

MR LOVERMAN

EPIISODE 2

by
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Based on the novel by Bernardine Evaristo

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F A B L E
P I C T U R E S



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In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it.

-Oscar Wilde, 1854-1900

MAXINE sits sobbing uncontrollably in front of a vanity mirror. Her face is free of make-up, displaying smooth, youthful skin. She wears a WIG CAP over her natural hair styled in plaits. A silk, designer robe hanging stylishly.

Her walls are a shrine to family pictures, vision boards and a multitude of self-help, road to fulfillment books etc.

She wails for a good moment or two before an ALARM on her Fitbit sounds. Suddenly, she stops, wipes her eyes, completely composed and renewed.

MAXINE

Okay Alexa. Let's do this.

ALEXA'S ROBOTIC VOICE springs out of the ether.

ALEXA (V.O.)

Sure thing, Maxine. You go girl.

RELAXING, INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC plays as Maxine starts to embark on an intense, almost mesmerising sequence of preparing her make-up and hair for the day:

-Cotton pads are soaked in cleanser and streaked across her face, lifting excess dirt and grease, before being methodically folded and discarded into the waste bin.

-Manicured fingers unlatch locks, allowing a huge UNFOLDING COSMETIC TRUNK to spring to life, revealing compartments containing a myriad of colour palettes, bottles, containers, brushes, spoolies, sprays and sponges etc.

-The fingers navigate their way through the options with immense dexterity, displaying an artistry to rival any of the Old Masters.

-Lids are popped off one by one, as an array of brushes dip daintily into concealer, foundation, beauty blenders and more, before being deftly applied in a variety of strokes, dabs and dashes as eyebrows are brushed and painted... under-eyes are shadowed... nose and cheeks are blended and contoured... lips are lined, painted and glossed and false eyelashes are glued.

Maxine pauses to inspect her fine work.

MAXINE

My body is healthy; my mind is brilliant; my soul is tranquil.

She takes a moment to let that sink in, takes a deep breath, then with more conviction...

MAXINE (CONT'D)

My body is healthy; my mind is
brilliant; my soul is tranquil.

Maxine nods. Slowly starting to believe as she repeats the affirmation again, whilst flicking a RED ELASTICATED BAND she wears around one wrist hard against her skin.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I am the architect of my life; I
built its foundation and will
choose its contents.

Maxine flicks the band again before repeating the incantation as she starts to set a middle parting in the two inches of exposed hair at the front of the wig cap.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I believe I can do anything.

Repeating this line over and over again, Maxine applies hair gel with a small brush in order to hold the edges of the hairline in place. She then selects a 20 inch, jet black wig from a line-up of wig heads sporting a plethora of styles.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

My ability to conquer challenges is
limitless; my potential to succeed
is infinite.

Carefully, she runs a fine brush through the wig, brushing it out before lifting it on and maneuvering it effortlessly to line up its middle parting with that of her natural one.

She starts brushing the wig hair into place, manipulating it to make it flat, intermittently dousing it with hair spray.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I believe I can do anything.

Selects a concealer - a tone matching her scalp's natural hue - and starts to blend it in with the parting line of the wig.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I can achieve greatness!

Maxine flat irons the wig hair from root to tip.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Today is the day I will grasp my
destiny with both hands.

She sprays a comb with hairspray and runs it repeatedly through the hair, beaming now - a new confidence found in the immaculate woman staring back at her in the mirror.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Today is the day I will grasp my
destiny with both hands.

She flicks her red band - this time maybe a little too hard, as the music cuts abruptly.

ALEXA
 Mum calling.

Surprised, even a little worried as she slips in an earbud.

MAXINE
 (to Alexa)
 Answer.
 (then)
 Mum? What's the matter?!

2

EXT. HACKNEY ROADS / THE WALKER RESIDENCE - DAY

2

TRACKING SHOT of BARRY'S 1984 JAGUAR SOVEREIGN as it winds its way along the roads of Hackney until it comes to a stop outside his home. A tired, drained looking BARRY, having just returned from the airport, exits to find a middle-aged woman, MRS JESSOP, trying to peer through his curtains.

BARRY
 You casing the joint, Mrs Jessop?

She turns, flustered. In her hand is a cheap bottle of wine, which she hastily offers forward. Barry smiles wryly.

BARRY (CONT'D)
 Oh no, I see your intent is far more nefarious. Seduction!

MRS JESSOP
 (laughing)
 Oh you are naughty. It's just a little, you know, thank you - for all you did for my son.

BARRY
 No need...
 (checks the vintage)
 Really! Mi happy to help.

MRS JESSOP
 Please. God knows you didn't have to.

BARRY
 We all need a little help upon occasion, don't we, ehn? *Like when Carm divorce me, bleed me dry!*

MRS JESSOP

Still... what other landlord would do that for a tenant? You're a man apart, Mr Walker. Truly.

BARRY

(not denying it)

Barry, please.

At that moment, a MAN ON A BIKE passing shouts out.

MAN ON BIKE

Yes, Barry!

BARRY

(to Mrs Jessop)
See.

MAN ON BIKE (CONT'D)

Bless up yourself, King!

(then shouting after)
Yes, Richard. Technique
improved nuff nuh?

