

# ANIMAL

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DRAMATISTS  
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INC.

# ANIMAL

## PROLOGUE

*Rachel's thoughts.*

*Very faint, distant piano music plays.*

TOM. Your knees  
RACHEL. Knees don't change.  
TOM. Maybe I've just never noticed them before.  
RACHEL. Okay yeah I'll take that, you're right (*Laughs.*) I  
do / have good knees  
TOM. Your fulcrum.  
RACHEL. That's a lever in a car.  
TOM. Oh, yeah, I meant clavicle.  
RACHEL. What's that?  
TOM. The bit that goes in, just there, above your heart,  
below your neck.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. What if I change even more?  
TOM. I'm expecting it.  
RACHEL. Forever. What if I get really fat?—  
TOM. RACHEL.  
Then I'd love you all the same.— What if my thoughts change?  
TOM. What?  
RACHEL. What if my thoughts change?  
TOM. Then good. That's what thoughts are supposed to  
do.

## ONE

*The lights snap up.*

*Rachel and Stephen are mid-session.*

*Two pens are in Stephen's pocket, a Parker and a plastic ballpoint.*

RACHEL. I take that on. I take that on board. I do. But. I find that... It's worse, actually if you say that, it's worse.

STEPHEN. There are many other people who—

RACHEL. I'm not expected to meet them am I? / Don't do that.

STEPHEN. No.

RACHEL. I don't want to do that.

STEPHEN. You don't have to

RACHEL. That's like putting someone with claustrophobia in a lift and saying it's okay because there's this whole other group of people who feel exactly the same; and don't worry they'll all be here in a minute.

*Beat.*

So, you know what? Instead of meeting them—

STEPHEN. You don't have to meet / them

RACHEL. I'm going to go / 'cause I said—

STEPHEN. You

RACHEL. —to Tom I'd come

STEPHEN.

And that's good that you did

RACHEL.

And now I've come. And I think you've seen me.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. And maybe you're magic 'cause I feel better. So all I need is the paper.

STEPHEN. What paper?

RACHEL. The certificate / the thing.

STEPHEN. I can't—

RACHEL. I'll take that now please to give to Tom, and to

work, and we can just all go back normal. Yes you can. You can sign a thing, and you can tick a box.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. I can.

RACHEL. Yeah right so—

STEPHEN. But I need to ask you some questions first.

RACHEL. You've done that.

STEPHEN. Not all of them.

*Beat.*

I need to know if, over the past two weeks, you've felt little pleasure or interest in doing things that you usually enjoy? On a scale of not at all, some days, many days, or every day Rachel, what would you say?

RACHEL. A questionnaire?

STEPHEN. It's not a questionnaire.

RACHEL. It sounds like a questionnaire.

STEPHEN. It's not as simple / as that

RACHEL. You think you can put a number on it?

STEPHEN. You can. We do. It helps.

RACHEL. What am I scoring so far?

STEPHEN. Six.

RACHEL. What's crazy?

STEPHEN. Twenty-seven.

RACHEL. How many questions?

STEPHEN. Nine in total.

RACHEL. What if I lie?

STEPHEN. Try not to.

RACHEL. Will you know?

STEPHEN. Whom will you help if you do?

*Beat.*

RACHEL. You know what's really surprising to me.

STEPHEN. What's surprising?  
 RACHEL. That there's a business here. In what you do.  
*Beat.*  
 STEPHEN. That's what you feel.  
 RACHEL. Yeah. That's what I feel.  
*Beat.*  
 'Cause, everyone's on Xanax, on Prozac, aren't they, the drug companies must be loaded / and I'm not saying that 'cause I'm jealous.  
 STEPHEN. The drug companies—  
 RACHEL. I'm saying it 'cause it's not natural is it? All of us on this stuff, this stuff, this scaffolding?  
 STEPHEN. If you think of yourself like a house / and that house is damaged.  
 RACHEL. I don't.  
 STEPHEN. You can't start with the roof. You've got to lay the foundations. And that's what the medication is for.  
 RACHEL. (Smiles.) They gave you a pen.  
 STEPHEN. I'm—(a doctor)  
 RACHEL. I know how it works. The reps, they come in. They say "have a free pen." Then they say okay, "I'm here to talk to you about this drug, the latest drug, the drug it's all about." And what is it called? Turn your pen over. There it is. Branding. Bribing. You're all doing it.  
 STEPHEN. You feel upset that your symptoms, they're not unique.  
 RACHEL. Do you have a pen?  
 STEPHEN. I'm a doctor Rachel. I need to write prescriptions.  
*Pause.*  
 RACHEL. Will you write one for me?  
*Beat.*  
 'Cause, I know I said what I said, but actually I

think I qualify. Actually I think I want the king. I think I want the one you wheel out from the vault marked "supremely fucking excellent." 'Cause if basically everyone's on it. Then why aren't I?

STEPHEN. We need to do some assessments first. We need to talk about what it is you feel is happening to you.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. I haven't been sleeping. I've been waking up in the middle of the night, not just waking up, but waking myself up. There've been weeks. Whole weeks.

STEPHEN. Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself, or harming anyone else around you?

RACHEL. That's quite a question?

STEPHEN. It is.

RACHEL. That's question two?

STEPHEN. No. That's question nine.

RACHEL. What happened to two through eight?

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. I need your answer Rachel.

RACHEL. I don't want to sit, or lie down, or think. I want to do, and buy, and eat, and shop, and gather.

STEPHEN. Is there any reason you feel / you have to?

RACHEL. To get ready for the fucking storm up ahead.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. I went out. I went to a shop and it sold everything. Which one? Tesco's? 'Cause everyone goes a bit mad in there. *(A small laugh.)*

*Beat.*

RACHEL. Oh my God. Was that a joke?

STEPHEN. It was / a

RACHEL. My God, you're trying to lighten the mood?

STEPHEN. No / I

RACHEL. When did you graduate?

STEPHEN. It's important to see the funny side.  
RACHEL. That something you learnt?  
STEPHEN. Draw a smiley face.  
RACHEL. Excuse me?  
STEPHEN. Draw something that's troubling you. Then next to  
it. A circle, a circular smiley face.  
RACHEL. Really?  
STEPHEN. Really.  
RACHEL. I didn't know I had to participate in my own therapy.

*Beat.*

Got a pen?

*Stephen passes. She reads the name embossed on the pen.*  
Effexor.

*She looks at him, shakes her head.*

*Beat.*

So. What? Go on? What's the game?  
STEPHEN. It's not a game—  
RACHEL. It's a game—  
STEPHEN. It's an exercise.  
RACHEL. I've got to think about something that's troubling  
me.  
STEPHEN. Yes.  
RACHEL. Only one?  
STEPHEN. Start small. And draw it. And next to it a smiley face.  
RACHEL. That's it?  
STEPHEN. That's it. Here. Have some / paper.  
RACHEL. I'll do it on my hand.  
STEPHEN. Don't do it on your hand that's—  
RACHEL. I'm doing it. Okay. It's drawn.  
STEPHEN. So. Now look at it.

*Rachel looks.*

How do you feel about the drawing? The thing



that was troubling you? With the smiley face next to it. Doesn't it all seem a little *less* troubling?

RACHEL. It seems...

STEPHEN. It makes you smile. Doesn't it?

RACHEL. A bit yes I suppose it does.

STEPHEN. You deflate the importance of the troublesome thing. You resuscitate your sense of humour. This is just a little exercise, it's silly and simple, but it might help you to understand that there are principles we need to work on that aren't silly, in fact they're very important. Like looking after yourself; washing and eating, we'll start with the basic, fundamental things—Have you eaten today?

RACHEL. I had breakfast.

STEPHEN. What did you have?

RACHEL. Six cups of coffee, and some speed.

*Beat.*

That's a joke. C'mon, I'm resuscitating my sense of humour.

*Stephen gives a small laugh.*

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. Rachel. You didn't answer my question before. It's important to be honest. Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself, or harming anyone else around you?

RACHEL. No. No, I'm not.

STEPHEN. Your husband was anxious / that.

RACHEL. Yeah.

STEPHEN. But you don't want to harm / yourself.

RACHEL. No.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. Many people / who

RACHEL. Don't start that again.



STEPHEN. Okay. Okay.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. Some people I see who feel as anxious as / you  
I don't feel anxious.

STEPHEN. Who feel as low—

RACHEL. I'm not low.

STEPHEN. Who are as distressed as you are Rachel, may also  
have other experiences that trouble them, I wonder  
if I can ask you a few questions / to see

RACHEL. What experiences?

STEPHEN. Hearing voices, feeling paranoid, withdrawal,  
ideas / of grandeur.

RACHEL. No.

STEPHEN. These are just routine questions, okay?

RACHEL. Okay. Yeah. No.

STEPHEN. No?

RACHEL. Yeah. No.

