

Lady Killer

By

Finn Whitney

INSERT - TRIGGER WARNING

(For the sake of anyone reading this)

WARNING FOR S.A., GORE, SUICIDE- IT GETS PRETTY GROSS. I'M GROSSED OUT WRITING IT. AND IM GROSS. ANYWAY I HOPE YOU LIKE IT :)

INSERT - TIK TOKS

We are watching the TikTok feed of FAYE BENNET, 20s. The videos are awkward and highly performed. There are uninteresting "Day in the Life" vlogs, "What I Eat In A Day" videos reeking of an eating disorder, and clips of her trying out random beauty filters. One is a "Put A Finger Down" Challenge.

VOICEOVER

Put a finger down, stupid bitch
edition. Put a finger down if you've
ever gone back to an ex.

Faye puts a finger down with feigned embarrassment.

Each of the videos have barely any likes or comments, and they are all timestamped at 20+ weeks ago.

We land on one of her in a sweatshirt on a couch, timestamped one hour ago. She is a curated casual. If you look closely, she's wearing a lot of makeup to cover up some small marks and discoloration. It isn't clear if they're injuries or if she just has bad skin.

The caption of the video says STORYTIME: MY PSYCHO A-LIST EX??? #storytime#celebrity#crazy#guesswho. It has 20K likes and 10K comments, steadily climbing.

FAYE

This is the storytime of how I dated a
crazy A-Lister. This is going to be
multiple parts, so strap in. Make sure
to like and follow, leave me a comment
if you're ready for part two. Okay,
let's get into it. Part one.

INSERT: PART ONE

FAYE (CONT'D)

Oh, and obviously for legal reasons, I
can't use anyone's real names, so I'm
gonna change them. Okay, part one.

INSERT: PART ONE (half as long)

FAYE

In order for you guys to understand, I'm gonna need to give some context. So actually this is like, the prologue.

INSERT: PROLOGUE

FAYE

So a couple years ago I started working at SavvyNews, and eventually they made me the celebrity correspondent. Which usually meant I would like, spend the day with an influencer or CW star and make a mini documentary about it.

INSERT - YOUTUBE VIDEO

The video is titled "I'm Spending Time With: A Murderer! SavvyExclusive". It is about half over.

Faye stands in a nice but clearly never used kitchen with MASON, 21, thin and faux grungy. A large bowl of lemons sits on the counter, and Mason struggles to cut them.

FAYE

So, what's it like playing the sensitive-but-dangerous Jack in *Ripper High*? Did you have to do a lot of research?

MASON

Umm...No. Not really.

FAYE

So it came naturally?

MASON

Yeah, for sure.

FAYE

(trying to get any performance out of him)
Well you do seem pretty comfortable with that knife.

Mason stops cutting and stares at it.

MASON

We use fake knives on set. Some people don't know that.

FAYE

That's...fascinating.

Faye forces a smile at the camera.

The video pauses.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Faye sits in a small cubicle in the corner of a larger room, staring at her computer screen with mild contempt.

She sighs.

FAYE

This is incredibly fucking stupid.

Behind her, NATHAN, 20s, leans against the wall.

NATHAN

I found his thoughts on the social hierarchy of high school to be rather poignant.

FAYE

Shut up.

NATHAN

He's hot in the show.

FAYE

You watch it?

NATHAN

Ironically. He's all dark and crazy, it's like that toxic passionate obsession. Like he kills other women, but he'd never hurt Lacy. Unless she tried to leave. Which she did in episode 6, but all it lead to was a hardcore fu-

VALERIE, 20, pokes her head into the cubicle.

VALERIE

Hi!

NATHAN
Valerie gets it.

VALERIE
Gets what?

NATHAN
Ripper High.

VALERIE
Oh my god, episode 6? It had me going feral.

NATHAN
The part where she's like "I wish there was a rehab program for my addiction to you."

VALERIE
Ugh! Roll me up and smoke me Jack!

FAYE
God, this sounds so dumb. She knows he's a serial killer?

VALERIE
I think that's part of the fantasy.

NATHAN
You're one to talk, Faye. Remember Alt-Right Ryan?

FAYE
Okay, he was a centrist.

NATHAN
He voted for Trump.

FAYE
Only financially.

NATHAN
(as Faye)
"He's changed, he's working on his internalized misogyny"

FAYE
Okay, you know his Mom really messed him up-

Faye's phone CHIMES. She checks it.

INSERT: NEW MESSAGE FROM GIRLBOSS

The message is a bitmoji-style cartoon dressed in a Mae West costume. The cartoon is saying "Come up and see me some time."

Below is another message, this one just text that reads:
"Like right now girlie!"

VALERIE

Oh, right! I'm here cuz Girlboss wants
to see you.

Faye takes a deep breath and stands, exiting the cubicle. She follows Valerie to the elevator and steps in. They are on the basement level.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The building has many floors. The level they are on is marked "Creative Department" and it is under the boiler room and something marked "Catacombs".

Valerie produces a key and enters it into the control panel next to the top floor. She turns it and presses the corresponding button. The doors close and they begin to move up.

FAYE

Is this about the Mason Parks video?

VALERIE

Sorry, I don't know. I thought it was
really good. He's so charismatic,
don't you think?

FAYE

No.

VALERIE

Don't yuck my yum.

FAYE

Wouldn't dream of it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator DINGS and opens to a long hallway lined with portraits of famous women. They are mostly generic white feminist picks with heavy tokenism. Among them are multiple war criminals and actual serial killers.

At the end of the hallway is a clear glass door. Easily visible is GIRLBOSS, 30s, wearing uptight casual clothing, on the phone. She stares down at the ground, a concerned look on her face.

Faye and Valerie step out and walk down the needlessly long hallway.

When they reach the door, Valerie knocks lightly.

Girlboss looks up, says something into the phone, and hangs up. She waves them in.

INT. GIRLBOSS'S OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They enter the sprawling office. The walls are nearly all glass and they show a beautiful skyline. The decor is minimalist but incredibly millennial. Rae Dun products populate the space. Behind Girlboss is a life sized cutout of Margaret Thatcher.

GIRLBOSS

(to Valerie)

Hey Bestie! Thank you so much, can you just quickly run down to the coffee place?

VALERIE

The eco one?

GIRLBOSS

Ugh, I love that one, "Save the Whales!" Yeah, but no they don't have that new sage latte. Can you get me a venti?

VALERIE

You got it.

GIRLBOSS

Ugh, thank you queen. Close the door behind you please, thank you!

Valerie exits and closes the door.

Girlboss turns her attention to Faye.

GIRLBOSS (CONT'D)

Hello icon. Saw the vid, loved it. You were glowing. However, I did notice you looking a little bit struggle-bus

in there a couple of times.

FAYE

I'm fine.

GIRLBOSS

Listen girl, I'm actually like, very much an empath. And I don't think the average person would pick it up, but I know because I really feel it, you know?

FAYE

I don't want to sound ungrateful.

GIRLBOSS

You can be honest with me, hunty. Go on! Spill the tea.

FAYE

(hesitant)

I'm having some trouble. I'm so thrilled to be doing what I'm doing, really. I just wish I was interviewing someone who can hold a conversation.

GIRLBOSS

Okay, shade has been thrown.

FAYE

I mean, you know. They're kids. I don't blame them. I feel like a babysitter.

GIRLBOSS

Ugh, I love that. You're like, that hot babysitter that they jerk off to for the first time.

FAYE

Yeah, uh-

GIRLBOSS

But you're not a babysitter. You're like, a real deal reporter, queen.

FAYE

Thank you.

GIRLBOSS

So here's what's up. I got a call from

a certain movie star's manager.

FAYE
Movie star? Like TV Movies?

GIRLBOSS
No girl.

FAYE
Streaming?

GIRLBOSS
Big screen.

FAYE
Holy shit. Who?

Girlboss leans in for dramatic effect. She slowly opens her mouth, then freezes.

FAYE (V.O)
And that is where I'm gonna have to end this one because I am almost out of time.

INSERT - TIKTOK

FAYE
Make sure to like and follow for part two.

Scroll up. In the next video she is in better lighting and looks more put together. At this point in the story Faye is feeding off of the attention.

FAYE
Okay, part two of my Psycho A-List Ex.

INSERT: PART TWO

FAYE (CONT'D)
If you have not seen part one please go watch that, and while you're at it make sure to like and follow. Okay, last time you guys said I took too long to get into the actual story, so I'm just gonna get right into it. So Girlboss leans in and she tells me who it is. And I'm like-

INT. GIRLBOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

Return to just moments after we froze.

FAYE
No fucking way.

GIRLBOSS
Yes, bitch.

FAYE
Oh my god.

GIRLBOSS
I want to expand "I'm Spending Time With". Higher budget. Bigger celebs. I want this to be bigger, better, longer, harder, and more importantly: realer. You're a journalist. No sugar coating.

FAYE
Absolutely, yes. I'll do it. 100%.

GIRLBOSS
That's what I love to hear. Now, where is my latte? I need caffeine, it's my life source.

Girlboss forces a laugh.

Faye smiles awkwardly.

GIRLBOSS
Okay, leave.

FAYE
Got it.

Faye heads for the door.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Faye stands center screen. She is all dolled up and smiling wide.

FAYE
Everyone knows his name. Actor, heir, heartthrob, but who is he when the cameras turn off? Today, we'll find out. I've been given exclusive access

to him B-T-S. We'll see his day-to-day, and hear firsthand how he became the hunk we all know today.

Someone yells "CUT" and the camera pulls back, revealing the entire set. Everyone moves around to get ready for the next shoot.

FAYE

And we'll have his picture behind me?

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Yeah.

FAYE

Okay, great.

Valerie approaches Faye and hands her a coffee.

VALERIE

How do you feel?

FAYE

Good, good.

VALERIE

Be honest.

FAYE

I mean, I'm fucking terrified. And excited. I mean he's an *Actor* actor. Like, gets invited to the oscars actor.

VALERIE

Oh my god, the things I would let that man do to me.

FAYE

I know.

VALERIE

I don't want to be crass, but I would let him cut my head off and fuck my bloody neck hole.

FAYE

Jesus fucking christ. Like the co-ed killer? That is fucked up.

VALERIE

Yeah, well. My therapist is in the psych ward so I'm just raw dogging it right now.

FAYE

That's upsetting.

Off to the side, the next reporter has been brought in to shoot.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Okay, everyone set for Blind Items.

Someone slates and when they peel back, GAY REPORTER, a Frankie Grande lookalike, stands cartoonishly queerly. The kind of gay man who is genuinely more misogynistic than your average straight man, but hides behind his queerness as an excuse ("Ugh, vaginas are so gross, I would vomit if I ever got near one" vibes).

GAY REPORTER

This "bad" A-lister is not as dead as everyone thinks. He-he was spotted outside a grocery store in Santa Monica-

Nathan enters, wheeling a large camera bag.

NATHAN

Are you ready to go? We're supposed to be in our first setup at 2.

Faye glances at her phone, checking the time.

FAYE

Okay. Do I look alright?

NATHAN

Better than alright.

Beat.

FAYE

Are you going to say how much better?

NATHAN

No.

FAYE

Okay. Whatever. Let's go.

EXT. HIGH END APARTMENT - DAY

Faye and Nathan pull into a rounded driveway. Red jacketed valet immediately come to accept their keys, and doormen cross around to the trunk to help with unloading.

Wordlessly, they are waved inside.

INT. HIGH END APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They enter, surrounded by a protective barrier of staff. Faye glances around and catches the same scene repeated throughout the lobby, seemingly never ending workers shielding each resident from any unwanted interaction.

They are hustled into the elevator alone. The doors close and the up arrow glows.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Faye looks down at her body.

FAYE

One of them took my purse.

NATHAN

Should have used your pockets.

FAYE

They're fake. They're fucking fake.
Like all of this.

NATHAN

Careful, babe. Don't spiral.

FAYE

I want my phone back.

The elevator DINGS and stops abruptly and the two of them are thrown off balance.

The doors open to reveal a view somehow even more beautiful than Girlboss's office.

Standing there is AXEL CRUISE, 30s, extremely handsome but strangely forgettable, with a plastic smile on his face.

Nathan and Faye slowly step out.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is decorated in the "photograph me anywhere" style that so many celebrity dwellings are. Every spot has good lighting and something interesting but not distracting to look at.

It is clear what the focus is: Axel. He stands out amongst the monochrome. He approaches, holding two drinks.

AXEL

Hey, welcome. I'm Axel.

He hands Faye one of the glasses.

FAYE

Faye. This is Nathan, our cameraman/director.

AXEL

Absolutely, welcome my man. Here.

He hands off the second.

NATHAN

Thanks.

AXEL

I'm jazzed to get started. This youtube stuff is pretty new to me. What's first?

NATHAN

Oh, um...They took our stuff-

AXEL

Duh! Right, yes.

Axel steps back and points to a previously hidden corner of the room.

Nathan and Faye follow him, revealing all of their stuff neatly set up.

FAYE

When...

AXEL

They have a different elevator.

Nathan and Faye exchange a look.

NATHAN

Well, our first set-up is the two of you meeting, so lets do that again.

AXEL

Totally. You got it. Oh, uh- Can we cheat it? With a door? You understand, letting people know about the elevator gives them clues about where to find me.

FAYE

Oh, sure. Have you...had issues with that? Like- stalkers?

AXEL

Yeah, yeah. For sure. Actually, you know what, let me save that. It's a great one.

He gestures to Nathan, indicating he should tell it to the camera.

INSERT - CAMERA FOOTAGE - AXEL'S APARTMENT

This scene is shot with two cameras, one handheld and one tripod.

There is a knock at what is clearly not the front door. Axel gets up to open it.

AXEL

Hey!

FAYE

Hey!

Axel leans in, giving her a warm gentile hug.

AXEL

It's great to meet you, finally, after all this back and forth.

FAYE

Uh- yes. I guess.

Axel makes a "cut" motion with his hand. Nathan doesn't cut, but he shifts the camera out of ready position.

AXEL

Sorry, I sprung that on you. It's all

of the stupid bullshit actor improv training. I'll try not to do it but, uh- just remember: "Yes, And."

Faye nods slowly.

FAYE

Yes.

AXEL

And. Yes.

FAYE

And.

AXEL

Okay, let's go from the top, then?

They set up the scene once more. KNOCK. Answer. Hey. Hug.

AXEL

You look great.

FAYE

Thank you, of course so do you.

AXEL

Oh, stop. So, I'm really flattered that you guys wanted to see behind the curtain, but you know, I'm just a man. No wizard here. But you know, I've got a few things planned, we'll see where I run lines, where I do my research. Maybe we can do a scene together, or something.

FAYE

Yes, and I have some question that your fans are dying to know.

AXEL

I can't wait. Let's dive in.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Cut.

AXEL

I think that was good.

FAYE

Yeah, that was gr-

Cut to black.

INSERT - TIKTOK

Back to the tiktok.

FAYE

Okay, I'm almost out of time. Go to part three of my psycho ex-

She looks directly into the camera.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Axel Cruise.

We click on the comments.

INSERT: COMMENT SECTION

The comments are blowing up, people freaking out that she actually named him. The #AxelCruise shows up often. We click on it.

INSERT: #AXELCRUISE TAG

Thumbnails of people looking shocked, text saying things like "HOLY SHIT? DID SHE JUST NAME HIM? OH MY GOD SHES GOING TO GET SUED SO HARD"

One has the text "My Psycho Ex Axel Cruise Part 3"

We click on that one.

The face we are greeted with is not Faye's, but rather BEAUTY GURU, 18, doing elaborate makeup while Faye's voice plays.

FAYE (V.O)

This is part 3 of my psycho ex story.
By the way, please, do not send hate to anyone involved in this story.

INSERT - CAMERA FOOTAGE - INTERVIEW ROOM

Axel sits in an interview chair. He looks cool and relaxed in front of the camera. His smile has a strong hint of arrogance.

NATHAN

Okay, we're rolling.

AXEL
Rolling? Alright.

He straightens himself out and makes eye contact with Faye.

FAYE
So I'm gonna ask a lot of basic stuff,
I just want to get a real profile of
your life.

AXEL
Go ahead.

FAYE
Where were you born?

AXEL
I was born in Santa Monica, but we
moved between estates for a little
while before settling in the Islands.

FAYE
You still spend most of your time
there.

AXEL
What can I say, it's home.

FAYE
Sorry- where exactly are the islands?

AXEL
You know, they're like- down there.
With all the- other islands.

FAYE
Like...the Carribean?

AXEL
Yeah, kinda. It's in a triangle of
sorts. Like- near bermuda.

Faye stares at him. She clears her throat.

FAYE
Did you always know you wanted to be
an actor?

