

### **Jed Gardner relives an awkward moment...**

The concert was in an old chapel near their campus. It was free for student cardholders. They arrived two minutes before it started, and had to sit at the back. Jed watched, hardly less astonished than before, as Jonathan gawped open-mouthed at the chamber orchestra. Once the music began, Jed closed his eyes and surrendered to the feeling of tranquillity. He could truly imagine a summer's day in Somerset. The flautist was particularly fine, he thought. He must congratulate her.

"Look at that! Melissa Melons." The piece was over, and Jonathan was digging him in the ribs and pointing at the flautist, a blonde girl wearing a low-cut black ball gown.

"She does play well," Jed said.

"What?"

"I mean, she has real talent. We should talk to her."

"Too right," Jonathan said.

It was hardly surprising that Melissa was mobbed by young men after the concert. Jonathan proved rather successful at elbowing his way past the crush, Jed trailing in his wake.

Jed hardly had time to say, rather stiffly and formally, that he felt her technique was superb. He was interrupted by Jonathan, who launched into a lengthy apology for not bringing her flowers. He felt the performance merited a large bouquet, and perhaps he could take her to dinner the following evening instead?

"I've got a date," Jonathan said smugly as they left the hall. "Fancy a beer?"

"I'm a Quaker." He was still keeping the faith then, Eleanor's faith, so drink was out of the question. He returned to the flat alone.

Jed sighed, alone in his spacious office. The music had stopped and the sky outside was darkening, London's tall cityscape brightened by neon advertising and the fluorescent squares of distant windows. Regrets had barely troubled him before, but he wished now that he could have spoken and acted differently at that moment in the chapel. He suspected he would be just as gauche if confronted with a similar situation again. It was men like Jonathan, or Boris as he appeared to call himself now, who knew how to turn on the charm.

**Although Jed has succeeded in IT, his complete inability to get on with others is his downfall. Read more in [\*After The Interview\*](#).**