

(Printed with the demonstration version of Fade In)

"Investment"

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INT. RESTAURANT BATHROOM, DAY.

A modern, greyscale bathroom. Large circular mirrors hang above hard-to-use sinks.

AMY LEWIS (28), is standing at one of the mirrors. Her make-up is heavy and her straightened hair is starting to go frizzy. She's wearing an ill-fitting black chiffon dress that covers her entire body. It's well-worn and faded. She's fidgety, which is making her draw her lipstick on wonky.

AMY:
(rubbing it off)
Fuck.

An OLDER WOMAN comes out of a cubicle and starts washing her hands at the next sink along. She looks at Amy in the mirror with vague disgust. She opens her mouth as if to say something, but she decides against it. The woman leaves.

Amy notices a green line on her neck from her "gold" necklace. She takes it off, annoyed, and shoves it in her bag. She frantically tries to wash the line off, but it won't budge.

Amy pulls a small scroll out of her bag and unrolls it carefully. It's a watercolour painting of a woman in a dress, standing on a windy hill. It's simple, nothing special. She puts it back.

Amy does last checks. One of her press-on nails is wonky, but there's no saving that. She pulls out a can of aerosol deodorant and sprays it all down her body, making her cough.

INT. RESTAURANT MAIN LOBBY, DAY.

Amy walks down the spiral staircase to the main dining area. She struggles in kitten heels, holding the railing tightly.

INT. RESTAURANT MAIN LOBBY, DAY.

A busy restaurant floor. The ceilings are high but it feels dark. The tables are long and wooden, with rustic light bulbs hanging above them. The waiter's faces are blank.

Amy looks around for her family, to no avail. She spots a nearby Waiter.

AMY:
'Scuse me, do you know where the, uh,
Baxter group is?

WAITER:

Follow me.

The Waiter marches off. Amy does her best to keep up.

INT. A RESTAURANT BAR, DAY.

A well-stocked bar off to the side of the main floor. Bartenders in waistcoats are rapidly making cocktails. Couples are sitting at the bar, facing each other and drinking.

Amy's family are sitting around a long table against the wall. There are 10 people in total. They're various ages, all wearing black, and look far more polished than Amy. The Waiter gestures to a small chalkboard that reads:

"Baxter, 12-3pm".

AMY:

(to the waiter)

Cheers.

He walks off.

No one acknowledges that Amy's there. She scans the table. The nearest seat to her right is empty. Next to the seat is STEPHEN (62), immaculately dressed, looking bored.

Amy glances down the other end. The table is too long for the space, so the final two seats are cramped against a pillar. MIKE (58), a more disgruntled version of Stephen, is sitting in one uncomfortably. Opposite him is another empty seat.

Amy's eyes go between Stephen and Mike. She makes eye contact with Mike.

She quickly sits down in the closest empty seat.

AMY:

Hi, again, everyone!

STEPHEN:

Ah, thought we'd lost you, Lamey.

Amy twists a real gold ring with a red ruby around her finger. She smiles tightly.

AMY:

Just Amy's fine, Uncle Stephen.

At that moment, CAMILLE (31), professional-looking with a sleek bob, comes over and stands above Amy holding a glass of wine.

CAMILLE:
(matter-of-fact)
Wrong seat.

AMY:
Sorry?

Camille picks up the thick white name card in front of Amy. It says "Camille" in gold calligraphy.

AMY: (cont'd)
(faking surprise)
Oh! Where was I meant to be?

CAMILLE:
Down there.

She says this as if it's obvious. In front of the other empty seat is a less-fancy, last-minute name card that reads "Amy".

AMY:
Well I'm sat down now, does it really matter?

Camille stares daggers at Amy.

CAMILLE:
I organised the seating plan.

Amy fidgets with her napkin.

AMY:
It'd be nice to mix it up, though, right? I never sit with you guys.

Mike leans across the table to be heard by them.

MIKE:
Amy, what are you playing at?

Amy is now red in the face. She ignores Mike, who sits back in his chair. Stephen holds out his hands, as if to signal peace.

STEPHEN:
(to Camille)
Maybe Amy has a point, Cam,
because...you know...those two butt
heads.

MIKE:
(sarcastically)
Nicely put, Steve.

Everyone is silent. Camille scoffs.

CAMILLE:
I just went to get ice!

Stephen puts his arm gruffly around Amy.

STEPHEN:
Let's just get on with it, yeah?

Camille looks from Stephen to Amy and back. She's defeated.

CAMILLE:
Fine. Mateo, move up.

