

BETWEEN THE CHAIRS

A Play in Two Acts by

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## **CHARACTERS**

NORA

A therapist in her 40s or 50s.  
Hopeless romantic.

AUDREY

A woman in her 20s or 30s.  
Highly confident and energetic.  
Anger issues.

PAUL

A man in his 20s or 30s.  
Avoids any form of conflict.

GABRIEL

A woman in her 40s or 50s.  
Pure realist.

ACT ONE

1 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

1

AUDREY is sitting on a couch opposite NORA, who is placed in a comfortable armchair. The room is filled with books, dimmed lights and quaint coffee tables. So many coffee tables.

AUDREY

What do you want me to say?

NORA

How do you mean?

AUDREY

How should I feel about it?

NORA

That's not up to me.

AUDREY

But I wish it was.

NORA

Why?

AUDREY

Because I don't feel how I'm supposed to feel.

NORA

How are you supposed to feel?

AUDREY

Remorseful! Guilty! Ashamed! I threw a massive fricking candy jar at the ground, god damn it!

NORA

Well, apparently he deserved it.

AUDREY

I said that he deserved it!

NORA

Did he not? I find it very interesting that you seem to entertain the idea of having to feel a certain way.

AUDREY

Isn't this the point of me coming to therapy? Don't you want me to feel remorseful? I'm sure the judge wants  
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)  
me to. Why else force anger  
management on me?  
(beat)  
At least ask me what kind of candy  
it was.

NORA  
Does it matter?

AUDREY  
It was gummy worms. I hate them!

NORA  
If I understand you correctly,  
you're saying that there's only one  
way to have reacted in this  
situation - which wasn't the way you  
picked.

AUDREY  
Don't you always say I should react  
calmer , do a breathing exercise and  
what not?

NORA  
Do I sound like that?

Audrey takes a moment to reply.

AUDREY  
Isn't it enough that I want to feel  
that way because I believe it would  
make me normal?

NORA  
I'm glad you say you want to feel  
remorseful.

AUDREY  
But you aren't glad for my reason of  
wanting to feel like that.

NORA  
You don't have to be normal.

AUDREY  
I don't even want to be.  
(beat)  
I don't mind people thinking I did  
something wrong, but I hate them  
telling me so. Does that make sense?

NORA  
Of course it does.

AUDREY

I know.

(beat)

Well, I won't go into *that* store anymore.

Both wait for the other person to continue.

NORA

It must be tou-

AUDREY

I feel lonely.

Nora leans forward.

NORA

Tell me more.

AUDREY

In any way. In every way! I wish there was someone.

NORA

Someone?

AUDREY

Oh, you know what I mean!

NORA

I don't. It's something we haven't discussed yet.

AUDREY

Someone to talk to, someone who looks out for me, someone who sticks to my side.

NORA

I take it you mean a partner?

AUDREY

Yes.

NORA

A man or a woman?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

Geez, you're progressive! I'm thinking of a man. Not that there'd be anything wrong with being gay!

NORA

No offence taken.

AUDREY  
Why would it offend you?

NORA  
(stumbling)  
Political correctness. Tell me more  
about this man then.

AUDREY  
There's no one precisely. I'm just  
sick of being alone. I feel like I  
have to do it all by myself. It's  
always me against the world. Why  
can't the world come to me? Why  
can't it be at least "me and  
somebody else" against the world?

NORA  
(joking)  
How about "me with the world"?

AUDREY  
(laughs)  
I'm not at that stage yet, thanks.

NORA  
How do you think a relationship  
would change your current situation?  
(beat)  
Is it a relationship you're after?

AUDREY  
Yes, of course.

NORA  
(surprised)  
Oh. What will you do about it?

AUDREY  
You seem so surprised. Why? Did you  
think I was gay?

NORA  
No!  
(beat)  
I mean, that wouldn't be a problem,  
would it?

AUDREY  
What? Being gay or you thinking I  
was gay?

NORA  
Either?

AUDREY

It wouldn't be a problem, no. I find women very attractive actually.

(beat)

You know me, I'm goal-oriented. I like to keep things neatly in check - one issue at a time.

NORA

(laughs)

So I realised. But things aren't always that neatly compartmentalised in our lives.

AUDREY

Exactly! But I thought about what you said last time.

Nora does not interrupt Audrey, although the question "Which is?" seems to linger in the air.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

It probably is true that most things in my life, how I react to certain things and how I get into crazy situations, all influence each other.

NORA

(contained excitement)

It is true.

AUDREY

So here I am, sharing my feelings: I feel lonely.

Nora looks at the clock next to Audrey and is visibly inconvenienced.

NORA

I'm afraid it's about time for us. I'm really sorry.

AUDREY

Just when things were starting to heat up.

NORA

I know. But I think that you made wonderful progress today. Let's set ourselves some homework, shall we?

AUDREY

Homework? Gee, this judge knew how to punish me.

NORA

It will be fun! I want you to put yourself into a situation this week which usually makes you angry.

AUDREY

You got it, that's an easy one for me. But isn't that what we want to do?

NORA

Not really! What I want you to do is to try the visualisation exercises you have been practising, right when that situation happens.

AUDREY

Woah. That sounds hard.

NORA

(excited)

It is!

AUDREY

(unsure)

I'll try.

Audrey rummages through her purse and hands Nora a handful of banknotes.

NORA

Thank you.

AUDREY

(getting up)

See you next week.

Nora opens the door for Audrey and leads her out the room.

NORA

See you next week, Audrey.

Audrey leaves through the door. Nora is turning visibly relaxed once alone. She starts to clear the room: putting away glasses, pouring out the water bottle, generally keeping busy. Her phone rings and she picks up.

NORA

Hello, sweetie!

(beat)

Of course, no problem.

(beat)

Oh, stop it. You know I won't. Bye.

(beat)

You too.



Nora crams the phone into her tiny bag and gets up to leave. Before closing the door, she draws a short breath and smiles.

2 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - NIGHT

2

Nora enters her apartment.

NORA  
Hello.

GABRIEL (OFF STAGE)  
Hello, darling. Did you get everything?

NORA  
(annoyed)  
Yes.

GABRIEL, a woman Nora's age, enters the living room through the kitchen door and gives her a kiss.

GABRIEL  
Are you okay? You seem preoccupied.

NORA  
I'm fine. It's just, I had this thought while being in a shop... Why do they all have this candy jar on the counter? Who even buys candy in an off-licence.

GABRIEL  
Good question. Isn't this where you just go to get your emergency cigarettes?

NORA  
Exactly.

Nora hands Gabriel some ingredient she had in her purse.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Maybe smoking makes people crave sweets?

GABRIEL  
Is that why all these e-cigarette users smell like sleazy Willy Wonka?

Gabriel rushes off the stage through the kitchen door. Nora makes herself comfortable on the couch and flicks through her phone. Gabriel comes back into the living room with two plates of food. They start to eat.

GABRIEL

How come you even ask about the  
candy jar?

NORA

Oh, it's just something a client  
said.

GABRIEL

What did *they* say?

(beat)

He? She?

NORA

(amused)

You know I won't tell you about my  
clients.

GABRIEL

Oh, why not?

NORA

Because you're still asking me  
weekly how "Ms Smartypants" is  
doing, when I mentioned *once* that  
a client came in with leggings that  
had "live to learn" written on them.

GABRIEL

You said it was written on her bum,  
Nora, on her bum! How is she doing?

NORA

(exhausted)

I haven't seen her in more than a  
year!

GABRIEL

Oh. How come you never told me?

NORA

Because I don't want to tell you  
about my clients, exactly!

GABRIEL

That's not fair, I'm sure you tell  
them all about me!

NORA

Why would I?

GABRIEL

You drive me insane! I'm telling you  
about my colleagues all the time.

NORA

My clients aren't my colleagues and you didn't sign confidentiality agreements with your colleagues.

GABRIEL

I'm sure some would prefer that! Just give me one detail at least.

NORA

If it means that much to you. I'm even going to give you a name: Kathleen.

GABRIEL

Kathleen? Totally a fake name.

NORA

Totally.

GABRIEL

Is that again from one of your movies?

NORA

"My movies"?

GABRIEL

If you could, you'd live in romantic comedies! Is "Kathleen" a name from a Hugh Grant or a Meg Ryan one?

NORA

(self-conscious)

It's a Meg Ryan one.

Nora continues eating her food.

GABRIEL

So, is that it? Where's the info?

NORA

You got a name! I offer you a hand and you take the arm.

GABRIEL

A fake name is not a hand, that's a-a glove!

NORA

Okay, okay, okay. Kathleen...

GABRIEL

(quotation marks in the air)

"Kathleen".

NORA  
Kathleen has to see me because of  
anger issues.

GABRIEL  
Has to see you? Is she a criminal?

NORA  
The court ordered her to see me,  
yep.

GABRIEL  
(excited)  
How horrible! Tell me more.

NORA  
She really opened up today. We've  
never spoken about any personal  
things before. But today she told me  
that she felt lonely.

GABRIEL  
And?

NORA  
And what? That's it.

GABRIEL  
She must have said more.

NORA  
She did, but not to you.

GABRIEL  
Come on, Nora! What kind of partner  
does she want? A man, a woman?

NORA  
I asked her the same thing - she  
said a man.

GABRIEL  
You told her you're gay?

NORA  
No! Also, you're my first  
girlfriend.

GABRIEL  
Don't start that again.

NORA  
Oh, honey, stop worrying about it. I  
don't want a man, I want you.

GABRIEL

I know.

(beat)

So, what are you going to do about  
"Kathleen"?

NORA

What do you mean?

GABRIEL

Well, what's the plan?

NORA

I can't heal people with a whip of a  
wand! Although I wish I could.

GABRIEL

You're right, I'm being stupid. It's  
their life after all.

NORA

Yeah.

3 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

3

Nora sits together with PAUL.

NORA

So, tell me, how did your date go?

PAUL

Oh, I almost forgot about it.

Nora leans more excitedly forward the more Paul speaks.

PAUL (CONT'D)

It went really well, you see, we  
wanted to meet in a café, and then I  
took the tube, and I arrived, I had  
a really nice latte, with a heart in  
the foam, you know?, and I was  
really well dressed, and...

NORA

And?

PAUL

And then she texted me "Sorry, I'm  
really tired this evening." But the  
coffee was wonderful!

NORA

(unsure)

Okay?

PAUL  
You say I should cherish the small  
things in life.

NORA  
Aren't you sad about her not coming?

PAUL  
I'm trying this positivity thing  
you're always on about.

NORA  
(amused)  
Positivity doesn't mean repressing,  
Paul! I'm really sorry to hear that  
she stood you up. How did you react?

PAUL  
(insincere)  
I took it with a stride!  
(beat)  
Who am I kidding. I felt crushed.  
Why couldn't she tell me earlier?

NORA  
Could we come up with possibilities?

PAUL  
Like what - her mother died? Or she  
got kidnapped. She said she was  
tired. She might be narcoleptic!

NORA  
It doesn't sound like something one  
expects to hear from an adult woman.

PAUL  
No, it doesn't. It's like I always  
say. Something must be wrong with  
me.

NORA  
Would somebody who stands you up  
like this really would be someone  
you'd consider going out with?

PAUL  
Not really.

NORA  
There you go.

PAUL  
But a person I'd like to sleep with!  
(beat)  
Is that a bad thing to say?

NORA

It's fine to want human contact.

PAUL

I guess that's why they call it "human". At least something that's not wrong with me.

NORA

Same question as usual: What is wrong with you?

PAUL

I don't know! That's why I'm coming!

