

MASTERED DRAMA STUDENT EDITIONS are expertly annotated texts of a wide range of plays from the modern and classic repertoires. As well as the complete text of the play itself, each volume contains:

- a chronology of the playwright's life and work
- a summary of the plot
- an introduction to the context of the play
- commentary on themes, characters, language and style
- a review of the play in performance
- notes on individual words and phrases in the text
- a list of suggested reading
- questions for further study

'Marber writes like a master. On the surface, *Closer* is brisk, urbane, witty, obscene, modern, quotable, slick; beneath the skin, it is deeply felt, painful, sad, and wise ... It is about sexual jealousy and sexual desire; and it is keenly alert to human isolation even within intense relationships. ... Marber seems to me to have the most assured sense of dramatic rhythm of any English playwright to have emerged since Pinter.'  
FINANCIAL TIMES

Dan rescues Alice. Anna photographs Dan. Larry meets Anna online. Alice rescues Larry. This is London at the end of the 20th century, where lives collide and fates change in an instant.

Strangers become lovers and lovers become strangers ...

On its premiere 1997, *Closer* won Olivier, Evening Standard and New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, and has since been produced in over 200 cities around the world.

This Student Edition includes an introduction by Dr Daniel Rosenthal that explore the play's historical context and production history, as well as the dramatic, thematic, and academic debates that surround it.

## DRAMA & PERFORMANCE STUDIES

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ATRICK MARBER

ROSENTHAL

ED. BY DANIEL ROSENTHAL

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## Characters

*Alice, a girl from the town.*  
*Dan, a man from the suburbs.*  
*Larry, a man from the city.*  
*Anna, a woman from the country.*

## Setting

The play is set in London.

**Scene One:** January  
**Scene Two:** June (the following year)  
**Scene Three:** January (the following year)  
**Scene Four:** January (the next day)  
**Scene Five:** June (five months later)  
**Scene Six:** June (a year later)  
**Scene Seven:** September (three months later)  
**Scene Eight:** October (a month later)  
**Scene Nine:** November (a month later)  
**Scene Ten:** December (a month later)  
**Scene Eleven:** January (a month later)  
**Scene Twelve:** July (six months later)

The above dates are for information only. They should not be included in any production programme or design.

All settings should be minimal.

## Note

This revised version of *Classer* replaces those previously published and is the sole authorised version of the play.

An alternative 'spoken' version of Act One, Scene Three appears at the end of this text.

## Act One

### Scene One

*Hospital.*

*Early morning. (January.)*

**Alice** is sitting. She is wearing a black coat. She has a rucksack by her side. Also, an old, brown, leather briefcase.

She rolls down one sock. She has a cut on her leg, quite bloody. She looks at it. She picks some strands of wool from the wound.

She looks at the briefcase. Thinks around. Opens it. She searches inside. She pulls out some sandwiches in silver foil. She looks at the contents, smiles, puts them back in the briefcase. Then she removes a green apple from the briefcase. She stings the apple and bites into it.

As she starts to chew **Dan** enters. He wears a suit and an overcoat. He stops, watches her eating his apple. He is holding two hot drinks in styrofoam cups. After a while she sees him and smiles.

**Alice** Sorry. I was looking for a cigarette.

**Dan** I've given up.

He hands her a drink.

**Alice** Thanks.

He checks his watch.

Have you got to be somewhere?

**Dan** Work.

They sip their drinks.

Didn't fancy my sandwiches?

**Alice** I don't eat fish.

**Dan** Why not?

**Alice** Fish piss in the sea.

**Dan** So do children.

**Alice** I don't eat children either. What's your work?

**Dan** I'm a . . . sort of journalist.

**Alice** What *sort*?

*Beat.*

**Dan** I write obituaries.

*Beat.*

**Alice** Do you like it . . . in the *dying* business?

**Dan** It's a living.

**Alice** Did you grow up in a graveyard?

**Dan** Yeah. Suburbia.

*Beat.*

**Alice** Do you think a doctor will come?

**Dan** Eventually. Does it hurt?

**Alice** I'll live.

**Dan** Shall I put your leg up?

**Alice** *Why?*

**Dan** That's what people do in these situations.

**Alice** What is this 'situation'?

*They look at each other.*

**Dan** Do you *want* me to put your leg up?

**Alice** Yes, please.

**Dan** *Lifts her leg on to a chair, offers his mobile phone.*

**Dan** Is there anyone you'd like to phone?

**Alice** I don't know anyone.  
Who cut off your crusts?

**Dan** Me.

**Alice** Did your mother cut off your crusts when you were a little boy?

**Dan** I believe she did, yes.

**Alice** You should eat your crusts.

**Dan** You should stop smoking.

*Beat.*

**Alice** Thank you for scraping me off the road.

**Dan** My pleasure.

**Alice** You *knight*.

**Dan** *Looks at her.*

**Dan** You *damsel*.

Why didn't you look?

**Alice** I never look where I'm going.

**Dan** We stood at the lights, I looked into your eyes and then you . . . stepped into the road.

**Alice** Then what?

**Dan** You were lying on the ground, you focused on me, you said, 'Hallo, stranger.'

**Alice** What a shut.

**Dan** I noticed your leg was cut.

**Alice** Did you notice my *legs*?

**Dan** Quite possibly.

**Alice** Then what?

**Dan** The cabbie got out. He crossed himself. He said, 'Thank fuck, I thought I'd killed her.' I said, 'Let's get her to a hospital.' He hesitated . . . (I think he thought there'd be

paperwork and he'd be held 'responsible'), so I said, with a slight sneer, 'Please, just drop us at the hospital.'

**Alice** Show me the sneer.

**Dan** *considers then sneers.*

**Alice** Very good. *Buster.*

**Dan** We put you in the cab and came here.

**Alice** What was I doing?

**Dan** You were murmuring, 'I'm very sorry for all the inconvenience.' I had my arm round you . . . your head was on my shoulder.

**Alice** Was my head . . . *lolling?*

**Dan** That's exactly what it was doing.

*Pause.*

**Alice** You'll be late for work.

**Dan** Are you saying you want me to go?

**Alice** I'm saying you'll be late for work.

*Beat.*

**Dan** Why were you at Blackfriars Bridge?

**Alice** I'd been to a club near the meat market . . . *Smithfield.* Do you go clubbing?

**Dan** No, I'm too old.

**Alice** How old?

**Dan** Thirty-five.

**Alice** Half-time?

**Dan** Thank you very much. So, you were *clubbing* . . .

**Alice** Then I went for a walk, I went to see the meat being unloaded.

**Dan** The carcasses, why?

**Alice** Because they're repulsive. Then I found this tiny park . . . it's a graveyard too. *Postman's Park.* Do you know it?

**Dan** No.

**Alice** There's a memorial to ordinary people who died saving the lives of others. It's most *curious*.

Then I decided to go to Borough — so I went to Blackfriars Bridge to cross the river.

