

The Boys Are Back in Town

by

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Based on the book by Simon Carr

13th June, 2008

JOE WARR is driving along the beach in his SUV. The sea is calm and so is JOE. His elbow rests on the open window, he wears sunglasses. He looks relaxed, happy.

JOE

Summertime and the living is easy . . .

He is not going fast but then again he is not exactly going slowly. He gives a couple walking on the beach a reasonably wide berth.

The WOMAN takes one look at him and loses control.

WOMAN 1

You idiot!

The MAN joins in.

MAN 1

You bloody idiot!

WOMAN 1

What the *hell* do you think you're doing!

JOE looks at her as he passes.

Now a BATHER standing in the shallows sees him.

BATHER

Are you crazy!

JOE

Jesus. What's their problem?

Their problem becomes apparent when a small face appears upside down in JOE's windscreen.

The camera pulls back to reveal that JOE's six year old son, ARTIE, is travelling on the roof. He holds onto the roof rack and hangs down looking in at JOE. He smiles.

There are other vehicles on the beach. None of them has a child on the roof.

Another COUPLE are leaving the beach as the SUV passes. The woman's voice is like a chain-saw.

WOMAN 2

Get that child off there!

JOE turns to them as he passes.

JOE

I'll deal with it, thank you.

1 CONTINUED:

WOMAN 2

What?

Like he's the expert on the scene.

JOE

I'll deal with it.

WOMAN 2

You're insane!

JOE drives on. ARTIE is sitting up now - he holds on very tightly, the wind in his hair.

JOE swings into the shallows. The sea water sprays up everywhere. ARTIE screams in delight.

2 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING**

2

JOE and ARTIE live in a shambling clapboard house on stilts. A large verandah runs around it. A lovely, over-grown, exotic garden.

JOE pulls up to the house. ARTIE is in his seat in the back now but wearing his mask and snorkel

JOE lifts ARTIE out. ARTIE tears off the face mask and runs.

Over a bank in the garden is a branch thirty feet above the river. From this a rope with a handle has been slung.

ARTIE leaps into the air and grabs the handle. He swings out on the rope high over the water.

ARTIE

Weeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

3 **INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING**

3

JOE moves through the debris: DVD boxes, clothes, plastic games, goggles, guns, popcorn, plates, cutlery, news papers, paintbrushes, crayons, Lego, game CDs.

JOE(V.O.)

Now, it may be that I'm a victim of false consciousness, maybe I've been deceived by over-assigned gender roles but, broadly speaking, I assert that mothers run their households better than this.

He picks up the remains of a takeaway pizza. He puts them on the mantelpiece.

JOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When Artie's mother was alive her presence was everywhere - the plumped cushions, the magazines squared off on the table, the beds crisp and fresh.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The scent of *Givenchy* from the bedroom,
or the rosemary from the kitchen. We miss
that now. We do miss that.

KATY (O.S.)

Joe . . .

KATY is an exuberant red-head. She is in a dressing gown that
is open at the front. She is heavily, beautifully, pregnant.

KATY (CONT'D)

Joe . . .

She's there in the doorway. JOE now stands in the room that
is just as he described - tidy, well-ordered.

KATY looks bewildered, legs splayed, one hand on her belly.

KATY (CONT'D)

My waters have broken.

KATY has a contraction. She looks at him, shocked. She
smiles.

4 INT. DELIVERY ROOM. HOSPITAL -NIGHT

4

KATY is having really painful contractions now. JOE is there
with the MIDWIFE and an OBSTETRICIAN.

JOE is next to KATY. He mops her brow.

KATY

(Bewildered)

What time is it?

Another massive contraction.

KATY (CONT'D)

That clock hasn't moved. It's not
working. What time is it?

OBSTETRICIAN

Stop asking the time. It's not going to
help the baby come.

JOE looks daggers at him. He leans in to KATY.

JOE

Just say the word . . .

OBSTETRICIAN

(Weary)

Look. You must push. We can't do this by
ourselves you know.

JOE

Just say the word and I'll sock the over-
qualified creep.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

Another earth-shattering contraction. JOE tries to be encouraging.

JOE (CONT'D)

Push. Push. That's it. Push. Pu . . .

KATY

Oh, shut up. You push!

5 INT. CANTEEN. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

5

JOE gets himself a coffee.

JOE

(V.O.)

I'm not at all sure fathers really fit in here. Seeing our wives in greater pain than we could ever imagine. She pushes and it's like the ground heaving, some disturbance so deeply strange you can't imagine what will come out. Maybe there are some things it's better not to witness.

6 INT. DELIVERY ROOM. HOSPITAL - DAY

6

The BABY has been delivered - a boy.

The newborn BABY is on KATY's chest. JOE is there, tears in his eyes. He mumbles something, emotional, incoherent.

7 INT. CORRIDOR. HOSPITAL -DAY

7

JOE sits on a bench, gathering himself. He wipes his eyes. A NURSE looks at him curiously as she passes.

JOE

Men have feelings too you know.

NURSE

Yeah, so do fish.

She walks on.

8 INT. PRESS BOX. CRICKET GROUND -DAY

8

JOE enters with champagne and big cigars.

JOE

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED.

The JOURNALISTS turn to look. One female amongst the men.

JOE (CONT'D)

He's *heeere!*

JOE is congratulated.

(CONTINUED)

DIGBY

Name?

JOE

Arthur. Arthur Garfield Lara Warr.

FEMALE JOURNALIST

Nice.

DIGBY

Jesus. Are they Cuban?

JOE

Cohiba Double Coronas. An hour and a half
of smoking pleasure.

Champagne is poured. The FEMALE JOURNALIST takes a cigar.

JOE (CONT'D)

Who says size doesn't matter?

JOURNALIST 2

(To female colleague)

When's the last time you had a big Cuban?

FEMALE JOURNALIST

Boys, boys, try to remember - sometimes a
cigar is just a cigar . . .

They drink champagne.

JOE

Time to kick your Aussie butts.

He is fantastically pleased with himself.

9 **EXT. CRICKET GROUND -DAY**

9

A yellow and green clad AUSTRALIAN clean bowls an ENGLISH
Batsman.

10 **INT. PRESS BOX. CRICKET GROUND -DAY**

10

A fog of cigar smoke. The Australian JOURNALISTS are on their
feet: *Howzat!*

JOE stays firmly in his seat beneath the *No Smoking* sign,
smoking and typing.

11 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING**

11

KATY is sitting with ARTIE, putting a T shirt on him. ARTIE
is now a happy-go-lucky boy of five or six. He struggles to
get free and back to his play.

KATY'S mother, BARBARA comes out of the house bringing plates
of food to lay out on the table. She cooks, as it were, for
Africa.

(CONTINUED)

She is in her sixties, short hair, brown skin, broken nails.

TOM, KATY'S father, tall, weather-beaten, taciturn, turns slabs of meat on the barbecue.

KATY is sitting with DIGBY and his wife, POODLE and their youngest daughter CORDELIA - about a year or eighteen months old. They drink wine.

DIGBY and POODLE have six children under ten years old. They are everywhere.

A TAXI CAB pulls down the drive from the road.

KATY

Oh, my God. Look Artie. It's your long-lost father . . .

The TAXI CAB pulls up. JOE gets out, pulls his travelling bag from the back.

DIGBY

Welcome home, mate!

More hellos as JOE dumps his bag, moves in on KATY.

JOE

Hello gorgeous.

KATY

Hey, you.

They kiss.

JOE

Little one!

ARTIE escapes his mother. JOE ruffles ARTIE'S hair as he runs off, happily shouting.

DIGBY

Good copy.

JOE

Thanks.

DIGBY

How was the old country?

JOE

Strawberries with lashings of English rain. It's good to be back.

JOE approaches the table of food, he surveys the vast spread. He checks the bottles of wine there. It's from BARBARA and TOM's vineyard.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

Wow. The good stuff. You shouldn't have gone to all this trouble just for me.

BARBARA

As if . . .

JOE pours wine.

He hooks a finger into a dish, singing "*Feed the World*." BARBARA slaps his hand playfully.

JOE takes off his jacket, his tie, kicks off his shoes. He sits down next to KATY, takes her hand, drinks his wine.

DIGBY and POODLE's other daughter REGAN, also six, is with ARTIE. They are about to race.

ARTIE

On your markies, get your car keys,
gooooooooooooo!

He races off - a head start. REGAN chases.

An idyllic scene: children running in the sunlight. JOE sighs deeply, visibly relaxes.

JOE

(V.O.)

And so we lived happily ever after. Now you know that's not true, don't you?

12 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING

12

JOE is lying on the bed, beneath the ceiling fan, dressed in an evening suit, ready, waiting. KATY is still looking at her reflection in the full-length mirror. She is trying on a little black number - possibly too figure-hugging.

KATY

So, do you think I can get away with this?

She models for him.

JOE

You know I like everything you wear.

KATY

But?

JOE

But . . . that dress is a bit . . . I don't think I could put my hand on my heart and say I really like it.

(CONTINUED)

KATY

Why not? What's not to like? You do,
actually, don't you?

JOE

Well, no, I have to say, not as such.

KATY

Okay, I'll change.

She looks at herself - she wants to wear the dress.

KATY (CONT'D)

Though I don't understand why you're
saying you don't like it.

Beat.

KATY (CONT'D)

(Playful)

Tell me you like it.

JOE

Well, I could, but it wouldn't be the
case.

KATY

Don't be perverse. I know you like it.

JOE

Okay I'll tell you I like the dress, but
only on the strict understanding that you
know I'm not telling the truth, right?

KATY

(Suddenly serious)

Just tell me what you think of the dress.

JOE

I love your dress. Your dress is
fantastic.

KATY

Thank you. At last.

She has her way. She puts on her earrings.

BARBARA comes in with ARTIE. He carries a space ship.

ARTIE

Thunderbirds Can't Go!

ARTIE makes the noises of a space ship in flight.

JOE

God, I love boys.

(CONTINUED)

KATY
Don't say that, darling, people will get
the wrong idea.

BARBARA
Come on young man, bath time.

KATY
Thanks, mum.

BARBARA
You're going to be late.

KATY
I'm ready.

JOE gets up.

JOE
Absolutely. Sorry to have kept you all
waiting.

13 INT. SMART PARTY. BRISBANE -NIGHT

13

JOE dances with KATY. He holds her close. He kisses her.
He moves her round the floor, looking into her eyes.

JOE
God, you're beautiful.

She grimaces. JOE thinks she's joking.

JOE (CONT'D)
In a slightly spooky sort of way.

Suddenly it clear that the grimace is for real.

KATY
Joe . . .

KATY doubles up as if she has just been punched hard in the
stomach.

She crouches down on her haunches, one hand grasping JOE's
trousers, gasping for breath.

JOE
Christ. What is it?

KATY can't speak. The music changes. Everyone starts to dance
wildly.

JOE (CONT'D)
Katy . . .?

Another stab of pain so awful, she passes out on the dance
floor.

14 **EXT. HOSPITAL -NIGHT** 14

KATY, still in her evening dress and jewellery, face hidden by an oxygen mask, is rushed into the hospital on a trolley. JOE, in his evening suit is there at her side.

15 **INT. HOSPITAL -NIGHT** 15

JOE sees KATY wheeled into X-Ray. The trolley pushes through the big double doors. JOE is left behind.

16 **INT. CORRIDOR. HOSPITAL -NIGHT** 16

JOE sits waiting, all alone in the empty corridor.

A NURSE comes along. She gives JOE KATY's earrings, wedding ring and so on.

