

“39 BIDS” by Alexander Lee-Rekers - Tom and Alice - M/F- 30s/40s

INT. STUDY - DAY

Following a closely guarded scandal at a prestigious university, Tom has been stood down from his teaching position pending an investigation. He is pottering around in his spacious home study when his wife Alice returns home unexpectedly.

TOM: Hey! You're home early. I made some sandwiches for lunch if you want to share? Fresh pot of coffee as well, although it might need a buzz in the microwave.

ALICE: Do you know where the Complete Works of Shakespeare is? With the blue leather and whalebone spine?

TOM: Whalebone?

ALICE: It's the one dad gave you for your thirtieth birthday.

Pause.

TOM: No, I- I know the one you mean, I didn't know it was whalebone in the spine. That's cool.

ALICE: Do you know where it is?

TOM: Somewhere in here. Probably the top shelf with the other old and rare ones. Why?

ALICE: I found it for sale on Ebay. I was looking for a present for dad for Christmas and I was scrolling through and I ... thought it looked familiar. *(Pause.)* Can you check it's not missing? Not been stolen?

After a moment, Tom looks through the shelves of books, plucks the book out and hands it to his wife. She looks at all the sides of it.

TOM: Took it down recently to give it a clean. Actually, and this might sound strange, I heard on a podcast that Ebay is a great way of getting something valued for free. Just to check in.

ALICE: So you did put it up for sale?

TOM: Just out of interest, to get the value.

ALICE: It's sitting at \$700. Thirty-nine bids.

TOM: It's a beautiful book.

ALICE: You should probably take it down. I noticed the auction ends tonight, you'd hate to accidentally sell it.

TOM: I will.

Tom doesn't move.

ALICE: You know we don't need money. We've always got options-

TOM: (*Interrupting.*) You don't need money, we don't need money, but I do. There's a difference.

ALICE: I don't see the difference. We're a team, you and me. We need to be able to rely on each other, before you start selling precious things for- for whatever reason.

TOM: It's my precious thing. I can't sell it?

ALICE: My father gave you that book from his own collection. He's going to expect to see it on the shelf when he comes to visit. How do I tell him you sold off one of his favourite, most valuable books?

TOM: Then it's more of a loan than a gift, isn't it? Like our house, which they own: we pay no rent, but we can't *really* call it ours, can we?

ALICE: That's a tax thing.

TOM: Must be nice.

ALICE: I don't want you to sell that book.

Silence.

TOM: Then bid on it. Not like it's your money.