

Closer

By Patrick Marber

DRAMA

ANNA. How did you get so brutal?

ALICE. I lived a little.

(Alice strokes the sweater, Anna watches her.)

ANNA. You're primitive.

ALICE. Yeah, I am. How's Dan?

ANNA. Fine.

ALICE. Did you tell him you were seeing me?

ANNA. No.

ALICE. Do you cut off his crusts?

ANNA. What?

ALICE. Do you cut off his crusts?

ANNA. What do you want?

ALICE. I want my negatives. *(Anna hands the envelope to Alice)* What's your latest project, Anna?

ANNA: Derelict buildings.

ALICE. How nice, the beauty of ugliness.

ANNA. What are you doing with Larry?

ALICE. *Everything.* I like your bed.

You should come round one night, come and watch your husband blubbering into his pillow - it might help you develop a conscience.

ANNA. I know what I've done.

ALICE. His big thing at the moment is how upset his family are. Apparently, they all worship you, they can't understand why you had to ruin everything. He spends hours staring up my arse hole like there's going to be some answer there, Any ideas, Anna? Why don't you go back to him?

ANNA. And then Dan would go back to you?

ALICE. Maybe.

ANNA. Ask him.

ALICE. I'm not a beggar.

ANNA. Dan left you, I didn't force him to go.

ALICE. You made yourself available, don't weasel out of it.

ANNA. Screwing Larry was a big mistake.

ALICE. Yeah, well, everyone screws Larry round here.

ANNA. You're Dan's little girl, he won't like it.

ALICE. So don't tell him, I think you owe me that. *(Anna looks away.)* She even looks beautiful when she's angry. The Perfect Woman.

ANNA. JUST FUCKING STOP IT.

ALICE. Now we're talking.

ANNA. Why now, why come for me now?

ALICE. Because I felt strong enough, it's taken me five months to convince myself you're not better than me.

ANNA. It's not a competition.

ALICE. Yes, it is.

ANNA. I don't want a fight.

ALICE. SO GIVE IN.

(Silence. They look at each other. Gently.)

Why did you do this?

ANNA. *(Tough.)* I fell in love with him, Alice.

ALICE. That's the most stupid expression in the world. "I fell in love" - as if you had no choice. There's a moment, there's always a moment; I can do this, I can give in to this or I can resist it. I don't know when your moment was but I bet there was one.

ANNA. Yes, there was

ALICE. You didn't fall in love, you gave in to temptation.

ANNA. Well you fell in love with him.

ALICE. No, I chose him. I looked in his briefcase and I found this ... sandwich ... and I thought, "I will give all my love to this charming man who cuts off his crusts." I didn't fall in love, I chose to.

ANNA. You still want him, after everything he's done to you?

ALICE. You wouldn't understand, he ... buries me. He makes me invisible.

ANNA. *(Curious.)* What are you hiding from?

ALICE. *(Softly)* Everything. Everything's a lie, nothing matters.

ANNA. Too easy, Alice. It's the copout of the age.

ALICE. Yeah well, you're old.

(Anna smiles to herself, looks at Alice.)

ANNA. I am sorry. I had a choice and I chose to be selfish. I'm sorry.

ALICE. *(Shrugs.)* Everyone's selfish, I stole Dan from someone else.

ANNA. Ruth?

ALICE. Ruth. She went to pieces when he left her.

ANNA. Did she ever come and see you?

ALICE. No. *(Alice turns to Anna)* So ... what are you going to do?

ANNA. *Think*

(Anna touches Alice's sweater.)

Is Larry nice to you, in bed?

ALICE. OK, Dan's better.

ANNA. Rubbish, at least Larry's there.

ALICE. Dan's there, in his own quiet way.

ANNA. They spend a lifetime fucking and never know how to make love.

(Pause.)

ALICE. I've got a scar on my leg, Larry's mad about it, he licks it like a dog. Any ideas?

ANNA. *(Shrugs.)* Dermatology? God knows. This is what we're dealing with. We arrive with our ... "baggage" and for a while they're brilliant, they're "Baggage Handlers." We say, "Where's your baggage? They deny all knowledge of it ... "They're in love" ... they have none. Then ... just as you're relaxing ... a Great Big Juggernaut arrives ... with that baggage.

It Got Held Up.

One of the greatest myths men have about women is that we overpack.

They love the way we make them feel but not us. They love dreams.

ALICE. So do we. You should lower your expectations.

ANNA. It's easy to say that. I'm not being patronising but you're a child.

ALICE. You are being patronising.

ANNA. And you *are* a child.

(They look at each other.)

Who's "Buster"?

ALICE. "Buster"? No idea.

ANNA. He says it in his sleep.

ALICE. *(Smiles.)* I've got to go. (

Alice makes to exit)

ANNA. Don't forget your negatives.

(Alice picks up the envelope)

ALICE. Oh, yeah. Thanks. *(Alice hands the envelope to Anna)*

Do the right thing, Anna.

(Alice exits. Anna looks at the envelope.)