

BETWEEN THE CHAIRS

A Play in Two Acts by

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## **CHARACTERS**

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

GABRIEL

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

ACT ONE

1 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

1

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

AUDREY

What do you want me to say?

NORA

How do you mean?

AUDREY

How should I feel about it?

NORA

That's not up to me.

AUDREY

But I wish it was.

NORA

Why?

AUDREY

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

NORA

How are you supposed to feel?

AUDREY

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

NORA

Well, apparently he deserved it.

AUDREY

I said that he deserved it!

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

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

NORA  
Does it matter?

AUDREY  
It was gummy worms. I hate them!

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

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

NORA  
Do I sound like that?

Audrey takes a moment to reply.

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

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

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

NORA  
You don't have to be normal.

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

NORA  
Of course it does.

AUDREY

I know.

(beat)

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

Both wait for the other person to continue.

NORA

It must be tou-

AUDREY

I feel lonely.

Nora leans forward.

NORA

Tell me more.

AUDREY

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

NORA

Someone?

AUDREY

Oh, you know what I mean!

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

I take it you mean a partner?

AUDREY

Yes.

NORA

A man or a woman?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

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

NORA

No offence taken.

AUDREY  
Why would it offend you?

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

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

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

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

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

AUDREY  
Yes, of course.

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

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

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

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

NORA  
Either?

AUDREY

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

(beat)

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

NORA

(laughs)

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

AUDREY

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

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

AUDREY (CONT'D)

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

NORA

(contained excitement)

It is true.

AUDREY

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

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

Just when things were starting to heat up.

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

Woah. That sounds hard.

NORA

(excited)

It is!

AUDREY

(unsure)

I'll try.

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

NORA

Thank you.

AUDREY

(getting up)

See you next week.

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

NORA

See you next week, Audrey.

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

NORA

Hello, sweetie!

(beat)

Of course, no problem.

(beat)

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

(beat)

You too.



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

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

2

Nora enters her apartment.

NORA  
Hello.

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

NORA  
(annoyed)  
Yes.

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

GABRIEL  
Are you okay? You seem preoccupied.

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

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

NORA  
Exactly.

Nora hands Gabriel some ingredient she had in her purse.

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

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

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

GABRIEL

How come you even ask about the  
candy jar?

NORA

Oh, it's just something a client  
said.

GABRIEL

What did *they* say?

(beat)

He? She?

NORA

(amused)

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

GABRIEL

Oh, why not?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

(exhausted)

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

GABRIEL

Oh. How come you never told me?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

Why would I?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

Kathleen? Totally a fake name.

NORA

Totally.

GABRIEL

Is that again from one of your movies?

NORA

"My movies"?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

(self-conscious)

It's a Meg Ryan one.

Nora continues eating her food.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

Okay, okay, okay. Kathleen...

GABRIEL

(quotation marks in the air)

"Kathleen".

NORA  
Kathleen has to see me because of  
anger issues.

GABRIEL  
Has to see you? Is she a criminal?

NORA  
The court ordered her to see me,  
yep.

GABRIEL  
(excited)  
How horrible! Tell me more.

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

GABRIEL  
And?

NORA  
And what? That's it.

GABRIEL  
She must have said more.

NORA  
She did, but not to you.

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

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

GABRIEL  
You told her you're gay?

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

GABRIEL  
Don't start that again.

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

GABRIEL

I know.

(beat)

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

NORA

What do you mean?

GABRIEL

Well, what's the plan?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

Yeah.

3 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

3

Nora sits together with PAUL.

NORA

So, tell me, how did your date go?

PAUL

Oh, I almost forgot about it.

Nora leans more excitedly forward the more Paul speaks.

PAUL (CONT'D)

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

NORA

And?

PAUL

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

NORA

(unsure)

Okay?

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

NORA  
Aren't you sad about her not coming?

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

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

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

NORA  
Could we come up with possibilities?

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
Not really.

NORA  
There you go.

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

NORA

It's fine to want human contact.

PAUL

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

NORA

Same question as usual: What is wrong with you?

PAUL

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

NORA

(kind)

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

PAUL

See, that's how wrong I am!

NORA

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

PAUL

That's okay, I forgive you.

NORA

(amused)

Thanks.

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

So on the computer doesn't count?

NORA

No, it doesn't.

Paul contemplates this for a moment.

PAUL

In that case, probably not.

NORA

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

The two think for a moment.

PAUL

Female employment fares!