AXEL
I knew I didn't just want to rely on
my grandfather's money like so many of

my cousins. I had to do something, work for my keep. And everyone always said I had a face for Hollywood.

He grins and winks at the camera.

FAYE

So once you decided on acting, how did you go about booking roles?

AXEL

It was a really long and arduous process. First I had to express to my father at Wednesday night dinner that I wanted to be an actor.

Faye waits for him to continue. He doesn't.

FAYE

That was it?

AXEL

Then I had to wait.

Silence.

After a beat, Faye nods.

FAYE

That must have been...nerve wracking.

She exchanges a look with Nathan.

Axel nods like he's finally being understood.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Tell me about the first roles you booked.

AXEL

I mean, I'm just so incredibly grateful to all the tiny roles that got me to where I am today. You know, they may have been intended as big or significant or memorable characters, but I think it's important for every star to start somewhere. I mean, now, you look back and it's like "Oh my god, Axel Cruise was in season 4 episode 8 of Desperate Housewives at 3 minutes and 58 seconds!" It's

flattering.

FAYE

You had a few ensemble roles in a couple blockbusters, but to an outside eye it might look like giving you a starring role in a movie meant it was likely going to tank.

Axel's eye twitches.

AXEL

What's the question, exactly?

FAYE

Oh, um, I just mean...Did it feel different when you finally got "Speak To Me Softly?"

SUPER: MOVIE POSTER

A "Brokeback Mountain" and "Call Me By Your Name" knockoff poster, housing Axel and THOMAS LAURENT, early 20s.

Axel returns to full charisma mode.

AXEL

Oh, absolutely. I mean there was just something in the words, I knew we had a hit on our hands. The story was just so important, you know. I mean, how many other stories about the love between two men are there available right now?

Faye stares at him.

FAYE

Um. A pretty decent amount.

Axel looks back at her blankly.

AXEL

Well, there weren't really any at the time.

FAYE

...Right.

Awkward silence.

FAYE (CONT'D)
 So... "Speak To Me" happens. Your slump
 is over, you and your Co-Star-

AXEL
 (to camera)
 Tommy! Love you, Man.

INSERT: Picture of Thomas, skinny and pale, on a red carpet.

FAYE
 -are catapulted to fame. He gets
 nominated for an Oscar, stars in other
 Oscar nominated films, becomes a sex
 symbol-

AXEL
 (under his breath)
 That fucking twink.

FAYE
 What?

AXEL
 Hm?

FAYE
 Sorry, um-

AXEL
 Yeah, well I'm very fortunate to have
 formed such a strong bond with this
 young visionary. He is- I mean really,
 he is. I mean this new project we're
 working on- oh! Oops! I wasn't
 supposed to say anything!

FAYE
 Well now you have to say more.

AXEL
 When does this video come out? You
 know after all the editing and stuff?

FAYE
 Oh, uh- About a month, usually.

Axel appears to do the math in his head.

AXEL
 Okay, yeah. Sorry, run me that one

again.

Axel shakes his body a bit before returning to his performance.

FAYE

(less enthusiastic)

Well now you have to say more.

AXEL

Okay, okay. What little I'll say; This is really Thomas's baby, you know. I mean he attached me to it early. I think first, yeah. This kid, I have to say, I mean he is really going to be the next Woody Allen.

NATHAN

Hey, uh-

FAYE

Yeah-

AXEL

Are we cutting?

NATHAN

We can't really talk about- like-

FAYE

He's just one of those names, you know.

AXEL

Oh, absolutely. I mean I am fully with the movement. Like, if you have to assault someone to get laid, what I'm hearing is- you're ugly.

Nathan laughs uncomfortably, but Faye laughs much harder.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Right? Am I- yeah, no. I don't know. Let me ask my manager about that one. That bit was funny. I just want to confirm with her it's not too far.

He takes out his phone and begins texting.

INSERT - CAMERA FOOTAGE - AXEL'S STUDY

Axel and Faye stand in front of a bookshelf (full of books that have never been opened) staring at each other. Axel's acting lies somewhere between believable and corny.

AXEL

I picked this out...I thought you might get something out of it. Something the other students can't.

He hands her a book. She looks at it for a moment and freezes, then seems to remember what she's doing.

She holds up a script closer to her face. Her acting is extremely robotic.

FAYE

The Iliad? The one with all of the greek gods?

AXEL

I know, heresy. Don't tell the Monsignor.

FAYE

I've actually read it before.

AXEL

Of course you have. Well, I've always seen myself in Achilles. When I met you I- I'm sorry. This is...unprofessional.

FAYE

No, it's fine. What were you going to say?

AXEL

Well it's just...when I met you I was struck by how much you resemble Patroclus.

FAYE

But...he was a hero. I'm no hero.

AXEL

Don't say that.

FAYE

It's true, I'm a scaredy cat. All of

the other boys say so.

AXEL

Patroclus was scared, but he put on Achilles armor and he persevered. That's just about the bravest thing I can think of. And every day you do the same thing.

FAYE

Thanks, Mr. Fine. I've never felt so close to a teacher before.

AXEL

Well I'm not a Teacher. I'm an Assistant Teacher. There's a difference.

Axel pauses dramatically, taking his time. Confused, Faye checks the script closer. She points to a line and opens her mouth, about to remind him it's his turn, but he speaks.

AXEL (CONT'D)

You know what? Here.

Axel pantomimes removing a tie. He then mimes slowly tying it around Faye's neck, making strong eye contact. Faye's "acting" gets more believable as real life mirrors the script.

FAYE

Your tie?

AXEL

Think of it as my armor. To give you courage.

He pretends to smooth out the tie, which might be moderately "acceptable" on a male chest, but Faye being a woman means he's essentially fondling her. The tension grows thicker by the second.

FAYE

T-thank you.

AXEL

Don't thank me. Just wear the tie every day. So I know you're thinking of me.

FAYE
 (loudly)
 Mr. Fine I-

Axel quickly places a finger over her mouth.

AXEL
 Shh...When you speak to me, you must
 speak to me softly. For if ever
 another heard your words they'd no
 longer be ours.

Slowly, he trails his finger off her lips and across her jaw, resting his hand on the side of her face. He leans in and kisses her for real. The kiss is uncomfortably long, especially since Nathan is just standing there behind the camera.

When they break apart, Axel goes right back to his normal self.

AXEL
 And scene.

He gives a little bow.

Jaw still agape, Faye claps.

FAYE
 Wow.

AXEL
 Hey, you did a great job. You really
 have something.

FAYE
 Wh- What? Who...me? No- I-

She scoffs and sputters more, unable to form a single sentence. Axel seems to find this endearing.

FAYE (CONT'D)
 So- um, my next question- Sorry, um-

Nathan picks up the slack.

NATHAN (O.S.)
 So what do you say about the backlash
 the movie received over the age gap
 between 25 year old Mr. Fine and 17
 year old Billy Young?

AXEL

Well, you know- I believe all critique is valid, to an extent. But I think that people fail to think critically, you know? You really have to look at the cultural context of life in the catholic church, you know. What was acceptable.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Uh...

AXEL

I personally view it as a metaphor-like, the taboo of it relates to how scandalized homosexuality is. Did you know in some places it's still illegal to be gay? Yeah, it's crazy. People freak out over- what? Two consenting people? It's the same thing with Billy and Mr. Fine. The age gap is barely five years-

NATHAN (O.S.)

Eight.

AXEL

Right, exactly. It's nothing, but the culture says it's wrong. It's all the same, you know? Love is love. What Billy and Mr. Fine have is real.

Faye nods, but it doesn't really look like she's listening. She's mostly just nodding at Axel moving his lips.

NATHAN (O.S.)

But- Don't you think it glorifies the already rampant issue of older men preying on young boys in the gay community?

AXEL

(considering it)

Um...no.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nathan packs up the camera as Axel and Faye chat.

AXEL

So...can I be honest?

FAYE

Can you?

Axel smiles.

AXEL

Hey, that guy- in there. He's me. Same guy, just turned up to eleven and polished up a bit.

FAYE

Right. Go ahead. Be honest.

AXEL

I asked my manager to contact you guys.

FAYE

No way.

AXEL

Yes.

FAYE

You watch SavvyNews?

AXEL

Well, I watch your show.

Faye looks at him, shock and amusement and disbelief all flooding her face at once.

FAYE

Right. Sure.

AXEL

No, I love it. Really. I mean, watching you work your ass off trying to get something out of these - excuse me - frankly dumb kids. Not to talk about your ass, though it does look great-

Faye laughs, she's getting sucked in already.

The two of them make eye contact.

AXEL (CONT'D)

-But I thought, y'know, she's put in the hours, she deserves restitution, right?

FAYE
And that's you?

AXEL
I know, that sounds so ego-maniacal.

FAYE
To some. I think I get it. I mean,
obviously you're a higher caliber than
my previous guests.

AXEL
Thank you! Yes, I'm so glad. It's so
hard to toe the line with this stuff.

FAYE
No, yeah- totally.

AXEL
I have to say- I mean, I had a feeling
from your videos but-

He scoffs in disbelief.

AXEL (CONT'D)
You are unlike anybody I've ever met.

FAYE
Stop it.

AXEL
I'm not lying. You think this is some
line to get in your pants? You think
me that shallow?

FAYE
No, but you are an actor.

AXEL
You think I'm performing.

FAYE
I think life is performance. But
you're going for the Oscar.

Axel laughs.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Sorry, that was corny.

AXEL
No- no, I liked it.

FAYE
I really should-

She looks around, realizing Nathan and the equipment are nowhere to be found.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Where-

AXEL
Oh, he must've left.

FAYE
I didn't see him use the elevator.

Axel shrugs.

Faye's phone BUZZES and she checks it.

ON THE PHONE: NEW MESSAGE FROM NATHAN

The message reads "Took me out the staff elevator. Fucking weird but secure that fucking bag bitch"

Faye rolls her eyes.

AXEL
So...you wanna stick around?

Faye smiles and nods.

INSERT - YOUTUBE VIDEO

Gay Reporter stands on screen, looking somehow gayer and more plastic than before.

GAY REPORTER
This old-money A-Lister has been seen out on the town with some fucking nobody this week. An exclusive source tells us that Axel Cruise's new bae is actually a video producer here at SavvyNews, Faye Bennet, aka "@YoullRueTheFaye" on Instagram and Twitter. You heard it here first: She's incredibly lame. The pair were first spotted out together at the opening of *Splunch*, L.A.'s best new

restaurant that has already gone under. After that, they can be seen in Bombardier Ben's Instagram live from his "I'll Never Live Past 30" themed 45th birthday party.

INSERT - INSTAGRAM LIVE

BOMBARDIER BEN, 45, essentially if you put Pete Davidson and Machine Gun Kelly in a blender and aged them 25 years, stands on top of a table yelling.

The Live Chat is visible, mostly praising him for existing or being funny, but also a lot of people just being misogynistic/racist.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Yooooooooo you already know who it is, Bombardier Ben comin' at'chya, "Look out below!"

He jumps, landing directly on a PARTYGOER. He jeers and laughs, writhing rather than actually getting up.

PARTY GUY

Come on, Asshole, you're crushing her.

Ben laughs and scrambles to his feet, running out of the room.

He now stands in the kitchen, Axel and Faye leaning on each other in the back.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Yo! It's my boy!

As Ben approaches the two, the last bit of their conversation can be heard.

AXEL

Yeah, I know, he sucks. But we can duck out-

BOMBARDIER BEN

What is up my man!

Axel looks confused for a split second before registering he's on camera. He lays on the Axel charm.

AXEL

Ben, my brother, what is going on?

Sweet rager.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Axel, you are my rock, for real. Like honestly dude.

AXEL

Stop it, man. That's too sweet.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Seriously. I'm floating out to space and I will collide with the sun if someone doesn't grab me or correct my trajectory.

AXEL

Um-

Ben makes an obscene noise and laughs, loud and forced.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Am I right man? Shit's crazy out here! What's up, who's this? Sup, I'm Ben, this is my abode, these are my Instagram followers. What's your deal, you like, a Tik Toker?

FAYE

No.

BOMBARDIER BEN

It's all love between me and the TikTok, Señorita. I'm all over that shiz. You know that trend where you, like, cheat on your girlfriend in front of her to see how she reacts? Yeah, I started that.

FAYE

I'm not really on TikTok.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Okay, boomer. Am I right guys?!?

INSERT - YOUTUBE VIDEO

Back to Gay Reporter.

GAY REPORTER

This all comes just days after Ben was sentenced to pay 300,000 dollars in

restitution to the family whose lives
he ruined with his "Ultimate Fart
Bong" Prank.

INSERT - TIKTOK

Faye's production value has gone up substantially. Though she
is better in front of the camera, the story is becoming
harder for her to tell.

FAYE

Things got serious pretty quickly. You
know when you meet someone, and they
start giving you attention, and
suddenly it means more than anything
else? And it's like, "oh my god, I
have to do everything I can to make
sure this never stops?"

INSERT - CAMERA FOOTAGE - HAPPY MEMORIES

Faye and Axel frolic through a field, hold hands, kiss,
general "in love" things. Some of it seems performed, but
sometimes you can see how much they genuinely care for each
other.

FAYE (V.O)

And like, you're watching yourself
push everyone else away, but it just
feels so good when they heart your
text, or swipe up on your story, or
like, laugh- or whatever.

Faye stops herself, hoarseness growing in her throat.

INSERT - TIKTOK

She sits, regaining composure.

FAYE

Um, that's when- Well, it's dangerous.
To be like that. I don't recommend it.

INT. AXEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Axel and Faye lay entwined in his bed, mid coitus. They both
seem to be having a good time.

Axel begins to kiss Faye's neck, then bite it. At first she
moans, but soon lets out a cry of pain.

She pulls back, holding the now bleeding spot.

FAYE

Sorry, I- I wasn't expecting that. I'm
sorry.

Wordlessly, Axel takes her hand, moving it from the spot. He places his lips back on it and begins licking up the blood.

Faye looks like she can't decide whether it's hot or disgusting. Maybe it's both.

INT. AXEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Faye and Axel sit in bed. Axel reads "A Modest Proposal" while Faye spaces out, absentmindedly running her finger over the the spot on her neck.

Axel's phone rings. He picks it up and looks at it.

AXEL

I've gotta take this.

He answers.

PHONE VOICE (O.S.)

Axel? Are you alone?

AXEL

No I'm with- Uh huh. Okay.

Axel rises, walking out of the room. His voice becomes muffled.

Faye watches him leave. After a few seconds, she follows to the doorway, listening out of view.

AXEL (O.S.)

(responding to unknown voice)
Wait, wait. Slow down. Who?
Steph...oh. Yeah. Vaguely. Mhm. No
way. Well what does she have? That's
it? How far does she expect to get
with that? Yeah. Uh huh. Like, 2,000.
Nothing much. Okay. Yeah, I'll tell
her. Okay. Bye.

Faye quickly goes back to the bed before Axel returns.

FAYE

Everything alright?

AXEL

Yeah, yeah. Minor PR thing. Hey, uh, you should probably stay off social media for a few days while this dies down. How many followers do you have now?

FAYE

Uh, like 2,300.

AXEL

Right. Yeah. Stay off anyway. You hungry? I'm starving. I want In-N-Out. I'm gonna DoorDash.

FAYE

Aren't the drivers on strike while the lawsuit is going on?

AXEL

I don't know. It says Julio is on his way to the restaurant.

Axel leaves the room again.

FAYE (V.O)

That minor PR thing? She had a name. Stephanie Donner.

INSERT - INSTAGRAM PAGE

We scroll through the instagram page of STEPHANIE, 20s. Her image is highly curated. She has a couple hundred thousand followers and mostly posts sponsored content, particularly "Skinny Teas" and pore-erasing face masks that don't work.

Her latest post stands out starkly against the rest of them. It isn't posed or filtered, just a blurry picture of her and Axel. The photo is dark and the two of them have bad red eye, and appear to be very drunk.

Also visible is the caption, which Stephanie's voice reads out.

STEPHANIE

This picture was taken just hours before my life changed forever. The girl you see there is happy. Healthy. Naive. She met a very famous man who told her she'd be a star. She trusted that man. I'm not that girl anymore. I

don't have that luxury. Not after him.

INSERT - YOUTUBE VIDEO

Gay Reporter sits opposite Stephanie, in a setup that is reminiscent of Oprah interviewing a former child star.

GAY REPORTER

So what exactly did he do?

STEPHANIE

At first, nothing. It was all "Do a scene with me, wow you really have something" and "you're not like any other girl I've met." At that point not being like other girls was a good thing. Then he started to ask me about my fantasies. He said one of his kinks was his partner being turned on, and he would try anything for me.

