

# SHIPS

A FILM FOR TELEVISION  
BY ALAN WAKEMAN

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# SHIPS

*The film is set in London. The time is now.*

## MAIN CHARACTERS

### TERRY

*Cockney; good-looking; flirtatious; cheerful  
Cheeky; skin-tight jeans; aged about 25.*

### BILL

*Well-spoken; serious; attractive; bored  
successful; aged about 35; **not** camp!*

### MARGARET

*Suburban; smart; respectable; aged about 40.*

### MICHAEL

*Southern Irish accent; charismatic; intelligent;  
scruffy but not filthy; age indeterminate.*

### DIM

*Cockney accent; scruffy; filthy; sullen;  
surly; age indeterminate.*

### STREAKY

*Skinny; shaved head; scruffy; aged about 20.*

### PETE

*Ageing flower-child with long hair;  
and Jesus look; beautiful; **not** camp!*

## Small Speaking Parts

### TRACY

### RESPECTABLE WOMAN

## Small Non-Speaking Parts

### JIMMY

### NEWSVENDOR

### CITY GENT

### YOUNG WOMAN



## **LOCATIONS**

### **EXT/DAY/DIALOGUE**

*City Street, outside works entrance.*

*Works yard, outside office.*

### **EXT/DAY**

*City streets, driving.*

### **EXT/DAY/DIALOGUE**

*Period house in smart residential street.*

### **INT/DAY/DIALOGUE**

*Landing outside Bill's flat.*

*Bill's flat: hallway, bedroom, kitchen, study, bathroom.*

### **EXT/DAY**

*Pavement café in Soho.*

*Soho Streets and tube station entrance.*

### **INT/DAY/DIALOGUE**

*Interior tube station newspaper kiosk.*

*Interior tube station tunnel with poster showing a sexy female model wearing a clinging, red, tee-shirt.*

### **EXT/DAY**

*Tube station entrance.*

*Period house in smart residential street.*

### **INT/DAY/DIALOGUE**

*Landing outside Bill's flat.*

*Bill's flat: hallway, living-room, study, bathroom.*

### **EXT/DAY**

*Period house in smart residential street.*

*Tube station entrance.*

### **INT/DAY**

*Interior tube station tunnel with poster.*

### **EXT/DAY**

*West End street with bus stop.*

### **INT/DAY**

*Interior bus.*

### **EXT/DAY**

*Bus turn-round point, Hampstead Heath*

### **EXT/DAY/DIALOGUE**

*Heathside path with benches.*

### **EXT/EVENING/DIALOGUE**

*Tree-lined path near road with shops.*

### **EXT/NIGHT**

*Trees and night-sky with moon and stars.*

# SHIPS

A great city multiplies chance encounters with strangers till they become a daily commonplace. Yet every such encounter could still be the beginning of a marvellous adventure. This is the excitement of the city; this is why we put up with the pandemonium and the pace, the pollution and the pressure. How paradoxical then that most of us choose not to speak to those people queuing with us for the bus, or sitting next to us in a café! And how paradoxical the consequences of this choice! Because of it, our fellow citizens become as isolated from us as the myriad dummies arranged in stilted poses in glittering shop windows all over the city. For the truth is that we have all lived lives of 365-day years, 24-hour days, 60-minute hours, year in and year out, leading inexorably to this particular moment when this particular film begins...

# SHIPS

**1 EXT.**

**DAY**

*A cloudy sky forms the background to the titles, dropping slowly down to a busy city street outside a works entrance.*

***TERRY** comes out of an office in the works yard, gets into a white van and starts the engine.*

***TRACY** comes running out of the office after him, waving a form.*

***TERRY** winds down the window, takes the form, reads it and grins.*

**TERRY:** *(Cockney accent.)*

Another flash pad, eh, Trace?!

What yer reckon? Another rich bird, gagging for it?

**TRACY:**

Knowing your luck!

***TERRY** grins and drives the van out of the works yard and away.*

***TRACY** sticks her tongue out at the receding van.*

**2 EXT.**

**DAY**

***TERRY** drives the van from the depot to a smart residential West End street.*

***TERRY** parks, gets his tool bag and goes up to the door of a well-kept, period house.*

*CU doorphone.*

***TERRY** checks his worksheet and rings a bell. A voice replies but it is so heavily-distorted we can't make out what it says or what sex the speaker is.*

***TERRY** speaks closely into the doorphone.*

**TERRY:**

Morning! Gas fitter. Come to see about a leak.

*The doorcatch releases with a buzzing sound.*

***TERRY** pushes the door open and goes in.*

**3 INT: BILL'S FLAT (LANDING)**

**DAY**

*The front door to **BILL'S FLAT** is unlatched and swung open by an unseen hand. Through the opening comes the sound of music.*

*We hear approaching footsteps and **TERRY** appears whistling cheerfully.*

***TERRY** pushes the door open further.*

**TERRY:**

'Allo! Gas fitter! Anyone at 'ome? *(No reply)*  
Okay if I come in, ma'am?

*TERRY enters the flat and shuts the door behind him.*

**4 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN)**

**DAY**

*TERRY arrives at the open kitchen door and looks in.*

*We see the room from his POV.*

*The remains of breakfast for two are on the table but the room is empty.*

*TERRY sniffs the air, turns away and heads for the music.*

**5 INT: BILL'S FLAT (HALLWAY, OUTSIDE BEDROOM)**

**DAY**

*TERRY hesitates about going into the bedroom but the door is ajar and the music is loud.*

**TERRY:** *(Shouting)*

'Allo! Gas fitter! Come to see about the suspected leak! *(No reply)*  
All right if I come in, ma'am?

*TERRY pushes the door gingerly open and shoves his head round.*

**6 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM)**

**DAY**

*We see the bedroom from TERRY's POV.*

*BILL is making the bed. He looks up and reacts to TERRY's presence.*

**TERRY:**

*(Grinning)* Morning! Gas fitter!  
Come to see about the suspected leak, *sir*.

*TERRY comes fully into the room*

**TERRY:**

Is that a waterbed?

**BILL:**

Er, yes, it is.

**TERRY:**

Straight up!

*BILL quickly shuts a bedside drawer to conceal a magazine.*

**BILL:**

But there's no gas in here.

**TERRY:**

Nah, well there wouldn't be, would there?

**BILL:**

The leak's in the kitchen actually...

**TERRY:**

You don't say. Right you are, matey. Just leave everything to me.

*TERRY exits to kitchen.*

*BILL gets the pin-up magazine out again and arranges it on the bed, then thinks better of it and puts it back in the drawer. The pin-ups are of men.*

**7 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN)**

**DAY**

*TERRY checks that the gas is turned off at the main, opens the windows and begins checking that all the appliances are off.*

**BILL:**

(OOV) I've already turned them all off, actually.

*BILL enters.*

**BILL:**

I think the leak may be in that joint where the pipe goes into the stove.

**TERRY:**

Didn't they tell you to open all the windows?

**BILL:**

No.

**TERRY:**

Typical!

*TERRY leans over the cooker to look behind it. A gap opens up between his tee-shirt and jeans.*

*BILL looks at the gap.*

*TERRY straightens up and sees BILL looking.*

**TERRY:**

(Grinning.) Right you are, matey. Just leave everything to me.

**BILL:**

Yes. Fine.

Er... I'll be in the other room, if you need anything.

**TERRY:**

(Grinning) I'll bear it in mind.

**8 INT: BILL'S FLAT (STUDY)**

**DAY**

*BILL enters, sits down at his desk, and begins working using his laptop computer.*

*BILL types a sentence.*

*TERRY's cheerful whistling can be heard from the kitchen.*

*BILL looks in TERRY's direction.*

*The whistling stops. BILL gets up again and exits.*

*TERRY has the cooker out and is using a spanner to loosen a joint at the back. His tools are all over the floor.*

*BILL arrives at the kitchen door and looks in.*

**TERRY:**

All right, mate?

**BILL:**

Er, yes...

Er... it occurred to me you might like a cup of coffee...

**TERRY:**

Wouldn't say no. Can't use your cooker though.

I've 'ad to turn off your stop-cock.

**BILL:**

Oh really. That's all right. I'll use the electric kettle.

*BILL picks up the kettle. To fill it he has to squeeze past TERRY who is now squatting on the floor putting grease on the nozzle of the flexible cooker hose.*

*BILL puts out his free hand as he squeezes past, as if to touch TERRY, but doesn't.*

*BILL fills the kettle at the sink.*

*BILL squeezes past TERRY again.*

*BILL plugs the kettle in and retires out of TERRY's way.*

*TERRY begins whistling again.*

*BILL prepares two mugs for instant coffee.*

**BILL:**

How long have you been doing this job?

**TERRY:**

Too bleedin' long!  
'Scuse my language.

**BILL:**

Don't you like it then?

**TERRY:**

What's there to like?  
Wasting me life, aren't I?  
Every day, another day gone - and I'm standing 'ere scratching meself.

**BILL:**

Oh dear! Why not change it then?

**TERRY:**

What's the point? All jobs are the same.  
Now what I'd like is...

**BILL:**

Go on.

**TERRY:**

Nah...

**BILL:**

Please tell me. I'm interested, really.

**TERRY:**

Well... what I'd like is a bit of excitement...

*BILL listens.*

**TERRY:**

Look at me! Halfway to thirty and my life's bleedin' over, isn't it?

Married. Kids. Telly. Job. The lot! Bloody hell!

Carry on like this and I'll top meself.

I'd better stick to whistling, hadn't I?

**BILL:**

Oh I don't know. Do you always wear jeans to work in?

**TERRY:**

Course. They're practical. They're cheap. What else should I wear?

*BILL laughs.*

**BILL:**

I don't think that's the only reason people wear them.

**TERRY:**

Oh no. What other reason would there be then?

**BILL:**

Well, some people wear them because they think it makes them look... sexy.

*TERRY laughs.*

**TERRY:**

If you're feeling sexy, it's more a matter of taking things off,  
not putting them on, i'n'it?

**BILL:**

*(Laughing.)* Yes.

*The kettle boils.*

**TERRY:**

Your water's boiling, mate.

**BILL:**

What?

**TERRY:**

Your kettle - it's boiling.

