

THE A WORD

SERIES 2

Episode Four

SHOOTING SCRIPT

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1 **EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 12. 08:00.**

JOE is riding his bike with stabilisers, helmet on, steady but slow. REBECCA is walking with him, carrying Joe's iPod, which is connected to a little round animal speaker. JOE is singing. REBECCA is singing. 'Don't Sit Down 'Cause I've Moved Your Chair' by Arctic Monkeys.

JOE/REBECCA/ARCTIC MONKEYS

"Break a mirror
Roll the dice
Run with scissors
through a chip pan fire fight
Go into business with a grizzly bear
But just don't sit down 'cause I've
moved your chair . . ."

The music bleeds into the following scenes . . .

CUT TO:

2 **INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. DAY 12. 08:05.**

ALISON wakes up, gets out of bed, exits the room without a glance back at PAUL. PAUL watches her go, lost in thought for a moment then, businesslike, gets up himself.

CUT TO:

3 **EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 08:10.**

Early morning at the 'High Tarn Fell Race' - a village event with a fell run as its centrepiece.

This all set up on the grounds around the Gastropub. The coffee hatch might open later but the Gastropub itself is closed now.

A few stallholders putting stalls together and MAURICE is putting up a beer tent with DAVID and PAVEL. MAURICE is wearing a tracksuit, clearly going to run at some stage. His phone goes. He answers it.

MAURICE

Hello? (THROWN) What? Oh. Yeah.
I'll be right there. I'm coming
now!

MAURICE starts to rush away from the site without explanation.

CUT TO:

4 **EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. DAY 12. 08:30.******THIS SCENE HAS BEEN SHOT****

RALPH opens the door. MAURICE rushes in as though he is the fourth emergency service.

CONTINUOUS:

5 **INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. LANDING. DAY 12. 08:31.**

MAURICE arrives at the bathroom door - he is tentative, given that the last time they spoke, Louise accused him of using her to get his own back on God. From inside we can hear LOUISE being sick. MAURICE knocks on the door.

MAURICE

Louise. It's Maurice. Are you okay
in there?

A silence, then LOUISE opens the door and looks at MAURICE. She looks like death.

LOUISE

Thank you for coming. I panicked.

MAURICE

That's all right. You're allowed.

LOUISE looks at MAURICE and starts to feel a second puke coming on, rushes back to the toilet.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I know I'm no oil painting but
that's a bit rough.

LOUISE doesn't laugh. MAURICE stays put, he turns and sees RALPH holding a bucket and cloth.

CUT TO:

6 **INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. BATHROOM. DAY 12. 08:38.**

MAURICE is cleaning up the bathroom with bleach, marigolds on. A man possessed. At last he has something practical and solid he can do and he is doing it well.

MAURICE

I'll drop off some ginger. And
peppermint tea bags. Might help
with this if you're off the
steroids.

LOUISE is sitting on the bathroom floor.

(CONTINUED)

LOUISE

Thanks.

MAURICE scrubs on.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Is Ralph there?

MAURICE

He was just in the hall, shall I go
and get him?

LOUISE

No, no, no. I don't want him seeing
me like this.

MAURICE considers this for a moment.

MAURICE

Any chance I can borrow him for the
day? I've got this beer tent that
needs an extra pair of hands.

LOUISE

That'd be great. Yes. Thank you,
Maurice.

MAURICE nods, LOUISE looks up. She knows he is doing her a
good turn and for once it's the right good turn.

CUT TO:

7

INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/LOUISE'S HOUSE. DAY 12. 08:45.

****THIS SCENE HAS BEEN SHOT****

MAURICE is driving along parallel to RALPH walking as quickly
as he can away from him, MAURICE has the car window down.

MAURICE

I need your help, mate.

RALPH walks on, not looking at MAURICE.

RALPH

I'm not a baby.

MAURICE

Nobody's saying you are. Look, I've
got a busy day.

RALPH

I've got a busy day.

MAURICE

I need a hand. I've overcommitted.
Like usual.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Just give me the morning. Hey?
There's a fry up in it.

RALPH hesitates, MAURICE slows down and we . . .

CUT TO:

8

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 12. 08:50.

ALISON is on the laptop, PAUL is staring at the kettle as it boils. Both dressed. REBECCA enters with a holdall and bangs it down on the kitchen table.

ALISON

Are you going somewhere?

REBECCA

No. You two are. I've packed for you. Eddie's lending you his flat. All you have to do is get in the car. So go on. Get out.

PAUL turns, exchanges a look of puzzlement with ALISON.

ALISON

Lovely idea but Paul's got the Fell Race at the Gastropub today and we've got a 25-page assessment form to fill in for Joe's school - (and that's going to take some doing...)

REBECCA

(INTERRUPTING)

The Fell Race is outside the Gastropub, not in it, and I can manage a form. I know Joe off by heart and Nicola loves filling in questions.

ALISON

Nicola?

REBECCA

We're looking after Joe together. You've got no excuses left. Now go.

PAUL

It's really sweet of you love but -

REBECCA

'But' nothing. Are you seriously telling me there isn't a problem? I've noticed it so you can bet Joe's noticed it. And you never see each other anymore so now's your chance.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

REBECCA (CONT'D)

It's only Eddie's flat but it's all
I could think of . . . go on!

PAUL

Relationship advice from an 19 year-old
with a three week broken
engagement to her name?

REBECCA

Be good for my shattered self-esteem
if you said yes.REBECCA picks up the bag and is physically pushing them out
of the door. JOE, curious, follows them out, and joins in on
the pushing by pushing REBECCA as they exit.

CONTINUOUS:

9

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 12. 08:52.JOE pushing REBECCA who pushes PAUL and ALISON out of the
door as EDDIE is arriving at the Scott House.

EDDIE

Is this a private conga or can
anyone join in?

ALISON

Eddie. Thanks for offering us your
flat. That's very sweet of you.

EDDIE

As long as you strip the bed and
don't go in my special bedside
drawer . . .

ALISON

We're not going. You need your flat
for you and Emily.

EDDIE

No. Emily is going to meet Holly
for the first time this weekend so
we'll be staying at hers.

PAUL

A sleepover? At your girlfriend's?
Are you sure you're ready to take
it to the next level?

ALISON

What if it doesn't work out? You'll
need a bolt hole.

EDDIE

Your faith in me is very touching.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

You done your 'Seduction Playlist'
on your iPod yet?

EDDIE

No comment.

PAUL

Has Holly got a compatible hub?

EDDIE

Hilarious. Now get going, you crazy
kids!

NICOLA has come out of the house with baby EMILY.

ALISON

You're in on this too?

NICOLA

All REBECCA's idea. She wants you
to go.

ALISON

Is she planning a party? Is that
what this is about?

NICOLA

No. She's worried about you. Should
she be?

ALISON turns back and looks at REBECCA and we . . .

CUT TO:

10

EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 12. 08:53.

ALISON and PAUL drive away. EDDIE, NICOLA, REBECCA, JOE and
EMILY wave.

CUT TO:

11

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 12. 08:58.

EDDIE is gathering up Emily's things. JOE is in the corner,
alongside EMILY. EMILY is playing with some plastic rings
which are part of a stacking toy. She is animated, engaged,
interested. JOE, by contrast, is still - running his finger
along the spine of one of EMILY's books, treating it as an
object, not something to read. NICOLA crosses to JOE with a
chart she has written up, with pictures mapping out the day's
events.

NICOLA

All right, Joe. Today is going to
be different but it's all on here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICOLA (CONT'D)

We will have some breakfast. Go to the playground. Then we will go to the fell race and see Grandad run! Then we will choose a film and we will have fish and chips and all watch it together at yours. How does that sound?

JOE

'Lust For Life'.

REBECCA

Iggy Pop. 1977.

JOE

Baby Emily will have fish and chips.

A look from EDDIE to NICOLA.

EDDIE

Sorry about that, Joe. I'm whisking this one away. But she'll see you soon.

JOE turns away, starts to run his finger along the table or a shelf - not madly upset but just distant.

NICOLA

(IN EXPLANATION)

Emily is going to meet Eddie's Manchester girlfriend.

EDDIE

She's got a name. She's called Holly.

REBECCA

(TEASING)

Who? Your Manchester girlfriend?

REBECCA puts Joe's school assessment questionnaire down in front of NICOLA.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I'll do motor skills and you do emotional development.

EDDIE

I'd go the other way round if I were you. (TO NICOLA) Is this for another of your public speaking engagements?

NICOLA

It's a questionnaire for Joe's new school. I thought you were in a hurry to get away.

EDDIE is putting baby EMILY's coat on, having the usual trouble finding her arms in her sleeves.

EDDIE

Ask me one before I go.

NICOLA

It's a psychological profile, not a pub quiz. (READING) Does your child have difficulty making friends?

REBECCA

No. Not really. He's just choosy.

