

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Weak sunlight strains to reach the face of SUZY CAMDEN (48), who squints at the screen of a television set in front of her. She's as faded and plain as the uninspired decor of her living room, but her eyes are alive with fear.

On the television, muted, a photogenic SCIENTIST talks to the camera. He gestures behind him at a radio tower. An animation shows the tower producing radio waves and the figure of a human man. The man changes color as the radio waves penetrate him.

Back to the scientist, who holds up a tub of squirming rats.

The phone rings and Suzy jumps. She watches it ring on the table behind her. She doesn't get up.

It hits answerphone. Back on the television, the rats are dead.

SUZY (ANSWERPHONE)

Hi hi hi, you've reached the Camden family, such as it is. If you want to reach Liz, Jordan, or Suzy, that's me, please leave us a message and yes, we're perfectly happy with our television, thank you! Beep.

Footage of a confused rat. Before and afters of chemical levels. X-rays of different animals' brains with arrows pointing to specific aberrations, then one of a human with the same.

LIZ (ANSWERPHONE)

Hi mum, it's Liz at the airport. Going to be a little late cause the train was canceled. Alice said she'd pick me up. I know you weren't planning to make a big thing of it, but... sorry anyway.

(beat)

Never mind. See you soon. Love you. Bye.

Suzy turns back to the TV and switches it off. The scientist, a warning look on his face, fades away with the high-pitched squeal of the television.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Rain fights the progress of a blue sedan on an empty carriageway. Electricity pylons line the road. They drip and hum.

INT./EXT. ALICE'S CAR - DAY

Engine noise replaces electrical noise.

LIZ (16) gazes out the window. Next to her, ALICE (17), blonde and pretty, peers through the blur of her windshield wipers.

LIZ

They have those trees in Australia.

She nods at a eucalyptus on the road.

ALICE

Yeah?

LIZ

Justin sent pictures.

Alice spares a moment to glance at the tree, then at Liz.

LIZ (CONT'D)

He says they're poisonous.

ALICE

Couldn't he have sent a nice postcard instead?

Liz half-smiles. Alice does too, having got what she wanted.

EXT. NORWICH ROAD - DAY

The car cruises into Norwich city. They pass a radio transmitter on a hill; its lights pulse an uneven series of reds.

INT. TERRACE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The jangle of keys and laughter precedes Liz and Alice through the terrace door.

ALICE (O.S.)

I didn't tell him that!

LIZ (O.S.)

It was you! Who else at work knows about my boyfriend?

ALICE

What about when he called up the airport and started asking about you?

Liz groans as she hangs up a wet coat.

LIZ
Now I'll never get a raise.

Alice gasps.

ALICE
You weren't planning on... not with
John...

A cheeky grin later and they're in a heap on the foot of the terrace stairs, laughing. It winds down.

LIZ
I miss Justin, you know...?

Alice offers a sympathetic hand and pulls her up.

ALICE
Yeah, I know what you miss.

She winks.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Why don't you come with me
upstairs, to your bedroom, and I'll
show you?

Liz laughs unsteadily.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Come on, cutie. Don't be shy.

Alice, coy, pulls her by one hand up to second floor.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice takes Liz down the corridor to Liz's room and goes in.

As Liz goes through, the lights snap on. Her small family is there waiting for her among a pathetic show of balloons: there's Suzy, a stupid grin on her face, and her brother JEFF, 15 and sullen.

ALL
SURPRISE!

Liz is completely shocked. She blinks, and her face undergoes a series of transformations - from sentimentality to pride to anger. This she directs at Alice.

LIZ
You!

ALICE
What were you expecting? A peck on
the cheek?

SUZY
Happy birthday sweetheart!

Suzy rushes up to Liz and kisses and hugs her.

ALICE
Well there you go.

SUZY
I'm so proud of you. Sixteen years
and still so unspoiled.

LIZ
(sarcastic)
Thanks mum...

Alice looks amused.

SUZY
(archly)
Jeff...

Jeff, pulling a thread from the pink duvet, looks up at last. Nonchalantly, he goes to the cupboard and fetches two bags branded "PHONE ZONE."

LIZ
(uncomfortable)
I thought we weren't planning to
make a -

SUZY
I don't get to do this many more
times in my life. Go on, open it.

Liz takes one of the bags. With a reprimanding glance at her mother she takes it to the bed and unwraps the packaging. Inside is a cell phone made of smart plastic and a full keyboard.

