

THE A WORD

Episode One
SHOOTING SCRIPT

Written by

Peter Bowker



7th October 2015

STRICTLY PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL. No part of this document or its contents may be disclosed, distributed or used in any way, stored in a retrieval system, disseminated or incorporated into any other work, without the express written permission of Fifty Fathoms Productions. Any unauthorised use is strictly prohibited and will be prosecuted in courts of pertinent jurisdiction. © 2015 Tiger Aspect Productions Limited.

1 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. ROAD. DAY 1. 09:45.**

A road bisects an empty, rugged landscape, fells climbing either side of the road, a lake in the distance. Then we see something, someone - JOE - a beautiful five year old boy - walking along it - alone, vulnerable. He has headphones strapped to his ears and is clutching an ornamental windmill he has nicked from someone's garden. We can hear the music he is playing on his headphones and singing along to - 'Mardy Bum - Arctic Monkeys'.

ARCTIC MONKEYS

(ON HEADPHONES)

"Now then Mardy Bum, I see your frown and it's like looking down the barrel of a gun, And it goes off. And out come all these words, Oh there's a very pleasant side to you, A side I much prefer..."

A car horn behind him. A transit van. But the boy doesn't hear, or is ignoring the van behind him. The driver - PAVEL (Polish, mid 20's) - doesn't look particularly surprised or angered by this turn of events. He slows down so much that his workmate - DAVID - can jump out of the transit, run ahead of the boy and get his attention. The boy smiles, half in recognition and we . . .

CUT TO:

2 **EXT/INT. LAKE DISTRICT. ROADS/BREWERY VAN. DAY 1. 09:49.**

JOE sits between PAVEL and DAVID up front. Headphones still on . . .

CUT TO:

3 **EXT. HUGHES HOUSE. DAY 1. 09:55.**

A row of greystone houses in a small village on the edge of a Lake District town. At the end of the row two larger houses with a cottage squeezed in between from which a 'LET BY' Estate Agent's sign hangs.

PAUL HUGHES - a wiry man in his mid 30's - and his wife, - ALISON, lovely, also mid 30's, rush out of the end house as PAVEL helps JOE to jump out of the transit. They are concerned but not hysterical. This is clearly not unusual.

PAUL

He's here! Panic over.

JOE heads for PAUL.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Thanks, guys!

They wave back and drive away. PAUL is already tipping JOE upside down.

ALISON

Joe! What have I told you about going looking for Pavel and the boys? Hey? One day it won't be them and you'll get run over.

PAUL

Mozart? Where did you get the windmill? Hey? Help yourself to a birthday present?

But JOE giggles, still upside down.

PAUL/JOE

(SINGING)

"I just want a lover like any other. What do I get?"

JOE

Buzzcocks. 1978. Written by Pete Shelley.

PAUL

You're a genius. What are you?

JOE

(SMILES)

A genius!

PAUL tips JOE the right way up and stands him on his feet. PAUL goes inside, shuts the door, JOE hangs back and waits for ALISON to go inside too. When the door is shut behind her, JOE opens it and goes inside himself . . . A familiar automatic routine that nobody thinks about anymore.

CONTINUOUS:

4

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 10:00.

The preparation of children's party food laid out on the kitchen table. Happy Birthday banners everywhere. Sausages waiting to go on sticks, bowls of crisps covered in cling film, buns, jellies in animal shapes, sandwiches - the sheer quantity and dazzling says 'Over the top' - a notion confirmed by a three-tiered OCTOPUS cake.

PAUL, ALISON and JOE enter. ALISON takes JOE's iPod away.

ALISON

No music and no presents till you've got ready, Mister.

ALISON kisses him, sends him towards his room then sets about the party food, obsessively tweaking the birthday cake.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Rebecca! I need some help!

PAUL
(SEEING THE FOOD)
I see you're doing what you can for
the childhood obesity epidemic.

ALISON
It's the whole class. There's 30 of
the little buggers.

REBECCA - Alison's 16 year old daughter, all eye make up and attitude enters - ALISON glances up at her.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Is that what you're wearing?

REBECCA
No. You're hallucinating. Yes. Why?
Are there any Cheerios?

PAUL checks his phone as REBECCA forages for breakfast.

ALISON
(TO PAUL)
Any word from Eddie and his whore
of a wife?

PAUL
No. But let's try and be kind and
supportive to both him and his
whore of a wife . . .

PAUL starts blowing up balloons.

ALISON
It's never going to work.

PAUL
She cheated on your brother. Not
you.

ALISON
You really don't understand family,
do you?

PAUL
Not yours, I don't.

ALISON
(SHOUTING)
Joe! Your party clothes are on the
bed! (TO PAUL) Where are you going
to hang the balloons?

PAUL

I thought I'd leave them free
range.

ALISON

No. No. No. Never let boys near
balloons at the start of the party.
Trust me. I've seen the dark side
of balloon liberty.

REBECCA steals a sausage while putting another on a stick.

ALISON (CONT'D)

That isn't helping. Don't mix the
gluten free and the normal.

MAURICE, Alison's Dad enters, mid-to-late fifties, wiry,
thin, fit as a flea. He hesitates as he takes the grand
preparations in.

MAURICE

Good lord. Did you need planning
permission for that birthday cake?

REBECCA and PAUL laugh but not ALISON.

ALISON

(REMEMBERING)

Party bags!

ALISON steers MAURICE towards a pile of little silver bags
and a pile of gifts.

ALISON (CONT'D)

They need a toy. A book. A packet
of sweets. Tattoo stickers,
bookmark, superball and a baseball
cap in each.

MAURICE

(PERPLEXED)

What happened to a balloon and a
slice of cake?

MAURICE catches PAUL's eye. He shakes his head in warning and
carries on blowing up balloons.

ALISON

(TO PAUL)

And just make sure Joe is centre
stage. All right?

PAUL

Of course.

ALISON

You know what you're like when
there are other kids around who
laugh at your jokes more than Joe
does . . .

PAUL takes a sausage too and winks at REBECCA.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Did you hear me? Joe's birthday.

Joe's day.

(TO PAUL)

Don't hog the karaoke either!

MAURICE

Karaoke? At a five year old's
birthday party? Now I've heard it
all.

ALISON

(LIKE A MANTRA NOW)

Joe's birthday. Joe's day. And no
parents.

CUT TO:

5

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 1. 13:45.

Musical statues. Three smiling and over-protective parents stand in the corner with a glass of wine each, watching as a party of around thirty 4 and 5 year olds go mad, many of the boys lying on balloons or hitting girls with them.

PAUL at the iPod dock which has disco lights either side of it. The music is water or ocean themed.

JOE jumps up and down to the music - even in this mayhem he is slightly separate from the others. Some of the girls do girly dances. PAUL stops the music. All the children freeze, apart from JOE who carries on jumping up and down.

PAUL

Joe! Joe! Music's stopped. Oh, I
think you might be out this time.
Come to the side. Anybody else?

ALISON

Little girl there. Lucy, is it?
Your hand was moving, lovely.

LUCY

No, it wasn't.

LUCY'S MUM

Just a little, love. I think it
was.

LUCY good naturedly goes to the side and stands by her Mum. Smallest of glances from the OTHER TWO PARENTS as the music starts up again. A glance from PAUL to ALISON. JOE jumps and we . . .

CUT TO:

6

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 14:15.

REBECCA can be heard doing pass the parcel in the other room. The music stopping and starting, squabbling . . . ALISON setting the birthday tea and making final adjustments to the cake. PAUL enters, frantic, checking his phone. MAURICE in the corner eating sandwiches, still doing party bags.

REBECCA (O.S.)

Let go of the parcel, Joe. Let it

go and pass it on. No. Don't rip it

• • •

ALISON

Any word from the entertainer?

PAUL

Satnav problems.

ALISON

I thought she was a Mermaid.

PAUL

How would that stop her needing
Satnav?

ALISON

I'm thinking of dolphins. Camera
charged, Dad?

MAURICE

I thought I was on party bags.

PAUL

Lucy Merrick was not moving her
hand, by the way.

ALISON

You wanted your own son to be first
out on his birthday?

PAUL

No. But knocking Lucy out. It drew
attention to Joe.

ALISON

(SHRUGS)

It's his day. He should be the
centre of attention.

The front door bell goes.

PAUL
(BIG AND HAMMY)
I wonder who this can be!

ALISON
Tea time boys and girls!

PAUL exits.

CUT TO:

7 **INT/EXT. HUGHES HOUSE. HALL/FRONT DOOR. DAY 1. 14:20.**

The kids are rushing through to the kitchen as PAUL heads for the front door. He opens it and SEA LILY is standing there, dressed in a plunging green mermaid costume and chewing gum.

PAUL
Well done for finding us!

SEA LILY
(UNSMILING)
Sea Lily. Underwater theme.

She shakes his hand and as she does so a car horn sounds from behind her. PAUL looks past her to see a car with EDDIE and NICOLA arriving, both looking pale.

PAUL
Great.

SEA LILY
Something wrong?

PAUL
Yes. But nothing that should bother you.

PAUL steps out towards the car.

CUT TO:

8 **INT/EXT. EDDIE & NICOLA'S CAR/HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 1.**
14:22.

EDWIN SCOTT and NICOLA DANIELS, a nervous looking couple in a heavily packed estate car with rooftop box. EDDIE is Alison's younger brother, a Philosophy graduate and failed computer start up entrepreneur - and she is his wife - NICOLA - a GP. Before he has even slowed down MAURICE is 'helping' EDDIE park, with puzzling hand signals.

EDDIE

(RATTLED)

Dad. Can I just park the thing!
Okay! You're not helping.

MAURICE holds up his hands in supplication.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Is that more parking semaphore or
humility! I can never tell!

