

MOPHEADS.

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INT. WESTPOINT MALL - 2ND FLOOR PLAZA - MORNING

We descend over suburban FAMILIES, FRIENDS, and COUPLES, bustling through the mall, SHOPPING BAGS in hand. Sticking out like sore thumbs are mall janitors MARINA SALAZAR, 25, and HARRISON "HAN" STOW, 23, people-watching from the benches.

Marina is a young Latina, her natural beauty hidden behind the folds of her hideous beige uniform. Han, an overweight college dropout and self-proclaimed science fiction nerd, barely fits into his own raggedy uniform.

From their view, Marina and Han watch a MOTHER, 43, and her DAUGHTER, 15, having a quarrel at the entrance of a DEPARTMENT STORE, several feet away. Far enough not to be heard, Marina and Han begin speaking for them:

HAN

(voicing the mother)

"How many Goddamn times do I have to tell you? *Stop hoarding the perfume samples from Macy's!*"

MARINA

(voicing the daughter)

I wanna smell nice too!

HAN

If anybody's smelling nice around here, it's gonna be me. I've smelled like a dirty trucker rolled in Axe spray since the day you popped out!

MARINA

(blubbering)

Why do you hate me so much?!

HAN

Because your face looks ugly when you cry! And I never wanted to have you in the first place!

The woman waves her outstretched arms at her daughter.

HAN (CONT'D)

THIS IS HOW MUCH I RESENT YOU!

MARINA

Can I have a Cinnabon from the food court?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAN
NO, YOU CANNOT HAVE A CINNABON FROM
THE FOOD COURT!

Marina and Han burst into a fit of LAUGHTER, so loudly that both the mother and daughter turn their heads. But Marina and Han carry on pointing and laughing, prompting the mother and daughter approach them.

MOTHER
(irately)
Excuse me? What do you two think
you're laughing at...?

HAN
"No, you cannot have a
Cinnabon from the food court!"

Han gives the mother a toothy grin, as if sharing a joke she should understand. She isn't following. Marina and Han continue to snicker.

MARINA
(waving her arms)
"This is how much I resent you!"

MOTHER
What... what is *this* supposed to
be?
(Mimicking Marina)
Is this drugs? Is that what that
means?!

The daughter appears embarrassed and facepalms.

HAN
(in a teenage girl's
voice)
Mommy, why can't I smell nice?

DAUGHTER
HEY-

MOTHER
That's enough!
(Collecting herself)
Look, this is a nice mall. It's not
the place for this kind of
behavior, set an example for the
children.
(Beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MOTHER (CONT'D)

And don't think for a second I won't file a report with your manager.

Suddenly, the fun comes to a screeching halt. Han's grin drops to a grave scowl, his eyes locked onto the mother's.

He means business now.

HAN

Lady, you really don't want to go reporting me. Because when I get reported... I get angry...

MARINA

...and you don't want to see him when he's angry.

MOTHER

Is that a threat?

HAN

More of a precaution, really. I mean, I doubt you've ever worked as a mall janitor at any point in your long, illustrious career as a suburban housewife...

The mother's eyes narrow, staring him down.

HAN (CONT'D)

(shrugging)

Take it from me, it ain't pretty. Working in bathrooms and storage units and the basement--

MARINA

(eyes widened in terror)

Oh, no, not the basement...

HAN

We've been exposed to all types of chemicals, acids, asbestos... Things you've never even heard of. After a while, the tendons in your body starts to give out... And your humanity? Forget it.

Suddenly, Han lets out a sickening CROAK. He clutches his chest in agony. The daughter grins a little out of the mother's line of sight. Marina holds her hand over her mouth in shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARINA

Oh, no...

MOTHER

(nervously)

Oh, no? Oh, no, what? *What the hell's wrong with him?*

HAN

(under his breath)

It's happening... all over again...

Han starts shaking and convulsing, his eyes widened to the size of golf balls and his mouth contorted into a growl.

MARINA

(teary eyed)

I told you! You don't... want to see him... when he's angry...

Her eyes glued on Han shaking on the floor beneath her, the mother reaches for her daughter's hand, slowly backing away.

MOTHER

Wh-what are you doing...?

HAN

(gasping for air)

Run... while you can... before I... before I...

His breathy voice turns into a monstrous ROAR:

HAN (CONT'D)

**GRRRRRRRAAAAAHA
HHHHHHRRR!!**

The mother and daughter yelp in terror and FLEE in the other direction, as Marina joins in Han's howl:

HAN/MARINA

AAAAAAHRRGH!!!

With the mother and daughter long gone, Marina and Han drop the theatrics and, once again, dissolve into a fit of laughter, falling over each other in amusement.

HAN

(Choking back laughter)

Fucking idiots.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Marina and Han laugh until it hurts too much. Sprawled over each other on the floor, they let out one last giggle.

TITLE OVER:

MOPHEADS.

INT. NICHOLAS' KITCHEN - MORNING

NICHOLAS DAFT, 18, a typical-looking high school senior in a Letterman jacket, breezes through the kitchen and pops into the REFRIGERATOR for ORANGE JUICE. He drinks straight from the carton, the corner of his eyes wandering to...

ANGLE ON the SMALL TV SET: An advertisement for a popular energy drink, **JUCED!**, is playing. Two CHILDREN are chugging the bottles and EXPANDING in size, as the ANNOUNCER booms:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

New **JUCED! MONSTER MAX!**
Bring's out the MONSTER in you!

NICHOLAS

(to himself)

They selling juice or Viagra?

Nicholas scoffs, sets down the carton, and exits.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas is seated with his head against the window, out of place amongst the older, WORKING CLASS COMMUTERS around him. As the bus slows to a stop, he eyes a RED CONVERTIBLE in the lane to the left.

Inside, he recognizes three SCHOOL GIRLS, pretty, cheerleader types. They're dancing playfully to the radio and passing around a bottle of **JUCED!**

Nicholas shields his face, so they don't catch sight of him riding public transport. But he watches on, until the traffic light goes GREEN. The girl in the passenger's seat tosses the now-empty **JUCED!** bottle. It SHATTERS on the pavement, as the convertible speeds off.

JENKINS (O.S.)

Nicholas Daft. What do the kids at school call you? Nick? Nicky?

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Nicholas is slouching at the desk of STEPHEN JENKINS, 49, a middle-aged mall manager with a false sense of prestige about his job. Jenkins holds an eager grin at Nicholas.

NICHOLAS
(flatly)
It's Nicholas.

JENKINS
Right. Who needs nick names anyway?
No nicknames for Nicholas...
(Beat)
Nicknames for Nicholas! Get it?

Jenkins chuckles at his own joke. Nicholas doesn't.

JENKINS (CONT'D)
(upholding his grin)
Yeah, okay, that wasn't funny.
So... I see you're a, uh, senior in
high school. Get good grades?

NICHOLAS
No.

JENKINS
You play a sport? Chess club?

NICHOLAS
(as if he should assume)
I'm on the football team.

JENKINS
Oh, wow. That's... Good for you,
son. Go, Tigers!

NICHOLAS
We're the Bears.

JENKINS
(dropping the grin)
Whatever.

The tone's shifted now. Jenkins is tired of overcompensating. The feeling is all too familiar.

JENKINS (CONT'D)
Look, I think we both know you're
not our typical applicant here.
You're young, you're rich, you're
above nicknames. I get it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nicholas raises an eyebrow in agreement.

JENKINS (CONT'D)
But you're here now. You filled out
the application. So, choice is
yours: Do you want the job or not?

Nicholas brings himself to just barely nod in response. It
isn't exactly what Jenkins wanted, but he'll take it.

JENKINS (CONT'D)
You ever held a mop before?

NICHOLAS
No.

JENKINS
Windexed a window?

NICHOLAS
No.

JENKINS
Cleaned a toilet?

NICHOLAS
No way in hell.

JENKINS
(grinning once again)
Perfect.

EXT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas exits the office, colliding with Marina and Han on
their way in. He mumbles something vaguely resembling "excuse
me" and pushes through, as Jenkins sees him out. Marina and
Han turn to watch him walk off, then look to each other and
at Jenkins in bemusement.

JENKINS
That's Nicholas. He's your new co-
worker, starting tomorrow.

HAN
That kid?! Jenkins, that kid is in
high school! You never hire high
school kids.

JENKINS
That's because high school kids
never apply.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENKINS (CONT'D)

They're the ones working retail for minimum wage and a store discount.

MARINA

We work the toilets for minimum wage and these ugly ass uniforms.

HAN

(genuinely offended)

Hey... I like our uniforms.

MARINA

Only because you squint at yourself in the mirror and imagine you're *Luke fucking Skywalker!*

HAN

Really, Marina? Luke Skywalker? Do you even know me at all?!

(Beat)

I'm a Han Solo guy...

JENKINS

Hey, that's enough! I got a pretty nasty report from one of our shoppers about your behavior on the second floor this morning.

Marina and Han exchange confused shrugs.

MARINA

(to Han)

Do you know what he's talking about?

HAN

(to Jenkins)

We have no idea what you're talking about. Could you elaborate?

JENKINS

A mother, a daughter, and a fit of animal-like howling outside of Nordstrom. Ringing any bells?

The two look to each other again and gasp, as if suddenly just remembering. Jenkins isn't amused.

HAN

Jenkins, we were provoked.

JENKINS

You were mocking her!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARINA

Okay, but, in our defense, her daughter seemed pretty happy before the animal-like howling...

Jenkins raises his hand to silence Marina.

JENKINS

I don't want to hear it. This is a job, people. And, if you think I won't fire you, you're wrong. You saw what happened to Kendall.

HAN

(sheepishly)
Jenkins, Kendall was caught stealing and dealing cleaning supplies in the parking lot. You had to fire her.

JENKINS

Get back to work.

MARINA

Wait, Jenkins, you didn't tell us about the new guy.

HAN

Yeah, what's his deal anyway?

JENKINS

(defensively)
There's no "deal" to be known. Okay? He's just... a nice kid.

INT. MALL - 1ST FLOOR PLAZA - DAY

The wet, thick mop head DROPS to the floor, making a sickening THUD as it dampens the tile.

Holding the mop is BETTY ABRAHAM, 40, a petite, black woman with a BUTTON on her chest pocket that reads "Firecracker".

BETTY

(snorting)
Nice kid, my ass.

Betty and Han are mopping the platform to the elevator back-to-back as Marina paces around them.

MARINA

That's what I said!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAN
No, you didn't.

MARINA
(shamefully)
No, I didn't. But I should have.

BETTY
Girl, don't let Jenkins intimidate you. He's a man. It's our job to call him out on his shit.

Sitting on a nearby bench to tie his shoes, their fourth co-worker GUY RICHARDSON, 58, a grouchy gray-haired man and the oldest of the group, lets out a GRUNT at Betty's remark.

GUY
No, it isn't, Betty. He's our boss.

BETTY
But he's a man before he's our boss. His key identifiers are man, boss, and asshole, and in that order. Now, if you're talking to him in the context of being the boss and the asshole, then, sure, boss trumps asshole.

(to Marina)
But you and I are women. Jenkins is first and foremost a man and, as a man, we have every right to put him in his place. And if he dares play the power card to strike us down... *that's sexual harassment.*

Marina, Han, and Guy share a bemused chuckle.

GUY
That most definitely is *not* sexual harassment.

HAN
(endearingly)
Oh, Betty, you are so full of shit.

BETTY
Tell that to my lawyer. My twenty million dollar Target lawsuit back in 2005? Now, THAT was theater!

MARINA
You sued Target? Did you win?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY

(dryly)

Honey, I'm holding a motherfucking mop. Does it look like I won?

Marina winces, abruptly resting her case. Guy stands up from the bench to take his cart, set beside Han's feet.

GUY

Does it look like any of us won?

HAN

Well, I think I'm doing alr--

Marina, Betty, and Guy shoot an icy glare at his idealism.

HAN (CONT'D)

(exasperated)

Right, I forgot we're the human toilets of high society... eating the dog food of consumer America... the absolute bottom of the barrel... and what not...

MARINA

So, why the hell is Mike Seaver coming to work with us then?

From behind Guy's shoulder, Nicholas can be seen entering the mall, in his new uniform, from the opposite side.

GUY

I don't like the idea of some little snot working with us.

BETTY

I agree. He's eighteen. Eighteen-year-olds don't do shit.

HAN

Kendall wasn't that much older than him and her hands never stopped moving...

BETTY

Honey, that girl had so much dope in her system, she couldn't stop her hands from moving even if she tried.

Nicholas approaches the group from behind, still out of their view but able to hear every word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARINA

The bottom line is, high school kids don't clean toilets. They work at fucking Foot Locker.

NICHOLAS

What if I didn't want to work at the fucking Foot Locker?

Marina and the group whip around to see Nicholas standing there cross-armed, an unamused scowl on his face.

HAN

(nervously)

Oh, hey, there... new guy. How long you been, just, standing there?

NICHOLAS

Long enough to hear you talk shit about me.

HAN

What? We weren't talking shit about-

MARINA

We just think it's weird that you're working here. To be honest.

Han shoots Marina an open-mouthed scowl of betrayal.

NICHOLAS

Well, as long as we're being honest... I think it's weird that you're working here.

MARINA

How do you figure?

NICHOLAS

(to Marina)

Well, you're too pretty...

(to Betty)

... you're too high maintenance...

(to Guy)

... and you're too old.

(to Han)

You? You're the only one that makes sense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HAN

What, you think I'm some loser who spends his nights playing Warcraft in Darth Vader underoos? Because that would only be *half* true!

GUY

Leave it, Han. It ain't worth it.

MARINA

Yeah, you don't have to explain yourself. Not to Mike Seaver here.

BETTY

Okay, now I'm lost... Who's this Mike Seaver person?

HAN

(gasping)

Did you never watch Growing Pains?

BETTY

That old TV show about that fake-ass white family?

HAN

Oh, what, and *The Cosby Show* wasn't about a fake-ass black family?

Just as Betty's eyes go wide, Nicholas cuts in:

NICHOLAS

So, really...

Han and Betty pause, turning to face Nicholas. He's addressing Marina, his eyes locked onto hers.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

You think that because I'm white and my parents have money, you know exactly who I am?

MARINA

(hissing)

No. I think that because you're white, have rich parents, a shit attitude, I know *exactly* who you are.

A heavy silence. Nicholas snickers to himself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

NICHOLAS

Well... it was real nice meeting
you people. Really. The name's
Nicholas, by the way. Not like any
of you cared to ask.

Nicholas turns on his heel and walks away, his sneakers'
SQUEAKING filling the dead air.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Fuckers.

The group watches him walk away, dumbfounded.

BETTY

(mouthing to Han,
subtitled)

I really don't like him.

INT./EXT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

A disgruntled Betty and Marina stand in the doorway. Jenkins
is sitting at his desk, his head buried in his palms.

JENKINS

(incredulously)

You don't like him?

MARINA

He called me "pretty".

Jenkins cocks his head back at Marina's complaint.

BETTY

(to Marina)

Honey. Just let me do the talking.

Jenkins stands up at his desk, moving to leave.

JENKINS

Listen, as long as he's doing his
job, Nicholas isn't going anywhere.
So, I suggest you get used to him.

Jenkins weaves around the two of them to get to the doorway,
gesturing for them to follow him out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Now, if we're done bitching and moaning on the clock -- not what I pay you for, by the way -- we've got a trash overflow on the third floor. I need you to handle it.

BETTY

Oh, what, just because we're the two females--

JENKINS

(sniping)

Just fucking do it, Betty!

The girls nod halfheartedly. Jenkins walks them out, locks his door, and rushes off. Marina and Betty begin to head towards the elevators but don't get too far when they run into Nicholas. He's headed for the office.

