

# THE A WORD

## SERIES 3

**Episode Two**

**SHOOTING SCRIPT**

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1

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 4. 11:00.

JOE and REBECCA sitting together, staring out at the landscape, stillness. JOE does not make eye contact in this exchange. REBECCA does not expect him to. (NB: REBECCA is now 18 weeks pregnant).

REBECCA

I want to tell you something. And we can talk about it as much as you like. Or not. I'm going to have a baby. It's going to be born before Christmas. And then there will be the three of us. You, me and the baby, and the baby will be your friend. A new friend.

A beat.

JOE

Where is it now.

REBECCA points to her tummy.

REBECCA

In here. Growing. Until it's ready to come into the world and meet you.

JOE

Will it cry. Like Baby Emily.

REBECCA

Yes. Sometimes it will cry. Sometimes it will laugh. A lot. In this family. It will have to . . .

JOE gets up, then does a forward roll on the grass.

JOE

Will it do this.

REBECCA

(LAUGHS)

Not straight away. No.

JOE

Where will it sit.

REBECCA

What?

JOE

In the car.

REBECCA

Oh, I hadn't thought. In the back. I suppose. With you. In a car seat.

(CONTINUED)

JOE looks at REBECCA and looks at her tummy.

JOE

The baby's in there now.

REBECCA

Yes. I know. I find that as strange  
as you do.

This is different to JOE's normal speech, faster, like a  
chant, something that has been said to him before:

JOE

"Get in the car Joe there's a good  
lad, do your thing and get in the  
car."

REBECCA

Is that okay? About the baby.

JOE

Growing now. Until it's ready.

REBECCA smiles at what sounds like it might be acceptance.

CUT TO:

2 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT HILLS. DAY 5. 08:30.**

Montage. Music: No Hot Ashes, 'Skint Kids Disco' plays over.

Early morning, MARK runs up a hill. Tracksuit on, rucksack on  
his back, headphones in. It's his music we're hearing . . .

CUT TO:

3 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 5. 08:45.**

JOE arriving at school. ALISON watches as he shakes hands  
with HEATHER as usual - then, to HEATHER's surprise, hugs her  
and holds on to her. HEATHER registers slight concern but  
this sometimes happens.

CUT TO:

4 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT HILLS. DAY 6. 08:30.**

New day. At the foot of a hill, MARK puts a rock into his  
rucksack, puts rucksack on his back and runs along the path.

CUT TO:

5 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 6. 08:45.**

ALISON watches JOE go in. JOE shakes hands with HEATHER, hugs her, and then high-fives her . . .

CUT TO:

6 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT HILLS. DAY 7. 08:30.**

New day. MARK adds a second rock to his rucksack. On to his back. Runs off up a path.

CUT TO:

7 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 7. 08:45.**

ALISON watches JOE go in. JOE shakes hands with HEATHER, hugs her, high-fives her.

JOE pauses, then repeats the same routine. HEATHER looks surprised, puzzled, as does ALISON watching this.

The music fades as we . . .

CUT TO:

8 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT HILLS. DAY 8. 08:35.**

New day. MARK stops at the top of a hill. Gets out a 'Health Bar' from his heavy backpack. Checks his time on his watch. As he does so MAURICE comes into view with his hiking group.

MAURICE

Morning, Mark. That's a packed lunch and a half, pal. How long are you planning on being out here?

MARK looks at his watch.

MARK

Hello, Maurice.

MAURICE

This is my hiking group. Brian. Heart Disease. Christine. Diabetes. Pauline. High Cholesterol. And Keith. Low self-esteem, lacks will power. If you need any help with motivation I'm your man.

MARK

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

As MARK does up his rucksack, MAURICE notices several rocks inside. MARK heaves the rucksack onto his back and heads off . . . MAURICE watches him go.

PAULINE

Don't go getting ideas about  
putting rocks in our rucksacks,  
Maurice.

MAURICE

That'll be month two, Pauline.

PAULINE laughs a little too eagerly at this joke. They press on, MAURICE watches MARK disappear, intrigued, and we . . .

CUT TO:

9

**INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 8. 08:50.**

Post-run, MARK enters the gastropub where REBECCA is setting up for the day, TOM with her.

MARK

Good morning, Rebecca. Are you  
still pregnant? Did you sleep all  
right? Are you ready for  
Motherhood?

REBECCA

Not really. But I will be.

MARK

(TO TOM)

Are you ready for Fatherhood?

TOM

Not at the moment. But the world is  
full of surprises.

REBECCA

Tom isn't the Dad, Mark.

MARK moves away to get himself a drink as PAUL comes out of the kitchen.

PAUL

Bit early for the afternoon shift  
aren't you, big man.

MARK

I needed a drink.

PAUL

Right. Fine. Well, good for you,  
getting fit.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

2 kilometres in 10 minutes 15  
seconds. It's on the website.

PAUL

What website?

MARK

You have to do 2 kilometres in 10  
minutes 15 seconds. To get in the  
army.

PAUL

How do you mean?

MARK

I'm joining the army.

PAUL looks thrown.

MARK (CONT'D)

See you later. Thank you!

On that bombshell . . .

CUT TO:

10

**EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 8. 08:55.**

ALISON walks JOE over to HEATHER - who is waiting to greet him. ALISON crouches down and does their daily 'Goodbye' routine.

ALISON

Schooltimes now. Handshake or Hug?

JOE

Hug.

JOE hugs ALISON.

ALISON

That was nice. See you tonight.

JOE crosses to HEATHER. She and ALISON exchange a smile.

ALISON (CONT'D)

His book's in his bag, Heather. He  
had a good weekend.

HEATHER

Great.

JOE shakes HEATHER's hand. Gives her a hug, then a high five.

JOE

Morning, Heather.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER

Morning, Joe.

JOE holds HEATHER's hand. This isn't part of the usual routine.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

In you go, Joe.

JOE

"Get in the car Joe there's a good lad, do your thing and get in the car."

Again, the pace is different, a mantra. ALISON hears this, concerned, and sees JOE still holding HEATHER's hand.

HEATHER

Come on then.

JOE and HEATHER go in, hand in hand.

CUT TO:

11

**INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 8. 08:57.**

A roomy classroom with about 8-10 CHILDREN, two ASSISTANTS and the teacher - HEATHER - and JOE.

A horse shoe of chairs - the day not formally started yet. Some CHILDREN sit on chairs thumbing through books of their choice. Others go about their tasks which are referenced on a visual and written display - Fruit, Toast, Milk, Recycling.

JOE is staring at a card that says Recycling but he's not moving. Then he stands and slides out a drawer, but then slides it back in again. Then again. But faster. Then again. Faster still - talking to himself.

JOE

"Do your task Joe. A good way or a bad way a good way or a bad way a good way or a bad way."

HEATHER watches this and notes it for a moment before another child, the GIRL we saw in Epl, crosses to her to say "Hello".

GIRL

Hello Mrs Meadows, you look nice and full of nice views today.

HEATHER

Thank you, what a lovely thing to say, good morning to you too. Can you do the weather? Now everybody, are we ready for circle time!

(CONTINUED)

Rather than look out the window, the GIRL heads out to the playground. HEATHER watches JOE again, he is staring at his recycling task card but not moving, pushing the laminated card against his face. The GIRL comes back in to proudly announce:

GIRL  
It is cold but we can wear coats!

Some of the CHILDREN cheer, some seem not to notice. JOE sits forward, head in hands, looking at his feet.

CUT TO:

12 INT. CAFE. MANCHESTER. DAY 8. 10:00.

ALISON sits in a cafe, waiting. Then she spots who she's waiting for - STUART. He has entered and is holding the door open for a YOUNG WOMAN who's exiting. All smiles, all flirt. He crosses to ALISON, who shakes her head in half disbelief.

STUART  
I've still got it.

ALISON  
Letchy Granddad. Not such a good look.

STUART seems unaffected by the put-down.

CUT TO:

13 INT. CAFE. MANCHESTER. DAY 8. 10:04.

STUART and ALISON sit together.

ALISON  
So has she talked to you at all?  
Since she told you.

STUART  
Loads. Yeah.

ALISON  
Well, that's good. At least she's talking to somebody about it.

STUART  
When I say loads. She texted me last week.

ALISON  
So she's not talking to you either.

(CONTINUED)

STUART

The thing you don't understand about pregnant women, Alison, is they sometimes like to be left alone.

