

MR LOVERMAN

EPISODE 1

by
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Based on the novel by Bernardine Evaristo

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F A B L E
PICTURES



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*Not everything that is faced can be changed, but
nothing can be changed until it is faced.*

-James Baldwin, 1924-1987

A small basement club blasting '*Hurt So Good*' by *Susan Cadogan* out of the impressive sound system.

BARRY (O.S.)

Denial...

We are amongst the lithe, sweaty bodies of DANCERS - a mix of ages - swivelling their hips effortlessly on the dance floor as we slowly push on through to find...

TWO OLDER WEST INDIAN GENTLEMEN. 74. Black. Antiguan born. Spruced up and sharp-suited, moving their hips in a similar, albeit more cautious, hula-hoop fashion to those around them.

BARRY (CONT'D)

You know this word?

The question is asked by the taller of the two, with a rather manly swagger. A mischievous smile etched across his face.

This is BARRINGTON JEDIDIAH WALKER, Esq. BARRY to his friends. Of which he has many. But his oldest and most loyal now stands before him with a look of sheer consternation.

MORRIS

(shouting back)

Do you?!

A cutting jab of a response befitting of a man clearly still sporting a welterweight's physique beneath his threads, and a lightness of touch in the way he shifts his body weight.

His name is MORRIS COURTNEY DE LA ROUX - a former bookkeeper, usually found with a half-pencil tucked behind one ear - and his defensiveness only serves to amuse Barry further.

BARRY

It not I suffering from the affliction known as teetotalism.

Indeed, Barry takes a satisfied swig from the glass of rum he cradles in hand, and looks admiringly at Morris.

MORRIS

I mean it this time, Barry. I can't deal with all this intoxication no more. My memory is getting so bad I think Tuesday is Thursday, and the bedroom is the bathroom.

Barry waves him off.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

What is more, I goin' join gym on pensioner discount so I can have a sauna every day to keep my circulation pumping good, because between you, me and these four walls...

Morris stops and looks over his shoulder to ensure no one is eavesdropping, then leans in extremely close to Barry's ear.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

I suddenly noticed last week, mi have a varicose vein.

Barry, unmoved, wipes some of Morris' spit out of his ear. Picks up a glass of rum from a nearby table. Takes a hit. Offers some to Morris who, annoyed, refuses. *Suit yourself.*

BARRY

Morris, varicose vein is what happen when you is ole man. Get used to it. As for forgetfulness? You likely got early dementia and nothing you can do about that except eat more oily fish.

(another deep hit, then)
As for staying sober...

But a concerned Morris isn't in the mood to play.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I is joking, man.

Barry playfully punches Morris in the chest.

BARRY (CONT'D)

If you was goin' off your head, I would be the first to tell you. Nothing to worry about, my friend. You as sane as you ever was.

(mumbled under breath)
Which ain't saying much.

Despite himself, Morris cracks a smile. Punches Barry in return.

BARRY (CONT'D)

See, nobody can stay depressed around me for long. No sir. I am the Great Mood Levitator. I am the Human Valium. I am-

MORRIS

An arse with a big head.

At that moment, TWO WOMEN walk past and smile at Barry.

WOMAN
Love the suit.

Whether genuine or a jibe is unclear, but Barry takes it as the former, such is his nature. He turns to Morris with glee.

BARRY
Who clearly ain't lost his touch.

Morris frowns.

BARRY (CONT'D)
We veterans now. We have to adjust.
Yes. Still, we must believe that
our best years are ahead of us, not
behind us. Only way we deal with
this non-stop train hurtling
towards oblivion is to be positive.
You know what they say, glass
either half full or half empty.

Barry downs his drink.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Let we make it half full.

Barry thirstily glances the nearby bar.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Do we have a deal, my man?

2

EXT. CAZENOVE ROAD - STOKE NEWINGTON - NIGHT

2

A tired FORD FIESTA pulls to a stop outside the row of VICTORIAN TOWNHOUSES, breaking the early morning still.

The passenger door swings open to reveal Barry, plastered, barely able to swing a leg out. He turns back to regard a sober Morris behind the wheel.

BARRY
Nightcap?

It's said almost imploringly.

MORRIS
No chance.

BARRY
Coward.

Barry disembarks. Morris goes to start the engine. Hesitates.

MORRIS
It's that one.

Morris indicates the house next door to the one Barry is approaching. Number 100. Barry waves him off. *I know, I know.* Morris shakes his head. Keys the ignition.

Barry tip-toes up the gravel path of a well-maintained garden to the sound of the FIESTA DEPARTING.

BARRY (V.O.)
Into the lion's den.

3 INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - MOMENTS LATER

3

Barry very carefully closes the front door. He stops, back pressed up to it, ears pricked, listening out for any sound.

Nothing. Not a hint of disturbance from upstairs. Relieved, he takes off his jacket and throws it towards the coat rack on the left. It falls on the floor. Barry is confused.

BARRY
Rack must-a moved.

He tries again. The jacket lands on the stairs. Barry tries a third time. Bingo. Barry silently high-fives himself before catching sight of the suave gentleman in the HALL MIRROR.

BARRY (V.O.)
*Go-wan, Barry. Still a Saga Boy.
Eat your heart out Denzel.*

4 INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - STAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

4

Barry ascends the staircase with the proficiency of a cat burglar.

5 OMITTED

5

6

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

6

Barry inches into darkness. Stops. Looks over at the audible rise and fall of a SLUMBERING FIGURE in the bed, hidden by a mound of duvet and quilts.