NICHOLAS

Is Jenkins gone? He said he wanted to talk to me.

BETTY

Yeah, he just--

MARINA

He told us to tell you... there's a trash overflow on the third floor. He wants you to handle it.

Nicholas' face drops, as Marina and Betty's do every facial contortion possible to hide their amusement.

INT. MALL - FOOD COURT - MINUTES LATER

The elevator doors OPEN to reveal a disheveled Nicholas, his grip on a large, wheeled CRATE of garbage.

Nicholas pushes the crate along when he runs into Guy, stationed with his MOP WRINGER and BUCKET at the outermost table in the food court.

GUY

Hey, Nicholas, I could use a hand with food court cleanup here.

Nicholas stops, struggling to keep the crate steady, and looks to Guy as if he's out of his mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY (CONT'D)
I'm just repeating Jenkins' orders,
kid. How about this? I'll get that
Pretzel Hut over there...

Guy points out the smallest KIOSK in the farthest corner of
the large, crowded food court.

GUY (CONT'D)
...and you get everything else.

Nicholas scans the food court, his mouth agape at what
"everything else" entails.

NICHOLAS
(dryly)
Okay. I just need to take this out
first. Then buy a gun. Then shoot
myself in the face. And I'll get
right on that.

OMITTED

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - SOME TIME LATER

Nicholas is busy mopping the floor in front of the Asian
cuisine when he stops for a moment to look across at Guy, who
is standing in the same spot at the PRETZEL HUT. He is
mopping so slowly, he may as well not be working at all.

Suddenly, the sound of STATIC rings from his pocket. He pulls
his WALKIE TALKIE out, as Han's voice reports:

HAN'S VOICE
(over the speaker)
Hey, new guy. Jenkins wants you to
get the men's restrooms. I'm pretty
swamped upstairs myself...

INT. GAMEHUB - CONTINUOUS

Han is, instead, idly shopping in his favorite video game
store. With one hand holding two GAME CASES and the other
holding a World Of Warcraft expansion pack, his walkie talkie
rests in between his chin and his chest.

HAN
I'm going to be stuck up here for
at least... two hours.

Han notices a YOUNG BOY reaching for the last copy of a VIDEO
GAME on the shelf. He pockets the walkie talkie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAN (CONT'D)
Yo, kid, that game is mine.

His hands full, Han can't stop the boy from swiping the game anyway. Han lunges for it, but the kid's on his toes.

YOUNG BOY
I've been saving up my allowance
for weeks.

HAN
(scoffing)
Yeah, well, you know what? I've
been saving my paychecks for weeks,
which combined are probably *less*
than your allowance!

YOUNG BOY
So? Aren't you a little too *old* for
this game anyway?

With that, Han angrily TOSSES all of the games in his hand to the floor, frightening the boy.

HAN
IT'S RATED "E" FOR EVERYONE!

Han proceeds to try and seize the video game from the boy, but the kid's holding on for dear life.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

Having only made it a few eateries over, Nicholas wipes his brow in between his efforts. He looks over at Guy to see that, still, he is mopping the same spot in front of the Pretzel Hut. He hasn't moved an inch.

Nicholas turns around to find a chummy Marina and Betty gallivanting through the food court. Their smiles vanish when they realize they're in enemy territory.

NICHOLAS
(snapping)
Where have you two been?

MARINA
Oh. We were just talking to Jenkins
in his office.

NICHOLAS
No, you weren't. Jenkins just went
out for lunch. He was just here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty and Marina shrug to each other, weakly.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
And where's the chubby guy at?

MARINA
Hey, not cool, okay? Han isn't--

Suddenly, from the floor above, they hear a wailing:

HAN (O.S.)
THE GAME IS MINE!!!

Nicholas, Marina, and Betty look up to the banister to see Han DRAGGING the young boy (the game still in-between them) out of GameHub.

NICHOLAS
Yeah, he's not doing shit either.

Nicholas then points to Guy, who is still mopping a few feet away from him.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
And the old dude's been mopping the same spot for thirty minutes now!

Guy shies away from eye contact. Nicholas drops his mop to the floor, a loud THUD echoing throughout the food court.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
You guys had me doing your shit all afternoon?

Betty and Marina are taken aback.

BETTY
Okay, I'mma need you to back the fuck up there. It was just a little fun.

NICHOLAS
This is your idea of fun? Really? I mean, are you people just the laziest bunch of assholes or what?

MARINA
Hey, man, we were just--

NICHOLAS
(backing away)
You guys can finish this yourselves. I'm out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Nicholas turns around to walk away, just as the nearest elevator BINGS. A sweaty, exuberant Han springs through the ELEVATOR DOORS with his prized video game in hand.

HAN

People, I just brought new meaning to the phrase "stealing candy from a baby"... Except the "candy" was Zombies Hit the Town 2 for X-BOX and the "baby" had a killer right hook!

Not getting much of a response at all, Han notices his co-workers' shaken expressions. The tone has been deflated.

HAN (CONT'D)

Someone piss on the carousel again?

The group gesture towards Nicholas, prompting Han to catch sight of their disgruntled co-worker walking away.

BETTY

White boy looked all kinds of Columbine two seconds ago. But we told his pasty, little--

The group watches as Nicholas, yards away, turns around in a panic and races back in their direction. His eyes bulging and mouth hanging open, he looks like a mad man on the run.

BETTY (CONT'D)

(shrieking)

Oh, shit, he's coming back for us!
I knew he got a gun!

But, as Nicholas gets closer, it becomes apparent that he's not running towards them but away from something else.

MARINA

Betty, he doesn't have a gun. Look at him. He's freaked.

GUY

(snickering)

Of course he is. Look at what he's running from...

Trailing just a few feet behind Nicholas unknowingly is the bleached blonde, long-legged, and perfectly padded COURTNEY CORDUROY, 17, accompanied by her color-coordinated FRIENDS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MARINA
(under her breath)
Well, hel-lo, Barbie dream house.

An incoming Nicholas collides into the group, barely able to catch his breath.

NICHOLAS
(panting)
She's... That's--

GUY
Your girlfriend?

Nicholas nods stiffly.

HAN
And she doesn't know you work here?

Nicholas nods again, pleadingly.

NICHOLAS
How do I get to that supply closet again? I just need to--

BETTY
Take it from me, hon. The closet ain't all it's cracked up to be!

Betty seizes Nicholas' hand and leads him out of the food court, with the gang shuffling around them for cover.

HAN
Where are we going?

The group collectively hushes Han and scurries into the nearest store....

INT. BOUTIQUE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

With Marina, Guy, and Han blocking off the entrance, Betty shoves Nicholas behind a female MANNEQUIN, dressed in a sundress and a large hat, and hurriedly exits store with the others. To Nicholas' horror, Courtney and her friends walk right past the group and towards the boutique shop.

The group whips back around to catch Courtney, headed into the store. A wide-eyed Betty emphatically mouths "oh, shit!" and pushes Han towards boutique store.

Han springs into action, outrunning the girls and weaving in front to stop them in their tracks. They JUMP back in alarm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAN
Well, hello there, little ladies.
How can I be of service to you?

COURTNEY
(dryly)
We're her for shoes.

HAN
Oh, well, that's a shame. We're...
uh... fresh out of shoes!

Nicholas slowly wraps his body out of view, as Han's eyes dart back and forth from the girls to the glass window.

COURTNEY
You're sold out of shoes?

FRIEND #1
Do you even work here?

FRIEND #2
Aren't you the janitor?

HAN
Aren't we all janitors, in th grand
scheme of things? Just a world of
survivors left in a dying planet
with no one else to clean up after
the sins of our fore fathers?

The three girls respond with blank, unmoved expressions.

COURTNEY
(repulsed)
You're really creepy.

Courtney turns away and nods for her friends to follow her out. Han dramatically shrugs, hardly bothered.

FRIEND #1
(on her way out)
And you smell, too.

HAN
Like a champion, I'm sure.

Nicholas breathes a deep sigh of relief, as he watches Courtney and her girlfriends saunter off into the crowd. He tries to maneuver his way around the mannequin and out of the glass window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

In doing so, he ELBOWS the model's arm and knocks it over, resulting in -- The loud COLLAPSE of Nicholas, the mannequin, and the platform. The store's EMPLOYEES and CUSTOMERS rush to his aide.

From outside the glass window, Marina, Betty, Guy, and Han can be seen HOWLING, keeling over in laughter.

MARINA (O.S.)
So, your first day. Could have been worse, right?

INT. MALL - 2ND FLOOR PLAZA - NIGHT

With the lights dimmed and the stores behind steel gates, Marina and Nicholas are mopping the floor together. Nicholas turns to Marina with an incredulous tilt. She shrugs.

MARINA
Your girlfriend could have seen you in the world's shittiest two piece.

Nicholas shakes his head at the mere thought of it.

MARINA (CONT'D)
What's the story there anyway?

NICHOLAS
Courtney just... She wouldn't get it. "Minimum wage" isn't really in her vocabulary. Her dad's Patrick Corduroy, the celebrity lawyer--

MARINA
Hold up. Courtney Corduroy? That's the girl's name? Legitimately?

NICHOLAS
Mmm-hmm.

MARINA
(perturbed)
Sometimes, I swear we're one exit off of Pleasantville.

Marina stops mopping altogether and clasps her hands over the mop's handle, her chin resting over them.

MARINA (CONT'D)
So, why are you working here then? If it's so beneath you and all...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
(teasingly)
Why not work at the fucking Foot
Locker?

Nicholas and Marina share a laugh, for once.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
I didn't have much of a choice,
really... It's a long story.

MARINA
I've got all night.

Nicholas puts his mop down against the wringer.

NICHOLAS
(hesitantly)
Last spring, my buddies and I were
out celebrating this big game. We
won by, this miracle touchdown. We
got a little carried away, I guess.
My friend Justin had us over and,
there was a lot of liquor... It was
crazy.

Nicholas smiles softly in reminiscence, but only briefly. He
lowers his head to his shoulders, reluctant to go on.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
So, uh, Justin needed cigarettes
and there was this convenient store
down the road. I offered to drive.
I don't remember it really, but
they said I insisted. It was just
him, my friend Sam, and me in the
car... and, uh...

MARINA
You got pulled over?

Nicholas nods stiffly.

MARINA (CONT'D)
How bad was it?

NICHOLAS
Your standard underage DUI. Revoked
license, two years of probation,
community service. The works.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARINA

So, what, working at the mall is your community service?

NICHOLAS

No, this is the doing of my parents. They forced me to get a part-time job... something about learning how to be "responsible" or some shit like that.

MARINA

And here you are.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, here I am.

The two pause for a moment. Marina idly taps the top end of the mop a few times just to fill the dead air.

MARINA

Well, I'm not going to lie. I was expecting more.

NICHOLAS

(snorting)

From the little white boy with money and a stick up his ass?

MARINA

Hey, you're the one who led with "I didn't have a choice." I thought this was going to be some Witness-Protection-Program shit, but no. More drunken high school party boy.

NICHOLAS

Like your story is so much better.

Marina looks away, hesitant to go there.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Come on, I told you my reason. What's yours?

MARINA

It's my son.

Nicholas lets out something in between a laugh and a gasp. Marina gives him a piercing look; she's being serious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICHOLAS

(apologetically)

I just mean... Wow. I wouldn't have thought... How old are you?

MARINA

Twenty-five. It was my birthday last week, actually. Betty stole this cookie cake. Sweetest thing anyone's ever done for me.

NICHOLAS

And Betty did all that? Diary of a mad black woman Betty?

Marina reaches into her wringer for a wet rag and FLINGS it at him. Nicholas shields himself, arms up.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Hey! Come on, it's not like anyone bothered getting to know me. None of you even introduced yourselves.

Marina lets up, nodding understandingly.

MARINA

Okay, well, there's Betty. Cheeky, boisterous, funny as shit. She's a street artist with a sugar momma. She does this for pocket money, or so she says. Guy's the older... well, guy. I don't know how old he is, but he's been here forever. Always in a shitty mood, but I'm convinced he's a marshmallow deep down. And, then, there's Han.

NICHOLAS

(snickering)

The overgrown twelve-year-old.

MARINA

And there you go being an asshole again...

NICHOLAS

You always get so defensive about him. Is there something between you two?

MARINA

Han's like my best friend. He's there for me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MARINA (CONT'D)

I guess after years of dealing with selfish assholes, I've gained an appreciation for the nice guys who finish last.

NICHOLAS

Translation: Baby daddy drama?

Marina assaults Nicholas again with the wet rag. He howls in mock agony, skirting away from her.

MARINA

And then you wonder why people don't like you...
(scoffing)
Asshole.

INT. NICHOLAS' BEDROOM - MORNING

His alarm clock BLARING relentlessly, a half-awake Nicholas buries his face into his pillow. His room is a mess of sweat pants, athletic gear, and bedsheets, all sprawled out between the bed and floor. His mother, SHARON DAFT, early 50's, can be heard POUNDING at the door:

SHARON (O.S.)

Nicholas, it's eight-thirty. You need to get dressed and go to work!

NICHOLAS

Mmmh-hmm...

SHARON (O.S.)

Nicholas! *Now!*

NICHOLAS

Okay, okay, I'm up.

Nicholas pulls himself upright in bed, his hair lop-sided and his cheek red with the imprint of pillow folds.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

...I wish I was dead.

Nicholas nods miserably, as his mother leaves him to it.

INT. MALL - 2ND FLOOR PLAZA - DAY

Han, Betty, Marina, and Guy are lounging against the banister, facing GAMEHUB. Beside them are four abandoned garbage cans, looming over them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETTY

Sixteenth? Are you shitting me?

MARINA

You didn't know?

BETTY

(accusingly at Han)

That this motherfucker has applied at this poor man's Best Buy sixteen times? No. No, I didn't know that. And I wish I never did.

Han looks up to the GameHub sign overhead with pride.

HAN

Betty... GameHub is a sanctuary for those of us who didn't forget how to dream. It's a beacon of hope for every Mario Kart loser, and aspiring Stormtrooper. Maybe I'll never get to join the ranks amongst the stars, but at least I dared to dream big.

The group chuckles softly in bemusement, as an incoming Nicholas stumbles upon their discussion.

MARINA

Han, your idea of "dreaming big" is the two for one aisle at GameHub.

BETTY

Yeah, sweetie, you've got to aim higher than that.

HAN

(frowning his brow)

What, and work at Games R Us? Their employee discount is, like... eight percent. It's modern-day slavery!

Nicholas stops in front of GameHub, blocking their view of the entrance. He scoffs indignantly.

NICHOLAS

So, this is what we do in between jobs? Sit around and wish for better employment?

HAN

Speak for yourself, Mike Seaver.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MARINA

Oh, quit it with that, Han. That was done yesterday.

Han cocks his head back, another open-mouthed expression of betrayal on his face.

HAN

So, what? We're on his side now?

NICHOLAS

(with a satisfied grin)
Yeah, Marina, we on my side now?

Han, Betty, and Guy give Marina a disapproving glare.

MARINA

I'm just saying... We're scrubbing toilets, right? Why make shit smell worse than it already does?

GUY

Fair enough.

Betty and Han are less than convinced and making it known. Nicholas flashes the two of them a taunting smile.

NICHOLAS

And speaking of shit... Betty...

Betty's eyes go wide, but he doesn't let his smile falter.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Jenkins says we need a cleanup in the third floor women's restroom...

The rest of the group freezes, looking back and forth between Nicholas and Betty like a ticking time bomb.

BETTY

(folding her arms)
What, and you don't have two hands and a bottle of bleach? Or is this another case of "cleanup on aisle seven, let's get the black woman to take care of it"?

