

Characters

CHORUS

- A, female/male, any age
- B, female/male, any age
- C, female/male, any age

One member of the chorus should be female and in her twenties

YASMIN, female, any age from late teens to thirties

LEYLA, female, twenties

ALI, male, twenties

CANDACE, female, late fifties

NIA, female, forties

GIRL IN THE YELLOW DRESS, female, twenties – A, B or C
can play the role here; whoever fits age-wise.

This text went to press before the end of rehearsals and so may differ slightly from the play as performed.

1

The sound of a girl breathing through a tube.

The beep of a heart monitor.

It gets louder and louder and then –

2

A, B and C enter.

They look at each other and then begin.

A Everyone stop what you're doing.
 And watch this.
 Now.

B This is happening.
 This *just* happened.

C What did?

B This literally just happened right now.

C Sorry.

 What did??

A Warning.

 The following contains content some viewers may
 find upsetting.

C Goddam you shitty WIFI!

B Are you watching?

 Skype me and tell me if you're watching.

C It's blocked on my –

 Cos I didn't update the –

I need to know this SECOND what it is that just happened.

B PLEASE EVERYONE STOP AND WATCH AND SHARE.

A Have *you* watched it?

C Uh, of *course* I have.

B I just saw it.
God...

A Terrible.

C Reprehensible.

A It just flashed up.
It literally just flashed up on my screen.

C That poor girl.

B What girl?

A It just flashed up!

C You have to watch it right through to the end, OK.

B But it keeps freezing.

Why, WHY does it keep - ?

A Have you seen the bit where she sort of crumples to her knees?

B Yes I've seen *that* bit.

C And when she puts her hands over her stomach and, Christ -

A All that red, red blood -

C Yes, it sort of arcs out of her.

A A lot of very red, very thick, very *pleasing* actually -

B That lovely girl in yellow.

C What?

The girl in the yellow dress.

A I'm not sure what you -

C You haven't seen it?!

A Not yet.

C Google it.
Google it right now.

A But I'm eating -

C Right NOW.

B What so she just - ?

A Wait.

So -
Someone shot her?

This is disgraceful.

Someone just like SHOT her?!

A I'm disgusted.

B I'm actually nauseous.

C In the protests.

B What protests?

C God, do you not *listen* to the *Today Programme*??

B Oh yeah of course.

The protests.

In - ?

C She was protesting.

She was a protester.

B Yup.

Got it.

A That's -

Yeah, that's a lot of blood.

C Campaigning for her rights.
Democracy.

Freedom.

They don't really have them over there.

B

Is she actually dead?

C

So pretty.

A

She *is* pretty isn't she.

C

It's such a shame.

The prime of her life!

B

Do you know, she actually looks a bit like my friend Emily.

God I should really call her.

C

And that dress!

It's so glam.

A

Are those –

Are those her knickers?

B

What?!

A

Look, if you look –

You can see her knickers.

C

You shouldn't be looking!

A

I'm sorry but!

You see a girl's knickers, you look at them.

C

She's bleeding profusely from her stomach!

B

(Can someone possibly –

Fill me in on the context?)

C

Why would you be paying any attention to her crotch area?!

B

(Hey so.

Do you know basically what it's all *about*?)

A

What what's about?

B

(Well, I'm a bit behind in, you know –

Current affairs.)

A

Tsk.

They're seizing power.

From a government that has countlessly failed to acknowledge them.

Wow OK.

A corrupt government.

An increasingly out of touch yet iron-fisted government.

Oppression.

Yes obviously oppression.

What on earth are you doing?

Nothing.

You're searching for yellow dresses on ASOS?!

No I'm –

You are!

OK fine.

But I've got my cousin's wedding, haven't I!

These horrible, infamous prisons.

Full of the people who bravely buck against the system.

Terrible.

You're actually an awful person.

Oh calm down.

A terrible, vapid, shallow human being.

Hunger strikes are common.

Torture.

They get beaten on the soles of their feet.

On the soles of their feet?

Yes.

With paddles.

Repeatedly, not terribly hard, but enough to send you slowly mad.

Well I tell you what, I REFUSE to watch it.

B

Wait.
What?

C

I said I refuse to watch it.

B

Why in heaven's name – ?

C

Because it's prurient.

B

Oh, honestly.

C

It's, it's GHOULISH.

A

Ohhh I think that's a tad harsh!

B

Dying is intimate.
Right?

It's private.

It's not something you should have to share with
millions and millions of –

C

Yes but what if it changes perceptions?

A

Yes!
Exactly.

C

Raises awareness?
Strengthens resolve!

A

It's practically your duty to watch it.
I think.

B

Yeah but the thing is you're getting off on it.

A

Pardon?

C

What did you say?!

B

She's blonde –

A

Dyed blonde, I reckon.

C

Eh?

A

You can see the roots.
If you look.

B

Anyway.

She's blonde –

A

(Ish.)

B

And she's thin and she's writhing around and you
can see her knickers.

A

She's not actually dead.

C

She isn't?

A

She didn't die.

C

Oh.

Oh right.

A

Look here's a picture of her in hospital.

C

Oh God that's nasty.

All those tubes coming out of her –

B

So, wait, she DIDN'T die?

C

Well no.

Not yet.

B

Oh.

A

Anyway back to my original point.

C

Which is?

B

Oh God I don't know.

I'm just a bit shocked that's all.

A

Well yes it's shocking.

B

Really shocking.

A

Look at all those angry people.
God.

B

God they're really angry.

C

It's understandable.

A

All those old women weeping.
Terrible.

B

Boys weeping too.
And men.

C

They're all weeping.

B

Do we know her name?

C I really want to know her name.

A Have you shared it?

B What?

A SO important, please share.

B Oh God yes, share, you've got to share.

C Watch now, so important.

A SHARE THIS NOW.

B Just shared it, mate.

C Awesome, dude.

B No problem, buddy.

A Dying for a cause.
Wow.

Is there a cause that I'd die for?

B Of course there is!

C Dunno.

Is there?

B You'd die for democracy!

You'd die for justice!

C Oh yeah.

Yeah course I would.

A She looks a bit like my friend Natalie.

B She looks a lot like my friend Clare.

C Changed my profile pic.

B What?

A Change your profile pic, can't you?!

C Cos, in a way, we're all the girl in the yellow dress.
I mean, aren't we?

B We are all the girl in the yellow dress.

A, B, C WE ARE ALL THE GIRL IN THE YELLOW
DRESS!

3

A, B and C gather strips of yellow cloth.

They tie the cloth around their wrists and over their mouths.

The sound of a huge crowd.

YASMIN enters – dressed plainly and a little scruffily.

She hasn't brushed her hair and isn't wearing any make-up.

She has a pile of papers in her hand – roughly photocopied, curling around the edges.

She clears her throat.

She takes the top piece of paper off the pile, then wedges the rest between her knees.

She holds up the piece of paper.

YASMIN Has anyone seen this – ?

Um.

She has to fight against the noise of the crowd.

Has anyone seen this woman?

Uh –

Hello?

It's too noisy.

EXCUSE ME.

Can you all please, um...

Just, be on the lookout or –

Can you keep your eyes peeled, please...?

No one.

She approaches A and taps her/him on the shoulder.

Hi.

Excuse me.

Sorry to, but...

This is my mum.

If you could take a look – ?

What?

- YASMIN Does she look familiar to you at all?
 A Listen, can you get phone signal?
 YASMIN Um.
 A Look at this!
 Nothing!
 YASMIN Uh-huh.
 OK it's just I haven't seen her for a bit and I'm just trying to...
 Trying to trace her movements or something so –
 A They're here somewhere but I just –
 I can't get through to them.
 YASMIN Um.
 A Everything's blocked.
 The whole network.
 YASMIN Uh-huh.
 Look –
 A Do you think it's them?
 Do you think they've shut it down?
 YASMIN Can I give you one of these?
 A Of course it's them.
 Why am I even asking?
 A *takes the piece of paper.*
 What's this?
The phone rings.
 A *drops the piece of paper.*
(Into phone.) Where are you?
 No I said where *are* you?
 YASMIN OK.
 Thanks.
 Thank you.
 YASMIN turns to B, who is tapping feverishly into a mobile phone.
- Excuse me, hi, have you seen this woman?
She taps B on the shoulder.
 B *ignores her.*
 YASMIN *starts to tuck the piece of paper in B's pocket.*
 B What are you doing?
 YASMIN Sorry to bother you, I'm Yasmin, I'm just –
 B Did you take something?
 YASMIN What?
 B From my pocket?
 Just now?
 YASMIN No.
 B Come on, what did you take?
Beat.
 YASMIN Right, so, this is my mum.
 B What?
 YASMIN This is a picture of –
 B This is your mum?
 YASMIN Have you seen her?
 Recently?
 B *studies the picture.*
 B Sorry I just –
 You feel a hand in your pocket, you make assumptions –
 YASMIN That's OK.
 If you could just look...?
 B *studies the picture.*
 B Sorry, but there are a lot of people here and –
 She looks like a lot of people's mums.

- YASMIN Right.
Well, she looks like my mum.
- B I mean, I'll keep hold of this.
- YASMIN Thank you - ?
- B But, you know, everyone here is looking for someone and -
- YASMIN She has a scar.
If you look -
- B Oh yeah.
God.
Bit nasty.
- YASMIN A dog bit her.
- B Right.
- YASMIN For no reason!
It just jumped up and bit her.
- C What's going on?
What's this?
- YASMIN It's a picture of -
- B Her mum.
- C Oh right.
Oh shit.
- YASMIN Could I give you a pile - ?
- C You can't find her?
- YASMIN No.
But -
- C How long?
- YASMIN Well.
Day before yesterday.
- C You tried the hospital?
- YASMIN Beat.
Not yet.
- C I reckon you should try the hospital.
- YASMIN No I don't think -
I think she's probably just stuck somewhere.
Cos of the blockades maybe.
- C They're coming down pretty heavy, you know.
She's probably inches away, do you know what I mean?!
- C Whereabouts was she protesting?
- YASMIN Oh she wasn't protesting.
- C What?
- YASMIN She just tried to go to the shops.
But the ones nearest us, there was nothing in them.
Like, just a few bits of rice on the floor.
So she said she'd be going a bit further than normal.
- A *A gets another phone call.*
(Into phone.) What?
I can't hear you -
- B She wasn't protesting?
- YASMIN No.
- C Why not?
- YASMIN Well because -
- A *(Into phone.)* Listen the signal's TERRIBLE so -
- YASMIN She went across town.
Where there's a bit more choice and everything.
But -
- A *(Into phone.)* Yeah a bit better.
YES I CAN HEAR YOU NOW.
- YASMIN I mean, I said I'd go.
Cos it's normally me that does it.
The shopping.

