

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.

MARTIN

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,'
Topsy.

WILLIAM

Topol.

MARTIN

That's right -- Topol.

WILLIAM

But Ringo Starr doesn't look
anything like Topol.

MARTIN

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

WILLIAM

So it could have been neither of them?

MARTIN

I suppose so.

WILLIAM

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

MARTIN

Not classic, no.

Martin shakes his head. William drains his cappuccino.

WILLIAM

Right -- want another one?

MARTIN

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

William sets off.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

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

EXT. PORTOBELLO ROAD - DAY

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

ANNA

Oh Jesus.

WILLIAM

Here, let me help.

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

ANNA

What are you doing?!

He jumps back.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

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

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Eighteen yards. That's my house there.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

They enter. She carries a few stylish bags.

WILLIAM

Come on in. I'll just...

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

WILLIAM

It's not that tidy, I fear.

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

WILLIAM

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

She heads upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

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

WILLIAM

Would you like a cup of tea before you go?

ANNA

No thanks.

WILLIAM

Coffee?

ANNA

No.

WILLIAM

Orange juice -- probably not.

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

Really, no.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

No.

WILLIAM

Do you always say 'no' to everything?

Pause. She looks at him deep.

ANNA

No.

(pause)

I better be going. Thanks for your help.

WILLIAM

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

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

WILLIAM

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

She smiles. She's cool.

ANNA

Thank you.

WILLIAM

Yes. Well. My pleasure.

He guides her towards the door.

WILLIAM

Nice to meet you. Surreal but nice.

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

WILLIAM

'Surreal but nice.' What was I thinking?

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

WILLIAM

Coming.

He opens the door. It's her.

WILLIAM

Oh hi. Forget something?

ANNA

I forgot my bag.

WILLIAM

Oh right.

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

WILLIAM

Here we go.

ANNA

Thanks. Well...

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

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

WILLIAM

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

Spike walks in.

SPIKE

Hi.

ANNA

Hi.

WILLIAM

Hi.

Spike walks past unsuspectingly and heads into the kitchen.

SPIKE

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

And leaves them in the corridor.

ANNA

Probably best not tell anyone about this.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

Bye.

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

SPIKE

There's something wrong with this yogurt.

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

INT. MANHATTAN ART GALLERY - DAY

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

MICHAEL

Smile.

ANNA

No.

MICHAEL

Smile.

ANNA

I've got nothing to smile about.

MICHAEL

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

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

Yes, she is fairly fabulous.

INT. BOOKSHOP - DAY

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

MR. SMITH

Do you have any books by Dickens?

WILLIAM

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

MR. SMITH

Oh right. How about that new John Grisham thriller?

WILLIAM

No, that's a novel too.

MR. SMITH

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

Pause.

WILLIAM

Martin -- your customer.

MARTIN

Can I help you?

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

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

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

SPIKE

Hey.

WILLIAM

Hi...

INT. WILLIAM'S KITCHEN - DAY

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

WILLIAM

Just incidentally -- why are you wearing that?

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

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

EXT. WILLIAM'S TERRACE - DAY

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

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

Groovy. You should do more of this stuff.

WILLIAM

So -- any messages?

SPIKE

Yeh, I wrote a couple down.

WILLIAM

Two? That's it?

SPIKE

You want me to write down all your messages?

William closes his eyes in exasperation.

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

Right. No one else?

SPIKE

Absolutely not.

Spike leans back and relaxes.

SPIKE

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

William freezes -- then looks at Spike.

WILLIAM

What did she say?

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

Which was?

SPIKE

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM

Hello.

RITZ MAN (V.O.)

May I help you, sir?

WILLIAM

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

INT. RITZ RECEPTION - DAY

RITZ MAN

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

WILLIAM

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM

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

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

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

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

SPIKE
Try 'Flintstone.'

WILLIAM
(to Spike)
What?

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

WILLIAM
Does 'Flintstone' mean anything to
you?

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

Flintstone is indeed the magic word.

WILLIAM
Oh my God.

He practices how to sound.

WILLIAM
Hello. Hi. Hi.

ANNA (V.O.)
Hi.

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

WILLIAM
(caught out)

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

ANNA (V.O.)

You played it pretty cool here,
waiting for three days to call.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA (V.O.)

