

The Lunch Room
By
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CHARACTERS

Renee: top level executive in an corporate agency
Dana: mid level management trainee in same corporate agency
Secretary: works for Renee
Worker: construction worker

SETTING

The lunch room in a corporate office.

TIME

Mid-afternoon during lunch. The same day hours later. The same day in the evening.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Renee walks into corporate lunch room with several newspapers and lunch followed by her secretary behind her talking. They both sit down at lunch table.

SECRETARY

I have few things to tie-up before lunch then I will be out of your hair. Peterson?

RENEE

From this morning's meeting? Yes, I called him after the meeting. He is coming back in tomorrow with another partner. We will try again. Check the calendar it should be there

SECRETARY

New York e-ticket is in your inbox?

RENEE

Thank you

SECRETARY

Betty Richman wants to see you briefly regarding the new project

RENEE

She can see Bill

SECRETARY

She prefers to talk to *you*

RENEE

Send the info to Bill and I will see her next week. Make sure Bill gives it a look and shoots me an email *before* I see her. Is that it?

SECRETARY

Oh and your mother called.

RENEE

Of course she did (*smiles*)

Secretary stands up and leaves. Renee is sitting at the table reading the Wall Street Journal. Dana walks in and starts preparing her lunch, chopping veggies for her salad at the counter. Lights dim, power goes out, power back on, lights dim, lights back on. Door slams shut open shut.

DANA

What's going on?

RENEE

I don't know.

(Gets up and slowly walks over to door tries to open it. It is stuck. Pulls hard then harder)

Seems like the door is jammed. Can you give me a hand?

DANA

Sure

(Gets up and rushes to her side. They both pull hard with no luck)

RENEE

Huh, weird

DANA

Oh no

RENEE

What?

DANA

The doors were worked on by maintenance today. They were fixed to automatically open during an emergency or fire.

RENEE

Ok, but they are not opening *(walks over to the phone)*. Phone is dead too. Do you have your cell?

DANA

(shakes head no)

RENEE

Me either, I took a break from it during lunch.

DANA

Me too. I did want to talk to him

(She says under her breath talking to herself out loud)

RENEE

What?

DANA

Nothing. I'm sorry I get a little chatty when I get nervous and I'm a bit claustrophobic. How are we going to get out of here?

RENEE

Let's try to jimmy the lock

(Goes over to drawer and takes out a butter knife. Walks back over to door and tries to jam knife into latch, knife breaks and falls into halves onto the ground.)

DANA

How are we going to get out of here?

RENEE

I don't know right now. I think we are safe for the time being. It must be some glitch in the new system

RENEE

Someone will figure it out. I guess we are stuck for a while.

DANA

That's it?! I guess we are stuck?! How can you be calm?! We have no idea what is happening! It could be 9/11 out there. We have no contact with the outside world. A gunman...

RENEE

Whoa. Relax. We have to stay calm. How about you get your lunch, sit down and eat.

DANA

(stares for a long time then retrieves lunch from microwave and sits down)

RENEE

Good. I'll get my lunch too.

DANA

(does not eat)

RENEE

Come on now, try to relax *(Silent eating and awkward)*

DANA

(Breathing slowly playing with food.)

RENEE

(Back to reading the newspaper as she takes small bites)

SCENE 2

Clock displaying Time lapse. Dim lights. Lights return both women in same positions. Dana looking bored and Renee reading the paper trying to do the crossword.

DANA

(clearing voice)

The Peterson meeting was really long this morning.

RENEE

(Looking up then back down to paper)

Yes, it was.

DANA

My boss was in that meeting this morning. That's how I know about it. It was quite the topic this morning. It seemed so intense. ...I heard you were really good in there.

RENEE

What?

DANA

Y-you were good at presenting. I am always impressed with how you speak so confidently. It's refreshing.

RENEE

Thank you. Are you implying that you are not confident?