NORA

Probably also only for females to  
enter.

PAUL

Damn it.

NORA

You told me that you started drawing  
again.

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

I know.

NORA

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

PAUL

And that would be?

NORA

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



PAUL  
(worried)  
Puh, right at the money.

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

PAUL  
Still a challenge.

NORA  
Homework isn't easy.

PAUL  
I guess it isn't.

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

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

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

PAUL  
(slightly frightened)  
I guess so.

4 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

4

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

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

AUDREY  
You won't believe what happened this weekend.

NORA  
I can only believe it once you told me.

AUDREY  
No, you guess.

NORA  
Did you win the lottery?

AUDREY  
Nope.

NORA  
Did you get a promotion?

AUDREY  
What? Way better.

NORA  
Did you meet a man?

AUDREY  
Haha, yes! Was it so obvious?

NORA  
Maybe a little. How did it happen?

Light on Paul, Audrey in the dark.

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

NORA  
Did you learn a language that quick?

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

NORA  
That's a great idea! How come?

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

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

NORA  
Do you usually get angry when playing board games?

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

NORA  
 Which game did you go for?

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

Light on Paul, Audrey in the dark.

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

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

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

NORA  
 (surprised)  
 They are!

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

Light on Audrey and Paul.

AUDREY  
 Hi. What are you playing?

PAUL  
 Exploding Mittens.

AUDREY  
 Like the gloves?

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

AUDREY  
That's what I'm here for!

PAUL  
(self-conscious)  
Yeah. Me too.

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

NORA  
So, what did you talk about then?

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

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

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

Audrey places a card.

PAUL  
Nope, you can't put this now.

AUDREY  
But I want to.

PAUL  
Sure. But you can't.

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

PAUL  
Are you okay?

AUDREY  
Absolutely. Just putting myself in a  
happy place.

PAUL  
And here isn't? Hey!

AUDREY

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

(beat, calm)

Forget about it. What can I do then?

(beat, to Nora)

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

NORA

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

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

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

Light only Paul, Audrey in the dark.

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

(devastated)

No!

NORA

Why not?

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

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

PAUL (CONT'D)

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

NORA

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

PAUL

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

(beat)

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

Nora twitches in surprise.

NORA

Audrey?

PAUL

Like the movie star! Why?

NORA

Oh, nothing. Just a peculiar name.

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

NORA

(scared)

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

(anxious)

What's his name?

(calming down)

I mean, did you happen to get his name?

AUDREY

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

Nora drops her notebook in surprise.

AUDREY  
Are you alright?

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

AUDREY  
On Tuesday.

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

AUDREY  
I thought the same!

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

AUDREY  
(sad)  
I won't!

NORA  
You didn't get his number?

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

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

AUDREY  
I'm on Facebook, yeah?

NORA  
I just thought he might want to  
contact you.

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

NORA  
Damn it!

Light on Paul, Audrey in the dark.

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

Light on Audrey, Paul in the dark.

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

NORA  
 On Tuesday?

AUDREY  
 Oh God, do you think I messed up?

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

Light on both Audrey and Paul.

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

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

5

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

GABRIEL (OFF STAGE)  
 Hello, darling.

NORA  
 (distracted)  
 Hello.

Gabriel enters the living room.

GABRIEL  
 Do you want a cup of tea?

NORA  
 No, thank you.

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

GABRIEL  
 What are you writing there?

NORA  
 Oh, nothing.



GABRIEL

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

NORA

No!

(defensive)

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

It's about a therapist.

GABRIEL

Of course.

NORA

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

GABRIEL

I wouldn't have expected otherwise.

NORA

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

GABRIEL

A man?

NORA

The therapist is not me, you know?

GABRIEL

Just checking.

NORA

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

GABRIEL

Sounds wrong.

NORA

Really? Why?

GABRIEL

Because she swore an oath of confidentiality!

NORA

But it's about love, you see?

GABRIEL

Still wrong.

NORA

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

GABRIEL

Still wrong. Even more wrong!

NORA

Oh, come on!

GABRIEL

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

NORA

(disappointed)

I see.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

Do you think like that?

NORA

(insincere)

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

Absolutely. Thank you, honey!

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

6

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

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

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

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

7 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

7

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

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
Wow, you have a good memory. Yes!

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

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

NORA  
Are you mad at me?

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

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

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

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

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

NORA  
I do. But, I am one.

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

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
But what if I did!

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

Nora reads from her notes.

