

Mr Rashid

by

Callum McKay

07925 275978  
callum.mckay95@outlook.com

1 FADE IN: 1

2 EXT. HENDON CENTRAL TUBE STATION PLATFORM - DAY 2

Swathes of bleary-eyed commuters assume their positions as a tube train pulls into the station. They congregate around the opening doors as always, and are startled as a young man, ARAN, 21, shoots out like a bullet from a gun.

Aran barges through the gaggle, oblivious to the torrent of insults from people dodging his flying backpack as he disappears down the stairs.

3 INT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY 3

Masses of twenty-something students mill around, chatting, unpacking, preparing for the lecture. At the front a mature student, ZI, late-30s, Nigerian, scans the room. He sucks in air and shakes his head. Someone's clearly missing.

4 EXT. STREET - DAY 4

Aran runs the gauntlet of commuters, dog-walkers and pushchairs as fast as his slight frame and heavy bag allow. He darts out in front of a car, ignoring its furious driver.

5 INT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY 5

Zi chats with ELLIOT MORGAN, late-50s. His battered suit and greying hair make it clear he is faculty.

ZI

We getting our placements today,  
Elliot?

ELLIOT

Depends if Amy's bothered to --

As if summoned by the mention of her name, AMY O'NEILL, 40s, marches in. Her mere presence brings silence, and Elliot nervously retreats to allow her to take centre stage.

She silently studies the room. No one dares break eye contact with her hawk-like stare.

AMY

Good morning everyone. I hope you  
all had a lovely weekend.

No one's brave enough to respond.

AMY

Because from now on is when the  
real work starts --

ELLIOT

Basically if you've got a  
girlfriend, boyfriend, fiancé or  
even a needy dog, you can kiss them  
goodbye for the next nine months!

There's a ripple of laughter. Indignant, Amy stands tall, head high, shoulders back. The room's silenced.

AMY

You'll get your school placements shortly, so see that you're working to meet the expected standard. Anyone who thinks this will be easy, you are sorely mistaken.

She eyeballs a few students who sit up straight, rigid, afraid to even scratch their nose.

AMY

But if you're struggling remember, you chose to be here, so start taking responsibility for --

A sweaty, breathless Aran bursts in. Amy's scowl follows him as he settles meekly into the nearest seat.

AMY

As I was saying...  
(she shoots daggers at Aran)  
Start taking responsibility for yourselves. Your schools have expectations of you, as do we --

ELLIOT

Obviously we still want you to enjoy your time in school.

AMY

But anyone who can't make the grade will be dealt with. Now you can say your bit, Elliot.

Amy theatrically stands aside for Elliot. Meanwhile, Aran catches Zi's eye. They share a look, Aran breaks it off when he spots Amy glaring at him.

AMY (V.O.)

Two and a half thousand words by the fifteenth, please.

6 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

6

Amy addresses Aran, Zi, and the rest of the class beside a board, on which is an essay title: 'Why Teach Science?'

AMY

I'm aware this is after your placements start, but I'm sure you can all manage your time.

Aran focuses on his work, deliberately avoiding her gaze.

AMY

Right, thank you everyone.

The class packs up, but as Aran files out...

AMY

One moment, Aran.

He hangs back. Zi hovers by the door.

AMY

It was quite rude of you to scuttle off after the lecture without explaining why you were late, ruder still to do the same now. Can you tell me why you were late, please.

ARAN

Sorry, tube was delayed.

AMY

Tubes are every two minutes.

ARAN

Something came up.

AMY

Something so important it was worth missing --

ARAN

I'm sorry. It won't happen --

AMY

Please don't interrupt me. It won't happen again, will it? Because you'll be taking this course seriously in future.

Zi leaps aside as she strides out, leaving Aran reeling.

7 INT. THE STANNARY - DAY

7

A bright, bustling social space. Aran and Zi sit in a corner with their coffees.

ZI

You're playing with fire, man. Don't want to be getting her mad.

ARAN

Zi, it's not like she can send me to Lagos.

ZI

Shame. My mum could have done you some of her legendary okro soup.

As Zi reminisces, the word 'mum' strikes a chord with Aran.

ZI  
You all right, man?

ARAN  
Fine. Look, I don't care where that  
cow sends me.

Zi snorts with laughter.

ARAN  
All that matters is the kids.

ZI  
Sure man, good luck with that.

8 EXT. STREET - DUSK 8

Aran power walks, periodically checking his watch.

9 INT. PHARMACY - DUSK 9

Aran enters just as the PHARMACIST is cashing out. He  
brandishes a prescription.

ARAN  
Name of Rashid.

PHARMACIST  
Till's closed.

ARAN  
Can't you just --

PHARMACIST  
No.

ARAN  
Look, these tablets are important.  
Maybe not to you but they are to --

PHARMACIST  
You deaf or something? I said  
till's closed.

ARAN  
I was here first thing, I waited  
and waited. They said come back  
later. Well, it's later.

A stand-off. Aran glares at the indifferent Pharmacist.

10 EXT. STONEWALL ESTATE - NIGHT 10

Several grey, sad-looking tower blocks surround a patch of  
grassland where several kids congregate. Aran ignores them,  
too busy cursing the Pharmacist under his breath.

Outside a tower block, kids kick a ball against a gleaming  
BMW. When Aran clocks it, he breaks into a panicked run.

11 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

11

Aran hurries in to a mess: clothes, dirty plates, school books strewn about the place. He glances at his brother, RAWAND, 12, curled up on the stained sofa.

Navigating the clutter, he approaches his father, KADIR, mid-50s, quietly sitting in a moth-eaten chair in the corner.

(NOTE: All dialogue in brackets is spoken in Kurdish)

ARAN

[Dad, I saw the car. Where's --]

A stout woman in a smart suit emerges from the kitchen, WENDY HEWITT, late-40s. Through her thin glasses, she studies Aran, then the room, then her clipboard as she jots notes. She looks up to give Aran a simpering smile.

WENDY

Better late than never.

ARAN

How can I be late? I didn't even know you were visiting.

She makes a note on her clipboard.

ARAN

No one told me.

WENDY

A letter was sent last week.

Aran crosses to the stack of letters on the table: Bill, bill, overdue notices, each one a fresh thread to his noose. Among them, a letter from social services.

ARAN

Fine. What do you want to see next?

WENDY

Oh I've already completed my evaluation.

ARAN

Then we shouldn't take up any more of your valuable time.

He goes to the front door and stares her down.

WENDY

I'm just here to help, Aran. To work out what's best for you, for Rawand, for your family.

Aran opens the front door for her.

ARAN

I'm sure you'll want to beat the traffic.

She marches out. Aran watches her every step then slams the door, locking it with the chain before approaching Rawand.

ARAN

What did she say?

Rawand shrugs.

ARAN

What did you tell her?

RAWAND

Nothing.

ARAN

Rawand --

RAWAND

Nothing, all right?

Rawand pushes past him and stomps out. Aran goes to pursue.

KADIR

[Leave him be, Aran.]

ARAN

[It's like he doesn't care.]

KADIR

[He does. He's just scared.]

ARAN

[That's why I'm trying to help him.]

Aran kneels beside Kadir and pulls a blood pressure monitor out from under a heap of magazines and an empty plate.

ARAN

[How've you felt today?]

Kadir shrugs as Aran slides the sleeve up his father's arm.

KADIR

[Did you get my tablets?]

Aran snorts.

KADIR

[What was it this time?]

Aran dodges the question by fixating on the monitor.

KADIR

[Don't ignore me. What happened?]

ARAN

[One forty four over ninety two,  
that's the highest this week.]

KADIR

[If things are getting too much,  
you need to focus on --]

ARAN

[Dad. We've been through this. No.]

KADIR

[You're not wasting this  
opportunity because --]

ARAN

[Don't say it, because I'd rather  
that than just sit back and put you  
in an early grave.]

They wallow in tortuous silence. The mention of death  
cutting them both deeply.

ARAN

[Sorry. It's just --]

KADIR

[I know.]

SERIES OF SHOTS: ARAN CARES FOR KADIR

A) INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - Aran feeds Kadir from a ready  
meal, meanwhile Rawand eats alone at the table.

B) INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - Aran leads Kadir towards a door.

C) INT. KADIR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - He changes his father into  
his nightclothes. Carefully, he lowers Kadir into bed and  
kisses his forehead.

12 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 12

In between mouthfuls of ready meal, Aran studies the bills.  
He opens his mobile bank account, it makes for grim reading.  
He lays down his fork to hold his head in his hands.