NICOLA

Would you say your child is clumsy?

REBECCA

Yes.

EDDIE

Yes for me, too.

NICOLA

Can your child dress himself without prompts?

EDDIE is looking at EMILY who has the coat on back to front.

REBECCA

That's a 'Yes' for Joe and a 'No' for Eddie.

EDDIE takes the coat off EMILY to start again.

EDDIE

Let me have a look.

(TAKING THE QUESTIONNAIRE)

Does he indulge in perfectionist behaviour, obsessive behaviour, repetitive behaviour? "Yes" - but only when filling in this form.

(CHUCKS THE FORM BACK AT

NICOLA)

There's stuff there he might not have tried so, what, he just scores a 'No'? That's like saying am I good at pole vaulting? Well, how would I know that? I've never had to find out.

REBECCA

If I was going to make a guess, though . . .

NICOLA

(READING FORM)

Bedwetting?

EDDIE

Usually straight after pole vaulting.

NICOLA

Aren't you going to be late?

Then EDDIE sees the next section about skills acquired.

EDDIE

Skills. This is more like it. Catching balls, running, cycling, swimming, dressing, stair climbing. We'll get ticks in half these boxes by lunchtime.

NICOLA

It's not a bucket list, Eddie. That isn't how it works. It's a snapshot.

EDDIE

Exactly. A snapshot of all the things he can't do. Let's change some of that. Right Joe! Would you like to ride that bike without stabilisers?

JOE doesn't respond. EDDIE crosses to him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Joe. Would you like to ride a bike? Properly. Without stabilisers. Hey?

JOE

Would you like to ride a bike?

EDDIE

I'm taking that as a "Yes". And tick the "communicates clearly his needs and desires" box while you're at it . . .

EDDIE heading out and we . . .

CUT TO:

12

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 12. 09:30.

The usual stopping point on Joe's school journey.

PAUL

I don't need a wee, do I?

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

Do you want to turn back? Because we can. If you think this is a bad idea.

PAUL

Do you want to turn back?

ALISON

Don't do that.

PAUL

Eddie's flat is hardly a break for you, is it?

ALISON

We promised each other we'd be all right when Joe moved schools. And now we're avoiding each other when we are together and not talking when we're not. We can carry on like that or we can do something about it. So do you want to do something about it? Yes or No?

PAUL

Let me see now . . .

ALISON

Taking the piss is not an option.

She's not joking. PAUL looks at her, starts the car and drives away and we . . .

CUT TO:

13

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB - RACE SITE. BEER TENT. DAY 12.
09:35.

MAURICE and RALPH setting up the beer tent. RALPH's phone beeps with a text.

MAURICE

(GENTLE)

Is that your Mum? Is she feeling better?

RALPH

It's not my Mum.

But RALPH offers nothing more, carries on loading crates.

MAURICE

Thing is about your Mum. She's all over the place. It's the drugs, not her, that's talking half the time.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH

I know.

MAURICE

She doesn't know her own mind so
how we're supposed to know . . .

RALPH

I know.

MAURICE

Well, with due respect, you don't
know. I've been through it before.

RALPH

I'm not a child. I understand.

MAURICE

You can't, Ralph. I mean I hardly
understand so God knows how you do.

RALPH gives him a filthy look and walks away.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Ralph! Sorry, that came out wrong.
I didn't mean. Ralph!

But RALPH keeps walking.

CUT TO:

14

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 12. 10:20.

The school playground - perfect for teaching a child to ride a bike.

EDDIE is taking the stabilisers off the bike while JOE waits, with his helmet on, headphones round his neck.

NICOLA (on the grass, or similar) has put EMILY on a mat with some toys - a plastic tea set and a small 'handbag' with a teddy and two plastic stacking rings.

EDDIE

Are you sure this is the right way
to go about it?

Both NICOLA and REBECCA are filming this moment for posterity on their phones.

NICOLA

(FILMING)

You must never surprise the child by presenting them with their bike suddenly with no stabilisers. You let him see you remove them, he can process the change.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE puts the stabilisers on the ground and beckons JOE over to the bike.

EDDIE

Okay, Joe. Let's make history.

JOE crosses to the bike but picks up the stabilisers instead, fascinated, then heads back to where EMILY is sitting. He sits down next to her. NICOLA and REBECCA amused.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Well, that's well and truly processed.

CUT TO:

15

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 12. 10:28.

EDDIE is holding the back of the bike seat, JOE is sitting on the bike now, helmet on, his hand on EDDIE's head.

EDDIE

Okay, Joe. Let go of my head and pedal. Let go and pedal.

EDDIE is holding the back of the seat. JOE lets go. Doesn't pedal. EDDIE holds him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Off you go.

JOE uses EDDIE to climb off the bike, holding EDDIE's head and then getting down and heading back to EMILY.

NICOLA

Your fault that time, ambiguous phrase use: "Off You Go".

EDDIE

There's a bike helmet in the car, Rebecca. I feel a positive role model is needed.

REBECCA heads off to EDDIE's car (unseen). EDDIE and NICOLA look down at JOE, alongside EMILY and her toys. EMILY is playing with the toy tea set. It's all a bit clumsy but she's engaged with it. JOE, by contrast, has a toy teapot hanging from his finger and is slowly rotating it with his other hand, fascinated by the movement.

NICOLA

Talking of "Off You Go" . . .

NICOLA taps her watch.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE
I'll give it till lunchtime. This
will do the trick.

As she's heading to the car, REBECCA turns and looks at NICOLA and EDDIE watching JOE and EMILY - looking like a family. Smiles to herself and . . .

CUT TO:

16

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 12. 10:35.

JOE, a juice with a straw, watches EDDIE, now with a helmet on, cycling in circles on Joe's bike. NICOLA and REBECCA filming EDDIE, both amused.

EDDIE
See. Just keep pedalling. Just keep
pedalling and the bike will take
care of you. Yeah?

JOE nods. But it's not clear whether he follows.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
You see. Do you want a go? Hey?

JOE stands and stares.

CUT TO:

17

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 12. 10:39.

JOE has his bike upside down and is pedalling the pedal with his hand as fast as it will go, delighting in the speed with which the wheel is rotating. EDDIE, REBECCA and NICOLA look on - NICOLA filming some of this on her phone.

REBECCA
Is this him still processing, or
telling us he doesn't want to ride
a bike?

EDDIE looks at REBECCA, NICOLA tries not to smile.

EDDIE
What else is on the list?

NICOLA looks down at the list.

NICOLA
Swimming. Throwing balls. Hopping.

EDDIE
Hopping? Where's that going to get
him in life? Unless the Beatrix
Potter Museum is hiring.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE watches JOE with the bike.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
I'll have him doing wheelies by tea
time.

EDDIE's phone beeps. He checks the text - starts to reply.
NICOLA and REBECCA exchange a look and we . . .

CUT TO:

18 INT. EDDIE'S FLAT. DAY 12. 11:05.

ALISON and PAUL arrive at Eddie's flat. ALISON busies
herself, puts the kettle on. PAUL puts the bag down on the
kitchen table.

PAUL

Okay?

ALISON

Okay.

PAUL

What do we do now?

ALISON

Anything we like.

PAUL

Yeah. But what do we do now?

They kiss. And it feels a bit forced. Or just not right.

ALISON

We could go out.

PAUL

(BIT TOO EAGER)

True. True. We could.

ALISON spots a few of Joe's things (eg. a sock, a T-shirt,
plastic figure, an exercise book) lying around and starts to
tidy them up. PAUL dials a number on his phone.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'll just call Eddie, let them know
we arrived. (ON PHONE) Hiya, Eddie.
Arrived. Everything all right, your
end? (NEEDLESSLY TO ALISON) Bike
pump? Yeah there should be one in
the shed. Yeah. Yeah. Great. Great.
Thanks, Eddie. No everything's
fine. Found your porn movies.
Lovely.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAUL (CONT'D)

The home-made stuff particularly
strong. Yeah. Bye. Bye. Cheers.

ALISON

What was that about?

PAUL

Eddie is teaching Joe to ride a
bike without stabilisers.

ALISON

I'd like to see that.

PAUL

Me too. Last time I tried to take
his stabilisers off he sat and
barked like a dog till I put them
back on. Shall we warn Eddie or is
it more fun if he finds out for
himself?

ALISON

We're talking about Joe already.
How long has that taken us?

PAUL

We're banned from talking about
Joe?

ALISON takes an electronic timer from one of the kitchen
cabinets and places it on the table between them. Sets it to
'5 minutes'.

ALISON

Five minutes.

PAUL

If you've set that for sex then
I'll need to unpack my inhaler.

ALISON

We are going to sit here and talk.
But not about the kids. Or work.
Just for five minutes. All right?

PAUL

All right.

ALISON starts the timer. They both stare at it for a moment.
Silence. Tension rising as they try to think of things to
say. After about fifteen seconds PAUL looks at ALISON.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I wonder if he's taken the
stabilisers off yet.

