

ONE DAY

by

David Nicholls

Based on the novel by David Nicholls

This draft (3.0); 8th April 2010

INT. SENATE HOUSE, EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY - DAY

CLOSE-UP: a face against a bright blue sky -

A young woman, 22 years-old. Bright expressive eyes behind NHS spectacles, hair badly-cut, a little awkward, she is pretty, but seems almost annoyed by the fact.

This is EMMA MORLEY. A flash of light causes her to blink.  
CREDITS BEGIN.

VOICE (O.C.)

Perhaps without the spectacles?

REVEAL: the blue sky is a photographer's backdrop. EMMA adjusts her graduate's gown, clutches a scroll, assumes a rather self-conscious facial expression she calls 'pride'. Another flash. Enough -

EMMA

Can I go now?

The next fresh young graduate steps before the backdrop. Attractive, self-confident, possibly a little drunk, this is DEXTER MAYHEW, 23 years-old, handsome, confident, he needs no prompting to pose for the camera.

Standing on the sidelines with her proud PARENTS, EMMA glances over, amused. DEXTER catches her eye -

CREDITS CONTINUE -

INT. GRADUATION PARTY, EDINBURGH - DAY

CREDITS CONTINUE. A last-gasp student party. EMMA MORLEY laughs with her best friend TILLY - flamboyant drama type - pretending not to be aware that she's being watched by -

DEXTER, a little drunk, in conversation with his flatmate CALLUM (scruffy, even drunker).

DEXTER

'Anna'?

CALLUM

*Emma.* Her name's Emma Morley, Emma or Em.

DEXTER

I thought she was called Anna?

CALLUM

You've been here four years.

Over to EMMA, TILLY hissing through gritted teeth.

TILLY

He's coming over! He's coming, oh God, calm,  
calm, calm...

(TILLY turns - flirtatious)

Hello, you!

DEXTER

(to EMMA)

We've never really met.

EXT. GARDEN, GRADUATION PARTY, EDINBURGH - NIGHT

CREDITS CONTINUE. The party has spilled out into the garden now.

EMMA

I write a bit. But everyone says that, don't  
they? Go up to any girl here and say how's the  
writing? and not one of them would say 'what  
writing?'

DEXTER can't look away.

DEXTER

What d'you write?

EMMA

The usual rubbish. Plays, poetry. That's where  
the big money is, apparently. Poems.

DEXTER

I'd love to read them.

EMMA

No, you wouldn't.

DEXTER

You're absolutely right, I wouldn't.

She laughs. Meanwhile TILLY and some drama-types have produced an acoustic guitar and a tambourine and are beginning an assault on the Simon and Garfunkel songbook.

EMMA

A tambourine. Time to leave.

DEXTER

Really?

EMMA

If I'm not home by midnight I turn into - I  
don't know - an idiot!

(offering her hand)

Nice to meet you, finally -

DEXTER

I'll walk you home.

EMMA regards him - a decision.

EMMA

Come on then.

EXT. EDINBURGH OLD TOWN - NIGHT

CREDITS CONTINUE. They walk together through the winding streets of the Old Town, bottles in their hands - a perfect midsummer night, the bells of St Giles chiming midnight.

EMMA

..well that's what I believe anyway. It's important to make a difference. You know, actually change something.

DEXTER

What, change the world?

EMMA

Well, maybe not the *whole* world.

(he takes her arm. She hesitates, carries on)

I expect you've got your future all mapped out. Probably got a little *list* somewhere -

DEXTER

Hardly.

EMMA

So go on then. What's the masterplan?

DEXTER

Head back to London tomorrow, then travelling. China, India...

EMMA

'Travelling'. Why not just say I'm off on holiday for three years?

DEXTER

Because travel broadens the mind.

EMMA

I suspect you're probably a bit too broad-minded as it is.

And he takes this as his cue to kiss her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Well this is a bad idea.

And they kiss again. TITLE - ONE DAY.

INT. HALLWAY, EMMA'S FLAT, EDINBURGH - NIGHT

They continue kissing as they stumble into EMMA's flat.

EMMA

So - this is me!

Kissing, laughing, they tumble towards the bedroom.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM, EDINBURGH - NIGHT

The usual paraphernalia; albums, posters, photos. A bottle of wine, an ashtray, clothes discarded on the floor.

EMMA, a little self-conscious, still in her underwear, talks as DEXTER nuzzles at her neck.

EMMA

Anyway, I didn't mean what are you doing tomorrow or this time next year, I meant the future-future. What are you going to be when you're, I don't know...forty?

DEXTER

Forty? Good god, forty. Can I say famous? Rich?

EMMA

Terrible. Just a terrible human-being -

DEXTER

The thing is, Em -

EMMA

'Em'? Who's 'Em'?

DEXTER

I thought people called you Em.

EMMA

Yeah, friends call me Em -

DEXTER

So I can't call you Em?

EMMA

Aw, go on then, Dex.

DEXTER

The thing is, Em, I've decided I'm going to stay exactly as I am right now.

EM takes him in, eyes closed, cigarette dangling.

EMMA

You look like you're waiting for someone to take your photo.

DEXTER

You want me to go?

EMMA

Not sure.

DEXTER

So if I'm so awful -

EMMA

- which you clearly are -

DEXTER

- then why are we having sex?

EMMA

Actually, I don't think we have yet -

DEXTER

Well, that depends -

EMMA

- unless I dozed off -

DEXTER

- on your definition -

Suddenly EM breaks away, sits, wraps a sheet around her.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

EMMA

To brush my teeth. Booze and fags.

DEXTER

I don't mind.

EMMA

I do. No playing with yourself while I'm gone -

DEXTER slumps back in the bed. He looks at the clock - 04.45 15 JULY. A 'Thatcher Out' poster glares down at him. A sigh - *What am I doing here?*

INT. BATHROOM, EMMA'S FLAT, EDINBURGH - DAWN

In the mirror a gleeful EMMA brushes her teeth, assesses her complexion.

A shelf of late-'Eighties wholesome toiletries; oatmeal scrubs and raspberry face-wash. She grabs a deodorant, applies it liberally, stops, sniffs, peers at the label -

EMMA

Peach. Peach?

Cursing, she starts to swab at her armpits with a flannel, checking her reflection once more. A pep talk -

EMMA (CONT'D)

Concentrate. Do not cock this up.

EXT. HALLWAY, EMMA'S FLAT, EDINBURGH - DAWN

In the cluttered hallway, the graduation cloak and mortarboard have been discarded, and EMMA pulls these on, giggling, leaning mock-seductively into -

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM, EDINBURGH 1988 - CONTINUOUS

DEXTER is getting dressed.

EMMA

Oh. You are going.

DEXTER

It's getting light out, so -

EMMA

(too quick-)

I don't want you to go.

(then reversing-)

I mean I want you to go if you want to go, ships that pass in the night and all that, very poignant -

DEXTER  
I just thought you might  
need some sleep -

EMMA  
- very, I don't know,  
'bittersweet' -

DEXTER  
- but if you don't want me  
to go -

EMMA  
No, go, I'm not bothered.  
You sneak off -

DEXTER  
I wasn't sneaking off, I  
just thought -

EMMA  
- jump out the window for  
all I care. Five floors up,  
mind -

DEXTER  
Fine, I'll stay -

EMMA  
I'd like that.

DEXTER  
You do want me to stay?

EMMA  
Just to, you know - cuddle.

Bucks to each other, self-conscious, they start to get undressed, EMMA pulling on a T-shirt that demands *Nuclear Disarmament Now*.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Can't believe I just said 'cuddle'.

DEXTER  
Least it wasn't 'snuggle'. Or 'smooch'.

EMMA  
Let's promise never, ever to smooch.

An awkward little smile before they settle back into bed. EMMA picks up the clock -

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Nearly morning. No more lectures, no more exams.  
Just real life.

DEXTER  
St. Swithin's Day.

EMMA  
What's that then?

DEXTER  
15th July. It's a tradition. If it rains today it'll rain all summer. There's a poem. 'If on St. Swithin's Day it doth rain, something something something again'

EMMA  
Dexter, that's *beautiful*.

DEXTER  
Go to sleep.  
(he closes his eyes)  
Can you smell...peach?

EMMA  
(change the subject)  
Dex?

DEXTER  
Em?

EMMA  
If it doesn't rain?

DEXTER  
Hm?

EMMA

D'you want to do something? Me and you?

On DEX - a decision.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE UP. Bright sunlight on DEXTER's face. He opens his eyes. A WOMAN lies with her back to him.

DEXTER

Bonjour.

The WOMAN turns, smiles, kisses him -

Not EMMA.

EMMA (V.O.)

*My dear, dear friend...*CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

EMMA (V.O.)

*Soon I will have completed the novel that I spoke of so passionately when last we met...*

INT. PUB THEATRE, FULHAM - DAY

C.U. An old-fashioned fountain pen, spluttering ink. EMMA speaks aloud in a strangulated 'posh' voice.

EMMA

It is indeed a strange creature...

REVEAL: EMMA is writing, dressed as Virginia Woolf and sporting a not entirely convincing prosthetic nose.

EMMA (CONT'D)

*I have called it To The Lighthouse in fond recollection of those summers we spent together...ever yours, Virginia...Woolf.*

Piano arpeggios. Bizarrely EMMA starts to sing, a little tentatively. Perhaps also a little flat.

EMMA (CONT'D)

*'To the Lighthouse, I long to get/To the Lighthouse, away from the Blooms-bur-y set...'*

REVEAL: we are in a fringe theatre, a shabby room above a pub. EMMA suddenly breaks off from the awful song -

EMMA (CONT'D)

Sorry, sorry can we stop a second?  
 (to TILLY, EMMA's flatmate, the  
 director, sat in the empty  
 auditorium)  
 Can we do something about this?  
 (- the false nose -)  
 No wonder she killed herself. I'm going to have  
 someone's eye out with this -  
 (storming off-stage)  
 It's a disaster, Tilly. I'm a disaster. I can't  
 do this.

TILLY

Let's have a break, shall we? Take five  
 everyone...

INT. PUB THEATRE, FULHAM - DAY

EMMA pumping coins into a payphone -

DEXTER (O.S.)

I'm sure it's not a *disaster*.

EMMA

Dexter, I'm going to get lynched. That's if  
 anyone comes.  
 (in a whisper)  
 - and Tilly's sending me mad. The flat's a dump,  
 my room's got no windows, I keep finding teeth-  
 marks in the cheese and her big grey bras  
 soaking in the sink -

INT. BEDROOM, PARIS - DAY

As DEXTER listens and dresses, the WOMAN showers.

EMMA (O.S.)

- and London's so big and  
 depressing, I might give  
 up, go home. Are you still  
 there? Is someone with you?

WOMAN

(shouting from the  
 shower)

Dexter! Come and join me!

DEXTER

No-one, just the cleaning-lady. Listen, Em, you  
 can't give up. Nothing truly good was ever easy.

EMMA (O.S.)

Who said that?

DEXTER

You did.

EMMA (O.S.)

Did I? That's annoying.

INT. PUB THEATRE, FULHAM - DAY

EMMA

My money's running out. Sorry for moaning I just  
really wanted to -  
('hear your voice')  
How's teaching?

DEXTER

It's fine. Very fulfilling.

EMMA

Well don't sleep with any of your students.  
It's unethical, and predictable. La vie  
Parisienne, tu aimes? Parle-tu Francaise  
comme sa langue maternalle?

DEXTER

I have no idea what you've just said.

EMMA

Dexter, you're meant to be teaching  
languages.

DEXTER

Listen, Em, I've got to go -

EMMA

Apologise again for me, will you? I didn't mean  
to call your dad a fascist -

DEXTER

A *bourgeois* fascist -

EMMA

Oh, God. Say sorry. And Dexter?  
Tu me manques. Tout le temps.  
(the money runs out)  
Look it up.

The buzz of a dead connection. She rests her head against the  
wall, sighs. TILLY approaches, gingerly -

TILLY

Sorry, are you in character?

EXT. CAFE, SAINT SULPICE, PARIS - DAY

Now late for his appointment, DEXTER runs through the tourist  
crowds.

In the chic little cafe that faces the church of St. Sulpice, an  
elegantly dishevelled woman waits, eyes closed, a book in her  
hand, face turned towards the sun.

This is ALISON MAYHEW. Early '50s, attractive, humorous, carrying with her an air of having been something-in-the-Sixties. DEXTER watches her fondly as she flirts with the handsome WAITER, her hand on his arm.

DEXTER approaches, startling his mother with a kiss.

ALISON

Forty-five minutes late.

DEXTER

Sorry. Tutorial.

ALISON

You look tousled. Who's been tousling you? And where were you last night? You were meant to be meeting us for dinner.

DEXTER

Language School disco. Two-hundred drunken Swedish girls Vogue-ing.

ALISON

Vogue-ing. I'm pleased to say I have no idea what that is. Did you have fun?

DEXTER

It was hell.

ALISON

Your father's gone back to the hotel for a lie-down. His *sandals* were chafing his *corns* through his *socks*. So continental.

(DEXTER laughs, ALISON regards him fondly)

So. Tell me about your love-life.

DEXTER

No!

ALISON

Come on, you know I have to live vicariously through my children now. Who's been writing you all these long letters?

DEXTER

None of your business.

ALISON

Don't make me steam them open again. Is it that girl who came to stay?

DEXTER

Which one?

ALISON

Nice girl, very earnest. Called your father a bourgeois fascist.

DEXTER

- sucking the blood of the working classes.  
Emma. Yes, she's sorry about that.

ALISON

Oh I don't mind. Least she had a bit of spark, not like the usual silly little things I hear tip-toeing to your room in the middle of the night.

DEXTER

Emma and I are just good friends.

ALISON

You're sure about that?

DEXTER

She's not my type -

ALISON

- which is exactly why I liked her.  
(she takes his hand)

Walk with me.

EXT. RUE JACOB, PARIS - DAY

ALISON hangs affectionately on her son's arm as they walk through the elegant back streets of the 6th arrondissement.

ALISON

...but how much holiday do you need? It's not like you did any work at Uni.

DEXTER

I'm not on holiday, I have a job.

ALISON

Teaching Beatles songs to dreamy-eyed girls, it's hardly a vocation.

DEXTER

I'll settle on something soon.

ALISON

But what?

DEXTER

I'm weighing up my options. Journalism?  
Documentaries? Photography maybe.

ALISON

I remember that school project of yours.  
'Texture'! All those close-ups of *gravel*!  
(she starts to laugh)  
And shoes! Rows of old shoes...

DEXTER

When you're finished?

ALISON

Sorry! Sorry, I apologise. Don't pout. If photography's what you want to do, then do it. But do it with some love, some passion. You can be anything you want, Dexter. You're young and healthy and educated and you look okay, I suppose, in a low light. But you mustn't let time slip away from you. One day things might not be this...serene, and it would be good if you were prepared. Equipped.

DEXTER

You sound like dad.

ALISON

Do I? I don't mean to. I just want you to have some purpose, some ideals, like your friend Emma.

(she takes his arm)

I want you to make me proud, that's all. Of course I'm already proud of you, but...

They approach the hotel. DEXTER's father STEVEN waits, lanky, a little stern, uncomfortable in tourist's shorts, examining his feet.

ALISON (CONT'D)

Isn't that Alain Delon? Ah, no, it's your father, picking his corns. Socks and sandals; *c'est chic*. Take me for lunch tomorrow, will you? Just me and you. Somewhere quiet with white tablecloths. I want to talk to you.

DEXTER

(suddenly concerned)

Why? Is something wrong?

ALISON

No, nothing's wrong.

DEXTER

So why do we need to-?

ALISON

Do I need a reason? I simply want to talk to my handsome son. Tomorrow. We'll talk properly tomorrow.

Music up; A mariachi band plays LA CUCARACHA.

INT. LOCO CALIENTE, KENTISH TOWN - DAY

But we are not in Mexico, we are in Kentish Town, in a run-down Tex-Mex restaurant where EMMA, in garish baseball cap and T-shirt, waits to take an order. Reciting a script -

EMMA

Ola amigos and welcome to Loco Caliente where the food and the atmosphere are hot hot hot.  
Arriba!

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

CUSTOMER

Can you tell me - what's the difference between a tortilla and a taco?

EMMA

(fast, by rote)

A tortilla's either corn or wheat, but a corn tortilla folded and filled is a taco whereas a filled wheat tortilla is a burrito. Deep-fry a burrito, it's a chimichanga. Toast a tortilla, it's a tostada, roll it, it's an enchillada unless you fold it and fill with cheese in which case it becomes a quesadilla.

CUSTOMER

Can you...repeat that?

