

Slightly Mad

1 INT HOTEL EDINBURGH NIGHT

There is a happy wedding in full swing. A large ballroom entertains guests dancing gaily; a bride dips delightedly in tandem with her new husband, a good-looking super-hero of a young man, all teeth and muscles. HARRY, thirties, dark, dishevelled hair, good-looking in a gaunt, deep, intense sort of a way, bow-tie undone, smiles darkly at the proceedings and walks confidently up to a deserted bar and speaks to a smartly-dressed, middle-aged, equally dark-looking barman.

HARRY

Whisky.

The barman unsmilingly takes a glass and fills it twice from an optic. He puts it down and drops in two ice cubes, looks at HARRY and smiles a bit. HARRY has been here before. He takes a deep drink and looks around before wandering out through glass doors onto an adjacent balcony; wide and handsome as the groom, bedecked with flowers and fairy lights but entirely empty. HARRY leans on the wall and looks out at the city lights and sighs a little before taking a long drink. A young woman, MICHELLE, 30ish, pretty, elegantly-dressed, steps out onto the balcony and joins him.

MICHELLE

Don't you just hate all this happiness?

HARRY

Well, I suppose I do, but it's too easy, isn't? Shouldn't we be happy for them? They're the winners after all.

MICHELLE

And we're the losers?

HARRY

I suppose we are. Well, winners and losers, what does it matter, fifty percent of marriages end in divorce these days.

MICHELLE

That's better.

HARRY

Better?

MICHELLE

I imagined you'd be cynical, world-weary, dark and intense.

HARRY

Well you've got that bit right. I'm Harry, by the way.

MICHELLE

Michelle, and I know, I've already been told to keep away from you

HARRY

Hmm, I have puritanical cousins with, well, let's be kind and just say limited imagination. (warming to the task a little) So would you like to dance or should we take a good vantage point and wait for the inevitable drunk uncle to start a fight or try to molest someone half his age.

MICHELLE

Well both I would hope, it's the only reason I came. However I think the dance thing for now but you should know that I'm not going to sleep with you, not tonight anyway.

HARRY

Oh well I might as well just go home then. That's the only reason I came.

They both smile and walk hand in hand back to the party.

FADE TO:

2 EXT CASTLE ESPLANADE NIGHT

HARRY and MICHELLE dance a somewhat drunken waltz on Edinburgh castle esplanade (a wide expanse of tarmac leading up to the castle, overlooking Princes Street) HARRY is holding a bottle of champagne. They break, HARRY takes a swig from the bottle and offers it to MICHELLE who laughs and does the same before putting the bottle down. HARRY pulls her towards him and they kiss passionately.

HARRY

(whimsically) So, where do we go now? Where to go? Where indeed to go?

MICHELLE

(laughing) I'm still not going to sleep with you, for all you know I might be the kind of girl who only sleeps with people after they marry her.

HARRY

(getting down on one knee) Will you marry me?

MICHELLE

(laughing) No! For goodness sake. (pause) People will think we're in love.

HARRY

(after another little pause) You know for a second there I was actually disappointed you said 'no'.

MICHELLE

For a second I was disappointed you were only joking. (pause, they look at each other and smile diffidently) Anyway it's the height of ridiculousness, is that a word? It should be.

HARRY

It should be, I'll phone the Home Office tomorrow. Or the queen, I'm sure the queen deals with these things.

MICHELLE

Well you're going to be busy tomorrow. (pause) You know there's another one of these things in a month, I think it's the cousin or the sister or something.

HARRY

It's the cousin, another one of my vile blood, or is that bloody, relatives. Shall we attend together? And be shocking?

MICHELLE

(kissing him) Oh we shall. We shall be utterly disgraceful.

FADE TO:

3 EXT TAXI RANK NIGHT

HARRY and MICHELLE kiss again as a cab draws up.

HARRY

(as MICHELLE gets into the taxi) Goodnight, sweet princess.

MICHELLE

(rolling down the window as the taxi pulls away) I had a wonderful night, Harry.

CUT TO:

4 EXT STREET NIGHT

HARRY is walking jauntily up a side street and suddenly stops and starts to turn round and then stops again.

HARRY

Bugger, bugger, bugger, the one fucking night you don't get a phone number. Idiot.

5 EXT STREET NIGHT

MICHELLE gets out of the taxi and walks a little unsteadily towards the front door of a respectable middle-class tenement block. She checks in her handbag for her keys and suddenly looks skyward with drunken concern.

MICHELLE

Bugger, bugger, bugger. Phone number. Idiot.

CUT TO:

THREE WEEKS LATER

6 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

A middle-aged, bespectacled, aunt, wearing the most respectable clothes in Britain, AUNTIE, and a quiet, sensible-looking young man, MICHAEL, sit drinking tea in a spotless, middle-class room. There is a plate of biscuits. MICHAEL looks at them with abject loathing.

AUNTIE

More tea, dear, another biscuit.

MICHAEL

No, thanks.

MICHAEL's imagination takes over the rest of the scene.

MICHAEL

In fact you can take these fucking biscuits and shove them up your tight, middle-class boring, respectable, boring, pot-pouri reeking, bleach-encrusted, boring, tedious, fucking arse.

FADE TO:

7 EXT STREET DAY

As the words from the preceding scene end we gradually fade to MICHAEL walking down a street lined on both sides with classic Scottish tenement buildings, a wealthy, middle-class, slightly studenty area. He is reading an ad for apartments.

CUT TO:

8 EXT NEWSPAPER DAY

The ad reads, 'Comfortable, spacious apartment in attractive location, reasonable rates, must hate children and animals and be prepared to at least tolerate hedonistic behaviour. Devil worshippers considered providing no pets.'

CUT TO:

9 INT APARTMENT DAY

MICHAEL knocks on the front door of the apartment. A man, RADIO, thirties, dishevelled, wearing only a towel, around his head, answers the door and looks at MICHAEL inquisitively. MICHAEL surveys this bizarre spectacle not quite knowing what to say.

RADIO

(politely) Can I help you at all?

MICHAEL

Er, I was looking for a Mr Parker?

RADIO

(turning round and shouting to anyone who might be listening) Is there a Mr Parker here, Mr Parker, anyone?

VOICE

Harry, you fucking dipshit.

RADIO

Right, right, you want Harry? You better come in.

MICHAEL follows RADIO into the seventh level of hell. People in various stages of undress are wandering about aimlessly. It is indeed a spacious apartment, largely open-plan, several rooms, the door on one of which has scrawled the words, 'you can check out any time you like but you can never leave'. MICHAEL follows RADIO into a large living room/kitchen area. A MAN is preparing to snort coke from a mirror at a coffee table. RADIO runs over to him on sight of this and beats him away with his towel. MAN backs off quickly.

RADIO

How dare you? I trust you with my possessions and this how you repay me?
You filthy swine.

RADIO immediately snorts the remainder of the line and then looks up.

RADIO

That's much better. Did you come about the room?

MICHAEL

Yes I did, is he here?

RADIO

I think he went out. It's maybe that room over there.

RADIO indicates a door in the hallway, adjacent to the living-room. MICHAEL wanders over uncertainly and opens the door to reveal a large well-lit bedroom furnished with only a bed, with three people in it.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry.

He retreats quickly and closes the door turning round to be confronted by a very much happier and even more manic RADIO.

RADIO

(handing MICHAEL a note) I found this.

The note reads, 'Tell him if he wants it it's £400 a month and all the whisky he can drink'

RADIO

I'm not sure if that's all the whisky you can drink or Harry can drink. If it's all the whisky Harry can drink you might not be able to afford it. I stayed here for a while and it was all I could drink but Harry couldn't afford it. So I suppose when you break it down...

MICHAEL

I think I've got the gist of it. Tell him I'll think about it over some whisky. I'm Michael Sanderson, I'll phone him soon.

RADIO

I'll do that, Michael Sanderson, you seem like a nice chap, I'll tell him that, I'll recommend you.

MICHAEL

Well, that's very kind of you and I won't forget that, (pause) or indeed any of, (looking round at the human detritus, empty whisky bottles and underwear hanging from the coat hangers) well, this.

CUT TO:

10 INT STAIRWELL DAY

MICHAEL descends the staircase outside the apartment. After a few steps there is the sound of a door slamming, followed by female giggling and a few seconds later MICHAEL is confronted by a drunken HARRY accompanied by an attractive, young, blonde-haired woman, CHRISTINE. HARRY stands in front of her protectively.

HARRY

Be careful, my dear, this man may be armed. Are you armed, sir?

MICHAEL

Not at the moment.

HARRY

So you intend to return bearing arms. I thought as much, (turning to CHRISTINE) I imagined this frightening development as soon as I set eyes on this fellow. We must be on our mettle, Pauline...

WOMAN

Christine.

HARRY

Christine, (brushing past MICHAEL, dramatically) we must return to the castle and prepare for war. It's war I tell you.

CUT TO:

11 INT APARTMENT DAY

HARRY and CHRISTINE lurch drunkenly in through the front door. There are still a few people wandering about still in various stages of undress, still all looking the worse for wear.

HARRY

(to anyone who might be listening) It's war! We are engaged in conflict. Where is my chief minister? (shouting) Chief minister! I demand a consultation, chief minister!

RADIO emerges from a room now sporting a twin set complete with pearls.

HARRY

We must repair to the drawing room.

They go into the living room and sit down, HARRY continues talking as they do.

HARRY

There have been worrying developments on the Franco-Prussian border and I myself have been party to a serious man.

RADIO

(shocked) No!

HARRY

Yes. We may well be subjected to accusations of breach of the peace, public affray, public indecency and indeed public toilets. This serious man may even ask us...

RADIO

(with grave concern) You can't say it, you mustn't...

HARRY

I must, my old friend, I must, (very gravely, slowly and deliberately) they may even ask us to (he swallows) keep the noise down.

There is a communal gasp from the five or six people who have now gathered in the living room to see what is going on.

RADIO

(turning his head away in disgust, in a whisper) The horror. The horror. (pause) Wait a minute, was this a young guy, jeans and a sweater, dark hair, glasses?

HARRY

Yeah.

RADIO

That's the guy that came to see about the room. I recommend him.

HARRY

(regarding RADIO's attire, looking him up and down) And...

RADIO

Oh, don't worry, I wasn't wearing this.

HARRY

Good. (thinking for a second, then, triumphantly) Then we are at peace. (a muted cheer is heard from the assembled human detritus who then disperse slowly as HARRY continues in statesman-like fashion) These have been a dark seventeen and a half minutes but we may sleep more easily in our baths tonight, our precious way of life preserved. The alcohol shall run like tap water and the three cornerstones of our society; sex, drugs and rock and roll will be freely available to all. (a louder cheer follows this one)

RADIO

These are wonderful sentiments (pause, starting to cry) I feel quite emotional.

CUT TO:

12 EXT OUTSIDE CINEMA NIGHT

MICHELLE stands waiting and looking around. A DRUNK approaches her.

DRUNK

Been stood up doll?

MICHELLE

Looks like it. Are you busy tonight? You look like you'd be a charming companion.

DRUNK

I would be, I used to work in the zoo, I cleaned out the penguins an' the camel, I liked the penguins, gave them bananas an' stuff. I wrote a story about them an' everythin'. So, you know, you're just my type an' this might be a bit quick but, well, let's get married.

MICHELLE

Well, it's a tempting offer but, oh well, here comes my friend so I'll have to decline, for now.

MICHAEL appears and gives MICHELLE a kiss on the cheek. They are clearly old friends.

MICHELLE

You're late and because of your lateness I almost married a man who writes about penguins. How do you feel now?

MICHAEL

Ashamed.

MICHELLE

And so you should, you're a disgrace.

MICHAEL

I can't be bothered to go to the pictures, let's have a drink.

MICHELLE

Fine. We shall proceed to the nearest pub and embark on a drinking spree of horrifying proportions. I shall strip down to my underwear and do the splits on the bar, I'll have sex in the toilets with three different men and then I'll projectile vomit on a wedding party. I'll be publicly disgraced and people will point me out on the street and say, 'you wouldn't think it to look at her'. I think it'll be the end of me.

MICHAEL

It's more likely to be the beginning of you.

MICHELLE

Nonetheless, I feel quite reckless. Do you think I should take my knickers off and wave them in the face of a passing policeman?

MICHAEL

No, well, I've no objection to you taking your knickers off but not here exactly.

MICHELLE

Michael Sanderson, you know I love you but not like that, not in a knickers kind of a way.

MICHAEL

Oh, alright. I might be about to share a flat with the devil and I'm not sure what to do.

CUT TO:

13 INT PUB NIGHT

MICHAEL and MICHELLE sit in a fairly typical Edinburgh pub. Oak furniture, Victorian paintings, brasses, fittings of all sorts, probably all fake. And Australian student bar staff. Unfortunately all real.

MICHELLE

I suspect you are on the verge of an exciting adventure. Was he good looking?

MICHAEL

You're thinking with your knickers again.

MICHELLE

We must stop talking about my knickers. They are not for public consumption. I think you should take it, anything's better than your terrible aunt, I mean, what if you pick up a girl?

MICHAEL

Hmm, I suppose, anyway, I have the feeling that might not be a problem in that place, the point is, do I really want to live there?

MICHELLE

You don't have to stay if you don't like it.

MICHAEL

That's true, I hadn't thought about that.

MICHELLE

It's settled then you must move in and begin your adventure, what's his name by the way?

MICHAEL

Harry.

