

THE DANGLING CONVERSATION

by Lewis Dunnill

FADE IN

INT. BEDROOM. DAY. **MARCH**

We open on two people laying asleep in bed facing each other, as if they're in the same bed, but upon closer inspection, these are two separate beds with two separate duvets presented in split screen. As the two wake up, we see their separate rooms as they crawl out of their respective beds. These are SHELBY and HARRY, both 21, both madly in love.

In voice-over we hear Boris Johnson's initial announcement of lock-down over shots of the two making and eating breakfast and brushing their teeth, as on screen text informs us that we're currently in **March**. Both check their phones as if they're receiving the lock-down news.

They return to their respective rooms, sitting down on their beds, technically facing each other in the split screen, as they begin to text, their words presented as graphics on screen.

SHELBY (TEXT)

You heard the news?

HARRY (TEXT)

Yeah... (beat) Fucking hell.

SHELBY (TEXT)

I know!!! We've only been together a bloody month!!!

HARRY (TEXT)

Hey, at least we finally get to talk.

SHELBY (TEXT)

I mean the other stuff was fun too.

HARRY chuckles for a bit on his side of the screen, while SHELBY releases a breath in a tense fashion, clearly thinking about the road ahead.

HARRY (TEXT)

We'll be alright. Can't be that long.
At best it'll be three weeks and we'll be done.

SHELBY (TEXT)

Or a month...

HARRY (TEXT)

Well yeah there's always that.

There's an awkward pause as the two consider the implications of this, both looking off in the distance finding the right words to say. HARRY perks up.

HARRY (TEXT)

At least I don't have to deal with people for a bit.

SHELBY (TEXT)

Idk I'll miss everyone.

HARRY (TEXT)

I get at least three months completely to myself, to do whatever the fuck I want. It's like my ideal situation.

SHELBY (TEXT)

(enthusiastically)

Well when you put it that way...

The two chuckle, both in sync but also with differing reason. Another pause is taken in their texting, as the two think of what to say next. For HARRY the wait is shorter, as he starts typing while Shelby is still struggling to find the words.

HARRY (TEXT)

I'm probably just going to go and play some of the games I've been meaning to play, watch some films I've been meaning to watch. That sort of stuff.

SHELBY (TEXT)

Honestly I'll probably do the same.
(beat) Though I'm tempted to give baking a go at some point.

HARRY (TEXT)

I mean you've got all the time in the world.

SHELBY (TEXT)

True.

The conversation runs dry as SHELBY and HARRY sit in silence, finally allowing them to reflect on their situation and the uncertainty that lays ahead of them.

HARRY (TEXT)

I'm sure we'll be alright.

With that, their worries are lifted, as they both set off to begin their respective activities.

INT. KITCHEN / BEDROOM. DAY. **APRIL**

On screen text informs us that we're now in **April**, as we catch up on the lives of our lovers. SHELBY is removing her baking from the oven, frustrated at her apparent bad batch. Meanwhile across the split screen, HARRY is engrossed in a game, but not enthusiastically. As SHELBY looks closer at the baking, she chuckles, taking a photo and texting her boyfriend.

SHELBY (TEXT)

So my baking is fucked

No response. In the split screen HARRY hasn't even looked. It's perfectly understandable but in our view of SHELBY, it's clear that this moment has become somewhat anti-climactic. However Harry finally looks at his phone, and starts to reply.

HARRY (TEXT)

(jokingly)

Jesus, what did you do to it?

SHELBY (TEXT)

I think I messed up the amounts... and the time in the oven.

HARRY (TEXT)

Does it taste alright?

SHELBY takes a bite, while HARRY looks somewhat unphased by the whole situation.

SHELBY (TEXT)

It tastes good.

HARRY (TEXT)

Then it's good, who cares what it looks like?

SHELBY (TEXT)

I do. If it's shit then I'm shit at baking.

HARRY (TEXT)

But it tastes good so you're good at baking.

The two sit in a tense silence for a bit.

HARRY seems slightly annoyed, like he doesn't get the issue, while on SHELBY's side, this clearly wasn't the response she was looking for. SHELBY picks up the baking tray to go to the bin off screen, while HARRY resumes his game.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT. **MAY**

In **May** we resume our story, the two sat in their beds, backs to each other on the split screen, but neither seems happy. SHELBY seems to be curled up, feeling vulnerable, while HARRY seems just low on energy, bored out of his mind, twiddling his thumbs looking for the words to say, trying out different combinations and deleting them until he finds one that works.

HARRY (TEXT)

You ok?

SHELBY (TEXT)

Yeah. Why?

HARRY (TEXT)

Idk you just seem off.

SHELBY (TEXT)

I'm fine.

SHELBY sinks deeper into her slump, her responses quick and violently to the point. while HARRY releases a tense breath, figuring out something else to say.

HARRY (TEXT)

Anything interesting planned for tomorrow?

SHELBY (TEXT)

No.

HARRY (TEXT)

Fair do's.

They return to their harsh silence, HARRY deep in thought on how to solve the problem, while SHELBY starts thinking about the state of things. HARRY accepts defeat, solemnly realizing there's not much he can do here, and knowing he's been there before, decides that there's probably one sensible thing to

do.

HARRY (TEXT)

I love you.

HARRY stares at his screen. SHELBY stares at the message.

SHELBY (TEXT)

Alright.

They linger on this exchange for a while, hurting for differing reasons as they try and find something more to say.

With nothing left in them, the two get into bed with their backs to each-other, mirroring the shot from before as they drift asleep, one image fading out before the other.

FADE TO BLACK.