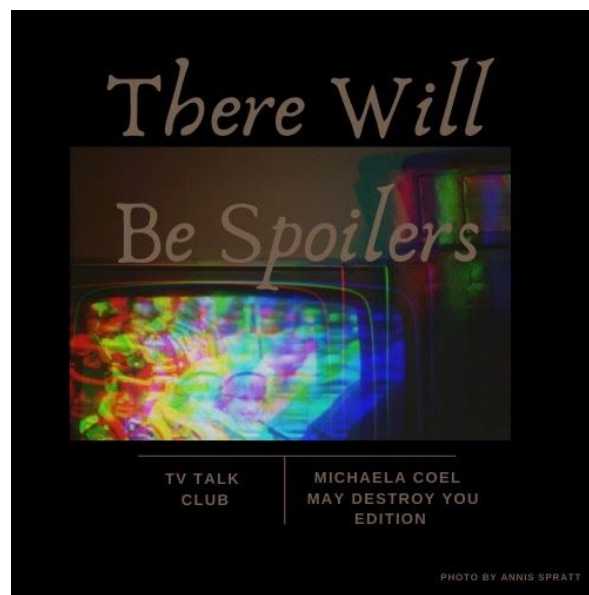


**There Will Be Spoilers TV Talk Club**  
[The Michaela Coel May Destroy You Edition](#)

**I**  
**May**  
**Destroy**  
**You**

Created by Michaela Coel, directed by Michaela Coel and Sam Miller, broadcast by BBC One & HBO, 2020



*A lil' sumpin' optional*

- [Spotify playlist](#)
- [In the End, There's Arabella](#)
- [Michaela Coel Of 'I May Destroy You' On Trauma, Levity And The Space Between](#)
- [Paapa Essiedu Talks About Kwame's Journey in I May Destroy You](#)

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## Characters

[\[cast page on IMDB\]](#)

Arabella/Bella (hero?)

Terry (bff)

Kwame (bff)

Ben (flatmate)

Biagio (Italian bf)

Simon (Friend who left her in the bar)

Julian/Francine (white agents)

Theo (sketchy white woman who ran the support group & falsely accused by of assault, though yes the boy was trash)

Zain (Mr TOOK OFF THE CONDOM)

Susy Henny (publisher)

Nilfur (Kwame's experimental straight sex woman)

## Themezzzzzz

- consent
- ghosting
- agency (who gets to do what and when?!)
- digital culture
- validation/affirmation/friendship/enabling
- revenge/justice
- What else???
- What we owe other people (friends, friends who are like family family and strangers)
- What does the title mean? Who is the subject of "I" *May Destroy You*?
- Harm and thinking about [transformative justice](#)

## WTF?! Situations of consent or lack of consent

- Bella and assault at bar
- Bella and Biagio

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<sup>1</sup> Talking points, questions, etc.

- Bella and Zain
- Kwame's story arc
- Theo and Ryan (at school)
- Terry, her threesome and her ambivalence about it
- Bella locking Kwame in room with guy (The Egyptidorian? The Ecuagyptian?) at her party

## Episode

1. Eyes Eyes Eyes Eyes - Opening shot: Bella's room with her book all mapped out, then we go to Italy
2. Someone is Lying - Bella's triggered by Terry asking, "What happened to your phone?"
3. Don't Forget the Sea - Bella and Terry in Italy; Bella meets Biagio; Terry has her threesome, which is totally a set-up (we see them together twice before they split up to enact their plan); Biagio, "Stop the drugs...You get in trouble one day, don't come crying to me."
4. That Was Fun - "There are hungry children...there's a war in Syria...not everyone has a smart phone." - Bella's mantra when she remembers the assault
5. It Just Came Up - "The problem is when people don't what is a crime and what isn't a crime and they don't report it."
6. The Alliance - school days flashback
7. Happy Animals - Terry says to Kwame, "Apart from Arabella, Black women don't get raped" 🙄🙄
8. Line Spectrum Border - Bella's monologue about men tiptoeing "on the line, on the border...where no one can be clear"; Bella goes to Italy to see Biagio; Kwame dates that white girl who is "into guys with some edge...really into black guys"
9. Social Media Is a Great Way to Connect - #IHWSG; my fave line of the whole series: "This echo chamber is freezing."; Bella calls out Kwame and Terry calls out Bella for locking Kwame in the room
10. The Cause The Cure - young Bella eats all the fries from her dad and immediately throws them up (and her mom *knew*, was right there with the bag)
11. Would You Like to Know the Sex?
12. Ego Death - see below for multiple ending scenarios; the book's title is *January 22nd* with the symbol she drew out with her therapist; Closing shot: Bella exhaling and running away from camera down the beach.

## Amuse-bouches

Who was your favorite character?

Who would you dread getting stuck in an elevator with and why?

What scene made you cry?

Which scene were you like, “Dang. Relatable content?”

Any quotes that stand out for you? Any epiphanies?

