

Characters

Claire (F) - A confident psychology student

Nick (M) - A nervous literature student

Scene 1 - Male student's bedroom

(The single bed is a mess, posters/photos up on the wall, piles of books are next to the bed, dirty mugs are everywhere, the bedside cabinet is wide open with dirty socks spilling out of it, dirty clothes are strewn all over the place. Bedroom door opens, lights on. Nick Enters, holding door open and shouting down the stairs)

Nick: Yeah of course, ermmm...? **(struggling to remember her name)** Claire! Feel free to use the downstairs one, it's the only one that works properly, the light doesn't work in the one up here, and it all rises up when you try and flush it, it's like a cess-pit!! **(she obviously hasn't heard)** I said!..The upstairs toilet!...Oh it doesn't matter! You can wash your hands with the fairy liquid in the kitchen! I'm second room from the left!

(He closes the door, turns around to take in how his room looks, and starts hurriedly picking up his dirty laundry, arranging his room and spraying deodorant down the front of his trousers)

Nick: Shit...shit...shit...bollocks....shit!

(He takes a single condom out of his wallet, kisses it and places it under his pillow looking satisfied just as SFX. his phone starts ringing)

Nick: Oh God, what now?! **(Answering the phone)** Hiya mate, you alright? Yeah she came back with me, she's in the loo...sorry for dashing off...What? Course I've warned her about the upstairs toilet, you're lucky I don't tell her that you're the one who blocked it...look I have to go, she'll be up in a minute...okay...yeah see you tomorrow...Oh and Happy Birthday mate!

(He slings the phone onto the bed, grabs a lighter and starts trying to light a candle on his bedside table, he is almost in tears before it finally lights, he hasn't noticed Claire opening his bedroom door)

Claire: Hiya **(making Nick jump and accidentally blow out the candle)**

Nick: Hiya! Sorry, I was just...trying to light the...

Claire: Central heating not working?

Nick: Actually, it isn't but that's not the reason, I just thought it would be...it doesn't matter...here pull up a chair, well a bed...that's not me suggesting you get into the bed...sit on the floor if you like

Claire: The bed's fine...were you talking to someone?

Nick: Oh just Eddie, remember, my mate at the bar?

Claire: Bit hard to miss him, especially when you two had party hats on, isn't it his birthday?

Nick: Not technically **(checking his watch)** It's half one now.

(Claire moves along the bed towards Nick)

Nick: So! Sorry to hear about your boyfriend

Claire: (she stops) Yeah, but that's the thing with long distance relationships, difficult to maintain but I guess that's why I was at the bar tonight, good time to make a few mistakes I suppose

Nick: (Laughs) You don't mean me do you?

Claire: (after an uncomfortable pause) No...

Nick: (unconvinced) Right.

Claire: What about you? Any loving girlfriend at home?

Nick: Me? Ah no, nothing like that, very limited experience when it comes to long-term relationships, if you get my drift (he winks)

Claire: You mean you're a virgin?

Nick: No! I mean, I came to uni young, free and single! This bed's seen some action that's for sure! But I try not to make mistakes; I know exactly what I'm after on a night out

Claire: Sex?

Nick: What?! No! Well, yes, but I don't just bound over the dance floor and start snogging someone

Claire: I noticed

Nick: To be honest I had to get pissed to even look at you

Claire: Oh cheers!

Nick: No, no I mean, my confidence. They say some girls look prettier after a few drinks, I just want to tell you that doesn't apply to you

Claire: What a flatterer

Nick: Well I hope I've given you some peace of mind

Claire: Something like that (she goes to move in again)

Nick: (jumping up) God sorry, I haven't even offered you a drink, what would you like? We've got lager?...or...(rummaging under his bed producing a four pack of canned lager)...well, lager?

Claire: Tea? I think I've had more than enough to drink

Nick: Tea! Right yes, good idea. (he makes a meal out of selecting the cleanest mug) I'll give it a rinse. (he tries to rummage about under his pillow) Milk? Sugar?

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Claire: Just milk please...what's wrong with your pillow?

