

**NOTTING HILL**

by

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EXT. STREET - DAY

Mix through to William, 35, relaxed, pleasant, informal. We follow him as he walks down Portobello Road, carrying a load of bread. It is spring.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

Of course, I've seen her films and always thought she was, well, fabulous -- but, you know, million miles from the world I live in. Which is here -- Notting Hill -- not a bad place to be...

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

It's a full fruit market day.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

There's the market on weekdays, selling every fruit and vegetable known to man...

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

A man in denims exits the tattoo studio.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

The tattoo parlor -- with a guy outside who got drunk and now can't remember why he chose 'I Love Ken'...

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

The racial hair-dressers where everyone comes out looking like the Cookie Monster, whether they like it or not...

Sure enough, a girl exits with a huge threaded blue bouffant.

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - SATURDAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

Then suddenly it's the weekend, and from break of day, hundreds of stalls appears out of nowhere, filling Portobello Road right up to Notting Hill Gate...

A frantic crowded Portobello market.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

... and thousands of people buy millions of antiques, some genuine...

The camera finally settles on a stall selling beautiful stained glass windows of various sizes, some featuring biblical scenes and saints.

WILLIAM (V.O.)  
... and some not so genuine.

EXT. GOLBORNE ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)  
And what's great is that lots of friends have ended up in this part of London -- that's Tony, architect turned chef, who recently invested all the money he ever earned in a new restaurant...

Shot of Tony proudly setting out a board outside his restaurant, the sign still being painted. He receives and approves a huge fresh salmon.

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)  
So this is where I spend my days and years -- in this small village in the middle of a city -- in a house with a blue door that my wife and I bought together... before she left me for a man who looked like Harrison Ford, only even handsomer...

We arrive outside his blue-doored house just off Portobello.

WILLIAM (V.O.)  
... and where I now lead a strange half-life with a lodger called...

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

WILLIAM  
Spike!

The house has far too many things in it. Definitely two-bachelor flat.

Spike appears. An unusual looking fellow. He has unusual hairs, unusual facial hair and an unusual Welsh accent: very white, as though his flesh has never seen the sun. He wears only shorts.

SPIKE  
Even he. Hey, you couldn't help me with an incredibly important decision, could you?

WILLIAM

This is important in comparison to,  
let's say, whether they should  
cancel third world debt?

SPIKE

That's right -- I'm at last going  
out on a date with great Janine and  
I just want to be sure I've picked  
the right t-shirt.

WILLIAM

What are the choices?

SPIKE

Well... wait for it...  
(He pulls on a t-  
shirt)  
First there's this one...

The t-shirt is white with a horrible looking plastic alien  
coming out of it, jaws open, blood everywhere. It says 'I  
Love Blood.'

WILLIAM

Yes -- might make it hard to strike  
a really romantic note.

SPIKE

Point taken.

He heads back up the stairs... talks as he changes...

SPIKE

I suspect you'll prefer the next one.

And he re-enters in a white t-shirt, with a large arrow,  
pointing down to his flies, saying, "Get It Here."

WILLIAM

Yes -- she might think you don't  
have true love on your mind.

SPIKE

Wouldn't want that...  
(and back up he goes)  
-- just one more.

He comes down wearing it. Lots of hearts, saying, 'You're  
the most beautiful woman in the world.'

WILLIAM

Well, yes, that's perfect. Well done.

SPIKE  
Thanks. Great. Wish me luck.

WILLIAM  
Good luck.

Spike turns and walks upstairs. Revealing that on the back of the t-shirt, also printed in big letters, is written 'Fancy a fuck?'

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)  
And so it was just another hopeless Wednesday, as I set off through the market to work, little suspecting that this was the day which would change my life forever. This is work, by the way, my little travel book shop...

A small unpretentious store... named 'The Travel Book Co.'

WILLIAM (V.O.)  
... which, well, sells travel books -- and, to be frank with you, doesn't always sell many of those.

William enters.

INT. THE BOOKSHOP - DAY

It is a small shop, slightly chaotic, bookshelves everywhere, with little secret bits round corners with even more books. Martin, William's sole employee, is waiting enthusiastically. He is keen, an uncrushable optimist. Perhaps without cause. A few seconds later, William stands gloomily behind the desk.

WILLIAM  
Classic. Absolutely classic. Profit from major sales push -- minus 347 pound.

MARTIN  
Shall I go get a cappuccino? Ease the pain.

WILLIAM  
Yes, better get me a half. All I can afford.

MARIN  
I get you logic. Demi-capu coming up.

He salutes and bolts out of the door -- as he does, a woman walks in. We only just glimpse her.

Cut to William working. He looks up casually. And sees something. His reaction is hard to read. After a pause...

WILLIAM

Can I help you?

It is Anna Scott, the biggest movie star in the world -- here --in his shop. The most divine, subtle, beautiful woman on earth. When she speaks she is very self-assured and self-contained.

ANNA

No, thanks. I'll just look around.

WILLIAM

Fine.

She wanders over to a shelf as he watches her -- and picks out a quite smart coffee table book.

WILLIAM

That book's really not good -- just in case, you know, browsing turned to buying. You'd be wasting your money.

ANNA

Really?

WILLIAM

Yes. This one though is... very good.

He picks up a book on the counter.

WILLIAM

I think the man who wrote it has actually been to Turkey, which helps. There's also a very amusing incident with a kebab.

ANNA

Thanks. I'll think about it.

William suddenly spies something odd on the small TV monitor behind him.

WILLIAM

If you could just give me a second.

Her eyes follow him as he moves toward the back of the shop and approaches a man in slightly ill-fitting clothes.

WILLIAM  
Excuse me.

THIEF  
Yes.

WILLIAM  
Bad news.

THIEF  
What?

WILLIAM  
We've got a security camera in this  
bit of the shop.

THIEF  
So?

WILLIAM  
So, I saw you put that book down  
your trousers.

THIEF  
What book?

WILLIAM  
The one down your trousers.

THIEF  
I haven't got a book down my  
trousers.

WILLIAM  
Right -- well, then we have  
something of an impasse. I tell you  
what -- I'll call the police -- and,  
what can I say? If I'm wrong about  
the whole book-down-the-trousers  
scenario, I really apologize.

THIEF  
Okay -- what if I did have a book  
down my trousers?

WILLIAM  
Well, ideally, when I went back to  
the desk, you'd remove the Cadogan  
guide to Bali from your trousers,  
and either wipe it and put it back,  
or buy it. See you in a sec.

He returns to his desk. In the monitor we just glimpse, as  
does William, the book coming out of the trousers and put  
back on the shelves. The thief drifts out toward the door.

Anna, who has observed all this, is looking at a blue book on the counter.

WILLIAM  
Sorry about that...

ANNA  
No, that's fine. I was going to steal one myself but now I've changed my mind. Signed by the author, I see.

WILLIAM  
Yes, we couldn't stop him. If you can find an unsigned copy. It's worth an absolute fortune.

She smiles. Suddenly the thief is there.

THIEF  
Excuse me.

ANNA  
Yes.

THIEF  
Can I have your autograph?

ANNA  
What's your name?

THIEF  
Rufus.

She signs his scruffy piece of paper. He tries to read it.

THIEF  
What does it say?

ANNA  
Well, that's the signature -- and above, it says 'Dear Rufus -- you belong in jail.'

THIEF  
Nice one. Would you like my phone number?

ANNA  
Tempting but... no, thank you.

Thief leaves.

ANNA  
I think I will try this one.



She hands William a note and the book he said was rubbish. He talks as he handles the transaction.

WILLIAM

Oh -- right -- on second thoughts maybe it wasn't that bad. Actually -- it's a sort of masterpiece really. None of those childish kebab stories you get in so many travel books these days. And I'll throw in one of these for free.

He drops in one of the signed books.

WILLIAM

Very useful for fighting fires, wrapping fish, that sort of things.

She looks at him with a slight smile.

ANNA

Thanks.

And leaves. She's out of his life forever. William is a little dazed. Seconds later Martin comes back in.

MARTIN

Cappuccino as ordered.

WILLIAM

Thanks. I don't think you'll believe who was just in here.

MARTIN

Who? Someone famous?

But William's innate natural English discretion takes over.

WILLIAM

No. No-one -- no-one.

They set about drinking their coffee.

MARTIN

Would be exciting if someone famous did come into the shop though, wouldn't it? Do you know -- this is pretty incredible actually -- I once saw Ringo Starr. Or at least I think it was Ringo. It might have been that broke from 'Fiddler On The Roof,' Topsy.

WILLIAM

Topol.

MARTIN  
That's right -- Topol.

WILLIAM  
But Ringo Starr doesn't look  
anything like Topol.

MARTIN  
No, well... he was quite a long way  
away.

WILLIAM  
So it would have been neither of  
them?

MARTIN  
I suppose so.

WILLIAM  
Right. It's not a classic  
anecdotes, is it?

MARTIN  
Not classic, no.

Martin shakes his head. William drinks his cappuccino.

WILLIAM  
Right -- want another one?

MARTIN  
Yes. No, wait -- let's go crazy --  
I'll have an orange juice.

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

William sets off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

William collects his juice in a coffee shop on Wesbourne  
Park Road.

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

William swings out of the little shop -- he turns the  
corner of Portobello Road and bumps straight into Anna.  
The orange juice, in its foam cup, flies. It soaks Anna.

ANNA  
Oh Jesus.

WILLIAM  
Here, let me help.

He grabs some paper napkins and starts to clean it off -- getting far too near her breasts in the panic of it...

ANNA

What are you doing?

He jumps back.

WILLIAM

Nothing, nothing... Look, I live just over the street -- you could get cleaned up.

ANNA

No thank you. I need to get my car back.

WILLIAM

I also have a phone. I'm confident that in five minutes we can have you spick and span and back on the street again... in the non-prostitute sense obviously.

In his diffident ways, he is confident, despite her being genuinely annoyed. She turns and looks at him.

ANNA

Okay. So what does 'just over the street' mean -- give it to me in yards.

WILLIAM

Eighteen yards. That's my house there.

He doesn't lie -- it is eighteen yards away. She looks down. She looks up at him.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

They enter. She carries a few stylish bags.

WILLIAM

Come on in. I'll just...

William runs in further -- it's a mess. He kicks some old shoes under the stairs, bins an unfinished pizza and hides a plate of breakfast in a cupboard. She enters the kitchen.

WILLIAM

It's not that tidy, I fear.

And he guides her up the stairs, after taking the bag of books from her...

WILLIAM

The bathroom is right at the top of the stairs and there's a phone on the desk up there.

She heads upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

William is tidying up frantically. Then he hears Anna's feet on the stairs. She walks down, wearing a short, sparkling black top beneath her leather jacket. With her trainers still on. He is dazzled by the sight of her.

WILLIAM

Would you like a cup of tea before you go?

ANNA

No thanks.

WILLIAM

Coffee?

ANNA

No.

WILLIAM

Orange juice -- probably not.

He moves to his very empty fridge -- and offers its only contents.

WILLIAM

Something else cold -- coke, water, some disgusting sugary drink pretending to have something to do with fruits of the forest?

ANNA

Really, no.

WILLIAM

Would you like something to nibble --apricots, soaked in honey -- quite why, no one knows -- because it stops them tasting of apricots, and makes them taste like honey, and if you wanted honey, you'd just buy honey, instead of apricots, but nevertheless -- there we go -- yours if you want them.

ANNA

No.

WILLIAM

Do you always say 'no' to everything?

Pause. She looks at him deep.

ANNA

No.

(pause)

I better be going. Thanks for your help.

WILLIAM

You're welcome and, may I also say... heavenly.

It has taken a lot to get this out loud. He is not a smooth-talking man.

WILLIAM

Take my one chance to say it. After you've read that terrible book, you're certainly not going to be coming back to the shop.

She smiles. She's cool.

