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Notting Hill

By Richard Curtis

EXT. VARIOUS DAYS

'She' plays through the credits.

Exquisite footage of Anna Scott -- the great movie star of our time -- an ideal -- the perfect star and woman -- her life full of glamour and sophistication and mystery.

EXT. STREET - DAY

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

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

It's a full fruit market day.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

A man in denims exits the tattoo studio.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - SATURDAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

A frantic crowded Portobello market.

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

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

WILLIAM (V.O.)

... and some not so genuine.

EXT. GOLBORNE ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

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

WILLIAM (V.O.)

... and where I now lead a strange
half-life with a lodger called...

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

WILLIAM:

Spike!

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

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

SPIKE:

Even he. Hey, you couldn't help me

with an incredibly important decision, could you?

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

What are the choices?

SPIKE:

Well... wait for it...

(He pulls on a t-shirt)

First there's this one...

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

Point taken.

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

SPIKE:

I suspect you'll prefer the next one.

And he re-enters in a white t-shirt, with a large arrow, pointing down to his flies, saying, 'Get It Here.'

SPIKE:

Cool, huh?

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

Wouldn't want that...

(and back up he goes)

Okay -- just one more.

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

Thanks. Great. Wish me luck.

WILLIAM:

Good luck.

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

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

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

William enters.

INT. THE BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

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

MARTIN:

Shall I go get a cappuccino? Ease the
pain.

WILLIAM:

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

MARIN:

I get your logic. Demi-capu coming up.
He salutes and bolts out the door -- as he does, a woman walks in.
We only just glimpse her.
Cut to William working. He looks up casually. And sees
something. His reaction is hard to read. After a pause...

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

No, thanks. I'll just look around.

WILLIAM:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Really?

WILLIAM:

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

He picks up a book on the counter.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Thanks. I'll think about it.
William suddenly spies something odd on the small TV monitor beside him.

WILLIAM:

If you could just give me a second.
Her eyes follow him as he moves toward the back of the shop and approaches a man in slightly ill-fitting clothes.

WILLIAM:

Excuse me.

THIEF:

Yes.

WILLIAM:

Bad news.

THIEF:

What?

WILLIAM:

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

THIEF:

So?

WILLIAM:

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

THIEF:

What book?

WILLIAM:

The one down your trousers.

THIEF:

I haven't got a book down my trousers.

WILLIAM:

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

THIEF:

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

WILLIAM:

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

He returns to his desk. In the monitor we just glimpse, as does William, the book coming out of the trousers and put back on the shelves. The thief drifts out towards the door. Anna, who has observed all this, is looking at a blue book on the counter.

WILLIAM:

Sorry about that...

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Yes, we couldn't stop him. If you can find an unsigned copy, it's worth an absolute fortune. She smiles. Suddenly the thief is there.

THIEF:

Excuse me.

ANNA:

Yes.

THIEF:

Can I have your autograph?

ANNA:

What's your name?

THIEF:

Rufus.

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

THIEF:

What does it say?

ANNA:

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

THIEF:

Nice one. Would you like my phone number?

ANNA:

Tempting but... no, thank you.
Thief leaves.

ANNA:

I think I will try this one.
She hands William a ?20 note and the book he said was rubbish.
He talks as he handles the transaction.

WILLIAM:

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

He drops in one of the signed books.

WILLIAM:

Very useful for lighting fires,
wrapping fish, that sort of things.
She looks at him with a slight smile.

ANNA:

Thanks.

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

MARTIN:

Cappuccino as ordered.

WILLIAM:

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

MARTIN:

Who? Someone famous?

But William's innate natural English discretion takes over.

WILLIAM:

No. No-one -- no-one.
They set about drinking their coffees.

MARTIN:

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

WILLIAM:

Topol.

MARTIN:

That's right -- Topol.

WILLIAM:

But Ringo Starr doesn't look anything like Topol.

MARTIN:

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

WILLIAM:

So it could have been neither of them?

MARTIN:

I suppose so.

WILLIAM:

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

MARTIN:

Not classic, no.

Martin shakes his head. William drains his cappuccino.

WILLIAM:

Right -- want another one?

MARTIN:

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

William sets off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

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

ANNA:

Oh Jesus.

WILLIAM:

Here, let me help.

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

ANNA:

What are you doing?!

He jumps back.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Eighteen yards. That's my house there.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

They enter. She carries a few stylish bags.

WILLIAM:

Come on in. I'll just...

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

WILLIAM:

It's not that tidy, I fear.

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

from her...

WILLIAM:

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

She heads upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Would you like a cup of tea before you go?

ANNA:

No thanks.

WILLIAM:

Coffee?

ANNA:

No.

WILLIAM:

Orange juice -- probably not.

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Really, no.

WILLIAM:

Would you like something to nibble -- apricots, soaked in honey -- quite why, no one knows -- because it stops them tasting of apricots, and makes

them taste like honey, and if you wanted honey, you'd just buy honey, instead of apricots, but nevertheless -- there we go -- yours if you want them.

ANNA:

No.

WILLIAM:

Do you always say 'no' to everything?
Pause. She looks at him deep.

ANNA:

No.

(pause)

I better be going. Thanks for your help.

WILLIAM:

You're welcome and, may I also say...
heavenly.
It has taken a lot to get this out loud. He is not a smooth-talking man.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Thank you.

WILLIAM:

Yes. Well. My pleasure.
He guides her towards the door.

WILLIAM:

Nice to meet you. Surreal but nice.
In a slightly awkward moment, he shows her out the door. He closes the door and shakes his head in wonder. Then...

WILLIAM:

'Surreal but nice.' What was I thinking?

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

WILLIAM:

Coming.

He opens the door. It's her.

WILLIAM:

Oh hi. Forget something?

ANNA:

I forgot my bag.

WILLIAM:

Oh right.

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

WILLIAM:

Here we go.