Nick: Nothing, just checking it for...mould.

Claire: Right..

Nick: Okay, just stay here and I'll go and make the tea (**moving towards the door**)

Claire: Okay then (**smiling**)

Nick: (**obviously been unable to retrieve the condom**) So I'll be right back, after making the tea...

Claire: Fine (**perplexed**)

(Nick Exits, closing the door slowly, whilst looking through the crack, before leaving her to it. Claire sits in silence for a few moments, taking in her surroundings. She takes off her shoes, before remembering the pillow. She listens to make sure Nick isn't coming back, before edging along towards the top of the bed. She lifts up the pillow, finds the condom, smiles and replaces it. She is made to jump as her phone starts ringing)

Claire: Hello? Oh hi Georgia...no I went back with him in the end. No. I don't know, I think he might be a bit mad. No they aren't the best ones! I think he's a bit nervous, I don't know, we'll see. He's making me tea...No...oh! I don't know, hang on (**she pulls the front of her dress forward and looks down her front**) Oh thank God, yeah, the lacy one...Oh stop it...well hopefully. I just found a condom under his pillow. Yeah...Yeah...I know, well worst comes to the worst, he can always try balloon animals! Oh wait I think he's coming, I've got to go, bye...bye...bye!

(She quickly hangs up before diving back to the foot of the bed as he is about to enter. Nick: Enters with a single mug of tea)

Claire: You were quick

Nick: (**looking around suspiciously**) Was I?

Claire: You were. Oh great, tea! Thanks!

Nick: Yes! Sorry for leaving you on your own

Claire: How ever did I manage before I met you?

Nick: (**looking embarrassed**) Well..

Claire: This isn't very hot

Nick: No, the kettle's broken, so I used the hot tap

Claire: And there isn't a lot of milk

Nick: Thought too much milk would make it cold...

Claire: ...colder. Well thanks for using your initiative (**Nick looks pleased with himself**) Are you not having tea?

Nick: Nah, it's awful since the kettle broke

Claire: Right

Nick: Think I'll stick with the amber nectar for now

Claire: The what?

Nick: Lager

Claire: Oh. I prefer a wine

Nick: You're not kidding, the fuss you made about the tea! **(he stops smiling when she doesn't laugh)**

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(Nick opens a can of lager, pours some into a mug sitting on a pile of books next to his bed, puts the can down and goes to pick up the mug, the book it's resting on comes away with it, he hurriedly puts it back)

Nick: Did you see that? **(she nods)** Maybe I'll have it out the can eh?

(They sit in awkward silence, Claire sipping her foul tea, Nick consuming the contents of the can in several large gulps. He burps silently, and blows it away from his mouth with his hand as he turns to Claire)

Nick: What was it you said you studied again?

Claire: Psychology

Nick: Bet you know how to spot a psycho then?

Claire: **(eyeing him)** Generally yes, but I'm not always right. What about you? Social Sciences?

Nick: **(smiling, not registering the insult)** No, you're miles off!

Claire: Am I really?

Nick: Yeah, I do Literature, that's what all these books are about

Claire: Cleverly piled up everywhere so anyone who sees your room knows instantly how witty and well-read you are?

Nick: Hahaha! Good one! **(he looks away from her and his face drops, she hit the nail on the head)**

Claire: Well, thanks for the tea...but how about we...

Nick: I play the guitar too you know!

Claire: Course you do

Nick: Would you like to hear a song!?! **(he starts rummaging for his guitar)**

Claire: It's a bit late isn't it?

Nick: Early you mean? **(tapping his watch)**

Claire: Early then

Nick: No, not at all, we're the only ones in at the moment, which is lucky isn't it?

Claire: Usually

Nick: Exactly, so...(he goes to strum the guitar)

Claire: **(interrupting)** So how many people do you live with then?

Nick: Oh...Four in total, all lads, 'the lads'. Eddie, my best mate, you've met him

Claire: Birthday boy?

Nick: Right! Then there's Kwame across the landing, he studies biology. Ian downstairs, test tubes in the kitchen, he studies Chemical Engineering, and those dog biscuits on the landing floor belong to George

Claire: Oh you've got a dog?

