



GOD FORBID!

Written by

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For MA Filmmaking

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

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Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

Thump.

INT. ANONYMOUS BAR SOMEWHERE IN SOHO - NIGHT

FADE UP. FISH EYE.

FRAME PULSES WITH EACH BEAT. THE EDGE OF THE FISH EYE PULSES.

The music thrums like a heartbeat.

Glitter.

Blonde hair. Pink hair. Blue hair.

Sequins *literally everywhere*.

It's like a *gorgeously* camp BOMB has gone off in this small, sweaty bar somewhere in north Soho.

Bright pink platform heels, a little heart cut out of the back, walk towards a buzz of people.

A queue of extravagantly dressed patrons snakes itself through tables. Packed in like rainbow trout.

A sign hangs, stuck lopsidedly with blu-tack, against the dripping pink-painted bar wall.

Written in gold glitter glue it reads...

BAR STAFF WANTED! - TEXT US ON THIS NUMBER

2

INT. EVIE'S FLAT - MORNING

2

A landline phone rings, a nostalgic tinny sound.

And it rings. And rings.

Goes to voicemail.

A hazy mid-morning light settles itself on dusty pink bed sheets. Birds chirp lightly in the background. A gentle breeze breathes on the curtains.

It also breathes quite intensely over a pile of unopened manilla envelopes. Angry red stamps on the front. One even has a muddy boot print adorning the front.

EVIE, a plain-looking girl lies in bed, arm covers her eyes. She groans theatrically. Turns slightly to look at the phone on her crowded nightstand.

MUM (V.O.)
(VOICEMAIL)
Hi sweetheart, it's Mum.

Just checking in, we missed you at church last Sunday. Hope everything is okay and that you're still remembering to pray! Good luck with your first shift tonight.

Evie hauls herself out of bed with great effort. The voicemail continues to play as she moves sluggishly across the room.

MUM (V.O.)
(VOICEMAIL)
Also I bumped in to Adam Smith in Tesco, do you remember him?

She stops in her tracks. Her head snaps towards the phone, she rolls her eyes into the back of head.

MUM (V.O.)
(VOICEMAIL)
Such a sweet boy. I could give him your number next time I see him...wouldn't it be lovely if you two could go out on a date-

Evie picks the phone up and slams it back down with a clatter.

She sits at a shabby-chic dresser. She pokes and prods at her pillow-round face. Widens her eyes and blinks them shut a mile a minute.

EVIE (V.O.)
My name is Eve. But I hate it. So call me Evie. I had a lot to process when I turned 18. Why did my mum make me eat shit cardboard wafers every Sunday morning?

A well-worn packet of Fluoxetine sits on Evie's dresser. It's clearly been opened and closed 1000 times. It's crowded by half used lotions and potions.

EVIE (V.O.)
Why was I never allowed to have the communion wine? Why did I have to be born into a devout Catholic family?

She moves her head to the side, reflected in the mirror is a cross nailed to the wall behind her.

EVIE (V.O.)
 Why did I have a crush on Rebecca
 Brown and not Adam Smith like all
 the other girls in Year 5?

Evie's eyes flick back up to her reflection. She leans in pointedly and reaches a tentative hand to her cross necklace, it's hanging limply upside down against her chest.

Evie corrects the cross.

EVIE (V.O.)
 You know, just the light stuff like
 that.

She looks towards the pile of bills, angry red stamps, boot prints and all.

3

INT. ANONYMOUS BAR SOMEWHERE IN SOHO - EVENING

3

A bartender with short, blunt, jet oil black hair walks with intent back and forth. She's the complete opposite of Evie. Her arms gesture with almost wild abandon, not unlike a conductor.

BARTENDER
 -so that's where the wine's kept.

Whoa. That is a *strong* Irish accent.

BARTENDER
 Also we're obviously a very LGBTQ+ friendly bar. I shouldn't ask really...but are you a a part of the community at all? Some of us wear badges to show-

Her voice all but fades out in Evie's ears.

EVIE (V.O.)
 Ah. That's the age-old question.

Evie stands in front of the bar. We're in her personal space.

EVIE (V.O.)
Am I gay? I've never had the courage to come out. I supposed the place to find the bravery to answer that question would've been at this totally, completely, normal bar...

A neon pink sign on the wall reads...

HEAT.

EVIE (V.O.)
Totally.

A different sign. *Drag Brunch - £25 for bottomless mimosas.*

EVIE (V.O.)
Completely.

A row of wigs perfectly pinned to polystyrene heads.

EVIE (V.O.)
Normal.

Another sign.

Soho's No.1 Drag Bar

4

INT. HEAT - NIGHT

4

Evie works frantically behind the bar. Pouring this and that, and just about any luminescent drink you could think of.

