

THE LETTER

By Lily Graham

3 female actors - Maeve, Victoria, police officer.

5 male actors - Lucas, Giovanni, teacher.

Maeve enters, post lying in the middle of the stage. Jingles keys as she walks to the post, picking it up. She shuffles through the post. Reaches newspaper and folds it out.

Maeve: Oh no. Not this again. "Missing boy presumed dead after one year. A teenage boy is presumed dead after being reported missing one year ago. Lucas Kingsley was believed to be part of a gang. The gang have still not been apprehended. The 16-year-old has not been found during an extensive land and marine search. PC Hopkins says, 'This is not the outcome anyone wanted, but we hope to give closure to his family shortly'." (*Narrow's eyebrows*) He didn't even belong to that gang.

Victoria: (*enters stage*) What did you say honey?

Maeve: Nothing mum, doesn't matter.

Maeve puts newspaper to the back of the pile, revealing a letter addressed to her.

Maeve: Strange... (*runs fingers over the writing*) I could swear I've seen that writing before.

Maeve turns over the letter to open it.

Victoria: Maeve, darling, it's time to prepare for dinner, open that later. Your father will be home soon. Have you got the post? I think it came through just before you arrived home. Best put it on your fathers' desk before he gets home.

Maeve: Yeah of course, I'll do it now. (*Puts letter in pocket*)

Victoria: Any post come for you darling?

Maeve: Oh, um, yes. 'm not entirely sure what it's about to be honest. It's probably a letter from school. Yknow. Exam stuff.

Victoria (*voiceover*): I see. Now drop off the post in your father's office and then get ready for dinner.

Maeve leaves stage.

Set shifts to Giovannis office. Maeve enters the office with post in hand, closing the door after. Goes over to desk and places post on it. Looks around the office at picture frames and old books then walks back to door, hesitates and takes another look around before leaving, closing the door.

Set shifts to Maeves bedroom. Maeve enters and throws her jacket onto the bed, the letter falls out.

Maeve: (sits on her bed and rubs her eyes) I hate this family. (notices the letter) I forgot about you. (picks up letter and folds it out as Lucas enters stage)

Lucas: Maeve, it's me. Lucas. You better not have forgotten about me already, because I kinda sorta need your help. Whatever the newspapers are saying, is wrong. I am not dead, in fact, I am very much alive. I don't break promises, you said you wanted a sign, so here it is. I wish I could just tell you in this letter exactly where I am but if the- what shall I call them..."villains", get their hands on this I'm pretty much screwed. Seeing as you're the only one I can trust, it's your job to find me. Yay, right? I hope you're up for an adventure. I'm running out of space now but I'll be nice this one time and give you a clue that only you'll understand, because I'm clever that way. -

Maeve: -(scoffs) Sure buddy. -

Lucas: -Do you remember when we first met? Well, how could you forget, it was pretty funny. -

Maeve: -Embarrassing more like.-

Lucas: -I need you to go back there.-

Maeve: -Right now? But school will be shut...-

Lucas: -And I mean today-

Maeve: -Of course you do.-

Lucas: - Or the absolute cretins at our school will find it before you and, well, we can't have that. Also, because the so called "villains" will have found out by now that I'm in cahoots with someone I.e., you. Don't worry your pretty little head, they won't know it's you...unless they get their hands on this letter. So, I'd keep this a secret if I were you. Now, to sum everything up, I am not dead, you're

going to rescue me, and everything will be right in the world. Don't let me down.

Silence.

Maeve: This must be a joke. It's got to be. *(puts letter into a box)* Or what if it's not. *(gets letter out of the box and looks at it)* Please be a real sign.

Maeve grabs her coat and bag off her bed, shoving the letter in her bag when Victoria calls for her.

Victoria (voiceover): Maeve? Is that you? Dinner is ready! You'll be eating alone tonight, somethings come up...with your father...at work. I'll see you soon. *Sound of front door closing. Maeve sighs and puts her coat on and her bag over her shoulder, leaves stage.*

Shift to dining room. Maeve is sat in silence on one end of a long table, clearly meant for more than one person, eating pasta. Only noise to be heard is the scraping of cutlery against her bowl.