PAUL

(AMUSED)

Eddie. At least get the car parked
before you start an argument, hey?

EDDIE

Did you hire a hooker? For a kid's
birthday party?

PAUL looks back at SEA LILY who has lit a cigarette and is
waiting on the step. EDDIE concentrates on parking the car.

MAURICE

(EYEING THE TYRE)

Did you adjust the tyre pressure
for the load?

EDDIE

(THROWN)

What?

EDDIE struggling to park. MAURICE steps into the road to
greet NICOLA on the non-driver's side.

MAURICE

Doctor. How are you.

NICOLA

Very well. And you?

MAURICE

Good. Yes. Good. Look. No cancer!
Again!

NICOLA

(BEMUSED)

Good.

MAURICE

I'm just teasing. You know that.

The car is a yard from the kerb but EDDIE gives up.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You're going to walk to the kerb
from there, are you?

NICOLA laughs.

EDDIE
(GETTING OUT OF THE CAR)
It's an old Woody Allen joke. 1977.
Misquoted. But up here it counts as
cutting edge humour.

NICOLA smiles uncertainly.

MAURICE
Eddie? Keys!

EDDIE hesitates for a moment. Is he weak or churlish? MAURICE stands with his hands out. EDDIE throws the keys, harder than he should. MAURICE catches them without missing a blink and moves round to drive the car. EDDIE takes in the street, the village, the hills beyond. Why did he come back? He can no longer remember.

CUT TO:

9

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 1. 14:55.

ALISON is putting candles and sparklers on the birthday cake. PAUL enters with EDDIE and NICOLA. In the background we can hear SEA LILY doing her act. She sounds surprisingly good and convincing.

SEA LILY (O.S.)
Now we are underwater, deep in the ocean. Wave to the turtles boys and girls!

PAUL
Look who I found lurking around outside.

EDDIE
Sorry about the timing.

NICOLA
We tried to call but no signal.

ALISON hugs EDDIE as though he has been bereaved.

ALISON
Don't worry. At all. Just in time to sing Happy Birthday. It's lovely to see you. You've lost weight.

EDDIE
Have I?

NICOLA goes to hug ALISON and ALISON goes to shake NICOLA's hand so they are stuck in no man's land. Finally a handshake. Despite the massive party arrangements ALISON looks neat and immaculate and NICOLA a bit sweaty and bedraggled from the car journey.

NICOLA

Hi, Alison. What a beautiful cake!

ALISON

Hi.

NICOLA

Did you buy it or make it yourself?

PAUL

Did we hug yet?

PAUL gives NICOLA a hug. EDDIE has moved to the hall visible from the kitchen door and smiles as he watches SEA LILY and the kids in the front room. He gestures for a lost looking NICOLA to join him to watch.

CONTINUOUS:

10

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. HALL/LIVING ROOM. DAY 1. 15:00.

EDDIE and NICOLA look in on the party, both smiling. SEA LILY has used a machine to fill the room with bubbles, an underwater backing track plays - all the kids are miming swimming actions. In truth, SEA LILY is pretty good and magical. JOE sidles over to the iPod dock and presses it to change track.

SEA LILY

Joe. Birthday boy! You are Neptune.
My assistant. I need you.

SEA LILY expertly and with charm leads JOE centre stage and hands him a trident. EDDIE smiles at NICOLA but NICOLA is carefully watching JOE. MAURICE appears on her shoulder.

MAURICE

Did they hire a hooker?

EDDIE

I already made that joke.

SEA LILY

Now. If all the fishes and sea urchins and turtles are very quiet then I think something special might be coming for Neptune! Shh!
Shh! Shh!

Everything is quiet and PAUL enters with a camera as ALISON and REBECCA enter carrying the three tier birthday cake between them.

ALL

"Happy Birthday to you! Happy
Birthday to you! Happy Birthday,
dear Joe! Happy Birthday to you!"

But before the song can finish JOE has managed to get the iPod on and Indie music blares out . . .

PAUL dashes over and pulls the iPod out of the dock.

PAUL

Later, okay? Come and blow your
candles out. Hey?

JOE hesitates, smiles, nods, takes his Dad's hand . . . then pulls back as PAUL leads him to the cake.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(LIGHTHEARTED)

Come on. Come on, Joe.

Finally JOE gives in to superior strength, then, when PAUL eases his grip, he lies on the floor. Some of his friends laugh. This is half child at party behaviour and half a bit odd.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Come on, mate. All your friends are
waiting for you to blow out the
candles! Top lad!

ALISON goes across, MAURICE too.

MAURICE

Joe. Come on. Enough of this. Big
boy now.

MAURICE shakes him on the shoulder. ALISON moves him away. She whispers into JOE's ear. He smiles but doesn't move. The other KIDS are getting restless. This is getting a bit awkward now. Going on a bit too long.

PAUL

"When I was waiting in the bar."

JOE

(INTO THE CARPET)

"Where were you?"

PAUL

"When I was buying you a drink."

JOE lifts his head from the carpet.

JOE

"Where were you?"

PAUL

"When I was crying home in bed."

JOE
"Where were you!"
(GETTING UP)
Mekons. 1978. "Where Were You?"

JOE walks over to the cake, the CHILDREN cheer. PAUL winks at ALISON who smiles her thanks, but we see MAURICE looking away slightly and NICOLA noting this and . . .

CUT TO:

11

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 1. 15:03.

JOE blows out the candles to cheers from all the friends and family. REBECCA filming now on her iPhone. The children clap and cheer. NICOLA is now watching him carefully. EDDIE looks at NICOLA watching and catches ALISON's eye. She carries on clapping and cheering and we . . .

CUT TO:

11A

EXT. HUGHES HOUSE. DAY 1. 16:10.

The party over. PARENTS arrive to pick up CHILDREN as one FATHER and CHILD leave, party bag and helium balloon in hand.

CUT TO:

12

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. HALL/FRONT DOOR. DAY 1. 16:12.

ALISON and JOE stand at the door handing out party bags to PARENTS collecting their kids.

LUCY
Bye, Joe. Thanks for having me.

JOE
Bye, Lucy.

LUCY'S MUM
(OF THE PARTY DECORATIONS)
It was amazing. I don't know how
you do it. Thank you for having
Lucy.

ALISON
A pleasure. She's a perfect guest.

JOE opens the door and closes it again before opening it for LUCY and LUCY's MUM. Just the slightest tense smiles around this ritual, but apart from that JOE's social interactions are perfectly normal.

NICOLA and EDDIE are watching this from the far end of the hall whilst having a whispered but heated conversation.

EDDIE

Why does there have to be something wrong with everyone?

NICOLA

Okay. I'm wrong. Let's change the subject.

EDDIE

Like my Dad's bowel cancer.

NICOLA

Your Dad had all the symptoms . . .

EDDIE

Yes. Apart from bowel cancer.

NICOLA

I do know a bit about child development. I did do a paediatric rotation.

EDDIE

(PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE)

Hardly likely to forget that, am I?

We focus on the doorway now where HARRY the last child, is about to leave with his Mum, LINDA.

ALISON

There you go. Thank you for coming.

HARRY

Happy Birthday, Joe!

JOE

Happy Birthday, Harry!

ALISON

(LAUGHS, COVERING UP)

Thank you, Harry, that's very sweet.

LINDA

(TO ALISON)

Nice glass of red wine for you now. You've set the bar pretty high for the rest of us.

ALISON

Joe just loves parties so, you know

• • •

JOE does the open and shut door thing before letting his guests leave . . .

LINDA
(SLIGHTLY TENSE)
Oh. Now. You going to let us go
young man!

LINDA and HARRY leave, LINDA slightly ill at ease with JOE's ritual. ALISON turns, her back to the door, staring at the hall where EDDIE and NICOLA are still deep in conversation.

CUT TO:

13

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 1. 17:08.

PAUL, EDDIE, MAURICE sit round, ALISON and NICOLA tidying away paper plates, etc. JOE is in the corner, iPod on . . . some presents unwrapped, others as yet untouched. REBECCA lingering with glass in hand as MAURICE works the cork on a champagne bottle.

REBECCA
Mum was right about the balloons.
The boys just hit each other with
them then lie down on them till
they burst.

ALISON
Must be a breast envy thing.

PAUL
Most things are.

ALISON
(TO EDDIE)
All set for the new job?

EDDIE
Hardly new, is it?

MAURICE
Is that the enthusiasm you brought
to your London customers? No wonder
you went bust.

PAUL nods towards JOE's unopened presents.

PAUL
When did we stop ripping presents
open as they came through the door?

MAURICE
When one little boy told his old
Auntie he had the Buzz Lightyear
already and was scared of him
anyway.

EDDIE
I was ten years old, Dad.

MAURICE

How do you know I was talking about
you? Millions of Buzz Lightyears
out there.

PAUL has crossed to JOE, mimes for him to take the headphones off.

PAUL

You going to open some more
presents, kidder? Come on!

(TO EDDIE)

You were scared of Buzz Lightyear?
Really?

EDDIE

He was always so certain he was
right. I have an aversion to
certainty. I can't think why.

JOE smiles and puts the headphones back on.

MAURICE

If I had my way I'd flush the
headphones down the toilet.

ALISON

He just likes music.

EDDIE is about to say something and NICOLA silences him with a look. ALISON notices this as the champagne cork fires.

ALISON (CONT'D)

What? What was that look?

EDDIE

Nothing.

ALISON

It was something.

EDDIE

It was just . . . you don't think
that Joe might have some kind of
communication disorder? Just
something. Might be worth. Checking
out?

NICOLA

(EMBARRASSED)

Eddie.

ALISON

We had his hearing checked.
Perfect.

EDDIE nods. But looks slightly unconvinced.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Is that not good enough for you?