NURSE

These will be safer with you.

She walks back along the corridor. JOE looks at the jewellery in his hand.

17 **INT. ICU. HOSPITAL -DAY** 17

KATY is attached to various drips, tubes coming from her. JOE is with KATY when she comes round.

JOE

Hello.

KATY

Hi.

JOE holds her hand. He slips the wedding ring back onto her finger.

KATY (CONT'D)

Do I have cancer?

He positions the ring.

JOE

Yes.

A pause.

KATY

I'm so sorry.

JOE

Don't be daft.

Then, suddenly taking her hand from his and putting it over her eyes, she utters a cry that comes from the depths of her.

18 **INT. BATHROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING**

18

ARTIE is in the bath. He is splashing around quite happily.
JOE sits on the closed loo, in a daze.

 ARTIE
 What's the matter, daddy?

Nothing.

 ARTIE (CONT'D)
 Daddy?

JOE staring.

 ARTIE (CONT'D)
 Daddy!

ARTIE splashes water everywhere.

 JOE
 Don't do that.

 ARTIE
 I'm cold.

 JOE
 Well move back. I'll run some more hot.

ARTIE shifts back in the bath. JOE runs the hot tap. He stirs the water in with his hand. ARTIE moves forward too far, too close to the very hot water.

 JOE (CONT'D)
 Sit back. Sit back. You'll scald
 yourself.

ARTIE sits back, hugging his knees. JOE, staring somewhere past the taps, stirs in the hot.

19 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT**

19

JOE sits with DIGBY. JOE opens a bottle of whiskey. He throws the top away.

 JOE
 Won't being needing that.

He pours two large whiskeys, drains his glass and refills it.

 DIGBY
 She'll be fine, Joe. I know she'll be
 fine.

 JOE
 How do you know?

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

DIGBY
I know her. She won't let it defeat her.

JOE
You know her? What? You know she's
immortal?

DIGBY
No, just that . . .

JOE
Digby. She's sicker than shit. The cancer
has rooted in her bowel and grown through
her body like . . . like Russian Vine.
You don't have a clue what you're talking
about.

JOE drinks his whiskey. DIGBY looks at him.

20 **INT. BATHROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 20

KATY is the bath. The illness has advanced rapidly,
inexorably. She is weak. Her face has collapsed around her
enormous eyes.

JOE is going to lift her out. He is tender, careful. He gets
ready, an arm behind her back, an arm in the crook of her
legs. But the tumour pushes on her lungs and she can't
breathe. She starts to struggle for breath.

21 **INT. LANDING. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 21

JOE runs to the bedroom for the oxygen. ARTIE is watching.
JOE runs back to the bathroom. He pushes the door to. ARTIE
follows. He can see through the crack.

KATY fighting for breath. JOE puts the mask on her face. He
gives her oxygen.

JOE
Breathe, breathe . . .

Bit by bit she gets some air into her lungs.

ARTIE turns away. He runs down the hall and down the stairs.

22 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 22

ARTIE runs into the garden. He comes to rest at the foot of a
tree. He squats on his haunches, his back against the trunk.

23 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 23

JOE walks down the garden. ARTIE is sitting on the grass,
digging at the ground with a stick.

JOE sits on the grass next to ARTIE. ARTIE sees JOE's
expression. He sits very still.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

You know how Mummy's been getting more
and more tired because she's been so ill?

ARTIE is looking at him.

JOE (CONT'D)

We think that soon, she's going to go
into a very deep sleep . . . a sleep so
deep we don't think she's ever going to
wake up again.

ARTIE is looking at JOE silently. JOE takes a deep breath.

JOE (CONT'D)

In fact, we think she's going to die.

ARTIE

When?

JOE

Soon . . .

ARTIE

But when exactly is mummy going to die?

JOE

I don't know . . .

ARTIE

Will she die by dinner time?

JOE

I don't know . . .

ARTIE

Will she die by bedtime? Will she die by
breakfast?

His tone is brighter than JOE might have expected.

JOE

I don't know. None of us knows.

ARTIE, failing to find a time Mummy might die by, suddenly
gets up and runs away up the garden. JOE sits there.

24 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

24

KATY wakes with a gasp. JOE lies on the bed next to her. She
is very ill now, delirious.

KATY

Where are the kids?

JOE

What kids?

(CONTINUED)

KATY
Isn't it Artie's birthday?

JOE
Sssh . . . It's okay . . . Artie's fast
asleep . . .

She's panicking, scared.

KATY
Oh, no, I'm in trouble . . .

She looks around, trying to sit up, get up.

KATY (CONT'D)
I'll get up. The train . . .

JOE puts his hands on her thin shoulders, tries to ease her
back down.

JOE
The train's a dream.

She is looking at him. She seems to come to. She starts to
breathe again, sinks back on the bed.

KATY
Soon be over.

JOE deliberately misunderstands her.

JOE
Yes, it will. Soon you'll have a sleep
and then we'll have breakfast, when the
night's over.

KATY
Hold my hand.

JOE lies next to her. He takes her hand in his. She closes
her eyes.

25 INT. LANDING. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

25

ARTIE, in his pyjamas, runs towards his mother's room.

26 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

26

ARTIE comes into the bedroom. JOE is still next to KATY on
the bed. He is sitting up. He stills holds her hand.

KATY is dead. ARTIE looks at his mother.

ARTIE
Did Mummy die last night?

JOE seems to come round, focus on ARTIE.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

JOE

Yes, I'm sorry to say she did.

ARTIE turns and runs from the room.

27 INT. LANDING. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

27

ARTIE runs down the landing.

ARTIE

See! See, I told you!

28 INT. GUEST BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

28

ARTIE runs into BARBARA. BARBARA wakes.

ARTIE

I told you!

BARBARA

What did you tell me?

ARTIE

I told you Mummy would die last night!

BARBARA looks at him in shock and horror. She throws back the covers and runs from the room.

29 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

29

JOE is at the window. BARBARA runs in to KATY. She takes her in her arms, she rocks her, keening.

BARBARA

My baby . . . my baby . . .

JOE looks on, deeply moved.

30 EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

30

KATY is taken away in a body bag on a gurney. TOM looks on, his face a mask of grief. BARBARA and JOE walk with KATY as she is loaded into the Funeral Director's van.

The doors are closed. BARBARA turns back to JOE. She looks around.

BARBARA

Where's Artie?

31 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

31

JOE enters the bedroom where KATY has been. He looks around. Suddenly he sees ARTIE. He is lying on the far side of the bed, on the floor, palms up, eyes open, staring.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

JOE
(Softly)
Artie.

He doesn't respond. JOE goes to him, picks him up. He sits down with him on the sofa. He strokes his hair.

They lay there together.

32 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING** 32

The sun is going down. The garden is peaceful, bird song, the natural world oblivious to the local tragedy.

33 **INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING** 33

Very slowly ARTIE slides off JOE and the sofa and onto the floor. JOE has been half asleep. He watches, in growing bewilderment and horror, as ARTIE works his way on his belly, inch by inch out of the room.

34 **INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 34

JOE comes in to his study, sits at his desk. There is a picture there of him with his first wife and son - about ARTIE'S age now. He checks the time. He dials a number on the telephone.

The machine takes the call.

FLICK (V.O.)
*If you want to leave a message for Flick,
Jason or Harry please speak after the
tone.*

Slight grimace from JOE - *Jason?* Then there's the tone.

JOE
This is Joe. A message for Flick . . . Um
. . . I guess it's about lunchtime for
you there. Can you call me when you can,
there's something I need to tell you.

The phone is suddenly picked up.

HARRY (V.O.)
Dad?

JOE overwhelmed by the sound of his son's voice.

JOE
Harry. Hey.

HARRY (V.O.)
Hi.

JOE
I thought you'd be away at school.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY (V.O.)
*Um . . . yeah, I had to come home for a
day or two . . . Are you okay?*

JOE profoundly choked.

HARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What is it you wanted to tell Mum?

Try and he might JOE can't speak properly.

JOE
I'm sorry . . .

HARRY (V.O.)
What's happened?

Pause.

JOE
Katy died in the early hours of this
morning . . .

HARRY (V.O.)
Oh god . . .

Long pauses, deep awkwardness.

HARRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry . . .

JOE
I was going to ask Mum to pass the
message on to you . . . Will you tell her
for me?

HARRY (V.O.)
Of course . . .

JOE
Thank you.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'll write to you.

HARRY (V.O.)
Okay . . .

JOE
I don't want you to worry about me.

HARRY (V.O.)
Okay . . .

JOE
I love you.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY (V.O.)
Love you too.

JOE
I miss you.

HARRY (V.O.)
I miss you too . . .

Beat.

JOE
Well . . . Bye then.

HARRY (V.O.)
Bye, daddy.

Daddy? HARRY's gone. JOE in pieces, phone in hand.

35 **EXT. CREMATORIUM -DAY**

35

The hearse stands ready, its back doors open, the coffin inside visible beneath the flowers. The VICAR is at the crematorium door. The UNDERTAKERS preparing themselves.

ARTIE, TOM, BARBARA, DIGBY and POODLE, SELBY and MUFF together with a large group of other MOURNERS - pre-dominantly female friends of KATY's - all weeping freely, are gathered waiting.

ARTIE is looking at the coffin.

ARTIE
What does the coffin look like inside?

JOE hears this but cannot reply. He still seems numb.

BARBARA
It's comfy. It's silk. It's soft.

ARTIE
Good.

BARBARA
You know mummy's in Heaven now.

ARTIE
Yes.

JOE looks on. JOE watches as BARBARA takes ARTIE's hand.

The UNDERTAKERS prepare to carry the coffin in. Music from inside the chapel. The VICAR leads the way. The UNDERTAKERS follow with the coffin. JOE walks behind. Everyone else follows JOE.

36 **INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

36

MOURNERS are gathered at the house. BARBARA moves amongst them making sure they have a drink, food.

JOE next to TOM, the two men drinking in silence. The reality is beginning to hit JOE hard. ARTIE comes over to JOE.

ARTIE

Daddy.

JOE

Yes, darling?

ARTIE

I want to die . . .

Beat.

JOE

Do you?

ARTIE

So I can be with Mummy.

TOM turns away. ARTIE sees JOE's face. He pats him on the leg with his little hand.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Daddy, I'll stay down here with you for now.

JOE

Good.

ARTIE goes off. JOE drinks.

37 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

37

JOE is filling the dishwasher with dirty glasses. BARBARA comes into him with another tray.

BARBARA

Have you eaten anything?

JOE

Not as such.

BARBARA

You need to eat something.

JOE

I can't do this . . .

BARBARA

What?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

JOE
This *life goes on* bullshit.

He grabs another bottle of whiskey.

JOE (CONT'D)
I can't do it . . .

JOE goes out the door into the garden.

38 **EXT. JETTY. RIVER. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT**

38

JOE clutches the whiskey. He sits on the jetty looking out over the water. He swigs from the bottle. He is yearning for KATY, full of anger and grief.

He listens to the night sounds, life going on.

He sits, inconsolable.

39 **INT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

39

JOE comes back up through the garden. He is drunk, bedraggled, confused. He climbs the steps up onto the verandah. No one around.

40 **INT. ARTIE'S BEDROOM. BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT**

40

JOE enters ARTIE's room. It is empty and tidy: the bed crisply made, a little pile of ironed, clean clothes.

JOE looks around, bewildered.

