

## ***Other Hands (Excerpt)***

By Laura Wade

### **Scene 1**

*Lydia's studio flat. Late morning.*

*Lydia is standing in front of the computer, looking at Steve. He stands by the door, a motorbike helmet in his hand. The air fizzles.*

**Lydia**            You've got an hour.

**Steve**            Um

**Lydia**            What?

**Steve**            It's. I can't predict how long it's

**Lydia**            How long

**Steve**            I mean, it can take longer

**Lydia**            Longer than an hour?

**Steve**            Well, it. I don't always know till I. Start. How long I'm going to be doing it for is all

**Lydia**            Right. Well / I

**Steve**            Sometimes it's just thirty seconds or so sometimes and sometimes it's I do try and keep it as quick as possible but

**Lydia**            OK

**Steve**            But it can take longer and I can't really tell until I, you know, get down to it

**Lydia**            Get down to it

**Steve**            Have a go

You don't think with your, your experience you should be able to predict

**Lydia**

Because I did tell you quite clearly what I wanted on the phone

**Steve**            There's lots of

**Lydia**            And you are a *professional* so

**Steve**            I mean it just isn't possible to

*Beat*

**Lydia**            I can only afford an hour.

**Steve**            Right.

**Lydia**            Sorry.

**Steve** No

**Lydia** I should have said on the phone

**Steve** OK

**Lydia** So

**Steve** Well let's give it an hour and see how we go.

**Lydia** OK.

*Steve puts his helmet down and moves towards the PC.*

**Steve** It's the modem, you said

God, I don't know, I mean

**Lydia**

God knows what's going on in there just won't connect to the internet

**Steve** Since

**Lydia** Monday

**Steve** OK well let's

**Lydia** I might not be using the right words, the terminology

*Lydia is still standing in front of the PC, barring Steve's way.*

**Steve** Can I

**Lydia** Um

**Steve** Have a look?

**Lydia** Um, yeah

*Lydia starts to move away, then darts back to stand between Steve and the computer.*

Sorry

**Steve** What?

Sorry I just

Thing is I can't let you *start*, you see, because

**Lydia** If you start and then we get to the end of the hour and it isn't fixed, and you. I'm not questioning you know, but. If it isn't fixed and you go away, or it's worse because I don't know, you've run some kind of programme on it and now it's worse it's made all sorts of crawlies come out of the. I mean I'm not saying you would, you know, but

I mean then I'm

Then I'm *really* stuck

**Steve** Yeah

**Lydia** I really need it, I

**Steve** Yeah Yeah

And you, you did say that. You know, sometimes, doesn't it, it takes more than an hour you said and I can't afford it because

And you can't tell, can you, with people, sometimes it's an hour and five minutes and you get charged for the second hour, for breaking into it but I really

**Lydia** I mean, when I say I can't afford it it's not that I think it *shouldn't* take longer than an hour, like I'm opposed to the idea of paying for this this service that you do, which I actually think is a great idea and you know it's a godsend for people like me so it's not that I don't agree with the idea of paying more than forty pounds it's just that

I mean I just don't have it, I really can't.

I'm sorry

**Steve** No, I

**Lydia** I should have said before

**Steve** No

**Lydia** Stead of making you come all the way over here from

**Steve** Fulham

**Lydia** Fulham. Oh, not too far

**Steve** Not too far, no

**Lydia** Quite direct on a bike I should think

**Steve** I, um

**Lydia** I'm sorry. I really am.

*Beat*

**Steve** I could

**Lydia** Yes?

**Steve** You could just pay me for the hour and I'll. I'll stay till it's done.

*Lydia exhales. Smiles.*

**Lydia** Yes. Yeh. Thank you

*She moves away from the PC.*

You see that's. That's kind. *That's kind*

Thank you.

**Steve** Sure

*Steve sits down at the PC. He flexes his fingers.*

**Lydia** So what if it's less than an hour?

**Steve** What?

**Lydia** Joke. Sorry, joke. Just, joke.

*Steve smiles. Lydia sits down on the bed.*

**Steve** You don't have to stay with me if you

**Lydia** It's a studio

**Steve** Right, sorry

**Lydia** Unless you'd like a cup of tea, or

**Steve** No thanks

Or water or

**Lydia** I think I've got some squash, some kind of weird combination like strawberry and apricot or

**Steve** I'm OK

**Lydia** Don't know why I bought it really, sounds disgusting. Not very grown-up, is it, squash?

*Steve moves the mouse, then frowns.*

**Steve** Does it always crash like this?

**Lydia** Oh. Yeah, always. All the time. Hit 'Save' every five seconds now.

**Steve** You work from home, do you?

**Lydia** No, I. No.

*Pause. Steve reboots the PC. Lydia watches him.*

God, you must. You must really see some stuff

Things people have on their machines

**Steve** Don't really look

**Lydia** No?

**Steve** Not really interested

**Lydia** No

*Beat.*

No? You must be a little bit?

**Steve** Maybe a / bit

**Lydia** A little bit. Curious.

**Steve** Most people there's not

**Lydia** Well you won't find any porn on there

*Lydia laughs and looks away.*

**Steve** What you do with your personal

**Lydia** My *personal*

**Steve** It's none of my business

**Lydia** I don't have anything *personal* on

**Steve** I'm just here to fix it

*Beat.*

There's someone I email, OK?

**Lydia** And if. If I can't email, then

And I haven't been able to email for days so I feel a bit

**Steve** OK

But I wouldn't

**Lydia**

I wouldn't want you to read any of the emails, so

**Steve** I won't

I haven't met him

**Lydia** I

It's ridiculous really, but

**Steve** I won't

**Lydia** Read them, no

*Steve peers at the screen.*

**Steve**                Shit

**Lydia**              What? What?

**Steve**              I'm going to be here a while.

*Fade.*

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