ALICE
It has a thousand minutes a month,
unlimited texts, picture
messaging... and an international
add-on so you can call Justin
whenever you want. No more
postcards, yeah?

SUZY
We know you've been having a hard
time since he left.

She brushes Liz's face. Liz has a hard time meeting her eyes.

LIZ
You haven't had the easiest time
either. How much was it?

SUZY

A lot less than college would have been.

Alice takes the second bag and swoops in.

ALICE

It's from all of us.
(to Jeff)
Isn't it?

JEFF

(bored)
Yeah.

Alice pulls a second, identical phone out of the bag.

ALICE

And you're not the only one who gets something. Matching phones! Now you don't have to call me from the phones at work anymore.

Liz looks like she's about to cry, but a smile fights it off.

SUZY

Lizzy?

LIZ

Oh thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I can't believe it. It's the best gift ever. I love you all so much. I promise I'll call you every day.

Jeff looks amused as she hugs each one of them.

SUZY

You'd better, sweetheart!

ALICE

(ironic)
Happy birthday, Liz.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - LATER

Through the open door, the distant voices of Alice and Suzy gossip from the kitchen. Jeff has gone, and Liz is alone, her phone to her ear. On the windowsill, a pair of goldfish circle in a bowl.

She stares out the window at the moon, just above the crest of the next terrace. She listens to the tone as she waits for someone on the other end to pick up.

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 (sleepy)
 Hello?

LIZ
 Justin! It's Liz.

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 Lizzy? Wha? It's like five in the morning.

LIZ
 Only I just got this new phone which calls Australia whenever I want so we can talk even when I'm not online at Alice's. And it has like a million texts and you can send me pictures on it, but don't stop sending them in the mail because they're brilliant; I saw one of those poisonous trees you know with the grey leaves today and thought that Australia can't be that different if the trees are the same don't you think? Justin?

There is a brief pause on the other end of the line.

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 Ha ha. I've missed you too baby. Hey, it's late but... are you maybe going to be around later?

Liz smiles.

LIZ
 Yeah.

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 Good.

Alice comes in and, seeing Liz on the phone, stops in the doorway and watches.

LIZ
 Can you see the moon?

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 The moon?

LIZ
 Yeah, I'm just looking at it and thinking that you're so far away you might as well be up there with the dust and the rocks and the cheese.

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 Contrary to popular belief, it's
 good English cheddar, not
 camembert.

LIZ
 So what's an Australian cheese?

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 Quentin Bryce.

Liz laughs.

LIZ
 Who?

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 Their head of state.

LIZ
 I thought that was the Queen.

JUSTIN (PHONE)
 I think of her more as a veiny
 blue.

Liz laughs louder. Alice taps the doorframe. She mouths,
 "Time to go."

LIZ
 Oh, okay. I've got to go. I'll
 talk to you later, okay?

JUSTIN
 Okay.

She hangs up.

ALICE
 You two really love each other,
 don't you?

Liz ignores the statement and goes to one of her drawers.
 She pulls out some fish food and sprinkles it in the fish
 bowl.

ALICE (CONT'D)
 It's nice. You ready?

LIZ
 Yeah.

They head out together.

The goldfish swirl in their bowl. After a second, Liz
 reappears and puts her cell phone down on the table next to
 it. She plugs it in and rushes out again.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT

Hummm. Alice hunches over the steering wheel, trying to drive with the light on in the car. Liz pulls on a long white sock. Then shoves her feet into tennis shoes.

LIZ

Your mum gave you a car on your seventeenth.

ALICE

Aw, don't compare yourself like that.

LIZ

'Cause you're just so much better off.

Alice thinks she's being sarcastic and snickers.

ALICE

Yeah, right!

Alice realizes she's being genuine.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You being serious?

LIZ

You have so much. Your mum and dad must really love you.

ALICE

No. Love's about the only thing I don't get. And it's what matters.

LIZ

A car matters. Mum never even taught me how to drive.

Liz listens to the engine noise for a moment, breathes in the air freshener coming off the tree-shaped dispenser hanging over the dash.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Are you jealous of Justin?

Alice blinks.

ALICE

Uh.

LIZ

Back there, you asked if we really loved each other.

ALICE

I'm just looking out for you.

LIZ

It's just the way you said it makes me think... you don't want it to happen.

ALICE

Bollocks.

LIZ

(dubious)

Okay.

ALICE

It's just ... I dunno if a relationship like that is good for you.

LIZ

Like what?

ALICE

Long distance. Like internet dating.

LIZ

People do it all the time.