GAY REPORTER

Ugh, thanks for getting us demonetized. Anyway he sounds like, super vanilla. What's the deal?

STEPHANIE

Well- Uh, it changed after a couple weeks. Then he started to bring things up to me, um, that I hadn't done before.

GAY REPORTER

Anal? Fisting? BDSM? Public?

He continues listing off kinks. She furrows her brow.

When we see him again, he has his phone out and he is reading categories off of Pornhub, getting less and less related.

GAY REPORTER

Bisexual Male? Transgender? Teen (18+)?

He pronounces the parenthesis.

STEPHANIE

This is getting kind of personal.

GAY REPORTER

Um, yeah, it's an interview dummy.

STEPHANIE

The honeymoon phase wore off- and he expected that I just agree to his fantasies because he did with mine. Then suddenly it's "Other girls have done it, [REDACTED] and I did it, I hated doing your stupid thing but I did it cuz I love you, you should have the same respect for me-"

GAY REPORTER

(nodding like he understands)
Mhm, yes. Reciprocation.

STEPHANIE

What? No, it's- it's sexual coercion.

GAY REPORTER

Oh, come on.

STEPHANIE

(rightfully offended)
Excuse me?

GAY REPORTER (V.O.)

After this, she went literally crazy for no reason and stormed off the set. Talk about "unprofesh".

Reporter's voice plays over footage of Stephanie becoming emotional, then calmly removing herself from the set. Though we can't hear her, it's clear she's apologizing profusely but needs to get out of there.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Faye sits in her office, clicking through news articles. They all have headlines like "INTERNET BUZZES AMDIST AXEL CRUISE ABUSE ALLEGATIONS" and "INFLUENCER ACCUSES ACTOR AXEL CRUISE OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT".

Faye bites her fingernail. Her neck is covered somewhat conspicuously.

Nathan enters, staring at his phone.

NATHAN

Jesus fucking christ. Do we take down the video?

Faye looks up.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I'm sorry.

Her phone RINGS. She answers.

FAYE

Hey, uh-

AXEL (O.S.)

Babe, I'm so sorry about all of this.

FAYE

I don't- I don't know what to do.

AXEL (O.S.)

It's not true, Faye. I swear it. She's just trying to get her 15 minutes of fame.

Faye sighs.

FAYE

Are you sure?

AXEL (O.S.)

Honey, look how many followers she's gained since this all started. I dated her, sure, for a little. But everything we did was consensual.

FAYE

This is a lot for me to-

AXEL (O.S.)

I know. I know. God, I'm so fucking sorry. You're one of the strongest women I've ever met, if anyone can get through it, it's you. But you shouldn't have to. God, I'm just so angry for you. Steph is such a crazy bitch, I'm sure she's ecstatic that she's dragging you into it. Listen, I'm releasing a twitter statement, her lawyers have been contacted, it'll all be over soon.

FAYE

I- I hope so.

AXEL (O.S.)

I promise, baby. I'm sorry.

FAYE
I gotta go.

Faye hangs up.

NATHAN
Was that him?

FAYE
Yeah.

NATHAN
What did he say?

Faye looks at him.

INSERT - TWITTER POST

On the screen is a tweet from Axel Cruise (@AxelCruise). It consists of a screenshot of the iPhone notes app. His voice reads out the text.

AXEL (O.S.)
Recently there have been some accusations against me from a former romantic partner. Though these rumors are completely untrue and the libel party's legal counsel has been contacted, I want to make it clear that I take these allegations very seriously. This subject matter is extremely sensitive and I will be going about clearing this up with caution. Before this goes any further, I would like to say to my accuser: I am truly, deeply, sorry if you felt like what happened between us was less than consensual. I would never make anyone feel like that. I hope that you find peace with the truth.

INSERT - YOUTUBE VIDEO

Gay Reporter is back, and his set has upgraded too. Axel's tweet and a picture of his face are up on the screen. When Gay Reporter begins to speak, it changes to a picture of Stephanie.

GAY REPORTER
After releasing this statement, Stephanie's post was removed for

"Potentially harmful untruths".
 Rendering this bitch a liar.

A red "LIAR" appears over her face, accompanied by some asinine sound effect.

EXT. OFFICE - DAY

Stephanie stands anxiously, scanning the PEOPLE going about their days. Suddenly, she stops, finding who she's looking for.

Exiting the building is Faye, walking with Nathan.

Stephanie beelines to them.

STEPHANIE
 Hey! Faye Bennet!

Faye turns, stunned. It takes her a few seconds before recognition washes over her face.

FAYE
 You're-

STEPHANIE
 Listen, his lawyers got my post taken down and they told me I can't say another word about him publicly but- I just... I thought I could at least warn the poor girl he's dating now.

FAYE
 Warn?

NATHAN
 Warn?

Faye gives Nathan a look and he mimes zipping his lips.

STEPHANIE
 Axel is dangerous. It's only a matter of time before he tries to hurt you.

Faye stutters, shocked, unsure of how to react.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
 I know you won't believe me. I wouldn't have. Just- If you see a red flag, don't ignore it. It could mean the difference between...I don't know. Pain. Just...be careful.

She checks her surroundings and speeds off.

Nathan unzips his mouth.

NATHAN
(urgently)
What the fuck was that?

FAYE
I don't know.

NATHAN
Did that girl just warn you about your
boyfriend?

FAYE
Maybe. Axel said she's crazy and that
she's like, feeding off all the drama.
And that she wants to torture me.

NATHAN
And you believed him? Sorry- Um, why?
Did he have evidence?

FAYE
Did she?

Nathan goes silent for a moment. He looks down at her neck.

NATHAN
Why is your neck covered?

FAYE
None of your business. I have to go.

Faye walks off, leaving Nathan to stand and watch her go.

INT. AXEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Faye lays in Axel's bed, scrolling on her phone. She gets a notification.

ON THE PHONE: A notification from Citizen.

She clicks on it.

The app opens and shows a report of a body found pretty close to her glowing blue dot. She clicks on the report. It takes her to an article. On the screen is a picture of VICTIM, early to mid 20s, attractive and smiling.

ON FAYE:

She furrows her brow, reading more intensely.

Axel enters in a great mood. He climbs into bed, kissing her on the cheek and wrapping his arms around her.

FAYE

They found a body like, less than a mile from here.

Axel continues the conversation, but is clearly more interested in Faye's body.

AXEL

Oh did they? When did they lose it?

FAYE

Hey- it's a girl. A woman- like my age.

AXEL

Well which is it? Are you a girl or a woman?

FAYE

I'm a woman.

AXEL

A beautiful woman. A sexy woman.

Axel kisses her and Faye kisses back, wrapping herself around him.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Hey, I was thinking- we should go to the Estate, I can introduce you to my family.

FAYE

The Cruise Estate? You think I'm ready?

AXEL

Oh, I think you're ready.

He kisses her again.

AXEL (CONT'D)

It would mean a lot to me. And hey, obviously there's a crazy psycho murdering women in L.A.. I've gotta protect you, get you out of here.

FAYE
Protect me?

AXEL
You're mine. I keep what's mine close,
where no one else can get it.

FAYE
Romantic.

AXEL
The Estate is romantic. Let's go
tomorrow.

FAYE
I can't go tomorrow. I have work.

AXEL
Ew.

FAYE
I know. I'm interviewing Bombardier
Ben tomorrow. Guess he saw you on the
show and had to be just like you.

AXEL
That guy's obsessed with me. I'm
obsessed with you.

FAYE
I'm obsessed with you.

He removes the bandage she put over her bite mark and
essentially makes out with it.

At first, Faye winces, but she soon gets used to the feeling
and melts into it.

AXEL (CONT'D)
I want all of you.

FAYE
All of me?

AXEL
I want your lips, your skin, your
hair.

FAYE
It's yours.

AXEL
I want your heart.

FAYE
You have it.

AXEL
I want your kidneys.

FAYE
My- what?

AXEL
And your liver.

FAYE
Um, okay. Sure.

AXEL
I want to be wrapped in your
intestines.

FAYE
Jesus.

AXEL
What?

Axel looks hurt and weirdly innocent.

FAYE
N-nothing. Sorry.

AXEL
Are you kinkshaming me?

FAYE
No. Never. I wouldn't.

AXEL
Good. It takes a lot of courage to
show someone the most intimate details
of yourself. I trust you with mine.
Please don't make me regret that.

FAYE
I won't. You can have my intestines.

AXEL
That's my girl.

He focuses his attention on her stomach- no- her organs. She stares at him.

INSERT - TIKTOK

Faye covers her mouth, her performance cracking a little.

FAYE

God, I just know TikTok is gonna take this down- well, if you're seeing it, you're like, special, I guess.

She smiles, tight and bitter. She clears her throat.

Scroll up.

This video is not one of the parts of the storytime. Instead, it's just Faye in the middle of a rant.

The video is replying to a comment that says "LMAOOO THE BEN SHADE"

FAYE

Like- does Ben have fans? What does he do? I literally interviewed him and I have no idea why he's famous.

INT. STUDIO - DAY

Faye and Bombardier Ben sit across from each other on a well curated set. There's a large neon sign that says "I'M SPENDING TIME WITH" in nearly illegible cursive. The RiseUp logo is hidden everywhere like Mickeys at Disney World.

Faye is barely hiding her discomfort, but Ben seems to be having a great time.

FAYE

So, Ben-

BOMBARDIER BEN

Please, call me Benny-Boy.

FAYE

Nope. Anyway, um- You were a rapper, then a pop-punk star, then you left music to pursue acting in music-related movies-

BOMBARDIER BEN

Yes, my starring role in the Rebecca

Black biopic as "Internet Troll #2".

FAYE

And finally you've settled into being a streamer/youtube personality.

BOMBARDIER BEN

Over a billion channel views.

FAYE

Wow. So- what was it that made you leave rap in the first place?

BOMBARDIER BEN

Um, if I can just get raw for a sec? Yeah, uh- A lot of "real rappers" were writing diss tracks about me, and to be honest- it really hurt my feelings. So I decided to remove myself from the situation.

Faye nods like she's listening intently.

INT. GIRLBOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

Girlboss watches the Ben interview as Faye sits across from her.

GIRLBOSS

This is some of your best work, skinny. Oh, sorry. HR told me not to give weight-based compliments anymore. Any-where, this isn't actually why I called you up here.

FAYE

Is it because I requested Friday off?

GIRLBOSS

Sort of. Are you spending the day with your mans?

FAYE

Um, not that it's really your business-

GIRLBOSS

Of course, yes. Healthy workplace boundaries. You don't have to tell me. However- if you don't it will reflect poorly on our relationship as women.

FAYE

Right- um, Axel's taking me to meet his family.

GIRLBOSS

Ugh! That's so romantic I could shit and throw up right now!

FAYE

Please don't.

GIRLBOSS

But here's the tea, sis: Your boy-toy is in some super hot water in the press right now.

FAYE

Um, yeah. I don't really-

GIRLBOSS

I understand it's a very sensitive subject. And like, our official corporate policy is to believe women. #MeToo, #TimesUp and all that. But like, you and me know, as women, like, sometimes women can be straight up crazy liars. I want to give your Bae the benefit of the clout- sorry- doubt. But the video is currently getting a lot of dislikes.

FAYE

I'm sorry.

GIRLBOSS

Please, never apologize. You didn't commit sexual misconduct. And he didn't either. Probably. But regardless we're gonna turn off likes, dislikes, and comments. It's gonna bring down our engagement, so I'm gonna need to take it out of your paycheck.

FAYE

Oh, um- okay. Do you mind if I ask why?

GIRLBOSS

Very much so. Will you send Valerie in on your way out?

Faye takes the hint and gets up to leave.

INSERT - TIKTOK

Faye now sits on the couch, a glass of wine in her hand. Her other hand is free and the angle is good. When she looks towards the camera we can see in her eyes she's using a ring light.

FAYE

Alright, I hear you. Less me, more Axel. Let's do it. Part 5? 6? I don't know. Hard to keep track. Anyway, the Cruise Estate was like walking back in time, in that it felt racially uncomfortable.

EXT. CRUISE ESTATE - DAY

The large sprawling estate is sat directly on water so blue it might as well be glowing. The main house was clearly once a plantation, and everything added on is attempting to simultaneously mimic and modernize the style, making it feel just overall weird.

Faye exits a limo, Axel climbing out behind her. He takes her by the waist and leans in to her ear.

AXEL

What do you think?

FAYE

Wow.

AXEL

Have you ever seen anything like it?

FAYE

Can't say that I have.

AXEL

You know, down here you're gonna meet Island Axel.

FAYE

Island Axel. What's he like?

AXEL

He's like regular Axel but he wears a shirt less.

FAYE

Hm, I think I might like Island Axel.

Axel kisses the top of her head.

AXEL

Come on.

He leads her inside.

INT. CRUISE ESTATE BEDROOM - DAY

Axel and Faye arrive in a guest bedroom. It doesn't exactly have a final wall, as it is in a part of the house they've attempted to make look "rustic" and "beachy". It looks directly onto the water and offers no sound protection beyond the crashing waves.

Faye puts down her things and takes out her phone. On the screen is an article about the body found.

ON THE PHONE:

The article states that the body was "mildly mutilated".

She attempts to click the "read more" button, but it doesn't load.

ON FAYE:

She turns back to Axel.

FAYE

Hey, what's the wifi?

AXEL

Oh, someone'll get that to you.

FAYE

Uh- Okay.

He kisses her as if he's about to comfort her.

AXEL

Why don't you freshen up before dinner?

FAYE

Sure, I guess.

She takes off her shirt, revealing more bandages around her

body.

INT. CRUISE ESTATE DINING ROOM - EVENING

The dining room is huge and loaded with food (think Shrek 2). Everything on the table is meat, literally not a single carb or vegetable. Faye has changed into something slightly more upscale, but everyone in the room has dressed for a different occasion.

At one head of the table is AKSEL CRUISE II (FATHER), 60s, tight with both plastic surgery and overall contempt. At his side is STEP MOMMY, at first appearing somewhere around her late twenties.

Far away at the other head is AKSEL CRUISE I (GRANDFATHER), genuinely could be 200 years old. He is flanked by STEP GRANDMAMA, appears to be late 40s, but when she shows her hands they are so wrinkled it's clear she's had a ton of work done. She literally doesn't say a word and only exists to act as his legs. When not pushing his wheelchair she's drinking a canned gin and tonic.

Next to Step Mommy is AAD CRUISE, late 30s, the Eloniest we can Musker without getting sued, dressed in the Silicon Valley uniform and constantly texting. Though his plate is piled high with food, he only drinks a meal replacement.

When Faye and Axel arrive, everyone but Aad looks at them. Step Mommy looks almost desperate in her attempt to look happy. Father is not trying to hide his ambivalence. Grandfather is just so freaking old.

AXEL

Hey everyone. This is Faye. Faye, this is everyone.

FAYE

Hi. It's so nice to meet all of you.

FATHER

Yes, it is.

Faye gestures to Grandfather, who is sat quite far away.

FAYE

Will he be able to hear us?

FATHER

Yes, the acoustics in here are fantastic.

GRANDFATHER

WHAT?

STEP MOMMY

Please! Have a seat!

Axel nods with encouragement and Faye sits across from Aad.
Axel begins to sit next to Father.

FATHER

No.

AXEL

Right, yeah.

Axel gets back up and gestures to Faye to switch with him.
Confused, she obliges.

STEP MOMMY

Hello Axel, it's been too long.

AXEL

Yes, Step Mommy. It has.

FATHER

(to Faye)

So. Are you a party whore or a party
whore he's payed to look respectable?

Aad snorts.

FAYE

Excuse me?

AXEL

Father!

FATHER

What?

STEP MOMMY

What he means to say is-

FAYE

I'm sure you're not saying you failed
to have me thoroughly vetted before
inviting me to your estate? With this
many captains of industry?

Father sort of raises an eyebrow, made difficult by his skin
rigidity.

AAD

(sarcastically)

Ooh, peasant girl shows her spunk and gets the attention of the Prince. When presented to the King she tames not her tongue, perhaps to relive the magic.

Everyone stares at Aad in silence for a few seconds.

FAYE

Sorry, what does-

AXEL

Just ignore him, he's special needs.

AAD

I have Aspergers, you ass burger.

FAYE

Isn't that, like, outdated Nazi terminology?

AAD

(mocking)

ISN't tHaT, lIkE, oUtDatEd NaZi teRmiNolOgy?

(normal)

That's what you sound like.

FATHER

That's enough. We're going to have a nice family dinner.

STEP MOMMY

Yes, please.

When we look at Step Mommy, she is noticeably younger, perhaps no older than college age.

