

A Caravan
Named
Desire

The Real Script

ABSTRACT

Helen and Alexander have a new show. The set is a caravan. And it's all true.

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The stage is filled with an old caravan with one side removed so that the audience can see the action within. It has been cared for over the years, but some wear and tear is unavoidable. It looks like it hasn't been moved for a long time. When scenes are exterior to the caravan, they can be performed either in front of the removed wall or the caravan can be rotated. Outside the caravan there are some old camping chairs and a table. Unless otherwise stated, all scenes are at night and the lighting should demonstrate this. The interior of the caravan is lit with old lamps, fairy lights, and one single, bare hanging bulb in the centre of the main living space. The interior of the caravan is surprisingly clean and tidy, though very dated, possibly 80s or early 90s decor. It is cramped, and most of the furniture needs some form of unfolding or setting up.

Alexander and Helen are standing outside the caravan. They are looking at each other, both feel a mix of emotions; panic, excitement, nervousness, and fear. They stand in silence for a bit longer than a moment, just staring at each other.

Helen Are you ready?

The lights blow and they are left in darkness.

Transition.

Alexander Good evening everyone.

Helen Good evening. I know what you're thinking. Shit! Where's the fucking fourth wall. These bastards could have me doing some kind of interactive shit.

Alexander And maybe we will.

Helen But not much.

Alexander You see, that's the point of this really. Trust. You see, most of time you trust the performer not to talk to.

Helen Touch you. I'm Helen by the way.

Alexander And I'm Alexander. And this is our set.

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Helen It's a caravan.

Alexander Well, it's a set made up to look like a caravan. This is where we need you to trust us, trust the set. Forget that we're currently in the [name of space] and believe we're actually outside, and occasionally inside, a caravan.

Helen Welcome to our new play...

Alexander *A Caravan Named Desire.*

Helen I was going to say that.

Alexander Sorry.

Helen *A Caravan Named Desire.*

Alexander Better? Now, a little bit of back story before we start...

Helen Do we need it?

Alexander What?

Helen Do they need the back story? Why can't we just start?

Alexander Because I think it's important for them to know why I wrote it.

Helen **And I directed it by the way.**

Alexander I knew you'd have to get that in.

Helen Fine, just do your stupid intro so we can get started.

Alexander Thank you. **As I was saying, a bit of back story for why we've created this piece. I'm interested in sex. All aspects of it. Not in a pervy way, just a general...fascination. Why we do it, how we do it, who we do it with, and how we tell stories about it. And that's sort of what this play is, a story about sex. Sort of. You see I had this idea of writing a play which showed sex in all it's different guises: romantic, messy, boring, violent, exciting, mundane, angry, supportive, funny, embarrassing, regretful, memorable, forgettable, tender, heated, force of**

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habit, ritualistic, just lubing up and getting on with it, the long build up with short lasting event, the spur of the moment that leads to an all-nighter, the...

Helen Sixty minutes.

Alexander But I knew I wouldn't be able to do this in just sixty minutes, so instead I thought about telling the story of a prostitute – or sex worker as they are now known - and a client and how their relationship potentially led to a variety of different sex acts.

Helen But that idea was also dull.

Alexander It was fine.

Helen So he thought why not tell a true story of a sex worker and client relationship. But it turns out not many clients want to make friends with their sex provider, or vice versa, and not many want their story to be told.

Alexander So I had no choice.

Helen No choice?

Alexander No. I had no choice but to investigate the matter myself. So I began to see a sex worker. Write what you know, they always say, so I had to make sure I knew. Now, a lot of what you are going to see tonight is true, by which I mean a representation of the truth, of events that have happened. A dramatisation of real life, real events. Inspired by, based upon. Not exactly a fallacy, more of an interpretation. What I'm trying to say is that this is all true, completely true...except for the bits that aren't.

Helen Now, before we go any further, do we have any questions? Have we said anything that has been unclear at all?

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Alexander **Good. One last formality then. I know I've already introduced myself to you as Alexander, but for the majority of this performance I will be referred to as Gary - the reasons for which will become clear to you.**

So, yes, I will be playing the part of Gary, and my wife, Helen, will be playing the part of our sex worker...

Helen **Krystal**

Alexander **Yes. Now, do you want to get yourself ready?**

Helen Ready?

Alexander Costume.

Helen What costume?

Alexander grabs a leopard print top and scarf from inside the caravan.

Alexander This.

Helen I'm not wearing that! I'll look like Bet Lynch!

Alexander That's a dated reference.

Helen We said we would be avoiding stereotypes.

