

"Zombie" v. 2021.02.26

written by

Martina Reese

407 Ashland Ave, 2F
River Forest, IL 60305 USA
312-316-3011
martha@martinreese.com

FADE IN:

1 EXT. DESERTED GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

1

ADELE, a 20-something female, is driving her car on a remote road. Suddenly, she brakes to a stop. Zombies with unrecognizable faces wielding flashlights emerge out of the darkness. They crowd the front and sides of the car, weirdly lit in the glare of the headlights. The strange figures pound menacingly on the hood, windows, and roof of the car. Ominous, dull thuds reverberate in the car interior.

A zombie, at the driver side window, leans forward and peers in. Adele and the zombie make eye contact, to her horror. The zombie smacks the open palm of his hand on the window and leaves it there. Adele recoils and stares, frozen, at the zombie and the hand.

Abigail turns to the crowd of zombies in the headlights. She closes her eyes, grips the steering wheel, and accelerates. The car tires spin, whine, then grab. The car lurches forward.

Adele brakes to a sudden stop, stunned. Checking her rearview mirror, an empty road. She looks in the driver side door mirror. An empty road. She turns in her seat and looks out the rear window. The exhaust of her car billows silently into the night, glowing red in the light of her car's taillights. Adele turns forward and drives into the silent void of night.

2 INT. PIZZA RESTAURANT - DAY

2

Adele enters the pizza restaurant. Standing behind the counter, CURTIS (her ex-boyfriend), a 20-something male, wipes the countertop. Curtis has a large purple-to-yellow bruise on and around his nose. Two strips of white medical tape span the bridge of his nose.

The restaurant seating area is empty except for SASHA, a 20-something female. Sasha sits at a table not far from the counter. She leans back, tipping against the wall. She scans her cell phone. On the table near her, a plate with an uneaten wedge of pizza. A plastic cup.

ADELE

What happened to you?

CURTIS

What do you mean?

ADELE

Your face.

CURTIS

Oh, nothing. Just a little accident.

ADELE

Is your nose broken?

CURTIS

Could be.

Adele waits for more explanation, but it is not forthcoming.

ADELE

Sorry to surprise you at work.

CURTIS

Mmm hmm.

Adele sees a knee-high nylon stocking stuffed full of bumpy, protruding objects on the countertop near Curtis. She is fixated and repelled.

ADELE

What is that?

CURTIS

Oh, that. We get organic garlic from a local farmer. This is how they deliver it. Apparently it lasts longer if the air can get in, but no light. Otherwise it sprouts. Or rots.

Curtis says "rots" like it's an accusation. Adele stares fixedly at the garlic sac. Curtis lifts the garlic sac. He swings it toward Adele's face. She recoils.

CURTIS (CONT'D)

Jumpy?

Curtis is amused at Adele's discomfort. He darts a glance at Sasha. Adele turns her head to intercept the glance between Curtis and Sasha. Sasha sees she is being watched. She quickly turns her head down to gaze at her cell phone, suppressing a grin. Adele turns back to Curtis.

ADELE

(quiet, angry)

Who is that?

Curtis looks at her defiantly but doesn't answer.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Are you seeing somebody already?

She waits for a response.

ADELE (CONT'D)

We broke up, what was it, 6...7 days ago?

CURTIS

When do you get to the part where you say why you're here? Wanna buy a slice?

ADELE

Why haven't you been responding to my texts?

CURTIS

Did you text me?

ADELE

Fuck you, Curtis. Okay, I came by to get back my apartment key fob.

CURTIS

What apartment key fob?

ADELE

Curtis, don't fuck with me. The key to my apartment that I gave you.

CURTIS

I don't have a key to your apartment.

ADELE

What, did you lose it or something?

CURTIS

I never had a key to your apartment.

ADELE

What the fuck, of course you did. I paid 25 bucks to get it for you.

CURTIS

Nuh uh. We talked about it, but you never got around to getting me one...

ADELE

You lying fuck.

CURTIS

...and I thought that was a bad sign, like you didn't trust me.

ADELE

Listen, you prick, you and I both know that you've had a key to my place for months and, no, you've got it backwards. You're the one who never gave me keys to your apartment, even though you kept saying you would. I bet the fob is still in your pocket on the ring with your own keys.

CURTIS

Don't think so.

ADELE

Show me.

CURTIS

Show you what? The key I don't have?

ADELE

Show me your keys, then. I know you keep them all together on the same ring.

Adele extends her hand, palm up.

CURTIS

(looks at her extended palm, then at her face)

I don't have to show you anything, uh, Adele. And believe it or not, I don't have your key.

ADELE

If you don't have it, uh, Curtis, then you shouldn't have a problem showing me your keys to prove it, right?

Curtis glances over toward Sasha. Adele follows his glance and looks at her too. Sasha stares back at Adele. Still fixed on Adele, Sasha picks up the wedge of pizza and takes a big bite from the point end. She chews it slowly, opening her jaw wide and keeping her lips open as she masticates the pulpy mass. Wet, sloppy sounds of chewing travel across the room to Adele.

ADELE (CONT'D)
(quiet, urgent, demanding)
Curtis, who the hell is that?

CURTIS
Who, her?

ADELE
Yes, her. The one you're exchanging
secret glances with.

Curtis shrugs, looks smug.

ADELE (CONT'D)
I'm really uncomfortable with this
whole situation and I'd like to
leave as soon as possible.

CURTIS
What's stopping you?

ADELE
My key, Curtis. I want it. Unless
you're hiding something, just show
me your keys and that'll be the end
of it.

Grudgingly, fixing Adele with a steady gaze, Curtis slips his hand into his pocket and pulls out a clutch of keys. He dangles them, swinging, in front of Adele's face. She reaches out for them and he jerks them back just out of her grasp. Adele glares at Curtis. He taunts her with the swinging keys, then drops them into her open hand.

Holding the bunch of keys in her palm, Adele pokes at them to make sure.

ADELE (CONT'D)
Did you take it off already?

CURTIS
Nope.

ADELE
Where is it?

CURTIS
Never had it.

Adele smacks the wad of keys onto the countertop. She turns abruptly away from the counter and heads toward the restaurant exit.

As she walks toward the door, she looks back over her shoulder. Another significant look between Curtis and Sasha. Sasha feels herself being watched and turns to look at Adele. Unsmiling, she flutters her fingers and waves bye-bye.

SASHA
Leaving already?
(dangling her slice of
pizza, bit tip down)
Want a bite of this before you go?

ADELE
(stares, then turns back to
Curtis)
I'm going to have my lock changed,
Curtis!

Curtis looks at Adele, smirking, defiant.

CURTIS
Knock yourself out.

Adele turns to the pizza-eating female.

ADELE
And you...you... I would call you a
bitch to your face, but the word's
too good for you.

SASHA
(amused)
Damn right it is.

Adele exits in a hurry.

3 EXT. FOREST PRESERVE - DAY

3

Adele is walking BUSTER, a dog, in the forest. She unclips the leash where it attaches to the dog's collar and wads the leash into her coat pocket. She pulls a tennis ball out of her pocket and throws it. Buster retrieves it. They do that a few times.

Walking along, Adele comes upon a limestone-lined Ancient Pit in the undergrowth. Adele stands at some distance from the Pit. Stares into it. She looks all around. Empty forest, fallen limbs and branches. She approaches and circles the Pit. She squats at the edge, peers down into it. Nothing down there except standing water and dead leaves.

Meanwhile Buster is doing some exploring of her own. The dog finds a length of dirty rope with frayed ends partially buried among leaves and branches. The dog gnaws at the dirty rope and tugs it free.

