

**Easy Does It, a new short play on love**  
**By Jake Alexander**

**CHARACTERS**

PETER, twenty-something, male-identifying, old “friends” with NAOMI

NAOMI, twenty-something, female-identifying, old “friends” with PETER

*(A restaurant, somewhere in NYC. Winter. NAOMI sits at the bar, not much to do. She taps her fingers on the bar, sips her drink through too-small a straw. She checks her phone, looks around again. After a moment, PETER enters, flustered, wearing too many layers. Like, wayyyy too many layers. He sees NAOMI, starts to make his way to her.)*

PETER

Hi!

NAOMI

Hey, you came!

PETER

Of course I did?

NAOMI

No, I just meant. Well. You know what I meant.

*(They go in for a hug. PETER’s many layers make it so he can’t quite get both arms around her. He does a sort of “one-arm-lean-in” hug thing, then begins undoing all his layers, which should take a really, really long time.)*

PETER

Have you been waiting long?

NAOMI

No, no, got here not too long ago.

PETER

Really?

NAOMI

Why?

PETER

Your drink is almost gone.

NAOMI

Well it’s a small pour. Also, don’t comment on my drinking-speed.

PETER (*awkward, knows he shouldn't have said that*)  
Sorry!

NAOMI  
No, no, I'm just kidding!

PETER  
I didn't mean to make things weird-/

NAOMI  
/Things aren't weird!/  
/

PETER  
It's just been so long and you look so great.

*(A beat. Kind of awkward.)*

PETER  
Sorry.

NAOMI  
You don't have to keep apologizing.

PETER  
I shouldn't have said that.

NAOMI  
It's always nice to hear that you look good.

PETER  
But I didn't want to just like, blurt it out, it just kind of-

*(NAOMI bursts into laughter.)*

PETER  
Hey, don't laugh.

NAOMI  
No, it's just-

PETER  
What?

NAOMI  
You're *\*still\** taking off your coats.

PETER  
It's cold outside!

NAOMI  
You're a New England boy, you're supposed to be able to handle a little cold! (She laughs, he relaxes. She grabs his hand and brings him to the seats.) Sit, sit.

PETER  
You do look-

NAOMI  
I know. And thank you.

PETER  
So. What're you drinking?

NAOMI  
Gin and tonic. I didn't know what else to get.

PETER  
That sounds good!/  
/

NAOMI  
/Simple./

PETER  
Been forever, hasn't it?

NAOMI  
Too long.

PETER  
We shouldn't go this long without seeing each other you know?

NAOMI  
We shouldn't.

PETER  
Sorry.

NAOMI  
Why are you so nervous?

*(A beat. PETER rubs his palms.)*

PETER  
I'm not. Nervous.

NAOMI  
Did it take a long time to get here?

PETER  
Uh, no. Not really.

NAOMI (*sensing something is up*)  
What?

PETER  
What?

NAOMI  
What's going on?

PETER  
Okay. Okay. Truth?

NAOMI  
Please.

PETER  
I stood outside for like twenty minutes before I came in.

NAOMI  
Why?

PETER  
Well. I didn't see you at the bar. And then I did. And then I just. Didn't want to be too early.

NAOMI  
\*I\* was early.

PETER  
I know. And I'm glad for that.

*(A beat. They smile.)*

PETER  
Why're you here?

NAOMI  
You invited me.

PETER

No, I mean, in the city. You didn't say.

NAOMI

Oh. To see some friends.

PETER

Got it. Have you had a good trip so far?

NAOMI

It's been fine. I'm glad you could make the time.

PETER

Of course.

NAOMI

No, not "of course". You didn't have to.

PETER

Naomi. *(A beat. He stares at her.)* Of course I made the time. For you.

*(They stare at each other. The moment is very, very charged. NAOMI starts to lean in to him. He breathes loudly. It's unsettling for a moment. NAOMI suddenly jerks away, stands up.)*

NAOMI

I'm not-

PETER

That's all right, this is-

NAOMI

No, I just mean-

PETER

I get it, really-

NAOMI

Just stop.

PETER

I didn't do anything.

NAOMI

I'm getting married.

(A beat.)

PETER  
Oh. I didn't know.

NAOMI  
Well I haven't told anyone.

PETER (*shocked*)  
And \*I'm\* the first person you told??

NAOMI  
Well-

PETER  
You just tried to-

NAOMI  
I didn't try anything.

PETER  
Naomi. I'm so confused.

NAOMI  
Well, clearly, me too.

PETER  
You told me to come here.

NAOMI  
\*You\* told \*me\* to come here.

PETER  
Look at the texts-

NAOMI  
No, I don't need to.

PETER  
So you're here for what?

NAOMI  
I just told you, to see friends.

PETER (*understanding where he stands*)  
Okay. Got it.

NAOMI  
I didn't mean that you're \*just\* a-

PETER  
Well, but, I am. You're getting married.

NAOMI  
I'm just not wearing the ring yet.

PETER  
Yet.

NAOMI  
Right.

(*A beat. She turns to go.*)

NAOMI  
This is stupid, I should go.

PETER  
You told me to meet you!

NAOMI  
And you said you wanted to see me!

PETER  
So we both played a part in this!

NAOMI  
Yes!

(*A beat. They stare.*)

PETER  
You do look-

NAOMI  
I know-

PETER  
No, let me finish. (*A beat. He exhales.*) You look amazing, Naomi. And I'm really, really glad you told me to come.

NAOMI  
I'm glad you told me you wanted to see me.

*(A beat.)*

NAOMI  
But-

PETER  
Oh. No.

NAOMI  
I should-

PETER  
We don't have to-

NAOMI  
But we will. We just will. You know that we will. We both want to. And so we would.

PETER  
Can't we just sit here?

NAOMI  
The longer I sit the harder it will be.

PETER *(disappointed)*  
Well. Fuck.

NAOMI *(equally disappointed)*  
Exactly. Fuck.

*(She moves to the chair where her coat rests. She goes to lift it. PETER puts his hand on hers. They don't look at each other. NAOMI leans her head on his hand, breathes him in. They stay like that for a moment. She lifts her head. She starts to put on her coat.)*

NAOMI  
I really should go.

PETER  
Won't you be cold?

NAOMI *(she smiles at him)*  
I'm from New England. One coat is enough for me.



PETER (*smiling back*)  
Okay.

NAOMI  
It was good to see you.

PETER  
It was really- well. You know.

NAOMI (*turning away*)  
Until next time.

PETER  
Oh don't say that.

NAOMI (*turning back*)  
Why?

PETER  
There won't be a next time.

NAOMI (*easy*)  
Well we don't know.

PETER  
Don't come in here, say you're getting married, and then dangle that-

NAOMI  
I'm not dangling!

PETER (*charming*)  
You so are.

NAOMI (*flirting*)  
I so am not.

*(A beat. They realize what they're doing.)*

PETER  
We can't keep doing this. It's too hard. Everytime.

NAOMI  
It is. This has never been easy. *(A beat.)* I should really go.

PETER

Bye.

*(She goes to exit. She's almost at the door, when:)*

PETER *(not looking at her)*  
I don't really want to stop, though.

NAOMI *(not looking at him)*  
Yeah? Me neither.

PETER  
We could-

NAOMI  
What?

PETER  
We could, you know-

NAOMI  
Yeah?

PETER  
We could start "next time" right now.

*(They stare at each other. It's charged. Neither moves. She stands by the door: she could leave, or she could stay. She breathes, sharp. And just when she's about to decide: black out.)*

*(End of play.)*