Faye is taken aback. As Father and Aad strike up a conversation of them literally just saying "stocks and bonds" over and over like Pokemon (sometimes with a nice "child labor" or "oil spill" thrown in), she turns to Axel and speaks in a hushed tone.

FAYE

Hey- How old is your step mother?

AXEL

Who? Step Mommy?

Faye tries to hide an eye roll.

FAYE

Yeah.

AXEL

Uh, I don't know, actually.

FAYE

Well, how long have they been married?

Axel shrugs.

FAYE (CONT'D)

When did you meet her?

Axel shrugs again.

FAYE (CONT'D)

What's her name?

Axel does even bother to shrug, he just stares blankly.

Faye nods, accepting it.

STEP MOMMY

So, Gaye-

FAYE

It's Faye.

GRANDFATHER

In my time those were the same thing.

FAYE

Right- Uh...

STEP MOMMY

Faye. What do you do?

FAYE

I'm-

AXEL

She's a reporter. It's how we met, she was doing a story on me.

FATHER

So an *Entertainment* reporter, then.

Father says the word with pure, agonizing hatred.

FAYE

Yeah, that's accurate, I think.

STEP MOMMY

Well, doesn't that sound nice.

Father makes a noise that does not sound like agreement.

FAYE

So- uh, Aad. Are you drinking a Soylent? Cuz we have those in the office so we can work through our lunch breaks.

Aad scoffs. He turns the cup around, revealing that it says "Soylent Orphan: Microchip Flavored".

Faye nods awkwardly, sinking back in her chair.

GRANDFATHER

Lunch Breaks. Bah. Next those union gangsters will want payment for limbs lost during production.

FATHER

He might not be sure what year it is but damn if he isn't still the shrewdest company chair in the world.

GRANDFATHER (O.S.)

Oh, my skin fell off again. Agatha, pick it up, help me.

AXEL

You know, speaking of unions, as a member of SAG-

The rest of the family boos and Aad throws his empty bottle at Axel's head.

Step Mommy is also even younger now, just barely 18, if that.

FATHER

Axel, please. Don't strain yourself trying to keep up.

They return to their "stocks and bonds" conversation.

Faye turns to Axel.

FAYE
 (hushed)
 Hey, are you alr-

AXEL
 Hm? No- Yeah, isn't this fun? Family's
 just amazing, huh?

He downs the rest of his drink.

Faye turns back to the rest of the group, catching the tail end of a story that Father is telling.

FATHER
 -so I said, "Yeah Svenson, I left the
 quarterlies under that stripper's top.
 If you want 'em, go get 'em."

The table erupts into Jimmy Fallon-style performed laughs, all but Faye.

She glances at Step Mommy, who for a split second looks like an actual middle schooler. Faye does a double take and she's back to her late 20s.

FATHER
 So anyway his wife calls the next day
 and she's all concerned, "Have you
 heard from Jorgen?" And I say "Yeah,
 screams of pleasure from down the
 hall, want me to take a message?"

Axel heavily seasons his food with "KNOCK YA ON YA ASS"
 Seasoning blend.

AXEL
 Legendary.

FATHER
 Don't interrupt me.

Axel waits for him to continue talking. He doesn't.

AXEL
 Was there more-

FATHER
 Here, Faye. Try this.

He serves her slices of something that looks like a vegan fried chicken replacement.

She takes a bite, nodding.

FAYE
It's good, what is it?

FATHER
Sweetbreads.

FAYE
Oh.

AXEL
It's pancreas. From a cow.

FAYE
Yeah, I know.

FATHER
Don't patronize her. Don't worry,
sweetheart, you'll get used to him.

AXEL
Good one, Dad.

Father growls.

AXEL (CONT'D)
Um, Sir.

Father half nods.

AXEL
Well, uh, they're my favorite, so pass
the swee-

As he speaks, Father takes the rest of the Sweetbreads and puts them on his plate.

Axel takes the hint and shuts up.

FAYE
Okay, Sir, All due respect-

Axel puts a hand on Faye's shoulder and shakes his head, begging her with his eyes to stop talking. She obliges.

There is dead silence at the table for an uncomfortable amount of time.

GRANDFATHER
I think McCarthy is going to drain the

swamp of all those commies in
Washington.

Father shakes his head, seeming genuinely devastated.

FATHER

I wish, Dad.

The rest of the Cruise's follow suit, like they're mourning a family member.

Faye shakes her head in disbelief.

INT. CRUISE ESTATE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Faye sits on the bed, knees tucked under her chin. She spins her phone around in her hands absentmindedly, staring off into space.

Axel enters from the bathroom, bringing her back.

FAYE

Hey, do you think I could get the-

She watches as he puts on his shoes.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

AXEL

I have some hometown obligations.
People to see. Appearances to make.
You know how it is.

Faye furrows her brow.

He leans down and kisses her on the forehead before walking out the door.

She stares after him for a beat, perhaps expecting him to return. When he doesn't, she looks back down at her phone and fruitlessly refreshes the page a few times.

She stands and paces around the room a few times before walking out.

INT. CRUISE ESTATE HALL - NIGHT

Faye wanders around the estate, occasionally passing by the odd STAFF MEMBER. She attempts to greet them, but they don't acknowledge her or make eye contact.

Framed paintings of patriarchs and large ships line the walls. There are magazine clippings and news articles about Father and Aad, pictures of them posing on golf courses and beaches.

There are a few pictures from Aad's youth, where he poses with DEAD MOTHER, a natural beauty in stark contrast to the plastic nature of the other Cruise women.

At the end of the hall is an expensive looking portrait of Father, Dead Mother, and Aad. Faye inspects closer, finding that they've had the painting reframed, and a fourth family member has been cut out.

FAYE
(under her breath)
...Fucking christ.

AAD (O.S.)
We posed for that portrait for hours.

Faye spins towards the source of the voice, finding Aad standing out on a balcony vaping out of something that looks like a car battery.

AAD (CONT'D)
The painter told us to pick a face we could hold for that time. Axel insisted on smiling as wide as he could.

She steps out onto the balcony with him.

FAYE
He's very determined.

AAD
He looked ridiculous.

He takes a hit and blows it in Faye's face. She coughs, and he offers it to her.

FAYE
Is that THC?

AAD
Yeah, it's 120%.

FAYE
I...don't think that's possible.

Aad laughs. It's mean but genuine.

AAD

That's funny. You're cute, trying to understand math.

She bites her tongue and takes a hit, coughing hard on the exhale.

FAYE

Ow.

AAD

It's not for everyone. My mother hated weed.

He takes it back, doubling the size of her hit with ease.

FAYE

That's her?

Faye gestures to the portrait and Aad nods.

AAD

She died pretty soon after that. We actually had to use a maid for the last few posing sessions.

FAYE

That must have been really hard on you two. Losing her at that age.

Aad sets his jaw.

AAD

I was old enough to look at it logically.

FAYE

And Axel?

AAD

Doubt he noticed. He didn't spend much time around women growing up.

FAYE

Really? The Lady Killer of Santa Monica didn't spend time with women?

He shrugs.

AAD

Believe whatever you want. I always thought he was gay. Or worse. For all his charm, he's not worth much.

FAYE

What does that mean?

AAD

Obviously, he's worth millions. But not billions. Not on his own. He doesn't have the bandwidth for that. I don't know you very well, but I'm almost certain you can do better.

FAYE

Thanks, but I'm not interested.

He laughs again, this time with considerably less humor but still just as mean.

AAD

Don't flatter yourself. I don't mean me. My girlfriend is a diamond heiress and a cyborg, I don't need some phoney two-bit corporate-owned influencer with a bullshit degree from a liberal sharts school.

FAYE

Wow, that must've been a mouthful.

AAD

You'd know.

FAYE

Implying that I'm a slut?

He shakes his head and steps closer, not looking her in the eye.

AAD

That's my thing. I don't lie. Ever. Don't-won't-can't-I don't know. Maybe I don't care enough to lie. I don't speak without knowing.

FAYE

You're being weird and cryptic.

AAD

I'm a tech mogul. Get creative.

FAYE

Do you mean-

AAD

I try not to look at pictures. Try.

FAYE

What the fuck is wrong with all of you?

AAD

Well...My mother died at a critical time in my life. You know, mysteriously. Never found her body. That does something to a boy. Of course it also does something to have everyone else deny she's even dead.

FAYE

I'm sorry you went through that. It's not fair.

AAD

It's fine. I just haven't eaten meat since. You'd probably benefit from less meat in your diet. I mean that both literally and metaphorically.

FAYE

God, you're insufferable.

He smiles. It's haunting.

AAD

Axel was always so concerned with being liked. That's his fatal flaw.

FAYE

Caring about others isn't a flaw.

AAD

I didn't say he cared. You should listen closer, reporter.

He blows another cloud.

AAD (CONT'D)

How much money are you spending on

bandages?

FAYE

Wh- Why would you ask me that?

AAD

You know.

Faye stares at him, thinking deeply.

FAYE

Do you just like stirring the pot?

AAD

There's no need for euphemism. I'm a nasty little boy who loves chaos.

FAYE

Ew.

He begins to walk back inside.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Wait! Do you have the wi-

Her phone PINGS.

ON THE SCREEN:

A NOTIFICATION: Aad Cruise has shared the password for "CruisingTheWeb". You are now connected.

About 10 more notifications come in, all making various ALERT noises. Among them are Nathan, frustrated that Faye is unreachable.

INT. CRUISE ESTATE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Faye stares intensely at her phone, her eyes rapidly moving back and forth.

ON THE SCREEN:

TEXT: "Identifying the victim was a challenge," said LAPD Detective Jeffrey Larson to our field correspondent, "her face was cut up pretty bad, and some parts were missing all-together." It took dental records to eventually identify the victim as 23 year old Jessica Thompson.

In the corner is the time, listed as 3:09 AM.

ON FAYE:

She bites her nail.

The bedroom door OPENS and a shirtless Axel steps in quietly before noticing Faye is awake. He quickly throws something into the closet.

AXEL

You didn't have to wait up for me.

FAYE

Hm? Oh, I couldn't sleep.

Faye looks him up and down.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Is this the famous Island Axel?

AXEL

Yes it is. What do you think?

FAYE

I like it.

Axel climbs into bed and looks at her phone.

AXEL

You're still on this? Stop freaking yourself out.

He takes the phone from her hand and clicks it off, placing it on his bedside table. Before she can try and get it back, he kisses her.

She melts, successfully distracted. She goes to put her hands in his hair and stops, noticing that it's soaking wet.

FAYE

Did your hometown obligations involve a swim?

AXEL

A dip at night always used to clear my head.

FAYE

Sounds better than the weird conversation I had with your brother.

AXEL
Yeah, that guy's the worst.

FAYE
I would have gone with you.

AXEL
I'll remember that next time.

They kiss again.

INT. CRUISE ESTATE BEDROOM - DAY

Faye groggily opens her eyes. Axel is dead asleep next to her. She gently lifts herself out of bed, careful not to wake him.

She walks over to the closet and opens it, surveying her options. She looks down, seeing something crumpled on the ground.

She picks it up and holds it out, revealing the shirt Axel was wearing when he left. The clean back of the shirt faces her.

She puts the shirt to her body as if testing the size and looks down, seeing the bloodstained front of the shirt for the first time.

She drops it in shock.

Outside, a car can be heard PULLING UP.

Doors OPEN and CLOSE.

FATHER (O.S.)
Commissioner, how are you?

COMMISSIONER (O.S.)
I am fine, sir.

FATHER (O.S.)
(rascistly)
You look like you've seen *una fantasma*.

Faye quickly shoves the shirt back in the closet and closes it.

She pads out onto the balcony, peaking down over the rail.

ON THE GROUND:

A police vehicle is flanked by two officers, COMMISSIONER, 50s, and DEPUTY, 30s. Though they are law enforcement, they seem strangely meek and timid. Especially in the presence of Father, who commands their attention from just under Faye.

COMMISSIONER
Sir, we found something.

Father sighs.

FATHER
When?

COMMISSIONER
Washed up sometime early this morning.

FATHER
Is it...?

He doesn't need to complete his sentence. Commissioner confirms it. Father nods, melancholy.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Right. We'll keep it between us. Tell the family the funeral will be paid for.

He turns to go back inside.

ON FAYE:

Faye puts a hand over her mouth to avoid making a sound.

COMMISSIONER (O.S.)
Sir, there's one issue-

ON THE GROUND:

Father stops and turns his attention back to the Commissioner.

FATHER
What is it?

COMMISSIONER
We can't locate- um, discern-

FATHER
Spit it out.

COMMISSIONER
She doesn't have a face.

For the first time, Father actually seems shaken.

FATHER
She's- it's missing a face?

COMMISSIONER
And something else.

FATHER
Stop building tension, *Ese*. Get to it.

COMMISSIONER
The pancreas.

Faye CHOKES and the three men look up to the source of the sound.

ON FAYE:

She quickly shoots back into the room, narrowly avoiding being seen.

She backs up directly into Axel, who wraps her in his arms from behind. She yelps with surprise.

AXEL
Hey, it's alright. It's me. What was that?

FAYE
Sorry, I'm- uh, jumpy, I guess.

AXEL
Come here, relax. You're all tensed up.

He showers her in hugs and affection. Though she loosens slightly, her face remains frozen.

INSERT - TIKTOK

On screen is MAGGOT (MAGA FAGGOT), late 20s. He is clinging to the scraggly patches of beard he has and though he is very clearly a grown ass man, he has LED lights and childish posters. He stands too close to the camera and talks too loud.

MAGGOT
 AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO SEES WHAT'S
 GOING ON HERE? ALL OF THE SHEEP IN THE
 COMMENTS ARE SO QUICK TO BELIEVE THIS
 RANDOM GIRL, BUT WHY SHOULD WE?

Scroll up. Another video of Maggot. He stands in a slightly different but just as unpleasant position.

MAGGOT
 THE SAME NIGHT THEY SHOW UP AT HIS
 FAMILY'S HOUSE THEY FIND A BODY? AND
 IT JUST SO HAPPENS TO BE MISSING HIS
 FAVORITE ORGAN TO EAT? IT'S A LITTLE
 TOO CONVENIENT FOR M-

Scroll up. Same deal.

MAGGOT
 IS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT THIS GIRL THAT
 MAKES HER CREDIBLE? I MEAN LOOK AT THE
 AMOUNT OF ATTENTION SHES GETTING FROM
 RUINING THIS GUY'S LI-

Scroll up.

Breaking up the rant is a random thirst trap to a god-awful country song.

Scroll Up.

Back to rant formation.

MAGGOT
 (high pitched and mocking)
 OOH LOOK AT ME, I'M SO HELPLESS I
 STAYED WITH A GUY AND IGNORED RED
 FLAGS, I'M A VICTIM-

Scroll up.

MAGGOT
 IT'S NOT THAT WEIRD TO EAT ANIMALS
 ORGANS, IN MANY CULTURE'S IT'S
 CONSIDERED A DELICA-

Scroll up.

MAGGOT
 ALL OF THESE FUCKING SNOWFLAKES ARE IN
 MY COMMENTS DEFENDING THIS CUNT-

INSERT: POP UP

Pop Up: Would you like to report this user?

We click yes.

Pop Up: Which guideline has this user violated?

- Bullying and Harassment
- Spreading Misinformation
- Inciting Violence
- Wearing Socks With Cross
- Labeled As "Satisfying" But The Thing Didn't Come Off In One Piece
- Made A White Person Cry

We click Bullying and Harassment.

Pop Up: Thank you for letting us know. Our team will review the content in question.

Scroll up. Maggot stands further from the camera but yells louder.

MAGGOT

WHICH ONE OF YOU FUCKING BETAS
 REPORTED ME? WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON
 YOU I'M GOING TO FUCKING TEAR YOU
 APART! I'M SPECIALLY TRAINED IN THE
 ARMED FORCES, DUMBASS! DON'T COME FOR
 ME UNLESS YOU-

An ERROR noise plays and the screen goes gray. There is white text that says "This user has been suspended for violating community guidelines."

Scroll up. We are back to Faye, who looks like she's just barely holding it together.

Attached to the Tik Tok is a comment that states "Girl this is so many red flags at a certain point its on you"

She points to the comment.

FAYE

So I've been getting a lot of comments

like this, and I just wanted to address it. I understand that on the outside these all look like red flags, but at the time I could barely see them. They just looked like...I don't know. Red-ish Scarves. That being said, it was around this time that something in me started to pull back. I knew I'd thrown myself completely into my relationship, and I thought I could make everything normal again if I just saw some friends, or got a hobby.

She laughs, dark.

FAYE (CONT'D)
"Normal". God, what a joke.

