

SECOND-IN-COMMAND

1. INT. CAFÉ - DAY

EMIN, suit-clad, fidgets with the undone top button of his shirt. His gaze is directed through the café window but his thoughts are miles further.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. He works the button of his pen incessantly.

Walking from off-camera a man in a loud Hawaiian shirt sighs and sits down at the table opposite Emin. This is JOHN SMITH.

John, taking off a pair of aviators, throws a look right down the camera.

JOHN SMITH
(looks down the camera and
sighs)
Here we go again.

EMIN
Aviators in January? Seriously?

JOHN SMITH
Fuck off. I can go.

EMIN
No, no. Please don't. Sorry.

JOHN SMITH
(sighs)
Why am I here?

EMIN
...what if...she says no?

JOHN SMITH
OH MY GOD! We've been over this.
She won't say no.

EMIN
I don't know how to ask her?

JOHN SMITH
Claudia...do you want to go for
coffee with me?

EMIN
It's not that simple. I-I'm-

JOHN SMITH
Worried? Stressed? Thinking about
last Tuesday?

EMIN
Oi, we decided not to talk about
last Tuesday.

JOHN SMITH

Don't blame me. You're the one
imagining me. If you think it, I
think it. That's how this works.

EMIN

I might not ask her. It'll go
wrong.

JOHN SMITH

Emin, they're transferring you from
the office next week. If you don't
ask now, you've lost your shot.

PATRICIA, the café proprietor, approaches the table and
clears Emin's empty plate.

PATRICIA

(only addressing Emin)

Thank you for coming to Patricia's
Café! Just come up to the counter
when you're ready to pay. There's
no rush of course.

EMIN

Thank you.

She takes the plate and heads into the back through some
doors.

JOHN SMITH

Dude, doesn't your lunch break end
soon?

2. INT. OFFICE - DAY

Emin studiously CLACKS away at the keyboard entering mindless
lines of data.

John spirals round on a swivel-seat throwing a ball up in the
air.

JOHN SMITH

Emin...did you pay?

EMIN

What do you mean?

JOHN SMITH

At the café...did you pay?

EMIN

Yeah at the end I went - oh shit.

JOHN SMITH

Yeah.

EMIN
Oh no no no no.

JOHN SMITH
That's a crime.

EMIN
Piss off.

JOHN SMITH
Dude, I'm messing. Just relax.

EMIN
It's theft!

JOHN SMITH
Alright Jean Valjean it's just lunch.

A woman approaches Emin's desk.

JOHN SMITH (CONT'D)
(to Emin)
CLAUDIA! CLAUDIA! CLAUDIA! CLAUDIA!

CLAUDIA
Hey Emin.

She takes no notice of John.

EMIN
(awkwardly)
Hey...what...uh...brings
you...here?

CLAUDIA
(chuckles)
Uh...you. I got you this.

She hands him a small model frog.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
You know...cuz of last Tuesday...

EMIN
It's nice...thank you.

CLAUDIA
...is it true? Are you leaving this week.

EMIN
...yes.

CLAUDIA
...oh. Okay.

EMIN

They're transferring me. Don't know where.

A beat.

CLAUDIA

...I'll miss you.

EMIN

...Um...yeah...I...I was wondering...Claudia...di-did you wanna go for coffee with me...?

As he says this John, smiling, mouths the words.

CLAUDIA

Oh...uh...yes...I would love to.

EMIN

(a soft smile breaking across his face, he's almost suprised)
...Wh-where did you wanna go?

CLAUDIA

Hmmm...oh! I know! There's this café I love...It's called Patricia's Café.

EMIN

(instinctively but shocked)
Sounds great!

JOHN SMITH

(to himself)
What a muppet.

CLAUDIA

Wonderful! I got to dash but I'll send you a message.

She smiles, lingers on his eyes - a beat - then heads back into the jungle of desks.

EMIN

(to John)
I gotta go back and pay for the lunch!

JOHN SMITH

You need to let it go. Move on. Just ask her to switch cafés.

EMIN

Tomorrow. At lunch. I'll go. I can
undo this.

JOHN SMITH

...Suit yourself, man.
(he slides on his
sunglasses and leans back
in the chair)
I think it's a terrible idea.

3. EXT. OUTSIDE CAFÉ - DAY

Like a hunter watching his prey, Emin eyes the café from a
distance, clutching a few loose coins.

John is leaning against a fence, aviators armed.

JOHN SMITH

Move on, Emin.

He makes a move. John stays leant against the fence. The door
of the café swings open and someone exits.

Claudia.

EMIN

(does a 180)
No no no no, ahhhh, not now.

He heads towards John. She spots him almost immediately.

CLAUDIA

(calling out, beaming with
a smile)
Emin!

He pretends not to hear.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)

(a little closer now)
Emin!

Still ignoring her. Emin is within talking distance of John.

EMIN

What do I do? She can't know!

JOHN SMITH

Not my problem. I told you not to
go in.

John sits down on the edge of the pavement and gets out his
phone.

EMIN
Useless.

CLAUDIA
(now with a touch of hurt)
Hey, Emin!

She's too close to pretend.

EMIN
(turning round)
Heyyyy, Claudiaaaa.

CLAUDIA
I didn't realise you knew this
place?

EMIN
Oh...uh...I don't...know uh
(he squints over to the
café sign, feigning
unawareness)
Patricia's.

CLAUDIA
Oh...right...

An awkward beat.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
...sorry can I ask? Were you...
ignoring me?

EMIN
I...I...no...I...I just wanted to
see the place you suggested. That's
why I'm here.