Though a little unsteady, Barry carefully starts to remove his tie clip and rings, placing them gently into a small bowl on the bedside table. Unloops his tie, drapes it over the doorknob of the wardrobe behind him, overstretching a tad.

BARRY (V.O.)

Oop! Careful, Barry. At your age, something that should stretch might snap instead.

Barry eases the gold cufflinks out of his starched white shirt and pops them into the bowl. He unbuttons his shirt, wriggles out of it and lightly tosses it towards the washing basket by the window. It lands satisfyingly straight in. Barry beams, bows, and is just about to make a start on unbuckling his belt when...

The deep-sea breathing coming from the bed stops.

BARRY (V.O.)

(freezing)
Uh-oh...

The figure in a headscarf rolls over and turns on the bedside lamp with a CLICK that sounds like the COCKING OF A TRIGGER.

CARMEL (O.S.)

Is morning time already,
Barrington?

Barry slowly turns to face the scowling face of his wife, CARMEL WALKER, 70, Black. Her soul perhaps the only thing wearier than the sunken eyes peaking out from underneath an eye-mask - the ache from life's series of disappointments having set in a long time ago.

Barry smiles.

N.B. In all of the following, BARRY's internal voice is indicated in *ITALICS*, thoughts spoken aloud in **REGULAR type.**

BARRY

You know how time does pass, dear?
Statement, not a question.

CARMEL

Does it?

BARRY

Threat, not a question. Why don't you go back to sleep, dear?
Instruction, not a question.

CARMEL

Oh, I'll have plenty of time to sleep when the Good Lord comes for me and that won't be long now, I am sure.

BARRY

Emotional blackmail - pure and simple. In which case, I hope he comes for me before he comes for you, dear. *A lie - pure and simple.*

CARMEL

Unless that one with horns and a pitchfork catch you first.

She throws him a look. One Barry tries to ignore by concentrating on removing three of his four rings, popping them in the bowl so that his WEDDING RING is the only one that remains. Carmel notices as it catches the light.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

Um-hm. Bringing the stink of cigars into my bedroom again.

BARRY

I sorry.

CARMEL

And that *renk rum narsiness*. When you go mend your ways? You could-a called, at least.

BARRY

I know, I... am... sorry.

CARMEL

I told you to get a mobile phone years ago.

BARRY

So the ole girl can track me down any time of day or night? No sir!
Yes, my dear. I go get a mobile phone if it make you happy.

Barry releases his big brass belt, fully aware that Carmel is very far from happy. Whipping his trousers off, whilst trying to give the illusion of sobriety, Barry suddenly realises that he still has his HAT on. He removes it and bows with grandiose hat-waving flourishes, like an eighteenth-century gentleman being presented at court. Only...

Carmel is unmoved. She rolls out of bed in a blue nylon nightie with ruffles at the cleavage that sticks to her various body parts, much to Barry's palpable disgust.

CARMEL

I just heard today that my papi's
had a second stroke and is in
hospital.

She waits for a response as she slips on her bright orange slippers. But Barry can only muster a mouthful of bile.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

He nearly a hundred years old and
I've not seen him for nearly thirty
of them. He asking for his little
girl.

BARRY (V.O.)

*Him gone get a mighty shock then
when him see you, my dear.*

Irked by Barry's continued silence, Carmel marches over to him, gets into his face.

CARMEL

So, listen to me good, Barrington.
I flying home to see my father on
Monday, and when I return, things
is goin' change round here. I am
not putting up with you putting
your thing about with those trampy
cows no more.

Barry cuts his eye at her, but she doesn't flinch.

BARRY

*How many times- Hand on heart, I
swear mi have never slept with any
other woman but you.*

Carmel sucks her teeth.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Who is the only cow I know giving
me blasted cheek when-

Before he can even finish, SLAP! Carmel lands a clean one across Barry's cheek.

CARMEL

God will damn you!

They stare at one another in stunned silence. Shaking, Carmel shoulders on past a traumatised Barry.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

You and your narsiness.

Carmel wraps herself in her yellowy flannelette dressing gown she's plucked from the hook of the door and flings it open.

Barry, hand to his face, watching her depart - rage turning to resolve as a huge decision is made right then and there.

'MR LOVERMAN'

7 OMITTED

7

8 OMITTED

8

9 **INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

9

CLOSE ON a CAN OF GUINNESS being cracked opened.

Enthroned at the head of a spacious dining table, that could comfortably seat eight, sits Barry in a carved antique chair with tapestry upholstery. A completed crossword before him. His face remains troubled as he pours the Guinness into a glass and brings it to his lips.

To his side, slurping intermittently on a hot chocolate with a copious amount of cream on top, sits Morris poring closely through a red top newspaper. We catch a glimpse of an article: **GANG MEMBER BEGGED FOR HIS MUM BEFORE DEATH**.

A picture of the victim. Young. Black. Lost.

Barry glances over. Unimpressed. Deliberately starts goading.

BARRY

Why do you read this rubbish? It all sex, violence and gossip.

MORRIS

And that Shakespeare you like so much is what exactly?

BARRY

Morris Courtney De la Roux, for an educated man, you plain foolish sometimes.

Morris shrugs, takes a slurp of his drink.

BARRY (CONT'D)

And enough with the slurping. What happened to your brought-upsy?

MORRIS

(too engrossed in paper)

Hm?

Barry sits back, annoyed.

BARRY (V.O.)

Cha, Morris, ask me what's up, man.

