

FIXING MRS. PHILPOTT

Written by

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Based on:

Fixing Mrs. Philpott by Rachel McAlpine

Address
Phone Number

1

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE/SITTING ROOM - DAY

Two ladies, one in her seventies and one in her eighties, are sitting having afternoon tea. The smartly dressed elder lady, has a tea tray on the occasional table next to her and the other lady has a side plate on her table, with a half eaten piece of cake. This seventy year old lady, Zoe Philpott, dressed drably, in a longish, beige synthetic suit with a blonde, 1960's, upswept hairstyle, and ugly glasses, has her cup and saucer in her hand and is somewhat agitatedly waving them around as she speaks.

ZOE

... and then Felicity said that Bill had admitted to her that he couldn't love me properly, anymore, because I didn't go in for ...
... you-know-what, any more ...
wellyou know what I mean. I was shockedso I collected my leaflets and left quickly, before she said anything else!

Katherine takes a sip of tea, puts the cup on her saucer, on her knee, and sits back in her armchair, by the side of the unlit fire.

KATHERINE

Perhaps you could consult Xianthe?
She's an expert in 'you know what'

ZOE

Oh! No need to go that far! This is just a hiccup.

KATHERINE

How about chatting to Felicity?

ZOE

Dear me, no! I couldn't talk about this to family. It's bad enough with my sister-in-law spotting the problem, without asking her to fix it, as well!

KATHERINE

Perhaps a nurse, then? Young Emmeline is very discrete.

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

It's probably just me, but I don't think that anyone that young could possibly understand.

Katherine's enthusiasm begins to wane. There is a pause.

KATHERINE

Susan's husband is a social worker. I dare say he encounters personal problems all the time.

Zoe's cup and saucer waving is getting rather dangerous

ZOE

With due respect, this is surely too delicate a topic to discuss with a ma ...

Katherine, with a burst of inspiration

KATHERINE

... or how about contacting the Happiness Lady?

ZOE

Who?

KATHERINE

You'll like her. She's trained in cognitive behavioural therapy.

Zoe removes her cup from her saucer, which is being held up, in her left hand and waving it at Katherine, causing the tea to slosh on the carpet, whereupon Katherine reaches across and firmly takes the cup and saucer off Zoe, putting them down on Zoe's arm table.

ZOE

Oh, sorry ... That sounds far too technical! ... But (smiling) ... I do appreciate your advice, Katherine, and all of your kind suggestions will certainly be considered.

Katherine looks up to her ceiling with exasperation and blinks. Zoe follows her glance, anxiously.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Something wrong with your ceiling?

2

INT. ZOE'S HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Philpott is lying on her back in bed, with her arms crossed over her chest. She is dreaming.

DREAM SCENARIO:

A deaconess is finishing reading out Mrs. P's eulogy in a church

DEACONESS

... and she was a good mother to
Rose and a good grandmother to
Bonny ...

Mrs. P nods agreement from in her coffin, which is placed at the head of the main aisle to one side of the pulpit, at the foot of the altar stairs.

DEACONESS (CONT'D)

... and Mrs. Zoe was always
unfailingly polite ... unlike many
other people.

Back in the real scene, Zoe sits up in bed, annoyed

ZOE

No! Mrs. William Philpott! The
etiquette is wrong! Plain
wrong! (Big sigh)

Zoe looks hopelessly at the big vertical crack down the wall

ZOE (CONT'D)

Why won't Bill let us take a
holiday? I'm too old for all of
these earthquakes!

Footsteps outside of the bedroom door are heard and Zoe's husband, Bill, comes in with a tea tray which he carefully deposits on Zoe's bed. There is immediately a roar and a rattle and Zoe and the tea tray are thrown from the bed making a mess of milk and muesli. Zoe clamps a pillow over her head. When the noise and movement stops, Zoe pulls her nightie back down over her knickers and stumbles upright.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Holy guacamole!

(CONTINUED)

BILL

I reckon that was only a 4.2 ... ?

ZOE

Well ... for small things, let us be grateful. I suppose we should be glad, every time, that it isn't another 7.1!

Bill is picking up the breakfast mess.

BILL

Now you hop back into bed, little lady and I'll bring you another tray.

ZOE

That's kind, dear, but I'll feel safer downstairs. I'll go and see Katherine.

BILL

Um, I'd better start on that front window.

He goes out .Zoe turns the radio on on while sitting at her dressing table and peering in the cracked mirror. She inserts hair pads and backcombs her hair, then smoothing it over the pads to make a beehive style hairdo, with lots of hairpins. Meanwhile the radio is announcing:

RADIO

Here, in Bexley, many residents, after the earthquake are at a point where frustration is overtaking fear and sadness. They are stuck in limbo. Insurance cover is always a waiting game.

3

INT. KATHERINE'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM-STUDY - DAY

Katherine is sitting half away from her desk, where there is a mound of paperwork. She is holding a mug of coffee, as is Zoe, who is sitting near her. Katherine is wearing an immaculate bob with a long, tubular, chocolate linen skirt and a fitted top. Zoe is her usual longish, A line dull, beigeish, heavy skirt and droopy, colourless top with ugly spectacles.

