

Excerpt from 'The Slaughter: Act One'

EXT. DREAM ALLEY – NIGHT

In a dream, Sydney sits beside a corpse, and speaks.

SYDNEY

Yes I know, at least I still have my self-awareness. That's one thing I can pride myself upon. I'm constantly observing my declining behaviour, as if through a looking glass. I'm just not entirely sure what to do about it, are you? I'm sorry, don't suppose manners have ever been an issue for you. I suppose I ought to keep composed until the very end. I'll be one of the decrepit few lurking in some dank corner of the local public house, condensing a lifetime of poor decisions into a few unintelligible slurs. Yes, that sounds about right.

Excerpt from 'Cabernet'

Cabernet is a currently-in-development game. The brief for this piece was to write in the style of a 19th century Russian poet inspired by Yesenin but imitating another Russian poet (Lermontov). A couple of hours later I had this, and my Russian client was ecstatic with the results.

Perched upon a rotting barrow, my eyes survey the fallow field,
Where once the wheat grew tall and narrow, now crops bestow a paltry yield.
The bitter wind turns lakes to stillness, no saplings in the frozen earth,
The farmer's wife now writhes with illness, as embers die upon the hearth.
See how in the forest hollow, the firewood, it gathers moss,
While in the tavern, ripe with sorrow, the farmer drinks to his great loss.
Now raise a toast to her, my brother, Nature shall we never scorn,
Though often a tempestuous mother, we may yet see the summer's dawn.

Excerpt from 'The Slaughter: Magdalene'

The Slaughter: Magdalene follows Cedric, a painter residing in a canal boat in Canning Town in the year 1880, when the area had the biggest black community in London.

INT. CANAL BOAT - DAY

A black hand moves with grace and precision across an easel, delicately picking out the features of its subject. ALICE, a white woman, poses in the likeness of Mary Magdalene. In the painting she is holding a large white egg. CEDRIC, a member of the black diaspora who call Canning Town home in 1880 London, bears a look concentration as he paints.

ALICE

What do you know of Mary Magdalene?

CEDRIC

She washed the feet of Jesus Christ, if I'm not mistaken?

ALICE

Anointed, and dried them with her hair. She was also the first to bear witness to the empty tomb.

Cedric continues in his state of concentration as the canal boat rocks gently in its mooring. The walls are hung with his various works, not parochial scenes or lords and ladies, but human beings from all corners of the earth with stories to tell. Alice is clearly struggling to remain still, having held the pose for some time.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Quite sad, isn't it?

CEDRIC
What is?

ALICE
To be known solely by the feet you've washed.

CEDRIC
Yes, I suppose it is. Though, they are possibly the most well-known feet in history. I do, however, see your point.

Alice fidgets slightly, catches herself, and readjusts her stance.

ALICE
I wonder if the old masters did this.

CEDRIC
Did what?

ALICE
Painted women like me.

CEDRIC
Women like you?

ALICE
Yes, you know...

CEDRIC
Ah, I should think so.

Cedric leans back to survey his painting. We see a full shot of Alice, revealing the egg she holds in the painting is in reality a cricket ball.

ALICE
How's it looking?

CEDRIC
Hmm, your cheeks could use a touch more colour.

Cedric leans in to make adjustments.

ALICE
What makes you so sure the old masters painted prostitutes?

CEDRIC

Well; it could be that they were all too broke to afford what might be deemed a career model. Or it could be the depth of humanity one finds in the eyes of a 'fallen woman'.

ALICE

Cedric, you know I hate that term. And if I'm a 'fallen woman', you're a man plunged from heights that would rival Lucifer himself.

CEDRIC

And a complexion twice as dark.

ALICE

That's not what I...

CEDRIC

Cursed as all who carry the mark of Cain, I suppose?

ALICE

Cedric stop teasing, you know.. You know I didn't mean that!

CEDRIC

Ah that's brought out the pink in your cheeks quite nicely.

Cedric leans in to paint the now blushing cheeks.

ALICE

You are an utter scoundrel!

Alice throws the cricket ball she has been holding at Cedric, who ducks. It hits a cupboard.

Excerpt from 'The Slaughter: Act One'

The Slaughter: Act One is a noir detective game with surrealist elements, set in Victorian London.

EXT. ALLEYWAY – NIGHT

Private Investigator Sydney Emerson lays in an alleyway, while local gangster Charlie Finch instructs his henchman; Sallis, to beat him to a pulp.

SYDNEY

gargle *sputter* *cough*

CHARLIE

Beggin' your pardon?

Dialogue Option 1: Shouldn't you be up a chimney somewhere?