Adele drops a stick into the pit; there is a splash. Rising to stand at the edge of the Pit, Adele calls to Buster and pats her thigh.

ADELE

C'mon, Buster. Let's go.

She heads back in the direction from which they came. The dog follows her, dragging the rope in its mouth. Pausing to wait for the dog, Adele sees the rope.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Buster, drop it. We don't want that dirty old thing.

Adele pulls the rope from the dog's jaws. She throws it away into the undergrowth. Adele and dog walk out of the forest into a clearing with a picnic table.

Adele sits on the bench of a picnic table. She calls Buster, who trots to her. She bends down with the leash in hand to reattach it to the dog's collar. She notices that something is stuck to the bottom of her shoe. She crosses her leg, resting her foot on her other knee. There is a mangled, dirty piece of silver duct tape stuck to the treads of her shoe.

4

INT. ADELE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

4

Adele sits on the couch facing her open laptop. She is part way into a Zoom appointment with her THERAPIST AKA Not-Doctor Blodgett, a 50-something male. The Therapist is seen only on her laptop screen during the entirety of the scene. Not-Doctor Blodgett holds a pen and takes occasional notes in what may be a notebook out of view at the bottom of the frame. He periodically sips something from a glass. Is it bourbon? He may be slightly intoxicated.

ADELE

So there was a bunch of them chasing me, and some dogs I think, and my pants got caught on a thorny bush or something and I panicked and struggled to get my pants uncaught before they caught up with me and I kept pulling and pulling and my pants ripped. Wait, I've got that same pair of pants right here.

(MORE)

ADELE (CONT'D)

I'll show you what I'm talking about.

Adele gets up from the couch and walks out of the room. While she is away from the laptop, the Therapist yawns, scratches his face, looks at his watch, looks bored. Adele reappears with a wadded pair of jeans in hand. She sits on the couch facing her open laptop screen. She lifts the thigh of her pant leg to the computer camera. She shows the Therapist the evidence, sticking her finger through the rip.

ADELE (CONT'D)

It's this rip right here. It didn't used to be there.

THERAPIST

Yeah, I see there's a rip in your pants. What did they look like, these...uh, zombies?

The Therapist twitches with a hiccup which neither he nor Adele acknowledge.

ADELE

I couldn't really see them. It was dark and they had flashlights pointed at me. And I was running away as fast as I could of course.

THERAPIST

Sounds like a nightmare.

ADELE

Yeah, doesn't it? But I know it was real, because I have these ripped pants.

THERAPIST

Would you excuse me for a minute? I need to run to the powder room.

ADELE

Sure, sure.

The Therapist leaves the frame of the Zoom call. Adele is left looking at the far wall of his room. He is gone a long time. Adele twiddles her hair. She becomes increasingly impatient. She mutters angrily under her breath.

ADELE (CONT'D)

C'mon, dude. Crap on your own time, will ya?

Adele continues to wait. She jiggles her foot. She picks up her phone from the table next to her laptop. She scrolls through the screen of her phone.

NORA, a 5-year-old girl, appears in the Zoom window on Adele's laptop, having stepped into view of the Therapist's computer camera. Adele, looking up from her phone, sees the girl onscreen.

NORA
 (tunelessly singing the
 theme from Rosemary's
 Baby)
 La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

ADELE
 Hi! Who are you?

The young girl is oblivious to Adele's presence.

ADELE (CONT'D)
 Where's Doctor Blodgett?

The young girl lifts the glass from the Therapist's desk. She smells the liquid, makes a face. She takes a tiny sip. She sputters.

NORA
 Yucky.

Nora places the glass back on the desktop, out of view. She picks up the Therapist's pen. She seems to scribble profusely onto the page where he had been making his encounter notes.

NORA (CONT'D)
 La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Nora puts down the pen. She picks up a flesh-colored knee-high nylon stocking from the floor. She pulls it onto her arm like a glove. She tugs, stretching it over her elbow.

NORA (CONT'D)
 La, la, la, la, la, la, la, la.

Nora pulls the nylon stocking off of her arm and drops it on the floor. She wanders out of view of the camera.

ADELE
 Hello? Hey, little girl, are you
 still there?

After a short time, Adele gives up hailing the departed girl. She fixes her attention on her phone. After some time, the Therapist returns and sits in front of the camera.

He offers no explanation or apology for his lengthy absence. He takes a drink from his glass.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Well that took a minute.

THERAPIST

Huh?

ADELE

It took you long enough. I started to wonder if you were coming back.

THERAPIST

Ah, so you felt it as abandonment. That's important. It would be good to talk about what kind of situations make you feel abandoned.

ADELE

Now?

THERAPIST

If you wish. Only if you're comfortable talking about it... Or another time.

As Adele talks, the Therapist absentmindedly sticks his pinkie finger into his ear and fishes around. He pulls out the finger, looks at the tip. He flicks something away. His hand drops out of view. He picks up the pen again.

ADELE

I was in the middle of telling you about my horrifying experience being chased by zombie-like creatures in the forest...

THERAPIST

Oh, right. Yes, let's go back to that. That nightmare...

ADELE

Not a nightmare! Look at this rip!

Adele grabs the jeans from the couch next to her and holds them up to the laptop camera.

THERAPIST

That nightmare...ish...experience when your pants got ripped.

Adele drops the jeans back onto the couch.

ADELE

Ugh. You're mocking me.

THERAPIST

Mirroring. I'm mirroring you. It's a common technique we therapists use.

ADELE

What are you drinking, anyway?

THERAPIST

What, this?

He lifts the glass and swirls its contents.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

This is, uh, iced tea.

He takes a sip.

ADELE

Why do you seem drunk?

THERAPIST

Do I? We can talk about why you feel that way too, of course.

ADELE

God, you talk like a...such a...

THERAPIST

Such a...?

ADELE

Such a therapist. Who was that girl?

THERAPIST

What girl?

ADELE

The girl who was in the room while you were gone to the bathroom.

THERAPIST

Hmmm, I don't know what you saw. There's nobody here but me.

ADELE

Look at your notepad. She scribbled on it.

THERAPIST

My what?

ADELE

Your paper thing, down there, look down. She was writing on it while you were gone.

THERAPIST

Uh, I'm looking at it, and there are no stray marks on it.

ADELE

Can I see?

THERAPIST

See the notes?

ADELE

Yes. Can I see the paper she wrote on?

THERAPIST

Well, these are my encounter notes, and it's not considered good practice to share them.

ADELE

With me?

THERAPIST

With anyone. It would be unprofessional and unethical.

ADELE

Ugh. Impossible. And what's that sock-thing she was playing with?

THERAPIST

Sock thing?

ADELE

Look by your keyboard. Some brownish, stretchy thing. Or look on the floor.

THERAPIST

(bending to pick up a
flesh-colored knee high
nylon stocking from the
floor)

This, if you must know, is a
compression stocking.

(MORE)

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

They reduce the risk of blood clots in the lower legs. Since I sit so much for my practice.

The Therapist pulls on the ends of the stocking. He stretches it horizontally to its full length in front of the camera.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

I should be wearing them now, actually.

The Therapist puts down the stocking. He looks at Adele, waiting a few beats before continuing.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

So what's going on, Adele?

ADELE

What do you mean what's going on?

THERAPIST

My beverage, the mystery girl, the encounter notes, the stocking. Are you avoiding talking about yourself today? If so, I want to challenge you a little bit about that.

ADELE

I was talking about me, then you walked away and I was left just sitting here waiting for fucking ever.