NORA  
How about an art gallery with a  
guided tour?

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

Nora strikes through a note.

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

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

Nora strikes through another note.

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

NORA

Why not? Last time you met Audrey.

PAUL

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

NORA

Yeah? Whoever said that may not be right.

PAUL

You said that!

NORA

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

PAUL

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

NORA

Oh, like in "Love, Actually"!

PAUL

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

NORA

(muttering)

Why does everyone hate Rom Coms recently?

PAUL

What?

NORA

Just talking to myself, sorry.

PAUL

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

Nora draws a sharp circle over an area of notes.

NORA

That might work! Where would you go?

PAUL

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

Nora takes a lot of notes from here on out.

NORA  
Interesting. Which day are you planning?

PAUL  
Saturday.

NORA  
Morning or afternoon?

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
I could only do Saturday.

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

PAUL  
By train?

Nora looks at her notes, pondering.

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

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

NORA  
Are we living in the same city?

PAUL  
I guess you're right.

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

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

PAUL  
A car share?

NORA  
Maybe you'll make a new friend!

PAUL  
That's actually a pretty good idea.

NORA  
I know!

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

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

8 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

8

Nora and Audrey sit together for their weekly session.

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

NORA  
How was it?

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

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

AUDREY  
Wow, you have a good memory. Yes!



NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

Don't worry. You might meet again!

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

No, I love it!

NORA

(mumbling)

Damn.

(to Audrey)

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

AUDREY

No, never.

NORA

(mumbling)

Come on!

(to Audrey)

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

That's what I want to get at.

AUDREY

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

NORA

You're not going to prison.

AUDREY

That's not how the judge sounded.

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

Exactly!

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

Never heard of it. Must be a dump.

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

(playful)

Laa-aame.

NORA

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

AUDREY

Okay, that sounds interesting.

NORA

Yeah, you should do it!

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

Let's see. Bye!

Audrey leaves the therapy room.

NORA

(excited)

Yes!

Nora starts typing on her phone.

NORA

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

Nora begins to call.

NORA

(in a high-pitched girl voice)

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

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

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

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

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

9

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

GABRIEL  
 Everything okay with you?

NORA  
 Yes, absolutely.

GABRIEL  
 You seem *a bit* stressed.

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

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

NORA  
 I wish there was.

GABRIEL

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

Nora pauses for a moment longer than necessary.

NORA

I suppose I can't, no.

GABRIEL

Anyway, what's the client up to?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

My break of confidence isn't bought  
that easily.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

(worried)

What do you mean?

GABRIEL

You know exactly what I mean.

NORA

No, I don't.

GABRIEL

Are you sure?

NORA

I never broke the trust of my cli-

GABRIEL

You never buy new milk when we need  
some.

NORA

(relieved)

Oh. Outside of work. I see.

(beat)

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

Nora gets up to leave through the door.

GABRIEL  
Can you bring me some white  
chocolate, please?

NORA  
Of course, honey!

Nora leaves the flat through the door.

10 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

10

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

NORA  
Oh my god, I'm so excited!

Nora lets out a girlish scream.

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

Nora looks at the clock.

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

Nora opens the door.

NORA  
(into the hallway)  
Paul, come in.

Paul enters the therapy room and sits down.

NORA  
Good evening. How are you feeling  
today?

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

NORA  
(shocked)  
Really? What happened?

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

NORA

Seriously?

(trying to be more  
composed)

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

PAUL

Me too. It was terrible right from  
the start.

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

AUDREY

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

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

PAUL

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

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

(while getting out of the  
car)

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

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

PAUL

Audrey!

AUDREY

Paul!

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

I know!

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

AUDREY

Shall we roll?

PAUL

Sure thing.

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

AUDREY

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

Nora laughs.

NORA

Wow, what a happy coincidence.

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

PAUL

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

Light on both Paul and Audrey now.

PAUL

But she ruined it.

AUDREY

But he ruined it.

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

PAUL

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



AUDREY

I have done this loads of times.

PAUL

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

AUDREY

(insincere)

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

(beat)

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

I respect that.

PAUL

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

AUDREY

Do people still ask you?

PAUL

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

AUDREY

That's funny.

(to Nora)

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

(to Paul)

Do you mind if I put on some music?

PAUL

Sure.

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

Are you kidding? They're childhood heroes.

PAUL  
Not where I'm from.

AUDREY  
Where is that, behind the moon?

