

BABY REINDEER
EPISODE ONE

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1 **BLACK. VOICEMAIL.**

A deep, foreboding drum-beat. Pulsating. Intense. On a loop.

VOICEMAIL

Welcome to your voicemail. Your
inbox is full. This means if
someone calls you they'll not be
able to leave you a message. You
have fifty new messages.

BOOM! Roxy Music's 'Love Is The Drug' flourishes into action. The screen explodes into life. Pulsating sound and sprawling white writing fills the screen. Frenetically animating the voicemails. A woman's voice. Manic. Deranged. Incoherent.

MARTHA

(breezy)
07840 475173-- this is a personal
call, not work stuff--
(business-like)
07840 475173-- one thing else I was
going to say is I have about
eighteen phones--
(desperate)
07840 475173--
(angry)
That is an Aids-ridden little tart
with lips that could suck ten men--
I fucking hate her!
(patronising)
You have got psychiatric problems
darling--
(flirtatious)
You've got a great jaw-line, a
lovely smile. You know, I find you
very attractive--
(giddy)
-- and he bounded in with this big,
fucking, noddy hat on, all, "what's
this hubbub, what's this hubbub," I-

She laughs. Shrieking. Manic. It goes on for an uncomfortably long period of time.

VOICEMAIL

Next. New message. Received Monday
16th at 9.58 am--

The voice returns. This time, vitriolic rage. As the music slowly drains out beneath her words.

MARTHA

I'm fucking furious! But I don't
know why I'm surprised! You come
from a long line of liars! Like,
your Mum--?! Oh yeah! Yeah! I found
out all about her!

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Problems with the council
perchance?! And your father?! Some
crack-pot nobody gets on with!
You're a mess! All of you. So keep
your traps, shut! Right? You're all
on your final warning. I fucking
mean it this time--!

The phone hangs up abruptly. Nothing but the sound of a dial
tone is heard. Slowly fading into the darkness.

DONNY (V.O.)

*I felt sorry for her. That's the
first feeling I felt--*

2 INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.

(AUGUST 2015)

BOOM! DONNY (25) looks up as the pub doors swing open. He is
unkempt. Thin. Troubled-looking. He is pulling a pint of
lager but finds his eye is drawn to the doorway, where--

MARTHA (42) hovers. Rotund. Agitated. Dressed in garish
clothing. A few sizes too small. Her eyes are puffy and red
from crying and she stands there rubbing them like a child.

DONNY (V.O.)

*It's a patronising, arrogant
feeling-- feeling sorry for someone
you've only just laid eyes on-- but
I did-- I felt sorry for her--*

Martha plucks up the courage to walk to the bar and sit down
on a stool. Unsure. Donny is full on staring now. As the bar
manager GREGGSY (45) jostles by. Nudging him out his stupor.

GREGGSY

Serve, you twat.

DONNY

Yep, sorry--

Donny pulls the customer a pint. Still distracted.

DONNY

Fiver please mate.

The customer hands over the money. Donny goes to the till and
places the cash inside. Pausing, to look back at Martha.

DONNY (V.O.)

*Maybe it was the fact she was
shaking. Maybe it was the fact she
had just been crying-- whatever it
was-- whatever intangible sense of
heroism I felt there and then, made
me walk over to her and calm her
down like I had it all figured out--*

Donny shuts the till. Then makes his way over to Martha.

DONNY
Can I get you something?

MARTHA
No thanks.

DONNY
Are you sure? Cup of tea?

MARTHA
No thanks.

DONNY
You have to buy something.

MARTHA
Can't afford something.

DONNY
Right. Not even a cup of tea?

MARTHA
No.

Pause.

DONNY
Well-- how about I give you a cup
of tea on the house?

Martha looks up suddenly. A look of disbelief on her face. When she nods and smiles. Donny smiles back then moves to the coffee machine. As Greggsy and head-chef GINO (40) spot her.

GREGGSY
Don't fancy yours.

GINO
Offt! Fuck me! By time you've found
the vagina, you've missed the last
bus home--

They howl with laughter. Donny looks to them and then to Martha who sits. Staring at him. Oblivious to the banter taking place. Donny takes the tea across and places it down.

DONNY
You're Scottish.

Martha nods.

DONNY
Me too.

MARTHA
You don't sound Scottish.

DONNY
 I can amp it up or down, you know--
 (Scottish)
 "Dependin' who ahm hittin' oan!"

Martha laughs hysterically. Clasping her hands over her mouth and muffling her shrieking scream. A few random punters and staff look over. Donny sees them and grows self-conscious.

DONNY
 Enjoy the tea.

Donny gives her a smile and goes back to working. Over his shoulder we can see Martha staring at him intrusively.

DONNY (V.O.)
*As I went about my shift, I could
 feel her gaze burning into me--*

3 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.** **(AUGUST 2015)**

Donny is wiping down a table. When he senses Martha staring.

DONNY (V.O.)
*Every now and then, I would look
 back at her-- and expect her to
 look away. To feel that
 unmistakable British shame of
 staring at someone. But as I turned
 to face her. She just stayed
 staring. Unbroken. At me.*

Martha stares. Unflinchingly. This bizarre look of wonderment on her face. Donny stares for a beat. Then frowns a smile back. Before taking some leftover plates into the kitchen.

4 **INT. THE HEART, KITCHEN - DAY.** **(AUGUST 2015)**

Donny is hosing down the plates and putting them in the wash rack. He stops. Thinks for a moment. Then cautiously nudges back open the kitchen door leading back to the bar.

Through the gap sits Martha. Staring directly at him. The same bizarre look on her face. As though she has been staring at the door the whole time he has been inside the kitchen.

Donny lets go of the door and Martha disappears from view. He frowns. Sniffs a laugh. Then goes back to washing the dishes.

5 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.** **(AUGUST 2015)**

Donny exits the kitchen to find Martha. Still staring. He looks at her for a moment. Then decides to re-engage.

DONNY
I'm not giving you another one.

MARTHA
What--?

DONNY
It's going to go cold.

MARTHA
What do you mean--?

