

THE A WORD

SERIES 2

Episode Two

SHOOTING SCRIPT

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22nd March 2017

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1 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAWN 4. 05:00

Joe's bed is empty. From under the bed we hear JOE singing - The Jam, 'Start' - but we only hear him, not the track.

JOE (O.C.)

"For knowing that someone in this
world
Feels as desperate as me -
And what you give is what you get."

On the door we notice his new school sweatshirt and polo shirt hanging up.

CUT TO:

2 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. DAWN 4. 05:15.

ALISON and PAUL lie wide awake in bed, a glance at the bedside clock. 5:15AM.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 4. 06:18.

Early morning, quiet. The front door opens. JOE comes out and the music kicks in full fat: we hear The Jam with JOE heading down the road, headphones on. The guitar riff, then . . .

THE JAM/JOE

"It doesn't matter if we never meet
again
What we have said will always remain
If we get through for two minutes
only
It will be a start!"

Close on JOE walking. Just his world for a moment and then:

PAUL

Joe! Joe!

We're jolted out of the music. PAUL has caught JOE up, mimes for him to take off his headphones.

PAUL (CONT'D)

We can't do this today, mate! We've
got a long car ride. But there'll
be music.

Out on JOE looking at PAUL and we . . .

CUT TO:

4 **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. DAY 4. 06:25.**

JOE is staring at his new school uniform laid out on the bed. Blue sweatshirt with Pear Tree logo, white polo shirt, grey trousers, etc. New blue Pear Tree reading folder next to it.

CUT TO:

5 **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 4. 06:30.**

ALISON is racing around the kitchen, putting snacks into a bag, books, a letter, gulping coffee as she goes. PAUL comes in, looking at his watch.

PAUL

Are we right?

ALISON

Not quite sure how looking at your watch is helping.

They turn and see JOE still dressed in his old school uniform, red sweatshirt, etc - headphones on.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Joe. No. No. No! I laid your new uniform out on your bed.

ALISON takes JOE by the hand and starts to lead him out.

PAUL

We haven't got time for him to change.

ALISON

It's only a sweatshirt, Paul.

PAUL

Okay! Let me get it. You get him in the car!

PAUL exits to upstairs. As he does so MAURICE enters.

MAURICE

Hiya, Joe. Bet you're excited!
Meeting all your new mates!

ALISON is putting JOE's coat on.

ALISON

No fuss, Dad. The whole idea is that this is just a normal day. We aren't going to make a big deal of it.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

A normal day? First day at a
Special School.

ALISON heading to the door, in a massive rush.

ALISON

It isn't a special school. It's a
specialist base in a mainstream
primary school. Best of both
worlds.

MAURICE

If a school's named after a tree
then people join the dots. That's
all I'm saying.

PAUL dashes out after ALISON clutching the sweatshirt.

CUT TO:

6

EXT/INT. HUGHES HOUSE/PAUL'S CAR. DAY 4. 06:32.

Paul's car is parked near the house. JOE is doing the 'door thing' but not getting in. PAUL overtakes ALISON and MAURICE.

ALISON

We don't want to make him anxious.
All right.

MAURICE looks at JOE who is opening and closing the car door in an exaggerated version of his usual ritual.

MAURICE

Oh. Right. And how's that going?

ALISON

It's just an acquaint day. To
settle him in.

MAURICE

Acquaint Day? They settled me in at
Keswick Tech with a Chinese burn
and a dead leg.

ALISON gets JOE into the car, then gets in herself. JOE, in his old school sweatshirt, stares at the new sweatshirt on the seat beside him. ALISON and PAUL both tense.

PAUL

Okay?

ALISON

(TO JOE)

All right, love?

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

They drive down the drive. As they go, JOE looks back towards the house and sees gathered behind the wall, hidden till now, REBECCA, NICOLA, EMILY and VINCENT all waving. ALISON stares in the rear-view mirror and allows herself a smile.

They drive away, passing EDDIE pulling up in his car.

CONTINUOUS:

7 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 4. 06:33.

EDDIE gets out of his car and heads up the drive, not looking pleased. MAURICE walks past in the opposite direction.

MAURICE
Morning, Mary Poppins.

EDDIE
Not funny.

REBECCA and JAMES are heading into the house.

REBECCA
Big day today. Double shift at the Fellside.

JAMES
They don't get any bigger than that.

REBECCA
You'll finally be able to afford my engagement ring.

On JAMES' look as REBECCA points to her empty ring finger. They kiss before they go inside. NICOLA, EDDIE and VINCENT find themselves looking at the young lovers as NICOLA puts EMILY into her buggy.

NICOLA
I've done her lunch and tea. Change of clothes in her bag.

EDDIE
You've had a fortnight to arrange Alison cover. I do have a job, you know.

VINCENT
(RAISED EYEBROW)
Anybody would think you can't stay away, Eddie.

A big cheesy wink from VINCENT.

EDDIE
I'll drop her off at tea time.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

EDDIE walks away, shaking his head in disbelief. VINCENT smiles at NICOLA and shrugs at her scowl.

CUT TO:

8

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 4. 06:55.

ALISON and PAUL tense in the front, JOE in the back. Clear from the speed PAUL is driving that they are running late.

JOE
Music walk then school.

PAUL
Not today, mate, that's changed.
Remember? We talked about it.

JOE
Music walk. I do it. Then school.

ALISON
We're in a bit of a rush, love.

JOE starts to take his seat belt off and try the car door.

ALISON (CONT'D)
No. Joe. Leave the door.

ALISON looks at PAUL.

CUT TO:

9

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 4. 07:00.

JOE walks down a road, headphones on. Music on full (The Jam, 'Start'). JOE singing along.

THE JAM/JOE
"And what you give is what you get.
And what you give is what you get."

We pull out to reveal that PAUL and ALISON are following JOE in their car, at a snail's pace.

As they do so a small GROUP OF RAMBLERS head towards them in the opposite direction, looking puzzled at this sight. PAUL nods an awkward "Hello" to them as they pass.

CUT TO:

10

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 4. 07:15.

PAUL drives, ALISON turns to JOE in the back.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

It's not the way to my school.

ALISON

This is the way to your new school,
Joe.

JOE holds up a finger like a lawyer making a killer point.

JOE

Just one thing. It's not the way to
school. It's not. The way. To my
school.

ALISON

Do you remember, love. We showed
you. It's going to be new and it
will be a bit strange for a while.

JOE

This is not the way to my school.
This is not the way to my school.

PAUL

I promise you it is, mate.

CUT TO:

11

EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 4. 07:20.

The car driving along.

JOE (O.S.)

Just one thing. This is not the way
to my school. (SINGING) "Strange
Little Girl, where are you going?"
Just one thing. This is not the way
to my school. "Strange Little Girl,
where are you going."

PAUL (O.S.)

It is, Joe. It is.

ALISON hears the strain in PAUL's voice.

ALISON (O.S.)

All right.

JOE (O.S.)

Just one thing. This is not. The
way. To my school.

ALISON (O.S.)

We're going to have to do the book
again.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. BILLBOARD/LAYBY. DAY 4. 07:25.

PAUL and ALISON's car parked in a layby, next to a billboard.

CUT TO:

13 INT. PAUL'S CAR (BILLBOARD LAYBY). DAY 4. 07:26.

JOE sits between ALISON and PAUL on the back seat with an album open across his lap. The album has photos of JOE at his school over the years - class photos etc - then photos of a new school. PAUL and ALISON trying to take their time and be calm.

ALISON

There's Mrs Hankin.

JOE

Mrs Hankin.

ALISON

And you at your old school.

JOE

Millcross Primary.

ALISON points to the page with pictures of the new school - with some new TEACHERS, including a young woman, BETH.

ALISON

And this is your new school. Do you remember what it is called?

JOE

Do you remember what it is called.

ALISON

(AMUSED)

That doesn't count as an answer. We get another question here. Do you remember the name of your new school?

JOE

'Germ Free Adolescents'.

PAUL

I wish . . .

ALISON

X-Ray Spex. 1978.

PAUL

The name of your new school is. . . ?

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Let me see now . . . Pear Tree
Primary.

ALISON

Good lad.

JOE spends a few moments silently contemplating the photos.

JOE

My today school.

ALISON

That's right. It's a school where
you will get a bit more help. With
things you find hard. And there'll
be other children who might find
things a bit difficult too.

JOE

Different children.

PAUL

Just children. And it has lovely
teachers. Do you remember, we met
some of them when we looked around?
And playtime. And dinner time.

JOE

I do like it, don't I?

ALISON and PAUL exchange a glance.

ALISON

You will like it. Yes. I'm sure you
will.

CUT TO:

14

EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. YARD. DAY 4. 08:40.

MAURICE in the brewery yard, watching LOUISE fussing over
RALPH on the way to his brewery interview. RALPH in shirt and
tie. LOUISE kisses him, 'Goodbye'. He makes a face to get her
to stop. As LOUISE walks away she turns and her eyes meet
MAURICE's. The slightest of nods and we . . .

CUT TO:

15

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 4. 08:45.

RALPH sits opposite MAURICE, his application form on the desk
in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

So, Ralph. Why don't you want to carry on being a lollipop man?

RALPH

I've got plans. I want to meet people.

MAURICE

I think you'd probably meet more people as a lollipop man than you would here. All I can run to is me and Pavel and David.

RALPH doesn't say anything. MAURICE looks down at his list of questions.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Do you have any interest in brewing?

RALPH

Not really, no.

MAURICE

Well, that's good too. I don't want some homebrew amateur dipping his immersion coil in my mash tun.

RALPH doesn't react.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Okay. All I want is someone clean, punctual and hardworking.

RALPH

Yes. Me too.

RALPH nods, serious.

MAURICE

You know your Mum won't like you working here, don't you?

RALPH

Got nothing to do with her.

MAURICE

(UNCONVINCED)

No. No. I don't suppose it has.