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

Audrey sings along to the chorus.

AUDREY  
Oh, come on! Sing with me!

PAUL  
I get nervous in front of an  
audience.

AUDREY  
It's not a choir.

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
That's okay.

AUDREY  
Who's Finsbury?

PAUL  
No one.

AUDREY  
Are you sure?

PAUL  
It's embarrassing.

AUDREY  
Try me.

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

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

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

PAUL  
This is Finsbury.

AUDREY  
Oh, he's so cute!

PAUL  
He has that effect on the ladies.

Audrey laughs.

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

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

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

Paul carefully places Finsbury the bear in the windshield.

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

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

PAUL  
What happened to it?

AUDREY  
My mom threw it out one day.

PAUL  
Oh no! That's horrible!

AUDREY  
(strong)  
Eh, I got over it.

PAUL

Now you tell me your secret.

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

Maybe I am?

PAUL

(laughing)

You're not!

AUDREY

(smirks)

Maybe not.

(beat)

So, why are you going to Crawley?

PAUL

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

AUDREY

Time to think about what?

PAUL

That's quite an intimate question for the start.

(to Nora)

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

AUDREY

Not so shy, Agent 008!

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

Paul laughs.

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

(to Nora)

God, was I wishing that he invited me!

PAUL

(to Nora)

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

(to Audrey)

Why are you going to Crawley then?

AUDREY

(to Nora)

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

(evasive)

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

(to Nora)

Of course I wasn't.

(to Paul)

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

PAUL

That sounds fun.

(to Nora)

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

NORA

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

PAUL  
 (to Nora)  
 It was. The trouble only started  
 after an hour of driving.  
 (to Audrey)  
 Wow, this car can go fast.  
 (to Nora)  
 First I was only giving slight hints  
 that she was driving quite above the  
 speed limit.

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

PAUL  
 An older car, I see.

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

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

AUDREY  
 Why?

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

AUDREY  
 It is intended.

PAUL  
 Oh.

AUDREY  
 Are you saying I can't drive?

PAUL  
 No, no, not at all.

AUDREY  
 You can't drive. You literally  
 said so.

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

AUDREY  
I am in the speed limit.

Audrey takes a glimpse down the wheel.

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

PAUL  
It feels faster than ten.

AUDREY  
Look at it, it's ten!

PAUL  
(scared)  
Eyes on the road!

The cell phone's loudspeaker navigation voice comes on.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM  
In one mile, exit onto the A2011.

PAUL  
Oh no, it's closed.

AUDREY  
What do you mean?

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

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

PAUL  
What are you doing?

AUDREY  
Driving to Crawley.

PAUL  
But the sign said the road is under  
construction.

AUDREY  
We'll be fine.

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

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

AUDREY

Are you done screaming?

PAUL

What happened?

AUDREY

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

PAUL

What, by foot?

AUDREY

Yes.

PAUL

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

AUDREY

Of course I can. This is my car.

PAUL

But I paid you to drive me to Crawley.

AUDREY

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

PAUL

No, I don't want to.

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

AUDREY

Get out of my car!

Audrey pulls Paul out of the seat.



PAUL  
You're crazy.

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

PAUL  
I will.

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

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

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

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

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

NORA  
(to both)

Wow.

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

AUDREY  
I never want to see him again!

PAUL  
I hope I never see her again!

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

11

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

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

GABRIEL  
Geez, did you scare me.

NORA  
What? You scared *me*!

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

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

GABRIEL  
It's okay.

NORA  
Sorry. How was it?

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

NORA  
Me? Nope.

GABRIEL  
Anyway, what are you watching?

NORA  
It's-

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

NORA  
(self-aware)  
Something like that.

GABRIEL  
You're so easy to tease!

NORA  
Then perhaps you don't.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

You know, we can marry too.

NORA

(startled)

Hurra for equality!

GABRIEL

No wondering if you want to?

NORA

Uh, do you?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

(insincere)

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

(distracting)

Am I the therapist or you!

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

You can't? What's going on?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

That doesn't sound reassuring.

(beat)

I'll go to bed. Are you joining?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

Good night.

NORA

Good night.

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

WOMAN (FROM THE TV)

How did you know?

MAN (FROM THE TV)

I saw you at the station.

WOMAN (FROM THE TV)

Why didn't you tell me?

The music is soaring.

MAN (FROM THE TV)

I love you.

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

MAN (FROM THE TV CONT'D)

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

WOMAN (FROM THE TV)

Me too.

