

# THE A WORD

## SERIES 3

### Episode Four

#### SHOOTING SCRIPT

Written by

Peter Bowker



12<sup>th</sup> July 2019

1

**EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. DAY 17. 08:10.**

MAURICE and RALPH stand side by side outside the brewery. RALPH is already in his new work gear, including a T shirt with 'MASH-UP' written in big letters on the back. Visible on the building, a sign: 'SCOTT'S BREWERY - PROUD MEMBER OF THE MASH-UP BREWERY GROUP'.

MAURICE

End of an era, Ralph. All those memories.

RALPH

Yes.

MAURICE

You're probably as choked up as I am.

RALPH

Yes.

RALPH does not seem remotely choked.

RALPH (CONT'D)

We need suits. Wedding suits.

MAURICE looks at RALPH. Interprets this as RALPH asking him to be Best Man.

MAURICE

Do we? (SMILES) We do. (CHUFFED)  
Cheers Ralph. I won't let you down.

RALPH looks at MAURICE sideways as MAURICE looks at the brewery.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You know, when Eddie married Nicola he had Paul as his best man. And we all know how that marriage ended. Tell you what. I'll buy the suits. My treat.

RALPH

If you like.

MAURICE

Can't have the groom and best man looking like a pair of scruffbags, can we?

RALPH's attention is taken by two Hipster-looking CRAFT BREWERS coming out of the brewery, in same uniform, greeting RALPH.

HIPSTER 1

Ralph! All right!

RALPH heads towards them, all handshakes and greetings, and follows them back into the brewery.

MAURICE  
(UNDER HIS BREATH)  
Bloody London.

CUT TO:

2     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 17. 08:12.**

We crash into 'Trampoline' by Julian Cope - the opening 3-chord riff. The song plays over the following . . .

Early morning - JOE with headphones on, walking, singing - a close up and a splash of green behind him - for a moment we think he may be in the Lakes.

JOE / JULIAN COPE  
"Well I stand at every corner of  
the world  
And I stand at every corner of your  
heart  
And I give you everything that I  
call love  
From the heavens to the bottom of  
the sea . . ."

We pull out to reveal that JOE is in a park, watching ALISON walking ahead of him. She is making notes as she goes and, every so often, stopping to draw a chalk cross on the ground.

CUT TO:

3     **EXT. HILL BEHIND MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 17. 08:15.**

REBECCA walking alone, 7 months pregnant now, lost in thought.

CUT TO:

4     **INT. VILLAGE HALL. DAY 17. 08:30.**

'Trampoline' continues to play as we find LOUISE leading the CHOIR in some breathing exercises. We take in, amongst others, MAURICE, PAULINE, etc.

CUT TO:

5     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 17. 08:32.**

ALISON a way ahead of JOE now, taking notes as she stands by water and a low fence. JOE is staring at a MAN asleep on a bench. Still singing.

JOE / JULIAN COPE  
"Well I stand at heavens gate  
Come see me cry  
Heavens gate is locked  
They will not let me by . . ."

He moves on and follows ALISON.

CUT TO:

6     **EXT. HILL BEHIND MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 17. 08:35.**

REBECCA has climbed up the hill and is staring down at the house below her, her hands resting on her tummy - an unavoidable gesture - considering her future.

CUT TO:

7     **EXT. PARK - NEAR BOATING LAKE. MANCHESTER. DAY 17. 08:40.**

BEN is waiting by his van as JOE and ALISON approach. ALISON and BEN exchange a smile as they all get in the van.

CUT TO:

8     **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 17. 08:55.**

ALISON, with BEN, watches JOE greet HEATHER with a handshake. He goes in, HEATHER gives ALISON a smile then heads in too.

A beat. Then ALISON turns to BEN and waves and heads into the school herself.

The music fades and we . . .

CUT TO:

9     **INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 17. 09:15.**

HEATHER at the head of the horse shoe of chairs as the kids pass around a "Good Morning", chair to chair. At the end of the row is ALISON. TANYA turns to her.

TANYA  
Good morning, Alison . . .

ALISON  
Good morning, Tanya. Good morning,  
Heather.

HEATHER  
Good morning Alison. Now whose turn  
is it to show the timetable today?

A CHILD takes a stick and points to the pictures on a timetable on the wall. Each card has been attached with a clothes peg, showing the order of the day. HEATHER may improvise responses to the CHILD pointing to, or talking about, the stages of the day.

During this we watch ALISON watching JOE.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Great. And after circle time Joe's Mum, Alison, is going to be telling us about tomorrow . . .

CUT TO:

10

**INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. ZEBRAS CLASS. DAY 17. 09:30.**

ALISON has a large sheet of paper on the table. It is a map, hand drawn - an Alison masterpiece - of her sponsored walk route. A number of 'Stations' are labelled, and at each one a small cartoon figure with a photo of a real person's head is attached with blue tac - Maurice's head on a cartoon fireman, REBECCA's head on a cartoon jester, etc.

TANYA and two CHILDREN stand round the table looking at the map. JOE is there too, but further back. HEATHER nearby, watching. LSAs working with other CHILDREN away from this.

ALISON  
So our first stop is with this man.  
He is called Maurice. And he is a  
Fireman. He is Joe's Granddad.

TANYA  
Well done, Joe.

ALISON  
You will need to say Hello and tell him your name, and he will tell you his name and give you a reward and then what will he do? Joe?

JOE  
Point.

TANYA  
It's rude to point.

ALISON  
It is. But he won't be pointing at you. He will be pointing the way to your next station.

TANYA looks down at the map, back up at ALISON. JOE stands at the back, taking all this in, more withdrawn.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Heather and I will walk with you,  
all the way round. And Aardvark and  
Penguin Classes are coming with us  
too so we can all raise lots of  
money for the new minibus. What  
will you be dressed up as, Heather?

HEATHER

It's a surprise.

TANYA and CHILDREN look at the map. JOE watches them.

CUT TO:

11

**INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY 17. 10:15.**

ALISON, carrying the rolled-up map and her bag, with HEATHER.

HEATHER

That was great, that is some map!  
How long did it take you?

ALISON

It's not too busy is it? I don't  
want to overstimulate anyone.

HEATHER

It's okay. It was a compliment.

ALISON

I've written up the risk assessment  
about the pond in the park. Got a  
place for the quiet space.  
Brollies, welly box, rain hoods if  
it rains. All the volunteers are  
DBS checked. And I've sent sponsor  
forms home with every child - I'll  
chase the parents up for the money  
next week . . .

HEATHER

(IN) Alison. Calm down. This is the  
best planned sponsored walk I've  
ever seen. It's a local park, not  
the D-Day Landings.

ALISON

You think I've overplanned.

HEATHER

No. You've come up with an activity  
that the children will enjoy. And  
you've made the thing that Joe does  
best the centre of the day.

ALISON

You still think it's a good thing to base my assignment on? You don't think it's bad that I use it for my Uni course?

HEATHER

You've done a nice thing. It's not a crime if it helps you too. Now you just have to add our kids and see if it works. One other thing, though . . .

ALISON

What? What have I left out?

HEATHER

Enjoy it. Try and enjoy it.

ALISON

This is me enjoying it. You should see me when I'm tense.

HEATHER

And all your volunteers know not to be too big and loud around our children?

ALISON

(ROLLING HER EYES)

You've not met my Dad, have you?

CUT TO:

12     **OMITTED**

13     **INT/EXT. VILLAGE HALL. DAY 17. 10:20.**

End of choir rehearsal, MAURICE and OTHERS moving chairs, etc.

LOUISE

Next rehearsal is a run-through of the wedding songs, so I need a full attendance, please. I've put the arrangements and the baritone and soprano parts on the website!

PAULINE makes a beeline for MAURICE, carrying a bag which she tries to hand to MAURICE.

PAULINE

Maurice. I wanted to give you -

MAURICE steps back, panicked.

MAURICE

I really can't - (take anything from you)

PAULINE

(IN) They're not for you, they're for your Rebecca. How far along is she now?

MAURICE

Seven months.

PAULINE

These are all the rage at ante-natal classes apparently.

MAURICE can't help glancing over at LOUISE, who has clocked this, but not in a way that indicates she cares. He looks in the bag. Puzzled, he takes out half the present - a crocheted boob. He looks at it for a beat before realising what it is.

PAULINE (CONT'D)

It helps with demonstrating latching on apparently. I went a bit abstract with the colour.

MAURICE stuffs the boob back in the bag. Takes the bag.

MAURICE

Right. Thanks. Thanks a lot.

PAULINE

I think she only needs one for the class but I did a pair just to be on the safe side. One's crocheted, the other's knitted.

As she's saying this, PAULINE reaches into the bag and gets both the boobs out, holds up one in each hand to illustrate.

MAURICE

Well, it's always nice to have a choice.

MAURICE stands still, slightly stunned, as LOUISE approaches.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

They're for Rebecca.

LOUISE, amused, carries on moving the chairs and we . . .

CUT TO:

PAUL with REBECCA, who is staring at a knitted boob that MAURICE has just given her. MAURICE holds the crocheted one.



REBECCA

Thanks Granddad. They'll be an ice-breaker if nothing else.

PAUL

Did you make them yourself?

MAURICE ignores PAUL.

MAURICE

They're all the rage at the antenatal groups.

PAUL

What time does your class start?

