**AUDITION SIDES – MALE ACTOR 1**

**Dégringolade – “NIGEL”**

**CONTEXT –** In the week of an election he is almost sure to win, a scandal from NIGEL’s past looks sure to destroy him. NIGEL is already under stress when he is called into the office by SAMANTHA. JAKE is NIGEL’s assistant and an idiot. NIGEL has run a campaign on integrity – “truthful politics” – and has a Blair-ish charm. SAMANTHA his fiercely loyal senior aid.

Nigel - RP, educated, well spoken. Tony Blair charm.

SAMANTHA

It’s finally reared its head.

NIGEL

What has rear...

SAMANTHA

Two thousand and six Nigel.

*He looks at her blankly.*

NIGEL

What?

*Her eyes bore into his.*

SAMANTHA

*Whitby*.

*His expression changes.*

NIGEL

(stuttering) Wh...what? Whitby?

*He looks to the ground. And then back up at her.*

NIGEL

*Whitby.* You mean...

*She nods. The cogs slowly start to turn NIGEL.*

NIGEL

(laughing) *No...*surely you’re...

*Her expression remains. He stops laughing.*

NIGEL

Jake, give us a moment please.

JAKE

(looking at phone) *Dégringolade -* rapid decline or det...

NIGEL

Jake *- fuck off.*

JAKE

What? Why?

NIGEL

Just do it.

JAKE

It’s your guys word, not mine. I didn’t even know what it...

NIGEL

(snapping) *Jake*.

*JAKE leaves. A silence hangs in the air.*

NIGEL

If it’s what I think it is, then you do realise that...that it could potentially be over for us.

SAMANTHA

Us?

NIGEL

For everyone. For the entire party. For all the people that are going to vote for us. For...

*Pause.*

SAMANTHA

For you.

*He looks at her.*

SAMANTHA

And yes - it is what you think it is.

*Tense. His mind races.*

NIGEL

How fucked am I?

SAMANTHA

Well, as soon as the press have it, I would say - you’re decimated.

NIGEL

Jesus, put it lightly why don’t you?

SAMANTHA

That is putting it lightly.

*Pause.*

NIGEL

What’s even being said?

SAMANTHA

I think...I think you know what’s being said Nigel.

*He thinks. A long pause. Suddenly he bursts.*

NIGEL

(shouting) *Fuck.*

*NIGEL starts to pace. SAMANTHA startles.*

NIGEL

Are the police involved?

SAMANTHA

No. Not yet.

*NIGEL is pacing. Thinking. Panicking.*

NIGEL

We *have* to stop this.

SAMANTHA

We can’t. I’ve...

NIGEL

What? You’ve what?

*Pause.*

SAMANTHA

I’ve tried.

NIGEL

(snapping) Well you *clearly* haven’t tried fucking hard enough have you Samantha? Jesus *Christ*, I...

*SAMANTHA scorned. NIGEL collects himself. Panic still bubbling.*

NIGEL

I’m sorry. I just...does...does Mary know?

SAMANTHA

Not yet.

NIGEL

No, good, good. She...she can’t know. She...*can’t.* She’s...this...this just can’t happen. This is...

*The pot is starting to boil.*

NIGEL

What the actual *fuck* Samantha? *Whitby.* I can’t even...The election is next fucking week. *Next week.* This is just...this is...this simply *cannot* happen.

*Pause.*

SAMANTHA

Well, it’s happening.

NIGEL

But how? *How?* I thought that...that we’d...back then, you know? I thought we’d...

SAMANTHA

That *we’d* what Nigel? We? This is *you.*

NIGEL

This was dealt with. Nearly...twenty years ago for God’s sake. They...we cleared it all up, didn’t we? We set things straight. We...

*Pause.*

SAMANTHA

Nigel - I need to ask you something.

NIGEL

Not now Samantha, I’m still trying to process this.

SAMANTHA

It’s important.

NIGEL

What can possibly be more important than this? My career is on the edge of a fucking cliff here Samantha, don’t push me off.

SAMANTHA

Your...your *career?*

NIGEL

Yes, Samantha, my career. Everything I’ve done to...everything that *we’ve* done. The promise we made to the people out there that believe in us. Do you want all that to topple? Because of an old hiccup. A grudge? Are we seriously letting this...let’s be honest, attention-seeking get in the way of what we’ve built? Don’t let a couple of old and bitter chambermaid’s gossip be the downfall of fucking Rome Samantha. We’ve worked too hard for this.

*Pause.*

SAMANTHA

A grudge?

*He says nothing. She looks in contempt.*

SAMANTHA

A *hiccup?*

NIGEL

I...

SAMANTHA

Just answer me one thing Nigel...

*Pause.*

SAMANTHA

Did you do it?

NIGEL

What?

SAMANTHA

I said, did you do it?

*She glares.*

NIGEL

No, I...I can’t even...it’s...

SAMANTHA

Listen to me right now - as your senior advisor, I *need* you to tell me if you actually did it. If you did what they’re saying. Just tell me. Say it. Come on. Your whole fucking shtick is ‘*the truth’*, remember? Honest politics. That’s what I want. Right now.

NIGEL

It was over twenty bloody years ago Samantha. I...it was different times then, you know? We didn’t know any better and we just...I...listen, I sometimes forget it ever...happened. It’s just it...

SAMANTHA

So, it *did* happen.