

Scene Four

*Nancy's office. Nancy has unbuttoned her shirt, it's getting more disgusting.*

NANCY I've got some offers for each member of the team. I don't want any staff leaving today without a clear sense of what I've asked them to do.

ANNA Get on with it then.

NANCY What I'd like to offer you is a research post at a different project the university is doing. Part of the Natural Sciences faculty.

ANNA What?

NANCY It's an international post.

ANNA Related to climate?

NANCY Working with the community in Jamaica.

ANNA Doing what?

NANCY Fluid dynamics.

ANNA Rain?

NANCY Waves.

ANNA What is it?

NANCY Helping to look at the effects of the waves, on the coastal business: fisheries, tourism, surfing. We think that you'd be great for it.

ANNA Are you taking the piss?

NANCY Today I've faced government ministers who are investigating us and assessing our funding. I'm not taking the piss. I'm trying to save your career.

ANNA Did you say surfing and fisheries?

NANCY We won't find out the long term impacts of what has happened today for months. This role is a very attractive science post, about seasonal wave patterns, where you can catch your breath.

ANNA And completely miss Paris.

NANCY I'm keeping you the hell away from them. I'm making sure you all have positions until this lab can return. Aren't I nice? Ben has agreed to a post in Denmark until January. Carla is in Glasgow.

ANNA But –

NANCY No. No arguments, it's late, just listen.

ANNA Surely not?

NANCY Jamaica.

ANNA When?

NANCY In a week.

ANNA This is crap. Won't it look bad that I've disappeared to Jamaica? 'Climate scientist runs away from controversy?' It was my email so I'll look guilty.

NANCY As long as we are as dull as possible, this will blow over for the university. You're a dull scientist: please continue being one. Retaining a position in science – of any sort is a good result.

ANNA Can I think about it?

NANCY Do think about it.

ANNA Our lab? Will it ever be the same? Is it just – no more climate science in the UK?

NANCY How am I supposed to know that? Hey?

This is our strategy: lay low, comply with all of the investigation, don't say anything stupid to a journalist. If that goes well, I'm sure there will still be a lab in six months.

ANNA I want to do something – I don't want to just sit here. You know?

NANCY I know exactly what you mean. I've also got some big news. YOLO – I'm going to be a Pilates instructor.

ANNA What the hell are you doing that for?

NANCY I'm letting everyone know so we're clear. I've handed my notice in. In three months I'm out of here.

ANNA Excuse me?

NANCY I've had to have stress counselling. Has anyone ever thanked me for my job? Do I get published? – no. I put all the research teams together, organise their resources, book all their meetings, communicate with the wider faculty, do I ever get a thank you?

ANNA Is that a question?

NANCY It's a 'no,' isn't it? Today has been the climax, the epiphany: I do not need this shit. You demanding a promotion from me. Demanding to be seen on the world stage. About rain. I don't need to speak to people all day, who give me subliminal shit if everything isn't going perfectly for them. You haven't asked me how I am? Worried about me? Whose sorting my job out? Oh that's right. Me. Everything's on me and I'm sick of it.

ANNA Nancy –

NANCY I started seeing a life coach. Yeah. About a month ago. He's called Dwane. And he's beautiful. And he's told me to get out. Last night, a journalist followed me home.

ANNA I'm sorry Nancy.

NANCY And I thought: what would Dwane do? He'd tell me to book that Pilates course and to hell with the consequences. I cried after our meeting this morning. Just a few tears. Not a lake.

But I don't want you to think I don't care. I've just reached the end of caring. I've come out of the forest of despair, through bullshit meadow, and I'm certain that I need to change my life. Do you know the carbon footprint of UCL?

ANNA            No.

NANCY        Neither do I. And who fucking knows what it means anyway?