

Carnal

A play by Nikhil Mahapatra

Time:

Present or a little before it

Place:

Greenwood Heights, Brooklyn, New York

Characters:

Tom - male, late twenties

Dan - male, late twenties

Ricky - male, early thirties

Carla - female, late twenties

Corinne – female, early twenties

Amy – female, mid twenties

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SCENE 7

*Shortly after
DAN rushes out of TOM's room
Pulling on his clothes as he goes.
TOM comes after him, doing the same.*

Dan- TOM

I have to go. DAN

Dan, don't- TOM

This- DAN
Look, I'll call you later and maybe-
We can get dinner. Or a drink- coffee. We can get coffee and talk about it

Coffee? Really? We're not business partners. TOM

Then what are we? DAN

We're together. TOM
That's what you wanted.

I assumed you wanted it too. DAN

I do, I want you- TOM

But you don't love me and you can't get hard for me either, so I don't really know
what we're pretending for when the spark is clearly gone for you. DAN

You're making things up; I didn't say that and I don't feel that way- TOM

DAN

Then how do you feel? Because I don't get it! I just don't get it! Are you attracted to me? Do you have a problem, like a medical issue? We can figure that out, but you need to tell me-

Everything was fine the first time, but ever since then-

Are you bored? Am I boring? Is it that I don't like movies that much? Is it the way I speak, am I fat or am I thin or is it that I'm just ugly and boring and-

TOM

No, that's not it! That's not it!

DAN

Then what is it!

TOM

Silence

I don't know how-

DAN

You don't know? Or you don't want to say? If you're not attracted to me just say it, just say it! I can take it, I'm just-

I keep thinking about it all, all the time, and I'm trying to figure it out but I can't. You like me and you don't. You can't get hard for me but you want to date me. Is there someone else out there? Am I a distraction, a rebound?

TOM

No!

DAN

No?

TOM

No.

DAN

Then what? Are you masturbating too much? Do you have a masturbation problem? A pornography problem.

Pause.

Because. I didn't think about that. And, it would make sense. And a lot of people do that. And there's help, we can get you help, we can figure it out! There's therapy and so many things-

TOM

I don't have a problem with porn-

DAN

Or ED, there are pills, you know there are pills-

TOM

Dan.

DAN

Are you anxious? Anxiety can, it's happened to me, I get anxious about things, so maybe poppers or something-

TOM

I don't mind poppers but it's really not the-

DAN

Then. What is it!?

What is it?

I don't understand.

You're not saying anything.

And I'm just...confused?

I think, and lost and I-

I don't understand. I need you to make me understand. I can't figure this out. I've tried. I've tried to wrap my mind around it and I can't-

Everything I thought, you've denied. At this point, I-

If I'm ugly, I can take it. I mean, I can't take it, but I have to take it. Just say I'm ugly, but-

Please don't let this go on. I can't take it. I can't tell left from right, straight from crooked.

TOM

Dan...

*TOM goes towards him
But DAN jumps back.*

DAN

Don't.

TOM

I'm not going to hurt you-

DAN

Then stop.

TOM

I...I can't help it. It...happens sometimes.

DAN

So, it's medical?

TOM

It's....I find it hard to talk about it-
But it's not you.

DAN

It feels like it's me.

TOM

I promise you, it's not you, it's me.

DAN

DAN cracks a smile at this.

Did you really just say that?

TOM

TOM smiles too.

I did.

DAN

That's some high school level.

TOM

I know. I'm terrible. But it's also true.

You're not ugly. I love how you look. I really do. I think you're really attractive. I love the simple curls in your hair. I love the feel of your skin, the spots on your back-

DAN

I have spots-

TOM

It's art-

And I love the way you put your arms around me. You make me feel safe and loved.

DAN

So, I'm not ugly? Unfit?

TOM

No, you're not.

DAN

It feels like that.

TOM

I know. I'm sorry. I don't want you to feel like that.