B *tries to remain focused on YASMIN but starts tapping at her/his phone nonetheless.*

But she seemed a bit restless or something.
A bit anxious, I don't know.
So I let her do it.

She said she'd be back in half an hour.
But she –
Wasn't.

B Signal!

Look, signal!

C Let me see?

YASMIN I should have gone though.
I should have gone.

B Maybe she's staying with a relative or –
Oh GOD it's gone again!

YASMIN I'm not sure what to –
What do I do?

B Sorry?

YASMIN Who should I be talking to?
Can you help?

A *brandishes her/his phone.*

A OK!

There's going to be a vigil outside the hospital.

B Now?

A We've got to get to the front.

B Is it safe?

A Of course it isn't safe.
What do you think?

C We'll go through the shopping mall.
It'll be quicker.

A Less police.

B Do you think?

A Come on.

A, B and C begin to exit hastily.

The pieces of paper given to them by YASMIN float, abandoned, to the floor.

YASMIN *slowly gathers up the pieces of paper.*

She sits down, holding the piece of paper up.

The sound of the crowd surges.

4

LEYLA and ALI.

Their apartment.

ALI I'm going to delete it.

LEYLA What?

ALI I'm taking it down.

LEYLA No.

ALI I should never have put it up it's –

LEYLA It's fucking brave, is what it is.

ALI It's –

Do you think?

LEYLA Yes!

No it's not, it's invasive.

It's wrong.

LEYLA OK.

So you witness something like that –

You capture something like that on *film* and then

you just, what?

Press *delete*?

No!

ALI She has no idea.
She has no idea what she's started.

LEYLA You *make* people watch it.

ALI She's comatose in a hospital bed and she has no idea.

LEYLA You grab everyone by the scruff of the neck and say,
LOOK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE.

Pause.

ALI It's just sad, that's all.
It's just fucking sad.

LEYLA Yeah.

ALI That this is what it takes.

LEYLA You don't have to tell me how fucked up that is.

ALI Why does some girl have to bleed from a hole in her stomach to get people to pay attention?

LEYLA Because the world sucks.

ALI And, OK, while we're asking questions –
Why did I just stand there with my fucking camera?

LEYLA It was a good instinct.

ALI Why didn't I –
I don't know.
Why didn't I put her in the recovery position?
Why didn't I take off my shirt and try and stop the blood?

LEYLA Well.
People were all over her.

ALI That would have been a good instinct.

LEYLA You wouldn't have been able to get close.
You wouldn't, Ali –

ALI But no.
I just stood there.
I pressed record and I just stood there.

LEYLA You did something huge.

ALI No.

LEYLA You bore witness.

ALI But a film is never going to –
It's never going to capture what it was actually like.

Pause.

LEYLA No.

ALI You weren't there.

LEYLA I know.
I should have been.

ALI It was so –
It was shocking.

LEYLA People constantly miss dentist appointments.
But not me, apparently.

ALI I've never even *heard* gunfire before.
Let alone...

LEYLA I was going to come afterwards.
You know that, right?

ALI She made a noise.
When it –
Hit.

LEYLA You said.

ALI Like a kind of –
Surprised noise.
Like, she sounded *astounded*.

LEYLA Yeah.

ALI And then the way she just –
Sank onto her knees.

And then her eyes –
God.

LEYLA

Yeah.

ALI

The way they –

Suddenly she wasn't a person any more, almost.
She was like something in a horror film.
She was horrifying.

God, is that why I couldn't touch her?

LEYLA

You, I don't know, you went into shock.
You went into autopilot.

ALI

That's not good enough.

LEYLA

You did what you could.

ALI

Which wasn't enough.
Do you think it was enough?

LEYLA

Well –

ALI

Do you think it was enough?

LEYLA

Which is why you can't take it down.
Pause.

ALI

It could have been you.

LEYLA

I know.

It could have been you.

ALI

That's what scares me.

LEYLA

It is scary.

But you can't –

ALI

That people will do that.
Just –
Bang.

LEYLA

Yes.

ALI

Roll down a window or –
Screech by on a motorbike and –

LEYLA

Cowards.

And why her?

That's what I can't –
What did she even do?

ALI

She was there.

LEYLA

She wasn't even *doing anything*.

ALI

Yes but she was there.

LEYLA

How is someone like that a threat?

ALI

Of course she's a threat.

LEYLA

She's just a girl in a yellow dress.

ALI

She was in their way.

LEYLA

They shouldn't just –

ALI

How can they just *do* that?

LEYLA

Because they need to send a message.

ALI

Well.

OK.

Now I've sent a message.

LEYLA

You have.

ALI

So what happens now?

Pause.

Do you think that –
They've seen it.

Pause.

LEYLA

Maybe they haven't linked it to you yet.

ALI

You know I was careful.

LEYLA

I know you were.

ALI

Obviously I used a false –

LEYLA

Of course you did.

ALI

I'd never be so stupid as to –

LEYLA No.
I know you wouldn't.
Pause.
978,000 views now.

ALI Oh.

LEYLA 979.

ALI OK.

LEYLA 980 –

ALI OK, stop, thanks.
Pause.

LEYLA I should have been there.

ALI You were at the dentist.

LEYLA I didn't even need a filling.
He just said –
Well done, I can see you've been flossing.
You would have been there otherwise.
Pause.

LEYLA Maybe I wouldn't.

ALI What do you mean?

LEYLA I mean...
Maybe I was scared.

ALI OK...
No one's going to judge you for being scared.

LEYLA Maybe they should judge me.

ALI Why?
You were at the dentist.

LEYLA She wasn't scared though, was she?

ALI Who?

LEYLA Her.
The girl.

ALI She might have been...
LEYLA No.
She was there.

ALI She –
She could be anyone.

LEYLA That's what counts, in the end.
She was there.

ALI She could be a –
A lunatic.
A human trafficker.
A bad mother.
We don't know.

LEYLA Yes but she's visible.
She matters.

ALI You matter.

LEYLA Hardly.
I'm a chicken.
A chicken with really good teeth.
Pause.

She's got good teeth.

ALI Does she?

LEYLA She's pretty.

ALI Not really...
Come on.
You know she is.
Pause.

How many times has that car been round the block?
Pause.

ALI What car?

LEYLA That one.

ALI The grey one?
 LEYLA Yeah.
 ALI I don't know.
 LEYLA Quite a few.
 ALI Really?
 LEYLA I just noticed.
 ALI Are you sure?
 LEYLA Quite slowly.
 ALI What do you mean?
 LEYLA I mean it's going round and round quite slowly.
 ALI That could be anything.
 Any reason.
 LEYLA Should we turn the light off?
Beat.
 ALI I don't know.
 Should we?
 LEYLA I think we should.
 ALI OK.
ALI turns off the light.
They wait.
 LEYLA It's probably nothing.
 ALI Exactly.
 LEYLA Is the door locked?
 ALI Uh –
 LEYLA And I'm only asking because I'm being extra-careful.
 ALI I don't see why it wouldn't be locked.
 LEYLA We always lock it.
 Why wouldn't we lock it?

ALI I'll check if you like.
 LEYLA No.
 No need.
Beat.
 Actually I think I might check it.
She goes to the door.
Checks it.
They wait.
 ALI Leyla?
 LEYLA What?
 ALI It's Adam.
Pause.
 It's just Adam.
 LEYLA Let me see.
Pause.
 ALI He was just driving around looking for a parking spot.
 LEYLA Just Adam!
 ALI We turned the light off –
 LEYLA For Adam!
 ALI You checked the –
 LEYLA I checked the lock and everything!
 ALI Shall we just calm down, maybe?!

LEYLA I think that's basically our only option right now.
Beat.
 ALI OK.
 It's decided.
 I'm not taking it down.

LEYLA

Good.

ALI

This is my –

LEYLA

This is my act of protest, isn't it?

ALI

Yes.
I don't care what they –
I don't actually care.

LEYLA

No.

ALI

Why should I be scared of them?

LEYLA

They're scared of YOU!
If you think about it.

ALI

They are!
They're actually scared of ME!

LEYLA

It's like spiders.

ALI

Exactly, it's exactly like spiders.

LEYLA

'They're more scared of you than you are of them.'

ALI

They're just spiders on the toilet seat.

LEYLA

You're just going to trap them in a cup and throw them out the window.

ALI

Or squash them.

LEYLA

Or squash them.

ALI

Up to me.

LEYLA

It's completely up to you what you do with those spiders.

ALI

Let's just watch some TV and forget about it.
For now.*They switch on the television.*

Fuck.

FUCK.

LEYLA

It's OK, Ali.
Come here.

5

A, B and C.

*Perhaps they are on the television that LEYLA and ALI have just switched on.**A steps forward.**B and C stand slightly behind, flanking her/him.*

A

Good evening.

It is an honour to stand before you tonight.

Tonight, with my heart full of love, I reach out to you.

As a father reaches out towards his children.

Pause.

For I am not blind to current events

These current events weigh on me heavily.

They fill me with sadness, with compassion for the men and women who seek only to fly the flags of freedom and democracy.

Noble, virtuous people.

Thank you for challenging me.

I welcome challenge.

What I do not, and will not, welcome –
Is chaos.*B hands A a bottle of water.**A takes a swig.*

There are some amongst you who are angry.

Angry and, yes, afraid.

I know this.

And may I say how much I admire those men and women who have taken to the streets to stand up to what they see as injustice, as power at its most foul and corrupt.

To those brave individuals I say: there is no one who detests that which is foul and corrupt as much as me.

B and C nod.

To those brave individuals I say: I pity you.

Yes: pity.

Because you have been misled.

Misled, as so many have been misled, by the false propaganda that seeks to destabilise the very foundations of our society.