DANA

Not really

RENEE

Not really? You seem pretty confident to me from what I know about you.

DANA

...You know about me?

RENEE

Don't you work for the Vice President of the company?

RENEE (continue)

Didn't you start off in an entry level position?

RENEE (continue)

You've worked here only 4 years and you are a finalist for the junior executive fellowship this year.

RENEE (continue)

We have worked in the same building for 4 years. *(smirk)* And you don't know anything about *me*?

DANA

You are an exec...People are suppose to know about you. You're important.

RENEE

So are you. We are all important or there would be no us

DANA

Do you really feel that way?

RENEE

Of course, and you're surprised?

DANA

Yes, you don't have to care about people who work under you

RENEE

But I do. Without *you* there is no *me*. *Together* we all make the company; everyone. Haven't you read the company's vision statement?

DANA

Yes, of course

(Lights dim, power goes out, power back on, lights dim, lights back on. Both Renee and Dana jump startled. They run to the door to try it but it's too late.)

RENEE

Are you ok?

DANA

...No! I had a shitty day that and now I am stuck in a Lunch Room. You make me sooo uncomfortable. *(Starts pacing back and forth talking to herself and rocking a bit when she stood still. Wring hands and breaking into a small sweat she runs over to the door trying to open it. She starts to hyperventilate as she tries to talk)* We ... need ... to get...

RENEE

Whoa. Whoa. (*gently grabs her looking into her face*) Calm down I need you to breath right now. Dana *look* at me. I need you to breath right now. Breath. Breath. That's better we are ok we are going to be ok. Come on sit down. (*easing Dana to a chair and rushes to get a cup of water.*) That's it. That's it much better ... I'm sorry about your day.

I think we *are* safe. We *are* safe and we are going to be ok.

DANA

There you go again with the confidence....or you are an excellent liar

RENEE

I'm glad you are feeling a little better (*Making eye contact. Wanders aimlessly back to seat. Seemingly rattled but holding it together*)

DANA

(*After a long silence*) I'm sorry I snapped. I need to hold it together

RENEE

Don't worry about it. You ok, right?

DANA

(*Dana nodding*)

RENEE

Good (*smiles*) We *are* safe and we are going to be ok.

DANA (*swallowing then softly to herself*)

God you make me uncomfortable

RENEE (*shocked*)

What? (*walks back over to table.*)

Did you say something? Are you talking to me?

DANA

No, no, no it's not like that (*shaking head*) Its-its never mind, forget I said it (*continuing*) It's your presence like I know you have it together and I want to have it together.

RENEE

Thank you I do not have it together

DANA

It sure seems like it to me.

Renee sits down across from Dana. They sit in silence. Lights dim

SCENE 3

Lights up. The two are looking a bit more exhausted. Clock shows time lapse. Lights flicker and Dana jumps. Both run for door with no luck. Slowly sit back down. Renee places her hand over Dana for calming. Hold eyes for a moment and Renee pulls hand back slowly. Quietly sitting Renee looking bored and Dana looking super annoyed. After a while Dana takes a deep breath and breaks the silence.

DANA

So can I have a turn?

RENEE

A turn?

DANA

At saying what I know about you.

RENEE

But you said it was not a stretch to know about me

DANA

I know you are in a relationship. If you don't mind me saying

RENEE

Really?! How do you know that?

DANA

You get flowers sometimes

RENEE

(Renee slowly smiles) Yes I do

(Lights flicker, door open then closes both jump and run to the door trying to get out. No luck)

RENEE

Jeezes. *(Renee sighs. Frozen for a long time slowly makes it back to table reading paper again.)* They will figure it out *(she assures Dana about the doors silence)*

DANA

Yeah I hope so. We have been here for hours.

DANA (continued)

Are you in love?

