

Screenplay: Not Your Heart Away

By

Carl Bennett

Based on the novel Not Your Heart Away.

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1

BEN is driving out in the countryside with LIZ. Her face is in the shadows.

LIZ:
You spent your whole life
dreaming about her, didn't you?
Always?

Liz's face seems to blur and change into CLAIRE's as she turns towards him and smiles. He doesn't see the corner coming up. The car crashes off the road into a tree.

Ben staggers out of the wrecked car. He looks at the buckled bonnet, then sees the smashed windscreen. He looks back into the passenger seat and vomits.

BEN:
Claire! Claire!

2 INT, UPMARKET 1970S BEDROOM, NIGHT

Ben holds the sobbing teenage Claire as they sit side by side on her bed.

CLAIRE:
It's OK. It's OK really, isn't
it? All of the best times are
sad. You know that.

3 INT., BEN'S BEDROOM NOW

Ben wakes in his own bed, screaming, 30 years older. A woman beside him is shocked out of her sleep.

BEN:
Claire! Claire!

WOMAN IN BED 1:
Are you alright?

MONTAGE OF OTHER WOMEN IN THE SAME BED AT DIFFERENT TIMES.

WOMAN IN BED 2:
Is there something you want to
talk to me about?

WOMAN IN BED 3:
Is there anything you think you
ought to talk to me about?

WOMAN IN BED 4:
Who is she? I said, who is she?

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN IN BED 5:
Did she love you too?

Ben gets out of bed. The woman in bed looks at him, dazed awake, hurt, confused. upset.

BEN:
Sorry. Bad dream. It was a bad dream or something.

EACH WOMAN'S FACE FLASHES PAST IN C/U.

WOMAN IN BED 1:
Bastard!

WOMAN IN BED 2:
Bastard!

WOMAN IN BED 3:
Bastard!

WOMAN IN BED 4:
I'm not going to get angry.
Because I'm already fucking
furious! You absolute, total
bastard!

A book hits the wall next to Ben's head, then a coffee cup. He walks out of the room.

4 INT. BATHROOM, MORNING

Ben puts the radio on then shaves in the mirror.

SFX: Bob Marley - Is This Love?

SFX: A door slams, hard.

BEN V/O:
Because that's the worst thing,
isn't it? I loved her. Claire.
No-one else. It's not great, is
it? It's not great but it's not
the worst thing. Did she love me
to? That's the worst thing.
Because if I don't know that, all
my life, what's been the point?
Tell me Bob? Is this love that
I'm feeling? I want to know now.
I think I waited long enough,
don't you?

5 EXT., CLAIRE'S HOUSE, EVENING

Ben drives up to the door of the huge old house. He gets out of his old car slightly apprehensively and goes to knock at the door.

POPPY opens the front door before he knocks.

POPPY:

Hello?

BEN:

Oh. Hi. Er, is Claire in?

POPPY:

No, sorry. (PAUSE) What's your name?

BEN:

It's Ben. I'm a friend of Claire. Sort of.

POPPY:

Are you Claire's boyfriend?

BEN:

No, not really.

POPPY:

No. I know. I'm Laura. But everyone calls me Poppy. Actually, I know you. Claire's birthday party. Last year.

6 INT., PARTY KITCHEN, NIGHT

A 1970s big party, teenagers dance, mingle, talk and snog. Poppy dances on a table. She jumps down when she sees Ben and runs to him.

POPPY:

Isn't this the very best party?
I'm so excited! Aren't you? Here,
feel my heart.

She takes ben's hand and places it firmly on her breast. Ben doesn't know what to do next.

7 EXT, CLAIRE'S HOUSE FRONT DOOR, EVENING

BEN:

Yes. Yes, I remember you.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY:

What did you want Claire for?
Apart from the obvious.

BEN:

I wondered, I mean I was just
seeing if she was in. I thought
she might like to go for a ride.
Somewhere. Or something.

POPPY:

She's not here, Ben. Will I do?
I'd quite like to. You know?

BEN:

Would you?

POPPY:

Possibly. We'll have to see.
Shall we go?

8 INT, BEN'S CAR, EVENING

Ben drives Poppy through country lanes.

SFX: The Undertones: Teenage Kicks

BEN:

So, what's your school like?

POPPY:

It's like school, you idiot. Do
you really want to talk about
school? Or is there something
else we could do instead?

Poppy looks idly out of the car window as they drive.

POPPY: (cont'd)

It's a very old place, isn't it?
Here? I can feel a presence.
Something from the past.

BEN:

That happens to a lot of people
here.

Ben drives past a hitch-hiker. The man stares blankly at
the car as it passes. Ben and Poppy look in the mirror but
there is nobody there.

POPPY:

Ben? That man -

(CONTINUED)

BEN:

Tapps Lane. We don't go there.

POPPY:

Was that - was that a ghost?

BEN:

Vanishing hitchhiker. Someone flags a lift and gets in the car. But when you get to where you were going there's no-one there.

POPPY:

Does that happen a lot?

BEN:

Enough. It's just we don't go down that lane.

POPPY:

It feels as if the past is all around us, here. I can sense it.

Ben drives past a small factory.

BEN:

SEE THAT BUILDING? THEY MADE SPITFIRES THERE. IN THE WAR.

A Spitfire howls loud and low overhead. Ben and Poppy don't react.

POPPY:

It's getting cold.

Poppy shivers. Ben is driving with his hand out of the window.

POPPY: (cont'd)

Isn't your hand cold? I bet it is. Here. Let me warm it up.

Poppy takes Ben's hand off the steering wheel and stuffs it under her leg. Ben's other hand is still out of the window. He has to grab for the wheel.

BEN:

That's the wrong hand.

POPPY:

I can't put both your hands under my leg to keep them warm, Ben. Not if you're driving. Perhaps you ought to stop somewhere. So we can warm your hands.

(CONTINUED)

An orange light appears on the horizon and passes at incredible speed over the car, filling it with light.

POPPY: (cont'd)
What was that?

BEN:
UFO. I told you.

POPPY:
Bollocks. What was that?

BEN:
A UFO! What did you think it was?

POPPY:
There are no such things as UFOs.

BEN:
Well we've just seen one.

POPPY:
There has to be a rational explanation. I believe in ghosts and spirits. But UFOs are just made-up.

BEN:
It's like that here, Poppy. Look, do the sums. How long did we see it for?

POPPY:
I don't know. About three seconds.

BEN:
OK, from over there where we saw it to over there where it went, that's about 20 miles. Horizon to horizon.

POPPY:
So?

BEN:
20 miles in 3 seconds. That's 40 miles in 6 seconds. So 400 miles in 60 seconds. That's one minute. 60 minutes in an hour so that's 400 times 60. Four sixes are 24, two naughts for the hundred, one for the 60 so 24 and three naughts.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY:
Are you saying?

BEN:
24,000 miles an hour. Nothing goes that fast. I don't think anything goes even half that fast.

POPPY:
Wait. Three seconds. Let's say it's only 10 miles. Halve it again. Oh. Oh my God. I've just seen a UFO.

Ben and Poppy look at each other and grimace.

POPPY: (cont'd)
Ben, it's been lovely. I like being with you. But would you take me home please? I'm not sure I like being out here with all this stuff going on.

9 CLAIRES KITCHEN, INTERIOR, EVENING.

Calire and her mother IMOGEN are cooking as Ben and Poppy arrive.

IMOGEN:
Hello you two! What have you been doing?

BEN:
Nothing.

POPPY:
Ben was showing me the sights!

CLAIRE:
See any?

POPPY:
Not this time. Ghosts. UFOs. You know how it is.

Claire looks at Poppy warily.

CLAIRE:
Aren't you going to kiss me?

Ben uncertainly kisses Claire on both cheeks.

CLAIRE: (cont'd)
I should think so too.

(CONTINUED)

BEN:
Hello Mrs Thompson.

IMOGEN:
Hello Ben. Are you alright? You look a bit - shaken. Hi Poppy. You too. Are you OK?

CLAIRE:
What have you been up to, Poppy?

POPPY:
I think we sort-of saw a UFO.

BEN:
We were driving down a lane and -

POPPY:
Anyway, is there any supper? I'm starving!

IMOGEN:
About half an hour. Are you staying for supper Ben? There's plenty.

CLAIRE:
Ben needs to get some rest. Ben's taking me to the theater tomorrow, Poppy.

BEN:
There's a few of us going. Would you like to come as well?

CLAIRE:
Poppy's got to go back to London tomorrow. Early. Don't you?

POPPY:
Shakespeare?

BEN:
Yes. Stratford on Avon. Loves Labours Lost.

POPPY:
That would have been brilliant!

CLAIRE:
But Poppy has to get back.

POPPY:
I'd have liked to come with you, Ben. But I do have to get back. Pity.

Claire quickly pecks Ben's cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE:

Night Ben. See you in the morning.

POPPY:

Maybe next time, Ben.

Poppy kisses Ben's cheek a little longer than she needs to and holds his waist.

CLAIRE:

Night, Ben!

BEN:

Goodnight Claire. Goodnight Mrs Thompson.

IMOGEN:

Goodnight Ben. Nice to see you. Are you sure you're alright?

BEN:

Yes. Thank-you. Just a bit - tired. Nine o'clock, Claire?

Claire looks in a saucepan on the stove. She briefly glances at ben.

CLAIRE:

Yes, that would be great. See you in the morning.

POPPY:

Bye Ben. See you sometime. Soon, maybe.

Claire looks daggers at Poppy.

10 INT., BEN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM, NIGHT

We look around the dated, outgrown bedroom and zoom in on the Camel cigarette packet on the dresser. The Camel s made-up of writhing naked women.

Ben lies thinking on his bed, still dressed.

MONTAGE: Rapid images of Claire walking in sunshine, glancing at the camera, pretending she doesn't know we're watching her. We see her as parts, hair, eyes, shirt, rear end in tight jeans. The UFO flashes over the car. Poppy's knowing smile. Ben's hand under Poppy's thigh on the car seat.

The Camel packet on the dresser turns sepia as if it was aging. The woman in the back leg of the camel moves. Her face becomes exactly like Claire's. She winks as her face fills the screen.

11 INT. BEN'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM, MORNING

pigeons land on the roof over Ben's room as he opens the window onto this sunny, happy morning.

He presses play on his cassette recorder

SFX: Pink Floyd: 'Sheep.'

He gets dressed but he can't decide what to wear. He carries his shoes in his hand as he goes downstairs.

12 INT., BEN'S OLD KITCHEN, MORNING

BEN'S MUM is at the sink. She puts a bowl of cornflakes and a cup of tea on the table.

BEN'S MUM
Shoes on the clean parquet?

BEN
No mum.

BEN'S MUM
I've put more petrol in the car.
There's nearly a full tank,

BEN
Thanks Mum.

BEN'S MUM:
And Ben. Drive carefully. No
drinking.

BEN
No mum.

BEN'S MUM
And don't go getting up to
anything on the back seat of my
car.

BEN
We're going to the theater.
Culture.

BEN'S MUM
I'm serious. One slip, one cough
and that's it. Your life ruined!

BEN
What?

BEN'S MUM
Condoms. They don't work. They
tear. They fall off. Then you've

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEN'S MUM (cont'd)
ruined someone's life and all for
what?

BEN (V/O)
For a shag, obviously.

13 INT., SEEDY PUB GENTS TOILET, NIGHT

An OFF-DUTY SOLDIER gets condoms out of a dispensing machine on the wall. he pockets them and walks out of the gents. A girl puts down her pint and takes his arm as they leave together.

BEN V/O
The thing is, no-one uses
condoms. Only squadies. People
who work in the pork pie factory.
Scrubbers. Every girl over 16 was
on the Pill. Probably. They
hadn't even invented AIDS.

14 INT., RUGBY CLUB BAR, NIGHT

A middle-class boy is being ignored in the middle of a happy rugby club bar crowd of young people. The girls stay well clear of him as he drinks a pint of orange juice.

BEN V/O:
The worst you had to worry about
was two weeks of drinking orange
juice because alcohol messed-up
the antibiotics. People like us,
none of us did NSU. Clap. Crabs.
Venereal disease. That was all
stuff that happened to other
people. People who used condoms.

15 INT., CLAIRE'S BEDROOM, MORNING

Claire wakes to the alarm clock. She rolls over and takes a tablet from a packet in her bedside drawer then gets out of bed.

BEN (VO)
Nice girls didn't get it. Or
rather, they did, but they didn't
get that as well. That's how it
worked.

16 INT., BEN'S OLD KITCHEN, MORNING

Ben's mother stares at him ominously, then looks quizzically at ben, worried.

BEN

I absolutely promise nothing like that will happen in the car. And there's four of us, so there wouldn't be room anyway.

BEN (V/O)

Although it should. She just won't, probably. And you need a bigger car.

BEN'S MUM

Make sure you don't. And don't wake us up when you get in.

BEN

I won't. Bye.

BEN'S MUM

Bye. Drive safely. And be careful.

BEN

Yes mum.

17 EXT., LIZ'S HOUSE, DAY

BEN WALKS away from his car through the piles of building materials, cement mixers, scaffolding poles to the door of Liz's house. LIZ'S DAD watches him silently, drinking tea, muscles bulging in the doorway.

LIZ'S DAD

Liz isn't ready yet. But you knew that, probably. Cup of tea, boy?

BEN

Please.

18 INT., LIZ'S HOUSE, DAY

Liz's Dad waves gestures with his mug at a sofa. Ben moves towards it. Liz's dad brings two big mugs of tea and sits beside him. it's not a big sofa.

LIZ'S DAD

Love's Labours Lost.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Sorry?

LIZ'S DAD

You're taking Liz to the play.
Peter's going?

BEN

We're picking him up in a minute.

liz enters the room, pretty and smiling. Her dad nods at her. Ben stands up. Liz's Dad remains seated, as if on a throne.

LIZ'S DAD

Smoke?

Liz's dad takes out a tobacco tin and rolls a cigarette.

LIZ'S DAD (cont'd)

I knew a bloke when I was a bit older than you. He didn't have much money but he wanted to get on so he went to college, nights. But he still didn't have any money and he did this.

Liz's Dad raises the tobacco tin and puts it down again before he rolls the cigarette.

LIZ'S DAD (cont'd)

You understand me?

BEN

Smoking?

LIZ'S DAD

He couldn't afford packets. So what he did, he rolled his own. He'd roll up 20 cigs on a Sunday night. That would get him through the week. You can get what you want. If you're careful about it.

Liz's Dad lights the cigarette and nods at liz.

LIZ'S DAD (cont'd)

One thing, boy. Be careful how you drive today, with Liz. Remember what I said.

Liz grabs her bag and kisses her father.

19 EXT., LIZ'S DRIVEWAY, DAY

Liz and Ben walk towards his car.

LIZ:
No Claire then? I thought you'd
pick her up first.

BEN
No, pick her up on the way.

LIZ:
At her big house.

BEN:
Just don't do anything to her.
Just be nice, Liz.

LIZ:
I am nice. Just in a different
way to yoghurt.

BEN:
Yoghurt.

LIZ:
Thick and rich. And creamy.

BEN:
Creamy?

LIZ:
If you're lucky.

Ben tries to stare liz down. She smiles enigmatically at him.

BEN
What was that about, with your
dad?