INT. PRIVATE JET - DAY

Faye and Axel lounge on opposite sides of a private plane. Axel snoozes while Faye looks at her phone.

ON THE PHONE:

An instagram feed. Nathan and Valerie pose drunkenly at a club. She double taps to like the post.

Within seconds, her screen lights up with an incoming FaceTime from Valerie.

She clicks the green button and Valerie appears on screen.

VALERIE
Look who's back from the dead!

FAYE
(stunned)
What?

VALERIE
You've been completely silent for days, what's going on? I thought it might be The Big Sad but I checked Spotify and you haven't even listened to any Mitski.

FAYE
(joking)
God, you're obsessed with me.

VALERIE
You're Mariah and I'm Eminem.

Faye laughs.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
T-b-h, I miss you. We haven't hung out
in forever, I've had to listen to
Nathan's Paul Thomas Anderson rant
like six times in the past month.

FAYE
I can never tell if he likes him or
not.

VALERIE
Oh my god, me neither.

FAYE
Well, I'm flying back right now-

VALERIE
Flying? From where? Hold on- is that a
private plane?

Faye blushes and shrugs.

VALERIE (CONT'D)
Shut the fuck up you lying bitch!!!

FAYE
No lie.

VALERIE
Is it Axel's?

Axel's eye lightly opens at the sound of his name. He
pretends to still be sleeping.

FAYE
I think it's rented, I don't know. We
went to the estate for a couple days.

VALERIE
Like, *the* estate?

FAYE
Met the family and everything.

VALERIE
Did you meet the tech one? Aad?

FAYE

Yeah.

VALERIE

Ugh, he's so fuckable in that nerd way.

FAYE

I don't know if I agree.

Axel smiles.

VALERIE

I was watching his Joe Rogan interview-

FAYE

Ew, are you serious?

VALERIE

I'll listen to a short man talk if it means I can look at a Cruise brother.

FAYE

You're seriously one of the horniest people I know.

VALERIE

My chart is dominated by scorpio.

FAYE

Of course it is.

VALERIE

So when do you land?

FAYE

I think in an hour or two.

VALERIE

Okay, so you know where Splunch was? There's a new place called Nudi there that does flesh toned raw brunch-

Axel gets up, walking over to Faye.

FAYE

That sounds fucking gross.

VALERIE

Of course it is. So I'll make a

reservation for-

Axel leans into the frame, planting quick kisses on Faye's cheek and neck.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, is that-

FAYE

Ax, you've got a fan.

Axel turns to the camera, oozing charm.

AXEL

Stop, I'm flattered. Hey, what's up?

Valerie lets out a squeal.

VALERIE

UM...nothing. Just trying to lock down your girlfriend for a brunch date.

AXEL

Well, I hate to say, Faye and I have a previous engagement.

FAYE

We do?

AXEL

Tommy's having a pool party and he wants to meet you.

VALERIE

Thomas Laurent?!?

Axel laughs.

AXEL

The very same.

VALERIE

Holy fuck, you have to go.

FAYE

No, really- it's fine, I can-

VALERIE

Shhh, if you pass up an opportunity to meet *The* white boy of the month, I will kill you.

FAYE

Well, if you feel that strongly.

AXEL

Why don't you guys do dinner tonight at Prycee?

FAYE

Yeah, not on what RiseUpMedia pays us. Besides, a reservation-

AXEL

I'll call and give them my Amex.

FAYE

No, babe, I can't accept-

VALERIE

Um, Faye, your super hot rich famous boyfriend is being generous. Say yes.

AXEL

I like this girl, she's right. Please, tell Faye it's okay to accept handouts- sorry, gifts.

VALERIE

What he said.

FAYE

Okay. Thank you.

AXEL

Anything for you.

He kisses her, then turns back to the camera.

AXEL

It was very nice meeting you. Take care of my girl tonight.

VALERIE

Um, yes I will take care of your girl.

FAYE

Okay, I'll see you tonight.

VALERIE

Bye-

Faye hangs up and Axel showers her in affection again.

EXT. THOMAS' MANSION POOL - DAY

The patio is bursting with attractive 20-SOMETHINGS. Some of them appear to shine even more, pulling focus.

Axel and Faye enter. He is the oldest one there. He waves at people, greets them, recalls specific details to make them feel remembered. Faye stays quiet, watching everyone's reactions. While everyone else is in tiny bikinis and Fashion Nova dresses, Faye is wearing a conspicuous coverup. Her bandages peak out ever so slightly.

The men return his greetings, high five him. They love this guy. The women huddle and whisper.

Axel puts his arm around Faye, and the women react.

FAYE

Axel, I don't know how comfortable I am-

AXEL

Babe, come on. You look fine, don't be ridiculous.

FAYE

No, that's not- Fine?

Axel spots Thomas, who has his back turned.

AXEL

Tommy! There's my favorite kid!

Thomas's face falls when he registers Axel, but quickly returns to Hollywood Fake.

THOMAS

Hey! I- didn't know you were coming.

AXEL

I wanted to surprise you. Hey, this is my girlfriend, Faye. Faye, this is Thomas.

As uncomfortable as he is, Thomas physically cannot resist flirting with a woman.

THOMAS

Faye. I know you, you interviewed my friend Mason.

FAYE
I did...do that.

THOMAS
He said you were beautiful in person,
but wow.

FAYE
(blushing)
He did? Oh- thank you- stop.

Axel, clearly threatened, overcompensates.

AXEL
I know, when she showed up at my door
I was like, "is this a niche internet
micro-celebrity or an angel?"

He forces out a laugh that is too loud, making everyone
uncomfortable.

THOMAS
Right, um- Faye, it was my pleasure to
meet you. Axel, can I steal you for a
sec?

AXEL
Steal me? You had me first.

Another god-awful laugh. He turns to Faye and kisses her on
the cheek.

AXEL (CONT'D)
Babe, I'll be right back.

More people look at her, judgement pouring from behind their
botox.

Faye looks like she's gonna be sick.

Axel follows Thomas inside.

Faye looks around, aware of how much attention she's drawing.
She quickly heads in the same direction as Axel and Thomas.

EXT./INT. THOMAS'S PATIO

Faye stops at a patio. Axel and Thomas are stationed just
inside some glass sliding doors. One is open enough for a
person to walk through. She ducks behind something, gettin
close enough to listen.

The conversation is slightly muffled, but audible.

AXEL

What's up? You look like you've seen a ghost. Or "una fantasma" in the islands.

THOMAS

Listen, Ax-

AXEL

Ooh, usually when I hear that it's followed by "it's not you, it's me."

He laughs. Thomas doesn't. Axel's face falls.

THOMAS

It's my management.

AXEL

(darkly)

That's a new one.

THOMAS

After all the...allegations-

AXEL

Those are bullshit.

THOMAS

I know. I think. I- My team thinks that until that's proven I shouldn't be seen with you. Publicly or...whatever.

AXEL

It's innocent until proven guilty. I don't need to be proven innocent.

THOMAS

Hey, I agree with you. But- that's not how things work with audiences. You know that.

AXEL

Yeah.

THOMAS

Listen- I'm really sorry, dude. Some friendly advice? I'd lay low for a while. I mean, I wouldn't abuse my

girlfriend, but-

AXEL
I didn't.

THOMAS
Right.

Thomas starts to walk out.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Oh, and this goes without saying but-
we're recasting your part. You
understand.

AXEL
Who are you getting?

THOMAS
Right now it's looking like Efron.

AXEL
My nemesis.

THOMAS
Hey- no hard feelings, right?

Axel forces a smile.

AXEL
Right.

Thomas nods and gives him a guilty look before turning to
leave.

On his way out he passes Faye, making eye contact with her.
He looks back at Axel, then at her. An apology? A warning?

He disappears into the crowd of 20-somethings.

Faye stands, her eyes still on the direction Thomas left in.
She takes a step forward and bumps into Axel.

FAYE
(scrambling)
Oh, hi- I was just coming to fi-

AXEL
We're leaving.

FAYE

Oh? Already? Okay. Let me just-

Axel grabs her arm, wrenching it close to him. Faye cries out, but Axel keeps moving, dragging her out to the front of the house.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Ow! Axel, you're hurting me-

People stare as they pass, whispering to each other.

EXT. THOMAS'S MANSION ENTRANCE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Axel stops abruptly and lets go, lightly launching Faye a few steps.

She rubs her arm where he held her.

FAYE

Why did you do that?

Axel waves down a VALET, who jumps into action retrieving his car.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Axel?

AXEL

Can you just shut up for a second?

Faye looks like the wind has been knocked out of her.

FAYE

(struggling to make a sound)

I'm sorry.

Axel looks at her, his face softening. Not with guilt.

AXEL

Don't apologize. God, I'm sorry you had to see me like that. I've had a really rough couple days. You know how hard I've had it, right?

FAYE

Yeah...

Axel brings her into a hug.

AXEL

Will you come to mine? I don't want to be alone right now.

Though he seems more in control, the anger isn't gone. He still speaks tightly and precisely, like he's stopping more words from leaving his lips.

FAYE

I...can't.

AXEL

Why not?

FAYE

I have to get ready for dinner.

AXEL

Dinner?

FAYE

Yeah-

Axel squeezes harder, drawing a pained gasp from Faye.

AXEL

With who?

FAYE

You were there, you told me to-

AXEL

Faye, answer the fucking question. Who are you seeing and where are you going?

FAYE

(struggling to breathe)

I- I'm seeing Valerie. From work. At Prycee. You made the reservation.

Axel sighs, letting go. He holds her at arm's length.

AXEL

Right. I'm sorry. Just slipped my mind. I'll drop you at your place.

FAYE

Um...thanks.

AXEL

C'mon.

He takes her hand, leading her to the passenger door and opening it like a perfect gentleman.

INT. PRYCEE RESTAURANT - EVENING

Faye enters a packed upscale restaurant. She looks around, looking out of place among the GLITTERATI.

She goes to the HOSTESS.

FAYE

Hey, um- my boyfriend made a reservation-

HOSTESS

You're Faye?

She nods.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)

Follow me.

Hostess leads her to a gorgeous table, very V.I.P. She turns heads as people try and figure out who she is to get such special treatment.

Waiters pull out her chair, pour her bottled water and champagne.

She takes out her phone and begins typing.

FAYE (V.O)

7:34 PM- Hey, I'm here. Axel pulled out all the stops, just warning you.

Time jump. Faye's drink is about half full. She picks up her phone again.

FAYE (V.O)

7:45 PM- Let me know when you're leaving.

Time jump. Faye's drink is almost empty. She takes the last sip and a WAITER refills it before it leaves her hand.

FAYE (V.O)

8:01 PM- Did you leave yet?

Faye begins chugging her drink. People around her give her judging looks.

Time jump. Faye now has the bottle at her table.

FAYE (V.O)
8:30 PM- Hello?

The voiceover continues but we stay on a shot of Faye, texting more and more frantically. She chugs straight from the bottle, looks around anxiously, fidgets.

FAYE (V.O)
8:45- Val? 8:49- Are you okay? 8:53- People are looking at me. 8:55- Just tell me if you're not coming. 9:01- Okay, I'll wait 10 more minutes. 9:15- 5 more minutes. 9:30- This is really shitty of you. 9:45- Val? Are you getting these? 9:51- Okay I'm gonna go. 9:56- I'm still here. 9:57- Please just tell me you're okay. 10:01- Okay. Seriously, fuck you Val. I'm leaving for real. You suck.

She finishes off the bottle and gets up, knocking things over and drawing more attention. She storms out, red faced and looking straight down at the ground.

EXT. PRYCEE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Faye stops outside, still on her phone.

She starts typing again.

FAYE (V.O)
Hey, have you heard from Val tonight?

NATHAN (V.O)
Seen at 10:03.

Faye takes short, shaky breaths. She taps on her phone and puts it to her ear. It RINGS once.

NATHAN (V.O)
Hey! It's Nathan. Don't leave a message!

BEEP. Faye hangs up.

She takes more breaths before dialing again. It RINGS twice.

When Axel picks up, he sounds somewhat frantic.

AXEL (O.S.)
Faye? What's up?

FAYE
Hey! Um, so- this is so embarrassing.
I got stood up.

AXEL (O.S.)
What?

FAYE
Yeah. Val never showed. And I asked
Nathan if he'd heard from her and he
read my text and then sent me to
voicemail.

AXEL (O.S.)
That's so messed up. God, what fucking
bitches!

In front of her, a taxi pulls up. DRIVER gets out to open the door.

DRIVER
Where to, Miss?

FAYE
Babe, um- do you still not want to be
alone?

AXEL (O.S.)
Um, yes. Please. I'm not home at the
moment- Um, meet me at the apartment.
If you beat me just let yourself in.
Fuck, baby I can't wait to see you. I
missed you so much.

Faye climbs into the car, mouthing "Santa Monica" to the driver. He nods and begins to close the door behind her.

FAYE
I missed you too.

SLAM.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The elevator DINGS and opens, and Faye stumbles out.

FAYE
Axel? You here?

Axel comes speeding out of the back, panting. He's buzzing with manic energy.

AXEL
Hey!

FAYE
Hey! Did you just get back?

He kisses her, making a vague "mhm" noise.

She tries vaguely to pull back as she speaks, but he persists, making more fake noises of active listening.

FAYE
I sat at the restaurant for like, over two hours. Like a fucking idiot. It was so mortifying. Axel, are you listening to me? And then no one responded to my texts, and- Ax- It hurt a lot.

AXEL
Hey. I'd never, ever do that to you. Anyone who would isn't worth being in your life.

FAYE
I know.

AXEL
I love you.

FAYE
I- I love you too.

Axel sweeps her up in his arms, kissing her again. She wraps her legs around him and lets him carry her to the bedroom.

INT. AXEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

AXEL
(in between kisses)
I love you. I love you.

Faye laughs.

AXEL (CONT'D)

I want to hear you say it again.

FAYE

I love you, Axel Cruise.

AXEL

Fuck. Say you think my brother sucks.

FAYE

He sucks so much. Genuinely one of the worst people I've ever met.

AXEL

Yes.

FAYE

I'd honestly rather die than ever be in the same room as him again.

AXEL

Fuck, yes!

FAYE

And God, your Father? He's fucking horrible!

AXEL

Okay stop.

FAYE

Oh, sorry.

Axel places Faye on the bed.

FAYE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, that was out of-

AXEL

Hey, will you- will you try something...a little kinky?

FAYE

Kinky? Like...Bondage or something?

AXEL

Or something.

Faye looks slightly unsure.

Axel catches this.

AXEL (CONT'D)

I love you so much. I don't want you to- never mind. I know you're not like the other girls I've dated. You don't have to be up for it. We can stay...*vanilla*.

He sounds like the word tastes bad on his tongue.

FAYE

No! No, I'm not- I'm not *vanilla*. I'm down...for stuff. You know I am.

AXEL

Really?

FAYE

Yeah, as long as it's not too-

AXEL

I love you. Close your eyes.

Faye obliges, but Axel ties a blindfold around her eyes anyway.

He gently pushes her back, until she's lying flat on the bed with her feet just barely hanging off.

He makes his way down her body with random kisses and gropes.

He begins to take off her shoes. Slowly and methodically. When they're bare, he sucks on her toes.

She looks unaroused, if not a little bored, but the experience isn't entirely unpleasant.

Whoops! Spoke too soon! With a SNAP not unlike a carrot, Axel bites off Faye's pinky toe.

She SCREAMS, shooting back and throwing off her blindfold. She frantically tries to hold her foot and stop the bleeding, which is actively staining the silk sheets.

Axel plays the rest of the scene with the toe in his mouth.

FAYE

Axel, what the fuck?!

AXEL

What?

FAYE
You fucking bit my toe off!

AXEL
And?

FAYE
And? What the fuck is wrong with you?!

AXEL
Hey, you consented!

FAYE
To something a *little kinky*, not
losing a fucking phalange!

AXEL
Great word, babe, but you're really
hurting me right now.

FAYE
I'M hurting YOU?

AXEL
Um, yeah? You consented to
"something." That counts. And now
you're actually kinkshaming me, in an
intimate moment of vulnerability,
which my therapist says can create
lasting socio-sexual scars.

FAYE
What? No, I-

Faye is beginning to lose a lot of blood. She's getting
woozy.

AXEL
You know what? No. This is my fault. I
should have known you wouldn't really
get me. You know- most girls, are
actually into this sort of thing. Cuz
of the true crime shit. It's my fault,
I knew I was dating a prude.

FAYE
I- I'm sorry.

Axel grunts.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Really. I'm sorry. I don't want to socio-sexually scar you.

AXEL

I know you don't. It's the worst thing you can do to a man.

