

STRAWBERRY LOCAL

Written and Created by

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Episode 1

'Let's Start a Band'

INT. LUKE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Strip LED lights flash every colour of the rainbow. The bass from the speakers makes the crockery rattle in the cupboards. Shoes sticking to the linoleum.

Teenagers fill every corner of the room: talking, snogging, necking shots, stoners rolling joints on the glass stove-top.

JADE, 17, Black-British, indie-sleaze, is the life and soul of the party.

Jade's afro is gelled into space buns; her eyes are coated with thick-winged eyeliner that has smudged throughout the night.

Jade chugs beer from a RED SOLO CUP whilst her peers eagerly count down from ten. She finishes the drink with three counts to spare.

Liquid foam drips from the corners of her beaming smile.

The crowd erupts into cheers and chants of her name.

Jade locks eyes with LUKE, 18, a handsome golden boy; he shoots her a cheeky smile and walks over, placing his arm around her shoulder.

LUKE

You're on my team for beer pong.

JADE

I'm not that good.

LUKE

You can down the pints.

Luke winks and refills Jade's cup.

Jade opens her mouth to thank him, but Luke is dragged away into another conversation.

Jade feels the heat from her cheeks; the beer has gone straight to her head.

She stands still, people shuffle and dance around her, her eyes glued to Luke: his face, lips, arms - she's smitten.

Jade lets out a burp that isn't just a burp. She runs towards the kitchen door, covering her hand over her mouth.

EXT. LUKE'S HOUSE, GARDEN - NIGHT

Jade stumbles out just in time to vomit over the fence.

Two teenage boys share a passionate kiss in the shadows, the only light source being the fairy lights that twinkle around them.

ROSS, 17, shrinking violet with hair that falls in his eyes, pulls away, distracted by the sound of retching.

CIARAN, 18, rugby player, impatiently pulls Ross back in.

CIARAN
Just ignore it.

Someone wolf whistles. Ciaran immediately jolts away.

CIARAN (CONT'D)
What the fuck was that?

Ross caresses Ciaran's cheek. Ciaran pushes his hand away.

ROSS
No one can see us-

CIARAN
Get the fuck off me.

Ross takes a step back, tears welling in his eyes. Ciaran's expression softens.

CIARAN (CONT'D)
I didn't mean it like that-

LILY, 17, gorgeous yet down-to-earth, drunkenly sways out the kitchen door.

Lily removes her novelty-shaped 2016 sunglasses and searches for Ciaran in the dark.

LILY
Ciaran?

Ross pushes past Lily, slamming the door behind him.

LILY (CONT'D)
Ross? What's wrong?

Ciaran emerges from the shadows, lighting a cigarette.

LILY (CONT'D)
Y'alright?

Ciaran avoids eye contact.

CIARAN
I'm fine.

LILY
You don't look fine?

Lily places a hand on his shoulder. Ciaran shakes it off.

Lily sighs and takes a swig from her vodka bottle.

LILY (CONT'D)
This party sucks – music's shit.

She offers the bottle to Ciaran; he takes large gulps until Lily pulls it away.

LILY (CONT'D)
Slow down; it's not even midnight.

Ciaran doesn't respond; the uncomfortable silence lingers.

LILY (CONT'D)
Well, if you're gonna be like that,
I'll check on Ross.

Lily hears groans and notices Jade's body hunched over the fence, limp and swaying.

LILY (CONT'D)
Jade? D'ya need some water?

JADE
(croaky)
Water sounds nice.

LILY
Ciaran! Help me with Jade!

Ciaran flicks his cigarette and lifts Jade's limp body from the fence.

Jade perks up and drunkenly wipes her mouth with Lily's shoulder.

JADE
Beer tastes like shit.

Lily giggles and looks at Ciaran for a comment, but he remains silent as they walk back inside.

INT. LUKE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jade sways on the toilet seat while peeing. Lily washes the sick off her dress' shoulder.

Jade's best friend MIRA, 17, South East Asian, femme, tough as nails, vapes while perched on the bathtub's edge.

LILY

Am I alright to leave her with you?

MIRA

Yeah, I can take it from here.

Lily exits the bathroom. Mira lifts Jade's head up.

MIRA (CONT'D)

You're so embarrassing, man.

JADE

You should've seen his pupils, they were HUGE--

MIRA

That's the MD.

JADE

He looked at me like there was no one else in the room.

MIRA

He looks at every girl like that.

JADE

Can I have this moment, please?

MIRA

There's only so much of your delusion I can handle.

JADE

You're just jealous because Rhiannon hasn't spoken to you all night.

MIRA

I should've known better; her nails were a giveaway

Jade flushes the toilet and stands up, readjusting her dress.

MIRA (CONT'D)

Did you shave?

JADE

Yeah!

MIRA

You need help.

INT. LUKE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jade approaches RHIANNON, 18, amateur DJ, no-nonsense tomboy standing between speakers with a laptop, her long, black nails clicking on the keypad.

JADE

I have a request.

RHIANNON

None of your indie shite.

JADE

It's not indie shite; it's Blur.