EDDIE

It's just, well, I might be talking shit, you know, but Joe's really gifted in some ways but he doesn't seem able to follow, like, simple instructions.

PAUL

Joe? Our Joe. Are you kidding me? He just wanted his own way. On his birthday. Find me a five year old who isn't like that!

ALISON

Is this your opinion, Eddie? Or Nicola's? Is that what you were arguing about in the hall?

NICOLA looks at the floor.

MAURICE

Rebecca. Give everyone a glass my love. Quick. Quick. This is losing its fizz.

ALISON

You're telling me.

ALISON heads back to the kitchen. MAURICE stands.

MAURICE

A few words! On this occasion of Joe's fifth birthday. I retired so my son could come home and . . . I lost my dear Sandra twelve months ago but our lives go on and . . .

PAUL

So he lay on the carpet? Who didn't have a tantrum at their own birthday party?

EDDIE

Exactly.

ALISON

Nicola. Why do you need to make yourself feel important by finding fault with everyone else?

MAURICE

A toast. To us. Hey? To us! All back together. Fighting like only a loving family can. To us!

Nobody responds. The joke isn't enough to get over the hurt on both sides.

NICOLA
We should go and unpack.

EDDIE
Yeah. Good idea!

MAURICE
I'm making a toast here and nobody leaves till they bloody well join in.

ALL
(LIKE RELUCTANT CHILDREN)
To us!

MAURICE
To us!

MAURICE drinks, smacks his lips thoughtfully, as the others drink too. The only sound in the room is of JOE singing along to 'Another Girl, Another Planet" on his iPod dock.

JOE
(SINGING)
"Space travels in my blood, There ain't nothing I can do about it."

The music plays over the following scenes.

CUT TO:

13A **EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 1. 18:05.**

EDDIE comes out to the car and carries a box into the house. We register it is right next door to the Hughes House.

JUMP CUT TO:

14 **INT. SCOTT HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 1. 18:10.**

NICOLA unpacking her case in the bedroom. The double bed is like an unspoken admonishment. A reminder she doesn't need of where this went wrong. She looks around at this strange new world she has chosen to inhabit.

JUMP CUT TO:

15 **OMITTED**

16

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 1. 18:42.

The house is modern but small and dark with well used appliances. NICOLA puts medical books on to the empty bookshelves. Checks for signal on her phone. Nothing.

She hears music from the garden. The opening chords of 'Another Girl, Another Planet.' A track starting over and over again. JOE is playing his iPod through a little portable speaker and AUX lead. She shuts the window to keep the noise out and turns as MAURICE walks in with EDDIE, carrying a table between them.

MAURICE

What did you mean? A communication disorder?

NICOLA

I don't really want to talk about it, Maurice.

MAURICE

Last time you visited you said I had bowel cancer so you'll understand if I ask one or two questions.

NICOLA

You had weight loss and blood in your stools. I just said you should have it checked out.

MAURICE

That's as maybe. But thanks to your advice I ended up with a strange man sticking his finger up my arse.

EDDIE

And he didn't even buy you dinner first.

MAURICE glances at EDDIE and just frowns in disapproval.

NICOLA

I'm going for a walk.

MAURICE

It's going to be dark soon.

NICOLA

I'm going for a walk in the dark.

NICOLA exits, slams the door behind her.

MAURICE

I thought she cheated on you.

EDDIE

What's that got to do with anything?

MAURICE

And you just let her talk to you like that? When she's the one in the wrong? No wonder she cheated on you.

MAURICE exits before EDDIE can reply. He stands there stunned, barely able to move.

CUT TO:

16A

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. NIGHT 1. 21:55.

Both houses with lights bright against the darkness.

CUT TO:

16B

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 1. 22:01.

The helium balloons hover in mid air, between floor and ceiling, slightly withered. PAUL comes in, turns off the light.

CUT TO:

17

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 22:05.

ALISON is in bed, making notes in the margin of an illustrated child development book. PAUL enters.

ALISON

Can you believe Nicola? She hasn't even got kids.

PAUL

In fairness it was your Eddie's fault it came out at all.

ALISON

We don't owe her an explanation. She doesn't get to judge our son! She has no right to judge anyone!

PAUL

So adultery makes her a bad doctor? Christ, there'd be no good doctors at all if that was true.

PAUL gets into bed. ALISON sighs. PAUL makes his move, kissing her shoulder. She concentrates on the book.

ALISON

Does this look like my sexual
desire face, to you?

PAUL

I don't know. I'm not normally
looking at your face.

ALISON laughs and hits him with her book.

ALISON

Is it the balloons or Sea Lily that
got you all stirred up?

PAUL

Sea Lily turned out brilliantly,
didn't she? And I got a discount
for an early booking for Joe's stag
night.

ALISON frowns and concentrates on reading the child
development book.

ALISON

60 months old and he ticks 80% of
the boxes. I ought to mark this up
and post it through Nicola's door.

PAUL

Sex can be a very effective cure
for anger.

ALISON

Who says I want a cure?

PAUL

Come on. I've got a hard on you
could hang your washing off.

ALISON

Good. I've got a delicates wash on.

PAUL

That isn't sex slang by any chance?

ALISON

Sadly not.

ALISON smiles, gives him a kiss and makes a point of
concentrating on her book.

CUT TO:

EDDIE is up, watching a documentary on TV. He doesn't know
whether to feel guilty or angry. NICOLA enters. He looks up.

NICOLA

(CALM)

Don't use your family to gang up on me. That isn't why we came here. Or maybe it is. Tell me now before I really commit and unpack my toiletries.

EDDIE doesn't respond. NICOLA goes upstairs.

CUT TO:

19

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 23:10.

ALISON lies awake. She can hear something. Then she realises it is music and canned laughter somewhere in the house. She gets up out of bed and exits. . .

CUT TO:

20

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 1. 23:12.

From ALISON's POV we see JOE's feet sticking out from under the duvet at the pillow end. Underneath the covers he has made a little tent where he is clearly watching a DVD. ALISON gently pulls back the cover to see that he has a portable DVD player open on Mr Bean (the live action series).

ALISON

Hey. Little man. Come on. Sleep time.

JOE is still laughing about the show as ALISON gently takes the DVD player away.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Shh. Shh. Lie down.

JOE turns the right way up and lies down, ALISON strokes his forehead but his eyes stay stubbornly open. He chuckles to himself.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Come on, now . . . "The time has come to say 'Goodnight', to say 'sleep tight' til the morning light. . ."

He doesn't look tired at all. Eyes wide open.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Come on.

CUT TO:

21

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. NIGHT 1. 23:18.

ALISON comes out of the house holding JOE. NICOLA is leaning out of an upstairs window, trying to get a phone signal and having a cigarette which she hides when she sees ALISON.

NICOLA

Hi.

ALISON

(LOOKING UP)

Oh. Hi.

ALISON busies herself putting JOE into the car. She opens the door for him. He doesn't get in. She closes it. Then he opens it and gets in. Another little routine that everyone has stopped noticing.

NICOLA

Is he having trouble sleeping?

ALISON fastens his child seat.

ALISON

Too much excitement. Way too many Haribos. The car sends him to sleep. Always works.

NICOLA

So you do this a lot? Drive him round to get him to sleep?

ALISON

No. No. Hardly ever. I didn't know you smoked.

NICOLA

Hardly ever.

ALISON gets in the car and drives away.

CUT TO:

22

INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/LAKE DISTRICT ROADS. NIGHT 1. 23:40.

ALISON drives with JOE in the back. He has opened the window and the night floods in to the car.

JOE

Can we have music?

ALISON

No music, Joe.

JOE

'Don't You Want Me'.

ALISON

Close the window, Joe.

JOE

Who was the band?

ALISON

(A FORCED CALMNESS)

Joe. Close the window.

JOE

Human League. 1981.

ALISON

Joe. Close the window.

JOE

"You were working as a waitress in a cocktail bar, when I met you. I picked you out, I shook you up and turned you around . . . "

ALISON

Close the window!

JOE

"Now five years later on you've got the world at your feet, success has been so easy for you."

ALISON slams on the brakes and moves round to the side of the car, furious now, we can still hear JOE singing.

JOE (CONT'D)

(SINGING)

"But don't forget, it's me who put you where you are now."

ALISON

That's enough! That's enough!

That's enough!

JOE

That's enough. That's enough.

That's enough!

ALISON immediately feels regret and shame.

ALISON

I'm sorry.

JOE remains quiet.

ALISON (CONT'D)

"You were working as a waitress in a cocktail bar, when I met you."

JOE stays quiet.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Are you tired, baby? I'm tired too.

ALISON strokes his face, gets back in the car. Stares ahead at the dark empty road.

CUT TO:

22A EXT. NEWLAND VALLEY FELLS. DAY 2. 07:16.

Early morning. MAURICE running relentlessly along the top of the fells opposite the houses.

CUT TO:

23 OMITTED

24 EXT. CONISTON. HIGH STREET. DAY 2. 08:40.

PAUL has caught up with EDDIE walking towards the brewery.

PAUL
First day? I'll walk in with you.

EDDIE
There's no need.

PAUL
Oh. It's no bother.

RALPH, a young adult with a learning disability crosses in the opposite direction in high-vis jacket and lollipop man sign. PAUL glances and nods as he walks by.

PAUL (CONT'D)
All right, Ralph?

RALPH nods.

EDDIE
Joe got over his party yet?

PAUL
One bit of advice. On your first day. Don't let the Polish lads take advantage. I learnt the hard way.

EDDIE
Sorry about the row. I should never have said anything.

PAUL
I'm only up the road. Don't be too proud to give me a shout. All right?

EDDIE

Don't know why I blurted it out
like that. I think Joe's great.
And, you know, I know what it's
like to be the odd one out in this
family.