Nick: No?

Claire: I see

Nick: Cool! Okay, listen to this, it's about how the modern student is being repressed by the rise in university tuition fees

(He strums the guitar which is quite obviously out of tune)

Claire: Maybe a little out of tune?

Nick: Oh do you think so?

Claire: Do you know Greensleeves?

Nick: **(thinking)** Nah, sorry, don't know any of their stuff

Claire: Right. Well, how long have you played the guitar for?

Nick: Not long, only started when I came to uni, thought it was a good way to express myself, you know, show people what I'm really like?

Claire: Well I'd say it's done the job

Nick: Yeah?!

Claire: Definitely

Nick: How about a different song?

Claire: No! Really! Thank you but there's only so much serenading a girl can take.

Nick: Ahh I seem to spend half my life strumming on this bed

Claire: Now there's an image

Nick: What? Oh you mean...

Claire: You know, there's always something else we could do on this bed?..

(She moves towards him again, placing her hand on his knee)

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Nick: Shall we watch TV?!

Claire: Umm..?

Nick: Great stuff...you know (**gesturing at the TV**) I got this from my neighbour's house

Claire: What?

Nick: The TV. I got it from my neighbours' house

Claire: Won't he want it back?

Nick: I doubt it. He's been dead for a year

Claire: Dead?

Nick: Yeah, he was in his 90's. I used to go round occasionally...he died and well...it seemed a shame for it to go to waste

Claire: So you stole a TV from a dead man?

Nick: It was more a case of inheriting it without the owner's permission

Claire: Still sounds dodgy

Nick: Well it's not like I whipped it away one evening while he was watching Countryfile. Although, coincidentally he did die while he was watching TV

Claire: Is there anything about you that's normal?

Nick: Certainly. (**he retrieves an open packet of cheese footballs from somewhere on the floor**) cheesy balls?

Claire: Hope that's not your nickname...

Nick: Okay, so TV, TV, TV

Claire: Umm...surely there isn't a lot on?

Nick: Ooh! Texas Chainsaw Massacre!

(SFX. sounds of chainsaw/horror film come from tv)

Claire: Great!

Nick: Oh no!

Claire: What?!

Nick: It's the remake!

Claire: Oh no! (**looks away sarcastically, rolling her eyes**)

Nick: Wow! Did you see her head come off?!

Claire: Lucky cow

Nick: Eh?

Claire: Hey, Nick...do you think we could?..

Nick: ...change the channel? (**he jumps up, frantically pressing the remote buttons**)
Yeah sure, there's QVC, Top Gear, X-Files omnibus...depends what you're into really...

Claire: ...no I mean...

Nick: ...of course we could always just watch the news channel...or wait for Cbeebies to start broadcasting, only another six hours to go and...

Claire: Ugh! (**she grabs the control, turns off the TV, throws it over her shoulder, grabs his hands and puts them on her breasts**)

Nick: Oh I see, yes, well okay, I'd better turn out the light then?

Claire: If it makes you feel more comfortable...

Nick: Comfortable? Oh no, no, nothing to do with that, I could um...do it...all night with the light on, and during the day...with the curtains open!...

Claire: So what's the need to turn the light off now then?

Nick: Well, um...I'm just thinking of the environment, that's what students do isn't it? Rallying for the cause, Just Stop Oil and all of that? Someone's got to save mother earth

Claire: So you alone are tackling the problem of climate change by turning your light off?

Nick: Well it's a start

Claire: Yes, a start would be nice

Nick: Oh, sorry, well I'll turn it off then. Now you've heard my reasoning.

Claire: And a convincing reason it is too...

Nick: Pardon?

Claire: Nothing, just thinking out loud

Nick: Oh right, did you want to think for a bit longer, if you want some time alone?

Claire: You mean you'd do that for me? You'd let me just sit and think for a while, about where I've come from, where I'm going?