The Man on Bike rings his bell as he cycles past. Barry turns his attention back to the ever grateful Mrs Jessop.

MRS JESSOP

Your family's so lucky to have you!

Barry's smile remains, albeit a little uneasier now.

3

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - DAY

3

Barry closes the front door, taking a moment to appreciate the glorious silence befalling his home. Wearily, he places the bottle of wine on the side, tosses his car keys into a drawer, and is in the process of removing his jacket when the sharp shrill of the house phone breaks the tranquility.

With one arm now stuck in his jacket, Barry, cursing under his breath, approaches the ringing hallway phone and picks up the receiver before adopting his best phone voice.

BARRY

Hullo?

4

EXT. MAXINE'S FLAT - STAIRWELL - DAY

4

Maxine, outsized sunglasses, tiny white T-shirt beneath a suit jacket and skinny jeans, removes day-glo stilettos and stashes them into her large Gucci bag before descending the metal stairs. Carmel's expensive hooped earrings from Episode 1 jangling from her earlobes. Her mobile in one hand as she goes. A real edge in her voice.

MAXINE

Dad, listen to me carefully. You and I are going to talk-

A wolf whistle. Maxine looks down at a passing male, leering up at her. Numb to it, she rolls her eyes, continues on.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
This afternoon. Alone!

Maxine reaches the bottom, restores the day-glos to her feet.

MAXINE (CONT'D)
Understand?!

5 **INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - DAY**

5

Back on Barry. Receiver to his ear. His face falls.

6 **EXT. CAZENOVE ROAD - (PARK OPPOSITE WALKER RESIDENCE) - DAY**

MORRIS walks along, smiling carrying a box of pastries and two coffees. A spring in his step as he nods hellos at passers-by. A happier man in the whole of London there isn't. He looks up at the blue sky streaked with contrails. Breathes a small sigh of relief at his life starting anew.

7 **EXT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - DAY**

7

Morris bounds excitedly up to the front door only to be met by Barry wearing a grave expression. Morris' smile immediately evaporates.

8 **INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY**

8

Barry sits draining his wine as Morris quietly sips from his takeaway coffee and picks at one of the Danish pastries.

BARRY

I tried to tell her! But given her current predicament, her daddy dying and everything. How can I heap trouble upon woe?

Morris wipes his mouth, taking a moment to seal away his immense disappointment. He nods gently in agreement.

MORRIS

I was thinking the same thing last night. We both got caught up and wasn't thinking straight.

Morris takes the short-pencil from behind his ear and attacks a sudoku puzzle to take his mind off of the blow.

Barry shakes his head as he ponders his glass of wine deeply.

BARRY

If someone asks for their freedom,
you got to give it to them;
otherwise you become their jailer.

MORRIS

'Cept you've never asked.
(off Barry's look)
Not properly at least.

BARRY

(ignoring the dig)
Now Maxie's calling me out of the
blue demanding a confrontation.

MORRIS

(surprised)
What, Maxine?!

This only adds to Barry's concern.

BARRY

Precisely... Carmel's no fool.
Donna, mi had a whole lifetime of
being off, but Maxie...

PRE-LAP: SINGING...

9

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1987

9

Barry, head beside a huge baby bump underneath a nightie,
singing softly, albeit not very well. The sound of laughter.

Find the bump belongs to CARMEL, propped up on the settee,
chuckling. Fresher faced than we've seen to date. Revelling
in her pregnancy glow as she strokes the hair of the sleeping
ten-year-old girl (DONNA) beside her, tucked under a blanket.

CARMEL

Yuh keep on so and she never gone
want to come out.

Barry continues to sing for a moment, tenderly stroking the
bump, clearly already in love with his unborn child.

BARRY

Don't you worry. She'll come out
when she good and ready.

Carmel - faux stern.

CARMEL

Oh, is that right?!

Barry nods gently.

BARRY

(to bump)

Um-hm. No rush little one. Just
know your daddy ready when you are.
More than ready... This time.

He looks up at Carmel with a sincere gaze. And in that moment, we can see it means the world to her. To them both.

10

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

10

Back on Barry at the table.

MORRIS

That girl's always had you wrapped around her finger. Maybe this your chance to finally stand up to her. Allow the girl to grow up a bit - make her own way, perhaps.

Barry stands.

BARRY

Yuh always pushin' me, Morris.

Morris is angered by this.

MORRIS

I'm always what?

BARRY

Just leh mi alone, once in-a while.

MORRIS

Leh yuh alone? Leh you alone?!
Don't act like you weren't the one to follow me to England after I did already build-a new life - a happy life - begging me to start over, promising a whole heap a nothings.

BARRY

I never begged. And you should-a waited fah me, 'stead of marrying the first woman yuh did see.

The pain of the past still tangible for both men.

MORRIS

(placatingly)

No use dwelling on the past.

BARRY

I told you, this time it different.
I ready for the showdown. Soon as Carm back.

MORRIS

Don't mess me around, Barry, or you will lose me for good.

BARRY

Come nah, man, you don't mean that.

MORRIS

Don't I?

Barry is shocked to find Morris is in fact most earnest.

The PHONE STARTS TO RING in the hall. Barry seems anxious as he exits to answer it.

