned)

Sorry, just doing as I'm told.

Mark looks up to the heavens. Then back down at Daniel.

MARK

Let me look at this.

Mark begins to read the script, pacing the room as he does. He stops and turns back to Daniel and Louise.

MARK

This is good. I will speak to David about roles but from now on you write what I tell you.

LOUISE

(Sarcastic)

Sounds reasonable.

Mark gives her a nod and walks back into his office.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S OFFICE.

Annie isn't there yet. He sits at his desk for a moment. There is a knock on the door and Andrew is stood in the doorway.

MARK

Hey, what are you doing here?

Mark stands up and shakes Andrew's hand. Andrew looks confused.

ANDREW

I came into see Elizabeth but the press people said she's not here.

MARK

No. She's got a new job, had to move on.

ANDREW

Seriously?

MARK

Yeah surprised me as well. What did you need to see her about?

ANDREW

She was meant to be prepping me on my interview with Chris Munroe.

MARK

Oh right. I can handle that.

ANDREW

Really? I didn't think you got on well with the press.

MARK

I don't think that's why I'm the best one to know how to deal with them. He's going to be confrontational you know that.

ANDREW
Yeah, I guessed.

MARK
Don't rise to it. Stay focussed on the show. If he pushes too hard just throw some witty remark back at him and I'm sure he will back off.

ANDREW
Sure I don't need to go see one of the press people?

MARK
No you will be fine.

Andrew nods and goes to leave but stops as he turns back around to face Mark.

ANDREW
You're going to need to get a new press officer. Show won't get off the ground without one.

MARK
We will work on it, now go and knock them dead.

Andrew smiles and walks out.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

32. INT. CHRIS'S SYUDIO - DAY.

Andrew is sat across a desk from Chris. It all seems very nice.

CHRIS

I can tell you the public are really excited to see you on our screens once again.

ANDREW

And I can't wait to be back on their screens. This is a very exciting project. Mark and David are going to produce something incredible. They are truly making art in their offices.

CHRIS

Of course, your bookmaker will be happy as well.

Andrew's face drop.

ANDREW

Excuse me?

CHRIS

I mean with the money you will be making from the show. I'm sure your bookmaker will love the extra money you will be spending on bets.

ANDREW

I don't gamble.

Chris laughs.

CHRIS

I'm sorry Mr Johnson but your gambling addiction has been well documented. Is Mark Wilson a gambler as well, is that where you met?

ANDREW

That's none of your business.

CHRIS

I think we all want to know your take on it.

ANDREW

This show is fantastic. Seriously I've read parts of the pilot and its obviously award worthy.

CHRIS

(Wryly)

Are you gambling on whether the show will win a BAFTA?

Andrew stands up.

ANDREW

This is over.

He turns away but then turns back towards the Chris.

ANDREW (CONT.)

You smarmy prick, having a go at someone just for cheap laughs. You're not a journalist, you're a clown.

CHRIS

And you're not an actor Mr Johnson, you are a liability. I've got two to one that you blow it before the pilots even filmed.

Andrew runs over and grabs Chris to his feet by his jacket before chucking him to the floor. Security quickly arrives.

CUT TO:

INT. MARK'S OFFICE.

Mark has his head against his chair, his eyes wide. Annie suddenly walks in.

ANNIE

Did you see that?

MARK

Yeah.

ANNIE

I mean did you see that? There is going to be trouble.

MARK

That's not trouble. Trouble is running down the stairs.

Suddenly David appears in the office doorway.

DAVID

Mark.

Mark shoots up.

MARK

I know it looks bad.

DAVID

Looks bad, this is bad.

MARK

I will handle it.

DAVID

We hired him on your request Mark. On your request.

MARK

He was pushed. He was un-prepared with Liz leaving, no one briefed him.

DAVID

And whose fault is that?

Mark looks hard at David who closes his eyes. He opens them again looking apologetically at Mark.

MARK

I will sort this out.

DAVID

How?