**Dan** That *park* . . . it's near here?

**Alice** Yes.

**Dan** Is there a . . . statue?

**Alice** A Minotaur.

**Dan** I do know it. We sat there . . . (my mother's dead) . . . my father and I sat there the afternoon she died.

She died *here*, actually. She was a smoker.

(*Remembering*) My father . . . ate . . . an egg sandwich . . . his hands shook with grief . . . pieces of egg fell on the grass . . . butter on his top lip.

But I don't remember a memorial.

**Alice** Is your father still alive?

**Dan** Clinging on. He's in a home.

**Alice** How did you end up writing obituaries? What did you *really* want to be?

**Dan** (*smiles*) Oh . . . I had dreams of being a writer but I had no voice.

What am I saying? I had no *talent*. So . . . I ended up in the 'Siberia' of journalism.

**Alice** Tell me what you do, I want to imagine you in Siberia.

**Dan** Really?

**Alice** Yes.

*Beat.*

**Dan** Well . . . we call it 'the obits page'. There's three of us; me, Harry and *Graham*. When I get to work, without fail, *Graham* will say, 'Who's on the slab?' Meaning, did anyone important die overnight — are you *sure* you want to know?

**Alice** Yes.

**Dan** Well, if someone 'important' did die we go to the 'deep freeze' which is a computer containing all the obituaries and we'll find the dead person's life.

**Alice** People's obituaries are written when they're still alive?

**Dan** Some people's.

If no one important has died then *Harry* — he's the editor — he decides who we lead with and we check facts, make calls, polish the prose.

Some days I might be asked to deal with the widows or widowers; they try to persuade us to run an obituary of their husbands or wives. They feel we're dishonouring their loved ones if we don't but . . . most of them are . . . well, there isn't the space.

At six, we stand round the computer and read the next day's page, make final changes, put in a few euphemisms to amuse ourselves . . .

**Alice** Such as?

**Dan** 'He was a convivial fellow', meaning he was an alcoholic.

'He valued his privacy' — gay.

'He enjoyed his privacy' . . . raging queen.

*Pause. Alice slowly strokes Dan's face. He is unnerved but not unwilling.*

**Alice** And what would your euphemism be?

**Dan** (*softly*) For me?

**Alice** Mmm.

**Dan** He was . . . *reserved*.

**Alice** And mine?

**Dan** She was . . . *disarming*.

*Beat.*

**Alice** How did you get this job?

**Dan** They ask you to write your own obituary: if it amuses, you're in.

*They are close. Looking at each other.*

*Larry walks past in a white coat. Dan stops him.*

**Dan** Excuse me, we've been waiting quite a long time . . .

**Larry** I'm sorry, it's not my . . .

*He is about to walk away. He glances briefly at Alice. 'Pretty girl.' He stops.*

What happened?

**Alice** I was hit by a cab.

**Dan** She was unconscious for about ten seconds.

**Larry** May I?

*He looks at the wound and examines her leg with interest.*

You can feel your toes?

**Alice** Yes.

**Larry** What's this?

*Larry traces the line of a scar on her leg.*

**Alice** It's a scar.

**Larry** Yes, I know it's a scar. How did you get it?

**Alice** In America. A truck.

Larry looks at the scar.

Larry Awful job.

Alice I was in the middle of nowhere.

Larry You'll be fine.

Larry makes to leave.

Alice Can I have one?

Larry looks at her, she nods at his pocket.

Alice A cigarette.

Larry takes out his pack of cigarettes and removes one.

Alice reaches for it, he withdraws it.

Larry Don't smoke it here.

He hands her the cigarette.

Dan Thank you.

Larry exits. Alice lights the cigarette.

Alice Want a drag?

Dan Yes but no. What were you doing, in 'the middle of nowhere'?

Alice Travelling.

Beat.

Dan Alone?

Alice With . . . a male.

Beat.

Dan What happened to this male?

Alice I don't know, I ran away.

Dan Where?

Alice New York.

Dan Just like that?

Alice It's the only way to leave; 'I don't love you any more, goodbye.'

Dan Supposing you do still love them?

Alice You don't leave.

Dan You've never left someone you still love?

Alice No.

Beat.

Dan When did you come back?

Alice Yesterday.

Dan Where are your belongings?

Alice points to her rucksack.

Alice I'm a waitf.

Beat.

Dan Did you like New York?

Alice Sure.

Dan Were you . . . studying?

Alice Stripping.

She looks at him.

Look at your little eyes.

Dan I can't see my little eyes.

Alice They're popping out. You're a cartoon.

Beat.

Dan Were you . . . 'good' at it?

Alice Exceptional.

Dan Why?

**Alice** I know what men want.

**Dan** Really?

**Alice** Oh yes.

**Dan** Tell me . . .

**Alice** *considers.*

**Alice** Men want a girl who looks like a boy. They want to protect her but she must be a survivor. And she must come . . . like a train . . . but with . . . elegance.  
What do you want?

*Pause.*

**Dan** Who was this . . . *male*?

**Alice** A customer. But once I was his he hated me stripping.

**Dan** *smiles.*

**Dan** What do you want?

**Alice** To be loved.

**Dan** That simple?

**Alice** It's a big want.

*She looks at him.*

Do you have a girlfriend?

**Dan** Yeah, Ruth . . . she's called Ruth. She's a linguist.

*He looks at Alice.*

Will you meet me after work?

**Alice** No, take the day off. Don't go and see 'who's on the slab'. I'll call in for you and say you're sick.

**Dan** I can't.

**Alice** Don't be such a pussy.

**Dan** I might be anyone, I might be a psychotic.

**Alice** I've met psychotics, you're not. *Phone.*

*She holds out her hand, Dan gives her his mobile.*

**Dan** Memory One.

*Alice punches in the number.*

**Alice** Who do I speak to?

**Dan** Harry Masters.

**Alice** What's your name?

**Dan** Mr Daniel Woolf. What's *your* name?

*Beat.*

**Alice** Alice. My name is Alice Ayres.

*Blackout.*

## Scene Two

*Anna's studio.*

*Late afternoon, June (the following year).*

*Anna stands behind her camera. Dan sits. Anna takes a shot.*

**Anna** Good.

*Shot.*

Don't move.

*Shots.*

**Dan** What was this building?

**Anna** A refuge for fallen women.

*Shot.*

**Dan** Wasn't there a river here?

**Anna** *The Fleet*. They built over it in the eighteenth century.

**Dan** A buried river.

*Shot.*

**Anna** If you stand on Blackfriars Bridge you can see where it comes out.

**Dan** I think I will.

**Anna** You must.

*Shot.*

Stay there.

*Shots.*

It inspired an 'urban legend' – a bit like the alligators in New York. People thought that pigs were breeding underground and then one day this big, fat boar swam out into the Thames and trotted off along the Embankment.

**Dan** So it was true?

**Anna** No, it escaped. From Smithfield.

**Dan** Pigs can swim?

**Anna** Surprisingly well.

*Shots.*

Relax.