Morris remains at the table, subdued. Takes in the family portraits of The Walker family on the walls. A pang of sadness.

PRE-LAP THE SOUND OF CHILDREN'S LAUGHTER.

Morris looks over to see...

11

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY - 1993

11

Barry entering with a BIRTHDAY CAKE. The kitchen is now alive with energy as MORRIS'S BOYS **LEON** (8) and **TREVOR** (10) sit at the table with **YOUNG MAXINE** (6), **YOUNG DONNA** (16), **CARMEL** and **ODETTE** (Black, presentable and wholesome). They all break into a rendition of HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Morris's youngest, LEON, who shyly hugs into his father for protection. Morris strokes his son's hair, kisses him reassuringly, before:

12

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

12

Morris sits alone once more. He shakes away the painful reverie, stands and crosses to the fridge as Barry enters.

MORRIS

(head in fridge)

Damn, Carmel's cronies really left the bare minimum, nah?!

No response. Morris closes the fridge and turns to find Barry shifting through the box of recycling by the back door.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Don't tell me you have a secret food stash hidden in there, Barry?!

Morris' little joke brings nothing from his friend.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Barry? What is it? Who that on the phone?

No response.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

While there's a lotta things
starting to fail on you, mi know
for a fact your ears aren't one.

Barry yanks out the red top Sunday paper that Morris had been reading the previous day in Ep 1 and starts scouring through.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Okay, now I'm officially concerned!

Barry slinks down into his chair, staring sadly at the picture above the article about the murdered young man who had called for his mum in his final moments.

BARRY

Him look familiar to you?

Morris takes a seat for a closer inspection - the picture a little distorted now through general wear and tear.

MORRIS

(reading)

Jerome Cole-Wilson...

(then to Barry)

No. Should he?

BARRY

Him Melvin's boy.

MORRIS

As in your nephew Melvin?

*

Barry nods. Morris looks harder.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

I didn't know he even had-a son.

*

Barry stares at the picture of the boy - a stranger until only moments ago - with a profound sense of loss and sadness.

BARRY

He probably didn't neither, being hooked on them drugs for so long.

MORRIS

God, the boy was only 14.

BARRY

Barely time to draw breath.

Morris nods, sorrowfully.

Barry looks back at the picture of Jerome - young and lost. Suddenly strikes the table.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Dammit Melvin, man. Mi know life
not been easy, but my brother raise
you better than that. 'Specially
after we did promise our own daddy
to break the curse of we people by
being good husbands and fathers.

(off Morris' look)

I might've failed at the former,
but the latter, few can question me
on. Fuh you put your seed into the
world, you water it. Make sure it
grow.

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13

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING - 1988 13

Barry, shirt and tie beneath blue work overalls, stands holding a screaming BABY GIRL (MAXINE).

BARRY

You not hear her crying?

He's talking to Carmel, flopped about on the settee, still wearing her maternity dressing gown, caked in a few days' worth of dirt and grime. To the side is a Christmas tree, unlit. Three stockings. The heavy damask curtains are drawn but let through a cold slice of English daylight that falls partially onto Carmel's face, leaving the rest in shadow.

Carmel doesn't respond.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I told you, you can't keep leaving
Maxie alone like that. Here.

Carefully, he goes to hand the baby to Carmel, who recoils.

BARRY (CONT'D)

She's hungry.

Carmel turns away, wrapping her dressing gown tightly shut across her swollen and leaking breasts.

CARMEL

Course she is. She's always hungry.
Damn succubus.

Barry looks perplexed - and just a little helpless.

BARRY

Come, woman. She needs you - a
change and some milk.

Barry now realises that the smell he thought was coming from his daughter is actually the result of his wife. Tenderly:

BARRY (CONT'D)

Maybe wouldn't hurt for you to have
a wash and change neither.
(no response)
Carm?!

With Baby Maxine's screams only intensifying, Carmel watches
a cluster of dust motes swirling aimlessly through the shard
of light before vanishing into the gloom.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Carmel?! Come nah, woman, take her.

Carmel shakes her head. She just can't.

CARMEL
Keep her. She's yours.

Carmel shuts her eyes in despair as Barry works to try and quell the incessant screams of their daughter.

14

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

14

Back on Barry as he takes one last look at Jerome's picture.

BARRY
No matter how hard it get. Yuh
water your seed.

Barry, worked up, oblivious to the hurt Morris now exhibits.

BARRY (CONT'D)
Whatever anyone might say about me,
they can never accuse me of not
doin' my duty.

MORRIS
(sotto)
It not always so simple

Barry picks up the paper.

BARRY
Is-a damn shame. A damn shame.

And with an air of reluctance, places it back into the recycling.

14A

INT. FASHION STUDIO = DAY

14A

Maxine hands a bundle of fabulous clothes to an ASSISTANT as she answers her phone.

MAXINE
(on phone)
What do you want Donna? I've got an important pitch meeting to get to, like now... I don't know why she called me. I was as surprised as you are believe me... well, she is my mum too... I can handle Dad... what's that supposed to mean exactly?
(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Just because I don't want to murder him and drink his blood doesn't mean I'm not angry with the way he... of course I am. Seething. And he's gonna know that, believe me... Donna, you coming along will just make things worse!

