



Cambridge IGCSE™

DRAMA

0411/11

Paper 1

October/November 2023

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL



Centres should download this material from the School Support Hub and give it to candidates.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the **two** play extracts provided in this booklet.
- You may do any appropriate preparatory work. It is recommended that you explore both extracts as practical theatre, investigating performance and staging opportunities.
- You will **not** be allowed to take this copy of the material **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.
- A copy of the pre-release material will be provided with the question paper.

This document has **24** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

EXTRACT 1

Taken from *The Winslow Boy* by Terence Rattigan

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Extract 1 is taken from Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy*. It was written in 1946. The play is in four Acts, and the extract is taken from Act One.

The action takes place around 1912. The play is set in the drawing-room of the Winslows house in London. The play follows Arthur Winslow's long, but ultimately successful attempt to establish his son's innocence when he is accused of theft. Rattigan is often seen as a master of the well-made play, with a careful build-up of suspense and a well-crafted ending. Rattigan uses this framework as a vehicle for astute social commentary and an exploration of the emotional lives of well-drawn characters.

Notes

A 'drawing-room' was a room in a house where visitors could be entertained.

CHARACTERS

ARTHUR WINSLOW

GRACE WINSLOW (his wife)

CATHERINE WINSLOW (his daughter)

DICKIE WINSLOW (his elder son)

RONNIE WINSLOW (his younger son)

DESMOND CURRY (the Winslows solicitor)

JOHN WATHERSTONE (gets engaged to Catherine Winslow)

VIOLET (the Winslows housemaid)

The drawing-room of a house in Courtfield Gardens, South Kensington, London, on a morning in July, at some point not long before the war of 1914–1918. The comfortable furnishings are typical of an upper-middle-class house of the period.

VIOLET:	[Announcing] Mr Watherstone.	5
	JOHN WATHERSTONE comes in. <i>He is a man of about thirty, dressed in an extremely well-cut morning coat and striped trousers, an attire which, though excused by church parade, we may well feel has been donned for this occasion.</i>	
ARTHUR:	How are you, John? I'm very glad to see you.	10
JOHN:	How do you do, sir?	
ARTHUR:	Will you forgive me not getting up? My arthritis has been troubling me rather a lot, lately.	
JOHN:	I'm very sorry to hear that, sir. Catherine told me it was better.	
ARTHUR:	It was, for a time. Now it's worse again.	15
	Well, now. I understand you wish to marry my daughter.	
JOHN:	Yes, sir. That's to say, I've proposed to her and she's done me the honour of accepting me.	
ARTHUR:	We'll take the sentimental side of the project for granted. As regards the more practical aspect, perhaps you won't mind if I ask you a few rather personal questions?	20
JOHN:	Naturally not, sir. It's your duty.	
ARTHUR:	Quite so. Now, your income. Are you able to live on it?	
JOHN:	No, sir. I'm in the regular army.	
ARTHUR:	Yes, of course.	25
JOHN:	But my army pay is supplemented by an allowance from my father.	
ARTHUR:	So I understand. Now, your father's would be, I take it, about twenty-four pounds a month.	
JOHN:	Yes, sir, that's exactly right.	
ARTHUR:	So that your total income – with your officer's pay and allowances plus the allowance from your father, would be, I take it, about four hundred and twenty pounds a year?	30
JOHN:	Again, exactly the figure.	
ARTHUR:	Well, well. It all seems perfectly satisfactory. I really don't think I need delay my congratulations any longer. [<i>He extends his hand, which JOHN, gratefully, takes.</i>]	35
JOHN:	Thank you, sir, very much.	
ARTHUR:	I must say, it was very good of you to be so frank and informative.	
JOHN:	Not at all.	
ARTHUR:	Your answers to my questions deserve an equal frankness from me about Catherine's own affairs. I'm afraid she's not – just in case you thought otherwise – the daughter of a rich man.	40
JOHN:	I didn't think otherwise, sir.	
ARTHUR:	Thank you. Well, now, continuing about my own financial affairs. The Westminster Bank pay me a small pension – three hundred and fifty to be precise – and my wife has about two hundred a year of her own. Apart from that we have nothing, except such savings as I've been able to make during my career at the bank. The interest from which raises my total income to about eight hundred pounds per annum.	45
	Now, in addition to the ordinary expenses of life, I have to maintain two sons – one at Osborne, and the other at Oxford – neither of whom, I'm afraid, will be in a position to support themselves for some time to come – one because of his extreme youth and the other because of – er – other reasons.	50

	So, you see, I am not in a position to be very lavish as regards Catherine's dowry.	55
JOHN:	No, sir. I quite see that.	
ARTHUR:	I propose to settle on her one-sixth of my total capital, which, worked out to the final fraction, is exactly eight hundred and thirty-three pounds six shillings and eight pence. But let us deal in round figures and say eight hundred and fifty pounds.	60
JOHN:	I call that very generous, sir.	
ARTHUR:	Not as generous as I would have liked, I'm afraid. However – as my wife would say – beggars can't be choosers.	
JOHN:	Exactly, sir.	65
ARTHUR:	Well, then, if you're agreeable to that arrangement, I don't think there's anything more we need discuss.	
JOHN:	No, sir.	
ARTHUR:	Splendid.	
	<i>Pause. ARTHUR takes his stick and bangs it, with an air of studied unconcern, three times on the floor. Nothing happens.</i>	70
JOHN:	Pretty rotten weather, isn't it?	
ARTHUR:	Yes. Vile. <i>He bangs again. Again nothing happens. ARTHUR goes slowly but firmly to the dining-room door, which he throws open.</i>	75
	<i>[In apparent surprise.]</i> Well, imagine that! My wife and daughter are in here of all places. Come in, Grace. Come in, Catherine. John's here. GRACE comes in, with CATHERINE behind.	
GRACE:	Why, John – how nice! <i>[She shakes hands.]</i> My, you do look a swell! Doesn't he, Kate, darling?	80
CATHERINE:	Quite.	
	<i>Pause. GRACE is unable to repress herself.</i>	
GRACE:	<i>[Coyly]</i> Well?	
ARTHUR:	Well, what?	
GRACE:	How did your little talk go?	85
ARTHUR:	<i>[Testily]</i> I understood you weren't supposed to know we were having a little talk.	
GRACE:	Oh, you are infuriating! Is everything all right, John?	
	JOHN <i>nods, smiling.</i>	
	Oh, I'm so glad. I really am.	90
JOHN:	Thank you, Mrs Winslow.	
GRACE:	May I kiss you? After all, I'm practically your mother now.	
JOHN:	Yes, of course.	
	<i>JOHN allows himself to be kissed.</i>	
ARTHUR:	While I, by the same token, am practically your father, but if you will forgive me –	95
JOHN:	<i>[Smiling]</i> Certainly, sir.	
ARTHUR:	Grace, I think we might allow ourselves a little modest celebration at lunch. Will you find me the key of the cellars?	
	<i>He goes out through the hall door.</i>	100
GRACE:	Yes, dear. <i>[She turns at the door. Coyly.]</i> I don't suppose you two will mind being left alone for a few minutes, will you?	

