

You & Me

By Dan Rebellato

Draft 4.2 (November 2020)

Characters

Naomi Woods
Tom Luckhurst

Nick
Waiter
Driver
Security Guard

The play is set in London in January 2021.

Although the actors swap soon after starting, the script indicates which character speaks, not which actor.

A forward slash in a line of dialogue shows where the next line begins, creating an overlap.

If one character's line ends with a dash and their next line begins with a dash, they should carry on talking over the other character.

An incomplete line without any final punctuation is probably just a thought that doesn't complete.

A blank dialogue line means that speaker owns the silence.

Zoom.

POLLY kind of used to it now.

NAOMI The new normal.

POLLY It would be good to get back into the studio, of course, because you have more flexibility in how you record.

TOM Yes I suppose you do.

POLLY Yes, you know you can control how off-mic you are –

NAOMI which is harder at home

POLLY Yes, and of course things like a dead room

NAOMI is that the

POLLY Very silent room, no echoes

NAOMI Oh yes.

POLLY Where are you calling in from?

NAOMI [answers truthfully]

TOM [answers truthfully]

POLLY Have you done a remote recording before?

NAOMI Yeah, a few things, videos, green screen kind of thing.

POLLY Do you have your own green screen then?

NAOMI Yeah! They're very cheap.

TOM Every home should have one.

Waiting room notification.

POLLY Ah I think our writer is here. I'll just let him in.

Clicks.

Just connecting to audio.

TOM Do we have a schedule?

NAOMI I don't think so.

Arrival notification.

POLLY No I'll say something about that in a minute.

TOM/NAOMI Fine/No problem.

POLLY Hello Dan!

Pause.

Dan, you're muted.

DAN orry I'm always doing that.

POLLY So this is our writer, Dan. Dan this is [name] and [name]¹ who are our Naomi and Tom.

DAN Ah amazing. Thank you guys, thank you so much for doing this.

TOM Yes, nice work, man. Good words.

NAOMI It's great, really lifts off the page.

DAN Ah, cheers, that's so good to hear, thanks.

POLLY This isn't the first time you two have worked together is it?

NAOMI No we did a theatre thing years ago.

TOM And we did an ITV crime drama a year ago. It's called *Rollercoaster*. (Is it still called *Rollercoaster*?)

NAOMI I think so!

TOM The title's changed so many times...

POLLY I don't think I've seen it.

TOM Oh no you wouldn't have, it's not out yet, we were finished in ... (*looks to NAOMI*) February?

NAOMI January I think.

TOM Wow January, but the later episodes got held up because of Covid etc. etc. and they've only just finished editing –

NAOMI I think at one point they were worried they'd just have to scrap everything.

POLLY Well look, we thought we'd launch straight in. We don't have a schedule as such, because the way it's written, it's sort of continuous

¹ If the actors can use their own names, that would be ideal, but if they'd rather not, we can choose a fictional actor that they play.

so we thought we might just go from the top and record, see what happens spontaneously. Is that alright?

NAOMI/TOM Sure/Yeah fine.

POLLY Obviously, we can stop and go back and do as many takes as you need; we've got time. Just give me a moment to set up.

NAOMI So Polly, we were talking before and we had an idea about something – and she's gone.

TOM Yes she's gone.

NAOMI When she gets back.

TOM Yeah.

Pause.

NAOMI Dan, you did the World War One thing on the radio right? *Home Front*. I thought it was great.

DAN Oh right yeah. That was, actually, I think that was Katie Hims but yes, it was very good wasn't it?

NAOMI Yeah.

TOM We had an idea about something we'd like to try.

DAN Er, I think you should probably run that by Polly. It's sort of Polly's show at this stage. I'm just the writer.

TOM No problemo.

Phone rings.

DAN Sorry I better take this. I'll mute. I won't be long.

NAOMI You go ahead.

The actors leaf through the script.

Did she say anything to you about accent?

NAOMI No. Why, are you doing one?

TOM No, just my own voice.

NAOMI We should do it in [*choose accent*] or something, don't tell them.

TOM Oh god, can you imagine. (*Accent*) 'Naomi, what are you doing here?'

NAOMI (*Accent*) 'I just dropped by, on the off chance'

They laugh silently.

(whisper) Can she hear us?

TOM *(whisper)* I don't know.

POLLY *(unmutes)* Okay actors. Sorry about that, just had to reboot a laptop helpfully. So let's go for a take.

NAOMI From

POLLY Yes from the top. Just like a read through but we'll record in case there's anything really great we might want to use. But just take a run at it.

DAN *(unmuting)* Sorry about that. Phone call.

POLLY Dan you'll need to mute again.

NAOMI In fact

DAN Yep yep. *(mutes)*

NAOMI we were just

POLLY Okay, we're recording. Actors, when you're ready. *(Mutes)*

Dead silence. Then the sound of an office entrance way. Busyish, chatter, doors opening and closing, people are leaving for the day. We are with NAOMI, waiting on a settee near the main door. Distant ping of a lift and then a small group of guys are heard coming out of the lift.

NAOMI Tom!

He's not heard her.

Tom? Tom!

The group of guys are nearer but still talking.

TOM *(distantly)* So look, let's park the access panel reboot. If Caitlin's not playing ball, we're wasting our time.

NAOMI Hey Tom!

TOM *(distant, surprised)* Naomi! One minute! *(to his colleagues)* We can start again on functionality tomorrow. Small Board Room at 9.30? Nick, you're bringing coffee. *(Background: NICK 'whaaat?')* Yes you are. Mine's a flat white. *(And now he's with Naomi. Kiss.)* Hey Naomi, what are you doing here?

NAOMI I just dropped by, on the off chance.

TOM Cool, you want to come for a drink? I think some of the boys are going to the Parcel Yard.

NAOMI No, I think I'd rather...

TOM Rather, what?

NAOMI I mean I don't want to stop you if you were planning -

TOM No no

NAOMI - a boys' night out or

TOM What? No.

NAOMI I cancelled the meeting after work, thought we could have a date night, catch up.

TOM Catch up on...

NAOMI I'm so busy and you're so busy and the evening comes and we both want to slump and

TOM I know, babes, I'm sorry. My head's been in the big redesign recently and

NAOMI No it's absolutely me too, work has been mental

TOM Yeah let's go somewhere -

NAOMI I feel like we've kind of missed each other a bit

TOM - have a date, like we used to.

NAOMI A bit of you and me time.

TOM A date with my brilliant wife. (*Kisses her*)

NAOMI I mean if you're too tired.

TOM No, babes, I said.

NAOMI Happy to just go home if you

TOM No it's a good idea. Just us.

NAOMI Cool.

TOM There's a decent bar just off Granary Square.

NAOMI Great.

TOM Like we used to.

NAOMI Yeah.

TOM Couple of beers.

And we're in the pub. TOM sets two beers down on the table.

NAOMI Thank you.

