

JETT BLACK TATTOOS

"No Regrets"

Written By

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CHARACTERS:

GLENDIA GRIFFIN, mid-60s, her mind's as faded as her Grateful Dead t-shirt.

JETT BLACK, early-30s, tattooist and narcissist in residence. Black t-shirt and jeans. His arms a mish-mash of upside down tattoos (he did them on himself).

TALLULAH 'TEE' MOORE, late-20s, rockabilly in both outfit and attitude.

AXEL TEMPLE-DOUTHWAITE-FOX, early-30s, vegan leather jacket, moustache and jeans. He's very good looking and very trust fund East London.

LISA, 40s, loves a trouser suit.

SKINNY BOY, 19, could do with putting a few pounds on.

ALISON, early 20s, polka dot dress, headscarf and personality.

DARREN MUTCH, 30s, North East Ink photographer. The David Bailey of Blyth.

WALK-IN CUSTOMER, 30s, ya cannot understand his accent like.

And an assortment of SUNDERLAND'S FINEST.

INT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - MORNING

GLEENDA GRIFFIN sits cross-legged on the counter of a run-down tattoo studio. A WALK-IN CUSTOMER shows her a picture on his phone. She nods and closes her eyes.

GLEENDA

We don't do other people's tattoos.

WALK-IN CUSTOMER

I'm not askin' ye to dee someone else's, I'm asking ye to dee mine.

She opens one eye.

GLEENDA

Aah, but if yours is theirs then theirs is thine... And that's how curses start.

Their conversation is drowned out by a loud motorbike outside. JETT BLACK struts in dressed only in white briefs, not even shoes. He throws his helmet in Glenda's direction but it soars past, smashing a picture on the wall.

JETT

My caramel macchiato, Glenda. Extra wet.

Glenda bows and goes to the sputtering coffee machine as Jett looks down at the numerous dead flies stuck to his body. He picks one off and flicks it at TALLULAH as she tidies her tattoo booth. Nothing. He flicks another.

TALLULAH

OK, I'll bite. Why are you riding around like that?

JETT

I'm wearing everything required by law.

Tallulah gestures at the contents of Jett's briefs.

TALLULAH

Must be colder than it looks out there.

Jett taps his crotch.

JETT

Sport Mode.

TALLULAH

Just put some clothes on before the  
photographer gets here.

JETT

Photographer?

TALLULAH

From North East Ink. Five o'clock.  
I told you. The 'Rising Star'  
profile piece.

JETT

Ah, finally. I'll oil up The  
Widowmaker.

TALLULAH

The widow what now?

JETT

My signature jacket. The leather of  
legends.

TALLULAH

Calm down, Springsteen, they're  
coming for me.

JETT

You? But why go for Mary when you  
can have Jesus?

The Walk-in Customer interrupts them.

WALK-IN CUSTOMER

Are you a tattoo artist?

GLEENDA

(to self)

And so it begins.

JETT

No. I'm...

He turns around and gestures to the large tattoo in gothic  
text across his back that simply reads 'THE TATTOO ARTIST'.

WALK-IN CUSTOMER

(holding up his phone)

Can ye dee this on me?

JETT

(without turning back)

Get out.

WALK-IN CUSTOMER

It's alreet if you cannat like. It looks canny hard actually.

Jett spins and slaps the phone out of his hand.

JETT

Begone, Pinterest Philistine!

The Walk-in Customer bolts for the exit.

JETT (CONT'D)

This is why we don't do walk-ins.

TALLULAH

You are why we don't get walk-ins.

TITLE: JETT BLACK TATTOOS

EXT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

AXEL TEMPLE-DOUTHWAITE-FOX emerges from a taxi with two very large, unwieldy leather suitcases. He's on his mobile.

AXEL

No, I'm not coming back. (beat)  
Because I deserve to be somewhere  
I'm respected. So as of today I'm  
at Jett Black Tattoos.

(smugly)

A renowned studio. In Sunderland...

(beat)

Sunderland.

(beat)

Of course it's a real place it's  
near... it's in the North.  
Somewhere. Whatever, it's renowned.

He hangs up as his eyes fix on the grubby tattoo shop.