Maeve: *(to herself)* So, dad's skipping out on yet another meal. I thought that family was supposed to be important in Italian culture? Apparently not. Now mum's gone too. *(shakes head)* What could possibly come up at an ice cream parlour that is so important family time is interrupted? Mum says he's a busy man, but you'd think he'd still make it home for dinner once in a while. I can't remember the last time we all had a meal together without something "coming up". It's just- we left most of our family back in Naples, and for what? For dad to run an ice cream parlour in the middle of rainy England? I miss everyone back at home. I miss the massive family dinners, the laughter, the fun, the warm weather. Come to think of it, there's not much I don't miss. Mum tells me there's no reason to be upset over such a small matter. That my father works the time he does to provide for us. To provide me with a spacious room, an en suite bathroom and the best education in the area. That every girl my age would kill to have just as much as me. She calls me ungrateful, *(sits upright)* which I am *not*. She likes to remind me that my father does care about us. *(scoffs)* Could've fooled me. She thinks I'm acting out because of the constant reminders that Lucas is gone. Preposterous. He was just

a friend. Not even that. An acquaintance. (*shrugs*) It's not my fault he might have thought we were more than that. (*looks down at her food*) She didn't like the fact that his family weren't as well off as us. I didn't see why that mattered, but it mattered a hell of a lot to her. And dad. Something about bringing down our family's reputation. I don't see much of a difference between him and I. Well- of course I do. But not because of wealth. Because he was an absolute dick. (*sighs and pulls the letter out of her pocket*) Could you really be from him? (*pushes her dishes away from her and stands up*) That's a chance I'm willing to take. (*stuffs the letter back into her coat pocket and leaves stage*)

Set changes to hallway. Maeve gets out the letter and holds it in one hand, looking down at it. As she starts walking forward, eyes concentrated on the letter, Giovanni enters stage and Maeve walks into him.

Maeve: (*eyes widen and she pulls the letter close to her chest so he can't see the writing*) Father-

Giovanni: Maeve? What are you doing?

Maeve: (*pauses whilst trying to think of an excuse*) going for a walk?

Giovanni: Are you asking me that or telling me?

Maeve: Telling you.

Giovanni: Then you mustn't raise your voice at the end of a statement, that way it becomes a question. (*shakes head*) What do these common schools teach kids these days...

Maeve: Where's mother? I thought she'd gone to meet you at work because of some so called "emergency".

Giovanni: She's dealing with things back at the parlour, I came back here to make sure you were okay.

Maeve: Well, as you can see, I'm all good. What happened anyways?

Giovanni: (*avoids eye contact and says quickly*) A robbery, not important. I'm glad you were okay by yourself. Your mother says all this about that boy's death is affecting you more than you'd like to admit. Is that true?

Maeve: It's not true, I barely knew the guy. She's worried about nothing and there's no need to be. I'm sixteen, I can look after myself.

Giovanni: (*chuckles*) Sure you can.

Maeve: Well, if that's all I'll be off. (*goes to walk past him, Giovanni stops her with a hand on her shoulder*)

Giovanni: Hold on.

Maeve: (*stops and moves back in front of him*) Yes?

Giovanni: What's that you've got there? (*points inquisitively at the letter*)

Maeve: This? Oh- It's nothing.

Giovanni: Then you wouldn't mind if I gave it read, would you? (*turns his hand from pointing to laying out his palm for her to give him the paper*)

Maeve: Oh, you don't want to read this. It's um. It's really boring. School stuff- you know how it is, year 11, exams exams exams.

Giovanni: Surely the school send letters electronically, via email. Are you sure it's from school?

Maeve: Pretty sure.

Giovanni: Then I'll need to see it. It will be about the down payment for next month's trip. (*walks over to Maeve and reaches for the letter until he's interrupted by a call*)

Giovanni takes his phone out of his pocket and reads the name, then looks back up at Maeve.

Giovanni: This is important. You...go for your walk. (*puts the phone up to his ear and walks across set, leaving the stage*)

Maeve: (*sigh of relief*) That was close. Too close. (*walks off the opposite end of the set to Giovanni, leaving stage*)

Set change to inside an empty classroom, Maeve is sat at a table, reading. Lucas walks in, and Maeve looks up at him, then back down at her book.

Lucas: Uh, have I got the right room?

Maeve: (*doesn't look up from her book*) Depends.

Lucas: (*tilts head in confusion*) Look, is this detention room 3 or what?

Maeve: Mhm.

Lucas walks into the room, heading towards Maeve.

Maeve: (*looks up*) Oh, word of advice. (*Points to teacher sat at desk*) The teachers at this school have ears like an owl. They can hear anything. With that, they like to remind us that detention is not a social club.

Lucas: Got it.

Lucas sits next to Maeve and proceeds to take every single item out of his bag.

Maeve: Are you done?

Lucas: Uhhh... (*pulls out a shiny green apple, admires it for a second and then places it on the table, putting his bag on the floor, he turns to Maeve and exaggerates a grin*) Now I am.

Maeve: (*moves her stuff away from his*) Do you mind? You're kinda in my way buddy.

Lucas: Someone's asking a lot of questions today. (*takes another bite of his apple*)

Maeve: Only when the person on the receiving end is an idiot. (*smiles sarcastically*)

Lucas: (*copies her smile*) Charming, really.

Maeve: I-

Teacher: (*interrupts*) Keep it down you two. This is detention not-

Lucas: A social club. I've heard.

Maeve: You have apple in your teeth.

Lucas: Get it out for me?

Maeve: Ew- no. (*looks to the end of stage where the teachers voice came from, then back at Lucas and lowers her voice*) Why are you even here?