TOM Cheers.

They clink.

NAOMI Oh I needed that.

TOM Tough day?

NAOMI It was okay. Jessica's still off after her operation so we're not running at full capacity but we're ticking over. Better than it was. How about you?

TOM Same old same old. We're stuck on the redesign for the lads in Dublin; we keep pitching them ideas – they consult for two weeks and then turn it down, we pitch something else, they consult and turn it down.

NAOMI Wow. Frustrating.

TOM Big yep.

They both take a sip. Beat.

NAOMI So, Tom. I ran into Mark today.

TOM Oh yeah?

NAOMI He was in to see Jenny about some stuff, doesn't matter, but he mentioned something and I didn't really know what to say so I thought I'd just come right out and ask you.

TOM What sort of thing?

NAOMI He just sort of mentioned it in passing. I think he thought, as your wife, I knew. He said you were off work for a bit last year.

Beat.

TOM Off work how?

NAOMI Which is what I said and he kind of got embarrassed and tried to change the subject.

TOM What did he mean?

NAOMI Off work: not at work.

TOM Well I wasn't was I?

NAOMI That's what I said.

TOM Because you'd know, wouldn't you?

Pause.

Silence.

(That's your line.)

NAOMI Yeah

Pause.

POLLY (*unmutes*) Is everything okay?

NAOMI Yeah not quite feeling it.

POLLY Of course. Do you want to take a moment?

TOM We were talking actually – is that what you were meaning, [name]?

NAOMI Yeah!

TOM Yes, we were just wondering if we might try something.

POLLY Sure, what sort of thing?

NAOMI Swapping parts.

POLLY Okay, interesting.

NAOMI Just for a run.

TOM Or a take even.

POLLY Just to ...

NAOMI I think it would help me, well help both of us, / to, sort of, to get into their heads, sorry, I'm not being very clear.

TOM Yeah definitely

POLLY No it's fine.

NAOMI I think it would be good to know *him* so that I can know *her*, if that makes sense.

TOM And if it doesn't work

NAOMI Yes of course, but just to try

POLLY Let me check with the writer, Dan, are you okay if we try that?

Pause.

Dan you're muted.

DAN (*unmutes*) eep doing that.

POLLY [Name] and [name] want to try swapping the parts over.

DAN ...Yeah I heard.

POLLY Do you mind if we try that?

DAN I mean, yes if, I mean, if, not to record or

POLLY Well we'd record just to see

DAN I mean, okay, record but not for the, you know, final version

POLLY Just to see.

DAN ... um, sure, why not. I guess.

POLLY Great. So do you want to go back from to top?

NAOMI Um, what about just back a page maybe.

TOM From the bit where we're in the pub maybe.

POLLY Okay, give me a minute. (*mutes*)

NAOMI Thanks, [name].

TOM No it'll be fun.

NAOMI Yeah.

POLLY (*Unmutes*) Okay, so shall we go from 215 on 11: Tom's line 'A couple of beers'

NAOMI/TOM Got it/... yep fine.

POLLY Okay, we're recording. Actors, when you're ready.

Pause. Actors swap.

TOM Couple of beers.

And we're in the pub. TOM sets two beers down on the table.

NAOMI Thank you.

TOM Cheers.

They clink.

NAOMI Oh I needed that.

TOM Tough day?

NAOMI It was okay. Jessica's still off after her operation so we're not running at full capacity but we're ticking over. Better than it was. How about you?

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NAOMI Wow. Frustrating.

TOM Big yep.

They both take a sip. Beat.

NAOMI So, Tom. I ran into Mark today.

TOM Oh yeah?

NAOMI He was in to see Jenny about some stuff, doesn't matter, but he mentioned something and I didn't really know what to say so I thought I'd just come right out and ask you.

TOM What sort of thing?

NAOMI He just sort of mentioned it in passing. I think he thought, as your wife, I knew. He said you were off work for a bit last year.

Beat.

TOM Off work how?

NAOMI Which is what I said and he kind of got embarrassed and tried to change the subject.

TOM What did he mean?

NAOMI Off work: not at work.

TOM Well I wasn't was I?

NAOMI That's what I said.

TOM Because you'd know, wouldn't you?

NAOMI Yes I would, wouldn't I?

TOM Maybe he meant when we were in Sorrento.

NAOMI No he didn't mean a holiday.

TOM When was this supposed to have happened?

NAOMI Spring, summer, he wasn't sure.

TOM Uh-huh.

NAOMI But you were working, Tom.

TOM Yeah.

NAOMI You certainly went to work.

TOM Course I did.

NAOMI You left the house.

TOM What else would I be doing?

NAOMI Well exactly.

TOM I mean, Mark though.

Beat.

NAOMI What about Mark?

TOM Well, come on, Nomes: Mark?

NAOMI I don't know what you mean.

TOM He fancies you, always has.

NAOMI Oh don't be ridiculous.

TOM You know he does.

NAOMI Tom, don't be silly.

TOM He's always trying to do me down. The thing about my shed.

NAOMI That was nothing. We'd all had a bit to drink.

TOM Sometimes I think you like how he flirts with you.

NAOMI What? That's a terrible thing to say.

TOM No?

NAOMI No.

TOM Well he's wrong anyway.
NAOMI Okay.
TOM And I don't like being gossiped about.
NAOMI It wasn't gossip.
TOM Oh sure.
NAOMI It wasn't.
TOM Hm.

Pause.

NAOMI I didn't say he was doing you down, Tom.
TOM What?
NAOMI I just said he mentioned you were off.
TOM
NAOMI I don't know why you assume it was for something bad.
TOM Well, what *did* he say?
NAOMI It doesn't matter.
TOM No he obviously said something.
NAOMI No, you said it wasn't true so let's leave it.
TOM No go on
NAOMI He obviously made a mistake.
TOM I'd like to know what people are saying about me.

Beat.

NAOMI Don't be cross.
TOM I'm not getting cross.
NAOMI You are getting a *bit* cross, Tom.
TOM Just – I can't believe I'm having to drag this out of you – just tell me what he said. Naomi. Please.

Pause.

NAOMI He said he thought you were suspended.

TOM *Suspended?*

NAOMI I know, Tom, I know.

TOM What the hell?

NAOMI That's what I said.

TOM For what? Did he say?

NAOMI He didn't say.

TOM I mean Jesus, Naomi.

NAOMI Don't get cross with *me*.

TOM Well, how would you react if one of your friends was going round telling everyone you'd been suspended for some / well he told *you*

NAOMI Hardly *everyone*

TOM - so who knows who else he's gossiping to

NAOMI He wasn't *gossiping*, it was / in the context of

TOM He is such a bigmouth.

NAOMI Tom, you're overreacting. He obviously just got the wrong end of the stick somehow.

TOM It's what he does, Naomi.

NAOMI Tom, don't be like that. Forget I said anything.

TOM Okay but -

NAOMI Let's just have a drink and forget I said anything.