SYDNEY

I said, shouldn't you be up a chimney somewhere?

CHARLIE

Always the clown, eh Sydney? Sallis, show our friend your sense of humour.

Sallis kicks Sydney.

CHARLIE

Still laughing Sydney?

Dialogue Option 1: I'm trying not to...

SYDNEY

I'm trying not to, but that prepubescent voice of yours is making it difficult.

Sallis kicks Sydney.

CHARLIE

You're impressin' no one. You see Sydney, this ain't the day to wind up Charlie Finch. Do you know why?

Dialogue Option 2: Another beating from your mother?

SYDNEY

That inebriate... mother... gave you another thrashing....

Sallis kicks Sydney.

CHARLIE

Mrs. Finch's drinkin' habits ain't none of your worry. No, I'll tell you why. That ugly mug of yours intruded on my dream last night, and I take particular offence to that. Intrusions upon my dreams

SALLIS

The boss likes his dreams.

CHARLIE

That's right Sallis. So you can imagine my displeasure when I found you playin' with bad credit in my gamblin' house. That you'd have the nerve to do such a thing after last night's intrusion. Teach him to keep his nose out of my dreams Sallis.

Sallis kicks Sydney repeatedly.

SYDNEY (IN HEAD)

And once again, I plunge to a new depth; Having my internal organs reshuffled at the command of a child. I suppose it's as good a death as I'm likely to receive.

Excerpt from 'Barcode' - Structo Issue Seven - ISSN 2044-8244

Barcode is a short exploration of American post-modernism which tackles themes of toxic masculinity, ownership and consumerism. It is written in American English to reflect the unhinged narrator as he builds a fantasy life through each item scanned at his supermarket checkout.

Her black Gucci pumps glide across the vinyl floor which is white and ingrained with the fallout of past commerce. She wears red lipstick like the dame in an old detective movie, the kind so red it pierces the TV screen even in monochrome and is only parted by the occasional exhalation of cigarette smoke. Her lips are unable to caress a cigarette here as the store enforces a strict no smoking policy, but I would make an exception for her. She flutters around the checkout counters as if treading water. This is the part they struggle with, the refusal to accept that their Wal-Mart experience must come to an end. She surveys the checkouts. The elderly woman at my register is intent on finding a 20 cent milk coupon and has been searching for the last 30 seconds. If I can dispose of her before Jason's lane is free I know she'll come straight to me. There's no threat from Janice, a large family with two carts looming over her conveyor belt. One of the kids sneaks a candy bar into the cart whilst her mother is attempting to silence a crying newborn. The old woman has been talking to me, I think I laughed. Claris shops here daily, only buys enough to carry her through the night. The store is central to her routine, her sanity. She talks a lot. Cousins in Wisconsin, her nephew the research scientist, how kids are too loud, her blind cat, and how she used to know Barbara Stanwyck. She finally leaves, talking to no one as she exits through the sliding doors. A gust of wind finds an opportunity as they open, for a moment I catch the scent of pine, but it is quickly assimilated into the warm air of the heating system.

Six. The number is suspended above my head at full mast. She glows under the fluorescent lights as she approaches the counter and begins to unload her basket.

"Hello ma'am, how are you this afternoon?" This is the thirty-eighth time I've used this phrase today. She smiles and says nothing, the white light painting her skin almost translucent. I lure the conveyor belt towards me, ensnaring a carton of milk in the lights of the scanner.

Half and half, fat-free. She doesn't need to lose weight, I wish I could tell her. Maybe I could forget to bag it, then run after her in the parking lot. You forgot your half and half. I noticed it's fat-free, I just want you to know that you're not fat. In fact you're perfect. I can change it to full-fat if you want. I have that power.

[...]

'Now you've got him started!' Her mother exclaims, pouring steaming coffee from a silver French press. He leads me to the garage, leaving the women to converse in the lounge. The room smells of labor, this is a man's sanctuary. The fluorescent lights flicker on, revealing a huge mass of steel piping and aluminium panels. It's a top drive hunting rig. I've seen these things in magazines before but not in person. I'm aware of how they function but I let him explain regardless. He passionately details every inch of the contraption, how he had it custom made and shipped from a specialist in Three Rivers, Texas. It fixes to the roof of the truck, adding a self-contained open-air top deck. The gear shift, steering and brakes are all attached to their respective counterparts so the truck can be operated from inside the rig. It's a triumph of American engineering and even contains a beer cooler; after his daughter it's his most treasured possession. Next Saturday? Yes, I'd love to go hunting. Beef Cold Cuts.