

## Two Together

By Zeph Auerbach

*Alex (TONY) and Becky (SARAH) enter the door of the theatre. They are both holding scripts, but do not read from them.*

SARAH: I'm just not sure of the timing of starting on this play.

TONY: Look, ultimately it'll be good for us. We'll be spending more time together and you said you wanted a project like this.

SARAH: I didn't necessarily mean as *us, together*. And-

*FINNEAN enters, also carrying a script. He leads TONY and SARAH around the theatre, inspecting its various features. It is clearly their first time here. TONY and SARAH look at each other nervously, and occasionally attempt to engage FINNEAN in conversation – 'Well?.. So...?' FINNEAN ignores them and simply looks around. He places two chairs on an otherwise bare stage. He stops, taking a deep breath, and looks out at the audience. When he speaks, it is clear TONY and SARAH are trying to see what he's getting at.*

FINNEAN: Yes... yes... yes! You can feel them, can't you? You can see them, yes? They've travelled from the nooks and crannies of the UK – from Carlisle, from the Worrall, from Peckham Rye and Wrexham - just to come *here*, to be in our presence, to see – to *witness* – something spectacular. (*TONY and SARAH find it hard to see what FINNEAN is getting at and obviously feel quite awkward. FINNEAN points at a seat in the audience.*) There – a couple. Much in love; early stages, squeezing each other's hands as they entwine their first shared emotions. *Here* – an elderly man. He knew love, once, oh yes, and then some. But that was a long time ago. He wants desperately to just get a simple reminder – confirmation! – that *it was real*. *Here*, a little girl, only 12. She's heard of 'love', she knows the names Romeo and Juliet, and she's let a handful of boys peck her cheek, but other than that: *nothing*. She's come to learn. Over there, near the back – a sceptic, supposedly enlightened, with a critical and scientific mind. He's come to scribble, to scorn, to scrutinise. He's led by his head. But his heart whispers out to us – and will he answer? Will we? (*sigh of satisfaction*) You can smell them, can't you? (*big sniff*) Who needs the National? It's the same magic. It's the same bodies. And when we do eventually get there, we'll take the magic with us. (*long, awkward pause*) Now, Tony-

TONY: Alex.

FINNEAN: (*frowning*) No, *Tony*. You are *Tony* whilst on this stage. You have left that other, dreary world behind. (*Reading script*) *Tony*, you are a middle-class, aspirational gent, starting to bald (*TONY touches his hair-line defensively*), you have the type of job in an office which you describe to people in meticulous detail but which they forget instantly. You are besotted with Sarah. You are the secondary character. And Sarah-

SARAH: Present.

FINNEAN: Sarah, you are the lead. You are an archetypal *female* insofar as: a curious mixture of weakness and will. Your life is starting to bud with nascent opportunities – to lead, to deliver, to nurture – and you believe that Tony could

well be your soul mate. But you are not quite sure. This sets the scene for...  
Act 1. You're in the early stage of your relationship, perhaps 2 months?

SARAH: *(remembering, as if far off)* Oh, the honeymoon period.

FINNEAN: Just beyond, where unfettered lust has started to seep into mutual domestic duties. E.g. you've just done your first weekly shop at Tesco together, and it was a moderate success and felt like a bit of a day out – that sort of thing. Then, Tony, you give her this surprise gift. *(he unveils the Railcard)*. The surprise alone is a jot too forward for Sarah – keep this in mind for later - but even more embarrassing and presumptuous is the gift itself: the Two Together Railcard – *annual*. The script *(FINNEAN points)* emphasises the date, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016. September: the month which, unless I'm mistaken, resonates best with feelings of commitment-slash-melancholy. Sarah looks off stage *(FINNEAN acts it out)*, as if looking into the distant future. Into dark, formless uncertainty. Then we-

SARAH: What's that, a Network Railcard?

FINNEAN: *(with disbelief)* No, the *Two Together* Railcard. You *did* read the synopsis, didn't you?

SARAH: I thought it was a love story.

FINNEAN: It is a love story *and* a coming of age story, but it *features* the-

TONY: Becky, the Two Together –

FINNEAN *Sarah. (pause)* On this stage...

TONY: Sarah, this is the railcard I suggested that we get, when we were on the way back from Steve's, do you remember? One third off rail journeys but you've got to go together.

SARAH: And do you need to book in advance?