ZOE

I'm so glad your house is not empty.

KATHERINE

I have no intention of moving out. Besides being the Chairman of the apartment block trust, I've also been green-stickered, so I am officially mandated to remain in my home, at least for now.

ZOE

When will the verdict be delivered on our place?

KATHERINE

In three, or four weeks, I understand.

ZOE

I do find the uncertainty a bit difficult

KATHERINE

Don't stress, dear. We shall all make a joint decision about demolishing, or rebuilding the unitsNow, did you contact the Earthquake Commission about our joint insurance claim? Did you get the spreadsheet?

Zoe looks shifty and uncomfortable, and Katherine's eyebrow goes up

ZOE

... .umis there anything else I can do to help things, instead?

(CONTINUED)

KATHERINE

Ahwell ... then, how would you like to record some stories for the library's archive of Canterbury Tales?

ZOE

What? You mean their earthquake stories?

KATHERINE

And their happiness secrets ... This is our gift to the people of Canterbury. See if you can record twenty-fivefamily and friends will do.

ZOE

People don't just blurt stories out like that!

KATHERINE

Oh, but they do ... anyway, what have you done about the 'you know what' problem, since we last talked? It's been three months, now. Is this holiday you are going on, a trial separation?

ZOE

Dear me no! I've begged Bill to come but he won't ... I don't know what other people do.

KATHERINE

Well, then. Forget the archive. You can gather private stories about how people cope with relationship difficulties. You can go away and do your homework and then come back to your marriage knowing exactly what you want to doYou will thank me later.

ZOE

I still can't see people talking themselveseven about their relationship problems ... even if I do say it is for the library archives

(CONTINUED)

KATHERINE

Oh, lots of people like talking
about their sex lives

Zoe's mouth drops open

ZOE

Their sex lives?!

Zoe looks uneasy. Katherine delves into her big desk and
brings out a device.

KATHERINE

Yes. These recordings will comprise
a sort of Canterbury Tales mixed
with a self-help manual. Where's
your phone? Look I'll lend you this
juice pack and then give you your
first story about a superhero
called Sunday.

She starts installing an app on Zoe's phone.

4

EXT. ZOE'S HOUSE/FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Zoe is on her hands and knees, weeding and Bill is bringing an empty wheelbarrow to her. A young woman backs into the front drive, shunting a caravan. She gets out and comes over to kiss Zoe and Bill. She is wearing jeans and tee shirt.

ROSE

Hi Dad, hi Mum. Your old caravan's here, now. I thought you might just like a final quick look before I hand it over to Aunt Felicity.

Zoe walks around the yellow caravan, running her hand over the painted-on daffodils and butterflies. Bill crouches down and investigates the undercarriage.

ROSE (CONT'D)

I suppose that poor Aunt Felicity could really use this, now, with the vicarage being such a shambles.

ZOE

Well, now that you mention it ... our decision has not been 100% finalized ... I am thinking of taking a little trip away from all of this earthquake mess and visiting a few friends ... you know: Queenie, Una, Polly, Viola and the others. You need a break, too, Bill.

BILL

Slow down, little lady. Let's not do anything rash.

ZOE

Sitting here meekly, in our house, waiting to be killed, is rash. The house is going to fall on our heads, any minute.

BILL

It's almost fixed, honey. Maybe, in a few months ...

ZOE

But Bill, the earthquakes are still going on.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

ZOE (CONT'D)

It would be safer to sleep in a caravan and even safer to get away from here. I've asked you so many times and it is always "later, later".

BILL

Well, at least let me fix the roof, and the doors and windows, first ... and that crack

ZOE

... yes, yes ... right ... Rose, come a have some tea.

She walks into the house followed by Rose, who raises her eyebrows at Bill, as she walks by.

5

EXT. ZOE'S HOUSE/FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Zoe goes into the caravan carrying a cardboard box of food supplies and pans, etc. She then comes out and goes over to call through the front door.

ZOE

Bill! Will you help me hook up the caravan to the car, please, love?

BILL (V.O.)

When?!

ZOE

Now!

Bill appears

BILL

Surely there's no hurry?

ZOE

We either go on this trip, together, or I'm going alone, anyway!

BILL

What will I do without the car?

ZOE

Buy another one, dear

Bill turns to couple up the car and caravan

BILL

Well, I don't know what your hurry
...

Zoe suddenly sees a ripple of silt and sewage hump into the driveway, she points and calls

ZOE

Oh, oh! Liquification!

Bill stands up, having coupled up the vehicles

BILL

I'll just get my barrow and shovel

Zoe grabs his hand

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

No, no! I'll have to leave now! The car will get stuck with the doors, and caravan and stuff ... can you get my handbag and coat?

Bill goes off and brings out her coat and handbag, putting them in the caravan, while Zoe, brings out a loaf, and some towels,etc. and similarly deposits them.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I'll stay with Rose tonight

BILL

How long are you going for?

ZOE

I don't know. Phone me if you change your mind and want to come out and join me, huh?

Zoe kisses Bill takes the car keys out of his hand and drives off with the caravan, waving to Bill.

