

Beyond the bundles of thick, roping electricity lines, the sky is bleak. The road on the street is narrow, the apartments that line its edge dull and uniform. A few houses sit wedged between the apartment blocks. No yards. In the distance, we see the figure of a girl.

JO, 16 years old, wearing a grey jumper and jeans, walks briskly across the road. The bus behind her pulls out from the curb, its noisy drone fading as she hurries down the street.

She approaches her house, eyes fixated. Not on the door, but on the flaking paint coming off the weatherboards. They serve no purpose other than a constant reminder of her meagre living conditions.

She fumbles quickly around her bag, and in a swift movement, jams her key into the keyhole. Using her shoulder, she shoves into the door to open it, and steps inside.

The kitchen is clean and well-kept, likely due to the fact that there is so little comprising it. The bench is grey. The stove-top is grey. The kitchen lacks a proper oven, made up for by a microwave that sits in the corner. A little to the right is a small, rounded dinner table with two chairs tucked into it. Similar to the weatherboards, the flaking white paint reveals they are wooden underneath.

Jo's bag thuds as she dumps it on the ground. She strides towards the fridge and throws the door wide open. A disappointing sight.

RON  
(Calling out from bedroom)  
Jo? That you?

Clatter is heard as she rummages through the bits and pieces that litter the shelves.

JO  
(calling out halfheartedly)  
Yeah, it's me.

She shuts the door and turns to the bench. On it sits a catalogue, a cordless phone, a box of tissues, a small bowl containing some withered fruit and a packet of tablets.

She turns back to the kitchen and fills up a glass of water. With the glass in one hand, she grabs the tablets and heads towards the sound of the voice.

3

INT. RON'S BEDROOM - DAY

3

RON, 57, looking ill beyond repair, lies reclined in his bed with the blanket pulled up to his chin. Next to him, on the bedside table, sits a small silver box with a screen from which a faint beeping can be heard.

RON

How was your day?

JO

It was fine.

Jo approaches the bedside table and sets down the glass and tablets. She takes her phone from her pocket, opens an app, and points the phone at the monitor. This prompts a message to appear on her screen. It reads:

**'Message from E-commerce+: Your payment of \$44.70 is due. Please pay by 12.00am tonight'.**

Jo turns to face her dad.

JO

Dad, they're gonna cancel your prescription if we don't pay by tonight.

RON

(sighing)

Just take it out of my savings.

JO

Those savings aren't gonna last forever.

RON

(avoiding eye contact)

Well I know that.

JO

So what's gonna happen when they do run out? Seriously?

RON

Jo, can we just not talk about this right now? I'm tired.

JO

(frustrated)

Well we're gonna have to deal with it at some point! You can't just keep brushing it off. This isn't

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JO (cont'd)  
the first time that message has  
come up.

RON  
They're still sending us the  
medication aren't they? That's all  
that matters for now.

JO  
(unconvinced)  
For NOW.

Annoyed, Jo picks up the box of tablets. She tears the packet open, pops out a pill and hands it to her father. He carefully places it on his tongue while reaching for the glass of water. Jo refrains from passing it to him. She turns on her heels and walks out.

4 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

4

With one hand, Jo opens the pantry. In the other she holds her phone. Quick glances between what's in front of her and what's on her screen make for a disjointed sequence of actions. She takes out a teabag and a container of sugar, then flicks the switch on the electric kettle to set it off. She drops into a chair, eyes still locked on the phone screen.

A particular image piques Jo's interest - we see a photo of a dress, posted by a girl from her school. The caption reads:

**'Wow, simply stunning! Love this!'**

She stares at the image for some time, then continues scrolling. In the background, the faint bubbling of boiling water from the kettle can be heard.

5 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

5

A variety of shops, cafes and restaurants pass by Jo as she strolls down an inner city street. Signs protrude obtrusively from their shopfronts. Pedestrians bustle along the footpaths, with barely a glance up from their phones.

Jo weaves between the crowds. A particular banner catches Jo's eye. It reads:

**'40% off store-wide at BEAMO'S, for 1 day only!'**

She stops. Something else strikes her: a mannequin in the display window wearing a dress - it is identical to the one from the photo.

6

INT. BEAMO'S - DAY

6

Jo enters the shop. The eager smile of a shop assistant is already beaming in her face.

SHOP ASSISTANT

Hi there! Is there anything I can help you with today?

JO

Yeah, actually, I was just wondering how much that dress in the window was?

SHOP ASSISTANT

(gesturing towards the dress)

This one just here? It's usually 55 dollars but today it's just 33! What size can I get for you?

Jo pauses.

SHOP ASSISTANT

(cont'd)

We have it in pink also, would you like me to show you where that is?