ALISON

Oh. So when I was expecting Rebecca and you left me, that's what you were doing? I had no idea.

STUART

Look. I know you've got the womb here but I've been round more pregnant women than you over the years and the one thing you should never do is go in uninvited.

ALISON

This is our daughter. Maybe she's too scared to ask for help or support. Or too proud.

STUART

I'm good for chipping in with a few bob and she knows that.

ALISON

That wasn't the kind of support I had in mind.

STUART

How did you feel when she told you she was pregnant? I mean. How did you really feel?

ALISON

If I'm honest . . . That her life is going to be ten times harder.

STUART

And you wonder why she won't let you in now?

ALISON

I didn't say that though, did I?

STUART

What did you say? That you were there for her?

ALISON

Well, yes.

STUART shakes his head in disapproval.

(CONTINUED)

STUART

There's your problem right there.  
"I'm here for you" is what you say  
when someone's wife has left them,  
or their Mother has died. It's  
like, what you say when someone has  
problems.

ALISON about to object to this but sees he may have a point.

ALISON

What did you say?

STUART

I told her I could get her a  
discount on a four door family  
saloon with an extended warranty.

ALISON looks at STUART. He is serious.

CUT TO:

14

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 8. 11:10.

MAURICE with his hiking group, they arrive at the Gastropub gate and MAURICE checks his watch.

MAURICE

Well done today. Same time next  
week and we'll add 5K so get some  
sleep. Sensible eating in the  
meantime and remember the group  
motto. "Walking Back To Happiness."

The group join in on the motto, PAULINE more enthusiastically than the others. Some drift off to cars, others walk on, leaving just PAULINE with MAURICE.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I can't hang about for a coffee  
today, I'm afraid, Pauline. My  
Eddie's in London so I'm keeping an  
eye on the brewery.

PAULINE

Hasn't he done well, your lad! He  
was in the paper again. Another  
award. Cumbrian Brown Ale of the  
Year!

MAURICE

Not the toughest category to be  
fair but Eddie's done all right,  
yes. Anyway, we're getting some  
hops delivered so . . .

(CONTINUED)

PAULINE  
Do you ever stop?

MAURICE  
We're a long time dead.

PAULINE  
That's what my late husband used to  
say.

MAURICE  
Sorry, I didn't mean . . .

PAULINE looks around conspiratorially, goes in her rucksack.

PAULINE  
I've got a little something to give  
you.

MAURICE  
Not more flapjack, Pauline. I'm  
meant to be the role model, not the  
lardarse in elasticated waists.

PAULINE pulls out a small wrapped box, with a card attached.

PAULINE  
It's just a token. To say, "Thank  
You" for helping me put one foot in  
front of the other. And making me  
less of a lardarse in elasticated  
waists . . .

MAURICE  
Oh, no, I didn't mean you.

PAULINE  
Don't apologise. Blunt and  
offensive can be very attractive in  
a man of a certain age.

And as PAULINE gives him the present she taps him on the back  
of the hand, and walks away. MAURICE, troubled, stuffs the  
gift into his pocket.

CUT TO:

15 INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 8. 11:15.

PAUL comes off the phone and crosses to REBECCA.

REBECCA  
What did his Mum say?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

She said she went along with it.  
She thought him joining up would be  
like when he tried to get on X  
Factor. That he'd get knocked back  
early on. But apparently he's done  
an online form and had an interview  
and now the army have invited him  
to a two-day assessment.

MAURICE enters and eavesdrops as he helps himself to coffee.

REBECCA

Haven't they . . . I mean, how is  
Mark coming across as suitable for  
the army?

PAUL

Someone's clearly making allowances  
for him, aren't they?

MAURICE

Or taking the piss.

PAUL

Well, they might think they're  
being kind stringing him along but  
he's going to be gutted when they  
turn him down.

MAURICE

If they turn him down.

PAUL and REBECCA look.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Lad I was at school with stood at  
the wrong bus stop every day for  
five years, ended up in charge of  
three cruise missiles.

MAURICE heads out with his coffee.

PAUL

That'll be £2.80 when you're ready,  
Maurice.

MAURICE exits. PAUL turns to REBECCA.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Shit. What if he gets in?

CUT TO:

16

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 8. 11:30.

MAURICE sits at his old desk. He brings out the wrapped package. He opens the card. Reads the card. We don't see it. Looks puzzled, maybe concerned. He starts to unwrap the gift but then he sees RALPH walk by and stuffs it back in his pocket. He feels guilty but he isn't sure why . . .

CUT TO:

17

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 8. 11:45.

Classroom work going on, but HEATHER has taken JOE to one side. They're looking at a Three Houses worksheet, marked 'WORRIES - what could be better?', 'GOOD THINGS - what's going well?', 'DREAMS - what does a good life look like?'

HEATHER

Now then. What do you think, Joe?  
Where are you?

JOE looks at the sheet. After some thought he puts a cross in the 'WORRIES' house. And the 'GOOD THINGS' house.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Okay. Can you tell me the thing  
that is going well?

JOE

The car seat.

HEATHER

The new car seat. You're getting a  
new car seat?

JOE

No. "Get in the car Joe here there  
there here get in the car Joe."

HEATHER

And you're getting a new car seat  
when you get in the car?

JOE

No. The baby. The new friend.

HEATHER

A baby? Whose baby?

JOE

It will be the three of us. And the  
car seat.

HEATHER

Okay. And what about things that  
could be better?

(CONTINUED)

JOE

The baby.

HEATHER

Right. What baby? What is the baby called?

JOE

Rebecca's baby isn't here yet.

HEATHER

Okay.

JOE

"Is there room on the broom for a frog like me?"

Out on HEATHER, mulling this over.

CUT TO:

18

OMITTED

19

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 8. 15:15.

JOE, holds hands with HEATHER as she talks to ALISON.

HEATHER

I think we might have a bit of a problem. Could you see if Paul can come in with you tomorrow and have a chat?

CUT TO:

20

INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 8. 17:00.

PAUL and MARK are clearing up at the end of MARK's shift.

PAUL

And when you applied. To the army. They asked about your medical history? Did they? Any disabilities or conditions you might have?

MARK

I'm fit and healthy. I'm a legend. I'll need a lift to the assessment.

PAUL

You didn't think it was worth mentioning your autism?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

(AS IF THIS IS OBVIOUS)  
No because I'm not autistic  
anymore.

A beat while this lands with PAUL.

PAUL

Right. When did you decide this?

MARK

When I stopped banging my head and  
breaking my Mum's furniture.

PAUL

Okay. But that isn't the only thing  
that autism means, is it? Although  
it's great about the furniture.

MARK

It doesn't mean me.

PAUL

How do you know that?

MARK

Because I know what autism is. And  
it isn't me.

MARK busies himself with cutlery. Out on PAUL, watching him.

CUT TO:

21

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 8. 19:00.

MAURICE, REBECCA and PAUL. REBECCA cooking. MAURICE already  
on one, but PAUL still struggling with what he has heard.

MAURICE

'Course he thinks he's autistic. He  
just doesn't want the army to know.

PAUL

No. I don't think that's why he's  
saying it. Besides, being on the  
autism spectrum doesn't rule you  
out of joining the army.

MAURICE

You know, I've often wondered if  
I'm on the spectrum myself.

PAUL

So Mark decides he isn't autistic  
and you decide you are? It's not  
one in one out, Maurice. You can't  
self-diagnose.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Sounds like Mark just did.

PAUL

If it's about not wanting the label then, fair enough, that's one thing. But if he thinks taking the label away takes his autism away, he's kidding himself.

REBECCA

What if he'd never been labelled?  
What difference would it have made?  
What difference would it have made to Joe?

PAUL

It's Mark we're talking about.

REBECCA clocks the deflection from PAUL. MAURICE continues.

MAURICE

I'm serious, you know. I've been online. I tick a lot of the boxes.

REBECCA

I think you might just be rude,  
Granddad.

CUT TO:

22

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. MAURICE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 8. 22:05.

MAURICE on his own at last. Unwraps the present. It is a Fitbit-style sports watch. Looks expensive. He takes it out of the box. Presses a few buttons. Then he turns the box over and sees the price tag. £129.99. MAURICE looks surprised and a bit panicked. He puts it back in the wrapping.

CUT TO:

23

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 9. 09:15.

Morning. The entrance to the school is quiet. The children already inside for the day . . .