AXEL (CONT'D)

Okay. So it's renowned and...  
gritty. Yeah. It's real. It's raw.  
It's...

The door bursts open. The Walk-in Customer barrels out, clipping Axel as he stumbles past.

WALK-IN CUSTOMER

Absolutely mental! I wouldn't gan  
in there, mate, there's a psycho in  
nowt but his kecks gannin' radgie.

Axel edges towards the door, nodding like he totally gets it.

AXEL  
So authentic.

INT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Axel enters the shabby parlour, struggling with his luggage. Jett watches him cautiously as he approaches Glenda, back on the counter top meditating.

AXEL  
Hi there.

GLEENDA  
Oooooohm... cheddaaaaar...  
briiiiiie... camembeeert...

AXEL  
Hello?

Axel waves his hands in front of Glenda's face as Jett walks over.

AXEL (CONT'D)  
Why is she chanting cheeses?

JETT  
First time she dropped acid was on  
a dairy farm. Obviously.

AXEL  
Sure... anyway - I'm Axel, you were  
expecting me.

JETT  
The coffee machine guy? Right, so,  
it's started that demonic hissing  
again whenever anyone touches it.  
Like this.

Jett begins hissing loudly at Axel.

AXEL  
No. No, I'm not.  
(proudly)  
I'm the celebrity portrait artist.  
From Shoreditch.  
(looking around)  
Is this a vibe or what?

JETT  
(to Tallulah)  
Who is he?

AXEL  
Axel. Axel Temple-Douthwaite-Fox.

TALLULAH  
Jesus, do you charge by the hour or  
the hyphen?

AXEL  
(ignoring her)  
We've been messaging. You said you  
had an opening.

JETT  
Nope.

TALLULAH  
Hold up. You're supposed to consult  
me before hiring anyone. I'm co-  
owner, remember?

JETT  
(to Axel)  
Minority shareholder.

TALLULAH  
We don't have shares.

JETT  
That's right... because ownership  
is a capitalist construct. And  
anyway whose name's above the door?

TALLULAH  
Because you said we couldn't afford  
a bigger sign.

JETT  
That's capitalism for you. Doesn't  
matter anyway. I didn't hire him.

AXEL  
You called my work 'rockstar-level,  
tattoo-god shit'. Said I was your  
guy?

JETT  
That doesn't sound like something I  
would say.

AXEL

What are you talking about? I spent six hours on public transport for this!

JETT

I mean, that feels like a you problem.

AXEL

A me problem?! YOU invited ME here!

JETT

Hey, Alex, chill.

AXEL

It's Axel.

JETT

I prefer the Northern pronunciation.

AXEL

And you told me this place was high-end.

JETT

It is. We're the best in Sunderland.

TALLULAH

Second best.

Jett stares at Tallulah.

JETT

Treason.

GLEENDA

(excited)

Oh! And we do have a space to fill.

Jett's stare snaps to Glenda.

JETT

Alright. Let me see your work, and maybe I'll think about giving you a try.

AXEL

You've got to be kidding?

JETT

I'm going to need to see your work.

Axel pulls out his phone, opens it and shows it to Jett.

JETT (CONT'D)

Impressive.

AXEL

I know. Artisanal, right? So when do I...

JETT

But how can I be sure it's yours?

AXEL

It's my Insta.

JETT

Deepfake.

AXEL

That's me, tattooing. Right there.

JETT

Photoshop.

AXEL

It's a video.

JETT

AI is wild these days.

AXEL

What do you want then? A lie detector? A fingerprint scan? A signed affidavit from God?!

JETT

Just a satisfied customer will do.

AXEL

They're all in London.

JETT

Then you'll have to get someone new and tattoo them.

AXEL

But I don't know anybody up here.

JETT

Proof is proof and I'm going to need proof.

AXEL  
 (to Tallulah)  
 Can't you overrule him?

TALLULAH  
 Do you think I haven't tried?  
 Sorry, Shoreditch, you're on your  
 own.

JETT  
 (in dreadful Cockney  
 accent)  
 You've got till teatime, guv'nor.

Axel stares in disbelief.

JETT (CONT'D)  
 Now scarper! Before I set me dog on  
 ya.