**Anna** *changes film, adjusts a light, etc.*  
**Dan** *stands up.*

**Dan** Do you mind if I smoke?

**Anna** If you must.

**Dan** I don't have to.

**Anna** Then don't.

*She looks at Dan.*

I liked your book.

**Dan** Thanks . . .

**Anna** When's it published?

**Dan** Next year, how come you read it?

**Anna** Your publisher sent me a manuscript, I read it last night. You kept me up till *four*.

**Dan** I'm flattered.

**Anna** Is your anonymous heroine based on someone real?

*Beat.*

**Dan** She's . . . someone called Alice.

**Anna** How does she feel about you stealing her life?

**Dan** *Borrowing* her life. I'm dedicating the book to her, she's pleased.

*He is staring at her; Anna turns, looks at him.*

*Pause.*

Do you exhibit?

**Anna** Next summer.

**Dan** Portraits?

**Anna** Yes.

**Dan** Of who?

*Beat.*

**Anna** Strangers.

**Anna** *gestures for him to sit again.*  
*She checks the light on him with a meter.*

**Dan** How do your strangers feel about you stealing their lives?

**Anna** *Borrowing.*



**Anna** *adjusts his hair.*

**Dan** Am I a stranger?

**Anna** No . . . you're a job.

*Pause.*

**Dan** You're beautiful.

*Beat.*

**Anna** No I'm not.

**Anna** *looks down the lens.*

Chin up, you're a sloucher.

*Shots.*

**Dan** You didn't find it obscene?

**Anna** What?

**Dan** The book.

**Anna** No, I thought it was . . . *accurate.*

*Shot.*

**Dan** About what?

**Anna** About sex. About love.

*Shot.*

**Dan** In what way?

**Anna** You *wrote* it.

**Dan** But you *read* it. Till *four.*

**Dan** *looks at her, Anna looks down the lens.*

**Anna** Don't raise your eyebrows, you look smug.

*Shot.*

Stand up.

**Dan** *stands up.*

**Dan** But you did *like* it?

**Anna** Yes, but I could go off it.

*Shots.*

**Dan** Any criticisms?

**Anna** *considers.*

**Anna** Bad title.

**Dan** Got a better one?

**Anna** Really?

**Dan** Yeh . . .

*Beat.*

**Anna** 'The Aquarium'.

*They look at each other.*

*Beat.*

**Dan** You liked the dirty bit . . . ?

**Anna** Some of it.

**Dan** You like aquariums?

**Anna** Fish are therapeutic.

**Dan** Hang out in aquariums, do you?

**Anna** When I can.

**Dan** Good for picking up 'Strangers'?

**Anna** *Photographing strangers.* I took my first picture in the one at London Zoo.

*Silence.*

**Dan** *(gently)* Come here . . .

*Pause.*

**Anna** *moves towards him, slowly. She stops.*

**Anna** I don't kiss strange men.

**Dan** Neither do I.

*They kiss. Ten seconds. Anna slowly pulls back.*

**Anna** Do you and this . . . Alice . . . live together?

**Dan** *considers.*

**Dan** . . . Yes . . .

**Anna** (*nods*) 'She has one address in her address book; ours . . . under "H" for home.'

**Dan** *touches her face.*

**Dan** I've cut that line.

**Anna** Why?

**Dan** Too sentimental.

*Anna gently takes his hand from her face, looks at it and then pulls away from him.*

**Dan** Are you married?

**Anna** Yes.

**Dan** *turns away, she looks at him.*

**Anna** No.

**Dan** *turns back.*

**Anna** Yes.

**Dan** Which?

**Anna** Separated.

**Dan** Do you have any children?

**Anna** No.

**Dan** Would you like some?

**Anna** Yes, but not today.

*She shuts her camera case and begins to pack up, session over.*

Would Alice like children?

**Dan** She's too young.

*He glances at his watch.*

Actually . . . she's coming to meet me here . . . quite soon.

**Anna** Why are you wasting her time?

**Dan** I'm not. I'm grateful to her . . . she's . . . completely loveable and completely unleaveable.

**Anna** And you don't want someone else to get their dirty hands on her?

*Beat.*

**Dan** Maybe.

**Anna** Men are crap.

**Dan** But all the same . . .

**Anna** They're still crap.

*The door buzzer goes.*

Your muse.

**Dan** *looks at Anna.*

**Dan** (*ironic*) You've ruined my life.

**Anna** You'll get over it.

*They look at each other. Dan goes to exit.*

Dan . . .

**Dan** *turns.*

**Anna** Your shirt.

**Dan** *exits tucking his shirt into his trousers.*

*Silence.*

*Anna thinks.*

**Dan enters with Alice.** *Her hair is a different colour to Scene One.*

**Dan** Anna . . . Alice.

**Anna** Hi.

*Alice looks at Anna.*

**Alice** I'm sorry if you're still working.

**Anna** No, we've just finished.

**Alice** Was he well-behaved?

**Anna** Reasonably.

**Alice** Is he photogenic?

**Anna** I think so.

**Alice** Did you steal his soul?

**Anna** Would you like some tea?

**Alice** No thanks, I've been serving it all day. Can I use the . . . ?

**Anna (gestures)** Through there.

*Alice exits.*

**Anna** *She is beautiful.*

**Dan** Yes, she is.

*He looks at Anna.*

I've got to see you.

**Anna** No!

**Dan** Why are you getting all . . . 'sisterly'?

**Anna** I'm not getting 'sisterly'; I don't want trouble.

**Dan** I'm not trouble.

**Anna** You're taken.

*Pause.*

**Dan** I've got to see you.

**Anna (shakes her head)** Tough.

*Pause. Alice enters.*

**Alice** I'm a block of ice.

**Dan goes to Alice and rubs her.**

**Alice (to Anna)** Will you take my photo?

I've never been photographed by a professional before. I'd really appreciate it, I can pay you.

*Pause.*

**Anna** No . . . I'd like to . . .

**Alice (to Dan)** Only if you don't mind.

**Dan** Why should I?

**Alice** Because you'll have to go away.

(*To Anna.*) We don't want him here while we're working, do we?

**Anna** No, we don't.

*Beat.*

**Dan** . . . Right . . . I'll wait in the pub on the corner . . .

*He kisses Alice.*

Have fun.

(*To Anna.*) Thank you. Good luck with your exhibition.

**Anna** Good luck with your book.

**Dan** Thanks.

**Dan exits, lighting a cigarette as he goes.**

**Alice** You've got an exhibition?

**Anna** Only a small one. Take a seat.

**Alice sits.**

**Anna busies herself with the camera, checks lights, etc.**

**Alice watches her.**

**Anna** I read Dan's book, you've had . . . quite a life.

**Alice** Thanks.

Are you single?

