

ANOTHER YEAR

A film by

Mike Leigh

Title: 'SPRING'

A big close-up. A middle-aged WOMAN. She is in pain. She wears no make-up.

Another woman speaks, out of vision. We will discover that she is a DOCTOR.

DOCTOR
So how long's this been going on
for?

WOMAN
I don't know.

DOCTOR
A few weeks?

WOMAN
A long time.

DOCTOR
A year?

(Pause)

WOMAN
I suppose so.

DOCTOR
A whole year? You've taken your
time to come and see me, haven't
you?

WOMAN
You think it's going to stop,
don't you?

DOCTOR
Right, I'm just going to take
your blood pressure. Can you pop
your arm on the desk for me?

(The close-up ends. From here on in, the shots vary.)

(The WOMAN puts her arm on the desk.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
There you go. Can you straighten
it up, and push up your sleeve?

(The WOMAN does so.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Are you dozing in the daytime?

WOMAN

Sometimes, so I just need something to help me sleep.

DOCTOR

I know. How much sleep are you getting at night?

(She wraps the cloth around the woman's arm.)

WOMAN

I'm not getting any, am I? That's the problem - that's why I'm here.

DOCTOR

I understand, sweetheart. Okay... it's just going to go tight.

(She pumps up the apparatus. The measure rises in the gauge. Tense, the WOMAN breathes heavily. The DOCTOR removes the cloth.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Have you got any particular worries at the moment?

(The WOMAN vaguely shakes her head.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

No financial problems?

WOMAN

No. I dunno what that's got to do with it.

DOCTOR

What about at home? How are things with husband?

(The WOMAN doesn't reply. The DOCTOR gets up, moves round the WOMAN, and stands behind her with her stethoscope. We see that the DOCTOR is pregnant, and black.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Okay, if you could just lean forward for me and take a few deep breaths, in through your mouth.

(She does so; the DOCTOR listens to her back.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

And again.

(More breathing.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
'Ts lovely and clear.

(The DOCTOR returns to her desk.)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Have you got any kids?

WOMAN
Yes.

DOCTOR
Are they still at home with you?

WOMAN
Son is. Works with his Father.
Daughter's left - only see her
when she wants something.

DOCTOR
And how about you? Have you
started your menopause?

WOMAN
Yes.

DOCTOR
Everything okay?

WOMAN
(Shrugs. Then -) So will you
give me some sleeping tablets?

DOCTOR
Maybe, but it might not solve
your problem.

WOMAN
Give me a night's sleep, though,
wouldn't it?

DOCTOR
How much alcohol are you
drinking?

WOMAN
I don't drink. My husband drinks.

DOCTOR
Is that a problem?

WOMAN
No.

DOCTOR
Are you taking any drugs?
Medication...?

WOMAN
(*Shakes her head*)

DOCTOR
How about coffee? Are you
drinking a lot to keep awake?

WOMAN
Coffee - yes.

DOCTOR
Tea?

WOMAN
Yes.

DOCTOR
Well, we might have to look at
that, mightn't we? (*Pause.*) Okay.
Your blood pressure is slightly
raised, but I'm not overly
concerned about that at the
moment. But I do want you to have
a blood test, just to check your
thyroid. You can make an
appointment at reception.
Alright?

WOMAN
Yes.

DOCTOR
Now... I will give you something
to help you sleep, but just
enough for a week.

WOMAN
What good's that?

DOCTOR
Insomnia isn't a disease.
Sleeping tablets won't make it go
away. We need to find the cause.
Now you're obviously anxious, and
a little depressed; so I want you
to come back, and speak to our
counsellor.

WOMAN
What for?

DOCTOR
I think she'd be able to help
you.

WOMAN

But you'll give me the
prescription now?

DOCTOR

Yes. But will you see the
counsellor? I think it will do
you some good. You think about it
for a moment.

*(The WOMAN looks anxious, as the DOCTOR enters data onto
her computer.)*

**Pouring rain. A middle-aged couple scuttle out of a
reasonably large Edwardian semi-detached suburban house,
loading gardening equipment into the back of a large Volvo
estate car. They drive off.**

**An allotment. It has stopped raining. The couple are TOM
and GERRI. He has a beard, straggly hair and spectacles.
She has long hair. Both are informal and alternative in
demeanour and attire.**

**TOM is turning over soil with a spade. He stops, and joins
GERRI, who is planting.**

GERRI

Don't do your back in.

TOM

I know. It doesn't get any
easier. Job for a younger man,
this.

GERRI

Joe used to love it here.

TOM

Did you speak to my son and heir?

GERRI

I left him a message on his
answer-phone. *(She plants a
plant.)*

TOM

It's going to rain again.

More heavy rain. TOM and GERRI are sitting in their nearby shelter on the allotment, sipping mugs of tea. They share a joke. They look happy and contented.

Clear, bright weather. A train passes a Land-Rover, which drives across a barren piece of wasteland by the River Thames. A motor barge on the water; the cityscape in the distance. The car circles a drilling rig, and stops.

TOM gets out of the passenger seat, wearing a hard hat, a suit and tie, and a yellow safety jacket. He and a young male colleague, who has been driving, walk over to the rig. Two men are laying out a long metal tube on a bench.

TOM (CONT'D)
Alright, then?

WORKER
Alright, boss.

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
What you got? You hit rock, then?

WORKER
Yeah - we just gone through. This is the fourth, so I reckon, what? ... Seventeen-and-a-half, give or take.

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Seventeen and a half? *(To TOM)*
It's got to be a scour hollow.

TOM
Probably.

(The other WORKER joins them.)

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Alright, Mick?

MICK
Alright?

TOM
Hello.

(MICK helps the first WORKER, who unscrews a small section at one end of the tube.)

TOM (CONT'D)
How long will it take us to get back?

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Twenty-five, with traffic. Are
you hungry?

TOM
I am.

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Good.

FIRST WORKER
There you go.

*(He has removed the section. He holds it out to TOM, who
scrapes off a small sample of muddy clay with his fingers.
He inspects it for a second.)*

TOM
(cheerfully) Yes! London clay!
Thank you!

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Thanks, Andy - See you!

ANDY
Cheers!

TOM
Ta ta.

*(TOM and his colleague get into the car and drive off, as
ANDY and MICK get on with the job.)*

**A large industrial shed. Long tables. Technicians
inspecting and logging sample of clay, etc. TOM'S COLLEAGUE
unwraps such a sample. He examines a small piece of clay
with a meganifier. TOM looks on.**

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
Dusting of mica.

TOM
Let's have a look.

(TOM'S COLLEAGUE passes him the sample and the magnifier.)

TOM'S COLLEAGUE
'Ts quite nice.

(TOM inspects it, and laughs. Warm, enthusiastic.)

TOM
Very nice.

(His COLLEAGUE is breaking off another chunk of earth. TOM points to it.)

TOM (CONT'D)

It's just a dusting, isn't it?

TOM'S COLLEAGUE

Yeah.

The Medical Centre. Another small, unsympathetic room. GERRI is counselling JANET, the insomniac from the first scene.

GERRI

What would you say was the
happiest moment of your life?

JANET

What d'you mean?

GERRI

Your nicest memory. Have a think.

(JANET sits in silence. Miserable and expressionless. GERRI waits for a while.)

GERRI (CONT'D)

When your children were born?
Your wedding day?

JANET

I don't know.

GERRI

Take your time.

JANET

I can't remember.

GERRI

Can't, or won't?

JANET

Mm?

GERRI

Can't or won't remember?

JANET

Don't know what I'm doing here -
I don't want to come. Don't want
to talk about my family - why
should I? None of your business.
(MORE)

JANET (CONT'D)

All I need is a good night's sleep, and nobody's helping me.

GERRI

Janet, I want to help you - that's why we're here. I know it's not easy to talk about personal things. Suppose the boot was on the other foot, and someone came to you - say, your daughter, and said "I haven't been sleeping for months". What would you say to them?

JANET

Go to the doctor.

GERRI

What else would you say?

JANET

I don't know.

GERRI

What would you ask her?

JANET

Is she eating alright, or something like that.

(GERRI looks at her for a few moments.)

GERRI

Good. Anything else?

JANET

That all she needed was a couple of months of proper sleep, and then that would sort it out.

GERRI

Sort what out?

JANET

The sleeping.

GERRI

Okay. *(She reflects for a moment.)* On a scale of one to ten, how happy would you say you are, Janet?

JANET

One.

GERRI

One. (*Slight smile.*) I think there's room for improvement there, don't you? What is the one thing that would improve your life apart from sleep?

JANET

A different life.

GERRI

A different life. Change is frightening, isn't it?

JANET

Nothing changes.

(*Pause.*)

A little later. GERRI sees JANET out of the room.

GERRI

I hope to see you next week, Janet. Same time. I'll be here, but it's up to you. No pressure. Bye.

(*JANET walks out of the room without saying anything. GERRI sighs, closes the door, and moves back into the room.*)

Later still. Outside GERRI's room. She comes out with a CLIENT, who puts on his cap.

GERRI (CONT'D)

Bye, bye, Sam.

SAM

Bye.

(*GERRI shuts her door, and crosses the waiting-room.*)

GERRI

Look at you! You look like you're fit to burst.

(*She is addressing TANYA, the pregnant doctor we met earlier. They walk along together, GERRI gently touching TANYA's tummy.*)

TANYA

I am fit to burst. Big Boy's
wrestling his way down.

GERRI

Well, if he pops out, give me a
shout.

TANYA

Sweetheart, I'll do more than
shout!

*(GERRI laughs and goes into an office. An attractive,
middle-aged woman with her hair pinned up and wearing a low-
cut dress, is sitting at a computer, surrounded by piles of
files. She is wearing reading glasses.)*

WOMAN

Hi, Gerri.

GERRI

Hello, Mary

MARY

You're a sight for sore eyes.

GERRI

Can you process these for me?
(She is carrying some documents.)

MARY

Oh, well, seeing as it's you...

(She takes the documents.)

GERRI

How are you?

MARY

I'm... snowed under, to be
honest. *(She takes off her
spectacles.)* And I've got a
headache.

GERRI

Have you seen the doctor? *(MARY
laughs.)* Hello, Gemma!

(A young woman is passing her.)

MARY

I don't suppose you fancy a drink
tonight, do you?

GERRI

I'd love one.

MARY
Oh, great - are you sure?

GERRI
I've only got an hour.

MARY
That's alright.

GERRI
Tom's cooking supper.

MARY
Oh, lovely!

GERRI
I'll see you later.

MARY
Yeah... Yeah.

(GERRI goes. MARY reflects for a moment, then resumes work.)

In a busy bar. GERRI and MARY are seated at a table, sharing a bottle of white wine.

MARY (CONT'D)
D'you know, Gerri, I've never
been with a man who could cook.

GERRI
Haven't you?

MARY
No. They could do lots of other
things. *(Laughs.)*

GERRI
That doesn't get you fed.

MARY
Yeah - keeps a girl happy,
though. *(Giggles.)*

GERRI
And you can't cook.

MARY
No. Well, I can a bit, but it's
not really my thing.

GERRI
No, it's not!

MARY

Oh - don't remind me about that,
Gerri!

(She giggles again. GERRI smiles.)

GERRI

You could put an ad in the paper:
"Chef wanted."

MARY

Yeah. "Chef-stroke-boyfriend
required for gorgeous girl" - no:
"mature woman, with cat."
(Laughs.) No - "matur-ish." We
don't want to put 'em off, do we?

*(MARY now observes a handsome middle-aged MAN in a suit.
He is standing at the bar, alone, drinking a glass of
wine.)*

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, it's really lovely the way
you and Tom do everything
together.

GERRI

We're very lucky.

MARY

Yeah, you are - but you deserve
it: you're both such lovely
people.

GERRI

Oops - me halo's slipping!

MARY

Yeah, Saint Gerri. *(Chuckles.)*
No, but I'm really comfortable
with where I am in my life, as
you know. I've got my lovely
little garden flat; I've got a
good job; I've got my health,
touch wood, I've got my
independence. I haven't got
anybody telling me what to do.
I mean, don't get me wrong, it's
not all rosy - I have good days
and bad days like everyone else,
don't I? But, hey!!

GERRI

Are you going to do something
about your garden this year?

MARY

Oh Gerri, no - don't remind me,
I'm really guilty about that.
I've neglected it, haven't I?

GERRI

Yeah, you have.

MARY

Oh, but yesterday... I was just
brushing my teeth, and I looked
out the window, and I saw these
two little daffodils peeping over
the top of the grass. I must get
it cut this year.

GERRI

You have to get yourself that
lawn-mower, Mary.

MARY

Yeah, I know. Couldn't I just get
a man in? It wouldn't cost too
much.

GERRI

Hmm. "Gardener-stroke-chef-stroke-
boyfriend."

MARY

(Laughing) Yeah. Oh, but no... I
don't want to spend too much
money at the moment, because I'm
going to get myself a little car.

GERRI

Oh, are you?

MARY

Yeah - I've decided, it's about
time.

GERRI

It's a big step.

MARY

Yeah, I know - it's exciting,
isn't it? I mean, I've got a
little bit of money - not a lot,
but... enough. But it does mean
I'm going to have to cut back on
my, you know - shoes, clothes,
jewellery, all my little knick-
knacky things. But that's alright
because I've got loads of
clothes. I mean, my wardrobe
isn't big enough.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

In fact I'm not doing anything this weekend, so I'm going to get up really early, sort out all my winter clothes, put 'em into plastic bags and shove 'em under the bed. *(She picks up the wine bottle, and aims for GERRI's glass.)* Can I top you up?

GERRI

No, I'm going now, Mary.

MARY

Oh, aren't you going to help me finish the bottle?

GERRI

No, really.

MARY

Oh, alright. Well, I think I'm going to stay for a little while.

(She pours herself the rest of the wine, and glances at the MAN at the bar.)

MARY (CONT'D)

How's Joe? Have you heard from him this week?

GERRI

No. But I'm sure he's fine.

MARY

Still not got a girlfriend?

GERRI

I've no idea.

MARY

He must have something on the go, a good-looking boy like him.

(GERRI has put on her cape. She gets up, and kisses MARY.)

GERRI

See you on Thursday.

MARY

Oh...

GERRI

And you're coming for supper on Saturday.

MARY

Oh, lovely. Thank you, Gerri. Give my love to that lovely Tom.

GERRI
I will. You take care.

MARY
Yeah.

(GERRI goes. MARY prepares to flirt with the MAN at the bar, who for a moment glances in her direction. But almost immediately, MARY's seductive expression melts to horror, as an attractive YOUNG WOMAN with long, blonde hair and a broad smile arrives, and embraces the man. They kiss on the lips, and MARY looks crestfallen.)

GERRI is enjoying her ample, beautiful back garden. She tends to a bush, takes a relaxing breath, and goes into her conservatory, where she sprays a plant or two. Then she picks a leaf, which she sniffs as she enters her expansive, attractive kitchen. She crosses to the stove, where TOM is stirring. He is wearing an apron. She puts her arms round him from behind, and snuggles up.

GERRI
What's for supper?

TOM
Arrabiata. Are you hungry?

GERRI
I'm starving.

(TOM stops stirring, and turns to face her.)

TOM
Hello.

(He kisses her on the lips.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Have a taste.

(He holds out the wooden spoon.)

GERRI
I hope it's not too hot.

TOM
You can never tell with chillies.

(They taste the sauce in turn, GERRI first.)

GERRI
No...

TOM

No?

GERRI

Oh! - it's comin' out me ears!

TOM

Good. Glass of wine?

(GERRI is getting some plates.)

GERRI

No, I've had a couple. Oh, go on - just a smidgeon.

TOM

That's the spirit.

(He pours some red wine. GERRI sets the plates on the table.)

A few minutes later. They are sitting at the table, eating.

GERRI

How was your day?

TOM

Good. I was out and about; getting my hands dirty. How about you?

GERRI

Disappointing. Pass me the parsley.

(He does so.)

TOM

No breakthroughs?

GERRI

I had my alcoholic teacher in again.

TOM

Yeah.

GERRI

He was pissed as a fart.

TOM

(Amused) Really?

GERRI
(Smiling) It was very upsetting,
actually.

TOM
How did you handle it?

GERRI
I bought him a double scotch.
No, I had to challenge him. I
told him it was up to him.

TOM
How did he take that?

GERRI
Well, I don't know. We'll have to
see.

TOM
Well, at least he came.

GERRI
Hmm. Have we heard from Joe?

TOM
No. But I haven't checked my
emails.

GERRI
I'll ring him later. I'd love to
see him.

TOM
He's alright.

(GERRI reflects, maternally.)

An airy room on a busy main street. Traffic noise outside. Twenty or so chairs, arranged in a square. A few people are waiting, This is a community law centre.