I pity you because you have been exploited and manipulated by the cynical political desires of a lunatic minority.

A ruthless, nihilistic minority comprised of outlaws and terrorists.

But, and this is my pledge to you: I will protect you from them.

C taps A on the shoulder and whispers something almost imperceptibly.

A nods.

Turns back to audience.

In the light of recent events...

There are images that sear themselves onto our consciousness.

There are images that horrify and appal us.

There are images that grab us by the throat and make it hard to breathe.

But, brothers and sisters, remember: that is all they are –

An image.

An illusion.

Pay them no more attention than you would a small child who claims they have discovered how to fly.

B clears her/his throat.

Thank you.

Thank you so much for listening to me, your humble servant, on this most glorious night. Goodnight.

And God bless.

6

A large house in an affluent part of West London.

NIA and CANDACE are drinking tea and nibbling biscuits.

NIA has lots of folders in front of her.

She has one open and is pointing at something.

NIA This is Suli.

CANDACE This is him?!

NIA I'm sorry I haven't been able to get a photo until now –

CANDACE Oh hello!

Oh he's lovely.

He's got such a cheeky little face!

NIA He's certainly a handsome boy.

CANDACE He really is.

They look, smiling.

NIA turns the page.

NIA He drew this for you.

CANDACE For me?

NIA He's quite good, isn't he?

An artist in the making, perhaps.

CANDACE Now just a moment let me get my glasses.

She looks for her glasses.

Finds them and puts them on.

Oh I say!

Now what's this?

NIA Well.

This is meant to be your house.

CANDACE Oh!

Is that the cat?!

NIA

We told him you had a cat.
He loves them.
He used to have one before...

CANDACE

And that's -
Is this supposed to be me?

NIA

He's given you a crown, look.

CANDACE

Well!

I'm -

Please do tell him that I'm so honoured.

NIA

You can write and tell him yourself.
If you like?

CANDACE

Oh.

Can I?

NIA

We encourage communication.

CANDACE

Well you see I wasn't sure -

NIA

We absolutely encourage it.

CANDACE

In that case I shall write to him this afternoon.

NIA

He'll be delighted.

CANDACE

Do you think?

NIA

The more detail the better.
He loves detail.

CANDACE

He must be awfully clever.
He looks clever.

NIA

Yes he's very bright, very inquisitive.

CANDACE

Oh, bless him.

NIA

Which is why everything that is happening to him
is so...

It is hard to take.

I'm sure you agree.

CANDACE

How is the uh...

How is the situation?

Pause.

NIA

It's hard to say.
It's volatile.

CANDACE

I've been following as much as I can on the news.

NIA

There is still no sign of his parents.

CANDACE

No?

Nothing?

NIA

We can assume that the outcome will not be -

CANDACE

Oh no.

Oh I can't bear it.

NIA

It is best to assume the worst.

Pause.

They sip tea.

Everyone was so hopeful initially but now...

CANDACE

Sometimes I stay up half the night reading about it.

NIA

The government is cracking down.
As predicted.

CANDACE

But it only ever seems to be that one story.

NIA

A lot of people are in prison.
A lot of people are -

CANDACE

'The girl in the yellow dress.'

NIA

Missing.

Dead.

We can presume they're dead.

CANDACE

And of course I care about her.

This poor girl.

But you wonder about everyone else, don't you?

It seems a shame -

NIA

Still.

If it hadn't been for her you wouldn't have
approached us.

Would you?

CANDACE No.

I suppose that's true.

NIA Before her most people barely gave a second thought to our country.

CANDACE Oh dear.
You must take a pretty dim view of the world.

NIA Not at all.
Look at everything you are doing to help.

CANDACE Ohh...

NIA Because of you we're able to help children like Suli.
Help them get food, shelter, help them get out of the country if needs be.
All because of people like you.

CANDACE Oh, gosh, yes, well.

Pause.

I just –
Sometimes it makes me feel a bit queasy.
All this.

She looks around the room.

It's all his, of course.
He let me keep the house.
Graciously.

And every month, thanks to his guilt, my bank balance swells in a manner that is –
Almost obscene.

Pause.

He lives in the Norfolk property now.
With his new –
And their children.
Two girls.

They go to a Steiner school.
They call the teachers by their first names.
'Barnaby'.

And 'Debbie'.

She sends me a round robin four times a year.

She sips tea.

But I mean, goodness, I haven't suffered.

NIA I'm sure it must have been painful.

CANDACE Ohhhh.

Not compared to you.

NIA It's relative.
Everything is.

CANDACE I mean, sometimes, at night...
Sleeping isn't my greatest skill, put it that way.
Ha!

NIA Knitting helps, I find.

CANDACE Oh really?

I'm all fingers and thumbs sadly.

NIA Better to get up and do something than lie there and fester.

CANDACE You have trouble sleeping?

NIA Oh I'm a –
Seasoned insomniac.

CANDACE I tend to have the World Service on all night.

NIA Ah yes.

CANDACE But it can be rather dampening.
I mean, there's so much one is so powerless to control.

NIA Yes.

CANDACE So many horrors.

NIA That's true.

CANDACE Sometimes I think, well Candace, you don't *deserve* to sleep.
Pause.

So I try to help.

I want to help.

Is it helpful?

I don't know.

Money...

It makes me feel rather empty that all I can offer is money.

NIA It makes a huge difference.

CANDACE Yes but it's -

I don't know.

It's remote, isn't it?

NIA Not for Suli.

Not for all those children.

CANDACE Yes.

Yes thank goodness I can help them...

They sip tea.

NIA *Opens another folder, thumbs through it.*

Opens it on a page and shows it to CANDACE.

NIA This is my father.

My mother.

CANDACE Oh aren't they elegant!

NIA This is their wedding day.

CANDACE Doesn't she have lovely eyes?

NIA They were both journalists.

Very smart, very well-educated.

CANDACE You've got her eyes, haven't you, Nia?

NIA They opposed the regime.

Vehemently.

And vocally.

NIA *turns the page.*

This is what happened to them.

CANDACE Oh -

CANDACE looks away and puts her hand over her face.

Silence.

NIA *closes the folder.*

The death certificates, when eventually they were made available -

Gave 'meningitis' as the cause of death.

Pause.

I grew up with a small asterix next to my name.

Which ensured I couldn't be admitted to

university.

Or gain employment of any meaningful kind.

I was often arrested, on the smallest pretext.

She rolls back the sleeves of her top.

They did this to me.

CANDACE looks at NIA's wrists.

Swallows.

With a broken bottle.

They sawed it back and forth over my wrist.

CANDACE Why did they do that?

NIA I was kept in solitary confinement for several

months.

CANDACE Oh...

NIA Assaulted, sexually.

CANDACE No.

NIA I was released, arrested again, released...

The cycle continued...

CANDACE How...

Awful.

NIA

Until eventually I was able to escape.
Smuggled out of the country in the boot of a car.
That was fourteen years ago.

NIA *rolls down her sleeve again.*

You must never underestimate what money does.
Never.

Pause.

You'll find we all have a –
A deeply personal investment in this cause.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA

You will meet all of us, I hope.
We're very social.
We've created a kind of network.
Parties, dinners, symposiums.
I think you'll enjoy the interaction.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA

Perhaps you might consider hosting something
yourself.

CANDACE Here?

NIA

You have a beautiful home.

Beat.

CANDACE I should love to.

NIA

And many friends, no doubt.
People, like you, who –
Who bristle at the injustices of the world.

CANDACE

Well I hope so.
I hope they do –

NIA

It's so important to raise awareness.
It is imperative that people know.
It is vital that –
That the world doesn't forget what is happening
there.

CANDACE I agree.

I really do.

NIA

Perhaps we could look at three weeks' time.
Does that sounds good?

CANDACE Oh.

Um –

NIA

Is that enough time?

CANDACE Uh –

Yes.

Of course.

NIA

If you're quite sure?

CANDACE

No, yes, I'll put some invitations together and
send them out this week.
It won't be any trouble.

NIA

I can draft the invitations.

CANDACE Ah.

Yes?

NIA

Just to ensure the tone is correct.

CANDACE

Of course.
I quite understand.

NIA *begins to gather up her folders.*

Is time up?

NIA

I've got another appointment.
Thank you so much for the delicious tea.

CANDACE

Did you like it?
It's Fortnum and Mason's own blend.
Someone got me one of those hampers at
Christmas.

NIA

I must get some.

CANDACE

Do you need a cab?
I can call you one.

NIA

No.
It's very close.
I can walk.

CANDACE And you'll come again?

NIA

Oh yes.
Of course.

CANDACE

Well.

You're always welcome.

I've very much enjoyed meeting you face to face.

It's been –

Well I've certainly –

Thank you.

NIA *reaches out to shake CANDACE's hand.*

NIA

I'll be in touch.

7

A, B and C *enter, with yellow fabric around their wrists.*C *is wearing a yellow dress.**They all have yellow balloons.*YASMIN – *a little grubbier than before – is unable to get past A, B and C.*

A

Please, take a balloon.

B

A balloon for you?

C

Madam, a balloon?

YASMIN

(Trying to get through.) Excuse me.
Sorry.

Can I get through?

B

Has everyone got one?

C

Stick your hands up if you haven't got one.

B Is everyone taking pictures?

Please, please take as many pictures as you can.

A

Yes, please, it's really important.
We need total saturation.

B

We need this to be the front page of every
newspaper in every country.

A

We need to show that we're not cowed.
That we'll never give up!

B

That they can't intimidate us with their truncheons
and their helmets and their guns!

YASMIN

(To C.) Can you let me through?

C

(Handing her a balloon.) Here you go.YASMIN *looks at the balloon in her hand.*

What's this for?

C

She might be about to wake up.

YASMIN

Who?

Listen, I need to get inside the hospital –

C

That's her room.

That one right at the top, to the left.

B

There's going to be a minute of silence in her
honour.

A

And then we'll each release our balloon, into the
air, at the same time.
As a tribute to her.

C

Imagine if she looked down.
And she saw all of us.

YASMIN

Are they not letting people in?

C

Imagine if she could see how much people love her.

YASMIN

It's just I badly need to get inside.

C

Are you hurt?

YASMIN No –

C Have those bastards hurt you?