She follows her husband out. JOHN goes to CATHERINE and kisses her.

CATHERINE:	Was it an ordeal?	105
JOHN:	I was scared to death.	
CATHERINE:	My poor darling –	
JOHN:	The annoying thing was that I had a whole lot of neatly turned phrases ready for him and he wouldn't let me use them.	
CATHERINE:	Such as?	110
JOHN:	Oh – how proud and honoured I was by your acceptance of me, and how determined I was to make you a loyal and devoted husband – and to maintain you in the state to which you were accustomed – all that sort of thing. All very sincerely meant.	
CATHERINE:	Anything about loving me a little?	115
JOHN:	[<i>Lightly</i>] That I thought we could take for granted. So did your father, incidentally.	
CATHERINE:	I see. [<i>She gazes at him.</i>] Goodness, you do look smart!	
JOHN:	Not bad, is it?	
CATHERINE:	What about <i>your</i> father? How did he take it?	120
JOHN:	All right.	
CATHERINE:	I bet he didn't.	
JOHN:	Oh, yes. He's been wanting me to get married for years. Getting worried about grandchildren, I suppose.	
CATHERINE:	He disapproves of me, doesn't he?	125
JOHN:	Oh, no. Whatever makes you think that?	
CATHERINE:	He has a way of looking at me through his glasses that shrivels me up.	
JOHN:	He's just being a colonel, darling, that's all. All colonels look at you like that. Anyway, what about the way your father looks at me! Tell me, are all your family as scared of him as I am?	130
CATHERINE:	Dickie is, of course; and Ronnie, though he doesn't need to be. Father worships him. I don't know about Mother being scared of him. Sometimes, perhaps. I'm not – ever.	
JOHN:	You're not scared of anything, are you?	
CATHERINE:	Oh yes. Heaps of things.	135
JOHN:	Such as?	
CATHERINE:	[<i>With a smile</i>] Oh – they're nearly all concerned with you.	
	RONNIE <i>looks cautiously in at the window door. He now presents a very scruffy appearance, with his uniform wringing wet, and his damp hair over his eyes.</i>	140
JOHN:	You might be a little more explicit –	
RONNIE:	[<i>In a low voice</i>] Kate!	
	CATHERINE <i>turns and sees him.</i>	
CATHERINE:	[<i>Amazed</i>] Ronnie! What on earth –	
RONNIE:	Where's Father?	145
CATHERINE:	I'll go and tell him –	
RONNIE:	[<i>Urgently</i>] No, don't. Please, Kate, don't!	
	CATHERINE, <i>halfway to the door, stops, puzzled.</i>	
CATHERINE:	What's the trouble, Ronnie?	
	RONNIE, <i>trembling on the edge of tears, does not answer her. She approaches him.</i>	150
	You're wet through. You'd better go and change.	
RONNIE:	No.	
CATHERINE:	[<i>Gently</i>] What's the trouble, darling? You can tell me.	
	RONNIE <i>looks at JOHN.</i>	155
	You know John Watherstone, Ronnie. You met him last holidays, don't you remember?	

RONNIE *remains silent, obviously reluctant to talk in front of a comparative stranger.*

JOHN: [Tactfully] I'll disappear. 160
 CATHERINE: [Pointing to dining-room] In there, do you mind?
 JOHN goes out quietly. CATHERINE gently leads RONNIE further into the room.
 Now, darling, tell me. What is it? Have you run away?
 RONNIE shakes his head, evidently not trusting himself to speak. 165
 What is it, then?
 RONNIE pulls out the document from his pocket, which we have seen him reading in an earlier scene, and slowly hands it to her.
 CATHERINE reads it quietly.
 Oh, dear! 170
 RONNIE: I didn't do it.
 CATHERINE re-reads the letter in silence.
 Kate, I didn't. Really, I didn't.
 CATHERINE: [Abstractedly] No, darling. [She seems uncertain of what to do.] This letter is addressed to Father. Did you open it? 175
 RONNIE: Yes.
 CATHERINE: You shouldn't have done that –
 RONNIE: I was going to tear it up. Then I heard you come in from church and ran into the garden – I didn't know what to do –
 CATHERINE: [Still distracted] Did the school send you home alone? 180
 RONNIE: They sent a Petty Officer up with me. He was supposed to wait and see Father, but I sent him away. [Indicating letter.] Kate – shall we tear it up, now?
 CATHERINE: No, darling.
 RONNIE: We could tell Father term had ended two days sooner – 185
 CATHERINE: No, darling.
 RONNIE: I didn't do it – really I didn't –

 DICKIE comes in from the hall. He does not seem surprised to see RONNIE.

 DICKIE: [Cheerfully] Hullo, Ronnie, old lad. How's everything? 190

 RONNIE turns away from him.

 CATHERINE: You knew he was here?
 DICKIE: Oh yes. His suitcase and things are all over our room. Trouble?
 CATHERINE: Yes.
 DICKIE: I'm sorry. 195
 CATHERINE: You stay here with him. I'll find Mother.
 DICKIE: All right.
 CATHERINE goes out by the hall door. There is a pause.
 What's up, old chap?
 RONNIE: Nothing. 200
 DICKIE: Come on – tell me.
 RONNIE: It's all right.
 DICKIE: Have you been sacked?
 RONNIE nods.
 Bad luck. What for? 205
 RONNIE: I didn't do it!
 DICKIE: [Reassuringly] No, of course you didn't.
 RONNIE: Honestly, I didn't.

