

THE UPSIDE TO THE END OF THE WORLD

(Working title)

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1. INT. HAWTHORNE INDUSTRIES. HAWTHORNE OFFICE - DAY

MR HAWTHORNE, the well-dressed CEO of Hawthorne Industries, sits behind his neat office desk organizing his work. The office décor boasts its occupant's financial success. JENNY, his assistant dressed in a sharp suit and a tight bun, pokes her head in the office.

JENNY

Your 2 O'clock interview is here
to see you Mr. Hawthorne.

HAWTHORNE

See him in Jennifer.

JENNY

Yes sir.

HAWTHORNE

Jennifer?

Jenny stops at the door.

JENNY

sir?

HAWTHORNE

You did remember to seal the
main doors, didn't you?

JENNY

Of course sir.

HAWTHORNE

Very good. See him in.

Hawthorne rearranges his tie and sits up straight. JIM, a mid-twenty clean shaved man, walks in nervously clutching his messenger bag. He's already breaking in sweat and the bags under his eyes are prominent.

HAWTHORNE

Come in. Please have a seat,
Mr...?

JIM
Handler. Jimmy Handler.

HAWTHORNE
Mr. Handler. Mind if I call you
Jim?

Hawthorne gestures to the empty seat opposite him.

JIM
Not all all.

Jim takes his seat. He nervously lets out a small cough.
Hawthorne hits a button on his landline. Jenny comes in.

JENNY
You called sir?

HAWTHORNE
Yes. Two cups of tea if you'd be
so kind Jenny.

JENNY
Of course sir.

HAWTHORNE
How do you take your tea Jim?

JIM
Err...plain sir.

HAWTHORNE
Heat mine until it's scolding,
then wait a minute for it to
cool before adding to exactly 3
teaspoons of sugar, a dollop of
honey, a sprinkle of black
pepper and just a hint of lemon.
Jim will take his plain.

JENNY
We're out of black pepper, sir

HAWTHORNE
Mind running across the street
and getting some?

JENNY

Not at all

Jenny makes to leave.

HAWTHORNE

Oh, you'll be needing this.

Hawthorne reaches under his desk and pulls out a pistol. He casually hands Jenny the weapon. Jim watches stoically as she takes it, tucks it in the back of her skirt and walks out the room. Jim lets out another cough. Hawthorne grabs a folder on his desk and begins to go through it. He seems impressed by what he's reading.

HAWTHORNE

Princeton graduate. Top of your class. Near perfect grade point average. I gotta say Jim, I'm liking what I see.

Jim sits more confidently in his seat.

HAWTHORNE

So why do you want this job?

JIM

I have always been interested in Hawthorne Industries, I did my internship here. And I do feel like I will be a valuable asset in your company.

HAWTHORNE

We could use a man like you..
(beat)
...especially in these troubling times

Jim gives Hawthorne a sympathetic nod. He lets out another cough. This one is more wet.

HAWTHORNE

Are you alright?

Jim wipes the sheen from his forehead.

JIM
I'm fine, just a little under
the weather.

Hawthorne stares at Jim suspiciously. SFX: RING. The telephone chimes to life. Hawthorne puts it on speaker phone.

HAWTHORNE
Hello?

JENNY
Sir. They seem to out of honey.

HAWTHORNE
No honey? That's a shame. What
about the black pepper?

There's silence followed by a long distant moan and a sudden gun shot.

HAWTHORNE
Jennifer?...

JENNY
(panting)
Got the pepper.

HAWTHORNE
(smiles)
I'll see you in a few then.

Hawthorne's statement is left hanging. A shrill scream bursts out then the line dies. Hawthorne exchanges a look with Jim, who lets out a dry cough. The men share an awkward silence when SFX: Knock Knock.

Jim and Hawthorne both stare at the door. Jenny walks in with two cups of tea. She's covered in blood and sweat. Her tight bun is running loose long the length of her neck.

HAWTHORNE
(Happily)
Oh, That was fast.

JENNY
(impassively)
I ran.

Both men watch Jenny place the teas in front of them while completely covered in blood. Jim lets out another cough. It's more wet this time. Hawthorne pulls out the handkerchief from his breast pocket and hands it to Jenny.

JENNY
Thank you, sir.

Jenny wipes the blood from her face as she makes her way out of the office. She stops. She goes back to Hawthorne and pulls out the pistol from the waist of her skirt and places it on his table.

JENNY
I'm afraid it's empty sir.

HAWTHORNE
No worries. Err...Jenny

Jenny stares at Hawthorne inquisitively.

HAWTHORNE
(hesitant)
Were you...

JENNY
No sir.

HAWTHORNE
Thank God. I'd hate to have to replace someone so exceptional. Do you mind...?

Hawthorne pulls out a magazine from his desk and hands it and the pistol to Jenny.

JENNY
Not at all.

Hawthorne favors Jenny with a smile which she politely returns before leaving the office, reloading the pistol. Hawthorne watches her go.

HAWTHORNE

Damn fine assistant. Don't know
what I'd do without her.

Jim looks on awkwardly and lets out another cough.

HAWTHORNE

You sure you're alright?

Jim wipes his forehead again.

JIM

Yes.

Hawthorne gives him another suspicious look. He lets out a
sigh. Hawthorne give the papers a quick read.

HAWTHORNE

Well. Everything seems to be in
order. You can discuss salary
and all that tosh with HR later..
Welcome to Hawthorne Industries.

Hawthorne stands up and holds out a hand. Jim smiles. He
leans across the table and takes his handshake. Hawthorne
suddenly jerks Jim closer to him. With his other hand,
Hawthorne pulls up Jim's sleeve. There's a large bite mark
on his arm. Both Hawthorne and Jim share an awkward stare.
The men slump back into their seats. Jim opens his mouth to
talk but Hawthorne silences him with a finger. He hits a
button on his telephone. Jim watches as Hawthorne takes a
delicate sip of his tea with his eyes trained on Jim. Jenny
walks in. She looks from Jim to Hawthorne. Hawthorne gives
her a nod. Jenny pulls out the pistol. Jim's eyes go wide.

JIM

Wait! No! please!!!

Jenny quickly shoots Jim. He slumps over the chair and falls
off. Hawthorne watches the downed body and sighs.

HAWTHORNE

Another one. This zombie
apocalypse is really bad for
business.

Hawthorne sees the resume and laments.

HAWTHORNE

And he was perfect. At this rate
Lakestay Industries is going to
run us into the ground.

(re: Jenny)

Zero deaths to zombies!

Jenny looks pensively at Hawthorne.

JENNY

I heard that their CEO was
killed in a zombie attack.

HAWTHORNE

What?! When did that happen?

JENNY

(shrewdly)

...tomorrow.

Hawthorne smiles at his assistant. Jim begins to stir. He
lets out a long zombie moan. Jenny immediately blasts him
with 3 more bullets. They all stare at the downed Jim.

END