RENEE

That's pretty personal

DANA

We can leave our conversation in this lunch room. We have been here for over two hours and I'd say we are bonding *(silence, Dana waiting to make eye contact with Renee, she continues when Renee looks up at her)* When we leave it stays here. I agree to that

RENEE

I don't know. *(shaking head)* Last thing I need is some weird gossip coming back to me. I don't think so. *(extra long silence)*

DANA

I don't gossip. I won't talk about you. I really want to ask about what you think it feels like. It is an interesting topic to me. *Renee shifts in seat and meets Dana's eyes)*

DANA (continued)

I just broke up with what's his name. You know his name because he's the same guy with a different face that rotates through every girl's life. At least

through mine. He's the one that is so self absorbed, he wants eye candy and an escort for important events like work parties and hockey games. No real conversation occurs that are not about him, his friends, his job or his thoughts. I was waiting for the day he would ask about me and I waited too long. Then one day he decided I was just too average for him. He said those words *too average*, not enough confidence. I was rejected by a *reject*. I love your strong voice and confidence. I wish I could harness it and ride it out of this lunch room. When you see me next week I will have bridled your confidence in every area of my life. I will have it! and wear it like a badge of honor. *(long uncomfortable silence)*

RENEE

You have it.

DANA

What? *(lost in thoughts she forgot Renee was there.)* Oh my God, I am so sorry. (I don't know what has gotten into me Ms. Davenport. Low blood sugar or something. I should not be talking like this. I'm *(getting up moving around like she's going somewhere looking for a place to hide)* I'll just...

RENEE

Don't leave. There is no where to go. We are in this lunch room together please sit *(Renee waits as Dana slowly sits back down away from Renee then thinks out loud to herself)* it was refreshing to hear someone state what's really going on in her mind

(Long silence both lost in thoughts. Loud noises outside of door. Renee jumps up and yells for help)

RENEE

We are here! *(Dana jumps up and joins the yelling hitting on door)*

DANA

Help! Help! *(loud slamming noises from outside the door, then silence)* What is going on!

RENEE

I don't know. This may be much longer than I thought. Let's assess the food and water.

DANA

What?! This is not Survivor!

RENEE

(walking to the refrigerator.) No, it is not but if this continues we should see what is available. *(Opens refrigerator)* See if there are any dry goods, check the cupboards

DANA

(Pauses then checks and unloads the cupboards placing items on the table.)

Well... Here's what I found

(Renee walks up to the table and surveys the items)

Granola bars and crackers. Well that's better than nothing

Dana turns toward Renee

DANA

What's in the refrigerator?

RENEE

We have a bag of baby carrots, 3 small yogurts, a bag of celery, two oranges and some frozen vegetables. Oh yeah and what's left of our lunches.

DANA

Do you really think this could go on for days?

RENEE

I was hopeful at first but it's obvious that something is happening out there that is making it difficult to open the doors. We have been here for way over 3 hours. We may not be the only people trapped. They were working on the whole building right? Well, first everyone has to be accounted for then they look for people. We should get comfortable.

DANA

I'll put all the food together. How about drinks?

RENEE

(Checks the sink turns on the water) Well... we have water. You ok?

DANA

Yeah. This is turning into something isn't it?

Renee takes off shoes and sits on the floor. Dana sits back in a chair.

DANA

Sorry again for my crazy rant earlier. How embarrassing

RENEE

It wasn't

DANA

Yeah for you it wasn't

RENEE

Sorry about your boyfriend problem

Dana looks at Renee they hold a gaze for a moment.

DANA

That was nice. You mean you are not mortified that I dated such a loser and had the nerve to share it aloud?

RENEE

Renee shaking head no in an answer to the question

We have all been there.

DANA

I have been on edge lately. I guess I can hold it together for a minute or two but the super long lunch pushed me over the edge.

RENEE

Ahhh. Come on give yourself a break

DANA

Yeah? *(holding her gaze a minute before she moved to the floor to sit down)* Ok, make the playing field even.

RENEE

What do you mean?

DANA

Make this space more like two people rather than a higher up and a subordinate?