Rhiannon dismisses Jade.

Jade locks eyes with Luke from across the room; he flashes a flirty smile.

Jade positions herself in front of Mira and grinds on her.

Mira enjoys the dance until she notices LUKE and his friends ogling. Mira pushes Jade off her, repulsed.

MIRA

Allow it man; I'm not your prop.

Mira storms off. Jade moves towards Luke, squeezing past sweaty drunk bodies.

Luke's best friend, HARRY, 17, Mockney, stands up on the sofa, cupping his hands around his mouth.

HARRY

ONE MINUTE LEFT!

The TV shows the countdown to midnight: 59, 58, 57, 56...

Jade gets stuck behind a couple snogging; she tries to push past but fails.

A drink lands on Jade's hair; the liquor drips down her face, and she gags at the stench of beer.

JADE

Luke! LUKE!

CHARLOTTE
 (mocking)
 Luke! LUKE!

Jade turns around to see CHARLOTTE, 18, athletic and popular, sneering at her.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
 Move, twat.

Charlotte elbows Jade to the side and struts up to Luke, wrapping her arms around his neck possessively.

Jade, now self-conscious, turns around and pushes her way to the kitchen.

INT. LUKE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jade sees BILLY, 17, fresh-faced, nerdy, sitting alone, playing a game on his phone.

Jade looks him up: he sports a juvenile haircut but is not unattractive.

Jade hoists herself on the counter beside Billy and opens a bottle of Prosecco left on the table. The cork POP startles him.

Jade takes a large fizzing gulp and inches closer to Billy, resting her hand on his thigh.

JADE
 (burps)
 Hey, Billy!

CROWD (O.S.)
 FIFTEEN, FOURTEEN, THIRTEEN...

Billy looks up from his game, his cheeks flush pink as he notices Jade's hand on his thigh.

BILLY
 Hey?

Jade batters her eyelashes at Billy, his eyes dart around for an exit, but he's stranded.

JADE
 (flirty)
 Are you having fun?

BILLY
 Yeah?

JADE
 (teasing)
 Can't be that fun if you're playing
 on your phone?

BILLY
 I should go--

JADE
 You won't make it in time; why
 don't we skip to the good bit?

CROWD (O.S.)
 FIVE, FOUR, THREE...

Jade closes her eyes and leans in for the kiss.

Billy leans away and falls off the countertop with a LOUD
 THUD.

Jade opens her eyes to see Billy scampering away to the
 living room; she's mortified.

CROWD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Jade watches all the couples kissing through the doorframe to
 the living room.

Charlotte pulls Luke in for a sloppy, tongue kiss.

Lily wraps her arms around Ciaran. Ciaran quickly kisses Lily
 and pulls away first, wiping his lips when she isn't looking.

Ross sits in the middle of the sofa, necking his beer. The
 drunk couple next to him eat each other's faces.

Ross catches Jade's eye and pretends to shoot himself in the
 head, rolling his eyes back; Jade smiles.

Mira knocks on the kitchen window from the garden, waving a
 joint in her hand. She fogs up the glass and uses her finger
 to write 'HNY!' inside a heart.

INT. SCHOOL MUSIC SUITE - DAY

JANUARY.

Jade sings quietly as she plays around with chords, trying to
 configure a melody.

Her half-eaten lunch sits on the piano beside an untouched
 French A Level textbook.

(Text in italics is sung)

JADE

*I don't want to change,
but I'm already changing,
You may know my roots,
but have you seen my growth?
I'm growing tired
of all the over-explaining,
Stop picking my flowers and
just let me bloom...*

Jade's alarm interrupts her. She sighs and shuts the piano.

INT. EXAM HALL - DAY

Jade stares blankly at the multiple-choice test paper.

The words blur and move around the page (the perspective of her dyslexia)

Jade looks over at her best friend MIRA (17, South East Asian, boyish haircut, face full of piercings), doodling on her hands, her test paper face down.

A TEACHER taps his pen on Jade's desk, telling her to focus. The clock's ticking grows louder.

The BELL rings. The exam is finished.

Jade panics and mindlessly ticks the boxes in patterns of A, B, C, and D. A teacher collects her test paper.

Jade groans and slumps her head on the desk.

EXT. SCHOOL GATES - DAY

Jade waits for Mira while she retrieves her calculator from KATIE, 18, tomboy-femme.

Mira strolls back, beaming.

JADE

You should ask her out.

MIRA

LOL. She's straight.

JADE

She has a Venus tattoo.

MIRA

She's a feminist.

They walk out the gate, arms linked. A few boys ogle at them and wolf whistle. Jade laughs whilst Mira flips them out.

MIRA (CONT'D)

You have no idea how exhausting it is being the only dyke at this school.

JADE

You're the only dyke that we know.

MIRA

You can't use that word.

JADE

I fancy girls, just not you.

Mira playfully shoves Jade off the pavement.

MIRA

New episode of Teen Wolf tonight!

JADE

I can't. I need to revise.

MIRA

Don't be boring.

JADE

I'm not "gifted" like you.

