THE GIRL IN THE CAFE

(Int. Restaurant. Gina sitting alone at a table for four. Lawrence searching for a place to sit and finding none, approaches the table.)

LAWRENCE
Do you mind if, I... uh...

GINA
No, go ahead.

(He sits diagonal from her, and begins adding 3 sugars to his tea.)

GINA
That’s a lot of sugar.

LAWRENCE
Well, it’s been quite a tough day.

GINA
The worse your day, the more sugar you have?

LAWRENCE
Yes... well, within certain limits; never higher than four... even on the worse of days. (long pause) It’s actually not bad tea... seeing as how they’re Italian. (pause) How’s your coffee?
GINA
Not great... seeing as how they’re Italian.
(pause) I had a boyfriend who used to make us sit like this. He felt that sitting directly opposite from me, put too much pressure on him to talk.

LAWRENCE
Did he stay your boyfriend long?

GINA
No. But it wasn’t that, that did it for us really. (pause) He used to sleep in old stripey, Marxist Marks pajamas... the top button done up.

LAWRENCE
Ha! – I’d never do the top button.

(Long pause)

GINA
Do you work around here?

LAWRENCE
Yes.

GINA
Interesting?
LAWRENCE
It… uh… has it’s moments. Umm… a lot of paper, a lot of pens.

GINA
You just snuck out?

LAWRENCE
Yes.

GINA
You were craving peace and quiet, with no one talking to you?

LAWRENCE
No, no… this is… um… this is nice.

(Long pause.)

GINA
You can move. (Indicating the seat opposite her) Or, I could… uh (She starts to move)

LAWRENCE
No, I’ll…
(They both are switching seats, resulting in the same diagonal situation. Realizing... Lawrence starts to move back)

GINA
No, stay there. I’ll come back. (She moves back opposite him)

LAWRENCE
And, uh... what about you? What do you do?

GINA
Nothing... uh... student of sorts. (pause) So... Marks & Spencer still making good pajamas then?

LAWRENCE
Well, I wouldn’t really know. I... uh... it’s mainly food these days isn’t it?

GINA
Don’t really know... haven’t been in much recently.

LAWRENCE
I’m told it’s quite the place for dating. I’m told people go there to shop, and they get casually talking about the spaghetti a la carbonara, and suddenly love flowers by the counter for people with under five items.

GINA
Wow. (pause) Well, I suppose people have to meet somehow.

LAWRENCE
Yes. (pause) Yes... (looks at his watch) Oh dear... my masters only give me tiny windows of freedom. I’d better be going.

GINA
Better finish it. (indicating his tea) All the sugar’d be at the bottom. That’s the best part.

LAWRENCE
Yes... If you want to be fat, fat, fat. Which of course... I do. (finishes his tea) Well, it was lovely... uh... sitting directly opposite you.

GINA
And you.

LAWRENCE
I enjoyed the earlier time as well, obviously. I’m Lawrence.

GINA
I’m Gina.

(He stands)

LAWRENCE
Goodbye.

GINA

Bye.

(He leaves. She goes back to her coffee. He get to the door – struggles – and with great difficulty returns to the table)

LAWRENCE

Look, uh... you wouldn’t care to... uh... perhaps meet again, for uh... coffee, or a bite to eat, or something,... sometime?

GINA

Ok.

LAWRENCE

(Shocked) Oh! Well! Uh, good lord... good, uh... (pulls out his appt. book) When would be a good time... uh?

GINA

Whenever. I have absolutely nothing to do with my time.

LAWRENCE

Uh... that’s rather... a severe contrast. Uh... what about lunch then, next Thursday? Oh no, damn... the Wednesday after that... no, oh dear. Friday... two weeks!?...

GINA
Yeah... I’m free. (pause) Where?

LAWRENCE
Well... there’s uh... there’s uh... a proper Italian restaurant next door.

GINA
Sounds good.

LAWRENCE
Well, ok, ok... that’s uh... splendid. It can’t be a very long lunch though because... no... but, that’s good. Uh... thank you. Something to look forward to. Look, I’d better be going. I’m already aggressively late.

GINA
Go. Don’t work to hard.

LAWRENCE
Sorry.... I’m afraid... uh... that’s what I do. (he leaves)