PAUL

They're grafters but if they think
you're going to be a pushover then
they'll give you the runaround.

EDDIE

(GIVING UP)

I did run my own business for two
years.

PAUL

I know. Lighten up. I'm just saying
• • •

EDDIE and PAUL walk into the brewery yard.

CUT TO:

25

EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWERY YARD. DAY 2. 08:45.

A lorry is being loaded with casks as PAUL and EDDIE head
into the building.

CUT TO:

26

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWHOUSE. DAY 2. 08:50.

EDDIE - aware that PAUL hasn't left - looks around at the
brewery - the fermenting vessels, the mash tun, the copper,
something Willy Wonkaish about the whole set up. This is
exactly what he went to London to get away from . . .

He looks up to see PAVEL and DAVID chatting with PAUL in the
REST ROOM that overlooks the Brewhouse. Feels slightly
worried. They are clearly talking about him. PAUL comes out,
all cheery.

PAUL

('BYE' IN POLISH)

Czesc! Be gentle with him, hey
guys!

PAUL gives EDDIE a wave as he exits. EDDIE looks back towards
DAVID and PAVEL and gives them what he hopes is an
authoritative wave.

CUT TO:

26A INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. REST ROOM. DAY 2. 08:51.

PAVEL and DAVID look down at EDDIE. They speak in Polish; English subtitles on screen.

PAVEL
Biedny skurczybyk. Najpierw zona mu sie dyma na lewo i prawo, potem interes mu upada, a teraz musi nam tu mowic co robic.

DAVID
To moze postarajmy sie mu nie podskakiwac za bardzo.

PAVEL
No, przynajmniej nie na pierwszy dzien.

SUBTITLE
Poor bastard. His wife screws somebody else, his business fails and now he has to tell us what to do.

SUBTITLE (CONT'D)
So try not to give him the runaround.

SUBTITLE (CONT'D)
Not on day one anyway.

CUT TO:

27

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. DAY 2. 08:55.

ALISON and JOE cross the road towards school. ALISON glances at RALPH the Lollipop Man as he waves them across. The reception class is in a separate low level, nursery-like building. We recognise other children from the party arriving. HARRY with his Mum LINDA is handing out envelopes to PARENTS and CHILDREN in the playground. ALISON crosses behind LINDA and overhears her talking to another PARENT.

LINDA
(TO ANOTHER PARENT)
It's just crisps and ice cream and a game of football but if the weather holds, you know . . .

ALISON disappears inside the Reception.

CUT TO:

28

INT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. CLOAKROOM. DAY 2. 09:00.

MUMS and some DADS linger as their children dump their coats and change into their coloured 'smocks'. ALISON watches JOE as he does the same as all the other kids. A chaotic struggle for all kids at this age. ALISON finds herself focussing on LUCY MERRICK opening her envelope containing a party invitation. ALISON looks down and JOE is standing in front of her.

ALISON
Bye, lovely boy.

JOE goes to the door then steps back to allow TWO PARENTS to leave. One PARENT gives JOE a look. It's discreet but it is awkward and marks again that Joe is a little 'odd'.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Joe. Just go out of the door, hey?

JOE patiently waits till everyone has left, ALISON last of all.

CONTINUOUS:

29 INT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY 2. 09:02.

ALISON steps into the corridor. JOE shuts the door behind her. Then, finally, he comes out and strides towards the communal room . . .

CUT TO:

30 EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 2. 09:05.

As ALISON is coming out LINDA is talking to another parent who is also putting an invitation into her bag.

LINDA
About two o'clock or drop him at ours beforehand! We love having him. (TURNING TO ALISON) Hi, Alison! Thanks so much for yesterday. Harry hasn't stopped talking about Sea Lily! He took quite a shine to her.

ALISON
I'll bet. I heard he was trying to tempt her back to his place with tins of tuna.

LINDA
What? Sorry? What?

ALISON smiles to herself. 'Little Victories'. LINDA thinks she must have misheard. ALISON turns and sees LINDA giving out another invitation.

CUT TO:

31 INT. SCOTT HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 10:45.

NICOLA is on her laptop, trying to get an internet signal, holding the laptop in the air to see if that works. Standing on a chair. There is a gentle knock on the back door and MAURICE lets himself in without being asked.

MAURICE

What did you mean by, "Can't follow simple instructions"?

NICOLA

Maurice. Like I said. I really don't want to talk about it with you.

MAURICE

Don't get all delicate on me, Nicola. If there's a problem with my Grandson then we need to get it fixed. And you think there's a problem, don't you?

NICOLA

None of my business.

MAURICE

I think there's a problem too. And it'll get bigger if we wait for those two airheads to do anything about it. So? Where can I go? Who should I talk to . . . nobody needs to know you told me.

NICOLA

(SIGHS)

Okay. I'll have a think.

MAURICE nods and smiles but shows no sign of moving.

NICOLA (CONT'D)

I'll have to make a couple of calls.

MAURICE

It's okay. I can wait.

NICOLA feels outflanked.

NICOLA

(INDICATES HER MOBILE)

I get a better signal on this in the bedroom.

MAURICE

(BRANDISHING HIS DATED NOKIA PHONE)

You need one of these! Old but effective. Like me.

NICOLA goes upstairs. MAURICE stares down at the land line - he hears a mumbled conversation from the room above.

CUT TO:

32

INT/EXT. DAFFODIL DINER. DAY 2. 14:25.

An Airstream Trailer - 'The Daffodil Diner' - a high end food, coffee, pastries, etc, just down the hill from the gastropub that Paul is building. ALISON is behind the counter, looking at a documentary about communication and child development as she unloads coffee, etc. The phone rings.

ALISON

(ON PHONE)

Hi, Dad. Did you pick him up okay?
Everything all right?

CUT TO:

33

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. PAEDIATRICS WAITING AREA. DAY 2.
14:26.

Close on MAURICE speaking into his phone.

MAURICE

(INTO PHONE)

Everything's fine. I have to go to
Manchester so I thought I'd take
him to the Science Museum. Joe?
Your Mummy says, Hello!

Pull out to reveal that MAURICE is standing with JOE (wearing headphones) in a hospital waiting area.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

He waves, "Hello" back. I'll see
you later. Bye!

CUT TO:

34

INT/EXT. DAFFODIL DINER. DAY 2. 14:27.

ALISON looks at her phone, slightly surprised. She lets it go and looks at the documentary again, but snapping the laptop shut as a customer arrives, MARTHA - another parent from school.

ALISON

Latte?

MARTHA

Please. Is Joe going to wear a
proper kit?

ALISON

For what.

MARTHA

For Friday? Harry's football party?

ALISON

(DAWNING)

No. No. He's not that into football. Much to his Dad's despair.

MARTHA waits for her coffee. ALISON's feelings are hurt but she tries to disguise it, taking it out instead on her late arriving assistant - TERRY.

ALISON (CONT'D)

You're late.

TERRY

Or you could be early. Time's all relative.

ALISON grabs the laptop and heads out.

ALISON

We're out of skimmed milk.

ALISON heads out of the diner and goes to her car and drives away.

CUT TO:

35

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. PAEDIATRICS WAITING AREA. DAY 2.
14:40.

MAURICE is waiting with an iPod-wearing JOE.

CUT TO:

36

INT/EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 2. 14:45.

This is going to be Paul's gastropub. And it is starting to take shape. (NB no name/signage in evidence yet).

PAUL stands by an open doorway on some rough boards that will become a deck. The view beyond is stunning. The project manager - SALLY - same age but with an easy authority stands beside him.

PAUL

You gave me a price for the build with no doors? Is that normal?

SALLY shows him the plans.

SALLY

There. Balcony doors. "TBC."

PAUL looks blankly at the plans.

PAUL

Right.

SALLY

To Be Confirmed?

PAUL

I know what TBC means.

SALLY

You couldn't decide between German aluminium bi-fold. Cost a fortune. Look amazing. Bog standard. Don't and don't.

PAUL stares out at the view, again that combination of beautiful but dangerous – almost threatening.

PAUL

Fifteen grand for a glorified French window . . .

SALLY

Bespoke glass room gives you a USP.

PAUL

Are you going to talk in initials all day?

PAUL walks, leaving SALLY exasperated.

CUT TO:

37

EXT. DAFFODIL DINER. DAY 2. 14:48.

PAUL reaches NICOLA as she is being served by TERRY.

PAUL

Don't take her money, Terry. She's family.

TERRY

(A DAWNING)

I knew I knew you from somewhere. It's Nicola. The Doctor, right? So you came too in the end, then?

NICOLA

Why wouldn't I?

TERRY

Good for you! The past is past, yeah?

NICOLA

(UNSMILING)

Thank you.

NICOLA turns to PAUL. He smiles awkwardly.

CUT TO:

38

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 2. 15:00.

PAUL and NICOLA sit on a bench in front of the half built gastropub: PAUL talks, NICOLA tries to get a phone signal. In the background, high on a hill, we see three workmen trying to get phone signals.

PAUL

So the cycle route comes right by and the Cumbria Way and two other hikes cut down the hill. They sit out on the deck, eating dinner, drinking our beer. And the day trippers and campers come up in the evening . . .

NICOLA

Does everybody talk about everybody's business here?

PAUL

(SLIGHTLY THROWN)

What? Well. Pretty much. Two metres of rainfall a year can do that to a town.

NICOLA

(NODS)

If you were hiking or cycling the Diner does the job, doesn't it? Why build a restaurant.

PAUL

It's a gastropub not a restaurant.

NICOLA

Even so. It's a beautiful setting . . . but kind of sinister too.

PAUL

(A LITTLE WORRIED)

Really? I don't see that.

NICOLA

I like the contrast.

