

BETWEEN THE CHAIRS

A Play in Two Acts by

Rick Schubert

79 Ricardo Street
E14 6EQ London
+44 749 0947 880
rickschubert@gmx.de

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.

GABRIELLE

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 GABRIELLE'S FLAT - NIGHT

2

Nora enters her apartment.

NORA

Hello.

GABRIELLE (OFF STAGE)

Hello, darling. Did you get everything?

NORA

(annoyed)

Yes.

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

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

Exactly.

Nora hands Gabrielle some ingredient she had in her purse.

NORA (CONT'D)

Maybe smoking makes people crave sweets?

GABRIELLE

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

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

GABRIELLE

How come you even ask about the
candy jar?

NORA

Oh, it's just something a client
said.

GABRIELLE

What did *they* say?
(beat)
He? She?

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

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!

GABRIELLE

Oh. How come you never told me?

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

Why would I?

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

Kathleen? Totally a fake name.

NORA

Totally.

GABRIELLE

Is that again from one of your movies?

NORA

"My movies"?

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

Okay, okay, okay. Kathleen...

GABRIELLE

(quotation marks in the air)

"Kathleen".

NORA

Kathleen has to see me because of anger issues.

GABRIELLE

Has to see you? Is she a criminal?

NORA

The court ordered her to see me, yep.

GABRIELLE

(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.

GABRIELLE

And?

NORA

And what? That's it.

GABRIELLE

She must have said more.

NORA

She did, but not to you.

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

You told her you're gay?

NORA

No! Also, you're my first girlfriend.

GABRIELLE

Don't start that again.

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

I know.

(beat)

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

NORA

What do you mean?

GABRIELLE

Well, what's the plan?

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

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 GABRIELLE'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.

GABRIELLE (OFF STAGE)
 Hello, darling.

NORA
 (distracted)
 Hello.

Gabrielle enters the living room.

GABRIELLE
 Do you want a cup of tea?

NORA
 No, thank you.

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

GABRIELLE
 What are you writing there?

NORA
 Oh, nothing.

GABRIELLE

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!

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

It's about a therapist.

GABRIELLE

Of course.

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

I wouldn't have expected otherwise.

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

A man?

NORA

The therapist is not me, you know?

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

Sounds wrong.

NORA

Really? Why?

GABRIELLE

Because she swore an oath of confidentiality!

NORA

But it's about love, you see?

GABRIELLE

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-

GABRIELLE

Still wrong. Even more wrong!

NORA

Oh, come on!

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

(disappointed)

I see.

GABRIELLE

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?

GABRIELLE

Do you think like that?

NORA

(insincere)

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

GABRIELLE

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 GABRIELLE'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. Arundel 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 Arundel 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... Arundel?

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 Arundel - 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 Arundel.

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 Arundel 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 GABRIELLE'S FLAT - AFTERNOON

9

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

GABRIELLE
 Everything okay with you?

NORA
 Yes, absolutely.

GABRIELLE
 You seem *a bit* stressed.

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

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

NORA
 I wish there was.

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

Anyway, what's the client up to?

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

My break of confidence isn't bought
that easily.

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

(worried)

What do you mean?

GABRIELLE

You know exactly what I mean.

NORA

No, I don't.

GABRIELLE

Are you sure?

NORA

I never broke the trust of my cli-

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE
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 Arundel 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 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 down 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 Arundel?

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 beer 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 Arundel 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 Arundel.

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 Arundel.

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 GABRIELLE'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. Gabrielle enters through the main door and turns on the light. Upon

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

GABRIELLE
Geez, did you scare me.

NORA
What? You scared *me*!

GABRIELLE
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.

GABRIELLE
It's okay.

NORA
Sorry. How was it?

GABRIELLE
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.

GABRIELLE
Anyway, what are you watching?

NORA
It's-

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

NORA
(self-aware)
Something like that.

GABRIELLE
You're so easy to tease!

NORA
Then perhaps you don't.

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

You know, we can marry too.

NORA

(startled)

Hurra for equality!

GABRIELLE

No wondering if you want to?

NORA

Uh, do you?

GABRIELLE

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!

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

You can't? What's going on?

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

Good night.

NORA

Good night.

Gabrielle 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, 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 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 Arundel, 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 Arundel?

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 Arundel 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
 Arundel.

PAUL
 (sniffing, still close to
 tears)
 Also, I wanted to say that I'm
 terribly sorry for Arundel. 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 Arundel 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
 Arundel.

AUDREY
 (drunk)
 This drink is on me. As an apology
 for Arundel. 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 Arundel" 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 GABRIELLE'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.

Gabrielle enters the flat, unseen by Nora. Gabrielle 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 Gabrielle, staring at her from above.

NORA
(startled)
Gabs!

GABRIELLE
What are you doing?

NORA
Nothing.

GABRIELLE
It didn't look like nothing.

NORA

Depends on how much you saw.

GABRIELLE

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 rung me.

GABRIELLE

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

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

What are you doing?

NORA

You're always so nosy!

GABRIELLE

At least I'm interested in you.

Nora sighs.

NORA

I was pondering about a work problem.

GABRIELLE

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.

GABRIELLE

What's the problem?

NORA

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

GABRIELLE

(laughing)

Sounds like one of your movies!

NORA
Art imitates life.

GABRIELLE
Wasn't it the other way around?

NORA
Whatever.

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

NORA
But they ruin it!

GABRIELLE
(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.

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

Nora flinches.

NORA
What do you mean by that?

GABRIELLE
Isn't this from Harry and Mary?

Nora realises what Gabrielle means and laughs stiltedly.

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

GABRIELLE
Do you ever watch any new movies?

NORA
If they feel like the old ones,
sure!

GABRIELLE
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 - 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 no 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 GABRIELLE'S FLAT - AFTERNOON

18

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

GABRIELLE
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!

GABRIELLE
What do you love about it so much?

NORA
We had this a hundred times.

GABRIELLE
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, ...

GABRIELLE
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?

GABRIELLE
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?

GABRIELLE
 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?

GABRIELLE
 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!

GABRIELLE
 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.

GABRIELLE
 I thought so.

NORA
 What's wrong?

GABRIELLE
 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!

GABRIELLE
 Says the one addicted to mobile
 games!

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

GABRIELLE
 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.

GABRIELLE
 You love your job!

NORA
 I do.

GABRIELLE
 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!

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

NORA
 No, thanks.

Gabrielle 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
 Gabrielle 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
Gabrielle 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)

I'm in so much trouble. What was I thinking? I can't have her tell Paul about me. Or him tell Audrey. I can't even tell Gabs. I'm so going to prison, ain't I? Oh god. I'm in so. much. trouble.

Nora brings out the chocolate again and starts to nibble.

NORA (CONT'D)

So much trouble. What was I thinking? I just wanted to help.

20 INT. PAUL'S FLAT - EVENING

20

PAUL

I thought we were going to watch a movie!

AUDREY

We are. While having a drink.

PAUL

I do think there's a difference between "having a drink" and playing a straight-up drinking game!

Audrey laughs, falling in his arms.

AUDREY

You're no fun!

PAUL

I am. In moderate portions.

AUDREY

(childish voice)

No fun. Right, Mr Bear?

PAUL

Finsbury.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

I just love to wind you up.

PAUL

(lovingly)

You're certainly good at it.

AUDREY

Of course I know his real name. That's how we met.

PAUL

Is it? I thought we met at a board game night. And then again at a car-share.

AUDREY

(frustrated)

Hng, let's forget that!

PAUL

I will forget that.

(beat)

When I'm dead.

AUDREY
(laughing)
Hey!

PAUL
Is that how you lost your gloves?
Staggering drunkenly through the
streets?

AUDREY
I told you I don't know how I lost
them!

PAUL
Precisely. Because you were too
drunk to remember.

AUDREY
(laughing)
You're wrong! They must have fallen
out of my pocket while walking.
Either way, let's play something
else then. Since you don't want to
drink, the dare part is already off
the table. So "truth" it is!

PAUL
(worried)
Okay, okay, I'll take a drink.

AUDREY
No! Too late!

PAUL
I don't mind having a drink, really.

AUDREY
Truth! Truth! Truth!

PAUL
Geez. Okay.

Paul positions himself like he is about to take a punch.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hit me.

AUDREY
Why is Finsbury called Finsbury?

PAUL
I don't know really. Ever since I
can remember, his name was Finsbury.

AUDREY
La-ame. Another one.

PAUL

But I already answered one, that's not fair!

AUDREY

You didn't really answer, did you?

Paul grumbles.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

What were you doing last Tuesday?
And the Tuesday before that?

PAUL

Oh, uh... I was relaxing. Didn't I tell you?

AUDREY

Yes, you did. But I don't believe you.