ANNA:

Thanks. Well...

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

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

WILLIAM:

Oh my God. My flatmate. I'm sorry --

there's no excuse for him.
Spike walks in.

SPIKE:

Hi.

ANNA:

Hi.

WILLIAM:

Hi.

Spike walks past unsuspectingly and heads into the kitchen.

SPIKE:

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

ANNA:

Probably best not tell anyone about
this.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Bye.

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

SPIKE:

There's something wrong with this
yogurt.

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

Well, there you go.

(takes another big spoonful)

On for a video fest tonight? I've got some absolute classic.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. MANHATTAN ART GALLERY - DAY

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

MICHAEL:

Smile.

ANNA:

No.

MICHAEL:

Smile.

ANNA:

I've got nothing to smile about.

MICHAEL:

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Yes, she is fairly fabulous.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

MR. SMITH

Do you have any books by Dickens?

WILLIAM:

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

MR. SMITH

Oh right. How about that new John Grisham thriller?

WILLIAM:

No, that's a novel too.

MR. SMITH

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

Pause.

WILLIAM:

Martin -- your customer.

MARTIN:

Can I help you?

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

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

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

SPIKE:

Hey.

WILLIAM:

Hi...

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Just incidentally -- why are you wearing that?

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

EXT. WILLIAM'S TERRACE - DAY

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

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

Groovy. You should do more of this stuff.

WILLIAM:

So -- any messages?

SPIKE:

Yeh, I wrote a couple down.

WILLIAM:

Two? That's it?

SPIKE:

You want me to write down all your messages?
William closes his eyes in exasperation.

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Right. No one else?

SPIKE:

Absolutely not.

Spike leans back and relaxes.

SPIKE:

Though if we're going for this obsessive writing-down-all-messages thing -- some American girl called Anna called a few days ago. William freezes -- then looks at Spike.

WILLIAM:

What did she say?

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Which was?

SPIKE:

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Hello.

RITZ MAN (V.O.)

May I help you, sir?

WILLIAM:

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

INT. RITZ RECEPTION - DAY

RITZ MAN:

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

WILLIAM:

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM

WILLIAM (cont'd)

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

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

RITZ MAN:

Yes, sir. I have him in my mind.

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

Try 'Flintstone.'

WILLIAM:

(to Spike)

What?

SPIKE:

I think she said her name was
'Flintstone.'

WILLIAM:

Does 'Flintstone' mean anything to
you?

RITZ MAN:

I'll put you right through, sir.
Flintstone is indeed the magic word.

WILLIAM:

Oh my God.
He practices how to sound.

WILLIAM:

Hello. Hi. Hi.
ANNA (V.O.)
Hi.
We hear her voice -- don't see her.

WILLIAM:

(caught out)
Oh hi. It's William Thacker. We,
ahm I work in a bookshop.
ANNA (V.O.)
You played it pretty cool here,
waiting for three days to call.

WILLIAM:

No, I've never played anything cool
in my entire life. Spike, who I'll
stab to death later, never gave me the
message.
ANNA (V.O.)
Oh -- Okay.

WILLIAM:

Perhaps I could drop round for tea or
something?
ANNA (V.O.)
Yeh -- unfortunately, things are
going to be pretty busy, but... okay,

let's give it a try. Four o'clock
could be good.

WILLIAM:

Right. Great.

(he hangs up)

Classic. Classic.

EXT. RITZ - DAY

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

INT. RITZ HOTEL - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Which floor?

TARQUIN:

Three.

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

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

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

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

WILLIAM:

Are you sure you...?

TARQUIN:

Yes.

WILLIAM:

Oh. Right.

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

KAREN:

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

She hands them a very slick, expensively produced press kits,

with the poster picture of Anna, for the film 'Helix.'

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE ANTE-ROOM - DAY

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

KAREN:

What did you think of the film?

TARQUIN:

Marvellous. 'Close Encounters'

meets 'Jean De Florette.' Oscar-winning stuff.

They both turn to William for his opinion.

WILLIAM:

I agree.

KAREN:

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

TARQUIN:

'Time Out.'

KAREN:

Great. And you...

WILLIAM:

(seeing it on a coffee table)

'Horse and Hound.' The name's

William Whacker. I think she might be expecting me.

KAREN:

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

They sit down as Karen goes off.

TARQUIN:

You've brought her flowers?

William goes for the cover-up.

WILLIAM:

No -- they're... for my grandmother.

She's in a hospital nearby. Thought
I'd kill two birds with one stone.

TARQUIN:

I'm sorry. Which hospital?
Pause. He's in trouble.

WILLIAM:

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

TARQUIN:

Oh sure. Of course.

KAREN:

Mr. Thacker.
Saved by the bell.
INT. TRAFALGAR SUIT CORRIDOR - DAY

KAREN:

You've got five minutes.
He is shown in through big golden doors. Karen stays outside.
INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY
There Anna is, framed in the window. Glorious.

WILLIAM:

Hi.

ANNA:

Hello.

WILLIAM:

I brought these, but clearly...
There are lots of other flowers in the room.

ANNA:

Oh no, ho -- these are great.
A fair amount of tension. These two people hardly know each
other -- and the first and last time they met, they kissed.

WILLIAM:

Sorry about not ringing back. The

whole two-names concept was totally too much for my flatman's pea-sized intellect.

ANNA:

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

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

JEREMY:

Everything okay?

ANNA:

Yes, thanks.

JEREMY:

And you are from 'Horse and Hound' magazine?
William nods.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

So I'll just fire away, shall I?
Anna nods.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Obviously. Very difficult.

Jeremy leaves.

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Absolutely fine about it.

Re-enter Jeremy.

JEREMY:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

It takes place on a submarine.

WILLIAM:

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

Jeremy exits.

WILLIAM:

I'm just a complete moron. Sorry.