ANNA

Thank you.

WILLIAM

Yes. Well. My pleasure.

He guides her toward the door.

WILLIAM

Nice to meet you. Surreal but nice.

In a slightly awkward moment, he shows her out the door. He closes the door and shakes his head in wonder. Then...

WILLIAM

'Surreal but nice.' What was I thinking?

... He shakes his head again in horror and wanders back along the corridor in silence. There's a knock on the door. He moves back, casually...

WILLIAM

Coming.

He opens the door. It's her.

WILLIAM

Oh hi. Forgot something?

ANNA  
I forgot my bag.

WILLIAM  
Oh right.

He shoots into the kitchen and picks up the forgotten shopping bag. Then returns and hands it to her.

WILLIAM  
Here we go.

ANNA  
Thanks. Well...

They stand in that corridor -- in that small space. Second time saying goodbye. A strange feeling of intimacy. She leans forward and she kisses him. Total silence. A real sense of the strangers of those lips, those famous lips on his. They part.

WILLIAM  
I apologize for the 'surreal but nice' comment. Disaster...

ANNA  
Don't worry about it. I thought the apricot and honey business was the real lowpoint.

Suddenly there is a clicking of a key in the lock.

WILLIAM  
Oh my God. My flatmate. I'm sorry --there's no excuse for him.

Spike walks in.

SPIKE  
Hi.

ANNA  
Hi.

WILLIAM  
Hi.

Spike walks past unsuspectingly and heads into the kitchen.

SPIKE  
I'm just going to go into the kitchen to get some food -- and then I'm going to tell you a story that will make your balls shrink to the size of raisins.

And leaves them in the corridor.

ANNA

Probably best not tell anyone about this.

WILLIAM

Right. No one. I mean, I'll tell myself sometimes but... don't worry -- I won't believe it.

ANNA

Bye.

And she leaves, with just a touch of William's hand. Spike comes out of the kitchen, eating something white out of a styrofoam container with a spoon.

SPIKE

There's something wrong with this yogurt.

WILLIAM

It's not yogurt -- it's mayonnaise.

SPIKE

Well, there you go.  
 (takes another big  
 spoonful)  
 On for a video fest tonight? I've got some absolute classic.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The lights are off. William and Spike on the couch, just the light from the TV playing on their faces. Cut to the TV full screen. There is Anna. She is in a stylish Woody Allen type modern romantic comedy, "Gramercy Park," in black and white.

INT. MANHATTAN ART GALLERY - DAY

Anna's character -- Woody Anna -- is walking around the gallery with her famous co-star, Michael. They should be the perfect couple, but there is tension. Anna is not happy.

MICHAEL

Smile.

ANNA

No.

MICHAEL

Smile.

ANNA  
I've got nothing to smile about.

MICHAEL  
Okay in about 7 seconds, I'm going  
to ask you to marry me.

And after a couple of seconds -- wow -- she smiles.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SPIKE  
Imagine -- somewhere in the world  
there's a man who's allowed to kiss  
her.

WILLIAM  
Yes, she is fairly fabulous.

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

The next day. William and Martin quietly co-existing. An  
annoying customer enters. Mr. Smith.

MR. SMITH  
Do you have any books by Dickens?

WILLIAM  
No, we're a travel bookshop. We  
only sell travel books.

MR. SMITH  
On right. How about that new John  
Grisham thriller?

WILLIAM  
No, that's a novel too.

MR. SMITH  
Oh right. Have you got a copy of  
'Winnie the Pooh'?

Pause.

WILLIAM  
Martin -- your customer.

MARTIN  
Can I help you?

William looks up. At that moment the entire window is  
suddenly taken up by the huge side of a bus, obscuring the  
light -- and entirely covered with a portrait of Anna --  
from her new film, "Helix."



INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - CONDOR/LIVING ROOM - DAY

William heads upstairs and pauses. Spike coming down, wearing full body scuba diving gear.

SPIKE

Hey.

WILLIAM

Hi...

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

The two of them fixing a cup of tea in the kitchen.

WILLIAM

Just incidentally -- why are you wearing that?

SPIKE

Ahm -- combination of factors really. No clean clothes...

WILLIAM

There never will be, you know, unless you actually clean your clothes.

SPIKE

Right. Vicious circle. And then I was like rooting around in your things, and found this, and I thought -- cool. Kind of spacey.

EXT. WILLIAM'S TERRACE - DAY

The two of them on the rooftop terrace, passing the day. William is reading 'The bookseller.' The terrace is small and the plants aren't great -- but it overlooks London in a rather wonderful way. Spike still in scuba gear, goggles on.

SPIKE

There's something wrong with the goggles though...

WILLIAM

No, they were prescription, so I could see all the fishes properly.

SPIKE

Groovy. You should do more of this stuff.

WILLIAM  
So -- any messages?

SPIKE  
Yeh, I wrote a couple down.

WILLIAM  
Two? That's it?

SPIKE  
You want me to write down all your messages?

William closes his eyes in exasperation.

WILLIAM  
Who were the ones you didn't write down from?

SPIKE  
Ahm let's see -- ahm. No. Gone completely. Oh no, wait. There was --one from your mum: she said don't forget lunch and her leg's hurting again.

WILLIAM  
Right. No one else?

SPIKE  
Absolutely not.

Spike looks back and relaxes.

SPIKE  
Though if we're going for this obsessive writing-down-all-messages thing -- some American girl called Anna called a few days ago.

William freezes -- then looks at Spike.

WILLIAM  
What did she say?

SPIKE  
Well, it was genuinely bizarre... she said, hi -- it's Anna -- and then she said, call me at the Ritz -- and then gave herself a completely different name.

WILLIAM  
Which one?

SPIKE  
 Absolutely no idea. Remembering one  
 name's bad enough...

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

William on the phone. We hear the formal man at the other  
 end of the phone. And then intercut with him.

WILLIAM  
 Hello.

RITZ MAN (V.O.)  
 May I help you, sir?

WILLIAM  
 Ahm, look this is a very odd  
 situation. I'm a friend of Anna  
 Scott's -- and she rang me at home  
 the day before yesterday -- and left  
 a message saying she's staying with  
 you...

INT. RITZ RECEPTION - DAY

RITZ MAN  
 I'm sorry, we don't have anyone of  
 that name here, sir.

WILLIAM  
 No, that's right -- I know that.  
 She said she's using another name --  
 but the problem is she left the  
 message with my flatmate, which was  
 a serious mistake.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM

WILLIAM  
 Imagine if you will the stupidest  
 person you've ever met -- are you  
 doing that...?

Spike happens to be in the foreground of this shot. He's  
 reading a newspaper.

RITZ MAN  
 Yes, sir. I have him in my mind.

WILLIAM  
 And then double it -- and that is  
 the -- what can I say -- git I'm  
 living with and he cannot remember...

SPIKE  
Try 'Flinstone.'

WILLIAM  
(to Spike)  
What?

SPIKE  
I think she said her name was  
'Flinstone.'

WILLIAM  
Does 'Flinstone' mean anything to  
you?

RITZ MAN  
I'll put you right through, sir.

Flinstone is indeed the magic word.

WILLIAM  
Oh my God.

He practices how to sound.

WILLIAM  
Hello. Hi. Hi.

ANNA (V.O.)  
Hi.

We hear her voice -- don't see her.

WILLIAM  
(caught out)  
Oh hi. It's William Thacker. We,  
ahm I work in a bookshop.

ANNA (V.O.)  
You played it pretty cool here,  
waiting for three days to call.

WILLIAM  
No, I've never played anything cool  
in my entire life. Spike, who I'll  
stab to death later, never gave me  
the message.

ANNA (V.O.)  
Oh -- Okay.

WILLIAM  
Perhaps I could drop round for tea  
or something?

ANNA (V.O.)

Yeh -- unfortunately, things are going to be pretty busy, but... okay, let's give it a try. Four o'clock could be good.

WILLIAM

Right. Great.  
(he hangs up)  
Classic. Classic.

EXT. RITZ - DAY

William jumps off a bus and walks toward the Ritz. He carries a small bunch of roses.

INT. RITZ HOTEL - DAY

He approaches the lifts. At the lift, he pushes the button and the doors open. As he is getting in, William is joined by a young man. His name is Tarquin.

WILLIAM

Which floor?

TARQUIN

Three.

William pushes the button. They wait for the doors to close.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

The lift lands. William gets out. So does Tarquin. Rooms 30-35 are to the left. 35-39 to the right. William heads right. So does Tarquin.

William is puzzled. He slows down as he approaches room 38. So does Tarquin. William spots, so does Tarquin. William points at the number.

WILLIAM

Are you sure you...?

TARQUIN

Yes.

WILLIAM

Oh. Right.

He knocks. A bright, well-tailored American girl opens the door.

KAREN

Hello, I'm Karen. Sorry -- things are running a bit late. Here's the thing...

She hands them a very slick, expensively produced press kits, with the poster picture of Anna, for the film 'Helix.'

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE ANTE-ROOM - DAY

A few seconds later -- they enter the main waiting room. There are a number of journalists waiting for their audience.

KAREN

What did you think of the film?

TARQUIN

Marvellous. 'Close Encounters' meets 'Jean De Forette.' Oscar-winning stuff.

They both turn to William for his opinion.

WILLIAM

I agree.

KAREN

I'm sorry I didn't get down what magazines you're from.

TARQUIN

'Time Out.'

KAREN

Great. And you...

WILLIAM

(seeing it on a coffee table)

'Horse and Hound.' The name's William Whacker. I think she might be expecting me.

KAREN

Okay -- take a seat. I'll check.

They sit down as Karen goes off.

TARQUIN

You've brought her flowers?

William goes for the cover-up.

WILLIAM

No -- they're... for my grandmother.  
She's in a hospital nearby. Thought  
I'd kill two birds with one stone.

TARQUIN

I'm sorry. Which hospital?

Pause. He's in trouble.

WILLIAM

Do you mind me not saying -- it's a  
rather distressing disease and the  
name of the hospital rather gives it  
away.

TARQUIN

Oh sure. Of course.

KAREN

Mr. Thacker.

Saved by the bell.

INT. TRAFALGAR SUIT CORRIDOR - DAY

KAREN

You've got five minutes.

He is shown in through big golden doors. Karen stays  
outside.

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY

There Anna is, framed in the window. Glorious.

WILLIAM

Hi.

ANNA

Hello.

WILLIAM

I brought these, but clearly...

There are lots of other flowers in the room.

ANNA

Oh no, ho -- these are great.

A fair amount of tension. These two people hardly know  
each other -- and the first and last time they met, they  
kissed.

WILLIAM

Sorry about not ringing back. The whole two-names concept was totally too much for my flatman's pea-sized intellect.

ANNA

No, it's a stupid privacy thing. I always choose a cartoon character -- last time out, I was Mrs. Bambi.

At which moment Jeremy, Karen's boss, comes in. A fairly grave, authoritative fifty-year-old PR man consulting a list.

JEREMY

Everything okay?

ANNA

Yes, thanks.

JEREMY

And you are from 'Horse and Hound' magazine?

William nods.

ANNA

Is that so?

William shrugs his shoulders. Jeremy settles at a little desk in the corner and makes notes. A pause. William feels he has to act the part. They sit in chairs opposite each other.

WILLIAM

So I'll just fire away, shall I?

Anna nods.

WILLIAM

Right. Ahm... the film's great... and I just wondered -- whether you ever thought of having more... horses in it?

ANNA

Ahm -- well -- we would have liked to -- but it was difficult, obviously, being set in space.

WILLIAM

Obviously. Very difficult.

Jeremy leaves.



William puts his head in his hands. He was panic.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry -- I arrived outside -- they thrust this thing into my hand -- I don't know what to do.

ANNA

No, it's my fault, I thought this would all be over by now. I just wanted to sort of apologize for the kissing thing. I seriously don't know what got in to me. I just wanted to make sure you were fine about it.