ALISON
(LOOKING AT THE TIMER)
Fifteen seconds.

PAUL
Closer to twenty.

ALISON
Maybe five minutes was over
ambitious.

PAUL
It's the timer.

ALISON
Come on. We can do this. We're
Alison and Paul. The Golden Couple.

PAUL
Nobody ever called us the "Golden
Couple".

They both stare at the timer again.

ALISON
Shall we go out for a coffee first?

PAUL
Yeah. Let's do that.

PAUL breaks away, again a little too eagerly. ALISON notices this, tries not to feel hurt.

CUT TO:

19

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 11:10.

MAURICE and RALPH finishing setting up the beer tent as a bouncy castle is inflated in the background.

MAURICE
Earlier on. When I said you
couldn't understand what I couldn't
understand.

RALPH
It doesn't matter.

MAURICE
I didn't mean. It was because
you're her son. It wasn't because
you're, like . . .

RALPH
Downs.

(CONTINUED)

RALPH checks his phone, keeps looking at it as MAURICE is talking.

MAURICE

Right. Yes. The thing is with being a Mum or Dad, you always think of your kids as kids. You always want to look out for them and although they grow up they never . . .

MAURICE finally notices that RALPH isn't listening.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Bloody hell! Am I talking to myself here? Have you got a hot date or something?

RALPH

Yes.

MAURICE

Oh. Right. I see. Sorry. When do you have to go?

RALPH

I don't. She's coming here.

MAURICE

Great. So I'll get to meet her, will I?

RALPH looks at MAURICE, over his glasses, "No".

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, son, I won't embarrass you.

RALPH

No. You won't.

RALPH concentrates on the job, frowning. MAURICE smiles to himself.

MAURICE

How did you meet?

RALPH

At the karaoke.

MAURICE

Right. Right. It was your singing she fell for, was it?

RALPH doesn't reply. MAURICE can't help himself.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE (CONT'D)
(SINGING - 10CC)
"I'm not in love, So don't forget
it, It's just a silly phase I'm
going through . . ."

He laughs at his own joke. RALPH allows himself a smile.

CUT TO:

20

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 12. 11:15.

EDDIE has the bike upside down again while he attaches a piece of cardboard to the spokes so that when he turns the wheel it makes a 'flicker' sound which the young and impressionable may believe resembles a motorbike. NICOLA and REBECCA watching from a bench. NICOLA notices REBECCA check her phone.

NICOLA
Anyone special?

REBECCA
No. Just haven't heard anything
from Mum and Dad.

NICOLA
That's good, isn't it?

JOE seems very taken with the cardboard flicker. He turns to EDDIE and smiles.

EDDIE
Hey? How about that? Hey?

JOE
Semaphore Signals.

EDDIE
No. It's not a question. When
somebody says, "How about that?"
it's not a real question.

JOE
Wreckless Eric. 1977.

CUT TO:

21

EXT. MILLCROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL. PLAYGROUND. DAY 12. 11:19.

EDDIE is running alongside JOE holding the back of the bike seat. JOE is pedalling, the cardboard making its wonderful clicking sound.

(CONTINUED)

RAMESH and BILL have arrived at the playground, both on their bikes, BILL not just helmeted but wearing elbow pads and knee pads and a luminous vest despite the fact it is broad daylight. REBECCA and NICOLA watching with EMILY.

REBECCA

Eddie doesn't want to leave.

NICOLA

He's surprisingly determined when he puts his mind to it.

REBECCA

I don't think the bike is the reason he's staying.

REBECCA pointedly looks at NICOLA.

NICOLA

Rebecca. You are heartbroken yourself so I think you are projecting your own desire for reconciliation on to us.

REBECCA

This isn't about James. But if he came back and looked at me like Eddie looks at you then I'd be happy.

NICOLA

'Cos you still want James back?

REBECCA

No. Because I'd know he wanted me back. And he was suffering.

NICOLA

That's my girl.

They both look across and watch EDDIE running alongside JOE as JOE pedals for the umpteenth time, holding the seat of the bike, then tentatively letting go.

EDDIE

Still holding it! Still holding it!

JOE cycles a few yards without realising EDDIE has let go.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

That's it! That's it. You're doing it! You're doing it!

EDDIE runs alongside JOE to show he is doing it. JOE immediately puts his feet down in panic.

JOE

No. No. No! Really no! Really no!

EDDIE doubles up to catch his breath.

EDDIE

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry. Okay. Sorry.

JOE, distressed, gets off his bike, lies it down and walks over to a tree, picking at the bark, facing away from everyone else.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Joe! I'm sorry!

REBECCA hands EDDIE the questionnaire and runs over to JOE. NICOLA joins EDDIE. BILL and RAMESH cycle up.

RAMESH

I think the problem is that whenever you let go of the seat he stops his bike.

EDDIE

I think you're right.

RAMESH

You need to keep pretending that you are holding on to the seat when in fact you are not.

EDDIE

I see that now. Thank you.

RAMESH

The basic problem is -

As EDDIE makes each point he tries to fold the questionnaire into smaller squares, having trouble after just two folds.

EDDIE

The basic problem is this, Ramesh. This questionnaire. The measuring, the assessing, the endless, tedious, comparing!

(LOSING IT NOW)

What he can't do. Especially what he can't do. And measured against who? Against us? Against 'normal' people. Look at us. Are any of us normal? Look at us! Is this normal!

On RAMESH and BILL - who is this nutter?

RAMESH

It is mathematically impossible to fold paper more than seven times.

EDDIE hasn't even managed three. He throws the questionnaire on the ground and looks to where JOE is picking leaves off a tree and REBECCA is talking to him.

(CONTINUED)

BILL

Did he not sleep through? I don't
think he slept through.

RAMESH picks up the questionnaire and hands it to NICOLA.

NICOLA

Thank you, Ramesh.

EDDIE looks sheepish and feels foolish.

EDDIE

Time I got going anyway.

EDDIE gets his phone out. REBECCA has reached them with JOE.

REBECCA

I promised Joe an ice cream. At the
fell race.

EDDIE looks up from his phone at the mention of ice cream.

CUT TO:

22

INT. ART GALLERY. MANCHESTER. DAY 12. 12:50.

PAUL and ALISON walk into a gallery room. They find
themselves staring at a painting of a nude.

PAUL

Have you noticed how her nipples
seem to follow you round the room?

ALISON

No. That must be a boy thing.

They move on.

ALISON (CONT'D)

So was it Eddie's flat that made
you want to come here or your
interest in the history of art?

PAUL

It's nice, though isn't it. Just
doing nothing together?

ALISON

Yeah. It is. Maybe that daughter of
ours had a point.

They turn and both find themselves looking at a sculpture of
an elephant - THIS IS A VERY CONTRIVED GAG BUT IT'S A BEAUTY.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

But then again, you can't tell me
there isn't an elephant in the
room.

ALISON and PAUL both stare at the elephant and we . . .

CUT TO:

23

INT. ART GALLERY. MANCHESTER. DAY 12. 12:58.

PAUL and ALISON sit in an empty gallery room.

PAUL

You never mentioned the Sophie
thing again. So I just thought you
didn't want to talk about it.

ALISON

I didn't. At first. (BEAT) But you
felt something. And it was clearly
enough to make you tell me.

PAUL

I loved the gig.

ALISON

So you said.

PAUL

I loved it for Joe in a daft way. I
imagined him there. In ten years
time. And it felt okay for once.
Him growing up.

ALISON

Good. So . . .

PAUL

So when I dropped them off. It all
felt, you know, familiar, easy. . .

ALISON

And you thought that Sophie might
feel familiar and easy as well.

PAUL

It was a moment. And it was only a
moment for me to be honest. Sophie
didn't encourage me. She didn't
react. She just looked a bit
surprised.

More detail than ALISON can handle.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

Yeah. I get that. I just want to know what was going on in your head.

PAUL

Well, when you find out can you tell me?

ALISON turns this over for a few moments.

ALISON

Did she look like she needed rescuing? Was that it?

PAUL

Was that what?

ALISON

I looked like I needed rescuing when we got together. Single Mum. Working in a bakery. Living with her parents. Most men would have run a mile. But not you.

PAUL

Most men hadn't tasted your novelty scones.

ALISON

I can see that Sophie might look like a woman who needs rescuing. And I can see how that would work for you.

PAUL

Except she isn't you.

ALISON

I can see that you would get confused by me being away and you being there. I get it.

PAUL

Except she isn't you.

ALISON

I can't say I'm happy about it but I get it.

PAUL

Right.

ALISON

I just need to know that you get it too.

PAUL

Yes. I do. I do. And I'm sorry.

PAUL reaches for her hand.

CUT TO:

24

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 13:00.

Beer tent, Tea tent, plant stall, ice cream stall, a burger van, Announcer - and the bouncy castle . . .