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

ANNA:

And what happens next in the dream?
It's a challenge.

WILLIAM:

Well, I suppose in the dream dream scenario. I just... ahm, change my personality, because you can do that in dreams, and walk across and kiss the girl but you know it'll never happen. Pause. Then they move towards each other when... Jeremy enters.

JEREMY:

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

WILLIAM:

Very nearly.

JEREMY:

Maybe time for one last question?

WILLIAM:

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

WILLIAM:

Are you busy tonight?

ANNA:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

INT. TRAFALGAR SUITE CORRIDOR - DAY

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

TARQUIN:

How was she?

WILLIAM:

Fabulous.

TARQUIN:

Wait a minute -- she took your
grandmother's flowers?
William can't think his way out of this.

WILLIAM:

Yes. That's right. Bitch.
He turns to go, but is accosted by Karen.

KAREN:

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

WILLIAM:

The others?

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

KAREN:

Mr. Thacker's from 'Horse and Hound.'
A forty-year-old actor with great presence warmly shakes
William's hand.

MALE LEAD:

Pleased to meet you. Did you like the
film?

WILLIAM:

Ah... yes, enormously.

MALE LEAD:

Well, fire away.

WILLIAM:

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

MALE LEAD:

I did.

WILLIAM:

Any bit in particular?

MALE LEAD:

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

WILLIAM:

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

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Did you identify with the character you were playing?

INTERPRETER:

Te identificaste con el personaje que interpretabas?

FOREIGN ACTOR:

No.

INTERPRETER:

No.

WILLIAM:

Ah. Why not?

INTERPRETER:

Por que no?

FOREIGN ACTOR:

Porque es un robot carnívoro
psicópata.

INTERPRETER:

Because he is playing a psychopathic
flesh-eating robot.

WILLIAM:

Classic.

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Is this your first film?

GIRL:

No -- it's my 22nd.

WILLIAM:

Of course it is. Any favourite among
the 22?

GIRL:

Working with Leonardo.

WILLIAM:

Da Vinci?

GIRL:

Di Caprio.

WILLIAM:

Of course. And is he your favourite
Italian film director?

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

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

KAREN:

Mr. Thacker?

WILLIAM:

(so weary)

Yes?

KAREN:

Have you got a moment?

INT. ANNA'S SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY

They knock on her door.

ANNA (V.O.)

Come in.

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Okay -- fine.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

If that's all right.

WILLIAM:

I'm sure it's all right. My friend

Max is cooking and he's acknowledged to be the worst cook in the world, but you know, you could hide the food in your handbag or something.

ANNA:

Okay.

WILLIAM:

Okay.

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

Bella and Max are in the kitchen.

MAX:

He's bringing a girl?

BELLA:

Miracles do happen.

MAX:

Does the girl have a name?

BELLA:

He wouldn't say.

MAX:

Christ, what is going on in there?

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

MAX (cont'd)

Oh God.

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

MAX:

Come on in. Vague food crisis.

William and Anna move along the corridor to the kitchen.

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

Bella is there.

BELLA:

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

expected.

WILLIAM:

He's cooking guinea fowl?

BELLA:

Don't even ask.

ANNA:

Hi.

BELLA:

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

WILLIAM:

Bella -- this is Anna.

BELLA:

Right.

(pause)

MAX:

Okay. Crisis over.

He rises from his stove position.

WILLIAM:

Max. This is Anna.

MAX:

Hello, Anna ahm...

(He recognizes her -- the word just falls out)

Scott -- have some wine.

ANNA:

Thank you.

Door bell goes.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max opens the door -- it is Honey.

MAX:

Hi.

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

MAX:

Yes, Happy Birthday.

They head back along the corridor.

MAX:

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

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

They enter the kitchen.

HONEY:

Hi guys.

(sees Anna)

Oh holy fuck.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Hiya.

HONEY:

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

ANNA:

Ahm... I think that sounds -- you know -- lucky me. Happy Birthday.
She hands her a present.

HONEY:

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

then we can be sisters.

ANNA:

I'll think about it.

The front door bell goes.

MAX:

That'll be Bernie.

He heads out into the corridor to the front door.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max opens the door.

MAX:

Hello, Bernie.

BERNIE:

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

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

They enter the room.

MAX:

Bernie -- this is Anna.

BERNIE:

Hello, Anna. Delighted to meet you.
Doesn't recognize her -- turns to Honey.

BERNIE:

Honey Bunny -- happy birthday to you.

(hands her a present)

It's a hat. You don't have to wear
it or anything.

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

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

MAX:

You haven't slept with her, have you?

WILLIAM:

That is a cheap question and the answer

is, of course, no comment.

MAX:

'No comment' means 'yes.'

WILLIAM:

No, it doesn't.

MAX:

Do you ever masturbate?

WILLIAM:

Definitely no comment.

MAX:

You see -- it means 'yes.'

Then on to Bernie's conversation.

BERNIE:

So tell me Anna -- what do you do?

ANNA:

I'm an actress.

BERNIE:

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

ANNA:

Well, they can be.

BERNIE:

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

do you do?

ANNA:

Films mainly.

BERNIE:

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

ANNA:

Fifteen million dollars.

BERNIE:

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

MAX:

Right -- I think we're ready.
They all move towards the kitchen.

ANNA:

(to Bella)
I wonder if you could tell me where the...?

BELLA:

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

HONEY:

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

BELLA:

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

BERNIE:

Anna Scott?

BELLA:

Yes.

BERNIE:

The movie star?

BELLA:

Yup.

BERNIE:

Oh God. Oh God. Oh Goddy God.

The horror of his remembered conversation slowly unfolds.

Honey re-enters.

HONEY:

I don't believe it. I walked into the
loo with her. I was still talking when
she started unbuttoning her jeans...

She had to ask me to leave.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

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

BELLA:

What do you think of the guinea fowl?

