

Bugger Bugger

written by

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(C)

Stage/Screen

NOTE: Cont'd / Aside - Off set *

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Squab dramaturg, HUMPHREY NUGENTS (50's) lies on a King sized bed with a glass of brandy in hand. He looks rather pleased with himself in his black rimmed specs, red cravat and paisley dressing gown.

HUMPHREY

(on phone)

That would be just my luck,
Poulet- I should land in Charles
De Gaulle at around ten-thirty...
all being well- You know why,
Poulet. It's difficult with her
stuck up my arse, prodding me
with her forefinger- So will you
pick me up, or shall I jump in a
cab like last time-? Excellent-!
I'll do that then-

He hears the sound of the front door opening downstairs and panics as he covers the phone with his hand.

INT. RECEPTION - NIGHT

Voluptuous redundant actress GRACE (62) carries a shopping bag as she enters. She marches towards the kitchen with a face like thunder.

HUMPHREY / *

(on phone)

Rightyo then, Stephen. Just let
him know I rang, will you-?
That'll be great- Ciao for now,
then.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Grace opens the fridge and takes out a bottle of Chardonnay. She pours herself a glass from the bottle.

Humphrey appears in doorway. She turns and scowls at him.

GRACE

So, you're in then.

HUMPHREY

(casually)

Either that, or it's yet another figment of your imagination.

GRACE

Who were you talking to up there?

HUMPHREY

Stephen. I rang Gordon, but I just missed him. He popped out.

She turns away knowingly.

GRACE

Liar.

HUMPHREY

Who, me or Gordon, Grace? You decide.

GRACE

You. Who else?

HUMPHREY

Gordon, maybe?

GRACE

Oh, piss off and leave me alone.

He sighs and exits. She stacks the groceries inside the cupboard.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

He stomps towards the drinks trolley and pours himself another brandy, before he slumps down in the armchair and opens his laptop.

HUMPHREY

Anyway, what's got into you this evening? Had another shit day lying on your back naked?

She enters with the glass of Chardonnay and shows him the finger.

GRACE

Swivel.

HUMPHREY

I'll try, but I'm not as nimble
as I used to be.

GRACE

Just tell me one thing, will you?

HUMPHREY

What's that?

GRACE

How is it that every time I come
home you're upstairs talking to
Stephen about Gordon who just so
happened to have popped out? I'm
not stupid you know, so don't
take me for a fool.

HUMPHREY -

(quietly)

Debatable.

GRACE

(bitterly)

I heard that, you twerp.

HUMPHREY

So you think Stephen doesn't
really exist, is that it?

GRACE

Probably not.

HUMPHREY

Well, I'll prove it to you if you
like? I'll ring him back and tell
him that my wife thinks he
doesn't exist.

He opens his laptop and switches it on.

GRACE

(dispassionately)

Don't bother. I couldn't care
less.

HUMPHREY

Fine. I won't.

She shakes her head in disapproval and sits down on the sofa.

HUMPHREY /

Anyway, you might be interested to know I was offered a part in a play this afternoon. They're doing a production of War and Peace over at the Globe. They asked me if i might be interested in taking a small part.

Her ears prick up and she becomes excited. He ignores her gaze and casually taps away on his keyboard.

GRACE

Well... what did you say to them, c'mon?

He looks across at her knowingly.

HUMPHREY

Well, if you really must know, I turned it down, naturally.

GRACE

(deflatedly)

You did what?!

HUMPHREY

I turned it down. I'm far too busy to be poncing around on stage when I've got my own projects to think about.

GRACE

(outraged)

You turned it down?! You big nincompoop!

HUMPHREY

That's right. Insult me, go on.

GRACE

I'm only asking you why you had to turn it down.

HUMPHREY

Because it wasn't big enough, if you really must know.

GRACE

(scowls)

You twerp!

HUMPHREY

It wasn't worth my while. It was only a small part, for heaven's sake.

GRACE

Twat!

HUMPHREY

For your information, Gordon and I have been putting our heads together. Some time ago we came up with an idea to stage a play of our own. I haven't told you, but we've been running a competition to find a playwright to work with. We've found our winner. We're really excited about staging his play.

GRACE

(defeatedly)

I need another flippin' drink.

She gets to her feet and exits.

Silence as he continues to tap away on his laptop.

She returns with another glass of wine, then stands over him with a look of utter contempt.

HUMPHREY

I mean. Well, if they would have offered me the part as Nikolai Rostov, or Pierre Bezukhov I might've considered it. At least with Rostov you get to marry the beautiful Marya Bolkonskaya. Hmm, now that would've been a worthwhile challenge, dontcha think, Grace?

He knocks back a mouthful of brandy. She snarls as he continues to tap away on his laptop.

GRACE

Oh, I wish I could get a flipping audition. I haven't had anything in months. D' you know if they're still auditioning for other parts?

(sighs)

Didn't you even think to ask for me?

HUMPHREY

(nonchalantly)

No, I'm sorry, I didn't. They already have someone for Napoleon, I think.

She turns away with a fractured look of despair.

GRACE

Fuck you then!

She slumps back down on the sofa.

HUMPHREY

Well, you know what I mean, Grace. You're no Helen Mirren, are you?

GRACE

(tearfully)

Cantcha see I'm flipping desperate? I can't go on like this. I need work.

HUMPHREY

I've told you a dozen times - change your agent.

GRACE

But I can't. I've been with him flipping years. Are you sure they're not auditioning for other parts, Humphrey? I bet you haven't even asked.

HUMPHREY

(flippantly)

You're not what they're looking for, Grace... unless you can grow another beard in the next two weeks.

GRACE

Oh, don't be bloody ridiculous!

HUMPHREY

Find another career. You're not cut out for the stage. And anyway, you're too old to play Marya. They're looking for someone with a young, fresh face. I specifically heard them say not to audition anyone with a craggy face.

GRACE

Oh but you're always saying things like this, just to wind me up. I don't know what you mean. What'd you mean? I look younger under the lights. And they can do wonders with make-up nowadays.

HUMPHREY

In most cases, Grace.

GRACE

You're so bloody selfish! You don't care one bit about me. I might as well not even be here for all you care.

She gets up and storms out.

HUMPHREY -

(quietly)

I rest my case.

Flushing toilet sound.

GRACE *

I'm classically trained, you know.

HUMPHREY -

(quietly)

Hysterically trained, more like.

She reenters with a face like thunder, and with yet another glass of Chardonnay in hand. She takes her seat on the sofa.

GRACE

Oh shove it up your arse, you selfish cunt!

HUMPHREY

I'll have a go if you like, but I'm not sure how far it'll go up. You might have to shove the rest up your own arse.

GRACE

Oh get lost, wanker!

HUMPHREY

(angrily)

Look, haven't you got anything better to do? Change the sheets or something. Polish the tables for once. This place is gathering dust faster than your knicker drawer.

GRACE

No! I'm not your flipping slave. You do it. You live here as well as I do.

HUMPHREY

In case you haven't noticed, Grace, I work.

She cocks a deafen and begins to channel surf the TV.

GRACE

And so do I, if you haven't noticed.

HUMPHREY

Lying on your back naked is not work, Grace.

GRACE

Is that what you think I really do all day?

HUMPHREY

It's one of them.

GRACE

You think I'm fucking around, dontcha?

HUMPHREY

No I don't think anything, Grace. I didn't get where I am today by thinking, you should know that of all people.

GRACE

Just because you can't get it up anymore, you think I'm getting it elsewhere, dontcha?

HUMPHREY

Oh, give me a break, will you?!

GRACE

Why? You started it.

HUMPHREY

In that case let me finish it.

A protracted silence as he continues to tap away and she channel surfs the TV.

