

MURDER IN LONDON

Written by

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INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

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

Nathan barrels into a column of paperbacks 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 slowly passes away. The Killer leaves.

EXT. WYCOMBE SQUARE (SUPER: 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 home. She, too, leads a dog.

They look towards a red door with gold numbering.

Slowly, it opens. JO MILLER (29) cradles a 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 borders. She wears a linen apricot dress with blue buttons, plus blue peep-toe heels to match. Jewelry 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 (29).

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 walks through her family's red front door. She releases her dog, he scampers to a bowl. Jo bounces up a beech wood staircase. She walks a well-appointed second floor, past a door, and into her bedroom. Lined up are twenty mannequins, all of which display garments of Jo's own clever invention.

She paces left to right, as if a drill sergeant evaluating a platoon. Pleased, Jo begins to photograph the collection.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - DAY

Eleanor works: Ironing and sewing, lint traps and tailoring.

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 a tiny 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. Eleanor, unmoved, 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.

(MORE)

HODGESON (cont'd)

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 continues to smile in the face of his garish poetry.

HODGESON

Twenty years 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. Our process 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 you will die.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

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

HODGESON

Jo, yes. Have a seat.

She sits, demurely smoothing 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 endeavor.

JO

Totally. I just read that Cristóbal Balenciaga 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, then dispense with formalities.

HODGESON

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

JO

Well, 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

I do. I love it here. My parents have settled in nicely, so I'd like 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

Oh.

(beat)

I mean, that would be amazing, but again, I'm looking to establish my own line. It's very flattering and I do appreciate the offer, but I'm really hoping 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. "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. Like, steel yourself for disappointment.

HODGESON

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

JO

I see what you're saying.

(beat)

There's a very fine line between A- work and A+ work.

HODGESON

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

INT. JO'S 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 (60), witnessed the interaction.

MRS. MILLER

I'm sure Mary appreciates your help.

(beat)

We pay her well for her efforts, Jo.

JO

(beat)

I'm sure she appreciates your help.

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 my dog?

MRS. MILLER

When you pick up after it, then set the table, it's hardly 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 well-adjusted human.

(beat)

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

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. JO'S 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.

Jo makes a final adjustment, then steps back to evaluate.

JO

What do you think?

MODEL 1

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

JO

Oh, please. Studying fashion at Saint Martins is like playing football at Cambridge. Maybe one footballer at Cambridge goes pro, and maybe 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 Viv?

JO

Yeah, we've hung out a few times.

MODEL 1

They're a great night out.

(beat)

Do you know Eleanor James?

INT. ELEANOR'S 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, then 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 prefer to be stabbed by you. Everyone with taste loves your work, even if others find it a bit 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. JO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

I don't think she enjoys life.

MAID 1

There are only so many ways one can eat foie gras, there are only a few variations on the way Figaro can be married. Boredom has to wear on her.

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 loving 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, followed by a second.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - MORNING

Eleanor sweeps and mops a dull, tile floor. She hems skirts, sews dresses. Later, exhausted, she stares at the spin cycle.

INT. BANK - DAY

Eleanor is received by a slovenly BANK TELLER (40).

ELEANOR

Hi. I was looking to speak to someone about getting a stay on my student loan payments?

He nods, picks up a phone, then dials an extension.

TELLER

What are you studying, then?

ELEANOR

Art. Design, specifically.

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 in shame.

INT. ELEANOR'S FLAT - DAY

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

Eleanor weaponizes the blouse, a button as its warhead. She closes on the roach and strikes. Its exoskeleton limps away.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Eleanor eats alone. She watches Jo hold court with STUDENTS.

INT. DESIGN STUDIO - DAY

Jo presents a gown from her collection for peer review.

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.

(MORE)

JO (cont'd)

As you can see here, I'm still focusing on dark, classic gowns, which are covered by intricate embroidery and lace.

HODGESON

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.

(beat)

Okay, next up... Eleanor James.

ELEANOR

I have nothing to preview.

HODGESON

Will you be finished by show time?