A beat, and then almost telepathically whilst still reading.

MORRIS
What's on your mind?

BARRY
Nothing. Why you ask?

Morris shrugs as he continues to read.

MORRIS
These couple hours Carmel at church
you usually at your happiest. She
give you a hard time last night?

BARRY (V.O.)
Good. That's more like it, Morris.

MORRIS
Or rather this morning?

BARRY
She always give me a hard time.

MORRIS
You give her a hard time too, don't
forget.

BARRY
Yes, but she give me a harder time
than I give her. Almost as if she
don't realise her man is one of the
good ones. All these years, haven't
I made sure she and the girls are
protected? That them want for
nothing?

(off Morris' "um-hm")
And still she accuse me of
"narsiness" - accuse me of being a
cheat.

Morris finally looks up from his paper.

MORRIS
But you are a cheat.

BARRY
Yeah. But not how she think.
There's an honour - a loyalty to it
that she can never understand.

MORRIS
Or me.

BARRY
I'm serious, Morris. Mi can't deal
with all this marital craptitude no
more.

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

There comes a point when the mask
has to drop and the charade has to
stop. *Speak plain, Barry, you
eedyat.*

MORRIS

You chose the life you have,
remember? So don't go complaining
now and expecting sympathy.

Morris slurps the last of his drink. Barry stands, splenetic.

BARRY

I can't take no more, Morris.

MORRIS

(re: hot chocolate)

Alright, it's finished, see. No
more slurping so relax, man.

BARRY

No, mi don't mean - look...! *Say
it, Barry, just say it...* I've
decided to leave Carmel!

(off Morris' look)

Seriously. I decided last night.

MORRIS

(amazed)

Why? What happened?

Barry subconsciously runs a hand along his cheek.

BARRY

Sup'm did shift between us.

Morris, stunned, understands completely. *Oh!*

BARRY (CONT'D)

Mi can't keep on keeping on so.
I've finally come round to your
idea.

Barry turns to look earnestly at Morris...

10

INT. MORRIS' FLAT - DAY - 1997

10

In a cramped bedroom, Barry lies in a state of undress in bed
with Morris wrapped in his arms, smoking a cigarette. They
share a tender kiss before:

MORRIS

I've been thinking. I think we
should move in together.

BARRY

Move in together?

MORRIS

Your hearing is correct, Barry.

Morris takes a deep drag. Hand trembling slightly. It's a big moment, but he's determined to hold his nerve.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

My divorce is final. Your children older. Mine don't talk to me. What's stopping us?

They lie there in silence. Morris holding the cigarette for Barry, who inhales long and slow as he begins to entertain the possibility.

BARRY

Our own place, together.

Morris regards him, excited.

MORRIS

No more sneaking about.

BARRY

Could do it up real nice!

Morris nuzzles into his neck as they beam over what could be.

11

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1997

11

The same set-up, but a slightly different colour scheme and furnishing to the present day layout. The big table remains. At which Carmel sits in her Sunday best, drinking rosehip tea, humming a hymn, tapping the table as she reads the Bible and dunks chocolate digestives into her big mug.

Opposite sits Barry, watching her intently, his face troubled as we begin to bring up the RACING SOUND OF HIS HEART.

It only builds as he swallows a lump from his throat, wipes his clammy hands and finally opens his mouth to speak. What he says is drowned out in part by the din of his pounding heartbeat as time and sound begin to slow and distort...

BARRY

There's, uh, no easy way of saying this - but it - it's been something weighing heavily on me for a while now and... well mi think it-a be best for the both of us if we went - well if we went ahead and started thinking about getting a divorce.

Carmel's expression darkens.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Carm? Did you hear what I said?

After a slight pause, she suddenly leaps out of her seat, flies over to the cutlery drawer, draws out a steak knife and wields it at Barry.

CARMEL

I'd sooner kill us both than allow that, you selfish son-of-a-bitch! Understand?! For better or for worse - we are in this for life!

*
*
*
*
*

12

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

12

Morris folds up his paper, annoyed.

MORRIS

You was a coward, Barry... I waited years for you to change your mind while I've been...

He stops. Almost too embarrassed to admit it.

BARRY

You been what?

MORRIS

All on my own.

BARRY

You been lonely? I see you practically every day.

MORRIS

(winces)

I prefer the word *independent*. Who cares? I used to it by now.

Beat. Barry moves to Morris, wrapping his arms around him.

BARRY

You should-a talked to me.

MORRIS

No point talking if it can't change the situation.

BARRY

But it can, this time. I can't live my life with this daily fretment no more. I made the wrong decision all of those years ago. Now I make the right one.

MORRIS

You're admitting it, finally?

BARRY

We nearly seventy-five years ole,
Morris. Can you believe it? Wha'
d'ya say we spend the fourth
quarter of our cycle together-
discreetly?

Morris hesitates.

MORRIS

You reckon we got another twenty-five years on this earth? Is this your positive thinking nonsense again? We are two feet away from the knackers' yard, my friend.

BARRY

I goin' be around for at least another twenty years, so stop your negativity. What I keep telling you? Glass half full, my man.

Morris is sceptical. But Barry, needing this, gets to work, teasing Morris' neck with soft kisses and his hands.

BARRY (CONT'D)

We can live anywhere we so-to-choose. How about Miami?

Hmm... Morris does like the sound of that.

MORRIS

Miami?

Barry bites seductively on Morris' earlobe.