HUMPHREY /

Anyway, we're changing our perspective, Gordon and I. Gordon wants to present new work that matters to our audiences from now on. Contemporary plays that mark out new territory in performance and subject matter. We have plans for the future you know, Grace... and you could well be a part of them if you cut me some slack.

GRACE

I don't want anything from you.

HUMPHREY

(irksomely)

You know your trouble?

GRACE

No. Enlighten me.

HUMPHREY

You're ungrateful.

GRACE

(aback)

Ha! I'm ungrateful? I'm ungrateful?

HUMPHREY

I don't know why you have to be so bloody bitter all the time.

GRACE

I'm not bitter. I'm frustrated, that's all.

HUMPHREY

Get better, Grace. Not bitter.

GRACE

Bollocks!

HUMPHREY

Well, for your information, I'm going to be directing this new production of ours. So if you want to come along and have a sneak preview, feel free to do so.

GRACE

Is there a part in it for me?

HUMPHREY

There might well be. We'll see. We'll see.

GRACE

OK. I will then.

HUMPHREY

No, I'm deadly serious, Grace. There's all sorts of things happening in this one we're staging. We've got witches, whores, murderers, gipsies, tramps and thieves. I'm sure we can find something that'll suit you.

GRACE

(aghast)

You wanker!

She gets up and exits in a fury.

HUMPHREY -

(quietly)

Oh dear. Was it something I said?

She reenters and returns to the sofa with another glass of Chardonnay.

GRACE *
Tell me something - Are you
ashamed of me?

HUMPHREY
Only slightly... nothing to worry
about though.

She picks up a cushion and lobs it at him.

GRACE
Bastard!

The cushion hits him flush in the face and causes him to jerk and spill his brandy all over himself and his laptop.

HUMPHREY
BLOODY HELL! WHAT THE FUCK IS
BLOODY WRONG WITH YOU?! YOU
BLOODY STUPID COW! LOOK WHAT
YOU'VE DONE! IF THIS LAPTOP IS
BROKEN YOU CAN PAY FOR IT TO BE
FIXED!

He jumps up and exits in a fury with his laptop.

GRACE
Stop winding me up, then.

HUMPHREY *
What's happened to your bloody
sense of humour?! Cantcha take a
bloody joke any more?!

GRACE
I still have mine.

She turns up the volume on the television.

He reenters with his laptop and pours himself another brandy.

HUMPHREY
And turn that bloody thing down!
I can't hear myself think with
that going up and down!

GRACE -
(mumbles)
Go to hell.

HUMPHREY

I SAID TURN IT DOWN!

He grabs the r/c from her and mutes the TV.

GRACE

Leave it alone!

A protracted silence as he sits back down with his laptop.

HUMPHREY

(soberly)

By the way, there's something you should know.

GRACE

And what's that?

HUMPHREY

I have to go to Paris in the morning. Gordon has asked me to check out a play festival in Montmartre. I need to be there.

She consumes his statement of fact with a disbelieving frown.

GRACE

That's a bit short notice, isn't it?

HUMPHREY

Yep. So I'll be leaving early.

GRACE

Can I come?

HUMPHREY

No. You'll just get in the way.

GRACE

No I won't. I can visit Sacre Coeur while you're at the festival.

HUMPHREY

No. I'll be too busy meeting people. You'll just get bored. Stay here.

GRACE

But I don't want to stay here.
I'd rather come to Paris with
you.

HUMPHREY

(angrily)

Take no for a bloody answer, will
you?

She turns away during her disappointment and buries her head
in a cushion.

HUMPHREY /

I'll be back on Thursday. I'll
take you out for dinner when I
get home. I know a decent vegan
restaurant that's just opened
near Gordon's farm.

GRACE

I'll believe that when I see it.
(despairingly)
I hardly see you these days. We
might as well be flipping
divorced for all you care.

HUMPHREY

Maybe if you didn't spend so much
time lying on your back, things
might be different, Grace.

GRACE

The students pay me for my time.
I don't sit for free you know.

HUMPHREY

Is that what they call it
nowadays?

(pauses)

Sitting?

GRACE

If it wasn't for my model thing
shit, I'd probably have to work
in some crappy restaurant, or a
pub. I mean, I'm not going to
have this figure forever, am I?

HUMPHREY

What figure?

She gives him the finger and scowls.

HUMPHREY

Actually, I apologise. That was unfair. You do have a great figure, I'll give you that.

GRACE

Oh, please take me with you, Humphrey. I won't get in the way, I promise. I can go shopping and visit some art galleries.

He ignores her pleas and knocks back the rest of his brandy.

HUMPHREY

D' you know what I discovered today?

GRACE

What?

HUMPHREY

You're married to the fifth most important person in British theatre.

GRACE

Whoopy do.

HUMPHREY

And that's official. And that's not me saying that.

GRACE

Who are the other four?

(pauses)

Hang on, let me guess- The Ayatollah. King Charles. God, and the President of America.

HUMPHREY

D' you want to know, or not?

GRACE

You're going to tell me anyway, so fire away.

HUMPHREY

I'm in the ascendancy, Grace.

(smugly)

It's all the way up from now on.

(Pauses)

My endeavours haven't gone unnoticed. And it's about time too.

(swigs brandy)

I've given my life to the theatre. All these years of blood, sweat and tears. I deserve a little bit of gratitude, dontcha think?

(reflects)

Well, aren't you going to congratulate me, or something?

GRACE

Why should I?

HUMPHREY

Your time will come, Grace, you'll see. You just have to be patient, that's all. Stick at it, like I did.

GRACE

I'll believe that when I see it.

She knocks back the dregs of her wine.

GRACE /

I'm going to bed.

She gets up and exits. He ignores her and taps away on his laptop.

INT. AEROPLANE - DAY

Grace has the window seat and carries knowing grin. Humphrey sits next to her and has a long, miserable face. She turns to look at him.

GRACE

I always get what I want in the end, don't I?

HUMPHREY

This is the last time you're coming. And when we disembark you can go off and do your own thing. I've got business to attend to. I don't want you hanging around, getting in the way.

GRACE

I know. I know.

She passes him a wry look, before she stares out of the window and grins.

SUPER: PARIS

A topographical view over the River Seine and the Eiffel Tower.

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

Humphrey quickly drags his trolley case. Grace races to keep up with her trolley case.

INT. POULET'S BOUDOIR - DAY

Humphrey lies bare chested inside the sheets next to sultry French actress POULET (pronounced Poulay) (30's) They share a cigarette.

POULET

So why did she have to come with you?

HUMPHREY

I couldn't get out of it. She would never have spoken to me again.

POULET

Why can't you be a man and tell her it's over?

HUMPHREY

I will soon, soon, I promise.

POULET

(irked)
Yes but when, Humphrey?

HUMPHREY

It's not the right time, Poulet.

POULET

Humphrey. I am not going to wait forever.

HUMPHREY

Just give it time. I was going to wait till after we stage the play from our Dead Playwright's competition.

POULET

But you promised.

HUMPHREY

I know. I know. And I will.

She stumps out the cigarette in the ashtray on her side cabinet, before she lies back and opens her legs for him.

POULET

Take me, before I change my mind.

He grins knowingly as he cocks his leg over hers and kisses her passionately.

EXT. SACRE COEUR - DAY

A beautiful sunny day as Grace dressed in denim hot pants and a slinky red vest, sits upon the lawn and admires the aesthetics of Montmartre.

She takes out her camera then begins to take pictures of Sacre Coeur.

INT. POULET'S BOUDIOR - DAY

Poulet goes hell for leather on top of Humphrey as she swings her hips and attempts to reach a conclusion.

EXT. MONTMARTRE MARKET - DAY

MONTAGE:

Grace strolls along the flea market. She stops at a hat stall and tries on different summer hats.

