

"TERMINAL"

FADE IN:

EXT. THE GATEWAY PUB - EVENING

Speed-dating event in full swing, in a chain pub with sticky tables. MADDIE sits across from an ANGRY MAN. The two are sat in a stony silence, arms firmly crossed.

The bell rings and the angry man gets up to leaves, Maddie snorts and turns away as he tries to shake her hand.

TAV slides into the seat across from her, stethoscope round his neck, doctor's coat still on. They instantly have rapport like they've know each other all their lives, which they have.

MADDIE
That's slick.

TAV
What?

She fans her face.

MADDIE
Swoon.

TAV
What?

She gestures at his doctor's coat and stethoscope.

MADDIE
Come off it. Look at you. You've got a talking point and a bit of prestige.

TAV
Came here straight off shift.

MADDIE
Sure you did.

TAV
I did.

MADDIE
Made any headway?

TAV
The doctor thing does seem to perk people's interest.

MADDIE

Oh right.

TAV

Although one woman gave me really specific details of a worrying skin condition. She was really keen on giving me a sample.

MADDIE

What made you decide to enter the fifth circle of hell?

TAV

Your mother invited me.

MADDIE

My mother, the woman over there, you mean --

She points behind them, where her mother is sat with the angry man.

TAV

She does what she preaches I guess. Who's she talking to?

MADDIE

The asshole re-incarnate. He's the one all the other assholes wish they could be, the one they all flock to. He is the chosen asshole. The asshole of destiny--

TAV

If he's that bad shouldn't we do (something)?

MADDIE

She said she wanted to live life to the fullest. She can breathe that ripe life in front of her now. Really breathe in deep.

Silence.

TAV

When did you start believing in hell?

MADDIE

What are you doing?

TAV

I'm making date-talk.

MADDIE

This is date-talk?

TAV

I mean, yeah--

MADDIE

So not like what do you do, where do you live, did you come far, how are you liking your drink, isn't this awkward, I never usually do these things, my last girlfriend was a crazed banshee. Or my favourite: so are you divorced too?

TAV

I'm not religious--

MADDIE

Unless your mother asks

TAV (CONT'D)

Unless my mother asks,
inshallah

TAV (CONT'D)

But seems like you think most places recently are some kind of hellscape.

MADDIE

Is this a prerequisite to being your romantic partner, whether you believe in hell?

TAV

Getting a good grasp on what my future partner might believe, is kinda important. Maybe not hell--

MADDIE

What are your personal circles of hell?

TAV

Where's my 'isn't this awkward,' I never do this, my ex was an axe murderer. I'm so sorry my mother dragged you here.

MADDIE

Did she drag you?

TAV

She was very convincing.

MADDIE

What, convincing you could score if you brought a stethoscope?

TAV

That you'd hate every minute of this, and would want back-up.

MADDIE

Every minute. But you have the power of 'no, thank you Mrs Roberts, Maddie's fine on her own.'

TAV

It's Alison, now, we have an understanding.

MADDIE

So?

TAV

Circles of hell... A circle-jerk of prostate exams, both giving and receiving, endlessly.

He coughs purposefully. She laughs.

MADDIE

That's the worst you have.

TAV

I mean there's a lot of things I'd rather not see or do, but you kind of get used to it.

MADDIE

(animated)

Exploding pus, knife wounds, people caked in faecal matter? Birth. Oh my god, birth. That's another layer of hell. On the outside it's loads of people telling you it's a joy and the best moment of their lives and on the inside it's just endless vaginal tears. Blood, shit, piss and placentas shooting-- (at you.)

TAV

(de-escalating)

I'd rather not tell someone their loved one's dead.

(MORE)

TAV (CONT'D)

But seems like that be a pretty niche layer of hell, and also somewhat too self-referential. Like you're in hell, and you get to tell other people that their loved ones are dead, even though they're actually the ones that are dead and in hell.

MADDIE

So you think everyone involved is in hell too. Like it's not personally created for you?

TAV

Yeah I'm a pretty selfless guy.

MADDIE

Guess I'm not. There's only so much caring you can do.

TAV

So what's your personally constructed, only you in there hell?

MADDIE

Well infuriatingly long queues would be on my list, and people who tut and give you evil-eyes because they've decided you queue-jumped, even though you didn't and they actually did. But you should have queue-jumped because life is too short and this is bullshit. But you don't. And waiting rooms, where you never hear what you're waiting to hear about. Also Ikea.

TAV

Heathrow Terminal 4 - security.

MADDIE

That's very close to your prostate exam circle of hell.

TAV

Yet it has completely different stakes.

Silence.

MADDIE

Did my mum really make you come?

TAV

Her life is worth grasping by both hands philosophy is pretty catchy.

MADDIE

What because she's seen behind the curtain?

TAV

I mean - I turned off the machines, but there she is getting inappropriately close to a man half her age. It makes you wonder--

They look over at the two of them.

MADDIE

In my mind she went, you know, down-under. You just don't wake up with that sunnier a disposition, when you know...

TAV

You're really caught up on this hell business--

MADDIE

Which side of the table are you sitting on tonight?

TAV

Appear to be sitting on the side I'm on.

MADDIE

Shame. I could give you the glorious inside scoop on half the men in here. It's kind of like the Henry the Eighth rhyme except it goes, divorced, divorced, divorced, it's your fault I'm single you bitter hag, divorced.

TAV

Well on this side of the table, at which I am sat, it's kind of the same story. Except there's you and your mother.

MADDIE

The widow.

She glances over to her mother and the arsehole incarnate, to find them all over each other. She hunches down in her seat and covers her eyes.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

TAV

What?

MADDIE

Don't look over there.

TAV

Oh wow. That's... I can't compete with that. I hope she's not expecting...

She slaps his shoulder.

MADDIE

We should put a stop to it.

TAV

We?

The bell rings.

TAV (CONT'D)

Guess I'm putting a stop to it. See you at the finish line.

She waves him off. Another man slips into the seat across from her, this time he wears a dog collar and holds a pint.

MADDIE

What is it with the props?

GARY

It's kinda my profession.

MADDIE

And my mother asked you to come.

GARY (CONT'D)

And your mother asked me to come.

MADDIE

How's the dog-collar work as an aphrodisiac?

GARY

Like lukewarm piss. Should've brought Tav's costume.