

FALL FASHION

Written by

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INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

NATHAN SIMS (25) runs for his life. He races through a dimly-lit, spartan home. Dark blood, hot and thick, surges from his throat. A KILLER is in pursuit.

Nathan barrels through a stack of books on his way out of one room. He overturns a chair on his way into another.

A knife slashes through air, advancing with haste, before brutally stabbing Nathan. His legs tremble, then give way.

Nathan Sims collapses in a pile. He gurgles and chokes on his own blood, then dies alone on the floor.

EXT. WYCOMBE SQUARE (TWO YEARS LATER) - DAY

London's Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Neo-Georgian houses, among the finest in England.

MAID 1 exits one such home with a dog on a leash. MAID 2 exits another. She, too, leads a dog. They look towards a red door with gold numbering.

Slowly, it opens. JO MILLER (25) cradles a corgi puppy. She steps out. Thick hair, arguing with the wind.

EXT. SHEFFIELD TERRACE - DAY

Jo and the two Maids walk. Jo's corgi wags an eager tail.

While both Maids wear matronly, black-and-white uniforms that express civility and compliance, Jo Miller wears an outfit that reveals capacity and competence. Also, style.

There is a fine line between fashion and style, and Jo is effortlessly navigating their shared border. She wears a linen, apricot dress with blue buttons, and peep-toe heels to match. Jewellery from Verdura, though almost as an afterthought. She is an American in London. She is bright.

Her appearance, her nationality, and her privilege: Three reasons why Jo Miller so intrigues one ELEANOR JAMES (25).

The Englishwoman grips laundry bags, studies the American from the next block. Eleanor is conventionally attractive, though it's obscured by a regimen of ill-applied eyeliner and burgeoning mental illness. Her socioeconomic struggle starkly presents: Dry and matted hair, dull and thin skin.

Eleanor stands in judgment of Jo. Adjusts an unwieldy bag.

INT. JO'S HOUSE - DAY

Jo enters. She releases her dog, he scampers to a bowl.

Jo heads up a staircase and continues into her bedroom.

Lined up are ten mannequins. Each display garments of Jo's own clever invention. She paces left to right, as if a drill sergeant evaluating a platoon. Pleased, Jo photographs the collection.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - DAY

Eleanor works. Sweeping and sewing; lint traps and ironing.

INT. ELEANOR'S FLAT - NIGHT

Drab, tenement housing. On Eleanor's sole mannequin rests a firebrick blouse. Eleanor's laser-like, almost athletic focus is trained on the blouse: Lapels. Pockets. Buttons.

Eleanor's attention turns to the kitchen sink, where a German roach waits patiently on the dull, stainless steel.

The bug's curious antennae: They wave crisp figure eights.

INT. CENTRAL SAINT MARTINS - DAY

Jo and Eleanor are in studio, graduate students finishing their Master's in Fashion at Central Saint Martins School of Fashion and Textiles. AL HODGESON (50) boldly lectures.

HODGESON

History will remember that Alexander McQueen was born right here in London. A cogent argument can be made, however, that he was born right here: at Central Saint Martins. In any event, McQueen was born naked, without the clothes he would come to admire. Unfortunately, McQueen died naked, hanging in the closet with the clothes he had come to love.

Hodgeson talks to hear himself talk, and Jo listens with rapt attention. Unmoved, Eleanor sketches evening wear.

HODGESON

When McQueen was alive, so too, was his imagination. He abandoned formal education at age sixteen, choosing fashion design in its stead. He learned tailoring on Savile Row, and pattern-making from costumiers Angels and Bermans. Then, in 1990, McQueen arrived at Saint Martins. Once here, he worked tirelessly: in this studio, in that seat. His thesis collection was acquired by Isabella Blow, his eponymous line by Gucci Group shortly thereafter.

Jo smiles in the wake of his garish poetry.

HODGESON

Now, decades later, McQueen is gone. He has left our hallowed halls...he has left our hollow lives. Tomorrow, I ask that you bring one piece from your thesis collections. Afford us the opportunity to improve upon any one piece in the collection that may need outside input. Collaboration worked for McQueen, now let it work for you. Because the fact remains, Alexander has gone, but we are here.

(beat)

Embrace opportunity... Embrace it, for tomorrow we will die.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Jo negotiates a crowded hall. Knocks on Hodgeson's door.

HODGESON

Jo, yes. Have a seat.

She sits, dutifully smoothes her skirt to avoid creasing.

HODGESON

How's the collection coming along?

JO

It's going well. I actually finished a few weeks ago, so it's more about making adjustments at this point.

HODGESON

Congratulations. Finishing accounts for 90% of success. In any endeavour.

JO

Totally. I just read that Vivienne Westwood once said, "Finishing a collection is like having a child. They each bring something into the world that wasn't there before --

HODGESON

"And they're each a terrific pain in the ass."

They share a smile, dispense with formalities.

HODGESON

Jo... I'm curious about your plans.

JO

Like everyone else, I hope my collection makes an impression so I can continue doing the work.

HODGESON

Do you intend to stay in London?

JO

Oh, I love it here. My parents have settled in nicely, so I want to split time between New York and London. But that's a bit ambitious.

HODGESON

There's no such thing as being "a bit" ambitious. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman is either willing to kill for her vision or is not. Degrees of want are silly to quantify, so in that regard... Have you ever considered teaching?

JO

Teaching? Like a professor?

HODGESON

Like an adjunct.

JO

I mean, that would be amazing, but again, I'm looking to establish my own line. It's flattering, and I appreciate even the idea of it, but I'm really looking to get backing.

HODGESON

I understand. But be practical, Jo. The fashion landscape is cluttered with once bright lights now dimmed by expired filament. To be certain, your output is commendable.

JO

But...

HODGESON

I don't know if it's inspired.

JO

In my last review, you said that my work is consistently excellent.

HODGESON

It is. Unfortunately, "consistently excellent" gets you into this school.

(MORE)

HODGESON (cont'd)
 "Occasionally transcendent" catapults
 you out of it.

JO
 Wait. Do you think I have a chance
 to show the best collection?

HODGESON
 I do.

JO
 Just not a good chance. As in,
 steel yourself for disappointment.

HODGESON
 Life is full of disappointment, dear.
 The fashion business is no exception.

JO
 I think I see what you're saying.
 (beat)
 There's a very fine line between
 grade-A work, and A+ work.

HODGESON
 ... It's actually a very thick line.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

STAFFERS prepare the home for a formal gathering. Along with
 MAID 1, Jo sets the vast, ornate dining room table. She places
 a crab fork. Maid 1 slightly adjusts it. Jo smiles. Her mother,
 VICTORIA MILLER (55), witnessed the interaction.

MRS. MILLER
 I'm sure Mary appreciates your help.
 (beat)
 We pay her well for her efforts, Jo.

JO
 I'm sure she appreciates your help.
 Soon, Mrs. Miller tries another tack.

MRS. MILLER
 Were you out with your dog earlier?

JO
 Eben is "our" dog, Mom. And yes, I
 was out. He's keeping me in shape.

MRS. MILLER
 May I ask that he keep you in line?

Jo fumbles a place fork.

JO

Is it out of line to walk our dog?

MRS. MILLER

When you pick up after it, then set the table, it's not exactly civil.

JO

If your concern was about hygiene, you'd have a point. But it's not. It's about "What Will People Think?"

MRS. MILLER

We've been here for two years and the closest friends you have are the staff. What will people think?

JO

Maybe that I'm down to earth and a relatively well-adjusted human.

(beat)

The British know we're rich, Mom. We don't need to rub their noses in shit every chance that we get.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The party in full swing. MOVERS and SHAKERS wear black tie.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jo fits a thesis dress on MODEL 1. Jo pulls, prods, twists.

MODEL 1

Do your parents have parties often?

JO

Once a month. When they leave town on weekends, I throw my own parties. You should come by Friday night if you're not doing anything.

She makes a final adjustment, steps back to evaluate.

JO

What do you think?

MODEL 1

It's fantastic, Jo, but I'm not the Saint Martins grad student.

JO

Oh, please. Studying fashion at Saint Martins is like playing soccer -- football -- at Cambridge.

(MORE)

JO (cont'd)

Maybe one player at Cambridge goes pro, and only one designer at CSM gets their thesis bought. The rest of us slave away for the big houses.

MODEL 1

Sounds worse than modeling. Are you friendly with Tom and Sally?

JO

Yeah -- I'll invite them, too.

MODEL 1

They're a great night out.

(beat)

Do you know Eleanor James?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eleanor threads a chenille needle. Pins a dress on MODEL 2. She guides the needle through thick gingham. It breaks the surface like a dolphin, submerges, and reappears once more.

The needle pierces skin. Draws a pearl of blood and a yelp.

ELEANOR

Sorry.

MODEL 2

It's okay.

ELEANOR

That hurt. Do you need a minute?

MODEL 2

No, that's the job. Besides, Eleanor, if I'm gonna get stabbed by anyone, I'd rather be stabbed by you.

Everyone with taste loves your work, even if most people think it's weird.

(beat)

That came out wrong. "Weird" is good. You're ahead of your time.

She smiles. Eleanor cuts fabric with steel pinking shears.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

In the shadows, Jo and Maid 1 watch the party from a balcony.

MAID 1

Look at your mother. When she was your age, her best friend was the mirror. Now she's 30 years past a prime she can't bear to let go of.

JO

There are only so many ways one can eat foie gras, there are only a few variations on the way Figaro can be married... I used to think of her as an Ice Queen. But at least ice melts.

Mrs. Miller mingles. Yellow diamonds and no hint of a smile.

JO

My mom grew up poor. Not lower-middle class poor, but poor-poor.

(beat)

She always wanted the life that every girl gets to live. I want the life that no girl gets to live.

MAID 1

You already have that life.

JO

I do. Do you want to trade?

MAID 1

No. Not in two million years.

Jo smiles. Maid 1 places a nurturing hand on her back.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tossing and turning, Jo combats a restless, fitful sleep.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Jo places flowers at a granite headstone: "NATHAN SIMS."

A tear works its way down her face.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - MORNING

Eleanor mops curled, linoleum tile.

Later, exhausted, she stares at a spin cycle. In perpetuity.

INT. BANK - DAY

Eleanor is received by a slovenly TELLER (50).

ELEANOR

Hi. I was hoping to speak to someone about getting an extension on my student loan payments.

TELLER

What are you studying?

ELEANOR

Art. Design, specifically.

He picks up a phone, dials.

TELLER

Shouldn't apply for student loans if you're studying the arts, you know.

ELEANOR

Sorry to let you down.

TELLER

You're letting your dad down, not me.

(beat)

Student loans... More like "student groans," innit?

Teller laughs obnoxiously. Eleanor lowers her eyes.

INT. FLAT - DAY

Uninspired, Eleanor evaluates a blouse on her one mannequin. She casually tears it off. Then, she notices another roach.

Eleanor weaponises the blouse, a button its warhead. She closes in on the roach, then strikes. It limps away.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Eleanor eats alone. Watches Jo hold court with STUDENTS.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

For peer review, Jo presents a gown from her collection.

JO

My thesis aims for dramatically constructed pieces that combine elements of Welsh tailoring and French couture. Most of my looks include billowy dresses cut into hourglass silhouettes, and frock coats paired with sharp, angular suiting. As you can see here, I'm still focusing on dark, classic gowns that are covered by intricate embroidery and lace.

HODGESON

(beat)

You give us intricate embroidery and lace, we ask for intelligent embroidery and life.

The color drains from Jo's eyes.

HODGESON

When I asked for the weakest link in your collections, I did expect works-in-progress. However, the key word is "progress," as the goal is progression and not regression. Okay, next up... Eleanor James.

ELEANOR

I don't have anything to show.

HODGESON

Will you be finished by Tuesday?

ELEANOR

I don't know if I'm ever finished.
(beat)
Honestly, Sir; my work is rubbish.

HODGESON

Your work is exceptional, Eleanor. It's your attitude that's rubbish.
(beat)
There's far more to the clothes than simply "the clothes." There's also the human and their humanity.

He stares her down.

HODGESON

"Art without the artist is not art."

ELEANOR

Who said that?

HODGESON

I did.

ELEANOR

We can tell. It's a shit quote.

Classmates laugh. All but Jo, who studies Eleanor keenly.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eleanor walks home, flanked by distressed brick and mortar.

Jo follows her. Corner after corner, she keeps up the pace. Then, walking around a final corner, she loses track of her.

Ready to give up the chase, Jo turns, meets Eleanor's face.

ELEANOR

Why are you following me?

Jo, startled.

ELEANOR

You're a long way from Wycombe Square.

Eleanor feels the lapel on Jo's coat. Jo swats her hand.

JO

Seriously...? When I see you around my neighbourhood, spying on me, do I stop you and say, "You're a long way from East London"? No. I don't. Because that would be horrible and classist and fucked. Don't you ever put your hands on me again.

Eleanor recedes, unnerved by a calm, cold-blooded delivery.

ELEANOR

I was just getting clothes.

JO

I was picking up clothes.

JO

There are no fabric stores near me.

ELEANOR

I know. There aren't any --

ELEANOR

I was getting clothes... To wash.

JO

I'm sorry... For what it's worth, I think you're the best designer in school. So today you may be washing people's clothes, but tomorrow you'll be making them. Talent and tenacity always win.

ELEANOR

That's a fallacy. It assumes class mobility and a level playing field.

JO

Sure. But the arts are a roll of the dice, anyway.

ELEANOR

Not when the dice are weighted.

Jo's focus shifts to a candy shop. She nods at the display.

JO

Do you like candy?

ELEANOR

Chocolates, mainly.

JO
 Who doesn't love chocolate, right?
 (beat)
 Do you like other types of candy?

ELEANOR
 ... I like taffy, I suppose.

JO
 You're not hearing me.
 (beat, smiling)
 Do you like candy, Eleanor?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A thick line of cocaine, mashed with a Harrods gift card.

JO
 Hodgeson is always going on and on
 about McQueen, right?

ELEANOR
 When he's not drooling over Stella.

JO
 McQueen's father was a taxi driver.
 No one at Saint Martins knows that.
 Now, Stella McCartney's father was
 a Beatle...so all of us know that.

ELEANOR
 What's your point?

JO
 No matter how humble our beginnings,
 our endings won't be determined by
 birth, but by talent.

ELEANOR
 Do you honestly believe that, or is
 that some talking point you've read?

JO
 Both.

Eleanor's eyes narrow.

ELEANOR
 I can't determine whether you're
 stupid or cunning.

JO
 I want to see your collection.

ELEANOR
 I'm leaning towards stupid.

JO

I want to see your collection.

ELEANOR

Look: Privilege incubates talent. Poor people don't have the luxury of studying philosophy or pottery, so spare yourself the naiveté.

JO

... I need to see your collection.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The collection is vividly displayed by ceiling hangers.

JO

You're gonna get this bought.

ELEANOR

Hodgeson hates me. And he has pull with the committee.

Jo examines a pleated blouse and purple sheath.