13 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 13

Aran sits with Zi and the rest of the class as Amy drones  
on. He stifles a yawn, but nothing gets past her.

AMY

Am I straining your attention?

ARAN

No, sorry.



AMY

As I was saying, this workshop is a privilege. We've worked hard to arrange this so I expect you all to attend.

14 INT. THE STANNARY - DAY

14

Aran and Zi wander towards the cafe in the corner.

ARAN

Sounds pretty pointless.

ZI

Don't know. It's more than I got in Lagos.

ARAN

Why? Because Amy's "worked so hard"?

Aran's phone pings with a message: 'NHS - Appointment Friday 2nd October, 16:30'

15 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

15

Aran gets a soaking as he helps Kadir out of the bath and dries him off.

ARAN

[I'll tell Dr Corlett you missed a dose, and you tell her everything this time. No playing the hero.]

KADIR

[Would I do that?]

Aran grins and hands over two tablets. As Kadir swallows them Aran's phone pings, and his smile fades.

AMY (V.O.)

I thought I'd made myself clear.

16 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

16

Aran faces off against Amy as the class files out.

ARAN

I know. But I can't make it.

AMY

Then you'll tell me why.

Aran's slow, searching for an answer. Too slow.

AMY

I've worked hard to arrange this --

ARAN

I know, but --

AMY

Excuse me, I'm speaking. It hasn't been easy to give you this opportunity. If you aren't decent enough to attend you can at least give me a reason.

ARAN

It's personal.

AMY

You have a lot of convenient personal reasons, Aran. I have personal matters, but I find time. Perhaps you should consider how much you want to remain here. There are plenty who'd be grateful to be where you are.

She departs, head held high, leaving Aran seething.

17 INT. THE STANNARY - DAY

17

Aran sits, his phone glued to his ear as Zi studies his laptop.

ARAN

(into phone)

Can I rebook?... I know it's late but... Christmas?!... Are you fucking serious?... Sorry, sorry, if that's the earliest... Thanks... Sorry. Bye.

Aran hangs up and flings his phone on the table.

ZI

If you've got an appointment you should go.

ARAN

Too late. Bitch gets her way, as usual.

ZI

Boom. St Andrews Comprehensive.

He spins the laptop round so Aran can see.

ARAN

Oh, fuck off.

ZI

What?

ARAN

Lagos would be closer!

18 EXT. ST ANDREWS COMPREHENSIVE - DAY 18

The place is one tired shade of grey, made darker by the pounding rain. The only splash of colour is the blue on the sodden blazers of three freezing students by the gate.

Aran, Zi and the trainees dash through the empty car park.

19 INT. ST ANDREWS COMPREHENSIVE - CORRIDOR - DAY 19

Zi leads the trainees aimlessly along the corridor.

ZI

It's got to be here somewhere.

ARAN

Why?

Zi ignores him and opens a classroom door. He's startled to see a lone teacher wildly air drumming to Arctic Monkeys' 'Brianstorm'. He's oblivious to the trainees, and Zi quickly shuts the door.

ZI

Wrong room.

20 INT. ST ANDREWS COMPREHENSIVE - CORRIDOR - DAY (LATER) 20

The trainees get comfortable. Zi watches Aran pace back and forth, visibly frustrated.

ZI

Someone's got to come eventually.

ARAN

Why? It's Friday.

ZI

They're just running late.

ARAN

More like they've gone home. Like I should have.

ZI

Well, you're here now.

ARAN

If I'm still here at five, I'm off.

Aran's bolstered by a few murmurs of agreement.

ZI

Why don't you go now if you're going to be like that?

ARAN

Be like what?

A moment of friction is interrupted by a door opening behind them. A sweaty, red-faced man, MR O'DWYER, 40s, emerges. He spins his keys and hums a tune, until he sees the trainees.

MR O'DWYER

Hi, can I help?

ZI

Sorry. We've got a workshop.

MR O'DWYER

Oh?

ZI

Yeah, with Mr O'Dwyer? Head of Biology?

MR O'DWYER

No one told me. One sec.

He shuffles into his office. Aran gives Zi a withering look.

MR O'DWYER (O.S.)

Oh fucking hell, no!

21 INT. ST ANDREWS COMPREHENSIVE - SCIENCE LAB - DUSK 21

Aran gently sways as he watches two other trainees attempt a biology experiment. Bored, he looks around the room:

Trainees are trying out other experiments, Mr O'Dwyer moves around the room, a Technician sits in a corner, bored out of his mind. Beside Aran, Zi scrawls detailed notes.

ARAN

Why did you remind him?

Zi ignores him.

ARAN

Seriously. What are we doing here?

ZI

Go then.

Aran considers it, but before he decides, Mr O'Dwyer approaches their workstation.

MR O'DWYER

How're we getting on here?

ZI

Fine.

MR O'DWYER

Good.

TRAINEE

Quick question. Say you've got a Key Stage Three class, how do you relay this sort of thing to them, so they don't transfer any misconceptions to GCSE?

ARAN

Why do you care? You're only here for the bursary.

ZI

Okay Aran, shut up now.

Mr O'Dwyer's taken aback by this outburst.

MR O'DWYER

Come and find me at the end.

(to Aran and Zi)

Do you two want to try out the digestion practical over there?

Aran and Zi start to wander over. Mr O'Dwyer heads for another part of the room, but Aran's within earshot.

MR O'DWYER

(muttering)

More than my job's worth.

Aran and Zi stand before an unpleasant mess of squashed banana, biscuit crumbs, and a soggy pair of tights. Zi scowls at Aran's unimpressed grimace.

22 EXT. ST ANDREWS COMPREHENSIVE - DUSK

22

Zi storms across the car park, Aran struggles to keep up.

ARAN

Zi! Hey!

Zi doesn't respond until Aran catches up and pulls him back.

ARAN

What's your problem, man?

ZI

You seriously asking? After you've been whining in my ear all evening.

ARAN

I lost a doctor's appointment for that.

ZI

Maybe if you'd actually paid attention --

ARAN

I'd what? Learn that some people can screw up a digestion experiment? Whoop-de-fucking-do.

ZI

Why are you here, Aran?

ARAN

Same as you, because Amy "worked so hard" for us.

ZI

No, why are you here?

Aran's stumped into silence.

ZI

You don't care. Not really.

Zi squares up to Aran.

ZI

I taught for nothing in Nigeria, because I was expected to. Some went on strike, but I carried on because I loved to teach those kids. What do you think that did to me? I leave my home, my family, my students, all of it because I had no choice. I can survive here, to make a difference and be respected for it, but only if I learn how. No, you have no idea what it means to care.

Zi storms off leaving Aran to squirm.

23 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

23

Aran absent-mindedly checks Kadir's blood pressure.

KADIR

[What's the reading?]

Aran's miles away.

KADIR

[Aran?]

He snaps back.

ARAN

[Sorry. One thirty over eighty.]

KADIR

[Getting better. Who needs a doctor, eh?]

ARAN

[Don't.]

KADIR

[What's wrong?]

ARAN

[Mum wanted me to be a teacher. I could have done anything else. Maybe I should have.]

KADIR

[What's this? Teaching was your idea. Your mother supported you, like I do.]

ARAN

[Doesn't mean I was right.]

His phone pings: 'I hope you all enjoyed the workshop. Please upload a reflective statement by Monday. Amy'

ARAN

[I wouldn't get this crap.]

He tosses his phone aside.

ARAN

[I'd be able to look after you.]

KADIR

[Aran, I won't say it again. You don't use me as your excuse.]

ARAN

[What about Rawand? Maybe he'd be doing better --]

KADIR

[It has nothing to do with Rawand.]

ARAN

[I'd have more time for him.]

KADIR

[But he'd still be... You know, and Wendy would still be monitoring us. It's not the teaching, you've both had a lot on your minds since your mother...]

He tails off and starts welling up. Aran holds his hand.

KADIR

[I know she'd say you're doing the right thing. She'd be proud of you, both of you. Like I am.]

Aran pulls his dad into a hug.

24 INT. LECTURE THEATRE - DAY

24

The room gossips, but Aran and Zi sit apart. Aran catches Zi's eye, but Amy's entrance grabs Zi's attention and silences the room. She's flanked by Elliot and ROSS THOMPSON, 60s, a warm smile on his face.

ELLIOT

Morning. So, tomorrow's the big day. It's natural for a few pre-match nerves, but wherever you're sent, remember the three P's: Punctuality, Presentation, Professionalism --

AMY

This is the least we expect.

ELLIOT

Yes, thank you Amy. Anyway, because there's always a few jitters, Ross is here to let you know of the support available to you.

