

Tall Order  
by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS, LONDON - DUSK

Swarms of people mill around the streets, jostling with one another.

From up above, they scurry like ants, shuffling together, all heading in the same direction--

--towards a magnificent, eighteenth century palace. Somerset House.

The setting sun warms the white stones of the nine-bayed facade, painting it with an orange glow. Fluorescent light catches the shimmer of the windows.

Doric and Ionic pillars syncopate the horizontal blocks of stone.

Below the serene cut stone masonry and against the neon lights of the reflected sun, dark shadows congregate outside the palace entrance.

Young men and women bump and hustle around, being pushed in to line by burly beings decked in military wear.

They shove the whirlpool of people in to a regulated queue against the wall.

The line tails in to the distance, down the Strand and towards Fleet Street; a sperm-like creature fighting to break through into an inner sanctuary.

A loud murmur hangs in the air as people politely grapple with another in true British style.

A huge banner with 'AUDIO ATTICS' blazes across the entrance.

A grubby urchin scampers up a ladder and splats a 'SOLD OUT' sign on to the banner. He surveys the chaos below before sliding down again.

Immediately, a guy in the queue jumps on to the ladder and clambers upwards, aiming for the first floor balconies.

Suddenly a GUN SHOT rings out.

The guy tumbles down the ladder.

He hits the ground in foetal position, clutching his weeping stomach.

A shiny bullet sparkles from the stony wall, embedded in the centre of a slab.

Wisps of smoke smoulder from a rifle, nestled in the hands of a bouncer in military gear.

Momentarily all eyes focus on him.

Silence ripples outwards.

Then the circle of people swirls up again, stepping over the target, some even stepping on his fingers, intent on entering the courtyard. Determination pervades.

A sassy brunette, late teens, dressed in eclectic fashion - a melange of Avril Lavigne and Kate Moss - stands tall in the queue. CAMI.

Next to her, a strawberry blonde guy in an Audio Attics T-shirt towers over. Early twenties with perfectly ruffled hair, JAKEM wraps his arms around Cami.

She leans her head back on to his chest as he bends over to kiss her on the nose.

They shuffle forwards inch by inch, getting closer to the entrance.

Dusty children weave in and out of their feet, crawling on their knees, scampering away from the men with the guns.

A blue-eyed LITTLE GIRL with blonde ringlets pauses in front of Jakem and Cami.

She trepidly stands up, barely coming up to Jakem's knees.

LITTLE GIRL  
Spare tickets? I'll buy spare tickets  
for favours.

Jakem shakes his head and waves her on.

Suddenly raised voices and GUN SHOTS sprinkle the air.

Cami gasps as she sees one of the little boys galloping away from a bouncer.

He dives in to a mass of people.

Bullets follow him, perforating the crowd. Shrills and shrieks pepper the scene.

One of the bullets finds its way in to the side of his head, creating another ear hole.

He collapses to the ground, writhing and gurgling in pain.

Jakem covers Cami's eyes as he nudges her forwards in the queue.

Further GUN SHOTS in the air silences the assembly.

Men dressed in simple robes with crucifixes tattooed on their arms, decked in hijab veils with kippahs on their heads step forward and drag the various bodies away.

Normalcy returns.

Jakem and Cami lumber closer to the front of the queue, Jakem shielding Cami from the circular bustle.

A massive red poster hangs next to them on the wall with--

HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS APPLY

--in large black letters.

Jakem delves in to his pocket and takes out a pill box. He rattles it by Cami's ear.

Cami bites her lips and nods. She looks up at Jakem with a weak smile. It grows as he smiles back at her.

Three purple pills roll on to Jakem's palms.

His fingers wrap around them. He kisses his fist, before unfurling his fingers and holding them out for Cami.

She pops one in her mouth and washes it down with water.

Jakem swallows down the other two.

A look of apprehension mingled with determination passes between the two.

Suddenly a head springs up between them. Wearing an Audio Attics baseball cap, the head displays a pearly grin. Early twenties and tanned, REDNER oozes charm.

He looks up at Jakem.

REDNER

How about a swap?