DICKIE:	That's all right, old chap. No need to go on about it. I believe you.	
RONNIE:	You don't.	210
DICKIE:	Well, I don't know what it is they've sacked you for, yet –	
RONNIE:	<i>[In a low voice]</i> Stealing.	
DICKIE:	<i>[Evidently relieved]</i> Oh, is that all? Goodness me! I didn't know they sacked chaps for that, these days.	
RONNIE:	I didn't do it.	215
DICKIE:	Why, at school we used to pinch everything we could jolly well lay our hands on. All of us. I remember there was one chap – Carstairs his name was – captain of cricket, believe it or not – absolutely nothing was safe with him – nothing at all. Pinched a squash racket of mine once, I remember –	220
	<i>He has quietly approached RONNIE, and now puts his arm on his shoulder.</i>	
	Believe me, old chap, pinching's nothing. Nothing at all. I say – you're a bit damp, aren't you?	
RONNIE:	I've been out in the rain –	225
DICKIE:	You're shivering a bit, too, aren't you? Oughtn't you to go and change?	
	I mean, we don't want you catching pneumonia –	
RONNIE:	I'm all right.	
	<i>GRACE comes in, with CATHERINE following. GRACE comes quickly to RONNIE, who, as he sees her, turns away from DICKIE and runs into her arms.</i>	230
GRACE:	There, darling! It's all right, now.	
	<i>RONNIE begins to cry quietly, his head buried in her dress.</i>	
RONNIE:	<i>[His voice muffled]</i> I didn't do it, Mother.	
GRACE:	No, darling. Of course you didn't. We'll go upstairs now, shall we, and get out of these nasty wet clothes.	235
RONNIE:	Don't tell Father.	
GRACE:	No, darling. Not yet. I promise. Come along now.	
	<i>She leads him towards the door held open by CATHERINE.</i>	
	Your new uniform, too. What a shame!	240
	<i>She goes out with him.</i>	
DICKIE:	I'd better go and keep watch for them. Ward off the old man if he looks like going upstairs.	
	CATHERINE <i>nods</i> .	
	<i>[At door.]</i> I say – who's going to break the news to him eventually? I mean, someone'll have to.	245
CATHERINE:	Don't let's worry about that now.	
DICKIE:	Well, you can count me out. In fact, I don't want to be within a thousand miles of that explosion.	
	<i>He goes out. CATHERINE comes to the dining-room door, which she opens, and calls 'John!' JOHN comes in.</i>	250
JOHN:	Bad news?	
	CATHERINE <i>nods</i> . <i>She is plainly upset, and dabs her eyes with her handkerchief.</i>	
	That's rotten for you. I'm awfully sorry.	255
CATHERINE:	<i>[Violently]</i> How can people be so cruel!	

JOHN:	[Uncomfortably] Expelled, I suppose?	
	<i>He gets his answer from her silence, while she recovers herself.</i>	
CATHERINE:	Goodness me, how little imagination some people have! Why should they accuse a child of that age, John? What's the point of it?	260
JOHN:	What's he supposed to have done?	
CATHERINE:	Stolen some money.	
JOHN:	Oh.	
CATHERINE:	Ten days ago, it said in the letter. Why on earth didn't they let us know? Just think what that poor little creature has been going through these last ten days down there, entirely alone, without anyone to look after him, knowing what he had to face at the end of it! And then, finally, they send him up to London with a Petty Officer – is it any wonder he's nearly out of his mind?	265
JOHN:	It does seem pretty heartless, I admit.	270
CATHERINE:	Heartless? It's cold, calculated inhumanity. How I'd love to have that Commanding Officer here for just two minutes. I'd – I'd –	
JOHN:	[Gently] Darling, it's quite natural you should feel angry about it, but you must remember, he's not really at school. He's in the Service.	
CATHERINE:	What difference does that make?	275
JOHN:	Well, they have ways of doing things in the Service which may seem to an outsider horribly brutal – but at least they're always scrupulously fair. You can take it from me that there must have been a very full enquiry before they'd take a step of this sort. What's more, if there's been a delay of ten days, it would only have been in order to give the boy a better chance to clear himself –	280
	<i>Pause. CATHERINE is silent.</i>	
	I'm sorry, Catherine, darling. I'd have done better to keep my mouth shut.	
CATHERINE:	No. What you said was perfectly true –	285
JOHN:	It was tactless of me to say it, though. I'm sorry.	
CATHERINE:	[Lightly] That's all right.	
JOHN:	Forgive me?	
	<i>He lays his arm on her shoulder.</i>	
CATHERINE:	[Taking his hand] Nothing to forgive.	290
JOHN:	Believe me, I'm awfully sorry. [After a pause.] How will your father take it?	
CATHERINE:	[Simply] It might kill him –	
	<i>There is the sound of voices in the hall.</i>	
	Oh! We've got Desmond to lunch. I'd forgotten –	295
JOHN:	Who?	
CATHERINE:	Desmond Curry – our family solicitor. Oh, Lord! [In a hasty whisper.] Darling – be polite to him, won't you?	
JOHN:	Why? Am I usually so rude to your guests?	
CATHERINE:	No, but he doesn't know about us yet –	300
JOHN:	Who does?	
CATHERINE:	[Still in a whisper] Yes, but he's been in love with me for years – it's a family joke –	
	<i>VIOLET comes in.</i>	
VIOLET:	[Announcing] Mr Curry.	305
	<i>DESMOND CURRY comes in. He is a man of about forty-five. He has a mildly furtive manner. JOHN, when he sees him, cannot repress a faint smile at the thought of his loving CATHERINE. VIOLET has made her exit.</i>	

CATHERINE:	Hullo, Desmond. I don't think you know John Watherstone –	310
DESMOND:	No – but, of course, I've heard a lot about him –	
JOHN:	How do you do?	
	<i>He wipes the smile off his face, as he meets CATHERINE's glance. There is a pause.</i>	
DESMOND:	Well, well, well. I trust I'm not early.	315
CATHERINE:	No. Dead on time, Desmond – as always.	
DESMOND:	Capital. Capital.	
	<i>There is another pause, broken by CATHERINE and JOHN both suddenly speaking at once.</i>	
CATHERINE:	} [Simultaneously]	320
JOHN:		
JOHN:	I'm so sorry –	
CATHERINE:	It's quite all right. I was only going to ask how you did in your cricket match yesterday, Desmond.	
DESMOND:	Not too well, I'm afraid. My shoulder's still giving me trouble –	325
	<i>There is another pause.</i>	
	[At length.] Well, well. I hear I'm to congratulate you both –	
CATHERINE:	Desmond – you know?	
DESMOND:	Violet told me, just now – in the hall. Yes – I must congratulate you both.	330
CATHERINE:	Thank you so much, Desmond.	
JOHN:	Thank you.	
DESMOND:	Of course, it's quite expected, I know. Quite expected. Still it was rather a surprise, hearing it like that – from Violet in the hall –	
CATHERINE:	We were going to tell you, Desmond dear. It was only official this morning, you know. In fact, you're the first person to hear it.	335
DESMOND:	Am I? Am I, indeed? Well, I'm sure you'll both be very happy.	
CATHERINE:	} [Murmuring together]	
JOHN:		
DESMOND:	Only this morning? Fancy.	340
	GRACE comes in.	
GRACE:	Hullo, Desmond, dear.	
DESMOND:	Hullo, Mrs Winslow.	
GRACE:	[To CATHERINE] I've got him to bed –	
CATHERINE:	Good.	345
DESMOND:	Nobody ill, I hope?	
GRACE:	No, no. Nothing wrong at all –	
	<i>ARTHUR comes in, with a bottle under his arm. He rings the bell.</i>	
ARTHUR:	Grace, when did we last have the cellars seen to?	
GRACE:	I can't remember, dear.	350
ARTHUR:	Well, they're in a shocking condition. Hullo, Desmond. How are you? You're not looking well.	
DESMOND:	Am I not? I've strained my shoulder, you know –	
ARTHUR:	Well, why do you play these ridiculous games of yours? Resign yourself to the onrush of middle age and abandon them, my dear Desmond.	355
DESMOND:	Oh, I could never do that. Not give up cricket. Not altogether.	
JOHN:	[Making conversation] Are you any relation of D. W. H. Curry who used to play for Middlesex?	