TONY: *(while FINNEAN sighs in exasperation while pacing)* No, any time. But you can't get anything off morning peak times, like the commute, and –

SARAH: Yes, yes, I remember.

TONY: I *did* tell about this. I told you-

SARAH: Can we not do this now, Alex? Can we just-

FINNEAN: *Tony.*

SARAH: *(sighs)* Let's just get on with it.

FINNEAN: *(facing away from them)* I thought I asked for professionals. Don't you think Laurence Olivier had a *basic* grasp of the railway network of his day? Anyway, let's rise above it. Are we all clear on the *central plot device*? Any more questions? Anyone need lessons on how to learn lines, how to pronounce words, or how to spell Shakespeare? So where were we? Oh yes *(looks off to stage)*. *Uncertainty*. This leads us into Act 2.

SARAH: How many acts are there?

TONY: *(impatiently)* 3. There are always-

FINNEAN: 8. If you can see one Act which isn't essential, please let me know. Act 2. Tony and Sarah are in a very happy stage during their first joint trip to Doncaster. *(he forces them to sit down on chairs next to each other, and makes some noises and gestures like a train)*. Pleasant trip, lots of leg room, refreshing beverages trolley. Assumption of the audience (who, we may expect, are roughly well-educated) is that significant savings have been made. *This* is the Two Together dream: two human beings fulfilling each other's desires in perfect symbiosis. *No!* A montage! *(he starts scribbling on his script)*. That's it, we do it as a montage! Signs drifting past the window *(he runs up and down,*

*drawing the signs in the air with his hands) – Doncaster, Crewe, Brighton... and the light fades off and on – an espresso here, a muffin there, Sarah resting her head on Tony’s shoulder, Tony writing entries into his moleskin journal – yes, all of this. And it is clear that Sarah now knows – or thinks she knows – that Tony truly is The One.*

TONY: Finnean, would you like us to read out some of the lines?

FINNEAN: The details are not always as important as the... vision. The overriding *truth*.

SARAH: The montage?

FINNEAN: Yes. But let’s do a bit of that in... Act 3. It is some time in the future. It’s a Friday evening at Clapham Junction, Platform 9. Picture the typical panicked exodus from London to provinces etc etc, throngs of commuters – we’ll get maybe two or three dozen extras. I’ve got some numbers I can ring. Tony and Sarah have had long, tiring days at work. You’re going somewhere like Andover i.e. the implication is neither really wants to go. You’re on the platform and tension builds *gradually* over the Act. (*pointing*) We’ll have here a big prop, one of those electronic screens saying ‘Due’ – seemingly forever. Sarah works in Surbiton, Tony in London Bridge. To travel with him, she had had to travel *back* to Clapham Junction, when a much more direct route for her would have been to go via-

SARAH: Woking?

FINNEAN: Woking, precisely. And - now, you’ve got notes on the nitty gritty of the different routes and travel plans available to them - the details which give this *texture (they leaf through 2-3 pages of the script)*. Originally, I wanted all of the details to be communicated in silence, through the facial expressions and subtle gestures of the actors. But unfortunately sometimes we must let grubby dialogue do its bit. Let’s try some lines. Remember, this juxtaposes *directly* with the montage. (*pointing*) Start *here*.

TONY: It would’ve been nice if you’d come to Waterloo. Maybe next time you can consider that.

SARAH: OK, my love.

TONY: Because, I mean, it wouldn’t have cost you any extra, would it? You already have a railcard and you can leave work earlier than me. I could’ve walked across from London Bridge, and-

SARAH: Let’s just leave it, yeah? It’ll be here soon.

TONY: OK. (*pause*) And it’s very difficult to get a seat from here. Do you remember last month, for Freddy’s birthday?

SARAH: Well I came here instead of going via Woking, didn’t I? This was our compromise. We agreed on this, didn’t we?

FINNEAN: (*interjecting while jumping in-between them*) - Because this is Clapham Junction, remember, which is – if ever there was one - a station of bitter compromise. Resume.

TONY: Just don’t complain if we don’t get seats.

SARAH: Yes, my love.

TONY: (*pause*) Because moaning all the way to Andover... I’ve just had such a bad day, I’m not sure I could take it-

SARAH: I came *back* to *Clapham Junction*, adding about *25 minutes* to my journey, so that *we* could travel with *our* Two Together railcard. If *I* want to *moan* for the full *56 minutes* to Andover, then that’s what I’ll do. (*under her breath*) I should’ve gone via Woking.