WILLIAM

Absolutely fine about it.

Re-enter Jeremy.

JEREMY

Do remember that Miss Scott is also keen to talk about her next project, which is shooting later in the summer.

WILLIAM

Oh yes -- excellent. Ahm -- any horses in that one? Or hounds, of course. Our readers are equally intrigued by both species.

ANNA

It takes place on a submarine.

WILLIAM

Yes. Right... But if there were horses, would you be riding them yourself or would you be getting a stunt horse person double sort of thing?

Jeremy exits.

WILLIAM

I'm just a complete moron. Sorry. This is the sort of thing that happens in dreams -- not in real life. Good dreams, obviously -- it's a dream to see you.

ANNA

And what happens next in the dream?

It's a challenge.

WILLIAM

Well, I suppose in the dream scenario. I just... ahm, change my personality, because you can do that in dreams, and walk across and kiss the girl but you know it'll never happen.

Pause. Then they move towards each other when... Jeremy enters.

JEREMY

Time's up, I'm afraid. Sorry it was so short. Did you get what you wanted?

WILLIAM

Very neatly.

JEREMY

Maybe time for one last question?

WILLIAM

Right.

Jeremy goes out -- it's their last seconds.

WILLIAM

Are you busy tonight?

ANNA

Yes.

They look at each other. Jeremy enters, with another journalists in row. Anna and William stand and shake hands formally.

ANNA

Well, it was nice to meet you. Surreal but nice.

WILLIAM

Thank you. You are 'Horse and Hound's' favorite actress. You and Black Beauty. Tied.

INT. TRAFALGAR SUITE CORRIDOR - DAY

William exits fairly despondent and heads for the door. Tarquin is in the corridor calling on his mobile phone.

TARQUIN

How was she?

WILLIAM  
Fabulous.

TARQUIN  
Wait a minute -- she took your  
grandmother's flowers?

William can't think his way out of this.

WILLIAM  
Yes. That's right. Bitch.

He turns to go, but is accosted by Karen.

KAREN  
If you'd like to come with me we can  
rush you through the others.

WILLIAM  
The others?

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

KAREN  
Mr. Thacker's from 'Horse and Hound.'

A forty-year-old actor with great presence warmly shakes  
William's hand.

MALE LEAD  
Please to meet you. Did you like  
the film?

WILLIAM  
Ah... yes, enormously.

MALE LEAD  
Well, fire away.

WILLIAM  
Right, right. Ahm -- did you enjoy  
making the film?

MALE LEAD  
I did.

WILLIAM  
Any bit in particular?

MALE LEAD  
Well, you tell me which bit you  
liked most -- and I'll tell you if  
I enjoyed making it.

WILLIAM

Ahm right, right, I liked the bit in space very much. Did you enjoy making that bit?

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Same room same seat, minutes later, with a monolingual foreign actor and an interpreter.

WILLIAM

Did you identify with the character you were playing?

INTERPRETER

Te identificaste con el personaje que interpretabas?

FOREIGN ACTOR

No.

INTERPRETER

No.

WILLIAM

Ah. Why not?

INTERPRETER

Por que no?

FOREIGN ACTOR

Porque es un robot carnivore psicopata.

INTERPRETER

Because he is playing a psychopathic flesh-eating robot.

WILLIAM

Classic.

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

And now William is sitting opposite an eleven-year-old American girl.

WILLIAM

Is this your first film?

GIRL

No -- it's my 22nd.

WILLIAM

Of course it is. Any favorite among the 22?

GIRL  
Working with Leonardo.

WILLIAM  
Da Vinci?

GIRL  
Di Caprio.

WILLIAM  
Of course. And is he your favorite  
Italian film director?

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

William emerges traumatized into the corridor. It is full  
of camera crews. And there is Karen.

KAREN  
Mr. Thacker?

WILLIAM  
(so weary)  
Yes?

KAREN  
Have you got a moment?

INT. ANNA'S SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY

They knock on her door.

ANNA (V.O.)  
Come in.

William enters. A certain nervousness. They are alone  
again.

ANNA  
Ahm. That thing I was doing  
tonight -- I'm not doing it any  
more. I told them I had to spend  
the evening with Britain's premier  
equestrian journalist.

WILLIAM  
Oh well, great. Perfect. Oh no --  
shittity brickitty -- it's my  
sister's birthday -- shit -- we're  
meant to be having dinner.

ANNA  
Okay -- fine.

WILLIAM

But no, I'm sure I can get out of it.

ANNA

No, I mean, if it's fine with you,  
I'll, you know, be your date.

WILLIAM

You'll be my date at my little  
sister's birthday party.

ANNA

If that's all right.

WILLIAM

I'm sure it's all right. My friend  
Max is cooking and he's acknowledged  
to be the worst cook in the world,  
but you know, you could hide the  
food in your handbag or something.

ANNA

Okay.

WILLIAM

Okay.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bella and Max are in the kitchen.

MAX

He's bringing a girl?

BELLA

Miracles do happen.

MAX

Does the girl have a name?

BELLA

He wouldn't say.

MAX

Christ, what is going on in there?

The oven seems to be smoking a little. Then the bell rings.

MAX

Oh God.

It's hard timing. Max shoots out of the kitchen.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max heads for the door impatiently. He opens it and turns back without looking at William and Anna standing there.

MAX

Come on in. Vague food crisis.

William and Anna move along the corridor to the kitchen.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bella is there.

BELLA

Hiya -- sorry -- the guinea fowl is proving more complicated than expected.

WILLIAM

He's cooking guinea fowl?

BELLA

Don't even ask.

ANNA

Hi.

BELLA

Hi. Good Lord -- you're the spitting image of...

WILLIAM

Bella -- this is Anna.

BELLA

Right.  
(pause)

MAX

Okay. Crisis over.

He rises from his stove position.

WILLIAM

Max. This is Anna.

MAX

Hello, Anna ahm...  
(He recognizes her --  
the word just falls  
out)  
Scott -- have some wine.

ANNA

Thank you.

Door bell goes.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max opens the door -- it is Honey.

MAX

Hi.

She does a little pose, having worn a real party dress.

MAX

Yes, Happy Birthday.

They head back along the corridor.

MAX

Look, your brother has brought this girl, and ahm...

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They enter the kitchen.

HONEY

Hi guys.

(sees Anna)

Oh holy fuck.

WILLIAM

Hun -- this is Anna. Anna -- this is Honey -- she's my baby sitter.

ANNA

Hiya.

HONEY

Oh God this is one of those key moments in life, when it's possible you can be really, genuinely cool -- and totally and utterly adore you and I think you're the most beautiful woman in the world and more importantly I genuinely believe and have believed for some time now that we can be best friends. What do you think?

ANNA

Ahm... I think that sounds -- you know -- lucky me. Happy Birthday.



She hands her a present.

HONEY

Oh my God. You gave me a present.  
We're best friends already. Marry  
Will -- he's a really nice guy and  
then we can be sisters.

ANNA

I'll think about it.

The front door bell goes.

MAX

That'll be Bernie.

He heads out into the corridor to the front door.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max opens the door.

MAX

Hello, Bernie.

BERNIE

I'm sorry I'm so late. Bollocksed  
up at work again, I fear. Millions  
down the drain.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They enter the room.

MAX

Bernie -- this is Anna.

BERNIE

Hello, Anna. Delighted to meet you.

Doesn't recognize her -- turns to Honey.

BERNIE

Honey Bunny -- happy birthday to you.  
(hands her a present)  
It's a hat. You don't have to wear  
it or anything.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A minute or two later -- they are standing, drinking wine  
before dinner. Bernie with Anna on their own -- William  
helping Max in the kitchen.

MAX

You haven't slept with her, have you?

WILLIAM

That is a cheap question and the answer is, of course, no comment.

MAX

'No comment' means 'yes.'

WILLIAM

No, it doesn't.

MAX

Do you ever masturbate?

WILLIAM

Definitely no comment.

MAX

You see -- it means 'yes.'

Then on to Bernie's conversation.

BERNIE

So tell me Anna -- what do you do?

ANNA

I'm an actress.

BERNIE

Splendid. I'm actually in the stockmarket, so not really similar fields, though I have done some amateur stuff -- P.G. Wodehouse, you know -- farce, all that. 'Ooh -- careful there, vicar.' Always imagined it's a pretty tough job, though, acting. I mean the wages are a scandal, aren't they?

ANNA

Well, they can be.

BERNIE

I see friends from university -- clever chaps -- been in the business longer than you -- they're scraping by on seven, eight thousand a year. It's no life. What sort of acting do you do?

ANNA

Films mainly.

BERNIE

Oh splendid. Well done. How's the pay in movies? I mean, last film you did, what did you get paid?

ANNA

Fifteen million dollars.

BERNIE

Right. Right. So that's... fairly good. On the high side... have you tried the nuts?

MAX

Right -- I think we're ready.

They all move towards the kitchen.

ANNA

(to Bella)

I wonder if you could tell me where the...?

BELLA

Oh, it's just down the corridor on the right.

HONEY

I'll show you.

A moment's silence as they leave -- then in a split second the others all turn to William.

BELLA

Quickly, quickly -- talk very quickly what are you doing here with Anna Scott?

BERNIE

Anna Scott?

BELLA

Yes.

BERNIE

The movie star?

BELLA

Yup.

BERNIE

Oh God. Oh God. Oh Goddy God.

The horror of his remembered conversation slowly unfolds. Honey re-enters.

HONEY

I don't believe it. I walked into the loo with her. I was still talking when she started unbuttoning her jeans... She had to ask me to leave.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

A little later. They are sat at dinner. Bella next to Anna.

BELLA

What do you think of the guinea fowl?

ANNA

(whispering)

I'm a vegetarian.

BELLA

Oh God.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Moving through the evening -- they are very relaxed, as they eat dinner. A few seconds watching the evening going well -- Anna is taking this in -- real friends -- relaxed -- easy, teasing. And there's a cake. Honey wears Bernie's unsuitable hat. Anna watches William laughing at something and then putting his head in his hands with mock shame.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Coffee time.

MAX

Having you here, Anna, firmly establishes what I've long suspected, that we really are the most desperate hot of under-achievers.

BERNIE

Shame!

MAX

I'm not saying it's a bad thing, in fact, I think it's something we should take pride in. I'm going to give the last brownie as a prize to the saddest act here.

A little pause. Then William turns to Bernie.

WILLIAM

Bernie.

BERNIE

Well, obviously it's me, isn't it -- I work in the City in a job I don't understand and everyone keeps getting promoted above me. I haven't had a girlfriends since... puberty and, well, the long and short of it is, nobody fancies me, and if these cheeks get any chubbier, they never will.

HONEY

Nonsense. I fancy you. Or I did before you got so far.

MAX

You see -- and unless I'm much mistaken, your job still pays you rather a lot of money, while Honey here, she earns nothing flogging her guts out at London's seediest record store.

HONEY

Yes. And I don't have hair -- I've got feathers, and I've got funny goggly eyes, and I'm attracted to cruel men and ... no one'll ever marry me because my boobies have actually started shrinking.

MAX

You see -- incredibly sad.

BELLA

On the other hand, her best friend is Anna Scott.

HONEY

That's true, I can't deny it. She needs me, what can I say?

BELLA

And most of her limbs work. Whereas I'm stuck in its thing day and night, in a house full of ramps. And to add insult to serious injury -- I've totally given up smoking, my favorite thing, and the truth is... we can't have a baby.

Dead silence.

WILLIAM

Bella.

Bella shrugs her shoulders. Bernie is totally grief-struck.

BERNIE

No. Not true...

BELLA

C'est la vie... We're lucky in lots of ways, but... Surely it's worth a brownie.

William reaches for her hand. Max breaks the sombre mood.