JO

With my work, it's 99% perspiration, and 1% inspiration. With your work, it's 99% inspiration, and 1% perspiration.

ELEANOR

I work hard.

JO

No. I work hard. You work smart.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jo sprinkles cocaine on a pot-packed pipe.

ELEANOR

Buyers want a presence. They're not gonna champion the dowdy local girl.

JO

Stop. You're gorgeous; you just don't spend all your time watching makeup tutorials on TikTok. And it's not like I'm who they want to back, either.

ELEANOR

You're exactly who they want. Not "what" they want, mind you, but "Who" they want. An American in London? Check. Daddy is a highly-esteemed commodities broker? Check.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (cont'd)
Handing his fresh-faced progeny
the golden ticket? Checkmate.

Jo's silence confers agreement.

ELEANOR
Do you know what they call me?
The other designers?

JO
They don't call you anything.

ELEANOR
I'd respect you more for answering.

They face off.

JO
Eleanor Smell-anor. It's mean.

ELEANOR
It's life... It gets hot where I work.
Then I go from work straight to class.

JO
Those people aren't my friends.

ELEANOR
... Do you know what they call you?

JO
They call me something?

Eleanor lights the pipe.

JO
What do they call me?

Jo forces a smile.

JO
Seriously, what do they call me?

Eleanor exhales a plume of smoke.

ELEANOR
Miss America.

EXT. WESTMINSTER BRIDGE - DUSK

A cold sun sets over London.

ELEANOR
Your parents can't bankroll a line?

JO

They see fashion as frivolous. Some families go from rags to riches, and some go from riches to rags. Both my parents' families went from riches to rags, and then again back to riches. So they never, ever want to go back.

ELEANOR

They're wealthy and want to stay wealthy. Keep the candle burning.

JO

Right. Major in Economics, marry well, design is strictly a hobby... I don't care about the money, I care about the credit. My name.

ELEANOR

Oh, I'm the opposite. I don't care about the credit, I want the money.

(beat)

Eh. I care a lot about the credit, but it's just not happening for me.

The two gaze at the water. Ships pass in the night.

JO

Your work, my name.

ELEANOR

What?

JO

Let's pair my name, my face, and my pedigree...with your skill set.

Eleanor studies a ship, not entirely opposed to the idea.

JO

You said it yourself -- it's not happening for you. So if you're gonna slave away in corporate as it is, why not take a shot to be my A.D.? Create whatever you want, spin off, and you can easily start your own line.

(beat)

How many 2nd-placers ever get that?

ELEANOR

None. Winner takes all.

JO

Try thinking of me as the P.R. rep for your designs. I'll be the face.

ELEANOR

... My friend Melissa works in P.R.

JO

Exactly.

ELEANOR

I can't stand my friend Melissa.

JO

I understand.

ELEANOR

You don't understand. I hate my friend Melissa.

JO

I do understand. I hate all my female friends.

ELEANOR

... It would be a huge risk for me. I've got student loans and can't risk a last-minute expulsion.

JO

I mean, I can pay your student loans. Out of my own pocket even, I can pay your loans. I can also give you a ridiculous amount of cash. We have an attorney here in London; we have like, three of them. We can figure out a non-disclosure agreement and be on our way.

ELEANOR

I don't know. Though it would nice to see Hodgeson piss himself silly over a two-headed monster of sorts.

JO

Seriously, then. Let's make a deal.

Jo extends a hand.

JO

Partners?

Eleanor considers. From a distance, a striking man, Detective ALEX FULHAM (30), watches.

INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Steam rises as a cup of tea is poured. Eleanor is in her father's home. She brings him the tea as he rests in bed. HAROLD JAMES (65) employs an oxygen mask, a respite from his emphysema. Eleanor switches out his oxygen canisters.

ELEANOR
Someone has a birthday coming up.

MR. JAMES
Let's celebrate. Only a few left.

Eleanor hides her dismay.

ELEANOR
What would you like me to get you?

MR. JAMES
Maybe just...a close shave.

ELEANOR
A trip to the barber?

MR. JAMES
Just cartridges. Shaving cartridges.
A four-pack of the ones Gillette
makes for their buzz-buzz razors.

ELEANOR
That's hardly a suitable present.

MR. JAMES
A four-pack is twelve pounds.

ELEANOR
That is steep.

MR. JAMES
At the shops, they keep them locked.
It's easier to steal a Picasso.

INT. SHOP - DAY

A CLERK scans a pack of razors. Eleanor swipes her card.

CLERK
It was declined.

ELEANOR
Oh. It's okay; I don't need them.

CLERK
You wanna try another card?

ELEANOR
No, that's okay. I'm sorry.

INT. CHEMIST - DAY

A chrome, circular lock guards razor blades behind plastic.
Eleanor removes a bobby pin; her hair falls to her shoulders.
She looks left, looks right, then picks the lock with ease.

EXT. CHEMIST - DAY

As Eleanor exits, she's accosted by a GUARD. He takes her bag; a struggle ensues. Eleanor falls down. Guard finds the razors, spits on her, leaves. Eleanor checks her lip/finds some blood.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - DAY

Once again, Eleanor stares blankly at the endless spin cycle.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Jo walks to the door, waves off Maid 1, opens it herself. A defeated Eleanor briskly nods.

ELEANOR

Partners.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eleanor looks at the high ceilings, intricately carved.

ELEANOR

Your house is extraordinary.

JO

I dunno. It's growing on me.

(beat)

Money doesn't buy happiness, but
it sure as hell tries to.

ELEANOR

... If you're taking ownership of
my work, and I'm taking ownership
of yours, it may present problems
when the collections don't match
up with what people expect from us.

(beat)

See, everyone at school knows...

Eleanor raises a piece of gulix.

ELEANOR

I'm not fond of embroidery.

JO

Okay.

ELEANOR

I find it tacky.

JO

Okay.

ELEANOR

I find it very tacky.

JO

I can imagine.

ELEANOR

You can't.

JO

I mean, it's not something I've given a whole lot of thought to.

ELEANOR

Yes, we've established that. I just think that if the wool is going to be pulled in any sort of convincing way, whatever I put forth can't show even a hint of embroidery. Full-stop.

JO

Uh, it's really not a big deal, but clearly it is to you. At the same time...embroidery has been thriving in China since 2000 B.C.

ELEANOR

So has the one-child policy and female infanticide, but I don't see you carrying that torch, Madam Secretary.

JO

... No embroidery. What else?

Eleanor rubs a sash between her fingertips.

ELEANOR

We call these doilies.

JO

That's what we call them, too.

ELEANOR

Doily? You use the same word?

JO

With almost as much contempt.

ELEANOR

So you know they're terrible, and yet you persist. Strange.

JO

Yeah. My mom always liked them, but she's also not like most American moms. She can be really cold and very puritanical, Mayflower-ish about life. She hasn't fully accepted Irish people and Italians as actual Americans yet.

Eleanor looks at Jo's output. Twelve months of hard work.

ELEANOR

How do you make Jo's designs look
like something Eleanor would make?

Jo searches for an answer between the paisley and percaline.

JO

Burn them.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Jo feeds a long length of clothes line into a gas can.

EXT. YARD - DAY

10 metres from Jo, her collection hangs on the line. She nods. Eleanor puts a match to the line, and fire whizzes across it. As soon as flames reach the collection, Jo directs Eleanor.

JO

Now.

With a hose, Eleanor douses the collection, left to right. Flames are extinguished, replaced by rising trails of smoke.

JO

... What do we call it?

Eleanor, confused.

JO

The title we give it for the show.
What do we call it?

ELEANOR

An improvement.
(beat)
You name it. They're your clothes.

JO

Not anymore. You broke it; you buy it.

Eleanor thinks. Calls back to Jo's lineage:

ELEANOR

Rags to Riches.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jo walks, her face the picture of reservation.

INT. NATHAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jo looks at a framed photo of a long-dead Nathan Sims, the classmate who was murdered in the opening scene.

MRS. SIMS (60) is a hollowed out, empty vessel of a mother.

MRS. SIMS
You said that you would visit.

JO
Mrs. Sims... I'm really sorry.

MRS. SIMS
You told me so at the funeral.

Jo looks at the framed photo.

JO
Can I see his room?

BEDROOM

Mrs. Sims stands with Jo, looking at Nathan's walls.

MRS. SIMS
Most mothers keep their children's
room a shrine. Turn them into some
awful mix of diorama and dollhouse.

JO
We all grieve differently, right?

MRS. SIMS
I suppose. But they need to get on
with it. The heart doesn't move on,
but the house does.

Jo peers into a cage. Sees a snake.

MRS. SIMS
That's Anabella.

JO
Is it poisonous?

Jo and the serpent lock eyes.

MRS. SIMS
She's wondering the same.

Anabella's tongue tastes the air.

MRS. SIMS
I'll leave you two alone.

She leaves. Jo eyes the cage. A toy treasure chest is inside. Jo lifts the top of the cage. Exhales. She puts her hand in, then slowly lowers it. Anabella doesn't move.

Jo's hand moves towards the treasure chest. Anabella hisses.

Jo takes out the chest. There's a drawer in its body. She opens it, sees a stash of designer drugs in bright colours.

Jo steals them, places the chest back in. A second, hidden snake bites her. Jo screams. Anabella, still frozen, watches.

INT. FLAT - DAY

Jo and Eleanor prepare the latter's work for the thesis show. Eleanor scans one piece with a magnifying glass.

ELEANOR
There's an errant stitch.

JO
Where?

ELEANOR
There.

JO
... Where?

ELEANOR
Here.

Jo squints through the magnifying glass.

JO
Eleanor, no one's gonna notice that.

ELEANOR
I noticed. It stands to reason that others will as well... Just because your eyes aren't sharp doesn't mean --

JO
Relax.

ELEANOR
I can't. Relaxing and being unconcerned with the stitching is what accounts for the gap between us. One you've just stumbled into.

JO
Sorry. You're calling the shots.

ELEANOR
Am I?

JO
Yes. Speaking of which, I had a non-disclosure agreement drawn up.

Jo opens a satchel.

ELEANOR

Oh, goody. Secret, cloak-and-dagger documents that toe the line between manipulative and exploitative. I bet you noticed the stitching on this one.

JO

Touché.

ELEANOR

Used a magnifying glass, did you?

JO

I actually went with the fine-toothed comb. So here it is: Your student loan balance will be paid prior to the show. Sign today, give them your routing number or however it works here, and you'll be wired the money tomorrow. You'll also get 50,000 in cash. If I lose -- if we lose -- obviously you keep the money, plus the collection. Yeah, you can't really use it in your portfolio, but seven months of work? If you don't think you'll win? I think it's a fair deal. Talk to your lawyer if you want, but yeah: Sign now, sign later, but the funds will be wired the next business day. The 50,000 I can give you tonight.

ELEANOR

Really?

JO

Really.

ELEANOR

In actual dollars?

JO

In actual pounds. Now, if the collection is officially bought --

ELEANOR

I want 100,000. I'm firm on that.

JO

Eleanor, if this gets bought, I'm giving you 250,000 pounds. You're basically carrying a baby to term, then giving it up for me to adopt.

ELEANOR

... You can pay 250,000 for just seven pieces?

JO

Our cars cost that much. My mom's car cost 300 grand in American dollars, and she doesn't even know how to drive... The reason I'm offering you £250,000 is because you're worth 800.

ELEANOR

... Do you have a pen?

JO

You're not gonna read it?

Eleanor holds her stare.

JO

You should have someone read it.

(beat)

Why, because if I'm gonna cheat you, I'm gonna cheat you anyway?

ELEANOR

Nah. Look at the psychology of it. You don't want to cheat me out of money, you just want your product delivered and for me not to squeal.

JO

Will you?

ELEANOR

What, deliver?

JO

Squeal.

ELEANOR

I'm sure a substantial penalty awaits me if I do... Shall we?

Jo takes a pen, hands it to Eleanor, who reads the document.

ELEANOR

I always dreamt I'd sign a design contract. Not like this, but still. I feel so grown up and important.

JO

Eleanor, you are important. Your time will come.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A manila envelope on a mahogany desk. It's the NDA.

Jo pushes the envelope forward. An ATTORNEY examines it.

JO

Sorry if this is insulting, but how do we know you're not going to say anything? Does attorney-client privilege apply in the U.K.?

ATTORNEY

It does. Though even if it didn't, I've been practicing for 30 years. I've seen agreements far more complicated and complex than this.

JO

Got it. And not that you'd tell me given the context of NDAs, but... does my father do stuff like this?

ATTORNEY

Like what?

JO

Like this. You say "complicated" and "complex," I say "duplicitous" and "vicious."

ATTORNEY

"Vicious" is a strong word.

JO

... Unseemly.

ATTORNEY

Your father does not engage me in unseemly business practices.

JO

Right. I was just curious.

ATTORNEY

He never will. I assure you.

(beat)

You get it from your mother.

EXT. RIVER LEA - SUNRISE

A FISHERMAN (40) reels in his catch. The pole bends at an extreme angle, suggesting a heavy weight on the line. The Fisherman's eyes widen as the object breaks the surface.

INT. ANDERSON & SHEPPARD - NIGHT

While Jo and Eleanor negotiated on Westminster bridge, Detective Alex Fulham was watching them. Now, he shops.

Alex looks at shirts. After finding one to his liking, he looks for a price tag. A SALESMAN (60) presents.

SALESMAN

Need a price on the shirt, Sir?

ALEX

Oh, no. I'm curious about the material.

SALESMAN

... They're a thousand pounds each.

ALEX

That's a bargain, isn't it?

SALESMAN

At 50% off, I'd say it is.

ALEX

So it's 500 for the shirt?

SALESMAN

They're 1,000 after the reduction.

(beat)

They're regularly priced at £2,000, so £1,000 per shirt is a bargain. £500? That is theft.

ALEX

It certainly is.

SALESMAN

May I help you with anything else?

ALEX

I'm looking to buy a suit.

SALESMAN

For business or pleasure?

ALEX

Business.

SALESMAN

Terrific. What do you do?

Detective Alex smiles, ignores the question.

ALEX

I'm looking for a suit that can impress at a new job. In short, I want to look good, but not too good... I prefer to do the heavy lifting on my own.

SALESMAN

All the great ones do. Let's see what we have.

EXT. SOMERSET HOUSE - DAY

Central Saint Martins MA Fashion Show: A Kentucky Derby of sorts, only with larger horses and more ostentatious hats.

BENCH

Blood-red ketchup is spread upon cardboard and newspaper. Jo and Eleanor wear fine outfits, in contrast to their fish and chips dinner. They watch the CROWD across the way.

JO

Somerset House is gorgeous.

ELEANOR

It's the rich man's Lincoln Center.

JO

Funny. Have you been to New York?

ELEANOR

I haven't. I shouldn't be knocking your city when I've never been out of England even. Hell, I don't get out of Hackney-Shackney beyond CSM.

JO

Hackney-Shackney? That's hilarious. Is that what people call it?

Eleanor watches cameras flash.

ELEANOR

Just me.

JO

Well, with all the money you're getting, you can visit whenever.