There's an awkward shuffling of seats. Camille throws herself down opposite Amy.

Chatter resumes.

STEPHEN:
(looking around)
Let me call the waiter. Still a, uh,
what was it - rum and coke girl?

AMY:
Oh, no thanks, I'll have the red.

STEPHEN:
Good woman.

MATEO (31), Stephen's son, passes Amy the open wine bottle in front of him. She pours herself a big glass. She takes a big gulp, like she's incredibly thirsty.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
(laughing)
Steady on there! There's plenty to go
round.

Pause.

Stephen nudges Amy with his side.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
Only teasing ya.

AMY:
I know.

The Waiter brings over another bottle of champagne in an ice cooler, and pops the cork, making Amy jump.

AMY:
So, Stephen, I've, uh, been meaning
to run something by you...

Stephen fills up his glass with champagne, half-listening.

AMY: (cont'd)
And I've got it right here -

She bends down to reach for her bag, jogging the table in the process. Stephen's champagne glass spills on his cutlery, napkin and lap.

STEPHEN:
(jumping up)
Oh, for fuck's sake!

People scramble to get stuff out the way. Camille hands her napkin to Stephen, who rubs himself with it angrily.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
(about his trousers)
These are silk. They're ruined!

Amy has been frozen still in horror.

AMY:
I'm so, so sorry. Here, let me -

STEPHEN:
No, don't bother.

Visibly seething, Stephen runs a hand through his slicked hair.

STEPHEN:
If you'll excuse me.

Stephen goes to leave just as the Waiter comes over.

WAITER:
Are you okay, Sir?

STEPHEN:
(loudly)
Do I look okay?

Stephen walks off in a huff, still rubbing his trousers.

CAMILLE:
(to the Waiter)
Can we get a fresh set of stuff for
my Dad?

INT. RESTAURANT, DAY.

The Waiter is taking the table's orders. He's started up the other end, with Mike.

Stephen is wearing glasses as he reads the menu. He's talking to ANGELA (60), his reserved wife.

STEPHEN:
I'm thinking foie gras or ribeye.
Rare. What do you reckon?
(to the Waiter)
Uh...the, duck a l'orange, well-
seared. Thanks.

WAITER:
Excellent, Sir.
(to Amy)
And for you, Miss?

Amy pretends to scan the menu in front of her.

AMY:
I think I'll have the same, duck a
l'orange. Thank you.

The Waiter nods once, takes the menu and walks off.

CAMILLE:
(suspicious)
Since when do you like duck?

Amy goes to speak but -

STEPHEN:
Since today, huh, Ames? Finally
kicked that vegan nonsense!

He throws his head back and laughs. BENJI (5) laughs with him, despite not understanding.

AMY:
Just thought I'd try something new.

Camille cocks her head to the side.

CAMILLE:
Does that extend to your job?

Amy jumps at the chance.

AMY:
Well, I've actually had an idea that
I wanted to run by you, Stephen -

She turns to him, but Stephen has started standing up,
tapping his wine glass aggressively with his knife.

STEPHEN:
(to the whole table)
If everyone could just - yep, thanks.
Right, just thought while we wait,
someone should say something about
Mum, as she's the reason we're all
here today.

Low noises of approval.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
Mum was...quite the spitfire. She was
a doting wife to Leonard, God rest
his soul...

He looks moved by his own words.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
Mother to me and Mike -

Mike raises his whiskey glass without looking up.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
And, uh, Nan to Cam, Mat and Amy.
Shame the little ones didn't get to
see her more.

Pause.

STEPHEN: (cont'd)
Anyway, to Enid!

He raises his wine glass high in the air, almost spilling
it. The family goes to clink, but before they can, Amy
starts to stand.

AMY:
(uncertain)
If I could just, uh, add a few words?

Everyone looks at Amy.

Stephen shrugs, conceding, and sits down.

AMY: (cont'd)
Thank you, Stephen. If it's okay, I
wanted to bring our attention to
something Enid felt passionately
about - art.

More confused looks, and utter silence.

AMY: (cont'd)
Not everyone knows, she was modest
about it, but she was a really
talented artist. It became an escape,
even, when she went into the home.

Amy is deep in thought for a second. Then, she snaps to it,
and clumsily rummages around in her bag to pull out the
scroll.

AMY: (cont'd)
Like, like this one. This was called,
um, "Lady on a Hill, 2018".

She shows the painting to the table, who all look at it
vaguely.

AMY: (cont'd)
(sincere)
You can tell she painted it, you
know? So much of her voice.

