
A TWISTED TRUTH

By Marc Auf der Heyde

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A twisted truth, feared for being told

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The Solar Bar at Berlin's Anhalter Bahnhof, was often during the day, occupied by a very distinguished class of customers. Business men, and business women, swarmed in shortly after 1 pm, to discuss and make deals about other business men and other business women, for so was their way, the way of the business. Cocktails or liquor, no matter what beverage or alcohol percentage, each of these business men and women would keep their drinking to a steady two glass system. They needed enough drink to be cheerful and persuasive, but not so much that they wouldn't be able to make it back to the office after their meetings. It was a ritual of sorts, each day the swanky bar saw new guests and those also who'd visited before. 1 pm to 3 pm. At 3 pm, all deals were sealed and all disappointments had been unleashed.

At 1:30 pm, on a rather sunny Wednesday afternoon, Alison Creed too found herself in the Solar Bar at Anhalter Bahnhof, sipping at her drink delicately as she listened to the words that formed like tar in her ears.

"There's *absolutely* no way I'm sticking my money into this one, Alison." Frank Lemund carefully sipped at the Martini in his right hand, the olive bobbing up and down in the clear alcoholic beverage. "I really hope you realize that this is more than an insane idea. If you make it, you will be hated. Thousands will think of you as a... Well you know. And the other thousand, well they'll think of you as a... Well you know. No one likes a meddler." He paused and took another - this time longer - sip. "Come to think of it, I don't like meddlers, so it wouldn't even be right of me to produce this, *absurdity*."

Alison Creed sighed with silent disappointment whilst maintaining her façade of serenity by radiating little glitters of sunshine through the curtains of her eyes. Frank Lemund had in the past been the one producer to take on any of her projects, no matter how 'insane' or 'meddling' they were. But that time had seemingly come to an end. She finally had a project which, no one wanted. Frank didn't want it, the four producers she'd previously tried to charm into at least contributing, didn't want it, and she expected no one else in the city of Berlin, or really the whole world, wanted her project.

And what a shame it was. If only they knew how certain she was, that the film she had thought of and patched together in the ever-flowing currents that rushed throughout her brain, would be one of the best films ever created. But she didn't blame them. There was no way of selling such a project. No cheap and dirty trick of convincing the men with money to finance it. They wanted something to double their investments, they wanted something flashy and controllable they could sell to the public. But Alison's project was deadly, not flashy, Alison's project was like a stormy tide that could go one way but also the

other. It was unique, original, literally one of a kind. But she needed the money. She always needed the money to do what she knew she was capable of.

“I see that you might be hesitant to trust in something like this, Frank, but how can I convince you to change your mind? You and I both know that next year, when this thing comes out and the box office ratings break every record ever created, you’ll remember this day. You’ll remember that I came to you first, and that you turned me down. Why don’t you just do it Frank?” Alison spoke flawlessly as always, her voice remaining constant in tone and pitch, never faltering at a sight or a sound.

“There are about 1,025,109 words in the English language. Literally, I googled it, because I knew that one day I’d have to use that crazy number to make my point, that there isn’t a single word out of those 1,025,109, not even a combination of those words, that will change my mind. I may be old Alison, but not so old to be making risks like this one.” Frank downed his Martini emphasizing that the discussion was over. He was a solid man when it came to opinions. If he didn’t want something, or if he didn’t approve of something, you’d have an easier time cutting down a 100-year-old Oaktree, rather than shifting his opinion if even a little. Alison should probably have accepted her defeat ten minutes ago, but she did think she was charming, and she was aware of her way with words. If anyone could cut down that 100-year-old Oaktree, she’d always thought she’d be the one to do it. She sighed.

“Well then Frank, I guess our ‘date’ here is over,” said Alison as she finished her drink and reached gracefully for her purse.

“Well you don’t have to go immediately. Just because I won’t give you 500,000 Euros, doesn’t mean we can’t have a good old chat, and talk about the good old days does it?” asked Frank, his voice portraying genuine hurt.

“Do you mean the good old days, when I made you those 500,000 Euros?” replied Alison sharply, smirking to reassure Frank that she was just being sly. “I have to go meet the next producer since you won’t pay up. I’m sure you understand.”

Frank chuckled as he reached for his wallet and pulled out a crisp 100 Euro Note. “I thought I was the first producer you came to?” he asked sarcastically, not expecting an answer from the already standing Alison. “Don’t worry about the drinks. The least I can do is pay.”

Alison smiled a glorious smile and retired her purse into her handbag. She stepped forward and gave Frank a hug. “You will regret this, Frank. I’ll give you tickets for the premiere.” And with that last, bold statement, she exited the bar on the 21st floor, and took the elevator back down to a certain cold reality.

It was a lot colder on the streets of Berlin, now that Alison had faced yet another rejection. She wasn't used to the strange unwanted feeling that vibrated and hummed within her chest. Failure. Failure was the first word that came to mind as she tried to think of a happier time, maybe even a happier place. Failure had never been an option for Alison, and yet here she stood with her hands on her hips, the uncertainty within growing and resonating more with each passing stranger.

