

I Saw You

Claire is seated on a futon in a dorm common room. She is wearing a black lace cocktail dress with a full skirt and is flipping through a magazine. Jack enters casually dressed; is surprised to find her there.

Jack: Hi...

Claire: Hi.

Jack: Oh, you must be Will's girlfriend. He said you'd be here.

Claire: I'm no one's anything. I'm here with Mark.

Jack: Oh, I'm sorry. He's...?

Claire: In the bedroom. On the phone. His Mum, I think.

Jack: Oh. You're going tonight?

Claire: Mhm, you?

Jack: Unclear.

Claire: You should.

Jack: Why?

Claire: I'll be there.

Jack: With Mark.

Claire: Yes, with Mark.

Jack: 1, 2 Names, we haven't done them. Jack.

Claire stays seated. They shake hands.

Claire: Claire.

Jack: Oh.

Jack lets go. From here on there is no pause between replies, conspicuously so. Their speech is quick, curt and accusatory.

Claire: Do I know you?

Jack: No, but I saw you. In...

Claire: Norton's Lit A, I saw you too.

Jack: Sophomore year. *Wuthering Heights*.

Claire: And *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

Jack: Right. The canary.

Claire: Sure. And the moors.

Jack: Well, I should...

Claire: What?

Jack: I dunno.

Claire: Sit?

Jack: Alright.

He sits on a stool straight across from her.

Claire: So.

Jack: So. You know Mark?

Claire: Barely.

Jack: From where?

Claire: *The Tempest*

Jack: I saw it. Who were you?

Claire: The costumes. I did them.

Jack: I liked them.

Claire: Thank you, I stabbed him. Mark. Accidentally. With a needle.

Jack: Auspicious beginning.

Claire: We haven't.

Jack: What?

Claire: Begun.

Jack: Oh. It's his mother on the phone?

Claire: Yes.

Jack: Family emergency?

Claire: Allowance issue.

Jack: He told you that?

Claire: Thin walls.

Jack: I'll go and get him.

Claire: Don't.

Jack: Alright. Music?

Claire: Why not?

Jack rises, plays Serge Gainsbourg and Brigitte Bardot, "Bonnie and Clyde" from his laptop.

Claire: Classic.

Jack: Impressed?

Claire: 1, 2 Not yet.

He sits back down.

Jack: I saw you somewhere else.

Claire: We both won that scholarship.

Jack: Yes, The Monroe. I don't mean that.

Claire: Debate, third round.

Jack: Yes, but no. You won.

Claire: You didn't.

Jack: I was awful.

Claire: You were nervous.

Jack: Amelia's Christmas party.

Claire: Last year.

Jack: Yes. You were crying.

Claire: I wasn't.

Jack: You were. In the coatroom. Why?

Claire: *Not in answer* You were there with Jessica.

Jack: You were there with Ted.

Claire: You could've asked me then.

Jack: I didn't know you.

Claire: But you'd seen me.

Jack: I think I'll get dressed.

Exit Jack. Claire flips through the magazine. Mark opens his door half-way and leans out.

Mark: I'm so sorry, but it's a family emergency. Can you give me one more minute?

Claire: Of course.

Mark: *Grins.* You're too good to me.

Enter Jack in a tux, putting on left cufflink; bow-tie hangs loose around neck.

Claire: Do you know how to tie that?

Jack: No, do you?

Claire: Yes.

Jack: How?

Claire: YouTube.

Claire rises and goes to work on the tie. They are less than six inches apart in height; continue to talk as Jack looks over her slightly bent head. Their dialogue, despite the intimate posture, remains curt and rapid fire.

Jack: I read your editorial.

Claire: "Tyrant Tenure?"

Jack: No. Another one.

Claire: I voted for you.

Jack: This year?

Claire: And last year.

Jack: I've read them all.

Music continues, Claire finishes tying; looks up.

Claire: There.

They don't move apart; don't touch.

Jack: Why Ted?

Claire: He asked me.

Jack: That was all?

Claire: I was crying.

Jack: Say, "Why Jessica?"

Claire: I know why.

Jack: Can I kiss you?

Claire: 1, 2 Not yet.

They look at one another thoroughly and quizzically 1,2,3

Claire: Now.

They kiss. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and stop, don't move apart, don't touch.

Claire: I'm still going with Mark.

Jack: I think I'll call Jessica.

Claire: She's going with Ted.

Jack: Where are you from?

Claire: Nowhere you've heard of. Where are you going?

Jack: Into politics.

Enter Mark, oblivious, though Jack and Claire don't move, don't break eye contact.

Mark: Sorry, sorry! Finally ready.

Picks Claire's clutch up off the futon and hands it to her.

Mark: Here.

She takes it.

Claire: Thank you.

Mark: Coming, Jack?

Jack: Unclear.

Jack and Claire finally break eye contact, she moves away, Mark takes her arm momentarily and then...

Mark: Oh, the tickets!

Goes back into his room.

Jack: Where to next year?

Claire: Appalachia. Teaching.

Jack: *Smiles* You too?

Claire looks at him thoughtfully, doesn't smile. Mark re-enters.

Mark: Well, we're off.

Mark and Claire exit, she doesn't look back. Jack sits down on the stool, unties tie. Black-out.