



MAGPIE MURDERS

Seven for a secret never to be told...

Episode One
A Six Part Event Series

by
Anthony Horowitz

Adapted from his bestselling novel

Goldenrod revisions dated 17 May 2021

© Eleventh Hour Films Limited

Confidentiality Notice:

This document contains confidential and/or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact Eleventh Hour Films on 0207 251 6848 immediately.

1 CUT

1

1AA CUT

1AA

1A CUT

1A

1B INT. ALAN CONWAY's STUDY - DAY

1B

BIG CLOSE UP. An expensive fountain pen, being slowly unscrewed. The nib gleaming like a dagger.

It is being held by ALAN CONWAY - but we do not see him at this stage.

A pause.

ANOTHER ANGLE. Showing ALAN CONWAY sitting at his desk - seen from behind. The entire novel - MAGPIE MURDERS - (minus the last chapter) is typed up beside him in manuscript form. A computer and a printer. But the first draft is by hand.

He thinks.

PICKING UP OTHER DETAILS IN THE OFFICE. The Atticus Pünd novels. Various reference books. An award. We are inside a writer's head - inside his space - as he writes the final paragraph of his book.

CONWAY dips the pen into an ink bottle. He begins to write the last paragraph of the last chapter of MAGPIE MURDERS.

CONWAY (V.O.)

What else can I tell you about
Atticus Pünd? He had solved his
last case.

1C INT. PYE HALL (1955) DAY.

1C

FLASHBACK. MARY BLAKISTON lies still with a broken neck.

All these three images should be filmed in a way that gives them shock value - a sense of violence, displacement. We don't yet know what they mean. We're not giving too much away.

CONWAY (V.O.)

The death of Mary Blakiston.

CUT TO:

1D EXT. PYE HALL (1955) DAY.

1D

FLASHBACK. DETECTIVE INSPECTOR CHUBB and a couple of POLICEMEN enter the house.

CONWAY (V.O.)

Soon followed by another death at Pye Hall.

1E EXT. PYE HALL LAKE (1942) DAY.

1E

FLASHBACK. BRENT carries a drowned body out of the lake. We see it is a CHILD - but not the identity.

CONWAY (V.O.)

And, of course, the tragedy that had taken place thirteen years before.

CUT TO:

1F INT. THE QUEEN'S HEAD, SAXBY-ON-AVON (1955) DAY.

1F

FLASHBACK. The wrap. ATTICUS PÜND with CHUBB and FRASER is explaining the solution. But we do not see who he is talking to - and nor do we hear what he is saying.

CONWAY (V.O.)

Three deaths that seemed to have no connection until Atticus Pünd brought them together and made sense of them.

1G INT. ALAN CONWAY'S STUDY. DAY

1G

Back to the present. A pause. ALAN CONWAY has written all the words we have heard. He thinks for a moment. Then begins again.

1H SCENE OMITTED

1H

1I INT. ALAN CONWAY'S STUDY. DAY

1I

CLOSE SHOT. "He was the kindest and wisest man I ever knew." The words are written in ink on the page.

ALAN CONWAY looks at them, then scrawls underneath:

"The End."

CONWAY (V.O.)

The end.

(CONTINUED)

CONWAY looks at the words on the page - but without pleasure.

He screws the lid onto the expensive pen. Thinks for a moment and then - like Prospero at the end of The Tempest - he suddenly snaps the pen in half, INK splattering over his fingers and onto the page. An act of anger, frustration and self-disgust.

OPENING CREDITS

ALTERNATIVELY

NEW SCENE

1J

EXT. SUFFOLK COUNTRY LANE (1955) DAY

1J

In this case, we would show PÜND walking down a lane into the distance (which connects with Episode 5, Scenes 12 and 15 when he is abandoned by SUSAN). PÜND, back to camera, would walk into the distance, disappearing into the heat haze.

CONWAY (V.O.)

He was more than a friend. He was the kindest and wisest man I ever knew.

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDITS

An amalgam of the present day and the "golden age" of detective fiction (1955).

The final image morphs into the cover of a new bestseller: MAGPIE MURDERS by ALAN CONWAY. Published by Clover Books.

CUT TO:

2

INT. FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR - ENTRANCE/SECURITY DAY. 2

CLOSE SHOT. A TV screen showing ghost images of the contents of a large HANDBAG as it slides into view. And very visible inside, the black outline of a mobile phone.

Two GERMAN SECURITY GUARDS. One of them looks at the screen. Then up at the handbag's OWNER - questioning.

SUSAN RYELAND is in a hurry to get through, late for a meeting. She's the unconventional hero of our story, smart, focused, well-known throughout the publishing world. Wearing a LANYARD with her name (and Frankfurt Book Festival).

SUSAN

What? (Beat - then more annoyed)
What?

The GUARD hands her the HANDBAG.

GUARD (2)

Your phone.

He wants to see it.

SUSAN grabs the HANDBAG and searches in it. She can't find the phone. She turns the bag upside down and the contents pour out. Paperback books. Pens. Notepads. Two packets of cigarettes. A sandwich. A pair of high-heeled BUSINESS SHOES (Manolo Blahnik pumps?). The PHONE. Frustrated, she shows it to the GUARD. Is it such a big deal?

SUSAN

OK?

The phone rings in her hand. SUSAN stares at it - appalled. She answers.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Sorry, Charles. Yesterday was wall -
to-wall and I've got Klaus at nine,
I'll call you later.

She disconnects.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Ich bitte um entschuldigung. Ich
habe vergessen dass es in der
Tasche war.

I'm sorry. I forgot it was in the bag.

3

INT. FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR - ESCALATOR DAY.

3

BANNERS read: WELCOME TO THE FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR. A few PEOPLE going up and down an escalator.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN is one of them, taking off the TRAINERS she was wearing on the way from her hotel and putting on the BUSINESS SHOES even as she travels upwards.

She reaches the top and stuffs her TRAINERS back into the handbag.

She takes a breath. She's ready. She continues forward.

CUT TO:

4 **INT. FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR - CORRIDOR DAY.** 4

We hear the sound of the crowds and the general atmosphere as SUSAN makes her way down a corridor between different publishing booths.

At once, she's joined by KLAUS ECKERMAN, stepping out of one of the booths as if to ambush her, now walking beside her. Shoulder to shoulder. No escape.

KLAUS is in his forties. Sharp and a little oily. He quite fancies SUSAN - but this is not reciprocated.

KLAUS

So?

SUSAN

Good morning, Klaus.

KLAUS

Atticus Piind. You have considered my offer?

SUSAN

Yes.

KLAUS

And?

SUSAN

It's not good enough.

KLAUS

I don't agree.

SUSAN

Well, you wouldn't.

She continues towards the CLOVER BOOKS booth.

4A **INT. FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR - CLOVER BOOKS BOOTH DAY.** 4A

(CONTINUED)

CLOVER BOOKS publish Alan Conway. They have a space with lots of books, a couple of young GERMAN STAFF MEMBERS and an animated poster showing an image of the author himself along with a list of all his novels, one after another, with the ninth about to be announced.

ATTICUS PÜND INVESTIGATES
NO REST FOR THE WICKED
ATTICUS PÜND TAKES THE CASE
NIGHT COMES CALLING
ATTICUS PÜND'S CHRISTMAS
GIN & CYANIDE
RED ROSES FOR ATTICUS
ATTICUS PÜND ABROAD

KLAUS

Come on, Susan, We're old friends.
We don't need to haggle.

SUSAN

I thought that's what I was here
for.

She looks him in the eye.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Eighteen million copies sold world-wide. Two and a half million in this territory. 35 languages. A TV series on the way.

KLAUS

But Wörterhaus are no longer
interested.

