

FOLLOW
(excerpt)

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Background for excerpt:

Kate, 30s, and very British, has left her top job as a lawyer and hopes to go into business with new internet friend Briana. Kate is living on her parents' couch while she navigates her career change and believes Briana has the creative skill that will provide them with a lucrative product she can sell, launching her new career as someone who follows their heart.

Briana, 30s, and very American, has flown to London because she believes Kate has the business sense to make her dreams of being a digital artist become a reality. Briana has not been able to draw anything for months due to an emotional block she's hoping to overcome with travel and new stimuli.

They met on Tumblr.

Between them they put together a company of three other entrepreneurial women from Tumblr and invite them to London for a 'Digital Dawn' conference, but only Maja from Sweden shows up at the bus stop, and promptly gets lost on the circle line anyway (where she is throughout this excerpt).

In this scene, Kate and Briana, despite a shared agoraphobia, are attending the 'Digital Dawn' conference, celebrating online communities and possibilities.

INT. CONFERENCE HALL. DAY

Briana and Kate walk into the hall reception like the new kids at a school, not knowing what to expect. However, everyone is friendly.

Singing is heard - live, communal karaoke.

Briana is delighted. Kate is appalled.

They walk into the main hall to see people on their feet, singing along, the lyrics on a large screen.

Kate, uncomfortable.

Briana shimmies them along a line of seats. They end up next to an older woman who is singing at the top of her lungs. This is VERITY, 60s, a cross between an old theatre dame and a hippy. She exudes an aura of serenity. She barely notices the new arrivals.

Briana joins in, a little self conscious but happy.

Kate studies the room suspiciously. She does not sing.

JUMP CUT TO:

The audience is seated as a FACILITATOR gives an introduction to the Assembly.

FACILITATOR

Welcome to our celebration of life!

Applause in the audience.

FACILITATOR (CONT'D)

We're here to help you live better, help often and wonder more. What does mean? Probably something slightly different to each and every one of you. And that's exactly how it should be. We're all different, and as such, we're the same. One community. No doctrine. No deity. But one life to live together.

Kate is texting on her phone. Briana is between listening and pointedly glaring at Kate.

FACILITATOR (CONT'D)

We're here for each other and we're to share our stories. Learn about your fellow humans. Be inspired. Unlock potential. And have a laugh!

A spoken word poet is introduced.

This is Charlie Vaughan, black, from South London, 24, male.

You can't take your eyes off him.

BRIANA

I love spoken word.

KATE

Why? It's shit rap without the musical interludes.

BRIANA

It's poetry.

KATE

This is the most white middle class thing I've ever seen.

BRIANA

Why does that have to be a bad thing? Don't be so classist.

Charlie solemnly walks to the microphone with purpose.

A video plays on screen behind him, timed with his words.

The title: **Take-No-Phobia**

Social injustices, global recession, occupy movement, are featured images and clips. Present day problems and tech.

As he speaks, Briana is enraptured. Kate starts out bored and then becomes interested. Verity remains serene as she listens.

CHARLIE

They say it's a me generation. I say it's a free generation. They say we'll be fools just texting and speaking in sass not looking for longer than to laugh at cats, that's where it's at. Temporary.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Like nothing is real, only we feel
and fear and appeal to you to
understand,
that breaking new ground don't mean
fear's all around, that a new idea
and new technology don't mean the
end of friends and family. That we
present a new dimension, not a cry
for attention. That now more than
ever we endeavour to love one
another, to reach out to a brother.
Remember a mother. World's getting
smaller, we getting taller, no
hiding. That generation turn round
and they chiding. Like it's nothing
to do with them.

Verity smiles.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We communicate so we learn not to
hate or berate. We don't forget
your words: they here on your
plate. Free expression, we learned
this lesson. So many ways in which
to say your piece, they hate the
conversation that you have off-
piste. Defying police. Not so long
ago now electricity was a danger to
your family. Now it's new
technology, corrupting human
biology.

Kate looks at her phone in her hand.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What happened to vigilance - a bad
workman blames his tools, it's up
to us to be workmen or fools, and
use what we have to improve our
society to become so much more than
we thought we'd ever be. But that
very same moon is pulling the tide
in. We have to act fast, no
running, no hiding. Excuses are
waning, people are blaming, but it
starts here at home, on your
laptop, no shaming.

Video: Displays Twitter quotes on various protests,
#BlackLivesMatter, photos of riots.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Words on your lips, revolution at your fingertips, the press can't lie when your friends share all the tips - what's really going on. 'Inequality' still sticks like shit to the wall for us all to see. This battle should have ended. What were you doing with all your free time away from the perils of being online? Coz you weren't fighting for me. Or my family.