MAX

Well, I don't know. Look at William. Very unsuccessful professionally. Divorced. Used to be handsome, now kind of squidgy around the edges -- and absolutely certain never to hear from Anna again after she's heard that his nickname at school was Floppy.

They all laugh. Anna smiles across at William.

WILLIAM

So I get the brownie?

MAX

I think you do, yes.

ANNA

Wait a minute. What about me?

MAX

I'm sorry? You think you deserve the brownie?

ANNA

Well... a shot at it.

WILLIAM

You'll have to prove it. This is a great brownie and I'm going to fight for it. State your claim.

ANNA

Well, I've been on a diet since I was nineteen, which means basically I've been hungry for a decade.

(more)

ANNA (cont'd)

I've had a sequence of not nice boyfriends -- one of whom hit me: an every time my heart gets broken it gets splashed across the newspapers as entertainment. Meantime, it cost millions to get me looking like this...

HONEY

Really?

ANNA

Really -- and one day, not long from now...

While she says this, quiet settles around the table. The thing is -- she sort of means it and is opening up to them.

ANNA

... my looks will go, they'll find out I can't act and I'll become a sad middle-aged woman who looks a bit like someone who was famous for a while.

Silence... they all look at her... then.

MAX

Nah!!! Nice try, gorgeous -- but you don't fool anyone.

The mood is instantly broken. They all laugh.

WILLIAM

Pathetic effort to hog the brownie.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Anna and William are leaving.

ANNA

That was such a great evening.

MAX

I'm delighted.

He holds out his hand to shake. She kisses him on the cheek. He stumbles back with joy.

ANNA

And may I say that's a gorgeous tie.

MAX

Now you're lying.

ANNA  
You're right. I told you I was bad  
at acting.

Max loves this.

ANNA  
(to Bella)  
Lovely to meet you.

BELLA  
And you. I'll wait till you've gone  
before I tell him you're a  
vegetarian.

MAX  
No!

ANNA  
Night, night, Honey.

HONEY  
I'm so sorry about the loo thing. I  
meant to leave but I just... look,  
ring me if you need someone to go  
shopping with. I know lots of nice,  
cheap places... not that money  
necessarily...  
(gives up)  
Nice to meet you.

And Honey gives her a huge hug.

ANNA  
You too -- from now on you are my  
style guru.

Anna and William head out... Bernie tries to save some  
dignity.

BERNIE  
Love your work.

They move to the door and wave goodbye.

EXT. MAX AND BELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

William and Anna step outside. From inside they hear a  
massive and hysterical scream of the friends letting out  
their true feelings. William is a little embarrassed.

WILLIAM  
Sorry -- they always do that when I  
leave the house.



The house is in Lansdowne Road, on the edge of Notting Hill. They walk for a moment. A bit of silence.

ANNA  
Floppy, huh?

WILLIAM  
It's the hair! It's to do with the hair.

ANNA  
Why is she in a wheelchair?

WILLIAM  
It was an accident -- about eighteen months ago.

ANNA  
And the pregnancy thing -- is that to do with the accident?

WILLIAM  
You know, I'm not sure. I don't think they'd tried for kids before, as fate would have it.

They walk in silence for a moment. Then...

WILLIAM  
Would you like to come... my house is just...?

She smiles and shakes her head.

ANNA  
Too complicated.

WILLIAM  
That's fine.

ANNA  
Busy tomorrow?

WILLIAM  
I thought you were leaving.

ANNA  
I was.

EXT. NOTTING HILL GARDEN - NIGHT

A little later in the walk.

ANNA  
What's in there?

They are now walking by a five foot railing, with foliage behind it.

WILLIAM  
Gardens. All these streets round here have these mysterious communal gardens in the middle of them. They're like little village.

ANNA  
Let's go in.

WILLIAM  
Ah no -- that's the point -- they're private villages -- only the people who live round the edges are allowed in.

ANNA  
You abide by rules like that?

WILLIAM  
Ahm...

Her look makes it clear that she is waiting with interest on the answer to this.

WILLIAM  
Heck no -- other people do -- but not me -- I just do what I want.

He rattles the gate, then starts his climb -- but doesn't quite make it, and falls back onto the pavement...

WILLIAM  
(casually)  
Whoopsidaisies.

ANNA  
What did you say?

WILLIAM  
Nothing.

ANNA  
Yes, you did.

WILLIAM  
No, I didn't.

ANNA  
You said "whoopsidaisies."

Tiny pause.

WILLIAM

I don't think so. No one has said "whoopsidaisies," do they -- I mean unless they're...

ANNA

There's no "unless." No one has said "whoopsidaisies" for fifty years and even then it was only little girls with blonde ringlets.

WILLIAM

Exactly. Here we go again.

He fails, and unfortunately spontaneously...

WILLIAM

Whoopsidaisies.

They look at each other.

WILLIAM

It's a disease I've got -- it's a clinical thing, I'm taking pills and having injections -- it won't last long.

ANNA

Step aside.

She starts to climb.

WILLIAM

Actually be careful Anna -- it's harder than it looks...

But she's already almost over.

WILLIAM

Oh no it's not -- it's easy.

A few seconds later. Anna jumps down into the garden.

ANNA

Come on, Flops.

William clambers over with terrible difficulty, dusts himself off, and heads towards where she stands.

WILLIAM

Now seriously -- what in the world in this garden could make that ordeal worthwhile?

She leans forward -- and, for the first time since the first time -- she kisses him. This time a proper kiss. A tiny pause.

WILLIAM  
Nice garden.

EXT. MAGIC GARDEN - NIGHT

They walk around the garden. It's a moonlit dream. We see the lights of the houses that surround the garden. They come across a single, simple wooden bench.

ANNA  
"For June, who loved this garden --  
from Joseph who always sat beside  
her."

We cut in and see an inscription carved into the wood. She doesn't read the dates, carved below -- "June Wetherby, 1917 - 1992." She is slightly chocked by it.

ANNA  
Some people do spend their whole  
lives together.

He nods. They are standing on either side of the bench, looking at each other. The camera glides away from them, up into the night sky, leaving them alone in the garden. Music plays.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

William in a towel rushes downstairs, having just had a shower. He shoots past Spike.

WILLIAM  
Bollocks, bollocks, bollocks. Have  
you seen my glasses?

SPIKE  
No, 'fraid not.

WILLIAM  
Bollocks.  
(still searching --  
with no help from  
Spike)  
This happens every time I go to the  
cinema. Average day, my glasses are  
everywhere -- everywhere I look,  
glasses. But the moment I need them  
they disappear. It's one of life's  
real cruelties.

SPIKE  
That's compared to, like,  
earthquakes in the Far East or  
testicular cancer?

WILLIAM  
Oh shit, is that the time? I have  
to go.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM/CORRIDOR - EVENING

He sprints downstairs, now fully dressed.

WILLIAM  
(not meaning it)  
Thanks for your help on the glasses  
thing.

SPIKE  
(sincerely)  
You're welcome. Did you find them?

WILLIAM  
Sort of.

INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

Mid-film. We move across the audience. And there is in  
the middle of it, we see Anna, watching the screen, and  
next to her, William, watching the film keenly, through his  
scuba-diving goggles.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A very smart Japanese restaurant. We see Anna and William  
sitting, near the end of their meal.

ANNA  
So who left who?

WILLIAM  
She left me.

ANNA  
Why?

WILLIAM  
She saw through me.

ANNA  
Uh-oh. That's not good.

We've been aware of the conversation at a nearby table --  
now we can hear it. Two slightly rowdy men.

LAWRENCE

No - No- No! Give me Anna Scott any day.

William and Anna look at each other.

GERALD

I didn't like that last film of hers. Fast asleep from the moment the lights went down.

Again -- Anna reacts.

LAWRENCE

Don't really care what the film are like. Any film with her in it -- fine by me.

GERALD

No -- not my type at all really. I prefer that other one -- blonde -- sweet looking -- has an orgasm every time you take her out for a cup of coffee.

Anna mouths "Meg Ryan."

LAWRENCE

Meg Ryan.

William and Anna smile -- they're enjoying it.

GERALD

Drug-induced, I hear -- I believe she's actually in rehab as we speak.

LAWRENCE

Whatever, she's so clearly up for it.

Anna's twinkle fades.

LAWRENCE

You know -- some girls, they're all "stay away chum" but Anna, she's absolutely gagging for it. Do you know that in over fifty percent of languages the word for "actress" is the same as the word for "prostitute."

This is horrible.

LAWRENCE

And Anna is your definitive  
actress -- someone really filthy you  
can just flip over...

WILLIAM

Right, that's it.

He gets up and goes round the cover to the men. There are  
in fact four of them, the two meeker men, Gavin and Harry,  
hanging on the other guys' witty words.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry to disturb you guys but --

LAWRENCE

Can I help you?

WILLIAM

Well, yes, I wish I hadn't overheard  
your conversation -- but I did and  
I just think, you know...

He's not a very convincing or frightening figure.

WILLIAM

...the person you're talking about  
is a real person and I think she  
probably deserves a little bit more  
consideration, rather than having  
jerks like you drooling over her...

LAWRENCE

Oh sod off, mate. What are you, her  
dad?

Anna suddenly appears at his side and whips him away  
without being recognized.

WILLIAM

I'm sorry.

ANNA

No, that's fine. I love that you  
tried... time was I'd have done the  
same.

They walk on and then...

ANNA

In fact -- give me a second.

And she walks straight back to their table.

ANNA

Hi.

LAWRENCE

Oh my God...

ANNA

I'm sorry about my friend -- he's very sensitive.

LAWRENCE

No, look, I'm sorry...

ANNA

Please, please -- let's just leave it there. I'm sure you meant no harm, and I'm sure it was just friendly banter and I'm sure you dicks are all the size of peanuts. A perfect match for the size of your brains. Enjoy your meal. The tuna's really good.

And she walks away. Gerald turns to Lawrence.

GERALD

You prick.

EXT. RITZ ARCADE - NIGHT

They are walking.

ANNA

I shouldn't have done that. I shouldn't have done that.

WILLIAM

No, you were brilliant

ANNA

I'm rash and I'm stupid and what am I doing with you?

WILLIAM

I don't know, I'm afraid.

ANNA

I don't know either.

They have arrived at the end of the arcade.

ANNA

Here we are.

(pause)

Do you want to come up?



WILLIAM  
 (he hoes)  
 There seem to be lots of reasons why  
 I shouldn't.

ANNA  
 There are lots of reasons. Do you  
 want to come up?

His look says yes.

ANNA  
 Give me five minutes.

He watches her go -- and stands in the street. Music plays.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR/ANNA'S SUITE - NIGHT

William coming along the hotel corridor. He knocks on the  
 door.

ANNA  
 Hiya.

There's something slightly angry. He doesn't notice.

WILLIAM  
 Hi.

He kisses her gently on the cheek.

WILLIAM  
 To be able to do that is such a  
 wonderful thing.

ANNA  
 (pause)  
 You've got to go.

WILLIAM  
 Why?

ANNA  
 Because my boyfriend, who I thought  
 was in America, is in fact in the  
 next room.

WILLIAM  
 Your boyfriend?

He is duly shocked. She's trying to be calm.

ANNA  
 Yes...

JEFF (V.O.)  
Who is this?

Jeff drifts into view behind. He is a very famous film star and looks the part -- well built, very handsome. Unshaved, he has magic charm, whatever he says. Over a t-shirt, he wears a shirt, which he unbuttons as he talks.

WILLIAM  
Ahm... room service.

JEFF  
How you doing? I thought you guys all wore those penguin coats.

WILLIAM  
Well, yes -- usually -- I'd just changed to go home -- but I thought I'd just deal with this final call.

JEFF  
Oh great. Could you do me a favor and try to get us some really cold water up here.

WILLIAM  
I'll see what I can do.

JEFF  
Still, not sparkling.

