

**The Devil's In The Timing**

By Samantha Priestley

INT. BEDROOM.

Danielle, brunette, small. Nik, Asian, tall. Both in their mid twenties.

Danielle and Nik are in bed having sex. Danielle is on top and the pair move frantically, as if in the latter stages of the act.

NIK

I love you.

Danielle stops still and looks down at him. She says nothing, but frowns. Danielle looks as if she can't believe he would say that. Nik looks back at her, waiting for a response, but doesn't get one.

Opening Credits.

A year earlier.

EXT. DAY. A NORTHERN CITY.

Begins looking in on them dating. Opening music over scenes of the two of them. His arm around her, they walk in the street, holding hands.

Then short shots of them. They go to the cinema, the two of them sitting waiting for a film to start, their heads leaning into each other's. Then they go to the pub, a live band is playing, and they stand at the bar and do tequila shots, laughing at each other.

Then we see them walking in the street again, holding hands. Close up of their hands letting go. He lets go. Him moving away to look in a shop window and her face, wary and confused about why he is distant. Noise of a city around them.

INT. DAY.

The two of them sitting opposite each other in a café.

DANIELLE

So, this barbeque thing that mum's putting on this Sunday.

Nik looks out of the window and nods.

DANIELLE

So, shall we go? Like, together.

NIK

Together?

DANIELLE

Yeah, like, me and you. Together.

NIK

Me and you, together? To your mum's barbeque?

DANIELLE

Yeah.

NIK

On Sunday?

DANIELLE

Yeah.

NIK makes a face like this is a bizarre idea.

DANIELLE

It's what people do, Nik.

NIK

Is it?

DANIELLE

Yeah.

NIK

People go to barbeques on Sundays at other people's parents' houses?

DANIELLE

Well, yeah.

NIK

Just who are these people who do this? Who are people?

DANIELLE

It's a barbeque at my mum's, it's not running with bulls in Pamplona.

NIK looks sharply at DANIELLE, then back to looking around again.

NIK

It's just that I can't really say.

DANIELLE

What do you mean, you can't really say?

NIK

I mean, Sunday's a few days away yet and I don't really know.

DANIELLE

What? You think a once in a lifetime opportunity is gonna come up between now and the weekend? You expecting a call from Duncan Ballantyne offering you his job and it starts this Sunday?

NIK

I just...

DANIELLE

You just what, Nik?

NIK

It's just that I don't really know what I'm doing on Sunday.

DANIELLE

What do you mean? What would you be doing?

NIK

I don't know, that's what I mean, I could be busy, so, you know, don't want to say I can go if I can't.

DANIELLE looks at him while he stares around the street.

DANIELLE

If you don't want to go just say so.

NIK

It's not that, I just...

DANIELLE (mockingly)

Just that you don't really know what you might be doing this Sunday.

NIK

Exactly.

DANIELLE

How long have we been going out, Nik?

Nik laughs in disbelief.

NIK

What is this?

DANIELLE

It's a simple question. How long have we been going out?

NIK

You know how long we've been going out.

DANIELLE

I know I know, but do you?

NIK

Yeah, course.

DANIELLE

So, how long then?

NIK (sheepishly)

Few...weeks...couple of months...

DANIELLE

Six months, Nik.

NIK

That's what I said.

DANIELLE

That is not what you said.

NIK

You women are always better at that stuff, come on, you know I never remember stuff like that. Doesn't mean...

DANIELLE

Doesn't mean what?

NIK

Doesn't mean...I don't...

DANIELLE

Don't what?

NIK

What does it have to do with anything anyway?

DANIELLE

What?

NIK

What does how long we've been going out have to do with a barbeque at your mum's on Sunday?

DANIELLE

It has EVERYTHING to do with it, Nik.

NIK

Does it?

DANIELLE

Yes.



NIK

Really?

DANIELLE

Yes.

They both look around.

DANIELLE

Why don't you want to meet my mum and dad?

NIK

I don't not want to meet your mum and dad, I just can't say what I'm doing this Sunday.

DANIELLE

Right.

NIK

Honestly.

DANIELLE

Six months, Nik, and you won't meet my mum and dad and I've never met your family, and...

NIK

There's no rush is there? I mean, let's just take our time.

DANIELLE (under her breath)

Yeah, you just take all the time you need.

NIK

What was that?

DANIELLE

I said you just take all the time you need. Fine!

Them sitting at the table of a café, looking at each other, not with love, but with apprehension, the space between them. Then she is looking at him, but he is playing with his phone. Sounds of the café. He looks up, smiles at her, then continues to glance around the café in a disinterested way. She stares at him, wanting his attention, but feeling she shouldn't have to ask for it.

EXT. DAY.

Danielle works at a kennels. We see her attending to the dogs, softly stroking the ears of a dog, feeding them, playing with them, walking them. She is finishing up work for the day and passes a colleague.

WOMAN

You are coming to the pub, aren't you?

DANIELLE

Am I?

WOMAN

Yes, and I'm not taking no for an answer. Come on, it'll be a laugh.

DANIELLE

Oh, I don't know...

WOMAN

Stop mooning about after that man and come out and enjoy yourself. It's his loss. Honestly, if he can't even meet your mum and dad, I mean, what does he think's gonna happen? You'll slap the shackles on him there and then and force him up the aisle?

DANIELLE (smiling)

Nik's just...

WOMAN

Just what?

DANIELLE

Cautious.

Woman pulls an unconvinced expression.

WOMAN

I can think of other words I'd use to describe him. Come on. Come out for a drink, it'll take your mind off it. And if he doesn't want to spend time with you there's plenty of others who do. Don't you dare sit in and wait for him to buck his ideas up.

DANIELLE (she's being persuaded)

I have given him plenty of time.

WOMAN

Exactly.

DANIELLE

I mean, I have been very patient.

WOMAN

You have. Extremely bloody patient.

DANIELLE

But I can't wait around forever.

INT. EVE.

Light is fading as evening approaches. The outside of a pub, lights glowing orange from the windows. Danielle is in the pub with work colleagues. Three men are sitting with them, clearly trying to chat them up. Danielle's colleague looks at Danielle and rolls her eyes as a man leans in and flirts with her. Danielle laughs. The man next to her is good looking and they seem to have been talking as he sits closely to her.

JAMES

So, what are you doing later?

DANIELLE

Going home!

JAMES

What about tomorrow? You might as well know, I'm not giving up till you agree to go out with me.

Danielle hesitates. She looks over at the woman from work and sees her make a 'go on' motion while mouthing the words. Danielle laughs. She raises her glass to her face and takes a drink. Then she looks at James seriously. He is looking right at her, waiting for her answer. He is giving her the attention she wants, the attention Nik didn't give her. She nods her head with a shy smile.

DANIELLE

Ok. Yes, ok, why not.

EXT. DAY.

The next day Danielle is at work. We see her walking dogs, and staring into space, deep in thought. She doesn't look happy. We cut to a shot of Nik, at work, he's a teacher at senior school. We see Danielle finishing work for the day and leaving the kennels. Then we see Nik finishing work, a noisy school, kids leaving and the school going quiet. He lets go a big breath as he leaves for the day. But he's smiling, he's looking forward to seeing Danielle. Another member of staff is also approaching their car.

MAN

Alright, Nik? Got much planned this weekend?

NIK

Not much, no.

MAN

No?

NIK

No.

MAN

Not much then?

NIK

Well, not anything, no.

