N O T T I N G H I L L

Screenplay by Richard Curtis

Title

EXT. VARIOUS DAYS

'She' plays through the credits.

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

EXT. STREET - DAY

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

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

It's a full fruit market day.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
There's the market on weekdays, selling every fruit and vegetable known to man...

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

A man in denims exits the tattoo studio.

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)

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

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - SATURDAY

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

A frantic crowded Portobello market.

WILLIAM (V.O.)
... and thousands of people buy millions of antiques, some genuine...

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

WILLIAM (V.O.)
... and some not so genuine.

EXT. GOLBORNE ROAD - DAY

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

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

WILLIAM (V.O.)
So this is where I spend my days and years -- in this small village in the middle of a city -- in a house with a blue door that my wife and I bought together... before she left me for a man who looked like Harrison

Ford, only even handsomer...

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

WILLIAM (V.O.)
... and where I now lead a strange half-life with a lodger called...

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

WILLIAM
Spike!

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

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

SPIKE
Even he. Hey, you couldn't help me with an incredibly important decision, could you?

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

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

WILLIAM
What are the choices?

SPIKE
Well... wait for it...
(He pulls on a t-shirt)
First there's this one...

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

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

SPIKE
Point taken.

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

SPIKE
I suspect you'll prefer the next one.

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

SPIKE
Cool, huh?

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

SPIKE
Wouldn't want that...
(and back up he goes)
Okay -- just one more.

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

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

SPIKE
Thanks. Great. Wish me luck.

WILLIAM
Good luck.

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

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

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

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

William enters.

INT. THE BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Classic. Absolutely classic. Profit from major sales push -- minus $B!r (J347.

MARTIN
Shall I go get a cappuccino? Ease the pain.

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

MARIN
I get your logic. Demi-capu coming up.

He salutes and bolts out the door -- as he does, a woman walks in. We only just glimpse her.

Cut to William working. He looks up casually. And sees something. His reaction is hard to read. After a pause...

WILLIAM
Can I help you?

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

ANNA
No, thanks. I'll just look around.

WILLIAM
Fine.

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

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

ANNA
Really?

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

He picks up a book on the counter.

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

ANNA
Thanks. I'll think about it.

William suddenly spies something odd on the small TV monitor beside him.

WILLIAM
If you could just give me a second.

Her eyes follow him as he moves toward the back of the shop and approaches a man in slightly ill-fitting clothes.

WILLIAM
Excuse me.

THIEF
Yes.

WILLIAM
Bad news.

THIEF
What?

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

THIEF
So?

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

THIEF
What book?

WILLIAM
The one down your trousers.

THIEF
I haven't got a book down my trousers.

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

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Sorry about that...

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

WILLIAM
Yes, we couldn't stop him. If you can find an unsigned copy, it's worth an absolute fortune.

She smiles. Suddenly the thief is there.

THIEF
Excuse me.

ANNA
Yes.

THIEF
Can I have your autograph?

ANNA
What's your name?

THIEF
Rufus.

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

THIEF
What does it say?

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

THIEF
Nice one. Would you like my phone number?

ANNA
Tempting but... no, thank you.

Thief leaves.

ANNA
I think I will try this one.

She hands William a $B!r (J20 note and the book he said was rubbish.
He talks as he handles the transaction.

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

He drops in one of the signed books.

WILLIAM
Very useful for lighting fires, wrapping fish, that sort of things.

She looks at him with a slight smile.

ANNA
Thanks.

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

MARTIN
Cappuccino as ordered.

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

MARTIN
Who? Someone famous?

But William's innate natural English discretion takes over.

WILLIAM
No. No-one -- no-one.

They set about drinking their coffees.

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

WILLIAM
Topol.

MARTIN
That's right -- Topol.

WILLIAM
But Ringo Starr doesn't look anything like Topol.

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

WILLIAM
So it could have been neither of them?

MARTIN
I suppose so.

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

MARTIN
Not classic, no.

Martin shakes his head. William drains his cappuccino.

WILLIAM
Right -- want another one?

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

William sets off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

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

ANNA
Oh Jesus.

WILLIAM
Here, let me help.

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

ANNA

What are you doing?!

He jumps back.

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

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

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Eighteen yards. That's my house there.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

They enter. She carries a few stylish bags.

WILLIAM
Come on in. I'll just...

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

WILLIAM
It's not that tidy, I fear.

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

WILLIAM

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

She heads upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Would you like a cup of tea before you go?

ANNA
No thanks.

WILLIAM
Coffee?

ANNA
No.

WILLIAM
Orange juice -- probably not.

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

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

ANNA
Really, no.

WILLIAM
Would you like something to nibble -- apricots, soaked in honey -- quite why, no one knows -- because it stops them tasting of apricots, and makes them taste like honey, and if you wanted honey, you'd just buy honey, instead of apricots, but nevertheless -- there we go -- yours if you want them.

ANNA

No.

WILLIAM
Do you always say 'no' to everything?

Pause. She looks at him deep.

ANNA
No.
(pause)
I better be going. Thanks for your help.

WILLIAM
You're welcome and, may I also say... heavenly.

It has taken a lot to get this out loud. He is not a smooth-talking man.

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

She smiles. She's cool.

ANNA
Thank you.

WILLIAM
Yes. Well. My pleasure.

He guides her towards the door.

WILLIAM
Nice to meet you. Surreal but nice.

In a slightly awkward moment, he shows her out the door. He closes the door and shakes his head in wonder. Then...

WILLIAM
'Surreal but nice.' What was I thinking?

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

WILLIAM
Coming.

He opens the door. It's her.

WILLIAM
Oh hi. Forget something?

ANNA
I forgot my bag.

WILLIAM
Oh right.

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

WILLIAM
Here we go.