ALICE

Maybe this is an opportunity for you to find something better.

LIZ

Than Justin? Look, I know what they say about this sort of thing, but it's going to be the same as it always has. We've been together forever. You asked if I love him? I do. And he feels the same. I'm not going to let anything get in the way of that. Not you, not a million miles.

ALICE

Ten thousand. Miles. And I never did anything to get in the way of you and Justin... You were always pretty good at doing that yourself.

Liz can't think of a diplomatic response.

LIZ

What a bitchy thing to say.

Liz scowls at her reflection out the passenger side window. She sees Alice look over, irritated, then reach up and switch off the interior lights.

With her reflection gone, Liz can see the countryside and the blinking cell phone towers on the hill.

INT. BRIGHT TENNIS COURT - NIGHT

Alice swipes a tennis ball out of the air with a yell. Tennis shoes squeak on the glossy court surface as the other team, JANE and LAURA, rally. They're about the same age.

LIZ

All right, I got it!

The two teams contend vigorously for the point. Liz and Alice intrude widely into each others' half of the court and steal shots.

They almost run into each other and exchange a competitive glare.

Liz hits the last shot of the game close to the edge of the court. LAURA raises her hand.

LAURA

Out!

LIZ

(panting)

Get off!

LAURA

It was, yeah!

LIZ

Pathetic!

Alice catches Laura's eye as she starts to get angry and shakes her head. Laura bites her lip. She nods.

LAURA

All right... Your point I guess.

ALICE

Nice one.

LIZ

(smirking)

Cheers.

They set up for the next point. Alice throws the ball and gets it started with a smash.

INT. THE PROGRESS - NIGHT

The four of them share a booth in a velvety pub with dirty lacquered tables.

Liz pours some of Jane's rum (she's the oldest) from its bottle into her coke. She sips, then slumps back against Alice.

They all watch Laura on her phone, smiling and unconsciously straightening her hair.

LAURA

Yeah, yeah of course I can. I'll deal with my dad if you deal with your mum.

(listens)

Don't be stupid; you'll think of something.

(listens)

No, we're done now, mister jealous. Enjoying the fruits of Jane's recent ascension.

(listens)

Yeah, but Liz is only seventeen.

(listens)

Now I'm jealous.

(off phone)

Rich says happy birthday.

Liz nods, sips.

LIZ

Tell him to fuck off.

The others chuckle nervously.

LAURA

I hope you heard that, Rich. Priorities! Isn't that what your mum always says?

She hangs up and the rest let out a tired cheer. Alice pours some of Jane's rum into her lemonade and raises her glass.

ALICE

To priorities.

Liz glances apologetically at Alice and toasts. The others follow suit.

LIZ

To priorities.

LAURA

To priorities, haha!

JANE

Okay...

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Liz sheds tennis gear labeled with Alice's name as she makes for her dresser. She seizes the cell phone and climbs onto the bed. Dials.

It rings a few times and Justin picks up.

JUSTIN

Hey. I've been waiting. Thought you weren't going to call.

LIZ

I was playing tennis with the girls. Haven't had time for a shower so I'm all sweaty and could really use a bath.

JUSTIN

Yeah?

LIZ

And I'm still in my uniform, too. The purple and white one.

Justin pauses on the other side.

LIZ (CONT'D)

How about you?

JUSTIN

I've been down to the beach. You should see my tan.

LIZ

The beach, huh? Looking at all those girls must make you a little, you know. Frisky.

JUSTIN

... yeah..

LIZ

Are you now?

JUSTIN

yeah. I'm just... holding it.

Liz grins. She squeezes her chest with her free hand then runs it down under her skirt.

LIZ

Okay. What are you doing now?

JUSTIN

I'm kissing your mouth. Your neck. Your stomach. Your tits. I'm going to fuck you.

She sighs and grabs a pillow.

LIZ
Hold me down.

We linger perhaps a little long as they jack off over the phone.

END OF ACT 1.

EXT. RAIL STATION - DAY

A small-carriage train inches towards an exchange station. It coasts to an agonizing halt just before the footbridge.

EXT. RAIL PLATFORM - DAY

Liz waits on a bench in front of the tracks. She cranes her head to see her train beyond the footbridge over the tracks. It just sits there.

She groans and rummages around in her handbag, then produces her cell phone. She checks the time: Friday October 16, almost eight.

She watches an OLD LADY waiting nearby make her tortured way to a WARDEN, who shakes his head. He points to a rusted aerial sticking out over the tracks.