Lucas: (*lowers voice too and leans closer to her, picking apple out of his teeth as he talks*) That's a long story. I could tell you over some popcorn at the cinema tonight.

Maeve: (*mimics him*) Charming, really.

Lucas: Is that a yes?

Maeve: No.

Lucas: Too bad.

Maeve: (*rolls eyes*)

Lucas: Roll your eyes once more and they'll stay at the back of your 'ed. Well known fact.

Maeve: (*ignores his comment*) I meant, what are you doing here, next to me. There are plenty of other spaces.

Lucas: Ah yes, I see them, it's just- well, this one looked comfier.

Maeve: Oh, for sure-

Teacher: Hey! Did you not hear me last time? This isn't a-

Maeve & Lucas: Social club!

Maeve: We get it sir.

Lucas: Extremely sorry sir, she just can't help herself.

Maeve: Excuse me?

Lucas: It's okay, I understand. I know I'm fascinating to talk to...?

Maeve: (*grits teeth*) Maeve. Call me Maeve.

Lucas: -Maeve, but there's a time and a place. (*opens a bottle of water and drinks from it, putting the bottle on the table with no cap on*)

Maeve: Fascinating? (*scoffs*) I think you mean self-centred, arrogant-

Lucas: Gorgeous?

Maeve: Absolutely not.

Lucas: Ouch. (*pretends to have been hurt and clutches chest*)

Maeve: Look...?

Lucas: Lucas. Call me Lucas.

Maeve: -Lucas, I don't know who you think I am-

Lucas: Ugh, please. Spare me.

Maeve: What?

Lucas: If I hear another rich bitch speech today, I might just tear my own eyes out.

Maeve: Tad dramatic, don't you think? What makes you think I'm a "rich bitch"?

Lucas: Please. What *doesn't*?

Maeve: Care to elaborate? (*picks up his water and starts drinking from it, thinking it's hers*)

Lucas: (*gestures to her outfit then looks back at her*)

Maeve: What's that supposed to mean?

Lucas: I could bet an obscene amount of money that your outfit costs more than £100.

Maeve: And?

Lucas: (*clears throat*) Rich bitch.

Maeve: I beg to differ. Fine. My family may be on the wealthy side, but I don't believe that I'm a bitch.

Lucas: Hm. We'll see.

Maeve: We will?

Lucas: Give it time. (*reaches his water then realizes she's drinking it*) And that time may come sooner than expected.

Maeve: Huh?

Lucas: You owe me a water.

Maeve: I do not-

Lucas: Now *I* beg to differ. That's *my* water. You owe me.

Maeve: Disgusting. (*wipes mouth*)

Lucas laughs.

Maeve: That's not funny! I don't want your germs.

Lucas: Ah yes, because I'm a boy I have germs.

Maeve: Not because you're a boy, because you're- (*looks at his cheap clothing*) you're...

Lucas: (*looks slightly hurt for a split second, then changes his expression*) I'm what?

Maeve: (*swallows*) you're annoying. (*turns away from him*)

Lucas: That's not what you were going to say.

Maeve: (*defiant*) yes it was.

Lucas: Liar.

Maeve: I am *no* liar-

Teacher: Miss Rossi, may I remind you why you are here.

Maeve: (*looks over to the teacher*)...You may not?

Lucas: (*follows her gaze*) You may. I'm intrigued, why are you here? You don't look like the kind to be here.

Maeve: Um offensive much. (*sits upright*) I have been here more times than you may think.

Teacher: Is that supposed to be some kind of show off?

Maeve: I- well... (*slumps back in her seat*) No. (*sighs*)

Lucas: Tut tut tut. Did you tell a lie Maeve? (*fakes a shocked face*) How terrible.

Maeve: (*hits his arm*) Oh stop with the theatrics. I may have told one teensy little lie-

Teacher: Telling your art teacher that you're picking up supplies and then skipping school isn't a teensy little lie. We have high expectations here, you know that.

Lucas: That happened?

Maeve: Yes, it did. I'm not proud of it either.

Teacher: You shouldn't be, I'm sure when your father found out he- nevermind.

Maeve: How do you know my father?

Teacher: Everyone knows your father Maeve Rossi.

Maeve: (confused) Huh? How-

Teacher: Never mind. Forget that. Just...don't mention that to him, that would be very...um (*clears throat*) appreciated.

Maeve and Lucas look at each other with confused expressions.

Lucas: Loosen up a bit, that's not all bad. I've done worse.

Maeve: Shocking.

Lucas: What was all that about your dad anyway?

Maeve: I don't have the faintest idea. I wouldn't say he's well known. He runs a small ice cream business in town, it's special but not something he would be known for.