NORA

(kind)

Two years of therapy and we still don't know.

PAUL

See, that's how wrong I am!

NORA

I disagree with you. But we had this conversation already.

PAUL

That's okay, I forgive you.

NORA

(amused)

Thanks.

PAUL

Two years and nothing really changed. I wish there was someone so badly.

NORA

Well, are there any situations where you expose yourself to women your age, apart from on your smartphone?

PAUL

So on the computer doesn't count?

NORA

No, it doesn't.

Paul contemplates this for a moment.

PAUL

In that case, probably not.

NORA

Why don't we come up with places  
where you could meet a woman?

The two think for a moment.

PAUL

Female employment fares!

NORA

Probably also only for females to  
enter.

PAUL

Damn it.

NORA

You told me that you started drawing  
again.

PAUL

Of course I had to pick the most  
solitary activity in existence!

NORA

Is that something you might do in  
society? Are there drawing groups?

PAUL

Maybe. Or what about I start to  
learn a new language?

NORA

I'm sure you'll have no problem  
coming up with ideas, the way I know  
you. It could be anything. The most  
important thing will be to actually  
go to such an event.

PAUL

I know.

NORA

We haven't had any homework for a  
while, had we? How about we set  
yourself a challenge this week?

PAUL

And that would be?

NORA

I challenge you to go somewhere  
where you could meet women, and to  
talk to one of them.



PAUL  
(worried)  
Puh, right at the money.

NORA  
That's all you have to do. The challenge is *not* to go out and to find the love of your life, it's just to expose yourself to the world.

PAUL  
Still a challenge.

NORA  
Homework isn't easy.

PAUL  
I guess it isn't.

NORA  
(excited)  
You'll do great!  
(beat)  
Just to double-check, you do remember that next Tuesday our session won't happen, right? I'm sorry for the inconvenience, but I really can't do that week.

PAUL  
That's okay, I quite enjoy having a week off once in a while.

NORA  
Perfect. That gives you one more available day of going out meeting someone!

PAUL  
(slightly frightened)  
I guess so.

4 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

4

Nora, Audrey and Paul sit in their usual spots. Alternating lighting indicates to the viewer that we are seeing their two individual sessions compressed into one. Only the lighting on Nora stays consistently on.

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

AUDREY  
You won't believe what happened this weekend.

NORA  
I can only believe it once you told me.

AUDREY  
No, you guess.

NORA  
Did you win the lottery?

AUDREY  
Nope.

NORA  
Did you get a promotion?

AUDREY  
What? Way better.

NORA  
Did you meet a man?

AUDREY  
Haha, yes! Was it so obvious?

NORA  
Maybe a little. How did it happen?

Light on Paul, Audrey in the dark.

PAUL  
I guess you remember the homework from last week you gave me.

NORA  
Did you learn a language that quick?

PAUL  
Haha, no! I went to a board game event.

NORA  
That's a great idea! How come?

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

AUDREY  
I thought it would be a good way of challenging myself dealing with anger. For the homework you gave me, you remember?

NORA  
Do you usually get angry when playing board games?

AUDREY  
 (insincere)  
 No, I don't.  
 (beat, honest)  
 Well, only when I lose. Anyway, so I went to this board game group on Saturday evening in a pub - it was much more crowded than I expected, around five different groups were playing various games.

NORA  
 Which game did you go for?

AUDREY  
 I just went to the one table where people were actually laughing.

Light on Paul, Audrey in the dark.

PAUL  
 I noticed her immediately when she was heading to our table: such a lovely, well put together outfit. She wore blue jeans, a white shirt and white shoes and earrings.

NORA  
 Is this normal for you to remember a woman's outfit?

PAUL  
 I always do.  
 (beat)  
 Nice shoes by the way. Are they new?

NORA  
 (surprised)  
 They are!

PAUL  
 Anyway, so we were just in the middle of our game and there she sits down at the table, ...

Light on Audrey and Paul.

AUDREY  
 Hi. What are you playing?

PAUL  
 Exploding Mittens.

AUDREY  
 Like the gloves?

PAUL  
Yeah, it's hilarious! Do you want to  
join the next round?

AUDREY  
That's what I'm here for!

PAUL  
(self-conscious)  
Yeah. Me too.

Paul shuffles a deck of cards and creates a few piles.

NORA  
So, what did you talk about then?

AUDREY  
Mostly about the game. There were so  
many rules to follow.

PAUL  
You see, this is the mitten. If you  
place this, you prevent your own  
death.

AUDREY  
(to Nora)  
And this guy knew all of them!  
(to Paul)  
A mitten? Who comes up with this!

Audrey places a card.

PAUL  
Nope, you can't put this now.

AUDREY  
But I want to.

PAUL  
Sure. But you can't.

Audrey takes a deep breath and closes her eyes for a few  
seconds.

PAUL  
Are you okay?

AUDREY  
Absolutely. Just putting myself in a  
happy place.

PAUL  
And here isn't? Hey!

AUDREY

Sorry, I just meant because of my an...

(beat, calm)

Forget about it. What can I do then?

(beat, to Nora)

The conversation went mostly along the lines of "No, you can't put this now", "Did you already draw a card?", "It is your turn" and so on.

NORA

That's impressive! You didn't strike me like the... rule-following type.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

I know! But he didn't make me feel bad for not knowing the rules. He said it is okay to not know the first time.

Light only Paul, Audrey in the dark.

PAUL

She was that kind of person you just feel comfortable with, you know? Such a cute laugh and smile, dear Lord! Sweeter than a laughing chocolate cake!

NORA

I'm so happy for you! Will you see her again?

PAUL

(devastated)

No!

NORA

Why not?

PAUL

Because I didn't ask for her number! I didn't dare to ask!

NORA

You can go to that group again, can't you?

PAUL

I can't. I went on Tuesday night, which is usually the time we have our session - like right now! And I  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

don't want to move the session just for her either. And who knows if she would even be there again!

NORA

Isn't there another way to find her? Did you get her name?

PAUL

What, so that I could stalk her online and chat her up on Facebook?

(beat)

Who am I kidding, I already tried that. And LinkedIn. And Instagram. And twitter. Heck, I even tried myspace! There are thousands of Audreys out there, how should I find her?

Nora twitches in surprise.

NORA

Audrey?

PAUL

Like the movie star! Why?

NORA

Oh, nothing. Just a peculiar name.

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

NORA

(scared)

That sounds wonderful! Tell me a bit more about him.

AUDREY

He wore glasses, toused hair, a dress shirt, -

NORA

(anxious)

What's his name?

(calming down)

I mean, did you happen to get his name?

AUDREY

I did! Usually, I'm not good with names, but his feels somehow burnt into my mind: his name is Paul.

Nora drops her notebook in surprise.

AUDREY  
Are you alright?

NORA  
(insincerely laughing)  
Of course. I'm just a bit clumsy,  
that's all. When did this all happen  
again?

AUDREY  
On Tuesday.

NORA  
On Tuesday? ... Such a wonderful  
treat after Mondays.

AUDREY  
I thought the same!

NORA  
So, ... when will you see him again?

AUDREY  
(sad)  
I won't!

NORA  
You didn't get his number?

AUDREY  
No. He didn't ask me for mine. And I  
didn't want to come on too strong.

NORA  
That's a shame. Are you on Facebook?  
Or LinkedIn perhaps? Instagram?  
(desperate)  
Myspace?

AUDREY  
I'm on Facebook, yeah?

NORA  
I just thought he might want to  
contact you.

AUDREY  
I hope! I tried to find him online,  
but I couldn't. There are just so  
many Pauls out there.

NORA  
Damn it!

Light on Paul, Audrey in the dark.

PAUL  
 What did I do? I need to see her  
 again! I haven't felt like that in  
 years. Perhaps never!

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

AUDREY  
 I could go again next Tuesday. He  
 might be there again.

NORA  
 On Tuesday?

AUDREY  
 Oh God, do you think I messed up?

NORA  
 Me? Oh, no, I'm just listening.

Light on both Audrey and Paul.

PAUL	AUDREY
I should've asked her.	I wish I'd asked him!

5 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - NIGHT

5

Nora enters the flat in much haste. She claws after the notebook in her purse, throws herself on the couch and starts scribbling.

GABRIEL (OFF STAGE)  
 Hello, darling.

NORA  
 (distracted)  
 Hello.

Gabriel enters the living room.

GABRIEL  
 Do you want a cup of tea?

NORA  
 No, thank you.

Gabriel sits on the couch next to Nora who is manically scribbling.

GABRIEL  
 What are you writing there?

NORA  
 Oh, nothing.



GABRIEL

It doesn't look like nothing. Let me see.

NORA

No!

(defensive)

I mean, uh, I'm a bit shy about it. It's a, a...script for a movie!

GABRIEL

You finally started your own romantic comedy! What's it about?

NORA

It's about a therapist.

GABRIEL

Of course.

NORA

And she's really good at her job. And obviously very good looking!

GABRIEL

I wouldn't have expected otherwise.

NORA

Anyway, you're right, it's a romantic movie. See, she has a... a colleague.

GABRIEL

A man?

NORA

The therapist is not me, you know?

GABRIEL

Just checking.

NORA

Yes, a man. And he used to be her client. But he's now her colleague. And she wants to be with him.

GABRIEL

Sounds wrong.

NORA

Really? Why?

GABRIEL

Because she swore an oath of confidentiality!

NORA

But it's about love, you see?

GABRIEL

Still wrong.

NORA

So then what if the movie was still about a therapist, but perhaps she had two clients who have met each other separately, and now she wants t-

GABRIEL

Still wrong. Even more wrong!

NORA

Oh, come on!

GABRIEL

She swore confidentiality. To both! Her *clients*!

NORA

(disappointed)

I see.

GABRIEL

Gosh, I'm so sorry. I didn't want to ruin your creative mood. But the story might work as a thriller! Because the therapist character you described is clearly doing something wrong. it could be one of those anti-hero stories, you know?

NORA

But isn't it a therapist's job to make people happy?

GABRIEL

Do you think like that?

NORA

(insincere)

Me? Oh, no. I totally agree with you!

GABRIEL

A therapist is about *helping* people with their struggles. But not about tackling those struggles for them.

NORA

Absolutely. Thank you, honey!

6 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - MORNING

6

Nora is alone in the flat, scribbling on a big piece of paper in front of her.

NORA  
(singing like My Fair Lady)  
I think she's got it! I think she's got it!

Nora lifts the big paper from the coffee table and reveals to the viewer a huge, meticulously constructed mind map.

NORA (CONT'D)  
My masterpiece: the perfect meet-cute map! This will be like Meg Ryan meeting Tom Hanks and Billy Crystal combined! I wish somebody would turn this into a movie because I'd definitely watch it! Now all I have to do is wait for a good spot to drop one of those ideas - at least one of them should work, right? How many do I have?  
(counting)  
Forty-nine!  
(beat)  
How Gabs thinks this is crossing the line is beyond me. I'm helping my clients, what's so hard to understand about that? I'm the angel this city needs but doesn't deserve.

7 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

7

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session. During the conversation, Nora often sometimes flicks through her notebook, presumably to look at her "strategy map".

PAUL  
I don't really know what to talk about today.

NORA  
The best conversations just happen unplanned. What did you do this week?

PAUL  
Nothing extraordinary. I still feel stupid for having been so passive, as usual.

NORA  
You're talking about that woman,  
right? Audrey?

PAUL  
Wow, you have a good memory. Yes!

NORA  
Oh, I remember her name, because...  
I'm taking notes of course!

