Title: ‘SPRING’

A big close-up. A middle-aged WOMAN. She is in pain. She wears no make-up.

Another woman speaks, out of vision. We will discover that she is a DOCTOR.

    DOCTOR
    So how long's this been going on for?

    WOMAN
    I don't know.

    DOCTOR
    A few weeks?

    WOMAN
    A long time.

    DOCTOR
    A year?

(Pause)

    WOMAN
    I suppose so.

    DOCTOR
    A whole year? You've taken your time to come and see me, haven't you?

    WOMAN
    You think it's going to stop, don't you?

    DOCTOR
    Right, I'm just going to take your blood pressure. Can you pop your arm on the desk for me?

(The close-up ends. From here on in, the shots vary.)

(The WOMAN puts her arm on the desk.)

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    There you go. Can you straighten it up, and push up your sleeve?

(The WOMAN does so.)

    DOCTOR (CONT'D)
    Are you dozing in the daytime?
WOMAN
Sometimes, so I just need
something to help me sleep.

DOCTOR
I know. How much sleep are you
getting at night?

(She wraps the cloth around the woman's arm.)

WOMAN
I'm not getting any, am I? That's
the problem - that's why I'm
here.

DOCTOR
I understand, sweetheart. Okay...
it's just going to go tight.

(She pumps up the apparatus. The measure rises in the
gauge. Tense, the WOMAN breathes heavily. The DOCTOR
removes the cloth.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Have you got any particular
worries at the moment?

(The WOMAN vaguely shakes her head.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
No financial problems?

WOMAN
No. I dunno what that's got to do
with it.

DOCTOR
What about at home? How are
things with husband?

(The WOMAN doesn't reply. The DOCTOR gets up, moves round
the WOMAN, and stands behind her with her stethoscope. We
see that the DOCTOR is pregnant, and black.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Okay, if you could just lean
forward for me and take a few
deep breaths, in through your
mouth.

(She does so; the DOCTOR listens to her back.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
And again.
(More breathing.)

DOCTOR (CONT’D)
'Ts lovely and clear.

(The DOCTOR returns to her desk.)

DOCTOR (CONT’D)
Have you got any kids?

WOMAN
Yes.

DOCTOR
Are they still at home with you?

WOMAN
Son is. Works with his Father. Daughter's left - only see her when she wants something.

DOCTOR
And how about you? Have you started your menopause?

WOMAN
Yes.

DOCTOR
Everything okay?

WOMAN
(Shrugs. Then - ) So will you give me some sleeping tablets?

DOCTOR
Maybe, but it might not solve your problem.

WOMAN
Give me a night's sleep, though, wouldn't it?

DOCTOR
How much alcohol are you drinking?

WOMAN
I don't drink. My husband drinks.

DOCTOR
Is that a problem?

WOMAN
No.
Are you taking any drugs?
Medication...?

(Shakes her head)

How about coffee? Are you drinking a lot to keep awake?

Coffee - yes.

Tea?

Yes.

Well, we might have to look at that, mightn't we? (Pause.) Okay. Your blood pressure is slightly raised, but I'm not overly concerned about that at the moment. But I do want you to have a blood test, just to check your thyroid. You can make an appointment at reception. Alright?

Yes.

Now... I will give you something to help you sleep, but just enough for a week.

What good's that?

Insomnia isn't a disease. Sleeping tablets won't make it go away. We need to find the cause. Now you're obviously anxious, and a little depressed; so I want you to come back, and speak to our counsellor.

What for?

I think she'd be able to help you.
WOMAN
But you'll give me the
prescription now?

DOCTOR
Yes. But will you see the
counsellor? I think it will do
you some good. You think about it
for a moment.

(The WOMAN looks anxious, as the DOCTOR enters data onto
her computer.)

Pouring rain. A middle-aged couple scuttle out of a
reasonably large Edwardian semi-detached suburban house,
loading gardening equipment into the back of a large Volvo
estate car. They drive off.

An allotment. It has stopped raining. The couple are TOM
and GERRI. He has a beard, straggly hair and spectacles.
She has long hair. Both are informal and alternative in
demeanour and attire.

TOM is turning over soil with a spade. He stops, and joins
GERRI, who is planting.

GERRI
Don't do your back in.

TOM
I know. It doesn't get any
easier. Job for a younger man,
this.

GERRI
Joe used to love it here.

TOM
Did you speak to my son and heir?

GERRI
I left him a message on his
answer-phone. (She plants a
plant.)

TOM
It's going to rain again.
More heavy rain. TOM and GERRI are sitting in their nearby shelter on the allotment, sipping mugs of tea. They share a joke. They look happy and contented.

Clear, bright weather. A train passes a Land-Rover, which drives across a barren piece of wasteland by the River Thames. A motor barge on the water; the cityscape in the distance. The car circles a drilling rig, and stops.

TOM gets out of the passenger seat, wearing a hard hat, a suit and tie, and a yellow safety jacket. He and a young male colleague, who has been driving, walk over to the rig. Two men are laying out a long metal tube on a bench.

TOM (CONT’D)
Alright, then?

WORKER
Alright, boss.

TOM’S COLLEAGUE
What you got? You hit rock, then?

WORKER
Yeah – we just gone through. This is the fourth, so I reckon, what? ... Seventeen-and-a-half, give or take.

TOM’S COLLEAGUE
Seventeen and a half? (To TOM)
It’s got to be a scour hollow.

TOM
Probably.

(The other WORKER joins them.)

TOM’S COLLEAGUE
Alright, Mick?

MICK
Alright?

TOM
Hello.

(MICK helps the first WORKER, who unscrews a small section at one end of the tube.)

TOM (CONT’D)
How long will it take us to get back?
TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Twenty-five, with traffic. Are you hungry?

TOM
I am.

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Good.

FIRST WORKER
There you go.

(He has removed the section. He holds it out to TOM, who scrapes off a small sample of muddy clay with his fingers. He inspect it for a second.)

TOM
(cheerfully) Yes! London clay! Thank you!

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Thanks, Andy - See you!

ANDY
Cheers!

TOM
Ta ta.

(TOM and his colleague get into the car and drive off, as ANDY and MICK get on with the job.)

A large industrial shed. Long tables. Technicians inspecting and logging sample of clay, etc. TOM’S COLLEAGUE unwraps such a sample. He examines a small piece of clay with a magnifier. TOM looks on.

TOM’S COLLEAGUE
Dusting of mica.

TOM
Let's have a look.

(TOM'S COLLEAGUE passes him the sample and the magnifier.)

TOM’S COLLEAGUE
‘Ts quite nice.

(TOM inspects it, and laughs. Warm, enthusiastic.)

TOM
Very nice.
(His COLLEAGUE is breaking off another chunk of earth. TOM points to it.)

TOM (CONT’D)
It’s just a dusting, isn’t it?

TOM’S COLLEAGUE
Yeah.

The Medical Centre. Another small, unsympathetic room. GERRI is counselling JANET, the insomniac from the first scene.

GERRI
What would you say was the happiest moment of your life?

JANET
What d’you mean?

GERRI
Your nicest memory. Have a think.

(JANET sits in silence. Miserable and expressionless. GERRI waits for a while.)

GERRI (CONT’D)
When your children were born? Your wedding day?

JANET
I don’t know.

GERRI
Take your time.

JANET
I can’t remember.

GERRI
Can’t, or won’t?

JANET
Mm?

GERRI
Can’t or won’t remember?

JANET
Don’t know what I’m doing here - I don’t want to come. Don’t want to talk about my family - why should I? None of your business.

(MORE)
JANET (CONT'D)
All I need is a good night’s sleep, and nobody’s helping me.

GERRI
Janet, I want to help you - that’s why we’re here. I know it’s not easy to talk about personal things. Suppose the boot was on the other foot, and someone came to you - say, your daughter, and said “I haven’t been sleeping for months”. What would you say to them?

JANET
Go to the doctor.

GERRI
What else would you say?

JANET
I don’t know.

GERRI
What would you ask her?

JANET
Is she eating alright, or something like that.

(GERRI looks at her for a few moments.)

GERRI
Good. Anything else?

JANET
That all she needed was a couple of months of proper sleep, and then that would sort it out.

GERRI
Sort what out?

JANET
The sleeping.

GERRI
Okay. (She reflects for a moment.) On a scale of one to ten, how happy would you say you are, Janet?

JANET
One.
GERRI
One. (Slight smile.) I think there's room for improvement there, don't you? What is the one thing that would improve your life apart from sleep?

JANET
A different life.

GERRI
A different life. Change is frightening, isn't it?

JANET
Nothing changes.

(Pause.)

A little later. GERRI sees JANET out of the room.

GERRI
I hope to see you next week, Janet. Same time. I'll be here, but it's up to you. No pressure. Bye.

(JANET walks out of the room without saying anything. GERRI sighs, closes the door, and moves back into the room.)

Later still. Outside GERRI’s room. She comes out with a CLIENT, who puts on his cap.

GERRI (CONT’D)
Bye, bye, Sam.

SAM
Bye.

(GERRI shuts her door, and crosses the waiting-room.)

GERRI
Look at you! You look like you're fit to burst.

(She is addressing TANYA, the pregnant doctor we met earlier. They walk along together, GERRI gently touching TANYA’s tummy.)
TANYA
I am fit to burst. Big Boy's wrestling his way down.

GERRI
Well, if he pops out, give me a shout.

TANYA
Sweetheart, I'll do more than shout!

(GERRI laughs and goes into an office. An attractive, middle-aged woman with her hair pinned up and wearing a low-cut dress, is sitting at a computer, surrounded by piles of files. She is wearing reading glasses.)

WOMAN
Hi, Gerri.

GERRI
Hello, Mary

MARY
You're a sight for sore eyes.

GERRI
Can you process these for me? (She is carrying some documents.)

MARY
Oh, well, seeing as it's you...

(She takes the documents.)

GERRI
How are you?

MARY
I'm... snowed under, to be honest. (She takes off her spectacles.) And I've got a headache.

GERRI
Have you seen the doctor? (MARY laughs.) Hello, Gemma!

(A young woman is passing her.)

MARY
I don't suppose you fancy a drink tonight, do you?

GERRI
I'd love one.
MARY
Oh, great - are you sure?

GERRI
I've only got an hour.

MARY
That's alright.

GERRI
Tom's cooking supper.

MARY
Oh, lovely!

GERRI
I'll see you later.

MARY
Yeah... Yeah.

(GERRI goes. MARY reflects for a moment, then resumes work.)

In a busy bar. GERRI and MARY are seated at a table, sharing a bottle of white wine.

MARY (CONT’D)
D’you know, Gerri, I’ve never been with a man who could cook.

GERRI
Haven’t you?

MARY
No. They could do lots of other things. (Laughs.)

GERRI
That doesn’t get you fed.

MARY
Yeah - keeps a girl happy, though. (Giggles.)

GERRI
And you can’t cook.

MARY
No. Well, I can a bit, but it’s not really my thing.

GERRI
No, it’s not!
MARY
Oh - don't remind me about that, Gerri!

(She giggles again. GERRI smiles.)

GERRI
You could put an ad in the paper: “Chef wanted.”

MARY
Yeah. “Chef-stroke-boyfriend required for gorgeous girl” - no: “mature woman, with cat.”
(Laughs.) No - “matur-ish.” We don't want to put 'em off, do we?

(MARY now observes a handsome middle-aged MAN in a suit. He is standing at the bar, alone, drinking a glass of wine.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh, it's really lovely the way you and Tom do everything together.

GERRI
We're very lucky.

MARY
Yeah, you are - but you deserve it: you're both such lovely people.

GERRI
Oops - me halo's slipping!

MARY
Yeah, Saint Gerri. (Chuckles.) No, but I'm really comfortable with where I am in my life, as you know. I've got my lovely little garden flat; I've got a good job; I've got my health, touch wood, I've got my independence. I haven't got anybody telling me what to do. I mean, don't get me wrong, it's not all rosy - I have good days and bad days like everyone else, don't I? But, hey!!

GERRI
Are you going to do something about your garden this year?
MARY
Oh Gerri, no - don't remind me, I'm really guilty about that. I've neglected it, haven't I?

GERRI
Yeah, you have.

MARY
Oh, but yesterday... I was just brushing my teeth, and I looked out the window, and I saw these two little daffodils peeping over the top of the grass. I must get it cut this year.

GERRI
You have to get yourself that lawn-mower, Mary.

MARY
Yeah, I know. Couldn't I just get a man in? It wouldn't cost too much.

GERRI
Hmm. "Gardener-stroke-chef-stroke-boyfriend."

MARY
(Laughing) Yeah. Oh, but no... I don't want to spend too much money at the moment, because I'm going to get myself a little car.

GERRI
Oh, are you?

MARY
Yeah - I've decided, it's about time.

GERRI
It's a big step.

MARY
Yeah, I know - it's exciting, isn't it? I mean, I've got a little bit of money - not a lot, but... enough. But it does mean I'm going to have to cut back on my, you know - shoes, clothes, jewellery, all my little knick-knack things. But that's alright because I've got loads of clothes. I mean, my wardrobe isn't big enough.

(MORE)
In fact I'm not doing anything this weekend, so I'm going to get up really early, sort out all my winter clothes, put 'em into plastic bags and shove 'em under the bed. (She picks up the wine bottle, and aims for GERRI's glass.) Can I top you up?

GERRI
No, I'm going now, Mary.

MARY
Oh, aren't you going to help me finish the bottle?

GERRI
No, really.

MARY
Oh, alright. Well, I think I'm going to stay for a little while.

(She pours herself the rest of the wine, and glances at the MAN at the bar.)

MARY (CONT'D)
How's Joe? Have you heard from him this week?

GERRI
No. But I'm sure he's fine.

MARY
Still not got a girlfriend?

GERRI
I've no idea.

MARY
He must have something on the go, a good-looking boy like him.

(GERRI has put on her cape. She gets up, and kisses MARY.)

GERRI
See you on Thursday.

MARY
Oh...

GERRI
And you're coming for supper on Saturday.

MARY
Oh, lovely. Thank you, Gerri. Give my love to that lovely Tom.
GERRI
I will. You take care.

MARY
Yeah.

(GERRI goes. MARY prepares to flirt with the MAN at the bar, who for a moment glances in her direction. But almost immediately, MARY’s seductive expression melts to horror, as an attractive YOUNG WOMAN with long, blonde hair and a broad smile arrives, and embraces the man. They kiss on the lips, and MARY looks crestfallen.)

GERRI is enjoying her ample, beautiful back garden. She tends to a bush, takes a relaxing breath, and goes into her conservatory, where she sprays a plant or two. Then she picks a leaf, which she sniffs as she enters her expansive, attractive kitchen. She crosses to the stove, where TOM is stirring, He is wearing an apron. She puts her arms round him from behind, and snuggles up.

GERRI
What's for supper?

TOM
Arrabiata. Are you hungry?

GERRI
I'm starving.

(TOM stops stirring, and turns to face her.)

TOM
Hello.

(He kisses her on the lips.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Have a taste.

(He holds out the wooden spoon.)

GERRI
I hope it's not too hot.

TOM
You can never tell with chillies.

(They taste the sauce in turn, GERRI first.)

GERRI
No...
TOM
No?

GERRI
Oh! - it's comin' out me ears!

TOM
Good. Glass of wine?

(GERRI is getting some plates.)

GERRI
No, I've had a couple. Oh, go on -
just a smidgeon.

TOM
That's the spirit.

(He pours some red wine. GERRI sets the plates on the
table.)

A few minutes later. They are sitting at the table, eating.

GERRI
How was your day?

TOM
Good. I was out and about;
getting my hands dirty. How about
you?

GERRI
Disappointing. Pass me the
parsley.

(He does so.)

TOM
No breakthroughs?

GERRI
I had my alcoholic teacher in
again.

TOM
Yeah.

GERRI
He was pissed as a fart.

TOM
(Alused) Really?
GERRI
(Smiling) It was very upsetting, actually.

TOM
How did you handle it?

GERRI
I bought him a double scotch. No, I had to challenge him. I told him it was up to him.

TOM
How did he take that?

GERRI
Well, I don't know. We'll have to see.

TOM
Well, at least he came.

GERRI
Hmm. Have we heard from Joe?

TOM
No. But I haven't checked my emails.

GERRI
I'll ring him later. I'd love to see him.

TOM
He's alright.

(GERRI reflects, maternally.)

An airy room on a busy main street. Traffic noise outside. Twenty or so chairs, arranged in a square. A few people are waiting, This is a community law centre.