6

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE/FRONT GARDEN - DAY

Rose is Polyfilling around a lower window frame with a spatula. Zoe arrives and starts to back into Rose's drive a bit off centre. Rose hastily puts down the tub and spatula, and hurries over to Zoe to help with shouted 'distance instructions'. After a rather hairy experience, Zoe gets out and Rose kisses her.

ROSE

Dad phoned and said you're spending the night with me.

ZOE

Well, just in the caravan, if that's OK?

ROSE

Oh, Mum! There's a comfy bed, inside!

ZOE

Well, I shall certainly need to use your bathroom. Can I borrow it, now, darling?

ROSE

As soon as Xianthe has finished with it ... come in, Mum. Bonny will be glad to see you.

They go into the house

7

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

As they enter the hallway, they meet an older, rather assertive and fierce-looking woman in a track suit with wet hair.

XIANTHE

Thanks Rose. They say they'll fix our sewerage before Friday, so fingers crossed ... Oh, you must be Rose's mother!

Xianthe grasps Zoe's hand with a heavy grip which causes Zoe to totter, a little, and strides out. Zoe looks after her.

ZOE

Are all psychiatrists like that?

ROSE

Oh, she's one of a kind.

Zoe gingerly straightens her crumpled fingers out and goes to the bathroom while Rose puts a casserole in the oven and then scrubs some jacket potatoes. Zoe re-emerges, scrabbling in her handbag, and sitting herself at the kitchen table.

ZOE

Look, Rose, love, I'll leave a blank cheque for you here, as I know that you have paid for the WOF and the wheels and stuff.

ROSE

You really do intend to take the daffodil caravan, then? You do realize people don't use caravans, any more!

ZOE

Well, I do! Campervans are such ugly things ... Anyway, when are you and Bonny off, then?

ROSE

December 28th, straight after ChristmasMum, you know that we might stay in Portland, don't you ... for several years.

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

(Sadly)

I do. Maybe I'll meet Bonny's
father, soon.

ROSE

You will come on long visits, won't
you?

ZOE

We both will, darling! But, with
the greatest respect, these long
distance relationships are not
easy, you know.

ROSE

(Ironically)

Well, good luck with yours, then.

Zoe, continues, not appearing to have heard Rose's last
comment. She rummages in her bag and brings out her phone and
the pack, setting it up on the table.

ZOE

I'm calling in at Felicity's
tomorrow and I shall get an oral
'relationship story' off her for
the library, too. Can I have a
quick story off you, as well, love?

Rose sighs, and comes and sits at the table.

ROSE

Oh, Mum!

Rose smiles

ROSE (CONT'D)

OK ... you can have my "Internet
date #22" story.

Rose smiles, mysteriously.

8

EXT. FELICITY'S VICARAGE/DRIVE - DAY

Zoe pulls into the driveway, gets out of the car and looks up at Felicity's half demolished vicarage which has Keep Out and Danger signs on it and some wooden props half shoring it up. A large, capable-looking woman, in her sixties, and wearing a crumpled navy blue suit comes around to the front of the vicarage, from the back of the house. She gives Zoe a big smile and a kiss.

FELICITY

Well, hello, my dear! Lovely to see you! How are you and Bill?

ZOE

Goodness, Felicity! You're not still living in the back of that?!

FELICITY

Not of yesterday. I'm now in a motel, sharing with a young nurse, Emmeline MakiweraWhat's this about your going off in the caravan, then?

Zoe takes Felicity's arm and steers her into the caravan

ZOE

Come into my parlour, said the spider ...

FELICITY

... .I don't know that I fancy being your fly

Zoe sits Felicity at her little table and makes two mugs of coffee.

ZOE

I don't know how you do it, Felicity. You've got no home, or husband, but you still carry on. I'm not half the woman you are! I don't even have a typing job.

FELICITY

Yes, but what are you up to?

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

Oh, that ... Katherine has asked me
to collect some Canterbury tales
for the library archive.

FELICITY

Hope they're not going to be as
lascivious as the originals

Felicity waggles her eyebrows mischievously

ZOE

Oh, no! Well, yes ... well, I mean
that they have to be women's
personal stories ... about
relationships ... I mean that they
could be ... but not necessarily
about 'you know what' ...

FELICITY

(Airily)

Oh, I bet once you get a mic in
front of most of your friends, you
just can't stop 'em! It'll be sex,
sex sex, all the way.

ZOE

Really, Felicity!

FELICITY

I'm serious. How can you separate
the physical from the
psychological, in a relationship?
... Here, where's your recorder?
I've got a good one about a youth
camp I went to a lifetime ago ...
I'll call it "Petting in the
Pulpit"! ... Oh, and when you go,
can you give Emmeline a lift on the
way to Akaroa, please?

Zoe, who is getting out her mobile and pack, looks up
reproachfully and in dismay at the story's title, at
Felicity. Felicity grins.

9

INT. ZOE'S CAR - DAY

Zoe is driving along wearing her usual horrible drab beige, stiff skirt and top and Emmeline, the nurse, is in jeans and tee shirt, next to her. People, in other cars, see Zoe's daffodil caravan and they toot and wave. Zoe waves back

ZOE

What will you be doing at the university in Lincoln, Emmeline?

EMMELINE

Aw, I'm just taking a seminar at the university about working with refugees in Afghanistan ... I'm just back from there.