CUT TO:

24

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. SIDE ROOM. DAY 9. 09:20.

HEATHER with ALISON and PAUL. HEATHER is professional but scattergun. She is used to being short of time and so giving a lot of information as quickly as she can. She is familiar with ALISON and PAUL, as teachers in Special Ed tend to have daily dealings with parents.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER

It took a bit of digging but I reckon he's anxious that when Rebecca's baby is born he might get . . . displaced.

ALISON

He's seemed pretty settled at home.

ALISON, puzzled, looks at PAUL, who nods in agreement.

ALISON (CONT'D)

We don't talk about the baby a lot because we wanted him to absorb it at his own pace.

HEATHER

Don't worry. I'm not having a go. I don't think he would have been showing these behaviours at home. A lot of our kids have anxiety around transitions. Joe loves it here but coming through the door every day is hard for him, and when he has other worries - like Rebecca's baby - then arriving and leaving starts to become a problem. On top of that he's had other big changes in his life to process.

ALISON

Yes.

PAUL and ALISON fall silent.

HEATHER

Well, you pair can sit here with long faces or we can all think about how we make this better for Joe. I'll start with some social stories to show how the new baby might fit in, and I'll send them home with him too. In some ways it's quite timely. We are starting Relationships and Sex Education this term. I've got the materials here. Does he use the anatomically correct terms for penis and vagina?

PAUL

Yes. But not at the dinner table.

ALISON

We've always used the proper names, yes.

PAUL looks a bit lost with this, subdued. A glance from ALISON.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER

We try to get them aware that their bodies will start changing. And we build stuff like personal hygiene and public vs private spaces into their day-to-day lives. Like at swimming lessons. This kind of emphasis - (READING FROM A HANDOUT) "I'll wash my armpits in the shower but I won't take my trunks off."

PAUL

Try telling that to some of the blokes at Keswick Baths.

HEATHER

Best to get any jokes out of your system before you actually do this stuff with Joe. But we can focus on conception and babies alongside . . . if you think it will help Joe absorb what's happening.

PAUL

Yes. Right. Of course.

HEATHER

And you need to get your stories straight. He has to be hearing the same thing from all three of you. That a new baby is positive and not a Joe replacement.

ALISON

Right.

PAUL

Sure. Thanks.

HEATHER

He loves you both but you have changed and moved and he's had to go with that.

PAUL and ALISON nod in agreement.

CUT TO:

25

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 9. 10:00.

ALISON and PAUL are looking in on the playground where CHILDREN from Joe's class play. JOE isn't really joining in - he's staying close to the door back into the classroom.

ALISON's holding the handouts.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

What should I go for first? 'My Body Is Changing' or 'Where Do Babies Come From?'

PAUL

Pity we didn't get a copy of that one six months ago and give it to Rebecca.

ALISON

Has she been talking to you about it? Because she kind of skirts around it with me and she hasn't really spoken to Stuart . . .

PAUL

Why would she talk to Stuart about it?

ALISON

Is she confiding in you?

PAUL

No. But that's her choice isn't it. And I think we need to respect it.

ALISON feels a flash of irritation - knows that PAUL would always avoid a confrontation. But she keeps her counsel and stays on subject.

ALISON

So she hasn't confided in you.

PAUL

It's early days. She's probably still in shock. I know I am.

They both watch JOE for a few moments.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Here we are again, hey, trying to work him out.

ALISON

Heather's done that for us. It's our job to go with her plan.

PAUL

Do you think she's right? That he's worrying Rebecca's baby will take his place?

ALISON

Heather knows what she's doing. I talk to her every day.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Course you do.

PAUL looks at JOE for a few moments. Feels out of his depth.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Should I come back tomorrow? See  
how he's getting on.

ALISON

No, it's fine. We have to trust his  
teacher on this. And I'm here if he  
gets worse.

PAUL

I know you're here. I'm saying I  
could come back tomorrow, that's  
all!

This feels like an overreaction to what ALISON has just said.  
She decides to deflate it.

ALISON

I know. (BEAT, GENTLER) I know.

They stand apart, watching their boy for a bit. Separate and  
in their own thoughts. ALISON glances at PAUL. PAUL doesn't  
take his eyes off JOE. Music bleeds in to this moment.  
'Careless' by Cinerama.

CUT TO:

26

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 9. 11:20.

The music plays on - 'Careless' by Cinerama - from PAUL's  
speaker, as he tries to assemble a flatpack bed. Joe's room  
has come on. The bedroom walls have been painted, although  
the outlines of Maurice and Joe remain.

CUT TO:

27

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 9. 11:30.

'Careless' plays on. PAUL is hanging a photograph. The  
flatpack bed lies abandoned. PAUL stares at the photo of him  
with his arm around Joe for a few moments. And then, suddenly  
lays the picture down and walks out . . .

CUT TO:

28

INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 9. 12:00.

MARK is prepping for lunchtime. PAUL enters, energised. He  
might not feel he can help Joe, but he can help MARK.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL  
I'll give you lift.

MARK  
Thank you.

PAUL  
To the assessment. If you want.

MARK  
Yes.

PAUL was hoping for a less take-it-in-your-stride response.

PAUL  
Because I think you should go for  
it, yeah?

MARK  
I have to be there at 9.30. So we  
have to leave at 6.30. So you need  
to set two alarms.

MARK carries on setting up and we . . .

CUT TO:

29

**EXT. 'I FEEL KNITTY'. DAY 9. 13:00.**

MAURICE lingers outside a Lakeland wool and crafts shop which is owned by PAULINE. He stares at the window display, reluctant to go inside. PAULINE spots him and comes out.

PAULINE  
Maurice. What a lovely surprise.  
Wouldn't have had you down as a  
knitter but it speaks well of your  
masculinity . . .

MAURICE tries to thrust the gift back into PAULINE's hand.

MAURICE  
I can't take this, Pauline.

PAULINE  
Have you got one already?

MAURICE  
No. It's just. I mean. The price  
tag was on the box. You can't spend  
that on me . . .

PAULINE  
I didn't.

MAURICE  
Well, you did.

(CONTINUED)

PAULINE

It was a birthday present for my late husband but he didn't . . . well . . . That's why I wanted you to have it. You're the first man since him that has shown any interest in me -

MAURICE

(PANICKED)

I have an interest in your cholesterol and your step count, Pauline, but anything else is very much outside my remit. Due to being very much fixed up in the lady department.

PAULINE

Of course. Of course. You and Louise. I'm not a fool, Maurice.

MAURICE

I didn't think you were . . .

PAULINE

So it would mean a lot if you accepted my gift in the spirit in which it was given.

MAURICE

Right. Well. Yes. Of course. Thank you. Thank you.

PAULINE smiles. And goes back into the shop. MAURICE stands there, as confused as ever.

CUT TO:

30

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 9. 20:00.

ALISON with JOE, side by side on the sofa. In front of them on the coffee table, two of the handouts from Heather: 'My Body Is Changing' and a school-made social story which has been custom written for Joe, 'A New Baby in the Family.'

ALISON

So what would you like to look at? 'My Body'? Or the story about a New Baby in the Family?

JOE looks at the handouts. He points to 'My Body Is Changing'. Something in ALISON dies a little and she opens the handout. We see it from the cover side.

ALISON (CONT'D)

(READING)

As we get older our bodies change.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)  
We grow hair on our bodies. We grow  
taller. Boys' voices go deeper.

ALISON turns a page.

ALISON (CONT'D)  
(KEEPING IT NORMAL)  
And here's a picture.

We don't see the picture - but they both look at it for a few moments.

JOE  
Shouldn't he be doing that in  
private?

CUT TO:

31

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. EVENING 9. 20:20.

JOE is on the bed, holding hands with ALISON, who is reading the end of the 'Social Story' that Heather has made for Joe.

ALISON  
Sometimes my Sister will bring her baby to my Mum when I am there. It will be okay. The baby will sleep in a cot. I will sleep in my bed. Sometimes my Sister will bring her baby to my Dad when I am there. It will be okay. The baby will sleep in a cot. We will be a family. With a new baby in it. The baby will be in our family too.

ALISON turns the words over as though they are addressed to her as much as to JOE. She puts the story to one side.

CUT TO:

32

INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 9. 20:25.

ALISON comes into the living room, still thinking about the story. She picks up her phone, dials and waits. Rebecca's voicemail kicks in and we . . .