"It'll be such a good movie" she said to herself reassuringly, closing the door to the now cursed bar. She didn't want to take any more steps that day. Five producers had shut her down already and she only knew seven producers who would even agree to see her for a meeting. Five out of seven. She had been tuned away by 71% of all the people in the world, who could make her dream a reality. That was Alison's definition, of a pretty shit day. *Disappointment, and crushed dreams.*

As soon as the phrase had entered her mind, she pulled out a small golden notepad and jotted the phrase down on the center of the cover page. It was one of the few remaining blank pages in her "think tank engine" as she called it, reserved for what would become the title of her new movie. She didn't have a producer, she didn't have a script, she didn't have any actors, but the one thing she did have, and it would prove to be the right thing to have, was a title for her movie. Disappointment and crushed dreams.

Slightly more satisfied by the small shred of progress, she made her way away from the Solar bar, and headed towards the S Bahn Station, to travel to her next meeting. She looked at her wristwatch, an expensive piece of jewelry which her father had given to her after her first successful premiere.

"What a spectacular film Alison! You've made us both so proud! And that ending, like something out of a Shakespeare Monologue! Absolutely Fantastic! It's made me think a lot about your job. Being a film director, a film producer, all that stuff... It's OK with your mom and me as long as you're happy!" he had said back then, actually quoting a line from her hit movie, Ten Days within a day. Her father had hugged her tightly and pressed the 'Michele Diamond Watch' into the palm of her hand, proclaiming that it was 'just something small for her fantastic work'.

Dr. Basile Creed and Dr. Doriane Creed had not exactly always been happy with Alison's line of work. They had wanted to send her to Harvard, to study medicine as they had done, but Alison had always strived for a more creative occupation, and discovered her passion for film directing when she was just 14 years old. The only reason her parents accepted her now, was because of the success she had gradually amassed. Her first hit movie (Ten days within a day), had won several awards at the Berlinale, quickly making her known to be one of the youngest successful film directors, ever to have lived.

Her father's, and less so her mother's, pretentious acceptance based only on her successes, had damaged her relationship with her parents to say the least, and she now only rarely saw them although they too lived in Berlin.

As she looked at the watch to take in the time (2:30 pm) she was again reminded by something deep within her, that the kind of superficial behavior which her parents portrayed, was exactly the sort of behavior she hated in people. She loved her parents, there was no doubt about that. Any child who suckled on the bosom of its mother and any child that heard the sweet lullaby's sung by its father, would surely have an everlasting connection to these prominent figures reigning within their lives. And so it was for Alison. She loved them more than she hated them, but there were mixed feelings always swimming about.

2:30 pm. She pushed the little circular button to open the S Bahn doors, and stepped into the faint dry whisk of air which was slowly escaping. Her next appointment, and least promising one at that, was with the Vice President of Universal Studios, a certain Harald Clay. Her dealings with Mr. Clay in the past had been, to say the least, unsuccessful, but he agreed to meet with her nonetheless, each and every time she dared to contact him. Maybe it was her looks, maybe Harald Clay thought that he was playing hard to get with his continuous optimism and cheeky glances. But Alison suspected there was more to it than that. Alison presumed that Harald Clay saw her for the person she knew she really was. A cinematic genius.

The six minute train ride to Friedrichstrasse, went by as most train rides do, in mostly a blur. Alison tried to focus her mind on other things, anything really, not pertaining to her film project. She hastily pulled out her iPhone 6s from her handbag, and turned it on, watching as the white apple logo glowed and seemed to pulsate, as if it was a beating heart. Twenty-nine seconds she counted, a habit of hers. Upon releasing the phone, Apple had claimed it was supposed to turn on in twenty-three, but the closest she'd ever gotten to that fabled number, was twenty-four and a half. It had really been twenty-five, but the half a second difference gave the whole ritual a lot more purpose, so she had improvised just a little.

Ten new notifications. All on WhatsApp. She needn't be optimistic with false hope, for she knew that those ten notifications, as they always did, all stemmed from her best friend Claire Stevenson.

Claire had a sort of mild ADHD, which had never actually been diagnosed, but was always used to blame for anything and everything, by her and her parents. *Claire failed her math exam. It's because of the ADHD. Claire is annoying Alison on WhatsApp again. It's because of the ADHD.* Anything, and everything, the Stevenson's might as well have called their daughter "ADHD", it certainly seemed that they spoke the word a lot more often than her actual name.

Message 1 read; “Hey hey hey bitch”. Message 2 read; “You know we going out tonight baby”. Message 3 read; “We”. Message 4 read; “are”. Message 5 read; “getting”. Message 6 read; “so”. Message 7 read; “royally”. Message 8 read; “smashed”. Message 9 read; “tonight omg!!” Message 10 read; “Meet me at U Warschauer at 23:00, love you xoxo”.