JOE enters, a young man of around thirty. He is carrying a wrapped sandwich and a can of Coke. He addresses an elderly MAN, who is with a young WOMAN.

JOE
Mr Gupta?

(MR GUPTA and the WOMAN get up. JOE shakes MR GUPTA’s hand.)

JOE (CONT’D)
Joe Hepple. Nice to meet you.
WOMAN
I just came with him.

JOE
Ah - good. Just follow me this way, please.

(He leads them out of the room.)

JOE (CONT’D)
This way.

An upstairs corridor. They follow him into his tiny, cluttered office.

JOE (CONT’D)
Excuse the mess. You sit there, Mr Gupta (He moves a chair.) And... (to the WOMAN) ... I'll pop you there.

(He closes the door.)

A little later. JOE is sitting at his desk. He has a letter in his hand.

JOE (CONT’D)
Okay, now we've opened all these letters, and I've seen all I need to see for the time being. Obviously, it's a sizeable correspondence, and, understandably, Mr Gupta hasn't exactly been in a position to open them, seeing as he's been in hospital for the past ten weeks. But, you're looking fit and raring to go, Mr Gupta.

(MR GUPTA has not understood any of this, and turns to his friend.)

MR GUPTA
Tieh?

(The WOMAN shakes her head, meaning to say, not to bother. JOE picks up another document.)
WOMAN
Excuse me...

JOE
Mm?

WOMAN
Er, how long will this take?

JOE
Oh, not too long.

WOMAN
Er, it’s, just, I have to get back to work.

JOE
What d’you do?

WOMAN
Er,... restaurant; family business.

JOE
Oh - tasty.

(She isn’t amused.)

JOE (CONT’D)
Okay. Erm, it’s important for Mr Gupta to understand that at this point he is in no danger of being evicted.

(Speaking in Hindustani, the WOMAN explains the situation to a confused MR GUPTA.)

JOE (CONT’D)
Okay? I’m just going to take you briefly through what’s going to happen in Court. Erm... I’ll be representing Mr Gupta on the day. We’ll put the case to the judge, and... (a phone rings) he will agree to adjourn, which will then give us time to sort things out, okay? So, I’ll just... excuse me (He answers the phone.) Hello?

Early on a Saturday evening. MARY puffs on a cigarette, puts it out on the pavement, a scuttles across a busy main road.
Inside TOM and GERRI’s front hall. MARY arrives, and knocks. As GERRI come to the door...

GERRI
I'll get it!

TOM
(elsewhere) Alright!

(GERRI opens the door. MARY is carrying a potted plant.)

GERRI
Hello, Mary!

MARY
Hi, Gerri. It's stopped raining, thank goodness.

GERRI
I know. Welcome!

MARY
(entering) Oh, thank you. I bought you a little present - some thyme.

GERRI
That's lovely!

MARY
It's nothing much.

GERRI
(taking it) Thank you.

MARY
Oh, there he is!

TOM
Hello, love!

(MARY hugs TOM.)

MARY
Hello, Tom. Oh...! Oh, I'm sorry - I just had to have a cigarette, and I know you don't like the smell.

TOM
(Laughing) Don't be daft!

MARY
I'm trying to give up though - aren't I, Gerri?
GERRI
Oh, are you?

MARY
Only, I've just had a bad experience on the tube.

TOM
Are you alright?

GERIFF
What happened?

MARY
There was this man...

GERIFF
What did he do?

MARY
Well, he was lookin' at me. I mean, every time I looked up, he was lookin' at me...

TOM
Oh, dear.

MARY
Yeah, it was a bit unsettling, to be honest.

GERIFF
Well, you're here now.

MARY
Exactly. And I'm very happy to be here with both of you.

(She pulls a bottle of wine out of her bag, and gives it to TOM.)

MARY (CONT'D)
This is for you, Tom.

TOM
Ah!

MARY
It's nothing special.

TOM
(reading the label) Buenos Aires.

MARY
Yeah, because I thought – well, you went there, didn’t you, the two of you? Argentina.
TOM
No, we didn't - no.

GERRI
No.

MARY
Didn't you?

TOM
No.

GERRI
Tom's been to Brazil. Digging his holes.

TOM
Yeah.

MARY
Oh, I'm so stupid sometimes!

TOM
That's alright.

GERRI
That's fine.

MARY
Oh, honestly, (She mimes shooting herself in the head.) Oh, what are you going to do with me, eh? I'm just going to run upstairs - is that alright? I won't be a minute.

(She hurries upstairs. GERRI repeats MARY's shooting-herself-in-the-head gesture. Amused, TOM and GERRI go into the kitchen.)

A bit later, in the kitchen. TOM is chopping vegetables at the table. GERRI is preparing salad. MARY has a glass of white wine.

MARY (CONT’D)
I haven't seen you since Christmas, Tom.

TOM
Really?

(MARY looks at the set table.)
MARY
Oh, it's just the three of us tonight.

GERRI
Yes.

MARY
Oh, I'm surprised.

GERRI
I did tell you.

MARY
Did you?

GERRI
Mm.

TOM
We wanted you all to ourselves, Mary.

MARY
Oh...! Thank you, Tom. That's what all the boys say.

(TOM looks at her.)

MARY (CONT'D)
No, I wasn't sure what to wear. I didn't know if it was going to be one of your lovely big dinner parties, or just us - you know, casual...

(TOM moves to the sink, next to MARY.)

TOM
I think you've got it just about right, Mary.

GERRI
You look lovely.

MARY
Oh, thank you, Gerri. (She yawns)
Oh... sorry

GERRI
Did you have a late night?

MARY
Oh... I stayed up, watching the film. I couldn't wake up this morning. No, but it was lovely, having a lie-in on my day off.
GERRI
We stayed in.

MARY
Did you?

GERRI
We listened to some music.

MARY
Oh...?

TOM
Amongst other things.

(A slightly chilly reaction to this from MARY.)

MARY
I thought Joe might be coming.

TOM
I don't think so.

(TOM collects the chopping board from the table.)

GERRI
He's coming tomorrow.

MARY
Oh, that's a shame. I won't see him. Did Gerri tell you about me getting a car, Tom?

TOM
Yes.

MARY
What d’you think?

TOM
Exciting. What’re you gonna get?

MARY
Well, I dunno.... er, something small and.... red.

TOM
Small and red? Well, that narrows it down.

MARY
Yeah.

GERRI
I hope you're hungry, Mary.
MARY
Oh, I'm starving, Gerri. You know me.

GERRI
We'll have to fatten you up.

MARY
Oh, it's lovely having your dinner cooked for you. You don't really bother when you're by yourself, do you? I don't, anyway.

TOM
You're looking well.

MARY
Oh, thank you, Tom!

GERRI
You're nice and slim.

MARY
Am I? Well, I've always been slim, haven't I?

GERRI
Unlike me. Middle-aged spread. (She pinches her "spare tyre".)

TOM
Shut up! You're perfect - gorgeous in every way. (He kisses her on the cheek.) And you know it!

(Pause. TOM makes salad dressing. GERRI smiles at MARY, who is looking a little bleak. She manages a half-smile, and finishes her wine.)

GERRI
Sit yourself down, Mary. Help yourself to another drink.

(MARY sits at the table. GERRI squeezes TOM's arm.)

GERRI (CONT'D)
How's that dressing coming along?

TOM
As well as can be expected.

(TOM gets on with it. GERRI stirs a pot on the stove. MARY pours herself another drink, and continues to look bleak.)
Later, in the living room. Dark outside. GERRI and MARY are sitting, side by side, on the sofa. TOM is sitting ion a armchair, facing them. All have glasses of wine on the go, but only MARY is fairly drunk.

MARY
I hear you're going to the Emerald Isle again, Tom.

TOM
That's correct. Rent a cottage, take the car.

GERRI
Put the tent in the back.

TOM
And the sleeping-bags. If the weather's nice we might do a bit of camping.

MARY
Oh, no! I wouldn't fancy sleeping in a tent, thank you very much.

TOM
No, I never had you down as one of nature's Girl Guides, Mary.

MARY
No, Tom! But I am always prepared. (Laughs)

GERRI
Yes, but what for?

MARY
For anything, Gerri. You know me! (Laughs)

GERRI
(Chuckling) Yes, I do!

MARY
I'm not going to get a holiday this year. But then, I never do, do I, Gerri? Because I haven't got anyone to go with. It's alright for you two - you've got each other.

GERRI
We're going to the Ring of Kerry.
MARY
The what?

TOM
The Ring of Kerry. It's an area.

GERRI
Tralee, Dingle Bay...

MARY
Oh, lovely - you've been there before, haven't you?

GERRI
That was Donegal.

MARY
Oh.

TOM
The geologist stands on the beach with his back to the sea, and looks at the cliffs.

GERRI
Whilst the geologist's wife stands on the beach with her back to the cliffs, looking at the sea.

(MARY ponders this hazily, then - )

MARY
You see, I can't afford to buy my car and have a holiday. But, if I had more money, then I could do both.

TOM
But when you've got your car, Mary, you'll be able to go wherever you want, very reasonably.

MARY
Exactly, Tom. That's exactly why I'm getting it. You see, I like just taking off and escaping, don't I, Gerri?

GERRI
Mm.

MARY
I feel like I'm being somebody else.
TOM
Really? Who's that, then?

GERRI
Tom!

(TOM grins. GERRI can't conceal a smile.)

MARY
I like to get on the train... But you see, the car is cheaper than the train, isn't it?

GERRI
Not environmentally.

MARY
Oh, what? You mean... (she stamps her feet.) Those are my carbon footprints, Gerri. (Giggles.)

GERRI
Yes, I know.

(MARY laughs uproariously.)

TOM
Financially, cars are cheaper. That's why there's no incentive to go by train.

GERRI
What about the airlines?

TOM
No government wants to increase the duty on aviation fuel.

MARY
(vaguely) No.

TOM
And this government won't invest in the railways, so anything we do is a piss in the ocean.

MARY
Absolutely.

GERRI
And then there's the big corporations, who keep their lights on all night in empty office blocks.
TOM
And we're all expected to do our bit with eco-bulbs.

MARY
I know. Should I stop recycling then, Gerri?

GERRI
No.

TOM
You've got to set an example.

MARY
Yeah.

GERRI
Plant a few tomatoes.

TOM
Or courgettes.

(GERRI laughs quietly.)

MARY
I am very environmentally friendly, actually.

TOM
Are you?

MARY
Yeah. I don't fly. I don't live in a house that's more than I need. I don't cook.

TOM
Other people cook for you, though.

MARY
Who?!

TOM
You get take-aways, don't you?

MARY
That doesn't count. Everybody gets take-aways. You've built whole motorways, Tom. How environmentally friendly is that?

TOM
Exactly!
MARY
Yes! Cars, more cars, more
cars... At least, I'm buying an
old car.

GERRI
Recycled.

MARY
Yeah!

TOM
Yet we're constantly told that
the measure of a thriving economy
is the sale of new cars.

MARY
Yes, but, Tom... If I buy a new
car, that's another car.

TOM
You're absolutely right, Mary.
And would you like some coffee?

(MARY blinks vaguely. Then - )

MARY
No, thank you.

GERRI
I'd like my usual.

In the kitchen, TOM stirs the coffee in the cafetiere, and
waits for it to brew.

Meanwhile, in the living-room, MARY strokes GERRI's arm.

MARY
Are you alright, Gerri?

GERRI
Yes, Mary, I'm fine. How are you?

(MARY reflects, exuding drink and sadness. Then - )

MARY
I'm happy!

GERRI
Good.
MARY
I just wanted to say, that if you ever need to share anything, I'm here for you. I'm a very good listener.

GERRI
Thank you, Mary. But I'm fine.

MARY
Yeah, I know.

(Pause. Then MARY throws her arms tightly around GERRI, who is a little taken aback, though she doesn't show it to MARY.)

GERRI
It's very kind of you, Mary.

(Staying in the clinch, MARY turns her head, so that she and GERRI are now cheek-to-cheek.)

MARY
Oh, Gerri! Everybody needs someone to talk to, don't they?

GERRI
Yes, Mary, they do.

(MARY breaks the embrace.)

MARY
Oh, well... Onwards and upwards!

GERRI
You'd better stay the night.

MARY
No.... no.

GERRI
Well, I think you should.

MARY
(saluting) Alright, Gerri - you're the boss.

GERRI
We'll find you a t-shirt again.

MARY
Will you?
Upstairs, on the landing. GERRI comes out of the bathroom, holding a towel and a new toothbrush.

GERRI
I've found you a toothbrush.

(MARY is sitting on the stairs.)

MARY
I sometimes wonder what he's doing; if he thinks about me - I bet he does.

GERRI
How old was he?

MARY
He'll be sixty-four now.

(TOM is at the top of the stairs.)

TOM
Sixty-four? Blimey, he's older than me!

GERRI
Almost a pensioner.

TOM
He'll be past it now, Mary - give us your hand.

(MARY takes his hand, and he helps her up.)

MARY
Oh.... no, Tom.... he was lovely.

GERRI
Well, we all grow old.

(MARY leans unsteadily on the bannister rail. She lowers her voice.)

MARY
Oh, no, but... he was very, very, sexy Gerri - d'you know what I mean?

TOM
Too much information!

(This amuses GERRI.)

MARY
I bet he regrets it, deep down. I hope he does. (She leans in a doorway.) He was my big love. But he was married.

(MORE)
Well, what can you do, Tom? You can't walk around with a label saying, "Don't fall in love with me, I'm married", can you?

(She has now staggered to Tom at the bathroom door.)

Tom
Some people wear a ring. (He displays his.)

Mary
He didn't. But he wasn't a bad person. He loved me.

Tom
Sounds to me like he was a duplicitous shit.

Gerri
Tom!

(Tom and Gerri exchange a look.)

Mary
D'you think it was my fault, Tom?

Tom
No, I don't, Mary. Honest.

Gerri
It takes two to tango.

(Mary staggers back to Gerri, and holds her hands. Tom raises his eyebrows, and closes the bathroom door behind him.)

Mary
Oh, so you think it was my fault, Gerri?

Gerri
I didn't say that.

Mary
No, I know you didn't, really.

(Now she leans on the doorway of Joe's bedroom.)

Mary (Cont'd)
I blame my big heart.

Gerri
Well, we all have to make choices, don't we?
MARY
Why do I always get it wrong,
Gerri? I mean, look what happened
when I got divorced from that
shit! I let him palm me off with
five thousand nothing pounds. And
what am I left with now? Sod all!
I'm living in a poky rented flat
when I should have my own home at
my age. It's not fair!

(She is fraught. She turns around, staggers into the room,
and collapses onto the bed, face down.)

MARY (CONT‘D)
Bastard!

(GERRI proceeds to put her to bed.)

A little later. TOM and GERRI are sitting up in bed,
reading books. Pause. GERRI closes her book, and takes off
her spectacles.

GERRI
My goodness!

TOM
Mm?

GERRI
She gets worse.

TOM
I know. Desperate.

(GERRI puts away her book and spectacles and turns off her
bedside light.)

GERRI
I feel a bit guilty.

TOM
What?

GERRI
Well, you know.

TOM
No....

(GERRI lies down next to TOM. He puts his arm around her.)

GERRI
No. You're right.
TOM
I don't think I really enjoyed History at school.

GERRI
Didn't you?

TOM
Maybe I did.

TOM (CONT'D)
It's just that the older you get the more relevant it seems. (He puts his book and spectacles away.) To state the bleedin' obvious.

GERRI
We'll be a part of History, soon.

TOM
Exactly.

(GERRI laughs.)

Next morning. Clear, Spring weather. TOM is outside his house. Just as he opens the tail-gate of his car, JOE arrives on his bicycle. He is wearing a cyclist's safety helmet.

TOM (CONT'D)
Aha!

JOE
Aha!

TOM
(funny voice) What are you doing, riding on the pavement, young man?

JOE
(Alighting) I'm breaking the law, officer.

TOM
Ey, up!

JOE
Hiya!

(They embrace for a moment.)
TOM
How long'd it take you?

JOE
About an hour.

TOM
Are you knackered?

JOE
I'm ready for bed.

TOM
Late night?

JOE
Hangover. D'you want a hand?

TOM
Yes, please.

JOE
I'll stick this away.

TOM
Alright.

(As he carries his bike towards the side door of the house, GERRI and MARY appear at the front door. At first, MARY doesn't see JOE.)

