

ACT [1]

SCENE [1]

ROBIN AND KIT ARE LOUNGING AROUND THE HOUSE. THE TV/MUSIC IS ON. FOOD IS BEING PREPARED, WINE IS BEING DRUNK. EVENTUALLY THEY GET ONTO THE TOPIC OF A CELEBRITY IN THE MOVIE THEY ARE WATCHING AS THE LIGHTS GO DOWN.

KIT: All I'm saying is, she looks like how girls feel when their period hits.

ROBIN: Oh my god! So cruel!

KIT: Tell me I'm not spot on.

ROBIN: How would you know?

KIT: I've been victim to it enough times. Haven't you?

ROBIN: Most of the women around me seem to be menopausal nowadays.

KIT: Even-

ROBIN: Even.

KIT: Oh my god-

ROBIN: But nobody can know, oh god, I shouldn't have... No, it's fine-

KIT: -Fact of life-

ROBIN: Exactly, not like I said anything else about her, is it?

KIT: Like what?

ROBIN: Like where she's had surgery.

KIT: WHAT?

ROBIN: Yup.

KIT: Where?

HE POINTS TO THE PLACES.

KIT: Oh my god.

ROBIN: Christ, I've drunk far too much.

KIT: You haven't tried it on yet. So not too much.

ROBIN: Yeah well, give it a glass.

THE LAUGHTER IS AWKWARD.

ROBIN: I've never watched this film the whole way through.

KIT: How? Everybody has.

ROBIN: Well I mean I've seen it through once, when it first came out. But since then... I just don't have the heart to get past the happy bit.

KIT: They're not real.

ROBIN: But they represent something very real. You know?

KIT: Oh fucking hell.

ROBIN: No, no, don't- I can't stand anything but happiness in this film, that's all. In any film-

KIT: It's not that sad, it's not Schindler's List.

ROBIN: No, I don't think Richard Curtis has that in him.

KIT: Oh my god, imagine if he wrote it.

ROBIN: I imagine that was what the Liam Neeson plot in Love Actually was.

KIT: Oh my god, hilarious! Worrying that he ends up with the Aryan at the end.

ROBIN: Claudia Schiffer?

KIT: Yeah.

ROBIN: Bit reductionist.

KIT: Oh shush.

HE KISSES ROBIN.

KIT: You're beautiful.

ROBIN: No. I'm not.

KIT: Yes. You are.

ROBIN: I'm just less decrepit than the average. You're beautiful.

KIT: Well yes.

ROBIN: Arrogant prick.

KIT: Guilty.

ANOTHER KISS. THEY TURN TO WATCH THE  
FILM. THE SCENE MOVES TO AN OPERA, AND  
CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYS.

ROBIN: Oh christ.

KIT: What?

KIT LOOKS AT ROBIN.

KIT: Is this-

ROBIN: Yeah.

KIT: Isn't this the-

ROBIN: Yeah, the 'I'm dating a rich woman so here we are  
at the opera' scene, standard.

KIT: And they chose one of your scores?

ROBIN: Storms in a Teacup.

KIT: Good one.

ROBIN: Thank you.

KIT: Do you get royalties then?

ROBIN: I guess.

KIT: Bit like About A Boy then.

ROBIN: Slightly less mortifying musically though.

KIT: At least people listen to Christmas songs.

ROBIN: Brutal.

KIT DRINKS HIS WINE AS IN TO SAY 'YEAH,  
WELL...'

ROBIN: Does this make you Nicholas Hoult?

KIT: Who?

ROBIN: The kid.

KIT: Bit old.

ROBIN: You're right. More of his Skins phase.

KIT: More of his 'A Single Man' phase, actually.

HE LOOKS AT ROBIN, WHO CAN'T QUITE  
JUSTIFY HIMSELF BEING COLIN FIRTH.

KIT: Next bottle's on you then.

ROBIN: What?

KIT BECKONS AT THE STILL PLAYING MUSIC.

ROBIN: The royalties wouldn't afford any wine we want to drink.

KIT: We are a bit pretentious, aren't we?

ROBIN: Speak for yourself. I'm cursed with a good palette.

KIT: Oh christ you just said those words.

ROBIN: What? I am! Years of wine gives you one.

KIT: Well then maybe I have one too.

ROBIN: Years, Kit. Years.

KIT APPRAISES HIM.

KIT: Could you be my Dad?

ROBIN: Ummmm, go fuck yourself?

KIT: No, but seriously. How old are you? Forty....  
Fifty... Six-

ROBIN: Don't go any fucking further.

KIT: ... Thirty?

ROBIN: Don't be trite.

KIT: Then answer you dick.

ROBIN: I'm forty.... And twelve.

KIT: Wow.

ROBIN: And you're what, nine?

KIT: Paedo.

ROBIN: 24?

KIT: Well remembered.

ROBIN: See? I'm very attentive.

KIT: (suggestive) Yes you are.

ANOTHER KISS.

ROBIN: I'm more than double.

KIT: I always had a thing for silver foxes.

ROBIN: Thanks?

KIT: Though you don't have much to go silver-

ROBIN SLAPS HIM PLAYFULLY ACROSS THE  
FACE.

KIT: Fancy being more attentive?

ROBIN: No... No. Not yet. That's... No.

KIT: Someday?

ROBIN: ... Maybe.

ANOTHER KISS.

KIT: I'm heading upstairs.

ROBIN: Why?

KIT SHRUGS.

KIT: I dunno... To work up a sweat.

ROBIN: Exercising?

KIT SHRUGS AGAIN AND WINKS. KIT KISSES  
HIM AND HEADS UPSTAIRS. ROBIN FINISHES  
HIS GLASS OF WINE WATCHING THE FILM. HIS  
PHONE VIBRATES. HE IGNORES IT. HE TAKES  
THE GLASSES INTO THE KITCHEN AND THEN  
THE DOORBELL RINGS. ROBIN IS STILL  
CLEANING. DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

ROBIN: I'll get that then.

KIT: (from upstairs) Yeah cheers.

ROBIN GOES TO THE DOOR, HE REACTS WITH  
SHOCK TO SEE HIS WIFE AT THE DOOR.

MELISSA: I was hoping for a kiss.

ROBIN: Jesus Christ-

MELISSA CONTINUES TO WAIT. HE FINALLY  
PECKS HER ON THE CHEEK. A PAUSE.

MELISSA: A good husband would take my suitcase.

A PAUSE AS ROBIN REGISTERS THE TITLE.

ROBIN: Yes quite, yes, I-

HE TAKES IT AND PUTS IT AWAY AS SHE GOES  
INTO THE LIVING ROOM. SHE LOOKS AROUND,  
AND AT THE TV, AND TAKES OFF HER COAT  
AND GLOVES. MELISSA IS A VISION OF  
ELEGANCE BUT VERY DISTINCTLY IN HER LATE  
40S/EARLY 50S. SHE HAS THAT KIND OF SEXY  
TWINKLE THAT CHARLOTTE RAMPLING HAS.  
ROBIN COMES BACK IN AND DOES NOTHING.  
SHE SMILES.

MELISSA: (arms thrown wide and insincere) Honey I'm home.

ROBIN: Good one.

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM.

MELISSA: (suspicious) What have you done?

ROBIN: (Quickly) Nothing at all.

MELISSA NODS WITH HER EYEBROWS COCKED.

MELISSA: Where's the lodger?

ROBIN: The who?

MELISSA: The lodger? The lodger, you mentioned him in the  
weekly newsletters.

ROBIN: The what?

MELISSA: The weekly newsletters. I did read them, don't be  
too surprised.

ROBIN: Do you mean my e-mails.

MELISSA: I mean the novellas.

ROBIN: They weren't that long.

MELISSA: Well considering all you've done for three years  
is build your sodding model railways yes, they  
were quite long, actually. Where is your little  
engine shed?

ROBIN: I cleared up.

MELISSA: Oh, so we have a dining table again? So glad.

ROBIN: Why, are you going to cook something?

MELISSA: I might.

ROBIN: Well alright, cooking hasn't changed since you last did it-

MELISSA: I presumed as much-

ROBIN: In 1982.

ROBIN SMILES AT MELISSA, WHO SMILES BACK.

MELISSA: There's the old fighting spirit.

ROBIN: Thought I'd softened in your absence?

MELISSA: No, I thought you'd age well, like a fine wine.

ROBIN: Have I?

MELISSA: More like a stilton, really.

ROBIN: I'm not the one with the blue veins, am I?

MELISSA: Everybody's veins are blue, actually.

ROBIN: Not all of ours are visible, actually.

MELISSA: Ah great, so the old jokes have already begun, and exactly where were you on my birthday?

ROBIN: Sat at home.

MELISSA: In our house.

ROBIN: No no.

MELISSA: With the 'lodger'?

ROBIN: No need for air quotes.

MELISSA: I'll be the judge of that. Where is he? It is a he, isn't it?

ROBIN: Yes, it is.

MELISSA: Oh good. So I don't need to be worried.

FRISSON OF DRAMATIC IRONY AHOY.  
HOPEFULLY.

MELISSA: Well where are they?

ROBIN: Upstairs.

MELISSA: Sleeping?

ROBIN: No.

MELISSA: Well get them down, please.

ROBIN: He's not a servant, I can't just call him down with the ring of a bell. This isn't Downton-fucking-Abbey.

MELISSA: Well it's all I've had for reference in Paris.

ROBIN: Reference to what? England?

MELISSA: No, human relations.

ROBIN: Jesus Christ you're the same as ever-

MELISSA: Bring him down.

ROBIN: You didn't need to learn how to condescend to everyone, sweetheart, you had that down before the channel tunnel-

MELISSA: Robin.

HE LOOKS AT HER STARE AND SIGHS.

ROBIN: He won't come when beckoned.

MELISSA: If only men did...

ROBIN: Jesus Christ.

THERE IS A SMALL SMILE OF RECOGNITION  
THIS WAS AT LEAST A CLEVER INNUENDO.

MELISSA: So that's two housemates you failed to break in then.

ROBIN: I never tried to break you in.

MELISSA: Yes, that's right. You never really tried, did you.

ROBIN: You make it sound like we're not still married.

MELISSA: Don't worry, I've remembered. All three years.

ROBIN: How was Paris, anyway?

MELISSA: Lovely. Tiring. I haven't had a good cup of tea since I last saw you.

ROBIN: I'll make you another, shall I?

MELISSA: Oh would you? French men just don't know how to.

ROBIN: And how many French *men* have you asked?

MELISSA: As many as I've asked French women, I'd say.

ROBIN: Ooooh la la.

MELISSA: Oh shush.

ROBIN: How continental.

MELISSA: Bitter?

ROBIN: Like good chocolate.

MELISSA: Swish.

ROBIN: How do you take it?

MELISSA: Any way you ask me if you buy me dinner.

ROBIN: I see age hasn't matured you yet.

MELISSA: No. Maybe I'm not stilton after all.

ROBIN: Well I *camembert* you, that's for sure.

MELISSA SLOW CLAPS.

ROBIN: Better than my old ones.

MELISSA: Well yes, but it's hard to get much worse.

ROBIN: You know whilst it's mashing I might try and count all the compliments you've given me on my hands, excuse me whilst I extend *none of my fingers*.

MELISSA: Oh I have missed this.

ROBIN TURNS TO SEE SHE'S BEING GENUINE.

