

O

By Gabriella Sloss

A Doctor's Office. DR. CAMPBELL is sitting at a desk typing notes.

There is a knock at the door.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Yes, come in!

A pause.

Another knock at the door.

(She clears her throat and speaks louder)

Come in!

AMY enters, headphones hanging around her neck. DR. CAMPBELL looks up.

AMY:

Sorry, sorry...I just never know whether to knock or to just/

DR. CAMPBELL:

/that's alright! Now...

She looks at her computer screen.

Amy, hi, it's nice to meet you, I'm Dr. Campbell. I've just started at this practice and I'm still going through patient files at the moment, so do bear with me...

This is just a check in, really. I see you've been on sertraline for a while now. How's that been for you? And how are things in general?

AMY:

Um, yeah. Yeah, so it's been okay recently I guess but/

DR. CAMPBELL:

/How are you sleeping?

AMY:

Yeah much better.

DR. CAMPBELL:

And how's your appetite?

AMY:

Yeah, it's fine...

Her phone pings loudly. She glances at her phone, distracted.

Sorry, sorry. It's my friend, she sends me these voicenotes sometimes when I'm feeling a bit nervous.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Are you feeling nervous now?

AMY:

A little.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Why are you feeling nervous, Amy?

AMY:

Well, it's a little hard to...I kind of want to talk about...

*She mumbles off. The two stare at one another for a moment.
DR. CAMPBELL smiles kindly.*

DR. CAMPBELL:

That's okay, take your time.

A pause.

Well let's go back to friends. Sounds like you've got a reasonable support network there, yes?

AMY:

Yeah Jen's...supportive. And there's some other people about that I go and see for coffee and stuff. Um yeah it's good. Seeing friends is good. I went to a party last weekend and that was...okay.

And I had a phased return to work which was fine. Everything's, you know, fine.

DR. CAMPBELL:

What about exercise?

AMY:

Uh yeah, I'm going for walks which I like. I feel like I know the area a bit better now so that's something.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Have you lived in Glasgow long?

AMY:

Oh yeah, a few years. I guess I mean I didn't really *see* the area too much. And walking is really mindful, which is what the Lifelink Counsellor was saying.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Ah okay, so you've been connected with Lifelink. Wonderful.

AMY:

Yup.

A pause.

DR. CAMPBELL:

So it sounds like there's something on your mind, Amy. I'd really like to help if I can.

AMY:

It's really awkward.

DR. CAMPBELL:

That's okay. I just want you to know that you can come to me about anything. If there's something that you're worried about or if you're unsure about the medication, I/

AMY:

/so I guess it's the medication really.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Okay.

AMY:

It's just like...things are fine. I've put weight on again, I'm working, I'm seeing people, I'm sleeping. Like, I made a plan and I've stuck to it and it's all fine. But it's starting to feel like something's kind of missing.

DR. CAMPBELL:

How do you mean?

AMY:

I guess I just feel a bit flat.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Right.

AMY:

I feel a bit like...there's some stuff that I can't really do anymore and I feel a bit...fed up. You know?

DR. CAMPBELL:

Is there anything in particular you feel like you can't do that's frustrating you?

AMY:

Yeah. *Frustrating*. Frustrating is definitely the word.

Nervous laugh.

Yeah so it's like...oh I hate this.

A pause. She scrunches her face and turns away, mumbling.

I guess it's like a sex thing...

DR. CAMPBELL:

A sex thing?

AMY:

Yeah.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Ah. Okay.

She tries to brighten up.

Okay, that's fine. So...you're saying that your sex drive is down.

AMY:

No, like I *want* to, but I feel like every time I start it's like I know I'm not gonna...you know.

DR. CAMPBELL:

And do you feel like this is a priority at the moment?

AMY:

Well like, I'm not saying it's the *most* important thing but I do feel like it would make me feel a bit more normal.

DR. CAMPBELL:

You know, Amy, there's a lot of women who struggle to orgasm and that's completely normal/

AMY:

/No but I could before the sertraline.

DR. CAMPBELL:

So you've been trying to resume your sex life, and you're feeling like the sertraline is blocking you in some way?

AMY:

...yes.

DR. CAMPBELL:

And have you discussed it with your partner?

A pause.

AMY:

Uh no, that's not...I haven't, no.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Perhaps it's worth setting up that dialogue, and communicate what's going on so they understand and can help you/

AMY:

/Yeah but it's just like/

DR. CAMPBELL:

/Because keeping this kind of thing from a partner can be a blocker in itself/

AMY:

/yeah but it's not/

DR. CAMPBELL:

/do you feel like this is something you can't talk about with your partner?