TONY: What did you say?

SARAH: Nothing.

TONY: You said you should've gone via Woking. Jesus Christ. I had to buy a *peak-time Single* to meet you here. I didn't get my walk-

SARAH: Your precious after-work walk!

TONY: I need it, to relax. You *know* that! Why are you saying it like that?

SARAH: Let's just *leave it*. We're going to Andover, from Clapham Junction, and there's nothing we can do about that now.

TONY: My love, we discussed this. We discussed all of the options. You know that you leave work earlier than me, you know-

SARAH: Forget it. (*pause*) Next time, I'll just use my 16-25 railcard.

FINNEAN: The 16-25 railcard lies, you see, dormant, at the bottom of her handbag, a weighty reminder of her vanishing youth (*FINNEAN says, wafting a hand over Sarah, which rankles her*). Now comes Tony's moment of madness... (*FINNEAN crouches, getting a good view*)

TONY: Well you better make good use of your 16-25 railcard. *As you won't have it much longer. (SARAH slaps TONY hard on the cheek) Ow! That was too hard!*

FINNEAN: That was *fantastic!* Yes, that's it! (*TONY is recovering for the sentences which follow, and SARAH does not go to his help*) And we leave all of these issues floating around us, reverberating with that abrupt slap: who *is* their Two Together card for? Does she need him as much as he needs her? We're leaving these elephants in the room: huge but tiptoeing. And then the sign turns from 'Due' to 'Cancelled'. Or is that too poignant? And then comes-

TONY: Wait a second, don't you think her position needs to be made more believable?

FINNEAN: What on earth do you mean?

TONY: Well, clearly given the context she should've come back to Waterloo. 11 extra minutes, to get a seat and avoid having to pay for extra singles? That's a no-brainer isn't it?

SARAH: Well yes. Yes, it is. If you don't value her *time*. If you think *his* time, just because it's *his*, is more valuable. And if you think that his – what was it? After work walkie? - is more valuable than anything she could be doing. Because it's just a woman's career, after all. Yes, if you think he should always come first, and it's his word which is the final one. Yes, I can see why you'd think that. Yes, yes, yes – her position needs to be made more believable.

TONY: Becky, not now-

SARAH: But perhaps she wanted just *one night* where she went out with *her* friends, and instead they're doing something with *his* friends, like they do every week. But in Andover. Perhaps *that* should be added in.

FINNEAN: (*excited, impressed*) Well perhaps, Sarah, I'll consider editing the nitty-gritty. Perhaps it does need this extra texture. Perhaps I need to add a scene at the ticket office.

SARAH: Because she's had a *shit* day too, don't forget that. A really *shit* day.

FINNEAN: OK, yes, I see that, play that up.

SARAH: And he's not there for her.

FINNEAN: No, no he's not. He's hiding behind the details of the Railcard. He's defending his luxuries and concealing his insecurities.

SARAH: When she needs him the most.

FINNEAN: Clapham Junction, Friday night, you took the words out of my mouth – very insightful. This is when he should be asking her about her day, seeing if she’s OK. Sarah, perhaps I was too harsh on you before.

TONY: He *is* there for her, he’s just not bending over backwards to-

FINNEAN: Let’s plough on, Tony, while we’re all still coagulating with emotion. Let’s not get obsessed with the nitty-gritty. Act 4. Perhaps a year in the future. We’re on a quiet Southern train. Sarah is on her phone to a friend (*FINNEAN adjusts SARAH’s body*). She’s distraught (*SARAH acts it out*). He has just broken up with her. We learn that Tony initiated the argument on the platform of Tulse Hill and just left her there. The Inspector comes up – I’ll play him for now, Ian’s still on his run as Macbeth at the Old Vic – and I start off rather jolly. From *here* (*he points at her script, then rushes off the stage*).

SARAH: (*on her phone, looking distraught and abandoned and attempting to sob*) I didn’t think he’d actually do it! He just left me there.

FINNEAN: (*walking onto stage*) Tickets from Streatham please. Tickets please. (*performs the actions of an Inspector with pride*). Now young lady, where’s your ticket?

SARAH: He left me.

FINNEAN: What’s that? Who did?

SARAH: Tony. He just left me there. On the platform of Tulse Hill.