MAN

How's life with that girlfriend of yours?

NIK

Pretty good.

He's smiling and nods his head in a slightly smug way.

MAN

You'll be making an honest woman of her soon.

NIK

Hey, let's not get too carried away! Though, you never know, she's special, this one. Do you know, we've been going out for six months now? Six months! I don't think I've been with

anyone for six months before. It's like a milestone or something. I mean, it's pretty significant, and the funny thing is, I didn't even know!

MAN

Sounds like it's going well then.

NIK

Oh, it is, but we're taking our time.

MAN

That's the way, eh? Take your time, no rush, is there? You see all these couples rushing into getting serious, and where does it get them?

NIK

Exactly. That's exactly it. Rush into it and it all falls apart. Take it slow, like we are, and it lasts six bloody months without you even realising it!

INT. EVE.

Nick is in his flat getting changed. His brother is there.

NIK

What do you think to this shirt?

NIK'S BROTHER

Never mind the shirt, what's going on? What you getting all dressed up for? Something you want to tell me, eh? Big night or something?

Nick smiles at his brother

NIK

What is it with everyone thinking me and Dani are gonna get married or something all of a sudden? We're taking it slow, what's wrong with that?

NIK'S BROTHER

Too slow, broth. Let's face it, you're not getting any younger.

NIK

Cheeky git.

NIK'S BROTHER

Nah, but Danielle's a good looking girl, mate, you should marry her quick, before someone else does.

NIK

What? That's bull. Me and Dani are fine as we are. We're taking our time. Actually she asked me to go and meet her parents this weekend so, well, you could say things are definitely moving on. Though I might have, well I did, sorta blown it off.

NIK'S BROTHER

Are you serious, man? What is your problem?

NIK



Don't want to rush things, you know, but it's cool, Dani's cool.

INT. EVE.

Nik is sitting in the pub waiting when Danielle arrives. He stands up and kisses her. She puts her bag on the seat and sits opposite him.

NIK

Shall we grab a drink and then get something to eat?

Danielle looks down at the table then up at Nik. She seems like she is about to say something, but nothing comes out. They look at each other for a moment

NIK

God, what's wrong?

She looks at him with a pained expression on her face

DANIELLE

I'm sorry, Nik.

NIK

What? What do you mean, you're sorry? For what?

DANIELLE

Me and you...it's...I just don't think you're what I want. I just don't think...

DANIELLE shakes her head and looks like she is about to cry.

NIK

Don't think what?

DANIELLE

I don't think I'm what you want, I mean, we don't want the same things. You don't really want all...this, do you?

NIK

Yeah, I do.

DANIELLE

Come on. You still want the single life. You're not ready to settle down, you know you're not. You don't want to commit.

NIK

Is this because I wouldn't go to meet your mum and dad?

DANIELLE

No. I mean, that just confirmed it really.

NIK

Just because I'm not ready now doesn't mean I won't ever be. It's just a bit soon for me, but if that's what you want, ok, I'll come to meet your mum and dad.

DANIELLE

Too soon? It's been...

NIK

Six months, yes, I know, you said.

DANIELLE

Point is, Nik, it could be six months or six weeks or six years. How long do I have to wait?

NIK

For what?

DANIELLE

For you!

NIK

I'm right here, aren't I?

DANIELLE

For you to commit. I need to know you're serious.

NIK

Alright, I'll meet your mum and dad. If it means that much to you, I'll meet your mum and dad. Happy now?

DANIELLE shakes her head.

DANIELLE

You're supposed to want to, Nik. That's the point.

NIK

So, what are you saying?

DANIELLE

We've got to want the same things at the same time for it to work. And we don't. Who knows, in five years you might be ready, but...

NIK

That's it?

DANIELLE

That's it.

NIK

Come on, Dani, you know I...

DANIELLE

What? You what, Nik?

NIK

I...

DANIELLE

You can't even say it, can you?

DANIELLE wipes away tears.

NIK

Hey, don't get upset. You know I can't stand it when you get upset.

DANIELLE looks up at him again with tears in her eyes and shakes her head.

NIK

Hey, don't cry, Dani. Come on, don't get upset. It'll be ok. I'll take you home.

DANIELLE

No, it's fine, really, you don't need to do that, I'll be fine

NIK

You sure?

DANIELLE nods and smiles.

NIK

Are we...? We're still friends, though, yeah? And, maybe I'll see you soon? I mean, this isn't the end for us, Dani. No way is this the end.

INT. EVE.

A year later. Danielle is out with James, in a busy bar, noisy.

INT. EVE.

Nik is out with his girlfriend, she's blonde and almost as tall as him.

INT. EVE.

Danielle still in the bar with James. She looks around and realises it's the same pub she'd been in with Nik, the time they did tequila shots at the bar.

DANIELLE

Hey, lets do some shots. Tequila.

JAMES

What?

DANIELLE

Come on! It'll be fun!

JAMES

I don't think that would be a good idea, Dani, we've both got work tomorrow.

DANIELLE

Oh. Right. Yeah, you're probably right.

Her smile fades and she looks around the bar. James can see her interest slipping away.

JAMES

Well, maybe just one then.

Danielle grins at him.

The shots sit on the bar.

DANIELLE

Hang on a minute.

Danielle takes a quick photo of hers on her phone.

JAMES

What you doing that for?

DANIELLE

Just, for the girls, at work, you know, make them jealous.

She and James down their shots. He winces and shakes his head. The scene is lacking in the fun she'd had doing this with Nik. James goes to the toilet and she sends the picture to Nik with a text - Remember this? And in the same pub, remember? How are you doing anyway? X

Cut to Nik who gets the text, sitting at a dinner table opposite his girlfriend. He reads the text and smiles.

Girl

What's that?

Nik looks up at her

NIK

A friend.

He looks back to his phone, then shakes his head

NIK

Someone I haven't seen for a while.

He puts his phone down and carries on with his dinner date.

GIRL

What friend?

NIK

Just a friend. Doesn't matter...does it?

GIRL

No, no...just.

NIK

Just what?

GIRL

Just...I've never met any of your friends, that's all.

NIK



So?

GIRL

So...you ashamed of me or something?

NIK

Course not.

GIRL

Then how come I've never met any of your friends?

NIK (shrugs)

Just hasn't occurred.

GIRL

Hasn't occurred?

NIK

Yeah

INT. NIGHT.

Later, the girl is asleep in Nik's bed and he sits on the edge of the bed in the semi dark and he reads the text again, and he replies to Danielle. - Ha! That brings back memories 😊 I'm good thanks, how are you? X He puts the phone down on his bedside table, lies down in the bed and stares at his mobile, but it stays silent.

INT. DAY.

The next day Nik is at work when she texts him back. He is busy, moving from one room to another in the school with files/papers in his hands. He pulls out his phone and reads the text. - Thought that would make you smile. I'm fine, thanks, keeping busy. See you soon x he stops in the doorway, half way through the door and reads the text. Doesn't smile, just stares at it, then someone inside the room calls.

MAN

Nik!

Nik looks up.

MAN

You ready?

Nik puts his phone back in his pocket.

NIK

Yeah.

and he carries on into the room.

INT. EVE.

Nik walks into his flat after work and the girl is there. He's tired, walking with heaviness and doesn't seem like he wants to be there or in this situation.

GIRL

We need to talk

Nik just eyes her

NIK

Talk?