In the bouncy castle queue we find EDDIE, NICOLA, REBECCA, JOE and RAMESH eating ice creams - EDDIE two flakes. EMILY with them. NICOLA filming bits of the day. BILL has a meagre-looking frozen lolly. EDDIE looks at his two flakes.

EDDIE

(HOLDING OUT ICE CREAM)

Are you sure you don't want a bit,
Bill?

BILL

I've got allergies.

Runners in tracksuits and kit have started to arrive, CHILDREN and PARTNERS with them. As the runners take off tracksuits, warm up etc, MAURICE is by the beer tent taking off his own tracksuit, stripping down to T-shirt and shorts, doing the usual male adjustment ritual of shorts, etc, while talking to RALPH.

MAURICE

This girlfriend of yours, how serious is it?

RALPH

It's a first date.

MAURICE

Thing is, you might think that having a woman in your life is the be-all and end-all but it isn't you know. You spend half your time wondering what they're thinking and the other half trying to work out what they mean when they've told you what they're thinking.

RALPH

Right.

MAURICE

And one day they want you in their life, the next they are telling you to back off, you can't tell when you are in the right and when you are in the wrong.

RALPH

Yes.

RALPH spots VANESSA - his girlfriend - making her way towards him. He smiles and waves.

MAURICE

But most of all they know you better than you know yourself. And the sooner you work that out, the better.

MAURICE has started to put vaseline on his nipples under his T-shirt at this point.

RALPH

Thank you.

RALPH intercepts VANESSA before MAURICE can get near. MAURICE heads off to the start of the race where all the runners are gathering with that mad intensity and watch-checking that descends amongst us elite athletes.

VANESSA

Hello, Ralph.

RALPH

Hello.

EDDIE is at the head of the queue for the bouncy castle. Only JOE is taking his shoes off. Other kids, including RAMESH and BILL, are standing behind him, waiting. EDDIE is paying MR ELLIOT (who is running the Bouncy Castle) a few quid extra.

EDDIE

First five minutes, he goes on on his own. That cover your losses?

MR ELLIOT

No skin off my nose.

EDDIE

He just likes to -

MR ELLIOT

I know what he likes to do. Joe and me have got history.

MR ELLIOT clocks BILL and RAMESH staring at him. He nods.

(CONTINUED)

MR ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Bill. Ramesh.

RAMESH
How is the Bouncy Castle trade
these days, Mr Elliot?

MR ELLIOT
Well, January was dead but we're
booked all through the summer.

RAMESH nods, impressed.

BILL
Is it safe, Mr Elliot?

MR ELLIOT
It is so far . . .

They turn and look as JOE gets on the bouncy castle and proceeds to carefully count each ridge, using his fingers, taking one step at a time, slow, painstaking, as though working out a complicated piece of Maths. NICOLA films this on her phone. EDDIE is kind of hypnotised. RAMESH and BILL start to take off their shoes in preparation for their go.

RALPH has arrived at the bouncy castle with VANESSA.

EDDIE
Hiya, Ralph. You all right?

RALPH
Maurice is being strange.

EDDIE
Well, he gets very fired up for
this kind of thing.

EDDIE nods over to where the fell runners are gathering for the start.

RALPH
That's not the reason.

EDDIE
Oh?

The FELL RACE ANNOUNCER drowns out RALPH's voice.

ANNOUNCER
This year we're proud to announce
that we're fully kitted-out with a
brand new defibrillator. Comes as
welcome news to some more than
others, hey Maurice? Only kiddin'
you, feller! On the sound of the
klaxon the race will begin. Good
luck everyone, rather you than me!

(CONTINUED)

On EDDIE and NICOLA looking over at MAURICE as the klaxon sounds. MAURICE sets off and we stay with him, running, intense, for a few moments then . . .

CUT TO:

25 **EXT. MANCHESTER. BENCH. DAY 12. 13:20.**

PAUL and ALISON sit on a bench, eating sandwiches.

PAUL

This rescuing thing you say I do.

ALISON

That you do. Yes.

PAUL

You aren't trying to say I don't like strong women, are you?

ALISON

Don't be ridiculous. What man doesn't like a strong woman?

PAUL

Well, I've been with you for seventeen years so there's at least one strong woman I like.

ALISON

Thank you for saying that.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

PAUL

Do you come here a lot? All the pigeons seem to know you by name.

ALISON

I come to lectures. At the University. While Joe's at school.

PAUL

Really? You gatecrash lectures?
Since when?

ALISON

It started when I dropped in on Eddie, but then I just got hooked. It's something new. Something I missed out on. Does that sound mad?

PAUL

What do you go and listen to?

ALISON

Psychology, Politics. Embroidery...

PAUL

Good job they do girls' subjects.
(ALISON LAUGHS) So you just go and
sit at the back?

A beat while they both turn this over: PAUL - that this is all news to him; ALISON - that she never told PAUL. They used to share everything.

ALISON

Joe is settled at his new school
and Rebecca will be going to Uni.
And you've got the Gastropub. And
we sold my Diner to help you expand
and I am completely over that.

PAUL

Clearly.

ALISON

So, you know, for me, what next?
'cos it has to be something . . .
I can't not do anything . . . Isn't
it fair to just ask what I might do
now? Is that fair? Or does that
scare you? Like everything else
seems to scare you these days.

PAUL

Are you asking this question as a
strong independent woman with
something to offer the world or my
lovely little obedient wifey?

ALISON turns to PAUL - punches him on the shoulder.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You should do it. You should go to
University. You'd be great. You
should do what you want.

He kisses her to confirm this. Then the confirming kiss becomes more passionate. As they fall into it, a passing van sounds its horn and we . . .

CUT TO:

26

INT. EDDIE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY 12. 13:50.

ALISON and PAUL fall into the flat, kissing, passionate. ALISON leans back against the kitchen counter. PAUL tries to lead her to the bedroom.

ALISON

No. Let's do it in here.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

In here? In Eddie's kitchen?

ALISON

Yes. Here. (KISSING HIM) But don't call it Eddie's kitchen again. It's a bit of a passion killer.

They kiss again but PAUL is distracted by something. ALISON notices this and pulls away.

ALISON (CONT'D)

What?

PAUL

Nothing.

PAUL goes to kiss her again but he is clearly trying to concentrate.

ALISON

What?

PAUL nods towards EDDIE's CD shelf.

PAUL

Is that my copy of The Wedding Present Complete Peel sessions?

CUT TO:

27

INT. EDDIE'S FLAT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM. DAY 12. 13:53.

They go to the bedroom - they both sit on the bed, then lie down next to each other. ALISON reaches for PAUL's shirt and starts to unbutton it. But PAUL starts to shrug her off and take his shirt off himself.

ALISON

We can take our time, you know.

PAUL, shirt half on and half off, suddenly self-conscious.

PAUL

I know that.

ALISON

You might want to try and sound a little less defensive.

PAUL

Sorry. It's just. Sorry. It feels like we're trying a bit too hard.

ALISON

Shh. Shh. Come on. Let's just be spontaneous. We can do this.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Which is kind of not that spontaneous.

ALISON breaks away, self-conscious too now.

ALISON

Yep. Yep. You've made your point. I'm getting the spontaneous thing.

PAUL

All right. I was only joking.

ALISON

Forgive me for feeling just a tiny bit rejected by the fact that a little awkwardness is enough to stop us making love.

PAUL

It's like the timer. And if it comes down to it you aren't exactly relaxed.

ALISON

We have just been talking about you being attracted to someone else.

PAUL

And you said you got it.

ALISON

I got it but it still hurts like hell. "I felt more at home with her than I do with you."

PAUL

For a moment. I said. For a moment!

ALISON

Even for a moment, don't you think that stings just a little bit?

PAUL

Oh. I see.

ALISON

Do you? Oh, good. Let's not go to Relate because Paul "sees".

PAUL

So this is the real argument. Not the other one where I explained and you said you got it. We're having the real row now, are we? Eddie was right. I shouldn't have told you.

ALISON

Eddie? When did you talk to Eddie
about it?

PAUL

I've done the right thing and I've
told you the truth.

ALISON

So that means I have to be okay?
What is this? Emotional plea
bargaining?

PAUL

Yep. You found me out.

ALISON

And as for your actual feelings,
I'm just going to have to guess, am
I?

PAUL

Well, don't guess too hard, you
might just get them right and then
we really would be in the shit!

PAUL exits.

CUT TO:

28

EXT. FELLS. DAY 12. 13:55.

MAURICE going for it in the fell race. He has his usual intensity but there is something more going on here - even more rage than normal channelled into the run. It is tough. Very tough. But he is lost in it. He overtakes a YOUNGER RUNNER (who we have already met) and runs on . . .

CUT TO:

29

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 14:00.

NICOLA with EDDIE and EMILY. JOE with REBECCA, BILL and RAMESH. During this conversation the first of the runners start to arrive at the finish line - becoming a steady stream.