MARY
Oh, he's back. That was quick, Tom. Did you get the manure?

TOM
Compost.

MARY
Here's Joe!

JOE
Hi, Mary.

MARY
Hello, Joe. What a surprise.

(JOE kisses MARY on her cheek.)

JOE
Are you alright?

MARY
I'm great. How are you - oh, continental! (JOE has kissed her on the other cheek.) Oh, he's all sweaty! (She strokes JOE's cheek.)
JOE
I've been riding all morning.

MARY
Have you? I like your hat.

GERRI
Aha!

JOE
Aha!

(They hug.)

MARY
Ah, that's right.... never forget to kiss your mum!

JOE
I never do.

MARY
No - you're a good boy, aren't you?

JOE
Yeah.

(GERRI joins TOM at the car.)

MARY
I remember when you were this big. You were a naughty boy.

(JOE unlocks the side door.)

JOE
I still am, from time to time.

MARY
Oh, really?

JOE
I like your coat.

MARY
Oh, thank you. I think I'm a bit over dressed for a Sunday morning - what d'you think?

(She opens her coat briefly.)

JOE
Is that what you wore in bed?

(He puts his bike inside. MARY joins him.)
MARY
I slept in your bed, actually - is that alright?

JOE
As long as you cleaned the sheets!

MARY
No, I didn’t actually - is that a problem?

JOE
We’ll have to wait and see, won’t we?

MARY
Oh, right. Oh, sorry, Tom! I’m in your way.

(TOM is passing her with a bag of compost. MARY follows JOE into the street, giggling.)

MARY (CONT’D)
All these strong men!

(JOE passes her with another bag of compost.)

Look at his muscles. (She feels JOE’s arm.)

GERRI
That’s why we had him!

(MARY giggles. TOM and JOE join the women on the pavement.)

MARY
Alright, well.... I'm off, then.

TOM
You don't want a lift to the station?

MARY
Oh, no, it's alright.

TOM
Are you sure?

MARY
Yeah, I'll be fine. I could do with a walk.

GERRI
Yeah.

MARY
Sorry about.... you know....
GERRI
It's okay.

TOM
It was good to see you.

MARY
Oh, thank you, Tom.

GERRI
Are you alright?

MARY
Yeah; you know... Had a bit of a wild night, Joe. (Pause.) Well, I'd best be off.

(She glances over her shoulder, away from the others, at the horror of the lonely, empty day ahead of her.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh - thanks for saving me that breakfast, Gerri. It was really delicious!

GERRI
You're very welcome, Mary.

MARY
Yeah. It's lovely to see you, Joe. I'll see you soon, I hope - yeah?

JOE
See you soon.

MARY
Yeah, hopefully. (Pause) Well, have a lovely day together, all of you.

TOM
Right. Ta-ta, then.

MARY
Yeah.... bye.

(She walks off.)

MARY (CONT’D)
See you on Tuesday, Gerri.

GERRI
Bye, Mary. Take care!
MARY
(Over her shoulder) Bye. Bye, Joe!

JOE
Bye.

MARY
Bye!

TOM
Bye!

(TOM and JOE unload more bags. After some distance, MARY glances round at them for the last time. Then she disappears.)

GERRI pushes a wheelbarrow through the allotments. Passing a man hoeing, she joins TOM and JOE at their patch, and sets down the barrow.

GERRI
There you go.

JOE
Delicious!

GERRI
Present for you.

(JOE empties the wheelbarrow of compost. TOM is working in a kneeling position.)

JOE
Matt's getting married.

GERRI
Oh, Matthew!

TOM
Oh, is he? Matt with the guitar?

JOE
No, that's Paul.

TOM

GERRI
That's great!

TOM
Have you met the young lady in question?

JOE
I certainly have.
TOM
Is she worthy of him?

JOE
No, they hate each other.

GERRI
You mean, is he worthy of her?

TOM
Oh! Beg your pardon, Mrs Pankhurst!

(GERRI laughs)

TOM (CONT’D)
Where’s the stag-do this time? Buenos Aires?

JOE
No, Dublin.

GERRI
Ooh, lovely.

TOM
Another capital city brought to its knees!

JOE
Well, we'll try and leave it as we find it.

GERRI
When are you going?

JOE
July - the wedding's August.

GERRI
Lovely. I'll make some tea.

(She goes towards the shed. The men continue to work.)

TOM and GERRI sit side by side in their shed. JOE stands.
GERRI pours mugs of tea from a large Thermos flask.

GERRI (CONT’D)
So, when is it going to be your turn?
JOE
A week on Wednesday.

GERI
Oh - you didn't say.

JOE
I didn't want to spoil the surprise.

TOM
I knew.

GERI
Oh, no! I haven't bought a hat!

(Pause. They drink.)

GERI (CONT'D)
Any news? Nobody...?

JOE
No. Still quiet on that front.

(TOM gives GERRI a gently sardonic look.)

GERI
What...?

(They both smile. But JOE gazes reflectively into the distance.)

FADE TO BLACK

Title: ‘SUMMER’

A bright, sunny day. In a train. An overweight, slightly dishevelled, middle-aged man staggers down the carriage, carrying two cans of lager and a bag of potato crisps. His attention is caught briefly by a young woman, who passes him going the other way. Arriving at his window seat, he is obliged to disturb a grumpy, middle-aged woman.

He is KEN.

KEN
Sorry, love. Excuse me.

(The woman gets up for him, and he sits down. Debris from previous food and beer is on the table. He opens a beer, and takes a swig. Then he starts on the crisps.)
TOM and GERRI's front door, from the inside. KEN's figure appears, through the frosted glass. He knocks vigorously. TOM sprints out of the kitchen, followed by GERRI.

TOM
(half-singing) Who's that a-knocking at my door?

(He opens the door.)

KEN
It's only me!

TOM
Bugger off!

KEN
Hello, Tom, mate!

(They hug each other.)

KEN (CONT'D)
Hiya, Gerri, love!

GERRI
Hi, Ken! How are you?

KEN
I'm alright!

(He hugs GERRI.)

GERRI
Oh - crushed ribs!!

KEN
Oh, sorry!

TOM
Give us your bag.

(He takes it.)

KEN
I'm bursting for a pee. I'll just run upstairs - is that alright?

(He goes upstairs, followed by TOM.)

TOM
I'll put it on your bed. You're in Joe's room.
Moments later, TOM goes downstairs.

More moments later... KEN comes into the kitchen, taking off his overcoat.

KEN
Ooh, that's better. I needed that!

TOM
I'll take your coat.

KEN
Thanks, mate.

(TOM hangs the coat up in the hall.)

KEN (CONT’D)
Gerri!!

(He hugs her again.)

GERRI
(laughing) Careful, Ken! Would you like a beer?

KEN
Oh, I'd love one - ta!

(TOM leaps onto KEN’s back, so that KEN is giving him a piggy-back. They rotate exuberantly for a few moments, laughing and whooping, Then KEN puts TOM down. GERRI gives KEN a beer. She and TOM pick up glasses of wine.)

GERRI
Maniacs.

(They all laugh.)

A bit later, at the kitchen table. The three of them are eating supper and drinking wine. KEN also has a beer on the go.

KEN has his jacket off, and his shirt open at the collar, though he still has on his tie, very loosely. He munches his food urgently, grunting.

KEN
It's great, this.
GERRI
Thank you.

TOM
Better?

KEN
I haven't eaten since breakfast.

GERRI
(unconvinced) Haven't you?

KEN
No. It's great to see you both! Cheers!

TOM
Cheers!

GERRI
Cheers!

(They clink glasses. TOM and GERRI chuckle together, gently. KEN gulps down his wine, and returns to his plate.)

GERRI (CONT'D)
So how's your flat, Ken?

KEN
Oh, same old, same old.

GERRI
You employed a cleaner yet?

KEN
If I got a cleaner in there, she'd turn around and walk straight out again.

TOM
You never know - it might give her a purpose in life.

KEN
It's a bit of a mess but it suits me.

GERRI
Yeah.

KEN
Five minutes walk to work. I usually get the bus, but... if I'm late, I have to leg it, if I miss the bus. I stop at the caff, pick up breakfast; I have a croissant if they haven't got any iced buns. Cup of tea. (MORE)
KEN (CONT'D)
I have to smuggle it in. This lad Steve, he's a right fascist.

TOM
That's your boss, isn't it?

KEN
Yeah, my boss. My “supervisor”.

GERRI
Is he still there?

KEN
Oh, yeah. He's only been with us three - no, two years. Thirty-five, looks twelve, treats me like a child. Bloody graduate!

TOM
You're a graduate.

GERRI
We're all graduates, aren't we?

KEN
Oh, yeah. So we are!

GERRI
You forgot. Would you like some salad, Ken?

KEN
No, no, I'm alright - ta.

GERRI
Sure.

KEN
Mm. I mean, you spend nearly forty years trying to get people out of the dole queue and into jobs. What thanks do you get? I'm sick of it!

TOM
At your age you could walk away, couldn't you?

KEN
I dunno...

TOM
You've got a good retirement package; index-linked pension.

KEN
I could’ve walked away two years ago.
TOM
Why didn't you?

GERRI
Well, it's not that easy, is it?

TOM
Isn't it?

GERRI
What would you do with your time
if you retired, Ken?

KEN
Pub. Eat, drink, be merry. I
don't know.

(He takes a large swig of wine. TOM and GERRI exchange
 glances.)

How's Joe?

GERRI
He's fine.

TOM
He's well, yeah.

GERRI
You'll see him on Sunday.

KEN
Oh, great. Has he got a
girlfriend?

GERRI
No, I don't think so.

TOM
Not that we know of

KEN
Who else is coming to the
barbecue?

TOM
Jack and Janey...

GERRI
Tanya, a GP from work.

TOM
Mary.

KEN
Oh, Mary. Is she?

(GERRI looks at TOM.)
TOM
And then, of course, there's
yourself, sir. The guest of
honour!

GERRI
Hooray!

KEN
(Laughing) Oh, I don't know about
that!

(Pause.)

TOM
What else you been up to?

KEN
Oh, nothing much. Oh - oh, no -
hey! Guess where I went, the
other week.

TOM
Where?

KEN
Hull versus Derby.

TOM
(Laughing) Who d'you cheer for?

KEN
Derby, of course!

TOM
Did you?

KEN
I had to keep quiet - I got stuck
with the Hull mob.

TOM
Was there 'owt worth cheering?

KEN
No, it were crap.

TOM
I don't think my brother ever
missed one home game.

KEN
No. Me and me dad used to stand
with him on the terraces.
GERRI
He always used to leave Carl at your mum's on a Saturday afternoon. Do you remember?

KEN
Oh, yeah.

GERRI
You could hear the roar of the crowd from your front room, couldn't you?

TOM
Course you could; it's only three streets away.

KEN
Our house used to shake.

TOM
Ours did. They all did. During the Clough Glory Years, we were at the centre of the footballing universe.

GERRI
You never went!

TOM
I did occasionally. I wasn't manic, like him. *(Indicating KEN.)* I don't think Ronnie can afford to go now, the price of season tickets.

KEN
How is Ronnie? I haven't seen him for years.

TOM
He's seventy now, you know.

KEN
Is he?

GERRI
Carl's forty-one.

KEN
Bloody hell!

TOM
Linda's still working.

GERRI
She's kept him all his life. She's worn out, poor woman.
KEN
Is Carl still the same?

TOM
As far as we know. Very sad.

GERRI
Linda's heartbroken.

TOM
So's Ronnie.

GERRI
He's cut himself off.

KEN
I used to have a drink with Ronnie. When my dad was in the home, I'd go down to Derby. He was always in the pub.

TOM
Yep! That's one of the advantages of being free from the tyranny of regular employment.

KEN
Yeah, he never bought a round.

TOM
Are you accusing my brother of being a mean bastard?

KEN
Yeah, I am!

TOM
You're right, he is!

KEN
I know!

(They all laugh. KEN takes a swig of beer from the can.)

Later. It's now dark. The three are sitting in TOM and GERRI's garden. KEN takes a swig from yet another can of beer. He is smoking a cigarette, and he is drunk.

KEN (CONT'D)
I mean, I... you get to a certain age... I can't go to the places I used to; they don't like old fogies.
TOM
You don't have to go there.

KEN
Yeah, but they're my pubs.

TOM
Not any more, they're not.

KEN
Except they're not like pubs now. They're all poncy bars.

TOM
Exactly. Things change.

KEN
When I started at work we'd all socialise together. On a Friday night everybody would go to the pub for a drink. Go for a curry. But now....

GERRI
It's hard, isn't it?

KEN
I mean, who would I go on holiday with? There's nobody, let's face it! The only time I went on holiday was with Pam... Spain. Nightmare.

TOM
Didn't you go away with Andrea?

GERRI
No, she went off with her sister. You remember.

TOM
Oh, yeah.

KEN
Stood me up, the bitch.

TOM
It leaves a nasty taste, doesn't it?

KEN
Girls in bikinis covered with suntan oil. Boys flexing their muscles on the beach. No, it's not for me.

TOM
(Laughing) Oh, I don't know!
GERRI
(Laughing) Sounds nice. You could try a cultural holiday.

(TOM raises his eyebrows)

KEN
No, I'm not one for culture.

TOM
Pub culture!

KEN
Young people, young people. Everything's for young people! These bars, you know, they're full of young people shouting about nothing.

TOM
I seem to remember you got banned from a number of pubs in Hull for shouting about nothing. When you were a young person.

KEN
(Laughing) Yeah... right. "Ken: we like you. You're a good bloke, you're good on the darts. But if you talk about politics again, you're barred."

(They all laugh.)

KEN (CONT'D)
No, but these kids. They're just bloody noisy.

GERRI
Isle of Wight festival, 1968. We were noisy, weren't we?

TOM
We weren't - he was.

GERRI
(To TOM) You were noisy.

TOM
(To GERRI) You were noisy.

GERRI
I know I was noisy. Remember 'Plastic Penny'?

KEN
Plastic Penny...
GERRI
Where are they now?

TOM
You fancied Plastic Penny.

(GERRI laughs)

TOM (CONT'D)
It's the young person's prerogative to be noisy.

KEN
Yeah, I know, I know. It's all my own fault. I'm not meeting the right people. I'm stuck in a rut.

GERRI
It's not your fault, Ken.

TOM
You are stuck in a rut. That's why you can't face retirement.

KEN
Yeah, I know. (Pause.) I'm dreading getting on that train Sunday night. I always do.

GERRI
Why?

KEN
I know what I'll be thinking. There's nothing for me in Hull anymore. Except my job. Most of my friends have gone.

TOM
Hit you hard when Gordon died, didn't it?

GERRI
And his wife.

TOM
(To GERRI) She gone?

GERRI
(To TOM) Yes!

KEN
Oh, yeah, they're both gone, now. Funnily enough, I was thinking about him on the way down. I looked out the window, somewhere in Lincolnshire.... I saw this fucking tree. It re...

(MORE)
KEN (CONT'D)
(He starts to cry) It reminded me of his funeral.

(He breaks down.)

GERRI
Oh, Ken! Ken, Ken!

(She gets up, puts her arms round him, and cradles him.)

GERRI (CONT'D)
Come on...

KEN
Gerri, I'm sorry.

GERRI
It's alright.

KEN
Sorry...

GERRI
It's alright, don't worry.

KEN
I'm sorry, Tom. I'm sorry.

(TOM looks on, a little helpless and in pain.)

In her bedroom, GERRI looks in the mirror, and combs her long, grey hair.

TOM and KEN have moved to the end of the back garden. TOM sways gently on JOE's old swing, while KEN, who has sobered up a bit, sits near him, smoking a cigarette.

TOM
How're you doin'?

KEN
I feel like shit.

TOM
You look like shit.

(KEN laughs.)
TOM (CONT’D)
Apart from that, how are you doing?

KEN
I still feel like shit.

(TOM laughs.)

TOM
I'll race you to the top.

KEN
What?

TOM
Snake Pass - I'll race you.

KEN
(Laughing) Oh, yeah.

TOM
When was the last time you sat on a bike?

KEN
1896. Penny Farthing.

(TOM laughs.)

TOM
I tell you what. You and me, we'll walk... from Edale to Matlock Bath. Take as long as it takes. Stay in nice pubs along the way. What d'you reckon?

KEN
I tell you what: I'll stay in the pubs, you do the walking.

TOM
Bugger that! You're carrying the bags!

(They both laugh.)