STEPHEN. The ultimate aim is for you to be able to stand in  
the middle of a storm, be buffeted on every side  
by the world, but remain centred.

*Beat.*

Are you still cooking—

RACHEL. Do you ask men that question?

STEPHEN. Yes, it's not a gendered question.

RACHEL. Yeah. I'm doing / that.

STEPHEN. Not just for yourself.

*Beat.*

Okay that's good. That's really good.

RACHEL. Is it?

STEPHEN. It is, but I want you to come back and see me in a  
few days. We can monitor your progress. You can  
book at the front desk.

RACHEL. I don't get my paper?

STEPHEN. No.

RACHEL. My certificate?

STEPHEN. There's not really a thing, a paper, a proof. You can technically go back to work whenever you want. You don't need a certificate for that. It's your decision. But I'm not recommending it. There's no reason to rush, to put yourself in a position of greater stress.

*Beat.*

I want you to take your time.

*Beat.*

Why don't you try, tonight, doing something nice for yourself? Something for you.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. Like what?

STEPHEN. Have a think.

RACHEL. I can't think of anything.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. Anything you want? Something comforting.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. I'm finding this a bit upsetting.

*Beat.*

It's hard to think of something just for me.

STEPHEN. What about a face-pack a masque.

RACHEL. What?

STEPHEN. A masque a / treatment—

RACHEL. Oh so you mean, put some bubbles in the bath? Dress in a white robe, little white peep-toe slippers, and a face masque, and think of smiley things?

STEPHEN. Your choice. As I say, something nice to treat yourself.

*Beat.*

RACHEL.

You want to know something they didn't teach you at school? They didn't teach you that it's women in the movies that do that, and that real women step in shit on the way home, and spend the journey doing scrape-y sideways walking to try and ditch the stench. But. Inevitably. It gets stuck in the grooves and you're actually, with all that shuffling, you're grinding it into the soles.

And then, you know what happens then? Your bags split as you're crossing the threshold, so your shopping's all rolling about in the dirt as you're kicking it in the house, with those shoes, the ones with the shit. And then you get in

*Beat.*

and there's a power cut. So you eat your dinner in the dark, after cleaning your shoes in the sink, and they're there on the counter sodden and fucked up with the memory of shit and you think, at least the shoe has its double.

*Beat.*

So now they're sat there, stinking, but smug, smug 'cause there's two. And you're just one. Until your husband comes home. And even then, laying there in the dark, the shoes have it better. 'Cause at least they're a match.

*Beat.*

Where do you buy face packs? Tesco's? Now there's an irony.

## TWO

*Rachel's thoughts.*

*Very faint, distant piano music plays.*

*The sound of a heart monitor.*

TOM.            Let's sing a song.

RACHEL.        What song? Fuck off. I'm not singing.

TOM.            Three little men in a flying saucer, flew round the world one day, they looked left and right and they didn't like the sight so one man flew away—

*Tom keeps humming the tune underneath.*

RACHEL.        That's a hideous song. They didn't like the sight?  
It's a bit dark. It's a bit existential.

*Tiny beat.*

Actually. I think it's brilliant. How does it go?

## THREE

*The lights snap up.*

*Tom and Rachel.*

*Kitchen.*

*Rachel is picking at some food. She's upbeat, trying to disguise her real feelings.*

*An Older Woman is sat in a wheelchair drinking milk from a beaker.*

TOM.            So, yeah, so he spoke to me.

*Beat.*

David spoke to me.

*Beat.*

RACHEL.        What?

TOM.            I said he spoke to me.

*The Older Woman drops the top of her beaker.*

RACHEL.        Who?

TOM. Have you been listening?

RACHEL. She'd dropped the...she needs help with the—  
*Tom picks it up and sorts the beaker through the following.*

TOM. David spoke to me—He was just there, suddenly, looking at me, he's never said a word to me before but now he's there and he's asking me how I thought the figures were—how the company was doing—

RACHEL. So, what did you say?

TOM. Not what I wanted to say. The phone rang. So I had to pick it up.

RACHEL. You should have left it.

TOM. But it's my job.

RACHEL. But he's waiting.

TOM. Look.

RACHEL. Waiting for your answer.

TOM. The phone was ringing. We could both see it. We could both hear it. So I couldn't leave it. I did try to answer him at first, and the phone was loud, sure, but look—I think he heard me, I didn't get to say everything but that first bit...It was just stupid trying to compete with the phone ringing, so—

RACHEL. He didn't.

TOM. What?

RACHEL. He didn't hear you.

*Beat.*  
*Tom laughs under his breath.*  
*Beat.*

TOM. Thanks. Thanks very much.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. It's true.

*Beat.*  
 You should have picked up the phone first. Asked

them to hold. Then answered him properly. That was an opportunity.

*Beat.*

TOM. Okay. Yeah. I know. I'm sorry my day was shit, that it was a shit story about my day. But I've asked you how it went today—why are you looking away? What? We irritate you?

RACHEL. Actually yes.

TOM. I've asked you how it went today / and you won't tell me, so—

*Rachel starts to cry.*

Don't cry. Why are you crying? Don't you think? / Talking to each other?

RACHEL. No.

TOM. So what? Sit in silence?—

RACHEL. Yeah. Yeah 'cause my day was pretty shit too.

TOM. Okay so just tell me. What you've done, what you've achieved.

RACHEL. *(Recovers.)* Achieved? I achieved not defecating on your clothes.

TOM. Stop it. That's sick. What is that? Who says that? That's not funny or or true or, that's not even funny.

RACHEL. You said funny. I achieved not defecating on your clothes.

*Beat.*

But you know, in hindsight maybe that was an error. Maybe I'll do it now / where's your jumper, here, you want to provoke me, you've not seen anything yet.

*They chase each other for the jumper, she gets it, and they fight.*

TOM. Don't do that. Fucking crazy. Stop it.

RACHEL. No. Don't look at me / like you hate me—

TOM. Lashing out again / stop it. It's not my fault.

RACHEL. I achieved not burning the house down so I suppose  
I achieved sustaining a human life. And that's a big  
thing. That's a big big thing.

*Beat.*

TOM. I just want you to tell me the truth.

RACHEL. I achieved nothing. *Nothing.*

*Beat.*

I achieved getting out of bed, Tom.

*Pause.*

TOM. But you talked to him?

*Pause. Rachel closes her eyes.*

You didn't cancel did you, 'cause if you cancelled  
then that's really bad.

RACHEL. Wait.

TOM. Look at me. I want you to look at me, so we can—

RACHEL. Wait

TOM. What?

RACHEL. Just. Stop.

TOM. Why are you closing your eyes?

RACHEL. I'm drawing.

TOM. What does that mean?

RACHEL. You know what drawing is.

TOM. I don't understand.

RACHEL. In my mind, I'm drawing you.

TOM. If this is a game, then you should explain the rules.

RACHEL. And I'm drawing your face, and your legs.

There are no rules Tom.

*Beat.*

There.

TOM. You've finished.

RACHEL. I have. I've drawn your face. And it's smiling. A big  
stick man smile / from ear to ear.



TOM. Well that's nice. My stick-man self is smiling.  
*Beat.*

RACHEL. I know you're having lots of fun at the moment. /  
 And I'm trying to be fun too

TOM. I'm not, it's work, I'm not having fun actually, I'm  
 not.

RACHEL. But I am just so tired.

TOM. I know.  
*Beat.*

RACHEL. No. You absolutely don't.  
*Beat.*

I got this.  
*Rachel takes out the face masque.*  
 It's supposed to make me feel better. I was going to  
 do it after dinner. But I think that's too late. I think  
*She rips it open.*  
 I think I need it now.  
*She slathers it all over her face.*

TOM. Jesus Rachel.  
*She sits, and starts to pick at the food again.*  
*Beat.*  
*Tom's mortified. But doesn't want to show it for her sake.*  
*Rachel eats.*  
*Tom watches. This can take some time. He's struggling with*  
*what the right thing to do is. It's imperceptible.*  
*Beat.*  
*He leaves. He takes the Older Woman with him.*  
*(To the Older Woman.)* Come on. Let's go and  
 watch some TV.  
*Beat.*

RACHEL. *(Shouts after them.)* She shouldn't watch telly after  
 6—That stings. Ouch.

*She closes her eyes.*

Ow. Typical. Shit. Great. Shit.

*She rubs her eyes. We can hear the sound of the TV from the next room.*

Tom. Tom! I can't open my eyes. Can you hear me?  
(Laughs.) Great. Brilliant. Just my luck.

*A Young Man enters the room.*

Thank God. I thought you couldn't hear me. I can't open my eyes. They really sting. Fucking Tesco's. (Laughs.) I'm sorry about before. I can be cruel, and I know I'm hurting you. But I love you. I do. It's both. It's not a binary thing.

*Beat.*

It's good about your boss. It really is. I just don't want to see your face when he promotes someone else and not you, 'cause he will you know, he's a shark.