YASMIN No, no, it's nothing like that.
I'm just –

C Show me what they've done to you.
YASMIN I'm looking for my mother.

C You look shattered, you poor thing.

YASMIN Well I –
Do I?
I haven't really slept, much.

C It's hard to sleep, isn't it?
With those monsters out there.
They mow people down, you know.

YASMIN Sorry?

C With horses.
With tanks.

YASMIN They –
What?

C We're just insects to them.

YASMIN No.
She was just shopping.
She was just –

C Who?

YASMIN My mum.

C They've got your mum?

YASMIN No!
Nothing like that!

B OK, it's a bit of a scrum so let's just –

A Try not to push.
There's no need to push.

YASMIN What were you saying though?
About –

C Mowing people down?

C You can't dwell on it.
You can't let it scare you.

YASMIN No but –
That sounds bad...

A God there's so many people...

B (To A.) Are you OK?

A I need some air...

B Don't stop, you've got to keep going.

C Can everyone stop pushing?

YASMIN But I mean, she had her crappy old straw hat on!
Why would they do that to her?

C I said, don't push!

YASMIN And she's tough, that's the thing.
I mean, she's not the kind of person you mess
with.

C I've got a picture if you want to keep your eyes
peeled –

C Look!

YASMIN What?

C She's –
The curtains they're...!

A Is it?

B Do you think it's...?

C Is it her?

C Is it actually her?

A Wait!
Don't let go yet.
Please just wait –

YASMIN

Hello?

C

Is it her?

B

Is it - ?

*Pause.**They all hold their breath.**Then collectively let it out again.*

C

What was that you were saying?

What's that you've got?

YASMIN *looks at the crumpled piece of paper in her hand.**She crumples it up even more.*

YASMIN

Nothing.

Never mind.

8

*A café.**Evening.**LEYLA and ALI sit silently at a table together.**A and B are sitting, separately, at two more tables.**Silence.*

LEYLA

Well this is nice.

ALI

Yeah.

LEYLA

I'm not sure we've managed more than ten words between us but -

Yes.

Nice to get out.

ALI

Ha!

Right.

ALI *looks nervously around and behind him.*

LEYLA

I even waxed my legs.

*She sticks her leg out for him to admire.**He pats it absent-mindedly.*

Your raw lust is dizzying.

ALI

Look I did something I kind of regret.

LEYLA

Right.

ALI

I spoke to this -
This like blog thing.

LEYLA

OK.

Right.

What -

C approaches with a pad.

C

Ready to order?

LEYLA

Ummm.

C

I'm afraid we don't have any soup left.
Oh and only vegetarian options on the sandwiches.

We're clean out of meat.

ALI

Uh -

LEYLA

I don't know, some tea?

ALI

Yeah tea, tea's fine.

C

Tea?

LEYLA

Yes please.

C

Tea...

*C writes it down slowly.**They wait for C to leave.**C smiles.*

We haven't had a delivery in I don't know how many days now.
When will all this nonsense be over, that's what I want to know?

LEYLA

Mm.

ALI

Mm.

C

I don't know, I just think it's all bonkers, I honestly do!

C twiddles her/his hair and smiles a bit more.

Anyway, you'll yell if you need me?

C saunters away.

LEYLA and ALI *speak quietly.*

LEYLA

What blog?

ALI

I don't know, something in New York.
Zane works there.

LEYLA

So he knows to keep you anonymous.

ALI

He got in touch, like, 'do you know anything about this girl?'
And I sort of had to say –
Yes.

LEYLA

He'll make sure it's safe.
He's your friend.

ALI

I haven't seen him for what?
Five years?

LEYLA

You keep in touch.

ALI

So you think I can trust him?

LEYLA

Um.

Well, it's not really him we've got to worry about, is it?

ALI

So you think I've made a massive mistake?

LEYLA

Maybe you should have wrestled with this yourself before blurting everything out but –

This is Zane we're talking about.
Zane!

ALI

Yes.

LEYLA

I got that.

ALI

I'm not a complete idiot.

LEYLA

We said we weren't going to talk about it tonight.
Remember?

Pause.

Sorry.

ALI

Am I being a nightmare?

LEYLA

A little bit.

But I forgive you.

As long as you dazzle me with your scintillating conversation for the rest of the night.

ALI

Thing is, he said something else.

LEYLA

Nope.

Not dazzling enough, sorry.

ALI

He said that, if he was me...
He'd be scared.

Pause.

He could help us, you see.

With paperwork and stuff.

He said he knows people.

LEYLA

Sorry –

What paperwork?

ALI

You know.

If we wanted to –
To go there.

LEYLA

To New York?

ALI

Yeah.

Yes.

Beat.

LEYLA

Is this –
Are you serious?

ALI

Yes.

LEYLA

Why?
What's happened?

ALI

Nothing.

LEYLA

You have to tell me if –
If –

ALI

Nothing's happened.
I promise.

Beat.

But you don't think it's weird?

LEYLA

Think what's weird?

ALI

This... silence?

Silence.

B *approaches.*

B Are you finished with that?

LEYLA

What?

B

Your newspaper.

LEYLA

Have it.

B *takes the newspaper.*

Opens it.

Shakes head.

B

Extraordinary...

They wait for B to leave.

B *wanders back to table.*

LEYLA and ALI *resume speaking, at an even quieter volume.*

ALI

Can we talk about it?

LEYLA

What?
About New York?

ALI

Yes.

LEYLA

So, just up sticks in the middle of all of this?
Take a jaunt up the Empire State Building?

ALI

No –

LEYLA

Sorry guys!
You're all standing up for freedom and risking
your lives or whatever.
We're buying Basquiat postcards in the MOMA
gift shop!

ALI

Please.
Let's talk about it.
Seriously.

A *gets up and moves her/his chair a bit closer to*
ALI and LEYLA.

A

Don't mind me!
Better light over here.
A *smiles.*

ALI and LEYLA *resume at a quieter volume.*

LEYLA

Right.
Seriously.
Where would we work?

ALI

Uh –
Well, Zane would help us get something.

LEYLA

What kind of thing?

ALI

Um –

LEYLA

Where would we live?

ALI

I, I guess...
Someone's sofa for a bit until – ?

LEYLA

Would my parents come with us?

ALI

What?

LEYLA Would they?
 ALI Well...
 That's probably not realistic.
Pause.

LEYLA OK.
 ALI Obviously we couldn't...
 I mean that's a whole other...
Pause.

LEYLA What do you want me to say?
 I'm not sure.
Pause.

ALI You could call them.
 Your family.
 You could call them every day.

LEYLA Oh.
 ALI People do it.
 They do it all the time.

LEYLA Yeah.
 ALI People in much worse situations than ours.
 We're lucky.

LEYLA Oh right.
 ALI We know people.
 People who can help us and, and make it as
 bearable as it can be.
 Loads of people don't have that option –

LEYLA How are we funding this?
 ALI Sorry?
 LEYLA How are we funding it?
 This complex operation.
Pause.

ALI We'll... we'll scrape it together.
 LEYLA I can't imagine it comes cheap.
 ALI We'll manage.
 LEYLA Or we could just ask my uncle.
Pause.

ALI Well, no, but...
 We couldn't...

LEYLA He's filthy rich.
 Isn't he?

ALI Well yeah but...
 It didn't occur to me that we would –

LEYLA It didn't?
 Are you sure?

ALI Yes.
 LEYLA He's rolling in cash.
 You've said it yourself a million times.

ALI I know but –

LEYLA Rolling around in all that dodgy cash.
 Like a big, smug sea lion, I think is how you
 described it.

ALI I don't think I put it quite –

LEYLA You've always had a lot to say about my uncle.
 ALI Yeah but I was being an idiot.
 I was just being a judgemental prick.
 I mean, what do I know about his life?

LEYLA Oh, now you understand him?
 That's great!
 I'm so pleased you've finally found it in your
 heart to forgive him –

ALI Hey –

LEYLA

Now that he's able to buy your safety with all that garish gold you hate so much. He'll be so happy!

Pause.

ALI

I wasn't assuming – Leyla, I wasn't.

LEYLA

Five minutes ago I knew where I was. And suddenly I'm, I'm breaking my mum's heart, I'm bleeding my uncle dry and I'm smuggling myself inside a Fedex box.

C returns with tea.

C

Shall I just – ?

ALI

Just put it down.

LEYLA

We can manage.

C

I'm alright just to – ?

ALI

Yes.

LEYLA

Yes.

C

You'll give me a nod if you need anything else?

ALI

Yes!

C retreats.

Pause.

Or I could just go.

LEYLA

What?

C returns.

C

Did you want sugar?

ALI

No.

C

(*To LEYLA.*) What about you?

LEYLA

No.

C

If you want any you'll just holler?

LEYLA

Yes.

C retreats.

What did you just say?

ALI

I could go. On my own.

A sneezes loudly.

A

Oof.

Excuse me.

LEYLA

OK.

Now this feels like a whole other conversation.

ALI

You're right.

You shouldn't have to leave your family, your home.

I wouldn't make you do that.

LEYLA

You go? On your own?

ALI

I don't want to drag you into my mess.

LEYLA

Hang on.

I thought it was our mess.

I'm the one who made the film.

LEYLA

I'm the one who told you to put it up.

ALI

They don't have to know that.

LEYLA

OK.

Right.

She takes a long slurp of her tea then spits it out.

Fuck!

ALI

Hot?

LEYLA

Fucking scalding!

Pause.

Something occurred to me actually.

ALI

Yeah?

LEYLA That day.
The day of the –

ALI Yes?

LEYLA You were filming her before she got shot.
Before.

Beat.

ALI Yeah.

LEYLA How come?

ALI What do you mean?

LEYLA How come you were filming her?

ALI I don't really know.
That's just the way it was.

LEYLA Did you know her?

ALI No.

Pause.

LEYLA So she just caught your eye.

ALI Well –

I guess she did.

LEYLA The dress, probably.

ALI Uh.

Yeah maybe.

LEYLA What with it being so bright.

ALI I expect so.

LEYLA That's probably it.

Pause.

OK.

I'll speak to my uncle.

ALI You don't have to.

LEYLA - If you think this is the only way then, then OK.

Pause.

Then it's decided.
I'll go and see him tomorrow.

Pause.