ANNA:

(whispering)

I'm a vegetarian.

BELLA:

Oh God.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Coffee time.

MAX:

Having you here, Anna, firmly
establishes what I've long suspected,

that we really are the most desperate
hot of under-achievers.

BERNIE:

Shame!

MAX:

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

A little pause. Then William turns to Bernie.

WILLIAM:

Bernie.

BERNIE:

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

HONEY:

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

MAX:

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

HONEY:

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

shrinking.

MAX:

You see -- incredibly sad.

BELLA:

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

HONEY:

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

BELLA:

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

WILLIAM:

Bella.

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

BERNIE:

No. Not true...

BELLA:

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

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

MAX:

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

at school was Floppy.
They all laugh. Anna smiles across at William.

WILLIAM:

So I get the brownie?

MAX:

I think you do, yes.

ANNA:

Wait a minute. What about me?

MAX:

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

ANNA:

Well... a shot at it.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Well, I've been on a diet since I was nineteen, which means basically I've been hungry for a decade. I've had a sequence of not nice boyfriends -- one

of whom hit me:

gets broken it gets splashed across the newspapers as entertainment. Meantime, it cost millions to get me looking like this...

HONEY:

Really?

ANNA:

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

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

ANNA:

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

MAX:

Nah!!! Nice try, gorgeous -- but you
don't fool anyone.
The mood is instantly broken. They all laugh.

WILLIAM:

Pathetic effort to hog the brownie.
INT. MAX AND BELLA'S KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/CORRIDOR - NIGHT
Anna and William are leaving.

ANNA:

That was such a great evening.

MAX:

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

ANNA:

And may I say that's a gorgeous tie.

MAX:

Now you're lying.

ANNA:

You're right. I told you I was bad
at acting.
Max loves this.

ANNA:

(to Bella)
Lovely to meet you.

BELLA:

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

vegetarian.

MAX:

No!

ANNA:

Night, night, Honey.

HONEY:

I'm so sorry about the loo thing.

I meant to leave but I just...

look, ring me if you need someone to go shopping with. I know lots of nice, cheap places... not that money necessarily...

(gives up)

nice to meet you.

And Honey gives her a huge hug.

ANNA:

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

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

BERNIE:

Love your work.

They move to the door and wave goodbye.

EXT. MAX AND BELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

WILLIAM:

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

The house is in Lansdowne Road, on the edge of Notting Hill.

They walk for a moment. A bit of silence.

ANNA:

Floppy, huh?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Why is she in a wheelchair?

WILLIAM:

It was an accident -- about eighteen months ago.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

You know, I'm not sure. I don't think they'd tried for kids before, as fate would have it.
They walk in silence for a moment. Then...

WILLIAM:

Would you like to come... my house is just...?
She smiles and shakes her head.

ANNA:

Too complicated.

WILLIAM:

That's fine.

ANNA:

Busy tomorrow?

WILLIAM:

I thought you were leaving.

ANNA:

I was.

EXT. NOTTING HILL GARDEN - NIGHT

A little later in the walk.

ANNA:

What's in there?

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Let's go in.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

You abide by rules like that?

WILLIAM:

Ahm...

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

WILLIAM:

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

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

WILLIAM:

(casually)

Whoopsidaiesies.

ANNA:

What did you say?

WILLIAM:

Nothing.

ANNA:

Yes, you did.

WILLIAM:

No, I didn't.

ANNA:

You said 'whoopsidaiesies.'

Tiny pause.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Exactly. Here we go again.
He fails, and unfortunately, spontaneously...

WILLIAM:

Whoopsidaiesies.
They look at each other.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Step aside.
She starts to climb.

WILLIAM:

Actually be careful Anna -- it's
harder than it looks...
But she's already almost over.

WILLIAM:

Oh no it's not -- it's easy.
A few seconds later. Anna jumps down into the garden.

ANNA:

Come on, Flops.

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

WILLIAM:

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

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

WILLIAM:

Nice garden.

EXT. MAGIC GARDEN - NIGHT

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

ANNA:

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

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

ANNA:

Some people do spend their whole lives together.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

No, 'fraid not.

WILLIAM:

Bollocks.

(still searching --
with no help from
Spike)

This happens every time I go to the cinema. Average day, my glasses are everywhere -- everywhere I look, glasses. But the moment I need them they disappear. It's one of life's real cruelties.

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM/CORRIDOR - EVENING
He sprints downstairs, now fully dressed.

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Sort of.

INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

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

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

ANNA:

So who left who?

WILLIAM:

She left me.

ANNA:

Why?

WILLIAM:

She saw through me.

ANNA:

Uh-oh. That's not good.

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

LAWRENCE:

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

William and Anna look at each other.

GERALD:

I didn't like that last film of hers.

Fast asleep from the moment the
lights went down.

Again -- Anna reacts.

LAWRENCE:

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

GERALD:

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

Anna mouths 'Meg Ryan.'

LAWRENCE:

Meg Ryan.

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

GERALD:

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

LAWRENCE:

Whatever, she's so clearly up for it.
Anna's twinkle fades.

LAWRENCE:

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

LAWRENCE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

WILLIAM:

I'm sorry to disturb you guys but --

LAWRENCE:

Can I help you?

WILLIAM:

Well, yes, I wish I hadn't overheard
your conversation -- but I did and I
just think, you know...
He's not a very convincing or frightening figure.

WILLIAM:

...the person you're talking about
is a real person and I think she

probably deserves a little bit more consideration, rather than having jerks like you drooling over her...

LAWRENCE:

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

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

WILLIAM:

I'm sorry.

ANNA:

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

They walk on and then...

ANNA:

In fact -- give me a second.

And she walks straight back to their table.

ANNA:

Hi.

LAWRENCE:

Oh my God...

ANNA:

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

LAWRENCE:

No, look, I'm sorry...