FINNEAN: Sorry to hear it, petal, but where’s your ticket now?

SARAH: Here. (*FINNEAN hands SARAH a Railcard for her to hand back to him*)

FINNEAN: Where’s your named partner? Where’s this man?

SARAH: I just told you. He left me.

FINNEAN: This man? (*He says, thrusting the picture in her face, which distresses her more*). You need to be travelling with *this man*. (*Stepping out of character*) And she sees him in this picture, by her side, like they used to be. And from you, Sarah, there’s just this deluge, this emotional outpouring. (*In character, he starts to tap something into a box*).

SARAH: What are you doing?

FINNEAN: I’ve got to give you a fine, petal. You breached the terms and conditions. (*Stepping out of character*) Now you *wail*, you *clutch out for me* (*he pulls her hands to him*). Pit of despair. Nadir. Hope has left the theatre-slash-universe. But you beg-

SARAH: Please, *please!* You must *understand!*

FINNEAN: You beg for my *forgiveness!*

SARAH: *Please!* It wasn’t my fault. What did I do *wrong?* I loved him. We were going to Brighton together, like we did for our anniversary. I just want to go home now, I—

FINNEAN: (*in character*) The fine stands. (*He hands her a slip of paper, then walks away.*) This railcard is a commitment. You young folk... you think everything’s disposable. (*out of character*) And then the act ends, somewhere like Norbury. (*FINNEAN rests, and takes a long pause, as if something very important has just happened*)

TONY: Oh come on. What about her season ticket?

FINNEAN: Excuse me?

TONY: Well she works in Surbiton, Zone 6. She’s presumably got a season ticket as far as Norbury, Zone 3.

FINNEAN: *Excuse me*, Tony, such impertinence! (*pointing violently at the script*) Who are *you* to *question* the nitty-gritty of-

SARAH: Perhaps she *does* have a season ticket? So what? He's *left* her. She has invested all of her good years in him and look at how he's treated her. She's clearly not thinking straight. It's *just* like Tony to fail to appreciate and – *argh!* – have even a tiny bit of empathy for her situation. Isn't that right, Finnean?

FINNEAN: Well in the notes I wrote that she'd just left her season ticket at home, but that works too. Right – Act 5. More time has passed. Sarah is sitting on a train, now single and ostensibly happy. (*SARAH finds it hard to smile*). Happier. (*She forces a smile*). Tony walks into the carriage. It's clear they haven't seen each other for some time. They make small talk: jobs, mutual friends, pop-up restaurants. Then the moment of gut-turning sadness... (*he gestures the act of handing the drama over to them*. *SARAH brings some bits of paper out of her pocket and shows them to TONY.*)

TONY: (*from script*) Our advanced purchase discounted tickets to Crewe.

SARAH: I just couldn't go by myself. I just, legally, couldn't go. (*They both attempt to laugh, sadly*). What's that? (*she gestures to a Railcard he has in front of him*).

TONY: That? Oh, sorry. I didn't mean for you to see...

SARAH: (*Shaken*) It's OK. I just didn't expect... so soon. And you look after it. For her.

TONY: Yes.

SARAH: You never used to look after it for us. It was my responsibility. I asked you. I used to hold you, here, in my pocket.

FINNEAN: Woe. Lots of woe. Billowing woe. (*he gestures, as if billowing smoke around the room*). And then... (*FINNEAN leaves the stage. He leaves them, and they put their scripts down to their sides*).

SARAH: (*out of character*) Alex, we need to talk.

TONY: Sarah – shit, I mean, Becky – what do we need to talk about now? I thought we'd talked about this.

SARAH: This has just brought things back, Alex.

TONY: Becky, it was two years ago. I told you then that it meant nothing. I keep thinking that we *have* talked about it. I can't be paying the price for that forever. And why is it always about what *I* did, when *it wasn't just me*. You always-  
(*FINNEAN returns, in a dress. They pick their scripts back up*).

SARAH: Oh. Your new... girlfriend... from the photo card...? (*unsure of the match*)

TONY: Sarah, please-

SARAH: (*Getting up to leave*) You aren't even paying full price. (*bitterly*) And you never did. (*SARAH walks away*).

