

AND ALL YOU CAN SAY IS FRESNO
a zoom play

by

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CHARACTERS

ALAN male, 40's. Kerri's boss. Runs a multi-million dollar company. High strung.

KERRI female, 20's. Head of Domestic Sales. Usually very calm and capable. But not today.

TIME AND PLACE

The time is now. Alan is at his home. Kerri is in her apartment.

SETTING: (The sound of a Zoom call initiating. ALAN is full screen.)

(Sound of the call answering. KERRI's face joins the screen. She is wearing pajamas, hair *way* unkempt. Maybe she drinks a Diet Pepsi.)

Kerri?
ALAN

Oh, shit.
KERRI

Don't hang up.
ALAN

I thought it was...
KERRI

I'm Zooming you from Sue's computer.
ALAN

Oh.
KERRI

I thought you might hang up if you saw it was me.
ALAN

No, no, I, uh...
KERRI

Don't hang up.
ALAN

Okay.
KERRI

What's going on? You haven't logged into a meeting in days. Are you okay?
ALAN

Yeah, yeah, I'm okay.
KERRI

Then what's going on? You've got to talk to me. You cannot be AWOL, especially at a time like this.
ALAN

KERRI

Can you slow down?

ALAN

No, I can't slow down. Where have you been?

KERRI

I have a thing.

ALAN

Yeah, we all have a thing. We all have a thing, Kerri.

KERRI

This is really hard.

ALAN

"Really hard"? "Really hard" is trying to keep a multi-million dollar company from going under *and* teach my kids Colonial history between phone calls, while my wife is at her mother's house trying to take care of her because she has the virus. I'm here without her. And then, on top of that, my Head of Domestic Sales can't be found. *That* is hard.

KERRI

Did you call to scream at me?

ALAN

"Did I call to scream at you?" Yes! I called to scream at you. I'm not paying you six figures to not answer the phone when I call you. Do you understand me?

KERRI

I'm a mess, Alan.

ALAN

You're a mess? *We're* about to be a mess. *We're* about to be a *big* mess. The Fresno account is about to fall through. I've been on the phone to them twice today. Let me explain to you what happens if we lose this account.

KERRI

We lose this account, the company goes. Believe me, I know the books better than anybody.

ALAN

Then why aren't you—?

KERRI

I'm finding it very hard to be alone.

ALAN
Well yeah, we're all finding it—

KERRI
I mean, like, *really* hard.

ALAN
Like, what do you mean? Like...?

KERRI
“Like” I’m not in a good place, Alan.

ALAN
Come on. You’re the strongest person I know.

KERRI
Alan, I’m trying to tell you...

ALAN
You’re not going to, like, *hurt* yourself or something?...Are you?...Kerri?

KERRI
(Almost distracted.)
...What?

ALAN
You’re not going to hurt yourself, are you? Kerri?

KERRI
...No.

ALAN
Alright. Good.

KERRI
Alan, I need you to understand something, okay? You are coming at me full guns blazing. Meanwhile, I am barely keeping myself together here, okay? I am hanging on by a thread. And that thread is quickly unraveling.

ALAN
Fresno is walking away from the deal. Look, if you want to discuss my management style, I am more than happy to do that when we get back. Or even later this week, if you want to. But this cannot wait. If Fresno doesn’t get this shipment by Friday...

KERRI

I wake up every morning, and I turn on the computer, and I sit there, and I look at it. And I just can't do it.

ALAN

What do you mean, "You can't do it"? You're doing it right now. You're sitting in front of the computer *right now*.

KERRI

(Brings cigarette into view.)

I'm sitting here with a cigarette trying to calm myself down. Look at my hands. They're shaking.

ALAN

What are you worried about?

KERRI

"What am I *worried* about?" "What am I worried about?!" Everything. The world. My parents. My grandmother. The people in Italy. The first responders. The doctors and nurses. The fire fighters. The grocery store workers. The Mexican day laborers. The food service workers. You name it, I'm worried about it. I've taken three Xanax, and it's only ten o'clock in the morning. The world is going to hell in a handbasket, and all you can say if Fresno?

ALAN

This is all going to be over some day—

KERRI

Yeah, right.