BARRY

Mm-hm. I hear that place is full of pooftahs. Maybe we can live in a luxurious bungalow in Florida with sprinklers on the lawn and half-naked butlers serving up our evening aperitif.

Morris, who's been rocking back in his chair, tingling with sexual desire, slams it back down now with a thumping CRASH.

MORRIS

I'm not having you mess me around. I'm used to this now. I've made my peace.

Barry reaches for Morris' arm in protest.

BARRY

Morris, I serious.

Only Morris retracts it and slams his fist down as though it were a gavel.

MORRIS

No! Best things stay as they are at this late stage. You are not goin' mess me around, Barry. I can't take that. Not again. Do you understand?

Barry sits back down. Down but certainly not defeated.

BARRY

Fine. Soon as Carmel back from church, I goin' sit her down. Tell her I divorcing her. Just watch. *I'll show you, my love.*

He picks up his Guinness. Close on the dark liquid, sloshing slowly from side to side as the SOUND OF WAVES rises.

13

EXT. BEACH - ANTIGUA - 1969

13

Waves calmly washing onto shore, lapping across the toes of TWO TEENAGE BOYS (Young Barry & Morris 19 yrs) sitting on golden sand. Alone. Basking in the glow of the day's last, warm, relaxing light. Stripped to only their pants, lithe bodies glistening as their fingers stealthily find one another's. They smile. Utterly euphoric.

13A

EXT. BEACH - ANTIGUA - 1969

13A

Young Morris turns to look at Young Barry. He taps his own chest three times, slowly and purposefully. A code.

YOUNG BARRY

A wha dat?

Young Morris taps three times again, this time miming the code's meaning:

YOUNG MORRIS

(miming)

I. Love. You.

Young Barry beams. He pushes Young Morris into the sand, lies on top of him and kisses him.

13B

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - ANTIGUA - 1969

13B

The two boys on a bicycle, exhilarated, wind in their hair. As Young Morris pedals, Young Barry, on the back, leans his head back and closes his eyes.

13C

EXT. CAZENOUE ROAD / THE WALKER RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON

13C

*

Carmel and THREE SMARTLY DRESSED WOMEN (Merty, Drusilla and Candaisy), walk towards the house on their return from church, full of chatter and gossip.

*

*

*

14

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

14

Barry is slumped, drinking, the froth from his umpteenth glass of Guinness adorning his top lip as he watches the CLOCK SLOWLY TICK. Finally, the sound he's been dreading...

A KEY IN THE LOCK.

Barry jolts, lowering his drink as he shoots a look over at Morris, catching a quick forty winks. Morris' eyes snap open.

Okay, this is it. Showtime. Until...

THE SOUND OF THE DOOR OPENING AND NUMEROUS VOICES ENTERING.

BARRY

(annoyed)

How many times I told her not to
bring back the 5,000 after church?

Before Morris can even respond, the kitchen is colonised by Carmel and three smartly dressed women: MISS MERTY, MISS DRUSILLA, and MISS CANDAISY. All Antiguan born and life-long friends of a similar age to Carmel.

Ad-libbed talk about the wonderful church service they've just attended. How the new preacher reminds them of a young Harry Belafonte - with a voice just as sweet, etc. They are also proud of their recent fundraising efforts to help bring relief to Antigua after a recent devastating storm.

Carmel, dressed in a blue pleated skirt and white blouse, throws a cold look over at Barry.

BARRY (V.O.)

*Um-hm. You think you hate me now,
dear... you just wait.*

Barry sits quietly - the lord of the manor - as Morris interacts and shares pleasantries with Carmel's three cronies - particularly Candaisy whom is particularly taken with him.

Carmel nods curtly at Morris as Merty motions in a fashion akin to a mafia don at Candaisy and Drusilla to start setting the table. The ladies do it without hesitation. Carmel, thankful, squeezes Merty's shoulder.

CARMEL

Drink, ladies? Water? Sarsaparilla?
Sorrel?

MERTY

Mi love some guinep juice if you
have it.

BARRY (V.O.)

*Course you would. Anything to be
difficult.*

DRUSILLA

Me too.

CARMEL

Okay. I'll just have to check.

Carmel turns to look at the meek Candaisy.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

Candaisy?

CANDAISY

Oh, water's fine for me.

MORRIS

What keeps yuh looking so young.

Barry can't help but shake his head as Carmel nods and exits. Merty smiles, calls after her. (N.B. Merty as the group's boss does the least amount of work - delegates mainly, etc).

MERTY

Thanks, dear.

Merty throws a look at Barry before correcting a setting that Candaisy has just laid out. ***Ad-libbed about the latest reports from Antigua, places they once frequented being destroyed by a storm. It's bittersweet.***

DRUSILLA

Boxes too. Do you remember Boxes?

Barry shares a knowing look with Morris.

MORRIS

I remember Boxes. Do you Barry?

BARRY

Um-hm. I remember Boxes alright. I remember a certain someone used to lime there.

Morris cracks up.

DRUSILLA

Who me? Mi never lime in mi life.

Etc, as Barry and Morris playfully tease her about her past days.

Laughter from the table as Carmel re-enters with the drinks.

PRE-LAP: THE SOUND OF SUDDEN SNIPPET BLASTS OF MUSIC.

15

EXT./INT. DONNA'S CAR - AFTERNOON

15

Behind the wheel of a vehicle hurtling along is DONNA WALKER (47), hair scrapped back, shiny black tracksuit. On edge as she sips on a Frappuccino. Beside her, her son DANIEL (17), tall and strapping in a rugby shirt and chinos is messing with the stations on the car's DAB radio. Lands on a modern, inane song that's all the rage. A parent's worst nightmare.

