

THE A WORD

SERIES 3

Episode One

SHOOTING SCRIPT

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1

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 1. (FLASHBACK - 14:55)

We begin again . . . the Lakes, the wide shot of Joe's walking road. The opening chords of 'Granadaland' by The Wedding Present. We wait for Joe to appear but no . . .

MAURICE walks into shot. And behind him, a trail of six hikers, all over 50, kagooled up - not the healthiest. MAURICE striding ahead.

A high-pitched beeping sound comes from MAURICE's pocket. The music stops. He takes out a pager - with red lights flashing - then sets off at a lick, back the way he came, abandoning the hikers. Over this, we hear . . .

MAURICE (V.O.)

So I'm leading my Hiking for Health group and we're half way up the pass when I get the shout.

One of the hikers, PAULINE, stares after MAURICE as he makes off like roadrunner.

CUT TO:

2

EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. DAY 1. 16:30.

MAURICE stands in the yard, telling this anecdote to RALPH.

MAURICE

But that's the nature of the On-Call Firefighter game. Any time. Any place. Anywhere.

RALPH

Will this take long?

CUT TO:

3

EXT. FIRE STATION. DAY 1. (FLASHBACK - 14:57)

MAURICE running towards the fire station, checking his watch.

MAURICE (V.O.)

Five minute turnout time and if you don't make it, you're off the job. Not everyone makes it.

CUT TO:

3A

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 1. 16:45.

MAURICE is now telling the story to EDDIE, who is wearing a suit and sitting in a considerably smartened up Brewery Office.

(CONTINUED)

On one wall, trophies - 'Stout of the Year', 'Champion Pale Ale', 'Best Bottled IPA' etc.

MAURICE

I'm thinking it's a fair lick but, you know, nothing like the thought of lives in danger to give you a rocket up the arse.

EDDIE looks at his watch, bored.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

And believe me, that five minute deadline has seen off quite a few.

EDDIE

Not as many as this anecdote.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4 OMITTED

5 **INT. FIRE STATION. DAY 1. (FLASHBACK - 14:59)**

MAURICE smiles with satisfaction as he reaches the local fire station and glances at his watch. A fire engine is already out on the road.

MAURICE (V.O.)

Four minutes thirty-eight seconds. The 'old timer' has still got what it takes.

CUT TO:

5A **EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 1. 16:58.**

MAURICE now telling the story to ALISON, who is ushering JOE from her car into the house. JOE is wearing his headphones.

MAURICE

Some of the team are a bit in awe of me if I'm honest.

ALISON not really listening, watching JOE. MAURICE follows them in.

ALISON

Get your bag, there's a good lad.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6 OMITTED

7

EXT. PART-REFURBISHED HOUSE. DAY 1. (FLASHBACK - 15:20)

MAURICE, now in his volunteer firefighter uniform, is with three other FIREFIGHTERS and the fire engine outside the scene of the fire - a part-refurbished house.

The whole place looks a bit of a wreck - skip outside, bits of timber, abandoned armchair - but the house now has smoke marks up the brickwork from the fire in a downstairs room.

MAURICE (V.O.)

It was a primary dwelling fire. I kept the crowds back from the pump while the lads did a 360.

Reveal the 'crowds' - a small group of children on their way home from school, including BILL and RAMESH. RAMESH is taking photos on his phone.

CUT TO:

8

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 17:02.

Now we arrive at PAUL in Maurice's kitchen, half listening to MAURICE as JOE sits at the table, making a line of plastic bricks around the edge. ALISON is unpacking some of JOE's things (reading book etc) from his bag. MAURICE oblivious to the fact there is domestic stuff going on around him.

MAURICE

Could have been nasty but it was neutralised in time.

ALISON

(OVER, TO PAUL)
He's got a new reading book and his clean pyjamas are in his bag.

PAUL

(AMUSED, TO MAURICE)

Well, thank God for the brave volunteer firefighters of Grey Watch. Be careful out there, Maurice.

MAURICE

You can take the piss all you like, the whole of Wordsworth Row might have gone up.

PAUL

Wordsworth Row? That's where my new house is.

MAURICE

I know. That's what I've been trying to tell you if you'd just let me get to the point. It was your new house.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

What was?

MAURICE

Where the fire was . . .

PAUL gets up and dashes out. ALISON throws MAURICE a look and goes after him.

CONTINUOUS:

9 EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 1. 17:03.

PAUL is about to run to his house. ALISON calls after him.

ALISON

Paul. My car's right here. Get in.

PAUL hesitates for a moment, then gets in ALISON's car.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. PART-REFURBISHED HOUSE - PAUL'S NEW HOUSE. DAY 1. 17:08.

PAUL has got out of ALISON's car. He takes in the state of the fire-damaged house.

PAUL

(TO HIMSELF)

Shit.

ALISON gets out of the car and joins PAUL. Hesitant. This is the first time she's seen the house.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Go on. Say it.

ALISON

(KIND) I was going to say you've chosen a lovely spot.

PAUL looks at the house, sees how far this has set him back.

PAUL

(WEARY)

Yeah.

PAUL heads into the house.

CUT TO:

11 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 17:09.

PAUL stands in the newly decorated kitchen which is now ruined by fire and water damage.

(CONTINUED)

Newly plastered walls, paintwork, a new unit all blackened and destroyed. PAUL looks devastated. ALISON appears at the kitchen door. When ALISON and PAUL talk it is careful, egg shells - still not entirely sure how to be with each other.

ALISON
(HESITANT)
Is it okay? If I come in?

She takes in the damage and PAUL looking like the life's been punched out of him.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Christ. I'm sorry.

PAUL
Nothing for you to be sorry about.
(A STAB AT HUMOUR) Unless you
started it.

He exits. ALISON stands, looks at the damage. She goes to the soot on one wall, wipes it with her hand, looks around, determined to do something to make it better, as we . . .

CUT TO:

12 INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. "JOE'S ROOM". DAY 1. 17:10.

PAUL looking round, a bit more relieved - the fire didn't damage this room, it just looks crappy. It is a shell of a room - the wallpaper half stripped, a shitty carpet and half-sanded window frames. On one wall some colours have been tried out from sample pots. In one corner a dismantled bedframe has been stacked.

PAUL hears the sound of MAURICE's voice, alarmed when he hears he is talking to JOE.

MAURICE (O.S.)
Come on, Joe. Come and have a look
at your new house. There's nothing
to worry about. Your Granddad
sorted it.

PAUL can't believe it - he turns to the door but MAURICE appears with JOE. PAUL tries to shut the door.

PAUL
Maurice? Maurice! Not in here!

Too late. MAURICE brings JOE into the bedroom.

MAURICE
See. Told you. All good. Or at
least it will be when your Dad
learns how to hold a paint brush.

(CONTINUED)

JOE takes in the room - steps back. Close on JOE's face as we hear this argument.

PAUL

I don't want him seeing it in this state!

MAURICE

I've seen better episodes of Grand Designs.

PAUL

It's all right, Joe. It'll look great. It'll all change.

JOE turns on his heels and runs down the stairs. PAUL exits, furious, leaving MAURICE puzzled.

CUT TO:

12A INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 17.11

From the kitchen, ALISON sees JOE run out, PAUL in pursuit.

ALISON

Paul?

As PAUL comes past the kitchen door he puts a hand up.

PAUL

I've got it! I've got it!

PAUL follows JOE out of the house, shutting the front door behind him. MAURICE comes down and into the kitchen.

ALISON

Dad! What were you thinking?

MAURICE sees ALISON has magicked up a bucket and cloth from somewhere and is trying to clean a wall.

MAURICE

You know me. Get stuck in first. Ask questions later. (NODDING TO THE CLEANING ATTEMPT) Bit like you.

ALISON

I'm just trying to sort some of this mess out. This is where Joe's going to be half the time.

ALISON starts to scrub at the wall, more manic, the sense that she is displacing her anger and pain.

MAURICE

It's not your mess to sort out, is it?

(CONTINUED)

ALISON carries on. MAURICE stands by her, until she stops.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I thought you didn't want to be
like this anymore.

ALISON's frustration - at MAURICE, at what's happened - gets the better of her.

ALISON

It's hard not to be like this when everyone around you is useless!

MAURICE

Now you sound like me. When you said you wanted to change I didn't think that's what you meant.

ALISON, half sad, reluctantly amused, hands MAURICE the cloth and heads out.

CONTINUOUS:

13

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 1. 17:12.

ALISON comes out of the house to find JOE walking four steps forward then four steps back, PAUL looking close to despair. JOE saying the words fast, over and over. We feel it has been like this for a while.

JOE

(FAST)

I like my new house, don't I. I like my new house, don't I. I like my new house, don't I.

PAUL

Joe. I've said. This isn't how it's going to look! (TO ALISON - APOLOGETIC) He wasn't supposed to see it till it's finished.

JOE has stopped pacing on seeing ALISON.

JOE

I like my new house, don't I.

PAUL looks at ALISON. She's measured, purposeful in her tone.

ALISON

You will like your new house, yes. When it's ready. It's like this now, but your Dad will make it better.

MAURICE exits, sees PAUL and ALISON with JOE between them.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE
You two going to be okay?

ALISON
Go home and sit by your batphone,
Dad. (TO PAUL) Maybe I should stay?
Or I could take him back.

PAUL
No! (CALMER) No. Thanks. I don't
think you should. We have to stick
to the handover routine. He's
confused enough already.