**BILL:**

Oh, the water! Yes. Thanks.

*BILL prepares cups, makes coffee etc.*

*TERRY looks at BILL and grins.*

**TERRY:**

So... er... you reckon they make me look sexy, do yer?

**BILL:**

I didn't say that. I said other people.

**TERRY:**

Fellers are always making passes at me. I dunno why.

**BILL:**

I wonder why that could be.

**TERRY:**

Wha'd'yer mean? I don't encourage no one!

**BILL:**

Some people might find your manner of dress... provocative.

**TERRY:**

I'm only wearing a pair of old jeans, for Chrissake!

**BILL:**

How do you like your coffee?

**TERRY:**

In a mug.

**BILL:**

I meant, what do you want in it?

**TERRY:**

Oh the usual things. Ecstasy. LSD. What yer got?

**BILL:**

I've got sugar and milk, actually.

**TERRY:**

Yeah, well I'll 'ave both them.

*BILL pours milk, picks up sugar bowl and taps it.*

**TERRY:**

Two... There, that's done.

*TERRY shoves the cooker back into its slot.*

**TERRY:**

Shouldn't 'ave no more trouble with that.

*(Grinning.)* Just needed a spot of grease up your flexible 'ose.

**BILL:**

Oh really! Thanks. Here's your coffee.

Help yourself to biscuits.

**TERRY:**

Ta.

*BILL picks up his own coffee and exits with it.*

*TERRY takes his mug and follows.*

**10 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM)**

**DAY**

*TERRY is framed in the doorway looking at the waterbed.*

**TERRY:**

Is it true what they say about waterbeds?

**BILL: (OOV)**

What's that?

**TERRY:**

You know - they're supposed to be a knock-out for... you know.

**BILL: (OOV)**

Oh, that. Er, yes, it is.

**TERRY:**

Straight up! Can I 'ave a look?

**BILL: (OOV)**

Be my guest.

*TERRY enters the bedroom, puts his coffee down beside the bed and pulls back the bedcovers.*

*TERRY makes the waterbed ripple and is delighted.*

*TERRY tries sitting on the edge.*

*TERRY grins, takes his track shoes off and lies down on the water-bed full-length. He bounces around with obvious pleasure, then discovers a male pin-up magazine under the pillow.*

*TERRY flicks through the pages with increasing delight.*

*TERRY folds it open at a double-page spread and places it under the covers in the middle of the bed.*

*TERRY gets up and exits in his stockinged feet.*

**11 INT: BILL'S FLAT (STUDY)**

**DAY**

*TERRY appears in the doorway and looks at BILL who is working at his desk.*

**TERRY:**

I've never tried a waterbed.

*BILL continues working.*

**BILL:**

Haven't you now?

**TERRY:**

I'd be interested to 'ave a go.

*BILL doesn't react.*

**TERRY:**

Don't you get seasick?

**BILL:**

*(Without looking up)* It only moves for a minute or two after you get in.  
You get used to it. I don't even notice it anymore.

**TERRY:**

Well it'd make an interesting change for me.

**BILL:**

*(Without looking up)* I suppose it would.

**TERRY:**

Might even bring a bit of excitement into me life, don't yer think?

**BILL:**

If you say so.

*BILL looks up from his work and notices TERRY's stockinged feet.*

**BILL:**

Have you... finished the job?

**TERRY:**

Yeah.

I've just got your stop-cock to turn on again; then I'm through.

*TERRY exits to HALLWAY.*

*BILL looks after him.*

**12 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM)**

**DAY**

*TERRY enters and picks up and puts on his track shoes.*

*TERRY looks wistfully at the waterbed and exits.*

**13 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN)**

**DAY**

*TERRY enters, turns on the stop-cock, picks up his toolbag and exits to HALLWAY to find BILL looking in at the bedroom door.*

**14 INT: BILL'S FLAT (HALLWAY)**

**DAY**

**TERRY:**

Well, I must be pushing off.

Another gorgeous young 'ousewife is awaiting my special service, somewhere.

Just sign 'ere.

**BILL:**

Thank you for doing the job so... expertly.

*BILL signs the form then looks nervously at TERRY.*

**BILL:**

Listen... do please feel free to... come and try the waterbed...  
erm... sometime...

**TERRY:**

I didn't really mean it, mate.  
It was just a passing fancy, you know.

*BILL opens front door.*

*TERRY goes through it.*

**TERRY:**

Keep smiling, sunshine.  
You're not so bad-looking yerself.  
You never know what the tooth fairy might bring yer one of these nights!

*BILL reacts to this.*

*TERRY grins and exits to landing.*

**15 INT: BILL'S FLAT (HALLWAY) DAY**

*CU of BILL framed in his frontdoor as the sound of TERRY's footsteps and whistling recedes down the stairs.*

**16 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM) DAY**

*BILL enters and sits down on the bed.*

**17 INT: BILL'S FLAT (LANDING) DAY**

*The front door to BILL'S FLAT is unlatched and swung open by an unseen hand. Through the opening comes the sound of music.*

*We hear approaching footsteps and TERRY appears whistling cheerfully.*

*TERRY pushes the door open further.*

**TERRY:**

'Allo! Gas fitter! Anyone at 'ome? (No reply)  
Okay if I come in, ma'am?

*TERRY enters the flat and shuts the door behind him.*

**18 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN) DAY**

*TERRY arrives at the open kitchen door and looks in.*

*We see the room from his POV.*

*The remains of breakfast for two are on the table but the room is empty.*

*TERRY sniffs the air, turns away and heads for the music.*

**19 INT: BILLS' FLAT (HALLWAY, OUTSIDE BEDROOM) DAY**

*TERRY hesitates about going into the bedroom but the door is ajar and the music is loud.*

**TERRY:** *(Shouting)*

'Allo! Gas fitter! Come to see about the suspected leak! *(No reply.)*  
All right if I come in, ma'am?

*TERRY pushes the door gingerly open and shoves his head round.*

**20 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM)**

**DAY**

*We see the bedroom from TERRY's POV.*

*BILL is making the bed. He looks up and reacts to TERRY's presence.*

**TERRY:**

*(Grinning)* Morning! Gas fitter!  
Come to see about the suspected leak, *sir*.  
*(VO)* Aye aye! Been 'aving fun and games, 'ave we?!

*TERRY comes fully into the room.*

**TERRY:**

Is that a waterbed?

**BILL:**

*(NV)* Er, yes, it is.  
*(VO)* Christ! What a gorgeous boy!

**TERRY:**

*(NV)* Straight up!  
*(VO)* Rich bastard!

*BILL quickly shuts a bedside drawer to conceal a magazine.*

**BILL:**

But there's no gas in here.

**TERRY:**

*(VO)* Not fast enough, matey! I got your number!  
*(NV)* Nah, well there wouldn't be, would there?!

**BILL:**

*(VO)* Damn! Why must these temptations be thrust at me?  
*(NV)* The leak's in the kitchen actually...

**TERRY:**

*(NV)* You don't say.  
*(VO)* Fancy yer chances, do yer?  
*(NV)* Right you are, matey. Just leave everything to me.

*TERRY exits to kitchen.*

*BILL gets the pin-up magazine out again and arranges it on the bed, then thinks better of it and puts it back in the drawer. The pin-ups are of men.*

**21 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN)**

**DAY**

*TERRY checks that the gas is turned off at the main, opens the windows and begins checking that all the appliances are off.*

**BILL:**

*(OOV)* I've already turned them all off, actually.

*BILL enters.*

**BILL:**

I think the leak may be in that joint where the pipe goes into the stove.

**TERRY:**

Didn't they tell you to open all the windows?

**BILL:**

No.

**TERRY:**

Typical!

*TERRY leans over the cooker to look behind it. A gap opens up between his tee-shirt and jeans.*

*BILL looks at the gap.*

**BILL:**

*(VO)* Oh Christ! Just look at that!

*TERRY straightens up and sees BILL looking.*

**TERRY:**

*(Grinning.)* Right you are, matey. Just leave everything to me.

**BILL:**

Yes. Fine.

*(VO)* Control yourself, William!

*(NV)* Er... I'll be in the other room, if you need anything.

**TERRY:**

*(Grinning)* I'll bear it in mind.

*(VO)* You randy bastard!

**22 INT: BILLS' FLAT (STUDY)**

**DAY**

*BILL enters, sits down at his desk, and begins working using his laptop computer.*

**BILL:**

*(VO)* Okay, so you're a sexy-looking number,  
but cocky little oiks like you are always lousy in bed...

*BILL types a sentence.*

**BILL:**

*(VO)* ...so I definitely won't make a pass at you.

*TERRY's cheerful whistling can be heard from the kitchen.*

*BILL looks in TERRY's direction.*

**BILL:**

(VO) Besides, my life's complicated enough already.

*The whistling stops.*

**BILL:**

(VO) Still... I suppose it's only civilised to offer you some coffee.

*BILL gets up again and exits.*

**23 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN)**

**DAY**

*TERRY has the cooker out and is using a spanner to loosen a joint at the back. His tools are all over the floor.*

**TERRY:**

(VO) Just look at this bleedin' pad! Some people 'ave all the bleedin' luck.

I bet I could really screw this geezer if I played me cards right.

'E's bound to 'ave a go at me.

*BILL arrives at the kitchen door and looks in.*

**TERRY:**

All right, mate?

**BILL:**

Er, yes...

(VO) Oh Christ! He's fucking gorgeous!

Er... it occurred to me you might like a cup of coffee...

**TERRY:**

(VO) We're off already, are we?

(NV) Wouldn't say no. Can't use your cooker though.

I've 'ad to turn off your stop-cock.

(VO) You leering sod!

**BILL:**

Oh really.

**TERRY:**

(VO) Yeah, really!

**BILL:**

That's all right. I'll use the electric kettle.

*BILL picks up the kettle. To fill it he has to squeeze past TERRY who is now squatting on the floor putting grease on the nozzle of the flexible cooker hose.*

*BILL puts out his free hand as he squeezes past, as if to touch TERRY, but doesn't.*

**BILL:**

(VO) It's not fair! It's just not fair!

*BILL fills the kettle at the sink.*

**BILL:**

(VO) Other people get funny little men in baggy overalls...