He mimes holding back an invisible pit bull, making aggressive barking noises. Axel just stares. The barking continues. It's awkward. Finally, Axel moves to the exit.

JETT (CONT'D)  
 Wait a minute...

Axel turns back. A reprieve.

JETT (CONT'D)  
 You can't leave those bags there.  
 Health and safety.

Axel picks up his heavy cases and struggles out of the door as Jett soothes his "dog".

JETT (CONT'D)  
 It's OK boy, he's gone.  
 (beat)  
 Now fetch...

He stretches a latex glove and fires it across the studio. Bullseye! Glenda's forehead.

GLEENDA  
 (looking to the sky)  
 The prophecy?

JETT  
 Better - it's me. Did you sort out  
 the lease on my flat?

GLEENDA  
 Yes!

JETT

Great.

GLEENDA

They said you have to move out.

JETT

What? Why?

GLEENDA

Er, hold on a second.

Glenda searches through the many piles of paper around her - her 'filing system'. She finds a crumpled ball, unfolds it and reads from it.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Unauthorised erotic mural.

JETT

Erotic? It was satanic. I should have expected this. Banksy gets a gallery. I get an eviction notice. Just get onto my estate agent and find me somewhere else.

GLEENDA

They said they won't rent anything to you any more.

JETT

Then try a different estate agent.

GLEENDA

Tried all of them. You've been blacklisted.

JETT

Blacklisted? Why?

Glenda searches her papers again and unfolds another piece.

GLEENDA

Er... Unauthorised erotic murals. Plural.

JETT

Satanic! Plural!

TALLULAH

Nothing erotic about them at all then?

JETT

Maybe a couple of devils had their dicks out but they're not exactly going to be rocking boxers in hell, are they? They'd be boiling. No-one ever appreciates the nuance.

(beat, refocuses)

But this is a travesty. A vendetta. A modern-day witch hunt. What do I do?

TALLULAH

Stop drawing dirty demons everywhere?

JETT

Or?

TALLULAH

Find some gullible idiot with a spare bed and no sense of self-preservation?

She glances sideways at Glenda who closes her eyes and starts chanting cheeses again, only this time a little faster.

JETT

Of course! A flatshare...

TALLULAH

Exactly.

JETT

...with you.

TALLULAH

What? No, that's not what I meant at all. Anyway you can't. My cats hate you.

JETT

All God's creatures love me... Except swans. The angry bastards.

TALLULAH

Jesus wept, man. You're not moving in with me.

JETT

No choice.

Decision made he wanders off. Tallulah looks at Glenda horrified. Glenda opens one eye.

GLEENDA  
Phew. That was close.

TALLULAH  
Was it, Glenda? In what specific way?

GLEENDA  
Well I'm kind of between teepees myself right now.

Hidden under the counter lies a makeshift home: sleeping bag, camping stove, and dreamcatcher.

TALLULAH  
I don't even know what that means... I haven't got time for this! My photoshoot client's coming and the only thing *rising* at the moment is my cortisol.

GLEENDA  
Ooo! I could ask the Universe!

She shuts her eyes again.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)  
Ohhhhhhm... edaaaaam...  
weeenslydaaaaale...

Tallulah folds her arms, waits. Nothing. Silence. A beat.

TALLULAH  
Any chance you could put me through to a supervisor?

Glenda tilts her head as if listening to something mystical.

GLEENDA  
Sorry. The Universe... is buffering. Please try again later.

TALLULAH  
Fantastic. I guess I'll go do some earthly groveling for old Vincent Van Cock then.

EXT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Axel sits on a suitcase outside, shell-shocked. He looks through the window. Jett's still stroking his "dog". A TATTOOED GIRL, 20s, walks past. Axel turns, smiling a megawatt smile.

AXEL

Oh, hey there. What do you say to some free ink from the guy who tattooed Stormzy's accountant?

TATTOOED GIRL

Really? Wow. Well I was thinking of getting something soon anyway... yeah, why not?

Axel opens the door for her. Inside, Jett tugs at the invisible lead, barking again.

JETT

Sorry, he's a bit skittish.

TATTOOED GIRL

(to Axel)

Yeah... maybe not.

She walks swiftly away.