Grace enters a charity shop and tries on a fake fur coat. She poses in the mirror with the coat, then pays for her purchase and leaves.

Grace enters a lingerie shop where she purchases a peignoir, a pair of satin French knickers and black stockings.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Humphrey dons a safari suit as he stands on the doorstep and kisses Poulet lightly upon the cheek.

POULET

Am I going to see you later, or not? I need to know, so I can arrange my evening.

HUMPHREY

I'll call you, I promise.

POULET

OK. But not too late, Humphrey, otherwise I might not be around.

HUMPHREY

Sure.

POULET

You better call, Humphrey, or I will be angry with you.

HUMPHREY

I will. I will.

She closes the door upon his exit. He makes a call on his iPhone.

HUMPHREY /

(on phone)

Gordon, I'm here- OK. I'll be right there- See you soon.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Grace carries a large plastic shopping bag and sports a red straw hat and sunglasses as she stands and watches handsome street artist - VINCENT (30's)

He sketches a pretty young GIRL (10) who sits upon a stall. He smiles at the young Girl then shows the exaggerated sketch to her and her PARENTS who stand close by.

VINCENT

There you are, Mon Cherie. It is all finished.

She looks at her sketch and giggles.

VINCENT /

So what do think? It is a true likeness, non?

GIRL

(giggles)

I really like it. It's funny.

VINCENT

She looks like you, non... except for the nose. You have a pretty little button nose.

GIRL

I like it a lot.

The Parents pay him, then walk off with the sketch, before he begins to pack away his easel and paints.

Grace continues to watch him and removes her shades.

GRACE

Hi.

VINCENT

(brightly)

I am sorry, but I have to get back to my studio.

GRACE

Oh no. I wasn't looking for anything. I'm ugly enough, so my other half tells me.

He stands up and looks deep in to her eyes, before he gently runs his fingers over her facial bone structure.

VINCENT

Mon Cherie, you have perfect bone structure. Your other half must be blind if he thinks you are ugly. In fact, you are perfect.

GRACE

(gasps)

Oh Really?

VINCENT

Oui Madam. If you have time I would like to paint a portrait of you for my exhibition. I would pay you for your time.

GRACE

Yeah, all right, then.

VINCENT

Now?

She looks at her watch as he finishes to gather his belongings.

GRACE

I only have one hour though. I have to meet my other half at six for dinner.

VINCENT

Actually, that's more than enough. I think if we get started straight away I can finish within the hour.

GRACE

All right.

VINCENT

Shall we go?

GRACE

(excitedly)

Yeah.

She follows him as he walks off with his equipment.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Humphrey sits in the stalls. He chuckles as he watches rehearsals of a comedic farce.

He is soon joined by GORDON (60's) He is lanky and bald, with eyes bulbous and stifling.

GORDON

Humphrey! So, what'd you think?
It's great, isn't it?

HUMPHREY

It's certainly amusing if that's
what you mean.

GORDON

D' you think we should take it to
The Rose, or not?

HUMPHREY

I can't see why not. The thought
of the Bard being Parisian will
have them falling about the
aisles I should imagine.

GORDON

I'll set it up then. I'll arrange
a meeting for next week in London
with the playwright, Mr. Yusimi.

HUMPHREY

I thought we were going to meet
him today, here, today.

GORDON

I cancelled that appointment. I
have to fly back to London. I'm
rushed off my feet.

HUMPHREY

What was the point of me coming
here if I can't meet the
playwright? I thought that was
the whole point of me being here
today.

GORDON

You thought you'd kill two birds
with one stone, I know.

HUMPHREY

(irked)
So what?

GORDON

Like I said, we'll do it next
week. Apologies, Humphrey, but it
is what it is.

He gets to his feet and walks off. Humphrey sighs his despair then checks his watch. He makes a call using his iPhone.

HUMPHREY

(into phone)

Grace, where are you-? Answer
your bloody phone, will you-?

He ends call and sighs.

INT. VINCENT'S STUDIO - DAY

There is a chaise longue situated a couple of feet from an easel. A clothes rail and decorative screen along the back wall, situated close to a sink unit. Vincent's artwork of semi-naked women scattered about the room.

Grace stands incongruously when they enter. She places the plastic shopping bag upon the floor.

VINCENT

So this is it.

GRACE

You are prolific.

VINCENT

Pard-on?

GRACE

Well, you like to paint women
naked, I see.

VINCENT

That is because women are
beautiful when they are naked.

GRACE

So, how'd you want to paint me,
then?

VINCENT

However you please. And however
you feel comfortable.

GRACE

I bought a fake fur coat. Shall I
put that on?

VINCENT

You want me to paint you wearing
a fake fur coat?

GRACE

If you want to.

VINCENT

OK. Just as long as you have
something sexy to wear underneath
the coat.

GRACE

Oh, I do. I bought something else
at the market.

VINCENT

OK. Surprise me. You can get
undressed behind that screen
(points)
Over there.

Grace walks behind the screen. Vincent prepares his paints.

She emerges dressed to thrill, with her fake fur fully
unbuttoned. She reveals her cleavage and black French
knickers, black stockings and suspenders.

VINCENT

(gasps)
Ohmondieu! Grace!

He approaches her in a hurry.

GRACE

D' you like it, Vincent?

He catches her as she falls into his arms.

VINCENT

(bemused)
Do I like it?

GRACE

Oh say it, Vincent. Say you do.

VINCENT

I do, Grace. I do. I love it.

She cackles wildly, before he leans over her - they resemble
Cupid & Psyche.

VINCENT /

But you do mean the coat, non?

He lifts her back to her feet, then ushers her towards the chaise lounge.

GRACE

(soberly)

Yes of course, silly.

(dispiritedly)

What else is there to like?

VINCENT

OK. Park yourself down.

She lets her fur coat fall by her feet, before she lies in a suggestive pose on the chaise.

Vincent stands like a cat that got the cream. He instantly kneels down beside her and begins to stroke the fur coat.

GRACE

(perplexed)

What are you doing now, Vincent?

VINCENT

(smitten)

Will it bite? Is it real?

GRACE

No, silly. I couldn't afford to buy real fur. It's imitation beaver. Anyway, I wouldn't be seen dead wearing real fur. I don't agree with killing animals for their fur.

VINCENT

(salaciously)

May I stroke it? It feels so soft and warm.

GRACE

Yes, but be careful, it's moulting.

VINCENT

Moulting? But I thought you said it was-

GRACE

-Yes moulting, Vincent. So be careful with it, please.

VINCENT

You mean losing hair, Grace?

She cackles.

GRACE

Oh yes, Vincent! Ha! Oh you know what I mean, silly nincompoop.

VINCENT

But are you sure, Grace?

She cackles.

GRACE

Yes! Oh what are you like, Vincent?

VINCENT

But it feels so soft and warm. I can barely keep my hands from stroking it.

She cackles.

GRACE

'ark at you! Oh, come on now, Vincent, stop. I haven't got time for all this malarkey. I've got to meet my other half for dinner at six.

VINCENT

Fine. Fine.

He climbs to his feet and steps towards the easel.

VINCENT /

(disorientated)

Were was I?

He collects his brushes at the sink unit. She poses for him as before.

GRACE

You will finish me within the hour, won't you, Vincent?

VINCENT

Yes.

She exaggerates her pose with her chest out and her legs apart.

GRACE

Is this better?

VINCENT

Magnifique!

He paints.

GRACE

Sorry about having to rush you like this, but he can get quite annoyed with me at times.

VINCENT

It's fine, Grace.

GRACE

He's at some play festival somewhere near here. He wouldn't take me with him though.

VINCENT

So, what is he doing there?

GRACE

Checking out new talent, apparently.