ZOE

My word, how terrifying!

EMMELINE

Mostly not.

ZOE

Would you like to rehearse your talk with me?

EMMELINE

No

ZOE

Or tell me a story about relationship difficulties in a war zone ... er, for the Canterbury library archive collection I'm making, I'm ...

EMMELINE

..STOP!

An old Honda coming from the opposite direction drifts across the central line of the road, across the two lanes on Zoe's side and then crashes into a concrete power pole, missing them by centimetres.

EMMELINE (CONT'D)

Call 111!

Emmeline dives out of the car and runs across to the crashed car. A young woman runs out of a house nearby in track bottoms and bra, only.

(CONTINUED)

Emmeline and her confer and then the woman comes over to enlist Zoe in diverting oncoming traffic. Emmeline, meanwhile, being unable to open the Honda's door, smashes the windscreen, with her shoe and crawls in to inspect the driver. She inspects the occupant, and then takes photos with her mobile and then the police car and ambulance arrive. Emmeline talk briefly with them. She then takes the arm of Zoe who is standing anxiously peering, nearby, and they head back to Zoe's car.

EMMELINE (CONT'D)

She was dead before she crashed ...
no blood ... heart attack,
probably.

ZOE

Ohpoor lady!Look,
I'll take you to Lincoln and then
I'll go home. This was a doolally
idea.

Emmeline looks Zoe in the face

EMMELINE

No! Living at home during
earthquakes is a doolally idea.
You just coped with an accident,
stopping instantly, avoided a
collisiondiverted traffic;
called 111 ... talked to the
police! You just need a hot drink
and some food. We'll stop for eggs
and bacon and then I will give you
my relationship story. I shall call
it "Like a Virgin".

10 EXT. BEACH - DAY

There is a rumbling and shaking and Zoe's caravan and car pull up quickly and park just onto a shingle beach. She gets out and takes a breath, then is sniffing. She looks at her hands and they are trembling, as the ground is still shaking. Zoe leans into the car and gets a thermos flask out and tries to pour some tea into the cup. She spills it and it pours over her hand. Zoe is crying by now

ZOE
Oh, shit, shit, damn!

She is shaking her hands and wiping the tea off it, when a woman approaches.

JENNY
Ooh, I saw that! These wretched quakes! Are you burnt?

ZOE
No, it's OK, my daughter made this tea hours ago, it's getting cooler, now.

Zoe sniffs

JENNY
Well, I'm afraid that you can't leave this caravan here, or you will soon be stuck fast in this shingle, especially with these quakes. Come on, we'll park it up at my weekend place just up there and you must have some dinner with me.

ZOE
Oh, I couldn't!

Zoe is still sniffing

JENNY
No "Buts"!

11 INT. JENNY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - EVENING

Zoe is perched upon a cane chair drinking tea with Jenny, a middle aged woman who is wearing rough trousers and a tea shirt, with bare feet.

JENNY

No, I don't live here, I design gardens in the city. It's only a weekend place ... but do tell me about yourself. What have you been up to, today?

ZOE

Thanks for asking, but nothing of any importance.

JENNY

You must have done something ... and something that upset you, too.

ZOE

Well ... it's just that I ran away from my house to escape it falling in on me, and then I narrowly escaped an accident and the lady died. So I dropped an acquaintance off in Lincoln and was just ... then the earthquakes started again, so I parked on the beach (starts sniffing).

JENNY

Look, you put your feet up in that room for an hour, or two, and I shall make the dinner. You're staying here for the night until things settle down.

ZOE

Oh, I couldn't!

JENNY

Yes, you could ... no arguments!

12 EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE/GARDEN - EVENING

Zoe comes out through the back door and there are potatoes and salad in bowls, with wine, on a laid table. Zoe sits down, as Jenny comes out holding a plate of hot, breaded fish. Jenny sits down.

JENNY

Snapper?

ZOE

Oh, yes, please!

Jenny dishes the fish and then pours the white wine

JENNY

Fish is our staple dinner. Half the locals surf-cast, so we all get fresh fish.

They look at the scoured horizon with only a few twisted trees. The earth shakes again and Jenny and her look at each other wondering whether to dive under the table. The shaking stops.

ZOE

I'm sorry I ...

JENNY

... please, Zoe, you've had a rough day ... just relax. Did you find anything to read in Xianthe's room.

Zoe looks a bit embarrassed

ZOE

Well, there was one book called My Secret Garden ... but it wasn't about gardening!

JENNY

Oh, that one! Yes, Xianthe is a psychiatrist who does sexual therapy. We share this place.

ZOE

Oh, yes ... I think I have met her ... at my daughter's house ... The stories are a bit ... stimulating.

(CONTINUED)

JENNY

They're sexual fantasies that Nancy Friday winkled out of hundreds of women, way back when.

ZOE

The style is not exactly literary

JENNY

Oh, I guess these stories were just direct transcripts. Women are dying to know what other women fantasize about during sex, so this collection hit a market.

ZOE

You mean that these stories are true? Women really think about these things when they are having 'you know what'?

JENNY

I think about having ice-cream spread all over me and then licked off.

ZOE

Oh, surely not!

