

PATRICK MELROSE

Episode Five

'At Last'

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Adapted from the novel by Edward St Aubyn

FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

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Music up; I GOT PLENTY OF NUTHIN', the Louis Armstrong version, brassy and upbeat -

FADE IN:

- 1 INT. ONSLOW CLUB, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 1
- CHAMPAGNE! Put on ice in preparation for a PARTY in a high, bright room.
- Trays of canapes are laid out by CATERERS, white tablecloths are thrown over trestle tables, glasses are polished.
- 2 INT. BATHROOM, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 2
- April 2005. PATRICK MELROSE, now in his mid-40s, wipes steam from the bathroom mirror. In C.U., older, trimmer, he shaves carefully.
- A dark suit hangs, waiting. PATRICK pulls on a crisp white shirt, inserts cuff-links, slips into polished shoes.
- 3 INT. ONSLOW CLUB, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 3
- Flowers are arranged, white lilies and roses, by a WAITRESS - we'll know her later as HELENE. Elsewhere, two WAITERS carry a large, wrapped canvas to an easel at the end of the room, ready for unveiling.
- 4 INT. BATHROOM, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 4
- MARY MELROSE is getting ready too - putting in ear-rings, applying lipstick. Upbeat MUSIC continues.
- 5 INT. BEDROOM, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 5
- A plastic bag full of tangled neckties. PATRICK rejects stripes, spots, blue and green and settles on black.
- 6 INT. HALLWAY, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 6
- MARY, about to leave, inspects her reflection, tugs at the hem of her little black dress - too little? Right for this particular occasion?
- She peers at the lipstick. What on earth was she thinking? She produces a tissue, wipes it away.

7 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 7

PATRICK, in black tie and suit, sits at the table. For the first time, a clear view of the setting - a bedsit, sparsely furnished, very much *not* the family home. Life alone.

In his hand, a fountain pen and a small pile of white index cards. He stares hard at the card, pen poised, ready to write.

8 INT. BUNYON'S FUNERAL PARLOUR, LONDON 2005 - DAY 8

In C.U., an artificial white silk rose is held between the twisted fingers of ELEANOR MELROSE. Another hand, latex-gloved, removes the rose and puts it to one side to use again.

ELEANOR's face, revealed now, is hollow-cheeked, pale and dusted with powder. Lifeless. One last glimpse -

- and the COFFIN LID slides into place.

9 INT. ONSLOW CLUB, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 9

The brown paper is pulled from the canvas, revealing a huge black and white photo of ELEANOR in her 'Sixties pomp, arms outstretched in a gesture of welcome, of generosity, a champagne glass in hand, presiding over this, her final party.

'In loving memory of Eleanor Melrose, 1931 to 2005'

10 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 10

PATRICK stares hard at the whiteness, pen poised, ready to write.

But nothing comes. On the blank card, he writes -

'?'

11 INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 11

- PATRICK stands sentry at the side of his mother's coffin at the crematorium, one hand on the coffin's lid. A moment of solitude.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Mourners are arriving, sir.

PATRICK
Fine. Let's begin.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES, white on black -

'AT LAST'

11 OMITTED 11

11A INT. ELEANOR'S ROOM, THE CHATEAU, LACOSTE 2003 - CONTINUOUS

A reprise of scene 4/59, PATRICK and ELEANOR alone, saying goodbye in Lacoste. Silence, then -

PATRICK

Can I get you anything, or -?

ELEANOR

I want -
(she beckons him closer)
I want you...to kill me.

PATRICK takes this in -

TELEPHONE VOICE (O.S.)

Hello, directory enquiries, how can I help you?

PATRICK (O.S.)

(low voice)
Yes, I'd like a number please. It's for an organisation called The, um, Voluntary Euthenasia Society.

12 INT. PAY PHONE, COURTS OF JUSTICE, LONDON 2004 - DAY 12

PATRICK, in his barrister's gowns, is speaking on the pay phone, keenly aware of the policemen, lawyers and judges who jostle nearby.

TELEPHONE VOICE

I'm sorry, you'll have to speak up -

PATRICK

The Voluntary. Euthenasia. Society.

CAPTION -

'ONE YEAR LATER'

Lots of FAST CUTS through the following calls -

EUTHENASIA SOCIETY (O.S.)

I'm sorry, I can't give you any advice. We're a campaign group. It's really about changing the law.

PATRICK
But 'Voluntary Euthenasia', it
sounds so... hopeful.

Jump cut to -

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Yes, it's an international number,
in Switzerland. Dignitas...

DIRECTORY ENQUIRIES (O.S.)
What's that again?

Behind him, a POLICEMAN taps his watch.

PATRICK
Dignitas.

DIRECTORY ENQUIRIES (O.S.)
What kind of organisation are they?

PATRICK
They...I'll spell it for you.
D.I.G...

'One moment!' He writes the number down.

13

INT. LIVING ROOM, MELROSE FAMILY HOME 2004 - DAY

13

He pours a large glass of whisky, chatting to a SWISS VOICE
that oozes reassurance.

SWISS VOICE
It's really not a matter of
euthanasia. It's an assisted
suicide administered by the patient
herself. We'd need a letter of
consent.

PATRICK
She can't write. She certainly
couldn't give herself an injection -

SWISS VOICE
Can she sign?

PATRICK
Yes.

SWISS VOICE
Can she swallow?

PATRICK
Yes.

SWISS VOICE

Then maybe we can help. But we'd need a doctor's report too.

14 INT. CORRIDOR, ELEANOR'S NURSING HOME 2004 - DAY

14

ELEANOR, very frail now, is turned in her bed. It's physical, distressing. In the corridor, DOCTOR FENELON, the Melrose family doctor, visiting as requested, debates with an anxious and frustrated PATRICK.

DOCTOR FENELON

Suicide stems from a disease, a disease we now call depression, and that's what we should be treating.

PATRICK

She can't move or speak or control herself. Depression isn't a *disease*, it's an entirely reasonable response. Frankly it's *cheerfulness* that would take some explaining.

DOCTOR FENELON

When people are depressed we give them antidepressants.

PATRICK

She's on them! They gave a certain enthusiasm to her loathing of life. That's when she asked me to kill her.

DOCTOR FENELON

It can be a great privilege to work with the dying.

PATRICK

I don't think she's going to start working with the dying, do you? If you mean that it's a great privilege for you, I'm more concerned with *her* quality of life.

DOCTOR FENELON considers -

15 INT. ELEANOR'S ROOM, NURSING HOME, 2004 - DAY

15

PATRICK holds ELEANOR's hand. A whisper -

ELEANOR

I want...Swiss-land.

PATRICK

That's what we're looking into.

ELEANOR
You...look like...my son.

PATRICK
Yes, there's an explanation for that. I am your son.

ELEANOR
(sure of her ground)
No...no.

PATRICK
Oh God...
(Too late - DOCTOR FENELON enters)
You remember Doctor Fenelon? Our family doctor?

DOCTOR FENELON
Hello, Eleanor. So I'm just going to take a look at you and ask you a few questions...

ELEANOR beckons for PATRICK to come closer.

ELEANOR
Please...don't tell him my mother was...a duchess.

PATRICK
(smiles, squeezes her hand)
I won't breathe a word.

16 OMITTED 16

17 INT. ELEANOR'S ROOM, NURSING HOME 2004 - DAY 17

MARY sits on one side of the bed, MARY on the other, reading to ELEANOR quietly and as calmly as she can, while PATRICK listens.

MARY
...I can hardly move and speak, I am bedridden and incontinent and feel uninterrupted anguish at my own uselessness. There is no prospect of improvement and I can already feel my faculties betraying me. I do not look on death with fear, but with longing. Please help me to escape the daily torture of my existence. Yours sincerely.' Do you think that's fair?
(or more precisely -)
- a fair description?

ELEANOR

Es.