Lucas: Poor man looked scared at the mere thought of him. Your dad must be scary or something. I can practically see the beads of sweat forming-

Maeve: (*hits his arm playfully and they both try to hide their laughter*) Oh come on. You don't really think he could be scared of my dad. I mean, come on, he's not that bad. He's a little high strung but that doesn't make him scary.

Lucas: Does your mum work?

Maeve: (*shakes head*) She's a housewife.

Lucas: Did you get on scholarship here?

Maeve: No, my father paid.

Lucas: With money he made from...an ice cream parlour...in the middle of a country that rains most of the year...?

Maeve: (*rolls eyes*) I only moved here recently. My dad still has money from working in *sunny* Italy. Plus, I have a big family. We all help each other out. (*shrugs*)

Lucas: Can't relate, but understandable none the less. *Bell signals end of detention.*

Teacher: Okay, you guys are allowed to leave now.

Lucas: (*gets up and pulls his bag over his shoulder, walks to the edge of the stage then turns*) You still owe me that water. (*walks out backwards and off stage*)

Maeve: (*calls to him*) I still hate you!

Lucas: (*from offstage*) No you don't!

Maeve: (puts her bag on her shoulder and walks off stage in the opposite direction to Lucas, flipping him off)

Lights dim.

When lights come back on, all chairs are on top of the tables except for the two Lucas and Maeve were sat at. Present Maeve is sat in past Maeves seat, Lucas' seat is empty, and Maeve is staring at it longingly with letter in hand.

Maeve: I take it back, it was pretty funny.

Maeve gets up and paces the classroom.

Maeve: Why did you lead me back here? (folds out the letter again and then turns it to the back) This isn't a social club... What am I looking for? (roots through the drawers and finds nothing, leans back on the chair and sees the notice board ahead labelled social clubs)

Maeve walks over to the board, taking it off the wall, turning it over, another letter is sellotaped to the back of it.

Maeve: (takes the letter off and puts the board back, smug look on her face) Maybe you're pretty smart Kingsley.

Phone chimes and Maeve reaches into her pocket.

Maeve: A text from mum...

Victoria (voiceover): Maeve, it's time for you to come home now, it's getting late.

Maeve: (puts her phone back in her pocket) I'll read this when I get home. (puts letter in her bag and leaves stage)

Set shifts to Maeves bedroom. Maeve enters and immediately gets out the second letter. She sits on her bed and folds out the letter. Her eyes skim the page. Lucas walks on stage, reading his second letter.

Lucas: If you're reading this then that means that maybe I do actually have a chance-

Maeve: -He doubted me? -

Lucas: -because, if I'm being completely honest, I didn't think you'd find this letter. -

Maeve: -So he doubted me. Awesome. I'll show him. -

Lucas: -I know, I know, you're probably wondering why I'm doing so many of these, however, as seen previously, my brain knows no bounds-

Maeve: - Can one be so self-centred?-

Lucas: -And I know that if I only did one letter explaining where I was then one of the cronies at our school would've stumbled across the letter before you, hence the importance of you finding it somewhat soon. Also, because I wanted to piss you off. -

Maeve: -As always. -

Lucas: -Anywho, I couldn't risk anyone but you finding out where I am so I've done three letters. -

Maeve -Three? So, I have to find another? -

Lucas: -No, I am not mistaken, there is another one of these bad boys lying around. Two didn't seem like enough in my eyes. Again, I'm running out of space on here. I guess that's what happens when you've spoken to no one for a year. I never apologized to what happened at the park. I was stupid and I'm sorry...

Lights dim.

Set shifts to park scene. Single bench on stage, by a tree, Maeve is sat at it reading. Lucas enters stage, listening to music through headphones. Maeve sees him and quickly turns away in hope he doesn't notice her. Lucas recognizes Maeve and takes headphones out whilst walking over to her.

Lucas: *(walks over)* Hello stranger.

Maeve: Thank you for noticing the dynamic I would like to keep between us. Strangers.

Lucas: Don't be like that. *(sits next to her)* Is this because you drank my water? Because if it is, surely, I should be the one upset-

Maeve: *(puts her book down and looks at him)* This isn't to do with your stupid water Kingsley.

Lucas: Addressing by the last name, wow, I must have done something wrong.

Maeve: You think?

Lucas: Okay, what did I do?

Maeve: You- you-

Lucas: Yes? Spit it out, I'm intrigued.

Maeve: We just can't be friends. Not now. Not ever. We're too...different. *(stands)*

Lucas: (*stands too*) Where has this come from? We were fine the other day in detention.

Maeve: I said I hated you, flipped you the bird and left. Only you would take that as being 'fine'.

Lucas: (*shrugs*) Flirting?

Maeve: (*scoffs*) Flirting? I would never flirt with someone like you.

Lucas is taken aback, and Maeve breathes in, knowing she struck a nerve, her eyes constantly fleeting to off stage.

Lucas: You know, maybe I don't want to be friends with someone like you. Rude, distant and stuck up.

Maeve: What did you say?