ALISON
Yeah, but I could . . . (STOPPING
HERSELF - A BREATH) Alright. But
will you message me or something?
Tell me how he is?

PAUL
Yeah, he'll be fine. I'll sort it.

ALISON goes to eye level with JOE - their "Goodbye" routine.

ALISON
I'll see you on Sunday night. But
it's time for me to go there. And
you to stay here.

JOE
There. Here. Here. There.

ALISON
(TOMMY COOPER)
Just like that.

JOE
Just like that.

ALISON
Hug or handshake?

JOE
Handshake.

They shake hands. Then ALISON, forcing herself to go, heads for her car. JOE watches her. Keeps staring straight ahead when he speaks.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm okay, aren't I.

From JOE's POV - ALISON driving away. Then he looks at the fire-damaged house. The skip. Then at PAUL.

PAUL
I'll fix it. I'll fix all this.

(CONTINUED)

Close up on JOE - that look - distant, lost. When he speaks, this is more like a chant, or a mantra.

JOE

What could be better? What's going well? What could be better? What's going well?

JOE suddenly turns and starts to run away down the road as fast as he can go.

PAUL

Joe!

PAUL goes after him. MAURICE, standing by his car, sees this and is about to go after PAUL but then his text message signal beeps. He looks at his phone - we don't see the message.

MAURICE

Shit.

HARD CUT TO:

14

INT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. DR GRAVES OFFICE. DAY 1. 17:20.

MAURICE sitting in DR GRAVES' surgery, the cuff of a BP gauge around his arm. DR GRAVES with stethoscope, listening to his blood pressure and taking a reading as the cuff deflates.

MAURICE

Feel that rhythm. Pulse like a kettle drum.

DR. GRAVES

(UNIMPRESSED)

Yes. (READING GAUGE) 160 over 100.
That's high.

MAURICE

I ran here, Doc. It's bound to be up.

DR. GRAVES

And so is your cholesterol. And you've just turned 60.

MAURICE

I am not 60 in the way other men are. I am not a normal man.

DR. GRAVES

Indeed. I'm going to prescribe Statins.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

No chance. I've seen the side effects. Flatulence. Weight gain. Impotence. I'd rather take my chances.

DR. GRAVES

You collapsed two years ago. Hospitalised. You're at risk of a heart attack or a stroke if you don't slow down.

MAURICE

Slow down? Have you met my family? Both families? If I go down they all go down with me . . .

DR. GRAVES

So you need to take care of yourself. I see you running past here every morning. Not jogging. Running. Like a maniac. Gritting your teeth. I stopped at the traffic lights the other day and saw you half way up a tree with a chainsaw.

MAURICE

Elderly neighbour. It needed doing. (BEAT) One question. Have I got cancer? That's the only one that scares me.

DR. GRAVES

No. You haven't got cancer. But there are many ways to die, Maurice.

MAURICE

(NOTICING THE TIME)

Yeah, I've just thought of another.

And MAURICE dashes out.

HARD CUT TO:

Hard in on a stern-looking LOUISE, giving MAURICE a look as he runs in, late, and joins the choir in rehearsal. All ages, shapes and sizes - singing Amy Winehouse's 'Rehab'. What they lack in ability they make up for in enthusiasm.

LOUISE is the leader. RALPH and his new girlfriend KATIE are amongst the members, as is PAULINE, the hiker from Scene 1.

CHOIR

"They tried to make me go to rehab
I said no, no, no
Yes I been black but when I come
back you'll know, know, know . . ."

PAULINE glances across and smiles at MAURICE as he finds his place. MAURICE meets LOUISE's eye, gives her a weak smile, starts to sing louder than everyone else -

MAURICE/CHOIR

"I aint got the time
And if my daddy thinks I'm fine -"

CUT TO:

16 EXT. LAY-BY. DAY 1. 17:35.

ALISON has pulled over into a lay-by, engine running. She's holding on to the steering wheel and thinking hard about what just happened with Joe - considers heading back, even turns the car around. But then, finally, sticks to the decision and drives on, away from the Lakes.

CUT TO:

17 INT. VILLAGE HALL. DAY 1. 17:45.

LOUISE and MAURICE are tidying away chairs. The rest of the choir leaving. RALPH and KATIE are last to go, holding hands.

KATIE

Bye, Louise.

LOUISE

Bye, Katie.

RALPH clearly not going to say anything.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

My son used to say Goodbye to me
before he met you.

KATIE

I'm a bad influence.

LOUISE

That's right. You are. But we both
love you so, forgiven . . .

LOUISE and MAURICE watch RALPH and KATIE walk away.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

He's up to something that lad.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

I've got a good idea what. He never stops smiling.

LOUISE

He's started hoovering. And the other day I caught him writing down a menu from Saturday Kitchen.

MAURICE

Have you asked him about it?

LOUISE

I thought it would be better coming from you. Take him for a pint.

MAURICE

In the words of the song, "No, No, No". I've got a lot on right now.

LOUISE

Like what?

MAURICE

Drill night. Rebecca's due back from University. Joe's staying at mine all weekend. Paul's there. Eddie's there. I haven't got time for a pint.

LOUISE

Are you saying you don't want to bond with my son?

MAURICE

I just don't want to interrogate your son. He never cracks.

LOUISE

So you don't want to go for a drink with him because you know he'll run rings round you.

MAURICE

Yes. Since you mention it.

LOUISE

Exactly. You're not as clever as me. He won't see you coming.

Out on MAURICE, cornered.

CUT TO:

18

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 1. 17:46.

The old Hughes family house - with a 'SOLD' sign outside. A NEW FAMILY sit at the picnic table. There's a 'To Let' sign outside Nicola and Eddie's old house.

Across the road, leaning on a wall, we find REBECCA with a student rucksack by her feet. She's looking up at the house as though trying to commit it to memory. Nothing now is as it was. After a few moments she walks on. As she disappears down the road, JOE arrives, PAUL following.

JOE walks straight up the drive to the house. PAUL gives the family a tentative wave.

PAUL

You want to say "Goodbye" to the old house. I get it. I'm sure they won't mind.

But JOE isn't stopping. PAUL's phone goes as JOE reaches the front door. PAUL looks at the phone: "Alison". He answers it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Yes. He's fine, yeah. He's settled down . . .

As PAUL is saying this, JOE does the door thing and goes through the unlocked door.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Joe! Hang on!

The family, bemused, as PAUL gives them an awkward wave and also heads into the house.

CUT TO:

19

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S OLD BEDROOM. DAY 1. 17:47.

We find JOE in his old bedroom - except there's nothing much of JOE left in here apart from the carpet. It is piled with removal boxes and stuff that isn't his.

PAUL arrives behind him.

PAUL

Joe. This isn't your room now. This isn't our house. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday are Mum days in Manchester. Saturday and Sunday are Dad days at Granddad's house. Until the new house is ready. A new family live here now.

JOE lies face down on the floor. PAUL kneels down next to JOE, puts his hand on his back.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know it takes a bit of getting
used to but we will get used to it,
I promise . . .

JOE starts to talk. And the phrases are almost relevant and we should feel have been used at school with him but for now they are like a comfort blanket.

JOE

What do you think, Joe? Is this a
good place to lie down? Is this a
good place or a bad place?

And then he sees it. He has been searching for something.

In the very corner of the room, against the skirting board, tucked under the carpet. JOE pulls it out. A small Sheriff's Badge. He stands, puts it in his pocket and heads out. PAUL stands, processing what has happened, before following him.

CUT TO:

20

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 1. 17:48.

JOE comes out of the house, followed by PAUL and the OWNER.

PAUL

(TO THE OWNER)
He just forgot something . . .
sorry, sorry.

OWNER

Don't worry about it.

And PAUL waves at the rest of the FAMILY as JOE heads away.

CUT TO:

21

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. BOTTOM OF DRIVE. DAY 1. 17:49.

PAUL has stopped with JOE at the foot of the drive. PAUL takes the badge. He's struggling with this.

PAUL

This badge. We bring it with us.
And it's like . . . The badge comes
with us. And so do our memories. It
will remind you of all the lovely
times we had . . . We won't forget
the house.

JOE

We won't forget the house.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

That's right. That's it. That's right. Yes.

JOE looks back at the house and at the badge and then, slowly and deliberately takes his headphones off and puts them down in the middle of the road. He walks away at pace. PAUL stares down at the headphones as JOE walks away.

CUT TO:

22

EXT. ROAD. LAKESIDE. DAY 1. 17:51.

JOE has come to a stop by a lake. He stares at the water. PAUL approaches him, holding the headphones.

PAUL

You okay? You don't want to be without these, do you? Hey? Would you?

PAUL is trying to sound reassuring but he isn't even reassured himself. JOE takes the headphones from PAUL. But he doesn't put them on. He looks at PAUL and as he is looking him in the eye he throws them into the lake.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Joe?! What are you - (doing?)

Again, JOE turns and walks away. PAUL torn between going after him and trying to retrieve the headphones. He takes one step into the edge of the water. Knows this is stupid. Thrown. Looks at JOE walking away.

This feels like rejection. And not just of the headphones.

CUT TO:

23

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 18:00.

EDDIE and REBECCA sit around with tea, EDDIE in running gear, tracksuit top. PAUL, ragged, follows JOE in. JOE sees REBECCA and goes and stands by her. His way of saying hello . . .

