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**“The only way to avoid No Deal is to vote for a deal,” according to Ruth Davidson  
at the Edinburgh International Book Festival**

“The only way to avoid No Deal is to vote for a deal,” according to Ruth Davidson. The Scottish Conservative leader was speaking today at the Edinburgh International Book Festival about her new book on female empowerment, *Yes She Can*, with former Olympic athlete Katherine Grainger.

“[A] heightened idea of tribalism is involved in politics right now, the politics of identity that’s going on... I’ve been, in whatever space I can, trying to get colleagues on my side of the aisle, colleagues on other sides of the aisle to walk those steps back to the middle, particularly on Brexit...” She said. “I know there are lots of people that didn’t particularly like the deal that Theresa May brought back from the EU, but it’s a deal that had preapproval of the EU, it was on the table. That actually isn’t the most important part of Brexit, the future deal that comes after Brexit is the most important part because that decides on what terms we deal with them as our largest neighbours on our shores.

“And there’s a lot of people now who are howling about the idea about the idea of a No Deal Brexit, but who refused to vote for the deal at any point, knowing that what came after they would have the ability to implement and shape themselves. My colleagues and myself are getting it in the neck from some quarters, from people who have already come out publicly and say it doesn’t actually matter what deal gets brought back to the House of Commons, we’re going to vote it down anyway. And they’re simultaneously saying that that’s terrible and saying, but no deal is the worst thing in the world. So I really do think there that some people that need to catch a check of themselves.

“And if the country is going to leave, if the referendum decision is going to be upheld, there is no perfect deal out there. You have to pass a deal and then work for how it goes forward. And we in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland know this better than anyone - that Brexit won’t be an event, it’ll be a process. It doesn’t start and end on, if it’s the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, that’s the next deadline, then that’s not the end of it. It’s how you then operate with supranational bodies like the EU, with

individual countries within the 27, with countries outside of it, with blocs such as ASEAN and NAFTA and all the rest of it. That's stuff that you work out and that evolves, in the same way that devolution has evolved.

The only way to avoid No Deal is to actually vote for a deal."

Davidson was asked about her future working relationship with Boris Johnson.

"I was taught in the [Territorial Army] that you salute the rank, not the person that wears it." She said. "I am utterly professional about what I do. I genuinely believe that if the Prime Minister does well then the country does well, so I want him to land a deal. Any background that we have is completely irrelevant to looking out for the national interest and I will always endeavour to do that to the best of my ability and for what I think that is. I personally don't think that no deal is in the national interest which is why I'm arguing against it and there's sometimes where some of the clash that's written up comes from.

"And I can absolutely categorically say, 100%, that there is no job in the world that prepares you for being Prime Minister of the country." She added. "I think that most fair minded people will judge Boris Johnson not on what he was like as a journalist or as a Mayor of London or as a Foreign Secretary but they will judge him on what he's like as a Prime Minister, and I will judge him on what he's like as a Prime Minister. And you cannot tell from what's come before, what will come next."

*Yes She Can* covers Davidson's own personal career, and a number of other successful professional women. She says she believes that we've seen an improvement in gender equality since the start of her own working life;

"Lots of these first people are the first or one of a very small number to break through the glass ceiling. I think that there is a responsibility, and loads of women talked about it, that yes they absolutely were focused on what they were trying to achieve and rightly so, but almost every one in there was trying to make it that there was a hand up, that the next person was able to build on what they had achieved."