AXEL

You know what? No. This is not how my story goes. I refuse.

(waves at Jett)

Goodbye dickhead.

Jett squints through the window, tilts his head, mouthing "Who is he?" as Axel's phone vibrates. Ping!

TEXT MESSAGE

*Hello Axel. If you could confirm gainful employment by close of play today, your father can avoid re-hibernating the trust. Yours, Marcus.*

Axel reads it. Looks at the shop. His face twitches. An OLD LADY, 80s, wheels past on a motability scooter.

AXEL

Free tattoo?

She rolls up her sleeves. Her arms are already fully inked up - flames, skulls, the works.

OLD LADY

Too late, pet. I had me first sleeve before your fatha had his first pint.

She floors it, zipping away at breakneck speed. Axel looks at his reflection in a window and fixes his hair.

AXEL

Guess it's time for some East End charm.

POV MONTAGE - REJECTED BY SUNDERLAND'S FINEST

A rapid-fire barrage of POV rejections.

LOCAL HARDMAN: "Say 'tattoo' again and I'll tattoo me fist to your fucking face."

SINGLE MUM (and her bairns): "If I get one, these little shits'll want one too."

GREGGS GUY: "No chance. Me body's a temple. Made out of steak bakes."

WALK-IN CUSTOMER (again): "But do you do other people's tattoos?"

A TODDLER built like a retired boxer waddles past, stops and shakes his head. Pure disappointment.

EXT. SUNDERLAND HIGH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Axel dejectedly rounds a corner to find Jett, now fully dressed, facing one of the shops.

JETT

Alright, treacle. Bag yourself a punter yet?

AXEL

Not yet. Apparently, "Free tattoo from a good looking guy you don't know" isn't the winning pitch I thought it'd be.

JETT

See that's your problem.  
(putting his arm around him)  
The thing about tattooing, Alan...

AXEL

Axel.

JETT

...is that it's not about talent. Or skill. Or hygiene. It's about swagger. You know how I got my first client?

Walked up to a guy, dead serious,  
and said: 'You don't deserve a  
tattoo.' Boom. Booked a full back  
piece out of spite.

(he lets that sink in)  
But that's enough mentoring for  
today.

Jett pulls out a marker pen and waves it at Axel.

JETT (CONT'D)

I'm kind of busy with my own  
problems here.

INT. LISA'S LEASES ESTATE AGENTS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Tallulah sits across the desk from LISA, the Estate Agent.

LISA

I mean, it's not like I'm a prude  
or anything.

TALLULAH

No, of course not. You exude  
debauchery.

LISA

It's just they're so...  
aggressive... yet erotic.  
(almost in a reverie)  
Aggressively erotic.

TALLULAH

Aren't they just?

LISA

(snapping out of it)  
Quite frightening really.

TALLULAH

But I promise you it won't happen  
again.

INT. LISA'S LEASES ESTATE AGENTS RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Tallulah and Lisa walk into the reception area when suddenly  
Lisa stops, open-mouthed, as she sees Jett signing his name  
beneath an absurdly buxom demon with Lisa's face, expertly  
drawn in thick black marker across the front window.

INT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - AFTERNOON

Tallulah enters with Jett close behind.

JETT

Who doesn't want a personalised  
satanic mural? Pro bono.

TALLULAH

Mostly bono! Never mind Sunderland,  
you won't get a flat anywhere now!

JETT

I don't need one, I live with you.

Tallulah bangs the countertop in exasperation. Glenda appears  
groggily from underneath.

GLEENDA

Oh, hi Tee. I think your client's  
here.

Tallulah takes a steadying breath.

TALLULAH

(to self)

OK. Focus. This is important.

GLEENDA

Do you want me to light some Sage  
and Onion?

TALLULAH

No!

She storms away.

GLEENDA

I'm sensing some serious bad juju  
in here.

Jett checks the bottoms of his shoes as Glenda grabs a case  
of crystals and starts placing them around.

JETT

Stop that. I told you, no voodoo.  
You'll be sacrificing animals next.

GLEENDA

I'm vegetarian.

JETT

What do you sacrifice then? Quorn?

GLEENDA

No... fake meat attracts fake  
ghosts.

