

79TH & AMSTERDAM
By Teddy Haddow

Prof. Meehan
CW 288
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CHARACTERS

TESS, 28, frustrated, finding herself

NICKY, 31, nice girl, has an easy life.

BRIANNA, 29, heart of gold.

PLACE:

A bus stop in Manhattan

TIME:

Now

At Rise: **NICKY** is waiting silently at the bus stop, headphones on, when **TESS** comes running in, disheveled. **TESS** looks around, checks the time, and sits down.

TESS

Excuse me? Do you know what time the next bus comes?

NICKY

Hm? Oh, it's in a few minutes.

TESS

The 11 or the 79?

NICKY

The 79.

TESS

Fuck!

(NICKY is startled. TESS senses this.)

TESS

Sorry, I just... I had an appointment. I'm gonna be late, again!

(TESS produces a pamphlet with bus times and reads it.)

TESS

Half an hour. Shit. *(Pause)* So, what're you up to? Hey!

NICKY

Huh? Sorry.

TESS

Oh, no, I'm sorry. Uhm... What're you up to?

NICKY

Well, I'm waiting for the bus.

TESS

Clearly.

NICKY

My girlfriend is coming. We're going to the Zoo.

TESS

That's nice, I love the Zoo. I worked there when I was younger. How long have you and your girlfriend been together?

NICKY

Four years. We've been living together since last April.

TESS

Four years! Wow. You grow up around here?

NICKY

We both did, sorta. I'm from Queens, she's from South Orange.

TESS

Cool, cool. (*Pause*) I used to date a girl from South Orange.

NICKY

Yeah? They're something else.

TESS

I hear that. What's her name?

NICKY

Brianna.

TESS

...Levine?

NICKY

Uhm...

TESS

Brianna Levine is your girlfriend.

NICKY

Yes, uhm, how did you know?

TESS

Well, I said I dated a girl from South Orange... I just guessed.

NICKY

...oh. Oh! *(Pause)* Wow.

TESS

What a day. My caseworker is probably pissed off, and I meet my ex-girlfriend's girlfriend. Rich! Just rich.

(Beat)

NICKY

How did you meet her?

(Beat)

TESS

Sleepaway camp. Like, ten years ago. We were together for almost a year after that.

NICKY

Jesus. What's your name?

TIM

My name's Tess.

NICKY

Oh.

TESS

She's talked about me, hasn't she.

NICKY

A bit.

TESS

In a flattering way?

NICKY

Not at all.

TESS

Right. How is she?

NICKY

She's great. She's working towards her Master's in Psychology. She also runs a Planned Parenthood.

TESS

That's great to hear. She always had trouble in school.

NICKY

What do you think makes it okay to say that about her?

TESS

That she had bad grades?

NICKY

It's mean.

TESS

It's not mean if it's the truth. Besides, it doesn't seem to be the case anymore.

NICKY

She's said some shit about you. Awful shit.

TESS

Can't say I blame her.

NICKY

She made you out to be some hedonistic party animal. A legend in school, epic bashes every weekend, hard drugs, hooking up with other people-

TESS

I did not hook up with other people! I just... made out with a few.

(**NICKY** shakes her head.)

NICKY

You're a real jackass.

TESS

I didn't ask to be insulted! I know I was a jackass. It's been ten years since she ended it, and I just wish everyone would drop it. I get teased back home: "Hey Tess, where's Brianna? Where'd she go? Oh that's right, she got sick of you screwing up and dumped you." Even my mom. I'm pushing 30, and she's riding my ass to find someone. Give her some grandkids to spoil the way she never spoiled me. Ours is the longest relationship I've ever had, and I took it for granted. Biggest mistake I ever made. She could've been it, the one, if I thought ahead for more than a week at a time. You're a lucky woman. Never let go of her.

(*Beat.* **NICKY** checks her phone.)

NICKY

She's coming.

TESS

Right now?

(NICKY nods. TESS stands up and paces.)

TESS

Hey, uhm...

NICKY

Yeah?

TESS

Can you tell her... tell her that...

(TESS exits right abruptly. BRIANNA enters left, holding two coffees.)

BRIANNA

Hey nerd!

(They kiss. BRIANNA gives NICKY a coffee.)

BRIANNA

Ready for the Zoo?

NICKY

Yeah, uh, yeah I am.

BRIANNA

Great! *(Notices something is off)* Wait, are you okay? You seem stressed.

NICKY

No, no, I'm good.

BRIANNA

Okay. Who was that girl?

NICKY

What?

BRIANNA

The girl who just left. It looked like the two of you were talking.

NICKY

Oh yeah, she just, missed the bus. Asked me when the next one was.

BRIANNA

I see. That was nice of you.

NICKY

What?

BRIANNA

You told her when the next bus was, right?

NICKY

Yeah, of course. *(Pause)* Brianna?

BRIANNA

Yes, Nicky?

NICKY

...nothing.

BRIANNA

What do you mean, nothing?

NICKY

Don't worry about it.

BRIANNA

You don't just ask that and then say-

NICKY

I said don't worry about it!

(They sit in silence. The sound of a bus arriving is heard.)

END SCENE