MICHELLE

Really (thinking aloud). No it can't be, I'm sure it's not.

CUT TO:

14 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT DAY

MICHAEL and AUNTIE are standing in the living room looking around in bemusement, in MICHAEL's case at a pristine clean apartment.

MICHAEL

Harry, are you there? Harry?

HARRY appears looking distinctly the worse for wear, again. He is wearing only a pair of highly suspect underpants.

HARRY

You must be Martin.

MICHAEL

Michael.

HARRY

Michael, and this young lady is...

MICHAEL

My aunt.

HARRY

Oh, a sister surely, never an aunt.

AUNTIE is clearly unamused.

HARRY

You must excuse my underpants.

HARRY disappears, presumably to put some clothes on. AUNTIE makes for the front door and beckons MICHAEL to follow her. They talk quietly at the door.

AUNTIE

You can just come home until we find someone nice for you to live with.

MICHAEL

It's alright, I think he's been ill.

AUNTIE

Well if you're sure.

MICHAEL

I'll be fine.

AUNTIE

Phone me later, just to be safe. (whispering) I think he might be a communist.

MICHAEL

Don't worry, I'll be fine.

AUNTIE kisses him on the cheek and leaves. MICHAEL returns to the living room to find HARRY holding a glass of whisky and gazing out of the window at the apartment block opposite.

HARRY

I disgust my sister.

MICHAEL

Sorry?

HARRY

My sister, she imagines I spend my life in a state of perpetual squalor and insists on disinfecting the place every time she comes round, which isn't often mercifully. She has children.

MICHAEL

You make them sound like a disease.

HARRY

It's time I had another strong drink, would you like a drink?

MICHAEL

I suppose I could.

HARRY goes to a cupboard and produces expensive-looking single malt and two glasses. He sits down beside MICHAEL and proceeds to pour two very large straight whiskies and then takes a long drink followed by a cough.

HARRY

I don't hand this stuff out to just anyone you know. One glass and then it's back to the twelve year olds. So to speak.

MICHAEL

(not quite knowing what to say) Thanks.

HARRY gets up and goes over to the window, surveying the tenement buildings opposite. A pretty blonde girl is gazing out of a window.

HARRY

We should go out, it's Friday. Gorgeous blonde from number seven across the road is thinking about her lipstick. I wouldn't get too excited, though, I met her at a party once and she called me a 'fucking disgrace'. She has a dull relationship with a dull accountant. I think they're married now with a dull child.

HARRY turns round and continues with a little more animation.

HARRY

You know what gets me, though? They always look so in control of their lives, so confident, like they're saying, 'okay, so maybe I am a bit boring but I know exactly who I am, where I am and where I'm going'. You know, I think I hate them for that, how do they find it all so easy?

MICHAEL

(sympathetically) Well, for what it's worth I tend to do it too. But it's only because you don't know them. From here they're only two dimensional images, I'm sure their lives are full of problems, we make them perfect.

HARRY

Exactly my point, I make them perfect, why do I do that? Why do you do that?

MICHAEL

Not sure. They probably do it too, though. The fact that she called you a fucking disgrace probably says a lot about her, I mean when you think about it, it's a pretty unpleasant thing to say to someone you hardly know. Jealousy, insecurity...

HARRY

(smiling) Go on, I'm starting to like this conversation.

MICHAEL smiles a little, too. Maybe they're not so different.

MICHAEL

That's the tortured genius from number ten. He's decadent, hedonistic, clever, witty, good-looking, has wild parties every weekend. They probably hate you. For no other reason than that they're themselves and not you.

HARRY

(smiling) Who said I was tortured? It's time to go to the pub.

CUT TO:

15 INT PUB NIGHT

MICHELLE walks into a small pub. She is clearly very unsure of herself although the place is empty. It is not a trendy West End place, more sticky carpets, bars on the windows and blood-stained wallpaper. It has a charm though, warm, friendly and an authoritarian but likeable publican, DOROTHY. MICHELLE sidles up to the bar. DOROTHY helps.

DOROTHY

Hello young lady, what would you like to drink?

MICHELLE

Er, I'll have a gin and tonic please.

DOROTHY

No problem, on your own or waiting for a friend?

MICHELLE

Actually I was kind hoping to meet someone, sort of, he doesn't know I'm here or anything but I know he lives round the corner and I was well, I was wondering, do you know a guy called Harry?

DOROTHY

(thinking hard, sympathetically) Yeah, he comes in here, how do you know him?

MICHELLE

Well, this probably sounds crazy and please don't think I'm a deranged lovesick kid, because I'm not, really not but I had the most wonderfully romantic night of my life a couple of weeks ago with a guy called Harry and we forgot to exchange numbers and then I thought and he probably thought and you know, maybe he just forgot about me and I was just one of an endless stream of, well, you know.

DOROTHY

I'll be honest with you, Harry's off the scale crazy but he's a very charismatic, likeable, even loveable guy and I'll leave it at that. Well actually I won't leave it at that but I'll be charitable because you seem like a nice girl and girls like you and 'wonderfully romantic' aren't what I would normally associate with HARRY so I'll tell him you were here and if he's got any sense he'll call you.

MICHELLE

(smiling) That's nice of you, I'm Michelle.

DOROTHY

Dorothy, and hopefully we'll meet again.

MICHELLE leaves, DOROTHY smiles wistfully.

CUT TO:

16 INT PUB NIGHT

HARRY and NOSTRIL sit at the same bar a few hours later. NOSTRIL is reading a newspaper. HARRY throws a beer mat at him, hitting him on the side of the head. NOSTRIL looks up, a little annoyed as HARRY snatches the newspaper away.

HARRY

We're supposed to be entertaining each other, we can read newspapers at home.

NOSTRIL

I was reading my horoscope, give me that back.

HARRY

(regarding the newspaper) What sign are you?

NOSTRIL

Pisces.

HARRY

Pisces, right here we are, today will not be an interesting day, you will wake up late and make a cup of tea from that old teabag next to the sink that is the only thing in the world that has less will to live than you. You will watch mind-numbing chat shows and game shows where you, too, will have the chance to win. That rotisserie oven could be yours, just get out your phone and dial the fucking number, Pisces. This evening you will watch successful young men engaging in sports and you will love them all, hope dissolving with each and every little injection of TV happiness, just sitting there on the couch waiting for arthritis to set in. You will see how stunning young housewives are finding it easier and easier to wash their dishes. Each week the grease comes off more easily than the last until finally she just smiles at the dishes and they are magically clean. Not like the dishes in your kitchen, Pisces, not like those gravy-encrusted, mould-cultivating plates that you are considering throwing out because not even Fairy Excel could get rid of the filth in your kitchen. You, Pisces, would need a fucking pneumatic drill to get rid of all that. You will go to your bed, another piece of your soul destroyed, another humiliating day over, you will masturbate while thinking about that girl who works in the Post Office, with whom, by the way, you have no chance but, wait, just as you are drifting off to sleep, inspiration will come to you. You might win the lottery, it's only fourteen million to one, so don't worry, Pisces, it could be you.

NOSTRIL

It doesn't say that, does it?

DOROTHY rolls her eyes, obviously being used to these sorts of musings from HARRY.

DOROTHY

Radio was in here looking for you. Also a very pretty girl called Michelle came in here looking for someone called Harry. Something you want to tell me.

HARRY

(with great interest) Michelle, really?

DOROTHY

Uh huh. That's quite a reaction, for you. Don't tell me you're in love?

HARRY

No, God no, not really, not exactly, oh God. (composing himself) What did Radio want?

MICHAEL enters and joins HARRY at the bar.

DOROTHY

There was some nonsense about the milkman.

HARRY

Dear God, not again.

DOROTHY

Yes, again.

MICHAEL

The milkman?

HARRY

(DOROTHY and HARRY exchange a look) I'll take it, Dorothy, Radio loves, well, loved Mary. Mary, who works in a dairy, if you can believe it, left Radio for a milkman.

DOROTHY

A milk distribution executive.

HARRY

Is there a difference? Yeah, yeah, I suppose there is, anyway, his previous girlfriend having left him for the postman, and no, I'm really not making this up. Radio decides that enough is enough, at least from delivery personnel, and I quote, 'it appears that every romantic encounter I have is at the mercy of the Andorran national football team'. That's kind of a football joke.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I get it, that's pretty funny.

HARRY

Yes, it was a good joke, and a relief to know that you like football, that'll tend to come up.

DOROTHY

It never goes away.

HARRY

Two pints of lager please, Dorothy. Anyway, that's kind of where we are, from a Radio point of view. (turning to DOROTHY) This is Dorothy, by the way, Michael (DOROTHY and MICHAEL shake hands) is renting the spare room.

DOROTHY

Well, good luck, I hardly know where to start...

HARRY

Then don't.

DOROTHY

Don't let them tie you to anything, most especially not a sheep, poor Nostril. Always keep your clothes on even if it seems as though you shouldn't, believe me it happens. I've had more naked, angry people in here asking to borrow a phone than you could possibly imagine, don't trust the clocks in the house; he likes to have different time zones in there so the party just keeps on going and never, ever, ever open a window and lean out.

HARRY

Oh for goodness sake Dorothy, that's ridiculous.

DOROTHY

They tied Barney to a home-made bungee rope, it was just awful. Those poor old people in the ground floor flat thought they were going to be robbed.

HARRY

No they didn't...

DOROTHY

By a large, naked man, intermittently for half an hour until the police came.

RADIO enters.

RADIO

Well, well, how is the wild man of the west end? (Indicating to DOROTHY that he would like a drink, NOSTRIL indicates the same.)

DOROTHY pours pints for both RADIO and NOSTRIL, clearly knowing what they want.

HARRY

Me? Well I suppose I'm bearing up under the strain of well, everything.

RADIO

And by everything, you mean nothing.

HARRY

It's far too early for a philosophical debate. How's your milkman.

DOROTHY puts RADIO's pint down on the bar in front of him and looks at him in expectation of payment. RADIO looks blank, then at NOSTRIL who shrugs his shoulders and looks at HARRY who pays. Nothing is said.

NOSTRIL

We don't like him and we have stopped drinking milk.

HARRY

Commendable. This is Michael; he's renting the spare room.

NOSTRIL AND RADIO

Good luck.

MICHAEL

I really wish people would stop saying that.

HARRY

They will now, from now on they'll just look at you with a mixture of disgust, horror and disbelief.

MICHAEL

Oh well, thank God for that.

RADIO

In answer to your question, he keeps a vintage motor cycle in a garage and I am eating it

HARRY and DOROTHY look at each other in stunned silence.

HARRY

The garage?

RADIO

The motorbike.

DOROTHY

Even for you...

HARRY

So this is some sort of revenge mission I assume, or were you just hungry?

RADIO

It is revenge on the scale of a Greek tragedy.

HARRY

I have the horrible feeling that that is precisely how it is going to end. Having said all that maybe you should write to one of these reality television producers and see if you can get on one of these 'my girlfriend ran off with the milkman so I ate his motorbike TV shows'. You'll be a star.

RADIO

I'm already a star, Harry, (finishing his pint in unison with NOSTRIL) we have to go, I'm getting hungry.

HARRY

Well, don't eat anything I wouldn't.

FADE TO:

17 INT PUB NIGHT

HARRY and MICHAEL are sitting at the bar in a west end pub, loud, trendy, full of chrome furniture and young people, both are engaged in conversation with attractive young women, JANICE and MAGGIE.

JANICE (talking to MICHAEL)

So is your friend really a surgeon?

MICHAEL

Oh yes, yes he is very much a surgeon.

HARRY

(overhearing and interrupting) I most certainly am a surgeon, I tend to specialise in gunshot wounds, I could be rushed off to Spain or Zanzibar at a moment's notice.

MICHAEL

(drunkenly) Specialising in gunshot wounds.

HARRY takes MICHAEL to one side.

HARRY

I'm going to head home with this girl, do you mind if I leave you to your own devices?

MICHAEL

(whispering drunkenly) I might not have been too convincing about the gunshot thing.

HARRY

Don't worry, you're so drunk you're not all that convincing telling them the truth.

MICHAEL

Ok.

They go back to their respective friends. We focus on HARRY.

HARRY

So, I was thinking, shall we go?

MAGGIE

Go where?

HARRY

On a flight of fancy. To the land of sweet dreams and sensual pleasure beyond your wildest, wettest, wickedest fantasy.

MAGGIE

Is that your place or mine?

CUT TO:

18 INT HARRY'S BEDROOM NIGHT

HARRY's bedroom is much as we would expect. Clean and tidy, this would be quite a nice room but, sadly, even HARRY's sister doesn't come in here. There are empty cans and bottles lying about, clothes everywhere but it is nonetheless atmospheric, a little light stealing in from the street illuminating the smoke from HARRY's cigarette. There is a bedside table with a bottle of whisky and two glasses. HARRY leans over and pours himself a drink.

MAGGIE

Why is there a traffic cone on top of your wardrobe?

HARRY

In case anyone tries to park there during the night, I've had quite a bit of trouble with that sort of thing lately, it's really very difficult to find a parking space in this area. This is much cheaper than having a traffic warden spend the night. (thinking) although oddly enough that actually happened once.

MAGGIE

(laughing) So, what do you do really, I mean apart from specialising in gunshot wounds, I mean, really, does anyone actually fall for that?

HARRY

You did. No, actually, I'm a professional killer. I kill people, in all fairness bad people, footballers mostly, but people nonetheless. And sometimes horses (pause) and once a guinea pig.

