Paul – BUS 1

**In Loco Parentis extract**

**Brian, a teacher in his mid 50s -**



**Maggie, a teacher in her 40s**



*A school residential trip for Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Brian, designated driver, has absconded with the school minibus, and children – hiking across the moors -  need to be picked up. Maggie,  tracks him down to find out what’s going on, so they can get the kids and save their career*



*………*

MAGGIE:

Maybe we could do some... biology...

*She reaches over to unzip his anorak. He lets her. She turns her attention to his trousers and starts to undo his belt. BRIAN is enjoying this and beginning to fall for it. Then, a moment of realization. He leaps to his feet and runs to the front of the bus. MAGGIE remains seated.*

BRIAN:

I see what you are doing. I am not falling for that.

MAGGIE:

For what?

BRIAN:

The feminine wiles. The allure. I’m not falling for it.

(beat)

You don’t want me. You just want the keys.

MAGGIE:

I want my phone. However, the thought of it near your nether regions fills me with horror. And disgust. Disgust AND horror. I have to hold that to my mouth. I want my phone back. The keys would be a bonus, although I’ll need to wipe those down too. Brian - We need to leave.

BRIAN:

(starts to cry). I can’t leave. I’ve nowhere to go.

MAGGIE:

Look, whatever this is about, it can’t be as bad as you think it is. It never is.

BRIAN:

Did you speak to Julie?

MAGGIE:

Who’s Julie?

BRIAN:

My wife. You spoke to her when you were trying to find me.

MAGGIE:

Yes, she was really helpful. She was worried about you. She seems lovely.

BRIAN:

She’s asked me to leave. Did she tell you that?

MAGGIE:

No. No, she didn’t...

BRIAN:

Yep. Twenty years up in smoke. Just like that. Working all hours, scrimping and saving, raising a family... all for nothing. All gone. When I came home from school on Friday, my cases were packed, and the locks had been changed.

MAGGIE:

I did think you had a lot of luggage for a weekend residential.

BRIAN:

(heaving sobs now) Thanks for your concern.

*She leaves the back seat of the bus and joins him at the front. They sit.*

MAGGIE:

(tenderly) I’m sorry, Brian. I am. I had no idea. I didn’t mean to be flippant. I struggle with adulting sometimes. Did she say why?

BRIAN:

Oh yes. There was quite a list, ranging from me working all hours and being constantly stressed and angry down to putting the toilet roll on the holder the wrong way around. It seems that living with me is quite unbearable. She stayed because of the kids, but now they’ve gone to university, and she can unburden herself. Oh, and she’s met a guy called Geoff... at hot yoga. I was never sure what made hot yoga hot, but now I know.

(beat)

BRIAN:

I mean... he’s called Geoff. Who is called Geoff nowadays?

MAGGIE:

Brian... you’re called Brian...

*He realizes the absurdity of what he said and starts to laugh. MAGGIE laughs, too. Soon they are both pissing themselves with laughter.*

BRIAN:

It’s a long time since I’ve laughed like that.

(beat)

Thank you.

MAGGIE:

You’re a good teacher. You’re great with the kids. They respect you.

BRIAN:

I wouldn’t go that far...

MAGGIE:

I find teaching a struggle. Anxiety underlies everything I do. The fear of being found out and not being good enough. It all seems effortless for you. When I started, you helped me get through it. Kind words, tips for dealing with disruptive kids, a shoulder to cry on, a person to bounce ideas off. You backed me when I fucked up that time. You didn’t have to do that.

BRIAN:

Teachers should have each other’s backs. Working in a school is like working in a zoo, but the difference is that the keepers know that some animals shouldn’t be put together in a zoo. You don’t put the zebras in with the lions. In schools, we throw them all in together. It’s brutal. Some fly, some flounder, and some are eaten. That experience shapes entire lives.