THERAPIST

(pauses, puts his hands on his face, rubs both eyes with fingers, sighs)

I'm going to say something, uh, Adele, and it may not feel good to hear it. Right now, your anxiety and anger are manifesting as hostility. Toward me. That's called transference. I'm sorry to insert psychiatric jargon. It can be beneficial and productive for people — like you — in a therapeutic setting — like this — to transfer their feelings about other people and situations onto their therapist. That's normal. Healthy. It's a sign that you're moving forward.

(MORE)

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

With continued work, I think we can make progress on the feelings you struggle with like anxiety, anger...

The Therapist takes another drink from the glass and smacks his lips and exhales appreciatively. He wipes his mouth crudely with the sleeve of his shirt. There is the distant sound of a buzzer.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Oh, yes. That'll be the plumber. I'll just go let him in and get him started. There's a leak in the kitchen I've waited too long to fix. Hold on, I'll be right back.

The Therapist gets up and Adele is again left with a view of his empty room. She stares into the screen, waiting.

ADELE

(hissing)
Scumbag.

5 EXT. FOREST PRESERVE - NIGHT

5

Adele is held captive deep in an Ancient Pit in the forest, alone in the dark of the night. Her mouth is sealed with duct tape. Her hands and feet are bound with rope.

Zombies with unrecognizable faces approach through the forest and assemble around the Pit. They lurk above her. She is blinded by the glare of their flashlights. A zombie with a disfigured face crouches at the rim of the Pit. The steam of his exhalations in the cold night air is illuminated in the flares of the other zombies' flashlights. He extends his hand ominously toward Adele. Adele screams into the lonely void.

6 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

6

Adele walks along the sidewalk. She carries two heavily laden reusable grocery bags. She stops at an intersection. She pushes the button to activate the pedestrian walk light.

Diagonally across the intersection, she sees two men - they may or may not be Curtis and the Therapist. They stand on the corner together, talking. Curtis has a large gauze rectangle taped over his nose with medical tape. Curtis passes something to the Therapist. It is a roll of silver duct tape. The two men talk inaudibly, nodding. They bump elbows, bid each other farewell. They part company walking in opposite directions.

The walk light blinks on. Adele hurries across the intersection, lugging her heavy grocery bags. As she arrives on the other side of the street, the Therapist crosses the street to the corner diagonally opposite where she has just arrived. Curtis continues walking away. Adele waits for another walk light to cross the street to the corner where the two men had been standing when she first saw them. The men, walking in opposite directions, move ever farther away from Adele and their original position. Finally, the walk light illuminates. Adele crosses the street.

The Therapist, now a considerable distance away, gets into a parked car. He drives away. Adele turns to follow Curtis, who is by now half a block away on the sidewalk. Struggling with the heavy bags, Adele hustles to catch him. Curtis turns into an alley beyond an apartment building. When Adele gets to the alleyway and turns the corner, she sees no one. She stands there, deflated, sagging with the weight of the bags.

7 INT. MICHELLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

7

Adele sits on one end of the couch. MICHELLE, a 25-28 white female, sits facing Adele at the other end, feet up on the couch, leaning against some cushions. In other words, Michelle is taking up 2/3 of the couch while Adele is confined to 1/3. On the coffee table in front of Michelle rests Michelle's laptop, lid up, log-in screen showing. Michelle holds up a joint in one hand and a big click-on lighter in the other and looks at Adele.

MICHELLE

You want?

ADELE

Nah. It'll just make me paranoid.

Michelle clicks the lighter and lights the joint. She inhales, then talks funny while she holds it. She puts the lighter on the coffee table.

MICHELLE

I don't think we can blame your paranoia on weed, dude.

(exhales, talks normally)

In your case, a hit or two might make you you less paranoid.

Michelle holds the burning joint toward Adele, offering a second time. Adele does not take it.

ADELE

You've seen me high. It's not pretty.

(MORE)

ADELE (CONT'D)

(pause)
Speaking of paranoid...

MICHELLE

Uh oh.

ADELE

(perplexed)
Does it seem possible that Curtis
would know my therapist?

MICHELLE

What makes you say that?

ADELE

I think I saw them together.
Standing on the sidewalk near my
building.

MICHELLE

Is that likely? Do they even know
each other?

Michelle takes another hit and holds it.

ADELE

That's what I'm asking. I think it
was them. Together. Talking. Like
they knew each other.

MICHELLE

(Michelle exhales smoke,
laughing)
Talking about you, of course.

ADELE

Knock it off. And Curtis had this
big gauzy thing over his nose, and
you know when I saw him at the
pizza place he had these big
bruises...

Adele waves her hand in front of her nose and eyes.

MICHELLE

He had a big gauze thing over his
face. So you couldn't really see
his face, but you're pretty sure it
was him?

ADELE

Well, yeah.

MICHELLE
What was he wearing?

ADELE
I don't remember. But I think I
could recognize him at a distance.
(pause)
I did go out with the guy for six
months, you know.

MICHELLE
Okay, if you say so. And the
therapist. Does he live around
here?

ADELE
No idea.

MICHELLE
Have you ever met him? In person, I
mean? Face to face?

ADELE
No. He does tele-whatever only.

Michelle inhales and holds it, taking her time. She exhales slowly.

MICHELLE
Telehealth.

ADELE
Yeah, telehealth.

MICHELLE
So, did you go up to them to say hi
and why the fuck are you lurking in
my neighborhood?

ADELE
Well, I wanted to, actually. Or at
least get closer so I could see
them better. But I was over here on
this corner, and they were on the
diagonal opposite corner, and by
the time I got to that corner, one
had gone one way and the other the
other. The doctor got in a car and
drove away.

MICHELLE
Poof! They disappeared!

Michelle licks her fingertips. She pinches out the burning tip of the joint. [Don't worry, we'll protect her fingertips with duct tape.] It sizzles. She puts it in an ashtray on the coffee table.

ADELE

Shut up.
(pause)
Does that hurt?

MICHELLE

A little.
(pause)
What kind of car?

ADELE

I don't know! Just a regular car. I think it was silver.

MICHELLE

You're a mess. I guess you're not ready to see the humor in this, are you?

ADELE

What's not funny is that my therapist is an asshole. And it pisses me off that Curtis is involved with somebody else already.

MICHELLE

What do you care about that a-hole? Let him shit all over somebody else for a change. You're better off, right?

ADELE

I'm freaked out. Curtis is just a tiny part of it.
(pause)
I keep having these bizarre dreams that feel like real experiences. Then I think I'm having real experiences that feel like dreams.
(pause)
And when I try to talk to people about them, they act like I'm making it up...or crazy.

MICHELLE

I love bizarre dreams! Tell me.

ADELE

Okay, which one do you want. The Ancient Pit in the forest?

MICHELLE

The Ancient Pit! Definitely.

ADELE

Don't laugh, promise?

With an air of mock solemnity, Michelle forms first the salute from Hunger Games, then a peace sign, then a Vulcan salute, then the scout's-honor sign with her right hand. She's too high to care. She turns to check that she has indeed formed a scout's-honor sign, rotating her hand to her face, then back toward Adele.

ADELE (CONT'D)

So I had a dream, although - please don't think I'm a weirdo...

Michelle drops the scout's-honor hand sign.

ADELE (CONT'D)

...it feels like maybe it really happened. But I can't prove it. I was kidnapped or abducted or something. The first thing I remember is I was really cold and I was sitting in a funny-smelling place with my hands and feet tied up, and I had no idea how I got there. It was totally dark, and I didn't know if I was blind, or it was dark, or if I was blindfolded. And I sat there, not knowing where I was, thinking nobody would ever find me and I could just die there alone in the dark.