Lucas: You heard me. All of you posh bastards literally *live* to bring down the people you deem to be below you. (*turns to leave and then turns back around, bringing up a finger to point at Maeve*) You have no idea what it's like to actually work for something. You've gotten everything you've ever wanted without lifting a finger and now you think you can lecture me on why we can't be friends because we're too 'different'. You're different Maeve. You weren't like this a couple of days ago. What's changed? Hm? What's changed?

Maeve is silent.

Lucas: Actually- I don't want to hear it. I don't. Nothing you say will make up for the extent to which you just insulted me.

Maeve looks at Lucas sympathetically.

Lucas: You know...maybe you aren't something special after all. You're just like the rest of those snobby girls at school. I don't know why I ever thought you'd be different.

Maeve: Lucas...

Lucas: Save it. See you in detention. (*puts headphones in and walks off stage*)

Maeve sighs and puts bag over her shoulder. Giovanni enters stage and stands opposite Maeve.

Giovanni: So?

Maeve: I did it.

Giovanni: Good. He wouldn't be good for our image-

Maeve: Save it. Please. I can't hear this right now. See you at home. (*ducks her head down and leaves stage*)

Giovanni: (watches Maeve leave and then sits on the bench, *pulls out his phone, dials number and brings it up to his ear*) Have my money yet, boy?

Lucas (voiceover): I'll have it to you soon, I promise.

Giovanni: You have three days. If I don't have the money by then...well, let's just say extended family members from Naples will be paying you a visit.

Lucas (voiceover): Yes sir.

Giovanni: Oh, and one more thing, I see you talking to my daughter again and you're dead. I set rules, boundaries not to cross when you joined my gang and speaking with her is one of them. I can't just wait around and watch you let slip my family's secret. She will find out at the right time, by me. You should be focusing on returning my money to me, not fraternising with my daughter.

Lucas (voiceover): Yes sir- Wait. Hold on one second. Did you tell her to cut ties with me?

Giovanni: (pauses) No.

Lucas (voiceover): Yes, you did, that's why it was so out of the blue.

Giovanni: You are in no place to question me. Now listen here, you will stop speaking to my daughter effective immediately and you will pay back the money you stole from me, understand?

Lucas (voiceover): Yes sir.

Giovanni stands and brushes himself off, fixing his tie.

Giovanni: You now have two days, no more.

Lucas (voiceover): But just before you said I had three!

Giovanni: Well, in light of recent events it seems as though I've changed my mind. Arrivederci! (*takes phone from his ear and puts it back in his pocket*)

Giovanni walks across and off stage.

Set change back to Maeve's bedroom, Maeve is sat on her bed and Lucas is stood beside her from before the flashback. Maeve looks up from the letter for a moment.

Lucas: -I hope you can forgive me Maeve; I can admit that I overreacted just a little-

Maeve: -(sighs) No, that was my doing. I said some pretty terrible things-

Lucas: -What I mean to say is that I know you didn't mean what you said that day. I know that...someone, forced you to say what you said-

Maeve: -What? How could you possibly know that? -

Lucas: -I can't tell you how I know. -

Maeve: -Seems about right-

Lucas: -It sucks, I know, but it would only put you in more danger than you're already in. You have to figure this part out by yourself. Not just for me, but for you too. -

Lucas leaves stage and Maeve stands with letter in hand.

Maeve: This makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. (looks down at the letter in her hand) You make no sense. There isn't any way you could know. Unless you're listening in on every conversation I have with anyone ever. What more do you want from me? I'm getting you out of a sticky situation as it is and now you're suddenly telling me there's more to it than meets the eye? That's not what I signed up for! Hell- (crumples letter up in her hand, rubs eyes) I don't even know what I signed up for here. I'm trying and it just doesn't seem like enough. This is all so difficult to understand and I'm so tired. (lies on her bed, yawns and closes her eyes) Just for a minute.

The time is projected onto the wall. Time fast forwards from approximately 10pm to about 3am. Giovanni enters and walks over to her sleeping on her bed.

Giovanni: My Maeve. (shakes his head) You weren't to know our family's...secret. Not just yet anyways. (opens the box she keeps her letters in) However, when you met...him, well, you were just so pleased to be with someone so different. Though, you never actually said that. Of course, he told you all about his little predicament, didn't he? Shame. I had a feeling you'd be involved with his disappearance. I hope this one time I am proven incorrect. It seems he may have rushed the story slightly. You see. His poor mother, on her death bed, his father nowhere to be seen. When he came running so desperately into our arms, I thought, why not? What harm could a

scrappy youngen like him do to us? I could use an extra pair of hands at 'The Ice Cream Parlour'. That was mistake number one. He took whatever faith I bestowed in him and broke it. (*opens up a box on her dresser*) He stole from me Maeve. From us. From our family. Such matters have consequences. (*pulls out a folded piece of paper and admires it whilst speaking*) Young Lucas didn't seem to understand that. He defied the one rule I put into place, to stop speaking to you. He broke that rule again and again and again. A vicious cycle, really. (*folds out the piece of paper*) I feared you would catch on, that he would tell you all about our family and its legacy but from a lower class, unworthy perspective. I feared you would side with him without truly knowing how powerful you could be one day. (*looks down and reads a few lines from the paper in his hand and then stuffs it into his pocket*) Alas. You may have already betrayed us. Fraternising with the enemy. Pity. (*stands upright and straightens himself out*) I hope you don't mind me taking this situation out of your hands? (*looks at Maeve who is sound asleep*) You'll need rest for tomorrow little one, when the police drag your friends' body out of the canal. (*leaves stage*)