CUT TO:

PAUL, ALISON and JOE get out of the car and rush towards the entrance to the base. They stand waiting and as they do a rush of older mainstream kids - all energy and chat - head into the mainstream part of the school. JOE feels and looks very small. They go inside and . . .

CUT TO:

17

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. RECEPTION. DAY 4. 09:10.

PAUL, ALISON and JOE sit in a row outside the reception area. PAUL is switching JOE's red sweatshirt to the new blue Pear Tree one. Over JOE's head but back to front.

PAUL

Just take your arms out, Joe,
there's a good lad. And we'll turn
it round.

JOE takes the sweatshirt off completely.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Not the whole thing. Oh, okay then,
the whole thing.

ALISON

(TO PAUL)

Just calm down.

PAUL

I am calm. Aren't we, Joe.

PAUL puts a protective arm around JOE as the Headteacher - MRS WEST - approaches.

MRS WEST

Hello. Hello, Joe.

ALISON

Sorry we're a bit late.

MRS WEST

It's fine. (BEAT) Joe? Shall we go
through to Rainbow?

MRS WEST opens a door, gestures for them to follow. JOE goes first. After a moment's hesitation PAUL and ALISON follow.

CUT TO:

18

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. RAINBOW UNIT. DAY 4. 09:12.

Some or all of the following are going on in the background:

WE SEE THIS FROM JOE'S POV AND FROM ALISON AND PAUL'S POV.

(CONTINUED)

A small classroom. 6 PUPILS, 4 STAFF. Years 3 and 4 (so age 7,8,9). They all wear the school uniform apart from one BOY - JACOB - who has turned up dressed as a FIREMAN.

The classroom looks quite like a conventional Year 3 classroom - but smaller. Fewer posters than normal. And a wipe clean board upon which the children sometimes just go and write stuff.

Today: 'The Weather is mery clod.' With a drawing of a cloud.

We may see one COMPUTER GIRL focussed on a laptop. Next to her a BOY is trying to see what she is doing on the laptop and the GIRL is slowly closing it until she is peering through the narrowest of gaps to try and see the screen.

We may see one BOY with a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) sitting down, engaged in writing about the leaves collected on the desk as part of science. From time to time the BOY simply rests his head on the desk and the LSA waits until he comes up again.

We may see another GIRL pacing back and forth and maybe twiddling a piece of string but occasionally returning to her chair where the LSA is waiting. She will then stick in a leaf and bang it down with relish.

We may see the COMPUTER GIRL suddenly get up and go and draw two figures on the wipe clean white board before returning to her work.

And we may see JACOB, of the Fireman's outfit, reading to his LSA - JEANETTE - from a science website, and writing information down . . .

AND THERE ARE NO TWO WAYS ABOUT THIS. THIS IS NOT A 'NORMAL' CLASSROOM. AND PAUL AND ALISON ACUTELY AWARE THAT THIS IS WHERE THEY HAVE CHOSEN FOR JOE.

BETH - the LSA we saw in the photo (Sc13) - crosses to where JOE, ALISON, PAUL and MRS WEST are standing and hands JOE an envelope.

BETH
Good morning, Joe.

JOE, momentarily intrigued, opens the envelope to find a card with an intersecting pattern on it.

MRS WEST withdraws. JOE stares down at the card.

BETH (CONT'D)
What do you think, Joe? Where do you think that might go?

From JOE's POV we see a table with an empty chair at an angle, the seat opened out towards the classroom door and, by implication, inviting JOE to sit.

(CONTINUED)

JOE works his way through this new and strange classroom, past these new unusual children, none of whom seem to notice him. We stay with him until he reaches the table.

After a few moments, he places the card where he thinks it might go - this is an intersectional sorting game - and seems engaged. Maybe this will be okay after all . . .

Joining him, BETH hands JOE another card. JOE promptly gets down and scrambles under the table.

PAUL and ALISON don't know whether to intervene. ALISON takes a step forward. BETH gets down on the floor too. JOE isn't moving - he puts his hands over his eyes.

CUT TO:

19

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. CORRIDOR. DAY 4. 09:35.

PAUL and ALISON walk away from the classroom.

ALISON

What are you thinking?

PAUL

That maybe the scallops I had last night were off.

ALISON

And . . .

PAUL

That he fits right in.

ALISON

He was nervous. And they were handling it.

PAUL

There were kids more autistic than him in there.

ALISON

He's not going to be copying the other kids, Paul. He's got his own rituals to be getting on with. That's half the problem, isn't it. And he's still in a mainstream school. They do music and PE in the afternoon, just like -

PAUL

Can we do one thing. Can we stop pretending it's normal? He's here. We chose to send him here. But can we stop pretending it isn't a bit, well, you know, weird?

(CONTINUED)

The door bursts open from behind them and JACOB - still in Fireman's outfit - comes crashing out at speed throws himself through the double doors and out into the playground.

A beat and then JEANETTE follows in hot pursuit.

ALISON

At least it wasn't Joe.

But PAUL is suddenly rubbing his tummy and feeling a bit uncomfortable and we . . .

CUT TO:

20

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. TOILET CUBICLE. DAY 4. 09:45.

PAUL is on the toilet in the cubicle. He is also on his mobile phone.

PAUL

Gary. Could you give me a call as soon as you can. Any punters complained? I've got the Ganges flowing out of my arse right now and I had the scallops.

PAUL hangs up as he hears somebody enter the toilet. He and we overhear the following kind conversation.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Okay, Johan, what do we do first? Can you remember? (BEAT) That's right. That's right. (BEAT) Now when you pee you aim at the ping pong ball. Okay. You keep hitting that ping pong ball.

We hear a stream of wee from the next cubicle.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

Good job. Are you hitting it?

JOHAN

I'm hitting it.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)

You keep aiming at that ping pong ball. You keep aiming. That's top work. Top wee work, Johan.

PAUL takes this in . . .

CUT TO:

21

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. TOILET SINKS. DAY 4. 09:50.

As PAUL washes his hands he cannot help noticing the picture signs everywhere, breaking every task down into stages. Turn on tap. Hands under water. Soap on hands. Rinse hands. Turn off tap. Dry hands. And a big "Thumbs Up" poster at the end.

He stares at them for a long time. It's as though he's in a foreign country where every road sign seems worth close examination.

CUT TO:

22

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 4. 12:05.

PAUL now watching JOE and his classmates in the playground. Just the six of them. All doing their own thing. ONE KID kicking a ball into an empty net and picking it up and repeating. ONE KID standing on a bench rapping to his LSA. JACOB is reading a book. JOE is walking slowly along the white lines, methodically, every white line he can find. ALISON nearby, watching too.

It shouldn't look extreme but it should be clear that these children are alongside each other, not with each other.

On PAUL. Is Joe a member of this club now? And if so, is that a good thing or a bad thing?

BETH comes over . . . she senses some of this.

BETH

All the other children come out in a minute and it all gets more mixed, you know.

PAUL

Yeah. Yeah.

BETH smiles encouragingly.

BETH

It's only his first day. He's doing really well.

The thought left hanging as PAUL focuses on these children not interacting.

CUT TO:

23

OMITTED

24

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 4. 15:35.

End of the school day. JOE, ALISON and PAUL walk to Paul's car from the entrance to the base. PAUL shakes JOE's hand.

PAUL

Day One done and dusted, mate.
You're off to a flyer! When we get home you can have an ice cream the size of your head.

JOE

School. Playground. Home.

PAUL

Not from your new school, Joe. We need to get back and it's a bit of a drive.

JOE

After school it's playground.

ALISON

If we get home early enough I'll take you to the playground there. Okay?

JOE

This is my new school. And my new playground.

PAUL

We can't go to a playground, Joe.

CUT TO:

25

EXT. MANCHESTER PLAYGROUND. DAY 4. 16:15.

A shitty concrete playground. JOE working his way round the playground as PAUL and ALISON wait.

CUT TO:

26

EXT/INT. MANCHESTER PLAYGROUND/PAUL'S CAR. DAY 4. 16:55.

As they get JOE back into the car, ALISON plucks up the courage to interrogate him.

ALISON

You know your new school, Joe?

JOE

The school that wasn't my school.

ALISON

Your new school. Did you like it?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
I felt fizzy.

ALISON
Well, fizzy's okay.

JOE
It was good, good, good. And
tomorrow is my school again. My
real school. At home.

PAUL looks across at ALISON and we . . .

CUT TO:

27 EXT. ROAD/PAUL'S CAR. DUSK 4. 18:20.

The car is driving.

JOE (O.S.)
I don't need a wee, do I?

CUT TO:

28 EXT. BILLBOARD/LAYBY. DUSK 4. 18:30.

JOE is having a wee behind the billboard. It's getting late.
PAUL and ALISON stand near the car waiting.

ALISON
You know what he's like with new
things. He'll get used to it.
(BEAT) And we will too . . .

PAUL
Do you remember when he wouldn't
sleep? Three months. Six months. A
year . . . And you said we're just
going to shut the door and let him
cry. Because the first
responsibility you have as a parent
is to your own sanity.

ALISON
I said that, did I?

PAUL
Yes. And we always go extra for Joe
but in the end . . . Our first
responsibility is to our own
sanity.

ALISON
(TAKES PAUL'S HAND)
Bit late for that.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

You know what I mean though. Maybe it's just too big a change for him.

ALISON

It's Day One, Paul.

PAUL

Exactly. It's not too late to change our minds.

JOE has arrived back from his wee.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Did you do your zip? Top lad. Top outdoor weeing.

PAUL, ALISON and JOE head back towards the parked car.

ALISON

Did we let him cry? In the end?

PAUL

What?

ALISON

When he was a baby did we just let him cry?

PAUL

You know we didn't.

ALISON looks up at the sky and points.

ALISON

He's this family's North Star. We follow him. That's how it has to be. Something had to change.

PAUL

(LOOKING UP)

That isn't the North Star. It's a plane.