PAUL  
I can't think of anything else,  
really. Now it's Tuesday again and  
she might be again at the event. But  
I can't go. Because I need therapy.

NORA  
Are you mad at me?

PAUL  
No! I'm mad at myself. If I'd be  
normal, I wouldn't need to go to a  
therapist. And I'd have the guts to  
do something so simple as asking a  
girl out.

NORA  
Do you think it's that unnatural to  
see a therapist?

PAUL  
By definition! We're how many  
million in London? Nine? Ten? Out of  
those, people going to a therapist  
are surely not even one per cent.

NORA  
That's true! But perhaps it's an  
issue of being able to afford it?  
And some don't have that eagerness  
to improve as you do.

PAUL  
Do you know many people who go to a  
therapist?

NORA  
I do. But, I am one.

PAUL  
It somehow just doesn't sit right  
with me. I rarely ever tell people.  
I don't think I would tell a  
girlfriend - if I ever had one. Take  
the girl I met last week, for  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
example, Audrey - she'd probably  
think I'm a weirdo.

NORA  
You never know - maybe Audrey is  
telling something similar to her  
therapist right now!

PAUL  
On Tuesday? Can't be, otherwise she  
wouldn't have time to go to that  
board game thing. I do hope she's  
not a Monday person. I hate Mondays  
- and their people.

NORA  
Always remember: when I gave you the  
homework of going out, it was just  
about putting yourself out there.  
Finding the love of your life wasn't  
a requirement.

PAUL  
But what if I did!

NORA  
It's not very realistic that it  
happens on the first try, is it? How  
about you try out another event.

Nora reads from her notes.

NORA  
How about an art gallery with a  
guided tour?

PAUL  
When it comes to art, I'm more into  
literature and music.

Nora strikes through a note.

NORA (CONT'D)  
That's fitting because I saw there  
was a Queen cover band playing this  
week!

PAUL  
I'm more a Blink-182 kind of guy.

Nora strikes through another note.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
(suspicious)  
Should I take dating advice from my  
therapist?

NORA

Why not? Last time you met Audrey.

PAUL

I don't feel like meeting someone. I need to work on myself first. So I've been told.

NORA

Yeah? Whoever said that may not be right.

PAUL

You said that!

NORA

Okay, I'm glad I used the word "may" then.

PAUL

Maybe I should just flee to America. They would like a dork like me.

NORA

Oh, like in "Love, Actually"!

PAUL

I didn't think of that. Now that you say it, I feel quite stupid for bringing it up.

NORA

(muttering)

Why does everyone hate Rom Coms recently?

PAUL

What?

NORA

Just talking to myself, sorry.

PAUL

It sounds fun though, leaving the city for a while. Maybe I should have a day trip.

Nora draws a sharp circle over an area of notes.

NORA

That might work! Where would you go?

PAUL

Puh, I literally just had the idea for a day trip now. Crawley maybe?

Nora takes a lot of notes from here on out.

NORA  
Interesting. Which day are you planning?

PAUL  
Saturday.

NORA  
Morning or afternoon?

PAUL  
Morning. You really want to know, don't you?

NORA  
It's just... professional interest. Are your plans likely to change?

PAUL  
Haha, what's going on! It seems like you're more excited about that trip than me!

NORA  
(overly happy)  
Oh, I'm just excited *for you*, that's all.

PAUL  
I could only do Saturday.

NORA  
Great! Uh, great choice! How will you get there?

PAUL  
By train?

Nora looks at her notes, pondering.

NORA  
I love this day trip idea! I'm just not sure about the train.

PAUL  
What's wrong with it? Everybody loves trains!

NORA  
Are we living in the same city?

PAUL  
I guess you're right.

NORA  
I just thought, don't you think it  
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)  
 would be nice to integrate it with  
 what we were speaking about two  
 sessions ago? What I'm saying is,  
 maybe you could use a car share, get  
 to know a stranger?

PAUL  
 A car share?

NORA  
 Maybe you'll make a new friend!

PAUL  
 That's actually a pretty good idea.

NORA  
 I know!

PAUL  
 A car share to Crawley it is then.  
 On Saturday. I'm already looking  
 forward to it.

NORA  
 Me too! I mean, to next week when  
 you tell me all about it.

8 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

8

Nora and Audrey sit together for their weekly session.

AUDREY  
 I went to the board game meetup  
 again this week.

NORA  
 How was it?

AUDREY  
 Interesting. Did you know that  
 people playing board games mostly  
 just sit there, looking anywhere  
 except into each other's eyes,  
 mostly silent? And apparently, it is  
 not very ladylike when you start  
 cursing at a nerdy university  
 student for cheating.

NORA  
 That sounds completely the opposite  
 to last week when you met - what was  
 his name? Paul?

AUDREY  
 Wow, you have a good memory. Yes!



NORA

I only remember his name because I'm taking notes.

AUDREY

I wanted to see him again. But he wasn't there.

NORA

Don't worry. You might meet again!

AUDREY

In this nine million people city? Sure thing. But that would imply that I would have anything planned where I meet people!

NORA

How do you feel about city life? Does it bother you?

AUDREY

No, I love it!

NORA

(mumbling)

Damn.

(to Audrey)

Do you never feel like needing a day off, somewhere in plain nature?

AUDREY

No, never.

NORA

(mumbling)

Come on!

(to Audrey)

You have no urge to take your car and drive somewhere?

AUDREY

I told you what happened last time I was driving, didn't I?

NORA

That's what I want to get at.

AUDREY

You want me to do a car share? I thought the purpose of this therapy was to get me out of prison, not into!

NORA

You're not going to prison.

AUDREY

That's not how the judge sounded.

NORA

I thought it would be a good idea to tackle the problems head-on and get you into situations where you can start acting on what we've spoken about so much. *If* a problem arises at all.

AUDREY

I can't have another car incident like that again.

NORA

Exactly!

AUDREY

How would that even work? Where would I drive to?

NORA

Oh, it could be any place really, ideally not too far away and well connected. How about... Crawley?

AUDREY

Never heard of it. Must be a dump.

NORA

See - that's the perfect spot to challenge yourself then!

AUDREY

Okay, pretending I'd go to Crawley - how *would* I relax there? In this place of nothing?

NORA

You could go for a long walk without seeing a single soul, nobody to judge. Work on the visualisation techniques a bit.

AUDREY

(playful)

Laa-aame.

NORA

Well, there's also a nice adventure park there for tree climbing.

AUDREY

Okay, that sounds interesting.

NORA

Yeah, you should do it!

AUDREY

Wow, you're quite keen on me going to Crawley.

NORA

Oh, I just thought it would help us get to the bottom of things.

AUDREY

If my therapist says that, then it might be true.

NORA

You'll enjoy it! It seems that our time is up now as well, I'm sorry.

AUDREY

That's okay. See you next week then. If I won't come, call me in prison, okay?

Audrey gets up to leave, Nora gets up to see her out.

NORA

You're so funny at times! I'm looking forward to what you might tell me about the trip. Like what you did, *who you met*...

AUDREY

Let's see. Bye!

Audrey leaves the therapy room.

NORA

(excited)

Yes!

Nora starts typing on her phone.

NORA

Let's help out Paul a little. Three spots left?

Nora begins to call.

NORA

(in a high-pitched girl voice)

Hi, this is Daisy. Yeah, just like the duck, hehehe. I'm calling because of your ad for the car share to Crawley on Saturday? It says you  
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)  
 still have three spots left, is that correct?  
 (beat)  
 Oh, it's even four spots? That's awesome! Can I reserve them?  
 (beat)  
 Yes, all four of them. Me and my girlfriends want to have a fun day, taking some cute photos, drinking something in the sun, ...  
 (beat, machine-gun laughter)  
 Yes, exactly! We'll meet you there at ten a.m. Saturday, sure thing. Byeee!

Nora hangs up the telephone and makes a note in her notebook.

NORA  
 One down, only two more left. There aren't that many people doing car shares in the UK.  
 (smirks)  
 Except for Audrey of course.

9 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - AFTERNOON

9

Gabriel sits on the couch reading a book. Nora sits next to her, scribbling some notes. She suddenly jumps up and paces across the room.

GABRIEL  
 Everything okay with you?

NORA  
 Yes, absolutely.

GABRIEL  
 You seem *a bit* stressed.

NORA  
 I'm just daydreaming, that's all. One of my clients is having an important event happening today.

GABRIEL  
 It's the weekend, time to relax! Anyway, there's no way you can help your client.

NORA  
 I wish there was.

GABRIEL

All you can do is help them change  
their lives themselves, but you  
can't change it yourself. Right?

Nora pauses for a moment longer than necessary.

NORA

I suppose I can't, no.

GABRIEL

Anyway, what's the client up to?

NORA

You know I can't tell you that. Due  
to... professionalism.

GABRIEL

Oh, come on! I've just been nice to  
you!

NORA

My break of confidence isn't bought  
that easily.

GABRIEL

Oh, don't act like you'd be such a  
saint.

NORA

(worried)

What do you mean?

GABRIEL

You know exactly what I mean.

NORA

No, I don't.

GABRIEL

Are you sure?

NORA

I never broke the trust of my cli-

GABRIEL

You never buy new milk when we need  
some.

NORA

(relieved)

Oh. Outside of work. I see.

(beat)

I'll go to the shop right away to  
make up for it.

Nora gets up to leave through the door.

GABRIEL  
Can you bring me some white  
chocolate, please?

NORA  
Of course, honey!

Nora leaves the flat through the door.

10 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

10

By exiting the previous scene through the door, Nora smoothly transitions into this scene, the therapy room. She is alone, waiting.

NORA  
Oh my god, I'm so excited!

Nora lets out a girlish scream.

NORA (CONT'D)  
I can't wait to see Paul's face of  
delight!

Nora looks at the clock.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Still three minutes to go, damn.  
(beat)  
Dang it, let's start now!

Nora opens the door.

NORA  
(into the hallway)  
Paul, come in.

Paul enters the therapy room and sits down.

NORA  
Good evening. How are you feeling  
today?

PAUL  
Terrible. Absolutely terrible.  
Worst. weekend. of my life.

NORA  
(shocked)  
Really? What happened?

PAUL  
The Crawley trip, that's what's  
happened. I knew I should've taken  
the train.

NORA

Seriously?

(trying to be more  
composed)

I mean, I'm just surprised how a  
trip out of the city could be so  
bad.

PAUL

Me too. It was terrible right from  
the start.

The lights change and we now see Audrey in her weekly  
session with Nora.

AUDREY

Oh my god, what a nightmare! I  
forgot how annoying car sharing  
can be. In this case, it was  
super annoying: I had forgotten my  
headphones at home and only realised  
when I was already ten minutes on  
the way to pick up that buffoon. So  
I had to turn around and was twenty  
minutes late. No big deal one might  
think, but this guy was going  
ballistic, calling me seven times!

The lights change, Paul is now standing, looking at his  
clock and bopping his feet up and down.

PAUL

Where is the car? Already thirty  
minutes late and she doesn't even  
pick up the phone!

Just as Paul is speaking these words, a down-beaten car  
comes up at a tremendous speed, coming to an abrupt halt  
in front of Paul.

PAUL

Woah, hold your horses! You could've  
killed me, dang it!

AUDREY

(while getting out of the  
car)

Oh suck it up, I was trying to be so  
quick for you, you were the one  
calling me five times!

Once Audrey steps out of the car, they recognise each  
other and seem quite happy about it.

PAUL

Audrey!

AUDREY

Paul!

PAUL

Audrey\_Toutou\_61 makes a lot more sense now!