ELEANOR

I don't know if I'm ever finished.

(beat)

Honestly, though; my work's 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 except Jo, who studies Eleanor keenly.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Eleanor walks home, flanked by distressed brick and mortar.
 Jo follows her. Walking around a corner, she loses track.
 About to give up the pursuit, Jo turns, meets Eleanor's face.

ELEANOR

Why are you following me?

JO

What? I'm not.

Eleanor feels the lapel on Jo's coat.

ELEANOR

You're a long way from Wycombe Square.

JO

Seriously...? When I see you around my neighborhood, 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 picking up clothes.

JO

There are no fabric stores by me.

ELEANOR

I was just getting clothes.

JO

I know. There aren't any --

ELEANOR

-- Clothes. To wash.

A wave of embarrassment passes over Jo.

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 always wins.

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 to begin with.

ELEANOR

Not when the dice are weighted.

Jo's focus shifts to a pastry shop.

JO

Do you like candy?

ELEANOR

I like chocolate, I suppose. Taffy.

JO

You're not hearing me.

(smiling)

Do you like candy, Eleanor?

INT. ELEANOR'S FLAT - DAY

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

JO

Professor Hodgeson is always talking 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 read?

JO

Both.

Eleanor squints her eyes.

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. Spare yourself the naiveté.

JO

... I want to see your collection.

BEDROOM

The collection is displayed by 20 ceiling hangers.

JO

You're gonna get this bought. Fuck.

ELEANOR

Hodgeson hates me. And he has a lot of pull with the awards committee.

Jo runs her fingers along 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.

KITCHEN

Jo sprinkles cocaine on a pot-packed pipe.

ELEANOR

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

JO

Stop. You're gorgeous; you just don't spend all your time reading beauty blogs. 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. "Who" they want. An American in London? Check. Daddy is a highly-esteemed commodities broker? Check. Giving his fresh-faced daughter 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 gets hot where I work.

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 thick plume of smoke.

ELEANOR

Miss America.

EXT. WESTMINSTER BRIDGE - DUSK

As a friendship takes hold, 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.

(beat)

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 out at the water as ships pass in the night.

JO

Your work, my name.

ELEANOR

Pardon?

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 go slave away in corporate anyway, why not take a shot to be my A.D.? Create whatever you want, spin off, and start your own line.

ELEANOR

I don't know.

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 bites a nail.

ELEANOR

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

JO

I'll pay your student loans. Out of my own pocket even, I can pay your student loans. I can also give you a ton of cash. My family's attorney can figure out the non-disclosure agreement, and we'll be on our way.

ELEANOR

I don't know. Though it would great 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 watches.

INT. COTTAGE - MORNING

Steam rises as a cup of tea is poured. Eleanor is in her father's home. She bring him the tea as he rests in bed.

HAROLD JAMES (60) 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, then?

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
Prohibitively so. At the shops,
they keep them under lock and key.
It's easier to steal a Picasso.

INT. GROCERY - DAY

A red light. A CLERK scans a plastic four-pack of razors.

Eleanor swipes her credit card.

CLERK
It was declined.

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

CLERK
You want to try another card?

ELEANOR
No, that's okay. Thank you.

CLERK
Cash, then?

ELEANOR
Really, it's alright. I'm sorry.

INT. DRUGSTORE - 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. LOT - DAY

Eleanor walks, until her arm is grabbed by a GUARD. He reaches for her purse, and a struggle ensues. Eleanor falls down. Guard spits on her, takes the razors from her purse. Eleanor checks for blood. It runs from her lips.

INT. ELEANOR'S FLAT

Eleanor looks in the mirror, cleans up. Gets ready for work.

INT. LAUNDERETTE - DAY

Eleanor sorts a laundry bag. Finds fecal matter on her hands. She rushes to a sink, then furiously cleans it off.

INT. JO'S HOUSE - DAY

The bell rings. Jo opens the door. It's a defeated Eleanor, who nods briskly.

ELEANOR
Partners.