Zoe takes a mouthful of wine

JENNY

How about you?

Zoe accidentally coughs out her wine in shock, grabs her napkin and mops herself up

ZOE

Well ... um ... It's annoying when you suddenly remember that you are out of eggs.

JENNY

Ummmm ... borrow the book, if you want. You are staying the night, so you might as well make your trip educational.

13 EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE/GARDEN AND BEACH - DAY

Zoe and then Jenny come out of Jenny's front door. Zoe has a overlarge fleece over her beige crimplene suit and gumboots on. Jenny has a fleece and wellies in with her jeans.

Jenny takes Zoe's arm, companionably

JENNY

You'll like Forsyth Lake. After all, this is called Birdling's Flat, so you can't possibly leave here if you haven't spotted a few birdlings.

Jenny waggles her bird book and binoculars.

ZOE

Will there be any spoonbills?

JENNY

There's sometimes the occasional one.

They walk along the beach and then up a track towards a lake where there is a hide. They go inside and take turns using the binoculars and book. Eventually

JENNY (CONT'D)

Had enough?

Zoe gets her phone out of her bag and waggles it at Jenny

ZOE

Well, I will have, when you have given me your own relationship difficulty story.

JENNY

Hmmmmmm ... then I shall give you "A Woman's Touch".

14 INT. JENNY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Jenny and Zoe are sitting at the table, having just finished lunch. Zoe stands up.

ZOE

Well, this has been lovely. Thank you for such a great time, Jenny. I must be getting off, now, however. Queenie must be wondering what has become of me.

JENNY

Would that be Queenie Jackson?

ZOE

How clever of you!

JENNY

Everyone knows Queenie

Zoe's phone rings. She answers and sits down.

ZOE

Good Morning, Bill.

Zoe frowns

ZOE (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm so sorry, I had my phone switched off ... Oh, dear, dear, dear ... Oh, dear, dear, dear ... How unfortunate! Of course I can ... sure ... I shall be with you as soon as I can.

She puts the phone in her handbag and stands up, again.

JENNY

What's the story?

ZOE

That was my husband, Bill. He was shovelling liquefaction off the driveway and cut his hand. He seems quite agitated.

JENNY

So do you.

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

He's trying to do everything with his left hand.

JENNY

Well, then ... off you go, but when you resume your journey, do drop in, huh?

ZOE

Am I going to resume my journey?

JENNY

You're not going to give up, are you? You've only just begun! You've got to get all of the other Canterbury Tales.

Jenny waggles her eyebrows at Zoe

ZOE

Well, I don't know ... It's just ... It's just that I didn't think that normal, well-bred people did all of those disgusting things, in private ... I mean that I have always tried to be polite ... you know, when I am having 'you know what', with Bill.

JENNY

Don't you enjoy sex, Zoe?

ZOE

I have always tried to ignore the fact that sex is deeply embarrassing. I mean ... it would be nice, were it not so rude! I just wish that happiness weren't so tangled up in something so ... disgusting and ... and ... abnormal.

JENNY

Well, lady, I think that when you have collected a few more tales, you will find out that it is not your tale tellers who are abnormal, not do they find their enjoyments disgusting.

Jenny smiles

(CONTINUED)

JENNY (CONT'D)
... Anyway, you get off then. Do
you want a hand getting the caravan
back on to the road?

15 INT. ZOE'S HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Zoe is pushing hard against the front door which is a little stiff in its frame (with the earth shifting)

ZOE
(Calling)
Bill! Bi-ill! Are you there, d ...

The door opens suddenly with a jerk, and there is Zoe's neighbour, Beryl, standing there in the hall

ZOE (CONT'D)
... Oh!

BERYL
Oh, come in! Doooo come in!

Beryl leads the way to the dining room and Bill stands up with a bandaged hand against his chest. As Zoe steps forward, she is semi 'tripped up' by a cat shooting out of the dining room.

BILL
Zoe! At last! I've

Beryl is shepherding Zoe to her allotted place at the table, well away from Bill

BERYL
... .well, sit, sit, sit!

Suddenly dashing to the kitchen for a second

BERYL (CONT'D)
I'll just get another plate

ZOE
How did you hurt yourself dear?

Beryl returns with Zoe's plate

BERYL
He was helping the Student Army
shift the liquefaction. He is so
strong for his age!

Beryl smiles, worshipfully and sickeningly at Bill

BILL
A piece of tin just c

(CONTINUED)

BERYL

... He needed a tetanus boost!
Don't worry, I took him to the GP.
He's been quite depending on me
haven't y ...

ZOE

... Nice macaroni cheese

Beryl runs her finger around her plate and then licks it.

BERYL

Waste not, want not!

She titters and then simpers at Bill. Zoe turns away, her
face expressing disgust and disbelief.

16 INT. ZOE'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill is lying in bed watching Zoe who is in her nightie and getting ready for bed. She looks at the crack in the wall and grimaces, as it has got bigger. She double checks that, near and on the chair next to her are her jacket, shoes, handbag, and torch. Zoe switches off her lamp and gets into bed.

BILL

Honey? ... Are you unhappy and that's why you're caravanning?

ZOE

How could anyone be happy in this place?