MIRA

I'm not gifted, just autistic.

JADE

Tomato, Tomato.

MIRA

Well, you know where I live.

JADE

No spoilers or I'm blocking you.

Mira and Jade hug before Mira runs off to catch a bus.

Jade puts on her headphones to drown out the world.

MUSIC: Lisbon - Wolf Alice

The music plays for about ten seconds before a hand grabs her shoulder, startling her.

Jade shrieks. She's surprised to see Luke.

LUKE
Hey, are you coming to the pub?
We're heading there now.

JADE
I'm not 18 yet.

LUKE
Have you not got a fake ID?

JADE
I'm not sure if you've noticed, but
not many girls here look like me.

Harry aggressively rings his bike's bell.

HARRY (O.S.)
HURRY UP MATE, STOP CHIRPSING.

LUKE
Just come. They never check.

Jade pauses, apprehensive, but she can't resist Luke's charm.

JADE
Fuck it, let's go!

INT. PUB - DAY

Jade sips her drink wedged between Luke, Harry and their friends in an old, rundown pub.

In the lulls of silence, Jade feels the stares, mostly from older white men, some in disgust, some in lust.

LUKE
How did your exam go?

JADE
Don't ask.

HARRY
I definitely failed.

JADE
I didn't know you needed A-levels
to get paralysed playing rugby.

Harry scoffs. Luke puts his arm around Jade.

LUKE
He'd have to make the team first.

HARRY

Third time's a charm.

Jade giggles, she notices Luke's arm and tries not to react.

Charlotte makes a large entrance into the pub.

Jade's giddy smile fades, and she averts her gaze.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks for the invite, lads.

Charlotte squeezes herself next to Harry on the table.

Luke's fingers brush Jade's shoulder. Charlotte scowls at Jade.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

What answer did you guys pick for question 44?

HARRY

Uh...your mum?

The table erupts with laughter. Charlotte rolls her eyes.

The BARTENDER approaches the table with a tray of shots.

BARTENDER

I've got an order for six
Jägerbombs, but I need to check all
your IDs quickly.

Mumbles and groans surround the table.

Jade tries to relax her trembling hands as the bartender walks around the table. Luke looks sympathetically at her and mouths 'I'm sorry.'

The bartender reaches Jade, but she stalls by rummaging in her bag. The bartender stands above her, arms crossed, impatient.

Jade eventually pulls out her GREEN PROVISIONAL LICENSE and hands it over without eye contact.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

You need to leave now.

Jade swallows the lump in her throat.

CHARLOTTE

Aw, bless you, Jade.

HARRY

PEAK!

LUKE

Shut up, Harry.

Jade awkwardly shuffles around the table with her head down.

Charlotte winks at her as she sits between Luke and Harry.
Jade leaves without saying bye.

As she heads towards the door, Jade feels a hand slap her bum from behind.

She spins around and sees an OLD WHITE MAN staring down at her with a creepy, toothless smile.

OLD WHITE MAN

I've always had a thing for black girls.

Jade impulsively knocks his pint onto his lap before running outside.

INT. MIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mira's bedroom is large, minimalist and tidy. Her walls are bare, and everything on her desk has its place.

Jade and Mira lay together on opposite ends of her bed with an episode of RuPaul's Drag Race playing faintly in the background, textbooks and revision notes strewn across the floor.

A notification appears on the screen: WOLF ALICE SECRET SHOW, ONE NIGHT ONLY IN LONDON. Jade clicks on the notification.

JADE

Wolf Alice presents a secret show
for one night only.
Tickets are on sale Sunday on a
first-come, first-served basis.

Jade shrieks in glee and turns her laptop to Mira.

JADE (CONT'D)

Come see Wolf Alice with me?

MIRA

I can't do mosh pits; they give me
mad anxiety.

JADE

Please?

MIRA
Why don't you ask Luke?

JADE
I'd rather die than get rejected.

MIRA
It'll be good to get it over with.

JADE
You're not supposed to agree that
I'll get rejected.

INT. JADE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jade sits next to her Dad, MICHAEL, 50s, tired and grey, on the sofa. He's fixated on the 10 pm news.

MICHAEL
Shouldn't you be in bed?

JADE
I need to ask you something.

MICHAEL
As long it's not money.

JADE
But Dad--

MICHAEL
We're making cutbacks since your
mum isn't working.

JADE
Why isn't she working?

MICHAEL
Why don't you ask her that?

INT. JADE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jade follows Michael into the kitchen, ardent to get his attention.

JADE
I'll wash the car, tidy the garden;
I'll do whatever you want.

Michael boils the kettle and opens the bread bin to make a sandwich.

JADE (CONT'D)

Dad, please, it's ONE gig.

MICHAEL

On a school night, no chance.

JADE

It's on Sunday, which is technically still the weekend.

MICHAEL

Technically, you need to focus on your schoolwork to get into a good university.

Jade sighs at the mention of university.

JADE

Didn't you have a favourite band when you were my age?

MICHAEL

Playing on my nostalgia isn't going to work.

JADE

Please, please, please, please.