ANNA
Thanks. Well...

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

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Oh my God. My flatmate. I'm sorry -- there's no excuse for him.

Spike walks in.

SPIKE
Hi.

ANNA
Hi.

WILLIAM
Hi.

Spike walks past unsuspiciously and heads into the kitchen.

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

And leaves them in the corridor.

ANNA
Probably best not tell anyone about this.

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

ANNA
Bye.

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

SPIKE
There's something wrong with this yogurt.

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

SPIKE
Well, there you go.
(takes another big spoonful)
On for a video fest tonight? I've got some absolute classic.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. MANHATTAN ART GALLERY - DAY

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

MICHAEL
Smile.

ANNA
No.

MICHAEL
Smile.

ANNA
I've got nothing to smile about.

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

WILLIAM
Yes, she is fairly fabulous.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

MR. SMITH
Do you have any books by Dickens?

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

MR. SMITH
Oh right. How about that new John Grisham thriller?

WILLIAM
No, that's a novel too.

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

Pause.

WILLIAM
Martin -- your customer.

MARTIN
Can I help you?

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

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

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

SPIKE
Hey.

WILLIAM
Hi...

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Just incidentally -- why are you wearing that?

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

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

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

EXT. WILLIAM'S TERRACE - DAY

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

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

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

SPIKE
Groovy. You should do more of this stuff.

WILLIAM
So -- any messages?

SPIKE
Yeh, I wrote a couple down.

WILLIAM
Two? That's it?

SPIKE
You want me to write down all your messages?

William closes his eyes in exasperation.

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

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

WILLIAM
Right. No one else?

SPIKE
Absolutely not.

Spike leans back and relaxes.

SPIKE
Though if we're going for this obsessive writing-down-all-messages thing -- some American girl called Anna called a few days ago.

William freezes -- then looks at Spike.

WILLIAM
What did she say?

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

WILLIAM
Which was?

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Hello.

RITZ MAN (V.O.)
May I help you, sir?

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

INT. RITZ RECEPTION - DAY

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM

WILLIAM (cont'd)
Imagine if you will the stupidest person you've ever met -- are you doing that...?

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

RITZ MAN
Yes, sir. I have him in my mind.

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

SPIKE
Try 'Flintstone.'

WILLIAM
(to Spike)
What?

SPIKE
I think she said her name was 'Flintstone.'

WILLIAM
Does 'Flintstone' mean anything to you?

RITZ MAN
I'll put you right through, sir.

Flintstone is indeed the magic word.

WILLIAM
Oh my God.

He practices how to sound.

WILLIAM
Hello. Hi. Hi.

ANNA (V.O.)
Hi.

We hear her voice -- don't see her.

WILLIAM
(caught out)

Oh hi. It's William Thacker. We, ahm I work in a bookshop.

ANNA (V.O.)
You played it pretty cool here, waiting for three days to call.

WILLIAM
No, I've never played anything cool in my entire life. Spike, who I'll stab to death later, never gave me the message.

ANNA (V.O.)
Oh -- Okay.

WILLIAM
Perhaps I could drop round for tea or something?

ANNA (V.O.)
Yeh -- unfortunately, things are going to be pretty busy, but... okay, let's give it a try. Four o'clock could be good.

WILLIAM
Right. Great.
(he hangs up)
Classic. Classic.

EXT. RITZ - DAY

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

INT. RITZ HOTEL - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Which floor?

TARQUIN
Three.

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

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

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

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

WILLIAM
Are you sure you...?

TARQUIN
Yes.

WILLIAM
Oh. Right.

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

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

She hands them a very slick, expensively produced press kits, with the poster picture of Anna, for the film 'Helix.'

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE ANTE-ROOM - DAY

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

KAREN
What did you think of the film?

TARQUIN
Marvellous. 'Close Encounters' meets 'Jean De Florette.' Oscar-winning stuff.

They both turn to William for his opinion.

WILLIAM
I agree.

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

TARQUIN
'Time Out.'

KAREN
Great. And you...

WILLIAM
(seeing it on a coffee table)
'Horse and Hound.' The name's William Whacker. I think she might be expecting me.

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

They sit down as Karen goes off.

TARQUIN
You've brought her flowers?

William goes for the cover-up.

WILLIAM
No -- they're... for my grandmother. She's in a hospital nearby. Thought I'd kill two birds with one stone.

TARQUIN
I'm sorry. Which hospital?

Pause. He's in trouble.

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

TARQUIN
Oh sure. Of course.

KAREN
Mr. Thacker.

Saved by the bell.

INT. TRAFALGAR SUIT CORRIDOR - DAY

KAREN
You've got five minutes.

He is shown in through big golden doors. Karen stays outside.

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY

There Anna is, framed in the window. Glorious.

WILLIAM
Hi.

ANNA
Hello.

WILLIAM
I brought these, but clearly...

There are lots of other flowers in the room.

ANNA
Oh no, ho -- these are great.

A fair amount of tension. These two people hardly know each other -- and the first and last time they met, they kissed.

WILLIAM
Sorry about not ringing back. The whole two-names concept was totally too much for my flatman's pea-sized intellect.

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

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

JEREMY
Everything okay?

ANNA
Yes, thanks.

JEREMY
And you are from 'Horse and Hound' magazine?

William nods.

ANNA
Is that so?

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

WILLIAM
So I'll just fire away, shall I?

Anna nods.

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

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

WILLIAM
Obviously. Very difficult.

Jeremy leaves.

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Absolutely fine about it.

Re-enter Jeremy.

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

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

ANNA
It takes place on a submarine.

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

Jeremy exits.

WILLIAM
I'm just a complete moron. Sorry. This is the sort of thing that happens in dreams -- not in real life. Good dreams, obviously -- it's a dream to see you.