Liz checks her contacts on the phone. There are four of them: Alice, Laura, Jane, and Mum. She selects Alice and dials.

LIZ

Hey stupid. Sleeping off last night? Well, some of us have to be at work but can't because the train system is shite. Communications failure or something. Well, call me back. I'm bored. Cheerio, tally-ho, all-the-best, ta-ta .

She hangs up and watches the warden take off his coat and drape it over the old lady. Liz shivers.

Her phone leaps to life with the ringtone: "Love Long Distance" by The Gossip. She grins and flips it open: UNKNOWN CALLER.

She frowns. Cautiously, she answers.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Yeah?

There's a brief pause on the other end.

VOICE

Is this Elizabeth?

LIZ

Yes ... ?

VOICE

Thank God. Look, can we speak in private?

(MORE)

VOICE (CONT'D)

Will you be at the Canteen for
breakfast tomorrow? I have
something you might want to see.

LIZ

Um... sorry. I think you might
have the wrong number after all.

A panicked silence, then whoever it is hangs up immediately.

Liz looks at her phone to make sure, confused. She barely
glances up as her would-be train rolls by.

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY - DAY

In a line with several AIRLINE PASSENGERS, Liz rummages
through her bag for her cell phone and deposits it in a
plastic tub with a pair of reading glasses, some keys, and a
couple of rings.

She glares at the SECURITY GUARD behind the scanner, who
salutes her knowingly. She avoids eye contact with him.

The guard elbows his BUDDY and points at the scanner as she
goes through.

SECURITY GUARD

Look at this.

Liz goes red.

LIZ

Perv much?

But the guard and his buddy are still looking at the screen.
They halt the luggage conveyor and run it through again.

LIZ (CONT'D)

What is it?

The guard gets up and reaches into the bag scanner past the
sign "DANGER - X-RAYS. NO REACHING BEYOND THIS POINT." He
pulls out Liz's cell and holds it up for him and his buddy to
examine.

BUDDY

That's interesting.

SECURITY GUARD

Huh.

LIZ

I just got that for my birthday.

The guard pushes a few buttons. Liz looks irritated. Behind
her, passengers are starting to get impatient.

Finally, the guard shrugs.

SECURITY GUARD
Okay. Happy birthday.

He pushes a button and the conveyor starts moving again. He tosses the phone into Liz's tub as it passes.

INT. CALL CENTRE - DAY

Several rows of CALL OPERATORS talk into headsets and type into computers in this fluorescently lit room. Liz's is the only empty seat.

She makes her way toward it, trying to avoid the eyes of JOHN, her boss, who finally sees her and comes over. He straightens his blazer and puffs his chest.

JOHN
Miss Camden.

LIZ
Sorry I'm late. The trains were late and then stupid security -

JOHN
Ah, Liz, actually this is about your good work this week. Customer feedback was excellent and your sales speak for themselves. You should consider a career in communications.

He touches her shoulder, then heads back to his desk.

From the next seat over, her coworker BILLIE winks at her.

Flustered, Liz sits down at her station. She puts her things in a drawer, boots up the computer which beeps, and puts on her headset.

She takes a deep breath.

LIZ
Yes, hi. My name is Liz, with Anglia Airlines. Pardon me for calling so close to lunch, but you've been a frequent flyer with us and I thought you'd like to hear about our limited offer deals before someone else takes them.
(listens)
Okay, great. Let's talk about holidays. Have you ever been to Australia?

With row upon row of operators, the room roars with voices. All jumbled up, it becomes incoherent and mechanical.

INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - DAY

The sound of engine noise fades as Liz watches a flight depart from one of the terminal windows. She munches halfheartedly at a whitebread sandwich.

Not far away, the giant radar dish on the airport control tower circles around and around.

Her phone rings in her handbag, waking her up, and she jumps to answer it. She eagerly checks the caller ID: Alice Beecham. She's almost disappointed as she answers.

LIZ

Hey.

ALICE

You don't sound so good.

(Throughout the conversation, Alice's voice is garbled by interference.)

LIZ

Neither do you. Anyway, I've been on the phone all afternoon.

ALICE

And all night, I bet. How's our Justin?

Liz smiles at the name.

LIZ

Grateful.

ALICE

You're so good to him. And John?

Liz laughs.

LIZ

The same.

ALICE

Still have a job, then.

LIZ

Apparently I not only have a job, but a career.

ALICE

I don't want to know.

LIZ
Apparently I have a talent for
communication.

ALICE
You ought to be careful.

LIZ
What?