*Beat.*

I went. He says he doesn't need to see me again. Clean bill of health. I'm out of the woods. Said, me in the shop that was just normal, normal levels of anxiety, just normal.

*Beat.*

Are you in here? Did you hear what I said? I can't open my eyes or they'll sting, I tried and it hurts. I might be allergic. Ironically it's the most unrelaxing thing I have ever done. (Laughs.) I can't think of anything worse to be honest. Will you help me to the sink, and wash it off?

*Beat.*

Talk to me.

*The Young Man goes to Rachel, close, and kisses her.*

*Rachel kisses him. Realises. Struggles free.*

Urrr. Ahh. Ahhhhh. Stay away. Keep away.

DAN. Okay.  
RACHEL. Oh my God you're not—  
DAN. I know.  
RACHEL. You kissed me?!  
DAN. I know—  
RACHEL. Stop saying I know. What are you a psychopath?  
Don't answer that.  
DAN. This stuff smells great.  
RACHEL. What if I hadn't opened my eyes?  
DAN. Have you a got a towel?  
RACHEL. I mean it! Breaking and entering is one thing  
but—(rape)

*Beat.*

What you've done is serious. My eyes hurt, and  
my heart's a bit...But I know you're not going to  
kill me. Are you?—  
DAN. No.  
RACHEL. No. 'Cause you'd have done that already wouldn't  
you? If you were going to kill me. You would have  
already done it wouldn't you?  
DAN. Yes.  
RACHEL. Well then. That's. Good. That's—My husband is  
just in there and he's massive. Huge. I mean it. I'd  
leave now before he comes and—  
DAN. But you can deal with me on your own can't you?  
RACHEL. Yes. Yes.  
DAN. I like you.  
RACHEL. What?  
DAN. You're a good kisser.  
RACHEL. You should leave now.

*He takes his T-shirt off, he wipes his face.*

DAN. My name's Dan. By the way.

*He offers her his T-shirt.*

You want it?

RACHEL

No.

DAN.

I think you do.

*She tries not to take it, but has no choice. She takes it and wipes her face.*

You need to get Yale locks. And a door bar, steel rod, runs straight down the seal. That's the only thing we can't break through. Out of interest. I wouldn't have harmed you. I mean I won't. Do you want a cigarette?

RACHEL

No.

*Beat.*

Yes. But not from you, 'cause you, I think you should leave my house now.

DAN.

I like maths, and mechanics. Forensics—

RACHEL

Am I allowed to say I don't care?

DAN.

—the small. The detail. Of things. I break in. That's what I do. I can get in anywhere. That's my challenge. To see how it's done. Then I feed it back. Give the pitfalls, loopholes...

It's a service. It's how I get paid, usually, for the / knowledge.

RACHEL

Are you asking me for money?

DAN.

You could pay me in another kiss if you'd like.

RACHEL

Here

*She offers him back the T-shirt.*

You're green. By the way. You've still got all that shit on your face. You should wipe it better.

*He puts his T-shirt back on.*

DAN.

You like me.

RACHEL

I don't.

DAN.

You do. It's chemical. We work.

*Beat.*

RACHEL.

I think you should, actually get out now. I could report you to the police. This is not acceptable.

DAN.

It's instinct. Animal. Pheromones I think they call them. A lust. You smelt me.

DAN.

You liked it. It's a feeling.

RACHEL.

I'm not having this conversation with you.

DAN.

Just admit it. And I'll leave.

RACHEL.

I didn't know it was you.

DAN.

Doesn't matter if you did or didn't. You leant into me.

RACHEL.

I didn't lean.

DAN.

You liked it. I felt it. You leant. It was new. You were surprised.

*Beat.*

Okay. Miss—

RACHEL.

Mrs.

DAN.

Mrs. I'll invoice you. I'll pop round tomorrow. Or you could just kiss me now?

RACHEL.

*Get out.*

DAN.

That can only mean one thing.

RACHEL.

What?

DAN.

That you want to see me again tomorrow?

*He smiles.*

## FOUR

*Rachel's thoughts.*

*Very faint, distant, piano music plays.*

TOM.

I'm going to sleep in the lounge.

RACHEL.

Yeah, well, you should.

TOM.

I got five hours last night—

RACHEL. Lucky you.  
TOM. It's not a competition.  
RACHEL. It is. Five definitely beats zero.

*Tiny beat.*

We used to list our favourite things about each other. You liked my knees.  
TOM. Yeah well, now I don't, 'cause all you do is fidget and kick me.  
RACHEL. We never kiss anymore.  
TOM. What?  
RACHEL. We never kiss.  
TOM. I'm asleep Rachel.

*Beat.*

I'm sleeping. I'm sleepwalking to the sofa.

## FIVE

*The lights snap up.  
Rachel and Stephen.  
In Stephen's office.*

RACHEL. I was given a penny. In a box. When she came back with us. Supposed to be lucky or something. I thought: Thanks. We're going to need it. Tom was delighted. Everyone under one roof. Triumphant. I just thought. Where's the amphetamines, MDMA, where's the...anything... Aspirin.

*Beat.*

Now I'm just a carer.

*Beat.*

He loves his mother. I hated mine. He's better. Why doesn't he do it?

*Beat.*

So then I'm crying at counters, weeping into the arms of the checkout girls, not 'cause I'm sad, or depressed or—'cause I hate myself.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. Have you heard about circadian rhythms Rachel? That our body is informed by light and dark—

RACHEL. What do you mean light and dark?

STEPHEN. How affected we are by light. Daylight. If you don't get enough good-quality sleep at nighttime, it can lead to more than just tiredness. Do you have curtains, in your bedroom?

RACHEL. I essentially just told you I want to kill my mother-in-law, and you're talking about haberdashery.

*Beat.*

You've seen Tom haven't you?

STEPHEN. We had a session yes.

RACHEL. I told him you didn't want to see me again. That I was better.

STEPHEN. You lied.

RACHEL. Yeah. But I forgot you were doing follow-ups. So. Busted.

*Beat.*

I need a cigarette.

*Beat.*

Are you getting this?

STEPHEN. I am.

RACHEL. But you're not writing. Where's your pen?

STEPHEN. I'd prefer to listen, rather than write. It means I can pay you the fullest attention.

RACHEL. That sounds very practical.

STEPHEN. It is.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. If I were a stranger and we were out, and there



was a bar and I was sat there, and I said, I begged you, I begged, "Please would you write this down. Write down what I'm saying, because that way I'll know there's a record, a template, a graph, a line. That someone is collating it and collecting it, and shuffling it and ordering it and you, you're really hearing me."

Would you do it?

*Beat.*

*Stephen gets his pen.*

*Beat.*

STEPHEN.

I'd like to know how you've been since we last met, Rachel.

RACHEL.

But you know from him.

STEPHEN.

There's a lot he can't know. He can see, he can assess, care, but he can't know.

RACHEL.

And you can?

STEPHEN.

If you don't mind me saying, you're a little more unsettled today, a little more manic / maybe?

RACHEL.

Manic?

STEPHEN.

Yes.

RACHEL.

Are you allowed to say that?

STEPHEN.

A bit more excitable, excited, maybe?

RACHEL.

I tried out your thing.

*Beat.*

I was having an argument with Tom. Did he tell you? I drew him in my head, and it wasn't that fun or funny to be honest, neither of us were smiling.

*Beat.*

He was a bit—

*Beat.*

He looked sad.

*Beat.*

Like I was lost to him.

*Stephen: Pause.*

You know you go on mute when you do that, don't you? Like there's a button on a remote control and I accidentally sat on it.

*Beat.*

That, or you're having a stroke or something.

*He starts to write something on his pad.*

Don't write that. Please don't write that.

*He keeps writing.*

Okay.

*She gets up; she puts on her coat during the following.*

You know what. I've broken it—

STEPHEN. It's not broken,

RACHEL. and there's an atmosphere / now—

STEPHEN. There isn't an atmosphere. I promise. You've brought up some images, and topics that I'd like to / discuss.

RACHEL. Your pen still has a lid on, I noticed that last time.  
Not your plastic ballpoint the one you got from the medical reps, but the shiny silver one. That one. In your pocket. It has a lid. And your briefcase closes.

STEPHEN. Yes.

RACHEL. Not lying open stuffed to capacity at your side. But closed. Upright. Like a general.

STEPHEN. And why do you find that significant?

RACHEL. The other doctors, I see them, when they're running about, busy. Whole lives play out in that waiting room. I see them on their way in, eating their lunch walking, their briefcases full of case files and old sandwiches.

But here, there's order.

I don't think you have a lot of files in your bag.

STEPHEN. Maybe that's a good thing. Maybe when you get more experienced, you get more jaded.

RACHEL. Do you equate order with naivety?

STEPHEN. —

*Beat.* You think order can't exist alongside wisdom?