*BILL squeezes past TERRY again.*

**BILL:**

(VO) I have to get beautiful boys in skin-tight jeans!

*BILL plugs the kettle in and retires out of TERRY's way.*

*TERRY begins whistling again.*

*BILL prepares two mugs for instant coffee.*

**BILL:**

How long have you been doing this job?

**TERRY:**

Too bleedin' long!  
'Scuse my language.

**BILL:**

Don't you like it then?

**TERRY:**

What's there to like?  
Wasting me life, aren't I?  
Every day, another day gone - and I'm standing 'ere scratching meself.

**BILL:**

Oh dear! Why not change it then?

**TERRY:**

What's the point? All jobs are the same.  
Now what I'd like is...

**BILL:**

Go on.

**TERRY:**

Nah...

**BILL:**

Please tell me. I'm interested, really.

**TERRY:**

Well... what I'd like is a bit of excitement...

*BILL listens.*

**BILL:**

(VO) If only you meant it!

**TERRY:**

Look at me! Halfway to thirty and my life's bleedin' over, isn't it?  
Married. Kids. Telly. Job. The lot! Bloody hell!  
Carry on like this and I'll top meself.  
I'd better stick to whistling, hadn't I?

**BILL:**

Oh I don't know. Do you always wear jeans to work in?  
(VO) Damn! Why did I ask him that? I must be more careful.

**TERRY:**

(VO) And we're over the first!

(NV) Course. They're practical. They're cheap. What else should I wear?

*BILL laughs.*

**BILL:**

I don't think that's the only reason people wear them.

(VO) As if you didn't know how well they show off that sexy arse of yours!

**TERRY:**

(VO) 'Ere we go!

(NV) Oh no. What other reason would there be then?

**BILL:**

(VO) My god! He's fishing for compliments!

(NV) Well, some people wear them because they think it makes them look... sexy.

*TERRY laughs.*

**TERRY:**

(VO) Yeah. Was I right, or was I wrong?!

(NV) If you're feeling sexy, it's more a matter of taking things off,  
not putting them on, i'n'it?

**BILL:**

(*Laughing.*) Yes.

(VO) And very delectable you'd look too, with nothing on!  
You little prick-teaser!

*The kettle boils.*

**BILL:**

(VO) But I'd bet you'd bloody soon thump me one if I tried anything.

Anyway, you're not nearly as fanciable as you think.

So now I'm going to make you a cup of instant  
and leave you all alone while I get on with my work.

**TERRY:**

Your water's boiling, mate.

**BILL:**

What?

**TERRY:**

Your kettle - it's boiling.

**BILL:**

Oh, the water! Yes. Thanks.

*BILL prepares cups, makes coffee etc.*

**TERRY:**

(VO) Funny. 'E's gone all quiet. Lost the knack, 'ave you?

Despite yer trendy gear and yer fancy pad?

Probably chatting up is as far as you ever get, i'n'it, matey?

Don't s'pose you ever make it to the pit no more, at your age?

**TERRY** looks up at **BILL** and grins.

**TERRY:**

(VO) And you really fancy me too, don't yer?

(NV) So... er... you reckon they make me look sexy, do yer?

**BILL:**

I didn't say that. I said other people.

**TERRY:**

Fellers are always making passes at me. I dunno why.

**BILL:**

I wonder why that could be.

**TERRY:**

Wha'd'yer mean? I don't encourage no one!

(VO) But I'd like to try it once, just for the 'ell of it.

It's all part of life's rich mosaic pattern, after all.

**BILL:**

Some people might find your manner of dress... provocative.

**TERRY:**

I'm only wearing a pair of old jeans, for Chrissake!

**BILL:**

(VO) And the fact that they're so tight that you must've been melted down and poured into them is purely coincidental, I suppose.

(NV) How do you like your coffee?

**TERRY:**

In a mug.

**BILL:**

(VO) A joker as well as a prick-teaser!

(NV) I meant, what do you want in it?

**TERRY:**

Oh the usual things. Ecstasy. LSD. What yer got?

**BILL:**

I've got sugar and milk, actually.

**TERRY:**

Yeah, well I'll 'ave both them...

(VO) ...actually!

**BILL** pours milk, picks up sugar bowl and taps it.

**TERRY:**

Two... There, that's done.

**TERRY** shoves the cooker back into its slot.

**TERRY:**

Shouldn't 'ave no more trouble with that.

(Grinning.) Just needed a spot of grease up your flexible 'ose.

(VO) Tinker Bell!

**BILL:**  
Oh really! Thanks. Here's your coffee.  
Help yourself to biscuits.  
(VO) Lover boy!

**TERRY:**  
Ta.

*BILL picks up his own coffee and exits with it.*

*TERRY takes his mug and follows.*

**24 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM)**

**DAY**

*TERRY is framed in the doorway looking at the waterbed.*

**TERRY:**  
Is it true what they say about waterbeds?

**BILL:**  
(OOV) What's that?

**TERRY:**  
You know - they're supposed to be a knock-out for... you know.  
(VO) Sex, you dumb cluck!

**BILL:**  
(OOV) Oh, that. Er, yes, it is.

**TERRY:**  
Straight up! Can I 'ave a look?

**BILL:**  
(OOV) Be my guest.

*TERRY enters the bedroom, puts his coffee down beside the bed and pulls back the bedcovers.*

**TERRY:**  
(VO) 'Ow about that then?!

*TERRY makes the waterbed ripple and is delighted.*

*TERRY tries sitting on the edge.*

*TERRY grins, takes his track shoes off and lies down on the water-bed full-length. He bounces around with obvious pleasure, then discovers a male pin-up magazine under the pillow.*

**TERRY:**  
(VO) Aye aye! What's this then?!

*TERRY flicks through the pages with increasing delight.*

**TERRY:**  
(VO) Right, that's it!

*TERRY folds it open at a double-page spread and places it under the covers in the middle of the bed.*

**TERRY:**

(VO) After all, 'e's not that bad-looking and 'e fancies me a ton...

*TERRY gets up and exits in his stockinged feet.*

**25 INT: BILL'S FLAT (STUDY).**

**DAY**

*TERRY appears in the doorway and looks at BILL who is working at his desk.*

**TERRY:**

I've never tried a waterbed.

*BILL continues working.*

**BILL:**

Haven't you now?

**TERRY:**

I'd be interested to 'ave a go.

*BILL doesn't react.*

**TERRY:**

(VO) 'E 'asn't twigged.

(NV) Don't you get seasick?

**BILL:**

(Without looking up) It only moves for a minute or two after you get in.  
You get used to it. I don't even notice it anymore.

**TERRY:**

Well it'd make an interesting change for me.

**BILL:**

(Without looking up) I suppose it would.

**TERRY:**

(VO) 'E really 'asn't twigged.

(NV) Might even bring a bit of excitement into me life, don't yer think?

**BILL:**

If you say so.

*BILL looks up from his work and notices TERRY's stockinged feet.*

**BILL:**

Have you... finished the job?

**TERRY:**

Yeah.

(VO) He can't get it together. Poor old sod.

(NV. Grinning.) I've just got your stop-cock to turn on again; then I'm through.

*TERRY exits to HALLWAY.*

**TERRY:**

(VO) Know your trouble, matey?

You don't fancy yer chances enough.

*BILL* looks after him.

**BILL:**  
(VO) My god! I do believe he wants it!

**26 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM) DAY**

*TERRY* enters and picks up and puts on his track shoes.

*TERRY* looks wistfully at the waterbed.

**TERRY:**  
(VO) Pity. Might've been fun.

*TERRY* exits.

**27 INT: BILL'S FLAT (KITCHEN) DAY**

*TERRY* enters, turns on the stop-cock, picks up his toolbag and exits to **HALLWAY** to find **BILL** looking in at the bedroom door.

**28 INT: BILL'S FLAT (HALLWAY) DAY**

**TERRY:**  
Well, I must be pushing off.  
Another gorgeous young 'ousewife is awaiting my special service, somewhere.  
Just sign 'ere.

**BILL:**  
Thank you for doing the job so... expertly.

*BILL* signs the form then looks nervously at *TERRY*.

**BILL:**  
Listen... do please feel free to... come and try the waterbed...  
erm... sometime...

**TERRY:**  
(VO) Too late, sunshine! Missed yer chance, didn't yer?!  
(NV) I didn't really mean it, mate.  
It was just a passing fancy, you know.

*BILL* opens the front door.

*TERRY* goes through it.

**TERRY:**  
Keep smiling, sunshine.  
You're not so bad-looking yerself.  
You never know what the tooth fairy might bring yer one of these nights!

*BILL* reacts to this.

*TERRY* grins.

**TERRY:**  
(VO) Gotcha!

*TERRY exits to landing.*

**29 INT: BILL'S FLAT (HALLWAY) DAY**

*CU of BILL, framed in his frontdoor, as the sound of TERRY's footsteps and whistling recedes down the stairs.*

**30 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BEDROOM) DAY**

*BILL enters and sits down on the bed.*

*The telephone rings. BILL picks it up.*

**BILL:**  
Hallo. (Pause) Oh hi, Jimmy!

*BILL notices the coffee mug beside the bed where Terry left it.*

**BILL:**  
Yes, they came. (Pause.) They've only just this minute left, actually.

*BILL opens the drawer in the bedside cupboard. The pin-up magazine is still there.*

**BILL:**  
No, I was right. It was the joint behind the cooker.

*BILL begins idly tidying the bedcovers.*

**BILL:**  
Of course. I said I'd pick them up this afternoon.

*BILL discovers the other pin-up magazine in the bed where Terry left it.*

**BILL:**  
Royal circle, sweetheart! Nothing but the best for your birthday!

*CU of BILL as he reacts to the discovery.*

**BILL:**  
No, it's a good idea. I could do with a bite to eat.

*BILL puts the second pin-up magazine in the drawer with the first.*

**BILL:**  
Usual place? (Pause) Right. Meet you there. Bye.

**FADE TO BLACK**

**31 EXT: PAVEMENT CAFÉ IN SOHO DAY**

*BILL and JIMMY have just finished a meal together in a café.*

*They pay the bill and exit to street, laughing, clearly at ease with each other.*

*They hug and kiss goodbye and head off in opposite directions.*

**32 EXT: SOHO STREETS & TUBE STATION ENTRANCE** **DAY**

*BILL sets off to walk back to his flat but decides to enter a tube station.*

**33 INT: TUBE STATION (NEWSPAPER KIOSK)** **DAY**

*BILL walks up to the kiosk and buys a copy of THE INDEPENDENT.*

*Enter MARGARET. She walks past BILL and heads for the exit tunnel but stops dead, her attention caught by a wall poster. She starts to shout at it.*

**MARGARET:**

You think you're so bloody clever, don't you?!  
You think you've really got it made, don't you?!