MELISSA: I have.

ROBIN SMILES.

MELISSA: Haven't you?

ROBIN: (carefully worded) I've missed having you round.

MELISSA: Don't tell me the sparring wasn't always a turn on.

ROBIN: It was certainly a work out.

MELISSA: Yes well, you certainly don't look like you've had one of those in a while.

ROBIN: I've been running with Kit, actually.

MELISSA: At last, I learn a name.

ROBIN: I named him in the e-mails.

MELISSA: There was a character called Christopher in your serialised epic, yes. Have we moved onto abbreviations now? Are you Robbie?

ROBIN: I just shuddered thinking of the prospect. Mel.

MELISSA: Oh lord don't.

HE HANDS HER TEA. MELISSA LAUGHS.

ROBIN: What?

MELISSA: I've just been imagining you running, that's all. Like a panda on ice.

ROBIN: Drink your tea and shut up will you.

MELISSA: Yes love.

SHE SIPS FOR A BIT.

MELISSA: I hate to ask because I fear I know the answer but-

ROBIN: No, I haven't.

MELISSA: Not even a page?

ROBIN: No.

MELISSA: Christ Robin, you used to toss 'em out more than you tossed 'em out.

ROBIN: Nice wordplay.

MELISSA: I thought so.

ROBIN: But no, no, nothing. Sorry.

MELISSA: It's been over three years.

ROBIN: I know.

MELISSA: We can't keep relying on revivals and royalties- on that note, are you getting royalties for this film being back on?

ROBIN: What?

MELISSA: The film? The opera scene?

ROBIN: Oh, well... I guess.

MELISSA: I guess? Haven't you checked over this stuff with the- Oh Christ, what is this? You used to care so much!

ROBIN: About money?

MELISSA: About success. About achieving something! God, you're weaker than your tea.

ROBIN: I need the milk to grow back the bones you break.

MELISSA: Man. The Fuck. Up.

ROBIN: Don't Lady Macbeth me, alright? I'm... Yeah. Soon.

MELISSA: Soon is your most overused word. I might start setting you deadlines.

ROBIN: How romantic. Did you come back to montage me into success again, sensei?

MELISSA: No. I didn't.

ROBIN: (twigging) Actually, why did you come back?

PAUSE.

ROBIN: Oh. Was it-

MELISSA: Shut up.

ROBIN: Really?

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM LONG AND HARD. SHE RESENTS HAVING TO SAY THE FOLLOWING.

MELISSA: Nobody wants Rodgers without Hammerstein.

ROBIN: I see.

MELISSA: People like when I choreograph *your* operas. Apparently not much else really sits well.

ROBIN: I'm sorry.

MELISSA: Well, I guess it's my fault as much as yours.

ROBIN: I guess.

MELISSA: I was being polite. It's *entirely* your damn fault. I can't choreograph an opera you haven't sodding written, can I?

ROBIN: You did that show last year, wasn't that successful? That musical?

MELISSA: Yes, but then it transferred. They kept the choreography, but not the choreographer. Disney-fucking over one artist at a time.

ROBIN: Right.

MELISSA: I'm not young enough to lead virile ensembles, it seems.

ROBIN: Who told you that?

KIT RE-ENTERS, LOOKING FOR ROBIN. HE IS IN HIS BOXERS AND GORGEOUS ENOUGH TO MAKE THE AUDIENCE MELT.

MELISSA: Nobody had to tell me. Look at me. Masturbating is like searching for something in the duvet cover.

KIT: Oh wow.

ROBIN AND MELISSA NOTICE HIM.

MELISSA: ... Ah.

KIT: That's one way to say hello.

MELISSA: You must be Christopher.

KIT: Kit.

MELISSA: Yes. Quite. How are you?

KIT: Yes, fine, sweaty, had a work out session upstairs whilst I had time to kill.

MELISSA: Yes. I see that. Apparently you've been taking my husband out on runs too?

KIT: Yes... Don't worry, I'm not pushing him too hard.

MELISSA LAUGHS A BIT. IT IS FORCED.  
THERE IS A LULL.

ROBIN: We need some... Milk.

MELISSA: Do we?

ROBIN: Yes, I'll just...

MELISSA: I could get it for you?

ROBIN: The shop's changed since you were last here.

MELISSA: How much can the village shop change?

ROBIN: It's a co-op now, just a small one, it's all very... Anyway.

ROBIN HUGS KIT HELLO. IT LINGERS A BIT  
IN MANY REGARDS. ROBIN LURCHES OUT THE  
FRONT DOOR. KIT SMILES.

KIT: How was...

MELISSA: Paris.

KIT: Yes. How was it?

MELISSA: French.

KIT LAUGHS. MELISSA DOES NOT GIVE AWAY  
IF SHE WAS JOKING OR NOT.

KIT: I hear the French are cunts.

MELISSA: Language.

KIT: I'm... Sorry?

MELISSA: ... You're right though. They are cunts.

KIT: Oh. Sorry.

MELISSA: Haven't you been there?

KIT: No, why?

MELISSA: Oh, I don't know. Robin seems to collect francophiles. I think it's because he wants to be Sartre.

KIT: Sartre didn't write operas.

MELISSA: (confused as to the remark) ... No. No, he didn't.

PAUSE.

KIT: Berlin.

MELISSA: What?

KIT: I uh, I've been to Berlin. I was just thinking through places I'd been and... You only got to hear the conclusion to that thought trail.

MELISSA: Lucky me. How was it?

KIT: Berlin?

MELISSA: The thought train.

KIT: Oh, um, it was-

MELISSA: I'm joking sweetie, how was Berlin?

KIT: Oh. Right. Yeah Berlin was cool-

MELISSA: I hear students like you are driving up housing prices in Berlin. Gentrification and all that. Old people holding sit-ins. Were you?

KIT: I don't think I single-handedly rose anything.

MELISSA: Wahey.

KIT: What? Oh, right, I-

MELISSA: I'm sorry. I'm being threatening and I don't know why.

KIT: Do you think it's fun to see me sweat?

MELISSA: No, though you suit it.

KIT: Sweating?

MELISSA: Athletic people always suit perspiration. Robin just looks like he's melting.

KIT: Strange, I'd have pinned you for the wicked witch of the west.

MELISSA: Ooooh, the puppy can bite, can he?

KIT: Puppy?

MELISSA: Sorry, I don't know where that came from... So, working out at home can't keep you in that sort of shape can it?

KIT: Can't it?

MELISSA: Well I imagine. You have a dancer's physique. Taut.

KIT: I'm sorry?

MELISSA: I'm just saying. My dancers had to really look after themselves- I'm a dancer.

KIT: A choreographer, surely.

MELISSA: Why surely?

KIT: Cos that's what Robin told me.

MELISSA: ... Oh. I thought you were making a slight about my age.

KIT: That too.

MELISSA: ... Oh.

KIT: Kidding.

MELISSA SMILES, BUT KIT WALKS AWAY AND SHE GRIMACES A BIT.

KIT: You're very attractive for your age.

MELISSA: How do you know my age?

KIT: I presume you're not much older than Robin?

MELISSA: No. Not much. How did you know I was older?

KIT: He alluded to it.

MELISSA: What else has he alluded to?

KIT: Oh, not much.

MELISSA: Well good.

KIT: Why?

MELISSA: No offence but we've been married a long time, and you-

KIT: Are his only company?

MELISSA: I was going to say 'a fresh recruit'.

KIT: Recruited for what?

MELISSA: It's a turn of phrase.

KIT: No it's not.

A PAUSE.

MELISSA: I suppose it's not.

KIT: A recruit for what?

MELISSA: I don't know.

KIT: For proving he's Sartre?

MELISSA: Yes, that.

KIT: Well then...

A PAUSE.

MELISSA: What brings you here then?

KIT: I could ask you the same.

MELISSA: I live here.

KIT: Do you?

MELISSA: Yes. Just not all the time.

KIT: Cracking job on the wife thing then.

MELISSA BRUSHES IT OFF, SHE HAS OTHER PURPOSES.

MELISSA: Anyway, you didn't answer my question.

KIT: I... I wanted to do some writing.

MELISSA: (exhausted) Another one?

KIT: Not operas.

MELISSA: Good. We don't need many more.

KIT: You could always choreograph mine as well. I presume that's why you're back.

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM COLDLY.

MELISSA: Answer. My. Question.

KIT: I did.

MELISSA: Not fully.

KIT: Well what else are you getting at?

MELISSA: Just a bit more backstory about the handsome young man who's been kipping in my house whilst I'm working on the continent.

KIT: Worried, are we?

MELISSA: No. Just intrigued.

KIT: I see.

MELISSA: See what?

KIT: Yes, I am single.

MELISSA: That's not-

KIT: Isn't it?

MELISSA: No, it wasn't-

KIT: Then what else did you mean?

MELISSA: Well, I mean, are you still a student?

KIT: No.

MELISSA: Well good-

KIT: I was though. Classics.

MELISSA: Oxbridge?

KIT: Yes.

MELISSA: Which one.

KIT: Take a guess.

MELISSA: (suggestively) What happens if I get it wrong?

KIT: Oh wow.

MELISSA: Don't pretend you're surprised. Boys like you are never surprised when people say things like that.

KIT: I suppose not. I've had plenty of girls hit on me.

MELISSA: Women-

KIT: Them too.

MELISSA: And men?

KIT: Yes, why?

MELISSA: I only ask.

KIT: But why?

MELISSA: Because you seem like the sort of person who gets a lot of attention.

KIT: I do.

MELISSA: And the sort of person who wants it.

KIT: I do.

MELISSA: And the sort of person who goes anywhere to get more.

KIT: Really?

MELISSA: Did you know my husband was a writer when you rocked up?

KIT: He mentioned it.

MELISSA: Where?

KIT: On airbnb, when he put up the room.

MELISSA: Which room?

KIT: Not your marital bed, if that's your fear.

MELISSA: It's not, but maybe it should be.

KIT: Maybe it should, or maybe you're just too concerned about getting me in there.

MELISSA: Don't flatter yourself.

KIT: Why would I when you were doing such a good job? 'Athletic people suit sweat', *please...*

MELISSA: Just because I like flirting doesn't mean I like cheating.

KIT: Do you do it even if you don't 'like' it?

MELISSA: No. Never.

KIT: So three years of-

MELISSA: I came back for the holidays.

KIT: Wow.

MELISSA: What?

KIT: Talk about a white christmas.

MELISSA LAUGHS. KIT LAUGHS TOO.

MELISSA: Good one.

KIT: Cheers.

SHE APPRAISES HIM.

MELISSA: I still feel like I don't know you at all.

KIT: Good.

DOORBELL RINGS. THEY BOTH LOOK AT IT.

MELISSA: I suppose you should get that?

KIT: As the lady of the house?

MELISSA: As the guest.

KIT: Since when did you set guests chores?

MELISSA: Since they had an attitude.

KIT: We both have attitude.

MELISSA: I have attitude, sweetheart. You just have one.

DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

KIT: Probably your husband.

MELISSA: He has his keys.

KIT: Then who could it be?

MELISSA: Curious, are we?

KIT: Afraid to show weakness, are we?

MELISSA: Making everything symbolic, are we?

GABE: (outside the door) Can somebody let me in?

MELISSA: Oh, it's him!