AMY:

Well I mean the thing is...is that it's not/

DR. CAMPBELL:

/I know you're nervous, Amy but I'm sure they'd want to know so they can help you/

AMY:

/it's not a person, it's a vibrator. It's my vibrator and it's just me.

*A pause.
She mumbles.*

I don't think I can have an open dialogue with my vibrator.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Oh. Okay.

AMY:

Oh god.

DR. CAMPBELL:

No no, it's fine. It's *healthy*. But I suppose what I'm wondering is why this is bringing you so much anxiety?

AMY:

/No I'm not anxious.

DR. CAMPBELL:

You just seem quite distressed.

A pause.

AMY looks down.

There's nothing to be embarrassed about. I'm your doctor and this is a problem with your body. But I do think that you're experiencing a lot of anxiety at the moment, and perhaps once we've got that under control we can reassess the situation. So possibly a prescription of beta-blockers would be a good idea for a while/

AMY:

/But I/

DR. CAMPBELL:

/and then we can see where we're at. I know that this must be incredibly...frustrating for you, but I'm looking at where you've come from, and how you're doing and I think we need to focus on staying on track, okay?

AMY slumps a fraction in her seat.

AMY:

Yeah, I mean. I guess. I just don't think I need beta-blockers.

DR. CAMPBELL:

How about I send you home with some and you can just have them on hand if you need some?

AMY:

After a pause.

Yeah, okay.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Okay, great! I'm just going to nip out to the printer and get that prescription all ready for you. You stay put, and I'll be back soon, okay?

AMY:

Okay.

DR. CAMPBELL rises from her seat and exits the room.

AMY lets out a sigh, puts her headphones on and looks at her phone. For artistic license, the voicenotes do not need the time it would take to record in between interactions.

JEN (VOICENOTE):

Hey pal, how'd it go?

AMY:

Still here. Fucking disaster.

JEN (VOICENOTE):

Okay, I'm gonna need a little bit more than that, hun. What's happening?

AMY:

So like...I told her. And she's being really nice, but she's basically saying that I'm focussing on sex when I'm actually just anxious or something, so she's gone to get me a prescription. But I'm *not* anxious, you know? I just want to cum, that's literally it. I just want mind-blowing orgasms and come back to myself and why is this so fucking hard to say out loud? And oh god, I started talking about vibrators and it was just...a nightmare. I could feel myself leaving my body and looking down at the whole thing and just wanted to scream.

JEN (VOICENOTE):

Oh pal, that sounds fucking rough. But you did tell her, and that's so brave! I guess...it kind of sounds like she's not really listening to what you're actually saying though so I'd give it another go. One more go.

AMY:

Uh god, I really, really just want to go home.

JEN (VOICENOTE):

I know, it's really shit. But look, you are a queen, you are a boss ass bitch, you are in control of your life, your destiny and your orgasms! Okay?

AMY:

I don't feel like a boss ass bitch.

JEN (VOICENOTE):

There is a distinct sound of bustling in the background.

Okay, this is what we're gonna do. She's going to come back, and you are going to look her in the eye, advocate for yourself and endure the crushing embarrassment and horror of the whole experience.

And then we are going to meet up in an hour and drink wine. All of the wine. Okay?

You are a strong, independent woman and you deserve to cum! Now repeat it back to me.

AMY:

Where are you?!

JEN (VOICENOTE):

Bus to town, why? Stop deflecting! Say it!

AMY:

I am *strong, independent* woman and I deserve to cum.

JEN (VOICENOTE):

Once more! With *feeling*!

AMY:

A *strong, independent* woman, and *I* deserve to cum!

JEN (VOICENOTE):

Yeah, you do!

AMY puts the phone down, and begins to tap her foot on the floor nervously.

DR. CAMPBELL enters with a prescription in hand.

DR. CAMPBELL:

So here we go/

AMY:

/I'm not anxious. I'm sorry, Dr. Campbell but I'm just not.

DR. CAMPBELL slowly takes her seat.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Okay.

AMY:

This is the fastest AMY speaks.

I just, I know that it sounds ridiculous, but I just feel a bit lost without it. You probably think I'm some kind of fucking nympho or/

DR. CAMPBELL:

No, I/

AMY:

/But this is my natural antidepressant, you know? It kind of always has been, and it's about connecting *me* to *my* body and feeling...alive. And I want to feel alive again, you know? I want to feel more than existence or whatever.

A pause. She stands up and takes a breath, and speaks very steadily and purposefully.

And I'm a strong, independent woman who deserves to cum.

DR. CAMPBELL smiles and rips up the prescription.

DR. CAMPBELL:

Okay Amy, I'm listening.

— *END* —