MAGGIE

Oh you are not, what do you do, really?

HARRY

Dear God, why does everyone have to know what I do? I will marry the girl who doesn't have to know.

MAGGIE

Well, because it's important, girls like to know that a person has prospects, a future, at least a plan for a future. I don't just sleep with anyone you know.

HARRY

I do.

MAGGIE

(missing the irony) Well I don't, so tell me, really, really, what do you do?

HARRY

(sighing) I'm a bum, I lead a pathetic, sad, lonely existence, drink heavily but, fortunately have an independent supply of wealth. I have a degree in history – honours I might add – but have no genuine ambitions other than to get as drunk as possible as often as possible. I eat beans on toast, sit around doing crosswords, don't eat out, don't go to the cinema and don't enjoy long walks on the beach.

MAGGIE

Oh, come on, really what do you do?

HARRY

Oh alright, I'm a car salesman.

MAGGIE

Really?

HARRY

Really.

Sell me a car then.

MAGGIE

Would you like to buy a car?

HARRY

Okay!

MAGGIE

CUT TO:

19 INT APARTMENT DAY

MAGGIE is in the kitchen making breakfast. MICHAEL looks on somewhat bewildered before retreating to the living room area where, oddly, NOSTRIL is sleeping on the couch. MICHAEL sits down and puts his head in his hands.

CUT TO:

20 INT WAITING ROOM DAY

HARRY is dreaming, he is sitting in a dentist's waiting room looking in horror at the person next to him, MAGGIE.

So what do you do for a living then?

MAGGIE

Nothing, why?

HARRY

Because I was going to ask you to marry me, I'm going to have your baby. We're here to have its teeth looked at. They're going to perform dental surgery on our unborn baby's teeth. It's wonderful what they can do nowadays.

MAGGIE

(sweating profusely) I have to go somewhere.

HARRY

HARRY leaves the waiting room and begins to walk down a long corridor with hamburger stands on either side. Not knowing what to do he stops and approaches a smiling vendor who has spectacular teeth.

Hamburger?

VENDOR

HARRY

(uncertainly) Yes, yes a hamburger please.

VENDOR

Are you sure, you don't seem sure?

HARRY

Yes, I want a hamburger.

VENDOR

We have cheeseburgers aswell.

HARRY

(panicking) A cheeseburger.

VENDOR

With what, onions, relish, salad? (turning nasty) You don't know what you want, do you?

HARRY

No, I don't I'm sorry, I have to go home.

VENDOR

You don't know where that is either do you?

HARRY

(miserably) No, I don't.

VENDOR

Haven't you got any shoes on?

HARRY looks down at his bare feet. He starts to run, the hamburger stand vendors are all laughing at him and pointing at his feet, he is terrified but eventually finds MAGGIE behind one of the stands complete with the baby, smiling at him with a full set of adult teeth.

MAGGIE

We really should get married, look at our baby, isn't it amazing, look at his teeth.

CUT TO:

21 INT BEDROOM DAY

HARRY sits bolt upright in bed, he is sweating like a racehorse.

HARRY

Dear God not again.

He looks down at clammy, shaking hands, puts on a dressing gown and trails unhappily through to the living room where he is confronted, rather suddenly, by MAGGIE, at which he screams.

CUT TO:

22 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Still in HARRY's apartment now much later in the day, HARRY is still in his dressing gown looking awful and staring at the wall. MICHAEL comes in fully-dressed but not looking a great deal better. NOSTRIL, too, is coming round.

NOSTRIL

Is there anything to eat?

HARRY

If memory serves there is a tin of alphabet spaghetti in the cupboard.

NOSTRIL goes in search of the tin.

HARRY

Can I tell you something?

MICHAEL

(tiredly) No.

HARRY

I didn't have sex with that girl.

MICHAEL

Was that it?

HARRY

No, it's not that, I met a girl and had a nice time with her, a really nice time a few weeks ago and then, well, we forgot to exchange phone numbers and I could've tracked her down but I didn't and then, well, as it turns out we're going to the same wedding in a week or so, so I thought well, I'll see her soon anyway but, truth be told, I wish I could see her now, I can't stop thinking about her.

MICHAEL

Are you in love with this girl? You're kind of going about things the wrong way if you are.

HARRY

I don't know, I've spent so long going about things the wrong way I think I'd forgotten what it was like to have a right thing.

MICHAEL

(struggling to take an interest) I trust last night's entertainment has departed.

HARRY

Mercifully. I wouldn't recommend whisky and fried bread for breakfast. Only the bloody British could come up with fried bread, Jesus Christ you might as well eat lard with a spoon. Oh God...

HARRY stands up and projectile vomits onto the carpet. He looks down at this and sighs before leaving the room.

MICHAEL

Harry! Harry! You can't just leave that there.

HARRY

(speaking out of shot) Watch me.

MICHAEL slumps down on the settee and sighs. A few seconds later the front door opens and closes. HARRY has left the building.

CUT TO:

23 INT BAR NIGHT

MICHAEL and MICHELLE are sitting in the chrome furniture bar. Michelle is still giving nothing away but we get the feeling she, at least, half suspects that HARRY is her HARRY.

MICHELLE

Well, I have to say that I share his reservations on the subject of fried bread.

MICHAEL

Well, so do I but I don't mix it with whisky and plaster it to the living room carpet.

MICHELLE

I imagine he must have body parts in the freezer, and likes to push old ladies down the stairs when nobody's looking. He doesn't do this sort of thing every day, does he?

MICHAEL

No, I don't suppose he does, although I've only been there two days. So, actually yes he does.

MICHELLE

Oh don't be silly, everyone does something they'd sooner forget once in a while. Why only yesterday I shared a bottle of meths with a couple of down and outs in the park and then had sex with both of them right there on a park bench in broad daylight. We were arrested of course and my father had to come to the jail and bail me out but we all had a good laugh about it afterwards. Mother wants to have them round for tea.

MICHAEL

You don't have to live with him.

MICHELLE

I wish I did, he sounds a damn sight more interesting than Martin the accountant and Maureen the beauty therapist. They practically faint if I have a glass of wine with my dinner. I'd far rather live with Maureen the crack whore and Martin the horse mutilator.

MICHAEL

Let's go back to my place and you can see for yourself, I'm sure we'll walk in on some sort of horrifying spectacle.

CUT TO:

24 INT APARTMENT NIGHT

MICHAEL and MICHELLE stand in the living room of the apartment looking down a large hole which has been cut in the carpet where once lay HARRY's vomit. MICHAEL wanders over to an open window and looks out then turns round again, evidently not seeing much.

MICHAEL

You see what I mean, he's not even here and I have to deal with his insanity.

MICHELLE

Yeah, well, I suppose when you think about it, it is his carpet.

MICHAEL

He's mad.

MICHELLE

Slightly mad, certainly. I like him.

Upon hearing a snore they go into the kitchen where NOSTRIL is asleep, face down at the kitchen table. In front of him sits a plate of alphabet spaghetti with which has been spelt out the words, 'this is shit'.

MICHAEL

Just when you think it can't get any more insane.

CUT TO:

25 EXT PARK NIGHT

HARRY walks sombrelly through a park. He stops to light a cigarette, blows smoke up at the moon and carries on walking into the darkness. A DRUNK staggers up to him.

DRUNK

Got any spare change, pal?

HARRY

I'm terribly sorry I need all my money for alcohol and drugs.

DRUNK

Got a cigarette then?

HARRY

(giving him the packet) Here.

DRUNK

(lighting up and trailing along beside HARRY) So what's your story?

HARRY

Oh, I don't have much of a story, I'm really just the same as you only I have more money.

DRUNK

You're no' the same as me son, you've a ways to go yet before you're me.

HARRY sits down on a park bench under a street light and is joined by DRUNK.

HARRY

My parents died in a car crash fifteen years ago and I think they're still on holiday. I think in the back of my head I believe that if I just keep drinking and getting out of my face, one of these days they'll come home and life can just go back to normal.

DRUNK

(quietly, sadly) No, son, they're not on holiday. (pause) I was like you, lost my wife. Must be twenty or so years ago now, maybe longer, you start to lose count after a while. The thing is, you are back to normal, this is normal. Normal isn't always all that good.

HARRY

(ironically) You're not kidding. (pause, HARRY smokes the last of his cigarette and puts it out). Well, illuminating as this has been I'd best be getting along.

HARRY begins to walk away, stops, fishes out his wallet and takes out a twenty, goes back and gives it to DRUNK, who smiles, gets up and heads off in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

26 HARRY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

HARRY, MICHAEL and RADIO sit drinking beer and watching football. HARRY is rolling a joint. The front door is heard to open and close with a loud bang.

MICHAEL

Dear God, what's that?

HARRY puts his joint in the middle of a newspaper and hides it under the coffee table and RADIO tries to make a run for it. Before he can get to the door, however, his path is blocked by a small angry young woman, AILEEN, HARRY's sister. AILEEN is attractive, dark, intense like HARRY but always looks as though she is about to have an argument with someone, most likely HARRY, although RADIO would come a close second. Both HARRY and RADIO look horrified.

HARRY

(warily) How delightful, Michael, may I introduce my charming sister, Aileen.

AILEEN

(angrily) You can smell the fucking dope smoke before you even turn the corner into this street. You know just for once it would be nice if I could walk in here and you weren't drinking, taking drugs or shagging one of my friends.

HARRY

Well, one out of three isn't bad. Unless you've brought a friend, of course.

AILEEN thins her lips.

AILEEN

Granny wants to see us. Tomorrow.

HARRY

(suddenly panicking a bit) I, er, I can't I've got to go to a wedding.

AILEEN

Saturday, she's my cousin, too, you idiot.

RADIO

Should've thought that one through Harry.

AILEEN

(addressing RADIO with full force) Shut up.

RADIO

Yes I will do that, very sensible advice.

HARRY

What does she want?

AILEEN

I don't know.

HARRY

Don't know or won't tell me?

AILEEN

Won't tell you. Caledonian Hotel, at the crack of noon. I strongly advise you to be there.

AILEEN turns tails and leaves.

RADIO

We need to tie a bell to her or something. If we could get her unconscious we could implant her with some sort of alarm device. We could be out of here before...

HARRY

It's no good, she doesn't sleep, you might as well try to bring down a charging elephant on speed. (pauses) It's one of these terrifying phrases, 'strongly advise you to be there'. Mark my words, no good can come of this.

CUT TO:

27 INT HOTEL DAY

HARRY, AILEEN and GRANNY sit in a restaurant in the Caledonian (a five star hotel). GRANNY is about seventy, a formidable, imposing lady, grey hair, pretty healthy-looking for her age. HARRY is looking very uncomfortable. She clears her throat loudly and HARRY nearly jumps out of his seat. GRANNY smiles, a waiter appears.

WAITER

Would you like something to drink?

AILEEN

Could I have a coke please?

GRANNY

I'll just have a glass of water, thank you.

HARRY

I'll have a large glass of wine.

WAITER

Certainly, sir, any particular vintage?

AILEEN

Nope, just any crap you have lying around and could you serve that to him in a trough?

GRANNY

Aileen, that's quite enough,

AILEEN

(defiantly) Well.

GRANNY

(to the WAITER) A glass of house red will be fine. He'll need it.

HARRY

What's that supposed to mean?

GRANNY

I assume you have a hangover, as usual.

HARRY

You assume correctly. I assume that you are vile, manipulative old harridan as usual.

GRANNY

You assume correctly. (pause) Harry, how much money do you have left? I mean entirely, from your parent's estate, insurance settlements and so on.

HARRY clears his throat as if he is about to make something up.

GRANNY

Don't clear your throat dear, I know you're lying when you do that. (moving on before HARRY can say anything) Don't bother, I'm not an idiot, at a rough calculation I'm going to suggest that you have about two to three years left if you continue to live as you currently do.

HARRY looks a little bit stunned but doesn't say anything. AILEEN looks smug. GRANNY continues.

GRANNY

As you are aware your Grandfather left me comfortably off. Indeed, you will each inherit in excess of half a million which I propose to begin transferring to yourselves from now...

HARRY

(with great suspicion) A phone call wouldn't have sufficed?

GRANNY

Oh, Harry, and deprive myself of your company?

HARRY

What are you up to, you old fucker?

GRANNY

(completely unphased) Aileen, of course, is a responsible young woman and must support my grandchildren and so, will receive her share without complication.

AILEEN claps her hands in excitement.

HARRY

Fuck me, complication?

GRANNY

(calmly and matter-of-factly) You, you wasteful, drug-addled fucking arsehole will not receive a fucking penny until you complete a masters degree in 18th century European history.

The WAITER appears holding a pad and pen. He addresses GRANNY.

WAITER

Is Madam ready to order...

HARRY

You fucking evil old monster.

WAITER

I'll come back.

WAITER quickly leaves the area.

GRANNY

It occurred to me that you would find somewhere easy, far away and no doubt second rate where you could coast through, cheat and basically do as little as possible so you will, of course, go to Edinburgh. It happens that I am quite friendly with Dean of the Arts Faculty and it should go without saying that your progress will be monitored closely. I have chosen the Enlightenment era for your studies, with you in mind. I thought, for one deliciously malicious moment about statistical analysis but you might as well study drunkards, hedonists and the like, since, well, you're one of them.

HARRY

(squirming a bit, being nice might help) Come on, we don't have to do this do we?

GRANNY

(laughing) Of course we do Harry, at this rate in ten years you'd be homeless. You will also find a nice girl and have a proper relationship rather than, well, what you do now. About a year, I would say.