MELISSA GETS UP AND OPENS THE DOOR. GABE IS THERE- IMMACUATELY DRESSED, IN HIS LATE 40S, SILVER FOX WITH A TIMID AND AWKWARD SENSE OF HUMOUR AND A CONSTANT SMILE.

MELISSA: Gabriel!

GABE: Hello darling. I brought wine.

MELISSA: Oh that's nice (she takes the crate) what did you get Robin?

GABE: I think you made the same joke last time I brought you wine.

MELISSA: Oh shush. Come on in.

GABE: Anybody else in?

MELISSA: Just the lodger?

GABE: You have a lodger?

MELISSA: Robin does.

GABE: How long have you been back then?

MELISSA: About ten minutes?

GABE AND MELISSA ENTER THE LIVING ROOM.  
KIT TURNS TO GREET THE GUEST AND IS  
SHOCKED TO SEE HIM.

KIT: Gabriel Jones?

GABE: Yes?

KIT: Oh God. I'm a massive fan.

MELISSA: You are?

KIT: I love dapper magazine. Honestly.

GABE: Oh wow, thank you.

KIT: I might have a copy in my room, can you sign it?

GABE: Absolutely.

KIT GOES UPSTAIRS TO GET IT. GABE SMILES  
MEEKLY AT MELISSA.

MELISSA: Should I have got the red carpet?

GABE: Stop it. This is the first time I've ever been recognised.

MELISSA: What with your face next to the editor's letter now-

GABE: I'm still just another journo.

MELISSA: Of course. How is it not having to struggle for money?

GABE: It's nice, yeah-

MELISSA: I bet.

GABE: How is it being back?

MELISSA: When I've spent more time in the house than the eurostar I'll let you know.

THEY BOTH CHUCKLE.

MELISSA: Thanks for agreeing to do this.

GABE: No worries at all. We needed someone to interview who wasn't 20 and looked good in lingerie.

MELISSA: I don't know if me or Robin would be more offended by that.

GABE: You know what I mean. Someone classy.

MELISSA: I take it we won't be your cover then?

GABE: Not unless Mila Kunis becomes an amputee.

MELISSA: How politically incorrect!

GABE: Oh as if you care.

MELISSA: Fair point. Tea? Oh shit, we're out of milk, Robin's gone out to get some.

GABE: No worries, I can wait. (Beat) My assistant will be joining us later too.

MELISSA: Oh?

GABE: Yes, just somebody to help with everything, and a chance to get her out of the office and seeing how things get done.

MELISSA: I'm sure something's 'getting done'.

GABE: Stop it.

MELISSA: Oh very well.

GABE: How's the new opera coming along?

MELISSA: (lying) Really well. I hear.

GABE: Got a theatre yet?

MELISSA: (lying through her teeth) Robin says things are coming along.

GABE: Good... Good.

KIT COMES BACK DOWNSTAIRS WITH THE ISSUE.

KIT: Sorry about this.

GABE: No, don't worry.

HE SIGNS IT.

KIT: I'm a massive fan, honestly. I even... My girlfriend, well, ex, she really wanted to get into journalism and I told her to apply to Dapper just so I could live vicariously through it, sorry, that's such a shit story-

GABE: Not at all. I'm flattered. Genuinely.

MELISSA: Gabe here's an old friend of Robin and myself.

KIT: I wish Robin had warned me, he knows I'm a fan!

GABE: Probably slipped his mind...

KIT: He usually remembers everything about me though.

MELISSA: Does he?

GABE: Sounds unlike him. Didn't he forget your birthday once Melissa?

MELISSA: It happens to everyone.

KIT: Does it?

MELISSA IS ABOUT TO LAUNCH AT HIM WHEN GABE PLACATES.

GABE: Could I get some help with my cases? Just, I had to leave them in the car to bring in the wine-

KIT: Oh absolutely.

MELISSA LOOKS AT KIT LIKE SHE'S WON.

KIT: Well I mean, I should... Probably put the wine away-

MELISSA: Should you now?

KIT: Melissa, you could go help-

GABE: Oh I wouldn't ask a woman of Melissa's seniority to be bag lady.

KIT: I'm sure she'd love to prove you wrong.

MELISSA: Not especially.

KIT: ... Right then. Where's your car?

GABE: Just out front.

GABE AND KIT ARE ABOUT TO LEAVE. MELISSA LOOKS AT THEM.

MELISSA: Christopher.

KIT: Kit.

MELISSA: I... Nothing. It's fine.

KIT: Alright then.

KIT EXITS WITH GABE. MELISSA PACES, LIGHTING A CIGARETTE AND POURING A GLASS OF WINE. EVENTUALLY KIT AND GABE PASS THROUGH THE HALLWAY WITH BAGS, FOLLOWED BY ROBIN WITH MILK.

ROBIN: Don't panic, don't panic!

HE ENTERS AND SEES MELISSA HAS VERY DECIDEDLY BEEN PANICKING.

ROBIN: Darling?

MELISSA: (from a reverie) huh?

ROBIN: Everything alright?

MELISSA: ... Yes. Yes, of course.

ROBIN: ... Ok. Good.

ROBIN GOES THROUGH TO THE KITCHEN. MELISSA LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW.

MELISSA: Peach crumble?

ROBIN: Don't call me that, but yes?

MELISSA: What's Kit's favourite song?

ROBIN: Unchain My Heart, Ray Charles.

MELISSA: And mine?

ROBIN TAKES A FEW SECONDS. THESE SECONDS  
ARE CLEARLY AN ETERNITY FOR MELISSA.

ROBIN: That Piaf one. No regrets.

MELISSA: It's Joni Mitchell.

ROBIN: Is it?

MELISSA: Both Sides Now.

ROBIN: The one from Love Actually?

MELISSA: Yes.

ROBIN: When the wife thinks he's cheating?

A HURT PAUSE.

MELISSA: That's the one.

ROBIN: Oh... Well they all sound the same to me.

MELISSA: Do they?

A PAUSE. ROBIN REALISES HE'S SAID  
SOMETHING WRONG.

ROBIN: Put it on.

MELISSA: No. No I don't think I will.

ROBIN: Well put something on anyway.

MELISSA DOES. 'THESE FOOLISH THINGS'.  
ROBIN RE-ENTERS WITH TEA.

ROBIN: Good choice.

MELISSA: Thank you.

MELISSA SINGS ALONG AS THEY SIT THERE  
DRINKING IN RELATIVE SILENCE. GABE AND  
KIT COME BACK DOWN MID-CONVERSATION.

KIT: Robin, you never told me you knew this man.

ROBIN: Must have slipped my mind, how do you do Gabe?

GABE: Good thanks Robbo.

ROBIN: (as if stung) Ooh, there it is.

GABE: Sorry, forget you don't like that nickname.

ROBIN: Do you?

GABE: Course!

KIT: I think it suits you. Robbo.

ROBIN: Not you too.

KIT: Is it really humid down here, or is that just me?

GABE: Not just down here, it's pretty close all round. Robbo... Robin... How are you wearing that fleece?

ROBIN: You get used to it.

GABE: The fleece or the weather?

GABE LAUGHS. NO ONE REALLY RESPONDS. KIT IS STRIPPING OFF HIS TOP.

KIT: I think it must have been the crunches, it got me all hot and bothered.

MELISSA AND ROBIN MEET EYES BOTH STARING AT KIT'S BARE TORSO. MELISSA, SEEING ROBIN LOOKS, NOTICES HIS SHAMEFUL LOOK AWAY. SHE LOOKS EVEN MORE SADDENED. KIT AND ROBIN SETTLE DOWN INTO CONVERSATION, IMPROVISED, UNDER THE SURFACE OF GABE COMING TO TALK TO MELISSA.

GABE: Penny for them?

MELISSA: What?

AS MELISSA TALKS TO GABE SHE LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER AT KIT AND ROBIN'S CONVERSATION. MAYBE THEIR FLIRTATIOUS BODY LANGUAGE BECOMES SLOWLY BUT SURELY OVERLY EXAGGERATED AS WE WATCH THROUGH MELISSA'S EYES AND GABE'S VOICE AND PRESENCE ARE SLOWLY MUFFLED BEFORE BEING SNAPPED OUT. MAYBE WE DON'T. EITHER WAY-

GABE: I'm sorry to hear about Paris.

MELISSA: Yes well... Nobody wants Rodgers without Hammerstein.

GABE: Or Ginger without Fred.

MELISSA: Yes, quite.

GABE: Although that's not true of course. Kitty Foyle, for one.

MELISSA: Mmmm.

GABE: And she won the academy for that one.

MELISSA: The whole academy?

GABE: (A laugh that fades into concern) ...are you alright?

MELISSA: Yes, absolutely, just... Humidity. Cloudy. The sea. It's all a bit... Bronte.

GABE: I suppose so. Could be worse. Could be Scarborough?

MELISSA: Quite.

GABE: On a lot of levels.

MELISSA: Oh?

GABE: Had a conference there the other week. Lord knows why, the North-east is hardly the mid-point of the country is it?

MELISSA: You can't have every conference in Northampton.

GABE: No, well, quite... But yes, awful place. In March, anyway. Sea as tall as me with my arm up, foam and snow and sleet and a woefully understocked M&S food section.

MELISSA: God forbid.

GABE: Only so many fry-ups a man can take in a tailored suit.

MELISSA: I can imagine.

GABE: Curd tarts were good though.

SHE DRIFTS OFF TO WATCH THEM AGAIN.

GABE: Wakey wakey.

MELISSA FINALLY SNAPS OUT.

MELISSA: Oh god, I'm so sorry. Listen, can I have a bit of time with the hubby? We haven't really had two moments to ourselves since-

GABE: No, absolutely, say no more. I'll just go unpack.  
Is tomorrow morning alright for the interview?

MELISSA: It's perfect.

GABE: Excellent. We'll open the wine tonight, shall we?

MELISSA: It's a date.

GABE NODS AND HEADS UPSTAIRS. ROBIN SEES  
MELISSA STOOD THERE. KIT DOES TOO.

KIT: Yes?

MELISSA: Can I talk to my husband alone please?

KIT: ... Alright.

KIT KISSES HIM ON THE HEAD AS HE LEAVES  
TO GO UPSTAIRS. ROBIN SMILES AND THEN  
LOOKS BACK AT MELISSA, WHO IS LIKE  
FROZEN LIGHTNING. SHE DOESN'T SAY  
ANYTHING, HE JUST LOOKS AT HER, AMUSED  
BY HER, BUOYED BY SUCCESSFUL FLIRTATION.

ROBIN: Don't just *loom* there, you're like an omen of  
something.

MELISSA: Do you love him?

PAUSE.

ROBIN: I'm sorry?

MELISSA: Do. You. Love him.

ROBIN: Who?

MELISSA COCKS HER HEAD BACK OUT THE DOOR  
KIT JUST LEFT FROM.

ROBIN: No, of course not, don't be ridiculous.

HE TRIES TO LEAVE, AND SHE STOPS HIM.

MELISSA: The only way you can make this situation any worse  
is if you keep lying to me.

ROBIN: I'm not lying to you.

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM. HE EVENTUALLY  
CRUMPLES.

MELISSA: Jesus Christ-

ROBIN: I didn't want you to know.

MELISSA: Excuse me?

ROBIN: Because I'm still coming to terms with it myself.

MELISSA: And how long have you been coming to terms with it?

ROBIN: A few months.