REBECCA

4.30. Why, do you want to come?

PAUL

I will if you really want me to, yes, but . . .

REBECCA

I'm joking. I know the thought terrifies you. Tom's coming. He's going to hand out business cards.

PAUL

As long as he's doing it for the right reasons, that's the main thing. (BEAT) And what about you?

REBECCA

What about me?

PAUL

Does the thought terrify you?

REBECCA

Bit late for that, isn't it?

Her glib brush-off isn't fooling anyone. PAUL glances at her, concerned, but doesn't know what to say. MAURICE notices this too but finds solace in the crocheted boob as TOM enters.

TOM

Is this a cry for help, Maurice?

MAURICE

They're all the rage apparently.

MAURICE gives the boob to TOM and heads out. PAUL looks over at REBECCA again, concerned.

CUT TO:

15      **INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 17. 11:50.**

PAUL still thinking about Rebecca as he gets the gastropub ready for the lunchtime shift. MARK enters from outside.

MARK  
There's a customer.

PAUL  
I hate to be a stickler but you are the waiter.

MARK  
She would like you.

PAUL looks through the window to see SARAH waving at him.

CUT TO:

16      **EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 17. 11:55.**

PAUL has brought SARAH a peppermint tea. He sits.

SARAH  
I expect you're wondering why I didn't ring you. After our early morning chat, at the camping.

PAUL  
No. Not at all. I get it. Euphoria of the barbecue and all that. Words said in haste. The heady perfume of the chemical toilet.

SARAH  
I was waiting for the right event. There's a talk. At the library.

PAUL  
A talk at the library, hey?

SARAH  
A travel writer. He trekked through Nepal, lost three toes to frostbite. I thought if we went to something stimulating, we'd have a catalyst for conversation.

PAUL  
Sarah. You had me at library.

SARAH  
Right. Does that mean you'd like to come?

PAUL  
Yes. It's a joke. End of Top Gun.

MARK  
Jerry Maguire.

PAUL looks up. MARK has come out to clean a nearby table.

PAUL  
Jerry Maguire. (BEAT) I think  
that's a lovely idea.

SARAH  
I brought you a leaflet. In case  
you said yes.

PAUL  
(GLANCING AT THE LEAFLET)  
Great. That's great. Tomorrow.  
(BEAT) Shit. I'm really sorry, I've  
got Joe's sponsored walk in  
Manchester tomorrow.

SARAH  
(FLUSTERED)  
Oh, right, well, you can't miss  
that!

PAUL  
I'm sorry.

SARAH  
It's fine. It's fine. Another time.

SARAH quickly finishes her tea and goes. PAUL turns to MARK.

MARK  
You don't like her, do you.

PAUL  
I do like her. What? You think it  
looked like I don't like her?

MARK  
Your body language looked like you  
don't like her.

PAUL  
Right. That's just my body. I come  
out at odd angles, you know. (BEAT)  
Did it look like she liked me?

MARK thinks about this.

MARK  
I think she thinks she's your  
girlfriend.

PAUL looks at MARK, he knows this analysis to be true.

PAUL  
You need to clean that table again.  
You missed a bit.

PAUL heads inside and we . . .

CUT TO:

17

**INT. LIBRARY. MANCHESTER. DAY 17. 13:05.**

ALISON on her laptop, close to the cafe, working on her sponsored walk write-up for University. AIMS, OBJECTIVES, SAFEGUARDS, ETC. BEN enters and joins her.

ALISON  
(WITHOUT LOOKING UP)  
Hi.

BEN  
A skinny americano when you're ready.

ALISON looks at BEN, then gets up and heads for the counter. We see she's wearing an apron. She starts to make a coffee.

BEN (CONT'D)  
How did it go then? At the school.  
You still okay for volunteers?

ALISON  
As long as you don't drop out I'll be fine.

BEN  
Drop out? I can't think of a better way to spend a weekend than walking round a park with you and a bunch of kids. Other than walking around a park with just you. On your own.

ALISON  
That could get very dull. For you, I mean.

BEN  
We could put it to the test. Weekend after next. Book somewhere nice? Near a park. Or similar. Eat room service and drink in the afternoon . . .

ALISON  
You have remembered it's fancy dress, haven't you?

BEN  
I'm assuming you mean the sponsored walk.

ALISON  
The weekend away too if you like.

BEN  
So that's a Yes?

ALISON  
It's a lovely idea. Yes.

ALISON kisses him as she leans over to give him the coffee.  
She turns to the next CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER  
(NERVOUS)  
I'll just have the coffee, thanks.  
I'm in a bit of a rush.

CUT TO:

18

**INT. ANTE-NATAL CLASS VENUE. CORRIDOR. DAY 17. 16:31.**

TOM and REBECCA, both suddenly nervous in the corridor.  
REBECCA, carrying the boobs in a bag, turns to TOM.

REBECCA  
We could just read a book about it.  
And there's loads of stuff on  
YouTube.

They look up and see another COUPLE looking equally nervous.

TOM  
Yeah. YouTube would be my go to  
guide for childbirth.

REBECCA  
I just don't want to sit in a room  
with a bunch of people who have  
nothing in common except they all  
had a shag around the same time.

TOM  
Come on. You just sold it to me. It  
might even be fun.

They head through the door and . . .

CUT TO:

19      **INT. ANTE-NATAL CLASS ROOM. DAY 17. 16:32.**

This isn't going to be fun. A group of smiling COUPLES sit around in a circle. JONATHAN and OLIVIA among them. All couples. REBECCA doesn't know what to do with the boobs.

A MIDWIFE - GAIL - stands at the front of the room with a white board.

GAIL  
Come in, come in, Rebecca. You haven't missed much. We're just contemplating the mucous plug.

Nervous smiles from the other prospective parents and suddenly even TOM feels a bit nervous.

CUT TO:

20      **INT. ANTE-NATAL CLASS ROOM. DAY 17. 16:40.**

The MEN and WOMEN have been split into separate groups and paired up. TOM's partner could not be more different to TOM. Off-duty businessman, JONATHAN, in chinos and Boden catalogue shirt. REBECCA has been paired with Jonathan's wife, OLIVIA.

In front of each pair are some random objects.

GAIL  
This is just a bit of a warm up. I would like each pair to use the objects they have to recreate a stage of the birth process.

TOM and JONATHAN look at their props - a jumper and a melon.

TOM  
I think the melon must symbolise the baby.

JONATHAN  
If we're going to win, we need to get on with it.

TOM  
I don't know that it's a competition . . .

As TOM picks up the melon, we move to OLIVIA and REBECCA who are staring down at a tray of circular foods in front of them - a Cheerio, party ring biscuit, mini-doughnut and a bagel.

OLIVIA  
Any ideas?

REBECCA

Mainly that you're going to have to  
fight me for the doughnut.

OLIVIA

Stages of dilation I would have  
thought . . .

OLIVIA starts to arrange the objects in order of size. We go  
back to JONATHAN and TOM.

JONATHAN

Is this your first?

TOM

No. I'm not the father.

JONATHAN

Wow. Well done you. Not sure I  
could raise another man's child.

TOM starts to put the melon into the jumper.

TOM

Me neither.

JONATHAN just looks confused. Back to REBECCA and OLIVIA.

OLIVIA

How is your birth plan coming on?

REBECCA

I've made a start. I know what  
sandwiches I'm bringing and I've  
put down for every drug known to  
man.

OLIVIA laughs, unsure if REBECCA is joking or not.

OLIVIA

All the kit we need! Unbelievable,  
isn't it? John Lewis is good for  
baby bag and presenting blankets.

REBECCA

"Presenting blankets"?

OLIVIA

Are you having a boy or a girl?

REBECCA

I don't know. I didn't want to  
know.

OLIVIA

Best to find out. Then you can  
imagine how it will feel.

(MORE)

OLIVIA (CONT'D)  
Start to get to know the baby as a  
person before they've even arrived  
. . .

REBECCA looks around. She sees perfect couples everywhere.  
OLIVIA smiles kindly and we . . .

CUT TO:

21     **EXT. MENSWEAR SHOP. NEAREST BIG TOWN. DAY 17. 16:42.**

MAURICE jauntily walking towards a menswear shop with RALPH.

MAURICE  
Get a pint in after, hey, Ralph?  
Run me speech past you.

RALPH looks at the ground.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
I'm pulling your leg. (HE'S NOT)  
Here it is. Come on. Let's get in  
there. We'll look like half the Rat  
Pack when we come out.

RALPH doesn't move.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
What are we waiting for?

RALPH  
Josh.

RALPH looks down the street and now we and MAURICE see a man  
Ralph's age walking towards them. This is JOSH - RALPH's  
mate, who also has Downs Syndrome.

MAURICE  
Who the hell's Josh?

RALPH  
My best man.

MAURICE  
Hang on. He's your best man?

RALPH  
Yes. Josh. He's a laugh.

JOSH has now joined them. MAURICE covers his disappointment.

MAURICE  
Alright Josh. I'm Maurice.



JOSH shakes MAURICE's hand but does not speak. A nod and he and RALPH head into the shop together. On MAURICE - what the fuck happened here?

CUT TO:

22     **INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 17. 16:44.**

PAUL is on a ladder, trying to wire a new light fitting on the ceiling. There's a knock at the front door. He stops, waits for the person to go away. Another knock. He sighs, gets down from the ladder and we . . .