Alison smiled as she replied with a simple, “Looking forward to seeing you xoxo”, and closed the application. If there really only was one person on the entire planet who could cheer her up no, matter what the issue was, that person was and always would be, Claire Stevenson. Upon meeting each other on the first day of school more than 10 years ago, the two had literally become best friends on the spot. Perhaps it really was a friendship based on the classical ‘opposites attract’ cliché, for where Claire Stevenson would never fail to protrude amazing bursts of energy, Alison always portrayed a certain calmness, so that the two seemingly complimented each other when hanging out together.

As Alison plugged an earphone into each ear and started her ‘be happy, f*** everything’ playlist, she thought back at all the great times Claire and her had spent together. Her first time getting drunk at a party when she was 15, her first and last time ending up in a hospital from alcohol poisoning and basically her first time doing every drug she’d ever done, had all been experiences shared with Claire. All the first times which parents hated. In Mr. and Mrs. Creed’s eyes, Claire had never exactly been what you may call a ‘good influence’ for a young girl. But Alison did and always had loved her, and although she was only half as wild as Claire, the two stuck together like hot tar on a road.

The train pulled slowly into the Friedrichstrasse S Bahnhof, as the eternal outro of “Eye of the tiger” faded into the distance on Alison’s phone. She didn’t feel in the slightest, *pumped up* or *ready to go and get ‘em*, as the song was supposed to provoke in most people who heard it. When Survivor’s greatest hit started blaring in Alison’s ears, it meant everything, just as well as it meant absolutely nothing. It was just a song, nothing more, nothing less. The fact of the matter was, that Alison was just far too intelligent to be emotionally influenced by a song, no matter how artistically genius it was.

“Whatever happens now, will happen now. Whatever happens after this meeting, will happen after this meeting. That’s how I live my life, and that’s how I’m going to continue living my life” said Alison to herself with an admirable devotion towards her cause, as she gradually clambered up the train station stairs, and made her way towards her next fateful appointment.

Alison fumbled nimbly through her abundance of clothes which hung rather neatly in a two and half meter walk-in cupboard. The walls, along with the door were made out of a dark chestnut colored

wood, which reeked of varnish, and ultimately seemed out of place in her mostly modern apartment. As much as Alison was a fan of keeping things in order, and having things be the same color when she was decorating, she liked to have the odd one or two things, stand out from the rest, as to remind her that perfection only existed in theory. Her walk-in cupboard, was this black sheep, and every time that she walked into it, it cleared her head, and gave her room to think anew.

This time, the clarity of her cupboard took her thoughts to her earlier meeting with Harald Clay, the Vice President of Universal Studios. Instead of inviting her in for a meeting in his office, he had insisted on taking her out for a drink at a bar at Friedrichstrasse. Alison had given him the benefit of the doubt, and agreed to meet him at the bar. She had never regretted something so much in her life.

Harald Clay had been a lot ruder than she had expected, not even leaving ten measly minutes before admitting that he had simply wanted to see her, “dressed in something *tight*”. She had laughed off the vulgar comment at first, but when others such followed, she decided that pouring her Virgin Mojito over the producers head, would be suitable punishment enough. He had gasped at first, in genuine shock, but what Alison had not anticipated, was that Harald Clay would continue with his abuse, even after he had been publically humiliated.

“You just want to get me out of these wet clothes now, don’t you?” he asked, cunningly. Alison had stood up, calmly as always, and with one quick movement that leaked into the next, she had slapped him once hard, across the cheek with a sharp *crack*, and then once again across his other cheek, using in turn the back of her hand. She knew those slaps would sting, so she didn’t bother to stick around. Businessmen and businesswomen, stabbed their cold eyes with disapproval into her back. She knew she wasn’t one of them, she knew she wasn’t another businesswoman. Maybe that’s why they all hated her, because of what she did. She didn’t sell houses or stocks, she sold movies. She didn’t make or break investment deals, she made and didn’t break, movies. She was an artist, not a businesswoman, and as she opened the door to exit the bar at Friedrichstrasse, her failed appointment tugged at her lips, and she smiled as in the background she could hear a very distinct “BITCH” escaping from Harald Clay’s vile mouth.

The memory of the event almost gave her mind some well-deserved peace. She may have been desperate to make a movie she knew would be spectacular, but she wasn’t about ready to sell herself out for it. That was still beneath her, and she hoped it would continue to remain beneath her.

The second meeting had been much like the former, except without all the sexism and drink chucking, etc. It had been a plain and simple rejection based on the idea’s extremism. “Don’t make this movie, Alison. I don’t know you too well yet, but this movie will destroy your reputation! I was a big fan of your first movie, you’re better than this, really.” She had heard it too many times in one day, and as she

was now sifting through her various outfits in preparation for the evening, she wanted nothing more than the company of Claire Stevenson. And perhaps, that want and that desire, was acknowledged by the universe, offering Alison the first good thing to happen to her all day long, with the sound of a doorbell.