ELEANOR

About that. You were supposed to pay me in advance of the show.

JO

I'll bring it to the after-party.

ELEANOR

You'll bring 50 to £300,000 to a pub? I wasn't born after you, Jo.

JO

I'm on it; I just didn't want you to haul it around all night. Keep in mind, I have to make you something to store it in. You can't put that much cash in the bank without paying taxes, and you can't just throw it under a mattress.

Unconvinced, Eleanor dips her fish in ketchup.

ELEANOR

Any magic in that bag of tricks?

Jo rifles through her clutch, produces a vial. She dips a hard gel nail, raises it, then sniffs. Passes it to Eleanor.

From a distance, Alex watches.

INT. SOMERSET HOUSE - DAY

DESIGNERS tuck, twist, and tear.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

STAGEHANDS and SECURITY prep their clipboards and earpieces.

FASHION EDITORS and FASHION MAVENS take their seats.

BACKSTAGE

Models line up like chorus line dancers, stretch their legs.

RUNWAY

As MUSIC rises, the first collection is unveiled. Models file out: deliberate, confident, and militant in stride.

COLLECTION 1

Androgyny is taken to its limits, with male models dressed in fishnets, brogues, and baize shirts. Eleanor watches.

COLLECTION 2

Pleats take the stage. A cobalt-blue collection featuring well-placed grafts of thistle and salmon.

COLLECTION 3

Models march in pairs. Tailored outerwear veiled in clouds of transparent tulle. The postmodern theme of reveal and conceal runs through the designs, emphasised by round, cutaway panels.

Jo and Eleanor continue to watch from separate vantage points as designs flood the senses. Some are pragmatic, others lofty.

ELEANOR'S COLLECTION

Eleanor's adopted designs get their close-up. We see a streamlined aesthetic of 40s-inflected tailoring, mermaid-esque gowns, complemented by advanced cocktail frocks.

JO'S COLLECTION

Jo's hired gun of a collection staccatos its way on the stage. A kaleidoscope prism of enameled copper wires and bold color.

There is lavish layering, featuring transparent fabric strips on the model's form. The patterns are more reminiscent of cheap acrylics than quotidian, high-fashion prints.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

Post-show, Designers, Models, Editors, PATRONS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, and DONORS. They commiserate, fueled by wine and cheese. Professor Hodgeson accosts Eleanor.

HODGESON

Burn it all down while you're at it.

Eleanor recedes.

HODGESON

You're so transgressive. Subversive is what you really are... And brave.

ELEANOR

It's my best work.

HODGESON

It is an embarrassment. Burning the clothes? If you meant it in earnest, why not lay the designs on the grass and treat them one-by-one? Because that wouldn't make for a provocative picture of fabric burning on a line.

On the walls, he eyes framed shots of the collection.

HODGESON

Style over substance. That's all it is. Did you think I wouldn't notice shoddy craftsmanship? Shabby design? Fire and Flame will not obscure the Fact. This is an avant-garde atrocity.

ELEANOR

I'm proud of my efforts.

HODGESON

It was gimmicky and unoriginal.

Powered by English wit and clean cocaine, Eleanor holds firm.

ELEANOR

It is not original but it is good.
(beat)
It smells like Labour and Triumph.

HODGESON

It smells like Butane and Mildew.

ELEANOR

We do the best we can, Professor.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Post-Hodgeson, Eleanor turns to cocaine for support.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

Beaming, Eleanor brings Jo up to speed.

ELEANOR

He was furious. He yelled at me.

JO

Hodgeson?

ELEANOR

He was angry because of the work.

JO

This is good.

ELEANOR

This is great; everyone's talking about you. Why aren't you excited?

JO

I am.

ELEANOR

You're supposed to be the happy one. Where has my American princess gone?

JO

I'm very happy. I just...expected this. I know how talented you are.

ELEANOR

You're happy?

JO

I'm thrilled... It's all going according to plan.

A pang of discomfort hits Eleanor. She drinks.

THE BAR

Jo holds court with well-heeled BUYERS.

BUYER 1

Are you looking for a position in corporate or to make your own way?

JO

Well, I did three years in New York with Ann Demeulemeester, then two at Proenza Schouler. I loved both places, but I'm ready to fly.

BUYER 1

You're too good to be working for someone else. Do you have backing?

JO

No. That's what we're all killing each other for, right?

BUYER 2

I see the tears and smell the sweat, but no blood just yet.

The three laugh, while envious Designers eavesdrop.

DESIGNER 1

It makes no sense. She had help.

DESIGNER 2

Elements of early Saint Laurent.

Jo and Buyers hear this, as they were meant to.

JO

Do you want to take passive-aggressive swipes at me, or do you want to engage me like an adult?

DESIGNER 1

... We think you had help.

JO

We all need help.

DESIGNER 2

What happened to your preview clothes? You talked about French couture and Welsh tailoring.

JO

Bait and switch. You think I'd spill trade secrets a week before the show?

Buyer 1 and a concerned Hodgeson join the group.

DESIGNER 1

There's no through line between this collection and your usual work. You had help. And you steal from YSL.

JO

I don't steal from anyone.

(beat)

I steal from everyone.

Buyer 1 laughs. Designer 1 turns to Hodgeson.

DESIGNER 1

Tell me I'm wrong.

HODGESON

Sorry, dear. I've been a champion
of Jo since the day she arrived.

Hodgeson lies, given his earlier conversation with Jo.

CHEESE STATION

Eleanor talks with a STYLIST while nibbling on cheese.

STYLIST

You helped with Jo's collection?

ELEANOR

Pattern-making, yeah.

STYLIST

Now, your work. It's daring. To me,
and correct me if I'm wrong, but it
exemplifies failed states... Greece?

ELEANOR

Spot on.

STYLIST

It's very avant-garde.

ELEANOR

So I've heard.

STYLIST

Your camlet is indigenous to Spain.
It wasn't just a critique of Spain
or the U.K., it's an indictment of
all European imperialism. I see what
you're saying. It's obvious.

ELEANOR

The decline of the Spanish Armada
began a decline for all of Europe.

STYLIST

Precisely. Your efforts delight.

ELEANOR

Thank you.

STYLIST

It's brilliant.

ELEANOR

Thank you.

STYLIST

You're brilliant.

ELEANOR

I am.

STYLIST

If she's ever interested in a great opportunity, have Jo call me. Do me that favor, and I'll have your back.

INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT

LOUISE WILSON (51), course director of the MA programme, stands at a podium and addresses the packed house.

LOUISE

The L'Oreal Professional Creative Award belongs to... Ms. Jo Miller.

Jo closes her eyes in disbelief. MUSIC rises as we SMASH TO:

INT. HAWKSMOOR SEVEN DIALS - NIGHT

Jo, Eleanor, and assorted FRIENDS drink and chat. Jo notices a CUTE BOY looking at Eleanor.

JO

Heads up. Boy with the red hair.

ELEANOR

It's England, Jo. They all have red hair... Oh, I see him.

Jo nods towards FRED (30), entering.

JO

My lesser half is here. Hold on.

ELEANOR

Before you go over there, did you bring the 300,000 from home?

JO

I still have to give you something to store it in. Tomorrow morning, okay? Just sit tight.

BOOTH

Later, Jo is in talks with Fred.

FRED

I'm not big on titles, but what do you think about making us a bit more exclusive?

Jo winces.

FRED

I think I've treated you well.

JO

I'm not looking for a relationship.

Fred is wounded at first. Then, he lashes out.

FRED

You're an American girl with English sexual proclivities. I just expected something more...carnal from you. You can be frigid at times, as if your work is more important than love.

JO

You're right. You're 100% right. No one wants to be labeled as "frigid," but I can be cold. That said, I do care more about design than I care about love... But with you? You're lucky to be my friend.

FRED

... The only thing more tedious than fashion is time spent with you.

Jo flings the wax from a candle at his coat, leaves.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The next morning, Eleanor walks through East London.

INT. KURT GEIGER - DAY

Jo studies a luxurious shoe chandelier.

EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY

Eleanor approaches a bench. Jo sits with a shoebox.

JO

I got you something.

Eleanor sits down. Jo places the shoebox on her lap. A beat, and Eleanor lifts the lid: a pair of wedges.

JO

Look closely at the soles when you get home. Ridiculous craftsmanship.

Eleanor feels the thick soles.

JO

They're redwood. The cut is well done. I spent an hour on them.

ELEANOR

Shoes are nice, but I was supposed to be paid. I need the money.

JO
I'm having a party tonight. Come by.

Jo stands, walks off. She then turns around, calls back.

JO
Look closely at the soles when you
get home... I spent an hour on them.

INT. FLAT - DAY

Eleanor rushes through the door, puts the shoebox on the bed. She opens it, tosses tissue paper, then looks at the soles.

They've clearly been scored. She sees a rectangle, as if a trap door has been built into floorboards. Eleanor hops up, then rifles through her supplies. She finds an X-Acto knife.

She traces the rectangle along the edge. It won't open. Eleanor finds a lighter, heats up the knife's blade.

Next, she cuts through the hardened glue. Pops off a thin slice of the 6-inch wedge. A 5-inch stack of bills falls out.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

"Jo Miller" and "Saint Martins" is Googled. Jo toggles through blogs: 1 Granary, Face Hunter, et al. The sites chronicle and explore her thesis win.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Jo's party. The halls are filled with GUESTS.

DRAWING ROOM

Eleanor explores various rooms. Guests smile at inside jokes which Eleanor will never be part of. She approaches a piano.

Lifts the fallboard. Feels keys with the pads of her fingers. Just as her tendons raise up in deliverance of a key strike:

ALEX
Excuse me, Miss?

Sitting among Guests on the floor, Eleanor sees Alex.

ALEX
We need another.

A Trivial Pursuit board covered with cash.

ALEX
Are you smart?

ELEANOR
Isn't that subjective?

ALEX (nodding)
 You're smart. Empty your wallet and
 let's balance the game out. You'll
 need to be on their team.

CELLAR

18-year-old soccer HOOLIGANS step with 80-year-old DIPLOMATS.

DRAWING ROOM

Eleanor rolls a die. Moves her Trivial Pursuit playing piece.

GUEST 1
 Who is the Sun God of Egypt?

ELEANOR
 Do over. That is beyond obscure.
 Give me a question about sports.

GUEST 1
 Trivial Pursuit is not a game that
 lends itself to "do overs." And the
 sports question was equally tough.

ELEANOR
 Fine. Who is the Sun God of Egypt?

ALEX
 Ra.

Guest 1 flips the card.

GUEST 1
 The Sun God of Egypt is Ra.

ELEANOR
 ... How did you know that?

ALEX
 I memorised the cards as a child to
 impress someone I liked... Tell me
 you haven't been tempted.

Alex rolls, lands on a square. Eleanor reads the card.

ELEANOR
 Which New York town is the
 birthplace of American feminism?

GUEST 1
 I say Manhattan. Maybe Brooklyn.

GUEST 2
 Those are boroughs. It's Albany.

Eleanor looks at Alex for the his take.

ALEX

Seneca Falls.

Eleanor flips the card: He's right.

ELEANOR

I see. The fastest way to a woman's pants is through her brain. You know nothing about feminism, except that it's a loaded word, so you spin it to your seedy advantage.

ALEX

It's possible that I answered correctly cuz it wasn't the most difficult question in a box full of incredibly difficult questions.

GUEST 1

... We should've played Monopoly. I said twenty times that we that we should've played Monopoly.

Guests laugh, while Eleanor and Alex maintain eye contact.

ALEX

Stick to sports.

POOL ROOM

Behind a bar, Jo pours drinks for Guests.

GUEST 3

Congratulations on Saint Martins.

JO

Thank you so much.

GUEST 3

What's your endgame?

JO

Affordable clothing. People need affordable housing, and they can also benefit from the dignity that dressing well affords them. Design shouldn't be exclusive to the rich.

GUEST 3

You're kidding... You're going to burn your artistic capital on the soft underbelly of society? Don't be ridiculous.

JO

(beat)

I'm not the one being ridiculous.

Guest 4 cuts in, all smiles.

GUEST 4

Jo. Are we going back to New York?

JO

Actually, I have my eyes on Paris.

GUEST 3

Oh, my. Please take me with you.

JO

I'll squeeze you in my suitcase.

GUEST 3

Speaking of which. How in God's name do you stay so thin?

STUDY

Jo rips cocaine in one fell swoop. Her nails grip the straw. They glisten like an eagle's talons. Alex enters. Eleanor notices, unconsciously fixes her hair.

Jo's dog chews his bone. She pets him, then sings.

JO

This old man, he played one / He
played knick-knack on my thumb /
With a knick-knack, paddy-wack /
Give a dog a bone / This old man
came rolling home.

Alex sits at a coffee table. Books, flowers, and drugs.

JO

I'm Jo.

ALEX

Alex. Fulham.

GUEST 4

Who are you with?

ALEX

It's just me tonight.

A CRADLE-ROBBER (40) with a TEENAGER (19) on his thigh:

CRADLE-ROBBER

What do you do?

GUEST 4

He's an art dealer.

GUEST 5

He's an angel investor.

GUEST 6

You're both wrong.

(beat)

He's a pediatric cardiologist.

ALEX

Close. I'm a police officer.

GUEST 4

... You're a cop?

Alex smiles.

ALEX

Detective.

The cocaine on the table holds its breath.

CRADLE-ROBBER

Aren't you a little young?

ALEX

Isn't she?

Everyone laughs.

GUEST 5

What division are you in?

GUEST 6

Missing Persons. Runaways.

GUEST 7

Terrorism.

JO

... Sex Crimes.

Alex wipes cocaine from the table, rubs it on his gums.

ALEX

Narcotics.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Away from Guests, Jo fields questions from Alex.

ALEX

Your parents leave for the country every weekend and you host parties. Drug parties. They don't find out?

JO

I have a loyal staff.

ALEX

You pay them well.

JO
I treat them well.

ALEX
And the neighbours. Stodgy, stiff
upper-lip types. They keep quiet
about raucous, weekly parties?

JO
The neighbours are the first to
arrive and the last to leave.

Alex drops his payload.

ALEX
I've been reading up on Nathan Sims.

JO
... Nathan was a great designer. He
was a better friend.

ALEX
The relevant parties gave statements
on his disappearance, but I was hoping
you might provide a few details that
were missed at the time.

(beat)
We came across something of interest.

JO
A friendship bracelet?

ALEX
No.

JO
A promise ring?

ALEX
Not this time.

JO
Sorry. I make jokes when I'm nervous.

ALEX
Bad ones at that.

Jo smiles.

JO
So what did you find? His diary?

ALEX
... His laptop.

Jo goes pale.

JO
Where did you find it?

ALEX
The River Lea. In Hackney.

Eleanor watches through the window.

JO
Can you salvage the hard drive?

ALEX
It takes time to recover the drive,
and longer to comb through it.

JO
... I should probably answer these
questions with an attorney present.

ALEX
I only asked you two questions.
(beat)
You've since asked six of them.

JO
I have.

