

The Life & Adventures of Nick Nickleby

by

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Part One

SALMON AMENDMENTS 13.07.12

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1

EXT. FIELDS - DAY 1 - 09:00

1

A rural idyll - rolling green fields, grazing herds, sunlight glinting through trees, a rustic farmhouse. 'Higher Moor Farm'. Signpost lovingly hand-painted. A home.

NOGGS (V.O.)

There once lived a man called Nicholas Nickleby. He was a good man. A family man and a farmer, with a loving wife, two loving children and a modest property in the county of Devonshire. Nicholas Nickleby had it all. Then he lost it.

In a meadow close by the farmhouse, beneath a great tree, is an open grave.

On the headstone, freshly carved: 'Nicholas Nickleby. Beloved husband and father.'

CUT TO:

2

INT. NICKLEBY'S FARM, MR & MRS NICKLEBY'S ROOM - DAY 1 - 09:15

2

NICK NICKLEBY, 18, a golden boy, but deathly pale today.

He opens his dad's wardrobe, looks inside at the worn-out lumberjack shirts and scruffy cords. Mud-caked boots are slung at the bottom, alongside a battered old briefcase.

At the end of the rail, Nick finds a dusty suit cover.

He takes it out, unzips it. Inside is a dated black suit, with shirt and tie. His dad's funeral suit.

Nick takes a moment, steels himself, then puts it on.

NOGGS (V.O.)

His son, Nick, took after him in many ways. A good boy with a warm young heart, kind and true.

Nick looks for the buttons on his shirt cuffs, but, after some contortion, he finds only holes for cuff-links.

NOGGS (V.O.)

Bit of a temper, mind you.

Frustrated, Nick slams out of the room.

CUT TO:

3

EXT. FIELD - DAY 1 - 10:00

3

Nick stands at the graveside with his mother, MRS NICKLEBY, his sister, KAT, and the NS MOURNERS.

Kat is 17, mid-rebellion, battling her natural beauty with baggy tops, combats and boots. She is losing the battle. Her black eye make-up is tear-smudged.

Mrs Nickleby is in her 40s, but clings to her 1980s heyday, her black attire all Dynasty shoulder-pads and Princess Di netted hat. Her weeping is far from Princess Di demure.

Nick puts his arms around them both, draws them close.

NOGGS (V.O.)

Nick thought he was ready to step up and guide the family through their loss.

The sleeve of Nick's suit jacket rides up to reveal his shirt cuff, secured by a pink glittery hair clip.

Kat notices and nudges her brother. He quickly corrects it before Mrs Nickleby notices. Nick and Kat share a sad smile - they'll get through this together.

NOGGS

But he didn't yet know just how much they had lost. And how his life was going to change, forever.

TITLE: 'The Life and Adventures of Nick Nickleby'

MUSIC and TITLES.

CUT TO:

4

EXT. FIELD - DAY 1 - 10:30

4

The service has ended. The Nicklebys lead the way, walking back to the farm. One of the mourners, the ancient DOCTOR GODFREY BRIGHTSIDE, muses to Mrs Nickleby.

DOCTOR

He was a good man, Mrs Nickleby.

MRS NICKLEBY

He was a saint, doctor. A saint. But he worked too hard. I kept telling him. Stress is a killer.

The Doctor is about to console her, but she keeps on.

MRS NICKLEBY (CONT'D)
I kept on and on - and on at him,
but he wouldn't listen and now
look. The stubborn old fool.

Kat frowns, is going to say something, but Nick stays her.

MRS NICKLEBY (CONT'D)
What am I going to do without
him?

Mrs Nickleby dissolves into fresh tears. Nick rallies.

NICK
It's all right, mum. Everything's
going to be all right.

A grubby van screeches past on the driveway, missing them
by inches. It swerves to a stop by the farmhouse door.

On the side of the van: Swift Recovery Bailiff Services.

CUT TO:

5 INT. NICKLEBY'S FARM, KITCHEN - DAY 1 - 11:00 5

The BAILIFFS take everything, including the funeral buffet,
cramming their mouths with cocktail sausages as they go.

Nick is at the door, remonstrating with an NS BAILIFF.

On the table, the briefcase from the wardrobe lies open,
spilling red bills, final demands, a repossession order.

Around the table, the Doctor sits with the sobbing Mrs
Nickleby. Kat picks at her black nail varnish.

Nick gives up and comes back to the table, bewildered.

NICK
He says it's too late. They're
putting the farm up for sale.

Mrs Nickleby is so stunned she forgets to sob. Kat looks
up, shocked.

KAT
They can't. Tell him they can't.

NICK
We have to pay up or get out.
Today.

MRS NICKLEBY
It must be some terrible mistake.

KAT

Can't we talk to the bank?

NICK

They're not going to help us. Dad was in debt. Something about the stock market. He's lost everything.

MRS NICKLEBY

How would he have done that? He couldn't use the hole-in-the-wall without getting his card eaten. He was a good man, but he was clueless. Clueless.

Fresh floods of tears. The Doctor hands her a tissue. Mrs Nickleby pauses in her grief to appreciate the texture.

MRS NICKLEBY

Ooh, these are nice.

DOCTOR

It's a special balsam.

Mrs Nickleby inspects the packet, and then takes the lot.

KAT

There must be something we can do.

Again she looks to Nick. He racks his brains, desperate.

NICK

We don't know anyone with that kind of money.

DOCTOR

Well... There's always Ralph.

Beat. Nick and Kat are blank, trying to place the name.

KAT

Ralph who?

DOCTOR

Your uncle. I know your father and he had their differences. But still, he is family.

MRS NICKLEBY

I've never even met the man. Your dad invited him to our wedding, and to your christenings, and to your gran and grandad's funerals. But he was always too busy. (A LITTLE AWED) He's in *London*.

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Nick's brain is ticking now. Could this be the answer?

NICK
Does he know that dad's died?

MRS NICKLEBY
(shakes head, tearful)
I've been a bit busy too.

DOCTOR
I believe he's done very well for
himself in the City.

MRS NICKLEBY
I don't even have his number.

Her lip wobbles. Nick looks around the ransacked room.

A bailiff leans in the doorway, jangles the door-keys,
impatient to lock them out.

NICK
Don't worry, mum. I'll find it.

On Nick, taking charge.

CUT TO:

6

EXT. FIELD - DAY 1 - 11:50

6

Nick is down by the grave, beneath the tree. He has a
rucksack on his back and is making a call on his mobile.

NOGGS (O.S.)
This is the answering service for
Ralph Nickleby Associates. Please
leave a message after the tone.

A long bleep.

NICK
Hi there, this is Mr Nickleby's
nephew, Nick. I need to speak to
him - about my dad - his brother.
I - I'm coming to London, today.

Nick hangs up, choked. He touches the headstone, regretful.

NICK (CONT'D)
I'll be back, dad.

A beep - he turns, sees a cab drawing up to the farmhouse.

CUT TO:

7

EXT. NICKLEBY'S FARM - DAY 1 - 11.55

7

The front door is blocked with a web of repossession tape.

Mrs Nickleby is in the backseat of the cab, sobbing her way through the rest of the balsam tissues. Kat sits beside her, withdrawn. Earphones in, angry music blasting out.