**Anna** . . . Yes.

**Alice** Who was your last boyfriend?

**Anna is unsure where this is leading.**

**Anna** My husband . . .

**Alice** What happened to him?

*Beat.*

**Anna** Someone younger.

**Alice** What did he do?

**Anna** He made money. In the City.

**Alice** We used to get those in the clubs. *Wall Street boys.*

**Anna** So . . . these places were quite . . . upmarket?

**Alice** Some of them, but I preferred the dives.

**Anna** Why?

**Alice** The poor are more generous.

**Anna looks into the camera.**

**Anna** You've got a great face.

*She focuses.*

How do you feel about Dan using your life, for his book?

**Alice** None of your fucking business.

*She stares at Anna.*

When he let me in . . . downstairs, he had . . . this . . . 'look'.

I just listened to your . . . conversation.

*Silence.*

**Anna** I don't know what to say.

**Alice (gently)** Take my picture.

*Pause.*

**Anna** I'm not a thief, Alice.

*She looks down the lens.*

Head up . . .

*Alice raises her head, she is in tears.*

**Anna** You look beautiful. Turn to me . . .

*She takes her shots. They look at each other.*

Good.

*Blackout.*

### Scene Three

*Internet.*

*Early evening, January (the following year).*

**Dan** is in his flat sitting at a table with a computer. There is a Newton's Cradle on the table. *Writersly slath, etc.*

**Larry** is sitting at his hospital desk with a computer. He is wearing a white coat.

*They are in separate rooms.*

*The scene is silent. Their 'dialogue' appears on a large screen simultaneous to their typing it.*

**Dan** Hallo.

Larry hi

Dan How RU?

Larry ok

Dan Cum here often?

Larry 1st time.

Dan A Virgin. Welcome. What's your name?

Larry Larry. U?

Dan *considers.*

Dan Anna

Larry Nice 2 meet U

Dan I love COCK

*Pause.*

Larry Youre v.forward

Dan And UR chatting on 'LONDON FUCK'. Do U want sex?

Larry yes. describe u.

Dan Dark hair. Dirty mouth. Epic Tis.

Larry define epic

Dan 36DD

Larry Nice arse?

Dan Y

Larry Becos i want 2 know

Dan *smiles.*

Dan No, 'Y' means 'Yes'.

Larry O

Dan I want 2 suck U senseless.

Larry B my guest

Dan Sit on my face Fuckboy.

Larry I'm there

Dan Wear my wet knickers.

*Beat.*

Larry ok

Dan RU well hung?

Larry 9C

Larry (*speaking*) Shit.

Larry (*typing*) 9"

Dan GET IT OUT

*Larry considers and then unzips. He puts his hand in his trousers. The phone on his desk rings. Loud. He jumps.*

Larry (*speaking*) Wait.

Larry (*typing*) wait

*Larry picks up the phone. Dan lights a cigarette.*

Larry (*speaking*) Yes. What's the histology? *Progressive?* Sounds like an atrophy.

*Larry puts the phone down and goes back to his keyboard.*

*Dan clicks the balls on his Newton's Cradle.*

Larry hallo?

*Dan looks at his screen.*

Larry anna

Larry (*speaking*) Bollocks.

Larry (*typing*) ANNA? WHERE RU?

Dan Hey, big Larry, what d'you wank about?

Larry *considers.*



**Dan** I send U a rose my love . . .

**Larry** ?

**Dan** (@)

|  
 \ |  
 | /  
 |

**Larry** Thanks. CU at Aquarium. Bye Anna.

**Dan** Bye Larry xxxxx

**Larry** xxxxxx

*They look at their screens.*

*Blackout.*

#### Scene Four

*Aquarium.*

*Afternoon. January (the next day).*

**Anna** is sitting on a bench, alone. She has a camera. She looks at the fish, occasionally referring to her guide book.

**Larry** enters.

*He sees Anna. He checks her out and smiles.*

**Anna** sees him and vaguely nods, acknowledging his presence.

**Larry** Anna?

**Anna** . . . Yes . . . ?

**Larry** unbuttons his overcoat and holds it open. He is wearing his white coat underneath.

**Larry** I've got 'The Coat'.

**Anna** observes him.

**Anna** Yes, you *have*.

**Larry** 'The White Coat.'

**Anna** So I see . . .

**Larry** I'm Larry. (*Dirty*) 'The Doctor.'

*Beat.*

**Anna** Hallo, Doctor Larry.

**Larry** Feel free to call me . . . 'The Sultan'.

**Anna** *Why?*

**Larry** (*laughs*) I can't believe these things actually happen. I thought . . . if you turned up, you'd be a bit of a trout . . . but you're bloody gorgeous.

**Anna** Thanks.

*Beat.*

**Larry** You mentioned a hotel . . .

**Anna** looks at him, trying to work out who he is.

**Larry** No rush.

*He checks his watch.*

Actually, there is, I've got to be in surgery by three.

**Anna** Are you having an operation?

**Larry** (*laughs*) No, I'm doing one.

**Anna** You really *are* a doctor?

**Larry** I said I was. (*Sudden panic*) You are . . . *Anna?*

**Anna** Yes. I'm sorry, have we met somewhere?

**Larry** Don't play games, you . . . 'Nymph of the Net?' (*Confused*.) You were filthy yesterday.

**Anna** Was I?

**Larry** YES. 'Wear my wet knickers', 'Sit on my face', 'I'm a cum hungry bitch trying with one . . . ?'

*Anna smiles.*

**Larry** Why do I feel like a pervert?

**Anna** I think . . . you're the victim . . . of a medic's prank.

*Pause.*

**Larry** I am *so* sorry.

*Larry exits. Anna chuckles. Larry re-enters.*

**Larry** NO. We spoke on the Net but now you've *seen* me you don't . . . it's *fine*, I'm not going to get upset about it.

**Anna** Then why are you upset?

**Larry** I'm not, I'm *frustrated*.

**Anna** I don't even have a computer, I'm a photographer.

*Larry considers.*

**Larry** Where were *you* between the hours of 5.45 and 6.00 p.m., yesterday?

**Anna** I was in a cafe seeing . . . an acquaintance.

**Larry** Name?

**Anna** Alice Ayres.

**Larry** The nature of your business?

**Anna** (*amused*) Photographic business. Where were *you* between those hours?

**Larry** On the Net talking to you.

**Anna** No.

**Larry** Well, I was talking to *someone*.

**Anna** (*realising*) Pretending to be me.

You were talking to Daniel Woolf.

**Larry** Who?

**Anna** He's Alice's boyfriend. She told me yesterday that he plays around on the Net. It's *him*.

**Larry** No, I was talking to a woman.

**Anna** How do you know?

**Larry** Because . . . believe me, she was a woman, I got a *huge* . . . She was a woman.

**Anna** No, she wasn't.

**Larry** She wasn't, was she.

**Anna** No.

**Larry** What a CUNT. Sorry.

**Anna** I'm a grown-up, 'Cunt Away'.

**Larry** Thanks. This . . . 'blaké' . . .

**Anna** Daniel Woolf.

**Larry** How do you know him?

**Anna** I don't know him really, I took his photo for a book he wrote.

**Larry** I hope it sank without trace.

**Anna** It's on its way.

**Larry** There is justice in the world. What's it called?

**Anna** (*smiles*) 'The Aquarium'.

**Larry** What a PRICK. He's advertising! *Why?* Why would he pretend to be you?

**Anna** He likes me.

**Larry** Funny way of showing it, can't he send you flowers?

*He produces a crumpled rose from his coat pocket. He hands it to Anna.*



Here.