Video: Images of immigration crisis.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Tide's coming in but you're already at sea. You've left it to us, to battle the fuzz, we can take it, we can make it, but don't berate it, don't slate it. It's our world, our words, we'll do it our way, the sun don't have to shine for us to make hay. Revolution's just another day, our online communities are here to stay - they serve a purpose. To get people together, to survive this circus. Possibilities are endless. Stop being afraid, there's so much we can do to end the blockade. Think of all the friends you've made - it's not a charade. That very same moon is rising high, tied to the earth she knows better than you or I. Inhale, exhale, high and dry, to everything there is a time, sublime, it's mine. It's now. It's us. It's everything you want it to be, just trust.

Whooping and cheering from the audience. Charlie, still very sincere, takes an awkward bow.

Briana loved it. Kate is certainly provoked by it.

Verity applauds warmly.

BRIANA

(kindly, to Verity)

I think it's your generation he's mad at.

Verity shrugs, unfazed.

VERITY
He's got a point.

CUT TO:

CONFERENCE HALL. DAY - LATER

Tea and cake as all kinds of different people mill around.
Briana is talking to Verity.

Kate is nearby, clutching on to a cup of tea for support.

She hears snatches of conversations around her as she stays
in her own space.

KEN and ANDY, a pleasant couple in their 40s, are chatting to
another older couple.

ANDY
Ken and I met online.

KEN
We both love ferrets you see.

ANDY
That's what got us talking! Our
first date was a picnic but we had
to be on roller skates.

KEN
Roller skates.

ANDY
Cute, I thought. Anyway, so for our
honeymoon, we're going to roller
skate the length of the UK.

KEN
Together.

Kate turns in another direction to hear more voices.

Separate voices pour in as Kate experiences sensory overload.

FEMALE VOICE
Yes it's a charity we both work
for. 16-24 year olds.

MALE VOICE
We meet every second Thursday. And
Alan runs the astronomy club there.

OLDER FEMALE VOICE

Oh I can put you in touch with Dawn! She's looking for help with social media. I'll get you her email.

ANOTHER MALE VOICE

Yeah my dad just turned 70. Can't swim. But he's getting in a kayak next weekend. New lease of life since my mum died.

Kate breathes deeply as she feels overwhelmed.

She re-centres herself, then spots Charlie talking to a group of new fans. She watches him with interest for a moment, pondering his words.

Then, a familiar voice. Briana, still with Verity.

BRIANA

Oh my god that's awesome!

She pulls Kate into the conversation.

BRIANA (CONT'D)

You won't believe this! Verity was at freakin Woodstock.

Kate is almost impressed. She takes in Verity.

KATE

I can believe that.

BRIANA

And then she came back to London and opened a chain of restaurants.

KATE

Diverse.

BRIANA

But then she sold them all and became a record producer.

KATE

Oh my god really?

VERITY

It was the eighties. My nephew was into Synthpop. What can you do.

She shrugs it off.

KATE

And now?

VERITY

I grow roses.

Beat.

BRIANA

You know, you would make the most fascinating dinner guest.

Kate, fear.

She turns to politely conceal her misgivings and notices a couple with a baby. This is GREG and NESSA, late 30s.

Kate warms up immediately.

KATE

He's adorable. How old?

Greg and Nessa come nearer, eager to show off the baby.

NESSA

Six months.

Briana smiles, uncomfortable.

GREG

Leo. Leo David Wilson.

KATE

He's beautiful.

She puts her finger out so baby Leo can hold it.

KATE (CONT'D)

Is he your first?

NESSA

Yes. We were trying for some time.
And now he's the most precious thing in our lives.

KATE

So sweet.

NESSA

It will be you soon. Once that maternal drive kicks in.

BRIANA

Which is when?

NESSA

Oh, I'd say any time for you!

BRIANA

No, it's not for me.

GREG

You don't like kids?

BRIANA

I do like kids. Nothing to do with that! I just don't want to be a mother. I like playing the piano too, but I don't wanna be an actual pianist. Don't wanna go pro.

GREG

You'll change your mind. Nessa did.

Verity rolls her eyes.

Kate is besotted with baby Leo.

NESSA

Yeah I wasn't one of the broody ones, but Greg changed all of that.

Nessa and Greg exchange a saccharine smile.

BRIANA

Well, never say never I guess, but this is how I've always felt.

NESSA

You're not worried about later in life? Regretting it? Being alone? Who would take care of you?

BRIANA

I think I'd be more worried about regretting having had a child.

Kate gently pulls away from the baby.

NESSA

Oh you wouldn't! You'd love your baby! It's the most amazing feeling in the world.

BRIANA

You don't know that. No one does. It's not a given. There are plenty of unwanted kids out there.

(MORE)

BRIANA (CONT'D)

Better that child is wanted, than a half-baked insurance policy for your old age.

Verity snorts.

KATE

(To Greg and Nessa)

Anyway. Lovely to meet you.

Kate moves Briana and Verity away from Nessa and Greg, who graciously nod their goodbyes.

BRIANA

Jesus.

KATE

Play nice.

BRIANA

They've had a baby because they're scared of dying and don't know what else to do.

KATE

That's not a valid reason anymore?

She smiles at Briana's horrified expression.