MARY

Do you want to sign it?

ELEANOR

Sign.

With a shaky hand, she signs.

18

INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 - DAY

18

- and sees it again, ONE YEAR LATER, as PATRICK stands at the side of the coffin, examining the blank cards that should carry his speech, hand shaking. MARY hands him the order of service - a photograph of ELEANOR, in happier times.

PATRICK

Thank you for doing all this. It's really not your responsibility anymore.

MARY

You're welcome. So -

PATRICK

- an orphan at last! It's what I always dreamed of. After all these years, I feel complete!

MARY

I hope that's not your speech.

PATRICK

Ah, now my speech...

MARY

- because it is printed in the order of service -

PATRICK

I know -

MARY

- I can't do that for you.

PATRICK

- and I wouldn't ask you to.

MARY

- so you've written one?

PATRICK

I thought perhaps I'd improvise, speak from the heart.

MARY

Are you sure that's a good idea?

PATRICK

With my heart? There'll probably be a stampede for the exit.

A VOICE from behind them -

NICHOLAS (O.C.)

Surprised to see me?

NICHOLAS PRATT is slighter and frailer now, walking with the aid of a stick but retaining his snobbish defiance and ferocious eloquence. MARY slips away.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I've become rather a memorial creeper. One's bound to at my age. It's no use sitting at home, guffawing over the mistakes of ignorant obituarists. No! One has to 'celebrate the life!': 'There goes the school tart. They say he had a good war, but I know better!' I'm not saying that it's not all very moving -

(inspecting the plain coffin, the few guests)

Thinly attended.

Hippyish-types, ANNETTE and friends from the Transpersonal Foundation are arriving now, but for PATRICK, even these old adversaries are preferable to NICHOLAS.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Are those your mother's religious friends? What colour would you call that? Aubergine? *Aubergine a la creme d'oursins*? I must get a suit made-up. I suppose your aunt will be here soon, an all too familiar face amidst the Aubergines, her vibrant self-pity masquerading as grief -

PATRICK

I really must talk to the -

NICHOLAS

Try not to be bitter about the money. One or two of my friends who've made a mess of that side of things have ended up dying in National Health wards, and I must say I've been very impressed by the humanity of the mainly foreign staff.

(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Mind you, what is there to do with money but spend it when you have it and be bitter when you don't? I suppose what I'm saying is - *do* be bitter about the money. What is it now, six generations with every single descendant essentially idle? It must be rather *thrilling* for you and your children, after this long exemption from competition, to really get stuck in!

PATRICK

Goodbye, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS

And you mustn't feel guilty about feeling pleased.

(PATRICK stops in his tracks)

If ever there was a merciful release, it was in the case of your poor mother.

19

INT. RECEPTION, NURSING HOME 2004 - DAY

19

FLASHBACK. PATRICK and MARY sit either side of ELEANOR, holding her hand as they wait for the ambulance.

PATRICK

Eleanor, I think it's time to go.
The flight's at three.

But ELEANOR is frowning, trying to speak, she gestures for PATRICK to come closer.

ELEANOR

Do...nothing.

MARY

What was that?

ELEANOR

Do...nothing. No go.

PATRICK

You mean...you've changed your mind?

ELEANOR

No..Swiss-land.

PATRICK can't believe it.

PATRICK

Will you excuse me a moment.

He strides off -

20 INT. CORRIDOR, NURSING HOME 2004 - DAY

20

MARY finds a deeply-confused PATRICK.

PATRICK

I think I'm entitled to feel a little ambiguous, don't you?

She stands next to him.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

She asked me to arrange it, get the doctor, the letter of consent -

MARY

I know.

PATRICK

- manipulated me, turned her death into this passion project, and now she changes her mind.

MARY

She's frightened. She doesn't want to do it herself, she wants someone to do it for her -

PATRICK

Oh believe me, I'm sorely tempted. Why isn't there a bar in this place? They'd make a fortune.

MARY

Come and talk to her.

PATRICK

What's the point? If she'd ever had anything meaningful to say to me, it's too late now.

MARY

Nevertheless. You mustn't run away.

21 INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY

21

In the PRESENT, SEAMUS's sidekick, oozes compassion and concern.

ANNETTE

Were you thinking about Eleanor?
(he turns)

Annette, we met in France, d'you remember?

PATRICK

Yes, I hope you're enjoying my family home.

ANNETTE

Oh, we are! Seamus sends his love. He's in your old bedroom now! He wanted to be here but he's *still* writing his book! How are you taking all this? You know Maya Angelou says that the meaning of our lives is the impact we have on other people, whether we make them feel good or not. Eleanor always made people feel good.

PATRICK

I might use that in my speech.

ANNETTE

You *should*! My gift to you!

PATRICK

You know who loves Maya Angelou? The old man over there, with the stick. Do tell him. His name's Nick.

ANNETTE

Will do!
(crossing to NICHOLAS)
Hello, you must be Nick...

And now NANCY, ELEANOR's sister, arrives, exhausted and clearly appalled by the other mourners. She kisses him peremptorily on the cheek.

NANCY

Patrick, of all the days to have the funeral! It's Prince Charles' wedding!

PATRICK

I'm sure you'd be there if you'd been invited.

NANCY

But *everyone's* at Windsor!

PATRICK notices that JOHNNY has arrived.

PATRICK

Feel free to nip down with a cardboard periscope and a Union Jack if you think it would be more entertaining -

With some relief, he crosses to JOHNNY - an embrace, and they're into their routine.

JOHNNY
Lovely venue.

PATRICK
Yes, I might get cremated here myself.

JOHNNY
No need to rush.

PATRICK
I was planning to wait until I die.

JOHNNY
How are you bearing up?

PATRICK
Weirdly elated. I think my mother's death could be the best thing to happen to me since, well, my father's death.

JOHNNY
I'm sure it's a little more complicated than that.

PATRICK
You're the psychiatrist -

JOHNNY
Psychotherapist.

PATRICK
Whatever.

From elsewhere, a raised voice -

NICHOLAS
What utter, utter nonsense -

JOHNNY
Christ, Nicholas Pratt, I didn't expect to see him.

PATRICK
You're so lucky to have an ethical reason not to talk to him.

JOHNNY
Doesn't everyone?

Over to NICHOLAS, joined by NANCY

NICHOLAS

Stand by the furnace, or the grave side, and repeat these words.
"Goodbye, old thing. One of us was bound to die first and I'm delighted it was you!" That's *my* spiritual practice and you're welcome to put it in your hilarious 'spiritual tool box.'

ANNETTE

(to NANCY)

Isn't he *hysterical*! What he doesn't realise is that we live in a loving universe, and it loves you too, Nick!

NICHOLAS

(escaping)

My dear, I never thought I'd be so pleased to see you!

NANCY

Nicholas, who are these peculiar people? Why are they here?

As they survey the room, JULIA arrives. PATRICK sees her. JOHNNY squeezes his arm - 'good luck' - and he crosses.

NICHOLAS

Zealots, moonies, witch doctors. Avoid eye contact, stick close to me and we may live to tell the tale.

NANCY

(on JOHNNY, alone now)

And who is he?

NICHOLAS

He wouldn't be anyone at all if he wasn't my daughter's psychoanalyst. As it is, he's a *fiend*.

MARY, greeting guests, has noticed JULIA too and watches as PATRICK hurries over, intercepted on the way by the FUNERAL DIRECTOR.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

We can start when you're ready, sir.

PATRICK

Ten minutes.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

(panicked)

Ten minutes?

PATRICK

There are still people arriving!
(with JULIA, a kiss
through her veil)
Just in time. We're about to kick
off, if that's the phrase I was
looking for.

JULIA

It's not.

PATRICK

It's been a while.

JULIA

Almost a year. Is it true you've
given up drinking again?

PATRICK

Yes, that's all over.