VINCENT

How do you mean?

GRACE

Oh, I don't know. I don't give a shit. He can do whatever he flippin' well likes for all I care. I've had enough of his bullshit to last me a lifetime.

VINCENT

I see.

GRACE

Yeah well, he didn't want to take me with him, did he?

VINCENT

Why not?

GRACE

Because he's a pig, Vincent,
that's why.

VINCENT

I see.

GRACE

He doesn't like taking me
anywhere. I embarrass him,
apparently.

VINCENT

Really?

GRACE

He said I'd just get bored...
which proves he doesn't even know
his own flipping wife.

VINCENT

Oh.

GRACE

Yeah, I don't believe a word of
it though.

VINCENT

So what will you do about it?

GRACE

I'd rather not say.

VINCENT

Ah.

GRACE

In case I've got the wrong idea,
you know?

VINCENT

Wrong idea about what?

GRACE

I think he's having an affair
with a woman in Paris and that's
the real reason we're here.

He shows his concern.

VINCENT

Oh dear.

GRACE

Yeah, I found a napkin inside his jacket pocket. It had a telephone number written in red lipstick on it.

VINCENT

Oh!

GRACE

And I listened to a phone call that he made to Gordon - he's a work colleague. They were laughing about some tart he's meeting up with.

(snarls)

I mean, what can I say to him? Who's this flipping tart you're shagging?

VINCENT

Ask him.

GRACE

Maybe I should just flipping knife him to death while he's asleep.

She cackles.

GRACE /

I've seen this sort of thing happening to other people.

VINCENT

Confront him. You must.

GRACE

He's got this flipping old pistol that his great uncle left him when he passed away. I was gonna take it out of the cupboard and shoot him while he was snoring last night. I would've enjoyed sticking it right up his flipping nose and pulling the trigger.

She cackles.

VINCENT

Ohmôndieu! This is far too
extreme for me, Grace.

GRACE

Oh, I know, but I can't believe
he would do something like this
to me.

Long silence as he paints.

GRACE /

Are we almost done?

VINCENT

It's finished.

She climbs off the chaise and glides over towards the easel,
then stares at it bemused as she attempts to make out what it
is.

Her POV: Cubism illusion on canvas - She is painted yellow
and green, with an exaggerated pointed nose. Her eyes small
and vertical and out of sync. Her mouth squeezed, and she has
a missing earlobe, with her cheek bones lopsided.

BACK TO SCENE.

GRACE

(nods uncontrollably)

I see.

VINCENT

You have such amazing bone
structure for your age.

GRACE

(bashfully)

Oh, d' you really think so?

VINCENT

I do, Grace, I do.

She turns her attention back to the painting and scratches
her head in belated wonder.

GRACE

I don't mean to be rude, Vincent,
but where am I? It's certainly
not me, is it?

VINCENT /

Ah! That's because you are standing too close. Just move back and you will see the likeness.

GRACE

Oh. Right.

VINCENT

Here, let me help you.

He gently moves her back a couple of steps.

VINCENT /

It's clearer, non?

Her shoulders deflate with disappointment.

GRACE

Oh, but my head isn't that shape, is it?

VINCENT

(chuckles)

No of course not. What do you think? It's an illusion. Can you not see it?

GRACE

But why did you paint my noses so pointy?

VINCENT

(sighs)

Illusion is the first of all pleasures, Grace.

GRACE

(dispassionately)

Oh, I see.

VINCENT

Well, it is most definitely you. Look at her missing earlobe.

She takes a closer look.

VINCENT /

Picasso used this method during one of his periods.

She steps to the side and tilts her head to gauge another angle.

GRACE

Now I see what you mean.

VINCENT

Super!

She looks at him dolefully.

GRACE

Is this how you see me?

VINCENT

Non! This is just a fascinating light I am exploring. I can paint an exact image of you if that's what you want me to do. But then, you will have to pay me for it.

GRACE

She looks like she's had cosmetic surgery.

VINCENT

Ha! You are so funny, Grace.

GRACE

You could've gotten anyone to lie on that chaise. You didn't need me at all, did you?

VINCENT

That is not true. You are very beautiful, Grace. But this painting has been particularly crafted for my exhibition.

She notices the time on the wall clock.

CU: 1800 HRS.

GRACE

Shit! Look at the time! I better go.

She rushes behind the screen to get dressed.

VINCENT

Relax, Mon Cherie. He will wait for you, I am sure.

GRACE

You don't know Humphrey. He won't.

OVER BLACK: ONE WEEK LATER

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Humphrey is in high spirits as he sets the dining table. He sports a beige safari suit and cravat.

KITCHEN

Grace prepares food in the kitchen. She wears denim hot pants and a red frilly blouse. She carries a glass of chardonnay whilst on the move.

GRACE

I can't see why we couldn't have gone out for dinner.

HUMPHREY

(intolerantly)

Yes, yes, yes, I know, Grace, I know. But-

GRACE

-you fucked up again.

HUMPHREY

I did suggest Johnny Allen's, but they were fully booked tonight. And anyway, it'll be a lot easier to do it here. It'll give me a chance to get to know this French playwright without being constantly interrupted by waiters and other diners seated nearby.

GRACE

It's a lot of work for us though, isn't it?

HUMPHREY

His writing style reminds me of Jacques Prevert.

GRACE

I've never heard of him.

HUMPHREY

He's a French poet and
playwright, known for his
excellent wit, but poor grammar.

(pauses)

I'm just happy we've finally
found ourselves a resident
playwright.

GRACE

So what's this person's name,
then?

HUMPHREY

Vincent Yousimi. And the play is
called Bugger Bugger.

She chokes on a mouthful of Chardonnay.

GRACE

(splutters)

It went down the wrong flipping
hole.

HUMPHREY

That makes a change. It usually
goes up the wrong hole.

She passes him a wry look before she exits.

HUMPHREY / -

(quietly)

That was a close shave.

He wipes his brow with a handkerchief.

She reenters with a bowl of salad and places it down on the
dining table.

HUMPHREY /

You know, you've been very
efficient tonight, Grace. I'm
very impressed.

(checks watch)

They should be here any minute.
I'm feeling quite excited about
this evening.

He exits, then reenters with a basket of bread and a bowl of
olives. He places them down on the table.

GRACE

Gordon should've been the one doing this, not us.

HUMPHREY

I know. I know. Don't keep on about it, Grace. It's getting boring.

GRACE

He farts and you sneeze.

HUMPHREY

He would have if my flight hadn't have been cancelled. In fact, I shouldn't even be here. It was very much a last minute thing. He wanted my valued opinion.

GRACE

And what about your whore in Paris? And don't think you're getting away with it that easily, Humphrey Nugents. You're not off the hook just yet. I want to hear it from the horse's mouth that nothing's going on between you two.

HUMPHREY

I told you, it's over.

(pauses)

She caught me at a low ebb, that's all. I let my guard down.

GRACE

I don't want to hear your feeble excuses, either.

HUMPHREY

It's over! Now leave it at that, will you?

(pauses)

Anyway, this could really benefit your career... providing you don't get silly drunk like the last time Gordon came for dinner.

GRACE

Well, I better not drink any more of this Chardonnay. Another glass of this and I'll be all over the flipping place.

She cackles.

He pours himself a brandy.

HUMPHREY

Just don't show me up tonight, Grace. I want to create a nice pulse to the evening.

GRACE

I know. I'm not stupid.

HUMPHREY

Good. And no grovelling either. Just leave Gordon and myself to talk to Vincent Yusimi, without any interruptions.

GRACE

I will.

DOORBELL.

HUMPHREY

(panicked)

Right! Here we go.

He steps towards the door. She quickly exits.

He opens the door to a scowling Poulet. She wears a black slinky dress, seamless stockings, and black stiletto heels.