They get into the car. JOE puts his headphones on. ALISON glances back at him and we . . .

CUT TO:

ALISON and JOE get out of the car and head for the house.

JOE

I liked the new school, didn't I?

ALISON

Yeah. I think so. Let's get you to bed.

A wave back at PAUL who watches them, then drives away.

CUT TO:

30

EXT/INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. NIGHT 4. 20:00.

PAUL stands on the deck, turning over the day's events, still in a bit of a daze.

Then he heads inside, to finish the evening shift. We go with him . . .

CONTINUOUS:

30A

INT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. NIGHT 4. 20:01.

PAUL stands and takes in the scene for a few moments. A handful of diners; SOPHIE and REBECCA working . . . JAMES at the bar, checking his phone. REBECCA takes a plate from GARY, who glances at JAMES, and heads over to PAUL.

REBECCA

How was it, then? (PAUL DOESN'T ANSWER) Did Joe settle in?

PAUL

Fine. It was fine.

SOPHIE overhears this. GARY speaks to REBECCA.

GARY

Is your boyfriend the barman or a customer? Only he's confusing me.

JAMES

Are you coming to our leaving party, Gary?

GARY

As long as you promise to actually leave.

PAUL has noticed MARK - SOPHIE's son - sitting quietly in the corner in his school uniform. SOPHIE quickly comes over to explain.

SOPHIE

I am so sorry, Paul. It's a one-off. His taxi never came and I didn't want to let you down.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

It's not a problem. Mark?

MARK steadfastly refuses eye contact.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Have you eaten, mate? I'm making myself a sandwich. Do you want one?

MARK is thrown by the question and looks away.

SOPHIE

Mark?

MARK

(STILL LOOKING AWAY)

Yes, please.

PAUL

Good lad. I haven't eaten all day.

GARY

I thought you were supposed to be the manager.

REBECCA

Tell me if you want a drink, Mark.

MARK

(LOOKING AWAY)

No, thanks.

JAMES notices MARK looking up at REBECCA as she walks away.

JAMES

Look at you. The pied piper of autism.

REBECCA

(LAUGHS)

Stop it. I was just being nice.

SOPHIE is at the kitchen waiting for an order.

SOPHIE

How was it, really? Was there a runner?

PAUL

How did you know?

SOPHIE

There always is. Mark used to be the runner. He hailed a taxi one time and got as far as Kendal.

PAUL wasn't expecting this. He can't help but look impressed.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
It'll all work out you know.

PAUL
Yep. People keep telling me that.

SOPHIE
There's people. And there's me. And
it's going to be all right.

PAUL
(RALLIES)
Let's get this sandwich on the go.

SOPHIE
He's already had chips I'm afraid.
I'll pay for them.

PAUL
Don't be daft. As long as he hasn't
had the scallops, he should be
fine.

This last shouted so GARY overhears.

GARY
How many times! There was nothing
wrong with the scallops!

SOPHIE
He's quite easy to reel in, isn't
he? I've noticed that.

PAUL
It's the main reason I employ him.

They share a smile - a connection. JAMES and REBECCA have a
quick kiss as they pass each other.

MARK
(IN BACKGROUND)
They're kissing. It's appropriate
for adults to do this when they
both like each other very much
indeed.

CUT TO:

Close on EDDIE getting out of his car with his bag. We don't
know where he is yet . . .

CUT TO:

32

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. HALL/KITCHEN. NIGHT 4. 20:11.

EDDIE enters the house.

EDDIE
Hi, honey, I'm home.

We follow EDDIE into the kitchen where we discover . . .

MAURICE at the counter. The kitchen is laid out with units and cookers that have been in place for 25 years. Clearly nothing much has changed since his wife died, although the space in the kitchen is severely compromised by a pool table that is a little too large for the room and serves as table, baby changing mat, storage space, etc . . .

MAURICE, preoccupied, is watching the kettle boil. He doesn't turn round.

MAURICE
I didn't change your sheets. You
were only here two nights last
week.EDDIE
I brought my own duvet. My old
Ninja Turtles cover wasn't doing it
for me anymore.

Still no response from MAURICE as EDDIE puts his bag and laptop on the pool table along with the general debris.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Frowning at it won't make it boil
faster, you know. (BEAT) Are you
all right?MAURICE
Ralph stormed the interview for the
brewery job.EDDIE
That's good, isn't it?MAURICE
The only other candidate is Dipso
Billy from the Rising Sun.EDDIE
Bet he's got a great palate - if a
little compromised by supping from
the dregs tray. Sounds like Ralph's
your man.MAURICE
His mum - Louise. She's asked me
not to give him the job.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE (CONT'D)
Won't say why but she'll have a
good reason knowing her.

EDDIE
Have you asked Dipso Billy's mum if
she wants him to take the job?

MAURICE
It isn't the same.

EDDIE
If Ralph's the best man for the job
then give him the job. That's how
it works, isn't it? Unless you're
Roy Hodgson . . .

MAURICE gets two Pot Noodles from the cupboard and starts to
pour hot water into both. EDDIE looks on with despair.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
What's for "afters?"

MAURICE
Choc ice. (BEAT - WITH EMPHASIS)
One each.

EDDIE nods with something approaching approval.

CUT TO:

33 **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 4. 22:50.**

PAUL comes in, ALISON asleep, dead to the world. He climbs on
to the bed, still fully dressed. Turns off the light and it
goes to black and then . . .

CUT TO:

34 **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. DAY 5. 06:00.**

The alarm seems to go off immediately. PAUL opens his eyes,
half in surprise, ALISON already getting up and heading out
to wake up JOE . . .

CUT TO:

34A **EXT. FELLS. DAY 5. 06:30.**

MAURICE running, gloriously alone, except he isn't. A YOUNGER
RUNNER is ahead of him. MAURICE puts his foot on the gas and
tries to catch him but is aware that the YOUNGER RUNNER is
pulling away from him . . . MAURICE keeps going but turns
down a side path to avoid the notion that he can't catch up.

CUT TO:

35

INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/HUGHES HOUSE. DAY 5. 06:45.

ALISON kisses half-asleep PAUL goodbye as he stands with coffee, ready to wave JOE off. Both of them anxiously watch JOE do the door thing before he gets in the car. PAUL gives an encouraging "fingers crossed" sign as ALISON heads for the car.

ALISON places snacks, water, phone, charger on the seat beside her.

They drive away. As they do so EDDIE passes the other way, giving them a wave and we . . .

CUT TO:

36

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 5. 07:00.

EDDIE is packing food and toys into EMILY's bag for the day. VINCENT has a huge cup of coffee in front of him and is eating a full English breakfast . . . NICOLA getting stuff together for work.

EDDIE

Have you got her raggy?

NICOLA

I had to wash it.

NICOLA hands EDDIE a bedraggled muslin cloth.

EDDIE

Really? I thought the essential attraction of raggy was that it smells of sick and baby food.

NICOLA

No. That's me you're thinking of.

EDDIE laughs as NICOLA packs the raggy. VINCENT looks up at the pair of them with disapproval.

VINCENT

Look at the pair of you. You get on better than most couples who are together.

EDDIE

The main reason being that we aren't together.

EDDIE smiles to NICOLA for encouragement but she looks slightly disappointed.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

Eddie. You behave like a husband
but you won't commit to being a
husband. Not even for your only
child.

EDDIE

It's called being civilised,
Vincent. (PICKING UP EMILY)
Come on, darling, time to take you
to 'Daddy's Gone', the special
nursery for broken home babies.

VINCENT

We'll talk some more tonight.

EDDIE

Why? What's happening tonight?

EDDIE looks at NICOLA but she looks as mystified as him.

VINCENT

I'm taking you out. Manning you up.

EDDIE

No. You're not! Bye!

EDDIE exits with a smiling EMILY.

CUT TO:

37

EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. YARD. DAY 5. 08:00.

MAURICE arrives at the brewery. RALPH is already there.

RALPH

Morning.

MAURICE

Morning, Ralph. You don't start for
another hour.

MAURICE unlocks the door.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Did your mum say anything about
your job?

RALPH

No.

MAURICE

Right. (BEAT) Come on, you can
start off by making me a brew and
we'll go from there.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH follows MAURICE into the brewery.

CUT TO:

38 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/ROAD IN MANCHESTER. DAY 5. 08:55.

ALISON keeping her eye on JOE in the mirror. He seems more relaxed. But then he suddenly takes his headphones off, staring at his inert iPod, battery dead.

JOE

It's not gone mouldy, has it?

ALISON

No, love, it'll be the battery.
Never mind . . .

ALISON puts on the radio. A song comes on. 'Getaway' by Blossoms. They listen as they drive and . . .

CUT TO:

39 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/MANCHESTER. DAY 5. 08:57.

ALISON and JOE in the car, both listening to the car radio.

BLOSSOMS

"Call me up,
You've got me choking up,
If we're in love
Tonight we can getaway."

CUT TO:

40 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. DAY 5. 08:58.

Blossoms still playing. We might see the last stragglers of the mainstream kids, hurrying into the other school entrance.

ALISON

Time to go, love. We don't want to be late.

JOE

Till the end.

ALISON looks anxiously towards the Base.

ALISON

Okay.

The song plays on, finally it ends.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Okay?

(CONTINUED)

JOE looks at the school then back at the radio.

JOE

Again.

ALISON

You can't have it again, Joe. It was on the radio.

JOE

I want the song.

ALISON

Joe. We can't do it now. How did it go again? Do you remember?

JOE looks out of the window towards the school, in silence.

ALISON (CONT'D)

We have to go to school now.

JOE

I want the song again.

ALISON

It's the radio, love. Not your iPod.

JOE

I want the song again. I know I can't. I want the song again.

ALISON

Joe. Come on.

ALISON reaches for his hand but he pulls away from her. BETH has arrived by the car.

BETH

Hi, Joe. Are you ready?