Elliot steps aside for Ross to take the floor.

ROSS

Elliot's absolutely right. Any issues, you can always come to me, or indeed any of us, as well as your placement mentors --

AMY

But if you're organised, you should have no excuses.

ROSS

Yes... Main thing is to enjoy your experience. Apply what you've learned and you'll be fine.

AMY

I would add, if you don't mind, Ross, a reminder that you chose to be here. Don't ever forget that.

25 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

25

Aran holds two bowls of bolognese. He hands one to Rawand, who takes it without a word or even a look to his brother.

ARAN

Anything to report?

Rawand just plays with his food.

ARAN

Rawand?



RAWAND

What?

Aran leaves him be. As he kneels beside Kadir he checks his phone.

KADIR

[It won't ring if you keep staring at it.]

ARAN

[She's taking her sweet time.]

Aran loads up the fork. Just as he's about to feed Kadir, his phone rings.

ARAN

You pick your moment, don't you?  
(into phone)  
Hi, Amy.

AMY (V.O.)

(through phone)  
Hello Aran. You're going to South Croydon High School tomorrow --

ARAN

Croydon? But that's --

AMY (V.O.)

I'm speaking. When you arrive report to your mentor, Natasha Forward. Have a good day. I'm sure you won't let us down.

With an abrupt click, she hangs up.

KADIR

[Well?]

26 INT. ARAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

26

Aran lies in bed, unable to sleep. His nerves apparent in his shaky breathing. He checks his clock, it's only 21:44.

He jumps as Rawand opens his bedroom door.

ARAN

What the hell are you doing? I'm trying to get an early night!

RAWAND

I forgot. You need to sign this.

He hands Aran a form. Aran switches on the light and sees Rawand's on report for misbehaviour.

ARAN

Not again. You promised.

Rawand says nothing, he just hands Aran a pen.

ARAN  
We've got to sort this out.

RAWAND  
I'm trying.

ARAN  
Try harder.

RAWAND  
God, you sound like Mr Harding.

ARAN  
Maybe that's because --

RAWAND  
Yeah, yeah, whatever.

Rawand snatches the form back.

ARAN  
Rawand...

He's out the room, slamming the door behind him. Aran punches his pillow before trying to sleep. It's hopeless.

27 INT. ARAN'S BEDROOM - DAWN 27

Aran's already awake when his alarm goes off: 05:30. He stares at the ceiling and takes a deep breath.

28 INT. HALLWAY/KADIR'S BEDROOM - DAWN 28

Aran emerges in a cheap suit. He's so busy fiddling with his tie, he bumps into Kadir standing by his door. Aran jumps.

ARAN  
[Dad. What are you doing?]

KADIR  
[I had to see you go.]

ARAN  
[Dad, come on, go back to bed.]

Aran leads his dad back into bed.

KADIR  
[Good luck, son. I'm proud of you.]

29 EXT. BUS STOP - DAWN 29

Aran reaches the bus stop just as a bus pulls away. Cursing his luck, he checks his phone: 06:02. The timetable says he has a half hour wait.

## MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) INT. BUS - DAWN - Aran sways with the bus as it trundles through London. He checks his phone: 06:37.

B) INT. TUBE - DAWN - Cramped in the packed carriage, Aran sees the time's 07:03 on the watch of a fellow sardine.

C) EXT. STAIRCASE/KING'S CROSS STATION CONCOURSE - DAWN - Aran squeezes his way up the stairs and onto the concourse. He sees on the departure board his train is delayed.

D) INT. TRAIN - DAWN - Aran checks his phone: 07:44. He throws a dirty look at a wheelchair user struggling to board up the ramp into the crowd of passengers.

E) EXT. EAST CROYDON STATION - DAWN - Rushing out of the station, Aran sprints to the nearest bus.

END OF MONTAGE.

30 EXT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 30

Sweating, panting, his shirt untucked and tie loose, Aran stumbles past a 'Welcome to South Croydon High School' sign. He's knocked aside by a group of kids. They don't care.

31 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - TOILET - DAY 31

Aran smartens himself up in the mirror. In the reflection, he spots scribbling on the wall and turns to read it:

'Rate Ur Poo' is scrawled above a chart of scores:

- 10/10 - Could have dropped it on Hiroshima

- 3/10 - Shit, 'nuff said.

- 0/10 - A ghost.

Lost in the chart, Aran's startled by banging. He opens the door, and is barged out of the way by a girl on crutches.

32 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCHOOL HALL - DAY 32

The lion's den. Scores of wild, rowdy children cluster in groups. In the far corner, Aran spots a teacher watching on. Aran braves the rabble to reach him.

He barely makes it three paces before a backpack flies into him, knocking him off his stride to a chorus of laughter.

STUDENT (O.S.)

Move!

Aran scurries across the hall towards the teacher, who's casually sipping from his mug, indifferent to the chaos.

ARAN  
Did you see that?

TEACHER  
Not a good idea to get in the way.

Aran's taken aback as the teacher takes another sip.

33 EXT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD - DAY 33

Bursting into the serene calm of the yard, Aran pauses to soak up the crisp morning sun. His peace is shattered by students huddled by a bin lighting cigarettes. Playing ignorant, Aran hurries towards the Science block.

34 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY 34

Aran wanders aimlessly until he sees a door marked: Miss Forward - Head of Biology. He knocks, no answer. Dumping his bag he leans against the wall and waits.

PETER (O.S.)  
Outside. You shouldn't be in here,  
you know you shouldn't be in here.

LEWIS (O.S.)  
Gimme three reasons, yeah, why we  
should go.

PETER (O.S.)  
Because you're a pain in my behind.

Aran ignores the chorus of laughter down the corridor.

PETER (O.S.)  
Move. Now!

The laughter turns into howling, now Aran can't ignore it. Through a set of doors, he sees four boys circling their prey, PETER, a prefect who stands his ground defiantly.

PETER  
I'm getting really sick of you. Get  
out now! Now!

The boys are in hysterics. One boy films Peter's eruption.

PETER  
Move! Move like it's World War  
Three! Move!

Peter shoves them through the doors, right past Aran, who doesn't know where to look.

PETER  
All your jokes, I'm sick of it!

One boy stops and squares up to Peter.

LEWIS

Get out my face. Get out my face  
right now.

HENRY

Drop him, Lewis!

LEWIS

Get out my face. Go down there.

PETER

No! I'm a prefect!

The boys howl again as they reform their bully circle.

NATASHA (O.S.)

Folks, what are we doing inside?

Aran looks around. Striding in like a haggard, bleary-eyed knight in shining armour is NATASHA FORWARD, late-30s. She holds a stack of books with her bag slung over her shoulder.

The bullies immediately leap away from Peter.

NATASHA

You know you shouldn't be in here.

HENRY

Miss, I'm just putting my bag away.

NATASHA

Don't lie to me, Henry. Planners,  
all of you.

Three of the boys hand their planners over.

HENRY

Miss, I forgot my planner.

NATASHA

Isolation then.

HENRY

Bus Miss how's that f--

NATASHA

Do I have to get Mr Cross?

Henry slopes off as Natasha hands back the planners.

NATASHA

The rest of you, outside, or you'll  
join him.

The other three make themselves scarce.

NATASHA

You can go too, Peter.  
Registration's in a few minutes.

Peter clicks his heels, even saluting before departing.  
Natasha shakes her head before turning to an awestruck Aran.

NATASHA

Sorry I'm late. You must be Aran.

35 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - NATASHA'S OFFICE - DAY 35

Aran sits at a coffee-stained desk, looking around as Natasha unloads her mountain of books. From grade targets to holiday photos every wall is decorated. Even the window has pictures to mask the depressing view of a concrete wall.

NATASHA

He's lovely, Peter, but his autism makes him easy prey for that lot, bless him. You find the place okay?

Aran nods.

NATASHA

Come far?

ARAN

Yeah, actually. Near Cam --

The door opens without warning. Aran jumps, but Natasha stoically turns towards a stone-faced woman, MISS NORTH, mid-30s. She glares imperiously at Natasha through her black, rectangular glasses. She ignores Aran.

MISS NORTH

Natasha, my office, now.

NATASHA

I'll be with you in a minute, I --

MISS NORTH

I said now.

She marches off without shutting the door. Natasha grits her teeth as she gathers up folders.

NATASHA

Sorry. Listen, we'll catch up on Fridays, for now focus on settling in and getting through your tasks.

ARAN

Okay. But what --

He's interrupted by a child flashing past the door, screaming at the top of her lungs, chased by a friend.