ANNA
And what happens next in the dream?

It's a challenge.

WILLIAM
Well, I suppose in the dream dream scenario. I just... ahm, change my personality, because you can do that in dreams, and walk across and kiss the girl but you know it'll never happen.

Pause. Then they move towards each other when... Jeremy enters.

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

WILLIAM
Very nearly.

JEREMY
Maybe time for one last question?

WILLIAM
Right.

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

WILLIAM
Are you busy tonight?

ANNA

Yes.

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

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

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

INT. TRAFALGAR SUITE CORRIDOR - DAY

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

TARQUIN
How was she?

WILLIAM
Fabulous.

TARQUIN
Wait a minute -- she took your
grandmother's flowers?

William can't think his way out of this.

WILLIAM
Yes. That's right. Bitch.

He turns to go, but is accosted by Karen.

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

WILLIAM
The others?

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

KAREN
Mr. Thacker's from 'Horse and Hound.'

A forty-year-old actor with great presence warmly shakes William's hand.

MALE LEAD

Pleased to meet you. Did you like the film?

WILLIAM
Ah... yes, enormously.

MALE LEAD
Well, fire away.

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

MALE LEAD
I did.

WILLIAM
Any bit in particular?

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

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

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Did you identify with the character you were playing?

INTERPRETER
Te identicaste con el personaje que interpretabas?

FOREIGN ACTOR
No.

INTERPRETER
No.

WILLIAM
Ah. Why not?

INTERPRETER

Por que no?

FOREIGN ACTOR
Porque es un robot carnivoro psicopata.

INTERPRETER
Because he is playing a psychopathic flesh-eating robot.

WILLIAM
Classic.

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Is this your first film?

GIRL
No -- it's my 22nd.

WILLIAM
Of course it is. Any favourite among the 22?

GIRL
Working with Leonardo.

WILLIAM
Da Vinci?

GIRL
Di Caprio.

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

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

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

KAREN
Mr. Thacker?

WILLIAM
(so weary)
Yes?

KAREN
Have you got a moment?

INT. ANNA'S SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY

They knock on her door.

ANNA (V.O.)
Come in.

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

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

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

ANNA
Okay -- fine.

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

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

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

ANNA
If that's all right.

WILLIAM
I'm sure it's all right. My friend Max is cooking and he's acknowledged to be the worst cook in the world, but you know, you could hide the food in your handbag or something.

ANNA
Okay.

WILLIAM
Okay.

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

Bella and Max are in the kitchen.

MAX
He's bringing a girl?

BELLA
Miracles do happen.

MAX
Does the girl have a name?

BELLA
He wouldn't say.

MAX
Christ, what is going on in there?

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

MAX (cont'd)
Oh God.

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

MAX
Come on in. Vague food crisis.

William and Anna move along the corridor to the kitchen.

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

Bella is there.

BELLA
Hiya -- sorry -- the guinea fowl is proving more complicated than expected.

WILLIAM
He's cooking guinea fowl?

BELLA
Don't even ask.

ANNA
Hi.

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

WILLIAM
Bella -- this is Anna.

BELLA
Right.
(pause)

MAX
Okay. Crisis over.

He rises from his stove position.

WILLIAM
Max. This is Anna.

MAX
Hello, Anna ahm...
(He recognizes her -- the word just falls out)
Scott -- have some wine.

ANNA
Thank you.

Door bell goes.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max opens the door -- it is Honey.

MAX
Hi.

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

MAX
Yes, Happy Birthday.

They head back along the corridor.

MAX
Look, your brother has brought this

girl, and ahm...

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

They enter the kitchen.

HONEY
Hi guys.
(sees Anna)
Oh holy fuck.

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

ANNA
Hiya.

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

ANNA
Ahm... I think that sounds -- you know -- lucky me. Happy Birthday.

She hands her a present.

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

ANNA
I'll think about it.

The front door bell goes.

MAX
That'll be Bernie.

He heads out into the corridor to the front door.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Max opens the door.

MAX
Hello, Bernie.

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

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

They enter the room.

MAX
Bernie -- this is Anna.

BERNIE
Hello, Anna. Delighted to meet you.

Doesn't recognize her -- turns to Honey.

BERNIE
Honey Bunny -- happy birthday to you.
(hands her a present)
It's a hat. You don't have to wear it or anything.

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

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

MAX
You haven't slept with her, have you?

WILLIAM
That is a cheap question and the answer is, of course, no comment.

MAX
'No comment' means 'yes.'

WILLIAM
No, it doesn't.

MAX
Do you ever masturbate?

WILLIAM
Definitely no comment.

MAX
You see -- it means 'yes.'

Then on to Bernie's conversation.

BERNIE
So tell me Anna -- what do you do?

ANNA
I'm an actress.

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

ANNA
Well, they can be.

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

ANNA
Films mainly.

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

ANNA
Fifteen million dollars.

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

MAX
Right -- I think we're ready.

They all move towards the kitchen.

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

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

HONEY
I'll show you.

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

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

BERNIE
Anna Scott?

BELLA
Yes.

BERNIE
The movie star?

BELLA
Yup.

BERNIE
Oh God. Oh God. Oh Goddy God.

The horror of his remembered conversation slowly unfolds. Honey re-enters.

HONEY
I don't believe it. I walked into the loo with her. I was still talking when she started unbuttoning her jeans... She had to ask me to leave.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

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

BELLA
What do you think of the guinea fowl?

ANNA
(whispering)
I'm a vegetarian.

BELLA
Oh God.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

Coffee time.

MAX
Having you here, Anna, firmly establishes what I've long suspected, that we really are the most desperate hot of under-achievers.

BERNIE
Shame!

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

A little pause. Then William turns to Bernie.