DONNA

Uh-uh. No way I'm listening to that crap.

She reaches over and turns off the radio, much to Daniel's annoyance. He looks at her. Intelligent eyes scheming.

DANIEL

What's crap, Mum, is the drink you're currently sucking into your system. It's pure sugar, which I'm sure you're well aware has long been linked to a plethora of ailments such as cancer, diabetes, and obesity to name but a few. Not to mention the negative effect it's bound to already have had on your current emotional state, which, as a passenger in this vehicle is already pretty alarming and - as your only child - I can only implore-

Donna, reaching over and turning the radio back on.

DONNA

Jesus, just listen to your damn song.

Daniel sits back, smiling triumphantly. Until... a message comes in on his mobile from a 'Chris' simply saying: "We need to talk". Crestfallen, he responds: "Please. I can change."

16

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

16

Carmel takes a large pot of curried goat from the hob and places it on the side.

CARMEL

Lunch is ready. Help yourselves.

A fantastic spread of food: macaroni cheese, coleslaw, collard greens, plantain to name a few... ***Ad-libbed dialogue as the women and Morris get up and help themselves.***

CANDAISY

It look good, Carmel.

DRUSILLA

Yes, Ma. It goin' bang good too.

Carmel snatches up Barry's plate, starts fixing food onto it.

DRUSILLA (CONT'D)

Just think-a all the fresh fish waiting for you back in Antigua, Barry. And the plantain - how sweet it goin' taste, you lucky soul.

Confused, Morris glances at Barry.

MORRIS
You goin' Antigua?

Barry, knowing the women are playing with him, smiles.

BARRY
Perfectly good fish and plantain
down Ridley Road if mi want it.

Carmel glares at him.

CARMEL
Goat?!

They exchange a tense look.

BARRY
Please.

Carmel dollops a large portion onto his plate.

MERTY
So yuh just goin' abandon your wife
in her time of need most crucial?

Carmel angrily sets the plate down in front of Barry.

CARMEL
"Him nah fly well."

Barry shrugs. *There you have it.*

CARMEL (CONT'D)
Um-hm. Almost 75 years-old and him
still too scared to face him fear.

Off Barry, unable to deny it.

17

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

17

Donna and Daniel bustling in through the front door.

18

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

18

THE SOUND OF THE FRONT DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING.

BARRY
Oh, dear Lord. Who this now?
(off the ladies glares)
Sorry, I say that out loud?

At that moment in walks Donna with Daniel moping behind.

CARMEL
Donna! Daniel.

DONNA CARMEL (CONT'D)
Hey mum. Come now. Grab a plate and help yourselves.

Carmel gives a look for Morris to stop helping himself to seconds, which he reluctantly does. Claps hands with Daniel.

Smiling, Donna gives a quick round of "hi-hi-hi" to everyone, except purposefully Barry.

BARRY (V.O.)
*Carmel must-a been on the phone
first thing, I see.*

Daniel mooches over and gives Barry's shoulder squeeze.

DANIEL
Hey grandfather.

BARRY
Grandfather? Um, what happened to
Grandy?

Daniel shrugs as he exits and returns after a moment with two fold-up chairs and comes to sit down next to Barry. As Donna fusses over his plate, the ***ad-libbed conversation continuing around them***, Barry turns to his grandson and proceeds to speak to him almost as if he were still ten-years-old.

BARRY (CONT'D)
How's school?

DANIEL
(shrugs)
Okay.

BARRY
Okay? For what I pay it better be
more than okay, my boy.

Daniel nods. Too preoccupied with his phone.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Okay. Decided what to study at Uni
yet? How about Law? Everybody need
a good lawyer upon occasion.
(looks at Carmel)
Fi true.

Daniel, still distracted by his phone, shrugs as Donna, who has been eavesdropping, proudly chimes in.

DONNA
Daniel's going to study PPE at
Oxford, aren't you darlin'?

Reaction from the table. Lifting even Carmel.

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| CARMEL Well, done my darlin'. | MORRIS What that? Physical education? |
| DANIEL Thanks Granny, but I haven't got in yet! | DONNA It stands for Philosophy, Politics and Economics. |

BARRY
*Or as I like to call it,
 Politrickery, Pontification and E-
 criminal-omics. I see.*

Barry regards Daniel, distant, texting furiously. We catch a glimpse of his response to Chris: "I can be what you want!"

MERTY
 Well if that doesn't deserve God's praise. Who goin' say grace? Barry?

Barry reluctantly leads the grace.

19 OMITTED

19

20 OMITTED

20

21 **INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - KITCHEN - DAY**

21

Barry, creaming his hands, marches toward the kitchen, braced for confrontation with whatever new intruder now awaits him. Instead he stops and smiles as his tension instantly eases at the sight of...

MAXINE WALKER (37), a stylist to the stars, sporting a pixie wig, leather jacket, ripped jeans, and heels, working the room like a celeb, air-kissing "hellos".

DRUSILLA
 (re: the ripped jeans)
 You not cold in them things, love?

MAXINE
 Auntie, with a body this hot, I
 need all the ventilation I can get.

Drusilla smiles. Donna rolls her eyes, while Merty fixes hers upon the grinning Maxine now coming in for a side hug.

MERTY
 Chile. Don't you know *Vanity* is a sin?

MAXINE
 Um-hm. But then so is *Envy*, auntie.