ALEX
Consecutively.
(beat)
I know you have nothing to hide. But
retain counsel by all means.

JO
How do you know I have nothing to hide?
He nods at the party.

ALEX
Fix me a drink. And I'll spill all.

JO
Please do. My carpet holds secrets.

GAME ROOM

The pair play miniature golf. Alex lines up a putt, misses.

JO
So how do you know I'm innocent?

ALEX
You immediately requested counsel.
The first thing they teach you in
(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)
 the academy... Well, the last thing they teach you is that when someone requests an attorney that soon during a line of questioning, they are the most innocent person in the room. Guilty people look to justify or argue their innocence. They think, "Oh. If I can convince this one cop that I'm not involved, he won't take it any further." Those who invoke counsel do it because they have nothing to hide. The guilty man believes that asking for an attorney makes him look that much more the part of a guilty man. It's the innocent wanker who jumps to an attorney as quickly as you did.

JO
 I'm not a wanker.

ALEX
 I have my doubts.

JO
 ... Am I in trouble for the drugs, or are you here for the statement?

ALEX
 Ultimately, both. At the same time, I just moved from Bath and I don't have a very active social calendar. I was hoping to abuse my power and have a good time. Maybe meet a girl.

He misses a second putt. Puts his coat on, approaches Jo.

ALEX
 Would you have dinner with me?

JO
 Do you always ask women out when working?

ALEX
 I don't ask women out in general.

JO
 ... I'm gonna say "no" to dinner.

ALEX
 I fully understand and respect that.

Alex extends his card.

ALEX

Just do let me know if you have a change of heart.

He leaves. Jo examines his card. Feels a Scotland Yard emblem. She fingers his contact info. Alex Fulham. The letters, raised.

INT. HIGH-RISE - MORNING

Jo and Eleanor in an elevator, about to meet Buyers.

JO

It's just really sad. After we moved here, Nathan was the first friend I made. He would come over every day, and we were excited to go to CSM together... It's been two years, but nothing. We don't know if he's missing or dead.

ELEANOR

They have no leads?

JO

The night he disappeared, I had a party. When the police came by to investigate, I told them that I saw Nathan take off with a guy he was hooking up with. But he left his phone in a car, so they don't know where he ended up... It's just sad. You would've liked him.

ELEANOR

I don't like anyone.

JO

Neither did Nathan. That's why you would've liked him.

The doors open. They head out.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jo and Eleanor in Buyer 1's magnificent office. Buyer 1, previously unnamed for clarity, is CAMILLE DOHERTY (40).

CAMILLE

With most designers, it's one of two qualities that make the work shine. Some designers have personality, but the work is a bit mechanical. Other designers are quiet in demeanor, but the clothes can sing and dance. Now, both designers have talent. But you, Jo, have a gift.

JO

Wow. Thank you.

CAMILLE

My favourite designers make clothes that sing and dance, but they have the personality to match. We believe in your ability, but also in you.

ELEANOR

As a wise man once said, "Where the money is, the jackals will gather."

CAMILLE

... Are we the jackals?

ELEANOR

Actually, no. We're the jackals.
(beat)
You're the vultures.

CAMILLE

... What was your name?

ELEANOR

Eleanor. Eleanor James.

CAMILLE

Just "Eleanor" is fine. So you're going to take notes so Jo doesn't lose track of what we discuss?

JO

Eleanor has an offer for assistant designer at Victor & Rolf. It's in Jersey, Knit, and Graphics, so it's a great opportunity. But we figured if you folks are financing the line, I need an AD, too. Someone I trust.

Camille nods a condescending chin.

BUYER 2

What's your training, Eleanor?

ELEANOR

I also just finished from CSM.

BUYER 2

Oh. We didn't see you on Tuesday.

ELEANOR

I must've been in the background.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jo and Eleanor are splashes of color against ominous skies.

ELEANOR

That was humiliating. What a twat.

JO

She was like, equal parts haughty and judgmental. Agreed. But maybe you should tone it down a little.

ELEANOR

Oh, stop. It's one thing to climb to the top of a mountain, Jo. The trick is staying there. You don't have the skills to go at it alone.

JO

I'm aware. Just don't be abrasive.

INT. MAY FAIR HOTEL - NIGHT

The cheek and belly of Middle White pork. Jo works a knife.

JO

Are you the type of cop who's just waiting to retire, or is it the kinda thing where they're gonna have to pry the uniform off?

ALEX

My mum was a cop for 25 years, and my dad was a cop for 38. His entire life, he always said that he'll serve his 25 years, earn his gold watch, then retire right away.

He shows Jo his phone's homescreen pic. A gold Rolex.

ALEX

The same one for over eighty years.
(beat)

My mum reaches her 25 years on the job, retires right away, earns her gold watch. My dad stays on for 13 years more, dies of a heart attack while cooking. So, now my mother wears her watch, my sister has got dad's watch, and the morning I get to 25 years, I'm trading the badge and the service weapon for my watch.

JO

So that gold Rolex is your freedom?

ALEX

... Dad loved his job. I love mine, too. But it's not about, "Oh, life is too short." That's obvious. See, it's more that...being a cop gives

(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)

you that pension. What other young person can get a job, retire young in their 50s, and yet still draw a salary for life? It allows us to pursue anything we want. We can garden, paint, eat, drink, or just sleep. Whatever we want. Sure, too many cops make for crap colleagues, but co-workers can be bad anywhere.

(beat)

Yeah. The day I get my watch, it's a paid vacation and smooth sailing.

Having previously declined and since accepted Alex's offer for dinner, Jo now allows herself to pick from his cabbage.

ALEX

You Americans are not a shy people.

JO

Sorry. I get a little aggressive.

ALEX

I just wish you hadn't ordered the cheapest entrée on the menu is all.

JO

Never take a woman to a fancy place on a first date. The good ones will never judge a guy over a restaurant.

ALEX

Only rich men have the luxury of taking their dates to a cheap pub.

JO

That's not true.

ALEX

Either way, this is hardly a date. I'm staying here and get my meals for free. You're dining on the tax largesse of her Majesty's subjects.

JO

You're living here?

ALEX

Just for now. Scotland Yard keeps a few floors in rotation so officials and new hires have a place to stay. From what I've heard, it's also where senior personnel have affairs.

JO

Scandalous. And even worse, you're breaking the blue wall of silence.

ALEX

Oh. You've dated law enforcement.

JO

No, I'm just from New York. It's got a police presence, so there's a familiarity with how cops operate.

ALEX

Sure. But whether it's an oath on the Bible, Omertà, or in your case, the blue wall of silence, those all deal with big picture details. If I see one of my own strangle your grandmother, for example, I'm not going to say anything. But when it comes to someone on the job going to the mat with another woman? To me, that's ripe for gossip. So, I'm here till I find a decent flat. Or at the very least, until my informants burn through my expense account.

JO

Am I an informant?

ALEX

Technically, no. But hopefully soon.

JO

I'm an official police informant?

ALEX

Jo, it's nothing to be proud of.

JO

Of course it is. Are you serious? I'm gonna put this on my résumé.

ALEX

Don't say résumé, say "C.V." I'm European. Even I don't say "résumé."

JO

Be nice. Or I'll tell your friends about you blowing lines at my party.

ALEX

Don't do that; they'll be jealous. But if you insist? Now's your chance.

ROGER BENDRICKS (40) and DETECTIVE 1 approach Alex and Jo.

BENDRICKS

Evening, Alex.

ALEX

Jo Miller: Detectives Bendricks and Chapman. New office mates. Mr. Chapman is in Forensics and Mr. Bendricks... My memory fails.

BENDRICKS

Homicide. Good to meet you, Jo.

They linger on one another. An obvious, mutual attraction.

EXT. GARDEN CENTRE - NIGHT

Jo and Alex at Rassel's of Kensington. Ferns are unloaded.

JO

So, do you think the discovery of Nathan's laptop means it could be like...foul play or whatever?

ALEX

Do I think a laptop dredged from a river, a ways from a missing man's home, is indicative of anything at all? No. When murderers dispose of the evidence -- laptops or otherwise -- they use dustbins and landfills, not rivers. Evidence in a landfill blends in. In a river, it sticks out.

Jo, curious as to where Alex is headed.

ALEX

I think Mr. Sims left his laptop on the tube. Someone took it, then grew frustrated that it wasn't a Mac, so it was thrown in the river. Sims probably killed himself, and it's only a matter of time before his body turns up. Two years is too long. It's a bad look for Scotland Yard, so we will find him... Or he'll find us.

JO

But why is a Narcotics cop involved?

ALEX

After the discovery of the laptop, everyone on the job brushed up on Nathan's case file... Yet no mind was paid to the fact that a Jo Miller has weekly powder parties.

JO

That's overstating it. And I can't control what's brought to my house.

ALEX
 Regardless, while everyone focuses
 on Mr. Sims, I'm with your fashion
 friends... I couldn't care less
 about Nathan. But I do care a
 great deal about cocaine.

INT. RONNIE SCOTT'S - NIGHT

The pair finish their date at a jazz club. During a break:

JO
 Why do I feel like this night's
 gonna end with me in handcuffs?

ALEX
 It only will if you want it to.

JO
 You're looking to make a bust.

ALEX
 Whether you buy three ounces or
 three kilos per week, arresting
 you won't help my career.

JO
 Arresting my dealer will.

ALEX
 Arresting his dealer will.

The BAND begins to warm up.

JO
 You're very like, cavalier about
 being a police officer. You share
 details about the case, you flirt
 like it's your job... Maybe it is.

ALEX
 What I tell you about my work is a
 smokescreen for what I don't tell
 you about my work. Beyond that?
 (beat)
 We do things differently in Europe.

JO
 Oh, wow.

ALEX
 They're ready to go.

JO
 Gag me with a spoon.

ALEX

Stop it.

JO

"We do things differently in Europe."

They share a laugh as jazz begins to play.

EXT. LONDON - DAY

Morning COMMUTERS hustle in coats and pantsuits.

INT. FLAT - MORNING

Again, "Jo Miller" + "Saint Martins" is entered into Google.

This time, it's Eleanor who looks for blog posts. Jealously rising, Eleanor studies the life that Jo has bought herself.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jo, Eleanor, Camille, and Buyer 2 circle around a workspace.

JO

This is for me?

As the others follow Jo as she paces and evaluates the room, Eleanor evaluates the floral pattern on a sofa.

Jo sits in front of a sewing machine. She steps on the pedal under the table. The needle CHARGES up and down.

JO

I can't believe this is happening.

CAMILLE

We've seen your portfolio. You're humble, Jo. Like certain athletes who transcend their craft. To a point where they no longer derive pleasure from it. As if it's almost...clinical.

Eleanor inspects the finish on a pillow.

BUYER 2

We all have egos in this business. At every level. However, very few of us have the attendant humility.

ELEANOR

Humility is overrated. Humility is just the most noble form of vanity.

JO

... This is a dream come true, and I swear I'm not having a "Come to Jesus" moment, but is studio space necessary? I'll work from home if I'm diverting resources.

BUYER 2

We all struggle with the importance of fashion. Certainly, in the grand scheme of things, it's of little use and relevance.

CAMILLE

Look... Here's how I sleep at night. Millions of people can carry a tune, and millions can produce a painting. Far more can write a paragraph. But very few people can design clothing.

Eleanor moves to a curtain. She photographs the material.

CAMILLE

Humans have been wearing clothes for roughly 170,000 years. Monkey became man, man became modest. Now, clothes define our appearance. Consider the word a moment: Appearance. Literally, it is how we appear. The moment we present, an observer discerns gender, ethnicity, and clothing. Of the three, clothing marks the one aspect of our appearance that can be easily altered.

(beat)

Its significance, you see, can be important. I admire you, Jo, because of the eight billion people on Earth, you're one of a few who can control how we appear to others. And it affects so much: From Work and Life to Warmth and Comfort.

JO

Okay, I think I just needed to hear that. Thanks. I've actually annoyed Eleanor with some of the same ideas. The fashion world, it can be narrow in scope, at least when it comes to the numbers pursuing design. But it also offers an opportunity for what we all need... For what we all want.

BUYER 2

Respect.

JO

True, but more than that.

CAMILLE

Adulation. Fame.

JO

Sure. Fame might look good on me.

CAMILLE

It would look incredible on you.
What more could a Jo Miller want?

ELEANOR

... Immortality.

Eleanor sucked the air out of the room. Camille turns to Jo.

CAMILLE

Yes, well, along those lines, the
business is moving much faster at
all levels. Margins are shrinking.

(beat)

I don't think we have time to
nurture designers. Instead, we
have to launch designers. This
business has no patience, neither
does the consumer, and neither do
we. Get ready, Jo. We're going to
introduce you to the entire world.

JO

Thank you.

CAMILLE

I don't mean that we're going to
introduce you to the world in the
abstract. We're going to formally
introduce you to the whole entire
world... Let's show your top five.

JO

Wait, what?

CAMILLE

Tokyo. Fashion Week. Get moving.

JO

I'm going to Japan?

CAMILLE

Get this space together and make it
your own. Tear down the walls, blow
out the windows, and whatever else.
Just get moving and get busy.

JO
 We're going to Fashion Week?
 (beat)
 We're going to Japan?

Camille smiles.

CAMILLE
 We're going...to Tokyo.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

At Jo's house, a ball machine shoots feeds to Eleanor, who's unskilled with a racket. Jo stands next to the machine.

JO
 Low to high.

Eleanor shanks it. The machine shoots. Another miss-hit.

JO
 What's the weather like in Tokyo?

ELEANOR
 I think it's the same as here.

JO
 Fuck me. Of course it is.

Eleanor flubs a third feed. Jo turns the ball machine off. The pair meet at the net.

JO
 I'm gonna have everything I've ever made shipped here. Like, the clothes I've made going back to 9th grade... Maybe you go through the stuff you've got, pick out the pieces your proudest of, and we mesh our talent... If Camille wants my top five, let's figure something out.

Eleanor, uncertain.

JO
 I could do three of mine, two of yours, or three of yours, two of mine... I'm serious; I can pay.

ELEANOR
 Maybe wait till the shipment comes.

JO
 Actually, why mess with success?

ELEANOR
What do you mean?

JO
I've got a lot more cash, Ellie.
Maybe we show them your top five.

ELEANOR
... Ellie?

JO
It's just one option; think about it
for a minute... We can always show
them my five, just keep it in mind.
(beat)
Then again, I want to make something
new just for Tokyo. We both should.
Like, maybe we pick up three older
pieces, then we make two new ones.
Or do four old, one new. Any combo.

Reluctantly, Eleanor nods.

JO
Get all your clothes tonight.
(beat)
I'll have mine shipped today.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY - NIGHT

Eleanor unzips, unpacks clothes. Her entire body of work.

EXT. WYCOMBE SQUARE - MORNING

Jo walks her dog, the landscaping as confident as she is.

INT. UNDERGROUND - DAY

Carrying multiple garment bags, Eleanor balances on the tube.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Eleanor sets out her five favourite designs. Jo evaluates.