Tallulah is preparing to tattoo a SKINNY BOY in her booth.  
Jett walks over and looks directly into his face.

JETT

Is he even old enough to get a  
tattoo?

SKINNY BOY

Actually, I'm 19 but...

Jett reaches out and pinches the skinny boy's lips together.

JETT

Seen... not heard.

Tallulah starts her work without looking up.

JETT (CONT'D)

The truth is, living with you will  
help save me some money.

TALLULAH

Can we not do this right now? I  
need to concentrate.

JETT

Money we could spend on a refurb.

TALLULAH

Well, I suppose. I mean the  
reception's a mess and I'd quite a  
like a new chair for...

JETT

What? No, I mean for our flat.

TALLULAH

My flat! My. Flat!

Her exclamations are punctuated by the harsh buzz of the  
tattoo machine as it digs into the skinny boy's arm.

SKINNY BOY

(in pain but still lip-  
pinched)  
Hmmmph.

JETT

I can't be expected to live among  
all those creepy dolls.

TALLULAH  
My vintage horror memorabilia?

Another harsh buzz of needle into skin.

SKINNY BOY  
Uuurh-fff.

JETT  
The last thing I want to see when I'm having a piss is the Bride of Chucky giving me the glad eye. So I was thinking I could just say they were pet toys and bundle them with the cats.

TALLULAH  
Cats?

JETT  
Oh, yeah, they're going to have to go. I've got allergies. I'll let you make the arrangements.

Another harsh buzz.

SKINNY BOY  
Prrrrgh!

TALLULAH  
Just let me have this one thing, Jett. One thing you don't turn into a flaming bin fire.

JETT  
That happened once. OK, twice.

Tallulah stares imploringly at Glenda who is back on the counter plucking unseen forces from the air.

GLEENDA  
I sense the problem. Jett's unbalanced.

Jett stands on one leg triumphantly.

JETT  
Wrong.

TALLULAH  
Mentally.

GLEENDA

Spiritually. We need to bring focus to your existence. Balance your chakras. I know an ancient zen method.

Glenda goes behind the counter and brings out a pack of toothpicks and a jar of pickled onions. Jett raises an eyebrow.

JETT

OK, colour me interested.

GLEENDA

Focus on the small to bring clarity to the large.

JETT

So what do I have to do?

GLEENDA

Balance a pickled onion on a toothpick.

TALLULAH

That's an *ancient* zen practice, is it?

GLEENDA

With added vinegar.

Jett leans against the counter and tries to balance a pickled onion on a toothpick. Glenda startles Jett by hitting a small gong and the onion falls to the floor.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Ignore all else. Become the onion.

Jett focuses hard on balancing the onion again.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Now visualise where you belong.

JETT

I see it. I see it!

Tallulah looks up, suddenly hopeful.

GLEENDA

What does it look like?

Jett squeezes his eyes shut, concentrating.

JETT  
 (awestruck)  
 It looks like... it looks like...  
 Tallulah's flat.

TALLULAH  
 Oh well done, pickle-whisperer.

GLEENDA  
 That may not be the right path for  
 you.

JETT  
 I don't think the journey of a  
 thousand miles begins with a  
 pickled onion.

He tries to stab the onion with the toothpick but sends it  
 flying across the room into the hallway. He crosses to pick  
 it up and in doing so looks at the loft hatch in the ceiling.

JETT (CONT'D)  
 Of course! I never, and I mean  
 never, thought I'd say this, but  
 you're a genius Glenda Griffin.

GLEENDA  
 (bowing, softly)  
 Awooga.

EXT. SUNDERLAND HIGH STREET - DAY

Axel spots a VAPING GUY leaning against a shop window,  
 scrolling through his phone. He looks like he's never smiled  
 on purpose. Axel strides over.

AXEL  
 You don't deserve a tattoo.

The man looks up. Slowly.

VAPING GUY  
 What did you just say to me?

AXEL  
 I said... I don't think you deserve  
 a tattoo.

VAPING GUY  
 Are you calling *us* soft?

AXEL  
 "Us"? No, just you. I mean, not  
 you... Not anyone.

An awkward pause.

VAPING GUY  
 You offering us out?