JOE

(TO ALISON)

I want the song. What was the song called? I want the song again. I know I can't.

ALISON

Joe. Ask me a question. Ask me a question.

JOE

I want the song again. I know I can't. What was it called. I want the song. I want the song again. I know I can't. What was it called.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

Honestly, Joe. I don't know. You
really need to go to school. Look,
Beth's here.

ALISON looks at BETH, not knowing what to do.

ALISON (CONT'D)

He's got into a bit of a state
about a song we heard on the way.
It might not just be that. You
know. He might be nervous that I'm
not staying this time.

BETH

Do you want to stay for a while?
It's all right.

ALISON

I don't know. Do you think that's a
good idea?

JOE

What's the song. I want the song.
(COVERING HIS MOUTH) What's the
song called. I don't know. I want
the song.

A moment and we . . .

CUT TO:

41

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 5. 09:00.

JOE walks calmly for a few steps under the gaze of BETH then
stops. Then starts again - talking to himself, into his hand.

JOE

I want the song. What's the song
called. I know I can't. I want the
song.

ALISON stays stock still as other PUPILS move past her, then
JOE looks back at her.

ALISON

I'll get you the song, Joe. I'll
bring it back. I promise.

JOE disappears inside the building. ALISON rushes into her
car and drives away at speed.

CUT TO:

42

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWHOUSE. DAY 5. 09:54.

DAVID, PAVEL and RALPH are working. MAURICE walks over, looks at the three of them.

MAURICE

You learnt any Polish swear words yet, Ralph?

RALPH

Just English ones.

At that moment LOUISE walks in and heads to MAURICE's office. MAURICE hesitates then takes the long walk after her.

DAVID

Nigdy wczesniej nie widziałem Maurice przestraszonego.

DAVID

I have never seen Maurice scared before.

PAVEL

Jest rozdarty emocjonalnie. Trzeba to uszanowac.

PAVEL

He is branching out emotionally. That has to be respected.

LOUISE has let herself into the office.

CUT TO:

43

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 5. 09:55.

MAURICE enters the office where LOUISE is waiting, steaming.

LOUISE

You promised me.

MAURICE

I know. I know I did.

LOUISE

But you gave him the job anyway.

MAURICE

Because it was the right thing to do.

LOUISE

For you. But not for me.

MAURICE

For me and for Ralph.

The phone starts to ring and PAVEL taps on the window.

LOUISE

Did you ask him to do that?

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

I tell you what. If you want me to sack Ralph at the end of the week then I'll do it. But I won't do it without a good reason from you because I won't do your dirty work without knowing why.

PAVEL taps again. LOUISE gets up and exits.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

You didn't actually want anything did you, Pavel?

PAVEL

No. But I can smell danger. It's a Polish thing.

MAURICE stares after LOUISE as she leaves and we . . .

CUT TO:

44

INT. PICCADILLY RECORDS. DAY 5. 10:05.

ALISON in the record store, she heads over to a young laconic shop assistant - EMMETT - who stands behind the counter.

ALISON

There was this song. My son heard it this morning.

EMMETT

Did he?

ALISON

And he's autistic, right and he got a bit obsessed with it.

EMMETT presses an app on his phone.

EMMETT

Sing it into that.

ALISON

Right. Really? Right. (SINGS) "Call me up, you've got me choking up, da-da da-da, da-da, da da Getaway."

EMMETT

(LOOKING AT HIS PHONE)

No. Nothing coming up. You sure that's the tune?

ALISON

I only heard it once.

(CONTINUED)

EMMETT

(FINDING A CD ALBUM)

I'm messing about. It's Blossoms.
There you go . . .

EMMETT has stuck the CD in a bag and hands it to a rather flustered ALISON.

ALISON

Are you sure this is it?

EMMETT gives ALISON a withering look.

EMMETT

It's an old track. Very well known.

ALISON

Right. Thank you.

ALISON feels about 100 as she reaches for her purse.

CUT TO:

45

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. RECEPTION. DAY 5. 11:04.

BETH enters the Reception area, where ALISON is waiting, clutching the CD in its bag.

ALISON

Sorry I took so long. I got it.
This should calm him down. He
doesn't have to play it more than
once.

BETH

He's fine now. He was upset for a
while but I stayed with him and
he's settled down.

ALISON

Oh. Really. Great. That's great.
And he's still okay?

CUT TO:

46

INT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. RAINBOW UNIT. DAY 5. 11:07.

ALISON stands on the edge of the classroom watching . . .

TWO CHILDREN alongside each other with an LSA, cutting out the stages of making cheese straws and equipment used, etc.

JACOB in the corner, on a sag bag, today dressed as a Pirate.

Two CHILDREN working with a Speech Therapist. They are passing a bag around.

(CONTINUED)

The bag contains the parts required to make a balsa wood plane. Each CHILD has to take a part out - say what it is and place it alongside the other parts on the table. This going on in the background as we watch ALISON watching JOE.

On the wall is a list of song titles from JOE's collection. A set of cards have been stuck around the room - on walls, drawers, some in the TEACHERS' pockets - with bands and dates written on them. It is JOE's task to retrieve each card by finding or asking or searching, then match it to the right title. In other words, they are encouraging him to engage using his passions and to communicate in order to retrieve the cards. He is utterly engaged. ALISON grips the CD bag.

CUT TO:

47 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 5. 11:15.**

ALISON stands at the entrance to the base. She looks down at the CD. Smiles to herself. Turns. What does she do now? She doesn't have a clue. She walks slowly away, thinking . . .

CUT TO:

48 **EXT. MANCHESTER. STREET. DAY 5. 11:52.**

ALISON stands in the street. Then looks around. Not sure what to do with this amount of freedom. She turns one way and walks in one direction and then, a bit Joe like, turns and heads in the opposite.

CUT TO:

49 **EXT. MANCHESTER. CLOTHES SHOP. DAY 5. 12:24.**

ALISON peruses the shop window. She's about to go in, but at the door she somehow loses confidence and heads off again.

CUT TO:

50 **INT. MANCHESTER. CAFE. DAY 5. 13:08.**

ALISON has a coffee on the go but she is counting all her loose change into pennies, two pences, five pences, etc, on the counter . . . She sees a YOUNG MOTHER with small CHILDREN, watches them going about their business.

CUT TO:

51 **INT. PICCADILLY RECORDS. DAY 5. 13:40.**

ALISON finds herself back in the record shop. She seeks out EMMETT at the counter.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

Hi!

EMMETT

All right? Did he like it?

ALISON

He will. I'm sure. I was just
wondering. Is there anything else
you think he might like?

EMMETT thinks this over. For a moment it isn't clear if he has heard or not. Then he springs into action, takes about six CDs down from the shelves in quick succession.

EMMETT

This. Oh. And this. My girlfriend
really likes this one.

ALISON

Great.

EMMETT

(SHOVING THEM IN A BAG)

My girlfriend likes most of these.

ALISON

Why do you keep mentioning your
girlfriend?

EMMETT

No reason. No reason.

ALISON smiles, realises EMMETT thinks she is hitting on him.

ALISON

I don't really have an autistic
son, you know. I made him up. I
just needed an excuse to come in
here and talk to you.

EMMETT

(DOESN'T GET IT)

Like I say. I'm fixed up.

ALISON smiles as she gets her credit card out.

CUT TO:

A children's playgroup. EDDIE at the heart of things. Making faces at EMILY, pushing another kid in a little car, etc.

We realise the POV is NICOLA's - watching this with a hint of envy as well as affection. EDDIE sees her and walks across.

EDDIE

Move along now, Miss. A children's playgroup is no place for loitering.

NICOLA

Look at you - Mr Popular.

EDDIE

Nothing more heroic than a man with a baby.

NICOLA

So I see.

EDDIE

Did you just come to heckle? I thought I was doing this because you didn't have any time.

NICOLA

I'm on my lunch break and I've got a favour to ask you.

EDDIE

It'll have to be quick. I'm leading the feminist version of Wheels on The Bus in five minutes.

CUT TO:

53

EXT. CONISTON. CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUP. DAY 5. 14:03.

NICOLA has EMILY on her knee and EDDIE is looking puzzled.

NICOLA

Please, Eddie.

EDDIE

I've already said "No" to a drink with Vincent so how did adding Dad to the party help?

NICOLA

I thought they might cancel each other out. Go on. I'll kill my Dad if he stays in with me another night and Emily will be raised without a mother.

EDDIE

(LOOKING AROUND AT THE OTHER MOTHERS)

Not for long, I wouldn't have thought.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLA

(LAUGHS)

Okay, cocky. Will you do this one
favour?

EDDIE

One favour? You mean one more
favour. I've already pretended to
be married to you.

NICOLA

Was that so bad?

EDDIE

It wasn't as bad as actually being
married to you but . . . (SIGHS)
I'll need a babysitter.

NICOLA

So will he.

EDDIE

Thanks. You're really selling it.

NICOLA kisses EDDIE on the cheek. EDDIE watches her go.

CUT TO:

53A

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWHOUSE. DAY 5. 14:30.

MAURICE drinking tea, watching RALPH working with DAVID and
PAVEL. He is clearly settling in. MAURICE still turning over
his confrontation with Louise. He crosses to RALPH.

MAURICE

All right, Ralph. How you liking
it?

RALPH

Good. Yeah.

MAURICE

'Cos not everybody's cut out for it
you know. And if you were having
second thoughts. And it wasn't,
like, everything you thought it
would be. I wouldn't mind.

RALPH

What?

MAURICE

If you don't want the job. After
all. There'd be no hard feelings.

MAURICE waits, hopefully.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH

I do want the job.

MAURICE

Good. Great. Good. (BEAT) I've just
got to . . . this tea. Wrong bags.
I'll get some more . . .

MAURICE strides out, preoccupied, his plan having failed.
DAVID and PAVEL exchange a look - MAURICE is losing it.

CUT TO:

54

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 5. 14:35.