WILLIAM
Bernie.

BERNIE
Well, obviously it's me, isn't it -- I work in the City in a job I don't understand and everyone keeps getting promoted above me. I haven't had a girlfriends since... puberty and, well, the long and short of it is,

nobody fancies me, and if these cheeks get any chubbier, they never will.

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

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

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

MAX
You see -- incredibly sad.

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

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

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

Dead silence.

WILLIAM
Bella.

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

BERNIE
No. Not true...

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

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

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

They all laugh. Anna smiles across at William.

WILLIAM
So I get the brownie?

MAX
I think you do, yes.

ANNA
Wait a minute. What about me?

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

ANNA
Well... a shot at it.

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

ANNA
Well, I've been on a diet since I was nineteen, which means basically I've been hungry for a decade. I've had a sequence of not nice boyfriends -- one of whom hit me: and every time my heart gets broken it gets splashed across the newspapers as entertainment. Meantime, it cost millions to get me looking like this...

HONEY

Really?

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

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

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

Silence... they all look at her... then.

MAX
Nah!!! Nice try, gorgeous -- but you don't fool anyone.

The mood is instantly broken. They all laugh.

WILLIAM
Pathetic effort to hog the brownie.

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

Anna and William are leaving.

ANNA
That was such a great evening.

MAX
I'm delighted.

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

ANNA
And may I say that's a gorgeous tie.

MAX
Now you're lying.

ANNA
You're right. I told you I was bad at acting.

Max loves this.

ANNA

(to Bella)
Lovely to meet you.

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

MAX
No!

ANNA
Night, night, Honey.

HONEY
I'm so sorry about the loo thing. I meant to leave but I just... look, ring me if you need someone to go shopping with. I know lots of nice, cheap places... not that money necessarily...
(gives up)
nice to meet you.

And Honey gives her a huge hug.

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

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

BERNIE
Love your work.

They move to the door and wave goodbye.

EXT. MAX AND BELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

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

The house is in Lansdowne Road, on the edge of Notting Hill. They walk for a moment. A bit of silence.

ANNA
Floppy, huh?

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

ANNA
Why is she in a wheelchair?

WILLIAM
It was an accident -- about eighteen months ago.

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

WILLIAM
You know, I'm not sure. I don't think they'd tried for kids before, as fate would have it.

They walk in silence for a moment. Then...

WILLIAM
Would you like to come... my house is just...?

She smiles and shakes her head.

ANNA
Too complicated.

WILLIAM
That's fine.

ANNA
Busy tomorrow?

WILLIAM
I thought you were leaving.

ANNA
I was.

EXT. NOTTING HILL GARDEN - NIGHT

A little later in the walk.

ANNA
What's in there?

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

behind it.

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

ANNA
Let's go in.

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

ANNA
You abide by rules like that?

WILLIAM
Ahm...

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

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

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

WILLIAM
(casually)
Whoopsidaisies.

ANNA
What did you say?

WILLIAM
Nothing.

ANNA
Yes, you did.

WILLIAM
No, I didn't.

ANNA
You said 'whoopsidaisies.'

Tiny pause.

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

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

WILLIAM
Exactly. Here we go again.

He fails, and unfortunately, spontaneously...

WILLIAM
Whoopsidaisies.

They look at each other.

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

ANNA
Step aside.

She starts to climb.

WILLIAM
Actually be careful Anna -- it's harder than it looks...

But she's already almost over.

WILLIAM
Oh no it's not -- it's easy.

A few seconds later. Anna jumps down into the garden.

ANNA
Come on, Flops.

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

WILLIAM

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

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

WILLIAM
Nice garden.

EXT. MAGIC GARDEN - NIGHT

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

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

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

ANNA
Some people do spend their whole
lives together.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

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

SPIKE
No, 'fraid not.

WILLIAM
Bollocks.
(still searching --
with no help from
Spike)
This happens every time I go to the

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

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM/CORRIDOR - EVENING

He sprints downstairs, now fully dressed.

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

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

WILLIAM
Sort of.

INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

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

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

ANNA
So who left who?

WILLIAM
She left me.

ANNA
Why?

WILLIAM
She saw through me.

ANNA
Uh-oh. That's not good.

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

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

William and Anna look at each other.

GERALD
I didn't like that last film of hers. Fast asleep from the moment the lights went down.

Again -- Anna reacts.

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

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

Anna mouths 'Meg Ryan.'

LAWRENCE
Meg Ryan.

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

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

LAWRENCE
Whatever, she's so clearly up for it.

Anna's twinkle fades.

LAWRENCE
You know -- some girls, they're all

'stay away chum' but Anna, she's absolutely gagging for it. Do you know that in over fifty percent of languages the word for "actress" is the same as the word for "prostitute."

This is horrible.

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

WILLIAM
Right, that's it.

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

WILLIAM
I'm sorry to disturb you guys but --

LAWRENCE
Can I help you?

WILLIAM
Well, yes, I wish I hadn't overheard your conversation -- but I did and I just think, you know...

He's not a very convincing or frightening figure.

WILLIAM
...the person you're talking about is a real person and I think she probably deserves a little bit more consideration, rather than having jerks like you drooling over her...

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

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

WILLIAM
I'm sorry.

ANNA
No, that's fine. I love that you

tried... time was I'd have done the same.

They walk on and then...

ANNA
In fact -- give me a second.

And she walks straight back to their table.

ANNA
Hi.

LAWRENCE
Oh my God...

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

LAWRENCE
No, look, I'm sorry...

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

And she walks away. Gerald turns to Lawrence.

GERALD
You prick.

EXT. RITZ ARCADE - NIGHT

They are walking.

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

WILLIAM
No, you were brilliant

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

WILLIAM
I don't know, I'm afraid.

