

# **INEXPLICABLES**

By Tom Critch and Alexander J Newall

## **Episode 3 – Public Speaking**

### Content Warnings:

- Strong language
  - Addiction & recovery
  - Alcohol & alcoholism
  - Arguments (inc shouting)
  - Manipulation
  - Social anxiety & panic attacks
  - Vicarious embarrassment
  - Victim blaming & dehumanisation
  - Sexual references
  - Discussions of: discrimination, substance abuse, poverty & homelessness, romantic rejection
  - Mentions of: vehicular accident, dementia, police & arrests, food, injury, parental death & funerals, violence
  - SFX: ringing, crying
- 

### **ICS, TOILETS - MORNING**

#### **HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

(Distressed) Monsters! They're all monsters!

[SHUHELA SOFTLY SHUSHES, TRYING TO CALM HIM DOWN]

#### **SHUHELA**

It's alright...

**HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

I just— And then— then with the teeth... Ah, the teeth!

[HAROLD WHIMPERS/SOBS]

**SHUHELA**

I, I know love, I know. It's a lot to process.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES; FOOTSTEPS]

**FRANK**

Shuhela? What's—

**HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

Mum dying is a lot to process. People trying to rip me off, that's a lot to process. But this? This is—

**SHUHELA**

I-I-It's okay, Frank. We're just having a little bit of a wobble, aren't we Harold?

[KNOCKING ON CUBICLE DOOR]

[HAROLD WHIMPERS]

**FRANK**

He's locked himself in the bogs?

**SHUHELA**

Yeah...

**FRANK**

Why?

**SHUHELA**

It's my fault. He's been so interested in everything, I thought it might be good if he met Len and some of the others before their session.

**FRANK**

(Wearily) Ah... Shuhela...

**SHUHELA**

He said he was ready!

**FRANK**

Ah, and you believed him?

**SHUHELA**

(to Harold) Just open the door, eh, love? Open the door and we can sit down, and have a nice cuppa, and talk it out, yeah?

**HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

No!

I'm never coming out!

**FRANK**

What happened?

**SHUHELA**

Well...

[FLASHBACK TRANSITION]

**ICS, MEETING ROOM - EARLIER**

**SHUHELA**

So, before you all get started, I just wanted to introduce everyone to... Harold.

**VAMPIRES (UNISON)**

(Disinterestedly) Hi, Harold.

**HAROLD**

Hello.

**SHUHELA**

And so we thought it might be a good idea for him to start meeting some more of the gang. Maybe sit in on the, uh, start of today's open, if everyone is okay with that?

[THE VAMPIRES MURMUR NONCOMITALLY BUT BROADLY AMENABLE]

**HAROLD**

Great.

[CHAIRS SCRAPE]

**SHUHELA**

Ooh, thanks everyone. I'll just stick around for a bit and make sure everyone's settled in.

**HAROLD**

You'll hardly know I'm here.

**SHUHELA**

Great, so—

**HAROLD**

(Joking) Because I'm a ghost.

...

What?

**SHUHELA**

So, Len, why don't you take it from here?

(Aside, to Harold) Len is the vampire support group rep. They've been talking about issues around anonymity, really deep stuff.

**HAROLD**

Of course they have.

**LEN**

Right then. First, I'd like to welcome everyone to today's session. It's, uh, it's good to see some new faces, vamps, friends and family and that and, uh...

Harold obviously.

Well, anyway, who'd like to start?

...

Cheers Suzy.

**SUZY**

Hey. Yeah, so, um, I don't want to speak for everyone. We've all got our own personal journeys and that, but I'm just... tired of people not even acknowledging that I'm **there**. Like, I know this only works if we all keep a low profile, loved ones too, anonymous solidarity and all that. But these days, lying low feels like way more than just staying out of trouble. I might as well be literally invisible, you know?

[MURMURED ASSENT FROM THE VAMPIRES]

**HAROLD**

Hmm. Yeah, yeah, like with chuggers.

**LEN**

What's that, Harold?

**HAROLD**

Chuggers. You know, 'charity muggers?' Those hippies that stand on corners and get all up in your grill about sea turtles or other stuff. It's a total scam. I mean they're all on commission, you know. Whenever I see one coming I just cross the road, fake a phone call or something.

**SUZY**

(Bemused) Yeah... Right, um...

**SHUHELA**

Uh, th-thank you for that Harold, but, um, let's try not to interrupt in the future, alright love?

**HAROLD**

If you say so.

**LEN**

You were saying, Suzy?

**SUZY**

Er, no. No, it's fine. I was basically finished anyway.

**LEN**

If you're sure.

[PAPER RUSTLING]

So, Robbie, you mentioned something interesting last time that I thought we could return to. All about accepting differences before we can manage them. Do you want to speak on that a bit more?

**ROBBIE**

I mean, yeah, basically, it's just, like, we don't just have to stay dry, we have to fake being normal, and look all 'together' on top, y'know?

And it's like, you've got to cut yourself some slack cos it's hard enough without beating yourself up about always being perfect, y'know?

[MORE MURMURED ASSENT]

I don't know... it's like, I'm already using all my energy not to just fall back and get fucking wasted, never mind all the extra stuff.

**HAROLD**

Mmm, yeah. I totally know where you're coming from.

**LEN**

Harold, I realise that you're trying to be helpful and relate, but I really think you might want to just listen for this session, alright?

**SHUHELA**

Yes, Harold love, let's not—



**HAROLD**

No, no, no, honestly, I-I've been there. Okay. We all have had those days where you just want to cut loose, and you get carried away, and the next day you remember everything you did, and you're like, 'Gargh!' Oh, and the hangovers, am I right?

**ROBBIE**

Is this a joke to you mate?

**LEN**

Okay. Why don't we all just take a moment and—

**ROBBIE**

I was nicking offcuts from the butchers just to get by, and you sit there pretending like you have any idea—

**HAROLD**

No, no, hey, I-I'm just saying that, that a bit of willpower and you can just overcome—

[ROBBIE HISSES, LEAPING FOR HAROLD, KNOCKING CHAIRS OVER]

[SUZY INTERCEPTS AND STRUGGLES WITH ROBBIE]

**SUZY**

It's alright, Robbie!

**SHUHELA**

Okay, Harold, time to go!

**SUZY**

Leave him!

**HAROLD**

What's wrong with his eyes?

Oh god! His teeth!

[ROBBIE CONTINUES TO SNARL WHILE STRUGGLING AGAINST RESTRAINT]

**LEN**

(Calmly) Come on, Robbie, you've been making proper progress. Don't let some stupid asshole ruin it, alright?

Just focus on the breathing, yeah? In...