ALISON, early, walks back and forth with the bag of CDs.

CUT TO:

55

OMITTED

55A

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. ENTRANCE. DAY 5. 15:00.

MAURICE is walking along with a box of tea bags. As he passes Millcross School - with a new LOLLIPOP LADY in situ - he can't help but stop and watch Joe's old muckers coming out at home time. RAMESH spots MAURICE and crosses to him.

RAMESH

Mr Joe's Grandad. Joe has left I'm
afraid.

MAURICE

What?

RAMESH

Joe left this school. He needed
extra help. He doesn't need picking
up anymore.

MAURICE

I know that, Son.

RAMESH

My grandad gets confused too. One
time he came to pick me up in his
slippers. Then a Doctor asked him
who the Prime Minister was. He
said, "I don't know, but they're
making a right mess of it."

MAURICE looks down at RAMESH.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

What's it like then, not having Joe here?

RAMESH considers this.

RAMESH

It's better and also worse at the same time.

MAURICE

Yeah. I think you're right.

RAMESH

Can you find your way home?

MAURICE amused by RAMESH's concern.

MAURICE

I think so, thanks Son.

MAURICE walks on, glances back at the school again and . . .

CUT TO:

56

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 5. 15:02.

ALISON still waiting for Joe, on the phone to Paul now.

ALISON

(ON PHONE)

He's had a good day. He was a bit upset going in but when I went back the staff had sorted it.

CUT TO:

57

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB. DAY 5. 15:03.

PAUL parked up outside the gastropub.

PAUL

(ON PHONE - FROWNING)

You went back? Did they call you in?

CUT TO:

58

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 5. 15:04.

ALISON on phone, spots the door opening.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

(ON PHONE)

No. Look, I've got to go. He's coming out.

She hangs up. BETH says goodbye to JOE. They shake hands and he comes out . . . he has a sticker on his jumper that says, "Top Work!"

ALISON (CONT'D)

Hello, lovely.

JOE

Hello.

ALISON

What did you do today?

JOE doesn't reply as they walk side by side towards the car.

CUT TO:

59

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB. DAY 5. 15:05.

PAUL gets out of his car and looks at his phone, slightly bewildered by the exchange he just had.

As he heads to the gastropub SOPHIE rushes out, coat on.

PAUL

Sophie?

CUT TO:

60

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/SOPHIE'S HOUSE. DAY 5. 15:25.

PAUL and SOPHIE sit in Paul's car outside Sophie's house.

SOPHIE

You didn't have to give me a lift.

PAUL

The bus would have taken you hours.

SOPHIE

Who was talking about the bus? I was going to nick your car.

PAUL

Oh. I see. (BEAT) Does this happen a lot. Him having a bad day?

SOPHIE

No. But he's a big lad now. The meltdowns are the same size but he isn't.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL thinks this over as a TAXI pulls up. SOPHIE is out of the car before the TAXI has parked. As PAUL gets out, MARK is out with his ESCORT. MARK is clearly distressed, trying to hit his own head - the ESCORT grappling to stop him.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
It's okay, Tony, I've got him now.

TONY
Thanks. We had all hell getting him in the car.

SOPHIE
I know. I think he must have just got tired. (TO MARK) We're going to go in now, love.

TONY lets MARK go and MARK runs hard at his own front door, hitting it as though trying to break in and we . . .

CUT TO:

61 INT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE. DAY 5. 15:30.

MARK is in the hall, PAUL stands, unsure what to do, SOPHIE is holding both his hands - we can glimpse this happening.

SOPHIE
All right, all right. It's okay.

SOPHIE lets go of MARK's hands. MARK throws himself against the wall with a thud that PAUL hears. PAUL moves forward. MARK keeps talking throughout PAUL and SOPHIE's conversation, a blur of distress walking backwards and forwards.

PAUL
Can I do anything?

MARK
Are you going to be good, Mark? Are you going to be good, Mark?

SOPHIE
No. He just needs to get it over with.

PAUL
Are you safe? Is Mark safe?

SOPHIE
Yeah. This is only about three on the Richter Scale.

MARK
Calm down, Mark, just calm down, Mark. Good lad. Good lad.

(CONTINUED)

MARK is walking up and down, agitated, a blur of distress, suddenly slaps himself and bangs the wall over and over.

SOPHIE

Thanks for the lift, Paul.

This is clearly SOPHIE inviting PAUL to leave.

PAUL

You going to be okay?

SOPHIE

We're going to be fine. But I don't know if I'll make it back tonight. I can't have the sitter when he's like this.

PAUL

Don't think about work for a minute. We'll manage. Bye, Mark. Hope you feel better tomorrow mate.

PAUL heads for the door. MARK is sitting on the stairs now, head in his hands. SOPHIE has one protective arm around him and one hand holding his hand to prevent him from hitting himself.

MARK

It's not okay. Mark's not okay. Mark's not okay!

CUT TO:

62 EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE. DAY 5. 15:35.

PAUL turning these events over as he walks back to the car.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. SWINGS. DAY 5. 18:30.

ALISON and JOE walk up the drive from the car. JOE sees REBECCA and JAMES on the swing and heads over. JAMES having a sly cigarette, he and REBECCA checking their phones.

REBECCA

(SMILES AT TEXT)

Great stuff. Dad's just offered me a shift.

JAMES

Tonight?

REBECCA

And you too if you want one.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

You know Steve who we're going to stay with in London?

JAMES swiftly puts his cigarette out as JOE arrives.

JAMES (CONT'D)

All right, Joe? (BACK TO REBECCA)
He's got a mate who works in a recording studio.

REBECCA

Hey, Joe. How did you get on? How was your new school?

JOE

'This Charming Man.'

REBECCA

The Smiths. 1983.

JOE

Okay.

REBECCA

Great stuff.

JAMES

Bet you're ready for your bed, aren't you, Joe?

JOE

'Hong Kong Garden'.

REBECCA

Look at that sticker. 'Top Work!'

JOE walks away, having lost interest . . . and as they talk we see JOE stop at the Scott House and stare at the door. REBECCA turns to JAMES and smiles.

JAMES

Anyway, they're looking for a runner.

REBECCA

Who are?

JAMES

The recording studio.

REBECCA watches JOE going into the Scott House.

REBECCA

Do you think he's having a nice time? At the new school? Did he seem okay to you?

(CONTINUED)

JAMES

He seemed normal. Normal for Joe.

JAMES returns to checking his phone. REBECCA still preoccupied by JOE.

CUT TO:

64

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 5. 19:02.

VINCENT is singing to himself as he checks his hair in the mirror. 'You To Me Are Everything' by The Real Thing. Shirt and tie, no sign of the dog collar.

VINCENT

(SINGING)

"So now you got the best of me,
Come on and take the rest of me,
Oh baby!"

NICOLA

You do know it's only Eddie and
Maurice you are meeting, don't you?

VINCENT

Who knows where the night might
lead . . .

VINCENT thrown by JOE who has drifted in and is unloading the dishwasher, putting the contents out on the table.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(OF JOE)

Should he be . . . ?

NICOLA

He's fine. And don't go flirting
with anybody.

VINCENT

The only love life I am interested
in tonight is yours and Eddie's. I
will reignite his pilot light and
he will warm the radiator of your
heart.

EMILY plays on in the corner, JOE carries on too, oblivious.

NICOLA

I'm a Doctor. I don't respond well
to metaphor.

VINCENT

Come on. You need to both dig in
and make it work. Like me and your
mum did for you.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLA

You and Mum? That's your example of
making it work?

VINCENT

Except better. Because you and
Eddie are made for each other. And
I think deep down you know it just
as much as I do.

NICOLA shakes her head in the face of this certainty.
Crouches down to EMILY and makes a fuss, ignoring VINCENT.

NICOLA

Don't listen to any of this, Emily.
Men telling women what they think.
Don't you listen my love.

But there is something in her softness that maybe indicates
she is glad VINCENT is going to have a go. JOE proceeds to
put the clean dishes back in the dishwasher and we . . .

CUT TO:

65

INT. CONISTON. PUB. NIGHT 5. 20:25.

EDDIE sitting in the pub, flanked by MAURICE and VINCENT.

VINCENT

The problem with you, Eddie, is
that you're a defeatist.

MAURICE

I wouldn't disagree with that.

EDDIE

Fine. I give up. Can I go now?

VINCENT

We haven't finished counselling
you.

EDDIE

This isn't counselling. It's
emotional heckling.

MAURICE

Nicola, for reasons entirely beyond
me, is clearly angling for a re-
match.

EDDIE

Right. That's me. Thanks for the
fun times.

(CONTINUED)

VINCENT

No chance, Eddie. This is our time.
Three thunderbuddies. The widower,
the divorcee, the player. You know
what? We could go bowling tomorrow
night!

VINCENT and MAURICE look up and see LOUISE striding towards them. VINCENT goes into what he imagines is 'seduction' mode but MAURICE stands first as LOUISE stops by the table.

LOUISE

I'm not stopping. Just to say,
don't sack Ralph. He can keep the
job. You're absolutely right.

MAURICE

Great. You'll stay for a drink
though, won't you? Celebration?
(TURNING) Sorry lads, back in a
sec. (TO LOUISE) Please rescue me.

VINCENT has stood and is introducing himself.

VINCENT

Can I buy the most beautiful woman
in here a drink?

LOUISE

I don't know. You'd better go to
the Pool room and ask her.

VINCENT

(THROWN)

I like a woman with spirit.

LOUISE

Who are you trying to convince
here, me or you?

MAURICE

Do you see what I mean?

LOUISE

(TO MAURICE)

All right. Just the one then.

MAURICE hastily steers LOUISE away from the table, profoundly relieved.

EDDIE

(DESPAIRING)

Dad!

VINCENT

(PUZZLED)

That's a turn up. She was flirting
with me.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE

She was talking to you.

VINCENT

Yes. That's what I said.