AXEL  
 Like on a date? God no.

VAPING GUY  
 Am I not good enough for ya like?

He begins aggressively taking off his jacket – Axel bolts.

AXEL  
 I'm sorry! I'm sure you're a  
 wonderful person!

INT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - LATER

Tallulah continues to tattoo the Skinny Boy but her work is punctuated by the sound of hammering from above. Each time she begins to tattoo a thump makes her jump and she has to compose herself.

SKINNY BOY  
 I think I'll just have this  
 finished another time...

The Skinny Boy starts to get out of the chair.

TALLULAH  
 Sit down. He's not gonna ruin my  
 big day.

SKINNY BOY  
 I think I like it as it is,  
 actually.

TALLULAH  
 I am finishing this tattoo.

The banging stops and the sound of sizzling starts.

SKINNY BOY  
 (sniffing and worried)  
 Is that burning flesh?

GLEENDA  
 Worse. Bacon.

She follows the smell through to the hallway and sees a wooden ladder propped up through the now open hatch in the ceiling. A wire trails from a plug in the wall and disappears up there, too.

INT. THE ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Christmas lights have been nailed around the outside of an otherwise unlit attic. The room covers the whole of the building but the ceiling is so low it's really more of a dusty storage space. Glenda's head appears at the top of the ladder sticking through the hatch. Jett is lying on a mattress in the corner cooking a piece of bacon between some hair straighteners.

                  GLENDA  
What's going on?

                  JETT  
Breakfast in bed.

Glenda stares around in awe.

                  GLENDA  
A realm beyond realms. My perfect  
neighbour.

                  JETT  
Neighbour?

                  GLENDA  
I meant cosmically.

                  JETT  
Anyway, it's just a bit of boho  
chic. Very bespoke. Expertly  
curated.

He points to the straighteners.

                  JETT (CONT'D)  
Kitchen.

He points at the mattress.

                  JETT (CONT'D)  
Bedroom.

He points to a plastic bag in the corner which has something suspiciously brown in it.

                  JETT (CONT'D)  
En-suite.

He looks around.

JETT (CONT'D)

Six stars. The lap of luxury. Come on up.

Glenda starts to climb into the loft but the floorboards creak noisily when she takes her first step.

GLEENDA

Are you sure it's safe?

JETT

Of course. It's perfectly safe.

Jett gets up and crouch-jumps up and down.

INT. JETT BLACK TATTOO PARLOUR - CONTINUOUS

Tallulah is putting the final touches to the skinny boy's tattoo.

TALLULAH

One last detail...

Jett's legs burst through the ceiling causing Tallulah to draw a long black line up his arm, his neck and across his face. They both stare at it in shock as Jett's wiggling legs disappear back up through the hole then he appears down the ladder nonchalantly chewing a piece of bacon and carrying his 'suspicious bag'. Tallulah glares at him.

JETT

What?

She gestures at the Skinny Boy's neck and face.

JETT (CONT'D)

Not sure about the massive line.

SKINNY BOY

I can't have this on me.

TALLULAH

(to Jett, controlled fury)

Do you have any idea what you've just done?

JETT

Improved the ventilation?

TALLULAH

Ruined my feature piece! Right,  
damage control. Glenda, I need you  
to call the photographer and  
reschedule.

GLEENDA

On it!

She pulls out her phone and holds it to her forehead.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

Signal's back - three bars of  
destiny.

She wanders off.

JETT

(to the Skinny Boy)  
Just get yourself a turtleneck.

SKINNY BOY

I can't. I'm claustrophobic.

JETT

(to Tallulah)  
Also, I won't be needing your  
hospitality any more. Upgraded to a  
penthouse.

She points wide-eyed at the hole.

JETT (CONT'D)

With a view.

TALLULAH

You can't live up there!

JETT

Why not?

TALLULAH

Because it's not a postcode, it's a  
fire hazard.

JETT

Oh, I get it.

TALLULAH

Well there's a first.

JETT  
 You just couldn't bear to live  
 without me! Back to 'Plan A' it is  
 then! Besties forever.

TALLULAH  
 Forever?

JETT  
 Forever forever forever.