RENEE

By doing what?

DANA

By telling me something that is equally as embarrassing.

RENEE

Come on. You can not be serious?

DANA

I am. We have been here for hours. You have read the paper several times, attempted the crossword puzzle, written to do list and listened to me babble on. I can never really take back my flightiness, can I? *(Waiting for some acknowledgement)* But you can ease some of the pain by letting your guard down and giving me a break. At this rate I will never be able to look you in the eye again Right?

RENEE

Hmmm. Something embarrassing? I can't think of anything.

RENEE

continue

About relationships or in general?

DANA

You are not the kind of person that needs help to have a conversation *(Dana shakes her head)*
Ok, what is something that happened to you when you were a kid?

RENEE

A kid? Hmmm. One time I wore an outfit my mom made for me that was so out of style the kids made fun of me, tie dye pants suit and tie dye was not in style that year.

DANA

That is so wrong? That is cruel. I would never want anyone to make fun of you. Not a fun story, a fun story is not cruel.

RENEE

Your story was not funny. How some loser broke your heart and did not appreciate you for who you are.

RENEE

Sorry

DANA

No. Thank you for that. *(uncomfortable silence)*

They both start to talk at the same time.

DANA and RENEE

I

SCENE 3

Time lapse. Lights dim, dark lights back up. The two women are sitting closer, shoes off comfortable together laughing.

DANA

Worst hairstyle

RENEE

80's, only Farrah Fawcett had it going on the rest of us were hurting. I hide those photos
(both laughing together) You seem a lot more relaxed

DANA

Than my usual hold it together until you are in the room with a higher up. I'm not normally so neurotic. *(looking at Renee)* you seem a lot relaxed too

RENEE

Than my usual uptight self. I'm not that stiff

DANA

How many times did you read that newspaper?

RENEE

Ok, a little stiff. *(laughing)*

RENEE

Worst date

DANA

Bill Coleman, his breath smelled like the bottom of a shoe and he was incoming for a good-night kiss after a long night of duck and move maneuvers! They laugh together. *(laughing dies down then silent for a moment)* And you?

RENEE

(Renee clears her throat and hesitates.)

Clare Washington. She was dressed like a construction worker and I thought I was taking out this sweet girl I met at a coffee shop not the Village People. *(They both laughed and look at each other. silence for a moment)*

DANA

Why did you hesitate to tell me your worst date?

RENEE

I did not want to talk about dating women. You know why

DANA

You think I don't know.

RENEE

It does not matter if you know or not. I have seen conversations stop because of it

DANA

And you think that's *me*

RENEE

You can never be sure, right?

DANA

Wrong

RENEE

Let's change the subject. Come on we were having a fun passing the time. God the time?!
What is going on with this place? I have not heard a sound in over an hour.

DANA

Tell me about it and you are the calm one

RENEE

Can you pass me my jacket I'm getting cold. I think its getting dark. *Passes jacket Renee starts to put on shoes and huddles her arms together around her legs. She looks over at Dana.*

RENEE

Are you cold? I'm sorry. You have no jacket... I don't mind if you sit next to me. *Dana snuggles next to Renee as she shares her jacket. Dana's face seems to look uncomfortable and she squirms* You ok? *Dana does not make eye contact*

DANA

Yeah (*she mumbles not looking up*)

RENEE

How about TV shows that jumped the shark. Glee season 2, Rachel was so ridiculous.

Dana leans over and kisses Renee as she finishes her sentence. Renee starts to pull away but instead kisses Dana back passionately. Separating slowly both are shocked

RENEE

No..., I'm sorry (*eases away from Dana standing up and putting the table between them*)

DANA

I'm not (*speaking softly to herself*) I don't know why I did that. I have never. I don't know what to say. I had the strongest feeling I have ever had. I was compelled to feel your mouth against mine. I just (*rambling*) felt so...