JOE enters, a young man of around thirty. He is carrying a wrapped sandwich and a can of Coke. He addresses an elderly MAN, who is with a young WOMAN.

JOE
Mr Gupta?

(MR GUPTA and the WOMAN get up. JOE shakes MR GUPTA's hand.)

JOE (CONT'D)
Joe Hepple. Nice to meet you.

WOMAN
I just came with him.

JOE
Ah - good. Just follow me this way, please.

(He leads them out of the room.)

JOE (CONT'D)
This way.

An upstairs corridor. They follow him into his tiny, cluttered office.

JOE (CONT'D)
Excuse the mess. You sit there, Mr Gupta *(He moves a chair.)*
And... *(to the WOMAN)* ... I'll pop you there.

(He closes the door.)

A little later. JOE is sitting at his desk. He has a letter in his hand.

JOE (CONT'D)
Okay, now we've opened all these letters, and I've seen all I need to see for the time being. Obviously, it's a sizeable correspondence, and, understandably, Mr Gupta hasn't exactly been in a position to open them, seeing as he's been in hospital for the past ten weeks. But, you're looking fit and raring to go, Mr Gupta.

(MR GUPTA has not understood any of this, and turns to his friend.)

MR GUPTA
Tieh?

(The WOMAN shakes her head, meaning to say, not to bother. JOE picks up another document.)

WOMAN

Excuse me...

JOE

Mm?

WOMAN

Er, how long will this take?

JOE

Oh, not too long.

WOMAN

Er, it's, just, I have to get back to work.

JOE

What d'you do?

WOMAN

Er,... restaurant; family business.

JOE

Oh - tasty.

(She isn't amused.)

JOE (CONT'D)

Okay. Erm, it's important for Mr Gupta to understand that at this point he is in no danger of being evicted.

(Speaking in Hindustani, the WOMAN explains the situation to a confused MR GUPTA.)

JOE (CONT'D)

Okay? I'm just going to take you briefly through what's going to happen in Court. Erm... I'll be representing Mr Gupta on the day. We'll put the case to the judge, and... *(a phone rings)* he will agree to adjourn, which will then give us time to sort things out, okay? So, I'll just... excuse me *(He answers the phone.)* Hello?

Early on a Saturday evening. MARY puffs on a cigarette, puts it out on the pavement, a scuttles across a busy main road.

Inside TOM and GERRI's front hall. MARY arrives, and knocks. As GERRI come to the door...

GERRI
I'll get it!

TOM
(elsewhere) Alright!

(GERRI opens the door. MARY is carrying a potted plant.)

GERRI
Hello, Mary!

MARY
Hi, Gerri. It's stopped raining,
thank goodness.

GERRI
I know. Welcome!

MARY
(entering) Oh, thank you. I
bought you a little present -
some thyme.

GERRI
That's lovely!

MARY
It's nothing much.

GERRI
(taking it) Thank you.

MARY
Oh, there he is!

TOM
Hello, love!

(MARY hugs TOM.)

MARY
Hello, Tom. Oh....! Oh, I'm sorry -
I just had to have a cigarette,
and I know you don't like the
smell.

TOM
(Laughing) Don't be daft!

MARY
I'm trying to give up though -
aren't I, Gerri?

GERRI

Oh, are you?

MARY

Only, I've just had a bad experience on the tube.

TOM

Are you alright?

GERRI

What happened?

MARY

There was this man...

GERRI

What did he do?

MARY

Well, he was lookin' at me. I mean, every time I looked up, he was lookin' at me...

TOM

Oh, dear.

MARY

Yeah, it was a bit unsettling, to be honest.

GERRI

Well, you're here now.

MARY

Exactly. And I'm very happy to be here with both of you.

(She pulls a bottle of wine out of her bag, and gives it to TOM.)

MARY (CONT'D)

This is for you, Tom.

TOM

Ah!

MARY

It's nothing special.

TOM

(reading the label) Buenos Aires.

MARY

Yeah, because I thought - well, you went there, didn't you, the two of you? Argentina.

TOM
No, we didn't - no.

GERRI
No.

MARY
Didn't you?

TOM
No.

GERRI
Tom's been to Brazil. Digging his
holes.

TOM
Yeah.

MARY
Oh, I'm so stupid sometimes!

TOM
That's alright.

GERRI
That's fine.

MARY
Oh, honestly, *(She mimes shooting
herself in the head.)* Oh, what
are you going to do with me, eh?
I'm just going to run upstairs -
is that alright? I won't be a
minute.

*(She hurries upstairs. GERRI repeats MARY's shooting-
herself-in-the-head gesture. Amused, TOM and GERRI go into
the kitchen.)*

**A bit later, in the kitchen. TOM is chopping vegetables at
the table. GERRI is preparing salad. MARY has a glass of
white wine.**

MARY (CONT'D)
I haven't seen you since
Christmas, Tom.

TOM
Really?

(MARY looks at the set table.)

MARY
Oh, it's just the three of us
tonight.

GERRI
Yes.

MARY
Oh, I'm surprised.

GERRI
I did tell you.

MARY
Did you?

GERRI
Mm.

TOM
We wanted you all to ourselves,
Mary.

MARY
Oh...! Thank you, Tom. That's
what all the boys say.

(TOM looks at her.)

MARY (CONT'D)
No, I wasn't sure what to wear. I
didn't know if it was going to be
one of your lovely big dinner
parties, or just us - you know,
casual...

(TOM moves to the sink, next to MARY.)

TOM
I think you've got it just about
right, Mary.

GERRI
You look lovely.

MARY
Oh, thank you, Gerri. *(She yawns)*
Oh... sorry

GERRI
Did you have a late night?

MARY
Oh.... I stayed up, watching the
film. I couldn't wake up this
morning. No, but it was lovely,
having a lie-in on my day off.

GERRI
We stayed in.

MARY
Did you?

GERRI
We listened to some music.

MARY
Oh...?

TOM
Amongst other things.

(A slightly chilly reaction to this from MARY.)

MARY
I thought Joe might be coming.

TOM
I don't think so.

(TOM collects the chopping board from the table.)

GERRI
He's coming tomorrow.

MARY
Oh, that's a shame. I won't see him. Did Gerri tell you about me getting a car, Tom?

TOM
Yes.

MARY
What d'you think?

TOM
Exciting. What're you gonna get?

MARY
Well, I dunno.... er, something small and.... red.

TOM
Small and red? Well, that narrows it down.

MARY
Yeah.

GERRI
I hope you're hungry, Mary.

MARY

Oh, I'm starving, Gerri. You know me.

GERRI

We'll have to fatten you up.

MARY

Oh, it's lovely having your dinner cooked for you. You don't really bother when you're by yourself, do you? I don't, anyway.

TOM

You're looking well.

MARY

Oh, thank you, Tom!

GERRI

You're nice and slim.

MARY

Am I? Well, I've always been slim, haven't I?

GERRI

Unlike me. Middle-aged spread.
(*She pinches her "spare tyre".*)

TOM

Shut up! You're perfect -
gorgeous in every way. (*He kisses her on the cheek.*) And you know it!

(*Pause. TOM makes salad dressing. GERRI smiles at MARY, who is looking a little bleak. She manages a half-smile, and finishes her wine.*)

GERRI

Sit yourself down, Mary. Help yourself to another drink.

(*MARY sits at the table. GERRI squeezes TOM's arm.*)

GERRI (CONT'D)

How's that dressing coming along?

TOM

As well as can be expected.

(*TOM gets on with it. GERRI stirs a pot on the stove. MARY pours herself another drink, and continues to look bleak.*)

Later, in the living room. Dark outside. GERRI and MARY are sitting, side by side, on the sofa. TOM is sitting ion a armchair, facing them. All have glasses of wine on the go, but only MARY is fairly drunk.

MARY

I hear you're going to the
Emerald Isle again, Tom.

TOM

That's correct. Rent a cottage,
take the car.

GERRI

Put the tent in the back.

TOM

And the sleeping-bags. If the
weather's nice we might do a bit
of camping.

MARY

Oh, no! I wouldn't fancy sleeping
in a tent, thank you very much.

TOM

No, I never had you down as one
of nature's Girl Guides, Mary.

MARY

No, Tom! But I am always
prepared. (*Laughs*)

GERRI

Yes, but what for?

MARY

For anything, Gerri. You know me!
(*Laughs*)

GERRI

(*Chuckling*) Yes, I do!

MARY

I'm not going to get a holiday
this year. But then, I never do,
do I, Gerri? Because I haven't
got anyone to go with. It's
alright for you two - you've got
each other.

GERRI

We're going to the Ring of Kerry.

MARY

The what?

TOM

The Ring of Kerry. It's an area.

GERRI

Tralee, Dingle Bay...

MARY

Oh, lovely - you've been there before, haven't you?

GERRI

That was Donegal.

MARY

Oh.

TOM

The geologist stands on the beach with his back to the sea, and looks at the cliffs.

GERRI

Whilst the geologist's wife stands on the beach with her back to the cliffs, looking at the sea.

(MARY ponders this hazily, then -)

MARY

You see, I can't afford to buy my car and have a holiday. But, if I had more money, then I could do both.

TOM

But when you've got your car, Mary, you'll be able to go wherever you want, very reasonably.

MARY

Exactly, Tom. That's exactly why I'm getting it. You see, I like just taking off and escaping, don't I, Gerri?

GERRI

Mm.

MARY

I feel like I'm being somebody else.

TOM
Really? Who's that, then?

GERRI
Tom!

(TOM grins. GERRI can't conceal a smile.)

MARY
I like to get on the train... But
you see, the car is cheaper than
the train, isn't it?

GERRI
Not environmentally.

MARY
Oh, what? You mean... *(she stamps
her feet.)* Those are my carbon
footprints, Gerri. *(Giggles.)*

GERRI
Yes, I know.

(MARY laughs uproariously.)

TOM
Financially, cars are cheaper.
That's why there's no incentive
to go by train.

GERRI
What about the airlines?

TOM
No government wants to increase
the duty on aviation fuel.

MARY
(vaguely) No.

TOM
And this government won't invest
in the railways, so anything we
do is a piss in the ocean.

MARY
Absolutely.

GERRI
And then there's the big
corporations, who keep their
lights on all night in empty
office blocks.

TOM

And we're all expected to do our bit with eco-bulbs.

MARY

I know. Should I stop recycling then, Gerri?

GERRI

No.

TOM

You've got to set an example.

MARY

Yeah.

GERRI

Plant a few tomatoes.

TOM

Or courgettes.

(GERRI laughs quietly.)

MARY

I am very environmentally friendly, actually.

TOM

Are you?

MARY

Yeah. I don't fly. I don't live in a house that's more than I need. I don't cook.

TOM

Other people cook for you, though.

MARY

Who?!

TOM

You get take-aways, don't you?

MARY

That doesn't count. Everybody gets take-aways. You've built whole motorways, Tom. How environmentally friendly is that?

TOM

Exactly!

MARY

Yes! Cars, more cars, more cars... At least, I'm buying an old car.

GERRI

Recycled.

MARY

Yeah!

TOM

Yet we're constantly told that the measure of a thriving economy is the sale of new cars.

MARY

Yes, but, Tom... If I buy a new car, that's another car.

TOM

You're absolutely right, Mary. And would you like some coffee?

(MARY blinks vaguely. Then -)

MARY

No, thank you.

GERRI

I'd like my usual.

In the kitchen, TOM stirs the coffee in the cafetiere, and waits for it to brew.

Meanwhile, in the living-room, MARY strokes GERRI's arm.

MARY

Are you alright, Gerri?

GERRI

Yes, Mary, I'm fine. How are you?

(MARY reflects, exuding drink and sadness. Then -)

MARY

I'm happy!

GERRI

Good.

MARY

I just wanted to say, that if you ever need to share anything, I'm here for you. I'm a very good listener.

GERRI

Thank you, Mary. But I'm fine.

MARY

Yeah, I know.

(Pause. Then MARY throws her arms tightly around GERRI, who is a little taken aback, though she doesn't show it to MARY.)

GERRI

It's very kind of you, Mary.

(Staying in the clinch, MARY turns her head, so that she and GERRI are now cheek-to-cheek.)

MARY

Oh, Gerri! Everybody needs someone to talk to, don't they?

GERRI

Yes, Mary, they do.

(MARY breaks the embrace.)

MARY

Oh, well... Onwards and upwards!

GERRI

You'd better stay the night.

MARY

No.... no.

GERRI

Well, I think you should.

MARY

(saluting) Alright, Gerri - you're the boss.

GERRI

We'll find you a t-shirt again.

MARY

Will you?

Upstairs, on the landing. GERRI comes out of the bathroom, holding a towel and a new toothbrush.

GERRI
I've found you a toothbrush.

(MARY is sitting on the stairs.)

MARY
I sometimes wonder what he's doing; if he thinks about me - I bet he does.

GERRI
How old was he?

MARY
He'll be sixty-four now.

(TOM is at the top of the stairs.)

TOM
Sixty-four? Blimey, he's older than me!

GERRI
Almost a pensioner.

TOM
He'll be past it now, Mary - give us your hand.

(MARY takes his hand, and he helps her up.)

MARY
Oh.... no, Tom.... he was lovely.

GERRI
Well, we all grow old.

(MARY leans unsteadily on the bannister rail. She lowers her voice.)

MARY
Oh, no, but... he was very, very, sexy Gerri - d'you know what I mean?

TOM
Too much information!

(This amuses GERRI.)

MARY
I bet he regrets it, deep down. I hope he does. *(She leans in a doorway.)* He was my big love. But he was married.
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Well, what can you do, Tom? You can't walk around with a label saying, "Don't fall in love with me, I'm married", can you?

(She has now staggered to TOM at the bathroom door.)

TOM

Some people wear a ring. *(He displays his.)*

MARY

He didn't. But he wasn't a bad person. He loved me.

TOM

Sounds to me like he was a duplicitous shit.

GERRI

Tom!

(TOM and GERRI exchange a look.)

MARY

D'you think it was my fault, Tom?

TOM

No, I don't, Mary. Honest.

GERRI

It takes two to tango.

(MARY staggers back to GERRI, and holds her hands. TOM raises his eyebrows, and closes the bathroom door behind him.)

MARY

Oh, so you think it was my fault, Gerri?

GERRI

I didn't say that.

MARY

No, I know you didn't, really.

(Now she leans on the doorway of JOE's bedroom.)

MARY (CONT'D)

I blame my big heart.

GERRI

Well, we all have to make choices, don't we?

MARY

Why do I always get it wrong,
Gerri? I mean, look what happened
when I got divorced from that
shit! I let him palm me off with
five thousand nothing pounds. And
what am I left with now? Sod all!
I'm living in a poky rented flat
when I should have my own home at
my age. It's not fair!

*(She is fraught. She turns around, staggers into the room,
and collapses onto the bed, face down.)*

MARY (CONT'D)

Bastard!

(GERRI proceeds to put her to bed.)

**A little later. TOM and GERRI are sitting up in bed,
reading books. Pause. GERRI closes her book, and takes off
her spectacles.**

GERRI

My goodness!

TOM

Mm?

GERRI

She gets worse.

TOM

I know. Desperate.

*(GERRI puts away her book and spectacles and turns off her
bedside light.)*

GERRI

I feel a bit guilty.

TOM

What?

GERRI

Well, you know.

TOM

No.....

(GERRI lies down next to TOM. He puts his arm around her.)

GERRI

No. You're right.

TOM
I don't think I really enjoyed
History at school.

GERRI
Didn't you?

TOM
Maybe I did.

TOM (CONT'D)
It's just that the older you get
the more relevant it seems. *(He
puts his book and spectacles
away.)* To state the bleedin'
obvious.

GERRI
We'll be a part of History, soon.

TOM
Exactly.

(GERRI laughs.)

Next morning. Clear, Spring weather. TOM is outside his house. Just as he opens the tail-gate of his car, JOE arrives on his bicycle. He is wearing a cyclist's safety helmet.

TOM (CONT'D)
Aha!

JOE
Aha!

TOM
(funny voice) What are you doing,
riding on the pavement, young
man?

JOE
(Alighting) I'm breaking the law,
officer.

TOM
Ey, up!

JOE
Hiya!

(They embrace for a moment.)

TOM
How long'd it take you?

JOE
About an hour.

TOM
Are you knackered?

JOE
I'm ready for bed.

TOM
Late night?

JOE
Hangover. D'you want a hand?

TOM
Yes, please.

JOE
I'll stick this away.

TOM
Alright.

(As he carries his bike towards the side door of the house, GERRI and MARY appear at the front door. At first, MARY doesn't see JOE.)

MARY
Oh, he's back. That was quick,
Tom. Did you get the manure?

TOM
Compost.

MARY
Here's Joe!

JOE
Hi, Mary.