MICHELLE

Yeah, that could happen.

ADELE

You mean it?

Michelle looks skeptically at Adele.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Or, no. You're kidding.

MICHELLE

Just tell me the story. Take a fucking joke, okay? You're so hypersensitive.

Adele sits up straight, leans forward, and puts her hands on the couch on either side of her legs, as though she may stand and leave.

ADELE

Well, maybe I...

MICHELLE

(interrupting, extending her hand in a restraining gesture)

Sit. Stay. Talk.

(pause)

Jeez. Do I have to beg you?

Adele relaxes back into the couch, still sulky. She makes Michelle wait. Michelle looks mock-penitent. Adele begins the storytelling. She glances at Michelle frequently for signs of disbelief.

ADELE

Then I heard sounds of people from up above me. Then there were little flashes of light and I got these little glimpses of where I was. It was some kind of stone pit, like an old well or something...

Losing herself in the storytelling, Adele stops checking for Michelle's reaction. She's reliving the nightmare.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Then these weird people, or not really people, more like zombies, or something, two of them, I think, or, I don't know, maybe more, they're standing up there looking down at me and I can't see anything cuz they're shining lights in my eyes. But what's even weirder than all that is, they have these blurry faces and they just stand there looking down at me and they don't say anything, and...

Michelle reaches forward to the coffee table. She pulls the laptop onto her lap.

When the laptop is moved, an oddly shaped, nylon-socking sac tied closed by a knot in its middle is revealed on the coffee table. Adele sees it and is transfixed.

ADELE (CONT'D)
(nodding toward the sac)
What's that?

MICHELLE
Yes, that! Thanks for reminding me.
It's for you!

ADELE
But what is it?

MICHELLE
It's organic garlic. There's a couple cloves in there for you.

ADELE
But that sac thing, it's...

MICHELLE
It's to keep it from sprouting. Or rotting.

Adele turns to look at Michelle.

ADELE
Where did you get it?

MICHELLE
Oh, I got it from...from, uh...

Michelle breaks off and looks away from Adele. She recovers herself and proceeds, still avoiding eye contact with Adele.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Oh, I remember. I got it from the farmer's market! They sell them by the full bag, and there's too much in there for me to use all by myself, so I thought maybe you...

Michelle focuses her attention on her laptop. She begins typing fast, looking intently at the screen. Adele watches her for a while in wonder.

ADELE
What are you doing?

MICHELLE
This is trippy stuff. I want to get it down.

ADELE

Get it down?

MICHELLE

Take notes. That stuff you were saying about the stone pit and the zombies. The zombie bondage kidnapping!! It's great! I think I can use it.

As Michelle types, Adele looks at her, baffled.

ADELE

What do you mean, use it?

MICHELLE

(pausing in her typing)
You may not see it, because you're too close to it. But you've really got something here. There's the bones of a great horror screenplay.
(typing again)

ADELE

Huh?

MICHELLE

(still typing)
If I build this out into a story with a beginning, a middle and an end, I might actually be able to sell it...for a change.

ADELE

What?

MICHELLE

(stops typing, testy, impatient)
Yes! Fads come and go, but zombie horror is a genre unto itself. It's got a fanatic cult following.
(pause)
How do you not know that?
(pause)
If you can get a star on board, zombie horror can even go mainstream. The bondage kidnapping piece is very original, and the pit is...well...
(pause)
It's primal.

ADELE

Primal?

MICHELLE

(typing again)

Go! Go! Keep the flow going! Don't stop!

ADELE

Could you just, like, listen to me?

MICHELLE

(stops typing)

I am listening!

(starts again)

I can listen and type at the same time, what's the problem?

ADELE

(quietly)

Michelle.

Michelle keeps typing.

ADELE (CONT'D)

(louder)

Michelle!

Michelle stops typing and looks up, irritated.

MICHELLE

What?

ADELE

I just wanted...

(pause)

I came over because I needed to...

MICHELLE

(interrupting)

So, like, were you gagged?

ADELE

Duct tape or something, I think.

MICHELLE

And how did you get there? Do you remember that part?

(resumes typing)

Did the zombies abduct you or did you just turn up in the pit?

ADELE

(exasperated)

It just feels like I'm trying to tell you about a really traumatic experience I had and meanwhile all you're thinking about is cobbling together a film pitch.

MICHELLE

(stops typing)

Cobbling?

ADELE

Yeah, cobbling.

MICHELLE

Who says that, cobbling?

Adele shakes her head, irritated at the subject being changed, but not wanting to pick a fight.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

(frostily)

Okay, I'll stop cobbling. You have my undivided attention.

Michelle ceremoniously closes the lid of her laptop. She moves it back to the coffee table. She settles back to hear the story, semi-reclining among the couch cushions, arms folded across her chest.

ADELE

Okay. Where was I?

MICHELLE

(tartly)

In a pit.

ADELE

(haltingly)

Oh, yeah. These bizarre zombie-like creatures - maybe four or five of them - are looking down into the pit thing and I can't see anything cuz there are these blinding lights in my eyes. The zombie creature things have these smeary faces with no features and they just stand there and don't say anything, and they're breathing - I remember seeing the steam of its breath - and I was so cold.

(MORE)

ADELE (CONT'D)

(Adele stares at a point on the floor, a million miles away)

And at first I thought they might be people who could help me, so I try to yell, but nothing comes out. And they don't say anything, which seems very weird, and then I try to scream, but I can't even open my mouth.

(reliving the horror of it)

And one of them bends down and sticks out this huge, gross hand in my face, and it gets closer and closer...

(transfixed with the memory)

and then, I don't know... I don't remember what happens after that.

Adele falls silent and looks down at her hands in her lap with a haggard expression. She twists the ring on her middle finger.

ADELE (CONT'D)

(without turning her head)

What do you think?

Hearing no answer, Adele emerges slowly from her reverie, turns to look at Michelle. Michelle is sunk back into the cushions on the couch, sleeping soundly. She breathes steadily through her open mouth.

8 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

8

The beam of a flashlight illuminates Adele's apartment door. A man's hand inside a latex glove waves a key fob at the sensor. The door latch clicks open. The doorknob turns and the man carefully pushes the door open. It is Curtis, but we do not see his face.

9 INT. ADELE'S APARTMENT ENTRY AND HALLWAY - NIGHT

9

The entry area of Adele's apartment is dark. The hand quietly pushes the door closed. Viewed from behind, the man's head is framed by a halo of flashlight glow. He points the flashlight to illuminate his jacket as he extracts a nylon stocking from the pocket. He sets down the flashlight on a nearby console table pointing up toward the ceiling for general illumination. He uses both hands to pull the nylon stocking over his head.

Curtis picks up the flashlight and points it at the floor. He tiptoes across the entryway. He knows where he is going. He approaches a bedroom door. The door is very slightly ajar and a sliver of light shows from inside. He turns off his flashlight and slips it into his jacket pocket. He pushes the door open and slips into the room.

10

INT. ADELE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

10

Curtis stealthily approaches the bed. On the bed, Adele is lying on her back, asleep. Her nightstand light is on. The book she was reading when she fell asleep is open, spine up, on top of the blanket on her tummy.

Leaning over the bed, Curtis carefully picks up the book. He looks at the spine as if to read the title. He shakes his head as if disgusted. He closes the book and carefully puts it face down on the nightstand. Adele sleeps on, undisturbed. Curtis moves to the foot of the bed. He raises one knee, then the other, so he is kneeling on the foot of the bed. He slowly inches forward on his knees, straddling the sleeping Adele. He reaches down and wraps his hands around her neck, squeezing.