WILLIAM  
Absolutely. Ice cold still water.

JEFF  
Unless it's illegal in the UK to serve liquids below room temperature: I don't want you going to jail just to satisfy my whims...

WILLIAM  
No, I'm sure it'll be fine.

JEFF  
And maybe you could just adios the dishes and empty the trash.

WILLIAM  
Right.

And he does just that. Scoops up the two used plates and heads to the bin.

ANNA  
Really -- don't do that -- I'm sure  
this is not his job.

JEFF  
I'm sorry. Is this a problem?

WILLIAM  
Ah -- no. It's fine.

JEFF  
What's your name?

WILLIAM  
Ahm... Bernie.

Jeff slips him a fiver.

JEFF  
Thank you, Bernie.  
(to Anna)  
Hey -- nice surprise, or nasty  
surprise?

ANNA  
Nice surprise.

He kisses her.

JEFF  
Liar.  
(to William)  
She hates surprises. What are you  
ordering?

ANNA  
I haven't decided.

JEFF  
Well, don't over-do it. I don't  
want people saying. "There goes  
that famous actor with the big, fat  
girlfriend."

He wanders off taking off his t-shirt.

WILLIAM  
I better leave.

Anna just nods.

WILLIAM  
-- this is a fairly strange reality  
to be faced with. To be honest, I  
don't realize...

ANNA

I'm sorry... I don't know what to say.

WILLIAM

I think good bye is traditional.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - NIGHT

William walks away.

EXT. RITZ - NIGHT

William walks down the arcade outside the hotel. He is stunned.

EXT. LONDON BUS - NIGHT

William sits alone on a bus. We see him through the side window. As it drives away, we see that the whole back of the bus is taken up with a huge picture of Anna.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He gets into his room and sits on the bed.

INT. SPACESHIP - NIGHT

Space Anna, in the very hi-tech environment and a serious mood, fastens the last clasps on her uniform. She takes a helmet type thing, and places it on her head.

INT. CONNECT CINEMA - NIGHT

Cut round to the Coronet cinema where this film is showing. It's not full. The camera moves and finds, sitting on his own...William. Just watching. We see a momentous flash of light from the screen explode, reflected in his eye.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

William is looking out the window, lost in thought. Spike enters.

SPIKE

Come on -- open up -- this is me --  
Spikey -- I'm in contact with some  
quite important spiritual vibrators.  
What's wrong?

Spike settles on the arm of a chair. William decides to open up a bit...

WILLIAM

Well, okay. There's this girl...

SPIKE

Aha! I'd been getting a female  
vibe. Good. Speak on, dear friend.

WILLIAM

She's someone I just can't -- and  
it's as if I've taken love-heroin --  
and now I can't even have it again.  
I've opened Pandora's box. And  
there's trouble inside.

Spike nods thoughtfully.

SPIKE

Yeh. Yeh...tricky...tricky...I knew  
a girl at school called Pandora ...  
never got to see her box though.

He roars with laughter. William smiles.

WILLIAM

Thanks. Yes -- very helpful.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Only two tables are being used. William and his friends  
are on their first course. Bernie reads an "Evening  
Standard," with a picture of Anna and left at Heathrow  
Airport.

MAX

You didn't know she had a boyfriend?

WILLIAM

No -- did you?

Their looks make it obvious that everyone did.

WILLIAM

Bloody hell, I can't believe it --my  
whole life ruined because I don't  
read "Hello" magazine.

MAX

Let's face facts. This was always  
a no-go situation. Anna's a goddess  
and you know what happens to morals  
who get involved with the gods.

WILLIAM

Bugged?

MAX

Every time. But don't despair -- I think I have the solution to your problems.

WILLIAM

Really?

They all look to him for wise words.

MAX

Her name is Tessa and she works in the contracts department. The hair, I admit, is unfashionable frizzy -- but she's as bright as a button and kisses like a nymphomaniac on death row. Apparently.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The kitchen. William is looking uneasy. A doorbell rings.

MAX

Now -- try.

William nods. Max heads off to the door. We stay with William -- and just hear the door open and a voice come down the corridor.

TESSA (V.O.)

I got completely lost -- it's real difficult, isn't it? Everything's got the word 'Kensington' in it -- Kensington Park Road, Kensington Gardens, Kensington bloody Park Gardens...

They reach the kitchen. Tessa is a lush girl with a huge hair.

MAX

Tessa -- this is Bella my wife.

TESSA

Oh hello, you're in a wheelchair.

BELLA

That's right.

MAX

And this is William.

TESSA

Hello William. Max has told me everything about you.

WILLIAM  
 (frightened)  
 Has he?

TESSA  
 Oh yes please. Come on, Willie,  
 let's get sloshed.

She turns to take the wine and William has a split second to send a message of panic to Bella. She agrees -- it's bad.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Max walks over to the table. Honey, Bella, William and another girl.

MAX  
 Keziah -- some woodcock?

KEZIAH  
 No, thank you -- I'm a fruitarian.

MAX  
 I don't realize that.

It is left to William, who has been set up here, to fill the pause.

WILLIAM  
 And ahm -- what's a fruitarian exactly?

KEZIAH  
 We believe that fruits and vegetables have feels so we think cooking is cruel. We only eat things that have actually fallen from the tree or bush -- that are, in fact, dead already.

WILLIAM  
 Right. Right. Interesting stuff.  
 (pause)  
 So these carrots...

KEZIAH  
 Have been murdered, yes.

WILLIAM  
 Murdered? Poor carrots. How beastly.

## INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Time for coffee and chocolates. Beside William sits the final, perfect girl. She is Rosie, quite young, smartly dressed, open-hearted. It is just Max and William and Bella and her.

ROSIE  
Delicious coffee.

MAX  
Thank you. I'm sorry about the lamb.

ROSIE  
No -- I thought it was really, you know, interesting.

WILLIAM  
Interesting means inedible.

ROSIE  
Really inedible -- yes that's right.

They all laugh. It's going very well.

## INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

William is with Rosie by the door -- just about to say goodbye.

ROSIE  
Maybe we'll meet again some time.

WILLIAM  
Yes. That would be...great.

She kisses him gently on the cheek. He opens the door -- she walks out. He shuts the door quietly and heads back into the living room...

## INT. MAX AND BELLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max and Bella wait excitedly.

MAX  
Well?

WILLIAM  
She's perfect, perfect.

BELLA  
And?

William makes a gentle, exasperated gesture, then...



WILLIAM

I think you have forgotten...  
 (he looks at them)  
 ...what an unusual situation you  
 have here -- to find someone you  
 actually love, who'll love you --  
 the chances are... always minuscule.  
 Look at me -- not counting the  
 American -- I've only loved two  
 girls in my whole life, both total  
 disasters.

MAX

That's not fair.

WILLIAM

No really, one of them marries me  
 and then leaves me quicker than you  
 can say Indiana Jones -- and the  
 other, who seriously ought to have  
 known better, casually marries my  
 best friend.

BELLA

(pause)

Still loves you though.

WILLIAM

In a depressingly asexual way.

BELLA

(pause)

I never fancied you much actually...

They all roar with laughter.

BELLA

I mean I loved you -- you were  
 terribly funny. But all that  
 kissing my ears...

WILLIAM

Oh no -- this is just getting worse.  
 I am going to find myself, 30 years  
 from now, still on this couch.

BELLA

Do you want to stay?

WILLIAM

Why not -- all that awaits me at  
 home is a masturbating Welshman.

Music starts to play to take us through these silent scenes.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max lifts Bella off her couch and carries her upstairs.

Mix through -- William sits on the couch downstairs -- eyes wide open -- thinking.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Morning. Max, all in his suit for the city... Bella kisses him goodbye. William sees this from the kitchen. She is also dressed for work -- and moves back into the kitchen to pack her briefcase with law books from the kitchen table.

EXT. MAX AND BELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

William emerges from the house, a little ruffled from a night away from home, a heads off.

EXT. NEWSAGENT - DAY

William walks past the newsagent, heading for home. We see, though he doesn't, a rack of tabloid papers, all of which seem to have very grainy, grabbed pictures of Annie on their front page. Headlines -- 'Annie Stunned'-- 'It's Definitely Her!' and 'Scott of Pantartica.'

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

William is shaving. The bell goes. He heads out to answer it.

EXT./INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE -DAY

William arrives at the door and opens it. There stands a dark-glassed Anna.

ANNA

Hi. Can I come in?

WILLIAM

Come in.

She moves inside. Her hair is a mess -- her eyes are tired. Nothing idealized.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The two of them.

ANNA

They were taken years ago -- I know it was...

(more)

ANNA (cont'd)

...well, I was poor and it happens a lot -- that's not an excuse -- but to make things worse, it now appears someone was filming me as well. So what was a stupid photo-shoot now looks like a porno film. And well... the pictures have been solid and they're everywhere.

William shakes his head.

ANNA

I don't know where to go. The hotel is surrounded.

WILLIAM

This is the place.

ANNA

Thank you. I'm just in London for two days -- but, with your papers, it's the worse place to be.

She's very shaken.

ANNA

These are such horrible pictures. They're so grainy... they make me look like...

WILLIAM

Don't think about it. We'll sort it out. Now what would you like -- tea ... bath...?

ANNA

A bath would be great.

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike enters through the front door. William doesn't hear him. Spike is reading newspapers with the Anna pictures in it.

SPIKE

Christ alive... brilliant...  
fantastic .... magnificent...

He heads up the stairs. Opens the bathroom door, walks in.

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

Spike heads for the toilet -- undoes his zip...

ANNA  
You must be Spike.

She's in the bath. Spike turns in shock -- and sidles out of the bathroom.

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike calms himself down. He then opens the bathroom door again -- and looks in.

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

Anna is still lying low in the bath.

ANNA  
Hi.

SPIKE  
Just checking.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike comes back out into the corridor. Looks to heaven.

SPIKE  
Thank you, God.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

William and Anna at the kitchen table, eating toast.

ANNA  
I'm really sorry about last time.  
He just flew in -- I had no idea --  
in fact, I had no idea if he'd ever  
fly in again.

WILLIAM  
No, that's fine. It's not often one  
has the opportunity to adios the  
plates of a major Hollywood star.  
It was a thrill for me.  
(she smiles. Pause)  
How is he?

ANNA  
I don't know. It got to the point  
where I couldn't remember any of the  
reasons I loved him. And you... and  
love?

WILLIAM  
Well, there's a question -- without  
an interesting answer.

ANNA  
I have thought about you.

WILLIAM  
Oh no no -- no.

He doesn't think she has to talk about this.

ANNA  
Just anytime I've tried to keep things normal with anyone normal -- it's been a disaster.

WILLIAM  
I appreciate that absolutely.  
(changing subject tactfully)  
Is that the film you're doing?

ANNA  
Yes -- start in L.A. on Tuesday.

WILLIAM  
Would you like me to take you through your lines?

ANNA  
Would you? It's all talk, talk, talk.

WILLIAM  
Hand it over. Basic plot?

ANNA  
I'm a difficult but brilliant junior officer who in about twenty minutes will save the world from nuclear disaster.

WILLIAM  
Well done you.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

A little later. They're in the thick of the script.

WILLIAM  
'Message from command. Would you like them to send in the HKs?'

ANNA

'No, turn over 4 TRS's and tell them we need radar feedback before the KFT's return at 19 hundred -- then inform the Pentagon that we'll be needing black star cover from ten hundred through 12.15' -- and don't you dare say one word about how many mistakes I made in that speech or I'll pelt you with olives.

WILLIAM

'Very well, captain -- I'll pass that on straightaway.'

ANNA

'Thank you.' How many mistake did I make?

WILLIAM

Eleven.

ANNA

Damn. 'And Wainwright...'

WILLIAM

Cartwright.