ANNA:

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

And she walks away. Gerald turns to Lawrence.

GERALD:

You prick.

EXT. RITZ ARCADE - NIGHT

They are walking.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

No, you were brilliant

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

I don't know, I'm afraid.

ANNA:

I don't know either.
They have arrived at the end of the arcade.

ANNA:

Here we are.
(pause)
Do you want to come up?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

There are lots of reasons. Do you
want to come up?
His look says yes.

ANNA:

Give me five minutes.
He watches her go -- and stands in the street. Music plays.
INT. RITZ CORRIDOR/ANNA'S SUITE - NIGHT

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

ANNA:

Hiya.

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

WILLIAM:

Hi.

He kisses her gently on the cheek.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

(pause)

You've got to go.

WILLIAM:

Why?

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Your boyfriend?

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

ANNA:

Yes...

JEFF (V.O.)

Who is it?

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

WILLIAM:

Ahm... room service.

JEFF:

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

WILLIAM:

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

JEFF:

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

WILLIAM:

I'll see what I can do.

JEFF:

Still, not sparkling.

WILLIAM:

Absolutely. Ice cold still water.

JEFF:

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

WILLIAM:

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

JEFF:

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

WILLIAM:

Right.

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

ANNA:

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

JEFF:

I'm sorry. Is this a problem?

WILLIAM:

Ah -- no. It's fine.

JEFF:

What's your name?

WILLIAM:

Ahm... Bernie.

Jeff slips him a fiver.

JEFF:

Thank you, Bernie.

(to Anna)

Hey -- nice surprise, or nasty surprise?

ANNA:

Nice surprise.

He kisses her.

JEFF:

Liar.

(to William)

She hates surprises. What are you ordering?

ANNA:

I haven't decided.

JEFF:

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

He wanders off taking off his t-shirt.

WILLIAM:

I better leave.

Anna just nods.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

I think goodbye is traditional.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - NIGHT

William walks away.

EXT. RITZ - NIGHT

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

EXT. LONDON BUS - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He gets into his room and sits on the bed.

INT. SPACESHIP - NIGHT

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

INT. CONNECT CINEMA - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

SPIKE:

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

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

She's someone I just can't -- someone
who... self-evidently can't be mine --
and it's as if I've taken love-heroin
-- and now I can't even have it again.
I've opened Pandora's box. And there's
trouble inside.
Spike nods thoughtfully.

SPIKE:

Yeh. Yeh... tricky... tricky... I
knew a girl at school called Pandora
... never got to see her box though.
He roars with laughter. William smiles.

WILLIAM:

Thanks. Yes -- very helpful.
INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Only two tables are being used. William and his friends are
on their first course. Bernie reads an "Evening Standard,"
with a picture of Anna and Jeff at Heathrow Airport.

MAX:

You didn't know she had a boyfriend?

WILLIAM:

No -- did you?
Their looks make it obvious that everyone did.

WILLIAM:

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

MAX:

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

WILLIAM:

Bugged?

MAX:

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

WILLIAM:

Really?

They all look to him for wise words.

MAX:

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

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

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

MAX:

Now -- try.

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

TESSA (V.O.)

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

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

MAX:

Tessa -- this is Bella my wife.

TESSA:

Oh hello, you're in a wheelchair.

BELLA:

That's right.

MAX:

And this is William.

TESSA:

Hello William. Max has told me everything about you.

WILLIAM:

(frightened)

Has he?

MAX:

Wine?

TESSA:

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

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

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

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

MAX:

Keziah -- some woodcock?

KEZIAH:

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

MAX:

I don't realize that.

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

WILLIAM:

And ahm -- what's a fruitarian exactly?

KEZIAH:

We believe that fruits and vegetables have feelings so we think cooking is cruel. We only eat things that have actually fallen from the tree or bush

-- that are, in fact, dead already.

WILLIAM:

Right. Right. Interesting stuff.

(pause)

So these carrots...

KEZIAH:

Have been murdered, yes.

WILLIAM:

Murdered? Poor carrots. How beastly.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

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

ROSIE:

Delicious coffee.

MAX:

Thank you. I'm sorry about the lamb.

ROSIE:

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

WILLIAM:

Interesting means inedible.

ROSIE:

Really inedible -- yes that's right.

They all laugh. It's going very well.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

ROSIE:

Maybe we'll meet again some time.

WILLIAM:

Yes. That would be... great.

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max and Bella wait excitedly.

MAX:

Well?

WILLIAM:

She's perfect, perfect.

BELLA:

And?

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

WILLIAM:

I think you have forgotten...

(he looks at them)

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

MAX:

That's not fair.

WILLIAM:

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

BELLA:

(pause)

Still loves you though.

WILLIAM:

In a depressingly asexual way.

BELLA:

(pause)

I never fancied you much actually...
They all roar with laughter.

BELLA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

BELLA:

Do you want to stay?

WILLIAM:

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

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max lifts Bella off her couch and carries her upstairs.

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

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

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

EXT. MAX AND BELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

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

EXT. NEWSAGENT - DAY

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

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

EXT./INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE -DAY

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

ANNA:

Hi. Can I come in?

WILLIAM:

Come in.

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

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The two of them.

ANNA:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

This is the place.

ANNA:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

A bath would be great.

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

SPIKE:

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

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

ANNA:

You must be Spike.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

Anna is still lying low in the bath.

ANNA:

Hi.

SPIKE:

Just checking.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

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

SPIKE:

Thank you, God.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

William and Anna at the kitchen table, eating toast, drinking tea.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

No, that's fine. It's not often one

has the opportunity to adios the plates
of a major Hollywood star. It was a
thrill for me.

(she smiles. Pause)

How is he?

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

I have thought about you.

WILLIAM:

Oh no no -- no.
He doesn't think she has to talk about this.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Would you like me to take you through
your lines?

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Hand it over. Basic plot?