NATASHA

Charlotte! Sunenah! Come here!

Two girls stands before Natasha, staring at shoes.

NATASHA

Do you think this sort of behaviour is acceptable? Because I don't. You're Year 11s, try acting like it. Go on.

The girls scurry off.

NATASHA

Go and find Tony, Mr Kneath. You'll be shadowing him and his form.

Natasha heads out the door, Aran hurries after her.

ARAN

Where am I --

NATASHA

Try the staff room. Main building, far door.

36 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - STAFF ROOM - DAY

36

Aran enters tentatively, trying to be inconspicuous. He shelters in a corner near the coffee machine, watching.

Teachers come and go, others sit gossiping. In a corner, a man stands at a photocopier, waiting as what looks like War and Peace is printed and stacked for him.

TEACHER #1

I caught them all outside, smoking and swearing like van men.

TEACHER #2

He tries bless him, but he's thick as pig shit.

TEACHER #3

Lord knows she tries. But if OFSTED saw the state of her department...

TEACHER #4

His dad came to parent's evening and I swear I could have ridden him there and then.

MR CROSS (O.S.)

You on stag or something, pal?

Aran's startled by a towering figure looming over him.

ARAN

Sorry?

MR CROSS

You getting a brew or just here for decoration?

Realising, Aran leaps aside to allow the man mountain to reach the coffee machine. He is MR CROSS, 40s, Scottish. He wears PE shorts and a shirt proudly bearing the insignia of the Parachute Regiment.

MR CROSS

Not seen you before. You a sub?

ARAN

Trainee.

MR CROSS

Ah. Popped your cherry yet?

ARAN

What?

MR CROSS

Had a run in with a wee shithead?

ARAN

Oh. Yeah.

MR CROSS

Like getting fucked by the Flying Scotsman. Am I right?

ARAN

Erm...

MR CROSS

First time's the same for everyone. Good you got it done and dusted.

ARAN

It wouldn't have happened if the staff member on duty had bothered to do their job.

MR CROSS

We all got better things to do, son.

TONY

Any cappuccino left, Mr Cross?

The teacher who was stood at the photocopier joins them. Aran sees he's the same teacher who was on duty in the hall.

MR CROSS

All yours, Tony.

Aran's eyes widen in disbelief at TONY KNEATH, 40s, balding, greying, with sallow skin. Mr Cross stands aside for Tony to dump his paper mountain and fill his 'World's Best Teacher' mug. As he does he clocks Aran.

TONY

Who's this?



MR CROSS  
Christ! Sorry son, I never asked.

ARAN  
It's fine. It's Aran.

TONY  
You're Aran? You should have said.

ARAN  
I --

The school bell rings out and the room leaps into action.

TONY  
Go to my room. Lab three. I'll be  
up in a sec.

Aran exits, looking back to check on Tony, only to see him  
take a seat with Mr Cross, shaking his head as he does.

37 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY 37

Aran battles a tide of students, searching for Lab Three.

38 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY 38

He peers in just as a bag hurtles past him, crashing into a  
formation of stools, arranged like bowling pins. A Year 10  
form cheer on the bowler, LEWIS, who soaks up the attention.  
Aran recognises him as one of Peter's tormentors.

LEWIS  
(obnoxiously loud)  
That was almost perfect, like me!

As Lewis rearranges the stools, he spots Aran lurking.

LEWIS  
What you looking at?

Busted, Aran enters the room.

ARAN  
Oh. No, nothing --

LEWIS  
Back the fuck up, bruv.

RHYS  
He's bare checking you out, man.

LEWIS  
Shut up.

ARAN  
No. Hang on --

Tony bursts in, rescuing Aran from further embarrassment.

TONY  
Year 10 good morning. Sit down,  
shut up.

The students just plain ignore him.

TONY  
People.

RHYS  
Sir, we ain't got no chairs.

TONY  
So get one, Rhys. Get one and sit  
on it. Lewis, put those back.

LEWIS  
Why me?

TONY  
Lewis, I'm not arguing with you  
this morning.

LEWIS  
Yeah but sir I ain't done nothing!

TONY  
Put them away or you'll be back on  
report.

ARAN  
Here...

Aran hurries forward to hand lab stools to students.

LEWIS  
Who is this joker?

TONY  
This is Mr...?

ARAN  
Aran. Rashid. Mr Rashid.

TONY  
That.

A girl at the front, TAMARA, stares at Aran, incredulous.

TAMARA  
You're a teacher?

ARAN  
Yes. Yes, I am.

TAMARA  
You don't look very old.

TONY  
Thank you, Tamara.

Aran joins Tony at the front of the room as there's a knock at the door. Natasha pokes her head in.

NATASHA  
Mr Kneath? Sorry, I need you, now.

Lewis and his friend RHYS lead a chorus of suggestive hoots.

TONY  
All right, that's enough.  
(to Aran)  
Take the register. You can learn  
their names.

Tony marches from the room, leaving Aran to face thirty pairs of contemptuous, disdainful eyes staring at him.

ARAN  
Anyone know where the register is?

LEWIS  
Up Mr Kneath's arse, Aran!

The class laugh as Aran scours the desk. They cheer as he knocks Tony's stack of papers over. Aran frantically gathers them up and roughly rearranges them.

TAMARA  
You're not very good at this, are  
you?

Aran's panicked eyes lock with Tamara's withering gaze.

39 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

39

Aran stumbles in, exhausted. Kadir sits up in his chair and gives a warm smile.

KADIR  
[How did it go?]

Aran collapses on the sofa.

ARAN  
[Fine.]

He removes his shoes and socks to inspect the weeping blisters on his feet.

KADIR  
[Is that all?]

Aran hobbles to Kadir's side and picks up the blood pressure monitor. His phone pings:

'Hi all. We've organised weekly workshops for you. These are very beneficial so it would be a shame for you not to attend. Hope you enjoyed your first day. Amy.'

Aran flings his phone aside.

KADIR  
[Tomorrow's a new day.]

40 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER) 40

Aran hunches over his laptop in the darkness. His eyes are drooping. A loud thud jerks him back to attention. He hurries from the room.

41 INT. KADIR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 41

Aran bursts in to find Kadir on the ground, clutching the duvet.

ARAN  
[Dad!]

Aran gently helps Kadir onto the bed.

KADIR  
[I didn't want to disturb you.]

42 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT 42

An empty, dark corridor.

ARAN (O.S.)  
[Okay?]

KADIR (O.S.)  
[Yes.]

There is the sound of a toilet flushing.

43 INT. KADIR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 43

Aran lowers Kadir into bed and covers him with the duvet.

KADIR  
[Sorry.]

ARAN  
[It's fine.]

KADIR  
[It's not. I shouldn't be like this.]

ARAN  
[Dad, you're not well. Don't be so hard on yourself.]

KADIR

[No, it's not fair. I'm dragging you down and Wendy's going to think you can't cope and that'll be that for Rawand.]

ARAN

[Stop it.]

KADIR

[Just for once I want to help myself.]

Aran goes to plump Kadir's pillow, but Kadir blocks him.

KADIR

[I'm fine.]

44 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

44

Aran emerges from Kadir's room and quietly shuts the door. He takes a moment, but as he turns he sees Rawand by his door, his face screwed up as he tries to hold back tears.

ARAN

Rawand...

Rawand storms into his room and slams the door. Aran doesn't follow.

45 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

45

Aran returns to his laptop. He sees the clock in the corner of the screen: 23:04. He rubs his tired eyes before Googling, 'lesson plan templates.'

46 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY

46

Aran stifles a yawn. He sees Tony watching him and hurriedly joins a Year 8 group measuring lung capacity using water and a bottle. The groups are excessively large.

ARAN

What are your results so far?

None of the students respond.

ARAN

Guys, this is easy. How about you?

He looks to a shy boy, QASIM, who says nothing.

ARAN

Come on.

YEAR 8 STUDENT

He don't speak, sir.

ARAN  
That's ridiculous.  
(to Qasim)  
What have you found out?

Aran inspects Qasim's exercise book. It's blank.

ARAN  
You're not even trying. I know  
there's a lot of you for one bottle  
but you should be recording each  
other's results so you've got --

TONY  
Mr Rashid?

Aran approaches Tony.

TONY  
That's enough.

ARAN  
I'm just trying to get him --

TONY  
Just leave him be. He's... Boys!

Aran turns to see the group arguing over whose turn it is to do the experiment. They wrestle for the bottle, splashing water everywhere. All except Qasim who sits rigid, on edge.

TONY  
Boys just take it in turns.

This has no effect.