GLEENDA  
 (dreamy)  
 Ooh, it's like a binding spell.

Axel enters the shop smiling triumphantly, dragging one of  
 his cases behind him.

AXEL  
 I did it!

TALLULAH  
 Great. Shoreditch is back. Like  
 mould.

JETT  
 You fixed the coffee machine?

AXEL  
 No, I found my canvas. Meet Alison.

ALISON enters, tiny handbag in one hand, Axel's second  
 suitcase in the other.

AXEL (CONT'D)  
 Her dear grandfather, God rest his  
 soul, has recently departed, and  
 what better tribute than one of my  
 portraits to keep his love and  
 memory alive.

GLEENDA  
 Oh, that's nice.

ALISON  
 I really miss him.  
 (she gently strokes her  
 handbag)  
 Don't I, Pop-pop?

TALLULAH  
 He's in your handbag?

ALISON  
Some of him is.

JETT  
What? Pop-pop? No, no, no. It has  
to be a portrait of me.

AXEL  
Wait, that's not what you said.

JETT  
I'm pretty sure I did. If not then  
it was definitely implied.

AXEL  
Are you actually insane? Like, full-  
blown, Looney Tunes, radgie in his  
kecks insane?

He looks around imploringly.

TALLULAH  
Radgie in his kecks?

AXEL  
That's right. I googled it. And  
he's totally radgie in his kecks if  
he thinks someone's going to let me  
tattoo him on them.

JETT  
A deal's a deal.

Jett puts his hands up. There's nothing he can do about it.

AXEL  
(to Alison)  
I don't suppose Pop-pop looked  
anything like him?

Alison shakes her head.

TALLULAH  
Hope you kept your railcard.

AXEL  
Believe me, I'd love nothing more.  
But it's... complicated. And I've  
already signed a lease on a flat  
here. Payment upfront.

TALLULAH  
(too casually)  
A flat? How many bedrooms?

AXEL  
What difference does it make?

TALLULAH  
Just curious.

AXEL  
Two.

She stares into the abyss. She can't be considering this.

JETT  
(pulling out his diary)  
Right, Tee - when's your period?

TALLULAH  
What? Why?

JETT  
To sync up our routines.

TALLULAH  
(to Axel)  
Tattoo me.

AXEL  
Some other time maybe, right now  
I've got to find someone...

TALLULAH  
Tattoo. Me.

He slowly realises what she's suggesting.

AXEL  
Why would you let me do that?

TALLULAH  
Because in exchange, Jett lives  
with you.

AXEL  
You'd rather have him tattooed on  
you than live with you?

TALLULAH  
Oh, absolutely. A tattoo doesn't  
piss in the sink and try to claim  
squatter's rights.

GLENDIA  
I'd take the tattoo.

SKINNY BOY

Same.

ALISON

Do I still get my Pop-pop?

INT. TALLULAH'S TATTOO BOOTH - LATER

Tallulah is lying face down on the tattooing table. We see Axel from behind as he works.

AXEL

(with a flourish)

Aaand... done. You know, tattooing someone is kind of... intimate really.

TALLULAH

It's not.

AXEL

Like we're connected now.

TALLULAH

We're not.

Glenda wanders over and has a look. Her eyes widen.

GLEENDA

Oh my god, it's so realistic. Like he's watching us.

(she jumps back)

It just blinked!

AXEL

That's impossible... isn't it?

TALLULAH

It did not just blink Glenda.

Jett walks over.

JETT

What just blinked?

TALLULAH

It didn't blink!

Axel proudly (and a little smugly) unveils the tattoo.

AXEL

This. Unmistakable, undeniable proof. A masterpiece, eyes open or closed. Now do you believe me?

JETT

I always believed you.

AXEL/TALLULAH

What?!?

Jett pulls out a hand mirror and meticulously compares his reflection with the tattoo.

JETT

Not bad. But is it a great tattoo...

(then looking only in the mirror)

Or just flawless reference material?

The door bursts open and DARREN MUTCH enters, juggling camera equipment and instantly clocking the chaos.

DARREN

Darren Mutch? North East Ink. I'm here for the photoshoot.

Everyone freezes.

TALLULAH

(slowly, to Glenda)

I thought you rescheduled?