**Anna** . . . Thanks . . .

*She looks at the rose, then at Larry.*

Wonderful thing, the Internet.

**Larry** Oh yes.

**Anna** The possibility of genuine global communication, the first great democratic medium.

**Larry** Absolutely, it's the future.

**Anna** Two boys tossing in cyberspace.

**Larry** *He was the tosser.*

I'll say this for him, he can *write*.

*He looks at Anna.*

Is he in love with you?

**Anna** I don't know. No.

**Larry** Are you in love with him?

**Anna** I hardly know him, no.

**Larry** But you're sort of . . . interested?

**Anna** I think he's . . . *interesting*.

*Bed.*

**Larry** So what are you doing here?

*Pause.*

**Anna** Looking at fish.

*Anna looks away from him.*

**Larry** (*gently*) Are you all right?

*Anna nods.*

**Larry** You can tell me . . .

**Anna** Because you're a doctor?

**Larry** Because I'm *here*.

*Anna turns to him.*

**Larry** Crying is allowed.

**Anna** I'm not allowed. Thanks, anyway.

**Larry** I'm famed for my bedside manner.

*Anna raises her camera, Larry covers his face.*

**Larry** Don't, I look like a criminal in photos.

**Anna** Please, it's my birthday.

**Larry** (*dropping his hands*) Really?

*Anna takes his photo.*

**Anna** Yes. (*Rueful*) Really.

*They look at each other.*

**Larry** Happy birthday.

*Blackout.*

### Scene Five

*Gallery.*

*Evening, June (five months later).*

**Alice** is looking at a huge photograph of herself. She has a bottle of lager. She wears a black dress.

**Dan** has a glass of wine. A slightly shabby black suit. He looks at Alice looking at the image.

**Dan** Cheers.

*She turns. They drink. Dan admires the photo.*

You're the belle of the bullshit. You look beautiful.

**Alice** I'm here.

**Dan** looks at **Alice**, smiles.

**Alice** A man came into the café today and said, 'Hey, waitress, what are you waiting for?'

**Dan** Funny guy.

**Alice** I said, 'I'm waiting for a man to come in here and fuck me sideways with a beautiful line like that.'

**Dan** (smiles) What did he do?

**Alice** He asked for a cup of tea with two sugars.

*She looks at him.*

I'm waiting for you.

**Dan** To do what?

*Beat.*

**Alice** (gently) Leave me.

**Dan** (concerned) I'm not going to leave you. I totally love you. What is this?

**Alice** Please let me come . . .

**Dan** turns away.

**Alice** I want to be there for you. Are you ashamed of me?

**Dan** Of course not. I've told you, I want to be alone.

**Alice** Why?

**Dan** To grieve . . . to think.

**Alice** I love you, why won't you let me?

**Dan** It's only a weekend.

**Alice** Why won't you let me love you?

*Silence.*

We've never spent a weekend in the country.

**Dan** Well . . . we will.

*He turns, drinks. He looks offstage and smiles at something he sees.*

Harry's here . . . pissed as a newt.

He wants me to go back to 'obits' . . . says they miss me.

**Alice** Poor Harry, you know he's in love with you.

**Dan** No he's not.

*He glances offstage again.*

Is he?

**Alice** (smiles) Yes. Do you want to go back?

**Dan** We're very poor . . .

**Alice** What about your writing?

**Dan** shrugs.

**Dan** Look . . . I'm going to say hallo and goodbye to Anna and then I'll get a cab to the station, OK?

Buster?

I love you.

*He kisses her forehead.*

**Alice** (softly) Kiss my lips . . .

**Dan** Sorry.

*He kisses her on the lips.*

I'll call you as soon as I get there.

**Dan** exits as **Larry** enters. They almost collide.

**Larry** regards the departing **Dan**.

**Alice** lights a cigarette, she uses her bottle as an ashtray.

**Larry** is wearing a suit with a black cashmere sweater with a collar. He has a bottle of wine and a glass.

**Alice** looks at him, curious.

Larry Evening.

Alice Are you a waiter?

Larry No, I'm a refugee escaping from the glittering babble.

*He looks at the photo and then at his exhibition price list.*

And . . . you are . . . 'Young Woman, London'.

*He looks at Alice.*

Pricey. Do you like it?

Alice No.

Larry Well, you should. What were you so sad about?

Alice Life.

Larry What's that then?

Alice *smiles.*

Larry *(gesturing to the photos)* What d'you reckon, in general?

Alice You want to talk about art?

Larry I know it's *vulgar* to discuss 'The Work' at an opening of 'The Work' but *someone's* got to do it. Serious, what d'you think?

Alice It's a lie.

It's a bunch of sad strangers photographed beautifully and all the rich fuckers who appreciate *art* say it's beautiful because that's what they want to see.

But the people in the photos are sad and alone but the pictures make the world *seem* beautiful.

So, the exhibition is reassuring, which makes it a lie, and everyone loves a Big Fat Lie.

Larry I'm the Big Fat Liar's boyfriend.

Alice Bastardi!

Larry Larry.

Alice Alice.

*Beat. Alice moves in on him.*

So . . . you're Anna's boyfriend?

Larry A princess can kiss a frog.

Alice How long have you been seeing her?

Larry Four months. We're in 'the first flush'. It's Paradise. All my nasty habits amuse her . . .

*He gazes at Alice.*

You shouldn't smoke.

Alice Fuck off.

Larry I'm a doctor, I'm supposed to say things like that.

*Alice now realises where she's seen him before. She holds out her packet of cigarettes.*

Alice Want one?

Larry No.

*Alice continues to offer the packet.*

Larry Yes. No. Fuck it, yes. NO. I've given up.

*He watches her smoking.*

Pleasure and self-destruction, the perfect poison.

*Alice gives him a dirty smile.*

Larry Anna told me your bloke wrote a book, any good?

Alice Of course.

Larry It's about *you*, isn't it?

Alice Some of me.

Larry Oh? What did he leave out?

*Beat.*

**Alice** The truth.

*Beat.*

**Larry** Is he here? Your bloke.

**Alice** Yeah, he's talking to your bird.

**Larry** *glances offstage, thinks, then returns to Alice.*

**Larry** So . . . you were a stripper?

**Alice** (*firtitious*) Yeah . . . *and?*

**Larry** *sees the scar on her leg.*

**Larry** Mind if I ask how you got that?

*Beat.*

**Alice** You've asked me this before.

**Larry** When?

**Alice** Two and a half years ago. I was in hospital. You looked at my leg.

**Larry** How did you remember me?

**Alice** It was a memorable day. You didn't really want to stop but you did, you were off for a crafty smoke.

You gave me a cigarette.