Oh -- Okay.

WILLIAM

Perhaps I could drop round for tea or
something?

ANNA (V.O.)

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

WILLIAM

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

EXT. RITZ - DAY

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

INT. RITZ HOTEL - DAY

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

WILLIAM

Which floor?

TARQUIN

Three.

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

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - DAY

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

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

WILLIAM

Are you sure you...?

TARQUIN

Yes.

WILLIAM

Oh. Right.

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

KAREN

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

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

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE ANTE-ROOM - DAY

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

KAREN

What did you think of the film?

TARQUIN

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

They both turn to William for his opinion.

WILLIAM

I agree.

KAREN

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

TARQUIN

'Time Out.'

KAREN

Great. And you...

WILLIAM

(seeing it on a coffee
table)

'Horse and Hound.' The name's
William Whacker. I think she might
be expecting me.

KAREN

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

They sit down as Karen goes off.

TARQUIN

You've brought her flowers?

William goes for the cover-up.

WILLIAM

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

TARQUIN

I'm sorry. Which hospital?

Pause. He's in trouble.

WILLIAM

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

TARQUIN

Oh sure. Of course.

KAREN

Mr. Thacker.

Saved by the bell.

INT. TRAFALGAR SUIT CORRIDOR - DAY

KAREN

You've got five minutes.

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

INT. THE TRAFALGAR SUITE SITTING ROOM - DAY

There Anna is, framed in the window. Glorious.

WILLIAM

Hi.

ANNA

Hello.

WILLIAM

I brought these, but clearly...

There are lots of other flowers in the room.

ANNA

Oh no, ho -- these are great.

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

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

JEREMY

Everything okay?

ANNA

Yes, thanks.

JEREMY

And you are from 'Horse and Hound' magazine?

William nods.

ANNA

Is that so?

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

WILLIAM

So I'll just fire away, shall I?

Anna nods.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Obviously. Very difficult.

Jeremy leaves.

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Absolutely fine about it.

Re-enter Jeremy.

JEREMY

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

It takes place on a submarine.

WILLIAM

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

Jeremy exits.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

And what happens next in the dream?

It's a challenge.

WILLIAM

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

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

JEREMY

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

WILLIAM

Very nearly.

JEREMY

Maybe time for one last question?

WILLIAM

Right.

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

WILLIAM

Are you busy tonight?

ANNA

Yes.

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

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

INT. TRAFALGAR SUITE CORRIDOR - DAY

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

TARQUIN

How was she?

WILLIAM

Fabulous.

TARQUIN

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

William can't think his way out of this.

WILLIAM

Yes. That's right. Bitch.

He turns to go, but is accosted by Karen.

KAREN

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

WILLIAM

The others?

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

KAREN

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

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

MALE LEAD

Pleased to meet you. Did you like the film?

WILLIAM

Ah... yes, enormously.

MALE LEAD

Well, fire away.

WILLIAM

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

MALE LEAD

I did.

WILLIAM

Any bit in particular?

MALE LEAD

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

WILLIAM

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

INT. RITZ INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

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

WILLIAM

Did you identify with the character you were playing?

INTERPRETER

Te identificaste con el personaje que interpretabas?

FOREIGN ACTOR

No.

INTERPRETER

No.

WILLIAM

Ah. Why not?

INTERPRETER

Por que no?

FOREIGN ACTOR

Porque es un robot 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 bricketty -- 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 boobies 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 clammers over with terrible difficulty, dusts himself off, and heads towards where she stands.

WILLIAM

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

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

WILLIAM

Nice garden.

EXT. MAGIC GARDEN - NIGHT

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

ANNA

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

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

ANNA

Some people do spend their whole
lives together.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

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

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

No, 'fraid not.

WILLIAM

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

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

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM/CORRIDOR - EVENING

He sprints downstairs, now fully dressed.

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

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

WILLIAM

Sort of.

INT. CINEMA - NIGHT

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

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

ANNA

So who left who?

WILLIAM

She left me.

ANNA

Why?

WILLIAM

She saw through me.

ANNA

Uh-oh. That's not good.

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

LAWRENCE

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

William and Anna look at each other.

GERALD

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

Again -- Anna reacts.