“I thought I’d come and cheer you up, you know, since you sounded so depressed on the phone earlier on!” said Claire, barging in through the crack in the door and taking off her high heels with a satisfied grunt. “Holy, COW! That feels, literally, like amazing, and like the best thing that’s happened to my feet since that one weird Swedish dude I met, licked them, for like, four hours!” Alison smiled. She had wanted Claire to come over and cheer her up, but hadn’t quite had the audacity to ask. Nevertheless, she had halfheartedly expected the arrival of her best friend, since as trust fund baby, Claire spent most her days hanging out at home, smoking weed and watching bad movies. In other words, she really had more than enough time to come over and comfort her friend.

“Now tell me all about these bullshit producers!” exclaimed Claire, flattening herself out on the red velvet couch in front of the massive TV.

“So the first five I went to, and the last one I went to, all let me down in pretty much the same way. “Your idea is too crazy, people will hate it, it’s not fit for this society”. All *that* kind of stuff. But the sixth one, Harald, fucking Clay, literally told me straight to my face, that he had absolutely no interest in producing my film, but that all he wanted, ‘take me on a date and all that it entails’. To, my, face.” said Alison, recounting the day’s events in a relatively simple summary.

Claire shook her head in clear disgust and rolled her eyes. “If you see him on the street some day when we’re together, please tell me so I can light his stupid arrogant head on fire. Or like, it doesn’t even have to be that violent, I can just kick him in the balls if that satisfies you.” Alison laughed at the mental image of Harald Clary running around Berlin with his hair ablaze and his genitals in agony. That really was something she would pay to see, and knowing her friend, she wouldn’t even have to pay to see it one day.

“Anyways, enough of all that nonsense now, I want you and me to do, what you and me are best at doing. Getting high, putting on some trippy music, and furthering the brainstorming for this hella dope project you’ve got bubbling. Once we’ve sobered up, and have at least an A4 page of brand spanking new, revolutionary film ideas, I’m going to trap my feet in those awful cages they call high heels, and we’re going clubbing. Productivity, and then steam blowing, tomorrow’s a new day, and you’re going to feel as fresh as a baby’s bottom!” continued Claire, opening her Luis Vuitton handbag and pulling out a cylinder tube. The tube had a flowery yellow label on its side which read ‘Medication against conformity’, and there was only one thing Claire transported in this little tube. She opened it by pulling out the rubber stopper

from the top, and gently pulled out a joint from the inside. She lit it very carefully, and picked up the ashtray from the lounge's coffee table.

“Come over my friend,” she said, beckoning over Alison with her free hand. Alison accepted the request, and sat down beside Claire, taking out a writing block and a golden inked pen. The small “Think Tank Engine” she kept on her at all times, was meant for her eyes and her eyes only, not because she didn't trust her friend, but because she viewed the little book of power, as a sort of window into her soul, and the thought of anyone peering through that window, was most unsettling.

They smoked the joint and turned on the TV, using it to blare music through its sophisticated sound system. The ideas rushed through as Alison and Claire slowly became ‘high’, and they took careful precautions to make sure everything of slight importance, was jotted down on the piece of paper they had prepared. They soon had their A4 page full within two hours, and so Alison, with the help of Claire, traveled yet again to her walk-in wardrobe, to make the final decision on what to wear.

It didn't take long for the pair to decide on a most suitable outfit, and soon Alison was slipping into an emerald green forest dress, accompanied by golden high heels which were just a little shorter than those of Claire. She tied her hair back in an experimental bun, and gathered together her necessary belongings for the long night ahead. Her purse, her handbag, her phone, a bottle of water, and her special notebook. Nothing more was needed for Alison to feel comfortable in her own skin, for when she was with her friend, they rarely required anything more than each other's company.

Claire handed her the little blue pill, without saying anything. It was ecstasy, nothing too drastic to handle, and for Alison the pill meant a little more than just dancing and euphoric feelings. Alison was able to channel every state of mind, every form of intoxication, mindful alteration, to fuel her creativity. She accredited many of her brilliantly acclaimed ideas to various drug encounters, from Magic Mushrooms to ecstasy and speed, she was always able to learn from her ‘highs’ and ‘trips’, always able to make something productive out of something that should be rather destructive.

They left Alison's apartment after swallowing their pills, and rushed towards the U Bahn station at Kufuerstendamm, where they could take the U1 to get to Warschauer Strasse. On this particular evening, they had decided to go to Suicide Circus, one of the less exclusive clubs in Berlin, but what it lacked in exclusivity, it certainly made up for in good taste in music.

They arrived at the club's entrance, shortly after 23:30, which was suitably early for a club night, but since the ecstasy would be kicking in soon, they decided to head on in anyways, even if they were one of the only people there. The techno music boomed, and steadily built itself up with each step the two girls

took towards the inside of the club. The lights were flashing, brightly and vividly, and despite the two girls expecting to see only a few random people present, they were pleasantly surprised by the sight of a packed room, filled with people jumping up and down, perhaps trying to make the floor cave in.

The pumping of the music began initiating the drug's effects, and as Alison and Claire shared a knowing glance with each other before continuing towards the dancefloor to join the masses, they knew that this night would be one to remember.

