

GUIDE ME By Paul Smith

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GUIDE ME

by Paul Smith

CHARACTERS

RICH – casual, smart. 30

CLARA – businesslike, efficient. 32

JACK – trendy, casual. 27

1.30pm – October – overcast

RICH is lying on a sofa in an apartment overlooking the River Thames in London. Docklands. The accommodation has doors leading to the kitchen, bathroom and the front door. It is smart, modern, clean and tidy. Cranes in the distance. Large windows. Curtains open.

A mobile phone is on the floor beside him.

Some music is playing – maybe in another room.

Every so often RICH leans down to the phone to check if there has been a message. Nothing.

As he puts it down again, it rings. RICH answers it.

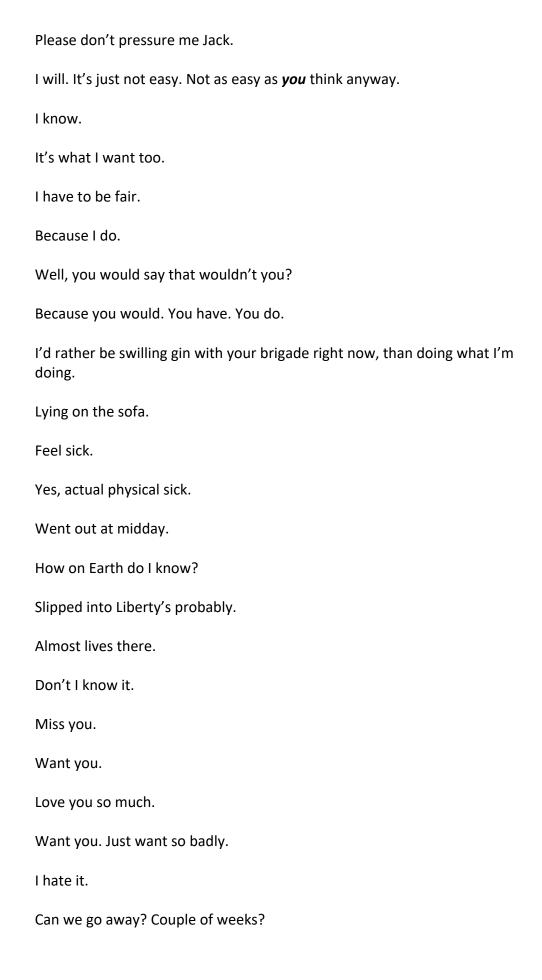
RICH You said you'd call an hour ago

I'm just waiting.

Shopping. Or something.

No, not shopping. Well maybe some. Doctors. Hospital. She's had some pains. Period I think. I don't know.

I told you.



Don't care. Just need to unload. Get rid of. You know. I won't. I promise. No, don't come round. No. I don't need you here for this. She won't. No, please. Don't. Sound of front door opening Hold on. She's back. I'll Call back. Love you. RICH ends the call and gets up. CLARA enters. RICH You were a time. CLARA Yes. RICH Alright? CLARA Not really. RICH Oh. CLARA Coffee. RICH Want me to... CLARA I'll get it. CLARA exits to kitchen.

Who were you on the phone to?

No one.

CLARA

RICH

CLARA Well it must have been someone.

RICH I wasn't.

CLARA Don't lie Rich. I heard you. As I came through the door.

RICH It was no one.

CLARA Ok, well I hope 'No one' enjoys talking to you when you call back.

RICH How did you get on at the doctors?

CLARA I don't want to talk about it.

RICH Ok.

CLARA Maybe I will when you decide that lying isn't worth the breath it takes.

RICH I'm sorry?

CLARA You play musical chairs with the truth on a daily basis, Rich. Not interested in

your inventions.

RICH I was concerned for your health.

CLARA Not enough to stop you wanking yourself off to someone you met on an app I

guess.

RICH What the hell is that supposed to mean?

CLARA It means what it says.

There is a silence – CLARA re-enters the room with coffee.

RICH Do you want a coffee Rich?

CLARA You only needed to ask.

RICH A regular occurrence.

CLARA Now it's my time to ask what the hell is that supposed to mean?

RICH Oh..... Jeez.

CLARA Sometimes you can be a real cunt. Did you know that?

RICH You keep me informed.

CLARA Yes, the only way I know how to is to post my profile on Tinder or the like and

there you are – suddenly engaged. Suddenly you want to talk. Oh, look, Rich has come alive for once and is showing some interest. And then all of a sudden he's swiping left and we're back in the fucking freezer together.

RICH I only asked how you got on at the doctor?

CLARA Interested are we?

RICH Clara...

CLARA Interested enough to want to come up and give me a hug. To touch me even.

Oh that would be a real advance wouldn't it? Human contact is something I thought we dispensed with a year ago – ten days after our wedding. What was it Rich? Was it my lack of originality in bed or was it suddenly your obsession with the bulge you managed to achieve in your fancy pink pants?

What was it eh? What did you see in the mirror that changed?

RICH Look in the mirror and maybe you'll find out.

CLARA Oh, wow, you're good aren't you? You really are. When people assume it's

the female who is the bitch of the earth, they really are just promoting the stereotype aren't they? The male of the species is by far the biggest fucking bitches that exist and you must be the Madam President of that particular coven. Why don't you go back and join your other sisters in stirring your filthy

potions of poison together.

RICH I just want to know how you are.

CLARA Does it matter to you?

RICH Of course it does. Why would you think so little of me to ask that?

CLARA Because you haven't been interested for so long I've almost forgotten what

compassion really is? I mean, come on Rich? Explain it to me? Suddenly after so long of nothing, you're actually shifting the ingredients on the shelves about and you've found compassion. Maybe you can add in a pinch of

concern and a handful of love spices too.

RICH You really are being unfair.

CLARA You peddle your own versions of love

RICH When did I ever lack compassion – look what happened when you're Mum...