TONY  
If you can't all behave together  
I'll have to split you up.

The boys ignore him until the bottle tips, drenching Qasim. He grips the stool, shaking, eyes wide, traumatised.

TONY  
Enough.

ARAN  
Are you all right?

Qasim doesn't say anything.

ARAN  
Hey. Are you all --

TONY  
Qasim. Miss Harris. Yes?

Qasim nods frantically.

TONY

Okay.

Qasim takes his bag and slowly exits. Everyone watches him.

TONY

(pointing at the group)

One, two, three. Join that group.

The rest of you, that group.

The boys join the other groups and continue the experiment. Aran surveys the room, aghast at what's unfolded.

ARAN (V.O.)

It was a mess.

47 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - NATASHA'S OFFICE - DAY 47

Aran stands before Natasha, who's fixated on her laptop.

NATASHA

That lot have been hell since day one.

ARAN

Maybe. But putting kids in groups that big? From what I've read he should have --

NATASHA

Please. Don't talk about shoulda, woulda, coulda when it comes to this department.

Aran's taken aback by her outburst. In the silence, Natasha looks up from her laptop.

NATASHA

Sorry. I know where you're coming from, but it's not that simple. We're just trying to make the best of what's available to us.

There's a knock at the door.

NATASHA

Come in.

Qasim gingerly enters.

NATASHA

Qasim. Okay now?

Natasha gives him the thumbs up and Qasim nods timidly. She hands him a worksheet. Aran spots it's in Arabic. Qasim takes it and exits, gently closing the door behind him.

ARAN

What's with him? Is he a mute or --

NATASHA

Syrian refugee. His mum and sister drowned on the crossing. He would have too had the Navy not pulled him out the channel.

ARAN

Jesus.

NATASHA

Doesn't speak English and he's terrified of water. In future just be sensitive around him.

ARAN

Tony could have at least --

NATASHA

Don't point the finger, Aran. It's not professional. If only more people would realise that.

48 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY

48

Aran types on his laptop, consulting bundles of paper scattered over the desk. Tony enters and sees Aran's mess.

TONY

Are you teaching biology or discovering it?

ARAN

It's all course crap. I want it done so I can plan my first lesson.

Tony looks over Aran's shoulder.

TONY

Dissection? There goes our budget for the rest of the term.

Tony disappears into the store cupboard. Aran hesitates.

ARAN

Why didn't you tell me about Qasim?

Tony emerges with his coat, unimpressed.

TONY

Excuse me?

ARAN

You must know about him. Were you planning on telling me?

TONY

I assumed Natasha --



ARAN

Why would she? It's your class.

TONY

Damn right. And when he joined nobody told me about him. I had to work it out for myself, and I didn't manage it by getting in his face, badgering him over some shitty experiment.

Tony marches out, leaving Aran to stew. An email from Amy doesn't help: 'Re. Reminder - Workshop'. It's quickly followed by another: 'Re. School Based Research Project.'

ARAN

Get a life and leave me alone!

His phone rings.

ARAN

(into phone)

Rawand? What is it this time?

RAWAND (V.O.)

(through phone)

Come home. Now.

49 EXT. STONEWALL ESTATE - DAY 49

Aran power walks towards the tower block. He's confused by the lack of a BMW.

50 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY 50

Aran enters to see Kadir on the floor with Rawand in tears, struggling to get Kadir in the recovery position. Rawand's phone lies beside him.

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)

(through phone)

The ambulance is on its way, my darling. You're doing really well.

After a beat of being paralysed by shock, Aran snaps back and drops to his knees to help Rawand move Kadir, who's struggling to breathe.

ARAN

What's happened?

RAWAND

I don't know! He said his chest hurt.

ARAN

Okay, okay.

(to Kadir)

[Dad, can you hear me?]

Kadir can only groan.

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)  
How's he doing now?

Aran scoops up the phone.

ARAN  
Hello?

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Is he in the recovery position?

ARAN  
Yes. Is he going to be all right?

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Help is on its way. Make sure his  
airway is clear.

Aran leans over to check. To his horror, Kadir's not breathing.

ARAN  
Oh my God. He's stopped! He's  
stopped breathing!

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Okay my lovely listen to me. Help  
is coming, I need you to perform  
chest compressions for me, okay?

Aran drops the phone in front of him and places his hands on Kadir's chest.

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Count nice and loud for me. Go.  
One... Two... Three... Four...

ARAN  
One... Two... Three... Four...

Aran's phone starts to ring.

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)  
Keep going. Well done.

ARAN  
One... Two... Three... Four...

It keeps ringing. Aran takes his phone out. Wendy's calling. He drops it and returns to Kadir. Wendy eventually hangs up.

ARAN  
One... Two... Three... Four...

Outside, the ambulance's blue flashing lights shine through the windows. Aran looks up at them. Wendy calls again.

51 INT. A&E WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

51

Aran gazes at the missed calls from Wendy as a chocolate drops from a vending machine. He pockets his phone and collects the chocolate, handing it to Rawand who takes it without a word. Aran watches him closely.

RAWAND

Am I going to be taken away?

ARAN

If this is about what dad said the other night then --

RAWAND

It's not. But I am, aren't I? He's going to die and Wendy will come and take me away and --

ARAN

Shut up. Seriously. Dad's not going to die.

RAWAND

So what? You'll need to look after him even more and Wendy will see that and take me away.

ARAN

No, she won't. She'll have to get through me first. Dad will be fine. He'll need some help for a bit but then things will go back to normal.

Rawand miserably nibbles the chocolate.

ARAN

I'm telling you. Dad will be fine. It's all thanks to you.

Rawand continues to nibble, ignoring Aran.

ARAN

Mum would be proud.

RAWAND

Don't say that. You make it sound like she's dead.

ARAN

I didn't mean it like --

RAWAND

It's been ages since we heard anything. Doesn't mean...

He tails off and tears up. Aran puts his arm around his brother, and Rawand cuddles up to him.

RAWAND

Maybe she's coming home. She could be waiting for us.

ARAN

Yeah. Maybe.

Aran holds his brother tight.

RECEPTIONIST

Rashid?

Aran approaches the Receptionist's desk.

RECEPTIONIST

The nurse says your dad's stable, but they're keeping him in. You should go home, get some rest.

52 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

52

The sound of a bedroom door closing can be heard. Aran clears a space on the sofa and collapses. His phone pings:

'Hi Aran, I was disappointed to hear you didn't attend today's workshop. Please make more effort in future. Amy.'

Aran buries his head in his hands, sobbing quietly.

53 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY

53

Tony saunters in with his coffee mug and is surprised to find Aran hunched over his laptop.

TONY

Bloody hell. Someone's keen.

ARAN

Got a lot to catch up on.

TONY

Find some other time for it. Morning duty. Come on.

Tony doesn't wait around, he's already out the door. Tired, frustrated, despondent, Aran hangs around for a moment.

TONY (O.S.)

Chop, chop.

Fed up, Aran grabs his coat and chases after Tony.

54 EXT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD - DAY

54

Boys play football with a bottle, girls huddle around their phones. Aran and Tony patrol. Tony clocks students gathering to watch four boys engage in crutch-jousting. The jousters ride piggyback, crutches poised as their mounts charge.

TONY

Boys! Really?

The gathering disperses, animatedly discussing the duel.

TONY

Children are the future. God help us.

Aran's too busy yawning to listen.

TONY

Keeping you up, are we? Three days and you're already done in.

ARAN

I've had a lot on. You wouldn't understand.

TONY

Wouldn't I?

ARAN

No. But it's fine, I get it. You let things slide when you stop caring.

Tony rounds on Aran, clearly offended.

TONY

Say that again.

ARAN

I just mean, from what I've seen --

TONY

In three days? Now you're some fucking expert?

ARAN

Obviously not. But even I know that correct teaching practices stipulate --

TONY

Of course, I forgot. A few weeks in your cushy lecture theatre, wanking over your course notes and you're the fucking dog's bollocks.

ARAN

Hang on, I --

TONY

You think I don't know how in the shit we are? You think it's not on my mind every time those kids walk in?

Aran stammers, trying to form an answer. Tony mocks him.

TONY

I told Natasha something needed to change, and we ended up with you. You just can't get the staff these days.

Shaking with rage, Tony tips the contents of his 'World's Best Teacher' mug on the ground, staring defiantly at Aran.

TONY

Looks like I need a refill.

He storms off, leaving an intimidated Aran far behind.

55 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY 55

Aran sits sheepishly in a corner as Tony takes the register.

TONY

Lewis?