INT. JO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eleanor looks at the high ceilings, intricately carved.

ELEANOR
Your house is beyond belief.

JO
I dunno. It's growing on me.
(beat)
Money doesn't buy happiness, but
it sure as hell tries to.

Eleanor turns to Jo.

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 fashion, whatever I put forth cannot display 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 1000 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. Nine months of hard labor.

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

A clothes line is dropped in a gas can, then removed.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Jo's collection hangs on the line. Eleanor puts a match to it, and fire whizzes across the rope. Soon, flames engulf the collection. Eleanor turns to Jo.

ELEANOR
Now.

Gripping a garden hose, Jo douses the collection with water. 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.

A beat. Eleanor calls back to Jo's lineage.

ELEANOR
Rags to Riches.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Later, Jo walks alone, 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 places her hand
inside, then slowly lowers it. Anabella doesn't move.

Jo's hand moves toward the treasure chest. Anabella HISSES.

Jo lifts out the chest. There's a small drawer in its body.

Jo slides it open, sees Nathan's stash: a vial of cocaine.

Jo steals it, drops the chest back in. A second snake leaps.

The snake's fangs, affixed to Jo's wrist. She SCREAMS.

Jo shakes her wrist as Anabella, still frozen, watches her.

INT. ELEANOR'S 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 now stumbled into.

JO

Sorry. You're calling the shots.

ELEANOR

Am I?

JO

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

Jo opens a satchel.

ELEANOR

Oh, goody. Secret, cloak-and-dagger documents which 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 a fine-toothed comb. So, here it is. Your loans for tuition and the lump sum payment will be paid prior to the show. Sign today, and you'll get 50 thousand on Tuesday.

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 this?

JO
Our cars cost that much. My mom's
car cost 300 grand, and she doesn't
even know how to drive.

(beat)
This is a career opportunity. A shot
at lifetime revenue. I'm offering
you 250, because you're worth 500.

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 dreamed I'd sign a design
contract. Not like this, but still.
It feels so important. Other-worldly.
(smiling)
Feels like I should sign it in blood.

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, a "Striking Man" was watching them. It was ALEX FULHAM (29).

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. 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?

Alex smiles, ignoring the question.

ALEX

I'm looking for a suit that can impress on 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.

STONE BENCH

Blood-red ketchup, spread upon cardboard and newspaper.

Jo and Eleanor wear fine outfits, in contrast to their fish and chips dinner. They watch the crowd from a distance.

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.

The Striking Man -- Alex Fulham -- watches from a distance.

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, 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, emphasized 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 forties-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 colors.

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 pretty picture of fabric burning on a line.

On the walls, Eleanor eyes framed shots of their collection.

HODGESON

Style over substance. That's all this is. Did you think I wouldn't notice shoddy craftsmanship? Shabby design?

(MORE)

HODGESON (cont'd)
 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's not original but it is good.
 (beat)
 It smells like Labor 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 mad because of shoddy 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's 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 uneasiness hits Eleanor. She ignores it, drinks.

THE BAR

Later, 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.

JO

Wait for it. It's coming.

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 wanna take passive-aggressive swipes at me, or do you wanna engage with 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 connection 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's since the day she arrived.

Hodgeson lies, given his early 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.

(MORE)

STYLIST (cont'd)

It wasn't just a critique of Spain or the UK, 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 get you back.

INT. ATRIUM - NIGHT

LOUISE WILSON, course director of the MA program, 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 at the bar.

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), accepting the BOUNCER'S greeting.

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

Jo, mid-conversation with Fred.

FRED

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

Jo winces.

FRED

I think I've treated you well.

JO

I'm not looking for a relationship.

Wounded, Fred lashes out.

FRED

I'm not looking for a relationship.
(beat)

Jo, 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 much more important to you than me.

JO

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

FRED

... Jo, the only thing I find more tedious than fashion is time spent with you.

Jo flings the wax from a candle onto his coat, then 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 really well done. I spent an hour on them.

ELEANOR

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

Jo smiles.

JO

I'm having a party tonight. Come by.