CUT TO:

33

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/MARK'S HOUSE. DAY 10. 06:30.

Very early morning. PAUL waits in his car, music on (TBC). MARK comes from his house, smartly dressed. PAUL switches off the music as MARK heads for the car.

CUT TO:

34

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/ROAD TO SCOTLAND. DAY 10. 07:20.

PAUL driving. MARK flicking through an army leaflet but not really reading, flicking one page back and forth.

PAUL

How you feeling? Ready for this?  
The assessment I mean. Not my  
driving.

Nothing.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You just have to be yourself.

MARK

That's right. (BEAT) How do I do  
that.

PAUL

Just relax.

MARK

And be myself. Put it all in the  
past.

PAUL

Very sensible. We don't want to go  
back to the past.

MARK

No. Why not? What's it like?

PAUL

What. The past.

MARK

No. Being a Dad.

PAUL

Where did that come from?

MARK

Being a Dad to Joe. Who you love on  
the outside.

PAUL

I love him on the inside too.

MARK

Good.

PAUL

You do think I love him on the  
inside, don't you?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I don't know. We don't know what is on the inside of people. That's where the trouble starts.

PAUL

It does indeed. Being a Dad to Joe is like being a Dad to any other kid. For the most part. But maybe you worry about the future more.

MARK

Rabbit!

PAUL

What? Where?

MARK

There.

MARK points straight ahead. PAUL swerves to avoid it and slams on the brakes.

PAUL

Did I hit it?

MARK

I'm staying calm.

PAUL

Good.

MARK

That's my way of saying I'm not calm.

PAUL

Did you feel a thud? I thought I felt a thud?

CUT TO:

35

EXT. ROAD. DAY 10. 07:25.

PAUL and MARK stare at a rabbit, not moving on the road. It doesn't appear injured but then again it isn't running away.

PAUL

It doesn't look hurt. Not that I know what a hurt rabbit looks like. If you can't hear "Bright Eyes" I think we're in the clear.

Without hesitation MARK picks it up and it rests in his arms, not moving.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

MARK walks back towards the car, carrying the rabbit.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 10. 08:45.

JOE greeting HEATHER: handshake, hug, high five, then repeat.

ALISON waves and then heads out of the car park, leaving her car there, carrying shopping bags.

We return to JOE and HEATHER at the school entrance. HEATHER is clutching a file.

HEATHER  
I'm just going to put this in the office and I'll see you in the classroom, Joe.

But JOE is showing no signs of letting go of her hand.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
How about we go together.

CUT TO:

37 OMITTED

38 INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/CITY CENTRE PICK UP POINT. DAY 10. 09:00.

We're now in the city. We see PAUL's car pull up near a station pick-up point. Small huddles of smartly dressed YOUNG MEN and WOMEN are waiting there with suitcases.

Inside the car, the rabbit sits in a box on the back seat. MARK is staring straight ahead.

MARK  
Are you nervous?

PAUL  
A bit. Are you?

MARK  
Yes.

PAUL  
That must be where you get the coach.

MARK  
Where?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

There. Where those lads are standing. I'm assuming they're going. That's the pick up point.

MARK watches the LADS for a few moments. They have a coolness and cockiness to their bearing which we know to be bravado but which MARK completely lacks in his demeanour.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You could take the rabbit with you?  
Be an ice breaker.

MARK

I don't think I'd be allowed.

PAUL senses a rising nervousness in MARK.

PAUL

My first day at catering college. You know I'm dyslexic so I'm hopeless with a timetable and I get there three hours early. Nearly turned round and left right then. (STRUGGLING TO MAKE HIS POINT) All I'm trying to say is, everybody feels nervous. I felt nervous.

MARK

Sorry about that, Paul. Are you all right now?

PAUL just smiles and offers his hand. MARK shakes it.

PAUL

Good luck, mate.

MARK

Good luck.

MARK gets out and heads to join the other LADS. We watch this walk through PAUL's eyes. MARK is a big young man but he doesn't move like a big man, and he looks like he might just get eaten alive as the other young MEN and WOMEN watch him.

CUT TO:

39

INT. PAUL'S CAR/ROAD. DAY 10. 09:45.

PAUL drives and talks - apparently into the 'hands free'.

PAUL

He was nervous. No doubt about that. But he wanted to do this. Autistic or not, he's a young man. He has to take the world on. Don't ask me why, young men just do.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Testosterone, I imagine. But then  
you'd know all about that . . .

PAUL looks down and we realise he's not speaking into the 'hands free' but to the rabbit, which is now in its box on the seat beside him, eating some grass.

CUT TO:

40 OMITTED

41 EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 10. 09:55.

ALISON, carrying a bag of shopping and a small bunch of tulips, walks into the school car park to find her car blocked in by a broken down council transport minibus. The DRIVER has the bonnet up and is peering inside. ALISON stops in her tracks.

ALISON  
Oh, shit.

A voice from behind her. Reveal BEN.

BEN  
I think you're blocked in.

ALISON  
You don't say. And before you start, I know I should have moved it before I went to the shops.

BEN  
Hey. I'm just happy to have the moral high ground for once.

ALISON  
Well, thanks for your help. Last time that thing broke down it took all day.

BEN  
What can I do? Get you a coffee while you wait or -

ALISON  
You could lend me your van. I need to go and see my daughter.

BEN  
I was going to say "or a sandwich."

ALISON  
Why not? I've driven bigger if that's what you're worrying about.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I can give you a lift if you like?

ALISON

She lives in the Lake District.

BEN

The Lake District? (THINKS, 'FUCK IT') I'm not doing anything else. I've got the day off.

ALISON

Is this 'cos I'm a woman and you don't trust me to drive?

BEN

No. It's because you're a woman and you can tidy round while I'm driving. (BEAT) Just let someone do you a favour, will you?

ALISON

You've seen my Dad. My family's a nightmare. I'm known as the reasonable one.

BEN

I don't need to meet them. I could drop you nearby. Or wear a disguise.

ALISON

Should I be worried that you keep a disguise in your van?

BEN

Is that a "Yes"?

ALISON doesn't answer.

BEN (CONT'D)

Come on, your tulips are drooping.

CUT TO:

42

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. HALLWAY. DAY 10. 11:00.

RALPH has answered the door to KATIE. They both head out.

RALPH

Bye, Mum.

LOUISE

Don't go buying anything daft.

KATIE

He won't, Louise.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE  
I meant you, Katie.

KATIE and RALPH leave as MAURICE comes downstairs, putting his jacket on.

MAURICE  
What's that about?

LOUISE  
They're going to a wedding fair.  
(BEAT) Every day until the wedding.

MAURICE  
Right. See you later.

MAURICE kisses LOUISE before heading out. The door closes and then a beeper goes off.

LOUISE  
Maurice! Maurice! (OPENING DOOR)  
It's your Fireman Sam beeper!

But MAURICE has gone. LOUISE listens. The beeping carries on. She realises it sounds more like a watch alarm. Puzzled, she reaches into the pocket of MAURICE's kagool hanging on the peg. She pulls out the beeping watch in its box, and the card, and stares at them. She starts to take the card out of the envelope and then thinks, "I'm better than this" and puts the card and now silent watch back into the kagool pocket.

CUT TO:

43 INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 10. 11:30.

REBECCA has a portfolio of Tom's photos open on the kitchen table, and TOM is unveiling a canvas which is a flattering painting of a family photo.

TOM  
So you see, I take the photo and then the magic happens - it's not exactly art, I know, but until the Royal Academy comes calling . . .

REBECCA  
(LOOKING AT THE CANVAS)  
You know they're much better looking on your painting than in the photo, don't you?

We hear a knock at the front door. Then, after a few beats, the sound of someone letting themselves in . . .

TOM  
That is very much what the customer is paying me for.

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA  
They actually ask for that?

TOM  
They don't need to. Flattery. Maybe  
that's where you're going wrong  
with your family.

And now REBECCA looks up to see ALISON entering the kitchen with the bag of healthy shopping and the flowers.

ALISON  
You didn't reply to my messages. So  
I thought your phone might be  
broken.

Both ALISON and REBECCA know that is just an excuse . . .

CUT TO:

44 **OMITTED**

45 **EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 10. 11:40.**

TOM - having made himself scarce - is sitting outside the house, returning his photos to his portfolio, getting ready to leave. He sees BEN leaning against his van, looking out at the countryside, and gives him a wave. BEN gives a non-committal wave back. TOM curious, returns to his photos.