The WAITER approaches the table again.

HARRY

(angrily) You old whore.

The WAITER about turns again.

GRANNY

You've brought it on yourself, you and Aileen and the girls are all I have left. I will not sit and watch you waste your life away on parties. (seriously, taking his hand) The parties end Harry, your looks will fade, one day you'll think of something funny and a smart-mouthed young dickhead sitting at the bar will say it before you and he'll leave with the pretty girl you had your eye on and you'll just get used to sitting there holding onto a pint glass because it's all you've got to hold on to. You don't stay young forever.

HARRY

So I need a kick up the arse, is that it? Fuck that, I'm perfectly capable of leading a responsible life and having a normal relationship and even getting a job and earning a salary if I need to.

AILEEN

(scoffing) Ha!

GRANNY

So...

HARRY

There's more, fuck me, are you going to drink my blood now?

GRANNY

I wouldn't dare, I have to drive home. No that's about it. Anyway, it wouldn't do you any harm at all to find a girl you like and have a relationship of some duration, longer than twenty-four hours. What about that girl you left the wedding with last month?

HARRY

How did you know about her?

GRANNY

I'm a witch.

HARRY

Hmm, well, maybe I'll see her on Saturday, did it ever occur to you that I am actually in a relationship?

AILEEN

No.

HARRY

You are a bad sister, you know it wouldn't do you any harm to get pissed or stoned or both once in a while.

Harry gets up and walks out.

GRANNY

For all that, he's right you know, I've an ounce of grass in my handbag, take it and invite some friends over. It's good stuff.

AILEEN

(a bit shocked) Granny! I don't smoke that stuff. (pause) I tried it once at a party but I didn't really like it.

GRANNY

Well, you obviously weren't trying hard enough.

CUT TO:

28 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

RADIO, MICHAEL and NOSTRIL sit silently on the couch as HARRY paces up and down ranting. There is, curiously, a budgie in a cage in a corner of the room. A budgie which squawks relentlessly.

HARRY

...and to top it all off they fuck off to the bollocks...

MICHAEL

The Trossachs.

HARRY

Whatever, and leave me with Bernie the fucking budgie here to look after for a week, a fucking week, mark you, just so that I can prove that I am a sensible, decent, responsible human being.

NOSTRIL

It really makes a lot of noise.

BERNIE continues to squawk.

MICHAEL

It does, doesn't it?

HARRY

It never fucking stops, day and night.

MICHAEL

Well, one day and one night to be fair.

RADIO

Take it for a walk.

More squawking.

HARRY

(infuriated to the point of no return) Right that's fucking it.

HARRY storms out of the room and returns with a vacuum cleaner which he plugs in, switches on, puts into the budgie cage and, with one last squawk, vacuums Bernie.

HARRY

Who says I don't do my share of the housework.

MICHAEL, RADIO and NOSTRIL continue to sit on the couch now looking blankly at where once was Bernie.

CUT TO:

29 INT HOTEL NIGHT

The evening guests are starting to arrive at another very posh hotel. HARRY is pacing up and down in the foyer. MICHELLE finally appears and HARRY is suddenly happier than we have seen him for a while. MICHELLE, although a little unhappy about what has transpired in the intervening period can't help but be pleased to see HARRY waiting for her. She smiles.

HARRY

I was starting to think you weren't coming.

MICHELLE

I was starting to think you weren't going to call me.

HARRY

Yeah, I'm sorry about that, I hate my Dad's side of the family and the prospect of going cap in hand to them to plead for a girl's phone number, well, I would've done it eventually but after a while I kind of thought, well I knew you'd be here, so...

MICHELLE

So the dog ate your homework, you had a flat tyre on your bicycle, you got measles and your granny died.

HARRY

Unfortunately not, at least the Granny thing. But the rest of it's entirely accurate. The measles and everything, you know I think we really are remarkably compatible.

MICHELLE

(taking his arm and walking into the party)I have a small confession to make.

HARRY

You're a prostitute hired by my grandmother?

MICHELLE

Good grief, no, where did that come from?

They find a quiet corner in the ballroom and sit down.

HARRY

My grandmother.

MICHELLE

Some explanation of that may be required but, no, actually, Michael, your flatmate, Michael, is one of my closest friends. I should say that I only started to realise this a week or so ago and then I came to that terrible bar you go to...

HARRY

Yes I was told.

MICHELLE

Harry! Fuck me, you knew I came to see you and you still didn't try to get my phone number!

HARRY

It was only a week ago and then the dog ate my measles and my homework died...

MICHELLE

You're lucky you're funny.

HARRY

(seriously) I thought about you every day. I think I thought, if she turns up then it was real, it can be real.

MICHELLE

Let's go.

HARRY

Go where?

MICHELLE

Wherever we want. We should talk.

HARRY

Oh good, a girl who wants to talk.

MICHELLE

You can do all the talking if you want and we can even talk about football.

HARRY

Oh, darling, I knew one day you'd come.

They get up and leave.

CUT TO:

30 EXT CASTLE NIGHT

MICHELLE and MICHAEL stand on the esplanade, arms folded on the wall staring out over the city.

MICHELLE

So granny has lots of money and she won't give it to you unless you grow up.

HARRY

I wish people would stop asking me to grow up, I do lots of grown up things in fact...

MICHELLE

No Harry, I really don't want to know about your grown up activities.

HARRY

They're not all... (pause) yeah most of them are.

MICHELLE

What do you want to do with your life? Really, what do you want to do?

HARRY

You know, I don't know, I suppose that's part of the problem.

MICHELLE

Well, that's okay, it's not a crime, you know. Sounds to me as though your Granny, however inadvertently, has given you a chance to think about it. University isn't a bad idea, you've done it before, you're smart, good-looking...

HARRY

What has being good-looking got to do with anything?

MICHELLE

Oh, you'd be surprised at how much of a difference it makes. I once married a very bad man because he was good looking.

HARRY

You're married!

MICHELLE

Not anymore, not for a while. I'll tell you about it when, well, when I'm ready. Or drunk.

HARRY

(quietly) Okay. (pause) God I hate the idea of going back to school, I mean, they'll pull my hair and steal my lunch money won't they?

MICHELLE

I'll make you a packed lunch and we can shave your head.

HARRY

I like you. Can I keep you?

MICHELLE

Oh I'll think about it.

HARRY

I know I've had a drink but I think I actually quite like the idea of being a masters (pause) what will I be, a degreeist, a master of ceremonies, what am I when I get a masters degree?

MICHELLE

Well I'm not an expert but I think they'll call you Sir Master of History and people will have to lie down on the ground in front of you when you approach.

HARRY

That sounds about right, so what will you do while I'm engaging in academic excellence. Your excellence, that's what they'll call me.

CUT TO:

31 EXT CALTON HILL NIGHT

HARRY and MICHELLE are now at the opposite end of Princes Street, looking up at the Castle.

HARRY

It's hard to imagine that we are now, even as we speak, engaged in conversation from a diametrically opposite perspective.

MICHELLE

You must be sobering up if you can say all that, I couldn't say all that.

HARRY

We'll buy some drink somewhere, we shall have champagne and the finest cognac, whisky, beer, vodka and tequila. For starters. (pause) So, who are you? Where did you come from, how did you suddenly come into this insanity?

MICHELLE

(sighs a little) Well, I suppose the big thing was that I got married young to a horrible man who hit me and everything that that sort of relationship entails and (faltering) mercifully I got out of it quickly thanks to my friends and my family and I couldn't trust men for a long time but...

MICHELLE suddenly starts to cry quite uncontrollably. HARRY looks bemused at first but then holds her tightly for a few seconds until she composes herself.

HARRY

I'm sorry.

MICHELLE

No, I'm sorry, I shouldn't be behaving like this, it's embarrassing.

HARRY

I'm not embarrassed. You shouldn't be either. You know, I know it's not the sort of thing people generally say on a first date but I'm not that guy and I never will be.

MICHELLE

Technically this is the second date but I knew that you weren't from the moment I met you.

HARRY

I don't what to say now, I can't make jokes about all this.

MICHELLE

You can make jokes Harry, you just don't want to. That's probably a good thing. Why do you think I came looking for you? Why do you think I hate weddings?

HARRY

In all honesty I actually thought you hated my family as much as I do.

MICHELLE

(laughing) Well, no, not really.

They kiss passionately.

HARRY

I never usually get this far with anything, anyone, should we go to an Italian restaurant and then the pictures and then arrange to meet next Tuesday for a drink?

MICHELLE

I don't know Harry, we're sad, broken people with hope, youth and most importantly, alcohol on our side. I can't sleep with you, I'm just not there yet but I'll happily go back to this infamous apartment and get pissed with you, if you can live with that idea, for a while?

HARRY

You know I'm not really in a sex kind of a mood right now anyway, my family tends to have that effect on me. Getting pissed sounds pretty good.

CUT TO:

32 INT APARTMENT NIGHT

The lights are dimmed, jazz music is drifting dreamily through the apartment, HARRY and MICHELLE are drinking tequila shots while sitting on the couch looking at the empty budgie cage.

HARRY

So the end result is that I need an identical budgie.

MICHELLE

Hmm, some sort of an accident couldn't be arranged?

HARRY

For my sister, no, I don't think so and I'd be left with her kids so really no.

MICHELLE

Mm, a guinea pig? More entertaining, probably.

HARRY

That's a good idea, you see, that's why I like you, I wouldn't've thought of that.

There is a silence.

MICHELLE

Harry, I'm a bit scared. I don't want this to go too fast, too soon but you have to take that as a compliment if you see what I mean.

HARRY

I do, if you'll excuse the expression. (pause, straightening up and looking serious) No sex, no expectations, I phone you a taxi anytime you want to go home, we take it easy.

MICHELLE

Sorry, I haven't done this for a long time. (taking a shot of tequila) But somehow I don't want to go home either.

CUT TO:

33 INT APARTMENT DAY

Next morning HARRY and MICHELLE are sitting together looking out of the living room window, gorgeous blonde is getting ready to go out. They watch her with interest.

HARRY

That's gorgeous blonde. She goes out on Sundays.

MICHELLE

(excitedly) Is she having an affair?

HARRY

I expect so. With an exciting man, who runs fast and has enormous muscles.

MICHELLE

Do you think he plays for Scotland at something?

HARRY

Yes, he must, he's a leading contender for something.

MICHELLE

She finds that terribly exciting.

HARRY

She does, there'll be no fried bread and the omnibus edition of Coronation Street for her.

MICHELLE

No there will not, it will be an exciting afternoon of disgusting sex and raspberry ripple ice cream.

HARRY

Raspberry ripple?

MICHELLE

It's my favourite.

HARRY

I'll bear it in mind. I'm also going to request that disgusting sex thing.

As he is saying 'disgusting sex', MICHAEL walks into the living room suddenly takes on a look of horror.

CUT TO:

34 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

MICHAEL, HARRY and MICHELLE sit uncomfortably looking at each other.

MICHELLE

Well, I did tell you I met a nice man.

MICHAEL

A nice man? Have you any idea...

MICHELLE

He's not the prince of darkness.

MICHAEL

(exasperated) The prince of darkness couldn't hold a fucking candle to Harry. He worships Harry.

HARRY

Just a comment from under the bus here, it seems to me that you guys need to talk about this for a bit so I might just nip down to the pub, I need to see Radio anyway.

MICHELLE

You see he can be sensible when he needs to be.

MICHAEL

Sensible! You've met Radio, right?

HARRY

I'm right here, you can see me?

MICHELLE gets up, smiles and kisses the departing HARRY.

MICHELLE

I'll call you later.

HARRY leaves.

MICHAEL

Sorry.

MICHELLE

I don't know where it's going or even if it's going, I just like him, I feel safe when I'm around him and I never felt that before. It might not mean anything but I need to find out.

MICHAEL

(sighing) Well, good luck.

MICHELLE

You know, you're young and good-looking and clever.

MICHAEL

I don't feel that clever right now.

MICHELLE

It'll pass, but you'll find someone, probably soon and I'll be jealous and I'll feel like I'm losing you or part of you anyway. It's just the way it goes at our age. (pause) You are my best friend and you've helped me through what I hope was the worst time of my life and you reminded me that not all men are my ex-husband, in fact, very few are. I will always remember that.

They look at each other and MICHAEL shrugs his shoulders a bit, like he's pissed off but might as well accept it.

MICHELLE

I always want us to be friends and we probably will since you're the prince of darkness's roommate and now that we're to be married...

MICHAEL

(with another look of horror) What?

MICHELLE

Oh, you're so easy, I've only known him a month, or, actually, two days.

MICHAEL

Yeah, very funny. I'm going to sleep with his sister, see how he likes that.

CUT TO:

35 INT PUB NIGHT

HARRY, RADIO, NOSTRIL and BARNEY, a very big man, the same age as the rest of them but, 'the sensible one', sit at the bar drinking pints, DOROTHY looks on with interest.

RADIO

So where do I start? The exhaust, the handle bars, what?

HARRY

I think you have to look at it as a meal, consider the tyres as a sort of starter. Have them with a nice salad.

BARNEY

(to HARRY) You are not seriously going back to uni?

HARRY

The forces of evil have forced my hand old bear. If I want to continue to pursue the road less travelled I must conform, at least for a while, with the miserable norms and values of conventional living.

BARNEY

Get a fucking job, Harry, I've told you a million times, there's jobs at our place all the time.