PAUL

I know you're upset about the house. And I don't mind you throwing your headphones away. You're not in trouble. Got a spare pair.

JOE

I put them away.

PAUL

Okay. You put them away. In a lake.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
What does a good life look like.

PAUL
We love music, you and me, don't we? You need your headphones for that. Is it the music you don't like anymore? Or just the headphones?

JOE
The music.

PAUL
Okay.

JOE
The headphones.

PAUL already has his phone out, scrolling titles. (We don't see the screen).

PAUL
How about we do a new playlist, eh?
Do you want to choose?

EDDIE
Paul. Just let him be for a bit.
You're putting me on edge.

PAUL
He's upset.

EDDIE
I can see that. Any more static coming off you and we could suspend you off the wall like a party balloon.

REBECCA
Could you?

EDDIE
I don't know if the science adds up but I'd like to give it a try.

JOE heads out. PAUL follows but REBECCA stops him.

REBECCA
Dad. Eddie's right.

PAUL stays. MAURICE enters carrying a takeaway curry.

MAURICE
Eddie's right about what? (TO REBECCA) Hello my love.

REBECCA

Hi Granddad.

PAUL

Joe threw his headphones away.

MAURICE

Hallelujah! At long last.

PAUL

He threw them away to hurt me,
Maurice, because he was confused by
seeing that wreck of a house.
Thanks to you.

MAURICE

It's still a result, isn't it? I've
done you a favour.

PAUL

Not if he's distressed!

MAURICE

Your generation. Unbelievable.
Something good happens and you have
to dig deep until you've turned it
into something bad.

PAUL

Maurice. All we've tried to do for
the last two years is protect Joe.
Get him used to me and Alison being
apart. Not give him too much change
to understand in one go. That's why
we didn't sell the old house till
now. And why I didn't want to show
him the new house till it's
finished.

MAURICE

Has it occurred to you that if you
and Alison stopped pussyfooting
around him he might understand a
damned sight more?

PAUL

Right, what do you suggest? "Movie
night, Joe? Mrs Doubtfire or Kramer
vs Kramer?"

MAURICE

We firefighters have a saying: "Put
a blanket on the spark, the forest
won't burn down."

EDDIE

(AMUSED, TO REBECCA)

Not one of Obi-Wan Kenobi's better days.

PAUL

(OVER)

We're trying to help him cope by keeping things familiar. Why do you think I'm living here?

MAURICE

Oh, well thank you for honouring me with your company.

PAUL exits.

REBECCA

I'm here out of choice if that helps, Granddad.

MAURICE

I know, love. (DISHING UP CURRY)
Get yourself a plate. You too, Eddie.

EDDIE

(HEADING OUT)

I'm trying to be healthy.

MAURICE

So am I, that's why I'm offering you half my curry.

REBECCA starts helping herself and we . . .

CUT TO:

24

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 1. 18:03.

PAUL outside, REBECCA joins him with a plate of curry. In the background EDDIE is warming up and stretching. JOE drifts out and EDDIE starts slowly encouraging him to do the same. This pantomime unfolds as PAUL and REBECCA talk . . .

PAUL

God knows it drove us mad, but however bad things got for him he always had music.

REBECCA

And it was your thing too.

PAUL turns, smiles at being busted.

PAUL

Fair enough.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

Just give him time. We work out
what he's trying to tell us. That's
what you always used to do . . .

PAUL

Me, or Mum?

REBECCA

Both of you. You were good at it.

PAUL

You never said so at the time.

REBECCA

You were being parents. That was
your job.

PAUL

We're still parents. Both of us.

REBECCA

I know.

PAUL

And you're still angry with us.
With me.

REBECCA

No. That's fading. The first year
was bad and the second year got a
bit better but one thing I do know
now is life doesn't always work out
like you planned it.

She glances at PAUL in the hope he might pick up on this, but
he doesn't - he is thinking about Joe and next steps.

PAUL

It certainly doesn't . . .

They both look at EDDIE trying to coax JOE into doing star
jumps but nothing doing. The landscape stretches out before
them in the fading light and we contrast this with . . .

CUT TO:

25

EXT. STREETS. MANCHESTER. DAY 1. 18:10.

An urban landscape, busy Manchester streets, ALISON driving.

CUT TO:

26

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 1. 18:15.

This is ALISON's home in Manchester. Nicely done out, photos of family everywhere. Ultra organised. A computer, and by it, a big pile of books and an A4 pad with notes.

For all that, it feels empty and wrong to ALISON without Joe.

She enters - carrying bags - stares at the books. We see a couple of files marked with 'Manchester St Ann's University'. She knows she should be working but her mind is in the Lakes.

She puts down the bags and heads out to . . .

CUT TO:

27

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 1. 18:16.

Joe's room is bright, ordered, decorated, cosy. A marked contrast to the room that he has just seen at Paul's new place. ALISON springs into action, strips the bed and we . . .

CUT TO:

28

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 18:17.

ALISON loading the sheets into the washing machine.

CUT TO:

29

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 1. 18:18.

ALISON stands in Joe's bedroom. Quiet. Alone now. This moment - returning without Joe - still hits her and she has to move that on with rapid and concerted action.

She makes Joe's bed, fresh sheets, duvet cover, pillow cases, smooths the lot down and then puts his knitted Teddy back in place. Then clean pyjamas, folded on his pillow.

Ready and perfect for JOE's return - in two days time.

She turns off the light. Looks once more at the room.

CUT TO:

30

EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING 1. 18:40.

MAURICE, having just knocked at the door, waits for RALPH to come out. He and LOUISE nod . . . RALPH falls in to step next to MAURICE and we . . .

CUT TO:

31

INT. PUB. EVENING 1. 19:00.

MAURICE and RALPH sit side by side in the pub. Neither of them seem that happy to be there.

MAURICE

Fancy a game of pool?

RALPH

No.

Silence.

MAURICE

Seems to be going all right with Katie.

RALPH

Yes.

MAURICE

I think your Mum's a bit, not worried exactly, but can see you're changing, you know. It can be hard for a Mum that. So if any of them changes you want to talk to me about. Man to man and all that. Then. Well. You know where I am.

RALPH holds MAURICE's gaze.

RALPH

We need a Disco.

MAURICE

Oh. Right. Why do we need a Disco?

RALPH

For the wedding.

MAURICE

What wedding?

RALPH

My wedding.

MAURICE

Your wedding?

RALPH

Me and Katie.

MAURICE

(STUNNED)

Congratulations. (BEAT)

When did you decide this?

(CONTINUED)

RALPH
A bit back.

MAURICE
Right. Great.

A long beat. Then -

RALPH
We need a van.

RALPH lets this land. MAURICE lets this sit.

MAURICE
Why do we need a van?

RALPH
For my stuff.

MAURICE
Is this you telling me that after
you get married you want to move
out of your Mum's?

RALPH
Yes.

MAURICE
So you're getting married and
you're moving out.

RALPH
Yes.

MAURICE
And when were you going to tell
your Mum all this?

RALPH
I'm not.

MAURICE
Oh right, I get it. So I'm telling
her, am I?

RALPH
No. Don't tell Mum.

MAURICE
Eh? You're asking me to keep it
secret?

RALPH
Yes.

MAURICE
Do you want to tell me why?

RALPH

No. I don't.

Out on MAURICE.

CUT TO:

32

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 1. 21:05.

MAURICE enters, back from the pub, preoccupied by RALPH's secret. As he takes off his coat, his phone goes. He checks it: 'Louise'. He reluctantly answers . . .

LOUISE (O.S, ON PHONE)

What did you find out?

MAURICE (INTO PHONE)

Nothing to find out. We just had a drink. He's not up to anything. Got to go. (LYING) Rebecca's just walked in. Night.

MAURICE hangs up. Opens the fridge. Stares at a couple of plastic takeaway boxes with his curry leftovers in. Considers a post-pub snack. Thinks better of it, and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

33

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. PAUL & JOE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 22:30.

JOE in his bed - asleep. PAUL, awake, lies in his bed. He watches the sleeping boy, and worries.

CUT TO:

33A

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 1. 22:35

In Manchester, ALISON still awake too. In her pyjamas, at her computer, trying to work. A couple of Educational Psychology textbooks open on the table next to her.

CUT TO:

34

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. MAURICE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 23:45.

MAURICE lying in his bed. It's late now but he's wide awake. Wearing headphones. Learning Spanish from an app on his phone (NB: we don't see it).

ON HEADPHONES

"Where are you from?"

"De dónde eres?"

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE
Soy de Lake District. SUBTITLE
I am from the Lake District.

ON HEADPHONES
De dónde eres?

MAURICE
Sigo siendo de Lake District. SUBTITLE
I am still from the Lake
District.

MAURICE's phone starts flashing. We see it's Louise calling. Again. He ignores it, sticks it under his pillow.

Then from downstairs, he hears a ping. The microwave. Curious, he gets out of bed and . . .

CUT TO:

35 INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 1. 23:46.

MAURICE finds the microwave door hanging open but the culprit has gone. He goes over and checks the bin where the two empty plastic takeaway boxes have been discarded, heat still coming off them. His curry leftovers. Fucking Eddie.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. LAKE DISTRICT HILLS. DAY 2. 08:10.

Music - Orange Juice - 'Blue Boy'. Wide shot of the fells. MAURICE in running kit, powering up the hill, no sign of slowing down.