ANNA
I don't know either.

They have arrived at the end of the arcade.

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

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

ANNA
There are lots of reasons. Do you
want to come up?

His look says yes.

ANNA
Give me five minutes.

He watches her go -- and stands in the street. Music plays.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR/ANNA'S SUITE - NIGHT

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

ANNA
Hiya.

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

WILLIAM
Hi.

He kisses her gently on the cheek.

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

ANNA
(pause)
You've got to go.

WILLIAM
Why?

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

WILLIAM
Your boyfriend?

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

ANNA
Yes...

JEFF (V.O.)
Who is it?

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

WILLIAM
Ahm... room service.

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

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

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

WILLIAM
I'll see what I can do.

JEFF
Still, not sparkling.

WILLIAM
Absolutely. Ice cold still water.

JEFF
Unless it's illegal in the UK to

serve liquids below room temperature:
I don't want you going to jail just
to satisfy my whims...

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

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

WILLIAM
Right.

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

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

JEFF
I'm sorry. Is this a problem?

WILLIAM
Ah -- no. It's fine.

JEFF
What's your name?

WILLIAM
Ahm... Bernie.

Jeff slips him a fiver.

JEFF
Thank you, Bernie.
(to Anna)
Hey -- nice surprise, or nasty
surprise?

ANNA
Nice surprise.

He kisses her.

JEFF
Liar.
(to William)
She hates surprises. What are you
ordering?

ANNA
I haven't decided.

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

He wanders off taking off his t-shirt.

WILLIAM
I better leave.

Anna just nods.

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

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

WILLIAM
I think goodbye is traditional.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - NIGHT

William walks away.

EXT. RITZ - NIGHT

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

EXT. LONDON BUS - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He gets into his room and sits on the bed.

INT. SPACESHIP - NIGHT

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

INT. CONNECT CINEMA - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

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

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

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

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

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

Spike nods thoughtfully.

SPIKE
Yeh. Yeh... tricky... tricky... I knew a girl at school called Pandora ... never got to see her box though.

He roars with laughter. William smiles.

WILLIAM
Thanks. Yes -- very helpful.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Only two tables are being used. William and his friends are

on their first course. Bernie reads an "Evening Standard," with a picture of Anna and Jeff at Heathrow Airport.

MAX
You didn't know she had a boyfriend?

WILLIAM
No -- did you?

Their looks make it obvious that everyone did.

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

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

WILLIAM
Buggered?

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

WILLIAM
Really?

They all look to him for wise words.

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

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

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

MAX
Now -- try.

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

corridor.

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

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

MAX
Tessa -- this is Bella my wife.

TESSA
Oh hello, you're in a wheelchair.

BELLA
That's right.

MAX
And this is William.

TESSA
Hello William. Max has told me everything about you.

WILLIAM
(frightened)
Has he?

MAX
Wine?

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

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

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

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

MAX
Keziah -- some woodcock?

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

MAX
I don't realize that.

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

WILLIAM
And ahm -- what's a fruitarian exactly?

KEZIAH
We believe that fruits and vegetables have feelings so we think cooking is cruel. We only eat things that have actually fallen from the tree or bush -- that are, in fact, dead already.

WILLIAM
Right. Right. Interesting stuff.
(pause)
So these carrots...

KEZIAH
Have been murdered, yes.

WILLIAM
Murdered? Poor carrots. How beastly.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CONSERVATORY - NIGHT

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

ROSIE
Delicious coffee.

MAX
Thank you. I'm sorry about the lamb.

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

WILLIAM
Interesting means inedible.

ROSIE
Really inedible -- yes that's right.

They all laugh. It's going very well.

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

ROSIE
Maybe we'll meet again some time.

WILLIAM
Yes. That would be... great.

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max and Bella wait excitedly.

MAX
Well?

WILLIAM
She's perfect, perfect.

BELLA
And?

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

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

MAX
That's not fair.

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

BELLA

(pause)
Still loves you though.

WILLIAM
In a depressingly asexual way.

BELLA
(pause)
I never fancied you much actually...

They all roar with laughter.

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

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

BELLA
Do you want to stay?

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

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

INT. MAX AND BELLA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max lifts Bella off her couch and carries her upstairs.

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

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

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

EXT. MAX AND BELLA'S HOUSE - DAY

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

EXT. NEWSAGENT - DAY

William walks past the newsagent, heading for home. We see,

though he doesn't, a rack of tabloid papers, all of which seem to have very grainy, grabbed pictures of Anna on their front page. Headlines --'Anna Stunna'-- 'It's Definitely Her!' and 'Scott of Pantartica.'

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

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

EXT./INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE -DAY

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

ANNA
Hi. Can I come in?

WILLIAM
Come in.

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

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The two of them.

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

William shakes his head.

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

WILLIAM
This is the place.

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

She's very shaken.

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

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

ANNA
A bath would be great.

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

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

ANNA
You must be Spike.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BATHROOM - DAY

Anna is still lying low in the bath.

ANNA
Hi.

SPIKE
Just checking.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

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

SPIKE
Thank you, God.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

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

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

WILLIAM
No, that's fine. It's not often one has the opportunity to adios the plates of a major Hollywood star. It was a thrill for me.
(she smiles. Pause)
How is he?

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

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

ANNA
I have thought about you.

WILLIAM
Oh no no -- no.

He doesn't think she has to talk about this.

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Would you like me to take you through your lines?

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

WILLIAM
Hand it over. Basic plot?

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

WILLIAM
Well done you.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Eleven.

ANNA
Damn. 'And Wainwright...'

WILLIAM
Cartwright.

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

WILLIAM
'Certainly. And little Johnny?'

ANNA
My son's name is Johnny?

WILLIAM
Yup.