MARY
Hello, Joe. What a surprise.

(JOE kisses MARY on her cheek.)

JOE
Are you alright?

MARY
I'm great. How are you - oh,
continental! *(JOE has kissed her
on the other cheek.)* Oh, he's all
sweaty! *(She strokes JOE's
cheek.)*

JOE
I've been riding all morning.

MARY
Have you? I like your hat.

GERRI
Aha!

JOE
Aha!

(They hug.)

MARY
Ah, that's right.... never forget
to kiss your mum!

JOE
I never do.

MARY
No - you're a good boy, aren't
you?

JOE
Yeah.

(GERRI joins TOM at the car.)

MARY
I remember when you were this
big. You were a naughty boy.

(JOE unlocks the side door.)

JOE
I still am, from time to time.

MARY
Oh, really?

JOE
I like your coat.

MARY
Oh, thank you. I think I'm a bit
over dressed for a Sunday morning
- what d'you think?

(She opens her coat briefly.)

JOE
Is that what you wore in bed?

(He puts his bike inside. MARY joins him.)

MARY
I slept in your bed, actually -
is that alright?

JOE
As long as you cleaned the
sheets!

MARY
No, I didn't actually - is that a
problem?

JOE
We'll have to wait and see, won't
we?

MARY
Oh, right. Oh, sorry, Tom! I'm in
your way.

*(TOM is passing her with a bag of compost. MARY follows JOE
into the street, giggling.)*

MARY (CONT'D)
All these strong men!

(JOE passes her with another bag of compost.)

Look at his muscles. *(She feels
JOE's arm.)*

GERRI
That's why we had him!

(MARY giggles. TOM and JOE join the women on the pavement.)

MARY
Alright, well.... I'm off, then.

TOM
You don't want a lift to the
station?

MARY
Oh, no, it's alright.

TOM
Are you sure?

MARY
Yeah, I'll be fine. I could do
with a walk.

GERRI
Yeah.

MARY
Sorry about.... you know....

GERRI

It's okay.

TOM

It was good to see you.

MARY

Oh, thank you, Tom.

GERRI

Are you alright?

MARY

Yeah; you know... Had a bit of a wild night, Joe. *(Pause.)* Well, I'd best be off.

(She glances over her shoulder, away from the others, at the horror of the lonely, empty day ahead of her.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh - thanks for saving me that breakfast, Gerri. It was really delicious!

GERRI

You're very welcome, Mary.

MARY

Yeah. It's lovely to see you, Joe. I'll see you soon, I hope - yeah?

JOE

See you soon.

MARY

Yeah, hopefully. *(Pause)* Well, have a lovely day together, all of you.

TOM

Right. Ta-ta, then.

MARY

Yeah..... bye.

(She walks off.)

MARY (CONT'D)

See you on Tuesday, Gerri.

GERRI

Bye, Mary. Take care!

MARY
(Over her shoulder) Bye. Bye,
Joe!

JOE
Bye.

MARY
Bye!

TOM
Bye!

(TOM and JOE unload more bags. After some distance, MARY glances round at them for the last time. Then she disappears.)

GERRI pushes a wheelbarrow through the allotments. Passing a man hoeing, she joins TOM and JOE at their patch, and sets down the barrow.

GERRI
There you go.

JOE
Delicious!

GERRI
Present for you.

(JOE empties the wheelbarrow of compost. TOM is working in a kneeling position.)

JOE
Matt's getting married.

GERRI
Oh, Matthew!

TOM
Oh, is he? Matt with the guitar?

JOE
No, that's Paul.

TOM
Oh - Matt. Yeah.

GERRI
That's great!

TOM
Have you met the young lady in question?

JOE
I certainly have.

TOM
Is she worthy of him?

JOE
No, they hate each other.

GERRI
You mean, is he worthy of her?

TOM
Oh! Beg your pardon, Mrs
Pankhurst!

(GERRI laughs)

TOM (CONT'D)
Where's the stag-do this time?
Buenos Aires?

JOE
No, Dublin.

GERRI
Ooh, lovely.

TOM
Another capital city brought to
its knees!

JOE
Well, we'll try and leave it as
we find it.

GERRI
When are you going?

JOE
July - the wedding's August.

GERRI
Lovely. I'll make some tea.

(She goes towards the shed. The men continue to work.)

**TOM and GERRI sit side by side in their shed. JOE stands.
GERRI pours mugs of tea from a large Thermos flask.**

GERRI (CONT'D)
So, when is it going to be your
turn?

JOE
A week on Wednesday.

GERRI
Oh - you didn't say.

JOE
I didn't want to spoil the surprise.

TOM
I knew.

GERRI
Oh, no! I haven't bought a hat!

(Pause. They drink.)

GERRI (CONT'D)
Any news? Nobody...?

JOE
No. Still quiet on that front.

(TOM gives GERRI a gently sardonic look.)

GERRI
What...?

(They both smile. But JOE gazes reflectively into the distance.)

FADE TO BLACK

Title: 'SUMMER'

A bright, sunny day. In a train. An overweight, slightly dishevelled, middle-aged man staggers down the carriage, carrying two cans of lager and a bag of potato crisps. His attention is caught briefly by a young woman, who passes him going the other way. Arriving at his window seat, he is obliged to disturb a grumpy, middle-aged woman.

He is KEN.

KEN
Sorry, love. Excuse me.

(The woman gets up for him, and he sits down. Debris from previous food and beer is on the table. He opens a beer, and takes a swig. Then he starts on the crisps.)

TOM and GERRI's front door, from the inside. KEN's figure appears, through the frosted glass. He knocks vigorously. TOM sprints out of the kitchen, followed by GERRI.

TOM
(half-singing) Who's that a-
knocking at my door?

(He opens the door.)

KEN
It's only me!

TOM
Bugger off!

KEN
Hello, Tom, mate!

(They hug each other.)

KEN (CONT'D)
Hiya, Gerri, love!

GERRI
Hi, Ken! How are you?

KEN
I'm alright!

(He hugs GERRI.)

GERRI
Oh - crushed ribs!!

KEN
Oh, sorry!

TOM
Give us your bag.

(He takes it.)

KEN
I'm bursting for a pee. I'll just
run upstairs - is that alright?

(He goes upstairs, followed by TOM.)

TOM
I'll put it on your bed. You're
in Joe's room.

Moments later, TOM goes downstairs.

More moments later... KEN comes into the kitchen, taking off his overcoat.

KEN
Ooh, that's better. I needed that!

TOM
I'll take your coat.

KEN
Thanks, mate.

(TOM hangs the coat up in the hall.)

KEN (CONT'D)
Gerri!!

(He hugs her again.)

GERRI
(laughing) Careful, Ken! Would you like a beer?

KEN
Oh, I'd love one - ta!

(TOM leaps onto KEN's back, so that KEN is giving him a piggy-back. They rotate exuberantly for a few moments, laughing and whooping, Then KEN puts TOM down. GERRI gives KEN a beer. She and TOM pick up glasses of wine.)

GERRI
Maniacs.

(They all laugh.)

A bit later, at the kitchen table. The three of them are eating supper and drinking wine. KEN also has a beer on the go.

KEN has his jacket off, and his shirt open at the collar, though he still has on his tie, very loosely. He munches his food urgently, grunting.

KEN
It's great, this.

GERRI
Thank you.

TOM
Better?

KEN
I haven't eaten since breakfast.

GERRI
(*unconvinced*) Haven't you?

KEN
No. It's great to see you both!
Cheers!

TOM
Cheers!

GERRI
Cheers!

(They clink glasses. TOM and GERRI chuckle together, gently. KEN gulps down his wine, and returns to his plate.)

GERRI (CONT'D)
So how's your flat, Ken?

KEN
Oh, same old, same old.

GERRI
You employed a cleaner yet?

KEN
If I got a cleaner in there,
she'd turn around and walk
straight out again.

TOM
You never know - it might give
her a purpose in life.

KEN
It's a bit of a mess but it suits
me.

GERRI
Yeah.

KEN
Five minutes walk to work. I
usually get the bus, but... if
I'm late, I have to leg it, if I
miss the bus. I stop at the caff,
pick up breakfast; I have a
croissant if they haven't got any
iced buns. Cup of tea.
(MORE)

KEN (CONT'D)

I have to smuggle it in. This lad Steve, he's a right fascist.

TOM

That's your boss, isn't it?

KEN

Yeah, my boss. My "supervisor".

GERRI

Is he still there?

KEN

Oh, yeah. He's only been with us three - no, two years. Thirty-five, looks twelve, treats me like a child. Bloody graduate!

TOM

You're a graduate.

GERRI

We're all graduates, aren't we?

KEN

Oh, yeah. So we are!

GERRI

You forgot. Would you like some salad, Ken?

KEN

No, no, I'm alright - ta.

GERRI

Sure.

KEN

Mm. I mean, you spend nearly forty years trying to get people out of the dole queue and into jobs. What thanks do you get? I'm sick of it!

TOM

At your age you could walk away, couldn't you?

KEN

I dunno...

TOM

You've got a good retirement package; index-linked pension.

KEN

I could've walked away two years ago.

TOM
Why didn't you?

GERRI
Well, it's not that easy, is it?

TOM
Isn't it?

GERRI
What would you do with your time
if you retired, Ken?

KEN
Pub. Eat, drink, be merry. I
don't know.

*(He takes a large swig of wine. TOM and GERRI exchange
glances.)*

How's Joe?

GERRI
He's fine.

TOM
He's well, yeah.

GERRI
You'll see him on Sunday.

KEN
Oh, great. Has he got a
girlfriend?

GERRI
No, I don't think so.

TOM
Not that we know of

KEN
Who else is coming to the
barbecue?

TOM
Jack and Janey...

GERRI
Tanya, a GP from work.

TOM
Mary.

KEN
Oh, Mary. Is she?

(GERRI looks at TOM.)

TOM
And then, of course, there's
yourself, sir. The guest of
honour!

GERRI
Hooray!

KEN
(*Laughing*) Oh, I don't know about
that!

(*Pause.*)

TOM
What else you been up to?

KEN
Oh, nothing much. Oh - oh, no -
hey! Guess where I went, the
other week.

TOM
Where?

KEN
Hull versus Derby.

TOM
(*Laughing*) Who d'you cheer for?

KEN
Derby, of course!

TOM
Did you?

KEN
I had to keep quiet - I got stuck
with the Hull mob.

TOM
Was there 'owt worth cheering?

KEN
No, it were crap.

TOM
I don't think my brother ever
missed one home game.

KEN
No. Me and me dad used to stand
with him on the terraces.

GERRI

He always used to leave Carl at your mum's on a Saturday afternoon. Do you remember?

KEN

Oh, yeah.

GERRI

You could hear the roar of the crowd from your front room, couldn't you?

TOM

Course you could; it's only three streets away.

KEN

Our house used to shake.

TOM

Ours did. They all did. During the Clough Glory Years, we were at the centre of the footballing universe.

GERRI

You never went!

TOM

I did occasionally. I wasn't manic, like him. (*Indicating KEN.*) I don't think Ronnie can afford to go now, the price of season tickets.

KEN

How is Ronnie? I haven't seen him for years.

TOM

He's seventy now, you know.

KEN

Is he?

GERRI

Carl's forty-one.

KEN

Bloody hell!

TOM

Linda's still working.

GERRI

She's kept him all his life. She's worn out, poor woman.

KEN

Is Carl still the same?

TOM

As far as we know. Very sad.

GERRI

Linda's heartbroken.

TOM

So's Ronnie.

GERRI

He's cut himself off.

KEN

I used to have a drink with Ronnie. When my dad was in the home, I'd go down to Derby. He was always in the pub.

TOM

Yep! That's one of the advantages of being free from the tyranny of regular employment.

KEN

Yeah, he never bought a round.

TOM

Are you accusing my brother of being a mean bastard?

KEN

Yeah, I am!

TOM

You're right, he is!

KEN

I know!

(They all laugh. KEN takes a swig of beer from the can.)

Later. It's now dark. The three are sitting in TOM and GERRI's garden. KEN takes a swig from yet another can of beer. He is smoking a cigarette, and he is drunk.

KEN (CONT'D)

I mean, I... you get to a certain age... I can't go to the places I used to; they don't like old fogies.

TOM

You don't have to go there.

KEN

Yeah, but they're my pubs.

TOM

Not any more, they're not.

KEN

Except they're not like pubs now.
They're all poncy bars.

TOM

Exactly. Things change.

KEN

When I started at work we'd all
socialise together. On a Friday
night everybody would go to the
pub for a drink. Go for a curry.
But now....

GERRI

It's hard, isn't it?

KEN

I mean, who would I go on holiday
with? There's nobody, let's face
it! The only time I went on
holiday was with Pam... Spain.
Nightmare.

TOM

Didn't you go away with Andrea?

GERRI

No, she went off with her sister.
You remember.

TOM

Oh, yeah.

KEN

Stood me up, the bitch.

TOM

It leaves a nasty taste, doesn't
it?

KEN

Girls in bikinis covered with
suntan oil. Boys flexing their
muscles on the beach. No, it's
not for me.

TOM

(Laughing) Oh, I don't know!

GERRI

(Laughing) Sounds nice. You could try a cultural holiday.

(TOM raises his eyebrows)

KEN

No, I'm not one for culture.

TOM

Pub culture!

KEN

Young people, young people.
Everything's for young people!
These bars, you know, they're
full of young people shouting
about nothing.

TOM

I seem to remember you got banned
from a number of pubs in Hull for
shouting about nothing. When you
were a young person.

KEN

(Laughing) Yeah... right.
"Ken: we like you. You're a good
bloke, you're good on the darts.
But if you talk about politics
again, you're barred."

(They all laugh.)

KEN (CONT'D)

No, but these kids. They're just
bloody noisy.

GERRI

Isle of Wight festival, 1968. We
were noisy, weren't we?

TOM

We weren't - he was.

GERRI

(To TOM) You were noisy.

TOM

(To GERRI) You were noisy.

GERRI

I know I was noisy. Remember
'Plastic Penny'?

KEN

Plastic Penny...

GERRI
Where are they now?

TOM
You fancied Plastic Penny.

(GERRI laughs)

TOM (CONT'D)
It's the young person's
prerogative to be noisy.

KEN
Yeah, I know, I know. It's all my
own fault. I'm not meeting the
right people. I'm stuck in a rut.

GERRI
It's not your fault, Ken.

TOM
You are stuck in a rut. That's
why you can't face retirement.

KEN
Yeah, I know. *(Pause.)* I'm
dreading getting on that train
Sunday night. I always do.

GERRI
Why?

KEN
I know what I'll be thinking.
There's nothing for me in Hull
anymore. Except my job. Most of
my friends have gone.

TOM
Hit you hard when Gordon died,
didn't it?

GERRI
And his wife.

TOM
(To GERRI) She gone?

GERRI
(To TOM) Yes!

KEN
Oh, yeah, they're both gone, now.
Funnily enough, I was thinking
about him on the way down. I
looked out the window, somewhere
in Lincolnshire.... I saw this
fucking tree. It re...
(MORE)

KEN (CONT'D)
(*He starts to cry*) It reminded me
of his funeral.

(*He breaks down.*)

GERRI
Oh, Ken! Ken, Ken!

(*She gets up, puts her arms round him, and cradles him.*)

GERRI (CONT'D)
Come on...

KEN
Gerri, I'm sorry.

GERRI
It's alright.

KEN
Sorry...

GERRI
It's alright, don't worry.

KEN
I'm sorry, Tom. I'm sorry.

(*TOM looks on, a little helpless and in pain.*)

In her bedroom, GERRI looks in the mirror, and combs her long, grey hair.

TOM and KEN have moved to the end of the back garden. TOM sways gently on JOE's old swing, while KEN, who has sobered up a bit, sits near him, smoking a cigarette.

TOM
How're you doin'?

KEN
I feel like shit.

TOM
You look like shit.

(*KEN laughs.*)

TOM (CONT'D)
Apart from that, how are you
doing?

KEN
I still feel like shit.

(TOM laughs.)

TOM
I'll race you to the top.

KEN
What?

TOM
Snake Pass - I'll race you.

KEN
(Laughing) Oh, yeah.

TOM
When was the last time you sat on
a bike?

KEN
1896. Penny Farthing.

(TOM laughs.)

TOM
I tell you what. You and me,
we'll walk... from Edale to
Matlock Bath. Take as long as it
takes. Stay in nice pubs along
the way. What d'you reckon?

KEN
I tell you what: I'll stay in the
pubs, you do the walking.

TOM
Bugger that! You're carrying the
bags!

(They both laugh.)

TOM (CONT'D)
How about it? Serious. We'll go
in the Autumn.

(Silence)

TOM (CONT'D)
What're we going to do with you,
then, eh? You can't go on like
this, that's for sure.