CUT TO:

23     **EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR. DAY 17. 16:45.**

PAUL opens the door to find SARAH standing there with two coffees in 'eco' cups, and a tupperware tub.

SARAH  
Thought you might be in need of  
sustenance.

PAUL smiles, a little uncertainly and we . .

CUT TO:

24     **INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 17. 16:48.**

SARAH is on the ladder and PAUL is holding the ladder. She fits the light fitting quickly and efficiently.

SARAH  
There's a knack with these kind of  
fittings. Your hand is going  
against what your brain is telling  
you is logical. I'm used to that  
feeling.

SARAH lets go and the fitting stays in place.

PAUL  
Brilliant. Thank you.

SARAH  
Pleasure. What's next. The chest of  
drawers?

SARAH nods towards a flatpack still in a box.

PAUL  
Well, yes, but we could have the  
cake and I could do that later.

SARAH

Do the things you don't want to do  
first, Paul, that way the day will  
always get better and you will end  
it on a smile.

SARAH comes down the ladder.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Phillips or Flathead screwdriver?

PAUL, somewhat surprised by her competence, follows her . . .

CUT TO:

25

**INT. ANTE-NATAL CLASS ROOM. DAY 17. 16:50.**

TOM has pushed the melon into the sleeve of the jumper.

TOM

So we thought the melon represented  
the baby's head and the sleeve is  
the birth canal. And here we have  
crowning, Ladies and Gentleman.

GAIL

Excellent. Yes. That's very good.

TOM

Thank you.

GAIL

Rebecca and Olivia?

OLIVIA indicates the order by size of the circular foods.

OLIVIA

We were thinking stages of  
dilation. (POINTS TO EACH FOOD)  
First contractions. Bigger. Then  
bigger still. Eye watering.

GAIL

Very good. Excellent.

REBECCA turns to OLIVIA as GAIL moves on.

REBECCA

Have you really got everything  
ready?

OLIVIA

The way I see it. Make yourself as  
prepared as you can for the  
unexpected.

REBECCA

Well, I think we all know what's expected.

OLIVIA

What I mean is, when the baby comes. We don't actually know what it's going to be like, do we?

On REBECCA, troubled at this notion. Back to GAIL.

GAIL

Now Tom, could you lend me your melon? And if I can get two volunteers to pull this scarf from either end, we can start showing how much pressure the pelvic floor is going to be under . . . Rebecca?

REBECCA shaken out of it by the mention of her name.

REBECCA

Yeah. Sure. Sure.

REBECCA walks up, without enthusiasm, still turning over OLIVIA's words.

CUT TO:

26

**INT. MENSWEAR SHOP. DAY 17. 17:02.**

MAURICE is frowning, sulking really, working his way down the suits. JOSH and RALPH not to be seen, in the changing rooms.

MAURICE

All right, Ralph?

RALPH (O.S.)

Yes!

MAURICE

Josh?

Nothing.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

(TO RALPH'S CHANGING ROOM)

What's Josh doing in there? Working on his speech?

A young male shop assistant - MO - comes over.

MO

What sort of thing are you looking for, Sir?

MAURICE

The sort of suit a best man  
wouldn't wear.

At that moment RALPH and JOSH come out of adjacent changing rooms in matching suits. RALPH looks at MAURICE.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You look like you should be working  
the door at Wetherspoons.

RALPH and JOSH exchange a look.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Too fitted mate.

MO steps in. Addresses RALPH and JOSH.

MO

What we thinking, fellers?

RALPH

Not right.

MO

More of a classic line? Softer cut?

MO gets a double breasted jacket off the rail.

MAURICE

You don't want double breasted,  
Ralph.

RALPH

I know.

MAURICE

And you don't want them double  
vents that make it look like you've  
got a book resting on your arse.

MAURICE has taken over and is holding a new jacket against RALPH. Doesn't see RALPH getting more irritated.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Try it on. Take a look in the  
mirror out here.

MAURICE reaches to help RALPH off with his jacket.

RALPH

(IRRITATED)

Stop fussing. You're not my Dad.

MAURICE retreats. Silence. RALPH turns to MO.

RALPH (CONT'D)  
It needs to look good with  
trainers.

MO laughs and looks at MAURICE.

MO  
Is he serious?

MAURICE  
Ask him. Like he says, I'm not his  
Dad. Or ask his best man - he's  
very forthcoming.

MO looks at JOSH. JOSH shrugs and we . . .

CUT TO:

27

**INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. JOE'S ROOM. DAY 17. 17:05.**

PAUL and SARAH have half-assembled the flatpack and are now  
eating SARAH's cake.

SARAH  
Are you keeping it neutral? Not too  
busy?

PAUL  
Yes. That's the idea.

SARAH  
Because of his autism?

PAUL  
Yes. Because of his autism. Which  
is ironic since he's living at his  
Granddad's which looks like an  
auction house.

SARAH  
It speaks well of your family that  
you can live with your ex-Father in  
Law without killing each other.

PAUL  
I think that's only a matter of  
time.

SARAH  
Bill's grandparents spend their  
time shouting at him. Because of  
his hearing aids. And saying with  
complete confidence but without a  
hint of medical knowledge that  
"There is nothing wrong with him."  
And "He hears you when he wants  
to."

PAUL

"He seems to understand when you offer him ice cream." That was one of Maurice's favourites with Joe.

SARAH

They don't blame Bill, they blame me. Sally Fusspot. All my allergies and homeopathic remedies and organic this and gluten-free that.

PAUL

That's made Bill deaf, has it? According to them?

SARAH

They think I worry too much. And once I found out there was something wrong I exaggerated it until he needed hearing aids . . .

PAUL

Wow. Do they actually say that?

SARAH

They don't have to. (BEAT) I've always been a worrier and then fate gave me a child to worry about.

PAUL

Not sure it works like that.

PAUL chews thoughtfully on the cake.

SARAH

You don't have to feel obliged to have our date after this, Paul. This can count and we can say we tried.

PAUL

Well, if there was another talk at the library some time.

SARAH

You don't mean that.

PAUL

I do. Really. Shall we get this job finished?

SARAH

(PLEASANTLY)

Yes. I'll just take an anti-histamine though, I don't want the paint fumes irritating my membrane.

PAUL  
Amen to that.

SARAH reaches inside her bag and we . . .

CUT TO:

28     **INT. MENSWEAR SHOP. DAY 17. 17:20.**

MAURICE and RALPH - who's in a different, good suit - wait for JOSH to emerge from the changing room.

MAURICE  
He was always your first choice,  
was he? For Best Man, like.

RALPH  
Yes.

MAURICE  
Just thought he might need to be a  
bit more outgoing. Or at least say  
a few words? Now and again?

Nothing. JOSH comes out in a suit matching RALPH's. He looks good. RALPH smiles, shakes JOSH's hand. They stand together.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
Nice. Smart. You look the dogs  
bollocks. Very nice.

Jealousy and pride fight for MAURICE's soul.

CUT TO:

29     **EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DAY 17. 17:30.**

TOM has walked REBECCA back to Maurice's.

TOM  
You could at least have told me you  
were going to take a vow of  
silence.

REBECCA  
I'm sorry.

TOM  
It wasn't so bad though, was it?

REBECCA  
Okay for you. Top of the class with  
your melon installation.

TOM

Jonathan was a great leader. I felt competitive urges I never knew I had.

REBECCA

Olivia. Banging on about all the plans she's made. All the kit she's already bought.

TOM

She was a bit full-on but perhaps she thought she was being helpful.

REBECCA

Perfect couples. They do my head in.

TOM links his arm through REBECCA's.

TOM

Now come on. Couples don't come much more perfect than us.

REBECCA smiles but briefly. TOM looks at her, puzzled.

TOM (CONT'D)

What? What is it? Is it just that it's scary now it's really happening?

REBECCA

Yeah, that's it.

TOM

I've known you since double English on the first day of Year 7. I know when you're hiding something from me.

REBECCA

You're right. It's just scary. That's all.

TOM knows there is something else but REBECCA won't say. She hugs TOM, then he watches, concerned, as she heads inside.

CUT TO:

30

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 17. 19:30.**

JOE in his pyjamas, with ALISON and BEN. They have the Walk Map out on the table in front of them. JOE is just finishing switching the 'Maurice' and 'Ben' figures on the map so that 'Maurice' is now on Station 3 and 'Ben' on Station 1.



BEN

Oh. I see. I'm being promoted to  
Station 1, am I?

JOE stands back to regard his work, leaning against BEN as he  
does this. ALISON notices how at ease JOE feels with BEN.

ALISON

I think that's a good idea, love.  
Cos Granddad can be a bit . . .  
alarming if you don't know him.

BEN

(SMILING) Okay, kidder. I'm off.  
See you bright and early.

JOE doesn't reply. BEN pecks ALISON on the cheek.

BEN (CONT'D)

Get some sleep.

ALISON

I'll try.

BEN exits. JOE hasn't moved.

ALISON (CONT'D)

You know what Heather said? We have  
to enjoy it? Yes.

JOE

(NODS)  
What if.

ALISON

What if what?

JOE

What if it rains.

ALISON

It might rain. But we'll be all  
right. We have a plan.

JOE

The plan. The cross. The map. The  
park. My class.