Nick gets in the front seat, shuts the door. He takes one last look around, heartbroken, then turns to the NS DRIVER.

NICK

Let's go.

On Nick, rising to the challenge.

CUT TO:

8

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 14:30

8

RALPH NICKLEBY, charming veneer, but something icy beneath. He's approaching 60, yet looks at least ten years younger thanks to the best of everything that money can buy.

He looks down from his window, surveys his kingdom below.

NOGGS (V.O.)

Ralph Nickleby was very different to his brother. He wasn't a good man, a family man, or a farmer. Few people knew exactly what Ralph Nickleby did for a living. But he enjoyed the reputation of being immensely rich.

Ralph focuses on something in his reflection, by his cold, restless eye. A tiny scar. Or is it the wrinkles around it that trouble him?

He smooths the skin with his finger.

NOGGS (V.O.)

I knew him better than anyone else. Unfortunately.

NEWMAN NOGGS enters. He is in his 40s, but looks at least ten years older thanks to the worst booze that money can buy. An ex-military hardman gone to seed.

NOGGS

Verisopht's here.

RALPH

The *Right Honourable* Jeremy Verisopht MP. Show the man a little respect, Noggs.

NOGGS

Shall I show him in?

Ralph considers, every move in this chess game.

RALPH
No. Let him wait.

On Ralph, playing to win.

CUT TO:

9 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - CONTINUOUS 9

JEREMY VERISOPHT - a silver spoon fop whose bad habits have left him a tad cash poor - waits on the leather sofa, anxious, his reddened nostrils twitching. Beside him on the sofa is a House of Commons embossed dossier.

He distracts himself with a newspaper. The front page headline is: 'Russian Oligarch in Teen Sex Scandal' with a photo of a gross, leering, billionaire gent.

As Noggs enters, Verisopht stands, ready to go in.

NOGGS
He's busy. You want a drink?

VERISOPHT
No, thank you.

Verisopht sits back down, even more anxious. Noggs opens a drawer in his desk, takes out a hipflask.

NOGGS
You sure?

He offers it. Verisopht hides behind the newspaper.

Noggs is about to take a swig when he sees a light flashing on his phone. He picks up the phone, presses a button, and listens... to Nick's answerphone message.

NICK (O.S.)
Hi there, this is Mr Nickleby's nephew, Nick... I need to speak to him - about my dad.

On Noggs, perturbed.

CUT TO:

10 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 14:40 10

Ralph is on his laptop, biding his time, when Noggs enters.

RALPH
I'm still busy.

NOGGS
Had a message from Nick Nickleby.

Ralph's mood lightens - he'd completely forgotten.

RALPH
Is he bankrupt yet?

NOGGS
Not your brother. Message is from
his son.

Ralph is thrown for a moment, but only for a moment.

RALPH
What does he want?

NOGGS
He's coming to see you. Sounded
upset.

RALPH
My brother must be too
embarrassed to face me.

He's amused. Noggs isn't.

NOGGS
Must've thought he could trust
your advice. Him being your
brother and all.

RALPH
Why would I wave a magic wand and
make his debts go away? When I
could have a little fun instead.

NOGGS
What should I tell the kid?

RALPH
I'm busy. Get rid of him.

Verisopht interrupts, poking his head in.

VERISOPHT
Ralph - sorry - there's a vote in
the House at three -

Ralph snaps his laptop shut, turns on the chilly charm.

RALPH
I've got a couple of minutes.
Have a seat.

Noggs withdraws. Verisopht sits. As he puts the newspaper down, Ralph notices the headline.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Ah, Hawkovsky. I've heard he's a
first rate businessman.

VERISOPHT
Even I would run a mile from
Vladimir Hawkovsky. And you know
I'm not especially discerning.

Ralph smiles thinly, picks up the dossier.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Now, how is our bid coming along?

On Ralph, down to business.

CUT TO:

11 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - CONTINUOUS 11

Noggs settles in, about to have another swig, when MADDY BHRAY rushes in. She's 19, British-Asian, breathtakingly pretty in spite of her unflattering cleaner's overalls. As she talks, she gets cleaning equipment from a cupboard.

MADDY
Sorry I'm late, Mr Noggs.

NOGGS
Late *again*, Miss Bhray. In your
first week.

MADDY
Maia was up all night. But my
dad's looking after her now. I'll
make up for it, work late.

Noggs grunts, apparently unforgiving. Maddy heads towards Ralph's office with cleaning products.

NOGGS
I've done in there. Don't want to
upset Mr Nickleby, do we?

She realises - he's on her side after all. She smiles grateful, and heads out to do the loos.

As she exits, HAWKOVSKY sweeps in, the leering oligarch from the front pages, a man of vast wealth and appetites, with an ever-present black umbrella. He heads for Ralph's office.

Noggs is panicked, tries to head him off.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

Mr Hawkovsky. I didn't hear the
buzzer. Have you got an
appointment?

HAWKOVSKY

I do not need appointment. I do not need buzzer. Your boss needs my money.

Hawkovsky bats Noggs out of the way with the umbrella and strides towards the door to Ralph's office. Noggs thinks fast, dives in front of the door.

NOGGS

How about a drink first - vodka?

He holds out his hipflask.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

It's not the top stuff, but -

Hawkovsky takes a swig. He approves.

HAWKOVSKY

It is strong. Like grandmother used to make.

Noggs begins to usher Hawkovsky towards a side room.

NOGGS

There were some papers Mr Nickleby wanted you to look over...

On Noggs, that was close.

CUT TO:

12 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 14:50

12

Ralph focuses on what Verisopht is saying.

VERISOPHT

I've been working on the other committee members. If we could just award you the contract for the care homes now we would, but we have to be seen to be going through the process. Political cover and all that.

RALPH

But the committee is on-side? I'm paying you handsomely enough -

Verisopht flinches: the less said on that,...

VERISOPHT

The care homes are yours - as long as you have the capital in place?

RALPH

I told you, I have an investment partner lined up. He's highly respectable, but prefers to keep his good works anonymous.

A knowing smile. Verisopht understands, but is still nervous.

VERISOPHT

The less I know the better. I just want you to promise me it'll all look above board? The paperwork. People will be all over this. It's worth billions.

RALPH

I promise you, my honourable friend, it will all be as clean as the kitchen surfaces in my flagship care home.

(IN CASE OF ANY DOUBT)
Spotless.

On Ralph, so convincing.

CUT TO:

13 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - CORRIDOR NR RECEPTION - DAY 1 - 14:58~~3~~

Maddy comes out of the loo and is heading to the next one. Noggs comes out to see her, grim-faced.

NOGGS

Your dad just called.

MADDY

I told him never to call here. Except in ... emergencies.

Her blood runs cold as she takes in his expression.

Verisopht hurries past them, happy to get out of there.

NOGGS

Your daughter needs to go to hospital.

Maddy pulls off her rubber gloves, starts to pack up.

MADDY

I'm so sorry.

NOGGS

Me too.

She realises what he means, can't deal with it now, but -

MADDY

No, please. I need this job, Mr
Noggs. Just give me a chance.

NOGGS

Pastoral issues aren't our strong
point.

Back at reception, the door buzzer goes.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

You'd better go.