PAUL

(RELIEVED)

Good.

NICOLA

Not everyone will but . . .

NICOLA nods and PAUL looks back at the half built gastropub and at the landscape, starting to see it through NICOLA's eyes, worried now.

CUT TO:

39

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/SCOTT'S BREWERY. DAY 2. 15:15.

PAUL driving home, still preoccupied. He slows down as he passes the brewery and sees a young woman - MAYA - guiding a delivery lorry out of the yard into the main road. He looks disbelieving and angry and then we . . .

CUT TO:

40

EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWERY YARD. DAY 2. 15:20.

EDDIE and PAUL stand in the yard, clearly arguing, as DAVID and PAVEL and MAYA get on with taking the lorry delivery of grain inside . . . coming back and forth during the conversation which is clearly heated.

EDDIE

She's a temporary appointment,
Andre had to go back to Poland.

PAUL

I told you they'd take the piss if
you let them. We don't do
temporary.

EDDIE

Maybe I do. And I'm the manager
now.

PAUL

Get rid of her. We don't need the
paperwork.

EDDIE

She's cash in hand. It's only a
couple of weeks.

PAUL

But it won't be. Then you'll have
the Inland Revenue on your back.
Just get rid of her, Eddie. By the
end of today.

PAUL walks out, EDDIE watches him go, shakes his head in disbelief.

CUT TO:

41

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. PAEDIATRICS WAITING AREA. DAY 2.
15:25.

MAURICE and JOE have been waiting a while now. As a Consultant - DR ESHELL - approaches she smiles at JOE.

DR. ESHELL

Hello, Joe. What are you doing here?

MAURICE

I'm his Granddad. I've got an appointment. A cancellation.

DR. ESHELL

Today? No. No. There must have been some misunderstanding.

DR. ESHELL mimes for JOE to take his headphones off and he does so.

DR. ESHELL (CONT'D)

That's better. How are you today, Joe? Do you like school so far?

MAURICE

(CONFUSED)

You know Joe? Already. How do you know him?

DR. ESHELL

I can't tell you that. I'm not being mysterious. Just confidentiality.

MAURICE

But you do know him . . .

DR. ESHELL

Clearly.

Out on DR. ESHELL looking at MAURICE as though he may be mad.

CUT TO:

41A

EXT. SCOTT HOUSE. DAY 2. 18:01.

The Scott house, NICOLA staring into the distance and smoking as she hangs out of the bedroom window. She stubs out the cigarette and disappears from the window, leaving it open.

CUT TO:

42

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 2. 18:30.

NICOLA is lying on top of the covers, fully clothed, trying to get a signal. EDDIE comes in. NICOLA pats the bed for him to come and join her. EDDIE hesitates then lies next to her. She takes his hand.

NICOLA

How was today?

EDDIE

It was okay. I get the impression they all think Paul was a bit of a wanker. So that made it easier.

NICOLA

I did my CV. Your Dad came round. He wanted to talk about Joe.

EDDIE

Oh, God. I told you we should stay out of it.

NICOLA

I said that. It's for Paul and Alison to deal with.

EDDIE, relieved, turns to her.

EDDIE

Are you settling in?

NICOLA

No.

EDDIE

Do you want to leave?

NICOLA

Only every hour or so.

EDDIE

Me too. We can make this work you know.

NICOLA

I know. I do love you.

EDDIE

Do you?

NICOLA

I wouldn't have come here if I didn't.

They turn to each other. He pulls her towards him and they start to kiss . . . they both smile, surprising themselves.

CUT TO:

43 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 18:32.

ALISON sets about making a risotto, chopping veg, making stock, etc. . .

CUT TO:

44 INT. SCOTT HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 2. 18:33.

EDDIE and NICOLA undressing each other. Pulling at each other, desperate, eager . . .

CUT TO:

45 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 18:34.

ALISON cooking, she thinks she hears a gasp, but no, maybe not . . .

CUT TO:

46 INT. SCOTT HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 2. 18:35.

EDDIE goes down on NICOLA. She stares at the strange room. This strange bed. She tries hard to concentrate . . .

CUT TO:

47 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 18:36.

ALISON making a salad.

CUT TO:

48 INT. SCOTT HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 2. 18:37.

EDDIE on top of NICOLA, he looks down at her and then quickly away as he pushes inside her. They start to fuck and . . .

CUT TO:

49 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. STUDY. DAY 2. 18:38.

REBECCA is half-heartedly doing her homework while checking her phone. ALISON puts her head round the door.

ALISON

Tea ready in twenty minutes. Have
you got homework?

ALISON crosses and picks up a text book, flicks through it.

REBECCA

Citizenship so not really. Where's
Joe? (BEAT) What's that?

ALISON

The washing machine.

REBECCA

No. Not that, that. That sound. . .

The unmistakable regular rhythm of bedsprings. Then groans,
growing louder . . .

ALISON

I don't know.

But she does. And so does REBECCA. And both of them are
unable to move as the rhythm goes on, relentless.

CUT TO:

50

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY 2. 18:40.

NICOLA and EDDIE are fucking. NICOLA takes EDDIE's hands and
guides them under her buttocks. EDDIE suddenly stops.

EDDIE

What are you doing?

NICOLA

Don't stop.

EDDIE

What are you doing? With my hands?

NICOLA

I just thought it would be nice.

(PUZZLED)

I've done it before.

EDDIE

Not with me you haven't.

EDDIE pulls away, NICOLA covers herself, feeling foolish.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Why don't you just tell me every
move he made? Everything he did to
you and you did to him? Hey?

NICOLA

I just thought it would be nice.

EDDIE

So where did you learn it? Who with?

NICOLA thinks about this.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Christ. Are you thinking about it? You can't even remember? What else did you do?

NICOLA

I'm not going to indulge this.

EDDIE

Like you indulged him inside you, you mean!

NICOLA shakes her head, then slams the bathroom door.

CUT TO:

51

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 2. 18:41.

REBECCA is laying the table, ALISON cooking, a loud sound of a door banging and now there is no mistaking the sound of the argument from next door. Both ALISON and REBECCA pretending they can't hear it.

EDDIE (O.S.)

You can't do that! You can't walk away! It's you that's in the bloody wrong!

NICOLA (O.S.)

Is it? Really? Jesus, I would never have guessed . . .

A door slams again and then silence. ALISON and REBECCA say nothing. Don't make eye contact. MAURICE enters with JOE.

ALISON

So there you are, you two. Where've you been?

MAURICE

Rebecca. Would you take Joe to play.

REBECCA

I was just about to eat.

ALISON

Take him to play? He must be exhausted. A morning at big school and a trip to Manchester! Did Harry give you an invitation today, Joe? Is it in your folder?

ALISON gives JOE a kiss. MAURICE absentmindedly hands ALISON his folder and she rifles through it - Reading Book, Reading Diary, pencil case. She tips it upside down. Nothing.

MAURICE

I just want a word with your Mum.

REBECCA

Come on, Joe.

ALISON is patting the reading folder now in case the invitation is stuck somewhere.

ALISON

Unbelievable. How was the Science Museum?

MAURICE

We didn't make it. We were in Manchester and it just so turns out the head honcho at St Greg's is a friend of a friend of Nicola's.

ALISON

(CONFUSED)

So?

MAURICE

So I dropped in on her. With Joe. Tried to get a cancellation.

ALISON

What? Sorry. You did what?

MAURICE

Dr. Eshell. Seems like a lovely woman. And what do you know! She knows Joe already.

ALISON

You fucking did what?

MAURICE

Why didn't you tell me, love. You and Paul shouldn't have to go through this stuff on your own. That's what your Dad's here for.

ALISON

You took my child to hospital without asking me? To see a Doctor?

(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)

To have tests done? Jesus! I knew
you were a control freak but . . .

MAURICE

Is the follow up with the same
Doctor or is she bringing some kind
of specialist in?

ALISON

You kidnapped him? Get out! Just
get out!

MAURICE shrugs, apparently unshaken and walks out of the back door as PAUL enters from work . . .

PAUL

What's going on?

MAURICE doesn't reply, PAUL turns to ALISON.

CUT TO:

52

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 2. 18:44.

EDDIE is outside pacing, as soon as he sees MAURICE come out of the HUGHES HOUSE he intercepts him.

EDDIE

Can you ease off on trying to drag
Nicola into family arguments?

MAURICE

Sure. If that's what I was doing.

EDDIE

We're trying to make a go of it
here. And it's not easy. Perfect
family next door. Dad up the road.
Paul dropping in every five minutes
to tell me how to run the brewery!

MAURICE

Do you want my advice?

EDDIE

No.

MAURICE

I advise you most strongly to get
your head out of your arse. There
are bigger problems in the world
than yours. That's all I'm saying.

REBECCA comes by giving a laughing JOE a piggyback. EDDIE lowers his voice.

EDDIE

"All I'm saying." "With all due respect." "If you don't mind me saying so." Little sweeteners which you think give you permission to say what the hell you like.

Both men are distracted by the sight and sound of PAUL striding out of his house, towards MAURICE, ignoring EDDIE.

PAUL

Stay. Away. From. My. Son!

PAUL walks back in the house and slams the door. EDDIE looks at MAURICE. MAURICE shrugs as though it has nothing to do with him.

CUT TO:

53 OMITTED

53A INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/MANCHESTER. DAY 3. 09:33.

JOE in his child seat in the back of Alison's car, PAUL and ALISON in the front. JOE gazes out at the busy and huge buildings of Manchester as they travel in. A marked contrast to the empty wilderness of home.

CUT TO:

54 INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. PAEDIATRICS WAITING AREA. DAY 3. 10:15.

ALISON and PAUL wait with JOE, along with other worried PARENTS with children who have clear disabilities or behaviour problems. A room full of Alison's fears. ALISON puts a protective arm around JOE who looks fascinated by the children who are displaying more problems than him.