Jade blocks Michael from opening the fridge; she won't move until he gives in.

MICHAEL

No. End of discussion.

JADE

You suck.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jade walks into the living room to find her Mum, LEEANE, 50s, depressed, unkempt, alcoholic, still fast asleep on the sofa from the night before, cradling the TV remote with the TV playing tele-ads.

JADE

Mum, have you seen my Docs?

Jade retrieves the remote and turns off the TV.

Jade opens her mother's purse and steals a £20 note.

She cleans up the empty wine glass and bottles, places a blanket on Leeane's sleeping body, and kisses her temple before she leaves.

EXT. BANQUET RECORDS, KINGSTON - DAY

Jade joins the back of a long queue for Wolf Alice tickets.

Time-lapse sequence of Jade moving from the back of the queue to the front.

Jade gives the vendor a twenty-pound note; the people queued behind her curse and groan.

VENDOR
Tickets are sold out.

INT. UPPER DECK, BUS - DAY

MUSIC: Freazy - Wolf Alice

Jade sits at the front of the bus, headphones on, gleefully bopping her head to her music.

A hand grabs a chunk of her afro and yanks it.

Jade removes her headphones and turns around to see a group of SKATER BOYS snickering at her, the perpetrator looking sheepish.

JADE
What are you doing?

SHEEPISH SKATER BOY
It was a dare, sorry.

JADE
(imitating)
It was a dare, sorry.
(angry)
You're pathetic, grow up!

The skater boys howl at Jade's anger; passengers on the bus tut and stare at Jade.

SKATER BOY 2
Yeah, shut up, you monkey-looking bitch.

The skater boys erupt with laughter.

Jade looks around for help. No one intervenes.

Humiliated, Jade stands up and walks downstairs.

INT. BOTTOM DECK, BUS - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Jade knocks hard on the BUS DRIVER's window for his attention.

JADE
Excuse me, those boys with
skateboards upstairs harassed me.

BUS DRIVER
How?

JADE
They pulled my hair and called me a
slur.

Bus Driver doesn't respond.

JADE (CONT'D)
You can check the CCTV; I have
witnesses.

BUS DRIVER
Like what?

JADE
Can you kick them off the bus?

BUS DRIVER
Report it online and move seats.

JADE
Can you do something?
I'm reporting a crime.

Bus Driver scoffs at Jade on the word 'crime'.

BUS DRIVER
They're just lads having a laugh.

JADE
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Bus Driver taps the window glass, pointing to a small, red sign that reads, 'DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON OUR STAFF.'

Bus Driver swerves into a BUS LANE and opens the front door.

BUS DRIVER
If you've got a problem, take it up
with the police.

The bus passengers start to whisper and moan whilst cars behind honk for the bus to move through the GREEN LIGHT.

Jade reluctantly gets off the bus. As the doors close, she flips her MIDDLE FINGERS to the Bus Driver and starts walking home.

INT. JADE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jade sits at her desk in front of a mirror, straightening her afro, the straighteners CRACK and SIZZLE on each strand, filling her bedroom with smoke.

An abrupt knock startles her, causing her to burn her fingertips.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Dinner's ready.

JADE
Coming.

INT. JADE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jade sits across from her Dad at the dinner table.

There's a third-place mat on the table with an empty plate.

They sit in silence other than knives and forks scraping across plates and the TV playing sports in the background.

Under the table, Jade checks the time on her phone:

T-minus 90 minutes until the Wolf Alice concert starts.

MICHAEL
How's the chicken?

JADE
Tastes fine.

MICHAEL
Just fine?

JADE
Yeah.

MICHAEL
How did your mock exam go?

JADE
Fine.

MICHAEL

Do you know other words than fine?

JADE

Nope.

Jade finishes her food, picks up her plate and exits.

INT. JADE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jade barricades her bedroom door with her desk whilst on Facetime with Mira.

MIRA (O.S.)

Are you sure this is a good idea?

JADE

If I get into trouble, I might as well have fun with it.
Ring my house phone in 5 minutes and say you're from British Gas; I sent you a link with a script.

MIRA (O.S.)

Won't they recognise my voice?

JADE

Put on an accent. Keep him on the phone until I text.

MIRA (O.S.)

You owe me big time.

JADE

Only if you're successful.

MIRA (O.S.)

Stay safe, G.

Jade hangs up and opens her bedroom window as wide as possible before turning off the lights and lifting one leg over the window frame.

INT. JADE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michael is dozing off in front of a film when the house phone rings, startling him.

He sighs and answers the phone, agitated.

MICHAEL

Hello? Who is this?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION:

INT. MIRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mira gets into character.

MIRA

(Indian accent)

Hello there, my name is Manpreet. I am calling from British Gas to discuss the changes being made to your account.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

I haven't requested any changes to our account.

Mira reads off the transcript Jade sent.

MIRA

Here at British Gas, we thank you for your loyalty and commitment by offering you a unique, limited discount for your monthly payment plan. Is this of any interest to you, sir?

MICHAEL

Sure, go ahead.