RENEE

I'm sorry. I should not have. If you want to contact HR. I completely understand. If you want to press charges. I..

DANA

Stop.

RENEE

If you want to press charges.

DANA

Stop it!

RENEE

I want you to know I will take full responsibility

DANA

DON'T! (*says sharply*) Don't you dare cheapen this.
Dana slowly gets up and approaches her.

DANA

Don't.. *She reaches for her hand. Renee is struggling*

RENEE

No, I can't...

Dana eases closer into Renee's space

DANA

Can't what?...I felt something I have never felt before...I'm sorry. (*Puts hand over Renee's heart. Shaking head yes*) You felt it too. You did. Your heart is racing.

Renee closes her eyes as she pulls Dana into her arms. Slowly, they kiss again passionately. Renee catches herself slowly pulls away and turns her back

RENEE

I can not do this.

DANA

Stop being an executive for a minute. Please. I have always felt something ... I can't explain it. You make me so uncomfortable

RENEE

(Renee sighs as she recalls) You have a crush on me?

DANA

I don't know! All I know is I was uneasy. I did not know it was... attraction. If that is what this is... I have never kissed anyone like that in my whole life. I have never felt such an overwhelming magnetism.

RENEE

What are you looking for here Dana?

DANA

Honesty Renee. Ms. Davenport, honesty.

RENEE

What is the point of this. This is fruitless. Do you know what you are trying to say? You want to talk about how you felt during one kiss. One kiss?

DANA

Two kisses

RENEE

Ok, and what is going to become of this? We are going to leave the security of this lunch room and be back into the mainstream of society. Your deep feelings won't feel so deep when you are faced with the socialization of a man centered society. We are not on E-Harmony and this is not a reality show! Yes, we kissed and it was real and that is all that will come of it.

DANA

Quit trying to change the subject. Did you feel something? Answer me. Have you thought about me before this moment? Easy stuff Renee stop skirting the question.

RENEE *(quiet for a long pause)*

I've noticed you..I think you know that

DANA

Noticed?

RENEE

Wondered,... thought about from time to time. So, what? It is not a big deal

DANA

What are you afraid of? We are the only ones here and I just want to talk through this. Did you feel something special when we kissed?

RENEE

Yes, ok?!

DANA

Yeah, I did too. Don't you want to know what this means?

RENEE

No...It can not mean anything.

DANA

Your job? Right?

RENEE

NO! It can not mean anything because I can not be your first girl crush, attraction or whatever.

DANA

You think I am making this up!

RENEE

No. I am a lesbian. I have been out for many years. You are a straight woman who shared a kiss with a woman for the first time, right? This is not a special situation. I am often the victim of straight women who want to live out their fantasies or just get some extra attention.

DANA (*scoffing at her words*)

RENEE

Straight women think I'm up for grabs because I am attracted to *some* women. I'm not attracted to everyone! I'm held to a different standard as a gay woman. I'm toyed with, flirted with, touched, caressed or whatever because some women need attention and think I'm going to give it to them.

DANA

What does that mean? Really, Renee?! That is the biggest crock of shit. I'm after you now and you are a victim! Really!? This is very much like the male female relationships that I'm use to. We share an intimate moment and you can not stand to acknowledge it. Why don't you stop with the gay lecture and honestly tell me, did I feel what I thought I felt. Did you kiss me with all your heart or am I delusion and needy?

RENEE

You know I kissed you back.

DANA

So why are you running away from it?

RENEE

I'm not. I can not be your first. I can not help you explore your sexuality or attraction as you figure it out. I'm not going down that road. As you play with the idea of loving a women sexually I'm not sponsoring the effort. My guess is that you have not even slept with a woman? I'm not going to hold your hand while you figure out your sexual journey. I have made my journey. We are on different pages.

DANA

Am I crazy!? Did we just not share an intimate moment?! A moment deeper than anything I have ever had and you are tossing it to the side as make believe. *Something* made your heart race and you are going to stand here and tell me I am in some sexual developmental phase. You are part of the phase Renee! Did you feel something that was *not* real? Did you?!

