

# Love Birds

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## OPENING CREDITS

An LP sleeve is lifted into frame, it is a Queen album.

The vinyl is slid out and placed onto a turntable, the needle is lowered and the intro of the Queen song "WHO WANTS TO LIVE FOREVER?" creeps in.

*There's no time for us,*

*There's no place for us,*

2

A LAKE. -- EARLY MORNING

2

Fade up to a crisp morning. Mid-may. Hunting season. A light layer of mist hangs over a small in-land lake. The music creates an ethereal mood.

*What is this thing that builds our dreams,*

*Yet slips away from us,*

*Who wants to live forever, Who wants to live forever....?*

Two HUNTERS trudge through the waist-high undergrowth around the water's edge. These men are seasoned hunters - with camouflage clothes and 12 gauge shotguns. We never see their faces.

Beside one of the hunters bounces an eager Golden Retriever barely containing his excitement about being on the hunt. Over this ideal scene the title appears.

## "Love Birds"

3

DOUG'S HOUSE. -- EARLY MORNING

3

As the music builds the camera drifts through vignettes of photos and mementos.

On the mantle over a gas fireplace sit two urns. Between them hangs a photo of Doug's parents standing either side of what must be a 10yr old Doug (eerily taken against the same wall of the room).

A headphone jack is plugged in, and as the head phones are put on we pull out to reveal DOUGLAS GORDON an average-looking bloke.

We are in a classic New Zealand bungalow, built around a hundred years ago. Its furnishings represent a clash of cultures: inappropriately modern furniture, garish drapes and sentimental prints among which the framed Queen concert poster looks out of place.

Doug walks across the room and into the kitchen, stretching the headphone cord to its limit. He drops tea bags then pours hot water into two mugs, one labeled 'Doug' and a second 'Susan'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Placing Susan's mug on the edge of the bench Doug picks up a cloth and returns to the job of polishing an LP. (a red colored vinyl of 'The Game' very rare). As he listens to the music now and then a lyric or two spill from his lips.

4 A LAKE. -- MORNING

4

A pair of Paradise Shelducks, handsome creatures, male and female, enter the water with a waddle and immediately become graceful little galleons, paddling out. Then, as if by mutual agreement, they start to beat across the surface, trailing V's behind them, rising powerfully into the air, wheeling to head off down the long narrow lake, a classic image against the brightening sky.

Up in the sky two ducks fly in formation.

The male duck - the drake - has a black head with a greenish gloss, the body is dark grey barred with black. The undertail and tertials are orange chestnut. The female duck has a white head and her body is a bright orange chestnut. Beautiful, native New Zealand birds.

5 LAKESIDE. -- MORNING

5

The Hunters wait, crouched in the reeds. One unwraps some packed sandwiches. The dog looks on hungrily.

6 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- MORNING

6

Doug's girlfriend SUSAN walks into the kitchen. She is holding a pink suitcase and vanity bag she puts them down by the door.

She's a pretty woman with steely blue eyes. She's made up and dressed. Dressed for business. She turns, considers Doug, then takes a deep breath.

SUSAN

Don't forget today is rubbish day.

Doug's face lights up when he notices her.

DOUG

(Too loud)

Morning, teas on the bench!

Susan winces and gestures to the headphones. Doug realises.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Oh sorry.

He takes them off and drops them around his neck.

SUSAN

Rubbish day? (Doug nods) And the power and water needs paying. I'm leaving some money towards it here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug looks to where the money is, then for the first time he notices Susan's suitcase by the door.

DOUG  
(Innocently)  
Going somewhere hon?

SUSAN  
Well yes, Actually I am, (beat) I'm  
leaving you Douglas.

Bang! A shot rings out. The booming reverberation of...

7 A LAKE. -- MORNING

7

A shotgun blast. The female duck is hit. She wheels and falls out of the sky. The Retriever dives into the water and swims after the dead bird. The drake, confused, starts circling in the air. Shrieking an alarm call. Calling desperately for his mate. We see the POV of a gun sight being trained on the male bird.

8 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- MORNING

8

Doug is obviously not expecting this, his mouth opens and closes as if he's trying to find the words.

She delivers her message gently.

SUSAN  
I'll be staying at Zara's, I'll  
come back and pick up the rest of  
my stuff later.

There is a toot outside, a car is waiting. Susan turns and makes her way to the front door.

Doug stands and takes a step towards her the headphone cable again stretches to its limit, in effect leashing Doug. The stereo moves dislodging the needle, it scratches across the record to the end.

DOUG  
That's it? But why? I don't  
understand.

Susan shakes her head and sighs.

SUSAN  
Please Doug...

DOUG  
Is it something I've done?

SUSAN  
It's more what you haven't done,  
you're stuck, and I need more, I'm  
sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug looks confused, this only serves to aggravate Susan.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
 For gods sake Doug, you're still in  
 your parents house, your jobs going  
 nowhere and when your not at that  
 stupid pub quiz with your mates,  
 you sit there polishing those  
 bloody Queen LP's.

There is a flicker of hurt when she mentions the music but  
 Doug forges on.

DOUG  
 (pleading)  
 But Susan you can't go... I love  
 you.

SUSAN  
 Douglas please.

DOUG  
 I promise, I'll change...I'll sort  
 it.

Susan opens the door and sunlight floods in on her bathing  
 her face with golden light. She looks at it and it gives her  
 new strength.

SUSAN  
 (sadly)  
 Nothing has changed in two  
 years..(reconsiders) except me.

DOUG  
 No, no you haven't...

He tries - in desperation - to take her hand. As he steps  
 forward the lead from the headphones pops out of the stereo  
 and slingshots past Doug forcing Susan to duck as it narrowly  
 misses her smashing into a photo of Doug and Susan in happier  
 times, knocking it to the floor. Susan steels herself.

SUSAN  
 (With finality)  
 I just don't want to be in this  
 relationship any more.

Susan exits slamming the door.

Bang! Another shot rings out.

Feathers fly from the male duck's wing, it reels in the air,  
 barely flying - then drops out of sight.

10 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- MORNING 10

Doug stands there in utter disbelief. The room suddenly seems very big.

Shell-shocked and teary Doug picks up the fallen photo, and sadly assesses the damage. He looks at the other photos on the wall and his eyes rest on one of himself (younger) with his arm around the shoulder of another man, they are laughing and dressed in University capping garb.

11 INT. CRAIG'S OFFICE. -- AFTERNOON 11

Craig (the friend in Doug's photo) is on his computer. Playing solitaire. There's a knock at his door. AMANDA - his P.A. leans in.

AMANDA

Mr Watson. There's someone to see you, he say's he's a friend.

Doug peeks in. He's still wearing the same clothes we saw him in before.

CRAIG

Flash? Come in, come in.

Doug shambles in. A broken man.

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Man, I haven't seen you since um... How are you, you look good. How's Susan?

DOUG

She left me.

CRAIG

Oh, that's terrible, but lets face it, she always was higher octane than your engine was designed for... I mean, it's a stinker but maybe it's for the best.

DOUG

For the best? I love her, I thought we were a pair, a couple.

Craig rounds the desk and puts a consoling arm around Doug.

CRAIG

Look, Flash. You want my advice? Get on with your life, there's an ocean of gorgeous, sexy, fun loving babes out there. Take a plunge.

Craig begins to usher Doug toward the door...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Now I'm really am snowed under.  
Shouldn't you be at work too?

DOUG

Yeah I guess so.

CRAIG

That's the spirit mate. Get on with  
your life. Onward and outward! Give  
me a ring sometime and we'll grab a  
beer.

Before he realises it Doug has been ushered out of the room.  
Craig closes the door leaving Doug standing, alone, in the  
hallway.

12

EXT. ROAD GANG. -- DAY/AFTERNOON

12

Roadworks. A busy road has been dug up. Cars are forced to  
crawl past at a snail's pace. A huge hole has been ripped up  
and it's sectioned off. There's a digger here and a truck.  
Lots of equipment. This is Doug's place of work.

The digger (equipped with the drill) is boring into the  
ground. Doug has the survey map in his hands. We see his  
workmates.

BRENT is a bloke with a real rockabilly style about him.  
Slicked hair, sideburns and tattoos to match. He's always got  
a ciggie tucked behind his ear.

KANGA is all brawn and muscle. He carries himself like a  
rugby prop. Kanga is not the sharpest tool in this box.

GURNEESH is an Indian. He's a sikh so he wears a turban. His  
appearance belies the fact he's actually a lot funnier and a  
great deal smarter than anyone else who works here.

Kanga operates the digger. Suddenly a spout of brown water  
comes bursting out of the hole. Everyone runs for cover.

Gurneesh points out that Doug has the map upside down. He  
turns it around for him.

Next we see the lads cleaning up the aftermath. Doug is  
getting a dressing down from his boss - RAY. Ray is a short,  
fat man with an unpleasant face. Doug is silent through the  
reprimand.

RAY

What the hell is wrong with you  
Doug? Eyes on the ball mate. You're  
supposed to be my number one guy!  
This is unacceptable! Unacceptable!  
Maybe I should find you a job you  
can't screw up!

CUT TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug is holding the stop/go sign. He stands there with a glazed expression. The sign reads "Stop." He's been relegated to this.

There is a line of cars behind him, he is jolted out of his daze by a car horn. Realising his lapse he quickly turns the sign around, the irate motorist utters abuse at the sheepish Doug as he drives by.

13

DOUG'S HOUSE. -- EVENING

13

Doug enters the house flops onto the couch and sighs, his eyes drift up to the photo's on the wall, they seem strangely haunting now, reminders of a life that was. Doug stands and walks over to the photo's.

He removes the photographs of him and Susan together and puts them into a box. He then notices other nick-nacks that obviously belong to Susan and packs them also.

Doug is now on autopilot and proceeds to pack anything and everything that belongs to Susan, we see snippets of his progress as he works.

Doug empties the washing machine and puts the clothes in the dryer.

There is now a big pile of boxes and stuff by the front door. On top are the photos in the frames of her and him together. Everything that gave the room any life is gone.

Doug looks at the now emotionally empty room.

Doug picks up the phone and calls Susan. It rings and then clicks straight to answer-phone.

SUSAN (O.S.)

Hi this is Susan leave a message.

DOUG

(Awkward, uncomfortable)

It's Doug. UM, can you call me? I think we should talk about this..us.. Ah... Okay...

(A beat, quietly)

I love you.

He hangs up and then cringes. Not a good message to leave. Doug sighs, sits back in his chair

A song creeps in. A Queen song. "IT'S A HARD LIFE."

14

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE. -- LATER

14

*...How it hurts - deep inside,*

*When your love has cut you down to size...*

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

A record is turning on the record player. Doug is holding the broken photograph of him and Susan together. She looks beautiful. Beside him is a half dozen empty beer bottles, he finishes the one in his hand and puts the bottle down. He stands and starts singing along to the song - loudly, and passionately.

*...Life is tough - on your own.*

CUT TO: High floating POV falling towards the roof.

*Now I'm waiting for something to fall from the skies...*

There is a crash and thump on the roof which jolts Doug from his reverie.

Doug lifts the needle from the record and looks around nervously.

He can hear other sounds, something coming from the roof but mostly loud barking outside the back door.

The barking outside now growing frenzied. Doug snaps and screams.

DOUG

Shut up you stupid mongrel!

But the barking persists.

15

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

15

Doug is a little drunk as he comes out to confront a raggedy-ass black dog which is barking maniacally, its eyes trained on something above Doug's head. It backs off a little as he shouts at it but it's only when he produces a broom and swings as if that it runs off a ways, then stops, starts barking again. Doug chases it out over the backyard, swinging the broom. Then he turns back to the house. That's when he sees the object of the dog's attention.

On the gutter, a DUCK perches, one wing hanging lower than the other. Doug stares at it, comes closer, his own concerns momentarily forgotten.

DOUG

What are you doing up there? You hurt?

The Duck stares down at him. Then the dog begins barking again, and the Duck tries to scramble up the roof but slips back and almost falls off the gutter.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Hold up, hold up.

And he turns, chases the dog again and then, from a small shed at the bottom of the yard he fetches a step ladder, brings it back to the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pops it against the wall, climbs up. That duck immediately tries to escape but only gets so far before sliding back down, but a ways further over so Doug has to lean across to try and reach it. The duck evades him and as he stretches further the ladder tilts and he has to grab the gutter to prevent toppling over. Then the ladder slips away and he is left hanging on to the edge of the roof, face to face with the equally panicked duck.

Beneath him the dog has reappeared and is leaping up, snapping and barking. The duck pecks at him and he lets himself drop, grabbing hold of the gutter with both hands.

The guttering breaks away and he falls to the ground and the duck with the restraint of the gutter gone, falls on top of him.

Doug lies, the duck flapping on his chest, the dog lunging in. In a panic the duck defecates on his chest, then goes scuttling off into the house, pursued by the dog.

Doug, shaken and shit-covered, gets up, chases after the two of them.

16

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

16

The chase is chaotic and punctuated by a plentiful trail of duck poop as it runs from room to room, the dog in the frenzied pursuit.

The duck and dog head for the neatly stacked pile of Susan's belongings.

DOUG

No, NO! Stay away from...

But as the duck circles behind it the dog slides straight into it scattering things everywhere.

Finally, Doug manages to lock the duck into the bathroom and drive the dog back out. He stands, panting, in the middle of the kitchen. Then his eyes fall on his and Susan's mugs of cold tea, he stops and a sadness creeps over him.

The complaints of the duck in the bathroom snap him out of it.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Bloody duck.

He gets up and goes to the bathroom door.

The duck is making a terrible racket and he hesitates for a moment. Then he goes to a cupboard, finds a large cardboard box, comes back to the bathroom door, opens the top of the box, holds it in one hand, opens the door with the other. The duck looks out, twisting its neck to see Doug. Then it goes back into the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Come on, there is a good duck, come  
on, let's have you out of there.

But there is no sight or sound of the creature. He opens the door wide, steps in, and the duck shoots past him and the chase begins again, Doug stumbling and slipping along in its wake until he finally manages to bring the box down on it with a triumphant..

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Yes!

17 THE YARD. -- MORNING

17

This is the yard where all the vehicles and equipment are stored that the lads use on their work gangs. Doug, Gurneesh, Kanga and Brent are standing looking at the duck in the box.

They don't know what to make of this...

KANGA  
You can't keep him here, I'm sure  
there are OSH rules about this sort  
of thing.

DOUG  
What am I supposed to do? If I  
leave it at home it'll trash the  
place.

GURNEESH  
Why don't you take him to a vet?

BRENT  
Nah , vets are a bloody rip-off.

Brent takes a long considered drag on his ciggie.

BRENT (CONT'D)  
It's munted right? Maybe we should  
just, you know, put it out of it's  
misery?

Doug looks at Brent. What is he saying?

BRENT (CONT'D)  
We just close up the box and roll  
over it with the...

Brent pops a thumb in the direction of the steamroller parked behind him.

BRENT (CONT'D)  
It'll be painless.

GURNEESH  
(Shocked)  
Dude, that doesn't sound painless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug doesn't like the suggestion either.

KANGA

We can have it for lunch.

They look at him with varying degrees of incomprehension which Kanga takes as a query.

KANGA (CONT'D)

You put mud all around it, put it in a hole in the ground, build a fire over it, give it an hour, maybe less, depending on the size of the duck, then when you break open the baked mud, all the feathers come off and the guts have kept it moist.

DOUG

We're not eating it.

BRENT

It's just a bird. They're filthy animals.

Brent spits onto the tip of his ciggie putting it out, then flicks it away. Filthy animals indeed.

KANGA

Maybe you should take it to the zoo? Zoos take animals don't they?

18

THE ZOO, EDUCATION CENTER. -- DAY

18

A Pukeko sits screeching on the branch of a small tree. It struts along the branch and then flaps down onto...a desk. As we pull back - we realise we're in a huge activity room festooned with paper mache trees and colourful mobiles. There are tables set up with paints and crayons. The walls are covered in photographs and pictures of animals and birds. HOLLY creeps into the scene.