Betty pushes herself off of the railing and slowly approaches Nicholas. Suddenly, he doesn't look so smug anymore. He brings his hands up to his chest in defense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICHOLAS

No, uh, it's not.. I just meant,
well, it *is* the women's restroom.

BETTY

(with a bitter chuckle)
Oh, okay. So, because I'm a
lesbian, you think I'd be into that
sort of shit? Lurking around in the
ladies' room, like a fisherman in a
fucking gutter swamp?

NICHOLAS

(tripping over his words)
Wh-what? I--I didn't even...

Unable to see him squirm any longer, Marina intervenes,
resting a firm hand on Betty's shoulder.

MARINA

Alright, Betty, we get it...
(to Nicholas)
She's just fucking with you.

BETTY

(mouthing to Nicholas,
subtitled)
I'm not.

Before anyone can dare attempt to break the tension, a
nasally, shrill voice booms from behind Nicholas.

GERARD (O.S.)

People, people, people!

The group turns to face the mousy GERARD BLUE, 30, a small
man with a Napoleon complex, thick-framed glasses, and a
purple, tucked GAMEHUB T-SHIRT.

GERARD (CONT'D)

Don't you have wads of gum to pick?
You're scaring off my frakkin'
customers here!

Han lets out a low, territorial GRUMBLE at the sight of him,
a reaction Gerard seems to relish in.

GERARD (CONT'D)

(with a high-pitched
giggle)
We meet again, Harrison Stow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HAN
(through clenched teeth)
The name's Han Stow-lo.

GERARD
No, I could have sworn your new application says "Harrison Stow". Now, get yourself and your friends out of my vicinity or I'm calling mall security!

BETTY
(rolling her eyes)
Ugh, don't be such an ass, Gerard. We're leaving.

Betty, Marina, and Guy retrieve their garbage cans and slowly start to roll along. Han moves to retaliate, but Marina SEIZES him by the collar and yanks him along.

GERARD
(bitingly)
Oh, and, by the way, your application? *Aaaaaaall* the way at the bottom of the pile.

Guy and Betty help tug Han along with their free hands, but he continues to try and save face:

HAN
(barking at Gerard)
So, that's how it's going to be?
You-- you don't scare me, Gerard!
You hear me? You're no Jedi Master.
Okay? You're NOT Samuel L. Jackson!
There can be only ONE Sam Jackson!
And it's me! You hear me Gerard?!

The group gains a firm grip on their loose canon. Marina puts her hand over his mouth, but, even muffled behind her palm, Han bellows:

HAN (CONT'D)
YOU DON'T OWN THIS GALACTIC
REPUBLIC! AND YOU NEVER WILL!

Gerard watches on, taking comfort in the last laugh.

INT. WOMEN'S RESTROOM - DAY

After a KNOCK and two beats, Nicholas enters with a mop and ringer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stumbles upon the frightening CHRISSY JENKINS, 16, a ghoulish girl in all black and an obscene amount of eyeliner. Turned to the wall opposite the sinks, Chrissy hardly gives him a glance.

NICHOLAS

Sorry, I didn't think anyone was--

Nicholas stops at the sound of rigorous ETCHING. He quickly realizes that Chrissy is writing on the bathroom wall.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

CHRISSY

(her back to him)

None of your business, fuckwad.

Approaching her the way you would a clawed animal, Nicholas cautiously peers over her shoulder. Scribbled on the wall are lines of GRAFFITI, written in vein of a Gothic font.

NICHOLAS

(flatly)

Okay. I am *not* cleaning that.

He reads the cryptic graffiti, his eyes widened in disbelief. The print reads:

"Westpoint Mall. The purgatory For the broken shells and the half alive. But all the money, bleach, and silicone in the World can't save you From the beast within."

Chrissy grows agitated with Nicholas reading over her shoulder. She stops writing and whips around to face him.

CHRISSY

I said fuck off, asshole.

NICHOLAS

You do realize this is destruction of property, right? That, and it's pretty fucking creepy.

CHRISSY

(smirking)

Awesome. Anything to make that fucker squirm.

NICHOLAS

Uh, okay. Well, I'm supposed to report this sort of thing, so...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHRISSY

Please. Make my day.

Nicholas rubs his eyes in irritation and begins walking out. Mumbling to himself and leaving Chrissy alone to continue writing.

EXT. WOMEN'S RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas exits the corridor to find Guy walking by, adjacent to the corridor. Nicholas flags him down, catching up.

NICHOLAS

Hey, Guy. Who am I supposed to go to about customers who are, say, defacing mall property?

GUY

Someone stick gum in the ATM machine again? Goddamn hipsters.

NICHOLAS

No, there's this chick writing freaky graffiti on the bathroom walls.

Guy sighs knowingly, shaking his head to himself.

GUY

Creepy girl, raccoon eyes, all black everything?

NICHOLAS

Repeat offender?

GUY

She's Jenkins' kid, Chrissy. Little spawn of Satan. He's all "see no evil, hear no evil" about the whole thing. She makes a mess, we just clean it up. No reports filed, no questions asked.

NICHOLAS

That's... *dysfunctional*.

GUY

Consider it the Chrissy clause.

Guy shrugs uselessly and carries on, leaving an agitated Nicholas with a casual:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY (CONT'D)
And I'd get the heavy duty stuff.
Bitch loves her permanent marker.

NICHOLAS
(Frustrated)
Fuck...

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - DAY

Betty is mopping what looks like a large puddle of soda in the center of the food court at its peak hour. She looks up and notices Nicholas stopped at the VENDING MACHINE at the outermost corner of the food court.

BETTY
(hollering)
Hey, kid, can I get an extra hand
over here?

Nicholas looks at her blankly. Before he can respond, his gaze travels below Betty's eye level to Courtney and her two friends, seated directly behind Betty. They're sharing a hearty laugh over Smoothies.

Nicholas frantically turns back to the machine, ignoring Betty. He can see her fuming in his peripheral vision.

BETTY (CONT'D)
White boy... I know you heard me...

Still, Nicholas refuses to make eye contact with Betty. Beads of sweat begin to form on his face. He BANGS his fist against the side of the vending machine, pretending to be so preoccupied with it that he doesn't notice Betty.

BETTY (CONT'D)
(raising her voice)
White boy...

Courtney and her friends turn to Betty in confusion, trying to make out what it is she's going on about.

BETTY (CONT'D)
WHITE BOY! I KNOW YOU HEARD ME!

Now, everyone in the food court has come to attention. Courtney and the rest of the bystanders turn to Betty and, after a few moments, the singled-out target of her rage: Nicholas. He hangs his head low in shame.

COURTNEY
Nicholas? Is that you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty whips around to find Courtney staring wide-eyed at Nicholas. Suddenly, it all makes sense.

BETTY
(to herself)
Oh, shit.

Unable to escape her now, Nicholas cautiously approaches Courtney's table, his eyes still scaling the floor.

COURTNEY
Is that a janitor's uniform? Do
you... *work here?*

NICHOLAS
Yeah, about that, I can explain...

Courtney's friends let out an emphatic SCOFF in disapproval. Courtney herself seems too distraught for mockery.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Courtney, look, just hear me out. I
didn't have a ch--

COURTNEY
How could you do this to me,
Nicholas? I mean, God, after
everything we've been through!

NICHOLAS
(bewildered)
It's just a part-time job.

COURTNEY
I don't want to hear it.

Courtney shakes her head in repugnance and nods to the girls: It's time to go. Nicholas watches helplessly as the three girls ready to leave. Passing through him, Courtney leaves Nicholas with a sharp:

COURTNEY (CONT'D)
Don't call me.

Nicholas stands there frozen as Courtney washes her hands clean of him. An onlooking Betty winces at the sight.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - NIGHT

Marina, Betty, Han, and Guy are collecting their cleaning supplies for close, as Betty relays:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETTY

... and he didn't even say a word.

He just stood there frozen, like a fucking coma patient.

MARINA

Damn.

BETTY

Mmm-hmm. Even I kind of felt a little bad for him...

HAN

Well, if a man is so foolish as to covet the One Ring, he's got to be prepared to face the consequences.

Marina, Betty, and Guy look at each other blankly.

MARINA

Han, you can't just reference things only you watch. Nobody knows what the fuck you're talking about.

HAN

(flabbergasted)

Lord of the Rings? Seriously, people? Am I asking too much?

Suddenly, Jenkins appears at the open doorway and knocks to command their attention.

JENKINS

Pardon me for breaking up this little supply room pow-wow... If I'm not mistaken, you're supposed to be taking those out there.

GUY

(gratingly)

We're on it, Jenkins.

JENKINS

Good. And, since you're all here, let me take the opportunity to remind you that we have our **JUCEO!** midnight launch tonight.

The group collectively groans, heads hanging low.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JENKINS (CONT'D)

I'm going to need all of the weekend shift -- and, just to make myself clear, that means all of you -- to work overtime. And I'm not taking any excuses on this. At all.

(to Marina)

So, get a baby sitter...

(to Betty)

... cancel your reservation at the Cheesecake Factory...

(to Han)

... your live-action role-playing group will have to soldier on one night without you...

(to Guy)

... and we both know you've got nothing better to do.

The group responds with silent, dead expressions. Their complacency is confirmation enough.

MARINA

Jenkins, you really think people are going to camp out for some over-priced energy drink?

BETTY

This ain't Apple!

HAN

... or the historic midnight launch of Halo 2...

BETTY

(sniping at Han)

Stop talking.

JENKINS

They're already here! Tents, tiny barbecues, beach balls... you name it, it's out there. With an entire line of people waiting to get this drink in their stomachs.

HAN

...How did we miss that on the way in?

Nicholas stumbles inside, slowing when he spots Jenkins.

NICHOLAS

What's going on?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAN

Jenkins is making us stay overnight because a few Red Bull elitists want to pay twice the price for some bogus brand.

JENKINS

JUICED! is actually one of the nation's top line of energy drinks. The website's got two hundred pre-orders for the new "**MONSTER MAX**" flavor in this mall alone.

MARINA

I hate this world.

Jenkins shoots Marina an indignant scowl.

JENKINS

(curtly)

Well, I'll see you all here tonight. Tell your friends!

Jenkins swiftly turns and exits, leaving the tone of the small supply closet pitifully deflated.

INT. MALL - **JUICED!** KIOSK - NIGHT

Nicholas, Marina, Guy, Betty, and Han are idly leaning against the banister opposite a long LINE OF CUSTOMERS, running from the bustling kiosk to the elevators.

MARINA

I cannot believe I'm actually seeing this right now.

GUY

Welcome to consumer America, Marina. The dealers supply and the sheep flock.

HAN

Those are two completely different metaphors, Guy.

Guy shrugs indifferently. From all the way down the line, Betty spots a familiar face speedily approaching.

BETTY

(squealing in delight)

BA-BY!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty's girlfriend DAPHNE, 42, a tall blonde in a white coat, arrives with a COFFEE TRAY in hand. The gang dives in, helping themselves to a welcome caffeine boost.

MARINA

Daphne, girlfriend, where you been
all my life?

DAPHNE

(scoffing)

Where have I been? What black hole
did you fall into, Salazar? Huh?
You don't call, you don't write.

BETTY

(counting on her fingers)

Five words: Her. Kid. Just. Turned.
Seven.

Daphne shoots Marina an apologetic wince. The girls share a giggle, as a bewildered Nicholas looks back and forth between Daphne and Betty.

NICHOLAS

(to Betty)

This is your... girlfriend?

BETTY

No, of course not. I was just
joking when I said I was a lesbian!
Cause I'm only here for your small-
minded, chauvinistic, white bread
brand of entertainment!

Nicholas blinks blankly. She's lost him there.

DAPHNE

(outstretching her hand)

Yes, I'm her girlfriend.

Nicholas shakes Daphne's hand, as Jenkins brushes past them with a filled CRATE of **JUCES!** in his arms.

JENKINS

I swear, you people are just
vegetables when I'm not breathing
down your necks.

HAN

Jenkins, please don't make food
references this late into a twelve-
hour shift. It's just cruel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JENKINS

Oh, come on, I'm paying you
overtime here! At least pretend to
be doing something janitorial.

The group huffs and reluctantly disperses throughout the line. Nicholas moves for the front of the line, but Jenkins taps his shoulder before he's out of arms length.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Not so fast. I need you to get
another one of these from storage.
We're going to be selling out like
hot cakes here in two minutes and
forty-five seconds.

Nicholas checks his watch. It's 11:58 PM.

INT. MALL - STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas enters to find a stack of BOXES against the wall facing the entrance. He stoops down to pick up the box at the top of the stack and pulls back up only to lose his grip. The box SLAMS back down against the cement floor.

NICHOLAS

Shit!

A few stray CANS roll out from the box, on their side. Nicholas immediately squats down to retrieve the box. There's now a tear on the left side. As he puts the cans, one by one, back into the box, he finds some of the juice itself dripping from his hand. He stops to hear a quiet HISSING. The can in his hand is leaking.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Eck! That's just... great...

He looks at the can's top to find that the seal isn't popped open, but loose. Confused, he checks the two drinks left on the floor and fiddles with their seals. Both are not secure.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

(softly)
... the fuck?

After a brief moment of head-scratching suspicion, Nicholas shrugs to himself, remembering he could care less, and continues loading the cans back into the box.

INT. MALL - *JUCEO!* KIOSK - MOMENTS LATER

With the torn box held tightly in his arms, Nicholas walks out of the elevator and towards the frenzy at the front of the line, as the first buyers excitedly brush past him.

CUSTOMER #1

(sipping from the can)
It's kind of flavorless, right?
But, like, the good kind of
flavorless.

CUSTOMER #2

(nodding enthusiastically)
It tastes like shit, *but I love it!*

PAN ACROSS to the other end of the line, where Betty, Daphne, and Han are sharing a laugh against the banister.

HAN

... and, so, then I was like, "Mr. Theatre Manager, sir, you're giving me this ultimatum during the climax of Attack of the Clones here. If you're really making me choose between cleaning the butter dispenser and Natalie Portman in white spandex, I think we both know what the answer's going to be."

DAPHNE

(blinking rapidly)
Wow.

BETTY

Daphne, don't encourage him.

His hands now free, Nicholas joins them at the banister.

NICHOLAS

So, I just noticed the weirdest thing in the stor--

HAN

(curtly)
I was in the middle of a story here, in case you hadn't noticed.

Betty and Daphne share a disconcerted glance, picking up on the tension between the guys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETTY

Somebody's low blood sugar is getting the better of them...

HAN

I'm just saying, it's rude. You don't just presumptuously invite yourself into a group dynamic and interject as you please.

NICHOLAS

I wasn't trying to interject, dude. It's just those energy drinks--

BETTY

(flippantly)

Can we please stop talking about the motherfucking drinks already?!

DAPHNE

Betty!

BETTY

I'm sick of it. **JUCEO!** this and **JUCEO!** that. You know, I ran a homemade lemonade stand as a kid and it had that same swamp orange tint to it. But did anyone give a shit then? No!

Daphne shakes her head, laughing to herself.

HAN

That doesn't sound sanitary.

Before Betty can respond, a high-pitched GIGGLE sounds from further up in line. Nicholas turns to find Courtney standing in line.

Courtney jabs one of her minions in the side for what seems to have been a joke about Nicholas from afar.

COURTNEY

(to her friend)

God, you are such a spaz!

Courtney turns to Nicholas at the banister, as if to make sure he hadn't heard them. He's staring right back.

NICHOLAS

(approaching)

You know, you never do get any better at that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Courtney scoffs, turning away. Her friends move inward and in between them, as if to guard her.

COURTNEY
I'm not talking to you.

NICHOLAS
Well, you're the one who came here.
To my job.

Courtney's friends snort at the word "job".