INT. JADE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jade's shoes dangle from above the living room window.

Michael paces around with the phone to his ear, unaware.

EXT. JADE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jade jumps down from her window ledge, falling on her bum. She looks at her grazed hands with little regard before gently opening and closing her front gate and running off.

EXT. NEW SLANG, KINGSTON - NIGHT

Jade runs towards the door and hands the SECURITY GUARD her ticket; he stamps her wrist and lets her in.

INT. NEW SLANG, KINGSTON - NIGHT

Lights go down as Jade swims through the crowd, searching for the perfect view of the stage in the centre.

The smoke machine creates a lavender haze. The music starts as the band members take the stage. The stage lights twinkle in Jade's eyes.

The crowd is predominantly full of white teenagers; Jade seems to be one POC, but that doesn't stop her from joining in on the cheering and chanting 'WOLF ALICE'.

A mosh pit opens as the opening chords of Moaning Lisa Smile are played; Jade, elated and exhilarated, prepares herself to join in.

Jade gets shoved side to side, surrounded by sweaty, shirtless indie boys with long floppy hair and girls in leather jackets, but she's enjoying herself.

The song slows as the band sings the first verse, but the shoving and pushing continue in the mosh pit.

Jade hears a scream and sees a waving hand outstretched on the floor; she immediately grabs it and instructs the people around her to stop pushing and help her.

Jade lifts the girl from the floor, and her panic dissolves.

JADE

You okay?

DANI, 17, meek, pretty, hugs Jade tightly.

DANI

Thank you so much!

Jade hugs her back; they smile at each other before they resume moshing.

DANI (CONT'D)

I'm Dani.

JADE

I'm Jade.

EXT. NEW SLANG, KINGSTON - NIGHT

Jade and Dani walk out, arms interlinked like they've been friends for years. The crowd around them sings 'Bros' by Wolf Alice.

INT. KEBAB SHOP - NIGHT

Jade and Dani sit across each other in a busy kebab shop, shovelling chicken nuggets in their mouths.

Their blossoming friendship is already at the stage where they are comfortable enough to pinch chips from each other.

DANI

You should see them at Reading Festival!

JADE

I'm down!

DANI

What sort of songs do you write?

JADE

Sad indie ballads.

DANI

The best kind.

JADE

They'd sound a lot cooler with guitar riffs.

DANI

I play guitar!

JADE

Do you sing too?

DANI

I sound like a cat in a blender.

JADE

Do you perform?

DANI

Only in my bedroom. I get nervous in front of crowds.

JADE

I could help with that.

DANI

How?

JADE

We should start a band!

Dani's eyes widen with intrigue.

JADE (CONT'D)

I want to make music; you need someone to help with your stage fright, we're the perfect match.

DANI

True, but all the best bands have four members.

JADE

Do you know anyone?

DANI

I know a bassist, but he'll need some convincing.

JADE

Leave it to me.

DANI

Cool! I'll introduce you tomorrow.

JADE

As long as my Dad doesn't kill me for sneaking out.

DANI

You snuck out?

JADE

I had to. I couldn't miss this.

DANI

That's rock and roll.

INT. JADE'S HOUSE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

With her back turned Jade gently closes the front door.

She turns around and is startled to see her mum, PAM, 50s, in her dressing gown, sitting on the staircase, nursing a glass of wine.

PAM

You're lucky your Dad's asleep.

JADE

Mum, I'm sorry, I-

PAM

Just go to bed.

Jade opens her mouth to retort but closes it.

She heads upstairs, reaches the fourth step and turns around to hug her mum.

EXT. ROSS' HOUSE - DAY

Dani rings the doorbell and is surprised to be greeted by Lily, wrapped in a towel, fresh out of the shower.

Dani is flustered to see her like this.

Lily looks like she's seen a ghost.

LILY

Dani! Oh my god! Hi!

Lily pulls Dani in for a tight, damp hug. Dani blushes.

LILY (CONT'D)

How are you holding up?

DANI

Fine. Surviving. You?

Lily furrows her eyebrows.

LILY

I'm so sorry I haven't called since the funeral; I've just been so busy, and I--

Dani tenses at the word 'funeral'.

DANI

Is Ross home?

LILY

Yeah. He's in his room.

Dani gestures to be let inside.

LILY (CONT'D)

Sorry, yes, come in!

INT. ROSS' BEDROOM - DAY

MUSIC: Sockets - Soft Play

Ross's bedroom is devoid of colour but neater than the average teenage boy's. His walls covered in band posters of The Strokes, Joy Division and The Smiths.

Ross sits at his desk, eyes glued to the monitor as he plays video games, his tongue stuck out for concentration.

Dani creeps up behind him and startles him by shaking his shoulders.

ROSS
What are you doing here?

DANI
(sarcastic)
Good to see you, too, Ross.
I'm great, thanks for asking.

Ross removes his headset and stands up to hug Dani.

DANI (CONT'D)
I've missed you.

ROSS
Sorry I haven't called. I wasn't
sure what to say to you--

DANI
Stop. Lily has already attempted to
console me; I'm good.