ALISON

All those things just help the day  
to go well. They aren't things to  
worry about.

JOE

There will be hats.

ALISON  
Yes. If it rains. Maybe. Or  
raincoats.

JOE  
We need hats. All my class. For the  
walk.

ALISON  
Hats?

JOE  
Special hats. For the walk. So we  
know.

ALISON  
Hats. Right.

JOE heads off upstairs to his room. ALISON picks up her  
phone, looking stressed. She waits for an answer.

ALISON (CONT'D)  
There's 12 hours till it starts and  
now he's saying we need hats.

CUT TO:

31     **INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. EVENING 17. 19:35.**

PAUL and SARAH come into the finished kitchen, having done  
the work on Joe's room.

PAUL  
Thanks for today. You saved me a  
load of time.

SARAH  
I'm never happier than when I've  
got my hand on an Allen Key.

PAUL  
(LAUGHS)  
You're full of surprises.

SARAH  
It's logical. It's reassuring. And  
when it's done, it's done. Although  
chipboard dust has to be handled  
with care.

PAUL  
Of course.

SARAH  
I'll come tomorrow if you like.  
(PAUL LOOKS PUZZLED) To the  
sponsored walk.  
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)  
You said there weren't enough  
volunteers. I'll come. I'd like to.

PAUL  
Really? You do know it's fancy  
dress? And what about Bill?

SARAH  
Bill's with his Gran this week. The  
other one. The nice one.

PAUL  
Really. Oh, right.

SARAH  
Only if you want me to. Otherwise  
you just have to say, "Sarah, you  
need to re-tune your antennae"

PAUL  
No. No. You should come. You should  
come. It'd be nice.

Without warning SARAH steps up to PAUL and kisses him  
suddenly on the lips.

SARAH  
Goodness me! What a day of  
surprises. Do you have any herbal  
tea?

PAUL  
Not so much herbal, no.

SARAH has produced two green tea bags.

SARAH  
I always carry a couple for  
emergencies.

PAUL reaches for the kettle, both of them surprised by what  
just happened.

CUT TO:

32

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. EVENING 17. 20:05.**

ALISON stands at JOE's bedroom door, watching him sleeping.  
There is a quiet knock at the front door. ALISON looks  
slightly puzzled, goes to answer it . . .

CUT TO:

33      **INT/EXT. ALISON'S HOUSE/FRONT DOOR. EVENING 17. 20:06.**

ALISON opens her door, is surprised to see HEATHER, who is holding a bag full of paper, scissors, etc.

HEATHER

I reckon between us we're capable  
of making a dozen hats, aren't we?

HEATHER pulls a couple of bottles of beer from her bag.  
ALISON smiles and we . . .

CUT TO:

34      **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 17. 20:12.**

ALISON and HEATHER - with card laid out, glitter, stars, feathers, scissors, etc. HEATHER has already started.

HEATHER

You start that end. I'll start this  
end. And don't hog the glue.

ALISON

I didn't mean for you to drop  
everything and come round. I just  
panicked.

HEATHER

I know how that feels.

ALISON

I can't believe you've ever  
panicked.

HEATHER

My first day of teaching practice I  
slipped on a mat and fell over,  
banged my head. I was demonstrating  
an obstacle course. And all the  
kids laughed. I panicked. I wanted  
to cry. So I pretended I'd done it  
on purpose. Really hammed it up -  
so I could properly cry. If The  
Smiths had written a song about  
teaching practice then I would have  
been that song.

ALISON

(LAUGHS)

You stuck at it. That's the main  
thing.

HEATHER

I had to. It was what I wanted to  
do.

ALISON

Why? I mean. I know why I'm  
obsessed with this stuff. Because  
of Joe. But why would you . . .

HEATHER

In the first place. I'm ashamed to  
say. Because I was a nauseating do-  
gooder. No, wait. I'm not being  
fair on myself. I was a kid. There  
used to be a collecting box,  
outside the sweet shop. A statue of  
a little boy with a leg iron and a  
walking stick. He might have been  
blind too, but I could've made that  
bit up. And I thought, I could do  
something about that. And when I  
left university I wanted to be a  
poet. But I had to get a job to  
tide me over before I became  
famous. So I got work at a hospital  
for people with learning  
disabilities - which was easy,  
because no fucker else wanted to do  
it. The first time I went up there  
I was - frightened. After six  
months a Nurse said to me, "You  
like working here, don't you." And  
I hadn't even thought about it. But  
I said, "Yes". And then I knew.  
This was what I wanted to do. Not  
because I wanted to do good.  
Because I enjoyed it. Do gooders  
don't survive.

ALISON

Well, nobody ever accused me of  
being a do-gooder, so . . .

HEATHER

So. My turn to say it to you. You  
like doing this, don't you. Not  
just because of Joe.

ALISON

Well. I don't know. It's crept up  
on me. The feeling that this might  
be my life now. I didn't know what  
I wanted when I first moved here. I  
knew what I'd had. What I'd lost.  
And for a while it was just about  
surviving, you know. But now it  
feels as though . . . It might be  
all right.

CUT TO:

35      INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. EVENING 17. 20:20.

MAURICE comes home to find REBECCA sitting alone.

MAURICE

You okay?

REBECCA

Yes.

MAURICE

How was the baby class . . .

REBECCA

Great. Yes. How was the suit hunt?

MAURICE

Good. I got something. Pretty plain.

REBECCA

You and Ralph didn't go for electric blue mohair, then?

MAURICE

We won't have matching suits. I'm not the best man. How was the baby class?

REBECCA

Oh. I thought you were.

MAURICE

No. I'm on the bench. When Ralph said we needed to go and get new suits I thought I was in. But it turns out he just thinks I'm a scruffy bastard and he doesn't want me showing him up. How was the baby class? I'm going to keep asking.

REBECCA

I took the knitted boobs. But I kept them in the bag in the end.

MAURICE

Not really my main concern.

REBECCA

I don't know. It was full of couples. I'm not in a couple. It was full of women who had planned everything. Not my thing really.

MAURICE

I know "need" is the wrong word these days and we're all strong and independent women and all that.

REBECCA

It's not the wrong word.

MAURICE

Has it occurred to you that you  
might need your Mum, right now.

Out on REBECCA, turning this over. MAURICE exits. We stay on REBECCA, she picks up her phone. She presses ALISON's number. She is about to press 'call' but something stops her. She stares at her phone for a few moments. Decides not to call.

CUT TO:

36

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 17. 20:40.**

HEATHER and ALISON - nearly finished all the cardboard hats.

ALISON

Do you want to go through the plan  
with me one more time?

HEATHER

No. I don't. And neither do you.  
Just get an early night and then  
embrace the chaos.

ALISON

It's a guilt thing, you know. The  
planning. Because I can never be  
sure where his autism ends and my  
bad parenting begins. I think I can  
plan my way out of anything. Cos if  
I plan it might make things better.

HEATHER

Listen. I've got a son who got a  
First in Modern Languages at  
Durham. He's living back with us in  
his old bedroom and delivering fast  
food on a moped so he can save  
enough money to get as far away  
from his Mum and Dad as possible.  
In the end we're all bad parents.  
And on that cheery note . . . I'll  
see you tomorrow.

ALISON

8.30.

HEATHER

Traffic permitting. Yes.

ALISON

Traffic permitting? Maybe you  
should set off earlier.

HEATHER

I'm winding you up. I'll be there.  
I'll take this (PICKS UP THE MAP).

ALISON

I can bring it.

HEATHER

No chance. I know you. If I leave  
it, you'll still be tinkering with  
it at 2 in the morning.

HEATHER laughs as she exits.

CUT TO:

37

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. EVENING 17. 20:45.**

ALISON comes in to look at JOE and finds him awake.

ALISON

Hey, Mister.

JOE

I'm not awake, am I.

ALISON goes and sits on her bed.

ALISON

We've got the hats. For tomorrow.  
Everything is ready.

JOE nods. ALISON notices that the duvet is tight around his chin. She loosens it slightly and sees he has his school sweatshirt on. She gently pulls it down further and sees he is fully dressed.

ALISON (CONT'D)

What's all this?

JOE

I'm going to like the walk  
tomorrow, aren't I.

ALISON

Of course you are.

JOE

The cross. The map. The park. The  
class.

ALISON

Listen. You don't need to worry  
about any of that stuff.

(MORE)



ALISON (CONT'D)  
All you have to do is walk. And you  
walk better than anyone I know.  
Right?

CUT TO:

38     **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. EVENING 17. 20:49.**

JOE has his pyjamas on again and climbs into bed as ALISON folds his clothes and puts them on a chair for morning.

ALISON  
There. Now. Stay in your pyjamas  
till morning. You'll sleep better,  
I promise.

JOE  
I won't do it wrong, will I.

ALISON  
Sleep? No. You're good at sleep.

JOE  
I won't do the walk wrong.

A beat - this lands with ALISON.

ALISON  
No. It's not like that. It's just  
fun. It'll be fun. Now go to sleep.  
You dream best in your pyjamas. I  
promise.

JOE  
It will be fun.

ALISON  
That's right.

JOE  
Will Asif have fun.

ALISON  
Yes.

JOE  
Will Tanya have fun.

ALISON  
Yes.

JOE  
(IN ONE BREATH)  
Will Abby Jacob Caspar Flo Ibrahim  
have fun.

