

NEIGHBOURS

Written by

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Adapted from "Neighbours"
by Raymond Carver

INT. OFFICE. DAY

We open on a split screen image of a man and a woman in separate offices. The man, BILL MILLER, sits slumped over at his desk, typing away at a computer. The woman, ARLENE MILLER, is answering a phone, her words barely audible through the bustle of background sound. Both look tired, both from along day's work, but also an unexplainable void within their lives.

ON SCREEN TITLES: NEIGHBOURS

INT. MILLER APARTMENT/APARTMENT 52. AFTERNOON.

In Apartment 52, BILL and ARLENE are unpacking their shopping, ARLENE by the cupboards putting away the dry food, then passing anything frozen or chilled to BILL, who stands by the fridge, they hardly look at each other, focusing on the task at hand. A door audibly closes in the hallway.

BILL MILLER

Hm. (beat) The Stones are off.

ARLENE MILLER

How were they dressed?

BILL MILLER

Didn't see them.

They return to their task in a brief silence.

ARLENE MILLER

Where do you think they're going?

BILL MILLER

Probably dinner again.

ARLENE MILLER

Jesus. 'Third time this week. How do they do it?

ARLENE stresses that last statement, more distressed than angry, as BILL silently takes note.

INT. MILLER BEDROOM. NIGHT

ARLENE and BILL lay in bed, ARLENE on her back looking at the ceiling, while BILL is reading a novel, the two spaced apart in the same way the pillows would be. ARLENE's eyes look around the room in thought. From the hallway, the conversation of The Stones can be heard in excited muffled speech and booming laughs. The MILLER's mood shifts, as their silence becomes more apparent.

ARLENE MILLER

You hear about that new italian place that opened down the street?

BILL MILLER

I didn't even know there was one opening.

ARLENE MILLER

You want to give it a try? I could always see if I could get home a little earlier Friday?

BILL thinks about this for a bit, almost as if he's doing accounting in his head.

BILL MILLER

I'll see if I can get the time off.

The silence returns, ARLENE growing anxious.

ARLENE MILLER

What about the weekend, are we doing anything Saturday?

BILL MILLER

Not that I'm aware of.

ARLENE MILLER

Alright then. Saturday.

BILL MILLER

Saturday it is.

ARLENE rolls over, somehow unhappy with the answer she was looking for, as BILL continues his reading, completely unaware.

INT. MILLER APARTMENT/APARTMENT 52. DAY

The next day, the two sit at their table having breakfast, too busy eating to speak. Just as ARLENE takes a bite out of her toast, the doorbell rings.

BILL MILLER

Don't worry, I've got it.

He gets up, opens the door, and there they are. JIM and HARRIET STONE, two beautiful well kept 30-somethings dressed in clothing that looks like it cost more than the MILLER's weekly shop. JIM immediately stretches out his hand for BILL to shake, something BILL gladly does, before the instantly charismatic voice of JIM STONE addresses him.

JIM STONE

Hi. You're the Millers right?

BILL MILLER

Last time I checked.

HARRIET STONE

Wonderful home you have.

ARLENE finishes her toast just in time.

ARLENE MILLER
(dismissively)

Thanks.

HARRIET flashes her a smile of flawlessly white teeth.

JIM STONE

I know this is a bit forward but we're going on a business trip soon, and were wondering if you'd be able to look after our cat?

BILL MILLER

I'd love to but I don't think our lease allows animals-

HARRIET STONE

Oh no, we mean in our apartment.

BILL MILLER

Oh... in that case we'd love to.

ARLENE nearly chokes on her breakfast.

ARLENE MILLER
(excited yet somewhat forced)

So where are you guys heading?

HARRIET STONE

We're going to Cheyenne on a business trip.

HARRIET dreamily hugs JIM's arm, the two almost beaming with excitement.

JIM STONE

It'll only be 10 days, I hope it won't be inconvenient.

ARLENE MILLER

I mean-

BILL MILLER

-Oh not at all. We don't have anything planned.

JIM STONE

Wonderful!