TOM (CONT’D)
How about it? Serious. We'll go in the Autumn.

(Silence)

TOM (CONT’D)
What're we going to do with you, then, eh? You can't go on like this, that's for sure.
The next morning. A bright, Summer’s day. Blue sky. Static clouds. An electric pylon on the distant horizon.

GERRI strolls contentedly through the allotments. She carries a large basket. She arrives at her plot, and stops. She closes her eyes, enjoying the sun and the gentle breeze on her face.

Meanwhile, four men pull their caddies across a golf course - JOE, TOM’s friend JACK (a genial, middle-aged fellow), TOM and KEN. Tall residential tower blocks in the distance.

JACK
So, is it every man for himself, or are we having teams?

JOE
Teams.

TOM
If I may make so bold, I would suggest that the best plays with the worst, Jack.

JOE
Good idea.

TOM
In other words, you're with Ken.

JACK
Thanks. It's me and you, Ken! Is there anything on it?

TOM
Bottle of wine.

JACK
You're on.

Now, under an expansive sky, they have parked their caddies at the first tee. They prepare to play. Jack holds up a coin.
JACK (CONT’D)
Are you ready?

KEN
Yeah.

TOM
Yeah, go on.

(JACK drops the coin.)

JACK
It's you.

(They all laugh.)

TOM
Shall I kick off?

JOE
Yeah, you take the honour.

(TOM gets out his golf club.)

TOM
So, this father and son team.

JOE
The Double Hepple...

TOM
Yes, take on these unknown mavericks...

JACK
That's us, Ken!

KEN
Good luck, Tom!

TOM
And good luck to you, Mo. (He shakes KEN’s hand.) Can I just say what a great pleasure it is to be playing with you once again?

JOE
Yeah, yeah. Watch and learn, Ken.

JACK
There's wine on it.

TOM
Right. (He places his ball.) Off we go.
(He prepares to tee off. He has a practice swing. They all watch him. Suddenly, just as he is about to hit the ball, KEN does a very loud mock sneeze, putting his handkerchief to his nose. He roars with laughter and runs off. TOM drops his club, and runs after him, mock-hitting him as he goes.)

    TOM (CONT'D)
    I knew it! I knew you were going to do that! All my life I've had to put up with this nonsense from you, and I'm not going to have it any longer!

(They disappear over the horizon. JACK takes a shot instead.)

A bit later. KEN is urinating behind a bush.

    JOE
    Don't scare the wildlife, Ken!

    TOM
    How many times a night do you go?

    KEN
    (emerging) I lose count.

    JACK
    You've got to get it sorted out, Ken.

    TOM
    Yeah.

(KEN joins the others, who are playing at the base of an enormous electricity pylon. JACK tees off.)

    JACK
    Oh! What a beauty!

    TOM
    Lovely!

    JACK
    (To KEN) Good shot, partner!

    KEN
    Oh, yeah - sorry. Good shot, Jack!

    JACK
    Thank you.

(TOM puts his arm round KEN.)
TOM
You alright?

KEN
(Out of breath) Yeah.

(JOE prepares his ball.)

Later. Three long shadows on the putting green - JOE's, TOM's and JACK's. We only see their feet.

JACK
You want it out, Joe?

JOE
Yep.

(JACK takes the flag out of the hole.)

TOM
Good luck, partner.

JOE
It's all down to this.

(He puts the ball. It proceeds directly towards the hole...)

JOE (CONT'D)
Looks good...

(The ball drops into the hole. They all roar with delight. We see the shadow of TOM shaking JOE's hand.)

Now a small, old red car drives erratically down TOM and GERRI's street. MARY is at the wheel. She parks clumsily, half on the kerb. She gets out, with her bag and a bottle of wine. She runs to TOM and GERRI's front door. She knocks, but gets no reply. She is agitated. She adjusts her hair and her knickers. Then she suddenly realises something, and rushes through the side entrance, and into the back garden.

MARY
Gerri! Tom!

TOM
Ha! Here she is!
GERRI
Hello, Mary!

(Grouped round a garden table near a barbecue are TOM, GERRI, KEN, JACK and TANYA. GERRI is holding TANYA’s baby. The table displays the remains of a meal. TOM is wearing shorts and his apron. MARY joins them excitedly.)

MARY
Sorry I’m so late!

TOM
What happened?

MARY
It’s taken me three hours to get here. I left home at two. I had to ask a policeman in the end. I got so lost.

GERRI
You got lost?

MARY
Yeah, I’m really sorry.

GERRI
You’ve been here loads of times.

MARY
I know.

GERRI
You know the way.

MARY
Yeah, but I came in my car, Gerri. Oh, God!

TANYA
What’s happened?

MARY
Oh, I’m so stupid! Why do I spoil everything? I wanted it to be a surprise.

TOM
You bought a car?

MARY
Yeah.

JOE
God help us.
MARY
I got it ever so cheap. I was really chuffed with myself, because they wanted seven hundred but I offered six hundred; but we settled at six-fifty. But they were a really nice couple of guys, though. I think they were brothers. One of them had a gold tooth.

TOM
Did he?

MARY
Yeah. But, they wanted cash. So I had to go to the cash point on Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. So, I couldn't collect it till after work on Friday. But they rang on Friday morning to find out what time I was going to go round with the money, and had I sorted out the insurance? Well, that hadn't even crossed my mind! So, I spent the whole of my lunch break on Friday sorting that out... And it was really expensive because I haven't driven since 1984. But I didn't tell you on Thursday, Gerri, because I knew I was coming here today, and I wanted to surprise you all.

TOM
Well, it is a surprise. Shall I take that from you? (MARY is still clutching the wine.)

MARY
Yeah - thanks, Tom.

TOM
Thank you.

MARY
(Giggling) Oh, Tom.... sorry.

(She gives him a hug.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Can I have a little glass, please?

TOM
Are you sure.
MARY
Yeah.

GERRI
You shouldn't drive if you're drinking, Mary.

MARY
Yeah - I know, Gerri. But, you're allowed a couple of glasses, aren't you, Tanya?

TANYA
Small ones.

MARY
Yeah - Yeah, is that alright, Tom?

TOM
Yeah.

(He goes off into the house. MARY giggles.)

MARY
Hi, Gerri. (She kisses GERRI.) I'm really sorry.

GERRI
Oh, don't be so daft.

MARY
Hi, Tanya. (She kisses TANYA.)

TANYA
Hello!

MARY
Oh, we really miss you at work, don't we, Gerri?

TANYA
Sweetheart!

MARY
When you coming back from maternity leave?

TANYA
Give us a chance!

(MARY laughs uproariously, and goes to JOE. She hugs him tightly.)

MARY
Hi, Joe!
JOE
Hi.

MARY
(Tighter still) Oh, it's really lovely to see you.

JOE
You, too.

(MARY disengages herself from JOE.)

MARY
Hi, Ken.

(KEN moves towards her.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Are you alright?

KEN
Yeah...

(But MARY moves away.)

JOE
Come and sit down, Mary.

GERRI
Have a seat, Mary.

(MARY moves round the table.)

MARY
Is anyone sitting here?

TANYA
No.

GERRI
No.

(MARY sits at the table next to JACK.)

MARY
Oh, this is lovely. Hiya, Jack!

JACK
I thought you were going to miss me out, Mary!

MARY
Oh, sorry.

(She kisses him on the cheek.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Where's Janey?
JACK
Oh, she's a bit under the weather this afternoon.

MARY
Oh, I'm sorry to hear that; I'm starving. Oh - the baby!

TANYA
Oh yeah - the baby!

MARY
I'm sorry, Tanya.

TANYA
That's alright.

(MARY leans over the baby.)

MARY
Hello, little Isaac.

TANYA
Say hello. Don't mind the funny lady!

MARY
(Giggling) I'm sorry. I didn't recognise him. Oh, he's asleep. Oh, hasn't he grown? He's got ever so big.

TANYA
They do that.

(TOM has returned. He gives MARY a glass of white wine.)

TOM
Here you are.

MARY
Oh, thanks, Tom.

(MARY takes a long swig of wine. GERRI gets up and gives ISAAC to TANYA. MARY returns to the table.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh, that's better.

GERRI
We've saved you some food, Mary. I hope it's still warm.

(She takes a cloth off a bowl of food.)

MARY
Oh, thanks, Gerri. Oh, yeah, that'll be fine.
(She helps herself to some meat.)

TOM
I'll do you some fresh, if you like.

MARY
Oh, no, Tom. Don't worry about me.

(TOM sits down. Everybody is now seated, except KEN, who is still hovering.)

JOE
So you didn't get arrested then, Mary?

MARY
No I didn't, Joe. He was very kind to me, actually.

JACK
What cc is your car?

MARY
What d'you mean?

JACK
How big's the engine?

MARY
Oh I don't know... It's about this big, I think.

(She demonstrates the size of her engine with her hands. Loud amusement from all. She looks perplexed. She giggles.)

MARY (CONT’D)
What's so funny?

GERRI
Don't be cruel!

TOM
He means, how powerful is it, Mary. How many cubic centimetres is it?

JOE
You should know that.

JACK
On the back, there's numbers, like one-point-six, or one-point-nine.
MARY TO ALL:
Oh yeah. I know, yeah. Well, that's boys' stuff, isn't it?

TANYA
It's not important.

MARY
No, Tanya. I think I'm going to have a cigarette before I eat this.

JACK
(getting up) Excuse me - I'll get out of your way.

GERRI
(getting up) Shall we take Isaac over there?

TANYA
(getting up) Okay.

MARY
Oh, I thought you wouldn't mind, cos we're outside.

GERRI
No, we don't, Mary. You carry on.

(TOM and JOE get up.)

TOM
You're alright - you're alright.

MARY
Yeah.

TANYA
It's okay - I fancy a swing.

(MARY giggles, and gets out a cigarette. KEN joins her. His t-shirt reads “Less thinking - more drinking.”)

KEN
Have one of these, Mary.

(He offers a cigarette.)

MARY
Oh, no, it's alright. I've got my own, thank you.

(She starts to light her cigarette, but KEN beats her to it with his lighter.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh. Thanks.
(She isn't enthusiastic.)

KEN
I'll have a smoke with you.

(He sits next to her. She moves away from him a little.)

MARY
Well, I don't really smoke, normally... just the occasional one or two.

(They both have a drag. Mary gulps some wine. Pause.)

KEN
How're you doing?

MARY
Yeah, I'm... I'm really well, thanks, Ken. (Another gulp of wine.)

KEN
Still on your own, are you?

MARY
Yeah, I am, and I like it like that - you know?

KEN
You're like me.

(An embarrassed silence. They both take drags on their cigarettes. KEN sips his beer. Pause.)

Meanwhile, TANYA sits on the garden swing, while TOM stands beside her, holding ISAAC, who is still asleep. During this scene the camera slowly tracks across TANYA and TOM, ending of GERRI and JACK.

TOM
He's good.

TANYA
He's great. He's a hungry bugger.

TOM
Is he?

TANYA
Just like his dad.
TOM
Is he a good dad?

TANYA
Yeah.

TOM
Is he a nappy changer?

TANYA
Ish.

TOM
I expect you're too capable.

TANYA
Oh, I am.

TOM
Like Gerri was.

GERRI
Like Gerri was what?

(ISAAC whimpers a little.)

TOM
(To GERRI) Mind your own business.

TANYA
We're talking about you, not to you.

(GERRI laughs)

JACK
Hey, thanks for popping around on Friday. Janey really appreciated it.

GERRI
How is she?

JACK
Not good.

GERRI
No.

JACK
She’s exhausted all the time, just getting up and down the stairs - knocks her out.

GERRI
I noticed.
JACK
And, you know, she could do with losing a few pounds, but she's not getting any exercise, so...

GERRI
How are you doing?

JACK
Oh, I'm alright. We stay cheerful, you know? We don't let things get us down.

GERRI
That's the spirit.

(Pause. GERRI sips her wine.)

The kitchen. MARY and KEN are at the fridge. MARY is pouring herself some wine. KEN tries to do it for her.

MARY
No, it's alright, Ken. I can pour my own wine, thank you very much.

(KEN lets go of the bottle.)

KEN
Sorry.

MARY
Look at the food in this fridge. (She closes it.) I haven't got anything in mine. I'll see you later, alright?

(MARY rushes off. KEN looks helpless and sad.)

JOE and GERRI are sitting on the garden bench.

JOE
Here she comes.

MARY
Can I come in the middle?

GERRI
Course you can.
(MARY sits.)

MARY
Never come between a mother and her son. (Laughs) Oh, this is my second one, Gerri.

JOE
Are you sure?

MARY
Yeah; and then that's it. (She takes a mouthful.)

GERRI
This could be the making of you, Mary.

MARY
Yeah. I think so, Gerri. I mean, just driving here today, I felt like a whole person...

GERRI
Did you?

MARY
Yeah, a free spirit. I mean, even though the journey was a complete nightmare from beginning to end - it was awful, people were getting so cross with me. D'you know what I mean, Joe? It's a lovely little car. I want you to come out and see it later. I feel really good behind the wheel - really special. You looked so lovely holding that baby, Gerri.

GERRI
He's delightful.

MARY
I expect you're looking forward to being a grandmother, aren't you?

GERRI
Hmm... you should ask my son about that.

JOE
It's got nothing to do with me.
MARY
(Laughing) He's great, isn't he?
You should come out and have a
drink with us some time, me and
your mum.

JOE
Yeah?

MARY
Yeah, why not? We often go, don't
we, Gerri?

GERRI
Occasionally, yes.

JOE
Yeah, I know you do.

MARY
Yeah, yeah. Or it doesn't even
have to be your mum - it could be
just us.

JOE
Just you and me?

MARY
Yeah, well we've known each other
a while, haven't we? We're old
friends, aren't we?

GERRI
Could you get me a refill, Joe?

JOE
(getting up) Yes, Mummy.

GERRI
Thank you.

(MARY laughs uproariously. As JOE crosses the garden to go
into the house, he stops for a moment to speak to TANYA,
who is changing ISAAC's nappy. As he goes into the
conservatory, KEN waddles out, holding a glass and a wine
bottle.)

MARY
Oh, here comes Ken.

(TOM comes out of the conservatory, overtaking KEN
quickly.)

TOM
Everything alright?
TANYA
Yes.

(TOM picks up a bottle of sauce from the barbecue, and returns to the house.)

TOM
He's a good lad.

TANYA
Yes.

(KEN ambles towards TANYA.)

MARY
He could be quite good looking if he wanted to.

(KEN and TANYA chat. We see all this from a distance, i.e. from GERRI's and MARY's point of view.)

MARY (CONT'D)
He should lose a couple of stone, shouldn't he?

GERRI
He was a good looking man when he was young.

MARY
Was he?

GERRI
Mm. He's got a good heart.

(They watch him. Then GERRI turns to MARY.)

GERRI (CONT'D)
Life's not always kind, is it?

MARY
No, it isn't, Gerri.

(She reflects on this for a few moments. KEN and TANYA chat.)

MARY (CONT'D)
I don't mind the grey hair; I think that can look quite distinguished on a man of his age, but... (she shudders) ... you know.

(GERRI looks at MARY for a moment, then looks away. MARY is unsure as to GERRI's thoughts. She reflects again.)
In front of the house. JACK leaves. TOM stands on his doorstep, his hands in his pockets. He is still wearing his apron.

TOM
I'll give you a ring in the week.

JACK
We'll have a proper game next time.

TOM
Yeah. Ta-ta.

JACK
See yer.

(He goes. TOM glances up and down the street, then goes inside, closing the door. A dog barks in the distance.)

JOE crosses the back garden, and joins MARY, who is sitting on the steps of a wooden cabin at the far end. She still has her wine glass.

MARY
Hi, Joe.

JOE
Hi.

MARY
Have you come back to me?

JOE
I have.

MARY
They all come back in the end.

JOE
Do they?

MARY
In my nightmares.

JOE
Oh, it's as bad as that, is it?

MARY
Oh, let's not open that can of worms.
JOE
No, let's leave that closed.

MARY
Not today, anyway.

(She strokes his arm.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh, how are you, Joe? Is life treating you kind?

JOE TO MARY:
Can't complain.

MARY
Really?

JOE
Yes.

MARY
Nothing you want to share with me?

JOE
No, I don't think so.

MARY
Because you know that you can come and talk to me... any time you like.

JOE
Well, I'll come and find you if I need you.

MARY
Yeah; yeah. I like to feel that I'm always there for you.

JOE
Thanks, Mary. How are you?