DONNY
I'm saying you better drink because
your tea's going to go cold--

MARTHA
It's cold.

Pause.

DONNY
-- I'll get you another one.

Donny heads back to the coffee machine as Martha stays staring. After a few beats, Donny strikes up conversation.

DONNY
So what do you do?

MARTHA
I'm a lawyer.

Donny laughs. Then looks at Martha. She is deadly serious. He stops laughing. Then places the tea down in front of her.

DONNY
How did you get into that then--?

MARTHA
(suddenly animated)
I trained in criminal law-- moved
to England-- retrained-- opened up
my own practice-- won several
awards-- now a leading adviser to
the government--

Donny stares at her, baffled.

DONNY
You own a law firm?

MARTHA

Amongst other things-- a flat in Pimlico, overlooking a private garden-- one in Bexley Heath, two in Belsize Park-- God doesn't like a bragger, but when you're the go-to for the biggest political minds in the game-- you've earned a brag or two--

(raising a hand)

I can't say who! Before you ask! So don't even go there--!

Martha points accusatorily at him. Donny nods awkwardly. She lowers her hand. Eyeing him with a playful energy.

MARTHA

Fine! David Cameron, Nick Clegg, Alex Salmond, but you didn't hear that from me--!

Martha hands Donny her phone. A beat-up, out-of-date Nokia 2G phone. We see the names of various politicians in her contacts list. Donny scrolls. Both impressed and perplexed.

DONNY

Wow. You must have amazing dinner parties...

Martha howls with laughter. This time, she doesn't put her hand over her mouth. Instead, laughing without restraint.

DONNY (V.O.)

She had this incredible laugh. This infectious, giddy, slightly disconcerting, laugh--

Martha stops laughing and fixes Donny with an intense stare.

DONNY (V.O.)

I was transfixed. Her name was--

MARTHA

Martha.

DONNY (V.O.)

But all I could think was-- if all of this is true-- then why can't you afford a cup of tea--?

6 **BLACK. EMAIL.**

"I need a nice boy to take care of me, he who looks like a baby reindeer

Sent from my iPhone"

7 **INT. SMALL COMEDY CLUB, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT. (AUGUST 2015)**

Donny is in costume. A shabby suit, with multiple pockets and a clashing shirt-tie combo. There is a suitcase at his feet filled with random props. Which he re-arranges nervously.

DONNY (V.O.)

I had moved to London to fulfil my lifelong dream of becoming a comedian-- but for whatever reason, found myself twenty-seven, working in a bar, living with my ex-girlfriend's mother in a broken old house miles out of town--

8 **INT. LIZ'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - NIGHT. (AUGUST 2015)**

Donny sits opposite LIZ (50) - kindly, wounded - on a massive dining table. They are eating pasta in stilted silence.

LIZ

Oh! Did you see that programme the other day about those autistic kids who are amazing at piano, but incapable of loving their parents?

DONNY

(beat)

No.

9 **SCENE DELETED.**

10 **INT. SMALL COMEDY CLUB, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT. (AUGUST 2015)**

Donny is standing. Ready to go on. Full of nervous energy.

DONNY (V.O.)

Even the gig opportunities were disappearing with frightening regularity-- as I alienated each and every promoter in the capital with my terrible knack of tanking a gig beyond all recovery--

11 **INT. SMALL COMEDY CLUB, MAIN STAGE - NIGHT. (AUGUST 2015)**

Donny is on stage. He places a top hat on his head. There is a cuddly mink toy stapled to the rim of the hat.

DONNY

"So I went vegan recently. Had to make some sacrifices--"

Nothing. No laughter.

DONNY

It's a mink hat-- but instead of
actual mink-- it's a--

(beat)

-- mink stapled to a hat--

AUDIENCE MEMBER (O.C.)

You're shite!

DONNY

You can fuck yourself mate--!

12 **INT. SMALL COMEDY CLUB, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT.** (AUGUST 2015)

Donny sits on a couch. Head in hands. Literally cringing with horror at the gig he just had.

DONNY (V.O.)

*I had arrived with such grand plans
to be someone. As though my brand
of whacky, bullshit, comedy, was
exactly what this world leading
city was missing--*

13 **INT. LONDON UNDERGROUND, TUBE - NIGHT.** (AUGUST 2015)

Donny is on a busy tube. Dressed in his ridiculous suit. All the action happening around him. As he sits. Depressed.

DONNY (V.O.)

But London red carpets for no-one--

14 **EXT. LONDON, STREET - NIGHT.** (AUGUST 2015)

Donny wanders through the streets. Still dressed in his ridiculous suit. The city whipping around him in a dizzying time-lapse. Nobody taking any notice of him at all.

DONNY (V.O.)

*It's like waking up one day to find
yourself a background artist in a
cast of millions.*

(beat)

*So when someone sees you through
the mire of it all--*

15 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.** (AUGUST 2015)

Donny is behind the bar. When Martha enters. More dolled up than last time. She stands in the doorway. Fixing him with an adoring stare and a flirtatious smile.

DONNY (V.O.)

*Sees you as the person you came
here to be-- you notice them--*

(beat)

You notice them, noticing you--

MARTHA

There he is! Mister funny bones!
Honestly-- been thinking about some
of the things you said last time--
the Scottish accent stuff?
Honestly, had me chuckling all the
way home, so you did--

Donny smiles. Too easily flattered. As Martha sits down.

MARTHA

I'll have a Diet Coke when you're
ready, please barman. I'd go full-
fat but you've already given me a
rapid heart-beat--

Martha cackles as Donny pours her out a Diet Coke.

MARTHA

Did you like that-- rapid heart-
beat? From all the sugar?

DONNY

Yeah. Good line.

MARTHA

I have loads of others-- you see
your t-shirt there? Would look a
lot better on my floor--

DONNY

That's not a line. That's more of a
statement.

MARTHA

Still, keen to see what's under
there--

DONNY

My shirt? Well, you've got a choice
between the appendix scar or the
third nipple--

Martha shrieks with laughter.

