

Subtext

Uri, 24, gender neutral. The diplomat of the three and works for Empire Magazine.

Becky, 24, black. She has a dry-wit and is hot-blooded.

Ray, 24, white. She is very sensitive and insecure.

A living room in London. Three friends are sat around on the sofas drinking red wine; they appear to be on the second bottle and are all in casual clothing. Becky sits in the centre; she has short black hair and is sat cross-legged. To her left on the other sofa is Ray, she has long red hair and is leaning forward. And finally walking over from the kitchen door at the back of the stage is Uri who has short brown hair and is carrying the third bottle of red wine in their right hand and a brown box in their left.

Uri Round three, here we go!

Ray I'm not sure if I can, my whole body is telling me no.

Uri This is a light pinotage, trust me, less acidic than the last.

Becky Well I'm game, bring it on!

Uri grabs the corkscrew from the table in front of the sofas and opens the third bottle, they then pour out its contents into Becky's, their own and then forcefully into Ray's.

Ray No, that's way too much.

Becky That's not even half full, there's hardly anything in there.

Uri I need you in top shape Ray, I've got a lot planned for you later.

Ray (Playfully) Shut up, you crazy nut. Fine give me some more, if it'll numb this headache I've got.

Uri passes the bottle to Ray and she helps herself to more.

Becky What's that in your hand, Uri?

Uri This is what I wanted to show you guys. It arrived today.

Uri starts to open the package.

You know a few years ago they brought out that remote translator, that could translate any language right there on the spot?

Becky Yeah Mitch used one when he went to Thailand.

Ray Shit, how'd he afforded that?

Becky Selling organs, sperm, being a jiggalo probably.

Ray Yeah sounds about right.

Uri Anyway, I got something made by the same company. It's called Sub. It's not on the market yet, but because of the job I get to review it early!

Ray You've got such a good job.

Becky It pays well, right?

Uri brings out the small device from the box.

Uri Oh yeah. And this, this is worth a lot of money. This isn't even a prototype, it's the real deal.

Ray Looks like a tampon.

Becky What sort of tampon's do you use?

Ray I gotta big girth what can I say?

Uri Jesus Ray. Maybe that extra glass was a bad idea.

Becky You're telling me.

Ray So what does it do?

Uri I'll show you.

Uri turns on the device, it makes a high-pitched beep. Uri rests it on the table and faces the little blue light emitted from the device up.

By the way, Becky I forgot to say, I prefer your hair short.
Sub I should mention, Becky I haven't told you yet, but you look fit.
Uri Oh my god!
Sub I cannot believe Sub just said that.
Becky Hahaha what? What/ was that?
Ray /What did it just say!
Sub Undetectable
Uri Hold on, a sec, hold on.

Uri presses a button on Sub and the blue lit dims.

Becky Why did that little machine just say I /was fit?
Ray /Why didn't it say I was fit?
Uri Okay, umm, it's a little embarrassing. But that wasn't from the machine. Fuck me it works so well! It basically translates speech, and reveals the subtext. So it read what I said and repeated the underlying nature.
Becky Holy shit.
Ray That is so cool!
Uri I know, it's wicked. We've got to do more, ready?
Becky Wait, so you think I look fit like this.
Uri Obviously!

Uri turns Sub back on and presses the same button, a blue light emits again.

Becky Well I think Uri looks fit.
Sub That will make her feel good.
Uri Thanks Becky.
Sub I feel good.
Ray I wanna go next.
Sub I want the attention.

They laugh.

Ray (Through a half-smile) Shut up you little machine, I'll bash your face in.
Sub Don't make me look like an idiot in front of them Sub.
Ray Well yeah, he's hit the nail on the head!
Sub I'm worried how accurate Sub is.
Ray Shit.
Sub Scarily accurate.

Ray puts her hands on her mouth; she shakes her head and decides not to speak anymore. The other two laugh.