*Keep smiling, keep smiling...*

INT. LOCO CALIENTE, KENTISH TOWN - DAY

EMMA is showing the new staff member the ropes. Pleasant, large-faced, a little bumbling, he shakes her hand vigorously.

IAN

Halooo, I'm Ian, Ian Whitehead -

EMMA

The new boy. Ian - welcome to the graveyard of ambition...

INT. KITCHENS, LOCO CALIENTE - DAY

EMMA takes IAN on the tour of the down-at-heel restaurant. Very fast, on the move -

EMMA

Meet Rashid, our chef - what this man can do with a microwave and a deep fat-fryer.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

That pork chop's still down the side of the  
fridge, Rashid -  
(moving on)  
Tell me, comadre, what brings you down Mexico  
way?

IAN

Well, you know - gotta pay the rent.

EMMA

And is there nothing else you can do? Sell a  
kidney or something?

INT. STAIRWAY, LOCO CALIENTE, KENTISH TOWN - CONTINUOUS

EMMA

What's your stroke?

IAN

My...?

EMMA

Waiter-stroke-actor, waiter-stroke-model, waiter-  
stroke-writer...

IAN

Well, I'm a comedian!

EMMA

God, really?

IAN

Just starting out, you know, working on my -  
(finger quotes, funny voice)  
- 'unique comedy stylings'! Not jokes so much,  
more wry little observations -

EMMA

(under her breath)

Ay caramba -

INT. STAFF ROOM, LOCO CALIENTE, KENTISH TOWN - CONTINUOUS

IAN

-like I do this whole bit about the difference  
between men and women, how women say one thing  
when they mean -

EMMA

(opening a door)

Toilets! Staff toilets. Sorry, you were saying -

IAN

I'm doing a gig tonight, if you were interested.  
In Willesden, House of Laffs, spelt L-a-f-f-s

EMMA

Ian, I'd love to but after work I like to head home, comfort eat, weep...

IAN

Oh, well. Another day maybe. What about you?

EMMA

What about me?

IAN

Your stroke? What do you really do?

EMMA

(a deep breath)  
Oh, this. This is what I do.

Music up; A mariachi band plays LA CUCARACHA

INT. LOCO CALIENTE, KENTISH TOWN - DAY

EMMA

...a chimichanga is a burrito deep-fried, toast a tortilla, it's a tostada, roll it, it's an enchillada unless you fold it and fill it with cheese in which case it becomes a quesadilla...

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER. IAN arrives -

IAN

Golden Boy's here -  
(EMMA looks around)  
He's got a new one. Table 12.

- where DEXTER and a GIRL are kissing voraciously. This is INGRID - model-beautiful, fashionable.

INT. LOCO CALIENTE, KENTISH TOWN - DAY

Rather awkwardly, EMMA has joined DEX and INGRID, who are drinking gaudy cocktails.

DEXTER

Ingrid's a researcher on the TV show, that's what she does now anyway - she used to be a catwalk model, until - you tell her, Ingrid -

INGRID

My breast's got too big for the catwalk.

DEXTER

Isn't that the greatest thing you've ever heard in your life?

EMMA

So today's special is the pulled pork  
quesadilla -

INGRID

Not for me. Got to go. I'm DJing tonight.

EMMA

(under her breath)

Of course you are.

INGRID

(kissing DEXTER)

Maybe I'll come and wake you up, hm?

DEXTER

Hm, that sounds nice.

EMMA stands patiently. IAN is watching her, a distance away. She catches his eye, smiles. He smiles back - smitten.

EXT. STREET, KENTISH TOWN - DAY

A lovely summer's evening. Post-shift, EMMA and DEXTER walk away from the restaurant.

DEXTER

We were just kissing!

EMMA

You were trying to fit your entire head in your mouth. Sat *straddling* each other, it's disgusting. What does she see in you anyway, this Ingrid.

DEXTER

She says I'm complicated.

(A beat then they both laugh.)

D'you know what I think?

EMMA

What d'you think, Dexter.

DEXTER

I don't think you should ever, ever go back there. Just walk away.

EMMA

But my job is my life!

DEXTER

You see? You can't throw away years of your life just because it's funny.

EMMA

Okay, wise one. What should I do?

EXT. PUB, LONDON - NIGHT

Drunk, sentimental, EMMA and DEXTER sit in the pub.

DEXTER

Publishing -

EMMA

No jobs -

DEXTER

Television! I could get you a job in television -

EMMA

Not everyone wants to work in the media, Dex -

DEXTER

- or teaching. You'd be a great teacher.

EMMA

(her hair to her nose)  
My hair smells of cheese. Monterey Jack.

DEXTER

Em -

EMMA

I'm sorry.

(her head on his shoulder)  
I just feel a bit...lost, that's all.

DEXTER

Everyone's lost at twenty-five.

EMMA

You're not! Trainee TV producer, nice new flat,  
CD player. Group sex Tuesdays and Fridays -

DEXTER

I still think you should write something.

EMMA

Tried that. Failed. I think I'm going to be one  
of those women who are always trying things.

DEXTER

D'you know what I'd give you, if I could give  
you just one gift for the rest of your life?  
Confidence. Either that or a scented candle.

EMMA

(she laughs)  
You're nice. And I'm drunk. I should go home.

She stands, but impulsively he takes her hand.

DEXTER

I've got an idea. I think you need a holiday.

EMMA

What? Me and you?

INT. RHODES AIRPORT, GREECE - DAWN

Exhausted from a dawn flight, EM and DEX stand on the travelator.

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER. (NOTE - no more spectacles for EM. Contact lenses from now on.)

EMMA

Fine, but we're going to need some guidelines if this is going to work. Rules of engagement.

DEXTER

Such as -

EMMA

- separate bedrooms. Wherever we stay, no shared beds, no drunken cuddles.

DEXTER

I don't see the point of cuddling anyway. Cuddling gives you cramp.

EMMA

Agreed then, that's Rule One.

JUMP CUT: At the baggage carousel. A rucksack for DEXTER, an unwieldy suitcase for EMMA.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Rule Two. No flirting.

DEXTER

Well I never flirt, so -

EMMA

I'm serious. No having a few drinks and getting frisky. Scary Ingrid, remember? And that's Rule Three. No running off with anyone else. I don't want to look up and find you rubbing oil into Lotte from Stuttgart.

EXT. FERRY TERMINAL, RHODES - DAY

Tired and dusty from their journey, EMMA and DEXTER board their ferry.

EMMA

Okay. Rule Four. No nudity.

DEXTER

Really?

EMMA

Total or partial. I don't want to see you shower or have a wee or have a wee in the shower, and absolutely no skinny-dipping.

DEXTER

I can't promise that..

EMMA

You've got to, Dex, it's the rules.

EXT. FERRY, AEGEAN SEA - DAY

An idyllic island rises out of the bluest sea. EMMA stands at the rail, relishing the breeze and sun on her face.

The click of a shutter. EM turns, and DEXTER snaps again.

DEXTER

What d'you think?

EMMA

(hiding a great grin)

S'alright.

EXT. VILLAGE/HARBOUR - DAY

The village is small and picturesque, spreading up the hillside over the quiet harbour.

EMMA

So what happens now?

DEXTER

You stay here with the bags, I'll go find somewhere.

EMMA

A balcony, please, and a writing desk. A sea-view -

DEXTER

Yes, ma'am -

EMMA

And Dex?

He turns. In her summer dress, with the first glow of a tan on her face, she looks quite lovely.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Rule Number One.

DEXTER  
Remind me?

EMMA  
Separate bedrooms?

DEXTER  
Absolutely. Separate bedrooms.

INT/EXT. GUEST HOUSE BEDROOM, GREEK ISLAND - DAY

DEXTER and the LANDLADY stand in a bright, light, pleasant room. There's a writing desk, a balcony that opens up onto a view of the harbour and town square. He steps out.

From the balcony he can see EMMA dozing against their luggage, her face turned towards the sun. She pulls the straps down on her summer dress, exposing her shoulders.

DEXTER  
We will need two rooms.

LANDLADY  
Okay, I have second room.

DEXTER  
So you do have two rooms?

LANDLADY  
Sure, two rooms. No problem.

DEXTER turns, looks at the double bed. He sits on it, bounces experimentally.

INT. GUEST HOUSE BEDROOM, GREEK ISLAND - DAY

EMMA sits on this bed, suitcase by her side.

DEXTER  
She only has one room.

EMMA  
Ah.

DEXTER  
(an exasperated sigh)  
I know! What can I do?

EMMA

But what about the Rules?

DEXTER

Perhaps we should see them more as  
...guidelines?

(EMMA frowns)

I don't mind if you don't mind -

EMMA

No, I know you don't mind -

DEXTER

Fine! Fine, I'll tell her we don't want it, keep  
looking -

EMMA opens the doors out onto the balcony.

EMMA

Lemons. Actually in trees. Never seen that  
before. They look stuck on.

(to DEX)

It's perfect. Thank you.

EXT. BEACH, GREEK ISLAND - DAY

The beach is perfect too, just three or four other tourists. With a whoop, DEXTER hurls himself into the water. EMMA, in her summer dress, watches and smiles.

The beach is not a natural environment for EM. She unlaces her Doctor Marten boots. DEX returns, handsome and tanned -

DEXTER

Excuse me, but aren't you the Girl from Ipanema?

EMMA

No, I'm her fat Aunt.

Lifting her summer dress over her head, EMMA catches DEXTER's eye. She wears a conservative but stylish black one-piece swimsuit. She sits and starts to apply thick white lotion.

DEXTER

What is that?

EMMA

My swimsuit. It's called 'The Edwardian'.

DEXTER

No, the house-paint.

EMMA

Factor 40. I burn!

She's struggling to reach her back.

DEXTER

Here, let me...

A moment, then she shuffles between his knees, her back to him as he applies the thick cream. A situation. By way of distraction, EM grabs his ankle; a small tattoo.

EMMA

I've not seen this before.

DEXTER

I got it in Thailand. It's a yin-yang.

EMMA

Looks like a road-sign.

DEXTER

It means 'the perfect union of opposites.'

EMMA

It means 'end of national speed-limit'. It means wear some socks.

DEXTER

(he laughs, his hand on the base of her spine)

Scooped quite low, isn't it?

EMMA

Good job I didn't put it on backwards.

They both wince; a kind of delicious agony.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Think I'll go for a dip.

And she stands and walks self-consciously towards the sea, her hand instinctively reaching round to adjust the material at the backside of her costume.

On EM - Oh God!

On DEX - Oh God!

EXT. BEACH, GREEK ISLAND - DAY

Later now. EMMA is reading Dostoyevsky, DEX is failing to read a copy of 'The Face'. Something is distracting him -

DEXTER

This is a nudist beach.

EMMA

No it's not.

DEXTER

It is. Look -

She does so. Sure enough, three other couples are naked.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

They're *barbecuing*!

EMMA

You see I couldn't do that. Barbecue naked.

DEXTER

Prude.

EMMA

I'm not a prude. Basic health and safety.

DEXTER

I'd barbecue naked.

EMMA

What's it like on the Wild Side? Your magazine's upside down.

(he corrects this, goes back to reading. A beat)

I can hear you thinking. It's like this grinding noise. The answer is no -

DEXTER

Just seems rude not to somehow. Everyone else is doing it!

EMMA

That's no reason. That's how fascism started.

DEXTER

You don't think we'd feel more comfortable naked?

EMMA

Un-believable, just unbelievable -

DEXTER

But *why* not?

EMMA

The Rules! Not to mention your girlfriend -

DEXTER

Ingrid's very open-minded. She'd've had her top off at the check-in desk.

EMMA

Well I'm not Ingrid.

DEXTER

What's the difference?

EMMA

Well as you keep pointing out, Ingrid was a model.

DEXTER

So? You could be a model. For catalogues or something.

EMMA laughs, swipes at DEXTER with her book.

EXT. VILLAGE/HARBOUR - DAY

Tanned, tired, they walk slowly back to their room.

DEXTER

Of course it's nothing we've not seen before.

EMMA

Can we change the subject?

DEXTER

That night. After graduation. Our one night of love. I'm just saying we've got no surprises, genetically speaking.

EMMA

I'm going to be sick -

DEXTER

You must remember though -

EMMA

I've blanked it out, like a car-crash.

EMMA

I haven't. In fact if I close my eyes, I can still picture you -

EMMA

Don't do that - stop please

-

DEXTER

Yep, there you are, provocatively unclasping your dungarees -

EMMA

I was *not* wearing dungarees.

DEXTER

You do remember then.

EMMA

I don't remember.

(they walk a little further)

Have I caught the sun?

She closes her eyes, turns her face to him for inspection. DEXTER takes her in.

DEXTER  
You look...fine.

INT. TAVERNA, GREEK ISLAND - NIGHT

EMMA and DEXTER, both glowing and a little drunk, sit at a pleasant beach-side taverna. The WAITER pours ouzo.

EMMA  
(to the WAITER, in Greek)  
Ef-hah-rees-toh po-lee!

WAITER  
(delighted)  
Ah, mee-lo kah-lee?

EMMA  
Eh-lee nee-kah, eh-lee nee-kah.  
(enchanted, the WAITER leaves. EM shrugs)  
I bought a tape.

And now a new arrival. A GIRL, clutching a pen and paper, her GIRLFRIENDS nearby watching, giggling.

GIRL  
You're that presenter, aren't you? Off *Largin' It!*

DEXTER  
Guilty as charged!

GIRL  
Could you? To 'Sam'?  
(he signs)  
Can I just say I think you're brilliant.

DEXTER  
Yes, Sam, you *can* say that.

GIRL  
(to EM)  
You are a very lucky lady.

EMMA  
I know! I keep pinching myself.

SAM giggles, and goes back to her pals.

DEXTER  
(with studied nonchalance)  
Well - that was weird!

EMMA

It's not going to change you, is it? Being very, very, very slightly famous.

DEXTER

(the GIRLS are waving)

I wouldn't say I was 'famous' exactly.

EMMA

Dexter, you've interviewed MC Hammer.

(the GIRLS are staring)

If you want to join your friends -

DEXTER

I'm happy here. We should toast.

EMMA

Okay. To your success.

DEXTER

No. To us. To Em and Dex.

They clink glasses, drink, wince...

EXT. VILLAGE/HARBOUR - NIGHT

And now they've taken the bottle of ouzo, and are sitting on the harbour wall.

EMMA

Awkward silence!

DEXTER

Not awkward. Comfortable

(beat)

Hey, I've got an idea.

EMMA

I'm not skinny-dipping -

DEXTER

Let's tell each other something we don't know. A secret.

EMMA

Well this is going to end in tears.

DEXTER

You first.

EMMA

Really? Oh God. A secret.

(she downs her ouzo)

Right, here we go -

(she makes her eyes sultry; her seduction-face)

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

When we were at University, before we spoke even, I used to see you around and...I had a crush on you. Ridiculous, I know, but when we almost, you know, *did it* that night, I couldn't believe it 'At last'! I was nuts about you all that summer, wrote poems and everything...

DEXTER

Poems? Really?

EMMA

I'm not proud of myself. Anyway. There you go. My big secret. What have you got to say to -

DEXTER

I already knew.

EMMA

(horribly let down)

What d'you mean you *knew*?

DEXTER

Tilly told me. Also I sort of guessed; all those long heartfelt letters...

(EM fixes her smile)

So what happened, what went wrong?

EMMA

(a shrug)

I got to know you. You cured me of you.

DEXTER

I still want to read these poems. What rhymes with Dexter?

EMMA

Prick. It's a half-rhyme.

Her confession hasn't gone nearly as well as she hoped.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I don't like this game anymore. Too much ouzo. We should go home.

DEXTER

(remorseful, making amends)

Not yet. Let's go for a walk, shall we?

EXT. BEACH, GREEK ISLAND - NIGHT

They walk in silence along the beach, stopping at the sea's edge; an exquisite phosphorescent glow.

DEXTER

Ah - the Mediterranean.

EMMA

The Aegean, technically. It's still lovely though. S'like an aquarium. S'like if you scooped it up it would glow in your hands.

(beat)

Bloody hell, I am drunk.

But DEX has an idea. He starts to undress.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Oh, 'ello. What's going on here?

DEXTER

A swim, to sober us up.

EMMA

But I haven't got my...oh, oh, I get it. I've walked right into it, haven't I? You get a girl drunk, lead her to a large body of water...

DEXTER

Be spontaneous, be reckless! Live!

(naked now)

So. Are you coming or not?

EMMA

(averting her eyes)

No!

DEXTER

Em, you are such a prude. Why are you such a prude?

And he runs into the surf, EM watching his naked back.

EMMA

You could at least leave your underpants on!

Rule Number Four, remember?

(swaying, alone)

Prude, am I? Yes, I am. Well we'll see...