Adele gags, coughs, opens her eyes, stiffens, struggles. She thrashes in the bed, trying to pry Curtis's hands from her neck. She looks up at the blurry, smashed face hovering menacingly above. Adele releases her hands from the attacker's grip on her neck. Choking and gagging, she thrusts her right hand, flat palm forward, into the center of his face.

Curtis lurches upward and falls back, yowling in pain. He falls off the side of the bed and staggers to his feet. A bloody stain oozes into the nylon stocking in the area of his nose. Curtis touches his nose with his latex-gloved hand. He sees blood on the glove. He turns and walks quickly toward the bedroom door.

Adele struggles to extricate herself from her bedding. It tangles around her legs and she falls to the floor. She picks herself up. She runs after the intruder, wearing underpants and a t-shirt. Ahead of her in the dark hallway, there are thudding sounds as the intruder bumps into closet doors and walls.

Adele enters the hallway. She finds the wall switch, and flips on the overhead light. The attacker is already out the apartment door, which swings closed as she watches. Adele runs to the door and flings it open. She runs out of her unit into the middle of the hall.

11 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

11

Adele looks left, then right in the hall. Nothing. The force with which Adele flung open the door causes it to ricochet off the interior wall. It slams shut behind her. Adele whips her body around to face her door. She desperately turns the knob. She is locked out.

ADELE

Damn it!

She smacks her open palm on her door.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Fuck, fuck, fuck!

Adele turns around and looks up and down the hall. She fixes her gaze on the door of the apartment across the hall. She runs to it and pounds desperately.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Hello! Hello! Come to the door please! Hello! It's an emergency!

(under her breath)

Wake the fuck up and come to the door.

Adele runs down the hall to the next door. She pounds on it.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Hello! Can you help me please? Open the door!

(under her breath)

Dammit!

Adele grabs the neighbor's doorknob. She yanks on it repeatedly to make it rattle.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Come on! Come to the door!

She turns and goes to the door across from the one she's just knocked at. She pounds with the side of her fist.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Hello, anybody? This is an emergency, can you help? Open up! Open up!

Two men appear at the far end of the hall. They walk toward her. Adele turns to face them, wary. One of them may be Curtis, returning. But, no. As they approach, Adele engages them.

ADELE (CONT'D)

(pleading)

Hey, can you guys help me out? I'm
in kind of a jam. I just got
attacked in my apartment and now
I'm locked out and...

The two men approach without slowing their pace. They look at her warily. They hug the opposite wall to give her a wide berth as they pass her. Having put a little distance between themselves and her, they speak together.

MAN 1 JUAN

(quiet)

What's she trippin on?

MAN 2 VICTOR

Strung ooooouuuuut!

MAN 1 JUAN

Este lugar se esta llendo a la
madre.
~~This building is going to shit.~~

MAN 2 VICTOR

Pero ese traje.... ~~Nice outfit,~~
~~though.~~

The two men walk past the camera and out of view. Adele stares at their retreating figures. She is small and alone in the desolate hallway.

12 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT.

12

Adele walks westbound on the south sidewalk of Lake Street beginning just east of where the bridge over the Kennedy Expressway begins (Chicago). The CTA Green Line elevated tracks loom above. Occasionally trains thunder overhead. As she moves, Adele pokes the screen, then holds her phone to her ear in her right hand. It rings and rings, then someone pick up.

MOTHER

Hello?

ADELE

Hey, mom, are you busy right now?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Hello? Adele?

ADELE

Yes, mom, it's me.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Sweetie, it's very noisy. I can barely hear you.

ADELE
(speaking louder)
Mom, I need to talk to you. I'm freaked out. Somebody broke into my apartment last night while I was asleep...

MOTHER (O.S.)
Honey, I'm having a hard time hearing you. Can you repeat what you just said?

ADELE
Yes, sorry. I'm out walking. I needed to get out of my apartment.

MOTHER (O.S.)
(farther away, addressing someone near her)
No, wait. There are more in the fridge, help yourself. No, not there. Look in the drawer at the bottom. Yes? No. Try the other drawer. Good. Yes. All you want.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(turning her attention to Adele)
Sorry, honey, it's a little crazy here at the moment. By the way, did Buster eat something funny while she was with you? She's been throwing up.

At the point when she arrives at the middle of the Lake Street bridge over the Kennedy Expressway, Adele stops, still facing west. Below, 12 lanes of traffic in ceaseless flow.

ADELE
Do you have people over?

Adele puts her left hand over her left ear to block out some of the city noise.

MOTHER
What?

ADELE
(louder, irritated)
Do you have people over? Visitors?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Oh, my, yes. Joey and Emma and the kids are here. It's a circus. We're just sitting down to eat, and it's way past the kids' bedtime.

Turn 1: North (across bridge)

ADELE

If you were going to have a family get-together, why didn't you let me know?

MOTHER (O.S.)

What's that?

ADELE

Why didn't you tell me they were coming over so I could come too?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Oh honey, I know you always work on Wednesday nights. Aren't you at work now?

Turn 2: East (toward lake)

ADELE

I called in sick, I'm not feeling so great. Somebody attacked me last night.

MOTHER (O.S.)

What's that? I can't hear you.

ADELE

I'm not at work tonight. I didn't go in.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Sweetie, if I'd known you weren't at work, of course I would've loved for you to come to dinner. Can you come over now?

Again, the mother is distracted by drama on her end.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Tommy! Tommy! Put that down, honey, it's dangerous.

(Crash)

Joey! Emma! Come get Tommy, he's...

Turn 3: South (toward bridge railing)

Adele looks down onto the constant flow of expressway traffic.

There is a loud thudding sound, then the sound of a child screaming. There is the sound of many excited voices, children and adults, a dog barking.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (sounding very far away)
 No, honey, it's okay, no. Joey!
 It's okay. We can just mop it up,
 don't worry! Joey! Emma! I need you
 in here... Tommy! Tommy don't walk
 over there. Buster, sit! Sit,
 Buster. Goodness gracious, it
 spattered everywhere.

Adele lets her left hand drop from her ear.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Joey, hold Buster before she tracks
 this stuff all over the house.
 (louder)
 Freddie, don't hit Tommy. He's not
 a bad boy, he just had an accident.
 Freddie, I said stop! Emma!

Adele drops her right hand (the phone).

The pandemonium emanates from Adele's dangling phone. She stares at the traffic below without seeing it. A passing train rumbles past on the track above with a deafening roar. Seen through the railings of the bridge, cars and trucks stream endlessly. Adele is tiny in the throbbing city.

13 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 13

Adele walks along a sidewalk. She arrives at her car and gets in.

14 INT. CAR - DAY 14

Adele inserts her keys and turns on the ignition. She twists in her seat to pull the seatbelt strap from its holder above the doorframe. Facing the window, she freezes. There is a greasy handprint on the driver side window.

Adele breathes onto the glass to create condensation. She lifts her arm to use the sleeve of her coat to to wipe off the handprint. It doesn't budge because it's on the outside of the glass. Adele raises her hand and places it on the inside of the window. She aligns her hand with the print.

It is larger than her own hand. The seatbelt alarm dings and dings and dings.

15 INT. ADELE'S BEDROOM - DAY

15

Adele pulls a tank-style vacuum cleaner on wheels across the floor by its snaky hose and long, tubular metal wand. She pulls her cell phone out of her pocket. She dials, puts the phone on speaker mode. She holds it away from her head with her left hand while manipulating the wand of the vacuum cleaner with her right hand. The ringer sounds. A fuzzy voice on the other end answers.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Hello?