(beat)

One of those pain killin' babies with a 'head in the sand' lozenge?

He flashes a smile as his eyes come to rest on Cami. She blushes and lowers her eyelids as he winks at her.

Oblivious to the coquetry, Jakem considers the proposition.

After a moment, he digs in to his pocket and pulls out the pills. He hands one to Redner as Redner gives him a yellow boiled sweet encased in bubble wrap.

JAKEM

I'm Jakem. This is Cami.

Jakem offers his hand.

REDNER

Redner.

They shake.

Cami squirms as she gives Redner her hand. He holds on to it just that bit too long.

She averts his gaze and pulls away.

Redner smiles.

REDNER (CONT'D)

Mind if I join you guys?

Jakem shakes his head as Cami moves to Jakem's other side, away from Redner.

As they progress in the queue, another sign calls out to them--

GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDED HEIGHT: 1.70M.

Cami lets out a sigh of relief as she squeezes Jakem's hand.

She looks up at him. Concern shimmers from her eyes.

CAMI

Are you sure?

Jakem nods, licking his dry lips.

CAMI (CONT'D)

But your beautiful hair...

She reaches up to run her fingers through his heavily gelled hair.

Jakem pulls away.

Cami looks down at her sticky hand.

Redner hands her a wet tissue.

Cami hesitates, then wipes her hand on the side of her jeans.

CAMI (CONT'D)  
I'm fine, thanks.

She flings her arms around Jakem. He looks preoccupied, staring ahead of him in the queue.

Redner shrugs and smothers his face in the wet tissue, wiping away the sweat and dirt. He mops his forehead and reaches to take off his cap but stops himself and simply swabs around it.

Another poster appears, a stone's throw away from the entrance--

PLEASE STATE PREFERENCE.

The military guys stalk by, gripping machine guns. They clear a way for the medical team to get to the queues.

Dressed in tight, white uniforms with prominent red crosses on their backs, the medics carry large syringes.

Stopping at each person, they offer their spike of salvation.

They reach Jakem, Cami and Redner.

A teardrop shimmers at the end of the needle.

DOCTOR  
Morphine?

A young DOCTOR with a stethoscope belt round her waist and a rubber glove flowering out of her pin hole smiles at them.

Jakem pulls back his sleeve and holds out his toned arm.

The needle pierces his skin and buries itself in the flesh.

The doctor pushes the clear liquid through as Jakem's eyes flutter. Ecstasy flows over him.

He flinches as she whips the needle out and hands the syringe to a nearby nurse. In turn, the nurse hands her a ball of cotton wool which she rubs over Jakem's pin prick.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Next?

Redner steps forwards, arms exposed.

Changing the needle and flinging the old one into a portable incinerator belted around her waist, the nurse hands the doctor the syringe.

She sticks it into Redner's arms before turning to Cami.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

What about you?

Cami shakes her head.

As Redner massages his arm with a big grin on his face, they reach the front of the queue.

Jakem grabs Cami and pulls her close to him, bending down to kiss her. Their lips meet, full and tender. He caresses her hair as they break apart, eyes focused on one another.

JAKEM

Promise me that you'll go straight in and don't turn back.

He shakes her.

JAKEM (CONT'D)

Promise me!

Holding back her tears, Cami nods.

Redner watches the couple, chewing his nails.

REDNER

I'll look after her until you get there.

Redner flicks the front of his cap.

REDNER (CONT'D)

I shouldn't be too long.

Jakem pats Redner on the shoulder and forces a smile as he pushes him and Cami forwards into the covered archway.

An outline of a red door awaits them. An infrared light shines horizontally across the door.

Behind the free-standing entry way, an ebony canvas prevents any view beyond it.

Next to the door, a man dressed head to toe in black with dark rimmed glasses and 'Organiser' written on his lapel taps his foot.

ORGANISER

Who's next?

Curt and cold, he sneers at them. Peering over his glasses, his dead eyes fall on Cami.

ORGANISER (CONT'D)

Hurry up.

Trembling, Cami steps forwards. Then stops. Turns and throws her arms around Jakem, kissing and hugging him.