HARRIET STONE

Come on Jim... all they have to do is feed kitty and water the plants, I'm sure it won't interrupt their wonderful lives.

BILL MILLER

Oh don't worry about it. It'll be our pleasure.

HARRIET notions for JIM to go.

JIM STONE

Well, I suppose we better get going.

ARLENE MILLER

Have fun on your trip.

JIM STONE

We will. You kids have fun too.

JIM winks as he shakes BILL's hand, HARRIET lovingly pushing him away. BILL watches them leave, closes to door, and turns to his wife as if he's still processing what happened.

ARLENE MILLER

Was he wearing cashmere?

INT. MILLER APARTMENT/APARTMENT 52. AFTERNOON.

BILL picks up the Stone's apartment key, then pauses to look at his home. It's not shabby, just painfully average, decorated with mismatched furniture in bland colours.

He enters the hallway, pausing to unlock the door, as a sudden suspense fills him.

He takes a breath, then crosses the threshold.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. AFTERNOON

In front of him is a room straight out of a showroom. Decorated with such class and decadence. Velvet couches adorned with the most comfortable looking throw pillows imaginable, surrounding likely the largest flattest T.V he's seen in his life.

BILL walks over to the kitchen slowly, feeling like he's Neil Armstrong taking his first steps on the moon, as he takes the cat food out of the can, one of those luxury brands you see in the adverts. As he lowers the food into the bowl, kitty comes running, his first objective complete.

As the cat feasts on it's luxury meal, BILL stares down at it as if every moment he's there is one too many. With a sigh, he decides he has to know.

INT. STONES BATHROOM. AFTERNOON

BILL stands in front of the mirror as a wave of intense self loathing overcomes him.

He opens the medicine cabinet. Inside is a container of pills, nothing he's ever heard of. On the container reads HARRIET STONE: ONE DAY AS DIRECTED.

He pockets the pills and leaves.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. AFTERNOON

BILL returns to the kitchen, searching the cupboards for some kind of container to water the plants with, his opening of literally every cupboard a thinly veiled excuse to snoop around the Stone's kitchen. Fine foods and crockery line the cupboards as BILL gazes at the contents, completely transfixed by the items in front of him. As he goes lower he sees a set of glasses and pitchers, sitting below the most expensive looking collection of alcohol he's ever seen. The kind of top shelf drinks he could only dream of drinking.

BILL stares at the cupboard, that sense of loathing returning.

He reaches into the cupboard.

INT. MILLER APARTMENT/APARTMENT 52. NIGHT

BILL silently enters the apartment, while ARLENE is slumped on the sofa, entranced by the TV. BILL sneaks up behind her, a sudden ecstatic energy to his movements. ARLENE barely notices him, but almost jumps as he starts caressing her shoulders.

ARLENE MILLER

Jesus Bill!

BILL chuckles as he leaves a kiss on her neck, crouching down closer to her. ARLENE tries to keep focused on the TV, slightly confused by the whole ordeal. The sudden affection does feel kinda nice though.

ARLENE MILLER

What took you so long anyway?

BILL MILLER

Nothing much... Just playing with kitty.

BILL kisses lower, pausing to look at a surprised ARLENE. As their eyes meet, BILL looks into her eyes as if it's the first time he's ever met her, a sudden lust and genuine love for his overcoming him.

They kiss.

INT. OFFICE TOILETS. DAY

We catch up the next day on BILL MILLER, visibly tired out, as he enters a toilet cubicle. As he sits on the toilet seat, he doesn't lower his trousers, but simply sits for a moment, before rummaging in his pockets.

In his hands is HARRIET's pill container, an item BILL stares at briefly in a kind of self reflection, as he suddenly opens the lid, and pops a pill into his mouth.

He sits there in the stall, the guilt of his actions truly setting in, before being washed away as the pill starts to hit. BILL sits up slightly, slouching less as if all the weight and tension on his shoulders is simply lifted, as he simply smiles, and leaves the stall.

While BILL washes his hands, a fellow OFFICE WORKER enters the toilets, BILL instantly taking note of him in the mirror with a chuckle.