ALICE
I said, it's not really your fault.

LIZ
Oh. Ha. There's a lot of
interference on this side - from
the control tower, I think.

ALICE
Or maybe you're just sick.

LIZ
I'm not sick.

ALICE
I said, thick. And this proves it.

They laugh a little, Alice's giggles coming through as a distorted electronic approximation of human laughter. Liz looks at her phone to see if something might be wrong, but it seems okay.

LIZ
That's creepy.

ALICE
I know you're sleepy.

LIZ
No! I said -

ALICE
Just taking the piss - ha ha ha.

LIZ
Look, I need to get back to work.
Talk to you later, okay?

ALICE
You're a big dork? Okay.

Liz rolls her eyes and hangs up. She looks at the remains of her sandwich and tosses it halfheartedly into a nearby bin.

INT. TRAIN CABIN - DUSK

Liz looks out through the train window at ploughed fields full of birds pecking at recently upturned dirt. An invisible drizzle makes the colors rich and over saturated.

The fields sweep away as her train plummets into a tunnel. The engine noise changes character, and Liz rubs irritably at her ears.

The train shoots out of the tunnel again, and the fields are gone, replaced by a sprawling, middle-sized city. Peterborough. Smokestacks. A power plant, blinking.

They coast to a crawl in front of the platform at Peterborough station.

As they go come to a halt, Liz spies the old lady she saw waiting there this morning, still wearing the coat the conductor gave to her half a day ago. The doors hiss open, but she stays riveted to the spot, eyes staring straight ahead.

INT. TERRACE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Liz shuffles in with a plastic supermarket bag. She sets it down to rub her forehead with her hand, then leans back to close the door behind her.

She recovers, hangs up her coat, and spies a large book sitting on a table by the door: The DSM-IV. Liz sighs.

LIZ
(wearily)
Mum?

INT. MOODY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Suzy bites her nails at a rickety table in the corner of the room. She watches Jeff, across from her, with obsessive care. He ignores her with an iPod, and eerily taps his feet to its inaudible sound.

Fluorescent lights suck the color from everything, even Suzy's bright pink slippers.

Jeff's eyes flick up as Liz creeps in with the shopping.

LIZ
Mum? Hey Jeff.

He shows no signs of cognition.

SUZY
Sweetheart! How was work?

Liz shrugs. She eyes Suzy, who tears away a long fingernail.

LIZ
Hungry?

Suzy pulls the hand from her mouth.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Right, well, I'm making you
something anyway.

Liz retrieves a couple of ready meals and some biscuits from her shopping bag. She heads for the microwave.

SUZY
Just a minute!

LIZ
Mum, you're practically anorexic...

SUZY
Stay away from the microwave.

Liz stops. Suzy gestures for her to come back.

LIZ
(alarmed)
Why, is there a mouse back there or
something?

SUZY
I don't want you to get sick.

Liz blinks.

SUZY (CONT'D)
It generates radiation, you know?

LIZ
Mum, that's completely irrational.

SUZY
(sarcastic)
Irrational! You're afraid of *mice*.

LIZ
Mice have germs. Lots of people
use microwaves and no one gets
sick.

SUZY
No?

Suzy goes up to Liz and taps her daughter's forehead. Then she kisses it and leaves.

Liz looks down at the second ready-meal and sighs. She puts it in the fridge.

JEFF

She always has to have to last word, even when she has no idea what she's talking about.

Liz puts her dinner in the microwave and starts it up.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Seriously, why is our family so fucked up?

Liz's ringtone explodes from her handbag. She digs the mobile out.

LIZ

Thank God you called. My mum is freaking out and my brother opened his mouth. Can I stay over tonight?

ALICE

I'll trade you places.

LIZ

Ha ha. Come again?

ALICE

Glad you asked.

LIZ

What?

ALICE

Ding-dong.

INT. TERRANCE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Liz swings the door open to Alice, who stands in a puddle of drippings from her umbrella.

She shivers. Liz looks confused as she slinks in.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice, draped in Liz's coat, sits cross-legged on the floor, eating from Suzy's steaming ready-meal. Liz has her own on the bed.

LIZ

Hey, at least I got someone to eat with me.

Alice smiles halfheartedly.

ALICE

Cheers.

Liz stares at her, not wanting to ask directly. Alice sighs.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Mum and I had a fight. She thinks
it's time for me to move out, so
here I am.

Liz looks uncomfortable.

LIZ
Mums, eh?

ALICE
Mum's the word.