TOM Yeah. Okay. But

NAOMI No, no buts, let's just have a nice evening.

TOM Okay.

NAOMI Thank you.

TOM Cheers.

NAOMI Cheers.

They sip. Pause.

TOM That's nice, is it new?

NAOMI Oh this? I've had it ages.

TOM Really? I don't recognise it.

NAOMI I usually wear it with the green top, maybe it looks, I don't know

TOM different, yeah maybe.

NAOMI Thank you. I worry it's a bit chunky.

TOM No it's nice.

NAOMI Glad you like it.

TOM Want another?

NAOMI I'm still going with this one.

TOM Should have got some crisps.

NAOMI We could grab something to eat if you like?

TOM There's a good place over the square.

NAOMI What sort of food?

TOM Don't know how to describe it. Small plates.

NAOMI Tapas?

TOM No. Well, yeah, but not just Spanish.

NAOMI It looks like it's just drinks.

TOM The food's on the back.

And we are in a bistro. NAOMI turns over the menu.

NAOMI Oh right.

TOM I can recommend the crabcakes.

NAOMI Well let's have crabcakes. Where are the waiters?

TOM You order on an app. I'll do it.

He's tapping on a smartphone, though we probably can't hear that because obviously he doesn't have keypad tones turned on; he's not an idiot.

NAOMI Oh it's one of *those* places.

TOM They started doing it last year because of Covid but apparently customers like it.

NAOMI If you say so.

A waiter brings wine to the table.

WAITER One bottle of Gavi?

TOM Yeah that's us. Is Gavi alright?

NAOMI Lovely.

WAITER Do you want to taste?

TOM No just pour thanks.

Wine glasses filled.

NAOMI Thank you.

TOM Cheers.

NAOMI Cheers.

TOM Anyway, how was your day?

NAOMI I said, Jenny's still off so

TOM Oh, yeah yeah.

NAOMI But we're getting a new photocopier, woo!

TOM It's the little things.

NAOMI And I think I might have to fire Stacey.

TOM Oh why?

NAOMI I mean, she's late six times in the last two weeks and she's knows because she's on a warning.

TOM Wait which one's Stacey?

NAOMI Blonde, about 30, layers with bangs?

TOM Could you translate that into guy-speak please?

NAOMI Looks like Taylor Swift.

TOM Gotcha. Hold on, she was at our wedding!

NAOMI Yeah I know.

TOM You can't sack one of our wedding guests!

NAOMI I'm not saying I'm *going* to fire her, just -

TOM Bit awkward

NAOMI - go down the formal disciplinary route yuck yuck yuck I hate that sort of thing

TOM That's part of being the Big Boss Woman.

NAOMI I know, Tom.

Sound of a group coming into the restaurant.

Oh look it's Marsha. (Hi Marsha!)

TOM What?

He turns round.

Oh yeah. (Hi! Yeah just)

NAOMI Who's that she's with?

TOM That's her assistant, now they've expanded HR. Can't remember the name. New girl.

NAOMI Do you want them to join us?

TOM No. No.

Pause.

NAOMI You seem on edge. You okay?

TOM Yeah why?

NAOMI I thought you got on with Marsha.

TOM I do.

NAOMI She's been to our flat!

TOM I know!

NAOMI You just seemed, doesn't matter.

TOM I'm not, I'm not anything, we should order.

NAOMI I thought you did.

TOM Oh yeah I did.

NAOMI You sure you're okay?

TOM I'm fine.

NAOMI Oh! I could ask Marsha if you were suspended last year

TOM *What?*

NAOMI *Joke!*

TOM That's not funny.

NAOMI Don't be so sensitive!

TOM I'm not being sensitive. I have been *libelled*.

NAOMI (*laughing*) Oh come on, Tom.

TOM No, I'm serious.

NAOMI You are totally overreacting.

TOM How am I overreacting?

NAOMI Tom, what's going on?

TOM I, I might ask you the same question.

NAOMI What?

TOM Hanging around with Mark, / gossiping about my – well that's how it seems to me.

NAOMI I wasn't 'hanging around' with Mark and I wasn't gossiping, don't say that. What's going on?

TOM Nothing.

NAOMI Were you suspended?

TOM What?

NAOMI Were you suspended?

TOM Why are you bringing this up again?

NAOMI Because now you're making me wonder!

TOM I don't believe this.

NAOMI It's not a difficult question, Tom.

TOM Giving me the third degree.

NAOMI It's one question.

TOM Is that why you came to the office?

NAOMI Just answer the question.

TOM I have answered the question.

NAOMI Look me in the eye and answer.

TOM Is this why you came to my office today?

NAOMI (*sigh*)

TOM Wow.

NAOMI Tom...

TOM You didn't want a date night with your husband. You didn't want some 'you and me time'. You wanted to cross examine me.

NAOMI That's not fair.

TOM Well it's true, isn't it?

NAOMI I'm allowed to ask.

TOM Didn't have to lie, though -

NAOMI 'Lie'.

TOM - bringing me here / under false pretences

NAOMI (*firmly*) Yes but you *still haven't answered the question.*

TOM

NAOMI

Silence.

NAOMI Right, I'll ask Marsha.

TOM What?

NAOMI She can clear this up.

TOM Wait wait wait

NAOMI If *you* won't tell me

TOM She won't tell you either.

NAOMI Why not?

TOM It's confidential.

NAOMI What's confidential?

TOM

NAOMI What's confidential, Tom?

TOM

NAOMI You have five seconds and then I'm going over and asking her.

Silence for five seconds.

Right.

She gets up.

TOM There's nothing down this rabbit hole, Naomi. It's nothing. It's not important. It's not *anything*.

NAOMI So tell me.

TOM I don't

Pause.

I don't want to.

NAOMI Why not?

TOM Because you won't leave it alone.

NAOMI Look, Tom. My love. My husband, whatever it is, I'd rather know than not know.

TOM You're making it sound much worse than it is.

NAOMI This is you and me, Tom. Just talk to me.

Silence.

TOM Okay. I'll tell you. On one condition: I tell you; you can ask one question and then that's it, no more questions, we forget it and we move on with our lives.

NAOMI I can't agree to that. I don't know what you're going to say.

TOM That's my condition.

NAOMI What if you say you're, I don't know, what?, like, a – a Nazi. / I'm just saying, I know you're not,

TOM What the actual -? A Nazi? Where did *that* come from?

NAOMI - just as an *example* of how, just an *example* -

TOM Pretty weird example.

NAOMI - just if you said something *like* that – not *that*, *like* that – *extreme*, and, what, I only get to ask one question?

TOM I'm not up for some great long interrogation.

NAOMI Put yourself in my shoes. One question? That's crazy.

TOM I'm serious, Naomi.

The waiter arrives with the food.

WAITER Crabcakes and mezze?

TOM We're sharing everything, you can put them anywhere.

Plates go down on the table.