BILL

I can't help feeling that you are unhappy with me.

ZOE

It's bad enough living with earthquake damage ... what is really threatening, though, is the knowledge that it might get a lot worse ... and your doings will all be for nothing, anyway ... probably because we will both have been buried under our roof, by then!

BILL

I miss you

ZOE

... So has Beryl been your chauffeur since I left?

BILL

Sure ... just to the supermarket and library and stuff ... what did you expect me to do?

ZOE

Hire, or buy a car; ask Rose, or Felicity; use a taxi!

BILL

Beryl's a neighbour. She offered.

ZOE

Hmph ...

(CONTINUED)

Zoe licks her fingers

ZOE (CONT'D)
... But I suppose her macaroni
cheese is OK ...

BILL
Never mind, dear. You're back home,
now.

17 INT. ROSE'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Rose leads the way into her kitchen with Zoe following. Rose puts the kettle on to make coffee and Zoe sits at the table.

ROSE
Where's Dad?

ZOE
We won't come. He now wants to
plane down the back door.

ROSE
Apparently, he told the Bowling
Club that he couldn't help them
because he was too busy.

ZOE
He doesn't seem to realize that he
is wasting his time as either the
shocks will get worse and so will
the damage, or the house will be
condemned, or the insurance will
come through and then it will all
need to be done by qualified
buildersafter the shocks have
finished, of course.

ROSE
Everyone's gone crazy.

ZOE
And that Beryl woman is keeping her
cat in our house. I found cat nuts
in the broom cupboard.

ROSE
Are you staying, now?

ZOE
Nope. Not while the after shocks
continue. I'm not sitting/lying
waiting for the roof to fall on
me. I know everyone will blame me.

ROSE
In Christchurch? I don't think so
... ..Hey, Mum ... why don't you
record your own story?

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

Good gracious! The archive is not
about me!

ROSE

You should record one to know what
it feels like.

ZOE

Wellllll ... I suppose ... I could
tell the story of Bill and me ...
the story of A Daisy on my Plate
...

Rose rootles in her Mother's bag.

ROSE

Well ... come on then.

18 EXT. ZOE'S HOUSE/GARDEN - DAY

Zoe is going in and out of the house provisioning the caravan. She talks to Bill, who is watering the garden as she passes back and forth.

ZOE
Bill, do leave off DIYing and come
on a little hols with me.

BILL
Oh, I've that much to do, love!

More provisioning

ZOE
Just a few weeks until the worse of
the aftershocks are finished.

BILL
There will be too much to do, then,
dear.

Zoe checks the coupling on the caravan and then gives Bill a quick peck on the cheek.

ZOE
Well, I'm off to Queenie's now,
BillSee you in a little
while.

She walks around the car and starts to get in

BILL
Don't go, ZoeI don't
understand why

ZOE
Give me a phone if you want to join
me ... byeeee

She drives away.

19 EXT. JENNY'S HOUSE/NEARBY BEACH - DAY

Zoe pulls up near to Jenny's house, gets out and goes for a walk along the beach. There is a howling wind. She falls over, slipping on the pebbles. Zoe carries on, however.

Upon returning to the car, Zoe finds Jenny there. Zoe leans against the car, for support, in the wind.

ZOE
Hello, Jenny.

JENNY
A wild old day

ZOE
Um ... I'm on my way to Queenie's.

JENNY
Can I come, too?

ZOE
Of course. We can stop somewhere
for lunch.

They get in the car

20 INT. CAFE - DAY

Jenny and Zoe enter a cafe and order at the counter. Jenny then leads Zoe towards a young woman in a very short dress, sitting at a far table.

JENNY

Mind if we join you? Zoe, this is Tossa.

TOSSA

Oh, hello, Mrs. Philpott! We met at that accident.

ZOE

Of course! You were most helpful

JENNY

How's your place?

TOSSA

My flat's, like, stuffed. I'm in my parent's garage for now. How about you, Jenny?

JENNY

Not much damage. Just too full of family. We're on our way to Akaroa.

Jenny tips her head to the daffodil caravan with painted daffodils on it, standing in the car park.

TOSSA

No way!

She runs outside and inspects it, looking in at the windows. The waitress arrives with their order. Tossa then runs back into the cafe.

TOSSA (CONT'D)

Shit-hot caravan! OK if I go inside?

ZOE

If you would kindly wait until we have finished our frittatas.

TOSSA

Are you actually, like, living in it?

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

I'm visiting friends in the country

TOSSA

Don't they have spare beds?

ZOE

As it happens, Queenie does, this week.

Tossa picks some lettuce off Zoe's plate. Zoe raps her knuckles.

TOSSA

Idea! Park the caravan at my place then you won't have to, you know, drag it over the hills ...

ZOE

... Oh, I cou ...

JENNY

... Yes! Brilliant idea, and, after we've dumped the caravan, Tossa can inspect it, while she gives you a relationship problem story for your collection.

TOSSA

Oh, yes ... a recording? About relationship problems? ... um ... I could give you one called Sober Sex.

Zoe looks uneasy.

21 EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

Zoe's car pulls up by the roadside, in the grass. It is very quiet, and there is no-one around. The passenger door opens and Jenny gets out, thankfully.