AUDREY

Agent\_008 doesn't yet though. This is so funny meeting each other again like this.

PAUL

I know!

Both stand in front of each other with a moment in silence - neither of them knows what to say.

AUDREY

Shall we roll?

PAUL

Sure thing.

The lights change again, indicating that we are back into the therapy room - with Nora and Audrey.

AUDREY

Can you believe that? The person I took to the car share with was Paul, the guy I met at the board game night. Unbelievable, right?

Nora laughs.

NORA

Wow, what a happy coincidence.

Light change: Nora and Paul now in the therapy room.

PAUL

I know. It felt like a once in a lifetime chance, I was so happy to see her.

Light on both Paul and Audrey now.

PAUL

But she ruined it.

AUDREY

But he ruined it.

Light change: Audrey and Paul are sitting both in the car. Audrey is driving.

PAUL

This is my first time doing a car share. How about you?



AUDREY

I have done this loads of times.

PAUL

Oh, really? Your profile didn't have a single review.

AUDREY

(insincere)

Oh, it didn't? Perhaps people thought they couldn't put into words how much they like me.

(beat)

So, is it your first time as a passenger or also as a driver?

PAUL

I can't drive actually. I usually take public transport.

AUDREY

I respect that.

PAUL

Thank you. I just never got around to taking my driver's licence. The only time I would need one is to prove my age when buying alcohol.

AUDREY

Do people still ask you?

PAUL

Yes, many times! Not as often as I'd like though.

AUDREY

That's funny.

(to Nora)

He was so cute, it was hard for me to concentrate on driving.

(to Paul)

Do you mind if I put on some music?

PAUL

Sure.

Audrey turns on the music and we hear quietly in the background an 80s song. Audrey hums along.

PAUL

Oh my god, you know them? I thought I'd be the only one my age.

AUDREY

Are you kidding? They're childhood heroes.

PAUL  
Not where I'm from.

AUDREY  
Where is that, behind the moon?

PAUL  
(to Nora)  
She was so cute, it was dazzling.

Audrey sings along to the chorus.

AUDREY  
Oh, come on! Sing with me!

PAUL  
I get nervous in front of an  
audience.

AUDREY  
It's not a choir.

PAUL  
Good, because a choir would be  
literally my worst nightmare.

AUDREY  
(taunts)  
Do you need your favourite blanket  
to calm you or something? And hot  
chocolate? A song from mommy?

PAUL  
(stressed)  
No! I have Finsbury when I'm  
stressed.

AUDREY  
I'm sorry, I was just teasing you.

PAUL  
That's okay.

AUDREY  
Who's Finsbury?

PAUL  
No one.

AUDREY  
Are you sure?

PAUL  
It's embarrassing.

AUDREY  
Try me.

PAUL  
No, thank you. I'm perfectly fine.

AUDREY  
You tell me a secret, I tell you one.

Paul looks doubtfully at Audrey, takes a deep breath and pulls a teddy bear out of his backpack.

PAUL  
This is Finsbury.

AUDREY  
Oh, he's so cute!

PAUL  
He has that effect on the ladies.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY  
And his name is Finsbury? What's that, a "Railway Bear" knock-off?

NORA  
(to Paul)  
You never told me about Finsbury!

PAUL  
(to Nora)  
Because it's embarrassing. I don't even know why I showed Audrey. I guess I felt comfortable around her.

Paul carefully places Finsbury the bear in the windshield.

PAUL  
(to Audrey)  
I have him since early childhood.

AUDREY  
I used to have a cuddle blanket I took everywhere.

PAUL  
What happened to it?

AUDREY  
My mom threw it out one day.

PAUL  
Oh no! That's horrible!

AUDREY  
(strong)  
Eh, I got over it.

PAUL

Now you tell me your secret.

AUDREY

I told you about my blanket, didn't I?

PAUL

That doesn't count, you're not even embarrassed by it!

AUDREY

Maybe I am?

PAUL

(laughing)

You're not!

AUDREY

(smirks)

Maybe not.

(beat)

So, why are you going to Crawley?

PAUL

Oh, I just needed a day off from city life, some space to think.

AUDREY

Time to think about what?

PAUL

That's quite an intimate question for the start.

(to Nora)

I shouldn't have said anything. I even showed her Finsbury! How is it her business what I'm doing there? Now I probably even gave her ammunition.

AUDREY

Not so shy, Agent 008!

PAUL

I just want to go for a walk and have a big lunch somewhere in a remote pub where you can get a full meal for the price of a bear in the city.

AUDREY

You really need to watch out with these country pubs. Sometimes they serve you food so old that you throw up right on the spot!

Paul laughs.

PAUL

That's only a myth city people tell each other.

AUDREY

Perhaps it is? You don't make it sound bad at all. A proper lunch is a pretty good idea.

(to Nora)

God, was I wishing that he invited me!

PAUL

(to Nora)

I wanted to invite her so badly! But my shyness! I'm glad I didn't though.

(to Audrey)

Why are you going to Crawley then?

AUDREY

(to Nora)

Obviously, I couldn't tell him that my therapist tasked me to seek out situations potentially causing aggression.

(evasive)

Oh, me... I'll be totally honest with you:

(to Nora)

Of course I wasn't.

(to Paul)

I have never really visited the countryside. So I'm exploring today. And I also have a ticket booked for a climbing park they have where you can swing through trees like monkeys.

PAUL

That sounds fun.

(to Nora)

Why didn't she invite me to the climbing park? I guess she wasn't interested in me after all.

NORA

I don't understand how the day could've been so bad. From what you told me so far, it sounds lovely.

PAUL

(to Nora)

It was. The trouble only started after an hour of driving.

(to Audrey)

Wow, this car can go fast.

(to Nora)

First I was only giving slight hints that she was driving quite above the speed limit.

AUDREY

Pretty good for such an old baby, right? I bought this car at the end of university - and it's still running!

PAUL

An older car, I see.

AUDREY

Hey, uni isn't *that* far away for me!

PAUL

That's not what I meant, sorry. But is still everything okay with the gas pedal?

AUDREY

Why?

PAUL

Oh, nothing. It just seems like the car is going faster than intended.

AUDREY

It is intended.

PAUL

Oh.

AUDREY

Are you saying I can't drive?

PAUL

No, no, not at all.

AUDREY

You can't drive. You literally said so.

PAUL

I'm just a bit worried about the speed limit.

AUDREY  
I *am* in the speed limit.

Audrey takes a glimpse down the wheel.

AUDREY (CONT'D)  
Maybe ten more than what's allowed,  
that's it.

PAUL  
It feels faster than ten.

AUDREY  
Look at it, it's ten!

PAUL  
(scared)  
Eyes on the road!

The cell phone's loudspeaker navigation voice comes on.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM  
In one mile, exit onto the A2011.

PAUL  
Oh no, it's closed.

AUDREY  
What do you mean?

PAUL  
There was a sign saying that there  
are constructions on the A2011. I  
think we'd be better off exiting on  
the next one.

Audrey silently fumes. She clearly steers right, ignoring  
Paul's remark.

PAUL  
What are you doing?

AUDREY  
Driving to Crawley.

PAUL  
But the sign said the road is under  
construction.

AUDREY  
We'll be fine.

PAUL  
We won't be able to turn back on the  
middle of the highway.

AUDREY

I think modern technology knows quite well how to give directions, don't you?

PAUL

Not if it isn't updated with the latest data about construction sites.

Tyres screech. The car comes to an abrupt halt. Paul screams.

AUDREY

Are you done screaming?

PAUL

What happened?

AUDREY

You, that's what's happened. You wanted to continue down the road we've been on, right? Here's your chance.

PAUL

What, by foot?

AUDREY

Yes.

PAUL

You can't just throw me out in the middle of the highway!

AUDREY

Of course I can. This is my car.

PAUL

But I paid you to drive me to Crawley.

AUDREY

If that's what matters to you then I'll refund you online, no problem at all. And now get out of my car.

PAUL

No, I don't want to.

Audrey steps out, walks over to Paul's side and opens the door.

AUDREY

Get out of my car!

Audrey pulls Paul out of the seat.



PAUL  
You're crazy.

AUDREY  
Don't you dare call me that! Get away.

PAUL  
I will.

Paul stomps off. The light turns mellow while Audrey and Paul both go back into their allocated therapy seats.

AUDREY  
Can you believe that? I was so happy to meet him again and then he started complaining all the time. You know how much I hate it when people use the C-word on me. I know I have anger problems, but he made me angrier than I possibly have ever been.

PAUL  
She left me standing there like an idiot, my entire weekend ruined! Hell, my entire week! And now it is even ruining my therapy as it's taking up the whole session to speak about it.

(desperate)  
And you know what's the worst? I left Finsbury in her car! On the windshield! I have texted her a million times already but she doesn't reply to my messages.

(close to tears)  
I need Finsbury back. I have him since childhood.

NORA  
(to both)  
Wow.  
(beat)  
I'm so sorry to hear that.

AUDREY  
I never want to see him again!

PAUL  
I hope I never see her again!

11 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - NIGHT

11

Nora lies on the couch, wrapped in a thick blanket, with ice cream on her lap and a glass of wine on the table. The only light in the flat is the flicker of the TV. Gabriel enters through the main door and turns on the light. Upon

seeing Nora, she gives off a startled scream. Nora is startled too.

GABRIEL  
Geez, did you scare me.

NORA  
What? You scared *me*!

GABRIEL  
I did? It looks like you were waiting for me to come home. Weren't you?

NORA  
(caught)  
You had the thing tonight. Of course I remember. I definitely was waiting.

GABRIEL  
It's okay.

NORA  
Sorry. How was it?

GABRIEL  
Nothing special. Toby was again a bit annoying. Other than that, a typical night out with colleagues. Oh, and I seemed to have misplaced my credit card again. It's not in my purse. Have you seen it?

NORA  
Me? Nope.

GABRIEL  
Anyway, what are you watching?

NORA  
It's-

GABRIEL  
Wait, let me guess: "The Notepad"? "Love, seriously"? "Three Proposals and a Trip to Disneyland"?

NORA  
(self-aware)  
Something like that.

GABRIEL  
You're so easy to tease!

NORA  
Then perhaps you don't.

GABRIEL

You always watch these movies where they marry each other in the end.

NORA

There's nothing wrong with that! I just find them soothing.

GABRIEL

You know, we can marry too.

NORA

(startled)

Hurra for equality!

GABRIEL

No wondering if you want to?

NORA

Uh, do you?

GABRIEL

I was just wondering why else you always watch these movies.

NORA

(insincere)

It's not like I'm projecting myself onto the characters, wanting to be like them, or something of that sort.

(distracting)

Am I the therapist or you!

GABRIEL

I'm sorry. Maybe I'm just too sensitive. Last weekend you were flying on clouds, whereas the last few days you seemed distracted and sad. And now I find you late at night munching ice cream and watching comfort movies.

NORA

I'm sorry, I can't tell you.

GABRIEL

You can't? What's going on?

NORA

Don't worry about me, I'm fine.

GABRIEL

That doesn't sound reassuring.

(beat)

I'll go to bed. Are you joining?

NORA

I just want to finish that movie if that's okay. I'll come right after.

GABRIEL

Good night.

NORA

Good night.

Gabriel leaves the room. Nora ponders a while before she resumes the movie. Sappy music plays; the film is clearly coming to a climax.

WOMAN (FROM THE TV)

How did you know?

MAN (FROM THE TV)

I saw you at the station.

WOMAN (FROM THE TV)

Why didn't you tell me?

The music is soaring.

MAN (FROM THE TV)

I love you.