NAOMI/TOM Thanks/Thank you.

WAITER Can I get you anything else.

TOM No we're fine thanks.

WAITER *leaves.*

NAOMI Okay, fine, whatever. One question.

TOM Alright. Okay, yes. Yes, I was *briefly* suspended from work, pending a ridiculous investigation, which completely exonerated me and in fact I got a full apology from Scott.

Pause.

NAOMI Is that all you're going to tell me?

TOM You can ask your question.

NAOMI (*rolls her eyes*)

TOM You agreed!

NAOMI I can't believe you were suspended and you didn't tell me.

TOM It was embarrassing, it was stupid, I knew it was all bollocks. I didn't want to make a big thing out of it.

NAOMI Okay then, tell me. What were you suspended for?

TOM Five weeks, well, four and a half.

NAOMI No, I mean –

TOM I'm afraid that was your one question.

NAOMI (*flash of anger*) Don't push me, Tom. I'm not in the mood.

TOM It was nothing, Naomi. It was never anything. They had to look like they were taking it seriously but it was nothing.

NAOMI Taking what seriously?

TOM Just leave it, Naomi. Please. Just leave it.

NAOMI How can I –

TOM Trust me. It's nothing.

NAOMI You said I could ask a question and I asked you what you were suspended for.

TOM I hate it when you're like this, you're like a dog with a bone

Pause.

TOM Okay, right. I did say. I warned you, I said – but obviously there's nothing I can

NAOMI

TOM You're enjoying this, aren't you?

NAOMI I'm really not.

Pause.

TOM Right. Someone made a complaint.

Pause.

NAOMI Uh huh.

TOM A ... complaint...

NAOMI

TOM It was a complaint of sexual harassment.

NAOMI

TOM Inappropriate sexual contact / or something. It was lies, *Naomi*, it was *lies* from beginning to end -

NAOMI Oh my god. Oh my god.

TOM - Naomi, it was nothing – and they *proved* it was nothing.

Pause.

NAOMI Why didn't you tell me?

TOM I thought it would blow over in a couple of days. But Scott was off sick and Marsha was in Leeds for a conference so it dragged on.

NAOMI Tom...

TOM I was kind of stuck because I hadn't told you what was happening and after a week there was still no resolution so I just kept my head down and waited.

NAOMI

TOM And after four and a half weeks, they call me up: we're very pleased to say that the investigating team has found the complaint to be completely without merit, we sincerely apologise, the complaint will be removed from my personnel file, et cetera.

NAOMI

TOM

NAOMI

TOM Are you going to say anything?

NAOMI I don't know what to say.

TOM I know I should have told you. I'm sorry.

Silence.

NAOMI Where did you go? When you said you were going to work.

TOM My brother's for a bit. He had this garden room-office thing and I helped it wire it up. Rest of the time, went to coffee shops, just sort of hung about.

NAOMI Right.

TOM It was stupid but I thought it would be over soon and why make a big deal of it.

NAOMI Who was she?

TOM A sad case

NAOMI Does she still work there?

TOM God no. She was a student on a placement, just six months.

NAOMI Young then.

TOM And they got rid of her sharpish I can tell you.

NAOMI Does she have a name?

TOM Course she has a name, don't do that. She's called Asti.

NAOMI Okay.

TOM When I got back she was gone, desk cleared, well she didn't have a desk, but you know, canned good and proper.

NAOMI Why?

TOM Um, malicious falsehood? Not exactly good is it.

NAOMI What did she say happened?

TOM Uh we are *not* going there!

NAOMI Why not?

TOM Because she made it up. Why do you care?

NAOMI Just tell me.

TOM It was a year ago, I can't remember the details.

NAOMI Roughly.

TOM Said I trapped her in a room or something, tried to, I don't know, kiss her or something...

NAOMI Christ.

TOM It didn't happen, so

NAOMI No but

TOM Anyway, turns out on the day she said I touched her or whatever I wasn't even in the building; I wasn't even in London.

NAOMI Oh okay...

TOM Yeah I was in Reading with Gregg working on the Nixon contract.

NAOMI Right.

TOM Yeah.

NAOMI Why would she make something like that up? Why would anyone?

TOM It happens.

Silence.

NAOMI I'm sorry, Tom. That must have been horrible.

TOM It was, yeah.

NAOMI I wish you'd told me. I could have helped.

TOM I know. I should have. I'm sorry.

NAOMI I feel bad.

TOM What do you have to feel bad about?

NAOMI That you had to deal with that on your own.

TOM I didn't feel I had much choice.

NAOMI And that I couldn't tell something was going on. What does that say about me?

TOM No Naomi, it was that period after Georgina's dad died and you were / doing all her work as well as

NAOMI (Oh right yes *then.*)

TOM your own.

NAOMI Shit I'm sorry.

TOM It's fine.

NAOMI Work was mental last summer.

TOM No it was me being stupid. I should have told you. But you just think: what if she doesn't believe me? Or even if she does, there'll be doubts, won't there?

NAOMI No I'd have

TOM And frankly, if I were in your shoes, I think I'd have thought exactly that.

NAOMI I wish you'd given me a chance. This is you and me, Tom.

TOM I will, next time. I mean, god, / not that there's going to *be* a next time.

NAOMI Next time!?

TOM God I can't believe I just said that.

NAOMI I love you, Tom. I'm sorry, really. And sorry for being so hard-nosed back there.

TOM I love you too.

NAOMI I've completely lost my appetite.

TOM Me too, what shall we do?

NAOMI Ask them if they can box it up for us?

TOM Shall we just get a cab home?

NAOMI Go on then.

TOM My shout.

NAOMI No let me, I feel bad.

TOM If you insist.

NAOMI Do we need to get anything on the way?

TOM How are we for booze?

NAOMI Let's stop at an off licence on the way.

TOM Where is there one?

NAOMI There's the one at Pimlico.

TOM Their selection's terrible.

NAOMI What did you get?

And we are in the back of a taxi, ticking over at the kerb. TOM shuts the door behind him.

TOM Thanks driver.

The taxi starts off again.

A Valpoli, and this Soave.

NAOMI Oh we've had that before, it's alright.

TOM There wasn't much choice.

NAOMI I'm sure it'll go beautifully with crabcakes heated up in the microwave.

TOM Shit, I meant to get crisps.

NAOMI Oh we are dining in style tonight.

TOM The crabcakes are a bit strong.

NAOMI Open a window.

TOM That's a good idea.

Does so.

NAOMI They're going to be rubber if we reheat them.

TOM Let's Deliveroo something.

NAOMI Chinese.

TOM We had Chinese on Saturday.

NAOMI So?

TOM Who eats Chinese twice a week?

NAOMI Chinese people?

TOM Ha ha.

NAOMI I'm just really in the mood for Chinese. Or Thai.

TOM I could do Thai.

NAOMI Let's do Thai then.

TOM Does Soave go with Thai?