Mark points at Annie

MARK

Get some press here at once. I want to make a statement.

DAVID

I think we should let our office do it.

MARK

They will want someone high profile and we don't have anyone in our press office. I will make this better.

Annie quickly returns.

ANNIE

I've set it for one 'o'clock.

DAVID

Sort it or he is out of the door.

Mark nods. David storms out. Mark sits back down in his chair with his head in his hands.

FADE OUT:

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FADE IN:

33. INT. GP VISITING ROOM - DAY.

David and Abi are sat in a GP visiting room. They are holding hands. They both look up as the doctor walks in and takes a seat opposite them.

DOCTOR:

How are you feeling Abigail?

ABI

I'm desperate for results.

DOCTOR:

I know it's taken awhile but we wanted to be sure. We believe the early treatment we started was crucial.

Zoom in on Abi's hand as she squeeze's David's. Cut back to wide view.

DAVID

What are we looking at?

DOCTOR:

We don't like to lie during these sort of appointments but this is something that sounds life breaking the first time you hear it. While scanning we found evidence of tumours within your thyroid.

Abi looks devastated.

DAVID

That's why you were desperate to begin treatment.

DOCTOR:

Attacking this early is the only way we like to do things.

ABI

What will be the treatment?

DOCTOR:

We are going to continue with radioactive thyroid treatment.. While we do that, we will consider other options.

DAVID

Surgery?

DOCTOR:

That's what we will be looking at yes but the tumours are still small and I hope the iodine therapy will work. I have some booklets for you to look at and I will see you next week.

ABI

Thank you doctor.

DOCTOR:

There are people here for anything you need.

DAVID

Thank you.

Abi and David stand up and they both leave.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM.

Suddenly Abi chokes and begins to cry.

DAVID

Hey hey.

David hugs her.

DAVID (CONT.)

We are going to get through this. They've been treating it for a while. Now they know what they are fighting, they will get on top of it.

Abi nods.

ABI

Are you going back to work?

DAVID

I told everyone I wouldn't be back today. They know what they need to do.

ABI

Don't you dare even think about leaving this project.

DAVID

I will if you ask me.

ABI

Never.

DAVID
Let's go home and get you a warm bath.

Camera pans upwards towards a TV screen as David and Abi walk off stage. The TV shows Mark.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE OF OFFICE.

Mark is stood on a step. REPORTER 1, REPORTER 2, REPORTER 3 are offscreen in front of him.

MARK
The incident in question does not show that Andrew is un-stable.

REPORTER 1 (O.S)
You think Mr Johnson is unstable?

Mark looks frustrated.

MARK
That's not what I said. Now we as an organisation have full faith in Andrew and his ability as an actor.

REPORTER 2 (O.S)
Is he going to apologise?

MARK
I don't think there is any need to apologise.

REPORTER 2 (O.S)
Why not?

MARK
He was clearly pushed by Chris Munroe, asking questions that were completely out of order.

REPORTER 1 (O.S)
So are you saying that Andrew Johnson had every right to assault?

MARK
It wasn't assault and let's be honest haven't we all wanted to hit interviewers every now and again.

Stunned silence. Mark looks panicked.

MARK (CONT.)
(Nervous)
Obviously I don't mean that I have ever wanted to.

REPORTER 3 (O.S)
I have a source that says Hartwell productions is pulling out of your deal.

MARK
(Whispers)
I haven't heard that.

REPORTER 3 (O.S)
Sorry?

MARK
I haven't heard that but if it is true then it's their loss on leaving such a great show and I think it shows the shallowness of network executives and their Hollywood guilt trip from past indiscretions.

Stunned silence again. Cut to show Daniel with his head in his hands and Annie looking shocked.

MARK (CONT.)
To conclude. Andrew Johnson deeply regrets what happened, but he is looking forward to taking a break from press work to film Beware the Dark Desire.
Thank you.

The reporters begin to walk away. Mark walks back towards Annie and Daniel.

ANNIE
Oh my God.

MARK
That could have gone better.