CUT TO:

46 **INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 10. 11:42.**

ALISON with REBECCA.

ALISON  
When I got pregnant, at 18, with you, your Granddad exploded, your Grandma said "These things happen", and your Dad did a runner. And after all the fireworks nobody said anything about me being pregnant, not for months, not me, not them. And the longer it went on the harder it became to say anything so here I am . . . saying something. Because I don't want you to feel like I did. Like you can't talk about it.

REBECCA  
You've not done a Powerpoint or anything, have you?

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

No, I'm trying to do less of that.  
(BEAT) I know when I was where you are I just didn't want to think about it, but I wish I - (had)

REBECCA

(INTERRUPTING)

I have thought about it. I'm going to have the baby here, in the Lakes, where most of my family are, and you're close by. I'm going to go back to University after it's born, part-time if I have to. I've not thrown my education away. I'm working with Tom until then.

ALISON

Oh?

REBECCA

He's got this photography into art thing going on . . .

The front door goes . . .

ALISON

Well, only work as long as you need to, we can help you out.

MAURICE enters, with BEN in tow.

MAURICE

If a feller has given you a lift from Manchester then the least we can do is offer him a cup of tea.

BEN

I was happy to wait outside, really.

ALISON

(TO REBECCA)

This is Ben. A parent at Joe's school. A friend. He gave me a lift because my car was blocked in.

MAURICE

How do you like your tea, Ben?

BEN

Milk. No sugar. Thank you.

REBECCA

(OVER)

I don't know any friend who'd do that for me.

(CONTINUED)

Then PAUL enters carrying the rabbit in its box.

PAUL

What's going on?

ALISON gives a look - her conversation with REBECCA not panning out as planned.

MAURICE

This is Paul. Rebecca's Dad. He's just been delivering a big autistic lad to the army. Got a rabbit in part-exchange by the looks of things.

PAUL

I know who I am, who's this?

BEN

Ben, pleased to meet you.

MAURICE

They're divorced. In case you were wondering.

BEN

I wasn't but thanks for the clarity.

MAURICE hands BEN the tea and he heads for the door.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'll leave you all to it.

He virtually runs out, but has to get past PAUL - they exchange a strained smile and we . . .

ALISON

Thanks, Dad. That was tactful.

MAURICE

Is he always that quiet? Your friend?

ALISON

What?

PAUL looks at the rabbit. REBECCA looks around at her mad family and seizes the moment.

REBECCA

While you're all here, let me say, I'm not the first person to get pregnant by mistake. I'm not even the first person in this family to get pregnant by mistake.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
And I'm okay with it. I'm going to  
boss this. You just have to trust  
me.

CUT TO:

47

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 10. 12:30.

MAURICE with ALISON - a coffee each.

MAURICE  
She sounds just like you did at her  
age.

ALISON  
I know. And it was all bluster when  
I said it at her age too.

MAURICE takes a punt at cheering ALISON up.

MAURICE  
He seems a nice feller. The  
Gardener.

ALISON  
He is a nice feller, but it's just  
all too complicated, you know. With  
Joe and . . .

MAURICE  
It's always complicated. Even at my  
age it's complicated.

ALISON  
What? Don't tell me you and Louise  
have fallen out.

MAURICE  
No. Nothing like that. Not yet  
anyway. (BEAT) You don't want to  
buy a second hand sports watch, do  
you?

Out on ALISON, puzzled.

CUT TO:

48

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 10. 12:35.

ALISON and MAURICE talk a little way away from the house.

ALISON  
What was your first thought when  
she gave you the present?

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Well, to be honest I was glad I  
could still pull.

ALISON sighs at the immaturity of this.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Then I thought Louise is going to  
kill me.

ALISON

And neither of those responses  
struck you as a bit adolescent?

MAURICE

Yes. And I felt all the better for  
that.

ALISON

(LAUGHS)

You might want to mention it to  
Louise though. Casually. You know.  
Just in passing . . .

They both look towards the drive where EDDIE is arriving back  
in his car.

CUT TO:

49

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/HALLWAY. DAY 10. 12:45.

LOUISE is playing the piano. An arrangement of 'Sweet Dreams'  
by Eurythmics. Trying to be the better person. But then she  
stops playing. Sighs. Fuck it. She heads for the hall . . .

. . . and reaches into the pocket of MAURICE's kagool.

CUT TO:

50

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 10. 12:50.

LOUISE stares at the watch, having read the card a few times.

CUT TO:

51

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 10. 12:55.

Close on BEN as he waits by his van - looking up towards the  
house. From his POV we see ALISON with PAUL - and EDDIE  
looking on, not hiding his curiosity.

PAUL

How was Joe this morning?

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

He seemed okay. I'll tell you if anything changes.

PAUL

Right.

ALISON

Right.

PAUL is looking over ALISON's shoulder at BEN. He can't help it. ALISON doesn't know what to say so says nothing.

ALISON (CONT'D)

I've got to get going. I'll be late picking him up.

EDDIE heads over and he and PAUL watch ALISON head for BEN's van. REBECCA has come out of the house and joins ALISON.

EDDIE

That must be weird. Alison turning up with her new bloke.

PAUL

Not really.

EDDIE

At least she got it the right way round and divorced you first.

PAUL

He's just a friend she said.

EDDIE

Yes.

PAUL

What's that supposed to mean? You're in London for a couple of days and you turn all cynical.

EDDIE

On the contrary. I found London very life affirming, life changing even . . .

REBECCA and ALISON reach the van.

REBECCA

It was nice. You coming to see me.

ALISON

Good. But from now on I'm going to wait for you to come to me. If that's what you want. I won't steam in. I won't take over. I know I've been guilty of that in the past.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)  
So I want you to be free to handle  
this how you want to.

REBECCA  
Right, thanks. Thanks.

ALISON gives REBECCA another hug and stands by BEN's van before getting in - looking up at her family, glancing at BEN as he gets into the van and maybe wondering what he is thinking. We join EDDIE as he crosses to REBECCA.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
She thinks I'm doing the wrong  
thing.

EDDIE  
Hey? How can you tell?

REBECCA  
She's being reasonable.

They walk on, back towards the house.

CUT TO:

52

INT/EXT. BEN'S VAN/PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. DAY 10. 14:50.

BEN has pulled up near the school. During the following exchange, he and ALISON get out the van and walk to her car, which is no longer blocked in.

BEN  
Thank you. I enjoyed myself.

ALISON  
You didn't.

A shrug from BEN. He did but he's not going to argue. Then ALISON says what she has been turning over the whole journey.

ALISON (CONT'D)  
I don't think Rebecca meant it.  
About handling it.

BEN  
Did you call her on it?

ALISON  
No. Do you think I should have?

BEN  
I don't know. She's not my  
daughter.

ALISON  
What would you say if it was your  
daughter?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

If it was my daughter I'd ring the Police. She's 11 years old.

ALISON

You know what I mean.

BEN

I'd make sure she knew I loved her and wait for her to come to me.

ALISON

Would you?

BEN

Fuck off. I'd be all over it.

ALISON

(LAUGHS)

There you are, see. It's impossible. I just don't want her to think I'm taking over. 'Cause that's what I do. I take things over.

BEN

Really?

ALISON

Look at your day. One conversation with me and you've driven 200 miles, with a tea break to meet the Addams Family.

They're now by ALISON's car.

BEN

Firstly, they're not my family so I already feel up on the day and secondly it was nice being with you.

ALISON doesn't reply - it's a nice thing to hear but her battered self-esteem won't quite allow it. BEN gets a piece of paper out of his pocket.

BEN (CONT'D)

In fact, I've got something for you.

He gives ALISON the paper. It is a hand-written questionnaire with multiple choice questions.

BEN (CONT'D)

Could you fill this in and return it to the relevant party.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

What's this?

BEN

It's a questionnaire. About where  
to go on a date. If you wanted.

ALISON looks at the questionnaire.

ALISON

You're kidding.

BEN

There is a 'None of the Above' in  
case you're worried.

ALISON

(AMUSED)

When did you do this? Or do you  
carry it around with you? Along  
with your disguise.

BEN

When I was waiting. Anyway. Now I  
am going to saunter away. Casually.

BEN does a saunter back to his van. ALISON amused, then  
stares back at the handwritten questionnaire.