"I'll see you on the other side!" shouted Alison, hoping she was loud enough to be heard over the invasive base erupting from the speakers. Claire seemed to hear, as she reacted by smiling and hugging her friend.

"I'll see you on the other side!" she responded, shouting directly into Alison's ear. They didn't need to say anymore, or do anything else. They knew where the other side lay, and they knew what lay on the other side. It was about the travels, the trip to the other side, which differed every time. And so they parted, Claire going straight into the middle of the dancefloor, surely looking for an average looking guy to indulge in a one night stand with, and Alison heading towards the outskirts of the cluster of people, where she always spent her trance like evenings.

She danced and danced for what must have been an hour and a half at least, only stopping now and then to take hasty gulps from her water bottle. As the music surrounded and breathed through her, she forgot everything else which had happened of late, and became fixated only on her film idea. The rejections which she had suffered, even the belittling she had undeservingly received from Harald Clay, melted away as she became a raw source of energy which bustled and hummed with even newer ideas. How she would shoot certain scenes, how she wanted her actors to sound like, all the finest details of a movie that truly only existed in her mind were becoming so real, and so possible.

Stepping away from the dancefloor, Alison moved towards a set of couches which seemed to smile at her and invite her over to take a seat. She obliged and calmly walked towards them, a warm feeling deep within her stomach radiating and glowing, keeping her warm like an open fire. She fumbled for her notebook, after sitting down, and turned to the last few pages. She began to write, scribble perhaps for lack of a better word, words and names which swum loosely around her brain. She knew that in the morning she would be able to patch them together, as random as the words seemed, they always had some kind of a connection, a map of sorts which Alison could easily decode, but the gradual filling up of her special notebook, worried her ever so slightly. The worries would surely have been a lot greater, if not for the drugs which reassured her, but the idea had come such a long way, grown so much since its initial birth. And yet

she had no way to bring it to life, and it scared her, that it would die as words on a forlorn notebook, because she didn't even own the little courage, to show someone that notebook.

Once the last word in her mind had been written down, she carefully packed away the notebook into her handbag, and stood up to leave. She looked at her watch, observing that it was only 01:10, pretty early in the night as well as her trip.

She disregarded this observation however, and decided to head home, making sure to let Claire know that she was leaving, by messaging her on WhatsApp. It was almost routine that the two would leave at separate times. Sometimes Claire would be the early one, sometimes like on this evening, it would be Alison. It depended completely on the situation, but both parties were happy with the way it was and so as Alison watched as Claire eagerly grinded on a mid-twenties guy with a beard, she blew her a weak kiss, not expecting in the slightest to be noticed at all. With that, she departed, inhaling the thick sweat stained air of the club, one last time, before stumbling through the exit door.

When Alison woke up the next morning, the first thing she noticed was the mild headache which usually accompanied an evening out on ecstasy. The second thing she noticed, was the time on the digital clock board hanging above her double bed. 15:00. She sighed. It wasn't uncommon for her to wake up at such a late hour after a night out, but the last thing she remembered was leaving the club at 01:15. Quarter past one in the morning, was not a late time to be leaving a club, and she'd have gotten home latest at two in the morning. Something wasn't right. Then she noticed the crude handwriting on the palm of her hand. *Script is on Computer, it's amazing.*

Her breathing slowed as her mind literally emptied itself and she sprung with an impressive mobility out of her bed. She had one goal in mind. To turn on her computer. If the reason for her late awakening was what she thought it might be, the day might be off to an incredible start.

The pulsating apple logo appeared on the large black iMac screen, accompanied by the usual simplistic loading bar. She held her breath as the desktop materialized, and in the very corner below the trash can, a single file loomed, titled *Disappointment and Crushed Dreams – Rough draft*. She double clicked, and felt a wave of utter accomplishment, wash over her as the first page gazed up at her. She had written the script when she had gotten home, it was 65 pages long, not quite the length of a feature film, but since no one wanted to produce it as such, it didn't have to be a feature film.

A tear dropped from her right eye, and splashed onto the white keys of the keyboard. She had a script, and at the bottom of that script she even had a list of actors she wanted to use. She had everything, she could actually make this movie, but then again, she couldn't, she didn't have the money.

Inspired by a fresh will to do what she knew she must, she clicked on the safari icon, and navigated her way, to kickstarter.com. It was all happening, very quickly, but she knew she could do it now, and she knew that ultimately, one way she would. Whether *this way* was the *right way*, she did not know. But her fingers were moving a lot faster than her thoughts, typing away, one step ahead in a continuous loop.

'Would you like to start a new project?' Alison clicked yes. 'Are you over 18 years old?' Alison chuckled out of sheer amusement, and again clicked yes. 'Have you used kickstarter.com to fund a project before?' Alison at last hesitated, as these somewhat toxic words looked up at her in a taunting manner.

"I haven't used kickstarter.com to fund a project before, because I've never needed to fund a project *independently* before" she said to herself, unsure whether she should continue, as the mouse hovered above the 'NO' button. Seconds passed, and an unwelcomed sickening feeling begun spreading throughout Alison's buzzing body. Did she want to do this? The film was about portraying her message, sending it out to the world, to *improve* the world. This wasn't about her making money, but did she have to stoop so low to give anyone the power to invest? Radicals, creeps, absolutely anyone?