(Pause.)

The next morning. A bright, Summer's day. Blue sky. Static clouds. An electric pylon on the distant horizon.

GERRI strolls contentedly through the allotments. She carries a large basket. She arrives at her plot, and stops. She closes her eyes, enjoying the sun and the gentle breeze on her face.

Meanwhile, four men pull their caddies across a golf course - JOE, TOM's friend JACK (a genial, middle-aged fellow), TOM and KEN. Tall residential tower blocks in the distance.

JACK
So, is it every man for himself,
or are we having teams?

JOE
Teams.

TOM
If I may make so bold, I would
suggest that the best plays with
the worst, Jack.

JOE
Good idea.

TOM
In other words, you're with Ken.

JACK
Thanks. It's me and you, Ken! Is
there anything on it?

TOM
Bottle of wine.

JACK
You're on.

Now, under an expansive sky, they have parked their caddies at the first tee. They prepare to play. Jack holds up a coin.

JACK (CONT'D)
Are you ready?

KEN
Yeah.

TOM
Yeah, go on.

(JACK drops the coin.)

JACK
It's you.

(They all laugh.)

TOM
Shall I kick off?

JOE
Yeah, you take the honour.

(TOM gets out his golf club.)

TOM
So, this father and son team.

JOE
The Double Hepple...

TOM
Yes, take on these unknown
mavericks...

JACK
That's us, Ken!

KEN
Good luck, Tom!

TOM
And good luck to you, Mo. *(He
shakes KEN's hand.)* Can I just
say what a great pleasure it is
to be playing with you once
again?

JOE
Yeah, yeah. Watch and learn, Ken.

JACK
There's wine on it.

TOM
Right. *(He places his ball.)* Off
we go.

(He prepares to tee off. He has a practice swing. They all watch him. Suddenly, just as he is about to hit the ball, KEN does a very loud mock sneeze, putting his handkerchief to his nose. He roars with laughter and runs off. TOM drops his club, and runs after him, mock-hitting him as he goes.)

TOM (CONT'D)

I knew it! I knew you were going to do that! All my life I've had to put up with this nonsense from you, and I'm not going to have it any longer!

(They disappear over the horizon. JACK takes a shot instead.)

A bit later. KEN is urinating behind a bush.

JOE

Don't scare the wildlife, Ken!

TOM

How many times a night do you go?

KEN

(emerging) I lose count.

JACK

You've got to get it sorted out, Ken.

TOM

Yeah.

(KEN joins the others, who are playing at the base of an enormous electricity pylon. JACK tees off.)

JACK

Oh! What a beauty!

TOM

Lovely!

JACK

(To KEN) Good shot, partner!

KEN

Oh, yeah - sorry. Good shot, Jack!

JACK

Thank you.

(TOM puts his arm round KEN.)

TOM
You alright?

KEN
(Out of breath) Yeah.

(JOE prepares his ball.)

Later. Three long shadows on the putting green - JOE's, TOM's and JACK's. We only see their feet.

JACK
You want it out, Joe?

JOE
Yep.

(JACK takes the flag out of the hole.)

TOM
Good luck, partner.

JOE
It's all down to this.

(He putts the ball. It proceeds directly towards the hole...)

JOE (CONT'D)
Looks good...

(The ball drops into the hole. They all roar with delight. We see the shadow of TOM shaking JOE's hand.)

Now a small, old red car drives erratically down TOM and GERRI's street. MARY is at the wheel. She parks clumsily, half on the kerb. She gets out, with her bag and a bottle of wine. She runs to TOM and GERRI's front door. She knocks, but gets no reply. She is agitated. She adjusts her hair and her knickers. Then she suddenly realises something, and rushes through the side entrance, and into the back garden.

MARY
Gerri! Tom!

TOM
Ha! Here she is!

GERRI
Hello, Mary!

(Grouped round a garden table near a barbecue are TOM, GERRI, KEN, JACK and TANYA. GERRI is holding TANYA's baby. The table displays the remains of a meal. TOM is wearing shorts and his apron. MARY joins them excitedly.)

MARY
Sorry I'm so late!

TOM
What happened?

MARY
It's taken me three hours to get here. I left home at two. I had to ask a policeman in the end. I got so lost.

GERRI
You got lost?

MARY
Yeah, I'm really sorry.

GERRI
You've been here loads of times.

MARY
I know.

GERRI
You know the way.

MARY
Yeah, but I came in my car, Gerri. Oh, God!

TANYA
What's happened?

MARY
Oh, I'm so stupid! Why do I spoil everything? I wanted it to be a surprise.

TOM
You bought a car?

MARY
Yeah.

JOE
God help us.

MARY

I got it ever so cheap. I was really chuffed with myself, because they wanted seven hundred but I offered six hundred; but we settled at six-fifty. But they were a really nice couple of guys, though. I think they were brothers. One of them had a gold tooth.

TOM

Did he?

MARY

Yeah. But, they wanted cash. So I had to go to the cash point on Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. So, I couldn't collect it till after work on Friday. But they rang on Friday morning to find out what time I was going to go round with the money, and had I sorted out the insurance? Well, that hadn't even crossed my mind! So, I spent the whole of my lunch break on Friday sorting that out... And it was really expensive because I haven't driven since 1984. But I didn't tell you on Thursday, Gerri, because I knew I was coming here today, and I wanted to surprise you all.

TOM

Well, it is a surprise. Shall I take that from you? *(MARY is still clutching the wine.)*

MARY

Yeah - thanks, Tom.

TOM

Thank you.

MARY

(Giggling) Oh, Tom.... sorry.

(She gives him a hug.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Can I have a little glass, please?

TOM

Are you sure.

MARY

Yeah.

GERRI

You shouldn't drive if you're
drinking, Mary.

MARY

Yeah - I know, Gerri. But, you're
allowed a couple of glasses,
aren't you, Tanya?

TANYA

Small ones.

MARY

Yeah - Yeah, is that alright,
Tom?

TOM

Yeah.

(He goes off into the house. MARY giggles.)

MARY

Hi, Gerri. *(She kisses GERRI.)*
I'm really sorry.

GERRI

Oh, don't be so daft.

MARY

Hi, Tanya. *(She kisses TANYA.)*

TANYA

Hello!

MARY

Oh, we really miss you at work,
don't we, Gerri?

TANYA

Sweetheart!

MARY

When you coming back from
maternity leave?

TANYA

Give us a chance!

*(MARY laughs uproariously, and goes to JOE. She hugs him
tightly.)*

MARY

Hi, Joe!

JOE

Hi.

MARY

(Tighter still) Oh, it's really lovely to see you.

JOE

You, too.

(MARY disengages herself from JOE.)

MARY

Hi, Ken.

(KEN moves towards her.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Are you alright?

KEN

Yeah...

(But MARY moves away.)

JOE

Come and sit down, Mary.

GERRI

Have a seat, Mary.

(MARY moves round the table.)

MARY

Is anyone sitting here?

TANYA

No.

GERRI

No.

(MARY sits at the table next to JACK.)

MARY

Oh, this is lovely. Hiya, Jack!

JACK

I thought you were going to miss me out, Mary!

MARY

Oh, sorry.

(She kisses him on the cheek.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Where's Janey?

JACK

Oh, she's a bit under the weather
this afternoon.

MARY

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that; I'm
starving. Oh - the baby!

TANYA

Oh yeah - the baby!

MARY

I'm sorry, Tanya.

TANYA

That's alright.

(MARY leans over the baby.)

MARY

Hello, little Isaac.

TANYA

Say hello. Don't mind the funny
lady!

MARY

(Giggling) I'm sorry. I didn't
recognise him. Oh, he's asleep.
Oh, hasn't he grown? He's got
ever so big.

TANYA

They do that.

(TOM has returned. He gives MARY a glass of white wine.)

TOM

Here you are.

MARY

Oh, thanks, Tom.

*(MARY takes a long swig of wine. GERRI gets up and gives
ISAAC to TANYA. MARY returns to the table.)*

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, that's better.

GERRI

We've saved you some food, Mary.
I hope it's still warm.

(She takes a cloth off a bowl of food.)

MARY

Oh, thanks, Gerri. Oh, yeah,
that'll be fine.

(She helps herself to some meat.)

TOM
I'll do you some fresh, if you like.

MARY
Oh, no, Tom. Don't worry about me.

(TOM sits down. Everybody is now seated, except KEN, who is still hovering.)

JOE
So you didn't get arrested then, Mary?

MARY
No I didn't, Joe. He was very kind to me, actually.

JACK
What cc is your car?

MARY
What d'you mean?

JACK
How big's the engine?

MARY
Oh I don't know... It's about this big, I think.

(She demonstrates the size of her engine with her hands. Loud amusement from all. She looks perplexed. She giggles.)

MARY (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

GERRI
Don't be cruel!

TOM
He means, how powerful is it, Mary. How many cubic centimetres is it?

JOE
You should know that.

JACK
On the back, there's numbers, like one-point-six, or one-point-nine.

MARY TO ALL:

Oh yeah. I know, yeah. Well,
that's boys' stuff, isn't it?

TANYA

It's not important.

MARY

No, Tanya. I think I'm going to
have a cigarette before I eat
this.

JACK

(getting up) Excuse me - I'll get
out of your way.

GERRI

(getting up) Shall we take Isaac
over there?

TANYA

(getting up) Okay.

MARY

Oh, I thought you wouldn't mind,
cos we're outside.

GERRI

No, we don't, Mary. You carry on.

(TOM and JOE get up.)

TOM

You're alright - you're alright.

MARY

Yeah.

TANYA

It's okay - I fancy a swing.

*(MARY giggles, and gets out a cigarette. KEN joins her. His
t-shirt reads "Less thinking - more drinking.")*

KEN

Have one of these, Mary.

(He offers a cigarette.)

MARY

Oh, no, it's alright. I've got my
own, thank you.

*(She starts to light her cigarette, but KEN beats her to it
with his lighter.)*

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh. Thanks.

(She isn't enthusiastic.)

KEN
I'll have a smoke with you.

(He sits next to her. She moves away from him a little.)

MARY
Well, I don't really smoke,
normally... just the occasional
one or two.

(They both have a drag. Mary gulps some wine. Pause.)

KEN
How're you doing?

MARY
Yeah, I'm... I'm really well,
thanks, Ken. *(Another gulp of
wine.)*

KEN
Still on your own, are you?

MARY
Yeah, I am, and I like it like
that - you know?

KEN
You're like me.

*(An embarrassed silence. They both take drags on their
cigarettes. KEN sips his beer. Pause.)*

**Meanwhile, TANYA sits on the garden swing, while TOM stands
beside her, holding ISAAC, who is still asleep. During this
scene the camera slowly tracks across TANYA and TOM, ending
of GERRI and JACK.**

TOM
He's good.

TANYA
He's great. He's a hungry bugger.

TOM
Is he?

TANYA
Just like his dad.

TOM
Is he a good dad?

TANYA
Yeah.

TOM
Is he a nappy changer?

TANYA
Ish.

TOM
I expect you're too capable.

TANYA
Oh, I am.

TOM
Like Gerri was.

GERRI
Like Gerri was what?

(ISAAC whimpers a little.)

TOM
(To GERRI) Mind your own
business.

TANYA
We're talking about you, not to
you.

(GERRI laughs)

JACK
Hey, thanks for popping around on
Friday. Janey really appreciated
it.

GERRI
How is she?

JACK
Not good.

GERRI
No.

JACK
She's exhausted all the time,
just getting up and down the
stairs - knocks her out.

GERRI
I noticed.

JACK

And, you know, she could do with losing a few pounds, but she's not getting any exercise, so...

GERRI

How are you doing?

JACK

Oh, I'm alright. We stay cheerful, you know? We don't let things get us down.

GERRI

That's the spirit.

(Pause. GERRI sips her wine.)

The kitchen. MARY and KEN are at the fridge. MARY is pouring herself some wine. KEN tries to do it for her.

MARY

No, it's alright, Ken. I can pour my own wine, thank you very much.

(KEN lets go of the bottle.)

KEN

Sorry.

MARY

Look at the food in this fridge. *(She closes it.)* I haven't got anything in mine. I'll see you later, alright?

(MARY rushes off. KEN looks helpless and sad.)

JOE and GERRI are sitting on the garden bench.

JOE

Here she comes.

MARY

Can I come in the middle?

GERRI

Course you can.

(MARY sits.)

MARY

Never come between a mother and her son. (*Laughs*) Oh, this is my second one, Gerri.

JOE

Are you sure?

MARY

Yeah; and then that's it. (*She takes a mouthful.*)

GERRI

This could be the making of you, Mary.

MARY

Yeah. I think so, Gerri. I mean, just driving here today, I felt like a whole person...

GERRI

Did you?

MARY

Yeah, a free spirit. I mean, even though the journey was a complete nightmare from beginning to end - it was awful, people were getting so cross with me. D'you know what I mean, Joe? It's a lovely little car. I want you to come out and see it later. I feel really good behind the wheel - really special. You looked so lovely holding that baby, Gerri.

GERRI

He's delightful.

MARY

I expect you're looking forward to being a grandmother, aren't you?

GERRI

Hmm... you should ask my son about that.

JOE

It's got nothing to do with me.

MARY

(Laughing) He's great, isn't he?
You should come out and have a
drink with us some time, me and
your mum.

JOE

Yeah?

MARY

Yeah, why not? We often go, don't
we, Gerri?

GERRI

Occasionally, yes.

JOE

Yeah, I know you do.

MARY

Yeah, yeah. Or it doesn't even
have to be your mum - it could be
just us.

JOE

Just you and me?

MARY

Yeah, well we've known each other
a while, haven't we? We're old
friends, aren't we?

GERRI

Could you get me a refill, Joe?

JOE

(getting up) Yes, Mummy.

GERRI

Thank you.

(MARY laughs uproariously. As JOE crosses the garden to go into the house, he stops for a moment to speak to TANYA, who is changing ISAAC's nappy. As he goes into the conservatory, KEN waddles out, holding a glass and a wine bottle.)

MARY

Oh, here comes Ken.

(TOM comes out of the conservatory, overtaking KEN quickly.)

TOM

Everything alright?

TANYA

Yes.

(TOM picks up a bottle of sauce from the barbecue, and returns to the house.)

TOM

He's a good lad.

TANYA

Yes.

(KEN ambles towards TANYA.)

MARY

He could be quite good looking if
he wanted to.

(KEN and TANYA chat. We see all this from a distance, i.e. from GERRI's and MARY's point of view.)

MARY (CONT'D)

He should lose a couple of stone,
shouldn't he?

GERRI

He was a good looking man when he
was young.

MARY

Was he?

GERRI

Mm. He's got a good heart.

(They watch him. Then GERRI turns to MARY.)

GERRI (CONT'D)

Life's not always kind, is it?

MARY

No, it isn't, Gerri.

(She reflects on this for a few moments. KEN and TANYA chat.)

MARY (CONT'D)

I don't mind the grey hair; I
think that can look quite
distinguished on a man of his
age, but... *(she shudders)* ...
you know.

(GERRI looks at MARY for a moment, then looks away. MARY is unsure as to GERRI's thoughts. She reflects again.)

In front of the house. JACK leaves. TOM stands on his doorstep, his hands in his pockets. He is still wearing his apron.

TOM
I'll give you a ring in the week.

JACK
We'll have a proper game next time.

TOM
Yeah. Ta-ta.

JACK
See yer.

(He goes. TOM glances up and down the street, then goes inside, closing the door. A dog barks in the distance.)

JOE crosses the back garden, and joins MARY, who is sitting on the steps of a wooden cabin at the far end. She still has her wine glass.

MARY
Hi, Joe.

JOE
Hi.

MARY
Have you come back to me?

JOE
I have.

MARY
They all come back in the end.

JOE
Do they?

MARY
In my nightmares.

JOE
Oh, it's as bad as that, is it?

MARY
Oh, let's not open that can of worms.

JOE
No, let's leave that closed.

MARY
Not today, anyway.

(She strokes his arm.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, how are you, Joe? Is life
treating you kind?

JOE TO MARY:
Can't complain.

MARY
Really?

JOE
Yes.

MARY
Nothing you want to share with
me?

JOE
No, I don't think so.

MARY
Because you know that you can
come and talk to me... any time
you like.

JOE
Well, I'll come and find you if I
need you.

MARY
Yeah; yeah. I like to feel that
I'm always there for you.

JOE
Thanks, Mary. How are you?

(MARY finishes her wine.)

MARY
(introspective) Yeah, I'm
alright... *(suddenly sparkling)*
No, I'm great, actually!

JOE
Well, you look well.

MARY
Do I? Oh, thank you. *(Laughs)* I
suddenly feel really liberated.

JOE
Well, you're a free spirit now,
aren't you?