**SUZY**

(Struggling) He's just ignorant! It, it isn't worth it!

**LEN**

... and out...

**ROBBIE**

(Panting) He needs... to learn...

**SUZY**

That's right! You're bang on, look, he does, yes—

**LEN**

... and in...

**SUZY**

Yeah. But this isn't how we show them they're wrong, is it, Robbie?

Come on. Come on now, you've got this.

**LEN**

... and out...

[ROBBIE'S BREATHING EVENS OUT, WITH A SNARL HE RESUMES HIS SEAT]

**SHUHELA**

Okay, right, well, thank you Len. Good job everyone! Woo.

I'll just, uh, I'll help Harold up and take him for some fresh air. You all carry on...

[FLASH FORWARD TO]

**ICS, TOILETS - MORNING**

**FRANK**

What were you expecting?

**SHUHELA**

I had no idea he thought we were messing with him!

**FRANK**

He hasn't believed any of it. He thought we were scammers.

**SHUHELA**

(Indignant) Who? Me and you? And Cressida?

**FRANK**

Mmmhmm.

**SHUHELA**

(Realising) Nooooo... But— but how? I mean, he's seen all the—

Oh dear, I didn't realise... Oh, okay...

**FRANK**

(Calling) Harold! It's Frank.

**HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

You stay out!

**FRANK**

Harold, you can't just hide in the bog all day.

**HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

Yes I can!

**FRANK**

Fine! You stay here. Enjoy the smell.

**SHUHELA**

We can't just leave him!

**FRANK**

(Exaggeratedly) You heard him, we should just leave him here.

**SHUHELA**

Frank!

**FRANK**

(Exaggeratedly) Completely alone.

[CUBICLE UNLOCKS, FOOTSTEPS]

**SHUHELA**

(Gently) Ohhh, hello, love.

**HAROLD**

(Shaken) He tried to bite me.

**SHUHELA**

But he didn't. Did he?

**FRANK**

You got him riled up. It's just his natural response to a threat.

**HAROLD**

"Natural"?! There was nothing "natural" about him!

**FRANK**

If you'd taken him seriously to begin with, he wouldn't have come at you like that. He's pretty young, and you pushed his buttons.

**HAROLD**

Oh, so it's my fault he nearly tore my throat out, is it?

**FRANK**

Pretty much.

**SHUHELA**

No, love, if it's anyone's fault, it's mine. I should have explained all this to you before we went in there.

**HAROLD**

You can't let a thing like that walk the streets! It'll kill someone!

**SHUHELA**

(Stern) They're not "things" Harold! They're still people, just like you. They just have a condition.

**HAROLD**

They're not the same as us! Shuhela, they're not the same at all!

**FRANK**

No, you're right. Because at least we get to live in a world that accepts **we** even exist.

**SHUHELA**

Our job is to help them keep their lives together. That's what your Mum spent her whole life trying to do!

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**SUZY**

(Cautiously) How are we doing in here?

Ooohh, that is a smell.

[HAROLD SHRIEKS AND SHUTS HIMSELF IN CUBICLE AGAIN]

Oh. I see.

**SHUHELA**

Ah, he-he'll be alright.

[FRANK SNORTS]

**SUZY**

Sure. May I?

[FOOTSTEPS AND GENTLE DOOR KNOCKING]

(calling) Harold? Harold, its Suzy.

[HAROLD WHIMPERS]

Robbie asked me to come in and apologise for him since you probably don't want to see him right now. He shouldn't have reacted like that, okay? He was out of order, and, and he's sorry. He's working on it.

...

Anyway, I just wanted to check in and let you know. If you ever have any questions about this... stuff or whatever, I'm around.

**HAROLD (MUFFLED)**

(Meekly) Yeah.



[HAROLD COUGHS, THEN IN DEEPER VOICE]

Yeah, okay.

**SUZY**

(Surprised) Uh. Oh. Uh... alright, good. Well... I'll leave you to it then. Look after yourself, Harold.

[FOOTSTEPS BACKING OFF]

**SHUHELA**

You were an absolute star out there, my love. You should be proud.

**FRANK**

Well done.

**SUZY**

(Awkward at praise) I, uh, right, yes. Uh, anyway, I'll, I'll come round later if it's still okay for me to borrow that charger?

**SHUHELA**

Of course, love. You know where to find me.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**SHUHELA**

(Calling) She's gone now, love.

[HAROLD EMERGES]

**HAROLD**

(Shaky) I just. I thought all this was, y’know, like a scam and, and—

**FRANK**

No, it’s not.

**HAROLD**

No.

**SHUHELA**

No.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**CRESSIDA**

Here you all are. What on earth are you doing huddling in here? I— Goodness  
Harold, are you alright?

**HAROLD**

Yeah. Uh... I’m fine. Everything is fine.

**SHUHELA**

Just a bit of a wobble, nothing to worry about.

**CRESSIDA**

A... “wobble”?

**HAROLD**

I do not “wobble”! I’m fine! Can we just... move on, please?

**CRESSIDA**

Certainly. I have news: we’ve finally got a date for the acquisition meeting. The council contacted me this morning. They wanted to see us this Friday, 10am sharp.

**SHUHELA**

Ooh, fantastic!

**HAROLD**

Acquisition of what?

**CRESSIDA**

We are going to make a pitch for why **we** should officially acquire St Mark’s Church. Friday at 10am, we tell the council why we are better suited to owning St Mark’s and its grounds than anyone else. As you can clearly see, and, uh, [SNIFFS] smell... this building is not exactly in the best repair, and we are running out of room for all the... services we provide. So, a change of location is needed.

**SHUHELA**

So what about Iris's speech? She wrote pages and pages about the whole shebang.

**CRESSIDA**

Well, I had thought Harold might want to do that.

**HAROLD**

Me?

**FRANK**

Him?

**CRESSIDA**

Yes. This could be Harold's chance to begin representing ICS as its new co-CEO, to tell the people in power that we're the only ones with a practical solution to the inexplicables left on the streets, and that we need a larger premises to enact it. What do you think?

**HAROLD**

Oh. Well, uh, naturally, I'm flattered, but... I'm not sure I'm the one to— I know nothing about the project, I don't even know what—

**SHUHELA**

We can talk you through it! We've got four whole days and all of Iris's notes. It'll be a fantastic chance for you to build some bridges!

**HAROLD**

Oh, I don't know...

**FRANK**

It'll keep you safe in the office for a while.

**HAROLD**

Oh. Well. I mean, I'll do it if it needs to be done but—

**CRESSIDA**

Excellent.

**SHUHELA**

Oh, I'm sure you'll be brilliant, love.

**FRANK**

Mmmm.