ALI Thank you.
I mean it.
And I'm sorry.

LEYLA Yeah.
I know you are.

9

CANDACE and NIA.

CANDACE's house.

Night-time.

They are drying glasses.

Silence.

CANDACE Well, I think that went well.

NIA You spoke brilliantly.

CANDACE Did I?

NIA You really communicated something, I think.

CANDACE Oh I do hope so.

NIA Your passion.

CANDACE People seemed interested, didn't they?

NIA I spoke to lots of very kind people.

CANDACE And they seemed – ?

NIA The main thing is to plant a seed.
No one wants to be forced.
That's not how we operate.

CANDACE Well I hope it yields something for you. I really do.

Gosh, I'm done in!

Pause.

NIA *continues to shine glasses.*

The cleaning lady's actually coming in the morning.

NIA It's no trouble.

CANDACE You'll be wanting to get home.

NIA The bus goes all night.

CANDACE Oh you can't get the bus!

NIA I like the bus.

CANDACE Are you sure you don't want me to call you a cab?

NIA I'll be perfectly fine on the bus.

Pause.

CANDACE Anyway.

Pause.

I wonder if you spoke to my friend, Miles.

You might have spotted him.

Tall, rather leonine.

Noble-looking, I've always thought.

He certainly thinks so!

NIA The barrister.

CANDACE That's him.

NIA Lovely voice.

CANDACE Oh that's Eton for you.

Anyway he's a very old pal.

Used to be married to my friend Evelyn.

My best friend, I suppose you'd say.

Anyway, she died.

Few years ago now.

Ovarian cancer.

Quite ghastly.

NIA I'm so sorry.

CANDACE Yes.

She was fun.

She was great fun.

NIA That must be hard.

For both of you.

CANDACE Yes we miss her.

Horribly...

But we soldier on.

Well.

As you'll know.

Beat.

Anyway he mentioned –

I was just chatting to him all about you and what you do, and he was full of admiration, of course.

NIA Where do these go?

CANDACE What?

Oh, that cupboard behind you.

Anyway –

NIA This one?

CANDACE Yes.

Anyway he –

The thing is he mentioned –

He said he'd done a bit of digging.

He's completely *obsessed* with the internet and the problem is he has a tendency to sort of believe absolutely everything he reads.

I've told him so many times, I've said, Miles, half of it is utter nonsense, it really is!

But he's stubborn and anyway the thing is he said that he'd stumbled across a few things that he just wanted to um –

Well, flag up to me, I suppose.

Pause.

Obviously you do all that wonderful work for those children.
And obviously you're opposed to the government that –
That inflicts such unutterable misery.
Which is completely understandable.

Pause.

But he just mentioned a few things to me about well –
Oh dear.

Methods.

Particular methods.

Pause.

Violence.

Pause.

Bombs.

Pause.

And I said –

I said, that can't possibly be true.

This is a reputable charity!

I trust them.

I inherently trust them and deeply believe in everything they do.

Pause.

But he said that perhaps I should just double-check.

Where it is the money –

My money –

Actually, well, goes.

NIA *slowly finishes shining a glass.*

You would like to see our accounts?

Pause.

Very well.

Of course.

CANDACE Perhaps I could get Miles round and all three of us could...

I don't know!

Stop his silly flapping!

NIA I can bring them round next time, if you wish.

If you'd like to check.

NIA *starts putting on her coat.*

CANDACE Oh dear.

You see, now I feel like a policeman.

NIA

It's perfectly understandable.

You have been generous.

Extremely generous.

You want to know precisely where it is that your money goes.

CANDACE Well he's always been a bit paranoid to be honest.

Used to drive Evelyn utterly bananas.

He was swindled by Lloyds so his antenna is rather 'up' when it comes to anything financial.

NIA

It's no trouble.

I'll gather the relevant information and we can go through it together.

If that is what you need.

I am happy to reassure you.

CANDACE Oh dear I don't need reassurance.

It's just Miles.

It's honestly just –

NIA I'll call this week.

Pause.

CANDACE I –

I haven't offended you, have I?

NIA Not in the slightest.

CANDACE I do hope I haven't.

NIA

But I need to be sure I have a commitment from you.

For Suli's sake.

CANDACE I'm, I'm committed.

I promise.

NIA

Because abandonment at this stage would be very –

Damaging.

And if abandonment is a possibility then I need to rethink my position, with regards our relationship.

CANDACE

You don't need to.

Honestly.

I'm –

I would never abandon Suli.

Pause.

NIA

Thank you for a very successful evening.
I'll see myself out.

CANDACE

Wait!

Pause.

I just don't want to be out of my depth.

NIA

That's entirely up to you.
Goodbye.

10

A *picks up a microphone.*

B *has a video camera.*

YASMIN – *tired, dirty, sleep-deprived – watches them.*

A

So, it's tense on the streets today as you can probably see.

People aren't quite sure where's safe and where isn't and there's quite a bit of confusion and general uneasiness.

We've been hearing heavy gunfire and there's been lots of shouting and there are reports that there have been some, uh, possibly some fatalities but I should emphasise that these are, at present, unconfirmed.

B *gets a phone call.*

B

Yeah?

A

The protesters are grimly clinging on, as you can see.

But I've spoken to several who say that they're beginning to lose faith even as their anger mounts. The government's response is characteristically heavy-handed and, even in moments of calm like this, there's a sense that violence won't be far behind –

B

OK.

Shit.

Sorry, we have to move on.

A

What?

B

I don't know.

They're just saying we have to go back to the hotel.

A

Fuck.

B

We've got to pack up and get out of here.

YASMIN

BBC?

- A Great.
First they cut short our trip and now they're dictating to us when we can and can't film.
- YASMIN Excuse me?
BBC.
- A *A glances at YASMIN.*
Can you...?
I don't understand what she's -
Can we get her out of the way?
- YASMIN Yes?
BBC?
- B Uh...
- A Just tell her we're BBC if it'll make her happy.
- B (To YASMIN.) Yes.
Yes, BBC!
- YASMIN *YASMIN waves the picture excitedly.*
Uh-hh...?
You, um...?
- B *She waves the picture.*
Some woman with a scar...
- YASMIN *points to the camera.*
She points to her mouth.
We could give her a few minutes.
Sort of a human-interest thing.
- A No offence but she's not really the angle we're going for.
- B (To YASMIN.) Um, you want to - ?
On the - ?
- YASMIN *nods.*
- A What are you doing?

- B You know, I'm just concerned we're not getting that well-rounded a picture.
We just keep talking to college kids with good haircuts and expensive shoes.
- A You're the one who just said we had to leave!
- B (To YASMIN.) OK, I'm going to point this at you and -
- B *B trains the camera on YASMIN's face.*
YASMIN *holds out the picture.*
She delivers the following speech - the first few lines are spoken backwards to give the impression that YASMIN is speaking a foreign language. The actor can deliver the whole speech backwards if she likes, otherwise the rest can be spoken as it is written.
- YASMIN
Esaelp.
I dlouw ekil enoyreve ot wonk taht siht si ym rehtom, dna taht ehs si gnissim.
I tnevah nees reh, ro draeh morf reh, ni rouf syad.
Please.
I would like everyone to know that this is my mother, and that she is missing.
I haven't seen her, or heard from her, in four days.
Her name's Marion, she's fifty-five and she's got this scar, here, as you can see, because a dog bit her a few years ago when she tried to give him some scraps.
I'm not sure who's watching this and what good it does me saying all this and I'm not a very articulate person anyway but I suppose I'm just hoping that the more people see this, the more chance there is that I'll -
That I'll find her.
Soon, I hope.
- A In case you'd forgotten, our translator got arrested.

YASMIN

And also to say that if she's watching this then I'd be really grateful if she could call me or, or find some way of getting in touch with me. I'm sure she wants to but obviously something very unusual has happened and I... There's a lot of... it's a very unpredictable time, it feels like quite a violent time and I would hate for her to...

They watch her in incomprehension.

A

(To B.) Stop filming.
I said stop filming.

B

She's still speaking.

A

It's OK.

We won't tell her we've stopped.
She can get it out of her system.

B hesitates, then stops filming – but keeps the camera trained on YASMIN's face.

YASMIN

Please tell everyone. I know I'm not the only person this is happening to but... I know I'm just a tiny person in the middle of something huge but –

A

OK.

OK, THANK YOU!

That's great.

REALLY great.

YASMIN recognises the finality of her/his tone.

She lowers the picture.

Nods.

YASMIN

Everyone.

She gestures – 'the whole world'.

Everywhere.

A

Yep.

Yep, absolutely.

YASMIN

Thank you.

A

Don't mention it.

YASMIN

Thank you.
Thank you.

11

LEYLA and ALI's apartment.

LEYLA, alone.

She sits very still.

ALI enters.

ALI

There's no bread anywhere.
I could only get these cracker things and I had to walk about three miles –

He notices LEYLA.

Leyla?

You alright?

Pause.

Leyla?

LEYLA You said you didn't know her.

ALI

What?

LEYLA

The girl.

Pause.

'Never seen her before in my life.'
That's what you said.

Silence.

ALI

OK.

OK I knew her a little bit.

LEYLA Yes.
 ALI Hardly at all.
 LEYLA Right.
 ALI We did classes in the same building and I –
 I saw her a few times.
 LEYLA Saw her.
 ALI Yes.
 LEYLA Right.
 ALI OK we spoke a few times.
 LEYLA Yes.
 ALI Which isn't a crime!
 Is, is speaking to another girl a crime?
 LEYLA Not as far as I know.
 No.
 Pause.
 ALI The only reason I didn't tell you is –
 Is cos I didn't want you to get the wrong idea.
 LEYLA OK.
 ALI Because there isn't anything.
 There's nothing!
 Honestly Leyla there's –
 LEYLA I went on your computer.
 ALI Um.
 What?
 LEYLA Yes.
 ALI Why –
 Why would you go on my computer?
 LEYLA A whole folder.
 ALI You can't just –
 Hack into someone's computer, that's –
 LEYLA A whole folder devoted to her.