ANNA
Well, get a message through to him too.

WILLIAM
Brilliant.
(the scene's over)
Word perfect I'd say.

ANNA
What do you think?

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

ANNA
You think I should do Henry James instead?

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

ANNA
Yes -- I mean -- you never get anyone in 'Wings of a Dove' having the nerve to say 'inform the Pentagon that we need black star cover.'

WILLIAM
And I think the book is the poorer for it.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S DINING ROOM

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

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

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

WILLIAM
You like Chagall?

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

WILLIAM
With a goat playing a violin.

ANNA
Yes -- happiness wouldn't be happiness without a violin-playing goat.

Spike enters with three pizzas.

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

ANNA
Fantastic.

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

SPIKE
(pause)
I have some parsnip stew from last week.

If I just peel the skin off, it'll be perfect.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

ANNA
You've got big feet.

WILLIAM
Yes. Always have had.

ANNA
You know what they say about men with big feet?

WILLIAM
No. What's that?

ANNA
Big feet -- large shoes.

He laughs.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

WILLIAM
You actually have clauses in your contact about nudity?

ANNA
Definitely. 'You may show the dent at the top of the artist's buttocks -- but neither cheek. In the event of a stunt person being used, the artist must have full consultation.'

WILLIAM
You have a stunt bottom?

ANNA
I could have a stunt bottom, yes.

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

ANNA
Definitely. Ths is important stuff.

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

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

WILLIAM
The ice cream or Mel Gibson's bottom?

ANNA
Both.

INT. WILLIAM'S UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

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

WILLIAM
Well, thank you.
(awkward pause)
Anyway -- time for bed. Or... sofa-bed.

ANNA
Right.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

WILLIAM
(to himself)
Oh my God...
(then...)
Hello.

SPIKE
Hello. I wonder if I could have a little word.

He drifts round the corner, half-naked.

WILLIAM
Spike.

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

WILLIAM
Maybe.

SPIKE
And she's in your house.

WILLIAM
Yes.

SPIKE
And you get on very well.

WILLIAM
Yes.

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

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

SPIKE
Right. Right. You think it's the wrong moment. Fair enough.
(pause)
Do you mind if I have a go?

WILLIAM
Spike!

SPIKE
No -- you're right.

WILLIAM
I'll talk to you in the morning.

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

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

WILLIAM
Oh please sod off.

ANNA
Okay.

WILLIAM
No! No. Wait. I... thought you were someone else. I thought you were Spike. I'm delighted you're not.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

WILLIAM
Wow.

ANNA
What?

And then gets over it straight away.

WILLIAM
Nothing.

And kisses her.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

The morning.

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

ANNA
You and every person in this country.

WILLIAM
Oh God yes -- I'm sorry.

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

WILLIAM
Well...

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

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

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

WILLIAM
(pause)
Actually, I can't think really -- let me just have a quick look...

He looks under the sheet at her breasts.

WILLIAM

No, beats me.

She laughs...

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

WILLIAM
Who was Gilda?

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

WILLIAM
(pause)
You're lovelier this morning than you have ever been.

ANNA
(very touched)
Oh.

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

ANNA
I'll be back.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

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

ANNA
Breakfast in bed. Or lunch, or brunch.

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

ANNA
Can I stay a bit longer?

WILLIAM
Stay forever.

ANNA
Damn, I forgot the jam.

The doorbell goes.

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

INT./EXT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

WILLIAM
Jesus Christ.

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

ANNA
What?

WILLIAM
Don't ask.

She heads back the corridor, with no suspicion.

ANNA
You're up to something...

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

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

WILLIAM
Undressed like this, yes.

ANNA
Jesus.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

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

SPIKE
Morning, daring ones.

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

ANNA
(on the phone)
It's Anna. The press are here. No, there are hundreds of them. My brilliant plan was not so brilliant after all. Yeh, I know, I know. Just get me out then.
(she hangs up)
Damnit.

She heads upstairs.

WILLIAM
I wouldn't go outside.

SPIKE
Why not?

WILLIAM
Just take my work for it.

The moment William goes upstairs, Spike heads for the front door.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - DAY

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

INT. WILLIAM'S CORRIDOR - DAY

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

SPIKE
How did I look?

Inspects himself.

SPIKE
Not bad. No bad at all. Well-chosen briefs, I'd say. Chicks love grey. Mmmmm. Nice firm buttocks.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM
How are you doing?

ANNA
How do you think I'm doing?

WILLIAM
I don't know what happened.

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

She's packing.

WILLIAM
That's not true.

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

SPIKE
(dropping in)
I went out in my goddamn underwear too.

WILLIAM
Get out, Spike.
(he does)
I'm so sorry.

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

WILLIAM
You do?

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

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

WILLIAM

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

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

WILLIAM
That's spectacularly unfair.

ANNA
Who knows, it may even help business. Buy a boring book about Egypt from the guy who screwed Anna Scott.

She heads out.

INT. STAIRS/LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

ANNA
I don't want a goddamn cup of tea. I want to go home.

The doorbell goes.

WILLIAM
Spike, check who that is... and for God's sake put some clothes on.

Spike leans merrily out of the window.

SPIKE
Looks like a chauffeur to me.

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN/CORRIDOR - DAY

They move from the kitchen into the corridor.

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Well, there are. And we don't need to go anywhere near that far. My best friend slipped -- she slipped down-stairs, cracked her back and she's in a wheelchair for the rest of her life. All I'm asking for is a normal amount of perspective.

ANNA
You're right: of course, you're right. It's just that I've dealt with this garbage for ten years now -- you've had it for ten minutes. Our perspectives are different.

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

ANNA
Excuse me?

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

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

He takes this in. That's the end.

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

probably better go.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN/CORRIDOR - DAY

Spike and William sitting there. Pause.