**IRIS' HOUSE - MORNING**

[CLOCK TICKING, THEN STARTS CHIMING]

**MEREDITH**

Oh, for fuck's sake.

[MEREDITH SIGHS, PULLS OUT PHONE AND DIALS; RINGTONE THEN...]

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Hello?

**MEREDITH**

Hello handsome! Have you had an accident in the last three months because of some dipshit back seat driver?

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Who is this?

**MEREDITH**

Oh shit, uh... Sorry, wrong number.

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Meredith?

**MEREDITH**

Wait. Godbolt?

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Oh, hey! I didn't realise. Uh, how did you get my number?

**DENISE (TELEPHONE, DISTANT)**

He just needs a little more backbone.

**MEREDITH**

Oh, you know me, international lady of mystery and all that.

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

(Aside) Shhh now, just a minute.

(To Meredith) Uh, what did you say, sorry?

**MEREDITH**

I said I'm an international— Forget it, it's not funny.

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Alright.

**MEREDITH**

So... who was that on the phone?

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Oh that's, uh... that's no-one. What's up?

**MEREDITH**

Well, I... just checked my diary and apparently my very important call with the Hong Kong investors was just rescheduled by one of my PAs, meaning I have a free afternoon.

Maybe you fancy a cheeky catch-up? Drinks? Me actually staying conscious this time?

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Oh, uh... well...

**DENISE (TELEPHONE, DISTANT)**

He was the same at school. Never spoke to anyone.

**MEREDITH**

Oh. You with someone?

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

What? No.

(Aside) Shh, please, I-I'll be there in a minute.

**DENISE (TELEPHONE, DISTANT)**

Saw doctor after doctor. Fat lot of good it did.

**MEREDITH**

Is... Is, is everything all right?

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Hmm? What? Oh yeah, everything's great.

**MEREDITH**

I mean, hey, if you're with someone then it's not a big deal, I'll just—

**DENISE (TELEPHONE, DISTANT)**

Is that Nick? Say hi to him! Hiiii baby boy!



**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

No I'm— H-Hang on, I'll, I'll just go outside.

**MEREDITH**

Actually, you know what? It's fine.

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

No! Wait just let me explain.

**MEREDITH**

I said it's fine.

**GODBOLT (TELEPHONE)**

Meredith...

**MEREDITH**

Say 'Hi' to Nick for me.

[PHONE BEEPS AS CUT OFF]

**MEREDITH**

Urgh. Stupid. Stupid, fucking stupid! You never call them back!

[THROWS PHONE, HITS SOMETHING THAT SMASHES, THE CLOCK CHIMES]

Ohhh... damn it!

**ICS, IRIS' OFFICE - DAY**

[HAROLD IS TYPING AT THE COMPUTER]

**HAROLD**

'The Oxford English Dictionary defines community as...'

[MUCH BACKSPACING]

No...

'Ever since the dawn of Man, when Man first saw Man and then... met Man...  
and...'

Oh man...

[MUCH BACKSPACING]

'Hey there! My name's Harold and I'm here with an amazing—'

[MUCH BACKSPACING]

Sounds like a bloody ad...

[TYPING]

**CALI-BIGMAN (VIDEO)**

Wwwwhat is up my dudes! This is Cali-Bigman, and today we're gonna be looking at my personally approved Top Ten List for absolute public speaking domination! As always though, before we start make sure to smash that Like button, smash the Subscribe button and ring-a-ling that bell for all of my latest self-improvement vids!

Now, let's get straight into it!

Now, research has shown that the fear of public speaking ranks even higher than the fear of spiders, even higher than the fear of heights and, get this, even higher than the fear of death! So it's not surprising that a whole bunch of you have commented asking for my help—

[HAROLD'S PHONE RINGS; VIDEO PAUSES WITH A CLICK]

[HAROLD TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND EXHALES, BEFORE ANSWERING]

**HAROLD**

Harold Stonewell.

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

Harold, its John Belfrage.

**HAROLD**

John, hi, yeah, I've been meaning to call you back.

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

Are you available this Monday at 9 o'clock?

**HAROLD**

Oh, um, I'm not sure, I haven't got my diary in front of me... Can you remind me what it's regarding?

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

I've spoken to Rajshree. We need you to come to Endeavour Square so you have a chance to put your side across to the investigation.

**HAROLD**

Investigation? [SNORTS] I'm not sure what exactly you think is going here, but—

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

I **think** we're looking at multiple instances of gross misconduct, including misappropriation of client funds, negligent investment into a fraudulent real estate scam, illegal international transfers—

**HAROLD**

Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait, hang on just a minute!

(Adopts sad tone) As I've already explained, I recently lost my mother, and I'm really not in a fit emotional state to engage in this sort of conjecture—

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

Yes, you said. Except your “emotional state” **hasn’t** stopped you from taking over her business, has it?

**HAROLD**

I’m sorry?

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

I have been reliably informed that you’re now CEO for her business in... Gravesby. That is correct, isn’t it?

**HAROLD**

What!? No! No! Well... I’m acting purely in an advisory capacity, you see, I’m not drawing a wage, and I wouldn’t—

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

I hope I don’t need to remind you that taking such a position whilst under investigation would violate all kinds of protocols.

**HAROLD**

Absolutely, I’d never dream of—

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

I think you should probably speak to your Legal Officer then. Because not only is she under the impression you’re now Acting CEO of your mother’s company, but she also seems to think you are making withdrawals from said company.

**HAROLD**

What!? Jesus Christ! No, John, I did not instruct anyone to do anything like that!

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

Listen Harold, let's be honest with each other. You've mucked us around for long enough—

**HAROLD**

(Indignant) Mucked you around! John, my mother died!

I had a funeral to organise, the transition of a business to oversee, and I've got a three-bedroom house to sell. I haven't had the time, frankly, to—

**BELFRAGE (TELEPHONE)**

Be here on Monday morning at 9am. Otherwise we're looking at an arrest.

[BEEP AS BELFRAGE HANGS UP]

**HAROLD**

Shit.

(Softly) Fucking...

[FOOTSTEPS; DOOR CREAKS OPEN]

(Calling) Shuhela! Shuhela, have you got Cressida's mobile number?

**IRIS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

[DOORBELL RINGS AS BIRDS TWEET]

**GODBOLT**

(Calling) Meredith?

[DOOR KNOCKING]

Are you there?

It's me!

[MORE DOOR KNOCKING]

**MEREDITH (INSIDE)**

What?

**GODBOLT**

Meredith, you've got totally the wrong end of the stick.

**MEREDITH (INSIDE)**

Hey, none of my business what you get up to. You do you.

[FOOTSTEPS WALK AWAY]

[CREAK OF LETTERBOX OPENING]

**GODBOLT**

Come on!