ALISON

Yes. They will. They will.

ALISON kisses JOE goodnight and we . . .

CUT TO:

39

**INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 17. 20:50.**

SARAH is sitting beside - and finishing off assembling - a small bookshelf with the last tweak of an Allen Key. PAUL is bringing in fresh cups of tea.

PAUL

If I'd known you were this handy  
I'd have hired you to build the  
extension.

SARAH puts the bookshelf to one side.

SARAH

I just like to keep my hands  
occupied at all times.

PAUL

Indeed.

SARAH

Otherwise who knows what mischief  
I'd get up to.

SARAH realises this is more flirty than she intended. They go silent again. PAUL sips his tea.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It didn't have to be green again.  
I do have other flavours.

PAUL

This is fine. Getting a taste for  
it.

Again, silence. SARAH sips her tea.

SARAH

Bill's at his Gran's.(BEAT)  
Just in case you were wondering.  
About me getting back . . . if  
things might get out of hand.

PAUL

Could easily happen, both of us on  
the green tea.

SARAH laughs but the tea goes down the wrong way.

SARAH

I'm sorry. It went down the wrong way.

PAUL

Are you okay?

SARAH

Yes. Yes. Probably do me good.

Their faces are close.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Would you like me to kiss you again?

PAUL

Well, we could give it a go . . .

PAUL's phone starts to vibrate.

PAUL (CONT'D)

That's my phone.

SARAH

I thought it was.

PAUL looks at the name on the phone - ALISON. They both look at the name. PAUL picks it up on the last ring

PAUL

Hi. No. I was just . . . busy.

SARAH, thrown, disappointed, grabs her things and stands. PAUL tries to mouth to her - 'Don't go' - SARAH mimes back, all hands and flutter, that it is fine, she waves a hurried goodbye to PAUL and heads out.

CONTINUOUS:

40

**INT/INT. ALISON'S L'ROOM/PAUL'S L'ROOM. EVENING 17. 20:51.**

We start on ALISON, then intercut between her and PAUL as they speak. ALISON is panicking.

ALISON

I involved him because I thought he would understand it better but I think I've overwhelmed him. If he has a meltdown and I've got the other kids to think of too - (and)

PAUL

Woah. Woah. Woah. Do you remember that time he refused to get off the ferry in France, or insisted on jumping from the highest diving board at Center Parcs? Or when he was three and he pooped in the ornamental carp pond? Hey? He survived those, didn't he? It will be fine.

ALISON

Will it?

PAUL

Or it won't be fine. Either way we'll deal with it. Okay?

ALISON

Yeah. You're right. Thanks. Okay.

ALISON hangs up. Allowing herself to be reassured.

CUT TO:

40A INT. PAUL'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 17. 20:52.

PAUL has hung up. Sits where we left him. Looks at the two mugs of green tea. He is disappointed, perhaps more disappointed than he expected to be. And yes, he can do this with a look.

CUT TO:

41 INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. ALISON'S BEDROOM. DAY 18. 07:00.

The alarm goes off. 7:00AM. ALISON kills it . . .

CUT TO:

42 OMITTED

43 INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 18. 07:35.

ALISON in PJs, packs the hats. Checks her checklist. Sorts snacks and drinks into separate bags. Looks at the clock.

CUT TO:

44 INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 18. 08:15.

JOE is in bed. His clothes still on the chair. ALISON kneels by the bed - now dressed in her fancy dress pirate costume.

JOE

"A walk in the park a sponsored walk, it will be okay it's nothing to worry about is it."

ALISON

We might have to move soon.  
Remember what we said. Out of bed by 8.

JOE looks at the clock on his visual timetable by the bed and looks at his alarm clock.

JOE

It's too late now.

ALISON

No. It's not. We've got plenty of time. You take your time. See?

JOE looks at the clock.

ALISON (CONT'D)

We can wait. You've got time. Do you want me to help you?

JOE

Do you want me to help you?

ALISON

Joe.

JOE

When you say Joe you mean wrong.

ALISON

I don't love. I just want you to know that you've got nothing to worry about. I'll be there. All the time. And if it stops being fun we can come home.

JOE

Everybody.

ALISON

Everybody will have fun, yes.

JOE

"Get your clothes on Joe. You will have a lovely time."

ALISON

You will, yes. I promise.

JOE

Everybody.

But JOE still doesn't move. The doorbell goes.

CUT TO:

45

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 18. 08:18.**

ALISON with BEN - who is in his gardening gear but with a straw hat as a nod towards fancy dress.

BEN

There's no need to panic. We've got loads of time.

ALISON

That's exactly what I said to Joe. I can see now why it doesn't work.

BEN

What's the worst thing that can happen?

ALISON

Joe doesn't turn up? I don't turn up. I'll have let everybody down and promised something I can't do.

BEN

Heather is there. She'll sort it. The volunteers will still turn up. It will happen.

ALISON

And Joe's day becomes the day everybody talks about because Joe wasn't there. 'Joe's day?' Listen to me. He hates being the centre of attention. I should have seen this coming.

BEN

He might just be over-excited. Shall I talk to him?

ALISON

As long as you don't use the phrase "Big day ahead of you."

The doorbell goes. BEN stays where he is.

ALISON (CONT'D)

That'll be Rebecca. She said she might come here first. At least she can take the hats! The hats!

BEN

Don't worry about the hats.

ALISON

Okay.

BEN

Do you like my hat by the way?

ALISON

It's lovely, yeah . . .

ALISON paces - looks at all the stuff, looks at her watch. The doorbell goes again. ALISON doesn't move. BEN hesitates.

BEN

I'll get it, shall I?

BEN leaves ALISON alone. She looks at all her plans. She starts to organise stuff.

CUT TO:

46     **EXT/INT. ALISON'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR. DAY 18. 08:20.**

BEN opens the door as PAUL is already speaking.

PAUL

You said fancy dress, we give you fancy dress.

PAUL and REBECCA standing there. PAUL dressed as a Chef, REBECCA as a Jester . . . PAUL is surprised that it is BEN answering the door and it becomes slightly awkward.

BEN

You'd better come in.

CUT TO:

47     **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LANDING. DAY 18. 08:23.**

JOE's closed door. ALISON gently knocking. Downstairs, we can hear adult voices.

PAUL (O.S.)

How do you mean, he won't come out?

BEN (O.S.)

Alison's been trying since early on. He won't open the door now.

CONTINUOUS:

48     **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 18. 08:24.**

Find JOE has pulled out all the drawers from his chest of drawers. The contents are now on the floor.

The mattress from his bed is also on the floor, blocking the door. JOE stands, hoping this will somehow make the anxiety stop. We hear a gentle knock at the door.

ALISON (O.S.)  
Joe? I won't come in if you don't want. I just want to know that you're all right.

CUT TO:

49

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 18. 08:35.**

REBECCA sitting down. PAUL and BEN stand, awkward. ALISON enters in pirate outfit.

PAUL  
(OF THE OUTFIT)  
Not sure how that's going to help.

ALISON  
I'm just trying to get everything done so we can go when he's ready.  
(LOOKS AT HER WATCH) I should be there by now.

PAUL  
I'll go and have a word with him.

ALISON  
He's not used to you being here.  
He's already anxious. If you go in he'll feel pressured and then it'll be a crisis.

PAUL  
And this isn't a crisis?

ALISON  
(IRRITATED)  
Paul. Don't make this any harder than it is already. I don't know what to do. Let me think.

PAUL  
I do know what to do.

The strain has pulled PAUL and ALISON back into their old habits of arguing, each taking the other's comments personally. BEN on the outside, looking on. Helpless.

ALISON  
Remember what he's like when he gets like this.



PAUL

I know what he's like. I see him  
all the time.

ALISON

I didn't mean . . .

PAUL

Of course I know what he's like.  
I'll talk to him.

ALISON

You're the adult here, Paul and  
he's the distressed child. Just try  
and remember that, will you?

PAUL

That helps. That really helps.

REBECCA

Dad.

BEN

(GENTLE)

Maybe Alison's right. This is his  
and Alison's space, isn't it? Maybe  
it would just confuse him.

ALISON

No. Hang on, Ben, it's okay.

BEN

(HANDS IN 'SURRENDER')

Just trying to help here. (TO  
ALISON) On your side, by the way.

ALISON

Didn't help.

BEN

Yeah. I get that.

ALISON notices BEN's irritation.

REBECCA

You all go. And I'll stay.

ALISON

No. I can't.

REBECCA

Mum. You've done all this work.

ALISON hesitates.

ALISON

No. Paul. You and Ben go.

PAUL  
Me and Ben.

ALISON  
We'll talk to him. And if he won't  
come I'll follow and Rebecca can  
stay behind. Is that okay, love?

REBECCA  
Yes.

On PAUL and BEN - realising they are now paired up.

CUT TO:

50 **OMITTED**

51 **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LANDING/JOE'S ROOM. DAY 18. 08:50.**

ALISON and REBECCA try Joe's door. It opens. The mattress has been moved. They step inside to see all the clothes on the floor and the mattress now leaning upright against one wall, forming a triangular hiding place for JOE behind it.

They both look at the mattress and look at each other . . .

CUT TO:

52 **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:00.**

MAURICE is standing in the corner of the park by his station, on a small picnic table, lining up individual fruit pastilles on a tray, pacing, looking at his watch, in his firefighting gear. A kid - JESSE - breaks away from his Dad and comes up to him.