MELISSA: Jesus-

ROBIN: I just... I didn't want to scare you if it was nothing.

MELISSA: And is it no-

ROBIN: You know full well it isn't, ok, stop trying to get answers out of me you already have.

PAUSE.

MELISSA: Do you love him?

ROBIN: Of course not.

MELISSA: Have you fucked him?

ROBIN: No, don't be so vulgar-

MELISSA: Do you want to?

PAUSE.

ROBIN: Well I mean, that's sort of the point-

MELISSA: No, Robin, that's not the bloody point. The point is that you are a married man and I married you thinking this wasn't going to be an issue.

ROBIN: Really? This exact issue right now?

MELISSA: Yes, shockingly, I thought my husband would remain straight.

ROBIN: I am straight.

MELISSA: Ish.

ROBIN: (joking) Askew.

MELISSA: Robin!

ROBIN: Oh don't be like this!

MELISSA: I think I have every fucking right to be like this, actually. Did you not think I'd notice how you behave with him?

ROBIN: Do you think this has been easy for me either?

MELISSA: That's not the issue I'm bringing up here.

ROBIN: It's not like he'd want me, anyway.

MELISSA: Are you serious?

ROBIN: No, not like that, no, not that I'd, no-

MELISSA: Oh good, glad to know our marriage is being held together by more than your low self-esteem.

ROBIN: Oh fuck you, alright? Yes, don't look at me like that, I said it, this is really fucking tough for me, and you want to know something? I don't know how I can ever be expected to keep churning out three hour long diatribes on the life and times of young lovers if I'm having to sit here day after day stewing in my own contempt at something I should feel no shame about.

MELISSA: I'm not saying you should feel shame, I'm just saying, what do you expect to get out of this? Is this why you're keeping him round?

ROBIN: He's not some sort of sex slave!

MELISSA: Then what do you want? Validation? A release? What is it that you need from this, Robin?

ROBIN: I just need to know.

MELISSA: About?

ROBIN LOOKS AT HER. SHE LOOKS BACK AT HIM. THERE IS A LONG AND TENSE SILENCE.

ROBIN: This is the first time in my life I've ever experienced a feeling that I know is completely my own. That sounds shit but it's true. Nothing has ever happened to me in my life. Ever. And now this is... There... and I need you to understand that this isn't going to go away anytime soon.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM.

MELISSA: Do you really think it's affecting your work?

ROBIN: I haven't written a word since I realised.

MELISSA: And why's that?

ROBIN: Because I need an outlet to help me find what it is I want to say.

MELISSA: An outlet?

ROBIN: For lack of a better phrase, yes, an outlet.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM LONG AND HARD.  
EVENTUALLY HE COMES OVER TO HER AND THEY  
HOLD HANDS.

MELISSA: I need to work again.

ROBIN: I need him.

KIT STORMS DOWNSTAIRS AND ENTERS.

KIT: I just wanted to say, before you-

HE SEES A QUIET SCENE.

KIT: Oh. I thought you'd be tearing his head off about something.

MELISSA: Not quite.

SHE LOOKS AT ROBIN.

KIT: Well... Good. He loves you.

ROBIN: She knows that. Don't you?

MELISSA NODS, SHE CAN'T SAY IT.

ROBIN: You see? All fine.

HE KISSES HER ON THE HEAD. SHE ISN'T  
MASSIVELY PLEASED BY THE SYMMETRY OF THE  
GESTURE.

KIT: ... Good. I was uh... I was going to uh... Head out.

MELISSA: Where?

KIT: I dunno, just somewhere. The pub maybe. Somewhere less humid.

ROBIN: Less close.

MELISSA: Everything does feel a bit claggy, doesn't it?

ROBIN: Do you want to go to the pub?

MELISSA: ... No. For the first time in my life I think I might pass on a drink.

ROBIN: Wow. Big day indeed.

MELISSA: Indeed. Big day for all involved.

ROBIN LOOKS AWAY.

ROBIN: Mind if I join you?

KIT: Not at all.

ROBIN: Excellent. You alright staying here?

MELISSA: I'll stay here, yes.

ROBIN: ... Right, sure. Cool.

MELISSA: Don't say cool darling, you don't have enough hair for that.

SHE SMILES AT HIM. HE SMILES BACK.

ROBIN: That's my girl.

MELISSA: Don't get too pissed.

KIT: I'll keep him in check.

MELISSA: Great.

THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.

ROBIN: Who could that be?

MELISSA: It might be Gabe's assistant, he said she'd be along just after him-

ROBIN: Should I get it?

KIT: Don't worry yourself, I will.

MELISSA: Oh I see how it is-

KIT LEAVES AND OPENS THE DOOR.

REGAN: (off-stage) Oh my god.

KIT SAYS NOTHING. MELISSA AND ROBIN ARE BOTH CONFUSED BY THE SILENCE FROM THE HALL. KIT RE-ENTERS, GOES OVER AND POURS HIMSELF A GLASS OF WINE INTO MELISSA'S OLD GLASS, OR FINISHES OFF HER CURRENT

ONE IF STILL FILLED. REGAN FOLLOWS IN  
AFTER WITH HER SUITCASE.

REGAN: Hello.

ROBIN: Hello, welcome, you must be Gabe's assistant?

REGAN: Girlfriend, actually.

MELISSA: Girlfriend?

ROBIN: Really?

REGAN: Yes, really.

KIT: Gabe's the new guy?

REGAN: ... Yes.

KIT: ... You got the internship then.

REGAN: ... I did. They kept me on.

KIT: What a surprise.

A PAUSE.

MELISSA: I take it you two know each other then.

REGAN: We used to date.

KIT: (correcting) She was the love of my life.

REGAN LOOKS AT HIM WITH A 'DON'T DO  
THIS'.

REGAN: We dated... For a while.

A PAUSE AS SHE WAITS FOR KIT TO DO  
SOMETHING.

REGAN: I'll just take my stuff upstairs then, is Gabe-

KIT: Don't.

THE SCENE SEEMS TO FREEZE.

ACT [2] SCENE [1]

EVERYONE IS SAT DRINKING (PERHAPS ROBIN  
HAS DRINKS ATOP THE PIANO?) AND CHAT IS  
FORCED. IT IS NIGHT.

REGAN: Did you know that empty chairs at empty tables  
fits perfectly into the muppet show theme tune?

NOBODY RESPONDS IN ANY MORE THAN A POLITE 'IS THAT SO' NOISE. AS THE SILENCE CONTINUES, REGAN BLATHERS ON.

REGAN: Sure, uh-

REGAN PERFORMS THE FIRST VERSE. GABE STOPS HER AND SHE SAYS 'OK' ALMOST BEFORE HE'S FINISHED.

KIT: I thought it was lovely.

REGAN: Did you?

KIT CAN'T REALLY BRING HIMSELF TO ACTUALLY SAY HE DID.

REGAN: Ah, again. All bark, no bite.

MELISSA: Be happy you get a bark at least.

THE CLEARLY ROBIN-FOCUSED REMARK CAUSES AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE.

MELISSA: I was talking about you-

ROBIN: Yes, I got that, thank you. Drinks?

EVERYONE: (Variations on 'yes please', 'thank you', 'at long last' etc.)

ROBIN: Kit, another red wine?

KIT: Yep.

ROBIN: And Gabe-

GABE: An old fashioned.

ROBIN: Right.

REGAN: Vodka martini.

KIT: What?

ROBIN: Right, and Melissa-

ROBIN LOOKS AT MELISSA, WHO LOOKS AT HIM WAITING FOR HIM TO SAY HER FAVOURITE DRINK.

REGAN: What?

KIT: Since when did you drink vodka?

MELISSA: What's the matter?

ROBIN: I, uh-

REGAN: Since forever-

KIT: You stopped drinking it after that night after our second year exams-

REGAN: Oh yes, I-

KIT: When you splattered that taxi with how much you'd drunk-

REGAN: Yes, I-

KIT: Seventeen doubles was-

REGAN: I said yes. I remember. But I drink it again now. Happy?

KIT: Not really.

MELISSA: (realising Robin won't get it) Oh Jesus Christ, a gin and tonic, please.

ROBIN: Yes. Right.

HE EXITS.

KIT: Regan used to drink gin and tonics.

REGAN: I still drink gin and tonics, you can drink more than one thing-

KIT: Not at a time-

REGAN: Such a pedant!

PAUSE.

GABE: Is... Is it gin and tonics or gins and tonic? Like culs de sac?

MELISSA: You've not got much better at defusing the tension, have you?

GABE: I can't say I try to make a habit of it.

MELISSA: Gabe here used to be awful during lovey spats at openings and wrap parties and the like, he wouldn't know what to do, sedate journalist that he was-

GABE: Glad I moved out of arts criticism.

MELISSA: Yes quite, don't you edit Dapper Magazine now?

REGAN: (proudly) The No. 1 men's lifestyle magazine in England.

GABE: (with a jokey arrogance) No. 3 in America...

REGAN: They're opening a Japan office soon.

MELISSA: Oh. Moving over are we?

REGAN: Oh no, they'll find a new editor over there.

MELISSA: Not desperate to replicate the success Gabe had?

GABE: I entered on a boom started by the editor before me, I just maintained the wind's direction, as it were-

MELISSA: Well yes, but still. A man like you. Living the lifestyle every man would want. Beautiful suits, beautiful women...

KIT: Women?

GABE AND REGAN SHIFT UNCOMFORTABLY UNDER MELISSA'S STARE.

MELISSA: Well, that's the image anyway isn't it? James Bond, nice watches... James Bond in nice watches...

ROBIN RE-ENTERS WITH DRINKS. HE HANDS ROUND TO EVERYONE, MELISSA, THEN GABE, DURING THE ABOVE LINE, THEN REACHES REGAN. KIT LOOKS.

KIT: Don't have too much of that now-

REGAN: Why should it matter?

KIT: Remember what happened last time you drank vodka?

REGAN: What?

KIT POINTS BETWEEN THEM.

REGAN: Oh. Yes. That.

KIT: That?

ROBIN: Kit-

KIT: Just 'that'? Because it lasted a long time to be just 'that', and I'm not just talking about the relationship-

REGAN: -Jesus fucking christ-

ROBIN: Kit, don't.

KIT: Why sweetie? Jealous?

ROBIN COUGHS.

ROBIN: I uh... I forgot my drink.

ROBIN RETREATS, ONLY TO TURN BACK ROUND.

ROBIN: And not because I'm jealous. Because she's taken.

GABE: Well yes, but that never stops anyone, does it?

ROBIN: No. It doesn't.

GABE: Good, well just so long as you notice-

MELISSA: Gabe-

GABE: What?

MELISSA: You're not one to talk.

REGAN: He's not?

MELISSA: No. He's not. Are you?

REGAN REALISES WHAT SHE MEANS AND LOOKS AT THE FLOOR.

KIT: What's going on?

ROBIN GOES TO GET HIS DRINK.

MELISSA: Let's just say Gabe likes the Dapper lifestyle. The yachts. The cocktails. The women.

KIT: Why do you keep mentioning that?

MELISSA: Look at his hand, Christopher.

KIT DOES.

MELISSA: And then look at Regan's.

KIT DOES. HE LOOKS AT REGAN.

KIT: He's married?

ROBIN COMES BACK IN WITH HIS DRINK.

REGAN: Yes, he is.