EVIE (V.O.)
It was my second night, a Sunday, I
think, when I first saw her.

Music starts, it's an anticipatory beat. Something swelling in the air. A dimly lit stage.

One fishnet-clad leg extends into view. Then another. Then the back of a veil. Then rosary beads snaked around an extended arm.

Beat.

House lights up.

SHE turns around. A drag queen. A nun. A nun drag queen.

She is wearing a nun costume that on anyone else would look cheap. Plastic, even. But on her it oozes sexuality, confidence, Evie is almost afraid of the power this person radiates.

The outfit is short, maybe a little too short. The veil is flicked so casually over her shoulder, beautiful cascading brown hair down one shoulder.

NUN/Drag Queen

Good evening, ladies and gentleman,
and everyone in between. My name is
Rose Arybeads, and tonight, you
worship to me.

ROSE speaks in a seductive but comedic tone as she begins to perform to Madonna's *Like a Prayer*.

The music fades slightly as we watch Rose sort-of dance, sort-of stumble around the stage.

Evie looks on in awe, her hands stilled around a bottle. She doesn't seem to notice the liquid overflowing out of the glass.

Close up to Evie's eyes, wide, with the reflections of the lights dancing in their whites.

EVIE (V.O.)

So I'm standing there thinking, is
that a nun? Don't get me wrong, I'd
seen plenty of those at catholic
school...but a drag queen? Dressed
as a nun? This is so confusing. Why
is she dancing? Why is she so
pretty? Why do I feel like this
again?

ROSE trips a little over her own heels. Drops the rosary beads to the ground - tries to cover it up with a move as smooth as cement.

EVIE (V.O.)

No, rewind. Why is she so bad at
dancing?

Evie notices she has *definitely* over-poured that drink. Catches Rose's eye and smiles a tiny smile, waves too. The liquid spreads out and spills over the edge of the bar.

5

INT. HEAT DRESSING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

5

Rose practically deflates as she slumps over in the plush velvet chair, melting into it, head tilted against the cold marble of the desk.

Evie edges in to the room, the dim light catches sight of her before Rose does. Leans her head against the door frame not unlike Rose does against the desk. Mirrored in actions, possibly in experience too.

EVIE (V.O.)

It was after that particularly bad performance that I found Rose with her head slumped against the mirror in the staff room. I was shy at first...

Rose beckons Evie in as soon as she notices her. Evie walks with a little more grace than Rose danced with, but with just as much apprehension laced into the movement.

They are having a conversation but we don't hear the words, just the pounding of the music from inside the club, leaking in through the open door.

EVIE (V.O.)

She had clocked me straight away. Seen the way I had looked at the her. And again, I was asked the dreaded question.

We're up close with Rose. She flips her brown hair over her shoulder and almost in slow motion asks...

ROSE ARYBEADS

Are you gay, then?

Rose smiles as she asks.

EVIE (V.O.)

She'd seen the fear in my eyes, I'm sure. Backtracked. Asked if I wanted my makeup done instead, and who could say no to looking that good?

They sit together, knees touching. Rose applying makeup tenderly to Evie, with each touch of a brush they warm to each others presence. Visibly connecting further.

EVIE (V.O.)

We got talking and it turns out, she knew her act was bad. *Like, really bad.* And I might have admitted some things about me too...about liking girls. About how I was scared to come out.

They laugh together, the sound just about fizzles above the music.

Rose mimics her dance - *no, lets be more specific* - the way she fell.

EVIE (V.O.)
 And so she asked me to help her.
 And I asked her to help me, to help
 me figure some important things
 out, to help me come out.

6

INT. HEAT - DAY

6

It's definitely the same bar, but it looks duller in the light. Every mark, every scratch on the floor visible in the harsh contrast.

Evie wears a bright work-out outfit, she looks like a slightly plumper Polly Pocket. All bright pink and neon green. She stretches like something out of an 80s aerobics show.

EVIE (V.O.)
 God knows I didn't know how to help
 her with her routine. I can dance,
 sure, but what she does is another
 level. But help thy neighbour and
 all...

Rose stands opposite her and mimics Evie's movements. She's wearing the nun costume.

EVIE (V.O.)
 It was going great. After I
 finished every shift, we would
 practice and practice.

The camera moves quickly, just about captures each dance move with chaotic abandon. They have changed outfits.

EVIE (V.O.)
 It was a little weird at first, the
 nun thing. Growing up
 religious...*it didn't quite feel
 right to me.* But I thought I had
 gotten over it. That was until I
 opened by big mouth.

7

INT. HEAT - SOMETIME LATER/DUSK

7

Time has clearly passed. Evie and Rose look much more disheveled. The light in the room has faded. They really ought to turn the stage lights on.

Somehow that feels like it would crack the intimacy of the time they spend together.