GIRL

Yeah, you know, like where are we going...what's going on with us? I mean, it's almost been a year.

NIK

A year?

GIRL

Yes, Nik, a year!

NIK

Wow, a year.

GIRL

So, I need to know, what's going on with us?

NIK

A year? Are you sure?

GIRL

Of course I'm sure! How long did you think it had been?

NIK (shrugs)

Few months. Less than six. Definitely less than six because I've never...

GIRL

Are you serious?

NIK

Yeah, absolutely. Six months is my personal best, I've never...

(NIK looks at GIRL and realising she is furious)

NIK

I mean...never before....I mean...wow a year, you say?

GIRL

Yes, Nik, a year, so you see my point.

NIK

Your point?

GIRL

Yes, my point.

NIK

There was a point?

GIRL

Yes, Nik, there was a point. I had a point. I do have a point.

NIK

...Which is?

GIRL

Which is, we've been going out for a year, a whole sodding year, and in that time I've never met...

NIK

Never met any of my friends.

GIRL

Or your family.

NIK

Or my family.

GIRL

And...

NIK

And?

Nik puts his keys on the sideboard and moves slowly, apprehensively.

GIRL

It's been nearly a year, Nik, we should start thinking about a future

NIK

Future?

GIRL

Yeah, you know, like where are we going...what's going on with us? I mean, it's almost been a year.

NIK

So? Why do we have to be going somewhere?

GIRL

I have to be, Nik. You know, if you don't see a future with me, then just say so.

Nik, talks over her, argumentatively

NIK

I didn't say I don't see a future with you, just said why do we always have to be *going somewhere*? Why can't we just be? What's wrong with the way we are?

GIRL

I'm almost thirty, Nik, I do want to...have a family...

He makes an over exaggerated turn of his body away from her, like a sulky teenager.

GIRL

...someday.

NIK

Yeah, someday

GIRL

But I can't wait around forever, Nik, if it's not going to be with you, then I'd appreciate you telling me that.

Nik just stands and looks at her. Doesn't say anything.

GIRL. Angry

Fine!

She grabs her coat and walks out, slamming the door.

INT. NIGHT.

Nik sits on the floor in his bedroom, going through old photos and letters. He finds a photo of himself and Danielle together. He looks at it for a while and rubs his finger over her face on the photo. Then he leans forward and grabs his phone from the bedside table. Texts her - Hey, hope you meant it when you said, see you soon. How about a coffee and a catch up?

INT. DAY.

Nik and Danielle sitting in a café. They lean forward with smiles as they talk to each other. More intimate than when they were actually together. They are chatting about work when he stops and looks down at her finger.

NIK

You're engaged, then?

Danielle looks down at her hand and moves her ring finger up and down, emphasising the ring.

DANIELLE

Yeah. Crazy, huh?

Nik shrugs

NIK

Not crazy, just...unexpected.

She looks in his eyes and smiles. Then looks down.

NIK

So, what does he do, this fiance of yours?

DANIELLE

Middle management, you know, very boring.

NIK

Does he think it's boring?



Danielle, slouched on the table a bit, shrugs

DANIELLE

Oh, I don't know, he probably doesn't even notice, he probably never thinks about whether it's boring or not. Anyway, let's not talk about him. What have you been up to? You seeing anyone?

Nik eyes her, wondering at the way she talks about her fiancé.

NIK

Nah, you know me. Well, I was, you know, but...well, it didn't work out.

DANIELLE

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

NIK

Don't be. I'm not.

They look at each other intently for a moment, then Danielle smiles with slight embarrassment and sits back in her seat and picks up her coffee mug to drink.

DANIELLE

Well, you were always one to take these thing lightly.

NIK

These things? Lightly?

DANIELLE

Yeah, I mean, you were never one to get too serious when it comes to 'matters of the heart'.

NIK

I was serious about you.

DANIELLE

You were not serious about me.

NIK

I was, I...

They both pause and look at each other seriously.

NIK

So, how are you anyway?

DANIELLE

I'm fine. You?

NIK

Oh yeah, fine, you know me. And you're happy?

DANIELLE

Yeah. Yeah, you know, yeah, I'm happy. I'm getting married for god's sake, I ought to be happy. I should hope I'm happy.

NIK

And are you?

DANIELLE

Yeah.

NIK

Really? Are you really?

DANIELLE

Yes. I'm happy, alright?

NIK

No, I meant, are you really getting married?

DANIELLE

Oh that.

NIK

Yes, that.

DANIELLE

Well, I am engaged.

NIK

And you've set a date?

DANIELLE

Well, no, we haven't, but...

NIK

But what?

DANIELLE

Well, there's no rush, is there. I mean, we're taking our time.

NIK

Taking your time is good.

DANIELLE

It is.

NIK

It's important to take your time.

DANIELLE

I think so.

NIK

You don't want to rush into anything.

DANIELLE

That's right.

NIK

I mean, you want to be sure.

DANIELLE

You do need to be sure

NIK

And it can take time...to be sure.

They are both quiet

NIK

Timing. It's everything, you know.

INT. DAY.

Danielle is walking the aisles of a supermarket when she gets a text. It's from Nik - hey, I'm having a party for my birthday on Saturday, consider yourself invited! X

She smiles and carries on walking round the supermarket, basket over her arm.

INT. DAY.

Danielle arrives home with the shopping and enters the flat she shares with James. She puts the bags on the worktop in the kitchen and then moves to the doorway between the kitchen and the living room. She leans against the doorframe. In the living room her fiancé is sitting on the sofa watching

football. She stands there watching him. He has his back to her and turns his head when he realises she is there.

JAMES

Hello love. You're late back.

DANIELLE

Yeah, I just picked a few things up on the way.

JAMES

My sister called, about Saturday.

DANIELLE

Saturday?

JAMES

Yeah, you know, they're having that thing for their first wedding anniversary. I did tell you.

Danielle lifts her eyes towards the ceiling while James's head is turned back towards the TV.

JAMES

You didn't forget, did you?

DANIELLE

No, it's just...there's a works night out and...who has a family party for their first wedding anniversary anyway? Don't they want to do something just the two of them? Go out? Get drunk, have some fun, what do they want us there for?

He turns around and stares at her.

JAMES

Why wouldn't they want us there?

DANIELLE

I wouldn't. Would you?

JAMES

I'd want you there...obviously.

He watches her, his words trailing and not having the effect on her he'd wanted. She doesn't smile or lift her gaze back up to his.

JAMES

I don't know, I haven't thought about it, but I don't see what's wrong with it.

DANIELLE under her breath

No, you wouldn't.

JAMES

What?

DANIELLE

It's just that I've said I'll go out on this work thing now, the girls want me to. But you go, to your sister's. It's more your kind of thing anyway.

JAMES

But that means I can't have a drink.

DANIELLE

Why?

JAMES

Cause I'll have to drive home.

Danielle seems like she can hardly be bothered with the conversation.

DANIELLE

Just kip on their sofa then. I'm sure they won't mind, they obviously love having you around...all the time.

She turns away and back to the kitchen where she starts putting the shopping away. We see her fiancé watch her for a minute, then he turns back to the TV.

EXT. DAY.

Danielle is at work. She's walking a dog with another woman, also walking a dog.

DANIELLE

It's just...I don't know. It's just...



WOMAN

Boring?

DANIELLE

Yes. And his family, oh god his family. I don't get why they have to spend so much time together. I mean, I love mine, but I don't want to spend every spare minute with them. His are so claustrophobic. That's what it is, the whole thing, his family, James, me and him, it's so claustrophobic.