Alexander So what, you're just going to wear that?

Helen Yes!

Alexander But...

Helen Who's the director.

Alexander sulks for a moment.

I'll wear the animal print scarf if you insist but that's it.

Alexander I've put your shoes in the caravan too.

He gestures to a pair of heels.

Helen I'm not wearing those either. I can't walk in heels and you know that.

Alexander So what then? Slippers?

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Helen I'm at home, I'm comfortable, yes!

Alexander Fine.

Helen Shall I go now?

Alexander You're the director.

Helen *positions herself in the caravan.*

Alexander Now... erm... well, I think we can get started now.

Transition.

Krystal climbs back into the caravan and begins hunting for a light bulb. Once she has found one she replaces the bulb that blew, and the lights come back on completely red. There is a knocking at the door.

Krystal Just a minute!

Krystal then turns on a lamp with a clear bulb to balance the light. Gary is waiting at the caravan door wearing a cheap-looking button-through shirt and trousers, as if he has just come from work. Everything is a little bit creased, and clearly a little bit old. He knocks again.

Just a sec!

Krystal turns on some fairy lights that trail around the caravan. She has to click the button a few times to work through the pre-sets before she settles on one. She checks herself in a small mirror before going to the door and opening it.

Sorry about that, bloody fuse went again. It's always doing it. Are you the new guy Uncle Stanley was on about? I'll just be a sec, come in.

Gary enters and is directed across to the other end of the caravan. Krystal goes to the bathroom, the only place not entirely visible to Gary, but is to the audience. Krystal pulls out a small money bag from within the toilet cistern. It contains some notes. She pulls out a few notes and returns the remaining money to where she found it. She returns to Gary.

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I told Stanley it was going to be a bit short this month 'cause the internet kept cutting out, so my loss of income is due to him. He knows, he said it's fine so no need to bother him. Well here, aren't you going to take it?

Krystal thrusts the money towards Gary. Gary, uncertain of what to do, slowly reaches for the money. Before he touches it, Krystal pulls it back.

Hang on. What's your name again?

Gary Gary. My name's Gary.

Krystal You're not the guy Uncle Stanley was on about.

Gary Erm...no. I don't know any Stanley. I sent you a message last week. We'd arranged to meet.

Krystal Thursday. We said we'd meet on Thursday. It's not fucking Thursday today is it?

Gary No. No, it's Wednesday today.

Krystal We did say Thursday, didn't we?

Gary Oh yes, we did. I'm early.

Krystal By twenty-four-fucking-hours. You made me think I'd lost a fucking day or something, Jesus Christ! You don't do that to somebody! Do you have any idea what shit you might have caused by making me think I'd lost a day. I might have plans, very specific plans, you know, which I have to do on a Thursday and now all of a sudden I've lost my Thursday and forgotten to do everything!

Gary It's not Thursday though, it's Wednesday.

Krystal I know that now! I knew that five minutes ago. But the time between five minutes ago and now I thought it was fucking Thursday! Fuck me I need a sit down.

Gary I'm sorry.

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Krystal *tucks the cash into her clothes.*

Krystal I should think so too. Why are you here anyway?

Gary I just, I wanted to make sure I knew the way when I came tomorrow, you know. Make sure I didn't get lost. Or that it wasn't some fake address or something. So, I put the address you gave me into my phone and, as you said, it directed me to this site, and then I saw the caravan and thought, well, whilst I'm here I should probably just knock and check it's the right one. I didn't want to come tomorrow and find I was at the wrong door.

Krystal Right, well...you've found me. Congratulations.

Gary Thank you.

Beat.

Krystal Did you want anything else?

Gary Oh, sorry, no. I just wanted to make sure I knew the way. I should be going actually. Nice to have met you.

Krystal Wait, wait, wait. Since you're here, do you want to...?

Gary Oh, no, no thank you. I've got to get back. But I'll definitely be back tomorrow. I'll see myself out.

Gary goes to exit the caravan and closes the door behind him.

Krystal Alright. Well, see ya.

Transition.

Alexander I did actually turn up twenty-four hours early. She probably thought I was a proper weirdo. You see I really wanted you to see this as part of the story, how a seemingly bad impression can still lead to a lasting relationship. It's all part of the build-up you see, the lead in, the details that create that little je ne sais quoi.

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Helen Would you just get ready for the next scene and stop monologuing. No one cares.

Alexander does as he is told by his director.

Transition.