JULIA

Congratulations. It must be hard
just now.

PATRICK

Not at all. A crisis demands a
hero. The ambush comes when things
are going well. Or so I'm told.

JULIA

Still not given-up irony then.

PATRICK

Hardest addiction of all. Forget
heroin, that need to mean two
things at once -

JULIA

I'm having enough trouble wearing
nicotine patches and smoking at the
same time. Don't take my irony,
leave me with a little sarcasm!

PATRICK

Sarcasm doesn't count. It only
means one thing.

JULIA

Quality freak.

The FUNERAL DIRECTOR loiters nervously.

PATRICK

The corpses are piling up outside,
you'd better take a seat.

JULIA
Very exciting. Who's on the bill?

PATRICK
I've no idea. Mary organised it.

JULIA
Sweet.

PATRICK
(about to react, but -)
We'll talk more.

She puts her hand on his arm, kisses him.

JULIA
It's good to see you again. I
wasn't sure I would.

22

INT. PATRICK'S BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2004 - DAY

22

FLASHBACK. PATRICK and JULIA lie on a bare mattress after unsuccessful love-making. Clothes dishevelled, both smoking, staring at the yellowing ceiling.

PATRICK is in the process of moving into his depressing bedsit. Suitcases are still unpacked, whisky bottles and ashtrays litter the floor. He's at the height of his alcoholism here.

JULIA
You're not really going to live here, are you?

PATRICK
I'm trying to think of it as my 'bachelor pad.'

JULIA
Hm. It's the kind of place people come to kill themselves.

PATRICK
The thought had -

JULIA
Be serious. Surely Mother Mary will take you back. What have you told the boys?

PATRICK
(pouring a drink)
I'm 'away on business.'

JULIA
Christ, it's all so bleak.
(the drink)
(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

Well, I'm sorry, squalor's not an aphrodisiac, not at our age. I can't come here again.

PATRICK

No, I don't think you should.

A moment. Then -

JULIA

I see.

(grinds out her cigarette)

It wasn't anything after all. Now that you're not with Mary, you don't need me. I was...structural.

PATRICK

Exactly.

And JULIA sits, straightens her clothing, picks up her things and, without turning back, leaves. PATRICK reaches for his glass -

23 EXT. MELROSE FAMILY HOME, WEST LONDON 2004 - DAY 23

- and, drunk, stands outside the old family home. He knocks on the door. No reply. He lets himself in -

24 INT. LIVING ROOM, MELROSE FAMILY HOME, WEST LONDON 2004 - ~~DAY~~

Clumsy, belligerent, PATRICK is pulling books from the shelves. He is very drunk, and doesn't notice ROBERT, in school uniform, watching from the doorway.

MARY (O.S.)

Robert? What are you doing in there?

PATRICK

(noticing ROBERT)

Hello, I didn't hear you. Come here!

Now MARY is there.

MARY

What's going on?

PATRICK

I'm picking up some things.

MARY

Robert, take Thomas upstairs please.

PATRICK
But we've not seen each other. Hello, Robert. How's school? Where's Thomas?

MARY (CONT'D)
Now, please!

There's one last look between PATRICK and ROBERT, tears starting to form in his eldest son's eyes.

PATRICK
I'll come up and say goodbye!
(ROBERT leaves)
Just a few bits and pieces, if that's alright. A few heirlooms to brighten up the bachelor pad -

25 INT. HALLWAY, MELROSE FAMILY HOME 2004 - CONTINUOUS 25

Follow ROBERT as he joins THOMAS on the stairs. INTERCUT-

MARY
Fine, take what you want, go back to your flat, pass out there, but I don't want the children to see you in this state.

26 INT. LIVING ROOM, MELROSE FAMILY HOME 2004 - CONTINUOUS 26

PATRICK
(smash)
Oops! Don't worry about that lamp, I'll buy you a new one.

MARY
Leave it and go home!

PATRICK
Home! How sweet of you to think of it as my home! I'm not in that happy position -

And finally MARY can't bear it.

MARY
Christ, this is hell, it's like being in hell. You, you of all people, should know...this is intolerable! You know? 'The service is intolerable, the noise is intolerable' Well, this is fucking intolerable. I am not Eleanor and I will not stand by and watch the disgusting, pitiful spectacle of you destroying yourself, and I certainly won't let the boys watch it either. It's too much and it's gone on for too long.
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)
 (going to leave)
 If you really are determined to
 drink yourself to death, now you
 have a room to do it in.

And she goes, leaving PATRICK on the floor.

27 INT. HALLWAY, BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2004 - NIGHT 27
 The communal hallway is bleak and depressing, the timed light
 switch clicking off as he struggles to fit his key in the
 lock.

28 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2004 - NIGHT 28
 The place looks even bleaker now, impossible to bear. A
 decision.

From the kitchen, a bottle of whisky. Methodical and
 strangely calm, PATRICK starts to drink -

29 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2004 - DAY 29
 - and wakes up the next morning, PATRICK lying in the debris
 of bottles and ashtrays, barely alive.
 The phone rings. Answering it is inconceivable - he is still
 drunk - so he lies and listens.

MARY ON ANSWERING MACHINE
 (tired, anxious)
 Hello. Pick-up if you can.
 (a pause, a sigh)
 Hope you're okay. The boys asked
 about you. We'll talk, but do know -
 we do love you.

She hangs up. He pulls the phone towards him, dials a number.

PATRICK
 Hello, directory enquiries please.

30 EXT/INT. MINICAB, WEST LONDON 2004 - DAY 30
 A profoundly sick PATRICK collapses into the back of a
 minicab, clothes stuffed in plastic bags.

31 INT/EXT. MINICAB, ROAD 2004 - DAY 31
 The cab heads west out of the city -

- then on into countryside. PATRICK, exhausted and pale, sleeps with his head against the window. His hands are shaking, sweat is pouring from him - more than a hangover.

32 INT/EXT. MINICAB/COUNTRY HOUSE 2004 - DAY 32

The taxi pulls up. PATRICK stuffs notes into the DRIVER's hand and gets out.

A large, rather grand COUNTRY HOUSE. PATRICK regards it warily, then picks up his bag and stumbles towards it.

HENRY (O.S.)
Nobody communicates in this family!

33 INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 - DAY 33

THE PRESENT, and HENRY, PATRICK's avuncular, wealthy cousin from *Mother's Milk* has arrived. He shakes PATRICK's hand warmly -

HENRY
- I was staying at the Connaught and when they wheeled in The Times with my breakfast, I saw that your mother had died!

PATRICK
I'm sorry, the last time we spoke was at Nancy's. I'm afraid I was a bit of a nightmare.

HENRY
Well, I guess no-one enjoys being unhappy. It tends to spill over.

PATRICK
It does, but I'm glad you made it.

HENRY
I loved your mother very much. She had an innocent quality that drew you in and kept you distant at the same time.

PATRICK
At least part of that is very true.

HENRY
Well whatever you feel about her, you know she was a good woman with the best intentions.

He places a hand on PATRICK's shoulder.

NANCY

Henry! HENRY! Sit here!

He goes. PATRICK stands for a moment, pondering that word 'innocent'. He's watched by MARY. He sees her, smiles -

A Bach chorale calls people to their seats. We stay on MARY.

34

EXT. GARDEN, THE CHATEAU, LACOSTE 1997 - DAY

34

FLASHBACK. MARY is PREGNANT with THOMAS. PATRICK is playing happily with ROBERT (precise date here depends on YOUNG ROBERT's age, but some time around 1997). A happier time in the marriage, with PATRICK still sober.

Pre-Transpersonal Foundation days. ELEANOR is relatively healthy - no stroke yet - and coherent, attempting, somewhat awkwardly, to confide.

ELEANOR

I think my problem is that I can never forget he's David's son.

MARY

Does he remind you of him?