RACHEL. I very much doubt what wisdom is. When it comes to this. Don't you think?

*Beat.*

I brought back the penny, in its box. And I looked at it for a really long time. And I remembered that when I was little my mum took me to a place, with a tower.

*Beat.*

She said it would be an adventure, and it was. We climbed all the way to the top, we leant over the edge, and she brought out a penny.

*Beat.*

"This penny, this tiny penny here, it's harmless, look," and she hid it behind her ear, she made it do a little dance, she let me touch it and trace the man's nose, but then she said, throw it over the edge, let nature do its work, let gravity hit its metal sides, and it's lethal. This penny given the right circumstances can kill.

*Beat.*

I'm worried I'm the penny Doctor.

*Tiny beat.*

I found this. On my phone, and I don't know what it means. I can't remember if I've heard it before and forgotten? Or...

*She plays the message on the mobile; it's from Tom, he's raging.*

TOM. "Do you think this is game? DO YOU THINK THIS IS A FUCKING GAME? Where are you?

You left her, you fucking left her. I just told you to get out, to go out the house, but I meant both of you. I meant *take her with you*. Just...call me... tell me you're okay. Please. Call me."

STEPHEN. Why don't you sit down?

*She stays standing but gets out a packet of cigarettes.*

RACHEL. Mind if I smoke?

*She lights up, and takes a puff. Tiny beat.*

I know you do, by the way. I know it's against the rules. This is a medical building, so it's probably even illegal. You writing that down?

*Beat.*

What's there to write?

*Beat.*

"She smokes."

*Beat.*

Femme fatal. Isn't it? Doesn't it? Imply?

*Beat.*

Imagine. They used to say smoking was good for your health like apples. That's why I don't eat apples, 'cause one day they're just gonna do a 180 and go "oh yeah you know that 'apple a day keeps the doctor away' thing, well turns out the doctor's a cunt, and apples give you cancer."

*Beat.*

So I'm just going to keep smoking. At least I know what I'm going to get.

*Beat.*

You're just letting me speak. But there's a plan. Isn't there? Tell me there's a plan.

*Beat.*

I might just have another / cig

*Stephen removes the cigarettes.*

STEPHEN. Why don't I keep these for now?

RACHEL. Why? You want one?

*She smiles at her own joke.*

*Pause.*

*She decides to stay, she takes off her coat, but she doesn't sit.*

STEPHEN. Would you like to take your hat off too?

RACHEL. Why?

STEPHEN. Because, I'm wondering what's wrong with your hair?

RACHEL. Nothing.

STEPHEN. Then why the hat?

RACHEL. What's wrong with my hat?

STEPHEN. You were wearing it last time.

RACHEL. Yes.

STEPHEN. You never took it off.

RACHEL. No.

STEPHEN. How long have you been wearing it?

RACHEL. Is that important?

STEPHEN. It might be.

RACHEL. It's just a hat.

STEPHEN. When we last spoke, you said, it started in a shop. Were you wearing it then?

RACHEL. Yes. No. I don't know.

STEPHEN. You said you'd been shopping. That day. You said the shop was very big. You gave the impression it sold everything—

RACHEL. Electrics, food, photos, and animals, right there, creatures, real, living, breathing, rabbits, cats, dogs. I mean it, and there were these fish, these fish who were launching themselves at the passersby, like they'd evolved somehow. One of them literally flew out of the barrel, the, what do you call it the—

STEPHEN. Tank.

RACHEL. Yes, tank. That was the moment...where...

*Beat.*

He flew out of the tank into the air, and landed right on top of the make-up counter. Flapping and splashing in the blusher, and the more he flaps the more he's sinking in this gooey-pink quicksand. And he's panicked. And bewildered. Have you ever seen an animal bewildered? It's horrific. He knows he's dying. And he's looking right at me.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. That sounds horrible. It must have really frightened you.

RACHEL. It didn't frighten me. Don't you see? He stared right at me. Accusing me. Like he knew me.

STEPHEN. It must be very confusing, and disturbing, to feel sad / and in pain like the fish.

RACHEL. Sad? He was fucking dying. He wasn't sad. He was exhausted. He was tired of a world that punishes you for wanting more, and drowning you when you dare to think outside of the...tank.

STEPHEN. I think your story is real, and powerful. It must be very difficult to have identified with this image of a fish, trapped in a tank, not content going round and round anymore, but propelled.

RACHEL. Yes.

*Beat.*

STEPHEN. I want to talk about your hat.

RACHEL. You do?

STEPHEN. Yes.

RACHEL. My hat?

STEPHEN. Yes.

RACHEL. You don't think the fish is...I don't know, remarkable in some way?

STEPHEN. I think it made a big impact on you yes.

RACHEL.  
STEPHEN.  
RACHEL.  
STEPHEN.

But you'd prefer to talk about the hat?  
I would.  
What about my hat, do you find, significant?  
Well, Why don't you try not wearing it next time,  
and we'll go from there.

## SIX

*Rachel's thoughts.*  
*Very faint, distant, piano music plays.*

RACHEL.

Do you ever have those days where you hear some music, see a man doing a back flip in the park, an artist sketching. And it takes your breath away. And you think, stupidly you think, I can do that. I can do all of that, if I just picked up that violin, or that paintbrush, or ran wildly into that jump, by some miracle I'd be able to do it. Without any practice or training, suddenly I'd be able to do it all. I had that thought today.

*Beat.*

TOM.  
RACHEL.  
TOM.

You bought into something here.  
I did.  
And you have to live with the consequences.  
I am



## SEVEN

*The lights snap up.*

*Kitchen.*

*Rachel is finessing a proposal/lecture, putting on high heels, make-up, sorting papers all at once, and all in the wrong order. She's busy, in a rush throughout.*

DAN. You're beautiful.  
RACHEL. Stop it. I'm busy.  
DAN. I'll just watch you then.

*Pause.*

RACHEL. This can't be interesting to you?

*Pause.*

I mean it. I've got a job to do. In fact I've got a million. I'm not joking. After this I've got nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine to go, and I'm late. I'm going to be late. So I'm not entertaining you.

DAN. You're an Amazonian.

RACHEL. Do you even know what that means?

DAN. Yeah.

RACHEL. It means strong and muscular and—Did you actually mean old?

DAN. No. I meant sort of wise.

RACHEL. *(Laughs.)* Wise? You have no idea. Wise isn't letting you in. Letting you in means I'm an adulteress.

DAN. It was just a kiss.

RACHEL. I didn't mean to my husband, I meant to my psychiatrist. I haven't told him.

DAN. You don't need him. You're better. Don't see him again. You're going back to work. Look at you. You look great.

RACHEL. Amazonian.

DAN. Exactly.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. But what if I need him. If it gets too much.

DAN. I'll do it.

RACHEL. What will you say?

DAN. I'll say...I'll say—does he have an accent?

RACHEL. It's posh.

DAN. I'll say "you're lonely. And I'm excellent."

RACHEL. *(Laughs.)* That's your diagnosis?

DAN. Any good?

RACHEL. It's quite accurate actually.

DAN. What about me?

RACHEL. You?

DAN. Analyse me... What am I?

RACHEL. I think...

I think you cut your hair.

DAN. What?

RACHEL. You did that for me.

DAN. Yeah.

RACHEL. You look good.

*Beat.*

DAN. Want a cigarette?

*She takes one.*

RACHEL. Just one.

*She lights it, inhales.*

I should stop this. But it's a release you know.

*She unzips her workbag; she exhales the smoke into it and re-zips it.*

That's sick. Isn't it? But my husband doesn't know  
I smoke.

DAN. He does.

RACHEL. Why would you say that?

DAN. 'Cause you stink and this place is a dump.

RACHEL. Hey that's rude that's really rude. It's my home.

DAN. Yeah, but it's going to the dogs.

RACHEL. No.

DAN. Just admit it.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. It's going to the dogs, but I don't know if the dogs would take it. They'd sniff it, and walk away. Like it's rotten. Disconcerting. Like something's hiding in the walls. And it's lurking there saying, what if you've made all the wrong choices?

DAN. You're going to fuck things up today.

RACHEL. That's cruel.

DAN. People like you shouldn't have children.

RACHEL. Where is this coming from?

DAN. I feel that, women like you shouldn't have children at all really.

RACHEL. Well that's good 'cause I don't.

DAN. Vacillating. Morally vacant—

*Rachel slaps him.*

You cross? You angry? You got the rage.

RACHEL. Yeah. 'Cause you're a prick.

DAN. Violence never taught anyone anything.

RACHEL. I may look tired and up against it, but when I want to be, I'm magic. So I'm going back to work today. No matter what you say. I'm going. And I'm scared but that's good, exhilarating, and free, all the things I should feel as a working...as a worker. And when I get back home tonight, you are not going to be here.

DAN. If you throw me out, I'll just break back in and hide in your walls, like you said, and all your

stuff—all your fairy lights and scented candles wouldn't make things better 'cause you'd feel it, you'd think it, but you'd never really know.