She clicked the button to continue, more by accident, but as soon as the next page had presented itself, the feeling within her had somewhat subsided, encouraging her to continue with the task. 'On this page, please describe your project and give incentives for people to donate towards your cause. Make sure to provide pictures and other Medias which may attract benefactors'. Alison scrolled down until she could at last see the inviting 'description' box, which stretched nicely across the entire page. She smiled and started typing, the web of words she had accumulated over the past few months, literally spitting out of her finger tips. There was no stopping her now, at least nothing worth mentioning besides the still lingering feeling inside her stomach.

In light of the ongoing Refugee Crisis, which plays such a prominent role in everyone's lives here in Europe, I have taken it upon myself to create a movie which hopefully successfully portrays the mixed feelings most Europeans have about Refugees in their countries. To portray these mixed feelings, I will be using certain cinematic techniques which will most probably be frowned upon by many of the movie's viewers. A shock factor, so to speak. The goal of this project is not to be overly politically correct, but rather to send an important message to the viewers, and hopefully the world. An example of a technique I will be using, is, instead of...

Alison paused, leaving only a moment to think. She wasn't quite ready for the big reveal, she wanted it to literally smack the reader in the face, but to find the perfect formulation for that, she knew she needed time. She continued on, deciding to return to her revolutionary techniques, later in the description.

The movie has a script, title, list of potential actors (who have not yet been contacted, but should be onboard for such an important project), as well as a director (me, Alison Creed (award winner)), and would be ready to start it's shooting as soon as the budget has been raised. The only reason I come to the public to create this, surely, masterpiece of a film, is because the producers of the big studios have no interest in qualitative films anymore. If it's not 'Mission Impossible', or some other cheaply thought of franchise that they can make action figurines out of to force down little children's throats, it won't be funded by a studio.

Alison's fingers ceased to type as she carefully reread what she had written so far. It was a great description, based on other film descriptions she had read on kickstarter.com, she would even say it was one of the best. But that was not why she was yet again hesitating. There was something inside her, which brought her to a halt, something inside her which made her again ponder whether she really should continue with setting up the project through a crowdfunding site.

Her fingers gently tapped the keys, without actually pressing any of them, as she stared at what she had written so far. 1302 characters. There was space for at least 10000 more, and the question wasn't whether she could fill those blanks, but whether she wanted to send her project out like this, through the *public*. She wanted, no, actually she needed, this to be her thing, and she knew the danger existed that through crowdfunding, she had no control over who funded her project, whether they were political extremists or other radicals, she couldn't face the danger of her message being thwarted by any one person.

She scrolled to the top of the page where the kickstarter.com 'instructions' still remained. 'On this page, please describe your project and give incentives for people to donate-' Alison stopped reading, and just like that, through the help of one word, made up her mind. Crowdfunding was not the way she wanted to go, she was not the kind of person who was looking for people to *donate* towards her cause. It wasn't even a cause, it was an artistic project, a project to make the people realize how despicable this society was. No, she did not want, *donations*.

She closed the kickstarter.com page and looked at the clock in the top right corner of the screen. Although she was slightly pleased with herself, Alison realized that 60 minutes after discovering the script, she was still in the exact same place she had been, prior – and post - to the seven rejections of the previous day. No money. Sure, she had a script now, and a list of powerful actors, but what was coming to be known to Alison as the bane of her existence, was still very real, and still, showed no hopes of being solved.

She picked up her phone which was attached to the computer (she presumed that she had put it there the night before), and unlocked it, to see if Claire had responded to her bids of farewell from the club. No new messages, but Claire had seen hers, which usually meant something like; “Thank you for letting me know you’re alive, I’m alive too, but there’s this cute guy I need to go spend some quality time with now”. Alison closed WhatsApp and opened her photo gallery, something she seldom did on the account that she had very few pictures saved on her phone, and those which she did have often made her quite emotional.

The picture she now faced, was of her and her brother, Pierre Creed, on a windy bridge in Ireland sometime the year before. They had decided to go on a holiday together to strengthen their brotherly, sisterly bond, which had come to wither and weaken over the years apart. They had planned to make trips like the one in the picture an annual event, so that they could always maintain this bond. But alas, the annual holiday plan hadn’t exactly gone as planned, due to, *unforeseen* circumstances, but they were still close, just differently.

Alison weakly smiled, as various memories of her brother and her, flowed through her mind and let faint cracks of light shine through the darkness. She had arrived at a crossroad in her life, a crossroad whose destinations were clouded from Alison’s view, so if she were to stumble she would do so blindly. Yesterday, she had needed Claire, Claire who was always there for her and Claire who would do anything to make her smile. But today, she needed her brother, Pierre, for her brother was the one who would pick a path, and if it was the wrong path for her, she would know, and it would be thanks to him.