HARRY

Barney, you're a van driver, who gets up at six o'clock and has to undergo regular drug testing. I'm a regular drug tester who usually doesn't go to bed till six o'clock.

RADIO

He's right, Barney, we're not all capable of making your sacrifices.

NOSTRIL

Some of us are destined for a higher path.

BARNEY

And the higher you are, the better.

HARRY

Nice one Barney.

BARNEY

Well. At least you're doing something, your Granny's right, you know.

HARRY

Barney! What a dreadful thing to say, in this, my darkest hour.

MICHELLE walks in and sort of hides behind HARRY. She smiles diffidently at the assembled company, DOROTHY smiles and gives her a wink.

HARRY

Boys, this is Michelle, Michelle, these are my friends.

There are quiet 'hellos' and not a little disbelief. BARNEY walks over to MICHELLE and shakes her hand and smiles.

BARNEY

I'm Barney, Harry and me go back a long way.

RADIO

Harry you appear to have things in reverse perspective, you're supposed to leave with women not arrive with them.

HARRY

And this is Radio.

MICHELLE

Harry I have to go home, work tomorrow.

NOSTRIL

Bloody hell Harry! Back to school, a girlfriend with a job? Radio's right, this complete madness?

HARRY

(walking out with MICHELLE) Calm down I'll be back in half an hour.

CUT TO:

36 EXT PARK NIGHT

HARRY is walking MICHELLE home through some parkland.

MICHELLE

They seem nice, (pause) and a bit resentful.

HARRY

Hmm, well, Radio, I met at university, we cheated together in exams and where possible copied each other and, of course, we have a great deal in common.

MICHELLE

Drugs, alcohol, loose women, football...

HARRY

Well, not loose women, of course, I've hardly any experience in that department...

MICHELLE

Don't, I really don't want to hear about that department.

HARRY

Quite, although I have to say it's not as bad as you obviously think. (pause)
Right, anyway, Barney's completely different, Barney, and I went to primary school together, he's not an intellectual but at the same time he's not stupid, we've looked out for each other all the way through life. He's enormous, I'm smart, it works. I was best man at Barney's wedding. His wife hates me, actually all of us.

MICHELLE

You sound like an organised crime syndicate.

HARRY

Hmm, no, we're not criminals, just old friends. I look at Barney and Radio and Nostril and I think, I'm 34 years old, I won't get any more of these. And truth be told, I don't want any more.

MICHELLE

So, Nostril?

HARRY

Nostril kind of latched onto us in secondary school because he got beaten up a lot and we kind of liked him and didn't beat him up.

MICHELLE

Well that's nice.

HARRY

I like to think so.

MICHELLE

So, what about the university thing, I think Barney's right. I mean, I know we haven't known each other long and I'm not about to judge you.

HARRY

Good.

MICHELLE

Alright, tell me what you think? I'll still like you if you want to carry on with the whole drunken, drug-ravaged, womanising, football hooligan thing. I mean it's worked pretty well up to now.

HARRY

Why do I suddenly feel like I have a nagging girlfriend?

MICHELLE

(not rising to the bait, laughing) Oh Harry, I wasn't trying to be facetious. Or if I was I'm sorry but I really do want to know what you think of it all. Hell I wish someone would offer me half a million quid to do a masters degree, sounds like a bloody decent deal.

HARRY

(thinking hard) Yeah, I know, (reluctantly accepting his fate) I know. I can't carry on with things the way they are because the money'll run out, that old bugger's right actually, in about a couple of years, maybe three or four if I cut down on the parties and the coke. But it's not a life is it?

MICHELLE

No. (pause, MICHELLE says no more sensing that HARRY is starting to wake up to the reality of his situation)

HARRY

I mean, I got a 2:1 in history, I can do a masters degree and by that time I'll be used to getting up at (pause) what time do normal people get up?

MICHELLE

Seven, eight maybe.

HARRY

In the morning!

MICHELLE

Oh, stop it.

HARRY

Alright, I know how the world works. I could buy a car, you know I haven't owned a car for a long time, if I'm going to be responsible I should get a car and car insurance.

MICHELLE

Well, if you can afford it, I guess that might be a good idea. You see, you're turning into a sensible, responsible human being even as we speak.

CUT TO:

37 EXT EDINBURGH BYPASS DAY

Very loud, heavy rock music introduces a Maserati screaming along the bypass at an extraordinary speed. RADIO is at the wheel, HARRY is in the passenger seat and NOSTRIL and BARNEY sit in the back. They are all wearing sunglasses.

CUT TO:

38 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT DAY

MICHELLE sits on the settee in the living room looking a bit bored. AILEEN and GRANNY knock and come in.

GRANNY

You must be Michelle.

MICHELLE

Granny? And Aileen, at a guess?

They kiss each other's cheeks a little bit and quietly say hellos.

AILEEN

Where is he?

MICHELLE

Well, he decided to buy a car, which, well, actually, I encouraged. It seemed kind of sensible. He's going to have to get up and go to university in the mornings so I thought...

GRANNY

Hmm, I hadn't thought about this. Radio wasn't involved at all?

MICHELLE

They were leaving the apartment when I got here, they said they wouldn't be long, they were just going to pick up Harry's new car and they'd...

AILEEN and GRANNY

Be back in half an hour.

MICHELLE

Oh.

GRANNY

(sitting down on the settee next to MICHELLE, taking her hand) You see the thing is, he's insane. Loveably insane, I'll grant you but you have no idea how he can turn something seemingly completely innocuous, even sensible and constructive into a scene from a Grateful Dead back stage party.

MICHELLE

(sadly) Is he just playing with me?

GRANNY

No, dear, I very much doubt it, that's one of the good things about Harry. He doesn't hurt people and he isn't deceitful. He's falling in love with you. He probably doesn't really get this yet but I think that's it. There are a few bits and pieces about his behaviour that I haven't seen before. He likes you. And it'll change him, if he'll let it, so, although he's my grandson and I'm obviously biased, please give him a chance, well, a few chances, more than likely. And remember, you're here to make him normal, not the other way round.

AILEEN

(handing MICHELLE a piece of paper) These are our numbers, you'll need them.

MICHELLE

(now a little bewildered) Thanks.

MICHAEL comes in.

MICHAEL

Hi, is, er, everything ok?

AILEEN

He's gone to buy a car. With Radio. I don't mean a car with a radio...

MICHAEL

No, I get it. Well, how bad can it be?

From an open window we hear the sound of a very large petrol engine at high revs followed by a lot of squealing tyres. There is a short silence before slamming car doors and an argument ending in BARNEY saying, 'well why don't you watch where you're fucking going?' Followed by HARRY saying, 'was there anything else?'

AILEEN

It can easily get a lot worse than that.

CUT TO:

SAME SCENE A FEW MINUTES LATER

HARRY and RADIO enter.

HARRY

Granny, how delightful, I have secured a means of transport to and from prison, you will be pleased to hear.

GRANNY

(looking out of the window) A Maserati I see, you really are keen to go to prison.

RADIO

(leaving, quickly)) I might go home.

HARRY

(after RADIO has left) And to what do I owe this pleasure?

GRANNY

Without sarcasm, Harry, I simply came to see if you had decided to take up my offer.

HARRY

Yes, I've been to the university and I will be enrolling in one week, cunningly timed that little meeting of ours wasn't it?

GRANNY

Yes, well, I'm happy to see you've seen a little sense, for now anyway so I'll count my blessings and leave you to it. (kissing Michelle on the cheek before turning to leave) Very nice to have met you, dear. Good luck.

MICHELLE smiles quietly, a little uncomfortably, not really knowing what to say.

MICHELLE

And you.

As GRANNY leaves, AILEEN trails along, somewhat unhappily, in her wake.

AILEEN

A fucking Maserati, you should give him a big row. He's a bad grandson, you tell him to be responsible and he runs out and buys a fucking sports car.

GRANNY leaves, smiling, she knows, however unsteadily, things are going in the right direction.

MICHAEL

(waiting till GRANNY and her protégé have gone) You know she's not bad looking your sister.

MICHELLE

Oh, Michael, don't.

HARRY

Don't what?

MICHELLE

He said he should sleep with your sister because you're seeing me.

HARRY

Fine by me.

MICHAEL

Give me the keys and I'll see what I can do.

HARRY throws him the keys and he makes to leave.

MICHELLE

(to MICHAEL, as he is leaving) Are you drunk?

MICHAEL runs out without saying anything.

MICHELLE

Dear God, it's this place, everyone who crosses the threshold becomes a nutter. What am I going to be in a month?

HARRY

Pregnant? Come on let's give it a go, we'll be the white trash from the West End.

CUT TO:

39 INT STAIRWELL DAY

MICHAEL breathlessly catches up with AILEEN and GRANNY in the hallway at the front door of HARRY's building, they turn round, a bit surprised to see that it's MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

(a little out of breath, to AILEEN) I've got the keys to the car, I couldn't help noticing you were a bit pissed off about it all. So, I thought, if you weren't doing anything...

GRANNY

No, dear, why not, I'd love to go for a drive in a sports car with an attractive young man. Where should we go?

MICHAEL

Er, well, the thing is I actually...

GRANNY

I know you did dear, and she'd love to. (shoving AILEEN and MICHAEL out the front door together) Have too much fun.

CUT TO:

40 EXT CAR DAY

AILEEN and MICHAEL drive along a country road at a leisurely pace. AILEEN (who is driving), for once, has an almost happy, carefree look about her. MICHAEL, however, looks as though he just dived into the deep end and can't remember how to swim.

AILEEN

I'm glad you moved in with him. At least somebody sane is living there. God, you should've seen it when Radio was there and for a while Nostril was sleeping on the couch. It was horrifying.

MICHAEL

Well, they're young men, I suppose it's understandable, your parents die in a car crash, you suddenly get tons of money, you've got grief to deal with, you're young, good-looking. I can see how that might pan out.

AILEEN

(sharply) I'm his sister, remember.

MICHAEL

God, I'm sorry, I keep forgetting, that was horribly insensitive, wasn't it.

AILEEN

It's ok, a lot of people forget. You'd honestly have thought he was the only one dealing with a trauma the way people used to talk. 'Poor Harry, he must be heartbroken', not me though. I apparently just sailed through the whole experience. I've always been the sideshow to the main event though. 'And this is Aileen, our other child, the one that isn't clever and witty and captain of the school rugby team and quite possibly the next fucking messiah'.

There is a pause as MICHAEL mulls this over.

MICHAEL

You seem pretty clever and witty to me. You might be surprised about how much he really cares about you. Men aren't that great at talking about emotional stuff, even in this enlightened age.

AILEEN

He loves my kids, I have two girls although he doesn't visit them often enough which annoys me and upsets them. They don't really have anyone else apart from Granny and a few cousins on Dad's side who are a bunch of fucking arseholes that neither of us ever really liked or were close to. The other grandparents are both dead and Dad's sisters are even meaner than their offspring, so here we all are.

MICHAEL

What happened to the father?

AILEEN

My reaction to the car crash was to marry quite literally the first guy that came along. He was nice enough for a while but if I'm being completely honest I didn't love him. It's hard to be married to someone you don't love. You go through the motions for a while, pretend you like having sex when all you're actually doing is lying there thinking, 'for fuck sake get on with it.'

MICHAEL

Possibly a little more information than I needed.

AILEEN

Sorry, I don't often get the chance to drive around in a sports car with someone who has to listen to me whether they like it or not.

MICHAEL

You know, you're not that different to your brother.

AILEEN

Well, we are twins. Dizygotic. That means we're not identical, obviously.

MICHAEL

You're twins!

AILEEN

He never told you! God he's awful.

CUT TO:

41 INT LECTURE THEATRE DAY

HARRY sits at the back of the theatre with a blank folder in front of him ready to take notes. There is a bustle and hum as people wait for the LECTURER, a middle-aged bespectacled, friendly-looking man to start. He writes the word 'Voltaire' on a board and turns round to look at his, now captive audience. A man enters, drawing the attention of all, says, 'sorry I'm a wee bit late' looks around for a second and finally spots HARRY. Yes, it's RADIO. He climbs the stairs and sits down beside HARRY.

HARRY

What the fuck?

RADIO

I joined up, you're not the only one who got a 2:1, remember.

HARRY

Really? This is actually happening? I'm not tripping?

RADIO

I'm here, baby. All the way. Let's take some notes. Do you want to sleep or will I? We're back in the game.

LECTURER

(looking at HARRY and RADIO) If you are ready gentlemen, perhaps you can tell us something about this gentleman.

RADIO

If there hadn't been a Voltaire it wouldn't have been necessary to invent one.

HARRY puts his head in his hands.

LECTURER

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a comedian in our midst. He is sadly mistaken however, Voltaire was one of the most progressive thinkers in the history of mankind. His ideas are perhaps even more relevant now than they have ever been. In a time dominated by intolerance and prejudice...

CUT TO:

42 INT UNIVERSITY COFFEE SHOP DAY

HARRY and RADIO sit drinking coffee. HARRY is staring hard at RADIO. RADIO looks up.

RADIO

What?

HARRY

What? I hardly know where to fucking start. Rule number one, don't draw attention to yourself. You know that. The guy that makes the first joke in situations like that is the guy everyone remembers for the rest of the fucking year, if not longer. Remember that guy that asked to go to the toilet in the first lecture in the main theatre in first year. That guy got a first class honours degree and at the end of four years people were still calling him the guy that went to the toilet.

RADIO

Sorry, I'm out of practice.

HARRY

And, by the way, what the fuck are you doing here? I thought you were eating a motorbike?