RACHEL. Are you threatening me?

DAN. I feel sorry for you. Because. The problem you're facing is that despite everything I have a *grandeur*—

RACHEL. (*Laughs.*) You've got to be kidding—

DAN. A spark of greatness, charisma. I've got power. I don't need to be patronised. Be kept around as a bit of raw life blood for a middle-aged, bored—

RACHEL. Say "wife." Go on. Say it? Say it and I will claw off your face. I'm not looking for comment. For judgement. Not from you. Not from you.

DAN. Why? 'Cause I'm just / *just*

RACHEL. Yeah. You're *just*—

*He grabs her head.*

DAN. NO. I'm so much more. I've been waking up in the middle of the night lately, not just waking up, but waking *myself* up. Screaming like those women you see on TV in grief, at the roadside, a dead child in their arms. Animal. Reptilian. Horrible. And you know what? I started to pray. To a God. Anyone that's up there. To say hear me. Hear me now. I've gone a long way to prove that I don't need anybody. Right? But now. Right now. I do.

OLDER WOMAN. MAAAA. MAAAAA.

DAN. Jesus.

*He lets Rachel go.*

What the hell is that?

OLDER WOMAN. AAAA. MAAAAA.

RACHEL. I thought she was asleep—

DAN. Who—

RACHEL. —she's supposed to be in bed—

DAN. Fuck sake. Is there someone else here?

RACHEL. Maybe she'll go back down.

OLDER WOMAN. AHHH AHHHH.

RACHEL. I better get her. She can't walk.

*She leaves and comes back on immediately with the Older Woman in a wheelchair.*

DAN. She's shivering.

RACHEL. Well she shouldn't be. It's not cold.

DAN. She lives here?

RACHEL. Yeah.

DAN. I thought we were alone.

RACHEL. Yeah well—

DAN. Scared the shit out of me man.

*The Older Woman tries to grab Rachel.*

RACHEL. What are you... Stop it. Are you cold? You better put a jumper on.

You want a jumper?

*Rachel opens a cupboard and takes out a jumper.*

DAN. Is she alright?

RACHEL. I don't know. Here. Take this one.

*She places the jumper on her lap.*

*The Older Woman looks at it.*

Put it on.

*The Older Woman drops/throws the jumper.*

Don't throw it. If you don't like it, give it back.

*The Older Woman looks at it more closely.*

*(To Dan.)* She drives me mad.

DAN. Does she speak?

RACHEL. To herself sometimes, but no not really...it's hard.

*The Older Woman starts making a noise to herself.*

For God's sake. Do I have to do everything?

*Beat.*

Okay. Okay. Here. Give me your arm. One. Where's your hand gone?

*She pulls it through the armhole.*

Oh. There it is.

*The Older Woman laughs.*

Give me your other one. Two. Oh. Where's your hand gone?

*She pulls it through the armhole.*

Oh. There it is.

*Beat.*

No? Okay. Hand number two wasn't funny?

Well. I tried. And you're warm now. So. That's good.

DAN. Shall we go out then, we could go for a walk.

RACHEL. We can't.

DAN. What?

RACHEL. We can't leave her.

DAN. You mean you can't ever leave without—

*The Older Woman tries to get Rachel's attention.*

I thought you were going to work? Were you going to take her?

RACHEL. *(To the Older Woman.)* What?! I could hit you sometimes.

*The Older Woman starts trying to take off the jumper.*

STOP!

DAN. Let's go. Come on. Take her with us for a walk then—

RACHEL. Yeah but I actually think she's tired.

DAN. She doesn't look tired.

RACHEL. But if she doesn't sleep now, she'll get irritable. Whining all day. Do weird things. *(To Older Woman.)* Do you want to go to bed?

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

Ow.

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

Don't push me.

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

I said don't push me.

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

DAN. You should stop her doing that.

RACHEL. You want a fight do you? A tantrum, yeah?

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

You love it don't you? Thrive on it? You fuck, you fucking—

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

Cow.

*The Older Woman slaps her.*

You can provoke me as much as you want. But I'm not rising to your bait.

*The Older Woman points to a cupboard.*

You've eaten. You've already eaten.

(*To Dan.*) She has.

DAN. Yeah.

RACHEL. What do you want? This?

*She holds up a can.*

No. Okay.

This?

*She holds up a can.*

Heinz. Okay Heinz. But you had your lunch. I gave you lunch. And technically, you're still supposed to be asleep. But you want soup. For some reason today. You want Heinz soup. Alright. You win. You win because I don't care anymore. Okay? You win. But it's full of sugar. And you can't have sugar. Or



you'll die. Or something. Soon as possible I hope.  
But you want Heinz soup, so you'll have it.  
DAN. Where's your husband? / Doesn't he help?  
RACHEL. But then it's straight back to bed. No fussing.  
OLDER WOMAN. You hate me.

*A moment. They look at the Older Woman—*

DAN. I thought you said—  
RACHEL. Yeah. Well maybe she does talk sometimes. I don't know.

*Rachel tips the soup roughly into a bowl, puts a spoon in it, and puts it on the table.*

*There.*

*The Older Woman tries it. Doesn't like it. Picks up the bowl and starts spilling it everywhere.*

*Christ sake.*

*The Older Woman throws her spoon.*

*Rachel picks it up—gives it back. Sees the Older Woman spill her soup.*

*Oh don't spill it.*

*The Older Woman throws her spoon.*

*Rachel picks it up—gives it back.*

*The Older Woman throws her spoon.*

*Rachel picks up the spoon and force-feeds her. Aggressively. All of it. Spoon by spoon as she struggles. This goes on for quite a while.*

*You spiteful. Spoilt. Spoilt. Spoilt.*

*You can be a real bitch, do you know that?*

*She stops. Looks at the Older Woman, who's upset and worried. At Dan, who's standing at the back of the room, just watching.*

*Oh my God.*

*Beat.*

*I don't know what I'm doing. I'm sorry. I don't know what I'm doing.*

*She cries.*

Oh no no no no no.

*The Older Woman starts trying to take off her trousers.*

*Pause.*

DAN. I should go.

RACHEL. Yeah.

*He does. Rachel picks up the Older Woman's trousers.*

You need help?

Come on.

Come on then. You need a change? Are you wet?

You want these off?

*Tom comes in.*

TOM. What's going on? What happened with the soup?  
She okay?

RACHEL. Yeah. Yes. I didn't hear you. You just got back?

TOM. Has she been wet for long?

RACHEL. I don't know Tom. I didn't time it. I don't have a  
buzzer and a stopwatch. Don't judge me. It's not  
that bad. / Don't stand there and judge me.

TOM. Isn't it? Look at the place.

RACHEL. You come in. You've not been here and you don't  
see that for the rest of day, we paint, press flowers  
/ do baking.

TOM. Tell me what happened with the soup.

RACHEL. What does it look like?

TOM. Armageddon.

*Beat.*

Why are you dressed for work?

## EIGHT

*Rachel's thoughts.*  
*Very faint, distant, piano music plays.*

STEPHEN. Think of something nice.

TOM and RACHEL. *Three little men*

RACHEL. Okay.

TOM and RACHEL. *in a flying saucer*

OLDER WOMAN. aaaa

TOM. Do you think this is a game?—

TOM and RACHEL. *flew round the world*

OLDER WOMAN. Maaa

TOM and RACHEL. *one day*

TOM. DO YOU THINK THIS IS A FUCKING  
GAME?—

STEPHEN. It's a key moment—

TOM and RACHEL. *They looked left and right*

OLDER WOMAN. MAAAA

RACHEL. How many particles in space?

TOM. I'm calling someone.—

DAN. Ten

STEPHEN. There's a view that this state you find yourself in is  
just a legitimate response to the world.

TOM and RACHEL. *But they didn't like the sight*

OLDER WOMAN. MAAA

DAN. I hadn't finished—ten quadrillion—

STEPHEN. When a baby learns to operate—

DAN. Ten quadrillion, vigintillion—

OLDER WOMAN. MAA

STEPHEN. to experience the world, it will find that it's dan-  
gerous but predictable in that danger.

TOM. ...You're going to sort this out.  
 STEPHEN. and through that discovery, it's managing.  
 OLDER WOMAN. MAAA  
 RACHEL. Tom?  
 TOM and RACHEL. *So one man flew away*  
 OLDER WOMAN. MAAA  
 STEPHEN. You're managing too—  
 DAN. One hundred thousand quadrillion vigintillion  
 atoms.  
 STEPHEN. You're managing the world.