ANNA

'Cartwright, Wainwright, whatever your name is, I promised little Jimmy I'd be home for his birthday -- could you get a message through that I may be a little late.'

WILLIAM

'Certainly. And little Johnny?'

ANNA

My son's name is Johnny?

WILLIAM

Yup.

ANNA

Well, get a message through to him too.

WILLIAM

Brilliant.

(the scene's over)  
Word perfect I'd say.

ANNA

What do you think?

WILLIAM

Gripping. It's not Jane Austen,  
it's Not Henry James, but it's  
gripping.

ANNA

You think I should do Henry James  
instead?

WILLIAM

I'm sure you'd be great in Henry  
James. But, you know -- this  
writer's pretty damn good too.

ANNA

Yes -- I mean -- you never get  
anyone in 'Wings of a Dove' having  
the nerve to say 'inform the  
Pentagon that we need black star  
over.'

WILLIAM

And I think the book is the poorer  
for it.

Annie smiles her biggest smile of the day. He is helping.

INT. WILLIAM'S DINING ROOM

Anna and William. Sat down at table. There's a picture  
hanging on the wall behind.

ANNA

I can't believe you have that  
picture on your wall.

It is a picture of a Chagall painting of a floating wedding  
couple, with a goat as company.

WILLIAM

You like Chagall?

ANNA

I do. It feels like how being in  
love should be. Floating through a  
dark blue sky.

WILLIAM

With a goat playing a violin.

ANNA

Yes -- happiness wouldn't be  
happiness without a violin-playing  
goat.

Spike enters with three pizzas.

SPIKE  
Voila. Carnival Calypso, for the  
Queen of Notting Hill -- pepperoni,  
pineapple and a little more  
pepperoni.

ANNA  
Fantastic.

WILLIAM  
I don't mention that Anna's a  
vegetarian, did I?

SPIKE  
(pause)  
I have some parsnip stew from last  
week. If I just peel the skin off,  
it'll be perfect.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later in the evening. William and Anna on their own.  
They're sipping coffee. A few seconds of just co-existing.  
Anna looks up.

ANNA  
You've got big feet.

WILLIAM  
Yes. Always have had.

ANNA  
You know what they say about men  
with big feet?

WILLIAM  
No. What's that?

ANNA  
Big feet -- large shoes.

He laughs.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A few hours later -- eating ice-cream out of the tub.

ANNA  
The thing that's so irritating is  
that now I'm so totally fierce when  
it comes to nudity clauses.



WILLIAM

You actually have clauses in your contact about nudity.

ANNA

Definitely. 'You may show the dent at the top of the artist's buttocks -- but neither cheek, in the event of a stunt person being used, the artist must have full consultation.'

WILLIAM

You have a stunt bottom?

ANNA

I could have a stunt bottom, yes.

WILLIAM

Would you be tempted to go for a slightly better bottom than your own?

ANNA

Definitely. Ths is important stuff.

WILLIAM

It's one hell of a job. What do you put on your passport? Profession -- Mel Gibson's bottom.

ANNA

Actually, Mel does his own ass work. Why wouldn't he?

WILLIAM

The ice cream or Mel Gibson's bottom?

ANNA

Both.

INT. WILLIAM'S UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

They are walking up the stairs -- and stop at the top.

ANNA

Today has been a good day. Which under the circumstances is... unexpected.

WILLIAM

Well, thank you.

(awkward pause)

Anytime -- time for bed. Or... sofa-bed.

ANNA

Right.

Pause. She leans forward, kisses him gently, then steps into the bedroom and closes the door.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

William downstairs -- on a sofa -- under a duvet. Eyes open. Thinking. Pause and pause.

He waits and waits -- the ultimate 'yearn.' But nothing happens. William gets off the sofa decisively. Sits on the side of it. Then gets back in again.

Pause, pause, then... in the darkness, a stair creaks. There's someone there.

WILLIAM

(to himself)

Oh my God...

(then...)

Hello.

SPIKE

Hello. I wonder if I could have a little word.

He drifts round the corner, half-naked.

WILLIAM

Spike.

SPIKE

I don't want to interfere, or anything ... but she's split up from her boy-friend, that's right isn't it?

WILLIAM

Maybe.

SPIKE

And she's in your house.

WILLIAM

Yes.

SPIKE

And you get on very well.

WILLIAM

Yes.

SPIKE

Well, isn't this perhaps a good opportunity to... slip her one?

WILLIAM

Spike. For God's sake -- she's in trouble -- get a grip.

SPIKE

Right. Right. You think it's the wrong moment. Fair enough.

(pause)

Do you mind if I have a go?

WILLIAM

Spike!

SPIKE

No -- you're right.

WILLIAM

I'll talk you in the morning.

SPIKE

Okay -- okay. Might be too late, but okay.

Back to William thinking again. Dreamy atmosphere. And then... more footsteps on the stairs.

WILLIAM

Oh please sod off.

ANNA

Okay.

WILLIAM

No! No. Wait. I... thought you were someone else. I thought you were Spike. I'm delighted you're not.

The darkness of the living room. We see Anna in the shadow.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A few moments later. William and Anna stand in the middle of the room. He kisses her neck. Then her shoulder. What a miracle it is just to be able to touch this girl's skin. Then he looks at her face. That face. He is suddenly struck by who it is.

WILLIAM

Wow.

ANNA

What?

WILLIAM

Nothing.

And kisses her.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The middle of the night. They are both sleep -- a yard apart. In sleep, her arm reaches out, touches his shoulder and then she wriggles across and re-settles herself, tenderly, right next to him. He is not asleep and knows how extraordinary this all is.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

The morning.

WILLIAM

It still strikes me as, well, surreal, that I'm allowed to see you naked.

ANNA

You and every person in this country.

WILLIAM

Oh God yes -- I'm sorry.

ANNA

What is it about men and nudity? Particularly breasts -- how can you be so interested in them?

WILLIAM

Well...

ANNA

No seriously. I mean, they're just breasts. Every second person in the world has got them...

WILLIAM

More than that actually, when you think about it. You know, Meatloaf has a very nice pair...

ANNA

But... they're odd-looking. They're for milk. Your mum's got them. You must have seen a thousand of them -- what's the fuss about?

WILLIAM

(pause)

Actually, I can't think really --  
let me just have a quick look...

He looks under the sheet at her breasts.

WILLIAM

No, beats me.

She laughs...

ANNA

Rita Hayworth used to say -- 'they  
go to bed with Gilda -- they wake up  
with me.' Do you feel that?

WILLIAM

Who was Gilda?

ANNA

Her most famous part -- men went to  
bed with the dream -- and they  
didn't like it when they woke up  
with the reality --do you feel that  
way with me?

WILLIAM

(pause)

You're lovelier this morning than  
you have ever been.

ANNA

(very touched)

Oh.

She looks at him carefully. Then leaps out of bed.

ANNA

I'll be back.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

William on the bed. The door opens. It is Anna with a  
tray of toast and tea.

ANNA

Breakfast in bed. Or lunch, or  
brunch.

She bends across. She smiles and sits on the bed.

ANNA

Can I stay a bit longer?

WILLIAM  
Stay forever.

ANNA  
Damn, I forgot the jam.

The doorbell goes.

ANNA  
You get the door, I'll get the jam.

INT./EXT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

William heads down the corridor and opens the door. Outside are hundreds of paparazzi -- an explosion of cameras and questions, of noise and light. The press seem to fill the entire street.

WILLIAM  
Jesus Christ.

He comes back inside, snapping the door behind him. Anna is in the kitchen.

ANNA  
What?

WILLIAM  
Don't ask.

She heads back the corridor, with no suspicion.

ANNA  
You're up to something...

She thinks he's fooling around. She opens the door, the same explosion. In a split second she's inside.

ANNA  
Oh my God. And they got a photo of you dressed like that?

WILLIAM  
Undressed like this, yes.

ANNA  
Jesus.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

Anna is on the phone. Spike is blithely heading downstairs to the kitchen in just his underpants.

SPIKE  
Morning, daring ones.

He does a thumb up to William -- very excited about what he knows was a 'result.'

ANNA

(on the phone)

It's Anna. The press are here. No, there are hundreds of them. My brilliant plan was not so brilliant at all. Yeh, I know, I know. Just get me out then.

(she hangs up)

Damnit.

She heads upstairs.

WILLIAM

I wouldn't go outside.

SPIKE

Why not?

WILLIAM

Just take my work for it.

The moment William goes upstairs, Spike heads for the front door.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

From outside -- we see this scrawny bloke in the frame of the doorway, in his gay underpants. A thousand photos. Spike poses athletically.

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike closes the door and wanders along to a mirror in the hall-way, muttering.

SPIKE

How did I look?

Inspects himself.

SPIKE

Not bad. No bad at all. Well-chosen briefs, I'd say. Chick love grey. Mmmmm. Nice firm buttocks.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

William enters. He's unhappy for her. She's almost dressed.

WILLIAM

How are you doing?

ANNA

How do you think I'm doing?

WILLIAM

I don't know what happened.

ANNA

I do. Your furry friend thought he'd make a buck or two telling the papers where I was.

She's pacing.

WILLIAM

That's not true.

ANNA

Really? The entire British press just woke up this morning and thought 'Hey --I know where Anna Scott is. She's in that house with the blue door in Notting Hill.' And then go out in your goddamn underwear.

SPIKE

(dropping in)

I went out in my goddamn underwear too.

WILLIAM

Get out, Spike.  
(he does)  
I'm so sorry.

ANNA

This is such a mess. I come to you to protect myself against more crappy gossip and now I'm landed in it all over again. For God's sake, I've got a boyfriend.

WILLIAM

You do?

It's a difficult moment -- defining where they stand.

ANNA

As far as they're concerned I do. And now tomorrow there'll be pictures of you in every newspapers from here to Timbuktu.



WILLIAM

I know, I know -- but... just --  
let's stay calm...

ANNA

You can stay calm -- it's the  
perfect situation for you -- minimum  
input, maximum publicity. Everyone,  
you ever bump into will know. 'Well  
done you --you slept with that  
actress -- we've seen the pictures.'

WILLIAM

That's spectacularly unfair.

ANNA

Who knows, it may even help  
business. Buy a boring book about  
Egypt from the guy who screwed Anna  
Scott.

She heads out.

INT. STAIRS/LIVING ROOM - DAY

WILLIAM

Now stop. Stop. I beg you -- calm  
down. Have a cup of tea.

ANNA

I don't want a goddamn cup of tea.  
I want to go home.

The doorbell goes.

WILLIAM

Spike, check who that is... and for  
God's sake put some clothes on.

Spike leans merrily out of the window.

SPIKE

Looks like a chauffeur to me.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN/CORRIDOR - DAY

They move from the kitchen into the corridor.

ANNA

And remember -- Spike owes you an  
expensive dinner. Or holiday --  
depending if he's got the brains to  
get the going rate on betrayal.

WILLIAM

That's not true. And wait a minute... this is crazy behavior. Can't we just laugh about this? Seriously -- in the huge sweep of things, this stuff doesn't matter.

SPIKE

What he's going to say next is -- there are people starving in the Sudan.

WILLIAM

Well, there are. And we don't need to go anywhere near that far. My best friend slipped -- she slipped down-stairs, cracked her back and she's in a wheelchair for the rest of her life. All I'm asking for is a normal amount of perspective.

ANNA

You're right: of course, you're right. It's just that I've dealt with this garbage for ten years now -- you've had it for ten minutes. Our perspective are different.

WILLIAM

I mean -- today's newspapers will be lining tomorrow's waste paper bins.

ANNA

Excuse me?

WILLIAM

Well, you know -- it's just one day. Today's papers will all have been thrown away tomorrow.

ANNA

You really don't get it. This story gets filed. Every time anyone writes anything about me -- they'll dig up these photos. Newspapers last forever. I'll regret this forever.

He takes this in. That's the end.