A pretty woman wearing a zoo uniform. There's a bird embroidered on the breast pocket. In one hand she holds a large net, the other is outstretched with some birdseed in it. She whistles intermittently.

HOLLY

(Soft calming)

Okay you've had your fun Mr Clever Dick. Back into your cage now eh?

The mischievous Pukeko - pulls a computer keyboard to bits. Holly creeps closer and closer.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Yes, nice and easy. I've got you now fella...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's close, about to pounce when...

The door opens with a BANG! The startled bird takes flight and knocks a couple of paint pots from a shelf.

One of them hits her and splatters down her front.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Oh, bollocks!

Fuming, she looks around to see who's responsible. Doug stands there awkwardly holding the duck in a box.

Irritated, Holly wipes at her top.

DOUG  
I'm, ah, looking for the bird expert, keeper person.

Holly, distracted, peels off her shirt. Doug averts his eyes as she strips to a tight tank top, she balls up her shirt and casts it aside.

HOLLY  
Well you've found her, hand me one of those jackets.

Doug grabs a zoo jacket off the hooks by the door and hands it over. Holly puts it on and zips it up - the whole time watching the escaped bird.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
What can I do for you?

DOUG  
It's this duck, I think it's injured.

HOLLY  
Then you need a vet.

DOUG  
Thing is it's not really my duck.

HOLLY  
(Firmly)  
Look we're not a hospital for broken birds. Sorry.

Doug trails along after her as she moves through the room.

DOUG  
I thought you might have a bird hospital or something...

Holly doesn't even look at him. She's closing in on the Pukeko.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOLLY  
(Deadpan)  
Yeah it's right next door to the  
bird fire station... Look I'm kinda  
busy.

Holly suddenly grabs the bird which perches on the back of a chair.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Got ya!

The Pukeko squawks and flaps angrily.

19 A HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

19

Holly hurries along with the squawking box. Doug follows.

DOUG  
There must be somewhere I can take  
a duck.

HOLLY  
It's not a duck.

DOUG  
Actually I think it is.

HOLLY  
Oh so you're the bird expert now?

Holly strides faster away from him. Doug tries to keep up.

DOUG  
No, I didn't mean it like that...

Holly wheels abruptly towards a doorway...

20 INT. ZOO - EDUCATION CENTRE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

20

Open on BRENDA - a keeper. She is a nerdy looking creature who is uncomfortable talking to a group of school children.

BRENDA  
(Stilted)  
The traditional method of feeding  
zoo animals from a feed pan does  
little to stimulate complex feeding  
behaviours...

She's holding up bags of grain and feed pellets. Holly and Doug enter at the back of the room. The children all turn to stare at the squawking box and the duck. Brenda clicks her fingers to get their attention back.

HOLLY  
(Hushed)  
It's a shelduck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With difficulty, Holly gets the door of a large cage open.

DOUG  
See what do I know? It'd be much  
better off here.

Holly sighs and places the squawking box on top of the cage.  
With the other hand she hurriedly pulls out a business card.

HOLLY  
I'll give you the name of someone  
who can help.

As she scribbles something down on the back of it.

BRENDA  
Now some of the food we feed the  
animals you might not think of as  
food...

Brenda opens the freezer and produces a series of frozen,  
dead animals. She plonks them down on the table. The children  
look horrified. Brenda tries to make it better but makes it  
much worse. She holds up a cold, dead rabbit.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Look it's the Easter Bunny.

Some of the children start crying.

HOLLY  
Oh, Jesus.

Holly thrusts the card at Doug. It reads Dr Buster.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Give him a call...

With a bright, big smile Holly heads over to divert the  
children's attention.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Who'd like to see a Pukeko?

Doug is left looking at the card.

21 THE VET'S OFFICE. -- DAY

21

DR BUSTER - the vet - is an oddball character who has the air  
of "old hippy" about him with a thin goatee and skullet  
hairstyle. He has a name-tag on his jacket. Doug watches on  
with mild interest while Dr Buster examines the duck's wing.  
He quotes Edgar Allan Poe.

DR BUSTER  
Nothing further then he uttered;  
not a feather then he fluttered;  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: DR BUSTER (CONT'D)  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered,  
 "other friends have flown before -  
 On the morrow he will leave me, as  
 my hopes have flown before." Then  
 the bird said, "Nevermore."

Doug looks at him blankly.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)  
 Putangitangi , the paradise  
 shelduck, is endemic to New  
 Zealand, it is found nowhere else  
 in the world. When discovered by  
 Captain Cook, he called it the  
 Painted Duck, an inadequate  
 description, I feel...

DOUG  
 You sure know a lot about ducks.

DR BUSTER  
 (Corrects him)  
 Shelduck, Actually they have more  
 in common with geese and swans than  
 ducks.

Dr Buster nods at his bookcase filled with books on birds.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)  
 I'm a vet by trade and a twitcher  
 by volution.

DOUG  
 Twitcher?

DR BUSTER  
 (Smiles)  
 Bird watcher.  
 (Considers)  
 I've always loved birds. They do  
 something we can't - fly unaided.  
 They're rather magical animals as  
 far as I'm concerned.

The duck lets out a wet fart. Disgusted, Doug looks at it.

DOUG  
 Yeah, magical.

Dr. Buster extends the wing a little.

DR. BUSTER  
 Hmm, yes looks like he was shot. No  
 sign of a female when you found  
 him?

Doug shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

DR BUSTER

That's a shame. I'm guessing his  
mate got shot too but didn't  
survive. Many people believe they  
mate for life so when the mate  
dies, that's it. He's on his own.

Doug blinks.

22 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- DAY

22

A quick flashback of Doug standing looking out his window as  
Susan pulls away in a taxi. Leaving him alone.

23 THE VET'S OFFICE. -- DAY

23

DR BUSTER

Yep, it seems this wing is about as  
much use as the proverbial water-  
proof tea bag.

Doug is unsure how to respond.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)

I'm afraid your friend's flying  
days are over. He can't fend for  
himself so the most humane thing we  
can do is put him down.

Doug takes this in. A beat.

DOUG

Oh.

DR BUSTER

Or...

Doug looks at him, expectantly.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)

I could bind the wing and see if we  
can find him a foster home.

DOUG

That sounds okay.

DR BUSTER

But someone will need to look after  
him in the meantime.

Dr Buster looks at Doug. Doug eventually clicks that he's the  
"someone."

DOUG

How long?

DR BUSTER

A few days. A week maybe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug considers this. He's resigned to his fate.

DOUG  
(Convincing himself)  
Okay. Yep, I can do this, sure,  
what does he eat?

DR. BUSTER  
Shelducks mainly graze on grasses  
and seeds, the odd worm, but tinned  
peas will do fine.

DOUG  
Tinned peas?

24 THE SUPERMARKET. -- DAY

24

Tinned peas on the shelf. Doug is pushing a shopping cart around the aisles. Sitting in the kiddie seat of the trolley, in his box, is the duck. His wing is now bound up. The cute little animal looks around at his surroundings with a sense of excitement.

The other shoppers are amused by this sight. Doug is slightly embarrassed by all the attention. A little girl smiles in delight and points. An old woman at the deli section breaks into a grin in spite of herself.

Doug is standing by a whole row of rotisserie chickens slowly turning under hot lights. He suddenly realizes and covers the duck's eyes as they hurry away. Doug quickly collects cans of peas, bags of grain, bread crumbs and a dog bowl.

While Doug is buying his goods, the bubbly, checkout girl - smiles at Doug and the duck. Her name tag tells us her name is ROBIN.

ROBIN  
I like your duck.

Doug smiles uneasily.

ROBIN (CONT'D)  
Have you had him long?

DOUG  
No, I'm just looking after him for  
a while...

The duck fart's loudly and powerfully. Doug burns with embarrassment.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(A beat)  
It's not a permanent thing...

Doug's phone announces the arrival of a text, he checks it, it's from Susan...COMING TO GET REST OF MY STUFF NOW.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It slowly dawns on Doug the state he left her belongings in.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Oh, no...!

He bolts out.

25

DOUG'S HOUSE. -- DAY

25

Keys jingle in the lock. Susan enters with ZARA (her sister). They are shocked by what they find. The place is a mess.

ZARA  
Christ on a bike.

Susan looks around, the place has been trashed.

SUSAN  
(Shocked)  
My God. I didn't think he'd stoop  
to this. That's nuts.

ZARA  
I always thought there was  
something odd about him.

Zara picks up a piece of crap covered clothing.

ZARA (CONT'D)  
(Horror, disgust)  
Is this... (spunk)?

Susan looks down at her messy belongings lumped by the door. Anger boils up in her.

SUSAN  
He wants to trash my stuff? Fine!  
I'll bloody show him.

She walks up to his prized Queen poster.

26

EXT. ZOO - DAY

26

Holly and Brenda are watching the sea-lions from the under water viewing area.

BRENDA  
Is it true that penguins mate once  
a year?

HOLLY  
Yep.

BRENDA  
Lucky bastards.

Holly looks at her a moment, then they both laugh. Then,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Don't know what you're laughing at.  
When was the last time you got  
lucky?

HOLLY

I'm perfectly happy being a  
penguin.

They share the joke as they move off, as they walk back,  
Holly study's a nearby pond.

BRENDA

So what did that guy with the duck  
want?

Holly shakes her head, preoccupied.

HOLLY

Found it. Wanted to know what to do  
with it.

BRENDA

He was cute.

HOLLY

Well he could walk and talk.

BRENDA

Like I said, cute.

But Holly is looking at the pond, pointing.

HOLLY

This pond isn't draining properly.  
Needs a rooting out.

BRENDA

(Disgruntled)

Not the only thing around here.

And Holly, amused, rolls her eyes, laughs.

27

INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - DAY

27

Doug flies through the door, only to find the house has been  
emptied of furniture, save for a few obviously old pieces. It  
looks bereft. He stands, staring around him, then he notices  
his Queen poster trashed on the ground.

DOUG

Oh, Susan.

He puts the duck and shopping on the bench where he spots a  
note, which simply says "DON'T CONTACT ME EVER AGAIN"

He turns to the duck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG (CONT'D)  
This is all your fault!

The Duck squawks and Doug, close to tears, sits down. The phone rings and Doug jumps to answer it.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Susan?

GURNEESH (V.O.)  
Hey Flash, I guess you're not coming back today...

DOUG  
What, oh, no, it sort of all got out of hand, You know, trying to get rid of this duck, I'll see you tomorrow.

GURNEESH (V.O.)  
You'll see me tonight, mate. It's Quiz night.

Doug looks dismayed.

DOUG  
Oh, yeah, right.

GURNEESH (V.O.)  
You okay?

And for a moment Doug looks as if he might tell him, then,

DOUG  
I'm fine. I'll see you soon.

GURNEESH (V.O.)  
Hey and bring the duck, he can't be any worse than Brent or Kanga.

Doug puts the phone down. Looks at the Duck who is rooting around in the groceries.

DOUG  
Sure, make yourself at home. Or what there is left of it.

The duck looks at him and honks.

28

EXT. GARDEN BAR - EVENING

28

The outside area of a pub with tables on a big lawn, a pleasant, unpretentious place. Doug and his mates sit at a table with their beers. The Duck sits under the table grooming itself, a piece of string on one of its legs tied to the table leg. There are a number of other groups at the other tables, all competing in the Quiz.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Brent looks down at the Duck, trying to tempt it with an ashtray full of beer.

BRENT  
Does it like beer?

DOUG  
Where would a duck get beer?

Brent shrugs.

GURNEESH  
C'mon focus you lot, let's get serious.

As the QUIZ MASTER introduces the next question.

QUIZ MASTER  
The category is "All Creatures Great and Small."

BRENT  
Hey, Doug, might get a duck question.

QUIZ MASTER  
A group of bees is called what?

KANGA  
A shoal, a shoal of bees.

BRENT  
Don't be stupid it's a hive.

GURNEESH  
A hive is where they live. It's a swarm. Right, Doug?

But Doug doesn't seem to be paying attention.

GURNEESH (CONT'D)  
Right? A swarm?

DOUG  
Oh. Yeah, yeah, a swarm...

BRENT  
If you guys are wrong you're shouting the next round.

KANGA  
Not gonna happen dickjam.

BRENT  
Who you calling dickjam, numb nuts?

GURNEESH  
Hey settle, you don't see the Professors arguing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They look toward a table of older men - "The Professors" a formidable team of intellects. On the scoreboard up by the quizmaster we can see the team names. The team in front with a close-to-perfect score is "The Professors" in second place is "Men at Work".

KANGA

(Indignant)

They don't have to! They've got two  
PHDs , a bloody astronomer and a  
sports journalist!!

GURNEESH

(In awe)

Unbeatable.

QUIZMASTER

All Creatures Great and Small. I am  
an animal from greek mythology. The  
harbinger of death I take the form  
of dogs, dolphins and birds.

On the mention of birds being "harbingers of death" Doug looks at the duck. It stares right back. There's something creepy in the way it's looking at him. Unsettling. Gurneesh leans forward - excited.

GURNEESH

Psychopomp!

KANGA

A cycle pump...?

BRENT

That's not a word.

GURNEESH

Yeah I read it in a Stephen King  
book. These birds pecked a dude to  
death. They were psychopomps.

Doug looks at the duck, who still seems to be staring right at him.

BRENT

Yeah, yeah makes sense cos Birds  
are evil bastards. Dirty creatures.  
Because of, you know, the feathers.

KANGA

So how does Susan feel about having  
a "flying rat" in the house?

Doug is unnerved by this stare-down from the duck, sits silent.

GURNEESH

Doug, you ok?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Doug looks at him and out of his mouth, almost without thought comes,

DOUG  
Susan left me.

This comes as a surprise. Now the group is uncomfortable. They sits in awkward silence, looking at each other. Finally, Gurneesh says,

GURNEESH  
Oh, sorry to hear that mate.

KANGA  
Was it because of the duck?

Doug stands up abruptly.

DOUG  
I'm not really up for this. You'll do better without me.

And he starts to walk away until.

KANGA  
Don't forget your dinner.

Gurneesh unties the creature, takes the string to Doug. Doug looks broken. Gurneesh gives him a friendly pat on the shoulder.

GURNEESH  
Take it easy eh?

Doug nods holding in the sadness.

DOUG  
Sure, see you tomorrow.

And he goes. Gurneesh looks after him a moment, then turns back to the others.

29 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

29

Doug has a large illustrated book, "Myths and Legends" and is reading aloud from it. We WIDEN to see he is in the bath.

DOUG  
'The Psychopomp is the guide of lost souls, a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious realms, life and death.'

And we see the Duck is scarfing up a plate of peas on the bathroom floor.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DOUG (CONT'D)  
'Their role is not to judge the  
deceased but to provide a safe  
passage to the next life.'

The duck quacks, he looks over the edge of the bath.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Well, it's nice to know you aren't  
judging me.

The Duck finishes its meal, looks at him over its shoulder.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
What was she like, your mate?

Then, catching himself.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Maybe you shouldn't answer that.

There's a pause. Doug spots a melted candle and a memory  
occurs to him.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(Sadly)  
Susan and I tried to have a bath  
together once.  
(Beat)  
I lit all these candles. Opened a  
bottle of wine, put on some music,  
it was quite romantic, But it was a  
bit cramped and the taps kept  
sticking in my back. So Susan moved  
and she leaned too close to one of  
the candles, then her hair caught  
on fire,  
(beat)  
Lucky we were in the bath.

As he breaks from his reverie, he is shocked to see that the  
duck is poised on the ledge of the bath.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Whoa! Hey! NO! STAAAY!

But before Doug can do anything about it, he splashes down  
into the water.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Hey, hey, now look Donald you'll  
have to get out, this is kind of a  
one man deal.