VINCENT still looking over at LOUISE as he takes a drink.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Where was I?

EDDIE

You were going big on the sanctity
of marriage.

VINCENT has drained his glass and hands it to EDDIE without
looking at him.

VINCENT

Oh, yes. Get them in, Eddie. I've
got plenty more where that came
from . . .

EDDIE looks as though he would prefer death.

CUT TO:

66

INT. CONISTON. PUB. NIGHT 5. 20:30.

LOUISE with MAURICE in a different part of the pub.

LOUISE

I've still got it.

MAURICE

Not sure Vincent counts. His wife's
just left him. He'll be shagging
the bar stool before the evening's
out.

LOUISE

Thanks.

MAURICE

Sorry. I didn't mean -

LOUISE waves it away.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

A couple of years ago you told me
something. About Ralph. About you.
You were trying to talk some sense
into me about Joe. And you said,
"He will find his way."

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Shut up. I've told you. I've
changed my mind.

MAURICE

Aren't you at least going to tell
me why?

LOUISE

No.

MAURICE

So just like that? No arguing back?

LOUISE

Now you're really starting to annoy
me.

MAURICE

That's more like it.

She smiles. So does he and we . . .

CUT TO:

67

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 5. 21:10.

ALISON is making a cake. JAMES drifts in to make coffee . . .

ALISON

I hope you like chocolate cake.

JAMES

What?

ALISON

For your leaving party. (BEAT) You
didn't fancy doing one last shift
at the Fellside, then? For old
time's sake?

JAMES

Not really my thing.

ALISON

It doesn't have to be your thing.
It just has to help you make money
so you can do whatever your thing
is. Sorry. I'll stop talking like
James Brown.

JAMES stares at the kettle, waiting for it to boil, praying
for it to boil.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)

This afternoon I stood outside
Joe's school in Manchester and
thought I have been a mother all my
adult life.

JAMES

Right.

ALISON

Can you imagine that?

JAMES

No. Not really.

ALISON

You know what. I'm going to miss
our little chats, James.

ALISON is taking the piss but he doesn't get it.

JAMES

Me too. Me too.

JAMES gets out of there as quickly as he can.

CUT TO:

68

EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. NIGHT 5. 22:05.

LOUISE and MAURICE walk back towards hers.

LOUISE

So aren't you concerned that your
son is out on the pull with
Vincent?

MAURICE

I don't think Eddie sees it like
that. I don't think he has ever
pulled anyone in his life.

LOUISE

I can't think where he gets that
from with you for a role model.

LOUISE takes MAURICE's arm. They have reached LOUISE's
doorstep by now.

MAURICE

Are you taking the piss by any
chance?

LOUISE

You make it pretty easy.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE laughs. They catch each other's smile. She gazes at him. He leans in for a kiss and she kisses him back. She turns to the door, unlocks it. They go inside . . .

CONTINUOUS:

69

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. HALLWAY. NIGHT 5. 22:07.

They kiss, leaning up against the wall, passionate. And then LOUISE breaks away.

LOUISE

No. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm really sorry, Maurice. Don't know what I was thinking.

MAURICE

Is it 'cos Ralph's in. I forgot. I get it.

LOUISE

No. Ralph's out. No, it's me. It's us. This just shouldn't be happening.

MAURICE

Did I just get hold of the wrong end of the stick here?

LOUISE

No. You didn't. But, sorry. I just can't.

MAURICE

Why not?

LOUISE

Because I just can't.

MAURICE

Well, thank you for finding me so irresistible.

LOUISE

Don't be like that.

MAURICE

Like what? Pissed off? Feeling daft? Why not?

MAURICE turns and walks away. He doesn't know whether to be angry or upset.

CUT TO:

70

EXT. SCOTT HOUSE. NIGHT 5. 22:15.

VINCENT is throwing up in the flowerbeds. EDDIE has a half comforting arm on his back.

VINCENT

Oh dear Lord, oh dear Lord.

EDDIE

Not sure the Lord is going to help you right now.

NICOLA comes out of the house.

NICOLA

What are you doing? Did you poison him?

EDDIE

No. Why? Was that the plan?

VINCENT

Just leave me here to die.

EDDIE helps VINCENT through the door.

EDDIE

He said he could hold his drink.

NICOLA

He's a fantasist. You know that!

EDDIE

Which is why I didn't want to go for a drink with him in the first place!

NICOLA

That doesn't absolve you of your responsibilities to keep him sober.

From inside the house VINCENT can be heard vomiting. NICOLA shuts the door. EDDIE looks pissed off - 'What Did He Do Wrong?' He stares at the door for a few moments before stomping away . . .

CUT TO:

71

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT 5. 22:25.

MAURICE is still turning over the night's events, watching football on the TV (we don't see the screen) drinking tea and eating cornflakes from the box when EDDIE comes in.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

(WITHOUT LOOKING UP)

Tea in the pot. Good night in the
end?

EDDIE

Not really. You?

MAURICE

Not really.

EDDIE

Do you want to talk about it?

MAURICE

Not really.

EDDIE takes the cornflakes box from MAURICE and pours some into a bowl, pulls a chair over to watch the telly. The chair he is sitting on is smaller and lower than MAURICE's.

EDDIE

Let me rephrase that. Why didn't you have a good night?

MAURICE

Because, if you must know, I was led, well, I misled myself, like, well, if you went on a run and didn't know the route then you wouldn't be surprised if you got lost, would you?

EDDIE

Thanks for opening up.

They both turn towards the football, eating cereal.

MAURICE

So, do you want to tell me about your night?

EDDIE

(WATCHING THE FOOTBALL)

No. You're all right. It'll keep.

MAURICE nods, doesn't try any harder. EDDIE shifts in his smaller chair and glances at MAURICE.

CUT TO:

72

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. EMILY'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 5. 22:35.

NICOLA looks down at the sleeping EMILY in her bed. She strokes her hair. She is lost in thought and reverie until the sound of Vincent's wretching brings her back to earth.

CUT TO:

73

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 5. 22:40.

PAUL looks in on JOE who is fast asleep in bed.

CUT TO:

74

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 5. 22:42.

ALISON is in bed. A barely awake PAUL enters.

ALISON

How was it?

PAUL

People asked for food. We cooked it. They ate it. They paid. You know, the usual . . . how was Joe on the way back?

ALISON

His home/school book is in the kitchen if you want to read it. . .

PAUL

So he calmed down after they called you in.

ALISON

They didn't call me in. I was worried about him so they invited me in. He got upset when we got there this morning. There was a song on the (radio and) -

PAUL

(INTERRUPTING)

So there wasn't a problem. He's had a good day. That's great. Because he'll have bad days. We can guarantee that.

ALISON

Good you're staying so positive.

PAUL

I just saw Sophie's Mark have a meltdown that'd make your hair curl.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

Joe isn't Mark though, is he?

PAUL

Not yet, he isn't. No.

ALISON

And one of the reasons we've sent him to that school is so he can get help while he's still young.

PAUL

Yes. I'm aware of that.

ALISON

What? Why are you being so... What?

PAUL

Like you say. He's gone to a school where people know what to do with him, can get through to him. Joe. Our Joe. And that's great. And I'm knackered and I'm sure you are too.

PAUL turns off the light. ALISON looks at him for a moment then turns away . . .

HARD CUT TO:

75

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. DAY 6. 06:00.

BANG IN ON ALARM! Both ALISON and PAUL shocked by morning. And a big song kicks in as though it's their alarm . . .

The Jam 'In the City'. It plays across the following montage.

CUT TO:

76

INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/ROADS. DAY 6. 07:35.

ALISON driving, JOE in the back, headphones on, singing.

JOE/THE JAM

"In the City there's a thousand things I want to say to you
But whenever I approach you,
you make me look a fool
I wanna say, I wanna tell you. . ."

CUT TO:

77 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 6. 08:58.**

JOE at the entrance with ALISON, waiting to go in.

CUT TO:

78 **EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 6. 15:02.**

ALISON greeting JOE. He has one more sticker on his sweatshirt.

CUT TO:

79 **INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/ROADSIDE BILLBOARD. DAY 6. 17:20.**

ALISON sits in the car waiting for JOE to come from behind the billboard where he has had a wee.

CUT TO:

79A **EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 6. 18:30.**

ALISON and JOE arrive home.

CUT TO:

80 **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. JOE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 6. 21:30.**

JOE fast asleep in bed.

CUT TO:

81 **INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/ROADS. DAY 7. 07:35.**

ALISON (different clothes, new day) driving, JOE in the back, headphones on, singing along to the guitar bit too . . .

JOE/THE JAM
(GUITAR BIT)
"Dala dala dala dad dam
In the City!
Dala dala dala dad dam
In the City! "

CUT TO:

82

EXT. PEAR TREE PRIMARY SCHOOL. BASE ENTRANCE. DAY 8. 09:00.

ALISON (different clothes, new day again) watching JOE go in to the building. He turns and looks back at her. He doesn't wave. He goes inside.

CUT TO:

83

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 8. 09:30.

MAURICE is working on his figures but keeping an eye on RALPH working with DAVID and PAVEL in the brewhouse, cleaning the tanks. It all looks to be going well.

He looks up a second time to see LOUISE walking through the brewhouse.

CUT TO:

84

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. BREWHOUSE. DAY 8. 09:31.

RALPH looks up from his work to see LOUISE walking towards MAURICE's office and looks pissed off.

CUT TO:

85

INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 8. 09:32.

LOUISE enters.

LOUISE

Have you got five minutes?

MAURICE

I'm kegging, bottling and casking today so what do you think?

RALPH knocks on the door.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Come in, Ralph. Let's make it "Bring Your Mother To Work Day".

RALPH

You don't need to check up on me.

LOUISE

I'm not. I just want to talk to Maurice.

RALPH looks from LOUISE to MAURICE and goes back outside, lingering at the door.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH
(TO MAURICE)
Tell me if you need help.