MARY
I know!

JOE
You're your own woman.

(She laughs)

JOE (CONT'D)
The world's your oyster.

MARY
It's so exciting, isn't it? I
feel like Thelma and Louise.
This little car is going to
change my life.

JOE
Well, let's hope so.

MARY
I do feel a bit guilty, though.
But at the end of the day.... so
what? It's my little present to
me.

JOE
That's fair enough.

MARY
Yeah, because if I don't treat
myself, nobody else is going to,
are they?

JOE
What are you going to call this
car?

MARY
Ooh, I don't know. Why, do you
give names to things?

JOE
I've got names for everything.

MARY
(Giggling) Really? Like what?

JOE
Well, my nose is called Roger...

MARY
Oh, you mean... your body parts?

JOE

Yeah, I'm not going to introduce you to everyone, though.

MARY

(Laughing) What, not even little Percy?

JOE

Oh, you've already met my knee, then?

(MARY laughs)

MARY

Oh, Joe - we must go out and have a drink one night. We have such a laugh.

JOE

Yeah, we do.

MARY

You see, the thing about you and me is... that we've always just sort of clicked, haven't we?

JOE

Yeah.

(Pause.)

MARY

It's nice when that happens, isn't it?

(Pause. JOE nods imperceptibly. MARY glances up at the cabin.)

MARY (CONT'D)

D'you remember when you showed me your little box?

JOE

Yes.

MARY

You wouldn't tell me what was in it

JOE

I'm still not gonna tell you.

MARY

I know!

JOE

What?

MARY

(Giggling) I'm not telling you.

(She climbs the steps of the cabin, and opens the upper barn door.)

MARY (CONT'D)

I still think about that. We had a barbecue that day, didn't we? Oh, it still smells the same. It's messy, isn't it? Your kids'll will enjoy playing in here, won't they? One day.

(Pause. She closes the door.)

MARY (CONT'D)

So, is there anyone special in your life at the moment, Joe?

JOE

No.

(MARY comes down the steps.)

MARY

Oh, good. No - what I mean is, that's alright, you're comfortable with that, aren't you?

JOE

Am I?

MARY

Well, the thing is, Joe, you're young. You still want to be out there, don't you?

JOE

What, sewing my wild oats?

MARY

Well, yeah. Live life while you can. Don't think about tomorrow.

JOE

A lot of my friends are getting married.

MARY

Oh, but... Yeah, you wanna be careful, Joe, because... See, I got married in my twenties, and granted, he was the wrong man, but I was too young - I couldn't handle it.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

But when I was in my thirties, I met the right man, and I was mature, I was ready for it. (Pause.) I mean he left me, but... what can you do?

JOE

It's never too late, Mary.

MARY

Oh, no, I know it isn't, Joe... and you know me - I'm very much a glass-half-full kind of girl. But it's tricky, because... I meet these older men who want somebody younger, and that's great, because I fit the bill. But... when they find out that... you know, I'm not as young as they thought, they don't want to know. My looks work against me. How old do you think I look, Joe?

JOE

Sixty...? Seventy...?

(A brief moment of horror, then she realises.)

MARY

Oh, stop it!

(They laugh. But the laughter fades away. Pause.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, it's alright - you don't have to answer that. So, when are we going to have this drink, then?

JOE

Oh, I don't know - I'll have to check my diary.

MARY

Yeah, you do that. Give me a call.

JOE

I will.

MARY

Promise.

JOE

I promise.

(Pause. JOE looks away, In these few moment, we see in MARY's face a multitude of painful thoughts and emotions.)

KEN is standing in the kitchen, by the hall door. He is holding a glass of red wine and the bottle. TOM comes in from the hall.

TOM
Hello, mate. Got to get your
train - we should get cracking.
I'll run you to the station.

GERRI
(*entering*) You've had too much to
drink, Tom.

TOM
(*taking off his apron*) No, I
haven't!

GERRI
I think you have.

TOM
I'm alright.

GERRI
We can get him a mini-cab.

KEN
No, I'll be fine on the tube.

MARY
(*entering*) Oh no, you don't want
to get a mini cab.

TOM
No, it might take twenty minutes
to turn up. We haven't got time.

MARY
I had a really bad experience in
a mini-cab once.

(*Enter JOE.*)

GERRI
You're going on the tube, aren't
you, Joe?

JOE
Of course.

MARY
Oh, no - don't go on the tube,
Joe. I can give you a lift - you
can be my navigator.

JOE

Ooh, that sounds fun.

MARY

Yeah.

TOM

You can give them both a lift.
You're all going in the same
direction.

GERRI

I'm not sure Mary can manage
that.

MARY

Of course I can, Gerri. *(She
looks at KEN)* Oh, I don't know...

KEN

I'll be fine on the tube -
honest.

JOE

(putting on his coat) It's a
great idea.

MARY

I don't know how to get to King's
Cross, though.

JOE

I do. We can all go together. *(He
goes out to the hall)*

TOM

That's great. Is that alright
with you, Mary?

MARY

Yeah, of course it is, Tom. It'll
be good practice for me. I'm
gonna run upstairs, before we go
on the journey. *(She goes)*

GERRI

I'm not sure about this.

JOE

(returning) It'll be fine.

KEN

I'd better pack me bag.

(He follows JOE out of the room)

GERRI

Tom!

TOM

What?

*(GERRI laughs)***In the street. MARY leads them out to the car.**

MARY

What d'you think, Tom?

TOM

Well, it's small and red. It's what you asked for.

JOE

What've you done, Mary?!

(MARY rushes excitedly round to the driver's door.)

MARY

It's great, isn't it?

TOM

Nice bit of parking, Mary!

(MARY giggles then -)

MARY

Oh - ! Oh, God - I didn't lock it! It's a good job it didn't get pinched, isn't it? *(She gets into the car)*

TOM

By the way, Mary, it's a one-point-four.

MARY

(Giggling) Oh - thanks, Tom!

TOM

Well, you must come again. Now you don't know the way.

*(KEN starts to get into the car, but TOM stops him, and gives him a hug. Then KEN hugs GERRI. As he gets into the car, JOE hugs GERRI.)***MARY's car races through London's busy traffic.**

In the car. JOE is in the front, KEN behind.

MARY

Oh, God, Joe. What am I going to do without you?

JOE

You'll be fine.

MARY

Can't you stay in the car just till we get to King's Cross?

KEN

We'll be alright, Mary.

MARY

Ken, what are you talking about? You don't even know London!!

JOE

It'll be sign-posted.

MARY

Oh, it's so lovely having you sitting next to me, Joe. Telling me where to go and what to do.

JOE

It's been a pleasure, Mary.

MARY

Oh, please! I'll take you anywhere you want. I'll take you home, if you like!

JOE

Just here'll do.

MARY

Oh, God, alright - let me pull in.

(She stops the car.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh... bye then.

(She kisses JOE.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Lovely to see you. Don't forget to give me a ring, will you?

JOE
No, I won't.

KEN
Bye, Joe.

JOE
Yeah, take care.

(JOE and KEN shake hands.)

KEN
See you soon.

JOE
Look after yourself.

MARY
Oh - Joe, where do I go?

JOE
Straight ahead, left round the
one-way system.

MARY
Yeah, okay. Oh, bye then... Bye.

(JOE gets out.)

KEN
I'll get in the front.

(He proceeds to do so.)

MARY
Oh, no, Ken. We haven't got time
for this!

(He pushes the front seat forwards.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, for God's sake!

(He gets into the front, and closes the door.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh, no need to slam the door!

The car pulls up outside King's Cross Station.

MARY (CONT'D)
Better hurry up.

KEN
Yeah, I'll run.

MARY
Yeah. See you soon, then.

KEN
Good bye, Mary.

MARY
Bye.

(He leans towards her.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Bye, Ken.

(She proffers her cheek, and he kisses it. Then he puts his arm round her.)

KEN
I like you, Mary.

MARY
No, Ken!

KEN
Can I phone you?

MARY
No.

KEN
Just for a chat.

MARY
No, you can't!

KEN
I could come down and see you.

MARY
Can you take your hand off of me
please, Ken?

(He removes it.)

KEN
Sorry.

MARY
Look, I'm gonna have to be honest
with you. I just don't have those
kind of feelings for you, Ken -
I'm really sorry.

KEN
Right.

(He takes his bag from the back seat, accidentally hitting her with it - which he doesn't notice.)

MARY

Oh.

KEN

Sorry, I got carried away. I didn't mean to.

MARY

It's alright. But hurry up, your train's going in a minute.

KEN

Thanks for the lift.

MARY

Yeah, alright. Bye.

(He gets out, and rushes off.)

MARY (CONT'D)

God Almighty!

(She reverses erratically, confusing an unfortunate young man who is trying to cross the road behind her. The car drives off, making unhealthy noises.)

Under the Summer sky, KEN's train races back to Hull.

FADE TO BLACK

Title: 'AUTUMN'

The allotment, A crisp, Autumn day. Bright sunshine. TOM is digging up pumpkins. GERRI is picking tomatoes.

Outside the house. TOM takes a box containing their produce from the back of the car, and follows as GERRI, carrying her green wellies, unlocks the front door, and enters.

GERRI

I'll put the kettle on.

TOM
The sooner the better!

(TOM walks past the living-room doorway.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Oh!!

JOE
Ahh!!

(He is lying on the sofa, a book open in his hand. They laugh.)

TOM
What're you doing here, you daft
bugger?!

(He puts the box in the hall. JOE gets up and hugs him.)

JOE
I've come to surprise you.

(TOM goes into the room.)

TOM
You certainly did that.

GERRI
(entering) It's lovely to see
you.

(She hugs JOE.)

TOM
Oh!!

GERRI
Uh?!!

(A young woman is behind the door.)

WOMAN
Hello!! Sorry! He made me hide
behind the door.

(Much amusement all round.)

GERRI
You frightened the life out of
me!

TOM
So who's this, then?

JOE
Mum, Dad - this is Katie.

KATIE

Hello!

JOE

This is Tom, and Gerri.

KATIE

Tom and Gerri! That's brilliant!

TOM

Yeah, well... we've learnt to
live with it over the years.*(He puts an arm around GERRI.)*

TOM (CONT'D)

So what's your name again?

KATIE/ JOE

Katie.

TOM

Katie.

JOE

So, have you been at the
allotment?

GERRI

Yes.

TOM

Yeah. Gathering the last of the
season's harvest...

GERRI

We've brought back some lovely
tomatoes - haven't we?

TOM

Yeah.

KATIE

Sounds gorgeous.

TOM

We were just going to have a
sandwich...

GERRI

Are you both hungry?

KATIE

I'm starving.

JOE

She's starving.

GERRI
I'll just go and change.

(She goes out.)

TOM
Just get out of this filthy
clobber.

(He follows GERRI, who calls -)

GERRI
You go on through, Joe!

JOE
Alright.

(JOE and KATIE proceed towards the kitchen. They kiss. Then he squeezes her bottom.)

In the kitchen. GERRI is putting flowers into a vase.

KATIE
This is a lovely big kitchen,
isn't it?

JOE
(ironic) It's gigantic.

KATIE
(humorous) Shut up!

(She gives JOE a loving squeeze. TOM takes food from the fridge and puts it on the table.)

GERRI
Thank you for the flowers, Katie.

KATIE
Glad you like them.

GERRI
They're lovely.

KATIE
Oh, they're alright.

GERRI
Sit yourself down.

KATIE
Thank you.

(KATIE and JOE sit at the table.)

TOM
So how did you two meet?

JOE
Our eyes met across a crowded
bar.

KATIE
We'd both been stood up by our
dates.

TOM
Ah, the bonding of the jilted.

JOE
Something like that.

KATIE
Pretty much.

GERRI
When was this?

KATIE
Oh, about three months ago,
wasn't it?

JOE
Yeah.

(TOM continues to set the table.)

GERRI
You never told us.

TOM
Master of discretion. I didn't
know he had it in him.

GERRI
My enigmatic son.

JOE
You know me!

TOM
Must be important.

KATIE
Oh, he's a dark horse.

JOE
I wanted to keep you a secret.

KATIE
Your son's a weirdo!

GERRI
Yes, we know. He's having
treatment.

(TOM and GERRI sit at the table.)

TOM
Help yourself. Tuck in. Whatever
you want.

KATIE
Thank you. *(To JOE)* My mum and
dad know all about you.

JOE
Do they, now?

TOM
And what do they do, Katie?

KATIE
Oh, my dad's a postman, and my
mum works on a make-up counter.

TOM
Oh, yeah?

GERRI
And what do you work at, Katie?

KATIE
I'm an occupational therapist.

GERRI
Oh, are you? Where do you work?

KATIE
At the Royal Free.

GERRI
Oh, that's a great hospital.

KATIE
It's pretty good.

GERRI
Do you specialise?

KATIE
Yeah. Care of the elderly, and
stroke rehab.

TOM
What's straight rehab?

JOE
(Laughing) Stroke rehab!

GERRI
You are going deaf.

TOM
Oh, stroke rehab - I thought you
said, "straight rehab".

KATIE
What's straight rehab? What, for
gay men who are on the turn?

TOM
For straight men, who've tried
being gay, but want to be
rehabilitated into being
straight.

(JOE and KATIE laugh.)

KATIE
Joe tells me you're a counsellor,
Gerri.

GERRI
Yes, I am, for my sins.

KATIE
But it's great to come home at
the end of the day and feel like
you've made a contribution, isn't
it?

GERRI
Yes, of course.

TOM
Or not, as the case may be.

KATIE
(To TOM) Oh, I'm sure you
contribute!

TOM
I'm not talking about me. I'm
talking about you lot in the
caring professions. I don't care.

JOE
We know!

GERRI
Hard man.

KATIE
And I know you're a geologist,
Tom. But what exactly do you do?

TOM

Ah, yes. Well, strictly speaking,
I'm actually an engineering
geologist, which means that I -

GERRI

He digs holes.

TOM

I investigate...

JOE

You dig holes!

TOM

Alright, I dig holes!

(Everybody laughs)

KATIE

That's just calling a spade a
spade, isn't it?

GERRI

I always call it a shovel.

TOM

You call it a fork. I call it a
trailer-mounted tripod cable
percussive boring unit.

GERRI

And that's why I love him.

TOM

No, I investigate the ground
beneath our feet, to test the
feasibility of various
engineering and building
projects.

KATIE

Oh, it sounds amazing. What are
you working on at the moment?

TOM

Ah, yes. Well, right now the main
project is an eight-metre
diameter tunnel, which is going
to alleviate the pressure on
London's Victorian sewage system.

KATIE

Blimey! Eight metres! That's big!

TOM

Oh, yeah. And it'll follow the path of the Thames for twenty miles, up to eighty metres under ground.

JOE

And that's just for this household.

(KATIE laughs)

TOM

So, it's quite a big number. But I'm not doing it on my own. There's a few of us. And it won't be finished till after I'm dead.

KATIE

Oh no! You'd better get a move on!

(They all laugh.)

TOM

Help yourself. Anything you want. D'you want some ham?

KATIE

Oh, no thanks. I'm a veggie, actually.

TOM

Are you?

KATIE

Mm. This cheese is gorgeous, though. Thank you.

GERRI

Help yourself.

KATIE

Thank you.

JOE

What you got planned later?

TOM

Ah, yes... We're having a visitation.

JOE

Sounds ominous.

GERRI

Mary's coming for tea.

JOE
Oh, I was right.

KATIE
Who's Mary?

GERRI
She's a friend from work.

KATIE
Oh, right.

TOM
Yes, she's er... Hmm, yes.

JOE
She's something else.

KATIE
I won't ask.

(KATIE laughs.)

A little later. JOE opens the front door to reveal MARY.

JOE
(singing) Ta-da!!

MARY
Oh, Joe! How lovely to see you!

(She comes in and throws her arms round him.)

MARY (CONT'D)
This is a surprise. How are you?

(TOM joins them.)

JOE
I'm good.

MARY
Oh, you look great!

JOE
So do you.

MARY
Oh, thank you!

(She laughs, and hugs him again.)

TOM
Hello, Mary! I'm Tom, I'm his
father, I live here.

MARY
Oh, Tom! My two favourite men.

(She hugs TOM.)

JOE
In you go.

(MARY takes JOE's arm.)

MARY
You never rang me.

JOE
I'm sorry.

MARY
Whatever happened to that drink
we were going to have?

JOE
I've got a surprise for you.

MARY
Oh, Joe - you shouldn't have!

*(KATIE comes out of the conservatory, holding a basil plant
in a pot. She is followed by GERRI.)*

KATIE
Hello!

JOE
Katie, this is Mary. Mary, this
is Katie.

KATIE
Hello, Mary - it's nice to meet
you.

(She shakes MARY's hand.)

MARY
Oh, hi.