PAUL

Why not?

AUDREY

Every Tuesday "relaxing"? That sounds suspicious, doesn't it?

PAUL

Why?

AUDREY

Because you have plenty of days already during the week to relax!

PAUL

Yes, I do, but-

AUDREY

But?

PAUL

Tuesday is just a difficult day, isn't it? The week has started on Monday, the next upcoming day is Wednesday, ...

AUDREY

You do remember that the game is called "Truth or Dare", right?

PAUL

Yes, I d-

AUDREY

And you're all out of dare! Truth! Truth! Truth!

PAUL

Okay, okay. I'll tell you the truth.

AUDREY

What are you doing every Tuesday?

PAUL

I'm going to..., to a choir.

AUDREY

Didn't you tell me on our way to Arundel you'd be scared of being in a choir?

PAUL

See? That's exactly why I kept it secret! Also, I thought you're the one who wanted to forget about Arundel.

AUDREY

You can sing? Wow, that's so sexy. Please, sing a bit for me.

PAUL

I'm "all out of dare". Remember?

AUDREY

Oh, come on! Please.

PAUL

I can't.

AUDREY

Why not?

PAUL

Because, uh... Because I'm not confident in my singing voice. That's exactly why I go to a choir. In secret. So that my voice melds into the background.

AUDREY

Okay. Now do me.

PAUL

Excuse me?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

You're funny. A question I mean.

PAUL

Okay. Why are you ashamed of me?

AUDREY

Ashamed of you? Honey, I'm really into you!

PAUL

Why do you then never introduce me to your friends?

AUDREY

What do you mean?

PAUL

Yesterday you met Victoria, the week before Melanie, the week before that Emma, ...

AUDREY

Oh.

PAUL

And you never introduced me to any of them. So my conclusion is you're ashamed of me.

AUDREY

I talk a lot about you. I really do.

PAUL

Is there so much to complain?

AUDREY

No, not like that! It's just that... my friends, they are- I wouldn't want to rub my happiness too much in their faces.

PAUL

I'm sorry.

AUDREY

Don't apologise.

PAUL

I have the perfect way to make it up though!

Audrey kisses Paul on the cheek.

AUDREY

(suggestive)

Do you?

PAUL

It's a bit of a surprise.

AUDREY

Oh my, I love surprises! What is it?

PAUL
A weekend trip!

AUDREY
Great!

PAUL
And this time I'm planning not to
hitchhike home.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY
Don't be mean. Where are we going?

PAUL
Paris!

AUDREY
How lovely!
(beat)
Oh.

PAUL
What's wrong?

AUDREY
Nothing.

PAUL
But?

AUDREY
Paris is just-

PAUL
What?

AUDREY
I don't know it's-

PAUL
You don't like Paris?

AUDREY
Oh, I don't care too much.

PAUL
But weren't you learning French?

AUDREY
Un poquito.

Paul laughs.

PAUL
Is this another one of your jokes?
(beat)
Do you not want to go on holiday
with me?

AUDREY
I do! It's just-

Audrey stands for a moment in reflection, suddenly jumping
overly eager into Paul's arms.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Which movie did you want to watch?

21 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

21

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session.

NORA
How has your week been?

PAUL
Good! Audrey and I are still
together - how couldn't it be good?

NORA
That makes me so happy to hear.
(joking)
So then there's nothing to discuss
this week? Thank you for coming, and
don't forget to pay.

Paul laughs.

PAUL
There is actually something. About
Audrey. I mean, it's nothing major,
but- Oh, well, maybe it is major.

NORA
Well, what is it?

PAUL
I think she might be cheating on me!

NORA
Why would you think that?

PAUL
You sound more shocked than I am!

NORA
High empathy, comes with the trade.

PAUL

I see. Well, it's just that I have been asking her if she'd like to go on a vacation with me. And suddenly she has been very evasive!

NORA

Where did you want to go?

PAUL

Paris. City of romance and all.

NORA

It does sound romantic. Could it be that she doesn't want to repeat another situation like you experienced during your car trip?

PAUL

I was wondering the same and even brought it up! But she didn't seem to mind really.

NORA

But does that merit you assuming she was cheating?

PAUL

On its own, probably not. But the thing is that she's also seeing somebody every week. Every single week, on Thursday, she says she sees a friend.

NORA

(alarmed, feigning calm)

Is that so?

PAUL

It just seems iffy. Over the past weeks, she has been seeing Victoria, Melanie, and Emma. Only Geri is missing to complete the whole set of Spice Girls!

NORA

(detering)

Is it possible that Audrey is friends with the Spice Girls?

PAUL

Highly unlikely!

NORA

These are all fairly common female names.

PAUL

They are, but it just seems too made up. Especially since she always meets one of them on Thursday.

NORA

How does she seem when you see her after she has seen her friends?

PAUL

She seems more relaxed. Calmer.

NORA

Isn't that great?

PAUL

Not if this relaxed state comes from staying the night with another man!

NORA

Audrey doesn't seem to be like that kind of woman to me - from what you told me about her.

PAUL

Perhaps I'm just making up problems that don't exist. I love spending time with her! That's why I also wanted to ask you if we could move our sessions to Thursday instead.

NORA

Thursday I can't do unfortunately, I'm already seeing another client that night.

PAUL

(frustrated)

You're busy, Audrey's busy - what's happening on Thursday?

NORA

I don't know about Audrey, but for me, it's work.

(beat)

Are you really asking this so that you can spend more time with her during the rest of the week though? Or are you asking so that you can feel more distracted on Thursdays?

PAUL

I hate it when you see right through me.

Nora laughs and leans forward.

NORA

Do I?

Paul stares at Audrey's gloves that Nora had left thoughtlessly on the small table beside her. He is speechless.

NORA

I feel like you're now seeing
through me, literally!

PAUL

(waking up)
Me? Oh, no.

NORA

Everything okay?

Paul starts pointing at the gloves but catches himself halfway through.

PAUL

Yes, yes, I'm fine. I just thought
something reminded me of Audrey.

NORA

What was it?

Paul looks at the clock across the room.

PAUL

Oh, nothing. I guess we have to end
our session for today anyway.

NORA

That's true, but please don't feel
under pressure if there's something
important you'd still like to
mention.

PAUL

Oh, it's fine.

Paul gets up to leave, Nora also stands up to see him out.

PAUL

I'd like to pay in cash this time,
it's a bit easier for me.

NORA

No problem.

Paul fumbles on purpose around his jacket, takes out his wallet and lets it fall. It lands directly in front of Nora.

PAUL
I'm such a klutz.

Nora bends down to pick up the wallet. While doing so, Paul snatches Audrey's gloves from the table and crams them into his jacket. He then turns to Nora, takes the wallet, takes out the money and hands it over.

PAUL
Thank you very much. I can be so clumsy at times!

NORA
We all are. Do you have everything?

PAUL
Yes, I think I do now. All my things.

NORA
Have a nice week!

PAUL
(distracted)
Yeah.

Nora opens the door and lets Paul leave.

22 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIELLE'S FLAT & PAUL'S FLAT SIDE BY SIDE - EVENING 22

Paul's flat, as well as Nora's and Gabrielle's home, are showing side by side. Paul sits on the couch, fumbling Audrey's gloves. Nora fumbles nervously on her phone.

NORA
If anyone of them realises what I did, I'm dead.

Nora makes a telephone call.

NORA (CONT'D)
Hello. I'm calling about some transactions on my credit card. There are a few from something called "ChitChatCar". Could you please remove these from the transaction history?
(beat)
No, thank you, I don't want to log
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

any suspicious activity. I just want to remove these transactions.

(beat)

Why's my call suspicious?

(beat, hurried)

No, don't make me listen again to your cover version of Uptown Funk, please jus-

PAUL

Why would Audrey's gloves be at the therapy place? Either she also goes to a therapist, and even to the same one, or she followed me there. No, it can't be, she despises therapist. She called them "brain plumbers who managed to drain their own"!

NORA

(humming)

Uptown. Funky. World. Bah, I hate this song!

(desperate)

Come on, just cover my tracks so that no one will ever know what I did. Please!

PAUL

She must have been following me because of my lie with the choir.

NORA

(surprised)

Hello, yes?

PAUL

She followed me all the way to Stepney Green? It's a bit sexy I must admit.

NORA

Could you call me back instead? Perfect, thank you! Call me back when you sorted it out.

Audrey enters through the main door. Paul shrieks and crams the gloves into a couch fold.

AUDREY

Hello darling!

(beat)

Are you okay? You look shocked.

PAUL

Me? Of course. I just wasn't expecting you.

AUDREY

I know, having the keys to your flat feels so official! It's such a smooth and sure-fire way go get happy. You're happy to see me, right?