ELEANOR

Flashes, when he's angry or sarcastic. Which thankfully is less often now.

(a moment, a breath)

Does he talk to you about him?

MARY

I don't think he haunts him the way he once did.

ELEANOR

'Haunts'

PATRICK charges across the lawn, ROBERT laughing on his back.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

But *you* are alright?

MARY

Hm?

ELEANOR

He treats you well? And the children?

MARY

Of course. He's not his father.

ELEANOR

Can I show you something? In private.

35

INT. DINING ROOM, THE CHATEAU, LACOSTE 1997 - DAY

35

The room is gloomy after the afternoon sunlight. ELEANOR wrings her hands in anxiety as MARY reads a letter, shocked, disquieted.

ELEANOR

It came last week. I get an awful lot of letters, usually people asking for a helping hand, and I give it if I can, but this is something different.

MARY

She seems deeply damaged.

ELEANOR

Clearly she's a very unhappy woman, the alcohol, the depression, but really - to lay this at my door -

MARY

Do you remember her?

ELEANOR

Of course! The family were charming. She was a bright, happy little girl. David could be harsh, but the children were always safe, he was better with children, playful even, so long as they weren't too noisy.

MARY's anger is tangible -

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

All I know is that family seemed perfectly happy. They told me they'd had a lovely time.

MARY

She says your husband interfered with her.

ELEANOR

But how could he?! It was inconceivable, literally, I could not conceive of such things -

MARY

No suspicion -

ELEANOR

No -

MARY

No signs -

ELEANOR

None at all. That's what makes me so angry 'I forgive you'. She forgives me for not *protecting* her, but how could? From what? I didn't even know this kind of... behaviour existed?

MARY can't bear this. She stands. Outside, PATRICK and ROBERT are playing. MARY watches from the window as they walk towards the house.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

You mustn't say a word about this.

MARY

He is my husband -

ELEANOR

It will only unsettle him, all this talk of blame and forgiveness. Goodness, I know what a tyrant his father could be, but I did my best. Always my very, very best to protect our son.

MARY

Except leave.

ELEANOR

I did.

MARY

Yes, *you* did. Eventually.

ELEANOR

Patrick was always safe. Always. I'm sure of it.

36 INT. CORRIDOR/DRAWING ROOM, THE CHATEAU, LACOSTE 1997 - DAY 36

MARY, shaken by the conversation, walks numbly down the corridor. Piano continues off-screen. She turns into her bedroom.

37 INT. GUEST BEDROOM, THE CHATEAU, LACOSTE 1997 - DAY 37

PATRICK joins her on the bed.

PATRICK
Are you awake?

MARY
The things you told me, when we
met. About your father -

PATRICK
What's brought this on?

MARY
We have to talk about it again.

PATRICK
I've really nothing more to add -

MARY
I think you should tell your
mother.
(PATRICK groans)
I'm sorry, I know you don't want
to, I know it's hard -

PATRICK
Why then?

MARY
Because...she can't keep hiding.

MUSIC UP, the BACH chorale.

38 INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 - DAY

38

In the PRESENT DAY, MARY sits at the front, eyes blurred; the
photo of Eleanor on the order of service. She's joined by
PATRICK, full of manic, nervous energy.

PATRICK
It's show-time -
(the red eyes)
Are you alright?

MARY
Yes, yes, just thinking about your
mother.

PATRICK
(an unctuous shopkeeper)
A highly suitable choice, madam.

A moment and then they start to giggle. The ceremony begins,
BACH replaced by 'I Got Plenty of Nuthin'', this time the
version by Paul Robeson, scratchy and more sombre.

Over to NANCY and NICHOLAS.

NANCY

When I think of how we were brought up, to end up in a crematorium in *Mortlake*. All the lovely things, all the lovely houses, where have they all gone?

NICHOLAS

Presumably they're where they've always been, but they're being lived in by people who can afford them.

NANCY

But that's just it, I *should* be able to afford them. And to be *cremated* too; fire is something one dreads.

NICHOLAS

If you ask me, the Egyptians got it right with the Pyramids.

NANCY

Yes! Something huge and permanent with all one's things, lots and lots of things, tucked inside.

ANNETTE from the Foundation steps up to the lectern.

NICHOLAS

Oh, Christ. It's the Spiritual Tool Box -

ANNETTE

(As the MUSIC stops)

What a great choice for Eleanor! A fitting reminder, too, of her incredibly strong connection with the African-American people.

PATRICK and MARY are giggling now, MARY squeezing his arm.

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

All of you will have known Eleanor in different ways and if my Eleanor is not yours, all I will say is...let her in. Let her in.

(more giggles)

I first met her when a group of us from the Dublin Women's Healing Drum Circle went down to her wonderful house in Provence which many of you know well -

(she looks to PATRICK. He stops laughing now)

(MORE)

ANNETTE (CONT'D)

When we arrived we saw her sitting on the wall of the terrace, hands tucked under her thighs, for all the world like a lonely young child, dreaming about the future...

39 INT. BUNYON'S FUNERAL PARLOUR, LONDON 2005 - NIGHT 39

FLASHBACK to five days before. PATRICK is alone with his mother's remains in the subterranean chapel.

ANNETTE (V.O.)

Soon she'd flung her arms wide to greet us, but I never lost that first impression of her child-like quality -

The room is plain, more functional than the New York chapel of rest. With trepidation, he steps closer like a man approaching a cliff edge.

ANNETTE (V.O.)

- her belief that justice could be achieved and that there was goodness in every person and every situation, no matter how hidden it might seem at first sight.

She is holding the satin rose that we saw in the opening sequence. He leans over and touches her chest, startled at its thinness. He kisses her forehead, noting its coldness. There's none of the rage and malice that he felt in confronting his father's corpse in 'Bad News'. It's sad, more tender.

A voice - the FUNERAL DIRECTOR from the crematorium.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Everything alright here?

PATRICK

Not sure. A little longer, please?

Something gnawing -

40 INT. COUNTRY HOUSE 2004 - NIGHT 40

FLASHBACK. PATRICK is wheeled on a trolley, drips of saline attached. The stately home is a REHAB CLINIC, and PATRICK is an emergency admission, dressed in plain hospital clothing, hastily-packed bag on his lap. White-faced, shaking uncontrollably. Even in his junkie days, he wasn't as unwell as this.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI
You're undergoing *delirium tremens*.
Do you know what that is, Mr.
Melrose?

PATRICK
It rings a bell.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI
Then you'll know what to expect.
Shaking, sweating, there may be
some hallucinations. We'll get you
something to stabilise your heart,
stop you having seizures -

PATRICK
I'm going to die -

DOCTOR PAGAZZI
You're not going to die -

PATRICK
I don't mind.
(head back, under his
breath)
I want to die, I want to die, I
want to die...

41 INT. SUICIDE PREVENTION WARD, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - NIGHT 41

PATRICK writhes on the bed, tangled in the sheets soaked with sweat. Shaking uncontrollably, teeth chattering, he is finding it hard to breathe, suffocating.

He leans over the side of the bed. A vivid hallucination, water churning, threatening to drown him.

42 INT. CORRIDOR, SUICIDE PREVENTION WARD, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - EVENING 42

Day three of the detox. Bruised, gaunt and shaking, PATRICK walks the corridors.

43 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY 43

Still gaunt and shaking, he sits opposite DOCTOR PAGAZZI.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI
How often would you say you have
suicidal thoughts?

PATRICK
When I was younger it's all I
thought about. I never questioned
it.

(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Then, when we had the boys - more
of a whisper. On a quiet coastal
path, in a chemist, driving on the
motorway -

DOCTOR PAGAZZI

And now?

PATRICK

I look at the window and wonder
whether this floor is high enough.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI takes this in.

MARY (O.S.)