*BILL turns round to see what the disturbance is.*

**34 INT: TUBE STATION TUNNEL** **DAY**

*CU of poster. It shows a sexy female model wearing a clinging, red, tee-shirt.*

**MARGARET:**

*(To poster.)* ...with your clingy tee-shirt and your soft, manageable hair,  
and your creamy smooth complexion...

*CU of MARGARET, her face contorted with anger.*

**MARGARET:**

...you think you're pretty bloody clever, don't you?!  
Don't you?! Don't you?!

**35 INT: TUBE STATION TUNNEL** **DAY**

*BILL watches MARGARET with concern.*

**36 INT: TUBE STATION TUNNEL** **DAY**

*MARGARET produces a felt-tip pen from her bag and begins defacing the poster, spitting out short phrases as she scrawls each mark.*

**MARGARET:**

*(To poster.)* Eat it up! Drink it down! Put it on! Take it off! Buy this, buy that!  
Well let me tell you, little Miss Provocative! you'll be caught out!  
Oh yes, mark my words, you'll be caught out, one day, you... you... you... hussy!

**37 INT: TUBE STATION TUNNEL** **DAY**

*CU of poster. MARGARET is drawing age lines on the model's face, spitting out phrases as she scrawls each mark.*

**MARGARET:**

*(To poster)* First you'll have lines here!  
And then you'll have lines here!

**MARGARET:**  
And then you'll have lines here!  
And then you'll find out what it's like to be *all alone*,  
little Miss Cleverpot! Little Miss Sexpot!

**38 INT: TUBE STATION TUNNEL**

**DAY**

**MARGARET:**  
*(To poster)* Don't you understand, you silly cow?! Don't you understand?!  
They're bastards?! The bloody lot of them! Bastards! BASTARDS!  
*MARGARET sinks to the ground, crying and sobbing. Her bags fall to the ground.*  
*BILL takes a hesitant step towards MARGARET.*  
*MARGARET continues sobbing.*

**MARGARET:**  
Oh god! Oh god! Oh god, help me, please god!  
*A CITY GENT walks by and looks down at MARGARET with distress, but after looking at his watch, shakes his head and hurries on.*  
*A RESPECTABLE WOMAN stops to speak to MARGARET.*

**WOMAN:**  
*(Severely)* Pull yourself together, woman! What can you be thinking of?!  
*The RESPECTABLE WOMAN hurries away.*  
*BILL approaches cautiously, crouches down and cautiously touches MARGARET's shoulder.*

**BILL:**  
Are you all right?

**MARGARET:**  
No! No. Oh, no. I'm not. I don't know what... to do...

**BILL:**  
Do you need help?

**MARGARET:**  
Please! Please, could you?

**BILL:**  
I live just round the corner. Would you like...  
to come and... have a cup of tea with me?

**MARGARET:**  
Oh yes, please!  
But I don't think I can walk.

**BILL:**  
Here, let me help you...

*BILL helps MARGARET to her feet, picks up her bags, puts his arm round her and helps her along the tunnel towards the exit stairs.*

**MARGARET:**

It's being underground that does it. I should've known better.  
It's claustrophobia you see. People don't understand.  
I'll feel better as soon as I'm out in the open air.

**39 EXT: TUBE STATION ENTRANCE**

**DAY**

*BILL and MARGARET come out of the station together. MARGARET is talking non-stop.*

*They set off for BILL's flat. They look like a married couple.*

**40 EXT.**

**DAY**

*We see the same street as SCENE 2. BILL opens the street door with a key and they both enter.*

**41 INT: BILL'S FLAT (LANDING)**

**DAY**

*BILL and MARGARET arrive at the front door to Bill's flat.*

**BILL:**

...and have you had these... attacks before?

**MARGARET:**

Oh yes. Lots and lots of times.

**BILL:**

I see. Well, here we are. This is where I live.

*BILL ushers MARGARET in.*

**42 INT: BILL'S FLAT (HALLWAY)**

**DAY**

*BILL enters followed by MARGARET who looks about avidly.*

**MARGARET:**

Isn't this nice?! I never would have imagined this. You are lucky.

**BILL:**

Right. I'll go and put the kettle on. The living-room's through there.  
Please make yourself comfortable.

**MARGARET:**

Do you have a loo I could use?

**BILL:**

Of course. It's through there.

*MARGARET exits to bathroom.*

*BILL exits to kitchen.*

**43 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BATHROOM)**

**DAY**

*MARGARET closes and locks the bathroom door.*

**MARGARET:**

Oh god! Oh god! Oh god!

*MARGARET goes to the mirror, looks at herself, sighs heart-rendingly, splashes water on her face, dries herself, takes out a compact, lipstick and so on and 'puts on a new face'.*

*MARGARET contemplates her handiwork in the mirror.*

**44 INT: BILL'S FLAT (LIVING-ROOM)**

**DAY**

*BILL has prepared tea for two on a tray. He sets it down on a low table, and sits down on a sofa. He looks serious.*

*A WC flushes and MARGARET enters.*

**BILL:**

Ah, there you are. Do you take sugar and milk in your tea?

**MARGARET:**

Whatever must you have thought of me?

I must've looked simply dreadful! Lying on the ground, crying like a baby!

**BILL:**

I just thought you needed help.

Do you take sugar and milk in your tea?

**MARGARET:**

Huh! More than those other swine!

Did you see them walking right past?

As if I were a piece of old baggage!

**BILL:**

Well, you're looking much better now.

Really, very much better.

Do you take... sugar?

**MARGARET:**

Yes, but I can't stand milk. It makes me ill, milk does.

It's an allergic reaction. Nothing I can do about it.

*BILL picks up the sugar bowl, thinks of asking how many lumps but puts two in her saucer instead. He offers it to her but she doesn't notice.*

**MARGARET:**

Well, I just can't explain it. I can't think what came over me.

**BILL:**

Here you are. Drink this. You'll feel much better.

**MARGARET:**

Oh I feel perfectly all right now, thank you.

*MARGARET takes the cup of tea but doesn't notice the sugar.*

**MARGARET:**  
Perfectly all right.

**BILL:**  
Good.

*MARGARET sits down on another sofa.*

*They drink their tea.*

**BILL:**  
Have you ever thought of... going by bus?  
I mean, if the underground worries you so much?

**MARGARET:**  
(*Matter of fact.*) Oh it does, it does.  
I can't stand being down there as a matter of fact.  
I get this feeling of being trapped with no escape, you see, and I panic.

*MARGARET sips her tea demurely.*

**BILL:**  
So why... don't you go by bus?

*BILL looks at her.*

*MARGARET smiles at him.*

**MARGARET:**  
You're right. I really shouldn't go down there, should I?  
You're absolutely right. I know it.

*MARGARET notices the sugar, adds both lumps to her cup and begins stirring.*

**MARGARET:**  
But you see it really is the most convenient way for me to get to work.  
If I go by bus, I have this long walk across the park to the stop  
and sometimes...

**BILL:**  
Yes?

**MARGARET:**  
(*Still stirring.*) Well, only very very sometimes, you understand,  
I get this strange feeling that the path... (*Stops.*)

**BILL:**  
Yes?

**MARGARET:**  
Well, I know how silly this sounds, but...  
...I get this awful feeling that the path is going to start *moving*...  
and that I'm going to lose my balance.  
So I panic and have to find somewhere to sit down.

*MARGARET stops stirring and delicately lays the spoon in her saucer.*

**MARGARET:**

And then people start staring at me.  
Like they were in the underground.  
Did you notice? As if they wanted to murder me!

*MARGARET picks up her cup and sips her tea demurely.*

**MARGARET:**

One day.

**BILL:**

Yes?

**MARGARET:**

Oh, nothing.

**BILL:**

Please tell me.  
I'm interested, really.

**MARGARET:**

*(With a cheerful laugh.)* Oh, it's just a plan I have  
to get a machine-gun and shoot the lot of them.

*BILL stares at her.*

**MARGARET:**

Do you ever feel you could just shoot everyone in the whole world?

**BILL:**

Er, no, actually. I can't say that I do.

**MARGARET:**

My mother said that I...  
But I mustn't talk so much. *(Laughs gaily.)* I must not talk so much.

**BILL:**

Please feel free to talk as much as you want to.

*MARGARET looks at BILL warmly.*

**MARGARET:**

Kind. Kind eyes.

**BILL:**

Thank you.

**MARGARET:**

Do you want to see the pullover I bought in a sale this morning?

**BILL:**

Yes, please.

*MARGARET takes a new olive-green pullover out of a Harrods bag and displays it for BILL to admire.*

**MARGARET:**

It's pure cashmere!

*MARGARET holds it up for BILL to admire.*

**MARGARET:**

Olive green, you see.  
I *always* wear olive green.  
It goes with my eyes.  
I know what suits *me*!  
Oh yes! There's no doubt about that!

*BILL* looks at her clothes. *She's wearing no olive green at all.*

**MARGARET:**

Do you like it?

**BILL:**

Very much. It's very smart.

**MARGARET:**

Isn't it?! You obviously have good taste.  
Now my mother...

**BILL:**

Yes?

**MARGARET:**

My mother wanted me to buy a *scarlet* one!  
Can you imagine that? *A scarlet one!*

*BILL* listens attentively.

**MARGARET:**

She's always telling me what to do. She never lets me buy what I want.  
Oh no! I say to her: 'Listen, mother,' I say: 'I'm over forty now,  
and only whores wear scarlet when they're over forty.'  
But she just goes on and on and on about it.