Meredith, just give me five minutes. Please?

Meredith?

[LETTERBOX SHUTS, GODBOLT SIGHS]

Fuck it. You know what?

[EXTENDED SOUNDS OF ATTEMPTED DRAINPIPE CLIMBING AND EXERTION]

Ow. Ah! Ow! Fuck! Great idea, climbing the fu— OW!

[HEAVY FALL, LEAVES RUSTLE, FABRIC RIPS]

Aaaaah, fuck's sake... ow! Ow!

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES; FOOTSTEPS]

**MEREDITH**

You'd make a shit burglar.

**GODBOLT**

(Pained) I think something just entered me.



**MEREDITH**

Hot.

**GODBOLT**

Look, Meredith...

**MEREDITH**

It's fine, alright, none of my business who you're shagging.

**GODBOLT**

Would you shut up for two damn seconds and listen?

**MEREDITH**

One... Two...

**GODBOLT**

That was my Aunt Denise on the phone. She's in a care home and I visit her when I can, because, well, she's not exactly firing on all cylinders, if you get me.

**MEREDITH**

Sure, whatever. So who's Nick?

**GODBOLT**

My cousin. Denise's son. Never visits her. Just a useless sack of shit, really.

**MEREDITH**

Right.

So... why did you come all the way here just to say that?

**GODBOLT**

Oh. Well... I thought, well... I, I dunno, I, I thought you might be—

**MEREDITH**

What? Jealous? Don't flatter yourself, you're not all that.

**GODBOLT**

(Cocky) Oh yeah?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah. You're like, a 4. 5, tops. I've had **much** better offers.

**GODBOLT**

Ouch.

**MEREDITH**

Yeah.

[LEAVES RUSTLE AS GODBOLT STRUGGLES WITH BUSH]

**GODBOLT**

No, I mean literally, ouch. This bush is really getting, ah... kinda, ah, intimate.

Can you help me up please?

**MEREDITH**

I really am a fucking saint you know that, right?

[MORE RUSTLING AS MEREDITH ASSISTS]

**GODBOLT**

Ow, ow, dammit. [SIGHS]

Who has roses by their front door? Oh fuck, these are my best jeans!

**MEREDITH**

(Laughing) Oh shit! It's torn the arse out! Look at those cheeks!

**GODBOLT**

Oh yeah, laugh it up.

**MEREDITH**

Look, just get inside before you moon some poor granny or something.

**GODBOLT**

It's not funny. Absolutely gutted man, I love these jeans!

[FOOTSTEPS; DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**SATIE'S RESTAURANT - EVENING**

[SOUNDS OF A MODERATELY BUSY ITALIAN RESTAURANT THAT PROBABLY SERVES DECENT EGG PASTA]

**CRESSIDA**

Could you at least have some... wine? It's a bit less suspicious than just sitting there with an empty plate, watching me eat.

**LILY**

Water's fine. Look, Cressida, I've got a call in thirty minutes, so—

**CRESSIDA**

Very well. Your little package is under the table.

[CRINKLE OF PAPER]

**LILY**

Is it fresh?

**CRESSIDA**

Does it really matter? Now, tell me. How are things looking at your end?

[RUSTLING AS PACKAGE IS STOWED]

**LILY**

You've got the council for the entire morning session if you need it.

**CRESSIDA**

Excellent. And is William likely to be gracing us with his presence?

**LILY**

Well, I can't exactly just keep him locked up in his office.

**CRESSIDA**

Sadly not. But he will need you to get him there, won't he?

**LILY**

What are you suggesting?

**CRESSIDA**

I'm *suggesting* that if he were to be, let's say, unavoidably detained in transit for the duration of the meeting, that would be very fortuitous for ICS.

**LILY**

Cressida...

[BACKGROUND DOOR OPENS/CLOSES; FOOTSTEPS APPROACH]

**CRESSIDA**

It wouldn't need to be anything drastic, just a minor—

Oh...

Harold...

**LILY**

What?

[ANGRY FOOTSTEPS]

**HAROLD**

Just what the hell do you think you're playing at?

**CRESSIDA**

Lily, this is Harold Stonewell, Iris's son, and as of yesterday, her successor.

Harold, Lily is William Allen's personal assistant.

**LILY**

We've met.

**HAROLD**

(To Lily) Yes, hello again.

(To Cressida, loudly) Look, I don't know what you think you're playing at, but if you think for one moment that you can just—

[FOOTSTEPS]

**WAITER**

Is everything alright?

**CRESSIDA**

It's lovely, thank you dear.

Harold, do sit down. People are staring at you.

**WAITER**

Would you like a menu, sir?

**HAROLD**

What? No, I'm not—! I'm not staying long.

[CHAIR SCRAPES AS HE SITS]

**WAITER**

Can I get you a drink then?

**HAROLD**

No, thank you!

[FOOTSTEPS]

**LILY**

I can leave you two if you wan—

**CRESSIDA**

(To Lily) Nonsense. This will only take a moment.

(To Harold) Now Harold, anything you want to say to me, you can say in front of Lily.

**HAROLD**

I— Really? Fine. You had no business tipping off the FCA.

**CRESSIDA**

Pardon me?

**HAROLD**

John Belfrage! You told him I was taking over the business!

**CRESSIDA**

You'll have to forgive me Harold, but you **did** suggest I get in contact with him.

**HAROLD**

Yeah, well, I, w— That's beside the point!

**CRESSIDA**

And it's a good job I did. When you and Meredith announced you were taking over ICS, I had to do some due diligence in my capacity as Acting Legal Officer.

**HAROLD**

Yes, alright, but that doesn't excuse going behind my—



**CRESSIDA**

You can imagine my surprise when I discovered that you were part of an investigation. And for fraud, no less.

**HAROLD**

It's none of your bloody concern!

**CRESSIDA**

Well, acting as both Legal and Financial Officer for ICS – an organisation which you are now the newly appointed co-CEO of – I'm afraid that it is very much my concern. With this in mind, I have notified the relevant authorities of your appointment as director. Furthermore, I am now informing you as your advisor that we should prepare you for the very real possibility of imminent criminal charges.

**HAROLD**

But I am as much a victim as any of my clients!

**CRESSIDA**

(Dripping with 'sympathy') Of course you are. And as Legal Officer for ICS, I'm duty bound to assist you in proving that fact. But I can only do so from a place of perceived transparency. Do you understand?

**HAROLD**

You— [SIGHS]

Right. Yeah, I get it. Just... run things by me in future, okay? Especially where the FCA are concerned. Belfrage isn't an idiot.