RADIO

I had an epiphany, you might want to write that down by the way, it's a...

HARRY

I fucking know what it means, what the fuck are you doing here?

RADIO

Well, it seems to me that Granny was right...

HARRY

My Granny.

RADIO

Well I think we're splitting hairs here...

HARRY

(exasperated) No, no hair-splitting, she is actually my granny and not yours.

RADIO

So, anyway, I thought, I'm not getting any younger...

HARRY

Really? I actually thought you were getting younger, I really thought that. And stupider.

RADIO

No, turns out I'm not, so a master's degree might be just the thing.

HARRY

Just the thing for what? A fucking cataclysmically disastrous event, culminating in an early death for both of us at the hands of my grandmother?

RADIO

Calm down. First of all, she doesn't have to know that I'm here at all.

CUT TO:

43 INT GRANNY'S HOUSE DAY

AILEEN is talking to GRANNY in the conservatory. It doesn't look good. MICHAEL is pacing about in the background looking like he doesn't want to be involved but knowing that pretty soon he will be.

AILEEN

Radio's at uni with Harry.

GRANNY

Hmm, well it might not be such a bad thing.

AILEEN

It's a terrible thing they'll just end up moving in together again, and then you know what'll happen, it'll all just go to hell.

CUT TO:

44 INT PUB NIGHT

HARRY and MICHELLE sit at the bar in the pub sipping quietly on small drinks. DOROTHY sits opposite.

DOROTHY

In fairness to RADIO he's maybe just trying to improve himself and move on. Maybe he just doesn't want to be left behind, I get that.

MICHELLE

I agree, I don't see that he's doing anything wrong. Why can't you just be two students doing a degree.

HARRY

Dorothy?

DOROTHY

The last time it was like someone had unleashed hell. Some of the lecturers wouldn't even let them into their classes by the end of fourth year.

MICHELLE

How did you both get 2:1s?

HARRY

Probably best not to get into that too deeply. Suffice to say I can't go through all that again and to be honest technology has moved on a bit so cheating in exams might be tricky these days.

MICHELLE

Harry! That's awful.

HARRY

I know it's awful. Why do you think I want to do this the right way this time?

MICHELLE

Did it ever occur to you that Radio might want that too and that maybe in his own way he's starting to grow up too?

DOROTHY

Have you met Radio?

HARRY

Oh, maybe he will behave himself, I should stop jumping to conclusions, I suppose we're all just assuming the worst based on our past and I suppose, apart from anything else, I was just as bad as him. He's just scared that he'll be cast adrift and left to wander the earth for all eternity. A month ago everything was the same as it was ten years ago, now I've got a girlfriend, a sensible man has moved into my apartment and I've gone back to university.

DOROTHY

That's right, now he's sensible.

CUT TO:

45 INT GARAGE NIGHT

RADIO and NOSTRIL are in a small garage where sits a gleaming motorbike. RADIO licks his lips in anticipation.

NOSTRIL

What do you want to eat first? I'm actually quite hungry. Do you think there's anything that tastes nice?

RADIO

Not unless you put a lot of curry sauce on it. What about a mudguard?
That can't be too horrible.

NOSTRIL takes a knife out of his pocket as they close in on the motorbike.

CUT TO:

46 EXT STREET NIGHT

HARRY and MICHELLE head home from the pub and are approached by a group of men. One of whom is MICHELLE's ex-husband, COLIN, early thirties, slickly attired, cropped hair, good-looking, smug, private-school educated and still wearing the sweater at age thirty-five. The devil in fine clothes.

COLIN

(as they sweep past each other) Slut.

HARRY turns round in bewilderment and anger.

HARRY

(loudly) What did you just say?

COLIN stops and eyeballs HARRY.

COLIN

Well, I wasn't talking to you but I imagine it applies nonetheless.

MICHELLE

(quietly, to HARRY) It's Colin, my ex-husband.

HARRY

Go fuck yourself, wife beater, nobody else will.

COLIN is restrained by his friends and MICHELLE ushers HARRY away as quickly as she can.

CUT TO:

47 INT MICHELLE'S APARTMENT NIGHT

HARRY is pacing about the living room seething with rage.

HARRY

Slut? How old is he? Twelve?

MICHELLE

Did it not occur to you that someone who beats up, well, me, might not be very smart or mature?

HARRY

I hate him.

MICHELLE

No, you don't, you just hate what he did. It's not the same thing. (pause)
Harry, the world isn't perfect, we're going to meet Colin and his like all over the place all the way through life. Forget him, move on, don't let him get to you.

HARRY

Well, he did get to me. And I can hate him if I want, I've hated guys like that all my life.

MICHELLE

Harry, don't make our relationship about him. I love the things you're doing now, I love the fact that you're trying to make something out of your life I love the fact that you're my boyfriend and that you've grown and matured even in the few weeks since we met.

HARRY

You know, I have to say that I resent the fact that everyone seems to think that I need to grow and mature, that I'm somehow a project for you and Granny and Aileen to nurture and toy with almost like it was some sort of amusement. I may give in to temptation now and again but I'm not a child.

MICHELLE

No one's toying with you, that's ridiculous. We just have your best interests at heart.

HARRY

We? You're one of them now? I absolutely loved you when I first met you because you were one of me. Because you were fun, because you were the best person I met in a long time. You're not so much fun now.

MICHELLE

Harry, I'm not doing this so I can have a lot of arguments. I've been down that horrible road once and I'm not going there again and I'm not going to apologise for wanting to have a boyfriend who has ambitions and a future.

HARRY

So what the hell are you doing with me?

MICHELLE

Right now, I don't know.

HARRY leaves without saying any more. He's not happy though.

CUT TO:

48 HARRY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

HARRY has returned home and is gazing out of the apartment window at gorgeous blonde who is staring vacantly out at the street.

HARRY

Poor gorgeous blonde, are you as bored with all this as I am? Normally I'd be in the pub by now, I think. I want to run away from it all, gorgeous blonde, run like the wind and wake up to a normal life of fried bread, 'what do you do for a living?', greying dishcloths in the sink, Coronation Street at half past seven, two for one deals and the excitement of a closing down sale at the pet shop. Let's buy each other banal greetings cards and eat hamburgers every night, have holidays in spectacularly overpriced theme parks, our whole lives a celebration of mediocrity. If only I was stupid, if only I'd fallen in love with someone boring like you. (pause) Fuck it, why shouldn't I get drunk?

CUT TO:

49 INT PUB NIGHT

HARRY is sitting at the bar in his usual spot. DOROTHY is behind the bar looking a bit on edge. COLIN and his friends are sitting at a table in a corner, HARRY hasn't noticed them, yet.

DOROTHY

(confidentially, to HARRY) Harry, these guys were going on about someone called Michelle and her new boyfriend. I'm guessing it's you. I'd go home, pal, this is not your territory and they look nasty if you ask me, and believe me, I know nasty when I see it.

HARRY

Oh, I won't cause any trouble, Dorothy, you know me.

DOROTHY

Harry, sweetheart, it's not you I'm worried about. Well it is but only because you might get hurt.

HARRY

These annoying little public school boys don't start fights, well not with men anyway, they might scuff their brogues or tear their school sweaters.

The annoying public school boys have heard HARRY, it would seem, and talk a little more loudly so that HARRY and DOROTHY can hear them.

COLIN

Tunnel vision, that's what he's got, a total waster, just a dickhead.

1ST ANNOYING SCHOOLBOY

I heard he cheated his way through uni and did nothing but drink and take drugs.

2ND ANNOYING SCHOOLBOY

Tunnel vision's right, I heard he just sits in that apartment and stares at the bird in the apartment opposite.

HARRY smiles at DOROTHY who gives him a look that says, 'I told you'.

COLIN

Tunnel vision, a drunk and a junky.

COLIN gets up and goes to the bar to order more drinks.

COLIN

Can I have four pints of lager please?

DOROTHY

Certainly.

HARRY

(unable to restrain himself) Four pints of lager, four squarehead haircuts...

DOROTHY

(giving HARRY a knowing look) Don't.

HARRY

Four pairs of brown brogues, four private school sweaters, four pairs of designer jeans. And you, who have never met me, don't really know anything about me and whose only source of information is third or fourth hand gossip think I've got tunnel vision. Tell me, what's it like to have one brain between four people? Do you take turns or do you all just have a quarter each, your conversation would seem to suggest the latter.

COLIN smiles unpleasantly, we get the feeling this isn't over. He pays his money and takes his drinks without a word.

DOROTHY

(to HARRY) Go home now. Go. An arsehole like that doesn't just walk away from people like you, Harry. Go home and run all the way.

HARRY

(finishing his pint) Yeah, you're probably right, although they don't look too menacing.

DOROTHY

That's because they're upper middle class thugs, Harry. They hate just the same, they're just as stupid and resentful but they don't get their hands dirty if they can avoid it and they never let someone like you get the last word.

HARRY

Jesus, Dorothy, you sound like the godfather.

DOROTHY

Just go home, Harry.

HARRY

(getting up from his barstool) Ok, ok, I'll see you tomorrow.

HARRY leaves but COLIN and his friends get up to go only a few seconds after him. DOROTHY tries to intervene.

DOROTHY

That you off then, lads?

COLIN

(without stopping) Yeah, time for bed.

1st ANNOYING SCHOOLBOY

A hospital bed.

They all laugh.

DOROTHY

(as the door closes behind them) Fuck it.

CUT TO:

50 EXT STREET NIGHT

DOROTHY walks hurriedly along a dark street, looking around, stopping to look up alleys. She comes to an alley where a human form lies motionless. She approaches tentatively and looks closely at the face, which is covered in blood. It is HARRY. She takes out her phone and dials a number quickly.

DOROTHY

Yes, I need an ambulance.

CUT TO:

51 INT HOSPITAL DAY

HARRY lies in bed. He is covered in cuts and bruises face a mess, GRANNY by his bedside. He opens his eyes and sees her, yells out, turns away to face the bed next to him confronting the smiling face of RADIO, prompting a further scream.

HARRY

In the name of God, what is this? I'm in hell, that's it, I've died and gone to hell.

GRANNY

Feeling better?

HARRY

Better than what? Of course I'm fucking not. What are you doing here and more to the point what is he doing here and finally what am I doing here? And finally, finally where is here?

GRANNY

You were beaten up by your girlfriend's ex-husband and his pals although not surprisingly they have denied all knowledge of the incident.

HARRY

(sighing) Yes I remember that, or at least the start of it. What the fuck is he doing here?

GRANNY

He tried to eat a mudguard but didn't cut it up into small enough pieces. They had to cut him open. He's in worse shape than you, believe it or not.

RADIO

(helpfully) Worse shape than you.

HARRY

It's not a competition.

RADIO

If it was I'd be winning.

GRANNY

(pulling the curtain between HARRY and RADIO's beds) Well, anyway, I don't what else to say, the doctors say you'll be fine in a few days. You've a nasty cut on the back of your head which is about the worst of it. Thankfully Dorothy found you a few minutes after it happened and phoned for an ambulance. (seriously) Harry, if it hadn't been for Dorothy you could have died. Mercifully we'll never have to test the theory but you could have lain there bleeding for a long time.

HARRY

I'll buy her a drink.

GRANNY

Yes you will, and a lot more besides.

HARRY

So all I get is you? Where's Michelle? And my twin sister? I thought twins were supposed to be mutually psychotic or something? Shouldn't she have got a headache when I got hit on the head?

GRANNY

Psychic, you mean?

HARRY

Not with her. Psychotic is about right.

GRANNY

She was at home sleeping peacefully.

HARRY

Hmm, I might have guessed.

GRANNY

She was very upset although now she's angry, now that she knows what happened.

HARRY

What? She's angry because I got beaten up by a bunch of moronic public school sweaters?

GRANNY

No. She's angry because Dorothy told us the whole story and how she told you to keep your mouth shut and you wouldn't. How you riled them up and then finished your drink and walked home when she told you to get away from them as quickly as possible.

HARRY

So, let me get this right, this mindless thug beats my girlfriend, beats me half to death and it's my fault.

GRANNY

(sitting back in her chair and considering HARRY's point of view) Yes.

HARRY

(to RADIO) Can you hear this?

RADIO

Yeah, she's right, Harry. As Rousseau said, 'A man is only as free as his mind will allow him to be'.

HARRY

Rousseau never said any such thing, you just made that up.

GRANNY

Alright, (kissing him on the forehead) I have to go.

HARRY

Where's Michelle?

GRANNY

Well, she's blaming herself. Apparently you had some sort of argument?

HARRY

Yeah, I forgot about that. Oh God, I need to get out of here, can I leave now?

GRANNY

(laughing) Fuck, no. You'll have to stay here and listen to people passing judgement over you three ways to Sunday, until at least Sunday.

GRANNY leaves.

HARRY

(to RADIO) What day is it?

RADIO

Monday.

HARRY

Fuck. (pause) What are the nurses like?

RADIO

Tall, blonde, good-looking and sexy.

HARRY

That's more like it, you know this might be quite fun for a few days.

A tall, blonde, good-looking, sexy male nurse, STEVEN, walks in.

STEVEN

Hi, I'm Steven, I'll be your nurse today, nice to see you awake, Harry. I think it's time somebody had a bed bath.

HARRY

(to RADIO) I hate you.

CUT TO:

52 INT HOSPITAL NIGHT

BARNEY and NOSTRIL are sitting between HARRY and RADIO's beds.

HARRY

(clearly finishing off the story of what happened) So that's about it.