Nora sniffles and wipes her wet eyes on her blanket before helping herself to a big spoon of ice cream.

MAN (FROM THE TV CONT'D)

I always knew. I knew it since the day I met you.

WOMAN (FROM THE TV)

Me too.

The music is coming to its final crescendo before transitioning over into calm credits music. Nora blows her nose, staring at the screen. After a few moments, she gets up and pulls out her notebook and the mindmap she previously made. She takes a good look at the mindmap, sits back and starts to scribble.

12 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

12

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session.

PAUL

(desperate)

But now he's gone, and I don't know what to do! Usually, I'm very conscious about what people think about me, but with Finsbury, I don't

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
care at all: yes, he is a plush  
bear. Yes, he is incredibly  
important to me.

NORA  
How come you never mentioned him  
before then?

PAUL  
There are some things which are so  
shameful, you don't even dare to  
tell your therapist.

NORA  
If not your therapist, who then?

PAUL  
Finsbury, exactly!

NORA  
But he's a bear.

PAUL  
See? Nobody understands!  
(beat)  
Sorry. I know you probably do.

NORA  
(chuffed)  
You think so? Thank you!

PAUL  
I can't afford to lose him.

NORA  
But he isn't lost, is he? Presuming  
that the woman from the car share  
didn't burn down her car, he'll be  
still there, right?

PAUL  
But what if she *did* burn down her  
car? I wouldn't put it past her.  
(shocked)  
Or what if she'd burn down  
Finsbury?!

Paul lets out a howl of pain.

NORA  
She wouldn't do that.

PAUL  
How would you know?

Nora pauses for a moment.

NORA

We therapists get to know plenty of people.

PAUL

So what's your assessment of Audrey then?

NORA

Uh, I have never met he-

PAUL

Given what I told you about her.

NORA

She does seem... exciting.

PAUL

Exciting? As a therapist maybe, to analyse!

NORA

Not for me - for you! She seems like somebody who challenges you.

PAUL

So if she challenges me, why does she then not respond anymore? I have tried to message her on the website, I called her, I texted - she doesn't reply!

NORA

You'll get Finsbury back. Don't worry.

PAUL

Thank you for reassuring me.

NORA

You said earlier you feel ashamed for your attachment towards Finsbury. How did Audrey react then?

PAUL

She teased me about it, but I didn't have the impression she was looking down on me.

NORA

Interesting.

PAUL

It kind of is, isn't it?

NORA

Why do you think Audrey was angry at you?

PAUL

(surprised)

I guess she didn't like me pointing out her mistakes. Reckless driving and not watching out for road signs.

NORA

How did you deliver that?

PAUL

I thought I was being really subtle. But then I got scared by her driving and I just had to tell her directly. I'd rather do that than die in a road accident.

NORA

Do you think you're a good judge of driving?

PAUL

What, given that I don't have a driving licence? Maybe not. But I know when somebody drives much faster than what's allowed. One has an instinct for that, no?

NORA

I don't know. Maybe.

PAUL

Anyway. I never want to see her again.

NORA

Can you do that? You still have to get Finsbury back.

PAUL

(in pain)

I know!

NORA

She may ignore you know, but I'm sure she'll contact you one day.

PAUL

I hope so.

NORA  
(sarcastic)  
If not, I'll make her!  
(laughs, beat)  
How about we do a little roleplay?

PAUL  
A roleplay? I thought you're a  
regular therapist, not a sex  
therapist.

NORA  
(taking notes)  
I'm definitely going to write *that*  
down.

PAUL  
What? No!

NORA  
I meant a roleplay of what you would  
say when you'll talk to her again.  
Which you will.

PAUL  
So, I should just talk to you like  
you were Audrey?

NORA  
Exactly. And I'll respond like I  
would be Audrey.

PAUL  
Okay.

Paul calmly closes his eyes. takes a deep breath... and  
bursts out:

PAUL  
I need Finsbury!

Nora is mouthing the words but we actually hear Audrey's  
voice.

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
Hello too.

PAUL  
Wow, you do sound a bit like her.

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
Do I? What a coincidence. Anyway,  
what's Finsbury.

PAUL  
My bear! He's still in your car.



NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
In my car? Can't be, I burned it  
down.

PAUL  
(desperate)  
I hate you!

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
I was joking. But now I might really  
burn it down!

PAUL  
That didn't work out as I expected.

NORA  
What did you expect?

PAUL  
I would expect her to say, "Oh,  
sorry, I totally forgot. I'll drop  
him off at your house."

NORA  
Hm.

PAUL  
Hm? You never just say "Hm".

NORA  
I don't know her, but I can imagine  
she's hurt too. She probably feels  
ashamed for having you thrown out  
and still angry at you that you made  
her.

PAUL  
I made her? I'm not the one to  
apologise. She has to apologise to  
me!

NORA  
There are always two to a fight.  
That's all I'm saying.

PAUL  
Let's do it again.  
(beat)  
Hello. This is Paul.

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
Paul. What gives me the "pleasure"  
of your call?

PAUL  
I'm calling for two reasons. First  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
 off, I wanted to apologise for my  
 behaviour.

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
 What behaviour?

PAUL  
 You know what I mean.

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
 Perhaps I don't.

PAUL  
 I'm sorry that I have been afraid of  
 dying due to your reckless driving.

NORA  
 Why don't we try that again.

PAUL  
 I'm sorry for making you tear me out  
 of your car in the middle of the  
 highway under the blazing sun.

NORA  
 Again.

PAUL  
 (sincere)  
 I have been a bit of an ass. I'm  
 sorry.

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
 That's okay. I was too.

PAUL  
 So, the second thing I'm calling  
 about is my bear. Perhaps you  
 remember him?

NORA  
 That was great! If you call her like  
 that, I'm sure she'll be  
 cooperative. Just don't forget to  
 apologise, okay?

PAUL  
 Thanks, Nora.

13 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

13

Nora and Audrey sit together for their weekly session.

NORA  
 Did you do the breathing exercises?

AUDREY

I did actually, yeah. I do find them helpful - otherwise, I'd have absolutely exploded in Kelly's face! No scene I made this week like on the car trip.

NORA

I thought we could perhaps talk a bit more about that this "scene you made".

AUDREY

Is this the moment where you say "Audrey, what do you think of your reaction?"

NORA

Audrey, what do you think of your reaction?

AUDREY

It wasn't great, I can tell you that! But I still think that this guy had it coming. I should've reacted better though.

NORA

What would you say if you'd see this person again? Paul was his name, right?

AUDREY

I would say nothing. I'd do just like you told me: Take a deep breath and think about that I can neither change the world around me nor other people.

NORA

That's a really good answer! But given that you *had* to talk to him?

AUDREY

Can't I just avoid him?

NORA

Are you avoiding him?

AUDREY

I blocked him from my telephone and removed my profile on the car-sharing website.

NORA

Are you afraid of him contacting you?

AUDREY  
(confident)  
Phew, why would I be?  
(shy)  
Maybe a little bit. I don't like it  
when people tell me off.

NORA  
Which is interesting, given that you  
tell other people off quite freely.  
What if he needs to contact you?

AUDREY  
Why would he have to do that?

NORA  
Maybe he wants to apologise. Maybe  
you're his alibi to a crime he's  
falsely accused of. Maybe he forgot  
something in your car. Maybe he  
needs to warn you o-

AUDREY  
Okay, okay, I get it. Out of all  
these, I like the idea of him  
apologising the best.

NORA  
I thought it would be interesting to  
think about. What would you say if  
he contacted you?

AUDREY  
I'd talk about the weather.

NORA  
The weather?

AUDREY  
Maybe a new movie that came out?

NORA  
Would you apologise?

AUDREY  
(defeated)  
I'd like to. But I'm not sure I  
could.

NORA  
How do you think Paul felt that day?

AUDREY  
Angry I guess?

NORA

Angry like you? Do you think he was sad?

AUDREY

Sad? Why?

NORA

Oh, I don't know. I was wondering - maybe when you met he was happy to see you?

AUDREY

I was happy to see him! It was such a coincidence seeing someone again you really wanted to.

(beat)

Why are you asking me so much about Paul?

NORA

Because I have homework.

AUDREY

Am I going to like it?

Nora doesn't reply immediately.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I take this as a No.

NORA

(amused)

Have you been like this in school as well?

AUDREY

You're implying right now I did homework.

NORA

What I want you to do is to confront Paul.

AUDREY

Confront him? But I thought when I did that in Crawley, it was bad.

NORA

Not in that way. You said that you have shut him off from your life, blocked him from your telephone. After such an altercation, he must have sent you some messages after all, right? Unblock him from your telephone and try to face what he's saying.

AUDREY

Can I copy the answers from a friend instead?

NORA

I'm afraid not. It has to be you doing it.

AUDREY

Dangit . Okay, I'll give it a go. Thanks, Nora.

14 INT. AUDREY'S FLAT AND PAUL'S FLAT SIDE BY SIDE - EVENING 14

Audrey's flat is visible on one side, Paul's on the other. Audrey and Paul are both on their phones.

AUDREY

(shocked)

Twenty messages?! What?

Audrey starts reading.

AUDREY

I'm not sure I want to read twenty of these. Can't I just fake it and tell Nora I did it?

Paul makes a phone call. Audrey's phone starts vibrating. She panics, strides through the room. Audrey hides the phone under a pillow but the vibrating won't stop. Ultimately, she picks up.

AUDREY

(cool)

Hello? Sorry, I didn't hear this earlier, I have just been in another room.

PAUL

I'm so glad I could finally catch you! I need Finsbury!

AUDREY

Hello too.

PAUL

Hello, Audrey. This is Paul.

AUDREY

What's with Finsbury?

PAUL

Well, I don't know! Is he okay? Please tell me he's okay!

AUDREY

How should I know? I don't even know who that is.

PAUL

It's my bear! He's in your car!

AUDREY

What?

PAUL

I put him in the windshield, don't you remember?

AUDREY

I honestly don't.

PAUL

Have you ever driven your car again after Crawley?

AUDREY

(unsure)

Yes.

PAUL

And you never noticed this cute bear in your windshield?

AUDREY

I admit that my car might need a bit of tidying up.

PAUL

So you didn't throw him out?

AUDREY

You know what, let me check.

Audrey runs out the door and swiftly returns with Finsbury in her hands. Paul prays to heaven.

AUDREY

I have him!

PAUL

Thank you! When can I pick him up?

AUDREY

After what happened, I'm not sure I'd like you to visit me.

PAUL

I didn't want that either.

AUDREY

(hurt)

Oh. How about I send him in the post?

PAUL

In the post? Too unsafe, what if they damage him? Or if he gets lost? You have no idea how much he means to me!

AUDREY

No, but I think I'm getting the idea. So what do you want me to do then? Get a taxi?

PAUL

That sounds like an idea.

AUDREY

But what if the driver would just chuck it out on the way?

PAUL

Wait, you wouldn't be in the taxi with him?

AUDREY

Why would I pay twice for a taxi ride through the entire city if I could have the driver deliver it on a one-way trip?

PAUL

This makes me anxious. What if they throw him out. Or what if they smoke in the car. Or wha-

AUDREY

So you don't trust a driver, but you would trust me?

PAUL

Well, yes.

AUDREY

(surprised)

Okay.

PAUL

Isn't there a term for this condition, where one develops a close relationship with the hostage-taker?

(to himself)

That's the Oslo Effect, isn't it?



AUDREY

Stockholm effect! And I didn't develop a relationship with your bear, I didn't even know he was still in my car! Although he is quite cute.

PAUL

I was the hostage in the scenario, not Finsbury. But either way, don't hurt him!