LIZ:
That's just my dad. Pete!

PETER arrives in the yard.

BEN:
Pete! Ready for some culture and
that?

PETER
Drink Scotch whisky all night
long and die behind the wheel
ready.

They get into the car.

20 INT., BEN'S CAR, DAY

LIZ:
Got everything?

PETER
Collapsible bouquet of flowers,
check. Inflatable box of
chocolates, check. Gentleman's
something for the weekend, check.

LIZ:
Yogurt?

PETER
Check.

Liz and Peter laugh. Ben tries not to.

LIZ:
So is Simon coming today as well?
You know Ben? Claire's boyfriend?

BEN
No. He's not.

LIZ:
No? But he's Claire's boyfriend.
I don't understand. Peter, do you
understand? (LAUGHS).

BEN
Is this going to happen all day?

LIZ:
Don't worry. I won't mess things
up with Claire for you. Maybe.

They drive away.

21 EXT., CLAIRE'S HOUSE, DAY

SFX: Sex Pistols - Great Balls of Fire

Ben, Peter and Liz sit in the car in the lane. The boys watch Claire walk towards them like a vision. She's carrying a picnic basket and an old sheepskin coat. Liz watches Ben.

SFX: Sound of a record stylus being dragged across a record.

LIZ:
Here she comes! Yogurt spoons
ready!

Claire pauses to open the gate into the lane. Ben gets out of the car.

22 EXT., LANE, DAY

Claire leans over the gate and offers Ben her cheek to kiss. He tries to kiss the other cheek as well, french-style. She turns away leaving him pecking the air.

BEN
Good morning, Claire.

CLAIRE
Hi Peter. Hello Liz.

LIZ:
Good morning.

PETER
Hi Claire! Looking good!

Claire smiles modestly as she swings the gate open. Her dog runs up to her. She stops, puts down her picnic basket and kneels at Ben's feet, but only to pat her dog.

CLAIRE
Sorry Hugsy! Not today. No, not today. You have to stay here, boy.

PETER
But Ben's driving!

Claire looks puzzled. her head is just inches from ben's groin. He tries not to look down her shirt. Fails.

CLAIRE
I know, Ben.

Claire slowly stands up, knowing the effect she has on ben, Ben looks longingly at the silver Aston-Martin on the gravel drive as they walk to his car.

BEN
Is that yours?

CLAIRE
No, it belongs to Piers. My mum's - he's moved in. I thought everyone knew.

Liz lets Claire into the back seat of ben's car next to her and shoots a meaningful glance at ben.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ:

What have you got in there?

Claire arranges her things and bends forward, stretching her shirt tight. Ben and Peter try not to notice. Badly. Liz sees them pretending not to look at Claire.

CLAIRE

Cava 'cos I'm not driving. Apple juice, some pate, hard-boiled eggs. Grapes. Some peaches. Yogurt.

LIZ:

Oh wow! Yogurt!

Claire looks suspicious.

CLAIRE

Have you tried putting grapes in it, Liz? I think you'd be surprised the fun you can have with that.

Liz looks suspiciously at Claire.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Just an idea.

Ben and Peter swap glances as ben starts the car.

23 EXT., OPEN ROADS, DAY

Ben's little old car sweeps through beautiful countryside.

24 INT., BEN'S CAR, DAY

Ben, Peter in the front, Liz and Claire in the back of the car are having a good time as the car drives along. liz opens a carton of fruit juice and swigs from it before she passes it to peter as he opens a map.

LIZ:

Are we lost already?

BEN

I think I know where we are, actually. I have to turn somewhere.

LIZ:

Actually.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
Is it north of Cirencester?

PETER
About 40 miles.

CLAIRE
Well if we turn right in a minute
we should get to Cirencester.

Ben and Peter exchange glances. Liz looks at Claire.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
It's the way we go when we used
to go to Badminton.

LIZ:
Playing it?

CLAIRE
Eventing. Horses. Here! Turn
right here, Ben!

Ben turns at the junction. They drive happily along in the
sunshine.

25 EXT., BEN POV, DAY

As the car approaches a junction. another road joins from
the right where the road curves left, behind some trees.

PETER
If we go down there - that road
on the right - on the way back I
think we can cut off about 20
miles.

A silver car on the other side of the road. Suddenly a red
car is coming straight at Ben, overtaking the silver car.

26 INT., BEN'S CAR, DAY

Ben stamps on the brakes. The red car fills the
windscreen, getting closer all the time.

LIZ & PETER
Shit!!!

CLAIRE
Ben!

Ben takes his foot off the brake. He stamps hard on the
accelerator. He steers towards the grass verge. In freeze
frame the red car slots past. They drive on. Ben's voice
is shaky.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Is everyone OK?

PETER

Yes. I - I thought that was it.

CLAIRE

If you hadn't accelerated then,
we'd all have been killed.

27 EXT., MARKET TOWN SQUARE, DAY

Ben takes the next turning into a little market square and parks. he gets out of the car and walks away to sit under a stone cross. After a moment Liz joins him. She sits down silently and passes him the fruit juice carton.

LIZ:

Drink it.

BEN

Liz. I - I'm really sorry.

LIZ:

I think I'm going to die every
time you drive me anywhere.
Usually. Not today. You actually
saved everyone's life today. You
idiot.

BEN

Is Claire OK? I mean, is everyone
OK?

LIZ:

Everyone is fine. Even me. Thanks
to you. I want to talk to you
about Claire. Nothing bad. But
not now.

Liz takes ben's arm and leads him back to the car.

LIZ: (cont'd)

There's yogurt in the car for
you.

BEN

I don't want any yogurt right
now, Liz.

LIZ:

You do. She wants you, anyway.
Come on. Let's see the play.

28 INT., BEN'S CAR, DAY

Ben switches off the engine and everyone gets out of the car in the theatre car park..

BEN
We're here.

CLAIRE
Thanks to you, Ben.

LIZ:
What time is it?

Claire looks at her incongruously expensive, discreet, very grown-up gold watch.

CLAIRE
Just gone one o'clock. Let's have our picnic!

PETER
It doesn't start till half-seven. What are we going to do till then?

LIZ:
(sarcastically) Let's hire a punt on the river or something! Claire?

CLAIRE
Good idea! That would be brilliant, Liz!

BEN
Yes, brilliant!

CLAIRE
We can all go in one! They're big enough.

LIZ
I'd have thought you'd want a small punt.

CLAIRE
Not really, Liz. I mean, I might if I was on my own but you're here as well.

PETER
I'd like a go in a big punt. He said enunciating carefully.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ
Shut up, Peter.

29 EXT., RIVERBANK, DAY

Ben, Liz, Claire and Peter walk towards the river at a boat hire jetty. A COUPLE are in front of them in the queue. There are only small rowing boats left. The boatman writes a time down in a book, tears off the page and gives it to the couple in front.

BOATMAN
Next two then, two per boat. Next two then. You pay when you get back, love.

Ben steps into the boat. Liz tries to move so Claire can get in but the boatman grabs her hand and firmly spins her into the boat with Ben and shoves it off into the river.

BOATMAN (cont'd)
Nothing to worry about love. Know how to row?

BEN
Yes.

LIZ
You don't.

BEN
I do, actually. Sailing. At school.

LIZ
Actually.

Claire grins ruefully and shrugs at Ben as she steps into the other boat. She sits down and flicks her hair out of her eyes as Peter drops an oar that nearly hits her foot.

CLAIRE
Oh well.

Ben rows the boat out into the river. Peter is hopeless at rowing. His boat is left behind.

LIZ
Oh well. No punting for you, Ben.

BEN
Doesn't look like, does it?
Anyway, she's got a boyfriend.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Who we all aren't talking about.
But I know why she isn't talking
about him.

Liz pulls a flagon of cider out of a plastic bag and drinks hillbilly style. Ben can't stop looking at her tits as she does. In the distance peter's boat spins in circles.

BEN

And the reason is, exactly?

LIZ

If you stop staring at my tits I
might tell you.

BEN

Sorry.

LIZ

My dad. He said you were a
keeper.

BEN

Well, you know. What does that
mean?

LIZ

Well, you know.

Ben takes the cider jar and swings it up. he spills cider down his shirt.

BEN

I'm going to spill this if
we drink it out here. I'll
put us into the bank.

LIZ

Mind out for the swans.

BEN

OK. You were going to tell me why
no-one's talking about Claire's
boyfriend. Apart from the fact
he's an arse.

LIZ

Ellen's mum didn't think so.

30 INT., ELLEN'S HOUSE, NIGHT

A party is going on. Ellen walks into her room. ELLEN'S MUM and SIMON are standing very close together. They spring apart when Ellen enters.

ELLEN'S MUM

Oh, there you are! Can you keep
on eye on your guests? Poor Simon
here was completely lost!

31 EXT., RIVER, DAY

Ben rows Liz slowly in their punt.

LIZ

You know that party we all went
to there? After that. Apparently.
Claire got it out of him. So he's
not getting anything out of her.

BEN

This is what you were talking
about in the car? Why didn't
anyone tell me?

LIZ

She was hardly going to put it in
the school magazine, was she?

BEN

What was all that stuff about
Piers, as well?

LIZ

Her voice went funny, didn't it?
When she mentioned him.

BEN

Why's Piers's Aston-Martin at
Claire's at half-past eight in
the morning?

LIZ

You'd be better-off asking
Claire.

BEN

Should I just do that?

LIZ

No! Don't be so stupid!

Liz swigs angrily from the cider jug.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)
I don't know why I do this!

BEN
Drink cider?

LIZ
Try to help you shag Claire.

BEN
I'm not trying to shag Claire.
It's more than that.

Liz laughs and snorts derisively into the jug.

LIZ
Then that's different. I might
not help you at all.

Liz nods for Ben to take the jug. He drinks, then rows the punt to the bank. Liz lies back and closes his eyes. He tries not to stare at her.

LIZ (cont'd)
Give me your sweater.

BEN
You can't be cold.

LIZ
I need a pillow. Give me your
sweater now. Or I won't help you
shag Claire.

Ben holds out his sweater. Liz reaches for it, eyes still closed. Ben lies back at his end of the baot and closes his eyes. A bee buzzes past.

They doze.

A sudden bang, the boat rocks.

BEN POV: Claire in a blinding halo of light in her boat alongside.

CLAIRE
Having fun, you two?

BEN
I wasn't. I mean I can't see you
because I'm looking at the sky.

CLAIRE
You're not really awake, are you?

PETER

Worn out. Like Liz.

Peter looks sceptically into ben's boat. Liz sits up, her hair awry and her shirt more open than it should be. Liz notices and glances at Claire. She does not adjust her shirt.

LIZ

Who isn't worn out at all. But who is extremely thirsty.

Liz reaches for the cider jar and swigs hillbilly style again.

CLAIRE

Can I have a go?

Liz wipes her mouth with the back of her hand and pauses.

LIZ

Sure. Here you go.

Claire takes the jug and swigs hillbilly style without spilling any. Her lips are still dry. She looks up, nonchalant.

CLAIRE

What?

PETER

Time to go and eat.

32 EXT., ITALIAN RESTAURANT, EARLY EVENING

Ben lights Peter's cigarette as they wait in the street. Liz and Claire walk towards them in the sunshine. They look fantastic, their hair flowing, talking happily to each other, discreetly made-up.

BEN

They look like they're in a film.

PETER

Liz's aren't bad either. It's just Liz though, isn't it?

CLAIRE

Hello, you. What are you two talking about?

BEN

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

Nothing.

Liz looks suspiciously at ben and pete.

BEN

Shall we eat?

CLAIRE

Let's. I'm starving. Where are we going?

PETER

There's this little place I know.

Peter steps back and opens the door for the girls then Ben to walk into the restaurant.

BEN

(WHISPERS) Do we have to pay for Claire and Liz as well?

PETER

(WHISPERS) I don't know!

33 INT., RESTAURANT, EARLY EVENING

A WAITER hovers as Liz, Peter, Claire and Liz sit and look at their menus.

CLAIRE

Sorry, could we just have a minute?

WAITER

Certainly, madam.

CLAIRE

There's no point hiding this. I'm just going to say it.

Peter puts his menu flat on the table, waiting. Liz looks at Claire over the top of her menu.

BEN

I - I think I know what you're going to say.

CLAIRE

Good. I'm glad it's not just me.

PETER

One of you has to say it.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Ben, I - I just don't know what half of these things are on the menu. I mean, minestrone, I know what that is, obviously.

PETER

Life is a minestrone.

LIZ

It would be extremely messy if it were.

CLAIRE

Bolognese and risotto I know. Carbonara, cannelloni.

PETER

And chips. I know what chips are. What pollo e chips are is different. But I do know chips.

LIZ

Ragu is a sauce. Farfalle I don't know. I think it's a kind of pasta. Crostini?

PETER

No, it's just the way I'm sitting.

BEN

It's all Greek to me.

CLAIRE

No, that's moussaka.

Liz stares hard at Claire.

LIZ

Let's just ask what's good.

The waiter brings food. as they eat and talk happily Ben bites a mouthful of food that is insanely hot.

BEN

Sorry. I've got to go. A minute. Excuse me.

Ben stands up quickly.

34 RESTAURANT BATHROOM.

Ben spits food out into a sink, then pokes it down the plughole. He drinks cold water from the tap and washes his face. Peter walks in.

PETER
You alright, Ben?

BEN
Yes. No. I just had something
really hot in my mouth.

PETER
Got a pen?

Peter writes 'TAKE YOUR BOOTS OFF' on the condom machine on the wall, underneath a notice that says 'NOTES TO SERVICEMAN.' He stands back and admires his work.

PETER (cont'd)
You really like her, don't you?

BEN
I think about her all the time. I
can't think of anything else.
Since her party.

PETER
I'll take that as a yes, then.
It's there, isn't it?

BEN
Is it?

PETER
Reckon. But you haven't really
spoken to her about it.

BEN
No. And I don't know why. I just
can't seem to. About us.

PETER
Just do it. Or it'll really annoy
Liz.

BEN
How does that work?

PETER
I dunno. Chick stuff. Girl stuff.
Their brains are another country.

BEN
Do it.

(CONTINUED)

PETER

In a loving and caring way,
obviously.

BEN

Obviously.

They move towards the door.

PETER

After you.

BEN

No, after you sir.

PETER

No, after you, sir.

35

THEATER STREET

Ben and Claire, Liz and Peter stand blinking in the evening sunlight outside the restaurant. Peter winks, then he and Liz walk off.

BEN

Claire.

Claire looks keen, expectant. The silence gets longer and she starts to look impatient. A tourist horse and carriage clip clops past in the street.

CLAIRE

Love and marriage.

BEN

What?

CLAIRE

Love and marriage. Song. They go together like a horse and carriage.

BEN

I've sort of heard of that. The horse thing.

CLAIRE

Do you like horses, Ben?

BEN

Not really. I fell off one once.

CLAIRE

Good. I don't really like them either.

Claire gives up and starts walking slowly towards the theater. Now she's not going to be kissed she's relaxed with ben, confidential.

36 INT., PONY CLUB TACK ROOM, NIGHT

A flock of over-excited girls in their early teens are at a pony club party. A younger claire holds her rosette as she talks to the other happy girls in the glow of the party. the door opens.