GERRI
This is Joe's girlfriend.

(MARY's ebullience drains away. She is devastated.)

KATIE
(To MARY) I like your jacket. *(To
JOE)* Look, your mum gave me a pot
of basil. Smell that.

GERRI
She's going to make him some
pesto.

KATIE
Lovely.

TOM
Shall I take your jacket, Mary?

MARY
(subdued) Yeah, thanks, Tom.

(He takes it.)

GERRI
How are you, Mary?

MARY
Yeah, I'm really good, Gerri,
thanks, yeah.

GERRI
How was your journey?

MARY
It was alright.

GERRI
Good.

MARY
Oh, no, it wasn't, actually.

TOM
Didn't get lost again, did you?

MARY
Oh no - the journey was alright.
It's the car...

(JOE and KATIE sit at the table.)

TOM
Is it okay?

GERRI
What happened?

MARY
It wouldn't start.

TOM
Oh, no.

MARY
Yeah, it's a nightmare. I had to
come on the tube.

TOM

Did you?

MARY

Yeah, and it got broken into last night.

GERRI

Oh did it?

JOE

Oh, sorry to hear that.

KATIE

Oh, no.

MARY

Yeah, I did my big weekly supermarket shop yesterday, and... which is great, because I couldn't do that before I had the car, and erm... I went nice and early, so it wouldn't be dark when I got back... and I brought three bags in, but I must have left the fourth one on the front seat... And I got in, I thought, that's great, that's done. I can chill out now and have a nice little glass of wine, and... I had a really nice evening, actually. Em... but then, this morning, I'm in the bathroom and I'm sitting on the - because it's the toilet roll that I've left in the car. So I rush out, and my window's been smashed; there's glass everywhere, and all my toilet rolls have been stolen.

JOE

It's probably kids.

MARY

Yeah, I think you're right, Joe.

KATIE

Are you insured, Mary?

MARY

Yeah, of course I'm insured.

KATIE

Well that's something, isn't it?

MARY

You can't drive a car without insurance, can you? It's illegal.

KATIE

I know, but what I'm saying is, at least you'll be able to claim for your window, won't you?

MARY

I know. Anyway, I'm.... I'm sick of it. I just left it. It's just a car. What does it matter?

GERRI

Go on, sit yourself down, Mary. Put the kettle on, Tom.

TOM

Yeah, yeah. Good idea.

(He proceeds to do so.)

MARY

It's given me a lot of stress, Tom.

TOM

That car's been a catalogue of disaster, hasn't it?

MARY

I know.

TOM

Maybe you should cut your losses, Mary, and get rid of it.

MARY

Yeah, but I've spent so much on it, Tom. I can't just sell it now.

TOM

Well, if you keep it, it's only going to get worse, isn't it?

GERRI

Well, you know what I think, Mary.

MARY

Yeah... yeah. I'm fed up with it, to be honest, Tom. I've had three punctures.

TOM

Three punctures?

MARY

Yeah. My exhaust's fallen off, I had to get a new one, my carburettor went...

TOM

You can't take it back to the guys you got it from, can you?

MARY

No, well they said they'd guarantee the labour for three months but not the parts. Bastards.

TOM

Other way round, probably, isn't it? The parts for three months, but not the labour.

MARY

No... Oh, yeah, that's right. Oh, I don't know. Anyway, my windscreen wiper got ripped off, I got three points for speeding, at sixty pounds each, so, I got nine points on my driving licence, haven't I, Gerri?

GERRI

Yes.

MARY

It keeps making funny noises. I got towed away and I wasn't even parked on a double yellow line; I got seven parking tickets... no, nine parking tickets... and then, I broke down on the motorway on the way to Brighton... and I got towed to Crawley, which is the last place I wanna go to, cos I grew up there, and I hate it. So, I had to get the train home and then the train back to Crawley the next day, and the guy kept trying to touch me up, and it cost me nearly five hundred pounds and I never even got my weekend in Brighton, and that was supposed to be my summer holiday, wasn't it, Gerri?

GERRI

Yes.

MARY
It's not fair, is it?

TOM
No.

GERRI
Well, never mind.

JOE
Come and sit down, Mary. Relax.

(She moves to the table.)

MARY
Yeah, thanks, Joe.

KATIE
Yeah, at least you're here now,
eh?

MARY
What did you say your name was?

KATIE
Katie.

GERRI
Well, the good news is, Mary:
I've made a cake in your honour.

MARY
Oh, thanks, Gerri.

TOM
She knew you were coming, so she
baked a cake.

(GERRI puts the cake on the table, and starts to cut it.)

KATIE
Don't forget to give me the
recipe, will you?

GERRI
No, I won't forget, Katie.

TOM
You haven't tasted it yet.

KATIE
Oh, it smells nice, anyway!

MARY
Yeah, I wouldn't mind having the
recipe for that, Gerri. I've
never baked a cake before.

GERRI
Of course, you can.

JOE:
You can have a cake-off.

KATIE
Oh, I don't think so. I tried
making a fruit cake once.
Everything sank to the bottom, it
was horrible.

JOE
You're a good cook.

KATIE
Thank you.

(A loving moment between them.)

TOM
What about these two, then, Mary?

GERRI
Such a surprise.

(Irritated, MARY looks away.)

TOM
This monster hid this young lady
behind the sitting-room door.

GERRI
Made me jump.

KATIE
(Laughing) Yeah, poor Tom. I
thought I was going to give him a
heart attack.

JOE
She passed the test.

TOM
Surprised you passed the test. I
would have got rid of you on the
spot. *(Chuckling)* Terrible way to
treat someone.

KATIE
Yeah!

GERRI
We had absolutely no idea.

JOE
This is my big secret.

KATIE

Oh, thanks very much!

TOM

It's obviously serious.

KATIE

Still, it's been really good to meet you both, though. And we had a lovely lunch.

MARY

You didn't say you were having lunch, Gerri.

JOE

We have lunch every day.

MARY

Yeah, I know you have lunch everyday, Joe.

TOM

Bread and cheese.

GERRI

Nothing special.

KATIE

I thought it was special. We had some tomatoes from Tom and Gerri's allotment. Have you tasted them?

MARY

Yeah, loads of times. Gerri's always giving me stuff from the allotment. Aren't you, Gerri?

GERRI

I'll give you some to take home, Mary.

MARY

Oh, great. Oh... yeah. I can take them on the tube. *(Pause.)* So what is it you do then, Jackie?

KATIE

Katie.

MARY

Katie.

KATIE

Don't worry. I'm an occupational therapist.

MARY

Oh.

GERRI

She looks after stroke victims,
and the elderly.

KATIE

And, I grew up just down the road
from you, in Croydon.

MARY

I only went to college in
Croydon.

KATIE

Oh, right? Which college?

MARY

Croydon College.

TOM

The aptly named!

(GERRI, TOM , KATIE and JOE laugh.)

KATIE

So which course did you do?
Secretarial?

MARY

What makes you think I'm a
secretary?

KATIE

Well, you are, aren't you? Gerri
said...

GERRI

Yes.

MARY

Well... I got my diploma. I look
after the doctors.

KATIE

Oh, brilliant! So have you two
worked together for a long
time...?

GERRI

Ooh, about twenty years, haven't
we, Mary?

MARY

Yeah.

GERRI

Mary's known Joe since he was ten.

KATIE

No way! I bet you've got some embarrassing stories.

MARY

I've got some really nice stories, actually. Joe and I have shared some really special moments together, haven't we, Joe?

JOE

Yes, Mary.

MARY

It'll just have to be our secret, won't it?

GERRI

She's almost like an auntie to him.

MARY

I wouldn't say that.

GERRI

Well, we think of you as an auntie.

TOM

Auntie Mary!

KATIE

I think that's really sweet.

GERRI

Right, who wants some cake?

KATIE

Yes, please.

(GERRI hands a slice of cake on a plate to JOE, who gives it to KATIE. Then he hands one to MARY.)

JOE

Auntie Mary!

MARY

Thanks, Joe.

JOE

(To GERRI) Thanks, Mum.

MARY

It must be really boring looking
after old people.

KATIE

No, I love it. You get to know
them really well, and, well...
we're all going to be old one
day, aren't we? Touch wood!

TOM

Some of us already are.

(JOE and KATIE laugh.)

MARY

We look after old people, don't
we, Gerri?

GERRI

No, not in the same way.

(TOM looks at GERRI. Long pause.)

KATIE

Amazing cake.

GERRI

Thank you, Katie.

(They all eat cake in silence.)

**A little later. It is now dark outside. TOM leads them all
out of the kitchen, into the hall. KATIE is holding the pot
of basil. MARY hovers in the kitchen doorway.**

TOM

Right, we'll see you when we see
you.

KATIE

Soon, hopefully.

JOE

And you'll never know when.

TOM

We'll probably find you hiding in
the shed, some afternoon.

KATIE

Lurking in the bathroom!

JOE
Or down the toilet!

KATIE
Oh nice!

GERRI
You must come to supper.

TOM
Yeah.

KATIE
Yes, please! I hear you're both
excellent cooks - no pressure!

(JOE and KATIE put on their coats.)

GERRI
Tom makes a mean curry.

KATIE
Oh, I love curry.

(MARY taps JOE's arm, and kisses him on the cheek.)

TOM
Well, there's been no litigation
to date.

KATIE
I'll take my chances then.

JOE
(Kissing GERRI) I'll speak to you
later.

GERRI
Bye.

TOM
See you, boy!

JOE
Bye-bye. Take care.

(TOM and JOE hug.)

KATIE
Ah, thank you so much.

TOM
Yeah, take care. Bye.

GERRI
Thank you for the flowers.

KATIE
Pleasure. (*Kissing GERRI.*) Lovely
to meet you.

GERRI
You too.

KATIE
Bye, Mary.

MARY
Yeah.

KATIE
Really nice to meet you.

MARY
Yeah.

KATIE
Hope you get your car sorted out.

GERRI
Bye, Katie.

KATIE
Bye.

TOM
Bye.

KATIE
Bye. See you soon.

TOM
Yeah, safe journey. Bye.

JOE / KATIE
Bye.

GERRI
Bye.

(JOE and KATIE leave. The front door closes.)

TOM
How about that, then?

GERRI
That's a turn up for the books.

TOM
You're not kidding. If you'll
excuse me, I've got a bit of work
to do.

GERRI
Alright.

(TOM goes upstairs.)

MARY
I was going to bring you some
flowers, Gerri. I just couldn't
find anywhere open.

GERRI
Don't be silly.

*(She disappears into the kitchen. MARY follows her. GERRI
starts clearing up the tea things.)*

MARY
Gerri?

GERRI
What?

MARY
What d'you think of her?

GERRI
She's lovely, isn't she?

MARY
Well, I don't know...

GERRI
Joe likes her.

MARY
Yeah but - you know...

GERRI
They seem to connect.

MARY
Well, he's only young, isn't he?

GERRI
He's thirty years old, Mary.

MARY
No, but what I mean is, he
doesn't want to rush into
anything. He's only known her for
five minutes.

GERRI
I think Joe knows what he's
doing, actually.

MARY
Well... I hope so.

GERRI
Don't forget your tomatoes, Mary.

MARY
No, I won't. *(Half to herself)* I
should have brought a bottle of
wine.

(GERRI ignores this, and continues to clear up. Pause.)

MARY (CONT'D)
I might head off in a minute.

GERRI
(smiling politely) Alright then,
Mary.

*(She walks out of the room. MARY is confused and
perplexed.)*

Outside. GERRI sees MARY out.

GERRI (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming, Mary.

MARY
Yeah, thanks, Gerri. I'll see you
on Tuesday, yeah?

GERRI
Yes. Bye, now.

MARY
Okay, bye.

(GERRI closes the door. MARY leaves.)

**TOM and GERRI relax together on the living-room sofa. Each
has a glass of red wine. TOM is reading a newspaper.**

TOM
Very sad.

GERRI
Really upsetting.

TOM
Yeah. Are you surprised?

GERRI
Of course I am. No, I'm not,
actually.

TOM
No.

GERRI
It's disappointing.

TOM
So, when are you inviting her
round next?

(GERRI laughs and sips her wine.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Did you see this?

(An article in the newspaper.)

GERRI
It's extraordinary.

TOM
I like whats-her-name?

GERRI
Katie?

TOM
Yeah, she's a laugh, isn't she?

GERRI
She's lovely. He is a dark horse,
our son.

(TOM sips his wine.)

TOM
I think you'll find that we men
are.

(GERRI chuckles. TOM reads the paper.)

FADE TO BLACK.

Title: 'WINTER'

**Early morning. Frost on the ground. TOM and GERRI's car
speeds up the M1 motorway. Much traffic.**

**Now it drives along a provincial street of gardenless
terraced houses.**

It stops. TOM, GERRI and JOE take various items from the car, and walk to a small, shabby house with lace curtains. TOM knocks on the door. They wait. They are dressed as for a funeral, the two men in black ties.

TOM (CONT'D)

It hasn't changed much, has it?

(The door is opened by an elderly man with longish hair, sideburns and a moustache. He is RONNIE, TOM's brother.)

TOM (CONT'D)

Hello, mate.

(He goes into the house, touching RONNIE on the shoulder. He is followed by GERRI and JOE.)

GERRI

How are you, Ron?

(She kisses him.)

JOE

Hiya, Ronnie

TOM

D'you recognise Joe?

JOE

I've grown a bit.

(RONNIE closes the door.)

A few minutes later, in RONNIE's drab living-room. TOM is standing by the fireplace, JOE is sitting in an armchair, and RONNIE sits by the table, smoking a cigarette. GERRI stands by JOE.

GERRI

How are you managing, Ronnie?

RONNIE

I'll be glad when this is over.

GERRI

This is the hardest day.

TOM

Yeah.

GERRI

She was a lovely person.

JOE
She was.

TOM
Very kind.

GERRI
Mm.

(She goes into the small kitchen, and pours some tea.)

TOM
Have you been eating over the weekend, Ronnie?

RONNIE
I had some beans.

TOM
Need a bit more than that though, don't you? D'you want something now?

RONNIE
No.

GERRI
Are you sure?

RONNIE
Yeah.

JOE
We brought a load of sandwiches, Ron.

TOM
Some beers.

GERRI
So where's Carl?

TOM
I told him when and where.

JOE
Question is, if he'll turn up.

TOM
Well, that's up to him.

RONNIE
He'd bloody better.

(GERRI gives JOE and TOM mugs of tea.)

JOE
Ta.

TOM
Cheers, Gez.

GERRI
The hearse'll be here soon.

TOM
Yeah.

(GERRI brings a cup of tea for RONNIE.)

GERRI
There you are, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Can I have one of them beers now?

TOM
Yeah, you're alright - go on.

(GERRI gets RONNIE a can of beer from the kitchen.)

RONNIE
Ta.

(He opens it.)

TOM opens the front door, to reveal the hearse, the FUNERAL DIRECTOR, and a young lady ASSISTANT.

TOM
Hello.

(The FUNERAL DIRECTOR removes his top hat.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello; Mr Hepple?

TOM
Yes, I'm Tom Hepple. I think we spoke on the phone.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello.

(They shake hands.)

TOM
This is my brother, Ronnie. He's Linda's husband.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Hello.

(RONNIE joins them.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)
Are you all ready?

TOM
Yes, we are, yes. Just the four
of us.

(The FUNERAL DIRECTOR replaces his hat. GERRI and JOE follow RONNIE into the street. TOM starts to close the front door.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Have you got the keys, Ronnie?

RONNIE
Yeah.

(TOM closes the door.)

The hearse, followed by the car, drives slowly through the frost-covered crematorium grounds. It stops outside the chapel. The FUNERAL DIRECTOR greets the waiting VICAR, and disappears with him into the building. Assistants open the tail-gate of the hearse, and attend to the coffin.

The FUNERAL DIRECTOR comes out. He speaks to a young lady ASSISTANT.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Thank you.

(The ASSISTANT opens the nearside doors of the car for TOM and JOE, who get out.)

TOM
Thank you.

(GERRI and RONNIE alight on the other side of the car.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Er, Mr Hepple

TOM
Yes.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
This is Robert, your Minister.

TOM
(To VICAR) Ah! I'm Tom Hepple.

VICAR

Oh, yes.

TOM

This is my brother, Ronnie.
Linda's husband.

(The VICAR shakes hands with RONNIE.)

VICAR

Robert Saunter. I shall be taking
the service.

TOM

We're expecting Ronnie's son,
Carl, to be here, but he doesn't
appear to have turned up yet.

(Pause. They all look vaguely round for CARL.)

VICAR

Right. Well, we'd... er, best be
started.

TOM

Yes.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Are you all ready?

TOM / GERRI

Yes.