SUSAN

We left Wörterhaus . Alan Conway
didn't like them.

KLAUS

He reads his translations?

SUSAN

He reads his royalty statements.
They were getting lazy.

A YOUNG ASSISTANT hands her a cup of coffee.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Vielen dank, Theo.

KLAUS

We can go to a hundred thousand
Euros.

SUSAN

We won't go below a hundred and
twenty.

(CONTINUED)

KLAUS

That's too high.

SUSAN

He has a new book.

(CONTINUED)

KLAUS

Magpie Murders. Have you read it?

SUSAN

He hasn't delivered it yet. But it'll be number one. Like the last one. And the one before.

A pause. KLAUS considers.

KLAUS

OK. I can give you an answer this evening. Not here. How about a drink at your hotel?

SUSAN

You're not the only interested party, Klaus.

KLAUS believes this isn't true. And it may not be.

KLAUS

Six thirty.

CUT TO:

4B

EXT. FRANKFURT HOTEL DUSK.

4B

ESTABLISHING SHOT. A small but classy Belle Epoque hotel in a Frankfurt Street. Cocktail music.

CUT TO:

4C

INT. FRANKFURT HOTEL - ALTSTADT DUSK.

4C

The music takes us inside. SUSAN and KLAUS are in the bar. They have drinks.

KLAUS

You know, I always like seeing you, Susan. How many years have we known each other?

SUSAN

Too many.

He puts a hand on hers.

KLAUS

It's a shame it always has to be business.

He's coming onto her. SUSAN withdraws her hand.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Have you rethought your offer,
Klaus?

KLAUS

OK.

KLAUS smiles. But he's annoyed with the brush-off and now he's business-like.

KLAUS (CONT'D)

Eighty thousand.

SUSAN

Then you're wasting my time.

KLAUS

I don't think so. You have problems.

SUSAN

What problems?

KLAUS

Clover Books. I hear you're being bought out.

SUSAN

That's not a problem. That's an opportunity

KLAUS

Come on, Susan. The accountants come in. You lose your independence. Maybe you lose your best authors.

SUSAN

And then?

KLAUS

You're screwed.

SUSAN

Is that what you think?

KLAUS

Yes.

SUSAN gets to her feet. She speaks loud enough for everyone in the bar to hear.

SUSAN

I may be screwed, Klaus. But not by you.

(CONTINUED)

She walks out.

CUT TO:

5

INT. FRANKFURT HOTEL - SUSAN'S ROOM EVENING.

5

SUSAN returns to her elegant room. But she's in a bad mood. She throws her stuff down on the bed. Drags her case out to start packing.

A knock at the door. Puzzled, she opens it to see a very handsome, Greek waiter dressed in a white jacket, carrying a bucket of champagne. ANDREAS PATAKIS.

ANDREAS

Miss Ryeland?

SUSAN

(suspicious)

Yes?

ANDREAS

Your champagne.

SUSAN

I didn't order any champagne.

ANDREAS

Are you sure?

SUSAN

Yes.

ANDREAS

Then I must have the wrong room.

SUSAN

No! Leave it...

The waiter puts the champagne down.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

In fact, why don't you share it with me?

ANDREAS

I'm sorry, madam. Hotel policy...

SUSAN

I was told it was a full service hotel.

SUSAN takes hold of the waiter and pulls him towards her. A long, passionate kiss. They sink towards the bed.

CUT TO:

6

INT. FRANKFURT HOTEL - SUSAN'S ROOM NIGHT.

6

LATER. SUSAN and ANDREAS are lying in bed, drinking the champagne. Their clothes discarded around them. And now we see that actually they're old friends.

SUSAN

How did you know where to find me?

ANDREAS

I rang your office. Alice told me.

SUSAN

Remind me to talk to her. You never know who you might have found me with.

ANDREAS

Klaus Eckermann?

SUSAN

Come on. Give me some taste!

(Beat)

Aren't you meant to be teaching?

ANDREAS

I took the day off.

SUSAN

And you came all this way. You are sweet.

She kisses him.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Where did you get the jacket?

ANDREAS

I bribed a waiter.

SUSAN

You're full of surprises, Andreas. I'm glad to see you. I've had a horrible time here.

ANDREAS

We can go home together.

SUSAN

Are we on the same flight?

ANDREAS

17F.

SUSAN

OK. Alice is promoted.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREAS

And we have the weekend.

SUSAN

(a smile)

I can't wait...

CUT TO:

7

EXT. LIVERPOOL STREET STATION - PLATFORM DAY.

7

SUSAN and ANDREAS leave the Stansted Express and make their way down the platform. As they go through the TICKET BARRIER:

SUSAN

I'm getting a taxi. You want to share?

ANDREAS

No. I'll tube.

SUSAN

OK. What time will I see you tomorrow?

ANDREAS

I'll come at lunchtime. But I'm out in the evening.

SUSAN

(surprised)

Where?

ANDREAS

We're rehearsing. The school play.

SUSAN

See you when I see you then.

(Smiling)

Thank you for surprising me.

They kiss and go their separate ways.

CUT TO:

8

EXT. CLOVER BOOKS DAY.

8

ESTABLISHING SHOT. An old fashioned publishing house in a quiet street. SUSAN enters the building.

ALICE (V.O.)

So how was Frankfurt?

CUT TO:

9

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - SUSAN'S OFFICE DAY.

9

SUSAN has come into the wood-panelled, cosy office where she works. This is the way publishing used to be. Her young assistant ALICE, is there, delivering Susan's MAIL to her.

SUSAN

Oh - the usual madness. This is for you.

SUSAN takes a large, phallic German SALAMI out of her bag. She gives it to ALICE.

ALICE

You shouldn't have.

SUSAN

I didn't. It's from Andreas. And no smutty jokes.

ALICE

He found you then?

SUSAN

(gently chiding)

I'll talk to you about that another time. Just tell me it's arrived.

ALICE

Charles wants to see you.

SUSAN

Meaning?

ALICE

He looked happy when he came in.

CUT TO:

10

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CHARLES'S OFFICE DAY.

10

CHARLES CLOVER is aged about 60, elegant, always smartly dressed. The old-fashioned owner and CEO of this quite old-fashioned firm. Sitting behind a desk. Various AWARDS on his shelves. Lots of books, of course. Wood panelling. Thick curtains. Everything in the room is twenty years out-of-date

SUSAN sitting opposite him.

SUSAN

So?

CHARLES

I had dinner with him last night.

SUSAN

And?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES
(sarcastic)
He was his usual charming self.

CHARLES hands across the manuscript.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
But he's finished it.

SUSAN
Magpie Murders.

CHARLES
One for sorrow, two for joy, three
for a girl, four for a boy.

SUSAN
Five for silver, six for gold,
seven for a secret never to be
told. Very Agatha Christie. Have
you read it yet?

CHARLES
I've started it.

SUSAN
And?

CHARLES
Number one in time for Christmas.

SUSAN
(about to leave)
Well, that's my weekend taken care
of.

CHARLES
One moment, Susan.
(Beat)
We have the meeting next week.

SUSAN
(heavy heart)
Cityworld Media.

CHARLES
Don't say it like that. You make
them sound like the enemy.

SUSAN
They don't understand publishing.

CHARLES
Which is why they want you in charge
after the buyout. (Beat) But they
are going to need an answer.

SUSAN

I don't know, Charles. It's all very well for you. Grandchildren. Retirement. Cruises.

CHARLES

I'll still be here for you. I've told you.

SUSAN

I'm just not sure I'm cut out to run a company. Finances. Targets! It's not what I'm used to. I'm an editor.

CHARLES

And the best in the business, but this is a huge opportunity for you. A proper salary...more than I could ever afford to pay. Plus a five percent share.