Maxine gives Merty a disarming wink and an air-kiss as Barry lets out a hearty chortle.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Hello, Daddy.

MERTY

I see, the apple still doesn't lie
far from the tree.

Maxine hugs her father tightly. Barry closes his eyes, lost in the embrace until a throat being cleared ruins the moment.

CARMEL

Here. You're lucky I could find it.

Carmel, having just entered, shoves a KEY into Maxine's hand, somewhat coldly.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

And whatever you take, I want back,
Maxine. Yes?

MAXINE

Yes, alright, Mum. Understood.

DONNA

Want what back? What are you
taking?

MAXINE

None of your business.

Maxine flicks her tongue at her sister, departs rapidly.

DONNA

Mum?

Donna looks to her loyal confidant to expand.

In the dull glow of a low-hanging bulb, Maxine riffles through a trunk brimming with Carmel's old clothes. Colourful, a mixture of styles, all surprisingly elegant.

Maxine carefully draws out a few that tickle her fancy.

Opens a small jewellery box and retrieves a stylish, expensive pair of HOOPED EARRINGS.

DONNA (O.S.)

So this is what you're up to?!

Maxine is startled by the sudden appearance of Donna.

MAXINE

Jesus shitting christ, Donna!

DONNA

What? You thought I'd just allow
you to waltz by and help yourself
to all of Mum's best stuff?!

MAXINE

Borrow! I'm *borrowing* a few bits
and pieces for a shoot.

DONNA

Yeah? For how long exactly?

MAXINE

Seriously, Don, please get a life,
'stead of always sticking your big
snout in mine.

Maxine goes back to her hunt. Selects a piece. A bodysuit.

DONNA

No, you can't take that one. I want
that one.

Maxine eyes the slim fitting item.

MAXINE

For what? Motivation?

That stings. Maxine regrets it instantly. Goes back to
digging. After a moment, her eyes bulge with surprise.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Whoa, Mumma!

Maxine holds up a SEXY SET OF RED LACED NEGLIGE. Bursts into
laughter as she waves it in Donna's face.

DONNA

Eww, stop that. I mean it!

Maxine, smirking, takes in the racy set.

MAXINE

Who knew she had it in her, eh?

DONNA

Most likely how you were conceived.

Donna chuckles as Maxine drops the negligee back into the box
like it's radioactive.

23

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - DAY

23

Maxine descends the stairs, her shoulder bag packed with items. Sliding her killer heels back on, she shouts down the hall in the direction of the kitchen.

MAXINE

K. Ciao everyone. Bon appétit.

Barry exits into the hallway from the kitchen - where a flittering of "goodbyes" sound - his face troubled.

BARRY

Wait. You not staying?

MAXINE

And have lunch with the *Bitches of Eastwick*? Daddy, much as I love you, life's far too short.

Barry's dispirited as she flashes a heart-melting smile, pecks his cheek and heads for the door.

BARRY (V.O.)

Um-hm. There she-a go. My own little Plato.

24

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

24

Barry, fresh glass of Guinness in hand, eases himself back into his seat, surveying the crowded table: Merty opposite, Carmel, Candaisy and Morris to his right; Drusilla to his left; Donna rejoining Daniel, side by side.

DONNA

Mum, is there any wine?

BARRY

You want wine why didn't you bring some?

Carmel shakes her head, too busy bursting with gossip.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Go on. You know where it kept.

Donna reluctantly stands to find the wine as:

CARMEL

Tryphena confided that her eldest - you know, Melissa has got fibroids.

Reaction from the women. Daniel, seeking clarification, turns to Barry, who in turn looks to Morris, who shrugs. The others however, bar Donna, seem beyond excited.

DRUSILLA

Really? How big are they?

CARMEL

They're inside the lining of the womb, so they can't easily be extracted. Apparently, as Melissa is menstruating three weeks out of four, she got to have hysterectomy.

Morris puts down his fork. Donna returns with a glass of wine. Barry picks some goat gristle out of his teeth.

BARRY (V.O.)

Superb Sunday lunch conversation you started up, dear.

DRUSILLA

She got pickney?

CARMEL

No, Drusilla, she hasn't.

Carmel, who seems almost youthful again, sits back.

DRUSILLA

Well, once that womb is out, no babies for her.

Drusilla adjusts the parasol on her head for emphasis.

DRUSILLA (CONT'D)

You can't cheat nature. Women should have baby by twenty-five latest. That way they just pop out like golf balls.

Merty, not one to be upstaged, looks sternly at Drusilla.

MERTY

You talking nonsense, Drusilla. Fifty-year-old women can have children these days.

BARRY (V.O.)

Yes, ladies, slug it out.

DRUSILLA

Yes, they can, Merty, but then the pickney comes out with two heads and ten legs, though, isn't it?

BARRY (V.O.)

It isn't.

DRUSILLA

Anyways, how we know Melissa hasn't had an abortion?

(MORE)

DRUSILLA (CONT'D)

This is how career women carry on.
Make baby, kill baby, make baby,
kill baby, make ba-

Escaping the table, Donna gets up to get more food.

MERTY

(bulldozing in)

Yes, but there's one person who
knows everything.

(points upwards)

Maybe He's punishing her.

Barry looks at Carmel, rueful now for setting this off and
struggling to contain her clear objection to such talk.

BARRY (V.O.)

*Never understood why my intelligent
wife - in spite of her faults -
remains loyal to these women.*

Hold on Carmel's constrained discomfort for a moment, before
she stands, collecting up her plate.