CLAUDIA
You said you didn't know this
place?

EMIN
Yes...I mean...uh...what I meant
is...it's...

CLAUDIA
(clearly hurt)
...Maybe we don't do coffee, Emin.
See you at the office.

She passes Emin and John and turns a corner.

JOHN SMITH
That went well.

A switch flips.

EMIN
 (yelling)
 I WAS TRYING TO MAKE THINGS BETTER!

JOHN SMITH
 (calm as a mouse)
 I've been thinking. Maybe you're
 right about wearing aviators in
 January...perhaps I'm trying too
 hard.

EMIN
 ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?! THIS IS
 YOUR FAULT!

JOHN SMITH
 ...perhaps it's best I
 wasn't here...

EMIN
 YOU'RE NOT LEAVING! COME BACK!

John straightens up calmly.

JOHN SMITH
 You know...I've decided...I like my
 glasses.

John disappears.

EMIN
 BASTARD!

4. INT. OFFICE - DAY

More mindless CLACKING.

COLLEAGUE #1
 Is this chair free?

He's sticking a finger out towards the empty swivel chair
 besides Emin, the one John sat on.

EMIN
 Hmm?
 (realising)
 Oh, yeah, yeah, it's free.

The colleague rolls it away.

Claudia heads in the direction of Emin's desk. She glances at
 him but as he turns his head in her direction she veers her
 gaze away.

She passes him with a silence that slaps him in the face.

Emin and the model frog, still on his desk, stare at each other.

5. EXT. OUTSIDE CAFÉ - DAY

He pauses a few feet outside the café, holding the coins. He fidgets with his shirt's top button. Emin looks over to his right and spots a fence, the kind John might have leant on if were there. But he is isn't. It's just Emin...who enters the café...

6. INT. CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

Patricia weaves round, handing salt-shakers, taking orders, and wiping down tables.

PATRICIA

Give me one moment and I'll be with you.

EMIN

I'm not here to eat.

PATRICIA

You sure I can't tempt you?

EMIN

I forgot to pay for my lunch a few days back.

PATRICIA

Hmmm...that's all paid for.

EMIN

(confused)

What d'ya mean its all paid for?

PATRICIA

...I'm sorry to say but you wasted your time coming here.

EMIN

(irate)

I need to pay.

PATRICIA

(to Emin)

Look.

(to camera)

I really wasn't supposed to say.

(to Emin)

Someone came in yesterday. Funny man, wearing sunglasses this time of year...he paid for you.

EMIN

He-He what?

PATRICIA

Paid for you. Told me you'd forgot.

The annoyance in Emin deflates into confusion.

EMIN

Oh?

PATRICIA

So you're all good here. No need to worry.

EMIN

Erm...thank...you.

PATRICIA

Have a wonderful day. Perhaps you'll come again.

Emin turns to leave, almost stunned.

7. EXT. OUTSIDE CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

He stops for a moment to let it sink in...and chuckles.

8. INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Emin adjusts his tie in the mirror of his home bathroom.

EMIN

(to himself)

It's my last day in the office,
Claudia, I just wanted to say sorry
... Claudia I'm sorry for
ignoring...

(sighs)

I'm sorry...Claudia.

9. INT. FRONT DOOR

He shuts the door, suit-clad and ready for work.

EMIN (CONT'D)

I wanted to tell you but just, in
the moment, I didn't know what to
say.

10. EXT. ROAD - DAY

Striding along.

EMIN (CONT'D)
I really enjoy spending time with
you Claudia.

11. INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Arriving at his desk, he throws the coat over his chair. He sees Claudia diligently typing away, pre-occupied and unaware of him.

COLLEAGUE #1
You gonna talk to her? It's your
last day, right?

He comes up from behind pushing a chair.

EMIN
Sorry what?

COLLEAGUE #1
Claudia...you're not exactly
subtle.

EMIN
What are you doing here?

COLLEAGUE #1
I come in peace...just returning
the chair. Cheers for letting me
borrow it.

EMIN
No worries.

COLLEAGUE #1
Why do you have two anyway?

EMIN
Oh...uh...variety.

COLLEAGUE #1
Sure...okay...I like your frog by
the way.

He trails off.

Emin eyes the second chair and the frog. Then back to Claudia.

She looks up and gives him a soft smile, but it's clear she's done with him. After a second too long, she turns back to her work. Emin takes a moment to gather himself...

Then gently smiles. It's one of acceptance, not happiness.

He turns away from her and towards his desk. As he approaches he doesn't stop but instead leans in to grab the small frog.

He walks past the colleague.

EMIN
(handing him the frog)
You can have it.

A song like 'MAYBE I WILL MAYBE I WON'T' by NICK MARKS begins to play.

12. EXT. OUTSIDE OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Emin walks away from the office. A smile begins to make itself comfortable on his face.

He jumps to the side of the pavement and playfully balances along the edge, as though tight-rope walking.

A runner, up-ahead, gets blocked by two other pedestrians. He moves around them and, as he comes past Emin, looks more and more like John. This runner has the exact likeness of John but in no way registers Emin. Only in the last second does Emin notice the similarity.

The runner carries on past Emin who spins briefly around to watch the lookalike. He's slightly - but not completely - confused.

Emin smiles once more than turns round again.

13. EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Emin leans back on a park bench, a man besides him gets up and heads down the path.

He leaves behind some aviator glasses.

EMIN
(calling to him)
'Scuse me. 'Scuse me.

The man doesn't hear and continues down the path. Emin notices the glasses and doesn't call out a third time.

He picks them up.

14. THE END.