JENNY
... but if I don't stretch, I'm
going to turn to stone ... like a
troll!

Jenny commences doing the yoga moves Salute to the Sun, and Zoe gets out of the car, too, with a map, which she spreads out on the bonnet and proceeds to read.

ZOE
Jenny, when I ask for a story about
relationship difficulties, why does
everyone talk about the physical
side?

JENNY
Why shouldn't they?

ZOE
It seems rather vulgar! Do you
think they're teasing me?

JENNY
No! What do you mean, vulgar?

Zoe still continues to study the map

ZOE
Wouldn't most people call Tossa's
story vulgar?

JENNY
Her story was about relationships
... about massive choices that
changed her life!

Zoe looks up at Jenny

ZOE
Are you saying that I've got it all
wrong?

JENNY
Yeah ... No! ... Yeah

(CONTINUED)

ZOE

I suppose Tossa just grabbed her
life and fixed it. How can people
do such a thing?

JENNY

Well, you can't really do it for
anyone else, but yourself, can you?

ZOE

I've done nothing. Ever. In seventy
years.

JENNY

Well, there's nothing preventing
you from starting something now ...
is there?..

Jenny looks furtively around.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Just going for a pee behind that
hedgeKeep a look out!

She hurries away

22

INT. QUEENIE'S SHOP - EVENING

The shop is a recycled designer clothes shop.

Jenny and Zoe come in the door and are kissed and hugged by Queenie. There is another woman there, in her mid sixties, wearing a dirty old boiler suit and checked shirt. Queenie, in her late sixties, is dressed flamboyantly in scarves, floaty chiffon frock and curls.

QUEENIE

Darlings! Come in! Come in! Jenny,
Zoe, this is Anne. Paella for
everyone!

ANNE

No, really, Queenie. I'm filthy ...
I can't stay!

QUEENIE

Nonsense! Go get some clean clothes
from my Bargain Bin.

Queenie dismisses Anne, imperiously, with a flutter of fingers, puts the Closed sign up on the door, and takes them through to the verandah, at the back of the house overlooking a lovely green scene.

23 EXT. QUEENIE'S HOUSE/VERANDAH - DAY

Queenie leaves her friends for a minute, and then reappears with a tray of white wine and glasses. Queenie proceeds to pour the wine.

QUEENIE
You tired, Zoe?

ZOE
Just a little. A few days peace and quiet will be welcome.

QUEENIE
Just you relax, my dear. We are used to refugees, here. You can eat my paella and then I will give you a story for your famous collection.

ZOE
Is it famous?

Queenie smiles, mischievously, and waggles her eyebrows

QUEENIE
You bet it is!I shall give you
(dramatically))
The Quickstep!

24

INT. QUEENIE'S HOUSE/KITCHEN DINER - EVENING

The four friends are seated around the dining table, having just finished dinner and had, perhaps, just a little too much wine. There are four empty bottles of wine in the table and Zoe's phone and battery pack.

ZOE

Thanks for that, Queenie. So that's what made you happyfirst love.

QUEENIE

(A bit slurry of diction and over dramatic with her arms, etc) That wasn't lovethat was hormones and fantasy.

ZOE

But you said meeting him for dancing made you so happy ...

QUEENIE

Dancing makes one happy and being in love, I suppose, but the latter is just a drug ... an addiction. When a young bride's tide goes out, she discovers that there are so many other things that can make you happylike looking good for yourself ... self respect, etc.

ZOE

Ohbut everything is harder when you're old, though.

QUEENIE

Rubbish! You just have to stay young, my dear! Now pop up on the table, and I'll make you look twenty years younger.

Queenie looks at Jenny and Anne who giggling, grasp Zoe's arms and hoist her onto the table, while Queenie picks up some pinking shears from a nearby desk and bends to attack Zoe's midi length hem.

ZOE

Oh! Don't!

(CONTINUED)

She squirms

JENNY
Hold still, now!

Queenie proceeds to cut several inches from Zoe's hem.

ZOE
Hold Moly! My dress is ruined!

QUEENIE
Turn her around

They do

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
Off with the top two buttons

She snips them off

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
Tonight I'll finish the hem and
it'll be as good as new ... honest!

Zoe gets down and turns to Jenny

ZOE
I thought you were my friend

JENNY
I am! Here you are, setting off on
a post-apocalyptic camping trip,
but wearing a long, clumpy
shirtdress. We've done you a favour.

QUEENIE
I'm afraid 70's styles are out,
now, Zoe.

She grabs the remaining, half full bottle of wine and waggles
it

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
Any more for any more, huh?

They all look slightly dismayed, so Queenie puts the bottle
down, and puts her arm around Zoe's shoulder.

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
Now you've got the front, pink
bedroom, so have a good rest, my
dear. Tomorrow, we will play in my
clothes racks.

(CONTINUED)

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24 CONTINUED:

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Queenie hiccups and smiles at them.

25 INT. QUEENIE'S SHOP - DAY

Queenie is behind the counter, and Jenny and Ann are rifling through the clothes' racks. Zoe emerges shamefacedly from a cubicle wearing a shortish pastel dress. Queenie claps her hands in delight.