JESSE  
My football got stuck up a tree.

MAURICE  
Sorry to hear that, son, but I'm  
not on duty.

JESSE looks bemused, starts to walk off.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
Practise keeping the ball on the  
deck next time.

Then MAURICE sees the minibus arriving, with HEATHER driving and Joe's classmates inside. He walks towards it . . .

. . . as HEATHER gets out, dressed as Where's Wally. She brings Alison's rolled-up Walk Map with her.

The KIDS (WHO ARE IN SCHOOL UNIFORM, NOT FANCY DRESS) get out of the minibus with LSAs, etc.

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
No sign of Alison yet but I've given the course the onceover just to be on the safe side.

HEATHER  
Glad to hear it.

MAURICE  
(LOOKS AT THE KIDS)  
I'm guessing you are the special school.

HEATHER  
One or two clues, yes.

MAURICE  
I take my hat off to you. I'm Maurice, by the way. Alison's Dad.

HEATHER  
I got that. Heather. Joe's teacher.  
(TO THE KIDS) Okay, everyone, do we all remember our sponsored walk rules?

HEATHER un-rolls Alison's map. Holds it up.

MAURICE  
Has Alison told you what the hold up is, 'cos I've heard nothing.

HEATHER  
(COMPLETE FOCUS ON THE KIDS)  
First things first. Toilet break. Look at the map. Who can see the toilet on it?

One of the children and LSAs looks at the map.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Now which way should we go?

One of the CHILDREN points in the right direction.

HEATHER (CONT'D)  
Right. Off we go then. (TO MAURICE)  
You don't mind giving us a hand, do you?

MAURICE  
No. Not at all.

MAURICE walks along as the CHILDREN form an orderly procession towards the toilet.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Thanks for helping Alison, by the way. I've not seen her this, you know . . . (A SHRUG) happy? For quite a while . . .

HEATHER

Don't be silly. She's helped me.

MAURICE

I know that's what you say. But she's my daughter. I know she's hard work at times.

HEATHER

(LAUGHS)

When she talked about you I thought she was exaggerating but no, you're pretty much living up to your reputation.

MAURICE

Right. Good.

MAURICE looks up and is surprised to see SARAH hurrying towards him - dressed in a tiger onesie.

SARAH

Hello, Maurice.

MAURICE

Hello, erm, Bill's Mum.

SARAH

Sarah. Yes. (TO HEATHER) Is this the sponsored walk for Joe's school? Joe's Dad said you might be short of volunteers and I am fully checked. I have my certificate here as a matter of fact. I always carry it round.

SARAH pulls her certificate out of her bag.

MAURICE

Paul invited you? (TO HEATHER) Neighbour of ours. She knows the territory. Got a deaf kid.

SARAH

Yes. Yes. Where is everyone? I thought they'd all be here by now.

CUT TO:

53

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 18. 09:10.**

ALISON and REBECCA sit in front of the mattress. We can see JOE, from the side, sitting, back against the wall behind his mattress shield. But ALISON and REBECCA talk to the mattress.

ALISON

Your Dad and Ben. They've gone to the park. We're just going to stay here for a bit, with you.

JOE

Will Dad be sad.

ALISON

No. He won't be sad. He'll have a good time.

JOE

Fiery Jack.

REBECCA

The Fall. 1980. You like to walk.

JOE

I like to walk.

ALISON

So we could walk.

JOE

So we could walk.

ALISON

Where do you think we could walk.

JOE

The other way.

ALISON

The other way?

JOE

(INTO HIS HAND)

"That way Joe with everybody else, with everybody else why do you have to be different, why do you always have to be different?"

ALISON

Hey. It's okay. (BEAT) I tell you what, Joe. I'm going to go now. Just to see how your class are getting on. Rebecca's going to stay here with you. How about that, hey?

ALISON and REBECCA exchange a look. ALISON stands to give them space. She exits but leaves the door open.

REBECCA  
Just us two now.

JOE  
Just us two.

REBECCA  
I know what this feels like. When something is going to happen. Something good even. But you start to think what it might be like. And you worry. And worry chases all the good away. I know what it feels like.

JOE  
I know what it feels like.

CONTINUOUS:

54     **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LANDING. DAY 18. 09:11.**

On the landing, by Joe's door, ALISON has been listening to this. She moves away, then heads downstairs.

CUT TO:

55     **EXT. STREET. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:12.**

PAUL and BEN hurry through the streets together.

BEN  
Look mate, I'm sorry. About back there. About butting in.

PAUL  
You were right. Really. It was just, you know, when he's distressed you get pulled in to Joe world and all bets are off.

BEN  
I wouldn't have liked it if it was Molly and some bloke I hardly knew started telling me -

PAUL  
You know what. You are right. You were bang out of order.

BEN smiles.

BEN  
One question. Does this hat make me look like a bit of a tosser?

PAUL

If I'm honest. It does a bit.  
That's not a powerplay. It really  
does.

BEN puts the hat on the top of a concrete bollard as he  
passes and they head on . . .

CUT TO:

56

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 18. 09:15.**

REBECCA with JOE. He is still behind the mattress.

JOE

Where will they be?

REBECCA

Who?

JOE

My class. My Dad.

REBECCA

Right now? I think they'll just be  
getting to the park. The walk won't  
have started yet but I might need  
to get going soon. Do you know the  
way?

No reply.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

What's the park called?

JOE

What's the park called.

REBECCA says nothing. She waits.

JOE (CONT'D)

The Sponsored Walk Park.

REBECCA

I don't know where that is. I don't  
live here.

JOE

How will you find it.

REBECCA

I don't know. (BEAT) Do you know  
where it is?

JOE puts a hand out from behind the mattress, points.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Maybe you could show me the way?

REBECCA stands, hoping he might come out. We wait. The mattress perfectly still. Until, finally, it falls forward having been tipped by JOE. Now he remains sitting with his back against the wall. Not moving. The following exchange is done at breakneck speed - like a game of snap.

JOE

The Life of Riley.

REBECCA

Lightning Seeds 1992.

JOE

Disco 2000.

REBECCA

Pulp 1995.

JOE

Station Approach.

REBECCA

Elbow 2005.

JOE doesn't move. REBECCA sits down next to him, her back against the wall. She waits. Then . . .

JOE

I will need a hat.

REBECCA looks at JOE and we . . .

CUT TO:

57

**EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:20.**

MAURICE waiting with PAUL and BEN, who have arrived. The hats are being distributed.

PAUL

Well, we got here at least. That's the main thing.

MAURICE

No Joe and no Alison and you're giving yourself a pat on the back for turning up. Bloody hell.

HEATHER

I can see where Alison gets her anxiety from, Maurice.



MAURICE

Me. I'm not anxious. I'm the calm  
at the eye of the storm.

HEATHER

Right. If you say so. Who's this?

They turn to see ALISON arriving in her pirate costume.

BEN

Well done. You made it.

MAURICE

What time do you call this?

ALISON

Sorry, sorry. Sorry, everybody.

HEATHER

It's fine.

ALISON

(SPOTTING SARAH - PUZZLED)  
Hello, Sarah.

MAURICE

Paul invited her. She's got a  
certificate. Where's Joe?

On ALISON who exchanges a look with HEATHER.

HEATHER

Right. Everybody. We want you all  
at the start in a nice line. No  
bunching!

ALISON smiles, grateful.

CUT TO:

58

**EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:28.**

All the children are lined up. Each of them is wearing a  
cardboard hat. HEATHER and LSAs in line.

ALISON

You all look fantastic. We are  
going to start on that path and  
then follow the blue arrows to your  
first station where we will tick  
you in and you may well get a  
reward!

TANYA looks at something beyond ALISON.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Tanya? Are you ready?

But TANYA is still looking. ALISON looks round and, at first, sees a flurry of bubbles in the air. They are coming from JOE - who has a bubble machine going at full pelt, and is wearing BEN's abandoned hat. Bubbles trailing behind him. REBECCA by his side. Applause from the kids. ALISON smiles to herself - a look towards HEATHER.

CUT TO:

59

**EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:30.**

JOE leads off from the front - wearing his headphones, Ben's hat on top, and a cardboard hat on top of that - bubble machine on the go . . . Other CHILDREN follow with HEATHER and LSAs. ALISON and REBECCA fall in side by side as they watch the kids go off.

REBECCA  
He looks good in Ben's hat.

ALISON  
Yeah. And it didn't suit Ben.

REBECCA  
You didn't tell Ben that, did you?

ALISON  
No.

REBECCA  
You owe me a fiver for the bubble machine by the way.

REBECCA heads off to her station where a camping chair waits.

ALISON  
A tenner if you don't tell Ben I lied about liking his hat.

REBECCA turns to ALISON and smiles - no edge for the first time in a while - as ALISON catches the walk up.

CUT TO:

60

**EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:40 - MONTAGE.**

MONTAGE - 'The Life of Riley' by The Lightning Seeds plays over the following sequence. The CHILDREN, including JOE, and LSAs, HEATHER and ALISON arrive at each station in turn.

LIGHTNING SEEDS  
"Lost in the Milky Way,  
Smile at the empty sky and wait for  
The moment a million chances may  
all collide."