They don't quite get to a laugh, but the ice is broken.
Alice offers up her dinner.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I can see why she wouldn't eat
this.

Liz gasps.

LIZ
Rude!

Liz presents her own empty dish. Alice plops the leftovers
in.

ALICE
Can I stay here for a little while?

LIZ
Can't you sleep in your car?

Alice looks briefly alarmed, but catches Liz's too-serious
expression and laughs. Liz breaks into a grin.

ALICE
The car my mum gave me.

They laugh even harder.

LIZ
I'll get you a blankie in a sec.

She gets up and feeds her fish. Their mouths gape
desperately for the flakes of food.

ALICE
(half-serious)
You're so generous.

Liz catches the moon out the window, and her smile fades.

LIZ

Listen... I have to do some prep in the bathroom before bed. I'll be right back with those blankets, but don't wait up, okay?

Liz covertly picks up her cell phone from the dresser and disconnects it from the power.

ALICE

I'll just pee out the window, then.

LIZ

The neighbors like a show.

Liz winks and heads out. Alice's smile fades as she's left alone.

She takes one of the biscuits that Liz brought home from its package on the dresser. Munching, she watches the goldfish circle in their bowl.

Bored of the goldfish, she goes to the dresser and touches a photo of Justin and Liz at Glastonbury Festival. Idly or not, she opens some of Liz's drawers.

Besides the usual, she finds some boys' cricket clothes, a collection of gifts and jewelry from Justin, including the infamous photo of Justin and the eucalyptus (he's pretending to eat it), one of a lizard captioned "Lizzy the Lizard," tourist books on Australia and its history, and a small dildo.

She blinks at this last one and closes the drawer.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BATHROOM - NIGHT

A crack of moonlight under the door shows the lights aren't on. Still, we're privy to the sound of the toilet lid being put down and Liz's cell phone at her ear, ringing Justin in Australia.

It rings... and rings... and rings... and rings...

END OF ACT 2.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Liz lays awake in her bed, morning sun tickling her nose through the blinds. She reaches behind her and grabs her cell from the dresser.

The digital clock on the front sits on 6:59 for a second then flips to 7:00. An alarm breaks out on it, just long enough to punctuate the silence before she taps a button and it goes off again.

On the floor below, well-wrapped in blankets, Alice stirs, then goes still again.

Liz, fully awake, holds the cell to her lips and thinks.

EXT. NORWICH ROAD - DAY

Frost coats the edges of flint stones built into the wall of an old church. Liz walks past and the bell tower rings the half hour.

The sound frightens a cloud of birds which settle on a telephone wire. It makes a warping, whipping noise as it oscillates under their weight.

EXT. NORWICH MARKET - DAY

Stall TRADERS are just setting up, unloading heaps of autumn vegetables and fruit from the backs of their cars. A MANDOLINIST plucks from a corner with gangrenous fingers.

A trickle of PEDESTRIANS, TOURISTS, and Liz ignore him on their way past.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CANTEEN - DAY

Liz stands before the Canteen, an upscale cafe and breakfast bar with outdoor seating. The place is fairly busy with tie-and-suit BUSINESSMEN sitting in the sun, sipping hot coffees and shuffling important documents.

Liz looks around and feels out of place. Any one of these people could be her Unknown Caller.

She goes to the glass facade and cups her hand to peer through the glass, past her reflection. Inside, a wealthy CAREER-WOMAN talks on her cell.

She takes out her phone and looks at her four contacts. She sighs and puts it back in her pocket.

When she looks up, the image of the career woman has been obliterated in the window by the reflection of a WAITRESS in uniform. The waitress looks dubious.

WAITRESS

Excuse me miss, are you lost?

Liz takes offence, but stifles it.

LIZ

Actually, my name's Elizabeth, and I'm here to meet someone.

WAITRESS

Oh. Well, no one's mentioned it. Is it personal or corporate?

LIZ

It's personal.

WAITRESS

(condescending)
I'm sorry.

LIZ

Has anyone left anything for me, by chance? An envelope or a parcel?

The waitress looks her up and down.

WAITRESS

No.

The waitress walks back inside. Liz sneers.

She casually searches some of the empty tables, checking behind menus and under surfaces. She peers underneath an abandoned copy of the Telegraph.

One of the headlines catches her eye and she unfurls it:
"Cancer Scare Linked to High-Tech Industry."

She catches some of the businessmen looking at her, amused.

INT. INSIDE THE CANTEEN - LATER

The career-woman idly watches Liz walk away from the cafe - still talking into her phone.