CLAIRE V/O

Except I liked Pony Club. The best bit was at Christmas we always had a party and everyone had to groom their pony especially. Then we had games in the tack room and we all got a rosette. And tea.

CLAIRE'S DADDY is there, smiling, his expensive car visible behind him. Claire loves being at the party. She loves her daddy collecting her, too.

37 EXT., STREET, EARLY EVENING.

Claire and Ben walkj down the street. She stops, blinks and swallows before she walks on with Ben.

CLAIRE

We had a special Christmas tea. Then my Dad came and picked me up to go home. I - I don't have my pony now. We had to sell him. I still see him now and then.

BEN

Why did you have to sell him?

CLAIRE

My dad - when Piers moved in. My dad said - my dad said if Piers was having everything he could pay for it too.

Claire can't, won't look at ben as she speaks.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I thought you knew. I thought everybody knew.

BEN

No?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

You know about Piers and my mum.
You know my dad moved out.

BEN

No.

CLAIRE

Oh. Well, he did. Piers moved in.
My dad - my dad made a scene. It
was Piers's fault. It was all
supposed to be OK, but my dad
thought he was paying for it all.

38 EXT., CLAIRE'S HOUSE, DAY

Claire's dad is furious, pointing at PIERS and Imogen as gets into his expensive car. Imogen is trying to keep things calm. Piers certainly doesn't want a fight but he isn't going to take this crap much longer. Claire watches appalled from an upstairs window. She blames Piers for this entirely.

39 EXT., STREET, EARLY EVENING

Ben and Claire walk slowly, way behind Peter and Liz.

CLAIRE

He said that, anyway. It wasn't nice.

BEN

I don't know about any of this.
Claire, you don't have to talk
about it if you don't want to. I
mean, if you want to - that's,
well, you know.

CLAIRE

Thank-you Ben. That's what I like
about you.

BEN

What

CLAIRE

You know. Come on. Or we'll be
late for the play.

40 INT., THEATRE STALLS, EVENING

Peter, Liz, Ben and Claire sit waiting for the curtain to go up. Claire pulls a book of the play out of her bag.

LIZ
Bored already?

Claire holds the book above her head to show the cover to everyone in the theater. She pretends to cough and pats her throat. She sounds as if she's announcing a jump-off at a gymkhana.

CLAIRE
Loves Labours Lost.

LIZ
So tell us what it's about,
Claire.

CLAIRE
Well, the boys say they love the
girls. But the girls say if they
still love them in a year and a
day then they'll let them f-

She stops, embarrassed. The lights in the theater go down.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Hush! It's starting!

The play begins. Ben can only look at Claire. Her leg rubs against his. Ben tentatively presses his leg against Claire's but hers moves away. Claire's leg moves back against Ben's again, but when he presses back she moves her leg away again until the lights go up. Peter gets up and squeezes past Liz and Claire to get to Ben and the aisle.

PETER
Come on. Let's get some drinks.

CLAIRE
Yes please! White wine! Please!

LIZ
What Claire's having.

41 INT., THEATER BAR, EVENING

Ben and Peter carry the drinks through the interval crowd back to their seats.

BEN
What do you think of it so far?

(CONTINUED)

PETER

It's like you and Claire, really. Nothing for a year and a day. Or ever. Unless you say something to her.

BEN

I do say something to her.

PETER

But not the thing. Not as in saying I'm going to marry you, obviously!

BEN

Pete, I have to tell you this before you waste your whole life. You're really nice. I respect you. But I'm not going to marry you.

PETER

Funny. Just tell her. You're really pissing Liz off.

Ben hands the wine to the girls and takes his drink from Peter.

CLAIRE

You look very serious Ben. What are you talking about?

Ben sees Liz's book in her open bag on the floor.

BEN

Anais Ninn.

PETER

Anais Ninn. Liz's book. It's about lesbians in Mexico.

CLAIRE

I don't believe you.

LIZ

True. They probably have classes on that at your old school, don't they?

CLAIRE

I don't know. I never listened anyway.

Claire looks down modestly and smiles as they sit. As the curtain goes up she puts the plastic glass between her lips and claps wildly. The lights go down. Claire's leg brushes ben's leg. then again, definitely. Ben turns his

(CONTINUED)

head towards hers. Claire smiles and turns her head slowly towards Ben, her eyes huge in the dark.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Watch the play!

42 INT., BEN'S CAR, NIGHT

Peter sits in the back of the car with Liz. He looks up from the map he reads with a torch as Ben drives through the dark countryside. Claire sits next to ben in front.

PETER
If we can get off this road we'd miss Bath entirely.

CLAIRE
(Quietly) I will.)

BEN
How do you mean?

CLAIRE
My trip. My new life.

Claire bites her lip. She can't look at Ben.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
I thought you knew. I thought everybody knew. My Dad got this job for me. In America. He's really trying to help. And with things, you know. With Piers. And the house and everything. All the changes here.

BEN
What changes?

Liz reaches forward and taps Ben twice on the side of his neck away from Claire so that she can't see it done.

CLAIRE
My mum's moving. I'm going to California.

BEN
For ever?

CLAIRE
I don't know.

PETER
We can go left down the road a bit.

(CONTINUED)

Ben takes the next turning into a farm track. After only a few yards Ben stops the car and gets out to open the gate blocking the track.

LIZ

Ben!

Ben walks to the gate. He hears a car door click shut and light footsteps behind him. Claire takes his arm.

CLAIRE

What are you doing, Ben?

BEN

Peter thinks there's a shortcut. I thought this was the road. But - I'm not sure it is. When are you going?

CLAIRE

Tuesday. I think it's Tuesday. Or Wednesday. It's a real job, Ben. My dad sorted it out because, well, there's not much for me to do here.

Claire snuggles against Ben, lit up in the car headlights. She can see how upset he is.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

He's trying to sort things out for me. My mum's got to move and I don't know - it doesn't feel like there's room for me in the new house. It's not really fair to live at my dad's. I don't know.

Ben puts his hand on the gate to open it.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Ben, don't open the gate. It's the wrong road. And anyway, maybe there's nothing the other side. That's what it feel like, Ben.

Ben pauses.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Ben - Ben will you take me home?

BEN

Of course. That's where we're going.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Then, would you like to take me home, Ben?

43 EXT., CLAIRE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Ben, Liz, Claire and Peter get out of Ben's car in the driveway. Claire leads the way into the house. Liz taps Ben's arm to hold him back.

LIZ (WHISPERS)

Listen to me Ben! Are you staying? Because we need to get home tonight.

BEN

It's not something we've been able to talk about in the car, is it?

LIZ

Don't get snarky with me Ben. Or I'll tell her you talked about it with me just now.

They eye each other in stand-off, then walk into the house.

44 INT., LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

Claire ushers Peter, then Liz and Ben into a huge 1970s shabby luxury living room. She shows Ben to the biggest sofa, Liz to another and Peter to a third.

CLAIRE

Sit wherever you want.

Claire kicks her shoes off and stands next to a drinks trolley.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

So. Drinks. Ben?

BEN

Scotch please. And ginger. Scotch and ginger.

CLAIRE

Scotch. We don't have any ginger. Or we might, but I don't know where it is. Anyway.

Claire pours Ben an enormous scotch. She pours smaller drinks for Liz and Pete with much less ceremony. She puts soft music on the stereo then joins Ben on the big sofa.

(CONTINUED)

She takes her jumper off and lies down, resting her head in Ben's lap. Pete and Liz smirk. Claire makes herself comfortable, rubbing her head side-to-side in Ben's lap. She smiles up at him.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
(Softly) What?

BEN
Oh, you know. Just what.

CLAIRE
So what are you going to do, Ben?

BEN
What, now?

Claire smiles and grinds her head into Ben's lap again.

CLAIRE
Next. What are you going to do next? Now the exams are over, for example?

BEN
Oh that. Go to university in September.

Claire reaches up and pulls Ben's hand holding the cigarette down to her lips and drags on it. She might be kissing his fingers.

BEN (cont'd)
I didn't know you smoked.

CLAIRE
I do lots of things, Ben. I read about things in magazines.

LIZ
What, smoking?

CLAIRE
All sorts of things. Rude to ask.

PETER
Talking of not asking, we ought to be getting on.

Claire wriggles her head in Ben's lap.

CLAIRE
I thought we all were.

Imogen enters the room. She looks at Ben and Claire on the sofa and smiles.

IMOGEN
Hello. Hi Ben!

 BEN
Or. Er, hi,

Claire cranes her head back to look at her mother, lying upside down across Ben.

 IMOGEN
We're going to bed now. You can stay as long as you like. Can you just make sure you shut the door so it locks when you go? Unless you're staying, Ben?

 CLAIRE
OK, Mum.

Imogen smiles and leaves the room. Liz stands up.

 LIZ
We have to go.

Peter shrugs and slowly stands up, collecting his cigarettes and lighter slowly, taking his time to help Ben.

 PETER
Oops, no car keys!

 LIZ
That's because Ben's got the keys. For your car? Ben! You took us to Stratford in it. Ben, we have to go.

Claire looks up at Ben. He says nothing. She shrugs a rueful smile.

45 CLAIRE'S DRIVEWAY

Liz steps out of the front door. Claire sweeps past Ben, pressing against him as she tries to be the gracious hostess, leaning forward to kiss Liz once on the cheek, being polite. Liz is surprised, wrong-footed.

 LIZ
You were much more fun than I thought you'd be. 'Night, Claire.

Liz awkwardly kisses Claire's cheek before she steps out of the door. Peter moves in to kiss Claire's cheeks both sides.

PETER
Mwah! Mwah!

CLAIRE
(Laughs) 'Night Peter!

Claire turns towards Ben as he steps out of the doorway. they hug. Claire looks up at Ben to be kissed but he takes so long to get the message that she turns to look at Peter and Liz. Ben bangs his nose on her ear.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Tickles!

Claire wipes Ben's kiss from her jaw with the cuff of her shirt.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Ben, I want you to know something. I've had a wonderful day with you. Thank-you.

BEN
It was nothing.

CLAIRE
Don't say things like that. Please.

BEN
Sorry Clare. I was just joking. You know, like in a film or something. That's what they say.

CLAIRE
When you know how the story ends.

BEN
Sorry?

CLAIRE
Nothing.

BEN
It's not as if I'll never see you again, is it?

CLAIRE
I - I don't know Ben. I don't know. I don't know what's going to happen.

BEN
I didn't know. Claire - Claire, can I see you before you go?

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

No. I'm going the day after tomorrow. I just remembered. I got the dates wrong.

BEN

Claire -

CLAIRE

I'm not being cruel. There isn't time. I've got to pack and everything. And there's all the stuff here.

BEN

Exciting though. Job in America?

Claire nods. Ben moves towards her to take her in his arms but he can't touch her. Claire half-turns away.

CLAIRE

Ben, it was such a lovely day with you.

BEN

It was a lovely day with you. I should have brought you some flowers or something. For luck. Or something.

CLAIRE

No, we never have flowers here.

BEN

How do you mean?

CLAIRE

I don't know! If we put flowers out they're just all over the floor in the morning. And the windows are all open.

BEN

Do you mean a ghost or something?

Claire shivers and looks behind her. Ben looks around too but there's nothing there.

CLAIRE

It's one of the things about living here. I won't miss that. But I'll miss you. Bye, Ben. Good luck.

(CONTINUED)

Claire gives a funny, awkward wave. She turns and walks into the house. As she gets to the door she turns but Ben's already walking slowly to his car where Peter and Liz are already sitting inside, Liz sits in the front passenger seat. They see Claire looking back at him. He doesn't.

Ben gets into his car and drives away.

46 INT., BEN'S CAR, NIGHT

Ben, Peter and Liz drive through the dark lanes. Liz sits in front with Ben. Peter lights a cigarette and passes the pack to Liz. She takes out a cigarette.

LIZ

That's it. End of big house.
She'll be just the same as anyone
else now. Except with a bigger
arse. They probably won't notice
in America.

BEN

Liz.

LIZ

Ooh, you luuurve her!!

BEN

I don't want to talk about it.

LIZ

Just as well. Because there's
nothing to talk about. She's
going to be 5,000 miles away. Now
you can be normal again.

BEN

Thanks, Liz.

LIZ

My pleasure.

PETER

Are we going home now?

BEN

Yes. I'll take you both home.

47 EXT., LONDON STREET, DAY

Ben gets out of his car and walks up steps to a flat. He presses the buzzer but nobody answers. He checks his watch then writes on a piece of paper he tears from his notebook and slips it though the letterbox.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (VO)

I got out of getting a job that week. My sister wanted someone to bring a chest of drawers up from our house to hers. I get the car, a full tank of petrol and somewhere to crash. Even if it is just my sister's. She's alright.

Ben walks off towards the Tube station.

48 INT., TUBE STATION, DAY

Ben buys a What's On magazine in the tube station entrance. He stands looking through it then finds a phone that works. On the fourth ring it's answered.

BEN

Poppy?

Ben has to hold the phone away from his ear.

POPPY V/O

Seven! Tottenham Court Road Tube!
Top of the steps! HMV side. Not
the tower side. Opposite! Write
it down! Ben, I'm serious. I
mean! I am! I'm really not
joking. Honestly! Write it down!
Write it down and I'll see you at
seven! Bye! Bye! Bye!

Ben blinks, still holding the dead phone.

49 EXT., CENTRAL LONDON STREET, DAY

Ben wanders along the street looking in the guitar shop windows.

SFX: Dire Straits - 'Wild West End.'

BEN (V/O)

I had the whole afternoon to kill
before I met Poppy. Just checking
out the movies.

Ben's eyes follow a PRETTY GIRL walking on the street.

BEN (V/O) (cont'd)

And the magazines. Like that Dire
Straits song. Anything could
happen. Anything at all.

Ben thinks he sees Claire going into a record shop. He
rushes to the doorway.

(CONTINUED)

SFX: Bob Marley - No Woman No Cry.

She's not there. Ben slowly notices his is the only white face in the shop. As he turns back towards the street he bumps into Poppy.

POPPY

Hi Ben! Hi! What are you doing here?

BEN

Hi! Poppy! Er -

POPPY

What? (laughs)

BEN

Poppy, you're standing on my foot.

POPPY

Oh, sorry! Were you in there? (laughs)

BEN

Yes. I thought -

POPPY

Too funny! I don't think of you as a Rastafari, somehow Ben! Movement of Yah People! (laughs)

BEN

I and I was doing the roots ting, innit?

POPPY

No you weren't! You were on your own. I and I means we. And I'm not at all sure I want to do a roots ting.

Ben sees a TRENDY GIRL with white cropped hair walking towards them.

BEN

You could dye your roots.

POPPY

Only scrubbers dye their roots, Ben.

The trendy girl sets her jaw and walks straight towards Poppy but loses her nerve and steps away into the road to pass around them, staring hard at the oblivious Poppy.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

So what's at Tottenham Court Road?

POPPY

We are!

BEN

I mean, why were we going to meet here?

POPPY

Oh I just said here because I thought you might get lost. And it's in the middle of things. Anyway, where are we going?

BEN

I looked in Time Out. Geales for fish and chips, then a film, Violette Noizierre. It's French.

POPPY

Really Ben?

BEN

Oui, vraiment.

Poppy absent-mindedly scratches her shoulder inside her shirt. She follows Ben's eyes to the small cut there.