DAN

Ever since-

It's just so easy to feel ugly, you know. Sometimes, I trick myself into believing that I had great self-confidence before my ex did what he did. But that's not true. If I was, then I would have been unshaken. But he shattered me with such little effort, like flicking a china doll off a table. I think that's the difficulty of loving. You have to give someone the power to annihilate you, and trust that they won't. We're always just destroying each other, and it's hard to forget that.

TOM

I don't want to annihilate you.

DAN

I'm glad. Neither do I.

So, will you give me the power to destroy you completely?

TOM

I-

That's-

You don't know what you're asking for.

DAN

But I have to ask. I have to know. We can't go forward till you-

TOM

I can try. It's...the right words. Finding the right words is hard. It's like they get stuck in my throat and I can only croak.

DAN

Is it psychological?

TOM

It's definitely my head.

DAN

So? Anxiety? Depression? Multiple personality?

TOM

Multiple personality?

DAN

That was a joke...but it also feels true. Every time I strip your clothes off, it's like I'm flaying you away into nothingness. But you're still there, standing in front of me in all your...radiance. I love it. I love your body. I love that hungry look in your gaze. I love how your skin quivers and hairs stand on edge. But that's all surface- because you're frozen underneath. I don't know where you go, but it's not with me. It's not like it is at the movies or playing with pumpkins. You've gone somewhere, when I

want you with me. Not the doll you leave behind naked. I want you, blood boiling and all, I want you.

TOM

I don't have multiple personality. Or anxiety, or depression. At least not that I know of. It's something else. And I'm....I'm so scared.

DAN

I won't destroy you.

TOM

Don't say that! You don't know! How could you know that, you don't even-! I'm- I'm so-

I'm scared. Terrified. I'm afraid, I can't even speak it. I can't, and I...I don't want to. But Dan. You need to understand, I-

I want it. I hate it, but I want it. I've tried so hard to bury it, over and over again, but I can't help but want it. And sure enough, as the sun rises, my mind goes to dark places and I can't stop myself. I can, but I can't. My hand moves. My body is driven in search of joy. I can't say what it is. But I want it so badly. I want to be ripped apart by the splendour in my veins – but if I let myself, I know I'm going to lose everything. It'll kill every other part of me. It'll destroy everything else I want- every other thing, every other sexless dream. I want what you want. I want to be like you. I want to love someone, and have someone love me for the rest of my life. Till death do us apart, in sickness and in health, I want that everlasting fairy tale love, I want it, it's all I've ever wanted, ever, ever!-

But I can't have it, I don't think so- It doesn't fit into who I am. Because I- I crave-

I-

I-

DAN

Tell me.

TOM

I-

DAN

You can tell me.

TOM

I want you. I want you to-

I want you to rape me. I want you to tie me up and fuck me. I want to be your slave. I want to do everything you say. I want you to command me and crush me. I want to wake up in the morning with you inside me. I want you to bind me and violate, and take away everything from, I want to be a slug at your feet, I want you to carve your name into my flesh and into my brain, I want to be yours so wholly, so madly, so

beyond my existence, I want to betray every biological strand that says I don't want this and I want to obey every maddening sting that says I do. Take me and have your way with me. Spit on me, piss on me, bleed me raw, hang me out to dry, whore me out, and make money off me. Control me. Humiliate me. Don't let me cum. But make me orgasm. Bring me to the heights of pleasure. Take me as far as my body can go. Wrap your love around my throat and drain me of air, let me touch the side of death and experience life beyond what we were meant to experience. Kill me while I orgasm. Fuck me while I die. But don't hurt me. Never that.

Silence.

DAN

You want me to-?

TOM

Destroy me and love me.

DAN

I-

TOM

Love is giving someone the power to annihilate you.

DAN

I don't know if-

TOM

Don't say that-

DAN

I can't-

TOM

Don't say it! You don't need to answer right now. You don't need to answer ever. We can just forget about this too. But now you know. At the very least you know.

DAN

This makes you happy.

TOM

It does.

What are you going to do about it?

Scene end.