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Well done you.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Eleven.

ANNA:

Damn. 'And Wainwright...'

WILLIAM:

Cartwright.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

'Certainly. And little Johnny?'

ANNA:

My son's name is Johnny?

WILLIAM:

Yup.

ANNA:

Well, get a message through to him too.

WILLIAM:

Brilliant.

(the scene's over)

Word perfect I'd say.

ANNA:

What do you think?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

You think I should do Henry James instead?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Yes -- I mean -- you never get anyone

in 'Wings of a Dove' having the nerve to say 'inform the Pentagon that we need black star cover.'

WILLIAM:

And I think the book is the poorer for it.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S DINING ROOM

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

ANNA:

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

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

WILLIAM:

You like Chagall?

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

With a goat playing a violin.

ANNA:

Yes -- happiness wouldn't be happiness without a violin-playing goat. Spike enters with three pizzas.

SPIKE:

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

ANNA:

Fantastic.

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

(pause)

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

ANNA:

You've got big feet.

WILLIAM:

Yes. Always have had.

ANNA:

You know what they say about men with big feet?

WILLIAM:

No. What's that?

ANNA:

Big feet -- large shoes.

He laughs.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

You actually have clauses in your contact about nudity?

ANNA:

Definitely. 'You may show the dent at the top of the artist's buttocks -- but

neither cheek. In the event of a stunt person being used, the artist must have full consultation.'

WILLIAM:

You have a stunt bottom?

ANNA:

I could have a stunt bottom, yes.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Definitely. Ths is important stuff.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

The ice cream or Mel Gibson's bottom?

ANNA:

Both.

INT. WILLIAM'S UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Well, thank you.

(awkward pause)

Anyway -- time for bed. Or...

sofa-bed.

ANNA:

Right.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

WILLIAM:

(to himself)

Oh my God...

(then...)

Hello.

SPIKE:

Hello. I wonder if I could have a little word.
He drifts round the corner, half-naked.

WILLIAM:

Spike.

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Maybe.

SPIKE:

And she's in your house.

WILLIAM:

Yes.

SPIKE:

And you get on very well.

WILLIAM:

Yes.

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

(pause)

Do you mind if I have a go?

WILLIAM:

Spike!

SPIKE:

No -- you're right.

WILLIAM:

I'll talk to you in the morning.

SPIKE:

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

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

WILLIAM:

Oh please sod off.

ANNA:

Okay.

WILLIAM:

No! No. Wait. I... thought you were someone else. I thought you were Spike.

I'm delighted you're not.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

WILLIAM:

Wow.

ANNA:

What?

And then gets over it straight away.

WILLIAM:

Nothing.

And kisses her.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

The morning.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

You and every person in this country.

WILLIAM:

Oh God yes -- I'm sorry.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Well...

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

(pause)

Actually, I can't think really -- let me just have a quick look...
He looks under the sheet at her breasts.

WILLIAM:

No, beats me.
She laughs...

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Who was Gilda?

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

(pause)

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

ANNA:

(very touched)

Oh.

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

ANNA:

I'll be back.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

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

ANNA:

Breakfast in bed. Or lunch, or brunch.

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

ANNA:

Can I stay a bit longer?

WILLIAM:

Stay forever.

ANNA:

Damn, I forgot the jam.

The doorbell goes.

ANNA:

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

INT./EXT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

Jesus Christ.

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

ANNA:

What?

WILLIAM:

Don't ask.

She heads back the corridor, with no suspicion.

ANNA:

You're up to something...

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Undressed like this, yes.

ANNA:

Jesus.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

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

SPIKE:

Morning, daring ones.

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

ANNA:

(on the phone)

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

(she hangs up)

Damnit.

She heads upstairs.

WILLIAM:

I wouldn't go outside.

SPIKE:

Why not?

WILLIAM:

Just take my work for it.

The moment William goes upstairs, Spike heads for the front

door.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

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

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike closes the door and wanders along to a mirror in the hallway, muttering.

SPIKE:

How did I look?

Inspects himself.

SPIKE:

Not bad. No bad at all. Well-chosen briefs, I'd say. Chicks love grey.

Mmmmm. Nice firm buttocks.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

How are you doing?

ANNA:

How do you think I'm doing?

WILLIAM:

I don't know what happened.

ANNA:

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

She's packing.

WILLIAM:

That's not true.

ANNA:

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

goddamn underwear.

SPIKE:

(dropping in)

I went out in my goddamn underwear too.

WILLIAM:

Get out, Spike.

(he does)

I'm so sorry.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

You do?

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

That's spectacularly unfair.

ANNA:

Who knows, it may even help business.
Buy a boring book about Egypt from the
guy who screwed Anna Scott.
She heads out.
INT. STAIRS/LIVING ROOM - DAY

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Spike, check who that is... and for
God's sake put some clothes on.
Spike leans merrily out of the window.

SPIKE:

Looks like a chauffeur to me.
INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN/CORRIDOR - DAY
They move from the kitchen into the corridor.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Well, there are. And we don't need to

go anywhere near that far. My best friend slipped -- she slipped down-stairs, cracked her back and she's in a wheelchair for the rest of her life. All I'm asking for is a normal amount of perspective.

ANNA:

You're right:

It's just that I've dealt with this garbage for ten years now -- you've had it for ten minutes. Our perspectives are different.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Excuse me?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN/CORRIDOR - DAY
Spike and William sitting there. Pause.

WILLIAM:

Was it you?

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

Right.

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

EXT. LONDON - DAY

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

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

First it is summer -- summer fruits and flowers -- a six-month
pregnant woman -- Honey with another leather-jacket boyfriend.
As he walks on the rain starts to fall -- he turns up his coat
collar -- umbrellas appear. Followed by winter coats --
chestnuts roasting -- Christmas trees on sale and the first hint
of snow.

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

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

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

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

HONEY:

Have we got something for you.