COURTNEY
Get over yourself, Nicholas. This
is a mall. In fact, it's *my* mall. I
come here all the time. It has
nothing to do with you.

Unable to hear anymore, Betty marches up to Nicholas and Courtney. Han and Daphne cautiously follow behind.

BETTY
(with a testing smile)
Honey, hi. It's Courtney, right?

Courtney furrows her brow, unamused.

BETTY (CONT'D)
I know it's none of my business,
but this whole act you got going
on, is SO played out...

NICHOLAS
Betty, please. It's fine.

BETTY
(clutching Nicholas by the
collar)
This uniform? This job? It's just
that. A job. Now, I know we've got
nothing but the menstrual cycle in
common, but you seem like a
reasonable girl. And, sure,
Nicholas may be a vain, sheltered,
self-centered son of a bitch, but,
honey... so are you. So, come on,
why not just give him a chance?

Nicholas scratches his head, sheepishly. Courtney stands there expressionless, as if frozen by her words. Han snuffles from behind Betty's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAN
Betty... that was beautiful.

Betty turns around and gives him a "I'm good" nod.

COURTNEY
(softly)
Hey, Nicholas?

Nicholas takes an eager step forward.

NICHOLAS
Yeah?

COURTNEY
I want you and rest of your little
mopheads to get THE fuck out of my
breathing space. *Right. Now.*

NICHOLAS
But--

COURTNEY
Just leave... me... alone.

Nicholas' face tightens, jaw clench. He peels off, hearing obnoxious snickering from Courtney's friends. Betty, Daphne, and Han watch on as he retreats to the end of the line. An oblivious Jenkins comes out from behind the bend, blocking Nicholas' path to the exit.

JENKINS
Hey, we've already got our first
drink spill at the kiosk. I need
you on it ASAP!

NICHOLAS
(sniping)
Fuck the drink spill. I quit.

Nicholas pushes his way past Jenkins, never stopping in his beeline for the exit.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Consider this my two week's notice!

Jenkins stands dumbfounded as Nicholas storms through the double doors. He turns to Betty and Han accusingly, who give him an innocent shrug in acquittal.

EXT. ROAD TRAFFIC - MORNING

Car horns are BLARING throughout the cluttered scene of bumper-to-bumper TRAFFIC on the town's busiest main road.

At the center of the hysteria, an angry, middle-aged BUSINESSMAN is pounding his fists against his steering wheel in rage, honking his horn the most frequently.

In front of his car is a sluggish, teenage SKATEBOARDER, dressed in baggy jeans and a hooded sweater. In his hand is a near empty **JUICEO!** can. He's skateboarding slowly, almost lifelessly, in the center of the lane. With the other two lanes refusing to let up, the man continues to honk for the skateboarder to clear out of his way.

BUSINESSMAN

Kid! Move!

The man rolls down his window, craning his neck outside.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

**Hey, get the hell out
of the road!**

His back to the man in his car, the skateboarder doesn't respond, his head hanging low and out of view.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Jesus Christ.

The man pulls his BRAKE and exits the car to approach.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

I'm not messing around, kid. You can't be doing this in the middle of the road, it's not--

His head still low, the boy stops his board and whips around to face the man. His face, still shrouded by his hood and stringy hair. But the man can make out a rash of PEELING and discolored BLISTERING around his jaw and chin.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)

(crossing his arms)

Do you... do you understand what I'm saying?

The skateboarder brings his head up to eye level to reveal the spread of DETERIORATION across his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His skin seems to be peeling away, in front of the man's very eyes, to reveal a sickening orange layer underneath. The pupils of his eyes are nearly faded to a milk white.

BUSINESSMAN (CONT'D)
 (nervously stepping back)
 Kid, what--*what's wrong with you?*

The boy curls his lips into a menacing smile and then opens them to reveal a set of long, thinly SHARP TEETH. The man yelps and turns away to flee. But the monstrous teenager LUNGES at him rabidly and seizes him by the hair.

The man lets out a muted whimper, the skateboarder SINKS his teeth into his shoulder, eating him in front of the rush hour traffic.

INT. NICHOLAS' BEDROOM - MORNING

Nicholas is awoken by his mother, violent shaking him as she kneels by the bed. He lets out an emphatic huff.

NICHOLAS
 What do you want?

SHARON
 Honey, it's Saturday. Don't you have work in an hour?

NICHOLAS
 I *had* work in an hour. But then I quit, so I think I'll just stay under here for a few more hours.

SHARON
 You what?

NICHOLAS
 I said I had work in an hour. But then I quit, so--

SHARON
 Why would you quit your job, Nicholas? We had an agreement, you, your father, and I.

Nicholas moans groggily and pulls himself into an upright position, facing his mother.

NICHOLAS
 Mom, I told you, I'll find another job.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

If I have to scrub one more toilet,
I'll kill myself. Is that what you
want me to do?

SHARON

(sternly)

No, what I want you to do is start
acting like an adult. Now, get up
and get to work or I'm sending your
father up. It's up to you.

Nicholas shoots his mother a spiteful look and pulls himself
out of bed. She stands up to let Nicholas through to the
bathroom.

SHARON (CONT'D)

And, Christ, put your uniform in
the wash, will you? It's starting
to smell like a pair of gym shorts.

INT. MALL - 2ND FLOOR - CD STORE - MORNING

Betty and Han are lazily flipping through the NEW RELEASE
RACK on the clock when a gaggle of SCHOOL GIRLS brush past
them, each of them toting a **JUCED!** energy drink. Betty
makes a face at the sight.

BETTY

It's ridiculous how much those
stupid cans have been selling.
Fucking waste of money.

(Mumbling)

...Corporate America...

HAN

Betty, I get the childhood lemonade
stand PTSD, but let's not take it
out on the brand.

BETTY

(snapping)

It's not about the damn lemonade
stand! I'm just saying, it's not
healthy the way these people
salivate over anything with "NEW"
stamped across it. What's so wrong
with the old?

Han's eyes widen at a science fiction SOUNDTRACK and he
snatches it, turning it over to read the track list.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAN

(barely attentive)
It's just the pitfalls of the market. The people want new and improved to the point where nothing's new and there's nothing left to improve.

Betty nods, turning back to the girls walking off with the cans at the front of the store.

BETTY

I swear, they could dress lollipops up as jewelry and these rich folk would lose their shit.

HAN

(incredulously)
Uh, hello? *Paging planet Ring Pops?*

Betty turns to him blankly, shaking her head to communicate that she isn't following.

HAN (CONT'D)

I need more friends who were awake in the nineties.

(back to the rack)
Oooh, the WATCHMEN soundtrack!

BETTY

Great, more of your white-washed superhero movie bullshit.

HAN

(taken aback)
How in the world are superhero movies white-washed? If anything, they don't see color.

BETTY

They don't see color, all right. At all. Give me one significant superhero who isn't a white man?

A defensive Han raises a disproving finger, but holds his note for a few seconds too long.

HAN

Well, there was that one black lady on Star Trek...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY

I said significant. Hollywood doesn't want to see powerful women of color saving the world. They'd rather see us in aprons and service uniforms, making witty quips in ebonics.

HAN

On behalf of white America, Betty, I apologize.

Done scouring the rack, Betty walks out of the aisle, gesturing for Han to follow her out.

BETTY

So, I guess we should actually be doing shit right about now?

HAN

Jenkins isn't in yet. I doubt anything too exciting is happening.

BETTY

Han, this is the suburbs. Nothing exciting ever happens.

(Beat)

It is strange that he isn't here though.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - PERFUME COUNTER - DAY

A group of onlookers are huddled around Candy's register in piqued interest. Exiting from the nearby restrooms, Marina and Guy stumble upon the scene, pushing through the crowd to find a flustered CANDY, 35, berated by a HOUSEWIFE.

CANDY

(stammering)

I-I-I'm sorry, ma'am, but... no receipt, no return. Th-that's our policy here.

HOUSEWIFE

I'm telling you, this is not the perfume set I purchased! You tricked me, you... you... WHORE!

CANDY

(Trying to ignore her comment)

What are you... what are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The housewife stops to take a vigorous SWIG of **JUCED!** and turns back to Candy with a bloodlust in her eyes.

HOUSEWIFE

(sneering)

Lady, I told you I don't want your piece of shit favorite fragrance! You gift-wrapped the Lauren set I handed you. But what did I unwrap when I got home? Your cheap, off-brand garbage!

CANDY

Just because it's on sale doesn't mean it's garbage!

Marina and Guy step up to the counter to interject. The crowd around them seems to be closing in.

MARINA

Hey, hey, let's take a deep breath here. I'm sure it was all just a--

HOUSEWIFE

(bellowing in Marina's face)

I WANT MY REFUND!

Marina pulls back in alarm, her eyes warily fixed on the housewife's. Candy, however, seems to have had enough.

CANDY

Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but that's not happening.

MARINA

(disconcerted)

Candy...

The housewife's hand begins to clench and tremble uncontrollably, crushing the **JUCED!** can.

HOUSEWIFE

(hissing)

What?

CANDY

You may be a "valued" shopper, ma'am, but you're also a bully...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GUY
 (off of the housewife)
 Candy... Not the time to be taking
 a stand here...

The housewife's eyes begin to glaze over and her face starts to twitch. But Candy, lost in her moment, isn't perceptive.

CANDY
 ... so, if you don't like my
 service and you don't like my
 products, then I think it's time
 you take your business else--

The housewife violently VOMITS a thick, **green** mucus over the counter, taking Candy by surprise. Chunks of it splatter onto Candy's pink blouse.

A wide-eyed Marina and Guy watch in horror as the housewife's head hangs lifelessly over the counter, her hands gripped to both corners of the counter.

GUY
 (timidly)
 Ma'am...? Ma'am, are you alright?

Candy, Guy, and Marina hold a nervous gaze on the woman, as she slowly brings her head back up.

HOUSEWIFE
 (in a deep register)
 I...

GUY
 Uh, Candy?

HOUSEWIFE
 ... want...

Marina looks down at the counter to find that the vomit-covered glass surface is MELTING into its interior.

MARINA
 Candy, *move!*

The housewife raises her head all the way up to Candy's, bringing them face-to-face. Candy's mouth drops in numbing shock. Marina and Guy are unable to move, frozen in awe.

HOUSEWIFE
 (roaring)
 ...myyyYYYYAAAAARRRRRGHHHH!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

All of the surrounding customers SHRIEK in fear and flee for the exit. The housewife, with her face now covered in orange patches and her mouth opened to reveal razor-sharp teeth, lunges over the counter towards Candy.

CANDY
 (in a blubbering panic)
 Okay, okay, I-I'll give you your
 refund, okay? I will--just please
 don't--DON'T KILL ME, PLEEEEAASE!

But it's too late. The monstrous housewife brutally RIPS Candy's face off with her teeth.

MARINA
 (voice breaking)
 HOLY SHIT!

The housewife brings herself atop the counter entirely, eating away as she crushes Candy into the floor. Marina races to the entryway of the perfume counter, with Guy uneasily following behind.

MARINA (CONT'D)
 Candy!

GUY
 Marina, wait! We should really
 get...

Marina and Guy stop at the sight of Candy's mangled corpse on the floor. Towering above her is the housewife, now fully transformed into an orange, hulking CREATURE.

She has visibly grown in height and muscle mass, bursting out of her too-tight sundress. Her hair falls away, her teeth have grown twice their length, and her white pupils have spread into the iris.

GUY (CONT'D)
 ... the hell out of here.

The creature takes a small step away from Candy's body and in Marina and Guy's direction. They pull in close together.

MARINA
 (softly)
 Guy...?

GUY
 (through his teeth)
 Run.

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - DAY

A few stray customers from the department store are fleeing past a disillusioned Betty, who is standing alone with her garbage crate outside of the food court.

BETTY
 (to the customers)
 What? The fucking Jonas Brothers
 come to town or something?

Nobody takes a moment to explain to Betty what's actually happening, leaving her abandoned in the dust. As she moves for a grip on her crate, Betty's head sharply turns at the sound of SOFT SOBBING.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Hello? Is anyone out there?

Suddenly, she notices the CAROUSEL at the farthest corner of the food court. It moves slowly in rotation, but Betty can make out the shape of a LITTLE GIRL hiding behind a GOLDEN HORSE FIXTURES.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 (calling out to the girl)
 Hey! What are you *doing* back there?

The little girl, tears running down her face, turns to Betty in alarm. She puts her index finger over her mouth tightly, pleading for Betty to remain quiet.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 (to herself)
 Well, if this isn't the sorriest
 game of hide and seek I've ever
 seen...

Betty approaches the girl, leaving her garbage crate behind. The girl continues gesturing for her to remain quiet, as the carousel spins her in and out of view.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Okay, kid, now can you just get
 down from--?

The girl shakes her head stiffly, before being rotated out of view again. Betty sighs deeply.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Okay, alright. I'll play along.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty begrudgingly climbs on the small set of stairs leading into the entryway and paces herself. She winces as she HOPS onto the moving carousel. She turns to her left to see that she's jumped on just inches from where the girl is hiding.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 (in a soft tone)
 Hi, sweetie. You look lost. Do you know where your parents are...?

LITTLE GIRL
Shhh!

BETTY
 (dropping her soft tone)
 I know you did not just shhh me. Listen, I doubt you've been exposed to the likes of Aretha Franklin, but there's a little thing called R-E-S-P--

LITTLE GIRL
 (pleadingly)
 You have to. Or else *they'll* hear you.

BETTY
 Who? Who's going to hear me?

Too shaken to say anymore, the little girl outstretches a trembling finger and points it past Betty's head.

LITTLE GIRL
 (whispering)
The monsters.

Betty turns around to see a scattered group of seven terrifying CREATURES, standing at the opposite end of the food court. They slowly start to move in, from behind the mark of Betty's garbage crate. It takes a moment for the reality of the situation to sink in.

BETTY
 (nervously)
 Well, sweetie, I think it's too late. They definitely heard us.

Genuinely frightened for once, Betty joins the little girl behind the golden horse, as if hiding is even an option.

INT. MALL - 3RD FLOOR PLAZA - DAY

Nicholas exits the staircase, completely ignorant to what's happening just floors below. A blissful stroll, he straightens his uniform and presses his hair, when he finds Courtney and her two friends inside of a BOUTIQUE SHOP.

The three girls pass a can of **JUCEO!** between each other as they shop. Nicholas scoffs to himself and enters...

INT. BOUTIQUE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Courtney and her two friends partake in one collective EYE ROLL at the sight of Nicholas approaching.

COURTNEY

What part of "leave me alone" did you not understand? Or do you no longer compendo English?

The other two girls chuckle softly at Courtney's borderline racist joke. Nicholas is unfazed.

NICHOLAS

(sneering)

Courtney, I'll gladly leave you alone. In fact, I'd rather not touch you with a ten-foot pole.

COURTNEY

Let's be real, Nicholas. You've never come around with any kind of pole. *More like three inches of rope.*

Courtney holds up her pinky in triumph. This brings Courtney's friends to howl in laughter, looking Nicholas up and down shamelessly. One passes the bottle of **JUCEO!** to the other, who then eagerly takes a sip.

NICHOLAS

You know what, Court? I am so glad that you found out about my job, I probably never would've realized how much of a bitch you are.

Suddenly, the girls quit laughing. They turn to Courtney, whose teeth clench together at the nerve.

COURTNEY

Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
Before this job, I thought you were perfect.

COURTNEY
(tilting her head)
I am perfect.

FRIEND #1
She is perfect.

Nicholas laughs to himself, almost maniacally. He's putting Courtney on edge. Her hands are shaking and she seems unable to put them at rest.

FRIEND #2
(reaching for Courtney's shoulder)
Courtney, are you okay?

COURTNEY
(pulling away)
Leave it, I'm fine!
(to Nicholas)
What's so funny? Huh?