He gasps as he grabs the door frame for support.

HUMPHREY /

(quietly)

Poulet, what are you doing here, for heaven's sake?

POULET

You didn't come. I waited for you. Why not?

HUMPHREY

Ssh. Keep your voice down. Grace'll hear you.

POULET

Why?

HUMPHREY

You can't come here. You'll get me shot for heaven's sake.

He checks over his shoulder.

POULET

But I had to see you. I thought something bad had happened to you. I was worried.

HUMPHREY

You have to go.

Grace reenters with two bottles of wine and places them on the table.

Humphrey steps outside the door and closes it on himself.

GRACE

(with concern)

Humphrey, who is that?

HUMPHREY *

(To Grace)

No one, dear. I'm dealing with it.

POULET *

But when will I see you again?

Grace stares at the door knowingly and scowls.

HUMPHREY *

I don't know. Didn't you get my message? All the flights were cancelled, due to the fog. I sent you a message for heaven's sake. Didn't you read it?

Grace now highly suspicious approaches the door.

GRACE

Humphrey, what's going on? Who's at the door?

HUMPHREY *

(to Poulet)

I'll call you.

POULET *

Let me in, or I will scream.

Grace pulls the door back and peers over his shoulder.

GRACE

(furiously)

Who the fuck is this?

HUMPHREY

It's okay, Grace. Get back inside. I'm dealing with it.

GRACE

No!

HUMPHREY

(desperately)

Oh shit.

He steps aside. Poulet enters.

POULET

(to Grace)

Merci beaucoup.

GRACE

I know who you are.

POULET

Poulet.

HUMPHREY

I think I can explain.

GRACE

What the fuck is going on?

POULET

Tell her, Humphrey.

GRACE

(dismayed)

Tell me what?

POULET

Tell her. Or I will.

HUMPHREY

Look, I'll explain every-

GRACE

-OH SHUT THE FUCK UP, YOU TWERP.

(to Poulet)

Did he invite you here?

POULET

No. But I've come to take him
back to Paris with me.

GRACE

(to Humphrey)

Is this true?

HUMPHREY

I'm not going anywhere. I have a
very important guest arriving any
second now.

GRACE

(to Humphrey)

So you are still together, then?

POULET

(to Grace)

Did he tell you your marriage to
him is over?

Humphrey squirms.

GRACE

That's news to me. Are we over,
Humphrey?

HUMPHREY

No, we are not over, Grace.

(wipes brow)

I just thought it was going that
way.

GRACE

And now?

POULET

(interjects)

He said you were having an
affair.

He sits down defeatedly at the dining table.

GRACE

That was probably just an excuse
to get you into bed. I'm not
having an affair with anyone.

HUMPHREY

I didn't actually say that,
Poulet. I said she could be-

POULET

(angrily)
-Menteur!

HUMPHREY

Look, can we all just calm down?

Poulet sits down at the table opposite him. Grace remains
defiant and continues to stand by the open door.

Awkward silence.

HUMPHREY

A drink, anyone?

POULET

Est-il Francais?

GRACE

It's Italian.

POULET

Merci.

He pours her a glass of red.

Grace grabs the bottle of white and pours her own.

HUMPHREY

(to Poulet)
Olive?

POULET

Sont-il bourres?

HUMPHREY

Yes.

POULET

Merci beaucoup.

He pushes the bowl towards her. She picks one out.

GRACE

No speaking French in this house,
or you can both sling your hook
right now!

HUMPHREY

OK, Grace. Just calm down.

(pauses)

Look, Poulet, I'm so sorry you've
come all this way, but quite
frankly I'm staying here.

(wipes brow)

I thought Grace was having an
affair with one of the students
she life models for. It turns out
that I was wrong. I imagined the
whole damn thing. I was highly
chagrined at the thought of them
together behind my back. I felt
quite insecure. I just needed
someone to listen to me.

POULET

You used me?

HUMPHREY

No. Let me finish.

POULET

But in your bed upstairs you told
me you loved me, remember? When
you were fucking me, doggy.

GRACE

RIGHT! BITCH!

Grace dives across the table towards her. Humphrey attempts
to block her path.

GRACE

GET OUT! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE
RIGHT NOW!

Shaken, Poulet moves away from the table.

HUMPHREY

Grace, just hold on. Give her a
chance to explain herself. She's
come a long way to be here.

GRACE

HOW DARE YOU LET HER IN HERE TO
INSULT ME! GET HER THE FUCK OUT
BEFORE I KILL THE BITCH!

HUMPHREY

Poulet, you can't say that stuff.
She's very upset.

TELEPHONE RINGS.

They all stare at the phone.

HUMPHREY /

Shit.

POULET

(to Grace)

I apologise.

GRACE

Just leave.

HUMPHREY

She'll be going in just a minute,
Grace.

The phone continues to ring.

Grace finally picks up the receiver and listens.

GRACE

(to Humphrey)

It's Gordon. He wants to speak to
you.

She smacks the receiver into his groin as she gives Poulet
the evil eye.

He yelps, then puts the receiver to his ear.

HUMPHREY

(irksomely)

Where are you-? But we're waiting
for you here- Can't it wait-? I
see. Well, thanks a bunch- I
suppose I'll just have to, won't
I?

He slams down the receiver, then ruminates.

Grace continues to stare threateningly at Poulet.

GRACE

(to Humphrey)

What's wrong now?

HUMPHREY

Gordon can't make it. I bloody
knew he'd do this to me! I can
read that man like a book!

GRACE

Now get her out, before I do
something I regret.

HUMPHREY

(angrily)

Will you just shut up for one
moment and let me think!

(ruminates)

Right, so Gordon can't make it.
That means there'll be a spare
seat at the table.

GRACE

(animatedly)

No fuckin' way. No fuckin' way!

HUMPHREY

I want her to stay for dinner,
then she can leave immediately.

GRACE

If she stays, I'm off.

HUMPHREY

Think, Grace. You know it makes
sense.

GRACE

You get stuffed! She's not
staying. Get her out, or I'm off!

POULET

Call me a taxi. I will go.

HUMPHREY

No I will not. Gordon's left me
to speak to this Vincent Yusimi-

Poulet chokes on a mouthful of wine.

HUMPHREY /

(bemused)

-so it makes complete-

(pauses)

Are you alright, Poulet?

POULET

I'm fine. It just went down the wrong hole.

Protracted silence as Grace watches her in dismay.

GRACE

(to Poulet)

If I hear one word about your sordid affair with my husband, I'll swing for you, I swear.

HUMPHREY

Right then. Sorted.

(rubs his hands)

I need to take a leak. I trust you won't claw each other's eyes out while I'm gone.

He closes the door then exits.

Awkward silence as they sit back down at the table.

GRACE

This is your chance to leave. I'll tell him that you left of your own accord. He'll understand.

POULET

I am not leaving without him. I have nowhere else to go.

GRACE

Well you can't stay here, love!

POULET

Why not? I can sleep on the couch.

GRACE

Listen cloth ears! D' you think for one moment I'm going to let you take my husband away from me?

The toilet is heard flushing.

He reenters.

DOORBELL.

HUMPHREY

That'll be him! Now please
contain yourself, Grace.

He opens the door to Vincent, who stands dressed in a red
suit, white tie, and white beret.

VINCENT

(smirks)
You must be Humphrey Nugents. I
am Vincent Yusimi.

HUMPHREY

(perplexed)
Yes. Come in, come in.

Vincent enters and his attention quickly turns to Poulet.
She bears a huge grin at the sight of him.

Humphrey closes the door and stands aghast. Grace recognises
him and smiles knowingly.

GRACE -

Oh my god, Vincent.