## NINE

*The lights snap up.*

*A park.*

*Rachel, Older Woman, and Tom.*

TOM. I brought your wallet, your phone, your keys...  
 RACHEL. I left them behind.  
 TOM. Which is why I—  
 RACHEL. On purpose.  
 TOM. But you haven't even brought her food with you.  
 RACHEL. She doesn't need to eat all the time.  
 TOM. And if she got hungry, you wouldn't have had the  
 money to buy her anything.  
 RACHEL. We'd have gone feral.  
 TOM. This isn't a joke. Come on, what's happening here?  
 It's seven o'clock in the morning.  
 RACHEL. She woke up early.  
*Beat.*  
 TOM. Do I need to call him?  
 RACHEL. —

- TOM. It's seven in the morning. I wake up. You're not there. Nor is she. Your wallet's on the counter so are your keys. What am I supposed to think?
- RACHEL. That you sleep too long, you'll lose your family.
- TOM. You're punishing me for sleeping?
- RACHEL. How did you find me?
- TOM. There's only one park.
- RACHEL. I could've gone to a café?
- TOM. The cafés don't have accessibility / for—
- RACHEL. My life is that predictable. I walk out on you and like a bad smell I can't lose you.
- TOM. Is that what you're doing?
- RACHEL. I don't know Tom, why don't you work it out for yourself.
- TOM. Is she okay?
- RACHEL. She's great. It's an adventure. My mum took me on them all the time.
- TOM. I brought her hat. You left her hat.
- (To Older Woman, putting her hat on.) Here you go. That's better.
- RACHEL. She was fine.
- TOM. It's bright sunlight, and it's high in the sky, so I don't want her head to burn.
- RACHEL. She was fine. You're fine aren't you?
- OLDER WOMAN. Ma-Ma.
- Rachel laughs.*
- TOM. Why are you laughing?
- RACHEL. She keeps calling for Ma-Ma.
- TOM. Why is that funny?
- RACHEL. It's just silly. Look at her. She's calling for her mummy. (To Older Woman.) Your mummy died a long time ago.
- TOM. I'm calling the police.

RACHEL. Why, I didn't kill her.  
 TOM. Are you coming home with me, or not?  
 RACHEL. You're all about calling in other people to do your  
 dirty work aren't you?  
 TOM. If I need to.  
 RACHEL. Is that a threat? Why are you escalating this? It's  
 ridiculous. Like what? I've abducted her? It's a  
 walk in the park.  
 TOM. I need to know that she's okay.  
 RACHEL. She's excellent. She had tomato soup for lunch,  
 dinner, and breakfast. She's buzzing. Come on  
 let's just put her on the swings and then go home  
 TOM. She's not going on the swings.  
 RACHEL. Why not? She loves them. It's like crack to her.  
 TOM. She's been on them before?  
 RACHEL. Yeah loads of times.  
 TOM. But it's dangerous.  
 RACHEL. Yeah, if you could die from having fun, yeah it's  
 lethal.  
 TOM. I'm saying it's not sensible, I'm saying it's not right  
 she's / too (fragile)

*Rachel loses it.*

RACHEL. I look after her all the time. I know what she likes,  
 and when she likes it. You want a say, then you do  
 more. You clean her arse. You bathe her when  
 she's wriggling and biting. You deal with her when  
 she wakes up at twelve, at two, at four, at six. You  
 make her meals every day and cut off the crusts,  
 the bad bits, the pips, the rind. Or. Wait. No. You  
 go to work. You leave. Every day. Get your coffee  
 from the man in the jazzy little coffee cart, pick  
 up the paper, stroll in, while I'm struggling with  
 the shit, and the tears. So tell me not to put her on  
 the swings.

*Beat.*

Or call the police. Say my wife and I are having a conflict of interest. She came for a walk. She wants to use the swings. They'll say who's the responsible adult here and we'll say well, my wife is the main carer—

TOM.

Who's currently having treatment for—

RACHEL.

TAKE HER. Take her home then.

*Beat.*

Just take her home.

## TEN

*Rachel's thoughts.*

*Very faint, distant, piano music plays.*

*The sound of a heart monitor.*

RACHEL.

(Singing.) "One little man in a flying saucer, flew round the world one day. He looked left and right / but he didn't like the sight—"

LITTLE GIRL.

"but he didn't like the sight so one man flew away."

## ELEVEN

*Night. Rachel and Tom in bed. The light is out.*

*Rachel gasps.*

TOM.

It's okay. It's okay. I'm here.

RACHEL.

I'm scared.

TOM.

I know. I'm here.

RACHEL.

You came back from the sofa.

TOM.

I did. It's more comfortable it's like Siberia / in there.

RACHEL.

Don't joke / don't.



TOM.  
RACHEL.

Why?

You won't sleep in here. I'm too noisy. You hate me. I kick you.

TOM.  
RACHEL.

It's okay. I don't care. I'm staying. I don't hate you. Help me sleep. Please help me sleep. Don't let her come for me.

TOM.

Okay. Okay. It's okay. Shush. Shush. Shush. Shush. Shuushh. Shuuush.

RACHEL.  
TOM.

Okay?

Okay.

Do you think tomorrow, Rachel, we can talk in the light.

RACHEL.  
TOM.

What do you mean in the light?

I mean in the day. Not just like animals in the dark, snatched moments, out of dreaming, between bed—

RACHEL.  
TOM.

We do talk in the day.

I mean come out with me.

RACHEL.  
TOM.

Okay...

Okay?

RACHEL.  
TOM.

Okay. Maybe.

You're sure?

RACHEL.  
TOM.

I'll think about it.

A date.

*Beat.*

RACHEL.  
TOM.

Your feet. By the way.

Yeah? *(Laughs.)* My feet?

RACHEL.

Yeah. Your feet.

## TWELVE

*The lights snap up.  
Stephen's office.*

STEPHEN. Can you tell me what happened?

RACHEL. I can draw it. If you want, I can draw it? But I can't say it.

STEPHEN. Well let me just.

*His pen, which has been clipped to his white shirt, under his jacket, has leaked all over his pocket. He exhales in anger.*

RACHEL. Shafted.

STEPHEN. Excuse me?

RACHEL. Turns out the pen's no good?

STEPHEN. Yes, it does seem so.

RACHEL. Got a job to get that stain out now

STEPHEN. I do.

RACHEL. Tissue?

STEPHEN. *(Smiles.)* No thank you. I'll just go and get myself cleaned up.

RACHEL. I definitely won't look in your briefcase.

*He smiles, and goes.*

*She sits in his chair.*

*She discovers a file.*

*She reads.*

"Mrs. G is multi-medicated, and has been referred to me with..."

*She reads further on.*

"...She recently explained that she was 'terrified' to go to sleep because during a recurrent nightmare she was pursued by..."

*She reads further on,*

"As a result her anxiety has reached a level of vivid intensity..."

*A ten-year-old girl appears. Rachel's looking down at the notes.*

All clean now?

*Rachel looks up and gasps.*

LITTLE GIRL. Stained, I think. You'll see it there forever. Ingrained. My shirt may as well be blue. But it doesn't matter.

*Beat.*

I never normally leave. I'm sorry. I can see that it's upset you... You've found my notes.

RACHEL. Who's Mrs. G?

LITTLE GIRL. How far did you get?

RACHEL. Vivid intensity.

LITTLE GIRL. I see.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. Things seem to be going very badly with Mrs. G. Don't they?

*Beat.*

LITTLE GIRL. My chair.

*They return to their own chairs, in their correct places.*

Thank you.

*Pause.*

What about the file, may I have it back too?

RACHEL. I want to keep it.

LITTLE GIRL. Why don't we agree that you'll close the file. But you can keep it safe, while we talk. How about that?

*Rachel closes the file. But keeps it with her.*

You were going to draw me a picture, before, you were going to—

RACHEL. Yes.

LITTLE GIRL. Would you still like to?

RACHEL. I don't need to.

LITTLE GIRL. I see.  
RACHEL. What do you see?

*Beat.*  
LITTLE GIRL. I see you Rachel. What do you see?

RACHEL. I see something that scares me.

LITTLE GIRL. What scares you?

RACHEL. A little girl.

*Beat.*

Is it religious?

Am I having a religious vision? Maybe you're me?

*Beat.*

Or maybe you're regret?

*Beat.*

Something wasted? I'm swimming. I'm stuck.  
And it's got to stop.

*She starts to rip the folder fast, into little bits.*

If you stand still for too long, you'll stay like that.

*She rips. She stops. She's remembered something.*

That's what my mum used to tell me.

*Beat.*

Oh my God. It was terrifying.

*Beat.*

Every night. Hearing about this man, this man who was very, very, fast. He's rushing around, has no time for anything meaningful, but something happens to him, I can't remember what and after this... moment—he goes the other way, tries to push back, to burrow back in time. He really thinks about it. Breaks down the data. He starts to count everything, steps, mouthfuls, blinks, and take double the time now, triple the time, with practice, with painstaking practice, and will—he trains himself to go slow. He gets obsessive, resisting

impulse, squashing reflex, respiratory, heartrate, and just on this slow burn, this pilot light, he just exists, living out of time, out of sync, in anti-gravity. He takes a month to eat breakfast. A year to blink. A decade to walk to the bottom of his garden.

