

ROTHMORE UNIVERSITY

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EXT. ADMISSIONS BUILDING — DAY

SUPER: ROTHMORE UNIVERSITY, U.S. NEWS RANK #12, ADMISSIONS BUILDING. JANUARY 2ND...DEADLINE DAY.

INT. ADMISSIONS BUILDING — DAY

KEVIN (mid 20's) stands in a hallway trying to read a map on the wall. He repeatedly glances from a sheet of paper in his hand back to the map. From down the hallway, MARK, 50's and confident, approaches.

MARK

Hey, you the new guy?

KEVIN

Yeah!

(extending hand)

Kevin.

MARK

Mark.

Mark shakes Kevin's hand.

MARK CONT.

C'mon, I'll lead ya through the maze.

They walk down the hallway.

MARK

You excited?

KEVIN

Definitely.

MARK

As you should be! Not too bad for a first internship, though the office is usually a little slow. Our algorithm mostly sorts the applicants for us. You'll probably just get us coffee and help us schedule our interviews. That's really what the job is.

KEVIN

Sounds good to me.

Mark stops by a door and points.

MARK
Here it is...

He pushes it open...

INT. OFFICE COMMON AREA — CONT.

It's CHAOS. EMPLOYEES rush back and forth. A group of five or six ADMISSIONS OFFICERS huddle in the middle while other Employees cart cardboard boxes full of paper around.

Mark and Kevin walk in, trepidatious. Mark stops one of the employees.

MARK
What the hell is going on?

EMPLOYEE
The algorithm crashed. So did all our office P.C's. We have Lydia's laptop hooked up to the printer cranking out apps by the hundred.

MARK
Oh fuck.

The Employee rushes off. Mark nods for Kevin to follow him toward a table of SCRIBBLING ADMISSION OFFICERS in the middle of the room.

KEVIN
What does this mean? Can't you just delay the results?

MARK
Legally, no. We have a three-day call-back guarantee under our rolling admissions policy. Usually the algorithm handles it...

They've arrived at the table.

MARK CONT.
Lydia, what's the damage here?

It's a flurry of red x's and green check-marks over the applications. LYDIA, at the far head of the table, doesn't look up from her page.

LYDIA
Bad.

MARK

Perfect.

(to the table)

Alright everyone, I'm here now.
Keep working, I'll start helping
out soon.

(to Kevin)

Hop in there, man, follow their
lead! Green pens are in, red pens
are out, just get a rough gauge on
how the rest of the table chooses.

KEVIN

Right.

Kevin takes a seat, a pen, and a paper. Mark walks over to
the coffee machine on a nearby counter:

LYDIA

(without looking)

Coffee's broken.

MARK

Well, isn't it just a perfect day
all around?

(to Steve)

Steve, could you figure out a way
to fix this? We got a long night
of this shit ahead of us.

STEVE sighs.

STEVE

(standing up)

Yeah, I guess I'll try.

MARK

Attaboy.

Mark walks toward the head of the table. He stops when he
notices Kevin meticulously annotating the apps.

MARK

Woah, Kevin, what're you doing?

KEVIN

...Analyzing the application?

MARK

We don't have time for that. It's
buzzwords and keyphrases, alright?

KEVIN

Alright...

Mark pats Kevin's shoulder and sits down. CATHY, directly next to Mark, thoughtlessly slashes green checks across her applications. Mark stares at her for a beat.

MARK

Cathy, are *all* those
acceptance-worthy?

CATHY

(extremely stressed)

They all seem so great, I can't
pick!!

MARK

Well, try save some room in case
there's better ones later, okay?

Cathy groans. Across the table, Lydia is checking an email.

LYDIA

Shit.

MARK

What now?

LYDIA

CommonApp is down in Arkansas and
their applications are being
shipped by mail. Not arriving
until Tuesday.

MARK

That's fine, they're not getting
in anyway. Take a 1600 and a
football player, maybe a Senator's
kid or something, we'll be fine.

(noticing Kevin)

Kevin!

Kevin has the applications haphazardly spread out in front of him. He frantically SWIPES his green and red pens, seemingly at random.

KEVIN

You told me to go quick, sir!

MARK

Not *that* quick! Jesus!

KEVIN
I'm an intern, I just—

Steve pokes his head back over the table.

STEVE
(to Mark)
Where're the tools?

MARK
The what?

STEVE
Tools. For the coffee...

MARK
Oh, uh...try the west closet?

STEVE
Right.

Steve slinks away. Mark shakes his head and finally settles in to review his first application when he notices Cathy now x-ing red on every page.