SUSAN

After five years.

CHARLES

You'll be rich.

SUSAN

(grudging)

Not as rich as you.

CHARLES

Think of the company. Think of what you can make it.

SUSAN takes the book and gets up.

SUSAN

We'll talk on Monday.

CHARLES

Enjoy the read.

SUSAN leaves.

CUT TO:

11

EXT. EXPENSIVE LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOL DAY.

11

A smart independent school. We hear a BOY'S voice - speaking very hesitantly in Greek.

(CONTINUED)

BOY (O.S.)

Andra moy ennepe mousa politropon
os mala plagthi...

CUT TO:

PROPERTY OF ELEVENTH HOUR FILMS

12

INT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - CLASSROOM DAY.

12

ANDREAS, smartly dressed, is giving a class in ancient Greek to a very small group of sixteen-year-olds. Just six of them. Note: the door has a GLASS WINDOW so you can look in.

BOY

...eri Troyis ear-on ptolithron
epepsen.

ANDREAS

Thank you, Simon.

The BOY is relieved to sit down.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Homer's Odyssey - one of the greatest epic poems ever written. Anyone got any idea what any of those words meant?

Silence. No-one has a clue.

CUT TO:

13

INT. EXPENSIVE LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOL DAY.

13

ANDREAS is walking with a computer science teacher, CHRIS FLETCHER. We'll meet him again in Episode Six.

ANDREAS

Six of them. Just six. And last year it was eight. Do you know why they even have it as an option?

FLETCHER

You've got to have somewhere to put the nerds.

ANDREAS throws him an ugly look.

ANDREAS

Because it's tradition. It makes the school look good...

CUT TO:

14

EXT. SUSAN'S FLAT DUSK.

14

CLOSE SHOT. SUSAN turns the key in the front door of a flat - the ground floor of a larger house in Crouch End, north London.

SUSAN has her luggage from Frankfurt, two bags of shopping, a bag of duty-free. With difficulty, she manages to scoop it up and carry it all in.

(CONTINUED)

ANOTHER ANGLE. As SUSAN closes the door, a single MAGPIE watches from a tree on the other side of the road.

CUT TO:

15

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - KITCHEN DUSK.

15

SUSAN dumps the bags in the kitchen. She takes out her phone and opens a MUSIC APP, pushes a button on a small BLUETOOTH SPEAKER - instrumental, low-key JAZZ, from the fifties starts to fill the room. As it plays she opens the fridge and takes out a BOTTLE OF GIN with one hand and a CAN OF TONIC with the other.

CUT TO:

16

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - SHOWER DUSK.

16

Music over. SUSAN takes a quick shower. Downs the first gin and tonic while the hot water pours.

CUT TO:

17

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - KITCHEN NIGHT.

17

Music over. SUSAN pops the ice into a second gin and tonic.

CUT TO:

18

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM NIGHT.

18

Music over - a suitable background for a novel set in the fifties. SUSAN sitting on a sofa freshly showered and changed, with crisps and gin and tonic. Damp hair. Comfortable on her own. Opens the manuscript, relishing this moment.

Then begins...

CONWAY (V.O.)

There were many who considered Atticus Pünd to be the world's greatest detective but, as he walked down Harley Street on that early summer's day, he knew that he was facing the greatest mystery of all...

FADE THROUGH TO:

19

EXT. HARLEY STREET, LONDON (1955) DAY.

19

Music fades out. ATTICUS PÜND is the fictitious detective invented by Alan Conway. He is elegant, dressed in a suit and tie.

What makes him different from other "golden age" detectives is his war experience...a German Jew in a prison camp. There is a seriousness about him, a sense of mortality.

CONWAY (V.O.)
...his own mortality.

ATTICUS stops in front of a black-painted door with a name: DR R. BENSON.

CUT TO:

20

INT. DR BENSON'S SURGERY (1955) DAY.

20

DR BENSON is also wearing a suit, almost a caricature of what a doctor should be. But this is a fictitious world. So - wood panelling, ticking clock, antique desk. X-rays hanging on the wall. A world of clichés.

She has just finished examining ATTICUS PÜND who is wearing a vest. His shirt, jacket and tie are behind a chair.

DR BENSON
You can get dressed now, Mr Pünd.

As PÜND pulls on his shirt, we see a TATTOO NUMBER on his arm. This is from his time in a German prison camp.

PÜND
So. Tell me the worst, Dr Benson...

DR BENSON
Well, there's no sign of any further deterioration but I'm afraid it's still not good news.

PÜND
How much time do I have?

DR BENSON
It's not easy to be precise. I'm afraid the tumour is very advanced. Had we been able to spot it earlier there's a small chance we might have been able to operate. As it is...I'm sorry.

PÜND
There is no need to be. I'm no longer young.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PÜND (CONT'D)

I have had a long life and will say that in many respects it has been a good one. I have expected to die on many occasions before now. You might even say that death has been a companion of mine, always two steps behind. Well, now he has caught up...

A pause. The ticking clock.

PÜND (CONT'D)

Even so, it would help me to know...for example, if I were considering a skiing holiday in the Bavarian Alps...?

DR BENSON

It wouldn't be a good idea. (Beat)
Do you ski?

PÜND

No. (Resigned) And now I never will.

CUT TO:

21

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - KITCHEN NIGHT.

21

A SMASH CUT to an angry SUSAN on the telephone to CHARLES.

SUSAN

Why didn't you tell me?

CUT TO:

22

INT. CHARLES CLOVER'S OFFICE NIGHT.

22

CHARLES has taken the call at his desk, working late.

CHARLES

Tell you what, Susan?

Cutting between them.

SUSAN

I've just read the first chapter.
Atticus at the doctor.

CHARLES

Ah yes.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

Did he tell you he was killing him off?

CHARLES

I haven't got to the end yet. It many not be terminal.

SUSAN

It had bloody well better not be.

CHARLES had answered on his desk phone. Now his CELL rings. He glances at the screen.

CHARLES

I can't talk now. My car's here.

SUSAN

Where's Alan?

CHARLES

I think he's in London. Heading back tomorrow.

SUSAN

Maybe you should call him.

CHARLES

(calming her)

Finish the book. We'll talk Monday.

CHARLES hangs up.

SUSAN puts down the phone. Pours herself another gin.

CUT TO:

23

EXT. LIVERPOOL STREET STATION DAY.

23

ESTABLISHING SHOT. The following day. ALAN CONWAY gets out of a taxi. He has an overnight bag.

CUT TO:

24

EXT. STATION CONCOURSE DAY.

24

CONWAY is making his way to his train when a WOMAN FAN approaches him.

WOMAN FAN

Excuse me. Are you Alan Conway?

CONWAY

(distracted)

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN FAN

I just want to say, I love your books.

CONWAY

Thank you.

WOMAN FAN

When is the next one coming out?

CONWAY

Soon.

The WOMAN FAN reaches for her mobile.

WOMAN FAN

I know it's cheeky of me, but I don't suppose I could have a selfie with you? My husband won't believe I met you.

CONWAY

(angry)

No!

CONWAY has to control himself. He has his public image to consider.

CONWAY (CONT'D)

(calmer)

No. I'm sorry. I'm late for my train.

CONWAY hurries across the concourse. The WOMAN FAN watches him, puzzled and disappointed.

CUT TO:

25

INT/EXT. TRAIN DAY.

25

ALAN CONWAY sits in first class, pen in hand, staring dejectedly at a Times crossword. He has a slight cough which troubles him. And he can't focus on the clues.

He puts his pen down and stares out of the window: this prompts a nightmare series of FLASHBACKS relating to the last few days. They are jumbled, out-of-sequence...