We are aware, as he is running, that his phone is ringing. EDDIE appears, catching him up. Phone still ringing.

EDDIE
You might want to answer that.

MAURICE
It'll keep.

EDDIE runs alongside MAURICE - matches him stride for stride. EDDIE's fitter. It's unnerving. The phone stops.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Running my curry off, are you?

EDDIE
What?

MAURICE
"I'm trying to be healthy." Then
you go after my leftovers under
cover of darkness.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE's phone goes again. He stops to retrieve it as EDDIE runs off. He plays a voicemail.

LOUISE (V.O.)

I know you know something, Maurice.
And I need to know what it is. Get
round here.

Out on MAURICE, knowing the shit just hit the fan.

CUT TO:

37

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 2. 08:30.

MAURICE and RALPH sit together on the sofa like two guilty schoolboys - MAURICE still in his shorts and tracksuit top. LOUISE sits opposite. RALPH looks at MAURICE to encourage him to talk. MAURICE is surprised to be taking the lead.

MAURICE

Ralph and I were having a chat.
And, well, to cut a long story
short . . .

LOUISE

That'll be a first but go on.

MAURICE

Do you mind. This is hard enough as
it is.

RALPH

I'm getting married.

MAURICE

He's getting married.

RALPH

To Katie.

A beat as LOUISE takes this in.

LOUISE

And Katie knows about this?
Because, Ralph, you'd be surprised
how many men get an idea into their
head but forget to mention it to
the woman in their lives.

LOUISE looks pointedly at MAURICE.

RALPH

Katie asked me to marry her.

LOUISE

Well, she's got good taste.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH
I said, "Yes".

LOUISE
And you've really thought it
through, have you. The pair of you?

RALPH
Yes.

LOUISE
What's your favourite film?

RALPH
School of Rock.

LOUISE
What used to be your favourite
film?

RALPH
Little Mermaid.

LOUISE
Right. And you know that film ends
with the wedding? But in real life,
that's just the start. Marriage can
be hard. Even the Little Mermaid
will argue with that soppy Prince
when he starts leaving his dirty
socks on the floor.

RALPH
I know.

LOUISE
And you might not always be able to
watch Match of the Day if Katie
doesn't want to.

RALPH
I know.

LOUISE
I'm only saying these things
because I want it to work. And I
want you both to be happy. And -

MAURICE
Ralph. Tell your Mum what you told
me. About what she said to you.
When you were 21. She said she
wanted to . . .

RALPH
Dance at my wedding one day.

And this sideswipes LOUISE. She is trying to fight tears as she comes over to RALPH and hugs him.

LOUISE

I did. I did. Congratulations.

LOUISE gives RALPH a hug and as she does so catches MAURICE's eye over his shoulder - the Congratulations not heartfelt.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

(BUSINESSLIKE)

Right. Well obviously it's fine for Katie to move in here but we should probably take a look at that room of yours. Your Paul Pogba poster might have to go.

As LOUISE heads out, MAURICE glances at RALPH, panicking.

RALPH

She likes Paul Pogba.

LOUISE (O.S.)

Who doesn't like Paul Pogba.

MAURICE looks at RALPH again. "Well?"

CUT TO:

38

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. RALPH'S BEDROOM. DAY 2. 08:33.

LOUISE looks around RALPH's room. She has the tape measure out - trying her best to be businesslike - writing down the measurements.

She looks up at the wall and is brought up short by the photos of her and Ralph. The pair of them. The team. Childhood. Adolescence. Young Adulthood. She picks up a framed photo of her and Ralph from his bedside table, sits on the bed and takes a moment. No. She is going to do this. She is going to stay in control.

But then she looks up to find MAURICE and RALPH standing at the door.

MAURICE

There's something else.

LOUISE

Well? What?

On LOUISE.

CUT TO:

39

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. BENCH. DAY 2. 08:56.

LOUISE and MAURICE.

LOUISE

I've dreamt of this moment all his life. Of him standing on his own two feet and setting off into the world without me. I wanted it more than anything. (BEAT) And at the same time I never wanted it to happen. Because it terrifies me.

MAURICE

I know.

LOUISE

And you know what else. It terrifies him too.

MAURICE

Well, he's a brave lad and . . .

LOUISE

Don't you see. The reason he didn't want to tell me is because he knows deep down he can't just move into a flat with Katie. It won't happen. He just can't admit it yet.

MAURICE

Which is why we go along with it for now. For Ralph's sake. For Katie's sake. Lad's got his pride after all.

MAURICE's bleeper goes off. He pulls it out of his pocket.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Fire never rests. Like me. Sorry.

MAURICE heads away, leaving LOUISE thoughtful on the bench. This is a heavy one to carry . . .

CUT TO:

40

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 09:05.

REBECCA enters the empty kitchen, finds cereal, a bowl, milk.

She is about to pour the milk when she sees something stir under the dining table. It is JOE. She pours the milk on the cereal and we . . .

CUT TO:

41

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 09:08.

REBECCA and JOE under the table together. Both eating cereal.

REBECCA

This is good.

JOE looks at his cereal and nods.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

A good place to sit and hide I
mean.

JOE doesn't respond.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Just to work things out.

Nothing from JOE.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I know what it feels like, you
know. Mum and Dad. Not being
together anymore. Not having the
old house anymore. I know.

Again nothing from JOE.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Sheena is a Punk Rocker?

JOE says nothing.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Go Buddy Go.

JOE still doesn't reply.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Okay. We can just hide. We all need
a place to hide every so often. Can
I share this place?

JOE

Till you go away again.

REBECCA

Yes. Till I go. But just so you
know. And just you. I'm not going
anywhere for a while.REBECCA says this with emphasis. Not that JOE will get it but
almost to herself. JOE looks into his cereal.

JOE

Ramones 1977. Stranglers 1977.

(CONTINUED)

Then he sets about his cereal.

CUT TO:

42 **EXT. STREET/CAFE BAR. MANCHESTER. DAY 2. 09:55.**

ALISON, walking towards a cafe, looks at her phone. She's about to make a call, then stops herself. Puts the phone away. A few beats . . . then she gets the phone out and makes the call.

ALISON

Hiya. I just wanted to make sure
he's okay. Yeah, I know. I know.

As she heads inside . . .

CONTINUOUS:

43 **INT. PAUL'S NEW HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 2. 09:56.**

PAUL is on his phone in the house, work scruffs on. No sign of Joe in the room - PAUL covering slightly.

PAUL

He's with me now. At the house.
He's fine.

CUT TO:

44 **INT. CAFE BAR. MANCHESTER. DAY 2. 09:57.**

ALISON still on the phone, heads behind the counter and puts on an apron - JIM, the owner, watching her.

ALISON

Good. Thank you. I'll see you
tomorrow. (LOWERS VOICE) Got to go.
I'm at work. I think my boss might
be finally starting to like me.

ALISON smiles at JIM. He half smiles back.

CUT TO:

45 **INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 2. 10:00.**

MAURICE is driving home, in his running kit (from Sc39). A Spanish language podcast is playing out of the car speakers.

LANGUAGE PODCAST

"Do you have any children?"
"Tienes hijos?"

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE
Sí. Tengo hijos. SUBTITLE
Yes. I have children.

MAURICE
(IN ENGLISH)
And they are all slowly killing me.

He slows as he drives past Paul's house, and sees the scorched front door, the skip, and BILL and RAMESH on their bikes looking over, curious.

As he passes the skip, reveal JOE, sitting in a discarded shabby armchair.

CUT TO:

46 **EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 2. 10:02.**

MAURICE has parked up and is walking towards the house, past JOE in the armchair.

MAURICE
Morning, Joe.

JOE looks at him but doesn't say anything. RAMESH, with BILL, has a notebook and calls over to MAURICE.

RAMESH
Was the fire electrical?

MAURICE
It was as it goes, Ramesh.

RAMESH
Frayed wires?

MAURICE
Frayed plasterer. He left a heater on overnight to dry the walls.

RAMESH starts to write something down. PAUL comes out and crosses to MAURICE - both looking at JOE in the armchair.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Why don't you get him a pipe and a banjo and have done with it.

PAUL
I tried to get him to come inside and he wouldn't and I have to get on with this because the sooner it's finished the sooner it'll look like home and he'll get used to it. You screwed the plan, Maurice. I'm just trying to put it right!

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

You do the house. I'll take Joe. Do one job well. Not two jobs half-arsed. Joe?

JOE gets up from the chair and crosses to MAURICE.

PAUL

Where are you going to take him?

MAURICE

Where haven't you been yet on the Divorced Dads circuit?

MAURICE turns to RAMESH who approaches with his notebook.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

It wasn't an insurance job if that's what you're getting at . . .

CUT TO:

47

INT. CAFE BAR. MANCHESTER. DAY 2. 10:03.

JIM, the cafe owner, watching ALISON. He looks irritated. ALISON is at the table of MRS JENKINSON, an elderly customer, finishing taking her order.

ALISON

I'm sure that'll be no bother.

ALISON crosses to JIM.

ALISON (CONT'D)

A tuna mayonnaise for Mrs Jenkinson with no sweetcorn?

JIM

We don't do a la carte.

ALISON

She's a nice old lady and the sweetcorn gets stuck in her dentures.

JIM

She should have taken care of her teeth when she was younger . . . and the filling is made up already.

ALISON

Oh come on, Jim. How long would it take you to open a tin of tuna?
I'll do it.