ALI No.
 Hang on.
 Hang on let's just think about who's got the moral
 high ground here.
 LEYLA Your new muse.
 ALI If you want to know something, Leyla, you should
 just confront me.
 You shouldn't go rooting around in someone's
 personal –
 LEYLA It wasn't me.
 ALI What?
 LEYLA It was the men.
 ALI What men?
 LEYLA The men who were here earlier.
 Pause.
 The men who did this to the apartment.
 ALI *looks around and realises the flat is in
 disarray.*
 Pause.
 They found your computer and they opened it and
 it took them about five seconds.
 Pause.
 They said, you're very beautiful.
 No wonder your boyfriend has all these pictures
 and films of you.
 Pause.
 I said, that's not me.
 That's the girl who's nearly dead in hospital.
 The girl you shot.
 They smiled.
 Pause.

They said, you're an actress, right?
A porn actress.

Pause.

And your boyfriend.
He makes porn films.

Pause.

They said, why would you make this film?

Pause.

This film, where you writhe so provocatively and
reveal your underwear to the world.

Pause.

They said, obviously you made this film to
discredit us.

Pause.

They said, why don't you go on television, tell
everyone it was just an illusion.
Just a story.

Pause.

Because there is no girl, lying in a hospital bed,
with a tube coming out of her nose.
She doesn't exist.
Does she?

Pause.

Then one of them put his truncheon under my skirt
and lifted it.

Pause.

So I said, no she doesn't.

Pause.

You're right.
It was me.

Me and my boyfriend made the film together.

Pause.

That was very silly and very rash, they said.
I agreed with them.

Pause.

But we're prepared to be lenient, they said.
The one with the truncheon pushed it up a little
further.

Pause.

Because you're going to do a statement, aren't
you?

You and your boyfriend.

That's what you're going to do.

Pause.

I agreed with them.

Pause.

No one got shot, did they?

I agreed with them.

And you're going to tell everyone?

I agreed with them.

And you're going to kiss this nice man now,
aren't you?

I agreed with them.

Silence.

After a while ALI puts his head in his hands.

We're expected at the Broadcasting Centre
tomorrow at nine.

She starts to leave.

Where are you going?

For a walk.

Pause.

I'll be back in half an hour.

An hour.

I don't know.

ALI

LEYLA

ALI

Leyla –

She's gone.

#12

*The hospital waiting room.**The sound of wailing.**A is sitting in front of a computer.**YASMIN – even more sleep-deprived, hot and sweaty – has just given A the photo.*

A

What is this?

YASMIN

It's my mum.

A

Yes?

YASMIN

I need to find out if she's here.

A

Right.
Name?

YASMIN

Her name or my – ?

A

Her name.

YASMIN

Marion –

A

CAN SOMEONE TELL ME WHY THIS
SCREEN KEEPS FREEZING?*C enters with a tray of implements and pushes past YASMIN.*

C

Excuse me.
Out the way!

YASMIN

Sorry –

C

No, not in there!
STRICTLY prohibited.

YASMIN

OK I'm sorry.

C

For goodness' sake.
Be careful.

A

I can't do my job if even the simplest technology
is going to fail me EVERY time.

C exits.

YASMIN

(To A.) Is it true what they're saying?
About all those people?

Under those –

Those big government cars?

Their faces all...

Is that really true?

A's phone rings.

A

(Into phone.) Yes?

A sighs.

Just a moment.

Yes I said just a moment.

A taps into the computer.

YASMIN

Can you tell that caller to wait?

A

(Into phone.) I tried to explain to you before,
madam.

He was taken to the morgue this morning.

Yes, that's what I said.

A holds the phone away from her/his ear.

YASMIN

I was in the middle of talking to you.
We'd started a conversation.

A

(Into phone.) All I have is the information in the
computer in front of me.

I need to ask you to keep calm.

I know.

I know and I'm sorry –

YASMIN

I'm at the front of the queue.
It's my turn.

A (To YASMIN.) Do you think you're the only person here?

YASMIN

You can't just –
Act as if it isn't my turn.

A Do you think you're the only person with a missing mother?
Or a missing eye or a missing arm?
Do you think you're more important?

YASMIN

I've been waiting since this morning.
Hours and hours and hours.

A People come in here with their fingers in plastic bags.
Did you know that?

YASMIN

I'll chop mine off if that's what it takes.

She seizes a pair of scissors from a tray and holds them up.

If that's what's required, then that's what I'll do.
I'm so sick of people telling me to get out the way
or to wait my turn or, or, or to take a balloon.
Cos unless that balloon has a tiny mini-version of
my mum inside it I'm not interested, OK?

A

OK.
Security?

B approaches YASMIN.

B has a cloth clamped to her/his head.

B

Are you a nurse?

YASMIN

No.

B

Now listen.

I think I've been shot.

I think there's a bullet and I think it's in my head.
I'm scared that if I take this cloth off my head that
it will all just –
Flop open.

YASMIN

Can someone – ?

I think this man needs some help?

B

Like my head is in segments like an orange and
this cloth is the only thing keeping the segments
together.

A

I need you to take a seat over there, sir.
SIR.

B starts to unwrap the bandage.

B

Could you just give it a glance and tell me how
bad it is?

A

And can someone get that woman OUT of here?

C enters carrying bedding.

YASMIN pushes past B.

B

Hey, where do you think you're going?

YASMIN intercepts C.

YASMIN

Hi.

Hello.

YASMIN bars her way.

C

Excuse me.

YASMIN

Nope.

Not moving.

C

Can someone get this woman out of my way?

YASMIN

Listen to me.

I'm very tired.

I'm very dizzy cos I haven't eaten for two days
straight.

C

Alright.

Let's just calm down –

YASMIN

I've been to every hospital in the city.

I've waited in lines.

I've fallen asleep in waiting-room chairs.

I've got blisters all over my feet and my shoes are full of blood.

C I'll be able to help you in five minutes –

YASMIN

No.

Not five minutes.

Now.

C You're going to have to be a little bit patient.

YASMIN

No.

C Just let me change this bedding and I'll be with you in five –

YASMIN

No I can't let you.

I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't...

She runs out of words.

She stumbles.

C catches her.

Please.

Look at it.

Look at her.

Please.

Slowly C takes the piece of paper and studies it.

C Who is this, love?

YASMIN

My mother.

Her name's Marion.

Pause.

It's the thought that she might think I'm not looking for her.

That I don't care.

That's what's killing me.

Pause.

C I... I think I might have...

YASMIN You... you actually recognise her?

YASMIN throws her arms around C.

After a while you start to think you're going mad or something!

C allows him/herself to be hugged for a moment then gently disentangles from YASMIN.

Why are you looking at me like that?

Pause.

C You might want to try the coroner's office.

YASMIN Who?

C The coroner, sweetheart.

YASMIN What do you mean the coroner?

C I'm –

I'm sorry, love.

YASMIN Why are you sorry?

What do you mean?

B approaches YASMIN again and tugs at her arm.

B How bad is it?

Please can you tell me?

C *(To YASMIN.)* I'm sorry.

I've got to get on.

C moves away from YASMIN.

B TELL me.

YASMIN There's nothing there, you stupid idiot.

B I –

I've been shot!

YASMIN No you haven't.

B I can feel it in there!

- A Sir!
I really need to ask you to sit down and wait your turn.
- B You're a disgrace to your profession.
Call yourself a nurse?
You can't even be bothered to brush your hair?!
WHORE.
- YASMIN exits.

13

CANDACE, alone, late at night.
She is drinking a solitary glass of wine.
Listening to the World Service.
Her phone rings – an unknown number.
She tuts and lets it ring out.
A few moments later it starts ringing again.
She tuts again and picks it up.

CANDACE Yes?

Silence.

Well if you're not going to say anything then I'm going to hang up.
Goodbye.

A strange sound can be heard, tinnily, from the phone.

A sort of gasping and sighing.

It could possibly be sexual.

CANDACE shifts uncomfortably.

The noise resolves itself into the sound of someone in intense pain.

They are screaming and begging in a language CANDACE can't understand.

She drops the phone hastily.

The sound continues.

She stares at the phone.

Eventually and abruptly it goes dead.

CANDACE continues to stare at her phone.

Gingerly she picks it up.

She is about to switch it off when it rings again.

She answers it.

What you just heard, Candace.

Is happening now.

Right now.

He is a young man.

Only twenty.

He has dark-brown hair and a gap between his front teeth.

Pause.

His fingernails are being slowly removed.

When they have finished with his fingernails they will begin on his fingers.

They will remove them, one by one, knuckle by knuckle, with a jagged knife.

It will take a long time, and it will be very painful.

Pause.

CANDACE Why –

Why are you telling me this?

Pause.

Because this is happening.

It is happening.

NIA

CANDACE I don't know what to –

What do you want me to – ?

NIA

You must know how grateful we are, Candace.
You are such a good friend to us.
To Suli.

Pause.

Friends don't judge one another.

Friends don't leave any room for doubt.

Friends don't tiptoe away when things get messy,
or frightening –

CANDACE But I –

I haven't tiptoed away.

I promise –

NIA

There is still so much that has to happen, Candace.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA

And I have to be sure that you're aware of that.

CANDACE But I am.

All those poor children –

NIA

It isn't just children, Candace.

CANDACE No.

NIA

It's a whole, a whole *nation*.
A whole nation suffering.
A whole nation persecuted.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA

It needs to be completely ripped up.
It needs to start again.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA

And when you rip something up –
It might not always be –
Palatable.

CANDACE No.

NIA

It can't always be a girl in a yellow dress.
A girl who does nothing but rather, something *is*
done to her.
Do you think there would even be a video,
Candace, if she wasn't so completely passive?

CANDACE I, I don't know –

NIA

If she was dressed all in black, with teeth missing,
holding a Kalashnikov?
Would there have been a video then?
What if she was holding up a nail bomb and
spitting?
Her hair falling out in clumps, her skin
pockmarked?
What if there was blood and scalp and flesh
beneath her nails?
Actual human flesh.

CANDACE I don't know –

NIA

Would he have trained his camera on her then?
Or would he just have turned and run.
And never looked back?

Pause.

Sometimes it can't be peaceful.

Because we don't feel peaceful.

Sometimes we want to turn on the man who has
systematically beaten and abused us.

We want to put explosives in the kitchens of the
restaurants he dines in, in the urinals he pisses into.

We want to rip him to pieces.

We want to leave him disfigured and maimed on
the courtroom floor.