(The FUNERAL DIRECTOR speaks to the PALL-BEARERS, who are waiting by the open hearse.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Thank you.

(The PALL-BEARERS take the coffin out of the hearse, raise it onto their shoulders, and wait. From inside the chapel, recorded music begins ('Air On a G-String' from J.S.Bach's Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major). The VICAR begins the prayer.)

FUNERAL DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

Thank you.

(The PALL-BEARERS proceed into the Chapel, led by the VICAR. The family follows. Three MOURNERS, two WOMEN and a MAN, go in last.)

VICAR

"I am the resurrection and the
life, says the Lord. Those who
believe in me, even though they
die, will live.

(MORE)

VICAR (CONT'D)

Everyone who lives and believes
in me will never die. I am
convinced that neither death, nor
life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor
powers, nor things present, nor
things to come, nor height, nor
depth, nor anything else in all
creation will be able to separate
us from the love of God in Christ
Jesus Our Lord."

(A crematorium OFFICIAL closes the chapel doors, and walks away.)

Inside the chapel, a little later. The coffin is on view. TOM, GERRI, JOE and RONNIE sit on the front row. The three MOURNERS are at the back, the MAN separate from the TWO WOMEN. The rows of seats are otherwise empty.

VICAR (CONT'D)

We have entrusted our sister,
Linda Margaret, to God's mercy,
and we now commit her body to be
cremated. "Earth to earth, ashes
to ashes, dust to dust..."

(The automatic curtain closes round the coffin.)

VICAR (CONT'D)

"...in sure and certain hope of
the resurrection to eternal life
through our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Who will transform our frail
bodies that they may be conformed
to his glorious body. Who died,
was buried and rose again for us.
To Him be glory forever. Amen.

(He faces the congregation.)

VICAR (CONT'D)

"May God give you His comfort and
His peace, His light and His joy,
in this world and the next. And
the blessing of God Almighty; The
Father, the Son, and the Holy
Spirit be upon you, and remain
with you always. Amen."

(During the above, the doors at the back have opened abruptly, and a severe-looking bearded man in black leather has entered. He takes off a woollen hat to reveal a bald head. The family turn to look at him.)

VICAR (CONT'D)
You are welcome.

(CARL - for it is he - sits in the second row, immediately behind TOM and GERRI.)

(The VICAR, having finished, leaves the pulpit. More recorded music commences ('Nimrod', Variation 9 from Elgar's 'Enigma Variationa'). The VICAR leaves the chapel.)

(TOM, JOE, and RONNIE get up. So does CARL.)

CARL
You're joking, aren't you?

TOM
Hello, Carl.

(He shakes CARL's hand.)

CARL
Is that it?

GERRI
It's all over, Carl.

(She gets up)

GERRI (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry.

(CARL watches the family go out. He looks round the chapel. The MOURNERS leave. He follows them.)

Outside the chapel, moments later. TOM, GERRI and RONNIE come down the steps. CARL overtakes them. JOE is already in the grounds, looking at some wreaths. The funeral attendants stand by the car nearby.

CARL
Unbelievable!

(He confronts TOM, GERRI and RONNIE.)

CARL (CONT'D)
Why couldn't you wait?

TOM
There's another one coming up behind us. You can't wait.

CARL
What, you can't wait five minutes?

TOM

No.

GERRI

We did ask them.

TOM

We asked them.

CARL

Outrageous.

TOM

What happened to you?

CARL

Motorway was fucked up, wasn't it?

TOM

You should have taken that into account, shouldn't you?

CARL

I did.

TOM

Obviously not enough.

CARL

(To RONNIE) I'll never forgive you for this. You know that, don't you?

RONNIE

Yeah, don't blame me.

TOM

It's not his fault.

RONNIE

I might have known you'd pull a stunt like this.

(CARL moves away. JOE joins him.)

JOE

Carl.

CARL

What?

JOE

It's Joe.

CARL

(uninterested) Oh, yeah. Right

(JOE walks away. GERRI joins CARL, and kisses him on the cheek.)

GERRI

Carl, I'm really sorry. We're going back to the house, to your mum's.

CARL

I've got to go back there any road, so...

GERRI

Alright. We'll see you there.

CARL

Yeah.

(CARL leaves. GERRI and TOM talk to the MOURNERS. We half-hear the conversation - that is, they all speak quietly, and we are some distance away.)

TOM

Hello, I'm Tom. Ronnie's brother. We're going back to the house if you'd like to join us.

GERRI

Hello, are you friends of Linda's? How long have you worked with her? Are you coming back to the house. Good. Alright, we'll see you there.

MAN

Aye, I will. Thank you.

TOM

Do you have your own car? Did you have transport? Do you know the way?

GERRI

We'll see you there.

(TOM and GERRI walk towards the car. JOE has already got in. The three MOURNERS go off together in another direction.)

Back in RONNIE'S house, in the living-room. GERRI sets out bought sandwiches on a coffee-table, removing the plastic lids. JOE and RONNIE are sitting at the table. TOM stands. TOM and GERRI have mugs of tea. RONNIE has a beer. So does JOE.

GERRI (CONT'D)

When was the last time you saw Carl?

RONNIE

A couple of years ago.

TOM

Just turns up out of the blue, doesn't he?

RONNIE

When he can be bothered.

JOE

When did we last see him?

TOM

Can't remember. Five, ten years ago?

GERRI

It was the year your mum died.

TOM

Was it?

GERRI

Mm.

RONNIE

1979.

TOM

No.

GERRI

No.

JOE

No, ninety-five.

TOM

Yeah.

RONNIE

Don't know.

JOE

So, hang on - when did he stay with us in London?

TOM

That was in the eighties.

GERRI

You were nine.

JOE
He always wore black, didn't he?

GERRI
Mm... It's tragic. He was such a lovely kid. Full of fun.

RONNIE
Was 'e?

(He takes a swig of beer.)

JOE opens the front door, revealing the three middle-aged MOURNERS.

JOE
Hi. Come on in.

FIRST WOMAN
Thanks, love.

(They start to enter. TOM appears.)

TOM
Hello, come in.

FIRST WOMAN
Hiya.

TOM
D'you want to go through?

SECOND WOMAN
Thank you.

TOM
(To MAN) You find it, alright?

MAN
Aye, aye. No problem.

TOM
Shall I take your coat?

(JOE closes the front door.)

MAN
Er... No, you're alright, duck, thanks.

(TOM and the MOURNERS have gone through to the living-room. JOE stays near the front door to check his mobile.)

TOM
(*off*) Shall I take your coats,
ladies? Right.

GERRI
Joe, is there another chair in
there?

(*JOE sees a chair.*)

JOE
Yeah.

(*He picks it up, and takes it into the living-room.*)

**A little later. Tea and sandwiches. People variously
sitting and standing.**

SECOND WOMAN
It was a very nice service.

TOM
It was, wasn't it? Simple,
straightforward. That's what you
wanted, wasn't it, Ronnie?
Nothing fancy.

RONNIE
No.

(*Pause*)

SECOND WOMAN
Good job it didn't rain.

(*TOM and GERRI laugh politely*)

TOM
Yes. It's a nice spot, that,
isn't it?

SECOND WOMAN
Hmm.

TOM
We've seen a few off from there,
haven't we?

MAN
Aye, we have over the years. Aye.

GERRI
Have you worked with Linda for
long at the bakery?

SECOND WOMAN
About ten years.

GERRI
How about you, Maggie?

FIRST WOMAN (MAGGIE)
Not as long as that, no.

GERRI
She was a lovely lady.

FIRST WOMAN
She was, yeah.

SECOND WOMAN
We weren't that close.

FIRST WOMAN
She'll be much missed.

SECOND WOMAN
It was such a shock.

TOM
Be a big change for you, won't
it, Ronnie? Having to look after
yourself.

MAN
You get used to it though,
Ronnie. Eight years for me, now.

TOM
Is it?

MAN
Aye.

(We hear the sound of a key in the front door.)

JOE
It's Carl.

(CARL enters the house. He slams the door. He is wearing his black woollen hat. He takes off a pair of shades and a headset, and goes into the living-room.)

GERRI
Alright, Carl?

(CARL strides through the room.)

TOM
Eh up, Carl.

CARL
(To the MAN) Excuse me, mate!

JOE
D'you want a drink, Carl?

TOM
You got tea, beers... couple of
bottles of wine.

CARL
Sort meself out, ta.

(He crosses the room, and goes into the kitchen.)

TOM
Are you local then, Frank?

MAN
Aye, aye, I'm just a few streets
down. You know, Almond Street.

TOM
Oh, yeah. I haven't lived in
Derby for forty years.

(GERRI joins CARL in the kitchen.)

GERRI
How are you, Carl?

CARL
I'm alright. How are you?

GERRI
We're all fine.

TOM
(off) We got up a fair bit when
my mam was still alive.

GERRI
This must have been a bit of
shock for you.

CARL
I'll say.

GERRI
Where you living?

CARL
Up in Yorkshire.

TOM
(off) ...not now...

GERRI
Are you working?

CARL
Don't need an interrogation.

TOM
...there's a new ring road... one-way system...

(CARL picks up a pile of letters.)

GERRI
Well, there's food out here when you want it.

SECOND WOMAN
(off) It's all changed...

(CARL comes to the kitchen doorway, and hits RONNIE on his leg with the mail.)

CARL
No post for me, then?

RONNIE
No. None from you, either.

CARL
Eh?

RONNIE
There's none from you.

CARL
Not lost your sense of humour, then?

(He throws the letters down in the kitchen, and returns to the doorway.)

CARL (CONT'D)
Who sorted all this lot out?

GERRI
We did.

TOM
We brought it with us.

CARL
From London?

TOM
Yeah.

CARL
Nice. You didn't get your arse in gear then, Ronnie?

TOM
He didn't need to - we offered.

CARL
Did you?

TOM
Yeah.

CARL
It's his responsibility, though
in't it?

TOM
I don't think you should
underestimate the shock he's had,
Carl.

CARL
Yeah, I know. Very fragile, in't
'e, your brother?

TOM
His wife's just died.

CARL
His wife. Didn't much care for
her when she was alive.

TOM
Did you?

CARL
I beg your pardon?

TOM
Did you care for her, Carl?

GERRI
Tom!

CARL
I cared for her in me own way.

RONNIE
Carl!

TOM
What way was that, then?

CARL
She knew how I felt about her.

TOM
Did she?

RONNIE
Shut it!

CARL

(To RONNIE) Don't tell me how to
behave in me own house!

TOM

It's not your house, though, is
it?

CARL

It's my house just as much as it
is his.

GERRI

Tom!

(TOM shrugs and sees fit to hold his peace.)

CARL

*(To JOE, who is standing beside
him.)* And what are you looking
at?

JOE

I'm looking at you, Carl.

CARL

Well, I don't like it.

*(Now JOE sees fit to hold his peace, and takes a sip of his
beer. CARL turns on the SECOND WOMAN.)*

CARL (CONT'D)

Don't feel like you need to hang
about, duck.

FIRST WOMAN

We'd best get going.

CARL

Excuse me.

(He crosses the room and goes upstairs.)

GERRI

I'm really sorry about this.

(They all get up.)

TOM

(peevd) Do you want your coats?
Yeah, I'm not surprised.

(He gets their coats.)

GERRI

Thank you for coming.

MAN
Shall I drop you off?

FIRST WOMAN
Yeah. Thanks.

GERRI
You're welcome.

(RONNIE stands up, perplexed.)

TOM
Is that... can you do that,
Frank?

MAN
Aye. Aye. Give them a lift home.

TOM
That's great.

(At the front door. TOM and RONNIE see them out.)

FIRST WOMAN
Look after yourself, Ronnie.

(She goes out, followed by the other two.)

TOM
Thanks for coming. Sorry about
this. One of those things.

MAN
Ah, well. Not to worry, duck.

SECOND WOMAN
See you.

TOM
Thanks a lot. Take care. Ta-ta.

*(He closes the door behind them, and sighs. He passes
RONNIE, then stops by him.)*

TOM (CONT'D)
(exhales) Bloody hell. Are you
alright, Ronnie?

*(He gently taps RONNIE's shoulder. RONNIE looks at him,
bewildered.)*

RONNIE
I don't know what to do.

TOM
Ah, sod him. He'll bugger off
soon enough.

(A look of terror in RONNIE's eyes. TOM hugs him. RONNIE slowly responds. Pause. The TOM disengages himself.)

TOM (CONT'D)

Tell you what. Why don't you come back with us? To London.

RONNIE

No, no. You're alright.

TOM

Well, why not? Just for a few days, a week. Whatever it takes. Then we'll put you on the train back home.

RONNIE

I don't know...

TOM

Well... Think about it.

(He leaves RONNIE, who is lost, confused and in pain.)

A few moments later, in the living-room. RONNIE joins TOM, GERRI and JOE.

TOM (CONT'D)

What d'you reckon?

GERRI

You might as well, till you feel a bit better.

RONNIE

Are you sure?

TOM

Yeah.

GERRI

Mm.

RONNIE

Okay.

TOM

Good.

GERRI

Chuck a few things in a bag. *(To JOE)* We'll clear up.

(CARL returns, from upstairs.)

JOE

Yeah.

TOM

Have you got a bag?

RONNIE

Think so.

GERRI

Carl, your dad's coming home with us for a couple of days.

CARL

Is he, now?

(GERRI and JOE start to clear up.)

RONNIE

I think there's one under the bed.

TOM

Right.

CARL

How did she go?

RONNIE

Eh? *(Pause.)* She were dead when I woke up. Satisfied?*(TOM goes upstairs. GERRI starts to collect some dirty cups.)*

GERRI

Excuse me, Carl.

(CARL takes the cups.)

CARL

I'll do that, Gerri.

GERRI

No, I'll do it.

CARL

No, you leave it. You sit yourself down.

(He goes into the kitchen. GERRI, JOE and RONNIE watch him. We hear a crash of crockery.)

CARL (CONT'D)

What am I doing this for? Save me mam the trouble? She's fucking dead now!

(He storms past GERRI and JOE.)

GERRI
Carl, listen to me.

(She puts a hand on his shoulder. RONNIE goes upstairs.)

CARL
No, no, no, no, no.

(He collects his coat.)

CARL (CONT'D)
I'm going to get a bottle of
wine.

JOE
Carl, we've got loads of wine.

(CARL storms through the room, towards the front door.)

GERRI
Carl!

(CARL leaves, slamming the door behind him.)

(Pause.)

JOE
He won't be back.

(GERRI walks away from JOE.)

**Up in RONNIE's dark bedroom. TOM is packing an old
suitcase. RONNIE stands, watching.**

TOM
Pyjamas... get some shirts. Are
you gonna change?

RONNIE
Yeah.

TOM
D'you want this?

RONNIE
Yeah.

*(TOM gives him a clean shirt on a hanger. Then he folds and
packs another couple.)*

TOM
How're you doing? Are you
alright?

RONNIE
Yeah, I'll be alright.

TOM
We'll be off soon.

At the allotment. A very cold and frosty day. GERRI is pulling up wooden stakes, and TOM is stacking planks by the shed.

Meanwhile, RONNIE sits quietly on their living-room sofa. Pause. There is a knock at the front door. Slowly, RONNIE gets up. He goes to the door, and opens it very slightly. MARY is on the step. She is uncharacteristically dishevelled. Hair awry. No make-up. Old clothes.

MARY
Oh, hi. Is Gerri in?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
Oh. Is Tom here?

RONNIE
No, they're out. What's it about?

MARY
I... I... I just wanted to see
'em.

RONNIE
They didn't say nothing.

MARY
Oh... oh no, they don't... I just
came on the spur of the moment.
I'm a friend of Gerri's, I work
with her. Oh, have... have they
gone to the allotment?

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY

Yeah. Er... Can I come in? Just to wait for them?

RONNIE

I don't know.

MARY

I'm really cold.

RONNIE

I'm here on me own.

MARY

Oh... I'm not going to burgle you, or anything. I can give you a description of the house, if you like. When you go in the kitchen,... the cooker's on the right... and the sink's straight in front of you, and on the left is... a little cupboard -

RONNIE

Yeah, yeah.

MARY

Thanks.

(He lets her in, and shuts the door. Pause.)

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm Mary. What's your name?

RONNIE

Ronnie. Tom's me brother.

MARY

Oh. Oh - is it... your wife that's just passed away?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

I'm really sorry.

RONNIE

That's alright.

MARY

Would you like me to make you a cup of tea?

RONNIE

No, thank you.

MARY

Is it alright if I make one for myself? I don't think Gerri and Tom would mind.

RONNIE

Alright.

(He watches her go into the kitchen. She puts her bag on a chair, and smiles at him. She sets about filling the kettle. RONNIE goes slowly into the kitchen. MARY goes to the fridge to get the milk.)