ALISON moves behind the counter and busily starts to open a tin of tuna.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)

It's good for business. She's in here every day. We go the extra mile, Mrs Jenkinson will tell her friends and they'll all come . . .

JIM

Have any of them got their own teeth?

ALISON

I know how these things work.

JIM

Is this where you tell me you ran your own diner for ten years?

ALISON starts to make the sandwich.

ALISON

It's the little things, the details. You don't spell halloumi with two "o's".

JIM

You know what, Alison. I don't want you coming in anymore.

ALISON

What?

JIM

I mean it. I'm sacking you. Give you a week's wages but you don't have to serve notice.

ALISON

You're sacking me because I'm making a sandwich for a pensioner. Seriously?

JIM

It isn't just the sandwich. It's everything.

ALISON

Everything? I come in early and I go home late. I'm still cleaning tables at 9 at night.

JIM

That's the problem. This isn't how I like to run things.

ALISON

Efficiently?

(CONTINUED)

JIM

Relaxed. You're too much. I know it just sounds like an excuse.

ALISON

It is an excuse. You can't sack me for being competent.

JIM

You never have a cloth out of your hand. You smell of bleach. You think you know best. You customise the menu. Change the specials. I didn't come into the cafe trade for that . . .

ALISON

It's how to run a cafe.

JIM

Not this one. You just do my head in. I'm sorry.

ALISON

Is this where I say, "I really need this job for my kid." And you say, "I'm not running a charity." And I say, "I'm a damned good waitress." And you say, "One more chance"?

JIM

No. It isn't. Nowhere near.

ALISON hands him the tin of tuna and exits - watched by MRS JENKINSON.

CUT TO:

48

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 10:10.

MAURICE enters with JOE. REBECCA tidying up.

MAURICE

Get your rucksack not your weekend bag and put in what you want to take. Ten minutes. Starting now!

MAURICE presses his watch, JOE exits slowly.

REBECCA

You do know he can't tell the time.

MAURICE

I know. But one of us has to look like we're in charge. Taking him to the petting zoo.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Ice Cream and the smell of goat
shit is enough to cheer anybody up.
You fancy it?

REBECCA's phone has pinged.

REBECCA
(READING A TEXT)
No. I'm at The Fellside all day.

MAURICE
Don't let me interrupt your
reading. When did eye contact go
out of fashion?

REBECCA
(LOOKING UP)
Sorry. It's Mum. She's been sacked.
She's furious.

On MAURICE . . .

CUT TO:

49

EXT. ALISON'S HOUSE. MANCHESTER. DAY 2. 11:50.

ALISON reaches her front door, still dazed by the sacking, to find MAURICE (now in regular clothes) standing with JOE, ringing the doorbell.

ALISON
Dad?

MAURICE turns and smiles . . .

CUT TO:

50

EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 2. 12:05.

MAURICE and ALISON, with coffees, walk together to a bench, will sit down. JOE nearby. ALISON has told MAURICE what happened with Jim.

ALISON
Do you think I'm a hard person to
be around? "Too much"?

MAURICE
No. Not at all. (BEAT) Not all the
time. (BEAT) And I'm not sure Jim
the cafe owner is much of a judge
of character.

ALISON
Well he did once try and dry his
hands on a laminated menu.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)
But it was a job, you know. And it fit round Joe and my Uni course.

MAURICE
You'll find something else . . .

ALISON
I have spent the last ten years fighting my son's corner. I spoke out because I had to. I don't regret it. But I know the fighting made me hard to be around. And maybe it got to be a habit, and now I'm just always looking for a fight . . . I don't want to be like that.

MAURICE
You're better at making the best of things than I ever was.

(ALISON LOOKS AT HIM)
Starting again. Setting up here. With Joe. Doing a degree at your age. Not that you're old, I mean -

ALISON smiles, letting him off the hook.

ALISON
When you have a kid like Joe you get used to feeling like you're failing. But you get through. And then me and Paul . . . well, we really failed him by splitting up.

MAURICE
Hang on. He left you. So if anyone needs to be kicking their own arse, it's him.

ALISON
You're missing the point, Dad. When anything goes wrong. Even getting sacked from a shit job. It feels ten times worse than it should. It feels like I'm failing Joe all over again.

A long beat while MAURICE turns this over.

MAURICE
You feel like a failure? I've got two divorced kids - and I'm being outmanoeuvred by Ralph. How do you think I feel?

ALISON laughs. They both look at JOE who carefully takes his spare headphones out of his rucksack and puts them on.

(CONTINUED)

For a moment we hear his music, full fat - Delta 5, 'Mind Your Own Business' - and see ALISON and MAURICE, drinking coffee, from JOE's POV.

DELTA 5

"Can I have a taste of your ice cream?
Can I lick the crumbs from your table?
Can I interfere in your crisis?
No, mind your own business
No, mind your own business . . ."

MAURICE

Well, that's a turn up.

ALISON

What?

MAURICE

Joe chucked his headphones in the lake after he saw the new house.
Refused to wear them altogether.
Did Paul not tell you?

ALISON

Probably didn't want me to know.
Wanted to handle it on his own. Or not handle it.

ALISON looks saddened by this thought, then another thought occurs and she turns to MAURICE.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Come on. We need to pick up some paint.

Out on MAURICE - what?

CUT TO:

51

INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 2. 12:45.

Lunchtime, early, a smattering of Diners. MARK is laying a table. REBECCA waiting on. PAUL, in his painting gear, has been handed a sandwich through the kitchen hatch. He sits eating it as REBECCA picks up an order.

REBECCA

I can cover your shift tonight too, if you want to crack on with the house. Need all the money I can make.

PAUL

Are you actually going to do any reading on this reading week?

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA heads off with the order. PAUL notices there's a fork missing from MARK's table and puts one there, only for MARK to touch it lightly and move it a millimetre to the left.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Did you always do that?

MARK
What?

PAUL touches the fork again, to one side, MARK moves it back.

PAUL
That. Was that something you always did or did it change when you were growing up?

MARK
I'm still growing up.

PAUL takes his plate to the kitchen hatch. MARK follows him.

PAUL
(TAKING IN MARK'S HEIGHT)
I hope that's not true - we'll need to move the lights. What I mean is - when you were growing up. Did you do anything strange? Different to what you did before? New things?

MARK
I asked a girl out and she said no and I sat in the kitchen with a bucket on my head for three days.

PAUL
(SMILES)
Yes. But did you do anything strange?

PAUL sits back down. MARK follows.

MARK
You're smiling so it's a joke.

PAUL
Did you change what you did? When you were upset? As you got older?

MARK
I learnt to shut down the bits I didn't need.

PAUL
How did you do that?

MARK
Techniques.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Like what?

MARK

Shutting down the bits I didn't need. (BEAT) I've still got the bucket if you want to borrow it.

PAUL looks at MARK. He can't tell if he is joking or not and MARK is giving nothing away. He approaches a table of DINERS.

MARK (CONT'D)

Are you ready to order?

DINER

What would you recommend?

MARK

The Monkfish curry is nice but Chef recommends we shift the bastard scallops if we can.

The DINERS don't look too put out by this recommendation.

CUT TO:

52

EXT. DIY STORE CAR PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 2. 13:30.

A trolley by the boot of MAURICE's car. ALISON, MAURICE and JOE have loaded paint tins, rollers, brushes and paint trays into the boot. JOE loads the final item in a precise JOE way, then moves things slightly so everything is neatly side by side, to correspond to some pre-ordained pattern in his head.

Then, as ALISON and MAURICE talk, he goes to the side of the car and starts to draw in the dirt on one of the windows.

ALISON

Good lad. (TO MAURICE) Just leave it at Paul's new house.

MAURICE

Tooth fairy job. Okay. If you say so. Very nice of you.

ALISON

Sooner he gets finished the better for Joe.

MAURICE

I know it might not feel like it sometimes but you are doing great. You're strong and you need to be. You need to be.

MAURICE heads off to return the trolley to the store.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON
You okay, love?

JOE doesn't move, leans forward and leaves a kiss mark in the window dirt.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Joe . . .

JOE starts to bang the car window - rhythmic, and chants along with the banging.

JOE
"What could be better? What's going well? What could be better? What's going well?"

ALISON
What's bothering you? Hey?

As JOE repeats his 'chant', we see a man - BEN - who is parked nearby and is finishing loading his work van with garden equipment. He sees the situation and stops. He is clearly wanting to be supportive.

BEN
Are you okay?

ALISON
Yes. I'm fine. But thank you . . .

BEN
No problem, got one like that at home.

BEN smiles and moves off but ALISON is slightly rattled by the phrase. Her default reaction when it concerns Joe.

ALISON
"One like what?"

BEN
Sorry. I didn't mean. A kid, you know, who plays up. I didn't mean -

ALISON
I don't care what you meant. We're fine. Okay. He's not "playing up".

BEN
Right. Sorry. Sorry.

MAURICE arrives back, looking concerned.

MAURICE
Everything alright?

(CONTINUED)

BEN
Yes. I'm just . . .

MAURICE
I'm her Dad.

BEN
(BEMUSED)
Right. Well, I'll go home and get
my Dad, shall I?

BEN gets into his van, clearly thinking they are a pair of lunatics. ALISON looks at MAURICE - it's happened again.

ALISON
See what I mean? Too much.