Because doesn't he deserve it?

Wouldn't you like to do that?

To your husband?

CANDACE I don't know.

NIA

What I'm trying to make clear to you, Candace, is
that we don't have a choice.

We are compelled to do this.
It is inevitable.

CANDACE Yes.

NIA I just need to be sure that you fully and completely understand that.
Because this is so important.
It is so —
Enormous.

CANDACE I know.

Pause.

What can I do?

Pause.

Tell me.
Please.

What can I do?

Silence.

NIA *is trying to compose herself.*

Nia.

Are you alright?

Pause.

NIA Sometimes...
It feels hopeless.

CANDACE *Is isn't hopeless!*
It isn't!

NIA Sometimes it feels as if I am achieving nothing.
That I am just...
Alone.
Futile.
Exiled.
Pause.

Sometimes that makes me feel very small.

CANDACE You're not alone.
You're not.

NIA Perhaps.

CANDACE Look.

Come over tomorrow.
We can talk properly then.
I'm sorry about all that stupid stuff before.
It's just bloody Miles and his...

NIA I should let you go to sleep.

CANDACE Oh I never go to bed this early.

NIA It's after midnight.

CANDACE You're still up.

NIA Yes.

That's true.

Pause.

What were you doing?
Before I called.

CANDACE I was drinking a glass of red wine.
Just a cheapie one from M&S.
And I was reading.

NIA What were you reading?

CANDACE One of my old favourites.
The Portrait of a Lady.

Lots of people find this one tricky.

NIA I love Henry James...

CANDACE Yes, I do too...

Pause.

What...

What will happen?

To the young man?

Silence.

NIA

Goodnight.

CANDACE

I feel so –
 Hemmed in sometimes.
 Because I'm just an old woman.
 That's all I am.

NIA

No.
 You're not just an old woman.

CANDACE

I'm expected to act in a certain way.
 Speak in a certain way.
 I'm expected to say – of course!
 Of course you must run along and be with her and
 the two young girls you've been secretly
 supplying with sweets and potties and picture
 books for the last four years without my
 knowledge.
 Of course!
 Of course it is perfectly natural that you would fail
 to find me anything other than entirely repulsive
 now that I'm so faded and fat and completely
 invisible!
 Of course you would want to be with that young,
 lovely, *young* woman with her thick dark hair
 and her swan's neck and her elastic cunt!

NIA

I'm sorry.

CANDACE

Oh that felt good!

NIA

Yes.

CANDACE

You see sometimes I feel so completely stifled
 by –
 By politeness.

NIA

Yes.

CANDACE

I feel very angry quite a lot of the time.

NIA

I know.

CANDACE

I am quite often uncomfortably furious.

NIA

Yes.

CANDACE

When Evelyn died, do you know?
 I had fantasies about running people over in my car.
 Really crunching over their bones.

NIA

Do you still want to do that?

CANDACE

Oh no.
 Well sometimes.
 On bad days.

Pause.

I've been asking myself.
 Could I do something dreadful?
 If it mattered enough?

NIA

Well.
 It would depend how much it mattered.

CANDACE

Could I blow things up?
 Things and people?

Pause.

The things that have happened to you.
 If it had happened to me...

Pause.

I might be capable.

Pause.

NIA

Goodnight, Candace.

CANDACE

Goodnight, Nia.
 Sweet dreams.

14

YASMIN and A are waiting for a bus.

It's taking a long time.

A has a shopping bag and is eating something from a paper bag.

YASMIN watches A.

A notices her gaze and smiles at her.

A Do you want one?

Pause.

YASMIN shakes her head.

Go on.

I've had enough anyway.

I'm on a diet, supposedly.

A hands YASMIN the paper bag.

YASMIN holds it but doesn't eat.

I'm starting to think this bus will never come.

YASMIN

Yes.

A My daughter will be worrying.
She's a worrier.

YASMIN

Yes.

Pause.

A Don't you want any of those?

Pause.

Well.

You save them for later.

Pause.

Have you got somewhere to go?
Love?

Are you alright?

You'd tell me if you didn't have anywhere to go, wouldn't you?

Pause.

Don't be nice to me.

What –

Cos if you start being nice I'll just... Please.

YASMIN hands back the paper bag.

I need money.

Sorry?

Sorry it's just –
I have to ask you for money.

Um.

I need as much as you have.
Everything in your wallet.

Um.

And your phone.

Well wait a –
Wait a minute.

Sorry and I really don't want to have to do this but –

She shows A that she has scissors.

I'm sorry.

But if you could give me your phone and, and all your money that would be –
That would be very helpful.

I'm really sorry.

Pause.

I don't want to have to do anything to you but if you don't give me what I ask for then I will, I will have to...
I will have to hurt you.

Slowly A hands over her/his phone, and a few notes.

YASMIN is still holding the scissors.

Is that everything?

A I'm, I'm sorry.

This is everything –

YASMIN That's all you've got?

A I've been shopping so –
I'm sorry.

YASMIN looks at the money in her hand.

YASMIN I'm not really this kind of person.

A OK.

YASMIN You see I'm in this queue, for information.
And they told me that if I had money they'd
accelerate my request.

A OK.

YASMIN And you do anything, don't you?
When it matters?

A Yes.

Pause.

YASMIN I hope the bus comes soon.
You've been waiting so long...
I'm, I'm really sorry.

They look at each other.

YASMIN exits.

15

ALI, talking into a camera.

He has rope around his ankles.

A, B and C, all now in yellow dresses, watch him.

ALI I would like to –
Publicly –
Admit to my –
My deceit.

Pause.

The video of the girl in the yellow dress.

The girl who appeared to be shot and then bleed,
copiously.

Pause.

That video was in fact fabricated –

By me.

I am a...

Pause.

I am a film director.

I am a film director who also makes –
Porn films.

Pause.

My girlfriend...

Is an actress.

A...

A prostitute and, and a porn star.

Pause.

We concocted the film together.

In order to discredit and humiliate the
government.

Because we are traitors and –
And perverts.

Pause.

No one was shot that day.

No one is lying in a hospital bed with a tube in their nose and a drip in their wrist.

Pause.

That is fiction.

Pause.

A fiction of our own making that we now –

Pause.

Bitterly regret.

Pause.

He removes his microphone from his shirt.

No.

I'm not doing this.

He starts to walk away from them.

A, B and C look at each other.

They shrug.

They pull on the ropes so he can't leave.

OK.

Very funny.

He tries again to leave but he can't.

So it's starting, is it?

Fine.

What's first?

C pops one of the yellow balloons.

OK.

OK I get it.

C pops another yellow balloon.

You can get on with...

With whatever you're going to get on with just as soon as you tell me where she is –

C pops another balloon.

She had nothing to do with it.

I need you to understand that.

Can you just –

Nod, or say something, to tell me that you understand that?

Nothing.

Is she next door?

Down the corridor?

Leyla?

LEYLA?

They pull on the ropes again.

He falls to his knees.

C pins the microphone back onto his shirt.

Smiles in a businesslike manner.

Points to the camera.

Smiles.

No.

I can't.

C nods to B.

B hands C a mobile phone.

C shows ALI the mobile phone.

He reacts violently.

He struggles to stand up.

They pull on the ropes.

He falls to the ground.

They make him look at the mobile phone.

He screws his eyes tightly shut.

They force his eyelids open.

He gasps.

Silence.

That –
 That could be anyone.
Silence.
 It's just...
 It's just images...
 How do I know you haven't –
He reacts to something on the phone.
He starts to weep.
C points to the camera.
Nods.
Taps the microphone on ALI's shirt.
Wearily ALI stands.
They help him.
Pat his arms and smooth down his hair.
 I would like.
 To publicly admit to my deceit –

16

YASMIN has a mobile phone.
She dials a number.
Waits.
The line goes dead.
She breathes deeply then dials the number again.
A enters with a large bag.
She/he is still for a moment and then begins to unpack what is inside – pieces of cardboard and tape.
A lays it out on the ground and looks at it.

YASMIN watches A as she waits.
Finally somebody answers.
 YASMIN Hello?
 I need to ask if there's been a registration of someone.
 A, a woman.
 Someone gave me your number, I paid him and –
Pause.
 Wait please don't –
The line goes dead.
 Hello?
 Nothing.
YASMIN slowly lowers the phone.
C and B enter.
They watch A unfolding the cardboard.
B and C look at each other.
 A *(Handing them cardboard.) Here.*
Silence.
 B What's that for?
 A It helps.
 If they, you know...
 A *mimes a soldier with a truncheon.*
 B How do I – ?
 A I'll help you.
 A *starts taping cardboard to B's arms and legs.*
 C *watches.*
 YASMIN *dials a number again.*
 C My sister she –
 She's got this bump on her head.
Pause.

We think she got hit with something, something heavy, but she's not awake long enough to – She just keeps sleeping.

I mean she wakes up for a bit and then, boom, she's asleep again. My mum is...

Pause.

She stood in front of the door, like a barricade, and she –

She kind of begged me.

Not to go.

Pause.

She said, I don't know if it's worth it.

If I'm going to lose both of you.

(Into phone.) I think we just got cut off.

Yes, I told you, I paid.

I just need to know if she's been registered as – Yes, I paid.

YASMIN *holds.*

C I told her it is worth it.

It is.

It has to be.

Right?

A If you don't want to come it's alright.

C Because it's working, isn't it?

It's really working!

A You should think of your mother.

We understand.

Don't we?

B *shrugs.*

C I wasn't frightened yesterday.

YASMIN Hello?

Yes her name's Marion.

She's fifty-five and she has a scar on her –

No please don't put me on hold again –

B *(Holding out cardboard.)* Here. Come on.

YASMIN *(Into phone.)* Yes. Yes I'm still here.

C I just wish –

I just wish she'd stop falling asleep.

YASMIN N– No. That can't be right.

B Are you coming or aren't you?

YASMIN Can you check again? Please.

C Yeah of course I am.

YASMIN Check again.

Check again.

She reacts to something she hears.

She lets the phone fall out of her hands, squeezes her eyes tightly shut.

Stands there.

C starts wrapping yellow ribbon around her/his wrist.

YASMIN looks at A, B and C.

She looks at the ribbon they are winding around their wrists.

B becomes aware of her gaze.