NICOLA

(AMUSED)

Have you calmed down now?

EDDIE

I was merely expressing my
frustration in the form of mime.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLA

I think we were all aware of your frustrations. Especially the other children.

EDDIE holds his hands up in mock surrender.

EDDIE

All right, all right. It's like, it's just so reductive. That's all I meant. If you put all these ingredients into a cake and baked them, Joe wouldn't come out, would he?

NICOLA

You know how I feel about metaphor.

EDDIE

(WEARY)

Yeah.

NICOLA

And, for the record, I got it at "reductive".

EDDIE

It just becomes a big list of his failures. How would you feel if that was Emily?

NICOLA

And as a man who has suffered failures of his own you feel that keenly. I see that.

EDDIE

Are you mocking me?

NICOLA

Ever so slightly. I have a feeling that your rant had as much to do with you not teaching him to ride a bike as it had to do with your objection to standard assessments.

EDDIE

(RUEFUL)

I was pretty sure I could nail it in a day.

NICOLA

A day you could have been spending with your Manchester girlfriend.

EDDIE

Well, yes.

NICOLA

But you were clearly enjoying
yourself too much here.

EDDIE

It was fun, yes. It is fun.

EDDIE turns to NICOLA and smiles. Each of them has a hand of
EMILY's . . .

NICOLA

Worth missing out on your night of
passion?

EDDIE

I would have been sharing a bedroom
with Emily. Just so you know.

NICOLA

It's none of my business. Just so
you know.

EDDIE

Right.

NICOLA

Who we see. Who we don't see. Who
we sleep with. Who we don't sleep
with.

EDDIE looks at her. Clearly rattled.

EDDIE

I know that.

NICOLA

I mean -

EDDIE

I said I know that! All right!

NICOLA, surprised by EDDIE's vehemence, falls into silence as
they watch runners finishing - the ANNOUNCER calling out
numbers and names as they cross the line . . .

CUT TO:

30

EXT. FELL. DAY 12. 14:05.

MAURICE is running like a maniac, overtaking where the path
is too thin, pushing and pushing, until, with no warning, he
stops. It is as though a switch has suddenly been turned off
inside him. He stops. It isn't that he can't go on. It's that
he doesn't want to go on.

(CONTINUED)

He stands perfectly still and stares straight ahead as other runners, including the YOUNGER RUNNER, sweep past him.

CUT TO:

31

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 14:10.

NICOLA and EDDIE scanning the runners. They have clearly been standing in surly silence for a while. REBECCA comes across with JOE.

REBECCA

(PUZZLED)

Have you seen Grandad come through yet?

EDDIE

No. I haven't.

REBECCA

That bloke from Kendal he always beats came through ages ago.

REBECCA drifts off, leaving JOE with EDDIE and NICOLA. EDDIE turns to NICOLA, can't keep it in.

EDDIE

Why would I need to know anything about who you are and aren't sleeping with?

NICOLA

I wasn't offering that information. But, for the record I haven't slept with anybody since you went.

EDDIE

Good. But I don't care!

NICOLA

I'm glad we sorted that out!

EDDIE grabs JOE by the hand.

EDDIE

Come on, Joe, let's walk up and see if we can cheer Grandad on.

EDDIE leads JOE away and up the hill.

CUT TO:

32

EXT. FELL. DAY 12. 14:15.

EDDIE and JOE walk up the hill. As they do so a few straggler runners pass them in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

33

EXT. FELL. DAY 12. 14:20.

EDDIE and JOE discover MAURICE, just sitting down staring out into the landscape.

EDDIE

Dad? Dad. Are you okay?

MAURICE

Course I'm okay. Just fancied taking in the view.

EDDIE and JOE sit down either side of him.

EDDIE

Oh. Right. Not like you.

MAURICE

I know. But, you know, really, in the end, what's the point?

EDDIE

What about your big finish?

MAURICE

Are you talking about death?

EDDIE

Well, I was talking about sprinting past that skinny feller from Kendal in the last 100 metres but, we could talk about death . . . if you really want to . . .

MAURICE

I thought you'd be off to Manchester by now.

EDDIE

I had to stay.

MAURICE

You didn't though, did you? You wanted to.

EDDIE, MAURICE and JOE stare into the distance.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE

You sure you're all right? It's just, you're usually so competitive. (THINKS) You're sitting out a fell race and I'm hurling push bikes around.

MAURICE looks at him and shrugs.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Is this it? You're turning into me and I'm turning into you?

EDDIE contemplates the darkness of this as MAURICE looks at him again. Then stands. He turns to JOE.

MAURICE

Joe. Sorry to tell you, Son, but you're the sane one here.

MAURICE ruffles JOE's hair, and then sets off running again.

EDDIE

Run, Forrest, Run!

MAURICE disappears over the brow of the hill.

JOE

My feet don't hurt, do they?

EDDIE looks down and sees that JOE is wearing a different trainer on each foot, both right footed - clearly at least one is not his own.

CUT TO:

34

EXT. FELLS. DAY 12. 14:23.

MAURICE runs towards the Fell Race site.

CUT TO:

35

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 14:25.

MAURICE appears, running for the finish line.

ANNOUNCER

And here. Last but not least. Local brewer and full-time fell runner, Maurice Scott.

Applause from the other finishers. And REBECCA and NICOLA and EMILY all clapping.

MAURICE runs over the finish line but doesn't stop. He runs straight past the WOMAN waiting with a souvenir medal.

(CONTINUED)

Past MR ELLIOT and the bouncy castle, past the beer tent manned by DAVID and PAVEL.

He carries on out of the Race Site and onto the road leading back into town. REBECCA and NICOLA exchange a puzzled glance.

CUT TO:

36 **EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTRO PUB - RACE SITE. BEER TENT. DAY 12.**
14:26.

DAVID and PAVEL serving in the beer tent.

PAVEL
Jak myslisz, od czego uciekal Maurice?
PAVEL
What do you think Maurice was running away from?

DAVID
Facet z tyloma demonami? Jest z czego wybierac.
DAVID
A man with that many demons?
Take your pick.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(IN ENGLISH)
So, Sir, what will it be?

CUT TO:

37 **EXT. CONISTON. ROAD. DAY 12. 14:45.**

MAURICE running - getting one or two odd looks as he powers through the town with his race number on.

CUT TO:

38 **EXT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. DAY 12. 14:48.**

****THIS SCENE HAS BEEN SHOT****

MAURICE has arrived at LOUISE's house, rings the bell. Only when he does so does he look down and realise he may not be looking his best, race number still on, spit-splattered vest, mud-splattered legs. LOUISE answers the door. She looks like death.

LOUISE
I didn't think anybody could look worse than me today Maurice.

MAURICE
The day Sandra died I went out to the garage and serviced the car.

LOUISE
Sorry?

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Oil change. Filters. Brake pads.
The lot.

LOUISE

Right.

MAURICE

Grief. It takes people in different
ways, you know.

LOUISE

Maurice, I'm tired, love and . . .

MAURICE

I know. I'm sorry. I won't keep
you. I came to say you were right.
What you said. I am trying to save
Sandra again when I am helping you.
And helping you brings it all back.
And it's sometimes hard not to
think I'll do it better this time.
And that me helping you get through
it is me sticking two fingers up at
cancer. Part of me will always be
stuck there - by Sandra's bed. But
. . . but you really need to know
this. I don't want you to come
through this for Sandra. I want you
to come through this because you're
you. Nobody else. Because I want it
for you. And because I want you to
be here for me. After. Taking the
piss. Making me think things I
never thought before. Rattling my
cage. Now. I might have blown it
right there. Right now. And if I
have, well. It'll knock me bow-
legged. But at least I've said it.

LOUISE looks at MAURICE, and MAURICE looks at LOUISE. LOUISE reaches out and touches his hand.

LOUISE

I'll say this for you, Maurice, you
are full of surprises.

MAURICE

Nobody's ever said that to me
before.

LOUISE

And now I have to go and throw up.

MAURICE

Right . . . right.

LOUISE shuts the door, MAURICE looks at the door. Then walks away, maybe he smiles to himself. He looks down at his hand where LOUISE touched it and we . . .

CUT TO:

39

INT. EDDIE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 12. 14:50.

PAUL has his The Wedding Present box set on the CD player. He is using the remote to flick from one track back to another in a rather Joe-like way - 'Something and Nothing' to 'Getting Nowhere Fast' and back again. ALISON, meanwhile, has got paperwork spread out in single sheets and piles on the table, scribbling on post-it notes - and attaching to some - as part of Sophie's appeal for Mark's schooling.

ALISON

Can you stop doing that? I'm trying to concentrate.

PAUL stops.

PAUL

On what?

ALISON

Sophie's appeal for Mark's school.

PAUL

Are you doing that because you want to or to prove a point?

ALISON

I'm doing it because it needs doing.