NICHOLAS
You're far from perfect, Courtney. The truth is... you're superficial and empty on the inside. Like a coconut.

This sends Courtney over the edge. She begins breathing heavily, a low RUMBLE sounding from her chest.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Have a nice life. Or whatever.

As Nicholas turns to leave, Courtney begins to TRANSFORM: Her skin peels away and her eyes turn dead white. Her hair begins to fall out in clumps, startling her two friends.

FRIEND #1
OMG, Courtney, your hair!

COURTNEY
(shouting at Nicholas)
Get back here, Nicholas! I'm not done with you yet!

Nearly at the exit, Nicholas stops in tracks, his back still turned to the girls' unraveling:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICHOLAS
Yeah, well, I'm done with you.

FRIEND #2
(shrieking)
What the hell--what's happening to us?! *Courtney!*

COURTNEY
(her voice distorted)
I AM NOT A FUCKING COCONUT!

Nicholas turns back around to see Courtney and her two friends transforming in the middle of the aisle. Courtney looks further along in the process than the others, expanding in size and tearing through her clothes.

NICHOLAS
(aghast)
What the shit...?

Before Nicholas can process the image of his ex-girlfriend as a six-foot-tall demonoid, she LEAPS out at him.

COURTNEY
Grrraaarghh!

NICHOLAS
(flailing backward)
Woah! Wait!

Nicholas scrambles behind the nearest rack before Courtney can reach him. He zips through the store, looking for another way out. Thinking he's found one, Nicholas dives underneath a floating dress, left on a hanger, only to find himself cornered in the display window.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
(frantically)
Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!

Nicholas whips back around but is stopped by the two CREATURES, formerly Courtney's minions. They close in on him, teeth exposed and eyes blankly widened, with their muscular arms outstretched.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Hey, okay, let's just...

To make matters worse, Creature Courtney creeps up from behind the other two to join in on the attack.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
 (stammering)
 I, uh... I take back the "coconut"
 thing, Court. I didn't mean it...

The creatures gaze upon him, backing him into the corner of the window. Unable to move any further, he raises his arms up in defense and shuts his eyes tight.

Suddenly, the window SHATTERS from behind Nicholas, sending a MOP WRINGER into the display case and the creatures into a tailspin. Nicholas whips around to find an exasperated Han, urgently motioning for him to follow his lead.

HAN
 Dude. Prison Break!

Nicholas stands stunned for a moment, before Courtney's GROWL prompts him to spring through the broken window.

HAN (CONT'D)
 (incredulously)
 Now you're getting it!

INT. MALL - 3RD FLOOR PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas and Han race towards the staircase, turning back to catch the three creatures slowly gaining on them. Han pulls out his walkie talkie and brings it to his mouth:

HAN
 (into walkie talkie)
 Betty? Marina? Guys...? Something
 seriously weird is going on here...

BETTY (O.S.)
 (over walkie talkie)
 You don't fuckin' say! I'm about to
 get jumped by these -- stop crying --
 by these whackjobs in Halloween
 costumes -- I said stop crying, kid --
 and I would run, but I'm STUCK ON
 THE MOTHERFUCKING CAROUSEL!

MARINA (O.S.)
 (over walkie talkie)
 Betty, I don't think they're
 Halloween costumes... One of them
 just killed Candy. And I think
 we're next.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nicholas comes to an abrupt halt, forcing Han to slow down. They share a knowing look. Nicholas pulls Han's hand with the walkie talkie up to his face.

NICHOLAS
Marina, where are you?

MARINA'S VOICE
Perfume department. Candy's
counter... or what's left of it.

Han pulls his arm back to his side and tucks the walkie talkie in his pocket. He gives Nicholas a soldier's nod.

HAN
I've got Marina. You get Betty.

NICHOLAS
No, you get Betty. I'll get Marina.

HAN
(huffing)
No, I'll get--

A dismissive Nicholas bolts for the STAIRCASE above the department store.

HAN (CONT'D)
Hey, you can't just... fine...
yeah... *I'm coming Betty!*

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - PERFUME COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas races into the near deserted perfume department to find a scene of destruction: Display cases have been toppled over, broken perfume bottles scattered on the floor. Candy's corpse is now unrecognizable at the opening of the counter.

The creature is thrashing away at the locked OFFICE inside the counter space. Nicholas can see Marina and Guy inside, trying to block the doorway with shelves and chairs.

NICHOLAS
(hollering)
Hey, Freakenstein!
Over here!

The creature turns to face Nicholas, its eyes wide, chest pulsating in rage. It's as if the creature understood him. Nicholas swiftly snatches a large, silver PERFUME SAMPLE TRAY and FLINGS it forward, like a frisbee. The tray cuts into the creature's underbelly, as the flying perfume bottles SHATTER against its chest and face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The creature WAILS in agony, scratching at its eyes. Marina and Guy peer from behind the office window, impressed.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
Guys, hurry up!

Marina and Guy come through the office door and cautiously maneuver around the incapacitated monster. Marina notices a life-sized TAYLOR SWIFT CARDBOARD CUTOUT overhead and seizes it by the STEEL ROD holding it up.

GUY
(sniping)
What the hell are you going to--?

The creature lunges at the two of them, still at arm's length. Marina brings the cutout above her head, both hands clasped around the steel rod, and DRIVES it through the creature's shoulder blade. It HOWLS in agony.

MARINA
(breezily)
You were saying?

Marina and Guy scurry off towards Nicholas, leaving the impaled creature flailing about in a panic.

MARINA (CONT'D)
(to Nicholas)
Did you really just attack that thing with a sample tray?

NICHOLAS
Did you really just impale it with Taylor Swift?

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

Han reaches the seating area from behind the mob of creatures, closing in on Betty and the little girl on the moving carousel. They circle the platform, outstretching their arms through the poles for their prey. Betty holds the sobbing child to her chest, as she berates the creatures:

BETTY
(shrieking)
Hey! Get back, you ugly-ass creeps!
I mean it! I'm only going to warn you once...

Suddenly, Betty catches Han's gaze from across the food court. She gives him a pleading NOD, communicating for him to do something fast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETTY (CONT'D)
 I'm telling you motherfuckers...
I'm gonna make it rain blood!
 (louder so Han can hear)
 You hear me? I'm going to make...
 it... rain!

Han runs over to the last block of the food court, and locates the FIRE EMERGENCY LEVER. He SHATTERS the glass case with his elbow and yanks down on the lever.

The alarm BLARES.

HAN
 Heads up, Betty! You've got rain!

The creatures turn at Han's shouting. Suddenly, a SHOWER of water washes over them. The creatures touch their decayed flesh. They croak and growl at the sensation, unable to understand why and where the water is coming from.

Betty cackles in delight.

BETTY
 (tauntingly)
 That's what I thought! Go on and melt! Melt to the ground, bitches!

The creatures become increasingly flustered as they thrash and try to escape the water. From Han's view, they look as if they're being burned alive.

HAN
 Uh, Betty, I don't think they're melting...

Betty does a double-take at the mob of creatures, who seem to be finally putting together that the water isn't harming them. She shoots Han an alarmed glare.

BETTY
 (looking down)
 Uh, I think we should--

The space in between her arms and bosom is now empty. The little girl is gone.

BETTY (CONT'D)
 Where'd she go?

Betty stands up at the ledge of carousel and looks out to the far end of the seating area.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Behind the mob, she can see the little girl FLEEING the scene. The girl glances back at Betty briefly, sticking her tongue out.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Well, fuck me for tryin'.

Betty scrunches her face into a pained wince, bracing herself. She leaps off of the carousel and hits the ground running, following Han out of the food court.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

A shaken Marina, Guy, and Nicholas are hiding in the small supply closet, checking the clock anxiously. Suddenly, they jump all at once at the door flying open. Betty and Han race through and shut the door behind them.

BETTY
Well, I think I speak for us all here when I say *what in the shit are those scary-ass, freak-of-nature motherfuckers?!*

MARINA
(shuddering)
One of them shredded Candy right in front us... Fucking ate her face off without blinking.

NICHOLAS
Yeah, try getting mauled by three of them at the same time... when one of them's your ex-girlfriend.

Marina, Betty, and Guy turn to him, wide-eyed.

MARINA
(her hand over her mouth)
No way. Corduroy Courtney? They got Corduroy Courtney?

This brings Han to a dry chuckle.

HAN
Corduroy Courtney morphed into the Osh Kosh monster. It all makes sense now!

NICHOLAS
(hissing)
That's not funny, asshole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAN

Who you calling an asshole,
asshole?

NICHOLAS

Shut the fuck up.

HAN

(sighing sardonically)
How easily he forgets who saved his
ass from being grass ten minutes
ago...

BETTY

Both of you, cut it out! We don't
have time for this pissing contest.
We're all going to fucking die if
we don't get out of this damn mall.

GUY

It'd help if we knew what we're
dealing with exactly. We need to--

BETTY

(chirping)
It's fucking aliens! I'm telling
you, we're getting invaded or
infested or possessed or some shit!

The group collectively scoffs at Betty's hackneyed theory.
She shrugs weakly.

MARINA

God, Betty, you sound like Han.

HAN

(scoffing)
Please. I'd have better sense than
to use "infested" and "possessed"
in the same context. Science
fiction and fantasy: Two different
sub-genres!

Guy moves to speak, but Betty yelps at another thought:

BETTY

Global warming! You know, Al Gore
tried to warn us about this shit!
But did we listen?! HELL NO!

NICHOLAS

That makes absolutely *no sense*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Han hears a SOFT ROLLING below and looks down to find a **JUCEO!** CAN on its side, colliding with his right foot. He eyes it, curiously.

GUY

What I'm trying to say is that whatever is going on here must be, in some way, related to--

HAN

Guys, the drinks.

MARINA

(not following)
The drinks?

HAN

The drinks. I mean, come on. **JUCEO!** comes to town, the town guzzles half our stock down like cola, and, what do you know?

GUY

(nodding)
The town gets **JUCEO!**

NICHOLAS

(sarcastically)
Oh, of course! It was the energy drink that turned our customers into flesh-eating, superhuman 'roid machines. About as plausible as Global Warming.

MARINA

Yeah, sorry, Han, but I'm with Nick on this one.

NICHOLAS

It's Nicholas.

MARINA/BETTY/HAN

(bemoaning)
Whatever.

HAN

This really isn't anything I haven't seen in your standard zombie B-movie circa 1980. Diabolical forces target venues of mass consumption to wreak havoc and hysteria.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

NICHOLAS

Jesus, man, would you quit it with the sci-fi shit for like two seconds? Reality. Here. Now. not your never ending George Lucas wet dream.

HAN

And what do you know about anything? You're a rich kid with an allowance and a revoked license! HOW ORIGINAL!

MARINA

(sniping)

Han!

NICHOLAS

(to Marina)

You told him?

Marina winces weakly, a look of guilt in her eye. Betty watches her and Nicholas' body language intently.

BETTY

Told him what?

MARINA

(muttering)

Nothing.

BETTY

Told him what?

Nicholas scoffs bitterly, shooting Marina an indignant scowl. Han stands aloof to them, fishing for Marina's gaze.

NICHOLAS

And I'm fake?

HAN

(stepping up to Nicholas)

Hey, don't talk to her like that.

NICHOLAS

(shoving him backward)

Or what? What are you going to do about it?

HAN

(bucking forward)

You don't even want to know what I'm going to do about it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BETTY

Bitch, this is not the Donner party! You want to kill each other? Take a step outside!

NICHOLAS

Stay out of this, Betty.

BETTY

(fists balled)
White boy say what?!

GUY

(bellowing)
Would all of you just shut up and focus here?!

Everyone holds in place and faces Guy, surprising them with his commanding presence.

GUY (CONT'D)

Look, it may sound stupid on paper, but the **JUCSD!** theory is the only thing that makes a lick of sense. It can't be a coincidence that all of these people have... changed on the day after the big launch.

MARINA

Come to think of it... That woman? The housewife who went all Incredible Hulk on us at the perfume counter? She was chugging the stuff right before she changed.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, so was Courtney.

MARINA

It was weird. It was like the angrier she got, the more she would drink... until she just lost it.

NICHOLAS

(softly)
Courtney was the same way.

HAN

Whatever's in this drink is affecting people, channeling their anger and adrenaline into some kind of metaphysical transformation...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

The group once again turns to Han blankly. They seem to have lost him at "metaphysical".

BETTY

Wait, what?

NICHOLAS

You know, last night, when I went into storage to get more boxes... I dropped one of them and noticed that the cans weren't sealed right. I don't know, it looked like someone had fucked with them.

HAN

And why was it you said nothing?

NICHOLAS

(bitingly)

Uh, I tried. You were being a dick and wouldn't let me get a word in--

HAN

Well, would you look at that! The dick is calling me a dick!

GUY

If this is true... If the cans were tampered with, that means someone knowingly put this madness into action...

(gravely)

Someone with access to our entire stock days before the launch.

HAN

Spoiler alert: He conveniently didn't come in to work today.

MARINA

(incredulously)

Jenkins? You've got to be kidding.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, why would the mall manager do that to his own customers? I mean, nobody's going to buy anything now.

BETTY

That's the point. Nobody's going to buy anything now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

The group shares a nod, taking it in. Suddenly, it's all starting to make sense.

MARINA

Okay, let's say it's Jenkins. That he, somehow, spiked the drinks to turn everyone into monsters... What are we supposed to do about it?

BETTY

Get the fuck out of town.

GUY

(ignoring Betty)

We confront Jenkins. Try and see if there's a way to, I don't know, reverse the transformations.

BETTY

Or get the fuck out of town.

HAN

(ignoring Betty)

I know where he lives. He's just a few blocks out, right by that Methodist church in the ditch.

BETTY

(moaning)

We're not getting the fuck out of town, are we?

Marina, Han, Guy, and Nicholas shoot her a deadpan scowl that says it all.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Fine, then we can take my car.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON Nicholas' hands, gripped around the handle of a MOP. A BROOM in Marina's hands, a BOTTLE OF DISINFECTANT in Betty's, a PLUNGER in Guy's, and a pair of HAMMERS in Han's.

PAN UP to the group, wearing a shared expression of anxiety, dread, and white-faced fear.

HAN

Yep.

(sighing)

We're all gonna die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The elevator PINGS, reaching the destination: the bottom floor. The doors SWING OPEN, leading them into the...

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

What used to be the parking garage is now a scene of chaos and destruction. A gang of **JUCSD!** CREATURES, seven or eight of them at first glance, are relentlessly pummeling and ravaging the parked CARS and JEEPS.

Before anyone dares to step foot outside of the elevator, an upturned TRUCK comes skidding across their path of exit and SMASHES into another car. The crash draws unwanted attention to them, frozen in the open elevator.

The creatures, one by one, catch sight of them, a bloodlust in their eyes. They begin to close in on the elevator, suddenly appearing to have multiplied in numbers.

CLOSE ON: Nicholas, a put-on bravado in his game face. Betty, Marina, Han, and Guy, however, look scared shitless.

BETTY

(voice wavering)

Okay, so, what's Plan B?

NICHOLAS

There is no Plan B.

Nicholas brings the mop up to his chest, holding it like a weapon of some sort. They're merely a few feet away now.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

We fight, or we die.

Nicholas flips his mop tail-side-up, and CHARGES in, gunning for the LEADING CREATURE of the pack.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

(at full speed)

Ahhhhhh!

Nicholas DRIVES the handle of the mop straight through the creature's chest, it keels over, spurts of blood hitting the pavement. The surrounding creatures erupt into chaos, HOWLING; they scramble to pounce on the humans.

From inside the elevator, the gang watches on, stunned.