Jo stands, then walks off.

JO

Hey.

Jo calls back.

JO

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

INT. ELEANOR'S 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 pops out.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

"Jo Miller" and "Saint Martins" is entered into Google.

Jo toggles through blogs: 1 Granary, Face Hunter, et al.

The sites chronicle and explore her thesis win.

INT. JO'S 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 Fulham.

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 isn't 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 memorized the cards as a child to impress someone I liked.

(beat)

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 eyes Alex for the final decision.

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 of feminism, except that it's a loaded word, so you spin it to your slimy advantage.

ALEX

It's also possible that I answered correctly because it wasn't the hardest question in a box of some right-hard 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. Are you 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 always stay so thin?

STUDY

Jo sniffs cocaine in one swoop. Her nails grip the straw. They glisten like a baby eagle's talons.

Alex enters. Eleanor notices him, flips 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. Good to meet you.

GUEST 4
Who are you with?

ALEX
It's just me tonight.

A CRADLE-ROBBER (50) with a TEENAGER on his thigh:

CRADLE-ROBBER
What do you do, Alex?

GUEST 4
He trades equities.

GUEST 5
He's an art dealer.

GUEST 6
You're both wrong.
(beat)
He's a pediatric cardiologist.

ALEX
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 4
What division are you?

GUEST 5
Juveniles.

GUEST 6
Terrorism.

JO
... Sex Crimes.

Alex wipes cocaine from the table and 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. They don't find out?

JO
We have a loyal staff.

ALEX
You pay them well.

JO
I treat them well.

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

JO
The neighbors 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 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

Do you want to 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 extends his card.

ALEX

Let me know if you have a change of heart.

He leaves. Jo examines his card. Sees a Scotland Yard emblem. She fingers his contact info. Alex Fulham. The card is embossed.

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 cab, so they don't know where he ended up... It's just so 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 favorite 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 figure if you guys 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 have been in the background.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jo and Eleanor, 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 and Alex eat.

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 you?

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 timepiece.

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.

(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)

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 watch 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 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, and sleep...whatever we want. Yes, too many cops make for crap colleagues, but co-workers can be bad anywhere.

(beat)

So, 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 wealthy men have the luxury of taking their first dates to a dive. Either way, this is hardly a date. I'm staying here and get my meals half-off. You're dining on the tax largesse of her Majesty's subjects.

JO

You're staying 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 work.

ALEX

Sure. But whether it's an oath on the Bible, Omertà, or in our 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 as much. 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 proper flat. Or, at the very least, till all my informants burn 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 a 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 CENTER - NIGHT

Jo and Alex at Rassells 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. 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 a long
wait. It's a bad look for Scotland
Yard, so we will bring him home.
He'll turn up. Eventually.

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 drug 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 drug bust.

ALEX

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

JO

But 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

Night turns to day. COMMUTERS hustle in coats and pantsuits.

INT. ELEANOR'S 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 Buyers follow Jo around 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 steel 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 the point where they don't derive any pleasure from it. It's...clinical.

Between two fingers, Eleanor feels 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's overrated. Humility is just the most noble form of vanity.

JO

... The thing is, 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 quite useless.

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 on to a curtain. She photographs the fabric.

CAMILLE

Humans have been wearing clothes for roughly 170,000 years. Monkey became man, man became modest. Now, clothes define our appearance. Consider that 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 altered. Well, without much effort. Its significance, therefore, is so important. I admire you, Jo, because of the eight billion people on Earth, you're one of a few who can control how we may appear to others. And it affects so much. From Warmth and Comfort to Labor and Love.

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 sucks 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?

Jo smiles.

JO
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
Reckon 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 - MORNING

Carrying multiple garment bags, Eleanor balances on the tube.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Eleanor sets out her five favorite 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 lead
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 onto a Policeman's hat.

Policeman looks up, and three duck for cover.

INT. STUDIO - MORNING

Jo and Eleanor roll out long, unwieldy cylinders of carpet.
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 over 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. Sees a brief 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 talk 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. ELEANOR'S 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, 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
Sara said you were all over Tom after we left. And Sara said you hooked up.