WOMAN

But I thought that was what you wanted. At least he's serious about you

DANIELLE

Yeah, maybe a bit too serious.

WOMAN

Well, you can't have it all ways, and James is just what you need, after that last one.

DANIELLE

You mean Nik?

WOMAN

Yeah, he did mess you about.

DANIELLE

No, he just wasn't ready for all that...commitment, that's all.

WOMAN

And are you?

DANIELLE

That's a good question. I thought I was, but now...

WOMAN

Now what?

DANIELLE

It's just all started me thinking...

WOMAN

What has? Started you thinking what?

DANIELLE

I saw him.

WOMAN

Who?

DANIELLE

Nik.

WOMAN

Nik Nik?

DANIELLE

Yeah. Nik.

WOMAN

You saw him?

DANIELLE

Yeah, I mean, I *saw* him.

WOMAN

Oh dear Christ tell me you didn't...

DANIELLE

What? No! I mean I saw him...I mean we went for coffee.

WOMAN

You went for coffee?

DANIELLE

Yeah.

WOMAN

With your ex boyfriend?

DANIELLE

Yeah.

WOMAN

Your ex boyfriend who messed you about to high heaven and couldn't even be arsed to meet your mum and dad.

DANIELLE

It wasn't like that.

WOMAN

I think you'll find it was exactly like that.

DANIELLE

Well, it was over a year ago now, I'm sure I can have a coffee with him without...

WOMAN

Without wanting to smash his face in?

DANIELLE

I never wanted to do that

WOMAN

No, that's right. You were far too calm about the whole thing. If that had been me, I'd have...

DANIELLE

I could never be angry with Nik for long.

WOMAN

Oh no? And why not? I could.

DANIELLE

I don't know, he just...he's just too...

WOMAN

Oh dear holy lord, you still have a thing for him.

DANIELLE

I do not.

WOMAN

Yes, you do.

DANIELLE

I do not. I'm getting married, I'm engaged. I'm happy.

WOMAN

Are you though?

DANIELLE

Yes. I am absolutely getting married.

WOMAN

I meant, are you happy? Are you really happy? Because I don't think you are.

DANIELLE

You don't?

WOMAN

No. Do you want to know what I think?

DANIELLE

I don't know. Do I?

WOMAN

I think you're still in love with him.

DANIELLE

Who?

WOMAN

Father fucking Christmas, who do you think?

DANIELLE

Nik? You think I'm in love with Nik? You think I...Nik?

WOMAN

Yes. Nik. And until you sort that out you're never going to be happy with James or anyone else for that matter.

DANIELLE

I'm not in love with Nik.

WOMAN

Well, you're not so in love with James, either, are you?

DANIELLE

So, what do I do?

WOMAN

You stay away from him.

DANIELLE

Nik?

WOMAN

No, the dalhi fucking lama. Yes, Nik! You stay well away. No more meeting for coffee. No texting. Nothing.

DANIELLE

Right.

WOMAN

It's worked for a year, hasn't it? And then he swans back in and all types of shit starts flying around looking for fans to hit.

DANIELLE

But...If I'm not happy with James...

WOMAN

You sure as piss aren't going to be happy with no-clue-Nik, are you?

DANIELLE

I suppose.

WOMAN

You know it. You stay well away.

DANIELLE

Right.

WOMAN

Right.

DANIELLE

I'm going to his birthday party on Saturday night. At his house. And James thinks I'm out with you because he's going to his sister's wedding anniversary. I mean who invites all the family to their wedding anniversary? So I said, you go and sleep on the couch so that you can have a drink, and I'm going to Nik's, and...

WOMAN

Oh for the love all that is pissing holy. That man really knows how to pick his times, doesn't he?



EXT. NIGHT.

Danielle is driving to Nik's house, slowly, looking for the house number. She finds it and parks outside. Walks up the path and knocks on the door. He opens the door and the party is loud inside. He welcomes her with a big smile and holds his arms out to her. They hug and he kisses her on the side of the head. She walks into the house with him. She can see he's been drinking and he soon pours her a drink and she joins the party.

Cut to - he is introducing her to friends.

NIK

Danielle, Sue, Sue Danielle. Me and Danielle went out for about five minutes, but we're friends now.

SUE

How very adult of you

Nik and Danielle look at each other and smile uneasily.

Nik's brother approaches them, smiles at Danielle and pats Nik on the arm.

NIK

You remember Danielle, don't you?

NIK'S BROTHER

I remember you talking about her, yeah.

Then he turns to Danielle.

NIK'S BROTHER

You'll have to excuse my brother, he's got no tact. But I do remember him going on about you and how crazy he was about you.

Then he points at her, his other hand coping with a drink that threatens to spill.

NIK'S BROTHER

You're the one that got away.

Danielle turns to Nik again with an over emphasised look of astonishment on her face.

NIK

My brother is drunk, Dani, ignore him

Cut to Nik and Danielle talking in a corner of the room. They are both drinking.

NIK

See Mike over there, he's so boring it kills you, whatever you do, don't get stuck talking to Mike.

Nik gulps at his drink and motions to Danielle

NIK

Your ex would probably get on with him

Danielle looks at him wide eyed and grins

DANIEELE

Ex?

NIK

Oh god, sorry, sorry, terrible pho-par. Sorry. I mean, not ex, obviously.

DANIELLE

Not my ex yet...not yet

They look at each other

NIK

You want another drink?

Danielle holds his gaze.

DANIELLE

Sure, why not?

Nik moves past her, laying his hand on her shoulder, close up of this, and picks up a half bottle of wine and pours it into her glass.

NIK

Well, driving home could become a bit of a problem, you're already over the limit.

Danielle has just taken a gulp of the wine. She stops with it still in her mouth then swallows it.

DANIELLE

Shit.

She tips the glass in his direction slightly

DANIELLE

Oh well, I could always get a taxi

NIK

Yeah, I suppose, or you could just kip here. Spare room's in the attic, but it would save on the taxi, then you could just drive home in the morning.

He waits and looks at her, scared, worried about her reaction.

NIK

I mean, your car's outside, so if you get a taxi home tonight you've got to come back for it tomorrow.

He shrugs.

NIK

Up to you though. Offers there. It's a comfy spare room if you want it.

She looks back at him. It's right here between them.

DANIELLE

Yeah, I could do that. It makes sense

NIK relieved

It does make sense

They nod and smile relief flooding them

Danielle holds her almost empty glass out

DANIELLE

You know what else makes sense?

Nik smiles and takes the glass from her hand, pours more wine and hands it back to her.

NIK

Hey, you know what this means, don't you?

DANIELLE

What?

NIK

You've officially met my family.

DANIELLE

What?

NIK

My brother. I mean, I know he's pissed and an idiot, but he's still my family. That is one of the things you complained about when we were together.

DANIELLE

I suppose I did.

NIK

Well, that's one thing I've put right then.

Cut to - change in music, chatter. People are leaving, saying goodnight at the door. Nik holds the door open and Danielle stands in the kitchen while people say goodnight and leave.

Once they have all gone he closes the door and breathes an exaggerated sigh of relief. He turns and looks at Danielle. She leans on the kitchen side and bites her lip.

NIK

Thank god that's over.

Danielle walks forward and touches his arm.

DANIELLE

It was fun

NIK

Yeah?