GABE: I can't believe what's going on here- am I seriously about to get judged?

KIT: Yes.

GABE: By you?

KIT: What's the problem with me judging you for sleeping with another woman?

GABE: Yes, I suppose it's different when I'm sleeping with a *woman* on the side, isn't it?

ROBIN: Oh God.

KIT: We're not sleeping together!

ROBIN: Please, don't...

MELISSA: Then what are you doing?

ROBIN: JUST STOP IT.

EVERYONE WATCHES ROBIN AND KIT AS THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER.

KIT: I'm just the lodger. I couldn't do anything more, honestly.

ROBIN LISTENS TO HIS WORDS, BUT SAYS NOTHING.

KIT: I'm not... I'm not like you two. I couldn't hurt somebody that much.

REGAN: Couldn't you?

KIT: Oh do you think I'm the reason we broke up?

REGAN: Well I didn't end it because you were being my favourite person-

AS THEY CONINUE SPEAKING, ROBIN STARTS TO CRY AND RETURNS TO THE KITCHEN WITH HIS DRINK. MELISSA FOLLOWS HIM IN, READY TO FIGHT WITH HIM, BUT STANDS AND WATCHES HER HUSBAND CRY BITTERLY AT THE TABLE. SHE GOES OVER TO HIM AND HE FALLS INTO HER ARMS. THIS MAY ALL BE OFFSTAGE,

BUT THIS IS WHAT IS OCCURRING IN THE  
MEANWHILE.

KIT: You could have told me.

REGAN: Did you not HEAR the conversations we had before I ended it? I wanted you to change.

KIT: Well I'm so sorry I didn't bend to your every whim.

GABE: You know, when you stop being a pathetic child Christopher-

KIT: -Kit-

GABE: -I'm not gracing you with your own nickname kid. When you stop being pathetic and young you'll realise relationships aren't about vivid arguments and getting drunk and having sloppy sex. They're about compromise, and trust. Regan's told me all about you-

REGAN: Not all about you-

KIT: Enough to call it sloppy?

REGAN: Those are his words-

GABE: Are they?

KIT: Regan for fuck's sake, is nothing sacred?

REGAN: I asked you that enough times-

KIT: But now look at you. Don't you even care about commitment? You used to harp on about that all the time and now-

REGAN: Oh don't act as if commitment in one situation is the same as commitment in another-

KIT: Are you TAILORMAKING commitment to the situation?

GABE: Contracts are bespoke, Christopher. That's how they work.

KIT: Oh don't try and get- don't try and- for fuck's sake, stop this, it's ridiculous, I am being attacked and yet the two of you are here on a seaside fuckfest away from your wife and how many kids?

NEITHER SPEAKS.

KIT: Two?

REGAN: Kit-

KIT: Two? Three?

GABE: ... Four.

KIT: Christ... Are any of them near our age?

REGAN: KIT.

KIT: Are they?

GABE: ... One's at university.

KIT: Oh for fuck's sake, you are revolting.

GABE: Aren't we all? Why don't we just accept we all have a base level of disgusting and try and like each other instead.

KIT: Oh I'm sure that's what you all do in the world of the media, you know, just polyfilla the cracks in a person's morality and start the identity again on top, whipped cream on the fucking pavlova...

REGAN: As if you're so righteous!

KIT: At least I know where my shit comes from.

REGAN: From where? Attention-seeking?

KIT: No, from understanding how lonely it can be to not be honest to yourself.

REGAN: Oh listen to yourself, you're like a fucking agony aunt column!

GABE: I can't take much more of this-

GABE ENTERS THE KITCHEN. HE MAKES HIMSELF A DRINK, THE SPELL BROKEN BETWEEN THE COUPLE IN THERE. KIT MEANWHILE IS FINDING IT HARD TO THINK OF WHAT TO SAY.

KIT: I need a cigarette.

REGAN: Something to suck on when your boyfriend isn't here?

KIT: He's literally in the next room.

REGAN: But you don't deny it, do you? What you're happy to do?

KIT: ... If he needed it.

REGAN: And yet you think I'm wrong. Just because it's a straight relationship.

KIT: What does he NEED from you his wife can't give him?

REGAN: Support? Youth? Affection?

KIT: You can get any of those back.

REGAN: Including youth?

KIT: Oh for god's sake, that's not-

REGAN: What? A good enough reason? And your's is?

PAUSE.

KIT: Cigarette.

REGAN: Great.

KIT GOES OUTSIDE. GABE GOES BACK THROUGH TO SEE REGAN. THEY SIT AND SILENTLY EMBRACE AS IF NEEDING TO RECHARGE THEIR AFFECTION FOR EACH OTHER. MELISSA ENTERS. SHE WATCHES OUT THE 'WINDOW' TO SEE KIT SMOKING. ROBIN FOLLOWS HER IN.

MELISSA: ... One night. That's all you get. One night.

REGAN WATCHES IN SHOCK. GABE SITS IN ACCEPTING SILENCE AS IF WATCHING A SATANIC PACT BEING FORMED HE HAS NO POWER TO STOP. MELISSA SITS DOWN AND DRINKS. ROBIN STANDS THERE AND IS ABOUT TO HEAD OUT WHEN KIT COMES BACK IN.

KIT: It's too fucking windy out there to get much-

KIT STOPS TO SEE THE SOMBRE SCENE. HE LOOKS AT ROBIN, THE ONLY OTHER PERSON STOOD UP. ROBIN GOES OVER TO HIM.

ROBIN: Dance with me?

THE MUSIC IS STILL PLAYING. KIT LOOKS TO MELISSA BUT NOT LOOKING FOR A YES, JUST TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING.

REGAN: Go on Kit. What's stopping you.

KIT LOOKS AT HER. HIS RAGE IS CLEAR IN HIS FACE.

KIT: Alright.

THEY START DANCING TO THE SONG. AS IT GOES ON, ROBIN KISSES HIM UP AND DOWN THE NECK AND FINALLY THEY MAKE OUT. KIT TAKES ROBIN'S HAND AND TAKES HIM UPSTAIRS. REGAN, DISGUSTED, AFTER A FEW SECONDS LEAVES. GABE FOLLOWS AFTER A LOOK TO MELISSA.

ACT [3] SCENE [1]

MELISSA SWITCHES OFF THE LIGHTS AND CLEANS UP THE PARTY. SOUNDS GET LOUDER FROM UPSTAIRS. BEFORE SHE CAN DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT'S HAPPENING SHE SWITCHES ON JONI MITCHELL'S BOTH SIDES NOW TO DROWN IT OUT. SHE IS DRUNK AND ANGRY. SLOWLY IT TURNS INTO A DANCE IN HER MIND, A DANCE OF RAGE AND ANGER AT ROBIN, FINALLY RETURNING TO NORMALITY AS SHE FINISHES CLEARING UP THE MESS. IT BECOMES MORNING. GABE AND REGAN ENTER WITH INTERVIEW STUFFS.

THEY BEGIN TO SET UP. GABE IS DOING MOST OF THE WORK, REGAN HELPING WHEN NEEDED, BUT SHE SPENDS A LOT OF TIME JUST WATCHING.

GABE: I'm thinking if we set up a pot of tea and things-

REGAN: Nobody's going to see it, it's recorded-

GABE: Yes, I know, but for general noises in the background. 'Ooooh, let me pour you a cup of tea', 'clink clink, cup on cup, ceramic contact'.

REGAN: Ceramic contact?

GABE: Ceramic. Contact.

THEY BOTH LAUGH. OR MAYBE JUST REGAN.

REGAN: Why?

GABE: Allows me to write it all in.

REGAN: Couldn't you just write it in anyway?

GABE: Why make something up when you can create it?

REGAN: ... Quite.

PAUSE AS GABE SETS UP.

GABE: I could win an award for this.

REGAN: For a promo?

GABE: For an interview, there are awards for interviews.

REGAN: We're helping to boost box office turnover and you think it'll be award-winning?

GABE: Maybe I have some other questions to ask.

REGAN: What sort of other questions?

GABE: What does it matter?

REGAN SHRUGS, WORRIED. A PAUSE.

GABE: Is everything all right?

REGAN: Yes.

GABE: Reggie-

REGAN: Don't call me that.

GABE: Sorry.

PAUSE.

GABE: Do you regret doing this?

REGAN: What sort of fucking question is that?

GABE: An important one.

PAUSE.

REGAN: I don't know.

GABE: Oh fuck...

REGAN: I love you. I do. But fuck's sake-

GABE: What?

REGAN: How are we any different?

GABE SHRUGS.

REGAN: What do I offer you that you couldn't already have?

GABE: What, so I should be coming out to have an affair?

REGAN: You shouldn't be having a sodding affair at all!

GABE: Well I'm sorry but I wanted one.

REGAN: Why?

GABE: I don't know!

BEAT.

GABE: Do philanderers ever fucking know?

REGAN: I suppose not.

GABE: I wanted one because I could have one but I shouldn't, I guess. Or is that too simple?

REGAN: It's something.

GABE: Do you want me to end this?

REGAN: I don't think so.

PAUSE.

REGAN: There was a time, when we first met, I debated packing it all in. I was too afraid of what it meant. I thought she would see me, somewhere, I don't know where, and just know. Like a slug trail left by you all the way down my body. I felt gazes that weren't there all the time. So I wrote you a letter. You told me you loved me that night and I never gave it to you. But I keep it with me. All the time. Just in case.

GABE: That's a bit morbid.

REGAN: I love you.

GABE: Well... No need for me to show you my letter then, is there?

REGAN: You prick.

GABE: Kiss me.

REGAN DOES. SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO ENJOY IT. SHE STARES OUT THE WINDOW HALFWAY

THROUGH. AS THEY PART, SHE TAKES TO  
STARING OUT IT FULLY.

REGAN: I used to love the sea.

GABE: Used to?

REGAN: I hope this doesn't taint it.

GABE: Why would it?

REGAN: I don't know. That's just what I thought when I  
kissed you. It was salty. Like scurf.

GABE: We'll leave tonight.

REGAN: We were going to anyway.

GABE: But now there's no chance of us being lured in by  
a second glass of wine. We've said it, haven't we?  
I'll drive us back-

REGAN: I've got to drive my own car-

GABE: I'll send someone to collect it. I want some time  
properly alone, just us.

REGAN: She'll smell me in the front seat.

GABE: Wear less cologne then.

THEY KISS AGAIN.

REGAN: Better.

KIT ENTERS. HE IS WEARING ROBIN'S SHIRT  
FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE.

KIT: Morning all.

GABE TURNS TO SEE HIM. REGAN STARES AT  
HIM STARTLED. GABE LOOKS AT REGAN.

GABE: Good morning.

KIT: Sleep well?

GABE: Yes. Did yo-

GABE STOPS HIMSELF. KIT CHUCKLES AND  
GOES TO THE KITCHEN.

KIT: Anyone / want anything?

GABE: (to Regan, privately) what's wrong?

REGAN: That's what I look like to everyone, isn't it?

REGAN LOOKS TO GABE.

GABE: I want to speak to him.

REGAN: No, let me.

GABE: No. The two of you have done enough, I think. Every time the two of you are together something goes tits up. My turn now.

REGAN: Then at least let me sit in.

GABE: No.

REGAN: Don't send me up to my room like your child.

PAUSE.

GABE: Alright.