And she reaches down, and with a giggly stagger, pulls her dress over her head.

Out to sea, DEX turns just in time to see naked EMMA stumble forward into the sea. He gathers his thoughts as she splashes towards him -

And they're together, breathless, naked beneath the water.

EMMA (CONT'D)

So, this is skinny-dipping! What am I meant to do, sort of lark about? Splash you or something?

(she does so. DEX takes her hand)

Oh. That's a very serious face. Hey, you're not having a wee are you?

DEXTER

I just wanted to say, I felt the same. When we had our...near-miss. I mean I didn't write *poems* or anything, I'm not insane, but I thought about you. Think about you. You and me.

EMMA

(her heart racing)

Really? Okay. Right, well...

DEXTER

Problem is I fancy pretty much *everyone!*

EMMA

(smile frozen)

Oh. I see.

DEXTER

I mean anyone! It's like I've just got out of prison all the time. Walking down the street, I see a glimpse of bra-strap and I'm stupid with it. *Everybody's* my type! It's a real problem.

EMMA

I can imagine.

DEXTER

This thing, with Ingrid, it's a sex thing. It's just sex, sex, sex, sex -

EMMA

- yes, the point's been made Dex -

DEXTER

- but you and me, well, it would be different. I think we'd want different things, and I don't think I'm ready.

EMMA

Fine. Forget I mentioned it.

(feeling foolish)

Has it got cold? Think I'll head back.

DEXTER

However! If you wanted to, you know - have a bit of fun -

(taking her hand)

A fling, no obligation, not a word to anyone, well - I'd be up for it.

EMMA

Up for it.

DEXTER

Yes. Up for it.

A long moment. EMMA puts her hand to his face - then pushes it under water. She stands there, holding DEX's head beneath the surface, ignoring his splashes, until she has gathered herself -

DEXTER (CONT'D)  
So that's a no, then.

EMMA  
I think so. I think our moment's passed.

DEXTER  
Really? Because I think we'd feel much better if we got it out of the way!

EMMA  
- sort of like having your tonsils out -

DEXTER  
I'm not expressing myself very clearly -

EMMA  
No, you are. That's the problem.  
(he's peering over her shoulder)  
I like you, Dex, God knows why, but -

DEXTER  
OIIIIIIII!

Now DEXTER is stumbling past her, heading towards the beach, where a group of TEENAGE BOYS are running off with his clothes, laughing, trousers waved like a flag...

EM watches as DEXTER chases them into the night.

EXT. BEACH, GREEK ISLAND - NIGHT

As EMMA gets dressed, DEXTER walks back towards her, hand clasped between his legs.

EMMA  
Any luck?

DEXTER  
Nothing! Armani, those trousers. Little bastards even took my underpants.

EMMA  
Armani?

DEXTER  
Gucci.

EMMA  
Dex, I am so sorry -

DEXTER

What kind of bastard steals someone's  
underpants?

EMMA

There's no justification for it -

DEXTER

Bastard!

EMMA

- thank God you still have your flip-flops.

DEXTER

You know how I'm going to find him? I'm going to  
look for the only well-dressed kid on this whole  
bloody island...

(EM's shoulders are shaking with  
suppressed laughter)

It's not funny! Look at me! I'm a victim of  
crime!

EMMA

I'm sorry, it's just...now I remember!

And she's in hysterics now, curled up on the sand.

And now DEXTER himself is laughing. He sits on the sand behind  
her, as they laugh and laugh and laugh...

EXT. VILLAGE/HARBOUR - NIGHT

They walk as nonchalantly as possible through the busy harbour,  
DEXTER struggling to maintain his dignity with a plastic bag held  
around his waist.

INT. GUEST HOUSE BEDROOM, GREECE - NIGHT

They lie in chaste parallel, both staring upwards.

EMMA

Dex?

DEXTER

Em.

EMMA

Your Gucci underpants. They'll turn up, I know  
they will.

(DEX narrows his eyes)

And I'm glad I'm here.

He smiles, and she turns the light out.

CUT TO BLACK:

DEXTER (O.S.)

God, I love you, Em. Just so, so much. I think I always have...

INT. CLUB, BRIXTON, LONDON - NIGHT

Music up: YOU'VE GOT THE LOVE by CANDI STANTON. DEXTER is on a pay-phone, high on ecstasy.

DEXTER

I think you're just...incredible.

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

INT. EMMA'S FLAT, EARLS COURT - DAWN

EMMA sits in her dressing-gown in the kitchen of her new flat, a mug of tea in her hand.

EMMA

And I'm touched, Dex, but you're off your face. It's five in the morning, go home, you've got a big day -

INT. CLUB, BRIXTON, LONDON - DAWN

DEXTER

Hey, how come we've never got together? We'd be great, Em and Dex, Dex and Em, everyone says so...

EMMA (O.S.)

Dex, I'm serious. Promise me you'll go home. Please?

A PRETTY GIRL has arrived, and is snaking her arm around DEX, massaging his shoulders.

DEXTER

I will. Goodnight, Em. And remember, you are absolutely truly amazing.

(He hangs up. To the GIRL)

Hellooooooo!

PRETTY GIRL

Hellooooooo!

DEXTER

You are absolutely amazing.

PRETTY GIRL

No, you're amazing. And famous!

DEXTER  
Well not *famous*...

PRETTY GIRL  
But you are! You're amazing.

DEXTER  
No, you're amazing. Who are you?

INT. CLUB, BRIXTON, LONDON - DAWN

DEXTER dancing with the GIRL in the arches of the club, eyes closed, lost in the music, out of his mind -

Jump cut; DEXTER signs his autograph on the bare belly of THE GIRL. They start to kiss -

INT. BATHROOM, DEXTER'S FLAT - DAY

DEXTER stands beneath the jet of the shower, eyes closed, his face haunted and pale - the come-down.

INT. DEXTER'S FLAT, BELSIZE PARK - DAY

A bachelor's paradise, stuffed with high-end hi-fi, an immense TV, stacks of CDs, mixing-desks. DEXTER opens the fridge door, pours orange juice, vodka - a lot of vodka. He goes to drink. He notices his hand is shaking -

Now dressed in a smart shirt, DEXTER is already sweating. By the door is a gift-wrapped parcel and a VHS cassette. He grabs these and leaves.

INT. SPORTS CAR, MOTORWAY - DAY

Teeth clenched, perspiring, DEXTER drives at speed. He blinks once, twice, jabs at the CD player. Dance music -

The blare of a horn. A lorry bears down him, just metres away. DEXTER is driving in the middle of two lanes. He swerves, loses control, knuckles white on the wheel -

EXT. MOTORWAY - DAY

DEXTER is parked on the hard shoulder, breathing fast.

EXT. MAYHEW FAMILY HOME, OXFORDSHIRE - DAY

A comfortable upper-middle-class home in leafy Oxfordshire - DEXTER sits in the car and regards it with dread. His father approaches. DEXTER stumbles out to greet him.

STEVEN MAYHEW is usually mild-mannered but deeply troubled now. DEXTER's clumsy, inappropriate embrace startles him -

DEXTER

How are you, old man?

STEVEN

Your mother's in the garden. She's been waiting for you all morning. Good God, you're sweating. Why are you sweating?

DEXTER

How is she?

INT/EXT. GARDEN, MAYHEW HOME - DAY

DEXTER steps out into the bright day.

ALISON MAYHEW sits looking out over her large, pleasant garden. As DEXTER approaches, it becomes clear that she is now very frail, very thin. Cancer has taken a terrible toll. Even so, she smiles at seeing her son approach.

DEXTER

(holding it together)

Hellooo there!

ALISON

Hello stranger. You're sweating.

DEXTER

It's a hot day.

(the parcel)

A present. Not from me, I'm afraid. From Emma.

ALISON

I could tell because it's wrapped. Yours come in bin liners. When they come at all-

(She opens the parcel - a pile of novels.)

How lovely. A little ambitious maybe. You might want to push her towards short stories in future.

DEXTER

Mum. Don't.

ALISON

Thank Emma for me. And you? What have you been up to?

DEXTER holds up a video cassette...

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

An outrageous, late-night TV show - Largin' It; girls in bikinis are deluged with brightly-coloured sludge.

A grinning DEXTER looks on.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MAYHEW HOUSE - DAY

DEXTER and ALISON watch the VHS of the above, deeply uncomfortable.

DEXTER

It's not all like this...  
(fast forwarding)

I'll skip this next bit. There's an interview that's pretty good...

Fast-forwarded images, garish and bright.

ALISON

Perhaps I'll watch it later.

She turns the TV off. An awkward silence.

DEXTER

Just a bit of fun. Live shows are always patchy -

ALISON

I understand. And you're very good, very...natural. I suppose I just don't care for this sort of thing. Honestly, Dexter, dancing girls in cages...

DEXTER

Well it's not really for people like you.

ALISON

'People like me'?

DEXTER

It's a bit of fun for kids, to watch after the pub -

ALISON

You mean I'm not drunk enough?

DEXTER

No, not that -

ALISON

I'm not a prude, Dexter, I just don't like seeing people humiliated.

DEXTER

No-one's humiliated! It's fun!

ALISON

You keep saying it's fun, are you trying to convince me or yourself?

DEXTER

I just host it! I smile and I ask pop stars about their exciting-new-video. It's a means to an end, that's all.

ALISON

But to what end? We always said you could do anything you wanted. I just never thought you'd want to do this.

DEXTER

What do you want me to do?

ALISON

Something good.

DEXTER

It is good! In its own terms -

ALISON

But you wanted to be a photographer, you wanted to make documentaries -

DEXTER

But this is what I can do. I'm good at it, and I enjoy it.

ALISON

Well you must do what you enjoy.  
(conciliatory)

And I know you'll do other things, in time...  
(pause)

Let's not argue. I'm sorry, the medication makes me ratty. I'll be better tonight.

DEXTER

Actually, I have to leave this afternoon.

(ALISON takes this in)

I have a premiere tonight. I can't skip it, it's Jurassic Park!

ALISON

Well. The life you lead!

She goes to stand. DEXTER leaps to help her.

ALISON (CONT'D)  
I'm afraid I'm going to need some help.

INT. HALLWAY, MAYHEW HOME - DAY

DEXTER carries ALISON upstairs, awkward, self-conscious.

ALISON  
My hero.

INT. ALISON'S BEDROOM, MAYHEW HOME - DAY

ALISON lies on her side in the darkened room.

DEXTER  
Can I get you anything? Water? Dry martini?

ALISON  
Just close the curtains.

He does so. Then tries to find something to say. Then goes.

INT. DEXTER'S BEDROOM, MAYHEW HOUSE - DAY

DEXTER lies asleep in his childhood bedroom, evening sunlight on his face. He opens his eyes, sees his teenage photographic project still pinned to the wall; pretentious black and white close-ups of gravel, rows of shoes. He smiles to himself.

Then he sees the clock radio by the bed - 1815. He swears, sits suddenly -

ALISON is at the end of the bed, watching over him.

ALISON  
Sleeping beauty.

DEXTER  
I must have dozed off.

ALISON  
I'm afraid you've missed our day. You're father's a little angry with you.

DEXTER  
Seems everyone is.

ALISON  
Poor Dexter.  
(pats the bed next to her)  
(MORE)

ALISON (CONT'D)

I'm not angry with you. Not *just* you. I'm angry with everyone who isn't sick.

DEXTER

I'll stay tonight.

ALISON

No, you go. That's no pleasure for me, watching you and your father snarling at each other. I want us to have fun. We've always had fun, haven't we?

(her head on his shoulder)

Can I speak frankly?

DEXTER

Do you have to?

ALISON

I think so. I think it's my prerogative. I know that you're going to be a fine young man; decent, loving, accomplished. Happy, because that's all a mother can really ask for.

(she takes his hand)

But I don't think you're there yet. I think you've got quite some way to go, and right now I worry...well, that you're not very nice anymore.

DEXTER takes this in.

DEXTER

There's nothing I can say to that.

ALISON

There is nothing that you have to.

And they sit there in silence.

EXT. VILLAGE TRAIN STATION - DAY

A simmering STEVEN has dropped DEXTER at the station.

DEXTER

I think you're being ridiculous. You can't confiscate my car keys.

STEVEN

I'm not going to argue. You can come back at the weekend, sober, and get the car then. There's a train at 7.15.

DEXTER

Fine. Though I would just like to say you're completely over-reacting -

And his father snaps -

STEVEN

Do not *dare* to insult my intelligence! You are not a child, so stop behaving like one.

(DEXTER shocked.)

Your mother loves you very much, and I do too, you know that. But in whatever time she has left to her...

(his voice breaks)

If you ever, ever, come and see your mother in this state again I will not let you in the house. I will close the door in your face. I mean this. Now. Go.

And he crunches the car into gear and drives off. Shaken, DEXTER watches him go.

INT. HALLWAY, EMMA'S FLAT, EARLS COURT - DAY

EMMA inspects herself in the hallway mirror, all dressed up.

She tries a smile, which makes her frown. Despite her scowls, she looks wonderful. She hurries out -

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY, EMMA'S FLAT - CONTINUOUS

- walks towards the lift, then hears the phone ring. Should she answer? She checks her watch again - no time. She hurries off to the lift. The answering machine -

DEXTER (O.S.)

...pick up, pick up. You're not there. I just remembered, it's your hot date tonight isn't it? I'm too late.

The lift door closes.

EXT. VILLAGE, TRAIN STATION - DAY

Pale, shaken, heavy with self-loathing, DEXTER speaks urgently into the phone.

DEXTER

Call me when you get this, I...well, I just want to talk to someone. Not someone, you. I'm sorry, another lunatic phone-call. It's just I've done something so bad, Em. Call me. Hope the date goes well. You heartbreaker, you.

He hangs up, then hangs his head. A wreck.

INT. CINEMA - DAY

Screams. A sword neatly decapitates a zombie, sending the head flying.

The movie is *Evil Dead 3: Army of Darkness*. EMMA winces, a little bemused. In the seat next to her, IAN WHITEHEAD, her old colleague from the restaurant, whoops and tucks into an immense bucket of popcorn.

EXT. CINEMA - NIGHT

They leave the cinema. IAN wears his stand-up uniform - old T-shirt, jacket with sleeves rolled up, razor burn.

IAN

A work of timeless beauty. A chainsaw for an arm - mad! If I had one criticism, I'd say that it wasn't violent enough. Hey, you didn't mind, did you? Or did you want to see *Three Colours Blue*?

EMMA

No, I enjoyed it. It was...fun.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT, LONDON - NIGHT

EM reads the menu in a classic 'date restaurant'.

IAN

Now I'm going to skip a starter 'cause I had those nachos, but you go ahead, my treat, have anything you want, up to a value of, say, £14.00? No, seriously, have anything. Don't go crazy but, you know, within reason. Sorry! Burbling on. It's just, it's so good to see you again after all these years!

(he hugs her across the table,  
knocking over various bottles,  
glasses..)

I did leave you messages. I wrote too, several times...

EMMA

Well I've been busy, with the course...

IAN

And you're going to be an amazing teacher. Wish I'd had teachers like you. Not that I'd've got any work done, Miss Morley!

INT. DEXTER'S FLAT, BELSIZE PARK - NIGHT

DEXTER, home now, checks his answering machine. 'You have NO messages'. He sighs, looks up. The bottle of vodka is where he left it that morning -

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT, LONDON - NIGHT

Onto the second bottle of wine, but no more relaxed -

EMMA

How's the stand-up comedy?

IAN

Oh, you know - bit hit and miss as usual. I've been doing this improv comedy night, where people shout out suggestions and sometimes I find myself just...standing there. Frozen. And of course people heckle and someone threw a glass last week but then that's all part of the fun of improv, isn't it?

(EMMA looks unsure)

I think I might give it up, stick to the more observational stuff. Like I do this whole routine about the difference between cats and dogs, how dogs come up to you and they're all like -

EMMA

Please, stop!

(IAN is a little thrown)

Sorry, I mean you don't have to. Be funny. We can just...talk.

IAN

What d'you want to talk about?

EMMA

Whatever occurs to you.

A long silence.

IAN

Nope. Dried! All gone. Not an idea in my head. I'm no good at this -

EMMA

Ian -

IAN

You know the worst thing about being a stand-up comedian?

EMMA

Is it the clothes?

IAN

It's that people always expect you to be 'on'. Because if you're not being funny, what are you being? And I've been so excited about seeing you, so nervous, I've been practicing and practicing...

EMMA

*Practicing?*

IAN

Observations, little remarks, quips -

EMMA

Ian, it's not a performance.

IAN

Except it sort of is, isn't it?

EMMA

Not with me. I wouldn't be here if I didn't want to be.

