

CLOSER by Patrick Marber

INT.MUSEUM – DAY

Alice watches Larry leave.

ANNA
How did you get so brutal?

ALICE
I lived a little.

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 looks at her.

ANNA
What do you want?

ALICE
I want my negatives.

Anna hands the envelope of negatives to her.

ALICE
What's your latest project, Anna?

ANNA
(ignoring her)
What are you doing with Larry?

ALICE
Everything.

Then...

ALICE
I like your bed. You should come over 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 is. Apparently, they all worship you, they can't understand why you had to ruin everything. He spends hours staring up my ass-hole like there's going to be some answer there. Any ideas, Anna?

Beat.

ALICE
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 weasle out of it.

ANNA
Screwing Larry was a big mistake.

ALICE

Yeah, well, everyone screws Larry around here it seems.

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. Starting to boil.

ALICE

She even looks beautiful when she's angry, "The Perfect Woman".

ANNA

(turning on her)
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 stare at each other.

ALICE

(gently)
Why did you do this?

ANNA

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

(giving in)

Yes. There was.

ALICE

You didn't fall in love. You gave into temptation.

ANNA

You fell in love.

ALICE

No. I chose him. I looked into his briefcase and I found this, this sandwich and I thought, "I will give all my love to this man who cuts off his crusts".

Beat.

ANNA

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

ALICE

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

Beat. Then...

ANNA

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

ALICE

So, what are you going to do?

ANNA

Think.

Anna touches Alice's sweater.

ANNA

Is Larry nice to you. In bed?

ALICE

Okay. Dan's better.

ANNA

At least Larry's there.

ALICE

Dan's there, in his own quiet way.

ANNA

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

ALICE

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

ANNA

Dermatology...?

A moment between them. Almost sharing the humour.

ANNA

God knows. This is what we're dealing with. We arrive with our..."baggage" and for awhile they're wonderful. They're "Baggage Handlers". We say, "Where's your baggage?" they deny knowledge of it..."they're in love"...they have none. Then...just as you're relaxing...a GREAT BIG JUGGERNAUT arrives with their baggage. It got held up!

(beat)

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

(beat)

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

ALICE

You should lower your expectations.

ANNA

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

ALICE

You are being patronising.

ANNA
And you are a child.

They look at each other. Smiling...almost...

ANNA
Who's "Buster"?

ALICE
Buster? Hm. No idea.

ANNA
He says it in his sleep.

Alice smiles.

ALICE
I've got to go.

ANNA
Don't forget your negatives.

ALICE
Oh yeah. Thanks.

Alice picks up the envelope of negatives...and hands it to Anna.

ALICE
Do the right thing, Anna.

She exits.