*MARGARET* 'acts' her mother.

**MOTHER:**

But think how sexy scarlet is, sweetheart!

**MARGARET:**

(*Normal voice*) I *hate* scarlet!

*BILL's* concern is beginning to turn to alarm.

*He looks nervously at the telephone, and then at the door.*

**MARGARET:**

(*Conspiratorially, to BILL.*) I could easily machine-gun *her*!  
I expect I will one day. She makes me go to parties, you know.

**BILL:**

Don't you like parties?

**MARGARET:**

Goodness me, no! All those people! I stand there. I feel trapped. No escape. So I panic  
and want to machine-gun them. Everyone feels that, don't they? You must have felt  
that, haven't you?

**BILL:**

Erm, no, actually.

**MARGARET:**

Yes, everyone feels that, don't they? From time to time, I mean. Everyone feels as if she could just shoot them all. I mean, if she had a gun...

*MARGARET suddenly leaps to her feet and machine-guns an imaginary crowd.*

**MARGARET:**

Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam! Bam!  
Hah! All dead! Hah! Then they'd be sorry! Then maybe they'd leave me alone! Are you a photographer?

**BILL:**

Sorry?

**MARGARET:**

I said: 'Are you a photographer?'  
'Are you a pho... tog... graph... fer?'  
I mean, you're very good-looking and you have this beautiful flat.

*MARGARET looks carefully round the room.*

**MARGARET:**

Not that I can see any photographs anywhere.  
But I just thought, you know, like that.

**BILL:**

As a matter of fact, I am. Yes.

**MARGARET:**

*(Gleefully.)* I thought as much!  
I'm very perceptive, you see. My mother always did admit that.

**MOTHER:**

You're a perceptive little bitch, aren't you?

**MARGARET:**

*(To BILL.)* She's always calling me a bitch, the cow! And I bet you're always photographing beautiful women in scarlet tee-shirts who simply throw themselves at you. So obviously you wouldn't be interested in a dowdy old wreck like me, would you? I mean, why should you be? Why should you even want to know someone *my* age?! So there's no need for me even to begin thinking in that direction, is there?

*MARGARET stuffs the pullover back into its bag with a gesture of finality.*

**MARGARET:**

Thinking can be such a bother, can't it?

*MARGARET directs a social smile at BILL who is simply bemused and doesn't know what to do or say.*

**MARGARET:**

Have you ever seen a film called *Blow Up*?

**BILL:**

Er, no, actually. I don't think so.

**MARGARET:**

It's about this handsome young photographer; and these two girls go to his studio to get some modelling work. But they get something else. My goodness me, yes! Something quite else! Have you ever raped anyone?

**BILL:**

Look, I think we'd better get something straight.  
In the first place, you're not a dowdy old wreck.  
In fact, you're very attractive, and you know it.  
In the second place, I don't do that kind of photography.  
I do portraits. *(Pause.)* And, in the third place... I'm gay, actually.

**MARGARET:**

What can you mean?

**BILL:**

I'm homosexual. I prefer men to women, sexually.  
So you see, you have absolutely nothing to fear.

**MARGARET:**

How marvellous! How marvellous!  
Now my mother would have said I was wrong to come here.  
Yes, she definitely would have said so.

**MOTHER:**

You're never, ever, under any circumstances, to go into strange men's lodgings! Do you hear?! They all want the same thing, and it's our job to make sure they don't get it!

**MARGARET:**

But mother, how am I to meet the man I'm to marry?

**MOTHER:**

You'll marry when I say so, my girl, and not before! There's only one fate for girls who go into strange men's lodgings. And no daughter of mine is going to end up like that.

**MARGARET:**

Oh mother! I'm quite old enough to look after myself.

**MOTHER:**

Old enough! Hah! You're a child! That's what you are! A child!

**MARGARET:**

*(To BILL.)* Do you have orgies here?

**BILL:**

What?

**MARGARET:**

Orge-eez?

**BILL:**

No. I have a lover, actually.

**MARGARET:**

Lucky, lucky you! What's his name?

*BILL remembers his encounter with Terry.*

**BILL:**

I don't need anything more.

**MARGARET:**

Lucky! What's his name?

**BILL:**

Jimmy.

**MARGARET:**

Lucky, lucky you!

*BILL thoughtfully nods his agreement.*

**MARGARET:**

Now me, I'm all alone in this whole rotten world.

Can you imagine that?

I don't even know where I'm going to sleep tonight! Imagine!

**BILL:**

Are you telling me you have no home to go to?

**MARGARET:**

Not that I want you to think that I'd like to stay *here*!

Oh no! My goodness me, no!

*MARGARET turns on her imaginary mother.*

**MARGARET:**

It would never even occur to me to ask him!

*MARGARET jumps to her feet as if jerked up by someone else.*

**MARGARET:**

Mother says I must leave now, sir.

*MARGARET looks about her in a panic then notices BILL's startled expression.*

**MARGARET:**

You've already been very kind.

And I expect you have lots of... photographs to take, so...

*MARGARET sees the tea things, turns to BILL and, reverting to her normal voice and manner, replies as if he had just spoken to her.*

**MARGARET:**

Yes, I would! Just a teeny drop more.

How kind of you to ask.

*MARGARET hands her cup to BILL who refills it.*

*MARGARET sits down again.*

**MARGARET:**

I wonder if you're completely gay.

My mother's no fool and she's always telling me to be very very very careful.

And I always take her advice in everything.

**MOTHER:**

They'll think up clever tricks to catch us out. They'll lie. They'll cheat.  
They'll pretend to be gay.

**MARGARET:**

Yes, mother.

**MOTHER:**

You must be strong, darling.  
I know he's good-looking, but it's time you left.

**MARGARET:**

Yes, mother. Can I finish my tea first?

**BILL:**

I assure you you are in no danger.  
If you have no home, why haven't you got any luggage with you?

**MARGARET:**

Everything I own in the whole world is here!

*MARGARET clutches the Harrods bag to her.*

**BILL:**

But you said you just bought that pullover in a sale.

**MARGARET:**

So I did. So I did. It's true. I never lie. But that was... ages ago.

**BILL:**

This morning?

**MARGARET:**

*(Humbly.)* Yes.

**BILL:**

What about your mother? Can't you go to your mother's?

**MARGARET:**

She's dead.

**BILL:**

Oh!

*BILL is completely taken aback by this revelation.*

**MARGARET:**

She died years ago.

**BILL:**

I'm sorry.

**MARGARET:**

*(Casually.)* Oh, I can hardly remember her.  
She was a good mother to me. She tried to protect me from my... wickedness.  
But now I'm alone in the whole rotten world and must fend for myself.

**BILL:**

I'm sorry. I must've misunderstood you.

**MARGARET:**

Oh, she still *talks* to me. But it's not the same, is it?

*BILL looks at her tenderly.*

*MARGARET looks back at him.*

**MARGARET:**

Kind. Kind eyes.

*MARGARET lets her bags fall round her again and slumps back into her chair.*

**BILL:**

Look, I don't know how to say this, but...

**MARGARET:**

*(Cutting in.)* Sometimes I think I'll buy a net and go out and catch somebody and take them home with me and keep them forever. And then I won't be lonely anymore. Have you seen a film called *The Collector*?

**BILL:**

Er, no, I haven't.

**MARGARET:**

No, of course not! You're much too young. What can I be thinking of?!

*MARGARET laughs.*

**MARGARET:**

Sometimes, I forget how old I am!

**BILL:**

Listen, I'm sorry you're lonely, and I'm sorry I can't help... but...

**MARGARET:**

*(Cutting in.)* As a matter of fact, I must leave now...

*MARGARET leaps up again.*

**BILL:**

Must you? Only you see, I have to go out myself now too.

**MARGARET:**

I'm going. I'm going. Right now.

*MARGARET picks up her handbag.*

**MARGARET:**

But... I wonder if I could just use your loo again? *(Laughs.)*  
The tea, you know, goes through so quickly, doesn't it?

**BILL:**

Of course. Help yourself.

*MARGARET exits with her handbag.*

*BILL goes to where she was sitting and examines the contents of the Harrods bag which turns out to be the cashmere sweater we've already seen and a bag of apples.*

*BILL replaces them in the Harrods bag and exits.*

**45 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BATHROOM)**

**DAY**

*MARGARET opens her handbag and rummages.*

**46 INT: BILL'S FLAT (STUDY)**

**DAY**

*BILL enters, picks up the telephone and dials a number.*

**47 INT: BILL'S FLAT (BATHROOM)**

**DAY**

*MARGARET wags a disapproving finger at herself in the mirror then suddenly stops, takes a ragged red tee-shirt out of her handbag and nurses it like a child of five. After a moment she puts it away again, sits on the WC seat and sucks her thumb.*

**48 INT: BILL'S FLAT (STUDY)**

**DAY**

*BILL is on the telephone.*

**BILL:**

Yes, but Jimmy, love, that's not the point...

*BILL hunts on his shelves for a directory.*

**BILL:**

The point is she's still here, she's about to leave and I don't know what to do.

*BILL finds a directory, opens it and begins flicking through the pages.*

**BILL:**

But Jimmy, love, she seems to be completely mad.  
I don't know if I ought to let her just... walk off into the blue.

**BILL:**

She says she hasn't.

**BILL:**

In the loo.

**BILL:**

Yes, quite ordinary things really.  
You're right - a leather handbag, a carrier bag with an expensive,  
brand-new pullover in it and - oddly enough - a bag of apples.  
Yes, I suppose you're right.

*BILL pushes the directory back where it came from.*

**BILL:**

All right, love. Thanks for the...

*MARGARET comes out of the bathroom and sees BILL on the telephone.*

**BILL:**

See you in the foyer at seven-thirty then. Must dash. And Jimmy?