15

EXT. THE TEA BUILDING - SHOREDITCH - DAY

15

A hive of activity. Hipsters coming and going. Maxine approaches the building, still on her phone, a real tapestry folder tucked under one arm.

MAXINE

(on phone)

I'll handle it! I've got to go.
Yes, I'll let you know, I promise!

Maxine clutches her folder tightly as she takes the red band she wears around her wrist and flicks it hard against her skin.

16 OMITTED

16

17 INT. BUS - DAY

17

Barry and Morris sit upstairs on a busy deck. Sorrowful, Barry takes in a BLACK FATHER (30s), holding hands with his YOUNG, HAPPY SON in the seat opposite.

MORRIS

Why you still seeming to fret so?

Barry regards Morris.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Remember, 'fret dem a fret-

MORRIS/BARRY

-and dem no get nuting yet!'

The pair share a smile - noticeably the only two in the carriage - save for the father and son - engaged in eye contact. Their hands, ever so slightly, touching.

BARRY

Nah worry, my man. Only thing mi
fearful of is the beginning of the
end of proper communication for the
human race with all these...

(a little too loud)

Zombies! Wasting them time away.

He indicates the other passengers - nearly all fiddling with their mobile phones. Some look up. Most don't.

MORRIS

Good. So long as it's not still
about Maxie. Because, truthfully,
if you serious about doing what you
intend, you goin' have fi get used
to fact that she might not like yuh
for it. In fact, for a time,
there's a real prospect she might
even hate you. Can yuh handle that?

Barry, uncertain, now fretting more than ever, nods.

BARRY

Yuh man. If it come to that, so be
it.

Off Morris, surprised and relieved to hear this.

18 EXT. RIDLEY ROAD MARKET - LONDON - DAY 18

Barry and Morris make their way along the bustling market in their dapper suits and English brogues.

19 INT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY 19

A cool, mellow ambiance, with the mellifluous voice of Ella Fitzgerald effortlessly caressing the notes of '**I've Got You Under My Skin**' as Barry and Morris enter. Instantly hit by the song, Barry stops. Morris turns back to him.

MORRIS

You okay?

Barry, shaking it off, nods and follows Morris to the bar area, passing a counter with a gallery of sugarific cakes.

BARRY

Damn. Avert thine eyes friend
before diabetes is upon thee.

Morris ignores Barry, takes a seat on a stool, smiles at the washed-out looking BARISTA with greasy, scraped-back hair.

MORRIS

Hello, my dear. I'll have a
refreshing cup of peppermint tea,
please and-

Morris turns and touches Barry's elbow.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Barry, what you having?

BARRY

Cool, gimme a Coke with lemon.

Barry sits on a stool. Turns to take in the joint. Clocks a HIPSTER with laptop hogging a large table with comfortable seats. Barry's eyes narrow.

20 OMITTED 20

21 INT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY 21

The Barista serves Morris and Barry their drinks. Departs.

Barry eyes the tall glass of hot chocolate stuffed with pink marshmallows, squirted with whipped cream, sprinkled with cinnamon, with three monolithic chocolate flakes inserted.

BARRY

Unless I'm also suffering from dementia, didn't you order peppermint tea?

Morris hands Barry his Coke.

MORRIS

Changed mi mind. Surely you of all people can appreciate that?!

Morris flashes a faux smile. Barry anxiously checks his watch for the time. Then:

BARRY

Seeing as you on the slippery slope downwards, have some rum in that. Overproof: it-a blow your balls off.

Morris doesn't respond - too busy trying to deduce how best to navigate drinking such an elaborate concoction.

Barry steals one of the chocolate flakes. Stealthily pretends to perform fellatio on it. Morris chuckles as Barry, retrieves his silver hip flask from his inside jacket pocket.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Sooner or later you goin' to succumb, so save yourself the aggravation.

Morris tries to act affronted for a moment, but when Barry starts to pour the golden elixir into Morris' drink, he makes no effort to try and stop him.

As it makes its way down the hot liquid, there is a palpable sizzle. When Barry pours it into his coke, there is a hiss.

They both take their respective sips, smile as it hits the spot and relaxes their limbs, freeing them of the stress of the past two days.

BARRY (CONT'D)

Nothing rum can't make better. It guaranteed to dissolve the stressment. And facilitate the forgive-ment.

Morris closes his eyes as he plunges a long spoon into his drink and scoops up some rum-soaked cream.

21A

EXT. TEA BUILDING - DAY

21A

Maxine exits the building, clutching her folder and looking jubilant.

She pulls out her phone to answer a text from a LOLA: "Good luck with the pitch, gril!" Maxine replies: "OMG, babe! I killed it!!!!!"

22

EXT. REDCHURCH STREET / ALLEY - DAY

22

Maxine, riding high off the back of her meeting, is passing an alley when she spots FOUR LADS, laughing as they try and boost TWO RENTAL E-BIKES. We HEAR THE CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

MAXINE

Daniel?!

Daniel, in suit and school tie, swiftly drops his smile and stops pushing the bike, regards his auntie with surprise.

DANIEL

Auntie Max. What're you doing here?