DANIEL
Do you think Mr Hartwell might have watched that?

MARK
For sure.

ANNIE
Is it going to be bad?

Mark smiles

MARK

No. Nothing we can't bounce back from.
Now let's get back to work.

FADE OUT:

(c) Jacob Bower 2019

FADE IN:

34. INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY.

Mark is at his desk looking dejected. Annie comes in.

ANNIE

David wants to see you?

MARK

I didn't think he was here.

ANNIE

Sophie just rang down; he came in to speak to Mr Hartwell.

MARK

It's over then.

ANNIE

The show?

MARK

No the network deal. Who else does he want?

ANNIE

Daniel and Louise. Should I fetch them?

Mark stands up, grabs his blazer and starts putting it on.

MARK

I can do it.

Mark walks out of the office.

CUT TO:

INT. SCREENWRITERS OFFICE.

Daniel and Louise are sat working at their desks. Mark knocks on the door. Daniel and Louise look up from their work.

MARK

David wants us.

Daniel and Louise stand up and walk with Mark up the stairs towards David's office.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE.

Beth, Hugo and Sarah are already sat at the table. David is on the phone. He puts his hand up to Mark. They all take their seat.

DAVID (INTO PHONE)
I understand. Thank you for your call.

David hangs up, places his phone on the table and rubs his cheek.

HUGO
He's pulled out?

DAVID
He has.

MARK
Because of Andrew or me?

DAVID
(To Mark)
I think it's a combination of all those things. We've been amateurs but one thing is for sure, you will never be talking to the press again.

LOUISE
Shouldn't have pissed off the press officer.

Everyone looks shocked at her but then David laughs and shakes his head. Everyone smiles looking at eachother.

BETH
What do we do now then? How long can we keep the project going?

DAVID
Peter still has enough for us to operate.

MARK
I have a few contacts, people who will be after merchandising rights. That will be enough to keep us rolling for a while.

David nods.

DAVID
We just have to do things differently.

HUGO

We scale back. We are struggling for actors anyway so we pool from unknowns, so we don't have to pay them as much.

MARK

If we go for more studio sets, we can scale our budget back as well.

DAVID

Can you handle that Sarah?

SARAH:

Sure but it will push us back filming.

DANIEL

Give us time to finish the script.

MARK

No this is good. We scale it all back and get filming. We don't leak anything, we keep it all in house and only start showing the networks once we have some substantial filming done and a real working project.

BETH

They won't be able to resist.

DAVID

I want everyone on this table working together tomorrow and I want to see a re-vised time table and plan by the end of the day. Now get to it.

Everyone stands up, Mark looks at Daniel.

MARK

Can you finish scene twenty three and get it to me by the morning?

DANIEL

Sure thing.

Mark lingers in front of David while the others leave.

DAVID

What do you want?

MARK

What a set of circumstances?

DAVID

What? Us losing our press officer a day before having a major PR disaster?

MARK

Yeah, I'm sorry about that.

DAVID

It's the least of my worries today.

Mark nods turns to leave but then turns back around.

MARK

How was Abi's appointment?

DAVID

(Deadpan)

It's cancer like we feared.

Mark walks towards David.

MARK

(Shock)

Oh, David I am so sorry. Is there anything you need?

DAVID

You to step up and help lead these people.

MARK

Are you going to take some time off during treatment?

DAVID

Not much.

MARK

We can handle it if you need to be there

DAVID

No Mark, I need the distraction.

MARK

Okay. I promise boss. No more disasters, we will get it done for you

David nods, zoom in on his face.

FADE CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S LIVINGROOM - DAY.

Text on screen reads "Present day" David sitting in his armchair. Camera pans around to show the TV. It is showing the news.

PRESENTER (V.O)

There seems to be no end to Mark Wilson's belligerent attitude towards the Incel community and a lot of us here wonder what this means for the Lockheart TV series.

David turns off the TV, sits forward with his head in his hands, Abi can be heard coughing from off stage.

FADE OUT: