

# THE VISIT

by

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(Vienna's English Theatre Gastspiel GmbH)  
Neudeggasse 14/17  
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## The Characters

*The play is performed by four actors.*

**Jez** – a ‘posh’ boy<sup>1</sup>, studying for a Sports Science Degree. Good looking and arrogant, with some underlying insecurities<sup>2</sup>. Can be charming but ultimately really only cares about himself.

**Lewis** – a boy from a northern working-class family, Lewis went to a state school and was the first in his family to go to university. A clever, likeable extrovert,<sup>3</sup> he is gay but not effeminate<sup>4</sup>. Lewis is reading Politics.

**Abby** – a young woman from a lower middle-class background, the daughter of two teachers. An intelligent, articulate<sup>5</sup> girl who is reading Drama and English at university.

**Teena Whitsom** – a female detective in her mid-twenties, from a local police station. She is forceful<sup>6</sup> and charismatic.

**Setting** – A student house in a provincial university town. March 2024.

**Worksheet available online**  
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<sup>1</sup> one who feels himself to be socially superior

<sup>2</sup> feelings of being insecure; lacking self-confidence

<sup>3</sup> an open, lively cheerful person

<sup>4</sup> without female characteristics

<sup>5</sup> able to express herself with conviction

<sup>6</sup> strong and firm

## THE VISIT

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*A living room of a small, terraced house<sup>1</sup>. The décor is bland<sup>2</sup>, enlivened<sup>3</sup> by a few posters on the walls. Also occupying the walls is an 'abused' cleaning rota and a white board, primarily used for banter<sup>4</sup>. It is titled, ironically, TO DO LIST. This is a communal space in the house for whom no one takes responsibility and consequently has an uncared-for look. There is an old sofa and chair with clothes strewn<sup>5</sup> over it. A coffee table has used mugs<sup>6</sup>, beer bottles and the remains of take-away meals on it. There is a sideboard, on which there are some portable<sup>7</sup> speakers. One side of the stage leads off to the front door and the opposite side to the kitchen and the upstairs. At present the room is empty. It is after midnight on a midweek spring term night. After a few moments, we hear chatter and laughter and Abby and Lewis enter. They have been drinking and are in high spirits.*

ABBY: Did you see Hannah? She was so wasted<sup>8</sup>. Ollie had to literally prop her up<sup>9</sup>.

LEWIS: Don't know what he sees in her – she's such a loser.

ABBY: Hey, she's my friend.

LEWIS: When you're not bitching<sup>10</sup> about her.

ABBY: Well, sometimes she can be such ....

LEWIS/ABBY: A loser!

LEWIS: (*laughing*) My point, precisely.

ABBY: Christ, it's freezing in here. Is the front door still open?

LEWIS: I left it for Jez.

ABBY: Where the hell is he?

LEWIS: Don't ask me. (*Calling off*) Jez! What are you doing, mate<sup>11</sup>?

JEZ: Coming.

*He enters and crosses to kitchen stage right holding one shoe.*

ABBY: Why are you holding your shoe?

JEZ: Dog poo<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> one of a row of houses linked together

<sup>2</sup> simple and uninteresting

<sup>3</sup> made bright

<sup>4</sup> the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks

<sup>5</sup> loosely scattered

<sup>6</sup> large cups without saucers

<sup>7</sup> that can be moved easily

<sup>8</sup> so drunk she couldn't stand up

<sup>9</sup> support her

<sup>10</sup> complaining, making unkind critical comments

<sup>11</sup> friend (colloq.)

<sup>12</sup> droppings (shit – *slang*)

ABBY: Dog poo?

JEZ: There was a great, stinking pile of it on the path. I stepped right in it.

LEWIS: It's that black Labrador next door. I think the old crone<sup>1</sup> gets her dog to do its business on our path, to get her own back.

JEZ: What for?

LEWIS: For the noise. Let's show her we're back! Party time.

*He selects some music. Jez re-enters putting his shoe on.*

ABBY: Whoa, I hope you got it all off<sup>2</sup>.

JEZ: You can check if you want.

*He holds his foot up to her.*

ABBY: *(moving away)* No way!

*The music starts.*

JEZ: You're not going to play that crap<sup>3</sup> ...?

ABBY: I like it.

JEZ: You two have no taste. Why not put on something from the king of pop...BIEBER!

ABBY/LEWIS: Nooo!

LEWIS: *(checking empty bottles)* There's no booze<sup>4</sup> left.

ABBY: No, you drank it all before we went out.

LEWIS: I really need a drink. Jez, you haven't got anything hidden away in your room, have you?

JEZ: Depends on whether you're prepared to take this crap off<sup>5</sup>?

LEWIS: That depends on what you've got ....

JEZ: It's Absolut<sup>6</sup>.

LEWIS: OK, I give in.

JEZ: I'll get it.

*Jez exits.*

ABBY: Are there any glasses left?

LEWIS: No, I broke the last one. Sorry.

ABBY: It'll have to be mugs, then. *(She lifts up a mug on the coffee table.)*

Christ, this is disgusting! It's got mould<sup>7</sup> in it.

LEWIS: It's Jez's. Been there for weeks.

ABBY: Does he never clean anything up? There are pans in the kitchen that haven't been washed since last term.

LEWIS: I know. Your cleaning rota<sup>8</sup> doesn't seem to be working.

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<sup>1</sup> an ugly old woman

<sup>2</sup> removed it all

<sup>3</sup> rubbish

<sup>4</sup> alcohol

<sup>5</sup> stop playing this music

<sup>6</sup> a brand of vodka

<sup>7</sup> fungus stains

<sup>8</sup> taking turns to do jobs around the flat

ABBY: It would, if everybody followed it.

LEWIS: I'm afraid it's not "Jez proof"<sup>1</sup>.

ABBY: Why does he never do his share of the cleaning?

LEWIS: Not brought up to it. Used to having everything done for him.

*Jez overhears as he re-enters with the bottle.*

JEZ: What's that?

LEWIS: You're too used to having everything done for you –by "the home help".

JEZ: That's so harsh<sup>2</sup>! Mummy only had a cleaner during the week.

We had to cope<sup>3</sup> all by ourselves at the weekends.

ABBY: (*sarcastically referring to the mugs*) I'll clean these up, shall I?

JEZ: (*sweetly*) That would be awesome<sup>4</sup>. Thank you.

*Abby exits, disgruntled<sup>5</sup>.*

LEWIS: And he's even polite to the servants – a true gentleman.

JEZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just 'cos I didn't go to the local comprehensive with all the other plebs<sup>6</sup>. Now shut up and change that music.

LEWIS: Fine.

*Lewis changes music, Jez dances ridiculously around the room teasing Lewis.*

JEZ: Did you see Hannah tonight?

LEWIS: Of course – couldn't miss her in that outfit.

JEZ: I swear, she was hitting on me<sup>7</sup>.

LEWIS: No way. She was pissed<sup>8</sup>, mate. Probably couldn't see straight.

JEZ: She was definitely trying to hook up with me<sup>9</sup>.

LEWIS: You think everyone is giving you "the come on".

*Abby re-enters.*

ABBY: What's this?

LEWIS: Jez thinks Hannah is hitting on him.

ABBY: Yeah, in his dreams! Everyone knows she's devoted<sup>10</sup> to Ollie.

*Abby puts the mugs down and Jez pours the drinks during the following.*

JEZ: You wait and see. He's too cheugy<sup>11</sup> for her anyway.

ABBY: And you're not?

JEZ: Ouch. That hurt, Abby. Really hurt. Don't be jealous – you know you

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<sup>1</sup> The system doesn't work when it's Jez's turn.

<sup>2</sup> hard

<sup>3</sup> look after the house

<sup>4</sup> fantastic, brilliant

<sup>5</sup> bitterly annoyed

<sup>6</sup> members of the lower social classes (Latin)

<sup>7</sup> She was flirting intensely with me.

<sup>8</sup> drunk

<sup>9</sup> get together - sexually

<sup>10</sup> emotionally committed

<sup>11</sup> someone or something that is unfashionable, or trying too hard

fancy me rotten<sup>1</sup>, as well. (*He moves towards her.*)

ABBY: Get off. I said, get off!

*There is a playful scuffle<sup>2</sup> between them.*

Leave me alone.

JEZ: Come on, stop playing hard to get<sup>3</sup>. You know you want me too.

LEWIS: Stop it, you two. Let's get down to the serious business of drinking.

JEZ: A toast! (*Mock toasting<sup>4</sup>*) To the residents of number 36.

LEWIS/ABBY: Number 36!

*They drink, laugh and sit down.*

LEWIS: (*excitedly*) Do you know what we should play?

JEZ: What?

LEWIS: Never have I ever...

ABBY: What?

LEWIS: Never have I ever ....

ABBY: Never have you ever what?

JEZ: She was away the weekend we played it.

LEWIS: You'll love it. It's a drinking game. It's really easy.

JEZ: Yeah, let's do it.

ABBY: (*with growing excitement*) How do you play?

JEZ: So, someone starts by saying: "Never have I ever...*whatever*". It's got to be about something you've never done before, like "Never have I ever ... sky dived", for instance.

ABBY: OK.

JEZ: So, then anyone who has actually skydived, has to stand up, take a drink, and pay a forfeit<sup>5</sup>. Then we move on to the next person, and so on.

LEWIS: The important thing is for everyone to be completely truthful. No fibs<sup>6</sup> or evasions<sup>7</sup>. Got it?

ABBY: (*really excited*) Got it. This is awesome!

JEZ: (*mockingly*) OK

LEWIS: What happened to the cards?

JEZ: What cards?

LEWIS: The forfeit cards? From the last time we played? They must be around somewhere.

*Lewis searches the room for the forfeit cards, upturning clothes, etc.*

ABBY: How do you know who the winner is?

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<sup>1</sup> really like me a lot

<sup>2</sup> fight

<sup>3</sup> stop pretending you are not interested (when you actually are)

<sup>4</sup> pretending to offer a toast

<sup>5</sup> to do sth. (usually unpleasant) as a 'punishment' for losing

<sup>6</sup> lies

<sup>7</sup> avoiding the truth

JEZ: By elimination<sup>1</sup>. If you throw up, you're out of the game.

ABBY: That's evil.

JEZ: *(smiling)* Yes, yes, it is.

LEWIS: *(finding the forfeit cards and spreading them face down on the table)*

Ah. Here they are.

JEZ: I'll pour out the drinks. *(He does so.)*

LEWIS: And we are ready to go.

ABBY: Who starts?

LEWIS: I will – here's a gentle one. "Never have I ever" ... stolen anything from our fridge.

*There is a pause. They look at each other, then at Jez. He stands and takes a drink.*

I knew it was you – you lying chad<sup>2</sup>. You're the one who steals all my milk!

JEZ: Sorry. *(He isn't really.)*

*Lewis refills Jez's mug.*

ABBY: So, he has to pick a forfeit now, yeah?

LEWIS: He certainly does.

*Abby starts a rhythmic chant of "forfeit, forfeit" and Lewis joins in. Jez tentatively<sup>3</sup> lifts a card, then puts it down again.*

JEZ: There's no way I'm doing that.

ABBY: What is it?

LEWIS: You have to – no copping out<sup>4</sup>.

*Abby grabs<sup>5</sup> the card and reads it.*

ABBY: "Eat something out of the bin." Eeugh<sup>6</sup>! That's totally gross<sup>7</sup>!

JEZ: Yeah...and I'm not doing it.

LEWIS: You are. Those are the rules.

*Lewis brings a kitchen bin into the room and they lift the lid. He and Abby exclaim at the smell.*

JEZ: There's stuff that must be over two weeks old in there.

ABBY: I have no sympathy. It was your turn to empty it.

*Holding his nose, Jez searches inside the bin while Abby and Lewis laugh hysterically. He comes up with a half-eaten yogurt.*

JEZ: OK. One sip. That's as far as I'm prepared to go. *(Preparing.)* Who doesn't finish a yogurt?

LEWIS: It was prune.

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<sup>1</sup> by who is still left at the end (after the others have been excluded)

<sup>2</sup> a stereotypical, dominant male – used humorously in a negative sense

<sup>3</sup> with hesitation

<sup>4</sup> avoiding

<sup>5</sup> suddenly takes

<sup>6</sup> expression of disgust

<sup>7</sup> horrible, awful (slang)



*Abby and Lewis clap and chant “forfeit” again, while Jez takes a sip from the yogurt cup and throws it back in the bin. Lewis takes the bin back to the kitchen.*

ABBY: What did it taste like?

JEZ: What do you mean what did it taste like?! It tasted like week old *prune* yogurt!?

LEWIS: Let’s carry on. Your call<sup>1</sup>, Abby.

ABBY: OK...Never ever have I ... cheated in an exam.

JEZ: Oh, *what... ?!!*

*Jez stands and drains<sup>2</sup> his drink.*

LEWIS: Abby and I will end up stone-cold sober<sup>3</sup> at this rate.

*He pours a shot into Jez’s mug.*

ABBY: I had you down as a lot of things, Jez, but never as a cheat.

JEZ: It was at Primary school<sup>4</sup>. I was nine at the time.

LEWIS: (*indicating the forfeit cards*) Go on, then.

*Jez picks up another forfeit card.*

LEWIS: (*selecting the card*) If this is anything like the ... (*seeing the card*) Oh, well, that could be worse.

ABBY: What is it?

LEWIS: “Remove an item of clothing”.

*Jez takes off his shirt and is bare chested beneath.*

JEZ: Feel free to gaze<sup>5</sup> in awe<sup>6</sup> and admiration.

ABBY: Uh, I don’t think so.

LEWIS: (*to Jez*) It’s your call.

JEZ: With pleasure. Time to level the playing field. Never have I ever ... kissed a boy – and I mean a proper kiss – tongues and all.

LEWIS: That is SO unfair!

*Abby and Lewis stand and take a drink.*

JEZ: (*chanting, mimicking<sup>7</sup> the others as he tops up their mugs*) Forfeit! Forfeit!

*Abby and Lewis each pick up a card.*

ABBY: (*reading*) “Call someone you don’t know and tell them you want to have sex with them.”

*She grabs Lewis’ phone, which is on the table and presses a random number<sup>8</sup>.*

LEWIS: (*tries to stop her, Jez wrestles him away.*) Not my phone! No!

ABBY: Hello? Is that (- *checks name in phone*) Mark Thewlis? Hi, I’m just calling to say that I’ve seen you around and I really want you. I’d do

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<sup>1</sup> turn

<sup>2</sup> finishes

<sup>3</sup> not having drunk any alcohol at all

<sup>4</sup> for pupils aged 5 to 11

<sup>5</sup> to look long

<sup>6</sup> respect

<sup>7</sup> copying

<sup>8</sup> one chosen by chance

anything, and I mean, anything, to hook up<sup>1</sup> with you. You're SO HOT.  
(*Brightly*) Bye!

*Jez releases Lewis.*

LEWIS: Thanks, Abby. Thanks a lot.

ABBY: So, who exactly is Mark Thewlis?

LEWIS: One of my history professors.

ABBY: Oops.

JEZ: Awesome, Abby. Perfect choice. So, Lewis, what does your card say?

LEWIS: (*reading card*) "Recite the alphabet backwards in twenty seconds or less without pausing".

JEZ: I had to eat bin yoghurt and he gets the alphabet!?

ABBY: But just about impossible after a couple of shots.

LEWIS: Z-y-x-w-v-u-t-s-r-q-p-o-n-m-l-k-j-i-h-g-f-e-d-c-b-a.

ABBY: Awesome!

JEZ: When did you learn to do that?

LEWIS: When I was a kid. Harry and I were a real pair of nerds<sup>2</sup>, always trying to outdo<sup>3</sup> each other. You know, quizzes, puzzles, problems ... the more off-the-wall<sup>4</sup>, the better.

JEZ: I wish I'd known you when I was doing my maths GCSE<sup>5</sup>.

LEWIS: It would have cost you. We used to charge<sup>6</sup> the other kids for solving maths problems. One term we made over twenty quid.

ABBY: Your turn, Lewis.

LEWIS: Never have I ever ... worn the same underwear for over a week.

*Beat. As they both look at Jez.*

JEZ: I'm going to be so drunk. (*He stands and drinks.*)

ABBY: Oh, Jez! You are disgusting.

JEZ: Didn't get a chance to go to the launderette. Had to buy new ones in the end.