CUT TO:

26

INT. ABBEY GRANGE/CONWAY'S STUDY DAY.

26

The scene that opened the episode. ALAN CONWAY types the last words - THE END - of his novel.

CUT TO:

27

INT. DR Rafter's Clinic DAY.

27 *

Another clinic, another doctor.

DR Rafter (Irish, sympathetic) examines ALAN'S X-ray. ALAN sits opposite.

CONWAY

(sardonic)

The End?

DR Rafter

Not necessarily. The cancer is at stage 4. That gives you a ten percent chance.

CONWAY

Ten percent is my royalty. It's never enough.

CUT TO:

28

INT. LA MAISON - BAR NIGHT.

28

ALAN CONWAY throws back a large whisky.

CUT TO:

29

INT. LA MAISON - RESTAURANT NIGHT.

29

ALAN CONWAY is having dinner with CHARLES CLOVER in a private restaurant/club. He is drunk, a little flushed.

CHARLES

I have to say, Alan, I liked it

from the moment we announced it.

"The Magpie Murders." Very strong.

I think I can see that on the bestseller lists.

ALAN

Magpie Murders.

CHARLES

I'm sorry?

CONWAY

Not "The Magpie Murders". "Mag-pie Murders. That's the bloody title.

CHARLES

Alan, there's absolutely no need to take umbrage. There's no "the". I know that. Magpie Murders it is.

(CONTINUED)

ALAN

It's just that this book is the
one. This is finally the moment
when I...

*
*
*
*

But before he can continue, there's a terrible crash.

*

*

*

*

A waiter has just come in from the kitchen and dropped a
large silver platter which hits the wooden floor with an
explosive clatter. The waiter stares at ALAN.

Later, we will know him as LEE JAFFREY.

*

*

CUT TO:

30

INT. CONWAY'S LONDON FLAT DUSK.

30

CLOSE SHOT on CONWAY writing the letter that will come at the
end of this episode. We see some of the words: "I'm very
sorry..."

CONWAY pauses. He looks ill.

CUT TO:

31

EXT. STATION CONCOURSE DAY.

31

The WOMAN FAN accosting CONWAY - somehow she looks more threatening and invasive.

WOMAN FAN

Excuse me. Are you Alan Conway?

32

INT/EXT. TRAIN DAY.

32

ALAN CONWAY stares out of the window. We see his POV of the outside world rushing by.

CUT TO:

33

EXT. RAILWAY LINE DAY.

33

The train rushes through the English countryside heading for Suffolk.

CUT TO:

33A

EXT. RAILWAY STATION & FOOTBRIDGE, SUFFOLK DAY

33A

ALAN CONWAY walks along the platform and crosses over a footbridge.

CUT TO:

34

EXT. RAILWAY STATION & CAR PARK, SUFFOLK DAY.

34

ALAN CONWAY exits the station and heads for his car, an expensive 4 X 4.

He notices that there is a deep scratch in the paintwork. It wasn't there when he parked. He looks left and right. Nobody seems to be around.

He gets into his car and drives away.

ANOTHER ANGLE. A 17-YEAR-OLD BOY steps out of his hiding place and watches ALAN CONWAY drive away, hatred in his eyes. We will later discover that this is FREDDY CONWAY, his son. There's another TEENAGER with him. Both of them look like drop-outs.

TEENAGER

Who was that?

FREDDY

My dad.

TEENAGER

You don't like him much.

(CONTINUED)

FREDDY

I wish he'd drop dead.

CUT TO:

35

INT/EXT. CONWAY'S CAR/SUFFOLK COUNTRYSIDE DAY.

35

ALAN CONWAY drives along a road. Beautiful countryside.

CUT TO:

36

INT/EXT. CONWAY'S CAR/KERSEY DAY.

36

ALAN CONWAY drives through a pretty Suffolk town. He passes the local PUB (which we'll see in 1955) as well as a church and a cemetery that will have a large part to play in our story - and certainly his.

CUT TO:

36A

EXT. PRIVATE DRIVE, SUFFOLK DAY

36A

ALAN CONWAY'S CAR drives through automatic ornate IRON GATES that open seamlessly as he enters his estate, passing a traditional Lodge House.

37

INT/EXT. CONWAY'S CAR/PRIVATE DRIVE DAY.

37

ALAN CONWAY continues down the narrow private drive.

About half-way down, another car, he finds himself blocked by another car, an SUV, turns from a side-lane signed APPLE FARM. The two cars stop, facing each other. The SUV's driven by his nearest neighbour, an urbane black man named JACK WHITE. He's a retired businessman, 40's, and their two quite separate houses share this common access. They do not get on. And now the two cars confront each other with no room to pass.

Stale mate.

ALAN CONWAY hoots. JACK WHITE gestures at him to reverse few yards into a wider section of lane. A pause. Nobody going anywhere. CONWAY hoots a second time. WHITE is used to this unpleasantness. He folds his arms.

CONWAY swerves round him, his car mounting the grass verge. WHITE waits until he's gone, then puts his car into gear and drives forward, a little sad. Why does life have to be like this?

CONWAY'S CAR drives pass a lake.

CUT TO:

38

EXT. ABBEY GRANGE, SUFFOLK DAY.

38

CONWAY arrives at an impressive house we established in Scene 1A and parks outside the front door, next to another car (it belongs to JAMES). He takes out his overnight bag and goes in.

CUT TO:

39

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - ENTRANCE HALL DAY.

39

As ALAN CONWAY enters the house, JAMES TAYLOR comes down the stairs, carrying a suitcase. They meet, uncomfortably, at the bottom.

CONWAY

I hoped you'd already gone.

JAMES

I just thought I'd say goodbye.

CONWAY

(cold)

Goodbye, then.

JAMES

Did you deliver the manuscript?

CONWAY

Do you care?

JAMES

Alan...

JAMES wants a conciliation. CONWAY isn't having it.

CONWAY

I think we've said everything we need to say. Don't you?

JAMES

No. I don't.

CONWAY

Well, I do.

CONWAY begins to move away. JAMES calls after him.

JAMES

I'm sorry!

CONWAY

Sorry about what exactly?
Humiliating me?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONWAY (CONT'D)

Disappearing whenever you fancied it, partying with your friends and presumably having a good laugh about me at the same time? I've had enough. Just get out. Go on.

JAMES moves towards a side table and picks up the KEY to the SPORTS CAR.

CONWAY (CONT'D)

You can leave the car.

JAMES

My car...you mean.

CONWAY

I think you'll find it's my name on the registration.

JAMES leaves the keys.

JAMES

Just out of interest, how am I meant to get to the station?

CONWAY

You can call a taxi.

JAMES

You can't do this to me, Alan. I have rights, you know.

CONWAY

You have nothing.

CUT TO:

40

EXT. ABBEY GRANGE, SUFFOLK DAY.

40

JAMES looks out the window of the SUFFOLK TAXI as is drives away from the house, passing another car approaching.

CLAIRE JENKINS arriving.

SUSAN (V.O.)

You never did like Alan, did you.

ANDREAS (V.O.)

He's an unpleasant man.

CUT TO:

41

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - KITCHEN DAY.

41

SUSAN is in the kitchen of her flat. ANDREAS has set out lunch for two - all out of a brown paper bag from a Greek deli.

SUSAN

You knew him before I did.

ANDREAS

I knew him when he was just a teacher - before he married Melissa. He was unpleasant then.

ANDREAS looks at the table. Points.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Tzatziki and keftedes. Baked aubergine. Hummus. Pita. Grilled halloumi.

SUSAN

What would I do without you?

ANDREAS

You wouldn't eat.

SUSAN

Retsina?

ANDREAS

Why not?

SUSAN goes to the fridge.

