

Intimate Matters

by

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## CHARACTERS

JENNA – 25, *a trans woman; she's attractive and confident, with a wry sense of humor, and a weariness born from some hard experiences*

NIALL – 25, *a cis man; open, guileless and easily embarrassed, he's prone to making faux pas, and attempting to smooth them over*

## SETTING

A restaurant in a U.S. city. The romantic ambiance at time clashes with the tone of the pair's talk.

## TIME

Present day.

A Restaurant. NIALL and JENNA sit at a table.

NIALL

I enjoyed meeting you at the party. Thanks for coming out tonight.

JENNA

Of course. I'm glad / you asked

NIALL

Oh, when I said "coming out," I didn't mean, like, because you're transgender. I / just meant here

JENNA

Right.

NIALL

Sorry . . . I don't mean to be weird about, you know . . . I think it's great, personally.

JENNA

Um, thanks? . . . Have you eaten here before? The menu looks good.

NIALL

Yes . . . I hope that wasn't awkward just now, when I said I / think it's great

JENNA

(becoming annoyed)

It was . . . fine.

NIALL

Oh, good.

JENNA

How do you Vince and Aubrey?

NIALL

Aubrey and I went to school together. How about you?

JENNA

I met Vince through work. I was glad he invited me. They're good party hosts.

NIALL

Definitely. When Aubrey invites me, I'm there . . . So, J.K. Rowling – what the fuck, huh?

JENNA

I'm sorry?

NIALL

You know, with the / anti-trans stuff

JENNA

Are you bringing up J.K. Rowling because I'm trans and it's the first thing you think of when, like, you look at me, or something?

NIALL

Oh, I mean, um . . . maybe. That's bad, isn't it?

JENNA

It's kind of weird. I guess it's good that you didn't ask me about surgeries before our appetizers came, though.

NIALL

Haha, right. Totally.

JENNA

You weren't just about to ask me about surgeries, / were you

NIALL

No . . . I mean, um – honestly, yes, I / was

JENNA

Wow.

NIALL

I was sort of . . . working my way toward – I should just stop / talking

JENNA

Jesus . . . Vince mentioned / you were kind of awkward

NIALL

In my defense, you and I are on a date, so . . .

JENNA

So . . . what, exactly? You thought, "Why not / bring up

NIALL

No. I, you know, thought we might . . . at some point, maybe, become "intimate," and . . .

JENNA

You didn't think I would have shared . . . some things,  
before that happened?

NIALL

(embarrassed, flustered)

Oh, was I supposed to wait?

JENNA

I don't know. There's not, like, an authoritative  
etiquette guide on the matter. I think you're always  
on safe ground not asking people about their / genitals

NIALL

Right, sorry . . . We are on a date, though . . .

JENNA

Yes, I believe you / mentioned that

NIALL

Right.

Pause.

JENNA

I feel like you're just sitting there obsessing on my  
groin now.

NIALL

I don't mean / to, it's

JENNA

What if I spent our whole dinner speculating  
indirectly about the size of your penis?

NIALL

Oh . . . I guess I'd feel a little self-conscious.

JENNA

I'm not / surprised

NIALL

Did you want to know the size of / my penis

JENNA

No! It was a hypothetical / question

NIALL

Right. Sorry.

JENNA

It would be nice to just get to know you a little as people before, you know, discussing “those things.”

NIALL

Oh, okay.

JENNA

What were you like in high school, for instance?

NIALL

Me? I was kind of quiet.

JENNA

Aww. Were you a daydreamer?

NIALL

(suddenly)

Were you a boy in high school? Oh my / gosh

JENNA

What?!

NIALL

Sorry. It just occurred to / me that

Jenna gathers her things, upset.

JENNA

I can't do this.

NIALL

No, wait. Please. I promise I wasn't trying to upset you.

JENNA

You asked what gender I was in high school, but you “weren't trying to / upset me”

NIALL

No, I wasn't . . . I was just curious, I swear.

JENNA

Okay . . . but it did upset me, do you understand that?

NIALL

Oh. I'm sorry. Do you want to say / why it

JENNA

I'm a woman. I don't want to be asked about when  
I was forced to act like / I was a boy

NIALL

That makes sense. Sorry . . . will you stay? On our  
date, I mean?

JENNA

(sighs, wary)

I guess.

NIALL

Thanks . . . in high school I was mainly quiet  
because my mom died and when I tried to talk  
about it, people got annoyed.

JENNA

Oh, I'm sorry. That sounds hard.

NIALL

Thanks. I saw a counselor, which helped, and by  
college things were better.

JENNA

That's good. I like counseling.

NIALL

Oh, did you see a counselor – oops.