(MARY finishes her wine.)

MARY
(introspective) Yeah, I'm alright... (suddenly sparkling) No, I'm great, actually!

JOE
Well, you look well.

MARY
Do I? Oh, thank you. (Laughs) I suddenly feel really liberated.
JOE
Well, you're a free spirit now, aren't you?

MARY
I know!

JOE
You're your own woman.

(She laughs)

JOE (CONT'D)
The world's your oyster.

MARY
It's so exciting, isn't it? I feel like Thelma and Louise. This little car is going to change my life.

JOE
Well, let's hope so.

MARY
I do feel a bit guilty, though. But at the end of the day.... so what? It's my little present to me.

JOE
That's fair enough.

MARY
Yeah, because if I don't treat myself, nobody else is going to, are they?

JOE
What are you going to call this car?

MARY
Ooh, I don't know. Why, do you give names to things?

JOE
I've got names for everything.

MARY
(Giggling) Really? Like what?

JOE
Well, my nose is called Roger...

MARY
Oh, you mean... your body parts?
JOE
Yeah, I'm not going to introduce you to everyone, though.

MARY
(Laughing) What, not even little Percy?

JOE
Oh, you've already met my knee, then?

(MARY laughs)

MARY
Oh, Joe - we must go out and have a drink one night. We have such a laugh.

JOE
Yeah, we do.

MARY
You see, the thing about you and me is... that we've always just sort of clicked, haven't we?

JOE
Yeah.

(Pause.)

MARY
It's nice when that happens, isn't it?

(Pause. JOE nods imperceptibly. MARY glances up at the cabin.)

MARY (CONT’D)
D’you remember when you showed me your little box?

JOE
Yes.

MARY
You wouldn't tell me what was in it

JOE
I'm still not gonna tell you.

MARY
I know!

JOE
What?
MARY
(Giggling) I'm not telling you.

(She climbs the steps of the cabin, and opens the upper barn door.)

MARY (CONT’D)
I still think about that. We had a barbecue that day, didn't we? Oh, it still smells the same. It's messy, isn't it? Your kids'll will enjoy playing in here, won't they? One day.

(Pause. She closes the door.)

MARY (CONT’D)
So, is there anyone special in your life at the moment, Joe?

JOE
No.

(MARY comes down the steps.)

MARY
Oh, good. No - what I mean is, that's alright, you're comfortable with that, aren't you?

JOE
Am I?

MARY
Well, the thing is, Joe, you're young. You still want to be out there, don't you?

JOE
What, sewing my wild oats?

MARY
Well, yeah. Live life while you can. Don't think about tomorrow.

JOE
A lot of my friends are getting married.

MARY
Oh, but... Yeah, you wanna be careful, Joe, because... See, I got married in my twenties, and granted, he was the wrong man, but I was too young - I couldn't handle it.

(MORE)
MARY (CONT’D)
But when I was in my thirties, I
met the right man, and I was
mature, I was ready for it.
(Pause.) I mean he left me,
but... what can you do?

JOE
It's never too late, Mary.

MARY
Oh, no, I know it isn't, Joe...
and you know me - I'm very much a
glass-half-full kind of girl. But
it's tricky, because... I meet
these older men who want somebody
younger, and that's great,
because I fit the bill. But...
when they find out that... you
know, I'm not as young as they
thought, they don't want to know.
My looks work against me. How old
do you think I look, Joe?

JOE
Sixty...? Seventy...?

(A brief moment of horror, then she realises.)

MARY
Oh, stop it!

(They laugh. But the laughter fades away. Pause.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh, it's alright - you don't have
to answer that. So, when are we
going to have this drink, then?

JOE
Oh, I don't know - I'll have to
check my diary.

MARY
Yeah, you do that. Give me a
call.

JOE
I will.

MARY
Promise.

JOE
I promise.

(Pause. JOE looks away, In these few moment, we see in
MARY’s face a multitude of painful thoughts and emotions.)
KEN is standing in the kitchen, by the hall door. He is holding a glass of red wine and the bottle. TOM comes in from the hall.

TOM
Hello, mate. Got to get your train - we should get cracking. I'll run you to the station.

GERRI
(entering) You've had too much to drink, Tom.

TOM
(taking off his apron) No, I haven't!

GERRI
I think you have.

TOM
I'm alright.

GERRI
We can get him a mini-cab.

KEN
No, I'll be fine on the tube.

MARY
(entering) Oh no, you don't want to get a mini cab.

TOM
No, it might take twenty minutes to turn up. We haven't got time.

MARY
I had a really bad experience in a mini-cab once.

(Enter JOE.)

GERRI
You're going on the tube, aren't you, Joe?

JOE
Of course.

MARY
Oh, no - don't go on the tube, Joe. I can give you a lift - you can be my navigator.
JOE
Ooh, that sounds fun.

MARY
Yeah.

TOM
You can give them both a lift. You're all going in the same direction.

GERRI
I'm not sure Mary can manage that.

MARY
Of course I can, Gerri. (She looks at KEN) Oh, I don't know...

KEN
I'll be fine on the tube - honest.

JOE
(putting on his coat) It's a great idea.

MARY
I don't know how to get to King's Cross, though.

JOE
I do. We can all go together. (He goes out to the hall)

TOM
That's great. Is that alright with you, Mary?

MARY
Yeah, of course it is, Tom. It'll be good practice for me. I'm gonna run upstairs, before we go on the journey. (She goes)

GERRI
I'm not sure about this.

JOE
(returning) It'll be fine.

KEN
I'd better pack me bag.

(He follows JOE out of the room)

GERRI
Tom!
TOM
What?

(GERRI laughs)

In the street. MARY leads them out to the car.

MARY
What d’you think, Tom?

TOM
Well, it's small and red. It's what you asked for.

JOE
What’ve you done, Mary?!

(MARY rushes excitedly round to the driver’s door.)

MARY
It's great, isn't it?

TOM
Nice bit of parking, Mary!

(MARY giggles then - )

MARY
Oh - ! Oh, God - I didn't lock it! It's a good job it didn't get pinched, isn't it? (She gets into the car)

TOM
By the way, Mary, it's a one-point-four.

MARY
(Giggling) Oh - thanks, Tom!

TOM
Well, you must come again. Now you don't know the way.

(KEN starts to get into the car, but TOM stops him, and gives him a hug. Then KEN hugs GERRI. As he gets into the car, JOE hugs GERRI.)

MARY’s car races through London’s busy traffic.
In the car. JOE is in the front, KEN behind.

MARY
Oh, God, Joe. What am I going to do without you?

JOE
You'll be fine.

MARY
Can't you stay in the car just till we get to King's Cross?

KEN
We'll be alright, Mary.

MARY
Ken, what are you talking about? You don't even know London!!

JOE
It'll be sign-posted.

MARY
Oh, it's so lovely having you sitting next to me, Joe. Telling me where to go and what to do.

JOE
It's been a pleasure, Mary.

MARY
Oh, please! I'll take you anywhere you want. I'll take you home, if you like!

JOE
Just here'll do.

MARY
Oh, God, alright - let me pull in.

(She stops the car.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Oh... bye then.

(She kisses JOE.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Lovely to see you. Don't forget to give me a ring, will you?
JOE
No, I won't.

KEN
Bye, Joe.

JOE
Yeah, take care.

(JOE and KEN shake hands.)

KEN
See you soon.

JOE
Look after yourself.

MARY
Oh - Joe, where do I go?

JOE
Straight ahead, left round the one-way system.

MARY
Yeah, okay. Oh, bye then... Bye.

(JOE gets out.)

KEN
I'll get in the front.

(He proceeds to do so.)

MARY
Oh, no, Ken. We haven't got time for this!

(He pushes the front seat forwards.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, for God's sake!

(He gets into the front, and closes the door.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, no need to slam the door!

The car pulls up outside King's Cross Station.

MARY (CONT'D)
Better hurry up.
KEN
Yeah, I'll run.

MARY
Yeah. See you soon, then.

KEN
Good bye, Mary.

MARY
Bye.

(He leans towards her.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Bye, Ken.

(She proffers her cheek, and he kisses it. Then he puts his arm round her.)

KEN
I like you, Mary.

MARY
No, Ken!

KEN
Can I phone you?

MARY
No.

KEN
Just for a chat.

MARY
No, you can't!

KEN
I could come down and see you.

MARY
Can you take your hand off of me please, Ken?

(He removes it.)

KEN
Sorry.

MARY
Look, I'm gonna have to be honest with you. I just don't have those kind of feelings for you, Ken - I'm really sorry.

KEN
Right.
(He takes his bag from the back seat, accidentally hitting her with it - which he doesn’t notice.)

MARY
Oh.

KEN
Sorry, I got carried away. I didn't mean to.

MARY
It's alright. But hurry up, your train's going in a minute.

KEN
Thanks for the lift.

MARY
Yeah, alright. Bye.

(He gets out, and rushes off.)

MARY (CONT’D)
God Almighty!

(She reverses erratically, confusing an unfortunate young man who is trying to cross the road behind her. The car drives off, making unhealthy noises.)

Under the Summer sky, KEN's train races back to Hull.

FADE TO BLACK

Title: ‘AUTUMN’

The allotment, A crisp, Autumn day. Bright sunshine. TOM is digging up pumpkins. GERRI is picking tomatoes.

Outside the house. TOM takes a box containing their produce from the back of the car, and follows as GERRI, carrying her green wellies, unlocks the front door, and enters.

GERRI
I'll put the kettle on.
TOM
The sooner the better!

(TOM walks past the living-room doorway.)

TOM (CONT’D)
Oh!!

JOE
Ahh!!

(He is lying on the sofa, a book open in his hand. They laugh.)

TOM
What’re you doing here, you daft bugger?!

(He puts the box in the hall. JOE gets up and hugs him.)

JOE
I've come to surprise you.

(TOM goes into the room.)

TOM
You certainly did that.

GERRI
(entering) It's lovely to see you.

(She hugs JOE.)

TOM
Oh!!

GERRI
Uh?!!

(A young woman is behind the door.)

WOMAN
Hello!! Sorry! He made me hide behind the door.

(Much amusement all round.)

GERRI
You frightened the life out of me!

TOM
So who's this, then?

JOE
Mum, Dad - this is Katie.
KATIE
Hello!

JOE
This is Tom, and Gerri.

KATIE
Tom and Gerri! That's brilliant!

TOM
Yeah, well... we've learnt to live with it over the years.

(He puts an arm around GERRI.)

TOM (CONT’D)
So what's your name again?

KATIE/ JOE
Katie.

TOM
Katie.

JOE
So, have you been at the allotment?

GERRI
Yes.

TOM
Yeah. Gathering the last of the season's harvest...

GERRI
We've brought back some lovely tomatoes - haven't we?

TOM
Yeah.

KATIE
Sounds gorgeous.

TOM
We were just going to have a sandwich...

GERRI
Are you both hungry?

KATIE
I'm starving.

JOE
She's starving.
GERRI
I'll just go and change.

(She goes out.)

TOM
Just get out of this filthy clobber.

(He follows GERRI, who calls -)

GERRI
You go on through, Joe!

JOE
Alright.

(JOE and KATIE proceed towards the kitchen. They kiss. Then he squeezes her bottom.)

In the kitchen. GERRI is putting flowers into a vase.

KATIE
This is a lovely big kitchen, isn't it?

JOE
(ironic) It's gigantic.

KATIE
(humorous) Shut up!

(She gives JOE a loving squeeze. TOM takes food from the fridge and puts it on the table.)

GERRI
Thank you for the flowers, Katie.

KATIE
Glad you like them.

GERRI
They're lovely.

KATIE
Oh, they're alright.

GERRI
Sit yourself down.

KATIE
Thank you.

(KATIE and JOE sit at the table.)
TOM
So how did you two meet?

JOE
Our eyes met across a crowded bar.

KATIE
We'd both been stood up by our dates.

TOM
Ah, the bonding of the jilted.

JOE
Something like that.

KATIE
Pretty much.

GERRI
When was this?

KATIE
Oh, about three months ago, wasn't it?

JOE
Yeah.

(TOM continues to set the table.)

GERRI
You never told us.

TOM
Master of discretion. I didn't know he had it in him.

GERRI
My enigmatic son.

JOE
You know me!

TOM
Must be important.

KATIE
Oh, he's a dark horse.

JOE
I wanted to keep you a secret.

KATIE
Your son's a weirdo!
GERRI
Yes, we know. He's having treatment.

(TOM and GERRI sit at the table.)

TOM
Help yourself. Tuck in. Whatever you want.

KATIE
Thank you. (To JOE) My mum and dad know all about you.

JOE
Do they, now?

TOM
And what do they do, Katie?

KATIE
Oh, my dad's a postman, and my mum works on a make-up counter.

TOM
Oh, yeah?

GERRI
And what do you work at, Katie?

KATIE
I'm an occupational therapist.

GERRI
Oh, are you? Where do you work?

KATIE
At the Royal Free.

GERRI
Oh, that's a great hospital.

KATIE
It's pretty good.

GERRI
Do you specialise?

KATIE
Yeah. Care of the elderly, and stroke rehab.

TOM
What's straight rehab?

JOE
(Laughing) Stroke rehab!
GERRI
You are going deaf.

TOM
Oh, stroke rehab - I thought you said, “straight rehab”.

KATIE
What's straight rehab? What, for gay men who are on the turn?

TOM
For straight men, who've tried being gay, but want to be rehabilitated into being straight.

(JOE and KATIE laugh.)

KATIE
Joe tells me you're a counsellor, Gerri.

GERRI
Yes, I am, for my sins.

KATIE
But it's great to come home at the end of the day and feel like you've made a contribution, isn't it?

GERRI
Yes, of course.

TOM
Or not, as the case may be.

KATIE
(To TOM) Oh, I'm sure you contribute!

TOM
I'm not talking about me. I'm talking about you lot in the caring professions. I don't care.

JOE
We know!

GERRI
Hard man.

KATIE
And I know you're a geologist, Tom. But what exactly do you do?
Ah, yes. Well, strictly speaking, I'm actually an engineering geologist, which means that I -

He digs holes.

I investigate...

You dig holes!

Alright, I dig holes!

(Everybody laughs)

That's just calling a spade a spade, isn't it?

I always call it a shovel.

You call it a fork. I call it a trailer-mounted tripod cable percussive boring unit.

And that's why I love him.

No, I investigate the ground beneath our feet, to test the feasibility of various engineering and building projects.

Oh, it sounds amazing. What are you working on at the moment?

Ah, yes. Well, right now the main project is an eight-metre diameter tunnel, which is going to alleviate the pressure on London's Victorian sewage system.

Blimey! Eight metres! That's big!
Tom
Oh, yeah. And it'll follow the path of the Thames for twenty miles, up to eighty metres under ground.

Joe
And that's just for this household.

(Katie laughs)

Tom
So, it's quite a big number. But I'm not doing it on my own. There's a few of us. And it won't be finished till after I'm dead.

Katie
Oh no! You'd better get a move on!

(They all laugh.)

Tom
Help yourself. Anything you want. D'you want some ham?

Katie
Oh, no thanks. I'm a veggie, actually.

Tom
Are you?

Katie
Mm. This cheese is gorgeous, though. Thank you.

Gerril
Help yourself.

Katie
Thank you.

Joe
What you got planned later?

Tom
Ah, yes... We're having a visitation.

Joe
Sounds ominous.

Gerril
Mary's coming for tea.
JOE
Oh, I was right.

KATIE
Who's Mary?

GERRI
She's a friend from work.

KATIE
Oh, right.

TOM
Yes, she's er... Hmm, yes.

JOE
She's something else.

KATIE
I won't ask.

(KATIE laughs.)

A little later. JOE opens the front door to reveal MARY.

JOE
(singing) Ta-da!!

MARY
Oh, Joe! How lovely to see you!

(She comes in and throws her arms round him.)

MARY (CONT’D)
This is a surprise. How are you?

(TOM joins them.)

JOE
I'm good.

MARY
Oh, you look great!

JOE
So do you.

MARY
Oh, thank you!

(She laughs, and hugs him again.)
TOM
Hello, Mary! I'm Tom, I'm his father, I live here.

MARY
Oh, Tom! My two favourite men.

(She hugs TOM.)

JOE
In you go.

(MARY takes JOE's arm.)

MARY
You never rang me.

JOE
I'm sorry.

MARY
Whatever happened to that drink we were going to have?

JOE
I've got a surprise for you.

MARY
Oh, Joe - you shouldn't have!