Noggs leaves Maddy as he goes to answer it. On Maddy, eyes
filling.

CUT TO:

14

EXT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:00

14

Nick, Kat, Mrs Nickleby and their suitcases await outside
Ralph's office, country mice in the big city. The building
is all period features, ostentatious, a forbidding door
with a brass plaque: 'Ralph Nickleby Associates'.

Nick presses the door buzzer again. There is crackling as
it connects.

NICK

Hello? It's Nick Nickleby.

The line goes dead. Strange.

Nick buzzes again.

NICK (CONT'D)

We're here to see Mr Nickleby.
About his brother.

NOGGS (O.S.)

He's busy.

The line goes dead again. Nick is frustrated. He buzzes
again, but gets ignored. Mrs Nickleby admires the plaque.

MRS NICKLEBY

Associates, Nick. You could be
one of those.

KAT

(rolls her eyes)
He can't even get us in the door.

MRS NICKLEBY

Nickleby and Nickleby. Ralph
Nickleby and Nephew.

The door opens - a moment of hope - then Maddy comes out and slams the door behind her. As she fumbles in a bag for her purse, Nick approaches.

NICK
Excuse me, do you work here?

Not a good question. She fights back the tears.

MADDY
No, I don't.

NICK
We need to see Ralph Nickleby. I don't suppose - (you can help?)

Maddy counts up the change in her purse as she hails a cab.

MADDY
I can't help you. Sorry.

Nick sees her upset, is concerned.

NICK
Are you all right?

A moment between them. But she has no time for such things. A cab pulls up.

MADDY
I've got to go.

She hurries to the cab window, turns on her sweetest smile.

MADDY (CONT'D)
Can you take us to Hackney for...
(COPPERING UP) three pound sixty-eight? It's an emergency.

The NS CABBIE is shaking his head, about to go, time-waster. Maddy is desperate. Nick touches her shoulder.

NICK
Here.

A scrumpled tenner from his pocket. His last. He offers it. She's still desperate, but wary.

MADDY
I don't even know you.

NICK
Nick Nickleby. (TO CABBIE) Will this get her to Hackney?

The Cabbie nods. Nick hands him the tenner. Maddy stares at Nick, touched. Another moment.

NICK
You'd better go.

MADDY
Thanks, Nick Nickleby.

A smile through her tears, before she speeds off. Nick watches her go. Kat rolls her eyes again.

KAT
When you've stopped trying to pull, we still need to get in.

NICK
(inspired)
Why don't you get us in, Kat?

He pushes the buzzer again.

NICK (CONT'D)
Say you've forgotten your bag.
Try to sound upset.

The line crackles. With Nick's encouragement, Kat sniffs.

KAT
I've forgotten my bag.

Crackle. Silence. Then a hum as the door is unlocked.

NICK
Wait here. I won't be long.

He opens the door and dashes inside. Success.

On Kat, left out.

CUT TO:

15 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:10

15

Hawkovsky has joined Ralph, lounging in the guest chair, holding forth.

HAWKOVSKY
Money is money. That is all there is in this world.

RALPH
The deal is happening, Vladimir, that's the main thing.

HAWKOVSKY
It may comfort these little people to think that there is clean and there is dirty. But money would comfort them more.

RALPH
So if you wouldn't mind signing
here?

A contract and pen. Hawkovsky smiles. Ralph tenses.

HAWKOVSKY
All in good time, my friend.

RALPH
We have agreed terms. The
committee meets on Friday.

HAWKOVSKY
Then I have time to - how do you
say? Sleep with it.

RALPH
You're getting the deal of the
century here, Vladimir. Better
than oil, gas. Old people will
never run out, never...

He sees the twinkle in Hawkovsky's eye.

RALPH (CONT'D)
I see. You are joking with me?

Hawkovsky booms with laughter, picks up the contract.

HAWKOVSKY
I love this country. Always in
such a hurry. Let me speak to my
lawyers. I will sign tomorrow.

RALPH
Thank you. And if you could avoid
any more underage... activities.
We don't want anything to risk
throwing this off course.

HAWKOVSKY
The papers pay these silly girls
to lie. Next time I will pay more
to keep them quiet.

The leer. On Ralph, satisfied.

CUT TO:

Noggs hunts for the bag. He gets down on his knees to hunt under the sofa. Nick opens the door stealthily, and heads in, hoping to make it to Ralph's office door undetected.

Without turning around, Noggs detects someone entering.

NOGGS

You sure you left it here?

Nick pauses. Should he run for it? That wouldn't be nice.

NICK

Sorry. That was a bit of a lie.

Noggs turns, glowering. Nick thinks he just has to explain.

NICK (CONT'D)

I have to see my uncle.

NOGGS

I told you already. He's busy.

NICK

Can't I wait? It's important.

NOGGS

He doesn't want to see you, or your dad.

(grasping his arm)
Get the message?

NICK

My dad's dead.

On the brink of throwing Nick out of the door, Noggs pauses, perturbed.

NOGGS

You what?

NICK

He died last week.

NOGGS

Sorry. I had no idea.

He realises he's still holding Nick. He lets go, holds out his hand instead.

NOGGS (CONT'D)

Newman Noggs, your uncle's...
associate.

Nick shakes his hand.

NICK

Good to meet you, Newman.
(beat, indicates)
Your tie's got a bit...

Askew. It always is, but Nick assumes it happened in the scuffle. Noggs doesn't follow. Nick reaches out, straightens it.

NICK

That's better.

NOGGS

Oh. Thanks.

Noggs can't remember the last time anyone cared enough to touch him. It's a tiny thing, but a big deal to him.

Nick tries again, heart felt.

NICK

I really need to see my uncle.

The door of Ralph's office opens and Hawkovsky sweeps out. He ignores Noggs and Nick and leaves.

Noggs can't bear Nick's hopeful face a moment longer.

NOGGS

You snuck in, okay? Nothing to do with me.

On Nick, grateful.

CUT TO:

17

EXT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - CONTINUOUS

17

Kat huddles on the wall, cold, and fed up of listening.

MRS NICKLEBY

Ralph Nickleby and *Son*. No one's going to quibble. Your dad would have been so proud.

Kat goes to the front door, intending to try again, when a figure looms in the doorway - Hawkovsky. Kat takes a step back, intimidated. Hawkovsky stays blocking the doorway, looking at her, intrigued.

HAWKOVSKY

You have business with Mr Nickleby?

Kat is thrown for a moment, is she going to get in trouble?

KAT

Um. Yeah, hi, my name's Kat. Uh. It's just - my uncle's Ralph Nickleby and my brother - he's gone in to see him and left us out here, but I'm freezing my - uh, my toes off, so if you could just let us inside to wait... ? Please?

Her shy smile kills him.

HAWKOVSKY

For you, Katerina, I would do anything.

He holds the door open. Kat beams, proud of herself.

KAT

Thanks. Come on, mum.

Mrs Nickleby, snaps out of her reverie and enters with Kat.

On Hawkovsky, watching Kat. That leer twisting his lips.

CUT TO:

18

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:25

18

Ralph looks at Nick, who is fighting back his emotions. Ralph is surprised by the news, but not unpleasantly so.