JO

Uh, no that's fine thanks, I --

SHOP ASSISTANT

(cutting Jo off)

No worries! I'll go grab you this one here from the back. What size are you?

JO

I'm a 10.

SHOP ASSISTANT

A 10, perfect! Don't move, I'll be right back!

Jo's smile drops as the assistant leaves. She consults her phone to see if her pay from last week has gone through. The figures indicate it has - relief for Jo.

The assistant returns, dress in hand. She gestures to Jo, who follows her to the front counter.

SHOP ASSISTANT

(smiling)

That's 33 dollars lovey!

(CONTINUED)

The shop assistant bags the dress. Using her phone Jo opens her digital profile and swipes to the E-commerce screen. She holds it to the touch screen tablet sitting on the counter. A ding and a green tick tell us the payment has gone through.

SHOP ASSISTANT

All done! Have a great day!  
(handing Jo the dress in a bag)

JO

(smiling)

Thanks.

(looking into the bag as she speaks)

Just one thing, if it doesn't quite fit and I want to re--

(looking up)

The shop assistant has already walked off. The camera cuts back to Jo. In the background, we hear the animated voice of the shop assistant greeting another customer. Jo leaves the store.

7

INT. RON'S BEDROOM - MORNING

7

(striding in)

Alright I'm off now. Seeya Dad.  
(leaning over to give him a hug)

RON

What is that?

JO

What?

RON

That dress.

Jo looks down.

JO

Oh, it's new. What, don't you like it?

(slightly embarrassed but more defensive)

RON

Well it doesn't seem like something you'd wear. That's all. You might want to pull it down a bit.

(CONTINUED)

JO

Dad!

RON

Well I'm just saying, I'm not used to seeing you in that kind of thing. You'd better hurry. You don't want to miss the bus.

JO

Yeah. I'll see you tonight.

Jo leaves the room while the camera lingers on Ron. He remains looking at the doorway where Jo has just left. Then, settling back into the pillow, he slowly closes his eyes.

8 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

8

Some students are already seated. Jo walks in, head bowed, brushing through the aisles of desks to reach a vacant spot. She settles into a chair beside MILLIE, who glances up momentarily from her phone to look Jo up and down.

MILLIE

(with an over-the-top smile)

Hey! Where'd you get that dress from?

JO

(somewhat taken aback)

Uh... it's from Beamo's.

MILLIE

Thought so. It's nice, huh. I saw it there a few weeks ago, actually considered buying it myself. You look lovely in it!

Millie flashes her another wide grin.

JO

Oh, thanks.

Millie turns back to face the teacher. Jo lowers her head, half-smiling to herself.

9 EXT. TRAM STOP - DAY

9

Jo sees Millie, Olivia, Lilly, Nell and Lucrezia standing in a huddle as she approaches the stop. Millie raises her head upon seeing Jo. The inaudible chattering of the group pauses. Each girl looks up from her phone.

(CONTINUED)

MILLIE

Hey, Jo! Come here for a sec!

Jo, tentatively, walks towards the girls. She tugs awkwardly at the front of her dress to lower it.

MILLIE

(loudly, to the group)

Girls, this is that dress I was telling you about that I was gonna buy the other day!

(quieter, to Jo)

Sorry, I just *had* to show them. It honestly looks so much better on you though.

The girls flash smiles and nod in agreement.

JO

(slightly flushed)

Aw no way.. but thanks.

MILLIE

We were actually gonna head head into the city tomorrow night and go shopping if you wanted to come? Maybe see a movie too.

JO

I...uh...yeah maybe. I guess I could. I just can't be home too late. I've gotta look after my dad.

MILLIE

(shrugging)

Well, we weren't planning on staying out *that* late. Just walk around for a bit. See what sales are on.

JO

Um, yeah, okay, that sounds good. I'll come along.

Jo offers an awkward smile. Millie turns to the rest of the girls who have since directed their attention back to their phones.

MILLIE

C'mon girls, lets go!

10

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

10

Jo follows the pack of girls, headed by Millie, as they stroll down the street. The street has come alive, all flashing lights and illuminated signs. We see digital screens depicting moving images on the faces of buildings. We hear a cacophony of sounds. Jo strains her neck to look upwards, taking it all in.

MILLIE

(shivering)

Gosh, it's getting cold now, don't you guys think?

LUCREZIA

Yeah, it's getting pretty chilly.

NELL

Yeah, I'm getting a bit cold.

LILLY

Me too.

JO

Yeah, yeah, I'm feeling it a bit too.

MILLIE

Well how about we just go see that movie? Get into some warmth.

(enthusiastically)

We could grab some popcorn! That'll warm us up.

(the girls all exclaim at once)

LILLY

Yes! I'm down for that!