*When I was a child, I spake as a
child, I understood as a child: but
when I became a man, I put away
childish things.*

44 INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 - DAY

44

THE PRESENT, and MARY is reading at the lectern.

MARY

For now we see through a
glass, darkly; but then face
to face: now I know in part;
but then shall I know even as
also I am known.

NICHOLAS

(whispered, to NANCY)
Christ, not this old
chestnut. Who's on next?

NANCY

Patrick.

MARY

...and now abideth faith, hope,
love, these three; but the greatest
of these is love.

MARY returns. There's a hiatus as the mourners consult their
orders of service.

But he's shaking, resistant. Panic setting in. MARY squeezes
his hand; *Can you do this?*

And PATRICK stands a little unsteadily and approaches the
lectern -

45 EXT. GARDEN, THE CHATEAU, LACOSTE, 1997 - DUSK

45

PATRICK approaches his mother, who sits at her favourite
place.

PATRICK

Lovely spot.

ELEANOR

It is.

PATRICK

Do you...mind if I join you?

ELEANOR looks to PATRICK; not usual behaviour at all. She stiffens slightly.

ELEANOR

Please.

The sun is setting. They sit for a moment, but the tension in the air is palpable and eventually -

PATRICK

I've been trying out different combinations of words and none of them are right, so perhaps if I don't think too much and just come out with it.

(a deep breath - no turning back)

When we were here, when I was a child and we used to come here, and for some years afterwards, father used to, he used to rape me -

ELEANOR

(immediately)

Me too.

(a beat)

Me too.

A moment. On PATRICK, his confusion, his disbelief -

PATRICK

Me too?

They return to the view in silence - the subject closed.

46

INT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 - DAY

46

- continue as he stands at the lectern, searching for words.

Time passes. The congregation shifts uneasily. He looks to the audience - finds JOHNNY, finds MARY, concerned- the only two who know. He drops his head. On the lectern in front of him, the cue cards, blank except for -

'?'

Eventually -

PATRICK

I've not prepared a speech. As you'll see.

(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

A lot has been said about my
mother's innocence, how child-like
she - all I know is that when I was
a child - when my father - why
didn't she...couldn't she -
(he's starting to falter
now, to break down, to
remember -)
'Me too'! Me too.

He shakes his head, looks to the audience - finds JOHNNY,
finds MARY, concerned.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I can't...I can't do
this...

And hurriedly, head down, he walks past the congregation...

- and keeps walking, out of the door.

There's a brief pause, some awkward shuffling. MUSIC UP, *Fly Me to the Moon* by Frank Sinatra. Some smiles, some laughter at the choice, relief. The coffin starts to move towards the red curtain.

MARY is on her feet, heading out to -

47

EXT. COURTYARD, MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 -
CONTINUOUS

47

The crematorium has an outside terrace, and here PATRICK stands, tearful, ashamed, trying to light a cigarette with shaking hands. He hears the door behind, and glances around.

PATRICK

I swear, if one more person tells
me how innocent she was -

MARY

She might not have been, but even
so -

PATRICK

Don't, Mary, please do not
try and make things better -

MARY (CONT'D)

- it's an emotional time,
you're bound to feel -

PATRICK

STOP! This isn't mourning or grief,
it's rage, I feel my heart racing
with it. She knew, she must have,
surely she must have, even
unconsciously, deep down, she knew
what he was like and yet she failed
to do the single thing she was
obliged to do, to protect her
child!

(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Christ knows I've been a fucking useless father - husband too and I'm sorry - but if I thought someone was going to harm our children, I'd fight. Even I would do whatever it took because if you love someone, you protect them. But my mother? Christ, no wonder my father stuck with her! All those kids around and a son thrown into the bargain, he couldn't believe his fucking luck!

(tears in his eyes)

Years and years and years of it, doing whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted. Nobody should do that to anybody else -

(MARY goes to hold him,
but he steps away -)

Christ, Mary, I'm a fucking mess. I thought I was getting better, I really did, but -

He holds out his shaking hands, examines them.

She reaches across. Takes his hand.

They sit in silence.

48 EXT. MORTLAKE CREMATORIUM, LONDON 2005 - DAY

48

A procession of limos drives down a street on crematorium grounds. PATRICK, still shaken, sits in MARY's car and looks out the window as the tombstones pass by outside.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI (V.O.)

We run some support groups -

49 INT. LOUNGE, DEPRESSION WING, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY

49

Another day in REHAB. The PATIENTS, at various stages of their recovery, chat happily, loll listlessly, cry, sleep.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI (V.O.)

*They're not obligatory, but they're
a chance to support each other,
share stories -*

A little way apart from everyone, PATRICK is reading *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Or rather he is pretending to read it. Instead he steals glances at a 20 year-old patient who sits, bored and petulant, across the room. This is BECKY.

DOCTOR PAGAZZI (V.O.)

You might get something from them.

She catches his eye. Smiles. He smiles back.

50 INT. DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY 50

PATRICK sits sullenly in the group session, silent and uninvolved, as the PATIENTS tell their stories.

An extraordinary looking woman in her sixties, mad-haired and wild-eyed and dressed in vivid green tweed; this is FLEUR -

FLEUR

(words cascading, manic)

The thing is I absolutely loathe my children. Monsters, complete horrors. Of course, I've played my part, I lay in bed for ten months not uttering a single syllable and when I did start I couldn't stop because of all the things that had piled up -

CUT TO -

ANNABEL

(posh, anxious)

I woke up next morning in the guest room...and there was excrement, human excrement, smeared all over the hand-painted wallpaper, and it took me a while to realise that it was mine.

PATRICK frowns facetiously. BECKY sees, giggles. CUT TO -

GORDON

(moderator, pompous)

I think we need to be aware of the alcoholic behind the alcohol. You can take the brandy out of the fruitcake, but you've still got the fruitcake.

PATRICK

(raising his hand)

I don't think you can.

GORDON

What?

PATRICK

Take the brandy out of the fruitcake. Same as you can't take the eggs out of the souffle -

GORDON

It's only a metaphor.

PATRICK

Only a metaphor! It doesn't work!

GORDON

Patrick, can we move on? Please?

PATRICK slides down in his chair. BECKY takes note -

51 INT. CORRIDOR, DEPRESSION WING, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY 51

- and intercepts him as they leave.

BECKY

Becky. Self-harming resistant depressive.

PATRICK

Patrick. Narcissistic schizoid suicidal alcoholic.

They shake hands.

BECKY

How many types of medication do they have you on?

PATRICK

Three. Two anti-depressants and a tranquilliser.

BECKY

I'm on eight.

PATRICK

Then I suppose you win.

She laughs and puts her hand on his arm and he is in love.

52 INT. DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY 52

Another day, PATRICK and BECKY seated together now.

JILL

I think a lot of my relationship problem stems from the fact that the person I'm having a relationship with doesn't know we're in a relationship.

BECKY

(barking with laughter)
Fuck, Jill! No wonder you're here for the ninth time!

JILL runs from the room. GORDON, the moderator, turns on BECKY.

GORDON
You're going to have to apologise
for that.

BECKY
Why? I meant it!

GORDON
That's why you have to apologise.

BECKY
But I wouldn't mean it if I
apologised.

TERRY
Fake it to make it, man. Fake it to
make it.

And now BECKY storms out, tossing chairs as she goes.

To PATRICK she is *perfect!*

53

INT. CORRIDORS, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY

53

Later, PATRICK is walking along the corridor when he sees
BECKY hurrying towards him tearfully.

BECKY
I was looking for you -
(pulls him to one side)
They're throwing me out.

PATRICK
Really?

BECKY
They say I'm a disruptive
influence. I 'don't contribute'. Of
course I don't fucking contribute,
I'm depressed! Fuck, I hate this
fucking place!

GORDON has spotted them.

GORDON
Rebecca -

A slip of paper, palmed into PATRICK's hand.

BECKY
I can't go back to my parents. This
is my sister's address. She's away
so I'll be there alone.

She kisses him quickly on the lips.

GORDON
Miss Owen, now, please!

BECKY
Come and find me.

And she heads off, glancing back. The slip of paper, held tightly in his hand.

54 INT. BEDROOM, DEPRESSION WARD, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - NIGHT 54
- and again, late at night, in his narrow room. A glimpse of the writing; 'If you feel like doing something CRAZY.'

55 OMITTED 55

56 OMITTED 56

57 OMITTED 57

58 OMITTED 58

59 OMITTED 59

60 OMITTED 60

61 EXT. THE ONSLOW CLUB, ONSLOW GARDENS 2005 - DAY 61

From the cell-like room to the luxurious black leather of the limo, as it joins the others outside the tall, fine Georgian building on a quiet West London street. They sit in the car, PATRICK still badly shaken.

MARY
Are you going to be alright?

PATRICK
Let's find out.

He gets out -

- and THOMAS runs up and leaps into his arms. He kisses his son, and puts his arm around ROBERT who, rather self-consciously, embraces his father.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Hello, you two. How's your other granny?

ROBERT

The same.

Huffing, martyred, KETTLE follows on.

KETTLE

Patrick! After the disinheritance, it would have been hypocritical of me to go to the funeral. But the party's a different matter. I want to *support* you. Of course it helps that it's just around the corner.

PATRICK turns and -

NICHOLAS

Patrick, what an unusual speech. So eloquent. And how thrilling to be introduced, at my advanced age, to a new club. 'The Onslow Club'! I've never heard it mentioned...

Keen to avoid NICHOLAS's corrosive atmosphere, PATRICK steps inside -

62

INT. HALLWAY, RECEPTION, ONSLOW CLUB 2005 - CONTINUOUS

62

- but NICHOLAS won't be shaken off.

NICHOLAS

Is this your eldest?

PATRICK

Yes - Robert.

NICHOLAS

What a pity David isn't here to enjoy your sons. He would at least have ensured that they didn't spend the whole day in front of the television. I remember vividly, when we had seen some children practically giving birth to a cathode ray tube, he said to me "I dread to think what all that radiation is doing to their little genitals"

NICHOLAS's hand is on ROBERT's head.

PATRICK

(to Robert, ending this)
Robert, go find your mother -
(Robert leaves)
How's your daughter, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS

Well, I presume. We've not spoken for years.

Point scored, PATRICK goes to leave, but NICHOLAS recovers.

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

I can't help thinking how much your father would have savoured this occasion. Whatever his drawbacks as a parent, he never lost his sense of humour.

PATRICK

Easy not to lose what you never had.

NICHOLAS

I disagree. He saw the funny side of *everything*.

PATRICK

He only saw the funny side of things that didn't have one.

NICHOLAS begins, with some difficulty, to remove his heavy overcoat.

NICHOLAS

Well, cruelty and laughter have always been close neighbours...

PATRICK

Close without being incestuous.

NICHOLAS

Your father had a rare and precious disdain for the opinions of most people. He bestrode middle-class morality like a colossus -

PATRICK (CONT'D)

- Nicholas, I understand how much you must miss my other amazing parent -

PATRICK (CONT'D)

- but if you'll excuse me, I have to deal with the people who came to mourn my mother.

And with that, PATRICK, shaking with rage, hurries upstairs leaving NICHOLAS struggling with the straitjacket overcoat. Thankfully -

ANNETTE

Are you alright, Nick? Did you get in a bit of a muddle?

NICHOLAS

Do NOT call me NICK!

63 INT. UPSTAIRS, ONSLOW CLUB 2005 - CONTINUOUS

63

PATRICK, panicking, finds MARY.

PATRICK

I can't breathe. It's like
someone's fingers squeezing my
throat, seeing that, seeing that
ghoul Nicholas Pratt put his hands
on Robert. My father's
representative on earth - I can't
be in the same room.

HELENE, arrives with a tray of drinks.

HELENE

Wine? Champagne?

PATRICK

Oh, God!

MARY

He means no thank you -

PATRICK

Maybe later -

MARY

Very much later. Water for now,
thank you. Here.

But someone else has arrived, a mad-haired, wild-eyed woman,
lipstick half an inch to the side of her mouth - FLEUR.

PATRICK

Oh Christ. It's Amitriptyline. What
the hell is she *doing* here?

MARY

Who?

PATRICK

No, I've got to get some air. I'm
going to walk around the block.

MARY

But you'll come back -

And he makes his escape -

63A EXT. ONSLOW CLUB, ONSLOW GARDENS 2005 - DAY

63A

- onto the street, where he walks briskly away. Then starts
to run -

63B EXT. WALKWAY, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY

63B

Furtive and guilty, a spy under surveillance, his possessions jammed into a plastic bag, PATRICK hurries down an exterior walkway towards the exit and freedom.

But FLEUR, the manic lady in green, has spotted him -

PATRICK

Oh Christ -

FLEUR

(a great unloading)

Hello, are you leaving? I must say, I don't envy you. I love it here, gets me away from my awful children, the little shits, I loathe them. Do you have children yourself?

A mini-cab is approaching.

PATRICK

Actually, I'm sorry, I have to -

FLEUR

If I have one word of advice, it's this. Amitriptyline. The only time I've been happy was on it, but the bastards won't give me any -

PATRICK

(inching away)

The thing is, I'm trying not to take anything.

FLEUR

Don't be ridiculous. It's the most marvellous drug.

(PATRICK makes a run for the taxi)

Amitriptyline! You lucky thing!

63C EXT. MINICAB, DRIVEWAY 2004 - CONTINUOUS

63C

She waves madly as he gets inside. The cab drives off -

63D INT. MINICAB, COUNTRY LANES 2004 - DAY

63D

- and now PATRICK is starting to feel a little more doubtful about his decision. The drug's are wearing off, the DTs are returning, and the DRIVER's banter is failing to cheer him up.

DRIVER

"...and now I keep thinking I'm a moth!" "Very interesting", says the psychiatrist, "Und vot made you come here today?" He says "Well, I saw the light in the window..."

PATRICK

Do you specialise in these jobs because of your sunny disposition?

DRIVER

You say that, but last year for four months I literally couldn't get out of bed. Couldn't see the point.

PATRICK

(taken aback)

Oh. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

63E INT/EXT. WEST LONDON 2004 - DAY

63E

Familiar west London streets. They arrive, pulling up at the flat, and now PATRICK has joined him in the front seat.

DRIVER

Believe me, Mr Melrose, in a month's time you'll look back at this and think 'What was all that fuss about?' 'What was I thinking!'

PATRICK is scrutinising BECKY's scrap of paper. *If you feel like doing something crazy...*

DRIVER (CONT'D)

That's what happened to me, anyway.
(they look to the flat)
This it then? Very nice. They'll be pleased to get their dad back.

PATRICK

Who?

DRIVER

The kids.
(offering his hand)
Good luck with it, mate.

BECKY at the window, just a glimpse; she doesn't see PATRICK.

PATRICK

Actually, I know this sounds crazy, for want of a better word, but could you take me back?

DRIVER
To the hospital?

PATRICK
I don't think I'm quite ready.

Exasperated, the DRIVER starts the car. Under his breath -

DRIVER
Fuckin' hell, you people.

And PATRICK takes one last look at BECKY's flat and the promise of oblivion.

63F EXT. ONSLOW GARDENS, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 63F

In the present day, PATRICK slows, stops, stands catching his breath. He looks back in the direction that he has come from, back to the wake -

63G INT. DEPRESSION SUPPORT GROUP, REHAB CLINIC 2004 - DAY 63G

FLASHBACK. In the support group, TERRY is speaking.

TERRY
(Scottish, ex-Meths
drinker)
Fear knocked at the door...
(long pause)
Courage opened the door...
(long pause)
And there was nobody there!

PATRICK enters. The group turn to stare.

PATRICK
(taking a seat)
Please. Carry on.

They know what has happened. GORDON gives a little round of applause, joined by JILL, ANNABEL, TERRY, even FLEUR -

- until everyone is applauding. Uncharacteristically, PATRICK succumbs to the wave of goodwill.

64 INT. UPSTAIRS, ONSLOW CLUB 2005 - DAY 64

- and walks into THE WAKE. For a moment, the first thing he sees is that large photograph of his mother, welcoming him in.

Gradually faces turn to stare -

Then turn away. MARY smiles. HENRY is chatting amiably to the kids, NICHOLAS ranting at ANNETTE, who smiles benignly.

NANCY is stripping a tray of smoked salmon while HELENE THE WAITRESS looks on. He sees JOHNNY and heads over.

JOHNNY

Well done. You came back.

PATRICK

Oh, I still want to leave. I want to leave with that waitress and never come back.

(HELENE smiles at NANCY's greed, suppressing laughter. Catches PATRICK's eye)

Christ, look at her. D'you think if I told her it was my mother's funeral and I needed cheering up -

JOHNNY

She might be the one to save you?

PATRICK

It's worth a try -

And he heads towards HELENE but is intercepted by -

MARY

Patrick, it turns out Fleur is an old friend of your mother's.

PATRICK

Yes, as a matter of fact we've met -

FLEUR

(no recognition)
Your mother saved my life!

PATRICK

Really.

FLEUR

I hope you're proud of her. You should be. She was one of the very few good people I've ever met -

This stops PATRICK for a moment, and he takes FLEUR to one side.

FLEUR (CONT'D)

She gave me a job in one of those charity shops she ran. I was thought by some, by everyone in fact, to be unemployable, but she trusted me enough to run the Kensington branch and that, I'm afraid, is when I had one of my episodes.

(MORE)

FLEUR (CONT'D)

We'd had a fur coat in that morning, an amazing sable coat, and I put it on, in July, emptied the till, shut up shop, hailed a cab and said 'Take me to The Ritz!' I sat in the Palm Court drinking champagne cocktails and talking to anyone who would listen. Eventually the police were summoned, and I had no-one to call on but your mother. She said she was used to it because she was always clearing her father's bar bills in grand places. I promised I wouldn't do it again, but of course I did. Many, many times -

(PATRICK catches the WAITRESS's eye. She smiles)

You should be very proud of her. She did an enormous amount of practical good. Touched *hundreds* of lives -

PATRICK

Thank you. That's good to know...

FLEUR

(gripping his arm)
So do you?

PATRICK

Do I what?

FLEUR

Feel proud of your mother?

PATRICK

I'm really not sure.

FLEUR

What do you mean you're not sure! You're worse than my children!

(as PATRICK walks away)
Absolute bastards! All of you!

PATRICK (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I really ought to circulate -

Quickly he heads to JULIA.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Help!

JULIA

Come, join me. I'm staring vacantly out of the window.

PATRICK

I'd love that.

JULIA

Not so vacantly that I didn't notice you flirting with the pretty waitress.

PATRICK

Flirting? I hardly said a word.

JULIA

Neither does a salivating dog when it sits next to you at dinner. Making little whimpering sounds...

PATRICK

Talking to that lunatic did make her look like the last overhanging tree before the roar of the waterfall.

JULIA

Sweet. You're still trying to be saved.

(her hand on his arm, the old rapport)

Do you want to come upstairs? For a cigarette I mean.

A moment. Then they leave together, noticed by MARY, joined by JOHNNY.

JOHNNY

It's a shame some things don't change.

MARY

That? Oh, I don't mind any more. It's better now. We're a lot closer since we separated.

65

EXT. BALCONY, ONSLOW GARDENS 2005 - CONTINUOUS

65

JULIA

So what did the lunatic say?

PATRICK

She suggested there were no easy conclusions about what someone's life means.

JULIA

You can come to a conclusion about what it means to you.

PATRICK

Actually, I feel inconclusive about both my parents.

JULIA

Sounds exhausting. Isn't it easier just to loathe their guts?

PATRICK

Yes, I tried that with my father. No good. The truth is I feel everything; contempt, pity, rage, terror... and tenderness -

JULIA

Tenderness?

PATRICK

At the thought of how unhappy he was, they both were. Then I remember I have sons of my own and the loathing...floods back.

But JULIA, distracted, checks her eyeliner.

JULIA

I hate bereavement, it plays havoc with your eyeliner.

PATRICK

I didn't realise my mother meant so much.

JULIA

Oh, nothing to do with her. It's just the way tears spring on you, at a silly film or a funeral. Not brought on by the thing that triggers them, just from a generalised sadness, I suppose. Life being so maddening.

PATRICK

Sometimes the trigger and the sadness are the same. Occasionally.
(zealous, a resolution)
Christ, I wonder what it'd be like to have an unconditioned response to things, to anything, without irony or detachment, just to be spontaneous, to *feel* something -

JULIA

Well, it's no use asking me -

PATRICK

No. But I don't want to die without finding out.

Suddenly, as if on cue -

HELENE

I'm sorry, but you can't smoke out here.

JULIA

Oh. I didn't know. It's funny, because it is outside -

HELENE

Technically it's still part of the club, and there's no smoking anywhere in the club.

JULIA

Well, I'd better put it out then.

She continues to smoke for a while, a long while, the three of them standing in awkward silence as any feeling that PATRICK might have felt for JULIA drains away.

She drops the cigarette on the floor and stalks off.

HELENE the WAITRESS sighs and puts down the tray so that she can pick up the smouldering butt.

PATRICK

Here, let me -

And PATRICK bends down, picks it up, drops it on the tray.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

HELENE

S'okay. I'm used to it.

But before he can think to respond, HELENE leaves.

A moment. A decision -

66

INT. UPSTAIRS, ONSLOW CLUB 2005 - CONTINUOUS

66

And we follow PATRICK as he rushes through the guests, up to HELENE.

PATRICK

Hello, excuse me, I just wanted -

HELENE

Tea or Coffee?

PATRICK

(searching for pen and paper)

Actually, no, something else -

No paper - he'll have to use the order of service. MARY, with THOMAS, notices while talking to HENRY.

HENRY

I'd expected more people. She was very well-loved.

MARY

She lost touch with people when she stopped speaking. Must have been terrible, not to be able to say what she wanted, especially to Patrick. That's if she knew what she wanted to say -

HENRY

Poor Eleanor.

MARY

It's why we must all resolve to drop our defences and say what we *feel*, while we can.

(THOMAS comes to her, and jumps into her arms)

At this point the English usually say 'Well this is a cheerful subject!'

KETTLE bustles up, HENRY leaves.

KETTLE

I see you two are still glued to each other.

MARY

(Enough!)

Will you go find Robert?

(THOMAS leaves)

Well, no-one can hope to ignore their children as completely as you did -

KETTLE

Mary! We always communicated!

MARY

Do you remember what you said to me when you telephoned me at school to say daddy had died?

KETTLE

I said how awful it was -

MARY

'Cheer up!' Cheer up, you said. You never had any idea who I was then and you still don't now...

And MARY heads off, leaving KETTLE gasping. But here's FLEUR -

FLEUR
How are you, dear?

KETTLE
Well considering I've just had my
head bitten off by my daughter -

FLEUR
Has she had mental health problems?

KETTLE
I beg your pardon?

HENRY is with NANCY, watching FLEUR in horror.

NANCY
When I think of Mummy's funeral -
eight hundred people, half the
French cabinet, the Windsors, the
Aga Khan -

HENRY
Eleanor chose a different path.

NANCY
More like a goat track.
(FLEUR is on the move)
Here comes the Green Goblin. Wagon
formation!