*Beat.*

And he's changing into this pale-eyed, wiry-haired, *thing*.

*Beat.*

"To this day, you can still see him making his journey through cornfields and countryside"—My mum's voice was far more scary than this, I'm not doing it right—"all the while lamenting, with his arms up to God, why he couldn't have learnt balance. Not too fast. Not too slow. Just right."

LITTLE GIRL.  
RACHEL.

I see. It was a scarecrow.

No. You don't, you don't see. The horror of it. What he's doing. Punishing himself, reconstructing actions, unpicking it all to find the precise moment where it all went wrong.

*Beat.*

Why?

*Beat.*

Why?

*Beat.*

What happened to his wife?

## THIRTEEN

*Rachel's thoughts.*

*Very faint, distant, piano music plays.*

RACHEL.

Did you always know you'd marry me? At school? I knew I'd marry you. For better or worse. I said to you "I love your eyes." You said "I love your wrists." "Wrists," I said. "That's a funny thing to love." You said "well love's a funny thing." You started a list of loveable things. "The indent under your nose, what's it called?" you said. "Philtrum" I said. "Philtrum. Yes. Philtrum." "It's not symmetrical, you know that don't you," I said, "I was wondering if you knew that?" It was the first thing I noticed about you, when you arrived, everyone else thought you were like this God, like this mysterious God, and they flocked to you like chickens to corn. But when I saw you. I just thought "his face is wonky."

*Tiny beat.*

and that's what made you like me, isn't it? I was the fox, in a pen of silly little chickens, I was dangerous 'cause I saw you for your flaws. Nowhere to hide. The ugly truth. I looked it up. Philtrum. It has no function. In the womb, in utero, the two sides of your face develop independently of one another and then at some point, before birth, they join in the middle.

*Beat.*

Your face didn't fuse properly. Have you ever thought about that? The ugly truth. What's my ugly truth Tom? Do you know? Do you? My brain. Why's that never on the list?

## FOURTEEN

*The lights snap up.  
A restaurant. Rachel and Tom are drinking.*

RACHEL. That's. Wow. That's really—

TOM. Best-sellers apparently.

RACHEL. You can tell you can tell.

TOM. You know it's 150 a bottle?

RACHEL. We can't afford that.

TOM. I know.

RACHEL. I mean we really...that's expensive.

TOM. I don't care, look.

*He sips.*

What's that? 10?

*He takes a gulp.*

30?

RACHEL. Do you think most people do this all the time?

TOM. I don't care about most people. Tonight. It's you and me.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. Thank you.

*She smiles.*

*Beat.*

TOM. I haven't seen you smile in so long. I feel like a student again.

RACHEL. But this time round, you really know your wines!

TOM. I'm going to get another bottle. We've got a lot to—

RACHEL. Let's save it, this is nice.

TOM. But we agreed.

RACHEL. I'm here aren't I?



TOM. But I need you to talk to me.  
 RACHEL. You're running out of patience. And I'm not getting better.  
 TOM. That's not what other people see. They see / some-  
 one—  
 RACHEL. I've been thinking of having a one-night stand. But that's vengeful. Isn't it? Not on you. On me. Revenge. 'Cause that's what they are, aren't they? They're punishments on yourself for getting everything else wrong.

*Beat.*

I could be doing this with him. But he's perfect. And I'm not. And that's embarrassing. It's embarrassing, this scared, this broken—

*She cries. Hard. Suddenly. No sound comes out.*

I knew I'd do this. I promised myself. Hold it together.

TOM. I understand.

RACHEL. NO. Why are you so nice to me? You're banging your head against a brick wall here, and you just keep running, and there's blood, and it's in your eyes, but still you run, bang, bang, / bang—

TOM. 'Cause I know you're behind it.

RACHEL. What if I'm not?

TOM. Shall we...dance? Or something?

RACHEL. Dance? No. No. This is why I didn't want to go out. 'Cause I knew you'd push me, to do things, to interact.

TOM. Just with me.

RACHEL. I've just told you I've met someone else. That I was thinking of...and you want to dance with me?

TOM. Yes.

RACHEL. Why?

TOM. You've not done anything?  
 RACHEL. No.  
 TOM. And you won't?  
 RACHEL. No.  
 TOM. So good. So, I'm asking you to dance with me.  
 RACHEL. You are.  
 TOM. Yeah.  
 RACHEL. But there's no music.  
 TOM. Pick anything you want.  
 RACHEL. Beethoven.  
 TOM. He scares me.  
 RACHEL. He doesn't scare you, he intimidates you.  
 TOM. Same thing.  
 RACHEL. You should have practiced more.  
 TOM. I should have done a lot of things.  
     *He brings out a mini tape player from his bag.*  
 RACHEL. Oh my God, that thing's older than me.  
 TOM. Only just.  
 RACHEL. *(Smiles.)* You went in the attic.  
 TOM. I did.  
 RACHEL. You hate going in the attic.  
 TOM. I do.  
 RACHEL. You can't play it here.  
 TOM. I can.  
 RACHEL. People will look.  
 TOM. Let them.  
 RACHEL. You just keep his sonatas in the player, do you, ready to go?  
 TOM. It was already in there. Which means you were the last to use it, so count yourself lucky 'cause it could have been Oasis

*She laughs at his joke.*

*He presses play, it's Beethoven's Sonata no. 8 in C Minor, Pathétique, Adagio cantabile.*

- RACHEL. *(Hears the music.)* Sounds like a funeral  
TOM. Take it seriously.  
RACHEL. A wake.  
TOM. Come on. Put your arms around me.  
RACHEL. I feel silly.  
TOM. Come here. And be an adult. Dance with me. Like adults dance.

*Rachel does a face.*

Come. Here. Now.

Ready?

*They dance. It's small. Intimate. He leads. Brilliantly.  
Beat.*

*She falls into it.*

*Beat.*

*She enjoys it.*

*They try something slightly bigger. They are elegant, romantic,  
and perfectly in sync.*

*Suddenly. Violently. Rachel pulls away.*

*Tom stops the music.*

What did I do?

- RACHEL. I can't.  
TOM. That's okay.  
RACHEL. You can't help me. / Not like this.  
TOM. It's okay. We'll stop.  
RACHEL. If suddenly. It overtook me. Completely. This. Black. This cloud. And it took me away forever. I want you to know. It's been really nice to know you Tom. To be married to you. Everything before. I liked that. I want you to know that. You wouldn't remember me as mad would you?

TOM. No, I wouldn't.

*Beat.*

Do you want to go home?

RACHEL. Yeah.

TOM. Okay then. Okay.

*Beat.*

Ready?

*Beat.*

RACHEL. I am.

*Tom switches on the lights, to reveal that they are actually at home still, and have constructed the idea of a restaurant, and restaurant table, in their kitchen.*

TOM. So that's it.

RACHEL. It was good. Really. It was. You did a good job. It felt very real. And very authentic, and I think yes, next time, maybe, yes, we can go out.

TOM. Okay. That's good.

RACHEL. I kissed him. The one I told you about.

TOM.

RACHEL. Did you hear me? I said. I kissed him. I did do something. I kissed him. I lied.

TOM. Okay

*He sighs.*

RACHEL. You just sighed at me?

TOM. Yeah.

RACHEL. That is almost the worst possible thing you could've done?

TOM. Is it?

RACHEL. Sighed at me, like, what a loser? You know what. You deserve it. You deserve it all.

TOM. I'VE DONE THE WORST POSSIBLE THING, I HAVE?

RACHEL. BECAUSE THAT'S JUST THE FUCKING LOWEST

FORM OF SIDE-STEPPING SHIT FOR ACTUALLY  
WHAT COULD'VE BEEN A REALLY TASTY SET  
OF EXPLETIVES, FOR SOME REALLY SEXY  
FUCKING / LANGUAGE THAT ACTUALLY—  
STOP IT. STOP IT. STOP SWEARING.

TOM.

RACHEL.

TOM.

What's wrong with me swearing? You swear.

No. Not like that. You're a mess. You really are.  
You push and push, and I put up with it. But no.  
Not now. Not this. I'm stopping you because I  
have to. Because someone / has to care.

RACHEL.

Right well good. Fine. And now you need to pass  
me that box.

TOM.

But we're in the middle of—

RACHEL.

Yeah. Yeah. But I've been thinking about it, and I  
want to throw away the fairy lights.

TOM.

Right now? We're finally talking and—

RACHEL.

Yeah, yeah, I think yeah. Right now.

*Beat.*

TOM.

Please. We were having a good night weren't we?

RACHEL.

Yeah.

TOM.

So maybe we should just...

RACHEL.

No. No I think I want to at least sort them.

TOM.

They're Christmas decorations. And they're not  
yours to throw away.

RACHEL.