## Provocations

**Bella and...**

**...her phone/social media**

There are four conclusions to her hero's journey:

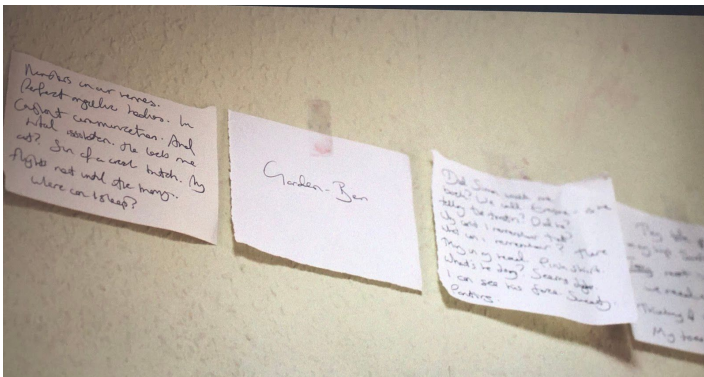
- The Alliance drug “Patrick,” track him down, Bella has a plan, pretends to be drugged, Bella & Terry assault him, Bella puts him under her bed where he bleeds out while she finishes her book
- Bella sees “David,” starts to call 999, Terry has a plan, gets Bella high to counteract letting him drug her (she sees and dances with *herself* from the night she was raped 😳), reveals himself to be a deranged, self-hating, pathetic misogynist, and Bella takes him back to hers for a confessional 😞 (“If you’re not scared, I don’t know how I’m meant to be.”), and he’s arrested.
- In the loos, Bella hears Terry admit she was tricked in Italy with her threesome, she sees the bleeding woman from the hospital (when she had her rape kit done) and young Bella, Terry, and Theo in the stalls, she encounters “Patrick” in the empty bar, willingly makes out with him in the loos (while his friend dances awkwardly for Terry 😂) and they have sex with Bella penetrating Patrick from behind. The morning after he leaves when she tells him to, along with his battered self who takes Bella’s bag from under the bed with her ultrasound.
- In last scenario, she’s already in the garden when Ben comes out. She’s done going to the bar.





Here are times when Bella escapes into her phone:

- at the police station with Kwame
- in her first therapy meeting
- at Zain's when she gets up to yoga, "You're turning into a computer...gulping down 1s and 0s"
- After her fight with Biagio, she starts to break down, pulls it together, takes and posts a bunch of selfies and gets affirmed.
- Samson's take on white supremacy, exploitation and social media (Episode 7, 22:16)
- At the physician's office when she gets a clear CT scan, she interrupts him to post to socials ("Back in the room, sorry" But she didn't say, "Excuse me.")
- After calling Kwame out and Terry calling her out, Bella hits the streets for some posing, posting and extreme likes...but ends up at her therapist's flat who asks her, "Do you need social media? Could you leave social media?"



Why do we keep coming back to Bella's conversation with Ben as the "reset" for how and whether she continues to track down the man who raped her?

- The edit makes it seem like once she's mapped out her book (with Della's/Zain's help), she's then clear to see on her stakeout at

Ego Death Bar.

- Is Ben a witness or a bystander or something else?
- There's only one time when we get Ben's interiority and he watches a video about loneliness. Why?

What is Coel trying to tell us about friendship, affirmation and enabling?

Why does she still fuck with Zain even after the condom stunt? Is she gaslighting him when she, first, drops his name as her rapist in front of Susy Henny, and later to his face calling him a rapist?

What assumptions does Bella make about her relationship to Susy Henny when she finds out Susy is Black (is Susy “Black” or “black???”)?

Does Biagio love Bella or nah? Is he afraid of her (even before she beats the shit outta his door)?

In her encounters with institutions — the police, the hospital for her high blood pressure — modeling standing up for one’s self, like she asks the doctor who marks her has Afro-Caribbean and not African, “Who makes the form?”

The way Bella’s family puts their lives on hold for her father, Kojo, will have an impact.

- Is Bella like her mom or dad (shot of how they both hold their feet under the table)?
  - Are we seeing evidence that Bella’s always had a selective memory? Is it all trauma-induced?
- Nick is always leery and skeptical...but seems like he’d treat someone really right.
- Grace and Kojo — “they are together, they just don’t stay in the same place,” according to Bella; she gets dressed so nicely for him for his birthday and the closing shot in her 😂😂😂

### **...Terry**

How do we feel about Terry’s threesome and the con that her sex-buddies ran on her? Why would she feel differently about it, knowing they knew one another?

How/why does Bella forgive Terry so easily? Is it easy?

What do we make of Terry’s acting subplot?

Terry kinda nails the problem with the sexism of the label “daddy issues” commenting on her father: “...eating Daddy-size portions as if he’s earned the right to *chomp*.”

The introduction of Kai seems... under-developed.

### **...Kwame**

What are the assumptions about gay men and sex?

How has Kwame learned to relate to other men via social media? How does Tyrone show him a different way?

- Ben: "You are nice."
- Kwame: "I reject that."

The disparities between how Bella is treated at the police station and Kwame being treated wholly incompetently. Because "men can't be raped." 🤦 "We've got machines out there to report..."

Did Kwame deceive that white girl (Nilufer) he had sex with? (Bella thinks so: "deceitful, destructive, narcissistic...")

- The way it's intercut with flashbacks to his assault, was he assaulted all over again?
- Would she have freaked out less if he'd said he was bi?

### **...work**

Alliances in the episode in which Theo and the assault survivors group are introduced: alliances at school, alliances in the home, alliances in the group. What are alliances predicated upon?

### **...so much more**

And Alissa...because chiiiiiiiile, she was something.

Simon and Cat wants a threesome for Simon to "feel free." Much to discuss re: "permission" in relationships.

This theme of friends, or acquaintances, leaving people who may or may not be in trouble:

- Kwame: "We're not having sex again." Kwame's rapist: "It's not sex."
- Simon leaving Bella off her nut, calling Terry to get permission to leave Bella on her own and, it turns out that Terry gives him permission and later asks him to

lie about having walked Bella home (when, in fact, it was a man without shelter she met at the cash point/atm who put her in a cab!)

Is Theo...what about Theo?!

- How has Theo mastered the language of sexual abuse? (Episode 6, 25:53)
- Why does Theo insist on all aggressors being called “Bob?”