PAUL

Sorry. That was a shit thing to say.

ALISON

I'll file it away under all the other shit things you said.

PAUL

How do you feel the weekend is going so far? On a scale of bad to disastrous.

ALISON's phone rings. She answers it.

ALISON

Hi, Eddie. No. No. You weren't interrupting anything. No. Right. I've got a horrible feeling they are in the car.

(TO PAUL)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALISON (CONT'D)

Joe's lost one of his trainers. I think we've got his spares.

PAUL

(NODDING)

They're in the car. I could smell them all the way here.

CUT TO:

40

EXT. THE FELLSIDE GASTROPUB - RACE SITE. DAY 12. 14:51.

EDDIE on the phone. JOE is in his stocking feet, both hands up, one hand holding a trainer, the other hand wagging a finger as he paces back and forth as though giving himself a talking to.

EDDIE

(ON PHONE)

We've found one. And he is a bit upset and saying he wants special trainers? Just wondering what he means? Or how I can persuade him shoes are just as good. It'll be fine, I'm sure, I just wondered if there was anything particular you said to calm him down.

CUT TO:

41

INT. EDDIE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 12. 14:53.

ALISON is gathering things together at the table. PAUL is heading for the bedroom.

ALISON

He won't settle without his trainers. Not once he's got that in his head. You know what he's like.

PAUL

(EXITING)

Yeah. Good job we didn't unpack. We should go. Eddie will have a nightmare otherwise.

ALISON

Exactly.

CUT TO:

42

EXT/INT. EDDIE'S FLAT/PAUL'S CAR. DAY 12. 14:57.

PAUL and ALISON come out of the flat and get into the car. They can't move fast enough . . .

CUT TO:

43

EXT/INT. ROADS/PAUL'S CAR. DAY 12. 16:05.

They drive in silence, but as the car approaches the familiar layby . . .

ALISON

Stop the car.

PAUL

(PUZZLED)

What?

ALISON

Stop the car.

ALISON looks at PAUL and starts to undress and PAUL pulls up and we . . .

CUT TO:

44

EXT. BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 12. 16:06.

PAUL and ALISON get out of the front of the car and are already undressing as they get in to the back seat.

CUT TO:

45

INT. PAUL'S CAR. DAY 12. 16:07.

PAUL and ALISON getting undressed quickly and urgently.

PAUL

I thought we were in a hurry to get back.

ALISON

We are. Deadlines just do it for me. I was the same at school.

PAUL

All right. Now you're worrying me.

They fall together and we . . .

CUT TO:

46

EXT. LAYBY. DAY 12. 16:10.

The car is rocking back and forth, windows steamed up.

CUT TO:

47

INT/EXT. PAUL'S CAR/BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 12. 16:15.

PAUL and ALISON back in the front seats. Dressed. Silence.

PAUL

As the old proverb goes, "The couple who shag in the car, make light work of the relationship shit."

ALISON

Not sure we're quite there yet, are we?

Clearly neither of them think they are, really.

CUT TO:

48

EXT. BILLBOARD LAYBY. DAY 12. 16:16.

The car drives away, heading in a homeward direction.

CUT TO:

49

INT/EXT. MAURICE'S CAR/BUS SHELTER. DAY 12. 16:30.

MAURICE, tracksuited now and driving back to the Brewery, passes the bus stop where he sees RALPH sitting with his arm round VANESSA. He smiles to himself, thinks about this for a moment and then pulls over.

CUT TO:

50

EXT. BUS SHELTER. DAY 12. 16:35.

RALPH and VANESSA in a cuddle.

MAURICE

Ralph! Ralph! Hang on a bit.

RALPH sighs and looks up to see MAURICE approaching.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Can I have a word.

MAURICE gives RALPH a twenty pound note.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Take that. Payment. For today. In
case the pair of you want to go for
a drink or anything.

RALPH hesitates.

RALPH

You don't want to come, do you?

MAURICE

(LAUGHS)

No. No, I don't.

RALPH

Thank you.

VANESSA

Thank you.

MAURICE

Nice to meet you, love.

Then MAURICE hesitates but turns RALPH away from VANESSA.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

If it does get serious. And you
need to talk to another bloke about
anything. I can be that bloke. If
you want.

RALPH

Right.

MAURICE

Condoms and all that.

RALPH

Right.

MAURICE

If you're embarrassed to buy them
yourself I could, you know . . .

RALPH

You're all right. (MEANING SHUT
UP!)

MAURICE

And condoms can be, well, you know,
you might want to practise
beforehand, like. You know when you
put gloves on and you can't get
your fingers to the end?

RALPH

There's more to life than sex,
Maurice.

(CONTINUED)

And with that RALPH turns and heads back to VANESSA.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 12. 17:09.

REBECCA and JOE ahead - JOE with one trainer on and one trainer off - coming from Eddie's car to the house. NICOLA, EMILY and EDDIE follow. NICOLA turns to EDDIE, smiles but he isn't having it. NICOLA gives up. JOE starts to hop to the house.

REBECCA

Eddie. It's a big tick for hopping!

EDDIE smiles but is not in a good mood. Then JOE spots the front door ajar, and runs into the house. He does the door thing (shutting it, then opening it again) in rapid time and we follow him in . . .

CUT TO:

52 INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 12. 17:10.

PAUL and ALISON are in the kitchen. They turn as JOE comes rushing in, over to PAUL and stops dead in front of him.

PAUL

Hello, matey.

ALISON

Hello, love.

JOE

Did you go to school?

ALISON

No. We were in Manchester, but we weren't at school. Look what I found in the car.

ALISON gives JOE his trainers. He just takes the one that he needs and starts to put it on. It doesn't match, but he doesn't mind. EDDIE comes in with REBECCA.

REBECCA

You're back already. What happened?

PAUL

Eddie? What are you still doing here?

EDDIE

Got dragged into family life. You know how that is. More to the point, why are you here?

(CONTINUED)

ALISON and PAUL look awkward. They clearly aren't going to answer.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
All right. I'll try and salvage my weekend then.

ALISON
Thanks, Eddie. For lending us the flat! I'll see you Monday night -

But he has slammed the front door and gone.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Now then, young man, what have you been up to?

REBECCA looks at PAUL - knows none of this is right. PAUL puts the kettle on.

ALISON (CONT'D)
What did you do today? Did you have a nice time?

JOE
Neat, Neat, Neat.

ALISON
The Damned. 1977.

JOE
Emily did a poo. "Good Lord, Nicola, I need oxygen."

ALISON
(LAUGHING)
Is that what Uncle Eddie said? What else happened? Hmm.

JOE heads into the front room.

REBECCA
Have you two had a row or what?

PAUL
We just couldn't settle in Eddie's place. Loose women calling round day and night. Drug dealers.

REBECCA
Stop it. Eddie's been great this weekend.

PAUL
(SEIZING ON THE DISTRACTION)
Teaching Joe to ride a bike, I hear? How did that go?

(CONTINUED)

REBECCA gets her phone out and we . . .

CUT TO:

53

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY 12. 17:13.

PAUL at the kitchen table, looking at REBECCA's video. ALISON is taking paperwork out of her bag (brought from Eddie's) and putting it into a box file with yet more papers.

PAUL

(LAUGHING)

Look at that. He looks like a bear
on a unicycle.

REBECCA

Stop it.

PAUL

Please don't tell me Eddie
succeeds.

REBECCA

You'd rather Joe couldn't ride a
bike than admit another man could
teach him?

PAUL

Can you ride a bike now, Joe? Hey?

JOE

I can ride a bike.

PAUL

Nearly, nearly. Look at that. Oh,
nearly. I'll take you out tomorrow
and get you riding that bike like
Bradley Wiggins!

REBECCA

Come and have a look, Mum!

ALISON

I'll look later, love. I just need
to nip out.

REBECCA senses tension. PAUL tries to burst it.

PAUL

Oh. You two. Presents. Presents!

PAUL gets presents they've brought from a petrol station out of a plastic bag. He hands 'Top Trumps Dinosaurs' to JOE and a huge chocolate bar with a reduced sticker on it to REBECCA.

JOE

I like Dinosaurs, don't I.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Bought them in a bit of a rush but,
you know, it's the thought that
counts.

REBECCA

Really?

JOE eyeing the chocolate.

JOE

I don't like big big chocolate, do
I.

JOE starts to lay the Top Trump cards out one by one along
the kitchen surfaces, the floor, the table, etc. ALISON grabs
the box file.

ALISON

I've just got to get this stuff
over to Sophie's. Thanks for
holding the fort, love. And looking
after Joe.

REBECCA

For all of eight hours.

The front door shuts. PAUL looks at REBECCA then they both
look at JOE who has now laid out the entire pack of Top
Trumps Dinosaurs in the kitchen.

JOE

I've done it.

CUT TO:

54

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 12. 17:30.