There's a note on the bed. *Arthur's with us. Call me. B x*

JOE lies down on ARTIE's little bed. He curls up to fit into it. He lies there hugging his knees. He closes his eyes.

41 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

41

JOE stands in his dressing gown, unshaven, drinking coffee, staring into the distance.

The POSTMAN arrives. He hands JOE his letters.

POSTMAN
You're popular.

There are a lot of letters of condolence. JOE can't face them. He wonders what the hell to do now.

42 **INT. ARTIE'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

42

Suddenly JOE is all action. He packs some of ARTIE's clothes hurriedly into a sport's bag.

43 EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY. 43

JOE packs the SUV. The bags, a case of wine, a tray of beers, two wet suits.

JOE chucks the letters onto the front seat. He gets in, starts up.

44 EXT. ROAD -DAY 44

JOE drives inland through the miles of vineyards.

45 **EXT. DIRT TRACK -DAY** 45

JOE tanks it up the track leaving a trail of dust in his wake.

46 EXT. TOM AND BARBARA'S VINEYARD -DAY 46

JOE pulls up outside the house. He jumps down.

BARBARA and ARTIE are breakfasting under a tree in the garden. BARBARA looks up.

Hi, guys. JOE

Dada! ARTIE

ARTIE runs to JOE. JOE picks him up. BARBARA looks tired.

JOE
Go get your things together.

ARTIE

Why?

JOE
I thought we'd go away for a while. Just
you and me.

ARTIE
Where?

JOE
I don't know. A Road Trip.

ARTIE
What would we do?

JOE
What would you like to do?

ARTIE
Go to *Splash Planet*.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

We'll see.

JOE puts him down.

JOE (CONT'D)

Go and get your bag.

ARTIE runs off.

BARBARA

Is this a good idea?

JOE

Well, I obviously think so.

JOE pours himself some coffee.

JOE (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking him last night.

BARBARA

We were so worried about you.

JOE

Well, I'm all right now.

Beat.

BARBARA

Where will you go?

JOE

Dunno.

He drinks. BARBARA looks deeply concerned.

BARBARA

Running away is never the answer, Joe.

JOE

Running away can be a perfectly good answer to a certain sort of question.

Beat.

BARBARA

How long will you go for?

JOE

I don't know. Look, he sees me as someone who comes home after a week in the city bringing presents. We're like intimate strangers. We need a crash course in each other.

BARBARA

And afterwards?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
And afterwards what?

BARBARA
When you need to work. Will you expect me
to have him then?

JOE
I left my other boy when he was six to be
with Katy.

BARBARA looks away - she's never been happy about JOE's
'past'.

JOE (CONT'D)
Now I've lost her. I can't lose Artie. I
have to . . . I have to know how to
comfort him if he needs it. I have to
know how to talk to him . . .

ARTIE is returning, dragging his bag, clutching HAROLD the
Helicopter.

BARBARA
It's not about a week on the road, Joe.
It's not about treats and sweets and late
nights and god knows what else. It's
about structure and routine and security.

JOE
(Quietly)
I'm his father. It's my decision.

BARBARA
You're making a big mistake.

JOE
Well, it wouldn't be the first time.

JOE walks off towards ARTIE, taking his bag and his hand.

47 INT. SUV. ROAD -DAY

47

JOE drives, ARTIE is in his seat in the back.

JOE
Are you thirsty?

Silence. JOE checks the mirror. ARTIE sits, holding his
favorite toy, HAROLD the Helicopter.

JOE (CONT'D)
Artie?

ARTIE does not reply.

JOE (CONT'D)
Artie?

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE goes into a deeper silence.

JOE (CONT'D)
Shall I stop and get you a drink? Do you
want a drink? Do you? Arthur?

Silence.

JOE (CONT'D)
Do you or do you not want a drink?

ARTIE silent, avoiding JOE's eye. They approach a junction.
JOE stops, turns round to ARTIE.

JOE (CONT'D)
Okay. Adelaide is that way. The shop is
this way. Which way do you want to go?

ARTIE sits there. He won't say.

JOE (CONT'D)
This way or that way?

The silence is oppressive now.

JOE (CONT'D)
Will you please bloody well answer me.

Things immediately get worse. Much worse. JOE can see ARTIE
is about to dive deep. JOE panics. He takes the edge off his
voice. He becomes amiable.

JOE (CONT'D)
Look, okay, okay. Thinking about it. It'd
be best to go to the shop.

JOE turns in the direction of the shop.

JOE (CONT'D)
We'll go to the shop, yes? That'd be
best.

JOE heads in that direction.

JOE (CONT'D)
Will you come in and help me choose? Boo?

Nothing. ARTIE holds HAROLD very tight.

JOE is trying to cover all options. He puts orange in
cartons, fizzy orange in cans, chocolate fingers, crisps in
different flavours into his basket.

49 **EXT. SERVICE STATION - DAY**

49

JOE returns to the SUV with the goodies. He opens the back, gives ARTIE the bag.

But by now ARTIE is a depth charge. He looks into the bag and goes off.

 ARTIE
I don't want orange juice!

He wails. His grief is enormous.

 JOE
You wouldn't come in and choose! I
thought you'd like orange juice. There's
a fizzy drink.

 ARTIE
It's orange!

 JOE
There's crisps. You're hungry. You're
tired. Eat the crisps.

ARTIE screams with anger and unhappiness, squirming in his seat, fists clenched, legs extended.

 JOE (CONT'D)
Artie. It's all right. It's all right.

One of ARTIE's wails has faded out at its peak and now he is staring, gasping, sobbing

 KATY
(O.S.)
Pick him up. Give him a cuddle.

JOE spins round. KATY is there. A healthy, beautiful KATY.

 JOE
Oh, Katy . . .

JOE moves towards her.

 KATY
He's crying. Comfort him.

 JOE
He doesn't want me to.

 KATY
Rubbish.

 JOE
He's inconsolable.

(CONTINUED)

KATY

How can you leave him crying?

JOE

It's like he's having a fit. You don't cuddle people when they're having a fit do you?

KATY

You're vile.

JOE

True.

KATY

I couldn't leave him like that.

JOE

I know.

KATY

Talk to him.

Pause.

JOE

The trouble is . . . things have gone very wrong and I can't fix them . . .

JOE looks down.

JOE (CONT'D)

It's not me he wants. It's you.

He looks up. She's gone. JOE paces up and down.

Then goes back to the SUV.

ARTIE is not crying anymore. He is sitting up eating all the food and drinking all the drinks.

JOE opens the door.

JOE (CONT'D)

You all right?

ARTIE

Yes, thank you, Dada.

JOE

I'm sorry.

ARTIE

That's okay.

JOE puts out his hand, smooths ARTIE's hair, touches his cheek.

50 **EXT. HOUSE. DIGBY'S HOUSE - EVENING**

50

JOE and ARTIE pull up outside a detached house in the suburbs as the sun is setting.

DOGS greet them. JOE and ARTIE approach the front door.

JOE bangs on the door. It's opened by REGAN. She takes one look at ARTIE.

REGAN

Chase me!

She turns and runs into the house. ARTIE sets off in pursuit. DIGBY appears.

DIGBY

It was ever thus.

DIGBY and JOE in a manly embrace.

51 **INT. KITCHEN. DIGBY'S HOUSE -DAY**

51

POODLE is at the stove producing food for her vast brood. Her oldest daughter MIRANDA is trying to feed their two year old, CORDELIA. Other CHILDREN are eating at the table. CORDELIA keeps turning her face away from the food. DIGBY gets JOE a beer.

MIRANDA

She won't eat, Mummy.

POODLE

Digby . . .

DIGBY

Okay. Here you are, mate. Be back soon.

JOE takes the beer. DIGBY heads off outside. JOE watches as POODLE picks up CORDELIA from the high chair at the table and takes her across to the sink. She sits her on the draining board by the window. She runs warm water into the washing up bowl. CORDELIA puts her bare feet into the water. POODLE stands ready with the food. JOE watching intrigued.

JOE can hear a motorbike.

POODLE

Here comes daddy, here comes daddy.

Suddenly, DIGBY passes the kitchen window on a motorbike. As he passes he raises both hands above his head.

POODLE (CONT'D)

Weeeee . . .

CORDELIA laughs, POODLE puts in one spoonful of food.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

POODLE waits. CORDELIA paddles. DIGBY passes, waves, and one more mouthful goes in. JOE watches.

52 **EXT. GARDEN. DIGBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

52

Dinner is over. JOE looks down the garden to where POODLE is reading to REGAN and ARTIE. All the CHILDREN - with the exception of CORDELIA who is in bed - are snuggled up by an open fire.

DIGBY brings JOE another drink.

JOE
Jesus. He's so little.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
What chance does he stand now?

DIGBY
He's got you.

JOE
That's what I mean.

He is watching ARTIE.

JOE (CONT'D)
Are we even allowed to stay together?
Can't the State intervene and make sure a
woman looks after little children?

He looks at DIGBY.

DIGBY
Don't look at me. I have to perform
tricks on a motorbike to get my child to
eat. What do I know? Embrace the Chaos,
mate.

53 **EXT. MOTEL -EVENING**

53

An unshaven JOE pulls into a Motel for the night. ARTIE looking out of the window of the SUV.

54 **EXT. BEDROOM. MOTEL - EVENING**

54

There's the sound of running water from the bathroom. JOE is lying on the bed working his way through the contents of the minibar.

The water keeps running powerfully.

Then water stops.

JOE
Artie?

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly there's a shout and a splash and the sound of something crashing down.

JOE (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing in there?

ARTIE
(O.S.)
Come and see, Daddy. Come and see!

55 INT. BATHROOM. MOTEL - EVENING

55

JOE goes into the bathroom. There is a vast spa-like deluxe tub with jet nozzles below the waterline.

The bath is full of water that sloshes around like storm water. There is water all over the floor and a tooth-mug that's fallen off its shelf above the basin. It runs down the tiling.

JOE
Oh my god . . .

ARTIE is naked, soaked and climbing four feet back onto the window ledge. He prepares to jump again.

ARTIE
Can I, daddy? Can I?

KATY (O.S.)
Ohmygod, Joe. Tell him to stop. He'll cut his head open.

JOE turns to her.

JOE
He's already done it once and survived.

ARTIE
Can I, Daddy?

KATY
You're soaking the place and you're making too much noise. You'll get thrown out . . .

ARTIE
Can I, Daddy? Can I?

JOE turns back to ARTIE.

JOE
Yes.

ARTIE leaps, a wild, joyous look on his face. He curls up like a bomb. Great sheets of water hit the ceiling. JOE is soaked, the towels are soaked. ARTIE shouts with delight.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

JOE turns on the taps to refill the bath.

JOE (CONT'D)

This is how rockstars must feel!

56 **EXT. MOTEL - DAY**

56

JOE, even more unshaven, comes back from the motel shop towards the cabin. He carries milk, bread etc.

He lets himself in.

57 **INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

57

JOE looks around. He can't see ARTIE, then he sees him, lying on the floor, in the same face down position he adopted when his mother died, face down, eyes open, in a kind of coma.

JOE puts down the things. Then very slowly and quietly he lies down on the floor next to ARTIE. They lie there together.

58 **INT / EXT. SUV - DAY**

58

JOE and ARTIE have spent the night in the back of the SUV in sleeping bags. They are packing up.

A sports convertible is approaching them from a distance away. ARTIE watches it as it passes them. It is being driven by a WOMAN, her long hair held back by a head band, dark glasses. ARTIE watches it retreat.

ARTIE

Can we get a car like that?