BARNEY

(shaking his head) You will get up these people's noses.

NOSTRIL

It's true, Harry, I'm actually surprised it's never happened before.

HARRY

Well, thanks for that, and thanks for coming, by the way.

BARNEY

I never said you deserved it. We're thirty-two, Harry, in a few years I won't be able to help you with guys like this.

HARRY

Don't do anything crazy, Barney.

BARNEY

Who said anything about doing anything crazy? Gentle persuasion should suffice. Failing that, I'll kick his fucking head in.

HARRY

Please don't, Barney, I'm in enough trouble with Michelle as it is, the last thing we need here is him in the bed opposite.

CUT TO:

53 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

AILEEN and MICHAEL are in bed, together.

MICHAEL

You know in a funny sort of way it might not be the worst thing in the world to happen to him.

AILEEN

(smiling) What? His flatmate screwing his little sister?

MICHAEL

No, I can't see him turning cartwheels about that one, and you're telling him by the way. (pause) Little? I thought you were twins?

AILEEN

One of us had to come first. Can you imagine him being second, at anything?

MICHAEL

No, I imagine not, but what I mean is I mean, well, by all accounts it's not the first time he's pissed people off in pubs and well, you know what it's like. Lots of drunk people and Harry. He's...

AILEEN

An egomaniac who can't take criticism and can't keep his mouth shut.

MICHAEL

Young men in bars trying to impress young women don't like guys like Harry.
In all fairness that's not all his own fault.

AILEEN

No, that's your fault as a gender.

MICHAEL

We're a bad gender.

AILEEN

You really are, there should be more options.

CUT TO:

54 INT HOSPITAL DAY

GRANNY is visiting, she has a shopping trolley full of books and papers. As she enters the ward, HARRY and RADIO look at her in horror.

HARRY

(with great suspicion) Been to Tesco's?

GRANNY

No. I have been to university on both your behalfs (looking at RADIO)
I might add, and have been supplied with reading materials which will
prove both edifying and constructive with regards to your studies.

RADIO

Did you bring any whisky?

GRANNY

What do you think?

RADIO

Any dope?

GRANNY

To be provided upon proof of reading at least two of these books each.
If so, and be mindful, I will ask questions pertinent to the literature in
question, you will receive a joint each.

HARRY

You are a terrible grandparent; I ought to report you to the social services.

GRANNY leaves looking content. HARRY and RADIO look at the books. This is not good, these are big, thick books.

RADIO

Christ, they even look boring.

HARRY

There's only one way to this. We each read two different books and note down everything that could lead to an exam question and take it from there. If we do this right, worst case scenario; we've got two thirds of the exam questions more or less in our heads and we can wing it on the rest. Fuck it we've got a whole year, if we read two or three of these books in the first few weeks we're ahead of the game and let's face it, normally at this point of the year we'd be organising the recreational side of, well, things.

RADIO

(having already picked up a book and started reading) Be quiet I'm trying to read.

CUT TO:

55 INT HOSPITAL NIGHT

HARRY and RADIO, believe it or not, are still reading. MICHELLE walks in. She pulls the curtain between the beds and looks at HARRY who is still covered in cuts and bruises and starts to cry.

MICHELLE

(hugging him tightly) I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.

HARRY

(patting her on the back) Hey, hey it's not your fault.

MICHELLE stands up and looks round for a chair and sits close to him.

MICHELLE

It is my fault Harry, I never told you the whole story, he, Colin...

HARRY

For the next few weeks I'm going to know who 'he' is...

MICHELLE

Yeah, well, he's been coming to the house and bothering me. You see; when we divorced I bought him out of our apartment and I thought that would be that.

HARRY

Let me guess, it wasn't.

MICHELLE

No, it wasn't, he started coming round on various pretexts, he would say I still had some of his CDs, his books, he'd got a bill that should've been sent to me, all sorts of things. It was like, even though we were divorced, and he'd acknowledged that that had been because he hit me, somehow he seemed to think that because that part was over we would carry on in some way and that he was still entitled to some part of my life whether I liked it or not.

HARRY

I'm not sure if you've done anything, wrong here to be honest, although it might, I suppose, have been useful to know that, I'm not sure it would've made any difference to anything. And, by the way, no, there's nothing wrong with wanting to have a boyfriend who has ambitions and a future and not wanting to have a relationship full of arguments. I do know that. (pause) And I can see where you were coming from. (pause) But look at all these books (making a sweeping gesture towards the books) Radio and I, in the interests of pursuing our studies, had them deliver these items by any means possible, in order that our studies may continue uninterrupted.

MICHELLE

(smiling benignly) I saw Granny on the way out.

HARRY

She promised us drugs if we read two books.

MICHELLE

She told me that aswell.

CUT TO:

56 EXT STREET DAY

COLIN is driving his Volvo in a nice middle-class area, attractive, limestone, tenement buildings, well-kept gardens and retired men walking dogs and smoking pipes. COLIN is looking repeatedly in his rear view mirror as there is a white, working-class van following him, closely. COLIN turns into a cul-de-sac and the white van continues to follow. COLIN slows down to five miles an hour as does the van. COLIN stops and the van nudges the back of his Volvo, causing no damage but a bit of a jolt. COLIN is incensed and gets out of the car to confront the driver of the working-class van. Presumably a working-class man. He strides, enraged, up to the van just as the driver is getting out.

COLIN

What the fuck do you...

Before COLIN can finish his middle-class sentence he is grabbed by the tie and lifted clean off the ground, by BARNEY.

BARNEY

I have friends who are even bigger and a lot meaner than me.

COLIN

(struggling a bit to get the words out) What? Who are you?

BARNEY

If you go near Harry or Michelle ever again, I will violate you. Do you understand?

COLIN

(stammering and choking) What?

BARNEY

I will make sure that your life is a living hell, to the point where you are terrified to leave your home. Do you understand that?

COLIN

I'll phone the police, you bastard.

BARNEY throws COLIN to the ground then grabs him by the hair before he can run away and punches him in the face.

BARNEY

And if I can't finish the job, there are a hundred more where I came from. Men who don't like bullies, men who really don't like men who hit women. Try me, I dare you. Actually, I want you to.

COLIN gets up, looks at BARNEY and has a bit of a think.

COLIN

I stay away from her and her arsehole boyfriend and this ends here and now.

BARNEY

That was the deal, although now I've met you I kind of wish it wasn't. (pause, menacingly, taking a step towards him) I'm warming to the task.

COLIN

(putting his hands up) Ok, ok, I get it, I'll stay away from them.

BARNEY

(very slowly and deliberately) Yes, you will, or you will be violated in ways that you can't even imagine. Do you understand?

COLIN

(now looking very afraid) Ok, ok, I understand, I won't go near her again.

COLIN walks to his front door and lets himself in, BARNEY watches until he has disappeared, gets into his van and drives away.

CUT TO:

57 INT HOSPITAL DAY

It is a couple of days later and HARRY and RADIO are still reading although the strain is beginning to tell, RADIO puts his book down.

RADIO

This is really boring. You know what the worst thing about it is?

HARRY

(putting his book down with a knowing look) I shudder to think.

RADIO

Alright, here it is. These blokes...

HARRY

Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Burns, some of the greatest writers, poets and philosophers in the history of mankind, those blokes?

RADIO

(unmoved) Yes, what they say is smart enough in its way...

HARRY

Please don't...

RADIO

The thing is, the problems they address, are they really all that different from the issues confronted by 'The Waltons', for example, on more or less a weekly basis? I mean if you boil it down to matters of moral philosophy, there isn't much in this literature that you can't get from an episode of 'The Waltons'.

HARRY

I bet you couldn't even name all the Waltons, I always preferred 'Little House on the Prairie'. It has more depth.

RADIO

How dare you? The Waltons are a fine upstanding family.

HARRY

Alright, you love them so much, name them.

RADIO

I'll name your Waltons, by God I will. There's Jim Bob, John Bob, Elizabob Mary Ellen, Sue Ellen, Pa, Ma, Grandpa, Old Bluey, Great Uncle Bulgaria, Grumpy, Sleepy and Dopey. So there. And Rudolph.

HARRY

You forgot at least ten.

RADIO

I got the main ones. You couldn't name those Little House on the Prairie weirdos.

HARRY

They were not weirdos, they were the classic American family; pioneers in an age of uncertainty, embracing change and moving with the times, they were resourceful.

RADIO

Name one.

HARRY

There was Ma, Pa, the blind one...

RADIO

The blind one? That's not a name, they didn't shout, Laura, come in for your dinner, and bring the blind one. If you can find her.

HARRY

That's offensive.

RADIO

Hello, I'm Radio, we've just met, apparently.

HARRY

Little House on the Prairie is one of the greatest programmes ever made. An honest, decent family struggling to make a life for themselves, battling nature, corruption, dishonesty on a weekly basis. They were the finest people imaginable. You could take a leaf out of their book.

RADIO

No I couldn't, I saw an episode where they decided that the telephone was the devil's work.

HARRY

Oh, and what about all those Waltons running off into the woods a whoopin' and a hollerin' every time there was an accident in the barn, which, by the way, happened far too often for my liking, those Waltons should've been reported to the social services for child abuse.

RADIO

Don't you dare, I once saw an episode where there was a tornado and a volcanic eruption and not one Walton was injured.

HARRY

Mary Ellen ended up a crack whore.

RADIO

You take that back.

BARNEY walks in.

BARNEY

Had a word with that fucker, should be no more problems there.

HARRY

(to BARNEY) Thanks, Barney. Don't know what I'd without you sometimes.

BARNEY

No problem. (pause, BARNEY sits down on the edge of the bed) So, how long are you in for?

CUT TO:

58 INT HOSPITAL DAY

HARRY and RADIO are being discharged. MICHAEL and AILEEN are waiting for them at the ward admin desk/nurses station.

MICHAEL

(to a nurse, as they wait for paperwork, making conversation) They both seem to have recovered well, I'm glad they're both getting out so quickly.

NURSE

(darkly) So are we.

MICHAEL

(jokingly) I'm sure they weren't that much trouble.

NURSE

Come with me, (leading them to a window that looks down on a flat roof below, on which sits two deck chairs and a small table supporting a whisky bottle and two glasses and an ashtray) I don't know how they did it and I work here.

CUT TO:

59 EXT HOSPITAL DAY

HARRY and RADIO leave the hospital with MICHAEL and AILEEN.

AILEEN

(to HARRY) I'm taking you home, Michelle's waiting for you.

MICHAEL

Come on Radio, I'll take you...

RADIO

Directly to the nearest pub.

CUT TO:

60 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT DAY

HARRY lets himself in to find MICHELLE lying seductively across the coffee table in her underwear.

MICHELLE

I've been thinking.

HARRY

I can see that. And I like your thinking.

MICHELLE

It's time we had sex, and lots of it.

MICHELLE gets up and walks towards HARRY. They smile a little nervously then kiss softly, diffidently, then passionately.

CUT TO:

61 INT HARRY'S BEDROOM DAY

HARRY and MICHELLE lie in bed, breathless and happy.

HARRY

That really was worth waiting for.

MICHELLE

Maybe that's what we should do, only have sex every three months.

HARRY

Don't even joke about that. (pause) I love you.

MICHELLE

I love you too.

MICHELLE climbs on top of him so they are lying face to face.

MICHELLE

What happens now?

HARRY

Well, I've got a degree to finish, a sister and two nieces to appease and a grandmother to kill. You?

MICHELLE

Well I have to get Colin out of my life somehow...

HARRY

(nervously) Yeah, about that, Barney kind of intervened, I told him not to, I really did, but he insisted, and I honestly don't know what he did but he said, and I quote, 'problem solved'. So, well, you've seen the size of Barney; people don't generally argue with him.

MICHELLE

Hmm, actually that does kind of fit in because a week or so ago he said he was coming round for one of his pathetic excuses and he never did and I thought I saw him on the street yesterday although he was wearing dark glasses and he crossed the street to avoid me and I just thought 'oh well it couldn't have been him, thank God'.

HARRY

Oh, I think it was him, Barney tends to be very efficient when it comes to matters of moral justice. (They stare into each other's eyes for a moment).

MICHELLE

Want to do it again?

CUT TO:

62 EXT GARDEN DAY

HARRY and MICHELLE are at AILEEN'S house. A nice, modest country cottage, lots of flowers, hedgerows. They sit outside open French windows on the lawn of a decent-sized, well-kept garden. Two little girls, PENNY, six and PATTY, four, run around gleefully, persistently demanding attention from 'UNCLE' HARRY. They clearly have a very close and happy relationship.

PATTY

(squealing) Uncle Harry! It's a frog! Look! It's a frog!

Both girls are intrigued. HARRY and MICHELLE join them in a corner of the garden as the frog tries to escape their attentions. Not before PENNY picks it up.

PENNY

It can jump.

The frog jumps from her open hand and she picks it up and passes it to PATTY who applies the same technique and then squeals again in delight. HARRY intervenes to allow the frog to escape.

HARRY

If you kiss it, it might turn into a handsome prince.

PENNY picks it up and kisses it, it squirms and escapes again.

PENNY

(making a face) It doesn't taste very nice.

MICHELLE

Most of them don't, dear, (smiling) sometimes it takes a long time to find a nice one.

The girls whisper to each other and giggle.

PATTY

Do you kiss Uncle Harry?

MICHELLE

Why, yes I do, but only if he's been good.

HARRY

And if I'm bad I have to chase her, sometimes I can be a bit of a monster.