GLEENDA

I left a message in the ether.

TALLULAH

The ether?

GLEENDA

The Universe's voicemail. Very reliable. Although...

She peers into her crystals.

GLEENDA (CONT'D)

...the ether has delays when Mercury's in Lucozade.

TALLULAH

Mercury's in what now?

GLEENDA  
I think it's the fizziness.

DARREN  
So where's the ink I'm capturing?

TALLULAH  
Sorry, there's been a misunder...

GLEENDA  
Oh! Tallulah just got a tattoo!

TALLULAH  
No, I didn't...

DARREN  
So you've got the tattoo?

AXEL  
(proud)  
My work. Portrait realism.

TALLULAH freezes as DARREN sees her new tattoo.

DARREN  
Is that... Jett Black?

JETT  
The one and only. Well, technically,  
now the two and only.

DARREN  
(to Axel)  
You tattooed your boss on a colleague?  
Bold. Subversive.

TALLULAH  
It's not what-

DARREN  
The power dynamic! The submission!  
Conceptual gold.  
(to Axel)  
And your name?

AXEL  
Axel Temple-Douthwaite-Fox.

DARREN  
(into dictaphone)  
"Rising Star Axel..." you don't mind  
if I drop the Tiddly-Douthwaite bit do  
you? Sounds more authentic.

TALLULAH  
No, not the hyphens.

AXEL  
Perfect.

DARREN  
"...Axel Fox debuts his 'Workplace'  
series on studio receptionist..."

TALLULAH  
Co-owner!

JETT  
(to Darren)  
Minority shareholder.

DARREN  
(not listening)  
"...at Sunderland's premier  
alternative studio, Jett Black  
Tattoos."

AXEL  
Wait... you think I'm the Rising Star?

DARREN  
Absolutely. Fearless, raw,  
unapologetic. You're the future.

JETT  
Big fan of the future. Happens all the  
time round here. You can quote me on  
that.

DARREN  
(to Axel)  
Do you have more work?

Axel opens his phone. Darren beams.

DARREN (CONT'D)  
Never mind Rising Star this is  
"Tattooist of the Year" material.

JETT  
Probably because I've built such a  
supportive space for emerging talent.  
I nurture, I nature, I neuter. It's  
holistic. You can quote me on that  
too.

The Photographer ignores him again and turns back to Axel.

DARREN

Now, talk me through your artistic philosophy.

Tallulah leans in to Jett, low voice.

TALLULAH

Just smile and let Shoreditch take the win. For the studio.

JETT

Already smiling. Look at me. Joy personified.

Darren positions them for a group shot. Axel in the middle, Tallulah beside him, Jett pushed to the side.

JETT (CONT'D)

Make sure you get the Widowmaker. Her patina is very photogenic.

INT. AXEL'S TATTOO BOOTH - EVENING

Axel unzips one of his suitcases. It's full of trophies. Too many trophies. He pulls out the largest one and places it on a rickety shelf - which immediately rips off the wall and crashes to the floor. Glenda looks up.

GLENDA

Oh dear, the fake ghosts are restless today.

Tallulah walks over, picks up the trophy from the ground and squints at it.

TALLULAH

"Best Use of Negative Space on Skin in a Socio-Political Context"?

AXEL

Banksy gave it a nod on Threads.

TALLULAH

Course he did.

Axel points at her behind.

AXEL

I could maybe add a beard and glasses so it looks less like him.

TALLULAH

No thanks. I've seen him with a beard and glasses. He looks like a sex offender.

(beat)

But maybe a little speech bubble that says 'I'm a bellend'.

AXEL

Done.

Right on cue Jett appears wearing only his underpants again.

JETT

Race you home, Andre.

AXEL

It's Axel! A X E L. Axel!

JETT

It really is too easy with you, isn't it?

Jett walks out of the door as Axel follows.

AXEL

And you don't live with me yet.

JETT (O.S.)

Baggy the big bedroom!

Glenda locks the door and switches off the lights. She grabs a blanket and climbs under the counter, chanting more cheeses.

GLEENDA

...gorgonzola... dairylea...  
babybel...

As a motorbike roars away obnoxiously in the background.

END OF SHOW