

ABAM.INFO

PRESENTS



By

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Going down the aisle, she wondered whether this would be more of a beer or wine style event. Then upon remembering that she was going to a party for *doctors*, discounted both of those options and looked for the liqueur.

The bottles were all stacked behind the cashier, shelves from the floor to ceiling cowering with the weight of off-brand *SirNoff* and *Grey Geese* vodkas, *GlenMangy* and *Glen's Fiddick* whisky, and *Sailor Gerald's* rum. There was too much choice, and Cassie knew that whatever she picked, it would taste like paint thinner and need to be heavily watered down with a mixer. She smiled as she realised this was yet another decision she didn't have to make.

***Big choices on a Saturday night...
Vodka, rum or whiskey?***

@CassieSimons_94

Cassie was enjoying her new decision-free lifestyle. She smiled politely at the cashier, who was eying her up suspiciously as she stood in front of him, looking at the bottles. He was a tall, wrinkly middle eastern man, who seemed to have a scowl etched on his face at birth.

"You got ID?" he asked her, as she perused the selection of spirits behind him.

"Yeah, I'm just waiting to hear what my friends want me to buy." said Cassie.

"ID." he said, abruptly.

She took her driver's license from her wallet. It was still a provisional because, as she would always say,

she was too distracted / busy / lazy to take the test. The delete-as-applicable answer depended on who was asking, and how honest she was feeling at the time. The scowling man stared at the photo, then stared back at Cassie.

“I've had my hair cut since then...” she said, trying to be helpful. It wasn't that he didn't believe she was the girl in the photo, he was counting the years back to 1994, which Cassie worked out when she saw the fingers on his hand twitching back and forth, matching silent numbers on his lips.

“It's fine. What you want?” he said, passing the driver's license back to her.

“I'm just waiting for my friend.” she replied. “You can serve someone else while I wait.” she added, looking around, but there were no other customers to be served.

The Scowl looked up towards a small square television fastidiously secured to a rig in the ceiling, bike chain padlocked around it to keep it in place and a cage locked around the whole unit.

'To prevent thievery of the bike lock, because it's certainly worth more than the crappy black and white TV!' Cassie reckoned.

Finally, to her relief, her phone beeped. Her glance to the camera unlocked the screen and she pulled up her Twitter feed.

Rob the shop, @CassieSimons_94

@MattBanks_9

Cassie let out a half-laugh, but was left feeling uncomfortable with his joke.

@MattBanks_9, thats nt as helpful as u think
@CassieSimons_94

She waited for a response, hoping that it would be anyone other than Matt. Whoever he was from school, he had a strange sense of humour. Another beep.

@CassieSimons_94, our decision hs been made.
Rob the shop.

@Sam_InAMan

*'Are they ganging up on me? They have to know I'm not **actually** going to rob the shop, right?'* She asked herself as she sent a DM through to Hannah, cutting the other two out of the conversation, and awaited her response. Almost as soon as the message sent, came the beep of a reply.

Rob the shop.

@RainboSprkls

Cassie quivered as she read the words, her fingers seemed to lose all control and the phone tumbled out of her hand towards the ground. She looked down, the words staring right back up at her.

"You ok girl?" asked Scowl.

Cassie didn't have words to respond, simply nodding

He looked at the thirty varieties behind him, sighed, then turned to her with a raised eyebrow, awaiting for further information. She wasn't paying attention to the transaction, trying to stifle the beeping that came from her bag with each new reply coming in.

"The... uh... Absolutely Vodka?" she clarified.

He reached up and took a bottle from the shelf, placing it on the counter between them.

"Ten fifty." he said.

"Great." said Cassie, as she grabbed her wallet and opened it up, realising that she had spent all of her cash in the Bye Felipe coffee marathon earlier in the day. "Do you take card?" she inquired.

"Fifty pence charge." said Scowl.

"Sure, whatever." she said, giving him a polite smile that was ignored. She handed the card over and gave in to a check of her Twitter feed, knowing that she'd regret it. She did. Her replies were full of the same messages over and over again, but at least the alerts would stop beeping for the moment. She switched over to the general feed, and felt that quiver come over her again, dropping the phone back in her bag.

"You ok miss?" asked Scowl, the words sounding strange coming from such an angry looking man. She took some deep breaths, nodded, unintentionally avoiding eye contact. Reluctantly, she shifted her gaze to the illumination in her bag, the screen staring back up at her vignettted by darkness. The words, the hashtag repeated over and over, first from Hannah.

**#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop
#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop**
@RainboSprkls

And beneath Hannah's tweet, the same message from all the others she followed.

**#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop
#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop**
@Glinner

- - - -

**#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop
#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop**
@LilyAllen

- - - -

**#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop
#RobTheShop #RobTheShop #RobTheShop**
@AnnaKendrick47

She picked up the phone with trembling hands and scrolled down. The entire feed was full of them, over and over again, not just the people she knew now, but everyone, every celebrity, every news source, they all said the same thing. She put the phone away again, feeling like she was about to pass out.

“You put PIN now.” said Scowl, signalling to the card machine. She nodded, still on the verge of hyperventilating, and typed the numbers in with fingers that were semi-reluctant to obey her orders.

She had never been good with passwords or remembering PINs, and had resigned to using her birthday or a combination of name and birthday, which she was hardly likely to forget. The card reader clicked and groaned electronically as it thought about its response to her digits.