FAYE

I don't feel great, Ax.

AXEL

Alright. Let's get you cleaned up. Oh-

He lets the toe out of his mouth and into his hand.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Will you hand me that water?

Faye hands him the glass from the bedside table, spilling much of it.

He graciously accepts it before popping the toe back in his mouth, taking it like a pill. He lets out a satisfied "Ahh" before picking Faye up and carrying her out.

INT. AXEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The next morning, Faye sits on the couch. She spaces out, her hand hovering over her heavily bandaged foot.

The news plays muffled on the television.

The sound of DONNA speaking slowly fades in. Faye pays attention to the screen.

DONNA

...body had been identified as 22 year old Valerie Price. What else can you tell us, Jean?

ON THE SCREEN:

A split screen news report. The reporters are nearly identical white women.

JEAN

Well, I've just learned from the LAPD's Officer Wembley that Price was particularly hard to identify. Wembley reported that the girl's face is

completely removed, and the rest of her body is in rough shape. Most of her fingers and all of her toes were missing. They were able to pull a few fingerprints, which got us a match in the system.

ON FAYE:

Faye's hand tightens around her foot, making her wince. She stares at the television in frozen horror.

ON THE SCREEN:

DONNA

Yes, we're just getting this in now- Valerie Price was arrested for shoplifting from a Target.

JEAN

Target will always get you, Donna.

DONNA

That's right, Jean. Oh- I'm just receiving new information- Am I understanding this correctly? Traces of the popular "KNOCK YA ON YA ASS" Seasoning Blend, brought to you by the Goldfarb Group, were found around the wounds, indicating that it- sorry, she- may have been cannibalized.

JEAN

Yes, I'm getting reports that the baffling substance was identified when an officer licked the body to try and taste the killer's motive.

DONNA

Oh, I saw them do that on Dog Cop.

JEAN

I was in that episode!

DONNA

Oh my god, who did you play?

JEAN

Bloated stripper #3.

DONNA

Wow, you were made for that role.

JEAN

Donna, I will sleep with your husband again. Now- This death marks the second young woman to fit the pattern.

DONNA

So it's not technically a serial killer yet.

A crawl begins at the bottom, stating "Dead Girl Worked For RiseUpMedia, Who Filed For Bankruptcy Today"

JEAN

Yes, we all know *three* dead girls is a serial killer. 2 is just some basic wannabe.

DONNA

Yes, there's no serial killer yet. Unless, of course, there's a third body we don't know about.

JEAN

And perhaps a fourth. Maybe a relative that was never seen again.

AXEL (O.S.)

My god.

ON FAYE:

Faye YELPS, shooting back from Axel, who has appeared behind her.

AXEL (CONT'D)

It says she worked at RiseUp. Did you know her?

Faye stares at him in shock for a few seconds, processing. After a beat she relaxes her face into a polite smile.

FAYE

No, not well.

AXEL

Well, a tragedy nonetheless.

He places his hands on her shoulders and gives her a kiss on

the head.

She stares straight forward, a clear thought on her face: I'm Next.

INSERT - TIKTOK

On the screen are PODCASTER 1 and PODCASTER 2. It is a highlight clip from a true crime podcast where two middle aged women laugh and drink wine.

PODCASTER 1

Wait, so- Are you...following the-

PODCASTER 2

The Axel Cruise thing?

PODCASTER 1

YES! Oh my god, it is starting to get so crazy.

PODCASTER 2

No- like- okay, if you haven't seen RueTheFaye's latest part, I think it's part like 11 or 12-

PODCASTER 1

(sing-songy)

I think it was lucky number 13.

PODCASTER 2

Oh my god, of course. Anyway, pause this, watch that, come back-

PODCASTER 1

Because SPOILERS-

PODCASTER 2

Any LA true crime fans, we knew right away who she was talking about.

PODCASTER 1

I remember when the body was released, sitting around thinking, like- "is this the next EARONS, like, Golden State Killer. Is this worse, is this like, a Bundy or Dahmer?"

PODCASTER 2

I know, we were literally considering doing an episode about it.

PODCASTER 1

If she's telling the truth, like if it's Axel fucking Cruise, like THE sexiest man that I can usually remember off the top of my head-

PODCASTER 2

I'm going to be so disgusted and horny.

PODCASTER 1

No, literally.

PODCASTER 2

Oh, before we forget, you can now go to [HelloFresh.com/SipandSlash](https://www.hellofresh.com/SipandSlash) for 50 dollars off your first meal kit, that's [HelloFresh.com/SipandSlash](https://www.hellofresh.com/SipandSlash) for 50 dollars off your first m-

Scroll up.

Faye stares somber at the camera. The video is replying to a comment that says "lowkey this is on her for not believing women..." She points to it.

FAYE

(slowly, calculating)

I couldn't fit my thoughts about this into a comment reply, so I'm making a video. I feel really conflicted. I mean, I guess on some level I agree with you-

The video cuts and restarts.

Scroll up.

This video is replying to a comment that says "no one cares!! where's part 14???"

FAYE

(drunker)

I accidentally hit 15 seconds. And apparently no one wants to hear it anyway! So...here you go. Part 14.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

We pick up exactly where we left off.

AXEL

I've got a bunch of work to do, I'm gonna make some fuel.

FAYE

(weakly)

Okay.

Axel walks over to the kitchen, visible through an open arch.

The CLICKING of a stove and the CRACKING of eggs is heard.

As soon as he is out of sight, Faye whips out her phone, furiously typing.

FAYE (V.O)

Holy fuck, Nathan. Did you see the news? Val's dead. It sounds crazy but I think Axel did it. Please, please answer me.

Faye's whole body shakes as she waits for a response. Her phone DINGS and she jumps to read the message.

ON THE PHONE:

A message with the "not delivered" symbol next to it.

AXEL (O.S.)

You want sausage?

FAYE

Um, sure.

Faye thinks quickly and goes over to the opening.

INT. AXEL'S KITCHEN - DAY

Axel flips uncased sausage patties.

FAYE

Hey, hon? I have a work zoom in a couple minutes, do you have-

AXEL

A zoom room? Absolutely. I was a *beast* during quarantine. I washed my hands like, twice a day sometimes.

FAYE

Wow.

Faye eyes his hands as they poke and prod the sausage patties.

FAYE (CONT'D)

So, uh-

AXEL

Oh, right. Down the hall, past the service elevator.

FAYE

Thanks.

As Faye turns, Axel slaps her on the ass, leaving a bit of raw meat on her pants.

INT. ZOOM ROOM - DAY

Faye rushes in and shuts the door behind her. She tries to wipe the meat off her butt.

The room is set up for zoom interviews, with lighting and a highly curated background.

She grabs a throw blanket from one of the chairs and stuffs it against the crack in the bottom of the door, attempting to soundproof it. She steps back and picks up her phone.

She scrolls through for a moment and presses something before putting it to her ear.

It RINGS.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The once orderly and dismal office we saw is now in complete disarray. PEOPLE run around screaming and looting, some sob as computers are taken from their desks. A printer is on fire, and a small group feeds it with paper, CHANTING and dancing around it in worship.

The phone RINGS and no one seems to notice.

Girlboss enters, looking around at the mess.

GIRLBOSS

Isn't anyone going to get that?

The printer group is about to sacrifice an EXECUTIVE to the fire.

GIRLBOSS (CONT'D)

Fine, I guess I have to do everything around here.

She picks up.

GIRLBOSS (CONT'D)

Hello, RiseUpMedia, this is Girlboss speaking.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

FAYE

Girlboss? Thank god, wait- why are you answering the phone? No- never mind. I need help.

GIRLBOSS

Help? That's funny. I need help around here, but no one's doing their jobs and a certain entertainment reporter never called to tell us she wouldn't be coming in.

FAYE

No- Why is it so loud there? I need you to listen. It's Axel. Axel Cruise. He's my boyfriend and- I think he killed your assistant. Valerie. I don't have enough to go to the police, but-

GIRLBOSS

Valerie's dead? Well I wish she'd notified me of her plans to be murdered, she's already used her PTO. Well, you can tell her she's fired.

FAYE

What? She's dead, are you kidding? I'm trapped in an apartment with her murderer, I need-

GIRLBOSS

No, Faye. I'm not going to save you from your own stupid choices. I don't care how murderous your boyfriend is, you should have been at work today. There was a very important announcement and now all of your coworkers are ahead of you in vacating

the building as quickly as possible.

FAYE

What?

GIRLBOSS

Well, I guess I can give you the short version. The company's bust and you're all fired. I guess that was the normal version.

FAYE

Huh? How?

GIRLBOSS

It's all a lie, Fayeson!

FAYE

Okay, Faye isn't short for anything-

GIRLBOSS

A successful youtube channel makes one person rich. The more people you add, the less you can pay them and still make seven figures! And kids don't want high production and bigger celebs, all they care about is what's on trend. We can't keep up with these teens in their bedrooms, filming and scrolling all day long- 'cuz apparently working 24/7 is a labor violation when we do it. So yes, I did borrow money from the silicone mafia. And now they're coming. They're coming for my implants! Anyway, slay the day, queen. See you in hell.

Girlboss hangs up.

INT. ZOOM ROOM - DAY

Faye takes the phone away from her ear and stares at it. She stands stunned for a few moments before shaking herself out of it and typing into her phone again. She puts it to her ear.

She attempts to disguise her voice and sound more professional.

FAYE

Yes, hello. I'm calling from the

Cruise estate, Mr. Cruise has asked me to check on his son, see how he's doing.

INT. HIGH END LOBBY - DAY

The ATTENDANT at the front desk nods, holding the phone to their ear.

ATTENDANT

Of course. We have the data compiled and ready to send at the end of the month per usual, did you want it all sent early?

INTERCUT: PHONE CONVERSATION

FAYE

No, that's alright. I just have one question about last night in particular. We weren't able to reach Axel for a few hours, can you tell me what time he left and returned last night?

The attendant types something on the computer and reads the results.

ATTENDANT

It looks like he arrived home in the afternoon, and the elevator wasn't used again until Ms. Bennet arrived close to 11 PM.

FAYE

Really? I mean- you're sure?

ATTENDANT

Yes ma'am, we have no record of the elevator going to his floor between those times.

FAYE

Right, well, thank you.

Faye hangs up.

She takes a few deep breaths, puts on a pleasant smile, and goes to open the door.

INT. AXEL'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Axel is putting plates on the table. Along with the particularly bloody sausage patties there is scrambled eggs and toast. He looks up.

AXEL
Hey, done already?

FAYE
Um, yeah.

AXEL
What's wrong?

Faye panics for a second.

FAYE
Well- uh, I just got fired.

AXEL
What?

FAYE
All of us. RiseUp is bust.

AXEL
Oh, baby, that's awful.

He brings her into a hug. She tenses at his touch and he pretends not to notice.

AXEL (CONT'D)
Well don't worry about money, okay?
You can stay here. Forever if
necessary.

He tightens his grip and smiles. He knows exactly what he's doing.

FAYE
Thanks.

AXEL
Sit, eat.

They take their places at the table and he digs in, going for the sausage first.

His fork and knife make loud SCRAPING noises. Faye's hand shakes, causing her fork to make repetitive soft CLINKS on

the plate.

Faye clears her throat.

FAYE

So, uh- where'd you go yesterday?

Axel makes a vague "hm?" sound, focused on scarfing down his food. Of course, he seasons the whole thing with "KNOCK YA ON YA ASS."

FAYE (CONT'D)

When I called you said you weren't home. You just seemed really upset after the party I figured you'd want to just stay in.

AXEL

I did stay in.

FAYE

What?

AXEL

Yeah, I didn't go anywhere last night.

FAYE

But- you said on the phone-

AXEL

Are you feeling alright? You were pretty drunk, maybe you imagined it.

FAYE

Imagined it?

AXEL

Or you know, you're just remembering wrong.

FAYE

Right...I must be.

Axel looks across at her untouched sausage.

AXEL

You gonna eat that?

Faye looks down at it, and the browning pattern begins to look like Valerie. She shakes her head.

Axel stabs his fork directly into Sausage Val's face, cutting off a small piece.

AXEL (CONT'D)
Just try a little bite.

He holds up his fork to her mouth. The look on his face suggests he's not going to let up.

Faye opens her mouth slowly and Axel shoves in the sausage.

Faye chews, forcing a smile to hide her disgust.

Axel smiles back, taking the rest of the patty and shoving it in his mouth whole.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Faye paces in a secluded corner of the apartment. She stops abruptly.

FAYE
Service elevator!

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

She rushes down the hall to an even more secluded area, with a dingy old elevator that somehow looks like it was made before the building itself.

She presses the call button and waits, anxiously tapping her foot. The elevator doesn't make a sound when it arrives, the doors just open.

The inside of the elevator is dirty, but one stain is different than the others. It's unmistakable: dried blood. The doors begin to close and she stops it with her hand. She reaches inside and hits the "door open" button a few times, before running into the next room.

INT. SMOKE ROOM - DAY

This room is set up stereotypically stoner-ish, a stark contrast to the rest of the apartment. Tapestries and Bob Marley posters cover all the walls, various smoking paraphernalia populate any flat surface. There are no regular chairs, only bean bags.

In the middle of the room is a coffee table with a rolling station set up.

Faye grabs a dime bag and empties its contents onto the tray. She grabs the tiny kief scraper and rushes back to the elevator.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

Faye returns as the elevator door is about to close again. She shoves her arm in, getting slightly crushed in the process. She lets out a small pained noise and the doors open again.

She dives down onto her knees, scraping up as much of the blood as she can and dumping it in the bag.

AXEL (O.S.)
(from far away)
Faye?

She jumps up, closing the bag and shoving it in her pocket before running towards Axel's voice.

INT. AXEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Faye nearly runs right into Axel, but he catches her by the arms and slows her down.

AXEL
Where you goin', speed demon?

FAYE
Just coming to find you.

AXEL
Well, I just finished up. What do you say we...

Axel trails off, kissing her cheek and then her neck. He moves his hand down her body, getting closer and closer to the pocket holding the blood.

Faye jumps back, and Axel doesn't look remotely surprised. He keeps the same calm, upper-handed smile throughout the interaction.

AXEL
Something wrong?

FAYE
Sorry, um- I should have eaten more of that sausage. I'm starving.

AXEL

Oh, I have more- I can make you some.

FAYE

No! Uh, let's go to that place next door. I want to eat out, I've had kind of a rough day.

AXEL

Of course you have. Anything you want.

He kisses her on the forehead. When he pulls away he stares at her. He's loving watching her squirm.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Let's go.

INSERT - INSTAGRAM STORY

Axel sits in the zoom spot, looking so perfectly curated to be casual. The video has captions on it, with any word that wouldn't be said on the Disney Channel either censored or in code. Every time a minute passes, it jump cuts to the next video (indicated by the dotted line at the top of the screen).

AXEL

Hey guys, so I just wanted to get on here and clear the air, before any more slanderous accusations are thrown at me by my unstable former partner. I loved Faye, but she's a very troubled girl. She's struggled with mental health issues for a long time.

He picks up a laptop and puts on a pair of reading glasses. Text appears next to his head that says "TRIGGER WARNING: SEWERSLIDE, UN-ALIVING."

AXEL (CONT'D)

In 2014 she tweeted "Ugh, LA pizza makes me want to K-M-S sometimes." For those unaware, KMS stands for "kill myself." Faye is the kind of girl to threaten suicide over pizza. I really hate to have to mention any of this, but Faye has made personal details of my life public and fabricated many horrible rumors that will never hold up in court. To Faye, I truly hope you get help. I understand that our

breakup was very hard on you, but you have to heal and move on.

"DR" JILL, age irrelevant because she's so heavily edited and filtered herself, pops up like she's using the "Green Screen Video" feature on TikTok. She holds one of those tiny novelty plug in phone microphones too close to her mouth.

"DR" JILL

I've gotten a ton of requests for this, so here you go. Body Language expert Dr. Jill analyzes Axel Cruise's response. As you can see, Axel is extremely relaxed and comfortable. He leans forward when he's talking to Faye, which clearly indicates sincerity. Also, you see here he's looking to the left, which is where you look for memory. If he was looking to the right, then we would know he's lying. As I always say, for legal reasons: I am not a licensed doctor or expert, but trust me I do know what I'm talking about. Follow me if you want to know how to feel about your favorite celebrity and influencer apologies.

INSERT - TIKTOK

Scroll up. "Dr" Jill stands in front of a notes app apology. It says something along the lines of "I made a severe and continuous lapse in my judgement. I don't expect to be forgiven, but I need to voice my apology. Before I apologize to the families affected by the disaster, I want to issue my sincerest regrets to the people I really hurt. You guys. My fans. You guys actually mean the world to me, and everything is just so crazy right now. We're trying to get in touch with all of the victims, but I know that I let you guys down and I will never be able to forgive myself for that. I made a mistake, I didn't know any better, and I will be taking some time off of the internet to further educate myself on how farts can be explosive, and how to safely perform my future fart bong pranks."