41A

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - KITCHEN DAY

41A

LATER. SUSAN and ANDREAS at the table. They've eaten. They're drinking. Companionable.

SUSAN

Charles wants me to give him an answer.

ANDREAS

The job.

SUSAN

Yes.

ANDREAS

Are you going to do it?

SUSAN

I don't know. I'm an editor. It's all I've ever done. Running a company...

(CONTINUED)

ANDREAS

Don't undersell yourself. You're brilliant. You could do that.

SUSAN

It's not just that. Working for an investment company. All they're interested in is the figures and if things go wrong...

ANDREAS

But they won't go wrong. You have Atticus Pünd.

SUSAN

Thank God. Yes.

(Beat)

The new manuscript arrived.

ANDREAS

And?

SUSAN

Magpie Murders. It's 1955 and we're in the village of Saxby-on-Avon...

ANDREAS

Where's that?

SUSAN

It doesn't exist. They never do. Mary Blakiston has been found dead at Pye Hall. It's the ancestral home of Sir Magnus. She was his housekeeper.

ANDREAS

What happened to her?

SUSAN

She fell down the stairs.

ANDREAS

Or was she pushed?

SUSAN

Another two hundred pages and I'll find out.

(sad)

I'm going to have to abandon you this afternoon.

ANDREAS

(fake outrage)

No! I don't know what I'll do.

SUSAN
(guessing)
Who are you playing?

ANDREAS
(a smile)
Man U. Starts at three.

CUT TO:

42 INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM DAY.

42

ANDREAS is watching the football on TV. Crowds roaring. SUSAN goes back to the manuscript.

CONWAY (V.O.)
As Pünd walked home he was already putting it all into context.

CUT TO:

43 EXT. TANNER COURT, LONDON (1955) DAY.

43

ATTICUS PÜND walks towards a block of mansion flats in Clerkenwell - which is where he lives. The sun shining.

CONWAY (V.O.)
It was just another throw of the dice and in a way his entire life had been lived against the odds.

PÜND goes into the building. We see his name on a door plaque, the letters spelled out in gold. ATTICUS PÜND.

CUT TO:

43A INT. TANNER COURT - STAIRWAY (1955) DAY.

43A

ATTICUS PÜND climbs the stairs to his flat, takes out a key, unlocks the door and enters.

CUT TO:

44 INT. PÜND'S FLAT - HALLWAY (1955) DAY.

44

PÜND opens the door to find his young assistant, JAMES FRASER, waiting for him. Late 20's, an Oxford graduate - but not the sharpest pencil in the case.

In the first of our crossovers, he is played by the same actor who played JAMES TAYLOR.

(CONTINUED)

FRASER

There you are! I was getting quite worried about you.

PÜND

Why?

FRASER

You're late for elevenses.

A little less worrying than terminal illness, perhaps.

PÜND

Ah.

FRASER

Where have you been?

PÜND

To Dr Benson.

FRASER

Is he a client?

PÜND

(bemused)

No. He's a doctor.

FRASER

Anything I need to know?

PÜND

I don't think so.

FRASER

(blithely unaware)

Well, you've got a client coming in ten minutes. I put out an extra cup.

PÜND

What client?

FRASER

Joy Sanderling. Don't you remember?

PÜND

(gently)

You may have forgotten to tell me.

FRASER

Oh. Well. She rang the day before yesterday and as you don't have anything on your desk at the moment, I said it would be all right.

PÜND

Forgive me, James. But I'm not in the mind to take on a new client just at this moment.

FRASER

But she's coming a long way.
(Beat)
She sounded very distressed.

REACTION ON PÜND. He has no choice.

CUT TO

45

INT. PUND'S STUDY/LIVING ROOM (1955) DAY.

45

JOY SANDERLING, smartly dressed and nervous, faces PÜND across his desk. FRASER is taking notes. Tea cups and biscuits in evidence.

JOY is in her twenties, a black woman with an innocence that underplays her steely determination.

JOY

I'm very much in love with Robert Blakiston... we were childhood sweethearts. And I am going to marry him no matter what anyone says.

PÜND

And what do they say Miss Sanderling?

JOY

About me?

PÜND

About your fiancé.

JOY

They think he killed his mother.

A pause as PÜND takes this in.

PÜND

That would be enough, I think, to make anyone think twice.

JOY

But I know they're wrong. It's just village gossip. It's a lot of nonsense.

PÜND

So what is it that occurred to give them this foolish idea?

(CONTINUED)

A pause.

JOY

Robert works at the local garage and his mother lived in the village. The two of them didn't get on. She was always nagging him, going on at him. It was like she never wanted him to leave home.

FRASER

Sounds like my mother.

PÜND glances at his assistant. He does not appreciate this interruption.

JOY

The whole thing began because of a silly argument. Robert's got a temper to him - I'll admit that. But she'd been going on at him to mend a light in her cottage and she just picked on him at the wrong time.

CUT TO:

46

EXT. THE QUEEN'S ARMS, SAXBY-ON-AVON (1955) DAY.

46

FLASHBACK. ROBERT and JOY are sitting outside a pretty country pub. There are various LOCALS present. One of them is passing by, not part of any group - CLARISSA PYE, we will meet later.

ROBERT is also in his 20s. Choirboy looks. Fair hair. Blue eyes. He and JOY look made for each other.

They have been interrupted by the arrival of MARY BLAKISTON, ROBERT'S mother. At the end of her forties, a woman for whom life has been a difficult passage. A village gossip and a do-gooder, housekeeper to Sir Magnus Pye.

ROBERT

I'm having a drink, mum. All right?
Every minute of every bloody day,
you never leave me alone.

MARY

Don't use that language with me.

ROBERT

I'm not a child any more.

MARY

No. But I'll tell you what you are.
You're the biggest disappointment
of my life.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT

Then get someone else to do it. And if you can't find anyone, just drop dead and give me a bit of peace.

Everyone has overheard this conversation and reacts with shock. Including CLARISSA PYE who has been lingering on the fringes throughout.

CUT TO:

47

INT. PYE HALL - ENTRANCE HALL (1955) DAY.

47

FLASHBACK. The CAMERA tracks through a hall that is almost identical to the hall (Scene 39) where Alan Conway lives - except that it's more like Agatha Christie in this period and this fiction, with ancestral portraits, wood panels, a suit of armour complete with sword.

MARY BLAKISTON is lying at the bottom of the stairs. She has fallen all the way down and broken her neck on the stone floor. A VACUUM CLEANER stands at the top of the stairs.

JOY (V.O.)

She was found dead the very next day. At Pye Hall. It's the ancestral home of Sir Magnus Pye. She was his house-keeper.

JOY'S words exactly echo SUSAN'S description (talking to ANDREAS) in Scene 41A.

CUT TO:

48

INT. PUND'S STUDY/LIVING ROOM (1955) DAY.

48

PUND and FRASER with JOY SANDERLING, as before. She continues her story.

JOY

And of course everyone's saying that he did it, that he pushed her down the stairs.

PUND

And what do the local police make of this?

JOY

They're still investigating. But they've talked to Robert several times. They clearly have their suspicions.

A pause.

(CONTINUED)

PÜND

Miss Sanderling, you say you are engaged to be married to Robert Blakiston... What did his mother think of this?

JOY

She was against it, of course.

PÜND

For what reason?

JOY

(uncomfortable)

I don't want to talk about it.

PÜND

Forgive me, but some might say this gave him exactly the motive to wish to do away with her.

JOY

People are saying all sorts of horrible things, Mr Pünd. But none of it's true. I was with him the morning she died.

(Blushing)

He has his own flat but I stayed over that night. So it couldn't have been him.

PÜND

Then what is it exactly you want me to do?