RALPH
I hadn't expected him to die -
(QUICKLY ADDS)
so young.

His mind is already racing, assessing the possibilities.

NICK
I'm sorry. We should have told you
straightaway.

RALPH
Brothers die every day. The world
goes on.

Nick is unsettled, but assumes Ralph is trying to make him feel better. He pushes on.

NICK
They've taken everything, kicked us
out, put the farm up for sale.

RALPH
The farm is for sale?

A very interesting possibility.

NICK
We wondered if - we were hoping you
might - maybe lend us the money to
buy it back?

On Ralph, unpleasantly surprised.

CUT TO:

19 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - 15:28 19

Mrs Nickleby sits on the leather sofa, waiting. She picks up one of the newspapers, peers at Hawkovsky's leer. She frowns - it's kind of familiar, but she can't think why.

Kat pokes around reception, looking at the objects d'art, and at Noggs, surly behind his desk. He takes Maddy's CV (with photo) from the HR files and drops it in the bin.

He looks up, sees Kat watching him.

KAT

Do you think Nick'll be long?

On Noggs, not likely.

CUT TO:

20 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:30 20

Ralph is struggling to get his head around the proposal.

RALPH

Let me get this straight. Your father took my birthright and -

NICK

Took your what?

RALPH

I'm the elder brother. By rights, the farm should have come to me.

NICK

Wasn't it because he looked after gran and granddad?

Repelled by the boy's emotion, Ralph pushes on.

RALPH

Your father took my birthright, ran it into the ground and then lost it all on some idiotic gamble, and now you want me to loan you hundreds of thousands of pounds at zero interest with zero guarantee of ever being repaid?

NICK

I'm sorry, I know it's a lot to ask, but I've got my mum and my sister to look after. I'd do anything. (INSPIRED) I could work for you.

RALPH

Why should I hire you?

NICK

Because I'll work hard, and do a good job, and... we're *family*.

He smiles at Ralph, hopeful. Ralph snaps.

RALPH

A grinning skull. That's all you are, with your sob stories and your smiles. Whatever it takes to get a free ride.

NICK

(horrified)

It's not like that. I just thought - you wouldn't want to see us on the streets.

RALPH

Why would I care? I don't know you. I don't owe you anything. I made my own way in life. I suggest you do the same.

Nick is raging with indignation, but all out of arguments. With balled fists, he spits out the words.

NICK

I will make my own way. But I'll never end up like you. Goodbye, Uncle Ralph!

Nick slams out, the door banging hard behind him.

On Ralph, a rare flare of anger. No one does that to him.

CUT TO:

21

EXT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:40

21

Nick, Kat and their mum are back on the doorstep. Nick is still seething.

NICK

We don't need Uncle Ralph's help.

KAT

Er, yes we do. You should've let me talk to him.

MRS NICKLEBY

I did say we should have got returns. They were only a pound more for off-peak.

KAT

Returns to what?

She scowls at Nick - nice one, brother.

On Nick, reality dawning. He's let them down.

CUT TO:

22

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY 1 - 15:45

22

Ralph lets off steam to a secretly amused Noggs.

RALPH

Like me? He'll end up like his dad. Dead and buried.

NOGGS

He's gone now. Forget him.

But Ralph's mind is already racing ahead. Sweet revenge.

RALPH

Higher Moor Farm.

NOGGS

What?

RALPH

Our old home in Devon. Nice name for a care home, don't you think?

NOGGS

Won't you have enough of those when this deal goes through?

RALPH

This one would give me particular satisfaction. Find the agent and snap it up.

Ralph's mobile rings. Noggs withdraws. Ralph checks the caller ID: HAWKOVSKY. He answers, hopeful.

RALPH

Vladimir, what can I do for you?... (FROWNS) Kat who?... (FROWN DEEPENS) I'm not sure I understand.

On Ralph, uncomprehending.

CUT TO:

23 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, RECEPTION - DAY 1 - 15:50 23

Now Ralph, entering at speed from his office, fully comprehends and there's no time to lose. He's enlisting Noggs for the mission.

RALPH

We need to find the girl.

NOGGS

What girl?

RALPH

Kat Nickleby. The sister. Go and find her, bring her back.

His urgency is palpable, but Noggs stays put, shrugs.

NOGGS

They could be anywhere by now.

Ralph can't waste time. He grabs his coat from the stand.

RALPH

Come on.

On Noggs, what's all this about?

CUT TO:

24 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE, CORRIDOR - DAY 1 - 15:53 24

Ralph brings Noggs up to speed as they hurry out to search.

RALPH

We can put her up at the club for a couple of nights.

NOGGS

What about the boy and the mum?

RALPH

I don't care about them.

NOGGS

Don't you think Kat might?

An inconvenience. Ralph rethinks.

RALPH

We can deal with the mother. But
the boy's trouble. He has to go.

They've reached the exit. Ralph heads out. On Noggs,
following, worried.

CUT TO:

25

EXT. STREET - DAY 1 - 15:55

25

Ralph scans the street outside his office, turns to Noggs.

RALPH

You go that way. If you find her,
call me.

Ralph sets off in the other direction. Noggs pauses, then
follows Ralph, catches him up, troubled.

NOGGS

What you want her for?

RALPH

For Hawkovsky.

A beat. Noggs's horror.

NOGGS

She's your niece.

RALPH

This is business. I'm not going
to let my deal fall apart over
some girl.

Ralph freezes, sees Nick and his family on the corner,
zeroes in on Kat - the target.

CUT TO:

26

EXT. STREET - DAY 1 - 15:58

26

Nick listens as Ralph works his magic, turning it around. The women are sucked in. Nick is wary, harder to convince. Noggs hangs back, unable to look them in the eye.

RALPH

Grief affects us in different ways. I may have been a little harsh.

NICK

Just a bit.

RALPH

Your father was better at showing his feelings. He was a good man.

MRS NICKLEBY

He was a saint, Ralph. A saint.

She's pushing it, but Ralph grits his teeth, nods along.

RALPH

Hopefully my actions now will show you - I'm not all bad.

NICK

You'll help us get the farm back?

RALPH

I've made enquiries. I'm afraid the farm has already been sold.

Their hopes are raised and dashed in an instant.

NICK

Sold? Are you sure?

RALPH

Some local developer. I'm sorry.

KAT

It can't be. There must be a way...

Tears spring to her eyes. Mrs Nickleby begins to bawl. Ralph is alarmed, by the emotion, and the noise.

RALPH

Please, do not upset yourselves. I will pay off all your remaining debts and provide you with a new home. Here, in London.

Mrs Nickleby's bawl is silenced as she gasps.

MRS NICKLEBY
In *London*?

KAT

Really?

Kat is grateful, impressed. Even Nick is convinced now.

NICK

Thanks, Uncle Ralph. I'm sorry if I got you wrong before.

RALPH

My fault entirely. Which is why I wish to make it up to you, Nick.

Noggs looks up, looks at Ralph, worried what's in store. Ralph enjoys his worry, then enlightens them all.

RALPH (CONT'D)

I have decided to give you a job. At my flagship care home. Dotheolds Hall. In Yorkshire.

Noggs is relieved, but only a little. Nick is taken aback.

NICK

Yorkshire?