But the duck ignores him and happily paddles around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Don't look so pleased with  
yourself. This will not be a  
regular thing.

The duck honks in response.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Great Doug you're talking to the  
duck.

Without warning the Duck bobs down into the water, causing  
Doug to leap out of the bath clutching himself.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
You blind or what? Can't you tell a  
worm from a willy?

Doug stands there flustered, dripping wet, while the Duck  
paddles around, happily quacking.

30 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT- LATER

30

Doug is trying to settle into sleep but there's a honking  
outside the door. Doug looks over.

DOUG  
Forget it, you're not coming in!

Honk. Quack. Doug turns the light out and tries to ignore the  
duck. Quack. Quack!

DOUG (CONT'D)  
If you don't shut up, I'll put you  
outside for the dog's dinner.

There is a silence, Doug smiles thinking he has won when:  
Quack. Quack. Quack! Doug puts the pillow over his head and  
tries desperately to get some sleep. Quacccckkkk!

31 A MOTORWAY STRIP. -- DAY

31

Open on a "Men at Work" sign. But, funnily enough, no work is  
being done here... We're on the wide strip of grass between  
two fast-moving lanes of traffic. Trucks and cars roar past  
in opposite directions.

In the strange oasis of this grassy strip the lads are  
playing Cricket with a tennis ball. Gurneesh is bowling.  
Brent is batting. Gurneesh effortlessly bowls Brent out. The  
tennis ball hits the bin behind him. Dong!

GURNEESH  
Yessss! He's down like a clown!

BRENT  
This isn't fair. You guys are like  
genetically designed to be better  
at cricket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GURNEESH

You guys?

Gurneesh picks up the tennis ball and tosses it up and down.

GURNEESH (CONT'D)

What do you call an Indian flying a plane?

Both Brent and Kanga look at him blankly. Brent shrugs. Gurneesh looks at them with mock horror and disgust.

GURNEESH (CONT'D)

(Playing it up)

You call him a pilot you racists. I can't believe I work with you people.

KANGA

(Completely over his head)

What? I'm not a racist...

Doug arrives with the duck - its head sticking out the top. Kanga takes the bat from Brent. Doug looks exhausted.

GURNEESH

Dude, you look terrible.

DOUG

(Dozy)

I didn't get a wink of sleep. Stupid duck kept trying to get into my bedroom... I should never have let him have a bath with me.

This comment disturbs the lads.

GURNEESH

Bath?

Brent gives Gurneesh a look that says - dodgy.

DOUG

Why aren't you guys doing anything?

BRENT

You weren't here.

Gurneesh bowls and Kanga hits the tennis ball for six. It hits the side of a truck speeding past, rebounds and hits Brent on the forehead.

He drops like a sack of spuds.

The duck excitedly quacks his approval.

KANGA

Come on that's gotta be a six.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GURNEESH

It would've been a six if you'd hit him in the gonads.

KANGA

That's too small a target...

Brent is on the ground playing up the injury. The boys laugh. Suddenly Doug's phone rings.

32 DR BUSTER'S HOME. -- AFTERNOON

32

The walls are covered with pictures and photographs of birds. There are stuffed birds about the place but they're interspersed with models of airplanes. Any other available wall space is decorated with kitsch porcelain birds that fly in formation across the wallpaper. On the desk is a stuffed raven - as black as ink - perched upon a bust of Pallas, the goddess of wisdom.

Dr Buster is on the phone to Doug.

DR BUSTER

Good news. I've found someone to take your duck.

DOUG (O.S.)

Really? That's great.

DR BUSTER

It's called Puddleduck Farm. Everythings taken care of, you can drop by anytime, they're expecting you.

Dr Buster hangs up and GINGER - a stunning woman - walks into the room. She's wearing a Vegas showgirl outfit - complete with feathers and a huge peacock plumage. She gives him a naughty little twirl. Dr Buster savours the scene.

GINGER

How's this?

DR BUSTER

Perfect.

33 A MOTORWAY STRIP. -- AFTERNOON

33

Doug clicks shut his phone. Delighted, he looks to the duck.

DOUG

Puddleduck Farm. Sounds like the place, alright.

34 INT. UTE - MOTORWAY - DAY

34

Doug is driving out into the countryside, the Duck beside him in its box. It looks around it with interest as they speed along, Doug talking the while.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG

So mister crappy, there will be  
heaps of other birds there. You'll  
be able to hang out, do duck stuff.  
You might even meet a nice lady  
duck. It'll be fun and you can poo  
anywhere you like.

The duck quacks happily.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I thought you'd like that.

Doug pops in a cassette and a song spills out of the  
speakers. It's a classic Queen song. "I WANT TO BREAK FREE".  
A fitting song for both the duck and Doug.

*I want to break free,*

*I want to break free,*

*I want to break from your lies,*

*You so self satisfied I don't need you.*

The duck looks quizzically towards the speakers and quacks.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Don't like it eh? Well tough,  
that's my driving music. My car. My  
rules.

The duck quacks. Louder this time.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Ok. Ok. Settle down.

Doug pops the tape out. A radio pop song blares out and The  
duck goes nuts. Confused, Doug pushes the tape back in and  
the Queen song starts up again. The duck calms down and  
starts moving to the music.

DOUG (CONT'D)

(To himself, amused)

Ha, the duck likes Queen.

As they drive off the shot widens to see Dougs car cruise off  
in to the distance to the rousing vocals of Freddy Mercury.  
It's a feel-good moment.

*I've fallen in love,*

*I've fallen in love for the first time,*

*And this time I know it's for real,*

The happy music scratches to a stop. We reveal...

35 PUDDLEDUCK FARM. -- AFTERNOON

35

This place is a mess of muddy bogs, dead grass, disgusting ponds and twee little wooden structures. Wind chimes, crystals and dreamcatchers dangle from the porch. A hippy sign proclaims that this place rejoices in the name "Puddleduck Farm".

Doug is still holding the duck.

The owner of Puddleduck Farm is JESSAMINE she approaches. She's a frumpy, aging hippy woman with a flowing dress and unkempt hair.

JESSAMINE

Oh hello dear, you must be Doug,  
Call me Aunty Jessamine everybody  
does. Oh we're very excited about  
having a new addition to our happy  
little commune. Aren't we family?

Doug notes she's talking to a group of ducks that are loitering around. They don't seem very interested in her at all. Strangely all of the ducks and geese here are all dressed in little bonnets and hats. Gay bonnets and hats. They look ridiculous.

DOUG

Well, good then.

Jessamine holds out her hands for the box, but Doug doesn't seem ready to hand it over.

JESSAMINE

Don't they look adorable? They all  
get their own hat.

Doug glances at his duck. It's looking at him accusingly as if to say "you can't be serious about leaving me here".

JESSAMINE (CONT'D)

I've got a darling one picked out  
for your little ducky already.

There's loud urgent quacking off.

JESSAMINE (CONT'D)

Gareth! Stop doing that to Darcy he  
doesn't like it!

She rolls her eyes.

JESSAMINE (CONT'D)

Sometimes the boys get a bit too  
frisky with each other...

Doug is trying desperately not to look at his duck but he's very aware he's being stared at. This place is hell.

36 DOUG'S CAR. -- MOMENTS LATER

36

Doug drives away from the farm. He glances in the rearview mirror and catches sight of the duck watching him leave. He is already wearing a hat, a matelot's cap tied under the neck. Standing next to the duck is a big goose wearing a ridiculous Carmen Miranda style fake fruit hat.

A wave of guilt ripples across Doug's face. He drives a little while longer down the driveway.

DOUG

Bugger.

Doug slams on the brakes.

37 INT. UTE - DAY

37

As Doug drives away, we reveal the duck in the front seat beside him. Doug looks at him.

DOUG

I must be mad.

Squawk, quack.

The duck jumps onto his lap, causing him to swerve wildly.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Watch it mate, you'll have us in a ditch.

Doug pulls over, but the duck continues to flap and squawk, shaking its head so that the sailor cap comes off, hangs round it's neck.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Let's get rid of that for a start.

And he takes the cap off. It has a name around the band, 'Pierre' which Doug hardly notices as he tosses it out the window, then pushes the Duck over into the passenger seat.

He shakes his head. It's him and the duck now. The next stage of Doug's adventure has begun.

The music kicks in - Queen's "CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE".

*This thing called love I just can't handle it,*

*This thing called love I must get round to it, I ain't ready,*

*Crazy little thing called love,*

A joyous happy song that carries us into the next scene...

38 EXT. DR BUSTERS. DAY

38

Doug walks up to the door of Dr Busters, only to find a note pinned to it. "Gone Dancing". He looks at it confused.

Doug pulls out the business card Holly gave him hoping for a Cell-phone number, but there is only his land-line.

He flips it over and see's Holly's name.

39 THE AVIARY, ZOO. -- DAY

39

At first it's hard to tell exactly where we are. Doug seems to be making his way through a tropical rain forest. He has the duck in his arms and we realize he's following Brenda. Doug is in the aviary at the zoo. All around him are strange and exotic birds. He comes across Holly in a clearing. She's feeding the birds.

BRENDA

Holly?

Holly looks around and gives Doug and the duck the once over. Then turns back to her birds.

HOLLY

Look um...

DOUG

Doug.

HOLLY

Doug. It's a wild animal, we're not a bird sanctuary.

DOUG

I just want some advice.

And the Duck quacks from under his arm.

HOLLY

My advice is to let it go, and let him fend for himself.

DOUG

But what if he can't?

Holly shrugs, affecting cynicism.

HOLLY

Happens all the time. It's called 'life.'

DOUG

(Defiantly)

Well, he's staying with me.

Holly turns to Doug.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

HOLLY  
(Mildly impressed)  
So, you're keeping him.

DOUG  
Yep. But, well, there's some  
issues.

Doug shuffles nervously.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(Embarrassed)  
He keeps trying to get into bed  
with me. I mean, not like, you  
know...

Holly turns away to hide a smirk.

HOLLY  
Have you tried closing the door?

DOUG  
I did but he makes so much noise. I  
can't sleep.

Holly sighs, she looks at the duck.

HOLLY  
I guess I can give you a few  
pointers.

BRENDA  
(Cuts in)  
But we'll need to see the duck's  
environment.

Holly looks at Brenda - what the hell?

DOUG  
My house?

BRENDA  
Yes, don't we Holly?

Holly gives Brenda a sideways glance "we"? She's been set up.

HOLLY  
Ok, Look I can give it a quick once  
over and suggest some changes.

DOUG  
(Worried)  
Changes?

HOLLY  
(Abruptly)  
Do you want a good night's sleep or  
not?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Doug gives in.

40

THE ZOO. -- LATER

40

Doug is exiting the aviary with the duck.

BOY (O.S.)

Are you stealing that duck?

Doug turns to see a young boy standing beside him. He's bright-eyed with a clever face but this kid has got some attitude.

DOUG

What? No.

BOY

What are you doing with it then?

DOUG

None of your business.

Doug moves off.

BOY

It is if you're stealing it.

Doug stops, stares at him.

DOUG

I've told you. I'm not stealing it.  
It's my duck.

BOY

What's its name?

DOUG

Excuse me?

BOY

If it's your duck you must know  
it's name.

And for a moment Doug is stumped, then he sees, in a FLASH CUT, the sailor's cap he threw out the Ute window.

DOUG

Pierre...

BOY

Who calls a pet Pierre? That's  
stupid.

DOUG

He's not a pet.

BOY

So he's not yours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG  
Yes he is...

BOY  
Liar. You're a duck thief.

DOUG  
I am not.

BOY  
Are too.  
(Loudly)  
Everyone he's stealing!

A group of people walking past glare at Doug.

BOY (CONT'D)  
I'm going to call the police on  
you.

Taylor pulls out a cellphone and starts dialing.

DOUG  
That's wasting police time, they  
won't listen to... You'll get in  
trouble.

Doug grabs the phone off the kid in desperation. He looks at the phone. It's a not a real phone. It's a toy. An astronaut communicator.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
It's only a toy.

BOY  
Is not!

Doug eyeballs the kid.

DOUG  
Kid, this is my duck. His name is  
Pierre and I'm not stealing him,  
I'm taking him home.  
(Sotto)  
So push off you little shit.

Doug tosses the phone into a bush and walks off. He's won that argument. The Boy is left gob-smacked.

41 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- DAY EXT

41

Doug enters the house, he is a lot more buoyant than his last entrance, he takes in the room for a moment, Doug puts Pierre(which he is now called)down and walks over to the photo of himself with his mother and father.

He looks at his parents proudly then turns his attention to himself at the age of 10.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He realises that he's standing in the exact spot he was when the photo was taken and the place looks pretty much the same.

DOUG

Maybe Susan was right, maybe I am stuck.

Pierre quacks. Doug looks at him unsure if the duck was responding to his insight. Doug makes a decision and after a deep breath he picks up the phone and dials.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Hi, Craig it's Doug, I need your help with something.

CRAIG (O.S.)

(Wary)

Um, sure, what's up?

DOUG

I think I want to sell the house, it's time for me to move on .

CRAIG (O.S.)

(Relieved)

Well good for you Flash.

DOUG

I'll need a few pointers, of well, you know, how to sell and where to invest.

CRAIG (O.S.)

You couldn't be in safer hands mate, don't worry I'll take care of everything.

DOUG

Sweet, thanks Craig.

CRAIG (O.S.)

The least I could do, I'll be in touch.

Doug hangs up. Pierre poos on the floor.

DOUG

Oh crap!

42

CRAIG'S OFFICE INT DAY.

42

Craig stands with his back to us as he flips his mobile closed, he looks out the window and watches a car being repossessed, his company car.

Amanda enters the room her face looks grim.

AMANDA

You've got call on line one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAIG  
Tell them I'm busy.

AMANDA  
It's the bank.

Craig moves over to his desk and sits down, he distractedly shuffles a few papers around, bills mainly.

CRAIG  
Then I'm in Wellington. Big deal in the offing.

Amanda just stares at him.

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Seriously, I'm on the verge of a major development deal...

AMANDA  
Bankruptcy is what you're on the bloody verge of Craig. Everybody who calls is looking to get paid and so am I.

Craig gets up, comes round his desk, and closes on Amanda.

CRAIG  
(With charm)  
Come on, Amanda. There's more to the job than money...

Amanda considers him with pity.

AMANDA  
Not anymore, If there's no money by tomorrow you're on your own.

And she goes out, slamming the door behind her. Craig returns to his desk and slumps in his chair.

OOS a doorbell rings.

43 DOUG'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR. DAY

43

Doug answers the door. Holly is here with Brenda.

DOUG  
Hi. Come in. Come in.

Doug invites them in. They look at the near empty house. The only thing on the wall is the roughly repaired framed Queen poster. The two girls scan the place and share a look.

HOLLY  
Moving in or out Doug?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG

What? Oh yeah, no just keeping my options open, you know.

Holly notes the poster and other Queen paraphernalia lying about.

HOLLY

So you're a bit of a Queen fan.

DOUG

Yeah I guess I am, got it from my old man, He was fanatical. Those are his albums, (reflectively) They're all I have left.

Brenda's checking out the urns on the mantelpiece.

BRENDA

So where are they now? Your folks.

Doug points to the urns.

DOUG

Oh, on the mantel.

Holly and Brenda suddenly realize. Brenda recoils.

BRENDA

I, oh sorry.

Holly feeling awkward, kneels down to look at the duck.

HOLLY

Hi little guy.

(To Doug)

He's looking good, healthy.

Holly stands up and looks around the room.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Does he get out much?

DOUG

Not really, there's been this stray dog hanging around...

Holly looks out the window.

HOLLY

He'll need somewhere to swim.

DOUG

I know, I need to keep him out of my bath?

Holly reacts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOLLY

Bath? I thought you were trying to  
get him out of your bed?

Now its Doug's turn to be embarrassed.

DOUG

What? Yeah, No of course not, no  
that would be weird, um, oh, hang  
on.