NELL

Yep, let's do that.

OLIVIA

Yeah, I'm keen!

LUCREZIA

Sounds good to me.

Jo remains silent. She checks the time on her phone.

MILLIE

Jo, you gonna join?

(CONTINUED)

JO

Yeah, I'd love to, I'm just worried  
I'll get back really late. It won't  
go that late, will it?

MILLIE

Jo. It's only 7.. you'll be back by  
9 at the most. That's not too late  
is it?

JO

(forcing a smile)

No, no that's fine. It'll be fine.  
(as if she's trying to  
convince herself more than  
Millie)

The girls huddle closer together.

MILLIE

Can you take a pic of us Jo?

JO

Uh yeah, sure.

She separates herself to stand apart from the group.

MILLIE

Oh, come on, don't be silly! You  
have to be part of it too! Take it  
so that we all get in it.

JO

Alright. Hold on just a sec.

Jo gets out her phone and extends her arm. The girls crowd  
together behind her and pose. The shutter sound goes off. Jo  
goes to put the phone back in her pocket.

MILLIE

Wait, let's have a look! Can't be  
letting you keep pics of me if  
they're hideous! Haha.

Jo holds the phone in front of her. The girls all crane  
their necks to get a look at the photo.

LUCREZIA

That's actually pretty nice.

NELL

Aw guys that's cute!

(CONTINUED)

MILLIE

Yeah, you should post that Jo!

JO

You reckon?

LILLY

(nodding)

Yessss, Jo, do it!

MILLIE

Yeah for sure!

JO

Alright then! I don't usually post much though.

Their chattering is interrupted by an abrupt noise. Jo's phone is ringing.

JO

Oh look, saved by the bell!

The girls laugh. Jo turns away from the group.

JO

(into phone)

Hey, dad.

(beat)

In the city? I already told you that.

(glancing back at the group)

Yeah, well, I decided to stay a bit longer. We're gonna see a movie now.

(turning back around)

I'll be fine! We're all gonna come home together so I'll be with people the whole time. Don't worry about me.

(beat)

(slowly)

Dad, really, I will be fine. I'll see you later. Love you.

Jo hangs up the phone and turns back to the girls.

JO

Sorry about that guys. Everything's all good!

(CONTINUED)

MILLIE  
(clapping her hands)  
Yay! Alright girls, we ready?

Jo smiles along with the other girls, but looks slightly put out. The groups regathers and start walking.

11 INT. JO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

11

Jo sits perched on her bed. Legs crossed, back hunched, elbows resting on knees, hands gripped tightly around phone. Her face is illuminated by a tiny square of light. A ding. She smiles as she sees a name appear.

The notification on her phone reads:

**'James liked your photo [1s ago]'**.

Another ding sounds. Jo smiles satisfyingly. Then, we see her face register 100 bewilderments at once. The source of her shock -- a message on the screen. It reads:

**'Congratulations! You can now redeem your 100 likes with E-commerce+ for \$20'**

JO  
(calling out loudly)  
Dad!

She leaps off the bed. The patter of her feet on the carpet can be heard as she runs out of her room.

12 INT. RON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

12

JO  
(bustling in)  
Dad! Look at this!

Jo thrusts her phone screen in his face. Ron's eyes scan the words. His eyebrows raise, then fall, then raise again. Jo, registering his confusion, explains.

JO  
So when you post a pic and it gets over 100 likes, you can cash in the amount for an equivalent of e-dollars. And today, I posted this photo of me and some friends from when we went shopping yesterday. And I've never gotten over 100 likes before but this time I did. So I redeemed it for \$20. This could go towards your medication!

(CONTINUED)

RON  
(pauses to register, and then,  
bewildered)  
Well then, if it's that easy..

JO  
Honestly Dad, not everyone can get  
this. I never thought I would.

RON  
How come?

JO  
(reflecting)  
Well it's mainly because I've sort  
of made friends with these girls.  
They're nice but they're...kind of  
intimidating.

RON  
Then why are you friends with them?  
(a pause)

JO  
I dunno. One of them liked my dress  
and then we started talking. And  
then we all hung out. It was just  
nice that they included me. That's  
all.  
(holding up her phone)  
Anyway, now look what's happened.  
Really we should be thanking them.

RON  
Yeah, I suppose. So 20 bucks,  
just like that.

JO  
Just like that.

RON  
Just for that photo?

JO  
Yeah, well, it happens for heaps of  
other people too you know. There  
are girls out there with heaps of  
followers, 200, 300 likes. Probably  
more. It's just that I never got  
that. No one cares enough about  
what I do to 'like' my photos.

Ron sighs.

(CONTINUED)

RON

Not everything is about that,  
honey.

JO

These days it is.