DESMOND:	[<i>Whose moment has come</i>] I am D. W. H. Curry.	360
GRACE:	Didn't you know we had a great man in the room?	
JOHN:	Gosh! Do you know you used to be a schoolboy hero of mine?	
DESMOND:	Did I? Did I, indeed?	
JOHN:	Yes. I had a signed photograph of you.	
DESMOND:	Yes. I used to sign a lot once, for schoolboys, I remember.	365
<i>VIOLET comes in, in response to a bell rung by ARTHUR some moments before.</i>		
VIOLET:	You rang, sir?	
ARTHUR:	Yes, Violet. Bring some glasses, would you?	
VIOLET:	Very good, sir. <i>She goes out.</i>	370
ARTHUR:	We're celebrating, you know, Desmond – GRACE <i>jogs his arm furtively, indicating</i> DESMOND. [<i>Adding hastily.</i>] – my wife's fifty-fourth birthday –	
GRACE:	Arthur! Really!	375
CATHERINE:	It's all right, Father. Desmond knows –	
DESMOND:	Yes, indeed. It's wonderful news, isn't it? I'll most gladly drink a toast to the – er – to the –	
ARTHUR:	[<i>Politely</i>] Happy pair, I think, is the phrase that is eluding you – DICKIE <i>comes in.</i> Ah, my dear Dickie – just in time for a toast in celebration of Kate's engagement to John –	380
<i>VIOLET comes in with a tray of glasses. ARTHUR begins to pour out the drinks.</i>		
DICKIE:	Oh, is that all finally spliced up now? Kate definitely being entered for the marriage stakes? Good – oh!	385
ARTHUR:	Quite so. [<i>To VIOLET.</i>] Take these round, will you, Violet?	
<i>VIOLET goes first to GRACE, then to CATHERINE, then to JOHN, DESMOND, DICKIE, and finally ARTHUR. The drinks have now been handed round.</i>		
ARTHUR:	[<i>Toasting</i>] Catherine and John! <i>All drink – CATHERINE and JOHN to each other. VIOLET lingers, smiling, in the doorway.</i> [<i>Seeing VIOLET.</i>] Ah, Violet! We mustn't leave you out. You must join this toast.	395
VIOLET:	Well – thank you, sir. <i>He pours her out a glass.</i> Not too much, sir, please. Just a sip.	
ARTHUR:	Quite so. Your reluctance would be more convincing if I hadn't noticed you'd brought an extra glass –	400
VIOLET:	[<i>Taking glass from ARTHUR</i>] Oh, I didn't bring it for myself, sir. I brought it for Master Ronnie – [<i>She extends her glass.</i>] Miss Kate and Mr John. <i>She takes a sip, makes a wry face, and hands the glass back to ARTHUR.</i>	
ARTHUR:	You brought an extra glass for Master Ronnie, Violet?	405
VIOLET:	[<i>Mistaking his bewilderment</i>] Well – I thought you might allow him just a sip, sir. Just to drink the toast.	

She turns to go. The others, with the exception of DESMOND, who is staring gloomily into his glass, are frozen with apprehension.

- ARTHUR: Master Ronnie isn't due back from Osborne until Tuesday, Violet. 410
 VIOLET: [*Turning*] Oh, no, sir. He's back already. Came back unexpectedly this morning, all by himself.
- ARTHUR: No, Violet. That isn't true. Someone has been playing a joke –
 VIOLET: Well, I saw him in here with my own two eyes, sir, as large as life, just before you came in from church – and then I heard Mrs Winslow talking to him in his room – 415
- ARTHUR: Grace – what does this mean?
 CATHERINE: [*Instinctively taking charge*] All right, Violet. You can go –
 VIOLET: Yes, miss.
She goes out. 420
- ARTHUR: [*To CATHERINE*] Did *you* know Ronnie was back?
 CATHERINE: Yes.
 ARTHUR: And you, Dickie?
 DICKIE: Yes, Father.
 ARTHUR: Grace? 425
 GRACE: [*Helplessly*] We thought it best you shouldn't know – for the time being. Only for the time being, Arthur.
- ARTHUR: [*Slowly*] Is the boy ill?
No one answers. ARTHUR looks from one face to another in bewilderment. 430
 Answer me, someone! Is the boy very ill? Why must I be kept in the dark like this? Surely I have the right to know. If he's ill I must be with him –
- CATHERINE: [*Steadily*] No, Father. He's not ill.
 ARTHUR *suddenly realizes the truth from the tone of her voice.* 435
- ARTHUR: Will someone tell me what has happened, please?
 GRACE *looks at CATHERINE with helpless inquiry. CATHERINE nods. GRACE takes the letter from her dress.*
- GRACE: [*Timidly*] He brought this letter for you – Arthur.
 ARTHUR: Read it to me, please – 440
 GRACE: Arthur – not in front of –
 ARTHUR: Read it to me, please.
- GRACE *again looks at CATHERINE for advice, and again receives a nod. ARTHUR is sitting with his head bowed. GRACE begins to read.* 445
- GRACE: [*Reading*] 'Confidential. I am commanded by My Lords' Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that they have received a communication from the Commanding Officer of the Royal Naval College at Osborne, reporting the theft of a postal order at the College on the 7th instant, which was afterwards cashed at the Post Office. Investigation of the circumstances of the case leaves no other conclusion possible than that the postal order was taken by your son, Cadet Ronald Arthur Winslow. My Lords deeply regret that they must therefore request you to withdraw your son from the College.' It's signed by someone – I can't quite read his name – 455

She turns away quickly to hide her tears. CATHERINE puts a comforting arm on her shoulder. ARTHUR has not changed his attitude. There is a pause, during which we can hear the sound of a gong in the hall outside.