ELEANOR
I made the cape when I was 15, and
then the blouse when I was 22.

JO
You made that cape at 15?

ELEANOR
And did the blouse at 22.

JO
Can you make it wider and longer?

ELEANOR

It's a cape. Wider and longer turns
it into the train on a wedding dress.

JO

This pattern is incredible.

(beat)

We should really use this in Japan.

ELEANOR

What about new work? One shot each.

JO

... You're a genius.

ELEANOR

Stop. The cape is great; that's why I
chose to show you it. But the word
genius is applied to women who land
lunar missions, start wars, or unravel
DNA... Great design is only for men.

JO

Men are the worst.

ELEANOR

People are the worst, not men.

JO

Speaking of which, remember that cop?
Alex? He wants me to come to this
underground spot. It seems sketchy,
but do you want to go?

ELEANOR

You know me by now. Does it sound
like something I'd want to do?

JO

... Kind of, yeah.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alex and Jo, parked in his car. Eleanor leaves her flat.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Alex leads Jo and Eleanor through an underground casino.

LATER

Alex plays roulette. He puts his chips on red, but Eleanor
shakes her head. Alex then slides the chips over to black.

The DEALER spins. The ball hops, skips, settles on black.

Alex turns to Eleanor and smiles.

ALEX
The sun God of Egypt is Ra.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Alex, Eleanor and Jo drop pebbles on the heads of POLICE.
Off-duty Police shake hands with hat-wearing on-calls.

ALEX
Are science and art linked? I read
that today and thought of you two.

ELEANOR
Hm. I notice that in science, studies
often prove illegitimate because
scientists start with a false premise.
They form a false thesis, then apply
the scientific method.

(beat)
Designers reverse that, and use the
scientific method to dream up a
bullshit thesis. Science begets art.
It's really just angles and geometry.

ALEX
It's the opposite with police work.
It's not about intuition -- the way I
thought it would be -- it's about
science, as you said. Now, I'm joking,
but had I known the amount of math,
chemistry, and physics I'd use, I never
would've become a cop.

ELEANOR
You'd be a scientist.

ALEX
Yeah. In forensics, it's all blood,
bullets, and murder. The fun stuff.

Alex and Eleanor exchange smiles. Jo drops a pebble on a
Policeman's hat. He looks up, and the three duck for cover.

INT. STUDIO - MORNING

Jo and Eleanor roll out long, unwieldy cylinders of carpet.
Next, they dig in with scissors.

LATER

Eleanor sews. She stabs herself and winces in pain. Camille
walks in, crooks a finger.

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

In Camille's office, Eleanor stands in front of a design.

CAMILLE

We need a second opinion on the sequins. Too few or too many?

ELEANOR

Honestly? I think it's just right.

CAMILLE

How do you figure?

ELEANOR

I don't know. It just passes the eye test for me. It's quite chic.

CAMILLE

So be it. Thank you, Eleanor.

ELEANOR

Anything else?

CAMILLE

Yes, we have the lunch order.

Eleanor, disappointed. Camille hands her a piece of paper.

CAMILLE

Are you coming for drinks tonight?

ELEANOR

Is Jo going?

CAMILLE

Naturally. It's why you're invited.

Camille smiles. Eleanor absorbs the thinly-veiled insult.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eleanor pays for gum at a stand. *Women's Wear Daily* catches her eye. She picks it up and flips through pages. Sees a story on Jo and her L'Oreal award. Eleanor's mouth parts.

INT. STUDIO - NIGHT

With a needle and thread, Eleanor is the last to leave. One-by-one, the light panels above her begin turning off.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

As part of a group gathered for after-work drinks, Eleanor sits with a FRIEND. Sees Camille with her husband, TOM DOHERTY (40), along with Jo, Buyer 2, and COLLEAGUES. Eleanor watches Camille kiss Tom. Soon, Camille and Jo leave.

LATER

Eleanor and Tom, alone at the bar. They laugh, flirt, touch.

TOM

I love Camille. Always will.

(beat)

I just don't necessarily...like her.

An awkward smile.

ELEANOR

Is this what I have to look forward to? My ambition leading to the broken marriage we're all so afraid of...? It seems men want passionate women, but want no part of a woman who has a passion. It's almost as if you're terrified by the fact that we don't need you, and have dreams of our own.

TOM

You're young, and you're idealistic. Take what you need; need what you take. But don't sell them your soul.

ELEANOR

I already have.

TOM

Well perhaps we can get it back.

INT. FLAT - NIGHT

Exacting revenge on Camille, Eleanor and Tom get into it.

LATER

Now alone, Eleanor purifies her cocaine, then smokes it.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jo and Eleanor sort through a pile of white ratiné, working on their one-off designs for the show. Eleanor's nose drips blood. Her hand moves to obscure it. Jo, ever her mother's daughter, notices. She extends a tissue.

JO

You need a Kleenex.

ELEANOR

I'm fine.

JO

... It wasn't a question.

Eleanor, taken aback.

ELEANOR

Jo, I may be a horse pulling your cart, but it doesn't mean I have to be whipped. If there's a reason you're being so bratty, just tell me.

JO

Kelly said you were all over Tom after we left. And Kelly said you went home with him.

ELEANOR

Get the fuck out of here with "Kelly said..." Kelly is a huge bag of shit.

JO

Even if she is, get a grip. You're fucking this up for the both of us, and you're fucked up all day. I know I brought it by in the first place, but you've gotta reel it in.

ELEANOR

I've used cocaine for some time now. It aids the work, and happens to be a nice time. If I have a problem with it, are you seriously under the impression it's because you brought it around? Christ, are you gonna take the credit for that, too?

JO

I'm a little worried; that's all I'm saying. Let's focus on the work.

ELEANOR

I'm doing the best I can.

JO

I know. And I appreciate that.

(beat)

But you have to do better.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Eleanor adds jam to yogurt. Mixes them. Her buzzer sounds.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eleanor and Alex talk while standing by his car.

ALEX

If you're up for it, let's go.

ELEANOR
Yeah, no; I'd like to hang out. I'm
working and partying a bit too much,
so a low-key night sounds fun.

They get in the car.

ALEX
Don't mind my speed; I'm hungry.

ELEANOR
Shouldn't we get Jo first?

ALEX
Get her for what?

ELEANOR
Jo's not hungry?

ALEX
Jo's not coming.

ELEANOR
Why not?

ALEX
... Why?

Eleanor blushes. Alex drives.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The pair eat dinner.

ELEANOR
Is it normal to make Detective by 29?

ALEX
No, but for those of us who do, it's
nothing special. We always want more.
Going to CSM probably isn't special,
either. At least to people who get in.

ELEANOR
Oh, no, it's incredibly special.
(beat)
I'm joking; it's our normal, too. But
we are lucky, in that most people
don't have an overarching goal in the
first place... Life is tough as it
is, so it helps to have a North Star.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Eleanor and Alex play Skee-ball. Eleanor rolls a ball into
a 50-point ring. Tickets emerge in succession.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Alex drives Eleanor home.

ELEANOR

When I was a kid, I would go to galleries. I thought most of the art wasn't very good, but I figured that the art dealers knew something I didn't. Turns out, it's just hard to find great art, so most of the pieces really are lacking... By the way, art dealers take 50% of the sale. Can you believe that?

Alex smiles.

ALEX

We're very similar, Eleanor.

ELEANOR

... You like Jo.

ALEX

I don't. I want her dealer's name.

ELEANOR

Alex, you went on a date together.

ALEX

It wasn't a date.

ELEANOR

Did it begin with dinner?

ALEX

Did it end with a kiss?

ELEANOR

She didn't say.

ALEX

Well, there's your answer. Do you really think Jo would give up the chance to turn your screws

Well, there's your answer. Do you really think Jo would give up the chance to turn your screws a bit?

He looks back to the road. Eleanor allows herself a smile.

INT. FLAT - NIGHT

Eleanor and her one mannequin. She packs it into a box.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Car and DRIVER (50) drop Jo off at the studio.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jo and Eleanor repair an open sewing machine.

JO

Some of the tools we need are at home. We should move this there, anyway -- I could use it at night.

ELEANOR

I have to return Alex's jumper.

JO

Tell him to come by. We'll have lunch.

Eleanor, wary of the proposal.

JO

Let's go; my shipment came in. Time you see my top five, right?

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eleanor and Jo evaluate. Ten mannequins stand at attention.

ELEANOR

They're good, but they're not great.

JO

Sure they are. It's not Shakespeare; it's not your work, but I know how I measure up. They're great pieces.

ELEANOR

... There's a reason I'm here.

JO

Okay, you don't have to be so blunt.

ELEANOR

How should I be?

JO

I'm grateful for all you've done for me, and you can be a little grateful for all I've done for you. And on a certain level our work is the same.

ELEANOR

Uh, on no level is our work the same.

JO

It's harder to impress professors at Saint Martins than anyone else. The slight difference between us doesn't matter as much at this level.

ELEANOR

It does matter. You are not talented.

JO

Fuck you; let's see you be judged in Tokyo. Grad school's a small pond. If we show five of your designs, they're gonna love them, but if they see five of mine, they'll love them, too.

ELEANOR

No, they wouldn't.

JO

My shit's gonna be talked about, and would be just as highly-regarded as yours would've been. Okay, almost.

ELEANOR

Jo, you're wrong.

JO

Maybe. I guess we'll never know.

Through a window, Jo sees Alex pulling up in the driveway.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jo arranges a fruit plate. Alex, post-arrival and knife in hand, cuts a watermelon. Jo looks at Eleanor, who sets up a table outside.

JO

So, I know that you and Eleanor having been spending time together. I don't mind, just so you're aware.

ALEX

Why would you mind?

JO

It's a little touch-and-go right now in terms of working on a new piece for Tokyo.

ALEX

Got it. We won't be out late.

JO

I'm just a little nervous, because Eleanor can be...unstable.

Jo plants a seed, knowing Eleanor will eventually water it.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - DAY

Jo, Eleanor, and Alex sit on the grass. Maid 1 and her SON (9) fly a kite. Jo joins the pair. Eleanor and Alex observe.

ALEX

"Let me tell you about the very rich."

(beat)

"They are different from you and me."

ELEANOR

An American describing Americans.
Hemingway?

ALEX

Fitzgerald... Does playing second
fiddle chafe?

ELEANOR

I don't like how people treat me
like that parasitic fish that
swims with the great white shark.

ALEX

Candiru?

ELEANOR

Remora... They humour me, so as
not to upset Jo. Though I can spin
off and start my own line with
backing if she finds success.

ALEX

That is one big "if."

The kite CRASHES down, breaking its wooden frame.

ELEANOR

Life is one big "if."

Jo assesses the damage.

ELEANOR

It can be disheartening. One has to
go into the arts with the knowledge
that X seats will go to nepotism, Y
seats to cronyism, and the rest are
filled by people who are undeserving
in general. If there's one seat
left, that's what you're competing
for as opposed to the 50 seats that
appear empty. While they may not be
filled, they're definitely reserved.

ALEX

That's a good attitude to have.

ELEANOR

It's the only attitude to have.

ALEX

Police work sees a lot of nepotism.
My folks weren't "high level" cops.

ELEANOR

Does it bother you?

ALEX

Nepotism doesn't bother me as much
as the insane dedication with
which its beneficiaries set about
denying its very existence.

ELEANOR

Funny... And where would a level
playing field find you?

ALEX

Homicide. Narcotics is dangerous.

ELEANOR

Narcotics is more dangerous than
Homicide?

ALEX

In Narcotics, the bad guys look to
protect their investment. Homicide,
about half the bad guys are on the
run, while the other half are dead.

He stares out at the sprawling landscape.

ALEX

Are you excited for Fashion Week?

Eleanor offers a perfunctory smile.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Fog and rain descend upon the city. A cold wind blows.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jo watches as Eleanor presents a new piece for Tokyo.

ELEANOR

It's a tribute to Japan. People love
their national flag, so I figured I
would pay respect by using the white
flag background, plus the red circle.

JO

Cool. You made a white dress.

ELEANOR

It's more than a white dress.

JO

With red polka dots.

ELEANOR

It's more than a dress. You'll see.

Jo places a stack of bills on the table.

JO

Let's present this as mine.

ELEANOR

Jo...

JO

Let's go with your best. We'll bring mine as a back-up... I don't want people seeing all my moves, you know what I mean? I gave you 300, and I'll pay 200,000 more. This is 10,000. You've got something that's obviously something unique.

ELEANOR

I don't know. I need money, but at some point it is just money. White shoe law firms pay you well, but at what cost...? They say that it's like a pie-eating contest, but the only prize you win is more pie.

JO

Okay, then teach me how to fish.

ELEANOR

Pardon?

JO

Teach me how to fish, so I can start over with my dress.

A keen play-calling strategist, Jo goes to an end-around.

JO

Forget about Tokyo a minute. Let's show the world your work, you pocket 200,000 pounds more, and I save what I've made for later. I also don't leave anything to chance, because your work is airtight.

(MORE)

JO (cont'd)

But after we do this, I wanna know where your inspiration is coming from. I know architecture's a big influence...but let's go fishing.

Jo reaches for her bag. She adds £190,000 to the £10,000.

JO

10,000, and this is 190,000 more.

ELEANOR

You want me to teach you how to fish.

JO

I want you to teach me...how to hunt.

Eleanor cuts the stack.

ELEANOR

Please. As if you don't already know.

EXT./INT. LONDON - MONTAGE

Music builds. Eleanor leads Jo on creative expeditions. They flip through magazines from decades past. They sort swatches which will form the basis for Jo's one-off.

Colours abound. Markers, pencils, paints, thread, chalk. Pattern books, lookbooks, style guides, and travel guides.

Eleanor descends further into drugs. Snorting and smoking.

Jo and Eleanor sketch with pencils and computers.

Eleanor and Alex at rifle shows, zoos, ping-pong clubs.

Jo and Alex at exotic car auctions, museums, and galleries.

Alex's time is platonic with Jo, romantic with Eleanor.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

A DJ spins records as REVELERS dance. Jo, Eleanor, and Alex watch from a soundproof, VIP lounge set high above the mix.

Jo reaches into her bag, grabs two boxes, turns to Alex.

JO

I don't want anyone feeling left out, Alex, so I'm not gonna give Eleanor a birthday present, then not pick something out for you. I spent like, so much more on hers, so please don't say thank you.

ALEX

Jo? In advance? Thank you.

She hands him a gift-wrapped box, then turns to her left.

JO

Happy birthday, Eleanor James.

Jo presents a red box. It features a Cartier logo.

JO

Open it.

Eleanor complies, reveals a flawless, diamond bracelet.

ELEANOR

This must have cost 10,000 pounds.

JO

I mean...18,000, but who's counting?

ELEANOR

There's no way I can accept this.

JO

You have to.

ELEANOR

I can't.

JO

You have to.

ELEANOR

Okay, I will. I'll find the strength.

Eleanor matches Jo's broad smile, then sees Alex, stunned.

He looks at a gold watch. The one he'd earn upon retirement.

ALEX

Jo... It's extraordinary.

