

Gemma's Date

By

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INT. OFFICE. DAY.

The large, open-plan office is empty and dark except for a square block of light around MIRI, 30, at her desk.

The rows of desks are plain and uniform, laid out in a depressing grid like a cattle farm.

Miri stares blankly at her computer screen, eating a plain boiled egg from a plastic packet that reads, 'Just Eggs'.

She taps her pen.

An email pops up and fills the dark silence with a happy 'plink-plonk'.

The email reads:

*Hi Miri,*

*Yes. That's all good to go. Please send it through.*

*Dave Stanner,*

*Accounts Overseer*

DAVE, 25, walks out of the private office at the end of the room, lighting up the space row by row as he strides to the exit in a smart black trenchcoat.

MIRI

Cheers for that, Dave.

Dave already has his headphones in and walks past Miri without hearing her.

She pulls a face,

MIRI

Prick.

Throwing on her smart but worn leather backpack, Miri hastily shuts down her computer.

EXT. OFFICE BLOCK. EVENING.

Miri quickmarches out of the office, sending a little nod to the doorman.

She has her mobile squeezed between her ear and shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

MIRI

(on the phone)

My boss went for a long golfing lunch and the tosser only just finished reading it. Yeah. Yeah, I know. Don't. I can't even.

INT. CROWDED PUB. EVENING.

GEMMA

Couldn't you have just left?

MIRI

If he had time to think about it there'd be something wrong and it wouldn't get sent for a fortnight.

GEMMA

Sounds like a massive-

MIRI

-prick, yeah. And he's so fucking young.

GEMMA

What a prick.

INT. WAGAMAMA. EVENING.

Gemma is the same age as Miri. She's plumper, happier, prettier. She smiles more than Miri. They're best friends.

MIRI

(through noodles)

and I swear he thinks he's so good-looking but ut's like, kid, if you weren't rich you'd be alone.

GEMMA

Can we stop talking about how much you hate your boss?

MIRI

If it'll stop him from existing.

GEMMA

Maybe pretend, just tonight, that Dave Your Boss doesn't exist. You've never met a man called Dave.

Miri takes a sip of coke.

(CONTINUED)

GEMMA (CONT'D)

Only women.

MIRI

Never met a woman called Dave.

GEMMA

Weird.

Miri flashes her friend an apologetic smile over her coke.

EXT. WAGAMAMA. NIGHT.

GEMMA

Night, dude.

MIRI

You off home?

GEMMA

Not home, no.

She grins cheekily.

MIRI

What?

She slaps her friend to shake out answers.

GEMMA

He's called Dave, actually.

Miri sucks the night air through her teeth in mock concern.

GEMMA

Shut up, he's nice. We like this Dave. This Dave made this Gemma date for the first time in-

The atmosphere turns sincere.

The women share a moment. They remember the harrowing events of a few months ago.

MIRI

I'm so happy for you, Gem.

GEMMA

Yeah. This is good, isn't it.

(CONTINUED)

MIRI  
So good. You're moving forward.

They hug goodbye.

INT. MIRI'S LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Miri hums a happy tune as she pours herself a glass of rose.

She's got cartoons on the telly, and slumps onto the sofa with her wine and laptop.

She scrolls contentedly through job listings, and feels injected with hope.

INT. MIRI'S LIVING ROOM. MORNING.

Miri is asleep on the sofa, still holding her wine.

Breakfast gossip is on the telly.

A phone rings.

Miri splutters awake, confused, and spills her wine all down herself.

MIRI  
Oh, fuck.

She looks around for the source of the weird, unfamiliar noise.

Then it hits her.

MIRI  
What! Haha.

INT. MIRI'S HALLYWAY. MORNING.

She picks up the ringing landline handset.

MIRI  
(smiling)  
Miri speaking.

A pause.

Miri's face falls and her legs go weak. She holds herself up against the wall.

INT. SOUTH LONDON FAMILY HOME. DAY.

Miri is holding a hysterical 50-year-old WOMAN on a patchwork sofa.

the woman grabs Miri's face in two hands.