MAXINE

Funny. Was about to ask you the same.

DANIEL'S FRIENDS - **RAFF, TIM & LOUIS** (who we'll meet again in **Ep 6**) snicker behind him. They are privileged, wealthy, Andrew Tate enthusiasts - playing at being bad. But what makes them dangerous is they have the money to pay their way out of trouble. Unlike Daniel, who they are using purely for his racial cachet. They nudge him, rib his well-spokeness with Maxine and clear unease at running into her.

TIM

(forced/unnatural)

Ayo, D, who the buff ting?

MAXINE

Buff ting? Young man, what you lack in manners, you make up for in taste. But don't be out here acting like the only estate you grew up on didn't have a valet, okay?!

Maxine throws Tim a look as Louis and Raff burst out laughing. Maxine guides Daniel off to the side.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Why aren't you at school?

DANIEL

Half-day. Teacher training.

MAXINE

Um-hm. Don't let this youthful complexion fool you.

Daniel frowns.

DANIEL

God, you sound like Mum.

Maxine recoils, greatly hurt by such an insult.

MAXINE

Oi! What's with you Walker men and your shoddy behaviour recently?

Daniel shrugs.

DANIEL

Perhaps it's symptomatic of being an oppressed minority.

MAXINE

You're just lucky I'm saving today's ass kicking for Grandy and not you! The same Grandy who pays your school fees, Mr Half Day.

DANIEL

And if Mum's to be believed, your whole lifestyle.

Daniel, very aware he's now perhaps overstepped the mark.

MAXINE

(defiantly)

Yeah. Well. Not for much longer.

23

INT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY

23

Barry watches as a tipsy Morris drains the last of his hot chocolate and starts scooping out the dregs at the bottom.

BARRY

Feeling better?

MORRIS

Much better, thank you, Mr Walker. Teetotalism is like bereavement. You remember all of the good times you had with a glass of something. Such good times.

BARRY

Even better times ahead. Promise.

They turn to face one another, both beaming the slightly idiotic, blurry smile of those now tanked up.

BARRY (CONT'D)

I still thinking 'bout Miami. Fuh true. Once mi told Carmel it over.

MORRIS
Run away together?

BARRY
A "retreat". Just you, me, the sun
and the sea for a likkle bit.

MORRIS
And how we goin' get there? Don't
tell me you finally goin' fly.

BARRY
For you, Boss? Maybe... maybe.

Barry taps his hand three times on the table. Morris responds with two of his own.

MORRIS
We spoke of our own place once,
remember?

BARRY
I do.

MORRIS
Somewhere we don't have to hide
anymore. Somewhere-

BARRY
We can walk around naked.

Morris chuckles.

MORRIS
Yes, that too. When we don't have
guests. Maxine, Donna and Daniel
can visit - come to tea.

Barry is less sure about this. Morris registers.

MORRIS (CONT'D)
They're going to know, Barry.

BARRY
Not if we get a two bedroom place,
they won't.

Before Morris has a chance to reply, Barry looks over to see Maxine wending her modelesque way towards them, stilettos sparking the floor.

Barry tries his best to straighten himself up as Maxine clocks him, erasing a flash of irritation when she spots he's not alone.

She makes a beeline for Morris, whips off her shades and kisses him on both cheeks.

MAXINE

(sarcastic)

How lovely to see you, Uncle Morris. It's been ages. I'm so pleased you could come too.

BARRY (V.O.)

The way that girl has mastered the Englishman's use of irony is remarkable.

MORRIS

Maxie. How yuh do?

Barry, annoyed, stands and takes his drink over to the table where the Hipster sits. The Hipster looks up at Barry and then at Morris and Maxine approaching. Annoyed, he collects up his stuff and leaves. Barry stretches, triumphantly.

Maxine deliberately sits down opposite Morris, her expression clouds as she regards Barry.

MAXINE

I am so *pissed off* with you, Dad!

Throughout the cafe, ears cock, eyes turn askance.

BARRY

Watch out folks, soap opera just come to Shaman Dalston. Come again?

MAXINE

Oh, you heard me!

They lock eyes. Morris, holding the last of his chocolate flakes to his lips, tries to act as an intermediary.

MORRIS

Maxie, you letting yourself down. Treat your father with respect, nah.

BARRY (V.O.)

Yes, Morris. You go-wan. Tell her.

MAXINE

Respect? Hmm, yeah, let's talk about respect then, shall we?

Maxine pauses as she starts to rummage through her expensive Gucci handbag. Barry and Morris share a look of bemusement as they wait for her to continue.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Just a moment. I'm so angry I forgot to eat.

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Got to chuck something down quickly
or I'll faint. Look at me, I'm
shaking and in no fit state to
conversate.

BARRY (V.O.)

Con-Ver-sate.

MORRIS

(rising)

Let me get you something to eat. A
sandwich?

BARRY

Uh-uh. She allergic, apparently.
After a lifetime of eating bread.

MAXINE

No, I'm fine, Uncle Morris. I've
already bought something.

She takes out a LIQUID LUNCH PROTEIN DRINK (think Huel).

BARRY

That's your lunch?

MAXINE

(defensive)

What?