BETTY

(wide-eyed)

Holy shit. White boy just set off
World War III.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS (O.S.)

Betty!

Betty and the gang, snapping back into it, look to Nicholas, as he draws the creatures out of their path of exit.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Shut your trap and haul ass
already!

Betty, Han, Marina, and Guy hop out of the elevator and make a RUN for it, only buying a few seconds and a mere few feet before the creatures catch onto them. Before they can get too far, a slew of the monsters block their escape, but there's no turning back now.

MARINA

Fuck!

Marina blindly SWINGS her broom through the crowd, setting them back in one sweeping motion. Enraged, one of them pushes through and lunges for her.

HAN

Think fast, Salazar!

Marina DUCKS. Han STRIKES with his hammer, inflicting a bloody blow to the skull. The pack of creatures pull back in alarm, as their fallen comrade grips its head in agony.

MARINA

(flashing a weak smile)
Nice save, Thor.

HAN

(touched)
Now, see, *that* was a reference done
right. I'm so proud!

BETTY

Um, guys, I hate to be a Debbie
Downer here--

HAN

I'd say you're more of a Betty
Disemboweler, really.

BETTY

Yeah, well, we ain't making it to
the car.

The gang scan the lot for an out, but the lurking monsters make it considerably difficult.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GUY
How far out is it?

Betty holds up her KEYS, clicks the "UNLOCK" button, and waits for the car to make a BEEPING noise. It sounds from all the way across the parking garage.

GUY (CONT'D)
Yeah, no way in hell.

The creatures begin to move in once again, widening their net so that they have nowhere to run.

MARINA
(off of the pack)
Well, we need to go somewhere fast.

Suddenly, a quicksilver Nicholas comes charging through the group and towards the pack.

NICHOLAS
Guys! LET'S GO!

Marina, Han, Betty, and Guy follow his lead, still with no exit in plain view. Nicholas, however, manages to slide in between two of the creatures and make it to the other side.

BETTY
(hissing)
Fucking show-off.

HAN
Yo, verminators!

Han, the closest to the pack, fakes out a cut to the right and ducks to dive left. The creatures, thrown off, go into a frenzy, as Han just narrowly makes it to the other side.

Betty, Marina, and Guy, however, are blocked off by the barricade of monsters. They begin to backpedal.

BETTY
(hollering)
Han! Heads up!

Betty TOSSES her car keys over the pack and to the other side, where Han catches them in both hands.

BETTY (CONT'D)
And hurry the fuck back!

NICHOLAS
Han, let's go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAN
 Don't worry, Betty!
 (in The Terminator's
 voice)
Ah'll be bahck!

NICHOLAS
 HAN! TODAY, PLEASE!

Han huffs and follows Nicholas to the car, as the creatures start to advance on the others.

GUY
 (pulling at Betty)
 Let's get out of here.

BETTY
 Don't have to tell me twice...

Betty, Marina, and Guy retreat into the elevator, just narrowly escaping. The sliding doors SHUT them out of view.

INT./EXT. BETTY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas STARTS UP the car and SHIFTS into reverse. The car resumes Betty's bass-heavy radio, mid-song into "Super Bass" by Nicki Minaj. Nicholas grimaces in disdain. Han, in the passenger's seat, is more occupied with the backseat.

HAN
 You might want to check your rear.

Nicholas looks into the REARVIEW MIRROR to find two of the creatures approaching the bumper in hot pursuit.

NICHOLAS
 ... and we're out.

Nicholas HITS the gas at full-speed.

From outside the car, we can still hear "Super Bass" blaring, as the car RAMS the two creatures into cars parked on the opposite side. Betty's car, a modest blue Mazda, shifts into drive and SPEEDS OFF.

Inside, Nicholas and Han hold on for dear life, as the car flies into BROAD DAYLIGHT. Betty's MARRIAGE EQUALITY PENDANT, hanging around the mirror, flails around aimlessly and smacks Nicholas in the face.

HAN
 Have we lost 'em?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nicholas, holding his face, checks the mirror: All clear.

NICHOLAS
(catching his breath)
We don't have much time. Now, where
the hell is this place again?

HAN
It's right by church on Griffith.
The subdivision's called Oak View
or... Oak-something. It's the third
house on the left.

Nicholas side-eyes Han, suspiciously.

HAN (CONT'D)
I knew his daughter, Chrissy.

NICHOLAS
(disgusted)
She's, like, sixteen.

HAN
We met on a message board!

Nicholas' judging eye grows harsher.

HAN (CONT'D)
(squirrely)
Okay, okay, we carpooled to MegaCon
this one time, but it was totally a
group thing!

NICHOLAS
Whatever, man, I... really don't
care to know.

HAN
Well, you were the one who asked.

NICHOLAS
No, actually, I didn't.

HAN
Yes, you did. You totally gave me a
look. A *questioning look!*

NICHOLAS
(curtly)
Please stop talking.

Han concedes, scowling at the road ahead for a moment, before coming back up for more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HAN

You know, I'm getting tired of your high-and-mighty complex, alright? I mean, really, what makes you so special?

(counting on his fingers)

You're only mildly attractive for a so-called jock, you lack any people skills whatsoever, you're probably still growing your pubic hair, and, oh, that's right, you don't even have a valid license!

Off of Nicholas, in the driver's seat, driving right now--

HAN (CONT'D)

(gasping)

YOU DON'T HAVE A VALID LICENSE!

As if on cue, the sound of SIRENS set off from behind them, followed by an onslaught of RED AND BLUE LIGHTS. Nicholas checks the rear to find a POLICE CAR tailing them.

NICHOLAS

Fuck.

Nicholas slows down, PULLING OFF to the curb. He parks the car and rests his head back into the cushion, cursing to himself. Han watches on nervously.

A burly POLICE OFFER appears at the driver's side, gesturing for Nicholas to roll down the window. He obliges.

POLICE OFFICER

Good afternoon, gentlemen.

(to Nicholas)

Are you aware you're going twenty over the speed limit, son?

A sheepish Han cranes his head over Nicholas and shoots the officer an uneasy grin.

HAN

Officer, are you aware mankind as we know it is currently facing total annihilation?

Nicholas holds his face in his hands, at a loss.

OFFICER

'Scuse me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HAN

Yeah, it's kind of going on, like,
at this very moment. Sir.

The officer still isn't following.

NICHOLAS

(hesitantly)

It's at the mall. People are
turning into, uh...

HAN

(sharply)

... monsters...

NICHOLAS

(grimacing)

... monsters... and they're killing
everyone else. But it's only
happening to people who have...

HAN

... been drinking **JUCEO!**, this
new energy drink we launched this
week at Westpoint Mall.

(matter-of-factly)

We're the janitors.

NICHOLAS

(in shame)

Yeah. That's about it.

The officer stares them down for a few moments, as if waiting
for them to crack. When they don't, he in turn bursts into
LAUGHTER.

OFFICER

Nice try, kids. Now, license and
registration, please.

HAN

Officer, we're serious. It's a
bloodbath at the mall right now!

OFFICER

(losing his patience)

Look, we're already neck-deep in
prank calls and noise complaints
from the mall, okay? We've sent a
few guys down there to handle it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HAN

And I'm sure that your "guys" are
zombie meat by now.

The officer leans closer in through the window,
threateningly.

OFFICER

Son, I wasn't born yesterday. Now,
you can both hand over some ID,
along with the vehicle's
registration, or I'll be forced to
take you down to the--

A terrifying, animal-like SCREECHING echoes from further down
the street, startling the cop. He spins around.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

What the fuck was that?!

The sound of earth-shaking MARCHING follows.

HAN

(to Nicholas)
Floor it, Saint Nick.

OFFICER

(terrified)
No. No, don't you DARE!

Nicholas shifts gears and hits the GAS, but the officer holds
his grip to the insides of the driver's window.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

(at the top of his lungs)
STOP THE CAR, SON, THIS IS YOUR
FINAL WARNING! STOP THE CAR, NOW!

But Nicholas continues to accelerate. The officer struggles
to hold on, losing his grip finger by finger...

Han turns around to find three CREATURES on their tail,
quickly gaining on them.

HAN

They're coming in, fast!

OFFICER

(off of the monsters)
NO! NO! NO! SLOW THE FUCK DOWN, YOU
SON OF A BITCH, OR I SWEAR TO GOD--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

NICHOLAS
(turning to the officer)
GOD HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!

With that, Nicholas HITS 100 MPH, the officer FLIES out of the window frame, and is DEVoured in instants.

SPURTS OF BLOOD hit the rear window, startling Nicholas and Han. They speed along, never looking back.

INT. MALL - 2ND FLOOR PLAZA - DAY

The elevator doors SWING OPEN to release Marina, Guy, and Betty, who burst through at full-speed and gun for the opposite side of the plaza.

BETTY
(out of breath)
Are you sure there's an emergency exit on this side?

MARINA
I'm pretty sure, yeah!

BETTY
(shrilly)
Well, you better be more than pretty fucking sure!

MARINA
(pointing out)
No, I've seen it. It should be right by the rest... rooms...

Marina SLOWS DOWN at the sight of two CREATURES, slinking out of the corridor towards the restrooms. Their exit point.

GUY
This day just gets better and better...

Before they can think of where to go next, the creatures lock their gaze on the trio and POUNCE.

MARINA
RUN!

Marina, Betty, and Guy turn on their heels and make a run for it, but the creatures are closing in. Fast.

GUY
(shouting back)
Betty, they're gaining on you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty's two steps behind the others, struggling to keep up. She whips around to see the two creatures looming over her, almost in arm's length now.

BETTY
Oh, hell no!

Betty holds out her bottle of disinfectant and SPRAYS one of them in the eye. And then the other. They SCREECH, clawing at their eyes in agony.

BETTY (CONT'D)
(cackling)
Eat shit, Jurassic Park.

GUY
(from further ahead)
Come on, Betty!

Betty scurries along to catch up, as the blinded creatures are left immobilized in the dust. Marina and Guy slow down for her in front of GameHub. In the window, a tight-lipped Gerard watches on behind STEEL BARS. He's holed himself in.

BETTY
(off of the store window)
Is that Gerard?

MARINA
(sternly)
Gerard, let us in.

Gerard shakes his head stiffly, a look of petrifying fear across his face. He seems traumatized.

GERARD
(muffled through the window)
I can't. Leave me alone.

BETTY
(to Marina)
Is bitch tits for real?

Marina comes closer to the window. He eases back.

MARINA
Gerard, let us in. Or else.

GERARD
Or else what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GUY

Or else we'll stand here, lure out every one of those monsters, and, when they're done with us, they'll get started on this little cage of yours.

(shrugging)

Shouldn't take them all of... five... Maybe six minutes?

Gerard's lips quiver at the thought. He looks around, ensuring the coast is clear, and moves to lift the bars.

GERARD

Fine. Just... hurry up.

MARINA

(flatly)

Thank you, Gerard.

BETTY

(under her breath)

I really hope they eat you first.

Gerard UNLOCKS and brings up the steel wall for them, but only halfway. Betty, Guy, and Marina slip inside and disappear into the store window.

EXT. JENKINS' HOUSE - DAY

Betty's car comes to a rocky HALT in front of the house. Nicholas leaps out of the driver's seat and marches up the driveway, with Han chugging along behind.

NICHOLAS

Get a move on, fat ass!

HAN

(griping to himself)

Oh, now he's in a hurry.

Nicholas reaches the front door first and RINGS the doorbell over and over and over again, before a displeased MARGARET JENKINS, late 40's, answers it. She keeps the door ajar, nervously.

MARGARET

(shaken)

May I help you?

NICHOLAS

We're looking for Jenkins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Han finally catches up, joining Nicholas' side.

MARGARET
Oh, well, Stephen's upstairs...

HAN
Who's Stephen?

NICHOLAS
(to Han; annoyed)
Jenkins, moron.

HAN
Jenkins has a first name?

Margaret looks them up and down, suspiciously.

MARGARET
May I ask what this is concerning?

NICHOLAS
Oh, just some work stuff.

HAN
Your husband's plot to swallow
suburbia whole and quite possibly
the rest of modern civilization
with it.

Nicholas shoots Han a stern glance that says "really?".

MARGARET
Sorry?

NICHOLAS
(with a put-on smile)
He has a condition.

MARGARET
Okay, well, um... we're a little
busy packing at the moment. We have
a flight to catch tonight.

Nicholas and Han share a bemused glance.

HAN
Jenkins is skipping town?

NICHOLAS
(pushing the door open)
Not anymore, he isn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Margaret is left stunned, as Nicholas and Han barge in and invite themselves into...

INT. JENKINS' HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Nicholas and Han gun for the staircase, as a rattled Margaret fails to hold them back.

MARGARET

(shouting)

You can't just barge in like this!
I could have you both arrested, you
know! Excuse me! Excuse me!

INT. JENKINS' HOUSE - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Jenkins is receiving a glass of LEMONADE from his daughter Chrissy, as Nicholas and Han race into the room.

JENKINS

(to Chrissy)

Thanks, sweetie.

The room is a cluttered mess of PACKED SUITCASES, DUFFEL BAGS, and emptied GLASSES. Jenkins glares at Nicholas and Han at the open door frame, waiting for his daughter to leave before addressing them.

As Chrissy passes, Nicholas extends a friendly nod. She reciprocates with a biting FINGER and exits. Nicholas and Han close in to approach Jenkins.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

What do you two think you're doing
here, in my house?

HAN

Save it, Jenkins. You don't get to
play the moral high ground when you
turn the city into monsters.

JENKINS

(sniping)

Keep your voice down, will you?
I... *I didn't do it.*

NICHOLAS

(crossing his arms)

So, you're saying you didn't tamper
with the mall's supply of **JUCED!**
to poison the customers?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jenkins fidgets nervously, avoiding eye contact between the two of them. Nicholas and Han stand their ground.

JENKINS

Okay, yeah, I did that. But... it was only supposed to *kill* them.

Jenkins pauses, grimacing at how that sounds aloud.

HAN

Yeah, if you ever stand trial for this, *don't* lead with that.

JENKINS

Listen, you guys know me...

HAN

... clearly not very well...

JENKINS

... you know how devoted I am to my job. How much I love people...

HAN

... how much you love killing people...

JENKINS

... and you know much I put up with at that mall on a daily basis.

NICHOLAS

(scoffing)

So, that's why you did it? Because you're sick of your job?

JENKINS

No. Because I wanted back the one thing that job took away from me: My family.

Jenkins sighs deeply, PLOPPING down into his office chair. He takes a gulp of lemonade and sets it down on the desk.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Six years ago, we were a family. My wife loved me. My daughter looked up to me. We even had this cute little dog, Yeller. We were struggling, but we were happy.

(shaking his head)

And then I got the job here. In the suburbs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JENKINS (CONT'D)

Where everything is pristine and perfect, or so they tell you...

Jenkins pauses, lost in thought. His eyes well with tears.

JENKINS (CONT'D)

We moved to this perfect little town and we were compromised. My wife grew to loathe me. My daughter grew up resenting me. And our dog was killed in a hit-and-run. Some stupid, drunken high school kid.

HAN

(under his breath)

Well, that's what you get for calling him Yeller.

JENKINS

We stopped being a family the day we moved into this damned house. And I couldn't just sit back and watch the people I love become total strangers. Not anymore.

(gravely)

I had to do something to get us out of this place.

Jenkins looks up at Nicholas and Han pleadingly, but they aren't on the same page.

HAN

(bemused)

Then, why didn't you just -- oh, I don't know -- *move*?

JENKINS

Selling is near impossible. This place is worth horseshit.

HAN

So, your solution is Resident Evil, minus any remote chance of survival?

JENKINS

I'm telling you, I didn't spike the drinks to do any of that...