FINNEAN: So Sarah walks away, clumsily knocking into the oversized beverages trolley, as our tumultuous tragic heroine, our Eustacia Vye, our Anna Karenina, our Medea. We'll pack it with pathetic fallacy: roll of thunder, toddler wailing, the sign on the toilet saying it's locked but we all know there's nobody in there.

TONY: *Wait!* I'll call you! Forgive me!

FINNEAN: *Fade to black.* To Act 6. It's just a week later. We're back at Platform 9 of Clapham Junction, the same platform as in Act 3, thus contenting the ghost of Aristotle. Sarah is waiting, anxious, checking her phone...

SARAH: (*starts to act into it, but then:*) Hang on, why am I agreeing to take him back?

FINNEAN: Hold your horses, we're not there yet.

SARAH: But why did I? Why did I give him another chance? Why did I give him another chance when I knew, in my heart of hearts, that I could never trust him again?

FINNEAN: *Woah* there, let's just see what the play has to say about it. Let the play speak *through* you. *(She gets back into character; TONY approaches her, sheepishly)*

TONY: Hi.

SARAH: Hi.

TONY: How have you been?

SARAH: I've been fine. You?

TONY: So-so.... *(awkward pause)* I got a promotion at work. Dave gave me a chance, said he thinks I should push myself more.

SARAH: That's good. Great. You should.

TONY: I saw my Gran – Granny Peterson – on the weekend.

SARAH: How is she? I miss her.

TONY: Her memory's not too good now.

SARAH: Does she ask about me?

TONY: Well her memory's not good. *(pause)* It feels weird. You know, this small talk. I feel like you should know all these things already.

SARAH: I know what you mean. Do you remember Andover? I mean, once we actually got there? It was a good trip, wasn't it? We left from this platform, didn't we? We had an argument. I think it was our first. But then, *(smiling)* do you remember Geoff's present?

TONY: Oh yeah! I didn't think he had the balls.

SARAH: Yeah. That was a good time.

TONY: Look. Sarah. *(shaking head)* That time that you saw me... I didn't want you to see me like that... it make me think so, so much... I promise you, I just want to promise to you...

FINNEAN: And there, where words fail him, he pulls out his Two Together railcard.

SARAH: Why do I want to see that? That's for you and her now.

TONY: No. *(pause)* It's for *you*. *(pause)*

SARAH: *(opening the Railcard, then putting her hand to her mouth)* Tony...

TONY: It was always you.

FINNEAN: Embrace. Reconciliation. *(whispering)*  
*(They embrace each other very tenderly, for a very long time.)*

SARAH: Will it ever be like it was?

FINNEAN: *(Checks script, not seeing this line there)* Well, umm, we'll have to see, Sarah. And at this point Tony and Sarah would use the Railcard straight away. But it's peak time i.e. *hint-hint* there's still a thorn in the relationship's side. Act 7.

SARAH: *(Still embracing)* Can we just have a moment, Finnean. Just two minutes, just us two, together.

FINNEAN: I understand. I really do. This material gives us all a lot to think about. But I want you to channel it all into the performance. *(He pats them both on the back awkwardly as they continue to embrace).* Right, Act 7. A year or two later. You're on a pleasant train journey and you're just out of Birmingham New Street. This has all the hallmarks of a 'happy ending'. The audience, indeed, is duped into thinking this is the happy ending they all crave. You're holding hands, you're playing Ludo, you're talking about mortgage rates. *(pointing to where he had done at the outset)* The couple – this is what they desperately want to share for themselves. The old man, now sitting on the edge of his seat – this is what he wanted to remember. The sceptic – this is what his heart whispered out for. BUT-

(At this point TONY'S phone beeps with a text message. SARAH tries to see it but TONY hides his phone).

SARAH: What's that?

FINNEAN: (Catching up with her, co-incidentally finding this line in his script) 'What's that?' Sarah shrieks, as she finds something dropping out of Tony's pocket, as he reaches for his latte. (TONY acts this out rather limply).

SARAH: What's that? (she holds up the second Two Together card). Who is that? Who?

FINNEAN: And now it comes: the flood. I'm not going to apologise about the excessive length of the next section, we need a full balls-to-the-wall Miller-esque Mamet-esque vitriol-drenched moralistic haranguing. I'd rather have it overdone than undercooked. I need *passion*.

SARAH: And you'll get it.

TONY: Look, it's just a friend. Her family lives in Taunton. The prices are extortionate.

SARAH: Get out.

TONY: What?