HARRY chases them around the garden pretending to be a monster, wrestling them to the ground and tickling them to great squeals and laughter. AILEEN and MICHAEL appear, hand in hand.

AILEEN

Harry...

HARRY continues to wrestle with the children.

AILEEN

(sharply) Harry!

HARRY gets up and dusts himself off.

HARRY

Aileen, how delightful! And Michael, having fun shagging my twin sister?

MICHELLE

Harry, don't, we've talked about this.

AILEEN

(motioning towards the house, angrily) Get in here.

PATTY

Mummy's angry with Uncle Harry.

PENNY

What's shagging?

AILEEN

Go and play, I'll see you in a minute.

The children scamper off as the adults step into the house.

CUT TO:

63 INT HOUSE DAY

All the adults sit at a dining room table just inside the French doors. It is a small but immaculate room.

AILEEN

My fucking ex-husband, their father, has fucked off to Australia.

HARRY

Really? How odd, he couldn't get any further away? Antarctica perhaps. Or outer space? Can't imagine why...

AILEEN

No more facetious remarks. You will have to be their father, as much as you can.

HARRY

What about him (MICHAEL)? You've lured him into your web, after all.

AILEEN

I've only known him for five minutes; I don't know where this is going.

MICHAEL

And none taken.

MICHELLE smiles.

HARRY

Alright calm down. We (looking at MICHELLE who nods in acquiescence) will consider coming here every second weekend (MICHELLE nods again) on the strict understanding that you won't be here and we can do what we want, eat what we want and drink what we want, within reason, of course.

MICHAEL

Alright (looking at AILEEN) that's pretty much what you wanted, it seems fair. Granny said she'd...

AILEEN

Never mind what Granny said. Harry has agreed to look after them every other weekend and occasional nights.

HARRY

Where did occasional nights come from?

AILEEN

Well, you do live with Michael and we thought...

HARRY

We?

AILEEN

We thought that if I came into the city to see Michael, I could bring the girls with me. You're a student now so you can't get pissed every night especially since Radio is also a student and will also have to not be an asshole.

MICHELLE

(before HARRY can say anything) If it was a regular thing, say, Tuesdays, it might be ok, we could take them to the pictures or something. (looking at HARRY) It's only eight days a month. I'll do it if you will, and of course, it'll be good practise for you.

HARRY

What do you mean, 'good practise'?

MICHELLE

Well, because I'm pregnant, silly.

HARRY

(preparing to leave the country) What!

MICHELLE

(laughing) Don't be daft! You are so gullible. And that reaction, by the way, doesn't make you any more attractive.

HARRY

I'm going to talk to Radio. And Dorothy. And Nostril.

CUT TO:

64 INT CAR DAY

MICHELLE and HARRY drive back to the city in the Maserati. HARRY is driving.

HARRY

I told you it was a good idea to see Granny first.

MICHELLE

Yes, well, she's only too painfully aware of the fact that you lot are all she's got and all she's going to leave behind. She loves you.

HARRY

And I suppose I love her, don't you dare tell her I said that. And in all honesty I love being with the kids. Aileen's just such a huge pain in the arse.

MICHELLE

I can see why Michael likes her, he's kind of submissive, in a way.

HARRY

Yeah, well, he'll need to be. The thing is, she's fiercely loyal and family orientated, if Barney hadn't intervened, she would've driven my car through his front door.

MICHELLE

Your car?

HARRY

Yeah, she's only loyal until it costs her money, then she's loyal to the money.

MICHELLE

(after a pause) Can you cope with all this?

HARRY

Well, I suppose so, I think when I first met you, although I was feeling a bit cynical about all that wedded bliss, I think that was partly because I felt I was falling behind, you know, people growing up, getting married, having successful careers, having kids. You get into your early thirties or so, you start thinking, 'I don't want to be still doing this at forty'.

MICHELLE

I don't think you will and to be honest if you were already thinking it you were probably half way to doing something about it. Granny just pushed it all along a bit.

HARRY

I can still get pissed and have a wild party every once in a while?

MICHELLE

Of course you can.

HARRY

And go to the football and end up staggering home at three in the morning?

MICHELLE

Of course you can.

HARRY

And...

MICHELLE

Don't push it.

CUT TO:

Six months later.

65 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT DAY

HARRY and RADIO are studying at the kitchen table. PATTY and PENNY are in the living room playing playstation games with MICHELLE. There are books and papers everywhere. HARRY puts a book down and looks up at RADIO.

HARRY

Do you think you'll pass?

RADIO

Yeah, easily.

HARRY

You don't think you're over-confident in any way?

RADIO

(putting his book down) Harry, look at this place. It's a normal apartment now. We're two normal people, doing normal things. Normal people do well in life. Thick people don't do postgraduate courses, average people do ok if they work hard enough, highly intelligent people, if they work hard, excel. We're the last one of the aforementioned.

HARRY

That's very modest of you.

RADIO

I've no time for false modesty.

HARRY

Clearly not.

RADIO

Harry, we've both studied hard, something we've never done before. That isn't going to end badly.

PATTY wanders in.

PATTY

(showing him a small cut on her finger) Uncle Harry, I'm bleeding, I need a plaster.

HARRY

(taking her onto his knee and looking at her finger) Hmm, this is quite a serious injury. We may need to operate, I'm afraid. (HARRY tickles her and she collapses into fits of giggles)

MICHELLE comes in and sits at the kitchen table.

MICHELLE

Well, where are we now?

HARRY

I suppose, however inadvertently I have to admit that this has all worked out quite well. As long as they're here we can't indulge ourselves in the usual way so it's always at least eight nights a month of studying. The dissertations are done so now it's just final exams. I guess we'll scrape through.

PATTY

(testily) I need a plaster and a sandwich.

MICHELLE

(leading her away) Come on then, what kind of sandwich would madam prefer?

PATTY

A nice one, with jam.

PENNY appears at the sound of the word 'jam'.

PENNY

I need some jam.

RADIO gets up, stretches and yawns.

RADIO

All this talk of jam is making me hungry, I might go for a pint. (looking at HARRY) Coming?

HARRY

No, Aileen'll be here in a minute.

RADIO nods in understanding, picks up a rucksack and begins to put his books away. MICHAEL and AILEEN come in as RADIO is leaving.

AILEEN

(to RADIO) Why are you always leaving when we're arriving?

HARRY

I'd leave when you arrive, if I could.

AILEEN

Arsehole.

HARRY

Slut.

AILEEN

Bitch.

MICHELLE

(before it escalates) Patty cut her finger and they want to stay here tonight.

MICHAEL

Fine by me. Let's go.

AILEEN

Michael is moving in with me.

There is a bit of a stunned silence before MICHELLE gives them both a hug and a kiss.

HARRY

(to MICHAEL) Good luck, mate, rather you than me.

MICHELLE

Harry! It's big deal, say something nice.

HARRY gets up and gives MICHAEL a handshake that turns into a tentative hug and then looks at AILEEN and does more or less the same. Aileen is as awkward about this as he is.

AILEEN

(smiling) Alright, you don't have to be such a girl about it.

CUT TO:

66 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

The girls are both asleep on the couch. HARRY and MICHELLE are drinking wine.

MICHELLE
It's nice isn't it?

HARRY
It's nice when they're asleep.

MICHELLE
What'll you do now?

HARRY
(suspiciously) Got any ideas?

MICHELLE
(pointedly) No, have you got any ideas.

HARRY
To be honest, I've been thinking about a lot of things but I want to get the exam out of the way before I start making any big decisions.

MICHELLE
(understandingly) That's fair enough. (getting up) Come on, let's get them to bed.

CUT TO:

67 INT EXAM ROOM DAY

HARRY and RADIO sit next to each other, finishing off their last exam. RADIO is twirling a pen in his hand, obviously having finished, HARRY is still furiously writing away.

INVIGILATOR
The exam is now over, please stop writing.

HARRY and RADIO exchange a look, HARRY shrugs his shoulders, RADIO looks quietly content.

CUT TO:

68 EXT AILEEN'S GARDEN DAY

AILEEN, MICHAEL and GRANNY sit drinking coffee quietly. GRANNY is smoking a joint.

AILEEN

I really wish you would be a nice old grandmother who makes scones and wears an apron. The children are only up the stairs.

GRANNY

And lives in a house made of gingerbread? (passing the joint to Michael who accepts).

MICHAEL

Thanks.

AILEEN

And you've spent too much time in that terrible apartment. Don't you dare turn into him.

MICHELLE appears.

MICHELLE

I think they need to be fed. I'm bad because I wouldn't supply biscuits.

MICHELLE sits down as AILEEN, giving MICHAEL a look, gets up at which MICHAEL trails along behind her.

MICHELLE

I think he'll pass, he will won't he?

GRANNY

Well, I guess half a million depends on it, so, yes, more than likely, although there is the other part of the bargain.

MICHELLE

The other part?

GRANNY

Hmm, well, the thing is, and don't be too upset about this because I said it after he met you, and entirely in his best interests, but the thing is, I told him he could only have the money if he did the masters thing and held down a relationship for at least six months.

There is a pause as MICHELLE processes this revelation.

MICHELLE

So I've been used as bargaining tool by you and a means to an end by him?

GRANNY

Sweetheart, he loves you, we all do, I'm sorry. It doesn't mean anything now.

MICHELLE

You could've told me.

GRANNY puts her arm round MICHELLE.

GRANNY

I actually forgot about it altogether when I realised he was in love with you.

AILEEN appears and immediately hugs MICHELLE who cries a little bit.

AILEEN

Granny, you absolute beast.

GRANNY

Where did you come from?

AILEEN

I was listening at the upstairs bedroom window.

GRANNY

(somewhat unrepentant) Ok, but think about this. I saw how interested he was in Michelle and I thought to myself, he really doesn't want to let her go, she was, is, a lovely, intelligent, young woman. I'd hate to think he didn't even give her a chance. Did it ever occur to you all that actually, I was more interested in him being serious about Michelle than doing his masters degree?

MICHELLE

I'm really not sure how I feel about all this.

AILEEN hugs her again.

AILEEN

You mustn't leave us, we love you.

MICHAEL wanders out, blissfully unaware.

MICHAEL

They've both fallen asleep, any of that joint left?

CUT TO:

69 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT NIGHT

As MICHELLE approaches the front door there is very loud music and clearly a wild party going on inside. MICHELLE shudders. She lets herself in and wanders rather miserably into the living room through a number of students who are enjoying life to the full. RADIO spots her and dashes over to try to divert her attention but to no avail. MICHELLE sees HARRY on the couch just as a pretty young female student flops onto his lap and kisses him drunkenly and passionately. She thins her lips as she confronts this unsavoury spectacle.

MICHELLE

Well, you've done your degree, you've conned me into being with you for the requisite number of months and now you can just carry on being you. Goodbye.

MICHELLE walks out. She leaves the apartment, walks out into the hall then sits down and cries. The door opens and RADIO appears. He sits down beside her and puts his arm round her. She is too tired of it all to resist.

RADIO

I'm not very good at these things but I have to say, he really, really loves you.

MICHELLE

Thanks, Radio, I wish I could believe you.

She gets up and leaves.

CUT TO:

70 EXT ESPLANADE NIGHT

HARRY, breathless, walks onto the esplanade. He looks rather desperately around and sees a small miserable figure, half way up. He walks tentatively up to her.

HARRY

Will you marry me?

MICHELLE

No.

HARRY

Look, she was just a classmate in high spirits, I'm not interested in her, look at me I'm sober, I've been all over the city looking for you.

MICHELLE

Harry, think about it, I'm a girl who took three years to get over an abusive marriage and finally when I let myself love someone, not just a little bit, not a crush, real love, grown up love, I find that that love is based on a deal between you and your awful grandmother. It hurts.

HARRY

I know it does, my parents died in a car crash and sometimes I used to tell myself they were on holiday, which you know, (he falters, his voice breaking up with emotion) but I knew they weren't and I think I was scared to let myself love people.

MICHELLE

(beginning to come round a bit) Am I people?

HARRY

You're the only people. I'm sorry I made you feel that way.

MICHELLE

(smiling, giving in) Well, don't do it again.

HARRY

Alright, we're both thinking it. You could move in.

MICHELLE

I could, I suppose.

HARRY

Well don't all rush at once.

MICHELLE

(laughing) I'm thinking about it.

HARRY

(suddenly looking animated and kissing her) Actually I've been thinking. Why don't we go travelling for a few months, I've still got a fair bit of money left, we could rent out the apartment and, of course, there's Granny's money to spend. If we end up hating each other after a month in Venice or somewhere, well, at least, well, you know. But if it goes well, you could move in when we get back.

MICHELLE

This is what you were thinking about when I asked you 'what now?' a couple of weeks ago?

HARRY

Yes.

MICHELLE

Really?

HARRY

I actually booked an apartment in Venice, six months ago, the day after we said 'I love you' for the first time.

MICHELLE

Hmm, alright, I love you again, and if you've passed your exams, so will Granny.

CUT TO:

71 INT HARRY'S APARTMENT DAY

HARRY, MICHELLE and GRANNY sit at the kitchen table eyeballing each other.

HARRY

(pushing a certificate towards GRANNY) Harold Andrew Parker, MLitt. Ok, cough up.

GRANNY

Oh, Harry, there's no money, you're richer than me, I did it to get you grow up and hopefully marry the best thing that ever happened to you.

HARRY

You fucking miserable, evil, deceitful, wicked, conniving old...

FREEZE FRAME.

THE END