*They laugh, Lewis fills Jez's mug as he picks a card.*

JEZ: This is strangely appropriate<sup>7</sup>, given<sup>8</sup> my last confession<sup>9</sup>: "Wear someone else's underpants or knickers on your head". Come on, then Abby, get 'em off! (*Jez mockingly goes to Abby to get her pants.*)

ABBY: (*laughing*) NO, no...I'm not wearing any!

JEZ: (*steps back*) Oh, Abby!?

ABBY: I'm joking

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<sup>1</sup> make sexual contact

<sup>2</sup> 'obsessives' who spend lots of time on academic activities

<sup>3</sup> beat, defeat

<sup>4</sup> way out, extreme

<sup>5</sup> general Certificate of Secondary Education, exam taken at 15 or 16 years of age in England

<sup>6</sup> ask for, demand money from

<sup>7</sup> suitable

<sup>8</sup> considering, in view of

<sup>9</sup> admission

LEWIS: There's some of mine in the kitchen, hanging on the dryer.

*Jez exits to fetch the underpants.*

ABBY: At least they're clean.

LEWIS: Sort of. We're out of washing powder again.

*Jez returns with Lewis' brightly patterned boxer briefs.*

JEZ: Lewis! what are these!?

LEWIS: They're my lucky pants.

JEZ: There's not many men would be able to carry off<sup>1</sup> this look.

LEWIS: That's something to be grateful for. Abby?

ABBY: Is it my turn again? All right, let's see: "Never have I ever ..." snogged<sup>2</sup> someone else's partner at a party.

JEZ: I cannot lie.

LEWIS: Nor I.

*Lewis and Jez stand and take a drink.*

ABBY: Who with?

LEWIS: Do you remember Ethan, that boyfriend you had -?

ABBY: You didn't? (*He looks at her.*) You didn't?... You didn't?!

LEWIS: Only joking. It was Joe Williams.

ABBY: I thought he was straight<sup>3</sup>.

LEWIS: Thereby lies a tale<sup>4</sup>.

JEZ: Can we get on? (*Indicating forfeit cards.*) Lewis, you go first.

LEWIS: (*picking up a card and reading*) "Act out a love scene from a movie - playing both roles".

*They all laugh - the doorbell goes.*

JEZ: Who the hell is that?

LEWIS: Probably the woman next door, complaining about the noise.

*The doorbell goes again.*

JEZ: Isn't anyone going to answer that?

LEWIS: Let's leave it. She'll get bored and go away.

*The doorbell rings again.*

ABBY: I'll go then, shall I?

*Abby gets up and exits.*

LEWIS: Thank you! Pass the bottle, Jez.

JEZ: After I've had a top up<sup>5</sup>.

*They drink - we hear Abby's voice off and also that of a woman.*

LEWIS: I've just thought of the best one, and I know she'd done it.

JEZ: Quick, tell me before she gets back.

LEWIS: Never have I ever, in a park squatted in a bush and had a ....

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<sup>1</sup> to perform successfully

<sup>2</sup> kissed intimately

<sup>3</sup> heterosexual

<sup>4</sup> A phrase used to show that there is a secret.

<sup>5</sup> a refill

JEZ: (*seeing the official looking visitor*) Ssshhhh.

Abby re-enters with Teena Whitsom - a plain clothes police woman - she is holding a card.

ABBY: This is Detective Sergeant Whitsom.

Jeز stands up and offers Teena his hand to shake, forgetting that he has no shirt and he's wearing Lewis' underpants on his head.

JEZ: We're sorry about the noise. (*Realising*) Oh, and ... about this. We were just, um, playing a game and it sort of got<sup>1</sup>...

TEENA: (*interrupting*) Yes, I can see. (*To Lewis*) Turn the music off, will you? *Lewis turns the music off.*

(*To Jez*) And I suggest you take those things off your head and put some clothes on.

Jeز starts to giggle<sup>2</sup>. There is a slight pause before he catches her look and realises she is deadly serious.

Now, please.

Jeز quickly removes the underpants and puts his shirt back on.

ABBY: Look, we're really sorry if we've disturbed anyone. We don't usually have the music this loud, in fact, we're normally really quiet, it's just ...

TEENA: (*interrupting*) I haven't come about the noise.

LEWIS: Really?

*They look at each other.*

TEENA: No.

ABBY: So, how can we help you?

TEENA: This may take a few minutes. I suggest we all sit down.

*They sit, awkwardly<sup>3</sup>.*

TEENA: Let's start with your names. (*Getting out a notebook. To Lewis*) Yes?

LEWIS: I'm Lewis Martin.

TEENA: And you live here?

LEWIS: Yes, we all do.

TEENA: So, you're a student at the university?

LEWIS: Yeah – doing Politics and History. (*To the others*) I'm beginning to feel guilty, and I haven't done anything.

TEENA: Date of birth?

LEWIS: Sorry... ?

TEENA: Your date of birth?

LEWIS: Oh, right. First of February, two thousand and four.

TEENA: Thank you. (*Looking at Abby*) And you are?

ABBY: Abby – Abigail Myers.

TEENA: Is that Miss Myers?

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<sup>1</sup> (...out of control)

<sup>2</sup> to laugh a little

<sup>3</sup> feeling uncomfortable

ABBY: Ms<sup>1</sup>.

TEENA: Ms. And you're a student, too?

ABBY: Yes. Reading<sup>2</sup> English and Drama. Born eighteenth June, two thousand and four.

TEENA: And? (*Turning to Jez*)

JEZ: Jeremy Brokenshire. Studying Sports Science.

LEWIS: (*to Abby*) When he feels like it.

TEENA: (*to Lewis*) Did you want to say something, Mr Lewis?

LEWIS: No, nothing. Sorry.

TEENA: (*to Jez*) Date of birth?

JEZ: Twenty third of March.

*Pause, Teena looks expectantly.*

Oh. Two thousand and three.

TEENA: Does anyone else live here?

ABBY: No, just us.

TEENA: (*briskly*<sup>3</sup>) I know it's late, so I'll try not to take up too much of your time. We're just making enquiries<sup>4</sup> at this stage.

ABBY: About what?

TEENA: Earlier this evening a young woman was found lying unconscious in the grounds of the university.

JEZ: (*under his breath, to Lewis*) Sounds like we missed a good party.

TEENA: (*with steel*<sup>5</sup>, *to Jez*) Not really. She tried to take her own life. A suspected<sup>6</sup> suicide attempt.

ABBY: That's awful! Is she OK?

TEENA: Too early to tell. She's in intensive care.

ABBY: It isn't someone we know, is it?

LEWIS: Jesus! Is that why you're here?

TEENA: We don't currently<sup>7</sup> know the young woman's identity. She was found lying underneath a willow tree<sup>8</sup>, close to Highfield Campus. The officers attending the scene found nothing on her person, apart from a suicide note.

JEZ: So why us?

TEENA: I thought you might be able to help with our enquiries.

ABBY: Of course – whatever we can do. Right, boys?

*The boys nod in agreement.*

(*Turning to Teena*) So you think she was a student, yeah?

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<sup>1</sup> alternative to Miss or Mrs (Here Abby is refusing to be categorised)

<sup>2</sup> studying

<sup>3</sup> quickly, sharply

<sup>4</sup> trying to find out information

<sup>5</sup> in a hard tone

<sup>6</sup> believed to be

<sup>7</sup> at present

<sup>8</sup> (a symbol of death or mourning)

TEENA: We're almost certain she was.

LEWIS: Because she was found on campus?

TEENA: Mainly because of certain ... information that has come to light since she was discovered. She used an online identity - rather than her actual name - to sign the suicide note. We've discovered that the name relates to an anonymous blog, and whoever wrote that blog is clearly a student at this University.

LEWIS: So, you think the girl wrote this blog?

TEENA: It would appear so, but she seems to have gone to some lengths<sup>1</sup> to conceal her real name.

ABBY: Then why bother with a false name... If she didn't want to be identified? It doesn't make sense.

TEENA: I couldn't say. In my experience, people hide their real identities for all kinds of reasons.

LEWIS: So, if you don't know who she is, what brought you here?

TEENA: The blog suggests she knew someone living in this house.

JEZ: Really?

ABBY: Doesn't sound like anyone we know.

TEENA: So, I'll need a few minutes with each of you. Just to see if anyone is able to identify her.

JEZ: (*jokingly*) I'm not going to need my lawyer, am I?

TEENA: I sincerely hope not, Mr Brokenshire.

*Jez automatically picks up his mug and reaches for the bottle.*

TEENA: (*to Jez*) No alcohol, please. I'll need your full attention for the next few minutes. (*To Abby*) I'd like to start with you, Ms Myers.

ABBY: Me? OK.

TEENA: When I visited the girl in hospital I took a picture, for identification purposes. I'd like you to look at it.

*Teena opens an image on her phone.*

JEZ: (*half rising from the sofa*) Can I see?

TEENA: Please stay seated, I'll be speaking to you shortly. Ms Myers?

*Teena takes Abby to one side and shows her the picture in her phone.*

TEENA: Here.

ABBY: Oh my god, she looks in a bad way. All those tubes<sup>2</sup>... No, no I don't recognise her.

*She hands the phone back to Teena.*

TEENA: I'll make the image bigger. Look again.

*She enlarges the image and hands the phone back to Abby.*

ABBY: I'm sorry, I still don't ... I mean, she looks a bit like a girl I knew at school, but ... actually, it could be her. Older, of course, and a lot thinner.

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<sup>1</sup> made a great effort

<sup>2</sup> (to keep her alive in intensive care)

Lucy... Lucy ... Lucy Fenton. I haven't seen her since sixth form<sup>1</sup>. But why would she be here, at this Uni?

TEENA: That's what we're hoping to find out. Can you tell me anything more about her?

ABBY: Not really. I didn't know her that well. She only joined my school to take her A Levels<sup>2</sup>. She didn't stay long. I think she dropped out<sup>3</sup> after a couple of months.

TEENA: Do you remember why?

ABBY: Sorry, I can't.

TEENA: Anything else about her?

ABBY: I think she joined the drama club at school.

TEENA: And?

ABBY: She was quite pretty.

TEENA: Did you like her?

ABBY: Is that relevant?

TEENA: It could be.

ABBY: As I said, I didn't have much to do with her.

TEENA: Did she have many friends?

ABBY: A few, I think, but you know what it's like. She was a newcomer and the rest of us already had our friendship groups.

TEENA: I see. Do you think that was why she joined the drama club?

ABBY: I don't follow?

TEENA: To make friends? If she was new and lonely?

ABBY: I don't think she was lonely. She seemed to get on with the boys well enough.

TEENA: You said that she was pretty, and popular with the boys. Would you say you were a little bit jealous<sup>4</sup> of her?

ABBY: Me?! Why would I be jealous?

TEENA: Well, a new, attractive girl arrives at school. Maybe she takes some of the attention away from you?

LEWIS: Hold on, Abby's not like that.

TEENA: Thank you, Mr Martin, but please don't interrupt. I'll come to you in a minute.

LEWIS: Not much point – I don't even know the girl.

TEENA: (*Back to Abby*) So you weren't jealous of Lucy Fenton?

ABBY: No, not really.

TEENA: Not even when teachers praised her as the star of your drama club?

ABBY: No! Look, where are you getting all this stuff<sup>5</sup> from?

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<sup>1</sup> final two years at upper-secondary school

<sup>2</sup> general Certificate of Education 'Advanced' Level (in England)

<sup>3</sup> left school

<sup>4</sup> envious

<sup>5</sup> information (colloq.)

TEENA: From her blog. Lucy also mentions a dispute<sup>1</sup> over a boy ... Matt? (*She refers to her notepad*). Yes, Matthew Courtney. She mentions an ‘Abby’ who was dating him – was that you?

ABBY: I did go out with Matt Courtney. Yes.

TEENA: He showed some interest in her, didn’t he? Did that make you angry?

ABBY: Of course it made me angry – who wouldn’t be? (*Playing down her reaction.*<sup>2</sup>) But I knew he wasn’t serious, so I let it go.

TEENA: Really? Didn’t you and your friends say some pretty unpleasant things about Lucy, on social media?

ABBY: I don’t recall. There may have been a couple of comments on social media. You know what young girls are like.

TEENA: I’d say it was a little more than that.

JEZ: Oh Abby, I am shocked. Little Miss Perfect, the school bully.

ABBY: Shut it, Jez.

TEENA: In the blog, Lucy describes a confrontation with you the day before she left the school. Tell me about it.

ABBY: If you already know what happened, why do you need me to go over it?

TEENA: Lucy was very clear about her side of the story. I haven’t heard yours.

ABBY: What did she say?

TEENA: She talked about bullying<sup>3</sup> and betrayal<sup>4</sup>. About lies that were circulated. Perhaps you’d like me to refresh your memory? (*Looking at her phone*). I’ve got a link to the blog here, I can read it out.

ABBY: (*turning away from Teena, unable to look her in the eye*) Look, is this really necessary? I’ve already told you who she is. What more do you want?

TEENA: (*ignoring Abby, looking up the blog date on her phone*) ... So, here we are. 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020. “I decided to follow Abby home from school. Not to pick a fight: I just wanted to know what could drive a person to be so horrible, to hate someone so much for no reason.”

*Teena moves towards Abby during the next few lines, speaking Lucy’s words and seemingly becoming Lucy herself.*

“I kept my distance as we walked, trying to build up the courage to run up to her - challenge her<sup>5</sup> - but I couldn’t do it. Just before she reached home she stopped and pulled out her phone. She must have got a text from one of her friends. She was standing, half turned towards me, and I could see she was smiling. That’s when I got the courage to speak. Even without seeing the text, I knew exactly what she was looking at.”

*Teena speaks as Lucy, grabbing Abby’s shoulder and forcing her to face her. As*

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<sup>1</sup> an argument

<sup>2</sup> (to make it seem less important)

<sup>3</sup> being ‘mobbed’

<sup>4</sup> being let down

<sup>5</sup> ask her direct questions



*Abby turns, there is a sound effect and a flashback<sup>1</sup> begins.*

LUCY: Why?

ABBY: Excuse me

LUCY: Why did you do it?

ABBY: I don't know what you're talking about.

LUCY: I think you do.

ABBY: All I know is, you've made an even bigger embarrassment<sup>2</sup> of yourself than usual. I heard about the photos going round school today. You, with your top off ... that's pretty tacky<sup>3</sup>, even by your standards.

LUCY: I didn't send them out, though did I. You did.

ABBY: And how exactly would I get hold of topless photos of you?

LUCY: Because you're "Luke."

ABBY: Sorry? Luke who?

LUCY: You set up a fake profile of a guy called "Luke Ellison" on Facebook. You messaged me, pretending to be him. Don't try to deny it<sup>4</sup>.

ABBY: Sounds like you've lost the plot. I've never heard of him and those pictures are nothing to do with me.

LUCY: You know they are.

ABBY: All right. Where's the proof?

LUCY: Lauren and Rachel. I overheard them, saying how you'd played me along<sup>5</sup>; made me think "Luke" wanted a relationship. If you really meant to keep it a secret, they're the last people you should have told.

ABBY: That's not proof.

LUCY: I know. That's why I went to Holly. She confirmed it.

*Abby is caught out. She doesn't know how to reply.*

You know, you were good. Really good. You made me believe that "Luke" was real, and that he liked me. I felt so lucky to have him when you and your friends were ignoring me, or bitching<sup>6</sup> about me. So when he ... when you ... asked for those pictures, I ... (*She takes a breath, pauses.*) Have you any idea what it feels like to walk in to school and know that everyone's seen you ... like that? Can you imagine what it's like? I mean, what have I ever done to you, Abby?

ABBY: You tried to take Matt off me.

LUCY: What? Why would you think that?

ABBY: I read one of his texts, one he sent to you. Saying he was ready to break up with me, talking about kissing you, touching you.

---

<sup>1</sup> A scene that takes place earlier than the main story.

<sup>2</sup> worse impression

<sup>3</sup> cheap, in bad taste

<sup>4</sup> say it's not true

<sup>5</sup> tricked me

<sup>6</sup> complaining, saying bad things

LUCY: Shame you never bothered<sup>1</sup> to look up my reply. (*Reaching for her phone*) The one where I said I didn't fancy him<sup>2</sup>. The one where I said that if he tried to grope<sup>3</sup> me again, I'd tell you. Here.

*She holds the phone at Abby's eye level. Abby barely reads it.*

ABBY: I didn't know.

LUCY: If you'd only asked me, I would have told you.

ABBY: OK. Maybe I went a bit far<sup>4</sup>. Too far. I'm sorry.