MARTHA

Third nipple! You make me laugh!
You can give me the third to take
home-- in fact, give me them all--
they're all useless, aren't they?
Men's nipples! One of life's great
mysteries--

Martha stares up at Donny with a sense of childish excitement. She clocks his baffled look and recedes.

MARTHA

Oh, no! You think I'm crazy--?!

Donny stares at Martha on the stool. In her clownish make-up and ill-fitting clothes. Waiting vulnerably for an answer.

DONNY

No. I think you're grand.

MARTHA

You too! I think you're better than that! In fact, it must have hurt when you fell from heaven, right--?

DONNY

You're butchering these chat-up lines Martha! You're supposed to ask-- "Did it hurt?" first...

(off her frown)

Did it hurt?

MARTHA

Did what hurt?

DONNY

When you fell from heaven--?

Martha puts her hand over her mouth. Tears fill her eyes. As though she is on the verge of crying. When she slowly lowers her hand and responds, in a crackled whisper--

MARTHA

It hurt.

16 **BLACK. EMAIL.**

"fells from hevean!!! omg you crak me up, heard some lines in my times but tahnt one is the bees, had to go write it down, hadnt blushes ina whiels but was beetroot, fg great!!

Sent from my iPhone"

DONNY (V.O.)

Weeks went by and Martha kept coming in--

17 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.**

(AUGUST 2015)

Martha bounds through the double doors. Dressed to the nines.

DONNY (V.O.)

Every time, with new outfits. Like a kid playing dress-up--

18 INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.

(AUGUST 2015)

Martha bounds in with a new outfit.

DONNY (V.O.)

Each time felt like a practice round, and each time more outlandish than before--

19 SCENE DELETED.

20 INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.

(SEPTEMBER 2015)

Martha bounds in. Another new outfit.

DONNY (V.O.)

She always opened the conversation by saying--

MARTHA

I've gotta go--

DONNY (V.O.)

But then would stick around for the entire shift despite saying this--

(beat)

I always thought it was strange that she painted herself as a busy person. As though she could trick me into thinking she's not spending all of her time hanging around--

MARTHA

I've got a busy day ahead-- AGMs, shareholder meets-- then getting my hair buffed, so can't chat for long-

DONNY (V.O.)

She always ordered the same drink every time. A--

MARTHA

Diet Coke, plenty ice--

DONNY (V.O.)

-- and I continued to give it to her on the house. She never drank her drink. Instead she would sit there on auto-pilot-- a glazed look in her eye-- as she monologued breathlessly about people in her life without ever explaining who they were--

MARTHA

I was talking to Steve today-- I was chatting to Joan-- Alan was just on the phone--

DONNY (V.O.)

Like I knew them already. Like I was already a part of her life-- and when she wasn't speaking about them-- or her firm-- or all the famous people she knew--

21 **SCENE DELETED**

22 **BLACK.**

DONNY (V.O.)

She would sit there talking about me--

23 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - NIGHT. (SEPTEMBER 2015)**

A busy night. Donny collects glasses on the bar. Martha sits at the bar in another makeover. Very much monologuing at him.

MARTHA

You've got really manly hands, haven't you--?

DONNY

Well, I--

MARTHA

Big deep voice, chiselled jawline-- it should be illegal to have your bone structure too, you know-- they should tax you for it-- man tax--!

Martha giggles up at him. Donny smiles back. Drawn in.

DONNY (V.O.)

Everything about her intrigued me.

24 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY. (SEPTEMBER 2015)**

A steady day. Martha beaming up at him unselfconsciously.

DONNY (V.O.)

Her misplaced confidence. Her weird turn of phrase. The surprising poetry that slipped through the cracks of her madness--

Martha pats the bar excitedly as she gets a new thought.

MARTHA

Shall we run away together--? My
birthday's coming up, and I want to
do something spesh--

DONNY

Who says I want to run away--?

MARTHA

You're already doing it-- some
people run away by packing their
bags-- others run away by standing
in the same place for too long--

Donny is taken aback by the potency of her words.

MARTHA

Sorry... I woke up a little gravy
this morning, not sure what's come
over me--

Martha stares down at the bar. Morose. Blinking back tears.

DONNY (V.O.)

*Then there were those times when I
would look at her in her most
vulnerable moments-- and I would
start to re-imagine her past--*

25 **INT. THE HEART, KITCHEN - DAY.** (SEPTEMBER 2015)

Donny is staring at Martha through the kitchen window. As she
sits on the bar. Head down. Looking deeply lost.

DONNY (V.O.)

*The school balls that no-one took
her to. The times she tried on
wedding dresses for fun. Nights
lost on social media, perusing the
lives of the rich and famous...*

26 **BLACK.**

DONNY (V.O.)

*So I don't know what it was in me,
but I started paying her
compliments here and there--*

27 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - NIGHT.** (OCTOBER 2015) *

A different day. A busy night. Donny slaps the bar. Engaging
in high-spirited flirtation. Martha is absolutely loving it.

DONNY

Your birthday's coming up? Your
twenty-first, is it--?

MARTHA

I'm forty-two!

DONNY

You're forty-two?! Well, I'll be
damned! You'd better give Peter Pan
his moisturiser back--!

Martha howls with laughter. Too overly flattered.

MARTHA

My oh my! You've got a silver
tongue, you do, devil boy, turning
my ears to butter, like that--

Martha locks him with a grin. Donny smiles back.

MARTHA

What do you say to picnic fun times
this weekend to celebrate? The sun
is out, pollen count low-- you can
get a tan, without the sniffles--?

*

DONNY

(beat)

Sure. I'll come picnic with you.

MARTHA

Oh my! Picnic fun-times with my
favourite reindeer--!

Donny frowns. Taking in her new bizarre, nickname. As Martha
rifles through her bag and removes her phone.

MARTHA

Here, give me your number and we
can arrange--

Donny stares. That is definitely not a good idea.

DONNY

... I tell you what, name the time
and place and I'll get you there.
I'll be the one sitting next to the
gorgeous brunette--

MARTHA

-- who's that then?!