(she takes his hand)  
It's nice to see you again, Ian.

IAN

Emma Morley, can I just say something?

EMMA

Go on.

IAN

I think you're the absolute bollocks.

EMMA

(she smiles)  
You with your honeyed words.

INT. DEXTER'S FLAT, BELSIZE PARK - NIGHT

DEXTER returns to the fridge for more vodka, phone pressed to his ear, pretty drunk now.

DEXTER

Pick up, pick up, pick up! I'm home now. Call me as soon as you get back. How's the date going? Is he making you laugh? Is he laughing you into bed?

He pours yet more vodka - no orange this time.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, LONDON - NIGHT

IAN and EMMA walk along, having a much better time now.

DEXTER (O.S.)

*I want to know! I want to see you, Em. Call anytime. I'll be waiting for you.*

EMMA

I'm going to be one of those inspirational teachers, like in films. One of those seize-the-day-types, sat astride a chair, talking about how Shakespeare was the first rapper and the kids are just going to gaze up, adoring. That's the idea anyway. They'll probably eat me alive, the little sods.

The summer night has clouded over -

EMMA (CONT'D)

*It's starting to rain.*

IAN

Sorry about that.

EMMA

*Ian, I'm pretty sure it's not your fault. I should head home.*

IAN

*Don't go! I mean...let's go somewhere else. I live quite near. It's a dump actually, just awful, but there's music, alcohol, hot milky drink if you prefer.*

On EMMA's decision, rain coming down harder now -

A phone rings. An answering machine picks up.

DEXTER (O.S.)

*Okay, just coming up to midnight now.*

INT. DEXTER'S FLAT, BELSIZE PARK - NIGHT

DEXTER lies on the sofa, a bottle of vodka open at his side.

DEXTER

Call me any time. I'm not going anywhere. Or just come round -

*(the doorbell rings)*

Maybe that's you now. Christ I hope so...

And with the phone pressed against his chest, he stumbles down the hallway and opens the door -

DEXTER (CONT'D)

*(on the phone)*

Some other time maybe.

He hangs up -

REVEAL: INGRID is there, cool and aloof, straight from a party, her hair and dress wet from the rain.

Without a word, lifting her dress over her head, INGRID walks towards the bedroom.

DEXTER follows without a word.

INT. EMMA'S FLAT, EARLS COURT - DAY

EMMA wakes in her double-bed - alone. 6.30 a.m. A clock radio clicks on. The morning news; the war in Yugoslavia, O.J. Simpson.

A working day, she gets up, shuffles bleary-eyed to -

INT. HALLWAY/BATHROOM - DAY

IAN is sat on the toilet, reading 'Watchmen'.

IAN  
Won't be a sec...

EMMA closes the door, sighs.

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

The beginning of rehearsals for DEXTER's new TV show. DEXTER is running through his script, coffee in hand -

DEXTER  
'Greetings boys and girls, and welcome to Late and Loud, the show that's late and, well, loud! And what a show we've got for you -

A STAGE MANAGER arrives, with a guest -

STEVEN  
I've helped myself to tea and buns, I hope I'm not going to get you into trouble.

His father looks even more out of place amongst the cables, the cameras, the dancing girls.

STEVEN (CONT'D)  
Well, this is all most impressive, I must say.  
Your very own television show.

From the other side of the studio, a bellow of WAAAHAY! His co-presenter, professionally 'bubbly' SUKI MEADOWS, has leapt into the arms of AARON, their agent.

DEXTER

There's Suki too. You should meet Suki.

STEVEN

No, I don't want to get in anyone's way. I just wanted to call by, say good luck. Your mother would've been...most impressed.

DEXTER

Thanks, dad.

STEVEN

I'll be watching if I can stay awake. Have fun, and don't pay any attention to what they say in the papers.

On DEXTER - pardon?

INT. BUS, NORTH LONDON - DAY

C.U. A photo of DEXTER, a headline;

IS THIS THE MOST ANNOYING MAN ON TELEVISION?

EMMA stands on the packed bus, reading the newspaper, IAN peering over her shoulder, gleeful.

IAN

They've got a point haven't they?

EMMA

Ian! Be nice.

IAN

Well I never liked him.

EMMA

Yes you've said that. Many, many times.

IAN

(the bus stops)

Now, you on the other hand -

(a kiss)

Love you, snootch.

EMMA

I thought we agreed to drop 'snootch'?

DEXTER

But you're just so damn *snootchy*!

EMMA  
(sceptical)  
Is that right?

IAN squeezes out of the bus. EMMA returns to the headline.

INT. TV STUDIO, LONDON - DAY

DEXTER talks on the phone, the newspaper in front of him.

EMMA (O.S.)  
It's not completely negative.

DEXTER  
I'm 'the king of car-crash television.'

EMMA (O.S.)  
But you're the *king* of it. That's good.

INT. STAFF ROOM, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL - DAY

EMMA sits in the dingy staff room. Noticeably, she wears a pretty vintage dress; a party dress.

EMMA  
Dex, I want you to take the newspaper now, tear it in half, and throw it away.

DEXTER (O.S.)  
I wish you were coming tonight.

EMMA  
I can't. You know I can't -

DEXTER (O.S.)  
But you're not here, mum's not here. I'm worried I'm going to be live on air and I'll just freeze and think - what's the point?

EMMA  
Hey come on, that's enough. She would have been so proud, Dex.

Another TEACHER runs in, MRS MAJOR, flustered.

MRS MAJOR  
Emma, come quickly! It's like a zoo, you can't leave them for one minute, not one minute. I said you were asking too much of them!

INT. TV STUDIO, LONDON - DAY

EMMA (O.S.)

I've got to go, a riot's broken out apparently.  
You'll be fine, more than fine, you'll be  
wonderful. Talk later...

She's gone. DEXTER sighs, drops the newspaper into a bin.

INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY

On the set of a production of 'Oliver!', two London urchins are brawling. A crowd of KIDS in Victorian outfits, stick on beards and side-burns, urge them on.

EMMA

Right, that's enough...I said ENOUGH!

The crowd quieten down. EMMA regards them all, a commander inspecting her troops.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Look at you. Look at how great you look in your costumes. Look at Samir there with his stick-on beard

(KIDS laugh, SAMIR blushes.)

She notices PHIL GODALMING, the headmaster, slide into the gym, forty years-old, handsome. With studied informality, he sits astride a chair.

EMMA (CONT'D)

In one hour your mums and dads and teachers are going to be sitting here and I think they're going to see something amazing. But only if we work together! Okay? I can't hear you!

KIDS

Yes, Miss Morley!

EMMA

Now go finish getting ready, run your lines, be back here in ten minutes for a warm-up. And then let's knock 'em dead!

The KIDS disperse. MR GODALMING approaches.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Can't believe I just said 'knock 'em dead'.

MR GODALMING

Very inspirational.

EMMA

This business we call 'show'!

MR GODALMING

So what can we expect tonight, Emma?

EMMA

Could go either way. They're taking it very seriously. Oliver's been in character for the last six weeks. I think if he could he'd have contracted rickets.

MR GODALMING

We've not had a school play here for five years. No-one's dared. I'm very grateful for your hard work.

EMMA

Thank you, headmaster.

MR GODALMING

Please - call me Phil. I seem to be sat astride this chair.

EMMA

Yes, I noticed.

MR GODALMING

(standing)

Sorry about that. Good luck tonight. I'll see you at the party

(he goes, then turns)

You look lovely by the way. The dress -

EMMA

(a little flustered)

Oh. Thank you.

And he smiles and goes, leaving EM a little flustered.

INT. DRESSING ROOM, TV STUDIO - NIGHT

In his presenter's outfit, DEXTER performs a delicate operation. He takes a bottle of vodka and carefully decants it into a water bottle. He takes a swig -

- then hides the bottle just in time. A girl bursts into the room, a ball of energy, boisterous, attractive, LOUD; his co-presenter SUKI MEADOWS. At speed -

SUKI

WAAHAY! There he is! The star of the show! Come here, gorgeous!

(wraps herself around him)

Are you excited? I'M excited. I'm PSYCHED! I'm MAD FOR IT! WHOOP-WHOOP!

(DEXTER flinches)

You alright?

DEXTER

I'm fine, you just whooped in my ear, so -

SUKI

We're going to be AMAZING, you and me. Dex and Suki, Suki and Dex. Come here -

A big kiss, DEXTER a little overwhelmed. Behind his back, she grabs the bottle of water/vodka, and before DEX can stop her...

DEXTER

Actually, Suki, that's mine...

Too late. SUKI is coughing, spluttering. Sombre now, she looks at a shame-faced DEXTER.

SUKI

Dex - are you pissed?

A FLOOR-MANAGER arrives.

FLOOR-MANAGER

Dexter, Suki, you're on -

He goes. SUKI is still glaring.

DEXTER

Just to...loosen me up. I'm ready, I'm fine. I swear.

SUKI

You'd better be. 'Cause I'm not carrying you, pal.

And she turns and walks away. Loud music up, as DEXTER walks out with the solemn trudge of a condemned man. Applause, whooping, cheering, as -

INT. SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

- the children take their bow at the end of the show. The audience are on their feet, IAN leading the whooping and cheering as EMMA is hoisted onto the shoulders of the young cast, beaming, laughing.

In the audience, MR GODALMING watches and smiles, his wife FIONA next to him.

INT. TV STUDIO, LONDON - NIGHT

DEXTER is attempting to interview a HIP-HOP GROUP, but they're talking over him, the LEAD SINGER leering at the camera, ignoring his questions. A close-up - behind the fixed smile, there is panic in DEXTER's eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM, EMMA'S FLAT, EARL'S COURT - NIGHT

EMMA watches the above through her fingers, wincing. IAN stands in the doorway just as the LEAD SINGER pours a glass of water over DEXTER's head.

EMMA presses pause, smiles. But too slow. IAN sees the face on the screen - a flicker of jealousy.

IAN

Turn that off, superstar. Come to bed...

He goes. EMMA glances at the screen; DEXTER frozen in his humiliation. She turns the TV off.

The sound of a smoke alarm, shrill, insistent.

INT. SPARE ROOM, WALTHAMSTOW FLAT - DAY

In the tiny spare room of her new flat, EMMA, scruffy in pyjamas, works through a great pile of exercise books -

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

- but the noise of the smoke alarm is too distracting.

INT. KITCHEN/DINER, WALTHAMSTOW FLAT - DAY

IAN stands on a chair in a smoke-filled kitchen, waving a tea-towel under the alarm. Bacon burns in a pan in a kitchen full of packing cases. Paint pots, old newspapers. Stripped wallpaper hangs forlornly off the walls.

EMMA

I thought you were stripping the wallpaper?

IAN

I can have breakfast first can't I?

EMMA

We've had breakfast.

IAN

Fine. Brunch, then! How's it going?

EMMA

Thirty-four identical essays on *Lord of the Flies*.

IAN

Bear hug, snootchy?

(EM raises her eyebrows)

(MORE)

IAN (CONT'D)

Sorry - slipped out. Can't seem to say the right thing these days!

And he goes back to making his sandwich. With a sigh, EM goes and puts her arms around his waist.

EMMA

If you don't want me to go -

IAN

No, you go -

EMMA

Or if you want to come with us -

IAN

Dexter ignoring me, you talking over me -

EMMA

It won't be like that -

IAN

Besides I've got a gig tonight, Mister Giggles at the Rose and Crown.

EMMA

A paid gig?

IAN

Yes, paid! You go out, have fun. Just don't get off with him, will you?

EMMA

Well, that's hardly likely to happen, is it? He's going out with Suki Meadows.

IAN

And if he wasn't?

EMMA

It wouldn't make the slightest bit of difference, because I love you.

IAN

Do you?

EMMA

Do I!

(but there's something awkward, unconvincing about this. Escape -)

Better get back to it then.

IAN

Em?

(She turns. IAN bites his sandwich.) About seventeen hundred hours, fancy a spot of, you know, afternoon delight?

She stands in the doorway, smiling, not sure what to say -

EXT. SOHO STREET, LONDON - NIGHT

EMMA, self-conscious in her party best, waits while DEXTER talks on his mobile phone.

DEXTER

(on phone)

Suki, you *mentalist*! Yeah, I'll see you at the par-tay, but my friend's here now - Emma, you've met her - Yes you have! - You have! - Yes, that one. Whoop-whoop to you too. Got to go. Laters!

(to EMMA, finally -)

Hey you! Come here...

An awkward half-embrace as DEXTER fiddles with his phone.

EMMA

(the mobile phone)

You do know they give you brain damage.

DEXTER

They do *not* give you brain damage.

EMMA

But how can you tell?

DEXTER

Ha. It's not 1988 anymore, Em. Six months, six months and you'll have one.

EMMA

(they shake on it)

You're on. If I ever get a mobile phone, you can buy me dinner.

DEXTER

What, again?

(an awkward beat)

You look amazing. Quite feminine.

EMMA

Aw, thank you!

DEXTER

And the shoes!

EMMA

It's the world's first orthopaedic high-heel.

(He laughs. Relief)

So - where are you taking me?

INT. SOHO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The cocktail lounge of an expensive Soho restaurant. EM stands awkward and alone by the bar.

Nearby DEXTER flirts outrageously with a CIGARETTE GIRL, startlingly sexy in retro stockings and corset.

A CUSTOMER and his GIRLFRIEND approach her.

CUSTOMER

We have a reservation for 8.15...

EMMA

Oh, I'm not a waitress.

CUSTOMER

Oh, I'm sorry, I thought...

And they dissolve into laughter, leaving just as DEX returns.

EMMA

Who's your new friend?

DEXTER

Cigarette Girl. It's sort of a retro-glam-thing.  
This place is famous for it.

EMMA

What, women dressed as prostitutes?

DEXTER

Well maybe her thick woolly tights are in the wash.

(drains his martini)

She doesn't mind, she probably feels empowered.  
Post-feminist, isn't it?

EMMA

Oh, is that what we're calling it now?

DEXTER

It's not 1988 anymore, Em.

EMMA

What does that mean? You keep saying it, and I still don't know what it means.

The pretty COCKTAIL WAITRESS has arrived.

DEXTER

Could we get two?- no, one more martini,  
Bombay Sapphire, very cold, very, very dry  
with a twist of lime.

(to EMMA)

I've become something of a mixologist.

EMMA

Misogynist?

DEXTER

Mixologist.

EMMA

Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you said  
'misogynist'.

A moment, while they stand there in awkward silence.

INT. BOOTH, SOHO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They're in their booth now, DEXTER fidgety, coked-up.

DEXTER

So. How's the king of comedy?

EMMA

Ian's fine, we both are.

DEXTER

Still very much in love?

EMMA

He can belch the alphabet, why wouldn't I be?  
I'm flesh and blood.

DEXTER

And your new house?

EMMA

The flat's brilliant. Well it's a depressing  
dump actually, but it's got loads  
of...potential. You should come up some time and  
see it.

(DEX non-committal)

How's Suki?

DEXTER

Fantastic. Gorgeous, mad, just this incredible  
ball of energy.

EMMA

She's certainly bubbly.

DEXTER

She *is* bubbly. And what's great for me is she  
understands the industry, what it's like to  
be...I was going to say famous, but I hate that  
word -

EMMA

Every time I turn on the telly, she's there in a little spangly top shouting 'wahay!' She's doing incredibly well.

DEXTER

Yeah, well we both are.

An awkward moment. Defensive -

DEXTER (CONT'D)

I've got lots of really exciting stuff coming up, but's all in development; if I told you I'd have to kill you!

EMMA

Please, do.

DEXTER

Aaron, that's our agent, he thinks I should take a break anyway. He's worried there's a danger I'll be over-exposed.

EMMA

I can see how that might happen.

DEXTER

Start without me.

Standing suddenly, he takes his drink and goes.

EMMA

(to herself)

Laters.

EMMA sighs, lets her head fall forward into her hands.

INT. BOOTH, SOHO RESTAURANT - NIGHT

EMMA sits doing origami with her menu as the food gets cold. Looking up, she sees DEXTER talking to the pretty CIGARETTE GIRL again. He nods towards EM, touches the CIGARETTE GIRL on the arm, gives her a slip of paper, then heads back and stumbles into his seat.

EMMA

Maybe you'd like her to join us? Or she could sit here and I'll go home -

DEXTER

Hey, I'm here to see you, remember?

EM picks at her food. For something to say -

DEXTER (CONT'D)

How's teaching?

(EMMA sighs)

What! What have I done now!

EMMA

If you're not interested, don't ask!

DEXTER

I am interested! I just thought you were going to write this novel -

EMMA

And I will, one day, but I also have to earn a living. More to the point I enjoy it. I'm a bloody good teacher, Dexter!