Eleanor unnerved, wary that Jo has sunk her claws into Alex.

INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Eleanor changes her father's oxygen canisters.

MR. JAMES

Your mum would've loved to have seen taking care of children of your own.

ELEANOR

I don't want kids.

MR. JAMES

Why not?

ELEANOR

They can hold you back in life.

MR. JAMES

Lots of things can hold you back
in life, Eleanor. A child may as
well be one of them.

Eleanor adjusts his pillow, then dutifully tucks him in.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jo cleans lint from a new design.

JO

It's a little black dress.

ELEANOR

Yeah, I can see that. Why?

JO

Because. It's timeless.

(beat)

And now it has pockets.

ELEANOR

... Pockets.

JO

For carrying things. Items.

Eleanor grits her teeth.

ELEANOR

Pockets.

She takes a closer look.

JO

How's your dad doing?

ELEANOR

Why do you ask so many questions?

How's your dad doing?

JO

... What did I do wrong?

ELEANOR

Sometimes when people ask how I'm
doing, they're not asking me how
I am, they're letting me know how
they're doing better.

JO

Oh, fuck -- it's not a conspiracy.

ELEANOR

No, it is not. It's right there in
front of me. Bright as the sun.

A moment passes.

JO

My dad has always worked overseas.
(beat)
He doesn't engage. He works.

ELEANOR

My father doesn't work at all.
(beat)
Well then. I guess we're even.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Alex and Eleanor dine. Eleanor writes notes in a sketchbook.

ALEX

What are you writing?

ELEANOR

The buyers requested that I put together a biography of Jo which they can use in press materials.

ALEX

Seems awfully personal for someone else to write... Put it away and finish your dessert. You haven't been eating much lately.

Eleanor picks at her plate.

ELEANOR

Will you be making an arrest?

ALEX

Of who?

ELEANOR

Of Jo, of her supplier, of anyone.

ALEX

There aren't any grounds. If you meant night one, arresting Jo leads to her suppliers by cutting a deal afterwards. But girls like Jo prove useful, in that the rich have their hands in a lot of pots.

ELEANOR

You don't owe me anything, but I have to ask. Do you like Jo?

ALEX

... Do you?

Eleanor lowers her eyes.

ALEX

A certain amount of professional jealousy is expected.

ELEANOR

I'm not jealous.

ALEX

I would understand if you are. One moment, your classmates are equals, until one takes her slight advantage in talent, then strikes.

ELEANOR

... Jo is no more talented than the rest of us.

ALEX

It appears the market disagrees.

Eleanor sets her silverware down.

ELEANOR

Central Saint Martins is the best institution of its kind. Jo has promise, but isn't as good as you think. To be honest, I don't even know how she got into CSM.

With his fork only inches from his mouth, Alex hesitates.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Alex at his computer. He Googles "Jo Miller."

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Alex sits with Bendricks (from the May Fair Hotel), as well as forensic technician WILLIAM FINLAY (50), plus DETECTIVES.

BENDRICKS

Next on the docket: Sims, Nathan. Probable suicide, but have at it.

FINLAY

Nathan Sims: Four distinct sets of prints were pulled from his laptop. One from the missing, one from his mother, one from the fisherman who hooked the laptop...and one unknown.

ALEX

Were the others wiped or dissolved?

FINLAY

Can't say. They're sebaceous prints. Far more tricky than eccrine prints.

ALEX
How long was the laptop underwater?

FINLAY
I'm sorry; who are you again?

ALEX
Alex Fulham. Just got in from Bath.

FINLAY
Oh. Welcome to Scotland Yard, Alex.

ALEX
Thank you.

FINLAY
Fuck off. Your enthusiasm grates.
(beat)
You've never fired a gun, have you?

ALEX
Only the one in your mother's pants.
Against their will, Detectives chuckle.

ALEX
I'm sorry. I was just under the impression that we could figure out a time frame here. We know galaxy SXDF-NB1006-2 is the most distant galactic body at 12.91 billion light years. We can date plankton microfossils from a two billion-year-old rock. But we can't tell if a laptop was dumped in August?

FINLAY
... You're smarter than you look.

ALEX
Attractive people are generally smart. Especially women; it's genetic... But you wouldn't know anything about that.

Detectives laugh. Alex studies the report: 3 out of 4 prints.

INT. HALL - DAY

Alex approaches the forensics lab, sees Finlay in his chair. He hesitates. After seeing a TECH, Alex pulls the woman aside.

ALEX
Hi. I'm new here and a bit nervous.
(beat)
What can you tell me about Finlay?

TECH
He's...ornery.

ALEX

You don't say.

TECH

He is obsessed with Toblerone.

ALEX

All about Toblerone. Terrific.

TECH

He has two sons, he plays chess,
and I think he roots for Chelsea.

ALEX

I appreciate it.

TECH

... He's ornery.

INT. LAB - DAY

Finlay works an electron microscope. He turns to see Alex.

ALEX

Hi. Um, regarding the Sims case, I'm
going to grab some prints. I'm hoping
you'll compare them to the fourth set.

Finlay, unmoved.

ALEX

Right. So, one theory I have is that
Sims may have gotten tangled up with
his friend's drug dealers. Perhaps he
owed a large debt. Only now, it's
Sims's friend who's raising interest.

FINLAY

I need more.

ALEX

I'm cozying up to the suspect under
the guise of getting information. I
wanted their narcotics contact, but
now I think they may be involved in
the Sims case. However, the suspect
is a rich kid, and an American at
that. If I bark up the wrong tree,
the tree is apt to bite in response.

FINLAY

... What's in it for me?

Alex stares. Then, two Toblerone bars SMACK onto the table.

Finlay stares at them. He deliberately places a newspaper
over them, as if covering a gun or a bribe. Slides them off.

ALEX
I'll bring you the prints tomorrow.

FINLAY
We'll see if he matches our unknown.

ALEX
... Never assume it's a "he." Crime-fighting or otherwise. Never assume it's a "he."

INT. FLAT - DAY

Eleanor smokes crack from a pipe. Her addiction peaks.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Jo drinks from, then sets down, a wine glass. Alex homes in on it. Jo's lipstick lies above two thumb prints.

Alex looks at the crew: Jo, Eleanor, and FASHIONISTAS. Pretends to be engaged. He takes a handkerchief, moves his hand towards the glass. Jo reaches for her clutch. Alex calls an audible and wipes the bar free of liquid.

FASHIONISTA
Have you been to Tokyo before?

JO
I've been to Seoul, I've been to Shanghai, I've been to Beijing...

ELEANOR
I simple "no" would suffice.

JO
... What is your problem?

ELEANOR
She asked whether you've been to Japan, and you listed three cities in Korea and China. Sorry, but when someone asks me if I've been to the US, I don't list all the small towns in Mexico I love.

JO
Well, you've never been anywhere.

ELEANOR
Yes. And I have you to remind me.

ALEX
Hey, Jo. My cousin is thinking about applying to Saint Martins. Do you have your application materials so I can give her a target to shoot at?

JO
Sorry, I deleted them awhile ago.

ALEX
Perhaps on a computer somewhere?

JO
I'll check; I don't think so, though.

Jo turns away. Alex studies her glass. As he's about to pick it up, the hand of a BUSBOY snatches it.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alex bursts through the swinging doors. A DISHWASHER is about to feed a rack of glasses to the steriliser.

Dishwasher closes the machine's door, and a cascade of water descends, as if a man-made Niagara Falls. Alex rushes the steel machine and raises a lever, opening it.

Boiling water streams out. Alex puts his hands into the mess and takes the rack out.

The confused Dishwasher looks on. Alex fumbles the rack. It crashes to the ground as shattered glass flies. Alex dives into the pile, slices a finger.

He identifies a section of glass with Jo's red lipstick. Alex holds it up to the light. He sees a flawless print.

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Alex sits at a desk. He places the glass in a drawer. Behind him, wholly unaware, Jo and Eleanor mix drinks.

JO
Last call for me. I gotta go.

EXT. HALL - NIGHT

After Jo leaves the room, she's surprised upon knocking into Bendricks. His bucket of ice almost falls.

JO
I didn't mean to startle you.
Detective Bendricks, right?

BENDRICKS
Are you visiting Alex?

JO
Yeah, I was just leaving. He's having a drink with my colleague if you're up for some fun... Do you stay here? He mentioned that senior personnel have rooms that
(MORE)

JO (cont'd)
are in rotation or what have you.

BENDRICKS
I have tenure, so I can reserve a room one weekend a month. My wife and I try to use it to get away from the kids every now and again.

JO
You can get a room once a month?

BENDRICKS
A suite, no less.

JO
Wow, really? I'd love to see it.

She smiles.

JO
I bet it's big.

INT. SUITE - NIGHT

Jo and Bendricks at his bureau. A string of pearls on a hook.

BENDRICKS
My wife knows this is a place for funny business and that sort. She comes with her jewellery on Fridays, and even if we leave Saturday, she keeps them here through Sunday so I can bring them home. The pearls are a marking of territory. In a way, I suppose I'm flattered.

JO
Well, I think if someone wanted to sleep with you, they wouldn't be a deterrent.

BENDRICKS
My wife is...unsatisfied. Constantly complains about my salary... This pearl necklace is an albatross around my neck.

JO
Blame Coco Chanel. She made pearl necklaces a must have for women... How'd you end being a cop?

BENDRICKS
I've always been one of the good guys. Picked first for sports; I stood up for the weaker boys...

(MORE)

BENDRICKS (cont'd)

And that's the side of the ledger a man wants to be on, but women also like men who have a touch of evil... But that's not me. We are who we are.

JO

The good guy look suits you. Keep it.

BENDRICKS

And you? To which code do you abide? Heaven and Hell as prescribed by Christianity? Or more practical principles like The Golden Rule?

JO

... I'm always trying to figure out whether I'm a good person, who is capable of lots of bad, or if I'm a bad person, who is capable of lots of good.

BENDRICKS

Any verdict?

JO

The jury's still out. But let's put it this way: I don't know if Heaven and Hell exist, but if they do... I definitely know where I'm going.

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor and Alex drink, the former skimming a hotel Bible.

ELEANOR

Are men interested in Jo because of her family's money, or would she draw the same attention if she were pretty without the money?

ALEX

The thing about Jo is...I sense some distance there. She's cold. Most Americans, for all their flaws, they're warmer than us. They hug a lot. Always with the hugging... They love each other in a way we don't, and care for America in a way we don't care for England. Revolution is something that came to pass because they wanted it more... Like the underdog in a sporting event, I think they only won the war is because they wanted it more.

ELEANOR
 You're probably right. And Jo's
 winning the design game for that
 same reason. She wants it more.

The clock ticks, then tocks.

ELEANOR
 I'm falling for you, Alex.

Alex smiles, but does not respond in kind.

ALEX
 I think I'm starting to as well.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Alex at his computer. Finlay appears, then drops a file.

FINLAY
 Prints from the glass. They match
 the fourth set from Nathan's laptop.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Alex and Finlay have just handed the prints to Bendricks.

ALEX
 The final set of prints are from Jo.
 The prints from the laptop are Jo's.

Bendricks opens the file, then regards Alex suspiciously.

BENDRICKS
 Did you sleep with her?

ALEX
 I'm in my 20s, Bendricks. There
 are plenty of women to choose from.

BENDRICKS
 All that ambition and wealth and your
 proximity to both. What I wouldn't do.

ALEX
 Quite seedy and dramatic, isn't it?

FINLAY
 So are your 20s.

The three share a smile.

FINLAY
 Alex, in a Narcotics investigation,
 you can break a few rules and some
 laws, even. But if you take down a
 young woman in stretching it out to
 a Homicide case, do be mindful.

ALEX

... I know I have dues to pay, being new here and all, but I have my sights set on Homicide. My parents didn't get there, but I will.

(beat)

Jo's captivating, but she's also a shark. If she's committed a crime, I won't do anything to jeopardise the investigation for Homicide.

BENDRICKS

I think you know what we're saying. Have your cake... But don't eat it.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Eleanor looks up from her desk. Stares intently at Jo.

ELEANOR

I want more rocks. I've earned them.

JO

Elle, I gave you a lot. And I told you to take it down a notch. We're coming down to the wire on this.

ELEANOR

Just give me the number.

JO

Eleanor, they're not some dorm room drug dealer, where they're just dabbling in crime. They're like, serious men with wives and children. They have something to lose here.

ELEANOR

Then why do you they talk to you?

JO

Because I buy an ounce every Monday.

ELEANOR

That's a lot.

JO

It's the third most in London on any given weekday... Bankers buy the most, then real estate agents, then Jo, then athletes and doctors.

ELEANOR

You owe me. How quickly we forget.

INT. SAINT MARTINS - DAY

Alex stands before a STUDENT receptionist.

ALEX

I'm looking to get the application file for one of your alumni. Her name is Jo Miller.

STUDENT

It's alumnus, if you so insist, and that's private information.

ALEX

It is private, though if you insist on being such an excruciating prick about it, it's alumna.

STUDENT

... I can't help you, and even if I could, I wouldn't.

Alex produces his badge. Flips it open, brass shining.

STUDENT

Revealing your shield is the most satisfying part of your existence, isn't it?

ALEX

You should feel the strength of my erection after a cop pulls me over.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eleanor in line. Her phone rings.

ELEANOR

Hello...? Oh, my God; where is he?

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Eleanor at her father's bedside.

She heads to the curtain separating his bed from another. Pulls it. Sees pill bottles on a bureau. She steals them.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Alex studies Jo's application file. A blue dress shines.

INT. LAB - DAY

Alex directs Finlay while they scan the latter's computer.

ALEX

Pull each file on his hard drive which touches upon fashion design:
(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)
 sketches, schemes, doodles.
 Anything that looks like a dress.
 Then transfer whatever's there to
 a floppy disk.

Finlay closes his eyes. Inhales, then exhales. Opens his eyes.

ALEX
 Three-and-half's?

FINLAY
 We no longer use floppy disks.

ALEX
 Okay, but can you prep one for me?

Alex, joking. Finlay, unaware. Counts to 5 with his fingers.

FINLAY
 Computers haven't had disk drives
 for years now. We use flash drives.

ALEX
 ... That's a USB, right?

FINLAY
 Oh, for fuck's sake. You're half
 my age and twice as slow.

ALEX
 Hm. If it makes you feel any better,
 I also make three times your salary.

Alex taps him on the shoulder with Jo's file, heads off.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Eleanor returns from the hospital. Finds a photography CREW
 taking over the studio, Jo being doted on by MAKEUP ARTISTS.

CREW
 Apologies, Miss; you can't be here.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Alex opens and closes the files which Finlay pulled for him.
 Sketch after sketch, design after design, Alex has no leads.
 He then clicks the Windows button at the bottom-left corner.

Alex sees the bar for "Search Programmes and Files." Types
 in "Application." Finds nothing. "Saint Martins." Nothing.

Then "CSM." Still nothing. A moment passes. He enters "Blue."