Ross looks at Dani sympathetically; he can see the hurt in her eyes that she's trying to hide.

DANI (CONT'D)
Enough of the sad eyes, you prick.

ROSS
Okay. What's up?

DANI
Why'd you ditch me last night?

ROSS
I'm avoiding being around people.

DANI
When did I become 'people'?

ROSS
He was there.

DANI

A venue that fits 500 people, and you're worried about bumping into ONE person? That's melodramatic, even for you, mate.

ROSS

I said I'd pay you back.

DANI

I have a better way for you to make it up to me.
I want you to meet someone.

ROSS

It's not a blind date, is it?

DANI

I have more important things to do than puppeteer your sex life.

INT. HMV STORE - DAY

Jade sifts through vinyl as Dani and Ross approach.

Jade looks up, pleasantly surprised; Ross looks nervous.

	JADE		ROSS
Ross?		Jade?	

DANI

Do you know each other?

	ROSS	JADE
Kind of.		I'm friends with Lily.

ROSS (CONT'D)

(scoffs)
You sit at the same lunch table.

JADE

Didn't I see you at Luke's party?

ROSS

That wasn't me.

JADE

(unconvinced)
Sure.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jade and Dani sit across Ross as if they're interviewing him, their eagerness palpable.

Ross fidgets with his black coffee cup, looking perplexed.

JADE
We have a proposition for you.

ROSS
Are you forming a cult?

DANI
We're starting a band.

JADE
we want you to be our bassist.

Ross bursts into nervous laughter.

Jade and Dani remain composed.

ROSS
You're joking?

JADE
Dani says you're good, but I'll believe it when I see it.

ROSS
It's not 2006, no one starts bands anymore.

DANI
(to JADE)
I told you it'd take some convincing.

JADE
You like Wolf Alice?

ROSS
Yeah?

JADE
Can you play bass?

ROSS
I'm not that good--

DANI
Join the band!

ROSS
I-I can't.

JADE
Why not?

ROSS
I- we have exams?

DANI
BOOOO! Answer rejected.

ROSS
Seriously. I need to study.

JADE
We're not asking you to go on tour
with the Red Hot Chilli Peppers;
it's just playing music for fun.

DANI
You do remember that.
Having fun?

ROSS
(dry)
Ha Ha.

JADE
Do ONE session with us; if you hate
it, we'll find someone else.

DANI
Don't act like you don't need an
excuse to leave the house.

Ross kisses his teeth.

ROSS
(sighs)
One session.

Jade and Dani cheer! Success!

JADE
Now we need a drummer!

Ross' eyes light, a grin spreads across his face.

ROSS
I may know a guy.

Who?

DANI

Who?

JADE

EXT. O2 ISLINGTON ACADEMY - NIGHT

Jade, Dani and Ross shiver in their jeans and jackets whilst queueing to be let into the venue.

DANI
What's the band called?

ROSS
'White Knuckles'.

DANI
How edgy.

Jade notices that most of the fans queueing are teenage girls of a similar age, with handmade signs, one reading, 'SAVE A DRUMKIT, BANG ME INSTEAD'.

JADE
How long have they been playing together?

ROSS
Two years.

JADE
Are they good?

ROSS
They have a lot of fans.

JADE
Are you sure this guy wants to leave a band that is headlining gigs?

ROSS
Trust me, watch, they won't last.

INT. O2 ISLINGTON ACADEMY - NIGHT

The lights go down as WHITE KNUCKLES, a four-piece rock band of white teenage boys with floppy blonde/ brown hair, leather jackets, and ripped black skinny jeans, takes the stage.

Jade's eyes light up when she catches her first glimpse of the drummer. NOAH, 18, an androgynous, manic pixie dream boy indie rocker with piercing green eyes and a nose ring.

DOM, 18, short, attractive, arrogant lead singer, struts on stage last, gesturing the crowd to cheer louder; the teenage girls shriek in what must be excitement but sounds like agony.

DOM
 We're White Knuckles; this song is
 called Into The Woods.

White Knuckles play their first song, a loud, fast rock song that sounds like a rip-off of A-Punk by Vampire Weekend.

Jade and Dani immediately get shoved by fans trying to reach the front of the stage. They exchange a sceptical look with Ross.

EXT. O2 ISLINGTON ACADEMY - NIGHT

Dani, Jade and Ross stand outside the stage door amongst several female fans, waiting for the members of White Knuckles to come out.

JADE
 Is this gonna work?

ROSS
 Have some faith.

DANI
 Ironic coming from you.

ROSS
 I've known Noah for ages.

One by one, the band members come out; the girls squeal and circle DOM, waving their phones and posters for him to sign.

Noah comes out last; he lights a cigarette and leans against the wall in the shadows.

ROSS (CONT'D)
 Oi, Noah!

Noah's face softens upon seeing Ross.

He strides over, sweat beading across his forehead, his muscular arms exposed in a fitted white Ramones tank top.

Jade is transfixed by his muscles; she reapplies her lipgloss. Dani looks bored and unfazed.

NOAH
 Alright, mate!