WILLIAM

Right. Fine! I will do the opposite, if it's all right by you -- and always be glad you came. But you're right -- you probably better go.

She looks at him. The doorbell goes again. She opens the door. Massive noise and photos. Outside are her people, including Karen, a chauffeur, two bodyguards. And then the door is shut and they're all gone. Silence.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN/CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike and William sitting there. Pause.

WILLIAM

Was it you?

SPIKE

I suppose I might have told one or two people down the pub.

WILLIAM

Right.

He puts his head in his hands. It's over now.

EXT. LONDON - DAY

As full, sad music plays -- William begins to walk through Notting Hill.

This walk takes six months... as he walks, the seasons actually and magically change, from summer, through autumn and winter, back into spring...

First it is summer -- summer fruits and flowers -- a six-month pregnant woman -- Honey with another leather-jacket boyfriend.

As he walks on the rain starts to fall -- he turns up his coat collar -- umbrellas appear. Followed by winter coats -- chestnuts roasting -- Christmas trees on side and the first hint of snow.

Then he comes to Blenheim Crescent, which is startling snowscape, for the hundred yard, right across Ladbroke Grove.

By the time he reaches the purple cafe, the snow is melting and in a few yards, it is spring again. He passes Honey again -- arguing with her boyfriend, walking away tearful. Then turns past 'the pregnant woman' -- now holding her three-month baby. The camera holds on her.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

A grey day in the bookshop. Martin and William. As ever. A feeling that things in there ever change.

Ten seconds pass. Honey rushes in. Spike, still feeling in disgrace, comes with her but lingers in the doorway.

HONEY

Have we got something for you.  
Something which will make you love  
me so much you'll want to hug me  
every single day for the rest of my  
life.

WILLIAM

Blimey. What's that?

HONEY

The phone number of Anna Scott's  
agent in London and her agent in New  
York. You can ring her. You think  
about her all the time -- now you  
can ring her!

WILLIAM

Well, thanks, that's great.

HONEY

It is great, isn't it. See you  
tonight. Hey, Marty-- sexy cardy.

And she rushes out. William looks at the piece of paper, folds it and then places it gently in the garbage bin.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Bella bangs a spoon on a wine bottle. All the friends are gathered in the restaurant.

BELLA

I have a little speech to make -- I  
won't stand up because I can't... be  
bothered. Exactly a year ago today,  
this man here started the finest  
restaurant in London.

TONY

Thank you very much.

BELLA

Unfortunately -- no one ever came to  
eat here.

TONY  
A tiny hiccough.

BELLA  
And so much face the fact that from  
next week, we have to find somewhere  
near to eat.

Tony's brave face breaks. The dream is over.

BELLA  
I just want to say to Tony -- don't  
take it personally. The more I  
think about things, the more I see  
no rhyme or reason in life -- no one  
knows why some things work out, and  
some things don't -- why some of us  
get lucky -- and some of us...

BERNIE  
... get fired.

BELLA  
No!

BERNIE  
Yes, they're shifting the whole  
outfit much more towards the trading  
side --and of course...  
(he owns up)  
I was total crap.

They're all rather stunned.

TONY  
So we go down together! A toast to  
Bernie -- the worst stockbroker in  
the whole world!

They toast him.

HONEY  
Since it's an evening of  
announcements ... I've also got one,  
Ahm... I've got engaged.

Total bewilderment from the others.

HONEY  
I've found myself a nice, slightly  
odd looking bloke who I know is  
going to make me happy for the rest  
of my life.

Special cut to Bernie -- the shot shows he had special feelings for Honey.

WILLIAM

Wait a minute -- I'm your brother  
and I don't know anything about this.

MAX

Is it someone we know?

HONEY

Yes. I will keep you informed.

As she sits down, Honey leans toward Spike and whispers.

HONEY

By the way -- it's you.

SPIKE

Me?

HONEY

Yes. What do you think?

SPIKE

Well, yes. Groovy.

MAX

Any more announcements?

WILLIAM

Yes -- I feel I must apologize to  
everyone for my behavior for the  
last six months. I have, as you  
know, been slightly down in the  
mouth.

MAX

There's an understatement. There  
are dead people on better form.

WILLIAM

But I wish to make it clear I've  
turned a corner and henceforward  
intend to be impressively happy.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Two hours later. They've had a very good time. There's  
been a chocolate cake. Lots of alcohol. Tony is playing  
'Blue Moon' on the piano, and Bernie joins him, singing.

At one table Bella and Honey sit -- beer and wine on the  
table.

BELLA  
I'm really horribly drunk.

Elsewhere, Max and William are relaxed together.

MAX  
So -- you've laid the ghost.

WILLIAM  
I believe I have.

MAX  
Don't give a damn about the famous girl.

WILLIAM  
No, don't think I do.

MAX  
Which means you won't be distracted by the fact that she's back in London, grasping her Oscar, and to be found filming most days on Hampstead Heath.

He puts down a copy of the 'Evening Standard' with a picture of Anna on its cover.

WILLIAM  
(immediate gloom)  
Oh God no.

MAX  
So not over her, in fact.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Cut to the wide sweep of Hampstead Heath. William entirely alone. He marches up a hill... goes over the crest of it -- and sees a huge film crew and hundreds of extras in front of the radiant white of Kenwood House, with its lawn and its lake.

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

Now closer to the house, William approaches a barrier -- where he is himself approached.

SECURITY  
Can I help you?

WILLIAM  
Yes -- I was looking for Anna Scott...

SECURITY

Does she know you're coming?

WILLIAM

No, no. She doesn't.

SECURITY

I'm afraid I can't really let you through then, sir.

WILLIAM

Oh right. I mean, I am a friend -- I'm not a lunatic but -- no, you basically...

SECURITY

... can't let you through.

At that moment -- thirty yards away, William sees trailer door open. Out of it comes Anna -- looking extraordinary -- in a velvet dress; full, beautiful make-up; rich, extravagant hair. She has a necessary cluster of people about her. Hair, make-up, costume and the third assistant who has collected her.

She walks a few yards, and then casually turns her head. And sees him. Her face registers not jut surprise, certainly not a simple smile. His being there is a complicated thing. Cut back to him. He does a small wave. She pauses as the whole paraphernalia of the upcoming scene passes between them. The movie divides them. But then she begins to walk through it, and followed by her cluster, she makes her way towards him. When she reaches him, the security guard stands back a pace, and her people hold back. She doesn't really know what to say...

ANNA

This is certainly... ah...

WILLIAM

I only found out you were here yesterday.

ANNA

I was going to ring... but... I didn't think you'd want to...

The third assistant is under pressure.

THIRD

Anna.

She looks around. The poor third is nervous -- and the first is approaching.



ANNA  
 (to William)  
 It's not going very well -- and it's  
 our last day.

WILLIAM  
 Absolutely -- you're clearly very  
 busy.

ANNA  
 But... wait... there are things to  
 say.

WILLIAM  
 Okay.

ANNA  
 Drink tea -- there's lots of tea.

She is swept away, four people touching her hair and  
 costume.

KAREN  
 Come and have a look...

EXT. KENWOOD PARK - DAY

As they make towards the set...

KAREN  
 Are you a fan of Henry James?

WILLIAM  
 This is Henry James film?

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

A complicated shot is about to happen -- with waves of  
 extras --and a huge moving crane. They end up next to the  
 sound desk.

KAREN  
 This is Harry -- he'll give you a  
 pair of headphones so you can hear  
 the dialogue.

Harry the sound man is a pleasant, fifty-year-old balding  
 fellow. He hands him the headphones.

HARRY  
 Here we go. The volume control is  
 on the side.

WILLIAM  
 That's great.

William, the headphones on, surveys the scene -- the cluster is full 100 yards from the action, to allow a gracious sweeping wide-shot. He watches Anna. She is with her co-star in the Henry James film -- let's call him James.

JAMES

We are living in cloudcuckooland -- we'll never get this done today.

ANNA

We have to. I've got to be in New York on Thursday.

JAMES

Oh, stop showing off.

He studies an actress a few yards to the left.

JAMES

God, that's an enormous arse.

ANNA

I'm not listening.

JAMES

No, but seriously -- it's not fair -- so many tragic young teenagers with anorexia -- and that girl has an arse she could perfectly well share round with at least ten other women -- and still be beg-bottomed.

ANNA

I said I'm not listening -- and I think, looking at something that firm, you and your droopy little excuse for an 'arse' would be well-advised to keep quiet.

Back by the desk, William is listening and laughs. That's his girl. Anna prepares.

ANNA

So I ask you when you're going to tell everyone, and you say...?

JAMES

'Tomorrow will be soon enough.'

ANNA

And then I... right.

JAMES

Who was that rather difficult chap  
you were talking to on the way up?

ANNA

Oh... no one... no one. Just  
some... guy from the past. I don't  
know what he's doing here. But of  
an awkward situation.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Cut back to William -- he has heard.

WILLIAM

Of course.

He takes off the headphones and puts them gently down.

WILLIAM

Thank you.

HARRY

Anytime.

William walks away. The moment of hope is gone. He  
couldn't have had a clear reminder.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

William is emptying Anna Scott videos into a box.

SPIKE

What's going on?

WILLIAM

I'm going to throw out these old  
videos.

SPIKE

No. You can't bin these. They're  
classics. I'm not allowing this.

WILLIAM

Right -- let's talk about rent...

SPIKE

Let me help. We don't want all this  
shit cluttering up our lives.

INT. BACKROOM OF THE BOOKSHOP - DAY

The next day. William is hard at work, doing the accounts  
in a dark small room with files in it. Martin pops his  
head in.

MARTIN

I have to disturb you when you're cooking the books, but there's a delivery.

WILLIAM

Martin, can't you just deal with this yourself?

MARTIN

But it's not for the shop. It's for you.

WILLIAM

Okay. Tell me, would I have to pay a wet rag as much as I pay you?

They head out, Martin behind him, incomprehensively rubbing his hands -- he's in a very good mood.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

William enters -- and there stands Anna -- in a simple blue skirt and top.

ANNA

Hi.

WILLIAM

Hello.

ANNA

You disappeared.

WILLIAM

Yes -- I'm sorry -- I had to leave... I didn't want to disturb you.

ANNA

Well... how have you been?

WILLIAM

Fine. Everything much the same. When they change the law Spike and I will marry immediately. Whereas you... I've watched in wonder. Awards, glory...

ANNA

Oh no. It's all nonsense, believe me. I had no idea how much nonsense it all was -- but nonsense it all is...

(more)

ANNA (cont'd)  
(she's nervous)  
Well, yesterday was our last day  
filming and so I'm just off -- but  
I brought you this from home, and...

It's quite a big wrapped parcel, flat -- 3 foot by 4 foot,  
leaning against a bookshelf.

ANNA  
I thought I'd give it to you.

WILLIAM  
Thank you. Shall I...

ANNA  
No, don't open it yet -- I'll be  
embarrassed.

WILLIAM  
Okay -- well, thank you. I don't  
know what it's for. But thank you  
anyway.

ANNA  
I actually had it in my apartment in  
New York and just thought you'd...  
but, when it came to it, I didn't  
know how to call you... having  
behaved so... badly, twice. So it's  
been just sitting in the hotel. But  
then... you came, so I figured...  
the thing is... the thing is...

WILLIAM  
What's the thing?

Then the door pings. In walks the annoying customer, Mr.  
Smith.

WILLIAM  
Don't even think about it. Go away  
immediately.

Mr. Smith is taken aback and therefore completely obedient.

MR. SMITH  
Right. Sorry.

And he leaves.

WILLIAM  
You were saying...

ANNA

Yes. The thing is... I have to go away today but I wondered, if I didn't, whether you might let me see you a bit... or, a lot maybe... see if you could... like me again.

Pause as William takes this in.