NAOMI It'll have to!

They sit in silence for a moment, the taxi motoring along.

The thing that pisses me off about Stacey is she doesn't even apologise.

TOM Wait what?

NAOMI Sorry, I was going back to an earlier conversation. Stacey always being late at work.

TOM Oh yeah, our wedding guest whose life you're going to ruin.

NAOMI It's the way she waltzes in, like she's the life and soul, like the office is really boring without her. I just can't get in her head.

TOM Well just level with her: 'this is unacceptable'.

NAOMI I'm going to, it's more that I just don't know what's going on in there.

TOM Like what?

NAOMI Well I don't know do I? Home stuff, family stuff, money stuff.

TOM Ask her.

NAOMI Like this Asti woman. I mean, I cannot get my head round someone making up an accusation like that, I mean I literally cannot conceive of what would make someone do that.

TOM Like I said, screw loose.

NAOMI More than a screw loose. I mean, it's vindictive. What if you couldn't disprove what she said? That could have wrecked your career, your everything.

TOM You don't have to tell me.

NAOMI 'Asti'. Where's that from?

TOM Sorry?

NAOMI Asti. Is it Italian?

TOM Like Spumante? No, Norwegian I think. I can't remember.

NAOMI Oh right. A Norwegian student.

TOM Or Danish maybe, that sort of region.

NAOMI It's a nice name, Asti.

TOM Yeah I can't get excited about it.

NAOMI I was school with an Asti. She was a big girl, we used to call her Pasty.

TOM You cow!

NAOMI I do feel bad about that.

TOM Pasty...

NAOMI Wait, didn't I meet her?

TOM What?

NAOMI Asti.

TOM I -

NAOMI Short black hair, pointy nose.

TOM Um yes but

NAOMI I did meet her.

TOM What are you talking about?

NAOMI Pub in Islington a year ago, I locked myself out and had to come and pick up your keys.

TOM Vaguely...

NAOMI You were having a drink with a young woman, she'd just lost her job and you were giving her career advice.

TOM Oh.

NAOMI Was that her?

TOM Um.

NAOMI That was her, wasn't it?

TOM I think, yeah, maybe.

Silence.

NAOMI Okay so I'm confused now.

TOM Why?

NAOMI You said you were giving her advice because she'd lost her job. But you said she lost her job because she made the complaint against you; she's hardly going to go for a drink with you after that, so when was this drink?

TOM I can't remember, it was a year ago.

NAOMI Hold on I can tell you. I lost my keys when I was in Newcastle for the Women in Business conference which was February.

TOM ... so?

NAOMI Mark said you were suspended Spring/Summer. February's not Spring/Summer.

TOM What's your point?

NAOMI Did she lose her job twice? That seems careless.

TOM That – doesn't – I don't –

NAOMI I mean, how bad at her job *is* this girl?

TOM This was ages ago, I don't remember every detail.

NAOMI How many times do you need to sack someone before they take the hint?

TOM Okay no need to be

NAOMI You said she didn't like you. You said she didn't like you from day one.

TOM Figure of speech.

NAOMI That's what you said.

TOM I don't know.

NAOMI So if she dislikes you so much why is she sitting with you in a pub in Islington having just experienced the first of who knows how many sackings?

TOM Don't get like that, Naomi.

NAOMI Well help me out here, Tom.

TOM What do you want me to say? No maybe she didn't take against me on day one *exactly* and I don't remember saying she'd been sacked so maybe that's you misremembering, but she certainly took against me soon after that.

NAOMI Why, what did you do to her?

TOM I don't know. Nothing. She was weird. She was a screw up.

NAOMI Were you having an affair with her?

TOM What?

NAOMI Were you having an affair with her, this Asti?

TOM *(low, intensely)* Keep. Your voice down.

Pause. Voices lower for a bit.

Press the intercom thing, the red button, turn it off.

NAOMI turns off the intercom. Atmosphere changes.

NAOMI Well were you?

TOM I can't believe you're asking me that. How can you ask me that?

NAOMI It's a perfectly straightforward question.

TOM No it's not. Course it's not!

NAOMI It's a yes or no, Tom.

TOM I think it's, it's, it's disgusting that you'd even ask that question.

NAOMI It wouldn't be the first time, would it?

Pause.

TOM Oh of course. I wondered how long it would take for this to come up.

NAOMI Well, it wouldn't.

TOM I had a – brief – fling, once, ages ago –

NAOMI Four years ago, / hardly 'ages'

TOM It was four years ago. I admitted everything, / I held nothing back I didn't try to, well sure but

NAOMI Only when I confronted you

TOM I still admitted it, didn't I?

Beat

NAOMI You had an affair, four years ago -

TOM Before we were married –

NAOMI What's that got to do with anything?

TOM Because it, I don't know -

NAOMI So I don't think it's illegitimate for me to ask if you had an affair with this Asti. Did you?

TOM I did something stupid four years ago, that doesn't give you the right -

NAOMI I notice you haven't denied it. I've asked you, what, four, five times and you don't answer, you just come back at me with something else.

TOM Why are you raking this all up? It was last year, it was a horrible time, we're going through lockdown, haemorrhaging work, I made mistakes, it's over, leave it alone.

NAOMI Oh my god, you did, didn't you?

TOM What? / No.

NAOMI I actually didn't think you had, but you did, didn't you?

NAOMI getting very upset.

TOM Naomi, don't –

NAOMI How *could* you, Tom?

TOM It's not like that.

NAOMI - After everything we said, how could you? -

TOM You're blowing this out of

NAOMI - You promised, you stupid bastard, you *swore* you'd never do it again, why did I believe you? -

TOM Naomi, come on

NAOMI - why are men so shit? Can't keep it in your pants for five seconds / can you?

TOM Come on, look, you're making yourself upset.

NAOMI No, *you, you're* making me upset, because you had sex with this girl, despite everything you said, you did, didn't you?.

TOM Keep your voice down.

Pause.

 It wasn't like that.

NAOMI Well maybe you tell *me* what was it like.

TOM Don't take that tone with me, Naomi.

NAOMI !!

TOM What about you?

NAOMI Wh – what about me?

TOM on your moral high ground. What about Bristol?

NAOMI Bristol?

TOM Yes, a few months after we had our big talk, you went to a big trade fair in Bristol for a few days.

NAOMI Yes, so?

TOM With Mark.

NAOMI

TOM And you got drunk together and ended up having sex in his hotel room.

Silence.

NAOMI Tom, this is – you’re changing the subject –

TOM I think this is very much the subject.

NAOMI I don’t know what you think you’ve heard.

TOM I know what happened, Naomi. No point denying it.

Pause.

NAOMI How did you find out?

TOM Doesn’t matter how I found out.

NAOMI How long have you known?

TOM Day after it happened.

NAOMI (Jesus)

TOM Thanks for not denying it anyway.

NAOMI Why didn’t you say anything?