DANIELLE

Yeah

She is looking up at him. He stares into her eyes. He puts his arms around her suddenly. She leans up towards him and kisses him. He lifts her up by her backside. She wraps her legs around him and they kiss. She falls back to the floor, to a standing position, still kissing him. She pushes her hands up his back under his T shirt. He stops and pulls his T shirt off quick. Then he pulls her top off. They kiss again, then they stop and they stand with their faces together. He has his eyes closed, their noses together she is looking up at him, wanting him. He takes a deep breath, opens his eyes.

NIK

Come on.

And he takes her by the hand and leads her to the stairs.

Cut to - they are in bed, arms around each other, kissing. He holds her close.

NIK

You know I love you

Danielle doesn't respond. She looks at him, slightly alarmed, then down at his chest. Her hand is on his chest and there she can see her engagement ring. She is confused by what she is doing and it isn't the time for 'I love you'. There is a silence and Nik stares at her, hurt by her lack of response. He carries on talking quickly to hide this.

NIK

And I don't want to lose you, I don't want to lose you again.

Danielle looks up at him.

NIK

So, we should keep our heads. Yeah?

Danielle shifts in his arms, propping herself up on her elbow

DANIELLE

What do you mean?

NIK

I mean, you're engaged and I'm...

DANIELLE

You're what?

NIK

I'm pretty useless, let's face it.

DANIELLE

You're not useless.

NIK

So, we should keep our heads.



DANIELLE

How do we do that?

NIK

It's fine, I'm used to being on my own. I'm fine with it.

Danielle looks at him for a moment, then lays back down, her head on his chest, a frown beginning on her face.

INT. EVE.

Danielle is sitting on the sofa watching TV with her fiancé. Nik texts her - are you alone? X

Danielle looks up at her fiancé, he continues to watch TV and doesn't seem to notice she is texting. She replies - no, but tomorrow I am.

Her fiancé turns and smiles at her then continues silently watching TV

Nik texts back - I'll pick you up at 11.00

EXT. DAY.

Danielle is leaving the house and half running, half walking down the road, looking around to check if any neighbours are watching. Nik is parked around the corner. She gets into the car and kisses him. They drive off.

Cut to pulling up at his house and kissing as they go in. they stand in the kitchen and kiss and pull at each other's clothes.

Cut to them having sex. Danielle is on top, they are breathing heavily.

NIK, in his breaths

I love you

Danielle stops for a second and looks down at him, slightly alarmed. Then she carries on without saying a word.

Cut to the bedroom again. The two of them laying in bed, his arm around her.

NIK

Are we having an affair?

She looks at him quickly

DANIELLE

I don't know. Are we?

NIK

'Cause, if we are, we need to be careful

Danielle frowns again at his words. She strokes his chest with the hand with the engagement ring on. She looks up at him and struggles with what she wants to say. She wants to say she loves him, but feels her confusion and the situation won't let her. He looks at her.

NIK

What? What do you want to say?

They look at each other and the moment is tense. This is the moment that could change the course of the affair. But she can't say it. She looks down again at her hand on his chest.

DANIELLE

Nothing.

INT. DAY. A FAMILY HOME.

Nik and his brother are visiting their parents together. They walk through the house.

NIK

How are you, mum?

NIK'S MUM

I'd be better if I saw more of you.

She wafts her hand in the air and sits back down.

NIK'S MUM

I'm fine, I'm fine, just would be nice to see a bit more of my boys, that's all. And when are you going to find yourself a nice girl and settle down, get married, have children?

NIK

Aw, mum!

He leans his head on one side in irritation and embarrassment.

NIK'S MUM

I'm only saying, you might think you're young and you have forever, but one day you wake up old and you don't know where the time went, and what will you do then, eh? Who will look after you?

NIK

Aw, not this again. Why don't you bother him like this?

He jerks his thumb in his brother's direction.

NIK'S MUM

Because you're the eldest. Good looking boy like you, you're not telling me you can't find a nice girl.

Nik's brother laughs and pats Nik on the back.

NIK'S BROTHER

Come on, broth, let's put the kettle on before she starts telling you about the girls she's got lined up for you.

Nik and his brother go into the kitchen and their mum shouts after them.

NIK'S MUM

And what's wrong with that?

Nik and his brother are standing in the kitchen together. The kettle boils. Nik leans forward, his palms pressed flat on the kitchen worktops.

NIK

Something happened after the party last week.

NIK'S BROTHER

What? What happened?

Nik looks sideways at his brother.

NIK

Danielle. Me and Danielle, we...

NIK'S BROTHER

Oh. But I thought you said she was getting married.

NIK

She is.

NIK'S BROTHER

Shit man. What are you gonna do?

NIK

I don't know. She's getting married. I can't get into it, you know. She...I mean...I can't do it. I can't. And what if I really like her? What if the same thing happens all over

again? Last time me and her were together, yeah ok, I was the one holding back at first, but just as I was starting to think she could be...the one, she went and dumped me!

NIK'S BROTHER

You've got to take a risk sometimes, haven't you? If it feels right.

NIK

I have no idea if it feels right or not. All I know is the last time me and her were together she was the one who ended it and now...once bitten and all that. She hurt me, man, and I don't know if I can risk it again.

NIK'S BROTHER

Yeah, but, this is Danielle we're talking about. And what if you've got another shot with her and you don't go for it? So, you're scared, so what? Everybody's scared.

NIK

I'm not fucking scared.

NIK'S BROTHER

You and her...

Nik shakes his head.

NIK

Me and her what? There's nothing special about me and her. I'm just saying, something happened, and I don't want her messing with my head again. It's just...when I'm with her, when I'm around her...it's like I can't make it stop. I know I

shouldn't be getting into this, I know I shouldn't be doing it, but I can't stop.

NIK'S BROTHER

And you don't think that means something?

NIK (hesitates)

I told her I love her

NIK'S BROTHER

What?

NIK

I told her I love her.

NIK'S BROTHER

Then what's the problem?

NIK

She doesn't feel the same.

NIK'S BROTHER

What are you talking about, man?

NIK

She didn't say it back, alright? She didn't say anything, so it's pretty obvious, isn't it? I'm just...a distraction or something.

NIK'S BROTHER

A distraction? Are you serious?

NIK

She's having some doubts about her wedding and then I come along and she thinks, oh good old Nik, he'll be good to work my jitters out on.

NIK'S BROTHER

Danielle?

NIK

Well, what would you think?

INT. DAY.

Danielle is sitting having a cup of tea with the woman she works with, on their break.

DANIELLE

I don't know how it happened.

Woman raises an eyebrow

WOMAN

I do.

DANIELLE



I mean, I didn't plan it.

WOMAN

Come on Danielle, you knew what would happen if you went there, if you started seeing him again.

DANIELLE

I just thought...

Woman raises her eyebrow again.

DANIELLE

Ok, maybe I did want it to happen. Oh I don't know, I don't know what I'm doing. You know he said he loves me.

WOMAN

Loves you?

DANIELLE

Yeah. Loves me.

WOMAN

He didn't by any chance say it while you were in bed with him, did he?

DANIELLE

What if he did?

Woman makes a face.

WOMAN

You can't trust anything a man says when you're in bed with him. It's like his brain is in a tunnel and everything he does and says has the one aim.

DANIELLE

Nik's not like that.

WOMAN

Oh yeah? Mr. commitment phobic? You really think he's above saying he loves you to get what he wants.

DANIELLE

I do actually. He meant it. And anyway, he said it again, the next time I saw him.

WOMAN

Just how many times have you 'seen' him.

DANIELLE

Only a couple. And he said he loves me both times.

WOMAN

Alright then. So, he's decided he loves you now. What did you say?

DANIELLE

Nothing. I didn't say anything. I was too shocked to say anything.

WOMAN

And do you love him?

DANIELLE

I think I do. I think I really do. All this, me being with James and then seeing Nik again and then...It's different this time, it's not like it was before, we're different and being with him again now...it's made me realise that I do love him.

WOMAN

So, he loves you and you love him, halle-fucking-luya!

DANIELLE

Yeah...except.

WOMAN

James?

DANIELLE

Yeah, James. It's not exactly great timing, is it? I mean, why couldn't Nik have done this last time? Why does he have to go and say it now?

WOMAN

Men are complex creatures...actually, they're not. My guess is, last time you and him were together he had you, so he didn't need to step up, did he? There was nothing to play for?

DANIELLE

Play for?

WOMAN

Yeah, you know, men are only interested while it's exciting, that's why your Nik is so shit bad at the whole commitment thing. It's not exciting, is it? He likes it when it's dangerous.

DANIELLE

No. No, that doesn't sound like Nik to me. No, I think it's just that he's realised it now. He's had all this time, hasn't he, to think about it. And now he realises how he feels.

WOMAN

I suppose you know him best.

DANIELLE

I do.

WOMAN

I suppose if anyone should know what's going on in his head it would be you, then

DANIELLE

Yeah...that's right. You're right. I reckon so. If anyone knows him it's me.

WOMAN

So, you know, someone who knows him as well as you do would never be spending six months with him only to find he wouldn't even do a little thing like meet your mum and dad.

DANIELLE

It's different now. He's different now. Everything's different now.

WOMAN

I'll say.

DANIELLE

So, what then? I should just stick with boring old James and let go of the only man I've really loved.

WOMAN

When the hell did that happen?

DANIELLE

I do love him. I really do. It's Nik. Me and Nik. It's Dani and Nik. Always will be.

WOMAN

Oh somebody shoot me now.

PAUSE

DANIELLE

I do love him. I do.

WOMAN (serious and softer)

Do you want to know what I really think?

DANIELLE

I don't know, do I?

WOMAN

I think in that case you should go and get him.

DANIELLE

Really?

WOMAN

Yeah. If that's how you really feel then sod me and sod James and sod everyone. This is your second chance. Don't let it go.

INT. EVE.

Danielle and Nik are out in the evening, eating in a restaurant. We see them laughing and smiling and having a good time. Then he is driving her home. In the car he is driving and we see his hand reach over and grab hers. He brings her hand over to his crotch to feel his erection. Then he puts his hand over to her crotch to feel her. He keeps one eye on the road.

DANIELLE

This isn't fair, you know it isn't. I have to get back.

NIK

You can be half an hour late, can't you?

DANIELLE

Yeah, but we're miles from your house, by the time we get there...

Nik glances at her and smiles while he continues to rub her crotch.

DANIELLE

You're so mean.

She pauses, clearly getting turned on.

DANIELLE

Do you know anywhere dark?

NIK

I think I might do, yeah.

Nik turns the car up a street to the right and they drive until they reach a dark secluded spot. He turns the engine off and they start kissing. He runs his hands up her shirt and unhooks her bra. Then she climbs on top of him while he sits in the driver's seat and they have sex.

The windows are slightly steamed up, but as she sits back in her own seat and puts her top back on, a pair of headlights swoop down the street and light up Nik's car.

NIK

Shit, it's not a police car, is it?

Danielle hurries with her top as the car parks behind them

DANIELLE

It's not, is it?

NIK

Yeah, it is. I'll go out and talk to them.

We watch Danielle sitting in the car, looking straight ahead. Outside, we can see Nik and we can hear the muffled words of him and the policeman

NIK

We're not bothering anyone, are we?

POLICEMAN

No, you're not bothering anyone.

Danielle takes a deep breath and knots her fingers together.

Then we see outside Nik standing with policeman.

POLICEMAN

I just need to run a vehicle check.



The policeman turns back to his car and Nik follows him with his eyes. He sees a police woman in the car, a smirk on her face.

Then we see Danielle in the car again and the door opens and Nik gets back in. The police car drives away. Danielle glances at Nik

NIK

Well, it's a good job they didn't turn up any earlier!

Danielle laughs, relieved. Then she goes quiet and looks ahead.

DANIELLE

Would you do this with anyone else?

NIK

What?

DANIELLE

This. Mad stuff like this, would you do this kind of thing with anyone else? Cause I wouldn't.

NIK

What are you talking about?

DANIELLE

Is it like this for you with anyone else? Has it ever been like this for you before?

Nik looks at her and she is looking back at him. He struggles with his words, unable to answer.

DANIELLE

That's a yes then.

NIK

No, I mean....no, not quite like this, no.

It's not enough for Danielle, not quite the answer she was hoping for. She wants more from him, but she knows what he's like and knows he won't give it. She nods her head slightly and turns back to look out of the window.

NIK

I mean...it is mad, isn't it? This.

Danielle watches from the window as the police car drives away.

Danielle

I suppose it is.

NIK

I keep thinking, I shouldn't be doing this. I know I've not always done the right thing, don't get me wrong, I know I'm not a saint, but...this. It'd be different if you weren't with someone else, if you weren't engaged and everything.

DANIELLE

It would be different. No, you're right, I can see that.

NIK

Good.

DANIELLE

Yeah, good.

We can see by how Nik says this in a definite way and Danielle says it in a way which holds possibilities for her that, although they each think this point is clear, they are in fact interpreting it a different way.

INT. NIGHT

James is asleep. Danielle gets undressed and slips into the bed quietly. She leans on her elbow in the bed and watches James for a second. Then she turns over and goes to sleep.

The next morning she wakes up and James is spooning her. She opens her eyes but doesn't move. He begins to wake a little and starts kissing her neck. Danielle is slightly alarmed. She pretends to be still asleep, but James moves his body so he's almost on top of her. He moves her face around and begins kissing her. She opens her eyes, smiles and pulls away.

DANIELLE

James, I have to get up, I'll be late for work.

JAMES

Come on, you can be half an hour late, can't you?

Danielle freezes. The same words exactly, that Nik had used the previous night. She's still for a moment then she gets out of bed.

DANIELLE

No, I can't, you know I can't

JAMES

What's going on with us?

DANIELLE

What do you mean?

Danielle turns her head slightly standing by the bed, turns her eyes towards him, but doesn't turn around.

DANIELLE

Is it the no sex thing?

JAMES

It's not about sex, Danielle. It's about you and me. If you don't want to marry me then just say so.

DANIELLE

I...I don't know.

JAMES angry

You don't know?

Danielle, turns and looks at him

DANIELLE

It's just...I don't know, it's a big step.

He softens a little

JAMES

I know it's a big step, but... I know it's scary sometimes, marriage, but as long as we love each other...

Danielle, turns away from him again and starts to get dressed quickly. Doesn't say anything. Close up of her face, sadness.

He lays back down in the bed and puts his arms out.

JAMES

Come back to bed.

She doesn't respond, closes her eyes against the discomfort of the situation.

DANIELLE

I need to (PAUSE) take my time.

JAMES

Take your time?

DANIELLE

Yes. I need time.

JAMES

Just how much time?

DANIELLE

I don't know.

JAMES

You don't know? What do you need time for? How long am I supposed to wait?

DANIELLE

I don't know, James

JAMES

I can't just wait.

DANIELLE

I'm sorry. I have to go.

She picks up her engagement ring and turns it over in her fingers. She puts it on and looks at it. Then she takes it off again, seemingly in a rush and puts it in the top drawer.

INT. DAY.

Danielle is busy at work. She looks at the clock. It is getting close to lunch time. She is eager to leave for lunch.

When it hits 12 she goes and gets her coat from the staff room. The woman she works with is there.

WOMAN

Where are you off to in such a hurry?

DANIELLE

Meeting Nik.

WOMAN

Oh yeah? Spill then, what's going on in your torrid love life?

DANIELLE

It's not torrid, thank you very much, but, well, I am leaving James. I mean, me and James are splitting up.

WOMAN

Because of Nik?

DANIELLE

Partly, though James doesn't know that.

WOMAN

Risky, don't you think?

DANIELLE

How do you mean? James won't find out, and anyway, even if he does, it'll be all over between me and him by then.

WOMAN

I don't mean that, I mean leaving James for Nik, are you sure about this?

DANIELLE

I'm sure.

WOMAN

A couple of I love yous don't mean it'll be different this time round. Just because he said that doesn't mean it's what he really wants.

DANIELLE

No, it is what he wants.

WOMAN

How can you be so sure?

DANIELLE

Because he said so. Last night. He said things would be different if I wasn't with someone else, if I wasn't engaged. I think he feels guilty. And he said it would all be different if I wasn't with James.

WOMAN

Are you sure?

DANIELLE

That's what he said.



WOMAN

Well, ok, if that's what he said. Maybe you're right then. And maybe it will be different this time. Just be careful is all I'm saying. Just make sure you know what you're doing.

DANIELLE

Oh god, I don't know what I'm doing. It's crazy. I have no idea what I'm doing, but...I know it's right, it feels good. It feels right, you know, this time. It feels like we're getting it right this time round. It's me and Nik. It's...

WOMAN

Please God, don't say anything like it's meant to be!

DANIELLE

What's wrong with that?

WOMAN

Everything is wrong with that! You tell yourself that and you're doomed.

DANIELLE

What, you don't believe in that?

WOMAN

No, I chuffing don't. And neither does he. Remember that. Cold hard facts, that's what you need here. You don't turn your life upside down for less than that. Facts. If he can deliver that this time then raise the fucking roof. But please God

don't tell me you're dealing in gut feelings and romantic notions.

DANIELLE (smiling)

You are one cold woman, you know that?

Danielle begins walking away.

WOMAN (calling after Danielle)

Yeah, but I'm one cold, happy, married woman!

Danielle smiles at the woman and leaves for lunch. She walks out of the building and into the street. She walks to a small café and sees Nik coming towards her. They both smile. He walks to her and they hug and kiss. Then he puts his arm around her and they enter the café.

INT. DAY. CAFÉ.

Danielle and Nik sitting opposite each other at a table. Nik is looking at the menu.

DANIELLE

We've started talking about splitting up.

Nik looks up quickly.

DANIELLE

Me and James.

Nik looks uneasy.

NIK

Don't do anything hasty

DANIELLE

Well, no, but now we've started talking about it I don't think James will want to hang around.

NIK

Give it some time.

DANIELLE

Time?

NIK

I mean, there's no rush, is there?

DANIELLE

Isn't there? We have started talking about it, so...

Nik looks at her quickly then back to the menu

NIK

Well, at least you're talking about it. That's progress. Just...that, and you and me, it's separate things. The two things are separate.

Danielle looks disappointed. This isn't the reaction she'd hoped for or expected.

DANIELLE

Separate things?

NIK

Yeah, you need to keep them separate in your head

The waiter approaches the table. Nik looks up at him.

NIK

Yeah, I'll have the ham and cheese...

He fades out and we move into a close up of Danielle, her face, watching Nik as he speaks. The feeling that she may have done something she shouldn't enters her face.

INT. DAY.

Danielle is back at work in the afternoon, walking a dog with the woman she works with.

DANIELLE

He said I need to keep the two things separate in my head.

WOMAN

Well, I suppose that makes sense.

DANIELLE

It does, doesn't it?

WOMAN

Yeah. Or, he's saying he doesn't want anything to do with your break up.

DANIELLE

How can he have nothing to do with it?

WOMAN

I'm not saying he doesn't have anything to do with it, but that he doesn't *want* to have anything to do with it. This is Nik we're talking about. Mr. commitment phobe. Mr. Won't grow up, won't take responsibility. Sounds exactly like him to me. You know you shouldn't expect him to have changed.

DANIELLE

But he has changed. And this is what he wants. He's said so.

WOMAN

Did he? Are you sure that's what he actually said?

Danielle is thinking.

DANIELLE

Yeah, that is what he said. I told you, it's different this time. This time it's right, I'm sure it is. And he did say he loves me, I mean, you don't just say that, do you?

WOMAN

You don't.

DANIELLE

Right.

WOMAN

I mean, you don't.

DANIELLE

I don't.

WOMAN

But does he? Does Nik?

DANIELLE

What?

WOMAN

I mean, you have to remember he's a man.

DANIELLE

So?

WOMAN

So normal rules don't apply.

DANIELLE

They don't?

WOMAN

They don't.

DANIELLE

So...?

WOMAN

So. You know what men are like.

DANIELLE

I'm not sure I do actually.

WOMAN

They like to take their sweet time about these things.

DANIELLE

About love?

WOMAN

Yes.

DANIELLE

But that's it exactly! He has taken his time. I know that. I understand that.

WOMAN

You do?

DANIELLE

Yes! He needed time to realise it, I know that. When we were together before he was always unsure, you see, but now he's had the time to realise it and now he knows.

WOMAN

He does?

DANIELLE

Yes. He does. I know he does.

INT. EVENING.

Nik and his brother are at their mother's house.

NIK'S MOTHER

Have you met a nice young lady yet?

NIK

No, mum, I haven't met a nice young lady yet.

Nik's mum turns to Nik's brother.

NIK'S MOTHER

And what about you?



NIK'S BROTHER

Oh shit, broth, she's after me now. Will you hurry up and get married, I don't want her on my back!

NIK'S MOTHER

Language! You two, deprive a mother of her only wish, see me without any grandchildren before I die, would you?

NIK

You're not dying mother.

NIK'S MOTHER

Nobody lives forever, boy, we are all dying!

NIK'S BROTHER

Why don't we make you a nice cup of tea, mum.

NIK'S MOTHER

That's all you two come here for, isn't it, to drink my tea. Well, go on then, and I'll have a strong cup, I need it dealing with you two.

Nik and his brother go into the kitchen and Nik fills the kettle.

NIK'S BROTHER

So. You really haven't found a nice young lady then?

NIK

She'll mess me about. Like she did before. Bloody women, you know I think she's just using me. I reckon she wants out of her engagement and I'm the perfect excuse.

NIK'S BROTHER

You sure about that?

NIK

She's got me in a tangle, she's got me doing stupid things...I'm not gonna be made a fool of.

NIK'S BROTHER

Do you really think so?

NIK

I think I know Dani better than you.

NIK'S BROTHER

True.

NIK

So, I think I'd know when she's holding back.

NIK'S BROTHER

Ok.

NIK

She's so hard to read, I mean, just when you think you know where you are, bam! It turns out you didn't know shit.

NIK'S BROTHER

Really?

NIK

Yeah.

NIK'S BROTHER

Well, you know best, mate, and if that's what you think, then..

NIK

Yeah?

NIK'S BROTHER

You need to put a stop to it right now.

NIK

You think so?

NIK'S BROTHER

Most definitely. You don't want to get mixed up in some pre-marital distraction thing.

NIK

I don't.

NIK'S BROTHER

I mean, if you say she's the type to deceive.

NIK

Course she is.

NIK'S BROTHER

I suppose so.

NIK

Right.

NIK'S BROTHER

I suppose she is engaged and so she is already lying.

NIK

She is.

NIK'S BROTHER

So, I suppose, there's nothing to say she wouldn't lie to you too.

NIK

Exactly.

INT. EVENING.

Danielle arrives home. James is already there, sitting on the sofa waiting for her. She puts her bag down on a chair and takes off her coat.

JAMES

Do you want me to leave? Cause if you want me to I'll get a flat or something, or I'll stay at a mate's, just tell me. Cause if you want me to leave I'd rather just go.

Danielle sits on the arm of the sofa and looks at him. He turns to look at her.

JAMES

You don't come near me anymore, it's like you can't stand to...You've stopped wearing your engagement ring. It's obvious. Do you want me to leave?

Danielle looks down and bites her lip then she looks back up at him.

DANIELLE

I'm sorry

James pats his hands down hard on the sofa beside him before getting up.

JAMES

Right. I'll sort it out. I'll look for somewhere tomorrow.

Danielle closes her eyes.

INT. DAY.

We see Danielle standing in the house while James packs his things. He goes from room to room pushing items into bags and boxes. Danielle stands and watches, biting her nails and running her hand over her head showing the stress of the situation. James stops near the door with a big liner in his grasp and turns to Danielle.

JAMES

Never thought it would come to this.

Danielle doesn't say anything, just looks at him with pain on her face.

JAMES

I just hope you know what you're doing. I hope you know what you've *done*.

DANIELLE

What I've done?

JAMES

To me!

DANIELLE

Oh. I'm...

JAMES

Sorry, yes, so you keep saying.

DANIELLE

Well, I am.

JAMES

So am I, Dani, and he might be fun than me, he might like tequila and being spontaneous and all the rest of it, but that stuff can only go on so long, can't it? That stuff is temporary, and when that stuff is over, what have you got?

DANIELLE is staring at JAMES in disbelief and shock

JAMES

You didn't think I didn't know?

DANIELLE

I...

JAMES

Of course I knew.

DANIELLE

But (PAUSE) how?

JAMES

It isn't only women who have intuition, you know. It was pretty obvious there was someone, and who else would it be? It was always going to be him.

DANIELLE

But why didn't you say anything?

JAMES

Because I love you, Dani.

DANIELLE

What?

JAMES

I love you. And it doesn't depend on whether or not you love me. And it isn't affected by the things you do or say, or anything else. It isn't changed by time or distance or anything. I didn't say anything because I would've done anything to keep you here. Is that so hard to understand?

DANIELLE

No. I'm...

JAMES

Don't say you're sorry again.

DANIELLE

Sorry.

JAMES

I'll get out of your way.



DANIELLE

Can we...?

JAMES

Be friends?

DANIELLE

Yes.

JAMES

No, I don't think we can. I don't think there'll ever be a time when we can be friends.

Then we see him walk out and slam the door. Danielle stands in the house and looks around at the empty spaces. She hugs her arms around her own body and stands with her back against the wall. And later that same night, light fading, still dressed the same, sitting on the sofa alone, wearing the same cloths, hugging her knees up to her chest and watching TV in the dark.

INT. EVE.

Nik is sitting on the sofa in his flat having a telephone conversation.

NIK

No, mum, for the last time, I'm ok as I am, you don't need to worry...no, mum, I have not gone and found myself a nice girl yet.

Cut to Nik watching TV and a text message comes through on his phone. We see his phone and it's Danielle. He checks the message and we read it - James has gone. He moved out today x

Nik puts the phone down on the cushion next to him heavily without replying. He leans his head back on the sofa and breathes in deeply and sighs it out.

Then we see Nik is in his bedroom. He takes out the photo of him and Danielle and he stares at it. Then he puts it on the bedside table. Gets into bed and switches out the light. Then he switches the light back on, picks up the photo and slides it into his bedside drawer and turns out the light again.

EXT. DAY

Nik and Danielle are walking through a park together

NIK

I don't want you to think that you're gonna go straight from that relationship and into one with me. I don't want you to think it's that easy, like you can just do that, like you can pick up where we left all a year ago and then drop it again when you want.

DANIELLE

What do you mean, into a relationship? Aren't we already in one?

NIK

Well...I want us to go back to being friends then.

Danielle doesn't say anything, just keeps looking down.

NIK

I don't like the idea of splitting you two up anyway. I don't want to be responsible for that. I didn't want to do that. I never wanted to...stop you from getting married, being happy.

DANIELLE

I'm happy with you.

NIK

I can't...give you that. All that. What he can give you. What you want.

DANIELLE

How do you know what I want?

NIK

All women want that. Don't they?

DANIELLE

And you don't? Is that it?

NIK

I don't know. I don't know what I want or who with or when. I don't know any of that stuff, and if you leave him for me and then I let you down, and...

DANIELLE

Nobody knows that stuff, Nik, not really.

NIK

...Or you, or if you let me down, and...

They stop walking and he turns to look at her.

NIK

You never said it back. When I said I loved you, you didn't say anything

DANIELLE

Love's a big word, and anyway, is that what it depends on? If the other person doesn't say it back you don't feel it anymore? People use that word too lightly. I only say it when I really mean it.

Pause. She looks around for a moment, then back at Nik.

DANIELLE

Sometimes when I really mean it I still don't say it.

NIK

Then how are we ever gonna know?

DANIELLE

You just *know*.

They look at each other for a moment. Then Nik looks down, seems to be struggling with his emotions and doesn't want to show it.

NIK

Well, maybe that's the problem, then. Because I don't know. Maybe that's it. Or maybe it's just bad timing.

DANIELLE

Timing?

NIK

Yeah. Maybe it's just not the right time for me and you.

DANIELLE

So, that's it?

NIK

I think that's it...and maybe.

DANIELLE

And maybe we can stay friends, is that what you were gonna say?

NIK

Do you think we can still be friends?

DANIELLE

I don't know, Nik. I don't know if me and you could ever really be just friends.

NIK

But it's not the end for us.

DANIELLE

Your brother, that night, do you remember, he said I was your one that got away, do you remember?

NIK

I remember.

DANIELLE

Why did he say that?

NIK

Because you were.

DANIELLE

I was?

NIK

You still are, Dani, I think maybe you always will be.

EXT. DAY.

Nik is walking in the street with his arm around a blonde girl. She is similar to the other girl he lived with before. They are smiling and chatting. They approach the same pub he had been in with Danielle before. He opens the door for the girl to go in and as he does this he sees Danielle coming out of a shop a couple of doors away. She is alone. He stops and watches her. She sees him and a small uncertain smile flickers on her face. They gaze at each other for a second, then the blonde girl calls Nik and he turns to her, looks back once at Danielle with a small smile and enters the pub.