WILLIAM

But yesterday... that actor asked you who I was... and you just dismissed me out of hand... I heard -- you had a microphone... I had headphones.

ANNA

You expect me to tell the truth about my life to the most indiscreet man in England?

Martin edges up.

MARTIN

Excuse me -- it's your mother on the phone.

WILLIAM

Can you tell me I'll ring her back.

MARTIN

I actually tried that tack -- but she said you said that before and it's been twenty-four hours, and her foot that was purple is now a sort of blackish color...

WILLIAM

Okay -- perfect timing as ever -- hold the fort for a second will you, Martin?

Martin is left with Anna.

MARTIN

Can I just say, I thought 'Ghost' was a wonderful film.

ANNA

Is that right?

MARTIN

Yes... I've always wondered what Patrick Swayze is like in real life.

ANNA

I can't say I know Patrick all that well.

MARTIN

Oh dear. He wasn't friendly during the filming?

ANNA

Well, no -- I'm sure he was friendly -- to Demi Moore -- who acted with him in 'Ghost.'

She's kind in here, not sarcastic.

MARTIN

Oh right. Right. Sorry. Always been a bit of an ass.

William returns a little uneasy.

MARTIN

Anyway... it's lovely to meet you. I'm a great fan of yours. And Demi's, of course.

Martin leaves them.

WILLIAM

Sorry about that.

ANNA

That's fine. There's always a pause when the jury goes out to consider its verdict.

She's awaiting an answer.

WILLIAM

Anna. Look -- I'm a fairly level-headed bloke. Not often in and out of love. But...

He can't really express what he feels.

WILLIAM

... can I just say 'no' to your kind request and leave it at that?

ANNA

... Yes, that's fine. Of course. I... you know... of course... I'll just... be getting along then... nice to see you.

WILLIAM  
The truth is...

He feels he must explain.

WILLIAM  
... with you, I'm in real danger.  
It took like a perfect situation,  
apart from that foul temper of  
yours -- but my relatively  
inexperienced heart would, I fear,  
not recover if I was once again ...  
cast aside, which I would absolutely  
expect to be. There are too many  
pictures of you everywhere, too many  
films. You'd go and I'd be... well,  
buggered, basically.

ANNA  
I see.  
(pause)  
That reality is a real 'no,' isn't  
it?

WILLIAM  
I live in Notting Hill. You live in  
Beverly Hills. Everyone in the  
world knows who you are. My mother  
has trouble remembering my name.

ANNA  
Okay. Fine. Fine. Good decision.

Pause.

ANNA  
The fame thing isn't really real,  
you know. Don't forget -- I'm also  
just a girl. Standing in front of  
a boy. Asking him to love her.

Pause. She kisses him on the cheek.

ANNA  
Bye.

Then turns and leaves. Leaving him.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

The restaurant is in the middle of being deconstructed.  
The pictures are gone off the walls -- a kettle on a long  
extension lead is on the bare table behind. They're all  
sitting there.



WILLIAM  
What do you think? Good move?

HONEY  
Good move: when all is sad and done,  
she's nothing special. I saw her  
taking her pants off and I  
definitely glimpsed some cellulite  
down there.

BELLA  
Good decision. All actresses are  
mad as snakes.

WILLIAM  
Tony -- what do you think?

TONY  
Never met her, never want to.

WILLIAM  
Brilliant. Max?

MAX  
Absolutely. Never trust a  
vegetarian.

WILLIAM  
Great. Excellent. Thanks.

Spike enters.

SPIKE  
I was called and I came. What's up?

HONEY  
William has just turned down Anna  
Scott.

SPIKE  
You draft prick!

Bella is casually looking at the painting that sits beside William. It is the original of the Chagall, the poster of which was on his wall.

BELLA  
This painting isn't the original, is  
it?

WILLIAM  
Yes, I think that one may be.

BERNIE

But she said she wanted to go out with you?

WILLIAM

Yes -- sort of...

BERNIE

That's nice.

WILLIAM

What?

BERNIE

Well, you know, anybody saying they want to go out with you is... pretty great... isn't it...

WILLIAM

It was sort of sweet actually -- I mean, I know she's an actress and all that, so she can deliver a line -- but she said that she might be as famous as can be --but also... that she was just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to love her.

They take in the line. It totally reverses their attitudes.

WILLIAM

Oh sod a dog. I've made the wrong decision, haven't I?

They look at him. Spike does a big nod.

WILLIAM

Max, how fast is your car?

EXT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Max's car arrives in the street outside. They pile into the car.

MAX

If anyone gets in our way -- we have small nuclear devices.

BERNIE

And we intend to use them!

MAX

Where's Bella?

HONEY  
She's not coming.

MAX  
Sod that. Bernie -- in the back!

He shoots out of his door, rushes round and grabs Bella out of the chair.

MAX  
Come on, babe.

EXT./INT. CAR. STANLEY CRESCENT/NOTTING HILL GATE - DAY

Max's car is shooting up Stanley Crescent. We are inside and outside the car.

BELLA  
Where are you going?

MAX  
Down Kensington Church Street, then  
Knightsbridge, then Hyde Park Center.

BELLA  
Crazy. Go along Bayswater...

HONEY  
That's right -- then Park Lane.

BERNIE  
Or you could go right down to  
Cromwell Road, and left.

WILLIAM  
No!

Suddenly the car slams to a halt.

MAX  
Stop right there! I will decide the  
route. All right?

ALL  
All right.

MAX  
James Bond never has to put up with  
this sort of shit.

EXT. PICCADILLY - DAY

The car turns illegally right across Piccadilly the wrong way down a one-way street and ends up outside the Ritz. William sprints into the hotel. Bernie follows.

BERNIE  
Bloody hell, this is fun.

IT. RITZ LOBBY - DAY

WILLIAM  
Is Miss Scott staying here?

It is the same man.

RITZ MAN  
No, sir.

WILLIAM  
How about Miss Flintstone?

RITZ MAN  
No, sir.

WILLIAM  
Or Bambi... or, I don't know, Beavis  
or Butthead?

Man shakes his head.

RITZ MAN  
No, sir.

WILLIAM  
Right. Right. Fair enough. Thanks.

He turns despondent and takes two steps when the Ritz Man stops him in his tracks.

RITZ MAN  
There was a Miss Pocahontas in room  
126 -- but she checked out an hour  
ago. I believe she's holding a  
press conference at The Savoy before  
flying to America.

BERNIE  
We have lift off!!

A Japanese guest assumes this is the way to behave and the Ritz Man gets kissed a third time.

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

The car speeds through London. It gets totally stuck at a junction where no one will let them in.

SPIKE  
Bugger this for a bunch of bananas.

He gets out of the car and boldly stops the traffic coming in the opposite direction. Our car shoots past him.

SPIKE

Go!

They leave him behind. Honey leans out the window and shouts...

HONEY

You're my hero.

Spike waves wildly -- he loses concentration and is very nearly hit by a car.

EXT. THE SAVOY - DAY

They pull to a stop. William leaps out.

MAX

Go!

INT. THE SAVOY - DAY

William rushes up to the main desk.

WILLIAM

Excuse me, where's the press conference?

MAN AT SAVOY

Are you an accredited member of the press?

WILLIAM

Yes...

He flashes a card.

MAN AT SAVOY

That's a Blockbuster video membership card, sir.

WILLIAM

That's right... I work for their in-house magazine.

(mimes quotation marks)

'Movies are our business.'

MAN AT SAVOY

I'm sorry, sir...

Honey shows into shot, pushing Bella's chair.

BELLA  
He's with me.

MAN AT SAVOY  
And you are?

BELLA  
Writing an article about how London hotels treat people in wheelchairs.

MAN AT SAVOY  
Of course, madam. It's in the Lancaster Room. I'm afraid you're very late.

HONEY  
(to William)  
Run!

INT. SAVOR ROOM - DAY

William runs, searching. At last finds the room, and enters.

INT. LANCASTER ROOM - DAY

Huge room -- full of press. Row after row of journalists, cameras at the front, TV cameras at the back. Anna clearly gives press conferences very rarely, because this one is positively presidential. She sits at a table at the end of the room, beside Karen: on her other side os Jeremy, the PR boss, firmly marshalling the questions.

JEREMY  
Yes... You -- Dominic.

QUESTIONER 1  
How much longer are you staying in the UK then?

ANNA  
No time at all. I fly out tonight.

She's in a slightly melancholic and therefore honest mood.

JEREMY  
Which is why we have to round it up now. Final questions.

He points at a journalist he knows.

QUESTIONER 2

Is your decision to take a year off anything to do with the rumours about Jeff and his present leading lady?

ANNA

Absolutely not.

QUESTIONER 2

Do you believe the rumours?

ANNA

It's really not my business any more. Though I will say, from my experience, that rumours about Jeff... do tend to be true.

They love that answer, and all scribble in their note books. Next question comes from someone straight right next to William.

QUESTIONER 3

Last time you were here, there were some fairly graphic photographs of you and a young English guy -- so what happened there?

ANNA

He was just a friend -- I think we're still friends.

JEREMY

Yes, the gentleman in the pink shirt.

He is pointing straight at William, who has his hand up.

WILLIAM

Yes -- Miss Scott -- are there any circumstances in which you two might be more than just friends?

Anna sees who it is asking.

ANNA

I hoped there might be -- but no, I'm assured there aren't.

WILLIAM

And what would you say...

JEREMY

No, it's just one question per person.

ANNA

No, let him... ask away. You were saying?

WILLIAM

Yes, I just wondered whether if it turned out that this... person...

OTHER JOURNALIST

(to William)

His name is Thacker.

WILLIAM

Thanks. I just wondered if Mr. Thacker realized he'd been a draft prick and got down on his knees and begged you to reconsider, whether you would... reconsider.

We cut to Max, Bella, Bernie and Honey, all watching. Then back to Anna.

ANNA

Yes, I'm pretty sure I would.

WILLIAM

That's very good news. The readers of 'Horse and Hound' will be absolutely delighted.

Anna whispers something to Jeremy.

JEREMY

Dominic -- if you'd like to ask your question again?

QUESTIONER 1

Yes -- Anna -- how long are you intending to stay here in Britain?

Pause. Anna looks up at William. He nods.

ANNA

Indefinitely.

They both smile -- suddenly the press gets what's going on -- music -- noise -- they all turn and flash, flash, flash photos of William. Max and Bella kiss. Bernie kisses a total stranger. Spike finally makes it -- he's bright red from running.

SPIKE

What happened?



HONEY

It was good.

Honey hugs him. It's a new experience for Spike.

Cut to William's face -- flash after flash -- still looking at Anna. They are both smiling.

INT./EXT. THE HEMPEL ZEN GARDEN WITH MARQUEEN - DAY

Anna and William at their wedding -- they kiss and walk into the crowd.

Honey, a bridesmaid in peach satin -- she is surrounded by at least four other bridesmaids, all under five.

Nearby, Tony standing, glowing, beside his fabulous, pyramidical wedding cake.

William's mother is not quite happy with how he's looking. She tries to brush his hair.

Max, dressed in the most devastating Bond-like white tuxedo is dancing with Anna -- thrilled. He does a rather flashy little move. Cut to Bella who is watching and laughing.

Martin, in an awkward tweed suit, is jiggling to the beat of a song, entirely happy in the corner.

EXT. LEICESTER SQUARE - NIGHT

A huge premier -- screaming crowds -- Anna and William get out of the car, she holding his hand -- looking ultimately gorgeous -- he in a black suit that doesn't quite fit. He's startled.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A pretty green communal garden. Children are playing, watched by mothers, one of whom holds a new baby in a papoose. A very old couple wander along slowly.

A small tai chi group moves mysteriously. And as the camera glides, it passes a couple sitting on a single, simple wooden bench overlooking the garden. He is reading, she is just looking out, totally relaxed, holding his hand, pregnant. It is William and Anna.

THE END