24

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1994

24

Carmel and Barry sit at the kitchen with YOUNG MAXINE (7).
The detritus of an impressive dinner on the table, but Young
Maxine's plate is untouched.

YOUNG MAXINE

What? I'm not hungry.

Carmel is exasperated.

BARRY

Listen, if the girl say she nah
hungry, she nah hungry.

CARMEL

You're not helping! She's seven. It
don't matter what she say. I'm her
mother, and I don't appreciate
being disobeyed like that.

Young Maxine gets down from the table and runs off. Barry
sighs.

BARRY

I'll have a word with her.

CARMEL

Don't do me no favours, Barry, cos
you certainly ain't doing Maxine
none. You may think you are, but
you ain't.

25

INT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY

25

Back on Barry quietly watching Maxine finish her meagre meal.

MAXINE

That's better.

BARRY

Think maybe now we can get to it?
(off her look)
Why you've summoned me?

MAXINE

Oh we're gonna get to it alright.
Um, Uncle Morris, could you give us
a moment? It won't take long.

Morris starts to fidget, looks to Barry who taps his knee.

BARRY

Morris, stay.

Morris settles back down.

Annoyed, Maxine locks eyes with her father again.

MAXINE

Would it have killed you to have
gone to Antigua with Mum!

Barry tenses. Glares.

BARRY

What you know of Antigua?

MAXINE

I know you haven't been back in God
knows how long. Since I've been
alive at least. Mum always took us.

BARRY

Um-hm, for good reason. Then maybe
you should've gone again with her.

MAXINE

She didn't ask me, she asked you!

Barry's jaw tightens.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

You've gone too far this time, Dad.
 She can't take any more of your sh -
 shenanigans. I mean, coming home
 pissed in the middle of the night
 when you should be tucked up at a
 reasonable hour with a mug of
 Horlicks...

*

BARRY (V.O.)

Facetey little wretch.

MAXINE

Or something stronger, whatevs.

BARRY

Maxine, you love the fact that I
 don't act like some old codger with
 one foot in the grave, so don't
 give me any of that Horlicks crap.

Maxine goes to interject, but Barry isn't finished.

BARRY (CONT'D)

And you been out on the lash nuff
 times with me and Morris, so even
 you don't believe what you saying.

MAXINE

Excuse me? Don't presume to-

BARRY

Listen to me good: it is true, I am
 a sinner and a drinker and as the
 porter says to Macbeth, "Faith,
 Sir, we were carousing to the
 second cock."

Morris splutters so much he practically spits out his drink.

MAXINE

Dad, this is serious. I've never
 heard her this upset before and if
 you're not careful-

*

BARRY

Your mother should get out more,
 which would stop her obsessing
 about my business and trying to
 contravene my basic Human Right.
 Look at her: church-shops-doctors-
 funerals. I remember she used to
 socialise with her work friends.
 Nice women.

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

Carmel had plenty to chat about in those days, because she was not banging the Bible over her head and mine. She even bothered with her appearance.

*

A beat.

*

BARRY (CONT'D)

Maxine, as one of the fellas said in King Lear, "I am too old to learn."

MAXINE

Which is unfortunate, as Mum isn't too old to be hurt. Neither am I. Ever consider how this affects me, or Donna? Seeing our parents this way?

The pain is evident on her face. It pains Barry to see.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

You know what Mum thinks the problem is? You don't like women.

Barry and Morris freeze as they share a worried look.

BARRY

Uh-oh! What?

MAXINE

You know, like, you're a... misogynist.

Barry lets out an indiscernible sigh of relief as he takes in his judgemental daughter for a moment.

BARRY

Not so long ago you were throwing up baby sick all over me. On what grounds am I a misogynist? Pray tell? I remember wiping your mushy green poo like it was yesterday.

MAXINE

The way you treat her friends. Her!

BARRY

Wiping the snot from your nose, tears from your eyes. I don't like her friends. At least not two of them. Teaching you how to walk, catching you when you fell.

MAXINE

You should still make the effort to
be nice.

BARRY

*You sucked your thumb until you
were nine. I've held my tongue over
half a century. From 0 to 12 I was
your God!*

Barry takes a lug of his liquid medicine.

MAXINE

You are this close to losing her.
And breaking our family apart!

Morris observes as the irony of this isn't lost on Barry,
processing his daughter's words intently.

BARRY

*She'd already be lost to me if it
wasn't for you, Maxie. I don't have
to justify myself to you, so go
phone your mother, duty done, you
spoke to me. At me.*

Tense silence. Maxine's mien is almost infantile.

MAXINE

I just want to see you and Mum
happy.

BARRY

We been married fifty years!
There's bound to be ups and downs.

MAXINE

So make things right. Because,
honestly, I don't think I could
forgive you if you don't!

Wounded, Barry's heart breaks a little.

BARRY

Fine, I'll call her to apologise,
if it'll make you happy.

Morris shoots Barry a look. Just then Maxine's mobile starts
doing a Saint Vitus' dance on the table.

MAXINE

(answering)

Hello? Oh, yes, *hullo!*
(then mouthing)
Just a sec. Sorreeee.

Maxine stands and moves off for some privacy. Barry watches her go, lost in thought. Turns to Morris - who is looking at him, arms folded.

