

DO UNTO YOURSELF

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INT. ANN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

ANN (50, hates everything about herself, including her curves) slumps against a counter in a well-presented kitchen. A sagging helium balloon with "Happy 50th" bobs around in the corner.

She pours a meagre portion of cereal into a bowl. Checks left, right, behind. Nobody there. She sneaks a bit more cereal.

As she's about to add milk, NETTY (25, has a look of Ann, she could be her glamorous, svelte daughter) glides in.

Netty scrutinises the bowl, gives Ann a stern glare. Ann tips some cereal back into the box.

Ann's phone buzzes - a photo message. She opens it. Her and a few friends around the same age at a bar. Her friends toast each other, grinning regardless of crows' feet and eye bags. Ann loiters at the edge, her smile awkward.

Netty swoops over, grabs the phone, crops Ann out of the picture, dumps the phone on the counter.

Ann trickles milk onto her breakfast.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - LATER

Ann hunches at a laptop, staring at an online "Team Meeting" call. A gallery of participants fills the screen, including dapper LEO (38) and grandiose call host JEREMY (60). Ann is the only participant with her camera off.

Netty perches on the desk next to her.

JEREMY

Well that about does us for today.
Any other business, folks?

Netty tries to block Ann from unmuting, a BEAT too late.

NETTY

(hisses)
Your funeral.

ANN

Hi Jeremy, yes I... I've been
thinking.

JEREMY

Nice to know I'm getting value for
money.

She falters. He smiles, motions for her to go ahead. Ann shares a staid PowerPoint presentation on screen, entitled 'Remote Team Building Proposal'.

JEREMY (cont'd)
PowerPoint, blimey! Didn't realise we still had licenses for that old mule.

LEO
Hang on a sec, love. Just have to feed my Tamagotchi.

Leo chortles, laughter ripples through the call attendees.

JEREMY
Tell you what, let's park this for now, give you time to regroup, no?

Netty leans into Ann's ear.

NETTY
You know that's code for 'let's shuffle this under the carpet', right? Probably for the best, eh.

JEREMY
Why don't the rest of you drop. Ann, you stay on for a little conflag.

Call attendees drop, leaving only Jeremy and Ann. Ann chews her lip, nervous.

JEREMY (cont'd)
Word of advice, Ann. If you use tired old methods, people will expect your ideas to be tired and old too.

ANN
Sorry. Nobody told me, I mean I didn't know that, erm... which tools should I be using, again?

Jeremy shrugs.

JEREMY
Ask Leo, he's a whizz at that gubbins.

ANN
No worries, I'll work it out.

JEREMY
Atta girl. And would it kill you to use a webcam?

Netty appraises Ann, grimaces, shakes her head.

ANN
Sorry, it's on the blink. I'll look
into that too.

JEREMY
Splendid. Fare ye well, trooper!

Jeremy hangs up. Ann deflates. Netty folds her arms.

NETTY
See? This is what happens when you
shun me.

Ann squeezes her eyes shut, massages her temples.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Ann checks herself out in the mirror. She wears a figure-hugging business dress. She sucks in her belly, half-smiles at her reflection. In B/G, Netty reads on the bed.

As Ann is about to leave the room-

NETTY
Ha! When you were my age, maybe.

Netty slinks over to Ann, prods the flesh on her hips. Wrinkles her nose. Selects a floaty dress from the wardrobe.

Ann changes into it. It swamps her figure. Netty gives a satisfied nod. Ann slouches out of the room.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - LATER

Ann works on copying and pasting her remote team-building ideas from PowerPoint to a snazzier app, a steaming coffee on her desk. A "Team Meeting" notification pops up. With a heavy hand, she clicks on the meeting link, joins the call.

JEREMY
Afternoon everybody, nice to see all
your smiling faces.

Ann's mouse hovers over the camera button, poised to turn it on. Netty appears at her side, wearing a disdainful sneer.

NETTY
Really? You know these lights don't
flatter you. Like, at all.

Ann bottles putting her camera on. With a smirk, Netty retreats and slurps Ann's coffee. Winces.

NETTY (cont'd)
Wow. No wonder you can't keep the weight off with all that sugar.

Ann drags her attention to the call. Jeremy expounds.

JEREMY
So, if any of you know any suitable candidates, or if you think you've got what it takes, ping Amit a CV and all that guff.

ANN
Er, sorry, my headset was playing up-

NETTY
-Liar.

ANN
... W-what are the CVs for?

JEREMY
Keep up, Ann. Early retirement. Mine, to be precise. To make things fair, we're opening up the position, rather than just promoting somebody. I'll circulate the job description, let us know of any candidates by Friday, we'll interview, assess and Bob's your uncle.

Leo points both thumbs towards himself.

LEO
And Leo's your boss.

Leo winks. Jeremy titters. The other faces on the call smile and laugh, all muted. Ann's shoulders sag.

NETTY
Dunno why they're bothering with this charade.