ELEANOR
Sara's womb is an infertile, barren desert that clouds her judgment.
(beat)
Get the fuck out of here with "Sara said." Sara's 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 got to 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.

(MORE)

ELEANOR (cont'd)

(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, so rip-off tickets spit out 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. ELEANOR'S 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 sweater.

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. JO'S ROOM - DAY

Eleanor and Jo evaluate. Five mannequins stand at attention.

ELEANOR

They're good, Jo, 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, scoops out a watermelon. Jo looks at Eleanor, who's setting up a picnic table in the big backyard.

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. HOUSE - DAY

Jo, Eleanor, and Alex sit on the lawn. Maid 1 and her SON 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
Hemingway?

ALEX
Fitzgerald.
(beat)
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 humor 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. 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.

Colors 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 must find a way.

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.

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.

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 over there?

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 ho?

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. It isn't number two, or the best in London, it's the best school in the world for fashion design. 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?

BENDRICKS

We probably could if it were a Mac.

FINLAY

It was a PC.

BENDRICKS

Exactly. No wonder he killed himself.

Detectives laugh. Alex studies the report: 3 out of 4 prints.
(I've only used PCs in life. This was just social commentary.)

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's 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 and his 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. ELEANOR'S FLAT - DAY

Eleanor smokes crack from a pipe. Her addiction peaks.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Jo drinks from, then sets down, a wine glass. Alex keys 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 a bunch of 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 can check; I don't think so.

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 sterilizer.

Dishwasher closes the machine's door, and a cascade of water ASSAULTS, 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 rips 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 in the hotel room he's staying in. He places the fingerprint glass in a drawer. Behind him, fully unaware, Jo and Eleanor mix drinks.

JO

Last call for me. I gotta go.

EXT. HALL - NIGHT

Later, after Jo leaves the room, she's surprised upon knocking into Bendricks. His bucket of ice 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 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. BENDRICKS'S SUITE - NIGHT

Jo and Bendricks at a 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 jewels every Friday, 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. Grouses constantly about my take-home pay.
(beat)
This pearl necklace is my nemesis.

JO

Blame Coco Chanel. She made pearl necklaces a must have... So how'd you end being a cop? Did you fall into it because of family or just...

BENDRICKS

I've always been one of the good guys. Picked first for sports, I stood up for the weaker boys... And that's the side of the ledger a man wants to be on, yet 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 the warnings of Christianity? Or perhaps the New Age, karma-soaked principles of The Golden Rule?

JO

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

BENDRICKS

Any conclusion?

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.

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. BENDRICKS'S 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 20's, 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 20's.

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

BENDRICKS

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

INT. STUDIO - DAY

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

ELEANOR

I want more blow. I've earned it.

JO

Dude, I gave you a ton. And I told
you to take it down a notch. We're
down to the wire over here.

ELEANOR

Come on, now. Give me the number.

JO

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

ELEANOR

Then why do you they talk to you?

JO

Because I buy a half-pound every Monday night.

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 lawyers and doctors.

ELEANOR

You owe me. How quickly we forget.

INT. SAINT MARTINS - DAY

Alex stands before a crab-faced, 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 cell 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:
 sketches, schemes, doodles.
 Anything that looks like a dress.
 Then transfer whatever's there to
 a floppy disk.

Finlay squints an eye. He inhales, then exhales.

FINLAY
 We no longer use floppy disks.

ALEX
 Okay, but can you prep one for me?

Finlay counts with his fingers, but only makes it to four.

FINLAY
 The laptops don't even have that
 drive anymore. We use flash drives.

ALEX
 ... What's a flash drive?

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 Programs 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. BENDRICKS'S 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.

(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)

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 share a 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.

(MORE)

FINLAY (cont'd)

(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 stares at her laptop. After a moment, he
approaches it, presses the "Start" button. Searches a
few terms.

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

One file pops up. Alex opens it. The blue dress appears.