TOM It was a couple of days before you got back. I’d kind of calmed down. It was obviously a one-night thing.

NAOMI It was, I promise.

TOM I know.

NAOMI I’m sorry.

TOM And I guess I thought it made us quits.

NAOMI That’s *not* why I did it.

TOM (*high ground*) I *really* don’t want to know why you did it, Naomi.

NAOMI I just mean –

TOM And we were getting married in a couple of months, maybe I thought this was one last fling or revenge or something.

NAOMI It was stupid. I was really pissed. I’m sorry.

TOM It's okay. I mean it wasn't okay, but it's okay now.

NAOMI I'm sorry though.

TOM Thank you.

NAOMI How *did* you find out?

TOM Jenny told me.

NAOMI Oh god.

TOM She was going to kick him out actually. / had to talk her down.

NAOMI I'm so sorry Tom. For what it's worth, it didn't happen the way you -

TOM I don't want to know how it happened. I don't want to think about it. I'm only mentioning it now because we don't have to make a big deal of these things.

NAOMI

TOM We can just let sleeping dogs lie.

NAOMI Sure, I mean, but –

TOM If I can do, Nomes, you know

NAOMI Let me just be clear what you're saying. Are you saying, Tom, that it's okay if you had an affair with Asti / because I had a one-night -

TOM I didn't have an affair with Asti

NAOMI - well whatever it was –

TOM a flirtation, barely more than that.

NAOMI But it was more than that.

TOM Barely. It was, I don't know, it was stupid, it was a release, an escape.

NAOMI An escape from what?

TOM I don't know, I was getting sidelined at work, biut bored, and this girl pops up, shows a bit of interest in me, laughs at my jokes, / just pays me a bit of, well maybe I am -

NAOMI God you're such a cliché.

TOM - maybe I am a cliché, yeah maybe I am, but I am human, and I'm / yes actually human and I'm not going to -

NAOMI 'human'!

TOM - apologise for that, but that's all it was, someone paying me a bit of attention, for once.

NAOMI ...I hope that's not aimed at me.

TOM I'm not saying that. I know your work is important to you.

NAOMI Oh so *it is* aimed at me.

TOM No but maybe I did feel a bit shut out.

NAOMI Tom, it's not *my* fault you banged the intern.

TOM A couple of times, a handful. It was stupid. I regretted it. I ended it -

NAOMI Jesus, Tom.

TOM - I regretted it. I said I couldn't go on with it, so it ended. Happy now?

NAOMI Oh delirious, Tom.

TOM It was nothing. It was stupid. And I'm truly sorry. But it wasn't an affair. It wasn't anything.

NAOMI How long did your 'not affair last?

TOM Couple of months...

NAOMI A couple of *months* - !

TOM *If* that. It didn't mean anything.

NAOMI Course it meant something. You slept with her.

TOM It was just sex.

NAOMI Don't be a prick, Tom.

TOM I know women don't believe this but it's true; sometimes, for a guy, sex is just sex.

NAOMI Imagine just for a second what it's like to be me, for your wife to hear your husband say when we have sex it doesn't mean anything.

TOM That's not what I'm saying.

NAOMI What *are* you saying?

TOM It's just, if it's not someone special then it's just sex. Of course, with you, it means, it means *everything*.

NAOMI Bullshit / self-serving bullshit -

TOM It's not bullshit. Why are men not allowed to say this -

NAOMI - how very convenient. It's not betrayal because it 'doesn't mean anything'. Of course it *means something*.

TOM Oh really? So you, with Mark in Bristol, what? that really meant something? Should I have told you not to bother coming home?

Beat.

NAOMI That was different. It was a mistake.

TOM A mistake. You had sex by accident?

NAOMI This is getting nowhere.

TOM There's nowhere to get. Move on.

NAOMI It's about trust, Tom.

TOM Goes both ways, Naomi.

Stalemate. Silence.

NAOMI Have you told me everything?

TOM Yes I have.

NAOMI Promise?

TOM Promise.

NAOMI Oh your life. On my life.

TOM I promise, Naomi.

Pause.

NAOMI (*wearily*) Tom, why are you such a dick?

TOM I don't know.

NAOMI Why didn't you just tell me?

TOM I should have.

NAOMI Yeah I'd have been angry but still

TOM Oh worse than that.

NAOMI What?

TOM You'd have been disappointed.

NAOMI Is that worse?

TOM Oh yeah.

NAOMI *(slight laugh)*

TOM Trust me. Anger a man can take. Disappointment's the killer.

Pause.

NAOMI What am I going to do with you, Tom?

TOM Search me.

NAOMI *(to the driver)* Actually, can we get out here?

DRIVER Right here

NAOMI Yeah / just here on the left.

TOM What are you doing?

Taxi starts to slow and park.

NAOMI Let's finish our date.

TOM What?

NAOMI It's not late.

TOM Where?

NAOMI Here in the park. We've got wine.

TOM We're not teenagers.

NAOMI It'll be fun.

TOM It's cold.

NAOMI Wear my coat.

And we're in the park.

TOM I'm not wearing a girl's coat!

NAOMI No one's going to see you.

TOM Oh alright then.

NAOMI It suits you.

TOM Yeah yeah.

NAOMI Do you want some?

TOM Yeah go on then.

She passes him the wine bottle and he swigs some.

NAOMI It's not been a bad four years, has it?

TOM Not bad at all, not really.

NAOMI What do you think?

TOM Give it another four?

NAOMI No, the wine.

TOM It's alright.

NAOMI Needs to breathe.

TOM It's wine. It'll do.

Takes another swig.

NAOMI What a year.

TOM Yeah.

NAOMI This stuff. Georgina's dad in hospital, having to step up. Covid. Everyone on furlough.

TOM We're getting through it.

NAOMI Can't believe you wired up your brother's garden shed.

TOM I did. State of the art. It's like the Tardis in there now.

NAOMI Did he pay you anything?

TOM It was fun. Bit of manual labour. Work up a sweat. Sunshine. Beers. Lads together. I haven't spent that much time with my brother in years.

NAOMI (*chuckles*)

Pause.

TOM His new girlfriend's nice.

NAOMI (*distracted*) Is she?

TOM Well not *new-new*.

NAOMI (*distracted*) No.

Pause. TOM has another swig.

TOM You alright?

NAOMI ... 'sunshine'?

TOM What?

NAOMI You said sunshine?

TOM Did I? When?

NAOMI When you were wiring up your brother's shed, it was sunshine.

TOM Yeah...

NAOMI Which makes it when? June? July?

TOM About then yeah.

NAOMI When?

TOM July I think, why?

NAOMI Okay so now I'm sorry to rake this up again –

TOM Oh you are kidding me –

NAOMI No but I don't see how this timeline works.

TOM What? What else is there to know?

NAOMI You tell me.

Pause. TOM resists for a second but senses that somewhere, somehow he has slipped up.