BEN (cont'd)

Are you OK?

POPPY

Hm? Oh that. My cat. She jumped in the bath when I was still using it. It was a bit embarrassing.

They start walking towards the tube, still talking.

POPPY (cont'd)

My dad saw all the scratches when he came into my room. You know what he said?

BEN

No?

POPPY

You shouldn't let them do that, Laura! (Laughs) He always calls me Laura! Come on! I'm hungry!

50

EXT., ITALIAN GARDENS, DAY

Poppy drags Ben by the arm, laughing as they cross the road into the park. She clings to his arm as she moves him quickly towards the fountains overlooking the lake.

POPPY

I've got something to show you!
It's Italian! Sort of! You'll
love it! Come on Ben!

BEN

What is it?

POPPY

Did you read Brideshead? You must
have read Brideshead! It's like
that.

BEN

What is?

They arrive at the balustrade and Poppy snuggles up against Ben to look out down the water towards Kensington.

BEN (cont'd)

This - it's absolutely brilliant!
Its like, like Longleat House or
somewhere. Or Claire's house.

POPPY

Not really, Ben. Claire's house
isn't big enough to have gardens
like this. You could put your
arms around me. I haven't see you
for ages.

BEN

Not since we were UFO hunting.

POPPY

Who's we, kemosabe?

BEN

Kemosabe?

POPPY

You know, the Lone Ranger. Him
and Tonto are out in the Wild
West. They're surrounded by Red
Indians.

BEN

I thought you were supposed to
call them Amerinds.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

Shut up. This is my joke. The Lone Ranger and Tonto are surrounded by Amerinds, if you insist. So the Lone Ranger says 'we're surrounded by redskins, Tonto!' and And Tonto says 'who's 'we', kemosabe?

Poppy pulls away, mock-cross.

POPPY

Laugh, damn you!

They both laugh.

POPPY (cont'd)

Never mind. You can kiss me if you like.

They kiss, warmly. Poppy breaks away slowly and leads Ben by the hand through the park.

POPPY

You're quite nice actually, aren't you? A few rough edges, but never mind. Come on. I'm hungry. Did you book a table?

51 INT., GEALES RESTAURANT, EARLY EVENING

A WAITER greets Ben and Poppy at the door, shows them to a table and leaves them with a short, understandable menu. Ben looks around the restaurant.

BEN

This is great!

POPPY

Of course it is. Kir Royale. I'll have that. It's OK to say you don't know what it is. I'll show you.

Poppy makes a k-sign with both hands, then a T-sign. In seconds the waiter brings two glasses with thick black liquid in the bottom.

POPPY (cont'd)

Thank-you. Just a half bottle.

Ben just manages to drink the thick liquid while Poppy looks on, amused.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

Idiot!

The waiter brings an ice-bucket containing a half-bottle of champagne. Poppy smiles and waves him away, then pours champagne into the kir glasses.

POPPY

You pour the champagne over the kir. What's left of it.

The waiter brings fish and chips for them both. Poppy downs her drink in one.

POPPY (cont'd)

Brilliant! I'm starving!

Poppy eats hungrily.

BEN

So, what are you going to do at uni?

POPPY

Drama! Acting! Reading it!
Writing it! Discussing it! All of that! Dramatically!

BEN

Is that what you want to do?

POPPY

Be dramatic? Always. I mean, I'm quite a dramatic person naturally, I think. I tried to get into RADA too. (shouts) Ben! What's the time?

MAN ON NEXT TABLE

Twenty past seven.

POPPY

Quick Ben! It's on in ten minutes! The film!

They eat manically. The next table are disgusted.

52

INT., CINEMA, NIGHT

Ben and Poppy slide into their cinema seats. She snuggles up to him. Half the audience seems to be chatting and shouting out and flirting with the other half. On the screen VIOLETTE slips her BOYFRIEND some money in a cafe, before she pays for their drinks as well.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY
Is she mad?

GIRL 1
Totally!

GIRL 2
Utterly tonto!

FEMINIST GIRL
She's a victim of male
oppression!

MAN 1
Leave it out!

POPPY
She's just mental!

On the screen Violette is disgusted as she listens to her PARENTS having sex. Later she finds a rag they used as a barrier contraceptive.

POPPY (cont'd)
Jesus! Imagine having that stuff
up you first!

BEN
I'd rather not.

FEMINIST GIRL
Not so long as you don't have to
take responsibility for women's
fertility!

POPPY
He does, actually!

Poppy snuggles against Ben and whispers in his ear.

POPPY (cont'd)
I hope you don't mind. I can't
stand these dykes and their
stupid feminist stuff. And you
probably do, anyway.

BEN
I sort of make sure people are on
the pill. Everyone is, anyway,
but you know. If we're going to.
I mean, I don't mean if we're
going to. Unless we are. I -
meant generally.

Poppy is amused, not angry. She might be up for it.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (cont'd)
I don't mean - I didn't mean to
be presumptuous or anything.

Poppy puts her finger on Ben's lips, smiling.

POPPY
Let's watch the film now. And
tease the dykes a bit.

Poppy grabs Ben's head and french-kisses him very, very
obviously. She breaks the kiss and looks down at Ben's
lap, smirking.

POPPY (cont'd)
Sorry!

Ben shifts in his seat.

POPPY (cont'd)
Ben. After the film - take me to
the pub. Get me drunk. If you
like.

BEN
OK. If you're that sort of girl.

POPPY
I might be. Depends on the
company, Ben. Now do as you're
told and watch the film!

53 INT., LONDON PUB, NIGHT

Poppy gets a table while Ben goes to the bar. He comes
back with white wine and a pint. As soon as they sit down
Poppy downs her wine in one then reaches for Ben's pint.

POPPY:
Let me?

Poppy drinks from Ben's glass. On the pub TV an episode of
Till Death Us Do Part is playing.

POPPY
Not bad. A bit Alf Garnett but
not bad. A bit like you.

BEN
I'm not like Alf Garnett.

POPPY
Well, a bit. But still not bad.
Get me another drink. A large
drink. I want to ask you
something. Get me a drink and
I'll tell you.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Tell me what?

POPPY

What?

BEN

You said you're tell me something.

POPPY

I didn't. I said I'd ask you something. When you've got me a drink.

Ben walks to the bar and orders. The BARMAN stares at him hard before he pours the drinks.

BEN

So what was it you wanted to ask me?

POPPY

You and Claire. I mean, I don't mind what people do, but if we're going to the Italian Gardens again then I'd quite like to know.

BEN

So would I.

POPPY

Not actually the best response, Ben.

BEN

No. But you know. I don't know where I am with Claire. She's gone to America anyway.

POPPY

True. But even so. I mean, it's not as if we're sisters or anything. But we don't.

BEN

Don't what? Lights out in the dorm?

POPPY

Not these days. We don't share boyfriends. If you're her boyfriend. Except she's got one boyfriend, what's his name? And I'm asking you. In case. So?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

So I don't know. No. She's got this boyfriend.

POPPY

Who's an arse. I don't know what she's doing with him. She's a bit upset right now.

BEN

I know.

POPPY

Do you? Has she talked to you about it?

BEN

Well. I've sort of tried to talk to Claire but then when Liz blew up - I don't think you know Liz. Another friend of mine. We were round at Claire's -

POPPY

I know. I heard about it.

BEN

And? What did she say?

POPPY

Which is why I'm asking if you and Claire? So to speak?

BEN

Well no. Everyone else was there.

POPPY

I didn't mean that.

BEN

I heard there was something about Piers's business going bust.

POPPY

Not just that.

BEN

Do you mean Claire and Piers, you know?

POPPY

Don't be silly. It's her dad as well.

BEN

What? Like Violette Noizierre sort of thing?

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

Of all the stupid things you could say, that's got to be top of the list. We might as well get it out in the open, don't you think? So we both know where we are?

BEN

OK.

POPPY

I'm going to tell you about Claire.

BEN

You were at school with her, weren't you?

POPPY

You know we were. St Catherine's. Which before you say it, was a convent boarding school for girls. Actually, you might as well get me another drink if I'm going to tell you. White wine. A large one. If you want me to tell you about lesbians and candles.

SPEEDED-UP SHOT OF BEN RUSHING TO BAR, CUT TO BEN POV AS LONDON BARMAN STARES AT HIM.

LONDON BARMAN

She's with you. Keep it in order, yeah?

The London barman keeps his eye on Ben as he serves someone else. BEN takes his drinks and sits down.

BEN

So, lesbians and candles then. At school.

POPPY

I knew you'd go on about that. It was nothing. Someone's boyfriend sent her a box of candles and she unwrapped the parcel when one of the nuns was there. She went completely mental. The nun. She thought, you know.

BEN

No, what?

POPPY

Don't be dense. You do know. I'm not going to mime it. Not on two glasses of wine, anyway.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

So no lesbians at all then.

POPPY

Of course there are.

BEN

You and Claire?

POPPY

Only kissing. Everyone does that once or twice.

Ben looks around. half the pub is trying to pretend they aren't listening to Poppy. She doesn't notice or doesn't care.

POPPY (cont'd)

Well, there was one time - I'm not going to tell you who with. But we got really, no, like really pissed on vodka. I mean. really. It was this boy's eighteenth so we thought we'd do him a favour. Anyway, so we went back to his place. So me and oh, whoever it was, we decided to give him a little show. We went back to his parent's place. It was quite nice.

BEN

The place or the show?

POPPY

What do you think? Both. No-one's going to do that in some shit hole on a council estate, are they?

The barman stares at Poppy again. Hostile now. Poppy is oblivious.

BEN

And?

POPPY

And I'm just about to tell you, since you ask so politely. First we did a little strip for him. Then - I think it was her first time. I know it was, actually. Completely, I mean. You know. You can put your jaw back up now, Ben. You might start dribbling.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Exactly. As you were.

Poppy laughs into her glass just as she's trying to drink out of it, spraying wine everywhere.

POPPY

As I was!

BEN

So what happened?

The room falls abruptly silent just as Poppy remembers the end of her story.

POPPY

I watched while she fucked him.
It was alright.

The pub seems silent forever. Everyone stares at Poppy. The barman locks eyes with Ben.

POPPY

And on that note, shall we go?

Ben and Poppy leave the silent pub.

54 EXT., NOTTING HILL STREET, NIGHT

Ben and Poppy walk down the deserted street and slow when they walk in the shadows under some trees.

BEN

Would you do it again?

POPPY

Like the idea, do you? Silly question! Of course you do.

Poppy casually brushes the front of Ben's jeans with her hand, as if she's patting down a horse. Ben stops, turns towards moves close to Poppy. He puts one hand on her behind.

POPPY (cont'd)

At my school it was considered polite to kiss first.

BEN

You didn't kiss me.

POPPY

You didn't go to my school.

Ben and Poppy kiss and grope in the shadows until Poppy breaks the kiss breathlessly.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY (cont'd)
I'm not going to shag you, Ben.
You haven't told me about Claire.
You and Claire.

BEN
No.

POPPY
Which means there is a
you-and-Claire thing. So we're
not going to.

Poppy kisses Ben frantically, rubbing his jeans harder and faster, grinding herself onto his leg. Suddenly she stops kissing him and tenses.

POPPY (cont'd)
(softly)
No.

Poppy breathes hard into Ben's mouth and shudders. She shuts her eyes and shakes her head. She stretches her arms behind Ben's head.

She slowly checks her watch behind Ben's head.

POPPY (cont'd)
Shit! Oh shit! Ben! I'm really
sorry! I've got to go! Last Tube!

Poppy breaks away, re-arranging her clothes, picks up her bag, panicking, then leads the way as they rush back to the tube station.

BEN
So to change the subject,
Claire's dad. What happened?

POPPY
You're not though, are you?

BEN
Not her dad? Not so far as I
know. What do you mean?

POPPY
Idiot. I mean you're not changing
the subject.

Ben starts to protest but Poppy holds her hand up, smiling, as they hurry on towards the station.

POPPY (cont'd)
It's OK Ben. What you tell your
girlfriend is your business.

BEN

I don't think Claire's really my girlfriend.

POPPY

Ben, it's nothing to do with me.

BEN

And anyway, we didn't -

POPPY

Exactly. You didn't, anyway. Sorry about that.

BEN

Claire's father.

POPPY

What about him? Oh, I see. Claire told me but you know what she's like. Something to do with building sites. He'd bought all this land where the Channel Tunnel was supposed to come up or something. But they're not going to build it there. He bought the wrong fields.

BEN

So her dad's gone bust and Piers has as well? What's going to happen?

POPPY

I don't know. They have to move, while she's in America. She did tell you all this, didn't she? I'm not telling you things you really don't know about?

55 INT., NOTTING HILL TUBE STATION, NIGHT

Ben and Poppy dash down the steps, Poppy's season ticket in her hand. She stops at the barrier and ruffles Ben's hair before she scoots through.

POPPY

Sorry Ben, got to rush! I've had a really nice evening. Thank-you. Goodnight.

BEN

You were going to tell me about Claire.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

I did, Ben!

Poppy smiles and blows Ben a kiss as the escalator takes her down out of sight, waving.

56 EXT., NOTTING HILL STREET, NIGHT

The last shops are shutting as Ben walks along the street. He sees his reflection in a shop window and smooths his hair. Nobody is around. He raises his hand and sniffs his fingers. A big old car with bass thumping drives past.

SFX: Mighty Diamonds - 'This is 1976.'

A BLACK GUY driving the car locks eyes with Ben. They slowly both smile.

57 EXT., BEN'S HOUSE, DAY

Liz drives her new, very secondhand red car into the driveway at Ben's house.

LIZ

Get in! What do you think! My dad gave it to me for getting into university! Come on Ben! Let's go!

58 EXT, RURAL PUB CAR-PARK, EVENING

Liz swings her car into the car park and has to brake sharply to avoid running into an Aston-Martin parked under the trees. She reverses almost all the way around the car park. She stops, gets out and slams the car door angrily.

LIZ

Fucking car!

BEN

I thought you liked it. Liz?

LIZ

Fucking - fucking Sloane Rangers and green wellies and their fucking Aston-Martins. Just fuck them all.

BEN

That's Piers's Aston-Martin, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Unless you know any more fucking wankers with cars like can't drive who live around here.

BEN

Well just go in and ask him to move it.

LIZ

I don't have much to do with people like that, Ben. You can go and talk to them if you want.

BEN

Liz? What's this about?

LIZ

I want to talk to you. I want to talk to you about stopping all this Claire stuff. About you. What you're going to do. And everywhere we fucking go, there they are. That's what it's about. Are you alright with that?

BEN

We can go somewhere else if you like?

LIZ

I'm not going somewhere else just because you're embarrassed being seen with me in front of these fucking wankers.

BEN

I've never been embarrassed about anything you did. Anything I know about, anyway. With me, I mean.

LIZ

Do you know what my dad says?

Ben shakes his head.

LIZ (cont'd)

He says when you're in a hole, stop digging. It means shut up.

BEN

I just wanted to tell you.

LIZ

Shut up.

Liz is trembling with anger. She lights a cigarette to calm down.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)

OK. If that is Piers's car I'm going to politely ask him not to park it where it inconveniences other people. So don't worry Ben. I won't make a scene, as your posh girls say.