BILL MILLER

Nice to take a break from it all
hey?

The WORKER gives the appropriate amount of confusion for being spoken to when you're about to empty your bowels, and anxiously enters the cubicle.

BILL chuckles the awkwardness off, as he shakes the water off his hands and strides back into the office.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX CORRIDOR. AFTERNOON.

HARRIET stands by the door to the MILLER apartment, fumbling around looking for the keys in her handbag. In the background, BILL sneaks up on her, arms ready to wrap around her waist.

BILL MILLER

Fancy seeing you here.

ARLENE jumps, a split second of genuine fear spiking through her before she realises who the voice belongs to, as she drops her keys in her handbag.

ARLENE MILLER

GOD... BILL! Why are you home so
early?

BILL slips his hands around her waist, taking the key from her hands to unlock the door as a pretense.

BILL MILLER

Nothing left to do.

BILL almost dances ARLENE into the room, his eyes instantly attracted to the door to the STONES apartment, as that mix of unrestrained lust and love returns. ARLENE barely notices this, too wrapped up in the confusion of going from borderline dismissed to obsessively desired, before she snaps back to reality.

ARLENE MILLER

Well then, how was your da-

BILL kisses her mid sentence, as the two make out like they're two horny drunks meeting for the first time. As they throw their coats off, the two make their way to the bedroom. While they stumble off into the background, we stay

focused on BILL's coat, as the orange pill container rolls out of his pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLER BEDROOM. NIGHT

ARLENE lays curled up on the bed, BILL lightly rubbing her back as he sits up, staring into space. As he looks around the room something feels off, as an unsettling disgust slowly sinks in. Not with himself, not with his beautiful wife, but something's doing it. Something isn't right.

As he looks through the doorway of the bedroom, he looks at their apartment door, knowing what must be done.

BILL MILLER
(with faked shock)
Ah damn, I should probably feed
kitty.

ARLENE MILLER
(barely registering him)
Alright.

BILL gets up and puts on some clothes. Framed by our view of the front door from the bedroom, we see BILL's journey across the apartment. He completely ignores his coat, and opens the front door, the light from the hall illuminating the dark of the Miller apartment, before returning to darkness as the door closes. BILL crosses the threshold.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. MILLER APARTMENT/APARTMENT 52. NIGHT

An hour has passed, and ARLENE has just awoken from a nap, hazily walking to the kitchen to get some water. As she turns the tap, she returns to reality, noticing the clock before turning to the door, noticing the coat on the floor.

ARLENE huffs. BILL disappears for an hour, and he can't even do her the simple favour of cleaning up after himself. She puts the full glass on the side for now, and goes to clean up his mess once again.

As she crouches down to pick the coat up, she notices an orange pill container underneath the coat rack, and investigates.

HARRIET STONE: ONE DAY AS DIRECTED rings through her mind as ARLENE is hit with a rush of different thoughts all at once. She looks at the door, almost expecting BILL to barge in at that moment.

Nothing. In the following silence, ARLENE re-contextualises the last few days.

As she stands up, ready to angrily kick down the STONES' door and confront BILL, she remembers just who's pills they are. HARRIET. Madly in love, perfectly happy, HARRIET STONE.

ARLENE removes a pill, and takes it with her water.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

BILL returns to his own apartment's door in a state of nirvana, dipping his hand into his dressing gown to retrieve the key, only to see the door open for him, ARLENE standing on the other side.

ARLENE MILLER

Now then. What have you been up to?

Before BILL can even respond, ARLENE simply drags him into her arms.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLER APARTMENT/APARTMENT 52. DAY

BILL sits at the table while HARRIET sleeps, staring at a painting hung on the wall. It's one of those nondescript skylines you see in a furniture store. He's never really stopped to think about it before, he bought it to fill a space.

But today he hates it. He loathes it. It's meaningless art, uninspired drivel mass produced for tasteless homeowners who can't afford anything really stimulating.

BILL MILLER

I'm off to feed kitty.