VINCENT

(ecstatically)
Poulet! Mais qu'est-ce que tu
fais ici?

He throws his arms around her neck and they peck one another.

POULET

(ecstatically)
Oh mon Dieu! Vincent! Que fais-tu
ici?

GRACE

(agape)
Holy shit. This is devine
intervention.

HUMPHREY

(dismayed)
Oh dear.

Grace rushes towards the kitchen while they continue to
embrace. Humphrey looks on in horror.

VINCENT

Ohmondieu!

Humphrey gets bored and intervenes.

HUMPHREY

Alright! Alright! Alright! Put her down for Christ sake! It's not the Folies Bergere?

Vincent guffaws.

VINCENT

Poulet used to be my fiancée.

POULET

Yes. We were going to be married, but we had a fight.

HUMPHREY

This is turning out to be a right proper unforgettable evening. Would you like us to leave, so you can be alone?

She gently releases herself from his grasp and confronts Humphrey.

POULET

Vincent is the artist I was telling you about, remember?

Grace reenters with a pot of fondue that she takes to the table.

GRACE

(casually)

Was that when he was doing you doggy style?

HUMPHREY

Oh Grace, stop it! This isn't the time.

GRACE

(to Poulet)

In the bed, was it?

POULET

Actually, it was not in the bed. It was in his car, behind the supermarket.

HUMPHREY

(to Poulet)

Will you two please just cut each other some slack?

Grace slaps his face hard.

GRACE

How dare you let her insult me!

Vincent sniggers.

HUMPHREY

Well, look at him standing there like he's just won the damn lottery.

(pitifully)

He and Poulet are past lovebirds. You couldn't make it up.

(pauses)

I suppose you want her back now you've seen her again?

GRACE -

Wanker!

She marches back towards the kitchen. Poulet follows.

VINCENT

I think you are just being ridiculous.

HUMPHREY

I should've seen this coming.

Poulet reenters and brings a pot of cooked aubergines to the table. Grace brings a pot of cooked rice.

GRACE

C'mon. Let's eat, before it gets cold.

Vincent rubs his hands together and licks his lips.

VINCENT

Where shall I sit, Grace?

HUMPHREY

You're not sitting anywhere, matey. I want you to leave.

VINCENT

Oh please...

Grace grabs Vincent's arm. She is joined by Poulet who grabs his free arm.

GRACE

If he goes, I go.

POULET

And I go too.

HUMPHREY

I see. Like that is it?

(to Vincent)

You are popular, aren't you?

Vincent shrugs his shoulders nonchalantly.

Humphrey reluctantly pulls a chair out, then sits down at the table next to Grace. Vincent takes a seat opposite him and next to Poulet.

HUMPHREY

How on earth did this happen?

VINCENT

Gordon invited me. He told me to meet him here.

Humphrey ignores his remark and begins to tuck into the food.

POULET

(to Vincent)

Il se comporte comme un cochon.

GRACE

(interjects)

I said no speaking French in this house.

POULET

(giggles)

Oops.

HUMPHREY

It's all right, Grace. It's no different to what you call me, really.

A protracted silence as Humphrey tops up their glasses with more wine.

POULET

Hmm. This is delicious, Grace.

GRACE

Thanks.

POULET

The coconut aubergine is so perfectly baked. Delicious.

GRACE

It's one of Jamie Oliver's recipes.

VINCENT

Hmm. I love these olives. I adore olives with garlic and aioli.

HUMPHREY

(proudly)

Yes, I made them myself.

(pause)

There's nothing to it really.

VINCENT

My compliments.

GRACE

You can get them from the supermarket.

HUMPHREY

True, Grace. But they're not as good as mine.

GRACE

Debatable.

Humphrey gives her a warning stare. Vincent chuckles.

GRACE /

So, Poulet, it looks like you've found yourself a bed for the night. You must be over the moon about that.

POULET

Thank you, Grace. That's very kind of you, but-

GRACE

(irately)

-Not here! With Vincent.

Humphrey throws down his utensils in abject torment.

HUMPHREY

Over my dead body! She can stay at MalMaison. It's just down the end of the road. I'll take her there myself if I have to.

VINCENT

I'm staying there too.

(grins at Poulet)

No, no, non! Vous pouvez dormir avec moi!

HUMPHREY

(to Vincent)

You've got to be joking, matey! She's not staying with you!

POULET

We are not strangers, Humphrey. We have slept together before.

(giggles)

Beaucoup de fois.

Humphrey looks oat her dementedly.

HUMPHREY

(to Poulet)

You are not going to sleep with him tonight... no way!

GRACE

(interjects)

Oh, get to bed. She can sleep with whoever she wants to.

HUMPHREY

Stay out of this, Grace.

VINCENT

Poulet is old enough to make up her own mind where she wants to spend the night, papa kins.

Humphrey rips off his napkin.

HUMPHREY

Right! That's it!

POULET

(imploringly)

Ah... Ce soir je veux danser
juste et oublier toute la douleur
de l'amour.

VINCENT

(lip kiss)

Super.

POULET

Oh I just love to be in London.
It is so beautiful at night.

GRACE

Humphrey, please sit down for,
you're clouding my space.

He sighs and sits down again with a threatening stare towards Vincent.

VINCENT

Actually, I know a nice little
French club in Piccadilly Circus.
Do you know the one I mean,
Humphrey?

HUMPHREY

No.

VINCENT

It's so quaint and French.

GRACE

(excitedly)

I'll put on an outrageous dress
if we go there.

VINCENT

Super, Grace.

(to Humphrey)

But what about the play? I am
here to discuss Bugger Bugger, my
play.

Humphrey stares at him and throws an olive into his mouth.

VINCENT /

Well, Humphrey?

Awkward silence as Humphrey swallows the stone inside the olive and begins to choke.

VINCENT /

Shit!

Vincent moves quickly to give him the Heimlich Manoeuvre.

The women quickly move away from the table.

POULET

(concerned)

Oh mon Dieu! What is happening to him, Vincent?

GRACE

He's only choking to death, Poulet. No need to be too alarmed.

VINCENT

Pour him some water, quickly!

The olive stone is extracted from Humphrey's mouth and flies across the table. It hits Grace in the face and she screams as she crouches over in shock.

POULET

(aghast)

Oh shit! Are you okay, Grace? Are you hurt?

GRACE

I'm fine. I'll be fine. Just see to him.

Poulet fills a glass with water and hands it to Vincent who feeds Humphrey.

POULET

He's pourpré.

VINCENT

He will be fine in a moment or two.

Humphrey takes the glass and begins to sip the water. Grace exits.

Humphrey clears his throat while he attempts to gather himself.

VINCENT /

Phew! That was close, Humphrey.
You had us all worried there for
a moment. You nearly choked to
death right in front of our eyes.

He stares coldly across the table at Vincent as he sits back down.

HUMPHREY

So tell me, what inspired you to
write a play upon the
reincarnation of the Bard as a
Parisian? And his name was
William Shakespeare - not Willam.

VINCENT

I thought it would be ludicrous
to reincarnate him as a
Frenchman.

HUMPHREY

Fair enough.
(pauses)
Would you like my assessment now?

VINCENT

Well, of course. This is why
Gordon invited me to come.
(confused pause)
Actually, where is he?

GRACE

He couldn't make it, Vincent.
Something popped up.

HUMPHREY

I'll give it to you without him,
and then you can fuck off back to
Malmaison.

Grace reenters with a red eye.

GRACE

(interjects)
Humphrey! Vincent just saved you
from choking to death. Give him
some respect.

VINCENT

Thank you, Grace.

Humphrey takes another sip of water.

HUMPHREY

Fine.

(clears throat)

It is a well-drafted play.

VINCENT

(impassioned)

Thank you, Humphrey.