JOE

A sports car?

ARTIE

One without a roof.

JOE

Why?

ARTIE

So that Mummy can still see me when I'm in the car and come down and drop in messages to me.

JOE looks at him.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Can we?

59 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING**

59

JOE and ARTIE return. JOE sporting a couple of week's worth of facial hair. JOE gets ARTIE out of the SUV. ARTIE runs off. JOE grabs a couple of bags.

60 **INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING**

60

JOE sets the bags down. A moment then:

 JOE
 (To no one)
 We're back.

JOE stands there, taking in the silence, the emptiness.

61 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

61

JOE, clean shaven and dressed for work. He is in a rush. The magnets on the fridge door read: *Just Say Yes*.

JOE opens the fridge, gets out some too hard spread.

 JOE
 Artie! Are you ready? I can't be late.

JOE butters some toast. The butter is hard, the toast is scuffed.

 JOE (CONT'D)
 Arthur?

ARTIE comes in. He is only wearing his underpants.

 JOE (CONT'D)
 Great. Let's go.

 ARTIE
 I'm not dressed!

 JOE
 (The same tone)
 I know! Why not?

 ARTIE
 I haven't got any clothes!

 JOE
 Look on the line.

 ARTIE
 Can I have a *Mars Bar*?

JOE looks at *Just Say Yes* on the door.

 JOE
 No, you bloody can't.

62 **EXT. GARDEN. HOUSE. QUEENSLAND -DAY**

62

JOE comes out of the house holding his briefcase, some sandals and the plate of toast.

ARTIE is ON a garden chair spinning the hoist choosing clothes. JOE watches as he puts on clean shorts, T-shirt.

JOE

All I need now is to get you to undress straight into the washing machine and the system will be faultless.

63 **INT. SUV -DAY**

63

JOE

Eat your toast.

ARTIE

It's all scuffed up.

JOE

What?

ARTIE

I don't like it when its all scuffed up like this.

JOE

Eat it up, okay. You know what happens when you don't eat.

ARTIE's eyes roll in his head. He moans.

JOE (CONT'D)

Tomorrow I'll do it how you like it. I promise.

JOE drives fast.

64 **INT. CORRIDOR. SCHOOL - DAY**

64

JOE can see through the high windows that the CHILDREN are assembled in the hall. Some are on the stage - some hold pets. The SECRETARY comes along the corridor.

SECRETARY

Don't forget Parents' Evening.

JOE

What?

SECRETARY

Tonight. If you can make it.

65 **INT. SCHOOL HALL -DAY**

65

 TIANNA

 In class we have been talking about our
 pets.

A school assembly in progress. JOE steers ARTIE in.

 ARTIE

 That's my class.

On the stage. ARTIE's TEACHER - blonde and plain - collects
ARTIE and steers him up onto the stage.

 TEACHER

 (Whispers)

 We're talking about our pets. You can say
 something if you want to.

ARTIE kneels with the others.

 LUCY

 I have a rabbit called Flopsy. Sometimes
 we cut her claws.

She's holding her out towards the audience. LUCY'S mother,
LAURA - blonde and striking - tapes her as she does.

ARTIE looks around. There are KIDS with goldfish bowls and
birds and animals in cages. LUCY sits, NINGALI gets up.

 NINGALI

 I learned to swim by copying my dog. He
 swims doggie paddle.

Some polite laughter.

 TEACHER

 (Whispers)

 Say something if you want to.

ARTIE stands.

 ARTIE

 Cat food looks better than it tastes.

Laughter. JOE slips out the back of the hall. LAURA watches
him go.

66 **EXT/INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICES. BRISBANE -DAY**

66

JOE is late. He flies up the steps and into the foyer.

67 **INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICES. BRISBANE -DAY**

67

JOE arrives running. He struggles out of his jacket. Busy
office in the background. DIGBY has pages for him. He hands
them to JOE.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

DIGBY
It's all there.

JOE
Thanks.

68 INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE. NEWSPAPER -DAY

68

An editorial meeting. All the section editors are there. The big windows look out onto the panoramic view. There are lots of photographs on the wall of WALKER - the Editor-in-Chief shaking hands with various dignitaries.

JOE sorts through the papers DIGBY has given him. He is sweating.

WALKER enters, no jacket, fat red braces.

WALKER
Morning, ladies and gentlemen.

The door is closed. He sees JOE.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Okay, well we'll start with *Sport*.
Welcome back, Joe, what have you got for me?

JOE fumbles with the pages.

DIGBY
We have the regular . . .

WALKER
Not you. Joe?

JOE
We have the regular . . .

He wipes the sweat from his brow.

JOE (CONT'D)
The regular Wallabies profile.

69 INT. CORRIDOR. SCHOOL - EVENING

69

JOE arrives in a rush, very late.

70 INT. HALL. SCHOOL - EVENING

70

JOE enters the hall. TEACHERS are sitting at desks with PARENTS opposite them. JOE sees LAURA sitting at a desk to one side, reading a book. JOE recognizes her.

JOE
Hi. Joe Warr.

He sits.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late. So how do you think he's doing? I know it's only the first day back but . . . How does he seem to you? I mean everyone grieves differently I suppose and there are times when he plays happily and he charts his mother's progress in heaven and then every day he collapses into a sort of coma. He sinks to the floor and just lies there. Half an hour later he comes to and continues his day and . . . I don't know . . . there are his moods and then god knows - there are mine . . .

She is looking at him, amused and touched. A beat.

LAURA

You do know I'm not actually Arthur's teacher?

JOE

Um . . .

LAURA

I'm Lucy's mum. She's in Artie's class.

JOE

Right.

LAURA

I was just waiting for Miss West myself.

JOE

I'll just um . . . join the queue then.

JOE gets up, takes himself off. He sees Miss WEST - blonde but plain. JOE waits. Some PARENTS leave. JOE watches as LAURA crosses the hall and sits down.

71 INT. CORRIDOR. SCHOOL - NIGHT

71

JOE walks along looking to collect ARTIE. He can see into the classrooms through the high windows. He can see ARTIE with LUCY. They are in the play kitchen in the corner of the room. LAURA is in there with them. She is pinning up artwork on the wall.

72 INT. CLASSROOM. SCHOOL - NIGHT

72

JOE enters. The classroom looks nice - tidy, flowers, new art work.

JOE

Are you sure you don't teach here?

LAURA turns, smiles.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA
I help out a little. Take them for art.

Beat.

LAURA (CONT'D)
How did it go?

JOE
Seems like he's doing rather better than
I am.

JOE watches ARTIE and LUCY absorbed in their make believe.

LAURA
You know if I can help in any way . . .
If you ever need me to have him for you.

JOE
Really?

LAURA
Of course. They get on really well. As
you can see. Three mouths are as easy to
feed as two.

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm on the contact sheet.

JOE looks blank.

LAURA (CONT'D)
What's your number?

JOE tells her. LAURA puts it into her phone. Then she texts
him. His phone beeps.

LAURA (CONT'D)
There. Now you have mine.

73 INT. CAR - EVENING

73

It's raining hard. JOE drives, checking ARTIE in his rear
view mirror. The wipers work hard to clear the rain.

JOE
So . . . first day back? Who was nice and
who was horrid?

ARTIE does not reply. JOE can see he's sinking into one of
his moods.

ARTIE picks up HAROLD from the back seat. He cuddles him. JOE
drives.

74 **EXT. SHOP - EVENING**

74

JOE pulls up in the car on the opposite side of the road from a convenience store.

75 **INT. CAR - EVENING**

75

JOE

Do you want to come in with me or stay in the car?

ARTIE clutches HAROLD.

JOE (CONT'D)

Talk to yourself. Artie? Do you want to come in or stay here?

ARTIE's legs are swinging, kicking the back of JOE's chair. He won't answer. JOE rubs his face, exasperated.

JOE (CONT'D)

Jesus, Artie, answer me!

ARTIE's eyes start to fill with tears. No reply.

76 **INT. STORE -NIGHT**

76

JOE, morose and tired, shops in silence. He puts household stuff - washing powder, toilet paper, dishwasher tablets - into his basket. ARTIE lags behind, clutching HAROLD.

KATY (O.S.)

It's not very satisfactory is it? Both of you sulking like five year olds?

JOE sees her there. A DRUNK crowds JOE at the beer cooler.

JOE

I'm doing what I can.

KATY

He's hungry.

JOE

That's why I'm shopping.

JOE shops on in silence.

KATY

How long are you planning on keeping this up?

JOE

I don't have any plans.

KATY

Why don't you take him to Mum?

(CONTINUED)

JOE

I want to see it through myself, I suppose.

KATY

An interesting strategy. Why don't you ask for help?

JOE

For the same reason I don't stop the car to ask for directions.

KATY

Oh, that's intelligent.

JOE

No, the reason for not asking for directions is different. At the moment it's not that I don't know how to get there, it's that I don't know where we're going.

KATY

We aren't supposed to do these things by ourselves. He's got no one to go to and say how mean you're being.

JOE looks at ARTIE trailing along behind.

JOE

That's true. That is certainly true.

But KATY has gone.

77 INT. CAR - NIGHT

77

A quiet stretch of road. The rain is still pouring down. A huge puddle has formed up ahead. JOE pulls over.

JOE

Hey, Beedle Bop.

ARTIE still sad. JOE turns, undoes ARTIE's seat belt.

JOE (CONT'D)

Come sit up here with me.

ARTIE climbs forward. JOE pulls him onto his lap. JOE holds him, kisses him.

JOE (CONT'D)

See that puddle.

ARTIE

Yes.

JOE starts to drive with ARTIE on his lap.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

JOE puts his foot down.

JOE
Wooooooooooooooooooooo!

78 **EXT. STREET - NIGHT** 78

The car hits the deep puddle at full speed. The water flies up like the bow wave of a ship.

79 **INT. CAR - NIGHT** 79

Waters washes over them. JOE drives blind.

They scream with delight. They come through the water.

ARTIE
Again! Again!

80 **INT. OLYMPIC POOL. MELBOURNE - NIGHT** 80

JOE is covering a swimming event - 200 metres butterfly. The SWIMMERS plough down the pool, the crowd cheers.

PHELPS is well clear of the field - plunging through the water, a magnificent sight.

JOE
(V.O.)
*You do not need to know anything about
biology, or fluid mechanics, to deduce
that Michael Fred Phelps the Second is
built for speed . . .*

81 **INT. HOTEL ROOM. MELBOURNE - NIGHT** 81

JOE is at his computer writing. He has a glass of whiskey.

JOE
(V.O.)
*With his flipper feet and six foot seven
wing span, his ability to control to
perfection pitch and roll, he must surely
be the result of some American experiment
in bionics . . .*

He stops. He thinks. He rubs his face, tired.

82 **EXT. AIRPORT CAR PARK - EVENING** 82

JOE throws his travel bag on the seat. He gets in, starts up.

83 **EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING** 83

JOE pulls up outside a modest, modern bungalow.

84 **EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE - EVENING**

84

JOE waits. LAURA opens the door.

 JOE
Hi.

 LAURA
Hi. Come in.

JOE steps inside.

 LAURA (CONT'D)
Good weekend?

 JOE
Can't you smell the chlorine?

 LAURA
Actually, I can . . .

85 **EXT. LAURA'S HOUSE. PALM COVE -NIGHT**

85

LAURA's house is individual, clearly someone with a good eye.
It is also neat, tidy, comfortable.

ARTIE is in his pyjamas, playing happily with LUCY.