WILLIAM
Was it you?

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

WILLIAM
Right.

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

EXT. LONDON - DAY

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

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

First it is summer -- summer fruits and flowers -- a six-month pregnant woman -- Honey with another leather-jacket boyfriend.

As he walks on the rain starts to fall -- he turns up his coat collar -- umbrellas appear. Followed by winter coats -- chestnuts roasting -- Christmas trees on sale and the first hint of snow.

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

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

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

A grey day in the bookshop. Martin and William. As ever. A

feeling that things in there ever change.

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

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

WILLIAM
Blimey. What's that?

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

WILLIAM
Well, thanks, that's great.

HONEY
It is great, isn't it. See you tonight. Hey, Marty-- sexy cardy.

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

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

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

TONY
Thank you very much.

BELLA
Unfortunately -- no one ever came to eat here.

TONY
A tiny hiccough.

BELLA

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

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

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

BERNIE
... get fired.

BELLA
No!

BERNIE
Yes, they're shifting the whole outfit much more towards the trading side -- and of course...
(he owns up)
I was total crap.

They're all rather stunned.

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

They toast him.

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

Total bewilderment from the others.

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

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

WILLIAM

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

MAX
Is it someone we know?

HONEY
Yes. I will keep you informed.

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

HONEY
By the way -- it's you.

SPIKE
Me?

HONEY
Yes. What do you think?

SPIKE
Well, yes. Groovy.

MAX
Any more announcements?

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

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

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

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

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

BELLA
I'm really horribly drunk.

Elsewhere, Max an William are relaxed together.

MAX
So -- you've laid the ghost.

WILLIAM
I believe I have.

MAX
Don't give a damn about the famous girl.

WILLIAM
No, don't think I do.

MAX
Which means you won't be distracted by the fact that she's back in London, grasping her Oscar, and to be found filming most days on Hampstead Heath.

He puts down a copy of the 'Evening Standard' with a picture of Anna on its cover.

WILLIAM
(immediate gloom)
Oh God no.

MAX
So not over her, in fact.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

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

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

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

SECURITY
Can I help you?

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

SECURITY
Does she know you're coming?

WILLIAM

No, no. She doesn't.

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

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

SECURITY
... can't let you through.

At that moment -- thirty yards away, William sees trailer door open. Out of it comes Anna -- looking extraordinary -- in a velvet dress; full, beautiful make-up; rich, extravagant hair. She has a necessary cluster of people about her. Hair, make-up, costume and the third assistant who has collected her.

She walks a few yards, and then casually turns her head. And sees him. Her face registers not jut surprise, certainly not a simple smile. His being there is a complicated thing.
Cut back to him. He does a small wave. She pauses as the whole paraphernalia of the upcoming scene passes between them. The movie divides them. But then she begins to walk through it, and followed by her cluster, she makes her way towards him. When she reaches him, the security guard stands back a pace, and her people hold back. She doesn't really know what to say...

ANNA
This is certainly... ah...

WILLIAM
I only found out you were here yesterday.

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

The third assistant is under pressure.

THIRD
Anna.

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

ANNA
(to William)
It's not going very well -- and it's our last day.

WILLIAM
Absolutely -- you're clearly very busy.

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

WILLIAM
Okay.

ANNA
Drink tea -- there's lots of tea.

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

KAREN
Come and have a look...

EXT. KENWOOD PARK - DAY

As they make towards the set...

KAREN
Are you a fan of Henry James?

WILLIAM
This is Henry James film?

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

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

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

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

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

WILLIAM
That's great.

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

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

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

JAMES
Oh, stop showing off.

He studies an actress a few yards to the left.

JAMES
God, that's an enormous arse.

ANNA
I'm not listening.

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

ANNA
I said I'm not listening -- and I think, looking at something that firm, you and your droopy little excuse for an 'arse' would be well-advised to keep quiet.

Back by the desk, William is listening and laughs. That's his girl. Anna prepares.

ANNA
So I ask you when you're going to tell everyone, and you say...?

JAMES
'Tomorrow will be soon enough.'

ANNA
And then I... right.

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

ANNA
Oh... no one... no one. Just some...

guy from the past. I don't know what he's doing here. Bit of an awkward situation.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

Cut back to William -- he has heard.

WILLIAM
Of course.

He takes off the headphones and puts them gently down.

WILLIAM
Thank you.

HARRY
Anytime.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

William is emptying Anna Scott videos into a box.

SPIKE
What's going on?

WILLIAM
I'm going to throw out these old videos.

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

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

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

INT. BACKROOM OF THE BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

ANNA
Hi.

WILLIAM
Hello.

ANNA
You disappeared.

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

ANNA
Well... how have you been?

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

ANNA
Oh no. It's all nonsense, believe me. I had no idea how much nonsense it all was -- but nonsense it all is...
(she's nervous)
Well, yesterday was our last day filming and so I'm just off -- but I brought you this from home, and...

It's quite a big wrapped parcel, flat -- 3 foot by 4 foot, leaning against a bookshelf.

ANNA
I thought I'd give it to you.

WILLIAM
Thank you. Shall I...

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

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

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

WILLIAM
What's the thing?

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

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

Mr. Smith is taken aback and therefore completely obedient.

MR. SMITH
Right. Sorry.

And he leaves.

WILLIAM
You were saying...

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

Pause as William takes this in.

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

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

Martin edges up.

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

WILLIAM
Can you tell her I'll ring her back.

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

WILLIAM
Okay -- perfect timing as ever -- hold the fort for a second will you, Martin?

Martin is left with Anna.

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

ANNA
Is that right?

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

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

MARTIN

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

ANNA
Well, no -- I'm sure he was friendly -- to Demi Moore -- who acted with him in 'Ghost.'