ORGANISER (CONT'D)

Now!

The man growls.

Cami unravels herself and rushes towards the door.

Taking a deep breath, she steps in and walks under the infrared light, turning to glance over at Jakem.

He waves to her with his right hand as his left fist quivers behind his back.

Safely on the other side, a smiling girl in red directs Cami to turn right.

She does so and disappears out of view.

Redner and Jakem look at one another.

REDNER

I'll go next.

Jakem nods.

Eyes half-closed and trance-like, Redner advances towards the door.

An open hand halts him.

ORGANISER

Hats off.

Redner stops.

He covers his face with both hands. Then pushes them upwards, lifting off his cap.

It tumbles to the ground and rocks until the kinetic energy runs out.

Jakem gasps. His eyes widen as he stares at Redner.

The top of Redner's head purples with bruises, swollen crimson and raw; the tip shorn off, depilated and weeping.

A piece of skin flaps over, barely attached to the crown. It exposes a blistered skin of puss and dewy blood.

Jakem notices a flash of alabaster...the skull?

He winces.

A band of blonde hair mottled with ruby clots adorns Redner's hairless cap. He resembles Stephen King's *It* following a battle with a guillotine.

With ease, Redner smooths the flap over.

He smiles at the Organiser.

REDNER

It's just a bit of swelling from last week's *Frigid Frolics* gig.

The Organiser waves him on.

Redner steps in to the doorway. The tip of his head cuts into the infrared light.

A SIREN goes off as the lights dim and a spotlight falls on him.

Redner shrugs.

REDNER (CONT'D)

Just slice a little bit off the top and use the same skin flap.

The Organiser nods as the girl in red appears once more and points Redner to go left.

The lights jolt back on.

Jakem watches Redner disappear, trembling.

He pales, his lips arid.

ORGANISER

Next!

The Organiser taps his feet impatiently.

A guy standing behind Jakem pushes him. Jakem tumbles forwards and trips by the doorway.

He stares at the infrared light in front of him. At eye-level.

Jakem licks his lips and swallows.

ORGANISER (CONT'D)

Are you coming in or what?

The Organiser rolls his eyes.

The crowd behind Jakem whoop, propelling him on.

Jakem looks at them, then turns to the doorway and beyond. The girl in red smiles at him, welcoming.

From the courtyard, a cheer bursts out.

CAMI

(O.S)

Jakem!

Jakem pricks up.

JAKEM

Cami! Hold on. I'm coming!

His knuckles whiten as he clutches his fist.

He steps forwards.

The infrared light slices across his eyes. The SIREN rings, the lights drop and the spotlight shines on him.

The girl in the red points to the left.

Jakem nods and turns down a dark corridor. It stretches in front of him, low lighting showing him the way.

At the end, he turns right in to an expansive, white room. Row upon row of clinical beds with a doctor and nurse on each, stretches out.

Men and women lie on the beds as the doctors tend to their heads and feet.

Electric saws, drenched in blood sparkle under the white lights.

An eerie silence, apart from the humming of the saws, hangs in the air.

Jakem notices a big, red poster--

SILENCE. DON'T RUIN THE CONCERT FOR YOUR FRIENDS.

A cute NURSE in the obligatory tight uniform bounces forward. Her blonde hair curls under her nurse's cap.

NURSE

This is yours.

She leads him to a nearby bed. A male SURGEON, chiselled and tanned stands by it. He looks as if he has been loaned out by *The Bold and the Beautiful* for the day.

SURGEON  
Head or feet?

JAKEM  
Feet.

The nurse helps Jakem on to the bed and then measures him. She marks a red line on both legs, just above his ankles.

She smiles down at Jakem.

NURSE  
Morphine?

Jakem nods.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Here are some cyber-glasses while we cut. OK?

Jakem nods again.

Darkness engulfs Jakem as the nurse places a pair of dark tinted glasses on his face.

Black and white lines jostle, then a beautiful girl dressed in nothing but a pair of hot pants pops up.

Jakem releases pent up air.

The doctor puts his surgery goggles on and holds up the saw. It glistens in the light.