DEXTER

I'm sure. Still you know what they say.

EMMA

What do they say?

DEXTER

(a little anxious now)

You know; 'those who can...'

EMMA

Sorry, I'm not familiar. Finish the sentence.

A stand-off. Finally -

DEXTER

Those who can, do, those who can't, teach -

EMMA

- and those who can teach say go fuck yourself.

And she stands, and storms out, knocking over the drinks. Swearing, mopping his suit, DEXTER follows.

DEXTER

Whatever I've done, I'm sorry!

EMMA

What, you don't know?

DEXTER

This is stupid, you're just a bit drunk -

The following on the move, very fast.

EMMA

No, you're drunk! I've not seen you sober for, what, three years? Nipping off to the toilet every ten minutes - either you're on coke or you've got dysentery and either way it's boring!

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Banging on about yourself all the time, me, me, me. It's like I've won a prize, a night out with Dexter Mayhew! I wouldn't mind, but you're a TV presenter, Dex. You've not invented penicillin, it's TV, and crap TV at that. All you do is stand around shouting 'make some noise'!

On the staircase now, she stumbles on her heels, the whole restaurant watching.

She's helped to her feet by the CIGARETTE GIRL. DEXTER, too, takes her arm.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Don't touch me! Do NOT touch me!

And fighting back tears, she heads out -

EXT. STREET, SOHO - CONTINUOUS

They push through the evening crowds into a quiet alley at the side of the restaurant. Both take a deep breath.

EMMA

Why are you being like this?

DEXTER

I'm having fun, that's all! A lot's happened to me and sometimes I get ...carried away. If you weren't so judgemental all the time...

EMMA

Am I? I try not to be. And I know you've been through a lot, with your mum and all, but...there are things I needed to talk to you about, how I'm stuck in this terrible flat with a man who I love but I'm not in love with, and also I don't even love, and if I can't talk to you about these things, then what's the point of you? Of us?

DEXTER

'What's the point'?

EMMA

I think we've grown out of each other. No, you've grown out of me. You think I'm uncool and dreary...

DEXTER

Em, I do not think you're dreary.

EMMA

Neither do I! I think I'm fucking marvellous as a matter of fact, and you used to too. But if it's over then maybe we should just face it. Say goodbye.

DEXTER  
(with failing bravado)  
It sounds like you're dumping me.

EMMA  
I suppose I am. You're not who you used to be. I liked the old Dex. I want him back, but in the meantime...I'm sorry.

Tearful now, she starts to walk away. To her back.

DEXTER  
Hey, come on Em. I apologise! Let's start tonight again. Em? Please?

And then suddenly she turns, runs back into his arms.

EMMA  
(whispers in his ear)  
Dexter, I love you so much, so so much, more than you can ever know.  
(she kisses him once)  
I just don't like you anymore. I'm sorry.

Then she runs back into the crowded street, and is gone.

DEXTER stands alone in the alley, unsure what to do next.  
He turns, and a little unsteadily, walks back to the bar.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

C.U. of EMMA staring at the ceiling. A male figure, half-dressed, collapses on top of her.

EMMA  
While I've got you here, 4B need more copies of *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

He rolls over - her boss, PHIL GODALMING.

Fade in CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

MR GODALMING  
I'll pull some strings  
(nuzzling at her neck)  
God, I'm going to miss this. Six whole weeks without you. I'll go crazy.

EMMA  
Well at least it'll give the carpet burn a chance to heal. And there's always your wife to fall back on.

EMMA starts to retrieve her discarded clothes. We're in the headmaster's office after hours; a bottle of warm white wine and two tea mugs, sofa cushions on the floor.

MR GODALMING

Are you angry with me for some reason?

EMMA

No, Phil, this is idyllic. I suppose one day I'd just like to make love on furniture that doesn't stack.

MR GODALMING

Hey, don't be like this. This is our last time 'til September. Come here -

(his phone is ringing)

Buggeration, it's Fiona -

(fingers on lips)

Shhhh. Not a word -

(he answers)

Hello darling! No, my meeting overran that's all, I'm just finishing up now...

Hugging her clothes, EMMA sits in the evening sun, melancholy.

INT. CORRIDOR, COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL - EVENING

EMMA

Phil, before you go, I've got to say something -

MR GODALMING

Fingers on lips! I got you a present -

(from his briefcase - a new mobile phone)

Top of the range, so we can talk anytime. I don't think I'll be able to hack it otherwise, not for six whole weeks.

(EMMA holds the box, smiles)

What's up? You don't like it?

EMMA

No, I just lost a bet with someone that's all. Thank you, it's very...practical.

MR GODALMING

I'd kiss you but the cleaners might see.

EMMA

Is that Keats?

MR GODALMING

I love you, Emma Morley.

EMMA

No, you don't.

MR GODALMING  
(wagging his finger)  
I think I'd know, don't you? Hm?

INT. FLAT, HACKNEY - NIGHT

Carrying bags of groceries, EMMA unlocks the door of her flat and hesitates; noise. She groans and enters;

IAN stands in the bedroom, going through drawers; photos and papers scatter the floor. In beard and ancient T-shirt, visibly drunk, he is a mess.

EMMA  
Looking good, Ian.

IAN  
Get stuffed, Emma.

EMMA  
Nice comeback. Is that from the act?

IAN  
No, though I do have this new thing I've been working on. I come on and I say, here's a funny story, you'll like this, there's this guy, nice enough, going out with this girl, loves her, worships her, they buy a flat together, he gets an engagement ring, the lot - turns out she's in love with her best friend -

EMMA  
I've got to warn you now, Ian, I'm not in the mood for this -

EMMA (CONT'D)  
That's not the reason, Ian, as I've told you a hundred -

IAN  
No? Here's the punchline -  
(notebook in hand)  
How does he find out? He reads her poetry!

Eyes blazing, EMMA flies at him, grabbing at the notebook-

EMMA  
You bastard. Give me that!

IAN  
Ah, graduation night, the shared bed, that magical week in Greece, all the *longing*, it's all here, in black and white.

EMMA  
Have some dignity, will you? Learn some self-respect, because if you ever, ever come here and go through my things, I swear I will call the police...

IAN  
Fine, call the police! It's my flat too!

EMMA  
Is it? I paid the mortgage, you just sat around farting and watching *Wrath of Khan*!

IAN  
Not true, that is just not true -

EMMA  
God, I hate this place, I've always hated this place.

IAN  
How can you say that? This was our home!

EMMA  
I wasn't happy, Ian, couldn't you see that?

IAN  
Don't say these things, please Em...

Desperate, he tries to embrace her, both of them crying now. EMMA resists, then relents.

IAN (CONT'D)  
This is hell. Ever since you left me, I'm in hell, Em.

EMMA  
Ian, I'm sorry, but what can I do?

EMMA can say nothing. She stands, holding on to IAN.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HACKNEY FLAT - NIGHT

Some time later, and they lie tangled up on the sofa.

IAN  
Good job we didn't get married.  
(IAN presses his face against her hair, taking in the scent)  
Sorry for going through your stuff. I've been a bit mad, that's all.

EMMA

S'alright. Don't do it again though.

IAN

It's good, by the way. Not the poems, the poems  
are awful, but the other stuff, the stories.  
You're funny, proper funny. Not like me.

EMMA

Ian -

IAN

All I mean is you should show them to someone.  
You're better than you know.  
(he sits)  
I miss you, Em.

EMMA

I know you do.

IAN

I feel sick with it. Right here.  
(his hand to his chest)  
Either that or it's trapped wind.

EMMA

Either way, it'll pass.

IAN

Still, I miss it. Ian and Em, Em and Ian.  
( - on EMMA - )  
Don't suppose you're going to change your mind?  
(EM shakes her head)  
Righto. No harm in asking.  
(he goes to the door)  
I still think you're the bollocks, mind.

EMMA smiles, and IAN tries to smile too. He turns, opens the door, kicking the bottom so that it appears he has struck his face. Comedy! EMMA smiles dutifully at the gag.

INT. BEDROOM, HACKNEY FLAT - NIGHT

And now EMMA is on her knees, cleaning up the devastation of IAN's rampage through her possessions.

Photos. On the terrace in Greece, Em and Dex. EMMA sits, stares, very much alone.

INT. LIVING ROOM, HACKNEY FLAT - NIGHT

An empty bottle of wine and the new mobile phone lie on the coffee table, as EMMA struggles to read the instructions, then gives up.

She starts to channel-hop. Then stops -

A late-night, low-budget show -

INT. 'GAME ON', TV STUDIO, LONDON - NIGHT

Looking paunchy and a little tired, DEXTER reviews computer games.

DEXTER

*Hello night-owls, and welcome to Game On, your chance to find out about the hot new console games coming your way...*

EM puts the TV on mute. It's almost as if DEX is talking directly to her. She smiles, picks up the new phone -

INT. HALLWAY, EMMA'S FLAT, NORTH LONDON - DAY

C.U. of the same phone ringing. EMMA glares at it, takes a deep breath, answers.

EMMA

*I've told you, please, please do not call me on this number.*

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's a purely professional relationship, and if you can't move on...I'm hanging up now, Phil, goodbye! I said goodbye now...

PHIL (O.S.)

*Oh no, Ms Morley, you can't do this, you can't just walk out on us after all we've been through and expect everything to carry on as normal -*

PHIL (O.S.)

*Let's not make this a disciplinary issue -*

EMMA

I beg your - Oh, forget it. I resign.

PHIL (O.S.)

*Resign? You can't resign, Emma. What'll you do...?*

She hangs up, heart-beating fast, elated. She looks around her, taking in her surroundings.

Packing cases. A new flat, a new haircut, new clothes, a new beginning. EMMA sits a moment to take it in.

Then she tosses the phone into a packing case, and continues to unpack.

INT. 'GAME ON', TV STUDIO, LONDON - DAY

A break from filming. DEXTER sits with his agent AARON.

AARON

The bad news is they're cancelling the show.

DEXTER

They are? Shit. Shit.

AARON

Not cancelling it exactly, it'll have the same name, just a different presenter.

DEXTER

So it's the same show -

AARON

- with a different presenter.

DEXTER

You mean - they're sacking me?

AARON

They didn't use the word 'sack', they said they were taking the show in a different direction, a direction that is away from you.

DEXTER

Right. Okay. Well, what's the good news?

AARON

Sorry?

DEXTER

You said that was the bad news, what's the good news?

AARON is silent.

EXT. 'GAME ON', TV STUDIO, LONDON - DAY

AARON and a down-beat DEXTER step out into the daylight.

AARON

Every career has its ups and downs; this is just a massive, bloody great down. I sense disenchantment, Dexy.

DEXTER

I'm just a little concerned about my future. It's not what I expected.

AARON

The future never is. That's what makes it so fucking *exciting!*

(the lift's there)

People do love you, Dex, but in an ironic, love-to-hate kind-of-way. We just need to get someone to love you *for real*.

INT. TV STUDIO, LONDON - DAY

DEXTER pumps money urgently into a cigarette machine. Nothing happens. He jabs at the buttons.

DEXTER

Not you too, you inanimate *bastard* -

The WOMAN at the adjacent vending machine looks over.

WOMAN

Perhaps it's telling you to give up.

(offering the packet)

Dried apricot?

She is pale, slim, ethereal, smartly-dressed. From somewhere DEXTER digs up his old smile -

DEXTER

Can I smoke it?

(she smiles, barely)

I'm Dexter...

WOMAN

I know who you are.

DEXTER

Well I'm glad someone still does.

(chewing dried apricot)

This is disgusting, by the way.

SYLVIE

(offering her hand)

My name's Sylvie. Sylvie Cope

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

DEXTER is practicing in the mirror.

DEXTER

I love you, Sylvie Cope. No, I think I might be in love with you...

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

You know, I've never said this to anyone before, well, not sober, but I think I might be...no, just 'I love you'. I love you, Sylvie.

EXT. GARDEN, COPE FAMILY HOUSE, SUSSEX - NIGHT

C.U. of SYLVIE, object of DEXTER's affection. Lit by candlelight in the summer evening, she is austereley beautiful. DEXTER stares, unable to believe his luck.

With them are the COPE family - wealthy, handsome, self-confident. MUM, DAD and teenage twins MURRAY and SAMUEL.

MRS COPE

Sylvie tells me you used to be a TV presenter.

DEXTER

Long time ago now.

MURRAY

On 'Largin' It', that terrible programme, d'you remember mummy?

SAMUEL

You used to really hate it.

MURRAY

Turn it off you, you used to say. Turn it off!

MRS COPE

Oh. That was you, was it?

DEXTER

Guilty as charged!

MR COPE

And what do you do now, Dexter? Are you still a presenter?

DEXTER

Not so much these days. That sort of...drifted away.

SYLVIE

What Dexter really wants to do is direct.

The TWINS snigger. A sceptical silence.

MRS COPE

Party games!

INT. LIVING ROOM, COPE FAMILY - NIGHT

Blind-folded, DEXTER and MURRAY kneel on the carpet, playing 'Are you there, Moriarty?', a surprisingly vicious Edwardian parlour game. MURRAY wields a rolled newspaper baton, which he uses to strike out at DEXTER.

MURRAY

Are you there, Moriarty?

DEXTER, blindfolded, attempts to contort out of the way.

DEXTER

Here!

And MURRAY lands a painful blow to DEXTER's ear. Laughter and applause from the family.

MURRAY

Are you there, Moriarty?

DEXTER

Here!

Once again, a vicious uppercut to DEXTER. More applause -

MURRAY

Are you there, Moriarty?

DEXTER

(weary now)

Here.

A demeaning slap to the head. Struggling to remain good-tempered, he tugs the blindfold away to see the family laughing merrily at his expense.

MURRAY

(punching the air)

Yessssss!

SYLVIE

Well I'm still proud of you.

MURRAY and SAM gleefully make the 'L' sign - L for loser..

MR COPE

Right, who's next?

JUMP CUT - as the game continues, DEXTER reaches once more for the wine bottle, glowering dangerously, excluded from the family high spirits.

SYLVIE

Dexter?

(he puts his wine down)

Care to take me on?

The COPE FAMILY think this is a splendid idea. DEXTER has no choice. As MURRAY ties his blindfold.

DEXTER

Are you sure you want to do this?

SYLVIE

Oh, I'm sure.

DEXTER

Ready?

SYLVIE

Whenever you -

And DEXTER suddenly lashes out, a fearsome upper-cut that catches SYLVIE unawares and sends her flying across the room. A terrible gasp of shock and disapproval...

MRS COPE

Darling, darling are you  
alright?

MR COPE

What the hell are you  
doing, man!

SYLVIE struggles to her knees, shaken, nose-bleeding.

DEXTER

I'm sorry, I must have caught her at an odd  
angle. Sylvie, I am so, so sorry.

MRS COPE

YOU DIDN'T EVEN ASK IF SHE WAS THERE MORIARTY!

DEXTER

I'm sorry, I wasn't thinking, I was...

MURRAY

Drunk! You're drunk, that's what it is.

And the accusation hangs heavy in the air.

INT. SYLVIE'S BEDROOM, COPE HOME - NIGHT

DEXTER and a red-nosed SYLVIE lie solemnly in bed.

DEXTER

You know, I think they really like me!

(SYLVIE scowls)

You did say you were ready -

SYLVIE

I don't want to talk about it, Dexter -  
(a kiss goodnight?)  
No. I'll bleed.

She turns her back to him.

DEXTER

Sorry for fucking-up. Again!

She snaps the light out but he has something to say -

DEXTER (CONT'D)

It's like they say; you always hurt the one you  
love!

He waits. And waits. Nothing from SYLVIE.

He sighs, and turns his light out too.

A moment as he lies there in the darkness.

Then DEXTER starts to laugh.

Music; THE ARRIVAL OF THE QUEEN OF SHEBA by HANDEL, played on a church organ. *Wedding* music...

INT. STATELY HOME, SOMERSET - DAY

A BRIDE progresses to meet her GROOM, her dress a fantasia of white satin and lace, her face obscured behind a veil.

EXT. STATELY HOME, SOMERSET - DAY

A beaten-up VW screeches diagonally to a halt on a grand gravelled driveway. EMMA, looking wonderful but harassed in a blue silk oriental-style dress, tosses her car-keys to a uniformed VALET.

EMMA

The doors don't lock and there's no reverse and no hand-brake. Park it on level ground or up against a tree. Thank you...

Music can be heard from the house. EMMA removes her high heels and runs across the lawn.

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER

INT. STATELY HOME, SOMERSET - DAY

The BRIDE's veil is lifted. REVEAL: TILLY, EMMA's old flat-mate from 1988-91.