RALPH shuts the door. MAURICE and LOUISE look at each other and laugh.

LOUISE
Can we talk outside. I've got something to tell you?

MAURICE
Is it, "Bugger off"? 'cos you can do that just as easily in here.

LOUISE
No. It's not.

CUT TO:

86 **EXT. CONISTON. BENCH. DAY 8. 09:45.**

LOUISE sits with MAURICE on a bench - both of them in silence. MAURICE looking stunned.

MAURICE
How long have you known?

LOUISE
I found a lump about six weeks ago. The Doctor sent me for a biopsy. They confirmed I've got a cancerous tumour and they won't know how cancerous the tissue is till they've operated.

MAURICE
When? When are they operating?

LOUISE
Today. I'm on my way there now.

MAURICE
Today? Bloody hell, Louise? Why didn't you tell anybody? Why didn't you tell me?

LOUISE
I just feel stronger with nobody knowing.

MAURICE
Why?

LOUISE
Because it makes me feel weak. And I can't be weak.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE (CONT'D)

And as mad as it sounds the reason
I didn't want Ralph working for you
is that I knew he might say I was
in hospital.

MAURICE

So Ralph knows?

LOUISE

Not that it's cancer, no. And I
knew if you got one whiff of
hospital you'd be steaming in with
twenty questions and a medical
dictionary.

MAURICE

And why would that be such a bad
thing?

LOUISE

Because I don't want anybody to
know. And I don't want anybody
feeling sorry for me. Not even you.
Especially not you.

MAURICE

So what was last night?

LOUISE

A honey trap so you'd come and
bring me a clean nightie and a
Woman's Own . . . Last night was me
wondering if . . . I don't know
what's going to happen, do I? So
that made me feel, just for a
moment, desperate.

MAURICE

Thanks a bunch.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

LOUISE

I'm sorry.

MAURICE

S'alright.

LOUISE

You know what? I'm not sorry. Three
years ago, you lost your wife. The
love of your life. To cancer. And
now you want to jump in feet first
with another woman. With cancer.
Bloody hell, Maurice, never let it
be said you haven't got a type.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Let me help. Low key, you know.
Keeping an eye on Ralph. Bringing
you stuff if you need it. Calming
you down. Cooking the odd meal.
Being on call in the night if the
steroids drive you doolallie.

LOUISE

Do you fancy doing the operation
while you're at it?

MAURICE

Just let me help. At least let me
run you to the hospital . . .

LOUISE

No. No. No. Jesus, Maurice, you're
an irritating sod. (BEAT - GENTLE)
Just stop and think what you'll be
letting yourself in for, hey?
Again. Because I don't know if
anybody is strong enough for that.

MAURICE nods, gets up and heads back towards the brewery.
LOUISE watches him go, and we see something in her that is
softer, that wants him to come back and look after her.

CUT TO:

87

EXT. CONISTON. STREET. DAY 8. 09:55.

MAURICE walks back towards the brewery. Trying to take this
in . . .

CUT TO:

88

EXT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. YARD. DAY 8. 09:57.

MAURICE walks past RALPH and DAVID and PAVEL rolling casks
back towards the brewhouse. He stops and watches them for a
while, still turning the conversation over.

CUT TO:

88A

EXT. ROAD/ALISON'S CAR. DAY 8. 16:35.

ALISON driving back from Manchester with JOE in the back.

JOE (V.O.)

I don't need a wee, do I?

CUT TO:

88B EXT. BILLBOARD/LAYBY. DAY 8. 16:38.

ALISON waits in the car, watches JOE emerge from behind the billboard and run back towards the car. She tries to start the car as he is getting in. A dying engine groans.

Tries again. Turns over. Nothing.

Tries again. Dead as fuck.

Out on ALISON, sighs and we . . .

CUT TO:

89 INT. SCOTT'S BREWERY. OFFICE. DAY 8. 16:40.

MAURICE sits in his office, preoccupied, watching DAVID and PAVEL joking and laughing with RALPH as they work. He looks at the clock - again - wondering where Louise is up to . . . He takes out his phone to text or call and to his surprise it springs into life. He checks it. ALISON's name appears.

CUT TO:

90 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 8. 16:41.

ALISON is by the car with the bonnet up. JOE is in the car with his headphones on.

ALISON

The battery died on me. Not turning over at all. Bring your jump leads . . . And put your foot down.

CUT TO:

91 INT/EXT. ALISON'S CAR/BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 8. 16:50.

ALISON and JOE sit in the back seat side by side. It is quiet and calm for the first time this week. ALISON is looking through his home/school book and alights on a line from today's diary.

ALISON

Did you make cheese straws today?

JOE

Rattlesnakes.

ALISON

Lloyd Cole and the Commotions.
1984.

JOE

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

So where's my cheese straw?

JOE

I didn't eat it, did I?

While she is talking ALISON takes a page from the newspaper and starts to fold it into a paper hat - origami style.

ALISON

Where's yours?

JOE

I didn't eat it, did I?

JOE watches ALISON folding the newspaper.

JOE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

ALISON

Making a hat in case we are stranded here.

JOE nods, accepting this. ALISON hands him a sheet of newspaper too.

ALISON (CONT'D)

That's it. Fold it like me. That's it.

CUT TO:

92

INT. ALISON'S CAR/BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 8. 16:55.

JOE and ALISON sit side by side with newspaper hats on. They look at each other. ALISON smiling, JOE deadly serious.

CUT TO:

93

EXT. BILLBOARD/LAYBY. DAY 8. 17:35.

MAURICE driving towards the car where JOE is standing with the illuminated Warning Triangle. He is facing the road, a solemn look on his face, the newspaper hat still on. ALISON, also still hatted, crosses to meet an agitated MAURICE who is agitated as he gets out of the car.

MAURICE

What's wrong with ringing Paul?
What've you got on your head?

ALISON

I couldn't get hold of him. And he needs to be there for the party.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

I can't be bailing you out every
five minutes, you know.

ALISON

One lift?

CUT TO:

94

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 8. 18:05.

ALISON parks up with MAURICE behind her. JOE and MAURICE get out of Maurice's car and ALISON gets out of hers. They walk up to the house which has a homemade 'CONGRATULATIONS AND BON VOYAGE' banner above the door and two 'Congratulations' balloons attached to the railings.

MAURICE

So we're still humouring the happy
couple? Pair of daft kids?

ALISON

Let's just go along with it, shall
we?

MAURICE

No sign of a ring, then? From Mr
Dreamboat?

They head inside . . .

CONTINUOUS:

94A

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN. DAY 8. 18:06.

MAURICE, ALISON and JOE enter to find NICOLA, EDDIE, REBECCA, JAMES and PAUL already with drinks in hand. The cake and some sandwiches on the table.

PAUL

All right, Superstar! Look at you.
More stickers than sweatshirt on
that top!

PAUL gives JOE a hug.

ALISON

Joe's done a painting. About his
new school.

PAUL

Has he now? Let's have a look.

ALISON pulls a painting from JOE's reading folder and everyone gathers round. JAMES and REBECCA look on, holding hands, JAMES slightly put out.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

(TO PAUL)

Alternator in case you're interested. Going to need a new one. Where were you when she was calling?

PAUL

Here. Putting the finishing touches to this breathtaking display . . .

PAUL points with mock pride at the slightly wonky iced cake as he unfurls JOE's painting and lays it out on the table.

Joe's painting is three pictures in one: a stick child with other stick children (helpfully labelled 'School' in Teacher's writing underneath, then Joe's attempt to write School under that), a stick child in a car (labelled 'Car', etc) and a stick child on a bed (labelled 'Bed', etc). And under that, some of JOE's barely legible writing.

MAURICE

School. Car. Bed. (TO JOE) Yep.
You've nailed that, sunshine.

JOE drifts off to the sofa.

ALISON

Dad.

PAUL

What's he written underneath, hey?

MAURICE

(LEANING FORWARD)

'Help Me.'

ALISON

Ha. Ha.

From time to time we pick up JAMES on the edge of this, looking on. This is supposed to be a party for him and REBECCA but it isn't working out that way.

ALISON (CONT'D)

(TO MAURICE)

It was never going to be easy. We knew that.

MAURICE

Seems to me like you didn't know it enough.

ALISON

There are people who have to wait years to get what we've got for Joe.

MAURICE

What's that? Somewhere he spends half his life in a car and the other half under a desk if what Paul tells me is anything to go by.

ALISON shoots PAUL a look - PAUL avoids her eye.

ALISON

Nobody's saying the journey is easy.

EDDIE

(STEPPING IN)

If you want to stay over with Joe a couple of nights a week at mine. If that helps. You know . . . the offer's there.

MAURICE

Stay over with you? Won't the other students mind?

EDDIE

Dad. It's not a student house. It's my house. My flat. I'm a lecturer, not a student.

ALISON

Really, Eddie? That'd be a great help. Wouldn't it?

PAUL

Yeah. Maybe I could stop over one night a week as well. Thursdays, maybe?

EDDIE

Yes. You could, yeah.

(ALREADY SLIGHTLY REGRETTING THIS)

If it would help. Just till you sorted yourself out, like, yeah.

MAURICE looks at EDDIE, shrugs. Soft touch.

ALISON

No need to look so worried. Just until he settles less travelling would really help. Won't be permanent.

EDDIE

And what happens after he settles?

PAUL

Then it'll be permanent. I'm joking.

EDDIE
I'm laughing inside.

ALISON
Come on. We'd be company for you.

EDDIE
Who says I need company?

ALISON
Really. Something you want to tell us?

EDDIE
No.

NICOLA looks sharply over at this information.

REBECCA
If I learn to drive, I could do a night. Give you two some time off.

On JAMES - 'What the fuck'?

ALISON heads into the kitchen carrying Joe's painting. NICOLA and PAUL follow her. ALISON pins the painting to the noticeboard.

NICOLA
It'd be a big change for Joe, staying with Eddie, wouldn't it?