MARK
Cathy.

CATHY
(distressed)
There might be better ones later!!

MARK
Cathy, please. Never, ever gamble.

Lydia stands.

LYDIA
I'm gonna go grab the new batch
from the printer.

Kevin SHAKES his pen up and down to activate ink.

KEVIN
Can you grab me a new green? I'm
already running out of ink.

LYDIA
Sure.

Lydia exits. Steve walks back carrying only a hammer. Mark attempts to review his page when he notices this.

MARK

Steve, is that a fucking hammer?

STEVE

You said fix it, I'm gonna fix it!

MARK

You didn't grab a screwdriver, or
I don't know, the whole *toolbox*?

STEVE

I'm an admissions officer, man,
not Bob the fucking builder!
Besides, I think it's just
clogged. Needs to be...burped, or
whatever.

MARK

Please don't say it like that.

Cathy groans, staring at two apps, indecisive and panicked.

CATHY

I think I'm getting an ulcer!

MARK

Relax, Cathy! Before our algorithm
this was your job!

CATHY

I usually played Solitaire all day
back then!
(shrinking)
I still do.

BANG BANG BANG! Steve senselessly pounds on the coffee
machine.

MARK

Steve!

Kevin scribbles his pen, but it produces no effect.

KEVIN

Anyone have a green I could borrow
until Lydia's back?

MARK

(absentminded)
Just make do.

Kevin shrugs and shakes the pen, trying to get some ink flowing.

BANG BANG BANG!

Cathy clutches her stomach. Her hair is in disarray. Her eyes twitch.

CATHY
This is too much. I'm gonna be sick.

MARK
Relax, Cathy.

Kevin keeps swinging his pen. Steve struggles with the machine.

STEVE
(frustrated)
This fucking thing...

He flips it on its side. BANG. BANG. BANG.

MARK
(snapping)
Steve, I take it back! Don't fix it!

STEVE
I'll get it.

MARK
You're being a distraction.

STEVE
I said I'll get it.

CATHY
STOP FIGHTING!!

Lydia reenters, carrying a large cardboard box.

LYDIA
Here they are!

BANG. BANG. BA-SNAP!!!! The coffee machine EXPLODES. Coffee powder PUFFS out of the crack. Boiling water BURSTS from the top. Lydia SLIPS on the water. She HURLS HUNDREDS of APPLICATIONS into the air. They're SOAKED and RUINED by water and powder.

Kevin swings his pen. The commotion SURPRISES him and he DUCKS the papers. Kevin accidentally lets go of his pen. It SOARS directly into Mark's EYE. Mark EXCLAIMS and doubles over. He CLUTCHES his face.

Unable to handle this stress, Cathy PROJECTILE VOMITS all over the table, ruining the applications.

A beat. The coffee dust settles.

Lydia struggles to her feet, holding her back.

LYDIA
(to Steve)
What the FUCK were you thinking??

The two loudly argue. Steve points and places the blame on Mark's instructions. They're argument is out of focus when:

Kevin RUSHES over to the injured Mark.

KEVIN
Sir, I'm so, so, beyond sorry.
Please don't fire me, I swear it
was an accident...

He continues blabbering on.

Cathy stands up, covered in filth, sobbing.

Mark's face is down. He holds his eye.

MARK
(weakly)
Enough...

No response.

MARK
(loud and assertive)
ENOUGH!!

They all go quiet. Mark looks up at them.

MARK
Everyone shut the fuck up.
Jesus...We're a top tier
university for Christ's sake.
Let's act like it.

Steve JABS a finger at Lydia.

STEVE

But she's acting like a child!

Mark gives him a harsh look. It shuts him up.

CATHY

What do we do?

MARK

I don't know...

He gestures to the ruined apps on the table.

MARK CONT.

Well *these* ones are all rejected,
that's a start...Lydia, what's our
acceptance rate?

LYDIA

About 8 percent?

MARK

8 percent. Alright. Everyone, just
salvage what you can. Put them in
piles of 100. Grab out the top 8,
set 'em aside as our new accepted
students, then move on to the next
100. Our admissions are a
crapshoot anyway. Deal?

They all look at each other then shrug in agreement.

INT. OFFICE COMMON AREA — LATER THAT DAY

The group stares at a pile of coffee stained, water-marked
papers, looking quite tired.

MARK

Class of '29.

CATHY

That felt...actually fair.

MARK

Same thing next year?

There are MURMURS of agreement.

MARK

Good.

A beat.

STEVE

Anyone wanna grab a cup of coffee?

MARK

Perfect idea.