The time projection reappears on the wall and fast forwards to approximately 8:30am. Maeve's phone alarm goes off and she wakes up.

Maeve: I'm up! (*scrambles to her feet*) I'm up? (*yawns and scratches her head*) It's awfully quiet. (*calls out*) Mum? Dad? (*no response to which Maeve shrugs*) Must be some sort of 'emergency' at work. (*rolls eyes and turns to bed, finds the crumpled-up letter*) Shit. (*picks it up and folds it out again, skimming it until she reaches where she was up to*) Wait, I don't remember finishing it. Where's the ending? Where's the clue to the last letter? (*turns it over*)

Lucas enters stage.

Lucas: -As I've previously stated, I keep running out of room so I'll have to finish on the back. By now you have to have some idea who's after me. -

Maeve: -You'd think wouldn't you. I have no idea. Literally no idea. I mean- For some reason you know my father told me to stop talking to you but I don't know

how you'd know that. I didn't tell you and he can't have told you. He wouldn't do something like that. -

Lucas: -I know it's hard to understand, comprehend even, and the fact that the answer has been right in front of you all along doesn't help-

Maeve: -It has? (*shakes head*) Where's the other letter... (*goes over to her dresser to see the box has been opened and she freezes for moment*) Where's the other letter. (*roots through the box*) I put it in here I know I did. (*looks back at letter number two in her hands*) If the answer has been right in front of me all along then that means...-

Lucas: -The last letter is in your house. You've had it all along. In fact, your dad's had it all along. -

Maeve: -He's had it?! That's- that's dangerous! Especially if it concerns where you are. If I'm right and he is part of this gang...hell, the leader, then why would you put it in his hands? -

Lucas doesn't leave the stage but stays silent, signalling the letter has come to an end.

Maeve: Of course. As soon as I ask the real questions there are no answers. (*sighs*) Hopefully you explain properly in this last letter... (*checks watch*) ...which I need to find imminently otherwise you'll be dead meat. My dad is seemingly on his way, his fellow gang members, which are undoubtedly the rest of my family, in tow. (*grabs her bag, stuffing the second letter into it, and leaves stage, Lucas follows with no rush behind her*)

Set changes to Giovannis office. Maeve enters stage, Lucas follows.

Maeve: Okay so you mentioned that I've had this letter all along, then it must've been with the post addressed to my father the night I got the first letter. (*rifles through a pile of papers on the desk, Lucas sits on a chair in the room*) It's not going to be these open ones... (*tosses some paper onto the floor over her shoulder*) And it's not going to be these bills... (*tosses more paper onto the floor*) What about this one? (*holds up a letter*) Addressed to "Gio's Gelato", my father's ice cream place. It's a bit odd he's not opened all of these other letters addressed to his business I mean- Oh. Yes. It's not actually his

business is it. (*Lucas shakes his head*) It's a cover up, for what his job actually is. (*Lucas nods*) I guess I just need to look for one with similar writing to all the others. (*roots through the last few papers on the desk and then pulls one out*) This one. Your handwriting is so shit Lucas. It stands out like a sore thumb. (*Maeve opens up the letter and folds it out*)

Lucas: How amazing am I? -

Maeve: -Here we go-

Lucas: -You've had the answer all along. In your house. In the hands of the enemy. I'm good. -

Maeve: -I thoroughly regret agreeing to help you now.
-

Lucas: -Now that I've had my moment, we've got to finally get down to the important stuff, where I actually am. God I can't wait to get out of here. Get some solid food. Like, a burger. -

Maeve: -Really? A burger is what you're focusing on right now-

Lucas: -In all seriousness now though, do you remember the phone call we had? It was right before I went missing. You were the last person I talked to. -

Maeve: -Yes, yes I remember-

Lucas: -But back to the point, the phone call.

Lights dim.

Set change to Maeve's bedroom. Maeve is sat on her bed, reading. Disturbed by her phone ringing.

Maeve: Unknown number? (*confused expression as she clicks on her phone to answer the call, bringing her phone to her ear*) Hello? Who is this?

Lucas (voiceover): Uh hey, it's me. Lucas.