STATION 1 - BEN, in his gardening gear, giving each CHILD a drink, ticking their arrival, then pointing them towards the next station. ALISON watches him, smiling. TANYA takes one drink then reaches back for a second and takes it as she goes.

CUT TO:

61     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 09:50 - MONTAGE.**

STATION 2 - PAUL in Chef's gear, waiting to check off each arrival. This time he has mini-chocolate bars on a tray. The CHILDREN pick one piece each. TANYA reaches back for an extra mini-chocolate as she goes.

LIGHTNING SEEDS

"I'll be the guiding light,  
Swim to me through stars that shine  
down,  
And call to the sleeping world as  
they fall to Earth."

CUT TO:

62     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 10:00 - MONTAGE.**

STATION 3 - MAURICE in Fireman's uniform. Helmet in place, so to speak. He ticks each CHILD off on a pad and gives them a fruit pastille each. Then points in the direction of their next station. TANYA reaches for an extra one as she goes but MAURICE clamps his hand down on it. TANYA heads off, looking back at MAURICE - unyielding, arms folded. When TANYA is out of sight MAURICE helps himself to a fruit pastille.

LIGHTNING SEEDS

"So here's your life,  
We'll find our way,  
We're sailing blind,  
But it's certain nothing's  
certain."

CUT TO:

63     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 10:10 - MONTAGE.**

STATION 4 - REBECCA in Jester's outfit, in a camping chair - a tray full of cakes. Each CHILD gets a cake as they're signed out and then we find JOE, headphones on, singing now.

JOE / LIGHTNING SEEDS

"I don't mind, I get the feeling  
You'll be fine, I still believe  
That in this world,  
(MORE)

JOE / LIGHTNING SEEDS (CONT'D)  
We've got to find the time  
For the life of Riley."

CUT TO:

64     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 10:20 - MONTAGE.**

STATION 5 - SARAH - dressed in her tiger onesie - checking off and waiting to point the CHILDREN to the end point. She offers fruit to each child, but they all walk past the fruit and to the finish. The music fades, and then . . .

Last to come past SARAH is PAUL. He takes a piece of fruit. SARAH smiles. PAUL looks her up and down.

PAUL  
You didn't have time for the fancy  
dress, then?

SARAH laughs.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
No. It's nice. Suits you.

SARAH  
Me and Bill like to wear them for  
our movie nights.

PAUL  
That's good to know. (BEAT)  
Thank you for coming to help.

SARAH  
Well . . . It was a pleasure.

They exchange a smile.

CUT TO:

65     **EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 10:25.**

The finish point. Applause for the stragglers. ALISON with HEATHER.

The KIDS who have finished are running around, blankets spread out. Some PARENTS, LSAs, etc. We might see PAUL, SARAH, BEN joining them. (N.B. We don't see MAURICE).

ALISON spots REBECCA, exhausted, eyes closed, now in her camping chair under the gazebo - the dedicated quiet place.

CUT TO:

66

**EXT. 'QUIET PLACE'. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 10:26.**

ALISON standing by the dozing REBECCA. REBECCA opens one eye and looks at her.

REBECCA  
You did it then.

REBECCA looks over at the CHILDREN, lost. ALISON watches her.

ALISON  
Yep. (BEAT) At the risk of breaking  
my own resolution to not wade in,  
I'm wading in. I'm making a guess  
you're terrified.

REBECCA looks at ALISON.

REBECCA  
It was the antenatal class.

ALISON  
It usually is . . .

REBECCA  
I just. I haven't done anything. At  
all. I haven't even got a  
presenting blanket.

ALISON  
(AMUSED)  
Outrageous.

REBECCA  
This woman at the class mentioned  
it. I'm not even sure what it is.

ALISON  
(LAUGHS)  
It's nonsense. It's just a blanket.  
They call it that so they can  
charge you more. You were passed  
round wrapped in a towel after you  
were born. And you were beautiful.  
No one looks at the blanket.

REBECCA  
Really?

ALISON  
Really. (SCEPTICAL) And that was  
it? That was what you were  
terrified about?

REBECCA  
Yes. That and everything else.

ALISON

Becky. Nobody knows what it's going to be like. It's unknown. And then the baby is here and somehow you manage. Everybody is panicking in different ways. Even the woman with the birth plan, the fully fitted nursery and the presenting blanket.

REBECCA

And is every woman thinking "What if my child has difficulties?" Is everybody thinking that?

ALISON

Rebecca -

REBECCA

Did it cross your mind when you were having me?

ALISON

(THROWN) No.

REBECCA

And what about when you were having Joe?

ALISON

I don't (think) . . . No. (GENTLE)  
But maybe that was always going to be a question for you. You've grown up with Joe. He's been your normal.

REBECCA

I looked at all the perfect couples. And I thought . . . I bet you'll all have perfect babies. And if anybody is going to have the less than perfect baby, it's me.

ALISON

You know that's not true . . .

REBECCA

The woman in the class. She asked if my baby was a boy or a girl and I said I didn't want to know. I wanted a surprise. But the truth is I didn't want to know anything. Because something might be wrong. And if I say to myself I don't want a baby like Joe then I'm saying I don't want Joe for a brother -

ALISON

No. No. All you're saying is that you want a healthy baby.

(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)

The rest is chance. You can want a baby without autism and still love Joe. That doesn't make you a bad sister. It doesn't mean you don't love him.

REBECCA

You're not ashamed of me?

ALISON

I could never be ashamed of you.

REBECCA

I really wanted you to be ashamed of me. To have a go at me.

ALISON

Why love? Why would you want that?

REBECCA

To give me something to fight against. Someone to prove wrong. And that way there'd be no room for regrets. Or doubt.

ALISON

I don't know a mother who doesn't have doubts. It's the first rule of parenthood: Whatever you are doing, you're doing it wrong.

REBECCA smiles.

REBECCA

What's the second rule.

ALISON

Everybody else is doing it right.

REBECCA relaxes, glances across at ALISON.

REBECCA

You could help me with the birth plan.

ALISON

Oh, boy, could I help you with the birth plan. Mine ran to 42 pages in a bound folder.

REBECCA laughs.

REBECCA

Did the hospital stick to it?

ALISON

Not so much the second time.  
Because Paul was there and he was  
too busy making the nurses laugh.  
The first time. Your Grandma was  
there. So. They really did.

REBECCA looks at ALISON.

REBECCA

Is that you volunteering?

ALISON

Yes. If you'd like me to. I would  
love that.

ALISON hugs REBECCA. A release for both of them.

CUT TO:

67

**EXT. PARK. MANCHESTER. DAY 18. 12:05.**

Later. The picnic thinning out. ALISON is collecting litter.  
PAUL is standing drinking coffee as she walks past.

PAUL

You've missed a bit.

ALISON

Thank you.

PAUL

You did great today, by the way.  
This is brilliant.

ALISON

Oh. Well. Everybody at the school  
mucked in, you know and . . .

PAUL

Anyway.

ALISON stops for a moment, looks over at SARAH who is  
wandering round sharing cakes from a box.

ALISON

Sarah. An interesting choice.

PAUL

I'm not sure either of us have  
actually made a choice.

ALISON

Any allergies cropped up so far?



PAUL

All right, all right. Let's just say she's got a well-hidden sense of irony that neither of us fully appreciated.

ALISON

If you say so. I'm not judging you.

As they talk, relaxed, BEN looks over. Not with any envy but can't help feeling strange - watching their long established familiarity.

PAUL

I talked to Ben.

ALISON

Well done.

PAUL

He's a nice bloke.

(ALISON DOESN'T REPLY)

What?

ALISON

I don't know what to say to you sometimes. It's hard to do small talk with someone you know this well.

REBECCA is taking a photo of JOE and his classmates.

REBECCA

Okay. Are we ready. Say "Ice Cream!"

Some do, some don't.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Excellent.

HEATHER approaches ALISON.

HEATHER

See. I told you it'd be fine.

ALISON

You did. Only a couple of mishaps.

HEATHER

And most of those are biodegradable so I don't think you have to put them in the report.

ALISON

Don't. Thank the Lord for wet wipes and a sense of humour.

HEATHER

Now you just have to write it all up.

ALISON

You know me. I enjoy that bit. I'm in control at last.

HEATHER

So not just Joe who has found a positive outlet for his obsessive behaviour, then.

HEATHER looks on at the picnic. A moment of celebration. A moment of harmony in some pretty tough lives.

Then they look over to where JOE is standing perfectly still and taking in the full glory of the picnic.

CUT TO:

68 **OMITTED**

69 **INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/HALLWAY. EVENING 18. 19:00.**

Evening now. LOUISE in the living room, looking at her watch, pacing, waiting for something or somebody, not clear what. She goes into the hall and shouts up the stairs.

LOUISE

Are you two going to be long? I could have made you both a suit in this time!

MAURICE (O.S.)

Coming. Coming. Button flies. Why anybody still insists on making these is beyond me . . .

MAURICE enters the living room, in his suit.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Here you are. Emperor Armani meets Emperor Penguin.

MAURICE stands. LOUISE smiles. MAURICE self-conscious.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

What? I thought I did them all up.

LOUISE

I'll say this for you Maurice. You scrub up well.

MAURICE

Ralph chose it.

LOUISE

Did he now. Well, he's got a good eye, my boy.

MAURICE

I think he was feeling bad. Leading me on like that. About being his best man.