CAREER WOMAN

Yes, I think we should take this seriously.

(listens)

I don't have proof but a certain level of precaution is status quo in situations like these

(listens)

Well, I was thinking about more than just a slap on the wrist

Yes ... yes, alright

(listens)

(MORE)

CAREER WOMAN (CONT'D)

You've got my new number?

(listens)

Good. Ask for Elizabeth.

She hangs up the phone and frowns. She glances back out the window, but Liz is gone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alice sits behind a chunky tube monitor, the Camden family computer. In the background, Suzy watches TV.

On Google, Alice types in "how to" and pauses to think. The search engine gives her a list of suggestions: *how to be more confident, how to be more assertive, how to get a job, how to get a girl to like you, how to lose weight...*

She scans through the options and looks depressed. She looks at her phone and picks Liz from one of her four contacts (Liz, Mum, Jane, and Laura).

She texts, "ou r u???" Sent.

On the TV, a handsome MAN and a LOVE-INTEREST argue over a syringe she's holding.

MAN (ON TV)

I'm dying, Alice...

Startled, Alice looks up. It's just the TV.

She turns back to her search and selects *how to get a girl to like you*. The Camdens are on dialup and it takes forever to load.

LOVE INTEREST (ON TV)

I won't let you do this. We never had a chance.

MAN (ON TV)

I'd rather die than never be able to kiss you, or touch you, or raise your children.

The love-interest stares him down.

LOVE INTEREST (ON TV)

So would I.

She raises the syringe. The man's eyes widen.

MAN

No!!

She plunges the syringe into her breast. The man gets there too late, cradling her in his arms.

LOVE INTEREST
Now you have no excuse.

Alice checks her phone. She's got her text back: *haha. I'm outside :P.*

Smiling, she gets up and leaves the room.

The man on the TV cries, his mouth hanging open. The woman reaches up and kisses his anguished lips.

INT. TERRANCE ENTRANCE - DAY

Alice swings the door open to Liz, who stands in a puddle of drippings from her wet hair.

They stare at each other for a moment, then collapse laughing.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Liz changes her clothes. Alice fiddles with her cell in one hand and Liz's in the other. She's messing around in the settings.

ALICE
How do you deny your number on
caller ID anyway?

LIZ
I think you have to work for the
government or something.

ALICE
Keep dreaming.

LIZ
Does this make me a spy?

ALICE
Does this make you a dork?

LIZ
Says the girl with the crap
ringtone.

ALICE
Stop trying to change the subject.
So has your spy called you more
than once?

LIZ
I think I scared him off.

ALICE
(sighing)
Like usual.

LIZ
Here, give me that.

Liz takes her phone from Alice and quickly texts something on it.

Alice's phone rings to the tune of "Good Girl Gone Bad" by Rihanna. The text reads, simply, *lame*.

Alice smirks.

The two girls' eyes snap to the door as Jeff passes, iPod earbuds embedded.

ALICE
Your brother is creepy. Think he's listening to us?

LIZ
He just wants attention.

ALICE
That's what's creepy.

LIZ
At least he has better taste in music.

ALICE
That doesn't make up for bad manners.

Alice covers her mouth. Liz smiles faintly.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

LIZ
Now that's creepy.

ALICE
I'm never going to get away from my mum am I?

Liz looks out the open door, a little depressed.

LIZ
Come on. Let's get out of here.

She picks up Alice's tennis bag and gives her an impatient look.

ALICE
What about my gear?

INT. BRIGHT TENNIS COURT - DAY

The four friends form teams for tennis, same as before. Laura bounces a ball. Alice wears some of Liz's old pajamas with Spongebob on the front.

LAURA

Don't expect any more free points now that your birthday is over.

LIZ

Ha ha. Whatever.

They get set. Alice twirls her racquet and shifts from foot to foot.

Laura serves the ball straight down the center line, acing both of them. Jane snickers.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jeff, earbuds in, slips into Liz's bedroom. He steals one of her biscuits from the package where it was left on the dresser. Lying next to them is her cell.

He picks it up and plays with it for a moment. He finds his way to the contacts: *Alice, Jane, Laura, Mum*. He ponders them for a moment, then presses a button.

Add Contact Name comes up. He fills in *Jeff*. Then *Add Contact Number* comes up. He sighs and cancels.

INT. BRIGHT TENNIS COURT - DAY

The tennis is in full swing. Laura and Liz hold the ball on their half of the court, Laura driving low and hard while Liz gets beaten back, returning long and high.