BARRY

Ever think if she had kids of her own she'd stop acting like one?

MORRIS

Maybe. But then what man could ever measure up to you, Barry?

They share a look as Barry splashes them more liquor.

26

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1994

26

Barry, just returned from his work at the car plant, stands before a Young Maxine (7) swamped underneath one of his best suits and shirts, complete with braces and a felt tip beard.

Young Maxine, fearing the worst, looks up at her father staring down at her. His face stern. He beckons her over. On the brink of tears, she reluctantly approaches. He kneels down beside her, examines her new look closely, tutting his disapproval before taking off his hat and placing it on her head.

BARRY

There. That's better, ehn? Always complete the look. And remember, "You're the star of the show."

She breaks into a smile as Barry winks and pinches her cheek.

27

EXT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY

27

Maxine is outside on the phone, smiling in anticipation.

MAXINE

I wasn't expecting to hear from you so soon... Yes, I really enjoyed meeting you all today too... Oh!

(her face falls)

Are you sure? I could bring my proposal back in and... Oh, I see... but, like, was that a group decision or... unanimous, oh okay. Well... yes... no, thank you for your time. Thank you. Bye.

*

Maxine hangs up. Numb for a moment. Not yet willing to allow in the biting disappointment until...

she balls up her fists and lets out a silent scream - swiftly persuading an approaching couple to seek their coffee from elsewhere.

She takes a moment to compose herself. An idea starts to formulate. Maxine flicks her red band against her skin. *

28

INT. SHAMAN CAFE - MINUTES LATER

28

Barry fretfully watches Maxine return to the table.

BARRY

Maxie, my lovely daughter, for all your performance of outrage, me and you get on too well for you to strip me of my fatherhood and banish me to exile, don't we?

He pulls a face. Maxine, despite herself, shares a chuckle with her dad.

BARRY (CONT'D)

See.

MAXINE

Seriously, Dad, I'm not in the mood. Not today.

Morris clocks that they need a moment.

MORRIS

Let me get yuh some more drinks.

Morris departs.

BARRY

Rum?

*

Barry waves his hip flask in front of her as if he's waving a hypnotist's pendulum.

MAXINE

Go on then, just a splash. It's been that kind of day.

Barry starts to pour some into Maxine's empty water glass.

Maxine reacts as she takes a sip.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Whoa, it's strong.

BARRY

Like your old man. Like you! So come on, what's troubling you?

MAXINE

You mean besides your best attempts
to tear the family apart?

BARRY

Yes, besides that. Go on.

Maxine covertly flicks her red band against her skin again.

MAXINE

Well, since you ask - there is
something else I'd like talk to you
about.

*

Barry can't help but notice Maxine's sly expression.

BARRY

The floor is yours, my dear.

MAXINE

You know it's a jungle out there in
the fashion world, Dad. A jungle.

BARRY

You've told me enough times.

MAXINE

I've only styled two shoots in the
past month, one of which was in
Skegness. And I'm up to my ears in
debt because schmoozing with the
fashion crowd bloody well doesn't
come cheap unless you've got a
Russian oligarch for a boyfriend,
which, don't remind me, I haven't.

BARRY (V.O.)

Boy, she getting pissed quickly.

MAXINE

And if I don't mingle, the work
dries up completely. And I'll be
really past it soon. Actually I am
past it. I've been twenty-five for
ten years already.

Maxine polishes off her rum.

BARRY (V.O.)

*Must be thirsty with all this
ranting.*

Morris returns with the drinks. Barry slips more rum into
each cup.

MAXINE

When I left Saint Martins I thought
the world would fall at my feet.

(MORE)

MAXINE (CONT'D)

You always told me I could do anything. Now look at me. Sometimes I feel like ending it all, *really*.

*

*

Barry scrapes back his chair to stretch his legs.

BARRY

Morris, perhaps we can advise my daughter on the options. Poison? Drowning? Asphyxiation? What sayest thou?

MORRIS

Don't mind your father. You and I both know he thinks he's funny. My advice is do the thing you love; otherwise you reach my age and you swimming in a sea of regrets.

BARRY (V.O.)

Um-hm. And you were supposed to be his lifeboat, Barry.

Morris takes another sip of his rum.

MORRIS

Anyone know about a wasted life? I do.

BARRY

Morris, stop it, man. Be positive like I always telling you. *Stay afloat. Lifeboat soon come.*

MAXINE

Yes, don't be down on yourself, Uncle Morris.

MORRIS

Some people don't get a chance at life, Maxie, let alone live it how they want. If the news earlier about young JJ taught me anything, it's that.

Morris locks eyes with Barry for a charged, reflective beat.

MAXINE

You're so right, Uncle Morris. I've got to fulfill my dreams... so...

Daddy...

(delving into her bag)

I was wondering if you would help me with a little something?

*

Maxine takes out the real tapestry folder from the pitch meeting, extracting fancy art-paper drawings that she strokes tenderly with her elegant, fluorescent, be-taloned fingers.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

I've come up with something exceptional. An idea for my first fashion collection and you are the first humans on earth to see these - well, almost.

Maxine takes a deep breath. Nervous and vulnerable. Almost a little girl again as she hands her work over for judgement.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

So... what do you think?