He says to no one in particular.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. DAY

BILL steps into the STONE's home, breathing in deeply as the cool crisp air hits his lungs. As he gets the water "for the plants", BILL takes in his surroundings, gazing at all too familiar velvet couches, soft carpet, giant TV, shelves full of strange foreign occult artifacts, books and literature, not the novels he reads. For the first time ever, he notices a painting. Before he thought it was part of the wall, but now he sees it for what it is. A canvas meticulously painted white, different shades dancing in and out of each other in harmony. It's beautiful.

BILL continues his journey across the apartment, stopping at the bedroom. The cat brushes itself against his legs, BILL barely noticing her presence, as he walks in to the Stone's most private quarters.

INT. STONES BEDROOM. DAY

BILL lays on the bed, looking at the ceiling, perfectly smooth unlike the shoddy paintwork of his own, as he absent mindedly moves his hand under his belt. As his hand finds something to fiddle with, he tries to remember the Stones, its been so long since he last saw them. He tries to remember their voice, absentmindedly making vocalisations he does.

Frustrated at his own poor memory, and the unwilling softness in his hand, BILL sits up, instantly facing himself in the mirror, really looking at himself for once.

He notices his hair, cut without any style, just convenience. He notices his clothes, the entire outfit probably cheaper than JIM's jumper alone.

And the loathing returns. However, BILL notices a wardrobe nearby, and has a look.

Racks upon racks of clothes fill his view, with jumpers and knitwear neatly folded up on the shelf below, BILL removes the items that look most appealing to him, and lays them out on the bed.

He goes to close the wardrobe, before noticing HARRIET's side, getting a good look before he closes the door.

CUT TO.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. DAY

BILL is dressed in JIM STONE's clothes as he walks around the apartment, going to the kitchen to make himself a drink. The cat's food bowl is empty, but it's not like that matters anymore, as BILL STONE pours himself a drink from his collection.

INT. STONES BEDROOM. AFTERNOON

BILL is back in his bedroom, his martini nearly emptied, as he stands naked, wondering what to wear next, a lone telephone ringing in the distance, it's melody falling on deaf ears. He opens the wardrobe and looks to his right, picking out some clothes as he strips in the mirror.

He really stops to look at himself, his handsome face, decent body, as he slowly slips on the Stone wife's lingerie. He can't remember her name, but her pills have been making him feel great, surely this is the next step.

INT. MILLER APARTMENT. AFTERNOON.

ARLENE sits by the phone, the pill container next to her. She's been trying to reach BILL for ages, and still nothing. With these great feelings she's been having recently, she just wishes he was here with her to share it.

As her mind begins to wander she stares at the apartment, mess cluttering the corners, clothes on the floor, and takeout containers laying empty on the tables. Between BILL's constant disappearances and all the sex, there hasn't really been much time to clear up.

ARLENE stares at the calendar. It's Saturday, and a little pizza is sketched on today's date. She isn't really sure of it's significance, but something about it opens up a pit within her heart.

As she tries to distract herself, she notices her home for the first time, and just how bleak and soulless it is. There's nothing in the room she's proud of having, not the second hand furniture, not the 35" TV, and certainly not that damn painting.

ARLENE MILLER

Fuck it.

ARLENE takes a pill, preferring not to wallow in her own disappointment, and as that familiar euphoria hits again, she decides to take matters into her own hands.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. AFTERNOON

BILL STONE stands proud in his apartment, after his little experiment earlier, he's put all the clothes back, now standing naked and erect in the comfort of his home. Why not? He's comfortable with himself. With an apartment as beautiful as his, why wouldn't you be.

While he looks out of the window, a knock rings through the house, BILL proudly striding over to answer it. As he looks through the peep hole, he sees his beautiful wife, ARLENE, pounding on the door, and lets her in, the two instantly embracing, shoving each other to the soft carpet.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. LATE AFTERNOON.

BILL and ARLENE lay on the floor, coming down from an immense high as they both regain their senses, both from their previous activity, and Harriet's pills leaving their system. ARLENE looks around the Stone's apartment, really taking it in for the first time.

It's beautiful. Everything is exactly how ARLENE wanted her apartment to be, only better. Then she remembers.