ALAN

—and then the word "Fresno" is going to matter a whole hell of a lot to us.

KERRI

How do you know?

ALAN

How do I know what?

KERRI

How do you know this is all gonna blow over? This might just be the end. The *very* end. This might be the last conversation you and I ever have. And if it is, I don't want it to be about the goddamn F word: Fresno!

ALAN

Okay, okay, okay.

KERRI

I was gonna go to med school. My parents wanted me to go to med school. I should have gone to med school. I could've been out there helping people. Instead, I'm in here doing God knows what. Nothing.

ALAN

You *didn't* go to med school. You got a business degree. I need *business-degree*-Kerri right now.

KERRI

There are lots of people who can take care of this situation for you.

ALAN

I need you. Fresno trusts you.

KERRI

Do not say that word to me again. That word is off limits.

ALAN

"Off limits"? It is *not* "off limits." It is very much *within* limits.

KERRI

(Reaching towards the screen to end the call.)

Thanks for calling.

ALAN

Don't you dare.

KERRI

(Pulling her hand back.)

Your priorities are backwards.

ALAN

"My priorities"?

KERRI

That's right.

ALAN

My "priorities" pay for that apartment.

KERRI

That doesn't make them right.

ALAN

They pay for your car. And your phone. And those designer clothes you wear.

KERRI

I don't know what to tell you.

ALAN

You know I don't like to "need" anybody. Ever. But I need you. Right now. You know that's not easy for me to say.

KERRI

I can't do it, Alan. I'm sorry, but I can't.

ALAN

Please. Kerri.

KERRI

Sue can do it. And she needs the opportunity. She needs the opportunity to show you what she can do. She will step up.

ALAN

I need *you* to bring them back to the table. They want *you*. You made the deal in the first place. They don't *like* Sue. Nobody likes Sue.

KERRI

Alan...

ALAN

I hired you right out of college, okay? Don't forget that.

KERRI

I know.

ALAN

When nobody else wanted you. I could see you were good. Okay? And I saw your potential. And I wasn't wrong. But right now, I need you to deal with this whatever-it-is, okay?, because I need you back on the job.

KERRI

Maybe if I get out of here. Maybe if I come in.

ALAN

Don't come in.

KERRI

Maybe that will jump start me.

ALAN

Do not come in.

KERRI

I think it would help me.

ALAN

Kerri...

KERRI

I'm self-destructing over here.

ALAN

Get yourself together. Sit down in front of the damn computer. And do this for me. Please...Please.

(Long pause. Several deep breaths. Then...)

KERRI

We lose the account, we lose the company, right?

ALAN

Right.

KERRI

Then I'm coming in.

ALAN

Do *not* come in, Kerri.

KERRI

I can't stay here, Alan.

ALAN

This is the new world, Kerri. We are six weeks into a new world. You've got to look at this as an opportunity. Move with the times, or get left behind. You're young. You've got to know what that means. You are too young to get left behind. Now, I need to get those items shipped, and you are the only person who knows the ins and outs of who to talk to and what to do to make that happen. I need you to show some leadership here. I need you to stand up and be counted...Can you do that for me?

KERRI

...I can try.

ALAN

Normally, I would expect more from you, but for today, I'll take "I can try."

KERRI

I will try. For you.

ALAN

Good. Thank you. You are going to call them right now.

KERRI

I am going to call them right now.

ALAN

Thank you. Now, what I *want* to say is that after you *do* that you should take the rest of the day and get yourself straight and log on tomorrow morning, but I'm afraid that if I say that, that if we break this connection, I'm never going to talk to you again.

KERRI

Mm hm.

ALAN

"Mm hm"? All I get is an "Mm hm"? I need to hear you say you're my girl.

KERRI

"You're my girl."

ALAN

Okay. Thank you...Do you feel better?

KERRI

A little.

ALAN

Good...Can you get on the phone with them?

KERRI

Yeah.

ALAN

Okay. Kerri, I really appreciate this. I know this is hard for you.

KERRI

Yeah.

ALAN

Call me when you're done.

(Alan disconnects and disappears. Kerri remains on the screen, alone.)

END SCENE