

Working Late

by Adam Steedman Thake

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Adrian walks slowly through rows of desks. He steps into the pool of light left by Sam's desk lamp.

ADRIAN  
You still here?

SAM  
(Surprised by being  
disturbed.)  
What? Oh, hi. Yeah, just putting  
the final polish on the report.

ADRIAN  
Go home, Sam. You look like hell.

SAM  
Screw you very much! So nice of you  
to say!

ADRIAN  
(As he leaves.)  
I'll see you tomorrow. You'll still  
be here, right?

Sam sticks her middle finger up at Adrian's departing figure. Sam's desk is the only lit area of the office, everyone else has gone home. It is dark outside. The office is not high-tech, with somewhat-dated computers and well-used furnishings.

Sam finishes writing her report and sends the document to the printer. She then walks across the dark office to the printer on the other side of the room.

When she reaches the creaking printer, she inspects the printed document. Instead of the graphs and tables and analysis she wrote, a series of very grainy, impossible to make out - although unsettling - images have printed out. Sam is unfazed.

SAM  
This bloody thing!

Sam wearily enters her code into the printer and makes it run another copy. Grainy, difficult to make out images comes through again. This time, they are subtly different and appear to be in a humanoid shape. Sam looks a little perplexed and disgruntled at the paper.

SAM

Just work!

Sam hits the printer, to no avail. The printer sits their silently. Sam wearily opens up the paper tray and inner workings of the printer. She begins inspecting the mechanisms, finding that one has become stuck and is covered in a dark liquid.

SAM

Gross.

She rolls up her sleeve and reaches in, finding something wedged in the machine. Sam struggles to free the object as the dark liquid begins to spread over her hand.

SAM

Gross! Gross!

Sam finally pulls out the object that was jamming the printer, covered in the thick, black liquid. She begins inspecting the curious object. She is startled by the sudden noise of...

JANITOR

(O.S.)

I'll take that.

SAM

Oh! Oh. Yes, thanks. You scared the life out of me.

The Janitor takes the OBJECT in a paper towel, gently and carefully folding it up and putting it on his trolley of cleaning supplies.

JANITOR

Bit late for you to be hanging around here, isn't it?

SAM

You know how it is. No rest for the wicked!

There is a lengthy pause.

SAM

(Indicating her hand, stained with the dark liquid.)

You don't have anything I can clean this with?

JANITOR

You'll have trouble getting that off.

SAM

I'll give it a proper wash when I get home. Just so that I don't get printer ink everywhere, have you got a paper towel or something?

JANITOR

Ink. Yes.

The Janitor simply looks at Sam's arm, tilting his head as he inspects it.

SAM

Do you have any paper towel?

Janitor stops focusing on Sam's arm, snapping out of his deep concentration.

JANITOR

Yes, of course. Here you go.  
(He gives Sam some paper towel.)  
It won't get rid of it, mind.  
You're marked.

SAM

(Smiling as she wipes her arm.)  
I'll get rid of it properly when I get home. This will do fine for now.

Sam finishes wiping as much of the liquid off her arm as possible, it has stained her skin. She hands the paper towel to the Janitor who looks rather wary of it.

SAM

Have you got somewhere to put this?  
(Beat.)  
A bin?

Janitor looks scared of the stained paper towel.

SAM

I'll just put it in here.

Sam puts the paper towel in the large refuse bag on the cleaning trolley. The Janitor still looks afraid.

(CONTINUED)

SAM  
Are you all right?

JANITOR  
(Suddenly aggressive.)  
Yes! Fine!

SAM  
(Defensive.)  
All right.

The Janitor wheels the trolley away.

SAM  
(To self.)  
Freak.

Sam returns to the printer and closes up all the trays and panels. The printer rumbles back to life. Sam presses some buttons and it begins printing.

Slightly fuzzy, although discernible, images of Sam at the printer begin coming out. Sam picks up the pages. As she does so, the printer prints images of her picking up pages. She picks those up, inspecting them closely. The printer then begins printing images of pages flying out of the printer and Sam being shocked. Sam picks these pages up, growing more apprehensive

Suddenly, the printer starts spewing out page after page after page, frantically filling the air with paper. Sam shrieks at the deluge.

One page flutters into her hands and she looks at it. In the picture, Sam is stood at the printer inspecting a piece of paper in her hands. Behind her is an immensely tall, shadowy figure. She stares at the picture, not quite sure what is going on.

She turns around to look behind her.

Cut to black. Silence.