ALISON

You know Harry is having a birthday party this afternoon.

PAUL

What time? We'll be pushed to make it back.

ALISON

Joe wasn't invited.

PAUL

No. What? No. You're wrong.

ALISON

I'm telling you. Every kid in his class was invited except for him.

PAUL

Harry? Harry with the inhaler. Who wants to go to his party?

ALISON

We invited every kid since Nursery. How many invitations has he had in return?

PAUL

He's being patronised by the kid with the inhaler?

PAUL looks at the other kids and pulls JOE closer to him.

CUT TO:

54A

EXT. CONISTON. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. DAY 3. 10:20.

NICOLA, smartly dressed, heads into the medical centre.

CUT TO:

55

INT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. RECEPTION AREA. DAY 3. 10:22.

NICOLA with the RECEPTIONIST.

NICOLA

Could you tell Dr. Graves I'm here. He's expecting me. Dr. Daniels.

RECEPTIONIST

Eddie's wife. Right. You actually came then. Good for you.

NICOLA smiles uneasily. The RECEPTIONIST reaches for the phone and . . .

CUT TO:

56

INT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 3. 10:26.

NICOLA sits opposite DR. GRAVES - a little older than her, overweight, long hair, fancies himself as anti-establishment. DR. GRAVES looks up from her CV.

DR. GRAVES

How is Eddie?

NICOLA

He's fine, thank you.

DR. GRAVES

I'm confused. The job is for a Practice Nurse.

NICOLA

I was a Nurse Specialist before I did my medical degree. So I thought

• • •

DR. GRAVES

(PUZZLED)

You'd downsize? You need to be going for a GP trainee post, don't you?

NICOLA

This is just for maternity cover, right? I need a job.

DR. GRAVES

I don't think it's going to work.

NICOLA

Because I'm overqualified?

DR. GRAVES

Because you're not the right kind of Nurse for us. It's just a personality thing. I'm sorry.

NICOLA

What sort of personality thing?

DR. GRAVES

You're kind of proving my point.

DR. GRAVES smiles, a little too pleased with himself.

CUT TO:

56A

EXT. MAYBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE. DAY 3. 10:45.

NICOLA emerges from the medical centre, looking pissed off, and to make matters worse it is raining. No hat. No umbrella. She starts the wet walk home.

CUT TO:

57

OMITTED

58

OMITTED

59

OMITTED

60

EXT/INT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD/BREWERY VAN. DAY 3. 10:50.

NICOLA sits squeezed in the front with PAVEL and DAVID.

PAVEL
Nie wydaje mi sie, zeby ona
dlugo pociagnela.

SUBTITLE
I don't think she's going to
last.

DAVID
Niby mowila, ze Joe mial
jakies trudnosci z
komunikacja.

SUBTITLE (CONT'D)
Apparently she said that Joe
had communication
difficulties.

PAVEL
Ta? Myslisz, ze to dlatego
tak sie na ludzi boczy?

SUBTITLE (CONT'D)
Yeah? You think that's why
she's socially isolated?

DAVID
Albo to, albo zdradza.

SUBTITLE (CONT'D)
That or the adultery.

PAVEL nods.

CUT TO:

61

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR. DAY 3. 10:52.

ALISON with JOE, PAUL with DR. ESHELL, as they walk back
towards her office.

DR. ESHELL
Your Dad turned up here the other
day. I wasn't at liberty to discuss
Joe with him.

PAUL
Not my Dad. Alison's Dad.

DR. ESHELL doesn't seem that bothered to pursue it. PAUL
turns to ALISON who is not smiling.

CUT TO:

62

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 3. 10:53.

DR. ESHELL enters and there is already another Doctor, DR.
WAITE, waiting. DR. WAITE is a young Nigerian woman. Indeed
she looks too young to be this experienced. JOE heads for the
corner and puts his headphones on.

DR. ESHELL
This is Dr. Waite who I told you
about. She specialises in learning
disorders.

ALISON
Yes. Of course. Hello.

They shake hands.

DR. ESHELL
I'll leave you to it.

DR. WAITE
Did you bring the questionnaire?

ALISON
Yes. And medical records.

ALISON hands them over. DR. WAITE glances at them.

DR. WAITE
Nursery reports? School reports?

ALISON
They're not very useful.

DR. WAITE
Maybe you could bring them next
time.

ALISON
Of course.

PAUL
If there is a next time.

DR. WAITE lets that one hang.

DR. WAITE
So why don't we start by you
telling me about Joe.

PAUL
We did that last time. We told Dr.
Eshell.

DR. WAITE
It'd be good for me to hear it
first hand.

ALISON
Like, what . . .

DR. WAITE
Whatever you like.

As ALISON talks, PAUL puts a supportive arm around her.

ALISON
He's charming and funny and he's a
musical genius and he remembers
full songs by heart. He's smarter
than the kids his age so they don't
interest him much.

(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)

He's got this thing about going
last through a door but my friend's
boy will only eat Cheerios so . . .

DR. WAITE

And are these the difficulties that
brought you here?

PAUL

Dr. Eshell said we should come back
so we came back.

DR. WAITE

But if you hadn't thought there was
still a problem then you wouldn't
have brought him back would you?
So?

PAUL and ALISON exchange a glance.

ALISON

When he was two and a half we took
him to a speech therapist because
he didn't really speak. And she
said it would right itself and it
did. Ever since then he never shuts
up. And, that's it.

DR. WAITE

Anything else?

ALISON

He doesn't talk to other kids much.
He prefers talking to adults . . .
and he's just started school.
Reception. Only part time but, you
know, if he's going to mix with new
kids and . . .

DR. WAITE

Okay. Well. Joe? Shall we have a
little play?

JOE doesn't respond. PAUL tentatively removes his headphones.

PAUL

Play with Dr. Waite for five
minutes and then you can have your
music back. I promise.

DR. WAITE smiles, slightly strained as PAUL edges JOE
forward. DR. WAITE gets a 'Winnie The Pooh' puzzle out.

ALISON

He hates jigsaws. He finds them too
easy.

Again the strained smile from DR. WAITE but she persists.

DR. WAITE

Can you help me with this, Joe.
Hey?

PAUL

Show Dr Waite where Tigger goes,
Joe. Go on. Just by Eeyore I think?
Yes. "The wonderful thing about
Tiggers."

JOE

"Is Tiggers are wonderful things,
Their tops are made out of rubber,
their bottoms are made out of
springs!"

PAUL nudges Tigger towards JOE's hand and he puts it in the right place.

DR. WAITE

If Dad keeps helping you, Dad might have to wait outside.

ALISON smiles and squeezes PAUL's hand.

CUT TO:

63

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 3. 11:01.

DR. WAITE is taking the largely untouched jigsaw away. PAUL and ALISON are trying to mask their disappointment.

PAUL

He really doesn't like jigsaws.

DR. WAITE

(A PROFESSIONAL SMILE)

It's okay. Children often react like this in the room. (BEAT) Now then, Joe. Take a look at this picture for me. And you tell me. What can you see?

The picture is a cartoon of a busy harbour, boats, seagulls, crabs, fishes, children playing with buckets and spades.

JOE

Ooo. Now let me see.

DR. WAITE

That's right. What can you see?
Hey?

JOE is looking but not looking. PAUL and ALISON sit behind JOE, willing him to say something. PAUL virtually bursting to help. ALISON gripping his hand tight.

JOE

Hmm.

DR. WAITE

Yes?

JOE points to the tiniest door on a fisherman's cottage on the far side of the bay.

JOE

A door.

DR. WAITE

That's right, Joe. A door to the cottage. Now. Anything else?

JOE looks long and hard again. Again a long wait with tension rising.

JOE

Ahh! Yes! (BEAT) Another door.

JOE points to a door in the lighthouse.

DR. WAITE

That's right. Another door. To the lighthouse this time. Can you see anything else.

JOE looks out of the window.

DR. WAITE (CONT'D)

On the picture. Maybe not a door this time?

A long silence then JOE looks up at DR. WAITE.

DR. WAITE (CONT'D)

Yes?

JOE

(AMERICAN ACCENT)

You are a sad, strange little man.

PAUL and ALISON laugh.

PAUL

It's Toy Story.

DR. WAITE

I know.

PAUL

Come on, Joe. You love the seaside. Do you remember? St. Ives? Yes? The seagulls?

JOE
A seagull ate Mum's pastie.

PAUL
That's right. He did. He really did.

PAUL winks at JOE then looks up at DR. WAITE.

HARD CUT TO:

64 **INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR/CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 3.**
11:24.

ALISON and PAUL watch through the window in the door from the corridor outside.

Then we see, although we can't hear, from their POV. JOE really engaging with DR. WAITE, imitating her movements. Using a huge life size doll or glove puppets to talk back and forth. Giving her matches to pictures with objects, objects with pictograms, sequencing, and so on.

Cut back to ALISON and PAUL sharing a smile.

PAUL
That lazy little bugger. I've never seen him so co-operative.

ALISON
Wait till I get him home!

But they are clearly both delighted as JOE engages.

CUT TO:

65 **OMITTED**

66 **INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. PAEDIATRICS WAITING AREA. DAY 3.**
12:20.

ALISON and PAUL smile and drink cans of pop. They are surrounded by WORRIED PARENTS and CHILDREN but no longer feel part of that tragic world.

PAUL
She loved him.

ALISON
Of course she did. Why wouldn't she?

PAUL

You know what? Let's go away this weekend. Just you and me. Book a nice hotel.

ALISON

That would be romantic.

PAUL

We could eat our fill from the award winning carvery then I could take you from behind over the Corby Trouser Press.