 JOE
Hey, mate.

JOE sweeps him up.

 JOE (CONT'D)
Give me a cuddle.

He holds him tight. ARTIE's arms round his neck.

LAURA brings JOE ARTIE'S bag. JOE takes it.

 LAURA
He's eaten really well. I've done his
nails, washed his hair. And we've washed
Harold.

LAURA hands JOE, HAROLD the Helicopter.

 LAURA (CONT'D)
He's been painting.

LAURA fetches some big pieces of paper.

On one she has drawn oval face shapes labelled, *Happy. Sad.*
Angry. Afraid. Guilty.

At the bottom it says *Draw some Feeling Faces (Feelings often*
show on faces)

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

ARTIE has painted in the expressions. JOE looks at them.
Eyes, ears, noses, mouths. JOE's feelings show on his face.

JOE
Thanks, Laura. I really appreciate it.

A moment between them.

LAURA
Any time. It's been a pleasure to have
him.

JOE holds the paintings.

86 INT. CAR. ROAD -NIGHT

86

JOE is driving ARTIE home. JOE deep in thought.

ARTIE
Can I go and live at Laura's?

JOE
What?

JOE seems to come to.

ARTIE
Can I live at Laura's?

There's a moment's silence. In that moment, ARTIE senses how
hurtful this might be.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
I can come back and visit you so you
wouldn't be lonely, but I'd live with
Laura and Lucy.

JOE seizes up. He wants to say the thing that will convey to
ARTIE that their relationship is the most important, enduring
and sustaining one in the world. Instead he sinks into a
miserable silence.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
Are you all right, Daddy?

JOE drives on, hurt, shut off. ARTIE watches him.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
Daddy?

JOE does not reply.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
Are you?

ARTIE stops trying to say anything. Then he stops daring to
move.

87 **INT. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT** 87

JOE watches ARTIE climb the stairs slowly, his head down.
He's starting to cry. ARTIE goes into his room.

88 **INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT** 88

JOE sits down.

ARTIE's low sobbing reaches JOE.

JOE sits there. Then he starts to cry as well.

89 **INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT** 89

ARTIE is on his bed. JOE comes in.

 JOE
 What do you want to do?

ARTIE wails.

 ARTIE
 Whatever you want me to do.

 JOE
 What?

 ARTIE
 Whatever you want me to do!

JOE goes to him, sits on the bed next to him.

 JOE
 I want you to stay with me. I want you to
 live here with me.

ARTIE throws his arms round JOE.

 ARTIE
 Okay! Okay!

They hug each other fiercely.

 JOE
 I'll change everything so you have what
 you need. I promise.

JOE holds him close.

90 **INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 90

JOE is lying on the sofa, ARTIE on top of him, snuggled up,
intimate, just the two of them in the midst of a lot of mess
and the remains of a takeaway pizza. JOE is reading out loud.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

*Mrs Darling had first heard of Peter when
she was tidying up her children's minds.
It is the nightly custom of every good
mother after her children are asleep to
rummage in their minds and put things
straight for the next morning . . .*

JOE pauses, wondering if ARTIE is asleep.

ARTIE

Don't stop.

JOE

Close those peepers.

91 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

91

The telephone is ringing. The machine takes the call.

ANSWER MACHINE

Hi. Leave a message.

The MACHINE beeps.

FLICK (V.O.)

Joe. It's Flick, can you call me please.

JOE comes into the study, obviously having just woken up. He picks up the telephone.

JOE

Hi. I'm here.

FLICK (V.O.)

Were you in bed?

JOE

No . . . Just on the sofa . . .

FLICK (V.O.)

How are you?

JOE

Not too bad.

Unconvincing.

FLICK (V.O.)

How's Arthur?

JOE

He's all right, mostly. Up and down.

FLICK (V.O.)

*Harry's been talking about you a lot.
Since you phoned . . .*

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Right.

FLICK (V.O.)

He wants to come and see you, Joe.

JOE

Right . . .

FLICK (V.O.)

I think he's been worried about you.

JOE

Right . . .

FLICK (V.O.)

*He hasn't seen you since you were here
for Wimbledon last year . . .*

JOE

I know.

FLICK (V.O.)

*He's never been, I think he should see
where you live.*

JOE

I agree.

FLICK (V.O.)

A boy his age needs his father.

JOE

Yes . . .

FLICK (V.O.)

*Plus things aren't exactly great here at
the moment . . .*

Pause.

FLICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So? Say something.

JOE

Of course he should come some time . . .

FLICK (V.O.)

*Some time? Is that the best you can come
up with?*

JOE

When were you thinking?

FLICK (V.O.)

We were thinking now.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2)

JOE
Doesn't he have school?

FLICK (V.O.)
*There's the half-term holiday. Anyway
I've spoken to the Head. The school will
be fine. You pay them enough.*

Beat.

FLICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Sorry, of course, it's too much to ask. I
should have known. I'll tell him you're
too busy.*

She hangs up. JOE immediately angry.

JOE
Christ!

He composes himself. The he rings back. It rings and rings.
Then it is picked up but no voice.

JOE (CONT'D)
Flick? Hello? You there? It's me. Just to
say . . . it's fine. Tell Harry he can
come any time, stay as long as he wants.

Pause.

JOE (CONT'D)
Hello?

FLICK (V.O.)
Thank you.

JOE
Just tell me when and I'll organize it.

FLICK (V.O.)
I'll e-mail you.

JOE
Okay.

She hangs up. JOE sits with the telephone in his hand.

92 INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

92

ARTIE is asleep on the sofa where JOE was reading to him. JOE
stands looking at him for a while. Then he scoops him up,
carries him, still fast asleep up to bed.

93 INT. SUV - DAY

93

ARTIE is stripped to the waist. JOE drives.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE
How much taller than me will he be?

JOE
I'm not sure. Quite a bit.

ARTIE
How much older is he?

JOE
Seven, nearly eight years.

ARTIE
So . . . about eight inches?

JOE
More.

ARTIE
Will he like me?

JOE
Sure. What's not to like?

ARTIE looks down at his chest.

ARTIE
I've got nibbles.

JOE
What?

ARTIE points to his nipples.

ARTIE
I've got nibbles.

JOE laughs out loud.

JOE
You worried he might not like your
nibbles?

Pleased, ARTIE improvises a song.

ARTIE
*I've got nibbles, I've got nibbles, I've
got nibbles, oh yeah . . .*

94 INT. ARRIVALS. AIRPORT -DAY

94

JOE and ARTIE stand with the people waiting to meet
passengers.

JOE is watching out for HARRY beyond the doors.

JOE
Put your shirt on.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE

Why?

JOE

Cover up your nibbles.

JOE sees HARRY. A moment. He smiles.

JOE (CONT'D)

There he is.

ARTIE pulls his T-shirt on. HARRY is being chaperoned by a FLIGHT ATTENDANT. HARRY pushes his trolley. He has a massive bag.

ARTIE

Which is he?

JOE is walking towards him, smiling, arms outstretched.

HARRY is fourteen, gangly, handsome, a bit shy and awkward.

JOE embraces him.

JOE

God, I've missed you.

HARRY does not hug back.

JOE (CONT'D)

This is your brother. This is Arthur.

HARRY

Hi, Arthur.

HARRY is English. ARTIE looks up at him.

JOE

How was the flight?

HARRY

Long.

95 INT. SUV -DAY

95

HARRY looks out the window at the buildings that line the roads, the signs, the people, the vehicles. It's very very hot.

JOE

How's your mum?

HARRY

She's all right.

JOE

School?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

HARRY

Crap.

JOE nods ironically.

96 **EXT. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

96

ARTIE jumps out of the SUV and rushes off. JOE gets HARRY's bag.

JOE shows him into the house.

97 **INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

97

HARRY looks around, somewhat surprised by the state of the place. The DVD boxes, clothes, plastic games, goggles, guns, popcorn, plates, crayons, Lego.

JOE sees him looking.

JOE

It didn't look like this when Artie's mother was alive.

JOE goes to the stairs.

JOE (CONT'D)

I run a pretty loose ship. Your room's up here.

98 **INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

98

JOE dumps HARRY's bag on the bed.

Outside, ARTIE is squealing, showing off. HARRY can see him from the window, jumping on the trampoline.

ARTIE

Hands up if you like sheep muck!
Hands up if you like cow pee!
Hands up if you like dog fart!
Hands up if you like me!

JOE

One of his own compositions, I'm afraid.

HARRY stands there

JOE (CONT'D)

Are you tired? Do you want to rest?

HARRY

No, I'm all right . . .

JOE

Do you want to get changed? Put on some shorts?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

Later on.

99 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

99

JOE removes the heavily pregnant CAT from the kitchen work top. He finds bread, butter, cheese.

JOE

Basically, I've found that the more rules there are the more crimes are created. So fewer rules. Fewer but bigger, rules.

He makes a sandwich.

JOE (CONT'D)

No interrupting adults . . .

HARRY

Why not?

A beat. Is he making a joke?

JOE

Very good. No swearing.

HARRY

Why?

JOE

I don't like it.

HARRY

Why?

JOE

I just don't. It's the mark of a limited vocabulary and a sign of laziness and egotism and that's why it's a privilege reserved for adults.

HARRY

If it's a sign of a small vocabulary how come there are so many swear words?

JOE looks at HARRY. Good point.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Bloody, bleeding, buggering, sodding, shitting . . .

JOE chucks HARRY a can of drink. He drops it.

JOE

Moving swiftly on. What else?

JOE leads HARRY out into the garden with the sandwiches.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

As little stealing and lying as possible.
No fighting, except for fun. No wanton
littering. As far as possible be polite.

100 EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

100

JOE

Screaming insanely, running round the
house making absurd and disgusting
noises, throwing water bombs and tennis
balls at the windows - all of these are
actively encouraged.

JOE sits at the garden table.

JOE (CONT'D)

In fact, there's really only one rule.
You have to do as I tell you. It's just
that I won't tell you to do very much.

HARRY sits.

JOE (CONT'D)

Artie.

ARTIE comes running up.

JOE (CONT'D)

The aim is something we like to call *Hog
Heaven*.

HARRY

Okay.

ARTIE opens his can. HARRY opens his. It sprays all over him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Shit.

ARTIE laughs.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Sorry.

ARTIE still laughing.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Not funny.

101 INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

101

JOE looks in on HARRY to make sure he's all right. HARRY is
in bed, in his pyjamas. The ceiling fan turns. His suitcase
is open, clothes strewn around.

JOE

You okay?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

It's so hot.

JOE

It's quite a shock isn't it? I remember when I first arrived.

HARRY

Yeah . . .

102 INT. BATHROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

102

JOE runs some hand towels under the cold tap, wrings them out.

103 INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

103

JOE gives HARRY a cold wet towel. HARRY wipes his face.

JOE

It really is a great place once you get used to it. As they say, "*Beautiful One Day, Perfect The Next.*"

JOE hands him the second cold towel.

HARRY has a copy of Bill Bryson's *Down Under* by the bed.

HARRY

(Reads)

It has more things that will kill you than anywhere else. Of the world's ten most poisonous snakes all are Australian.

Good ironic delivery. JOE laughs.

JOE

Hope you manage to sleep.

JOE wants to kiss him. Opts for a pat on the leg.

104 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

104

JOE is drinking a glass of whiskey playing some meaningful music. He has fished out pictures of him and FLICK and HARRY as a baby. He looks through them. *God, how this sort of stuff can fuck you up.*

105 INT. LANDING. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

105

HARRY comes down the landing, drawn by the incredibly loud bangings and shoutings coming from JOE's bedroom.