CUT TO:

53

INT. VILLAGE HALL. DAY 10. 15:00.

Choir practice. LOUISE leading. MAURICE and PAULINE amongst  
the choristers, singing, 'Sweet Dreams'. As they sing, LOUISE  
can't help finding herself watching PAULINE.

LOUISE

Lovely, lovely. Just a little  
glitch there in the ladies section  
before the second verse comes in.

(SINGING) "Ooo, ooo, ooo, ooo."  
Might have been you, Pauline. Not  
certain, but just a bit off key?

PAULINE

Oh. Right. Really?

LOUISE

Yes. It was definitely you. It's a  
tricky little section. Shall we try  
again?

MAURICE clocks this. Feels a little uneasy but the song  
begins again and he has to concentrate . . .

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE/CHOIR  
"Sweet Dreams are made of this  
Who am I to disagree . . ."

CUT TO:

54 **OMITTED**

55 **INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 10. 15:15.**

Home time. An ASSISTANT is standing by the door and we see the end of a crocodile of CHILDREN leaving - but JOE is standing by his tray, HEATHER watching him.

JOE  
"Get in the car Joe there's a good lad, do your thing and get in the car."

All the children gone now. JOE clearly reluctant to leave.

CUT TO:

56 **INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY 10. 15:18.**

HEATHER walks hand in hand down the corridor with JOE.

CUT TO:

57 **INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. HALL. DAY 10. 15:20.**

JOE does a circuit of the hall - long, deliberate steps, stiff legged - as HEATHER watches.

JOE  
"Come on Joe time to get in the car  
get in the car there's a good lad."

JOE completes the circuit, stopping by HEATHER.

HEATHER  
Okay. Let's go.

But JOE takes HEATHER's hand, to lead her on a lap. As they set off, HEATHER realises they may be here for a while . . .

CUT TO:

58 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 10. 15:35.**

ALISON waiting for Joe to come out. It is late. Maybe one CHILD STRAGGLER and ONE CARER. HEATHER appears without Joe and beckons ALISON across.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER  
Have you got a minute?

CUT TO:

59

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. SIDE ROOM. DAY 10. 15:40.

HEATHER with ALISON.

HEATHER  
I once had a kid who followed me around for a month before I realised it was because he liked the smell of my fabric conditioner.

ALISON  
(PUZZLED)  
Right.

HEATHER  
It happens. A child gets fixated. When I helped Joe understand that Rebecca's baby might be a nice thing I think it cemented his feelings about me and the school being a secure place.

ALISON  
I think of you and school as my secure place too so I can hardly blame him.

HEATHER  
And before I knew it he'd added a bit of me to his daily rituals. I should have kept an eye on it. Sometimes, as teachers, we accidentally encourage it. We're human. We all like to think we might have the magic key.

ALISON  
Please don't go telling me you haven't got the magic key, because I know I haven't.

HEATHER  
I'm not having that. You understand him better than anyone. You're the one who sticks up for him at every turn, fights all his battles.

ALISON  
Goes in two footed. Plays the bully.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER

Damn right you have to play the bully! Let yourself off the hook for once! We all want to be nice. "Nice" won't get Joe what he needs. Joe needs you to stick up for him. You always will. But while he is here it's my job to take some of the weight of that. And this time I didn't. I took my eye off the ball. And I'm sorry. But I'll fix it.

ALISON

Maybe his Mum and Dad were the problem and he just wanted to be with you.

HEATHER

Well I won't pretend you and Paul aren't sometimes the problem, but I think I was the problem this time. You've got enough guilt going on, Alison, have this one on me, hey?

CUT TO:

60 INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 10. 17:00.

ALISON watches JOE eat his meal, peas first, then fishcake, one item at a time.

CUT TO:

61 INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 10. 20:45.

ALISON watches JOE sleeping.

CUT TO:

62 INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LOUISE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 10. 22:00.

LOUISE and MAURICE lie in bed together.

MAURICE

Night, then.

LOUISE

Night.

LOUISE turns off the light.

MAURICE

You all right.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Yep.

They both know this isn't true but don't say anything.

CUT TO:

63

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LOUISE'S BEDROOM. DAY 11. 08:00.

Daylight through the blinds. LOUISE awake. Turns to MAURICE who opens his eyes to find LOUISE looking at him.

LOUISE

No. Actually.

MAURICE

(CONFUSED)

What?

LOUISE

You know that thing I did,  
yesterday?

MAURICE

You're going to have to narrow it  
down.

LOUISE

When I picked on Pauline in the  
choir. Did that seem like me, to  
you?

MAURICE

How do you mean?

LOUISE

Well, one day I'm the lovely local  
choir leader and the next I'm  
channelling Whiplash! Can you guess  
why?

MAURICE

Maybe.

LOUISE

Go on then. Have a guess.

CUT TO:

64

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 11. 08:30.

MAURICE and LOUISE sit with the sports watch and card on the table in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

I thought it'd be a coaster or a paperweight or something. Then it was a watch, so I thought . . .

LOUISE

You thought. That's more than a crush. Because the more valuable the gift the bigger the crush. That's how it works . . .

MAURICE

I tried to give it her back. But she said it was a present for her dead husband. And she wanted me to have it because I'd get the use out of it . . .

LOUISE

What size chest was he? Because you could do with a new kagool.

(LOOKING AT THE CARD)

Why didn't you just tell me?

MAURICE

When I opened the present, I saw how expensive it was and I thought - well, I thought.

LOUISE

You thought you had an admirer. So why didn't you tell me then?

MAURICE

I panicked. I didn't think you'd be best pleased. And she's in the choir as well so I didn't want any bad feeling.

LOUISE

What were you expecting? A cat fight?

MAURICE

I tried to give it her back. But it meant a lot to her, so I thought I'd better keep it.

LOUISE

You just needed to tell me. A lonely woman has a bit of a crush on you. It's fine. And it's a nice gift. So if it happens again. Try and be a bit more grown up about it. Okay.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Okay. Right. (BEAT) And you'd be all right with me wearing it?

LOUISE

Yes. Sure. Why not. Why not.

MAURICE gets up, takes the watch. And walks. LOUISE's face betrays that she isn't quite as calm about this as she seemed but doesn't want MAURICE to know that.

CUT TO:

65

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/CITY CENTRE PICK UP POINT. DAY 11. 14:40.

PAUL sits and watches as the coach empties and the YOUNG MEN and WOMEN come out, including MARK, who seems no more a part of the group than when they left but shakes hands with a couple of YOUNG MEN then crosses to PAUL who is waiting by the car. A couple of other PARENTS also waiting . . .

PAUL

Should I shake your hand or salute?

MARK doesn't reply, he gets in the car. PAUL shrugs, this may not be a hostile response from MARK, just typical MARK . . .

PAUL gets in the car.

MARK

You don't have to worry about me, Paul. We're all adults.

PAUL

How did it go? You don't have to tell me if you don't want to.

MARK

OK.

PAUL

Do you mean, "OK", it went "OK" or, "OK", you don't have to tell me?

MARK doesn't answer.

CUT TO:

66

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 11. 15:12.

Home time. HEATHER stands by the door. Clearly the other kids have gone. She looks at JOE who is standing in the classroom alone.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

"Check your book bag, put your coat on and get in the car. Do your thing and get in the car."

HEATHER

Joe. What time is it?

HEATHER points to the clock on the wall.

JOE

I'll stay here. With you.

JOE gets off his chair and lies down under the table, on his back. Keeping it low-key, HEATHER lies down next to him.

HEATHER

Do you remember what you do at the end of the day?

JOE

I tidy my tray.

HEATHER

You tidy your tray.

JOE

I pick up my bag.

HEATHER

You pick up your bag.

JOE

I say "Goodbye".

HEATHER

Yes.

JOE

I say "Hello Mum".

HEATHER

Yes. So. Did you tidy your tray?

JOE

In your house. Here. With you.

HEATHER

This isn't my house, Joe.

JOE

I am being good, aren't I?

HEATHER

Is sleeping under a desk a good idea or a bad idea?

JOE

Say "Yes".

HEATHER

A good idea or a bad idea?

JOE

I am being good, aren't I? "Get in the car Joe, do your thing and get in the car."

HEATHER

A good idea or a bad idea?

JOE

Say "Yes". Say "Yes". Say "Yes".  
Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Out on HEATHER, she stands. Thinks about this. And we . . .