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

JO

Don't touch my computer.

Jo storms off. Eleanor approaches, sees a porn 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. JO'S 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." She pauses, saves the 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. 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 to her face. It also makes sense that she wants to keep me where she can see me.

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

Okay...you signed up for this shit, and there's nothing going on with Alex.

ELEANOR

You're beautiful. You're stunning.
(beat)
I see the way he looks at you.

JO

Between the two of us, lots of guys
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. Um...I gotta talk to you
about Eleanor.

ALEX

What's wrong?

JO

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

ALEX

Oh, I don't know when I'll be off.

JO

Can you come by the house?

INT. JO'S 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. JO'S 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. JO'S 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 fingers (bone) emerge from the earth.

The dog jumps and barks as thunder follows lightning.

Light illuminates Alex against a dark sky. Rain soaks him.

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. But I've been on a plane, so here we are.

MR. JAMES

Make me proud. It's all I want.

ELEANOR

Don't I already make you proud?

She doesn't receive an answer. The pain shows in her face.

EXT. JO'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

A BUTLER places Jo and Eleanor's bags into a limousine.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Eleanor stands in line, waiting to be scanned by an AGENT.

She empties pockets, sees a vial of cocaine. She rolls her eyes, 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 contact with her skin. Swiftly, Eleanor grabs his wrist.

ELEANOR

The buttons are made of steel.

EXT./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 appears.

JO

Why are you sitting in coach?

ELEANOR

It's what my ticket says.

JO

Switch seats.

ELEANOR

I'm fine.

Jo smiles.

JO
 You work for me now. 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 behind his desk.

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

Alex places the jar in front of him.

ALEX
 It fucking is Nathan Sims.

BENDRICKS
 ... How certain are you?

He bites a pencil.

BENDRICKS
 Scale of one to ten.
 (beat)
 How certain are you?

ALEX
 ... It's a ten, 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 honored. 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 actually decent 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 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 onto the stage. The empty auditorium seems cavernous. Eleanor is soon joined by two little 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 beat.

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 gray, 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. 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. Cameras flash as each garment is presented, but very few of them. PEOPLE 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 dress.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Eleanor's red polka dot dress is last, and as Model 5 is walking, the red polka dots change colors. 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.

Cameras flashes go off like mad. 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 the white.

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 coffee and papers. Finlay comes KNOCKING.

FINLAY
If you need to talk with 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. BENDRICKS' OFFICE - DAY

Alex and Bendricks. The latter inhales, then 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 grim 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. ELEANOR'S 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. The clicking
 begins, and Jo stares at the pendulum, waiting to get her
 timing down. Then, as if a runner exploding from the
 starting blocks, she begins to play with vigor.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Deep in the London suburbs, a POSTMAN with a package ambles up the stairs. He rings the doorbell. He rings it twice.

Two drops of liquid land on his cheek. It's blood.

Another drop lands on his hand. He sees that it's red.

He looks up, spots a dark mass pooling on the overhang.

LATER

Squad cars and ambulances everywhere. Their lights flash.

A sullen Alex watches the action from across the street.

Nathan Sims has been found. "He'll eventually turn up."

Body bags on stretchers emerge. Bendricks heads to Alex.

Bendricks nods at a police car. The Killer sits in back.

BENDRICKS

His name is Richard Lee O'Brien.
Lured four gay men, with Nathan
Sims as the first. He was stabbed,
then gutted like a fish.

Alex's phone rings as Bendricks heads to the house.

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

Jo and Alex arrive at the lot of the May Fair hotel.

ALEX

He's not a serial killer, since he
killed four people over the course
of ten years. Serial killers kill
over a much shorter period of time.
(beat)

Just a standard-issue sociopath.

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

JO

Eleanor's been threatening to expose me. She's not well. 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 takes a deep breath.

JO

I stole Nathan's portfolio.

(beat)

The night he disappeared, Nathan left his laptop at my house, and he left designs on the mannequins. I have twenty of them in my bedroom, and we holed up in there 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

The thing with me is, if I see a crack in the system or a fault in some 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 from her car.