ALISON

Bit less romantic that time.

PAUL

(NODS)

It's such a fine balance.

ALISON

Indeed.

DR. WAITE comes out to greet them, with JOE.

DR. WAITE

Alison. Paul. Come through.

They both smile and follow DR. WAITE back to her office.

CUT TO:

67

INT. ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 3. 12:27.

PAUL and ALISON sitting opposite DR. WAITE. JOE in the corner with his headphones on playing with some toys. DR. WAITE has freshly printed papers in front of her. Her email alerts are pinging throughout. Occasionally she checks the screen and her phone. Not obsessively but enough for ALISON to notice.

PAUL

You're not going to give us jigsaws, are you?

DR. WAITE

He's a lovely boy. He's polite. He's affectionate, he makes eye contact, he loves his music.

PAUL

Thank you. For being so patient with him. And me. Especially me. I know I can be a bit of a prick. . .

ALISON has perceived there is a "but" here before PAUL. She nudges him.

DR. WAITE

I'll write my own report but I can talk you through the test results now. I don't believe in keeping people waiting. You were right to bring him to Dr. Eshell and she was right to refer him to me. He does have significant problems.

ALISON

What kind of problems?

DR. WAITE

Communication. Auditory processing. Emotional responses. Self-soothing behaviours. If you look at the tests. In some areas he is way above average . . .

PAUL

I know you're the expert but is that really so different to other kids?

DR. WAITE

No. Because he's five years old. But he will be . . . did Dr. Eshell mention the autism spectrum at all?

ALISON

What? Why would she? I don't know much about autism but from what I do know . . .

DR. WAITE

He has problems processing emotions. He has problems with his auditory processing.

ALISON

You keep saying that and I don't know what it means.

DR. WAITE

Sorry. It means there's nothing wrong with his hearing but he has trouble making sense of what he hears. And prioritising it. Like I'm prioritising this conversation over the sound of my email alerts.

ALISON

That . . . well . . . That just isn't him. He talks. He sings!

DR. WAITE

He has a wide vocabulary and uses that to keep everyone at a social distance. His singing is another way of keeping people out. It protects him from what he finds difficult. Communication . . . emotion.

PAUL

Sounds pretty much like every man I know.

DR. WAITE

(UNSMILING)

Right. But Joe has these problems to the extent that it limits his capacity to learn and change.

ALISON

So does that mean he is autistic?

DR. WAITE

I would say that he is on the autism spectrum. Yes.

PAUL

But he's not autistic?

DR. WAITE

That's not how I would describe anyone with autism.

ALISON

So you think he has autism.

DR. WAITE

Yes. But the first thing you have to understand is that Autism isn't a single condition. And it's not a disease. It's a set of behaviours that cause difficulty in social communication.

ALISON

Well. Here you are telling me that autism is hard to pin down so how can you say it's autism for sure.

DR. WAITE

I'm afraid it's not going to go away if we call it something different.

Out on PAUL and ALISON. Half shocked. Half accepting.

CUT TO:

68

INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/ST GREGORY'S HOSPITAL. CAR PARK. DAY 3.
12:45.

PAUL and ALISON sit side by side, passing the pages of the test results to each other as they read it. JOE is in his car seat in the back, wearing headphones, his eyes closed.

PAUL

This doesn't make sense. He scored high for expressive language. Third percentile.

ALISON

Third percentile means third bottom. Not third top. It means that 97% of children his age do better at this than him.

PAUL looks blankly at the report again.

PAUL

Oh. Right. Well. That's Eton down the drain.

ALISON starts to cry. PAUL reaches for her hand.

ALISON

That day. On the beach. He was two. And you looked at him. He was turning circles in the sunshine. And you said to me. You thought there might be something wrong.

PAUL

Yes. And then he got his hearing checked and we spoke to the Nursery and . . .

ALISON

(INTERRUPTING)

But deep down. What did you think? What were you afraid it might be? Was it this?

PAUL

It might have been. Yes.

ALISON

Well why the hell didn't you say so.

PAUL

Because he was a little boy and I didn't want to go pinning a badge that big on him.

PAUL looks at ALISON for a long time, then starts up the car.

CUT TO:

69

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. FELL. DAY 3. 13:30.

EDDIE running up a steep path . . . in the middle of an utterly deserted landscape looking out over the lake. He becomes slowly aware of heavy breathing behind him. He turns and there is MAURICE, a stick man in the distance, leaping up the hill towards him as though it is nothing.

EDDIE
(PISSED OFF)
Oh, perfect.

CUT TO:

70

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. FELL. DAY 3. 13:35.

EDDIE is labouring, MAURICE, fit as a 20 year old, breathing easily and catching him up. Father and son run side by side but MAURICE is clearly the quicker and stronger.

MAURICE
You got hill soft in London. That's
your trouble.

EDDIE
Right. Well, that's London for you.
The gift that keeps on giving.

MAURICE
You need to leave London behind.
Both of you. She's a Doctor. She
worked long hours. Got involved
with a colleague. It happens.

EDDIE
You know what, Dad. It may surprise
you to learn that owning a box set
of Grey's Anatomy does not qualify
you as a relationship counsellor.

They run on in silence, MAURICE grim and unrelenting.

MAURICE
Have you heard from Paul or Alison?
Joe had his follow up at the
hospital today.

EDDIE
I think maybe you should stay out
of their business.

MAURICE

Don't be ridiculous. He's my
grandchild. It's my business too.

EDDIE

Must be great to be so certain
about everything.

MAURICE

Are you saying there's nothing
wrong with the boy? Are you saying
he's normal?

MAURICE says nothing, pushes on, ahead of EDDIE. He seems to take some kind of pleasure in this. EDDIE tries to keep up and then gives up, panting on the hillside. He is suddenly alone again in the vast hills, and throwing up . . .

CUT TO:

71

INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/LAKE DISTRICT. ROADS. DAY 3. 15:05.

They drive in silence. JOE asleep in the back. Buzzcocks - 'What Do I Get?' comes on the radio. PAUL smiles at the coincidence but ALISON leans forward and turns it off.

ALISON

That's the first thing that's got
to change. Him listening to your
music all the time.

PAUL

Oh. Right. It's all Buzzcocks'
fault. Of course. My Dad used to
think that too.

ALISON

He isn't you.

PAUL

I get that.

ALISON

And if he didn't listen to your
music all the time maybe he
wouldn't be like he is.

PAUL

"Like he is?" One lousy football
party.

ALISON

Not just one. He never gets
invited. We invite every kid. We
throw everything in there. Party
bags. Entertainers. Three tier
birthday cakes. Karaoke. Games.

(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)

Prizes! And he doesn't even get invited back by the kid with the inhaler! You said it.

PAUL

I was joking.

ALISON

He's five years old and it's happening already. And you know what? Since school started the other Mums don't even try and hide it.

PAUL

Well, it's their loss.

ALISON

That's maybe so. But it's his loss too.

PAUL slams on the brakes and gets out of the car and heads to the supermarket.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

PAUL

To get a picnic of our own.

CUT TO:

72

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. LAKESIDE. DAY 3. 15:25.

PAUL, ALISON and JOE walk along the road towards an area of flat grassland and playground by the Lake/Mere/Water with supermarket bags of food. ALISON is smiling, PAUL looking determined . . .

CUT TO:

73

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. LAKESIDE. DAY 3. 15:30.

ALISON and PAUL stop in their tracks as they see, up ahead, HARRY's birthday party in full swing. There are even small inflatable goals.

PAUL

Why didn't you tell me it was here?

ALISON

I didn't know! I assumed it'd be up at the Sports Centre.

ALISON takes JOE's hand and turns to leave.

PAUL

Where are you going? I thought we
were having a picnic.

JOE

I don't want a picnic.

PAUL

Of course you do. It's all your
favourite food but with wasps and
dog poo. What could be nicer?

ALISON reluctantly heads with PAUL and JOE to a nearby patch
of ground.

CUT TO:

74

OMITTED

75

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. LAKESIDE. DAY 3. 15:55.

ALISON, PAUL and JOE sit eating their picnic in silence. The
unmistakable sound of a great party going on in the
background.

PAUL

Shall we go for an ice cream after
this, Joe? Shall we? Hey?

JOE smiles and nods.

ALISON

Can't we just go home?

PAUL gets a football out and starts to kick it back and forth
with JOE.

PAUL

We can do football, can't we? Hey?
Joe. Come on. Come on.

JOE bends to pick the ball up.

PAUL (CONT'D)

No, you don't pick it up. You kick
it, Joe. You kick it.

JOE clutches the ball to him and starts to sing, in an
alarming impression of Paloma Faith - 'Upside Down'.

JOE

(SINGING)

"Angels watching over me with
smiles upon their face, Cause I
have made it through this far in an
unforgiving place."

PAUL

(HIDING HIS TENSION BADLY)

You put the ball down and kick it.
That's it. Like the other boys.
That's it. Good lad!

JOE kicks it back and forth with PAUL and then picks it up again. PAUL goes to grab it, a little rattled now.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You. Put. The. Ball. On. The.
Floor.

ALISON

Just leave it, Paul.

JOE runs away, still holding the ball. He runs towards HARRY's party and throws his ball into the midst of their game. The other kids look bemused. JOE stands still in the middle of the pitch as the other boys and girls, and a couple of Dads, play on. PAUL looks at ALISON and doesn't move.

ALISON (CONT'D)

You go. I'm not going.

PAUL walks slowly over to JOE. LINDA looks over.

LINDA

Hi, Paul. Does Joe want to join in?
He's welcome.

PAUL looks at JOE.

PAUL

Would you like to play, Joe?

JOE nods. The match ball dribbles towards PAUL and he traps it. He smiles and nods.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Far post, Joe! Far post!