**CRESSIDA**

Noted. Now, I do need to mention that assisting you in these matters will be quite a drain on my time. As a result, I will need you to 'step-up' a bit more as CEO to help maintain the business. We are this close to securing St. Mark's, and finally being able to provide a real inexplicables shelter, but we can't do it without your invaluable help.

**HAROLD**

Oh well, yes. O-Of course. Anything I can do.

**CRESSIDA**

Excellent. I'm so pleased we had this talk, Harold. Now, please don't let me keep you any further.

**HAROLD**

Right, yes. Uh. I need to go finish the speech, and uh... yeah.

[CHAIR SCRAPES AS HE STANDS]

Nice meeting you Lily.

**LILY**

Likewise.

[FOOTSTEPS DEPART; DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**CRESSIDA**

(Smiling) Oh, nervous little weasel, isn't he?

**LILY**

William would eat him alive in a debate.

**CRESSIDA**

Which is why we're going to have to think of something you can do, so that doesn't happen and our arrangement can continue. Aren't we, my dear?

**LILY**

Apparently.

**ICS, MAIN OFFICE - EVENING**

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES; FOOTSTEPS, CHAIR RATTLES AS IT'S PUSHED AWAY]

**GODBOLT**

Wow. So this is what it looks like inside. Damn...

**MEREDITH**

Oi, that's **my** business you're talking about. Bit of respect, yeah?

[DOOR CREAKS; FOOTSTEPS]

**GODBOLT**

Business? Looks more like a shipwreck in here.

**SHUHELA**

Evening, love! What are you doing up here so late? I was just locking up!

[KEYS JANGLE]

(to Godbolt) I'm Shuhela, nice to meet you.

[FOOTSTEPS]

**GODBOLT**

Hi, Godbolt. I've heard a lot about you.

**MEREDITH**

He's lying. I've told him literally nothing.

**SHUHELA**

Oh, that's alright. He's just being polite, aren't you? Is she giving you the tour then?

**GODBOLT**

(Slightly mocking) There's a tour! Goodness me, how exciting!

**MEREDITH**

Give it a rest, you sarcastic prick.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES; FOOTSTEPS]

**SUZY**

Hey Shuhela. Sorry, I'm so late, I got stuck in the traffic and—

**SHUHELA**

Suzy! Come say hello. This is Harold's sister, Meredith, and her friend... G-Godbolt? Is that right?

**SUZY**

We've met.

**MEREDITH**

(Recognising) Ohhhh! Hey.

**GODBOLT**

Listen, forget this. Why don't we just hit that place I told you about, it's two-for-one until ten.

**MEREDITH**

No, we, we just got here.

**GODBOLT**

No. Yeah, I know but they're already locking up here anyway, so how about I get us a taxi, and we just go have ourselves a good time, yeah?

**MEREDITH**

Well, I mean, I guess? If that's what y—

[DEPARTING FOOTSTEPS]

**GODBOLT**

Give me five minutes!

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**MEREDITH**

Weird.

**SHUHELA**

(To Suzy) Ooh, she's done alright there, hasn't she?

You didn't find him in Gravesby, did you?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, actually. Wild, I know.

**SHUHELA**

Huh. Will wonders never cease.

[AWKWARD SILENCE]

**SUZY**

So Shuhela, about that charger...

**SHUHELA**

Oh right, yes! Of course love, back in a tick.

[FOOTSTEPS; DOOR CREAKS]

**MEREDITH**

So... Frank said you're probably a...

**SUZY**

Charity case? Yep, that's me.

Vampire. Recovering, obviously.

**MEREDITH**

Right.

...

Tell you what, you scared the shit out of me climbing up that wall like that.

**SUZY**

Yeah... about that...

**MEREDITH**

It was awesome!

**SUZY**

(Thrown) What?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah it was brilliant! And, like, your teeth were all [VAMPIRIC MOUTH SOUNDS] absolutely fantastic. Ten out of ten!

**SUZY**

Oh, well, thanks, I guess?

**MEREDITH**

So, er, while I have you... can I ask you a couple of questions? About, you know, vamping? Vampirism?

**SUZY**

(Unsure) Uh, sure.

**MEREDITH**

Wicked. Okay so, first question. What's the deal with the garlic cos, like, I've never understood that?

**SUZY**

Yeah, well, it's, um, not actually a thing. I quite like garlic bread.



**MEREDITH**

Uh-huh. And daylight?

**SUZY**

Stings your eyes a bit. Um, we just need to wear shades.

**MEREDITH**

Okay, that's not so bad. And your teeth? Where do they... go? Y'know, when they're not all [VAMPIRIC MOUTH SOUNDS]?

**SUZY**

Ah-hah, well, they just sort of... retract.

**MEREDITH**

Cool. Cool.

Can you turn into a bat?

**SUZY**

No.

**MEREDITH**

Wolf?

**SUZY**

No.

**MEREDITH**

What about, like, a horde of rats?

**SUZY**

(Chuckling) Oh yeah. We do that all the time for a laugh.

**MEREDITH**

Really?

**SUZY**

No.

**MEREDITH**

Damn.

**SUZY**

Sorry.

**MEREDITH**

S'all right. So, I mean, the big question is, what, what about the blood-sucking stuff. Does it taste really good or...?

[SUZY MAKES A SOFT SOUND OF AWKWARDNESS]

(Realising) Oh, hey, sorry. That, that was... that was shit of me. No, yeah, I didn't mean anything by it. It's just, um, you're the first one I've met, y'know?

Forget about it, it's none of my business. You do you; no judgment here.

**SUZY**

No... I mean, it's alright. Just... I wouldn't go around the ICS asking stuff like that.

It gets pretty old when it's the only thing anyone ever wants to talk to you about. And... no-one owes you an explanation, yeah?

**MEREDITH**

Gotcha.

**SUZY**

Alright. So the blood thing is... hard to explain. I mean, it's not the stuff itself, like the smell or the taste or whatever...

It's what it does to you.

Like... You know when you just wanna get completely out of your head for whatever reason? Like, you just decide that screw it, tonight you are just going to wreck yourself?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, I know that.

**SUZY**

Yeah, but then sometimes you can find that sweet spot where everything is just— just goes away for a bit, and you feel like... like everything is gravy for a while.

**MEREDITH**

Yeah.

**SUZY**

Yeah, it's like that. Times a million.

**MEREDITH**

Doesn't sound so bad.

**SUZY**

Mmhmm. And then you wake up. And you still have to deal with everything that made you drink in the first place, except it's all ten times worse because of all the shit you did the night before. And now you have to fix the things, twice as fast otherwise you're screwed. And it's just... you know...

**MEREDITH**

Never-ending?

**SUZY**

Yeah, exactly. And you, you can't take a moment to sort your shit out, because part of you knows that if you do, it'll be a lot worse than you're admitting. And then that moment of peace starts to feel really inviting again. And... yeah, well.