ADELE

Hi, Doctor Blodgett?

THERAPIST (O.S.)

This is Henry Blodgett. Who's calling?

ADELE

This is Adele. Adele Hammersmith.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

(pause)

Oh, yes, Adele. How are you?

ADELE

I'm okay. Not okay actually.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Adele, I'm sorry to hear that. Did you want to set up an appointment? You can always do that by email, of course. By the way, before I forget. I'm sure I've mentioned this before, but it's not exactly correct to address me as Doctor.

ADELE

How are you not a doctor?

THERAPIST (O.S.)

I'm not a doctor per se, I'm a licensed clinical therapist.

(pause)

I have a master's degree.

Adele closes her bedroom door. She vacuums ferociously behind it. She opens the door and moves to another section of the room. She attacks the floor with the vacuum wand.

ADELE

Oh. Um. Uh huh. Anyway, I'm calling to say I'm quitting.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Quitting what?

ADELE

Quitting therapy.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Oh, I see.

(pause)

Of course you are free to do as you wish, but I'd like to discuss your decision with you.

(pause)

Adele, I'm having a hard time hearing you, are you in a noisy location?

ADELE

Yes, I am.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

I see. Do you suppose you could move somewhere quieter just while we're talking?

ADELE

No, that's not possible right now.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Okay, fair enough.

(pause)

I feel like I'm hearing anger in your voice. Are you feeling angry about something? Would you like to talk with me about that?

ADELE

No, I wouldn't like to talk with you about that. I called to tell you I'm quitting.

Adele bends down to vacuum under her bed. With ferocious thrusting motions, she shoves the vacuum cleaner wand here and there. Under the bed, boxes and bins collide.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Like I say, of course you're free to discontinue your sessions at any time. I just want to discuss with you the possibility that you're making a decision while you're in a distressed frame of mind, and it's possible you may later regret it. I suggest, er, strongly recommend, that you find a way to talk about the things that are causing you distress. Whether that's with me or another therapist.

ADELE

Well, I am in distress as you put it, but you're not helping.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Okay, let's talk about the distress. Describe that for me.

ADELE

(exasperated)

I don't want to describe it to you. I'm quitting, remember?

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Yes, of course I remember you saying that. You sound very upset right now. Is everything alright?

ADELE

Somebody broke into my apartment and tried to choke me.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

(pause)

That's awful. When?

ADELE

Four days ago. No, five.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

How traumatic, I'm sure. Did you report it to the police?

ADELE

What's worse is that the person who broke in and choked me was Curtis, you know, my ex. I think it was him.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Curtis broke up with you?

ADELE
You're asking? We spent an entire session talking about it. I broke up with him!

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Are you sure we talked about it?

ADELE
Did we? Were you paying attention?

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Please calm down, uh, Adele. I don't have my session notes at my fingertips right now. I wasn't expecting your call. Anyway, you say you think Curtis broke in and tried to choke you. And you say you did call the police?

Having finished vacuuming under the bed, Adele rises to a standing position. She opens her closet and vacuums into it. Shoes and boxes scoot and tumble out of the way.

ADELE
I waited in the hall for two hours for the building manager to show up with a key. I was wearing these ridiculous, enormous plaid pajama pants I stole from Curtis and an old sweatshirt, inside out. That was Curtis's, too, come to think of it. The building manager looked at me like I was a lunatic.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Did the intruder attack you in the hall?

ADELE
No, in my bedroom. I was sleeping.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
I'm confused. Were you in your bedroom or the hall? I'm trying to piece it together.

ADELE
I got locked out of my apartment.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Someone broke into your apartment, choked you, and locked you out in the hall?

ADELE

No, no, not like that. Curtis - I think it was Curtis - whoever it was - entered my apartment, came into my bedroom while I was sleeping, climbed on top of me, and started to choke me. That's when I woke up. Actually I thought for a while it was a nightmare, but I couldn't breathe. His hands were tight around my neck and I couldn't pull them off he was grabbing and choking so hard. I really thought I was going to die.

Adele stands still while she continues the story. The vacuum cleaner roars impotently.

ADELE (CONT'D)

Then I remembered this self defense move I'd learned in college - smashing somebody in the face with the palm of your hand and breaking their nose.

(fist closed around the vacuum cleaner wand, Adele thrusts her hand forward a few times)

So I did that and I guess it must've hurt like hell, because the guy - like I said I think it was Curtis - let go of my neck and ran out of the room.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

He ran away?

ADELE

He was bleeding from the nose.

THERAPIST (O.S.)

Oh, so you saw his face. Did you get a good look at him?

Adele resumes vacuuming.

ADELE

No, he had this thing over his face, like a mask.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
But you said his nose was bleeding?

ADELE
Not a mask mask, more like a stretchy stocking or something pulled over his face. So his features were kind of smashed. But it really looked like Curtis.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Ah, I see.

ADELE
What?
(pause, then speaking angrily)
What do you see?

THERAPIST (O.S.)
So did the police come right away?

ADELE
(pause)
Like I said, I got locked out of my apartment.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
What? When?

ADELE
I called the building manager, who came with spare keys, but it took him two hours to get there.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Are you still talking about that night? The night of the attack?

ADELE
I chased the guy and when I ran out of my apartment into the hall, the door shut behind me.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
You weren't trying to catch the guy, were you? The intruder? After he'd just attacked you?

ADELE
I wasn't really trying to catch the guy. I was just chasing him. To see if it was really Curtis, I guess.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Incredible. Did you get another
 look at him in the hall?

ADELE
 No. He was gone.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 So you called the building manager,
 then the police? Or did you call
 the police first?

Adele uses her foot to turn off the vacuum cleaner. The roaring motor goes silent. She drops the metal vacuum cleaner wand onto the floor. It clatters. Adele sits down heavily on the edge of the bed.

ADELE
 (gesticulating wildly)
 I didn't have my phone! It was
 locked inside my apartment!

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Then how did you call the building
 manager?

ADELE
 From the security phone in the
 front lobby.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Huh?

ADELE
 There's a button on the panel that
 dials an answering service, then
 they page the building manager. For
 emergencies. But he didn't answer
 at first. I had to keep calling
 back.

Adele reaches for a fingernail clipper from her nightstand and lies tummy down on her bed, legs bent at the knees, feet crossed in the air at the ankles. She places the phone face up on the bed near her face. She clips her fingernails one by one and accumulates the little crescents of fingernail trimmings into a pile on the glassy front of her phone.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Hmmmm, I see.
 (pause)
 What's that now? Do you hear a
 clicking sound on the line?

Adele does not answer.

THERAPIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So the building manager came and
let you back into your apartment,
and then you called the police?

ADELE
I looked. There were no signs of
forced entry.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Does Curtis have a key to your
apartment?

ADELE
I asked him to give it back. He
said he didn't have it.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
So you changed the locks?

ADELE
I can't change the locks! It's a
fob key!

THERAPIST (O.S.)
A fob key?

Adele doesn't answer.

THERAPIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And how about you? Are you hurt? Do
you have any cuts or bruises or
anything?

ADELE
My adam's apple is sore, but
nothing shows on my skin.

Adele sits up, moves to the edge of the bed and reaches for a
small mirror on her nightstand. She inspects her neck in the
mirror, touching her adam's apple gently with her fingertips.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
Did you go to a doctor?
(he waits for an answer,
but there isn't one)
It was a good move to call the
police...
(he waits)
...so they could check out your
story.

(MORE)

THERAPIST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Although it sounds like maybe they
 didn't find any evidence?