Doug exits the room. There is a lot of clattering and noise  
in the hallway. After a moment he returns holding an old  
paddling pool. It's decorated with pictures of fish and  
shells.

DOUG (CONT'D)

There we go. It was mine when I was  
a kid...

HOLLY

It's a good start.

BRENDA

(Blerts Out)

Do you have a girlfriend?

Both Doug and Holly look uncomfortable.

DOUG

Lets just say I'm in between at the  
mo.

(A beat)

Right let's set this up. What do  
you think Pierre?

The duck looks nonplussed.

BRENDA

Pierre?

Holly smiles at this, amused.

HOLLY

Good name, suits him.

DOUG

(Looking pleased)

Yeah I guess it does.

Doug sits down and starts to inflate the pool.

44

DOUG'S HOUSE. -- LATER

44

The paddling pool is in the middle of the room. Doug has just  
finished filling it with the garden hose. Pierre is watching  
warily

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG  
(To Pierre)  
C'mon little fella.

He reaches for Pierre but Pierre backs away.

Holly shapes to help but thinks better of it and waits to see how it plays out.

Doug reaches again with the same result.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
C'mon Pierre. You'll like it.

Pierre looks at Doug then Honks! A honk of uncertainty.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(Soothingly)  
I know, it's not easy for me  
either, but if this is gonna work.  
You'll just have to trust me.

Pierre considers Doug, as if pondering his next move, Holly and Brenda watch with interest. Having seemingly made his mind up Pierre waddles over to him. Doug gently picks the duck up and puts him into the pool.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
There you go buddy. Somewhere to  
swim.

Pierre starts to swim around, he dips his head under and shakes spraying water over Doug.

Holly watches and smiles despite herself.

45 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- LATER

45

Doug is saying goodbye to Holly and Brenda at the door. Holly hands Doug a piece of paper.

HOLLY  
So here's a list of the basics,  
Amongst other things Pierre will  
need clean drinking water, good  
diet and protection from predators  
or his stay may well be a short  
one.

DOUG  
Thanks you've been a great help.

HOLLY  
He's seems comfortable with you  
which is important, so the more he  
comes to think of this as his nest  
the more respect he will treat it  
with.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DOUG  
No more crapping on the floor?

HOLLY  
(Smiles)  
Don't expect too much too soon, he  
is a duck.

DOUG  
Right. Thanks again.

HOLLY  
No problem.

Holly and Brenda leave. As they walk to the car Brenda  
whispers to Holly.

BRENDA  
Dibs on him.

HOLLY  
Oh, put it back in your pants  
Brenda.

BRENDA  
What? He's single. Got his own  
home. A nice butt...

Holly shakes her head.

HOLLY  
Each to their own...

46 WORK YARD. -- MORNING

46

Brent is trying to get an ancient motorized lawnmower to work  
without much success, hauling on the starter cord, priming  
the pump, but each time it coughs and dies.

Kanga and Gurneesh watch with interest.

KANGA  
Try kicking it...

GURNEESH  
Try not flooding it.

BRENT  
Bloody piece of junk, why doesn't  
Ray scrap this thing, get a new  
one...

KANGA  
You're joking right, he's tighter  
than a fish's bum.

Only to be interrupted by a roar as the mower catches and  
suddenly leaps forward, blades whirling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kanga and Gurneesh through themselves to the side as it rips past them, tearing up the earth. Brent curses, holding his hand.

BRENT

Bugger bit me...

Kanga and Gurneesh pick themselves up, go and retrieve the mower from where it has crashed into the office and is still spitting up earth.

KANGA

That's torn it, once she's got a taste for human flesh, that's all she'll eat.

Disengaging the clutch.

GURNEESH

Never start them in gear, that's my advice. Says so on the handle in case you don't believe me.

KANGA

So he's keeping the duck?

Gurneesh nods.

BRENT

Am I the only one who thinks this is a bit, you know, unnatural?

GURNEESH

Unnatural?

BRENT

His girlfriend leaves him and he replaces her with a duck.

GURNEESH

What are you implying?

BRENT

I'm not implying nothing. I'm just saying... it's not healthy. He takes baths with it right? I mean what about bird flu?

GURNEESH

That's chickens. What is it with you and birds?

BRENT

They're dirty. Come on, what about all the derogatory words we use to talk about birds?

GURNEESH

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRENT

Bird-brained. Feather-brained.  
Flighty. We say dead as a dodo.  
Dumb as a dodo. We call people  
chickens and, and...

KANGA

Turkeys?

BRENT

...Yeah and cocks. We say that  
someone is an egg.

KANGA

Or an egg burger!

BRENT

Exactly! They're foul.

47

DOUG'S HOUSE. -- MORNING

47

Doug is getting ready to go to work. He's talking to Pierre.

DOUG

Okay I'm going to work and you're  
staying here, understand? You stay.

The duck just stares at Doug. As he makes his way towards the  
door Pierre follows. Doug stops. Pierre stops.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Stay. Staay. Good duck.

Doug walks and again Pierre follows. Doug has the front door  
half open he's trying the block the duck with his legs.

DOUG (CONT'D)

No, you're not coming.

The stubborn animal is not taking no for an answer. There's  
now no way Doug can close the door without crushing Pierre.

He addresses Pierre with a stern look on his face.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Stay!

48

THE ZOO ENTRANCE. -- INT. UTE - DAY

48

Pierre is looking out of a window, Is he at home?

WIDEN to see him with Doug and Gurneesh in the cab of the  
Ute. They are outside the Zoo.

DOUG

This is the right address?

Gurneesh produces the work order, looks at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GURNEESH

This is it. Blocked drain it says.

Doug absorbs this.

49

EXT. ZOO ENTRANCE - DAY

49

Holly is heading for the office when she sees Doug approach. She is surprised, but not unpleasantly.

HOLLY

Hi Doug, is there a problem with Pierre?

DOUG

Oh, no, he's fine. I'm here because I've got a work order to unblock a drain in this area.

HOLLY

Oh. So you're...

DOUG

City maintenance, subcontractors.

Then he indicates behind him where Gurneesh, Kanga and Brent are looking at the birds in the aviary.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Well, me'n the crew.

Holly nods, absorbing this.

HOLLY

Oh Okay, well it's the penguin pond. I'll just pop these keys in the office and I'll show you the way.

She smiles and struts off. Brent, Kanga and Gurneesh all wander over, see Doug's eyes following Holly's trim rearview.

GURNEESH

They say when you fall off a horse, the thing to do is get straight back on again.

DOUG

I was just talking to her about Pierre.

BRENT

Grrr. Cute, she could clean my cage anytime.

The guys are all enjoying seeing Doug squirm. Pierre quacks, joining in.

Holly returns from the office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY  
This way Doug.

As Doug moves off with Holly, Brenda bowls up, bright-eyed, having seen the new arrivals.

BRENDA  
Hi Doug, those your mates?

DOUG  
Ah yeah, the big guy's Kanga, the  
little guy's Brent, and Gurneesh...

BRENDA  
Cool, I might just *supervise* them  
for a little while.

Holly smiles at Brenda as she bounces over to the boys.

HOLLY  
Brenda's a bit man-happy.

DOUG  
She does seem very friendly.

HOLLY  
(laughs)  
Yeah, that's one way of putting it.

50 EXT. ZOO - DAY

50

A SHORT SEQUENCE showing the squad at work as they uncover the drainage pipe from the pond. There's a fair amount of bare skin and rippling muscle and Brenda is an avid observer.

Brent notices her, as their eyes meet he gives her a smile.

51 THE AVIARY, ZOO. -- DAY

51

Doug and Pierre are having lunch. Pierre looks up and honks, Doug follows his gaze to see Holly cleaning some portable cages nearby.

DOUG  
Y'know it may be the first thing  
Brent's got right, she is cute.

Pierre turns back and looks at him

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Forget it, she's not the least bit  
interested in me.

Pierre nips his hand.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Ow, what was that for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With that Pierre starts walking towards where Holly is working.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Oi! Come back here..

Pierre ignores him and just quickens in pace. Doug sets aside his lunch and leaps up to pursue him, finally rounding on him cutting him off just short of the cage. Pierre just stares at him.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(Agitated)  
Where do you think you're going?

He moves to pick up Pierre, but Pierre flaps his wings and hisses.

HOLLY (O.S.)  
Hi Doug, everything okay?

Doug's face reddens, he turns to face her.

DOUG  
Oh yes, fine, I was, um just walking Pierre.

HOLLY  
Oh, okay.

She gets back to her business. Doug remains where he is. Holly stops and turns around again

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Was there anything else?

DOUG  
The drains almost done, now it will drain like... a drain.

Holly regards him wondering if there is a point to all this.

Unseen, Brenda observes them.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
(Nervously)  
...But I also wanted to thank you for helping me with Pierre. Um, what about... maybe... I could sort of buy you dinner, or coffee, or something?

Holly smiles.

HOLLY  
That's really sweet Doug, but my evenings are kind of committed.

This response deflates Doug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOUG  
Of course, no worries.

Brenda interrupts as she grabs a nearby broom.

BRENDA  
(Mischievously)  
Hi Doug, Holly I can't make it to  
dinner tonight. I've taken a late  
cleaning shift. Need the cash-ola.  
(with a cheeky grin) Why doesn't  
Doug go in my place?

Holly and Doug are both surprised by this.

DOUG/HOLLY  
What?

BRENDA  
Yeah why not? You both look like  
you could use the company.

Holly's on the spot here, Doug looks interested.

HOLLY  
Oh, I...

But Brenda's not going to let Holly off the hook. She circles  
around behind her and leans in.

BRENDA  
(Quietly)  
Happy little penguin are we?

Doug looks confused. Holly looks sideways at Brenda. After a  
beat, she considers Doug then relents.

HOLLY  
Actually, you know, it sounds like  
a nice idea. How about it Doug?

DOUG  
Um, sure!

BRENDA  
Great! That's settled then, oh and  
Holly' is partial to a nice  
Chardonnay.

DOUG  
Good, okay, see you then...then.

Doug wanders away with Pierre in tow, still a little unsure  
of how that happened.

Brenda is grinning from ear to ear, Holly turns to her

HOLLY  
Right, you're for it, girl.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She turns on the hose she was using and chases the squealing Brenda away.

52

AUCKLAND HARBOUR - PIER - EXT LATE AFTERNOON.

52

We are CLOSE ON Brent, Kanga and Gurneesh fishing off a pier.

They have all they need, well used rods, fold out chairs, and chilly bins containing bait and beers. Brent puts down his rod to grab a fresh beer.

BRENT

So you think Flash has got himself  
a new bird?

Brent chuckles at his lame joke.

KANGA

Has he got another a duck?

BRENT

Nah I mean "bird" as in girlfriend.  
A girlfriend that works with birds.  
It's a joke.

This is all utterly lost on Kanga.

KANGA

Oh right, well I hope he has better  
luck this time.

GURNEESH

He'll be fine as long as he  
remembers that women are like fish.

BRENT

Neither can parallel park?

KANGA

They both have small bladders?

The lads have a good laugh at their jokes.

Gurneesh smiles slyly as he reels in an empty hook. It dangles in front of him.

GURNEESH

No. Women are like fish because you  
can't stop thinking about the one  
that got away...

53

INT. A TRENDY BAR. -- EVENING

53

Susan and Zara are having a drink. The bar is buzzing; full of the young, the beautiful, the dateless and the desperate. Craig walks past and spots Susan. He's got a drink in his hand.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

CRAIG  
Susan?

SUSAN  
Craig.

CRAIG  
I caught up with Doug, I'm so sorry  
to hear about you guys...

SUSAN  
(Sighs)  
It's been on the cards for a while.

CRAIG  
If you ask me was a fool to  
let you slip through his fingers.

Zara gets up and moves off. She looks over at Susan and  
mouths the words "I'm off" followed quickly by "cute."

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
Can I join you?

SUSAN  
(Pleased as pie)  
Help yourself.

54 THE STREET. -- EARLY EVENING

54

Doug walks down the street wearing a smart shirt - and  
carries a box with Pierre in it and has a bottle of wine  
tucked under his arm. He checks a bit of paper in hand -  
(Holly's address obviously). He's there.

DOUG  
Now no crapping on the carpet okay?

He knocks on the door. He's good to go. He's ready for this.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Okay Doug, relax, there's no  
pressure, you're just having dinner  
with a friend, just a couple of  
friends eating together...

The door opens and... Taylor the kid from the Zoo is standing  
there. Everything stops.

TAYLOR  
Mum!! It's the loser duck guy!

The man and the boy stare at each other, both unsure why  
either of them are here. It's tense and uneasy. The  
atmosphere is broken when Holly appears behind him.

HOLLY  
Hi Doug. I believe you've already  
met my son, Taylor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG  
Your son. Cool, hi.

HOLLY  
Taylor, say hello to Mr Gordon and  
his duck, Pierre.

Taylor says nothing.

Uh-oh. This isn't good. Doug semi recovers.

TAYLOR  
He lost my communicator.

Holly looks critically at Doug.

HOLLY  
You did?

DOUG  
Ah, well yes, it was a  
misunderstanding you see...

TAYLOR  
He's mean.

HOLLY  
I'm sure he didn't do it on  
purpose.

DOUG  
I'll get you a new one.

TAYLOR  
(Roll his eyes)  
Whatever!

Taylor wheels around and heads back inside. Holly shrugs in  
silent apology, Doug gestures that it is fine.

55 HOLLY'S HOUSE. -- MOMENTS LATER

55

As Holly ushers Doug in while Taylor joins a little boy  
standing there in a scruffy spiderman costume.

HOLLY  
This is Taylor's friend Artie.

ARTIE  
If you stand up all day you get  
shorter.

Artie and Taylor move off. Doug doesn't quite know what to  
make of this. Holly leans in.

HOLLY  
He practically lives here, a bit  
different, but a good kid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holly gestures to Doug's wine.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Shall I open that?

Doug hands her the bottle of wine he is carrying.

DOUG  
Yeah good idea, thanks.

Holly moves off.

In the middle of the room is a strange chicken-wire blob on a table. Taylor and Artie are pasting paper mache over the wire frame. They seem to be making something. Doug attempts to build bridges with Taylor.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
Cool rock.

ARTIE  
It's not a rock, it's actually an  
asteroid.

TAYLOR  
(Correcting him)  
It's NT7.

Doug looks confused.

DOUG  
NT7?

TAYLOR  
(Dismissive)  
You wouldn't understand.

DOUG  
I wouldn't?

TAYLOR  
(Sighs)  
It's an asteroid that's going to  
destroy the earth in 2019.  
Scientists have seen that it's on  
it's way. It will be the end of the  
world.

DOUG  
Really?

TAYLOR  
There's nothing we can do to stop  
it.

DOUG  
Okay then.

56 ZOO EXT NIGHT.

56

Brenda has had a late cleaning shift. She's exhausted.

As she gets to her car, to her despair, A big black van is parked her in.

BRENDA

Ohhh.. You're bloody kidding!

She checks all possibilities and finds no way out.

Frustrated she kicks the vans tyre and slaps the side with her hand.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

You moron!

Without warning the side door opens giving Brenda a fright. Brent appears to have been expecting her he's holding some sort of garish cocktails, the van may well be his home.

BRENT

Somebody knock? Well.. hello  
Brenda, you look like you could do  
with a drink, care to join me?

Brenda doesn't need a second invitation, with a devilish grin she leaps in.

57 HOLLY'S HOUSE - EVENING

57

Doug and Artie are playing with Pierre, Holly watches them. She smiles. Doug seems good with kids.

Taylor is pretending to work on the asteroid but is secretly watching. Holly (who is just finishing the dinner salad) picks up on this.

HOLLY

Taylor why don't you go and say  
hello to Pierre?

Taylor shakes his head, not interested. Holly sighs.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Alright you lot, dinners ready.

They all make their way to the table and sit.

Artie smiles cheekily.