RALPH

It's a great opportunity. Start at the bottom, work your way up. You did promise to pay me back.

Nick remembers his promise, tries to act grateful.

NICK

Yeah. Yorkshire. That's... great.

RALPH

You can start tomorrow morning.

MRS NICKLEBY

Tomorrow?

KAT

We only just got here.

RALPH

It will be less of a wrench if you go now. Why don't you let Noggs take you to the coach station?

(to Kat and Mrs Nickleby)

We can take a cab straight to your new home.

Nick nods, reeling. Mrs Nickleby engulfs him in a big hug.

MRS NICKLEBY

I'm so proud of you, Nick. Nick
Nickleby & Associates.

She's on the verge of bawling again. Ralph swiftly hands her his pristine handkerchief. The quality distracts her.

MRS NICKLEBY (CONT'D)

Ooh, is this silk?

Ralph hails a cab. Nick and Kat are left together. Neither can handle another parting right now. They downplay it.

NICK

Look after mum. And yourself.

KAT

Who's going to look after you?

NICK

I'll be all right.

KAT

So will we.

NICK

Right then.

A moment of toughness. Then at the last second, they hug. Tight. Fast. As Kat pulls away, she sneaks something from her pocket, gives it to him. Maddy's CV.

NICK

How did you..?

KAT

I'm not completely useless.

She grins at him, toughening up again. He's grateful.

RALPH

Ms Nickleby?

He holds the cab door open for her. Mrs Nickleby is already inside. Kat gets in with Ralph. The door shuts and the cab pulls away.

Nick is left on the pavement with a taciturn Noggs. Nick tries to make the best of it.

NICK

So, what's it like, Dotheolds
Hall?

NOGGS

(beat)

We'd better get a move on.

Noggs sets off, pulling Nick's case, the least he can do for the poor lad.

On Nick, daunted, on the brink of his next adventure.

CUT TO:

27 INT. BHRAY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 1 - 20:00 27

Maddy enters, pushing a pram, a pharmacy bag in her hand. The child in the pram is unseen - sleeping under a blanket.

Maddy's dad, MR BHRAY, is on the sofa, a nebuliser beside him and a few used scratchcards scattered about. He's in his 50s, but aged by chronic illness and worry. He's deeply worried now. As is Maddy at the haggard sight of him.

MADDY

Dad. You should be asleep.

MR BHRAY

Is Maia all right?

MADDY

It's just an infection.

MR BHRAY

I shouldn't have called you.

MADDY

No, you did the right thing.
(BEAT) And now I'm going to do the right thing too.

She gets a battered laptop off a shelf. Mr Bh-ray panics.

MR BHRAY

No, Maddy. You promised not to go through with that.

*
*
*

MADDY

Things have changed.

*
*

MR BHRAY

I can look after Maia. I'm fine.

*

MADDY

No, you're not. And I don't want you getting worse any faster. I need to look after you both.

MR BHRAY

You don't have to sell yourself.

MADDY

It's a business arrangement.

MR BHRAY

It's an arranged marriage. I
never wanted this for you.

MADDY

He'll get his visa, we'll get
security for life.

MR BHRAY

It's not legal. If anyone finds out

-

*

MADDY

No one'll find out. It's perfect.

He knows she's kidding herself. His heart is breaking.

MR BHRAY

Maddy -

MADDY

I'm lucky to have this opportunity. The sooner it's done, the happier I'll be.

MR BHRAY

- I am sorry.

Now her heart is too, but she has to stay strong.

MADDY

Dad, please. Go to bed.

He gives up, retreats, sadly. Maddy opens the laptop, opens an e-mail from 'Mrs Khenwigs' entitled 'A Proposal'.

On Maddy, steeling herself.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL - DAY 2 - 08:00 28

Establishing shot of the home and a sign that reads:

'DOTHEOLDS HALL. CARING FOR YOUR PARENTS AS WE CARE FOR OUR OWN.'

CUT TO:

29 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DINING ROOM - DAY 2 - 08:10 29

Breakfast time. The woe-begotten RESIDENTS sit at a long table as gruel-like porridge is slopped into their plastic trays by a somnambulistic ASSISTANT.

MRS SMIKE, sits aside, at the window. She gazes out, unfocused, long accustomed to seeing the same thing every day and locking her thoughts up in her head. She wears a jumbled old man's suit, which looks unintentionally cool. She doesn't touch her breakfast.

Suddenly her eyes sharpen. She sees something different - someone - outside, at the gates. A golden boy, lost.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL - DAY 2 - CONTINUOUS 30

Nick is dazed and crumpled from a night on the coach. He looks around. It looks rather nice.

He sees a face at the window, Mrs Smike, watching him. She raises her hand, gives him a little wave.

Disarmed, Nick raises his hand, waves back. They smile.

Heartened, hopeful, he sets off down the drive.

CUT TO:

31 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DINING ROOM - DAY 2 - CONTINUOUS 31

Mrs Smike watches Nick approach with interest. She quickly reverts to her vacant look as WACKFORD SQUEERS enters

Squeers is a Little Britainish Hitler, rotund, balding, jazzy eye-patch, false tan set off by a pastel golfing sweater. He has a pile of residents' post, which he opens and reads aloud, with relish.

SQUEERS

Letters from home. Mr Cobbey?

MR COBBEY stirs into life, looks up, eager.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Your daughter sends her love.
She's sorry she's had to rent out
your flat and sell all your
furniture to pay for your keep
here, but hey ho, such is life.

Mr Cobbey's mouth drops open, agog. Squeers moves on.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Mrs Graymarsh? Your sister's
dead. She's left you a hundred
quid.

MRS GRAYWASH stares, disbelieving.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

It'll go towards the cost of
replacing that vase you broke.

SQUEERS
Wedding gift it was, to me and
the late Mrs Squeers.
Irreplaceable.

His eye moistens, sentimental.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
But a hundred quid is a start.

On Squeers, moving on.

CUT TO:

32 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, RECEPTION - DAY 2 - 08:20 32

The reception area is a different world, all soft tones and muzak. Nick walks in, looks around, impressed.

The reception desk is empty. Nick looks at a brochure. It all seems lovely. He sniffs the flowers. They're plastic. On Nick, less impressed.

CUT TO:

33 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DINING ROOM - DAY 2 - 08:30 33

Squeers reaches the final letter.

SQUEERS
Mrs Smike?

Mrs Smike turns to look, hopeful. Squeers laughs.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
Only kidding. Every time.

Mrs Smike turns back, disappointed. Squeers reads.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
Mr Bolder? Your son is... very
concerned... wants you to come
home at once...

Squeers frowns as he reads the rest to himself.

MR BOLDER quakes in anticipation.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
What have you been telling him?

BOLDER
Nothing. Honestly. I wouldn't.

Squeers comes up close, picks up Bolder's slop spoon, threatening - as much as you can be with a plastic spoon.

BOLDER

Just... when he saw me, he
thought I'd lost a bit of weight.

SQUEERS

Oh, did he? Well then, we'll have
do something about that, before
you're allowed to see him again.

He digs a big spoonful of slop, ready to feed Mr Bolder.

A plate crashes to the floor, distracting him. He swings
around, scanning for the culprit.