(KATIE comes out of the conservatory, holding a basil plant in a pot. She is followed by GERRI.)

KATIE
Hello!

JOE
Katie, this is Mary. Mary, this is Katie.

KATIE
Hello, Mary - it's nice to meet you.

(She shakes MARY's hand.)

MARY
Oh, hi.

GERRI
This is Joe's girlfriend.

(MARY's ebullience drains away. She is devastated.)

KATIE
(To MARY) I like your jacket. (To JOE) Look, your mum gave me a pot of basil. Smell that.
GERRI
She's going to make him some pesto.

KATIE
Lovely.

TOM
Shall I take your jacket, Mary?

MARY
(subdued) Yeah, thanks, Tom.

(He takes it.)

GERRI
How are you, Mary?

MARY
Yeah, I'm really good, Gerri, thanks, yeah.

GERRI
How was your journey?

MARY
It was alright.

GERRI
Good.

MARY
Oh, no, it wasn't, actually.

TOM
Didn't get lost again, did you?

MARY
Oh no - the journey was alright. It's the car...

(JOE and KATIE sit at the table.)

TOM
Is it okay?

GERRI
What happened?

MARY
It wouldn't start.

TOM
Oh, no.

MARY
Yeah, it's a nightmare. I had to come on the tube.
TOM
Did you?

MARY
Yeah, and it got broken into last night.

GERRI
Oh did it?

JOE
Oh, sorry to hear that.

KATIE
Oh, no.

MARY
Yeah, I did my big weekly supermarket shop yesterday, and... which is great, because I couldn't do that before I had the car, and erm... I went nice and early, so it wouldn't be dark when I got back... and I brought three bags in, but I must have left the fourth one on the front seat... And I got in, I thought, that's great, that's done. I can chill out now and have a nice little glass of wine, and... I had a really nice evening, actually. Em... but then, this morning, I'm in the bathroom and I'm sitting on the - because it's the toilet roll that I've left in the car. So I rush out, and my window's been smashed; there's glass everywhere, and all my toilet rolls have been stolen.

JOE
It's probably kids.

MARY
Yeah, I think you're right, Joe.

KATIE
Are you insured, Mary?

MARY
Yeah, of course I'm insured.

KATIE
Well that's something, isn't it?
MARY
You can't drive a car without insurance, can you? It's illegal.

KATIE
I know, but what I'm saying is, at least you'll be able to claim for your window, won't you?

MARY
I know. Anyway, I'm.... I'm sick of it. I just left it. It's just a car. What does it matter?

GERRI
Go on, sit yourself down, Mary. Put the kettle on, Tom.

TOM
Yeah, yeah. Good idea.

(He proceeds to do so.)

MARY
It's given me a lot of stress, Tom.

TOM
That car's been a catalogue of disaster, hasn't it?

MARY
I know.

TOM
Maybe you should cut your losses, Mary, and get rid of it.

MARY
Yeah, but I've spent so much on it, Tom. I can't just sell it now.

TOM
Well, if you keep it, it's only going to get worse, isn't it?

GERRI
Well, you know what I think, Mary.

MARY
Yeah... yeah. I'm fed up with it, to be honest, Tom. I've had three punctures.

TOM
Three punctures?
MARY
Yeah. My exhaust’s fallen off, I had to get a new one, my carburettor went...

TOM
You can't take it back to the guys you got it from, can you?

MARY
No, well they said they'd guarantee the labour for three months but not the parts. Bastards.

TOM
Other way round, probably, isn't it? The parts for three months, but not the labour.

MARY
No... Oh, yeah, that's right. Oh, I don't know. Anyway, my windscreen wiper got ripped off, I got three points for speeding, at sixty pounds each, so, I got nine points on my driving licence, haven't I, Gerri?

GERRI
Yes.

MARY
It keeps making funny noises. I got towed away and I wasn't even parked on a double yellow line; I got seven parking tickets... no, nine parking tickets... and then, I broke down on the motorway on the way to Brighton... and I got towed to Crawley, which is the last place I wanna go to, cos I grew up there, and I hate it. So, I had to get the train home and then the train back to Crawley the next day, and the guy kept trying to touch me up, and it cost me nearly five hundred pounds and I never even got my weekend in Brighton, and that was supposed to be my summer holiday, wasn't it, Gerri?

GERRI
Yes.
MARY
It's not fair, is it?

TOM
No.

GERRI
Well, never mind.

JOE
Come and sit down, Mary. Relax.

(She moves to the table.)

MARY
Yeah, thanks, Joe.

KATIE
Yeah, at least you're here now, eh?

MARY
What did you say your name was?

KATIE
Katie.

GERRI
Well, the good news is, Mary: I've made a cake in your honour.

MARY
Oh, thanks, Gerri.

TOM
She knew you were coming, so she baked a cake.

(GERRI puts the cake on the table, and starts to cut it.)

KATIE
Don't forget to give me the recipe, will you?

GERRI
No, I won't forget, Katie.

TOM
You haven't tasted it yet.

KATIE
Oh, it smells nice, anyway!

MARY
Yeah, I wouldn't mind having the recipe for that, Gerri. I've never baked a cake before.
GERRI
Of course, you can.

JOE:
You can have a cake-off.

KATIE
Oh, I don't think so. I tried making a fruit cake once. Everything sank to the bottom, it was horrible.

JOE
You're a good cook.

KATIE
Thank you.

(A loving moment between them.)

TOM
What about these two, then, Mary?

GERRI
Such a surprise.

(Irritated, MARY looks away.)

TOM
This monster hid this young lady behind the sitting-room door.

GERRI
Made me jump.

KATIE
(Laughing) Yeah, poor Tom. I thought I was going to give him a heart attack.

JOE
She passed the test.

TOM
Surprised you passed the test. I would have got rid of you on the spot. (Chuckling) Terrible way to treat someone.

KATIE
Yeah!

GERRI
We had absolutely no idea.

JOE
This is my big secret.
KATIE
Oh, thanks very much!

TOM
It's obviously serious.

KATIE
Still, it's been really good to meet you both, though. And we had a lovely lunch.

MARY
You didn't say you were having lunch, Gerri.

JOE
We have lunch every day.

MARY
Yeah, I know you have lunch everyday, Joe.

TOM
Bread and cheese.

GERRI
Nothing special.

KATIE
I thought it was special. We had some tomatoes from Tom and Gerri's allotment. Have you tasted them?

MARY
Yeah, loads of times. Gerri's always giving me stuff from the allotment. Aren't you, Gerri?

GERRI
I'll give you some to take home, Mary.

MARY
Oh, great. Oh... yeah. I can take them on the tube. (Pause.) So what is it you do then, Jackie?

KATIE
Katie.

MARY
Katie.

KATIE
Don't worry. I'm an occupational therapist.
MARY
Oh.

GERRI
She looks after stroke victims, and the elderly.

KATIE
And, I grew up just down the road from you, in Croydon.

MARY
I only went to college in Croydon.

KATIE
Oh, right? Which college?

MARY
Croydon College.

TOM
The aptly named!

(GERRI, TOM, KATIE and JOE laugh.)

KATIE
So which course did you do? Secretarial?

MARY
What makes you think I'm a secretary?

KATIE
Well, you are, aren't you? Gerri said...

GERRI
Yes.

MARY
Well... I got my diploma. I look after the doctors.

KATIE
Oh, brilliant! So have you two worked together for a long time...?

GERRI
Ooh, about twenty years, haven't we, Mary?

MARY
Yeah.
GERRI
Mary's known Joe since he was ten.

KATIE
No way! I bet you've got some embarrassing stories.

MARY
I've got some really nice stories, actually. Joe and I have shared some really special moments together, haven't we, Joe?

JOE
Yes, Mary.

MARY
It'll just have to be our secret, won't it?

GERRI
She's almost like an auntie to him.

MARY
I wouldn't say that.

GERRI
Well, we think of you as an auntie.

TOM
Auntie Mary!

KATIE
I think that's really sweet.

GERRI
Right, who wants some cake?

KATIE
Yes, please.

(GERRI hands a slice of cake on a plate to JOE, who gives it to KATIE. Then he hands one to MARY.)

JOE
Auntie Mary!

MARY
Thanks, Joe.

JOE
(To GERRI) Thanks, Mum.
MARY
It must be really boring looking after old people.

KATIE
No, I love it. You get to know them really well, and, well... we're all going to be old one day, aren't we? Touch wood!

TOM
Some of us already are.

(JOE and KATIE laugh.)

MARY
We look after old people, don't we, Gerri?

GERRI
No, not in the same way.

(TOM looks at GERRI. Long pause.)

KATIE
Amazing cake.

GERRI
Thank you, Katie.

(They all eat cake in silence.)

A little later. It is now dark outside. TOM leads them all out of the kitchen, into the hall. KATIE is holding the pot of basil. MARY hovers in the kitchen doorway.

TOM
Right, we'll see you when we see you.

KATIE
Soon, hopefully.

JOE
And you'll never know when.

TOM
We'll probably find you hiding in the shed, some afternoon.

KATIE
Lurking in the bathroom!
JOE
Or down the toilet!

KATIE
Oh nice!

GERRI
You must come to supper.

TOM
Yeah.

KATIE
Yes, please! I hear you're both excellent cooks - no pressure!

(JOE and KATIE put on their coats.)

GERRI
Tom makes a mean curry.

KATIE
Oh, I love curry.

(MARY taps JOE's arm, and kisses him on the cheek.)

TOM
Well, there's been no litigation to date.

KATIE
I'll take my chances then.

JOE
(Kissing GERRI) I'll speak to you later.

GERRI
Bye.

TOM
See you, boy!

JOE
Bye-bye. Take care.

(TOM and JOE hug.)

KATIE
Ah, thank you so much.

TOM
Yeah, take care. Bye.

GERRI
Thank you for the flowers.
KATIE
Pleasure. (Kissing GERRI.) Lovely to meet you.

GERRI
You too.

KATIE
Bye, Mary.

MARY
Yeah.

KATIE
Really nice to meet you.

MARY
Yeah.

KATIE
Hope you get your car sorted out.

GERRI
Bye, Katie.

KATIE
Bye.

TOM
Bye.

KATIE
Bye. See you soon.

TOM
Yeah, safe journey. Bye.

JOE / KATIE
Bye.

GERRI
Bye.

(JOE and KATIE leave. The front door closes.)

TOM
How about that, then?

GERRI
That's a turn up for the books.

TOM
You're not kidding. If you'll excuse me, I've got a bit of work to do.

GERRI
Alright.
(TOM goes upstairs.)

MARY
I was going to bring you some flowers, Gerri. I just couldn't find anywhere open.

GERRI
Don't be silly.

(She disappears into the kitchen. MARY follows her. GERRI starts clearing up the tea things.)

MARY
Gerri?

GERRI
What?

MARY
What d'you think of her?

GERRI
She's lovely, isn't she?

MARY
Well, I don't know...

GERRI
Joe likes her.

MARY
Yeah but - you know...

GERRI
They seem to connect.

MARY
Well, he's only young, isn't he?

GERRI
He's thirty years old, Mary.

MARY
No, but what I mean is, he doesn't want to rush into anything. He's only known her for five minutes.

GERRI
I think Joe knows what he's doing, actually.

MARY
Well... I hope so.

GERRI
Don't forget your tomatoes, Mary.
MARY
No, I won't. (Half to herself) I should have brought a bottle of wine.

(GERRI ignores this, and continues to clear up. Pause.)

MARY (CONT'D)
I might head off in a minute.

GERRI
(smiling politely) Alright then, Mary.

(She walks out of the room. MARY is confused and perplexed.)

Outside. GERRI sees MARY out.

GERRI (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming, Mary.

MARY
Yeah, thanks, Gerri. I'll see you on Tuesday, yeah?

GERRI
Yes. Bye, now.

MARY
Okay, bye.

(GERRI closes the door. MARY leaves.)

TOM and GERRI relax together on the living-room sofa. Each has a glass of red wine. TOM is reading a newspaper.

TOM
Very sad.

GERRI
Really upsetting.

TOM
Yeah. Are you surprised?

GERRI
Of course I am. No, I'm not, actually.
TOM
No.

GERRI
It's disappointing.

TOM
So, when are you inviting her round next?

(GERRI laughs and sips her wine.)

TOM (CONT’D)
Did you see this?

(An article in the newspaper.)

GERRI
It's extraordinary.

TOM
I like whats-her-name?

GERRI
Katie?

TOM
Yeah, she's a laugh, isn't she?

GERRI
She's lovely. He is a dark horse, our son.

(TOM sips his wine.)

TOM
I think you'll find that we men are.

(GERRI chuckles. TOM reads the paper.)

FADE TO BLACK.

Title: ‘WINTER’

Early morning. Frost on the ground. TOM and GERRI’s car speeds up the M1 motorway. Much traffic.

Now it drives along a provincial street of gardenless terraced houses.
It stops. TOM, GERRI and JOE take various items from the car, and walk to a small, shabby house with lace curtains. TOM knocks on the door. They wait. They are dressed as for a funeral, the two men in black ties.

TOM (CONT’D)
It hasn't changed much, has it?

(The door is opened by an elderly man with longish hair, sideburns and a moustache. He is RONNIE, TOM’s brother.)

TOM (CONT’D)
Hello, mate.

(He goes into the house, touching RONNIE on the shoulder. He is followed by GERRI and JOE.)

GERRI
How are you, Ron?

(She kisses him.)

JOE
Hiya, Ronnie

TOM
D'you recognise Joe?

JOE
I've grown a bit.

(RONNIE closes the door.)

A few minutes later, in RONNIE’s drab living-room. TOM is standing by the fireplace, JOE is sitting in an armchair, and RONNIE sits by the table, smoking a cigarette. GERRI stands by JOE.

GERRI
How are you managing, Ronnie?

RONNIE
I'll be glad when this is over.

GERRI
This is the hardest day.

TOM
Yeah.

GERRI
She was a lovely person.
JOE
She was.

TOM
Very kind.

GERRI
Mm.

(She goes into the small kitchen, and pours some tea.)

TOM
Have you been eating over the weekend, Ronnie?

RONNIE
I had some beans.

TOM
Need a bit more than that though, don't you? D'you want something now?

RONNIE
No.

GERRI
Are you sure?

RONNIE
Yeah.

JOE
We brought a load of sandwiches, Ron.

TOM
Some beers.

GERRI
So where's Carl?

TOM
I told him when and where.

JOE
Question is, if he'll turn up.

TOM
Well, that's up to him.

RONNIE
He'd bloody better.

(GERRI gives JOE and TOM mugs of tea.)

JOE
Ta.
TOM
Cheers, Gez.

GERRI
The hearse’ll be here soon.

TOM
Yeah.

(GERRI brings a cup of tea for RONNIE.)

GERRI
There you are, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Can I have one of them beers now?

TOM
Yeah, you’re alright – go on.

(GERRI gets RONNIE a can of beer from the kitchen.)

RONNIE
Ta.

(He opens it.)

TOM opens the front door, to reveal the hearse, the FUNERAL DIRECTOR, and a young lady ASSISTANT.

TOM
Hello.

(The FUNERAL DIRECTOR removes his top hat.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello; Mr Hepple?

TOM
Yes, I'm Tom Hepple. I think we spoke on the phone.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello.

(They shake hands.)

TOM
This is my brother, Ronnie. He's Linda’s husband.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello.
(RONNIE joins them.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT’D)
Are you all ready?

TOM
Yes, we are, yes. Just the four of us.

(The FUNERAL DIRECTOR replaces his hat. GERRI and JOE follow RONNIE into the street. TOM starts to close the front door.)

TOM (CONT’D)
Have you got the keys, Ronnie?

RONNIE
Yeah.

(TOM closes the door.)

The hearse, followed by the car, drives slowly through the frost-covered crematorium grounds. It stops outside the chapel. The FUNERAL DIRECTOR greets the waiting VICAR, and disappears with him into the building. Assistants open the tail-gate of the hearse, and attend to the coffin.

The FUNERAL DIRECTOR comes out. He speaks to a young lady ASSISTANT.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Thank you.

(The ASSISTANT opens the nearside doors of the car for TOM and JOE, who get out.)

TOM
Thank you.

(GERRI and RONNIE alight on the other side of the car.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Er, Mr Hepple

TOM
Yes.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
This is Robert, your Minister.

TOM
(To VICAR) Ah! I'm Tom Hepple.
Vicar
Oh, yes.