It takes a few brutal volleys, but Laura wins the hard point and grins, gasping air.

JANE

Thirty-forty. Break point!

ALICE

Liz...

Liz, wound up, reluctantly passes the ball to Alice. Jane stretches her swinging arm.

Alice serves, and the shot is returned wide. The ball's all over the place in this game, forcing them to move a lot to keep it under control. It's tiring.

Laura finally catches it wrong and it goes high and slow.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Liz! Take it down.

But Liz doesn't even move. The ball thuds into the court.

There's a brief ululation as Laura raises her arms and Jane cheers, but it's cut short when they notice Alice drop her racquet and rush over to Liz.

Liz holds her wrist to her face. When Alice comes close, she raises her head and blood trickles out.

LIZ

(muffled)

Alice..

INT. THE PROGRESS - DAY

Liz sits with the others in their pub, a bloody napkin and a glass of coke held against her face. Gingerly, she removes the napkin and peers at it.

Laura and Jane look terribly guilty.

ALICE

Bloody noses happen all the time.

JANE

Especially in the fall.

LAURA

It was a pretty intense match.

Jane nods.

ALICE

Don't worry.

LIZ

I'm not worried!

JANE

... want some whisky?

She offers Liz the bottle. Liz wrinkles her nose, which starts the blood flowing again. She reapplies the napkin.

Alice glares at Jane.

Laura's phone rings. She answers.

LAURA

Hey, what's up?

(listens)

Well for one, Liz has like a gash on her face.

(listens)

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)

No she's not a lesbian, asshole.

(listens)

We decided to seek medical attention at the pub.

(listens)

I can't be a drunk! I'm under age.

(listens)

Ha ha, that's not what I meant.

(listens)

Um, I think the age is sixteen in England?

(listens)

Guilt is so Generation X.

(listens)

Because I am brilliant. Goodbye!

Laura hangs up with a grin on her face. She notices the three of them looking at her testily.

LAURA (CONT'D)

No need to be jealous, girls.

LIZ

(too quickly)

I'm not jealous.

LAURA

... So Justin's doing all right, then?

LIZ

Really good. We talk every day.

Laura's phone rings again. She checks it and grins, then shuts it off. Jealous, Liz takes some whisky and pours it in her coke.

LAURA

Sorry, what was that?

LIZ

Nothing.

JANE

How's your gash?

LIZ

Dried up.

Liz snickers, then Alice giggles. Jane laughs. Laura rolls her eyes.

EXT. NORWICH ROAD - DAY

Alice's car cruises back into Norwich - past the place where the eucalyptus leans over the road. Her car swerves slightly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Suzy, wearing an unclasped Sainsbury's jacket, watches the bright square of her television. The lights are off. On the TV, muted:

News coverage of a car crash. Helicopter footage of the burning vehicle.

She flips the channel. A late-night advertiser is showing off a container of wonder-pills called LifeFORCE. Before and afters show customers transformed from putrescently obese to grotesquely overmuscled as if it were an improvement.

She flips the channel. A music video. A woman dances against a scrolling background from where, out of crevasses, corners, under beds, out of trash cans, men crawl like monsters. Just as quickly, they are swept away by the scrolling camera.

She flips. Kirk watches as Spock dies in the engine room during Star Trek II.

She flips. A cartoon depicts an urban man raping a robot sheep.

She flips. A bird walks around on a beach. It's a perfect, sunny scene until the bird catches the light and a prism of oil reflects in its feathers.

She hears the front door of the house open in the other room. It slams shut.

LIZ (O.S.)
Shhhhh... hehe.

Suzy's eyes follow their stumbling footsteps up to the second floor and then to the room directly above.

Relieved, she sighs and flips off the TV.

INT. MOODY BATHROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight makes the contours of the toilet, the sink, Liz's face and her arm as it grips the side of the bathtub - all silver. Through the shower curtain, her naked body moves in the bathwater amorphously.

She closes her eyes and grips the bathtub harder - until her knuckles are white.

INT. LIZ'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice lies fast asleep. She's graduated from the floor to Liz's bed.

On the dresser above her, bathed in the same moonlight, is Liz's cell phone.

It wakes and vibrates against the dresser once, twice. On the screen, caller ID reports:

UNKNOWN CALLER.

It vibrates a third time.

NEW VOICEMAIL RECEIVED.

Next to the cell phone is Liz's goldfish bowl. All the goldfish are floating on the surface.

Dead.

Title over:

THE LEMON

FADE TO BLACK.