QUEENIE
Wonderful! Delicate and ladylike,
but with a suggestion of the wolf
and ...

A customer approaches and mutters something

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
Over there, dear

She gestures

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
... .and quite updates ... no
fustiness!

Zoe looks at herself in the mirror, doubtfully and returns to try in another.

ANNE
She's so slim ... and what legs!

QUEENIE
Nice posture. She could wear
anything!

They continue rifling and selecting. Zoe emerges again, with another outfit. Again, she looks suspiciously at herself in the dressing mirror.

ZOE
I don't know ... I don't see
anything of me in these outfits

ANNE
Go naked, then!

ZOE
Right! For that, you can give me a
story for my Canterbury Tales!

ANNE
Already thought of oneit's
called Ambushed by a bottom

(CONTINUED)

Sc: 25
25 CONTINUED:

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They all look intrigued.

26 INT. QUEENIE'S HOUSE/KITCHEN DINER - DAY

Queenie, Anne, Jenny and Zoe are around the table. They have just finished breakfast.

QUEENIE

Hey, Anne, fancy you knowing Viola, a child. She was in oir class at high schoolwith me and Una and Caroline.

ZOE

And Beryl

ANNE

I believe she's back in town. Any idea why?

ZOE

Viola? She came home for a break and when the earthquake happened, she decided to stay for a while.

ANNE

It's exactly what she would do!

Jenny pushes back her chair.

JENNY

Well, people, I'm back off home. You're staying here a few days, Zoe?

ZOE

If Queenie's still happy with that

QUEENIE

Of course, dearieI have been looking forward to this for ages! I'm afraid, however, that I am tied to my GST, for today

ZOE

... Oh, that's OK ... I was rather hoping to ask Anne a question about her story..

ANNE

Well, then let's go out for a coffee..

(CONTINUED)

ZOE
It won't take a minute

ANNE
Cafe, or nothing!

Anne gets up and walks out of the door. Zoe stands, looks uncertainly around, and then bends a grabs her handbag.

ZOE
Sorry, I'll justHave a safe
journey, Jenny ... See you later,
Quennie ... Bye!

Zoe runs after Anne.

27 EXT. AKAROA - DAY

Zoe catches up with Anne and they chat. Anne points out the earthquake damage warning sign on the taped off tiny library. Two people greet Anne and smile at Zoe.

Zoe and Anne step down onto the beach and Zoe removes her kitten heels and looks worriedly at her tights.

ANNE
Take them off!

ZOE
I can make my own decisions, thank
you.

She marches briskly along the shore. A football comes towards her and she kicks it back. A girl runs across in front of her and shouts

GIRL
I like your dress!

Zoe smiles, and turns to Anne

ZOE
I am going the right way, aren't I?

ANNE
Yup ... just there

She points

28 INT. CAFE IN AKAROA - DAY

Anne and Zoe enter the cafe. There is a sign on the counter which reads "A coffee and a cake and we can tough anything out!!"

ANNE
Coffee and cakemy shout

ZOE
An apology for last night's attack?

ANNE
I'm sorry you got upset, but
Queenie's got style ... you know
that. You should be grateful!

She points to a cream cake and raises her eyebrows and Zoe nods. Anne points to a table and Zoe wanders over, and proceeds to text Bill. She has an email from him: "This separation is too long ... I miss you". Zoe smiles and shakes her head slowly.

Anne comes over with the tray of food and proceeds to lay it out on the table.

ANNE (CONT'D)
OK, sothe happiness thing. My
own dial is set to Not too Bad ...
Can't Complain. I have got another
story, though, so turn your
recording thingy on. It's called
How to be Brave.

A loud rumble suddenly fills the cafe and the coffee cups shake. In a flash, Zoe bends down to the floor, like a lobster and holds tight to the table leg.

The shuddering stops and she gets up again and sits down.

ZOE
Phew ... that was nothing!

ANNE
Correct. It was just a truck going
past.

Anne raises her eyebrows mischievously at Zoe, and smiles. Zoe looks mortifiedly around and smiles, sickly, at the other cafe customers looking interestedly at her.

29 INT. QUEENIE'S HOUSE/KITCHEN DINER - DAY
Queenie is getting up from breakfast with Zoe.

QUEENIE
Now, my dear ... in line with my
policy of updating you, you can
come to all of my classes with me!

Zoe looks aghast

QUEENIE (CONT'D)
No Buts!

She swans out

VARIOUS TABLEAUX

Zoe doing yoga (sideways bend)

Zoe hula dancing

Zoe doing tai chi

30 EXT. QUEENIE'S SHOP - DAY

Zoe has her travel bag in her hand and is standing by the front door of the shop with Queenie.

ZOE

Queenie ... you have been so good to me!

QUEENIE

I am sorry if we upset you with the frocks, but I've hemmed them both, now, and we can all see your pretty little legs.

ZOE

Well, my dressmaker can make me some new ones ...

QUEENIE

Oh, no! I insist you destroy those old Butterick patterns.

ZOE

The shirt dress has seven basic patterns.

QUEENIE

Well, then, choose the short versions and get them made up in lively colours ... no more beige. And in cotton, or silk, not those appalling crimplenes, or polyesters.