Tom
This is my brother, Ronnie.
Linda's husband.

(The Vicar shakes hands with Ronnie.)

Vicar
Robert Saunter. I shall be taking the service.

Tom
We're expecting Ronnie's son, Carl, to be here, but he doesn't appear to have turned up yet.

(Pause. They all look vaguely round for Carl.)

Vicar
Right. Well, we'd... er, best be started.

Tom
Yes.

Funeral Director
Are you all ready?

Tom / Gerri
Yes.

(The Funeral Director speaks to the Pall-Bearers, who are waiting by the open hearse.)

Funeral Director
Thank you.

(The Pall-Bearers take the coffin out of the hearse, raise it onto their shoulders, and wait. From inside the chapel, recorded music begins ('Air On a G-String' from J.S.Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major). The Vicar begins the prayer.)

Funeral Director (Cont'd)
Thank you.

(The Pall-Bearers proceed into the Chapel, led by the Vicar. The family follows. Three Mourners, two Women and a Man, go in last.)

Vicar
"I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live.

(More)
Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord.”

(A crematorium OFFICIAL closes the chapel doors, and walks away.)

Inside the chapel, a little later. The coffin is on view. TOM, GERRI, JOE and RONNIE sit on the front row. The three MOURNERS are at the back, the MAN separate from the TWO WOMEN. The rows of seats are otherwise empty.

VICAR (CONT'D)
We have entrusted our sister, Linda Margaret, to God's mercy, and we now commit her body to be cremated. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust…”

(The automatic curtain closes round the coffin.)

VICAR (CONT’D)
“...in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord, Jesus Christ. Who will transform our frail bodies that they may be conformed to his glorious body. Who died, was buried and rose again for us. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

(He faces the congregation.)

VICAR (CONT’D)
“May God give you His comfort and His peace, His light and His joy, in this world and the next. And the blessing of God Almighty; The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you, and remain with you always. Amen.”

(During the above, the doors at the back have opened abruptly, and a severe-looking bearded man in black leather has entered. He takes off a woollen hat to reveal a bald head. The family turn to look at him.)
VICAR (CONT’D)

You are welcome.

(CARL - for it is he - sits in the second row, immediately behind TOM and GERRI.)

(The VICAR, having finished, leaves the pulpit. More recorded music commences ('Nimrod', Variation 9 from Elgar's 'Enigma Variations'). The VICAR leaves the chapel.)

(TOM, JOE, and RONNIE get up. So does CARL.)

CARL
You're joking, aren't you?

TOM
Hello, Carl.

(He shakes CARL's hand.)

CARL
Is that it?

GERRI
It's all over, Carl.

(She gets up)

GERRI (CONT’D)
I'm really sorry.

(CARL watches the family go out. He looks round the chapel. The MOURNERS leave. He follows them.)

Outside the chapel, moments later. TOM, GERRI and RONNIE come down the steps. CARL overtakes them. JOE is already in the grounds, looking at some wreaths. The funeral attendants stand by the car nearby.

CARL
Unbelievable!

(He confronts TOM, GERRI and RONNIE.)

CARL (CONT’D)
Why couldn't you wait?

TOM
There's another one coming up behind us. You can't wait.

CARL
What, you can't wait five minutes?
No.

GERRI
We did ask them.

TOM
We asked them.

CARL
Outrageous.

TOM
What happened to you?

CARL
Motorway was fucked up, wasn't it?

TOM
You should have taken that into account, shouldn't you?

CARL
I did.

TOM
Obviously not enough.

CARL
(To RONNIE) I'll never forgive you for this. You know that, don't you?

RONNIE
Yeah, don't blame me.

TOM
It's not his fault.

RONNIE
I might have known you'd pull a stunt like this.

(CARL moves away. JOE joins him.)

JOE
Carl.

CARL
What?

JOE
It's Joe.

CARL
(uninterested) Oh, yeah. Right
(JOE walks away. GERRI joins CARL, and kisses him on the cheek.)

GERRI
Carl, I'm really sorry. We're going back to the house, to your mum's.

CARL
I've got to go back there any road, so...

GERRI
Alright. We'll see you there.

CARL
Yeah.

(CARL leaves. GERRI and TOM talk to the MOURNERS. We half-hear the conversation - that is, they all speak quietly, and we are some distance away.)

TOM
Hello, I'm Tom. Ronnie's brother. We're going back to the house if you'd like to join us.

GERRI
Hello, are you friends of Linda's? How long have you worked with her? Are you coming back to the house. Good. Alright, we'll see you there.

MAN
Aye, I will. Thank you.

TOM
Do you have your own car? Did you have transport? Do you know the way?

GERRI
We'll see you there.

(TOM and GERRI walk towards the car. JOE has already got in. The three MOURNERS go off together in another direction.)

Back in RONNIE's house, in the living-room. GERRI sets out bought sandwiches on a coffee-table, removing the plastic lids. JOE and RONNIE are sitting at the table. TOM stands. TOM and GERRI have mugs of tea. RONNIE has a beer. So does JOE.
GERRI (CONT’D)
When was the last time you saw Carl?

RONNIE
A couple of years ago.

TOM
Just turns up out of the blue, doesn’t he?

RONNIE
When he can be bothered.

JOE
When did we last see him?

TOM
Can’t remember. Five, ten years ago?

GERRI
It was the year your mum died.

TOM
Was it?

GERRI
Mm.

RONNIE
1979.

TOM
No.

GERRI
No.

JOE
No, ninety-five.

TOM
Yeah.

RONNIE
Don’t know.

JOE
So, hang on – when did he stay with us in London?

TOM
That was in the eighties.

GERRI
You were nine.
JOE
He always wore black, didn't he?

GERRI
Mm... It's tragic. He was such a lovely kid. Full of fun.

RONNIE
Was 'e?

(He takes a swig of beer.)

---

JOE opens the front door, revealing the three middle-aged MOURNERS.

JOE
Hi. Come on in.

FIRST WOMAN
Thanks, love.

(They start to enter. TOM appears.)

TOM
Hello, come in.

FIRST WOMAN
Hiya.

TOM
D'you want to go through?

SECOND WOMAN
Thank you.

TOM
(To MAN) You find it, alright?

MAN
Aye, aye. No problem.

TOM
Shall I take your coat?

(JOE closes the front door.)

MAN
Er... No, you're alright, duck, thanks.

(TOM and the MOURNERS have gone through to the living-room. JOE stays near the front door to check his mobile.)
TOM
(off) Shall I take your coats, ladies? Right.

GERRI
Joe, is there another chair in there?

(JOE sees a chair.)

JOE
Yeah.

(He picks it up, and takes it into the living-room.)

A little later. Tea and sandwiches. People variously sitting and standing.

SECOND WOMAN
It was a very nice service.

TOM
It was, wasn't it? Simple, straightforward. That's what you wanted, wasn't it, Ronnie? Nothing fancy.

RONNIE
No.

(Pause)

SECOND WOMAN
Good job it didn't rain.

(TOM and GERRI laugh politely)

TOM
Yes. It's a nice spot, that, isn't it?

SECOND WOMAN
Hmm.

TOM
We've seen a few off from there, haven't we?

MAN
Aye, we have over the years. Aye.

GERRI
Have you worked with Linda for long at the bakery?
SECOND WOMAN
About ten years.

GERRI
How about you, Maggie?

FIRST WOMAN (MAGGIE)
Not as long as that, no.

GERRI
She was a lovely lady.

FIRST WOMAN
She was, yeah.

SECOND WOMAN
We weren't that close.

FIRST WOMAN
She'll be much missed.

SECOND WOMAN
It was such a shock.

TOM
Be a big change for you, won't it, Ronnie? Having to look after yourself.

MAN
You get used to it though, Ronnie. Eight years for me, now.

TOM
Is it?

MAN
Aye.

(We hear the sound of a key in the front door.)

JOE
It's Carl.

(CARL enters the house. He slams the door. He is wearing his black woollen hat. He takes off a pair of shades and a headset, and goes into the living-room.)

GERRI
Alright, Carl?

(CARL strides through the room.)

TOM
Eh up, Carl.

CARL
(To the MAN) Excuse me, mate!
JOE
D’you want a drink, Carl?

TOM
You got tea, beers... couple of bottles of wine.

CARL
Sort meself out, ta.

(He crosses the room, and goes into the kitchen.)

TOM
Are you local then, Frank?

MAN
Aye, aye, I'm just a few streets down. You know, Almond Street.

TOM
Oh, yeah. I haven't lived in Derby for forty years.

(GERRI joins CARL in the kitchen.)

GERRI
How are you, Carl?

CARL
I'm alright. How are you?

GERRI
We're all fine.

TOM
(off) We got up a fair bit when my mam was still alive.

GERRI
This must have been a bit of shock for you.

CARL
I'll say.

GERRI
Where you living?

CARL
Up in Yorkshire.

TOM
(off) ...not now...

GERRI
Are you working?
CARL
Don't need an interrogation.

TOM
...there's a new ring road... one-way system...

(CARL picks up a pile of letters.)

GERRI
Well, there's food out here when you want it.

SECOND WOMAN
(off) It's all changed...

(CARL comes to the kitchen doorway, and hits RONNIE on his leg with the mail.)

CARL
No post for me, then?

RONNIE
No. None from you, either.

CARL
Eh?

RONNIE
There's none from you.

CARL
Not lost your sense of humour, then?

(He throws the letters down in the kitchen, and returns to the doorway.)

CARL (CONT’D)
Who sorted all this lot out?

GERRI
We did.

TOM
We brought it with us.

CARL
From London?

TOM
Yeah.

CARL
Nice. You didn't get your arse in gear then, Ronnie?
TOM
He didn't need to - we offered.

CARL
Did you?

TOM
Yeah.

CARL
It's his responsibility, though in't it?

TOM
I don't think you should underestimate the shock he's had, Carl.

CARL
Yeah, I know. Very fragile, in't 'e, your brother?

TOM
His wife's just died.

CARL
His wife. Didn't much care for her when she was alive.

TOM
Did you?

CARL
I beg your pardon?

TOM
Did you care for her, Carl?

GERRI
Tom!

CARL
I cared for her in me own way.

RONNIE
Carl!

TOM
What way was that, then?

CARL
She knew how I felt about her.

TOM
Did she?

RONNIE
Shut it!
CARL
(To RONNIE) Don't tell me how to behave in me own house!

TOM
It's not your house, though, is it?

CARL
It's my house just as much as it is his.

GERRI
Tom!

(TOM shrugs and sees fit to hold his peace.)

CARL
(To JOE, who is standing beside him.) And what are you looking at?

JOE
I'm looking at you, Carl.

CARL
Well, I don't like it.

(Now JOE sees fit to hold his peace, and takes a sip of his beer. CARL turns on the SECOND WOMAN.)

CARL (CONT'D)
Don't feel like you need to hang about, duck.

FIRST WOMAN
We'd best get going.

CARL
Excuse me.

(He crosses the room and goes upstairs.)

GERRI
I'm really sorry about this.

(They all get up.)

TOM
(peevved) Do you want your coats?
Yeah, I'm not surprised.

(He gets their coats.)

GERRI
Thank you for coming.
MAN
Shall I drop you off?

FIRST WOMAN
Yeah. Thanks.

GERRI
You're welcome.

(RONNIE stands up, perplexed.)

TOM
Is that... can you do that, Frank?

MAN
Aye. Aye. Give them a lift home.

TOM
That's great.

(At the front door. TOM and RONNIE see them out.)

FIRST WOMAN
Look after yourself, Ronnie.

(She goes out, followed by the other two.)

TOM
Thanks for coming. Sorry about this. One of those things.

MAN
Ah, well. Not to worry, duck.

SECOND WOMAN
See you.

TOM
Thanks a lot. Take care. Ta-ta.

(He closes the door behind them, and sighs. He passes RONNIE, then stops by him.)

TOM (CONT'D)
(exhales) Bloody hell. Are you alright, Ronnie?

(He gently taps RONNIE's shoulder. RONNIE looks at him, bewildered.)

RONNIE
I don't know what to do.

TOM
Ah, sod him. He'll bugger off soon enough.
(A look of terror in RONNIE's eyes. TOM hugs him. RONNIE slowly responds. Pause. The TOM disengages himself.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Tell you what. Why don't you come back with us? To London.

RONNIE
No, no. You're alright.

TOM
Well, why not? Just for a few days, a week. Whatever it takes. Then we'll put you on the train back home.

RONNIE
I don't know...

TOM
Well... Think about it.

(He leaves RONNIE, who is lost, confused and in pain.)

A few moments later, in the living-room. RONNIE joins TOM, GERRI and JOE.

TOM (CONT'D)
What d'you reckon?

GERRI
You might as well, till you feel a bit better.

RONNIE
Are you sure?

Yeah.

TOM
Yeah.

GERRI
Mm.

RONNIE
Okay.

TOM
Good.

GERRI
Chuck a few things in a bag. (To JOE) We'll clear up.

(CARL returns, from upstairs.)
JOE
Yeah.

TOM
Have you got a bag?

RONNIE
Think so.

GERRI
Carl, your dad's coming home with us for a couple of days.

CARL
Is he, now?

(GERRI and JOE start to clear up.)

RONNIE
I think there's one under the bed.

TOM
Right.

CARL
How did she go?

RONNIE
Eh? (Pause.) She were dead when I woke up. Satisfied?

(TOM goes upstairs. GERRI starts to collect some dirty cups.)

GERRI
Excuse me, Carl.

(CARL takes the cups.)

CARL
I'll do that, Gerri.

GERRI
No, I'll do it.

CARL
No, you leave it. You sit yourself down.

(He goes into the kitchen. GERRI, JOE and RONNIE watch him. We hear a crash of crockery.)

CARL (CONT’D)
What am I doing this for? Save me mam the trouble? She's fucking dead now!
(He storms past GERRI and JOE.)

GERRI
Carl, listen to me.

(She puts a hand on his shoulder. RONNIE goes upstairs.)

CARL
No, no, no, no, no.

(He collects his coat.)

CARL (CONT’D)
I'm going to get a bottle of wine.

JOE
Carl, we've got loads of wine.

(CARL storms through the room, towards the front door.)

GERRI
Carl!

(CARL leaves, slamming the door behind him.)

(Pause.)

JOE
He won't be back.

(GERRI walks away from JOE.)

Up in RONNIE’s dark bedroom. TOM is packing an old suitcase. RONNIE stands, watching.

TOM
Pyjamas... get some shirts. Are you gonna change?

RONNIE
Yeah.

TOM
D’you want this?

RONNIE
Yeah.

(TOM gives him a clean shirt on a hanger. Then he folds and packs another couple.)
TOM
How're you doing? Are you alright?

RONNIE
Yeah, I'll be alright.

TOM
We'll be off soon.

At the allotment. A very cold and frosty day. GERRI is pulling up wooden stakes, and TOM is stacking planks by the shed.

Meanwhile, RONNIE sits quietly on their living-room sofa. Pause. There is a knock at the front door. Slowly, RONNIE gets up. He goes to the door, and opens it very slightly. MARY is on the step. She is uncharacteristically dishevelled. Hair awry. No make-up. Old clothes.

MARY
Oh, hi. Is Gerri in?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
Oh. Is Tom here?

RONNIE
No, they're out. What's it about?

MARY
I... I... I just wanted to see 'em.

RONNIE
They didn't say nothing.

MARY
Oh... oh no, they don't... I just came on the spur of the moment. I'm a friend of Gerri's, I work with her. Oh, have... have they gone to the allotment?

RONNIE
Yeah.
MARY
Yeah. Er... Can I come in? Just to wait for them?

RONNIE
I don't know.

MARY
I'm really cold.

RONNIE
I'm here on me own.

MARY
Oh... I'm not going to burgle you, or anything. I can give you a description of the house, if you like. When you go in the kitchen,... the cooker's on the right... and the sink's straight in front of you, and on the left is... a little cupboard -

RONNIE
Yeah, yeah.

MARY
Thanks.

(He lets her in, and shuts the door. Pause.)

MARY (CONT’D)
I'm Mary. What's your name?

RONNIE
Ronnie. Tom's me brother.

MARY
Oh. Oh - is it... your wife that's just passed away?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
I'm really sorry.

RONNIE
That's alright.

MARY
Would you like me to make you a cup of tea?

RONNIE
No, thank you.
MARY
Is it alright if I make one for myself? I don't think Gerri and Tom would mind.

RONNIE
Alright.