ALISON
(AS MUCH TO PAUL AS TO NICOLA)
At least we'll get to spend time with him. As it is he doesn't see Paul at all, and all he sees of me is the back of my head. This afternoon, when the car broke down, we just . . . for the first time in a week we just messed about. And I thought. I miss this. And so does he.

And now EDDIE and MAURICE enter the kitchen, helping themselves to another beer each from the ice-filled sink. REBECCA also enters during the below.

NICOLA
(OF ALISON AND PAUL)
What about you two? You'll never see each other. Living 100 miles apart for most of the week.

PAUL
(FLAT)
94.5.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

We never see each other now. And when we do I'm knackered from driving. At least this way we can make the most of the time when we are together.

MAURICE

Say that often enough and you might start believing it.

EDDIE

Maybe some nights you could bring Emily to me. Joe loves her. It'll help him settle and it'd be nice to have her with me in Manchester. Makes sense, hey, Nicola?

NICOLA

Does it?

EDDIE slightly puzzled by this response. ALISON turns to MAURICE who is checking his phone, preoccupied.

ALISON

I tell you what, Dad. If you want to help, you could do worse than give Rebecca driving lessons.

REBECCA

Really! Would you! That'd be great.

MAURICE

I'm not sure I've got the time. I've a lot on right now.

ALISON

Like what?

MAURICE

I just can't commit to a regular time and place. All right! You're not the only one with responsibilities, you know!

ALISON is surprised by the vehemence of this, even by MAURICE standards more angry than rude. A silence, then a fire alarm goes off. EDDIE looks at NICOLA and they dash out, followed closely by ALISON, PAUL, REBECCA and finally MAURICE.

ALISON

(SMILES)

See what happens when you get angry, Dad.

But MAURICE isn't laughing. As everybody has gone we pick up the two remaining figures side by side on the sofa in silence. JAMES and JOE - and a table of untouched food.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 8. 18:10.

NICOLA and EDDIE dash to the Scott house. PAUL, ALISON and REBECCA come out too but ALISON is distracted by the sight of MAURICE striding to his car, half-running, checking his phone. There is no sign of fire - the alarm still squealing.

CUT TO:

96 INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN. DAY 8. 18:11.

NICOLA, EDDIE and REBECCA enter to find VINCENT in the kitchen - one hand helicoptering a tea towel to try and disperse the smoke, a can of beer in the other hand.

NICOLA

Open some windows.

REBECCA

I'll check on Emily.

REBECCA runs upstairs. EDDIE stops the alarm and then takes the smoking pan from the hob and pours cold water into it.

VINCENT

It was Nicola's favourite.

EDDIE

Unless her favourite is burnt shit and pan then I'm not sure that's true.

NICOLA

Don't try and lighten things up with attempts at humour, Eddie.

EDDIE

'Attempts' at humour?

VINCENT

I thought it would be a nice surprise!

NICOLA

A nice surprise would be if you were sitting here with your suitcase waiting for your taxi to arrive. That, Dad! Would be a nice surprise!

REBECCA

(RETURNING)

She slept through the whole thing.
She's incredible.

Then REBECCA realises that she has walked into a row and is kind of trapped here.

VINCENT

Okay. Here's the deal. If you tell me you don't want to get back together with Eddie then I will leave. Right now. Tonight.

NICOLA hesitates. VINCENT looks interested. EDDIE confused. REBECCA mortified.

NICOLA

I don't want to get back together with Eddie.

VINCENT

I don't believe you. I'm staying.

VINCENT heads up the stairs. A silence between EDDIE and NICOLA.

CUT TO:

97

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 8. 18:15.

JAMES comes out of the Hughes House. He looks pissed off. He leans on the railings and looks out . . . then is suddenly aware of somebody beside him. He looks down and sees JOE. JOE looks up at him.

JOE

I don't want those balloons, do I?

JAMES unties the balloon strings - JOE looking at him throughout - then hands the balloons to JOE. Still looking at JAMES, JOE lets them go. He and JAMES watch the balloons float up away into the air. It's almost a connection.

CUT TO:

98

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 8. 18:25.

EDDIE is decanting EMILY's stuff on to the table, beaker with lid, bowl, spoon, raggy, etc. He scrambles about in the bag for something more.

NICOLA

What've you lost?

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE
Thought my iPod was in here.

Another silence.

NICOLA
What Dad said. When he asked that question about us. And I hesitated.

EDDIE
You don't need to say anything.
It's all right.

More silence. Then something needs to be said.

NICOLA
I hesitated because I don't know. I don't know . . . (BEAT) Whether it might be worth thinking about (BEAT) Trying to get back together. (BEAT) Again.

EDDIE
(SMILES)
Yet again.

EDDIE leans towards her. Their foreheads touch. He closes his eyes. He so wants to feel this but can he?

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I'm seeing someone. Sort of.
Started to. Not seeing exactly.

NICOLA
You're seeing someone.

EDDIE
Yes.

NICOLA
That figures. I thought you'd forgiven me. I couldn't work out why.

They move apart and we . . .

CUT TO:

98A INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 8. 18:30.

REBECCA and JAMES side by side, eating cake in silence.

REBECCA
I'm guessing you're pissed off about something or you don't like chocolate cake. And I know you like chocolate cake. So?

(CONTINUED)

JAMES
Driving lessons?

REBECCA
They're going to need some help.

JAMES
We're supposed to be leaving.

REBECCA
Come on. You can see how it is with Joe at the moment. All hands on deck. Another few weeks isn't going to kill us, is it?

JAMES
We're supposed to be going down to London. I've got a job lined up in a recording studio. Right now.

REBECCA
No, you haven't. You've got the phone number of a recording studio where a friend of a friend brews up.

JAMES
Don't you see what's happening here?

REBECCA
No. Why don't you tell me what's happening here.

JAMES
When I met you, you were Rebecca. Here. You're just Joe's sister. Your family are sucking you back in.

REBECCA
My family? Who just laid on a party for us in case you didn't notice.

JAMES
For us? Really? 'cos nobody actually mentioned us.

REBECCA
What were you expecting? A red carpet and a mirror ball.

JAMES
Fine. I'm not going to get stuck here, Rebecca, even if you are.

CUT TO:

99

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. NIGHT 8. 19:45.

MAURICE in the hospital. He runs up some stairs, and then along a corridor, looking for the right ward . . .

CUT TO:

100

INT. HOSPITAL. WARD. NIGHT 8. 19:50.

MAURICE, clutching a bag, heads onto a ward and spots LOUISE sitting up on a bed in a hospital gown. She watches MAURICE walk towards her. This is all she needs.

MAURICE

How was it? How you feeling?

LOUISE

I'm waiting for the Consultant to sign me off and then I've got a taxi booked.

MAURICE

Well, car's outside and I've paid for the parking now. And I thought, you know, if they decided to keep you in, you might need -

(RE CONTENTS OF BAG)

Moisturiser. Lipsalve. Wet wipes. Water spray. Fruit. And I borrowed Eddie's iPod. I downloaded some audiobooks on it. He won't mind. Take it anyway. Even if you don't need it tonight. And a lift is better . . . after what you've had.

LOUISE holds up her hand to get him to stop.

LOUISE

This is you being low key, is it?

MAURICE

I want to help, Louise. If you'll let me. If you can put up with me.

LOUISE is going through the bag and pulls out a half-eaten sausage roll in a torn plastic wrapper.

LOUISE

This'll come in handy.

MAURICE quickly takes it back, then slides it in his pocket. LOUISE reaches for his hand and holds it. He sits down beside her. They sit there holding hands. Awkward, not quite at compatible heights and we . . .

CUT TO:

100A **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 8. 19:55.**

JOE is staring at the largely untouched party food on the table. The cake with two pieces missing at the centre of the uneaten crisps, sandwiches, pizza slices, etc.

PAUL enters, crosses and picks up a pizza slice. He is about to eat it when he has an idea. He turns to JOE.

PAUL

Come on . . .

Out on JOE, looking at PAUL and we . . .

CUT TO:

101 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROADSIDE. NIGHT 8. 20:30.**

PAUL, JOE and ALISON are lying on a picnic blanket staring up at the stars, the detritus of an improvised picnic based on the leftovers around them, including a couple of slices of the leaving cake, thermos, etc. JOE with headphones on.

The song on JOE's headphones - Edwyn Collins, 'North of Heaven' - can be heard behind the dialogue.

ALISON

You know what the teachers say about Joe at his new school? He's got a spiky profile.

PAUL

Like Bart Simpson?

ALISON

It means he's autistic in some ways and not in others. Spiky profile. It's good, isn't it?

PAUL

Well, I prefer it to autistic.
(BEAT) We're going to be all right, aren't we?

ALISON

We are having a picnic in the dark, with our seven year old son. What makes you think we're not going to be all right?

They look at the stars in silence.

PAUL

We're going to have to be good to each other. You and me. When we see each other.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

We're going to have to talk a lot.

PAUL

Together and alone.

ALISON

We're going to have to have a lot
of sex.

PAUL

Again. Together and alone.

ALISON punches him on the shoulder.

JOE/EDWYN COLLINS

"Things can only get better
What's around the corner, who can
tell?
I'll build a little place just
north of heaven"

EDWYN COLLINS

"I'm kinda tired of living south of
hell."

ALISON

You know what I think. I think we
chose Joe and Joe chose us and that
happened for a reason. Because we
can do this . . . everything else
is just so much bullshit.

PAUL

Ah ha.

ALISON

So you agree with me now? That he's
our North Star.

PAUL

It wasn't necessarily that kind of
"Ah ha."

ALISON

See. Now that's the North Star.

PAUL

(PEERING UP)

No. That's a plane too.

ALISON

That. What about that?

Silence. PAUL stares up again.

PAUL
Another plane. That's another
plane.

ALISON laughs, the music swells up, they all look up.

END OF EPISODE