KIT RE-ENTERS WITH A CUP OF TEA AND A PAIN AU CHOCOLAT.

KIT: The kettle's boiled so if anybody-

HE SEES THE SCENE.

KIT: Is there something on my face?

KIT RUBS THE EDGE OF HIS MOUTH. REGAN RECOILS.

REGAN: Jesus christ-

GABE: Can I have a word with you, Kit?

KIT: Why?

GABE: Just a word, that's all.

KIT LOOKS AT HIM.

KIT: You look like my english teacher when he did sex ed.

GABE: Appropriate, I suppose.

KIT: Is it? Oh.

KIT LOOKS AT REGAN, WHO DOES NOT MEET HIS GAZE. HE SITS DOWN. REGAN GETS OUT HAND SANITISER AND PROCEEDS TO APPLY IT

REPEATEDLY UNTIL THE CONVERSATION GETS  
SINISTER, AND THEN SHE STOPS.

GABE: Regan's a lovely girl, isn't she-

KIT: Yes, she is-

GABE: Beautiful, intelligent-

KIT: I'm very aware, I used to date her-

REGAN: Kit-

GABE: Just the loveliest person the world has ever  
known-

KIT: Will you stop fucking about and say whatever it is  
you have to say?

GABE: Took the words right out of my mouth.

GABE PROFFERS A BISCUIT.

GABE: Biscuit?

KIT SAYS NOTHING, HE JUST STARES IN  
CONFUSION.

GABE: I want to know what it is you want with Regan.

KIT: I don't want anything with her.

GABE: That's not what last night suggested. That's not  
what your play suggested.

KIT: I beg your pardon?

GABE: I love Regan very much. I love her like I love my  
work. You know what happens when someone threatens  
my magazine? I let them have an advertisement,  
quarter page at most. Or maybe a feature on  
something. I let them have a nibble and then they  
go away.

KIT: What are you-

GABE: Do you need closure? Because I'll allow you that.  
If that's all you want, then I won't stop you.

KIT: I think I'll have a chip now.

GABE: But do you only want a chip? Because you're  
welcome to pick at my chips... But aim to have a  
meal...

KIT: I'm sorry, there are so many metaphors flying around here it's hard to keep up. What precisely is it you're saying?

GABE: I'd forgotten what honesty and the truth sound like. Blame this house. Hell, blame business. But business has taught me about love. There is nothing better for the heart than a spoonful of compromise. If you want to have relations with Regan, spunk out the pain, whatever, then that's fine. But if you want her back, if you want to win her over, then I will fight you. Tooth and nail. Fist and foot.

KIT: Sex solves nothing. Sex starts nothing, and it solves nothing, unless people let it or want it.

GABE: Do you want it to?

KIT: I don't want sex in the first place, is that all you think she's worth?

GABE: I think it's a cracking consolation prize if you can't have the whole thing.

REGAN: Thing?

GABE DOESN'T LISTEN AT ALL.

GABE: Sex starts nothing and it solves nothing... You're young. You talk in big terms. You can't get away with that as you get older.

KIT: No, you can only get away with talking in 200 word letters to the editor.

GABE: At least I have a reason to be writing what I do, economic or otherwise.

KIT: You need to stop being so condescending.

GABE: Does it annoy you?

KIT: It annoys Regan.

GABE LOOKS AT HER. REGAN SAYS NOTHING.

GABE: Does she tell you that?

KIT: She doesn't need to. I know her and I only look at her in conversation, and I know she hates it.

GABE: I've never wanted to throw food in somebody's face so much.

KIT: I've never met a man so utterly insecure in my life.

GABE: Ditto. Now go back to your typewriter and wank out some more unrequited love poetry.

KIT: I've got too much faith in myself to be wounded by your petty remarks.

GABE: And I've got Regan. Therefore I win.

KIT: You're utterly pathetic.

GABE: At last, something we have in common.

KIT: Now we can be friends. Great choice, Regan.

KIT LEAVES THE ROOM, BAFFLED. GABE SITS THERE.

GABE: I admit that wasn't pleasant, but that was necessary.

REGAN: Was it?

GABE IS STARING AT HER. SHE MEETS HIS GAZE. SHE ROOTS AROUND IN HER HANDBAG AND GETS OUT THE LETTER.

REGAN: No worries about the scent in the front seat now, Bond. I'm pressing the ejector button.

GABE: Right then.

REGAN: I think you had better leave.

GABE: I'm the one working-

REGAN: Well fine then, I'll just leave shall I?

REGAN STARTS TO CRY BITTERLY. GABE GETS UP TO HUG HER AND SHE THROWS HIM OFF. HE GOES UPSTAIRS, BUMPING INTO GABE IN THE HALL.

MELISSA: What's going on here?

GABE: (at a loss for a diplomatic answer) Kit.

MELISSA: Been telling him what for, have you? Being a responsible older man?

GABE: Not my choice of wording.

MELISSA: No. God forbid the journalist word it badly.

GABE: The... The kettle's just boiled.

MELISSA: Excellent. Tea, anybody?

REGAN: Yes please.

MELISSA CAN HEAR SHE'S CRYING.

MELISSA: What happened to her?

GABE: Exit wounds.

REGAN: FUCK YOU.

MELISSA: This Kit as well?

GABE: In a sense.

MELISSA: Shouldn't bring him into the conversations Gabriel. Dangerous territory for the new squeeze.

REGAN: He's not my new squeeze.

MELISSA: No. He's not new at all, is he?

GABE: What does that make you?

MELISSA: Collectable.

GABE: Jesus Christ...

GABE EXITS.

MELISSA: I thought you might want him gone.

REGAN: Thanks.

MELISSA GOES TOWARDS THE KITCHEN.

REGAN: What I said... I didn't mean he's not a new squeeze. I meant... I meant he's not my squeeze at all anymore.

MELISSA: ... I'm sorry.

REGAN: You shouldn't be. If you were his wife you wouldn't be sorry.

MELISSA: Who knows? Maybe I would be.

REGAN: Would you be sorry if-

MELISSA: Tea?

REGAN: ... Yes.

MELISSA LEAVES. REGAN TIDIES HERSELF.

MELISSA: We're low on mugs.

REGAN: There's a couple through here. Gabe put some out for the interview.

MELISSA: Why?

REGAN: Ambience.

MELISSA COMES BACK THROUGH WITH A POT OF BREWING TEA AND A CARTON OF MILK. SHE MAKES THEM TWO MUGS OF TEA. THEY SIT THERE IN SILENCE FOR A BIT, DRINKING.

REGAN: How are y-

MELISSA: I'd rather not talk about it. If you don't mind.

PAUSE.

REGAN: Where've you been?

MELISSA: Walking.

REGAN: Nice place to.

MELISSA: I fucking hate the sea. Reminds me of him. Always looks placid but it's full of shit.

REGAN: ... Lovely.

PAUSE.

REGAN: I take it you'd rather be alone.

MELISSA: I suppose I would, yes.

REGAN: Well, if you need somebody to bounce ideas off-

SHE IS LEAVING AS MELISSA SPEAKS. WHEN SHE DOES, REGAN STOPS, LOOKS, WAITS FOR A MOMENT THAT FEELS LIKE A RELENTING AND GOES TO SIT BY HER.

MELISSA: I did everything right, that's what gets me. I did everything all the time that I needed to do. I never had contacts. Or high places to look to. I didn't even really have money. But I had skills, and the ability to learn them. I spent a life giving up everything to develop what a journalist once called my 'dressing up box'- how to be a ballet dancer, how to choreograph, or how to pliet,

how to do a fouettes et tournant... How to be a wife. How to be a mother. As you can see, some of those skill sets never got used. Not for lack of trying, I might add.

I never gave up on what it was I wanted. Never. I would constantly be confronted with situations where it looked like it could never work and I never let that happen. I saw other people, better people often, bury themselves in the sand and wait for it to blow over, turning with the tide and so on, but I always found a way to be what I wanted to be. I don't think it's selfish to put yourself first. I think it's selfish to deprive the person you could be of that possibility. When you see what you could be and you turn that down for six figures and a statistic in the suburbs, if that's not what you want, if that's not part of the dream then that's a real shame. A real fucking shame. And I saw Robin doing it. He told me he wanted to 'get out of London', you know, 'move away from the hustle and bustle'- I don't think anybody uses the phrase hustle and bustle not even him but I paraphrase- and I went along. I went along cos I loved him, and I went along because I knew if he wanted it, it would make things better. It would make us better. It would make me better because our work would improve and that's all I did. I'd given up other offers, good offers, because the awards and the praise came from how we fought against each other and loved each other and produced beautiful work. I think he even asked me after an awards ceremony, whilst I was taking my heels off, and at that moment I knew it was the only way we'd get any better. And that's all I wanted. I kept watching as others folded as the years went by and I kept my hand close to my chest, my cards of a romantic lifestyle and a crazy job and a loving husband. Then we came here. And they wanted us but Robin couldn't deliver. And the lifestyle dried up, and the job was dwindling away into workshops and lectures and appearing at events as the person I had once been without evidence to back it up any more. And then I went to Paris because someone said it would work there. And Robin and me we said we'd make it work. We said we loved each other enough, even though we couldn't stand the sight of each other anymore. So we did it. And it was great sometimes but it was mostly awful. Nobody wanted me anymore. My age, my dependence on my husband's material, my duo status... It was hard. Being the wife of a man people know is hard, even if they

know you too. Nobody thinks you can really do it. People forget what it is that made you because of the ring on your finger. But I kept that last card close to me, the king of hearts, my bloody husband, and he e-mailed me photos of model railways and the seaside and I remembered why I left but I remembered why I hadn't left him. But he never sent me work. And then I realised he needed a kick up the arse, and then I realised I wanted to give him that kick because I needed him. I hate that, it's the 21<sup>st</sup> century I'm in my 50s and I still need my husband but we all need people, don't we? For the first time I needed him. And I came back here... And I realised I wasn't holding him. He was holding me. And he threw me off. Last night he completely discarded me in everything but contractual obligation. And I fear when he comes down for breakfast I'm not going to be able to cope because it'll be a stranger. A stranger with my husband's face. And he'll finally have felt something he can write about and maybe we'll work again. But we won't work together.

REGAN: Leave.

MELISSA: Where? Paris again?

REGAN: There must be something else.

MELISSA: Probably. But I don't know if I have the strength anymore.

REGAN: You don't seem weakened.

MELISSA: Exactly. Seem.

REGAN: ... Tea?

MELISSA: No thanks.

REGAN: Gin?

MELISSA LAUGHS. PAUSE.

REGAN: Does he know how you feel?

MELISSA: Oh yes. I doubt he would have done it if he did.

REGAN: That's harsh.

MELISSA: I didn't mean it to be. I don't think I have harshness in me anymore.

REGAN: Just wait until you see Kit again, he brings it out in you.

MELISSA: He does seem to do that, doesn't he? Divine things from within. It's not a nice feeling to know everything about everyone but he really makes sure that's what happens.

PAUSE.

REGAN: I don't know what I'm doing here.

MELISSA: By the sea?

REGAN: For a start. Oh God, who the fuck am I?

SHE STARTS TO CRY. EVENTUALLY MELISSA HOLDS HER. IN THIS MOMENT, MELISSA IS A MOTHER.

REGAN: I'm so sorry, I don't deserve to cry. I didn't go through a genocide or anything-

MELISSA: If we all looked at other people's problems we'd never cry, and that would be an awful world.