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

WILLIAM:

Blimey. What's that?

HONEY:

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

WILLIAM:

Well, thanks, that's great.

HONEY:

It is great, isn't it. See you tonight.

Hey, Marty-- sexy cardy.

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

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

BELLA:

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

TONY:

Thank you very much.

BELLA:

Unfortunately -- no one ever came to eat here.

TONY:

A tiny hiccough.

BELLA:

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

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

BELLA:

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

BERNIE:

... get fired.

BELLA:

No!

BERNIE:

Yes, they're shifting the whole outfit much more towards the trading side -- and of course...

(he owns up)

I was total crap.

They're all rather stunned.

TONY:

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

They toast him.

HONEY:

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

Total bewilderment from the others.

HONEY:

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

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

WILLIAM:

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

MAX:

Is it someone we know?

HONEY:

Yes. I will keep you informed.

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

HONEY:

By the way -- it's you.

SPIKE:

Me?

HONEY:

Yes. What do you think?

SPIKE:

Well, yes. Groovy.

MAX:

Any more announcements?

WILLIAM:

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

MAX:

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

WILLIAM:

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

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

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

BELLA:

I'm really horribly drunk.

Elsewhere, Max and William are relaxed together.

MAX:

So -- you've laid the ghost.

WILLIAM:

I believe I have.

MAX:

Don't give a damn about the famous girl.

WILLIAM:

No, don't think I do.

MAX:

Which means you won't be distracted by the fact that she's back in London, grasping her Oscar, and to be found filming most days on Hampstead Heath. He puts down a copy of the 'Evening Standard' with a picture of Anna on its cover.

WILLIAM:

(immediate gloom)
Oh God no.

MAX:

So not over her, in fact.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

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

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

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

SECURITY:

Can I help you?

WILLIAM:

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

SECURITY:

Does she know you're coming?

WILLIAM:

No, no. She doesn't.

SECURITY:

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

WILLIAM:

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

SECURITY:

... can't let you through.

At that moment -- thirty yards away, William sees trailer door open. Out of it comes Anna -- looking extraordinary -- in a velvet dress; full, beautiful make-up; rich, extravagant hair. She has a necessary cluster of people about her. Hair, make-up, costume and the third assistant who has collected her. She walks a few yards, and then casually turns her head. And sees him. Her face registers not just surprise, certainly not a simple smile. His being there is a complicated thing. Cut back to him. He does a small wave. She pauses as the whole paraphernalia of the upcoming scene passes between them. The movie divides them. But then she begins to walk through it, and followed by her cluster, she makes her way towards him. When she reaches him, the security guard stands back a pace, and her people hold back. She doesn't really know what to say...

ANNA:

This is certainly... ah...

WILLIAM:

I only found out you were here yesterday.

ANNA:

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

The third assistant is under pressure.

THIRD:

Anna.

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

ANNA:

(to William)

It's not going very well -- and it's our last day.

WILLIAM:

Absolutely -- you're clearly very busy.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

Okay.

ANNA:

Drink tea -- there's lots of tea.

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

KAREN:

Come and have a look...

EXT. KENWOOD PARK - DAY

As they make towards the set...

KAREN:

Are you a fan of Henry James?

WILLIAM:

This is Henry James film?

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

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

KAREN:

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

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

HARRY:

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

WILLIAM:

That's great.

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

JAMES:

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

ANNA:

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

JAMES:

Oh, stop showing off.
He studies an actress a few yards to the left.

JAMES:

God, that's an enormous arse.

ANNA:

I'm not listening.

JAMES:

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

ANNA:

I said I'm not listening -- and I think,
looking at something that firm, you and
your droopy little excuse for an 'arse'
would be well-advised to keep quiet.
Back by the desk, William is listening and laughs. That's his
girl. Anna prepares.

ANNA:

So I ask you when you're going to tell

everyone, and you say...?

JAMES:

'Tomorrow will be soon enough.'

ANNA:

And then I... right.

JAMES:

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

ANNA:

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

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Cut back to William -- he has heard.

WILLIAM:

Of course.

He takes off the headphones and puts them gently down.

WILLIAM:

Thank you.

HARRY:

Anytime.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

William is emptying Anna Scott videos into a box.

SPIKE:

What's going on?

WILLIAM:

I'm going to throw out these old videos.

SPIKE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

SPIKE:

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

INT. BACKROOM OF THE BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

MARTIN:

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

WILLIAM:

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

MARTIN:

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

WILLIAM:

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

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

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

ANNA:

Hi.

WILLIAM:

Hello.

ANNA:

You disappeared.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Well... how have you been?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

(she's nervous)

Well, yesterday was our last day filming and so I'm just off -- but I brought you this from home, and... It's quite a big wrapped parcel, flat -- 3 foot by 4 foot, leaning against a bookshelf.

ANNA:

I thought I'd give it to you.

WILLIAM:

Thank you. Shall I...

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

What's the thing?

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

WILLIAM:

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

Mr. Smith is taken aback and therefore completely obedient.

MR. SMITH

Right. Sorry.

And he leaves.

WILLIAM:

You were saying...

ANNA:

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

Pause as William takes this in.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

Martin edges up.

MARTIN:

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

WILLIAM:

Can you tell her I'll ring her back.

MARTIN:

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

WILLIAM:

Okay -- perfect timing as ever -- hold the fort for a second will you, Martin? Martin is left with Anna.

MARTIN:

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

ANNA:

Is that right?

MARTIN:

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

ANNA:

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

MARTIN:

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

ANNA:

Well, no -- I'm sure he was friendly -- to Demi Moore -- who acted with him in 'Ghost.'
She's kind in here, not sarcastic.

MARTIN:

Oh right. Right. Sorry. Always been a bit of an ass.
William returns a little uneasy.

MARTIN:

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

course.

Martin leaves them.

WILLIAM:

Sorry about that.