Mrs Smike stares out of the window. Her plate on the floor.

Squeers drops Mr Bolder's spoon. His target has shifted.

SQUEERS

Double-portions from now on. (TO
MRS SMIKE) And nothing for you.
(TO ASSISTANT) Put her in her
room. For the rest of the day.

Mrs Smike glances at Mr Bolder. He's grateful, apologetic.
The briefest twinkle in her eye, letting him off the hook.
She doesn't mind. It was worth it.

CUT TO:

34

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, RECEPTION - DAY 2 - 08:45

34

Nick is getting impatient. He goes behind the desk, looks for
some way to summon assistance. It's just a mess of trashy
magazines, nail varnishes and doodles.

FRANNIE SQUEERS enters from within, 19 years of pig ignorance
and pig appetite zipped into a too-tight tracksuit. She stops
dead, fag halfway to her mouth. She has seen Nick and is
smitten. Frannie makes sure she looks her best, sticks the
fag behind her ear, and approaches.

FRANNIE

May I help you, sir?

Her smile is enough to send Nick running, but he braves it,
politeness personified.

NICK

I'm starting work here today.
Nick Nickleby.

FRANNIE
Frannie Squeers. My daddy's
Wackford.

NICK
Sorry?

FRANNIE
Wackford Squeers. The boss here.

NICK
Oh. My uncle is Ralph Nickleby.
Your dad's boss, in London.

Nick just got even more attractive to Frannie.

FRANNIE
Well, well, Nick Nickleby. I
think you'd better come with me.

A come hither look. On Nick, wishing he could decline.

CUT TO:

35

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - DAY 2 - 09:30

35

Squeers is in his element, giving Nick the sales spiel, showing off his framed health & safety certificates and very small runner-up golf trophy.

Nick tries to take it all in, as Frannie takes him all in.

SQUEERS
You'll have seen our ads in the
national quality press.

Nick hasn't, but nods as expected.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)
People flock here from far and
wide. We are a beacon of
excellence, awarded five-stars
from CRAaPU. (NICK IS BLANK) The
Care Review Assessment and Policy
Unit. They dubbed us a 'flagship
for the future of care in the
UK'.

He shows the CRAaPU report. Nick tries to look impressed.

NICK
Wow.

SQUEERS

The most remarkable thing is that we achieve all this whilst having the lowest overheads in the industry. And the highest profits. This is cutting edge business, my boy.

Nick frowns, not sure this is a good thing.

Frannie has a form, fiddles would-be erotically with a biro as she fills it in.

FRANNIE

So... Have you any experience of working in care before?

NICK

None.

FRANNIE

Any training courses, qualifications?

NICK

No.

FRANNIE

Voluntary placements? Informal care for an elderly relative?

NICK

Nothing. Sorry.

FRANNIE

Okey dokey. Now if you'll just sign here. Tick here. And here.

He takes the pen, signs and ticks.

FRANNIE

And now it's official.

She presents him with a photo ID badge, clips it on his chest, coming over all unnecessary. Nick is unnerved.

NICK

Is that it?

SQUEERS

Franniekins can show you everything else on-the-job.

Frannie titters. Nick pales.

CUT TO:

36 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, CORRIDOR - DAY 2 - 14:30 36

Nick pushes a laundry trolley. Frannie follows behind him, admiring the view.

NICK

How do we know whose clothes are whose?

FRANNIE

Just bung them whatever. They like a surprise.

She puts a 'Do not disturb' sign on the handle of the next door and opens it for Nick to go in.

CUT TO:

37 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, MRS SMIKE'S ROOM - DAY 2 - CONTINUOUS 37

Mrs Smike sits on the bed, staring out of the window. She turns as the door opens, and sees Nick, smiles.

MRS SMIKE

Hello.

Nick recognises her, smiles back.

NICK

Hi, I'm Nick.

Mrs Smike is about to introduce herself, when Frannie enters. She is not best pleased to see Mrs Smike.

FRANNIE

Mrs Smike. You're not allowed to be in here. Go to the dayroom.

MRS SMIKE

I have to stay in here all day. Mr Squeers said.

FRANNIE

Well, I'm saying you have to go. Now.

Mrs Smike hesitates, unsure who best to obey.

Frannie froths and marches out, shouting.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)

Daddy?

Nick is concerned about Mrs Smike.

NICK

Why do you have to stay in here?

But Mrs Smike is concerned about Nick.

MRS SMIKE

I saw you, outside.

NICK

Yeah. It's my first day.

MRS SMIKE

Looked like you wanted to leg it.

NICK

No, I don't mind, really.

He can't cope with someone being nice to him. And she is. She touches him.

MRS SMIKE

Don't be sad.

NICK

I'm not - I...

MRS SMIKE

You don't have to say. If you don't want.

Suddenly, he finds he wants to say.

NICK

My dad...

He's choked, can't say any more. Doesn't need to. She puts her arm around him, warm.

Frannie returns. Sees Nick upset. Mrs Smike touching him.

FRANNIE

Get off him, you loon. (TO NICK)
Has she hurt you?

NICK

No. We were only - (talking)

Squeers arrives, a small medical bag in hand. Frannie turns to him, indignant.

FRANNIE

Daddy?

SQUEERS

You know the rules, Mrs Smike.
You do as you're told or else.

NICK

Or else what?

SQUEERS

Outside, please, Nick.

NICK

Not until (we've sorted this) -

SQUEERS

Outside. Now.

Before Nick can protest further, Squeers ushers him out of the door, locks it. Mrs Smike backs away.

MRS SMIKE

I'm sorry.

SQUEERS

Shhh, Mrs Smike. *Or else.*

Frannie unzips the medical bag, takes out a syringe.

CUT TO:

Nick paces the corridor, troubled. He tries the door to Mrs Smike's room. It's still locked. He bangs on it. No answer.

Nick turns, heads up the corridor to a door marked 'office'. He checks the coast is clear and heads in.

CUT TO:

39

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - DAY 2 - 14:45

39

Nick looks around, not knowing where to start.

He looks on the desk. It's all photos of Frannie and golfing tat - 'World's Greatest' mug and the tiny trophy. There's a key inside it. No use to him.

Nick opens a large cupboard. It's full of boxfiles bearing patients' names. He finds MRS SMIKE's box, looks inside. There's a Personal Care Record. The pages are blank.

Nick frowns. In the bottom of the box is a brown envelope and a plastic bag with a silver locket inside.

Before he can pick them up, Squeers enters, spies the box.

SQUEERS

Interested in Mrs Smike, are we?

NICK

Is she all right?

SQUEERS

She's senile. History of violence.

Nick is still holding the Personal Care Record.

NICK

It doesn't say that in here. It doesn't say anything.

SQUEERS

That is an archive. Our records are computerised now. Accessible only to authorised personnel.

He takes the book back from Nick and puts the box away.

NICK

She doesn't seem senile to me. She seems scared.

SQUEERS

Leave Mrs Smike to us experts,
Nick. You're not a doctor. You're
not even an NVQ level 1. You're a
young man of impetuous temper and
little or no experience. But one
day, all this could be yours.

Nick frowns, it's the first he's heard.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Your uncle told me your dad's
dead. He's had to take you under
his wing, as it were.