LOUISE

God's sake, Maurice, let it go.

MAURICE

I don't know what kind of speech Josh is going to make but I've not heard a word out of him so far.

LOUISE

Maybe that's why Ralph chose him. So he won't take all the attention on his big day.

MAURICE shrugs, forces a half smile of acceptance.

RALPH (O.S.)

Well?

And MAURICE and LOUISE both turn to see RALPH, in his wedding suit. MAURICE smiles his approval. LOUISE looks at RALPH. Goes across to him, runs her fingers down the lapels of his suit. The trousers are too long but apart from that . . .

LOUISE

You'll do. You'll do.

She feels proud and RALPH knows it.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Now go and get changed before I make a fool of myself. Go on.

MAURICE

She likes it. A lot. Which is why she is sending you away. Don't look at me for an explanation. It's women. You'd better get used to it.

RALPH turns and goes upstairs.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I'll get changed too, shall I?

LOUISE

You could give me a Frank Sinatra song before you do if you like.

MAURICE

No. You're all right. Maybe at the wedding . . .

LOUISE heads out of the living room, shouting up the stairs as she goes.

LOUISE (O.S.)

Those trousers are going to need taking up, Ralph.

MAURICE, alone, remains standing. At a loss.

CUT TO:

70

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:02.**

BEN and ALISON return, in regular clothes now, having spent the day together. BEN helping ALISON bring in stuff from the walk, including a bag with some of the paper hats on top.

ALISON

Thank you for today.

BEN

It was fun in the end.

They kiss.

ALISON

Yes. In the end. I'm sorry about having a go at you. When you were backing me up. With Paul.

BEN

I can't pretend I wasn't a little put out. But then, you're a family, aren't you.

ALISON kisses him but doesn't disagree.

ALISON

You're a good man.

BEN

And a top singer.

ALISON

You aren't a top singer.

BEN

Great lover.

ALISON

Better than your singing, certainly.

They kiss, and are heading upstairs when ALISON's phone goes.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Rebecca.

She answers. BEN pauses, then goes upstairs.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Hello.

CONTINUOUS:

71

**INT/INT. MAURICE'S KITCHEN/ALISON'S L'ROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:03.**

JOE is on REBECCA's phone, PAUL and REBECCA are there - playing cards on the table, clearly they have been playing a game. We intercut between JOE and ALISON.

JOE

Hello. How are you. What are you doing right now.

ALISON

Hello. I am fine. I am about to sleep. How are you? What are you doing right now?

JOE

I am fine. I am speaking into the phone.

ALISON

Well, I asked for that.

JOE

What did you ask for?

ALISON

It's just a saying. Shouldn't you be in bed?

JOE

Is Ben there.

ALISON

Well, yes. Ben is here. Do you want to talk to him?

JOE

Is he sleeping in my bed?

ALISON

No. I'll probably sleep in your bed.

JOE

Here's Rebecca.

ALISON

You did well today, Joe. Looking after everybody. You did really well.

REBECCA

It's me. I'll tell him.

ALISON

Thank you.

PAUL starts to head out of the kitchen, part of the game.

REBECCA

We think Joe may have a future as a card shark. He plays us. Maybe he's been playing us all along.

And now we stay with ALISON on the phone.

ALISON

Yes. Well, do you remember that time in Corfu?

PAUL

(IN BACKGROUND ON PHONE,  
CALLING BACK)

It was Italy.

REBECCA (ON PHONE)

Dad said it was Italy.

CONTINUOUS:

72 **OMITTED**

73 **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. ALISON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:04.**

BEN reading a book in bed, from ALISON's bedside table, only half reading, aware of the chatter and laughter from downstairs. He puts down the book and listens, disappointed.

ALISON (O.S.)

That's right. So it was. Well, your Dad's got a better memory for these things than me.

CUT TO:

74 **INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:04.**

ALISON on phone.

ALISON

Night, you lot. Night night. Yeah.  
Thank you for today. Thank you.

ALISON hangs up the phone, smiles.

CUT TO:

75

**INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 18. 21:06.**

Nine playing cards laid out on the table. REBECCA picks up the card in the top left corner. 'Nine of Hearts'. JOE nods. REBECCA puts it back, face down. She's holding the rest of the deck in her hand. As PAUL comes back in, REBECCA gestures with her thumb on the deck to the top-left position. PAUL looks at the cards and turns over the one in the top left corner - the 'Nine of Hearts'.

PAUL

Is this your card?

JOE looks at it, nods "Yes". Enjoying the 'magic'. REBECCA laughs, playing along.

REBECCA

How are you doing that?

PAUL

I can't tell you. I'd be banned  
from the magic circle.

JOE

My turn now.

REBECCA and PAUL exchange a look.

PAUL

Go on then. Go into the hall. No  
peeping.

JOE goes outside. PAUL looks at REBECCA, a shrug. REBECCA taps the card in the top right hand corner. PAUL nods.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Okay, Joe. Come back in.

Nothing.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Joe?

PAUL goes to find JOE. He laughs. He turns to REBECCA.

PAUL (CONT'D)

He's gone to bed. Made himself  
disappear. That's a better trick,  
in fairness.

REBECCA laughs, PAUL too.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
You all right?

REBECCA  
Yeah . . . (GENUINE) I'm fine, Dad.  
I'm fine. Are you?

A beat. PAUL knows what she's driving at.

PAUL  
I'm glad your Mum's found someone.  
That stuff at the house, that was  
just because, you know, things were  
tense. Ben seems nice and he seems  
good with Joe and your Mum likes  
him so . . .

REBECCA  
Doesn't it make you sad to say  
that?

PAUL  
It makes me sad for you. Not for  
me. I'm sorry. I'll always be  
sorry.

REBECCA gives PAUL a hug. A gesture that tells him he doesn't  
need to be sorry.

CUT TO:

76

**INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:10.**

LOUISE finds MAURICE sitting in his suit in the dark.

LOUISE  
You going to keep that suit on till  
the wedding?

MAURICE doesn't laugh or respond.

LOUISE (CONT'D)  
This isn't still about not being  
his best man, is it? He just wanted  
a mate to do it. Josh has been his  
mate since he was ten.

MAURICE  
I could tell that by their  
repartee.

MAURICE falls silent. Then . . .

MAURICE (CONT'D)  
Do you think I drove Eddie away?



LOUISE  
What's brought this on?

MAURICE  
Something Ralph said today.

LOUISE  
About Eddie?

MAURICE  
"You're not my Dad."

LOUISE  
He was probably just being stroppy.  
It's what young men say to older  
men.

MAURICE  
But I'm not, am I? I drove my own  
son away and now... Well, what am I  
to Ralph, when all's said and done?

LOUISE  
You're going to have to just grin  
and bear this, Maurice. (GETTING  
IMPATIENT) Because this is Ralph's  
wedding!

MAURICE  
That's just it, isn't it? When you  
think about it. What's the point of  
me even going to the wedding?

On MAURICE, unsure how he got to this question, and how he  
came to say it out loud.

CUT TO:

76A     **INT. MAURICE'S KITCHEN/SARAH'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:12.**

PAUL on his own now. Makes a decision. Calls a number. We  
intercut between him and SARAH.

PAUL  
Hiya.

SARAH  
Oh. Hello.

PAUL  
I was thinking about Joe at Ralph's  
wedding. He's going to need a mate  
or two 'cos kids get bored at  
weddings, so, I was thinking it  
would be great if Bill could come,  
and he can't come on his own, so  
maybe you could come?  
(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)  
If you're free? To Ralph's wedding.  
As my plus one.

SARAH  
Well, plus two with Bill.

PAUL  
Yes. Obviously. Would you like to  
come?

SARAH  
That would be lovely, yes.

PAUL  
And Sarah?

SARAH  
Yes.

PAUL  
Maybe don't wear the onesie.

SARAH puts the phone down. And she smiles. Big time.

End on PAUL - staring at the phone - well, that felt okay. He  
smiles too.

CUT TO:

77

**INT. ALISON'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:15.**

ALISON looking at the photos of the day on her computer.  
Smiling to herself as she goes through the snaps. BEN comes  
in, watches her for a few moments, then walks over and joins  
her, puts his arms around her.

ALISON  
Have you seen this one?

BEN  
Lovely. Have you seen this?

BEN shows ALISON a picture of a hotel on his phone.

BEN (CONT'D)  
I just booked it. For us. Weekend  
after next.

ALISON  
That's lovely. Thank you. I'm  
looking forward to it already.

BEN kisses her, she kisses him back, but then she turns back  
to the screen.

BEN  
Are you coming to bed?

ALISON  
In a minute. Yeah.

BEN  
(SLIGHTLY PISSED OFF)  
Yep. Sure. In a minute.

ALISON  
Ben?

BEN is walking out, disappointed. On ALISON, watching him go, troubled. She likes Ben, and likes that he needs her like this, but isn't sure that the need in her is as strong.

ALISON looks back at the photos for a few beats, then closes the computer, gets up and starts to head upstairs. At the door, she looks back at the bag with the cardboard hats on top, and smiles.

CUT TO:

78      **OMITTED**

79      **INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. JOE & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 18. 21:20.**

JOE is in the bed, hidden under the duvet. A small gap in the duvet, near the top - and from it - a chain of bubbles flow out, jostling for space as they float out into the room.

END OF EPISODE  
FOUR