Maeve: Lucas? Why are you calling me? How did you get my number? (*looks down at her wrist to her watch*) Its 11:03pm-

Lucas (voiceover): I know its late um...can we talk?

Maeve: I- sure...why not.

Lucas (voiceover): I need to-

Maeve: (*At the same time as Lucas*) I should probably-
Maeve and Lucas (voiceover) laugh quietly for a moment.

Lucas (voiceover): (*Clears throat*) I wanted to apologize. Y'know. For yesterday.

Maeve: I should apologize too, what I said was rude and insensitive.

Lucas (voiceover): No, I'm the one who should apologize. I'm sorry saying you were stuck up. That's not true at all. In fact, you're probably the only person I can trust right now. The reason I'm calling- it's not because of what happened at the park, I couldn't care less about what happened at the park, it's- uh...something different.

Maeve: (*Raises eyebrow*) What is it then?

Lucas (voiceover): I'm in a bit of a pickle.

Maeve: Enlighten me. (*crosses her legs*)

Lucas (voiceover): I've not got a lot of time, but I need someone to know and seeing as we are, well, kind of friends, I'm going to tell you. (*Takes a deep breath and says quickly*) Basically, I stole a bunch of money from some guys I pretended to be in a gang with and they've figured out it's me and they want me to pay every penny of it back in the space of two days but the problem is that I've already used it for something.

Maeve: What- What on earth compelled you to join a gang, steal money from them and spend it all without even considering the fact that they'd probably find out it was you?

Lucas (voiceover): I needed that money.

Maeve: What for?

Lucas (voiceover): (*Pause, then whispers*) My mum.

Maeve: Okay...Your mum needs money. Can't she just go on benefits?

Lucas (voiceover): (*Clears throat*) She already is.

Maeve: Oh- I see. Well, I'm sure if you explain your position to these guys they'll understand-

Lucas (voiceover): (*Laughs*) No. They're all wealthy, I don't stand a chance.

Maeve: Well, how much is "a bunch of money"?

Lucas (voiceover): Uh. I was hoping they wouldn't notice it was gone, it's just my need is greater than theirs and the amount I took compared to all the money they've got is like a penny-

Maeve: Lucas. I'll ask you again. How much did you take?

Lucas (voiceover): One hundred.

Maeve: Well, that's not that much-

Lucas (voiceover): ...thousand.

Maeve: Shit.

Lucas (voiceover): Now do you see my issue?

Maeve nods quickly.

Lucas (voiceover): I imagine your silence means you're nodding your head. *(sighs)* What am I going to do? I can't go back to them. They'll kill me. Literally.

Maeve: Whatever you decide to do, I can help. Do I know of them?

Lucas (voiceover): Maybe? I don't really know how to answer that.

Maeve: Ah, I see the problem here. You don't trust me. You're keeping me in the dark. How am I supposed to help you if I'm not being told the truth about everything?

Lucas (voiceover): What? The problem isn't that I don't trust you Maeve. And I'm not telling you this one thing because it's dangerous. *(mumbles)* I'm sure you and the rest of the nation will know perfectly well who they are when my dead body is on the front of the newspaper.

Maeve: Don't joke about things like that. I'm just trying to help, if you don't let me in, I can't help, can I?

Lucas (voiceover): I get that, I do, but how can you help me when you don't understand what's going on. Even I don't fully understand what's going on.

Maeve: I know what your problem is. You're scared, which is completely fine, I mean- you've got a whole gang after you Lucas, fucking hell. *(Silence from Lucas)* Sorry, I'm making this so much worse. I can help you, let me help you.

Lucas (voiceover): Help implies desperation and I'm not desperate to be saved, Maeve. It's *her* who's desperate. It's *her* who needs saving, not me, and I've fucked everything up.

Maeve: This 'her' you're talking about, do you mean your mum? And she's sick? That's why you need the money.

Lucas is silent.

Maeve: I imagine your silence means you're nodding your head.

Lucas (voiceover): I have to disappear for a while, get them off my trail.

Maeve: How long are we talking about?

Lucas (voiceover): I guess we'll find out.

Maeve: Lucas, no. You can't just leave your mum by herself. You need to tell her what's going on.

Lucas (voiceover): If I tell her what's going on, she'll just worry about me and that's the last thing I want.

Maeve goes to speak but is interrupted by Lucas.

Lucas (voiceover): Promise me you won't tell anyone about this. No one. Not even my mum. Not even when things get tricky, you can't tell anybody anything. As far as everyone knows, this conversation didn't happen.

Maeve: Sure...Whatever you need.

Lucas (voiceover): Alright good.

Maeve: But you have to promise me something in return.

Lucas (voiceover): And what would that be?

Maeve: Just let me know you're okay, somehow.

Lucas (voiceover): Alright, if it makes you feel better.

Maeve: It will. Now, I gotta go, my parents are home and if they hear me speaking to you, they'll go bananas.

Lucas (voiceover): *(laughs)* Yeah, that they will. Hang in there Maeve.

