

## **“NEW START CLEANERS” by Alexander Lee-Rekers**

*A small, studio apartment covered in blood and viscera. POLLY and GRETA, dressed in cleaning gear from head to toe, mop big red stains into the floor.*

**GRETA:** I don't think we're making it any better. What colour's the floor supposed to be?

**POLLY:** No idea. But I reckon if the answer's not "red", the decor is fucked... Try to mop towards the centre, to where I'm mopping. We can scoop it all up in one go.

*They keep mopping.*

**GRETA:** Any idea who he was?

**POLLY:** Nobody nice. Found a pretty racist cartoon framed in the study.

**GRETA:** Is that supposed to make it better?

**POLLY:** I think so. You want to come in and mop up some sweet old lady who fell over and got half-eaten by poodles?

*From the bathroom, sounds of a person throwing up.*

**GRETA:** You all right, Beth?

**BETH:** (Off-stage.) I'm fine...

**POLLY:** It's messy, that's for sure. But it's the best we coulda hoped for on our first job. After this, we'll be properly-

**GRETA:** Traumatized?

**POLLY:** Desensitized. Like teenaged boys with video games.

**GRETA:** I have to stop. I need to take a break.

*GRETA leans her mop against the couch and sits down. She tilts her head back and groans.*

**POLLY:** Now what?

**GRETA:** There's more blood on the ceiling. How'd he get up there?!

**POLLY:** Do you not want to do this, Greta? Is this too hard? Because the attitude I'm getting makes me think you don't want to be here.

**GRETA:** When you said “I’ve got a business venture” I thought we’d be making candles.

**POLLY:** In this economy? This is the work that’s going, Greta. There’s a lot of demand, sorry to say, and we’re the supply!

**GRETA:** Why does it feel like we’re here because you’ve got a point to make?

*GRETA stands. A tense silence. From the kitchen area, BETH emerges with three tea mugs in her hands, which she places down on the coffee table. She looks grim, pale.*

**BETH:** Found some tummy tea in the kitchen. Didn’t think he’d mind.

**POLLY:** It’s the least he can do at this point.

**GRETA:** How do you feel?

**BETH:** Better. I’m going to add the bathroom to my cleaning duties.

**POLLY:** ‘ppreciate it.

**BETH:** I really hope I’m cut out for this, Polly. I appreciate the job. I just need to get over the-

**POLLY:** Blood?

**GRETA:** Brains?

**BETH:** Photos. There’s photos of him with his family all over.

**POLLY:** I hadn’t noticed.

**GRETA:** Why don’t you sit down for a bit, Beth? We’ll finish mopping in here and then start on the hallway.

**BETH:** I’ll be all right in a minute. Then I’d like to keep going. You know Mike said I wouldn’t last the morning? It was a joke, he didn’t mean anything by it.

**POLLY:** But it still pissed you off.

*BETH nods.*

**GRETA:** I can’t imagine Mike doing this.

**BETH:** Cleaning?

**GRETA:** That either.

**BETH:** He can't even cut up bait when he takes me fishing.

**POLLY:** Christ, he's fucking useless... Nice guy, all the same-

**BETH:** It's all right.

**GRETA:** Well you know what? You've proven him wrong already. It's coming up to lunch time now, and you're still here.

**POLLY:** Yeah, fuck him!

**GRETA:** You could go get us a sandwich from that place across the road. *(To Polly.)* You'll have a sandwich, won't you?

**POLLY:** I'll have a sandwich. Sandwich, Greta?

**GRETA:** I'll have a sandwich.

**BETH:** I really do appreciate the job.

**POLLY:** Yeah, you said that.

**GRETA:** I appreciate it, too.

**POLLY:** Good-o. No need to get mushy.

**BETH:** Let's finish the living room and we can all head out. Get some air.

*The three of them resume cleaning.*

**POLLY:** We could make candles on the weekend.