EDDIE, bad mood, is unpacking EMILY's bag which we saw him
packing for the weekend (in Scene 11).

EDDIE

No point taking her now. Half the
weekend has gone.

NICOLA

Stay for your tea at least. Fish
fingers and mayonnaise.

A moment's temptation for EDDIE, then businesslike . . .

EDDIE

If I go now I'll get back for the
evening.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLA

Go on. I could practise my new presentation. I've done it for Emily but her feedback's a bit limited . . .

By now, a pile of baby debris - favourite toys, teddy, plastic keys. EDDIE gets the final two things out with emphasis.

EDDIE

Doggy. Raggy.

NICOLA

You can't really say Doggy and Raggy and still sound angry. It's incongruous.

EDDIE can't help but smile.

EDDIE

I'm sorry about before. I don't know why but it . . .

NICOLA

I didn't mean to upset you.

EDDIE

It's just that I've spent a long time getting over you. Getting to this . . . where we can be mates. And parents to Emily.

NICOLA

Yeah. Me too.

EDDIE

So I don't want confusing by caring about who you're sleeping with. And I shouldn't care but I still do.

NICOLA

Even though you're sleeping with other women?

EDDIE

I'm not.

NICOLA

Oh.

EDDIE

Not been for lack of opportunity.

NICOLA

Of course not.

EDDIE

Oh, dear me, no. The Robotics Study Group is known as "Stud Central" in the Union bar.

NICOLA

I suppose I should be flattered.

EDDIE

You're kind of missing the point. If you're a sensitive lad growing up under Maurice's roof then your sexual confidence might not necessarily be sky high.

NICOLA

Really? You always seemed confident with me.

EDDIE

And. Did I? (PLEASED) Did I, really?

NICOLA

Yes.

EDDIE

Oh. Good. Well, maybe I'll leave it there then. Go out on a high point.

NICOLA

The reason I haven't slept with anyone since you is partly exhaustion but mainly the fact that I've never met anyone I liked as much as you so what would be the point?

EDDIE

Practice?

NICOLA

I don't think I'll forget what goes where. Like riding a bike.

EDDIE

Oh, that hurts.

They are easier now.

NICOLA

It was nice today. You make it easier. And Emily loves it.

EDDIE

Good. Good . . . Is that why you kept tricking me into staying longer?

NICOLA

I didn't ask you to stay. You just
couldn't leave that questionnaire
behind.

EDDIE

Bloody thing. What does it prove? I
mean, look at you. GP. Young child.
Beautiful house. On good terms with
your ex. You've got it all on
paper.

NICOLA

And?

EDDIE

And you'd be the first to admit
you're as screwed up and insecure
as everybody else.

NICOLA

I suspect your defensiveness about
this process masks an underlying
insecurity.

EDDIE

Is that to go along with my very
obvious surface insecurity?

NICOLA

I thought we'd just established you
were actually confident.

And they are close now. Almost touching. A smile.

EMILY happily playing in the corner and this could be the
family they could be.

And then there is a knock at the door and before they can
answer it MAURICE enters with HOLLY.

MAURICE

Thought I'd find you here. This
young lady was at my house trying
to find you, Eddie. I prayed for it
to happen in your teenage years but
better late than never . . .

EDDIE looks slightly found out. Moves a good yard away from
NICOLA in perhaps the most obvious move of all time.

EDDIE

Oh. Holly! Bloody hell. This is a
shock. A surprise. A nice surprise.

EDDIE doesn't introduce anybody. HOLLY takes the initiative.

HOLLY

Hi. I'm Holly. Eddie's girlfriend from Manchester.

NICOLA

Eddie's Manchester girlfriend. I'm Nicola.

They shake hands. Then silence.

MAURICE

Well. This is all very modern, hey? Very, er, modern.

CUT TO:

55

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 12. 17:40.

MAURICE, EDDIE, NICOLA and HOLLY sit round with coffees. EMILY sleeping.

MAURICE

Next time you drive, come off the M6 at the Kendal turning and take the A590. On a weekend you'll find that's faster.

HOLLY

Thank you. I will remember that.

NICOLA

Eddie tells me you work in medicine too.

HOLLY

I'm an anaesthetist.

EDDIE

That's how we met. I came round from a minor operation, found myself in a bar with her.

NICOLA smiles but HOLLY doesn't.

MAURICE

He's always had a weakness for medical types. He fell over a lot as a child.

EDDIE laughs nervously but neither NICOLA nor HOLLY do.

HOLLY

Eddie made that joke on our first date.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Did he? Well now you know where he
heard it first.

HOLLY

And our third date.

EDDIE

Did I?

REBECCA enters without knocking.

REBECCA

(TO NICOLA)

Sorry. Didn't know you had
visitors.

EDDIE

She doesn't. Probably time we were
going anyway. Sorry. Rebecca. This
is Holly.

REBECCA

Oh, right, Eddie's Manchester
girlfriend.

HOLLY

I prefer Holly.

REBECCA

'Course, sorry.

EDDIE is on his feet. MAURICE too. NICOLA turns to EDDIE.

NICOLA

Thanks for helping out with Joe all
day. (TO HOLLY) And thanks for not
minding.

HOLLY

I did mind actually. But I
understood.

NICOLA

Exactly.

They shake hands. REBECCA and MAURICE exchange a look.

EDDIE

(TO EMILY)

Bye, lovely, be good for your Mum.

EDDIE kisses the hopefully sleeping EMILY then goes to kiss
NICOLA "Goodbye" but corrects himself. It's a kind of half
hug, half kiss, half handshake.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Bye. Bye.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE is out of there as quick as he can go . . . MAURICE and HOLLY fast in pursuit.

REBECCA turns to NICOLA.

REBECCA
He didn't want to go.

NICOLA
I think he couldn't get out of the door quick enough.

REBECCA
Only 'cos it was awkward.

NICOLA
Am I really like her? I thought she was quite annoying.

REBECCA
She's not as pretty as you.

NICOLA
We're grown women, Rebecca, we don't do that comparison thing. It's demeaning.

REBECCA
No. Of course. But I know my stuff. And I tell you, you and Eddie should be a family. And I can make it happen.

NICOLA
Rebecca. That's very kind. But in three months time you will be at Bristol Uni having an emotional crisis of your own.

REBECCA
No, I won't.

NICOLA gives REBECCA a puzzled look.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I've binned the offer. I'm not going to University. I'm not going anywhere.

NICOLA looks at REBECCA, surprised.

CUT TO:

SOPHIE opens the door to find ALISON standing there, clutching the box file to her chest.

SOPHIE
(SURPRISED)
Hiya.

ALISON
I know. It's not my idea of a great
Saturday night either but are you
free to just go through some of
this stuff . . ?

SOPHIE
Yeah. Yeah. 'Course I am. Come in.

CUT TO:

57 INT. LIVING ROOM. SOPHIE'S HOUSE. DAY 12. 17:55.

ALISON and SOPHIE side by side with the papers in front of them. ALISON delivers this at lightning speed. It's like Spud's amphetamine monologue in Trainspotting.

Above them, the vague sound of music coming from Mark's room.

ALISON
If Mark is going to get the College
to take him, it's all in the
wording. If he needs one to one
maths support for eight hours a
week, a designated quiet space and
dancing girls then we write that in
and let them fight it. We don't let
the Council suggest stuff because
they'll suggest the bare minimum
then turn round and say they can't
even give you that.

ALISON stops talking and looks at SOPHIE.

ALISON (CONT'D)
Why are you looking so worried?

SOPHIE
Because if you don't stop and take
a breath soon you're gonna explode
and make a mess of the carpet.

ALISON
Sorry. Sorry. Just really fired up
about this stuff right now.

SOPHIE
I know. And thanks.

ALISON brandishes a booklet-type form - the EHC plan.

(CONTINUED)

ALISON

And you've got to get Mark to write about what he wants, in his own words. It's harder to say "No" to him than an angry mother waving bits of paper around . . .

Above them, there's now the sound of furious drumming along to the music - a generic rock'n'roll 'click' track which keeps replaying.

ALISON (CONT'D)

(LOOKING UP)

Is that Mark?

SOPHIE

(LOOKING UP)

I really, really hope so.

ALISON laughs.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I'll tell him to ease off on the kick pedal.

ALISON

You don't have to . . .

But SOPHIE has already exited and left ALISON alone in the room. She can't help taking in the room where Paul, temporarily at least, felt "more at home". We see it from her POV, as the sound of SOPHIE and MARK's voices comes from upstairs. Then quiet. And finally SOPHIE reappears.

SOPHIE

Success.

But as the word leaves her mouth the drums kick back in above, louder than ever. ALISON and SOPHIE exchange a smile and we . . .

CUT TO:

58

INT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. MAURICE'S BEDROOM. DAY 12. 18:25.

MAURICE showing EDDIE and HOLLY in to his bedroom. They both look horrified. Even MAURICE can tell it doesn't feel right.