He puts his arm around Nick, fatherly, confidential.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Now to my knowledge, he's
got no other heirs. Doesn't take
a genius to see what he's doing,
sending you here. A kind of...
apprentice. So learn from me.
Impress me. And we could both
impress your uncle, you see?

Nick nods, though he doesn't like what he sees: Squeers
grinning squint, right up close.

SQUEERS (CONT'D)

Why don't you join us for dinner?
I know my little girl would like
that. And it could be beneficial
for all of us.

On Nick, no way out.

CUT TO:

40

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 2 - 19:30

40

Frannie arranges the cushions, checks her reflection.
Unbuttons her tight pink top a little lower.

A knock at the door. She boings onto the sofa, calls out.

FRANNIE

Come!

She titters. Nick enters, sees her, freezes.

NICK

Oh. I thought - Mr Squeers said -

FRANNIE

(grins, he's so naive)
Daddy's gone to bed.
(MORE)

FRANNIE (cont'd)

Tired out, poor thing. And he
thought it'd be better, just us
two.

NICK

I'm pretty tired myself actually -

Before he can scarper, she bounds up, pulls him in.

FRANNIE

That's why I thought we'd just
chill out here. Watch some telly.
Have some dinner.

A massive bag of tortilla chips and a grim cheesy dip.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)

Come and get comfy. Have a dip.

Nick perches on the sofa, watches her dipping, sucking.

FRANNIE (CONT'D)

Hope it's posh enough for you.
Daddy reckons you're like a
millionaire.

NICK

Your dad might be a bit confused.

Nick decides to turn this to his advantage.

NICK (CONT'D)

But... my uncle did ask me to
keep an eye on things here.
Report back to him.

FRANNIE

What rating would you give me?

NICK

What happened with Mrs Smike?

Frannie is put out. Why isn't he falling for her wiles?

FRANNIE

Do you fancy her or summat?

NICK

Is she really senile?

Frannie huffs, might as well get this guff out of the way.

FRANNIE

She's nuts. Can't read or write.
Zonked out half the time. Then
when she likes she can be sneaky
as anything. They get like that,
proper cunning, when they've been
in the loony-bins.

NICK

What loony-bins?

FRANNIE
Been locked up all her life, that
one. Padded cells. Bzzz (MIMES
ELECTRIC SHOCK). The works.

NICK
(horrified)
What for?

FRANNIE
Cos she's nuts. Poor Nickybobs.
This is all new to you, isn't it?
But you'll learn. You can't go
around caring about them all.

Frannie decides to turn this to her advantage.

NICK
Isn't that the job?

FRANNIE
If you spend all day caring,
you'll never have nothing left
for them what really matter.

Her hand on his leg. Nick recoils.

NICK
Frannie, I -

FRANNIE
Forget about biddies. Let's make
babies.

She pounces, straddling him in a skilful move. Nick panics.

NICK
I - I really like you, Frannie -

FRANNIE
I *really* like you, Nickywicky.

NICK
But if it's going to mean
something, let's take it slowly.
Okay?

She looks at him, reticent. He gives her a chaste peck, to
convince her. It works. She clambers off him.

FRANNIE
Okay then. Tomorrow.

On Nick, reprieved, briefly.

CUT TO:

41 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, MRS SMIKE'S ROOM - NIGHT 2 - 20:30 41

A knock at the door. Mrs Smike opens her eyes, bleary. Nick enters, tentative.

NICK

Mrs Smike? Sorry, I know it's late. I just wanted to make sure you're all right?

MRS SMIKE

I'm all right. Just sleepy.

He feels bad, but has to come in, has to ask.

NICK

Have you ever seen a doctor here?

MRS SMIKE

There's nothing wrong with me.

NICK

That's what I thought.

MRS SMIKE

I don't like doctors.

He thinks of what Frannie said, is concerned. Sits by her.

NICK

What happened to you, Mrs Smike?

MRS SMIKE

I don't want to die in here. You won't let me, will you?

She grips his hand. Nick is perturbed.

NICK

No, course not. But you've got to tell me what's going on. What did Squeers do to you?

But she's already drifting, relieved.

MRS SMIKE

I just need to go to sleep.

NICK

I looked in your file. There was no diagnosis, just blank pages and a locket. Frannie said -

Mrs Smike is suddenly alert.

MRS SMIKE

A locket?

Nick moves on, unaware of the significance.

NICK

I was looking for - I don't know -
evidence, I suppose. Of how
they're treating you here. But if
you can just tell me, I could
talk to my uncle or the
inspectors or someone.

Mrs Smike is moved, but she has more pressing matters now.

MRS SMIKE

It won't make any difference. But
you have.

She squeezes his hand, warmly, closes her eyes. Dreams.

On Nick, troubled.

CUT TO:

42

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - NIGHT 2 - 21:15

42

Nick sneaks into the darkened office. He turns on the
computer. Desktop wallpaper of Frannie gurns at him.

He finds a folder entitled 'Patient Files', tries to open
it, but it's password protected.

He gets his mobile out, tries calling Ralph.

NOGGS (O.S.)

This is the answering service for
Ralph Nickleby Associates. Please
leave a message after the tone.

NICK

Hi, Newman. It's Nick. I'm at
Dotheolds and I'm a bit...
concerned. Can Uncle Ralph please
give me a ring?

Nick hangs up, what more can he do?

He sees the CRAaPU report on the desk.

Inspired, he turns the computer back on, finds the CRAaPU
website, clicks on 'Make a Complaint'.

On Nick, trying to make a difference.

CUT TO:

43

INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, NICK'S ROOM - NIGHT 2 - 21:45

43

Nick's cell-like bedroom. He settles down to sleep. He's done as much as he can, but is still restless.

He gets his phone out, tries calling Kat.

CUT TO:

44 INT. CITY GENTLEMEN'S CLUB, BAR AREA - NIGHT 2 - 21:47 44

A private members club. Leather upholstery and broadsheets. Kat and Mrs Nickleby are quite out of place. It doesn't bother Mrs Nickleby, gobbling her G&T. Kat fiddles with the black straw in her coke, self-conscious, but fascinated.

Ralph eyes her, coldly assessing. He makes his approach.

RALPH

(to Kat)

Good evening, Ms Nickleby -

MRS NICKLEBY

Still Mrs, if you don't mind,
Ralph, it's early days yet. And
anyway, my maiden name was Hoops.

Kat looks at Ralph, embarrassed, apologetic. Ralph smiles.

RALPH

I hope you're liking it here?

MRS NICKLEBY

We love it, Ralph. Love it. It's
just our kind of place.

She sucks on her lime slice. Kat's phone rings. A hard rock ringtone. NS MEMBERS stare. Kat turns it off, mortified.

KAT

Sorry.

RALPH

(comforting)

Let me get you a drink. G&T and
a... vodka and coke?

KAT

(grins, complicit)

Thanks, Uncle Ralph. (BEAT) It's
Kat, by the way.

On Ralph, swiftly positioning himself as favourite uncle.

CUT TO:

45 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, NICK'S ROOM - NIGHT 2 - 21:50 45

No answer from Kat. Nick is frustrated. He gets out Maddy's CV, finds her number, composes a text:

'HI MADDY. IT'S NICK NICKLEBY. ARE YOU OKAY?'