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

12 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

12

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session.

PAUL

(desperate)

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

(MORE)

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

NORA  
How come you never mentioned him  
before then?

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

NORA  
If not your therapist, who then?

PAUL  
Finsbury, exactly!

NORA  
But he's a bear.

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

NORA  
(chuffed)  
You think so? Thank you!

PAUL  
I can't afford to lose him.

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

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

Paul lets out a howl of pain.

NORA  
She wouldn't do that.

PAUL  
How would you know?

Nora pauses for a moment.

NORA

We therapists get to know plenty of people.

PAUL

So what's your assessment of Audrey then?

NORA

Uh, I have never met he-

PAUL

Given what I told you about her.

NORA

She does seem... exciting.

PAUL

Exciting? As a therapist maybe, to analyse!

NORA

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

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

Thank you for reassuring me.

NORA

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

PAUL

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

NORA

Interesting.

PAUL

It kind of is, isn't it?

NORA

Why do you think Audrey was angry at you?

PAUL

(surprised)

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

NORA

How did you deliver that?

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

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

NORA

I don't know. Maybe.

PAUL

Anyway. I never want to see her again.

NORA

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

PAUL

(in pain)

I know!

NORA

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

PAUL

I hope so.

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

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

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

PAUL  
What? No!

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

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

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

PAUL  
Okay.

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

PAUL  
I need Finsbury!

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

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
Hello too.

PAUL  
Wow, you do sound a bit like her.

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

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



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

PAUL  
(desperate)  
I hate you!

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

PAUL  
That didn't work out as I expected.

NORA  
What did you expect?

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

NORA  
Hm.

PAUL  
Hm? You never just say "Hm".

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NORA (AUDREY'S VOICE)  
 What behaviour?

PAUL  
 You know what I mean.

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

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

NORA  
 Why don't we try that again.

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

NORA  
 Again.

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
 Thanks, Nora.

13 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

13

Nora and Audrey sit together for their weekly session.

NORA  
 Did you do the breathing exercises?

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

Audrey, what do you think of your reaction?

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

Can't I just avoid him?

NORA

Are you avoiding him?

AUDREY

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

NORA

Are you afraid of him contacting you?

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

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

AUDREY  
Why would he have to do that?

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

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

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

AUDREY  
I'd talk about the weather.

NORA  
The weather?

AUDREY  
Maybe a new movie that came out?

NORA  
Would you apologise?

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

NORA  
How do you think Paul felt that day?

AUDREY  
Angry I guess?

NORA

Angry like you? Do you think he was sad?

AUDREY

Sad? Why?

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

(beat)

Why are you asking me so much about Paul?

NORA

Because I have homework.

AUDREY

Am I going to like it?

Nora doesn't reply immediately.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

I take this as a No.

NORA

(amused)

Have you been like this in school as well?

AUDREY

You're implying right now I did homework.

NORA

What I want you to do is to confront Paul.

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

Can I copy the answers from a friend instead?

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

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

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

AUDREY

(shocked)

Twenty messages?! What?

Audrey starts reading.

AUDREY

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

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

AUDREY

(cool)

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

Hello too.

PAUL

Hello, Audrey. This is Paul.

AUDREY

What's with Finsbury?

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

What?

PAUL

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

AUDREY

I honestly don't.

PAUL

Have you ever driven your car again after Crawley?

AUDREY

(unsure)

Yes.

PAUL

And you never noticed this cute bear in your windshield?

AUDREY

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

PAUL

So you didn't throw him out?

AUDREY

You know what, let me check.

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

AUDREY

I have him!

PAUL

Thank you! When can I pick him up?

AUDREY

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

PAUL

I didn't want that either.

AUDREY

(hurt)

Oh. How about I send him in the post?

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

That sounds like an idea.

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

Well, yes.

AUDREY

(surprised)

Okay.

PAUL

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

(to himself)

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



AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

That would work.

AUDREY

It was Finsbury's suggestion.

PAUL

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

AUDREY

And cute.

PAUL

A real ace with the ladies.

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

See you.

Both hang up.

AUDREY  
I brightened his day? Huh.

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

15 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

15

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

AUDREY  
You have no idea what  
happened this week.

PAUL  
You have no idea what  
happened this week.

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

PAUL  
I got Finsbury back.

NORA  
That's great news!

AUDREY  
I met Paul again.

NORA  
What happened?

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

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

NORA  
How did that go?