LUCY: I'm sorry. Is that all you can say?... You've ruined my life.

*Abby opens her mouth as if to defend herself, then thinks better of it. She turns away from Lucy, defeated and ashamed.*

TEENA: (*out of role, suddenly businesslike*) According to the blog, that was the last time you and Lucy spoke. The following week she left school ... as you can appreciate, she found it impossible to stay on after those photos went out. *Lewis and Jez are stunned<sup>5</sup> by what they have heard.*

LEWIS: Wow. Abby – I would never have thought you capable of doing something like that.

JEZ: Yeah. I'd call that pretty harsh<sup>6</sup>, even by my standards.

LEWIS: More than harsh – vicious<sup>7</sup>. What got into you?

ABBY: I feel ... I think I might be sick. (*To Teena*) can I sit down, now? *Teena nods.*

TEENA: (*To Lewis*) Get her some water, will you?

*Lewis grudgingly<sup>8</sup> exits to the kitchen.*

ABBY: What happened, just then? It all came flooding<sup>9</sup> back, like I was actually there. (*To Teena*) I don't understand! How did that happen?

*She sits with her head in her hands.*

*Lewis returns with a mug of water and hands it to her roughly<sup>10</sup>. Abby drinks.*

TEENA: Now your little online prank<sup>11</sup> is out in the open ... I assume there's nothing else you have to tell me about Lucy Fenton?

ABBY: No, nothing else. I just want to say that you're right, Lewis. What I did was vicious. I was young and stupid and it just didn't occur to me that she might be so ... vulnerable<sup>12</sup>. She always seemed so confident.

TEENA: Her blog tells a different story, I'm afraid.

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<sup>1</sup> tried, made the effort

<sup>2</sup> didn't want him as a boyfriend

<sup>3</sup> touch in an indecent way

<sup>4</sup> overdid it, exaggerated

<sup>5</sup> shocked

<sup>6</sup> fairly hard

<sup>7</sup> nasty, evil

<sup>8</sup> reluctantly, unwillingly

<sup>9</sup> rushing

<sup>10</sup> not gently

<sup>11</sup> trick

<sup>12</sup> easily wounded emotionally

LEWIS: Look, what Abby did was really unforgivable but it happened a long time ago. There must have been something else - something that happened more recently - to make her ... you know ... do what she did.

JEZ: Absolutely. (*He stands up and goes to leave the room.*) Well, if we're done, I'll just ....

TEENA: Where are you going?

JEZ: I've ... er<sup>1</sup> ... got some course work to write up.

TEENA: But I haven't spoken to you yet.

LEWIS: You've got the girl's name now. Surely that's all you wanted?

TEENA: Not quite. I'd still like to talk to you, Mr Brokenshire.

JEZ: This course work ... it's got to be in by tomorrow ...

TEENA: Then the quicker we can complete the interview, the quicker you'll be able to get on with it. And just by way of advice, drinking vodka is probably not the best preparation for doing course work.

JEZ: Look, my great uncle was a magistrate<sup>2</sup> and I've got massive, massive respect for the law, but don't you think this is taking things a bit far? I mean, I don't even know anyone called Lucy.

TEENA: Take a look. If you don't recognise the girl, then you'll be free to get on with your ... course work.

*She beckons<sup>3</sup> him over to look at her phone.*

JEZ: OK. But this is all pretty pointless, isn't it?

*He looks at the picture, from his reaction it's clear that he recognises the girl.*

TEENA: So, you do know her?

JEZ: Er...

TEENA: You recognise her?

JEZ: Yeah. Yeah, I think I do. But she's not called 'Lucy'. Well, at least, the girl I know who looks a lot like her, isn't called 'Lucy'. I think this is a girl called Charlie.

TEENA: Think, or know?

JEZ: Know. It's Charlie.

TEENA: It appears that she changed her name. (*She looks at Abby.*) A fresh start, perhaps? (*To Jez*) What's your connection<sup>4</sup> to her?

JEZ: I met her at a party, last year.

TEENA: How would you describe your relationship?

JEZ: I wouldn't say it was a relationship – more a friendship, really. I met her at a student house party – everyone was pretty wasted.

TEENA: Tell me about that evening.

JEZ: Not sure I remember much about it.

TEENA: Charlie remembered it pretty well. It's all in the blog.

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<sup>1</sup> (hesitation)

<sup>2</sup> court judge

<sup>3</sup> invites, gives him a signal to come over to her

<sup>4</sup> relationship

JEZ: Oh?

TEENA: Would you like me to read the blog entry?

JEZ: No!

TEENA: (*She ignores him and calls up the entry in her phone.*) 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2023, party at Callum Brady's...

JEZ: Look, if you're going to question us all like this, shouldn't we have a solicitor present, or something?

TEENA: I've got a squad car<sup>1</sup> outside. If you'd prefer to continue this at the station, then ...

JEZ: OK! I'll do it! Let's just get this over with<sup>2</sup>.

TEENA: She says the first time you met, you spilled a glass of red wine over her. Remember that?

JEZ: Yeah. I remember. But it wasn't my fault. There was this huge guy – must've been a rugby player, or something – charged in to me and I sort of swung round, like this ...

*As he turns, sound effect and we revert<sup>3</sup> to a flashback as before – Teena becomes Charlie. Jez is drunk –slurring<sup>4</sup> his words.*

CHARLIE: Hey, watch out!

JEZ: Sorry. Didn't see you there. Can I get you a cloth or something?

CHARLIE: No, you're fi...It's fine.

*Dabbing at<sup>5</sup> her dress with a tissue.*

JEZ: Pretty shit party.

CHARLIE: Pretty shit.

JEZ: Sorry. You with anyone?

CHARLIE: No, I came on my own.

JEZ: Me too.

CHARLIE: Really? Weren't you ...

JEZ: What?

CHARLIE: Oh, nothing. It's just, I thought I saw you with someone.

JEZ: (*caught out*) Oh, Alice? She's just a friend.

CHARLIE: You two seemed ... close.

JEZ: Well, she's a very good friend. Anyway, she went ages ago. (*Changing the subject*) You are stunning. How have I never seen you around before? What year are you in?

CHARLIE: First.

JEZ: Ahhh. That's why. I'd have remembered those beautiful blue eyes.

CHARLIE: (*laughing*) Is that a chat-up line<sup>6</sup>?

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<sup>1</sup> police car

<sup>2</sup> finish this (the questioning)

<sup>3</sup> return, go back

<sup>4</sup> speaking unclearly

<sup>5</sup> rubbing..... lightly

<sup>6</sup> a way of trying to flirt with me

JEZ: It could be.

CHARLIE: They're brown.

JEZ: What?

CHARLIE: My eyes.

JEZ: Well in this light they look... blue. Whatever, they're beautiful, you're beautiful. Let's get another drink?

CHARLIE: Better not.

JEZ: Go on. There's some beer left ...

CHARLIE: No, really. I think I've probably had enough.

TEENA: (*As herself, out of flashback*) And I think I've probably had enough of your chat-up lines. That was your first meeting, the first of many.

LEWIS: Jez, 'beautiful blue eyes'? Gag.

JEZ: So, I tried it on<sup>1</sup> with her. It's not a crime, is it?

LEWIS: No. It's just you sounded like a used-car salesman.

JEZ: In fairness, I was pissed<sup>2</sup>.

TEENA: So, what happened next?

JEZ: We went back to her room.

TEENA: And?

JEZ: I'm sure it's all there in the blog.

TEENA: It is. When did you next see her?

JEZ: ...Not for a while. We'd both been pretty drunk – it was just a spur-of-the-moment thing<sup>3</sup>.

TEENA: Do you think it was like that for her?

JEZ: Yes ... Yeah, definitely.

TEENA: (*looks at her notes*) "We had the most amazing night. He was so sweet, said he couldn't wait to see me again. He promised he was going to call me the next day."

JEZ: Yeah, well I never actually *promised*. I might have said, "see you around" or something.

TEENA: "A couple of weeks went by. Then, just when I had given up on him, he came round one night, really late. He was drunk. I know that's not a great way to build a relationship, but I thought maybe he hadn't been in touch before because he was shy."

LEWIS gives a snort<sup>4</sup> of laughter.

"I figured he needed a drink to give him courage."

TEENA: (*to Jez*) Would you say that was true?