**MEREDITH**

Changed my mind. That sounds proper shit.

**SUZY**

It is. Was.

But that was before. And now we're all keeping dry and keeping it together.

And it's better when you have other people with you, so... yeah.

**MEREDITH**

Cool. It's good you're getting help. Help is... good.

Listen, you know what, I've been a total prick quizzing you on this—

**SUZY**

Forget about it.

**MEREDITH**

No, I shouldn't have been so... yeah. Total prick. I'm sorry.

**SUZY**

Okay.

[DOOR CREAKS, FOOTSTEPS]

**SHUHELA**

Sorry about that, love. It's never where you leave it, right? Here you are.

[ITEM CHANGES HANDS]

Everything alright out here?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah.

**SUZY**

More or less.

**SHUHELA**

Oh, I am glad. For a moment there, I thought Mr Fabulous Arse would drive us apart!

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, speaking of, where the hell has he gone?

[GENERAL MOVEMENT AS SHUHELA LOCKS UP]

**SUZY**

Have you known him long?

[FOOTSTEPS HEAD DOWN STAIRS]

**MEREDITH**

Godbolt? Nah, only a couple of days. He seems alright though. Why? He's not your ex or something, is he?

**SUZY**

No... not Godbolt. Ah... just be careful with him, yeah? Don't let him lead you on.

[FOOTSTEPS; DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**MEREDITH**

Well that's ominous.

**TOWN HALL, MEETING ROOM - MORNING**

[PAPER RUSTLES AS HAROLD REHEARSES]

**HAROLD**

'Since 2012, the North-West has seen the highest rise of... highest rise of...'

Shitting hell! I had it last night. Shit, shit, fucking shit.

**SHUHELA**

Relax, love. You're gonna be absolutely fine. I'm here, Cressida's here...

**FRANK**

if all else fails, you can always blag it.

**HAROLD**

Blag it? Blag it? Oh yeah, I'll just go in there and start pulling stats out of my arse, shall I? I'm sure that'll go down really well.

[FOOTSTEPS APPROACH]

**CRESSIDA**

Good news, everybody. Looks like William Allen is a no show. They've tried his office, his mobile, Lily's mobile; no-one can get hold of him.

**FRANK**

Convenient.

**CRESSIDA**

Yes, isn't it? So, is he ready?

**SHUHELA**

Yes!

**HAROLD**

No.

**CRESSIDA**

That's the spirit. Come on then.

[FOOTSTEPS; DOOR OPENS/CLOSE]

[GENERAL MURMUR OF VOICES AS FOLKS TAKE THEIR SEATS]



**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Good morning everyone. Sorry for the delay. Uh, as you can see we're a man down already, but after some deliberation we have decided it is in everyone's best interests to press on regardless.

With that in mind I'd like to thank the... uh... [PAPERS RUSTLE] The ISC—

**SHUHELA**

(Calling) ICS!

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Oh my apologies. Ah yes, I'd like to thank ICS for their patience. Now, I understand we have their CEO speaking to us today regarding... ah yes, St Mark's on Cruttenden Street. Is that correct?

[CHAIR SCRAPES]

**HAROLD**

Yes, your honour that's... Hello, yes. Harold Stonewell.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Good morning. You don't need to stand, but it is appreciated. Also, uh, I'm not a judge, so Councillor should suffice.

**HAROLD**

Oh, um, yes. Councillor.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Excellent. Now as we all know, St Mark's is currently under public management, and as such we have several enterprises vying for the acquisition rights. It's your job, Mr Stonewell, to tell us why we should give it to ICS. In your own time, please.

[PAPERS RUSTLE AS HAROLD NERVOUSLY FUMBLES]

**HAROLD**

Yes. Uh. Hmm, yes that's— Yes, well, I, I, I, I, I, I wanted to—

(DROPS PAPER)

Oh f— Sorry.

(RETRIEVES PAPER, CLEARS THROAT)

I wanted to speak to you all today about the crisis we face, over... over... um... Over-population! Um, recession. Rising living costs, et cetera, et cetera, indeed! Who here hasn't heard these terms? None of us. None of us haven't heard these terms.

**FRANK (BACKGROUND)**

Good grief...

**SHUHELA (BACKGROUND)**

Shhh!

**HAROLD**

And um... We can no longer ignore them, or even avoid them. No!

Gravesby is a micro... uh, a microcosm of these wider world issues, and so, as such, we need to, to, to, to, to look at the bigger picture in order to make best our understanding of the smaller picture. Which in itself is part of the bigger picture, you see?

[MUTED COUGHS]

Er, yes. Well, right. Um. So, since 2012 the North-West has seen the highest levels of cuts to local services, to government schemes, to— Uh... uh...

[MOBILE PHONE BUZZES SOFTLY, AND IS ANSWERED]

**COUNCIL MEMBER #1**

(Quietly) Ian, hi, no, I'm in session. Oh not long, it seems open and shut. I'll call you back in ten.

[PHONE CALL CUTS OFF]

My apologies. Do continue.

**HAROLD**

Yes. Okay.

So to, uh... to, uh...

**SHUHELA (BACKGROUND)**

Government schemes!

**HAROLD**

Oh yes, yes. Um, government services— sorry, schemes, um, to, uh, for the most basic facilities, a tax paying member of this community could and should expect—

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

I'm sorry to interrupt, Mr Stonewall.

**HAROLD**

Stonewell.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

But due to the delayed start, we, we are under certain time pressures. Can we please just skip this preamble, thorough as it is, and address the primary matter at hand: namely, that St Mark's is in a state of severe disrepair, and given this fact, how can a social care organisation with no major public or private funding possibly expect to realise these rather... (PAPERS RUSTLE) ambitious plans that you've submitted to us?

**HAROLD**

Uh... Oh well... um... I, that is to say, we... we would, um... intend to—

[CHAIR SCRAPES; FOOTSTEPS]

**CRESSIDA**

Cressida Hynes, Chief Legal and Financial Officer to ICS. If I may, Councillor?

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Please.

**CRESSIDA**

You are correct that we would not be able to shoulder the costs of this alone. That is why we would need assistance from the council to realise these plans.

**COUNCIL MEMBER #2**

I'm sorry, you expect us to hand over the church and pay you for your own renovations, when other interested parties are willing to shoulder the entire costs themselves?