"DR" JILL

Here we go, analyzing the body language in Bombardier Ben's latest notes app apology. So right off the bat you can tell he really cares-

The "more" button is clicked, then the "not interested" button. Jill disappears.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

The restaurant is upscale, but not as fancy as Prycee. When Axel and Faye enter, the hostess, TRUE CRIME TINA (TCTINA), greets Axel with familiarity.

TCTINA

Hey! Welcome back. Do you want your-

AXEL

Usual everything, Teen.

TCTINA

You got it, sir. Just follow me.

TCTina leads them all the way to the back corner of the restaurant, next to a window facing the alley of Axel's apartment. It's ugly and the booth is weirdly close to the kitchen doors and the bathroom. Every 30 seconds or so someone comes BURSTING through the doors or a FLUSH can be heard.

Axel sits with his back to most of the restaurant, facing the alley directly. Faye sits across from him.

AXEL

Thank you so much.

TCTINA

No problem. Miguel will be over soon to take your orders.

TCTina tries to hand them menus, but Axel puts a hand up.

AXEL

You know that's not necessary.

TCTINA

You know I have to try. I'll tell Miguel you want two of your usual.

She walks away.

Faye opens her mouth, but Axel puts a hand to her lips.

AXEL

Trust me, you'll love it.

Faye puts on a forced smile and nods.

Axel settles back into his seat, sighing contently. He stares out the window at the mostly empty alleyway. Faye tries to slyly follow his glance, but she has to turn her head pretty far to see.

FAYE

This is your usual table?

AXEL

Yup. Is there something wrong with it?

FAYE

Nothing, I just would have expected you to want a nice view in a spot- I don't know- away from the kitchen and bathroom?

AXEL

What can I say? I value my privacy.

FLUSH. A MAN walks right by them still fastening his pants. His belt slaps Faye in the face as he passes.

FAYE

Right.

AXEL

I come here a lot, if I sat in the open it wouldn't take long for someone to follow me back to the apartment and- who knows what. Could be Kim Kardashian in Paris or Sharon Tate in- well- here, I guess.

FAYE

I just love how well thought out all of your decisions are. People would assume you were stupid for choosing a view of the dumpsters...

Faye gestures to a dumpster in the alley, trailing off as something catches her eye.

ON THE ALLEY:

A STAFF MEMBER throw out a big black garbage bag. He goes back over to a part of the wall Faye can't see, presses something, and then steps in.

ON FAYE:

She snaps back to attention when Axel starts talking.

AXEL

Well, no ones ever accused me of being stupid. Except Aad. And Father. And My mom a few times. And a couple of my tutors.

FAYE

Well, that's basically no one, when you consider how many people you've met.

AXEL

That's a fantastic point.

FAYE

Um, you don't mention your mom a lot.

AXEL

I don't think about her a lot.

FAYE

Really? Um...My dad died when I was in high school, and we had a really complicated relationship. But I still think about him a lot.

AXEL

That's weird. Sad, though. I didn't know that about you.

FAYE

I don't tell people. They usually point out right away how my dating habits are influenced by my dead dad issues.

AXEL

I wish I had dead dad issues instead of dead mom issues. Missing! Missing mom.

Just then, the waiters set down their dishes: two huge raw steaks.

Faye stares in horror for a beat before speaking.

FAYE

Will you excuse me for a moment? I have to- um, powder my nose.

AXEL

(hushed)

Babe, if you wanted to do coke you could have just done it before we left.

FAYE

What? No, I'm not gonna-

AXEL

Shh, shh... It's fine. I understand. The restaurant bathroom is part of the aesthetic. Have fun.

He taps the side of his nose twice, flattening his nostril to signify snorting.

FAYE

...Okay, whatever.

Faye walks over to the bathroom. When Axel turns his attention back to the window, she cuts around the tables to get a view more from his angle.

ON THE ALLEY:

It's clear, that alley is where the service elevator lets out.

ON FAYE:

She backs away, careful not to alert him to her presence. She ducks and speed walks, honestly drawing more attention to herself than if she just would have walked normally.

Faye makes her way over to the hostess stand, nearly running into TCTina.

TCTINA

Woah, sorry about that.

FAYE

No- I'm sorry. Um, I have a favor to ask. It's not exactly a favor, it's kind of life and death.

TCTINA

Huh?

FAYE

This is going to sound so nuts, but I think my boyfriend is a serial killer.

TCTINA

Holy shit.

FAYE

I know, you probably don't believe me-

TCTINA

That's so fucking cool!

FAYE

What?

TCTINA

I mean, not like cool cool, like exciting. You know what I mean. How can I help?

FAYE

Wow, that was easy. Um, do you guys have a security camera in that alley?

TCTINA

Oh my god, yes. I insisted we get one 'cuz crime always happens in alleys. Once again, the TCC comes in handy.

TCTina goes onto the computer, pulling up the alley camera footage.

TCTINA (CONT'D)

That stands for True Crime Community. We thought it was important not to call ourselves a Fandom. I mean, how insensitive would that be?

FAYE

Yeah, totally. Can you go to yesterday afternoon and just speed through?

TCTINA

You got it. Oh my god, I feel like Paul Holes and Michelle McNamara. Or Selena Gomez and those old guys in that Hulu show.

Faye looks like she wants to shoot herself.

TCTina pulls up the footage.

ON THE SCREEN:

STAFF buzz in and out of the elevator, throwing out garbage or starting/ending their work day. Pretty soon Axel, dressed in all black, steps into the alley. He checks his surroundings, then walks out of frame.

FAYE

That's him.

TCTina slows down the footage a tad. After a few moments of nothing, Axel returns, this time with his arm around Valerie. They whisper and giggle seductively as they enter the elevator.

TCTINA

Who's that whore?

FAYE

She's dead, show some respect.

TCTINA

Fine, who's that *sex worker*.

FAYE

No- she's not a- he must've seduced her, she was completely obsessed with him.

TCTINA

Oh, she's like- a *person person*? Sorry dead girl.

FAYE

Ew. Just keep going.

She speeds up, and after a bit Axel comes back out. He's rolling a large duffle bag with an arm hanging out of it. His face is covered in blood, like a murderous Augustus Gloop.

FAYE

Stop! Slow it down.

She plays it slightly slower than normal speed.

Axel gets out of the elevator and tries to shove the arm in the bag. He stops, leans down to take one more bite, and

finally closes her in.

He walks out of frame.

FAYE

Holy shit.

TCTINA

Is it bad that I think he looks hot in this?

FAYE

Yes. Listen- I need you to show this to the police. And this.

She pulls out the baggie of dried blood.

TCTINA

Wow, that looks so official.

FAYE

Call the police. Please.

Faye hands her the bag and she pockets it.

TCTINA

You got it. I used to be an ACAB Emily, but then I found out how problematic that was, so now I'm True Crime Tina. You should follow me on TikTok.

FAYE

I'd love to, but I think Axel's gonna kill me tonight. Thank you for your help. Go to therapy.

TCTINA

I already do.

FAYE

Go more. And subscribe to some sex worker's OnlyFans, Jesus.

TCTINA

Okay, you're the one dating a serial killer.

Faye turns around and finds Axel approaching.

AXEL

Hey-

FAYE

Fuck!

AXEL

We're leaving.

FAYE

What? Why? I was just coming back to the table when Tina and I got to talking-

AXEL

Why are you explaining? I'm not at all suspicious of your behavior.

He gives her that Axel smile, the one that holds all the power.

AXEL (CONT'D)

I just see a paparazzo outside. That's singular for paparazzi.

FAYE

Yeah, I gathered.

AXEL

I'll see you next time, T.
(to Faye)
Let's go.

He puts a hand on the back of Faye's neck. She's able to flash "help me" eyes at Tina, who gives her a big exaggerated wink and thumbs up.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Axel and Faye stand a few feet away from each other. An upbeat pop song (Poker Face would be funny) plays over the elevator speakers.

Faye is frozen, and Axel keeps looking at her with that same smile. They both know the other knows.

Faye looks up at the security camera, seemingly the only thing keeping her alive in this moment. Her eyes frantically jolt around, looking for anything to save her. She catches sight of the emergency stop button. She takes a few quick breaths, working up the nerve, and is about to reach for it

when-

DING. The doors open.

Axel puts his hand on the back of her neck again, guiding her out the doors.

INSERT - TIKTOK

Faye sits on screen, looking her most polished yet. This is in stark contrast to the look on her face, which is pained and scared. Her voice shakes as she speaks.

FAYE

Welcome to Part 16. This is the last part, I promise. The finale, I guess. I want to thank people for their support- and for believing me. This is...by far the hardest one of these I've had to make. I'm sorry if I stutter or...Um...yeah. This one is a little different. I'm going to be taking off my makeup.

She holds up a makeup wipe before running it across her face, revealing the half healed bruises and scars.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Alright. Let's get to it.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They stop just inside the apartment. Axel tightens his grip on Faye, holding her in place as the elevator closes. As soon as it does, he throws her to the ground.

She cries out, trying to crawl forward enough to get back on her feet. Just as she begins to stand, Axel stomps down on her missing-toe-foot.

She SCREAMS.

AXEL

(amused)

Come on, babe. You can do better than that!

She struggles, hooking her other foot behind his legs and tripping him.

He comes crashing down on top of her, catching himself just

enough to not crush her.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Yes! That's what I'm talking about! I knew you were into this. What else you got?

She tries to knee him in the crotch, but her blow isn't hard enough to do more than weaken his balance a little.

AXEL (CONT'D)

(slightly strained)

Gotta say, I've never done CBT. You get me to try new things.

He leans in for a kiss, but Faye smashes him in the nose with her forehead. He lets out a groan.

AXEL (CONT'D)

God! Fuck, Faye. Why the face?

Faye frees herself from under him, running down the hall towards the service elevator.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

Faye makes it to her destination, frantically pressing the call button.

Axel slowly meanders his way after her, not particularly concerned with her ability to escape.

As he draws nearer and the elevator still isn't there, she runs into the next room.

INT. SMOKE ROOM - DAY

She grabs the heaviest thing she can, a rather large glass bong. She spins around, ready to defend herself, but Axel is already right behind her.

He catches the hand holding the bong before she can even swing.

AXEL

Really? You're gonna use Bong Joon-Ho against me?

FAYE

Did you even watch Parasite?

AXEL

Did you?

Faye can't answer.

Axel sighs, like he's disappointed in this outcome.

With one swift move, he cracks down on the top of her head with the bong.

She crumbles to the ground, the world fading to black as Axel leans over her.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Faye slowly begins to regain consciousness. She takes in her surroundings. She's back in the front room, not 10 feet from the main elevator.

She looks down at her body, which is tightly tied to a chair.

Axel emerges from the bathroom. He's taken off his shirt and cleaned a bit his blood from Faye's head-butt.

This is the first scene to be played completely straight. Axel is performing toxic violent sex appeal. People should be uncomfortably attracted to him.

AXEL

Well hey there, sleeping beauty.

FAYE

(groggily)

Oh fuck me...

AXEL

I can't right now, I'm a little busy.

FAYE

Thank god for that.

Axel laughs.

AXEL

You don't mean that.

FAYE

I do.

AXEL

I seem to remember you being pretty

into it.

FAYE

And I seem to remember faking it every time.

Axel leans down, getting right in her face. His smile disappears, morphing into a dark grimace.

He hits her, eliciting a gasp of pain and a small trickle of blood from the corner of her mouth.

He grabs her face with one hand, forcing her to look at him. Once she can't look away, his calm smile returns.

With his other hand, he wipes the blood from her mouth, sucking it off his fingers.

AXEL

God. You know, I've tasted you before- but there really is something different about the meat when it knows it's about to die.

He walks over to a table, unfurling a set of chefs knives, strange dentistry looking tools, and the all important K.Y.O.Y.A Seasoning.

He picks up torture instruments one by one, inspecting them, drawing out the moment.

Otherwise helpless, Faye attempts to stall.

FAYE

Y'know, it's pretty stupid to kill your victims here.

AXEL

Oh yeah? Enlighten me.

FAYE

First of all, if I go missing, everyone knows you're my boyfriend. They'll come looking here first.

AXEL

(unconvinced)
Mhm. Great point. What else?

He holds up a particularly nasty looking tool.

FAYE

And- um- we're right next to the elevator. I could slip out of my restraints and get away. Or someone could arrive unexpectedly and they'd have a front row seat.

AXEL

Ooh, Exhibitionism, huh?

FAYE

How many were there before me?

AXEL

I thought we agreed not to discuss our body counts.

FAYE

You're fucking psychotic.

AXEL

See, now you're getting it. That's the difference between you and me. You're so concerned with getting caught. Me? I'm a God. I'm untouchable. You won't slip out of your restraints, but that glimmer of hope that you will- I get to watch it drain from your eyes as you become too weak to even make the ten steps to the elevator.

Axel's tone becomes more and more mocking.

AXEL (CONT'D)

And your little Deus Ex Machina fantasy will never be reality, because you don't have anyone left who gives a fu-

DING.

The serious tone is over. Standing in the open elevator is Nathan, stunned and frozen.

Axel's pedestal is completely rocked. He's lost all his footing, no longer the suave sexy murderer. Now he's just a murderer, flailing.

After a beat of them all staring at each other, Nathan tries to press the door close button.

Axel grabs a restraint and runs into the elevator, clumsily wrestling him out and into a chair next to Faye.

He ties Nathan up, but not nearly as tightly as Faye.

FAYE

Nathan, what are you doing here?

NATHAN

I was looting a bunch of camera equipment from RiseUp when I heard Girlboss yelling something about Valerie being dead and a psycho boyfriend.

FAYE

Murderous. She used murderous. And that was like, six hours ago.

NATHAN

There was a lot of stuff to take from the office! And I had no reason to believe Val was actually dead, I thought Girlboss was just being dramatic! When I got home and saw she was murdered, I unblocked your number and all of your texts came in. And then traffic was fucking awfu-

FAYE

You blocked my number? What the fuck, dude?

AXEL

Yeah, what the fuck?

NATHAN

Faye, you literally ignored public sexual assault allegations and the girl warning you personally for some famous dick. When you said Val stood you up, I thought we were done with your bullshit. But- you know, it wasn't actually her.

AXEL

Guilty.

FAYE

Well- did you like, call the cops at least?

NATHAN
Um, no. Ew. ACAB.

AXEL
Agreed.

FAYE
(to Axel)
Would you shut the fuck up?

AXEL
(like a child)
No! This is my thing, he ruined it!

FAYE
So, what. You're gonna kill us both,
now?

AXEL
Um, no Faye. I'm not gonna kill the
gay guy. 1, that's a hate crime, and
B, I'm a sexual needs based killer.
Killing a gay doesn't satisfy my
sexual needs. It's gross.
(to Nathan)
No offense.

NATHAN
There are so many offensive things
happening right now that I can't even
focus on the homophobia.

AXEL
I'm not homophobic, I'm just not
comfortable with anyone thinking that
I'm gay. How does it make me
homophobic to want people to know that
I'm straight?

NATHAN
Dude, you want me to educate you?
Right now? In your weird Dexter
apartment?

AXEL
Um, yeah, if you people are gonna make
such a big deal out of "homophobia"
you have to explain what's wrong with
it. Duh.

NATHAN

Oh my god, how did you sleep with this guy?

FAYE

Don't yuck my yum!

AXEL

HA! You do think I'm yummy!

NATHAN

Hey, if I kill myself can we end this?

Faye struggles in her seat, tipping on the legs back and forth, trying to wriggle out.

AXEL

Uh, no that's not any better. What if people think you were my lover or something?

NATHAN

Dude! Its the 2020s! Who the fuck is still homophobic anymore?

AXEL

Middle America, the soul of our country! Maybe I can just pin it all on you, Gay whose name I forgot.

Faye falls, cracking her head on the floor. The room starts to go fuzzy as the elevator DINGS and opens. The last thing Faye can make out is a COP stepping out.

Everything fades to black again.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The screen blinks, everything looking fuzzy for a few seconds before coming into focus.

Faye is in a hospital bed, hooked up to various BEEPING machines. Her head is wrapped up and the rest of her wounds have been more properly treated, even the older ones.

The cop from before sits in a chair across from her. He scrolls on his phone. Famous and outdated TikTok AUDIOS can be heard coming from it.

Faye lets out a soft noise of consciousness.

The cop looks up, registering her as awake. He gives her a smile and speaks condescendingly.