Martha sits up suddenly. Her face falling into a heavy frown.
Donny raises his eyebrows. A playful smile on his face.

MARTHA

Oh! You mean me--!

Martha cackles with laughter. Too easily flattered.

DONNY (V.O.)

I began to love her laugh. Obsess with it. Do everything I could to eke it out of her. You don't need to fancy someone to flirt with them. It's casual, it's harmless. It's--

(beat)

Becoming a joke around the bar--

28 INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - NIGHT.

(OCTOBER 2015)

Harsh reality. The ethereal nature of the previous section vanishes in an instant. As five staff members walk over.

GINO

Oi! Donny! Aren't you going to introduce us to your girlfriend--?!

GREGGSY

This is the one you've been telling us about, right--? The supermodel!

MARTHA

You said that?! Really--?!

Martha looks to Donny. Who cringes at how cruel this all is.

GINO

So come on Donny, out with it. When are you two going to shag--?

Martha looks to Donny. As though the question is genuine.

DONNY

-- I don't believe in sex before marriage...

GREGGSY

Well, what are you waiting for--?

(starting a chant)

Ask her! Ask her! Ask her!

Soon everyone is joining in. Chanting and slapping the bar. Martha does not chant. But she slaps the bar along with everyone. All the while fixing Donny with a hopeful stare.

Donny waves his hand across his neck, as if to say, "I'm not going there" and a pantomime "awww" ensues. Martha looks around as the raucousness dies down. Hugely disappointed.

MARTHA

What? You not asking--?!

GINO

Yeah, come on Donny. Someone like Martha only comes around once in a full moon--

MARTHA

Blue moon. You mean, blue moon.

GINO

Yep! Yep! My mistake--!

Donny stares on horrified. As the bar staff snigger behind.

MARTHA

I'm marriage material-- half of everything makes you rich, see-- just bought a penthouse, furnished-- all I need now is for someone to hang my curtains--

Donny looks up. Something in her words has set him racing.

DONNY (V.O.)

"Curtains"-- her words hung in the air. I couldn't believe nobody had spotted it...

(beat)

I was always careful not to sexualise Martha-- but at the same time, I just needed a way out of that painfully, awkward, fucking, situation--

(out loud)

I'll hang YOUR curtains--!

*

We pan across all of the bar staff as they crack up laughing. Until we land on Martha. Sitting still in the middle of it. Staring with a sudden intensity. Donny's smile quickly fades.

DONNY (V.O.)

I looked at her. Wanting her to laugh. Wanting her to share in the joke. But she didn't. She just stared. I knew then, in that moment--

(beat)

That she had taken it seriously.

29 **BLACK. EMAIL.**

"Baby reindeer. Roses are to clichay, thhink outside the box for me, I can cum several times in one sitting, wil teach you, all in th efingers. I've gotta go. M.

Sent from my iPhone"

30 **INT. LIZ'S HOUSE, DONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT.** (OCTOBER 2015)

Donny is looking at his laptop. Emails are rapid-firing into his account. One after the other after the other.

DONNY (V.O.)

I knew instantly, it was her. Her email address a random series of numbers and letters-- like spam-- but the writing exactly like she spoke. Unhesitating. Unfiltered. Unapologetically raw.

(beat)

I had opened up my junk folder to find she had been emailing me constantly since the day we first met-- around eighty emails a day-- continuing long into the night--

*
*
*
*
*

We see snippets of different emails as Donny monologues. Random phrases about all the "amazn sex theyr gon 2 hav" and how they have "met in a previus life" as well as huge over-confidence: "u r lucksy to hava godess likle me arround."

*

DONNY (V.O.)

There was a confidence to her writing that I couldn't tell belied or exacerbated my placing of her as some kind of victim. The spelling errors on words that were much simpler to spell than other words she had spelled perfectly. The fact she had an iPhone. Even though she didn't when I saw her texting at the bar--

*
*

*

31 **SCENE DELETED.**32 **INT. THE HEART, MAIN BAR - DAY.** (OCTOBER 2015)

Donny is crouched down. Stocking up the fridges. Slightly rattled as he turns things over in his head.

DONNY (V.O.)

It was unnerving in its own weird way. How strange her behaviour was becoming. How much her attachment had grown--

*
*

MARTHA (O.C.)

Look what I've got, reindeer--!

BOOM! Martha slams a box-shaped item on the bar. Covered by a picnic cloth. Donny turns. Surprised by her sudden gusto.

MARTHA

Ahead of picnic fun-times! A wee
willie hamper--!

*

Martha whips off the cloth to reveal a fancy-looking hamper. Donny looks down. Feeling immediately guilty. As Martha unpacks some of the contents to show him.

MARTHA

It's got jam, marmalade, croutons--
champagne too, if that's your
tipple? I don't drink, myself, but
you're absolutely welcome to pour
it on my chest and lick it from me--

Donny takes the moment to look at the label on the hamper. Baulking when he sees the cost. Almost two-hundred pounds.

MARTHA

-- and you know the best thing
about this hamper? Look! It's got
it's own little set of curtains!
See! Around the rim--!

Martha cackles, pulling open the fabric on the outside of the basket. Donny swallows, unsure. Martha sees this and sits up.

MARTHA

What's the matter, nipple--?!

DONNY

No, nothing, it's just-- you've
spent quite a lot here--

MARTHA

Yeah, but it's a special birthday
this year-- my forty-third, no less
-- and I get to spend it with you--

Martha does a little dainty pose over the bar. Staring up at him adoringly. Donny clears his throat, apprehensively.

DONNY

Listen, Martha-- I think, maybe--
this isn't such a good idea--

*

MARTHA

What?! No picnic fun-times?!

DONNY

No, I-- I don't think so--

MARTHA

Really?! Why?! I've just gone and
bought a quilt too-- extra soft so
we don't get pimples from the grass-

Martha is staring at him. Looking a little desperate.

DONNY
You know, picnics-- that's kind of
what-- lovers do, you know--?

MARTHA
Oh...

Martha looks down. Mildly confused. Before looking back up.

MARTHA
Well, what do friends do?