LEWIS: (*laughingly incredulously*<sup>5</sup>) Don't you dare say yes!

TEENA: After that, you made a number of similar visits: calling round late at

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<sup>1</sup> to 'make it' sexually

<sup>2</sup> drunk

<sup>3</sup> spontaneous

<sup>4</sup> a noise like a pig makes – a sudden loud noise through the nose

<sup>5</sup> unbelievably

night for sex.

JEZ: It wasn't like that. She wanted me to come round. (*Making a feeble<sup>1</sup> joke*)  
Couldn't get enough of me.

ABBY: For Christ's sake, Jez! Do you ever listen to yourself? The way you talk about women – you're disgusting.

JEZ: I don't think you're in any position to criticise.

TEENA: Shall we continue?

*Jez nods his head.*

After a few weeks you stopped going to visit her.

JEZ: Yes.

TEENA: Why?

JEZ: It wasn't fun anymore. When I got there she'd be in a mood. Then we'd argue. Then she'd cry, I'd feel guilty and finally we'd end up in bed together.

TEENA: What did you argue about?

JEZ: She wanted us to go out together - to meet my friends - to meet her friends. She even wanted me to say we were 'in a relationship' on social media.

TEENA: You didn't want that?

*Jez shrugs<sup>2</sup>, acknowledging<sup>3</sup> her comment.*

So, what *did* you want?

JEZ: For it to stay like it was at the beginning – uncomplicated, no strings<sup>4</sup>, just having fun. By the end she was just too ... needy<sup>5</sup>.

TEENA: "Needy", because she wanted you to acknowledge<sup>6</sup> her?

ABBY: Poor girl!

TEENA: So, you stopped seeing her?

JEZ: It wasn't worth the hassle<sup>7</sup>.

TEENA: But that wasn't the end of it, was it? You saw her again about a month later? (*Jez does not answer.*) Didn't you?

JEZ: Yeah. She sent me this weird WhatsApp message, saying she needed to see me, urgently. She'd added these lines, from a song or something.

TEENA: "These days of dust

Which we've known

Will blow away with this new sun"<sup>8</sup>

JEZ: Yeah, something like that. So, I went round to her.

flat. (*To Lewis and Abby*) It was a Saturday morning and I was supposed to be watching my mate Tobes - you know, Toby Winthrop - play rugby. I can

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<sup>1</sup> weak

<sup>2</sup> (his shoulders)

<sup>3</sup> showing he has understood

<sup>4</sup> without commitment

<sup>5</sup> in need of attention and emotional support

<sup>6</sup> recognise and respect

<sup>7</sup> trouble, effort

<sup>8</sup> quote from song *I will wait* by Mumford and Sons (2012)

tell you, I was pretty pissed off<sup>1</sup>, to have been summoned<sup>2</sup> like that.

*Jez turns to Teena – sound effect and we go back into flashback.*

CHARLIE: I wasn't sure you'd come.

JEZ: What is it? I can't stay long.

CHARLIE: I don't know how to tell you this, so I am just going to say it – I'm pregnant.

JEZ: Ha! Pregnant. Good one.

CHARLIE: Jez.

JEZ: Oh shit. *(Pause)* How?

CHARLIE: I think you know how.

JEZ: But I always wore a condom.

CHARLIE: Not the first time – we were both pissed.

JEZ: Shit, shit, shit.

CHARLIE: So, I'm not sure where we go from here?

JEZ: No brainer<sup>3</sup>. You have to get rid of it!

CHARLIE: I'm not sure I ...

JEZ: Please don't say you're actually thinking of keeping it? Christ! You can barely cope<sup>4</sup> on your own, let alone<sup>5</sup> with a baby.

CHARLIE: That's not fair. Other people manage. When I first found out I was really scared, you know? But thinking about it. A new life. All that hope, just waiting to be born. It could be a new start, for both of us.

JEZ: What about your course? Your career? Your future?

CHARLIE: I could take a year out.

JEZ: And come back with a baby?

CHARLIE: Other students have children. There's even a day nursery<sup>6</sup> on campus. I'm not saying it's going to be easy, but I feel like I've been offered a chance to change my life. Maybe this was meant to happen. I know we haven't been that close, recently. But please, at least say you'll think about it?

*She goes towards him, he turns away, visibly annoyed.*

JEZ: Don't! I can't handle this. It's not fair. You can't hit me with this sort of news and expect me to ... what ... fall in love in with you?

*Pause – Charlie cries.*

JEZ: *(softening)* I'm sorry. I just...this is ... huge. I can't take it in. *(Pause)* Let's just think it through. I know this must be hard for you, but you are going to have to be sensible<sup>7</sup>. You don't want to let this ruin your life – our lives.

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<sup>1</sup> annoyed

<sup>2</sup> told, ordered to come

<sup>3</sup> something that requires or involves little or no mental effort

<sup>4</sup> manage, handle your life

<sup>5</sup> especially

<sup>6</sup> crèche, where young children are looked after during the day

<sup>7</sup> reasonable and practical

(*Long pause.*) If you decide to - you know - to have an abortion<sup>1</sup>, I'll be by your side, 100%

CHARLIE: Really?

JEZ: Of course.

CHARLIE: Then isn't it worth trying to work things out between us? For the sake of the baby?

JEZ: (*losing patience*) No! Look, I'm sorry, but I'm just not ready for this. Being a father, having to think about another life, it's just not ... (*Brief pause*) If I'm honest, responsibility isn't exactly my *thing*, never has been. Look, I'll get some money from my parents to pay for the operation. I'll say it's for a new laptop or something. Take the money, get it done, and I promise, one day you'll look back and thank me.

TEENA: (*out of role*) But as we know, she never did thank you for your help with the abortion?

JEZ: (*breaking out of the scene*) All right. I might have been a shit boyfriend, but at least I supported her right up to the day she had it done.

TEENA: And afterwards?

JEZ: She didn't seem to want to know me, then.

TEENA: Would you say she was depressed?

ABBY: Who wouldn't be?

JEZ: No idea. All I can tell you is she was pretty intense<sup>2</sup>. You can only take so much.

ABBY: You used her, Jez. You used her and when you got bored you didn't want to know. You're unbelievable.

LEWIS: Persuading her to have an abortion she clearly didn't want. I mean, Jez – what were you thinking?

JEZ: I'm not proud of the way I behaved, but I have my own life to lead. I'm entitled<sup>3</sup> to that aren't I? (*No one responds*) Aren't I?

TEENA: Shall we move on?

*Teena looks at Lewis.*

LEWIS: Oh, no. You can't think I've got anything to do with this girl?

ABBY: (*to Teena*) Girls are not exactly his thing. You'll be wasting your time.

TEENA: Nevertheless, I'd like you to look at the picture.

LEWIS: Oh come on! There's no way....

*The others watch with interest as Teena calls him over to look at her phone. Lewis takes a long hard look.*

OK. That's Jade.

JEZ: This is ridiculous! How many names does that girl have?

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<sup>1</sup> an operation to end a pregnancy

<sup>2</sup> difficult to handle, deal with

<sup>3</sup> have a right



ABBY: How do you know her?

LEWIS: She was at Glastonbury<sup>1</sup> last year. I met her with a group of friends.

TEENA: And?

LEWIS: Look, you're not going to suggest I had a sexual relationship with her, are you? As Abby has already pointed out, I'm gay.

TEENA: I'm not suggesting anything. I just want to find out how much you know about her. Is she a friend?

LEWIS: Yes. But I haven't seen her much recently.

TEENA: Why is that?

LEWIS: To be honest, she became a bit of a pest<sup>2</sup>. Jade is crazy, a screw-up<sup>3</sup> – lovely and funny when she's on good form, but when she goes into one of her black moods<sup>4</sup>, she can be a real pain.

TEENA: You say you met her at Glastonbury?

LEWIS: Yes, we sort of teamed up together. I was with a group of dull<sup>5</sup>, straight guys and she didn't seem to fit in with her group, either. We had a similar sense of humour - liked the same music - she would belt out<sup>6</sup> our favourite songs, but she had the worst voice ever. She was hysterical.

TEENA: Can you explain why she might have tried to take her own life?

LEWIS: She told me she suffered from anxiety<sup>7</sup> when she was at school. You know, anxiety about her schoolwork, anxiety about what her friends thought about her. She felt everyone was judging her, all the time. I think her parents moved around a lot, so she had to go to lots of different schools. That didn't help.