AUDREY  
(insincere)  
Fine.

NORA

Really?

AUDREY

(disappointed)

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

NORA

In a taxi?

PAUL

I know!

AUDREY

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

PAUL

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

Audrey staggers towards Paul. She slurs her words.

AUDREY

(drunk)

Hi-iii. So we see each other again.

PAUL

Audrey, hello!

AUDREY

(drunk)

Do you want your bear?

PAUL

Yes!

AUDREY

(drunk)

Do you have the money?

PAUL

What money?

AUDREY

(drunk)

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

(to Nora, completely sober)

I was quite anxious to meet him.

NORA

You?

AUDREY

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

(beat)

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

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

PAUL

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

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

Audrey!

AUDREY

I have your bear.

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

PAUL

Finsbury!

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

AUDREY

Are you hugging the bear or my hand?

PAUL

Thank you!

AUDREY  
 (to Nora)  
 He was crying.

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

AUDREY  
 I think I can imagine.

Paul hugs again the bear.

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

AUDREY  
 (drunk)  
 No problem.

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

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

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

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

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

AUDREY

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

PAUL

(overzealous)

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

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

PAUL (CONT'D)

(crying)

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

AUDREY

(patting his shoulder)

A drink would be enough.

PAUL

(to Nora)

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

AUDREY

(drunk)

We should have a drink!

PAUL

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

AUDREY

(drunk)

That? I call that work. Hahaha.

PAUL

I think we should head home.

AUDREY

(drunk)

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

PAUL

Yes, you did.

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

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
 (teary)  
 Yes, you did.

NORA  
 You threw up?

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

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

Audrey swallows down a hiccup.

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

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

AUDREY  
 (drunk)  
 I insist!

PAUL  
(inconvenienced)  
If you really have to.

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

AUDREY  
Thank you.

PAUL  
Thank you.

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

NORA  
Did you have another fight?

AUDREY  
Not with Paul, no.

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

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

NORA  
Were you drunk?

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

NORA  
I thought you don't get along.

AUDREY  
I can still have drinks with them,  
right?

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



AUDREY

(drunk, angry)

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

(to Nora, calm)

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

(beat)

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

PAUL

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

AUDREY

I just snapped, took the bottle and ran.

PAUL

I went after her. I was worried.

AUDREY

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

PAUL

You should've seen her running.

(laughing)

More like staggering!

AUDREY

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

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

AUDREY  
Leave me alone.

PAUL  
What's going on?

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

PAUL  
I, I-

AUDREY  
Do you want some wine?

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

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

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

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

PAUL  
(laughing)  
You must be joking.

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

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

AUDREY  
Stuff like this keeps happening to  
me.

PAUL  
(teasing)  
What, bottles just steal themselves?

AUDREY  
No, I mea-

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

AUDREY  
Okay.

Paul taps on his phone.

PAUL  
Should be here in a few minutes.

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

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

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

PAUL  
What?

AUDREY  
Throw away the bottle!

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

NORA  
What did you say?

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

NORA  
Why did you do that, Paul?

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

(to Paul)

You seem quite agitated by this.

PAUL

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

NORA

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

PAUL

Yes.

(beat)

Am I taking it too seriously?

NORA

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

PAUL

Why do you ask?

AUDREY

What do you mean?

NORA

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

AUDREY

I feel... ashamed.

PAUL

I feel... put off.

NORA

I see.

PAUL

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

AUDREY

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

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

16

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

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

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

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

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

NORA  
(startled)  
Gabs!

GABRIEL  
What are you doing?

NORA  
Nothing.

GABRIEL  
It didn't look like nothing.

NORA

Depends on how much you saw.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

I will give it back!

(beat)

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

What are you ding?

NORA

You're always so nosy!

GABRIEL

At least I'm interested in you.

Nora sighs.

NORA

I was pondering about a work problem.

GABRIEL

I didn't know you take couples on.

NORA

(startled)

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

GABRIEL

What's the problem?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

(laughing)

Sounds like one of your movies!

NORA  
Art imitates life.

GABRIEL  
Wasn't it the other way around?

NORA  
Whatever.

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

NORA  
But they ruin it!

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

NORA  
Perhaps I just know better.

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

Nora flinches.

NORA  
What do you mean by that?

GABRIEL  
Isn't this from Harry and Mary?

Nora realises what Gabriel means and laughs stiltedly.

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

GABRIEL  
Do you ever watch any new movies?