Paul gives Audrey a kiss.

PAUL

Of course.

Gabrielle enters through the main door. Nora shrieks and crams the phone into a couch fold.

GABRIELLE

Hello!

(beat)

Everything alright? You look shocked.

NORA

Me? Noooo. How about you?

GABRIELLE

(annoyed)

These damn keys drive me insane. I have to wiggle them in the door for half a minute until I can enter.

(beat)

What did you do on your free evening?

NORA

Oh, I was... reading! Trying to have a phone-free evening. You were right, I'm addicted to these mobile games. I'm detoxing.

PAUL

You look really nice today.

AUDREY

I wanted to look nice for you.

NORA

You look really nice today.

GABRIELLE

These pants are killing me. I can't wait to hop into my sweatpants.

PAUL

How was your day?

AUDREY

Lovely, I got to see you.

PAUL
Weren't you meeting Geri today?

AUDREY
I don't have a friend called Geri.

PAUL
Oh, really.

AUDREY
But I'm going to acupuncture
tomorrow, remember?

Nora's phone, which is crammed into the couch fold,
vibrates.

GABRIELLE
What was that?

NORA
What?

It vibrates again.

GABRIELLE
Can't you feel that?

NORA
Do you think we're having an
earthquake?

Gabrielle gets up and inspects the couch. It vibrates
again. Nora jumps up and climbs under the table.

NORA
Quick, under here! I saw this in a
documentary!

Gabrielle retrieves Nora's phones from the couch fold.

GABRIELLE
It's your phone!

NORA
Oooh, is it? I remember.

GABRIELLE
Are you saying you put it there on
purpose?

NORA
A sure-fire way to remove myself
from any distractions. Trust me, I'm
a therapist.

GABRIELLE
(suspicious)
I see.

As Gabrielle holds the phone, it buzzes again. Before she has a chance to look at the screen, Nora snatches it away.

NORA
See? That's how addicted I am to
this game!

PAUL
I found your gloves.

AUDREY
So they were here after all?

PAUL
I put them back where I found them.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY
Stop playing with me!

Audrey looks under the table.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
(playful)
Here?

PAUL
Cold.

She moves to a shelf, closer to Paul.

PAUL
Warm.

Audrey slowly moves to Paul.

PAUL
Warmer.

Audrey moves even closer to Paul

PAUL
Very warm.

Audrey jumps onto Paul.

PAUL
Hot! Hot!

AUDREY
Give them to me!

PAUL

I don't have them.

Audrey sits down on the couch.

AUDREY

So where are they?

PAUL

Hot.

Audrey stands up in surprise and looks at where she just sat.

PAUL

Very hot.

Audrey grabs into the couch fold and retrieves the gloves.

AUDREY

I swear I never had my coat anywhere near this couch!

PAUL

Maybe the fell out of your bag?

AUDREY

(unsure)

Maybe.

GABRIELLE

That's a bizarre game if it vibrates all the time.

NORA

I know! This stuff is full of ads.

GABRIELLE

At least you're not doing anything naughty.

NORA

Naughty? What do you mean?

GABRIELLE

Like looking up naked women. Or men.

NORA

Are we having this again?

GABRIELLE

I just don't know how it is to be bisexual. I don't know your urges.

NORA

"Urges"? I'm not a trained dog, Gabs!

GABRIELLE

You're right, I'm just being stupid.

PAUL

This morning, I had a terrible start. The bus broke down. We all had to get off at *Stroud Green*!

AUDREY

Stroud Green? That's not even near your route!

PAUL

So you know this area?

AUDREY

(inconspicuous)

Uh, I heard of it, yeah.

PAUL

How come?

AUDREY

Uh- My friend Victoria is from there!

PAUL

Oh, is she? I always thought she was the posh one.

AUDREY

You've never met her!

PAUL

I think you told me so.

AUDREY

Did I?

NORA

Let's do something together. Watch a movie or something.

GABRIELLE

I can't, I'm sorry. I still have to finish this stuff for work.

NORA

In the evening?

GABRIELLE

I'm sorry. How about we watch one on Friday.

NORA

I thought we wanted to go out on Friday, with Lisa.

GABRIELLE

Did we? Let's talk about this later,
okay?

NORA

Okay.

AUDREY

I thought we were going to watch a
movie!

PAUL

What would you say to a James Bond?

AUDREY

Sure! I love Pierce Brosnan, he's a
real spy!

Paul shakes in alarm.

PAUL

You like spies?

AUDREY

Of course, I always wanted to be one
as a child.

PAUL

Would you ever spy on somebody?

Audrey falls into Paul's arms, laughing.

AUDREY

I want to spy on you! So that I can
have you for myself every day.

PAUL

(laughs suspiciously)
Haha, can you imagine that! What a
thought.

AUDREY

I know, right?

PAUL

Absolutely. Lunatic.

23 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

23

Nora, Audrey and Paul sit in their usual spots.

AUDREY

I'm in trouble. Big time. Paul was
inviting me on a weekend trip to
Paris.

NORA
(pretending surprise)
Oh, did he? What a surprise.

AUDREY
It is such a romantic gesture. But I
had to say No.

NORA
(pretending surprise)
Another surprise. Why did you?

AUDREY
Because of the court order. Part of
my sentence is that I'm not allowed
to leave the country.

NORA
(honest surprise)
That's quite severe! You didn't tell
me.

AUDREY
There are always two sides to a
story. Sounds like you have only
heard mine, not the one of the
judge.

PAUL
I made a breakthrough. I don't think
anymore that Audrey is cheating on
me.

NORA
That's great!

PAUL
I know! I'm so relieved.

AUDREY
I think that Paul thinks I would be
cheating on him.

PAUL
Instead, I suspect she's spying on
me.

NORA
(frustrated)
Why?

AUDREY
Because he keeps asking about what I
do on Thursdays when I meet you.

PAUL
Because of the gloves.

NORA
What gloves?

AUDREY
I'm afraid he doesn't believe that I
would be seeing friends. Shoot! I
have to find new friends called,
Melanie, Emma and Victoria *fast*!

PAUL
Oh, come on, don't pretend, okay?

NORA
(honest)
What do you mean, Paul?

PAUL
I don't know how Audrey knows that
I'm seeing a therapist, and
especially not *who* I'm seeing, but
I find it pretty creepy that she'd
pass by at yours.

NORA
(alarmed)
Are you saying-

PAUL
I saw her gloves at your side table
last week and took them.

NORA
(beat, lying)
Wait, you stole my gloves?

PAUL
Your gloves?

AUDREY
He somehow found my gloves.

NORA
Yes, *my* gloves. The, uh- black
ones. I was wondering where they had
been.

PAUL
I don't have them anymore.

NORA
Please return them immediately.

PAUL
Audrey has them.

AUDREY

If I would have lost them anywhere,
it would've been *here*.

NORA

Paul, why would you steal my gloves
and gift them your girlfriend?

PAUL

I thought they were hers! *She*
thought they were hers!

NORA

Let me recap: You saw a pair of
gloves in my office.

PAUL

Yes.

NORA

Which were looking like Audrey's.

PAUL

Yes.

NORA

Which is why you assumed that your
girlfriend followed you here.

PAUL

Yes.

NORA

And after having followed you here,
she then never brought it up again.

PAUL

If you say it like that, it doesn't
sound as believable as it did in my
head.

AUDREY

Do you think he's following me?

NORA

(frustrated)

Do you?

AUDREY

How else could he have had my
gloves? I'm certain I already didn't
have them anymore when I entered his
flat.

NORA

So, to rephrase: you assume that
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

Paul is, or was, secretly following you through the streets while you dropped your gloves, and he then picked them up - but decided to only return them two weeks later.

AUDREY

If you say it like that, it doesn't sound right, no.

PAUL

The worst is, I find the thought of her following me kind of pleasurable.

AUDREY

But also, I find the thought kind of sexy.

PAUL

Is that weird?

AUDREY

Is that weird?

NORA

(to Paul)

It seems like you don't find the thought of Audrey secretly following you being too believable when confronted with it either. Isn't this fear rather related to your mother?

PAUL

To my mother? How?

NORA

Many people project desires about their parents onto their partners.

PAUL

Desires? Haha, no, no, no! That's disgusting!

NORA

Not in that way of course.

PAUL

Absolutely not in that way!

(beat)

Audrey is definitely lying to me about Thursdays though.

AUDREY

I wanted this week's cover-up to be that I'm seeing a friend. I had even already made up a small biography

(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
for her: short, very British, called
Geri - but he's up to me on it.

PAUL
I once asked her:
(to Audrey)
How does your friend look like?

AUDREY
Which one?

PAUL
The one you saw two weeks ago.