ALISON turns to JOE, goes level with him. Her tone changes.

ALISON (CONT'D)
I'll pick you up tomorrow night. It
was nice to see you. But now it's
time for you to go there. And for
me to stay here. Yes?

JOE
There. Here. Here. There.

ALISON
(TOMMY COOPER)
Just like that.

JOE
Just like that.

They do a "Goodbye" handshake and hug. MAURICE watches, he knows this is a struggle. ALISON catches him watching. A nod of acknowledgement. ALISON steers JOE to the car door.

CUT TO:

53

INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/LAKE DISTRICT. DAY 2. 14:55.

MAURICE driving JOE back to Lakes - he is in the back with his headphones on. MAURICE's Spanish language podcast plays out of the car speakers but MAURICE isn't joining in. He's watching JOE in the mirror. As JOE recognises the landscape he carefully takes his headphones off and puts them back into his rucksack. MAURICE notices this and we . . .

CUT TO:

54

INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 2. 15:30.

JOE sits in the car. The boot is open. MAURICE comes out of Paul's house and takes a big tub of paint from the boot.

(CONTINUED)

As he carries it to the house, he gives an encouraging look to JOE but JOE doesn't move. He's not going back in that house.

CUT TO:

55

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 2. 15:40.

MAURICE has now put all the DIY purchases in the room. He looks at the room and then crosses to the window and looks out at JOE sitting alone in the car.

CUT TO:

56

INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 2. 15:41.

MAURICE comes out of the house. He opens the car door and leans in to JOE, holds a piece of chalk out to him . . . JOE can't help but be interested.

CUT TO:

57

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 17:00.

MAURICE and JOE enter. PAUL is cooking. EDDIE on his laptop.

PAUL

All right, champion. Have you had a good day?

MAURICE opens the fridge and takes stock, he notices one scotch egg left from a pack of two, glances at EDDIE.

PAUL (CONT'D)

How was the zoo?

MAURICE

(FROM THE FRIDGE)

Didn't get there actually. Alison called. She needed me over in Manchester so I took Joe with me.

PAUL waits for JOE to exit then turns on MAURICE.

PAUL

(ANGRY)

Brilliant! Why don't you add to his confusion by taking him to Manchester - the place he lives in the week! We've set up a structure for a reason!

MAURICE

He didn't seem to mind.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

How do you know he didn't mind?

MAURICE

He put his headphones back on for a start . . .

PAUL

What? He wore his headphones in Manchester?

MAURICE

Because he's doing a Neil Diamond, isn't he?

PAUL

What?

MAURICE

'I Am, I Said.' When he's in Manchester, his music reminds him of home. But when he's here he doesn't wear them because home doesn't feel like home anymore.

EDDIE

When did Neil Diamond move to Manchester?

PAUL

And he wants to punish me for that. I get it.

MAURICE

He isn't punishing you. He's trying to handle the fact that everything has changed.

PAUL looks puzzled.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

And he will get used to it. I mean, if I can coax him back into your house I'm damned sure you can too.

PAUL

What? You took him in the new house? Again? After everything I said?

EDDIE

Dad. Bloody hell.

MAURICE

(GIVES UP)

Oh, lovely. Do a man a favour and make an enemy for life. I'm off to Louise's.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE walks out. PAUL shouts after him.

PAUL

You took him in the new house?!

HARD CUT TO:

58

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 2. 17:30.

PAUL stands in the new house, in Joe's room, taking in the painting equipment that Maurice has brought there . . . but more importantly looking at two chalk full-body silhouettes on the wall - one of Maurice and one of Joe - side by side.

He smiles to himself, approves of this. Feels a bit of a shit for shouting at Maurice. EDDIE enters, carrying two mugs of coffee. He sees the outlines too.

EDDIE

Was there a murder?

PAUL

If there was, it didn't show up on the survey. No. Maurice did it. Got to admit, it's not a bad idea. For Joe, I mean. Help him get settled. Help him get over . . .

EDDIE

You can say the it, 'The Divorce.'

PAUL

I was going to say "all the change in his life."

EDDIE

I do get it, you know. I was just the same when me and Nicola split up. "Divorce." "Single parent." They feel like words you'd use about somebody else, don't they?

PAUL

I'm not frightened of saying it.

EDDIE

Look at me. My 4 year old daughter in London. I see her every other weekend. None of it feels like me. But it is. And I have to accept it.

PAUL

You're being understanding about a problem that I don't actually have.

EDDIE

Right. Right.

But EDDIE is not convinced, and PAUL is not convincing. They find themselves staring at the chalk outlines.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Does this mean that my Dad isn't as mad as we think?

PAUL
I wouldn't go that far.

PAUL turns to EDDIE and we . . .

CUT TO:

59

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LOUISE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 2. 21:40.

MAURICE at LOUISE's, but getting it in the neck again, as they stand at either side of the bed undressing. As each item of clothing comes off, the argument gets worse.

MAURICE
Ralph blinked? That's your proof?
Everybody blinks.

LOUISE
This was his guilty blink. I know it. I asked him if he wanted to look at flats and he said, "No". Then he blinked. He's hiding something.

MAURICE
I'm getting the feeling you think I'm to blame.

LOUISE
It was your idea to go along with it. Can you just come clean and tell me what else he's told you.

MAURICE
He hasn't told me anything.

LOUISE
And you expect me to believe that?

MAURICE
I expect you to trust me, yes.

LOUISE
Even though you lied last time.

Both down to their underwear. They get into bed, exasperated.

MAURICE
I didn't lie. I kept his secret.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

So how do I know you're not keeping his secret this time and you know something I don't?

MAURICE sighs, fed up, gets out of bed and proceeds to get dressed again.

MAURICE

I've had enough of this.

LOUISE

Did we have sex then, I didn't notice.

MAURICE

I can't just turn it on and off like a tap, you know. I'm not your plaything.

LOUISE

Rest assured, Maurice, I could never mistake you for my plaything.

MAURICE, in a huff, picks up the rest of his clothes and heads out.

CUT TO:

60

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. NIGHT 2. 22:10.

MAURICE gets out of his car and stomps towards the house. He is furious. Everything has turned to shit.

CUT TO:

61

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 2. 22:12.

MAURICE stares into the fridge as he talks. The scotch egg he was looking at in Scene 57 is gone. He starts to laugh.

MAURICE

Of course. Of course. My scotch egg. Why would it be here when it's the only thing I want?

EDDIE enters.

EDDIE

Are you all right, Dad?

MAURICE

Paul bollocks me for taking Joe to Manchester to help him out.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE (CONT'D)

And now Louise gives me grief for not telling her Ralph's secret, which I can't tell her because he kept it secret from me too because I made him tell her his last secret.

EDDIE

Let that be a lesson to you, to stay out of other people's business.

MAURICE

(ROLLING ON)

I'm a volunteer fire fighter, I'm learning Spanish, I've joined the choir, I run the hiking group, I've got three lodgers I didn't ask for, a girlfriend, a reluctant step-son and a dodgy knee. So you would think, would you not, that in the greater scheme of things, a scotch egg was not too much to ask?

EDDIE

Erm, no.

MAURICE

You're not denying taking it I see.

EDDIE

I thought the scotch egg was a metaphor.

MAURICE

Did you eat it?

EDDIE

Yes. It was delicious. I had a pickle analogy on the side. I did not eat your scotch egg.

MAURICE

Do you think I'm some kind of idiot?

MAURICE exits upstairs.

EDDIE

Several kinds . . .

CUT TO:

62

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. MAURICE'S BEDROOM. DAY 3. 07:00.

MAURICE wakes up. He checks his phone. No messages. It is early. Very early. He has an idea.

CUT TO:

63

INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/LOUISE'S HOUSE. DAY 3. 08:15.

Still early. We are with MAURICE watching Louise's house - playing Detective. As he does so he looks at his watch and keeps two fingers on his neck pulse. Counting. Then suddenly alert as he sees a taxi arrive a few doors down from Louise's - then KATIE and RALPH exit the house and get in. The taxi drives away. MAURICE starts up his car and we . . .

CUT TO:

64

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE. DAY 3. 08:20.

PAUL walks up the road with JOE - they are both wearing old scruffy clothes and PAUL is carrying two old shirts. JOE is carrying a brush. They stop outside the house.

PAUL

You open it.

PAUL hands the key to JOE. He gives PAUL the brush. He opens the door. Then he locks it and gives the key back to PAUL.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll open it and this time we'll go inside. If you want . . .

PAUL opens the door. He heads in first. JOE does the door thing and goes in after him and we . . .

CUT TO:

65

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 3. 08:22.

They both step into the room. PAUL smiles at the two chalk outlines on the wall. JOE goes and stands inside his outline, facing PAUL. PAUL nods. He gets it. JOE takes the Sheriff's Badge out of his pocket and puts it under the skirting board. PAUL nods. JOE nods.

CUT TO:

66

EXT. FLAT. DAY 3. 08:30.

We're outside a flat. The taxi is about to pull away. MAURICE has followed in his car, looks up at the flat . . .

HARD CUT TO:

67

EXT. FLAT. DAY 3. 08:35.

We find MAURICE crouched down, crawling into place below one of the windows. Slowly, he raises his head above the parapet, and . . .

CUT TO:

68

INT. FLAT. DAY 3. 08:35.

From MAURICE's POV we see RALPH, KATIE, Katie's Mum and Dad, STEVE and CLARE, and JEAN - Social Worker - looking back at MAURICE from inside an empty flat.