ADELE
 Are you accusing me of lying?

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 I'm not accusing you of anything,
 Adele. I'm just going by what you
 told me.

ADELE
 Do you think I'm delusional?

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Adele, what makes you think that I
 think that you think that I think
 you're delusional? I'm more
 concerned that you may think that
 you think you're delusional. Do you
 want to schedule a visit and talk
 about this?

Adele slams the mirror down on her nightstand. She lies down
 on the bed on her side, head supported on one hand, arm with
 bent elbow. She faces the phone, twiddling a strand of hair
 with her free hand.

ADELE
 I don't want to schedule a visit, I
 called you to say I'm not coming
 anymore.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Again. You're free to do whatever
 you want. I only discourage you
 from serially breaking off
 relationships without understanding
 why, especially while you're under
 stress.

ADELE
 Having you as a therapist is
 causing me stress.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
 Adele, I'm very concerned about
 your tendency to become hostile and
 aggressive whenever...

Adele rolls over and reaches out to her phone. She pokes the
 screen carefully so as to not disturb the fingernail
 clippings and ends the call.

16

EXT. CAR WASH DIY-VACUUM BAY AREA - DAY

16

Adele kneels on the back seat of her car, both rear doors open. She pulls on the hose, vacuums the floor. She vacuums the upholstered back seat, jabs the wand into the linty crease where the seatbelts come out.

Sasha's car pulls into the adjoining space to the right of Adele's car. Adele, facing the other direction, does not notice. The occupant of the neighboring car gets out of the driver door. She opens the driver side back doors of her car, then walks around and opens the passenger side back door. She removes the vacuum wand from its holder and walks with it to the open back door of her car. She puts one knee inside and begins vacuuming, facing Adele's car. Parked side by side, the two women vacuum, oblivious to each other.

Adele finishes vacuuming the back seat. She crawls backward out of the car holding the wand. She walks to the front of her car and places the wand in its holder. She walks back to her car, opens the trunk, removes an item, closes the trunk. Carrying the item, she walks to her still open passenger side rear door. Sasha is now fully inside her car, kneeling on the back seat, vacuuming the floor and rear passenger seat near the open door closest to Adele's car. Walking past, Adele glances at her, pauses and stares.

ADELE

(she stops)

Hey, do I know you?

Sasha is intent on her work. Either she doesn't hear Adele over the sound of the vacuum or doesn't want to engage.

ADELE (CONT'D)

(moving a little closer)

Excuse me, haven't we met before?

SASHA

(preoccupied by her work,
barely looking up)

I doubt it.

Adele hovers. Sasha scrubs a while, then talks, hardly looking up.

SASHA (CONT'D)

I need to finish then get through
the carwash, okay? Not a good time
to talk.

Sasha continues vacuuming, focused. Adele watches from a distance, awkwardly pacing back and forth between the two cars.

She places the item from the trunk in her back seat and closes the rear door. She hovers for a moment, then decides to leave.

Adele walks around the rear of her car and closes the other back seat door. She reaches for the handle of her driver door and pauses. She looks over the roof of her car toward Sasha's car. She changes her mind and walks back to the space between the two cars. Paces some more. Glances occasionally into Sasha's car at Sasha's figure as she moves the wand around.

Sasha backs her way out on the far side of her car, and stands, leaving her vacuum wand on the back seat of her car. She opens her passenger side front door. Adele walks around the back of Sasha's car to address her.

ADELE

Hey, I'm sorry to keep bothering you. But you look familiar. Weren't you at the pizza place when I...uh...

Adele stops, flustered. Sasha cocks her head, makes Adele wait.

SASHA

When you.....

ADELE

I came in to get my keys from Curtis.

Again, Sasha makes her wait.

SASHA

(narrowing her eyes)
Curtis. Who's Curtis?

ADELE

Oh, sorry. I must be mistaken. You look a lot like, um...

SASHA

(challenging)
I look a lot like somebody? Who is it I look a lot like?

ADELE

This girl, er, woman, uh, I saw at a...uh...

Sasha leaves her hanging.

ADELE (CONT'D)

You're not going out with Curtis?

SASHA

What did she look like, that other girl?

ADELE

Uh, well, kinda like you.

SASHA

You mean, Black?

ADELE

Yeah, she was.

SASHA

So I guess you're saying all us Black people look alike to you?

ADELE

(uncomfortable, defensive)

No, of course I didn't mean that, haha. I didn't get a real good look at her, that, uh other person.

SASHA

That, uh, what was it, "bitch is too good for you" other person?

Sasha brings her hand to her mouth to cover a smile, the same gesture she used in the pizza restaurant scene when first observed by Adele.

ADELE

So, uh, haha, you are....?

SASHA

Gotcha.

ADELE

Now I'm embarrassed. It was a stupid thing to say.

SASHA

No worries. I took it as a backhanded compliment.

ADELE

I was super pissed at Curtis that day, obviously.

SASHA

Obviously.

They stand a while without speaking.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Well, are we done here?

ADELE
(shaking her head)
Curtis is... Sorry, I guess I
shouldn't run down your boyfriend
to your face.

SASHA
(scoffing)
Boyfriend? Curtis? That wouldn't
happen. The guy's cute, but he's a
liar and a narcissist.

ADELE
I'm kind of relieved to hear you
say that.

SASHA
Well, you're the one that went out
with him.
(pause)
So, you go for creepy cute guys?

ADELE
He's such a good liar!
(pause)
He's such a good liar that it took
me a while to figure out he's a
narcissist. And he is cute.

SASHA
Right!

They stand a while without speaking.

SASHA (CONT'D)
The day you came into the
restaurant, my shift just ended. I
was hanging out for a little while
after Curtis started, just to get
off my feet.

ADELE
So you work there?!

SASHA
Hell, yeah. I wouldn't eat that
shit if it weren't free.

ADELE

(stunned)

I thought you guys were seeing each other.

(pause)

It pissed me off that he had a new girlfriend already.

SASHA

Nah, we're just friends, Curtis and me. But I feel ya. It hurts getting dumped, even by an asshole.

ADELE

(quietly)

Nuh uh. I dumped him.

SASHA

Not what I heard.

ADELE

He said that?

SASHA

Not him. His real new girlfriend.

ADELE

(looking away)

So he does have a new girlfriend?

SASHA

Yup. Mmm hmmm.

ADELE

Who is she? What's her name?

SASHA

Didn't catch that.

ADELE

(looking back to Sasha)

What does she look like?

SASHA

A white chick.

ADELE

But...what? Brown hair? Blonde? What?

SASHA

(winking)

Couldn't tell ya. They all look the same to me.

Adele is silent for a while, seething.

ADELE
He's dangerous, you know. Curtis.

SASHA
(scoffing)
Dangerous? I don't know about that!

They stand, saying nothing.

SASHA (CONT'D)
You know what he says about you,
right?

ADELE
No, what?

SASHA
That you're a psycho buh-buh-buh...

ADELE
(muttering)
Go ahead, say it.

Sasha shows that she's the kind of person who would never say that to somebody. Adele looks down, scrapes her toe on the ground. She looks up at Sasha, then away. She rolls her eyes, shakes her head, exhales in a defeated way.

SASHA
(genuinely sympathetic,
puts a consoling hand on
Adele's shoulder or arm)
Hey, give it time. It really hurts
for a while when they meet somebody
hotter and move on.

ADELE
(quietly incensed)
That's not what happened!

SASHA
Okay, girl. Whatever you say. I'm
sure you've got your version.

Sasha gestures toward the carwash entrance, then her car.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Hey, I need to get back to it.