**Larry** Well, I don't smoke now and nor should you.

**Alice** But you *used* to go and smoke. *On the sly.*

**Larry** Yeah, in a little park near the hospital.

**Alice** *Postman's Park?*

**Larry** That's the one.

**Alice** *takes a swig from his bottle.*

**Larry** And . . . the scar?

**Alice** A maffa hit man broke my leg.

**Larry** (*disbelieving*) Really?

**Alice** Absolutely.

**Larry** Doesn't look like a break . . .

**Alice** What does it look like?

**Larry** Like something went into it. (*Tentative.*) A knife, maybe . . .

**Alice** When I was eight . . . some metal went into my leg when my parents' car crashed . . . when they *died*. Happy now?

**Larry** Sorry, it was none of my business. I'm supposed to be off duty.

**Alice** *looks at him.*

**Alice** Is it nice being good?

**Larry** I'm not good.

*He looks at her, close.*

What about *you*?

*He gently strokes her face, she lets him.*

I'm seeing my first private patient tomorrow. Tell me I'm not a sell-out.

**Alice** You're not a sell-out.

**Larry** *Thanks.* You take care.

**Alice** I will, you too.

**Alice** *exits. Larry watches her go.*

**Larry** *exits as Dan enters elsewhere.*

**Dan** *carries a small suitcase. He checks his watch and wails, nervously.*

**Anna** *enters.*

*Pause. They look at each other.*

**Anna** I can't talk for long.

**Dan** Bit of a do, isn't it?

**Anna** Yeah, I hate it.

**Dan** But you're good at it.

So, he's a *dermatologist*. Can you get more boring than that?

**Anna** Obituarist?

**Dan** Failed novelist, please.

**Anna** I was sorry about your book.

**Dan** Thanks, I blame the title.

**Anna** (*smiles*) I blame the critics. You must write another one.

**Dan** Why can't failure be attractive?

**Anna** It's not a failure.

**Dan** It's *perceived* to be, therefore it is. Pathetically, I needed praise. A *real* writer is . . . above such concerns.

**Anna** Romantic tosh.

**Dan** Ever had bad reviews? Well, shut up then.

Talk to *Doctor Larry* about photography, do you?

Is he a fan of Man Ray or Karsh?

He'll *bore* you.

**Anna** No he won't – he doesn't, actually.

**Dan** (*exasperated*) I cannot believe I made this happen.

What were you doing at the Aquarium?

(*Joking*.) Thinking of me?

**Anna** No. How's Alice?

**Dan** She's fine. Do you love him?

**Anna** Yes, very much.

*Beat.*

**Dan** (*alarmed*) You're not going to *marry* him?

**Anna** I might.

**Dan** *Don't*. *Marry* me. Children, everything. You don't want his children – three little stooges in white coats.

Don't marry him, marry me.

Grow old with me . . . *die* with me . . . wear a battered cardigan on the beach in Bournemouth.

*Marry me.*

**Anna** (*smiles*) I don't *know* you.

**Dan** Yes you do.

I couldn't feel what I feel for you unless you felt it too. *Anna, we're in love* – it's not our fault, stop wasting his time.

**Anna** I haven't *seen* you for a year.

**Dan** Yes you have.

**Anna** Only because you *stalked* me outside my studio.

**Dan** I didn't stalk . . . I . . . *lurked*. And when I wasn't there you looked for me.

**Anna** How do you know, if you weren't *there*?

**Dan** Because I was there . . . lurking from a distance. (I love your work, by the way, it's tragic).

**Anna** (*sarcastic*) Thanks.

**Dan** *gestures to his suitcase.*

**Dan** I know this isn't 'appropriate', I'm going to my father's funeral – come with me.

**Anna** Your father died?

**Dan** It's fine, I hated him – no, I didn't – I don't care, I care about **THIS**.

Come with me, spend a weekend with me, then decide.

**Anna** I don't want to go to your father's funeral. There's nothing to . . . *decide*. What about Alice?

**Dan** She'll survive.

I can't be her father any more.

Anna, you want to believe he's . . . 'the one' . . . it's not *real*, you're scared of *this*.

**Anna** There is no 'this'. I love him.

**Dan** *Why?*

**Anna** Any number of reasons!

**Dan** Name *one*.

**Anna** He's kind.

**Dan** (*ferocious*) Don't give me 'kind'. 'Kind' is *dull*, 'kind' will kill you. Alice is 'kind', even *I'm* 'kind', anyone can be fucking **KIND**.

(*Gently*.) I cannot live without you.

**Anna** You can . . . you *do*.

*Beat.*

**Dan** This is not me, I don't do this.

All the language is old, there are no new words . . . *I love you*.

*Beat.*

**Anna** No, you don't.

**Dan** Yes . . . I do. I *need* you. I can't think, I can't work, I can't *breathe*. We are going to *die*. Please . . . *save* me.

Look at me.

**Anna** looks at **Dan**.

**Dan** Tell me you're not in love with me.

*Beat.*

**Anna** I'm not in love with you.

*Pause.*

**Dan** You just lied. See me next week. *Please*, Anna . . . I'm begging you . . . *I'm* your stranger . . . *jump*.

*Silence. They are very close. Larry has entered, he is looking at them. Dan sees him and goes to exit.*

**Anna** Your case.

**Dan** returns, picks up his suitcase and exits.

*Pause.*

**Larry** Hallo . . . *Stranger*.

**Anna** Hallo.

**Larry** Intense conversation?

*Beat.*

**Anna** His father's died. Were you *spying*?

**Larry** Lovingly *observing* – (with a telescope).

*He kisses Anna.*

He's taller than his photo.

**Anna** The photo's a head shot.

**Larry** Yeah, I know, but his head *implied* a short body . . . but in fact, his head is . . . *deceptive*.

**Anna** *Deceptive?*

**Larry** Yes, because he's actually got a *long* body. He's a stringy fucker.

**Anna laughs.**

**Larry** I could 'ave 'im.

**Anna** *What?*

**Larry** If it came to it, in a scrap, I could 'ave 'im.

**Anna smiles.**

**Larry** Did you tell him we call him 'Cupid'?

**Anna** No, that's *our* joke.

**Anna tugs his sweater, pulling him towards her.**

**Larry** I've never worn cashmere before. Thank you. I'm Cinderella at the ball.

**Anna (charmed)** You're such a peasant.

**Larry** You love it.

*He holds her.*

I had a chat with young Alice.

**Anna** Fancy her?

**Larry** Course. Not as much as *you*.

**Anna** Why?

**Larry** You're a woman . . . she's a girl. She has the moronic beauty of youth but she's got . . . *side*.

**Anna** She seems very open to me.

**Larry** That's how she *wants* to seem.

You forget you're dealing with a clinical observer of the human carnival.