ARTIE

I got a joke. What do you call a  
man with a shovel in his head?

They all look at him. No one knows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Doug.

Everyone looks at Doug. He laughs and they all follow suit.  
Except for Taylor.

HOLLY

Okay boys, eat up before it gets  
cold.

They start to eat.

58

HOLLY'S HOUSE -- LATER.

58

Everyone has finished eating, Holly starts to clear plates.

DOUG

Thank you that was great.  
(Gestures to asteroid)  
So Taylor, you're really into your  
space stuff eh?

Taylor shrugs and ignores him. Holly makes amends for her  
son's rudeness.

HOLLY

He gets it from me I'm afraid. I  
love space and movies about landing  
on the moon and stuff. There's  
something kinda sexy about space.  
When I was a kid I had this  
romantic dream that one day a  
spaceman would arrive in his rocket  
and whisk me off to the moon.

DOUG

The moon? So the whole no air or  
gravity thing didn't put you off  
then?

Taylor rolls his eyes.

HOLLY

I guess having lived in Lewisham my  
whole life, I wanted to get as far  
away from there as I could. There  
were no flights to the moon and I  
heard New Zealand was the next best  
thing.

DOUG

Ever think about going back to the  
UK?

HOLLY

Not really, Taylor's a Kiwi like  
his Dad is, was...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holly pauses as sadness creeps over her, Taylor reacts also. Doug senses this and changes the subject.

DOUG  
I've never left New Zealand.

HOLLY  
Really? You must be the only kiwi  
I've ever met who hasn't traveled.

Doug looks a bit uncomfortable.

DOUG  
I'm not a big fan of flying.

ARTIE  
More people get killed by  
hippopotamus' than in plane  
crashes.

DOUG  
Really? I'll keep that in mind next  
time I see a hippo at the  
supermarket.

Artie giggles at this, Holly smiles.

59

INT. A TRENDY BAR. -- NIGHT

59

The night has moved on. Susan and Craig are really close together at the table. They've both had a bit to drink.

CRAIG  
If I'm completely honest with you I  
never had much in common with Doug.

SUSAN  
(Finds this funny)  
Me neither.

They laugh.

CRAIG  
Now c'mon there must've been  
something.

SUSAN  
He was sweet and I liked having  
someone who was so devoted. But he  
didn't have a life and he was so  
content for things to stay the  
same and after a while that got...

CRAIG  
Boring.

Susan nods. Craig raises his glass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAIG (CONT'D)

Here's to you.

Susan raises her glass to clink against his.

SUSAN/CRAIG

Cheers

CRAIG

Oh, make eye contact - otherwise  
it's seven years bad sex.

SUSAN

(Loaded)

We can't have that can we?

They stare into each others eyes. It's electric.

60 HOLLY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN. -- NIGHT

60

Holly and Doug are still at the table there are a couple  
empty wine bottles. The boys are in bed. Pierre is asleep in  
his box. They're both a little tipsy.

Doug takes in the asteroid.

DOUG

Taylor seems a bit down on this  
'end of the world' asteroid thing.

Holly sighs.

HOLLY

He lost his dad when he was six,  
the counselor said the NT7  
obsession is his way of dealing  
with the grief, if his dad can die  
why can't the rest of us.

Doug is moved by this.

DOUG

Oh, I'm sorry...

HOLLY

It's fine, we'd already separated a  
couple of years before, he decided  
'happy families' wasn't his thing  
and some bullshit about having to  
find himself.

Holly stares sadly at Taylor's bedroom door

HOLLY (CONT'D)

I guess we just weren't enough for  
him.

She realises she might have said too much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Oh god, I'm sorry Doug, you didn't come here to listen to my 'tragic' relationship story's.

Doug chuckles

DOUG

That's fine, I totally get where you're at. Breaking up sucks.

Holly senses there's more.

HOLLY

(Teasing)

Come on fess up Doug, I showed you mine...

DOUG

Okay, well...Susan left me because, my life's too small. She said I was stuck and needed to change.

HOLLY

And do you?

Holly's directness surprises Doug.

DOUG

I thought things were fine, I like my job, I have good mates, (Beat) I loved her, I really thought she was the one. I guess something wasn't working, I just didn't see it.

Doug's expression saddens a little, Holly considers him.

HOLLY

Well it's her loss.

DOUG

Cheers.

There is a comfortable pause. Holly notes the time.

HOLLY

Wow it's getting late. Better clear this mess up.

Holly stands and begins to pick up glasses, Doug helps collect the dishes. Doug looks over at Pierre, asleep in his box.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

You're quite fond of that duck aren't you?

DOUG

He has sort of grown on me.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

HOLLY

Hmm it is nice to have someone who  
relies on you isn't it?

DOUG

At least Taylor doesn't crap on  
your floor.

HOLLY

Well, not anymore.

They both laugh. Holly and Doug look at each other. There's a  
moment. But not for long... Holly notices Taylor standing at  
his bedroom door.

TAYLOR

Mum, Artie's had a bad dream.

Taylor looks at Doug. It's obvious this isn't about Artie.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Can you come and sit with us?

HOLLY

(Lightly reprimanding)  
Taylor.

DOUG

I better go. Thanks for dinner.

There's an awkward moment. What do they do here? Finally  
Holly holds out her hand. Doug shakes it.

TAYLOR

Mr Gordon?

DOUG

Yes Taylor?

TAYLOR

I already had a Dad I don't want  
another one.

Holly is profoundly embarrassed.

HOLLY

Taylor! Apologize.

DOUG

It's okay.

Taylor shoots Doug a look of disdain and goes back into his  
room.

HOLLY

No, it's not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DOUG  
Really, it's fine Holly. I'll see  
you.

Holly sees Doug to the door and he leaves. Holly closes the door and leans on it, she's thinking about Doug.

61 INT CRAIG'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

61

This is a pretty damn flash affair but fairly soulless. Just the kind of place you'd imagine Craig living in. There's even a massive plasma TV in the bedroom.

Susan wakes up in the bed. By the look of the sheets it's been a big night. She looks around and sees a picture of Craig on the dresser. Craig comes in. He's partially dressed for work and he's carrying a cup of tea for her.

CRAIG  
Morning sunshine.

SUSAN  
(Sleepy smile)  
Morning.

He puts the cup down and continues getting dressed. Susan admires his toned body.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
Would you like to grab some  
breakfast somewhere?

CRAIG  
No can do. I've got a busy morning,  
deals to close, you know.

SUSAN  
Right.. so shall we catch up later?

CRAIG  
Why?

Susan's smile fades

CRAIG (CONT'D)  
This was just a bit of fun, wasn't  
it?

SUSAN  
(Unsure)  
Oh, of course, yeah.

CRAIG  
But it was *great* fun. Welcome to  
the wonderful world of singledom.

He finishes pulling on his boots.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAIG (CONT'D)

So, have a shower and grab whatever you want from the kitchen and let your self out. Oh and you'd be pleased to know Doug's actually moving on, he's even talking about selling his old house, isn't life a hoot? Anyway thanks again, that was nice.

He gives her a kiss on the forehead and leaves. Susan is left shocked by the news and feeling pretty disgusted with herself.

62

WORK YARD. -- MORNING

62

Brent is pouring kerosene into the tank of the rusty ride on mower. The broken grill at the front looks like mouth filled with a rotten fangs. Gurneesh is watching, Kanga is loading up some gear onto a work truck.

GURNEESH

Is that kerosene?

BRENT

Drastic measures are required, that tight arse Ray won't buy a new mower until this one's had it. I've put sugar in the gas tank. It's had no oil in it for months. The beast won't die.

Doug arrives cheerfully whistling away to himself.

GURNEESH

You're in a good mood.

Brent looks at Doug.

BRENT

No one likes a whistler.

GURNEESH

How can you say that? Whistling is a pure expression of personal happiness.

As it just dawns on Brent and Gurneesh.

BRENT/GURNEESH

Somebody's getting some!

Doug blushes. Gurneesh, Brent and Kanga rally on him.

DOUG

Leave it out. No one's getting anything, yet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GURNEESH

Is it the yummy mummy?

KANGA

You sly dog.

GURNEESH

So when are you seeing her again?

DOUG

Well it's funny you should ask.

63 EXT. CRAIG'S OFFICE -- DAY

63

Craig strolls up to his office to find his way blocked by a huge security guard.

He can see people inside rifling through papers repossessing anything and everything.

CRAIG

Hey! Get the hell out of..

As he tries to pass by the guard a massive arm blocks his way.

GUARD

Sorry sir, no-one allowed in. IRD business.

Craig's face crumbles. He's well and truly stuffed.

64 HOLLY'S HOUSE. -- INT BATHROOM -- DAY.

64

Holly is applying the final touches to her make up, Taylor enters looking glum. He watches her for a minute before Holly notices he's there.

HOLLY

Hey mister, you okay?

Taylor says nothing, he turns to go. Holly stops what she is doing for the moment and turns.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Taylor? Sweetheart what's up?

Taylor wheels around with fire in his eyes.

TAYLOR

You're seeing *him* again aren't you?

Holly is caught short of a reply.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

It's the duck man isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

His names Doug, and its only a  
drink. He's a nice guy, just try  
to...

Taylor cuts her off.

TAYLOR

(Defiantly)

Well I don't like him and I don't  
want you to go.

HOLLY

Oh Taylor that's not fair, I...

TAYLOR

(Bitterly)

Is it fair that I don't have my  
dad?

With that he runs out and into his room slamming the door.

Holly follows him, she knocks on his door but there is no  
reply, she tries to enter but he has barricaded the door.

HOLLY

Taylor? Can you let me in, please?

There is no reaction. Holly sighs and ponders for a beat  
before speaking.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(Softly)

Do you think this is easy for me?  
When your dad left, the thing above  
all that gave me comfort was that I  
still had you. You will always be  
the most important person in my  
life...

65 TAYLOR'S BEDROOM -- INT DAY

65

Taylor sits with his back to the dresser that he has pushed  
against the door, he fiddles with a small model asteroid. As  
Holly speaks he stops playing and starts to listen.

HOLLY

... it's not easy to meet a good  
guy like Doug, all I ask it that  
you give him a chance..for me.

Taylor is affected by Holly's plea. The doorbell rings.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

The sitters here darling, we'll  
talk later okay?

Again there is no answer. Holly places her hand gently on the  
door, then moves off.

66

THE GARDEN BAR. -- EVENING

66

The crew are here. Sitting next to him is Holly. The team are a bit uncomfortable with a woman in their midst. Pierre is strutting around the grass.

QUIZMASTER (O.S.)

...5200 runs, with an average of  
33.34 and he took 383 wickets with  
an average of 28.40...

GURNEESH

Ian Botham.

Doug writes down the answer. Brent is not happy.

BRENT

(Hushed)

This has been a sanctuary Flashy. A  
closed club, a boys club...

DOUG

Zip it.

Gurneesh and Kanga agree. No problem.

BRENT

I though we had an unspoken rule.

No sooner has this come out of his mouth when Brenda arrives.

BRENDA

(Beaming)

Hello Brent.

HOLLY

Brenda told me you two were seeing  
each other Brent, so I invited her  
along.

Brent is blushing. But he is actually rather pleased. She sits with him. He looks sheepishly at the others. We move through a series of quick cuts that track the passing of the pub quiz. Brent with his arm around Brenda, laughing. Beers being ordered and drank. Questions answered and debated over. The Men at Work are neck and neck with the Professors. It's a good night for them.

QUIZMASTER

What is the world's fastest bird?

The team look to Holly. Pierre even stops and looks over.

HOLLY

Easy. Peregrine Falcon.

Doug writes it down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

More snippets of the night as time passes. Drinking. Laughing and answering questions. Brenda and Holly seem to be answering the majority of the questions. Finally it's crunch time...

QUIZMASTER

And tonight's winner is... Men at Work win! Come up and get your seventy dollar bar tab!

The table erupts in joy! They're winners! Pierre quacks excitedly. The Professors nod their respect and applaud the winners.

BRENT

(Shocked)

We won, we finally won.

67

THE GARDEN BAR. -- LATER

67

Gurneesh is holding two full pints of beer.

GURNEESH

Behold the magic of the Indian Mystics. I call this trick the balanced pillars of justice.

Brent has his hands placed flat on the table. He's looking expectantly at Gurneesh. Gurneesh - with a careful "magical" flourish - balances the pints on the backs of Brent's hands. Brent looks at it - he's expecting a magic trick.

BRENT

Now what?

Gurneesh smiles. Brent now realizes that he's pinned to the table. There's no moving now, without spilling the pints or breaking the glasses. Gurneesh has tricked Brent.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Oh bugger.

He looks desperately at Brenda.

BRENT (CONT'D)

Help me out here?

Brenda giggles. She and Holly take themselves off to the Jukebox. Holly gives Doug a look. Gurneesh leans into Doug.

GURNEESH

She's great.

Doug almost blushes.

DOUG

Yeah, she's not bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly Queens insanely catchy "Don't stop me now" blasts out of the Jukebox.

To Doug's surprise Holly is suddenly there beside him, miming to the lyrics and she beckons Doug with her finger.

*Tonight... I'm gonna have myself a real good time,*

*I feel ali...ii...ive,*

*And the world.. I'm turning inside out Yeah!*

Doug offers token resistance before giving in, and before he knows it he is whisked onto the dance-floor.

*I'm floating around in ecstasy,*

*So don't stop me now,*

Holly dances around Doug, softly singing along with the lyrics, Doug gets into the groove and sings along as they dance. They are soon joined by the rest of the gang.

CUT TO: a car pulling up and a pair of shapely legs with high heels getting out.

*...Don't stop me 'Cause I'm having a good time having a good time...*

Kanga, Gurneesh and Brenda pop in just at the right time to theatrically add the harmonies.

CUT TO: Susan entering the bar with Zara, Susan is obviously looking for someone.

ZARA

Why are we here again?

SUSAN

Oh it's an old haunt of mine and...

Her voice falters as she spots Doug dancing. He looks very happy and Susan looks fondly at him, when a clearer view shows he's with Holly and the chemistry between them is obvious.

Susan's face shows shock which quickly gives way to hurt and anger. She grabs Zara and drags her away towards the exit.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

C'mon lets go, this place is dead.

Zara is oblivious to Susan's upset and trails her out with a confused look on her face.

*..I'm gonna go go go, There's no stopping me...*

Brent is still trapped under the pints. He's desperately trying to fish a straw out of one of the girls drinks.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

Success! He lifts it up to one of the pints, only for it to slip out of his mouth and sink into the pint glass out of reach.

With the sweet taste of victory and a few drinks under their belts the gang cut loose on the chorus.

*..I wanna make a supersonic man out of you..*

Brent looks at Pierre who is quietly sitting on the table.

BRENT

Hey Pierre, how about a hand here?

Pierre just looks at him and honks, what did he expect from a duck? Brent slumps.

*...Don't stop me now, I'm having such a good time...*

There is laughter, singing and some impressive air guitar.

The music takes us to...

68 INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

68

The Door opens to reveal Doug and Holly, Doug puts Pierre (in the box) on the steps. Pierre honks.

DOUG

Shhhh... you wait here, kids  
asleep.

Holly and Doug enter, both very drunk after a fun night.

The Baby sitter is asleep on the couch, the TV still on. Holly goes, switches it off and puts blanket over her. Doug stands, looking around as Holly looks into Taylor's bedroom, then beckons him over.

69 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

69

Taylor is asleep in his bed. He has his asteroid on top of him. Holly stands looking at this, her smile tinged with sadness. Doug stands behind her. She goes across, lifts the asteroid off, puts it on the floor beside the bed and kisses his forehead.

Doug looks around the Taylor's room. Among the space imagery he sees a smattering of cricket posters and paraphernalia. Holly comes over, and he steps back as she closes the door behind her.

70 INT. HOLLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

70

He sees the look on her face as they go back into the hallway.