She's kind in here, not sarcastic.

MARTIN
Oh right. Right. Sorry. Always been a bit of an ass.

William returns a little uneasy.

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

Martin leaves them.

WILLIAM
Sorry about that.

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

She's awaiting an answer.

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

He can't really express what he feels.

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

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

WILLIAM
The truth is...

He feels he must explain.

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

ANNA
I see.
(pause)
That reality is a real 'no,' isn't it?

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

ANNA
Okay. Fine. Fine. Good decision.

Pause.

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

Pause. She kisses him on the cheek.

ANNA
Bye.

Then turns and leaves. Leaving him.

INT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

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

WILLIAM
What do you think? Good move?

HONEY
Good move: when all is said and done, she's nothing special. I saw her taking her pants off and I definitely glimpsed some cellulite down there.

BELLA
Good decision. All actresses are mad as snakes.

WILLIAM
Tony -- what do you think?

TONY
Never met her, never want to.

WILLIAM
Brilliant. Max?

MAX
Absolutely. Never trust a vegetarian.

WILLIAM
Great. Excellent. Thanks.

Spike enters.

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

HONEY
William has just turned down Anna Scott.

SPIKE
You daft prick!

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

BELLA
This painting isn't the original, is it?

WILLIAM
Yes, I think that one may be.

BERNIE
But she said she wanted to go out with you?

WILLIAM
Yes -- sort of...

BERNIE
That's nice.

WILLIAM
What?

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

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

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

WILLIAM
Oh sod a dog. I've made the wrong decision, haven't I?

They look at him. Spike does a big nod.

WILLIAM
Max, how fast is your car?

EXT. TONY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

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

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

BERNIE
And we intend to use them!

MAX
Where's Bella?

HONEY
She's not coming.

MAX
Sod that. Bernie -- in the back!

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

MAX
Come on, babe.

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

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

BELLA
Where are you going?

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

BELLA
Crazy. Go along Bayswater...

HONEY
That's right -- then Park Lane.

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

WILLIAM
No!

Suddenly the car slams to a halt.

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

ALL
All right.

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

EXT. PICCADILLY - DAY

The car turns illegally right across Piccadilly the wrong way down a one-way street and ends up outside the Ritz. William

sprints into the hotel. Bernie follows.

BERNIE
Bloody hell, this is fun.

IT. RITZ LOBBY - DAY

WILLIAM
Is Miss Scott staying here?

It is the same man.

RITZ MAN
No, sir.

WILLIAM
How about Miss Flintstone?

RITZ MAN
No, sir.

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

Man shakes his head.

RITZ MAN
No, sir.

WILLIAM
Right. Right. Fair enough. Thanks.

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

RITZ MAN
There was a Miss Pocahontas in room 126 -- but she checked out an hour ago. I believe she's holding a press conference at The Savoy before flying to America.

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

BERNIE
We have lift off!!

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

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

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

SPIKE
Bugger this for a bunch of bananas.

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

SPIKE
Go!

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

HONEY
You're my hero.

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

EXT. THE SAVOY - DAY

They pull to a stop. William leaps out.

MAX
Go!

INT. THE SAVOY - DAY

William rushes up to the main desk.

WILLIAM
Excuse me, where's the press conference?

MAN AT SAVOY
Are you an accredited member of the press?

WILLIAM
Yes...

He flashes a card.

MAN AT SAVOY
That's a Blockbuster video membership card, sir.

WILLIAM
That's right... I work for their in-

house magazine.
(mimes quotation marks)
'Movies are our business.'

MAN AT SAVOY
I'm sorry, sir...

Honey shoots into shot, pushing Bella's chair.

BELLA
He's with me.

MAN AT SAVOY
And you are?

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

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

HONEY
(to William)
Run!

INT. SAVOR ROOM - DAY

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

INT. LANCASTER ROOM - DAY

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

JEREMY
Yes... You -- Dominic.

QUESTIONER 1
How much longer are you staying in the UK then?

ANNA
No time at all. I fly out tonight.

She's in a slightly melancholic and therefore honest mood.

JEREMY
Which is why we have to round it up now. Final questions.

He points at a journalist he knows.

QUESTIONER 2
Is your decision to take a year off anything to do with the rumours about Jeff and his present leading lady?

ANNA
Absolutely not.

QUESTIONER 2
Do you believe the rumours?

ANNA
It's really not my business any more. Though I will say, from my experience, that rumours about Jeff... do tend to be true.

They love that answer, and all scribble in their note books. Next question comes from someone straight right next to William.

QUESTIONER 3
Last time you were here, there were some fairly graphic photographs of you and a young English guy -- so what happened there?

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

JEREMY
Yes, the gentleman in the pink shirt.

He is pointing straight at William, who has his hand up.

WILLIAM
Yes -- Miss Scott -- are there any circumstances in which you two might be more than just friends?

Anna sees who it is asking.

ANNA
I hoped there might be -- but no, I'm

assured there aren't.

WILLIAM
And what would you say...

JEREMY
No, it's just one question per person.

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

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

OTHER JOURNALIST
(to William)
His name is Thacker.

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

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

ANNA
Yes, I'm pretty sure I would.

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

Anna whispers something to Jeremy.

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

QUESTIONER 1
Yes -- Anna -- how long are you intending to stay here in Britain?

Pause. Anna looks up at William. He nods.

ANNA
Indefinitely.

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

SPIKE
What happened?

HONEY
It was good.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXT. LEICESTER SQUARE - NIGHT

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

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

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

A small tai chi group moves mysteriously. And as the camera glides, it passes a couple sitting on a single, simple wooden

bench overlooking the garden. He is reading, she is just looking out, totally relaxed, holding his hand, pregnant. It is William and Anna.

THE END