Becky So what, we just talk and we let it speak out?
Sub I'm concerned what Sub might reveal.
Uri Yeah, it's mainly used for interviews and interrogations in extreme cases, but I don't see any harm in trying it out now.
Sub I will aide you Becky in sharing my knowledge on Sub, I want to hear your secrets.
Becky You ain't hearing anything Uri.
Sub I don't want to talk about that.
Ray I'm not sure I like this Uri.
Sub I'm feeling insecure.
Ray All it says to me is shit like that?
Sub I'm upset that Sub is revealing my feelings.
Uri Well, Sub's not making it up Ray, this is what we're meaning.
Sub Sub is accurate, don't be so foolish Ray,
Ray Foolish, Uri?

Sub Did you just insult me?
Uri Yes I did, that's what I meant by that. This is a high-tech device, and it's going to be right, everytime.
Sub Yes I did, Sub is a high-tech device and highly accurate.
Ray Can't we just turn it off?
Sub I'm feeling uncomfortable.
Ray Fuck sake, I'm done with this.
Sub The truth hurts, I can't deal with it.
Ray Fuck you! You piece of shit!
Sub Fuck you Sub! You've made me angry.
Becky Ray don't get angry at it, it's just a toy.
Sub You're getting hysterical. Sub is just a device.
Ray Hysterical? Really? How come it hasn't attacked you like it has me?'
Sub You have deeply offended me/ you are usually the crazy bitch.
Uri /Guys enough of this
Sub /Undetectable
Becky Crazy bitch, what the fuck does that/ mean?
Ray /Yeah crazy bitch, you go fucking mental at me all the/time
Sub /Undetectable
Becky What the hell are you talking /about?
Uri /Ray calm down!
Sub Undetectable
Ray I kissed your ex once and you went berserk on me!
Sub I slept with your ex and you overreacted.

Long pause

Becky What did it just say?
Sub I hope I have misheard Sub.
Uri I'm turning it/ off.

Uri switches Sub off.

Ray /Oh fuck.
Becky You slept with Mitch? You slut!
Ray Yeah I did, I'm sorry but Becky - he started it!
Becky You told me you just kissed that was it, you slept with him? Fuck!
Uri Guys.
Ray Yeah I did, all right, and I won't feel bad about it. It was ages since you were together.
Becky You should've asked me, you should've told me. Was it good?
Ray Look I'm sorry okay!
Becky Was it, good?
Ray I'm not answering that.
Becky Uri.
Uri What?
Becky Turn on Sub.
Ray No Uri, come on don't, all it'll do is cause arguments.
Becky Do it, for me.

Uri switches Sub on.

Uri Hey Sub, testing.
Sub I need you to work.
Uri Okay, Becky, all yours.
Sub Becky speak to control Sub.
Becky Did you sleep with Mitch?
Sub Did you sleep with Mitch?
Ray Yes.

Sub I did.
Becky Fuck.
Sub I am upset
Becky Did you enjoy it?
Sub Did you enjoy it?
Ray Becky, come on, why ask that?
Sub I am scared Sub will say yes-
Uri -That's a yes then.
Sub Undetectable

Pause

Becky Was it just that once?
Sub Has it been more than one time?
Ray Becky I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.
Sub I'm very sorry Becky, I'm sorry to hurt you.
Becky Answer the question.
Sub Answer my question.
Ray I have had sex with Mitch after that one time.
Sub I have had sex with my boyfriend on more than one occasion.

Pause

Becky's eyes widen, her nostrils flare, she is furious at Ray. Ray is stunned with fear. Uri's mouth is wide open. Sub is waiting for a response.

Uri Get out of my flat Ray.
Sub Leave the premises immediately.
Ray Becky...I...I...am so..
Becky Get the fuck out you whore! You backstabber get the fuck out!
Sub Undetectable.

Ray bursts into tears and grabs her things, she leaves the flat. Becky holds her own and grabs the bottle of wine, and fills up her glass. Uri turns off Sub.

Uri Maybe that wasn't such a good idea.
Becky Don't you dare think about giving Sub back. I'm not done with her.

-End-