29

INT. SHAMAN CAFE - BATHROOM - DAY

29

Barry and Morris are at the urinals of a small bathroom.

MORRIS

If nothing, she's talented.

BARRY

She's deluded. I mean, "an imaginative exploration of the relationship between fashion, furniture, friendship and family?"

MORRIS

(tongue in cheek)
Perhaps she an innovator.

BARRY

Piss-taker more like with her "Men's shoes that double as a dustbin and brush."

MORRIS

Helpful, for yuh mind always in the gutter.

BARRY

"I want you to model too, Dad"

Morris chuckles as Barry finishes up and heads for the sink.

MORRIS

What happened to watering your seed?

BARRY

I'm starting to think over-watering's just as bad. I always made Maxine feel her opinions was important.

(MORE)

BARRY (CONT'D)

I never slaughtered my child in an argument. I knew the rest of the world might do that to her, but not me, not her father.

Barry looks at his reflection in the mirror - a YOUNG MAXINE now in his arms, smiling, in his hat and clothes -

30

INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - 1994

30

- back to the scene of Barry and Young Maxine, as he spins her around and she shrieks for joy.

31

INT. SHAMAN CAFE - BATHROOM - DAY

31

Back on Barry, staring at his reflection - alone once more.

BARRY

Now I see, the world did do it to her. It said, "You, my dear, are not the star of our show."

Morris joins Barry at the sink, taking over the flow of water as Barry starts to slowly dry his hands.

MORRIS

So what yuh goin' do?

Barry is conspicuous in his silence. Morris' demeanour changes - no longer amused, but concerned.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

You can't seriously be considering investing in her business? It not just her concept that nonsensical! Her numbers are too!

BARRY

It was you who encouraged her with all-a that one life nonsense.

Morris can't believe what he's hearing.

MORRIS

Listen, I too was once a man of means, remember?! I had it all. Odette, the boys, the house. But freedom... it comes at a cost!

BARRY

So what yuh want me fi do? Not help her while I still can?

Morris considers, then gently shakes his head.

BARRY (CONT'D)

It don't change anything, spar. I
is still goin' leave Carmel. I am.

MORRIS

What about Maxine?

BARRY

What about her?

MORRIS

You really willing to break her
heart in the process, or you always
goin' surrender to her?!

We stay on Barry as the enormity hangs over him.

32

INT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY

32

Barry and Morris have rejoined an anxiously waiting Maxine at the table. Morris is noticeably more frustrated.

BARRY

Listen, Maxine, I go chew on it.

Maxine's face is a rollercoaster of emotion: hope, fear, excitement, pleading, the expectation of disappointment...

BARRY (CONT'D)

Okay, okay... let we sit down, put
our great minds together, one for
business, one for creativity, and
work out some logistics.

Annoyed, Morris reacts as Maxine jumps up and hugs Barry.

MAXINE

Great, thank you, daddy. I'm
thinking of calling it House of
Walker. A sort of homage to you.

BARRY

Cute.

MAXINE

I know, right. And thank you Uncle
Morris. I know you probably put in
a good word or two for me!

Maxine, barely able to control her excitement, hugs Morris,
who regards Barry - smiling uneasily.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

Any more rum going?

BARRY

Walker's Drinking Establishment
just run out of stock. Let us
procure some more.

MAXINE

The Looking Glass does the best
Blackberry Mojitos. We'll cab it.

Maxine pulls out a bulging make-up bag and starts to apply
bright red lipstick in a gold hand mirror.

MORRIS

(exasperated)
Mojitos? Taxi? Who paying?

33

EXT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY

33

Barry and Morris, propping a tipsy Maxine up as they leave.

MAXINE

Tomorrow's going to have to be one
serious detox.

Barry scans for a taxi to flag down. Maxine looks around with
a Hollywood-esque triumph-over-adversity gleam in her eyes.

MAXINE (CONT'D)

From this very spot the House of
Walker shall spread out across the
globe to Fifth Avenue, Champs-
Élysées-

*
*
*

MORRIS

Kingsland High Road.

*

MAXINE

Shuddup.

Maxine goes to slap Morris' arm but misses and suddenly sways
backwards off the kerb into the road. Barry grabs her.

BARRY

See, that's the problem when your
diet consists mainly of organic
air.

Barry pins one of Maxine's arms to him, while Morris holds
the other. Her lipstick is now smudged, affording her a
distinct childlike air as she looks up at her father as
though he truly is her saviour once more.

MAXINE

I sense my second life is just
beginning.

Barry and Morris share a charged look.

34 **INT. THE WALKER RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - 1988** 34

A flicker of a memory: Barry holding a NEWBORN MAXINE on his chest. Skin to skin. The start of their symbiotic love.

35 **EXT. SHAMAN CAFE - DAY** 35

Back on Barry, torn, his lover to one side, his drunk daughter in his arms, looking at him with the love and admiration he's craved his whole life as she declares-

MAXINE

There is a god, and he's called my daddy.

Barry, conflicted, hails a TAXI as we hold on Maxine's red elasticated band... broken and discarded on the road as the TAXI'S WHEELS run over it.

END OF EPISODE.