NORA  
If they feel like the old ones,  
sure!

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

NORA  
Maybe.

17 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

17

Nora and Paul sit together for their weekly session.

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

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

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

NORA  
You said you felt put off by her.

PAUL  
That doesn't sound like me.

Nora points at her notebook.

NORA  
I'm very good at keeping notes.

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

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

PAUL  
After everything she has done to me?

Nora looks at her notebook.

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

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



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

PAUL  
 Hey!

NORA  
 Was I saying this out loud? Oops.

Light change. Audrey and Nora in the therapy room.

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

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

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

AUDREY  
 Yes! I'd love that.

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

AUDREY  
 (taken aback)  
 What? Why?

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

AUDREY  
 It was certainly nice of him.

Light change. Paul and Nora in the therapy room.

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

NORA

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

PAUL

Who even says that she would be interested in me!

NORA

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

PAUL

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

NORA

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

(beat)

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

Light change. Paul and Audrey are now both illuminated.

AUDREY

He sent me a text.

NORA

What did he say?

Audrey looks at her phone and laughs.

PAUL

Finsbury just wanted to say hello.

AUDREY

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

PAUL

I do - 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 GABRIEL'S FLAT - AFTERNOON

18

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

"Should have"? You're underestimating me.

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

What do you love about it so much?

NORA

We had this a hundred times.

GABRIEL

I don't mind the hundred and first time.

Nora pauses the movie.

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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

NORA

Does it need one?

GABRIEL

What do you mean? You're a lesbian.

NORA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NORA  
 (alarmed)  
 Of course not.

GABRIEL  
 I thought so.

NORA  
 What's wrong?

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

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

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

GABRIEL  
 Says the one addicted to mobile  
 games!

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

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

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

GABRIEL  
 You love your job!

NORA  
 I do.

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

NORA  
 Nothing illegal in my praxis!

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

NORA  
 No, thanks.

Gabriel leaves the flat.

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



Nora resumes the movie.

19 INT. THERAPY ROOM - EVENING

19

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

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

Nora takes another big bite.

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

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

AUDREY  
Hello, nice to see you.

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

NORA  
How have you been?

AUDREY  
Better than ever!

NORA  
I assume this is related to Paul?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nora offers the chocolate bar.

NORA  
Do you want some?

AUDREY  
No, thank you.

NORA  
Staying fit?

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

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

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

NORA  
Is that how Paul appears to you?

AUDREY  
Well, of course! He's perfect!

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

AUDREY  
Man, you're a downer today.

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

Why?

AUDREY

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

NORA

(surprised)

How?

AUDREY

Well, about us!

NORA

About us?

AUDREY

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

NORA

(alarmed cry)

How didn't I think about that yet!

AUDREY

Why would you have?

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

(panicked)

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

AUDREY

No, of course not!

NORA

(relieved)

Good.

AUDREY

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

NORA

(panicked)

No, no!

(calmer)

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

AUDREY

So I should just keep lying to him forever?

NORA

(desperate)

Can you?

Audrey laughs.

AUDREY

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

NORA

(feigning pride)

I'm a professional.

(beat)

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

AUDREY

I'm not too sure.

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

NORA

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

AUDREY

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

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

NORA  
I just wanted to help.

AUDREY  
I know. Thank you.

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

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

NORA  
That's up to you.

AUDREY  
But me seeing you isn't?

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

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

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

AUDREY  
Well, I have a court order saying  
otherwise.

NORA  
Which is precisely the problem.

AUDREY  
(desperate)  
I know!

NORA  
When will you see Paul next then?

AUDREY  
Tomorrow, for a quiet movie night.

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

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

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

Nora looks at the clock.

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

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

AUDREY  
Thank you very much, Nora.

NORA  
No need to thank me.

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

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

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

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

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

NORA (CONT'D)  
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 Crawley 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 Crawley.

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 GABRIEL'S FLAT & PAUL'S FLAT SIDE BY SIDE 22  
- EVENING

Paul's flat, as well as Nora's and Gabriel'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.

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

GABRIEL

Hello!

(beat)

Everything alright? You look shocked.

NORA

Me? Noooo. How about you?

GABRIEL

(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.

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL  
What was that?

NORA  
What?

It vibrates again.

GABRIEL  
Can't you feel that?

NORA  
Do you think we're having an  
earthquake?

Gabriel 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!

Gabriel retrieves Nora's phones from the couch fold.

GABRIEL  
It's your phone!