JOE starts to run towards the goal. PAUL dribbles past a couple of kids who do that wild swinging leg tackle that little kids do. DAD 1 tries to tackle PAUL and he swerves past him and nudges him away a little too aggressively. He dribbles past another couple of kids. JOE is still running towards the goal.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Joe! That's it.

PAUL dribbles past DAD 2 with a Ronaldo stepover.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(LAUGHING)

Hey. You never lose it!

But when he looks up this time he sees that JOE has carried on running past the goals, off the pitch, past the picnic and the presents and is starting to climb a tree.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Joe?

PAUL picks up the match ball and runs after JOE. KIDS running after PAUL with the ball.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Joe! What you doing?

JOE has already climbed to the first branch, now the second.

HARRY (FROM BEHIND)

Can we have the ball, Joe's Dad?

PAUL turns to HARRY, and for a moment, loses his temper.

PAUL

Yes. Here. Take it!

PAUL does a long goalkeepers kick back towards the football match. HARRY looks as though he might cry and walks away. PAUL grabs JOE by the leg. The scene is descending into desperate farce.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(RATTLED NOW)

Just come down. Will you? I won't make you play football. All right. Just come down. Joe. Please.

JOE comes down and both PAUL and him are standing on the same branch. And then, without warning, JOE slaps PAUL on the face. PAUL does nothing. Just stares at JOE and looks back to see the PARENTS looking on at this scene as the kids race around playing football.

CUT TO:

76

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT. LAKESIDE. DAY 3. 16:30.

ALISON and PAUL walk back to the car, carrying remains of the picnic. JOE ahead, headphones on.

PAUL

It was a shit game anyway. Bunch of middle class kids in luminous boots. Replica kits! Inflatable goals! When did Toffs decide they liked football? Why can't they just piss off hunting and shooting so the rest of us can get on with proper sport?

ALISON

Why don't we make this about class
so you can feel better about
yourself.

PAUL

(RATTLING ON)

He's not a genius anymore? He's not
funny anymore? He's not Mozart?
He's Ralph the Lollipop man? I
wouldn't change anything about him.

ALISON

So if he was ill you wouldn't take
him to the Doctor?

PAUL

I know in your family only perfect
will do. Well, he's perfect to me
as he is. All right! If he's
autistic or spectrum or disorder
he's still perfect. I love him.
Fuck the world!

JOE

I want sausages.

PAUL

Joe. You can have anything you
like!

ALISON looks at PAUL despairingly as he gets into the car.

CUT TO:

77

EXT. HUGHES HOUSE. GARDEN. DAY 3. 18:15.

PAUL is rather manically assembling a barbecue, one leg of
the barbecue is wonky and he is trying to prop it up with
bits of wood. ALISON comes out.

ALISON

This isn't going to solve anything.

PAUL

Pass me a brick then.

ALISON

I didn't mean the wobbly leg
problem.

PAUL

Your Dad's on his way over . . .

ALISON turns and sees JOE and REBECCA playing with a yo-yo.

ALISON

When did you get a yo-yo?

REBECCA

I didn't. It's Joe's.

ALISON

Since when?

REBECCA

It was a birthday present. On his bed. He hadn't unwrapped it.

ALISON

Nobody got him a yo-yo.

EDDIE and NICOLA have drifted out and are talking to PAUL who is about to light the barbecue.

PAUL

(WITHOUT LOOKING UP)

Did you sack Maya yet?

EDDIE

No. Like I said. We need her.

PAUL

I've got fifteen years on you in that place so just listen to me, would you?

EDDIE

Dad gave me his job. And yours. Because he trusted me to do them both . . .

PAUL

No. Because you lost all your money and had nowhere else to go! At least you could be honest.

NICOLA looks at the floor.

EDDIE

(ANGRY)

Like you're being honest with me? About your son? Honest like that?

PAUL

(BEAT)

This hasn't got anything to do with Joe.

EDDIE

Hasn't it? You've both come back from the hospital with a face like a smacked arse and now you're looking for someone to shout at.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

That doesn't exactly strike me as
the behaviour of a man who has just
had good news about his boy.

PAUL

So you're a psychologist now?

EDDIE

No. I'm a failure. But I'm not
stupid.

PAUL looks hard and long at EDDIE, then something gives . . .
MAURICE arrives with steaks.

MAURICE

Stand back. Barbecue King arriving!

PAUL

That's all we need. The Barbecue
King.

CUT TO:

78

EXT. HUGHES HOUSE. GARDEN. DAY 3. 18:40.

A rather strained family barbecue. EDDIE, PAUL and NICOLA stand around. MAURICE cooking. ALISON with REBECCA, trying to rewrap the yo-yo in its original paper.

REBECCA

Why are you making such a big deal
out of it?

ALISON

Because it's Harry's present and
Joe stole it.

REBECCA

He steals windmills from gardens.
Why is this any different?

ALISON

Because it belongs to an asthmatic
five year old. We'll have to give
it back.

REBECCA

That'll just be embarrassing.

ALISON

Exactly. You'll have to give it
back. Wrap it up again and say you
found it outside the house.

REBECCA

They'll know that Joe took it.

ALISON

You're doing A level drama. It'll be good practice.

REBECCA

If this was any other kid no parent would go back with it . . .

ALISON

He isn't any other kid though, is he? That's the point. Now just do what I ask for once!

ALISON a little too emphatic. REBECCA shocked by her vehemence, heads inside. ALISON wanders over to the barbecue.

MAURICE

(FLIPPING BURGERS)

At least you've got Rebecca. Hey? That's something.

ALISON

Meaning what?

MAURICE

Meaning she's grown up and you don't have to worry about her. For God's sake. If you're going to jump down my throat every time I say anything.

EDDIE

Can you just try and be a bit more tactful, Dad. That's all.

MAURICE

Of course. (BEAT) So. Is there a cure?

ALISON

A cure? It's not a disease. EDDIE

Unbelievable.

MAURICE

All right. I didn't mean cure. I'm not up on latest jargon. I've only just stopped saying Spastic and Mongol.

EDDIE

And "Coloured" is still hanging in there, hey, Dad?

ALISON

We don't even know if it's the right diagnosis.

MAURICE

Exactly. You might want to get a second opinion. He sings, he talks, he smiles, he looks you in the eye. So how's he autistic? I don't understand.

ALISON

Nobody uses that word. Not in this house and not outside this house.

MAURICE

How about the word "Plates"? Are we using that word anytime soon?

EDDIE

What if we want to explain?

ALISON

We label him now and it's over. I'm not having the rest of the town judging him at five years old and that's it.

PAUL

That's right. Because the rest of the town hasn't noticed there might be something different. That's why he gets so many party invitations.

The rest of the family look uncomfortable.

MAURICE

Can somebody get some plates. These burgers are ready. Anybody?

ALISON looks at PAUL, wounded. PAUL shrugs. A silence. JOE has wandered inside, somewhere in the house he is playing music.

EDDIE

I don't know anything about it but don't we need to be honest? Isn't that the starting point?

A silence. NICOLA takes EDDIE's hand. PAUL logs this. They wait for ALISON to speak. All we can hear is JOE singing along to his music somewhere . . .

ALISON

You're right. (BEAT) You don't know anything about it.

EDDIE shrugs and heads inside for plates. JOE comes outside unnoticed now, headphones on, unwrapping the yo-yo that has just been wrapped up.

MAURICE
Ketchup as well, Eddie! Hey?

PAUL sidles up beside MAURICE.

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Do I get a job in your gastropub?
Short order cook?

MAURICE looks at PAUL who isn't smiling.

PAUL
"At least you've got Rebecca." What
was that supposed to mean?

MAURICE
I explained.

PAUL
She's my daughter. And I love her.
But I didn't bring her into the
world. Biologically. Joe is all
mine.

MAURICE
So?

PAUL
So you blame me. For your less than
perfect Grandchild?

PAUL and MAURICE carry on arguing in the background but our focus shifts to ALISON and NICOLA.

ALISON
I need a name. I need someone
who can give us a second
opinion. A heavyweight.

MAURICE
For what? Blame you for what,
exactly? Can we eat here!
Paul's delirious.

NICOLA
Really? I'm not sure who I
can ask.

PAUL
(ANGRY)
I know what you think!

ALISON
How about the person who
recommended Dr. Eshell in the
first place? Dad said you
called someone.

MAURICE
Well, take it on the road
with the rest of your mind
reading act 'cos I haven't a
clue what you're talking
about.

NICOLA
I'm sorry. I can't do that.

ALISON
What do you mean, you can't do it?
Who was it? The Wizard of Oz?

PAUL falls silent. Both he and MAURICE now listening in on NICOLA and ALISON's conversation. In the back ground JOE is now slowly unravelling the yo-yo

ALISON (CONT'D)

What's the problem? If your contact is recommending people they must know what they're talking about.

NICOLA

I can't do it because it's Michael.

ALISON

Michael?

NICOLA

The Michael who I had an affair with. He's a paediatrician. And he specialises in this area.

ALISON

Right. Well. Oh. (BEAT) So what's the problem?

NICOLA

I can't stay in touch with him. It would kill Eddie.

ALISON

This is Joe's future, here!

NICOLA

No. I can't. I'm sorry. It wouldn't be fair on Eddie.

EDDIE re-enters with the plates and bread.

EDDIE

What wouldn't be fair on Eddie?
Hey? What?

PAUL, ALISON, NICOLA look at EDDIE in silence. REBECCA looks at her feet. They turn and look at JOE. He is holding one end of the string and swinging the yo-yo round above his head like a helicopter, the wrapping paper torn into bits at his feet . . .

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What wouldn't be fair?

JOE

To infinity and beyond!

END OF EPISODE