Nick: Yes, course, half an hour alright? (**he goes to open the door**)

Claire: No! I'm screwing with you, just turn the light out

Nick: Oh! Yes, very funny. Okay here goes

Claire: Don't say 'here goes'

Nick: Why not?

Claire: Because it makes it sound like you're casting a ship off for its maiden voyage. What's next? Tally Ho? Chocks away?

Nick: I didn't think

Claire: You don't have to think, just try not to do anything else that's on the worrying side of weird. Look, just...shall we?

Nick: Yes, course, sorry (**he stands there thinking**)

Claire: What?

Nick: Just working out if I need a wee (**pause**) I'll go after (**He slaps the light off. The stage is plunged into semi darkness**) Okay! Makin' 'lurve'. Sorry do you mind if I...?

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Claire: What?

Nick: Go on the other side?

Claire: It's a single bed, there's not a lot of side to choose from

Nick: No, I know, I just feel better on the wall side

Claire: Okay...um...well do you want me to get out and...

Nick: No need, no need, I'll climb over

Claire: How athletic of you, now...Ow! Ow! You've leant on my hair!

Nick: Sorry, sorry, sorry!

Claire: It's okay, just try to be a little more careful

Nick: I should probably take my jeans off...

Claire: Might be an idea...the sensation can be reduced somewhat otherwise

Nick: Oh ha ha, yes

Claire: All okay?

Nick: Yep, just...skinny jeans...always get stuck at the heel

Claire: Right. Try pulling them?

Nick: Ooh err, missus!

Claire: Really?

Nick: Sorry. Almost done...and...there we are!

Claire: Managed it?

Nick: Managed one leg

Claire: **(a sound of annoyance)** Nnnngh!!

Nick: What?

Claire: I said 'mmmm!!'.

Nick: Ooh right. You know what; I'll leave the other leg. I'd better take your jeans off too...

Claire: I'm wearing a dress...

Nick: Oh course, difficult to see in the dark... 'I merely adopted the dark' **(impersonating Tom Hardy's Bane from Batman. Silence from Claire)**. You know that's from Batman?

Claire: Yes!

Nick: Right! Well I should just lift this...up...could you sit up?

Claire: Um...yeah sure...Oh wait, my hair's caught...Nick...Nick! My hair's caught!

Nick: Oh sorry! Look it's off, it's just...I'll untangle you, just give me a minute to wiggle the zip

Claire: Just leave it, look can we just...

Nick: Yeah, I'll just...shall I um...take off your bra? I know how **(brightly)**

Claire: It's okay just leave it...please can we...

Nick: Let me just....

Claire: Shall I..?

Nick: No, no I'll do it myself...

Claire: Ooh hello what's this?...Oh...do you need a minute?

Nick: No no, I'm just...I'm ready to...

Claire: I don't think you are

Nick: No, I am, just, one sec...

Claire: Give me your hand...if you touch this, does that help?

Nick: Ah yeah, that...that's really...hot

Claire: Don't sound too convinced?

Nick: No, no I am, that's...sexy

Claire: So...are we?

Nick: Nearly...just...

Claire: Nearly?
Nick: Nearly...just one sec
Claire: You already said that
Nick: I know, so I just need another sec...I think maybe nerves or...

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Claire: ...Right. Turn the light on!
Nick: **(jumping up)** No problem! If you're not ready...

(Nick clicks the light on to reveal the duvet pushed back, Nick: is by the wall light, jeans half off, trying to cover his modesty and Batman boxers. Claire is on the edge of the bed with her dress tangled in her hair, she is covering herself up)
Claire: Well...that was...
Nick: God I haven't offered you anything to eat!
Claire: I'm not hungry really
Nick: Well, I've got some curry left on the hob, you're welcome to it if I can break the crust...
Claire: Nick, I'm fine
Nick: ...or there's some egg...
Claire: No, really!
Nick: ...what about a bacon sandwich? I mean the bacon belongs to Eddie, but he won't mind because his girlfriend's staying over and she's a vegetarian...
Claire: **(Losing her temper)** Nick! For God sake! Are you going to shag me or not?!?!
Nick: **(After a long pause)** I was building up to it
Claire: Building up to it?! I'm surprised it's not daylight out there!
Nick: Well, I didn't want to be rude!
Claire: Rude?! It's a one night stand!
Nick: Is it? **(looking pleased with himself very briefly)**
Claire: Well of course it is! I didn't walk half way across a freezing cold campus in high heels with a bloke in a daft hat because I couldn't wait to get a few rounds of Connect Four out of him!
Nick: I didn't want you to think I was coming on too strong
Claire: Nick, any amount of coming, strong or otherwise would be appreciated right now!
Nick: Alright, alright!