PIN INVALID

“It no good.” said Scowl, looking at the readout. He turned it back over to her to re-attempt her PIN. She looked at the numbers on the keypad, certain that she had typed it in correctly. She put her shaking hands to the card reader again when her phone beeped.

@CassieSimons_94, You agreed that you would do what we told you. #RobTheShop

@MattBanks_9

Cassie threw the phone back in her bag and returned to the grid. This time she made certain that she was paying attention to the ones she hit, looking at the numbers intently before and as she pressed the buttons, despite knowing she didn't make a mistake the last time.

1 9 9 4

More whines and moans of electric thoughts as the card machine span its networked fingers through the ether to determine whether the digits were accurate.,.

Waiting for authorisation to release the funds as requested. Scowl picked up the card reader to get a closer look whilst it did its job, as if raising it off the counter would hasten its progress. Another beep from Cassie's bag. She didn't want to look at it, but couldn't help herself.

@CassieSimons_94 You're breaking the rules...

#RobTheShop

@RainboSprkls

'It couldn't be Hannah', she decided. 'Someone must have hijacked her account. If that was the case, when did they do it? When this all began, or before then?' She knew it couldn't have been longer than a day, having seen and spoken to Hannah the day before.

"Wrong again, lady." said Scowl, sighing as he handed the machine back to her. She put the phone away and took the card machine from him, this time slamming the numbers in, knowing that twice now she got them right, and twice they failed.

1994

The machine thought about the numbers for seconds and then started churning out a receipt. A long receipt. It kept printing and printing, over and over, the long stream of paper soon flowing over the counter, heading down towards the floor and curling around

Scowl's feet. Once again, her phone beckoned for attention.

@CassieSimons_94 smash him over the head with the bottle. #RobTheShop

@GetRich2Moro

Cassie looked at the bottle whilst Scowl was hitting the machine against the counter, trying to get it to stop printing. For a moment she wondered if she could do it, her fingers twitching as the scenario played out in her head, what it would feel like to grab the bottle, hoist it high and bring it down over the angry-looking man's skull. She stopped her train of thought, pushed it all out of her mind, and replied to the @s.

This isn't funny!

@CassieSimons_94

The machine stopped spitting out paper. Scowl tore it off at the base, and retrieved the stream of receipt that had started weaving its way up his legs. She reached for the vodka to take it and finally leave.

“No.” said Scowl, pulling the bottle out of her grasp and resting it on the counter by the cash register. “You still no pay.” he said, and seeing that she was confused, elaborated. “Card declined.” he added, showing her the receipt.

Cassie took the card out of the machine, as a slow mechanical whirr descended upon the store. She

retrieved another card and held it up to him, but his attention was elsewhere.

“What going on?” he asked, leaving the counter and walking towards the door.

Cassie looked over as the street lights disappeared, followed by the station, the cars, the road. The shutters outside were rolling down, sealing them in. Scowl opened the door, leaning down and looking under the shutter, yelling at whoever was responsible, but he saw no-one outside. The shutters were coming down on his neck, and he pulled back in, rather than risk a beheading. Cassie watched from the counter, a sense of claustrophobia in the air.

“And in a weird turn of events, the phrase 'rob the shop' is trending right now!”

Cassie looked up to the overly-secured television as 24-hour news hosts commented on the story. They figured it was a viral or advertisement, but didn't have any details, which they assured their viewers they would follow up on the moment they had any further information.

It must be a slow news day... she thought, before being distracted by another beep from her bag demanding attention.

@CassieSimons_94, Do it.

@WorkFrmHm

She looked at the bottle left unattended on the counter whilst Scowl banged on the shutters, shouting at them to open. Cassie could feel her heart racing, her palms clammy and a knot in her throat that

wouldn't budge. She took one more look at Scowl to make sure he was distracted, and grabbed the bottle, stuffing it deep into her bag. He jumped back as the shutters started rolling up of their own volition.

“Bout damn time, ass!” he said at them.

Cassie walked to the door with trepidation, trying to hide her terror as she approached Scowl. When the shutters were at waist height, he ducked under them and took a look outside, finding no perpetrator. She walked out of the shop and crossed the road, trying to maintain a pace that was casual yet fast. She needed to get out of sight, get out of reach as fast as possible.

ABOUT ABAM.INFO

ABAM, or 'A Book A Month', is a terrible experiment to see how long a former screenwriter can produce a original novella every month (along with companion audiobook) before he goes insane.

Alternating between dramatic and comedic prose, the books will be released on Amazon in print and for Kindle on the first Monday of every month, and on other ebook platforms some months later.

If you've enjoyed this book in any capacity, do please review it on Amazon – I read them all and will no doubt veer towards writing more of what you like.

Please visit the links below for more information and forthcoming releases.

<http://amazon.com/author/leeisserow>

<http://ABAM.info>

Thank you kindly for being an observer to my mental deterioration.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lee Isserow is an award-winning screenwriter and filmmaker, with over fifteen years spent trawling the back streets and dark alleys of the entertainment industry.

He's pretty sure he has some traits of autism, because he's been constantly working and obscenely prolific for the entire duration, writing over a hundred screenplays, many of which he's adapting into forthcoming ABAMs, because very few people are willing to turn them into movies. For now.

He lives in Liverpool, England because he accidentally bought a house there. He's not quite sure how that happened – but assumes part of that is because he used to drink a lot.

If you'd like to watch the pretty things he makes, you may find them at Leelsserow.com.

You may also interact, call him names, and read his awful jokes and observations on Twitter; [@Lee_Isserow](https://twitter.com/Lee_Isserow).