BEN

OK but -

LIZ

Yes, it will be. Then you are going to buy me a drink while you listen to me while I talk to you about getting your head straight about Claire. Who just takes the piss out of you.

BEN

I don't think that's true -

LIZ

Shut up. It's both of you taking the piss out of each other. I haven't actually started talking to you about it yet. This is an agenda. Please just shut up a minute. Please, Ben.

They stand in silence as Liz takes huge drags on her cigarette, trying not to cry. Suddenly she throws the cigarette down and grinds it into the ground.

59 INT., RURAL PUB, EVENING

Liz heads straight to the bar. Ben follows, looking around carefully for Piers. He isn't there.

BEN

Someone else with an Aston-Martin then.

LIZ

Where? How do you know?

BEN

I mean Piers isn't here. Claire's mum's not here either. It's not Piers's Aston. Whoever's it is.

LIZ

Good. Ben. I want you to listen to me. As a friend. This Claire thing. Just stop it.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Liz, I -

LIZ

I don't want to say this but I'm going to. You know that thing people like Claire say? PLU? People like us? They aren't Ben. They aren't people like you.

BEN

Liz...

LIZ

They do fuck all from one century to the next. About the only thing they ever do is lost all their money, then everyone's' supposed to feel sorry for them. But they do speak nicely so that's all that matters. Bollocks to them. You can do better than that.

BEN

Liz - Liz, this is guy stuff.

LIZ

Don't just think you can say guy stuff and walk away from it.

BEN

I didn't mean that, Liz. Claire's not even here any more. She's in America.

LIZ

What is it you're actually interested in about her?

BEN

Marrying Claire.

Ben can't believe he's actually said this. Liz slowly starts to laugh.

LIZ

Sorry! OK, tell me - what is the one thing, the really one thing about Claire? For you? What's the really big thing about her?

BEN

She's got this book.

LIZ

Enid Blyton. That or something about ponies. The Follyfoot Annual 1973.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I'm not going to tell you what it was. OK. It was.

LIZ

Enid Blyton!?

BEN

Well, yes. But it was what was written inside it. It said 'To Claire from Mummy and Daddy.' Then she'd written her name and her address.

LIZ

That's it?

BEN

She'd written everything that was important. Just her house and England.

Liz's eyes fill with tears.

SFX: Voices are raised in another bar, a glass smashes.

Ben and Liz stand up to. Claire is sitting in the back bar, very drunk. Ben walks towards her as if in dream.

LIZ

Just say hello.

Ben ignores her and walks off. He pulls out a chair at Claire's wrecked table for himself. Liz sits in it, leaving him standing.

CLAIRE

Hello you two! Fancy seeing me here!

BEN

Hello.

CLAIRE

He's quite rude sometimes, isn't he? Aren't you going to kiss me?

LIZ

Hello Claire. Are you alright?

CLAIRE

No, actually. I don't really think I am. Sorry about the noise!

Claire picks up a spilled wine bottle and holds onto it for support.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Liz. Liz, I'm really glad you're here. No, I am. Can I ask you something?

LIZ

Can I ask you something first?
How come you're not in America?

CLAIRE

I knew you'd ask that. When I saw you. I knew that. I got returned. Look. I'll show you.

Claire takes a typed form out of her expensive bag.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

There. This is from - what does it say? Oh! The United States Immigration & Naturalization Service. Return by steamship by the first available - I can't read that without my glasses. Cuh ah oh, carrier. There!

Claire smiles and the paper slips out of her fingers onto the wet table. She looks puzzled when she takes a sip from her empty glass.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Ben? Except they didn't put me on a steamship. I was quite looking forward to that. I've never been on a steamship. Have you, Liz?

LIZ

What happened?

CLAIRE

They put me back on the aeroplane and I flew all the way home to Heathrow. I was so tired. I went all that way, then I had to come all the way back again.

LIZ

I meant why did that happen? What did you do?

CLAIRE

That was the thing! I didn't have time to do anything! Do you know how long I was in America? One hour. That's how long I was in America.

Claire tries to pour herself another drink from the empty bottle.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I'd like another drink, Ben, please. Then I'll tell you. No, actually I'll tell you now. If you promise to get me a drink afterwards.

LIZ

Don't get her another drink.

BEN

Of course I will.

CLAIRE

That will be nice. I went all the way to America and they got all arsy about whether I was going to go to work. My dad kept saying to me, Claire, it's a proper job. That's what I told them.

Claire fights back tears. Liz reaches across the table and squeezes Claire's hand.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Anyway, here I am! So! My turn! Can I ask you a little question? It's quite an important question actually. May I? You and Ben. Are you going out?

Liz looks confused.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

You and Ben. Are you together? Are you going out with each other? You and Ben?

LIZ

No.

CLAIRE

No? You're not? Are you sure?

LIZ

I think you can assume I'd know.

CLAIRE

Oh. Would you get me some more wine, please Ben?

Ben goes to the bar. Liz tries to stop him but he shrugs her off.

BEN

Could I have two Cokes please? And a pint, same as last time.

(CONTINUED)

COUNTRY BARMAN

No. You don't want to be drinking any more. Not if you've got to drive her home.

BEN

How do you mean?

COUNTRY BARMAN

That Claire, isn't it? Her car's blocking half the car-park. That's her Aston-Martin, right? It's not anybody else's, is it? We got a delivery coming in eight tomorrow morning and it's not staying here. Silly little cow.

Country barman gives ben three Cokes and watches as he takes them back to the table. Liz is trying to be polite but she is very angry. Claire is oblivious, leaning forward in her chair towards Ben. It makes Liz even more furious.

CLAIRE

You can sit down if you like Ben. With me. If you like.

Ben sits between liz and claire.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

There you are. I wondered if you'd be here. I wanted to ask you a question. I asked Liz but she doesn't know the answer.

Ben looks at Liz for a clue but she's staring straight at Claire, looking as if she's going to punch her.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

It's a very easy question. Would you like to come outside with me? I've got something if we haven't got any wine.

Liz stands up.

LIZ

OK. I'm going home. I'll give you a lift if you want one.

BEN

Well, can't we stay a bit, first?

LIZ

You can do what you like. If you want a lift I'm going now. I'm not doing any more of this bollocks.

(CONTINUED)

Claire pulls a metal tobacco tin out of her bag and shakes it. There is a dull clunking sound from inside the tin. Claire looks up brightly.

CLAIRE
Just checking!

LIZ
She won't go to bed with you, Ben. You think she will but she won't. She's just taking the piss out of you.

CLAIRE
Have I upset you, Liz?

LIZ
Good night, Claire. Have a nice evening. Coming, Ben? Because I'm going now.

Ben says nothing, looking from one liz to Claire to Liz again.

LIZ (cont'd)
OK, bye. See you soon.

Liz walks out of the pub.

CLAIRE
I wonder what it was I said.

BEN
So they sent you back?

CLAIRE
Hm? Yes. They said it was the wrong visa or something. My dad's going to be so cross.

BEN
Haven't you told him yet?

CLAIRE
No. I haven't seen him since I got back. Just Mum and Piers. Mum was alright but Piers - he was shouting. We never shout in our house. So I just thought 'well, fuck it' and took his car. I think he cares about that more than anything else anyway.

BEN
How do you mean?

CLAIRE

He just says it's very difficult right now. Well fuck him. It's been very difficult for us, thanks to him.

BEN

What are you going to do, Claire?

CLAIRE

I - I don't know. I can't believe - I can't believe my mum likes such a bastard.

Claire stands up to leave but starts to cry and stops. Ben leaps to his feet and holds her tentatively. She snuffles into his shirt.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Sorry. Sorry, Ben. Didn't mean to.

BEN

Hold on.

Ben quickly goes to the bar. he gets a small white wine and some napkins.

COUNTRY BARMAN

Don't let that get out of hand, right?

Ben nods, puts money on the bar and takes the napkin and the drink back to the table where Claire stands unhappily.

CLAIRE

I thought you'd gone.

BEN

I wouldn't go, Claire.

CLAIRE

No. Sorry. I'm doing it to you now. Oh Ben!

Ben puts his arms around Claire as if he will never let her go while she shakes with tears. She takes a ragged breath and stops crying.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I'm being silly. In the pub and everything. Sorry. Sorry Ben.

Claire wipes her nose on her shirt cuff.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Here. Let me.

Ben offers Claire the napkin to wipe her tears. He holds the wine glass while she blows her nose noisily.

CLAIRE

Oh God, I bet I look a mess.
Sorry Ben.

BEN

You look fine.

CLAIRE

I don't.

Ben wants to kiss her but chickens out. He offers her a cigarette.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

No. Actually, yes. Let me.

Claire takes the cigarette out of Ben's lips and takes a slow drag on it.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

That's what you were smoking when you were at my house. My mum was talking about the smoke. She was talking about you.

BEN

Me?

CLAIRE

Not like that. Ben, I'm going to go and you know, check my make-up.

Claire puts her hand to Ben's face as she walks out of the door. Ben picks up the soggy napkin she dropped, tidies the table and takes the empties back to the bar, then goes out into the empty summer pub garden. He stands looking at the Aston-Martin. Claire suddenly appears beside Ben and nestles against him.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Have you got something for me? My wine?

Claire takes the wine from Ben and swallows it in one.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Thank-you. See? I'm fine now. Now I don't look a mess.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

You never look a mess.

CLAIRE

You're sweet, Ben. That's what I like about you. Actually, there's something you could do for me, if you like. Now we're outside.

Claire leads Ben over to a picnic table near her car.

BEN

Simon not here?

CLAIRE

Apparently not. Do you really want to talk about Simon, Ben?

Claire holds the tobacco tin out towards Ben. He takes it and starts to roll a joint.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

If you want some of this you'll have to do it. Poppy - you know Poppy? Actually, you do know Poppy. Quite well. Poppy has this really brilliant liquid dope.

BEN

Do you want me to?

CLAIRE

Please. You do mean making a joint?

Ben concentrates on rolling the joint.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

You look so serious, Ben! Use more than that. It's not mine. It's Piers's. I nicked his dope as well as his car. Go on! Talking to me like that! Bastard!

Ben tries to crumble more off the resin block but it's cooler so he has to scrape it with his thumb. He hands the finished joint to Claire.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Light it then. Now stick it in my mouth. I dare you.

Ben does as he's told. Claire visibly relaxes as she exhales, blowing a cloud of smoke around them.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (cont'd)
That's better. That takes the
edge off most things, doesn't it?

BEN
I didn't know you did.

CLAIRE
I do lots of things Ben. I've
told you before. You can come and
sit beside me if you like.

Claire puts her feet on the bench and hugs her knees, feet
apart, facing Ben as he sits next to her.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Put it in my mouth again, Ben.

She kisses ben's fingers as he puts the joint in her
mouth. ben can't stop looking between Claire's legs where
her jeans stretch tight just inches from him.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Blue remembered hills.

BEN
Sorry?

Claire puts her feet on the ground and pulls her shirt out
of her jeans so it hangs between her legs.

CLAIRE
Not too obvious, Ben. It's the
light. It reminds me of that
poem.

Claire is silhouetted against the fading blue evening sky.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Into my heart an air that kills
from yon far country blows. What
are those blue remembered hill?
What spires? What farms are
those?

BEN
I remember. We did that in
English.

CLAIRE
I like the next bit best of all.
Do you remember it? That is the
land of lost content, I see it
shining plain. The happy highways
where I went and cannot come
again.

BEN

It's about here, isn't it? It's the light. It reminded me.

CLAIRE

And the land of lost content. That was here too. I can see that shining plain. That's true enough.

BEN

It doesn't have to be.

They kiss.

CLAIRE

Ben, wait a minute. Liz. Definitely not, yes?

BEN

We don't. Ever. I thought you had a boyfriend.

Claire stands up, slowly but decisively.

CLAIRE

I don't want to talk about Simon, do you? He's such a fucking prick.

BEN

I'm - I'm sure he's OK.

CLAIRE

Oh, I'm sure he's OK! Nobody ever needs to worry about that. Five minutes. He actually timed it. Five minutes. From getting into bed.

BEN

That doesn't seem long.

CLAIRE

Small mercies, I agree. I wouldn't mind that. But it's just about him. He comes. I don't. Then there we are.

BEN

I see what you mean.

CLAIRE

Do you!

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Yes. Well, no. I mean, you know. You and me've never - and you know, you'd try to make sure whoever you're in bed with, you know.

CLAIRE

Comes! Exactly! It's only polite, isn't it? Someone told me that about you. Just recently. So we've got a different little question now, haven't we? (PAUSE) Ben, I want you to go to bed with me.

BEN

Claire -

CLAIRE

Well? Are you going to do something about it?

BEN

Claire, I -

CLAIRE

Shut up, Ben. Get on with it.

Claire takes Ben's hands and puts them on her breasts.

CLAIRE

There. What you've wanted. Like them?

Ben nods. Claire arches into his hands then reaches down and starts to undo Ben's belt. Ben can see DRINKERS at a distant garden table behind Claire.

BEN

Claire. There are people over there.

CLAIRE

I can't see them.

BEN

Claire, there are people at that table by the door. Behind you.

CLAIRE

Are you saying you don't want to, Ben?

The drinkers start to look towards Claire. Ben puts his hands on her waist.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Claire, can see.

CLAIRE

Fuck them. They can watch if they like. In fact - they can join in afterwards if they like. Anybody?

BEN

Claire -

CLAIRE

Listen to me. If you don't then I'm never going to ask you again. Ever.

BEN

Claire, I -

CLAIRE

I know you want to. And I do. I didn't for a long time. Not with you. Are you shy? Is that it?

Claire's voices catches. One of the drinkers at the faraway table gets up and goes into the pub.

CLAIRE

I mean it Ben! I mean it!

Ben takes Claire in his arms as she shakes, weeping silently into ben's chest.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

You know you want to. You know you do!

Claire suddenly breaks away from Ben and steps over to her car. She flings open the door and half-falls into the driving seat.

BEN

You can't drive, Claire!

CLAIRE

Don't tell me what to do, Ben! I'll have to, won't I? You can't drive this. Get in if you're coming home with me. Just get in.

Ben gets into the passenger seat. Claire slams her door shut. He watches carefully as she turns the key and presses the starter button. The engine throbs and Claire lifts her hands off the wheel, opens her legs and leans forward in her seat. She smiles and wipes her nose with the back of her hand. She can't get the car in gear.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Shit! Shit! This clutch is really heavy! I can't - my legs aren't -

THERE IS A GRATING NOISE AND THE ENGINE STALLS.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Shit!

CLAIRE PUTS THE GEAR LEVER IN NEUTRAL AND STARTS THE CAR AGAIN. SHE GRIMACES AS SHE PUSHES THE CLUTCH DOWN.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Shit! Fuck it! (Pause) Sorry, Ben.

THE CAR SHOOTS BACKWARDS AND STOPS WITH A THUMP FROM UNDERNEATH THE CAR. THE ENGINE IS STILL RUNNING AS CLAIRE PUTS HER HANDS OVER HER FACE.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Ben, would you get out and see what I've done? Please?

BEN STARTS TO GET OUT OF THE CAR.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

Actually, don't. It doesn't matter now anyway. But could you drive? Please, Ben?

BEN

Of course. Of course I'll drive you.