*MARGARET listens intently as if BILL didn't know she was there.*

**BILL:**  
Love you.

*BILL hangs up the receiver and turns to look at MARGARET.*

**MARGARET:**  
Was that your... boy-friend?

**BILL:**  
Er, yes, it was, actually.

**MARGARET:**  
Lucky. Well, I'm just off.

**BILL:**  
You look a lot better now. I hope you'll be more careful in future.

**MARGARET:**  
More careful?

**BILL:**  
About... going down the underground.

**MARGARET:**  
*(Laughing.)* Oh *that!*

**BILL:**  
Have you ever thought of going to see a doctor about...  
...your claustrophobia?

**MARGARET:**  
Yes, of course. I've seen hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of doctors.

*MARGARET finds and picks up her things.*

**MARGARET:**  
Well, thank you so much for the tea.  
It was a pleasure meeting you.

*MARGARET offers her hand to BILL who takes it uncertainly.*

**MARGARET:**  
I do so hope we'll meet again someday.

*MARGARET goes to the front door and waits for BILL to open it.*

**MARGARET:**  
Perhaps I could come and visit you sometimes?

*BILL opens the door.*

*MARGARET goes through it and turns to face him.*

**MARGARET:**  
But no. You're a good-looking young photographer...  
and you're... gay. What could you possibly want with an old hag like me?

*BILL starts to object.*

**MARGARET:**  
I know. I know. I'm very attractive, and I know it.

**MARGARET:**

Besides, you've got your... lover, Jimmy. Lucky.  
Now, have I got everything? (*Laughs.*) All my worldly goods!

*BILL* looks helplessly towards the living-room.

**BILL:**

Look, I'm sorry I have to go out.  
But Jimmy and I are going to the theatre this evening,  
and I said I'd pick up the tickets.  
But do, please, feel free to come and visit me again, if you want to.

**MARGARET:**

Kind. Kind eyes.

*MARGARET* reaches out as if to touch *BILL*, but doesn't.

**BILL:**

And do you think you'll be all right... out there?

**MARGARET:**

All right? Of course. You've been very...  
Thank you so much. I do hope you - and Jimmy - enjoy your visit to the theatre.

**49 INT: BILL'S FLAT (LANDING)**

**DAY**

*MARGARET* goes to the top of the stairs. *BILL* stands, framed in his doorway, looking at her.

**BILL:**

Good luck, then!

**MARGARET:**

Goodbye.

**BILL:**

Goodbye.

*MARGARET* descends the stairs. In the background *BILL*'s door closes.

**50 EXT.**

**DAY**

*MARGARET* leaves the house we first saw in *SCENE 2* and walks away. She looks like a smart, respectable, suburban woman.

**51 EXT: TUBE STATION ENTRANCE**

**DAY**

*MARGARET* walks back to the tube station where she met Bill. She hesitates a moment, then enters.

**52 INT: TUBE STATION (TUNNEL)** **DAY**

*MARGARET descends the stairs and walks along the tunnel.*

*MARGARET sees the poster and stops dead again. She comes to a decision, turns round and hurries out of the station.*

**53 EXT: TUBE STATION ENTRANCE** **DAY**

*MARGARET leaves the tube station and joins a bus queue. She looks a picture of perfect poise.*

**54 EXT.** **DAY**

*MARGARET boards a number 24 bus with 'HAMPSTEAD HEATH' on the front. She goes upstairs and sits down on one of the front seats.*

**55 INT: BUS** **DAY**

*MARGARET is seated with one arm clasped across her breast. She supports her chin on her other hand and arm and gazes intently out of the window.*

**56 EXT.** **DAY**

*The 24 bus makes its journey to Hampstead with MARGARET gazing out of the window.*

**57 INT: BUS** **DAY**

*MARGARET is in the same posture as SCENE 55.*

*CU of MARGARET as she lifts her chin, moves her hand forward, gazes at her nails and resumes her original posture. The whole movement looks completely natural.*

*After a moment or two MARGARET repeats the movement exactly.*

**58 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)** **DAY**

*The 24 bus arrives at its turn-round point at Hampstead Heath.*

*MARGARET gets off and sets off along a path leading to the heath.*

**59 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)** **DAY**

*MARGARET skirts a high brick wall with benches at intervals.*

*MICHAEL, DIM and STREAKY are occupying one of these benches as if it were a mansion. STREAKY is in the middle, sound asleep.*

*MARGARET sees this trio ahead of her and reacts with terror. She looks round for an alternative route, but there isn't one. She considers turning back, but instead adopts a haughty look and proceeds with determination.*

*MICHAEL sees her coming and rises to accost her.*

**60 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)**

**DAY**

*As MARGARET approaches MICHAEL meticulously but smilingly blocks her path.*

**MICHAEL:**

*(Southern Irish Accent)* Good evening to you, madam.  
I wonder if you could spare a few pence for a bite to eat and a cup of tea?

**MARGARET:**

Oh, so that's it, is it? I might have guessed!

**MICHAEL:**

Just some small change, madam...  
for a bite to eat and a cup of tea.

**MARGARET:**

No. You'd only spend it on drink. I know your sort.

**MICHAEL:**

Sure, there's no alcoholic drink can be purchased for the price of a cup of tea, madam.  
Not according to my knowledge of this holy city, anyway.

**MARGARET:**

No. But for the price of *several* cups of tea,  
cadged from honest, respectable people! What about that, then?

**MICHAEL:**

Sure, I swear it, lady, on the holy book.

*MARGARET folds her arms.*

**MARGARET:**

Respectable people don't swear.

**MICHAEL:**

Then, on my word of honour, as a gentleman.

**MARGARET:**

Hah! That cuts no ice with me! You're no gentleman.

**MICHAEL:**

What do you want me to say, lady?  
Shall I swear it on my mother's name?

*CU of MARGARET as she reacts to this.*

**MARGARET:**

Yes! Yes, swear it *on your mother's name!*

**MICHAEL:**

I swear, on my mother's name, God bless her! that I'll spend the few pence  
this respectable woman might feel able to spare, on *food*.

**MARGARET:**

And only on food.

**MICHAEL:**

On food, on wholefood, and nothing but food, so help me God!

*MARGARET begins fumbling in her handbag.*

**MICHAEL:**

Bless you, madam.

You'll never want for a friend when you have a heart of gold.

*MARGARET produces a pound coin from her handbag.*

**MARGARET:**

Only on food, mind.

**MICHAEL:**

I've sworn it.

**MARGARET:**

Take it then.

*MARGARET gives MICHAEL the pound coin.*

**MICHAEL:**

Bless you *mother!*

*MARGARET reacts to being called 'mother'. She takes a wad of five-pound notes from her bag and stuffs it in MICHAEL's hand.*

*MARGARET runs off and disappears round a bend in the path.*

*MICHAEL looks after her and then down at the money.*

**MICHAEL:**

Now that, Dim lad, is as convincing a demonstration  
as you're ever likely to behold that our fate hangs on finding *le mot juste!*

*MICHAEL counts the money as he goes back to the bench and sits down. It comes to thirty pounds.*

*DIM watches without interest.*

**MICHAEL:**

To think I ever doubted my vocation!

**DIM:**

What'd she give you, then?

**MICHAEL:**

Thirty pieces of silver, *of course!*

**DIM:**

Eh?

**MICHAEL:**

I've sold my soul again, Dim lad.

**DIM:**

You going to buy more booze?

**MICHAEL:**

I am not. I've given my word.

**DIM:**

*She won't know.*

**MICHAEL:**

*I'll know!*

**DIM:**

*She's gone.*

**MICHAEL:**

*Wanted to buy it for a pound, she did.  
And the likes of us not even allowed near the off-licence anyway.  
Makes you wonder.*

**DIM:**

*Exited. Departed.*

*MICHAEL picks up the wine bottle and tries to drink from it, but it's empty. He holds it upside down and pretends to wring it out like a cloth.*

**MICHAEL:**

*In my beginning is my end.*

**DIM:**

*That one's ended, anyway.*

*DIM laughs and, using his cider bottle, imitates MICHAEL's actions exactly.*

**DIM:**

*Done. Finished. Over.*

**MICHAEL:**

*It's back in the hands of providence we are.*

**DIM:**

*I've got stomach-ache.*

**MICHAEL:**

*And no wonder! You won't eat, will you. You daft boy!*

*DIM glares at MICHAEL.*

**DIM:**

*I know more words than you!*

**MICHAEL:**

*And wouldn't that be ape-like, if it were true? And me a Leo!  
Expect nothing, and sure, you can suffer no disappointment.*

*DIM relaxes.*

**DIM:**

*Ah, but is it better to lose it - meaning you must've 'ad it once?  
Or is it better never to've 'ad it in the first place? Like me?*

**MICHAEL:**

*'There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.'*

**DIM:**

*Good. Better. Best.*

*MICHAEL stands up and bows extravagantly.*

**MICHAEL:**

I'm forever honouring your illustrious memory, you glorious man.

*MICHAEL sits down again.*

**MICHAEL:**

God, but I had a powerful dream last night! Powerful!

**DIM:**

Bad. Worse. Worst.

I've 'ad a terrible thought these last few days, plaguing me. Jesus! Terrible!

**MICHAEL:**

Out with it then! Thoughts have no place in that dark void you call a mind.

Tell me your terrible thought and I'll tell you my demon dream.

**DIM:**

Fearful. 'Orrible. Ghaaaastly!

**MICHAEL:**

Will you listen to the boy?

Tell me this 'ghaaastly' thought, and I'll tell you my demon dream.

I can't say fairer than that now, can I?

**DIM:**

It's serious, Michael.

**MICHAEL:**

It's serious he wants me to be, and it's serious I always am.

Especially when I'm joking!

*MICHAEL catches sight of PETE approaching.*

**MICHAEL:**

Holy Mary, Mother of God! Will you look what's coming?!

It's *Himself*, coming to provide for us!

**61 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)**

**DAY**

*PETE is carrying a bottle of wine and two loaves of wholewheat bread.*

**62 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)**

**DAY**

*PETE smiles at MICHAEL as he walks by.*

**MICHAEL:**

Good evening to you, friend! Please! Just...

*MICHAEL recovers his senses and gets up to go after PETE, but the latter has heard him and turned back towards him with another smile.*

**MICHAEL:**

Sure, and I couldn't let a pair of honest eyes like those walk by without greeting them!

**PETE:**

Thank you. You have honest eyes yourself.

*MICHAEL points at PETE's bottle of wine.*

**MICHAEL:**

Would you be after letting us share in your good fortune, friend?

**PETE:**

Well... I'm on my way to a party and my friends asked me to bring a bottle and something to eat.