AUDREY
Oh, uh- Melanie?

PAUL
Yes.

During Audrey's description, the stage lighting shines
ever so slightly brighter on Nora. The following
descriptions should be adjusted to fit the traits of the
actor playing Nora, slightly focused on her negatives.

AUDREY
Oh, she's, uh- a bit older than me,
slightly taller.

PAUL
Aha. How does she dress?

AUDREY
Uh- formal. Like finance people. But
not sexy formal like people working
for a bank, but boring formal, like
people who work in a bank.

PAUL
So she works in a bank?

AUDREY
(surprised)
Uh, yes... yes, she does.

PAUL
What hairstyle does she have?

AUDREY
Uh- brown. Long. It just grows. She
doesn't really have any hair
"style".

NORA
(affronted)
Hey!

AUDREY

Why do you care so much about how she looks?

PAUL

I'm just so excited to meet your friends! This description feels like I might know her already.

AUDREY

(worried)

Does it?

PAUL

(to Nora again)

I was browsing through all her social media platform profiles and she doesn't have *any* contacts called Victoria, Emma or Melanie!

AUDREY

So instead of saying I would see another friend, I said this time I was going to try acupuncture like you suggested.

PAUL

This week she was going to "acupuncture". Sure. If she went to acupuncture, wouldn't I then have seen needle marks on her?

NORA

It's acupuncture, not taking heroin, Paul.

PAUL

I just don't buy it.

AUDREY

It feels so wrong. To lie, when I myself abhor being lied to.

NORA

Are you ever lying to her?

PAUL

Never!

(beat)

Well, except about seeing you.

NORA

Will you tell her?

PAUL

One day, but not now.

NORA
(relieved)
Fantastic news.

PAUL
(confused)
Why?

NORA
Oh, uh- it's just good to hear you
being so decisive about it. What are
you telling your girlfriend when you
see me?

PAUL
I'm going to "a choir".

NORA
A choir? How is *that* believable?

PAUL
Why does everybody say that!

NORA
So, Audrey doesn't believe you?

PAUL
She does. But she just was very
surprised when I told her.

AUDREY
I can't cope with it all anymore.
Paul has his choir, why can't my
thing just be therapy? I've had
enough of all the lying. I want to
be honest to him.

NORA
(panicking)
No!
(beat)
I mean, are you sure this is
necessary?

AUDREY
Yes. I need to cleanse myself. I
hate liars. How would you feel if
I'd lie to you?

NORA
I wouldn't know, would I?

AUDREY
No, you wouldn't. But I won't lie.
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Isn't this the whole point about seeing a therapist?

(beat, laughs)

You have it easy, you can't lie about anything because I know nothing about you!

NORA

Is there something you need to know?

AUDREY

(unsure)

Nothing I need to know.

NORA

Coming back to you speaking about us to Paul: do you remember our confidentiality agreement? According to studies, it's better for patients to not share anything discussed during therapy.

AUDREY

Does it say that? But even so, I'm sure it doesn't say I can't tell anyone I'm going to a therapist, right?

NORA

(frustrated)

What are you, a lawyer?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

Why are you so worried about me telling him about you?

NORA

(struck with an idea)

That's it!

(beat)

It's not you, it's me.

AUDREY

Are you breaking up with me?

NORA

No! I just would like to stay anonymous as a therapist. You might not know, but I'm quite a shy personality.

AUDREY

I would've never known.

NORA
 (pleasant)
 Thank you!
 (beat)
 How about you do one thing at a time. Perhaps first *only* share why you couldn't go to Paris. And then some other time about us.

AUDREY
 You're right. I'll tell him about the court order and Paris.

NORA
 And us?

AUDREY
 A girl needs a secret.

Nora laughs relieved.

24 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIELLE'S FLAT - EVENING

24

Nora is alone.

NORA
 It's all lies: about Audrey and Paul, to Gabs... Is a therapist even allowed to lie? It feels wrong. I need to tell them. But how? They would hate me, I'd lose them as clients. They might drag me through the dirt so that I lose *all* my clients! My licence! I couldn't even be mad at them. I would deserve it. Could I just say I can't be their therapist anymore? But how would that work? It would put a complete break to their healing process. Would they even want to know? Would they be ready? They are both so scared of sharing with each other that they're seeing a therapist. If I tell them myself, they might think of each other as liars. I mean, they clearly did lie to each other about where they go each week when they see me. They might break up because of that. Because of me! When I was the one who actually wanted that they get together. Who brought them together!
 They'll find out eventually. They have to. They can't lie about it forever. Neither can I.
 (MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

Would it be so bad if they found out? If it's on their own? It would mean at least they had been honest to each other. And I could say that I kept both my clients' therapeutic process confidential, as per agreement. I didn't do anything immoral after all. Except for bringing them together, making them meet. Making them *happy*! That's not immoral, is it? They would never find out anyway. Nobody else knows it.

25 INT. PAUL'S FLAT - EVENING

25

Paul sits alone on the couch, cuddling Finsbury. The door opens: Audrey lets herself in with her key.

AUDREY

Hello, darling!

PAUL

Hello!

(squeaky voice for
Finsbury)

Good evening!

AUDREY

What a cute sight, my two favourite people hugging on the couch!

PAUL

Did you hear that Finsbury? You're a person now!

(squeaky voice for
Finsbury)

Yes.

Audrey sits down next to Paul and kisses him.

AUDREY

I'd have almost thought you'd hide him again when I came in.

PAUL

I don't have to lie to you about that anymore.

Audrey thinks for a moment.

AUDREY

I need to tell you something.

PAUL
Oh no.

AUDREY
What?

PAUL
That's how breakups always start,
isn't it?

AUDREY
(laughing)
I'm not breaking up with you!

Paul hugs Finsbury a little.

PAUL
Okay.

AUDREY
It's about Thursdays.

PAUL
What about it?

AUDREY
There is no Victoria, Melanie or
Emma. I made them up.

PAUL
I knew you could not be friends with
the Spice Girls!

AUDREY
Spice Girls?

PAUL
Doesn't matter. So, what's his name?

AUDREY
His?

PAUL
I told myself you weren't, but
you're cheating on me, aren't you?

AUDREY
What? No! I'm not cheating on you!

PAUL
(interrupting)
Is it because I go to a th-

AUDREY
I'm a convict, Paul.

PAUL

What?

AUDREY

I have anger issues. Big time.

PAUL

Who says that?

AUDREY

(surprised)

What do you mean?

PAUL

Well, I really was being an asshole during our day trip to Arundel.

AUDREY

It's not about Arundel. It's about my life. I had a court case brought on me. I can't even leave the country at the moment.

PAUL

Is that why you didn't want to go to Paris with me?

AUDREY

Yes! I would've loved going, it was such a romantic gesture. I just don't want to lie to you anymore. That's why I had to tell you. I said the same to my therapist.

PAUL

Your therapist?

AUDREY

(caught)

Oh no, I shouldn't tell you about her at all!

PAUL

Her?

AUDREY

Shoot!

PAUL

Why should you not tell me about that?

AUDREY

Does it matter?

PAUL

I'm just wondering.

AUDREY

We have an agreement of sorts. I shouldn't share anything discussed during my therapy. Apparently, it's for my own healing.

PAUL

And you're allowed to tell me this?

AUDREY

Shoot.

PAUL

(in his own thoughts)

You have a therapist.

AUDREY

What's that look? Do you judge me?

PAUL

No, no, not at all! I'm glad if you're glad.

(beat)

Are you happy with her?

AUDREY

I love her! I have been feeling so much better in the past few months.

PAUL

So, your gloves...

AUDREY

What about them?

PAUL

Oh, nothing. I'm just a bit confused, that's all. I started becoming emotionally invested with a woman called Victoria and now I hear she doesn't even exist.

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

I'm so happy we can finally be honest with each other! I couldn't stand all the lying anymore. Can you forgive me?

PAUL

Of course.

AUDREY

I admire your calmness. I couldn't act like that when I found out somebody lied to me for so long.

(laughs)

But I guess that's why I'm seeing a therapist.

PAUL

I won't lie to you, don't worry.

Audrey hugs Paul.

AUDREY

I know.

26 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

26

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session.

NORA

How have you been?

PAUL

(absent)

Good.

NORA

(joking)

Are you again at your choir tonight?

PAUL

My choir? Ah - yes, I am.

Nora watches intently at Paul, waiting for him to pick up the conversation.

PAUL

I'm a bit quiet today.

NORA

That's fine. It's entirely your session.

PAUL

There is one thing, but I don't really know if I can say it.

NORA

It's my job to listen.

PAUL

It's a secret - but not mine. It's Audrey's.

NORA

If it's her secret, then perhaps
don't tell me.

PAUL

You don't want to know?