ANN
I think it's a good thing.

NETTY
Lip service, Ann. Everyone knows Leo'll get it. Why else do you think they laughed at his lame joke?

ANN

But I've got way more experience!

NETTY

Yes, but he's smart. Relevant. And he has a personality, sweetheart. You should try it sometime.

ANN

Oh, so I'm the only one who has zero redeeming features, am I?

NETTY

You manifest what you believe, hun.

Ann scowls. Picks up her coffee. Frowns at it. Puts it down with a frustrated growl.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

A peaceful clearing, not a soul around. Except Ann.

She sits on a bench, furiously typing into her phone. She stops, takes a deep breath. Reviews what she had typed.

An email addressed to Amit and Jeremy, attaching her CV, a few bullet points about her experience and the Remote Working proposal. She half-smiles.

NETTY (O.O.S)

Nice try, sweetheart.

Ann whips her head round, too quickly. She flinches and rubs her neck. Netty lounges beside her, pouting, long hair billowing in the breeze. She laughs.

NETTY

You should know better than to move so quickly, haven't you learnt anything over the years?

ANN

Fuck off, Netty.

NETTY

I wish you would appreciate me more.

Ann charges away from her, Netty easily keeps pace.

NETTY (cont'd)

I've been looking for you everywhere. You know I stop you making silly mistakes. Like sending that email.

Ann speeds to a trot. Throws her hands over her ears.

NETTY (cont'd)
 (shouting)
 You know, just coz you think you've
 got imposter syndrome, doesn't mean
 you're not actually shit.

Ann passes a pile of felled logs. Pauses. Doubles back. Makes a beeline for a log, around the size of a baseball bat. She hauls it up. Gives Netty a savage glare.

NETTY (cont'd)
 Oh bless, you couldn't hurt me if you
 tried. Your body'd probably-

Ann swings the log in Netty's direction. A THUNK of wood hitting flesh. Ann keeps hitting, swing after swing. Blood SPLATTERS Ann and soaks the wood.

Ann assesses Netty's broken corpse. She swoons, drops the log, collapses on top of it.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Rain patters on Ann's face, rousing her. She JOLTS upright. Stares at the log. Long-blinks. Stares again. Squeezes her eyes shut, rubs them. Inspects the log. NO BLOOD.

She looks around. Netty is nowhere to be seen. Ann dithers for a moment. Picks up the log, trudges away.

EXT. ANN'S HOUSE - DAY

SERIES OF IMAGES

-- Ann rummages in a chaotic garage, finally locates a saw. Blows dust off it.

-- Ann saws the log in half vertically

-- Ann binds the two halves into a cross

-- Ann etches words into the wood

-- Muddy and soaked, Ann plants the cross in a flower bed

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Ann emerges from an en-suite bathroom, towel-drying her hair. She heads for her laptop. Opens the drafted email.

She wanders to the window, looks at the freshly-made cross.

INSERT: The planted cross, with words roughly carved: "Rot in Hell Netty"

BACK TO SCENE

Ann gulps. Reaches for a photo frame - the same women from the earlier photo, but closer to Netty's age. Netty is also there, less glamorous, loitering at the edge of the gang, wearing a familiar awkward smile.

Ann removes the photo from the frame. Caresses it. Rips Netty off the photo, replaces it in the frame.

She hurries to her laptop. Presses SEND. Flops onto the bed.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ann stares at the ceiling, deep in thought. She JUMPS as her phone RINGS. Unknown caller. She answers with trembling hand and voice.

ANN

Hello?

AMIT (V.O.)

Ann! Long time, no speak. Just called to say that I'm glad you applied for Jeremy's job. Astounded, but glad.

Ann flounders, dumbstruck.

AMIT (V.O.) (cont'd)

Between you and me, I think your department is in danger of "group think". You'd make a refreshing change.

ANN

Then, I mean not to sound too bold, but why didn't you just promote me?

AMIT (V.O.)

I needed to know you really wanted it. And it needs to be a fair race. This isn't a shoo-in, Ann. You're gonna need to show me - and everyone else - what you've got. Like those ideas you shared.

Ann brims with tears. Takes a BEAT to compose herself.

ANN
Thank you, Amit. Haven't felt this
seen in a while.

AMIT (V.O.)
My part is done. Over to you, now.

Amit ends the call. Ann's jaw drops.

INT. ANN'S HOUSE - DAY

Ann perches on a kitchen stool, practices mindful breathing. She wears the business dress from the earlier scene, her hair has been coiffed.

She fires up her laptop. Opens a meeting invite. Takes a final deep breath, pulls her shoulders back. Glances at the now weather-worn cross in the garden.

She joins the call, turns on the camera and a flattering ring-light. Smiles at the team. They reciprocate with encouraging expressions - all except Leo, whose forced smile looks more like a sneer.

ANN
Afternoon, everyone. Nice to see all
your smiling faces.

She lets out a long, relieved exhale.