ARLENE MILLER

Maybe we should be getting back.

BILL MILLER

Why...

ARLENE MILLER

We need to clean up, make dinner...

BILL MILLER
Why can't we stay here.

ARLENE MILLER
Our apartment's back there.

BILL sits in silence, and for the first time in days, his own actions sink in.

The two tidy up, and get dressed into their clothes, all the while looking at the Stone's apartment. As ARLENE feeds kitty, she notices the painting from earlier, pausing to look at it's perfect shade of white. It's understated but classy. It's all she's ever wanted.

With kitty fed and the plants watered, ARLENE and BILL stand at the door. They look at the apartment one last time, and put the key in the door. BILL starts struggling.

ARLENE MILLER
What's wrong Bill?

BILL MILLER
I don't know. The lock's... jammed or something.

ARLENE MILLER
Jammed?

BILL MILLER
I don't know!

ARLENE signals for the key, as she tries her self. It's as if the key doesn't even work with the door anymore.

ARLENE MILLER
Shit

BILL MILLER
What?

ARLENE MILLER
We can't get out.

Panic sets in as Bill starts pacing, ARLENE on the verge of tears as her and her husbands actions really set in.

ARLENE MILLER
We fucked in their apartment!

BILL MILLER
SHUT UP I NEED TO THINK.

ARLENE flinches, as BILL, uncaring starts thinking, pacing until he suddenly stops.

BILL MILLER

Alright. Here's what we do. The Stones won't be back for a few days right? So we stay here, call a locksmith, and then return home. That sound good?

ARLENE and BILL look at each other, and then it hits. They get to stay in the Stone's apartment.

FADE TO:

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX CORRIDOR. AFTERNOON.

Grunts and sounds of strenuous labour fill the corridors, as we meet the source: ALISON and JARREL SMITH. As the two travel along carrying heavy boxes, they constantly and compassionately check the other is doing ok, as they arrive at their destination, APARTMENT 52.

As they set down their boxes, stretching out slightly, JARREL fiddles with the key. ALISON looks at their neighbour's door, noticing a parcel from a pharmacy, as she decides to do something nice and knocks on the door.

It opens.

ALISON SMITH

Hey, sorry to bother you, but there was a parcel left at your door.

In front of her are BILL and ARLENE STONE, the most beautiful, well dressed couple she's ever seen, as ARLENE smiles back at her, BILL in the back giving a warm nod to JARREL.

ARLENE STONE

(cheerfully)

Ah! I was wondering where that got to! (beat) Hey between you and me, sometimes the postmen in these apartments can be a real pain.

ARLENE laughs at her own comment, ALISON feeling a little less self conscious about delivering someone else's medicine. BILL moves out into the hallway to help his fellow man.

BILL STONE

You guys moving in?

JARREL SMITH

Yeah, just about to start unpacking

BILL STONE

We've been here for some time now, this is a wonderful complex.

JARREL SMITH

Really?

BILL STONE

Yeah, I mean you're right in the heart of the city here.

ARLENE STONE

So many great places to eat too.

JARREL props the door open as him and BILL each carry a box inside.

INT. APARTMENT 52. AFTERNOON

As BILL and JARREL drop the boxes inside, ARLENE and ALISON talk in the hallway. JARREL notions he's going to get a drink, as BILL nods politely, looking at the empty apartment in front of him. It's shoddy craftsmanship a far cry from his beautiful home.

BILL STONE

You've made a great choice with this place.

JARREL SMITH

Thanks.

BILL simply chuckles, as JARREL carries a box to the mantelpiece, hanging up a skyline painting. BILL's smile gets more forced.

BILL STONE

Well, I'm afraid I'm gonna have to leave you to it.

JARREL SMITH

I'm sure we'll handle it. Thanks for carrying the boxes in.

BILL STONE

(with the fakest laugh
you've ever heard)

You're welcome!

As BILL leaves, he politely nods and waves at ALISON, before motioning to ARLENE to return to the apartment. ALISON and JARREL look at each other and smile, happy they at least have nice neighbours.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. NIGHT.

