

## SOME SORT OF STORY (by Gerard Foster)

SIMONE, a writer sits at a café table with her laptop and coffee. She has writer's block and is struggling to write. Even worse, the chair opposite her is occupied by NATHAN, a young man talking loudly into his mobile phone. As he talks, she throws dark glances in his direction, quietly seething.

NATHAN (WEST-COUNTRY) Too right, mate! I could have had her there and then... But you know me, I likes to take my time... warm 'em up good and proper... like putty in my hands, that's right... and then, when I got 'em where I want 'em, bam!

SIMONE releases a heavy sigh. NATHAN throws her a glance – vaguely apologetic.

NATHAN Anyhow, must go mate. Fish to fry... Yeah, speak later... yep... seeya... yep... seeya... bye.

He finally ends the call.

NATHAN Sorry about that.

SIMONE No, no, that's fine.

NATHAN That's me - always yabberin' on to me mates, not realisin' there's people trying to work!

SIMONE No, that's fine.

SIMONE tries to focus on her screen. But she's no less distracted now. NATHAN watches her, intently. Slurps his coffee loudly. She tries to ignore his gaze, to carry on. But the words aren't flowing. Finally she looks up.

SIMONE Sorry, can I help?

NATHAN                   Who me? No. I was thinking maybe I could help you.

SIMONE                   Uh no, I shouldn't think so, but thanks.

She tries to focus on the screen. He continues observing her.

NATHAN                   What is it you're trying to write exactly?

SIMONE                   Oh it's nothing... Just a thing called Same Day Plays. You go along at eight in the morning, they give you a theme and a setting for a play and then you have four hours to write a script-

NATHAN                   Four hours! That's a long time to be writing. You must be a real pro.

SIMONE                   Well actually it's not that long and I've only got about an hour and a half left. So I really should be getting on.

NATHAN                   Right. Yeah you had. No more talkin' to me.

SIMONE returns to her laptop. NATHAN continues to watch her intently.

NATHAN                   So what's the theme then?

SIMONE                   Sorry?

NATHAN                   You said they gave you a theme.

SIMONE                   Uh, yes. The theme is 'What's New'.

NATHAN                   Well that's easy. There's loads of things that are new.

He thinks...

NATHAN                    Fanta Pineapple and Grapefruit. That's new... Well, the name's new. It used to be Lilt. But I reckon that would still count... if you wanted to write about a tropical drink-

SIMONE                    Sorry, perhaps I didn't make myself clear. I now have under an hour and half to come up with some sort of story, so I really do need to try and get on and not have any distractions.

NATHAN                    Right.

SIMONE returns her focus to the screen.

NATHAN                    Have you tried writing about what you know?

SIMONE                    I'm sorry?

NATHAN                    Isn't that what they say? You should try and write about you know.

SIMONE                    Yes they do.

NATHAN                    Well, there you go, do that then.

SIMONE                    Right.

He waits. She glares at the screen, feeling thoroughly wound up. He waits a little longer...

NATHAN                    (TEASING) What's up. Do you not know anything then?!

SIMONE                    No I do. As it happens, I know lots of things. But at the moment the only thing I know is I need to write something and I can't bloody do it because you keep interrupting me!

NATHAN                    (BEAT) You could always write about me?

SIMONE                    I'm sorry?

NATHAN                    Well if I'm the only thing you can think of at the moment-

SIMONE                    Yeah that's not exactly what I said-

NATHAN                    Then why don't you write about me? Go on. Ask me a question.

SIMONE                    All right fine. Could you leave me alone please?

NATHAN                    No. Next question.

SIMONE                    For Christ's sake! I have an hour and a half to come up with some sort of story!

NATHAN                    Yeah I know, and I'm trying to help!

SIMONE                    Well you're not.

SIMONE returns to her screen, seething. NATHAN watches, waits...

NATHAN                    You need to be more open... I could be the answer to your prayers... I could be the best story you've ever written-

SIMONE (EXPLODES) Rrrrrggghhhh! All right fine!

NATHAN What?

SIMONE Go on then, tell me whatever it is you want to tell me.

NATHAN All right. What do you want to know?

SIMONE I don't know. Let's start with your name

NATHAN OK...

SIMONE Well, what is it?

NATHAN Hold on I'm thinking.

SIMONE No, don't think, just tell me your name.

NATHAN ...Derek.

SIMONE Derek?

NATHAN It's the best I could do

SIMONE All right, listen, I'm the writer. You just give me the facts. So what is your real name?

NATHAN ...Still Derek.

SIMONE Forget it, this isn't going to work.

SIMONE returns to her screen. Still no joy. Nathan watches, waits...

NATHAN                    You want me to have go?

SIMONE                    What?

NATHAN                    D'you want me to have a go at writing a story? It's only words.  
Can't be that hard, can it? -

SIMONE                    All right, fine! Yeah, you bloody write it.

SIMONE furiously rises and offers him her seat. NATHAN looks surprised, hesitates...

NATHAN                    What really?

SIMONE                    Yeah, why not?!.

NATHAN gets up, takes her seat in front of the laptop.

NATHAN                    Hmm... Not as easy as it looks.

SIMONE                    No it isn't.

NATHAN                    Oh, hold on...

NATHAN starts tapping away at the laptop... hesitantly at first, then getting rapidly more fluent and confident. As he types, he makes various noises: laughs, giggles, grunts etc, clearly enjoying the process.

SIMONE watches, surprised at first, then somewhat annoyed at the ease with which the words appear to be flowing. She tries to interrupt.

SIMONE                      Sorry what are you-

He puts his hand up to silence her.

NATHAN                     Hold on, this is a good bit...

He continues merrily tapping away. She watches, incredulous, furious. Finally she can take no more.

SIMONE                     All right, stop-

NATHAN                     No wait... Nearly there... Done!

He finishes tapping away with a flourish. Then smugly turns the laptop around for her to see his work.

She looks at the screen. Reads.

NATHAN                     What do you think?

SIMONE                     Um... yeah... it's... not bad actually...

NATHAN                     Amazing what A.I. can do these days ain't it?

SIMONE                     A.I...?

NATHAN                     Ooh, that's another new thing. Kind of fits in with your theme and all too. Anyway, that'll be five hundred pounds please. You'll find all my bank deets here.

He presents her with a business card.

SIMONE                      No, sorry. I'm not paying you money for a script you didn't even write yourself.

NATHAN                     Oh no. You can have that for free. The five hundred pounds is to unblock your computer.

SIMONE looks with horror at her laptop. Something has changed on the screen. She frantically hammers at keys.

SIMONE                     What the hell have you done to it..? You SHIT!

NATHAN                     Well good luck with the writing.

He heads for the door, than turns back.

NATHAN                     At least now you got yourself some sort of story...

THE END