DONNY
I don't know. A coffee, or
something--

MARTHA
Coffee's good.

Donny stares. This isn't going well. He sighs. Then nods.

33 **BLACK. EMAIL.**

"coffee funtimes oh yes oh yes!!! i almost bought a thong
for you today then i thoughts who am i sixteen???? didnt need
that rhitng riding up me gash spltting me in two!!!

Sent from my iPhone"

34 **INT. INDEPENDENT CAFE, TABLE - DAY. (OCTOBER 2015)**

Donny is opposite Martha. Awkward silence. As they peruse the
menus. Occasionally, their eyes meet and Martha responds by
putting the menu over her face and giggling self-consciously.

DONNY
Do you know what you're having--?

MARTHA
I want the Scotch Broth. Just
trying to figure out if it's on the
menu or not.

DONNY
I don't see it, I--
(realising what she means)
Oh...

Martha lets out another giggling shriek.

MARTHA
Well, is it on the menu?

DONNY
(beat)
No, I'm afraid not.

Martha looks deflated. Donny sees her looking morose. Then leans in to say, flirtatiously--

DONNY
You'll find it in the specials
though...

Martha howls with laughter in a volume far outweighing the strength of the joke. Some people shoot over annoyed glances.

DONNY
Wow! That's... some laugh...

MARTHA
I get that all the time, Chuckles
Buckles my dad use to call me--
with his big hands--

DONNY
Well, Chuckles Buckles-- do you
have a volume dial? Can I turn you
down a bit?

MARTHA
You'd have to turn me on first.

Martha grins at him.

MARTHA
Just so you know, my on-switch is
my nipple-- and you have to tweak
it with your tongue--

Donny cannot help but laugh. When, suddenly--

MARTHA
So are you serious about me--? I
can take it, just be honest, I've
overseen some of the biggest cases
in the world, Hollywood, you name
it-- I can deal with anything--
(growing desperate)
Would be a shame, obviously, with
the curtains, getting my hopes up
but I'd work through it--
(tearing up)
-- I'd work through it--

Donny looks at her. As she blinks back tears.

DONNY
Yes, I'm serious about you--

Martha starts shrieking with joy. Donny tries to calm her.

DONNY
Wait! Wait! As a friend! Okay?

MARTHA

Friends. Okay. With benefits.

DONNY

Just friends.

Martha nods as if to suggest a hidden meaning. Donny shakes his head with slight frustration. The WAITRESS comes over. *

WAITRESS *

Can I get you guys something?

DONNY

Yeah. An Americano please--

Donny hands the menu back. The waitress looks to Martha. *

MARTHA

I'll just have some tap water.

DONNY

You not having anything--?

MARTHA

Can't afford it.

DONNY

I'll get it, just--

MARTHA

Okay, a croissant, a flapjack, and a chocolate brownie. And a coffee.

WAITRESS *

What kind of coffee--?

Martha doesn't understand the question and goes into shutdown mode. Donny turns to the waitress and answers for her. *

DONNY

Decaf.

The waitress leaves. Donny studies Martha. Sussing her out. *

DONNY

How did you get my email--?

MARTHA

Off your website. You shouldn't have it up there. Any so and so could get it.

DONNY

Yes, I'm starting to realise that. *

MARTHA

(beat) *

So you're a comedian?

DONNY

Sort of--

MARTHA

It's not going well.

Donny looks taken aback.

DONNY

Sorry, is that a question?

MARTHA

No-- I can tell these things. It's not going well.

DONNY

Well, that's not true, actually--

MARTHA

I saw your comedy videos online too. Thought they were shite.

DONNY

I've moved on a bit now.

MARTHA

Offensive too.

DONNY

It's satire.

MARTHA

Thin satire.

DONNY

(snapping)

Sorry, are you a critic?

Martha looks taken aback. They stare at one another. Just as the waitress appears and puts down the food.

*

DONNY

... Thank you.

The waitress leaves. Martha grabs her food and starts wolfing it down. Ravenously. Like she hasn't eaten in weeks. Donny watches her in mild disgust. Then takes a deep breath.

*

*

DONNY

Martha. Can you promise me you won't tell anyone at the pub? About the videos--?

MARTHA

(beat)

What do I get in return?

DONNY

A flapjack and a chocolate brownie.

MARTHA

Maybe...

DONNY

Martha, please--

MARTHA

Stop it! You should be proud!
Chasing dreams! I chased my dreams
and look where I am!

Donny stares at her. She has chocolate around her mouth, crumbs down her top, and icing in her hair.

DONNY

Yeah, no, I get that-- I just...

Donny tries to hold back his emotion. Martha sees this and puts down her brownie. She looks genuinely concerned.

MARTHA

What is it?!

DONNY

No, it's just--

(beat)

I dunno-- I spent my life dreaming
of one day being a comedian. But I
didn't realise it was going to be
so fucking hard-- you know--?

MARTHA

Hardness, can be good, though, no?

DONNY

Yeah, I know, it's just funny...

(beat)

I used to think my dreams would
lead to happiness--

(beat)

But now it almost feels like a
choice between the two--

Donny looks choked up. As Martha stares deep into his eyes. Like she is reading from deep scripture within his soul. When, out of nowhere, she reaches over and grabs his hand--

MARTHA

Someone hurt you, didn't they?

Donny frowns. He doesn't know how to respond.

MARTHA

I can see-- you're a warrior with a
chink in the armour-- a wounding of
some kind--

(beat)

Was it a woman? A heart-break?

DONNY

Ha! No. I'm fine.

Donny tries to pull his hand away. But Martha grips on.

MARTHA

That's what a warrior would say.
But you're bleeding, I can see--

(beat)

-- deep wounds--

Martha is in a trance-like state. Staring eerily still.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Who was it--?

DONNY

-- sorry, can you let go of my hand
now please?

Donny tries to pull away but her grip is tight. Very tight.

MARTHA

I want names.

DONNY

Martha, please--

MARTHA

Names.

DONNY

Martha, please, let go--!