**Anna** Ann I now?

**Larry** Oh yes.

**Anna** You seem more like 'the cat who got the cream'. You can stop licking yourself, you know.

*Pause. Anna turns to Larry, slowly.*

**Larry (coolly)** That's the nastiest thing you've ever said to me.

**Anna** God, I'm sorry. It was a horrible thing to say. It's just . . . my family's here and friends . . . I have no excuse. I'm sorry.

*Pause.*

**Larry** Forget it. I know what you mean. I'll stop pawing you.

**Anna kisses him.**

**Larry** I met your *Dad* . . .

**Anna** I know. He actually said, 'I like him.' He's never said that before . . . about *anyone*. They all adored you; my stepmother thinks you're gorgeous, 'Lovely hands,' she said, 'you can imagine him doing his stitching, very sensitively.'

**Larry** So they didn't think I was 'beneath you'?

**Anna** No. You're not . . . you're *you* and you're wonderful.

**Larry holds her.**

**Larry** Did you like my folks? They loved *you*.

**Anna** Your mother's got such a . . . kind face.

*They look at each other.*

*Blackout.*

### Scene Six

*Domestic interiors.*

*Midnight. June (a year later).*

**Anna** sitting on a chaise longue.

**Alice** asleep, curled up on a small sofa. She is wearing striped pyjamas. A half-eaten red apple beside her.

*They are in separate rooms.*

**Dan** enters. He carries the brown briefcase seen in Scene One.

*He looks at Alice.*

*After a while she wakes.*

**Alice** Where've you been?

What?

**Dan** Work. I had a drink with Harry. You never have one drink with Harry.

**Alice** Did you eat? I made sandwiches – no crusts.

**Dan** I'm not hungry.

*Pause.*

**Alice** *What?*

*Beat.*

**Dan** This will hurt.

I've been with Anna.

I'm in love with her. We've been seeing each other for a year.

*Silence.*

**Alice** gets up and slowly exits.

*On the other side of the stage Larry enters.*

*He has a suitcase, bags, duty-free carrier.*

**Larry** (to Anna) Don't move!

I want to remember this moment for ever: the first time I walked through the door, returning from a business trip, to be greeted by my wife.  
I have, in this moment, become an adult.

*He kisses Anna.*

Thanks for waiting up, you darling. You goddess. I missed you.

Jesus, I'm knackered.

**Anna** Didn't you sleep on the plane?

**Larry** No, because the permed German sleeping next to me was snoring like a *Messerschmitt*.

*He removes his jacket, Anna takes it.*

What's the time?

**Anna** Midnight.

**Larry** Seven.

*Time: what a tricky little fucker.*

My head's in two places, my brain actually *hurts*.

**Anna** Do you want some food?

**Larry** Nahh, I ate my 'Scooby Snacks' on the plane. I need a bath.

**Anna** Shall I run you one?

**Larry** No, I'll just have a shower.

*He untucks his shirt and kicks off his shoes.*

You OK?

**Anna** Mmmmm.

*Beat. They look at each other.*

How was the . . . thing?

**Larry** As dermatological conferences go, it was a riot.

**Larry** takes a bottle of Scotch from his bag of duty-free and swigs it.

**Anna** How was the hotel?



**Larry** Someone told me that the beautiful people of 'The Paramount Hotel', the concierge and the bell boys and girls – did you know this? They're all *vibores*.

**Anna** Everyone knows that.

**Larry** I didn't. Want some?

*He offers the bottle, Anna takes a swig.*

I love New York. What a town: it's a twenty-four-hour pageant called, 'Whatever You Want.'

*Then, you arrive back at Heathrow and the first thing you see is this . . . carpet.*

This Unbelievable Carpet.

What the fuck colour is the carpet at Heathrow Airport? They must've laid it to reassure foreigners we're not a serious country.

God, I stink.

**Anna** Are you all right?

**Larry** Yeah. I don't suppose you fancy a friendly poke?

*Beat.*

**Anna** I've just had a bath.

**Larry** I'll see to myself then, in the *Elle Decoration* bathroom.

**Anna** You chose that bathroom.

**Larry** Yeah and every time I wash in it I feel *dirty*. It's *cleaner* than I am. It's got attitude. The mirror says, 'Who the fuck are you?'

**Anna** You chose it.

**Larry** Doesn't mean I like it. We shouldn't have . . . *this*.

*Larry gestures vaguely about the room.*

**Anna** Are you experiencing bourgeois guilt?

*Beat.*

**Larry** (*sharp*) Working-class guilt.

*He looks at Anna.*

Why are you dressed? If you've just had a bath.

*Beat.*

**Anna** We needed some milk.

**Larry** Right.

*He goes to exit, stops.*

You OK?

**Anna** Uhhuh. You?

**Larry** Yeah . . .

*Larry exits.*

*Alice enters. She is wearing the black coat from Scene One, also her rucksack from the same scene.*

**Alice** I'm going.

**Dan** I'm sorry.

**Alice** Irrelevant. What are you sorry for?

*Beat.*

**Dan** Everything.

**Alice** Why didn't you tell me before?

*Beat.*

**Dan** Cowardice.

**Alice** Is it because she's clever?

**Dan** No, it's because . . . she doesn't need me.

*Pause.*

**Alice** Do you bring her here?

**Dan** Yes.

**Alice** She sits here?

**Dan** Yes.

*Beat.*

**Alice** Didn't she get married?

**Dan** She stopped seeing me.

*Beat.*

**Alice** Is that when we went to the country? To celebrate our third anniversary?

**Dan** Yes.

**Alice** At least have the guts to look at me.

**Dan** *looks at her.*

**Alice** Did you phone her? To beg her to come back? When you went for your 'long, lonely walks'?

**Dan** Yes.

**Alice** You're a piece of shit.

**Dan** Deception is brutal, I'm not pretending otherwise.

**Alice** How . . . ? How does it *work*? How can you do this to someone?

*Silence.*

**Dan** I don't know.

**Alice** Not good enough, I'm going.

**Dan** *presents her from leaving.*

**Dan** It's late, it's not *safe* out there.

**Alice** And it's *safe* in here?

**Dan** What about your things?

**Alice** I don't need 'things'.

**Dan** Where will you go?

**Alice** I'll disappear.

**Larry** *enters having had his shower. He is wearing a dressing-gown. He hands Anna a shoebox.*

**Larry** 'The Sultan' has returned bearing gifts.

**Anna** *opens the box and takes out the shoes.*

**Dan** *moves towards Alice.*

**Alice** DON'T COME NEAR ME.

**Anna** *(to Larry)* They're beautiful. Thank you.

**Larry** *kisses Anna.*

**Larry** Hey, guess what, *Alice* was at the Paramount Hotel.

**Anna** What?

**Larry** They sell arty postcards in the lobby, I bought one to boost your sales.

**Larry** *takes a postcard from his dressing-gown pocket and reads the back.*

'Young Woman, London'.