FINNEAN: What? (checking the script but not finding it)

SARAH: Onto the platform.

FINNEAN: Yes! Onto the platform! Good idea! Into the wild!

TONY: But where are we?

SARAH: We're at a deserted station on the outskirts of Wolverhampton and there's nobody else around.

FINNEAN: I like it, I like it. (TONY and SARAH get up and pace a while. SARAH is very angry.)

SARAH: (from script) I took you back. I took you *back*. You said I meant everything to you. You said you belong in *my* pocket, next to *my* passport photograph.

TONY: It's just a friend.

SARAH: It was only two months ago when we renewed our commitment to each other, by renewing our Two Together railcard. It was a public *act*. My friends know I carry this – for you. And your friends, when they see us together. Do *they* know about her? Did you make *that* a public act? Or did you keep it in your sordid little private life?

TONY: Check the date, it's only a week old. I was going to tell you about it. There are no restrictions to the amount of Two Together railcards you can hold. They're not exclusive.

SARAH: *We're* exclusive! And you must've got this when we had already purchased these tickets online. Two years ago, you left me with an obsolete railcard, rotting in my handbag along with my memories of you and my sense of self-worth, and I thought this one was different, but it's just the same. It's different card, but it's *just the same!*

TONY: The girl-

SARAH: (off script) It's not about that girl!

TONY: (checking his script, confused) I mean, the girl in the railcard-

SARAH: *It's not about the railcard!*

FINNEAN: *Yes! It's not! It's not about the railcard at all!*

TONY: (Flicking through script) What page are we on?

SARAH: Let's go back, let's go back to our first argument.

TONY: (confused) At your mum's?

SARAH: *(still off script)* At Clapham Junction! Let's go back to Clapham Junction. Because I should've done the best thing for myself! I should've gone via Woking! Instead, we've always put your work first. Your points first. Your ways of weaselling out of everything. And why? That night, I should've finished work a little later, bought the ticket on my 16-25 railcard, when I still had the chance, and finished the project that would've sealed *my* promotion. I should've seen more of *my* friends!

FINNEAN: Make it your *own*, Sarah! This is theatre!

SARAH: *(out of character)* Finnean, I need to get tighter under the skin of this character. Tell me, why *did* they break up, the first time, just outside Tulse Hill? Did we cover that?

FINNEAN: Well, umm, it was intended to demonstrate how difficult it is for romance to accommodate the increasingly complex and ridiculous, often arbitrary demands of society *vis a vis* The Two Together Railcard. Primal human behaviour is constrained by the norms of, er-

SARAH: That's *it*? That can't be *it*?

FINNEAN: Well plays are multi-dimensional, multi-faceted... that's on *one* dimension, one layer. *(waffling)* We don't now want to commit the intentional fallacy but I'm sure I intended, I left room for, other dimensions, multi-layer...

SARAH: I think Tony slept with someone. *(TONY is shaking his head, fuming)*

FINNEAN: Well that's pretty crude.

SARAH: Yes, yes it is. That's exactly what it is.

FINNEAN: OK, he slept with someone called... Julie Jivers.

SARAH: *(staring, knowingly, at TONY)* How about... Laura?

FINNEAN: Well the alliteration isn't as good, but OK.

TONY: What sense does this make? *He* broke up with her. Finnean, do you want your *heroine* to be a *caricature* of a woman or a *real* flesh and blood flawed human being? How about *she* also slept with someone!

SARAH: Just *kissed* someone!

TONY: Kissed someone! But for both Tony and Sarah, they were both just mistakes, just silly one night things. But, Finnean, she punishes him, and-

FINNEAN: In character, Tony! Run with it.

TONY: *(in character)* You were punishing me. I'd already apologised, over and over again. She meant nothing to me. I... before all of that, you would've come to Waterloo for me. You would even have come to London Bridge. You would've done anything for me.

SARAH: And you *destroyed* that version of you, Tony, in one night, with one mistake, when you let things slip and you showed me your true colours. That *statue* I kept of you – that I adored – just *shattered* into pieces.

TONY: It wasn't just me-

SARAH: Yes, but I paid the price, with my *friendships*, with my *freedom*-

FINNEAN: Then *this* is probably a good point to return to *this* line here- *(pointing at SARAH's script)*

SARAH: *(from script)* I knew there was something wrong from how eagerly you courted me. You were so quick with binding us together with this railcard. You had something to prove, to make up for your insecurities, and you needed possession. It wasn't really *me*, you just needed *someone*. I should've seen it earlier, you bought the railcard too damn early.