NORA

I want what's best for you. As your
therapist, I'll keep to myself no
matter what you tell me - so you
can tell me if you want to. Do
you?

PAUL

Audrey told me that she used to have
aggression problems.

NORA

Oh. This is unexpected.

PAUL

I know! it used to be so bad that
she even got convicted in court.

NORA

Does this change how you feel about
her?

NORA

Not at all! I'm glad she told me. I
thought she didn't want to go to
Paris because she doesn't think of
us as something serious. Instead,
she takes it so seriously that she
even tells me a truth like this!

NORA

Did she mention anything else in
regards to her conviction?

PAUL

Like what?

NORA

Oh, I don't know... Like, is she
doing something about her aggression
problems?

PAUL

You mean therapy?

NORA

Yeah, something like that.

PAUL

She does.

There is a distinct pause. Nora listens intently.

PAUL (CONT'D)
She's reading a book about anger management.

NORA
(surprised)
Oh, really! Is it working?

PAUL
Yes, she says it does. Also, she has to do community service, the judge made her do that.

NORA
Wow. That's quite a sentence.

PAUL
She seems to enjoy it! Do you remember Victoria, Emma and Melanie she spoke about? Those are actual people, but elderly people from a retirement home. That's where she goes every Thursday.

NORA
That's all wonderful to hear! And you were fearing that she would be cheating or spying on you.

PAUL
I know! I'm really glad the truth is out.

NORA
Did you also tell her about us then?

PAUL
I wanted to, but I couldn't. I felt completely stricken.

NORA
Tell her when you feel it is the right time.

27 INT. A RESTAURANT AND A DANCE CLASS SIDE BY SIDE - NIGHT 27

Location changes are indicated with light. The first half of the stage is a fancy restaurant. Nora sits on a table across from Gabrielle. Both are well dressed.

GABRIELLE
Are you sure we shouldn't cancel the order and ask for the Château Bataille instead?

NORA

The Roussillon will be fine. Where would even be the difference?

GABRIELLE

One is from Bordeaux, the other one isn't.

NORA

They're both French, right?

GABRIELLE

I just want to offer you the very best. It's our anniversary!

NORA

You do!

GABRIELLE

I'm sorry. It might be the dress.

NORA

Don't worry.

GABRIELLE

You look very pretty.

Light change. The second half of the stage shows Audrey and Paul. Swing music plays. Audrey and Paul are dancing in a closed position.

PAUL

I think I got it!

AUDREY

(imitating melody of The Rain In Spain)

I think he's got it! Yes, Paul, I think he's got it!

Paul laughs.

AUDREY

I'm enjoying this. But I thought that I'd be dancing only with you, not switching partners.

PAUL

I don't mind dancing with others as well.

AUDREY

Are you saying you want to see other people?

PAUL

What?

AUDREY
That's okay, not a problem. Let's
have an open relationship then.

PAUL
No!

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY
I'm just teasing you! You should see
your face!

The music stops.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
Do we really have to switch?

PAUL
Yes! What would the others say?

Paul moves away.

PAUL (CONT'D)
We'll dance again soon.

AUDREY
We better will.

Light change, back to the restaurant scene.

GABRIELLE
Another glass? Seems like you really
like it.

Nora gulps down some wine.

NORA
I do!

Nora and Gabrielle look at each other without knowing what
to say.

GABRIELLE
Anything new to report from work?

NORA
(alarmed)
From work? Not at all. You're the
one with plenty of colleagues, not
me!

GABRIELLE
(joking)
Am I hearing that right? Could you
be jealous of a "nine to five gig"?

NORA

It would be nice to have someone to talk to during the workday.

GABRIELLE

You talk non-stop at work, with your clients!

NORA

A dentist also works with a lot of people but doesn't share anything with the people on the chair, you know what I mean?

GABRIELLE

It must be interesting, hearing so many thoughts from strangers. Almost like reading a book.

NORA

Sometimes it feels like *being* that person for an hour.

GABRIELLE

(joking)

You must be looking at the clock all the time, desperately wanting to get back to your life!

NORA

(dishonest)

Haha, yeah.

Light change, back to the dance class. Paul comes back around to Audrey.

AUDREY

Missed me?

PAUL

(smirks)

Maybe.

They dance again.

AUDREY

I have to say, there are some good dancers here.

PAUL

(self-conscious)

Better than me?

AUDREY

(smirks)

Maybe.

PAUL

That's not fair. It's my first time!

AUDREY

Don't worry. I like dancing with you.

PAUL

We should do this more often, we could become real pros. I already see us at a dance competition!

AUDREY

There's a class happening right in the middle of us every Tuesday!

PAUL

Tuesdays I have my... choir.

AUDREY

Too bad.

PAUL

But I was thinking of perhaps stopping.

AUDREY

Oh, why?

PAUL

I'm not really good at it.

AUDREY

Most important is that you enjoy it.

PAUL

I do.

AUDREY

Then continue!

PAUL

But-

AUDREY

Shoot, we need to switch again. See you in a bit!

Light change, back to the restaurant scene.

NORA

That was a fantastic meal! Shall we head home now?

GABRIELLE

Already, on our special day?!

NORA
I had a lot of wine.

GABRIELLE
(joking)
You didn't leave a lot for me.

NORA
Didn't I? Sorry.

GABRIELLE
Let's head to the bar and get me one
as well, okay?

NORA
Why not.

Nora and Gabrielle get up from their table. They walk to the middle of the stage where a bar is located. They both stand with their backs turned to the spectators, ready to order.

Light change, back to the dance class.

PAUL
That was fun! Much more than I
expected. Thank you for the
suggestion!

AUDREY
No need to thank me. What's the plan
now?

PAUL
How about a drink downstairs? It's
such a nice venue.

AUDREY
Absolutely!

Paul and Audrey leave the scenery, heading towards the middle of the stage, to the bar. The lights change to fully focus on the bar where Nora and Gabrielle are already standing with their backs turned to the spectators.

PAUL
(to the waiter)
Two lagers, please.

Paul receives two drinks and hands one of them to Audrey. Gabrielle and Nora have not yet noticed the two; they are enthralled in their own conversation.

GABRIELLE
 (joking)
 Are you lying to impress me or
 because you're drunk?

NORA
 I'm not lying!
 (spreading arms)
 It was this big!

While spreading her arms, Nora accidentally slaps Paul,
 who stands behind her. Paul drops his glass.

PAUL
 Ow!

AUDREY
 (angry at Nora)
 Why don't you watch out!

Nora bends down and scrapes up the glass pieces. She
 doesn't look at Paul and Audrey yet.

NORA
 Oh dear, I'm so sorry!

AUDREY
 What were you doing? Are you a bird
 or what?!

PAUL
 (surprised)
 Okay, now I see the anger thing.

NORA
 I'm so sorry.

AUDREY
 You said this already. Anything new
 coming out of your mouth?

NORA
 Did anyone get hurt?

Nora stands up, directly facing Paul and Audrey.

PAUL
 (surprised)
 Nora?

NORA
 (shocked)
 P-Paul!

AUDREY
 (pretentiously pleasant)
 Oh hi, so nice to meet you. My name
 is Audrey.

GABRIELLE
(to Nora)
Do you know them?

AUDREY
(angry)
No! I have never met this person
before!
(pretentiously pleasant
again)
But I dare say, how lovely to meet
you.
(to Paul)
But how do you know her?

PAUL
(rushing)
Nora and I sing together at the
choir. Isn't that right?

NORA
(confused)
Yes.

AUDREY
Seriously?
(beat)
I mean, what a surprise! What a
happy surprise.

GABRIELLE
Listen, Audrey and...

Gabrielle indicates to Paul to introduce himself.

PAUL
Paul.

GABRIELLE
...Paul. We're really sorry about
this spilt drink. I know you're
angry...

AUDREY
I'm not angry!

GABRIELLE
...and you have every right to be!
Let me make it up to you by buying
another round.

AUDREY
(urging to flee)
It's not a problem. Right, Paul?

GABRIELLE
I insist. Please.

PAUL

It was only a lager, noth-

GABRIELLE

(to the bartender)

A lager, please. The best one you have. Thank you.

Gabrielle receives a beer and hands it to Paul.

GABRIELLE

There you go, all as new.

AUDREY

(muttering, eye-rolling)

A beer can't be new.

NORA

What a coincidence to meet.

(beat, grasping for straws)

Paul has told me so much about you, Audrey.

PAUL

(to Audrey)

Did I?! She's exaggerating.

NORA

But his descriptions fell short of conveying that it was actually you!

GABRIELLE

What do you mean?

AUDREY

Oh, she surely just compliments my outfit.

GABRIELLE

(muttering)

This girl has problems.