What do you mean not mine. They're mine.

TOM.

I'm not going to stand by and let you ruin that too.

RACHEL.

It's already ruined. It's ugly and brutal and sticking  
LED lights on it all won't change it. You know.  
There was a survey done of preschool children.  
And they were asked. "If you could make one  
wish for what you would really like to be when  
you grow up, what would it be?"

TOM.

I know.

RACHEL.

You do?

TOM. We watched it together.

RACHEL. So, this little girl, she said, / "Beautiful."

TOM. Beautiful.

RACHEL. Yeah. That's what she said. That was her answer. Not "politician" or "astronaut"—

TOM. But she was. Beautiful. Can't you remember? We said, "Wow. Imagine, if, one day, Alice looked like / that?"

RACHEL. But it's horrific isn't it? To put that first, put beauty first? Who? Wait. What did you say? Who's Alice?

OLDER WOMAN. Maa maa.

*Rachel rolls her eyes.*

RACHEL. Stop it! Stop calling for your mummy!

*Tom gets up. He goes out.*

*I told you, your mum died a long time ago.*

OLDER WOMAN. Maa Maa

*The Older Woman's cries turn into the cry of a baby.*

*Rachel turns in the direction of the cry, as if hearing it properly for the first time.*

*Tom enters pushing a pram. It's the same colour and design as the wheelchair we've been seeing.*

RACHEL. What's that? Where's your mum?

TOM. My mum?

RACHEL. She was crying again.

TOM. Alice was crying again.

RACHEL. What?

TOM. Alice

*This is Alice*

*Did you forget?*

*Rachel looks at him, the horror, everything sinking in.*

## FIFTEEN

*Rachel's thoughts.  
Very faint, distant piano music plays.  
A baby is crying.*

RACHEL. But you want Heinz soup, so you'll have it.  
*The baby gives a loud cry.*  
Christ sake.  
*The baby gives a loud cry.*  
You spiteful. Spoilt. Spoilt. Spoilt.  
*The baby gives a loud cry.*  
You can be a real bitch, do you know that?  
*Incessant crying.*

## SIXTEEN

*Stephen's office.  
Rachel is enraged. Sat next to her is Tom, holding a baby.*

RACHEL. And you just let me talk. You knew. You knew and it's sick. To let me go on and on, entertain you, flirt with you even. You should have wrestled with me. Both of you. Shouted. Screamed like a a a God, with wrath, with power, said **WAKE UP, WAKE UP, WAKE UP**

You should have searched, risked everything, come to me, huddled in the nightmare, and dragged me out. You could have got me out, you should have got me out, you should have told me.

TOM. We've got you now. We've always had you. You're safe here.

RACHEL. I'M NOT. No. You didn't have me. You did not. My fucking hat.



*She rips off her hat.*

That's all you could talk about. I want to shove it into your throat. You let me tell you stories, when all the time the dark was a living, breathing thing.— You should have sent me for brain scans. Put me through metal, through machines, checked, for a tumour, cut it out. Broken laws. Defied physics. Instead you left me. Like an animal.

STEPHEN.

Childbirth can feel like an abuse on the body.

RACHEL.

Yeah. Yeah. That's right. And you can say, it's dangerous and it's life and death / but I'm an animal.

STEPHEN.

It's a trauma. A trauma that can sometimes affect the brain.

RACHEL.

But why? Why?

STEPHEN.

There's no real understanding of the cause.

RACHEL.

Of course there's not. 'Cause only women suffer it, right?

Tell me we wouldn't know exactly what it was if he had it, if you had it! If your brain defied you and betrayed you, right after giving birth, right after the most extreme fucking moment of your life, when you need to hit the ground running, have your wits, and your mind and... Oh my God.

STEPHEN.

It's important to know that it's not your fault. There are many other women who suffer, and have suffered from postpartum psychosis—

RACHEL.

Postwhat?

STEPHEN.

Postpartum Psychosis.

RACHEL.

Er—is that a diagnosis? A psychosis diagnosis? Is that's what it's called, after all this time and all this talk, and all this up and down and bullshit in and out you've finally landed upon a thing that I have. A tangible thing that's actually actually wrong with me?

STEPHEN. Yes.  
RACHEL.  
STEPHEN. And people who suffer from it recover. After one month, six months, a year, but they recover.

*Beat.*

RACHEL. Why didn't you medicate me?  
STEPHEN. We did.  
RACHEL. What?  
STEPHEN. We did.  
RACHEL. No.  
STEPHEN. There's a lot you don't remember.  
RACHEL. No shit. No fucking shit doctor.

*Beat.*

(*To Tom.*) Did I take them?

TOM. Yeah.  
RACHEL. No. No I—  
TOM. I saw you. I was with you.  
RACHEL. Well, they didn't fucking work did they?

*Beat.*

I think my scarecrow man had a scarecrow wife.

STEPHEN. Did he?

RACHEL. Yeah. And I think they had a baby, who was made of the best and softest straw. And the scarecrow wife said, I don't know how to love this baby, fragile made of sticks. So she bought it a rose. But the scarecrow man said, what do you think that is? And she said. Love.

But he said. That's not love scarecrow wife. Can't you think of anything better?

*Beat.*

So she thought. Yes. Of course I can. So off she went, slowly making her way down the stairs, out the house, and down the garden. But I don't think

STEPHEN.  
RACHEL.

she's ever coming home. 'Cause she's still looking for the thing.

Looking for the thing.

The thing that she can bring back and say there.

*Beat.*

There. That's love. Right there. That's safety. That's kindness. That's protection. That's a promise. That we don't have to live in shit, that the rich don't just get richer, that the bullies don't win. That you can be exactly what you want to be. Promise. I brought you into a world that's fair, and just, and equal.

*Beat.*

and she's wracking her brains out there. And all the while the baby made of sticks and straw, she's growing, she's tall; she's a beautiful straw-girl. And she's clever. She passed all her exams at scarecrow school. And you know, she's the most beautiful, beautiful, pianist. And sometimes when the scarecrow wife is crawling like an animal, in the dirt, looking for the meaning of it all.

*Beat.*

She thinks she can hear this sound, and it's so beautiful that it makes her cry. And then it hits her, hard, in the chest. The simple truth. The very thing she was looking for. And then she laughs in anger. And rage. And spite. But she's lost in the woods so no one ever sees her. And her husband—he's looking in all the wrong places. In the light. In the fields. In the sun.

*A slightly longer beat.*

I saw her. The little girl. And others, other people who weren't real. But she was the worst, the little girl. She was the scariest—

*She looks at the baby for the first time.*

That she would grow up.

*Beat.*

And I'd miss it all.

*Beat.*

There was a man...who I think I kissed. An old woman. I saw you as the little girl.

STEPHEN. Do you see me like that now?

RACHEL. No. It was only once.

STEPHEN. What about the old woman?

RACHEL. No. She's gone.

STEPHEN. And the man?

*Rachel shakes her head.*

*Beat.*

RACHEL. I didn't hurt her?

TOM. No.

RACHEL. I fed her.

TOM. Yes.

RACHEL. Will she remember, that when she first needed me, I failed?

STEPHEN. You haven't failed.

RACHEL. I have.

*Pause.*

STEPHEN. I'm glad you took off your hat.

RACHEL. I could skewer out your eyes.

*Beat.*

Why? Why are you glad I took off my hat?

STEPHEN. You were dressing yourself as a patient.

RACHEL. What, and all patients wear hats?

STEPHEN. Yes. Hats just like that. And loose-fitting clothes. T-shirts, old trainers. A uniform for illness.

RACHEL. So I'm not a patient anymore?

STEPHEN. I think you're going to get better.

*Tom gives Rachel the baby, for the first time.  
She looks at him aghast, but then takes it.  
The lights change but the action is continuous into Scene  
Seventeen.*

## SEVENTEEN

*Tom and Rachel's house.  
Rachel is holding the baby.*

RACHEL.        Okay.

*Pause.*

I have a terrible voice.

*Beat.*

This is so silly.

*Beat.*

*(Sings.)* Three little men in a

*She stops. She stifles a cry.*

*She shakes her hands, she runs her hands over her face, she  
composes herself.*

As if you didn't already know I'm shit at this.

*Beat.*

Okay.

*Beat.*

Three little men in a flying saucer flew round the  
world one day

They looked left and right but they didn't like the  
sight

So one man flew away.

*Her hands are shaking. She's stopping herself crying, she  
pushes on.*

Two little men in a flying saucer flew round the  
world one day

They looked left and right but they didn't like the sight

So one man flew away.

*She takes deep breaths, breathing deeper and deeper.*

One little man in a flying saucer flew round the world one day

He looked left and right but he didn't like the sight.

*Beat.*

So one man...

*Beat. She's terrified.*

*She takes a sudden sharp breath in, like a shock, like she's going to do something, but we—*

*Blackout.*

**End of Play**