CUT TO:

69

INT. FLAT. DAY 3. 08:40.

RALPH and KATIE stand a short distance away, RALPH looking on with some disapproval at MAURICE. MAURICE is holding a cup of tea with STEVE and CLARE and JEAN.

CLARE

I'm sure Ralph was going to tell you about the flat when he felt everything was in place. Isn't that right Ralph?

RALPH nods unconvincingly.

STEVE

Weren't you, Ralph?

KATIE

We wanted to do it for ourselves.

MAURICE

I get that. Just, you know, it's hard to find somewhere by yourself and . . .

JEAN

And that's why they've been sensible these last few months and taken it one step at a time.

MAURICE

These last few months?

(CONTINUED)

JEAN

Yes. With Katie's Mum and Dad, and my input, as a social worker. We did assessments and Ralph and Katie came to the decision that it would suit them to live independently, but with a bit of help. Supported Living. And this place came up last week . . .

MAURICE

(PUZZLED)

So, you knew about this did you?

STEVE and CLARE nod.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

But you didn't think to pick the phone up to talk it through with his Mum?

KATIE

I told you we should have told your Mum.

CLARE

(OVER)

I assumed you had.

RALPH

I wanted to do it by myself.

MAURICE

(EXASPERATED)

I get that, Ralph. I get that. But it might have been the kind thing to do. All right? It might have been kind.

There is a silence in the room now.

RALPH

I was trying to be kind.

RALPH looks away, KATIE grips his hand and we . . .

CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 3. 08:50.

PAUL and JOE are wearing shirts back to front for overalls.

PAUL

I know I messed up, and I know it might not feel like it right now, but this is going to be okay. I promise. (BEAT) Now this wall.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)
We are going to change this wall.
You and me. We're going to make
this feel like yours. Now that bit
is yours. Over there.

PAUL points to one corner of the room where a tray of emulsion and a brush and roller stand ready. PAUL has the same in his corner. JOE walks over to the tray.

PAUL (CONT'D)
We can meet in the middle.

PAUL soaks his roller and starts to paint. JOE watches him, then dips his brush in his paint and makes tiny marks on the wall. The tiniest marks he can make.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Good paint work. This might take a
while but so far, so good.

Encouraged, PAUL turns the radio on - some indie show playing The Stranglers, 'Go Buddy Go'. He returns to his paint.

JOE crosses and turns off the radio. Returns to his paint.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Never liked The Stranglers anyway.
(BEAT) Silence is good. Yes.
Silence is fine.

They both paint. Side by side.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Silence is just fine.

And they paint on in silence.

CUT TO:

71

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. LEAFY PATH. DAY 3. 09:30.

MAURICE walking with LOUISE.

MAURICE
Ralph was worried because he and Katie decided they would like to live on their own, but they'd need a bit of help with it.

LOUISE
I don't understand. Why would that worry me?

MAURICE
He thinks he's let you down.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE
By finding somewhere to live?

MAURICE
By accepting he needs some help.
It's not the flat he didn't want to
tell you about. You've told him all
his life he can do anything. That
nothing can hold him back. And you
did a great job getting him to
believe that. So he thinks he's let
you down, for deciding that him and
Katie might not be able to do it
all on their own.

A beat, MAURICE looks at LOUISE.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
I said I knew you wouldn't think
that . . .

LOUISE stops walking.

LOUISE
If he's scared of telling me then I
have let him down.

If LOUISE wasn't LOUISE she would be in tears by now.

MAURICE
No, you haven't. You really
haven't. You wanted him to be
independent and he's been
independent. And he's lied to his
Mother. No more proof needed that
he's growing up. Hey?

Out on LOUISE, laughing to stop herself from crying.

CUT TO:

72

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. RALPH'S BEDROOM. DAY 3. 10:05.

A knock at the door. LOUISE comes into RALPH's room. He is pretending to be interested in a football magazine. LOUISE puts her arm around him. He doesn't move, his eyes down.

LOUISE
You know when you swam in the
swimming gala.

RALPH
Yes.

LOUISE
I knew then. You know when you sang
solo in the Christmas service.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH

Yes.

LOUISE

I knew then. You know when I had cancer and you asked me if I was going to die.

RALPH

Yes.

LOUISE

I knew then. Because nobody else was brave enough to ask me. And you were. I knew you could do anything. Because I know you will always do the brave thing. I'm proud of you. And you could never disappoint me. Or let me down. You have made a choice. And you made a good choice because you thought about it and you were brave enough to say you and Katie might need a bit of help. I always told you that you could do anything because I believed it. And I still do. I didn't mean you needed to do everything on your own to prove me right. You're a force of nature. So none of this worry about letting me down. Ever. I couldn't be prouder of you.

RALPH looks down at his magazine. LOUISE sits there for a while longer with her arm around him . . .

CUT TO:

73

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LANDING/STAIRS. DAY 3. 10:06.

MAURICE on the landing, has been listening near the door of Ralph's bedroom. He goes and sits on the stairs as LOUISE comes out of the room. She sits on the stairs next to him.

LOUISE

Did you hear any of that?

MAURICE

No. (BEAT) Some of it. (BEAT) All of it.

LOUISE puts her head on MAURICE's shoulder. She puts her hand on his. Turns to him, looks him in the eye.

LOUISE

You're a battering ram, Maurice. But sometimes a battering ram is exactly what's needed.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

And they sit together, side by side on the stairs in silence. RALPH comes out of his room, eyes them both with the disdain of a parent who has caught teenagers on the sofa and goes back into his room . . .

CUT TO:

74

EXT. LAY-BY. DAY 3. 14:30.

PAUL waiting by his car. JOE is sitting in the back. ALISON pulls in, in her car, and parks nearby. Waves to JOE as she gets out. JOE nods but doesn't get out of the car yet.

We see here that it is still raw for PAUL and ALISON, and they want to get these conversations over with quickly, but they have to talk about Joe - and that will always pull them back in. PAUL is the more defensive of the two.

PAUL

No headphones. As you can see.

ALISON

All the years we wanted it to happen. And when it happens it scares you to death.

PAUL

It scares me to death because it meant he was in distress.

ALISON

I know. Calm down. I wasn't getting at you.

PAUL

Maurice was right. When Joe's here the music reminds him that too much has changed. But if he thinks he can be one way with you and something else with me isn't that going to be bad for him? Consistency is the thing, right?

ALISON

It is for bedtimes and getting ready for school. But we split up.

PAUL

I'm aware of that.

ALISON

And it split him up too. And I'm not saying this to make you feel guilty or depressed. I'm just saying it so that you can see Joe might be one thing with you and another with me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)

And that's what he needs to do to deal with it. And we have to go along with that. Because we had a choice. And he didn't.

PAUL

Right.

ALISON

We just have to face that on our own. Like he does.

PAUL nods in agreement . . . the car door opens. JOE gets out. PAUL goes to eye level with him.

PAUL

Time to go there with Mum. I will be here.

JOE

There. Here. Here. There.

PAUL

(TOMMY COOPER)

Just like that.

JOE

Just like that.

They shake hands. JOE crosses the short distance between PAUL and ALISON's car and, as he does so, he puts his headphones on. He gets in. PAUL watches them drive away and we . . .

CUT TO:

75

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 3. 14:50.

RALPH sits opposite LOUISE.

RALPH

Is Maurice going to die soon?

LOUISE

Not soon, no. As long as he behaves himself.

RALPH

He'll help you. When I've moved out.

LOUISE

Yes. Yes, he will.

RALPH

But he isn't me.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

No.

RALPH

I'll still help you. When I'm
married.

LOUISE takes a moment to take in the enormity of this, then
recovers herself.

LOUISE

I should bloody well think so.

Out on LOUISE, smiling at RALPH. He smiles back.

CUT TO:

76

EXT/INT. MANCHESTER/ALISON'S CAR. DAY 3. 16:25.

JOE is in the back of the car, headphones on, staring at the
passing urban landscape. We hear his music - Ambition,
'Subway Sect'. Starting with the keyboards and riff . . .

SUBWAY SECT

"You can take it or leave it as far
as we're concerned
Because we're not concerned with
you . . ."

HARD CUT TO:

77

EXT. MANCHESTER. ROAD TO ALISON'S HOUSE. DAY 3. 16:35.

JOE walks two yards ahead of ALISON towards the house.
Headphones still on, music playing. She is carrying his bag.

SUBWAY SECT

"What you want is buried in the
present tense
Blind alleyways allay the jewels."

When JOE gets to the front door, he stops and stands with his
back to the door. The music carries on as JOE stares out at
this urban landscape. A small boy in a big city.
Discombobulated. ALISON watching him.

CUT TO:

78

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. EVENING 3. 19:12.

JOE sitting up in bed, ALISON next to him. They have a 'Three
Houses' worksheet in front of them - three sections, each a
house: "WORRIES - What could be better? GOOD THINGS - What's
going well? DREAMS - What does a good life look like?"

(CONTINUED)

JOE has drawn loads of stick men in the 'Worries' section. One stick man in 'Good Things'. ALISON points to 'Worries'.

JOE
Worries are everybody.

ALISON
Okay. And who is this? The good thing.

JOE
Rebecca.

ALISON reflects on this, points to the 'DREAMS' section.

ALISON
And what about this. What would you like to happen? Anything.