HUMPHREY

I particularly enjoyed its contemporary theme. It was poignant, well paced, and thought provoking. The characterizations are quite remarkable.

He takes another sip of water.

VINCENT

(fervently)

Please continue.

HUMPHREY

I haven't finished.

VINCENT

Oops. Sorry.

HUMPHREY

Maybe the removal of places of rest would be beneficial for certain wider societies. Bugger Bugger's social, spiritual and cultural well being included.

Vincent leans across the table with added enthusiasm.

HUMPHREY /

Bugger Bugger is written with profound pitch and penetrating skill which asks fundamentally important questions about family values and respect for the dead, no matter their moral status. The work has good structure without being polemical, so delivering an excellent pleasantry and plot. You have yourself a decent play.

(pauses)

The dramatic exploits of the main protagonist, Willam, is momentous. The central premise, that eerie question, is there life after death? Reincarnation is a very interesting theme to put out there, even in a comedic sense of the word.

(short pause)

Maybe the removal of places of rest would be beneficial for certain wider societies. Bugger Bugger's social, spiritual and cultural well being included. You're quite a playwright.

(pauses)

What I don't understand is why you want to bring it here to London.

VINCENT

It's obvious, non?

HUMPHREY

It was at first. But not any more.

GRACE

(interjects)

Humphrey, stop it!

HUMPHREY

Well look at him sitting there all chuffed with himself.

VINCENT

No, no, non! I'm going stage my play in London, that is all I want.

HUMPHREY

Over my dead body.

Poulet lends Vincent her sympathy as she puts a comforting arm around his shoulder.

VINCENT

But why not?

HUMPHREY

Because I don't like you, that's why, Vincent.

VINCENT

Excuse me?

HUMPHREY

D' you want everything I own? The shirt off my back, before you take these two cock starved fans of yours clubbing, and then to my bed. Or maybe you'd prefer to wait until I'm completely out of your way. I'll just kip on the sofa, shall I? And think about how I might stage your play, and even who I might cast - Grace, or Poulet. Is that what I should do, Vincent? Tell me, because at this juncture I'm completely discombobulated by your audacity to sit there and beg for me to work with you.

VINCENT

Oh, c'mon, Humphrey, don't be like this.

POULET

C'mon, Humphrey. You are being churlish.

HUMPHREY

(stiffly)

Am I, Poulet? Am I really?

GRACE

Actually, I thought you gave Vincent an excellent overview of his play. It was really good. So stop being so bloody childish and work with him to produce his play.

HUMPHREY

I see. Three against one.

POULET

No it isn't, Humphrey.

HUMPHREY

(to Vincent)

Anyway, why should I? I don't owe you anything.

VINCENT

Look, Gordon invited me here. He said you were expecting me.

HUMPHREY

I was expecting you. But I wasn't expecting you and Poulet to be past lovers.

Short silence.

VINCENT

Oh c'mon, Humphrey. It will be fun working together.

HUMPHREY

It's not going to happen, buddy. I'd prefer if you left now.

POULET

But this is crazy!

HUMPHREY

Is it, Poulet? So what are we going to do, then... sack the director?

GRACE

Oh, Humphrey. Give Vincent a break. He's working really hard to please you. And he painted a really nice portrait of me when you took me to Paris.

Humphrey bears a startled look during a protracted silence.

POULET

(aback)

So you two have met before?

GRACE

Yes. We met last week in
Montmartre when you were shagging
my husband.

VINCENT

I painted a portrait for my
exhibition.

POULET

But how did you meet?

VINCENT

We bumped in to one another in
Montmartre.

GRACE

Humphrey Nugents, lost for words.
I thought I'd never have to say
that.

Vincent sighs and climbs out of his seat despondently.

VINCENT

Maybe I should go.

Humphrey remains oblivious to everything around him.

GRACE

No! Wait, Vincent.

They watch as Humphrey gets up and exits.

GRACE /

He'll be alright.

POULET

So crazy.

Grace fills their glasses with more wine.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Humphrey sits quietly on the bed and stares at his miserable
reflection in the mirrored wardrobe opposite.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Grace glides over to the CD player and turns on the music.

Poulet begins to move sensually to the dance beats.

POULET

Oh I just want to dance.

VINCENT

(to Grace)

What is happening to Humphrey?

GRACE

Oh, don't worry, Vincent. I'll speak to him later when he decides to get over himself.

VINCENT

He hates me.

GRACE

It's not up to him, Vincent. He's just the organ grinder's monkey. He thinks he's more important than he actually is.

Poulet chuckles.

POULET

Organ grinder's monkey? That's so funny, Grace. You make me laugh.

VINCENT

(tormented)

This is my future we are talking about, Poulet.

POULET

(dreamily)

Oh, I just want to dance.

Grace raises her wine glass and looks up towards the bedroom with scorn.

GRACE

Come in number five! Where the fuck are you?

She cackles.

Poulet turns up the volume. A party atmosphere begins to take shape.

POULET

I want to dance like crazy...
Whoa! Whoa!

Grace joins her and dances.

GRACE

We won't let him spoil our fun.
Miserable old fuck-pig. Ha!

She cackles.

Vincent sits soberly at the table and looks on as they let their hair down to the music.

POULET

I love the music.

GRACE

Yeah, it's brilliant!

POULET

I know.

Grace stops dancing and stares at Poulet with some concern.

GRACE

It is over with you and him,
right?

POULET

Completely. Finished! Caput! Au
revoir Humphrey Nugents.

Grace cackles.

GRACE

Ha! Brilliant!

Vincent climbs to his seat and opens the door.

VINCENT

I brought something for you,
Grace.

He exits, then returns with the portrait wrapped in brown paper.

They stop dancing as he hands her the portrait.

POULET

What is that, Vincent?

GRACE

(excitedly)

Is that for me?

VINCENT

You can have it.

GRACE

Really? Oh, Vincent, thank you.

She kisses his cheek with affection.

VINCENT

It's yours.

GRACE

(to Poulet)

I wanted this portrait.

Grace rips off the paper and reveals the artwork. She positions it upright on the mantle.

POULET

Wow! It is beautiful, Vincent.

You are so talented.

(pauses)

But I knew that.

VINCENT

Merci, Poulet.

GRACE

I'll treasure it. Actually, I'll hang it on the bedroom wall so Humphrey can look at me when I'm not here.

POULET

I just want to dance all night long.

They all begin to dance.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Humphrey removes his spectacles, then opens the wardrobe door.

He takes out a varnished carved wooden box and opens the box to reveal an antique pistol. He loads a single bullet into the chamber, then points the gun at his reflection in the mirror.

HUMPHREY -

That reptile down there is the enemy of theatre. He's hostile to your world.

(American accent)

Are you talkin' to me?

(blows barrel)

Are you talkin' to me, punk?

He discards the pistol as he turns away in disgust.

INT LOUNGE - NIGHT

They continue to dance to the music of Saint Germain.

POULET

What are we waiting for? Let's go to a club.

GRACE

Alright then.

POULET

(provocatively)

Tu aimes ma robe, Vincent?

VINCENT

Oui. Très sexy, tu es aussi belle.

She pinches his cheek. Grace looks on and cackles.

GRACE

Brilliant!

VINCENT

Je ressens quelque chose dans mon cœur pour toi. Quelque chose de spécial.

POULET

Oui. Et moi aussi.

VINCENT

Well, what are we waiting for?

POULET

(eagerly)

Come on, hurry, Grace, let's go.

VINCENT

Yes, Grace, come on.

POULET

Quel beau destin, j'adore le
destin! Le destin est magnifique!
Fais moi rêver!

VINCENT

(to Poulet)

I'm not going to let you out of
my sight tonight.

GRACE

Ha! Brilliant!