ADELE

Right. Sorry to hold you up. I'm done, I guess. I'm Adele by the way.

SASHA

I know that.

ADELE

And you are....?

SASHA

Most people call me Sasha, but you can just call me "Bitch-is-too-good-for-you."

ADELE

Sorry 'bout that.

SASHA

(matter of fact)

Don't be. And I'll call you...

ADELE

Psycho bitch.

SASHA (CONT'D)

Psycho buh-buh-buh.

SASHA (CONT'D)

(winks)

Have a nice life.

Adele turns and walks around the rear of her car to her driver door. She gets in the car and pulls away. Sasha removes the vacuum wand from the back seat, closes the back door, and reaches into the front seat area of her car to begin vacuuming there.

17

EXT. RURAL FOREST AND FIELD - NIGHT

17

Adele walk or runs through a forest at night, pursued by zombies. Flashlight flares sweep the tree trunks. She finds herself in a patch of thorn bushes. A briar catches on the thigh of her pant leg. She struggles to pull free. Her pant leg tears. She bends down, inserts the tip of her finger into the rip in her pants. She glances back. The pursuers advance. Adele straightens and walks/runs again.

Adele emerges from the forest into a nearby open field. The zombies gain ground. Arriving at the middle of the open area, Adele turns resolutely, ready at last for the Zombie Standoff. The zombies stop in a ragged line some distance away from her, halted by her sudden attitude of power.

Adele stands firmly, her feet planted on the ground. She extends her arms toward her pursuers, palms up, summoning the miracle that is about to occur. [A wind machine blows her hair.] A flame thrower materializes in her open left palm. Her fingers enclose it in a tight grip. She passes the weapon to her right hand and grips the handle. Flame spurts from the barrel of the flamethrower. Adele points the flaming weapon at the zombies, sweeping back and forth in a broad arc, left and right. The disempowered zombies mill and cower.

The zombies held at bay, Adele directs the flame of her weapon toward a twined rope fuse on the ground. A line of bright flame travels quickly along the fuse. A tall woodpile bursts into an inferno of flame.

Intimidated by the flames of the roaring woodpile, the zombie pursuers hold position, vacillating. Rippling in the heat haze, the beams of their flashlights are pale and harmless. Adele faces the stalled zombies without fear. Her extinguished weapon dangles down beside her leg.

One by one, the zombies turn and walk away toward the forest from which they emerged. Their flashlight flares recede, then are lost in the night.

18

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

18

Adele and Michelle are in a restaurant, seated diagonally opposite each other at a table in a booth. Michelle is wearing a button front shirt, unbuttoned one lower than modesty would dictate. Michelle has a laptop open in front of her. Her phone is on the table next to the laptop, face down.

MICHELLE

(reading theatrically from
the laptop, with
expressive hand gestures)

The zombies disperse toward the forest from which they came. From behind her blazing wall of fire, the hero watches them recede. The flickering beams of the zombies' flashlights grow tiny, then are swallowed up and extinguished in the absolute dark of night.

(pauses, looking at her
screen, then looks at
Adele, pleased with
herself)

What do you think?

ADELE

(struggling to understand
how she feels about what
she has just heard, it
comes out slowly)

Hmmm. It's good. I guess. I dunno.

(with sudden energy, almost
angry)

But where the hell did the
flamethrower come from? Did it just
materialize in her hand?

MICHELLE

(shrugs, laughs)

Aha, so you don't believe the
flamethrower, but you do believe
the zombies?

ADELE

(deadly serious, resolute)

The zombies really happened.

MICHELLE

(narrows her eyes, cocks
her head, chuckles)

That's her story and she's stickin'
to it.

Michelle's phone vibrates and dings. She picks it up, looks
at the face, then puts it back on the tabletop, face down.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Should we get going?

Michelle pulls a lipstick out of her purse and applies it.
She's such a pro she doesn't need a mirror. Adele watches the
application.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

What? Too much?

ADELE

Maybe a little.

Michelle smiles and leaves her lips the way they are. She
clicks the lipstick closed and drops it in her purse.

ADELE (CONT'D)

I can give you a ride home if you
want.

MICHELLE

Nah, that's okay. I'm not going home. But I'll walk with you to your car.

19 EXT. RESTAURANT PARKING LOT - DAY

19

Adele and Michelle exit the restaurant. Adele walks toward her parked car, trailed by Michelle. By the driver door of Adele's car, they hug. In the hug, Michelle closes her eyes, inscrutable. Adele looks down and to the side, her thoughts far away.

Adele gets into the car and closes the door. She reaches over to insert her keys and start the ignition. Unsmiling, Michelle bends toward the car and extends her hand, fingers spread. She smacks her flat hand onto the glass in the same position as the print Adele found earlier in the story. Hearing the sudden sound, Adele whips her body to the left and faces the hand on the glass. She stares at it, fighting the haunting memory.

Standing outside the car, Michelle laughs at Adele's panicky response. Seeing Adele's dead-serious expression, Michelle goes silent. She pulls her hand away from the glass, looking sheepish. Michelle steps back from the car.

Without looking at Michelle, Adele pulls out of the parking spot. The car squeals away. Michelle flutters her fingers and waves bye-bye in the wake of the departing car.

20 INT. ADELE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

20

Adele is standing at her kitchen island counter. In front of her, a cutting board. In her hand, a knife. On the cutting board, Adele exerts maximum downward force on the knife blade, driving it through the center of an acorn squash. She separates the two halves and places them side by side, face up, on the cutting board. The centers of each circle glisten with moist, seedy fibers.

Adele uses a spoon to scoop the wet mass out of the center of one of the squash halves. After each scoop, she smacks the spoon on the cutting board. A pile of seeds grows, blob by blob. She surgically scoops and scrapes until the squash half is completely clean of seed goo. Adele places the spoon on the cutting board and straightens up to look at her excellent handiwork. She lifts her wine glass in a toast to herself and then drinks. Holding her glass, she looks away from the pile of squash goo toward another item on the countertop. It is the bumpy, knotted stocking gifted to her during the visit at Michelle's house.

Adele sets down the wine glass and reaches for the garlic sac. She lets it dangle, holding it by the knotted end, and rotates it in space. She unties the knot and empties the garlic onto the cutting board. Holding the ends, she stretches the stocking to its full length horizontally. She looks at it thoughtfully. She crumples it into her fist.

Adele turns and opens a utility drawer near the sink. She rummages through the miscellaneous contents of the drawer - batteries, rubber bands, string, scotch tape, screwdrivers, pliers. Her hand closes on the barrel of a flashlight.

21 INT. ADELE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

21

Adele enters her bathroom. She flips the light switch and the room flares bright. She places the wadded stocking and flashlight on the bathroom countertop. She stands in front of the mirror. She plants her hands on the countertop and puts her weight on her extended arms. Serious, she considers her reflected image. She is intent on beginning a new life chapter.

She picks up the stocking. She pulls it over her head, tugging until the elastic band is all the way down to her neck. She looks at her image in the mirror from several angles. In the mirror, the familiar smashed, blurry features that have haunted and hunted Adele.

She flips the bathroom light switch. Infinite blackness prevails for a few beats.

Suddenly, Adele's disfigured face fills the frame, huge and horrifying, eerily lit by the raking beam of the flashlight. The reborn zombie opens her mouth and howls.

22 EXT. CITY - NIGHT

22

A series of aerial drone shots of the city at night, each one wider than the one before. Streetlights. The beams of moving cars. Plumes of steam billowing silently. The eerie howl of zombie Adele tears through the night and reverberates for all eternity.

THE END