AUDREY

I won't.  
(cute voice)  
Finsbury says hello.

PAUL

Hello, Finsbury. I'll come for you soon, okay?

AUDREY

(reluctantly)  
How about we meet somewhere in the middle?

PAUL

That would work.

AUDREY

It was Finsbury's suggestion.

PAUL

Of course it was. He's a smart little buddy.

AUDREY

And cute.

PAUL

A real ace with the ladies.

AUDREY

(laughs)  
Are you referring with "lady" to your mom?

PAUL

Thank you so much, Audrey. I'm really grateful for it. You have no idea how much you brightened my day. See you soon.

AUDREY

See you.

Both hang up.

AUDREY  
I brightened his day? Huh.

PAUL  
Wait, I forgot to apologise! I  
better don't tell Nora that.

15 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

15

Nora, Paul and Audrey sit all in their usual seats. Audrey and Paul are both having their session with Nora and talk to her separately without giving the other any attention.

AUDREY  
You have no idea what  
happened this week.

PAUL  
You have no idea what  
happened this week.

NORA  
As I always say: not until you tell  
me.

PAUL  
I got Finsbury back.

NORA  
That's great news!

AUDREY  
I met Paul again.

NORA  
What happened?

PAUL  
I was really desperate to contact  
her, but she'd seemed to have  
blocked me from everywhere. But then  
I tried again and I could see that  
she actually read my messages. And  
she was online... so I called her  
again - and she actually picked up!

AUDREY  
I was thinking about what you said  
the other day, about me avoiding  
conflicts: so I removed him from my  
block list and read his messages.

NORA  
How did that go?

AUDREY  
(insincere)  
Fine.

NORA

Really?

AUDREY

(disappointed)

No, it wasn't fine. There were so many messages, and they were so long. I barely glimpsed over them. But then he called me: I still had his bear! It was in my car. So we decided to meet up because he couldn't pick it up and he didn't want me to put his bear in a taxi either.

NORA

In a taxi?

PAUL

I know!

AUDREY

Oh my god, why's everyone so outraged by this suggestion. It's a plush bear!

PAUL

It was quite an unusual night. I was really worried that she wouldn't come, that she would have set me up. But she arrived - incredibly drunk.

Audrey staggers towards Paul. She slurs her words.

AUDREY

(drunk)

Hi-iii. So we see each other again.

PAUL

Audrey, hello!

AUDREY

(drunk)

Do you want your bear?

PAUL

Yes!

AUDREY

(drunk)

Do you have the money?

PAUL

What money?

AUDREY

(drunk)

Relax, I'm only joking. Yes, I have him with me.

(to Nora, completely sober)

I was quite anxious to meet him.

NORA

You?

AUDREY

Yes! I felt ashamed for the Crawley incident. So when I spotted him in the bar, I felt quite shy to approach.

(beat)

He was literally praying, in this pub! Such a weirdo.

Audrey approaches Paul again, this time walking calm and regal. Paul has his head in his hands.

PAUL

Please, dear God, I know we rarely talk, but please, I need Finsbury back.

Paul moves his hand across his body in the shape of a cross.

AUDREY

Men praying to me? At last I can cross that off my bucket list.

PAUL

Audrey!

AUDREY

I have your bear.

Audrey pulls Finsbury out of her purse and hands him to Paul.

PAUL

Finsbury!

Paul takes Finsbury into his arms and closely pulls him to his chest, while Audrey hasn't even let go yet.

AUDREY

Are you hugging the bear or my hand?

PAUL

Thank you!

AUDREY  
(to Nora)  
He was crying.

PAUL  
(sobbing)  
You have no idea what a relief this  
is!

AUDREY  
I think I can imagine.

Paul hugs again the bear.

PAUL  
(to Nora, calm)  
I felt so relieved, you have no  
idea! I'm proud of how calm I  
managed to stay though.  
(to Audrey, composed and  
dignified)  
Thank you so much, Audrey.

AUDREY  
(drunk)  
No problem.

PAUL  
Something's different about him. But  
he looks the same.

AUDREY  
(drunk)  
It's the same bear, don't worry. I  
didn't go out into town and bought a  
new one.

PAUL  
I know that it's the same. I would  
notice if he wasn't.

AUDREY  
(to Nora)  
You should've seen his face when I  
told him I washed the bear.

PAUL  
(panicking)  
You washed him! Oh no, poor  
Finsbury, are you okay?  
(to Nora, composed)  
She even washed him.  
(to Audrey, composed)  
He does smell nice. I didn't know  
you could wash him. Thank you,  
Audrey.

AUDREY

I had actually planned to go home immediately after that. But he invited me to a drink and absolutely insisted on it.

PAUL

(overzealous)

You're my saviour, Audrey! Thank you so much! You have no idea how happy this makes me!

Paul throws himself before Audrey's feet and cries at her lap.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(crying)

I'm afraid I will never be able to repay you. How could I? Never!

AUDREY

(patting his shoulder)

A drink would be enough.

PAUL

(to Nora)

I had actually planned to go home immediately after that. But she invited me to a drink and was absolutely insisting on it.

AUDREY

(drunk)

We should have a drink!

PAUL

I'm not sure we should. It seems like you already had a few.

AUDREY

(drunk)

That? I call that work. Hahaha.

PAUL

I think we should head home.

AUDREY

(drunk)

Oh, come on! Don't ruin the fun! I brought you your bear, didn't I?!

PAUL

Yes, you did.

AUDREY  
 (to Nora)  
 He even apologised to me for  
 Crawley.

PAUL  
 (sniffing, still close to  
 tears)  
 Also, I wanted to say that I'm  
 terribly sorry for Crawley. I'm not  
 saying it was all my fault, but I  
 sure had a part in it.

AUDREY  
 Oh, don't worry about it. Did you  
 have a good time in Crawley at  
 least?

PAUL  
 (teary)  
 No, it was horrible. No shadow far  
 and wide, incredible heat, and after  
 I ate at the pub, I threw up on the  
 street.

AUDREY  
 Oh, no! I told you these country  
 pubs serve bad food.

PAUL  
 (teary)  
 Yes, you did.

NORA  
 You threw up?

PAUL  
 (to Nora, calm)  
 Audrey even apologised to me for  
 Crawley.

AUDREY  
 (drunk)  
 This drink is on me. As an apology  
 for Crawley. I'm terribly, ...

Audrey swallows down a hiccup.

AUDREY (CONT'D)  
 ... terribly sorry.

PAUL  
 Oh, it's okay. Don't worry about it.

AUDREY  
 (drunk)  
 I insist!

PAUL  
(inconvenienced)  
If you really have to.

NORA  
I'm really proud of you, it seems  
like you really tackled the  
conflict.

AUDREY  
Thank you.

PAUL  
Thank you.

AUDREY  
You haven't heard the rest of it  
yet, unfortunately.

NORA  
Did you have another fight?

AUDREY  
Not with Paul, no.

PAUL  
She then went to the bar to get yet  
another drink, and suddenly I heard  
her shouting at the barkeeper.

AUDREY  
(drunk)  
What's the problem? I am of age!  
(to Nora, calm)  
I had an... altercation with the  
barkeeper. He didn't want to serve  
me another drink. He said I'd have  
been too drunk already. That's not  
true!

NORA  
Were you drunk?

AUDREY  
Maybe just a little bit tipsy!  
Before I met Paul, I had drinks with  
work colleagues.

NORA  
I thought you don't get along.

AUDREY  
I can still have drinks with them,  
right?

PAUL  
It was so bizarre. Suddenly I heard  
her quote the constitution.



AUDREY

(drunk, angry)

This is discri- discrimination! I bet you wouldn't refuse a drink to a man. You sexist!

(to Nora, calm)

I really tried to hold myself together, like we discussed. But I couldn't. I was so angry.

NORA

Don't be hard on yourself. We can't change our ways from one day to the other. It's normal to have a lapse.

AUDREY

Thank you. I even *did* try doing the breaths after I shouted at him. There was a moment where I was really trying to count my losses and move on.

(beat)

But then I said to myself "Hell, screw it".

PAUL

Next thing I know, I see her running out of the pub with a bottle in her hand and the barkeeper shouting.

AUDREY

I just snapped, took the bottle and ran.

PAUL

I went after her. I was worried.

AUDREY

I don't know how long I ran. It seemed like forever.

PAUL

You should've seen her running.

(laughing)

More like staggering!

AUDREY

Finally, I did come to a stop in a park. I didn't even want that drink after all. I suddenly felt completely sober. And really angry. Angry at *myself* for causing such a scene, again.

PAUL  
I caught up with her in the park.  
(to Audrey)  
Audrey, stop!

AUDREY  
Leave me alone.

PAUL  
What's going on?

AUDREY  
What's going on with you? Why are  
you following me?

PAUL  
I, I-

AUDREY  
Do you want some wine?

PAUL  
Why not.  
(to Nora)  
There I was, having my "Apologies  
for Crawley" drink after all, but on  
a park bench, drinking directly from  
a stolen bottle.

AUDREY  
I really messed up this time, didn't  
I?

PAUL  
We all have days like this. Don't  
worry about it.

AUDREY  
What if they have me on tape and put  
me before court?

PAUL  
(laughing)  
You must be joking.

AUDREY  
In case you haven't noticed, I'm a  
trouble maker.

PAUL  
(joking)  
Really? I didn't notice.

AUDREY  
Stuff like this keeps happening to  
me.

PAUL  
(teasing)  
What, bottles just steal themselves?

AUDREY  
No, I mea-

PAUL  
I'm teasing you. Let's get you a  
cab, okay?

AUDREY  
Okay.

Paul taps on his phone.

PAUL  
Should be here in a few minutes.

AUDREY  
Thanks.  
(scared)  
Oh my god, the police!

PAUL  
(to Nora)  
She suddenly jumped behind a tree  
and said:

AUDREY  
I can't go to prison. I can't! Throw  
away the bottle, Paul!

PAUL  
What?

AUDREY  
Throw away the bottle!

PAUL  
And she was right - a policeman  
approached me and asked whether I  
would have seen a woman fitting  
Audrey's description.

NORA  
What did you say?

AUDREY  
He lied for me. Said he'd never seen  
a person like that before. I can't  
believe it.

NORA  
Why did you do that, Paul?

PAUL

She was asking the same thing! I felt sorry for her. She really seemed to struggle with her temperament.

AUDREY

It feels so good to have somebody who backed me up for once.

NORA

(to Paul)

You seem quite agitated by this.

PAUL

Well, it's not every day you cover up a crime.

NORA

She stole a bottle of wine, didn't she?

PAUL

Yes.

(beat)

Am I taking it too seriously?

NORA

That's your call, not mine. How do you feel now about this person?

PAUL

Why do you ask?

AUDREY

What do you mean?

NORA

Well, the first time you met, you were smitten. Then you met again and hated each other. So I was wondering how you feel now.

AUDREY

I feel... ashamed.

PAUL

I feel... put off.

NORA

I see.

PAUL

I'm glad I won't have to see her again now.

AUDREY

I'm glad I won't have to see him again now.

16 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - NIGHT

16

Nora sits on the couch. She holds in her hands a barbie doll and a cucumber.

NORA  
(deep voice, wiggling  
cucumber)  
You always cause me trouble.  
(high voice, wiggling  
doll)  
You are the reason for me making  
trouble!  
(deep voice, cucumber)  
I never want to see you again.  
(high voice, doll)  
Good, because you never will!  
(normal voice, Nora to  
cucumber)  
I think you would like her, Paul.  
(high voice, doll to Nora)  
How would you know?  
(normal voice)  
I just know. I see so many couples.  
I know what might work.