FINNEAN: *(jumping in, taking on SARAH's role, improvising)* And that one night with him – with David Dickerson –

SARAH & TONY: Jacob.

FINNEAN: That one night with Jacob Dickerson! To you, that proved I was insane and in need of correction. Never since then, *never* have you given me freedom. *(frantically scribbling some of this down)* And *this* railcard became my strait-jacket, nay – my asylum, and you my warden.

SARAH: Tony, I paid the price, over and over again, while you got away with it.

TONY: You held it over me, Becky!

FINNEAN: Sarah.

TONY: *(still off script but in character)* Sarah! You held it over me, Sarah! Like this guilt – this thick, black guilt – which forever stained me! I might have trapped you, but with all your passive-aggressive hinting-at and poking at, you made sure I remembered that I had this black stain on me forever. I was someone who could never be trusted again – that's who you turned me into. That's who you see before you.

SARAH: *(incredulous)* Wait, I turned you into?... *(Wipes away a tear. Then, while TONY is looking away and cannot see her, she reads from the script:)* So why did you do it again?

TONY: *(very upset)* How... did... you... know?

SARAH: *(pointing at his Railcard, but realising that TONY wasn't referring to this)* The railcard, Tony. *(very sad)* The girl from Taunton.

FINNEAN: Powerful stuff.

SARAH: Page 26.

TONY: *(defeated)* So yes, there was this time, a couple of month ago, in a club... I mean, at the ticket office, when I got this railcard with her. When we did it. Together. I was just being exactly what you expected of me.

SARAH: *And that makes it right?*

TONY: It hasn't been right for some time, Sarah. We both know that. I can't be here anymore. *(He walks to the exit of the theatre).*

SARAH: Where are you going?

FINNEAN: *(confused)* You're on the outskirts of Wolverhampton...

SARAH: If you go, you're not coming back. This is the last time. *(They stare at each other).*

FINNEAN: OK, good, and here is the point where she throws back at him their whole story together: all of their journeys together, all of their day-trips and holidays and evenings out, the memories they laid down together, the home which they built together, and he just stands there. And in this moment he truly realises, for the first time in his life, his error and his sin. He stands, more a wreck than a man, knowing that this girl from Taunton he got a railcard with, means nothing. It's just a passing fling. And the problem lies not with Sarah, not with the floosy from Taunton, but with *him*. He realises it here, on the outskirts of Wolverhampton, cast adrift with a return ticket which he can no longer legally use, and two railcards with the dead, smile-less faces of the women who he has betrayed. It. Is. Over. *(TONY sadly and quietly exits out of the door).*

SARAH: I'm not sure I can-

FINNEAN: Wait! This is good! We'll get him back in a second.

SARAH: He's never coming back.

FINNEAN: *Exactly.* That's how we leave Act 7. Now, Act 8. (*SARAH is in a daze, and FINNEAN calmly sits her down on a chair*). True independence and growth. You are bruised but happy, fulfilled, composed, reading a pleasant book like 'Life of Pi' in a window seat that you booked *well* in advance. Overlay with voice-over coming from Sarah herself, from a recent time, her voice confident and strong.

SARAH: (*Finding the page*) I'll take it. I'll take the Network Railcard. Is this passport photo OK? I got it in Boots.

FINNEAN: Then you smile, you gaze wistfully out of the window whilst toying with your new Network Railcard. You can *feel* its potential in its rich velvety plastic of opportunity. The curtain starts to fall. This is the apogee – the crystallisation - of self-actualisation. After a long journey, you are finally drawing into your destination. And then the curtain- (*the lights start to dim*).

SARAH: But can I get to, for example, Leeds?

FINNEAN: (*Holding her hand in his*) You can't get to Leeds, not now, not with a discount. And we assume the audience have some knowledge of the limited coverage of the Network Railcard.

SARAH: I can't go everywhere, but where I can go, now I can get there by myself.

FINNEAN: That's a good line, I'll try to get that in. You can't go everywhere, but where you can go, now you can get there by yourself. The curtain falls (*it does*). And... (*as an aside to her*) it's not that you *can't* go to Leeds, but you just have to pay a little bit more.