JOY

I want you to come to Saxby-on-Avon. Just for one day. If you look into it and tell people it was an accident, I'm sure they'll believe you. You're famous. Everyone knows who you are. That's all I'm asking, Mr Pünd. Come to Saxby. Tell them the truth.

Before the scene can continue, there's the ROAR of a football crowd. It's almost as if both PÜND, FRASER and JOY hear it, as if it interrupts what's happening.

CUT TO:

49

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM DAY.

49

ANDREAS' team have just scored on the TV. He is delighted.

ANDREAS

Yes!

(CONTINUED)

He looks up and sees that the commotion has interrupted SUSAN'S reading - which is why the ATTICUS scene stopped.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Sorry.

SUSAN

Don't worry. I take it that was Arsenal?

ANDREAS

Lacazette off a free kick.

SUSAN smiles and goes back to the manuscript, returning us to the 1955 world.

CUT TO:

50

EXT. TANNER COURT, LONDON (1955) DAY.

50

JOY SANDERLING comes out of the flat after her meeting. ROBERT BLAKISTON is waiting for her. He is nervous. Both of them look sweet and vulnerable...a young couple in love.

ROBERT

What did he say?

JOY

He won't do it. He says there's nothing he can do about village gossip and that if we just ignore it, it'll go away.

ROBERT

Bastard!

JOY

No. I liked him. I think he would have helped if he thought he could.

A pause.

ROBERT

What are we going to do?

JOY

I don't know.

ROBERT

There are other detectives.

JOY

No. I don't think so, Robert.

ROBERT takes her hands.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT

I'm not going to let them take you away from me. I love you, Joy. And I'm not going to be driven away by ... people who don't know anything.

JOY

It's not going to happen. We'll get through this.

A pause. They separate.

JOY (CONT'D)

We don't need to get the train yet. Let's have lunch.

ROBERT

Lyon's Corner House!

JOY

My treat!

They've cheered up a little. They walk away together.

CUT TO:

51

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - LIVING ROOM DAY.

51

We hear the same football match commentary as that from scene 49. But we reveal that it's a different TV in an altogether different home.

ALAN has just turned on the TV and is about to watch the game. The scene follows on almost continuously from Scene 40. The doorbell rings. He is not pleased.

As he goes to answer the door, we notice a copy of the MAGPIE MURDERS manuscript on the coffee table.

CUT TO:

52

INT/EXT. ABBEY GRANGE - ENTRANCE HALL DAY.

52

ALAN opens the door to CLAIRE. Late 40's, down-at-heel, divorced. She feels life has not treated her well. Her old, shabby car is parked in the drive.

CONWAY

Claire. This isn't a good time.

She can hear the television.

CLAIRe

You're watching the football.

(CONTINUED)

CONWAY

Trying to. Yes.

CLAIRe

Five minutes. You can talk to me
and watch it at the same time.

CUT TO:

53

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - LIVING ROOM DAY - CONTINUOUS.

53

CLAIRe and ALAN move into the living room with the TV still on.

CLAIRe

I want my old job back.

CONWAY

I thought we both agreed it wasn't
working.

CLAIRe

I need the money, Alan. I might as
well be honest with you. You know
there's not much work in the
country and you wouldn't want to
see me behind a bar. Anyway I
enjoyed being part of your world.

CONWAY

That's not what you said.

CLAIRe

I was wrong. I'm sorry. But I was
under a lot of stress and frankly
you weren't exactly paying me a
fortune.

(Beat)

Even so, I spoke out of turn and I
was just hoping you might think
again.

CONWAY

I don't know.

CONWAY begins to cough again.

CLAIRe

You're still coughing. I thought
you were getting that looked at.

CONWAY

I've seen the doctor. (Lying) It's
a chest infection. Nothing to worry
about.

CLAIRe notices the manuscript on the coffee table.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRe

I see you've finished the new book.

CONWAY

Yes.

CLAIRe

Who typed it for you?

CONWAY

I did, Claire. I can type, you know.

ALAN'S MOBILE begins to ring. He looks at it.

CONWAY (CONT'D)

Oh God. What now. Will you excuse me a minute?

CONWAY leaves the room.

CLAIRe eyes up the manuscript. She goes over to it and opens it at random. She is drawn to a section. It's something quite disturbing...

CUT TO:

54

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - ALAN'S STUDY DAY.

54

CONWAY has taken a call from his solicitor.

CONWAY

(on mobile phone)

Sajid? I want you to get the papers over to me as soon as possible. I'd like to sign them this weekend.

CUT TO:

55

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - LIVING ROOM DAY.

55

CLAIRe JENKINS is reading the manuscript with dismay. She turns a page. Dismay turns to anger.

CUT TO:

56

EXT. SAXBY-ON-AVON (1955) DAY.

56

Absurdly dressed in a hat with feathers and masculine tweed, plus too much make-up, CLARISSA PYE comes out of her house, gets on her pushbike, cycling off into the village. We have already seen passing by the pub with Robert Blakiston. She is played by the same actress who plays CLAIRe JENKINS.

(CONTINUED)

CONWAY (V.O.)

Unmarried, unloved - and always
desperate for cash, Clarissa Pye
looked ridiculous. And she was the
only one in the village who didn't
know it.

CUT TO:

57

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - STUDY DAY.

57

ALAN CONWAY still on his MOBILE PHONE.

CONWAY

(on phone)

I don't suppose there's any chance
you could drop them in tomorrow, is
there?

A Beat.

CONWAY (CONT'D)

(on phone)

That's brilliant. Thank you very
much.

He hangs up - considers, then goes back into the living room.

CUT TO:

58

INT. ABBEY GRANGE - LIVING ROOM DAY.

58

CONWAY comes back into the living room. The television is
still on. But there's no sign of CLAIRE.

CONWAY

Claire?

He doesn't notice that she has taken the manuscript with her.

CUT TO:

59

EXT. SUSAN'S FLAT DAY.

59

ESTABLISHING SHOT

The red MG parked outside SUSAN'S north London flat.

SUSAN (O.S.)

The manuscript!

CUT TO:

60

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - BEDROOM DAY.

60

ANDREAS is lying in bed. Sunday newspapers spread over the covers. The remains of breakfast on a tray. SUSAN storms into the room in her dressing gown, holding the manuscript.

SUSAN

I don't believe it.

ANDREAS

It was that bad?

SUSAN

I haven't finished it. There's no last chapter.

A look from ANDREAS.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Alice or Jemima must have buggered up the photocopying. It's missing the last chapter.

ANDREAS

(amused)

So you don't know who did it.

SUSAN

It's not funny, Andreas. It's bloody annoying.

ANDREAS

Can't you work it out for yourself?

SUSAN

No! These things are always too complicated for me.

She throws the manuscript down.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Is there anything more useless in the world than a whodunit without an ending? Maybe I should call Charles.

ANDREAS

Why?

SUSAN

He may have the last pages.

ANDREAS

Don't. Get back into bed and finish your coffee. You can talk to him tomorrow.

CUT TO:

61

EXT. PRIVATE DRIVE/ABBEY GRANGE DAY.

61

SAJID KHAN pulls up outside the house. He's a country solicitor, tweeds and waistcoat, 40's, with Pakistani ethnicity.

He gets out, taking with him a bulky A4 envelope. He rings the doorbell.

No answer. He rings again.

Still no answer.

SAJID KHAN notices something on the lawn in front of the tower. It looks like a heap of old clothes.

SAJID is puzzled.

He walks over to the heap. Puzzlement turns to horror as he recognizes the very smashed up body of ALAN CONWAY who seems to have fallen from the tower.

CUT TO:

62

EXT. PARK, NORTH LONDON DAY.