CARMEL

Everyone finished?

But Merty is only just getting into her stride.

MERTY

And another thing, I hear from very
good authority on the grapevine
that Melissa is also one of those
women who lies down with women.

BARRY (V.O.)

*Yes, you go-wan, Merty. All roads
in your dutty mind lead back to
sex.*

DRUSILLA

(unconvincing)

Yes, I think I heard that too...
er...

Drusilla glances nervously at Merty but perseveres,
determined to continue her bid for power.

DRUSILLA (CONT'D)

What I always say is, if a woman
was meant to lie down with woman,
God would have given woman a penis.

BARRY

*Her problem is when her mouth
speaks, it don't ask her brain for
permission first. As good a mantra
as any, that, Drusilla.*

Morris tries to contain a giggle as Carmel glares.

MERTY

If Melissa is one of those lesbian characters, it is an abomination.

The amusement slips from Barry and Morris' faces. Morris stands, takes Barry's plate. Barry secretly taps his leg twice (their secret code). The meek Candaisy uncomfortably rubs her neck. Drusilla sighs and nods her head gravely.

DRUSILLA

Though no sin is greater than God's mercy. We must first clean from inside the cup and dish and then the outside will be clean - Matthew 23:25.

Donna, hitherto silent, stops grinding her teeth.

DONNA

With respect, aunties. God also said that eating shellfish such as shrimp and lobster is an abomination.

Donna indicates the bowl of nearly empty shrimp rice.

DONNA (CONT'D)

And there's all that nonsense about not wearing material woven of two kinds of cloth, and that slavery is fine. D'you see my point?

Merty stares blankly at Donna.

MERTY

No.

DONNA

I just think it's crazy to base our opinions on arguments written in Leviticus 3,500 years ago.

BARRY (V.O.)

Thank you Donna, for rescuing your father's dignity even though you don't know it.

Tense beat.

Merty and Drusilla look down at their food like it's steaming hot excrement.

Carmel frantically fingers her wedding ring.

Candaisy is transfixed by the sky outside.

Barry glances at Morris who is hiding a smirk with his hand, then sideways at Daniel, who is texting under the table.

DONNA

Who cares what Melissa is or isn't?
It her own business.

BARRY

Amen.

MERTY

Well Antigua still cares. But maybe you're right, Donna. Maybe it's not Melissa's fault. After all, some women just can't seem to find or keep hold of a man, can they?

A few winces and coughs as Donna squirms a little, before trying her best to deflect the low blow.

DONNA

Some of us are too busying trying to raise them, auntie. Like loving, responsible parents should.

(a pointed look at Barry,
before back to her point)

Because when I see some of the content that's online now...

DONNA (CONT'D)

This social media stuff my son's exposed to with its violent, sexist, homophobic stupidness - I go through the roof, I really do. (looking up sharply) Leave me out of it, Mum.

DANIEL

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I can do what I like.

DONNA

(snapping)

Not on my watch you can't.

Barry and Carmel share a rare, mutual look of surprise as:

Donna manages to drop her fork onto the floor.

Merty's eyes suddenly gleam. She seizes the moment.

MERTY

So, Donna, if Daniel was one of them, an anti-man, you'd be happy with that?

(mimicking)

Mum, I'd like you to meet Giles Smythe... my boyfriend.

Drusilla stifles a snort as Daniel groans and scrapes back his chair as though ready to leave the room, only something holds him back.

Donna, raised to respect her elders, suddenly looks down, reduced to feeling like an eight-year-old again.

DONNA

I've no idea if Daniel is "one of them", as you put it. If he is... it would be up to... him. Most likely be a phase anyway. All teenagers go through *phases*.

BARRY (V.O.)

Um-hm. You certainly did.

DONNA

The point is people should be free to express themselves as they want.

Merty places her elbows on the table. Eyes trained on Donna.

MERTY

That's not what I asked. Would you approve?!

BARRY (V.O.)

Help her Barry.

He shares a look with Carmel - things have gotten out of hand. Donna shrugs. Merty is now on full-attack mode.

MERTY

(re: Daniel)

Look at him. He could become an anti-man. All his speaky-spokiness and private schooling that everyone knows is a breeding ground for sodomites.

Daniel, incensed, stands abruptly.

DANIEL

That's it. Stop talking about me like I'm not here. Mum, I'll be outside.

And he's gone. Barry watching after him as the cronies react. Barry, irate, stands and addresses the table.

BARRY

You should be ashamed... insinuating things. How you think that make him feel? And my daughter don't need to justify herself to anyone in this room.

Donna offers Barry a grateful grimace as Merty blinks slowly and swivels her head away from him.

Morris, in an act of support, takes the seat next to Barry that Daniel vacated.

Carmel again starts to rattle up some plates.

DRUSILLA

Like any disease, Mr Walker, it's best to catch it and cut it out early, lest it spread, or, God forbid, infect others.

BARRY

(snapping)

What on earth you talking about?
Your Bible preaches love, and all I hear out your sour mouths is bitterness and damnation!

Everyone freezes except for Carmel, who starts making so much noise at the sink it's like the blitz.

Morris regards Barry, now willing him to shut up. Too late.

MERTY

(to Barry)

Why are you defending them?

Barry and Merty lock eyes. No way she's backing down.

DRUSILLA

Those poor homosexuals are rightly suffering because suffering is a part of their salvation. The Lord says they should be beaten that they mayest be better.

Barry suddenly bursts up and punches the palm of one hand with the fist of another.