Niall covers his mouth spontaneously. Jenna appears confused and stunned, then laughs.

NIALL

Sorry about that. I, um . . . never mind.

JENNA

You were going to ask if / I saw a

NIALL

I stopped myself, though. I realized / it might

JENNA

I feel like an asshole now.

NIALL

No. You shouldn't.

JENNA

I'm some first date fascist, who's taught you to censor / yourself

NIALL

No, it's good. I don't want to be rude / to you

JENNA

I did see a counselor in order to get a letter for my hormones.

NIALL

Right . . . I thought that might have been the case. You didn't need to say that if you didn't / want to, though

JENNA

Fuck. This is the most awkward evening, isn't it?

NIALL

No . . . it's, um, we're getting to know each / other

JENNA

Besides the topic I've said I don't really want to talk about, are there other questions / you had

NIALL

No . . . I was wondering when you thought you might be open to / sharing about

JENNA

Seriously?

NIALL

Just because, you know, it seems like we're getting along so far, so . . .

JENNA

Your optimism is bordering on the delusional.

NIALL

Huh? . . . I mean, I shared about my mom, / and

JENNA

Sorry, I shouldn't have said that.

NIALL

It's okay.

JENNA

(with difficulty)

I transitioned in freshman year, and even though I was a girl for almost all of high school, no guy would date me, because they were afraid it would "make them gay."

NIALL

Oh, sorry. That's awful.

JENNA

Why would a guy liking a girl be "gay," you know?

NIALL

It isn't. They were just stupid.

JENNA

(upset)

And it's not "stupid" that you're fixated on the status of my genitals now?

NIALL

Oh, um . . . it's a little different, I think?

JENNA

In what way?

NIALL

Well, I agree that you're a woman, and I don't think my being here, regardless of, you know . . . whatever equipment - no, that's dumb, um, / . . .

JENNA

You don't think dating me makes you gay.

NIALL

Right. Exactly . . . Having said that, though, I - and this is probably a fault of my own - can't really imagine, you know, any kind of . . . sexual activity I could pleurably take part in / that would involve

JENNA

That is so basic, Niall.

NIALL

It's true, though!

JENNA

I hate when guys say that.

NIALL

I like intercourse . . . between my penis and a vagina, I mean.

JENNA

You should speak up. I don't think they heard you in the kitchen.

NIALL

(embarrassed, softer)

Oh, right. It is how I feel, though.

JENNA

Have you even tried anal? On a woman, I mean? It's similar.

NIALL

It's . . . messy.

JENNA

Really? . . . Okay, there's oral sex. There's you getting pegged while she wears a / strap on

NIALL

Jenna.

JENNA

Alright, it sounds like you don't want to / do that

NIALL

I don't think having . . . a boundary around something like that is - that's okay, isn't it?

JENNA

It's hurtful. A lot of trans women will never be able to afford surgery.

NIALL

I understand that.

JENNA

And you don't care? You're just / like, "I only want

NIALL

I do care. I've donated to people's GoFundMes. I think insurance should / cover

JENNA

So you asked me out just to roll the dice, and see / what I might have down there

NIALL

No . . . I enjoyed meeting you, and thought you were attractive.

JENNA

But if I did have a / penis

NIALL

Arrgh . . . can't you just tell me?

JENNA

Oh my god.

NIALL

Sorry. I / shouldn't have said

JENNA

I had my surgery, Niall. Are you happy?

NIALL

Um, I mean . . . sort of, or – I meant, I'm happy for you, because I'm / sure you

JENNA

Yes, I can tell my potential dysphoria was on the top of / your mind

NIALL

Do you hate / me

JENNA

No . . . your social ineptitude is kind of / charming

NIALL

Really? You don't think I'm unbearably dumb?

JENNA

No.

NIALL

Oh, wow. I thought from the moment I brought up J.K. Rowling, you'd been looking at me with contempt.

JENNA

Nope . . . good to know that's the vibe I give off, though, / I guess

NIALL

Wow, so you're enjoying our date? Oops, that sounded really / desperate

JENNA

That was a shockingly direct / question

NIALL

Right. Sorry. Maybe we should look at / our menus

JENNA

I've had worse . . . dates, I mean.

NIALL

Really? Oh, so . . . that's good / then, right

JENNA

I still think your "preferences" indicate a lack of imagination, on your part.

NIALL

Oh, um . . .

JENNA

I guess as a cis male, that's not your / fault, though

NIALL

Maybe you . . . could try the "pegging" thing you mentioned - I mean, if / you want

JENNA

Oh, wow.

NIALL

I just thought that, since / you brought it up

JENNA

Right. Let's see where the evening takes us.

Both lift their menus, smiling.