ARTHUR: [At length] Desmond – be so good as to call Violet. 460

DESMOND does so. There is another pause, until VIOLET comes in.

VIOLET: Yes, sir.

ARTHUR: Violet, will you ask Master Ronnie to come down and see me, please?

GRACE: Arthur – he's in bed.

ARTHUR: You told me he wasn't ill. 465

GRACE: He's not at all well.

ARTHUR: Do as I say, please, Violet.

VIOLET: Very good, sir.

She goes out.

ARTHUR: Perhaps the rest of you would go in to lunch? Grace, would you take them in? 470

GRACE: [Hovering] Arthur – don't you think –

ARTHUR: Will you go in, Desmond? And John? Dickie?

The three men go into the dining-room, in silence. GRACE still hovers.

GRACE: Arthur? 475

ARTHUR: Yes. Grace?

GRACE: Please don't – please don't – [She stops, uncertainly.]

ARTHUR: What mustn't I do?

GRACE: Please don't forget he's only a child –

ARTHUR does not answer her. CATHERINE takes her mother's arm. 480

CATHERINE: Come on, Mother.

She leads her mother to the dining-room door. At the door GRACE looks back at ARTHUR. He has still not altered his position and is ignoring her. She goes into the dining-room followed by CATHERINE. ARTHUR does not move after they are gone. After an appreciable pause there comes a timid knock on the hall door. 485

ARTHUR: Come in.

RONNIE appears in the doorway. He is in a dressing-gown. He stands on the threshold.

Come in and shut the door. 490

RONNIE closes the door behind him.

Come over here.

RONNIE walks slowly up to his father. ARTHUR gazes at him steadily for some time, without speaking.

[At length.] Why aren't you in your uniform? 495

RONNIE: [Murmuring] It got wet.

ARTHUR: How did it get wet?

RONNIE: I was out in the garden in the rain.

ARTHUR: Why?

RONNIE: [Reluctantly] I was hiding. 500

ARTHUR: From me?
 RONNIE *nods*.
 Do you remember once, you promised me that if ever you were in trouble of any sort you would come to me first? 505

RONNIE: Yes, Father.

ARTHUR: Why didn't you come to me now? Why did you have to go and hide in the garden?

RONNIE: I don't know, Father.

ARTHUR: Are you so frightened of me?
 RONNIE *does not reply*. ARTHUR *gazes at him for a moment, then holds up the letter*. 510
 In this letter it says you stole a postal order.
 RONNIE *opens his mouth to speak*. ARTHUR *stops him*.
 Now, I don't want you to say a word until you've heard what I've got to say. If you did it, you must tell me. I shan't be angry with you, Ronnie – provided you tell me the truth. But if you tell me a lie, I shall know it, because a lie between you and me can't be hidden. I shall know it, Ronnie – so remember that before you speak. [*Pause*.] Did you steal this postal order? 515

RONNIE: [*Without hesitation*] No, Father. I didn't. 520

ARTHUR: [*Staring into his eyes*] Did you steal this postal order?

RONNIE: No, Father. I didn't.

ARTHUR *continues to stare into his eyes for a second, then relaxes and pushes him gently away*.

ARTHUR: Go on back to bed. 525

RONNIE *goes gratefully to the hall door*.
 And in future I trust that a son of mine will at least show enough sense to come in out of the rain.

RONNIE: Yes, Father.

He disappears. ARTHUR gets up quite briskly and goes to the telephone in the corner of the room. 530

ARTHUR: [*At telephone*] Hullo. Are you there? [*Speaking very distinctly*.] I want to put a phone call through, please. A call ... Yes ... The Royal Naval College, Osborne ... That's right ... Certainly.

He replaces the receiver and then, after a moment's meditation, turns and walks briskly into the dining-room. 535

CURTAIN

EXTRACT 2

Taken from *Egyptian Products* by Laila Soliman

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

Egyptian Products was written by independent Egyptian theatre director Laila Soliman and was first performed at the Royal Court Theatre, London, in November 2008. The play is in 26 scenes and the extract consists of the Prologue, Scenes One to Six, and then Scene Sixteen.

The play explores the relationships and aspirations of GASIR, an extremely shy man in his early thirties, and HADIA, a young woman in her late twenties who suffers from the lack of an emotional life.

In the extract, the cut between Scene Six and Scene Sixteen shows a later stage in the developing relationship between GASIR and HADIA. Between Scene Six and Scene Sixteen, HADIA has apparently rejected several other potential suitors and decided to meet with GASIR for a meal despite their obvious incompatibility.

CHARACTERS

HADIA (a woman in her late twenties. She works as a nurse/companion to the Ustaz.)

GASIR (a man in his early thirties, an introvert, who works in a medical lab and suffers from loneliness after the death of his mother.)

USTAZ IDRIS (an elderly writer who is relatively famous and well off. He suffers from loneliness and a few medical illnesses related to his old age.)

ALL OTHER ROLES can be cast singly or doubled by one male and one female actor.

Setting

The set is comprised of two sections: the writer's house, and another changeable space that transforms into various locations. The playwright suggests placing only the important pieces of furniture for each place on the stage in a random fashion and moving them in whichever way the director chooses to shape the scene.

Notes and references

Wallahi – I swear, 'I swear to you'

Ustaz – a religious teacher/professor

PROLOGUE

Two separate spots of light on a dark stage. GASIR in one, HADIA in the other.

GASIR carries a suitcase along with various other bits and bobs which belonged to his late mother. He seems hesitant, inspecting each item and wondering whether he should pack it away.

5

HADIA is on her phone.

GASIR and USTAZ:	With you living, my life would be fulfilling. And if you cease, then no life after you would be worth living.	
HADIA:	[Agitated] Okay, Mama!	
USTAZ:	[Off] Hadia. Who wrote this poem?	10
GASIR:	[To the tune of the Arabic song] Oh, Mother. Oh, Mummy. Oh, Mama.	
USTAZ:	Is he Egyptian?	
HADIA:	No, Mama!	
GASIR:	Salutations. Adorations. I kiss you!	
USTAZ:	[Louder] Hadia! Where are you, Hadia?	15
HADIA:	Yes, coming. <i>Wallahi</i> I'm coming. [Impatiently.] Okay, all right, Mama.	
USTAZ:	What are you doing, Hadia?	
GASIR:	This day is yours, my only lady.	
USTAZ:	[Forceful yet fearful] Hadia?	
HADIA:	[On the verge of a breakdown] Coming!	20

She speaks as GASIR slams the suitcase shut.