ABBY: I didn't know.

LEWIS: How could you?

TEENA: Anything else?

LEWIS: She'd had some bad experiences with men. (*Looking at Jez*) Sorry, mate. But if it's any consolation<sup>8</sup>, you weren't the only one.

JEZ: Thanks, but I don't think that does help.

LEWIS: She told me she had given up on men and just wanted a friend.

TEENA: And you provided that friendship?

LEWIS: Yeah.

TEENA: What else did you provide?

LEWIS: I'm sorry?

TEENA: In her blog she said you supplied<sup>9</sup> her with drugs.

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<sup>1</sup> annual five-day festival of music and other performing arts, held in Somerset, SW England

<sup>2</sup> a pain, a nuisance

<sup>3</sup> confused, mixed-up person

<sup>4</sup> depressions

<sup>5</sup> boring

<sup>6</sup> sing loudly

<sup>7</sup> deep worry or fear

<sup>8</sup> comfort

<sup>9</sup> provided

ABBY: Lewis?

LEWIS: I didn't *supply* her. I just gave her some tablets - legal highs I'd bought for my personal use - at Glastonbury.

TEENA: Was that wise? I mean you have already said she was "a screw-up".

LEWIS: Yeah, well I didn't know her then did I?

TEENA: How did she react to the drug?

LEWIS: She seemed fine: happy. Said it relaxed her.

TEENA: And when you came back to University, did you see much of each other?

LEWIS: I saw quite a bit of her, on and off.

TEENA: You said earlier that she became a bit of a pest?

LEWIS: OK, well maybe that was a bit harsh. Trouble was, she would keep messaging me, night and day. She seemed to be getting more manic<sup>1</sup>.

TEENA: Why do you think that was?

LEWIS: I don't know.

TEENA: You don't think it was because she had moved onto harder drugs? From her blog it seems she was developing quite a habit.

LEWIS: I wouldn't know anything about that.

TEENA: Tell me about the last time you saw her. And please, Mr Martin, be honest.

LEWIS: What do you mean?

TEENA: Do you want me to put you under caution<sup>2</sup>? There's already enough evidence in the blog for me to do that.

LEWIS: What?

JEZ: Hey, steady<sup>3</sup>.

*Lewis does not answer.*

TEENA: I'm not interested in any minor offence you may have committed. At this moment I just want to understand why she tried to kill herself. OK?

*Pause.*

LEWIS: OK, OK. A few months ago, she called round here one night. (*He concentrates most of this speech on Abby and Jez.*) You were both away for the weekend. I was expecting someone. A guy I had just met. I opened the door - just a little - I could see she was in a state<sup>4</sup>. Before I could stop her she'd pushed her way past me and into the house.

*Sound effect – flashback. Teena becomes Jade, pushing past Lewis.*

JADE: Why won't you answer my messages?

LEWIS: Yeah, sorry – I've had a lot on.

JADE: It's been ages. We used to be really good friends. Listen, I need your

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<sup>1</sup> frantic

<sup>2</sup> An official warning the police give when they arrest someone, to tell them that anything they say may be used as evidence against them.

<sup>3</sup> hold on, wait a minute

<sup>4</sup> emotionally upset

help...

LEWIS: Look, any other time, Jade, but I'm expecting someone. A guy.

JADE: Please. Lewis. I can't take it. I need a hit.

LEWIS: I can see that. But I don't know why you've come to me. You know I'm not a dealer.

JADE: Mickie says you do.

LEWIS: I don't. It's just ... I sometimes get it for friends.

JADE: I thought I was your friend?

LEWIS: Jade, I really like this guy and he's going to be here any minute, so ...

JADE: Give me what I want, and I'll go.

LEWIS: Look, there must be someone on campus who can supply you?

JADE: I've got no cash and I've used up all my credit. Please, Lewis?

LEWIS: I can't afford to give it away. I'm sorry.

JADE: Please! I've never begged before. Have I? Have I?

LEWIS: No.

JADE: I promise I will never, ever ask you again. If you don't help me, honestly, Lew, I don't know what I'll do.

*Pause – Lewis looks at his watch.*

LEWIS: I've a few grams in my room. You can have them, but this is it<sup>1</sup>. I'll get it.

*We break out of the flashback.*

LEWIS: The irony is that the guy stood me up<sup>2</sup>.

ABBY: (*disapprovingly*<sup>3</sup>) I didn't realise you dealt.

LEWIS: I don't. I just know a few people who do back home, and I get stuff for friends.

ABBY: (*To Jez*) Did you know about this?

JEZ: Well...

ABBY: You did? You did! You know how I feel about drugs. You know about my sister.

JEZ: I didn't agree with what Lewis was doing.

LEWIS: Don't be such a hypocrite<sup>4</sup>, Jez. I don't remember you refusing the odd snort<sup>5</sup>. (*To Abby*) Don't look at me like that. It's all right for you and Jez.

You've got parents with money. How do you think I afford the rent on this house?

TEENA: (*writing in her notebook*) Possessing Class A drugs, selling them on for profit. You've just admitted you're a dealer.

LEWIS: I told you, I'm just helping out the odd mate.

ABBY: And yourself.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the last time I'm giving you any.

<sup>2</sup> didn't turn up, appear

<sup>3</sup> critically

<sup>4</sup> a person who says one thing, but actually does something else

<sup>5</sup> Taking powdered cocaine up through the nose.

TEENA: This is a serious matter, Mr Martin. But for now, I want to concentrate on the girl lying in the hospital. Here's my card. I'd like you to call me as soon as possible if you think of any other information that would help us with our inquiries.

ABBY: Of course.

TEENA: "Critical but stable" is the official account of her condition. Between you and me, I'd say there is less than a fifty-fifty chance of her surviving.

ABBY: This is so horrible. Do you think the hospital would let us see her? I started all this. I'd like to visit her, say I'm sorry.

JEZ: Yeah, Me too.

LEWIS: Seems to me she was in a pretty bad way before I met her, but I should have had more time for her. Helped her sort herself out...instead of... well... you know.

*Pause, Teena approaches Lewis.*

TEENA: Excuse me. I need to call in with her real identity. (*She picks up her Mobile.*) Yes, it's Detective Sergeant Whitsom. Any news on the girl found at the University? (*She listens.*) Right – thank you... Yes, I'm on my way back and I have a definite identification. Lucy Fenton. She's used different aliases<sup>1</sup> since then, but her real name should be in the University records. Ring me if you get a permanent address, and I'll go and inform the parents. Yes, I'm leaving now. (*She ends the call and looks at the three students.*) I am afraid I have to tell you that Lucy died about 15 minutes ago.

ABBY: No!

JEZ: Oh, God.

LEWIS: Jesus! That's terrible.

TEENA: I have to leave now. I may need to be back in touch if my superiors decide to pursue charges<sup>2</sup> with regard to the use and dealing of Class A drugs. Thank you for your time. Talking to you has been very...enlightening<sup>3</sup>. You may have forgotten this girl once, but I doubt you'll do so again. I can see myself out.

*She leaves. The three students look at each other.*

JEZ: I need a drink, and I intend to get completely wasted<sup>4</sup>.

ABBY: You think that's going to help?

JEZ: I sincerely hope so.

ABBY: I can't stop seeing Lucy in that hospital bed, with all those tubes.

LEWIS: Don't...

ABBY: Do you know what the worst thing is? Now we can't even say sorry or make any kind of amends<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> other names or identities

<sup>2</sup> make formal legal accusations

<sup>3</sup> has made things clear

<sup>4</sup> totally drunk

<sup>5</sup> make up for doing wrong

LEWIS: It's all right for you two. Looks like I'll be up on a drugs charge. That means no more Uni, a criminal record and probably a prison sentence.

ABBY: Can't you think of anyone else but yourself? Lucy's dead! Maybe with an overdose of the drugs you supplied.

LEWIS: What I gave her was hardly anything! Not enough to kill! You screwed her up<sup>1</sup> in the beginning. I don't see how she could ever get over something as vicious as the trick you played on her.

ABBY: Yeah, you just said it. It was a trick, I was young and stupid ...but at least I didn't get her onto drugs.

LEWIS: So, I was the evil drug dealer, while you and Jez were just ... What?! Misunderstood? My heart bleeds for you.