TOM Tell you what?

NAOMI I run into Asti in February; I imagine you're already having the affair / and you say, well whatever it was -

TOM Not an affair –

NAOMI - it lasted two months, which takes us to the end of March, but you're suspended in July – April, May, June, July, four months after the affair ended.

TOM So?

NAOMI Four months?

TOM That's when she put the complaint in, I guess.

NAOMI You guess or you know?

TOM How does it matter?

NAOMI A complaint about sexual harassment and they sat on it for four months? I don't think so.

TOM There are procedures -

NAOMI I know there are procedures, Tom, because, if you remember, Marsha asked me to help write your policy.

TOM I am fed up / with being treated

NAOMI Oh *you're* fed up

TOM - like some kind of a / criminal...

NAOMI Well I'm pretty fed up with being lied to, / having to, well perhaps then, Tom, you might like -

TOM Lied to? Oh thank you, that's very nice.

NAOMI - to explain why it clearly took four months for her to lodge a complaint.

TOM Maybe you should ask *her*.

NAOMI Maybe I should.

TOM Maybe she was cross I dumped her.

NAOMI Stewed on it for four months?

TOM I don't know!

NAOMI What happened?

TOM How should I know? I told you, she's nuts.

NAOMI What happened, Tom?

TOM Naomi...

NAOMI You promised. You promised on my life.

TOM

NAOMI Did you end it?

TOM Yes.

NAOMI How?

TOM What do you mean how?

NAOMI It was you who ended it?

TOM What do you mean?

NAOMI Because that's not like you. You're not a confrontation person.

TOM I think it was obvious to both of us that it was never going to go anywhere.

NAOMI So – what are you saying? You did or didn't end it.

TOM It ended.

NAOMI So – you *didn't* end it.

TOM It was sort of mutual.

NAOMI So mutual in fact that four months later she puts in a complaint of sexual harassment.

TOM That is out of order.

NAOMI Oh *I'm* the bad one.

He loses it. She is knocked back initially but soon rises to meet him.

TOM How am I supposed to know why she put that complaint in? This is not a game, Naomi. / It's not a riddle for you to solve. –

NAOMI I don't *think* it's a (game)

TOM - You can drop the courtroom tone, okay? This is serious. She screwed my life up, Naomi. I'm only just back. Do you understand that? It's taken me a year to pull things back together at work. You have no idea. A man's life, a man's life Naomi, can be torn apart by one false accusation by a screwed-up malicious little bitch. That was me. That's what I went through. Months later, even after I was cleared, people avoiding me, talking about me. Someone put a sign on the photocopier room that said 'Tom Luckhurst's Love Shack' and it stayed up there for a week, because I became a standing joke. And no you didn't notice anything was up because I hid it from you, because I shouldered the burden alone, because I didn't think you'd be able to cope, because I couldn't be sure, Naomi, that my own wife would support me, because I seriously thought that, because of some knee-jerk 'sisterhood' you'd take her side, automatically, because deep down you think men are shit, / that's what it comes down to -

NAOMI Where is all *this* coming from?

TOM - I notice you don't deny it.

NAOMI Stop trying to make out you're the victim here.

TOM I *am*! I *am* the victim! You don't get it, do you?

NAOMI Whatever happened between you she clearly wasn't happy.

TOM *And she deserved it.*

Beat.

NAOMI What?

Beat.

TOM What?

NAOMI What does that mean? 'She deserved it.' What does that mean?

TOM I don't – I don't know what I meant by that -

NAOMI What did she deserve?

TOM

NAOMI What did you do?

TOM I'm not talking to you about this.

NAOMI You didn't dump her. She dumped you.

TOM (*snort of derision*)

NAOMI Yes, she dumped you, didn't she? And that pissed you off.

TOM

NAOMI Asti? Dump the Great Tom Luckhurst? How dare she? Who does she think she is?

TOM

NAOMI Dump you, when she should be kneeling down and worshipping your big dick.

TOM It wasn't like that.

NAOMI No? What *was* it like?

TOM She was kind of nasty about it.

NAOMI Nasty how?

TOM Just like it didn't mean anything.

NAOMI I thought it *didn't* mean anything.

TOM It didn't.

NAOMI But you thought it should have meant something to *her*.

TOM I don't know.

NAOMI Did you think she was in love with you?

TOM No.

NAOMI So you were pissed off. What did you do?

TOM Nothing. I tried to talk to her a couple of times.

NAOMI Okay.

TOM And she just kind of took the piss.

NAOMI Go on.

Pause.

TOM I thought maybe she was seeing someone else in the firm.

NAOMI Cheating on you? Oh Tom, how awful, poor you.

TOM (*ignoring that*) So I, I tried to find out.

NAOMI How did you try to find out?

Pause.

TOM I followed her a couple of times after work.

NAOMI Christ, Tom.

TOM I just wanted to see if she was meeting someone.

NAOMI You stalked her.

TOM It was just a couple of times.

NAOMI What does following her mean?

TOM I watch her flat one night, couple of nights -

NAOMI Jesus, Tom.

TOM I know.

NAOMI She should have.

TOM Probably.

NAOMI And then what did you do?

TOM

NAOMI How bad is it?

TOM I don't know. I'm a bit lost, Naomi.

NAOMI Show me.

TOM What?

NAOMI *(getting out her phone)* I'm getting us a cab. We're going back to your office.

TOM What? we can't.

NAOMI I want you to show me where it happened.

TOM Why?

NAOMI No more lies.

TOM It'll be locked up.

NAOMI You've got keys.

TOM What will I say?

NAOMI You need to pick up a hard drive.

TOM I need to pick up a hard drive.

SECURITY No worries. Just lock up when you leave okay?

And we are in the office.

TOM Why are we doing this?

NAOMI You said the investigation proved she was lying. You said you weren't even here on the day it was supposed to happen.

TOM

NAOMI Tom?

TOM It was a very confusing time, Naomi.

NAOMI What does that mean?

TOM Gregg covered for me.

NAOMI What? How?

TOM You can't tell anyone this.

NAOMI What did he do?

TOM He gave me an alibi. He said we were in Reading, working on the thing for Nixon.

NAOMI But you weren't.

TOM I'd been there during the day but I came back.

NAOMI Back here?

TOM Just to pick up my laptop. It was late. I didn't think anyone would be in.

NAOMI What did you do, Tom?

TOM *(Moving through the room)* I picked up my laptop. I had some post. I went through that. It was deserted.

NAOMI Right, so

He's repeating his moves.

TOM And I'm just leaving and I remember we need paper so

He turns.

I go to the copy room and she's in there.

NAOMI Asti.

TOM Yes.

The door opens and we are in the photocopier room, several months earlier. The copier is running through a big job.

NAOMI

TOM I was surprised. I didn't intend to do anything.

NAOMI What did you do?

TOM I can't remember the details.

NAOMI Yes you can.

TOM No it's very hazy.