AS BEN WALKS AROUND THE BACK OF THE CAR HE SEES THE SMALL DENT IN ONE OF THE EXHAUSTS. HE HOLDS THE DOOR OPEN FOR CLAIRE TO GET OUT. SHE STUMBLES AS SHE WALKS AROUND THE BONNET. WHEN SHE TURNS AWAY FROM THE CAR TO GET IN, IN PROPER LUCY-CLAYTON STYLE BEN CAN'T RESIST LOOKING AT HER ARSE BEFORE HE PULLS THE HANDBRAKE ON AND GINGERLY PUTS THE CAR IN GEAR.

CLAIRE

Piers will kill you if anything happens to his car. And I bet you're not insured. Just be careful. It's really fast.

BEN TRICKLES THE CAR OUT INTO THE STREET AND POINTS IT ALONG THE LONG STRAIGHT ROAD. CLAIRE LOOKS IN BOTH DIRECTIONS, THEN LEANS TOWARDS BEN.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

You might as well do it.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Sure?

Claire cocks one leg up on the seat to face Ben and puts her hand to her neckline. She shrugs. Ben looks at the way her shirt is open. He presses the accelerator.

The speedometer needle flows easily up through 100mph and keeps on going.

60

INT., ASTON-MARTIN, NIGHT

Ben stops the car at Claire's gate. She stays in her seat, smoking, looking into the empty courtyard.

CLAIRE

Good. Piers isn't here. His other car's not here.

BEN

Would it be a problem? You know, you and me? You know?

CLAIRE

What I do in my own home is nothing to do with Piers. Whatever he thinks. This is our house. Not his. Who I screw is nothing to do with him.

BEN

Well -

CLAIRE

That is what you're here for, isn't it Ben?

BEN

No. I don't mean no. I mean I don't think of you - like that.

CLAIRE

But you do want to do me, Ben! Why don't you just say it? Why don't you just be straight with me! For God's sake Ben! What do you fucking want? Just tell me!

BEN

I want - I don't know how to say it. I know how I feel. I've felt like it since I met you. There's - something about you -

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

Are you going to open the gate or
make me do it?

61 EXT., CLAIRE'S HOUSE, NIGHT

Ben gets out of the car to open the gate. The courtyard is giving him the creeps.

A silent lightning flash and he sees a small crowd of Victorian maids, a gardener, a man on a horse, Imogen in Victorian clothes all watching him silently. Another lightning flash and they're gone but the feeling isn't.

Ben opens the gate, gets back into the car and drives the few yards to the front door. He gets out to shut the gate and walks back to the car.

BEN

Is there anyone here, Claire? You know, is anyone in? Your mum or anyone?

CLAIRE

The cars aren't here. Only the ghosts. You see now. No-one ever believes me until it happens to them.

BEN

It's dark.

CLAIRE

It doesn't matter. It happens in the daylight too. It's just this house. This is where I live.

Ben gets out of the car and opens Claire's door for her. She offers him her hand but stays sitting in the car.

CLAIRE

If you're coming in - if you're coming in I have to tell you something.

BEN

I'd like to.

CLAIRE

If you come to bed with me - I mean you are. If you're coming in then you are. If you have to get up in the night - are you listening? This is important.

(CONTINUED)

Claire gets out of the car. She clasps her hands at her breast but she allows Ben to hold her. He kisses her forehead and wet hair.

CLAIRE

Be, listen. If you need to go to the loo or anything. There are little stairs on the left, the old servant's stairs. We don't use them after dark. Ben! Seriously. Don't use them.

BEN

OK. Why?

CLAIRE

Ben, if you're going to keep on about it then you'd best not come in at all.

BEN

I promise I won't use the servant's stairs.

CLAIRE

Yes. But you have to really promise me. Really. I mean it.

BEN

Claire, I promise.

Claire studies Ben's face then leads him by the hand to the front door of the house.

62 INT., CLAIRE'S LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

The house is cold, packed, transient. Claire leads Ben past boxes and marks on the walls where pictures used to hang, up the grand staircase.

BEN'S POV: The stitching in the central seam of Claire's jeans.

She stoops to pick up an envelope on the stairs. She opens and reads it then stuffs it into her bag. She stops on the landing in front of a portrait on the floor, leaning against the wall it hung on.

CLAIRE

Sorry, Claire Imogen. We didn't do enough to keep this house. We let you down.

Claire leads the way up the stairs again.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
We're all called Claire. Come on,
Ben. Last stairs.

63 INT., CLAIRE'S ROOM, NIGHT

Claire sits on the bed and kicks off her shoes. For the first time she looks as if she can't remember what to do next. She puts her hand to her neck.

CLAIRE
Would you light a candle for us,
Ben? Over there. Then put the
light off.

Ben does it wrong, putting the light off first. We see the candle flame spurt reflected in the mirror on the dresser. There are song lyrics torn from magazines stuck to the glass.

BEN
(READING ALOUD) The storm that
brings harm also makes fertile.
Blessed is the grass and herb and
the true thorn and light.
(louder) I didn't know you liked
Patti Smith?

Claire digs in her bag and hands Ben the tobacco tin.

CLAIRE
Would you, please?

BEN
Are you sure?

CLAIRE
Of course I'm sure, Ben. Just do
it, please.

BEN
I meant in your mum's house, you
know?

CLAIRE
I'll do what I want in our house
if that's all right with you. You
sound like Piers.

BEN
I just didn't want you to get
into any trouble because of me.
You know?

Ben uses the candle flame to soften the lump of dope. Unseen behind him Claire shakes into silent tears then takes a deep breath.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE
I'm in trouble Ben.

Claire's voice breaks.

CLAIRE
Sit next to me, Ben. Kiss me, or
just go. And don't you dare go.

Ben lights the joint and sits next to Claire on the bed. He holds her until she stops shaking. Claire takes the joint and smokes slowly, leaning against him, looking at the wall. She coughs.

CLAIRE (cont'd)
Shit. (sniffs) Sorry. God, I must
look a state.

BEN
You don't. You look beautiful.

CLAIRE
Like Alice Cooper, I expect!

Ben puts his arm around Claire. Slowly she relaxes and smiles a little.

CLAIRE
It's OK. It's OK really, isn't
it? All of the best times are
sad. You know that. Blessed is
the grass and herb and the True
Thorn and light.

BEN
Patti Smith.

CLAIRE
You know it? No-one knows that.

BEN
No. I read it on the paper on
your mirror.

CLAIRE
It wouldn't be you Ben, would it?
Saying the right thing? It's why
I like you.

BEN
I know about the True Thorn
though.

CLAIRE
Really.

BEN

Give me some of that and I'll tell you.

CLAIRE

Tell me a bedtime story. Id like that.

BEN

Claire (coughs) Sorry. Claire. Are you sitting comfortably?

Claire nods and lies back on the bed. She crosses her hands behind her head and crosses her feet modestly.

BEN (cont'd)

Then I'll begin. Once upon a time, twenty miles and a thousand, two thousand years ago a man stopped to rest when all the land there was marshes and water.

64 EXT., LAKESIDE, DAY

2,000 years ago. A Saxon moors a small boat at the edge of a marsh. He walks up a hill and sticks his big walking stick into the earth, looking around.

BEN (V/O)

He beached his little boat at the bottom of a hill and stood on the dry land after his long voyage. He walked up the hill to see where he was among the reeds and bulrushes and set his staff into the ground.

65 INT., CLAIRE'S ROOM, NIGHT

Claire's eyes shine as she listens to Ben, entranced.

66 EXT., HILLTOP, DAY

The Saxon looks back at his staff amazed as it sprouts. Leaves and branches spurt out of it.

BEN (V/O)

A thing happened so passing strange it would be called a miracle. Leaves and branches were growing from the wood and the staff grew into a tree, in Glastonbury. At Christmas this

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEN (V/O) (cont'd)
same tree still flowers, for
Jesus. Because the man was his
uncle, Joseph of Arimathea.

67 INT., CLAIRE'S ROOM, NIGHT

Ben and Claire sit smoking the joint, leaning on each other on the bed.

BEN
The Glastonbury Thorn is his
staff.

Claire blinks back tears but this time tears of joy, in hope, her eyes are shining at ben.

CLAIRE
That's lovely. Did you just make
that up?

BEN
No. My uncle told me. Not Joseph
of Arimathea, you understand.

CLAIRE
Don't spoil it Ben. I've never
heard that before. Is it true?

BEN
If you want it to be. I mean,
perhaps it is, you know?

CLAIRE
What do you think, Ben? Do you
believe it?

BEN
The trees are there. I've seen
them. I don't know if they're old
enough to be the real trees, you
know, from then. But they're
really old.

CLAIRE
What about Joseph of Arimathea?
Is that true? Do you think it's
true?

BEN
Part of me thinks it's true just
because it is. It's where we
live, isn't it? It's like your
house. Maybe it doesn't matter if
it's true, so long as you believe
it is. Maybe that's how it works.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

I like that story Ben. The tree has thorns. But that's not the True Thorn.

Claire takes Ben's hand holding the joint and presses it to her lips so she can take a drag.

CLAIRE

The True Thorn is the one you carry in your heart, like a thorn in your shoe. And every now and then it pricks you and makes you stop. And remember.

Claire slowly stubs the joint out in an ashtray on the dresser. They finally kiss, slowly and lovingly and roll back on the bed.

BEN

Claire. I love you.

CLAIRE

Hush Ben. Don't. Don't say you love me. Don't.

BEN

I can't not. I love you. It's, you know. Because I love you.

CLAIRE

I know, Ben. I know. Shush.

The candle burns low. Claire rolls naked towards Ben. Her tears drip onto Ben's chest.

CLAIRE

We can't ever do this again. We can't!

They lovingly kiss.

SFX: Approaching footsteps on the landing.

Claire is really scared, digging her fingers hard into ben's arm. She's not joking.

CLAIRE (cont'd)

(WHISPERS FIERCELY) No! Stop! I don't want you to but stop! Just until she's gone. Be asleep Ben. Trust me! Be asleep! Ben - for fuck's sake! Get the sheet! Just do it! Now!

Ben flicks the sheet over them. Ben and Claire pretend to be asleep. The door opens. A woman's slow footsteps approach the bed. The footsteps stop. The candle goes out.

(CONTINUED)

The female footsteps walk softly towards the door, which gently closes. Ben opens an eye and touches Claire's back. She's really asleep now.

BEN

I love you, Claire. I know you can't hear me. But it's true.

He kisses her and closes his eyes.

Ben wakes in the dark. He gets out of bed and pulls on his jeans and shirt.

68

INT., CLAIRE'S LANDING, NIGHT

It is very, very dark. Ben can't find the light switch on the landing. He walks past the servants's stairs. A woman's voice calls him, very close. He can't see anything but a dark shadow.

SHADOW WOMAN

Simon. I thought we'd meet here before now.

BEN

It's - it's Ben. I - hope you don't mind. I mean, if you do its - a bit late. Actually. Sorry. I mean, if you object - not here. Sorry. I mean I'm not sorry. Sorry.

SHADOW WOMAN

I think there are better ways of going about things than this. But no. I don't mind. I think you would have been very good for Claire. Apart from the obvious I don't know exactly what's been going on tonight. Claire and I will talk about that tomorrow. I'm grateful to you for looking after her, Ben. She's been in a bit of a state.

BEN

Mrs Thompson, I - I love her.

SHADOW WOMAN

I know. I think you do. The bathroom is down the main stairs. That way. Goodnight Ben.

BEN

Goodnight Mrs Thompson.

(CONTINUED)

SHADOW WOMAN

Imogen.

The shadow woman moves towards Claire's room. Ben pauses then goes towards the main stairs the other way.

69 INT., CLAIRE'S BEDROOM, VERY EARLY MORNING

The sun streams through the window. Birds sing. Ben and Claire wake up together in her bed. She's really sleepy.

BEN

Your mum, she's really nice,
isn't she?

CLAIRE

Yes, she is. She's been really
good through all of this. Why? I
mean why are you talking about my
mum, now?

BEN

We had a chat last night. On the
landing.

CLAIRE

She's not here Ben. There as a
note. They all went out with my
dad. He wants to see me later.
We're going to work out what I'm
going to do. It must have been a
dream.

BEN

I talked to her when I got up to
go to the bathroom. She told me
to call her Imogen.

Claire's eyes widen in alarm. She sits up quickly.

CLAIRE

Ben! You didn't use the other
stairs, did you? I told you. I
said don't use the servants's
stairs.

BEN

You told me not to so I didn't.

CLAIRE

We're all called Claire. It's a
sort of tradition. Well, it is a
tradition, I suppose. All the
girls. Except not my mum.

Claire seems about to say something else. She looks towards the window and the new morning sun shining in.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE

What time is it? I think maybe -
and please don't take this the
wrong way - it might be better if
you weren't here.

BEN

Do you want me to go?

CLAIRE

No. No, I really don't want you
to go. But it might be better if
you did, Ben. Before they get
back. There's going to be trouble
and I like you too much for you
to be mixed up in that. And they
would. Piers would, anyway. So I
think you have to go now. I'm
really sorry.

Claire watches Ben dress. He kisses her.

BEN

Claire, I ...

CLAIRE

Ben, hurry, please!

BEN

Bye, Claire.

Ben leaves.

Claire gets out of bed. She walks to her dresser and finds
a packet of Camels. She lights one and sits on a chair,
her feet propped up on the wall.

On the dresser the women on the Camel packet primp their
hair.

70

EXT., OUTSIDE CLAIRE'S HOUSE, VERY EARLY MORNING

Birds sing in the sunny morning. Ben walks out of the
front door and shuts it behind him. The aston-martin is
the only car there, the passenger door still open. Ben
takes the key out of his pocket and puts it on the
windscreen.

He changes his mind and puts the key inside the car on the
driver's seat before he walks away.

71 INT., LONDON CAFE, AFTERNOON

Present day. OLDER BEN sits alone. Rain pours down the windows outside Ben writes in a big notebook but the words won't come. He stirs his coffee and looks out of the window blankly as the barrista a CD into the music system.

SFX: ELO - Telephone Line.

Ben looks up. He turns back to his book and picks his pen up again.

The door bangs open. OLDER LIZ walks in out of the rain. She stamps her boots dry.

LIZ:

Ben? Is it? Ben! It's you!

BEN

Liz! What are you doing in here?

LIZ

No, don't stand up. Look, can I join you?

BEN

Can I get you some coffee?

Liz looks at her mobile phone and grimaces.

LIZ

Yes please. I'm supposed to be somewhere but I'm not going. I'll just call them while you get the coffee. Macchiato, please Ben.

Liz makes her call while Ben gets the coffee and returns.

BEN

So what made you come in here today?

LIZ

Just wanted a coffee. But you? Is this where you live now?

Liz looks around the smart cafe at the other customers.

LIZ

Oh, the Yummy Mummies. That would do it. Unless you've changed. So what happened to you Ben? It's been years. What happened to old creamy?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Her name was Claire. You used to say yogurt. Not creamy.

LIZ

Yogurt. Thick and rich and creamy. If you're lucky. Still, you were once.

BEN

She was not thick.

LIZ

She wasn't rich. Not after the house went. But she was thick. Like all those dinosaurs. Still, three hundred years of inbreeding and what do you expect?

BEN

You got it right though, did you? It's been what, 21 years or something and you just want to go on about how thick that poor girl was? In your opinion?