She called the number, which she knew from memory, on her house phone, and waited two short seconds as the connection was made. “Good afternoon, how can I help you?” said the familiar voice on the other line.

“I’d like to speak to my brother, Pierre Creed. Is he available right now?” asked Alison.

“You’re in luck, its exercise time for them now. I’ll call him over Ms. Creed”.

The phone was placed on a presumably flat surface, and Alison could hear faint shouting in the background, as the man went to find her brother. She waited quite a while, two minutes, maybe three, but she was accustomed to the delay. She was fortunate enough to be able to even call, many people didn’t have the privilege which she worked for.

“Alison, is that you?” said an excited voice as the receiver was picked up again.

“Yes Pierre, it’s me! How are you my brother?”

“Well I only got into two fights this whole week, which is a pretty good improvement from the last few. And we got Hamburgers and Chips yesterday, which was also quite special. Apparently it’s a monthly thing or something, but only specific blocks get them on specific months, and so on, and so on... Basically, I’m fine” his voice trailed off as he remembered that his sister only asked in a rhetorical sense. She had told him before that she didn’t want any detailed descriptions of what, ‘Life on the inside’ was really like for her brother, it was hard enough knowing where he was and why he was there.

“Anyways, how have you been?” he asked, taking the short silence from the other line as a hint to change topics.

“I’m not so good actually. I still haven’t found funding for the movie I’m making, and I’ve decided that I also don’t want to crowdfund to make it, call me pompous for all I care, it’s art, not some startup, and so basically, I’m still at square one although I do have a script and list of actors now” said Alison, thankful for the opportunity to talk about something other than Pierre’s life. Pierre wasn’t offended that his sister had gotten straight to the point, considering how often she would visit him in the month, and how often she would call him during the week, he simply liked to hear the sound of her voice, and talking about her problems were always a lot easier than talking about his.

“What are you going to call it?” he asked.

Alison smiled. Pierre always asked the right questions, he knew that there was no way in solving a problem, if the core of that problem was bad feelings, so he liked to loosen Alison up first, get her conversing before he sought to help. “I’m going to call it Disappointment and Crushed Dreams, and then add a subtitle to describe it better. What do you think?” she asked.

A dry chuckle echoed through the phone as Pierre laughed out loud. “That sounds like my life’s story, I love it!” he replied, making Alison laugh too. “Do you still feel like you absolutely need to make this movie?”

“More than ever now, if I don’t do it, then I feel like there’s no more point in me being a film director anymore. And it’s essential to the public too, I feel like I’m withholding some gift from the world by not making it!” exclaimed Alison.

“My sister, the forever humble one,” said Pierre, jokingly before continuing, “Have you thought about independently funding it?” he asked.

“Pierre, we’re talking about like half a million Euros here, this isn’t just going to be some ‘cut and paste’ job” she replied. The thought certainly had crossed her mind, but she wasn’t all too sure about going down to the bank and taking out most of what she owned to make this movie. She was certain that the movie

would be a success, but what five hundred thousand euros missing from her net worth meant, was quite a big deal.

“Well you have that kind of money, sister. I know for a fact you do. The real question here seems to me if you trust yourself enough to be able to make the movie you think you can make. You seem pretty positive that it would break even at the very least” responded Pierre, illuminating the two paths of the crossroad Alison stood before.

She knew, without too much thought upon the matter, that Pierre was right. If she funded the film herself, she would have total control, and total artistic freedom to do as she pleased. If she chose not to fund it herself, the movie would remain as it was, words on paper, an idea in a mind.

“Pierre, I think I need to go fund this movie myself. Get the money, today still, and do everything myself!” Alison’s excitement was palpable, and extended through the digital connection her and her brother were currently sharing.

“I’m glad I was able to help so easily,” said Pierre, slightly bewildered by his sister’s lack of confidence, “I’m glad that you’re going to do it, because I think you know, that I know, that you can do it. And well, with all this knowing there’s not a lot you can go wrong with I would say.”

Alison smiled at her brother’s words. “I think I was meant to do it this way, but I just couldn’t bring myself to accept it. It was always there, at the very back of my head, but I needed my big brother to come and get it out of me” she said.

Pierre laughed. “I really didn’t do that much! But you’re welcome of course”. Alison’s heart raced as the production process begun mapping itself inside her brain. Get the money, hire the actors, hire the equipment, hire the set, hire the crew, start the shooting, edit, finish, shock the world. She was going to do it, and she was going to do it without the help of big time producers, or some crowdfunding benefactors who wanted to control her. This was her baby, it had always been her baby, so it was only right that she raise it completely.

“Pierre, I’m going to come visit you soon, I need to start, today still. I love you so much!” she shouted into the phone. She felt a little bad about abandoning him so quickly. He had helped her so much, by ultimately doing so little, and yet here she was, wanting to get on with her beautiful life.

“I understand ‘sis. Make me proud, don’t let me rot in here!” He took the initiative and hung up the phone, allowing Alison to go get dressed so she could still go to her bank, before it closed for the day. Had she been there to see her brother, instead of speaking with him over the phone, and had she not been so

fixated on continuing her project, she may have picked up the sadness in his voice, and seen the tears roll down his cheeks, as his sister left him, to be eaten by the wolves.