*He hands the postcard to Anna.*

And . . . I checked for your book in 'The Museum of Modern Art'. It's *there*. Someone bloody bought one! This student with a ridiculous little beard, he was drooling over your photo on the inside cover – fancied you, the *Geek*. I was so proud of you – 'You've Broken New York'?

**Anna** You're wonderful.

**Larry** Don't ever forget it.

**Larry** *exits.*

**Alice** Change your mind.

Please, change your mind.

Can I still see you?

Dan . . . can I still see you?

*Answer me.*

**Dan** I can't see you. If I see you I'll never leave you.

*Beat.*

**Alice** What will you do if I find someone else?

**Dan** Be jealous.

*Beat.*

**Alice** Do you still fancy me?

**Dan** Of course.

*Alice shakes her head.*

**Alice** You're lying. I've been 'you'.

*She starts to cry.*

Hold me?

**Dan** holds her.

**Alice** I amuse you but I bore you.

**Dan** No. No.

**Alice** You did love me?

**Dan** I'll *always* love you. You changed my life. I hate hurting you.

**Alice** So why are you?

**Dan** Because . . . I'm selfish and I think I'll be happier with her.

**Alice** You won't, you'll miss me. No one will ever love you as much as I do.

**Dan** I know.

*Pause.*

**Alice** Why isn't love enough?

I'm the one who leaves.

I'm supposed to leave *you*.

*I'm the one who leaves.*

*She kisses Dan. He responds. She breaks.*

Make some tea . . . *Buster.*

**Dan** exits.

**Alice** and **Anna** are alone.

**Larry** enters. *He is wearing trousers and the black cashmere seen in Scene Five.*

**Anna** Why are you dressed?

**Larry** Because I think you might be about to leave me and I didn't want to be wearing a dressing-gown.

I slept with someone in New York.

A whore.

I'm sorry.

Please don't leave me.

*Beat.*

**Anna** Why?

**Larry** For sex. I wanted sex. (I wore a condom.)

*Beat.*

**Anna** Was it . . . good?

*Larry huffs and puffs.*

**Larry** . . . Yes . . .

**Anna** 'Paramount' whore?

**Larry** No . . . Forty . . . something Street.

**Anna** Where did you go?

**Larry** Her place.

**Anna** Nice?

Larry Not as nice as ours. I'm really sorry.

*Pause.*

Anna Why did you tell me?

Larry I couldn't lie to you.

Anna Why not?

Larry Because I love you.

*Pause.*

Anna It's fine.

Larry Really? *Why?*

Anna *looks at her shoes.*

Anna Guilt present?

Larry Love present. Something's wrong . . .

Anna . . .

Anna *turns to him.*

Larry Are you leaving me?

Anna *nods.*

Larry Why?

Anna Dan.

*Beat.*

Larry 'Cupid'? He's our *joke*.

Anna I love him.

*Pause.*

Larry You're seeing him now . . .

Anna Yes.

Larry Since when?

Anna Since my opening, last year. I'm disgusting.

*Beat.*

Larry You're *phenomenal* . . . you're so . . . *clever*.

Why did you marry me?

Anna I stopped seeing him, I wanted us to work.

Larry Why did you tell me you wanted children?

Anna Because I did.

Larry And now you want children with him?

Anna Yes - I don't know - I'm so sorry.

*Pause.*

Larry *Why?*

*Beat.*

Anna I need him.

*Silence.*

Larry But . . . we're happy . . . aren't we?

Anna Yes.

*Beat.*

Larry Are you going to live with him?

Anna Yes. You stay here, if you want to.

Larry I don't give a FUCK about 'the spoils'.

*Alice exits with her rucksack.*

Larry You did this the day we met; let me *hang myself* for your amusement. Why didn't you tell me the second I walked in the door.

Anna I was scared.

Larry Because you're a coward. You spoil *blotch*.

Dan *enters with two cups of tea, he sees Alice has gone. He exits after her.*

**Larry** Are you dressed because you thought I might hit you?

*He moves towards Anna, slowly.*

(*Close.*) What do you think I am?

**Anna** I've been hit before.

**Larry** Not by me.

*He stands over Anna.*

Is he a good fuck?

**Anna** Don't do this.

**Larry** Just answer the question. Is he good?

*Beat.*

**Anna** Yes.

**Larry** Better than me?

**Anna** Different.

**Larry** Better?

**Anna** Gentler.

**Larry** What does that mean?

**Anna** You know what it means.

**Larry** Tell me.

**Anna** No.

**Larry** I treat you like a whore?

**Anna** Sometimes.

**Larry** Why would that be?

*Silence.*

**Anna** I'm sorry, you're —

**Larry** Don't say it, don't fucking say, 'You're too good for me.' I am — but don't say it.

*He kneels to her.*

(*Gently.*) Anna, you're making the mistake of your life.

You're leaving me because you think you don't deserve happiness, but you do, Anna, you do . . .

*He looks at her.*

Did you have a bath because you had sex with him?

*Anna looks at him. He moves away from her.*

**Larry** So you didn't smell of him? So you'd feel less guilty?

And how do you *feel*?

**Anna** Guilty.

*Beat.*

**Larry** Did you ever love me?

**Anna** Yes.

**Larry** Big fucking deal.

*Silence. Larry breaks down.*

Anna . . . please, don't leave me . . . please.

*Anna holds Larry.*

*On the other side of the stage Dan re-enters and sits on the sofa.*

**Larry** Did you do it here?

**Anna** No.

**Larry** Why not?

*He breaks from her.*

(*Hard.*) Just tell me the truth.

*Beat.*

**Anna** Yes, we did it here.

Larry Where?

*Beat.*

Anna Here.

Larry On this?

*He gestures to the chaise longue.*

We had our first fuck on this.

Think of me?

When?

When did you do it here?

ANSWER THE QUESTION.

*Beat.*

Anna (*scared*) This evening.

*Pause.*

Larry Did you come?

Anna Why are you doing this?

Larry Because I want to know.

*Beat.*

Anna (*softly*) Yes . . . I came.

Larry How many times?

Anna Twice.

Larry How?

Anna First he went down on me and then we fucked.

*Beat.*

Larry Who was where?

Anna (*tough*) I was on top and then he fucked me from behind.

Larry And that's when you came the second time?

Anna Why is the sex so important?

Larry BECAUSE I'M A FUCKING CAVEMAN.

Did you touch yourself while he fucked you?

Anna Yes.

Larry You wank for him?

Anna Sometimes.

Larry And he does?

Anna We do everything that people who have sex do.

Larry You enjoy sucking him off?

Anna *Yes.*

Larry You like his cock?

Anna I love it.

Larry You like him coming in your face?

Anna *Yes.*

Larry What does it taste like?

Anna It tastes like you but sweeter.

Larry THAT's the spirit. Thank you. Thank you for your honesty.

Now fuck off and die. You fucked-up slag.

*Blackout.*