DOUG

Taylor likes cricket then?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

Oh, yeah. He's very keen, or was.  
He and his dad used to play a lot  
of backyard cricket, (sadly) about  
the only time he showed an interest  
in Taylor.

There is an uncomfortable moment as Holly ushers him to the door.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Thanks Doug. I had a nice time.

DOUG

Yeah it was great, you really  
kicked ass in the quiz.

They stand a moment awkward. Holly takes the initiative, leans in and kisses him lightly on the cheek, as she moves back their eyes lock, the chemistry is palpable. She moves in again and this time the kiss is on the lips, a long passionate kiss.

When they break the mesmerized Doug takes the lead, only to be met by Holly's finger on his lips.

HOLLY

(Cheekily)

Hmmm. Thank you for seeing me home,  
Good night Mr Gordon.

Doug snaps out of his dream. But is still affected by the power of the kiss.

DOUG

Oh, yes of course, Good night.

Holly closes the door and leans on it with a satisfied smile.

71 EXT. HOLLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 71

Doug turns and goes, his smile permanently fixed on his mug. He returns to pick up Pierre.

72 INT. DOUG'S HOUSE - MORNING 72

Doug sits at breakfast reading the newspaper. He is particularly cheerful, until he see's a headline. His face drops.

DOUG

Oh shit.

He ponders this for a moment, then he gets up, grabs his toast and car keys and rushes out. We see on the paper a small picture of Craig with the headline 'Watson Holdings crumble'

73 INT. CRAIG'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

73

The place has been stripped bare by the harsh realities of financial ruin. Craig is sitting on a box in the living room. He looks like crap.

He's staring at the only thing he has left, his bicycle. It's propped on it's stand. There's a knock on the door, he slowly lifts his head. Dark rings under his reddened eyes and a mortgage foreclosure slip in his hand. He's at rock bottom. There's another - louder - knock at the door.

CRAIG

Yeah, yeah, hold your horses...

He stumbles towards it and opens it. Doug is there.

DOUG

Giddy mate. Need a hand?

Craig melts. He wraps his arms around Doug and hugs him.

74 DOUG'S HOUSE, SPARE BEDROOM. -- DAY

74

Doug turns on the light and we see a very sparse, pokey little room which contains a few boxes and a sofa bed.

DOUG

This is the bit where I say it doesn't look like much.

CRAIG

(Chuffed)

It's perfect...

DOUG

Now there is someone you should meet...

75 DOUG'S HOUSE. -- MOMENTS LATER

75

Doug and Craig are sitting watching Pierre swimming around in his pool.

CRAIG

Okay this I wouldn't have expected.

Doug smiles.

DOUG

I guess we'll have see about getting you a job.

CRAIG

All due respect I couldn't do what you do...I've got too used to being my own boss.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG

You could do worse. I have a trade that will always be in demand. Grass never stops growing, roads always need repairing. The truth is without us you the rest of you would be well and truly stuffed.

Craig chuckles, but nods his agreement.

CRAIG

(Shifty)

So when you sell this house, what are you wanting to do with the money?

Doug grins and shakes his head.

DOUG

Don't even think about it, anyway I'm not selling...

Craig feigns disappointment.

DOUG (CONT'D)

.. I've decided that moving on is less about where I live and more about who I am.

CRAIG

(impressed)

Very profound. (Beat) So how's your love life? Any new *ladies* on the scene?

DOUG

Well yeah, there's sort of someone...

CRAIG

Sort of someone?

DOUG

Her names Holly, she's cool, actually she's really cool, but..

CRAIG

But what?

DOUG

...her son's not a big fan. It makes things... difficult.

CRAIG

Well you know what they say. Keep your friends close, your enemies closer.

Doug nods. Good advice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOUG

Coffee?

Craig nods. Doug heads to the kitchen.

Craig suddenly becomes aware that Pierre is staring at him. Like he knows something. Craig avoids the strangely accusing gaze.

76

THE ZOO. EXT DAY

76

Brenda and Holly are cleaning out the emu enclosure. Brenda is watching Holly for clues, when none are forthcoming.

BRENDA

So?

HOLLY

(Coy)

So what?

BRENDA

I knew it, you fancy him!

HOLLY

Well fancy is a strong word but yeah he is nice. One small problem though.

BRENDA

Don't tell me, um...oh, Taylor doesn't like him? Big surprise he doesn't like any guy who shows an interest in you, that last bloke, what's his name? Jeff? Didn't Taylor down trou him at the park?

Holly laughs.

HOLLY

How was he to know Jeff was going commando?

BRENDA

Well at least you know you weren't missing out on much.

They both laugh.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Seriously Holly it's time you put yourself first. If Doug turns out to be a solid guy, Taylor will work it out.

Brenda gets back to her work, Holly ponders this.

77 INT. THE SUPERMARKET. - DAY

77

Susan is appears from behind a row she is obviously waiting for someone, she spots something and hides from view.

Doug enters and begins gathering supplies, soft drinks, chips, biscuits. He wanders around a corner and bumps into - Susan!

It's a bit of a shock for Doug, Susan feigns surprise. She's very dressed up and looks great. For his part Doug is wearing a new shirt and he's looking toned and healthy.

SUSAN

Douglas!

DOUG

Susan?

SUSAN

How are you?

DOUG

I'm good, you know, getting there.

SUSAN

You look great. Is that a new shirt?

Doug is flattered, but keeps it cool.

DOUG

Not really.

SUSAN

Have you lost weight?

DOUG

I don't think so.

SUSAN

Well there's something definitely different about you.

DOUG

(Innocently)

Well I do live with a duck now.

This is completely lost on Susan, she thinks it's a joke and laughs. A little too much.

SUSAN

I do miss that quirky sense of humour.

Susan lightly strokes the side of his face. Her expression saddens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I've been surprised how much I've missed you .(Beat) I think I made a mistake Doug, can we talk about this? Maybe over a drink or a bite to eat or something?

This surprises Doug, he goldfishes for a moment. Susan reacts first.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Unless, of course, you're seeing someone...

Doug is caught.

DOUG

No..I...well...Actually I am seeing someone.

This catches Susan off guard, she struggles to hide her disappointment.

SUSAN

Oh,(Beat) well I'm happy for you Doug.

Doug remains stoic.

DOUG

It doesn't mean we can't be friends though.

Susan winces.

SUSAN

Friends? Of course that would be... nice. Oh there it is.

She grabs the nearest thing off the shelf, as if it was what she was looking for. A packet of Nappies.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Better go, call me sometime.

She gives him an awkward kiss on the cheek and moves off.

DOUG

Sure, take care Susan

Doug is left a little perplexed.

78

EXT. HOLLY'S HOUSE.

78

HOLLY (O.S.)

Taylor?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holly walks down a path beside her house out of the corner of her eye spots something up a tree. It's Taylor and he's sitting there sulking.

Holly stops below him.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Hey mister, what are you doing up there? Doug's waiting.

TAYLOR

I'm not going.

HOLLY

Why not sweetheart? You'll have a great time.

TAYLOR

Cos he's just being nice to me so you'll like him.

Holly grits her teeth.

HOLLY

Doug's gone to a lot of effort for you today, god knows why, you haven't exactly been nice to him have you?

Taylor looks a little shamefaced.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

(With authority)

So you can get your butt out of that tree and show him some respect.

Taylor is surprised by his mothers forcefulness, he looks at her to see if she's serious, it seems so. He climbs down.

TAYLOR

Ok fine then, but he better not have dumb seats.

Taylor heads off, Holly shakes her head as she follows him back up the hill.

79

HOLLY'S HOUSE -- DAY

79

Brent is outside at the wheel of his van. It's a big, matt-black number. Gurneesh, Craig and Kanga are inside. Doug is standing here with Pierre under his arm.

BRENT

Come on Flash! How long we gotta wait for this kid? I want to get a good park!

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Holly comes out with a reluctant Taylor. She's quietly coaxing him.

HOLLY

It'll be fun, you love cricket.

On the side of Brent's van is painted the words "SHAGGIN' WAGON". Doug awkwardly tries to stand in front of the sign obscuring it from Holly.

DOUG

Hi Taylor.

Holly gives him a nudge.

TAYLOR

(Reluctantly)

Hi.

DOUG

Hope you're hungry, we've got heaps of snacks.

Craig sticks his head out.

CRAIG

(To Taylor)

C'mon mate, jump on board. (Spots Holly) Well *hello*, you must be the gorgeous Holly, Flash won't shut up about.

Doug looks embarrassed, Taylor glares at his mother (see!) Holly manages a smile.

DOUG

Holly this is my friend Craig, he's going to be staying with me a while.

HOLLY

Hi Craig, Wow it's getting to be a bit of a full house.

DOUG

Never a dull moment, now don't worry, we'll take him to the game and bring him straight back, he's in good hands. We're all responsible adults.

Holly reaches out and touches Doug's arm.

HOLLY

Relax Doug I trust you. It was lovely of you to arrange this.

The moment is interrupted as Brent honks the horn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRENT  
C'mon already!

HOLLY  
(To Taylor)  
Maybe I should come with you?

BRENT  
No girls!

TAYLOR  
(Embarrassed)  
Yeah Mum - no girls.

The guys all laugh. Taylor brightens a little, pleased that his comment has gone down so well.

HOLLY  
You boys look after him.

Taylor jumps into the van followed by Doug. Taylor sees that Doug still has Pierre under his arm.

TAYLOR  
You're bringing the duck?

BRENT  
Are you kidding? Of course he's  
bringing Pierre.

Taylor smiles - it's a merry blokes adventure. Holly waves as the van takes off.

80

EDEN PARK. -- DAY

80

Eden Park has been the home of Auckland Cricket since 1910 and Auckland Rugby since 1925. And today it's a beautiful day for the Cricket. The merry group make their way down to their seats. Good seats. Craig, Brent, Kanga, Gurneesh, Taylor, Doug and - of course - Pierre are all excited about the game.

It's New Zealand verses Australia and even though the game has yet to begin the atmosphere is electric. Two great rivals facing off against each other in what promises to be an action-packed one-dayer. The GANG settles into their seats.

CRAIG  
So Holly...

DOUG  
The bird expert.

CRAIG  
The extremely cute bird expert.

Doug is embarrassed he conscious that Taylor is listening in.

TAYLOR  
She's just helping him with Pierre.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CRAIG  
Is that all she's helping you out  
with?

DOUG  
Leave it out.

CRAIG  
(Sotto)  
Seriously, you don't want that  
bird to fly the coup.

Doug smiles.

Brent strikes up a conversation with Taylor.

BRENT  
So, you like cricket then kid?

TAYLOR  
Yeah, It's okay.

BRENT  
Just okay? So what do you like?

TAYLOR  
Space.

BRENT  
Cool. So you like UFOs and that?

Taylor looks at Brent.

TAYLOR  
Do you know about NT7?

BRENT  
NT7 is that like WD40?

TAYLOR  
No it's an asteroid.  
(As if he's memorised this  
from a book)  
NT7 circles the Sun every 837 days  
and travels in a tilted orbit from  
about the distance of Mars to just  
within the Earth's orbit.

Doug is listening to this conversation with interest.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)  
On the first of February, 2019 it  
will hit earth causing a global  
climatic catastrophe that will  
threaten the future of civilization  
as we know it.

Brent looks at Taylor, shocked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BRENT

Wow that's some heavy shi.. um  
stuff.

Taylor nods knowingly.

81 LIVE OB TRUCK. -- DAY

81

We're inside the Live OB (Outside Broadcast) Truck for the TV station. It's a wall of video monitors and TERRY - the director - is busy coordinating the team. It's dark in here and his face is bathed with the lights of the cathode screens. He is talking to the cameramen through his headpiece.

TERRY

Camera three just give me a sweep  
of the field, good, good.

Terry suddenly stops.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Brian stop go back, there!

Terry grins and looks at the screen. We can't see what he sees. He glances at a pretty young WOMAN who's manning one of the mixers.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Tell me you see that.

The woman grins and nods.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Christ we couldn't be that lucky...

Terry smiles to himself.

82 THE GAME. -- DAY

82

It's a hard fought battle of two evenly-matched teams on a field of burning green.

83 INT. EDEN PARK MENS TOILET. DAY

83

Doug and Kanga are standing at the urinals when Brent squeezes in between them. He pops his tub of fries on the top and goes about his business while still eating, Kanga and Doug watch him aghast.

BRENT

Great game eh? Geez that kid  
Taylor's pretty full on, got some  
issues there I reckon.

The boys shake there heads in disbelief at Brent's antics, as they move to the basins to wash, Kanga speaks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KANGA

Although he's wrong about NT7, it's going to miss us by a country mile.

DOUG

What?

KANGA

(Innocently)

Yeah I read it a while back in the "Sky and Telescope", apparently it's course has changed somewhat, still, we don't wanna spoil the kids fantasy eh?

Doug's jaw drops at this insight from the most unlikely source.

DOUG

(thoughtfully)

No, I guess we don't.

84 EDEN PARK. STANDS -- DAY

84

It's exciting, fast and furious. We see the game, the crowd and our gang's reactions to the excitement... Good fun. No, scratch that... Great Fun. Finally one of the Kiwi bowlers bowls out an Aussie batsman for a Duck (getting out for a score of zero). The crowd goes wild!

85 LIVE OB TRUCK. -- CONTINUOUS

85

Terry is beside himself.

TERRY

Brian cue!

86 EDEN PARK. STANDS -- SECONDS LATER

86

Up on the big screen appears Doug holding Pierre.

OUT FOR A DUCK!

The crowd erupts into laughter and more cheering. Doug realises he's on the big screen and - grinning - he holds up Pierre above his head and the crowd react as music blares over the speaker system.

87 INT. COMMENTATORS BOOTH - DAY

87

Two well known Commentators are enjoying the moment.

COMMENTATOR 1

Is that a real duck? Who brings a duck to a cricket game?

88 INT. HOLLY'S HOUSE. -- DAY

88

Holly again has her nose buried in a book - Jonathan Livingston Seagull - she glances up at the game on TV. She laughs gleefully when she sees Doug and Pierre.

COMMENTATOR 2 (V.O.)

I think you'll find that's a  
shelduck, Ian.

Doug is surrounded by his friends. They're all crowding into shot - including a grinning Taylor jumping up and down at the front. Their fifteen seconds of fame.

89 HOLLY'S HOUSE. -- NIGHT

89

Doug and Holly are talking at the front door. The boy's wait in the van.

HOLLY

Thanks for today, he had a blast.

DOUG

No worries, It was easy he's a good  
kid.

HOLLY

Yeah he is good.

DOUG

And, that's good.

In the light of day and sober, this moment is awkward but Holly takes the initiative and pulls Doug into a tight hug.

As they break, they look into each others eyes and it seems inevitable they should kiss, when they're interrupted.

Taylor is standing there staring at what's happening. He's shocked.

TAYLOR

Mum?

HOLLY

Oh, I was just saying goodnight to  
Mr Gordon. Wasn't I?

DOUG

Oh, yes.

It's all very uncomfortable.

DOUG (CONT'D)

And I was just going, seeya.

HOLLY

Bye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He turns to leave and then he remember something.

DOUG  
Oh, yeah, I almost forgot, What are  
you guy's doing tomorrow?

HOLLY  
Nothing planned.

DOUG  
Great, I've got something to show  
Taylor. Pick you both up at ten?

HOLLY  
Sounds very mysterious. See you at  
ten.

As she closes the door Holly leans out and gives Doug a quick  
kiss.

TAYLOR (O.S.)  
Mum haven't you said goodbye  
enough?

Holly smiles and closes the door. Doug leaves.

As he walks away, his phone rings.

DOUG  
Hi this is Doug.

SUSAN (O.S.)  
Doug, It's Susan.

There's silence due to Doug's surprise.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
Doug?

He recovers.

DOUG  
Hi, yes I'm still here, (with  
uncertainty) what's up?