AUDREY

You look lovely as well, N...

NORA

Nora is my name, Nora.

AUDREY

...Nora, right. I have never met someone with such a name before.

GABRIELLE

(to Nora)

You never told me you go singing!

NORA

I,- I wanted to surprise you!

GABRIELLE

You did! Because I can barely believe you.

PAUL

We both started very recently.

NORA

It's true, we even have a name.

Paul stares at Nora imploringly.

NORA (CONT'D)

The Chorale Reef!

PAUL

I love that name!

NORA

You get it? It's a pun on chorale and coral.

GABRIELLE

Could we have a taster of what you practised? Please!

AUDREY

He never sings for me.

PAUL

I don't know...

AUDREY

Please do! You always say you can't do it alone.

NORA

We're in public. I'm too shy.

GABRIELLE

Oh, loosen up. You were the one who had loads of drinks!

AUDREY

You did?

GABRIELLE

Chorale Reef!

GABRIELLE

AUDREY

Chorale Reef! Chorale Reef! Chorale Reef! Chorale Reef!

PAUL

What was the last song again we did?

NORA
Uh, it was this popular one,
remember?

PAUL
You know, the one "da da da-daa da".
The one everybody knows!

NORA
Ah yes.
(singing "Bohemian
Rhapsody")
Is this the real life?

AUDREY
Oh my god, I love that one.

NORA (CONT'D)
(singing)
Is it just fantasy?

PAUL
(panicking)
That's not "the song everybody
knows"!

NORA
(sour)
Surely everyone knows *that*! Audrey
does.

GABRIELLE
I do.

PAUL
I need the sheet music for that one.
You know me! How long have we been
sitting together, Nora?

NORA
What song were you thinking of then?

PAUL
(clasping for straws)
The easy one.
(relieved)
Yes, I remember!
(singing "All The Small
Things")
Na na, na na, na na- na na- na na.

Paul waves with his hands at Nora for her to join him.
They both sing the chorus to "All The Small Things":

PAUL	NORA
Na na, na na, na na- na na-	Na na, na na, na na- na na-
na na.	na na.

Gabrielle and Audrey clap. Paul and Nora take a bow.

AUDREY
(cheers)
Wooo!

GABRIELLE
Wonderful.

PAUL
Well done, Nora!

NORA
Thanks, you too!

AUDREY
When you told me that you sing in a
choir, I had always pictured you
doing classical pieces.

PAUL
It's a pretty casual group. Isn't
it?

NORA
Yes, very casual. So casual, you
can't even find us online.
(beat)
Seriously, don't try to look us up.
Won't happen.

AUDREY
So, Nora, tell me - who's your
friend? It must be a special
evening, judging from the dresses.

GABRIELLE
It's our anniversary!

AUDREY
Anniversary?

PAUL
You never told me you had a
girlfriend!

NORA
Well, we've only known each other
for a few... weeks. At the choir.

GABRIELLE
My name is Gabrielle.

Gabrielle shakes Audrey's and Paul's hands.

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)

Nice to meet you. You two look like a couple as well. How did you meet?

PAUL

(muttering to Nora)

Do you only hang out with nosy people?

AUDREY

We met at a board game night.

GABRIELLE

At a board game night, really!

PAUL

But we were both too shy to get each other's telephone numbers. I thought I'd never see her again.

AUDREY

But a few weeks later, we met again when I was sharing my car for a day trip. And out of all the people who could've joined, it had to be him!

GABRIELLE

(stricken)

You met at a car-share?

AUDREY

I know! It's like a higher entity made it happen.

PAUL

God bless ChitChatCar!

GABRIELLE

(mutters)

ChitChatCar...

NORA

What a curious happenstance.

GABRIELLE

Yes, how curious.

PAUL

It was fate!

GABRIELLE

Fate, yes.

NORA

You look happy together.

PAUL
(snickers)
Thank you.

NORA
I think we should leave these two
love birds alone.

GABRIELLE
She always knows what's best for
people. At least so she thinks! Just
the therapist.

Gabrielle laughs.

PAUL
(acting overly surprised)
You, a therapist? Oh, I didn't know
that.

NORA
No? I guess I never told you. One
doesn't get to talk much with all
the singing.

PAUL
That's true. A lot of "la la la",
but not much "bla bla bla", right?
(laughs in panic)
We should do this more often!

NORA
We should go now. Bye Paul, see you
on Tuesday. At the choir. Bye,
Audrey. It was very nice to
finally meet you.

AUDREY
Nice to meet you too.

GABRIELLE
Bye!

Nora and Gabrielle leave the bar. Paul and Audrey have a
drawn-out moment of silence.

AUDREY
What a charming woman.

PAUL
Yes, she is.

AUDREY
You never told me about the people
at your choir.

PAUL

Oh, I just never really talk to them much.

AUDREY

Paul, she knew who I was.

PAUL

I was surprised at that, I never to-

AUDREY

(hastily)

Nora sure didn't know me from me!

PAUL

Wait - are you jealous?

AUDREY

What? No.

Audrey stops for a second and decides to roll with it.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Actually. I am. I'm jealous. Thank you for being so thoughtful as to having spotted that. And I think you shouldn't go to that choir anymore.

PAUL

Are you serious?

AUDREY

Yes, because you talking to Nora, or whatever her name was, is making me completely envious.

PAUL

That's crazy!

AUDREY

Don't you use the C-word on me!

PAUL

But why can't I talk to her?

AUDREY

I didn't like how much she knew about me.

PAUL

Is it such a problem that I say things about you to a... friend?

AUDREY

Oh, now she's already a friend? What's next? A lover?!

PAUL

I like my Tuesdays. I feel like it helps me feel in equilibrium. That's what singing does to you.

AUDREY

Let's discuss that another time okay?

(beat)

Also, you have the sheet music for Bohemian Rhapsody at your place, right? I really want you to sing that one for me now.

PAUL

Um, ... We actually always share the sheet music between two people. Nora has it.

Audrey lets out a fake cry of jealousy.

28 INT. NORA'S AND GABRIELLE'S FLAT - NIGHT

28

Nora and Gabrielle enter the flat.

NORA

Is everything okay? You haven't said a word the whole way.

GABRIELLE

Me? Puh, I'm fine.

NORA

What is it?

Gabrielle takes out her phone and scrolls through it.

GABRIELLE

I knew I remembered that name.

NORA

Which name?

Gabrielle shows her phone to Nora.

GABRIELLE

ChitChatCar. You said somebody hacked my phone.

NORA

What do you mean?

GABRIELLE

Oh, come on. At least be honest to me.

NORA

Honest about what? I don't know what you're talking about.

GABRIELLE

I'm talking about those two people we just met. Paul and Audrey.

NORA

I'm sorry I didn't tell you about the choir, I just wanted to ha-

GABRIELLE

Do you really take me for that stupid? Nora, I am capable of putting two and two together. These two are your clients!

NORA

What? No!

GABRIELLE

Too funny that they thought it was fate - when it was you! You meddled in their lives!

NORA

They somehow saw each other again and became a couple. What's the big deal?

GABRIELLE

What do you mean, "somehow"?

NORA

Audrey still had his bear, and then she stole some wine, the police came, then she was worried about what Paul thought and the-

GABRIELLE

They tell you about each other?

NORA

It's my job to listen.

GABRIELLE

And what did you tell them?

NORA

I helped them succeed in life.

GABRIELLE

Succeeding in life you call that? It seemed like they were both hiding from each other that they even know you!

NORA

They might not have told each other yet. I certainly didn't.

GABRIELLE

And you don't think that's a problem?

NORA

It's confidential. I *shouldn't* tell them. I'm not allowed to.

GABRIELLE

Nora, this is crazy! How can you do this to real people?

NORA

Do what? Make them fall in love? Have you seen them? They are happy!

GABRIELLE

How is this love? It is fabricated!

NORA

You don't get to decide what feelings are justified and which are not. Not everybody has to behave the way you want them to.

GABRIELLE

I told you time and time again, stop acting like a therapist towards me!

NORA

See? You're telling me how to behave *right now*!

GABRIELLE

Nora, you have an obligation to tell them. As a therapist.

NORA

I don't need to do any such thing.

GABRIELLE

Somebody has to. If you don't, I will!

NORA

I want them to find out on their own.

GABRIELLE

How would that make things better?

NORA

Because it will mean they'll have
opened up to each other.

GABRIELLE

Or they will hate each other. This
isn't love.

NORA

Don't you dare tell me what love
means, how love is supposed to look
like. I have loved you so much, you
have no idea.

One could hear a needle fall in this silence.

GABRIELLE

You "have"?

NORA

Those two are happy. Don't dare to
tell me something different, even
the most ignorant person can see
that. When did we last look like
that?