Gabriel enters the flat, unseen by Nora. Gabriel sneaks behind the couch.

NORA (CONT'D)  
(high voice, doll)  
Well, that only proves how stupid  
you are. Because I will never like  
him.  
(deep voice, cucumber)  
And me neither. She's stupid.  
(high voice, doll)  
You're stupid!

Nora smashes the doll and the cucumber against each other, making gargling sounds, remotely resembling a fight. She sighs, lets herself fall back... seeing Gabriel, staring at her from above.

NORA  
(startled)  
Gabs!

GABRIEL  
What are you doing?

NORA  
Nothing.

GABRIEL  
It didn't look like nothing.

NORA

Depends on how much you saw.

GABRIEL

Hey, is that Jane's doll? When your niece loses something and you find it, you should give it back.

NORA

I will give it back!

(beat)

Eventually. If she wanted it back, she would have ringed me.

GABRIEL

I'm not sure she can ring you. She's six.

NORA

She's six, exactly. She should send me an e-mail!

GABRIEL

What are you ding [doing]?

NORA

You're always so nosy!

GABRIEL

At least I'm interested in you.

Nora sighs.

NORA

I was pondering about a work problem.

GABRIEL

I didn't know you take couples on.

NORA

(startled)

Oh, no, I'm just trying to put myself into the shoes of a client.

GABRIEL

What's the problem?

NORA

My client has a... colleague. They should be together. Instead, they hate each other.

GABRIEL

(laughing)

Sounds like one of your movies!

NORA  
Art imitates life.

GABRIEL  
Wasn't it the other way around?

NORA  
Whatever.

GABRIEL  
If they don't want to be together,  
so be it. It's their life.

NORA  
But they ruin it!

GABRIEL  
(laughing)  
Sweetie, you only know that  
colleague from what your client told  
you! You only know *your client*  
from what they tell you.

NORA  
Perhaps I just know better.

GABRIEL  
Not everyone can meet in a car, have  
a fight and then become a couple.

Nora flinches.

NORA  
What do you mean by that?

GABRIEL  
Isn't this from Harry and Mary?

Nora realises what Gabriel means and laughs stiltedly.

NORA  
Oh, that's what you mean, you're  
still onto me being into romantic  
comedies, I get it.

GABRIEL  
Do you ever watch any new movies?

NORA  
If they feel like the old ones,  
sure!

GABRIEL  
Maybe your client will work out  
what's best for them on their own.  
No?

NORA  
Maybe.

17 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

17

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session.

PAUL  
Everyone else knew how to do it  
except me. I felt so ashamed.

NORA  
You often mention this idea of  
normality: you being the odd one  
out, others fitting in. How do you  
feel about other people who don't  
fit in? How about that woman who  
returned your bear?

PAUL  
Oh, Audrey. I didn't mind her being  
the odd one out.

NORA  
You said you felt put off by her.

PAUL  
That doesn't sound like me.

Nora points at her notebook.

NORA  
I'm very good at keeping notes.

PAUL  
Perhaps it *does* sound like me.  
(beat)  
Why are we talking about her again?

NORA  
Because you... you said last time  
that you wanted to see her again.

PAUL  
After everything she has done to me?

Nora looks at her notebook.

NORA  
It says so in my notes. "But even  
so, I feel like I should see her  
again."

PAUL  
I think you got this wrong. You must  
have left out a "not" there.



NORA  
 (writing into her  
 notebook, speaking aloud  
 what she writes)  
 "I think you got this wrong."  
 Showing symptoms of denial.

PAUL  
 Hey!

NORA  
 Was I saying this out loud? Oops.

Light change. Audrey and Nora in the therapy room.

NORA  
 I was wondering anyway what happened  
 to your want for a boyfriend.

AUDREY  
 It's still there - but the boyfriend  
 isn't.

NORA  
 When we first spoke about it, you  
 said you'd like to have someone who  
 stands on your side.

AUDREY  
 Yes! I'd love that.

NORA  
 Do you think you should reach out to  
 Paul then?

AUDREY  
 (taken aback)  
 What? Why?

NORA  
 You mentioned last week that he lied  
 to the police officer when they were  
 searching for you. Does that make  
 you feel different about Paul?

AUDREY  
 It was certainly nice of him.

Light change. Paul and Nora in the therapy room.

PAUL  
 I enjoy talking to her, she's fun.  
 But she threw me out on the street  
 in the middle of nowhere! Should I  
 be okay with people stomping over  
 me?

NORA

Definitely not: you being more assertive is something we're working on for quite a while now.

PAUL

Who even says that she would be interested in me!

NORA

This is precisely the thought pattern we're trying to uncover: do you want to exclude her from your life because you dislike her or because you're afraid of being rejected?

PAUL

Even if I'd want to see her again, it isn't like it's that easy for me to approach women.

NORA

You say this a lot, but maybe it's not true. And if it is, this might be the perfect opportunity to test it out.

(beat)

Either way, it's not like you have never seen her before, is it? You have seen each other multiple times and at least the first time you met, you took a fancy to each other. Even the second time - at least before you got into a fight about her driving.

Light change. Paul and Audrey are now both illuminated.

AUDREY

He sent me a text.

NORA

What did he say?

Audrey looks at her phone and laughs.

PAUL

Finsbury just wanted to say hello.

AUDREY

Oh my god, that's such a cute photo. But your bear would never drink wine. Are you drinking a glass for him?

PAUL  
I do [I am] - but still less drunk  
than you were at the pub.

AUDREY  
(laughing)  
Oh, shut up! At least I'm not  
drinking by myself with a bear.

PAUL  
No. You're *just* drinking by  
yourself.

AUDREY  
(laughing)  
Touché.

PAUL  
Well, maybe with your childhood  
blanket.

AUDREY  
You remember me telling you that?

PAUL  
Of course! But I don't get the  
appeal. A blanket can't talk.

AUDREY  
Oh, and your bear can?

PAUL  
Ouch.

AUDREY  
If you think a bear is better, I'll  
buy one as well. I will get exactly  
the same one you have.

PAUL  
Don't ruin my childhood by telling  
me where my mother bought it from!

AUDREY  
It looks like that wouldn't just  
ruin your childhood but also your  
adulthood.

PAUL  
(laughing)  
Matchpoint.

NORA  
Why don't you ask her out?

AUDREY

I like that he hasn't asked me out yet!

PAUL

I don't want to come off as too keen.

AUDREY

But I'm also worried that he might just not be keen on going out with me at all.

PAUL

I'd love to go out with her, the more I have contact with her ! It's so much fun chatting to her.

AUDREY

But then I also have to wonder: what date would that be?

PAUL

It wouldn't be precisely the first date, right?

AUDREY

I want the first date to be perfect. So we can absolutely not count the pub as first date!

NORA

Could the car-sharing trip be the first date?

AUDREY

(screaming in agony)  
Even worse!

PAUL

We already had two dates anyway.

NORA

Did you?

AUDREY

I want to take it slow.

PAUL

I have lost out on many chances previously in my life because I was too slow. I should ask her out now, but to what?

NORA

Who knows, maybe I might have a few ideas.

PAUL

Do you?

NORA

Absolutely. London is full of exciting places. How about Kenwood House? You might have seen it in Notting Hill, with Hugh Grant.

AUDREY

I would want a simple date. Not like in the movies.

NORA

And if you're already there, you can go directly to St Lukes Mews. That's the house from Love Actually, you know this scene with the cardboard signs?

PAUL

I haven't seen this one.

NORA

(ignoring his thought)  
Or how about Borough Market, doing a classic Bridget Jones, grabb-

PAUL

(interrupting her)  
You're right, I should ask her out to a restaurant.

NORA

Did I say that?

AUDREY

He asked me out!

PAUL

She said yes.

NORA

That's fantastic!

Mellow romantic music starts to play, slowly rising up until the end of the scene.

PAUL

I'm so excited. The third date!

NORA

The third? Are you sure the bear handover counts?

PAUL

Well, Audrey must agree, otherwise she wouldn't have said yes to the restaurant.

NORA

(mumbling)

If you say so.

PAUL

I mean, who goes to a restaurant for a first date? That's clearly more of a second or third date event! On the first date, you want to go out just for a drink so that you can rush home in case it turns out to be miserable.

NORA

Good thing for you that you had that already.

PAUL

(laughs)

Yes!

Light change. Audrey and Paul sit together in a fancy restaurant.

AUDREY

This is such a lovely place. How do you know it?

PAUL

I literally just stumbled into it one day. I wanted to see a theatre play but arrived too late, so they wouldn't let me in anymore. Thus, I lingered through the streets... and there I was.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

Oh no, you poor guy! Why did you arrive late?

PAUL

(shy)

Don't laugh, okay?

AUDREY

I won't.

PAUL

I turned back in the middle of the  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
journey because I wondered if I had  
left the oven on.

AUDREY  
Did you?

PAUL  
Yes.

Audrey laughs. Light change. Audrey and Nora for their  
weekly session.

NORA  
You're perfectly radiating!

AUDREY  
Am I?

NORA  
Undoubtedly. You really must have  
enjoyed your date.

AUDREY  
Yes, I did. He's actually quite a  
gentleman.

NORA  
So you'll see him again?

AUDREY  
He already invited me on a second  
date!

NORA  
That's great!

AUDREY  
The only thing that's difficult for  
me is that he invited me again - I  
would have wanted to be the one who  
invites him next.

NORA  
Why?

AUDREY  
My typical spiel. Feeling in  
control.

NORA  
What are you worried about?

AUDREY  
That I already think more often  
about him than I should.

Light change. Audrey and Paul are strolling through a park, each eating a candy bar.

PAUL

(happy)

I can't believe he gave you two chocolate bars for free on top of the chewing gum. Which shopkeeper does that?

AUDREY

I guess some people are nicer than others.

PAUL

(teasing)

Someone likes you.

AUDREY

Don't worry, he doesn't.

PAUL

I'm not worried somebody else likes you.

AUDREY

(smirks)

"Somebody else?"

PAUL

Matter of speech.

AUDREY

Sure.

(beat)

Anyway, he didn't *know* that he gave them to me for free.

PAUL

What do you mean?

AUDREY

I just took them.

Paul stares incredulously at the chocolate bar in his hands, still with a bite in his mouth.

PAUL

What?

AUDREY

Don't worry, this guy is a fraud anyway.

PAUL

How?



AUDREY

Have you looked at the wrapper?

PAUL

I can't read it, it's some foreign language.

AUDREY

It's Hungarian. It says "Multipack Bar - Not to be sold separately".

PAUL

Do you speak Hungarian?

AUDREY

(smirks)

No. But I have had previous encounters of the sort. It's not stealing if you take it from another thief.

PAUL

"Another"?

AUDREY

(ignoring Paul's comment)

Wow, that building is huge. Let's go check it out!

Audrey grabs Paul by the hand, grabbing him with her. Paul looks to their hands and puts on a big smile.

Light change. Paul and Nora for their weekly session.

PAUL

I'm dying to see her again. But she said she can't do this week. I guess we're both very busy. I met a friend yesterday, tomorrow she's going to a concert and Thursday she has "a thing".

NORA

What thing?

PAUL

I don't know, she didn't tell me.

NORA

(slowly realising)

Oooh. Thursday.

(beat, shaking herself)

Sorry, I just wondered what this might mean.

PAUL  
I really hope she isn't seeing  
anybody else as well!

NORA  
Audrey? No way.

Light change. Audrey and Nora for their weekly session.