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - DAY

Jo and Alex continue. They romp between the sheets.

INT. ELEANOR'S CAR - DAY

Enraged and high, Eleanor dials her phone.

VOICE

Hello?

ELEANOR

Is this Tony Muzzatti?

VOICE

Who's this?

ELEANOR

A detective 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, until she slams the phone into the steering wheel, over and over again.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jo continues her confession.

JO

Just before graduation it became obvious that I wasn't getting my collection bought. I didn't want to spend my life on some fashion design treadmill. Eleanor doesn't have the right stuff in terms of mental makeup, but she does have the talent. So, we made a pact: I gave her money and took ownership of her collection... I submitted her collection as my thesis. It worked, and the ship set sail.

Alex smiles.

JO
 Just please talk to her , okay?
 She sabotaged us in Tokyo and she
 wants to meet later... I'm scared.

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 do
 struggle with them. They're like
 a distinct, opposing force.
 (beat)
 With me... I don't know where the
 demon ends and I begin.

Eleanor smiles.

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 going to take pity
on you now? It's going out Monday.

JO

You can come forward with the
truth, but I can do the same thing.
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 a drug addict, too.

ELEANOR

I hate you.

JO

... You hate me because I'm rich.

ELEANOR

I hate you because you're stupid.

JO

Just because I'm not as smart as
you are, it doesn't make me
stupid. Either way, you're gonna
sew on a lot of scarlet letters,
and I'll land on my fucking feet.

ELEANOR

Go tell everyone. Blackball me,
I don't care. It's a frivolous,
repulsive business filled with
frivolous, repulsive people.

(beat)

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.

(beat)

Then quickly extinguish it.

INT. JO'S 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. After another beat:

MRS. MILLER

What haven't we given you?!

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

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 family,
we have none of those boxes checked.

(beat)

Don't find God over two simple lies.

MRS. MILLER

... They're not simple.

JO

No. They're not.

(beat)

My life is over.

INT. ANDERSON & SHEPPARD - DAY

Alex wears the sharp 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 SHOOTs Alex twice in the head, execution-style.

Alex drops dead. Masked Man jumps in the van, SLAMS the door.

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.

(beat)

You wouldn't want that.

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 extraordinary fish tank. Salt-water, exotic specimens. Jo stares at it. Looks at the OWNER, busy with CUSTOMERS.

Jo moves towards the counter. She hurries to the Owner's station, homes in on a bottle: Levamisole. She steals it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jo tends to a large batch of cocaine laid out before her.

She dumps the entire bottle of Levamisole, mixes it well.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Jo waits outside Eleanor's flat. In time, Eleanor leaves.

INT. ELEANOR'S FLAT - DAY

Jo breaks in, goes directly to Eleanor's bedroom. She takes Eleanor's coke, then replaces it with her proprietary blend.

EXT. SHEFFIELD TERRACE - DAY

Jo walks her dog with her only friends, Maid 1 and Maid 2.

INT. ELEANOR'S 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. She foams at the mouth, then tumbles to the ground. Eleanor dies without dignity.

EXT. BOUTIQUE (SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER) - DAY

Jo enters a tasteful building. A sign out front reads, "Jo Miller." A fraudulent empire has now been birthed.

EXT. SAINT MARTINS - DAY

STUDENTS sit on the autumn grass. Jo walks among them, sees CHRIS (29) drawing. Over his shoulder she looks at his work.

JO
You're super talented.

CHRIS
Thank you.

JO
I love the way you introduced marbling to the vests.

CHRIS
It's risky; I know. Especially on the chubby fur... I'm Chris.

JO
I'm Jo. I actually went here.

CHRIS
Oh, cool. Did you like it?

JO
I loved it.

She sits down as ominous music crescendos.

JO
Can I ask you a question, Chris?

CHRIS
Sure.

Jo smiles, baring her wicked, white teeth.

JO
Do you like candy?

CUT TO BLACK.

MURDER IN LONDON