(He watches her go into the kitchen. She puts her bag on a chair, and smiles at him. She sets about filling the kettle. RONNIE goes slowly into the kitchen. MARY goes to the fridge to get the milk.)

MARY
Have you come down for a few days?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
Yeah. I haven't had any breakfast. Did you have breakfast?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
With Tom and Gerri?

RONNIE
Yeah.

(Pause.)

MARY
D’you want a cuddle?

(Pause.)

MARY (CONT’D)
You sure you don’t want some tea?

RONNIE
Aye, go on.

MARY
Yeah.

(She proceeds to make the tea.)

Now they are both sitting at the kitchen table, each with a mug of tea.
MARY (CONT’D)
Oh, that's better. It's really lovely to be here. I haven't been for months. They invite me a lot - we're really old friends. Are you sleeping in Joe's room?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
Oh, yeah. All his little bits and bobs. Did he go to the funeral?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
With his girlfriend?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
Oh.

(Pause.)

RONNIE
They're coming round later.

MARY
Oh, are they? (Pause.) Sorry I'm such a mess. I didn't get to bed 'til five. And then I couldn't sleep. I just got up and came straight here.

(She sips her tea.)

MARY (CONT’D)
Does Gerri ever mention me?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
Mary.

RONNIE
No.

(Pause.)

MARY
You look like Tom.
RONNIE
Oh, aye?

MARY
Yeah. You've got a nice face. Tom's got a nice face, too. What was your wife's name?

RONNIE
Linda.

MARY
Oh? Was she nice.

(RONNIE doesn't reply. He sips his tea.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Did you have dinner last night?

RONNIE
We had chicken.

MARY
Oh, lovely. They're good cooks, aren't they?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
I can't cook. Can you cook?

RONNIE
No.

(MARY laughs)

MARY
I didn't really eat anything yesterday.

RONNIE
D'you want some toast?

MARY
No, I'm alright, thank you. I wouldn't mind a cigarette, though. Do you smoke?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
Oh, good.

(RONNIE takes out a tin of tobacco.)
MARY (CONT’D)
Oh, yeah. My friend used to roll her own.

(He starts to roll one up.)

RONNIE
D’you want one of these?

MARY
Oh no, it’s alright. I’ll have one of mine. Oh, no – go on, then. For old time’s sake.

RONNIE
Huh.

(She watches him.)

RONNIE (CONT’D)
We have to go out there.

MARY
Oh, we can stay in here, can’t we? They won’t know.

(Pause. RONNIE doesn’t react.)

In the conservatory. RONNIE and MARY are standing by the plants with their mugs. They are smoking their roll-ups. RONNIE has put on his coat.

MARY (CONT’D)
Takes me back. Did you ever smoke dope?

RONNIE
Tried it a few times.

MARY
We used to. Me and my best friend, Monica. Don’t see her anymore. Did you like the Beatles?

RONNIE
They were alright. I was more Elvis. Jerry Lee Lewis...

MARY
Yeah. (Sings) “I’m all shook up.”

RONNIE
Heh.
(MARY giggles)

MARY
Have you got any children?

RONNIE
Got a son.

MARY
Is he married?

RONNIE
Don't know.

(Pause.)

RONNIE (CONT'D)
You got kids?

MARY
No. Unfortunately. Have you got to go back soon?

RONNIE
Yeah. Got a few things to sort out.

MARY
I don't suppose your son will help you.

RONNIE
No.

(Pause.)

MARY
I could come up and give you a hand, if you like... Have you got to move?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
I could take a few days off work.

RONNIE
Are you warm enough?

MARY
Oh... I'll be alright. We'll just finish these.

(Pause. They smoke.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh... do you know Ken?
RONNIE
Ken? Yeah.

MARY
Yeah. Did he go to the funeral?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
He's a bit weird, isn't he?

RONNIE
Is he?

(Pause. MARY thinks better of pursuing this, and lets it go.)

MARY
I don't really smoke. I had too much to drink last night. I had a bit of a bad day. My car broke down. It had to be towed away. They said it wasn't worth repairing. They gave me twenty quid for it.

RONNIE
That's not much.

MARY
No. What can you do with twenty quid? I bought myself a bottle of champagne.

RONNIE
Yeah?

MARY
Yeah.

RONNIE
Did you finish it?

MARY
Yeah, I did.

RONNIE
Huh.

(MARY sniffs a bit.)

MARY
I might have to have a little bit of a lie-down.

(Pause.)
In the living-room. MARY is lying comfortably on the sofa. RONNIE is sitting on the other side of the room.

MARY (CONT’D)
It's really lovely to have someone to talk to.

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
It's peaceful here. I might move away somewhere else. Start again. I used to work in Mallorca.

(RONNIE looks out of the window.)

RONNIE
They'll be back soon.

(MARY sits up.)

MARY
Oh, yeah.

(Then she settles back again.)

TOM and GERRI unload stuff from the car.

TOM
There you go.

GERRI
Thank you.

(Tom locks the car. They walk up the path, and enter the house.)

TOM
(calling) Hello, Ronnie!

GERRI
(calling) We're back!

(GERRI looks into the living-room and sees MARY.)

MARY
Hi, Gerri.
GERRI
Hello, Mary.

(TOM joins GERRI.)

TOM
Bloody hell!

MARY
Hi, Tom.

GERRI
What are you doing here?

MARY
Well, I just... thought I'd...

(GERRI looks at her for a moment, then goes.)

TOM
Just get my boots off.

In the kitchen...

TOM (CONT'D)
Where'd she spring from?

(He opens the conservatory door.)

GERRI
Bloody nuisance. Specially today.

TOM
You're not kidding.

(They put down their allotment stuff. TOM sits in a chair to change his footwear. GERRI stops, sighs, and rubs her forehead. MARY comes in.)

MARY
Are you alright, Gerri?

GERRI
Yes, Mary. I'm fine.

(She goes to the hall to take her coat off. MARY watches her.)

TOM
D’you drive?

MARY
Oh... No, I came on the tube.
TOM

Did you?

(GERRI returns)

GERRI

It might have been nice if you'd phoned first, Mary.

MARY

Oh, I'm really sorry.

(TOM comes into the kitchen, and closes the conservatory door. He passes MARY, taking off his hat and coat, and goes to the hall. GERRI takes the milk out of the fridge.)

GERRI

Joe and Katie are coming.

MARY

Yeah, Ronnie said.

(GERRI looks at MARY, then walks away. RONNIE comes in, followed by TOM, who pats him on the shoulder.)

TOM

Matey...

(TOM joins GERRI at the other end of the kitchen. MARY looks at RONNIE but he doesn't particularly respond.)

TOM (CONT'D)

Tea, Ronnie?

RONNIE

Yeah.

(RONNIE moves off to join the others. MARY stands alone.)

GERRI

Come and sit yourself down, Mary, and have a cup of tea.

(She joins them)

Later. Alone, in the living-room, RONNIE flicks through several TV channels.

Upstairs in Tom's study, he is working at his computer. GERRI comes in and puts her arms round him.
GERRI (CONT’D)

How’s it going?

TOM

Inexorably.

GERRI

I don't know what to do.

TOM

Well, if you don't, I don't.

GERRI

I can't just chuck her out.

TOM

Can't you?

GERRI

(Chuckling) No! Look at the state of her.

TOM

I know, poor woman. Joe and Katie'll be alright - they can handle her.

GERRI

I know. I've got enough food.

TOM

Have you? That's alright, then.

GERRI

Oh, well. Here goes.

(She leaves. TOM carries on working.)

MARY is sitting at the kitchen table, her head in her hands. We hear GERRI coming down the stairs. She enters, goes to the wooden dresser, opens a drawer, and takes out some place-mats. She puts these on the table.

MARY

D’you want me to give you a hand?

GERRRI

No, thank you, Mary. Would you like to stay for a bite to eat?

MARY

No, it's alright. I don't want to be in the way.
GERRI
You won't be. We've got plenty of food.

(She takes some wine-glasses from a shelf.)

MARY
Are you still angry with me?

GERRI
Mary, I wasn't angry with you. I just felt you'd let me down.

MARY
Oh, Gerri... (She gets up) I'd never want to do that. I'm really sorry.

GERRI
Yes, and I know you've apologised.

MARY
I miss you. I mean, I know that I see you at work, but we don't seem to talk to each other any more. I feel terrible.

GERRI
This is my family, Mary. You've got to understand that.

(MARY starts to cry)

MARY
I do.

(GERRI puts down the glasses.)

GERRI
Oh... Come here.

(She embraces MARY. They hug. MARY sobs deeply.)

GERRI (CONT’D)
You have to take responsibility for your actions.

MARY
(Sobbing) I know.

(GERRI disengages herself slightly, and looks at MARY directly.)

GERRI
Now, listen Mary. You need to talk to somebody.
MARY
Oh, no, I don't want to do that.

GERRI
Well, I think it would help you.

MARY
I just want to talk to you.

GERRI
Why don't I have a word with one of my colleagues?

MARY
As long as we're friends, then I'm alright.

GERRI
Well, that's beside the point. You need independent professional help. You'd be much happier. Let's talk about it on Tuesday, shall we?

MARY
Yeah.

GERRI
And you have a think.

MARY
Yeah, we could have a drink.

GERRI
Why don't you help me lay the table?

(MARY starts to set out the place-mats)

MARY
He's really nice, Ronnie, isn't he?

(GERRI doesn't reply. She continues to put out the glances, glancing at MARY for just a moment. MARY has finishes her task. She stands helplessly.)

Later. It is still light. Using his key, JOE comes through the front door, following by KATIE, who is wearing a woollen hat and a long scarf. GERRI comes out of the living-room.
GERRI
Hello! I saw you through the window. *(She embraces JOE)*

KATIE
Hello!

JOE
Hello, how are you?

GERRI
I'm fine – how are you?

JOE
I'm good.

GERRI
*(embracing KATIE)* Katie! Lovely to see you!

KATIE
Aw... lovely to see *you*. How are you?

GERRI
Fine.

*(GERRI points to the living-room, and indicates silently that MARY is present. KATIE does a momentary comic mock exit towards the front door. TOM appears.)*

TOM
Hello!

JOE
Aha!

*(He gives TOM a bottle of wine.)*

TOM
Aha!

KATIE
We brought you some chocolates.

GERRI
Oh!

TOM
Good. Ha! ha!

*(He grabs the chocolates from KATIE and runs off with them.)*

KATIE
Oh no! Give them back! Give them back!
JOE
You'll never see them again!

(He walks away.)

GERRI
Can I take your things?

KATIE
Yeah - cheers.

(GERRI and KATIE share silent humour about MARY's presence. KATIE mimes hanging herself with her scarf, with an appropriate funny face. TOM joins them. KATIE takes off her coat, followed by her scarf. TOM takes them.)

KATIE (CONT'D)
(while she takes it off) I've got the longest scarf in the world - sorry! Tea cosy on my head!

(TOM takes her stuff away.)

GERRI
Come and meet Ronnie.

KATIE
Ah, great!

GERRI
Mary's here.

KATIE:
Oh!

(They go into the living room, followed by JOE and TOM.)

KATIE
Hi, Mary! How are you?

MARY
Good, thanks.

KATIE
Excellent.

MARY
Hi Joe.

JOE
Hi.

(MARY kisses him.)

KATIE
Hi, you must be Ronnie.

(She shakes his hand.)
KATIE (CONT’D)
I've heard a lot about you.
Lovely to meet you.

RONNIE
Hello.

JOE
This is Katie.

TOM
My big brother!

KATIE
Ah...

(MARY sits on the sofa.)

GERRI
Right, what are we having to
drink?

KATIE
I'll have what everyone else is
having.

TOM
Red wine for me.

GERRI
We're having fish.

JOE
I'll have white, then.

KATIE
Actually, I'll have white wine as
well, please.

TOM
Beer, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Er, yeah.

GERRI
White wine, Mary?

MARY
Er, yeah, please, if that's
alright.

TOM
I'll do that, Gez.

JOE
I'll get you a beer, Ronnie.
(GERRI, JOE and TOM leave.)

KATIE
So, I hear you're a massive Derby fan, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Er, yeah.

KATIE
Great club. I'm a Palace supporter myself, for my sins. But I'm still holding onto the hope we might crash back through to the Premiership, at some point!

RONNIE
Yeah.

KATIE
What d'you reckon to Derby's chances?

RONNIE
Oh... not so bad.

KATIE
Well, fingers crossed!

(She crosses them. MARY sits, alone and lonely.)

Later. Outside the house. It is now dark. Light from within the house. A cyclist passes.

In the kitchen. They are all round the table, eating the pudding course. The camera slowly circles the table, as TOM, GERRI, JOE and KATIE talk. For a while, we don’t see RONNIE or MARY.

TOM
We met on our first day at university in Manchester.

KATIE
Oh, your first day!

TOM
We were in the same halls of residence.
We met on the stairs.

Yeah.

Really?

I was falling down them, she was going up them.

I was falling up them!

Well, things haven't changed, then.

And Tom's first job, when we left uni, was abroad for two years.

And you tried not to take it personally, eh? *(Laughs)*

We came down to London, didn't we, for about nine months.

Yeah...

I got my first geologist's job in Western Australia in the outback.

Oh, right

It was just him and a load of Australian cowboys.

Yeah. It was like the Wild West out there.

Yeah, all cork hats, was it, and beers?

You've worked in Australia, haven't you, Katie?
KATIE
Yeah, I worked in Sydney for a year.

TOM
Oh, yeah?

KATIE
Oh, I had the most wonderful time there. They know how to enjoy themselves, don't they, the Aussies?

TOM
Oh, yeah. And then you came out and visited, didn't you, my first Christmas holiday?

GERRI
Yes. Yes, and we spent Christmas on the beach.

KATIE
Barbie on the beach?

TOM
Yeah, oh, yeah.

GERRI
And then when Tom had finished after two years, I joined him again, and we...

JOE
You went on your grand tour, didn't you?

GERRI
...we came back overland.

TOM
Yeah, yeah. It took us seven months, I think. We got the boat from Fremantle to Singapore and then...

GERRI
Yeah... Singapore

TOM
Singapore to Malaysia, and then onto Thailand...

GERRI
Thailand... Burma.
JOE
And to India.

(The camera is now on RONNIE, who is eating his pudding and sipping his beer contentedly.)

TOM
Yeah.

KATIE
Oh, I'd love to go to India.

JOE
Stoned in India.

GERRI
We went trekking in Nepal.

KATIE
Really?

TOM
.....Nepal, trekking in Nepal, the beach at Goa. Wonderful, holiday of a lifetime.

KATIE
Up and down Everest.

GERRI
Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran. Turkey....

TOM
Yeah, yeah - Turkey.

GERRI
Over to the Greek Islands...

TOM
Greek Islands. The wonderful thing was, because I'd been two years working in Australia, and earning relatively good money, and nothing to spend it on really. So, we didn't have to do it on a really tight budget.

(Now the camera is on RONNIE and MARY. She smiles at him but he doesn't really respond.)

GERRI
Because some people could just hitch, but we could get buses and trains and stuff.
TOM
Yeah, yeah.

KATIE
It must have made a difference.

TOM
You've been to the Greek Islands, haven't you, Mary?

MARY
Yeah.

TOM
Which island was it?

MARY
Corfu.

TOM
Yeah?

KATIE
What were you doing on Corfu?

MARY
Oh, I only... ran a bar, on the beach.

JOE
You were a cocktail waitress, were you?

(Laughter.)

MARY
Yeah. (She smiles)

(The camera is now only on MARY.)

GERRI
So, when are you going to Paris.

KATIE
Oh, a week on Friday. Can't wait.

JOE
Yes. We've got an early start; six twenty-two train.

TOM
Oh, no!

JOE
Yeah.
KATIE
We get in at Paris, what is it....?

JOE
About quarter to ten?

KATIE
Yeah - nine-fifty.

JOE
Something like that. Have breakfast by the Seine.

(The dialogue starts to fade out slowly.)

KATIE
Breakfast...

TOM
Have you got your hotel booked?

KATIE
Yeah, we've got a lovely hotel, haven't we?

JOE
Very nice, yeah.

KATIE
Beautiful. In the Marais area.

TOM
Oh, yeah?

KATIE
It will be brilliant for our Christmas shopping.

(MARY drinks some wine.)

TOM
When are you coming back?

KATIE
... On the Sunday...

(The dialogue has now faded to total silence.)

(We hold on MARY, in her pain, for a while.)

SLOW FADE TO BLACKOUT

The End