One file pops up: "Little Blue Dress." Alex's pupils dilate.
 He double-clicks, sees the same dress from Jo's application.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Alex consults with Bendricks and Finlay about his discovery.

ALEX

The same dress, the same collection,
the same portfolio which Jo applied
with...is on Nathan Sims's computer.
(beat)
She killed him, then stole his work.

BENDRICKS

Doubtful.

ALEX

Why?

BENDRICKS

Chances are, they were her designs,
but being a good friend, he helped
her out with them. That's why
they're on his computer.

ALEX

Except for this: I told Jo that my
cousin was applying to CSM. Then, I
asked about her application
materials, and she said she deleted
the files. No artist would do that.

BENDRICKS

Drill it down. What's the motive,
to gain admittance to grad school?

ALEX

Why not? People kill for far less,
and it's resulted in her own line.

BENDRICKS

Why not cut out grad school and have
her parents establish the line?

ALEX

One, I don't think they support her
in that regard. Two, it's akin to
having your mother complain that
you didn't make the rugby team, no?
You'd prefer to make it on your own
merits, and it's not valid if Daddy
purchases The Kingdom.

BENDRICKS

But your assumption is that she
didn't make it on her own merit.

ALEX

Maybe she just wants people to think she did. Or the ends justify the means, and she covets a fashion line which exists 200 years from now. Prada was founded by a man, but now it's run by his PhD-wielding granddaughter. Maybe she wants that power and legacy. Or maybe she just likes killing people.

BENDRICKS

That makes two of us.

ALEX

Three.

They smile. For the first time, Finlay speaks up.

FINLAY

Alex... If Jo claims that she deleted the application file, but actually does have it on her computer...

ALEX

That would be damning.

FINLAY

Circumstantial, but damning.

(beat)

Maybe instead of focusing on his laptop...you might focus on hers.

EXT./INT. CAR - DAY

Alex drives. Eleanor responds to a text from Jo.

ELEANOR

Can we stop by Jo's a minute?
I want to choose her samples.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jo and Eleanor sort samples. Alex helps by stacking them.

JO

I'm gonna head down to the wine cellar and grab a bottle of red.

Jo leaves. Alex eyes her laptop. After a beat, he walks to it, presses the "Start" button. Searches a few terms.

"Blue" returns nothing. "Application," "Saint Martins," "CSM," they all return no results. Alex tries "Nathan."

"Nathan_Hello" pops up. Alex clicks. The blue dress appears.

Jo enters, so Alex quickly types. He then tries to close the lid, but Jo stops him.

JO
Don't touch my laptop.

Jo storms off. Eleanor approaches, sees an adult site.

ELEANOR
You like chat models?

She smiles.

ELEANOR
Pervert.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

With Jo having left once more, Alex now looks for her. Through the dark, he walks between racks of wine. Jo appears with a flashlight. Alex, startled. After a beat:

ALEX
We need a name, Jo. It's time.

JO
I don't buy drugs. I use them.

ALEX
The reason I'm after your dealer isn't just to bring him in, and then grab others higher up on the food chain... I think Nathan killed himself, but there is the chance that he got tangled up with your guy. I think he could've been done in by a drug deal gone wrong if he was buying that night.

Jo purses her lips.

JO
You're right. I wanna see Nathan rest peacefully, so...it's Tony Muzzatti. Anthony Muzzatti.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eleanor enters. Opens the fridge, takes out orange juice. She pours a glass, then sees Jo's phone on a table.

Eleanor scrolls through the contacts, looks for Jo's drug dealer. She sees "Barry," "Bobby," and "Boo."

Eleanor then sees "Colombia" and "Columbia." She pauses, saves the former number on her own phone.

Eleanor turns to leave. In the dark, Jo's mother speaks.

MRS. MILLER
How's your father been doing?

ELEANOR (startled)
He's stable. Thanks for asking.

MRS. MILLER
Well, I'm happy you're here. Jo doesn't have many friends, and as much as you need her during tough times, she needs you.

ELEANOR
Right.

MRS. MILLER
It's no secret that I'm not a patron of the arts, design in particular. But I admire your drive in life. Your curiosity... Most people don't have the will to really dive headlong into the arts. And those who have the will, they often lack the means... On the very rich and the very poor are ever truly free.

ELEANOR
I was telling Jo how it's one thing to climb the mountain, but the real challenge is staying there.

MRS. MILLER
Exactly. Most people don't stay at the top very long. And the fall is often...

ELEANOR
Precipitous?

MRS. MILLER
... Painful.

EXT. LONDON - NIGHT/DAY

Night finds the day. Streets are swept; deliveries are made.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Alex takes his latest evidence to Bendricks/Finlay.

ALEX
Jo's application is on her computer.

FINLAY
You still have no proof. I'm the one who suggested you catch her in a lie by searching the drive.
(MORE)

FINLAY (cont'd)

Yeah, she appears guilty, but she may have just thought she deleted it.

Alex throws up his arms.

FINLAY

I'm just playing devil's advocate. Let us assume she killed him. How?

BENDRICKS

Nathan leaves Jo's party at 4 a.m. He loses his phone, so we lose his whereabouts. Maybe he walked back later, angry and drunk, and he confronts Jo about stealing. I don't know how he found out, but they fight. Maybe Nathan hits her, and maybe she pushes him off the roof in a burst of anger.

FINLAY

... Maybe in the garage, she gassed him with carbon monoxide.

ALEX

Yeah, and maybe she bludgeoned him to death with a gold-plated bust of Stalin. It's hardly the point.

FINLAY

(beat)

If Nathan came after Jo, wouldn't she just claim self-defense? After all, she's a rich girl. She'd find the courts agreeable to her plight.

ALEX

After a murder, the killer isn't thinking straight. They just want the problem to go away. Literally. Also, when people commit a murder, they're usually quite careless in their execution.

FINLAY

It's my belief that murderers are rather precise in their execution.

ALEX

Self-defense wasn't an option, as after an investigation, she'd be kicked out of school. She was also using drugs, on foreign soil, with mum and dad away. If she killed him, she'd be afraid.

BENDRICKS

Habeas corpus. Where's the body?

ALEX

Probably buried in the backyard.
Easiest, most common place.

BENDRICKS

Bottom line is, you have no proof.

ALEX

I have motivation and desire,
circumstance and happenstance.

BENDRICKS

But no proof.

ALEX

... There is one good thing that's
come out of this fuck-show. I've
got the name of her candy man.
If nothing else, one Tony Muzzatti
is gonna do cold, hard time.

Bendricks ruffles his hair, trying to exhaust all angles.

BENDRICKS

If Jo killed Sims...why would she
willingly spend time with you?

ALEX

Because she likes me, Bendricks. I
pay attention to her art, not her
face. It also makes sense that she
wants to keep me where she can see me.

BENDRICKS

(beat)

How pretty is she? Scale of 1 to 10.

ALEX

... I don't follow.

BENDRICKS

Jo and her friend: Eleanor... How
beautiful are they? Scale of 1 to 10.

ALEX

Dunno, Sir. I'm not in the business
of rating women on their looks.

Bendricks, confused.

ALEX

I just don't see the value in
assigning a numerical figure to a
woman's appearance... Sir.

BENDRICKS
They're not very likable, are they?

ALEX
No. But they are interesting.

BENDRICKS
Just be careful.

ALEX
Unfortunately, I'm never careful.

BENDRICKS
Well this is London, Alex. Start.
(beat)
It's entirely possible that Miss
Miller is two steps ahead of you.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Jo and Eleanor operate a fusing press. Steam rises.

ELEANOR
I want credit.

Jo rolls her eyes.

ELEANOR
First you took my clothes and now
you're after Alex. I suppose that
next is my Bishop, then the Queen.

JO
What are you even talking about?
(beat)
Camille's husband wasn't enough?

ELEANOR
That was for sport. This counts.

JO
1) You signed up for this shit, 2)
There's nothing going on with Alex.

ELEANOR
The two of you have nothing in common.
You're perfect for one another... He's
beautiful while you're breathtaking...
Timeless.

JO
Between the two of us, a lot of men
would say that you're much prettier.

ELEANOR
I agree.

JO
... He doesn't like me.

ELEANOR
Jo, everyone likes you.

JO
You're going crazy.

ELEANOR
I was crazy before you met me.
I've had my share of problems.

JO
Huh. I never would've guessed.

Eleanor leans in.

ELEANOR
Tell people that they're my clothes.
I'll give you back your money. Say
we were subverting this or that, do
whatever you have to do in order to
save face. But at some point you
must be honest or I will expose you.

JO
Calm down. We'll talk after Tokyo.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jo dials her phone. She stabs a pin cushion with needles.

JO
Alex, hi. I have to talk to you
about Eleanor.

ALEX
What's wrong?

JO
I'm still a little...unnerved by her,
especially cuz we're leaving tomorrow.
Maybe I should swing by your hotel.
We'll have a drink.

ALEX
I don't know when I'll be off.

JO
... Can you come by the house?

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Alex waits for Jo in the baroque living room. Maid 1 appears.

MAID 1
Jo will be ready shortly.

ALEX

Thank you.

MAID 1

Hair and makeup, you see.

Alex smiles. Maid 1 leaves. After a moment, Jo's dog enters. The corgi approaches Alex with a bone in its mouth. Alex pets him. Then, the dog drops the bone in the space between them. Alex focuses on the bone.

INT. BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Jo's party. The dog chews his bone. Jo shows off her voice.

JO

This old man, he played one/He
played knick-knack on my thumb/
With a knick-knack, paddy-wack/
Give a dog a bone/This old man
came rolling home.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Back in present time, Alex stares at the bone. A moment passes, then the dog runs out of the room. It takes a few seconds for Alex to respond, but soon, he chases after him.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain pours. The dog runs across the lawn, Alex in pursuit.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The dog hurries through the dense growth, Alex far behind.

The dog stops in a meadow. Thunder claps. Alex catches up.

He stares at what the dog is circling.

The tips of Nathan's bone fingers emerge from the earth.

The dog jumps and barks as thunder follows lightning. Light illuminates Alex against a dark sky. Rain soaks him. He crouches down and begins digging around the bone.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Given the impending Tokyo trip, Eleanor visits her father. She brings a glass to his lips.

ELEANOR

I didn't think I'd be nervous. I've
been on a plane, but here we are.

MR. JAMES

Make me proud for once. Just try.

ELEANOR
 Don't I already make you proud?

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

A BUTLER places baggage in an SUV. Jo and Eleanor appear.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Eleanor stands in line, waiting to be scanned by an AGENT. She empties pockets, sees a vial of cocaine. She thinks quickly, then tucks the vial in her bra.

Agent scans her body, and the wand beeps near her chest.

ELEANOR
 The buttons are made of steel.

As he waves the wand again, his sausage-like fingers make intentional contact with her skin. Eleanor grabs his wrist.

ELEANOR
 The buttons are made of steel.

INT. PLANE - DAY

Eleanor sits in coach. She looks up the aisle, sees Jo in first-class. Eleanor tries to settle in to the tiny space. Jo gets up, joins her.

JO
 Why are you sitting in coach?

ELEANOR
 That's what my ticket says.

JO
 Switch seats.

ELEANOR
 I'm fine.

JO
 You work for me now. If you work for me, you're flying first-class.

LATER

A STEWARDESS brings Eleanor dinner. Pours a glass of wine.

LATER

The plane experiences turbulence. It gradually gets worse. Eleanor makes eye contact with a creepy-looking PASSENGER in the next row. He smiles at her, enjoying the distress.

INT. LAB - DAY

After his gruesome discovery at Jo's, Alex follows up. Holding out a clear plastic jar, he stops Finlay.

ALEX

How long would it take to have bone fragments tested?

FINLAY

48 hours. But first you have to have Bendricks sign off on it.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Alex stands in front of Bendricks, who sits at his desk.

BENDRICKS

Really, Alex? Fragments are not the way to find Nathan Sims.

Alex set down the jar.

ALEX

It fucking is Nathan Sims.

BENDRICKS

... How sure are you?

(beat)

Scale of 1 to 10. How sure are you?

ALEX

... It's a 10, Sir.

EXT. TOKYO - NIGHT

The lights and sights of Tokyo. Jo and Eleanor explore.

INT. HOTEL - MORNING

Eleanor wakes up. Opens the blinds. Sunlight pours in.

INT. UNIVERSITY - DAY

Alone, Eleanor wanders the hallway of a school. Festivities for Fashion Week include guest speakers, and Eleanor checks in on a speech through a half-opened door. The room is full.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Australian designer LUKE LEDVA (45), in front of a podium. Eleanor stands in the back. Jo and Camille sit together.

LUKE

When they asked me to give the keynote address, I was honoured.

(MORE)

LUKE (cont'd)

I was also nervous, as I didn't want to be one of those people who imparts advice, because far too often, it's self-serving and unhelpful. Now, while this isn't a university graduation, it's still a rite of passage in many ways. And I wanted share some thoughts that will guide all of us in the continued pursuit our shared, artistic mission. So I want to close tonight, and welcome you to Fashion Week, with decent, practical, advice.

Eleanor stands tall. Jo leans in.

LUKE

Don't let them break your spirit. People may break your will...but don't let them break your spirit.

(beat)

Hold on to your dreams, tight as you can, and never let go. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Tokyo Fashion Week, and may God bless you all.

The AUDIENCE rises and claps with enthusiasm.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Jo and Eleanor unpack four of Eleanor's best designs, along with the red polka dot dress. They place them on mannequins.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

On a break, Eleanor wanders on the stage. The empty auditorium is cavernous. Eleanor is soon joined by two young girls, SIBLINGS who come running and jumping. A beat, until their MOTHER appears. She's holding hands with her husband, keynote speaker Luke Ledva. Eleanor admires the love between the four of them. After a moment...

ELEANOR

I appreciate what you said. About not letting them break your spirit.

LUKE

I didn't know anyone was listening.

ELEANOR

I like a simple, uplifting message. Better than telling us to find the right networks or the right mentor.

LUKE

That's sweet of you to say. That said, I should've revised it, because my spirit gets broken all the time, and I'm doing well. It's hope that's important.

(beat)

People can break your will, they'll break your spirit, but always hold on to hope. It can get us through anything when we've got nothing else.

Luke and his wife watch the girls play. Eleanor smiles.

EXT. TOKYO - NIGHT/DAY

Night turns to day. The city comes to life.

EXT./INT. CAR - DAY

Jo and Eleanor are driven to the university. They wear grey, stoic game-faces. Signage, storefronts promote Fashion Week.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A collection debuts. MODELS walk and stalk the runway.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Jo and Eleanor take Eleanor's old pieces off the mannequins, then place them in garment bags. Eleanor notices a pained expression on Jo's face.

ELEANOR

What's wrong?

JO

Camille said she's ready for us.

ELEANOR

Let's put on a show.

JO

You're not nervous?

ELEANOR

Should I be?

JO

What do I tell her?

ELEANOR

Tell her that you have four old pieces you made as an undergrad. You tell them that you wanted to go on Safari your whole life...but it was never gonna happen.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (cont'd)
 Your parents, they used to fight a lot. You weren't going to ask for a trip while their screaming shook the walls and your mum was lit.