The beautiful girl writhes and wriggles on the floor.

In the background, the SAW REVS UP. It GRINDS and GRATES while HUMMING like a demented mosquito.

The girl thrashes her hair around as she rocks seductively on all fours.

Suddenly the saw stops.

Then a spray SQUIRTS and buckles CLINK.

The nurse removes Jakem's glasses. He winces as light pierces his eyes.

He pulls himself upright. The surgeon's gown and goggles drip with splattered blood, virtually scarlet.

The surgeon holds out a clear plastic bag. A pair of frosted feet stand to attention in swirls of dry ice.

SURGEON

Here are your feet. We've freeze dried them so they can be sewn on after the concert.

(beat)

Keep them safe. Don't let them melt.

Jakem looks down at his feet. Plastic shoes wiggle back at him.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

We've temporarily stopped the bleeding with tourniquets and fitted you with short-term feet to help you get down to the pits.

The surgeon removes his goggles. A panda mark remains on his face.

SURGEON (CONT'D)

Take them off when you get there and stewards will come and collect them before the concert starts.

Dazed, Jakem stands up and takes the bag.

He hobbles around, disoriented and confused.

The nurse ushers him out of the room and down a white corridor.

Gritting his teeth, Jakem totters, unsteady on his feet.

He notices a red poster--

ENJOY THE AUDIO ATTICS.

As he staggers further, another one pops up--

BROUGHT TO YOU BY PERFECT VISION - GUARANTEES A CLEAR VIEW EVERY TIME.

Few more shuffles--

IF YOU CAN'T SEE, WE'LL SHOOT THEM IN THE KNEE. (Please see your nearest steward.)

Jakem reaches the end of the corridor and turns right, out into the courtyard.

A massive stage awaits, bustling with activity. Stage hands go through the last minute checks, twisting knobs and adjusting levels.

Underneath them, a pit heaves with revellers; a sea of youth in perfect alignment - all the same height.

Some bop with weeping but neatly sliced heads, others sway and teeter, grabbing on to those next to them for support.

Jakem surveys the area, breathless by the sight.

Suddenly he sees Cami running up to him. She flings her arms around him.

They topple and crash to the floor, laughing.

CAMI

Are you OK? Does it hurt?

She covers his face with kisses, her brows furrowed.

Jakem smiles up at her, shaking his head.

JAKEM

Where's Redner?

Suddenly a pair of hands grab them both and pull them up.

REDNER

Come on you two. Let's get to the front.

Redner stands smiling, a line of blood trickling down from his oozing head.

REDNER (CONT'D)

And don't lose your feet.

He throws Jakem the bag containing his feet. Jakem catches it with a grin.

JAKEM

Don't you lose your head.

Redner punches him on the shoulder and gallops down towards the stage, laughing.

REDNER

Too late!

Cami supports the wobbling Jakem as they slowly make their way down after Redner.

Suddenly a myriad of spotlights burst on, lighting up the stage. The crowd quietens as the Audio Attics run on.

The drummer beats out a riff as the lead singer takes his mike.

LEAD SINGER

London, you're looking great!

Jakem and Cami cuddle one another as the crowd swells in euphoria.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)  
We're the Audio Attics! Offering you  
salvation from your sins. Any crime,  
perversion or evil thoughts will  
dissolve in a matter of minutes. Just  
close your eyes and let the music  
remove your sins.

A whoop of exaltation spreads throughout the crowd.  
Young boys and girls sway to the music, trance-like.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)  
Let it out. Forgive yourself. We know  
you didn't meant to hit your mother,  
blackmail your boss, rape that little  
girl.

The rest of the band kicks in.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)  
You couldn't help it, society made you  
do it. It's not your fault. Just  
remember that.

A loud murmur grows from the people pit as they mouth  
'it's not my fault' over and over again.

LEAD SINGER (CONT'D)  
(singing)  
It's not my fault. It's not my fault.

The crowd move in time to the lyrics, swaying left to  
right.

The mass unite in perfect pendulum-like formation.  
Rocking together, chanting their sins away, ready for a  
brand new day.

FADE OUT.