She shows it more closely to Stephen. He takes it, and
squints at it.

AMY: (cont'd)
(to Stephen)
It was in their hallway, remember?

STEPHEN:
(shaking his head)
Can't say I do, I'm afraid. Ah! Here
we go.

At that moment, a bunch of waiters come through the kitchen
doors holding plates of piping hot food. They start to set
the plates down on the table.

Stephen looks to Camille, as if it's her duty to start them
off.

CAMILLE:
(to the table)
Please, everyone, tuck in!

The family begins to eat ravenously. Amy slowly sits down.

INT. RESTAURANT, DAY.

Some time later. The meals are finished; only glasses and crumpled-up napkins remain. Stephen is relaxed back in his seat, overly full.

STEPHEN:
(to Angela)
Shall I ask for the cheque?
(to the table)
No one wants desserts, do they?

Benji and VIOLA (4) strain their arms in the air as if to say "MEEEEEE!"

Stephen pinches Viola's cheek playfully, then looks around for the Waiter. He spots him, and is about to mime the cheque sign when -

AMY:
Stephen, I have to tell you
something!

The table quietens. People pretend to not be listening.

STEPHEN:
(irritated)
What now, Amy?

Amy takes a deep breath.

AMY:
I've decided to sell Enid's
paintings. I have a business model -

She reaches down to her bag again, and pulls out a flimsy folder with a few pieces of paper inside.

STEPHEN:
(confused)
Sell them?

AMY:
Well, prints of them. Like this one!

She gestures to the scroll, which Stephen has discarded in the middle of the table.

AMY: (cont'd)
I have this business model...it's not
perfect -

Camille picks up the folder and starts flicking through it.

CAMILLE:
(under her breath)
Can say that again.

Amy goes to snatch it out of her hands, but Camille hands it to Stephen. He flicks through the folder absentmindedly, until he lands on one page -

STEPHEN:
Hang on, this says you need a loan of
£5000 to "get it off the ground"?

Amy twists her ring round her finger repeatedly. She swallows.

AMY:
Yes, and I thought you could, maybe,
help me out...with a return on your
investment, of course...

Stephen starts laughing. Chuckling, at first, and then belly laughing.

AMY:
(panicked)
What?

Stephen flippantly takes the print and waves it in Amy's face.

STEPHEN:
Look at it! It's crap! We can say it
now she's gone. No one's gonna buy
this, 5 grand or not.

He pushes the folder towards her.

STEPHEN:
Sorry, honey. Bad idea.
(to a passing waiter)
Can we get the bill, please, mate.
Soon.

The whole table is listening now. Even people sat at the bar have turned slightly towards them, eavesdropping.

AMY:
(quietly)
Don't call me "honey".

CAMILLE:
You can just admit it if you need
money.

AMY:
I - I don't need money. I need a
family with a fucking heart.

Amy jumps up. She scrambles to put the print in her bag. It takes a while.

As she makes her way towards the door, she almost trips up in her heels. A nearby waiter goes to catch her.

AMY:
Ugh, I'm fine.

Barely upright, she forces her way through the sea of tables to the restaurant exit.

EXT. RESTAURANT CAR PARK, DAY.

The restaurant building is massive, sleek glass and concrete. Amy is stood nearby, smoking. Her eyes are red.

Mike comes out through the door, carrying his whiskey glass.

MIKE:
Thought you'd be gone.

Amy looks at her shoes.

AMY:
Trust me, I'm going.

They stand side by side.

MIKE:
I'm surprised you made a business
plan.

Amy snorts.

AMY:
Figured as much.

Pause.

MIKE:
I could take a look at it.

Amy turns to him.

AMY:
Really?

Mike takes a last swig of his whiskey and looks in the empty glass. He nods.

MIKE:
Stephen's not the only one who knows
about business.

Amy takes a drag.

AMY:
This isn't about getting back at him?

MIKE:
No. I think you could do this. See it
through.

Amy looks at him for a while. Then, she reaches into her bag. It dawns on her that in her haste, she left the folder in the restaurant.

AMY:
Shit.

MIKE:
I'll retrieve it, don't worry.

He gestures to the ring on Amy's hand, the one that's holding the cigarette.

MIKE: (cont'd)
That hers?

Amy stamps out her cigarette on the wall.

AMY:
One of the last things she had.

Pause.

AMY: (cont'd)
Well, you have my number, Dad.

Amy walks towards her car, a muddy Ford Fiesta. She unlocks it and climbs in.

The car drives off. Mike watches it go.

END