COP

Hey there. How are you feeling?

She tries to sit up and groans. The cop puts a hand on her, one meant to be comforting but is clearly just about control.

COP (CONT'D)

Easy, easy. You had quite a fall. You were rambling nonsense when we brought you in.

FAYE

Nonsense?

COP

Kept saying your boyfriend was trying to kill you.

FAYE

He was trying to kill me. He hit me in the head with a bong.

COP

No, sweetheart. Maybe you were hitting the bong. You hit your head when you fell over in your chair.

FAYE

That too. He was trying to eat me.

COP

Eat you? That nice young man who sat at your bedside for hours to make sure you were okay?

FAYE

He's not nice- he's an actor. Not a very good one.

COP

He was pretty convincing.

FAYE

Yeah. That's his thing.

COP

Maybe you should get some more rest.

FAYE

No- wait- there was a hostess at the restaurant. I gave her-

COP

Yes, True Crime Tina. I follow her on TikTok. She gave us an evidence bag and some video footage of *someone*-

FAYE

It was Axel.

COP

Well, you know. We have no way to confirm that.

FAYE

What about the blood? Did you test it?

COP

Listen, sweetie. There's any number of reasons that Ms. Price's blood could be found in that elevator. I'm uh- not saying it was her's. We're looking into the staff in the building, but there's just no conclusive evidence linking him to the crime.

FAYE

But- Nathan! Nathan was there, he saw the whole-

COP

Mr. Fisher backed up everything Mr. Cruise told us. And Mr. Cruise also let us know of your history of suicidal thoughts and your cocaine problem-

FAYE

Oh my god, I do not have a coke problem!

COP

We all have our demons. I'm sober coming up on 10 years now. You will get there, I promise.

FAYE

Get the fuck out of my room.

COP

I understand. Listen, I know you've been through a lot. You should know your boyfriend really cares about you. I've never seen a man so distraught.

FAYE

Please leave.

The cop walks over to the door and opens it.

COP

I'm leaving my card. Call if you need to talk to someone. One step at a time, Ms. Bennet.

Faye throws a pillow, hitting the door just as it closes.

She puts her head in her hands, wincing at the pain.

Her phone vibrates. She picks it up, the screen light hurting her concussion.

She has about a thousand notifications.

ON THE PHONE:

MANY instagram notifications of people commenting on a post she's tagged in. At the top is a message from Nathan, merely saying "I'm Sorry."

She opens instagram, finding a post from Axel. It's a picture of the two of them, with a very lengthy caption.

AXEL (V.O.)

I am disheartened to announce that myself and Faye Bennet have mutually decided to go our separate ways. We very much still love each other, but we thought it best that we give each other time to grow and mature. Unfortunately and unrelated to this, Faye is currently in the hospital recuperating from injuries she sustained after our break. I stayed with her until she was stable. The exact details of the accident are unclear, but it seems there may have been a substance involved. My heart goes out to her and I'm sending her positivity during this difficult time

in her life.

FAYE

Fuck you.

She scrolls down, revealing the caption is even longer.

AXEL (V.O.)

That being said, I am thrilled to announce my next project, which will be a collaboration with up and coming director Nathan Fisher. Stay tuned and keep your notifications on, because we've got some big things coming your way!

FAYE

FUCK!

Faye screams and throws her phone across the room.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Shit!

She quickly realizes how dumb that was and runs over to it, briefly getting caught on her IV and having to roll it with her.

She picks up her phone to find it unbroken and sighs with relief. She takes one more step and trips, dropping the phone again. There is a very distinct CRACK.

She picks it up, now facing a shattered screen.

She breaks, curling up in a ball on the floor and sobbing.

INT. FAYE'S APARTMENT - DAYS LATER

Faye unlocks the front door and enters, looking exhausted physically and emotionally. Her bruises have turned slightly yellow and her bandages are now much smaller, indicating she's been healing for a little bit.

She drops her things on the couch and looks around. The apartment feels empty and unfamiliar, despite it being clearly lived in. There's a small layer of dust on most things.

She takes a few shaky breaths, every slight sound in the apartment echoing louder and more sinister.

She grabs a remote and turns on the TV, looking for any noise to distract her.

She steps further into the room, and notices a wrapped gift on the table.

Understandably, she is freaked out, slowly approaching it. Careful not to disturb the box itself, she checks the small piece of folded wrapping paper on the top.

ON THE CARD:

The card simply says "To: Reporter" with no other clues. The handwriting is neat and robotic.

ON FAYE:

Looking less frightened and more intrigued, she opens the gift, still closing her eyes like it might explode. When it doesn't, she opens one eye at a time to look at the contents.

At the very top is a letter written in the same handwriting. She picks it up and scans through it a bit.

AAD (V.O.)

Hello, Reporter. I am writing this to assure you that your medical bills and all other personal expenses will henceforth be covered. Included in this box is a replacement for your broken phone and something to help with the pain. Your decorum in this matter is greatly appreciated.

She puts down the letter, looking in the box. Sure enough, there is a brand new iPhone and the vape that Aad was using before.

She sighs, removing the phone from the box. Under it is another envelope, small and slightly bulging. It is labeled "For your other missing piece."

Confused, she picks it up. She opens it and takes out a flash drive and a small note. She reads it over.

AAD (V.O.)

(slightly more casual)

P.S.- I know it's not a perfect match, but I thought it might help.

She knits her brow, not getting it. She looks the drive over

a bit, then flips over the note. On the back is two more lines.

AAD (V.O.)
It's a THUMB drive. Get it? P.S. Sorry
I watched you cry. It was
uncomfortable.

Faye looks down at her foot and rolls her eyes, actually cracking a slight smile.

She stares at the drive, flipping it over in her fingers a few times.

She goes to sit down, opening her laptop and plugging in the drive.

ON THE SCREEN:

The files load in. Faye selects all of them and hits open. Each one is a video, and they play one after the other automatically.

The first couple are the security footage clips from the night of Valerie's death. After that, there's more footage. Shots of Axel on from grainy CCTV cams, compiled from all over the city, even some from the islands. They all depict Axel participating in violent criminal behavior.

ON FAYE:

Faye face depicts a complex range of emotions. Horror, guilt, sadness, and excitement.

ON THE SCREEN:

The last video plays and the final file comes up. It's a scan of the original Cruise family portrait.

When seen all together, Axel is clearly sticking out. He has a big forced smile on his face, but there is sorrow and pain in his expression. Father, who before just seemed to be looking off to the side, now clearly giving his son a dirty look. Axel's mother, once appearing stoic like a porcelain doll, now looks deeply sad, like she's trapped. The only one who looks the same is Aad, staring directly at Faye.

GAY REPORTER (O.S.)
-here with heartthrob Axel Cruise, and
my RiseUp bestie Nathan Fisher. Hey
y'all!

Faye turns her attention to the TV.

ON THE TV:

Axel and Nathan sit on a couch opposite Gay Reporter, who has been given his own Andy Cohen-style talk show.

AXEL

Hey, you.

GAY REPORTER

So, twitter is buzzing about your upcoming collab. Nathan, you're gay.

NATHAN

Yes.

GAY REPORTER

And Axel, you are one of Hollywood's biggest Ally's after Speak To Me Softly, which- by the way- that is my absolute favorite movie. It was so beautifully aspirational to young gay boys.

AXEL

Yes, thank you. Well, you know. We're all just people. Nathan is just absolutely incredible, I'm so lucky to be working with this young visionary.

Axel places a hand on Nathan's shoulder, who smiles awkwardly and tenses up. Axel responds by squeezing harder before letting go. The kind of interaction teens might think is flirting, but Faye recognizes as a reminder that Axel is in control.

ON FAYE:

She begins breathing harder and faster, a boiling rage building on her face. She looks down at her computer, the portrait staring back up at her.

She shifts her eyes between the portrait of young Axel and the current Axel on the TV.

She seems to make a decision. She grabs the new phone, opening the box and removing all the plastic. She goes into the bathroom and shuts the door.

INT. FAYE'S APARTMENT - SLIGHTLY LATER

The camera is set up in the same angle as the first video. Faye enters frame and sits down, setting up her new phone.

She takes deep breaths, trying to calm herself down.

ON THE PHONE:

She opens TikTok and clicks the "+" icon on the bottom.

The camera opens, and Faye hits the timed start button. It BEEPS as it counts down from three. When the timer hits two, Faye sets herself as she was when we first met her. The app BLOOPS when it starts to record.

FAYE

This is the storytime of how I dated a crazy A-Lister.

INT. FAYE'S APARTMENT - EVEN LATER

Faye sits in her spot from the final part, her phone and ring light set up in front of her. Makeup removed, smile nowhere to be found, she wraps up.

FAYE

So here we are. This is the end of my storytime. But- before you scroll away and believe whatever you're going to believe- you might want to check out my most recent instagram post.

INSERT - SPLIT SCREEN - TIKTOK AND INSTAGRAM

Back to part 16. As Faye talks to the camera, her Instagram page is opened. Up until the most recent post, all of her pictures are of her and Axel. We open the newest one and flip through the CCTV videos.

FAYE (V.O)

Trigger warning for just about everything there is. The police won't confirm that these videos are Axel, and I won't tell you that they are. All I'll say is that they're videos of *someone*. At the end of the day, you guys get to decide. Is Axel cancelled? Am I cancelled? Does that word even fucking mean anything anymore? I don't know. What the fuck do you do to take

accountability for the shit I actively ignored? I'm just...ready for this to be over.

The last slide on the post is a grainy, zoomed in screenshot from the night of Valerie's death, Axel's face covered in blood and out of focus. He's recognizable, but it being him could be denied.

As soon as Faye says "over", the TikTok part of the screen goes away, leaving just instagram. A notification pops up at the top that says "@Axelcruise is currently live."

We click on it and are taken to a live with 300,000 people watching. Comments are coming in at a mile a minute, some hate, some support, some people who don't even seem to know what's going on, and a ton that just say "Come to Brazil!"

Axel is in the middle of a tirade.

AXEL

-fucking bullshit, slanderous accusations. It is not me in those videos, and I'm contacting my lawyers to have them taken down immediately. Faye is a lying, manipulative, schizoid bitch who's just desperate for her 15 minutes of fame. What?

Axel reads comments out loud and responds to them.

AXEL (CONT'D)

"Wait, are the videos you or not?" No, they're not fucking me. Open your fucking ears. "I'm a lawyer, you have no legal claim to those videos without admission that they're of you-" Fuck you, what fucking backwoods law school did you do to? Fuck Harvard. Everyone shut the fuck up! I didn't do anything wrong!

The screen goes gray, and white text pops up on screen that says "This live has been ended by Instagram for violating community guidelines."

The app switches to twitter, and we click to write a new tweet. The TYPING noise plays as the message "Axel Cruise is a cannibal is a sentence I never thought I'd type and I think I need to get off of the internet for a bit." We hit post and it sends.

The screen goes black.

INT. FAYE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Faye sits in front of her TV, where Gay Reporter is giving updates.

ON THE TV:

GAY REPORTER

It's been two days since Faye Bennet went public with her accusations, which we've been calling "AxelGate" but everyone seems to hate that, so we'll put a poll on our website to pick a new one. Anyway, yesterday I sat down with director Nathan Fisher and Axel's replacement, star of "Ripper High" and "I Dated An Arsonist", Mason Parks.

Cut to a nearly identical interview to the one before, just with Axel replaced by Mason.

GAY REPORTER

So, you posted on twitter that Axel Cruise has been dropped from the project.

NATHAN

Yes, and I'm so happy to be working with my new friend Mason.

MASON

We've gotten really close these past 24 hours.

GAY REPORTER

Mhm...and what about the rumors that you two are more than just friends?

NATHAN

Come on, you know I don't like to kiss and tell.

MASON

I do. We just had sex in the greenroom.

GAY REPORTER

Ahh!! Spill everything! I want

details. Who's on top, what's your sex playlist, are you making an OnlyFans-

NATHAN
Let's refocus?

GAY REPORTER
Right, right.

NATHAN
We actually have a synopsis we can share, if I may?

GAY REPORTER
Of course!

Nathan clears his throat.

INSERT: TEXT ON SCREEN

Nathan reads out the text on the screen.

NATHAN (V.O)
"Heartthrob actor Asher Ciggs has everything he could ever want; money, fame, women, but it's not enough. There's one thing he can't get out of his mind, an insatiable taste for human flesh."

ON FAYE:

She lets out a bemused snort. She looks down at her phone, working up the nerve to pick it up. When she finally does, she opens Nathan's "I'm Sorry" text from less than a week prior.

She stares at it, finally tapping it twice and reacting to it with a heart.

ON THE SCREEN:

She types out a message: "I know" and presses send.

Immediately, Nathan heart reacts to it.

The typing bubble pops up, then disappears as another text comes in: "I love u girl"

Faye hearts it, typing back: "Asher Ciggs? Really?"

Another heart. Another message. "I thought it captured his energy."

Heart again. She sends "Totally."

She thinks for a moment, her fingers hovering over the keyboard. Cautiously, she types out "Maybe you can apologize in person?"

Before she can send it, her screen lights up with a phone call. It's Axel.

ON FAYE:

Faye is struck, all happiness from before gone in an instant. Fear overtakes her for a moment, but it is soon replaced by an anger fueled confidence.

She hits accept and raises it to her ear.

FAYE

This is a surprise.

INT. AXEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Axel sits on his couch, looking vulnerable and almost human for the first time.

AXEL

Is it?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

FAYE

No, I guess not.

Axel doesn't say anything.

FAYE (CONT'D)

What do you want?

AXEL

How long would you have stayed?

FAYE

With you?

AXEL

Yeah. If...I hadn't-

FAYE
Very obviously murdered one of my only
friends?

AXEL
How long?

Faye sighs, being honest with herself.

FAYE
I don't know. Longer.

Axel nods.

AXEL
Mhm, okay. Good note. Run me that one
again.

Faye laughs, half genuine and half out of disbelief. Axel
laughs too.

They sit for a moment in comfortable silence.

AXEL (CONT'D)
If love was about toying with each
other, we really could have been
something.

FAYE
I'm not gonna fill the Batman void in
your weird Joker fantasy.

AXEL
Batman and the Joker weren't in love.

FAYE
Of course they fucking were! Jesus
christ dude, take a human sexuality
course.

AXEL
Maybe I will. I can change.

Faye laughs again, the sentence sounding preposterous.

AXEL (CONT'D)
You asked how many there were...before
you.

FAYE
I'm not sure I really want to know.

AXEL
None.

FAYE
What?

AXEL
None like you. You're different.

FAYE
What, I'm gourmet? The other girls
were just fast food?

AXEL
Pretty much.

FAYE
God.

AXEL
We were good for each other.

Faye considers this.

FAYE
Maybe. I was good for you. And you
were good for making me realize I
didn't want to be.

AXEL
And you want to be- what- an
influencer?

She doesn't answer.

AXEL (CONT'D)
Was it worth it?

She mulls it over.

FAYE
If I never have to watch you chew up a
scene again...yeah. It was.

They laugh.

Faye softens as she speaks her final line.

FAYE
Adios, Axel.

AXEL
Farewell, Faye.

She takes the phone away from her ear and hangs up. She opens Axle's contact and scrolls down, hitting "Block This Caller."

The screen goes black.

INSERT - SPOTLIGHT

A Single spotlight in the center of the black illuminates Gay Reporter. He speaks in iambic pentameter.

As he speaks about each person, another spotlight appears and lights them up. When he finishes talking about a person, they freeze.

GAY REPORTER
And so, spoken with alliteration

The two lovers bid their final goodbye

And with internet participation

Like, ev'ry studio blackballed this
guy

Axel talks desperately into his phone, looks disappointed, then throws out the script he's holding.

GAY REPORTER (CONT'D)
But Miss Bennet's fate was not much
kinder

No, her life was far from picture
perfect

'Cuz if you went looking you would
find her

Doing dance trends and mourning self
respect

Faye stands in front of a phone, poorly doing a recent dance trend. She makes Addison Rae faces.

As for Nathan, well dearies, he's just
fine

Him and Mason Parks, they make quite
the team

In chaos the two found a perfect rhyme

A power couple, the creme de la cream

Nathan and Mason hold hands and wave, dressed to the nines
and appearing to be on a red carpet.

And so now we end, no words left
unsaid

Do not skip the credits, goodbye my
friends

Blackout.

The end.

INSERT - CREDITS FOOTAGE

Credits are flocked with footage of everything Axel and Faye
are doing to stay relevant.

Axel is unmasked as the T-bone on The Masked Singer.

He defends himself on the Joe Rogan Experience.

Faye dances with 21 year old Hype-House boys.