LIZ

No I don't. I want to know what happened to you.

BEN

Me? Nothing much Liz. You know, nothing much.

LIZ

I'm - I'm really glad I bumped into you. I was going to phone you.

BEN

Me too. But what are you doing in here.

LIZ

My aunt's house. It's around the corner. Look Ben, I don't know how to say this, so I'm just going to say it.

BEN

Would you like some more coffee?

LIZ

No. Yes. Thank-you. Let me say it first though. My dad. My dad died. My dad died on Thursday. I'm sorry. I know how much you used to like him.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I did. I mean, I do. Did. God
Liz, I'm so sorry. What was it?

LIZ

They didn't know, then they said
it was cancer. It was quick,
whatever it was. He was - he was
alright six weeks ago.

BEN

I didn't really know my
father. But your dad, I always
had the idea -

LIZ

What? Go on. I want to hear. He
was my dad.

BEN

Whenever I thought about him,
whenever things got really
rubbish, I always thought if it
gets really bad I can call Liz's
dad. He'll sort it out.

LIZ

Did you?

BEN

No, it never got that bad. It was
a sort of last resort.

LIZ

No, I mean did you think that?

BEN

Yes.

LIZ

That was the way I thought about
him too.

BEN

(pause) What's -

LIZ

Let's -

BEN

Sorry, I interrupted -

LIZ

No, you -

Liz blows her nose. A tear runs down her cheek.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

I - I didn't expect to see you. I was going to ring but I've been really busy with the funeral and everything.

BEN

Are you doing it?

LIZ

Well, all the arrangements, yes.

BEN

Not the actual funeral bit.

LIZ

Don't be so fucking stupid.

The other customers stiffen in their seats. Nobody looks around.

BEN

Sorry Liz.

LIZ

Sorry. I'm sorry Ben. But that was a stupid thing to say. Sorry.

BEN

No, it's me. Liz, look. I don't know whether you've got to be anywhere in a hurry or something, but I think we should go for drink. There's a pub around the corner.

Liz blows her nose again while she decides what to do.

LIZ

I've got to call someone - yes. take me for a drink then Ben. All the stuff I had to do is sorted-out, mostly. All the urgent stuff. The rest can wait.

Liz's mobile phone rings. She glances at the screen before she answers it.

LIZ (cont'd)

This is the call I had to make. Won't be a minute. Hello? Hi, yes. Can you look in the diary? Thursday. There's a phone number in blue. Blue. Not the red one. Are you sure. OK, call them and say that'll be fine. Can you? Thanks. No, really, thanks. The

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)
slate delivery is coming on
Tuesday. I put it off. See you
next week. Thanks Olly.
Thank-you. Bye.

Liz ends the call.

LIZ (cont'd)
Sorry Ben. Shop. Just sorting
things out so I don't have to be
in until after the funeral.

BEN
How is your shop? Still going
well?

LIZ
So so. I was thinking I could
save a lot of showroom space if I
shut the shop and put it all
online. What do you think?

BEN
I don't know, Liz. I don't think
I'm the right person to ask. I
don't know that much about it.

LIZ
But what do you think? What's
your first reaction? Have you got
a computer at home?

BEN
Of course I have. Things haven't
got that bad yet.

LIZ
Don't get snarky with me, Ben.
I've been doing some figures. It
makes a lot more sense. I was
thinking we should be able to put
queries through to our mobiles,
then we needn't go to the office
every day.

BEN
I thought your showroom was doing
well?

LIZ
When was the last time you were
there, Ben? Something's changing
in this country. I don't know if
it's the Internet - nobody goes
to real shops any more. Oh come
on. I'll tell you when we've got

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)
a drink. Everything changes,
doesn't it? I know that, after
this week.

72 EXT., RUN-DOWN LONDON STREET, AFTERNOON

It's just about stopped raining. Liz and Ben walk from the cafe to the pub. It's shut, boarded-up when they get there. They walk on.

LIZ
It's the same everywhere. This
whole country is being killed.
Can you even imagine a pub
closing when we were at school?
It's fucking ridiculous.

BEN
It's OK, there's another one
around the corner. Honestly, it's
not far.

LIZ
It's not how far it is. It's the
whole thing: stay in your homes.
Consume. Do as you're told. Drink
cheap crap from the supermarket.
Be afraid of strangers. That's
what's pissing me off. It's the
only message there is these days.

They stop outside the next pub. It looks rubbish. Ben opens the door before Liz kicks it.

73 INT., CRAP PUB, AFTERNOON

Ben and Liz walk to the bar. The barman looks bored, Sky Sports is on in the corner with the sound off and a games machine flashes.

74 EXT. COUNTRY LANE, NIGHT

Ben remembers the unidentified girl in his car, years ago. As the crash progresses in slow motion we slowly see the girl is Liz.

75 INT. CRAP PUB, AFTERNOON

BEN
Liz -

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

You know the time you crashed that car and nearly killed me?

BEN

Liz - I'm - I'm really sorry I crashed that car.

LIZ

You were just drunk.

BEN

Liz, I mean, I'm really sorry about that.

LIZ

What? The crash? Of course you are! I know that! God, sorry Ben, that's not - I'm sorry. I just feel as if I haven't talked to anyone for ages. And that's stupid. I've done nothing else except speak to people all week. Ever since -

BEN

You haven't had much time for you though, have you?

The barman brings drinks. Liz looks thoughtfully at Ben and sips her wine.

LIZ

You know, that's probably the most insightful thing you've ever said. Now, I shouldn't think it's a very long list. But you're right. I haven't. Not until I bumped into you.

BEN

Liz. Did you have any plans for this evening? Where are you staying?

LIZ

I wasn't. I was going to get the train back tonight and get someone to pick me up from the station.

BEN

Well, would you like to eat something? We could eat here -

Ben and Liz look around the crappy pub.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (cont'd)

Or back at mine. It's close to the Tube so you can still get to Paddington Station. What time's your train?

LIZ

If I'm going to get it I need to go now.

Liz looks at her watch, then at her nearly-full wine glass.

BEN

You could stay at mine if you liked. It's almost clean.

LIZ

Are you sure? Because I'm really enjoying talking to you again. I needed this, talking to someone like an adult, instead of telling them what to do?

BEN

Well, like adults then, let's go and get something to eat. I think we need to. I know I do, anyway.

76 EXT., STREET OUTSIDE CRAPPY PUB, EVENING

Liz and Ben look around for a taxi with a yellow light.

LIZ

I haven't had any lunch. I haven't felt hungry all week, really. It won't do me any harm.

BEN

You look fine. You always do.

LIZ

Do you mean that?

BEN

When did I ever say anything different?

LIZ

You've always said that. Just you never -

Liz turns away from Ben, pretending to look for a taxi.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

- did anything about it.

BEN

I think there's a difference between jumping on someone and saying they look nice. You never offered, anyway.

LIZ

Of course I didn't. You had a girlfriend all the time we were at school. And at uni. When you weren't doing calf eyes at Claire.

Liz steps out into the road and flags down a taxi.

BEN

I don't think I've heard anyone say her name - for - years.

LIZ

What happened to her?

BEN

I don't know Liz.

LIZ

I don't know what's wrong with you, Ben. Really. I'll have to sort you out, same as I used to.

Ben and Liz get into the taxi and drive away.

77 INT., BEN'S FLAT, NIGHT

Liz looks around the flat appraising it as Ben draws the curtains and puts the main lights on.

LIZ

Ben, if you've got things to do? Like making a bed for me, for example? You do that and I'll open this. Is there a corkscrew in the kitchen?

Liz busies herself around the flat as Ben changes the sheets on the spare bed.

LIZ (cont'd)

(OFF) Have you got any matches?

BEN

Try the kitchen drawer.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Got them.

Ben finishes making the spare room bed and goes to find Liz in the living room. She's transformed it from a bleak bright bare room into a cosy, relaxed space. Liz switches on the CD player.

SFX: Bob Marley - Turn Your Lights Down Low.

BEN

Wow! How did you do this?

LIZ

This is what I do, Ben. Transform people's homes. Sorry. I should have asked. It's not my flat, after all. That was rude of me.

BEN

It looks great!

LIZ

It looks more cosy, doesn't it?

BEN

Thank-you. This looks a lot nicer. Warmer. It's all been a bit empty. Since Jane went.

LIZ

You don't have much luck with women, do you? Pour me some wine. You were going to tell me what you thought about my idea. The shop.

BEN

Putting it online? What will happen to your assistant? Keep him on for additional duties?

LIZ

Don't be ridiculous. He's 20 years younger than me. I mean, I wouldn't mind if I was that age. I'm not going to end-up like some sad old tart with a face like a crocodile handbag and pretty little helpers hanging around.

Ben sits next to Liz on the sofa and sips wine from one of the two glasses she has poured.

BEN

Well, it's an option. But look Liz, if you're going to do a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEN (cont'd)
proper online retail offer you
need some proper advice on it. I
don't really understand Facebook
and things like that anyway. I
use Twitter quite a lot.

LIZ
Facebook's the same idea but you
can do more with it.

Liz sips some wine and takes an iPad out of her bag.

LIZ (cont'd)
I'll show you. But I've got to do
something before the shop just
disappears. You know how people
like Ellen's mum used to go to
Bath on a Saturday, just to have
a look around and buy stuff they
didn't need? People just don't do
that anymore. They just sit
indoors and go online.

BEN
I hate to use her name in your
presence Liz, but I remember how
people like, say -

LIZ
Claire's mum?

BEN
Possibly. Used to go to London
and back just for something to do
on a Saturday afternoon. What was
that? 250 miles in a Range-Rover.
Claire used to go with her.

LIZ
That's what I mean. Those sorts
of people, they're exactly who I
I opened the shop for. They're
still around somewhere. It's just
finding them. And taking all
their money off them. What's left
of it.

Liz drinks some more wine and considers Ben closely.

BEN
How is it that women can still be
bitchy about another woman they
haven't even see for 30 years?
What did she ever do to you?

Liz pours herself more wine, then pours Ben what's left.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Apart from making me walk out of the pub that night on my own? Apart from making me the gooseberry the day my dad gave me my first car? Apart from that? Nothing really. With her huge arse.

BEN

I meant her mum, actually. You can't still be annoyed about that. It was twenty years ago.

LIZ

Trust me, I can. Not at you. It wasn't your fault. You can't leave a dog with a plate of meat.

BEN

That isn't the nicest thing to say, Liz.

LIZ

I didn't even say which one of you was the dog. Anyway. Facebook.

BEN

Facebook.

Liz gets the twitter page up on her computer screen and shows it to Ben.

LIZ

So here you are, you can do links to other stuff but you've really just got 140 characters and you can paste-up photos.

BEN

Brevity being the soul of wit.

LIZ

Yes. It's good for that. I like your Tweets. They make me laugh. Usually.

BEN

Thank-you.

Liz's leg is pressed up against Ben's as they sit together watching the screen. Ben ignores it.

LIZ

It's a bit limited for business though. There's a lot of clutter.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)

All these weird Americans for a start. Anyone would think they invented it.

BEN

They did.

LIZ

No, they didn't. Tim Berners-Lee invented HTML. The basis of the entire Internet. He was English. He got the idea from a book called Enquire Within Upon Everything. Don't you think that's just the most magnificent title for a book? You should write something like that. Call it Don't Ask Her Out. Or Piss Your Friend Off When She's given You A Lift. That would be a good book. I'd read that.

BEN

Wow Liz! Shall I go and get my recorder so we can get this stuff down? I can't believe you still go on about this. I really was sorry.

LIZ

No, Ben, you weren't. At all. Then or now. I don't mind what happened. Actually no, yes I do. I mind that you aren't sorry about it.

BEN

I'm sorry I upset you.

LIZ

I'm sorry I upset you? That sounds like bollocks to me. I'm quite serious about this. I'm well aware of how much we've both drunk but I'm serious. You really upset me that night, making me leave like that.

BEN

That's not exactly how I remember it, Liz.

LIZ

It wouldn't be, would it? That's exactly how it was.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Liz, despite all this time, I'm sincerely sorry I upset you. But I'm not going to apologise for you know. Claire. We weren't going out with each other or anything, were we, you and me?

BEAT.

LIZ

I don't know. - I've thought about it a lot, since then. We did everything together. Except that. Even when you wanted to take Claire to the theater, that was me.

BEN

What do you mean, that was you?

LIZ

Who do you think asked Claire to come to the theater? How do you think she knew about it?

BEN

I asked her.

LIZ

I asked her. I told her how much you wanted to ask her out. Real girl stuff. That was me.

BEN

You? When? You didn't even know each other until you two sat in the back seat on the way to the theater!

LIZ

Of course Ben. Don't be silly. I used to phone her up. Because you wouldn't. I did it for you.

BEN

I don't know what to say. I mean, you didn't have to -

LIZ

No, Ben. But I did. And looking back, I don't know why I did.

BEN

We were friends. I've known you longer than anyone else in my life.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

That's how I feel about you too.
But not then we didn't.

BEN

You didn't ask.

LIZ

I meant we didn't know each other
longer than we'd known anyone
else. And you didn't ask either.

BEN

More fool us then.

Liz raises her glass and smiles slowly at Ben.

LIZ

Possibly. A toast - more fool us!

BEN

I'll drink to that. I always do.

They drink, holding each other's eyes just too long.

BEN (cont'd)

Oh and Liz - if you sort of -
want to -

LIZ

I'm going to pretend I didn't
hear that. Let me show you how
Facebook works. Then you can tell
me if you think it would work for
my shop.

Liz moves her computer so Ben can see the screen, trying
to be business-like and straightforward.

LIZ (cont'd)

OK Ben, this is how Facebook
works. You can say more and you
can have a deeper dialogue with
people. That's why I think this
might work for the shop. Better
than paying business rates,
anyway.

BEN

I can see how this might work for
your shop, Liz. Sort of. The way
you can see what you're talking
about, that's quite good.

LIZ

And the people who use it seem to
be different to say, Twitter.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

I read something about that. Someone said Twitter's like the people you wish you'd been to school with. But Facebook actually is the people you went to school with.

LIZ

So is Claire one of your Facebook friends?

BEN

No. You know.

LIZ

I don't know.

BEN

I've never been able to find her. You know all this. We've talked about it before, you and me.

LIZ

Let's see.

Liz types Claire's name into her iPad. A string of names instantly appear on the screen but they are obviously too old, too young or the wrong sex.

BEN

She's not there, Liz. I've looked. She must have got married or something.

LIZ

Or dead? She could be dead. Have you checked to see if she got married? What her married name is?

BEN

Well, I was going to. I looked in the Records Office years ago.

Liz drinks some more wine and laughs.

LIZ

You didn't want to spend the money on a search, did you?

Liz taps at the iPad screen.

LIZ (cont'd)

£9.25! You didn't want to spend £9.25 to find the love of your life. Oh my darling, you are the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)
dark angel that haunts my dreams.
But I didn't want to break a
tenner.

BEN
Funny. It wasn't like that.

LIZ
It is though. You could have
found out any time you wanted to.
You just didn't want to.

BEN
Do you want to know why? Do you
actually want to know?

LIZ
I think I know why, but tell me.

BEN
I knew I could do that. Look the
records up online. I - I didn't
want to know if she was dead.