MAURICE

I'm thinking it's the only double bed in the house so . . . you'll be more comfortable in here.

EDDIE

We won't need a double bed, Dad.

(CONTINUED)

MAURICE

Oh. Right.

EDDIE

What I mean is. We can't let you give up your bed for us.

MAURICE

Suit yourself. But just so you know I'm having your bed, Eddie, so it's going to be snug.

MAURICE leaves them, slamming the door behind them. They both sit on the bed side by side. EDDIE takes in the room. Photos of MAURICE and his Mum. MAURICE and his Mum everywhere.

EDDIE

Well, as Freudian nightmares go, this is right up there.

He turns to HOLLY . . .

CUT TO:

59

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY 12. 18:30.

REBECCA and NICOLA sit together. NICOLA has opened the wine.

REBECCA

Mum and Dad came back from Manchester early. So it can't be good, can it?

NICOLA

No. Well, it is quite hard to keep a marriage on track when you're living in separate cities.

REBECCA

Right! So what if everything falls apart when I'm not here?

NICOLA

We all think we're indispensable to our families. But the truth is, none of us are.

REBECCA

It's different for me though, isn't it? There's Joe for a start.

NICOLA

Joe will be fine.

REBECCA

Not everyone gets him. James didn't.

(CONTINUED)

NICOLA

You're 18 years old. None of this
is your responsibility.

REBECCA

You don't get it. It is.

NICOLA

You are bound to have attachment
anxiety given your family
situation.

REBECCA

What? No. I'm not a case study,
Nicola.

NICOLA

We're all case studies in the end.
That's what Eddie was so angry
about.

REBECCA

Oh. I thought he was angry because
he couldn't teach Joe to ride his
bike.

NICOLA

We want the world to see us how we
see ourselves. And we delude
ourselves every day just to survive
• • •

REBECCA

Who are we talking about now? Me or
you?

NICOLA

See? You're smart. Just go to
University.

NICOLA pours herself and REBECCA another drink and . . .

CUT TO:

60

EXT. MAURICE'S HOUSE. DUSK 12. 19:00.

EDDIE and HOLLY are standing by their respective cars - ready
to leave.

EDDIE

Why don't I leave my car and we go
back in yours?

HOLLY

You need your car and I need mine.

(CONTINUED)

EDDIE
Less romantic though.

HOLLY
I think 'romantic' finally gave up
in your Dad's bedroom.

EDDIE
I'm really sorry about today. You
do understand, don't you?

HOLLY
You have a baby here. And an ex-
wife. I knew that when we met. And
family, and an autistic nephew. I
understand all of that.

EDDIE
It's just that, you know, you'd set
up a nice day and everything.

HOLLY
Yes. I was aware of that.

EDDIE
I'm sorry. You sounded okay about
it on the phone.

HOLLY
I was. I am. But it feels as though
you want me to prove I care with
some kind of demonstrative
outburst.

EDDIE
No. Sorry. Though just a slight
outburst might be nice.

HOLLY
I do care if that's what you're
worried about. I care enough about
you not to want to disrupt your
family life. And I understand your
insecurity because of your past.
But I drove all the way up here to
find you. So, perhaps that gives
you a clue about how I feel. Now
all you have to do is ask yourself
how you feel.

HOLLY gets in the car, starts up the engine and drives away.
EDDIE watches her go, turning over her words. Then he slowly,
with resignation, gets into his own car.

CUT TO:

61

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT 12. 21:00.

LOUISE is lying on the bed. Her phone is beside her and MAURICE's voice is coming through on speakerphone.

MAURICE (O.S.)
You still pick up, then.

LOUISE
Yes, I still pick up.

MAURICE (O.S.)
I'm trying to not, you know, crowd
you. Not, you know, be all over it.

LOUISE
You did all right.

MAURICE (O.S.)
Good. And I'm mustard with a mop
and bucket.

LOUISE
So I saw.

MAURICE (O.S.)
So if you need anything. Or that.
Just say. But I am going to wait
for you to call me.

LOUISE
Do you want me to call you out of
the window or phone?

MAURICE (O.S.)
How do you mean?

LOUISE
You're outside the house, aren't
you?

MAURICE (O.S.)
(BEAT)
No.

LOUISE slowly gets up and looks out of the window. We see,
from her POV: MAURICE on the phone, in a doorway opposite.

LOUISE
When did you first realise you
weren't cut out for MI5?

CUT TO:

62

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. NIGHT 12. 22:05.

PAUL and ALISON in bed together. ALISON reading through the questionnaire.

PAUL

Did they fill in the whole thing?

ALISON

Nearly. Amazing. Though they left bike riding empty for now. (BEAT)
If I asked you to promise me you won't lose sight of me again, do you think you could do that?

PAUL

I'll need a bigger telescope for when you're in Manchester.

ALISON

Could you? Promise me.

PAUL

I promise.

ALISON

And I won't lose sight of you.

ALISON leaves a silence, hoping for something more from PAUL. But he says nothing and he's going to say nothing.

ALISON (CONT'D)

And at least we're not Eddie and Nicola.

PAUL

Yet.

ALISON

What's that supposed to mean?

PAUL

It wasn't supposed to mean anything. It was supposed to be a joke.

ALISON

Right.

PAUL

(WARMING TO HIS THEME)

Why do you always have to pick away at everything, like that? I just wish . . .

ALISON

You just wish what?

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

I just wish we could leave things alone for a while. Let things be.

ALISON

Okay. Fine. That's what we'll do.
That's what we'll do.

ALISON turns off the light, disturbed. PAUL shuts his eyes.
Both can't quite work out how they got here.

CUT TO:

63

INT. SCOTT HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 12. 22.10.

NICOLA gathers the day's debris together. Folding one of a number of endless washes of Emily's clothes fresh from the tumble dryer. She is thinking it might be nice to share some of this right now. She has her phone propped up on the table and is watching footage of Eddie trying to teach Joe to ride a bike. We can hear playground chatter, maybe Rebecca laughing. NICOLA smiles at the memory of a good day.

CUT TO:

64

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT 12. 22:15.

MAURICE and LOUISE lie on the bed together, both fully dressed. There is an MP3 player between them and they have an ear piece each in, listening to music . . . MAURICE opens his eyes and sneaks a glance at LOUISE, whose eyes remain shut.

CUT TO:

65

EXT. HUGHES HOUSE. DAY 13. 08:10.

Early morning. We are on the house. We can hear something, a flickering sound. A wheel spinning.

CUT TO:

66

INT. HUGHES HOUSE. ALISON & PAUL'S BEDROOM. DAY 13. 08:11.

ALISON and PAUL in bed together, both still half sleeping.
PAUL hears the cardboard flickering sound.

ALISON

What's that?

PAUL

I don't know. (SITTING UP) Oh,
shit, I do. I do actually.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL gets up and dashes out of bed, pulling on clothes as he goes.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DAY 13. 08:13.

PAUL is pulling jeans on over his pyjamas and a sweatshirt is going on as he comes out of the house, but not before he sees JOE, helmet on, headphones round his neck, riding past. REBECCA filming him, still in her pyjamas, as he races down the drive. At her feet a roll of sellotape and scissors.

Close up on the wheels reveals that Joe has sellotaped a Top Trump card to nearly every spoke.

PAUL
(EUPHORIC AND SCARED)
Alison! Alison! He's riding it.
He's only bloody riding it! Joe's
riding a bike. Without stabilisers!

PAUL goes legging after him, shouting back to REBECCA -

PAUL (CONT'D)
Did you teach him how to brake?

CUT TO:

68 EXT. HUGHES & SCOTT HOUSES. DRIVE. DAY 13. 08:14.

JOE riding down the drive, freewheeling, smiling, feeling the sheer miraculous freedom of being on wheels. Feeling like the whole world is on wheels, speeding past him . . .

CUT TO:

69 EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 13. 08:20.

JOE riding his bike, ALISON and PAUL on foot after him.

ALISON
Joe. Slow down!

JOE speeds up. And smiles.

CUT TO:

70 EXT. LAKE DISTRICT ROAD. DAY 13. 08:23.

JOE cycles to the familiar bridge.

(CONTINUED)

Then he gets off his bike, lays it down carefully on the bridge, takes his helmet off and stares at the bike until PAUL runs over and joins him. PAUL stands the bike up, pats the saddle for JOE to get back on.

JOE
I've done that now.

He abandons the bike and PAUL and walks back towards ALISON, pulling his headphones on, singing to 'The Sound of The Crowd' by The Human League . . .

JOE/HUMAN LEAGUE
(SINGING)
"Get around town, get around town
Where the people look good
Where the music is loud
Get around town
No need to stand proud
Add your voice to the sound of the crowd!"

The music swells. JOE walks away. ALISON turns and looks at PAUL, now carrying the bike . . . before they both watch JOE walking ahead.

END OF EPISODE