Lewis is nowhere to be seen.

TONY

No Lewis. Which means...

He scans the room.

TONY

Yup, no Rhys either. What a shame.

There's a knock at the door and Natasha enters.

NATASHA

Sorry, I'm free now if you want that chat?

Tony thrusts the register at Aran and exits without a word.

TAMARA

What have you done this time?

ARAN

Nothing. I mean --

Before he can continue, Lewis and Rhys enter, giggling and engrossed in whatever's on Lewis' phone.

ARAN

What time do you two call this?

The boys ignore him and wander to their seats.

ARAN

Give me your planners.

LEWIS  
Chill man, we're here.

ARAN  
Now, please.

Rhys hands Aran his planner without fuss, while Lewis, in a strop, stays rooted in his seat.

ARAN  
Hurry up, Lewis.

LEWIS  
What for? I'm here, ain't I?

ARAN  
Planner.

LEWIS  
I ain't got my planner.

ARAN  
Then it's isolation.

LEWIS  
Whatever, man.

ARAN  
Now.

To Aran's frustration, Lewis breaks into a smug grin.

LEWIS  
You can't tell me to do nothing.

ARAN  
I can. Now go.

LEWIS  
Nah man, you're just some trainee,  
innit?

This gets the class' attention. Aran hesitates, thrown off by Lewis' revelation.

ARAN  
Excuse me?

Lewis holds up his phone to show Aran and the fascinated class Aran's Facebook profile. Lewis taps on his profile picture to show him at graduation with his family.

LEWIS  
Your mum is well fit.

Aran starts to tremble, struggling to control his anger. But Lewis touching himself is too much.

ARAN

Enough!

The outburst is loud enough to stun the room to silence.

TAMARA

You shouldn't have lied to us.

56 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY

56

The bell rings then fades, and the last stragglers hurry into their classrooms. Aran approaches Natasha's office. He goes to knock, then hears sobbing inside. He pauses.

NATASHA (O.S.)

It's okay, Tony. It's okay.

Aran hurries on.

57 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #2 - DAY

57

Aran sits in a corner with his laptop, his eyes flitting between the open door and the room of restless Year 9s.

YEAR 9 STUDENT

Sir, where's Miss?

ARAN

Miss Forward's running late.

Aran sits silently as the class starts talking. They're silenced as a dishevelled, flustered Natasha charges in.

NATASHA

Year 9, when a teacher enters you stand.

The class snaps to its feet. Natasha points out a few.

NATASHA

Lab coat. Lab coat. Lab coat. I shouldn't have to remind you.

The guilty scramble for their lab coats, except one boy.

NATASHA

Alex, where is your lab coat?

ALEX

Forgot it, Miss.

NATASHA

Planner.

Alex hands it over. Natasha takes it to her desk. To everyone's surprise, she takes a moment, holding her head as if fighting tears.



ARAN

Are you all right?

Natasha doesn't respond. Aran makes to take a stack of practice papers.

NATASHA

No. You've done enough today.

She snatches the papers and hands them out alone.

58 INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DUSK

58

Kadir's hooked up to various monitors. Aran sits at his bedside, watching him sleep. His phone rings. When Aran sees the caller, his head drops.

ARAN

(into phone)

Hi, Wendy.

59 INT. CHILDREN'S HOME - DUSK

59

An institutional home, bare walls decorated with children's paintings, notices about adoption and fostering, and photos of outings. Wendy leans against the wall, dodging children playing in the corridor.

WENDY

(into phone)

Nice of you to pick up the phone.

INTERCUT: PHONE CONVERSATION

ARAN

Sorry. The last few days have been... Well, they're done now.

WENDY

Something I should know about?

ARAN

No, no, I'm fine. Things are fine.

WENDY

Then why are you ignoring my calls?

ARAN

I've just been busy, starting this placement and everything.

WENDY

Because if my calls are ignored, you know what I'd think, don't you?

ARAN

Yes.

WENDY

I have a duty of care, and I wouldn't hesitate to exercise it.

ARAN

I understand.

WENDY

So from now on, when I call, you'll answer, won't you?

ARAN

Yes.

WENDY

Good boy. Now, I must go, got some prospective foster parents coming in at short notice. See you soon.

Aran hangs up, pockets his phone and goes back to watching Kadir. His father gives a small cough and continues sleeping. Aran reaches out and gently holds his hand.

60 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAWN

60

Aran gazes forlornly at his laptop, the title on screen reads: 'School Based Research Project'. He's barely started.

NATASHA (O.S.)

Is Tony in yet?

Aran jumps and turns to see Natasha approaching him.

ARAN

Doubt it. It's still dark outside.

NATASHA

That's true.

She perches on the corner of Aran's desk.

NATASHA

Sorry about yesterday. That was unprofessional.

ARAN

It's fine. It looked like you had a lot of crap to deal with.

NATASHA

Exactly, which is why I'd like you to apologise too. I told you about pointing the finger.

ARAN

I'm sorry. I've got a lot on and it just sort of slipped out.

NATASHA

Maybe. But that's no reason to say what you said to Tony. He had a Sixth Former last year, Shola. Anywhere else she'd be brilliant but here, she was a prodigy. She wanted to do medicine so needed all 'A's'. Tony worked himself into the ground to make it happen. She got a 'B' in Biology, just one of those things. Oxford, King's, UCL, Imperial, they all turned her down, so you can imagine how Tony felt. But it was only after he took the flack from her parents, SLT, the Head, that he told me his wife had died at the start of the final term. Cancer. He never thought to mention it. Not that anyone would have cared. Grief isn't measured on the league tables. Loss doesn't secure a larger budget. The shit he went through, I didn't think he'd stay. I'd have gladly waved him off to some international school in the Bahamas like so many others. But he sticks it out because he cares more for these kids than himself. It's too bad more can't make that sacrifice. But then again, why should they?

A moment of silence as Aran processes what he's been told.

NATASHA

Anyway, I'd better get on. When you see him, tell him I need those Year 11 predicted grades ASAP.

61 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

61

Aran leads Kadir slowly into the room and lowers him into his chair. Kadir is looking more frail than ever before.

KADIR

[That's better.]

He kneels beside Kadir and checks his blood pressure.

ARAN

[Do you feel like eating?]

KADIR

[Anything but hospital food.]

Kadir chuckles, and Aran reciprocates with a small smile.

62 INT. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

62

Aran consults an NHS Heart Attack pamphlet and sees the list of food to avoid includes ready meals. He scours the cupboards, settling on a few tins of soup. As he pours it out, Rawand rushes in.

RAWAND

What did you do?

ARAN

What?

RAWAND

I was waiting to see the head and Wendy was there. The school had called her in.

ARAN

Why? What did you do?

RAWAND

Nothing. It was you. She said she spoke to you and thought you were hiding something. She asked me if you were.

ARAN

Really?

RAWAND

She said, "Is Aran looking after you? He won't tell me."

ARAN

(to himself)

Bitch.

RAWAND

You couldn't have said everything was okay?

ARAN

I did! She's just --

RAWAND

You've ruined my life!

Rawand storms from the room. Aran hesitates, but then something clicks and he follows his brother into the lounge.

ARAN

Rawand! Wait.

RAWAND

Leave me alone.

ARAN

Why were you outside the head's office?

RAWAND

I said get lost!

ARAN

Why? Answer me!

RAWAND

Final warning. One more chance or I get suspended.

Aran takes a moment to digest this. He can't look at Rawand.

ARAN

I spoke to Wendy. I told her everything was fine, and she had no right to go behind my back like that. But for Christ's sake, how do I convince her things are fine when you're so determined to keep screwing this up?

Rawand just sulks on the sofa.

ARAN

I know you're upset. But you're not the only one, and the more you act like this is all about you, the more Wendy will think it's about me.

Rawand curls up, suddenly looking very vulnerable.

RAWAND

I just want mum to be here.

Aran looks back at Kadir, who's looking equally sad.

ARAN

I know.

Aran sits beside Rawand.

ARAN

There will be news eventually. There always is. Meantime, I need your help to make this work. Go back to how you were before she went away. You know, little golden boy, sun shining out your arse and all that.

This gets a little grin from Rawand.

ARAN

Okay?

Their brief moment of reconciliation is ruined by Aran's phone ringing.

RAWAND  
(reading the screen)  
Who's Amy?

ARAN  
My tutor.

RAWAND  
Why's she calling so late?

ARAN  
Witches only come out at night.

63 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAWN

63

Aran's back in front of his laptop, staring, zombie-like at the screen, his phone clamped between his ear and shoulder.