Donny yanks his hand away, snapping Martha out of her trance.
She responds by violently smashing her hand on the table.

MARTHA

DON'T!

Martha screams from a deep place within her soul. The whole
cafe falls deathly silent.

MARTHA

DON'T YOU DARE!

They stare at one another. The whole cafe looking over. When
the waitress reappears with the coffees.

*

WAITRESS

Is everything okay here?

*

DONNY

Yeah, it's fine-- we're--

Martha goes into shutdown mode. Twitching and mumbling to herself. Donny turns to the waitress with an apologetic air. *

DONNY

We're fine, honest...

The waitress nods, unconvinced. Then places down the coffees. *

WAITRESS *

Can I get you guys anything else?

Donny stares at Martha twitching away. Then to the waitress. *

DONNY

Just the bill.

35 **EXT. INDEPENDENT CAFE, STREET - DAY. (OCTOBER 2015)**

They exit the cafe. Nobody knows what to say.

DONNY

What way are you walking?

MARTHA

This way.

DONNY

I'm this way.

MARTHA

Oh...

Martha looks down. Then looks back up at him. Vulnerable.

MARTHA

Have I broken it? Like, is it ruined--?

(off his reaction)

Oh, I have! I have--!

Martha hangs her head in her hands and lets out a high-pitched whiny sound. As though she has a splitting headache.

DONNY

Are you okay? Do you need, help, at all, or--?

MARTHA

(under breath)

-- I've... FUCKED... it... it's fucked... it's ruined... it's--

DONNY

No, it's not, it's-- I'm still here, okay--? I'm still here--

Martha looks at him and nods. Her panic instantly subsiding.

DONNY

Just go home. I'm back in the bar Tuesday, you know where to find me.

Martha smiles.

MARTHA

Thanks for the brownie...

With that, she walks off. Donny watches her go. People around her giving her a wide birth as she walks. Donny turns and walks in the opposite direction. Looking a little unsure.

DONNY (V.O.)

I sometimes question what would have happened had I just continued walking-- got on the bus and went home-- whether this is where this whole ordeal might have ended--

Donny stops, suddenly. Then turns. Thinking.

36 **BLACK.**

DONNY (V.O.)

But there was just something so arresting about Martha--

37 **EXT. LONDON, STREET - DAY.**

(OCTOBER 2015)

Donny is following Martha down the road. She is on the other side of the street. Mumbling to herself. Slightly less upset.

DONNY (V.O.)

This feeling she inspired in me that made me concentrate so singularly when she was around. She was flammable. Pure focus--

Martha stops suddenly in her tracks. Like she senses someone watching her. Suddenly, she whips her head towards Donny. SHIT! He instinctively ducks into a nearby doorway of a shop.

DONNY

Fuck...

Donny slowly peers out the doorway as subtly as he can. Martha is now crossing the road towards him. Oh shit!

Donny ducks back into the doorway. He waits for her to appear. But when she does, she walks straight past him. Over to a large supermarket bin a few metres away.

Without a single beat of self-consciousness, she flips open the bin lid and starts raking around inside. Pulling stuff out. Inspecting it. Before throwing it back inside. WTF?!

Martha then pulls out a frozen meal and inspects the ingredients on the back. After a few beats, she shoves it under her armpit and marches off back down the street.

38 **EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE, STREET - EVENING. (OCTOBER 2015)**

Magic hour. Donny is almost running to catch up with Martha now. When she takes a sharp right and walks up a path towards a council estate.

Donny takes a moment to examine the building. A washed out, multi-story. Staring with a mix of intrigue and confusion on his face. When Martha disappears inside the building.

Martha switches on a light in a downstairs flat. She grabs some stuff from near the window. Then disappears back out of the room. Donny thinks, then ventures on--

39 **EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE, MARTHA'S FLAT - NIGHT (OCTOBER 2015)**

Night now. Donny is walking around the side of Martha's flat. He peers into the room we just saw her in. There is a mattress on the floor and Union Jack flags on the wall. There is almost no floor space due to clutter everywhere. *

He ventures to the next window along and cautiously peers in. Martha is in her kitchen. Microwaving the meal she took out of the supermarket bin a few minutes ago.

The microwave pings. She takes out the meal and starts scraping it onto a plate. Then picks it up and exits. Donny wanders to the next window along and watches as Martha brings the plate into a similarly cluttered living room. *

Martha sits down in a beaten-up armchair and switches on the TV. A smutty X-Factor style show. Donny watches as she eats in silence. There is something quite sad about the image.

Martha puts down her plate. Then grabs a beat-up, Dell laptop from a side table. Opens the lid and starts typing. Suddenly, PING! Donny's phone goes off in his pocket! Martha whips her head around towards him at the window-- FUCK!

Donny instinctively ducks down. His phone continuing to ding in his pocket--

DONNY

Shit!

Donny scrambles his phone out of his pocket and sprints from the council block. Walking low as to not give himself away. When he looks and sees a bus pull up outside the estate. He quickly pulls his hood up and power walks towards it.

40 **INT. BUS, SINGLE DECK - NIGHT.** (OCTOBER 2015) *

Donny walks onto the upper deck and sprawls across two seats with his back to the window. As the bus pulls away, he looks back. There, outside the estate, stands--

Martha. Looking directly at him. A devilish smile on her face, as the bus speeds away.

41 **BLACK. EMAIL.**

"babyr ein i saw you looking, ickle wickle peeping tom
Sent from my iPhone"

DONNY (V.O.)
*I never believed she was a multi-
millionaire lawyer--*

42 **INT. MEDIUM COMEDY CLUB, BACKSTAGE - NIGHT.** (OCTOBER 2015)

Close up on Donny, looking perturbed. In full comedy get-up. Prop suitcase in hand. A visual contrast to the scene before.

DONNY (V.O.)
*But seeing the depths of her lies,
play out in front of me like that
expelled whatever feeling I had
revelled in whilst following her--
(beat)
Who was this woman? And what did
she want from me--?*

The act on stage wraps up to sudden applause.