CUT TO:

67

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 11. 15:15.

ALISON is waiting at the door. HEATHER appears, without Joe.

ALISON

Is he all right?

HEATHER

No panic. He's fine. But he's having a bit of a problem leaving and I just want to try something. Are you okay to wait?

ALISON

Sure. Yes. Do you want me to come in?

HEATHER

If you don't mind, I reckon it's him and me that need to work something out around this getting fixed on me. And the school. Is that okay?

ALISON

Yes. Of course. Sure.

ALISON concerned, heads back to her car.

CUT TO:

68

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/ROAD. DAY 11. 15:20.

PAUL and MARK drive in silence. PAUL occasionally stealing a glance at MARK to try and work out his mood. MARK stares ahead, neutral.

CUT TO:

69

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 11. 15:25.

HEATHER and JOE in the classroom. HEATHER busies herself with her work. JOE sits at the table, watches her for a while. Then gets up and moves around the classroom, trying every seat one by one. HEATHER carries on working.

JOE

Where is your bed?

HEATHER

In my bedroom. In my house.

JOE

But where is it?

HEATHER

I don't live here, Joe.

JOE

But you're here now.

HEATHER

I'm here now because you're here now.

JOE

And I'm here now because you're here now.

HEATHER

Exactly. We've got a bit stuck, haven't we?

JOE heads for the door. HEATHER lets him open it. She doesn't react. He lingers by the open door. HEATHER does not react. He slowly goes out and we . . .

CUT TO:

70

EXT. MARINA. DAY 11. 15:30.

PAUL's car parked up. MARK and PAUL are sitting drinking huge milkshakes from cardboard cups that signify junk food.

MARK

My Mum never lets me have drinks like this.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Why not?

HARD CUT TO:

71

EXT. MARINA. DAY 11. 15:32.

MARK - wired on milkshake - has opened up and is rattling on.

MARK

My medicine ball throw measured 3.2 metres and I did the 2 kilometre run in 9 minutes and 55 seconds. And when they give you the plate you take plate to food, not food to plate and if you do that you get press-ups. And I did the press-ups anyway. And you had to fill in a form and no end of what one lad called shit. And you don't mind me saying shit do you. Of course you don't. And then we had to stand up one by one and talk about ourselves. And we went outside for manoeuvres and then we had more food. And you take plate to food, not food to plate and that's just the way things are done.

PAUL

And did anybody talk to you before you left? Did anybody tell you how you got on?

MARK

Why do you have to know everything about me?

PAUL

I don't.

MARK stands, walks away, speaks to PAUL without turning back.

MARK

It was a "Fuck It"

PAUL

What was?

MARK

It was. I didn't get in. It was a "Fuck It".

PAUL

Oh. Right. I'm sorry. I am sorry.

MARK gets back in the car.

CUT TO:

72 OMITTED

73 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. DAY 11. 15:55

ALISON stares at some University work on her laptop, not concentrating. She looks back up at the school, concerned. Her phone goes. We see it is Ben. She answers.

ALISON

Hi. No. School car park. Joe's having a bit of a thing about leaving so his teacher is working him through it. So I just wait . . .  
Thanks. Yeah. Thanks for ringing.  
(SMILES) No. I've not filled it in yet.

ALISON looks at the empty questionnaire from yesterday, still on the seat beside her. The call ends.

She stares at her laptop again, then back at the school. She shuts the laptop and we . . .

CUT TO:

74 EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 11. 16:00.

ALISON is walking purposefully towards the school entrance. Then she hesitates at the door. Shuts her eyes. Counts to three. Itching to go in. But no. She will stick to her word. She turns. Heads back to the car and we . . .

CUT TO:

75 INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY 11. 16:05.

Through JOE's eyes: He walks along the corridor. He looks into each classroom as he passes. Finally he stops. Stares into the Reception Class. 'Piglets'. The trappings are more childish, and younger for JOE. But he isn't moving. HEATHER appears beside him.

JOE

I don't want to go in there, do I.

CUT TO:

76

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. RECEPTION CLASS. DAY 11. 16:08

JOE in Reception Class, sitting on a sag bag that is for a smaller child. HEATHER is sitting next to him. He is flicking his way through a small book. He puts it down next to him - slowly, deliberately.

JOE

It's not the same.

HEATHER

This classroom?

JOE

This classroom.

HEATHER

This classroom is not the same because?

JOE

I'm not here.

HEATHER

Well. You're not in Piglets, are you? You're in . . .

JOE

Zebras.

HEATHER

That's right.

JOE

I like Joe in Piglets. Baby Joe.

JOE squeezes the sag bag around him as though to disappear into it and become secure Baby Joe again, where everything was simpler. HEATHER gets this. And then . . .

HEATHER

Baby Joe was all right, but I like him in Zebras too.

JOE

I like Heather in Zebras.

HEATHER

Good. Because that's where Joe and Heather are together. Isn't it?

JOE

That's where Joe and Heather are together.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER

And where are Heather and Mr  
Meadows and their son Michael  
together?

JOE

At home.

HEATHER

So where are Joe and his Mum  
together?

JOE

At home.

HEATHER

Yes. At home.

Out on JOE, turning this over. A glance at HEATHER, a glance  
at the door of the classroom. He does not move but something  
is starting to shift.

CUT TO:

77 OMITTED

78 OMITTED

79 INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 11. 16:25.

JOE, alone, stands in his familiar classroom - looking at the  
visual timetable. He takes in the emptiness. He looks out of  
the window and takes in the fading light. And, still on his  
own, he walks over and puts his book in his drawer.

HEATHER enters, she starts to tidy up as JOE too starts to  
tidy up. She knows to play this low key. JOE stops. Looks at  
her.

JOE

Put your coat on, Heather.

HEATHER puts her coat on, plays this low key.

HEATHER

Put your coat on, Joe.

JOE puts his coat on.

JOE

Pick your bag up, Heather.

HEATHER picks her bag up.

(CONTINUED)

HEATHER

Pick your book bag up, Joe.

JOE

Time to go home, Heather.

HEATHER

Time to go home, Joe.

JOE goes to the door and opens it. HEATHER follows.

CUT TO:

80

**EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 11. 16:30.**

HEATHER and JOE come out of the school. He does a handshake and a hug, then goes for the high five.

HEATHER

You know what, Joe. We will leave it on a handshake and a hug today.

JOE hesitates, holds his hand up, keeping it in position, and walks across to ALISON . . . then high fives her instead.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

It's a start.

ALISON smiles at HEATHER. JOE gets in the car and we . . .

CUT TO:

80A

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 11. 18:05.**

ALISON and JOE are sitting on the sofa together. JOE holding a drink.

ALISON

You have a good day at school?

JOE

I helped Heather.

ALISON

Good.

JOE

She has a Michael and a Mr Meadows.  
At home. Not at school.

ALISON

That's nice for her.

JOE

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON smiles to herself. JOE takes a sip of his drink, that's all he has to say on the matter.

CUT TO:

81

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/MARK'S HOUSE. DAY 11. 18:10.

PAUL with MARK in the car, outside MARK's house.

MARK

Thank you, Paul. Goodbye, Paul.  
(BEAT) I did well.

PAUL

Yeah.

MARK

Except for the tests where I did very well but I didn't pass. But I was fit. And mixed with the others. They said.

PAUL

Good. Good. You did better than I ever could. You were brave enough to do the assessment. So, I'm sorry you're disappointed but you should still be very proud of yourself.

MARK

Did you think I could get in?

PAUL

Yes. I did. Of course I did.

MARK

Did you 100% definitely think I could get in.

PAUL looks at MARK and decides to front up.

PAUL

No. No, if I'm honest I didn't.

MARK

So why did you let me do it?

MARK gets out of the car and heads for his house. PAUL watches him, turning over this question.

CUT TO:

82

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 12. 11:00.

Morning. The gastropub open for the day. We might notice a box outside on the decking . . .

CUT TO:

83

INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 12. 11:02.

Inside, PAUL is getting the bar ready. MARK preparing tables.

PAUL

Bet you slept well last night.  
(BEAT) I know I did.

MARK doesn't reply, this is the nearest MARK would get to blanking PAUL.

PAUL (CONT'D)

The reason I let you do it was because you wanted to do it. And, in the end, I thought it was better for you to try. All your stuff about not being autistic and applying to the army feels like you saying that you want the world to accept you on your own terms. But for that to happen you have to accept the world on its terms. And the world is in the habit of shitting on you from time to time. Because the world is like that.