ARAN  
(into phone)  
Zi, mate, I'm telling you, what she's asking must breach the Geneva Convention or something... Don't even get me started on lesson plans... You know with all I've got going on, I actually wondered if this crap is worth it... No, wait, that doesn't mean I don't care, I just --

A bang against the door startles Aran. He looks around and sees Rhys amble past.

ARAN  
Got to go, things are kicking off early today... Fine, I promise I'll be in on Monday.

64 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAWN

64

Aran emerges from the lab to see Rhys absent-mindedly kicking a football up and down the corridor, occasionally against the wall and the door.

ARAN  
Rhys? What do you think you're doing?

RHYS  
What?

ARAN  
What does that say?

He points to the large clock on the wall reading 07:20. Rhys studies it intently.

RHYS

Five past... Quarter past?

ARAN

What? No, twenty past seven, and you know you shouldn't be inside before ten to nine.

RHYS

It's freezing outside.

ARAN

I know, but... I mean, why are you even in this early?

RHYS

Mum always works the early shift on Thursday.

ARAN

Can't your dad drop you off?

RHYS

Don't have one.

A moment as Aran scrambles to dig himself out of his hole.

ARAN

What does your mum do?

RHYS

Paramedic.

ARAN

Wow. Is that something you fancy doing?

RHYS

Maybe. I like helping people.

Rhys juggles his ball a few times.

ARAN

You know you can't play that in here.

RHYS

No one's stopped me before.

ARAN

No one's usually in this early.

RHYS

Yeah. So why don't you do your thing and I'll do mine?

ARAN

You know I can't do that.

RHYS

Why not? I'm just killing time, and you've probably got stuff to do or you wouldn't be in this early.

ARAN

Touché.

RHYS

So?

ARAN

All right. But if you're still doing it at eight, you're on my time, and I'll have it.

Rhys meanders up the corridor, juggling the football with impressive skill. Aran watches him go, pondering.

ARAN (V.O.)

Will you guys just pack it in?

65 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY

65

Normal service resumes as Lewis and Rhys mess around at the back of the room. Exasperated, Aran just tells them off from behind his laptop.

RHYS

Sir, it weren't me!

ARAN

I don't care. The pair of you, just shut up.

The boys settle down, and Aran goes back to his laptop. The room is hushed. Suddenly, out of nowhere, there is the loud, unmistakable sound of a woman's orgasm. Heads snap to see Rhys punch Lewis, who's howling with laughter.

RHYS

Dickhead!

ARAN

Rhys!

RHYS

He sent me it, sir.

LEWIS

Shut up, man.

ARAN

Lewis, outside.

LEWIS

Why?



ARAN  
Just get outside.

LEWIS  
Wait, yeah? Just explain why you're  
always picking on me.

ARAN  
I'm not arguing with you, Lewis.

LEWIS  
This is bullshit, man.

ARAN  
Now!

Lewis struts from the room, tutting as he goes.

66 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY 66

Aran emerges to see Lewis wandering off and follows briskly.

ARAN  
Come back and wait outside.

LEWIS  
Nah.

Lewis stares at his phone, obnoxiously ignoring Aran.

ARAN  
Lewis, you can't wander around the  
corridors.

LEWIS  
Do what I want, mate.

ARAN  
That's it. You're going to  
isolation.

LEWIS  
You can't do that.

ARAN  
I can and I will.

LEWIS  
Trainees can't do shit.

Without warning, Lewis dashes down the corridor. Aran tries to keep up, but Lewis is faster. At the end of the corridor, Lewis turns back with a smirk on his face, gesturing:

LEWIS  
Wanker!

He disappears round a corner. As Aran catches up, he almost runs into Lewis as he finds him face to face with Mr Cross.

MR CROSS

Did I miss something? Did Miss North make you King for the day? Or did you really think you can go around using that kind of language?

LEWIS

Yeah, but Sir, he's just a --

MR CROSS

One more word, Lewis, and you'll spend the rest of your natural life in isolation.

ARAN

That's where he's going, Mr Cross.

MR CROSS

You'd better get going then.

Lewis turns and makes to walk off.

MR CROSS

Lewis, aren't you forgetting something?

He turns back.

MR CROSS

I'm not even going to ask.

He holds out his palm, and Lewis hands over his phone before trudging off in a sulk.

ARAN

Thanks.

MR CROSS

Wait 'til you meet his mother.

The bell rings.

67 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY

67

Aran squeezes through the door as the students file out. He approaches Tony at the desk.

ARAN

Where were you?

TONY

Busy.

ARAN

Look, Tony --

TONY

I've got a cover lesson to get to.

He gathers up his bag and worksheets, and departs without waiting for Aran's response.

MONTAGE - ARAN'S DAY

A) Lab #3 - Aran's laptop sits open with the blank lesson plan on the screen. The cursor blinks expectantly.

B) Lab #2 - Aran assists with a practical demonstration of an experiment.

C) Lab #3 - The lesson plan remains untouched.

D) School Hall - Aran braves a food fight to break up an argument.

E) Staff Room - Aran hurriedly guillotines worksheets, slicing them at odd angles, forcing him to do it again.

68 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY 68

Aran collapses into his seat and stares at his laptop. Just as he starts typing, there is an almighty shrieking noise: the fire alarm.

He sees scores of staff and students filing past the lab. He slams his hands on the desk in frustration.

69 EXT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - COURTYARD - DAY 69

The school assembles in form groups as teachers pace down the lines taking a register. The bell continues to ring.

Aran hands the register to Tony at the head of the line.

ARAN

All good.

Tony takes it without a word. They stand in silence. Several times Aran considers speaking, but doesn't.

ARAN

Tony, I --

TONY

Sshh.

ARAN

Look, I'm sorry for what I said. Natasha told me about --

TONY

I don't care. I've got bigger problems than pulling your head out your arse.

The bell falls silent and the school starts to disperse.

TONY

Must be all set for tomorrow. I'm  
really looking forward to it.

70 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DUSK 70

Aran gazes, dejected, at his pitiful plan. As he stares, typing, his phone pings: 'Reminder: Dad's new prescription'.

He checks the wall clock: 18:02. With a sigh, he closes his laptop and packs his bag.

71 INT. PHARMACY - DUSK 71

Aran impatiently queues, fiddling with the prescription until he reaches the counter.

PHARMACIST

Back again?

Aran slams the prescription down, not in the mood.

ARAN

And a pack of Nytol.

72 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 72

Aran checks Kadir's blood pressure, then administers the tablets.

73 INT. KADIR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 73

He then helps Kadir into bed, hangs his clothes and turns out the light.

74 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 74

He shovels pasta into his mouth whilst trying to work. Rawand appears with his report for Aran to sign.

75 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER) 75

Tears fill Aran's eyes from tiredness. He wipes them away as he hits send on an email to Amy titled, 'Lesson Plan'. With a deep sigh of relief he shuts his laptop.

76 INT. ARAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 76

Aran pops two sleeping tablets and crawls into bed. His bedside clock reads 00:04. He lies still, staring blankly.

77 INT. ARAN'S BEDROOM - DAWN 77

Aran's already awake when his alarm goes off. He silences it and swings out of bed. He breathes deeply, steeling himself.

78 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAWN 78

Aran flicks on the light and surveys the deserted classroom. He takes a moment, closing his eyes.

NATASHA (O.S.)

I hope you're not picturing them  
all naked.

He opens his eyes to see Natasha leaning against the door.

ARAN

What?

NATASHA

You know? Picturing an audience au  
naturel makes it easier when you're  
nervous. Whoever dreamt that up  
obviously never read teacher  
guidelines.

Aran forces a grin, but he can't hide his nerves.

NATASHA

Relax. Stick to your plan and  
you'll be fine. I'll see you after.

79 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY 79

The distant sounds of breacktime echo as Aran frantically prepares. In his haste, he drops a stack of sheets on the floor. Tony marches in, swigging from his mug to see Aran fighting to contain a yawn as he tidies up.

TONY

What a fucking mess.

ARAN

I'm fine.

TONY

Oh? Because anyone that knackered  
has either been up all night  
shagging or shitting themselves.

ARAN

I'm fine.

The bell rings.

TONY

We'll see, won't we? Lesson plan?

Aran rummages in his bag and hands over the plan.

TONY

Risk assessment?

Aran freezes.

ARAN

What?

TONY

Basic requirement for practicals.  
Did nobody mention that?

ARAN

I've never seen you do one.

Aran looks around, lost, panicked. The sound of chatting children growing louder from beyond the door.

TONY

Jesus. Check the drawer.