ALISON taps at the empty house. JOE taps at the empty house. Then he lies down, clearly not going to engage anymore. He puts out his hand, palm up, ALISON joins her palm to his.

ALISON (CONT'D)
It will be all right. Everything will be all right.

JOE lets his hand drop. Closes his eyes. ALISON stays there.

CUT TO:

79 EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. NIGHT 3. 22:48.

It's late. MAURICE's house stands silent.

CUT TO:

80 INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 3. 22:49.

Everyone else asleep. We find MAURICE sitting in his chair. Waiting. Or rather, lying in wait. Struggling to stay awake.

Suddenly he hears a bedroom door opening upstairs. At last.

He hides behind the kitchen door and waits . . . as we hear footsteps coming downstairs and padding into the kitchen.

As soon as he hears the fridge door open, MAURICE comes out from behind the door, ready to bust Eddie.

But it's not Eddie. It's REBECCA. She turns round.

REBECCA
That hasn't scared me since I was ten years old.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE
You're not Eddie.

REBECCA
Well spotted.

REBECCA turns back to the fridge. MAURICE stands, puzzled.

MAURICE
Did you take my curry the other
night, Rebecca? And my scotch egg?

REBECCA
Yes. Sorry about that. Were you
saving it for anything special?

MAURICE
Eating it. Digesting it. That sort
of arrangement.

REBECCA has opened the freezer and takes out a fish pie.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Rebecca?

REBECCA
Yes.

MAURICE
You're eating a fish pie in the
middle of the night. And I've only
ever seen one other person do that.
Your Mother. When she was pregnant.
With you.

Out on REBECCA, looking back at MAURICE - busted.

CUT TO:

81

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 3. 22:52.

MAURICE and REBECCA sit up, MAURICE has split the fish pie between them and they are both eating. MAURICE glances at REBECCA, even he knows he has to handle this delicately.

MAURICE
Assuming it still takes two to make
a baby, who is the Dad?

REBECCA
He was an ex-boyfriend.

MAURICE
"Ex" straight after he found out
you were pregnant, was he? I've met
his type. Your Dad with all due
respect.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA

No. We weren't together. He'll be involved. But not all the time. I've got this. I'm sorted with it. I just have to make sure everybody else is . . . including my Mum and Dad. I know that's asking a lot.

MAURICE

You'll be surprised. They might take it better than you expect.

REBECCA

How did you take it when Mum told you that she was pregnant?

MAURICE

You know how your real Dad walks funny? That's how I took it.

REBECCA

Oh, God.

MAURICE

But if I've learnt anything this week it's that you tell everybody as soon as you can. Don't keep secrets. You get your Mum and Dad together, and I will be with you every step of the way.

Out on MAURICE's certainty. REBECCA hugs him.

CUT TO:

82

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 4. 08:45.

Monday morning at Joe's school in Manchester. Music - Wire, 'Dot Dash' - plays over . . .

At the door of the Unit, meeting and greeting pupils and talking to parents, is HEATHER - Joe's teacher.

HEATHER

Morning Asif. (SHAKES HAND) Nice haircut. Good morning, Daisy. (TO PARENT) We'll keep an eye and ring you if she seems under the weather. (SALUTES ONE CHILD THREE TIMES THEN HANDSHAKES) Good morning, Jack.

Another child, a GIRL, presents her with a leaf.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Thank you. I'll put this in the nature scrapbook.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

HEATHER (CONT'D)

(TO PARENT) Can you send that
permission slip in for the climbing
wall trip? Sorry to nag!HEATHER looks at her watch and looks out at the playground
where we see ALISON's car arriving . . .

CONTINUOUS:

83

INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/SCHOOL ENTRANCE. DAY 4. 08:46.JOE is in the back seat, headphones on. The music we've been
hearing is his.From JOE's POV: a Father and Daughter arguing beside a van.
The father is BEN and the daughter is MOLLY (11). Ben's van
is the one we saw in Scene 52, with the name of his Gardening
business on the side. MOLLY wears the uniform of the adjacent
mainstream primary school but topped off with a feather boa
and a sparkly bowler hat. The music stops, abruptly.

ALISON

All right, my man. School time.

CUT TO:

84

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 4. 08:47.JOE is out of the car - and while ALISON is getting his bag
out of the boot, JOE walks across to BEN and MOLLY. As he
gets close we see what has grabbed his attention - a red
feather that has fallen from the boa as MOLLY has shaken it.JOE picks it up and stands watching the following while
holding the feather.

BEN

I'm going to count to three. You
give me the boa and the hat and you
go into school else I come in with
you and embarrass you. One. Two.
Three.

MOLLY

Dad. Nobody will even notice.

ALISON is walking across now and witnessing this, recognising
BEN as the man she tore a strip off outside the DIY shop.

BEN

I'll notice. Your teacher will
notice. One. Two. Three.

MOLLY

I'm not five years old.

(CONTINUED)

BEN turns and sees JOE who is holding up the feather.

BEN

Thank you, mate. You keep it.

MOLLY sighs, puts the hat and boa on BEN, and flounces off to her school. ALISON laughs as BEN takes the hat and boa off.

ALISON

They suit you. And she's got a point. Did the count to three routine ever work in the history of child-rearing?

BEN

This is all I meant. I've got a kid. And she sometimes plays up. I'm sorry if I offended you or spoke out of turn or . . .

JOE is turning the feather in his hand. BEN notices his fascination. In the background HEATHER starts to walk over.

ALISON

Maybe I over-reacted. I can be a bit over-sensitive around this young man. Pick a fight where there might not be one . . .

BEN

Does it happen a lot?

ALISON

Not really. Once, twice, sometimes three times a day.

BEN

I'm not easily offended. I'm a landscape gardener. I'm trained in anger management.

Without missing a beat, BEN takes a better, bigger feather from the boa and hands it to JOE. Speaks quietly, throwaway.

BEN (CONT'D)

There you go, mate.

JOE takes it, looks at BEN. BEN smiles but not over the top. ALISON notes this. He might be okay. HEATHER has arrived.

HEATHER

Good morning Joe. Shall we go in?

ALISON

Sorry Heather. Got distracted. I shouted at him in a car park the other day.

HEATHER

What've I told you about shouting
at strange men in car parks.

ALISON

He was patronising me.

BEN

I wasn't patronising her. If that's
not too patronising to point out.

HEATHER

We're doing emotional regulation in
the nurture room later if you two
want to join?

HEATHER and ALISON break away and walk towards the school entrance with JOE. JOE turns once to look at BEN through the filter of the red feather. BEN half waves.

ALISON

He's had a tricky weekend. It's all
in the book.

HEATHER

Not just him by the sounds of it.

ALISON smiles. She goes down to JOE level.

ALISON

Hug or handshake?

JOE

Handshake.

They shake hands. JOE walks to the door with HEATHER. ALISON watches him shake hands with HEATHER before they head inside.

ALISON returns to her car and BEN shouts across from his van.

BEN

Ben, by the way.

ALISON indicates BEN's name on the side of the van.

ALISON

Very good. Now can you read the
rest of the words?

BEN smiles.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Sorry. Alison.

ALISON gets in her car, a half wave from BEN who gets in his van.

(CONTINUED)

She smiles to herself. She doesn't know why. That was nice, and surprising. Then an idea starts to form . . .

CUT TO:

85 INT. CAFE BAR. MANCHESTER. DAY 4. 09:30.

JIM looks up as ALISON enters and crosses to MRS JENKINSON, who is sitting at her familiar table. ALISON fishes in her bag and puts a wrapped sandwich on the table.

ALISON

Tuna Mayonnaise. No sweetcorn.

ALISON walks out again, smiling to herself, as her phone beeps. She looks at it and the smile fades and we . . .

CUT TO:

86 INT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. RECEPTION. DAY 4. 09:45.

DR GRAVES comes into Reception to be ambushed by MAURICE.

MAURICE

There. See. Fit as a fiddle.
Indestructible.

DR. GRAVES

What? Have you got an appointment?

MAURICE

I don't need an appointment I am
just showing you. Indestructible.
And I have to be . . .

DR. GRAVES

It's only been a weekend, Maurice.

MAURICE

And what a weekend. Five crises
sorted and not a breath out of
place. I just wanted to reassure
you. Feel my pulse if you like.

DR. GRAVES

I'm medically trained, Maurice. I'm
pretty sure you're alive. My advice
still stands. The next crisis that
comes along? Walk away . . .

CUT TO:

87 INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 4. 11:05.

PAUL sitting waiting, ALISON enters.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Hi.

ALISON

Hi.

PAUL

Did he get to school all right?

ALISON

Yes. Have you got any idea what's going on?

PAUL shakes his head, "No" and we . . .

CUT TO:

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EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 4. 11:07.

MAURICE walking towards the house with REBECCA.

MAURICE

It'll be fine. She can hardly take the moral high ground, can she? Got pregnant herself at your age . . .

REBECCA

Yeah. You're right. You're right.

MAURICE

Although I wouldn't use that as your opener.

REBECCA

(PANICKING)

I haven't got an opener.

MAURICE

You go in there, and you start by saying "We're going to need a cot."

REBECCA

That's brilliant.

MAURICE

I'll be with you all the way.
Ready?

REBECCA

Ready.

They disappear into the house. We stay outside. A long beat.

Then MAURICE comes striding out, at pace. And does a runner.

END OF EPISODE
ONE