LAWRENCE

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

GERALD

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

Anna mouths 'Meg Ryan.'

LAWRENCE

Meg Ryan.

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

GERALD

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

LAWRENCE

Whatever, she's so clearly up for it.

Anna's twinkle fades.

LAWRENCE

You know -- some girls, they're all

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

This is horrible.

LAWRENCE

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

WILLIAM

Right, that's it.

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

WILLIAM

I'm sorry to disturb you guys but --

LAWRENCE

Can I help you?

WILLIAM

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

He's not a very convincing or frightening figure.

WILLIAM

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

LAWRENCE

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

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

WILLIAM

I'm sorry.

ANNA

No, that's fine. I love that you

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

They walk on and then...

ANNA

In fact -- give me a second.

And she walks straight back to their table.

ANNA

Hi.

LAWRENCE

Oh my God...

ANNA

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

LAWRENCE

No, look, I'm sorry...

ANNA

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

And she walks away. Gerald turns to Lawrence.

GERALD

You prick.

EXT. RITZ ARCADE - NIGHT

They are walking.

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

No, you were brilliant

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

I don't know, I'm afraid.

ANNA

I don't know either.

They have arrived at the end of the arcade.

ANNA

Here we are.

(pause)

Do you want to come up?

WILLIAM

(he hoes)

There seem to be lots of reasons
why I shouldn't.

ANNA

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

His look says yes.

ANNA

Give me five minutes.

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

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR/ANNA'S SUITE - NIGHT

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

ANNA

Hiya.

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

WILLIAM

Hi.

He kisses her gently on the cheek.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

(pause)

You've got to go.

WILLIAM

Why?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Your boyfriend?

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

ANNA

Yes...

JEFF (V.O.)

Who is it?

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

WILLIAM

Ahm... room service.

JEFF

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

WILLIAM

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

JEFF

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

WILLIAM

I'll see what I can do.

JEFF

Still, not sparkling.

WILLIAM

Absolutely. Ice cold still water.

JEFF

Unless it's illegal in the UK to

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

WILLIAM

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

JEFF

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

WILLIAM

Right.

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

ANNA

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

JEFF

I'm sorry. Is this a problem?

WILLIAM

Ah -- no. It's fine.

JEFF

What's your name?

WILLIAM

Ahm... Bernie.

Jeff slips him a fiver.

JEFF

Thank you, Bernie.

(to Anna)

Hey -- nice surprise, or nasty
surprise?

ANNA

Nice surprise.

He kisses her.

JEFF

Liar.

(to William)

She hates surprises. What are you
ordering?

ANNA

I haven't decided.

JEFF

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

He wanders off taking off his t-shirt.

WILLIAM

I better leave.

Anna just nods.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

I think goodbye is traditional.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - NIGHT

William walks away.

EXT. RITZ - NIGHT

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

EXT. LONDON BUS - NIGHT

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

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He gets into his room and sits on the bed.

INT. SPACESHIP - NIGHT

Space Anna, in the very hi-tech environment and a serious mood, 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, drinking tea.

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

No, that's fine. It's not often one has the opportunity to adios the plates of a major Hollywood star. It was a thrill for me.

(she smiles. Pause)

How is he?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

I have thought about you.

WILLIAM

Oh no no -- no.

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

I appreciate that absolutely.

(changing subject tactfully)

Is that the film you're doing?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Would you like me to take you through your lines?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Hand it over. Basic plot?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Well done you.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Eleven.

ANNA

Damn. 'And Wainwright...'

WILLIAM

Cartwright.

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

'Certainly. And little Johnny?'

ANNA

My son's name is Johnny?

WILLIAM

Yup.

ANNA

Well, get a message through to him too.

WILLIAM

Brilliant.

(the scene's over)

Word perfect I'd say.

ANNA

What do you think?

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

You think I should do Henry James instead?

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

And I think the book is the poorer for it.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S DINING ROOM

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

ANNA

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

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

WILLIAM

You like Chagall?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

With a goat playing a violin.

ANNA

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

Spike enters with three pizzas.

SPIKE

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

ANNA

Fantastic.

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

(pause)

I have some parsnip stew from last week.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

ANNA

You've got big feet.

WILLIAM

Yes. Always have had.

ANNA

You know what they say about men with big feet?