Blackout.

SCENE ONE

HADIA walks in a directionless and violent manner. GASIR enters from the opposite direction. We realise they are both headed towards the herb and spice shop (selling traditional spices, perfumes and herbal remedies). The shop's shelves are stocked with colourful bottles of herbs and oils, measuring scales, etc. Hundreds of little signs indicate the healing properties of each potion.

25

SELLER:	[To GASIR] Good to see you, sir. Haven't seen you in a while. We haven't upset you, have we?	30
---------	--	----

HADIA heads towards the SELLER, cutting in front of GASIR, convinced it is her right, because ladies are always first. GASIR shyly waits his turn.

HADIA:	[Attracting the SELLER's attention] Good evening. GASIR is silent. I need an ointment for rheumatism, please. <i>The SELLER gets the ointment.</i> And a laxative mixture. <i>The SELLER fetches the mixture.</i> No, no, the one made with prunes. [Agitated.] Are you new here or what?!	35
SELLER:	No, no.	40

*The SELLER looks for the right mixture.
HADIA's phone rings.*

HADIA: [On the phone] Hello. Yes, Ustaz. How are you? Feeling the same... 45
Yes, I'm at the spice seller's.

The SELLER takes advantage of the phone call to talk to GASIR. He smiles at him questioningly.

SELLER: How can I help you? Something for yourself this time?
GASIR: [Sadly] Yes, I am looking for something... [He becomes flustered.] 50
SELLER: What? [Whispers.] Go on...
GASIR starts to speak.

Some laxatives?
GASIR: [Defending himself against the accusation] No, no.
HADIA: [On the phone] Yes, I've got the ointment and the laxative. Do you 55
need anything else?

GASIR: No. I just need –
SELLER: [Encouraging him] Yes?
HADIA: [On the phone] Okay. This remedy, what's it called?
GASIR: I need something to help with my guts. 60
HADIA: [On the phone] Okay, I'll look for it.
SELLER: I understand you...

HADIA ends the call and is frustrated to find that the SELLER is helping GASIR instead of her.

HADIA: Excuse me! I'm not done yet. I also need a herbal remedy. 65
SELLER: What kind?
HADIA: It's green, apparently.
SELLER: Which one?
HADIA: You should know, shouldn't you?!
SELLER: [Cold and sarcastically] Sorry, I don't... 70

HADIA's phone rings again, just as she's about to start an argument. She tries to regain her composure before answering.

HADIA: [On the phone] Yes, Ustaz.
The SELLER takes advantage of the phone call to turn his attention to GASIR once more. 75

SELLER: So... Tell me. What was it you were looking for?
HADIA: [On the phone] You can't be serious?! I can't ask him about that!
GASIR: I'm looking for...
SELLER: What?
HADIA: [On the phone] A sedative, and a general energiser. Anything else? 80
Something to regulate your blood pressure. What else?
GASIR: It's just that my stomach gets so nervous, you know.
SELLER: Yes, I know. I understand you. You mean, you're embarrassed.
GASIR: You're misunderstanding me.
HADIA: [On the phone] Sure and – 85

It appears the caller has rudely hung up.

SELLER: There's nothing to be scared of. These herbs have no harmful side effects.

HADIA *turns to the SELLER. The phone call has drained her of all patience.*

HADIA:	Do you mind staying with me so we can finish here?	90
GASIR:	<i>[In another world]</i> I'm sorry but –	
HADIA:	It's just never-ending today!	
	GASIR <i>becomes nervous.</i>	
	<i>[To GASIR.]</i> Please. I was first, and it's very obvious you don't even know what you want, and in all honesty, I've had enough of the heat in this place. I'm getting claustrophobic.	95
GASIR:	<i>[Embarrassed whisper]</i> I'm sorry.	
HADIA:	<i>[Hasn't heard him and carries on like a loose cannon]</i> Give me some sedatives and a blood-pressure stabiliser – Oh, and some calming antidepressants.	100
SELLER:	For yourself?	
HADIA:	Why?! Do I look like I need it?! <i>[She turns to GASIR again, remembering his presence.]</i> And why are you standing so close? You've been standing here for an hour not knowing what you want. You're choking me. Oh, just go drink some mint tea or something!	105
SELLER:	Miss, the tranquilliser!	

SCENE TWO

GASIR *is at home on the phone.*

GASIR:	<i>[In a shy voice]</i> Hello, good morning – I mean, good evening. Is this the problem number that's been advertised? I mean, is this the problem hotline? I mean, the one we call to discuss our problems... My name? I'm... I'm... G.D.	110
	So, do I just talk or do you ask questions?	
	Uh, I work in a medical lab. My problem... My problem is that I don't know what to do with my mother's things. I can't even bring myself to wash her pillow. No, she passed away three months ago – long may you live too – and I was very attached to her. I haven't slept properly in weeks, and everything's confusing me. I've been having some very strange dreams. I wake up in the mornings, not knowing where I am or what day it is, sometimes I don't sleep at all, other times I just sleep through the whole day. Oh, and it takes me a while to gather myself after, especially if I've seen her in my dreams. So, I wake up and smell her perfume and pillow, and I even carry pieces of it around in my pocket to sniff throughout the day... Do you know much about dreams?	115
	No, I'm not married. No, of course my mother didn't mind. I suppose it wasn't meant to be... or the circumstances didn't allow. So, you don't know much about dreams? No. That's only the half of it, you see, sometimes I have this other sort of dream. I'm a little embarrassed... and – Umm... I get very shy, you see... and worried that – Uh... Well... it's flatulence waking me. Hello? Hello, can you hear me? Hello, can you hear me? Hello – Hello!	120
		125
		130

We hear hysterical laughter on the other end of the phone as he pulls it away from his ear.

SCENE THREE

The USTAZ is at home lying in his big comfy chair. He never leaves the stage. HADIA fidgets with her phone until she gets a text message which the audience hears, or sees on a screen. 135

MALE VOICE: 'Life isn't easy. Please understand that I have to protect myself from you. And you too must protect yourself from me.'

HADIA *tosses the phone aside.*

USTAZ: I'm craving some potato chips. 140

HADIA: You know you're not allowed.

USTAZ: But I'm absolutely craving them...

HADIA: Sorry, not allowed.

USTAZ: I'm the one who decides what I'm allowed or not and my stomach's been good today... 145

HADIA: But the doctor said you're not allowed.

USTAZ: What does he know?! My blood sugar's low and my body needs some potato chips.