Two months later

The first day of shooting had gone splendidly well. Alison was more than pleased with everyone's hard work, she found it quite hard to believe how far they'd all come in the two months since deciding to fund the project herself. As expected, the actors she'd casted for her project had jumped at the opportunity to star in something so critical and important, and the rest of the crew had been equally interested. Selling art to artists, was a hell of a lot easier than selling art to businessmen, Alison had come to conclude, and although it had always been obvious, it gave her mind some ease that she had been rejected not on the premise of a terrible idea, but rather on the lack of understanding of what makes a film great and memorable.

The joy she had received from being able to shout "Great work people, that's it for today! Let's meet back here tomorrow for another productive day!" was nothing short from fulfilling. As the idea had slowly formed into an actual movie over the past two months, there had been moments where her nerves had overtaken her, and shaken her with worry, but she had always been able to motor on, for the idea had solidified and taken root.

She was now sitting patiently in a steel chair in the prison's visitor area, waiting for her brother to come through the cold blue doors opposite her. She was excited to finally tell him more about the movie, although she was still unsure about how much she should tell him, given his beliefs and all. She decided that small talk would best be skipped today, since it was him who had made her realize her potential, that what she actually needed to do and could do, was well within her grasp.

The automatic doors opened, and Pierre walked through, striding casually without a worry in the world. His hair was kempt, and his beard neatly trimmed, and although he sat on the wrong end of the table, he smiled at the sight of his sister, who never failed to give him joy.

"How's it hanging 'sis. You look well".

She did look well, and had indeed been well those past 60 odd days or so, for doing something every day which felt absolutely right, had given her a health which vitamins could not. She took a deep breath and cracked her knuckles to relieve some of the tension.

"I've decided on a subtitle for my movie now. I'm going to call it, Disappointment and Crushed Dreams – From the Xenophobes Eyes, for the Xenophobes eyes." It was one sentence, a simple one at that,

but she knew it would explain everything to her brother, why the movie had not been made sooner. “You were my inspiration”.

Pierre’s dark brown eyes, stared blankly at Alison, for what must have been several minutes of complete silence. A tear formed eventually, and trickled slowly down his right cheek, but more did not follow, his tears had run dry. He opened his mouth, tremblingly he spoke. “I’m sorry, my sister. I’m sorry”.

Alison Creed’s film idea, had stemmed from a lifelong observation of society’s boa constrictor grip on political correctness. Instances like the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau being fired for saying “Well you know the American’s, they do like their maple syrup”, all led to Alison being pretty convinced that she had to be the one to let the world know, that political correctness had gone too far. There was a fine line between acceptable things to say, and non-acceptable things to say, Alison was not so naïve as to ignore this fact, but she had seen the censorship of the world grow far too harsh, and so had ultimately decided to make a movie which would shock the world in such a way as to make it realize the error of its ways.

It so happened that in the time after Alison decided she was going to make this movie, two external factors occurred which would ultimately decide the fate of the movie, and how the message against political correctness, could successfully be portrayed. The first of the two events, was the civil war in Syria, which brought millions of refugees into Europe, and made the whole political correctness issue even greater. Xenophobes would quickly be defined as anyone who said anything remotely to do with ‘sand’ or ‘camels’. It was a sad state of affairs, which had ultimately come about, and especially since, because of the tight political correctness ‘grip’, the real Xenophobes who hid in the shadows, were often overlooked.

Such a ‘real’ Xenophobe, was Alison’s Brother Pierre, who had gotten in with a bad group of friends while studying in Paris, and developed very anti-immigrant views. He was very quickly influenced by this group of friends, to return to Berlin, and partake in a series of attacks against refugees. After the first attack, the murder of two Syrian men, Pierre and his accomplices were quickly arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. The German government had taken it upon themselves to make an example of such Xenophobes, and so, quite like that, Pierre had thrown his life away, as well as inspired his dear sister, to create a film, not only to prevent such attacks and any other form of xenophobia against refugees, but to successfully bring across her harshest of judgements against political correctness.

Her entire film would portray Europeans as monkeys, and Refugees as Camels, and similarly to Animal farm, the voices would be dubbed. The story would follow a group of Europeans, which is

ultimately split between two further separate groups. Those who are the ‘real’ Xenophobes, like Pierre Creed, and those that are categorized into this group, simply because of some of the things they say.

Alison’s masterpiece, a half a million euro production, would follow a group of monkeys and camels, as they tackled issues like political correctness and alienation. It *could* go on to win Alison a Nobel Prize, just because in that frightful society, no one else had the courage to make a statement. Or it *could* go on to be one of the most shunned films ever created, because of its ill intent to indoctrinate the people.

Alison had never quite known, and still didn’t quite know, whether she played a monkey, or a camel. But she certainly felt that if one thing was true, an animal should be an animal, just as a human should be a human.