In the congregation, DEXTER and SYLVIE watch hand-in-hand. A commotion at the back of the chapel causes the crowd to turn. EMMA tumbles into her seat -

EMMA

Sorry! Sorry.

DEXTER sees her and smiles.

EXT. STATELY HOME, SOMERSET - DAY

The guests mingle on the terrace in the afternoon sun, EMMA chatting happily to TILLY the bride. DEXTER watches from a distance. SYLVIE sees him watching.

SYLVIE

Another old flame?

DEXTER

An old friend. Emma Morley. You met her at Bob's wedding, remember?

SYLVIE

Vaguely. They all melt into one after a while. So did you have a thing with her?

DEXTER

No -

SYLVIE

What about the bride?

DEXTER

No! What do you think I am?

SYLVIE

It's just every weekend we go to some wedding with a coach-load of people you've slept with. Like a conference...

DEXTER

Hey - you're the only one for me now.

And he slips his arm around her waist, kisses her.

A little way off, EMMA watches this, then turns her attention back to the bride, a snowdrift of satin and lace.

TILLY

(her absurd dress-)

You don't think it's too much?

EMMA

Not at all. It's...understated elegance.

TILLY

Awww, thank you! You know, when we used to live together all those years ago, I used to think, you and me, no-one will ever marry us. AND LOOK AT ME NOW! LOOK AT MEEEE! WHEEEEEEE!

And she bustles off. EMMA exhales slowly.

DEXTER

Don't I know you from somewhere?

EMMA

Your face rings a bell.

DEXTER

Nice outfit.

EMMA

(her oriental dress-)  
Thank you, I call it my Fall-of-Saigon-look.  
Natural silk my eye, I'm soaked, it's like I've run The Derby.

DEXTER

The hair's different too. Is that 'A Rachel'?

EMMA

Don't push your luck, Dexter.

A brief silence as they grin at each other.

DEXTER

Another weekend, another wedding.

EMMA

I'm eating so much salmon, twice a year I get this urge to swim upstream.

Then a commotion; TILLY is about to hurl her bouquet into the crowd.

TILLY

EMMMMAAAAA! CATCH!

And like a shot-putter, TILLY hurls the bouquet through the air towards her friend.

It lands on the ground at EMMA's feet...

EXT. STATELY HOME, SOMERSET - DAY

DEXTER is being talked at by CALLUM; bluff, charming, a great deal better-dressed than when we first saw him.

CALLUM

Sandwiches, that's the future. Crayfish and rocket wraps, organic smoothies, fair-trade coffees. I've got twelve branches open, twelve more by the end of the year.

DEXTER

You know there's a rumour going around that you're a multi-millionaire.

CALLUM

(a casual shrug)

Define 'multi'. Hey, you should come and have lunch. Not that crayfish shit, decent food. There could be opportunities.

DEXTER

Callum, are you offering me a *job*?

CALLUM

I'm just saying -

DEXTER

I can't believe you're offering me a *job*!

CALLUM

I've not seen you on TV for a while -

DEXTER

I'm in development!

CALLUM

- and if you felt like a career-change -

DEXTER

Callum, at University you wore the same pair of trousers for three years.

CALLUM

Long time ago now, pal. We're not students any more.

DEXTER

Eleven years ago.

CALLUM

Is it? Good God, eleven years.

A moment, as they take in the old friends from college.

CALLUM (CONT'D)

Have you seen Emma Morley?

(find EMMA in the crowd, laughing.

Glowing.)

Right under our noses, all that time. Bloody hell. Who knew?

DEXTER watches her. Music up - a cover version of *Nothing Compares 2 U*.

INT. STATELY HOME - DAY

The BRIDE and GROOM snog inappropriately to the wedding band's song. EMMA watches from the sidelines -

- and is watched herself by DEXTER, sitting between CALLUM and SYLVIE.

CALLUM

...at which point your boyfriend here, wanders in, 4 in the morning, completely smashed...

DEXTER makes a decision, gets up, walks towards EM. SYLVIE watches him go.

The band strike up - 1999 by Prince. People whoop and rush to the dancefloor, as DEXTER arrives.

DEXTER

Care to dance?

EMMA

Um, no.

They stand at the edge of the dance-floor, watching the arthritic frugging of their contemporaries.

EMMA (CONT'D)

When did we start dancing like old people? And what's with the thumbs?

(she demonstrates. DEXTER laughs. As '1999' plays-)

When I first heard this song I thought it would all be hover-cars and glass cities and holidays on the moon. I thought I'd have a jet pack and a robot dog, and here I am, drinking too much in painful shoes. Nothing changes.

DEXTER

Some things do.

(EMMA looks to him)

Shall we go get out of here?

EMMA

Oh, yes please.

EXT. STATELY HOME - DAY

They've taken a bottle of champagne to the steps of the stately home, away from the thump-thump of the party.

DEXTER  
So this book of yours. Am I in it?

EMMA  
Yes, it's called 'Dexter Mayhew, My Triumph.'

DEXTER  
Nice title. And writing obviously suits you.

EMMA  
Thank you, Dexter. You look fine too. Better than during the rock-and-roll years. What happened? Sex in toilet cubicles lose its bittersweet charm?

DEXTER  
(there's a bench.)  
Well If you're twenty-two you can say, I'm an idiot but I'm only twenty-two, I'm only twenty-five, only twenty-eight. But only thirty-four?  
(DEXTER pours champagne)  
Everyone has a central dilemma in their lives, and mine was can you be a decent, mature, successful human-being and still get invited to threesomes.

EMMA  
So what's the answer, Dex?

DEXTER  
An orgy won't keep you warm at night.

EMMA  
An orgy won't look after you when you're old.

DEXTER  
I wasn't getting invited to orgies anyway - or not many.  
(she laughs - then sombre)  
Screwed up my career, screwed up with mum -

EMMA  
Well that's not true -

DEXTER  
- screwed up my friendships.  
(beat)  
Then I met Sylvie, and she saved me really.

At the marquee, SYLVIE has stepped out and is speaking earnestly with CALLUM. They watch.

EMMA  
She's very beautiful -

DEXTER  
- a little scary sometimes.

EMMA

She's got a lovely, warm sort of Leni Riefenstahl quality to her.

DEXTER

Of course she has absolutely no sense of humour.

EMMA

A sense of humour's over-rated; goofing around all the time, like Ian. The only time Ian ever really made me laugh was when he fell down the stairs.

DEXTER

Sylvie says she never laughs because she doesn't like what it does to her face.

EMMA

Ow.

(They both laugh.)  
But you love her, right?

DEXTER

I worship her.

EMMA

Worship! Well that's even better. True love found you in the end.

DEXTER

Something like that.

A beat. In the silence, the wedding band strikes up 'It's Raining Men'.

EMMA

Apparently it's about to start raining men. Want to go back?

DEXTER

Not yet

(stands, offers his hand)  
Someone said there's a maze.

EXT. MAZE, STATELY HOME - DAY

They wander down the green corridors

DEXTER

So what about you? Any romance?

EMMA

Don't start, Dex.

DEXTER

What?

EMMA

Sympathy. I'm not lonely, I'm alone. There. How did that sound?

DEXTER

I bought it.

EMMA

Because it's true. I've got a tiny advance to write this book and I swim and go for walks and read. And I've had my adventures too. Nothing like your eat-as-much-as-you-can buffet, but one or two, or three. Besides, if I ever get desperate there's always your offer.

DEXTER

What offer?

EMMA

You once said if I was still single at forty, you'd marry me, remember?

DEXTER

Did I say that?

EMMA

Don't worry, still six years to go...

But DEXTER has stopped walking.

DEXTER

There's a problem.

She turns, and there's a moment of realisation between them before she throws her arms around him.

EMMA

You're getting married! That's amazing, congratulations, Dex.

DEXTER

(an envelope)

I wanted to give you this in person.

EMMA

Dexter, that is amazing stationary.

DEXTER

Eight quid each.

EMMA

That's more than my car. Scented -  
(sniffing the envelope)  
Your wedding invitations are scented!

DEXTER

Lavender.

EMMA

No, Dex - *money*. It smells of money.  
(she reads the invite)  
August 14th. That's...four weeks away.

DEXTER

It's what they call a shotgun wedding. For 350.  
With buffet.

EMMA

(and she gets it)  
Dexter, I turn my back for one minute!  
(hugging him again)  
Do you know the father? I'm kidding!  
Congratulations, Dex. God, aren't you meant to  
space these bombshells out a bit? A dad. Is that  
allowed? Will they let you?

DEXTER

Incredible isn't it? Bloody hell, sit back and  
watch me fuck *that* one up.

EMMA

You'll be a wonderful dad.

DEXTER

You think so?

EMMA

I don't doubt it for a second. And Sylvie's  
pleased?

DEXTER

She's worried it'll make her look fat, but we  
want to get on with it, we don't want to end up  
mid-thirties, all alone, no kids -

EMMA

Like me!

DEXTER

Exactly, like you. That's not what I meant.

EMMA

I know. But you're happy, yeah?

DEXTER

Happier. Happyish

EMMA

Happyish. Well that's all we can hope for.

They're embracing now. A moment, a look, then a vibration in  
DEXTER's chest makes them leap apart.

DEXTER

My phone. Sylvie! One minute -

And as he goes to take the call, we stay on EMMA; the agony of putting a brave face on this.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Sorry, love, it's like a maze in here!...No, it's a joke...well, because I am literally in a...forget it...only Emma. Okay, we'll find our way out now...you know Callum, talk to Callum...alright, see you soon. Love you...

(he hangs up)

Did I sound drunk?

(sees EMMA's face)

Hey, what's up?

EMMA

Too much champagne.

DEXTER

Tell me -

They embrace again -

EMMA

I missed you, Dex -

DEXTER

I missed you too.

EMMA

Thought about you every day, I mean every day -

DEXTER

Me too.

EMMA

Let's never, never do that again.

DEXTER

We won't.

They kiss, just for a moment -

Then break away.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Em...

EMMA

Dex?

DEXTER

We should go.

EMMA

Absolutely.

(heading off)

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Let's go and find this fiancée of yours. I want to congratulate her...

The sound of a baby crying -

INT. NURSERY, TERRACED HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

In the dawn light, DEXTER stands in a half-decorated nursery, desperately jiggling his seven-month old daughter JASMINE, small but with an incredible capacity to cry -

CAPTION: 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER

INT. TRAIN, LONDON - DAWN

Grey-faced with exhaustion, DEXTER strap-hangs, surrounded by commuters on the early morning train. He wears a beige shirt and tie, the uniform of -

INT. NATURAL STUFF CAFE - DAY

A busy branch of the organic sandwich chain. DEXTER, the manager serves a CUSTOMER -

DEXTER

So that's a carrot juice, a latte with an extra shot, the lentil soup - bread with the soup?

TWO CUSTOMERS are looking at him, giggling; recognition.

INT. STORE-ROOM, NATURAL STUFF CAFE - DAY

DEXTER is checking in a delivery from a LORRY DRIVER.

LORRY DRIVER

(with a clipboard)

And if I can just get your autograph?

DEXTER

Sure, who do you want it made out to?

But the DRIVER frowns, hands him the delivery note to sign. DEXTER does so.

Exhausted, DEXTER rests his head against the wall, closes his eyes, sighs. A voice behind him -

CALLUM

Everything alright, mate?

DEX jerks upright, smiles at CALLUM his boss. Then back to work -

INT. LIVING ROOM, TERRACED HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

The married home is pleasant, suburban, but in the throes of cataclysmic building work. Dust sheets cover the furniture, plaster dust hangs in the air.

SYLVIE

There's plenty of formula, I've pureed the veggies, or you can mash some banana.

An exhausted DEXTER is jiggling the baby, following SYLVIE as she gets ready for her hen-night.

DEXTER

What about Indian food? I can give her curry, right? And chips?

SYLVIE

Dexter, no!

DEXTER

Sylvie, I'm joking.

SYLVIE

Oh. Well I do wish you wouldn't, I'm late as it is. I don't even know why I'm going, I'm too old for hen nights.

(the sound of a horn)

My taxi. I'll be back tomorrow morning. Be good, don't burn the place down.

DEXTER

I'm not a child, Sylvie -

- he goes to kiss her, but she pulls away.

SYLVIE

Lipstick!

(then kissing the baby)

Goodbye my angel.

The slam of the door provokes another wailing from JASMINE.

DEXTER

Give me a break will you?

INT. LIVING ROOM, TERRACED HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

Wailing becomes whimpering as DEXTER bounces the baby and channel-hops at the same time.

A face flashes on to the screen. SUKI MEADOWS, presenting a lavish Saturday night entertainment show -

SUKI ON TV  
WAAAAAHAAAAAAAY!

He snaps the TV off, sighs, heads for -

INT. JASMINE'S BEDROOM, TERRACED HOUSE - NIGHT

'Mozart for Babies' plays as DEXTER performs a desperate stuffed-toy cabaret for his grizzling daughter.

DEXTER

What's that, Teddy? Mr Froggy is shattered? Mr Froggy wants to go to sleep! Aw, goodnight Froggy, goodnight!

(JASMINE just cries more)

I'm doing my best here. Am I freaking you out? Am I being weird? Just tell me what you want! Just...learn to talk!

INT. LIVING ROOM, TERRACED HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

DEXTER

(over JASMINE's cries)

- I'll pay for your taxi, anything Em, just come over will you? I'm going spare here, Emma. Call me!

He hangs up - more crying. What now?

INT. NURSERY, TERRACED HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

Music blares; BACK TO LIFE by SOUL 2 SOUL. DEXTER dances with his daughter, a sort of insane soft toy disco. JASMINE is at least smiling now, but still no nearer to sleep.

INT. NURSERY, TERRACED HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

DEXTER and JASMINE lie exhausted amidst the devastation. The phone rings. Bleary-eyed, he reaches for it -

DEXTER

Emma? Thank god...

SYLVIE (O.S.)

It's me.

DEXTER

(cursing himself)

Sorry, Emma said she might - how's the party?

SYLVIE (O.S.)

Drunk, messy. We're meant to be going on to some club now. How is she?

DEXTER

Asleep, finally.

SYLVIE (O.S.)

She's been awake all this time?

DEXTER

My fault, I should've given her the decaf.

(a noise from SYLVIE)

My God, I made you laugh.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, LONDON - DAY

SYLVIE sits on the bed in a lush hotel room, smiling, but emotional, with tears in her eyes.

SYLVIE

And are you alright? I was worried.

DEXTER (O.S.)

Fine, good, yes. Why were you worried?

SYLVIE

No reason, just...checking in. But if everything's fine...Goodnight then.

DEXTER (O.S.)

Sylvie?

INT. NURSERY, TERRACE HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

Taking in the chaos -

DEXTER

I know I'm not being very good at this, the whole dad-husband thing. But I'm working on it and I will get better, I promise you. And I do love you...

INT. HOTEL ROOM, LONDON - NIGHT

DEXTER (O.S.)

Very much. That's all.

A figure enters from the bathroom, wet from the shower -

- Dexter's friend, CALLUM. He kisses SYLVIE's neck.

SYLVIE

I've got to go. See you in the morning.

Sombre, a little tearful, SYLVIE hangs up the phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM, TERRACE HOUSE, RICHMOND - NIGHT

JASMINE sleeps on DEXTER's chest. With great devotion, he kisses his daughter's head tenderly and closes his eyes -

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

*Mesdames et Messieurs, le train arrive maintenant à Paris Gare Du Nord -*

INT. EUROSTAR TRAIN, GARE DU NORD, PARIS - DAY

- then opens them again. In C.U., dark shadows under his eyes, stubble on his chin; a mess. The train slows down.

ANNOUNCER

*Veuillez s'assurer que vous avez toutes vos affaires avec vous pendant que vous laissez le train -*

On the table, a hardback novel; on the cover, a scratchy cartoon of a teenage girl beneath a scrawled title;

*Julie Criscoll Versus The Whole Wide World by EMMA MORLEY.*

A sticker proclaims 'The Sunday Times Bestseller!'. DEXTER opens the book to its last page. On the flyleaf, a black and white photo of EMMA, laughing.

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

EXT. GARE DU NORD, PARIS - DAY

And there she is, at the arrivals gate, with the limo drivers and waiting partners. Hair cut, in new shirt and pencil skirt; happy, healthy, confident, as in her photo.

She peers into the advancing crowd, sees DEXTER, taking in his dishevelled appearance, then holds up a cardboard sign 'Monsieur Dexter Mayhew', a limo driver looking for her client.

And then they're embracing.

EMMA

Funny?

DEXTER

*Quite funny.*

EMMA  
Bonjour, bonjour!

DEXTER  
You didn't have to meet me.

EMMA  
Of course I had to meet you.

DEXTER  
(her new look)  
You even look like a writer. A writer in Paris.