Krystal is laid on the sofa bed going through some paperwork. She keeps looking at the clock hanging on the wall. She then taps on her phone to check the time is correct. Gary is outside the caravan, sitting in one of the camping chairs. Eventually, Krystal goes to the caravan door and opens it. She looks about until she spots Gary sitting in the chair and is startled.

Krystal Creeping Jesus! What the fuck are you doing sitting there?!

Gary is startled by her response.

Gary Sorry. I came to your door, but I was a little early and wasn't sure if you might be busy, so I thought I'd just wait out here for a minute. I guess I must have lost track of time.

Krystal You were meant to have been here at seven.

Gary I know.

Krystal It's nine!

Gary I know. I lost track of time.

Krystal Fuck me.

Gary Should I come back another time?

Krystal No. No, it's fine. I'm charging you as if you were here from seven though.

Gary Ok.

Krystal *(to herself)* Two fucking hours.

Gary What do we do now then?

Krystal Do you wanna come in?

Gary Can do.

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Krystal Unless you wanna do it out here?

Gary Would you like to?

Krystal I was kidding. It's fucking freezing out here.

Gary Sorry.

Beat.

It's a lovely night.

Krystal Yeah?

Krystal *looks up at the sky.*

Yeah, I suppose it is.

Gary The moon's so bright.

Krystal I prefer new moons myself.

Gary Yeah?

Krystal You can see the stars better then. The moonlight blocks out a lot of the stars.

Gary At New Moon you're also meant to bow and turn over any of your silver for good luck... or a new love. My Aunty Blanche told me that.

Krystal Yeah?

Beat

Well, come in then. I'm letting all the cold in here!

Gary gets up out of the chair and enters the caravan. Krystal shuts the door behind them.

I can see you're going to be trouble.

Gary I don't mean to be.

Krystal I'm sure. You just go from twenty-four hours early to two hours late. What would you have done if someone else turned up?

Gary Erm...I don't really know. Left, I suppose.

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Krystal Well, you're lucky I'm quiet at the moment. And in a good mood. Look, why don't you take a seat. Do you want a drink?

Gary Oh, nothing for me, thank you.

Krystal Then take a seat while I make myself a drink.

Krystal gets a bottle of squash and water out of a cupboard along with a glass and pours herself a drink. She takes a swig then tops up her glass. Gary is looking for somewhere to sit down. He goes to sit on the sofa bed but doesn't want to disturb the papers that are there. He starts to move some of them when Krystal turns around and sees him.

Don't fucking look at those!

Krystal rushes across the caravan and grabs at the papers, piling them up and throwing them in a drawer.

Gary I'm sorry. I was just trying to find somewhere to sit.

Krystal So you start looking over my fucking tax returns?

Gary Tax returns?

Krystal takes Gary by the shoulders and places him on the sofa bed where she has created him a space.

Krystal Yeah, my fucking tax return. I'm not exactly PAYE doing this, am I? Now, just sit there, and don't move, alright.

Gary Sorry.

Krystal And stop apologising.

Gary goes to apologise again but stops himself.

Now, before we go any further, have you got money?

Gary reaches into his pocket and pulls out his wallet.

Gary Did it not come through? I used the link you sent me when I booked.

Krystal That was for one hour. As I said, I'm charging you for three now.

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Gary Oh, yes. Sorry. How much? I've only got...

Krystal Hang on, let me work it out. Now, you've wasted two hours already, so that's going to be £160. £80 an hour whether we do anything or not, no negotiation. Now, what is it you actually want? You didn't go into much detail before.

Gary Well...

Krystal As I said, I'm open to most things but I do have my limits.

Gary All I really want is...

Krystal Come on, spit it out.

Gary Can we just talk?

Krystal Talk?

Gary Yeah.

Krystal I take it back, I will take the money first.

Gary I'm not saying I definitely don't want to do anything, I'm just not sure that I will.

Krystal So what *might* you want to do? Hand jobs, blow jobs, just wanna fuck, if so, front or back? Wanna finger me? Go down on me? Give me a facial, fisting, pegging, rimming, be rimmed...?

Gary I don't know. I probably won't want to try anything. At least not tonight. Maybe if we hit it off we could arrange a second night. I don't really know. I've never done this before. I'm sorry. Maybe I should just go now.

Gary gets up to leave but Krystal stands in his way.

Krystal £240 and you just wanna talk? Stay for the hour, and we'll talk. That's all that's covered, mind. Anything else happens and I charge more.

Gary Ok.

Gary gets out his wallet again and takes out some money.

I've only got £50 with me.

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Krystal I take card.

Gary takes out his phone to pay. Krystal picks up her card machine from amongst the paperwork on the bed. She sets it up using her phone. There's an awkward silence while

Krystal waits for the machine to load. She offers the device to Gary.

Tap it.

Gary does so. The transaction goes through.

Right. So, what do you wanna talk about?

Transition.

Alexander I hope this isn't breaking up the action too much for you. I don't mean it to, it's just there isn't much point in you watching the next hour when it's just talking.

There wasn't even much of that actually, to be fair. There were probably more pauses and silences than talking. And there's no point me making you watch an hour of just pauses and silences. I mean you might as well go and watch a Beckett or a Pinter if you're just gonna watch a silent stage.

Anyway, you didn't miss much. I didn't really think much about the details when I booked the appointment so I didn't even think about whether I would tell the truth or not when I met her. I decided to tell her that I worked at the local council office. That I lived alone in a two up, two down house I rent from my mother.

Helen moves position to confront Alexander.

Helen Hang on, I didn't know this. Why didn't you tell her the truth?

Alexander Because, I thought if I told her I was a writer trying to get a good story to make a play then she might not be as forthcoming.

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Helen You could have still said you were married though. Married men still see sex workers don't they? In fact I imagine most people who see sex workers are married. So, why *did* you say you were seeing her?

Alexander I said I was a virgin and that I wanted to try it with a professional before I did it with anyone else.

Helen You'd rather tell people you're a thirty year old virgin than say you're married to me?

Alexander There's nothing wrong with being a thirty year old virgin. I just thought it might complicate things. Now, can we return to the story.

Helen *reluctantly moves back into position.*

Alexander **As I was saying, we didn't do much on that first visit. We didn't actually do much for the first three visits. It was on my fourth visit however when I finally got up the nerve to... well, try something.**

Transition.

Gary is pacing around outside the caravan. Krystal is standing at the door as before trying to convince him to come in.

Krystal Look, the longer you stay out here the colder my caravan's going to get and then we'll both be complaining. Now, why don't you just get in here and tell me what's shit in your knickers today?

Gary Nothing's shit in my knickers!
Do you like me?

Krystal Do I what?

Gary Do you like me?

Krystal To be honest you're freaking me out a little bit.

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Gary I know you don't *like me* like me, that's not what I'm asking. What I'm asking is do you... do you think I'm an alright person.

Krystal I've only met you a handful of times and even then you barely speak, so I can't really say. I doubt you're a complete wanker if that's what you mean?

Gary Ok.

Krystal I'm not saying I've completely ruled it out, mind.

Gary I think I like you.

Krystal Right.

Gary Not, like that. I could never like you like that.

Krystal Good to know.

Gary I don't mean it like that. I just mean, I like you as a person, an acquaintance, sort of.

Beat.

I don't think you're a complete wanker either.

They both smile. This is the first time they both seem relaxed.

Krystal Look, why don't you come in, I'll make us both a drink and we can have a chat again.

Krystal turns to get some cans of drink out of her cupboard. Gary just stands and stares at her.

Gary I want to do more than just talk tonight.

Krystal turns to look at him.

If that's ok.

Krystal Erm. Sure. Yeah. What did you have in mind?

Gary I don't know.

Krystal Right.

Gary I just... I want to try something new.

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Pause.

Krystal Alright. I'll get those drinks.

Krystal gets out some cups to pour the drinks into but changes her mind.

Gary I don't drink.

Krystal I get the impression you're going to need something. It's only coke anyway.

Gary Can I just have a water?

Krystal Alright.

Krystal gets out a bottle of water and passes it to Gary. Gary just watches her, not thinking to take the bottle from her. Krystal just places it on the side. He takes a step towards her as if about to do something but is unsure what. He takes a step back, sees the water and takes a mouthful.

Gary Do you kiss?

Krystal Kiss?

Gary I know some...

Krystal Some?

Gary What do you like to be called?

Krystal Krystal.

Gary I mean...

Krystal I know what you mean. I'm Krystal.

Gary Well, I just know some... Krystals that don't do kissing.

Krystal Know many Krystals do you?

Gary Well, no. I mean I've heard, or rather seen on TV, that some don't like to do all that stuff.

Krystal Do you like to kiss?

Gary doesn't know how to respond for a second before eventually nodding.

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Then we can kiss.

Gary Ok. Ok.

Krystal moves close to Gary. Gary stands still but begins to prepare himself for a kiss.

Transition.

Alexander Her hands were all over me. Her fingers running through my hair, pulling my face into hers. I felt her fingers slowly run down my back before grabbing my arse. Our bodies rubbing together, her tits pressed up against me. I could feel her hands making their way round to my belt! She whipped it off me, ripped open her top and dropped to her knees...! I wish. Can you seriously imagine me...? We just kissed. But, you know what, she pretty good. I was a little awkward at first as I warmed up into it but when we properly got going, I think I did a pretty good job too! It was a bit like being back in school. When you'd spend ages kissing and feel like you'd done so much together.

Who here remembers the name of their first kiss by the way, you don't need to call it out, just a show of hands. Everyone remembers their first. Ok, a little trickier now. Who remembers *how many* people they've kissed, the actual number, not a round abouts? And their names? So, we're not really all that different are we. Some of us, anyway. Selena was my first. Selena French.

Helen Can we stop indulging about your past flings and get going.

Transition.

Krystal So be honest, was that your first kiss?

Gary seems to be just staring off into the middle distance, holding his bottle of water.

Gary No!

Krystal No?

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Gary Year 5. Selena French, at St Mary's Primary School. Kiss chase in the courtyard. I didn't even know I was playing but she just ran up to me, grabbed me, I mean properly grabbed me, and just planted one on my lips then ran off.

Krystal Did she kiss you as her name suggests?

Gary Pardon?

Krystal French?

Gary We were only nine.

Beat.

I lied to you Krystal. I've been seeing someone.

Krystal Ok.

Gary I'm not anymore!

Krystal Right.

Gary But it was pretty serious.

Krystal Ok.

Gary I just thought you should know.

Krystal Hang on, does this mean you're not a virgin?

Gary Well, not exactly.

Krystal Well you either are or you're not. Either way, it doesn't really bother me. You can say what you want, you're paying for the time.

Gary It's just, I'm a virgin in terms of... I've never really fully been with a woman.

Krystal What do you mean?

Gary I'm... well, I struggle.

Krystal Right.

Transition.

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Alexander I won't bore you with this next bit. It goes on a for a bit and it's not true anyway, so it doesn't really matter.

Helen Wait a minute, so you admit to her that you lied.

Alexander Yes.

Helen But rather than actually tell the truth, you just told another lie.

Alexander A more feasible one.

Helen And so now you're still not admitting you're married, but instead that you now can't get it up.

Alexander I can't keep it up.

Helen So erectile dysfunction is still more preferable to a wife.

Alexander You know that's not what I'm saying.

Helen Just get on with it!

Transition.

Krystal But you do at least stay hard when you wank, right? You do wank don't you? Masturbate? Jerk off? Shake hands with the milkman? Polishing the banister? Celebrating Palm Sunday? Burping the worm? Making soup?

Gary Erm... Do you mind if I just take a minute? I'm just getting a bit... sorry.

Gary rushes outside of the caravan to try and catch his breath. Krystal stands at the door of the caravan and watches him.

Krystal You alright?

Gary No. I get like this. I don't really know why I'm here. I don't know what's wrong with me.

Krystal It's alright, just take a breath. Nothing's wrong with you. You want another water or something?

Gary No, I'll be alright. I just need...

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Gary sits down on one of the camping chairs again. He looks up at the sky.

You're right. You can see more stars without the moon.

Krystal steps out of the caravan and looks up.

Krystal Beautiful, isn't it? If you look over there you'll see the Big Dipper.

Gary I can never see those things.

Krystal The constellations? Look, see that trapezium sort of shape there?

Gary The what?

Krystal The sort of square shape, over there?

Gary I think so?

Krystal And those three stars going up at an angle? That's the Big Dipper. People always say it looks like a saucepan or something, I dunno. And those three there, that's Orion's Belt. That was the first constellation I learnt. And that little cluster of stars there is the Seven Sisters.

Gary starts to relax.

Gary How do you know all of these?

Krystal I dunno. I just do. I'm not just some bimbo, alright. I do know things.

Gary Sorry.

Krystal It's alright.

Gary I just want to know what it's like.

Krystal To be a constellation?

Gary To fully be with someone.

Krystal Oh. We can work on that. Why now though? You've got to be what, 40, 42?

Gary I'm 31!

Krystal Sorry. But you must have had loads of opportunity to try it. Why is it only now you wanna do something about it?

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You don't have to tell me. It might just help me to work out what...

Gary She cheated.

Transition.

Helen I did not!

Alexander It was just the story I was telling her. To pity me.

Helen But why did she need to pity you? I still don't see why you couldn't have just told her the truth, that you were married, and things had dried up between us!

Alexander They haven't dried up. Things haven't dried up, have they?

Pause.

Helen No. No, of course not. It was just an example of... Let's just get back to it.

Alexander **Ok. Erm... I told her that my ex cheated on me, and it made me feel crap basically. That was the end of the session.**

What do you actually mean, dried up?

Helen Just get on with it.

Alexander **Ok. The next visit.. Actually, I just need a hand from someone for this next scene. Any volunteers? You.**

Alexander speaks to members of the audience, convincing one to join him on stage and convincing them to take a seat in his camping chair.

Just take a seat here. I'll be right back.

Transition.

Krystal stands in the doorway of the caravan looking exhausted. She steps out and takes a seat next to the audience member.

Krystal That was amazing. You were amazing. Wow. I mean... How was it for you?

The audience member may or may not respond.

You certainly know your way around a woman don't you?

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The audience member may or may not respond.

Did you get the link through by the way for booking your next appointment? In fact, just wait here a second, I'll go grab you a card with all the details on again.

Here, help yourself to a drink too.

Gary enters but freezes as soon as he sees the person in the camping chair. Gary looks at his watch then back at the other person. Gary walks off for a moment before returning, still confused. He offers a hand to the other person to shake.

Gary Hello. Gary.

The audience member may or may not reply.

I thought I must have been early, but only a couple of minutes. Is she still...?

Do you mind if I just sit and wait with you? I don't want to intrude if...

Gary sits in the second camping chair.

Is it just you here? There isn't someone else in with her I mean or have you just...?

The audience member may or may not reply.

Sorry. I shouldn't ask. None of my business. Sorry.

Beat.

Lovely night. Not too cold. Or too warm. Just right. What is it you're drinking?

Krystal walks out of caravan and sees the two clients together.

Krystal Sorry about that, I just had to find a card with the right details on. Oh...erm...
You're early?

Gary Only by a couple of minutes.

Krystal *(To audience member.)* I'm sorry about this. Here, drop me a message and we'll arrange another appointment.

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Krystal *ushers off the audience member. Gary tries to shake hands with them again before they go. Gary remains in her camping chair.*

Gary They seemed nice. Chatty.

Krystal *sits in the other camping chair and chooses a drink from the cooler.*

 New regular?

Krystal Why do you still come here, Gary?

Gary What do you mean? You know why.

Krystal It's been three months.

Beat.

 Aside from the occasional kissing session we haven't even tried anything more.

 I'm not trying to turn you away or anything, I'd just like to know where this is going? Which seems like an odd question under the circumstances I know, but, c'mon. Don't we know each other enough yet for you to get over your little shyness problem?

Gary I... I don't know. You're kind of putting me on the spot. I don't know.

Krystal Well, let's find out shall we.

Krystal *moves quickly to climb on top of Gary. Krystal kisses Gary passionately, taking him by surprise before he gives in. Krystal stops and slowly pulls her face away from Gary's.*

Krystal That seems to have started something.

Gary *nods his head, a little embarrassed.*

Gary I can't promise it'll last though.

Krystal Then let's not waste our chance.

Krystal *repositions herself so that her hand is down Gary's trousers. She begins to work.*

Krystal How's that?

Gary *nods, his breathing now becoming erratic.*

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That's it. C'mon. Come on.

Gary's face starts to look different, as if he is concentrating a lot.

Think of something. Think of something that turns you on. Think of something that gets you off. Your ex. Your favourite porn. C'mon!

Gary I don't know.

Krystal Picture the perfect girl. She looks amazing. She's calling you to her. She's wearing... [Krystal *begins describing a member of the audience: their clothes, their hair, their eyes, etc. in as much detail as possible.*] She looks at you, dead in the eye and tells you she wants you.

Gary Yes?

Krystal She's calling you.

Gary's face continues to look uncomfortably focused before he seems to give up.

Gary It's gone. I'm sorry.

Krystal *carries on for a second.*

Krystal Stay with me. C'mon, tell me what you wanted her to do to you.

Gary takes a gentle hold of Krystal's wrist, stopping her.

Gary It's too late.

Krystal retrieves her hand and, deflated, sits in the other camping chair.

Sorry.

Krystal What are you apologising for? I'm the one that didn't get you there.

Gary There was just too much pressure.

Krystal There's no pressure. I was just trying to be more spontaneous - even less pressure really.

Gary Not for me. I've had no chance to prepare myself for what might happen.

Then, as it happens, I was wondering how far it's going to go. Then I worry that

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maybe it will go further but I'll lose it. Then once I start to think I'm gonna lose it that's all I can think about and then...

Krystal You lose it.