ARTIE (O.S.)

Dark and sinister man!

(CONTINUED)

JOE (O.S.)
*Proud and insolent youth prepare to meet
thy doom.*

106 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

106

HARRY comes in to see what is going on. JOE and ARTIE are wrestling on the bed. JOE has hold of ARTIE's ankle. He twists it.

JOE
Do you submit?

ARTIE
No!

JOE seems to apply more force.

JOE
Do. You. Submit?

ARTIE
No.

JOE allows ARTIE to escape. ARTIE jumps into the air and lands on JOE with both knees. JOE grunts in mock pain. HARRY amused, intrigued but a bit suspicious.

ARTIE on all fours pushes his head into JOE's back. He pushes hard. JOE allows himself to be pushed off.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
One, two, three, four, five . . .

JOE climbs back on. It is his turn to pitch ARTIE off. JOE occupies the bed, triumphant.

JOE
(WWF American growl)
*King o' the bed. Thass what ah am. King
o' the Bed.*

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
A claim very few men, Harry, will make in
their wife's hearing . . .

ARTIE attacks again.

ARTIE
Shut up, fart face!

JOE strikes some serious wrestling poses.

JOE
You want some, big boy?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

No, not really . . .

JOE pounces. It's risky but worth a try. JOE has HARRY in his arms. He picks him up in a bear hug, shakes him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Don't . . . Don't, Dad, Jesus . . .

JOE stops, let's him go. HARRY leaves. JOE watches him go. JOE feels stupid. ARTIE launches himself at JOE again.

MOTHER(V.O.)

*Oh, my God! You have got to be kidding?*107 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

107

Shocked mother's face. JOE smiling.

JOE

Good, eh?

We see what has so alarmed the MOTHER. A BOY hangs on to the handle of the swing. He has launched himself off the rickety jetty. The arc of the swing takes him out high over the river. HARRY is out on the jetty waiting to grab the BOY as he swings back.

MOTHER

My God, that's so high!

JOE

(Pleased)

I know.

A sign strung between the trees across the drive announces that ARTIE is seven years old. 4WDs come down the drive bringing more of ARTIE's friends for a party and sleep-over.

The BOY swings back. HARRY lets him swing out again.

MOTHER

But if the rope broke . . .?

JOE

Don't worry about the rope . . .

LAURA arrives in her old car. LAURA gets out with LUCY.

JOE (CONT'D)

The rope's fine. I'm trying not to think of the tree falling on him.

LAURA shields her eyes from the sun and watches.

MOTHER

But seriously, look! If he let go . . .
he can't swim . . .

(CONTINUED)

JOE

That's why he's hanging on so tight.

The BOY swings past them screaming with laughter. HARRY grabs him, holds the rope, prepares for the next little BOY.

Another MOTHER is shouting at her son: *Be careful!*

LAURA

I think you rather enjoy upsetting mothers.

LAURA is next to him. JOE turns, looks at her, smiles.

JOE

What gives you that idea?

She holds his gaze.

108 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

108

There's a table laid out with plastic cups and lots of fizzy drinks. JOE leads LAURA to it. There's beers and wine on ice.

JOE

What would you like?

LAURA

Just some water.

HARRY comes up. JOE throws an arm round him.

JOE

This is Harry. Number One Son from England.

LAURA

Hi, Harry. I'm Laura.

HARRY

Hello.

JOE

Harry. You want a beer? Glass of wine?

HARRY

I'm fourteen.

HARRY grabs a can of *Coke* and goes.

LAURA

Is he here for long?

JOE watches him go.

JOE

To tell the truth, I'm not exactly sure.

109 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

109

BOYS running here and there. JOE bounces LAURA, ARTIE and LUCY on the trampoline, sending them high into the air. They are all screaming with laughter. ARTIE wears his dressing gown. HARRY sits on the jetty by the river with his ipod on.

LAURA

Stop! Stop for God's sake!

BARBARA arrives in the garden. She carries a birthday present and card. She stands and watches.

LAURA gets off the trampoline. She lifts LUCY down. She walks back towards the house. She sees BARBARA.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Hello. I'm Laura.

BARBARA

I'm Barbara. Arthur's grandmother.

LAURA

Pleased to meet you.

They shake hands. ARTIE and JOE are lying on the trampoline.

BARBARA

Is this one yours?

LAURA

Yes.

BARBARA

She's very pretty.

BARBARA is looking at LAURA when she says this.

LAURA

Arthur!

ARTIE looks up. He sees BARBARA. BARBARA waves. ARTIE jumps down and comes running.

JOE follows. BARBARA hugs ARTIE. LAURA chases LUCY.

JOE

Glad you could come.

They embrace. BARBARA looks at ARTIE in his dressing gown. ARTIE has a stick. He starts slashing at things with it.

BARBARA

You must be boiling in that.

ARTIE

Na.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

He's been wearing it solidly for the last five days.

BARBARA

Well, tell him to take it off.

JOE leads her into the house.

110 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

110

ARTIE has the stick in his belt. He gets a can of fizzy drink. He opens it and takes a swig from the can.

BARBARA

Use a straw to drink from the can or you'll cut your lip . . .

ARTIE draws out his stick and prepares to do battle.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You'll put someone's eye out with that.

ARTIE runs off.

JOE

The thing is . . . He's trying to be a super hero. And constant warnings are maddening for anyone aspiring to be an overlord.

JOE makes tea. BARBARA looks at the feast laid out on the table: everything is pink and red and processed and shop-bought.

BARBARA

I would have done this for you.

JOE looks at the spread.

JOE

Looks good doesn't it.

He eats a handful of crisps.

BARBARA

If they eat that lot they'll be climbing the walls.

BARBARA looks out through the window at the children running here and there. LAURA is swinging LUCY round by her arms.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

She'll have the child's arms out of their sockets.

JOE brings her tea.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Thank you.

She sips it. BARBARA looks at the cards that are standing there. There's a handmade one from HARRY. BARBARA picks it up and looks at it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Where is Harry?

JOE looks out, points. HARRY's now juggling with a football.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

He looks like you.

JOE

Really? I think he looks just like his mother.

She puts the card down.

BARBARA

I remember Katy's seventh birthday party. We invited her whole class, thirty of them. They ran riot. It was a complete disaster . . .

She laughs. But then, suddenly she is waylaid by her grief. Her eyes fill with tears.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I still see her. In the street or . . .
Not in a dream but actually there . . .

JOE puts his arms round her from behind.

JOE

Me too.

Beat.

BARBARA

Don't shut me out.

JOE

Of course not.

He's still hugging her.

111 **EXT. BEACH -NIGHT**

111

It's a dark but moonlit, starry night. JOE stands in sand dunes with LAURA and HARRY. He has a powerful flashlight - the sort that cuts a beam for a hundred yards.

JOE

Okay. I'm going to count to a hundred.
Everyone hide.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

JOE turns his back.

JOE (CONT'D)
One, two, three . . .

The BOYS scatter. LAURA stays with LUCY. HARRY walks off across the dunes.

112 **EXT. BEACH - NIGHT**

112

HARRY comes down out of the dunes onto the beach. His eye is drawn towards a fire that is burning there. A group of older teenage KIDS are gathered there with beers and joints and a guitar. BOYS in long shorts and bandanas, some with dreadlocks, GIRLS in shorts and bikini tops, firelight on their bodies.

They are boisterous, loud. Two of the BOYS are play kick boxing.

HARRY sits down, watching them from a distance.

113 **EXT. DUNES - NIGHT**

113

JOE
Ninety eight! Ninety nine! ONE HUNDRED.

He flicks on the light.

JOE (CONT'D)
Coming, ready or not.

JOE sweeps the immediate vicinity with the flashlight.

JOE (CONT'D)
Coming to get you.

Squeals of excitement from the distance.

He coos at them, a wheedling, flattering evildoer.

JOE (CONT'D)
Come here little children. Come here.
I've got presents for you. Sweeties for
you children because I love to play with
you and give you lovely presents . . .

Screams of excitement.

LAURA
(Laughing)
For God's sake. You'll get yourself
arrested.

His light finds LUCY hiding behind LAURA. She screams as the light seeks her out. JOE starts towards her.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Ah, there's one of the little darlings.

LUCY bursts into tears.

Laughing, LAURA takes LUCY in her arms.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

LAURA
It's okay.

She's holding LUCY.

LAURA (CONT'D)
You're okay . . .

Suddenly, one little BOY comes back to taunt JOE.

BOY
Na na na na na, can't catch me! Na na na
na na . . .

JOE swings round with his flashlight catching the BOY in its beam.

LAURA
Go on then.

JOE needs no second bidding.

JOE
*Come 'ere, you 'orrible little goblin or
I'll pull off yer 'ead!*

The BOY screams in terror and delight and runs off.

JOE (CONT'D)
Oh, bad boys, look what you've made me
do. I've shouted at you. I didn't mean it
at all. Little boys. Come here.

LAURA
(Laughing)
Oh, my god . . .

JOE moves off through the sand dunes in pursuit.

JOE
Come on lovely little boys.

Suddenly ARTIE is there, taunting him, wanting to be caught.
JOE jumps on ARTIE.

JOE (CONT'D)
Gotcha!

(CONTINUED)

They roll down the dune together.

They arrive at the bottom in a laughing heap, ARTIE in JOE's arms.

A moment then:

JOE (CONT'D)

Always remember this, Arthur. I want you
always to remember this.

114 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

114

The BOYS are all high as kites. They bounce on beds and hop around in sleeping bags and make a dreadful noise. JOE leaves them to it.

115 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

115

JOE returns to LAURA. She is with LUCY who has decided she wants to go home.

JOE

You sure you won't stay?

LUCY turns away, doesn't answer. LAURA looks at the mess. The left-overs, the wet t-shirts, the sink piled with dishes.

LAURA

You sure I can't help you clear up.

JOE

Nah, it's fine. *Hog Heaven*.

LAURA's looking at the fridge door.

LAURA

Just say yes?

JOE

Has the power to change the way you live.

LAURA

Really?

JOE

Seems to work for us. Our joint project is to make a household where we can follow our own peculiar natures.

LAURA

And it's not just an easy way out?

JOE

It's not easy at all. It's really difficult. Our kids ask to do a whole range of unsuitable things and we go, 'No'. We don't even think about it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

We don't even listen, we *Just Go No*.
That's the habit I'm trying to control.
Artie says can we go and build a dam in
the stream and I say, No I have to buy a
lettuce.

LAURA amused but unconvinced.

JOE (CONT'D)

It does have a certain *Lord of the Flies*
quality I admit.

LAURA

Don't you worry about spoiling him?

JOE

He's been on the sidelines of a drama
that's dominated his life for the last
year or so. It's his turn to have centre-
stage. It's where young children
naturally belong.

She smiles.

LAURA

Good luck with the sleep-over.

JOE

Thanks.

LAURA

Thank you for a lovely day.

JOE

No. Thank you.

She carries LUCY from the house. JOE closes the door.

116 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

116

The BOYS have all crashed out. JOE strokes ARTIE's hair.

JOE

You remember when I said to you, always
remember this? Tonight? In the dunes?

ARTIE

No. Why?

JOE smiles. ARTIE'S very sleepy.

JOE

Doesn't matter.

JOE leaves ARTIE there.

JOE (CONT'D)

Night, Birthday Boy.

(CONTINUED)

He switches out the light.