ANNA:

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

She's awaiting an answer.

WILLIAM:

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

He can't really express what he feels.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

The truth is...

He feels he must explain.

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

I see.

(pause)

That reality is a real 'no,' isn't it?

WILLIAM:

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

ANNA:

Okay. Fine. Fine. Good decision.

Pause.

ANNA:

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

ANNA:

Bye.

Then turns and leaves. Leaving him.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

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

WILLIAM:

What do you think? Good move?

HONEY:

Good move:

she's nothing special. I saw her taking her pants off and I definitely glimpsed some cellulite down there.

BELLA:

Good decision. All actresses are mad as snakes.

WILLIAM:

Tony -- what do you think?

TONY:

Never met her, never want to.

WILLIAM:

Brilliant. Max?

MAX:

Absolutely. Never trust a vegetarian.

WILLIAM:

Great. Excellent. Thanks.

Spike enters.

SPIKE:

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

HONEY:

William has just turned down Anna Scott.

SPIKE:

You daft prick!

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

BELLA:

This painting isn't the original, is it?

WILLIAM:

Yes, I think that one may be.

BERNIE:

But she said she wanted to go out with you?

WILLIAM:

Yes -- sort of...

BERNIE:

That's nice.

WILLIAM:

What?

BERNIE:

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

WILLIAM:

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

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

WILLIAM:

Oh sod a dog. I've made the wrong decision, haven't I?
They look at him. Spike does a big nod.

WILLIAM:

Max, how fast is your car?

EXT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

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

MAX:

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

BERNIE:

And we intend to use them!

MAX:

Where's Bella?

HONEY:

She's not coming.

MAX:

Sod that. Bernie -- in the back!

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

MAX:

Come on, babe.

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

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

BELLA:

Where are you going?

MAX:

Down Kensington Church Street, then Knightsbridge, then Hyde Park Corner.

BELLA:

Crazy. Go along Bayswater...

HONEY:

That's right -- then Park Lane.

BERNIE:

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

WILLIAM:

No!

Suddenly the car slams to a halt.

MAX:

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

ALL:

All right.

MAX:

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

EXT. PICCADILLY - DAY

The car turns illegally right across Piccadilly the wrong way

down a one-way street and ends up outside the Ritz. William sprints into the hotel. Bernie follows.

BERNIE:

Bloody hell, this is fun.

IT. RITZ LOBBY - DAY

WILLIAM:

Is Miss Scott staying here?

It is the same man.

RITZ MAN:

No, sir.

WILLIAM:

How about Miss Flintstone?

RITZ MAN:

No, sir.

WILLIAM:

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

Man shakes his head.

RITZ MAN:

No, sir.

WILLIAM:

Right. Right. Fair enough. Thanks.

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

RITZ MAN:

There was a Miss Pocahontas in room 126

-- but she checked out an hour ago. I

believe she's holding a press

conference at The Savoy before flying to America.

William is very grateful. He kisses the Ritz Man. Bernie's also grateful. He kisses him too.

BERNIE:

We have lift off!!

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

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

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

SPIKE:

Bugger this for a bunch of bananas.

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

SPIKE:

Go!

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

HONEY:

You're my hero.

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

EXT. THE SAVOY - DAY

They pull to a stop. William leaps out.

MAX:

Go!

INT. THE SAVOY - DAY

William rushes up to the main desk.

WILLIAM:

Excuse me, where's the press conference?

MAN AT SAVOY:

Are you an accredited member of the press?

WILLIAM:

Yes...

He flashes a card.

MAN AT SAVOY:

That's a Blockbuster video membership card, sir.

WILLIAM:

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

(mimes quotation marks)

'Movies are our business.'

MAN AT SAVOY:

I'm sorry, sir...

Honey shoots into shot, pushing Bella's chair.

BELLA:

He's with me.

MAN AT SAVOY:

And you are?

BELLA:

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

MAN AT SAVOY:

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

HONEY:

(to William)

Run!

INT. SAVOR ROOM - DAY

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

INT. LANCASTER ROOM - DAY

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

JEREMY:

Yes... You -- Dominic.

QUESTIONER 1

How much longer are you staying in the UK then?

ANNA:

No time at all. I fly out tonight.
She's in a slightly melancholic and therefore honest mood.

JEREMY:

Which is why we have to round it up now.
Final questions.
He points at a journalist he knows.

QUESTIONER 2

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

ANNA:

Absolutely not.

QUESTIONER 2

Do you believe the rumours?

ANNA:

It's really not my business any more.
Though I will say, from my experience,
that rumours about Jeff... do tend to
be true.
They love that answer, and all scribble in their note books.
Next question comes from someone straight right next to
William.

QUESTIONER 3

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

ANNA:

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

JEREMY:

Yes, the gentleman in the pink shirt.
He is pointing straight at William, who has his hand up.

WILLIAM:

Yes -- Miss Scott -- are there any
circumstances in which you two might be
more than just friends?
Anna sees who it is asking.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

And what would you say...

JEREMY:

No, it's just one question per person.

ANNA:

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

WILLIAM:

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

OTHER JOURNALIST

(to William)

His name is Thacker.

WILLIAM:

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

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

ANNA:

Yes, I'm pretty sure I would.

WILLIAM:

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

Anna whispers something to Jeremy.

JEREMY:

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

QUESTIONER 1

Yes -- Anna -- how long are you
intending to stay here in Britain?
Pause. Anna looks up at William. He nods.

ANNA:

Indefinitely.

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

SPIKE:

What happened?

HONEY:

It was good.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. LEICESTER SQUARE - NIGHT

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

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

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

A small tai chi group moves mysteriously. And as the camera
glides, it passes a couple sitting on a single, simple wooden
bench overlooking the garden. He is reading, she is just

looking out, totally relaxed, holding his hand, pregnant. It is William and Anna.

THE END: