

# **The Fierce Urgency Of Now**

By Doug DeVita

# THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

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## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

*This play is dedicated to the memory of Dolores (Dodo) Hanan (1925 – 2013), an English teacher who became a copywriter and used her skills to teach America they spelled cheese K-R-A-F-T, pushed me to be all that I can be, and reached out and touched my heart.*

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

### **Characters:**

Kyle, 30, an angry young Art Director.

Dodo, 70, an old-pro Copywriter.

Kate, 40, a bitter Creative Director.

Neil, 50, an aging Account Executive.

Meryl, 32, an up-and-coming Copywriter.

Goldfarb (Voice Only), an uptight Account Executive.

Anita (Voice Only), the client from hell.

**Setting:** NYC, mostly.

**Time:** October – June in the recent present.

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*The Fierce Urgency Of Now* was first produced by Arouet in Seattle, Washington in November 2014. It was directed by Roy Arauz, and the cast was as follows:

Kyle | Evan Louis Thomas  
Dodo | Laura Crouch  
Kate | Lisa Viertel  
Neil | Mark Waldstein  
Meryl | Kelly Johnson  
Goldfarb | Zach Sanders  
Anita | Ellen Dessler

*The Fierce Urgency Of Now* was subsequently revised and produced by The Fresh Fruit Festival in association with Soar Productions in July 2016. The production was directed by Dennis Corsi, and the cast was as follows:

Kyle | Matthew Jellison  
Dodo | Carole Monferdini  
Kate | Teresa Kelsey  
Neil | Steven Hauk  
Meryl | Paloma Pilar  
Goldfarb | Victoria Daly  
Anita | Mary Leggio

### **Awards and Honors:**

Fresh Fruit Festival Award of Distinction  
*Outstanding Play*

Fresh Fruit Festival Award of Distinction  
*Outstanding Production*

We Screenplay Spring 2021 Diverse Voices Competition  
*Semi-Finalist*

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*Total darkness. Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Then the sound of two men having sex. One stops.*

**NEIL.** Wait.

**KYLE.** Is everything okay?

**NEIL.** No.

**KYLE.** What's the matter?

**NEIL.** I don't want to hurt you.

**KYLE.** You're not.

**NEIL.** No. You don't understand. I can't do this anymore.

**KYLE.** We can try something else, then.

**NEIL.** No.

**KYLE.** Really, it's okay.

**NEIL.** No. It's not, Kyle... it's really not okay. I can't do any of this anymore.

*(Lights up on NEIL and KYLE.)*

*Projection: Kyle's Bedroom. 6:30 am, Sunday October 31st.*

**KYLE.** Oh. My. God. Neil? Are you breaking up with me?

**NEIL.** ... Yes.

**KYLE.** In the middle of sex?

**NEIL.** I'm sorry. I don't love you.

**KYLE.** But you said you did.

**NEIL.** I did. But I don't. Not the way you want, anyway.

**KYLE.** It really bothers you that I'm 30, doesn't it?

**NEIL.** It really bothers me that I'm 50. And... other things. So many other things. I think it's best we cool it now before I really do hurt you.

**KYLE.** Too late, Neil.

**NEIL.** We want different things, and it's not fair for me to keep lying to you.

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**KYLE.** So you're breaking up with me in the middle of sex? You can't wait until we've finished your "goodbye, it's been fun, fuck you" bang?

**NEIL.** I'm sorry.

**KYLE.** You're an asshole.

**NEIL.** You're too upset to talk right now. I'll call you later, okay?

**KYLE.** Don't call me later, you stupid, lousy... Just... go.

**NEIL.** I'm sorry.

**KYLE.** Stop saying that! You're not sorry, so just shut up and get the hell out of here. *(Neil picks up a bag, puts it back down, and stares at Kyle as if he's about to change his mind. He doesn't, picks up his bag again and goes, taking out his phone as he leaves. Kyle throws something after him. It hits the wall as the lights change.)*

**NEIL.** Bev?... Sorry, honey, I didn't mean to wake you... yeah, I was able to catch the red-eye last night, I just landed. I'm getting an Uber now; I'll be home in a little while... *(Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change.)*

**Projection: Kyle's office at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi, & Hess. Later that morning.**

**KATE.** I've never liked him. He's like a big black hole, ya know? I wish I'd known; I'd have told you not to get involved with him. It'll be okay, honey. Really. Maybe even better, ya know? Relationships take so much work for such little payoff. *(Kyle sobs. Kate awkwardly hugs him.)*

**KYLE.** This is embarrassing. You must be so sorry you got stuck with me after Alan got laid off.

**KATE.** Oh, honey, no! When I got promoted and Scalo asked if I'd take you and Meryl on my team, I jumped at the chance! I love the work you two are doing on Marriott.

**KYLE.** Thanks for saving our asses, Kate.

**KATE.** Don't mention it. *(Lighting a cigarette.)* D'ya mind?

**KYLE.** Actually, Kate, I do.

**KATE.** Nasty habit. Really should quit. Can't help myself.

**KYLE.** And it's illegal.

**KATE.** It's Sunday. Call a cop.

**KYLE.** Kate, seriously, I'm allergic to smoke.

**KATE.** *(Stubbing it out.)* You people and your goddamned allergies. Listen, sweetie, why don't you just go home?



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**KYLE.** I'd rather just get ahead of myself for the week, you know?

**KATE.** Kyle, yeah, honey...

**KYLE.** I know I'm a little behind on that new stuff for Marriott, but Meryl and I have some really neat ideas to show you.

**KATE.** Kyle, just wait a minute, okay? There are some changes we need to discuss.

**KYLE.** Shouldn't we wait for Meryl to get here?

**KATE.** It's not about the work... It's... I hate this part of my job...

**KYLE.** You can't be letting me go! Are you?

**KATE.** Oh, honey, no! Nobody's getting laid off... this time. But... We just got the Citibank account. I'm putting you on it and putting Angela on Marriott.

**KYLE.** Kate, you know Meryl and I left J. Walter Thompson to get off Citibank.

**KATE.** Well, it's here now and we have it. It's just for a couple of months, until we get it running smoothly, then I'll see what I can do.

**KYLE.** Can't you give it to Angela and leave me on Marriott? You just said you love the work we're doing!

**KATE.** I know, honey, and I do! But Angela doesn't have any financial experience. And she can't handle both Benjamin Moore and Citibank, she's not senior enough for accounts that high volume.

**KYLE.** Wait a minute, Kate! You're not taking her off Moore and giving it to me, too!?!

**KATE.** Moore is a fun account! Lots of good projects, some TV, too!

**KYLE.** But Benjamin Moore is Neil's account!

**KATE.** I didn't know you two were fu... Shouldn't shit where ya work, didn't your mother ever tell you... oh, sorry. I forgot. Didn't your aunt ever tell you not to screw with account execs?

**KYLE.** Aunt Maryanne? Uhm, yeah, she used to eat account guys for lunch.

**KATE.** See? Creatives and Account Management? Mongoose/Cobra. Look, honey, if Neil gets out of line, you come to me, okay? We go way back, and I don't trust him as far as I could throw him. *(Taking a deep breath.)* One more thing, Kyle: I'm keeping Meryl on Marriott. She'll be Angela's writer now.

**KYLE.** But Meryl and I have been a team for six years!

**KATE.** I really have no choice, sweetie. It's coming from upstairs. From Scalo himself.

**KYLE.** So who's my writer now? You?

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**KATE.** Oh, sweetie, I wish. No, we're getting some old fart from branding. Dolores... something or other.

**KYLE.** You're giving me that relic who's been here for 30 years? And Citibank!?! And Neil! I just can't... Goddammit! *(He hurls his coffee mug, shattering it against a wall.)*

**KATE.** KYLE! Get a grip! November's gonna be crazy and December's gonna be worse. I need you to be up for it all.

**KYLE.** Sorry.

**KATE.** I know it's all a bit rough right now, but trust me, I've got your back. Look, why don't you just take the day to sort yourself out, try to relax a bit?

**KYLE.** Thanks, but I think I'll stay and finish this stuff for Marriott before I have to hand it over.

**KATE.** Kyle, you are officially off the Marriott account. This is probably the last Sunday before the end of the year I'll be able to let you take off. You know our motto: You work at Scalo, Weisbrot, Zazzi, & Hess. You don't come in Sunday: Good luck and God Bless. So go. Your new boss says it's okay. Go out for a nice dinner and put in a reimbursement form. I'll sign it. I'll even approve a scotch or two, okay? Or better yet, you live in the Village, right?

**KYLE.** Yeah.

**KATE.** Go to the Halloween Parade tonight. Party with the fa... fun people!

**KYLE.** If you say so. *(Kyle reluctantly exits. Kate lights another cigarette and makes a call.)*

**KATE.** Meryl? ... No, he's not taking it well at all. ... I just sent him home. He's had a rough night. Neil dumped him this morning. In bed, during, you know, and he just fell apart ... Oh. Shit. I thought you knew about them. Oops ... I need coffee before this Marriott meeting. Starbucks in ten? ... See ya there. *(Hanging up, she starts scrolling through Kyle's Marriott files on his computer.)* Shit. This really is good stuff. *(Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Sounds of a busy office.)*

**Projection: Kyle's office. 9:30 am, Monday November 1st.**

*(Kyle is spritzing Breatheezy, a Febreze-like product.)*

**KYLE.** She just can't help herself. *(Kate enters with DODO, 70.)*

**KATE.** You know I made up the name Breatheezy, right? Got my first Clio for that campaign!

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**KYLE.** Yeah, I heard.

**KATE.** Too bad I don't get royalties, huh? How ya feeling this morning, sweetie?

**KYLE.** Okay, I guess.

**KATE.** Glad to hear it. Kyle, this is your new writer, Dolores. Dolores, this is your new art director, Kyle. Do I sense magic starting?

**KYLE.** I wouldn't call it "magic."

**DODO.** He's just darling, Kate. We'll be fine, won't we, Kyle-bird?

**KATE.** Good. Okay, we've got a Citibank status meeting in five minutes. FYI: Goldfarb goes nuts if anyone's even 30 seconds late. And we've got new project briefings for Moore in Neil's office at 11:00. Let the games begin! *(She goes.)*

**KYLE.** Kyle-bird? We're on a nickname basis already? You work fast.

**DODO.** You have to in this business. *(Sizing him up and smiling.)* If I'd realized it was you I was getting, I'd have laid in a supply of Pampers.

**KYLE.** And I'd have brought a year's worth of Depends.

**DODO.** *(Laughing.)* Well gaga goo-goo to you, too.

**KYLE.** I've seen you in the elevators; I thought you work exclusively on AT&T brand advertising. What are you doing down here in "Relationship Marketing?"

**DODO.** Keeping my job, Kyle-bird.

**KYLE.** No offense, but if I were your age I'd be thinking of retiring.

**DODO.** You keep talking to me like that you won't get to be my age, darling.

**KYLE.** Let's start over. Hi, I'm Kyle, your new partner.

**DODO.** I'm Dodo.

**KYLE.** I thought your name is Dolores?

**DODO.** Call me Dodo. Like the bird. Except I'm not extinct. Yet. You ever work on Benjamin Moore?

**KYLE.** Nope. You?

**DODO.** Years ago. Good client, lots of fun. Top shelf booze at their parties.

**KYLE.** How about Citibank?

**DODO.** Nope. But I worked on American Express for years. You?

**KYLE.** Yeah. At J. Walter Thompson. Crappy client, total hell. No booze. No parties.

**DODO.** Oh. That sucketh.

**KYLE.** Yes. It does "sucketh." I've heard horror stories about this Goldfarb.

**DODO.** Deirdre Goldfarb? All true.

**KYLE.** I thought you didn't work on Citibank?

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**DODO.** She was a junior account wienie when we had the Amex business back in the late '80s.

**KYLE.** The '80s, huh? That makes you how old?

**DODO.** Never you mind. So you're the kid who was raised by Maryanne Gordon?

**KYLE.** My aunt. Well, my mother's aunt. You ever work with her?

**DODO.** Nope, but everyone in the business knows Maryanne Gordon was one of the best damn art directors ever.

**KYLE.** She would have agreed with you. Not a great parental role model, but when there's no one else... I'd rather not talk about it anymore if you don't mind. It's not that big of a deal.

**DODO.** "Big a deal." Not "big of a deal."

**KYLE.** What, are you a fucking English teacher too?

**DODO.** Most boring year of my life. And I don't like the F-word, Kyle, it makes you sound more ignorant than you really are.

**KYLE.** Duly noted.

**DODO.** Must've been tough growing up with "The Dragon Lady of J. Walter Thompson."

**KYLE.** She hated that nickname. But she kinda was.

**DODO.** I've never thought of her as the maternal type.

**KYLE.** She tried. Well, she got me into some really good boarding schools.

**DODO.** So she wasn't even an "Auntie Mame?"

**KYLE.** Who?

**DODO.** Classic movie with Rosalind Russell?

**KYLE.** Oh. I don't watch anything in black and white.

**DODO.** And you're an Art Director? Damn, I've got my work cut out for me.  
(*Kyle's office phone rings.*)

**KYLE.** (*Looking at the phone's ID bar.*) It's Goldfarb. (*Putting the phone on speaker.*) This is Kyle.

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** Hello, Kyle, this is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. It is 9:58 am. The rest of us are waiting for you and Dolores in Conference Room 33B. I will cut you some slack today as we are starting a new working relationship, but you will please remember from now on my meetings start precisely at 10:00 am every Monday morning.

**KYLE.** We'll be right there.

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**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** I suggest you use the stairs rather than make us wait while you take the elevator.

**KYLE.** Duly noted.

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** You might want to put this as a recurring event with a reminder alert set for 9:50 / am...

**KYLE.** / We're on our way. (*Hanging up on her.*) Jesus!

**DODO.** She was like that when she was 22. Let's take the elevator. (*Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Sounds of a busy bar.*)

**Projection:** *O'Lunney's, an Irish bar. 8:00 pm that night.*

*MERYL, 32, and Kyle, shooting darts.*

**KYLE.** Have you seen the dinosaur I'm stuck with? God help us if we're still doing this when we're her age, Meryl. I can't believe Kate broke us up.

**MERYL.** I know!

**KYLE.** Want another bourbon?

**MERYL.** No thanks. Kate might not have had a choice. Did you talk to Scalo?

**KYLE.** Yeah. Joe's "happy to have us working here, we're all lucky to have jobs in this economy, Citibank is a new account and too important to trust with a less experienced art director..." blah, blah, blah.

**MERYL.** Kyle... There's something else we need to talk about... (*Kyle's cell phone rings. It's the "Wicked Witch" theme.*)

**KYLE.** Shit. It's Goldfarb.

**MERYL.** You've given her your cell number?

**KYLE.** We have to.

**MERYL.** Christ! It's worse than JWT!

**KYLE.** Yeah... (*Answering.*) Hey, Elphaba, what's up? ... Okay, okay, okay. Hello, Ms. Goldfarb, how's it hangin'? ... I told you I'd be back at 9:00 to release the files. ... You don't have to wait for me, I'm perfectly capable. ... That's your choice, then. ... Fuck off, Goldfarb! (*He disconnects.*)

**MERYL.** (*Sticking a dart in the center of the board.*) And there it is! Deirdre Goldfarb's first "Bullseye" from Kyle. (*The phone rings again. He ignores it.*)

**KYLE.** Third. All that stuff we've heard about her? She's worse. And there's a new client at Citibank. Her name is Anita, and she makes every other Citi-Wanker we

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worked with look like a Disney Princess. She doesn't even want us "in her presence;" only Deirdre can be in the room with her. We have to present everything via conference call.

**MERYL.** Yikes!

**KYLE.** At least it saves us trips out to Queens. I guess I should go back.

**MERYL.** Yeah, before you go, I need to / tell you (*The phone rings yet again. Kyle ignores it again but turns to go.*)

**KYLE.** / She's going nuts. Tell me at lunch tomorrow.

**MERYL.** Uhm... no. I can't this week at all.

**KYLE.** Then drinks next Monday?

**MERYL.** No, I can't next week either.

**KYLE.** But we always take a break to drink and dart on Monday. They can't stop us from that.

**MERYL.** Yeah, Kyle, listen... Marriott is sending Angela and me to Europe and Asia for the next couple of months. Researching international properties for a new campaign.

**KYLE.** You mean our new campaign.

**MERYL.** Look, wouldn't you rather hear it from me than finding out after we've gone?

**KYLE.** Yeah, yeah, sure. Thanks for telling me.

**MERYL.** I can't help thinking if you didn't insist on taking the train every time we went down to DC for Marriott meetings...

**KYLE.** I get it, Meryl. I've never wanted to go to Europe anyway. And I hate Chinese food.

**MERYL.** I don't like this anymore than you do, Kyle. And for the record, I'm hurt you never told me about Neil.

**KYLE.** Kate shouldn't have said anything to you.

**MERYL.** She thought I knew. I mean, I thought we tell each other everything.

**KYLE.** Almost everything. Don't say anything to anyone.

**MERYL.** You know you can trust me.

**KYLE.** When are you leaving?

**MERYL.** Tomorrow afternoon.

**KYLE.** Maybe you should start packing.

**MERYL.** Yeah. Maybe I should.

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**KYLE.** I have to go proof and release those files. Have a nice trip. (*He exits, still holding a dart.*)

**MERYL.** Kyle? Wait! (*Shouting after him.*) Grow up, Jerk-Face!

**KYLE.** (*Off.*) Shut up! (*Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change.*)

*Projection: Kyle's office. 10:45 pm, that night.*

*Neil enters.*

**NEIL.** Knock, knock, knock. Still here, kiddo?

**KYLE.** Obviously.

**NEIL.** Working on my stuff?

**KYLE.** No. Stuff for Goldfarb.

**NEIL.** You handled yourself well this morning.

**KYLE.** I can work with you. If I have to.

**NEIL.** No F-bombs. Impressive.

**KYLE.** You knew I was being put on your account, didn't you? That's why you dumped me.

**NEIL.** Yes, I knew. And no, that's not why I broke up with you.

**KYLE.** It could work, Neil, it could. We've been discreet, no one knows.

**NEIL.** Kate knows.

**KYLE.** She guessed. And she's promised to keep it secret.

**NEIL.** And has she?

**KYLE.** (*Quietly.*) She thought Meryl already knew.

**NEIL.** (*Picking up the dart from Kyle's desk and aiming towards Kyle's forehead.*) Bullseye. Those two are getting too close, too fast, if you want my opinion.

**KYLE.** I don't.

**NEIL.** I'd watch my back if I were you. Kate only kept you after Alan was laid off because she wants Meryl, and you guys are a package deal.

**KYLE.** Not anymore, we're not.

**NEIL.** See?

**KYLE.** She says she doesn't have a choice, that it's coming from Scalo.

**NEIL.** And what does Joe say about that?

**KYLE.** Who says I talked to Scalo?

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**NEIL.** I know everything that goes on around here, Kyle. And as for Kate: you've only been working with her a few weeks; I've known her more than a decade. Trust me, she piles up bodies like cigarette butts.

**KYLE.** I don't believe you.

**NEIL.** You don't want to believe me.

**KYLE.** I have to get these files released. Goldfarb is waiting for me to finish.

**NEIL.** She would be. Take a car home. Charge it to Moore.

**KYLE.** Kate gave me a voucher already.

**NEIL.** Remember what I said about her.

**KYLE.** Why do you care?

**NEIL.** I'm not heartless, Kyle.

**KYLE.** Duly noted.

**NEIL.** Yesterday morning, all I can see when I look into your eyes is a sweet young man, dreaming about the white picket fence, the cozy little house, the dog, the life he's never had... and it all becomes more than just a bit of fun. And that scares the crap out of me.

**KYLE.** Jeez, Neil, you can't even call it what it is? Maybe all I want is a fuck buddy too, did ya even think about that?

**NEIL.** You're also falling / in love

**KYLE.** / No, I'm / not.

**NEIL.** / You are falling in love with a version of me that doesn't exist. I like you Kyle, you're a wonderful lover and a great kid. But I don't want any more kids.

**KYLE.** Who's saying anything about wanting kids? Or a cozy little house with a white picket fence? You really don't know me, do you?

**NEIL.** Do you really know yourself, Kyle? I'm sorry I ended it, and I'm sorry I ended it the way I did.

**KYLE.** Yeah, right.

**NEIL.** I care about you, Kyle, and because I care I have to tell you to watch yourself around Kate. She's a mother, but not the kind you want her to be. Do not be taken in by that "Earth Mother" thing she's got going on. She's Mother Earth after the toxins have seeped deep into her soil.

**KYLE.** Would you please go?

**NEIL.** Don't say I didn't warn you.

**KYLE.** And just why the hell should I trust you?

**NEIL.** I can't think of a reason in the world why you should right now.



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**KYLE.** *(Taking the dart, he aims at Neil's heart.)* Bullseye. *(Waving Neil out of his office, he picks up the phone.)* Hey Goldfarb, I just sent the files to production... Whaddya mean you want to see them again? You've already proofed them twice!... *(Neil exits. Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Sounds of a busy office.)*

**Projection: Kyle's office. 11:45 am, Tuesday December 21st.**

*Kyle is on the phone.*

**KYLE.** ... Whaddya mean, it's my responsibility? ... No, Goldfarb, you push back ... Your client's been sitting on this job since before Thanksgiving, she's blowing the schedule, not me ... So what? It's a stupid credit card acquisition package ... So it goes to production a day late. It goes to the printer a day late. It goes to the post office a day late. It gets delivered a day late. It goes in the trash a day late. Who cares? ... I am not working Christmas Eve or Christmas day. Not for you, not for Anita, and not for Goddam Citibank ... You really think Moo Shoo Chicken is an incentive? What is wrong with you? ... Fuck off, Goldfarb. *(He slams the phone. Meryl enters, carrying a gift box.)*

**MERYL.** Isn't this where I left?

**KYLE.** Welcome back, Bitch!

**MERYL.** God, I never thought I'd say this, but I miss working with you, Jerk-Face.

**KYLE.** Working with "Saint Angela of The Font of Helvetica" getting boring?

**MERYL.** She's not you, that's for sure.

**KYLE.** Kate certainly loves her. How was the trip?

**MERYL.** Exhausting. But thank you for the care packages. Here. It's not much, but Merry Christmas. *(Kyle opens the box and takes out a coffee mug.)*

**KYLE.** Cool. They have a Starbucks in... Fuck It?

**MERYL.** Phuket *(Pronounced Poo-ket.)* Now don't break it the next time you have a temper tantrum. This can't be replaced downstairs.

**KYLE.** Duly noted. Thanks!

**MERYL.** So... Could you do me a favor and put our Marriott files back on the hard drive?

**KYLE.** Why?

**MERYL.** Angela needs them.

**KYLE.** No. Those are my designs.

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**MERYL.** But it's my copy.

**KYLE.** So, use your copy, I don't care. But Angela isn't using my work to pass off as hers. She can come up with her own golden shit.

**MERYL.** (*Gently.*) Look, Kyle; I know it's December 21st, but I really hate when you get like this.

**KATE.** (*Off.*) KYLE!

**KYLE.** Oh, shit. Right on time.

**KATE.** (*Shouting as she barges in.*) You have got to stop telling Deirdre Goldfarb to fuck off!

**KYLE.** She's an idiot, Kate, she can't control her client.

**KATE.** I know, but you can't keep telling a VP to fuck off, honey. That's my job.

**KYLE.** I am not working Christmas day because she's letting Anita blow the schedule.

**KATE.** Who said anything about working Christmas day?

**KYLE.** She did! She's offering to bring in Chinese food as if that's some great peace offering.

**KATE.** NOBODY is working Christmas day so just calm down.

**KYLE.** Fine.

**KATE.** Now I need a favor. Angela's going on vacation tomorrow through New Year's. I want you to step in on Marriott while she's away.

**KYLE.** Jesus, Kate, she just got back! I'm juggling five projects for Citibank, three for Moore, now you want me back on Marriott too?

**KATE.** You know the Marriott account.

**KYLE.** Yeah, just like I know the Citibank account.

**KATE.** And they like you at Marriott. Maybe I can get a freelancer for Benjamin Moore, but I can't promise.

**KYLE.** No way! Neil said there's a bunch of TV spots coming up. I am not letting anyone else get their hands on those! Get a freelancer for Citibank.

**KATE.** Citibank won't pay for that. And Neil shouldn't have told you about those spots for Moore, they're not official yet so don't get your panties in a twist. I know it's a lot of work, honey, but if anyone here can handle it all, it's you!

**KYLE.** Yeah. Fine. Whatever.

**MERYL.** (*To Kyle.*) And we'll be working together again

**KATE.** Okay, then. Oh, are you coming to DC with us for the Marriott holiday party tomorrow?

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**KYLE.** I'm not planning on it since I'm "officially" off the account.

**KATE.** They asked for you. Meryl and I are taking the 5:00 Delta Shuttle but I'm assuming you'll want to take the train?

**KYLE.** Yeah.

**KATE.** You'll have to book it yourself now and put in a reimbursement form. Don't take the Acela unless you want to pay for it yourself. And let Keith at Marriott know so he can book your room. Where's Dodo?

**KYLE.** She has an appointment this morning. She'll be back around noon.

**KATE.** I want to see those Citibank E-Blast revisions at 3:00. We have a conference call with Deirdre and Anita tomorrow, and I want to make sure everything is perfect.

**KYLE.** No problem.

**KATE.** I know she's not Meryl, but you're okay working with her so far?

**KYLE.** Yeah, she's alright.

**KATE.** Oh. Good. See ya at 3:00. Hey, Meryl, whaddya say we sneak out and get our nails done?

**MERYL.** Sure.

**KATE.** See ya downstairs in ten. *(Kate gives a thumbs up sign to Meryl behind Kyle's back and exits. Kyle coughs and spritzes the Breatheezy.)*

**KYLE.** It's like the smoke is the only thing that holds her together.

**KATE.** *(Off.)* I heard that.

**KYLE.** So, you're getting my stuff for Marriott after all. Did you two plan this?

**MERYL.** Just dumb luck. Do you want me to go to the cemetery with you later?

**KYLE.** I'm not going this year. I don't know why I go at all, it's just a headstone. And I don't really remember that much about them. I was just a little kid when it happened. *(Dodo enters.)*

**DODO.** When what happened?

**KYLE.** Never mind.

**MERYL.** Hi, Dodo, we've never officially met. I'm Meryl. I used to be this jerk's partner.

**DODO.** He's a moody little thing, isn't he?

**MERYL.** Yeah, but I like him. Listen, Kyle, what time do you want us all to get together to go over the Marriott stuff?

**DODO.** Marriott?

**KYLE.** Saint Angela's going on vacation, so I have to cover for her.

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**DODO.** Well ka-ka poo-poo for you!

**KYLE.** How about 4:30? Panera? I'm gonna need lunch.

**MERYL.** 'k. Nice meeting you, Dodo. If he gets out of line, smack him. He likes it.  
*(She exits.)*

**DODO.** Today's the anniversary, isn't it?

**KYLE.** What?

**DODO.** Lockerbie. Your parents were on that flight, weren't they?

**KYLE.** Yes. They were. How the hell...

**DODO.** I Googled you.

**KYLE.** You're pretty savvy for a digital immigrant.

**DODO.** *(Sending Kyle a text.)* Yes. I can text, too.

**KYLE.** *(Reading the text and laughing.)* So you won't say it, but you can text it?  
Not bad for a 70-year-old.

**DODO.** How the hell did you find that out?

**KYLE.** I Googled *you*. And then I added a decade because nothing added up.

**DODO.** Well! I'm going to have to keep my eyes on you. *(Lowering her voice.)*  
Listen, I took 12 years off my age when I started here, so keep your mouth shut.

**KYLE.** I guess that was easier to do before the internet. It's a good thing you're so well-preserved.

**DODO.** I'm going to slug you!

**KYLE.** You were a pilot?

**DODO.** I still am.

**KYLE.** Impressive. Do you still fly?

**DODO.** Sometimes. It's great to escape the world for a few hours. There's nothing like it: the sense of freedom, the feeling of you and the wind working in tandem, controlling everything while the rest of the crap takes care of itself down below. You can almost forget... It's better than any pill. It's even better than booze.

**KYLE.** I can imagine.

**DODO.** What did you really want to be when you grew up?

**KYLE.** Why are you still working?

**DODO.** You first.

**KYLE.** No. Ladies first.

**DODO.** After Don – my husband – died... well, there isn't as much money as I thought there'd be.

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KYLE.** Yeah, tell me about it. Aunt Maryanne wasn't as rich as everyone thought either. It sucketh.

**DODO.** It certainly does. Flying is an expensive little habit, but every now and then I just need to take off and feel a little closer to Don. *(Kyle takes out his phone and shows it to Dodo.)*

**KYLE.** That's me with Aunt Maryanne and my mom when I was about three. Aunt Maryanne was working on the Pan Am account. The pilot invited us into the cockpit.

**DODO.** Weren't you just adorable!

**KYLE.** I still have those wings the pilot gave me; he called me Ace. My mom called me Ace all the time after that, right up until...

**DODO.** I'll take you up with me next time if you like?

**KYLE.** NO! Thank you. I mean, how do I know you won't push me out of the plane?

**DODO.** You don't. Come with me anyway. You know you want to fly.

**KYLE.** I want to get this Citibank crap done. Kate wants to see our revisions at 3:00.

**DODO.** Here, I wrote this in the cab on the way back from my checkup.

**KYLE.** Everything okay?

**DODO.** Not bad. For a 58-year-old.

**KYLE.** *(Reading the copy.)* This is too good for Citibank!

**DODO.** I know. Now do that magic you do and let's blow Kate's darling little bobby socks off.

**KYLE.** You don't like Kate, do you?

**DODO.** I'm not in a position to dislike anybody, Kyle-bird. Nobody is. *(Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change.)*

**Projection: Kate's office. Immediately following.**

*Kate is on the phone.*

**KATE.** Anita is blowing the schedule, Deirdre, not Kyle. ... I am not siding with him! ... I don't care, just buy us a couple of days. ... It's a print package, Deirdre, it takes longer to produce. You know that. Now get us the time to do it properly or you'll be mailing one million packages full of blips, blurps and kitchieboobers, and

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

it'll be your ass on the line. ... Trust me, Deirdre, I don't like that little weasel any more than you do, but for some reason Scalo does. He made me keep him after Alan was canned. ... Look, sweetie, you're not the only one who's stuck working with people you don't want on your team, so just deal with it! ... The E-Blast? I'm seeing their revisions at 3:00 and you'll get it tonight. ... Yes, Deirdre, you've made Anita's color preferences quite clear. ... I know you're meeting with her tomorrow, I just told you, you will have the E-Blast tonight! (*Hanging up on her.*) Bitch! (*Neil enters.*)

**NEIL.** You bellowed?

**KATE.** Neil! Where the hell do you get off telling Kyle he's doing those Moore TV spots?

**NEIL.** Where the hell do you get off putting Kyle on my account?

**KATE.** That's my job. And I have no choice, it's coming directly from Scalo himself.

**NEIL.** Bullshit. But as long as Kyle is on the account, he's doing the spots. And that's coming directly from Scalo himself.

**KATE.** Bullshit. Why is it so important to you Kyle does these spots? Having second thoughts about dumping the little fagela?

**NEIL.** My personal affairs are none of your business.

**KATE.** I wonder what Scalo would think if he knew his son-in-law fools around with other guys on his payroll?

**NEIL.** Let's ask him, shall we? And while we're at it, let's see just how much he knows about you and that "Breatheezy" mess. Kind of sucks Alan lost his job because of that, doesn't it?

**KATE.** You know what Alan called me. In a room full of people, including the client!

**NEIL.** Refresh my memory: was that the Benjamin Moore client who paid to have your house repainted? Or was it the photographer who gave you a hefty kickback to shoot it for that Breatheezy campaign? Or was it the Breatheezy client you were sleeping with? (*They lock eyes. Kate caves first.*)

**KATE.** Fine. Kyle can do the spots. But I'm going to write them.

**NEIL.** Fine. I'll brief you both after the holidays.

**KATE.** Fine.

**NEIL.** A little advice? Never forget: I know a lot more than you ever will. And always remember: you wouldn't even have gotten your job here if it weren't for me.

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KATE.** I wouldn't be divorced if it weren't for you.

**NEIL.** Wanna bet? Your ex was a "little fagela" long before he met me. Sweetie.

**KATE.** Get the hell out of here. I have work to do.

**NEIL.** As long as we understand each other. Have a nice day, Kate. *(He exits. She picks up her phone.)*

**KATE.** Goddam asshole thinks he can bluff... Meryl? Let's get the hell out of here. ... Yeah, sure, we can go to Bloomingdale's too. I just need to be back by 3:00 to review that Citibank shit. ... Meet me in the lobby. *(Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change.)*

*Projection: Kate's office. 3:00 pm that afternoon.*

*Dodo and Kyle presenting to Kate.*

**DODO.** So when the target gets the ya-ya...

**KYLE.** E-Blast...

**DODO.** The subject line says: "Citibank has news which may be of absolutely no interest to you..." That'll get them to open the ya-ya...

**KYLE.** E-Blast...

**DODO.** And then we hit 'em with the hard sell: "HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO insert name here. Our gift to you: Use your Citibank Preferred Visa for all your last-minute gift giving NOW through January 15, and you'll pay NO INTEREST on your purchases for SIX MONTHS." And the gaga goo-goo...

**KYLE.** Body copy...

**DODO.** Will be blah, blah, blah...

**KYLE.** That's self-explanatory...

**DODO.** Until we close with "And don't forget to click on the links below to get your 50% discount on all purchases over \$500!" Then all the ka-ka poo-poo...

**KYLE.** Legal copy...

**DODO.** And the Citibank tag line.

**KYLE.** I'm keeping it spare, to allow the eye to focus on the important points: 0% interest, last minute holiday shopping and links which will bring them to the Amazon, Macy's, Harry & David, and Dress Barn sites, where they can use the discount code we'll be embedding in the blast.

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KATE.** I think it's terrific. Very clever copy, Dodo, nearly brilliant even. "Absolutely no interest to you." Love it! Only thing: Kyle, there's too much white space.

**KYLE.** I disagree, Kate.

**KATE.** You always disagree. All that white on the screen hurts my eyes. And if it hurts my eyes, it's gonna hurt Goldfarb's eyes. And if it hurts Goldfarb's eyes, you know it's gonna hurt Anita's eyes.

**KYLE.** I can point to the specific line in the Citibank Graphic Standards manual / that states

**KATE.** / Standards Shmandards, we're talking about an idiot account manager and a client who barely graduated high school.

**KYLE.** For Chrissakes, Kate!

**KATE.** Watch the tone, Kyle. I said change it.

**KYLE.** Why yes, Kate, I would love to. Perhaps a nice, soft grey, with subtle touches of red and green to suggest the holiday season. And just so Anita doesn't go apeshit again, how about some blue too, as she so eloquently puts it, "for the Jews?"

**KATE.** Kyle, cut the crap. Just fix it. Make it non-holiday specific. Make it... yellow.

**KYLE.** Whatever you say, Kate. (*Kyle and Dodo exit.*)

**KATE.** Kyle, wait. I need you to stay a minute.

**KYLE.** (*Coming back.*) Yeah?

**KATE.** Look, Kyle, as your friend I gotta tell you: you're really getting to be a downer lately.

**KYLE.** I've got to get off Citibank, Kate. It's killing me.

**KATE.** I know, honey, it's an awful account. But temper tantrums about simple color changes? Telling Vice Presidents to fuck off?

**KYLE.** So? Make me a VP. I've more than paid my dues.

**KATE.** Sweetie, nobody wants to work with you. I had quite a time convincing Neil you should do the TV spots for Moore.

**KYLE.** So that's been decided?

**KATE.** Yes, you and I will be working on them together.

**KYLE.** Oh. Good.

**KATE.** Oh, and one other thing: those spots? Most likely we'll be shooting in L.A.

**KYLE.** We can't shoot in New York?

**KATE.** You need to get over this fear of flying shit, Kyle. It's not healthy.



## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KYLE.** I'm not afraid to fly, I just don't like to fly if I don't have to.

**KATE.** Good to know. Let's see how those spots turn out, then maybe I'll see what I can do about the VP thing.

**KYLE.** Thanks, Kate.

**KATE.** Yeah. And get that revised E-Blast to me by 7:00 so I can look at it before I send it to Goldfarb tonight.

**KYLE.** I can send it to her.

**KATE.** Do you really want her calling you every 5 minutes to find out where it is, honey? Let me send it to her. You've got that Moore stuff to worry about too, remember?

**KYLE.** Good point. I'll get the changes to you by 7:00. *(He exits.)*

**KATE.** *(Making sure he's gone she makes a call.)* ... Deirdre? ... No, too many things have to be changed. I'll send it to you tomorrow morning. ... You will have it in time, don't worry! ... Look, do you want it done right, or do you want to have to deal with another Anita meltdown? ... Well, you're just going to have to trust me on this, aren't you? *(Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change.)*

**Projection: Conference Room 33B. 2:30 pm, Wednesday December 22nd.**

*A woman's voice on speaker phone, shrieking furiously.*

**ANITA'S VOICE.** What is this? "News which may be of absolutely no interest to you!?!?" Yuz gonna confuse 'em wit that clever word shit. Just tell 'em flat out we're offerin' 0% interest. And I done tol' you I don' wanna see no yella! I hate yella. Awful color, yella! No yella. Evah!

**KYLE.** We're trying to embrace all the holidays, Anita, and yellow / signifies

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** / This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. Anita very clearly has stated she does not like yellow. She has very clearly stated this many, many times.

**ANITA'S VOICE.** Damn right I have. Change that background, Kevin!

**KYLE.** Kyle.

**ANITA'S VOICE.** Yeah, yeah, yeah, Kyle, Kevin, I don't care. Make it white. Plain white. I like white.

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking again. Kate, I am sorry, but this will have to be fixed tonight if we want this to blast tomorrow. And we do want this to blast tomorrow so we can generate last minute / Christmas

**ANITA'S VOICE.** / Holiday. Can't say Christmas no / more.

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** / Holiday spending.

**ANITA'S VOICE.** And Kevin? Put in some more red and green. And blue! Lots of blue. Remember the Jews. And that writin'? I don't like the way it looks. Change it.

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. I believe Anita means she does not like the font you are using, Kyle.

**ANITA'S VOICE.** Yeah, yeah, yeah, font, whatevah.

**KYLE.** That's the official Citibank typeface, Anita. Legally, we're required to use it.

**ANITA'S VOICE.** Fuck legal! I'm Anita! I don't like it. Change it. Use something jazzy!

**KATE.** Whatever you say, Anita.

**GOLDFARB'S VOICE.** This is Deirdre Goldfarb speaking. I shall come by your office when I get back from Long Island City. I shall be back by 7:00. I am signing off now... Anita, I am so sorry, I do not know why those losers in creative cannot ever seem to get it right... Oh, shoot. Is this thing still on?

**KATE.** Yes, dear. Those losers in creative hear you loud and clear.

*(Disconnecting.)* Crap. I am not going to miss that party because Goldfarb screwed up.

**KYLE.** Deirdre never "evah" told us Anita hates "yella."

**KATE.** Fuck her. Sorry Dodo, I'm gonna rewrite this on my way to the airport.

**DODO.** Be my guest, darling.

**KATE.** Kyle, I'll e-mail the new copy to you. Bring a laptop and fix it on the train. Remember to use "something jazzy." I just wish I could see that cunt's face when she shows up at 7:00 and no one is here. I love me! Now let's get the hell out of here. I gotta pick up my kid from school before going to the airport; if I leave it to my dumb-ass ex and his "husband," she'll be sitting there waiting 'til New Year's.

*(She exits.)*

**DODO.** Should I be worried?

**KYLE.** Why?

**DODO.** She's re-writing my copy. Again. And now she's writing those TV spots for Benjamin Moore.

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KYLE.** Yeah, that sucketh. I wish we were working on them together.

**DODO.** I've got nothing to do now.

**KYLE.** Enjoy it.

**DODO.** You don't understand, Kyle-bird. This is how they start phasing you out.

**KYLE.** You're over-reacting. Kate re-writes everyone's copy. And she always hogs the TV.

**DODO.** I think she's figured out how old I am.

**KYLE.** She can't fire you because of that. You could sue.

**DODO.** They always find ways, especially when...

**KYLE.** What?

**DODO.** Never mind.

**KYLE.** Tell me!

**DODO.** Don't you have a train to catch? I'm going to be fine. Just fine. Go to your party.

**KYLE.** You sure? I can skip it if you want me to stay.

**DODO.** Kyle-bird, when a client requests your presence, you get your gaga goo-goo to the ka-ka poo-poo party! Now go. I'll be fine. *(As he leaves.)* Kyle?

**KYLE.** Yeah?

**DODO.** What are you doing for Christmas?

**KYLE.** Nothing special. Probably just sleep late, go to the movies, order a pizza.

**DODO.** How about I throw an emergency dinner party? I make a mean Beef Wellington.

**KYLE.** I'll bring the booze. What goes better with that? Scotch? Vodka? Gin?

**DODO.** Red Wine.

**KYLE.** Oh. Okay.

**DODO.** And Scotch.

**KYLE.** You're on. See ya when I get back.

**DODO.** Kyle-bird?

**KYLE.** Yeah?

**DODO.** I don't like women who use the "C" word. It's bad enough when men say it. But you can never trust a woman who uses it.

**KYLE.** Duly noted. Just use "darling" instead, right? *(Hugging her.)* Merry Christmas, Auntie Mame. You shoulda told me that movie is in color.

**DODO.** Get out of here. *(Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Light change. Sound of a jet taking off.)*

THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

*Projection: The Delta Shuttle. 5:30 pm that afternoon.*

**MERYL.** I feel bad about playing Kyle that way the other day.

**KATE.** You have those Marriott files now, right?

**MERYL.** Yeah, but...

**KATE.** It's good work, Angela's out for the next two weeks, what's the problem?

**MERYL.** It could have waited for her to get back.

**KATE.** He doesn't need to know that.

**MERYL.** I guess. He's getting full credit, right?

**KATE.** Oh, yeah, sure, why not? You miss working with him?

**MERYL.** Sometimes.

**KATE.** I'm getting a tired of his diva trips. He's a nice guy, I guess, but he just doesn't get it.

**MERYL.** He gets frustrated. It hasn't been easy for him, you know?

**KATE.** Are you kidding me? You know how many people would kill to have been given the opportunities he's had simply because Maryanne Gordon raised him?