And as NANCY turns her back, FLEUR is left stranded, but
rebounds towards NICHOLAS.

FLEUR
Have you had mental health
problems?

NICHOLAS
Have we met?

FLEUR
I have a feeling for these things.
So, have you?

NICHOLAS inhales deeply, then, in a great stream -

NICHOLAS
No I have not had 'mental health
problems'. Even in this degenerate
age of confession and complaint,
when the vocabulary of Freudian
mumbo-jumbo is emptied onto every
conversation like vinegar onto a
newspaper full of sodden chips,
some of us choose not to 'tuck in'!
(MORE)

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

The sophisticated cherish their syndromes and even the most simple-minded fool feels entitled to a complex. As if it weren't ludicrous enough for every child to be 'gifted', they now have to be ill as well. A touch of Asperger's, a little autism, dyslexia stalks the playground! Poor little things, if they can't confess to being *abused* they must confess to being abusive!

(GUESTS are staring now,
NICHOLAS's face deep red)

Well, my dear - I call you 'my dear' from what is no doubt known as 'Sincerity Deficit Disorder', no I have not suffered from the slightest taint of mental illness for I am the impossible man, the man who is entirely well!

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

Pyscho-therapists scatter in my presence, ashamed of their sham profession -

FLEUR

You're completely off your rocker. I thought as much. I have what I call my little radar -

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)

BUGGER OFF!

FLEUR

A month in the Clinic would get you back on your feet. Re-clothe you in your rightful mind, as the hymn says. Do you know it?

(and she starts to sing)

*Dear Lord and Father of
Mankind/Forgive our foolish
ways/Reclothe me in my rightful
mind -*

As FLEUR sings and NICHOLAS splutters, JOHNNY steps in, heading straight for FLEUR, his back to NICHOLAS.

JOHNNY

Everything alright?

NICHOLAS

Oh here he is! Like an exhibit in a courtroom drama.

PATRICK approaches, taking in the scene, NICHOLAS apoplectic.

FLEUR
Oh yes, never better. I was just trying to help this poor man who's had more than his fair share of mental-health problems -

NICHOLAS (CONT'D)
- a practising witch-doctor, happy to turn my daughter against her own father for a mere two hundred guineas an hour, inventing repulsive fantasies, polluting the human imagination with murderous babies and incestuous children -

And suddenly NICHOLAS rocks sideways on his walking stick, staggers and, grabbing at the tablecloth, pulls the wine bottles and glasses and trays of funeral food down with him.

FLEUR
Oh dear.

MARY
I'll call an ambulance -

FLEUR (CONT'D)
He got himself worked up -

HELENE
I'll warn reception -

FLEUR (CONT'D)
'Hoist with his own petard' as they say -

Now ANNETTE steps in, cradling his head, lips moving in silent prayer. JULIA, watching -

JULIA
Oh God, that would really finish me off. Is she praying?

ROBERT
That's nice of her.

JULIA
(to PATRICK, standing with the boys)
They say you should never speak ill of the dead so I'd better get a move on. I've always thought Nicholas Pratt was a perfectly ghastly man.

ROBERT
That's a horrible thing to say. He's just an old man.

JULIA
Well, you know it's time to leave the party when the children attack you -
(she looks to PATRICK but he has gone)
Say goodbye to your father for me.

And she slips away.

On NICHOLAS now. The pride, the eloquence, has all gone and now there's an awful fear in his eyes, and rage too at his own vulnerability. His mouth works silently, attempting to express the torrent of words in his head.

And now, for the first time, PATRICK is there, loosening his tie. He grasps at PATRICK's hand, staring at him desperately.

PATRICK does not reject his grip.

67

EXT. ONSLOW CLUB, ONSLOW GARDENS 2005 - DAY

67

NICHOLAS PRATT is carried out on a stretcher to the waiting ambulance. PATRICK reports to MARY, ROBERT and THOMAS.

PATRICK

Heart attack apparently. They can tell by the cold nose.

ANNETTE

I'll go with him to the hospital.
 (embracing PATRICK, who stands stiffly)
 What an emotional day!
 (crossing to Nicholas, taking his hand)
 Don't you worry, Nick, I'm not going to leave your side.

And there's one last moment of eye contact between PATRICK and NICHOLAS, his father's representative on earth.

NANCY

Is that woman going with him? He's practically my oldest friend! I know - I'll take his car and follow on.

KETTLE

(to NANCY)
 You couldn't drop me off on the way, could you?

NANCY

(indignant)
 It's Nicholas's private car, dear, not a limo service.

She hurries off. JOHNNY now -

JOHNNY

I must go, I've got a patient at four.
 (they embrace)
 Well done -

PATRICK
For what? The public breakdown?

JOHNNY
In the trade it's what we'd call a
breakthrough.

PATRICK
Hm. At the risk of getting
Californian - I'm grateful.

And then suddenly the family is alone. ROBERT takes his
father's hand.

ROBERT
Are you coming back with us?

A glance at MARY -

MARY
You'd be very welcome.

PATRICK
No, I'll see you at the weekend.

MARY
You can come and have dinner with
us if you like. Just us four. Very
quiet.

PATRICK
No, I think I'll just crash out.
It's been a long day.

MARY
Well, if you change your mind -

ROBERT
In fact you should change your
mind. That's what it's for.

PATRICK laughs at this. A kiss from MARY, and they leave.

He stands alone for a moment on the street in the spring air.

FADE TO BLACK. The ringing of a phone, loud, persistent, just
as in the opening of *Bad News*.

68 INT. HALLWAY, BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 68

PATRICK is rushing to catch the phone before it stops,
fumbling for his keys -

69 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - CONTINUOUS 69

He runs through the door, breathless, and grabs at it.

PATRICK

Hello?

VOICE

Patrick? Hello, Patrick is that you?

PATRICK

Yes -

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Annette here. I'm afraid I have rather bad news. Nicholas didn't make it. He stopped breathing in the ambulance. Oh, Patrick, are you crying?

PATRICK

No, just...out of breath. Though of course I'm also very sad.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

An amazing man, completely unique.

PATRICK

Let's hope so. The idea of a village full of Nicholas Pratts is rather terrifying.

(a change of tone)

I'm sorry, it just occurred to me that he was the last one. Last of my parents' circle. They've all gone now.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

Oh, now you're making me cry!

PATRICK

Really. There's no need. Thank you for what you said at the funeral too. It was helpful to have another point of view.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

She might not have been a perfect mother. That must anger you, I expect. But those who deserve the most blame also deserve the most help, and she was fundamentally a good person.

PATRICK

You seem very sure of that.

ANNETTE (O.S.)

I'm sure that she tried, which is as much as any of us can do. Goodbye, Patrick. God bless you.

72 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 72

There are tears in PATRICK's eyes, and for a moment he feels desperately alone in this bedsit, this non-bachelor's bachelor pad.

Then he sits suddenly, wipes at his eyes - 'snap out of it' - and searches in his pocket.

Here is the Order of Service, with Eleanor's photo. And here is the waitress' phone number. *Helene 02079460282...*

PATRICK

'Helene'

He reaches for the phone, looks at the number. He dials.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

PATRICK

Hello, it's Patrick here.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Oh. Hello.

PATRICK

I've decided I'm bored of ghosts. I want to see people instead.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Oh. I see. Okay, well -

73 INT. MELROSE FAMILY HOME, LONDON 2005 - CONTINUOUS 73

Reveal MARY is on the phone, the boys nearby.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Or is it too late to change my mind?

MARY

Not at all. After all, that's what it's for.

74 INT. BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 74

PATRICK smiles. Hangs up -

- sits for a moment, then stands with a groan, aching, older than he was.

75 INT. HALLWAY, BEDSIT, WEST LONDON 2005 - DAY 75

PATRICK locks the door behind him, walks down the hall.

And heads out to meet his family.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END.

*