It's dinnertime in the STONES apartment, as ARLENE carries the gorgeous meal she's prepared over to BILL, who's sat waiting at the table. She lays his down first, giving him a kiss, then moves to the other end of the dining table, where she places down her plate, and sits. They eat.

BILL STONE

This is wonderful, thank you dear.

ARLENE smiles with her entire body, deeply pleased by the praise, as she returns to her meal, waiting for BILL's next comment.

BILL STONE

So, what did you think of the new neighbours?

ARLENE STONE

They seem nice. A little scruffy though.

BILL STONE

Oh absolutely, I don't know where the hell they shop. They look like they crawled out of the bargain bin.

ARLENE gives out a laugh, warm and genuine yet shrill and forced.

ARLENE STONE

What's it like in their apartment.

BILL gives her a stern look, before answering.

BILL STONE

Shabby. I mean you know how rental apartments are, the tenants don't own it so they don't respect it. Shoddy craftsmanship for careless cheapskates.

ARLENE STONE

Maybe they'll make a nice home out of it.

BILL STONE

I doubt it. From what I saw, they're absolutely tasteless. You should have seen their mantelpiece, it had one of those ugly, mass produced generic city skylines hanging above it. It was disgraceful!

BILL barely makes it through the end of his sentence, his anger building with every description.

ARLENE tenses, but her love for her husband shines through, and she says nothing, returning to her meal, before stopping and notioning to BILL that she wants to speak.

BILL STONE

Yes dear?

ARLENE STONE
Our prescription arrived today.

BILL STONE
Wonderful! Just in time for the
trip.

BILL looks over smugly at his wife after that last sentence,
watching her excited expressions as the prospect settles in.

ARLENE STONE
Oh my god! Where are we going?

BILL STONE
Cheyenne! A team building exercise
I'm told.

ARLENE STONE
(dreamily)
Is Kitty coming with us?

BILL STONE
No dear, I'm going to ask the
Smiths to look after her while
we're gone. A change of scenery
will do them some good.

ARLENE smiles at BILL lovingly and nods in agreement, sure
she should be upset about letting strangers into her lovely
home, but BILL always knows what to do. He's so smart.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX. AFTERNOON

Later that week, BILL and ARLENE STONE are packing their
bags into their car, as the SMITHS stand outside with them.

JARREL SMITH
Have fun!

ARLENE STONE
We will!

BILL STONE
You kids have fun too!

BILL looks ALISON dead in the eyes, overflowing with charm.

BILL STONE
You look after him now Alison.

ALISON SMITH
(awkwardly)
I'll try.

BILL STONE
Well. Thank you both again, but we
should be heading off.

And that they do, waving as they drive off. Once the STONES are out of view, the SMITH's look at each other, genuinely unsure of what just happened.

INT. CAR. AFTERNOON.

In the car, BILL STONE stoically drives, while ARLENE is cosied up in the chair, lovingly looking at her perfect generous husband the entire time. She goes into her handbag to find her meds, only to see nothing there.

ARLENE STONE

Oh Bill... I forgot my pills!

BILL STONE

Don't you worry dear, I'll lend you some of mine, then we can find a pharmacy and get you some tomorrow.

With that, ARLENE's worries are lifted. She's so lucky she married BILL STONE, for in that moment, her love for her husband escapes the horrible feelings she gets when she misses her meds.

With her head dreamily resting on BILL's shoulder, the two continue on their journey to Cheyenne.

EXT. CHEYENNE FIELD. NIGHT.

It's night-time when the STONES pull up to "Cheyenne", an seemingly middle of nowhere field where a circle of benches are set up. Where BILL and ARLENE park, there's an incline that makes the area visible, and if the lights and festivities are anything to go off, they're not the only ones there.

BILL and ARLENE look at each other, and hold hands as they excitedly join the party.

In the party, STONES of all races, genders and sexualities gather together, wearing identical clothes, or variations of the same style.

BILL and ARLENE get chatting to some same sex STONES, their interactions almost eerie reflections of each other, while in the background, hooded priests in black watch over them like dark shepards.