117 **INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT**

117

HARRY is bed with his ipod on. He has a TEDDY BEAR. There's a knock at the door.

HARRY

Yeah?

JOE enters.

JOE

You all right?

HARRY takes the headphones off, dutifully.

HARRY

Yeah.

JOE sits down with him.

JOE

What you listening to?

HARRY gives JOE one headphone. JOE listens.

JOE (CONT'D)

So what's happening at home?

HARRY

What do you mean?

JOE

Has Jason moved in?

HARRY

Oh . . . yeah . . .

JOE

When?

HARRY

Dunno. A few months ago.

JOE gives the headphones back.

JOE

How's that for you?

HARRY

I'm away at school mostly.

JOE

What's he like?

HARRY shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

Do you like him?

HARRY

He's all right. He sleeps with his socks on. And he has like three books going at once. And when you're in restaurants with him, he plays with whatever's on the table. Straw wrappers are the worst, he tears them up into a million little pieces, or makes weird shapes out of them.

JOE

He sounds fun.

HARRY has a framed photo booth photograph by the bed. JOE kissing FLICK on the cheek while FLICK grins at the camera. HARRY is a little face between them. JOE picks it up, looks at it.

JOE (CONT'D)

I did love your mother very much, you know.

HARRY

Then why did you leave?

JOE

She needed a talented husband. I mean a man with a talent for husbanding. We had dreadful fights. I was no match for her in combat.

HARRY nods. He understands that.

JOE (CONT'D)

Married couples of my mother and father's generation stayed together for the sake of the children. We divorced for the same reason. It's unclear which course of action produces more heartache.

JOE puts the photograph down.

He smiles. HARRY sits there. JOE doesn't know what else to say.

JOE (CONT'D)

Thanks for today. You were great. He loves his card.

HARRY silent.

JOE (CONT'D)

Night, mate.

JOE gets up and leaves.

118 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

118

JOE at work at his computer. ARTIE in to him, excited.

ARTIE
Daddy, I found her!

JOE
I'm busy.

ARTIE
I've found her you simpleton!

119 INT. BASEMENT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

119

ARTIE leads JOE and HARRY into the basement. They move quietly towards the corner of the earth floored basement. The CAT has had her kittens on some old newspapers in the corner. There are four little blind creatures snuggled up to their mother.

JOE
You guys should name them.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
Harry?

HARRY
They don't belong to me.

ARTIE
Can I pick one up?

JOE
Not yet. They need to be with their mother.

ARTIE
Can we call one Uncle Charles?

JOE
If you like.

ARTIE
Harry?

HARRY
If one's a girl you could call her Salley Cat.

JOE
I like that.

ARTIE
When do they get their eyes?

120 **INT. HALL. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

120

HARRY and ARTIE play football in the hall. HARRY has the ball. He is teasing ARTIE with it. ARTIE's getting cross, fighting more than playing football. HARRY has some cool tricks.

121 **INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

121

Now all HARRY'S clothes are strewn across the room. JOE stands there, unclear what's clean and what's dirty.

JOE (V.O.)

Then something strange and disturbing
started to happen as the three of us
settled down together: *Hog Heaven* came to
pall.

He picks up a few garments and adds them to the basket he is carrying. The noise from downstairs.

JOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My *Lost Boys* theory had fallen apart and
hadn't been repaired or replaced.

122 **INT. HALL. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

122

JOE carries his basket. In the hall there's odd dirty shoes and trainers and a pile of sodden, sandy clothes in a puddle.

JOE

(Shouts)

Why can't you boys put your dirty clothes
in the laundry baskets?

123 **INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

123

ARTIE and HARRY are now on the floor at the big coffee table. They are making a dinosaur from modeling clay. HARRY helping ARTIE. JOE comes in to them with the basket of dirty clothes.

JOE

Do I have to do everything round here?

They are not listening.

JOE (CONT'D)

Arthur. Go and wash your face.

ARTIE

I washed it yesterday.

JOE

And put some clothes on. Both of you.

ARTIE

Why?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
You know why, Laura is bringing Lucy
round to play.

HARRY
So?

ARTIE
Can I have some Coke?

JOE
Can I have some Coke, *what?*

ARTIE thinks. What can JOE mean?

ARTIE
Can I have some Coke *now?*

JOE
Can I teach you some manners, Arthur?

ARTIE
No. You can just mind your own business.

JOE doesn't like the change that is taking place in ARTIE. He
shoves a chair out of the way a little too aggressively.

HARRY
Why are you angry?

JOE
(As he leaves)
I'm not angry. What makes you think I'm
angry?

124 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY** 124

JOE shoves things into the washing machine, slams it shut.

125 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING** 125

ARTIE, clean and dressed, waits with HARRY. JOE comes
downstairs.

JOE
Hey, Beedle Bop. It's your first date.

ARTIE
What?

JOE
You and Lucy.

ARTIE
Don't say that. It's not funny.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Just make sure you keep your nibbles
under wraps . . .

ARTIE
THAT'S NOT FUNNY! I HATE IT WHEN YOU SAY
THINGS LIKE THAT!

HARRY
Why do you tease him so much?

JOE
It's good for him.

ARTIE
NO! IT! ISN'T!

HARRY
They're here.

ARTIE
You're just a bunch of smartholes!

LAURA and LUCY are walking up the garden. LAURA carries a
bag.

JOE
Hey! Welcome.

JOE is suddenly all smiles. HARRY looks at him. Hypocrite.

LAURA
Hi.

They kiss cheeks.

JOE
That's lovely, thanks.

LAURA
I have something . . . I thought Arthur
might like . . .

She takes something from the bag. It's an old tin clockwork
boat. The key is set into the centre of the deck. There is a
tin sailor with a moustache. The boat is called *Dragon Fly*.

JOE
Wow. That's fantastic.

LAURA
It seems to work. I think it might have
been my dad's. Lucy has no interest . . .

ARTIE takes it.

ARTIE
Thank you so much!

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Would you like a drink?

LAURA looks at the table.

LAURA
I should get back really. I have some
work to do.

JOE
One glass?

ARTIE
Our cat has had puppies.

LUCY
Puppies?

She gets the giggles.

ARTIE
The daddy was a dog.

Well recovered.

JOE
Kittens that can bark.

HARRY
And hump your leg.

JOE looks at him.

LUCY
I've got a rabbit.

JOE
Mmm, delicious.

ARTIE
Dad!

JOE
What?

LUCY
Can I please see them?

JOE
Of course.

ARTIE and LUCY go off.

JOE (CONT'D)
I have some of the family red.

LAURA
Who could refuse?

126 **INT. BASEMENT. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING**

126

ARTIE and LUCY sneak up on the CAT and her KITTENS.

ARTIE unplugs the freezer and plugs in a lamp.

LUCY looks at them, strokes them.

ARTIE

Their eyes came today.

127 **EXT. TERRACE. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

127

JOE has thrown together some food. LAURA has stayed and eaten with them. The remains are on the table. JOE is about to pour more wine.

LAURA

I have to drive . . .

JOE pours for himself. LAURA stands.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Let me give you a hand to clear up.

JOE

No, it's fine . . .

LAURA

Just say yes.

128 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT**

128

JOE and LAURA come in from outside carrying plates. She looks for somewhere to put them down.

LAURA

Ummmm?

JOE laughs. He attempts to clear space for them.

JOE

The housework, I must admit, has come as a big surprise, even though I've watched so much of it over the years. There's the shopping. The putting of clothes into the washing machine. Hoovering the carpets when they've changed colour. Stacking this amazing cupboard, which not only stores but cleans the dishes. I can do a dash, I can do a hundred metres in cleaning, cooking, ironing, shopping, washing, but housekeeping is a marathon. More than a marathon. It's endless . . .

LAURA

How did you meet Katy?

(CONTINUED)

JOE looks at her - where did that come from?

JOE
Um . . . I interviewed her. At Crystal
Palace. In London. She was a swimmer.
There with the Aussie team.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
She was a Bird of Paradise.

LAURA smiles.

JOE (CONT'D)
I made her pregnant. She came back here
to be near her parents. I followed.

LAURA
I used to see her at school but never
really got to know her. What was she
like?

JOE
Uniquely endowed with beauty, rowdiness,
sympathy, sex appeal, energy, and, as it
turned out, cancer.

A beat. LAURA looks at JOE. JOE holds her gaze for a moment
then looks away.

129 **EXT. TERRACE. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

129

HARRY comes back from a late night swim. He stands towelling
himself off. He can see JOE and LAURA in the kitchen, deep in
conversation. He can see the growing connection between them.

130 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

130

LAURA
Then he took to wearing a T shirt
whenever we went out together that said,
*It takes a shit like me to be married to
a bitch like her.* That's when I began to
think our days were numbered.

JOE
Wow.

JOE impressed.

JOE (CONT'D)
Do you still see him?

LAURA
Yeah, of course. He's a good dad.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Well, as someone clever once said, to be without some of the things you want is an indispensable part of happiness.
Miserable thought.

LAURA smiles.

LAURA

What is it that you want?

Big sigh from JOE.

JOE

It's weird. I have plenty of people to do things with . . . I just have no one to do nothing with.

LAURA

You can do nothing with me any time you like.

JOE smiles.

JOE

Now there's an offer.

A powerful moment between them.

Suddenly, LUCY comes running in. She sits on her mother's lap, puts her thumb in her mouth and snuggles up.

LAURA

We'd better be going I think.

131 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

131

LAURA carries LUCY to the car. JOE with them. ARTIE and HARRY there to say goodbye.

LAURA

It's been fun.

JOE kisses her on the cheeks. ARTIE watches. He sees JOE's hand run down LAURA's back as she puts LUCY into her car seat.

They all watch LAURA and LUCY go. They turn back to the house.

ARTIE

I don't want to see Lucy ever again.

JOE

What?

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE

She spoils every game. She always wants to be the big sister and boss me and I'm always supposed to be three and I'm not, I'm seven.

JOE

I thought you wanted to go and live with them.

ARTIE

Well, I don't anymore!

JOE

Laura's my friend. I'm not going to stop seeing her on your account.

ARTIE

We'll see about that!

ARTIE storms off inside. JOE looks bewildered.

HARRY

He's not upset because of Lucy. It's because of you. He had you all to himself. Then I came along. And Laura.

JOE looks at HARRY.

JOE

Laura? She's a friend! Jesus, can't I have friends?

HARRY

God, dad. Anyone can see how much you fancy her.

JOE

Don't be so bloody precocious.

HARRY shrugs, goes on inside. JOE left there.

132 INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE. NEWSPAPER -DAY

132

WALKER is reviewing the paper on his computer. JOE knocks.

JOE

You wanted a word?

WALKER

I see that you've assigned coverage of the Open to Digby.

JOE

I thought Dig could bring something a bit differ . . .

(CONTINUED)

WALKER
I want you there.

JOE
I've done it for the last . . .

WALKER
I cut you a lot of slack when Katy was
ill . . . and after she passed away.

JOE
I know and I appreciate it . . .

WALKER
I want you there, Joe. From the first
point to the last. I want my top sports
writer to cover top sporting events.

Beat.

WALKER (CONT'D)
Otherwise you're not my top sports
writer.

133 INT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY

133

HARRY alone. He wanders from room to room. He goes into JOE's
bedroom. He opens the wardrobe. Lots of KATY's things. HARRY
closes the door. He crosses to the chest of drawers, now
covered in loose change, keys, old socks. HARRY looks at the
photographs of JOE and KATY and ARTIE. They look so happy.
HARRY full of a sense of what he has missed out on.