**MERYL.** Yeah, Kate, he's lucky his parents were killed in a terrorist attack.

**KATE.** That's not what I mean. But doesn't it bother you we've had to work our asses off to get where we are, and both he and Neil are entitled, whiny jerks who've had everything handed to them their entire lives just because of who they're related to?

**MERYL.** That's not entirely true, Kate.

**KATE.** Oh please, neither one of them would be where they are if they hadn't called in favors from their relatives.

**MERYL.** C'mon, Kate, we all use our connections. Kyle works very hard; he's always worked very hard. I will admit he can be an exhausting pain in the ass, but that's part of his charm.

**KATE.** You can do me a big favor, then...

**MERYL.** Keep Dodo on Citibank.

**KATE.** But I need senior creatives with financial experience on that account!

**MERYL.** Dodo is senior.

**KATE.** She's a little too senior. She makes more money than I do! I could hire a younger / writer

**MERYL.** / Careful, / Kate

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KATE.** / A senior writer and art director, plus two juniors with what she's pulling down.

**MERYL.** Not my problem.

**KATE.** The client hates her work, Meryl. Goldfarb's breathing down my neck.

**MERYL.** I told you I'm leaving if I have to work on Citibank again, and I mean it.

**KATE.** Just give me some time. Promise me you won't start looking until I can figure out a way to get rid of... Bring in some fresh blood.

**MERYL.** Three months. After that I'm not promising anything.

**KATE.** What if I add a V and a P to your title?

**MERYL.** That would help.

**KATE.** Merry Christmas. You're lucky I like you.

**MERYL.** I pity anyone you don't.

**CAPTAIN (V.O.).** Okay folks, we've begun our initial descent into Washington's Reagan Airport. There are some big winds blowing in the DC area; it's going to get a little bumpy on the approach so we've gone ahead and turned on the fasten seat belt signs. Flight crew, prepare for landing.

**KATE.** Oooh, this is the fun part! (*Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Sounds of a Corporate party.*)

***Projection: A Ballroom at the Marriott Hotel in Washington DC. 10:15 pm that night.***

**MERYL.** At least we'll be working together again, Kyle. I miss us.

**KYLE.** Really?

**MERYL.** Why wouldn't I?

**KYLE.** I thought no one wants to work with me.

**MERYL.** Whatever gives you that idea? Oh... never mind. I miss Alan.

**KYLE.** (*Toasting.*) Alan Friedenthal. Best boss ever.

**MERYL.** He really was. He might have been too good, ya know?

**KYLE.** Huh?

**MERYL.** Alan spoiled us. Considering what Scalo has turned into since he was let go. I mean, ya know, at least Alan wanted both of us in his group...

**KYLE.** What the hell are you babbling about?

**MERYL.** Kyle... Look... I think it's time we start looking for another job. Are you with me?

## THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**KYLE.** Maybe.

**MERYL.** C'mon, do you want us to get stuck on Citibank again?

**KYLE.** No, but I do want to do those TV spots for Moore.

**MERYL.** Oh, for crap's sake! Do you really think Kate's going to let you do them?

**KYLE.** She fought for me to do them!

**MERYL.** Are you really that dense? She's gunning for you. Just like she was gunning for Alan.

**KYLE.** She can't fire me without a really, really good reason. You know that.

**MERYL.** Yes, but with your temper it won't be long until you just hand her one on a screaming silver platter.

**KYLE.** Duly noted.

**MERYL.** It's all war games for her, and the one with the biggest body count is the winner. *(Kate enters. She may have had one too many.)*

**KATE.** There you are!

**MERYL.** *(Adroitly changing the subject.)* So I'm going out to Commack to spend Christmas with "The Drainers." Wanna join me?

**KYLE.** Christmas. On Long Island. With your parents. I love ya, Meryl, but no thanks.

**KATE.** Oh go on, Kyle, it'll be fun. I mean, what else have you got to do?

**KYLE.** I'm going to Dodo's for an "emergency dinner party."

**KATE.** Oh. That ought to be lovely. I'm glad you won't be completely alone.

**KYLE.** No, I won't be alone. But thanks for your concern. *(Kate's phone rings.)*

**KATE.** Oh crap, it's Goldfarb. *(Answers.)* Yes, Deirdre? ... No shit. I told you legal wouldn't approve the font change. ... Well, you just need to control her expectations a bit better now, don't you? ... Okay, okay, okay, Deirdre, calm down! Kyle will change it all back and send you the file tonight. *(Laughing as she disconnects.)* Citibank's lawyers just said "We're legal. Fuck Anita." Kyle, honey, sorry to end your party early, but you're going to have change it all back now.

**KYLE.** *(Taking out his phone.)* Hold on, Kate...

**KATE.** Don't you dare call her and / tell her to f...

**KYLE.** / Click, send, whoosh, done. *(Making a call.)* Hey, Goldfarb. ... I just sent it to you. ... Yes, it's exactly the same, white background, red, green, and blue highlights, but with the Citibank approved fonts. ... Yes. Go home, Goldfarb. *(Disconnecting and smiling at Kate.)* I did two versions, 'cause I knew this would happen.

THE FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW

**MERYL.** *(Under her breath.)* Well played.

**KATE.** Oh. Smart. Score one for you. *(Trying to save face.)* Some party, huh? I mean, I know times are hard, but a cash bar!?! At least we're all lucky to have a job, right? What the hell, it's Christmas, I'm in a generous mood, who wants another? I'm buying.

**KYLE.** No, thanks. I think I need to keep my wits about me.

**KATE.** Yeah, there's nothing worse than a drunk on an early morning train.

**KYLE.** Unless you're the drunk. On an early morning plane.

**MERYL.** Careful, Kyle. *(Kyle and Kate stare at each other: he confidently, she barely masking her contempt. Sound of a clock ticking. Fast. Lights change. Sounds of a busy bar.)*

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