SUSAN  
(Emotionally)  
This is kind of hard for me, but  
after seeing you today I haven't  
been able to stop thinking about  
you.

DOUG  
Uh huh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SUSAN

(Upset)

I was confused when I left you Doug, but now I've had time to clear my head, things are different. (Beat) I know you've started seeing someone, but we had two years together and that *means* something, I don't think I could live with myself if we just threw it all away without us at least talking about it?

Doug is starting to waver. Susan goes in for the kill.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Please, Just one more chance Doug, you won't be sorry..

Doug capitulates.

DOUG

Sure, can't hurt, I guess.

SUSAN

(Brightens)

Great are you free Monday night?

DOUG

Yeah, Mondays good.

With a guilt ridden face Doug glances back at the lights of Holly's house.

90

THE AUCKLAND OBSERVATORY. THEATRE -- DAY

90

Doug has brought Holly and Taylor here. Pierre also - in his box. Artie is here too, gormless as ever in his Spiderman suit.

They watch a projected display on the theatre ceiling. Taylor is watching and listening in wide eyed wonder to Professor Craddock. His voice is deep and dripping with honey, a beautiful sound that can't help but draw you in and enthrall you.

PROFESSOR CRADDOCK

NT7, while initially thought to be a high-level threat, has long since been down-graded. You see the science of observing the universe is the art of looking not once, not twice, but many, many times. By watching the orbit and trajectory of NT7 astronomers have observed that it will miss the earth by several tens of millions of kilometres.



91 THE AUCKLAND OBSERVATORY. EXT THEATRE -- DAY

91

They exit the theatre.

An astronaut suit has pride of place here in a moonlanding display. Taylor turns to Proffessor Craddock.

TAYLOR

So we're not all going to die?

Holly stoops down to give Taylor a cuddle.

HOLLY

No sweetheart, I guess not.

PROFESSOR CRADDOCK

(Diplomatic)

Not from being hit by NT7 we're not.

TAYLOR

But I was sure...

PROFESSOR CRADDOCK

That's the thing about the universe my young friend...

(He smiles broadly)

What is true today isn't necessarily true tomorrow... The universe must change. That is its nature...

With these words still in our ears we move on...

92 THE PARK. -- LATER

92

Taylor and Artie are playing while Pierre grooms himself. A dog wanders nearby.

Doug and Holly stroll beside the lake. Doug is deep in thought.

HOLLY

Thank you. I can't tell you how much that meant to Taylor. I've never seen him so happy.

DOUG

No worries.

The Dog moves closer to Pierre, he's got lunch on his mind.

Taylor hears the dog bark, he looks up to see that Pierre is gone.

Holly links her arm in Doug's.

HOLLY

You're a good man Doug Gordon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug realizes that this is the moment he has to unburden himself. But before he can get a word out, Taylor's panicked voice, halts him...

TAYLOR (V.O.)

Doug!

They turn to see the Taylor running towards them.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Pierre's gone!

DOUG

What?

HOLLY

(Worried)

When did you last see him?

Taylor and Artie look upset.

TAYLOR

Only a few minutes ago, (points) he was just there. I saw this dog.

Doug starts searching, calling Pierre's name. The others join in.

93 EXT. PARK - DAY

93

Pierre is scuttling through the bush, being chased by a DOG. It's more fun on the dog's part, but Pierre is panicked, running deep into the woods that edge the park.

94 EXT. PARK - DAY

94

Doug looking for him. He is starting to fret. He meets the Dog coming back, panting and happy from the chase. Doug stares at it.

DOUG

You seen a duck, mate?

As it trots past. Doug goes on, comes to the dense wooded area, stops, it hits home.. He's lost him!

95 EXT. PARK - DAY - LATER

95

The whole gang have gathered to look and are now back at the picnic site without having found the Pierre. Doug looks really upset as the others try to comfort him. It has become overcast now, threatening rain.

BRENT

Maybe he just took off, Doug.

DOUG

How could he take off, he can't fly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLY

He may not come back, Pierre *is* a wild creature.

Doug looks at her, almost accusingly.

DOUG

Yeah, so you've said.

The first drops of rain start to fall. Craig, Kanga, Brent and Gurneesh stand around staring at Doug who looks openly anxious.

CRAIG

Listen, Doug...

But Doug has turned away, gone back to searching. Holly instinctively follows. Suddenly the rain comes down in earnest and there's a rush to find cover in the vehicles.

Taylor is left there looking upset he feels responsible. Brenda returns to usher him under shelter.

96

BUSH CLEARING-DAY

96

Doug is obviously upset, he searches frantically. Holly catches him up, they are both soaked to the skin.

HOLLY

I'm sorry if I upset you.

Doug just nods and continues his search.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Something's probably scared him, maybe that dog you saw?

Doug's search becomes more frenetic.

DOUG

Pierre!

HOLLY

Doug he could be in hiding, he may not come out for hours, days even.

Doug forges on. Holly trails him.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

It's been nearly three hours, we're both soaked and it's getting dark, why don't we...

Doug stops and turns on her.

DOUG

(Snaps)

You expect me to just leave him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holly is surprised by this outburst. She takes his hands, makes him face her.

HOLLY  
No, Doug. I know you're not the  
type who just bails on his mates,  
We'll find Pierre...

And Doug listens, guilt now welling up in him. Holly, opening herself up, rushing it, goes on.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
... We're all fond of him,  
especially me, I mean he brought us  
together, didn't he...

And it's so near the truth and so far off the mark that Doug blurts out.

DOUG  
I'm having dinner with Susan. I  
think she wants to talk about  
getting back together.

Holly withdraws her hand, shrinking almost visibly. All she can manage is a faint,

HOLLY  
Oh.

DOUG  
I was trying to tell you...

And now she is back in some kind of control.

HOLLY  
Yes, well, now you have, so your  
conscience is clear.

Then she turns and leaves while her dignity is still intact. Doug stands doubly miserable. Then his phone beeps. For a moment he ignores it, but it keeps chirping. He takes it out, checks the message:

ALL BOOKED TOMORROW NITE XX SUSAN

Doug looks around.

DOUG  
PIERRE!!...(looks at the message  
again), shit!

Defeated, Doug just stands there as the rain gets heavier.

97

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON.

97

They are crammed into Brent's van, all except Doug. They look at each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GURNEESH

We can't just leave him here.

BRENT

It's pissing down.

KANGA

Yeah, the Duck'll be sweet. They're waterproof, you know. 'Dry as a duck' it's a well known saying.

CRAIG

Here he comes.

They all look and see Doug coming back, saturated, and without Pierre. His presence affects Holly. Upset she turns away

BRENDA

Poor Doug.

Taylor stares at his mum. Doug comes up, shakes his head.

DOUG

Not a sign.

There is an awkward pause for a moment, then Doug, without another word goes to the Ute, gets in. Starts the engine, then backs out and drives away.

BRENDA

It's just a duck for godsake.

We see the sadness in Doug's face, it's more than just a duck.

98

INT. UTE - DUSK

98

Doug drives, the windscreen wipers beating hard. To himself, he says through clenched teeth. Doug looks at Pierre's empty box on the seat next to him.

DOUG

Snap out of it, man. This is what you wanted, a chance to make it up to Susan. You going to let some bloody, stupid duck get you down...?

He stares ahead, unable to get his mind off Pierre. Almost reflexively he switches on the stereo and the Queen song 'Somebody to Love' fills up, the association makes him wince. He turns it off again and then suddenly pulls over to the side. Sits a moment.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Of course!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Doug hits the gas, powering into a fishtailed u-turn, heading back the way he came.

99 INT. TAYLOR'S BEDROOM. -- DUSK

99

Holly is tucking Taylor up in bed. The finished NT7 asteroid hangs from the ceiling. Over Holly's head.

TAYLOR

Mum?

HOLLY

Hmmm?

TAYLOR

Is Doug still your friend?

This throws Holly.

HOLLY

I'm not sure.

TAYLOR

Is it because of me? Because of what happened at the park.

Holly is quick to respond.

HOLLY

No sweetheart, of course not.

TAYLOR

I'm always going to be friends with Artie.

HOLLY

(Smiles)

I know you will darling.

Taylor sadly looks at the photograph of his dad.

TAYLOR

I miss Dad.

(Pauses, a bit guilty)

But I sort of like Doug too. Is that ok?

We can see by Holly's expression that she's upset about Doug as well but can't bear to admit it.

HOLLY

It's alright to like them both.  
Goodnight darling.

Holly she kisses him on the forehead and moves off.

As she closes the door she looks back at him. Her heart is breaking.

100 EXT. PARK - NIGHT

100

Doug has driven into the park. Light rain falls. He stops near the edge of the woods, turns on the music, opens both doors and gives it full volume. He stands silhouetted in the headlights.

*Can anybody find me somebody to love,*

*Each morning I get up I die a little,*

*Can barely stand on my feet...*

Queen spills out into the darkness, competing with the rain and thunder. He sits on the bonnet and stares into the darkness.

*...Somebody, (somebody) somebody (somebody)*

*Can anybody find me somebody to love...*

101 EXT. PARK - NIGHT

101

Doug is pacing back and forth in front of the Ute, Queen playing behind him.

He is almost ready to give up when he hears, deep in the woods, a sound.

DOUG

Pierre?

Incredibly out of the bushes waddles Pierre. Doug rushes to him and stoops down to greet him.

DOUG (CONT'D)

(Emotional)

You okay little buddy?

Pierre seems alright. Doug picks him up and holds him close. His delighted shouts, honking, and the music of Queen echo in joyful reunion.

DR BUSTER (V.O.)

Hold fast to dreams...

102 THE VET'S OFFICE -- DAY

102

Dr Buster is examining Pierre.

DR BUSTER

*...For if dreams die, life is a broken bird that cannot fly.*

DOUG

Is he going to be okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR BUSTER

Oh yes. Just a few ruffled feathers. He's going to be fine. More than fine in fact... I think I'm going to have to re-asses my original diagnosis. This bird could very well fly again.

DOUG

(Shocked)

Really?

DR BUSTER

As far as I can tell there's only one thing standing in his way. And that's you.

DOUG

Eh?

DR BUSTER

He's bonded with you and you don't fly so he doesn't need to fly.

DOUG

So in order for Pierre to fly I need to fly?

DR BUSTER

(Smiles)

A word of warning however, it will be a journey fraught with peril. Are you sure you are up for this?

Doug ponders this, a look of determination crosses his face.

DOUG

Absolutely.

DR BUSTER

I wasn't talking to you.

He was talking to the duck? Dr Buster smiles enigmatically.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)

I have a plan. All you need to do is let your mind open itself like a revolving door in a moderately priced hotel and allow the Peregrine Falcon of inspiration to fly in...

103 A RUGBY FIELD. -- AFTERNOON

103

Open on Dr Buster. He's dressed in a get-up that almost resembles a world-war one flying ace. Complete with leather flying helmet and goggles up on his head. He salutes Doug.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

DR BUSTER

When once you have tasted flight,  
you will forever walk the earth  
with your eyes turned skyward, for  
there you have been, and there you  
will always long to return.

We pull out and turn around to reveal that Doug, Pierre, Gurneesh, Kanga, Craig and Brenda are all here. Brenda stands by Brent. She doesn't look at Doug, her loyalties lie elsewhere.

Behind Dr Buster is a huge hot-air balloon in the field. Standing here with the balloon is Ginger - Dr Buster's flight crew. Dr Buster salutes her. She salutes back.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)

Ready for take-off first officer?

GINGER

Ready and willing.

DR BUSTER

So Doug you go up in the balloon.  
Pierre sees you fly. Pierre is  
inspired to fly.

Doug is definitely looking uncomfortable.

DOUG

(Awkward and scared)

Ah.. Yeah there's something I  
should've mentioned before. I don't  
really fly.

DR BUSTER

What?

DOUG

I thought when I got here I'd be  
okay, but being here has made it  
worse.

Dr Buster begins to usher Doug toward the basket.

DR BUSTER

We'll have to teach both of you to  
fly then.

Doug pulls away, he is sweating profusely.

DOUG

I can't...

CRAIG

His parents died in a plane crash.

There's an awkward silence. Dr Buster mellows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR BUSTER

It's okay we can still make this work.

104 THE BALLOON. -- LATER

104

Dr Buster and Ginger in the basket. Ginger is working the flame. In Dr Buster's arms is Pierre. He's squirming and quaking excitedly. Doug is standing outside the basket, looking in.

DOUG

You alright buddy?

Pierre quacks loudly.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I know, I know.

(Worried)

Are you sure about this?

Dr Buster pulls down his goggles.

DR BUSTER

He needs to get back his desire to fly. Trust me - I'm a vet.

Ginger pulls the flame and they slowly ascend. Leaving Doug on the ground. Pierre starts flapping his wings.

DR BUSTER (CONT'D)

See he's remembering...

105 A RUGBY FIELD. -- LATER

105

Doug looks up. From the ground he can see and hear Pierre. The others are standing beside him. Pierre sounds distressed.

BRENDA

This isn't right...

The duck is terrified and quacking in fear. Doug looks up and starts shouting.

DOUG

Okay that's enough, you can stop now! Bring him back!

Dr Buster peers over the rim.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Stop this, bring him down! Now!

106 A RUGBY FIELD. -- LATER

106

Pierre is circling the basket. He's desperately flapping his wings. The group is standing watching him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG  
He hasn't flapped his wings like  
that for ages.

BRENDA  
I think it's cruel. You've given  
him a taste of something he can  
never have!

She looks at Doug with fiery eyes.

BRENT  
Honey, chilax...

BRENDA  
You've shown him something and then  
cruelly snatched it away.

It's obvious Brenda is talking as much about Holly as she is  
about Pierre.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
(To Dr Buster)  
I should report you.  
(To Brent)  
Come on. We're going.

Brenda leads Brent away. Doug watches her leave, he can't  
think what to say.

DR BUSTER  
(Deadly serious)  
If you want him to regain his love  
of flying we'll need to keep coming  
back until...

Doug looks out at the sad sight of Pierre trying desperately  
to fly. He shakes his head and slumps.

DOUG  
No, I'm sorry he's been through  
enough.

107 INT. DOUG'S HOUSE. -- EVENING.

107

Craig enters in his full cycling regalia, he's breathing  
hard, having just been for a ride. He heads straight for the  
fridge and grabs a carton of O.J and begins to drink. Doug  
enters dressed for dinner.

CRAIG  
Going out mate?

DOUG  
Yep, I'm having dinner with Susan.

Craig almost chokes on the juice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG (CONT'D)  
 Pierre's still a bit scratchy so  
 I'll take him with me, see you  
 later.

Doug leaves.

Craig's face shows his dilemma. He knows he should stop him  
 but the truth will hurt someone.

108 EXT. THE YACHT CLUB CARPARK. -- EVENING

108

Doug sits in his car outside the restaurant. He looks at  
 Pierre who sits on the seat next to him.

DOUG  
 Why does it feel like I'm cheating  
 on someone?

Pierre just looks at him.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
 I mean Holly's great, but it's  
 Susan I love right? (Beat) Okay  
 here we go, wish me luck buddy.

With that Doug hauls in a deep 'now or never' breath and gets  
 out of the Ute. Pierre honks angrily.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
 (To Pierre)  
 It's okay mate, I know what I'm  
 doing.

As Doug strides off, Pierre stares after him and gives a  
 little plaintive squawk.

Tilt down to reveal Doug has parked in a park that says \*  
 "Reserved for Yacht Club President".

109 INT. DOUG'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

109

Craig is trying to watch TV, he can't concentrate as he knows  
 he has to do something. He grabs the phone and dials.

110 INT. DOUGS CAR -- NIGHT

110

On the seat Doug's phone rings, he's left it behind, Pierre  
 looks at it and honks.

111 INT. DOUG'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

111

There is no answer.

CRAIG  
 Oh maan!

He grabs his bike and runs out.