B Hello.

Pause.

Do you want one?

YASMIN nods.

Let me tie it on for you. Here.

YASMIN I can manage.

Pause.

YASMIN *looks at the ribbon for a long time.*

B It's easy to forget isn't it?

Pause.

I mean, that scrap of cloth...

It could mean anything.

Pause.

But I feel like I know her.

YASMIN You don't know her.

B What?

YASMIN You don't know her.

Pause.

YASMIN *digs in her pocket, finds something.*

She waits for a moments, then holds it up – it's a lighter.

She sets fire to the edge of the cloth.

B Wait, what –

What are you doing?

YASMIN *watches it burn.*

Stop that!

YASMIN *holds the burning ribbon up high.*

A What the – ?

C Oh my God she isn't – ?

A She is.

She IS.

C No – ?

B How could you – ?

What?

A Who *are* you?

C My God.

B I don't understand.

How could someone, how could anyone – ?

A How dare you?

C Stop it.

STOP it.

A People are dying.

Do you understand?

C Make her stop!

A *She's* dying, do you get it?

That girl is dying and this is the thanks you give her?

C Wait.

Give me your phone.

B Huh?

C People need to see this.

B I don't know if that's –

C Just give it to me.

C *snatches B's phone.*

Starts filming YASMIN.

A Are you one of *them*?

Are you?

OK.

OK I'm filming.

B Don't.

A It's people like you that are holding back this fucking country, do you understand me?

B Just let her go.

A I don't understand you fucking people.
Seriously.

Why are you so afraid of progress?

B It's not her fault.

C Don't you WANT choices?

A Why do we fucking bother?

C Say something.

Why don't you SAY something?

A It might as well have been you.
You with the gun.

You that aimed it at her.

You that pulled the trigger.
You.

B What are you doing?

A Get hold of her, can you?

YASMIN Get off me.

YASMIN *lashes out.*

A You disgusting, foul, pungent piece of SHIT.

C Now hold her down.

A That's it.

C Got her?

A We've got her.

YASMIN *fight back with all her strength.*

It's a piece of cloth.

Do you hear me?

It's a piece of yellow cloth.

C And now we SPIT on her.

They spit on her.

The sound of a huge explosion.

Everyone scatters, leaving YASMIN alone on the ground.

She touches her face, which is covered in blood.

She curls up and waits.

17

CANDACE *with A and B.*

Outside a school.

CANDACE That's right, girls.

You're coming with me today.

A OK!

B No we aren't.

CANDACE Didn't Daddy tell you?

B No.

A D'you have any crisps?

CANDACE Yes I've got LOTS of crisps actually.

B But Daddy didn't tell us.

CANDACE Tsk, SILLY Daddy!

Now, come along, that's it.

A Silly Daddy!

CANDACE Your poor mummy's not feeling very well so she's gone to stay with a friend for a few days.

B How many days?

CANDACE Oh just a few.

B Has she got cancer?

CANDACE Of course not!

She's got a little snuffle that's all.

- A I had a sniffle at the weekend.
- CANDACE Now I've got salt and vinegar AND I've got bacon!
But chop-chop!
- A Salt and vinegar, salt and vinegar,
SALT AND VINEGAR!!!!
- B *B puts her/his hands over her/his ears.*
- B Zoe, DON'T do that!
- CANDACE Now are you going to share with your sister?
- A NO!
- B We've only met you once.
You kept crying.
- CANDACE What did you do at school today?
Was it exciting?
- B No.
It was school.
- A I did icebergs with Barnaby!
- CANDACE Icebergs!
My word.
- B Why would school ever be exciting?
- A The *Titanic* hit an iceberg.
- CANDACE Yes it did.
It certainly did.
That's very clever.
- B You're walking too fast.
- A Lots of people drowned in the sea.
Tiffany CRIED about it!
- CANDACE Oh dear, poor Tiffany!
- B . You don't know who Tiffany is!
- A You're much older than our mummy.
How old are you?

- CANDACE Ooh now that's a bit of a cheeky question!
- A Are you seventy?
- CANDACE No.
- A Our mummy is the prettiest mummy in my class!
- CANDACE Now, just a bit further, and we can hop into my car
and be off.
- B Are you a good driver?
- CANDACE I'm an excellent driver.
- B But you wear glasses.
- A I want glasses!
I want glasses and braces and I want to be a bit fat
too!
- B She watched a cartoon where the main character
was fat and had glasses and braces and now she's
obsessed with it.
- CANDACE How refreshing.
- A Do you have any children?
- B She doesn't.
I remember.
- CANDACE That's true.
I don't have any children of my own.
- A But all ladies have children!
- CANDACE There's a little boy called Suli who's going to
come and live with me soon.
- B Suli?
- CANDACE In fact I'm going to invite lots and lots of children
to come and live with me.
- A How many?
- CANDACE I don't know.
But lots.

A I WANT TO COME!

CANDACE Their country's in the middle of a sort of civil war at the moment, you see.

B How far's your car?

CANDACE Oh nearly there!

B Mummy normally drives it right up to the school gates.

CANDACE But the goodies might be starting to win, you see!

A Are there baddies?

CANDACE Yes.

But a lot of them got blown up.

B BLOWN UP??

CANDACE Did I say that?

A Did they get blown up into bits of tiny pieces?

CANDACE I mean they got sent to sit on the naughty step.

B We're not *babies*.

The naughty step is SO STUPID.

A Can I have the bacon crisps now?

CANDACE Alright.

Here we are!

Now come along.

B Your car's very dirty.

You should have it professionally cleaned.

CANDACE We can go through a car wash on the way if you like?

They're always lots of fun!

B Where are we actually going?

A I want to sit in the front.

CANDACE Uh-hh.

Yes you can sit in the front if you like.

B Um, that is NOT allowed.

A SHUDDUP!

CANDACE Oh gosh.

You'd probably better go in the back actually.

A BUT YOU SAID I COULD GO IN THE FRONT.

CANDACE Well that was a mistake.

I shouldn't have said that.

Of course children shouldn't go in the front.

B Everyone knows that.

CANDACE So can you please both just –

Hop in, please.

Quickly!

A NO.

B Oh dear.

She's going to have a tantrum.

CANDACE Now look.

Little girls are NOT allowed to sit in the front,

Zoe!

Alright?

A But you S-A-I-D.

CANDACE It was just a joke!

B I could have told you this was going to happen.

A I want my –

I want my M-U-U-UH-M-Y-Y.

CANDACE Zoe!

Stop this nonsense and GET in the car.

A NoooooOOOO.

B She won't move now.

Look, she's gone rigid.

A I want my MUMMY.

B I'll get in if that helps.

Shall I?

Would that help?

CANDACE *grabs A by the wrist and tries to manhandle her/him into the car.*

A No!

B You're hurting her!

CANDACE She's FINE.

A *screams.*

B *starts to cry.*

I've had just about enough of this.
Just get in the car.

A and B *sniff.*

GET in the car.

They refuse to move.

CANDACE *looks at them.*

They continue sniffing.

Something in her sags.

You're right.

I'm actually going to –

I'm actually going to take both of you back to the playground OK?

B You are?

CANDACE Yes.

You see, I forgot.

B What did you forget?

CANDACE I made a silly mistake.

B A mistake – ?

CANDACE Your mummy's feeling much better and I, I, I got my days a bit muddled up so –

A Mummy?

CANDACE So hold my hand and we'll just –

A MUMMY!!!

CANDACE *freezes.*

She can't move for a moment then –

She runs.

18

The GIRL is in a hospital bed.

YASMIN, *bruised and battered, sits in the chair beside her.*

The GIRL stirs.

She opens her eyes.

GIRL Oh.

Hello.

YASMIN Hi.

GIRL You're not a nurse.

YASMIN No.

Sorry.

GIRL Do I know you?

YASMIN I'm in the ward opposite I just –
I shouldn't be here, I'll go –

GIRL It's OK.

Stay.

Pause.

The GIRL licks her lips.

Got any lip stuff?

YASMIN Um.

There's some here.

Want me to – ?

GIRL Thanks.
 YASMIN *puts lip balm on her lips.*
Pause.
 What's all this?
She shakes her wrist.
 There's medicine in there, I guess.
 GIRL Right.
 Would explain why I feel a bit –
 Wooo!
 YASMIN Yes.
 Bit cumbersome though.
 YASMIN Yeah.
 GIRL Oh well.
Pause.
 What happened to you?
 YASMIN I had an accident.
 GIRL Looks painful.
 YASMIN Yeah it is a bit.
 GIRL We're in the wars.
 YASMIN Yes.
 GIRL We should be a bit more careful.
 YASMIN Yes.
 GIRL A boy hasn't been in here has he?
 YASMIN No...?
 GIRL No.
 Hey ho.
Pause.
 You know, I just wandered out.

YASMIN Sorry?
 GIRL The day I got...
 YASMIN Oh.
 GIRL I was curious.
 I wanted to see what all the fuss was about.
Pause.
 Some of my friends, they were all wrapped up in it.
 They said, this is our chance!
 They said, everyone needs to take to the streets
 and fight for change!
 They were so –
 They were lit up by it:
 I felt envious of all that –
 Conviction.
Pause.
 But I also felt like they were –
 Acting?
 Like I didn't quite believe their passion.
 Does that make sense?
Pause.
 Did lots of people die?
 YASMIN *nods.*
 Thought so.
 You can hear in the corridors.
 Screaming.
 YASMIN My mum did.
Beat.
 GIRL I'm sorry.
Pause.
 Was she protesting?
Beat.

YASMIN

Yes.

She was.

GIRL

That's so brave.

YASMIN

Yes.

She was very brave.

GIRL

I just –

I just went along to see.

A crowd is starting to gather.

What's that?

YASMIN

What?

GIRL

That noise.

YASMIN

Oh.

Pause.

People outside.

GIRL What are they cheering for?

YASMIN

You actually.

GIRL

Oh.

*Pause.**The GIRL closes her eyes.*

YASMIN spots something under the bed.

*She tugs at it.**It's the yellow dress.**It is cracked and sticky with dried blood.**She studies it.**She pulls the dress over her head.**She goes to the window.**She opens it.**She waves.**The sound of the crowd cheering.**The cheering becomes ecstatic.**The End.*