They stand opposite each other, hands on their knees, breathing heavy after a particularly intense practice session.

EVIE
What's the whole...

She gestures vaguely towards Rose.

EVIE
...*Nun* thing about anyway?

ROSE ARYBEADS
The church was not kind to me growing up. You know, they didn't really like the whole 'flaming gay' thing. Kept telling me I'd go to hell. Pretty fucked up, to be honest.

EVIE
Oh...well, I don't know if that's the churches fault.

Evie fiddles with her cross necklace uncomfortably, she looks like she abhors talking about this.

Rose raises an eyebrow, cocks a hip. Drips with sarcasm.

ROSE ARYBEADS
Wait, are you...?

The question sits heavy in the air for a moment. Evie nods and her fingers tighten around the necklace.

ROSE ARYBEADS
I had no idea. I've also never noticed your necklace before. Surely you *can't still be religious*? They literally hate us. Everything we stand for.

Evie says nothing. The silence is potent.

EVIE
...*us*?

ROSE ARYBEADS
Don't pretend you don't know what I mean. You're gay, I'm gay. It is how it is. And the church don't like us.

EVIE

Yeah...I just...my family is religious-

ROSE ARYBEADS

I'm a drag queen. *And you're gay.* And you're helping me. This whole thing-

Rose waves wildly.

ROSE ARYBEADS

-is, is, *sacrilegious*. To put it lightly. I mean, I just? You're not going to go all preachy on me are you? God. Just like my parents did.

Evie says nothing. Awkwardness is tangible.

EVIE

I just don't think you should blame the church for your-

ROSE ARYBEADS

-I don't want to hear it. I don't want a sermon from you. What position are you in to talk to me about how the church feels?

Rose talks with heat, but remains externally calm.

ROSE ARYBEADS

You're not even brave enough to come out.

Evie doesn't say anything back. Her mouth hangs slightly open, scolded.

Rose waits for Evie to say something. Nothing comes. Rose turns on her heels and walks out of the room. Dropping her rosary beads by Evie's feet.

The light in the room feels like it dims down even further.

Evie is left slightly out of breath, still holding her necklace.

The light slightly streams in, fingers of God just out of reach of Evie.

Madonna's *Hung Up* plays in the background.

Rose emerges wearing a Sexy Nurse costume. No nun costume.

Rose is performing. Evie is also performing. A different dance though, behind the bar.

There's something different about Evie's makeup. She has the colours of the lesbian flag fanned out on her eyelids.

CUSTOMER

Wow. She is so much better than she was last Sunday. *What happened?*

They're not speaking directly to Evie, but she nods absentmindedly anyway. Eyes do not leave Rose on the stage.

We flip back and forth between Evie pouring drinks and Rose oozing talent on the stage.

EVIE (V.O.)

Did she want me to 'renounce' my trauma? Two people can experience things differently, right?

They make eye contact with each other, Evie doesn't break. Rose does. Evie looks down at her hands, lifts on and holds the cross necklace up to her eyesight.

Blurred in front of her face is the same customer waving their hand inches from Evie's face.

EVIE (V.O.)

And now we're not talking anymore.

Evie lets go of the necklace and it falls impossibly slowly against her chest.

9

INT. CHURCH CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - EVENING

9

It's not the Sistine Chapel, that's for damn sure. But its home, familiar, comforting even, to Evie.

She sits on a plastic chair in the middle of the church. Looking up into the light, fingers of God just brushing the edges of her skin.

EVIE

And so that's why I'm here.
Basically to ask your advice. No.
To come out.

The light shines bright, illuminates the right side of her face. Like a renaissance painting.

EVIE

I don't know if you're actually listening to me, or whatever. But I just want to say, I think you're wrong about some things.

She looks almost guilty as sin as she says it.

EVIE

Coming out isn't bad. Admitting you're gay isn't bad. Being a gorgeous drag-queen-turned-nun isn't bad.

Evie fiddles with something unseeable in her hand.

EVIE

The only thing that is bad is putting invisible, made-up barriers between people who love each other.

She doesn't move much as she speaks, only to punctuate her points with a slight movement of her hand over the beads that Rose had thrown at her earlier.

They rattle a little with each movement. She looks up at the ceiling.

EVIE

And you're a little bit of a prick for that, but y'know, nobody's perfect. So I won't hold it against you.

She puffs out a little attempt at a laugh, looking around her to make sure no one witnessed the profanity.

EVIE

Anyway, God, I just wanted to say that I forgive you for that...and I think I'll be sticking around at *HEAT* for a bit longer. There's someone I need to talk to, some things I need to fix.

She brings the beads up closer to her chest.

EVIE

And I think I'll stick around here too, if that's okay with you?

The light streams in brighter. It's not a definitive answer, of course, but that will do for Evie.