112 INT. THE YACHT CLUB RESTAURANT. -- EVENING

112

Doug is shown to his table, Susan waits, her face lights up when she see's Doug, she looks stunning.

DOUG

Hi, sorry I'm a bit late, tough to find a park around here. Wow you look great.

SUSAN

So do you Doug. You really have made an effort.

Susan gestures to the waiter and he pours Doug a champagne. Susan raises her glass.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Heres to the new you, and a fresh start.

They touch glasses, Doug subtly reacts to the 'new you' remark, but it is unnoticed by Susan and she continues.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

I always knew you had it in you Doug, you just needed a little nudge in the right direction.

DOUG

Yeah I guess I did.

SUSAN

It will be great, once the house is sold we can look at an apartment on the waterfront.

DOUG

(Unsure)

The waterfront?

SUSAN

And after we've furnished and decorated, you could get rid of that awful Ute, maybe get a Beemer.

DOUG

I don't want a Beemer.

SUSAN

Come on Doug sweetheart, you want this change don't you?

Doug looks at her and we see a realization dawning on his face.

DOUG

I do, I mean I have.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Susan spots the waiter making his way over to their table. She puts a hand on his and smiles provocatively.

SUSAN  
(Smiles)  
Perfect, ooh I hope you don't mind  
but I ordered an entree for you.

The waiter places plates down in front of them. Susan's ordered the same thing for them both. A juicy slice of meat drizzled with rich sauce, resting on a watercress salad and sprinkled with cranberry.

WAITER  
Enjoy your duck.

A look of sheer horror washes over Doug's face.

SUSAN  
God, it smells divine.

Susan tucks in. Doug is dumbstruck as she puts a fork-full into her mouth and savors the taste.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
Oh it tastes even better.

Doug is transfixed by her mouth as it masticates the meat. Finally he cracks.

DOUG  
I'm sorry Susan, I can't do this.

SUSAN  
(Shocked)  
What? Why?

DOUG  
This wont work, it can't work. We  
want different things, You want the  
best and you should have that, but  
I like my life and what I have, and  
thanks to you I know now...

At that moment Craig bursts in looking ridiculous in his gear and dripping with sweat.

CRAIG  
(Breathless)  
Doug stop, you can't do this, its  
all wrong, I...

A few heads turn.

DOUG  
Craig? What are you doing here?

CRAIG  
You're making a.. big mistake...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOUG  
No it's fine Craig, I..

CRAIG  
(Blurts it out)  
I slept with her, there I said  
it..Susan and I slept together, so  
now there's no going back.

Now the whole restaurant has turned to watch these antics.

DOUG  
Wow!(Beat) Craig I appreciate what  
it took for you to say that, and  
your timing is *almost* perfect, but  
I'd already made my mind up and I  
know that the right person for me  
is...

Something catches Doug's eye, he looks out the window and  
sees, to his horror, a Tow Truck DRIVER hitching the Ute;  
Pierre flaps agitated and helpless in the cab.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
...Pierre.

SUSAN  
Who on earth is Pierre?

Doug leaps to his feet, looking anxiously at imminent  
disaster outside.

DOUG  
Gotta go. (To Craig) Get the bill  
will you?

As the tow truck pulls away Doug bolts across the restaurant,  
leaving Susan calling after him in a fury.

SUSAN  
Douglas? DOUG!!

Craig sits down in the now empty seat, they both look  
suitably embarrassed.

CRAIG  
Um, I'm a little bit short right  
now.

113 EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

113

Doug rushes out as the tow truck drives past him. He looks  
around desperately. Then takes off at a run, as the tow truck  
gathers speed. He shouts desperately for the vehicle to stop,  
but the Driver just flips him the bird and carries on.

Doug can see Pierre in the cab, at the window looking  
panicked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's losing this race.

Exhausted he stops and looks around. He sees Craig's bicycle. Doug smiles. A Queen song kicks in. BICYCLE RACE... *Bicycle!*

114 CITY ROADS. -- NIGHT

114

*Bicycle, bicycle*

*I want to ride my bicycle,*

*bicycle, bicycle*

Doug is screaming along on the bike he catches up to the tow truck and with difficulty extracts Pierre from the moving car and takes off again cutting through traffic at speed, Pierre tucked under his arm.

*I want to ride my bicycle,*

*I want to ride my bike...*

It's a wild and wonderful ride. A jubilant and exciting journey. Doug gets his trouser leg entwined in the bike chain and narrowly avoids being hit by a car.

*I want to ride my bicycle*

*I want to ride it where I like...*

It starts raining. Doug is getting soaked but he surges on. He takes a short cut across a vacant lot. The bike cuts through a muddy puddle. Mud is sprayed up the back of his suit by back wheel. Finally Doug reaches his destination...

115 EXT. HOLLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

115

Doug parks the bike, he puts Pierre down.

DOUG

You stay here, watch the bike okay?

Pierre quacks.

Doug goes up to the door. A deep breath and then he knocks. After a moment, it is opened by Taylor. They stare at each other. Then Doug asks,

DOUG (CONT'D)

Is your Mum in?

Taylor nods and Holly's voice reaches them.

HOLLY (V.O.)

Who is it?

TAYLOR

It's Doug.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

There is a silence, then Holly comes to the door, her face set.

HOLLY  
Go inside, Taylor.

TAYLOR  
Isn't Doug coming in?

HOLLY  
Inside. Now!

And he does, with one last imploring glance at Doug. Holly looks him over. He's a pathetic sight, soaked through, trouser leg shredded, the rest of him mud-splattered. She says nothing for a moment, then.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Goodbye Doug.

Holly starts to close the door. Doug puts a hand against it.

DOUG  
Wait, wait, please. I need to talk to you, Holly.

HOLLY  
We're past talking.

DOUG  
Hear me out, please, Holly. Please?

She keeps the door half closed, but waits.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
I made a mistake.

HOLLY  
You certainly did.

Again, starting to close the door.

DOUG  
Wait... you don't understand...

HOLLY  
What?

Holly looks at him in disbelief.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
Tell me Doug what is it I don't understand? That you asked me out, that you made friends with my son, that you and your duck weaseled your way into my heart, or is it that Susan just clicks her fingers and you jump... Have I missed anything?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Doug has nothing.

HOLLY (CONT'D)  
I can take the hits Doug, but  
Taylor can't.

And she tries to shut the door again. Doug resists, his expression desperate.

DOUG  
Holly please, I want to make it  
right, tell me what to do...

HOLLY  
I thought you were a straight up  
guy Doug, but you're just a guy  
who's scared to fly, with a duck  
that can't.

And this time he can't prevent her closing the door which shuts with an awful finality. After a stricken moment, Doug turns and trudges away.

116 INT. HOLLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT 116

Upset, Holly stands inside the door, as a tear rolls down her cheek she stands attempting to recover her composure. Taylor comes out, sees her.

TAYLOR  
Has Doug gone?

She nods. Her brave facade crumbles. Taylor runs over and they hold each other tight.

117 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 117

Doug stares at himself in the mirror. Pierre waddles in behind him, jumps up onto the sink.

DOUG  
What a bloody mess, eh, Pierre...I  
lose love, find friendship which  
turns into love, then lose love  
again...it makes you wonder what  
it's all about...Why do we do it to  
ourselves?

Pierre responds, and Doug goes on.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
I guess it's like Freddie Mercury  
says. To be without love is like  
being kept in a prison cell.

Pierre waddles over and affectionately nuzzles Doug.

118 EXT. CRICKET PITCH - DAY

118

The crew are preparing to mow the field. Brent is hacking around with the mower, watched by Kanga.

Gurneesh is with Doug while Pierre wanders over the field.

DOUG

Man what a stuff up, I feel sick about how I treated Holly. She trusted me and I was gutless not to be straight with her...

GURNEESH

So Doug Gordon's not perfect. Big deal. Give her some time, try talking to her, you never know she may come round.

DOUG

Nah. She made it pretty clear that the ship has sailed, and the last thing I want to do is cause her any more pain.

Gurneesh pats him on the back.

GURNEESH

Well life's full of surprises you just never know what's...

And then there comes the roar of the lawnmower starting, immediately followed by yells of alarm.

They look round and see the lawnmower has taken off, Brent and Kanga in pursuit. Gurneesh yells,

GURNEESH (CONT'D)

I told you dipsticks, never start it in gear!

Laughing at the sight of the two men chasing the runaway mower. The Doug cries out, panic in his voice.

DOUG

Pierre!

And we see the Duck is directly in the path of the snarling mower, it bearing down on him, throwing up a wake of green clippings.

The others see the danger and all begin to shout, running after the mower.

Pierre sees it coming, starts to scuttle away, but it's clear there's only going to be one winner in this race. Doug is yelling at him,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOUG (CONT'D)  
C'mon Pierre... fly, fly...!

Pierre cannot see him, so intent is he on staying ahead of the mower, begins to flap his wings, ungainly at first, with the mower nearly on him.

Then, as the mower is about to catch Pierre, his wings are suddenly beating the air, gaining rhythm and power, and he lifts away, and starts to climb.

While the men all start cheering, the mower continues on, to crash into the pavilion.

KANGA  
Look at him go.

GANESH  
You beauty.

And they come together and watch Pierre climb the sky.

DOUG  
Alright, that's high enough,  
Pierre...

And it's clear he expects the bird to circle and return but instead it just keeps going.

Behind him the lads are silently watching too.

Doug's smile fades as it dawns on him that this time he's lost his friend for good.

DISSOLVE TO:

119 INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

119

Doug is emptying the paddle pool, using a saucepan, walking back and forth to the sink.

OUTSIDE a near full moon is hoisting itself above the skyline.

As he returns to scoop the next pan of water, Doug notices the moon reflected in the water. Through the ripples in the pool something catches his eye, was that a duck flying past the moon? He looks up and scans the night sky but no sign. Doug sighs as he realises he must have imagined it.

His eyes rest on the huge fat moon hanging in the nights sky, he smiles as an idea forms.

120 AUCKLAND ZOO. -- NIGHT

120

A sign reads: "Night Safari. Arahoe Primary School." Holly is in the small grassy area in the middle of the zoo. A face-painter is turning a whole bunch of kids into lions, leopards, zebras and butterflies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The area is lit up with burning torches. Taylor is here painted up as a tiger and Artie - predictably - as Spiderman.

Holly - wearing a safari hat - is handing out food and drinks. Brenda - with a safari hat - is also assisting. There's a sea of children here with their Mums helping out. It's pretty much chaos.

BRENDA

How about speed-dating? You could try that?

HOLLY

I don't want to talk about it.

(To the kids)

Okay now who wants Monkey Shakes and who wants Jungle juice?

The kids start crowding around her, demanding drinks.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Hold on, hold on...

ARTIE

Why is there a moon man at the zoo?

HOLLY

Artie you are a weird kid you know that?

TAYLOR

No, Mum look...

Holly looks up and sees a man walking towards them. He appears over the rise.

Walking slowly and deliberately - reminiscent of the film "The Right Stuff." The man is wearing an astronaut suit. A really good one with all the tubes, buttons and a fully reflective visor. So it's impossible to see who's inside. He's lit by the eerie half-lights here in the zoo. It's like he's walking on the moon. Music creeps in on the soundtrack. Queen's wonderfully campy hit "FLASH" - the theme to the equally campy movie. Suitable music for an astronaut.

*Flash a-ah Saviour of the universe Flash!*

The children all crowd in. Holly is as surprised as anyone.

*He'll save everyone of us!*

*Flash! He's a miracle Flash! King of the impossible...*

The song is intercut with the silly dialogue from Flash Gordon...

COLONEL OF BATTLE CONTROL ROOM  
(V.O.)

*General Kala! Flash Gordon approaching!*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GENERAL KALA (V.O.)

*What do you mean, "Flash Gordon  
approaching"?*

Finally the astronaut reaches the grass area. The kids are thrilled they crowd around the him - it's an impenetrable wall of children. He raises his reflective visor. We now see the man inside the helmet. It's Doug. Holly has already guessed this but she just stands there. Rooted to the spot. Her face remains stoic. Doug talks inside the helmet. But it's muffled, they can't hear him. Holly frowns.

ARTIE

(Calling out)

We can't hear you Moon man!

Doug tries to get the helmet off but it's stuck. He shouts inside. It's still too muffled to for anyone to hear. Taylor is standing closer to Doug, he cranes to hear and shouts it back to his mother - the other kids all try to help. It only makes things worse.

TAYLOR

(Shouting)

He wants to go to Mumbai!

Holly frowns she has no idea what's happening here it's a bit embarrassing. All the Mum's are looking at her.

HOLLY

(Confused, Embarrassed)

What? Go home Doug. This isn't the place!

Doug can't hear her either. He keeps shouting inside the helmet while trying to get the stupid thing off. Taylor's still "helping".

TAYLOR

He wants to go soon!

HOLLY

I don't want to go to Mumbai. I  
don't want to go anywhere with you.

Doug is still muffled.

TAYLOR

This June.

Holly turns and starts walking away. Doug finally pulls off the helmet and shouts over the heads of the huge throng of children. Over the laughter and shouts.

DOUG

(Calling to her)

I want to take you to the moon!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Holly stops in her tracks. She's moved. The Mums all melt. This is so romantic. Silly but romantic. Holly turns and looks at Doug.

HOLLY  
You can't take me to the moon,  
Doug.

A couple of the Mum's chime in.

MUM 1  
Why not? He's got the suit?

MUM 2  
Yeah hear him out. He's gone to all  
this effort....

MUM 3  
You can't turn down a trip to the  
moon.

BRENDA  
Yes, she can.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
He dumped her and hooked up with  
his skanky ex-girlfriend.

All the Mum's look at him disapprovingly.

DOUG  
Ok..I've been a spineless jerk, and  
you were right I am just a man and  
a duck but Pierre is gone.

Holly is surprised by this.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
He flew. And if he can fly...

He becomes aware of everyone looking at him. There's a deadly  
silence. Doug searches for the courage.

DOUG (CONT'D)  
I...I'm falling in love with you  
Holly.

The crowd is moved, Holly is rocked by this but remains calm.

MUM 2  
Oh, give him another go. God my  
husband would never dress up for  
me.

MUM 1  
I'm lucky if Bruce puts on pants.

Holly stares intensely at Doug, she walks towards him. The  
children part for her like the red sea.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Finally she reaches him. To the surprise of everyone she slaps him. The crowd gasps.

HOLLY

You honestly think you can just  
rock up here, say you love me and  
everything's fine?

Doug senses this isn't going to plan.

DOUG

Holly, I...

Holly slaps him again.

HOLLY

That's for embarrassing me and  
this...

Doug flinches expecting a third slap but instead Holly pulls him into a long lingering kiss.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Is for embarrassing me.

There are oohs and ahhs from the crowd.

DOUG

We can't go to the moon but I can  
get you close...

As if on cue a massive light bathes the scene. Everyone looks up as a hot air balloon appears overhead. Illuminated from inside by the flame it looks like a huge glowing egg. Dr Buster looks out from the basket and waves. The balloon slowly descends into the zoo. Holly can't hold back - a huge smile spreads across her face.

HOLLY

But you don't like flying...

DOUG

Depends on my copilot.

HOLLY

(Good natured)  
You're a dick.

They kiss again.

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EXT. HOT AIR BALLOON BASKET - NIGHT

121

As their lips part we reveal they are on the balloon floating high over the City. It's perfect, ideal. Doug has his arm around Holly and his eyes screwed shut, Taylor is with them. Doug is terrified, but exhilarated, holding onto Holly for more than dear life. As they drift away from us they are silhouetted against the city and moonscape.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

The music of Queen the song is fittingly "PRINCES OF THE UNIVERSE"

As the song plays we cut through all the characters we have seen in our little story. All in locations that define them. They're all singing along to the song. A joyous uplifting ending.

The final image we are left with is the bright blue sky. Into it flies Pierre, flying strong and happy. He lets out a happy honk. Another duck flies next to him. A female, a mate.

The End.