NAOMI I'm her. I'm in the photocopier room and you come in. What do you say?

TOM I can't do that.

NAOMI Yes you can. Do you say 'hi'?

TOM Naomi, come on.

NAOMI Do you say 'alright Asti'? What?

TOM I don't know. I probably say: you made me jump.

NAOMI Probably?

TOM I say: you made me jump.

NAOMI I say: did I?

TOM No, you don't say anything

NAOMI Okay.

TOM I say: are you going to keep ignoring me, Asti?

NAOMI I roll my eyes.

TOM Yes, you do: you roll your eyes. I say: please yourself. I just need to get some paper.

NAOMI What do I say?

TOM The paper's on the other side of you. You say: you'll have to wait. I haven't finished collating the report for Scott.

NAOMI You'll have to wait. I haven't finished.

TOM I say: I'm in a rush actually.

NAOMI Well so am I actually.

TOM It would take you five seconds to let me get some paper.

NAOMI This report is very complicated. I have to feed the coversheets by hand.

TOM This is so petty.

NAOMI I'll be ten minutes. You can wait ten minutes.

TOM Screw you.

NAOMI Oh classy.

TOM No seriously, screw you. I've been here six years. I've worked my way up. What are you? An intern.

NAOMI It's a placement.

TOM You're an intern. That's all you are, Asti. You need to treat people with respect.

NAOMI You follow me. You snoop on my work computer. You leave me weird voicemails. And you expect me to treat you with respect?

TOM How old are you, you stuck-up bitch? Twenty?

NAOMI Tom, you don't get to talk to me like that just because I don't want to sleep with you any more.

TOM You think I want you back, Asti? Get over yourself.

NAOMI Because, Tom, you think you've got the right to try it on with every woman in the office.

TOM Well that's bullshit for a start.

NAOMI Didn't you get a warning about it?

TOM What?

NAOMI All the women in the office warned me about you.

TOM You're just saying anything now.

NAOMI We have a list. It's not just you, Tom.

TOM 'A list'!

NAOMI Yep. You. Liam. Gregg's on there.

TOM A list of what.

NAOMI Men to avoid.

TOM Bullshit.

NAOMI All the women know the rules: don't go for a drink with Tom. Don't stand too near him. / If he starts making suggestive comments –

TOM That is *bollocks*.

NAOMI - change the subject. If he touches you, move away. Don't accept compliments on your appearance or your clothes. Don't let yourself be in a room alone with him -

Beat.

TOM And I say: well Asti, you broke that rule, didn't you?

NAOMI And she says: what do you mean?

TOM And I say: look at you, in a room alone with me.

NAOMI And she says: back off, you're making me uncomfortable.

TOM And I say: oh am I making you uncomfortable standing here? What about here?

NAOMI And she says: I'll scream.

TOM And I say: there's just us here.

NAOMI And she says: get your hands off me.

TOM And I say nothing.

NAOMI And she says: stop touching me.

TOM And I say nothing.

NAOMI And she says: please, Tom, please don't.

TOM And I say nothing.

NAOMI And then she says nothing.

TOM And I say nothing.

The photocopier sound builds, juddering and thumping. It builds.

NAOMI *(very close)* Please.

TOM *(Very close, like he's whispering in our ear)* And I say: you're lucky.

Beat.

You're lucky I'm a nice guy.

NAOMI whimpers. The photocopier sound builds and then subsides.

TOM And later I get home with my laptop and I think that's enough, that's over.

NAOMI But it's not over.

TOM No it's not over. Because two days later, Doug calls me and he says they've received a complaint which will have to be investigated and I am to leave the office immediately and they'll be in touch by email.

NAOMI Is that all true? Is that what happened?

TOM Now you know everything.

NAOMI Voicemails and another complaint and

TOM Yes.

NAOMI Christ Tom.

TOM I didn't do anything.

NAOMI What?

TOM I chose not to do anything.

NAOMI You chose.

TOM I could have but I didn't.

NAOMI You could have.

TOM Yes.

NAOMI Who are you?

Beat.

TOM I don't know.

Pause.

NAOMI I don't know who you are, Tom. My Tom.

TOM Naomi.

NAOMI They talk about you. You're on a list. They have to be careful round you, around my husband.

TOM I feel like I'm two people.

NAOMI Two people?

TOM I'm a good man. I try to be a good person. But sometimes, sometimes I'm not.

NAOMI But you're not two people, Tom. You're one person, and that's worse.

TOM I'm sorry.

NAOMI Put yourself in my shoes. What would you say now?

Long pause.

TOM I'd say: Tom, this is too much to cope with right now. Maybe you should go and stay with your brother tonight, maybe for a bit. I don't know if I want to see you again.

NAOMI Yes.

TOM I'd say: I love you but I kind of hate you right now. I think you're sick.

NAOMI I wouldn't say that, Tom, because you're not sick. That's almost the worst bit. You're very ordinary. You're a disappointingly ordinary man.

TOM I love you.

NAOMI I don't know you. I don't know what you think that means.

TOM I messed up. I know I did. But it's you and me.

NAOMI I'd like to cut the skin and flesh off you. I'd like to tear your eyes out. I'd like to crack your skull open and pull your foul, disgusting brain out of your head and drop it into a bucket of bleach.

Pause.

TOM Sort of I wish you would.

NAOMI I'm going home.

TOM Naomi.

NAOMI I have to think. I have things I need to do.

TOM What are we?

NAOMI I don't know.

TOM Don't leave me.

NAOMI Don't ask me that.

TOM I'll call you tomorrow.

NAOMI Don't.

And she's gone. We hear the emptiness of an after-hours office. The sleeping computers and their fans. The internet servers twinkling in the dark. A couple of phones bleeping their messages.

End.

POLLY Thank you, actors.

Release of tension. Actors back to cis-gender!

NAOMI How did that sound?

POLLY Good, interesting. How did it feel?

TOM That was kind of fun!

NAOMI Yeah! I mean horrible but yeah.

TOM Yeah and totally not fun. And you make a horribly convincing man!

NAOMI Haha. Yeah and sometimes I sort of forgot that I was playing the wrong character, well not the *wrong* character, but / you know what I mean

TOM Yeah.

NAOMI - a sort of out-of-body experience.

TOM I liked being her and didn't like it at the same time if that makes sense.

NAOMI Yeah, exactly.

POLLY What did you think, Dan?

Pause.

Dan, you're muted.

DAN orry, I will get the hang, yeah, I mean, yeah it was interesting.

POLLY Yeah.

DAN But I would quite like to try it the way I wrote it.

NAOMI Yeah. Sure.

DAN If that's okay.

TOM Fine.

POLLY If you're alright to build on that energy, we'll reset and we'll go for a take, if that's okay.

NAOMI/TOM Sure/yes fine.

Pause. Throat clearing, scripts reset.

POLLY Okay, recording. Actors when you're ready.

End.