**MICHAEL:**

And what have you done with the fishes, then?

**PETE:**

*(Smiling.)* What?

**MICHAEL:**

Sure it's only my little joke. Pay no heed to it.

**PETE:**

I can easily get some more on the way.  
All right. Why not? Here you are - have it.

*PETE offers the bottle of wine to a disbelieving MICHAEL.*

**MICHAEL:**

Sure I only meant *a drop!* Your friends needn't even notice.

**PETE:**

No. It's all right. Go on. Take it. Please.

*MICHAEL takes the bottle of wine.*

**PETE:**

May it warm your soul.

**MICHAEL:**

Spoken like an Irishman! Bless you, my friend!  
But will you not sit with us and share it?

**PETE:**

All right. I'd like to. Thank you.

*This involves moving STREAKY to one side so that PETE can sit between MICHAEL and DIM.*

*STREAKY doesn't show any sign of life during this business.*

*PETE breaks pieces off one of the loaves and offers them to MICHAEL and DIM.*

*DIM takes his piece, stares at it and elaborately places it on STREAKY's lap.*

*MICHAEL puts his piece beside him, opens the wine bottle - it's the kind with a cap, not a cork - and toasts the world.*

**MICHAEL:**

Bless everyone who can smile!  
And sustain everyone who cannot!

*MICHAEL* drinks and passes the bottle to *PETE* who drinks in silence and passes it onto *DIM*. *DIM* doesn't drink but in a continuous movement the bottle passes from him to *STREAKY* who awakes as if by magic, drinks, splutters and drinks again until *DIM* snatches the bottle away from him and passes it back to *PETE*, again without drinking himself.

**PETE:**

(To *DIM*.) Don't you want any?

**DIM:**

Not my drink.

*PETE* passes the bottle back to *MICHAEL*.

**MICHAEL:**

Sure the daft boy will drink nothing but cider.  
But for you and me, wine is the only fitting drink, so it is.

*MICHAEL* drinks again.

**DIM:**

Useless drinking wine. Takes you up. Brings you down. Bleeding pointless.

**PETE:**

Is there an off-licence anywhere nearby?

**MICHAEL:**

Indeed there is. And 'tis a miserable specimen of humanity inhabits it!  
She calls the police if we so much as go near.

*PETE* stands up.

**MICHAEL:**

You're not leaving us so soon, friend?

**PETE:**

I'll be back in a minute. But can you tell me where the off-licence is, please?

**MICHAEL:**

Sure I'll walk with you and show you, if I may.

*MICHAEL* places the bottle on the ground with extreme care, points a finger at it and speaks to it as if it were a child.

**MICHAEL:**

Stay there, mind!

*MICHAEL* gets up and exits with *PETE*.

*DIM* watches them leave.

**DIM:**

I'll be back in a minute.  
Sure I'll walk with you and show you, if I may.  
I, I, I.

A *YOUNG WOMAN* approaches, sees *DIM*, looks scared and hurries by.

**DIM:**

Makes no bleeding sense.

**DIM:**

'E thinks it does.

'E thinks everything does.

'E pays so much attention to 'is bleedin' words that 'e don't realise 'ow *crucial* it is?

Streaky, listen! Why don't 'e realise 'ow crucial it is that *nothing makes sense*!

*DIM speaks to STREAKY as if he were awake.*

**DIM:**

Terrible, that is!

No, portentous!

No, dire! Yeah, that's it.

Why won't 'e realise 'ow *dire* it is?

*STREAKY continues sleeping peacefully.*

**DIM:**

Did you 'ear my question?

*DIM shakes STREAKY who moans but doesn't open his eyes.*

**DIM:**

Did you 'ear my *dire* question?

Did you? Did you? Did you?!

**STREAKY:**

Did a person speak?

**63 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)**

**EVENING**

*PETE and MICHAEL are walking along a tree-lined path engaged in conversation. Through the trees, on the far side of the road that skirts the park, lights are coming on in the shops.*

*MICHAEL points out an off-licence and PETE crosses the road towards it.*

*MICHAEL turns to walk back to the bench. He starts singing at the top of his voice (to the tune of 'Oh what a beautiful morning!') and making extravagant gestures as he does so.*

**MICHAEL:**

There's a bright golden haze over Hampstead!

There's a bright golden haze over Hampstead!

*MICHAEL accompanies himself with extravagant gestures.*

**MICHAEL:**

The trees are as high... as a steeple- jack's eye...

But I don't think they're nearly as high as my

Why? Why? Why?

*DIM is still trying to rouse STREAKY.*

**DIM:**

I know you heard. I know you did.  
Didn't you? Didn't you?

*Enter MICHAEL singing.*

**MICHAEL:**

Oh what a beautiful evening!  
Oh what a beautiful day!  
I've got a wonderful feeling...

*MICHAEL punches DIM on the shoulder.*

**MICHAEL:**

...something is coming *your* way!

*MICHAEL sits down again and speaks normally to DIM..*

**MICHAEL:**

Are you not sometimes overcome with serious admiration for it all?

**DIM:**

What?

**MICHAEL:**

Life, Dim, lad, life!

*MICHAEL punches DIM again.*

**MICHAEL:**

LIFE!

*MICHAEL punches STREAKY, then indicates the trees and sky and sings it at the top of his voice.*

**MICHAEL:**

LIFE...!

**DIM:**

I've got stomach-ache.

**MICHAEL:**

Well, don't you go worrying about that, Dim lad.  
That lovely man has gone to get some soothing nectar for your poor, abused gut.  
And for him and me, there's still all this...

*MICHAEL picks up the bottle of wine and holds it up to the light.*

**MICHAEL:**

Ripened in the sunlight, matured in the darkness.  
Like my poor, mortal soul.

**DIM:**

What you on about?

**MICHAEL:**

Wine, Dim, lad, wine!  
You can keep your 'Morning Coffee' and your 'Afternoon Tea'!  
This...

*MICHAEL pats the bottle.*

**MICHAEL:**

...is the gift of holy truth...

*DIM stares at him.*

**MICHAEL:**

...from compassionate gods  
...to lonely, suffering, lying, mortals...  
...like ourselves.

**DIM:**

I only drink cider.

**MICHAEL:**

And don't I know it!?  
Holy Mother! He's getting you some.  
Have I not been telling you this past five minutes? He's getting you some!

**DIM:**

Is he, Michael? Is he really getting some? For me?

**MICHAEL:**

Sweet Jesus!

**DIM:**

I love you.

**MICHAEL:**

And I love you too, you silly heap of a boy.

*MICHAEL pulls DIM into a bear hug.*

**MICHAEL:**

Listen, tell me your serious thought and I'll tell you my demon dream.

**DIM:**

It's *dire*. It's not serious. It's *dire*.

**MICHAEL:**

So tell it to me!

**DIM:**

*(Pulling away.)* It's bleedin' dire!

**MICHAEL:**

*(Pushing him away.)* Dire, then.  
And aren't you becoming the perfect little pedant?!

**DIM:**

Dire Straits.

*Re-enter PETE.*

**MICHAEL:**

*(Interrupting.)* Ah! Here's our fine new friend, back again!

*PETE* has another bottle of wine and a bottle of cider. He offers the cider to **DIM**.

**PETE:**

Here.

*DIM* takes the bottle of cider, stupified.

**PETE:**

You did say it was cider you liked, didn't you?

*DIM* stares at the bottle but still can't speak.

**MICHAEL:**

Bless you. You're a lovely man.

**PETE:**

May I sit with you a little longer?

**MICHAEL:**

Indeed you may. We were hoping you would.

*PETE* sits down again. He places the new bottle of wine on the ground between his feet.

*DIM* opens the bottle of cider and drinks from it as if it were a baby's bottle. He keeps the cider cap in his other hand.

**PETE:**

My name's Pete. Could you tell me your names, please?

**MICHAEL:**

Well, Pete, the sleeper on the end is *Streaky* - that being one of my little jokes.

*PETE* looks at **DIM**.

**DIM:**

*(Pointing at MICHAEL.)* 'E calls me 'Dim'.

*STREAKY* splutters again.

**PETE:**

Is *Streaky* all right?

**MICHAEL:**

Oh, he's sound, Pete, he's sound. Never better.

Beautiful clear speech you have - a joy to hear it.

Are you a literary man? You have the eyes of a literary man.

**PETE:**

I do write stuff, yes. But... I don't think I'd call it *literary*.

**MICHAEL:**

Stick to it! Sure if we'll only let them, the gods will speak through us.

*(Pointing to a badge PETE is wearing.)* What is that, Pete?

*CU of badge.*

**PETE:**

It's a *Gay Vegetarian* badge.

**MICHAEL:**

Gay vegetarian, Pete? What is that?

**PETE:**

'Gay' for homosexual and 'vegetarian' for... vegetarian!  
(*Laughs.*) I'm a member of a group of gay vegetarians.

**DIM:**

'Omosexual vegetarians!

*MICHAEL stands up and turns to face PETE.*

**MICHAEL:**

Give me your hand! A child of the future age! At last!

*PETE stands up and he and MICHAEL shake hands. MICHAEL keeps hold of him.*

**MICHAEL:**

Ah! 'Tis a rare treat to meet an honest man!

**PETE:**

I'm sure I'm no better at it than you.

**MICHAEL:**

I had a friend who was a famous poet who was... like you.  
Ah, but not honest with it, like you. 'Tis fine honest eyes you have!

*PETE gently withdraws his hands and sits down again.*

**PETE:**

Thank you. What did you mean by 'Child of the future age'?

