

“NIGHT BAKERY” by Alexander Lee-Rekers (StageMilk, 2025)

CASSANDRA thinks quick and speaks quicker. She speaks to a potential employer at a job interview.

CASSANDRA: A personal strength of mine? I am full of good ideas. Always have been. Ever since I was very young, my brain has seen connections, you know? Like a maths genius, but instead of numbers ... in opportunities, business, life.

I mean, I have ideas that would turn this place on its head. If I told you half of what I've got planned, you'd look at me like some time traveller to the dark ages, my pockets full of flashlights and antibiotics. Not that this place is in the dark ages, mind you. In fact, it seems like just the kind of place where my ideas could really flourish.

Um ... no. I can't. Until very recently, that was a personal weakness of mine. I couldn't help sharing my ideas, and then before you know it they were out there and I was left with nothing. I can give you an example, because this one's from a few years ago:

When I was younger I was dating this economics major, and he was trying to come up with something to pitch in his business class that week. And out of nowhere, I said one of those things that was so brilliant it sounded completely stupid: "Night bakery." He said: "Night bakery?" And I said: "Yeah, it's a bakery that opens ... at night." Because bakers work from really early in the morning so they're ready for people around breakfast- You probably know this- *He didn't*- Anyway: "So at a night bakery, the bakers would work through the *day* and then open around dinner time." "Who would even come to a night bakery?" he said. "Restaurants! People having soup for dinner, people who forgot to buy dessert to take to a party! And what about people coming home late after a night out? Imagine being blind drunk and stumbling across a bakery at two in the morning selling chocolate croissants ... you'd buy fifty!"

We broke up a few months later. A year after that, he dropped out of school and opened a bakery called Nocturne. It's exactly what you think it is.

Do you have any other questions for me? I have some for you, and I'm keen to get started.