EMMA  
I've been trying to grow a little goatee. What  
do you look like?

DEXTER  
Fucked-up divorcee?  
(a moment)  
So d'you want me to get back on the train?

EMMA  
No. Not yet.  
(taking his hand)  
My apartment's not far. Shall we walk?

EXT. CANAL ST. MARTIN, PARIS - DAY

They walk arm in arm along the canal.

DEXTER  
How did it happen, Em? Eighteen months ago I had  
a family, a people-carrier, nice little house  
with sensible furniture and stripped floorboards  
-

EMMA  
- all of which you hated -

DEXTER  
But it was *mine*. And now everything's gone. My  
life's effectively over.

EMMA  
Dexter -

DEXTER  
I know, it's just...when I first lived here,  
everything seemed possible. Now, years later,  
nothing does.

EMMA

Dexter, you can do anything you want. You can go back to presenting, or photography, you used to talk about photography all the time, or something new. The internet!

(DEXTER groans)

You've got a third-class degree in anthropology. People will always need anthropologists.

(she takes his hand)

You're a healthy, capable, moderately attractive single father in your mid-late-thirties. You're gold dust.

DEXTER

Gold-dust.

EMMA

You just need your confidence back, that's all.

And they sit by the canal, EMMA's head on his shoulder.

EXT. BOULEVARD DE BELLEVILLE, PARIS - DAY

They walk arm-in-arm through the chaos and bustle of the 20th arrondissement. EMMA stops outside a door.

EMMA

So this is it, the writer's garret. Don't expect too much, will you?

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BELLEVILLE - CONTINUOUS

EMMA opens the door on a pleasant, unpretentious apartment, book-lined, light and airy.

EMMA

Chez moi! Put your bags anywhere.

She crosses to the fridge, gets a bottle of water and takes a long drink, turning to find that DEXTER is suddenly kissing her. Confusion. She takes a moment to step back and swallow.

DEXTER

Sorry about that -

EMMA

You took me by surprise,  
that's all -

DEXTER

Okay now?

EMMA

- but Dexter, I have to  
tell you -

- and he's kissing her again.

DEXTER  
I've wanted to do that ever since -

EMMA  
- Dexter, I've met someone.

DEXTER  
What?

EMMA  
I've met someone.

DEXTER  
You've *met* someone? Already?

EMMA  
Yes!

DEXTER  
A man?

EMMA  
Yes, a man, a guy.

DEXTER  
Oh, a guy. Right, okay. So, so...

EMMA  
He's called Jean-Pierre, Jean-Pierre Dusollier.

DEXTER  
He's French?

EMMA  
No, Dex, he's Welsh.

DEXTER  
But you've only been here six weeks!

EMMA  
Two months! I met him three weeks ago.

DEXTER  
Where, how?

EMMA  
A little bistro near here.

DEXTER  
A little *bistro* -

EMMA  
We got talking -

DEXTER  
What, in *French*?

EMMA

Yes, in French!

DEXTER

So what's he like then, this -

EMMA

Jean-Pierre? He's great. Handsome, charming, just very, very..French!

DEXTER

What, you mean rude?

EMMA

No -

DEXTER

Arrogant? Wears a string of onions -

EMMA

Why are you being like this?

DEXTER

Sexy, is that what it means? You're having lot of sex?

EMMA

Why are you being so mean? I've done nothing wrong, just met someone -

DEXTER

But we slept together!

EMMA

Dexter, we got a little drunk -

DEXTER

Not that drunk -

EMMA

You took your trousers off over your shoes, Dex. (conciliatory)

Okay, you want to talk about what happened, come here.

With a sigh, he crosses to the sofa.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I think you were upset about Sylvie and you got a little drunk, a little lonely, and you just needed a shoulder to cry on. Or sleep with. And that's what I was; a shoulder to sleep with.

DEXTER

And that's why you did it? To cheer me up?

EMMA

Well, it worked didn't it?  
(her head on his shoulder)  
(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

If you must know it was one of the better nights of my life, but we've known each other a long time, Dex -

DEXTER

So you don't think it's a good idea? Dex and Em, Em and Dex, the two of us, just for a while, see how it goes? Because I thought that's what you wanted too.

EMMA

I do...I did! In the late Eighties.

DEXTER

And you like him, this guy?

EMMA

I do, I really like him.

DEXTER

My timing isn't great, is it?

EMMA

No, not brilliant.

(head on his shoulder)

Dex, why didn't you say all this years ago?

DEXTER

Too busy having fun I suppose.

EMMA

(riled)

And now you've stopped having fun you think 'good old Em, give her a call, settle down -'

DEXTER

That's not what I meant -

EMMA

I'm not going to be the consolation prize, Dex. I think I'm worth a bit more than that.

DEXTER

That's what I've been telling you for years! Of all the people I've ever known, you're the one I want to talk to. Doesn't matter where I am, or who I'm with, you're always going to be the best person in the room. You're extraordinary. It just took me 'til now to realise it, that's all.

A long moment. Then EMMA stands suddenly.

EMMA

Right, well that's enough of that. We'd better get going.

DEXTER

Why, what are we doing?

EMMA  
(in the bathroom)  
Jean-Pierre wants to meet you!

DEXTER  
You're kidding!

EMMA  
We're going to hear him play.

DEXTER  
Play? Play what?

EMMA  
He's a jazz pianist!  
(DEXTER rolls his eyes)  
We're going to have a drink then hear him play  
free jazz for about nine hours and it's going to  
be lots of fun and in NO WAY AWKWARD!

She slams the door. DEXTER buries his head in his hands -

INT. BATHROOM, PARIS APARTMENT - DAY

Heart beating fast, EMMA stands with her back to the door.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT, BELLEVILLE - DAY

DEXTER lies on the sofa, deep in thought. The bathroom door opens. EMMA stands there in her summer dress. Whether or not he says it aloud, DEXTER's thought is clearly 'wow'.

EMMA  
Do me up.

She turns, and offers her back to him. DEXTER fastens the zip to her neck. They stand a moment.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Maybe we should change the subject.

EXT. BISTRO, PARIS - DAY

They walk through a beautiful Paris evening.

DEXTER  
So what are you writing now?

EMMA  
A sequel. Julie goes on this school trip to Paris and falls for this French boy. Hilarious. I'm a franchise now apparently, and everyone loves a franchise.  
(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

I mean I'd like to write a serious, grown-up book one day, something epic and beautiful, without pictures. But maybe that's what happens; you start out wanting to change the world and end up thinking it's enough to tell a few good jokes.

DEXTER

I brought a copy for you to sign.

EMMA

What d'you want me to *sign* it for?

DEXTER

You're famous now. And rich.

EMMA

Hardly.

DEXTER

You will be soon. An author, a successful author. I'm proud of you.

EMMA

Dexter? Shut-up.

They've reached a cool little bar on a pretty square. JEAN-PIERRE sits at an outside table. Startlingly handsome, every inch the jazz-pianist, he sips a glass of wine and reads a novel.

EMMA (CONT'D)

That is Jean-Pierre.

DEXTER

Couldn't you at least find someone good-looking?  
(She smiles. )

Em, I'm sure he's a fine jazz pianist, but I can't do this. You go, I'll see a movie, go back to the apartment, get some sleep. Call me in the morning.

EMMA

Oh. Okay. I'm sorry, Dex.

DEXTER

What for?

A smile, and then she walks towards the cafe.

For a moment, DEXTER watches as JEAN-PIERRE throws his arms around her. She starts to speak, reaching for a French-English dictionary in her bag -

But DEXTER has seen enough. He walks away.

And in wide shot, we see that behind him EMMA is leaving the restaurant, running after him...

EMMA

Dex, hold on! Wait!

DEXTER

Em, you have a nice time, I'll be fine -

EMMA

I told him I've got tonsillitis.

DEXTER

Tonsillitis?

EMMA

'Je suis tres desole mais mes glandes, je pense que je peux avoir l'amygdalite -'

DEXTER

L'amy -

EMMA

L'amygdalite. I looked it up.

And then she laughs, takes hold of his face and kisses him. The kiss continues for some time. Then, very stern -

EMMA (CONT'D)

If you muck me about, Dex -

DEXTER

- I swear, I will never, ever -

EMMA

- lead me on or let me down or go behind my back, I will murder you. I will eat your beating heart.

DEXTER

I won't do that -

EMMA

You swear?

DEXTER

I swear.

Another kiss. Then she looks at him.

EMMA

I thought I'd got rid of you.

DEXTER

I don't think you can.

They kiss again...

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

...in bed now, EMMA with her eyes closed, a tentative morning kiss.

DEXTER

So I've been thinking.

EMMA

Leave me alone. I'm asleep.

DEXTER

I think you should sell your flat. Move in with me.

CAPTION: 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER

EMMA

Dexter, are you asking me to be your *flatmate*?

EMMA (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll think about it.

EXT. STREET, NORTH LONDON - DAY

EMMA pushes her bike, DEXTER walks alongside.

DEXTER

I sort of assumed you'd just say yes.

EMMA

We more or less live together as it is.

DEXTER

I just don't see the point of pretending we don't want to be together when we do.

EMMA

(taking this in)

But your place is such a bachelor pad. Every time I open a cupboard I expect to be buried under this deluge of panties -

DEXTER

It's not like that -

EMMA

- and what if we need more space in the future, more rooms?

DEXTER

Why?

EMMA

Dex, you know why.

They've stopped outside a shuttered shop front, DEX a little awkward now, suddenly keen to change the subject.

DEXTER

I've got to go.

EMMA

That was close. We nearly talked about it.

DEXTER

(a kiss-)

We will. Tonight.

Still a little on edge, EMMA heads off on her bike.

DEXTER unlocks the metal shutter, lifts it up with a clatter. A sign on the wall; 'Cafe de Belleville'.

INT. CAFE DE BELLEVILLE, LONDON - DAY

DEX's new business is a Paris-themed cafe/delicatessen. Or at least it will be. At present, refurbishment is taking place, and DEXTER joins the BUILDERS and DECORATORS -

SYLVIE

So - all on schedule?

She stands with JASMINE, now two-and-a-half, pretty but rather serious, carrying a small suitcase. DEXTER scoops her up, kisses her. SYLVIE smiles stiffly.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

Very impressive. Whose idea was all this then?

DEXTER

Emma.

SYLVIE

Good old Emma.

(not bitter - regretful)

You look well, Dexter.

DEXTER

I am well.

A silence - not tense, but self-conscious.

SYLVIE

See you both Sunday.

A smile, a kiss on JASMINE's head, then SYLVIE's gone.

MUSIC. Upbeat, loud -

EXT. CAFE DE BELLEVILLE, LONDON - EVENING

Evening now, but EMMA, JASMINE and DEXTER continue to work, painting by candlelight.

EMMA and JASMINE have painted a large, goggle-eyed face in undercoat on the bare wall - mad teeth, cross-eyed.

DEXTER

Who's that meant to be?

JASMINE

It's you -

EMMA

- obviously.

DEXTER

Very funny, now paint over it.

EMMA

No! We like it.

DEXTER watches them, taking in EMMA's easy familiarity with his daughter.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM, DEXTER'S FLAT - NIGHT

EMMA reads *The Gruffalo* to JASMINE. DEXTER watches from the doorway.

DEXTER

Want me to take over?

JASMINE

Emma does the voices better.

Forcing a smile, redundant, DEXTER leaves.

INT. DEXTER'S BEDROOM, FLAT - NIGHT

DEXTER and EMMA in bed as before, faces almost touching.

DEXTER

But I'm just so *bad* at it, Em -

EMMA

No you're not -

DEXTER

I am! I don't know how to talk to her, I make a joke, she rolls her eyes at me; she's two-and-a-half! I didn't expect her to roll her eyes until she was at least twelve -

(EMMA laughs)

I thought little girls were meant to adore their dads?

EMMA

She does adore you, you know it. But this isn't about Jasmine.

(A deep breath)

I'm really happy, Dexter. I never expected to be, but I am. I love my work, I love London, and you. I've got everything I ever wanted -

DEXTER

- so why change things? -

EMMA

- except this; I want a child with the man I love. And if he won't do it, then I want one with you.

Faces almost touching, they kiss. From next door, JASMINE starts to shout -

JASMINE (O.S.)

Emma! Emmmmm-ma!

DEXTER

Technically she's calling for you.

EMMA closes her eyes. DEXTER sighs, kisses her, then goes.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking...Oh God. Start again. I'd like to thank everyone for coming today...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

DEXTER

...after what can only be described as a whirlwind romance. Pause for laughter. But seriously...

REVEAL; DEXTER is practicing his groom's speech, unaware that EMMA sits on the stairs behind him, listening in.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

...when people ask me how I met Emma, I tell them 'we grew up together'...

(MORE)

DEXTER (CONT'D)  
(realises she's listening)  
You're not meant to hear this.

EMMA  
Carry on. I love it.

DEXTER  
Can't you write it for me?

EMMA  
Maybe you could just use your last one.  
(holding out her hand)  
It's three in the morning. Come to bed.

DEXTER  
(crosses to her)  
You promise you won't make me have sex again?

EMMA  
I'm sorry, I can't promise that.

And they kiss -

INT. BATHROOM, DEXTER'S FLAT - DAY

- then crash into the mundanity of another working day. The burble of the radio as EMMA and DEXTER stand at the sink, brushing their teeth, both a little bad-tempered.

RADIO NEWS  
It's seven in the morning on Thursday 15th July -

CAPTION; 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER

DEXTER  
(examining his face)  
I'm getting old.

EMMA  
You're not getting old.

DEXTER  
I've got hair inside my ears. What's the point of that? And I'm getting fat. Look at me, I'm a mess.

EMMA  
So eat less. Do some exercise. Come swimming with me later.

DEXTER  
Can't, I've got to work -

EMMA  
Fine, don't then. Get fat -

EMMA stalks out, bad-tempered. A parting shot -

EMMA (CONT'D)

By the way, in case you're interested, I'm not pregnant.

And she's gone. On DEXTER, concerned.

INT. LIVING ROOM, EMMA AND DEXTER'S FLAT - DAY

The same old flat, cluttered now with EMMA's stuff. DEXTER follows her -

DEXTER

How d'you know?

EMMA

Dexter, how d'you think?

DEXTER

Oh well.

(he takes her hand)

We'll try again, yeah?

But she tugs her hand away and stalks off.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Em, I'm sorry, but please don't take it out on -

EMMA

Are you sorry?

DEXTER

Of course I am! I want this as much as you do -

EMMA

Because you never used to want it -

DEXTER

Well, I do now -

EMMA

You always look *relieved* -

DEXTER

You know I don't! Hey, come here -

EMMA

No. I've got to go -

DEXTER

Em -

EMMA

No!

He crosses, holds on to her. She relents, softens.

DEXTER

I'm sorry, Em.

EMMA

No, I'm sorry, for taking it out on you.

DEXTER

Okay, so after work, we'll meet on Primrose Hill, go to the movies, your choice, something with subtitles and no violence, then go have dinner somewhere, you and me, Em and Dex -

EMMA

- Dex and Em -

DEXTER

And we will work this out, I swear.

And they stay there, holding each other tight.

INT. EMMA'S OFFICE, EMMA AND DEXTER'S FLAT - DAY

EMMA sits at her desk, surrounded by papers, books, photographs, copies of her novels in various languages.

She sits and stares, unable to concentrate. Suddenly she stands -

EXT. SWIMMING POND, HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

The open-air swimming pond on the Heath. EMMA dives into the water, attempting to swim away some of her anxiety.

Pensive, she floats in the water, looking up at the canopy of branches. An overcast day, clouds rolling in.

EXT. SWIMMING POND, HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Leaving the pool now, she heads for her bicycle. A summer shower is on the way. She speaks on her phone -

EMMA

Hey there, just to say I'm running late but I'm on my way. And I'm sorry for being so snappy this morning...

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

EMMA cycles across the glorious Heath, free-wheeling, in a hurry.

## EXT. STREETS, NORTH LONDON - DAY

Head-down against the rain, EMMA cycles towards her appointment along residential streets.

There's a sudden blur of movement to one side as a van approaches from a side street without stopping.

EMMA is struck full-on, hurled from her bike to the other side of the street. The squeal of brakes, screams.

She comes to rest in the road, lying on her back, uncomprehending of what has just happened. Distressed PASSERS-BY stand over her, but EMMA hears no voices, just the sound of her own breathing. She tries to sit, and falls back, gasping.

EMMA looks to the sky in confusion. Rain falls on her face. She blinks once, twice.

Then EMMA MORLEY dies.

## EXT. PRIMROSE HILL, LONDON - DAY

DEXTER waits at the usual rendezvous, sheltering beneath a tree. He checks his watch, then his phone. EMMA's message -

EMMA (O.S.)