HADIA: [*Sarcastically*] Oh, really? Never heard that one before...

USTAZ: I've already got one foot in the grave... And, anyway, I don't understand why you're so agitated. 150

HADIA: I'm not agitated.

USTAZ: I know you're agitated because that new boy's dumped you. Right?

HADIA: Of course not. And I'm not agitated.

USTAZ: No. Agitated. But it was clear from the start he wasn't good enough for you. Too simple-minded. You're far more intelligent than he is. In my opinion... 155

HADIA: Excuse me, but what exactly brought this up? You're making something out of nothing.

USTAZ: My advice is that you should take up yoga... 160

HADIA: [*Losing patience*] Hmmm.

USTAZ: The best thing for you now is yoga!

HADIA *is irritated and starts flipping through a magazine.*

Nothing will help you... except for yoga!

Every repetition of the word irritates HADIA further. She bottles it in. 165

Okay, fetch me – [*He indicates the number with his fingers.*] three breadsticks.

HADIA: No, you're not supposed to have any.

USTAZ: All right then, two. [*He indicates with his fingers.*]

HADIA: No. 170

USTAZ: How about one?

HADIA: No!

USTAZ: [*With childish petulance*] I hate you.

HADIA: Suit yourself.

USTAZ: What's so wrong with eating what I want? I've been taking my insulin, and even if – 175

HADIA: I've had enough. Do we have to battle and barter for everything?

USTAZ: Even if my blood sugar stays low, I'll still have to take the insulin.

HADIA: This is impossible. This is seriously impossible.

USTAZ: I know why you're so agitated like this. 180

HADIA: Right!

She starts to gather her things, but changes her mind and sits back down.

USTAZ: That's it. Leave. I don't want you any more. You've given me a headache!

She turns her back to the USTAZ. 185
 Hadia, what are you doing?
No answer.
 Hadia!
No answer.
 Are you upset now? 190
No answer.
 Hadia! Hadia! Hadia!
 HADIA: Yes?
 USTAZ: What are you doing?
Silence. 195
 Hadia!
 HADIA *sits there in total silence.*
 What on Earth are you doing, Hadia?
 HADIA: Yoga... I'm doing some yoga...

SCENE FOUR

GASIR *is in a taxi, sitting in the passenger seat.* 200
 TAXI DRIVER: So, where you heading today?
 GASIR: Into the city.
 TAXI DRIVER: Looks like you're in a bad mood this morning, if you don't mind me saying.
 GASIR *doesn't answer.*
 [He chuckles.] Ah, relax, mate, it can't be that bad. 205
 Enjoy your life while you can.
 GASIR: Could you let me out here, please...
 TAXI DRIVER: Okay, but before you get down –
 GASIR: [Distressed] Just let me off here!

SCENE FIVE

HADIA *is in the USTAZ's room, on the phone.* 210
 HADIA: Hello... Mama. How are you? How's everyone doing? Well, I'm not really sure when I can take the time off work.
 USTAZ: [In a loud voice] You can take a vacation whenever you want.
She gestures for him to be quiet.
 HADIA: [On the phone] Mama, what's wrong with me working here?! For goodness' sake, the man I work for is older than my father, Mama. 215
 USTAZ: Thank you!
 HADIA: [She covers the phone] I'm sorry.
She gestures to him: 'You understand.'
 [On the phone.] Okay, fine, we'll see what happens... Mama, my 220
 brothers can say whatever they like. I'll have you know I dress very modestly. You too, Mama?!
 USTAZ: So, what's she saying? What's she saying?
 HADIA: [On the phone] No, I haven't forgotten how old I am... I'm twenty-nine, there's no need to humiliate me like this. 225
 USTAZ: [Impassioned] She has no right.
 HADIA: [On the phone] Now you're threatening me?! You're threatening me, Mama. Mama, please, I'm not a child any more.

USTAZ:	What? What's she threatening you with?	
HADIA:	[<i>On the phone</i>] Don't worry, Mama. Of course, Mama... Sure... Of course...	230
USTAZ:	So, what did she say to you?	
HADIA:	You know... The usual... Except now there's a countdown.	
USTAZ:	I don't understand. Are they angry because you're working for me?	
HADIA:	That's not the issue... Mama's worried the marriage train's going to pass me by, and my brothers are worried about their reputation.	235
USTAZ:	What about their reputation?	
HADIA:	Their sister is in the city working for a single man, whom she happens to live with. That's not an easy one to swallow in a small town, or anywhere else for that matter. What will people say?	240
USTAZ:	How do these people think?! You know, they must have heard about my reputation with the ladies and are just afraid for you.	
HADIA:	[<i>With a smile</i>] I don't think so...	
USTAZ:	Or maybe your brother read one of the anti-religious books I've written?	245
HADIA:	I really don't think so...	
USTAZ:	So, what did your mother threaten you with?	
HADIA:	If I don't get engaged by the time I'm thirty, I have to go back home so they can find me a husband.	
USTAZ:	What? And what am I supposed to do?	250
	HADIA <i>gives him a sharp look.</i>	
	I mean, how dare she?! This is a serious problem. We must find a solution.	
HADIA:	Hmm...	
USTAZ:	Let's put our heads together...	255
	HADIA <i>doesn't answer.</i>	
	You want us to pretend to get married? You and me?	
HADIA:	Of course not.	
USTAZ:	You'll get my pension when I die...	
HADIA:	Even so. No.	260
USTAZ:	Well... What do you think of that lawyer, Abdel Galil?	
HADIA:	Definitely not.	
USTAZ:	Why not? He's a good man and...	
HADIA:	Too sleazy.	
USTAZ:	Fine, forget him. What about that Mahmoud Al Ghanam?	265
HADIA:	You mean, Al Ghunaimi.	
USTAZ:	Yes, the one who's doing his Masters on my writings, he's an intelligent man, with impeccable taste and –	
HADIA:	And no, thank you. I wouldn't want to marry him. Besides, I don't think he's interested.	270
USTAZ:	Okay then. What about –	
HADIA:	Are you playing matchmaker now?	
USTAZ:	Why not? Just arrange a fake marriage to get your mother off your back, so you can stay with me... and then, after some time, break off the engagement –	275
HADIA:	[<i>Laughs</i>] No way.	
USTAZ:	[<i>Sadly</i>] Do you really want to get married then?	
HADIA:	Yes.	
USTAZ:	You'll leave me?	
HADIA:	I'll come and visit.	280
USTAZ:	Well, at least marry someone I know.	
HADIA:	The youngest person who comes round here, whom you call 'a child', is at least fifty years old.	
USTAZ:	And what's wrong with marrying a man in his fifties?	