(stammering)

Look, this isn't what I wanted... I wanted a fresh start. For my family. I wanted to give us an out from this suburban hell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

 CHRISSY (O.S.)
 But the suburbs weren't our
 problem, Daddy...

Jenkins, Nicholas, and Han turn to face Chrissy, squarely in the door frame. Her eyes are glazed over, dead inside.

 CHRISSY (CONT'D)
 (coolly)
 ... you were.

Jenkins face drops to a mortified contortion.

 JENKINS
 Chrissy, honey... *what did you do?*

 CHRISSY
 You were the one who became a slave
 to your job... Capitalism's little
 bitch. I mean, honestly, did you
 sign your balls away in the
 employment contract?

His mouth still on the floor, Jenkins stands up from his chair. Chrissy takes slow steps towards her father. Nicholas and Han watch on, piecing it together.

 JENKINS
 Chrissy...

 CHRISSY
 You drove Mom to clinical
 depression, your bitching and
 moaning was that unbearable.
 (sneering)
 Every day, it was another rude
 customer. Another midnight iPhone
 launch. Another unreliable, drug-
 addled janitor.

 HAN
 Hey, Kendall had her strong suits!

 CHRISSY
 (ignore Han)
 Meanwhile, I've been emotionally
 deteriorating in that fucking
 hellhole of a private school that
 you forced me into.

 JENKINS
 It's the best education in town--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHRISSY
IT'S A METHODIST SCHOOL!

Dead silence fills the room. Nicholas and Han share an uneasy glance at where this is headed.

JENKINS
Chrissy. What did you do?

CHRISSY
(shrugging)
A little online shopping... of the
black market variety.

Chrissy pulls a VIAL OF BLACK LIQUID from her pocket and tosses it back and forth between her hands.

CHRISSY (CONT'D)
Okay, it was really just this guy I
found on Craigslist, but he swore
it's the real deal. Guess he wasn't
fucking around...

NICHOLAS
(shaking his head)
You're seriously twisted.

HAN
Yeah... yeah, I'm going to have to
agree with you on this one.

JENKINS
Do you realize what you've done?
How much damage you've inflicted?

Chrissy shrugs sheepishly. Her father's getting worked up.

JENKINS (CONT'D)
(raising his voice)
How many lives you've taken?

CHRISSY
Collateral damage.

JENKINS
Collateral damage?! For what,
Chrissy? What exactly are you
trying to achieve?

Jenkins looks down at his hands, trembling uncontrollably. Han and Nicholas slowly start to catch on: The glass of lemonade on the desk. The empty glasses littering the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CHRISSEY
 (in a little girl's voice)
 Would you like me to get you
 another glass of lemonade, Daddy?

JENKINS
 (voice breaking)
 No...

Jenkins body begins to give way to the TRANSFORMATION. Chrissy watches on in amusement, as Nicholas and Han helplessly stand by.

CHRISSEY
 (reciting her own words)
 "The poisoning just killed your
 brain..."

Half-human, half-creature, Jenkins keels over in pain and ROARS in agony. Before even fully transforming, something seems to have gone wrong. He begins to FOAM at the mouth and convulse uncontrollably.

CHRISSEY (CONT'D)
 ... the rapid-fire burning out of
 your insides did the rest.

Jenkins' joints and bones seem to CONTRACT into his bloodstream, as his body expands at an alarming rate. He looks as if he's going to explode...

CHRISSEY (CONT'D)
 (grinning from ear-to-ear)
 I thought this would be a better
 fitting closer for you Daddy.

An EXPLOSION OF BLACK BLOOD fills the screen.

INT. GAMEHUB - DAY

Marina, Betty, Guy, and Gerard are lined up on the floor, along the inside of the checkout counter. Marina is on her CELL PHONE, with Betty eagerly listening in.

MARINA
 (into the phone)
 That's great, honey, I'm so... I'm
 just happy to hear your voice,
 Eddy. You're safe now, okay?

Marina starts to get emotional, but an impatient Betty NUDGES her for the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY

Jesus, Betty, it's her kid. Give her a minute.

BETTY

On her last bar? She can have thirty seconds.

MARINA

(wiping her eyes)

Okay, stay with your dad. Do what he says. Alright? Okay, baby, I'll see you really soon... I love you.

Marina hangs up and hands the phone over to Betty, who snatches it and begins dialing furiously.

GUY

Everything okay?

MARINA

Yeah, he's fine. My ex has him and they're on their way out of town. I just wish I could be there with him, you know?

Guy gives Marina a hopeful smile, but she's less than convinced. In between them, Betty jabbars on:

BETTY

(into the phone)

Daphne, baby, it's me. Listen, you need to get out of the house. You need to get out of town--

DAPHNE (O.S.)

(Over phone)

Betty, what's going on?

BETTY

We don't have much time. I lost my phone in the parking deck, and Marina's cell is dying. I just need you to get in the car and drive.

(beat)

I can't explain everything now, Daph--just trust me, okay?

(scowling)

Hello? Daphne? Are you there?

Betty checks the phone to find a black screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (CONT'D)
(tossing the phone)
It's fucking dead.

Marina rests a consoling hand on Betty's knee.

MARINA
She'll be okay, Betty.

Betty pulls away from Marina's touch, unnerved. Gerard examines the three of them, scoffing to himself.

GERARD
You people do realize none of this matters, don't you? We're not making it out of here alive...

GUY
Speak for yourself, Gerard.

MARINA
Yeah, we just need a new plan. Nicholas and Han will find a... cure or whatever, we just... we have to fight these things off.

BETTY
With what? Broomsticks and disinfectant? We need actual fucking weapons.

GUY
(off of the store merchandise)
Good luck finding anything useful in goddamn Toys 'R Us...

GERARD
(offended)
Toys 'R Us?! I'll have you know, our collector's edition Lord of the Rings sword replicas are 100 percent solid metal--

GUY
And where do you keep those again?

GERARD
Oh, up there.

Gerard gestures to the high shelf above them, where a limited supply of cased SWORDS are hanging.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GUY
(getting up for them)
Great, thanks.

GERARD
No, wait, you can't take those!
They're collector's items!

GUY
I'm collecting.

Guy moves for the swords on the shelf, but a rabid Gerard SHUFFLES across the floor, gripping him by the ankles.

MARINA
Gerard!

GUY
Kid, give it up!

GERARD
THEY'RE MINE, OLD MAN!

Guy tries shaking him off, before hearing the sound of a loud CRUNCH. It came from the ceiling.

GUY
... anyone else hear that?

The four of them stop, slowly look up to the CEILING. The rumbling and scuffling continues, getting louder and louder.

MARINA
(under her breath)
No. Fucking. Way.

CRASH! The ceiling gives way to a lone CREATURE, falling through and landing feet-first into the check-out line in front of them. The group panics. Gerard scrambles away from the rest of them, on all fours.

GERARD
(pointing at the gang)
GET THEM! TAKE THEM INSTEAD!

BETTY
You little bitch!

The creature, confused, approaches Gerard. One heavy step at a time. Gerard trembles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

GERARD

Please, please, no, don't--take them, please, they're just the janitors! Nobody will miss them, I swear! PLEASE!

The creature STRIKES, locking its jaw on Gerard's shoulder. CRUNCH! Gerard howls in agony. Blood spills across his GameHub uniform.

Suddenly, the creature is STRUCK from behind, as a blade runs cleanly through its neck. It stops wide-eyed for a moment, stunned. And, then, its HEAD collapses from its body to reveal Guy behind, with the replica in hand.

MARINA

(impressed)

Holy fuck.

Gerard is left trembling in front of a faceless body, before it too falls to the floor. He's going pale white, losing a lot of blood.

GUYS

(off of the creature)

Well, that's... new.

Guy, Marina, and Betty gather around the creature's corpse, examining the OPEN WOUND of a neck -- The blackened blood seems to be actively dissolving its MUSCLE TISSUE. It's being hollowed out at an alarming rate.

BETTY

(wrinkling her nose)

I'm so glad I skipped breakfast this morning.

MARINA

What is this? Why is it just... disintegrating like that?

GUY

I don't know. Maybe this stuff, the stuff in the drinks, is killing them? Their bodies are rejecting the transformations.

GERARD

(short of breath)

Hello?

Guy, Marina, and Betty turn to Gerard, who clearly isn't making it out of this one alive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

GERARD (CONT'D)

I'm pretty sure I'm... dying over here.... if anyone... cares...

BETTY

Frankly, I really don't.

Guy jabs Betty's side, and slowly approaches Gerard. Marina and Betty awkwardly hang back.

GUY

Gerard, listen... I'm sorry I stole your toy sword...

GERARD

... *replica*...

GUY

Whatever.

Gerard grunts, the pain overtaking him. He holds his side, as if trying to stop the bleeding. It's everywhere now.

GERARD

(forcing a smile)

Well, I'm glad it was put to good use, anyway... Aragorn would have been... proud...

GUY

Yeah. He would have been.

Betty and Marina feel uneasy watching, deflecting their gaze. But Guy watches intently.

GERARD

Just tell Harrison... tell Han... tell him he'll...

Gerard is hanging by a thread. Any second now.

GUY

Tell him what?

GERARD

(fading away)

He'll never get... to Level Seven... of Zombies Hit the Town... 2... for X-BOX...

Silence. Gerard is dead. Guy looks to Marina and Betty, with a renewed urgency in the eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

GUY

Let's move.

INT. JENKINS' HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Chunks of LIMBS and FLESH float in a pool of thin, black blood, soaking the carpet.

Nicholas and Han watch, dumbfounded, as Chrissy SNAPS photos of the crime scene on her PHONE.

CHRISSY

For my Tumblr.

NICHOLAS

(disturbed)

Right.

Chrissy puts her phone away, staring them down. They stare back, blankly. An awkward beat.

HAN

So, now that your father's gone biodegradable and you got what you wanted... would you kindly tell us how to reverse it?

CHRISSY

(shrugging carelessly)

You can't. It's not a fucking magical spell. It's a one-way acidic body cleanse. Everyone infected is a walking time bomb. Eroding from the inside out.

NICHOLAS

They're like vampires.

CHRISSY

More like zombies on bath-salts and LSD.

Chrissy laughs at her own inference.

HAN

The poison's killing them either way, but upping the dosage does the job faster...

(curiously)

So, without Jenkifying them, as you so mercilessly demonstrated, how long do these things have to live?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHRISSY

Hell if I know. And I don't really care to find out. Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a flight to Napa Valley to catch.

(a satisfied smirk)
Wine country.

Chrissy moves for the door, carefully tip-toeing around the sick all over the floor.

HAN

You have to be, like, the worst super-villain ever.

CHRISSY

(turning at the door)
You can't save them, you know. This whole town's swallowing itself alive as we speak. If you're smart, you'll save yourselves.

NICHOLAS

(bitingly)
That's kind of the idea.

INT./EXT. BETTY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

The car doors SLAM as Nicholas and Han settle back into their seats. Nicholas starts up the car and speeds away.

HAN

We should let the others know about the **JUCED!** side effects. See if they can get their hands on the rest of the stock.

NICHOLAS

Cool, I'll call Marina.

HAN

(whipping out his phone)
No, I'll call Marina.

Nicholas is already on it. Han races him, the sounds of DIALED NUMBERS overlapping over one another. They hold their phones to their ears in anticipation and, at the same time, drop them back down.

NICHOLAS
Voicemail.

HAN
Voicemail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nicholas turns his attention to the road, as Han gives him a testing eye. A look of distrust.

HAN (CONT'D)

You're not really her type, you know. I know you *think* you are, but you're not.

NICHOLAS

(scoffing)

Oh, and what is her type? Chubby gamer dropouts living in their parents' basement?

HAN

I'm an acquired taste.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, keep telling yourself that, Han Stow-Lo.

Han shrugs, takes in the road view for a few beats, and then decides he's offended. He crosses his arms.

HAN

We had a good thing going, the four of us. Betty, Guy, Marina, and me. Before you came along.

Nicholas rolls his eyes, unconvinced.

HAN (CONT'D)

Marina and I go back, okay? We've known each other a long time.

NICHOLAS

Yeah, dude, a little too long, if you ask her.

HAN

What are you talking about?

NICHOLAS

She doesn't see you like that, man. She told me the other night, when we were closing. She looks at you like a little brother.

HAN

You're full of shit!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICHOLAS

That's what happens when you wait
around for things to happen to you.
If you want something that bad,
you've got to grow some balls and--

BAM! The car suddenly CRASHES into a stopped CAR in front,
SHATTERING the glass and throwing Nicholas and Han back in
their seats. The impact is deafening.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Holy--

They see that the TRAFFIC ahead is being pummeled by a gang
of CREATURES. They're working their way through the cars,
yanking innocent PEOPLE through their windows and feasting
mercilessly. It's an all-you-can-eat buffet.

HAN

(gravely)

We need to get back to the mall.

NICHOLAS

If there's even still a mall to get
back to...

Han sees something in the rearview mirror and immediately
BOLTS out of the car. Cruising by the adjacent street, still
clear of monsters, is a CITY BUS. Han guns straight for the
intersection, hands waving for its attention.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Han! Wait up!

Nicholas follows suit, chasing after him.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Nicholas and Han stumble into the bus, out of breath. They're
stunned to find that the seats are filled with PASSENGERS,
all of whom are plugged into their SMART PHONES.

The bus doors SLIDE shut, and they're off.

NICHOLAS

What the--? You've got to be
fucking kidding me...

HAN

It's the downtown rush. They have
no clue what's going on uptown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS
(flabbergasted)
They have windows!

Han takes a stand at the center of the aisle, facing the bulk of the passengers. Nicholas hesitantly follows.

HAN
(to the whole bus)
Listen, people, we are now, in this moment, living through the most horrific genocide the human race has ever seen...

From the PASSENGERS' POV -- Han is a strange man in a dirtied janitor's uniform, rambling on. His rant is drowned out by the POP MUSIC coming through the headphone speakers.

HAN (CONT'D)
... and, if you step through those doors and return to your homes, understand me:
(spelling it out)
You. Will. Not. Survive.

Nobody responds to this. A few look up and glance away, avoiding eye contact. But most remain blissfully unaware, tuned out. Nicholas steps forward.

NICHOLAS
You need to run! Get on the next bus out of town, road trip to New Mexico, whatever. Just save yourselves, before they find you.

Still, nothing. Han grows increasingly agitated, which hardly helps his case.

HAN
COME ON, PEOPLE! Wake the hell up! We've been mindfucked by our own innovations because we let the machines think for us. Tell us what to do and what to buy and what to see and not to see...
(realizing as he says it)
... and this what we get for it.

Han looks out to the passengers to a unanimous vote for apathy. Nobody even heard him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NICHOLAS
(weakly)
Anyone?

Han shakes his head, infuriated, and concedes:

HAN
(taking a seat)
Fuck you all, I hope you die.

Nicholas sits next to him, uselessly, as the bus INTERCOM system alerts the passengers:

ANNOUNCER
Next stop: Westpoint Mall. West
Point Mall--

INT. MALL - 2ND FLOOR PLAZA - DAY

Betty, Marina, and Guy burst through the doors of the SPORTS AUTHORITY at the far corner of the floor, stocked up with BASEBALL BATS and HOCKEY STICKS.

MARINA
Well, hey, it's something.

BETTY
Oh, yeah, we'll just beat 'em to death with these windmills!

MARINA
They're hockey sticks.

BETTY
How the fuck would I know?!

GUY
Keep cool, Betty. Best to save the aggression for the beasties.

BETTY
(exasperated)
I just want to go home.

The three peek down the plaza before turning the corner. It's quiet. Too quiet.

MARINA
You'll be home soon enough. We all will. And we'll be laughing about this years from now -- decades in your case, because God knows you'll outlive us all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Guy and Marina chuckle. This puts Betty at ease.