BARRY

Someone's goin' give you beats one of these days, you crazy lady.

A communal, pantomime gasp of horror from the cronies. Beat.

DRUSILLA

I thanks God for your life.

And with that Drusilla gets up...

MORRIS

Yuh leaving, Drusilla?

... and walks out.

Merty continues to fix a probing stare on Barry, unsettling him somewhat. He goes to take a drink of his Guinness only to find it's empty. Agony.

Finally the excruciating silence is broken by Candaisy, who speaks with a light, breathless, girly voice.

CANDAISY

I personally think we should live
and let live.

A stern look from Merty.

CANDAISY (CONT'D)

It's not their fault if-

CARMEL

(cutting in)

You're right.

Carmel puts her hand on Candaisy's arm in solidarity.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

We should pray for their souls to
be saved. Now what I object to,
what boils my blood...

Carmel unashamedly eyeballs her husband.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

...is the kind of married man who
sticks his business in any ole
smelly, venereal, baggy pussy
that's had more dingle-dangles
stuffed up it than hot dinners.

At that point, Merty spits out the mint she's just unwrapped and popped into her mouth.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

Those kind of men should be
publicly flogged in the town
square.

BLACKNESS. Suddenly a light blinks on as a door opens and we recognise we are watching from the perspective of inside a FRIDGE, with Barry's face and hand coming into view as he searches for and grabs a can of Guinness.

Barry pops the lid and proceeds to down it.

From off we can hear the sound of Carmel bidding farewell to her friends and Donna: "thanks for lunch, mum", "I'm goin' pray for your daddy" etc.

Morris watches as Barry barely comes up for air.

MORRIS

Is that can half empty or half full?

Barry stops drinking, closes the fridge, his eyes landing on a picture magnet of himself, Carmel, Donna and Maxine - whom he is embracing warmly. He strokes her face lightly before turning to face his friend and lover, non-verbally willing him to do what he had promised.

BARRY

Morris, truthfully, I feeling a bit woozy. Maybe some fresh air would help?

Barry gives Morris an upwards-onwards nod, but is stopped by-

CARMEL (O.S.)

Bar-ring-ton!

Barry turns to find Carmel, returned. Arms folded. Bodeful.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

You ain't goin' nowhere... Morris?

Morris jumps up so fast he almost falls over.

BARRY

Tomorrow, my man. Mi do the thing.

Barry surreptitiously signals at Carmel behind him. Morris nods, scoops up a Tupperware box full of food, and exits.

Carmel wipes her hands on a tea towel and sits down in the chair previously occupied by Merty.

CARMEL

Bar-ring-ton...

Her speech is slow, deliberate, like she's struggling to control herself.

CARMEL (CONT'D)

As well you know, these mi friends, lifelong friends, and I don't appreciate you threatening them.

(beat)

After all this time you don't even know them properly, because you never bothered to find out who they are deep inside.

(MORE)

CARMEL (CONT'D)

You treat them like monsters,
'stead of real human people who've
had a harder life than you'll ever
understand because you lacking in
human decency, sensitivity,
compassion, all-round empathy and
good manners besides.

BARRY

That's some list.

Barry goes to defend himself but can only let out a croak.

CARMEL

Your problem is you don't go to
church to get religious
instruction, which is why you ain't
got no morals. Soon as I get back
from seeing my daddy, we goin' get
a new regime and you goin' mend
your ways.

BARRY (V.O.)

*You goin' get a new regime all
right. Don't worry about that.*

CARMEL

You been walking on the dark side
too long, Barrington, and now I
goin' drag you into the light.

Carmel makes the sign of the cross, bends her head and begins to pray for Barry's soul.

26

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - MORNING

26

Curtains are snapped open by Carmel, spilling cold morning light onto a Barry sprawled out in bed.

Groggy, he heaves himself out of bed and starts to dress.

27

EXT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - MORNING

27

Barry, dressed but bleary-eyed, drags a large suitcase down the front steps.

He loads the suitcase into the back of a pristine 1984 JAGUAR SOVEREIGN.

THUD. He slams the boot shut.

28

INT. BARRY'S CAR - MOVING - MORNING

28

N.B. We will film this scene with Barry and Carmel and then again with Young Barry and Carmelita.

Barry drives. Carmel beside him. Both silent. Eyes ahead. The metaphorical distance couldn't be more palpable. Finally:

BARRY
Which terminal you flying from?

CARMEL
South.

BARRY
Which airline you with?

CARMEL
Virgin.

BARRY
How long you gone for?

Silence. Barry reaches for the radio, turning it on. Ella Fitzgerald's '**I've Got You Under My Skin**' plays...

ELLA FITZGERALD
...*I've got you under my skin.*
I've got you deep in the heart of
me. So deep in my heart that you're
really a part of me.

Carmel immediately shuts it off. A long, strained beat.

CARMEL
What happened to us, Barry?

Barry pauses.

BARRY
Go on, Barry. The truth shall set
you free.
(shrugs)
Life happened, Carmel...

Another wasted opportunity to go with two wasted lives.

Carmel softens.

CARMEL
What if I asked nicely? If I really
needed you to be there with me? For
me. What then? Would you come?

Shit. Barry, silently drowning inside, unable to answer. Eyes fixed on the road, unwilling to meet hers as he shakes his head "no".

Heartbroken, Carmel quietly absorbs the hit. She turns away, rests her head back, and closes her eyes to stop the tears from falling.

END OF EPISODE.

OMITTED.