Noah hugs Ross.

NOAH (CONT'D)

What are you doing in this
shithole?

ROSS

We came to show our support; these
are my mates Dani and Jade.

DANI

Great show, man.

NOAH

It was a bit shit.

DANI

What was wrong with it?

NOAH

Dom's pissing me off. He thinks
he's fucking Bono. He had a go at
me backstage, saying my jeans
weren't skinny enough or the right
shade of black, as if anyone gives
a shit; no one can see me behind
the fucking drum kit.

JADE

He's probably jealous.
Everyone fancies the drummer.

NOAH

I like you. I'm Noah.

JADE

Jade.

Noah winks at Jade and offers her a cigarette; she accepts,
letting him light it.

NOAH

How'd you all know each other?

DANI

We're starting a band.

NOAH

Sick. What kind of music?

JADE

We wanna be the next Wolf Alice.

DANI

But we need a drummer.

NOAH
So you've come to poach me?

JADE
Well, are you interested?

Noah cracks his knuckles and stretches his arms.

NOAH
I'm pretty busy nowadays.

JADE
It must be hard carrying the weight
of being the most talented member
of your band.

NOAH
I see Ross has told you that
flattery will get you everywhere.

ROSS
I said you're ego-centric.

NOAH
I could do the odd gig, but I can't
commit to two bands.

JADE
Why waste time being a part of
something that doesn't make you
happy when you could be part of
something revolutionary?

Noah's eyes light up, he smirks at Jade.

NOAH
You're that good?

JADE
We're better.

ROSS
We haven't practised yet--

JADE
I guarantee you, we are better than
that.

Jade gestures at Dom, flaunting his muscles for the giddy
fangirls. Noah cringes.

NOAH
Without a doubt.

DANI

And we won't force you to wear
skinny jeans.

Noah scratches his head; he looks conflicted.

JADE

Have we piqued your interest?

NOAH

Fuck it, why not.

Jade beams. Noah turns toward Dom.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Oi, Dom.

DOM

What?

NOAH

Fuck your skinny jeans. I quit.

DOM

Hilarious, mate.

NOAH

I'm not joking.

Dom squares up to Noah. He sneers at Ross, Dani, and Jade.

DOM

Don't come crawling back when you
get bored.

Noah takes one last drag of his cigarette and blows the smoke
in Dom's face with a smile.

NOAH

I wouldn't dream of it.

The colour drains from Dom's face. Noah flicks his cigarette
and walks away, Jade, Dani and Ross following him.

INT. TUBE - NIGHT

Dani and Ross sit opposite Jade and Noah on a primarily empty
carriage.

Noah has his arm over Jade's shoulder. Jade rests her leg on Noah's knee; they'd look like a long-term couple to a stranger.

Jade mindlessly fidgets with the buttons on her skirt, struggling to maintain eye contact with Noah. Noah looks at Jade with intrigue, hanging on to her every word.

JADE

I've always been writing and singing since I was a kid.

NOAH

I can't wait to hear your voice.

Ross sits with his earbuds, ambivalent to the flirting as he's used to people falling for Noah.

Dani bites her nails as she eavesdrops on Noah and Jade's conversation, uncomfortable with the flirtatious dynamic.

JADE

How long have you played the drums?

NOAH

Since I was eleven, my psychiatrist told my parents it would be a good place to channel my anger.

JADE

You had a psychiatrist when you were eleven?

NOAH

I had anger issues as a kid.

JADE

(teasing)

Did you punch holes in walls?

NOAH

I threw a knife at my Dad. The blade just missed his eye by a few inches...he has a scar just above his eyebrow from it.

Jade's face falls.

JADE

Oh. Shit.

NOAH

It was either see a psychiatrist or send me to boarding school. I'm glad they chose the psychiatrist.

JADE

I'm sorry, that was too personal.

NOAH

I don't mind talking about it. We've all got issues; that's why we're musicians; we're all a bit fucked in the head.

JADE

(playful)

Or maybe it's just you.

NOAH

Or maybe it's just me.

JADE

It's cool how open you are.

NOAH

I imagine you've dealt with some shit in your lifetime.

Jade flexes her arms next to Noah's, comparing her dark skin with his light-coloured arms.

JADE

(sarcastic)

What gave you that idea?

(pause)

I guess being the only black girl at my college does have its challenges, but I try not to think about it too much.

NOAH

Why?

JADE

Because I'm not special just because I'm black.

NOAH

You have that thing where you walk into a room, and everyone wants to know you...that's special.

JADE

Are you flirting with me?

NOAH
Is it working?

The tube grinds to a halt; the doors slide open.

NOAH (CONT'D)
We're getting off here!

Noah pulls Jade up from her seat, and they run off the tube; Dani nudges Ross, they jolt up and follow behind.

EXT. STRAWBERRY LOCAL CORNER SHOP - NIGHT

They approach an off-license tucked away on a busy road. The shop's flashing NEON red and green sign reads 'STRAWBERRY LOCAL'.

Noah waves his arm to the shop sign, signalling they have arrived.