REGAN: And you're not crying, and I'm-

MELISSA: But I wish I could. My God I wish I could.

CRYING CONTINUES. EVENTUALLY...

REGAN: I used to love the sea.

MELISSA: I fucking hate it. Smug prick.

REGAN LAUGHS.

REGAN: None of this matters. None of this will be in a history book. None of this will be in the papers. None of this will make anybody do anything more than express mild concern.

MELISSA: I learnt long ago not to judge my pain by how other people quantify it. Sometimes the audience are wrong about the quality of the dancing. Nobody liked Rite of Spring, after all.

REGAN: I don't get it.

MELISSA: I'll play it.

REGAN: Won't we wake the others up?

MELISSA: Do we care?

REGAN: You're right. Play that funky music white girl.

MELISSA: Don't do that again.

THEY LAUGH. MELISSA PUTS THE MUSIC ON. THEY DANCE AROUND THE LIVING ROOM, REGAN WARMING UP AND JOINING IN AFTER SOME INITIAL ENCOURAGEMENT.

ROBIN ENTERS TO FIND THEM DANCING. REGAN SPOTS HIM FIRST, STOPPING, THEN MELISSA DOES, BUT SHE KEEPS GOING. ROBIN EVENTUALLY SWITCHES OFF THE MUSIC.

MELISSA: So sorry, was I an inconvenience?

ROBIN: That's not-

REGAN: Everybody's up.

ROBIN: Everybody?

MELISSA: Everybody. Apparently. Though some haven't shown their faces.

REGAN: He popped down earlier for tea.

MELISSA: And then?

REGAN: He went back upstairs.

MELISSA: Ah. Breakfast in bed.

MELISSA STANDS THERE LAUGHING AT HIS INSOLENT BEFORE STARING TOWARDS THE DOOR. ROBIN STOPS HER AND SHE BEATS HIM OFF.

MELISSA: Don't you fucking stop me.

ROBIN: Not now. We have an interview to do.

MELISSA: Yes, for an opera you've not yet fucking written.

REGAN: You've not written it yet?

ROBIN: ... No. But it's coming along. I started it.

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM.

MELISSA: Honestly?  
ROBIN: Honestly. This morning. An aria just kind of-  
MELISSA: After that?  
ROBIN: Probably, yes.

MELISSA NODS.

ROBIN: No more trying to throttle him?  
MELISSA: That is a big promise to make.

GABE ENTERS.

GABE: (forced comedy) Please, spare me, no hands around the neck-  
MELISSA: Not you.  
GABE: I always think threats are aimed at me, journalist and all-  
ROBIN: Yep that's why. Because you're a *journalist*.

GABE LOOKS AT HIM.

GABE: So would you like to start the interview now?  
MELISSA: Yes. I would.  
REGAN: Melissa-  
MELISSA: Yes. I would.  
GABE: Jorgstrom?  
ROBIN: Fine for me.  
GABE: Excellent. Ah, and you made the tea just as we planned, excellent work Regan.

REGAN SAYS NOTHING TO HIS PATRONISING REMARK.

GABE: Shall we all?

GABE, ROBIN AND MELISSA PULL AROUND THE COFFEE TABLE WITH THE DICTOPHONE ON.  
REGAN SITS NEARBY.

GABE: I'm here in the lovely coastal home of Robin Jorgstrom and wife Melissa, his long-suffering

partner in crime, to talk to them about their next project.

ROBIN LOOKS TO MELISSA, WHO RETURNS HIS GAZE.

ROBIN: We are.

MELISSA: Yep. We are.

ROBIN: How long ago did you mention to Gabe about-

MELISSA: Straight after you told me you were really into the writing of it. A week or two ago?

ROBIN: Oh yes. Then.

MELISSA: Yes.

GABE: So... Care to talk about it?

ROBIN: Oh I... I couldn't go into too much detail.

GABE: Anything at all?

MELISSA: It's about compromise.

A PAUSE. ROBIN AND MELISSA LOOK TO EACH OTHER.

ROBIN: Yes. It is. It's about what you do to make things happen. It's about ambition.

MELISSA: And love.

ROBIN: We both have our respective versions of it in our minds, we want to contrast our respective versions of the classic story, you know-

GABE: What classic story?

MELISSA: Psyche. People who fall in love who shouldn't, what people do to avoid the authorities to prevent that love, and what people will do to prove themselves, you know-

ROBIN: It should be really interesting.

GABE: Why now, then? What's it bringing to the table?

ROBIN: It's... It's coming from a feeling that's really new. I'm finding my voice is coming out of somewhere far more original this time around.

GABE: Well after the reviews of Jove as a Comforter, that's probably ideal.

MELISSA: The revival or the original?

GABBE AND ROBIN: The revival.

MELISSA: Oh, that's alright.

ROBIN: Melissa doesn't choreograph the revivals, but I still wrote them, so she's happy to hear the criticism.

MELISSA: Not happy. Just less involved.

GABE: Speaking of mercenary feelings Melissa, how did Paris go?

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM AS IF MILDLY OFFENDED.

MELISSA: I'm sorry?

GABE: Paris. How was Paris?

MELISSA: ... It was fine.

GABE: How was the work?

MELISSA: Rare. Like a good steak.

GABE: But unlike steaks, doesn't work tend to need to be well done?

ROBIN: Nice one.

MELISSA: No, it's not. It was well done, the reviewers loved it.

GABE: It's hard to do musical theatre choreography badly.

MELISSA: Musical theatre is just as much of a challenge as opera. It's far more intertwined in their theatre, after all.

GABE: So are you saying that opera doesn't need dance?

MELISSA: Well... No, it doesn't need dance?

GABE: So why does Robin need you?

ROBIN GRIPS MELISSA'S KNEE.

MELISSA: I suppose he doesn't.

ROBIN: Yes. He does.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

ROBIN: Opera is very easy to just wash over you. Dance helps to mix it up. Melissa helps make opera become as multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory, almost, as modern musicals. That's what people need.

GABE: I see.

MELISSA MOUTHS THANK YOU TO HIM.

GABE: You seem very confident in your working partnership.

MELISSA: We are.

GABE: What about your marital one?

ROBIN: I'm sorry?

GABE: Your marriage? There are rumours.

KIT RE-ENTERS.

MELISSA: I didn't realise you were writing for The Daily Mail.

GABE: I'm not. People care, regardless of what they read. Everybody loves a tragedy.

ROBIN: I'm sorry, can you strike that?

GABE: From the recording? I can't strike voice recordings.

ROBIN: Well don't include it, any of it, that's just-

GABE: You seem to be ignoring the question.

MELISSA: Because it's a shit question.

GABE: I don't think it is- it's phrased correctly, it's a relevant topic, you two ARE married. So come on. What's happening there?

ROBIN: Nothing.

MELISSA: As in nothing unusual.

ROBIN: Exactly, we are still married, we are still fine.

GABE: Of course you are.

MELISSA: What are you doing?

GABE: I'm just saying... I've been with you for the last eighteen hours, or so? And I think it's pretty clear that nothing is exactly fine.

ROBIN: This isn't an interview any more-

GABE: No, it's investigative journalism.

MELISSA: Oh fuck off-

GABE: Alright. I'll fuck off without you explaining anything about it shall I? Because I know what I've seen. Regan knows.

REGAN: Don't bring me into this-

GABE: Care to justify yourselves before I construct the article? Not like I have anyone to oversee what I write, it gets published if I think it's good prose and I'm a big fan of myself.

PAUSE.

REGAN: You're a prick.

GABE: As if you didn't know that before.

REGAN: No. I didn't.

PAUSE.

GABE: So. Is everything fine? Go on.

PAUSE.

ROBIN: Yes.

PAUSE.

GABE: Very well.

PAUSE.

GABE: Any plans to start a family?

MELISSA: No, not really. We're happy as we are.

GABE: Of course.

MELISSA: We are.

GABE: Early set menopause, wasn't it? That's what I heard a while ago.

MELISSA: It's not early set, I'm in my 50s-

GABE: But you weren't when you found out.

PAUSE.

MELISSA: No. I wasn't.

GABE: So no children, but at least an opera.

ROBIN: We're good at creating something.

MELISSA: For god's sake-

GABE: And what is it that kept you from writing it for so long? Was it Melissa darting off to France?

ROBIN: No, we all hit a wall, that's it-

GABE: Of course. When we no longer know who we are we no longer find our voice, do we?

ROBIN: What are you implying?

KIT: You know full well what he's implying.

GABE: Yes, you both do.

KIT: Don't suggest that it has anything to do with his work. It doesn't.

GABE: Alright-

KIT: And don't try and portray it as some sort of rotting disease at the centre of these two. Because it's not.

GABE: No, I certainly don't think what Robin's been going through is the virus in this relationship.

KIT: How dare you!

GABE: Well, I'm right, aren't I? Look what you've done around here, sorry, for the record this is Kit... What's your surname? For the interview?

KIT: Why don't you just check your subscriber list.

GABE: Oh that's far too long a list. Some of us have quite a lot of fans, you see.

KIT: You smug prick.

GABE: Maybe that's what Regan saw in both of us.

REGAN: What are you doing?

GABE: Trying to get the article out, because none of you are saying what needs to be said, are you? I came here because you told me to help advertise this opera, Melissa, but I think we all know it's not being written because someone over here-

ROBIN: It is being written. Now.

GABE: Oh wonderful. And have you told her about the letters?

MELISSA: What letters?

GABE: I had a look in the bureau last night. You should probably let her know.

MELISSA: About what?

ROBIN: Nothing, I'll tell you later-

GABE: It's always later with you. Always later.

MELISSA: You are a terrible interviewer!

GABE: (dryly) Oh, right through the heart!

KIT: Do you even understand what it is to have to go through what Robin did? Especially how late he did?

GABE: No, of course I-

KIT: Because I do. I'm lucky, you know, it happened to me at university, when it was new to me and new to everyone else and it didn't change anything. But you still feel impossibly guilty, like you've been found out for cheating at a game or something, and you start feeling like you're dirty or wrong because everyone makes you feel like you should feel something about it. And sometimes you throw everything at the women because if you love one of them then you're cured, thank god, you're cured, but just because you try with all your heart to love this woman more than you've ever loved any woman before, even if you pile hatred on them for not giving you the same level of love back, you know deep down that you love them just the same as you love the phantom gender that you can't stop staring at in the street or fantasising about under the covers. So forgive me for thinking he needs to learn to stop being afraid and actually

embrace it. Because if it wasn't me it would be some randomer on a random night and the feelings would all just be left hanging about in the air with no one to help them through it. Better it's me. And better it's happened at all and we can discuss it instead of placing a throw over it to make it look homely. So fuck you, because maybe it wasn't the right thing to do, but at least I did something. Would it be better to have let it lie?

PAUSE.

MELISSA: You've made me feel like a lie in my own home. You know that? You've made me feel like I could leave the house I gave up everything to come to with my stupid, romantic, sea-obsessed husband when all I wanted was to keep working in the city and now what did it matter? Because did he really want to do it all with me? I don't even know.

ROBIN: Of course I did.

ROBIN TAKES HER HAND.