COMPERE
Okay guys, it has been a fantastic
competition so far! Loads of great
acts vying for a place in the semi-
finals--

The audience 'woo' encouragingly.

COMPERE
So keep that energy up and please
welcome your next act to the stage--
DONNY DUNN!

43 INT. MEDIUM COMEDY CLUB, MAIN STAGE - NIGHT. (OCTOBER 2015)

Donny walks to the mic. He places the suitcase on the stage.

DONNY
I know what you're thinking!
(beat)
Serena Williams has let herself go!

Nothing.

DONNY
Sorry, I got that wrong. I said the
wrong person. Sorry, it's new
material-- let me just grab my
notebook out. I'll get it right
this time--

He grabs his notebook from the suitcase and reads it out.

DONNY
I know what you're thinking!
(beat)
Venus Williams has let herself go!

Nothing.

DONNY
Really? Nothing--?
(beat)
It's funny because I don't look
like either of them.

Nothing.

DONNY
Okay, let's move on--

Suddenly-- a laugh from the audience. A recognisable one. Donny peers through the darkness towards the laugh and sees Martha sitting there. A look of genuine enjoyment on her face. Their eyes meet. A small frisson of something.

DONNY
One laugh. Brilliant. If you could
move around the room, that would be
great--

The audience laugh. So does Martha, whose chuckling is heard long after the rest of the laughter dies down. Soon, another wave of laughter spreads throughout the audience.

DONNY
Jesus, can't take my Mum anywhere!

The audience laugh again. He walks to his suitcase and goes to pull out a prop.

DONNY

So, I--

Martha laughs again. Too soon this time. The audience laugh again too shortly afterwards. Revelling in her madness.

DONNY

What's your name--?

Martha looks at him puzzled.

MARTHA

Martha.

DONNY

Hello Martha. Is your spaceship parked outside?

The audience laugh. Including Martha.

MARTHA

Yes! Ha! Outside! Want to come for a ride? Back to my home planet?

DONNY

A planet where people find me funnier than they should? I'm sold!

Donny does a pantomime dash off stage and then comes back. The audience are really warming to him now.

DONNY

-- and where is your home planet?

MARTHA

Belsize Park.

The audience crack up with laughter, including Donny. But this time Martha is confused as to why that is funny.

DONNY

-- and just out of interest, when you say your spaceship, you mean--?

MARTHA

A Fiat Punto.

The audience crack up laughing. Even Donny finds it funny.

DONNY

Ladies and gentlemen, it ain't going to get much better than this!

Martha hears the compliment and starts getting excited.

MARTHA

I can sing, you know!

DONNY

Well, people haven't come here for singing--

AUDIENCE MEMBER (O.C.)

Let her sing!

Various audience members shout out in affirmation.

DONNY

Sod it. Go on then.

Martha shoots to her feet and starts singing. She is good. Not brilliant. But good enough.

MARTHA

"I know I stand in line until, I think you'll have the time to spend an evening with me--"

DONNY

Nancy Sinatra! What the hell are you doing here--?!

MARTHA

"And if we go some place to--"

DONNY

(cutting her off)

Do you know any Slipknot--?

The audience laugh. Martha shakes her head as though the question is genuine. The laughter dies down.

DONNY

I would let you sing some more but I cannot handle you upstaging me.

(beat)

Round of applause for Martha everyone--!

The audience applaud heartily. Martha sits back down. Absolutely delighted with herself.

DONNY

I've always thought that song was weird actually. I mean, they could have said something, really stupid like--

(singing)

"And then I go and spoil it all by saying something stupid like--"

(beat)

Hitler was misunderstood.

The audience laugh. He is smashing it now. He goes to the suitcase and pulls out the mink hat. He puts it on his head.

DONNY

So I went vegan recently. Had to
make some sacrifices...

A ripple of laughter spreads throughout the room. As it does, Donny looks over at Martha. Their eyes meet. She is smiling in wonderment at him. Donny smiles back at her. Grateful.

44 **BLACK. EMAIL**

"youre so funny, comes tgo smy spaceships wisth me, we cna
have hot aliensw sex together

Sent from my iPhone."

45 **EXT. MEDIUM COMEDY CLUB, STEPS - NIGHT. (OCTOBER 2015)**

Donny is looking at his phone. A smile on his face. As he reads Martha's complimentary email above. When he looks up to find her standing there. He jumps out of his skin!

DONNY

Fucking hell! How do you do that?!

MARTHA

Do what?

DONNY

Just appear! You're like ninja cat!

Martha chuckles.

MARTHA

That was fun stuff tonight! You
totally deserved your win. A lot
better than that shit online too--!

DONNY

Thanks. I think.

MARTHA

All the props and gadgets and
googly eyes and stuff. Oh my God, I
love it, reindeer! So funny--!

Donny smiles at her. As she sits down next to him. Beaming.

MARTHA

You have it in your bones this
comedy lark, don't you--?

DONNY

Thank you.

MARTHA

Don't thank me, thank yourself--
thank your bones.

Donny smiles at Martha, appreciatively. When he grows a little self-conscious. He looks away from her.

DONNY

Look, about earlier--

MARTHA

Don't be silly! Don't begrudge you a peep! Just come in for a bite next time! I'll cook you my special dish--

DONNY

What's your-- special dish--?

MARTHA

(leaning in)
Beef curtains...

Donny howls with laughter. Completely caught off guard by her answer. Martha is absolutely loving making him laugh.

DONNY

You're utterly mad, aren't you--?

Martha giggles. They stare at one another for a few moments. A frisson of something. Nobody saying anything. When out of nowhere, Martha shoots in for a hug.

Donny doesn't know how to react to her clinging to him like this. But after a few beats, he softens an arm around her. They sit facing out. It is nice. Weird, but nice.

MARTHA

If you had a superpower, what would it be--?

DONNY

... I would want to know what people were thinking. Rather than just guessing all the time...

MARTHA

Ugh! No. I wouldn't want that...
(beat)

What-- you worried people think bad of you or something--?

DONNY

No. I'm worried they don't think about me at all.

Pause. They stare out.

MARTHA

Aren't you going to ask me--?