WILLIAM

No. What's that?

ANNA

Big feet -- large shoes.

He laughs.

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

You actually have clauses in your contact about nudity?

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

You have a stunt bottom?

ANNA

I could have a stunt bottom, yes.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

Definitely. Ths is important stuff.

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

The ice cream or Mel Gibson's bottom?

ANNA

Both.

INT. WILLIAM'S UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

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

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

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

ANNA

Right.

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

INT. WILLIAM'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

WILLIAM

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

SPIKE

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

He drifts round the corner, half-naked.

WILLIAM

Spike.

SPIKE

I don't want to interfere, or anything... but she's split up from her boyfriend, 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)
Damn it.

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 downstairs, 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 and William are relaxed together.

MAX

So -- you've laid the ghost.

WILLIAM

I believe I have.

MAX

Don't give a damn about the famous girl.

WILLIAM

No, don't think I do.

MAX

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

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

WILLIAM

(immediate gloom)
Oh God no.

MAX

So not over her, in fact.

EXT. HAMPSTEAD HEATH - DAY

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

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

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

SECURITY

Can I help you?

WILLIAM

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

SECURITY

Does she know you're coming?

WILLIAM

No, no. She doesn't.

SECURITY

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

WILLIAM

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

SECURITY

... can't let you through.

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

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

ANNA

This is certainly... ah...

WILLIAM

I only found out you were here yesterday.

ANNA

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

The third assistant is under pressure.

THIRD

Anna.

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

ANNA

(to William)

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

WILLIAM

Absolutely -- you're clearly very busy.

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

Okay.

ANNA

Drink tea -- there's lots of tea.

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

KAREN

Come and have a look...

EXT. KENWOOD PARK - DAY

As they make towards the set...

KAREN

Are you a fan of Henry James?

WILLIAM

This is Henry James film?

EXT. KENWOOD HOUSE - DAY

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

KAREN

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

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

HARRY

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

WILLIAM

That's great.

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

JAMES

We are living in cloudbuckooland --
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 grateful. He kisses him too.

BERNIE

We have lift off!!

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

EXT. LONDON STREET - DAY

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

SPIKE

Bugger this for a bunch of bananas.

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

SPIKE

Go!

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

HONEY

You're my hero.

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

EXT. THE SAVOY - DAY

They pull to a stop. William leaps out.

MAX

Go!

INT. THE SAVOY - DAY

William rushes up to the main desk.

WILLIAM

Excuse me, where's the press conference?

MAN AT SAVOY

Are you an accredited member of the press?

WILLIAM

Yes...

He flashes a card.

MAN AT SAVOY

That's a Blockbuster video membership card, sir.

WILLIAM

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

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

MAN AT SAVOY

I'm sorry, sir...

Honey shoots into shot, pushing Bella's chair.

BELLA

He's with me.

MAN AT SAVOY

And you are?

BELLA

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

MAN AT SAVOY

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

HONEY

(to William)
Run!

INT. SAVOR ROOM - DAY

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

INT. LANCASTER ROOM - DAY

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

JEREMY

Yes... You -- Dominic.

QUESTIONER 1

How much longer are you staying in the UK then?

ANNA

No time at all. I fly out tonight.

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

JEREMY

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

He points at a journalist he knows.

QUESTIONER 2

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

ANNA

Absolutely not.

QUESTIONER 2

Do you believe the rumours?

ANNA

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

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

QUESTIONER 3

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

ANNA

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

JEREMY

Yes, the gentleman in the pink shirt.

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

WILLIAM

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

Anna sees who it is asking.

ANNA

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

assured there aren't.

WILLIAM

And what would you say...

JEREMY

No, it's just one question per person.

ANNA

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

WILLIAM

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

OTHER JOURNALIST

(to William)

His name is Thacker.

WILLIAM

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

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

ANNA

Yes, I'm pretty sure I would.

WILLIAM

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

Anna whispers something to Jeremy.

JEREMY

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

QUESTIONER 1

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

Pause. Anna looks up at William. He nods.

ANNA

Indefinitely.

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

SPIKE

What happened?

HONEY

It was good.

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

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

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

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

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

Nearby, Tony standing, glowing, beside his fabulous, pyramidal 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 jigging 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