None of the STONES notice them, too invested in their interactions to care.

In the centre, a priest starts to prepare something, while the STONES keep chatting. As they drone on, ARLENE starts to feel a little weird, as if she's slowly waking up from a week of sleep.

ARLENE STONE

Bill never told me he worked with you two?

BILL looks absolutely offended at this, glaring at ARLENE with genuine anger, as the OTHER STONES brush it off.

WILSON STONE

I mean he probably didn't considering we're from different branches.

BILL STONE

Oh don't worry about her, she can be quite the airhead.

The STONE men laugh, speaking as if this as the most obvious thing ever, as ARLENE starts looking around and really taking in her surroundings, noticing the PRIESTS, but becoming physically uncomfortable.

BILL notices his wife, scowling at how rude she's being, before excusing himself from the conversation to deal with her.

BILL STONE

(rudely)

What's wrong with you?

ARLENE MILLER

I don't know.... Something just seems weird about this whole thing Bill. There's these hooded guys watching us and...

ARLENE's increasingly frantic words are cut off by BILL, who physically shuts her up, while digging into his bag and getting the pill bottle.

ARLENE MILLER

Bill, please...

BILL STONE

You're in one of your moods Arlene.

BILL passes the meds her way. ARLENE backs up.

ARLENE MILLER

You don't see them?

She points to the priests. BILL turns around to face them, before instantly looking back at her, unimpressed.

BILL STONE

(patronisingly)

Those are the security guards Arlene... They're with the company.

He slips the pill past her lips, and before she can protest, makes her drink.

BILL STONE

Here.

ARLENE MILLER slips away as the pill takes hold, as she looks back at the priests, who are now SECURITY GUARDS. BILL was right. How could she be such an embarrassment?

BILL checks she's back, and gives her a pat on the back, as the two walk off to return to their conversation, an eased smile on ARLENE's face.

Behind them a crowd of Stones start moving towards the center of the field, where a small stage is set up, among murmurs of "it's starting." BILL and ARLENE follow, as the "SECURITY GUARDS" on the edges of the field move in like shepherds herding sheep.

In the center of the field stands a stage, as the "CEO" addresses the crowd, his words aren't audible, drowned out by what sounds like a chant from an ancient language.

The STONES surrounding them watch in awe, as the CEO continues, the dominant partner standing proud as the submissive STONES lay their head on their shoulder.

As the CEO continues, we return to ARLENE, who has no clue what's going on, as we see the CEO through her eyes, a figure in a dark hood throat singing not to a crowd, but at them.

Her teeth clench as anxiety battles the nirvana of the pill, as she looks around at the oblivious crowd. As she blinks, the CEO returns to his pep talk, the DARK PRIESTS becoming SECURITY GUARDS once more.

ARLENE relaxes, resting on her wonderful husbands shoulder, looking into his eyes as the throat singing reaches a crescendo.

Behind them, alternate STONES rapidly start spontaneously exploding into a bloody mist of flesh and bone, at first random, but then in a pattern, a wave of carnage that edges near BILL and ARLENE.

The two look into their eyes oblivious, as they explode, their cashmere jumpers torn violently apart by the force. From their bodies, a colourful aura of light floats out, as it makes its way towards the CEO, who is feeding on the souls of his workers.

As the mass of souls enter his deformed mouth, we linger on what's left of the STONES. Nothing more than the bones of their feet stick out of blood stained loafers, surrounded by shreds of cashmere, and patches of flesh.

Identical scenes of carnage lay around them. As the CEO finishes his feast, and walks off the field.

INT. STONES APARTMENT. NIGHT.

From the darkness of the STONES apartment, we hear the muffled sounds of the SMITHS from across the hall.

JARREL SMITH
ALISON! I'm off to feed kitty!

ALISON SMITH
(mockingly)
Have fun!

JARREL SMITH
Eh, I'll try.

We hear footsteps approach the apartment, as they stop suddenly, followed by the jangling of keys.

The door opens, the light of the corridor piercing through the room, as JARREL SMITH stands in the doorway, ready to feed kitty.