LIZ
Or spend £10 finding out. You have
to find out. You can't just sit
here wondering for the rest of
your life. And pour me some more
wine. I'm going to sort this out,
same as usual with you and
Claire.

BEN
Well, firstly I can just sit here
the rest of my life not knowing -

Liz taps at the iPad screen again.

LIZ
Can't.

BEN
And secondly I don't sit here
wondering what happened to Claire
every day of my life. What do you
mean I can't, anyway?

LIZ
Can't because I'm not going to
let you. And you do. I know you
do. You've fucked-up every
relationship in your life
thinking about Claire. Don't even
think about arguing with me.
There.

Liz makes herself more comfortable on the sofa, brushing up against Ben and almost dropping the iPad. She taps the screen again.

LIZ (cont'd)

See? That's how easy it is.
Wiltshire Births Marriages and
Deaths. Free. I did my mum's
family tree on it. It's the first
place you look.

BEN

I didn't know it was there. I
haven't looked.

LIZ

Don't lie to me Ben! Get me some
paper or something. Oh wait, I'll
do it on here.

Liz types onto the keyboard and the words 'huge arse' appear on the screen. She flicks the page away, back to the records website.

BEN

Liz.

LIZ

Come on Ben. Lay the ghost. Oops!
Sorry! Still, she might be dead,
hey? When did you last see her.
Did she seem to be alive then?

BEN

Come on Liz, this isn't funny.

LIZ

There you are. Claire Thompson,
yes? Married William K Pedersen,
St David's church, 1989. And the
good news for you is she's not
dead. Not in Wiltshire, anyway.

BEN

I thought she'd get married. She
never talked about it but you
just knew.

LIZ

Not with you though. I'm not
being unkind Ben. It's what she
was bred for. To be very pretty
and have lots of babies and get
married, but definitely not in
that order. That's why she had a
huge arse. Sorry, I meant
child-bearing hips.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

She had really nice hips,
actually.

LIZ

I've got really nice hips. If you
like big hips.

Ben and Liz both start to realise their legs and arms are touching as they sit huddled together, staring at the screen.

LIZ

Pour me some more wine Ben. We
haven't finished this yet. Now we
find her on Facebook.

Liz and Ben look at the long list of Claire Pedersens on facebook. Face after face scrolls down the screen but none of them are Claire. Some are just icons, not faces at all.

LIZ

I don't get this. It's like
privacy settings. Why would you
go on Facebook and not tell
anyone who you are? What's the
point?

BEN

Liz. Hugsy.

LIZ

What?

BEN

Hugsy. Hugsy was Claire's dog.
Back then. There.

LIZ

She has to be joking. That's
exactly what I'd expect from her.

BEN

How do we find out?

Liz opens up Hugsy's facebook page. Ben reads in silence for a while.

BEN

I didn't know any of this. I
didn't think she'd have a craft
shop.

LIZ

Gift shop. She's running a
tourist gift shop with her dog.
In Basalt, Colorado.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

We don't know that Liz, do we? There isn't a picture of her. And she's selling Native American crafts, anyway. It's not a gift shop.

LIZ

Bollocks. I actually know something about Native Americans. In that part of Colorado they were all gone by 1900. All of them. The only Indian stuff in her shop probably comes from Bombay. Or China. It's all fake.

BEN

Country house makeovers for City brokers living in Hackney. What isn't?

LIZ

They're wankers as well. I just wanted to get as much money out of people like that as I could. Do you know what?

BEN

No. What is it, Liz? What's so upsetting? This was your idea, finding Claire. I didn't even know her married name. Or if she'd got married.

LIZ

No, nothing.

Liz taps at the computer screen again, then peers closely at it.

LIZ

She's got a daughter. If it's her. Tansy Claire Pedersen. It's not a very American name, is it? This has got to be her. You should be very grateful to me.

Liz and Ben are pressed very close to each other on the sofa. Ben moves his leg against Liz's leg. She goes with it, pushing back as well. They're both aware they're pretty drunk and maybe up for it.

BEN

They're all called Claire. All the girls in the family. Except Claire's mum. She told me once. That night. You know.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

You spent six months wanting to shag her and when you got into her bedroom you talked about her mum's name? I don't believe you. You're mental! Did you even actually shag her?

BEN

Of course we did. I mean, I don't mean of course. We slept together.

LIZ

You shagged her, Ben. Just say it! It was a shag. There's nothing wrong with that!

BEN

The True Thorn. The one that pricks your heart and makes you stop. And remember.

Liz stares hard at Ben.

LIZ

What?

78 EXT., HILLTOP, DAY

On the top of the hill the staff flowers into a tree as the Saxon man sails away in his small boat.

79 INT., BEN'S FLAT, NIGHT

BEN

Nothing.

Liz goes back to looking at the computer screen. Liz finds a wedding reception picture. Claire's name is lit up as well as a blurry, looking the wrong way THOMAS PEDERSEN but it's hard to see who's who. Ben looks as well, but he can't be sure if it's Claire or not.

LIZ

Maybe it's not her. I can't see her face in any of these. And to be fair, she was quite pretty. Apart from the size of her arse. And all that bollocks about her house being haunted.

BEN

It - it was a fox.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Ben?

80 INT., CLAIRE'S PARTY, NIGHT

Young Claire flirts with her friends in the kitchen of her big old house. Ben stands with Theresa - Claire knows he's watching her though. She spoons hot chili into her mouth and realises it's just too hot but she can't spit it out, with Ben watching.

Theresa strides out of the room. Ben takes a step after her then stops. He turns back towards Claire. She's got rid of the chili and is flirting with someone again.

Ben walks out of the back door into the freezing garden.

81 EXT., CLAIRE'S GARDEN, NIGHT

Ben steps out into the dark, frosty garden. The sound of the party stops as he shuts the door. His breath hangs in front of him. He looks for a cigarette and freezes, convinced something is watching him.

Ben slowly looks up, terrified. He sees a fox staring at him, silver in the moonlight. Suddenly it flicks away into the bushes.

82 INT., BEN'S FLAT, NIGHT

Liz looks at Ben with love and sorrow in her eyes. Ben is staring at the computer screen, sad and blank.

LIZ

She's still here for you, isn't she? All your life, she's always been with you. In your mind. That's why you didn't look for her.

Liz slowly taps the computer again. She does a double take and switches the screen off. She puts the iPad on the table in front of them, agitated.

LIZ (cont'd)

Ben, would you get me another drink, please? I want to ask you something. You don't have to say yes.

BEN

Sure. What is it?

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Could you get me a drink first
Ben? I'm not sure how to ask you
this.

BEN

OK -

Ben gets up and leaves the room.

Liz looks at her computer again and stares at the screen.

Ben comes back into the room bringing more drinks and some
water.

Liz quickly puts the iPad down. It's upside down to Ben,
but he can see on the screen a pretty woman Ben's age and
a much younger man.

LIZ

Oh! Thanks, Ben!

BEN

There you are. What was it you
wanted to ask me?

LIZ

I - I know it's really short
notice. And say no if you want. I
won't mind. But would you come to
the funeral with me? Tomorrow? -
Because I could do with some
help, Ben. I really could.

BEN

What sort of help?

LIZ

Just some help. Please Ben. I'd
be really grateful.

Liz looks anxious.

BEN

Of course I will. (JOKING) How
grateful?

Liz grins and picks-up her computer. She tries to switch
it off without Ben noticing the screen.

For a second he sees the younger man looks like him. He
can see an older Claire, with the new hussy the dog.

Liz grabs the computer to stop ben seeing it. she stabs at
the screen button but it stays on.

(CONTINUED)

BEN (cont'd)
Who's that? Can I see?

Liz is holding her drink and the iPad, trying to switch the screen off, looking as if she's going to drop it. Ben reaches to catch the iPad. Liz straight-arms Ben as if she's fending off a rugby tackle.

LIZ
(SHOUTS) No!

Ben is astonished. Liz tries to pull the iPad away as he's still holding it. He grabs it to stop it falling and smashing and falls headlong on top of Liz. Their lips are just inches apart.

LIZ
Ben. One thing. Let me put my iPad down. Ben - don't look at it. Please. Promise me you won't look at it. Not tonight.

Ben shuts his eyes before he nods. Liz twists lying down and puts the iPad safely down on the table near her then turns back to Ben. His eyes are still closed.

She unbuttons her shirt a little and moves to kiss him.

83 INT., LIZ'S DAD'S HOUSE, EVENING

The house is packed with FUNERAL MOURNERS leaving, paying their respects to Liz as they go.

Finally the last one has gone leaving Ben and Liz and the wreck of the wake. Liz sits down, exhausted. Ben brings her a drink and sits with her on the sofa, the mirror of the night before.

LIZ
Thank-you Ben. Thank-you for being here today. (BEAT) About last night -

BEN
This might sound uncharacteristically grown-up of me, Liz. We should talk about last night. But I don't think we should talk about it this evening. (BEAT) I'd like to talk about it.

LIZ
Yes. Me too. I - no, you're right. Ben. I know you looked at my iPad when I was asleep.

(CONTINUED)

BEN

Yes. I did. (BEAT) Sorry.

LIZ

I knew you would. You saw the photo.

BEN

Yes.

LIZ

So - if I can remember how to do that whiny lisp, as Claire used to say, there's another little question now, isn't there? You have to get in touch.

BEN

I don't know her number.

LIZ

Ben, not tonight. Just don't pretend any more. What would my dad tell you to do?

Ben is silent. He avoids looking at Liz.

LIZ (cont'd)

I can't do today any more.
Goodnight Ben.

Liz stands up. She goes to kiss Ben's forehead but changes her mind. She walks out of the room leaving Ben nursing his drink, almost in the dark now.

Ben takes his mobile phone out of his pocket and scrolls through to Claire's number. His finger hovers over 'phone.'

84 EXT., COLORADO GARDEN, DAY

A MID-20S CLAIRE and her HUSBAND and a BABY move boxes into a small, cheap house in the Colorado sunshine, happy, busy, expectant on the edge of their life together.

The house shrinks and we see fields, then the state, the whole USA then the Google Earth screen on Liz's iPad.

85 INT., BEN'S FLAT, NIGHT

Ben sits in the dark, his face lit by the light from Liz's iPad.

(CONTINUED)

BEN
Directions. It even gives
directions to places.

On the screen of the iPad a COMPUTER NERD looks out at Ben.

NERD
Hey Ben. We've been waiting for
you, dude. Man, you should have
tried harder to find Claire. No,
really you should. She kept
something from you, Ben.
Something secret. You would
really, really like to know.

BEN
What is it?

NERD
We're going to try to help you,
Ben. But we have to know what you
want. Directions to here? Or from
here? To Claire's house in the
past? Or to the future?

Ben flicks the web page away to look at the woman who is very obviously the older Claire and her son. He's about 30, healthy, looking a bit like Ben.

BEN
How old is he, Claire? How old is
he? Your son? Because when I
think about it now - there's
something we didn't do that
night. Something I thought girls
like you always did.

Ben sips his drink, sitting, still staring at Claire's son on the computer screen in the dark.

BEN (cont'd)
Because the funny thing is Claire
- your boy. I think I've seen him
before.

Ben makes the picture larger, squints at it. He stands and goes through to the bathroom in the dark.

He puts the iPad by the side of the mirror as he looks at his own reflection.

BEN (cont'd)
I think I've seen her boy. I
think I've seen him for - for a
long time now.

ben washes his face in the dark.

(CONTINUED)

SFX: Patti Smith - Rock and Roll Nigger.

PATTI SMITH (V/O)
Blessed is the herb and grass and
the true thorn and light, the
maw, the belly, the maw and the
belly

MONTAGE: A kaleidoscope of Claire's bedroom, Claire in bed, the silver car, the Aston-Martin, the big house, Poppy, Liz all whirl past us.

White-out.

86 EXT., ROADSIDE, DAY

A horn blares as a truck thunders past Ben sitting in his car as he opens the door.

The truck nearly takes the open door of his car off and he wakes with a start.

Ben shakes his head and unsteadily gets out of the car. He stares after the truck then walks towards Claire's old house.

It's now a hotel.

87 INT, HOTEL, DAY

Ben walks to the hotel Reception desk. No-one there.

There are guests in another room. Ben follows the sound of their voices and enters. He slowly recognises the big living room from long ago. Imogen and Piers are mingling with the guests, not a day older.

Imogen turns towards Ben and smiles. She glances at Piers then holds her finger to her lips as she nods at something behind Ben.

He turns to see a glimpse of Claire walking up the stairs.

Ben looks back to imogen - she nods, smiling. Ben races up the stairs but Claire slips around the corner of the stairs ahead of him.

Ben arrives at the door to Claire's old bedroom. He tries the handle but it won't open. It looks as if it hasn't been opened for years. Ben looks old and tired and ill as he slowly walks down the stairs, past the RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST
Is there anything I can help you
with sir? Sir? Are you alright?

(CONTINUED)

BEN

The True Thorn. The one that
pricks your heart. The one that
makes you stop. And remember.

Ben stumbles, puts his hand out for support as he reaches the open front door and stands stock still.

88 EXT., HOTEL CAR PARK, DAY

A silent crowd stands in the hotel car park. A Victorian man on a horse, maids, gardeners, Imogen, Piers, hugsy. their attention is fixed on the front door. On Ben.

Ben stares back at them, confused.

30 YEAR-OLD CLAIRE walks up behind him, wearing a wedding dress.

In total silence she takes his arm and smiles up at him.

SFX: Rooks caw as the wind blows.

BEN

Claire.

SFX: A blackbird calls in alarm.

Claire looks at Ben, happy, triumphant, smiling. Ben nods and they take their first step towards the crowd who go wild, throwing confetti, cheering. CLAIRE'S SON is in the crowd, smiling, clapping. He looks so much like Ben.

SFX: Patti Smith - Rock And Roll Nigger.

BEN (cont'd)

The storm that brings harm also
makes fertile.

Claire smiles and squeezes Ben's arm.

CLAIRE

Couldn't tell you, Ben. Not then.

The crowd parts to show the silver Aston-Martin with a cardboard 'just married' sign on the windscreen. Ben smiles and hands it to one of the crowd.

Claire throws her trousseau to them before Ben opens the passenger door of for her. She lowers herself daintily in to the car.

Ben walks around the car through the cheering crowd and gets into the driving seat. The engine fires as soon as he touches the button.

(CONTINUED)

CLAIRE (cont'd)
It's nice, isn't it?

Ben shuts the door and trickles the car through the cheering crowd.

89 INT., ASTON-MARTIN, DAY

Claire turns smiling, keen, towards Ben. The sound of the crowd fades as they drive away out of the hotel car-park. There is some commotion by Ben's car in the lane.

CLAIRE
Is it true? Is it true Ben? Do
you think it's true?

BEN
I don't know. Maybe. Maybe it
doesn't matter if it's true, so
long as you believe it is.

Claire smiles and waves at the guests as BEN drives the Aston-Martin out into the lane, past his own car. An ambulance is parked there. A body is loaded into the ambulance.

As Ben accelerates away down the straight the Aston-Martin seems to fade to nothing.

There is nobody in the car-park empty outside the present-day hotel.

There is no trace of the wedding guests.

CLAIRE (V/O)
Maybe that's how it works.

The wind blows a piece of confetti in the car-park.

FADE TO BLACK.