**MICHAEL:**

Ah, that's a quote, Pete, from William Blake.  
A glorious genius of our magnificent language. Listen:

*'Children of the Future Age  
Reading this indignant page,  
Know that in a former time,  
Love, sweet Love! Was thought a crime.'*

*MICHAEL sits down again.*

*DIM stands up and adopts the posture of a child doing a recitation.*

**DIM:**

*'Dear Mother... the Church is cold,  
But the Ale-'ouse is 'ealthy and pleasant and warm;  
Besides I can tell where I am used well,  
Such usage in 'eaven will never do well.  
But if at the Church they would give us some Ale,  
And a pleasant fire our souls to regale,  
We'd sing and we'd pray all the live-long day,  
Nor ever once wish from the Church to stray.'*

**MICHAEL:**  
Bravo, Dim, lad! Well done!

*DIM sits down again.*

**DIM:**  
'Cept that I only like cider.

**MICHAEL:**  
Pete, what is it like for a man to love a man?

**PETE:**  
Are you so sure you've never loved one?

**MICHAEL:**  
Ah! I see what you mean. And have you loved many?

**PETE:**  
*(Smiling.)* Only one.  
He was the light of my life. For fourteen years.

**MICHAEL:**  
'Was', Pete?

**PETE:**  
*(Without charge.)* He was killed in a car accident years ago.

**MICHAEL:**  
What was his name, Pete?

**PETE:**  
*(Tenderly.)* James.

**MICHAEL:**  
He left you rich in memories, so he did.

*PETE nods and looks down.*

**MICHAEL:**  
I loved a woman once. Oh, just so much *(he indicates an inch)*.

**DIM** pulls a face. He's heard this story before.

**MICHAEL:**  
Ah, but she loved another, and it was so painful for me that I had to leave.  
I couldn't abide to be even in the same country as herself.  
'Twas then I went on the road.

**DIM:**  
On the road!

**PETE:**  
What's it like, being on the road?

**DIM:**  
Trudging! Tramping! Pushing on!

**MICHAEL:**  
Sure, it's hard.  
But it's the only way I know to keep from being swallowed up by... *them*.

**PETE:**

So you've never regretted it?

**MICHAEL:**

I have not! I've loved every minute of my life.  
Sure regret is wasted energy.

**DIM:**

Getting ahead! Overtaking! Everything's wasted energy, i'n'it?

**PETE:**

May I see your palms?

**MICHAEL:**

Do you read palms, Pete?

**PETE:**

A bit.

**MICHAEL:**

That's a different kind of magic, to be sure.  
But do you think it's true?

**PETE:**

I don't know. I first started doing it as a way of touching people. I like the physical contact, and everyone likes hearing about themselves. But I must admit, the more hands I look at, the more I begin to wonder if there might not be something in it.

**MICHAEL:**

So...

*MICHAEL presents his palms to PETE who bends over them to look closely.*

*MICHAEL looks down at his bent head with warmth - it could almost be love.*

**MICHAEL:**

And what do you see?

**PETE:**

Well... it's a good, strong hand. You're a very simple man,  
but you have a strong sense of purpose.

You find it easy to make decisions - even snap decisions - and then act on them.

*MICHAEL smiles.*

**PETE:**

That must be a great asset 'on the road'. And although you have very powerful emotions, you don't bottle them up, so they're not a problem to you.

*MICHAEL tenderly touches PETE's hair.*

*PETE smiles at him.*

**PETE:**

And your intuition's powerful too - I wish I could develop mine as much.  
You ought really to be reading my palms!

*PETE looks back down at MICHAEL's palm again.*

**PETE:**

It's really a remarkable hand. I can see you've lived well.  
I think it's... the best hand I've ever seen...

*PETE looks up again.*

*MICHAEL leans forward and kisses PETE on the lips.*

*PETE neither pulls away nor participates in this kiss, but he puts his hands on MICHAEL's shoulder.*

*When MICHAEL pulls away, PETE smiles at him.*

*PETE turns to DIM.*

**PETE:**

What about you, Dim? Can I see your palms?

*DIM is still holding the cider bottle. He offers his other hand without expression. It still has the cider bottle cap in it.*

*PETE takes the cider cap and puts it on the seat beside him.*

*MICHAEL sits back and stares ahead, looking dazed.*

**MICHAEL:**

Brendan always wanted that from me.  
And me wondering all these years what it would have been like.  
And I suppose wanting it too, in a way.  
Ah, but he would never admit it, and so it never happened.

*PETE looks up at MICHAEL without letting go of DIM's hand.*

*DIM gets increasingly impatient during the following dialogue.*

**PETE:**

Did you admit it to him?

**MICHAEL:**

Admit what, Pete?

**PETE:**

That you knew what he wanted, and that you wanted it too.

**MICHAEL:**

I did not. I thought it would embarrass him.

**PETE:**

Because physical love between men is unmentionable?

**MICHAEL:**

Because I thought it was up to him to tell me if he wanted to.

**PETE:**

Why should he? If you weren't prepared to tell him you already knew?

*PETE looks back down at DIM's palm.*

**DIM:**

*(Impatiently.)* What can you see?

**MICHAEL:**

Holy Mary, you're right there, Pete!  
Ah, you've given me something to think about there!

**PETE:**

(*To DIM.*) You've had a brutal life. But it's still in your power to change it.  
If you don't, I don't think you'll live much longer.

*DIM snatches his hand away.*

**PETE:**

The problem seems to be that you don't eat properly...

**DIM:**

'E drinks wine, not me. I drink cider.

**PETE:**

(*Gently*) There's nothing wrong with cider. But why don't you eat?

**MICHAEL:**

Ah, you're right there, Pete, indeed you are.  
I long ago gave up trying.  
Stubborn as a teetotal bishop he is!

**DIM:**

It's my way! My way! MINE!

**PETE:**

Of course it is. But that doesn't mean you can't change it.

*MICHAEL and DIM glare at each other across PETE who stands up.*

**MICHAEL:**

Are you leaving us, Pete?

**PETE:**

Yes. I want to go to my party now.  
My friends are giving it in my honour.

**MICHAEL:**

Then a final toast.

*MICHAEL stands up and toasts the others.*

**MICHAEL:**

I drink... to the few honest souls, in this dishonest city.

*MICHAEL drinks and offers the bottle to PETE who drinks and hands it back to MICHAEL.*

*PETE breaks a hunk of bread off a loaf and offers it to DIM who refuses, then accepts with a sheepish grin.*

*PETE touches STREAKY on the shoulder.*

*STREAKY begins eating the piece of bread that's been on his lap throughout.*

*DIM looks at STREAKY in amazement and slowly begins to eat too.*

*PETE turns to say goodbye to MICHAEL.*

**MICHAEL:**

Will you come and sit with us again, Pete?

**PETE:**

*(Shaking his head.)* I'm going abroad tomorrow, for a year.  
That's what the party's for - saying goodbye to my friends.

**MICHAEL:**

That's too bad.

Then, farewell, Pete.

*MICHAEL and PETE shake hands and PETE gives MICHAEL a quick light kiss on the lips.*

*As PETE exits, MICHAEL calls after him.*

**MICHAEL:**

God be with you, my friend!

*PETE smiles and waves as he disappears round the bend in the path.*

**64 EXT:**

**LATE EVENING**

*MICHAEL sits down again. He drinks a couple of times.*

*DIM continues to eat his hunk of bread.*

**MICHAEL:**

Ah, damnation! It's the likes of me that'll be the ruination of the world!  
I meant to tell him my demon dream - my wonderful, demon dream!  
And I forgot! Would you be after believing that? I forgot!

*MICHAEL nurses the wine bottle like a baby.*

**MICHAEL:**

Sure, it'll take all your skill to console me now,  
and you feeling weak and poorly yourself.

**DIM:**

Tell me.

**MICHAEL:**

What?

**DIM:**

Tell me yer demon dream.

**MICHAEL:**

All right. But only if you'll tell me your *dire* thought.

**DIM:**

Streaky must be in the middle.

**MICHAEL:**

Ah, you daft heap of a boy! Come on, then...

*The three men rearrange themselves as when we first saw them.*

*MICHAEL waits for calm.*

As **MICHAEL**'s final speech proceeds, the light slowly fades.

**MICHAEL:**

I'm on an impossible journey. There's a deep well and, somehow, I've contrived a sort of rope attached at the top and wrapped in a curious fashion around my middle - so that I can feed it out as I need it. I'm going to lower myself down this well! (*Laughs.*) And me always terrified of heights! At first, as I begin to go down, hand over hand, I can feel the solid walls of the well in the darkness. They're firm, warm, comforting. When I reach up to test the rope, I can see it stretching up like a silken thread into the night sky. At last, I'm at the bottom. I reach my arms out into the blackness, till they're stretched to their limit and everywhere I reach, there's *nothing*. Nothing at all!

**STREAKY** stops eating and looks scared.

**MICHAEL:**

As I reach into it, it seems to push back at me, this nothingness! It's like a kind of physical presence. I can feel it beginning to stifle me. I'm suffocating! I can't breathe! I'm going to die! And then it hits me that this is the answer! That there is nothing at the bottom of this famous well! Nothing! Sweet pure and perfect NOTHING!

**DIM** stops eating and looks terrified.

**MICHAEL:**

It's a vision of the holy grail! And me, always searching, searching. When there's nothing to find! There is no well! There is no rope! There is no 'up' and no 'down'! Why, there isn't even a 'me' to climb! And, suddenly, I'm filled with a powerful joy, and with a final vast effort I cry aloud: 'I've found it! I've found it! I can perform miracles! I can create a whole universe - out of NOTHING!' And there I am, startled awake, and the sky with a billion stars! And the moon shining down on me, like it knew all the time!

**DIM:**

That was it! That was me dire thought!  
There's nothing, nothing, NOTHING! Oh, the horror of it!

**MICHAEL** leaps to his feet.

**MICHAEL:**

No, no, no! Joy, not horror! Don't you see? We exist! We're alive! The world exists because we're making it - all the time. *We* are! Out of nothing! And if we're making it, we can make it any way we like!

*The sun sets behind the trees.*

**MICHAEL:**

Daily magic!

Wake; look at the sky, the sun, the trees, the clouds! Wonder at it! Love it! God looks through all our eyes! Through yours too, Dim, lad, don't you see? Ah, here's to you, Pete! Bless you, and your Beloved Friend! and all the honest souls like you!

**MICHAEL** turns to camera and toasts the audience.

**MICHAEL:**

And here's to you all - CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE AGE!

**66 EXT: (HAMPSTEAD HEATH)**

**NIGHT**

*We pull away from our three lost souls on their park bench and rise up past the trees until the canopy is left behind and the whole screen fills with a night sky which dissolves into deep space with galaxies of stars.*

**END TITLES**