Gary Yeah. I've never been one of these one-night-stand kind of guys. I've got to get to know you first.

Transition.

Helen This is one of the bits you were on about at the start isn't it?

Alexander What do you mean?

Helen One of the bits you made up, right? Everything you're about to see is true, except the bits that aren't. This is one of the bits that isn't true, yeah?

Pause.

Tell me this bit is just for the play, Alex.

Alexander Course it is. Yeah.

Helen Ok. Ok.

Helen returns to her position as Krystal.

Alexander You see the problem I have is this block I get if I don't know someone well enough. We were coming up to six months now. How much longer was it gonna take to get to know her. She asked me.

Transition.

Krystal How much longer is it gonna take to get to know me?

Transition.

Alexander I couldn't tell her. I mean you don't know, do you?

I made a suggestion for my next visit. That we just talk. Back to step one, but this time with a specific topic of conversation. Has anyone here heard of the 36 questions?

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If someone says yes then Alexander can engage them in conversation to see how much they know.

Well, there are these 36 questions right which, if discussed with a partner, are meant to create a really close and intimate bond between you. Nothing too fancy, it's just meant to be an exercise to get to know someone essentially. *The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness: A Procedure and Some Preliminary Findings* accredited to Dr Arthur Aron and his colleagues. For those non academics in here, it was also in Cosmo last year, snappily titled 36 Questions to Fall in Love, and has featured in a dozen other magazines before that.

Transition.

The two camping chairs are now positioned to be facing one another. Gary is sitting on one, holding a piece of paper. Krystal is getting herself a drink from inside the caravan before coming out to join Gary, sitting in the opposite chair.

Krystal So what do we do?

Gary Just work our way through the questions. You ask a question and we both answer, then I ask a question which we both answer, until we've both answered all 36. It was just an idea, that was all.

Krystal But why? What do you think it's gonna achieve exactly?

Gary Well, then you know me. And I know you. It might just sort our little problem out and we can try some stuff.

Krystal So, who goes first?

Gary You go.

Krystal Ok. Set 1 slip 1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?

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Pause.

Gary Now, you answer first since you asked the question, then I'll answer.

Krystal Oh, erm... Is it living or dead?

Gary Try not to over think it. Just go for it, first name in your head.

Krystal Jack the Ripper.

Gary Why?!

Krystal Firstly, I think it would be cool to finally know for definite who he was and secondly, he killed a load of my sisters. I think they deserve some vengeance.

Gary Fair enough.

Krystal You?

Gary My grandmother. Before she got ill. She's dead now, but I'd love to have one more meal with her. Hear her stories and her laugh.

Krystal That's nice.

Gary Thank you. Slip 2: Would you like to be famous? If so, in what way?

Transition.

Alexander You get the gist. I'm not going to show you all 36 questions, but I just wanted to share a few of the key ones with you.

Helen We did this.

Alexander What?

Helen We did this. We did this on like our, fifth date or something.

Alexander Did we?

Helen You thought it would be a laugh, so we did it and... and that night was the first time we... Did you actually do this with her?

Alexander Helen.

Helen Did you?

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Silence.

Helen *returns to her Krystal position.*

Transition.

Gary Slip 8: Name three things you and your partner appear to have in common.

Krystal Shit.

Gary Surely it's not that hard.

Time moves forward.

Krystal Slip 13.

Time moves forward.

That was the first time I properly saw a planet. We looked round the whole sky and he taught me... that's when I learnt the constellations. At the end of the night, when he dropped me back off at home, he gave me the telescope. Said it was mine.

Time moves forward.

Gary Slip 20: What does friendship mean to you? Trust.

Krystal That all?

Time moves forward.

Gary Slip 24.

Time moves forward.

Krystal Slip 25

Time moves forward.

Krystal "I wish I had someone with whom I could share..." my life, I guess.

Gary Yeah?

Krystal Yeah.

Time moves forward.

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Gary If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?

Beat.

Krystal You ok?

Time moves forward.

Slip 35.

Time moves forward.

Gary Slip 36: Share a personal problem and ask your partner's advice on how they might handle it. Also, ask your partner to reflect back to you how you seem to be feeling about the problem you have chosen.

Krystal Wow.

Gary Yeah. It's the big one.

Beat.

Krystal Well...

Time moves forward.

Transition.

Alexander The final part of the experiment is sustained eye contact. You look into each other's eyes for four minutes.

Transition.