GABRIELLE

Are you trying to dodge the topic or
wh-

NORA

I brought them together. Why would
you even get involved in any of this
now? You never cared.

GABRIELLE

That's not true at all, I was asking
you about your clients all the time!

NORA

But when have you last cared about
me? You always dismiss my ideas,
ridicule all my hopes, you don't
take me seriously at all! You always
call me dreamy, but what's so wrong
with wanting something more!

Nora moves to the door.

GABRIELLE

You can't just go.

NORA

I need some space.

GABRIELLE

We haven't finished yet!

NORA
Goodbye, Gabs.

Nora leaves the flat.

29 INT. PAUL'S FLAT - EVENING

29

Audrey and Paul cuddle on the couch, watching a movie.

AUDREY
We should do this every day.

PAUL
I agree. And oh my god, I love this movie!

AUDREY
(laughs)
You don't.

PAUL
I do!

AUDREY
Are you kidding me?

Audrey laughs all the way through Paul's list:

PAUL
What's not to love? I love the dialogue, the music, the chemistry between the two, the situation is hilari-

Audrey's telephone rings.

AUDREY
You don't have to stop it for me.

Audrey gets up, rummages through her purse and picks up the phone. She stands apart from Paul, while he continues watching the movie. Gabrielle appears to the edge of the stage, with a phone in her hand.

AUDREY
Hello?

GABRIELLE
Hello. Am I speaking to Audrey?

AUDREY
Yes, this is Audrey. Who is this?

GABRIELLE
It's Gabrielle. We met a few days ago, together with Nora.

AUDREY

(confused)

Oh yes, I do remember. Why are you calling me? Is she okay?

GABRIELLE

Is it a good time to talk? Are you alone?

AUDREY

Yes, it's fine now.

GABRIELLE

Nora didn't want to tell you, but I feel like it's my moral duty to let you know. Nora isn't just your therapist. Your boyfriend Paul is also her client.

AUDREY

(shocked)

What?

GABRIELLE

Yes. And I'm pretty sure that she brought you together. At least the car-sharing trip was definitely arranged by her. She booked a number of other car-shares around the same time as yours using different credit cards - one of them being mine. That's how I found out.

AUDREY

This is a joke, right?

(beat, scampering)

I,... I have to go. Bye.

Gabrielle disappears from the stage. Audrey stares into the void.

PAUL

Are you okay?

AUDREY

(waking up)

Yes, I'm fine.

PAUL

You're missing the best part!

Paul laughs about a scene. Audrey looks at him stricken like a deer. Paul's phone rings.

PAUL

Huh? I never get calls.

Paul pauses the movie and picks up.

PAUL
Good evening.
(beat, secretive)
Yes, I do. Why do you ask?
(beat, confused)
Why do you tell me that?
(beat, lifeless)
Bye.

Paul hangs up and throws the back of his head against the couch, closing his eyes.

AUDREY
Was it her?

PAUL
Sorry, what?

AUDREY
Who called? It was Nora's
girlfriend, right?

PAUL
Yes.

AUDREY
So it is true? You were going to
therapy, with Nora?

PAUL
Honey, I'm as shocked as you are!

AUDREY
You're a bad liar. But you are one!

PAUL
You said you didn't know Nora when
we met her. At least I admitted to
that.

AUDREY
I lied? You told me for weeks you
were going to a choir!

PAUL
And you were making up meeting
friends and discussing your life
with them!

AUDREY
At least the "discussing my life"
part is *true*, you amateur singer!

PAUL
(half-singing)
Ouch, now that was hurtful.
(beat)
I started to get emotionally
invested with Victoria, and then I
find out that she doesn't even
exist!

AUDREY
Which I told you two weeks ago! I
can't believe you did this to me!
This is despicable!

PAUL
Do you think I deliberately selected
my therapist to be the same as
yours? I have been seeing her for
close to a year!

AUDREY
How did this work then? Have you
been telling her "I feel so lonely",
and she just said, "Oh, Paul, I know
just the woman for you!"? Or did you
see me one day leaving the therapy
space and said: "Hey, Nora, I'd like
a piece of that"!

PAUL
No, it wasn't like that.

AUDREY
I was honest with you. You could've
told me that you see a therapist
when I told you.

PAUL
I was too scared.

AUDREY
Did you know it was Nora about
seeing a therapist?

PAUL
I found your gloves one day at the
therapy space. Nora said they
would've been hers, but I didn't
believe her. I thought you had been
following me around.

AUDREY
Why would I do that?

PAUL
I didn't think that you'd see a
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
therapist. And especially not her!
But when you told me you're going to
a therapist, I knew she was covering
herself.

AUDREY
And you didn't tell me that?

PAUL
Honey, not even Nora knows that I
know!

AUDREY
Don't "honey" me! You could've told
me the truth.

PAUL
How? You would have thought badly of
me for seeing a therapist.

AUDREY
You don't know that.

PAUL
And on top of that the same one!

AUDREY
I would have preferred you seeing a
therapist than lying to me about
something so essential.

PAUL
So me seeing a therapist is a
problem for you?

AUDREY
No, it's not.

PAUL
So why are we then even fighting?

AUDREY
Because it's all a lie! Do you know
want us to continue just like
nothing happened? Are you totally
fine with our relationship being a
lie?

PAUL
A lie?

AUDREY
It's all fabricated, isn't it? I
have been thinking a lot about the
car trip. We hated our guts.

PAUL
We had an argument.

AUDREY
We wouldn't even have run into each other again without her.

PAUL
But did we get together because of her? We got in contact again because I lost Finsbury.

AUDREY
Nora told me to contact you. To face somebody after I made a mess.

PAUL
It doesn't matter to me. We would have gotten together either way.

AUDREY
I can't believe that anymore.

Audrey picks up her things. Audrey is already at the door and turns around before leaving.

AUDREY
I trusted you.

PAUL
You can!

Audrey leaves.

PAUL
I thought you could.

30 INT. THERAPY ROOM, PAUL'S FLAT, AUDREY'S FLAT - EVENING 30
The therapy room, as well as both Audrey's and Paul's home, show all simultaneously. Light changes should bring attention to the various shifts in location.

The once so invitingly looking therapy room appears now much less so: it is full of boxes and bags. Nora enters carrying a box.

NORA
Home, sweet home.

Nora puts the box down and hieves two suitcases inside.

NORA
At least I can arrange everything just how I want it to be. "A bowl of
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)
bonbons in the kitchen?" Take that,
Gabrielle, now I can!
(beat)
If I'd have a kitchen.

Nora stacks some boxes on top of each other, creating a tower that exceeds her own height. After placing the last box on top, they all collapse onto the floor. Nora lets herself fall onto the couch where usually her clients sit. Tears are welling up.

NORA
It's okay, Nora, it's okay. Everyone
has a bad time once in a while.
(beat)
At least it can't get any worse.

Nora gets up again and restacks all the boxes.

NORA
Perhaps I can hang a curtain here so
that the clients won't notice?

Paul lies on the couch. He holds Finsbury in his arms and speaks to him in a tearful voice.

PAUL
We'll be fine, Finsbury, right? I'm
sure we're going to find somebody
who loves us. No, it wasn't nice
that we didn't tell Audrey the
truth. I was too afraid.
(beat)
I miss her too.

Audrey sits on her bed with a laptop.

AUDREY
Why the hell is it so hard to find a
review portal for therapists? I need
to warn others! Do I have to create
my own?

Audrey picks up her phone and speaks into the voice feature.

AUDREY
Hey Laila, how do I create a
website?

Audrey browses for a while and then forcefully puts the phone away.

AUDREY
Nah, this won't work. I need to go
(MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)
to war like the natives did: social
media.

Audrey starts typing furiously.

NORA
Relax, Nora. You've only lost your
relationship. Everything else is
still intact: your career, and your,
uh - well, your career.

AUDREY
I'll tell the whole world what you
did. You broke your client's trust,
you played with people's lives, -

Audrey pauses for a moment.

AUDREY
How would this even help me, ruining
her life?
(beat)
Did I just say that? The therapy
sessions must have worked after all.
Damn you, Nora!

NORA
I'm really looking forward to seeing
them both again - seeing them happy
also makes me happy! I can't wait to
her how things went after we all
met. Did Paul finally admit that he
goes to a therapist as well? And
that it's me? I so wish that they'd
tell each other. I know they're
strong enough now.

PAUL
I can't even tell Nora about it.
Being both our therapist is one
thing, but meddling with our lives
is another! I have to quit therapy
with her.
(beat)
You're right, Finsbury, I can't just
run away. I'm done with avoiding
conflicts all my life - I guess all
this therapy helped after all. I'll
confront her.