62

Sunday afternoon. ANDREAS and SUSAN have gone for a walk together.

SUSAN

You got in very late last night.
Where were you?

ANDREAS

(uncomfortable)

I told you. The school play.

SUSAN

It must have been midnight.

ANDREAS

I stayed on for a drink.

SUSAN

With the kids?

ANDREAS

With the teachers.

(Beat)

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

I tried not to wake you.

SUSAN

You didn't.

They walk on a few paces.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREAS

Susan. There's something I haven't told you.

SUSAN

Oh God. Don't tell me you're going back to your wife.

ANDREAS

She wouldn't have me.

SUSAN

She adores you.

ANDREAS

Only because we're divorced.

SUSAN

Go on.

ANDREAS

I'm thinking of leaving the school. At the end of term.

SUSAN

Why?

ANDREAS

I'm wasting my time. Half the kids don't want to learn and the other half are going to turn into bankers and lawyers.

SUSAN

So move into the state system.

ANDREAS

Ancient Greek?

SUSAN

(annoyed with herself)

I'm not thinking.

(Beat)

What else can you do?

They walk a few paces in silence.

ANDREAS

My cousin, Yannis, has been offered a hotel in Crete. Near the town of Agios Nikolaos. He wants me to go in with him. To buy it and run it.

SUSAN

In Crete?

ANDREAS

We're just talking. But it's an opportunity. (Beat) For both of us.

SUSAN

You want me to come with you?

ANDREAS

I wouldn't go without you.

SUSAN tries to take all this in.

SUSAN

You haven't talked to me about this before.

ANDREAS

I was going to mention it earlier. But I couldn't.

SUSAN

Why not?

ANDREAS

Well, obviously with this buyout, you becoming CEO and everything...

SUSAN

But I haven't even made up my mind about that!

ANDREAS

Exactly. I'm waiting for you to say no.

SUSAN

But for God's sake, Andreas. Even if I don't take the promotion, I'm still going to stay in publishing. It's all I've ever known. What would I do in Greece? I'm not Shirley Valentine!

ANDREAS

I just thought we could talk about it.

SUSAN

We are talking about it.

A beat. Then she gives him her answer.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

No!

They walk on in silence.

CUT TO:

63

EXT. LONDON STREETS DAY.

63

ESTABLISHING SHOT.

Terrible morning traffic.

CUT TO:

64

INT/EXT. SUSAN'S CAR/LONDON STREETS DAY.

64

SUSAN is driving ANDREAS into town in her MG. They're hardly moving. Nor are they speaking.

SUSAN

When's your first lesson?

ANDREAS

Not until ten. But I need to be there for assembly.

SUSAN

We'll make it.

But they're not moving. Another silence. Then together...

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry...

ANDREAS

I'm sorry...

A pause.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

I shouldn't have just sprung it on you. Not when you've got so much on your mind...

SUSAN

I'm just a bit surprised, that's all. If you're not happy, Andreas...

ANDREAS

I'm happy with you.

SUSAN

But I'm here. London. It's my work. My home. This traffic...

She hits the horn.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREAS

I'm not making any decisions. I
promise you. I just want to...
talk.

SUSAN

You should have mentioned it
earlier.

A pause. SUSAN relents.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Are you free tonight?

ANDREAS

No. I've got the school play.
Tomorrow...

SUSAN

OK. Let's go out and have dinner.
Somewhere quiet. Not Greek food!

ANDREAS

I'd like that.

Still crawling.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

Pull in here.

A look from SUSAN.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

I'll get there faster by tube.

SUSAN pulls in.

ANDREAS (CONT'D)

I hope you find your chapter.

SUSAN

I'll see you tomorrow.

They kiss.

ANDREAS gets out of the car. He's swallowed up in the crowd.
SUSAN watches him with concern.

CUT TO:

64A

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CORRIDOR DAY

64A

Businesslike now, SUSAN strides down the corridor

65

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - SUSAN'S OFFICE DAY.

65

SUSAN hurries into her office, dumps her stuff, checks her mail. ALICE - her secretary, enters

ALICE

Hi, Susan.

SUSAN

Alice. Good weekend?

ALICE

Yes, thanks.

SUSAN

That manuscript Charles gave me. Magpie Murders. Did you do the photo-copying?

ALICE

No. It was Jemima.

SUSAN

Where is she?

ALICE

I haven't seen her.

SUSAN

I think she may have left out a chapter.

ALICE

Oh. Do you want me to chase it?

SUSAN

Can you ask her? Yes. Is Charles in?

ALICE

He's in his office.

SUSAN

Right.

Grabbing the manuscript, SUSAN heads out again.

CUT TO:

66

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CHARLES'S OFFICE DAY.

66

CHARLES CLOVER is behind his desk. SUSAN comes bursting in.

SUSAN

Charles - I can't believe you did this to me. You gave me a book without the last chapter.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES

I know. Sit down, Susan.

SUSAN

Do you have it?

CHARLES

Sit down. I've got something terrible to tell you.

SUSAN falters and sits.

SUSAN

What?

A pause.

CHARLES

I read the book over the weekend, like you. I got to the last chapter. It wasn't there. So I tried to call Alan to see what had happened. I must have called him half a dozen times on Saturday and Sunday and then last night I got a call at home.

(Beat)

Alan is dead.

SUSAN

Dead?

CHARLES

Yes. I'm afraid so.

SUSAN

Who called you?

CHARLES

His solicitor. A man called Sajid Khan. He found him.

SUSAN

That's awful. Charles, I'm so sorry. What happened?

CHARLES

It looks as if Alan fell out of that bloody tower of his.

SUSAN

What tower are you talking about?
At his house?

CHARLES

Of course. You never went there.
But I've described it to you. Yes.
There was a tower.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

And he fell.

CHARLES

That's what he said on the phone.
But I'm afraid it's rather worse. I
was opening my mail this morning
and I found this.

He hands an envelope to SUSAN. We see the typed address - Charles Clover, Clover Books, Bedford Place, London W1. The envelope is crumpled and a corner is torn - where the stamps would have been.

SUSAN takes out a handwritten letter. It's four pages long, each page numbered (in a slightly thicker pen than the rest).

CHARLES (CONT'D)

It's from Alan. It's a suicide
note.

SUSAN

But that's...

(Beat)

Why would Alan want to commit
suicide? He was successful. He had
a partner...

CHARLES

Maybe I had a part in it.

A look from SUSAN.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

I had dinner with him on Thursday
night, while you were in Frankfurt.
I told you. It wasn't exactly the
cheeriest evening. Maybe I should
have reached out to him...if he had
this on his mind...

SUSAN glances at the letter.

SUSAN

(reading)

"I'm very sorry but I wasn't on my
best form at dinner last night."
He's apologising to you.

CHARLES

That just makes me feel worse.

SUSAN

(reading)

"By the time you read this it will
all be finished. I have achieved
great success in a life that has
gone on long enough."

(CONTINUED)

She scans the letter.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
He had cancer.

CHARLES
If I'd known that, I might have
been a little more...I don't
know...a little more forgiving. He
was seeing someone in Harley
Street. A Dr Habilia.

SUSAN
Have you spoken to them?

CHARLES
No.

SUSAN
Is that why Alan decided to kill
off Atticus Pünd? He had cancer so
he wanted to take his beloved
detective with him?

CHARLES
I have no idea. He never said
anything about it.
(Beat)
And he looked absolutely fine when
I saw him.
(Remembering)
He had a slight cough.

SUSAN takes this all in.

SUSAN
I want to talk to Jemima.

CHARLES
Why?

SUSAN
She photocopied the manuscript.

CHARLES closes this down.