MARY

Have you come down for a few days?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

Yeah. I haven't had any breakfast. Did you have breakfast?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

With Tom and Gerri?

RONNIE

Yeah.

(Pause.)

MARY

D'you want a cuddle?

(Pause.)

MARY (CONT'D)

You sure you don't want some tea?

RONNIE

Aye, go on.

MARY

Yeah.

(She proceeds to make the tea.)

Now they are both sitting at the kitchen table, each with a mug of tea.

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, that's better. It's really lovely to be here. I haven't been for months. They invite me a lot - we're really old friends. Are you sleeping in Joe's room?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

Oh, yeah. All his little bits and bobs. Did he go to the funeral?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

With his girlfriend?

RONNIE

No.

MARY

Oh.

(Pause.)

RONNIE

They're coming round later.

MARY

Oh, are they? *(Pause.)* Sorry I'm such a mess. I didn't get to bed 'til five. And then I couldn't sleep. I just got up and came straight here.

(She sips her tea.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Does Gerri ever mention me?

RONNIE

No.

MARY

Mary.

RONNIE

No.

(Pause.)

MARY

You look like Tom.

RONNIE

Oh, aye?

MARY

Yeah. You've got a nice face.
Tom's got a nice face, too. What
was your wife's name?

RONNIE

Linda.

MARY

Oh? Was she nice.

(RONNIE doesn't reply. He sips his tea.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Did you have dinner last night?

RONNIE

We had chicken.

MARY

Oh, lovely. They're good cooks,
aren't they?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

I can't cook. Can you cook?

RONNIE

No.

(MARY laughs)

MARY

I didn't really eat anything
yesterday.

RONNIE

D'you want some toast?

MARY

No, I'm alright, thank you. I
wouldn't mind a cigarette,
though. Do you smoke?

RONNIE

Yeah.

MARY

Oh, good.

(RONNIE takes out a tin of tobacco.)

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah. My friend used to roll her own.

(He starts to roll one up.)

RONNIE

D'you want one of these?

MARY

Oh no, it's alright. I'll have one of mine. Oh, no - go on, then. For old time's sake.

RONNIE

Huh.

(She watches him.)

RONNIE (CONT'D)

We have to go out there.

MARY

Oh, we can stay in here, can't we? They won't know.

(Pause. RONNIE doesn't react.)

In the conservatory. RONNIE and MARY are standing by the plants with their mugs. They are smoking their roll-ups. RONNIE has put on his coat.

MARY (CONT'D)

Takes me back. Did you ever smoke dope?

RONNIE

Tried it a few times.

MARY

We used to. Me and my best friend, Monica. Don't see her anymore. Did you like the Beatles?

RONNIE

They were alright. I was more Elvis. Jerry Lee Lewis...

MARY

Yeah. *(Sings)* "I'm all shook up."

RONNIE

Heh.

(MARY giggles)

MARY
Have you got any children?

RONNIE
Got a son.

MARY
Is he married?

RONNIE
Don't know.

(Pause.)

RONNIE (CONT'D)
You got kids?

MARY
No. Unfortunately. Have you got
to go back soon?

RONNIE
Yeah. Got a few things to sort
out.

MARY
I don't suppose your son will
help you.

RONNIE
No.

(Pause.)

MARY
I could come up and give you a
hand, if you like... Have you got
to move?

RONNIE
No.

MARY
I could take a few days off work.

RONNIE
Are you warm enough?

MARY
Oh... I'll be alright. We'll just
finish these.

(Pause. They smoke.)

MARY (CONT'D)
Oh... do you know Ken?

RONNIE

Ken? Yeah.

MARY

Yeah. Did he go to the funeral?

RONNIE

No.

MARY

He's a bit weird, isn't he?

RONNIE

Is he?

(Pause. MARY thinks better of pursuing this, and lets it go.)

MARY

I don't really smoke. I had too much to drink last night. I had a bit of a bad day. My car broke down. It had to be towed away. They said it wasn't worth repairing. They gave me twenty quid for it.

RONNIE

That's not much.

MARY

No. What can you do with twenty quid? I bought myself a bottle of champagne.

RONNIE

Yeah?

MARY

Yeah.

RONNIE

Did you finish it?

MARY

Yeah, I did.

RONNIE

Huh.

(MARY sniffs a bit.)

MARY

I might have to have a little bit of a lie-down.

(Pause.)

In the living-room. MARY is lying comfortably on the sofa. RONNIE is sitting on the other side of the room.

MARY (CONT'D)
It's really lovely to have
someone to talk to.

RONNIE
Yeah.

MARY
It's peaceful here. I might move
away somewhere else. Start again.
I used to work in Mallorca.

(RONNIE looks out of the window.)

RONNIE
They'll be back soon.

(MARY sits up.)

MARY
Oh, yeah.

(Then she settles back again.)

TOM and GERRI unload stuff from the car.

TOM
There you go.

GERRI
Thank you.

(Tom locks the car. They walk up the path, and enter the house.)

TOM
(calling) Hello, Ronnie!

GERRI
(calling) We're back!

(GERRI looks into the living-room and sees MARY.)

MARY
Hi, Gerri.

GERRI
Hello, Mary.

(TOM joins GERRI.)

TOM
Bloody hell!

MARY
Hi, Tom.

GERRI
What are you doing here?

MARY
Well, I just... thought I'd...

(GERRI looks at her for a moment, then goes.)

TOM
Just get my boots off.

In the kitchen...

TOM (CONT'D)
Where'd she spring from?

(He opens the conservatory door.)

GERRI
Bloody nuisance. Specially today.

TOM
You're not kidding.

(They put down their allotment stuff. TOM sits in a chair to change his footwear. GERRI stops, sighs, and rubs her forehead. MARY comes in.)

MARY
Are you alright, Gerri?

GERRI
Yes, Mary. I'm fine.

(She goes to the hall to take her coat off. MARY watches her.)

TOM
D'you drive?

MARY
Oh... No, I came on the tube.

TOM
Did you?

(GERRI returns)

GERRI
It might have been nice if you'd
phoned first, Mary.

MARY
Oh, I'm really sorry.

(TOM comes into the kitchen, and closes the conservatory door. He passes MARY, taking off his hat and coat, and goes to the hall. GERRI takes the milk out of the fridge.)

GERRI
Joe and Katie are coming.

MARY
Yeah, Ronnie said.

(GERRI looks at MARY, then walks away. RONNIE comes in, followed by TOM, who pats him on the shoulder.)

TOM
Matey...

(TOM joins GERRI at the other end of the kitchen. MARY looks at RONNIE but he doesn't particularly respond.)

TOM (CONT'D)
Tea, Ronnie?

RONNIE
Yeah.

(RONNIE moves off to join the others. MARY stands alone.)

GERRI
Come and sit yourself down, Mary,
and have a cup of tea.

(She joins them)

Later. Alone, in the living-room, RONNIE flicks through several TV channels.

Upstairs in Tom's study, he is working at his computer. GERRI comes in and puts her arms round him.

GERRI (CONT'D)
How's it going?

TOM
Inexorably.

GERRI
I don't know what to do.

TOM
Well, if you don't, I don't.

GERRI
I can't just chuck her out.

TOM
Can't you?

GERRI
(Chuckling) No! Look at the state
of her.

TOM
I know, poor woman. Joe and
Katie'll be alright - they can
handle her.

GERRI
I know. I've got enough food.

TOM
Have you? That's alright, then.

GERRI
Oh, well. Here goes.

(She leaves. TOM carries on working.)

MARY is sitting at the kitchen table, her head in her hands. We hear GERRI coming down the stairs. She enters, goes to the wooden dresser, opens a drawer, and takes out some place-mats. She puts these on the table.

MARY
D'you want me to give you a hand?

GERRI
No, thank you, Mary. Would you
like to stay for a bite to eat?

MARY
No, it's alright. I don't want to
be in the way.

GERRI

You won't be. We've got plenty of food.

(She takes some wine-glasses from a shelf.)

MARY

Are you still angry with me?

GERRI

Mary, I wasn't angry with you. I just felt you'd let me down.

MARY

Oh, Gerri... *(She gets up)* I'd never want to do that. I'm really sorry.

GERRI

Yes, and I know you've apologised.

MARY

I miss you. I mean, I know that I see you at work, but we don't seem to talk to each other any more. I feel terrible.

GERRI

This is my family, Mary. You've got to understand that.

(MARY starts to cry)

MARY

I do.

(GERRI puts down the glasses.)

GERRI

Oh... Come here.

(She embraces MARY. They hug. MARY sobs deeply.)

GERRI (CONT'D)

You have to take responsibility for your actions.

MARY

(Sobbing) I know.

(GERRI disengages herself slightly, and looks at MARY directly.)

GERRI

Now, listen Mary. You need to talk to somebody.

MARY

Oh, no, I don't want to do that.

GERRI

Well, I think it would help you.

MARY

I just want to talk to you.

GERRI

Why don't I have a word with one of my colleagues?

MARY

As long as we're friends, then I'm alright.

GERRI

Well, that's beside the point. You need independent professional help. You'd be much happier. Let's talk about it on Tuesday, shall we?

MARY

Yeah.

GERRI

And you have a think.

MARY

Yeah, we could have a drink.

GERRI

Why don't you help me lay the table?

(MARY starts to set out the place-mats)

MARY

He's really nice, Ronnie, isn't he?

(GERRI doesn't reply. She continues to put out the glances, glancing at MARY for just a moment. MARY has finished her task. She stands helplessly.)

Later. It is still light. Using his key, JOE comes through the front door, following by KATIE, who is wearing a woollen hat and a long scarf. GERRI comes out of the living-room.

GERRI
Hello! I saw you through the
window. (*She embraces JOE*)

KATIE
Hello!

JOE
Hello, how are you?

GERRI
I'm fine - how are you?

JOE
I'm good.

GERRI
(*embracing KATIE*) Katie! Lovely
to see you!

KATIE
Aw... lovely to see you. How are
you?

GERRI
Fine.

(*GERRI points to the living-room, and indicates silently
that MARY is present. KATIE does a momentary comic mock
exit towards the front door. TOM appears.*)

TOM
Hello!

JOE
Aha!

(*He gives TOM a bottle of wine.*)

TOM
Aha!

KATIE
We brought you some chocolates.

GERRI
Oh!

TOM
Good. Ha! ha!

(*He grabs the chocolates from KATIE and runs off with
them.*)

KATIE
Oh no! Give them back! Give them
back!

JOE
You'll never see them again!

(He walks away.)

GERRI
Can I take your things?

KATIE
Yeah - cheers.

(GERRI and KATIE share silent humour about MARY's presence. KATIE mimes hanging herself with her scarf, with an appropriate funny face. TOM joins them. KATIE takes off her coat, followed by her scarf. TOM takes them.)

KATIE (CONT'D)
(while she takes it off) I've got
the longest scarf in the world -
sorry! Tea cosy on my head!

(TOM takes her stuff away.)

GERRI
Come and meet Ronnie.

KATIE
Ah, great!

GERRI
Mary's here.

KATIE:
Oh!

(They go into the living room, followed by JOE and TOM.)

KATIE
Hi, Mary! How are you?

MARY
Good, thanks.

KATIE
Excellent.

MARY
Hi Joe.

JOE
Hi.

(MARY kisses him.)

KATIE
Hi, you must be Ronnie.

(She shakes his hand.)

KATIE (CONT'D)
I've heard a lot about you.
Lovely to meet you.

RONNIE
Hello.

JOE
This is Katie.

TOM
My big brother!

KATIE
Ah...

(MARY sits on the sofa.)

GERRI
Right, what are we having to
drink?

KATIE
I'll have what everyone else is
having.

TOM
Red wine for me.

GERRI
We're having fish.

JOE
I'll have white, then.

KATIE
Actually, I'll have white wine as
well, please.

TOM
Beer, Ronnie.

RONNIE
Er, yeah.

GERRI
White wine, Mary?

MARY
Er, yeah, please, if that's
alright.

TOM
I'll do that, Gez.

JOE
I'll get you a beer, Ronnie.

(GERRI, JOE and TOM leave.)

KATIE

So, I hear you're a massive Derby fan, Ronnie.

RONNIE

Er, yeah.

KATIE

Great club. I'm a Palace supporter myself, for my sins. But I'm still holding onto the hope we might crash back through to the Premiership, at some point!

RONNIE

Yeah.

KATIE

What d'you reckon to Derby's chances?

RONNIE

Oh... not so bad.

KATIE

Well, fingers crossed!

(She crosses them. MARY sits, alone and lonely.)

Later. Outside the house. It is now dark. Light from within the house. A cyclist passes.

In the kitchen. They are all round the table, eating the pudding course. The camera slowly circles the table, as TOM, GERRI, JOE and KATIE talk. For a while, we don't see RONNIE or MARY.

TOM

We met on our first day at university in Manchester.

KATIE

Oh, your first day!

TOM

We were in the same halls of residence.

GERRI
We met on the stairs.

TOM
Yeah.

KATIE
Really?

TOM
I was falling down them, she was
going up them.

GERRI
I was falling up them!

JOE
Well, things haven't changed,
then.

GERRI
And Tom's first job, when we left
uni, was abroad for two years.

KATIE
And you tried not to take it
personally, eh? (*Laughs*)

TOM
We came down to London, didn't
we, for about nine months.

GERRI
Yeah...

TOM
I got my first geologist's job in
Western Australia in the outback.

KATIE
Oh, right

JOE
It was just him and a load of
Australian cowboys.

TOM
Yeah. It was like the Wild West
out there.

KATIE
Yeah, all cork hats, was it, and
beers?

GERRI
You've worked in Australia,
haven't you, Katie?

KATIE

Yeah, I worked in Sydney for a year.

TOM

Oh, yeah?

KATIE

Oh, I had the most wonderful time there. They know how to enjoy themselves, don't they, the Aussies?

TOM

Oh, yeah. And then you came out and visited, didn't you, my first Christmas holiday?

GERRI

Yes. Yes, and we spent Christmas on the beach.

KATIE

Barbie on the beach?

TOM

Yeah, oh, yeah.

GERRI

And then when Tom had finished after two years, I joined him again, and we...

JOE

You went on your grand tour, didn't you?

GERRI

...we came back overland.

TOM

Yeah, yeah. It took us seven months, I think. We got the boat from Fremantle to Singapore and then...

GERRI

Yeah... Singapore

TOM

Singapore to Malaysia, and then onto Thailand...

GERRI

Thailand... Burma.

JOE
And to India.

(The camera is now on RONNIE, who is eating his pudding and sipping his beer contentedly.)

TOM
Yeah.

KATIE
Oh, I'd love to go to India.

JOE
Stoned in India.

GERRI
We went trekking in Nepal.

KATIE
Really?

TOM
....Nepal, trekking in Nepal, the beach at Goa. Wonderful, holiday of a lifetime.

KATIE
Up and down Everest.

GERRI
Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran. Turkey....

TOM
Yeah, yeah - Turkey.

GERRI
Over to the Greek Islands...

TOM
Greek Islands. The wonderful thing was, because I'd been two years working in Australia, and earning relatively good money, and nothing to spend it on really. So, we didn't have to do it on a really tight budget.

(Now the camera is on RONNIE and MARY. She smiles at him but he doesn't really respond.)

GERRI
Because some people could just hitch, but we could get buses and trains and stuff.

TOM
Yeah, yeah.

KATIE
It must have made a difference.

TOM
You've been to the Greek Islands,
haven't you, Mary?

MARY
Yeah.

TOM
Which island was it?

MARY
Corfu.

TOM
Yeah?

KATIE
What were you doing on Corfu?

MARY
Oh, I only... ran a bar, on the
beach.

JOE
You were a cocktail waitress,
were you?

(Laughter.)

MARY
Yeah. *(She smiles)*

(The camera is now only on MARY.)

GERRI
So, when are you going to Paris.

KATIE
Oh, a week on Friday. Can't wait.

JOE
Yes. We've got an early start;
six twenty-two train.

TOM
Oh, no!

JOE
Yeah.

KATIE
We get in at Paris, what is
it....?

JOE
About quarter to ten?

KATIE
Yeah - nine-fifty.

JOE
Something like that. Have
breakfast by the Seine.

(The dialogue starts to fade out slowly.)

KATIE
Breakfast...

TOM
Have you got your hotel booked?

KATIE
Yeah, we've got a lovely hotel,
haven't we?

JOE
Very nice, yeah.

KATIE
Beautiful. In the Marais area.

TOM
Oh, yeah?

KATIE
It will be brilliant for our
Christmas shopping.

(MARY drinks some wine.)

TOM
When are you coming back?

KATIE
... On the Sunday...

(The dialogue has now faded to total silence.)

(We hold on MARY, in her pain, for a while.)

SLOW FADE TO BLACKOUT

The End