JEZ: OK, we may not be totally innocent here, but Abby's right: the drugs were the last straw<sup>2</sup>. It wouldn't have taken much to see she was messed up, but you gave them to her anyway.

ABBY: Yeah, that's how you buy your friends, isn't it? Making out you're so cool. Everyone's "Gay Best Friend."

JEZ: But in the end all you're interested in is getting high<sup>3</sup> and getting laid<sup>4</sup>.

LEWIS: Er, hello? (*To Abby*) Who was it that totally destroyed her confidence? (*To Jez*) Who knocked her up and made her have an abortion? If anyone's...

JEZ: I didn't *make* her have an abortion!

LEWIS: As good as!

JEZ: She wouldn't have said that – you lying shit! (*He moves towards Lewis.*)

LEWIS: Yeah? What are you going to do? Hit me, big boy?

JEZ: Do you think I wouldn't?

LEWIS: Come on then!

ABBY: Stop it!! Just stop it. This is not going to help.

LEWIS: Yeah, whatever.

ABBY: Please, let's not talk about it anymore. Not tonight, anyway. I'm going to bed, although I don't expect I'll get much sleep after everything that's happened. That woman's words will just keep going round and round in my head.

JEZ: Mine too.

LEWIS: This has been the most surreal<sup>5</sup> night of my life. I mean, the whole thing has just been ... seriously odd<sup>6</sup>.

*Abby, leaving the room, hesitates.*

ABBY: Odd? Why odd?

JEZ: Well, the way she behaved, for a start.

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<sup>1</sup> messed up her life

<sup>2</sup> the last of a series of events that led to her death

<sup>3</sup> (on drugs)

<sup>4</sup> having sex

<sup>5</sup> extraordinary

<sup>6</sup> strange, weird

ABBY: How do you mean?

JEZ: It just ... not what I'd expect, of a detective.

LEWIS: Jez is right. I don't think they are supposed to question people like that.

Almost making you re-live it. What kind of a detective does that?

ABBY: Maybe it's some new technique they're using now? She may have been *unconventional*, but none of this changes what we actually did.

LEWIS: Now I think about it, what she said was weird, too.

JEZ: What do you mean?

LEWIS: Do you remember, she said "In my experience, people hide their real identities for all kinds of reasons".

JEZ: So?

LEWIS: It was more the way she said it. As if it could apply to her as well...

There was something odd about her... Where's the card she left?

ABBY: It's here somewhere.

*She finds it on the table.*

LEWIS: Pass it over. (*Reading*) "Detective Sergeant Teena Whitsom. Northamptonshire Police".

*Lewis moves to the white board, wipes it clean and writes up Teena's name separating vowels and consonants.*

JEZ: (*To Abby*) She showed you an ID card, right?

ABBY: I think so – yeah, she flashed<sup>1</sup> something in front of my face.

JEZ: OK, but was it actually an official badge?

ABBY: I don't know, I had nothing to compare it to at the time! It looked real enough.

LEWIS: Teena Whitsom. T-E-E-N-A. That's a weird spelling.

ABBY: What are you getting at<sup>2</sup>?

LEWIS: I don't know. There's just something not quite right. Whitsom. W-H-I-T-S-O-M.

*He starts writing on the white board.*

JEZ: I don't see the point of ....

LEWIS: Let me concentrate, yeah?

*He's muttering to himself as he tries to reorder the name to make sense, the other two join him at the white board.*

LEWIS: That's it!

JEZ: NOT WHAT I SEEM?

ABBY: Lewis, are you ok?

LEWIS: Don't you see? TEENA WHITSOM – NOT WHAT I SEEM – it's an anagram<sup>3</sup>.

JEZ: What are you talking about?

---

<sup>1</sup> showed quickly

<sup>2</sup> suggesting, trying to say

<sup>3</sup> a word or phrase made from another word or phrase by putting the letters in a different order

LEWIS: An anagram. Her name. The letters from her name - rearranged - spell "NOT WHAT I SEEM".

JEZ: What does that mean?

LEWIS: Duh<sup>1</sup>! It means she wasn't a real policewoman.

ABBY: Oh, come on! It could just be a complete coincidence<sup>2</sup>. I mean, if you took my name and ...

LEWIS: Call the police station. Check if there is a detective who works there with that name.

ABBY: Have we got the number?

LEWIS: There'll be one on the card. No, that might be fake<sup>3</sup> – google it.

ABBY: OK. But I don't think there's much point.  
*She looks up the station on her phone.*

LEWIS: If I'm right, and she's not a real policewoman, it means the whole thing must be some kind of wind-up<sup>4</sup>.

JEZ: But who would ...?

LEWIS: One of your prattish<sup>5</sup> mates, probably.

JEZ: Believe me, none of them are bright enough to carry this off<sup>6</sup>.

ABBY: Quiet. it's ringing. Hello? Sorry to bother you, but can I speak to Detective Sergeant Whitsom?...Err Teena Whitsom. Right, don't have anyone by that name working there? You're sure? Of course you're sure. No, sorry, someone must have been playing a trick on us. (*She turns to the others.*) You heard that?

LEWIS: I certainly did.

JEZ: It was all a hoax<sup>7</sup>!

LEWIS: A pretty elaborate<sup>8</sup> one.

ABBY: So ... none of this happened? No suicide attempt? No policewoman? It was all just ... made up<sup>9</sup>?

JEZ: It's like, when you wake up after a bad dream.

LEWIS: We're off the hook<sup>10</sup>!

ABBY: I can't believe it. Who would do a thing like that? Why?

JEZ: Let's not worry about that now. Let's just enjoy not actually feeling guilty.

LEWIS: And not actually feeling like you're about to go to jail.

JEZ: Your face, Lewis, when she mentioned the drugs!

LEWIS: What about you? When you realised she'd read about the pregnancy.

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<sup>1</sup> exclamation

<sup>2</sup> piece of chance

<sup>3</sup> false

<sup>4</sup> trick or manipulation

<sup>5</sup> idiotic, foolish

<sup>6</sup> make this work, succeed

<sup>7</sup> trick

<sup>8</sup> complicated, sophisticated

<sup>9</sup> invented

<sup>10</sup> no longer in difficulty or trouble

Come to think of it, was it even the same girl?

ABBY: What do you mean?

LEWIS: Well, we were all shown her picture individually. For all we know, it could have been three different girls.

JEZ: Yeah! What are the chances that we would all know the same girl? That's it! Lucy, Charlie and Jade: they are all different people.

LEWIS: God, I am so relieved!

JEZ: I tell you what, let's drink to Teena-sodding-Whitsom. May she rot in hell<sup>1</sup>.

ABBY: Hold on a minute! We all confessed<sup>2</sup>. The way we treated those girls was still ... horrible, awful! We mustn't forget that. You're both pretending like<sup>3</sup> it never happened.

LEWIS: But it never did happen. No one died.

ABBY: That's not the point. We need to take some responsibility for the way we treated that girl whoever sh...

JEZ: Oh come on, Abby. Don't get all self-righteous on us<sup>4</sup>. Let's just have a little drink and get back to the game.

*Jez's phone rings, he goes to answer it.*

Anyone remember whose turn it was? Tobes! My man<sup>5</sup>! What's up? I tell you, mate, you won't believe what just happened to us. This crazy woman, yeah, she turns up at the door and says she's a ... What? Sorry, Tobes, you're breaking up. I thought you said there'd been a ... Oh God, are you sure?

*There is a pause as Toby explains. Jez has started to register<sup>6</sup> shock and disbelief.*

Christ, that's awful. Where was it? (*Another pause*) Are you sure? No, I mean, are you sure it was there? In that exact place? Oh Christ. And when? Just now. Right. Of course. Appreciate it<sup>7</sup>. Thanks mate. Speak later..

ABBY: What is it?

JEZ: The body of a dead girl has just been discovered. Suspected suicide<sup>8</sup>.

LEWIS: Where was she found?

JEZ: At Highfield Campus. Her body was under a willow tree.

*Pause.*

*Doorbell rings.*

***The End.***

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<sup>1</sup> decay and die (strong insult)

<sup>2</sup> admitted it

<sup>3</sup> acting as if

<sup>4</sup> Don't get all morally superior with us.

<sup>5</sup> (informal greeting)

<sup>6</sup> show

<sup>7</sup> thank you

<sup>8</sup> The victim is thought to have committed suicide.