BETTY

You're right. I will outlive you all. And, I don't know about the rest of you...

(shaking her head)

... but I will never be working as a fucking mall janitor ever again. I don't care how bad my debt is.

MARINA

(catching her)

So, that's the real reason you got this job?

BETTY

(looking ahead)

Han and white boy.

MARINA

Who cares about them, Betty? Come on, it's just us here--

BETTY

(pointing out)

No, look, *Han and white boy!*

Marina looks up to spot Nicholas and Han in the ELEVATOR SHAFT, rising to meet their level. Marina breathes a deep sigh of relief.

GUY

Well, it's about time.

Marina, Guy, and Betty break into a full SPRINT for the elevator as it comes to a stop. The doors swing open for them, Han and Nicholas gesturing for them to hurry.

NICHOLAS

Look out!

From out of nowhere, a stray CREATURE lunges out at them, from the left side of the elevator shaft.

MARINA

Shit!

Marina is last in line, the easiest target. Betty and Guy slip into the elevator, but Marina is stopped just short of entry. The creature has Marina by the collar. She SHRIEKS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HAN

Marina!

Han jumps into action, swiping Betty's hockey stick and hopping out of the elevator to STRIKE the creature in the face. It pulls back, freeing Marina and howling in agony.

MARINA

(tauntingly at the creature)

H-E-double hockey sticks. Bitch.

(to Han)

Thanks, Han.

HAN

I got your back, Salazar.

Han and Marina scurry into the elevator and are closed in, before the monster can get itself back up.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Together again, Nicholas, Betty, Han, Marina, and Guy barricade themselves in the elevator, out of breath and nearly out of time.

MARINA

(to Nicholas and Han)

We could use some good news right about now.

NICHOLAS

Well, Jenkins is dead. And, apparently, there's no way to reverse the transformations.

The rest of the group hangs on their words. Morale is practically mopping the floor, it's that low.

MARINA

(mortified)

I said good news...

BETTY

What do you mean there's no way to reverse the transformations?

HAN

His daughter Chrissy is behind it. Well, the "turning people into zombies" part. She told us. Jenkins was only attempting genocide.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUY

And how do we know Sabrina the Teenage Bitch isn't lying?

NICHOLAS

It makes sense. We saw it firsthand. She overdosed Jenkins with **JUCEO!** and he just... combusted. Like he was plastic.

Guy nods, off of what he saw earlier in GameHub.

MARINA

(catching on)

And you want to do that to the rest of them...

HAN

It's the only thing we can do.

Nicholas and Han scan their faces, hesitantly. Marina and Guy exchange concerned looks. Betty isn't believing this.

BETTY

(her hands up)

Hold the fuck up. You're saying you want to kill everyone? That's your big, motherfucking solution?!

NICHOLAS

Betty, they're already dead.

GUY

(nodding)

We're just speeding up the inevitable here. It's the only way to save ourselves.

BETTY

(recoiling)

Well, then.

NICHOLAS

So, we're all on board with this?

The group exchanges half-convincing shrugs and nods.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Good enough. Then, this is what we'll do...

INT. MALL - 1ST FLOOR PLAZA - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator swing open and reveals Nicholas, emerging with a baseball bat in hand. The rest of the group watches him leave as the elevator doors shut them out of view.

NICHOLAS (V.O.)
We split up. Take each floor and lure every last monster into the largest open space: The food court.

The elevator rises up to...

INT. MALL - 2ND FLOOR PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

Betty and Guy, hockey stick and sword in hand, rush through the doors. Only Marina and Han are left behind.

NICHOLAS (V.O.)
Meanwhile, someone's got to get a hold of the rest of the **JUCEO!** stock in storage and feed it through the sprinkler system--

INT. ELEVATOR - MINUTES EARLIER

HAN
(blurting)
I'll do it.

Nicholas turns and stares Han down for a moment, as if questioning his intentions. He nods, letting up.

NICHOLAS
Alright, man. If you're sure you can pull it off.

HAN
I can pull it off.

Betty and Guy nod to Han, encouragingly. But Marina remains shiftily silent. She's not sure about this.

INT. MALL - 3RD FLOOR PLAZA - MINUTES LATER

The elevator doors open and Marina leaves Han behind, taking only a few steps out of the shaft before coming to a stop. She braces herself, conflicted.

MARINA
(turning around)
Hey, Han...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Han steps forward, holding the elevator open. He can see that something is eating at her. She approaches him.

MARINA (CONT'D)

So, uh, just in case we don't make
it through this...

Marina PECKS Han on the lips, startling him. He goes starry eyed, grinning ear to ear, and, then...

HAN

That's it?

MARINA

(taken aback)

That's it?

HAN

Well, I kind of saved your life.
Twice. In one day. And I'm not
expecting you to upside-down
"Spider-Man" kiss me for it, but--

Marina grabs his face and KISSES him, a little more passionately this time. That shuts him right up.

MARINA

(half-joking)

If we live, this never happened.

HAN

Fat chance.

Marina smiles, sending him off, and races in the other direction. Han laughs to himself, high on cloud nine, as the elevator doors SHUT him from view.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Han rushes into the room, scanning it for --

The BOXES OF *JUCEO!*, stacked at the corner. Han swipes them, loading them onto a nearby FOLDING CHAIR DOLLY. He piles about fifteen cases, swipes something from the table, and exits in a hurry.

INT. MALL - 1ST FLOOR PLAZA - DAY

Nicholas makes his way down the seemingly quiet hall of pummeled and windowless stores. And, then, he hears a sharp RUMMAGING. And GROWLING. It's coming from around the corner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He cuts to his left and finds a group of CREATURES having a feast of human corpses in a Forever 21-like WOMEN'S BOUTIQUE. He counts his blessings, and--

NICHOLAS
If you've still got an appetite, we
should really do lunch! My treat.

The creatures look up, wide-eyed, at Nicholas. Confused glowers on their faces, they stand up to face him.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
(nervously)
Two-for-one deal at the Mandarin
Express--

Nicholas pauses at a disturbing revelation: A DRAGONFLY TATTOO on the pelvic line of the leading monster.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
No way... Courtney?

CREATURE COURTNEY hisses at him, as if responding. Nicholas quivers. Does she recognize him?

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
(slowly backing away)
Well... my offer still stands...
free lunch... all-you-can-eat... if
you just...

Nicholas turns around, bolting in the other direction.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
... FOLLOW ME!

The hoard of creatures LEAP through the shattered store window and follow him in hot pursuit. The commotion draws more of their kind out of the woodwork.

INT. FIRE CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Han wheels the boxes into the small, narrow room containing the WET PIPE SYSTEM -- A clunky maze of red pipes, valves, and levers. Han marvels at the sight, at a loss.

He whips out what he'd swiped from the storage room: A WET SYSTEM MANUAL for emergencies. The instructions read like gibberish.

HAN
(gulping)
Well, I'm done.

INT. MALL - FOOD COURT - DAY

Betty and Guy are running at full speed, with a gang of monsters on their tail. They cut into the food court, mortified to find that nobody else is there.

BETTY
WHERE THE FUCK IS EVERYONE?!

GUY
(pointing out)
Look, Marina, at eleven o'clock!

From the opposite end of the food court, Marina takes a SWING of her bat at the party on her tail and HOPS onto the first of the LUNCH TABLES. She skips from table to table, nimbly escaping from the clutches of her attackers.

Betty and Guy, meanwhile, make their way inward, throwing CHAIRS back to keep the monsters at bay.

MARINA
(spotting them)
Betty! Guy!

Marina hops off of the tables and back to the floor, leveling with them.

GUY
There's too many of them to hold off! I don't know how long we can keep this up!

MARINA
(panicked)
What are we going to do?!

But it's too late for thinking. The creatures CLOSE IN and the three raise their defenses. Marina swinging at heads, Betty faking them out, and Guy slicing away.

BETTY
WHERE THE HELL IS WHITE BOY!?

NICHOLAS (O.S.)
"White Boy" is a little preoccupied at the moment, Betty!

Betty and the gang whip back to find Nicholas approaching from the plaza, sprinting away from the massive CROWD of creatures. At the head of the fan club is Creature Courtney, teeth out and eyes wide open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
 (shouting)
 You guys remember my ex, right?

Nicholas zips into the food court, company included.

MARINA
 Corduroy Courtney?

BETTY
 (emphatically)
 She's not dead yet?!

Soon as she says this, Guy swoops in -- Nicholas dodges out of the way -- and DECAPITATES Creature Courtney with the blade. Her skull falls to the floor, with a sickening THUD.

Even Nicholas winces in disgust.

GUY
 (breezily)
 There. Dead now.

Nicholas and the girls give Guy a weak nod. Thanks?

INT. FIRE CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The MAIN DRAIN VALVE is burst open to an EXPLOSION OF WATER.

HAN
 (squealing)
 Shit! Shit! Stop!

Han scrambles to stop the water flow, clearly having no idea what he's doing. He tries to consult the manual, only to find that it's now a soaked wad of paper. He scans the controls in a panic.

HAN (CONT'D)
 (off of the valves)
 Uh, okay, which one looks less ominous? Ummmm...
 (choosing blindly)
 ... this one!

Out of sheer luck, Han turns the black WATER SUPPLY CONTROL VALVE. The flooding slowly comes to a stop. Soaking wet and freezing cold, Han gets started on tearing open the boxes and popping open the **JUCEO!** cans.

HAN (CONT'D)
 (weakly)
 Here goes nothing...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Han proceeds to pour the energy drink through the valve opening, and hustles to empty the rest of the case.

INT. MALL - FOOD COURT - DAY

Nicholas, Betty, Marina, and Guy are huddled with their backs to each other, swinging, slicing, chopping, and poking at the creatures closing in. A few close calls. Their chances of survival look slim.

NICHOLAS

We're running out of time here!

BETTY

Thank you, Mr. Obvious, for that insightful observation!

(scoffing)

Oh, and P.S. -- YOUR PLAN SUCKED BALLS, JOCKSTRAP!

NICHOLAS

OH, SO, IT'S "JOCKSTRAP" NOW, IS IT?! BECAUSE I WAS REALLY GROWING FOND OF "WHITE BOY"!

BETTY

(roaring)

OOOOH, IF I WASN'T FIGHTING FOR MY MOTHERFUCKING LIFE RIGHT NOW, I'D TURN AROUND AND WHOOP YOUR PASTY LITTLE ASS INTO--

MARINA

Guys! Seriously!?

The gang is caught off guard to a creature LEAPING overhead, gunning for the center of the circle.

GUY

Everyone, MOVE!

The four of them split off as the creature collides with the ground. They're on separate sides now, unable to flee the food court. The monsters zero-in on them individually.

GUY (CONT'D)

Keep on your toes, guys! Don't let them get you!

NICHOLAS

Where the fuck is Han?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betty, at the furthest end of the food court, dodges a creature's grab when she spots Han, across the balcony.

BETTY
(panting)
Han! Did you--?

Han half-smiles, telling her everything she needs to know:

HAN
Betty! Make... it... RAIN!

Betty nods and turns around to meet the bloodthirsty gaze of three creatures, moving in.

BETTY
(raising her hockey stick)
Out of my way, bitches, I AM THE
RAINMAKER!!!

Betty SWINGS the stick through the three of them, just barely breaking skin across the chest. She shrugs.

BETTY (CONT'D)
Oh, fuck it.

Betty tosses the hockey stick aside and DIVES in between their feet, scrambling through. The creatures are set off into a fluster of confused howls and roars, unable to get a hold of her in time.

Betty comes out on the other side, hops back up, and wraps around in a corner-turn. She eyes the fire lever, the glass case already shattered from earlier.

BETTY (CONT'D)
(shrugging)
"Make it rain."

Betty PULLS DOWN on the lever and the blaring alarm SOUNDS. Nicholas, Marina, and Guy, still separated, stop in their tracks, as do the monsters. Everyone's at a standstill.

NICHOLAS
(over to Marina)
Is it working?!

MARINA
I... don't know!

The SPRINKLERS begin to spew orange **JUICE!** across the food court, drenching the humans and monsters alike.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The creatures, confused, begin to taste the drink and open their mouths wide for more.

Han races across the bridge to the food court, both hands up in victory. He gives Betty a big hug.

HAN
WOO-HOO! We did it!

BETTY
We did...? Because they're not melting...

The creatures are still standing in place, lapping up the **JUCEO!**, when the sprinklers begin to let up. The "rain" fades to a weak sputter.

HAN
(his face falling)
Uh, oh...

Nicholas swallows hard, his heart skips a beat. Marina and Guy share mortified expressions. The creatures turn their attention back to the janitors, one by one, and then--

A sharp, high-pitched HOWLING. The gang watches on, holding their breath. The howling came from a creature, at the center and making its way outward. It falls to the floor, shaking uncontrollably and foaming at the mouth.

Nicholas' lips curl into a satisfied grin.

NICHOLAS
And here it goes.

The surround creatures begin to violently shake and thrash around in agony. Body parts expanding, ligaments deforming, black blood spewing. The entire non-human population is taken by a supernatural seizure, and the monstrous howling is deafening. And, then, with no warning --

An EXPLOSION OF BLACK BLOOD sweeps through the scene, swallowing everything its path into a cloud of darkness.

Dead silence. We can't see much except for blackened guts and body parts. And, suddenly, Han SHOOTs up from the floor, coughing up something foreign.

HAN
(gagging)
Eck. Monster guts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Han looks around to find Nicholas, Betty, Marina, and Guy, scattered across the floor of the food court. All covered in black and orange sick.

HAN (CONT'D)
(getting up)
So, we saved the suburbs?

BETTY
(flatly)
We bludgeoned the suburbs.

Han shrugs, hardly bothered. The group pulls together, staggering and all.

HAN
Well, who needs 'em, anyway?

Nicholas, Han, Marina, Betty, and Guy stand at the center of the destruction, watching each other blankly.

MARINA
So. What now?

HAN
We move. Get new lives, maybe new identities, better jobs--

BETTY
Oh, please. We'll be working the same dead-end jobs anywhere else.

GUY
(nodding)
That's America. The rich stay rich, the poor stay poor, and the janitor stays janitor.

MARINA
Or maintenance worker, if you're lucky.

HAN
(whining)
But we're heroes--

BETTY
We're not heroes.

HAN
Okay, we're not heroes. But we're survivors. That counts for something, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The group gives Han a "what do you think?" look.

HAN (CONT'D)
 (sighing deeply)
 Yeah, we're never moving up that
 social ladder...

Han trudges along towards the Nordstrom, kicking BODY PARTS by his feet. Nicholas, Marina, Betty, and Guy follow along, leaving their baseball bats, hockey sticks, broomsticks, and mopheads behind.

MARINA
 (nudging Han)
 If it makes you feel any better,
 Gerard ate shit. Open shoulder
 wound, lots of blood.

HAN
 Aw, he didn't deserve all that...

GUY
 He wanted us to tell you you'll
 never get to Level Seven of that
 zombie game--

HAN
 (deadpan)
 Son of a bitch had it coming.

BETTY
 Yeah, I never liked him.

The group carries off into the distance, leaving the bodies and bloodshed at the foreground. Han, at the center, jumps at a declaration:

HAN
 Oh, everyone! Marina kissed me!

MARINA
 (swatting him)
 Han!

NICHOLAS
 (peevied)
 Seriously?

BETTY
 Well, it's about damn time...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MARINA
(through her teeth)
That... didn't... happen, Han...

HAN
Oh, it happened. It so happened.

Han walks with purpose towards Marina, and swiftly twirls her and leans her back in his arms. Then they kiss again.

NICHOLAS
Well... shit.

The group's laughter echoes off of the walls.

CUT TO BLACK.