NORA  
Oooh, is it? I remember.

GABRIEL  
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.

GABRIEL  
(suspicious)  
I see.

As Gabriel 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.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

I know! This stuff is full of ads.

GABRIEL

At least you're not doing anything naughty.

NORA

Naughty? What do you mean?

GABRIEL

Like looking up naked women. Or men.

NORA

Are we having this again?

GABRIEL

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!

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

In the evening?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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 GABRIEL'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 Crawley.

AUDREY

It's not about Crawley. 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 Gabriel. Both are well dressed.

GABRIEL  
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?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

They're both French, right?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

You do!

GABRIEL

I'm sorry. It might be the dress.

NORA

Don't worry.

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL  
Another glass? Seems like you really  
like it.

Nora gulps down some wine.

NORA  
I do!

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

GABRIEL  
Anything new to report from work?

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

GABRIEL  
(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.

GABRIEL

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?

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

(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?

GABRIEL

Already, on our special day?!

NORA  
I had a lot of wine.

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

NORA  
Didn't I? Sorry.

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

NORA  
Why not.

Nora and Gabriel 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 Gabriel 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. Gabriel and Nora have not yet noticed the two; they are enthralled in their own conversation.

GABRIEL  
(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.

GABRIEL  
 (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.

GABRIEL

Listen, Audrey and...

Gabriel indicates to Paul to introduce himself.

PAUL

Paul.

GABRIEL

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

AUDREY

I'm not angry!

GABRIEL

...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?

GABRIEL

I insist. Please.

PAUL

It was only a lager, noth-

GABRIEL  
(to the bartender)  
A lager, please. The best one you  
have. Thank you.

Gabriel receives a beer and hands it to Paul.

GABRIEL  
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!

GABRIEL  
What do you mean?

AUDREY  
Oh, she surely just compliments my  
outfit.

GABRIEL  
(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.

GABRIEL  
(to Nora)  
You never told me you go singing!

NORA  
I,- I wanted to surprise you!



GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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

AUDREY

You did?

GABRIEL

Chorale Reef!

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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

Na na, na na, na na- na na-  
na na.

NORA

Na na, na na, na na- na na-  
na na.

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

AUDREY  
(cheers)  
Wooo!

GABRIEL  
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.

GABRIEL  
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.

GABRIEL  
My name is Gabriel.

Gabriel shakes Audrey's and Paul's hands.

GABRIEL (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.

GABRIEL

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!

GABRIEL

(stricken)

You met at a car-share?

AUDREY

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

PAUL

God bless ChitChatCar!

GABRIEL

(mutters)

ChitChatCar...

NORA

What a curious happenstance.

GABRIEL

Yes, how curious.

PAUL

It was fate!

GABRIEL

Fate, yes.

NORA

You look happy together.

PAUL  
(snickers)  
Thank you.

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

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

Gabriel 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.

GABRIEL  
Bye!

Nora and Gabriel 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 GABRIEL'S FLAT - NIGHT

28

Nora and Gabriel enter the flat.

NORA

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

GABRIEL

Me? Puh, I'm fine.

NORA

What is it?

Gabriel takes out her phone and scrolls through it.

GABRIEL

I knew I remembered that name.

NORA

Which name?

Gabriel shows her phone to Nora.

GABRIEL

ChitChatCar. You said somebody hacked my phone.

NORA

What do you mean?

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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-

GABRIEL

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!

GABRIEL

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?

GABRIEL

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-

GABRIEL

They tell you about each other?

NORA

It's my job to listen.

GABRIEL

And what did you tell them?

NORA

I helped them succeed in life.

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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!

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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*!

GABRIEL

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

NORA

I don't need to do any such thing.

GABRIEL

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

NORA

I want them to find out on their own.

GABRIEL

How would that make things better?

NORA

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

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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?

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

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.

GABRIEL

You can't just go.

NORA

I need some space.

GABRIEL

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. Gabriel appears to the edge of the stage, with a phone in her hand.

AUDREY  
Hello?

GABRIEL  
Hello. Am I speaking to Audrey?

AUDREY  
Yes, this is Audrey. Who is this?

GABRIEL  
It's Gabriel. We met a few days ago, together with Nora.

AUDREY

(confused)

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

GABRIEL

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

AUDREY

Yes, it's fine now.

GABRIEL

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?

GABRIEL

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.

Gabriel 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,  
Gabriel, 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

Gabriel, 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**