Claire: Look, I've had a shit day, you know I split up with my boyfriend, I just wanted to go out, have a few drinks, and frankly do what seems to occupy the Saturday nights of every bloke at this uni!

Nick: What? Get pissed, lie about your sexual prowess and then sick up a kebab?

Claire: No! I wanted to hook up!

Nick: And you did!

Claire: Yes! But how was I supposed to know that I'd gone home with the only one here who was about as interested in me as he is in buying a new kettle!?

Nick: That's not fair! I am interested in you!

Claire: Well you've got a funny way of showing it

Nick: Just because I don't throw you from wall to wall and ravish you with double jointed super sex doesn't mean I'm not interested, besides, it's not as easy as all that..

Claire: Oh what now, suppose you'll say I'm too heavy to do that with!

Nick: No, course not! Look I'm just not all that experienced with the whole 'sex' thing, it's sort of new to me

Claire: But you said this bed has seen loads of action!

Nick: It has! My parents drove it up here from London

Claire: That's not what you meant and you know it!

Nick: Well, I was trying to impress you

Claire: Why?

Nick: Thought that's what blokes do

Claire: Yeah but it comes round to bite you on the arse when it isn't true

Nick: Well yeah I bloody know that now don't I!

(They sit in contemplative silence)

Nick: Look, if you must know the truth, I did have a girlfriend when I came to uni, she said she'd wait for me and all of that stuff. We'd been together for ages, and last week she chucked me, over Whatsapp, said it was 'too difficult to maintain a long distance relationship'. I know I should have mentioned it, but we were having such a laugh at the bar that it seemed irrelevant, I understand if you want to leave, I'll call you cab. I'm sorry if I've ruined your evening

(Claire sits for a minute before moving towards Nick:, turning his head and kissing him on the lips)

Nick: Thanks

Claire: Don't say thanks, it's weird

Nick: Okay, sorry.

Claire: And don't say sorry either

Nick: Sorry, okay, thanks.

Claire: **rolls her eyes and smiles**) Seems like we're both in the same boat.

Nick: Well, *I* lied

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Claire: Yes you did, finally, you're acting like all the other blokes here...minus the kebab thing

Nick: Funny

Claire: Well I don't exactly want to ruin a perfectly good evening if *you* don't

Nick: You mean, you're not going to leave?

Claire: Not if you don't want me to, besides, you must have put that condom under your pillow for a reason..

Nick: Oh bloody hell I knew you looked!

Claire: Of course, who the hell has mouldy pillows!?

Nick: ...Eddie.

Claire: Well I'm glad I went home with *you* then

Nick: So am I...actually I reckon Eddie's girlfriend would prefer it this way as well

Claire: Good point. What time does everyone get home?

Nick: God knows, that's the thing about Saturday nights, they could get in any time between now and...Monday morning.

Claire: What a tough existence you all lead

(Claire goes to get up)

Nick: Where are you going?

Claire: Don't worry, I'm not leaving. I'm not your ex **(Nick looks uncomfortable)**. Hey I'm only joking **(she leans in and kisses him)**. I'm just nipping to the loo

Nick: **(in a daze, smiling)** Okay

(Claire exits. Nick, falls back on the bed obviously happy. He removes his boxers under the duvet and throws them on the floor in anticipation. SFX. The toilet flushes. A scream is heard)

Nick: The upstairs toilet!

(Claire enters with her feet covered more or less in brown liquid up to the middle of her shins)

Nick: Oh shit!

Claire: Shoes. Now.

(Lights out)