DONNY

Go on--

MARTHA

Mine's weird.

DONNY

I expect nothing less.

MARTHA

I get this thing, like-- do you ever, like, want to unzip people and climb inside them?

DONNY

Hmmm...

(beat)

-- can't say it's an impulse I've had very often--

MARTHA

I wish humans had a chin-zip-- one that opened all the way to their bellies... I could just unzip them and tuck myself away...

DONNY

-- is this you asking me for my skin suit--?

MARTHA

Ha! Yes! I would wear you like a onesie-- just snuggle away inside you, all winter-- that'd be nice-- I'd miss biscuits though--

Donny has a smile to himself. He pulls away to face her.

DONNY

Well, I tell you what-- give me a list of the ones you like and-- every now and again, when nobody is looking-- I'll unzip my chin and pop them inside for you-- how does that sound--?

*
*

MARTHA

(breathless excitement)

Oh my God, best of both worlds! In that case, caramel digestives, and some Golds bars, and, oh, oh, what are those ones, those ones with the -- they're like logs-- chocolate-y!

DONNY
Chocolate logs--?

MARTHA
Yes! Chocolate logs! Some of them
too! Then some wafers and I'm done!

Martha is so overly excited she has to catch her breath.

MARTHA
Oh my God-- the tongue on you...

Martha fixes Donny with a joyous smile, as her breath returns. They stare at one another for a few moments. Nobody saying anything. Then, out of nowhere-- she starts singing.

MARTHA
"And afterwards we drop into a
quiet little place and have a drink
or two--"

Donny stares at her, mildly embarrassed. Before, fuck it--

DONNY
"And then I go and spoil it all by
saying something stupid like--"

DONNY	MARTHA
Hitler was misunderstood--	"I love you."

Pause. Donny stares at her like he expects her to laugh but she does not. She just stares intensely back at him.

MARTHA
I love you.

Okay, this is getting a little weird now. Donny stands up. Martha looks insecure at his lack of reaction and stands too.

MARTHA
As a friend! Like you said!

DONNY
Yeah, no, sorry, I--

MARTHA
I've said too much, haven't I?
(beating her temples)
STUPID... fucking... moron gob...

DONNY
No! Don't do that! Don't do that!

Donny holds her arms and she calms down, immediately. She stares up at him in wonderment. Then-- out of nowhere-- she reaches out and places her thumb on the bottom of his chin.

MARTHA

... I have a sneaky, feeling, you
might to be the death of me...

Martha slowly traces her thumb from his chin, down his neck
and chest, making a weird unzipping sound as she goes.

MARTHA

Zzzzzziiiiip--

Slowly tracing all the way to his belly, when--

MARTHA

Boop!

She gives him a little, childish prod in the belly hole.
Before breaking out into her most maniacal laugh yet--

46 **INT. BUS, UPPER DECK - NIGHT. (OCTOBER 2015)**

Donny is on the bus. Staring out. Perturbed at what just
happened with Martha. His eyes wild and ruminative. When,
PING! His phone goes off. He takes it out and looks at it. He
has a Facebook notification: *

FRIEND REQUEST: MARTHA SCOTT

Donny stares at it with a combination of intrigue and worry.

47 **INT. LIZ'S HOUSE, DONNY'S ROOM - NIGHT. (OCTOBER 2015)**

Donny is now behind his laptop. Staring at the friend request
with a sense of unease. When he clicks open her profile. We
see a young Martha in nice clothes with a big, beaming smile
on her face. She looks oddly normal in it. Happier, even. *

Donny smiles. Pleased to see her that way. Before scrolling
through her timeline. But his smile soon fades when he sees
various poorly Photoshopped pictures of Martha standing next
to politicians throughout her page. All incredibly contrived. *

Donny scrolls further. When he lands on a photograph of him
that Martha has taken on the sly, captioned: "I me t someone
today, my very own baby reindeere to have andto whold."

Donny stares with concern as he reads a whole host of fake
congratulations messages from the famous people in her life.
David Cameron. Nick Clegg. All spelt wrong. "Cngrats." "So
hppy 4 u." "Wishn u both well." Hmm. This is too weird.

He scrolls back up to the top of her page and looks at her
name. Martha Scott. He thinks for a moment, then opens a
separate tab and types it into Google. When--

He clicks. Nothing. An anti-climax. Just the Wikipedia page for a 1950's actress. Donny looks oddly disappointed. When he gets a thought and scrolls back up to the search bar.

This time he types in 'Martha Scott' followed by 'lawyer' when-- BOOM! Donny jolts out of his seat as the browser fills with a whole range of terrifying headlines.

DERANGED LAWYER STRUCK OFF AFTER STALKING VERDICT

SERIAL STALKER TORMENTS BARRISTER'S DEAF CHILD

"SHE NEVER STOPS!" VICTIM'S PLEA TO JUDGE AFTER RULING

The Turtles' 'Happy Together' kicks in as Donny scrolls through the information. Panic rising. There is an overwhelming amount of information. Photos of Martha going in and out of court. Mugshots. Everything. Donny stares. Aghast.

DONNY (V.O.)

I sat there for three hours taking it all in. Piecing together her whole timeline. Her graduate job. How she got fired for inappropriate behaviour with the boss. How she started hanging around outside his house. Interrupting meals out. Work occasions. Then falsely reporting him to the police for abusing his disabled child.

(beat)

The details were frightening. The volume astonishing. Her weird friendship with his ex-wife. This one time she attacked his mother in the street. Her four and a half year prison sentence--!

*

Donny snaps his laptop shut. He sits for a moment. Panic rising. Did he honestly just read all that?!

He re-opens his laptop and exits each tab. We cycle back through the headlines as they disappear from the screen.

Until we get to the final tab-- the Facebook friend request. Donny stares at it. Hovering over the 'Decline' button. Deep in thought. Nerves rising.

When he looks to his prop suitcase on the floor. The mink hat protruding out at the top. Before turning back to the laptop.

When-- out of nowhere. He raises the mouse to the screen.

And clicks 'Accept.'