Maeve: I will, you too. Oh- And hey, didn't John Lennon say "Everything will be okay in the end, and if it's not yet okay, it's not yet the end."?

Lucas: Cheesy, but true. Now shoo. I gotta go too.

Maeve: Alright...bye Lucas.

Lucas: Bye Maeve.

Phone call ends and Maeve pulls the phone away from her ear, staring down at it.

Set changes back to Giovannis office, Maeve is looking down at the letter and Lucas is still sat down.

Lucas: -I hope you remember our last conversation. I keep playing it out in my head over and over again-

Maeve: *-(nods)* yes, of course I remember. I remember it like it was yesterday. -

Lucas: -By now, I should be waiting for you. You've got to hurry because your dad has eyes and ears everywhere.

-

Maeve: -Well I think of someone stole a hundred grand from me too, I'd be wanting it back. However, I know

you stole it for a good reason, and if my family's legacy really is part of the mafia then I'm sure we already have plenty enough money. I don't think reasoning with my dad is going to be an option. I'm going to have to do something no one would ever want to do to their family. (*pulls her phone out of her pocket*) Break them up. -

Lucas: -I know you're smart and I know you'll handle this, I'm not going to tell you what to do when it comes to your family, you'll know what's best. Just be careful. And be quick.

Lucas leaves stage and Maeve puts the last letter back on Giovannis desk, dialling numbers on her phone and bringing it up to her ear.

Police woman (voiceover): Hello, this is London police department how can I help?

Maeve: Hi, I'm calling for an arrest to take place. It's my father, Giovanni Rossi. I have suspicion enough to believe him and other members of my family are involved in a gang that originates from my home town in Italy, Naples. He is the reason my friend, Lucas Kingsley, went missing about a year ago and he will also be the reason you will eventually find his body if you don't go and arrest him. He should be on his way to Hyde Park right now, I think.

Police woman (voiceover): Thank you for your call...?

Maeve: Maeve Rossi.

Police woman (voiceover): ...Maeve, I'll send out armed officers now.

Maeve: My mother, Victoria Rossi, may be with him too. Arrest her as well. I believe she's as deeply invested in these crimes as my father.

Police woman (voiceover): Got it. We will need to take you and your...friend, Lucas, in for questioning as well. Could you please make your way over to Hyde Park too? Find you friend and wait for another officer to approach you whilst we take Mr and Mrs Rossi into custody.

Maeve: Of course, I'm making my way over now. Thank you. (*ends the call and puts her head in her hands*) I know this is the right thing to do but I feel like I'm betraying everyone. My whole family. (*sighs*)

Maeve puts her bag over her shoulder and exits stage, lights dim and set changes to the park with the bench from before. Giovanni is sat on the bench in handcuffs, police woman stood next to him. Maeve runs onto stage and approaches him.

Maeve: (looks at the police woman) It's okay, I'm the one who called. I'm his daughter, I just want to speak to him. (police woman nods) (Sits beside him and pauses) I'd like my letter back please.

Giovanni: (ignores her comment) My own daughter, throwing me under the bus like that. I was doing this for you. All of this was for you. So that you could take over the business when you were older without any complications.

Maeve: And that makes what you did okay? Because you were doing this for me? Don't you think you've done enough? Did you really expect this to turn out any better? (swallows) I did the right thing. You're a criminal. You and mother and god knows how many back at home.

Giovanni: You keep telling yourself that. You'll never escape what you did to your family today.

Police woman: Okay, it's time to get you to the department for questioning (pulls Giovanni up by his arm from the bench)

Giovanni looks down at Maeve in a disapproving manner and then follows the police woman off stage towards blue and red flashing lights.

Maeve stays sat on the bench and hangs her head. Lucas enters stage and sees Maeve on the bench, walks over quietly and stands in front of her. Maeve stands up quickly and knocks heads with him.

Lucas: (puts a hand to his face and winces) Ow Maeve! Dear god-

Maeve: (wraps her arms around him and pulls him into a hug) This nightmare is finally over.

Lucas: (taken aback by the hug but pulls his hand away from his face and hugs her back) I'm happy to see you too.

Maeve: (pulls away after a few seconds) Word of advice, don't stand in front of someone without saying anything because that really freaked me out.

Lucas: Okay, okay! Jeez. If I knew you were going to nag at me as soon as I got here, I would've called someone else.

Maeve: Yeah? Who?

Lucas: *(pauses)* Touche.

They kiss. Awkward silence.

Lucas: Hey Maeve? *(Starts walking off stage with Maeve next to him)*

Maeve: Yes? *(follows him off stage)*

Lucas: *(from off stage)* You still owe me that water.

Maeve: *(from off stage)* Okay, alright. I'll grab you a water on the way home.

Lucas: *(from off stage)* And a-

Maeve: *(from off stage)* And a burger.

Lights dim. End.