

**STAGNATE**

FADE UP FROM BLACK.

## 1.INT. CORPORATE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

We pull out from the grain in the stone logo of crossed palm trees on a desert island - revealed as the floor of a marbled reception area. A deep distorted rumbling sound seems to emanate from the image.

In the distance we hear the persistent ringing of a telephone.

MILDRED is a dizzy and colourful looking receptionist in a particularly grey, imposing and sterile looking reception area. She is in her mid-late twenties with elfin features and wears a 50's styled blouse and skirt with floral detailing and a green cardigan. Behind her, embossed into the wall, letters read 'Welcome to Funtime INC, the Sunny World of Holiday PR'.

The only other things in sight are an impressive collection of houseplants and indoor trees. Nearby planters house two palm trees.

A fat paper pad sits squarely in front of her and a dozen sharpened pencils are lined up ready for use.

A water-filled paperweight of a desert island sits in one corner of the desk, just next to a complicated looking telephone switchboard. The telephone continues to ring and eventually Mildred picks up the receiver.

MILDRED  
 Funtime Incorporated, sunny world  
 Of holiday pr, Mildred speaking, how  
 Can . . .

Another call comes through.

MILDRED  
 Sorry, would you mind hold . . .

(she presses the button next to the second flashing light)

MILDRED

Funtime Incorporated sunny world of  
Holi . . .

Her voice trails away as a dead tone indicates there is no one there. She presses all the buttons on the phone, trying to find the callers - but to no avail.

Mildred blows the shavings from the pencil and stares glumly about the reception area. There is little to distract her attention. She attempts to busy herself with shuffling papers and tidying the desk.

The 'ping' of the lift heralds the arrival of the SUITS. MILDRED half stands - unsure of the etiquette.

MILDRED

Good morning Mr Randolph  
Nice weekend ?

MR RANDOLPH does not respond, indeed does not even acknowledge her. More SUITS pass reception and the same thing happens again. A YOUNG SUIT runs after the others, obviously late. MILDRED is obviously resigned to it.

## 2. INT. CORPORATE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The clock over across the reception area thuds the minutes by. Mildred delves into a drawer in the desk containing all sorts of jars and boxes, cloths and creams and digs out a few gardening utensils. She begins to lavish love and attention on the veritable jungle of plants that surround the desk. She prunes and plucks, massages and scrubs, feeds and nurtures, always with the strictest attention to detail.

The lift 'ping' sounds and MILDRED returns hastily to her desk, unaware that she has a leaf in her hair.

The YOUNG SUIT runs through reception and trips up. He regains his balance and gives MILDRED a strange look, as though to suggest he has never seen her before. MILDRED smiles sweetly.

## 3. INT. CORPORATE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

MILDRED sketches away scratchy etchings of trees, or doodles that look like trees which appear to almost create themselves and come to life as though temporarily animated. In the background we hear subtle rustling sounds which appear to emanate from the plants. The phone rings again and Mildred's pencil tip breaks. The broken pencil rolls across the desk.

MILDRED

Funtime incorporated, the sunny  
world of holiday pr  
Mildred speaking, how can  
I help. . . ?Aaah . . .  
No . . . No, I'm afraid we don't  
mend kettles, no  
No, I'm sorry. I'm very sorry sir.  
Perhaps you could try . . .  
Ok yes, yes, than - yes, that's  
right, thank you, goodbye. Sorry.

MILDRED, disappointed that her one call is so unyielding replaces the handset and sits back in her chair and quietly tugs at a loose thread in her cardiagan.

#### 4.INT. CORPORATE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Ominous clouds appear to roll around the interior of the glass paperweight.

MILDRED goes about sharpening her pencils, ready for the offensive should it ever arrive. We again begin to hear strange whispering sounds and MILDRED quizzically looks about at the plants.

Yet they persist. Baffled, MILDRED pretends to ignore the sound.

Suddenly a very surprised look crosses her face. Mildred hiccups and she looks up. The rustling of the plants cease. She opens her mouth and we see a huge pink flower in full bloom on her tongue. She takes it out and examines it carefully and puts it in a glass of water.

MILDRED then notices the greenish grey tones of her skin. She climbs onto her swivel chair with some difficulty, so as to hold her arm up closer to the little light coming through

the window. Indeed it is fairly green in hue. She looks at herself in the back of a spade in her gardening kit and pulls the lower lids of one eye down. Her face is looking surprisingly rosy and there are leaves sticking out of her hair. Concerned, she looks all about and shakes her head. As she does so, more leaves fall into the desk around her. A slight breeze dances through the grasses in the planter beside her. She shakes her head hard so that her bun comes undone and still more leaves fall all around her.

MILDRED then stares at her hands - one of them has turned into green stems. MILDRED is now looking alarmed. She picks up the receiver. She dials 999.

MILDRED

Hello? Hello, yes hello,  
is that the rescue services,  
yes, could you . . .

RESCUE SERVICES

You are being held in a queue,  
Your call will . . .

MILDRED looks exasperated. Just then she notices a small shoot sprouting on one of the fingers. She replaces the handset just as someone responds the other end, and a broad grin spreads across her face.

The plants begin their usual whispering chant. MILDRED gets her gardening kit out and carefully begins to shape the stems, much like someone filing their nails. She smiles to herself and hums a tune.

6.INT.CORPORATE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

In the centre of the desk sits a plant that previously wasn't there. A small plant with huge pink blossoms - much like the detail on MILDRED's blouse.. As we track in the whispering sound becomes voluminous and overpowering and there are echoes of a tropical jungle. We travel deep into the heart of the blossom until the screen is saturated in deep pinks. In the distance a telephone rings persistently .  
. .

FADE TO BLACK.