Aran rifles through the drawers until he finds a document. He dashes it off as Tony meets the students outside.

TONY

Year 10, in you come.

The students file in. One of the first is Tamara.

TAMARA

What are we doing today, sir?

TONY

You've got a Mr Rashid special today.

Aran hurries up to them and hands Tony the completed form.

TAMARA

Could things get any worse?

Aran and Tony watch her theatrically throw her bag down beside her stool and sit, arms folded, in a mood.

Tony moves to the back, leaving Aran to take centre stage. Aran surveys the room, heartened by the students' intrigue of the equipment laid out before them.

ARAN

So, listen! Today we're --

He's cut off by Lewis bursting in, head down, hood up on his jacket. He makes for his seat without looking at Aran.

ARAN

Lewis...

Lewis doesn't respond. He pulls his hood down and hunches over his bag. Aran looks to Tony, who's giving nothing away.

ARAN

Fine. See me at the end. So today we're carrying on with circulation.

He taps the keyboard to advance his slideshow. Nothing happens.

ARAN

Umm... Hang on...

He tries again but the screen's frozen.

STUDENT #1

You tried turning it off and on again?

The class laughs, Tony makes notes, Aran starts to panic.

ARAN

Actually, if you gather round.

The class masses at the desk to watch Aran whip the cloth off his tray. Students ooh, aah and squirm at the pig's heart resting before them.

STUDENT #2

Sir, that is minging.

ARAN

No, it's a pig's heart, but close. So, the job of the heart is to...?

STUDENT #3

Pump blood.

ARAN

Spot on, and for us to see how, we need to look inside. Now watch carefully. Lewis...

The class look round, Lewis is still in his chair.

ARAN

Come here. Watch.

LEWIS

I can see from here.

ARAN

No. Come here so you can see properly.

Lewis trudges up to join the rest of the class.

ARAN

Now, you'll be cutting into the four chambers to see what each one does. With your scalpel, cut --

TAMARA

Sir, you can't do this.

ARAN  
Excuse me, Tamara?

TAMARA  
I'm actually a vegan, so you can't  
treat animals like this.

ARAN  
It's just a heart.

TAMARA  
Well you're discriminating against  
me, so --

ARAN  
Okay, okay, be quiet. You can just  
do the worksheet. Just let me show  
the others what they're doing.

A girl in a hijab, RABIA, timidly raises her hand.

RABIA  
Sir, can I? I'm not supposed to...

Aran looks at his class and realises there's a large number  
of students nodding in agreement with Rabia.

ARAN  
Oh God, of course. Rabia, isn't it?  
Okay, those of you like Rabia... I  
mean... Just do the worksheet.

TAMARA  
You're negatively impacting my --

ARAN  
Tamara, please!

Tamara stomps back to her seat, shaking her head and quietly  
muttering to herself.

ARAN  
Thank you. So, your first incision  
is here...

SERIES OF SHOTS - ARAN'S DISSECTION DEMONSTRATION

A) Aran slices into the heart and points out the contents.

B) Aran pokes his fingers through the blood vessels.

C) The students are fascinated and disgusted, except Lewis,  
who's just staring at the floor.

80 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB #3 - DAY 80  
(LATER)

The students are busy dissecting, or rather, butchering  
their hearts, and labelling their worksheets.



ARAN

People these scalpels are sharp, so anyone messing around will go straight to isolation.

Leaving the students to it, Aran approaches Tony who's moving among the students, inspecting their work.

ARAN

Something else you thought I should just find out for myself?

TONY

What?

ARAN

Tamara. It never occurred to you?

TONY

Why should it? I didn't know.

ARAN

Please.

TONY

It's not something that becomes an issue in my lessons. Nor does spotting half my students are Muslim.

Suddenly, there's a scream from behind Aran. He turns to see Lewis cutting chunks of heart away and catapulting them off his scalpel at Tamara.

ARAN

Lewis!

LEWIS

She won't leave me alone.

TAMARA

I just said he's been miserable all day and it's really childish.

LEWIS

Shut up, bitch.

ARAN

That's it. Lewis, out.

LEWIS

Shut up, this ain't nothing to do with you.

TONY

Lewis. Out.

LEWIS

Fuck this school, man.

Lewis grabs his bag and storms out.

ARAN  
Planner please, Tamara.

TAMARA  
What do you think you're doing?

ARAN  
Now.

TAMARA  
For goodness' sake.

She huffs and puffs as she surrenders her planner. Aran takes it to the front and drops it on the desk.

ARAN  
Right, everyone, get back to your work. Any more trouble, you'll all be back with me at lunch.

The class simmers down. There are a few tuts but Aran's too irritated to care. In the corner, Tony makes more notes.

81 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR/SCIENCE LAB #3 - 81  
DAY

Aran stands with Tony at the door as the students file out. Tamara's one of the last to pass them.

TAMARA  
(to Tony)  
Just so I know, sir, is this what I've got to put up with from now on?

TONY  
Hurry up, Tamara, you'll be late.

Tamara tuts and marches off.

ARAN  
So?

Tony ignores him. He's clocked Rhys, who's still packing up.

TONY  
Rhys, get a move on. You've got another class and so have I.

ARAN  
Good work today, Rhys. Circulation, how the heart works, it's the sort of stuff a paramedic needs to know.

Rhys gives a nod and exits. Aran lets out a small smile, though it vanishes when Tony squares up to him.

TONY

As shitshows go... I've seen worse.

Tony returns to the door where the next class is waiting.

TONY

Year 9 shut up, line up.

82 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - SCHOOL HALL - DAY 82

Aran stands on duty as kids eat their lunch. In the corner, he spies Rhys trying to comfort a despondent Lewis. Whatever he's saying, it's falling on deaf ears.

83 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY 83

Aran approaches Natasha's office. He goes to knock, but holds back when he hears voices inside.

MISS NORTH (O.S.)

Every department has targets, and everyone else seems able to meet them.

NATASHA (O.S.)

They're not being asked to do what you're asking me to do.

MISS NORTH (O.S.)

Of course they are. Stop being a drama queen.

NATASHA (O.S.)

I can't do this anymore. You can't force me.

MISS NORTH (O.S.)

Force you? Excuse me, it's your job.

NATASHA (O.S.)

It's not and you know it.

MISS NORTH (O.S.)

If you want a job at all, I suggest you see that it is.

Before Aran can react, the door opens and Miss North emerges. Her piercing eyes study Aran intently.

MISS NORTH

I don't like eavesdropping.

ARAN

I wasn't. I... I've got a mentor meeting with --

MISS NORTH

Oh, you must be our trainee.

She holds out her hand. Aran shakes it, unsettled.

MISS NORTH  
We're expecting great things from  
you, so no pressure!

She holds the handshake a few beats longer than is comfortable as she gives Aran a big, forced smile. Aran doesn't dare break the gaze, or the grip.

NATASHA  
Do you want to come in, Aran?

Aran hurries inside, giving Natasha a subtle nod of gratitude. Natasha and Miss North lock eyes before Miss North turns on her expensive high heels and strides away.

84 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - NATASHA'S OFFICE - DAY 84

Aran watches Natasha crash into her chair. She's done in.

NATASHA  
She's really on form today.

ARAN  
Who is she?

NATASHA  
Miss North. The Head. Didn't you know?

Aran shakes his head.

NATASHA  
She's only been in a couple of years, and she's younger than me! Proper fish out of water, bless her cotton socks. How're you doing?

ARAN  
Can I be honest?

NATASHA  
Not pointing the finger, I hope.

ARAN  
I'm exhausted.

NATASHA  
Join the club.

ARAN  
I'm sorry. I know I've only just started, but --

NATASHA  
I know it's hard, Aran. But you'll get there.

(MORE)

NATASHA (cont'd)

Teachers these days, we're more like firefighters. There's always another emergency, another crisis. Main thing is to never get burned. Right?

Aran gives an uncertain nod.

NATASHA

And hey, we've got ten weeks to get it right.

85 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY 85

Aran stands outside Natasha's door clutching a piece of paper. Before he can read it, his phone pings:

'From: Wendy Hewitt. Re. Visit evaluation.'

Aran pockets his phone and reads the paper. At the bottom, Amy's written, 'A positive start, room to improve.' Emboldened, Aran strides purposefully away, as if riding off into the sunset.

86 INT. SOUTH CROYDON HIGH SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DUSK 86

A Cleaner hoovers the carpet. She passes an open door and looks inside: Aran is still at his desk, head in hands, poring over his laptop. The Cleaner leaves him to it.

FADE TO BLACK

END.