INT. SHOW ROOM - DAY

Jo picks up where Eleanor left off. The four pieces are lined up in front of a focused Camille.

JO
 My parents, they used to drink a lot. I never wanted to ask for a trip while their screaming shook the walls. But my dream was to go on Safari, so I designed four dresses instead. One is inspired by a lion, another by a zebra, a the third's a giraffe, and the fourth is from a leopard. And to be honest, my art came from pain, because if I couldn't get them to stop drinking, I could channel my sadness into design.

(beat)

I thought art could ease my pain.

Camille is moved by the sentiment.

CAMILLE
 I love this. I really love it, Jo.

JO
 Thanks. But please know that this is the past. I can do much better than this... This is child's play.

Eleanor seethes from the affront.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Jo and Eleanor are back to work. Their pieces are now fitted on MODELS. Four Models, and a fifth in the red polka dot dress. Eleanor watches Jo and Model 3.

JO
 Have fun, okay? I'll see you in 30.

Jo kisses her, joins Eleanor.

ELEANOR
 It's show time; where are you going?

JO
 I'm not watching my own runway show; that's obnoxious. Be back in a sec.

Jo walks off. MODEL 4 appears.

MODEL 4
Excited?

ELEANOR
Always... Listen: change of plans.

MODEL 4
Yeah?

ELEANOR
Yeah. We're going to Jo's back-up collection. Everyone change it up, but the polka dot dress, that stays.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jo's four, old pieces come strutting down the runway. They make no impression at all. JOURNOS look disinterested.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jo and Luke Ledva sip drinks. Luke grabs a cherry.

JO
My one new piece is a red polka dot dress. It's a mystery piece.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Eleanor's red polka dot dress is last, and as Model 5 is walking, the red polka dots change colours. Red to OYGBIV.

JO (V.O.)
It's actually a plain white dress, but it refracts lights, interacts with each individual's eyes, then an optical illusion results. My white dress has red polka dots as a default, but some people will see orange dots, yellow dots, green ones, and so on. It's all retinas, rods, and cones. You hope that your work lands, but we also aim for that audience of one.

Camera flashes go off. Necks crane. Heads nod.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jo and Luke Ledva talk. Eleanor approaches with a smirk.

JO

I just want to show respect to Tokyo, respect to Japan, and I think the way to do it is with a dress that shows respect for their flag. The white flag and the red circle are super chic.

Eleanor draws close. Jo doesn't see her, though Luke does. Eleanor sees Luke's (married) hand on Jo's thigh.

Luke winks at Eleanor, who is disgusted.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Miserable, Jo sits alone. A beat. Locks eyes with Camille.

INT. LAVATORY - NIGHT

Eleanor preps cocaine. Her nose drips blood on white tile.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Alex walks to Scotland Yard.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Alex rides up. An OFFICER and his CHILD stand next to him.

OFFICER

Sing it. Sing for the detective.

CHILD

Daddy, you're embarrassing me.

He tries to encourage the Child by singing first.

OFFICER

Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer/Had
a very shiny nose/And if you ever
saw him/You would even say it glows.

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - DAY

Alex walks to his desk, passing CO-WORKERS along the way.

CO-WORKER 1

Hi, Alex.

A subdued greeting. Alex nods, walks on. Smiles and nods at others. Some avoid his glance, and Alex looks concerned.

CO-WORKER 2

Morning, superstar.

CO-WORKER 3

Great work, Fulham.

Alex, confused. He soon arrives at his office and sits down. He then attends to papers and coffee. Finlay comes KNOCKING.

FINLAY

If you need to talk to someone,
come see me after you're settled.

ALEX

What's going on? Everyone's been
acting like they're a pallbearer.

FINLAY

... Talk to Bendricks.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Alex and Bendricks. The latter inhales, deeply exhales.

BENDRICKS

Results came back on Nathan Sims.

(beat)

If you break a bone fragment off a
barely exposed tip, presumably a
finger or a toe, be certain it
isn't some animal's ribs instead.

ALEX

... What?

BENDRICKS

Rudolph. Donner. Blitzen. Bambi.

(beat)

It's a deer, Alex. Nothing more.

Alex turns pale.

BENDRICKS

Next time...dig a little deeper.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Jo and Eleanor before Camille, whose face portends doom.

JO

I know you don't want to listen to
excuses, but that's not what I set
aside for the walk. I'm sorry.

CAMILLE

Prefacing your apology by telling
me I don't want to hear an excuse,
and then immediately following up
with an excuse, is not an apology.

JO

I didn't mean to embarrass you.

CAMILLE

Well...it wasn't a total loss.

Camille takes off her glasses, folds them deliberately.

CAMILLE

The press may have thought the first four were flat-out dull, but I thought the polka dots were nothing short of ground-breaking.

(beat)

And Jo... I'm not the only one.

She spins her laptop. Jo and Eleanor see the headlines.

INT. FLAT - NIGHT

Pills and vials abound. After a moment, Eleanor throws up.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Jo sits in silence with a violin. She turns on a metronome, sets the winder. Clicking begins. Jo stares at the pendulum, waits to get her timing down. Then, like a runner exploding from the starting blocks, she begins to play with vigour.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

In the London suburbs, a POSTMAN ambles up the stairs. He rings the doorbell. He rings it twice. The Postman Always Rings Twice. A drop of liquid lands on his shirt. It's blood.

Another drop lands on his hand. Postman sees that it's red. He looks up, sees a dark mass pooling on the overhang.

LATER

Squad cars and ambulances. A sullen Alex watches the action from across the street. A body bag on a stretcher emerges. Bendricks joins Alex. Nods at a cop car, the Killer in back.

BENDRICKS

His name is Patrick Terence Culliford. Lured four gay men, with Sims being the last. He was stabbed, then gutted like a fish.

Alex's phone rings. He sees the screen, answers.

ALEX

Hi.

JO

Hey, what are you up to?

ALEX

... I could use a drink.

INT. CAR - DAY

Eleanor drives from Camille's office. Dark clouds gather.

INT. CAR - DAY

Alex and Jo arrive, park in the lot of the May Fair hotel.

ALEX

He's not a serial killer unless he killed within a relatively short period of time. If he killed them over decades, he's just a standard-issue, garden variety sociopath.

Alex exits, Jo as well. Alex sorts files in the trunk.

JO

Eleanor's threatening to expose me. Help me talk her down from the ledge.

ALEX

Expose you for what?

JO

... We all have secrets in life.

ALEX

Some have more than others.

JO

I have more than most.

She maintains eye contact.

JO

I stole Nathan's portfolio.

(beat)

The night he disappeared, Nathan left his laptop at my house, and he left his designs on the mannequins. I have ten of them in my room, and we worked there a lot... After he went missing, the writing was on the wall after a point: that he was probably dead... I applied to Saint Martins with his designs and got in.

Alex rubs his temples.

JO

I've always... If I see a flaw in the system or a fault in the plan, I have to exploit it. It's almost primal.

ALEX

It is primal.

JO

No, it's almost primal. Animals don't feel guilty about the sins they've committed.

ALEX

Neither do you.

Jo moves in on Alex. They kiss, separate, kiss again. Passion and disdain. Having come to drop in on Alex...Eleanor watches.

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - DAY

Jo and Alex romp between the sheets.

INT. CAR - DAY

Enraged and high, nearing psychosis, Eleanor dials her phone.

VOICE

Hello?

ELEANOR

Is this Tony Muzzatti?

VOICE

Who's this?

ELEANOR

Mr. Muzzatti, a detective from Scotland Yard is closing in on you.

VOICE

... How did you get this number?

ELEANOR

His name is Fulham.

Silence.

VOICE

Are you sure?

ELEANOR

... Alex.

She hangs up. A beat, and she SLAMS the phone on the wheel.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jo continues her confession.

JO

Just before graduation, it became obvious that I wasn't getting my collection bought.

(MORE)

JO (cont'd)

I didn't want to spend my life on the fashion design treadmill, and since Eleanor doesn't have the right stuff in terms of mental makeup, but does have the talent... We made a pact: I gave her money so I could take ownership of her collection, then submitted the collection as my thesis. It worked, and the ship set sail.

An angry, reluctant smile forms on Alex's face.

JO

Please talk to her. She sabotaged us in Tokyo, and now she wants to see me.

EXT. WESTMINSTER BRIDGE - DAY

In the spot where the pact was made, Jo waits for Eleanor. She sees CHILDREN singing. Their music TEACHER conducts.

CHILDREN

London Bridge is falling down,
falling down, falling down;
London Bridge is falling down,
My fair lady. London Bridge is
broken down, broken down, broken
down; London Bridge is broken
down, My fair lady.

Jo wears a pained expression as the creepiness rises.

CHILDREN

Build it up with silver and gold,
silver and gold, silver and gold;
Build it up with silver and gold,
My fair lady. Silver and gold will
be stolen away, stolen away,
stolen away; Silver and gold will
be stolen away; My fair lady.

LATER

Jo and Eleanor gaze out at the water.

JO

I understand you have problems, but this isn't the way to address them.

ELEANOR

We all have problems, Jo. I'm not the only one struggling with demons.

JO (softening)

Of course. But at least you struggle with them.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (cont'd)

They're like a distinct, opposing force... With me... I don't know where the demon ends and I begin.

ELEANOR

... Sunday night, I'm writing a letter. Monday morning, I'll be sending it to CSM, Camille, and the press.

(beat)

I wanted credit before you went and fucked Alex. I'm gonna take pity on you now? No. It's going out Monday.

JO

You can come forward with the truth, but I can do the same. You fucked the husband of one of the most well-liked buyers in Europe, so you will get blackballed for that. I'll tell people that you're an awful addict.

ELEANOR

I hate you.

JO

You hate me because I'm rich.

ELEANOR

I hate you because you're stupid.

JO

Eleanor... I was given a lot of advantages in life...and I took advantage of them. I was given a lot of disadvantages in life... and I took advantage of them, too.

ELEANOR

Tell everyone. Blackball me; I don't care. It's a frivolous, repulsive business filled with frivolous, repulsive people... We'll see you in the tabloids. Rags to Riches, indeed.

JO

... Why would you want to meet up if we can't negotiate a little?

ELEANOR

So I could offer you hope... Then quickly extinguish it.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Jo sits with her mother.

MRS. MILLER

Who else knows?

JO

Just Alex. He knows about the pact,
and knows that I stole from Nathan.

MRS. MILLER

Perhaps you should come forward.

JO

We're American. The English
tabloid press will eat me alive.

A moment passes. Pin-drop silence.

MRS. MILLER

What haven't we given you?

For the first time, Mrs. Miller has lost her icy cool.

MRS. MILLER

What haven't we given you?

JO

... How much time do you have?

MRS. MILLER

You can't build a company on lies.

JO

Oh, get a grip. Entire empires were
built on lies. Lies, deception, and
flat-out theft. Alexander the Great
raped and pillaged his way across
Europe and Africa. The Roman Empire
was built upon the backs of men and
the bodies of women.

(beat)

I want to live forever, and a sharp
needle is how I thought I could do
it... History is written by winners.

MRS. MILLER

Life isn't about winners and losers.

JO

Then what's it about, relationships?
Love? Affection? Because as a family,
we have none of those boxes checked.

(beat)

Don't find God over two simple lies.

MRS. MILLER

They're not simple.

JO
 ... My life is over. People don't
 come back from things like this.

INT. ANDERSON & SHEPPARD - DAY

Alex wears the suit that Salesman previously sold him.

SALESMAN
 You look great. Promise me you
 haven't been wearing it in the rain.

ALEX
 Rain? I wear this in the bathtub.

SALESMAN
 You cheeky as hell. Now get out of
 here before I report it stolen, kid.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Alex exits. Looks triumphantly left, then victoriously right.

A van pulls up and a MASKED MAN steps out. He calmly SHOTS
 Alex twice in the head, execution-style. Alex collapses hard.

Masked Man jumps in the van, SLAMS the door. The van leaves.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Alex's casket is lowered into the ground as a proper police
 burial is afforded to him. Bendricks, seething, stares at Jo.

INT. FULHAM FAMILY HOME - DAY

MOURNERS circulate. Eat cold pea soup, drink warm white wine.
 Jo sits alone. Bendricks presents, sits down across from her.

JO
 How's the soup?

Silence. Bendricks sips his wine. Sets his glass down.

BENDRICKS
 I know that you slithered into CSM
 on the back of Nathan Sims. I also
 hold you responsible for this
 tragedy... You are a foul creature.

JO
 I'm sorry.

Jo bends her head. She unhooks the clasp on her necklace.

JO
 Now, as long you keep your anger
 in check, I think you'll be okay.

Stolen pearls swing like a pendulum. Bendricks is thrown.

JO

I wouldn't want your wife finding
out...that someone's been wearing
her pearl necklace.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jo tosses and turns, worried that Eleanor will go public.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jo makes coffee. She adds sugar. She stirs...then pauses.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Online, Jo reads about Levamisole, used as a de-worming agent for fish enthusiasts. It's also used as a cutting agent that's been linked to overdoses and fatalities.

INT. PET STORE - DAY

An large fish tank. Salt-water specimens. Jo stares at it. Looks at the OWNER, busy with CUSTOMERS. Jo moves towards the counter. She hurries to the Owner's station, sees a bottle: Levamisole. No one is watching, so she steals it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jo tends to a batch of cocaine laid out before her. She dumps half the bottle of Levamisole, mixes it well.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jo waits outside Eleanor's flat. In time, Eleanor leaves.

INT. FLAT - DAY

Jo breaks in, heads to Eleanor's bedroom. She takes Eleanor's coke, then replaces it with her proprietary mix.

EXT. SHEFFIELD TERRACE - DAY

Jo walks her dog with her only friends, Maid 1 and Maid 2.

INT. FLAT - NIGHT

Eleanor takes out Jo's concoction. Spreads cocaine on a black plate. Produces a small straw. Sniffs three lines.

Her system floods. Cardiac arrest and a seizure.

Eleanor is alarmed. She stands up, but collapses on the dingy, curled linoleum. Eleanor dies without dignity.

EXT. BOUTIQUE (SUPER: TWO YEARS LATER) - DAY

Jo enters a tasteful building. A sign out front reads, "Jo Miller," with "London / New York" below it.

A fraudulent empire has now been birthed.

EXT. SAINT MARTINS - DAY

STUDENTS on the grass. Jo walks among them, sees CHRIS (25) sketching. Over his shoulder, she admires his work.

JO
You're so talented.

CHRIS
Thank you.

JO
I love the way you introduced marbling to the waistcoats.

CHRIS
It's risky; I know. Especially on the chubby fur... I'm Chris.

JO
I'm Jo. I actually went here.

CHRIS
Oh, great... Did you like it?

JO
I loved it.

She continues looking down on him as music crescendos.

JO
Can I ask you a question, Chris?

CHRIS
Of course.

Jo smiles, baring her wicked, white teeth.

JO
Do you like candy?

FADE OUT.

THE END