MARK turns this over, walks out. PAUL thinks he might have blown it. MARK comes back in, carrying the box with the rabbit in it.

MARK

We have to release the rabbit.

PAUL

Good idea. Take him out the back if you want.

MARK

He needs to be close to where you ran him over.

PAUL

He's a rabbit, Mark. He just needs grass and lady rabbits. And for the record I didn't run him over.

MARK looks unconvinced, PAUL can't quite believe what he is about to agree to. MARK looks at the rabbit.

CUT TO:

84

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/ROAD. DAY 12. 12:00.

PAUL and MARK parked up preparing rabbit release.

PAUL

The label isn't something you  
should be ashamed of.

MARK

I know.

PAUL

"Autistic" I mean.

MARK

I know.

PAUL

I know the arguments. About why you  
shouldn't have a label. Christ,  
I've made the arguments myself  
about my own boy. But it's hard out  
there, you know. And it's easier if  
you have other people around you  
who understand you. Who see the  
world the way you see the world.

MARK

Do you think I'm autistic?

PAUL

I think you have behaviours that  
would be described as autistic  
behaviours. We all do. But you have  
maybe a bit more than most. That's  
the only difference.

MARK looks at PAUL for a moment, and gets out of the car.

CUT TO:

85

EXT. ROAD. DAY 12. 12:05.

PAUL stands with MARK. The box is on the floor.

PAUL

Shall we say a few words. On the  
occasion of launching Graham back  
into the wild?

MARK

No.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

(PRESSING ON ANYWAY)

If you don't want people to  
describe you as autistic anymore  
then that is up to you. I respect  
that.

MARK

Right.

PAUL

And there's nothing remotely  
autistic about having to release a  
rabbit in the exact spot it was  
found.

MARK

No.

MARK opens the side of the box and the rabbit stays put.

MARK (CONT'D)

Why isn't he moving?

PAUL

Perhaps he doesn't know where he  
is.

MARK

Why not?

PAUL

Perhaps he's autistic.

Nothing from MARK.

MARK

That's not a good joke.

PAUL

No. That's not a good joke.

The rabbit hops out of the box, heads to the grass. They both  
watch it for a few moments. PAUL turns to MARK and smiles.  
MARK doesn't smile back, just watches Graham the rabbit.

CUT TO:

86

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM. DAY 12. 12:30.

MAURICE and LOUISE in the hall.

MAURICE

I'll see you later.

LOUISE

Yes. You will.

(CONTINUED)

A beeping noise - MAURICE looks at his sports watch.

MAURICE

Got to learn how to adjust this.

He fiddles with it.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Got to be a knack.

LOUISE

You know what, Maurice. Don't learn how to adjust it. Don't wear it. Give it to a passing jogger. Throw it in the Lake.

MAURICE

What?

LOUISE

I don't want you to wear the watch.

MAURICE

I thought you were all right with it.

LOUISE

Well I'm not. Because you hid it. And the fact you thought it was worth hiding means you thought about . . . I don't know, you and Pauline rubbing vaseline on each other's blisters. Sharing mint cake by the light of the moon up Scafell Pike.

MAURICE

Bloody hell, you've really thought this through, haven't you?

LOUISE

Yes. I have. And I hate it. I feel jealous, Maurice. All right. I feel jealous and I don't do jealous. It's not me!

Out on MAURICE, not sure what to do.

CUT TO:

MARK and PAUL return. MARK puts on an apron and gets back to work, as if drawing a line under the past few days. PAUL spots EDDIE sitting at the bar having a beer.

PAUL  
Daytime drinking. Another London habit.

EDDIE  
You know what I said? About it being life-changing?

PAUL  
Oh, yeah. What's her name?

EDDIE  
It wasn't a woman.

PAUL  
Okay. Surprising but, you know, thinking about it, not all that surprising.

EDDIE brandishes the bottle of beer he is drinking from.

EDDIE  
Two years ago. When my dad gave me the business. This was worth, what?

PAUL  
Three pound fifty as I recall . . .

EDDIE  
You know how much it's worth now?  
Over a million.

PAUL  
That's inflation for you. I hope you're going to pay for it.

EDDIE  
Not the bottle. What it represents.  
The brewery.

PAUL  
You've lost me.

EDDIE  
I've had an offer. To sell the brewery.

Out on EDDIE, flushed with success.

CUT TO:

LOUISE

You being here. But not moving in.  
It's great. Isn't it? It suits us  
both.

MAURICE

Yeah. I mean. Sometimes I run out  
of pants and that but . . .

LOUISE

It works how it is. I want it how  
it is. But this has all made me  
think that . . .

MAURICE

What?

LOUISE

I have feelings. Shit. I don't do  
poetry, Maurice.

MAURICE

I don't know. That was quite  
poetic.

LOUISE

I'm trying to tell you that I . . .

MAURICE

That you what?

LOUISE

Look. The last person I said I  
loved was my Dad. And he was  
already in a coffin in the Chapel  
of Rest.

MAURICE

Right.

LOUISE

So you can see. It doesn't come  
easily.

MAURICE

What?

LOUISE

To tell someone how I feel. That I  
feel that . . .

MAURICE

That you feel the same way about me  
as you felt about your Dad when he  
was in his coffin.

LOUISE  
For God's sake Maurice. I'm saying  
I think I might . . .

Just then, the front door goes and RALPH and KATIE enter, RALPH carrying a huge red heart.

KATIE  
We got it at the wedding fair. It's  
the centrepiece.

She flicks a switch. The heart lights up.

LOUISE  
You don't say.

LOUISE and MAURICE find themselves staring at the heart, which is gently throbbing. MAURICE glances at LOUISE then looks away again - straight ahead, at the heart.

CUT TO:

89

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 12. 13:15.

ALISON's car parked up. PAUL ushers JOE into the house while ALISON waits.

PAUL  
Go on in and see Uncle Eddie. He's  
a man full of surprises.

ALISON  
What?

PAUL  
Nothing. (BEAT) So Heather's  
performed another miracle, has she?  
It'll have to be more than a box of  
After Eights and a Thank You card  
at the end of term.

ALISON  
It's not sorted but it's getting  
better.

PAUL  
(MORE SERIOUS NOW)  
Sorry. (BEAT) Sorry I wasn't there  
to help.

ALISON  
You didn't need to be. You're here  
keeping an eye on Rebecca. How is  
she?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

She's Rebecca. Take more than pregnancy to change that girl.

ALISON

We'll need to keep talking to Joe about it. The pregnancy I mean, the baby . . .

PAUL nods.

ALISON (CONT'D)

She told me Mark is joining the army?

PAUL

He wanted to. He did his best.

ALISON

Well, at least you were there to help him.

PAUL

He needed someone to drive him.

(BEAT) And maybe I found it easier than helping Joe.

ALISON looks at him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

With Mark I know I didn't do the damage in the first place.

ALISON

Wow. Full marks for honesty.

PAUL is half expecting the criticism but nothing comes.

PAUL

You've changed.

ALISON

I'm trying.

PAUL

I'm not entirely clear why . . .

ALISON

You don't have to know. Not anymore. (BEAT) I'll just go inside and say goodbye to Joe?

PAUL

Yes. Sure.

ALISON heads inside, leaving PAUL alone with his thoughts.

CUT TO:

90

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 12. 16:00.

The landscape. The stillness. A mirror of the start of the episode. And, as at the beginning, we find JOE and REBECCA sitting outside. REBECCA has put a car seat next to JOE.

REBECCA

See. It's tiny. I thought you'd like to see that there'll be plenty of room even with the baby in a car seat.

JOE looks at the seat. Considers it. Pats it.

JOE

I was a baby.

REBECCA

Yes. You were. Once.

JOE

Not this baby.

REBECCA

No. Not this baby.

JOE looks at the seat again, turns this over.

This should feel like the end of the episode but then we. . .

CUT TO:

91

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LOUISE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 12. 22:30.

Louise's bedroom. Quiet. A duvet with two people under it.

Movement. From the look of the movement the two people are shagging. Then, from nowhere, the sound of Maurice's sports watch alarm cuts through the silence.

The movement stops suddenly.

LOUISE

(ANGRY, FROM UNDER DUVET)

Maurice!

END OF EPISODE  
TWO