RENEE

NO! *(Renee grabs Dana's arms and pulls her closer. Renee whispers into her face)* I felt something that was so real.

(Their mouths touch as they both look into each others eyes Renee pulls away Dana turns away and starts to tear up.)

RENEE

Don't *(softly)*

DANA

Shut up! Crying not part of my sexual journey? *(she says sarcastically)*

RENEE

You don't understand... do you know how many hearts are broken by women like you

DANA

Women like me

RENEE

I'm sorry. I don't mean to sound flippant and cold. Women who find they are attracted to another woman or someone special, someone unexpected. I'm not a calendar you can flip when you want. I'm a real person and when I feel I feel for *real*. I'm not going to change my mind in 5 years and marry some guy to have kids! I'm not going to suddenly realize I am not fulfilled and pack my things and move out. I'm not going to get tired of the endless stares as I kiss you in public or hold your hand at a movie. It is for real for *me*.

I have always noticed you I want you and our little vacation (*looking around*) locked in here did not help. I'm for keeps and you just entered the building.

DANA

You want me

RENEE

I can't

DANA

You won't

RENEE

Don't

DANA

Are you seeing someone?

RENEE

No

DANA

The flowers

RENEE

Someone wants to see me. I'm single.

DANA

And you would just leave me like this, knowing I want more.

RENEE

I have no choice. You can't really know what you want. It could be real for a month or two. Only time could tell right?

DANA

I guess

RENEE

Sexuality is a fluid experience and I'm sure you will find a comfortable place. I could never live up to your fantasy anyway.

DANA

It's reality to me. *(reaches for Renee's hand, Renee takes her hand)*

Large sounds outside of the door. Both women jump startled and rush to the door still holding hands. Pounding sounds and a Construction worker voice

WORKER

Anyone in there?

RENEE

YES! We are here. There are two of us!

WORKER

Ms. Davenport?

RENEE

Yes. I'm here with Ms. Rogers. *(looking into each other's eyes)*

WORKER

I will be right in hold tight. Does anyone need any medical attention?

RENEE

No we are fine. *(looking into Dana's eyes)*

WORKER

Stand back! *(Rustling and conversations outside the door)*

Loud noises and pounding outside the door. Door flies open. Worker comes into room. and starts to immediately on the door. Hands release.

Renee's secretary comes into the room on the heels of the construction worker

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1

Are you ok Ms. Davenport...

RENEE'S SECRETARY (*moving in front of the construction worker*)

Oh my God, I have been so worried.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER

Ms. Rogers (*Dana nods*)? Ms. Rogers your boss is awaiting to see if you are ok. We have many people who were worried about you two. This door system shut down and we could not get it to budge. So sorry. EMT'S are in the hallway waiting for you two for a routine check-up.

RENEE'S SECRETARY

You mother has called several times. I have no idea how she knew. I did not tell her a thing. Are you ok? My goodness, hours stuck in here?! (*she looks around*) Now, come let's get you downstairs the EMT's are waiting outside in the hallway to check you out.

RENEE (*pulling her arms away from being rushed out the door*) I'm fine, (*pausing to look at Dana before leaving the Lunch Room*)

(*Dana and Renee hold glances at each other. Renee leaves. Dana pauses a moment packs up her things and walks toward the door*)

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1

(*Stops Dana*) Are you ok? So sorry about this. Being locked in a room for such a long time can be traumatic.

DANA

Yes, (*nodding*) it can be.) It also can be very reflective. (*looking around room like she was taking in the memories*)

CONSTRUCTION WORKER #1

Yeah? Most people who are in a situation like this are a bit more frazzled.

DANA

I think I learned a lot about myself. It is almost like a new beginning. (*Exits Lunch Room lights dim to dark*)

THE END