Krystal and Gary look into each other's eyes. This can last anything up to four minutes but can be shorter. At the end of this time Gary kisses Krystal. Krystal takes Gary by the hand and leads him into the caravan. She turns the lights off and they undress each other. Helen begins to read on in the script as Alexander begins to undress. They start to have an argument about

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what is meant to happen. Eventually, Helen sits on the bed and refuse to do anything.

Alexander takes the script and begins reading the stage directions to the audience.

Alexander *They climb into bed and have sex. Krystal is clearly in charge of the situation, but there is still a gentle and tender quality to the act. It is not romantic, but more than simply platonic. It is affectionate and intimate, but not heated. It is unclear if they both climax or when it happens. They both relax and lay next to each other.*

Transition.

Gary climbs out of the bed as if trying not to disturb Krystal and puts on some form of clothing to cover up. This is more due to it being cold rather than any feeling of modesty.

Alexander **So, that happened. It only took me, what, nearly six months.**

Helen Did you actually sleep with her?

Alexander What?

Helen You spent six months seeing her and you told me you never did anything more than talk.

Alexander And that's mostly what we did.

Helen Mostly? You said you never did anything!

Alexander We both agreed it would be better if I got in deep with the research, so that I could write an authentic story.

Helen We didn't agree to that! You said it. You said you had to experience what it would be like, and *we agreed* that you could meet a sex worker and talk with her.

Alexander And I did.

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Helen Did you sleep with her?

Alexander Helen.

Helen Answer the fucking question! Did you have sex with a prostitute?

Alexander We said we'd only refer to them as sex workers.

Helen Did you fuck her!?

Silence.

You just made me act that out. You made me act out your sordid little... it's not even a fantasy! It happened! It actually fucking happened! Even the bits you said didn't, happened!

Silence.

Alexander It was just the once.

Helen What?

Alexander It didn't mean anything.

Helen It doesn't matter if it meant anything or if you only did it once, you shouldn't have done it at all.

Beat.

You let her jerk you off as well didn't you.

Silence.

Right. Fuck this.

Alexander What are you doing?

Helen You wanna tell your story, fine, but I'm not being a part of it.

Helen goes to storm off.

Alexander Helen.

Helen No. I'm not doing it. Find yourself another Krystal!

Helen exits.

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Alexander looks lost by himself.

Alexander I presume no one wants to play the part of Krystal for me? No, I guess it would just complicate things. Erm... well, I guess I should finish what I started.

After that night, I went straight home. I wanted to tell Helen but.. I was afraid she might storm off or something. It wasn't just thoughts of guilt around Helen that I was feeling though. I also felt bad for Krystal. For using our interaction as inspiration for this play and her not knowing anything about it. So I booked another meeting. I didn't tell Helen I booked this appointment. I told her I was... I can't even remember what I told her now.

I told Krystal the truth. That I wasn't Gary. That I was Alexander, a writer, a married writer, and that I was going to write and produce a play that told our story. She was quiet. She was quiet for some time actually. It was the quietest she'd been in all our meetings. She went outside for a minute with her phone. I think she was messaging someone. When she came back in she said she didn't want her story being told. That she'd told me some very personal things and that it wasn't my story to tell. I tried to explain to her that I would of course change names and certain details so people wouldn't know but..

There was a knocking at her door. Turns out her Uncle Stanley's a pretty big chap.

The following lines are directed to specific members of the audience.

Excuse me, could you just help me for a second? Could you just turn those chairs over for me please.

And would you mind just popping inside and throwing the cushions on the floor. Thank you.

And would you mind just moving all those apart for me, please.

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Members of the audience rearrange the set as instructed. As they do this, Alexander asks other members of the audience to touch different parts of his body, asking one to touch his face, one to touch his arms, and wherever else Alexander feels appropriate to invite people to touch. Once touched, Alexander applies purple make-up, possibly even some red liquid until he appears beaten up.

Thank you. You can all return to your seats now.

The caravan now appears wrecked as if a fight has occurred or it has been broken into.

Transition.

Alexander is wandering around outside the caravan, lost, as he looked before. He has clearly been crying. He appears broken. He gets out his mobile phone and tries to call someone. They don't answer. He starts to leave a message...

It's me. Could you...

...but hangs up before finishing. He waits a minute then sends a text instead.

Helen re-enters the space and sees Alexander. She pities him.

Helen You fucking idiot.

Alexander I didn't think you were coming back.

Alexander gets up.

Helen I shouldn't have.

Alexander I'm sorry.

Helen Well, you've done it now, haven't you? You've written your stupid play. We're going to have to do it now.

They stand in the same position as they had at the start.

Are you ready?

Blackout.