The shop's modern storefront sign contrasts its outdated interior of carpeted floor, wooden shelves and pale yellow, flickering lights.

Customers as young as fourteen come in and out of the shop with bottles rattling in black bags, some as young as fourteen.

NOAH
Ta-da! We're here!

JADE
This is "your spot"?

Jade raises her eyebrows at Dani and Ross; they both look underwhelmed.

ROSS
I thought we were going to a pub.

NOAH
It's not just any off-license; it's an off-license that doesn't ID.

Jade's eyes light up.

DANI
Swear down?

NOAH
I've been coming here since Year 11. It's practically a landmark.

Ross, Dani and Jade look hesitant and stand awkwardly by the front door, too fearful to be the first to enter.

NOAH (CONT'D)
Try it, trust me!

DANI
Fuck it.

Dani braves it first and strolls in. Within five minutes of being inside, she returns with a huge grin and a black bag of bottles CLINKING.

DANI (CONT'D)
This is the best day of my life.

ROSS
My turn!

Ross goes in next, comes out with a black bag of beer cans, and fist-bumps Noah.

ROSS (CONT'D)
Legend.

NOAH
See, success!

INT. STRAWBERRY LOCAL CORNER SHOP - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Jade walks past the magazine aisle and notices Wolf Alice on the cover of NME magazine; she picks it up and holds it proudly, sneaking the magazine in her inner coat pocket.

She scans the alcohol aisles; overwhelmed by choice, she picks up a 35CL bottle of Russian Vodka.

Noah puts a six-pack of Strongbow ciders on the counter with a pack of gum and a lip balm.

NOAH
That's all, mate--

Jade places the vodka on the counter.

JADE
Can I get a pack of Sterling Dual?

The CASHIER scans Jade's face, apprehensive. Jade stands tall, licking her lips and sticking her chest out with doe eyes.

CASHIER
Are you eighteen?

JADE
(lowers pitch)
Yeah.

The Cashier gives her a quizzical look but still retrieves the cigarettes from the locked drawer.

EXT. PARK BENCH - NIGHT

Dani and Jade swing on the swings, drunk and giggling.

Noah and Ross sit on a nearby bench, swigging their drinks.

NOAH
I like your friends, they're cool.

ROSS
Yeah, they're decent.

NOAH
I wasn't expecting to see you tonight.

ROSS
It's been a while.

NOAH
How's your Dad?

ROSS
He's moved to a private facility in Sussex.

NOAH
Have you visited?

ROSS
I tried. I bought a train ticket last month, but Lily found out and ratted me out to Mum.

NOAH
Doesn't she want to see him?

ROSS
She hasn't forgiven him.

NOAH
I'm sorry, bro. That's rough.

ROSS
It's weird grieving someone who
isn't dead.

Noah wraps his arms around Ross.

NOAH
I'm here for you, always.

Jade strolls over, struggling to walk in a straight line.

JADE
What are you gossiping about?

Ross straightens up and walks over to Dani on the swings.

JADE (CONT'D)
Shit, did I interrupt?

NOAH
No, you're fine.

Jade slumps onto the bench next to Noah.

JADE
(giggling)
I still can't believe it worked.

NOAH
I told you.

JADE
You didn't have to quit for us.
I'm worried you'll regret it.

NOAH
That's not your burden to carry.

JADE
But your band is real; I mean, you
have groupies, for fuck sake; how
can we compete?

NOAH
Are your feet cold?

JADE
No, but my hands are, feel em'.

Jade holds her hand up to Noah's cheek; Noah rests his face
in her hand and gazes at her.

NOAH
They feel nice.

JADE
 (flustered)
 I hope we don't let you down.

NOAH
 The band was always Dom's thing. I didn't mind initially, but I realised that people like him don't change, and I don't wanna be stuck somewhere that doesn't appreciate me.

JADE
 I appreciate you.

Noah edges himself closer to Jade. Jade feels her heartbeat in her throat, assuming he's leaning in to kiss her, but instead, he removes a bug from her hair.

Dani jumps off the swings and trips as she giddily runs over to Jade and Noah on the bench.

DANI
 (slurring)
 Guys, I propose a toast

Ross sits on the bench next to Jade and hands her a cider.

DANI (CONT'D)
 A toast to the iconic Strawberry Local, our new home of cheap bevs where no fucks are given. Cheers!

The group cheers their drinks.

JADE
 That'd be a good band name.

ROSS
 No fucks given?
 I think they already exist.

JADE
 No, Strawberry Local.

DANI
 It rolls off the tongue.

Jade stands up on the bench and raises her can again.

JADE
 Cheers to us, to Strawberry Local!

ROSS
We haven't even practised together--

DANI
Don't be a mug. Enjoy the moment.

ROSS
I'm just being realistic.

NOAH
Cheers to Strawberry Local and new
beginnings.

The group clink their bottles and cans, beaming in orange
neon lights from the street lamps.

Jade looks around and takes in the cheerful atmosphere, for
she knows that something new is forming; from this moment on,
STRAWBERRY LOCAL is born.

END OF EPISODE 1.