WOMAN

Come and see me, Miri. Please don't leave me here without her.

Miri tries desperately not to just weep.

MIRI

Of course, Mandy.

The woman cries and lays her head in Miri's lap as Miri looks up through her flooded eyes and meets the gaze of a man standing darkly at the door.

INT. FAMILY HOME CORRIDOR. DAY.

Miri sniffs and wipes away her tears as she struggles to put her shoes on.

The man appears behind her.

SIMON

Last year.

Miri spins round, and tries to wipe the tears away.

MIRI

Oh, Si. I'm sorry. I have to g-

SIMON

-last year. When Gemma came home in floods of tears and covered in bruises. I know you know what happened.

MIRI

Yeah Simon, I do.

They look at each other.

SIMON

I found out who he was, and I beat the shit out of him, Miri.

(CONTINUED)

MIRI

Simon-

SIMON

-I beat the shit out of him, but she was never the same.

Miri fights back tears.

SIMON

She used to wake up in the night. Screaming.

MIRI

This won't-

SIMON

(trying not to break down)  
-You know as well as I do. There's only one reason my little sister would do this.

They hold each other's gaze.

Miri knows exactly what he is saying.

It's planting a seed in her.

INT. OFFICE. MORNING.

Miri sits square at her desk, not even pretending to work.

She stares into the middle-distance, tapping her pen rapidly on the desk.

Her thoughts and ambitions are occupied.

INT. OFFICE. LATER.

MALE OFFICE WORKER

Good weekend, Davey Boy?

Dave is strutting through the desks to his office.

DAVE

Oh yes. Friday night, mate.

He makes a grotesque air-hump and winks at the boy.

Miri stops tapping.

She glares at Dave as he wafts nonchalantly past her desk.

(CONTINUED)

Of all the horrific coincidences...

Miri watches Dave swing his door shut with a whistle, and resolves to murder him.

INT. OFFICE. NIGHT.

All the office is dark except Miri, sitting perfectly still at her desk, tapping her pen and staring straight at the door to Dave's office.

Suddenly, she stops tapping.

The time is now.

She marches steadily along the aisle between the desks, illuminating the space as she goes.

She's at the door when-

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Dave has opened his office door onto Miri.

Momentarily, uncertainty flickers across her.

DAVE

Yes?

The uncertainty is gone.

MIRI

Can I come in, Dave?

Dave is taken aback. He looks at the clock on the wall, then his iPhone, then at Miri.

A pause.

DAVE

(giving up)

Yes. I suppose so- ?

MIRI

(walking in)

Miri.

He reluctantly shuts the door.

MIRI  
Do you like sex, Dave?

DAVE  
What?

She walks sensuously up to him, tapping her pen at the corner of her mouth.

He swallows.

She strokes his adam's apple with the point of the pen.

Dave grins.

Excitedly, he goes to his desk chair.

Disgust creeps over Miri. She hates teh man with everything she has.

She spins round to face him.

He is sitting in the chair, unzipping his trousers and all but licking his lips with anticipation.

Furiously, with the air of a very good, very edgy, dominatrix, Miri puts her pen on the table and removes her belt.

MIRI  
I'm upset today, Dave.

DAVE  
(playing)  
Why, Mona?

MIRI  
It's Miri.

She straps his hand to the chair with the belt and he winces in pleasure.

She hates that he likes it.

MIRI  
My best friend killed herself at  
the weekend.

Dave doesn't quite know what to do with this information.

She's removed his belt and is strapping down his other wrist.

(CONTINUED)

DAVE

Oh.

Miri stands back from her work.

She picks up the pen.

DAVE

Erm. Is this-?

Miri cocks her head questioningly.

MIRI

I'm going to flay the skin off your  
face, David.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Dave screams and screams.

Miri doesn't stop.

His skin squelches and the pen gouges and Miri breathes hard  
and even as she works.

On the desk, a message pops up on Dave's phone.

It reads,

*LISA*

*Thanks for Friday night, Big Boy X*

FADE OUT