- HADIA: Not for me. But I will try to marry someone who likes you... 285
- He begins to calm down.*
- USTAZ: I can see that nothing will brighten your mood except for some of that Swiss chocolate I was sent. And how about rewarding ourselves with a glass too?
- HADIA: You know I don't drink... [*Referring to his health.*] It's also not allowed. 290
- USTAZ: Have you even tried it?
- HADIA: I don't have to try everything.
- USTAZ: How can you be so quick to judge something you haven't even tried?

SCENE SIX

HADIA is in the bathroom, making herself up before going out.

GASIR is in the men's toilet, in some hotel. 295

- GASIR: My goodness me, what is this? I knew I shouldn't have come to this wedding. I'm not one for weddings, anyway. How can anyone go to a wedding when they just buried their mother three months ago? It's just to please you, Mama. It's absolute chaos out there. What a headache! Of course I won't meet anyone here. This is no atmosphere for falling in love. 300

HADIA rings her mother as she removes the veil from her head.

- HADIA: Hello, yes, Mama. Tell you what, I don't think I'll be able to make it today. The Ustaz has been very poorly and I can't bring myself to leave him alone. Oh, you know, one of those aches he gets. No, it's not sudden, it happens all the time, Mama. He's eighty years old and having a severe pain attack. What am I supposed to do?! Leave him alone?! No, I'm not lying to you! Okay, Mama, of course. Goodbye. 305

- GASIR: Maybe if I'd been drafted into the army my problems would've been solved by now, as they say. I'd be surrounded by friends. People would stop calling me 'nice' and 'well-mannered'. Maybe if I'd flirted with the neighbour's daughter – on the phone – or through the window – or even from the balcony. No, how could I?! But if I'd played out in the street, like the other boys, and learned to fight – I could've been... 310
- I would've stayed out late and disappeared for days – but Mama would've worried. 315

HADIA's phone rings.

- HADIA: Yes, Mama. I've just finished work. Mama, I swear if you rush me one more time – Fine, I didn't mean to. Mama, I'm sorry. Okay... Mama. 320
- She puts her veil back on.*

- Why does it have to be like this? Why can't you send me a decent man to save me from all this? Do all of them have to be losers?! A man can be forty and still be a child, with no idea what he wants.
- GASIR: How does it concern me who bought their dress where and how much it cost them? 'That girl got her gown specially made for the wedding,' as if it's the dress that'll catch her a husband. And my aunt tells me Hazem's bride insisted he invite all his bachelor friends to 325

the wedding. 'Come, my dear, Aunt So-and-so, you remember her, mother of So-and-so, wants to meet you,' only to be cornered at every angle with questions and answers – your job, your age, your flat, your family... No, no...! Damn it... It's upsetting my stomach... 330

He feels nauseous but cannot vomit.

HADIA: It could work out – I have to be optimistic. It's still possible that I'll find someone suitable, unlike the deranged men I keep meeting. They say I'm spoiled!! What do you call all those primmed and preened girls then? And even if it doesn't work out, maybe Mama will finally realise marriage just isn't as easy as frying eggs. Then we'll see how much better they can do. 335

GASIR heads for the door to exit but is stopped by the loud sound of the wedding procession outside. 340

GASIR: I think I'll wait until they pass... I don't want my aunt making any more of her ridiculous suggestions. 'Gasir, my dear, the Mosque offers a great service. You give them your details and a description of what qualities you're looking for in a life-partner, and they bring together like-minded people.' No, no... My goodness. 345

HADIA: No... I can't stand another sitting-room meet-and-greet. I'm not going.

She starts to take off her veil and change her clothes.

GASIR: No, no, I'm not leaving here until that commotion's over.

He sits on the closed toilet seat. HADIA's phone rings again. 350

HADIA: Hello. Yes, Mama. No, I'm not coming today. Don't start swearing at me. I can't believe you're all setting this trap for me! Again! Wasn't it enough my brother's friend wanted me to change the way I dress, how I look and everything else about myself? Look, Mother. I'm not coming. Tell my brothers – and yourself – to relax because I'm not getting married in this way. Don't you even dare think of finding me a husband again!! 355

GASIR: What is this? How do people sit on this filthy thing?

He starts to clean the toilet seat.

CUT TO SCENE 16

SCENE SIXTEEN

GASIR and HADIA are in a restaurant, seated next to an aquarium. 360

HADIA: Whenever I'd pass this place, I'd wish I was sitting in here with someone – my fiancé, for example, or my boyfriend... when he became my fiancé, of course. Are you always this quiet?

GASIR: No, I'm listening.

HADIA: Oh, you poor thing. No problem, let's start over. *She gets up and leaves, then comes back in with a smile on her face.* 365
Excuse me, is this seat free?

GASIR: Yes.

HADIA: *[Instructing him]* You mean, I can join you?
She sits and waits for him to start a conversation, but he remains silent. 370

GASIR: That didn't go too well. Are you bored?

HADIA: *[Eagerly]* No, no. You?

HADIA: Not at all. Although I do bore easily –

Just as she is about to launch into another verbal haemorrhage, GASIR speaks up bravely. 375

GASIR: Do we have to talk?

HADIA: Oh, I get it. You'll look into my eyes, and I'll look into yours. You'll tell me you like me and would like to know me better. I'll play hard-to-get but fall for you in the end. You do like me, don't you? 380

GASIR: Uh... Yes.

HADIA: Speak, don't be shy.

HADIA: Have you never been out with a girl before?

GASIR: I don't know – I'm not sure... Sorry, I need the toilet.

HADIA: Me too. 385

We see them enter separate toilets. GASIR sits on the toilet seat, fully clothed, hiding from the situation. HADIA 'powders her nose', checks her phone and fiddles with her veil. They both leave the toilets at the same time.

They sit at the table, each waiting for the other to speak. 390

HADIA: Don't you want to tell me something?

GASIR: No...

HADIA: You sure?

GASIR: *[After some thought]* What's your star sign?

HADIA: Leo... And you? 395

GASIR: Libra.

HADIA: I see...

Silence.

GASIR: Don't you have anything else you'd like to say to me?

HADIA: I don't know... Like what? 400

HADIA: Like what you think of the restaurant.

GASIR: It's nice.

HADIA: Or would you have preferred someplace else? I like it here because of the fish tank.

GASIR: It's nice here. 405

Long silence.

HADIA: Nothing else to say to me then?

Silence.

GASIR: I don't know...

Very long silence. 410

HADIA: I think if we meet again tomorrow, maybe we'll be more used to each other by then.

She leaves. GASIR is dumbfounded.

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