He agonises, then adds an 'X' at the end. He sends it. Looks at her photo, imagining her now.

A bleep. A reply already? He checks, excited.

'MESSAGE FAILED. CALL 450 TO TOP UP CREDIT'

On Nick, turning his phone off, cut off.

CUT TO:

46 INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - NIGHT 2 - 23:00 46

Nick's voicemail plays on Ralph's phone as Noggs sits in his office, drinking, contemplating a modern art painting.

NICK (O.S.)

It's Nick. I'm at Dotheolds and I'm a bit... concerned. Can Uncle Ralph please give me a ring?

Noggs takes the painting down, revealing a safe behind.

Noggs tries a random combination, tries to open it. Fails.

He slumps back in the chair, swigs, deletes the message.

CUT TO:

47 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DAYROOM - DAY 3 - 10:30 47

The residents are catatonic in front of the world's most tedious tv programme - educational footage about how milk bottles are made or something of that ilk.

Mrs Smike is the only one not watching the tv. She sits at the window, deep in thought.

Nick watches her, wondering. Frannie sidles up to him.

FRANNIE

Fancy taking me round the back - for a fag?

NICK

I don't smoke.

FRANNIE

I've got chocolate fingers.

An offer he can't resist. A chance to get rid of her.

NICK

You go. I'll be there in a bit.

She bustles off, excited. Nick looks around at the vacant faces. Makes a decision.

Nick grabs the TV remote, turns the telly off. There's a mild ripple of consternation, culminating in a meek...

MR COBBEY

Oi.

Mrs Smike turns, intrigued.

NICK

Sorry, Mr Cobbey. I thought we could do something different today, cheer us all up. What do you want to do?

Blank faces, underpinned by fear - what's all this about?

NICK (CONT'D)

How about... (GRASPING) a sing-song? What songs do you like? Mrs Graymarsh? Mr Bolder? Anyone?

Silence. But they look a little more interested now.

NICK (CONT'D)

Okay then, I'll start and you join in. (PAUSE, NO GOING BACK). Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile smile smile. While you've a la-la-la does anyone know the words?

Silence. Interest is waning. Pressured, he tries one more.

NICK (CONT'D)

It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go... Okay.
Maybe not then.

He reaches for the remote. Mrs Smike stands up, sings.

MRS SMIKE

Well since my baby left me, I've found a new place to dwell. It's down at the end of lonely street at Heartbreak Hotel. I've been so lonely, I've been so lonely, I've been so lonely, la-la-la

A different kind of silence. Awed. Her voice is surprising. Moving. She lights up when she sings. Everyone stares.

Nick claps. They all join in. Mrs Smike gives a little bow.

NICK

Who's next?

Ep 1, *Nick Nickleby* Salmon Amendments 13.07.12 44A.

Nick beams at her. This might just work after all. Mrs Smike beams back, yes it might. Her own plan, that is.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, BACK - DAY 3 - 10:45 48

A pile of old fag butts on the ground. Frannie alternates between smoking a fag and sucking a chocolate finger.

She hears something from inside. Singing. Laughter.

On Frannie, frowning, something's not right here.

CUT TO:

49 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DAYROOM - DAY 3 - 10:50 49

Mr Cobbey clears his throat and pipes up a rousing rendition of Gerry and the Pacemakers 'How Do You Do It'.

MR COBBEY

How do you do what you do to me? I wish I knew, If I knew how you do it to me, I'd do it to you.

You give me a feeling in my heart.
Like an arrow, passing through it.
Suppose that you think you're very smart. But won't you tell me how do you do it?

As everyone listens or sings along, Mrs Smike seizes her chance. She slips out, unnoticed.

CUT TO:

50 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, OFFICE - DAY 3 - CONTINUOUS 50

Mrs Smike enters, goes to the cupboard, finds her file.

She opens it with trembling hands. Delves down to the locket, clasps it a moment, before hiding it in her jacket.

She sees the brown envelope below. Stares at it, in shock.

She picks it up, blows off the film of dust. Her name is printed on the front 'MRS SMIKE'. She traces the letters with her finger. Pauses. Hardly dares to open it.

The door opens. She hides the envelope quickly.

Squeers enters, catching her closing the cupboard doors.

SQUEERS

Can I help you, Mrs Smike?

She overrides her fear, looks at him directly, honest.

MRS SMIKE

You could. If you wanted to, Mr
Squeers.

On Squeers, not likely.

CUT TO:

51 INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, DAYROOM - DAY 3 - 11:00

51

Mr Bolder leads a rousing chorus of 'Walkin' Back to
Happiness'.

MR BOLDER

Walking back to happiness, woopah
oh yeah yeah. Said goodbye to
loneliness, woopah oh yeah yeah. I
never knew I'd miss you. Now I know
what I must do. Walking back to
happiness. I shared with you.

Frannie marches in with NS assistants - reinforcements.

FRANNIE

That'll do now. Break it up.

The residents do as they're told. Nick is less pliable.

NICK

It's not doing any harm, Frannie.

FRANNIE

You've already lost one resident.
Told you she was cunning.

Nick panics, scans the room.

NICK

Mrs Smike.

FRANNIE

It's all right. Daddy's taking
care of her. We can take a break.

As Frannie puts the telly on, Mr Bolder touches Nick's arm
and whispers, fleeting, fearful.

MR BOLDER

You have to find her.

Nick is chilled. Frannie grabs his arm. He pushes her away.

NICK

Get off me.

FRANNIE

Nickybobs?

He's gone, bolted from the room. On Frannie, cast aside.

CUT TO:

52 EXT./ INT. DOTHEOLDS HALL, THE COOLER - DAY 3 - 11:10 52

A dingy door to the bowels of the building. The Cooler.

SQUEERS

It's for your own good, Mrs
Smike. You have to learn.

MRS SMIKE

I won't do it again.

SQUEERS

No, you won't. I'll make sure of
that.

Squeers boots the door open, manhandles Mrs Smike inside.

NICK (O.S.)

Let her go.

Squeers turns to see Nick. Nick is fuming, fists balled.

NICK

I said. Let her go.

SQUEERS

I don't care who your uncle is.
I'm in charge here.

He turns back, carries on dragging Mrs Smike inside, towards a wooden chair. Nick sees red. He flies at Squeers, pulls him off Mrs Smike and socks him in the face.

Frannie arrives, sees Nick attacking her dad and jumps on Nick's back. Nick whirls around, throwing her off. But as he does, Squeers picks up a plank and comes at him.

MRS SMIKE

Nick. Behind you.

Nick turns just in time to duck the plank. Squeers goes flying, lands on top of Frannie with a mighty OOF! A pile of crates topple over onto them.

Breathless, Nick turns to Mrs Smike.

NICK

Are you all right?

She nods, smiles.

MRS SMIKE

Thanks for coming.

Squeers groans from under the crates.

SQUEERS

Franniekins, call the police.

MRS SMIKE

Think we'd better be going.

Mrs Smike holds out her hand to Nick. He takes it.

On Nick and Mrs Smike, on the run, together. [HOOK]

COMING UP: EDITED HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXT EPISODE.

END OF EPISODE