CHARLES
I checked the page count on the
photocopier. Three hundred and
thirty two pages. It matches what
we were given.

SUSAN
So then Alan didn't give us the
whole novel.

A long pause.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I don't believe this. I don't believe any of it. First of all, I'm sorry. I never got on with him. I'll admit it. But you've lost a friend.

CHARLES

It's more than that...

SUSAN

I know. Our number one bestselling author.

And suddenly the thought occurs to her.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

What are Cityworld Media going to say?

CHARLES

They won't be happy. But the valuation was based on the backlist. Eight books plus one new one.

SUSAN

But the new book is missing the last chapter. A whodunit without a solution. Not even worth the paper it won't be printed on. (Beat) So what happens now?

CHARLES

The Suffolk police are on the way.

SUSAN

Here?

CHARLES

I rang them. I told them about the letter.

SUSAN

(unbelieving)

Cancer!

CUT TO:

67

EXT. CLOVER BOOKS DAY.

67

Later that afternoon. A car draws up and DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT LOCKE (from the Suffolk constabulary) gets out.

He's a brusque, seriously-minded police officer with a short fuse. Not one to suffer fools - and quick to let them know.

(CONTINUED)

He looks up at the old-fashioned publishing house. Perhaps he's wondering what the hell he's doing here.

CUT TO:

68

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CHARLES'S OFFICE DAY.

68

SUSAN and CHARLES are sitting opposite each other. We get the sense they've been like that for a while.

SUSAN is reading the suicide letter.

SUSAN

It's just so weird.

(reading)

"I have left you some notes with regard to my condition and to the decision I have made." Does that even sound like him?

CHARLES

Alan clearly wasn't himself.

SUSAN

Suicidal?

CHARLES

Possibly. You know how he was. Always good at hiding his emotions.

SUSAN

He doesn't say the cancer was terminal. He could have got treatment.

CHARLES

Maybe he didn't want to go through all that.

SUSAN

But he had dinner with you. Why didn't he just tell you?

The door opens and ALICE looks in.

ALICE

Detective Superintendent Locke is here. I put him in the conference room.

CHARLES

Thank you, Alice.

CUT TO:

69

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CONFERENCE ROOM DAY.

69

LATER. A conference room with a table for eight people. LOCKE is reading the suicide letter on one side. The envelope is also in view. The LETTER is handwritten. The ENVELOPE is typed.

SUSAN and CHARLES are together, facing him.

LOCKE

When did you receive this?

CHARLES

It came in the post this morning.

LOCKE

And you last saw Mr Conway on Thursday night.

CHARLES

Yes. He stayed over in London. He had a flat.

LOCKE puts down the letter. He considers.

LOCKE

Thank you for bringing this to my attention, Mr Clover. Of course, it puts a different complexion on things.

CHARLES

You assumed it was an accident.

LOCKE

That's right. Dark night. A low parapet. I'm surprised he hadn't had a handrail installed.

SUSAN

Was his death instantaneous?

A look of surprise from LOCKE. Why has she asked that?

LOCKE

I'm afraid not. According to the police doctor, he may have lain there for some time.

SUSAN

And had he been drinking?

LOCKE

No.

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

So he knew exactly what he was doing and I have to wonder - why would he do it that way? Is that how you'd do it? Jump off a tower on a Saturday night and lie there on the grass with half your bones broken? Why not take sleeping pills? Or hang yourself?

LOCKE has to swallow his annoyance.

LOCKE

Have you had experience of suicides?

SUSAN has. At least, there is one major event in her life that might be relevant. She's about to say so, then thinks better of it.

SUSAN

No.

LOCKE taps the suicide letter.

LOCKE

And perhaps you can tell me. Is this his handwriting?

SUSAN

Suppose someone made him write it?

LOCKE

Why would they do that?

SUSAN

It doesn't sound like him.

CHARLES

(embarrassed)

Susan...

LOCKE

Miss Ryeland...

SUSAN

I prefer Susan.

LOCKE

When people become suicidal, they don't always think things through. They're not themselves. At a basic level, their state of mind is not normal. There's no mystery here. Mr Conway had terminal cancer.

(Beat)

How well did you know him?

A beat.

SUSAN
We didn't get on.

A thin smile from LOCKE.

LOCKE
Why doesn't that surprise me?

He gets up, taking the letter. He addresses CHARLES.

LOCKE (CONT'D)
Thank you for contacting me. You've
been very helpful.

But before he leaves.

SUSAN
The letter's handwritten but the
envelope's typed.

LOCKE is about to snap a reply at her. He pauses, then
manages to bite back his words. Another thin smile and he
leaves.

CUT TO:

70

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CORRIDOR DAY.

70

CHARLES and SUSAN make their way back from the conference
room.

CHARLES
I don't know why you had to get at
him like that.

SUSAN
I didn't get at him.

CHARLES
You weren't very polite.

SUSAN stops him.

SUSAN
Listen, Charles. I don't really
care how Alan died. I'm sorry. But
right now I think we should be
concentrating on what happened to
that missing chapter.

CHARLES
How do we know he even wrote it?

SUSAN
We don't. But we need to find out.

(CONTINUED)

She looks around to make sure there's nobody listening.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You want me to take over after the buyout. But you know as well as I do that if we don't have this book, the investors could pull out and the whole company could...

CHARLES

Fold.

SUSAN

Exactly the right word for publishers going out of business.

CHARLES

So what are you going to do?

SUSAN

I'm going to Suffolk to look for the missing pages.

They go into CHARLES'S office.

CUT TO:

71

INT. CLOVER BOOKS - CHARLES'S OFFICE DAY.

71

SUSAN closes the door behind her as she and CHARLES go in.

SUSAN

Alan gave you the manuscript on Thursday night.

CHARLES

Yes.

SUSAN

But he always used a pen for the first draft.

CHARLES

So?

SUSAN

So there'll be a handwritten draft, first draft, second draft, notes, other copies...

(Beat)

There's got to be something!

CHARLES

Where will you stay?

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN

I've got my sister in Woodbridge.
She'll put me up.

CHARLES

All right. Take care - and let me
know how you get on.

SUSAN

I can't believe...I finally get to
see his house. I just had to wait
until he was dead.

CUT TO:

72

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - BEDROOM DAY.

72

Early the following morning. SUSAN throws a few clothes into
an overnight bag. Her MOBILE pressed to her cheek with her
shoulder.

SUSAN

(into mobile)

Andreas. It's me. Look, I'm really
sorry but I'm not going to be able
to see you tonight.

CUT TO:

73

OMITTED

73

74

INT. SUSAN'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM DAY.

74

SUSAN packs a work bag with the manuscript, a copy of Alan's
suicide letter, wallet, notebook etc.

SUSAN (V.O.)

I know this is going to sound crazy
- but I've got to go to Suffolk. We
need this book. And I need to find
the missing chapter.

CUT TO:

75

EXT. EXPENSIVE LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOL DAY.

75

ANDREAS is walking away from the school, listening to the
message on his cell.

SUSAN (V.O.)

You're not really going to go to
Crete, are you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SUSAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

At least give me a day or two until
I get back and we can talk about it
then.

CUT TO:

76

EXT. SUSAN'S FLAT DAY.

76

SUSAN throws her overnight bag onto the passenger seat of her MG. The roof is down.

SUSAN (V.O.)

I'm missing you already. Love you!

SUSAN gets in and starts the engine. At that moment, she glances in her rear view mirror. And sees...

...impossibly, ATTICUS PÜND is standing in the street - in the 21st Century - in North London. Watching her.

SUSAN twists around to look. BUT - ATTICUS isn't there.

She must have imagined it. When she turns back, there's no sign of him in the mirror. SUSAN drives off.

END OF EPISODE

END CREDITS