Grace cackles.

GRACE /

Wait here. I'll put on a nice
frock.

VINCENT

Super.

GRACE

I won't be long.

VINCENT

Go, go, go!

Grace exits.

Poulet throws her arms around him and they get up close as
they continue to dance.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Humphrey sits despondently on the bed when Grace enters in
high spirits. She ignores him and goes to the wardrobe.

She pulls out a black slinky dress, then turns to face him.

GRACE

Oh we're having so much fun
downstairs. We're going out. D'
you want to come?

Silence.

GRACE /
Oh come on, Humphrey. It'll be
fun.

Silence.

GRACE /
Oh cheer up, for god sake!

She holds up the dress for him to see.

GRACE /
D' you remember this dress?
Vivian Westwood.

Silence.

GRACE /
I'll wear it for you if you want?

Silence.

GRACE /
Look, it's no good you just
sitting there with your head
stuck half way up your flippin'
arse, is it?

She sighs then sits down next to him and puts a consoling arm
around his shoulders.

GRACE /
Why don't you put on your green
velvet suit and come out with us,
Humphrey?

Silence.

GRACE /
Oh come on, Humphrey, don't be
like this.

He looks at her glumly.

HUMPHREY
I can't. I'm finished, Grace.
It's over. I'm over. I'm
finished.

GRACE

Oh don't be so silly. No you're not.

Silence.

GRACE /

(sighs)

You've changed. You're becoming a stranger to me these days. I don't know my own husband anymore.

HUMPHREY

(bitterly)

That reptile down there has humiliated me.

GRACE

Rubbish! He has not! That's just your paranoia!

HUMPHREY

That toe rag has belittled me, not once, but twice.

GRACE

Don't be so bloody ridiculous!

(pauses)

D' you remember what you used to say to me?

(reflects)

Forgive your enemies, nothing annoys them more, remember that?

HUMPHREY

It wasn't one of mine. I borrowed it.

GRACE

Whatever. I don't care.

(pauses)

Vincent is a really nice guy. And it looks like he and Poulet are going to start up their relationship again.

HUMPHREY

I couldn't give a monkey's anus.

(pauses)

I loathe that reptile. In fact, I wouldn't mind putting a bullet right through his skull right now.

GRACE

(angrily)

Now you listen to me, Humphrey Nugents. You said his play was one of the best you've read in a decade. Just because he wrote it, you sit here like a defeatist, sulking like a juvenile. You've got egg all over your face and all because you've been exposed as a pompous, self absorbed, miserable old fuck pig! And I have just about had enough of your selfish me, me, me attitude all the soddin' time! All you do is sit there going on about how fuckin' great you are! Character assassinating people who don't live up to your expectations! And d' you know something else? In all the years of our marriage, you've not once offered me a leg up! How could you be so fuckin' high and mighty about your own successes while at the same time not give a flying fuck about mine? My life! You're an egotistical fuck pig, Humphrey Nugents, and right now I hate you with all my heart!

A protracted silence.

HUMPHREY

Gordon sent that tactile slime-ball here to humiliate me. He's made himself my Nemesis.

GRACE

No! You just want to control him.

(pauses)

Why does everyone have to feel the tension around you?

HUMPHREY

Just leave me alone. I want to be left alone.

(pauses)

You can have a divorce if it makes you feel happy.

GRACE

Oh stop this shit!

She pins him down on the bed and slaps him until she bursts into tears and sobs out her heart.

HUMPHREY

Leave.

GRACE

I should be the one sitting here with my head up my arse, not you. Your slut is down there with her ex and all you can do is hide. Go down there and face them like the man I thought I married.

HUMPHREY

I will. I'll confront him the Humphrey Nugents way.

He climbs off the bed and straightens his clothes.

GRACE

Just stay calm, Humphrey.

HUMPHREY

We'll see.

He stealthily grabs the pistol, then makes his way down the stairs.

Grace slides out of her denims and slips on her dress.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Vincent and Poulet quietly canoodle on the sofa when Humphrey enters with pistol in hand.

VINCENT

(to Poulet)

So what happened to you after the last time I saw you, Poulet?

POULET

I went to stay with my aunt in
Canada.

With a look of horror she spots Humphrey approaching.

POULET /

Humphrey?!

She jumps off the sofa. Vincent retreats with his hands
raised.

VINCENT

What's going on? What are you
doing, Humphrey?

HUMPHREY

I'm going to kill you.

He aims the pistol at him.

VINCENT

(horrified)

Please do not do this, Humphrey!
I'm begging you!

HUMPHREY

You know, this pistol once
belonged to my great uncle
Charles. He fought at the Battle
of Waterloo.

VINCENT

(panic stricken)

Bien! Bien!

HUMPHREY

Believe it or not, he killed
dozens of your lot with this
mechanical device.

VINCENT

Please don't shoot me with it,
then!

Poulet plucks up the courage and confronts him.

POULET

Please, Humphrey, don't do it. I
beg you not to shoot him. I love
him too much for him to die on
your floor like an animal.

HUMPHREY

You and him have humiliated me,
Poulet.

Humphrey's hand begins to shake violently and he becomes unsteady on his feet.

Poulet screams and quickly exits.

HUMPHREY /

You know, everything was hunky
dory before you arrived. Why did
you have to come here? You really
should have stayed away, punk.

VINCENT

I will leave then!

HUMPHREY

Who's laying eggs now, punk, eh?

He squeezes the trigger and a bullet hits the portrait flush in the centre. A huge hole appears in the canvas.

Vincent dives for cover.

VINCENT

OHMONDIEU! GRACE! HELP! HELP ME
PLEASE!

HUMPHREY

It's alright, darling, I'm just
dealing with a reptile. I think
he's cowering behind the sofa.
But don't worry, I've got him
covered.

VINCENT

HUMPHREY STOP THIS, I BEG YOU! I
DO NOT WANT TO DIE!

HUMPHREY

(rolls eyes)

Did you enjoy having my wife in
Paris? Oh yes... and the dinner.
That'll be five-hundred pounds.
And I only accept cash.

Poulet pops her head around the door.

POULET

LEAVE HIM ALONE YOU CRAZY FOOL!

VINCENT
PLEASE STOP THIS AND I WILL GO!

HUMPHREY
She can leave. But give me one
good reason why I shouldn't kill
you?

POULET
Oh please, Humphrey, let him go!

Grace enters in her outrageous slinky black and gold dress.
She immediately spots the destroyed painting.

GRACE
(apoplectic)
Look at my portrait! You twat!

She snatches the pistol from him and whacks him across the
head.

HUMPHREY
OUCH!

He falls down and holds his head.

GRACE
Look what you've done to my face!

HUMPHREY
(whimpering)
I was aiming at a reptile. I
missed.

Vincent pops up from behind the sofa. Poulet enters.

VINCENT
Grace, I'm not staying here any
longer with this headcase.

POULET
This is so crazy. I cannot
breath.

VINCENT
C'mon, Poulet. Let's get out of
this loony bin.

Grace sticks her head through the hole in the portrait and
stands deflatedly.

GRACE
(mournfully)
Look at my face. It's ruined!

HUMPHREY
It was an accident, Grace. I'll
fix it.

She puts the portrait down.

GRACE
(to Vincent)
I'm coming with you. I'm not
staying here with this madman.

VINCENT
(to Humphrey)
You need to get help, man.

GRACE
(to Humphrey)
And get to bed, you twerp.

POULET
You are really crazy, Humphrey.
Ohmondieu.

They open the door and march out.

A protracted silence as Humphrey stares at the pistol, before
he picks it up and inserts the barrel inside his mouth.

CLICK!

During his failure to shoot himself, he drops the pistol and
begins to sob like a baby.

FADE OUT.

THE END