Hey there, just to say I'm running late but I'm on my way. And I'm sorry for being so snappy this morning. I wanted to say...you're a fine thing Dexter Mayhew. I love you very much. There you go. Lucky you! Bye.

DEXTER smiles, raises his collar against the summer rain.

He waits.

A whisper, low, insistent -

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

*Hey you. Wake up. Waaaake-up...*

## INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM, EDINBURGH 1988 - DAY

And we're back where we started. A student bedroom; albums, posters, photos, discarded clothes. Crammed into the single bed are EMMA, 22, and DEXTER, 23, opening his eyes with a start, trying to take in his surroundings.

EMMA

S'alright, don't panic. It's only me. You stuck your tongue in my ear. This ear. Ring any bells?

DEXTER

Oh, hi there -

EMMA

(shaking his hand)

- Emma, Emma Morley.

DEXTER

First class honours with distinction.

EMMA

That's me. So - what do you suggest we do?

DEXTER

Ummm - keep in touch?

EMMA

I mean today. We're meant to be doing something today.

DEXTER

Today? Well it's a little tricky -

EMMA

Ah -

DEXTER

I've had lovely time, fantastic, really, but it's just I'm meant to be meeting my parents later.

EMMA

Oh. You'd better go then.

(she closes her eyes, turns over)

Nice to meet you. Bye now.

DEX reconsiders.

DEXTER

Not until later though. I mean, if you wanted to, I don't know, go for a little walk or something?

On EMMA, secretly smiling.

EXT. ARTHUR'S SEAT, EDINBURGH 1988 - DAY

The eastern end of Edinburgh is dominated by Arthur's Seat, a startling piece of Highland scenery that rises above the city.

Wearing his suit from the night before, smoking a cigarette, DEXTER pants and stumbles his way up the mountain while EMMA strides out in front.

EMMA

I can't believe you've never done this.

DEXTER

I've been busy.

EMMA

What, *studying*?

(DEXTER's doubled-over, gasping)

You might find it easier if you took the cigarette out of your mouth.

DEXTER

It's these shoes. I can't mountain-climb in brogues.

EMMA

It's not a mountain, it's a hill, just a big hill. A child could do it.

DEXTER

So can we go back down now?

EMMA

No! We have to see the view.

DEXTER

View's are over-rated.

EMMA

Dexter Mayhew. You're so dark and complex.

And they stop and turn. The view - 360 degrees, taking in Edinburgh, the Firth of Forth, the North Sea - is indeed spectacular on this spectacular July day. Despite himself, DEXTER has to smile.

Music up; dance music, loud, aggressive...

INT. NIGHTCLUB, LONDON - NIGHT

C.U. On DEXTER, the same smile, but now DEXTER's eyes are tightly closed, his head thrown back; a man completely lost.

A glass in his hand, he's dancing, stumbling round the dance floor, indifferent to the crowd around him, who regard him warily; a drunk, a clown. CAPTION: 15TH JULY, SEVENTEEN YEARS LATER

INT. NIGHTCLUB, LONDON - NIGHT

Soaked with sweat and booze, he stumbles towards a pretty GIRL at the bar.

DEXTER

What's your name?

GIRL

Go away.

DEXTER

Aw, don't be like that. Have a drink with me.  
It's my anniversary -

GIRL

I said go away. You're drunk -

DEXTER

First anniversary? One year ago on this very day

-

(tugging her arm, desperate)

Hey, come on, talk to me! Don't be like that,  
talk to me!

And now the BOYFRIEND is back, shoving DEXTER into a table of drinks. Glass everywhere, screams -

INT. DEXTER'S FLAT, BELSIZE PARK - DAY

A child's face, close-up, staring, confused.

This is JASMINE MAYHEW, now five and a half years-old. She stares, uncomprehending, at a figure slumped on the carpet.

DEXTER lies, beaten, bruised and filthy, clothes torn, on the floor. He opens swollen eyes, sees his daughter and, still drunk, smiles in recognition for a moment before his face buckles; shame and self-loathing.

And now SYLVIE is there, struggling to get him into a sitting position.

SYLVIE

Jasmine, please, go next door will you? Daddy's not very well. Next door, now!

DEXTER

Oh Sylvie, I fucked-up again -

SYLVIE

Sit, Dexter, come on, help me out...  
(JASMINE is still there)  
Jasmine! Next door, now!

DEXTER collapses, curls into a ball, closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CAR - DAY

DEXTER opens his eyes. He's in a car. A square of the brightest blue sky is visible through the window. He closes his eyes again -

INT. DEXTER'S BEDROOM, MAYHEW HOUSE, OXFORDSHIRE - DAY

- and opens them to find himself in his childhood bedroom; photographs and posters on the wall, evening sun on his face. Voices come from the front drive -

STEVEN (O.S.)

He'll be fine, I'll let him sleep it off...

Sitting, DEXTER's bemused to find himself in his father's old pyjamas.

SYLVIE (O.S.)

And you're sure you don't mind? I'd take him myself, but with Callum -

STEVEN (O.S.)

No, you did the right thing, I'll look after him...

He crosses to the window - in the driveway, SYLVIE is about to leave.

EXT. DRIVEWAY, MAYHEW HOUSE - DAY

DEXTER walks sheepishly outside.

STEVEN

Ah, talk of the devil...

And discreetly, he leaves DEXTER alone with SYLVIE.

DEXTER

I am so, so sorry.

SYLVIE

It's fine, just don't ever do it again. How are you feeling?

DEXTER

There's blood in my mouth and I don't know why.

JASMINE is watching from the car window. DEXTER rises his hand. Warily, she raises hers back.

SYLVIE

I told her you had food poisoning. Though that doesn't really explain this -

She touches his puffy, bruised face. DEXTER winces.

DEXTER

World's Greatest Dad.

SYLVIE

Well you could be. But that's up to you.

DEXTER

I'll make it up to her. And you. I keep saying that, don't I? For years now.

SYLVIE

(smiles, takes his hand)  
We do all love you, Dexter.

DEXTER

No reason why you should.

SYLVIE

No, maybe not. And yet we do.

And she smiles, turns and heads to her car. His FATHER is at his elbow now.

STEVEN

I've burnt the soup.

DEXTER

Can you burn soup?

STEVEN

Apparently so.

DEXTER

(the pyjamas)  
Who put me in these?

STEVEN

I was in the Merchant Navy, Dexter. You've got nothing I've not seen before.

He goes. DEXTER winces, then follows his father back inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MAYHEW HOUSE - NIGHT

DEXTER and STEVEN, two widowers in pyjamas, eat soup in front of the TV in companionable silence. Eventually -

STEVEN

So is this going to be an annual festival, d'you think? Every 15th July?

DEXTER

I hope not.

STEVEN

I don't want a heart-to-heart, do you?

DEXTER

I'd rather not.

STEVEN

Except to say that I think the best thing you can do is to live your life as if Emma's still here. Don't you?

DEXTER

I don't think I can, dad.

STEVEN

'Course you can.

(he turns back to the TV)

What d'you think I've been doing for the last ten years?

They continue to watch TV.

INT. CAFE DE BELLEVILLE, NORTH LONDON - DAY

The business is bustling now, and DEXTER stands at the counter, working through accounts. A voice behind him.

VOICE

Excuse me, waiter, but there's a fly in my soup.

IAN WHITEHEAD - older, happier, plumper but no better dressed. DEXTER gives him a slightly self-conscious embrace.

CAPTION: 15TH JULY, ONE YEAR LATER.

INT. CAFE DE BELLEVILLE, NORTH LONDON

DEXTER

How's the stand-up comedy?

IAN

I gave that up. Get booed as much as I did and you start to think maybe they've got a point.

DEXTER

That's a shame.

IAN

Not really, I was never any good. The only time I ever really made Emma laugh was when I fell down the stairs.

(DEXTER laughs)

I'm in insurance now, insurance sales.

DEXTER

Well that's great -

IAN

(funny voice -)

- he said as he stifled a yawn.

DEXTER

What I mean is I'm glad life worked out.

IAN

Yeah. Me too. Seeing anyone?

DEXTER

Not yet.

IAN

Well you should. She'd expect it. She'd bloody hate it, but she'd want it too.

(awkward pause)

I hate today, don't you? This date, 15th July. I always will hate it. I used to really hate you too. I mean quite violently. I used to read Em's diaries and overhear her phone calls and watch you together, and she used to just...light up with you like she never did with me, and I used to get so angry. she was always going to be the best, the smartest, brightest, kindest person we knew and I didn't think you deserved her. Can I say this?

DEXTER

Go on.

IAN

You were a shit - excuse my French - and then you grew up a bit and you weren't a shit anymore. She made you decent and in return you made her very, very happy. She...glowed with it. I'll always be grateful to you for that.

(DEXTER can't speak. In a funny voice-)

And on that note, this is for you -

He produces a large brown envelope, hands it over -

DEXTER

Are you sure you don't want to -

IAN

I shouldn't have had it in the first place. It's yours now. So -

IAN's family sit at a nearby table; WIFE and two KIDS, all eating ice-creams

IAN (CONT'D)

Back to the sticks. Look at 'em -

(the KIDS have ice-cream smeared round their faces)

- greedy little sods. How much do I - ?

DEXTER

On the house, I insist.

IAN  
How's your little one?

DEXTER  
She's a beauty.

IAN  
Well you should cherish her then.  
(- the envelope -)  
Look after that.

DEXTER  
And I'll give you a call...

IAN  
Oh, that's not necessary. I think we're done  
here, don't you?  
(A big hug)  
Good luck, mate. Seize the day, all that  
bollocks.

And then he's gone, bustling his children out of the cafe.

DEXTER takes a moment, then opens the envelope -

Glimpses of letters, photos, post-cards. He glances through them. Some images we recognise - the trip to Greece for instance - others we don't. DEXTER sees a photo, smiles and pulls it out for a closer look.

The photo shows DEX and EM on the peak of Arthur's Seat on this very day in 1988, standing together a little awkwardly.

EMMA (O.S.)  
Come on then, smile. Big smile. That's not a  
smile...

DEXTER smiles at the memory.

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
There. That's better.

The whirr of a self-timer...

EXT. ARTHUR'S SEAT, EDINBURGH - DAY

The camera is balanced on a rock. The shutter clicks.

EMMA  
For when you're famous! 'See that man there? He  
touched me up at a party once'

She retrieves the camera and settles next to him. There are a number of graduates dotted around the place, some hungover, some still wearing their graduation gowns.

EM and DEX look out at Edinburgh spread before them.

DEXTER

Beautiful day.

EMMA

If on St. Swithin's Day it doth rain/dum-di-dum-di-dum again.

(DEXTER laughs)

Dexter, I don't want you thinking that I'm bothered or anything, about last night. I know it was only 'cause you were drunk -

DEXTER

It's not that -

EMMA

Let me finish, will you? I've not done a lot of that kind of thing, I've not made a study of it, not like you, but it was nice, even if we just 'cuddled'. I think you're nice too, when you want to be. And now you should head off to India or Thailand or wherever it is, and find yourself, and I'll write my daft plays. I don't want your phone number or letters or postcards, I don't want to get married to you or have your babies, or even to have another fling. We had one really, really nice day together. I'll always remember it, and if we bump into each other sometime in the future, that's fine too. We'll be...friends. Agreed?

DEXTER

Fine by me.

And they sit next to each other, facing the view, shoulders touching.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

On the other hand -

EMMA

Go on.

DEXTER

Well, my parents aren't picking me up until this evening. The flat's empty. If you wanted to...finish what we started.

EMMA

What, sober?

DEXTER

And in daylight.

EMMA ponders this, makes her decision -

EMMA

Race you.

Then whooping, laughing, she starts to tumble down the hillside, with DEXTER following on...

As they do so, two figures can be seen on the horizon, a MAN and a seven year-old GIRL. A closer look -

DEXTER and JASMINE. 15th July 2007. JASMINE strides on ahead as her father struggles behind her.

JASMINE

D'you want a piggy-back, old man?

DEXTER

It's these shoes. I've got no grip on these shoes.

And laughing, she bounds on ahead.

EXT. ARTHUR'S SEAT, EDINBURGH - DAY

Once again, a number of GRADUATES stand around, hungover, posing in gowns and caps. DEXTER and JASMINE take in the view.

DEXTER

That's the Firth of Forth, flowing out to the North Sea. That's the New Town, where I used to live. Is this boring?

JASMINE

Not *completely*.

DEXTER

And down there, that's Emma's old flat.

JASMINE

Did you come up here with Emma?

DEXTER

I did, once. Long time ago now.

They lie back, basking in the sun.

JASMINE

Do you miss her?

DEXTER

Of course. She was my best friend. Why, do you?

JASMINE

I was only small, I don't remember her that well. I remember the wedding. She was nice. So who's your best friend now?

DEXTER  
You of course. Why, who's yours?

JASMINE  
(thinks hard)  
I think it's probably mum.

DEXTER  
Ha.

(his arm around her)  
Not such a terrible dad though, am I?

JASMINE  
I'm not answering that.

DEXTER  
Why not?

JASMINE  
Because you want me to be soppy, and I'm not  
going to.  
(stuffing ipod headphones into her  
ears)  
You know what you are.

- and, for the first time, DEXTER does.

JASMINE lies next to her father, her head on his shoulder. DEXTER  
regards her fondly.

DEXTER  
God, I love you. You have no idea.

JASMINE  
(removing her headphones)  
Hm?

DEXTER  
I said it's a beautiful day.

They both close their eyes against the sun.

DEXTER (CONT'D)  
No sign of rain.

EXT. EDINBURGH STREETS, NEW TOWN - DAY

EMMA and DEXTER hurl along the streets, hand-in-hand in the late afternoon, giggling, laughing with excitement as they turn into a terrace of elegant Georgian town houses.

EMMA  
Which number?

DEXTER  
18.

EMMA  
2...4...6...8...

EMMA/DEXTER  
10...12...14...16...

And then a voice sails across the street.

ALISON  
Dexter! Dexter, over here!

His parents wave from their parked car. DEX and EM slam into disappointment like running into a wall.

DEXTER  
Damn. They're early.  
(He drops EM's hand. To his parents -  
)  
You're early!

ALISON  
We thought we'd surprise you.

DEXTER  
You did, you have. Mum, dad - this is my friend Emma...

EMMA  
...Morley. Pleased to meet you.

ALISON  
Emma, you'll join us for tea, yes?

DEXTER's eyes blaze an apology. EMMA considers.

EMMA  
No. No thanks. I'll leave you to it.

DEXTER  
Really? You're going?

EMMA  
Pleasure to meet you all -  
(shaking DEXTER's hand)  
And, well - have a nice life!

She turns and goes, DEXTER struggling to hide his disappointment.

ALISON  
I'm sorry, did we just interrupt something?

DEXTER  
Not at all. Emma's just a...good friend.

ALISON  
(taking in his suit)  
Weren't you wearing this yesterday?

He watches as EMMA turns the corner and disappears.

EXT. EDINBURGH STREETS, NEW TOWN - DAY

EMMA MORLEY walks home slowly, frustrated, maddened by the way things have turned out. Wincing at the memory -

EMMA  
'Have a nice life'?

It's a warm summer evening, and the town's streets are busy with people heading home from work. She climbs the hill towards the great grey granite bulk of Edinburgh Castle.

And then she hears it - footsteps on the street, someone running. Without turning round, she knows who it will be. She hears her name and starts to smile, to laugh...

DEXTER  
Em! Em, wait, will you?

She adjusts her face from delight to aloof indifference.

DEXTER (CONT'D)  
I'm so, so sorry about that.

EMMA  
S'alright. Some other time maybe.

DEXTER  
Too vague. I need your phone number.

EMMA  
Phone number? Right, of course -  
(taking his pen)  
This is me in Edinburgh, this is my parents' number and their address, just in case. Dad's got a fax machine at work, if you -

DEXTER  
Just phone is fine.  
(writing too)  
This is me. Call me. Or I'll call you. What I mean is, it's not a competition, you don't lose if you phone first.

They swap numbers.

EMMA  
So. Was that everything?

And then, as if on cue, they are kissing, standing on the crowded street on this ordinary day in mid-July in 1988.

The kiss continues, then just as quickly stops. As they step away from each other.

DEXTER  
I've got to go.

EMMA  
I know.

DEXTER  
But I'll see you again.

EMMA  
I hope so.

DEXTER  
No, you will.

EMMA  
I know that I will.

DEXTER  
Well. Goodbye, Em.

EMMA  
Goodbye, Dex.

DEXTER  
Goodbye.

EMMA  
Goodbye. Goodbye.

FADE OUT.

THE END.