**CRESSIDA**

I'll be blunt. The cost to the council for ICS to take over and renovate St Mark's will be chicken feed in comparison to what you'll have to spend on rehousing the homeless population if you don't. Assuming that you **are** going to rehouse them, of course.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Miss Hynes, we have made it clear, time and time again, that we'll make no provisions for vagrants who continually—

**CRESSIDA**

The fact is, Councillor, that every day the homeless in Gravesby remain without shelter results in appalling, avoidable suffering.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Miss Hynes, I am sure we can all agree that homelessness in Gravesby is a problem, but it is not the problem that we have been brought here to solve. We are here to determine what is to happen to St Mark's.

**CRESSIDA**

Forgive me, Councillor, but these two problems are inseparable. Time and time again, the local government has refused to offer any solutions to our homelessness crisis. I would not presume to appeal to your conscience, but I would suggest that you consider recent opinion polls regarding local government.

[COUNCILLORS MURMUR]

**COUNCIL MEMBER #3**

(Whispering) Oh, why is she bringing it up?

**CRESSIDA**

People are not happy with you. Not at all.

[MURMURING INTENSIFIES]

But, happily, we are here presenting you with the solution. ICS can deal with this because helping the homeless is what we already do. Day in, day out, year in, year out. By granting the St Mark's site to ICS and *assisting* in the renovations, you would be allowing us to finally end this issue once and for all, with all the complexities neatly handled by us. You only need to sign a cheque.

**COUNCIL MEMBER #3**

You really expect to handle the entire homeless population of Gravesby within a single facility? People with criminal records, emotional problems, drug addictions? You're just going to lump them all in together and... what? Just hope for the best?

**CRESSIDA**

No. We will *provide* the best, because we *are* the best. The site is large enough for two hundred interior beds and, further, two hundred in additional facilities on the grounds and—

**COUNCIL MEMBER #3**

(Incredulous) Additional facilities?

**CRESSIDA**

Do you have an alternative? Because your current plan seems to be just abandoning these people. Our work will keep them safe, and bring them back into society. It's what we do, and we're very good at it. All we're asking for are the basic facilities we need to solve **your** problem before it draws any more unwanted attention. Like... the national press, for example.

[WHISPERING AS COUNCILLORS CONFER]

**HAROLD**

(Aside) Should I do the rest of my speech now?

**CRESSIDA**

(Aside) Maybe hold off for now. I think they've got enough to consider.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

It is at this point we would customarily hear any arguments against the proposal. However, given the absence of any formal opposition to these proceedings, I suggest we should just press on and put the motion to a vote.

Any objections?

...

Very well. In that case, all those in favour of allowing ICS acquisition rights to St Marks along with the necessary funding to allow basic renovation, please say aye.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Aye.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

And those against?



**COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Nay.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

The ayes have it seven to five, no abstainers. Motion is carried. Thank you all.

**SHUHELA**

(Loudly) Get in!

[SHUHELA GASPS AS FRANK LAUGHS]

(Whispers) Oh! Sorry!

**HAROLD**

Did we win? Did I—?

**CRESSIDA**

Congratulations, Harold. You just bought yourself a church.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

With no further motions proposed, we are hereby adjourned for this session. If we can please clear the chambers.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES; FOOTSTEPS STRIDE IN]

**WILLIAM**

(To Lily) —the second we are done here you get onto the transport department and you tell them that they are going to do something about that corner **tomorrow**, understand?

(To the room, politely) Ladies and gentlemen, I am so sorry for the delay.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Ah, Bill, we've been calling you. Is, is everything all right?

**WILLIAM**

Yes, thankfully nothing serious. Although the car's in a bit of a nasty state. Lily here got caught out on that bloody blind spot on Cressington Way. We're lucky we didn't end up smeared across the dual carriageway.

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Bill, if, if you've been in an accident, it's, it's probably best we run you down to the Royal and get you both checked up.

[FOOTSTEPS AS WILLIAM MOVES AROUND]

**LILY**

Uh, no!

**WILLIAM**

Lily, you have had enough input for one day.

No, no that won't be necessary. We're both fine. Besides, this has been delayed quite long enough. I know we're behind, and I see our friends from ICS are here, so, let's crack on shall we?

**CRESSIDA**

Perhaps we should update our friend and colleague on the motion... carried.

**WILLIAM**

"Carried"? What do you mean "motion carried"?

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

We've already ruled on ICS' proposal.

**WILLIAM**

Oh, good! So, who are we considering next?

[PAUSE, WITH SOME MUTED COUGHING]

Oh. You have got to be— You haven't given them the rights!?

**CRESSIDA**

And some additional funding besides.

**WILLIAM**

WHAT? It's not even eleven! You were in here for less than an hour!

**COUNCIL MEMBER #2**

Well, we were waiting for **you** for more than half an hour.

**WILLIAM**

Yes, well, my phone was damaged in the car crash that just nearly killed me, so apologies for the inconvenience, Linda!

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Bill, why don't we just go outside, and, and you can calm down—

**WILLIAM**

You can't just carry a motion without me! I'm the bloody Mayor!

**COUNCIL MEMBER #2**

That's not how it works and you know it. We put the motion to the house and the vote was cast, seven to five. If you'd been here to register your objections, well then maybe—

**WILLIAM**

(Irate) This is absolutely ridiculous! Jesus! I turn my back for 5 minutes and you just completely— Christ on a bike!

**LILY**

Look, William, I think it would be wise to—

**WILLIAM**

Will you shut! Up! Lily!

(To the room) I will be taking formal action against this, you know that? There will be a proper investigation into what has happened here, and I **will** speak to each of you in turn.

**COUNCIL MEMBER #1**

Oh, give over Bill. It's done.

**WILLIAM**

I will not "give over"!

**CRESSIDA**

If there's anything we can do to help, just drop us an email.

**WILLIAM**

You made a mistake today, Cressida, and you will come to regret it very soon!

**COUNCIL SPEAKER**

Bill... Bill.

**WILLIAM**

(To Lily) Get me everything we have on ICS, now. Everything!

[FOOTSTEPS DEPARTING]

**LILY**

Yes, of course, sir. I'll get straight onto it.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

[BACKGROUND NOISE OF COUNCILLORS MILLING AROUND]

**FRANK**

What a tit.

**SHUHELA**

I never know what people see in him. I just worry for Lily. That poor girl, she must get a right earful from him.

**CRESSIDA**

I wouldn't worry about her; she can handle herself, trust me. Besides, it's all hot air.

**HAROLD**

So that's it? We won?

**CRESSIDA**

Yes, Harold. We won.

**HAROLD**

And my speech helped?

**SHUHELA**

It was wonderful, love. Dead inspiring, weren't it, Frank?

**FRANK**

Mmmm.

**CRESSIDA**

It was perfect. We make an excellent team, and your mother would be very proud. But now, it's time to celebrate. I am going to take you all out for dinner.

**SHUHELA**

Oh! I'll need to stop off and scrub up. You'll have to get your suit out too, Frank!

**FRANK**

Eurgh.

**SATIE'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

[FOOTSTEPS]

**SUZY**

(Quietly) Everyone's looking at us...

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, cos we're well fit. Let them look.

**HAROLD**

(Topsy) Eyyyy there she is. My dear sister, and—

[DRINK SPLASHES AS HE YELPS ON RECOGNISING SUZY]

Uh. Hello.

**SUZY**

(Nervous) Yes, hello again Harold.

**SHUHELA**

Suzy! Lovely of you to join us. Come sit over here with me, pet.

**CRESSIDA**

Well, don't you both look lovely. How about some more drinks? Yes?

**MEREDITH**

Orange juice. Thanks.

**HAROLD**

(Snorting) Juice? Really? You're not pregnant, are you?

**SUZY**

Just a Coke for me, please.

**SHUHELA**

Oooh, everything looks so nice! I dunno what to have!

**FRANK**

You'll have the fish.



**SHUHELA**

Hang on, what makes you think that?

**FRANK**

You **always** get the fish.

**SHUHELA**

I don't **always** get the—

**CRESSIDA**

So! Now that we're all here, I just wanted to take a moment to say a few words.

[CHAIRS SCRAPE]

**HAROLD**

Speeeeeeech!

**CRESSIDA**

Yes, thank you, Harold. Anyway, I just wanted to extend my gratitude to everyone. This has been a long time coming, but our efforts have finally been rewarded. I couldn't be more proud of you all.

**HAROLD**

(Laughing) Crusty old bastards never saw us coming, did they?

**CRESSIDA**

Indeed.

Well, that's everything apart from telling you all: enjoy yourselves! The tab's on me. You've earned it.

[GLASSES CLINK AMIDST GENERAL RESTAURANT NOISE AND CHATTER]

**SHUHELA**

Oh, I meant to ask, Frank – how's Hannah doing?

**FRANK**

I swung by this morning but she didn't answer. Still upset with me, I reckon.

**SHUHELA**

Aww, she'll come round.

**FRANK**

Mmm.

**HAROLD**

So, are you really not drinking? What's brought all this on?

[CHAIR SCRAPES]

**MEREDITH**

Right, I'm going for a cigarette.

[FOOTSTEPS AS SCENE MOVES OUTSIDE TO AN URBAN STREETScape]

[FLICKING OF LIGHTER AS MEREDITH LIGHTS UP]

[FOOTSTEPS APPROACH]

**GODBOLT**

Oy oy! Who do we have here?

**MEREDITH**

You really do have a pair of balls on you, I'll give you that. Just rocking up here after totally bailing on me earlier.

**GODBOLT**

Yeah, sorry about before. I shouldn't have— I just— yeah. That was really uncool. Got you flowers.

[FOLIAGE RUSTLES]

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, I can see that.

**GODBOLT**

And?

**MEREDITH**

And I'm out with the work lot, so can you just, like, go? And I'll call you, or whatever.

**GODBOLT**

Come off it, I'm here to rescue you! You don't want to hang around with this sad lot. Why don't we just get out of here? You and me, go get a drink, paint the town—

**MEREDITH**

I said back off. Is that clear enough for you?

**GODBOLT**

Wait. You're serious?

[FOOTSTEPS BACK OFF]

Riiiiight. Okay, fine. I'll just... Fine. Whatever.

[FOLIAGE RUSTLES AS IT'S DUMPED AND GODBOLT HEADS OFF]

**MEREDITH**

Dammit.

[DOOR OPENS/CLOSES]

**SUZY**

He didn't look happy. Everything alright?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah. Just peachy.

**SUZY**

You sure?

**MEREDITH**

Me? I'm fucking fabulous. I am living the dream.

**SUZY**

I know it's none of my business, but you did the right thing. You're better off without him.

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, well. I don't need a babysitter.

**SUZY**

No, you don't.

...

Are you coming back inside?

**MEREDITH**

Yeah, screw it. Let's eat, I'm starving.

What are you having?

**SUZY**

I thought I'd start with the garlic bread.

[MEREDITH SNORTS]

[FOOTSTEPS; DOOR OPENS]

**MEREDITH**

You alright Cressida?

**CRESSIDA**

Hmmm? Oh yes. Just grabbing some fresh air.

**MEREDITH**

Well, I wouldn't leave that lot unsupervised with an open tab.

**CRESSIDA**

I'll be back in a moment. Uh, keep an eye on them in the meantime, won't you?

[DOOR CLOSES]

[FOOTSTEPS APPROACH]

You're late.

**LILY**

Sorry, sorry, I got held up and, and—

**CRESSIDA**

Yes, I'm sure. Sterling work with William earlier. It's appreciated.

**LILY**

He's been in a foul mood ever since. Will be for the rest of the week.

**CRESSIDA**

Still, I'm sure it's worth it, yes?

**LILY**

Um. Yes.

**CRESSIDA**

Good girl. Here's the rest of your... payment, as discussed.

[RUSTLING OF PAPER PACKAGE]

And before you ask, yes, it's fresh.

**LILY**

Thanks. I know it's sounds daft but it does make a difference, you know, and—

**CRESSIDA**

Just take it, dear. I'd rather I wasn't carrying it any longer than necessary.

[RUSTLING AS LILY ACCEPTS PACKAGE]

I'll be in touch.

[CLOSING THEME]

*Inexplicables* is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill Ltd and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence.

Written by: Tom Critch & Alexander J Newall

Script Editing: Helen Gould

Producer: Hannah Preisinger

Director: Maddy Searle

Production Manager: April Sumner

Executive Producer: Alexander J Newall

### **Cast**

Beth Eyre — Meredith Stonewell

Harry Farmer — Harold Stonewell

Safiyya Ingar — Shuhela

Ian Hayles — Frank

Fay Roberts — Cressida

Mark Nicolson — Abraham Godbolt

Karim Kronfli — John Belfrage

Savy Des-Etages — Lily Jones

Vera Chok — Suzy Broadbent

Alexander Doddy — William Allen

Alexander J Newall — Ivan

Frank Voss — Len

Sas Freeman — Denise

Tai Lawson — Robbie



*Inexplicables* – E03 – Public Speaking

Mike LeBeau — Cali-Bigman

Jenny Haufek — Council Speaker

Amy Dickinson — Council Member #1

Annie Fitch — Council Member #2 / Vampire

Francesca Reid — Council Member #3

Nico Vettese — Waiter / Vampire / Council Member

Imogen Harris — Vampire

Editing: Maddy Searle

Mastering: Jeffrey Nils Gardner

Music: Samuel DF Jones

Artwork: Anika Khan