AUDREY
She probably doesn't even know yet
that I know what she did! Paul said
she didn't know he knows either. I
need to call her.

Audrey picks up her phone. A buzz can be heard from inside one of the many boxes.

NORA
A call, at this time?

Nora rips open boxes, trying to find her phone.

NORA
Where is it, god dammnit!

Nora frantically opens some boxes. The ringing stops.

AUDREY
Is she ignoring me? May be better.
Tons of session yes or no, I'd
probably end up angry anyway.

PAUL
At least this anger at Nora keeps me
from feeling sad about Audrey. Is
that why she's so drawn to anger?

Paul makes a call. Audrey's telephone rings.

PAUL
Please pick up.

AUDREY
Paul.

Audrey holds the phone for a long moment in her hand.

PAUL
Audrey, please.

Audrey dismisses the call.

AUDREY
(teary)
I'm sorry, Paul.

Paul stares at the phone in despair and throws it against the wall, cracking into pieces. All three characters appear in deep grief.

31 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

31

The room looks a lot tidier than in the previous scene, although still filled with boxes, but at least neatly stacked up. There is a knock on the door. Nora opens.

NORA
Paul, so nice to see you. Come in.

PAUL
Hello, Nora.

NORA
Please, take a seat.

Paul sits down at his usual place, but his body language shows much more discomfort than usual. He looks around the room.

PAUL
Wow, what's going on in here?

NORA
Oh, ... It's the landlord, they are redoing one of the therapy rooms.

Paul laughs.

PAUL
I see. I almost thought you would've moved in!

NORA
(insincere)
Me? Haha, no, why would you think that!

Paul watches her intently.

NORA
So. How have you been since we last saw each other.

PAUL
You mean since Thursday, when we met at the pub?

NORA
Yes! I'm so sorry, this has never happened to me before. And especially not when my client's girlfriend isn't supposed to know! I hope she didn't realise?

PAUL
She didn't realise, no. But she knows now.

NORA
You told her? I'm so happy for you! That's wonderful. What did she say?

PAUL
She was angry.

NORA
(surprised)
Angry? I mean, did she *share*
something about herself?

PAUL
What do you mean?

NORA
I don't know, perhaps...

PAUL
...how you are also her therapist
and never told any of us?

NORA
It didn't seem right for me to tell
you. I wanted you to tell each
other.

PAUL
Well, we didn't tell each other!
Your girlfriend did.

NORA
(shocked)
Gabs? How does she even have your
number?

PAUL
I was hoping you'd know that!
(beat)
Audrey wasn't angry that I'm seeing
a therapist; she was angry for me
not having told her when she'd told
me. I lied to her.

NORA
You wanted to tell her on your own
time. Don't be so hard on yourself.

PAUL
You don't understand - I *knew* that
you are both our therapist. She
realised that.

NORA
You knew? Since when?

PAUL
Do you remember her gloves?

NORA
(sudden understanding)
I knew I didn't lose them, you took
the gloves! But why didn't you tell
me that you knew?

PAUL

For the same reasons I'm coming to therapy in the first place. Because I'm usually scared of conflicts. But here I am after all, saying it to your face.

NORA

There's more?

PAUL

Yes, there is. You destroyed my relationship with Audrey! You ruined it all.

NORA

What?

PAUL

She broke up with me because you brought us together. Your girlfriend told us so. She said our feelings for each other were not real.

NORA

I never did such a thing! How would I do that?

PAUL

Oh, I don't know? Perhaps by making us go on a car-share trip and arranging it so that we'll meet each other?

NORA

I'd nev-

PAUL

Or what about arranging making me talk to her although I felt so bizarre after the incident at the pub? Or what a-

The therapy room door slams open and Audrey bursts into the room.

PAUL

Audrey?!

NORA

Audrey!

AUDREY

(to Paul)

Oh, so you still remember my name at least.

PAUL

What?

NORA
Audrey, please take a seat.

AUDREY
(angry, to Nora)
Why should I do anything you say,
you damn liar.

NORA
I deserve this.

AUDREY
(angry)
You deserve much worse! I could
easily ruin your entire career, let
you lose all your clients, ...

NORA
And you would have every right to do
that.

AUDREY
(deflated)
Yes, I would.

AUDREY
(to Paul)
Can I talk to you in private for a
moment?

PAUL
Can we do it after my session? I
paid good money for this.

NORA
Oh, don't worry about that. I'll do
that one for free.
(to Audrey)
I'm receiving quite a beating.

AUDREY
(to Paul)
Why did you not call me back?

PAUL
Call you back? I called you, send
you messages, even a letter - you
never responded to me!

AUDREY
I needed my time. But I was calling
you like a dozen times today and it
didn't even ring. Why did you block
me?

NORA

I can leave you alone if you want to.

AUDREY

(angry)

Stay right where you are!

PAUL

(angry)

Don't move!

PAUL

(to Audrey)

I didn't block you, my phone died.

AUDREY

Sure.

Paul pulls a cracked phone out of his pocket.

PAUL

Seriously, look. I took it to a shop today, they said it's dead.

AUDREY

I could've told you the same. How did this even happen?

PAUL

I threw it against the wall in anger and grief.

AUDREY

Perhaps you should be the one doing anger therapy!

PAUL

Well, I already have the therapist for that.

(beat)

What did you want to tell me?

NORA

I can leave, that's no problem.

Paul and Audrey ignore Nora.

AUDREY

I wanted to ask if you can forgive me.

PAUL

Forgive you?

(beat)

For what?

Nora watches the discussion unfold from the side, teary-eyed.

AUDREY

Well, that I screamed at you and said our love wouldn't matter of course!

PAUL

(teary)

You don't want to break up with me?

AUDREY

I don't care what brought us together. Or who. What matters is how I feel for you. I, I-

PAUL

I love you, you know?

AUDREY

I love you.

Paul and Audrey hug. Nora sniffs. There is a long moment of silence.

AUDREY

Great. So the first time that we said it was in front of the brain plumber.

NORA

(apologetic)

I'm still here.

PAUL

We know.

AUDREY

We know.

NORA

I'm sorry for what I have done. I truly am.

(beat)

And in a way, I'm not.

PAUL

(sarcastic)

Charming.

NORA

A few months ago, you each told me that you met someone at a board game meetup who you were really, really interested in.

PAUL

(to Audrey)

You said that?

AUDREY
(embarrassed)
Maybe?

NORA
I don't know what you'd have done,
but I made a decision to help. You
both wanted to meet again, so I made
you. And then that didn't work out
and somebody ended on the roadside.

PAUL
Literally.

AUDREY
I apologised already a million
times!

NORA
And then I urged you to see each
other again. Because I knew Paul's
bear was gone. Is this a crime?

AUDREY
Breaking your client's
confidentiality agreements is
totally fine?

NORA
I know, bu-

AUDREY
(amused)
Don't worry, I'm joking.

PAUL
Jesus, she does this to me all the
time as well.

NORA
I can see how I'm a pretty bad
therapist, given what I've done. But
what I can also see is two people
sitting in front of me who seem to
really care about another, with an
admittedly pretty unusual story
about how they got together.

Audrey and Paul look at each other with eyes full of love.
They smile.

NORA
I would understand if you don't want
to continue with me as your
therapist anymore.

Nobody speaks for a moment.

AUDREY

I think I'd like to continue. I feel like it's doing me well. Just a few months ago I probably would've slashed your tyres and harassed you online.

NORA

Thank you, Audrey.

AUDREY

Well, thank you, I guess?
(beat, to Paul)
What about you?

PAUL

I need to think about this for a while.

NORA

I wouldn't have expected any different from you.

Audrey pushes her elbow into Paul, jokingly.

AUDREY

Dang, she got you good!

PAUL

I think we should go now.

NORA

I'm sure you have a lot to discuss.

AUDREY

You know so much about us, but we don't know anything about you, Nora. I don't even know where you live.

NORA

(embarrassed)
At the moment? Here.

PAUL

I knew it!

AUDREY

What happened?

NORA

Gabrielle, you met her... we broke up. And then she called you, as Paul told me.

AUDREY

Do you want to talk about it?

NORA
(amused)
Am I the therapist or you?

PAUL
How the table turns.

AUDREY
I have heard watching a romantic
movie helps with lovesickness.

NORA
Watching you two is like watching
one already.

AUDREY
Paul does look a bit like a movie
star, doesn't he?

PAUL
Me?

NORA
(to Paul)
See? I told you, you should think
higher of yourself!

Audrey and Paul get up to leave.

PAUL
Bye.

AUDREY
See you.

NORA
Have a nice evening.

Audrey and Paul leave through the door, holding hands.
Nora sits back on the couch. She smiles tearily.

NORA
I have the best job in the world.

END OF ACT TWO