ROBIN: I wanted you to come with me for a reason. Because I'm nothing without you. Ever since the first morning I woke up beside you and I knew I never wanted to sleep alone again. Ever since we went to that pub with your best friend on that double date and you rested your head on my shoulder and played with my hand in front of them and I kissed you on the head and you let out a little purr of contentment. Ever since then. Ever since I got up one day and realised that loving you wasn't an act anymore, it was just something I did, it was just a fact- the day was Wednesday, the sky was blue and I loved Melissa- ever since then. I never wanted anybody else.

MELISSA: What about him?

ROBIN: It could have been anybody.

KIT: Could it?

ROBIN LOOKS AT HIM. THE LOOK IS ALMOST LIKE AN ATTEMPT TO CONVEY HE DOESN'T REALLY MEAN IT, BUT THEN HE STEELS HIMSELF.

ROBIN: It could have been. Though I'm glad it was with you.

GABE SWITCHES OFF THE DICTOPHONE.

GABE: I've got what I need.

REGAN: Delete that entire interview.

GABE: Why? I can remember the gist anyway. Would you rather I paraphrase?

HE TURNS TO MELISSA.

GABE: I presume this is the end of our friendship.

MELISSA GETS UP AND SLAPS HIM ROUND THE FACE.

GABE: Well it's been a blast.

ROBIN: Sacrificing all these years just to get what you want.

GABE: I got my interview. You got the boy. We all do it.

HE GOES TO THE BUREAU. ROBIN DOESN'T STOP HIM. HE GETS OUT A SERIES OF ENVELOPES AND HANDS THEM TO MELISSA.

GABE: For you.

MELISSA: You shouldn't have.

GABE: (looking at Robin) You're right. *I* shouldn't.

HE STARTS HEADING TO THE DOOR.

MELISSA: See you in hell.

GABE: See you in print.

GABE LEAVES. HE DRIVES OFF.

REGAN: Oh god...

ROBIN: You should go.

REGAN: Yes. Yes, I...

SHE TURNS TO KIT.

REGAN: I still think you've been the world's biggest prick... But call me?

KIT: ... Alright.

REGAN: As friends. Obviously.

KIT: Obviously.

REGAN: ... Cool. I've been missing uni, you know...

KIT: I'll call tomorrow.

REGAN NODS AND LOOKS AT THE OTHERS. THEY  
NOD AT HER.

REGAN: God... The office is going to be so awkward on  
Monday.

SHE HEADS OUT TO GET HER STUFF.

KIT: I... I need a cigarette.

KIT HEADS OUT INTO THE GARDEN. MELISSA  
OPENS THE ENVELOPES. ROBIN GETS UP.

ROBIN: Whatever you want to do when you've finished  
reading those... I won't stop you.

MELISSA: That bad?

ROBIN SAYS NOTHING AND LEAVES THROUGH TO  
THE KITCHEN. MELISSA STARTS READING  
THEM. HER FACE SLOWLY FALLS. KIT RE-  
ENTERS.

KIT: What do they say?

MELISSA: Nothing for you to care about.

KIT: Is it about Robin?

MELISSA: It's about me and Robin.

KIT: Then I care about part of it.

MELISSA: Are you still genuinely thinking you can talk to  
me like that after everything you've done?

KIT: I'm just waiting for you to say thank you.

MELISSA LOOKS AT HIM. IN A SPLIT SECOND  
SHE HAS DROPPED THE LETTERS AND  
ENVELOPES AND LEAPT AT KIT. SHE KNOCKS  
HIM TO THE FLOOR AND PROCEEDS TO BEAT  
HIM. ROBIN COMES BACK IN BUT DOES NOT  
STOP HER. HE STANDS THERE AND DRINKS A  
GLASS OF WINE. EVENTUALLY KIT THROWS HER  
OFF AND STOPS TO BREATHE. HE TURNS TO  
ROBIN

KIT: Do you want to take a crack at me too?

MELISSA: He already got his turn.

KIT: Fuck you.

MELISSA: No thanks, the club's a bit full.

A TENSE PAUSE. SHE'S ABOUT TO SAY  
SOMETHING/DO SOMETHING WHEN ROBIN STOPS  
HER.

ROBIN: Let me, Melissa.

MELISSA: I want to watch.

ROBIN: No.

HE LOOKS TO MELISSA.

MELISSA: You're not getting off this easily.

ROBIN: I'm not trying to get off with anything.

MELISSA: Makes a fucking change.

ROBIN: MELISSA. PLEASE. Just a few minutes.

MELISSA: I'm setting the microwave to three minutes. And  
then I'm back in. And if he's still here-

ROBIN: Fine.

MELISSA LEAVES. ROBIN TURNS TO KIT.

ROBIN: I'm sorry.

KIT: It's fine, I've had worse.

ROBIN: That's not... I think you know what I really mean.

KIT: Do I?

ROBIN: Yes.

KIT: Then why don't you say it.

ROBIN CAN'T.

KIT: Fuck's sake, why is it always up to me to get  
everything out in the open?

ROBIN: Oh don't-

KIT: Well it's true, isn't it? When was the last time you ever just said what you fucking-

ROBIN: Get out of my house.

A PAUSE.

KIT: I'm sorry?

ROBIN: Get out of my house. Now. Don't worry about rent, just pack your bags and go.

PAUSE.

KIT: You don't mean that.

ROBIN: Yes. I do.

KIT: You need to say it, for her, but you don't mean it.

ROBIN: She's not in the room, Kit. This is me.

KIT: (all composure gone) No it's fucking not! The last few months? That was you. That was you all over. This? I don't know what this is. It's like somebody drained you of all your life as soon as that woman stepped through the door, I'm sorry but-

ROBIN: It was good while it lasted.

KIT: It wasn't good, it was fucking fantastic.

ROBIN: It was good while it lasted.

KIT: It. Was. Fucking. Fantastic.

THEY ARE EYE TO EYE NOW. KIT IS DESPERATE FOR ANYTHING FROM HIM. ROBIN'S BOTTOM LIP IS QUIVERING.

ROBIN: Yes. It was.

THEY HUG. IT IS LONG, AND THERE IS KISSING OF NECKS AND HEADS. THERE IS RUNNING OF FINGERS THROUGH HAIR. IT IS A FAREWELL. THEY PART. ROBIN'S EYES ARE SPARKLING.

ROBIN: Thank you.

KIT: No problem at all.

ROBIN: Just... Thank you.

KIT: No. Really. It's fine. Honestly. I'm glad I could help.

THEY HUG AGAIN. IT IS, AGAIN, LONG. THEY PART.

KIT: I did... I did help, didn't I?

ROBIN: We'll see.

KIT: Please just tell me I did.

ROBIN: I can't lie to you.

KIT: You did. For three months. When you told me you-

ROBIN: Don't. Don't say it.

KIT: Why. She's not in the room, remember?

THEY STAND THERE, ON THE VERGE OF SOMETHING. KIT GOES IN FOR A KISS.

ROBIN: No.

KIT: Just one.

ROBIN: I'm married-

KIT: You were married before. You were married last night. A farewell?

ROBIN KISSES HIM. IT IS DESPERATE AND WANTED FROM HIM. KIT TREASURES EVERY SECOND.

KIT: I've never liked a man like I came to like you. Honestly. You'll always... I'm sorry.

ROBIN: You shouldn't have to be.

KIT IS ABOUT TO LEAVE.

ROBIN: Last night was... So special.

KIT: I watched you... I watched you when you thought I'd gone to sleep. I saw you get up, and sit in your chair, in your pyjamas, and you sat and stared at me and then you put your head in your hands and cried. Then you went to the toilet and you threw up. I heard it all. I felt it all.

ROBIN: That wasn't because I didn't like it.

KIT: I know... I did the same thing, my first time...

A PAUSE.

ROBIN: I used to donate blood all the time. I can't now.

KIT: For once you did something for yourself. That's a good thing.

ROBIN: I'm always doing things for me. I moved here for me. I sure as hell didn't move here for Melissa, she fucking hates it.

KIT: Give her some good memories then.

ROBIN: After this?

KIT: Clean the slate. Or something. I don't know, I'm not married, what can I fucking add?

ROBIN: ... Thank you.

KIT: ... Just.... Talk to me about it. Or talk to somebody about it. E-mail me. Phone me. Fucking... Don't go silent again when I leave. The most important thing is to talk about it.

ROBIN: I know. I know.

PAUSE.

ROBIN: Where will you go?

KIT: Dunno. I haven't got anyone really.

KIT LETS HIS SAYING OF THIS SINK IN FOR A SECOND, INCLUDING TO HIMSELF.

KIT: Fuck. Where am I gonna go?

ROBIN: You'll be fine.

KIT: Of course I will. There's always another you somewhere along the coast.

THERE'S A MOMENT WHERE KIT MIGHT GO BACK AND KISS ROBIN. HE DOESN'T. HE GOES UP TO HIS ROOM. ROBIN SITS IN THE LIVING ROOM AND SILENTLY BEGINS TO CRY AS KIT GETS HIS THINGS AND LEAVES THE HOUSE. THE MICROWAVE GOES OFF. MELISSA RE-ENTERS. SHE SEES THAT KIT HAS LEFT AND LETS OUT A SMALL BREATH OF RELIEF. THEN SHE REMEMBERS THE LETTERS, COLLECTS THEM

FROM THE FLOOR ONE BY ONE, AND READS THE  
FIRST LINES TO ROBIN.

MELISSA: Dear Mr Jergstrom, due to an absence of new work as stipulated in our contract with you, we will no longer be able to maintain our working relationship.

PAUSE.

MELISSA: I'd read them all out but they all start the same, don't they? There's one from Glyndebourne. One from the ENO. One from my agent. One from our usual libretto binders. One from most of our previous collaborators or employees in one way, shape or form really. Not always for the same reasons. But everybody's said it, haven't they?

ROBIN: Yep.

MELISSA: They don't want us anymore, do they?

ROBIN SHAKES HIS HEAD.

MELISSA: ... Did you ever even write anything?

ROBIN NODS. HE GETS UP AND GOES OVER TO THE PIANO AND PLAYS A BEAUTIFUL, PAINFUL ARIA. MAYBE SOMEBODY SINGS. MAYBE MELISSA DANCES IN HER REVERIE. REGARDLESS, THE SONG ENDS AND MELISSA IS TERRIBLY MOVED.

MELISSA: That sounded like how I feel right now.

ROBIN: Ditto.

ROBIN CONTINUES TO CRY.

MELISSA: You'll get over it.

ROBIN: It?

MELISSA: Precisely.

ROBIN LOOKS AT HER.

ROBIN: You really don't get it, do you? Kit left, but what happened... That still means something.

MELISSA: I thought you'd want a fresh start.

ROBIN: I want us to be ok. I don't want us to be hiding anything again.

MELISSA: Well then what do you want me to do? Find you a stream of young men to fuck behind my back?

ROBIN: That's not what I'm saying! Please, Melissa, stop behaving as if I decided I was bisexual to spite you, that's not what happened. We just... We can't be the same as we were before.

MELISSA: You drag me down here, you take me from everything, you fuck up our careers, you stick a knife in our fucking marriage, I just-

ROBIN: And when did you ever try and stop me?

MELISSA: Sorry that I love you.

ROBIN: I'm sorry too.

ROBIN OFFERS A HAND. MELISSA TAKES IT.

MELISSA: What next?

ROBIN SHRUGS. THE SCENE FADES, LEAVING ONLY THE SEA.