NORA  
You're allowed to be forgetful,  
you're a busy woman.

AUDREY  
(barely audible)  
Less busy than some believe.  
(beat)  
I lied to Paul and I feel really bad  
about it. I know I shouldn't have.

NORA  
What did you lie about?

AUDREY  
I told him that I'd have been at a  
concert yesterday - when in fact I  
wasn't at all. We barely started  
dating and I'm already going down my  
regular route.

NORA  
That's not a big lie.

AUDREY  
You think so?

NORA  
No, not at all. I'm not sure I would  
even call it a lie. But tell me, why  
did you tell him you were at a  
concert?

AUDREY  
Because he asked me out again.

NORA  
That's fantastic! I'm so happy!  
(catches herself)  
Happy for you.

AUDREY  
(excited)  
I know!  
(beat)  
I told him I couldn't do yesterday  
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)  
so that I can save a little bit more  
of the excitement.

(beat)  
And because it means that now I  
can ask him out on a date.

NORA  
You don't like Paul's date ideas?

AUDREY  
I love them! But it means I'm not in  
control. Which matters to me.

NORA  
You're always in control, Audrey.

AUDREY  
Not always. The reason I'm here is  
precisely because I lose control  
all the time.

NORA  
There's a difference between being  
in control and losing control, isn't  
there? Tell me, what do you have  
planned then?

Light change. Audrey and Paul are sitting next to each  
other on two very closely positioned chairs facing the  
audience.

PAUL  
(laughs)  
She was incredible! I liked all the  
acts so far.

AUDREY  
Me too. I enjoyed the first one the  
most. Her voice was so rich.

PAUL  
One could say this is your second  
concert in a week then!

AUDREY  
One could?  
(realising)  
Ooh, of course, one could say that.

PAUL  
Do you do this a lot?

AUDREY  
I haven't come for a while. It's  
quite different being in the  
audience than it is being on stage.

PAUL

You were on that stage?

AUDREY

Not on that one exactly, but a few times with these events, yes.

PAUL

No way! What did you do?

AUDREY

Reading poetry mostly. Sometimes prose.

PAUL

I didn't know you're a poet!

AUDREY

I haven't written something in ages. I used to be really into it though.

PAUL

That's incredible! I want to hear one of your poems one day.

AUDREY

You will sooner than you think. Because I'll take to the stage *right now*. I'm next.

Audrey puts her purse on the chair.

AUDREY

Will you watch out for it?

PAUL

(dumb-founded)

Of course.

Audrey gets up to leave - and turns around after two steps. She sits back down, heavily laughing.

AUDREY

You really thought I would be the next act! I was just messing with you.

PAUL

(laughing)

One never knows with you.

AUDREY

I really used to do this kind of stuff though.

PAUL

I never said I didn't believe you.

Audrey and Paul smile at each other, not saying anything.

PAUL

What?

AUDREY

Nothing. It's just a nice evening.

PAUL

It really is. Thank you for inviting me.

AUDREY

I'm glad you came.

The two look at each other a few moments longer. They kiss.

**END OF ACT ONE**

ACT TWO

18 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIEL'S FLAT - AFTERNOON

18

Nora lies on the couch, watching television. Gabriel enters the room.

GABRIEL

That one again? You should've memorised it by now.

NORA

"Should have"? You're underestimating me.

A moment passes before Nora suddenly speaks along to the movie:

NORA

"I would send you a bouquet of newly sharpened pencils if I knew your name and address." I just love it!

GABRIEL

What do you love about it so much?

NORA

We had this a hundred times.

GABRIEL

I don't mind the hundred and first time.

Nora pauses the movie.

NORA

It's witty, sweet, the premise is interesting, there's the music and they've such an insanely palpable chemistry with each other, ...

GABRIEL

It's a good movie, I guess. But always the same, guy meets woman. Where is the rom-com for lesbians?

NORA

Does it need one?

GABRIEL

What do you mean? You're a lesbian.

NORA

You're my first girlfriend. But that's beside the point. Why do we  
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)  
 need a lesbian romantic comedy? I'm  
 not saying that I'd be against it -  
 but why do we need it?

GABRIEL  
 So that we're accepted as a genuine  
 part of modern society.

NORA  
 But why do we need a movie for that?  
 Most people are hetero, so it's just  
 natural to make those movies with  
 straight characters. Only because  
 you prefer white chocolate doesn't  
 mean that we should stop producing  
 dark chocolate, don't you think?

GABRIEL  
 But there actually is white  
 chocolate I can buy!  
 (beat)  
 Sometimes I wonder if you're  
 actually gay or just faking it.

NORA  
 Faking it? We've been living  
 together for over a year!

GABRIEL  
 I know. I wanted to talk to you  
 about something completely different  
 anyway. It may sound weird, but have  
 you been using my credit cards? Like  
 the one I couldn't find recently?

NORA  
 (alarmed)  
 Of course not.

GABRIEL  
 I thought so.

NORA  
 What's wrong?

GABRIEL  
 On all three of my cards, there are  
 multiple transactions from  
*ChitChatCar*. Apparently, I was  
 booking seven car-shares with three  
 different cards last month!

NORA  
 Wow, that seems oddly specific. They  
 must have hacked your phone or  
 (MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)  
 something. I told you those social  
 media apps can't be good!

GABRIEL  
 Says the one addicted to mobile  
 games!

NORA  
 I'm this close to level  
 seventy-three!

GABRIEL  
 Either way, why would these hackers  
 book seven car-shares on the same  
 website for the same weekend?!

NORA  
 It's not me who's the genius hacker!  
 If I would know how to, I'd be long  
 out of my job.

GABRIEL  
 You love your job!

NORA  
 I do.

GABRIEL  
 You almost sound guilty there. It's  
 not like somebody will come knocking  
 on your door to arrest you.

NORA  
 Nothing illegal in my praxis!

GABRIEL  
 I'll get myself some white  
 chocolate. Anything you need?

NORA  
 No, thanks.

Gabriel leaves the flat.

NORA  
 Harry and Sally, Meg and Ryan,  
 Audrey and Paul,... seeing them  
 together just makes me happy! That's  
 not a crime, is it?  
 (beat)  
 Except for me breaking my client's  
 confidentiality agreements. If  
 Gabriel would know, she'd kill me!  
 She just wouldn't understand.  
 (beat)  
 Does she understand me?



Nora resumes the movie.

19 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

19

Nora sits alone, taking a big bite of a chocolate bar.

NORA  
Gabriel won't find out. She won't.

Nora takes another big bite.

NORA  
(laughing miserably)  
I mean, how would she?  
(mumbling with chocolate  
in her mouth)  
Right?

The door buzzer rings. Nora opens the door for Audrey.

AUDREY  
Hello, nice to see you.

Audrey takes off her coat and her gloves, placing them on the couch as she sits down. Nora also takes a seat but quickly stows away the chocolate bar.

NORA  
How have you been?

AUDREY  
Better than ever!

NORA  
I assume this is related to Paul?

AUDREY  
Yes! I'm so happy I could explode!

NORA  
And you have no idea how happy I am  
to hear that.  
(mumbling to herself)  
No idea.

Nora reaches covertly for another piece of chocolate and eats it.

AUDREY  
It's been three weeks now since our  
first kiss and I feel like I'm  
walking on air.  
(beat)  
Are you eating?

NORA  
(mumbling with chocolate  
in her mouth)  
Me? Nooo.  
(caught)  
Sorry.

AUDREY  
That's okay - sometimes one is so  
busy that one can't even find the  
time to get a meal. I know the  
problem.

Nora offers the chocolate bar.

NORA  
Do you want some?

AUDREY  
No, thank you.

NORA  
Staying fit?

AUDREY  
Not really. It's just that I only  
want chocolate when I'm sad.

NORA  
(insincere)  
Oh. Me, I'm not like that at all.  
(beat)  
Tell me more about you walking on  
air.

AUDREY  
Paul and I, we just fit! It feels  
fantastic to date someone without  
any emotional baggage.

NORA  
Is that how Paul appears to you?

AUDREY  
Well, of course! He's perfect!

NORA  
Everyone has problems, even though  
it may not seem like it.

AUDREY  
Man, you're a downer today.

NORA  
I just want to make sure that you  
don't abruptly fall out of love.

AUDREY

I'm more worried that he falls out  
of love with *me*!

NORA

Why?

AUDREY

Because I'm lying to him on a daily  
basis.

NORA

(surprised)

How?

AUDREY

Well, about us!

NORA

About us?

AUDREY

I can't really tell this perfect  
gentleman that I'm seeing a  
therapist every week, can I?

NORA

(alarmed cry)

How didn't I think about that yet!

AUDREY

Why would you have?

NORA

Nothing, nothing. Tell me more about  
"the lying".

AUDREY

I hate it, but every time he asks me  
what I'm doing on Thursday, I'm back  
to saying "I'm meeting my friend  
Victoria".

NORA

(panicked)

Am I Victoria? So you didn't tell  
him that you're seeing a therapist,  
right?

AUDREY

No, of course not!

NORA

(relieved)

Good.

AUDREY

Wouldn't "good" mean instead to tell him the truth?

NORA

(panicked)

No, no!

(calmer)

It's just that some people don't react well to these things. I think you have to trust your own judgement there. It sounds like you aren't sure yet how Paul will react.

AUDREY

So I should just keep lying to him forever?

NORA

(desperate)

Can you?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

I love it when you reflect my own thoughts back to me.

NORA

(feigning pride)

I'm a professional.

(beat)

So you always say you're seeing a friend when you see me? Do you think Paul believes that?

AUDREY

I'm not too sure.

NORA

Could you come up with something else? Something more static, for example that you go to yoga every week?

AUDREY

Yoga? Nora, I can barely bend over to reach my knees!

NORA

How about a weekly appointment at a physical therapist? Maybe acupuncture.

AUDREY

Oh, and I would then have to stick  
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)  
myself with needles a hundred times  
to produce evidence? No, thank you.

NORA  
I just wanted to help.

AUDREY  
I know. Thank you.

NORA  
What about your court order - did  
you ever lie about that?

AUDREY  
(desperate)  
Of course I'm lying about that.  
Gosh, I'm such a mess! Do you think  
I should tell him about that at  
least?

NORA  
That's up to you.

AUDREY  
But me seeing you isn't?

NORA  
(panicked)  
You're right - better don't tell him  
either yet.

AUDREY  
That's not the answer I would've  
expected from you.

NORA  
If you could expect my answers, you  
wouldn't have to come every week,  
right?

AUDREY  
Well, I have a court order saying  
otherwise.

NORA  
Which is precisely the problem.

AUDREY  
(desperate)  
I know!

NORA  
When will you see Paul next then?

AUDREY  
Tomorrow, for a quiet movie night.

NORA  
How lovely! Fresh partner, a nice  
romantic comedy - what can one want  
more?

AUDREY  
A romantic comedy? I'm not a  
desperate loser.

NORA  
Ouch... to the people with bad  
taste!

Nora looks at the clock.

NORA (CONT'D)  
I'm afraid this is the end of our  
session.

Audrey packs up her things and stands up, leaving her pair  
of gloves on the couch.

AUDREY  
Thank you very much, Nora.

NORA  
No need to thank me.

Audrey leaves the therapy room. Nora slumps back in her  
chair, exhausted.

NORA  
For desperate losers she says? I  
guess I'm marked.

Nora lifts a hand to her forehead, shaping an L.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Oh no, she forgot her gloves! I'll  
hand them back next time.

Nora picks up the gloves and places them with disregard on  
the small table beside her.

NORA (CONT'D)