134 INT. NEWSPAPER. BRISBANE -NIGHT

134

JOE and DIGBY at their desks working. A SECRETARY comes to
them.

JANE
I've tried both airlines, absolutely no
seats available.

JOE
Suppose I could drive.

JANE
Ditto hotels. And no tickets for any of
the games.

DIGBY
They can't just sit around in some flea-
pit motel on the outskirts of the city
for a fortnight.

JOE
No . . .

JOE at a loss.

135 **EXT. TOM AND BARBARA'S VINEYARD - EVENING**

135

JOE drives up to the house in the SUV. He has come from work. As he pulls up, he sees BARBARA, TOM and other estate WORKERS in amongst the grape vines. They are inspecting the buds.

JOE gets out, crosses to them.

JOE

Hi.

BARBARA

Everything okay?

JOE

Yeah. How are you?

BARBARA

Busy.

Beat.

JOE

I'm in a jam. I . . . I wondered if you might be able to stay down on the river with Harry and Artie.

BARBARA

When?

JOE

This coming week. I have to go away. To cover the tennis.

BARBARA

This coming week?

JOE

Yeah . . .

BARBARA

Shouldn't you have thought of this before?

JOE

I was trying to take them. It's not possible . . .

BARBARA

So when I offer help you refuse it. Then when you're in a *jam* you suddenly turn up and expect me to drop everything?

JOE

Something like that, yes.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA

Well, it's budburst, Joe. I can't go
anywhere right now . . .

JOE

I suppose they could come here to you.

BARBARA

We're working seven days a week . . .

JOE

Right . . .

BARBARA

If it was just Artie . . .

JOE

Oh. I see . . .

BARBARA

I didn't mean it like that.

JOE turns away.

JOE

Then how did you mean it?

BARBARA

I don't know the boy . . .

JOE

Listen. It's fine.

BARBARA

(Imploring)

Joe . . .

JOE

It's fine.

He's walking away.

BARBARA

Joe, come on . . .

JOE

Forget it. I'll manage.

He goes back to the SUV. BARBARA watches him go.

136 INT. SUV. COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING

136

JOE's mobile rings as he drives. He looks at it. BARBARA
calling. He doesn't answer.

137 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

137

JOE returns. The smell hits him as he comes through the door.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Jesus. What's that smell?

The noise of a violent computer game from the study.

JOE (CONT'D)
There's a smell. There's a dreadful
smell. Like the drains are blocked.

He smells.

JOE (CONT'D)
Like a dead cat.

138 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

138

HARRY and ARTIE are at the computer. HARRY wears a tight beanie hat and his glasses.

JOE
Have either of you blocked the drains
with a dead cat?

No reply.

ARTIE
Die you S.O.B.!

HARRY
Love you lots but, Bye!

Action men are stalking round a stone labyrinth shooting at each other. ARTIE is destroyed.

BADDIE
*Are you just going to stand there and
bleed?*

JOE turns away.

139 INT. BASEMENT. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

139

JOE goes down the stairs with a torch. The smell is getting worse. There are flies.

JOE approaches the slowly. He opens it. He shines the torch.

It is a seething mass of rotting meat, vegetables in a soup of ice cream. A fish head breaks the surface.

JOE recoils, slams it shut.

He follows the lead. It's not plugged in. A lamp has been plugged in instead. JOE plugs the freezer back in.

JOE
OH, FOR GOD'S SAKE!

140 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 140

JOE pours himself a stiff whiskey and drinks.

141 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY** 141

The kitchen is even more untidy. Plus there are cats now - five of them.

JOE is making a packed lunch for ARTIE - very disorganized - searching for the bread knife, butter, anything that will go in a sandwich.

LAURA comes in through the back door with LUCY.

JOE

Hey.

LAURA

Hi.

JOE

Listen, I was wondering what you're doing next week.

LAURA

Hang on. Need the loo.

She dashes on through.

JOE

Hi, Lucy. Want some juice?

142 **INT. BATHROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY** 142

LAURA pushes down her knickers and sits on the loo. Something catches her eye. A chicken is floating in the bath water. It looks horribly naked. She stares at it.

143 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 143

LAURA returns. She holds the chicken. She looks at JOE.

JOE

Defrosting it.

LAURA still quizzical.

JOE (CONT'D)

There's a dinosaur in the microwave.

There is. The clay one is baking.

LAURA

Hog Heaven becomes Hog Hell.

LAURA finds a plate, deals with the chicken, puts it in the fridge.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Think of the Seven Dwarfs before Snow
White turned up.

LAURA starts to clear up.

JOE (CONT'D)

Please don't do that. He said, handing
her the rubber gloves.

LAURA puts them on, runs water. JOE to the door.

JOE (CONT'D)

Artie. Hurry up.

ARTIE comes in. JOE looks at him.

JOE (CONT'D)

You've got your shoes on the wrong feet.

ARTIE

(Furious)

These are the only feet I've got!

JOE

Change them round. And eat your
breakfast. And wipe your mouth.

ARTIE

Oh, God! I have to change my shoes, I
have to eat my breakfast, I have to go to
the loo, I have to do everything round
here!

He stamps off. JOE left there.

JOE

Jesus. They say you become the thing you
fight the most. I've become a scold.
Worse still I've turned my son into a
scold too. It's not supposed to be like
this.

LAURA

No, it's not.

She's increasingly annoyed by JOE.

LAURA (CONT'D)

We're going to be late.

JOE

(Shouts)

Artie!

LAURA

What about next week?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
I have to go away.

LAURA
Where.

JOE
Melbourne. The Open.

LAURA
And you want me to have them?

JOE
The thought had crossed my mind.

LAURA
Why don't you ask Artie's grandmother?

JOE
I already have. She can't . . .

LAURA
Why?

JOE
Because something called *budburst* is
occupying her every waking moment.

His attitude is really starting to get to LAURA. HARRY, in his hat, looking a bit bleary-eyed, wanders into the kitchen. He looks for somewhere to put his dirty plate. Not seeing anywhere obvious he puts it on the ironing-board and wanders off.

LAURA
I'm sorry but that boy really has to
learn that washing up does not do itself.

JOE
You know something, Laura. You're all
woman. And I don't mean that in a good
way.

LAURA turns to him.

LAURA
What did you say?

JOE
Nothing.

LAURA
*Hog Heaven? A certain Lord of the Flies
quality? Think of the Seven Dwarfs before
Snow White turned up?*

JOE
Just a joke.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

Yeah, well. Jokes and crappy theories,
stupid attempts to mythologize your sad
life - all just excuses for laziness and
irresponsibility. A chicken in the bath?

She's removing the gloves. She throws them at JOE.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I think maybe we should see a bit less of
each other for a while.

She goes to LUCY at the door.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Artie. We're leaving for school. Now.

LAURA and LUCY leave. ARTIE comes running down. He follows.

JOE left standing there.

144 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

144

HARRY is at the computer. He is having animated multiple MSN
conversations with his friends back in the UK. He types fast.

JOE stands outside the door and watches for a while. The fact
that HARRY is so animated and engaged is not lost on JOE.

JOE enters. HARRY quickly turns off the monitor, turns to
JOE.

JOE

As far as the outside world is concerned,
I'm not here, I'm in Melbourne. I'm not
going to answer the telephone and I don't
want you to either.

HARRY

Okay.

JOE

And I will need some help here, Harry.

HARRY

Okay.

JOE leaves. HARRY switches on the monitor and goes straight
back to his conversations.

145 INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

145

JOE has the Open tennis on television. He settles down with a
notepad to watch.

146 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING

146

JOE's report is on the screen: "Artful Roger Outclasses Hewitt." *Joe Warr in Melbourne.*

The telephone starts to ring.

JOE
(Shouts)
Don't answer it! Don't answer it!

The ringing stops abruptly. ARTIE comes in holding the phone.

ARTIE
It's Digby.

JOE
I said *don't* answer it!

JOE takes the phone.

JOE (CONT'D)
Hey.

DIGBY (V.O.)
Thought you should know our esteemed editor has tickets for the Finals. Men's and Women's.

JOE
Oh, shit.

147 INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

147

JOE comes into the room. It's in darkness. ARTIE is asleep on one sofa under his blanket. HARRY is on the other watching a DVD. He has his hat and glasses on.

JOE
Have you put the rubbish out?

HARRY
Not yet. I will. I will.

JOE
You rarely get set tasks in this house but when you do, you have to do them.

HARRY
Why can't it wait till the morning? It's dark out there.

JOE
I'll do it myself.

JOE stomps off. HARRY gets up and follows.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
I'll do it.

148 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

148

HARRY comes into the kitchen. JOE is tying the top of the over-full rubbish bag.

HARRY
Here, I'll do it if it means so much to you.

HARRY tries to take over.

JOE
I'm doing it. Just leave it.

HARRY
I'll do it!

JOE is pushing HARRY away. As they pull the rubbish sack from inside the bin. It splits. Crap goes all over the kitchen floor.

JOE
Oh, Christ!

JOE pushes HARRY aside. HARRY sees his father's anger. It scares him and upsets him. He starts to turn away.

JOE (CONT'D)
Where the hell are you going?

HARRY
You said leave it! Make your mind up!

JOE
Help me clear this up.

He pulls HARRY back.

JOE (CONT'D)
And take that stupid bloody hat off.

JOE pulls it off him.

HARRY's glasses go flying. A plate is knocked from the packed draining board. It smashes on the floor.

JOE (CONT'D)
Oh, for God's sake . . .

HARRY looks like he might cry.

JOE (CONT'D)
Jesus, don't start crying. You're just like your mother . . .

(CONTINUED)

HARRY suddenly cries out in pent up rage and frustration. He sweeps more crockery off the draining board.

HARRY
Don't say that!

He picks something up and throws it. It smashes.

JOE
Oh, brilliant. Terrific. Well done.

HARRY starts smashing up all the crockery he can get his hands on. ARTIE has woken up. He's in the doorway.

ARTIE
Stop it. STOP IT.

JOE protects ARTIE from the flying fragments.

Eventually, HARRY stops. He's breathing heavily, crying. ARTIE starts crying too. Both boys crying.

JOE picks ARTIE up, carries him from the room.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
I want to go to an orphanage!

HARRY stands there, breathless, at the centre of the mess.

149 **INT. BATHROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

149

ARTIE is brushing his teeth. JOE sits with him.

150 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

150

HARRY is down on all fours picking up shattered china, putting it into a bin bag.

JOE
Be careful. Don't cut your fingers.

JOE gets down beside him to help.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry. Someone said something about chores and I fell for it. Stupid. Do I want my son, or do I want my son doing chores? I want my son.

They pick up china.

HARRY
You have to go to Melbourne, dad. You can't do it from here. It's crazy. You'll never get away with it.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Given that my editor has tickets for both
finals you may well be right.

HARRY

How long would you be gone?

JOE

Two nights.

HARRY

You should go.

JOE

How can I?

HARRY

I'll look after Artie.

JOE pauses, thoughtful.

A beat.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Two night's is nothing. I can do it. Let
me do it. I want to help.

JOE

I'm not sure . . . I really appreciate
the offer. And actually I like your hat.

HARRY

Trust me. I can do it. I promise.

151 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

151

JOE is ready to go. HARRY and ARTIE together. He is anxious
about leaving them.

JOE

There's food in the fridge. All the
relevant numbers are there. You know how
to lock up. I'll leave my mobile phone on
all the time. Be careful.

JOE puts his bag on his shoulder.

JOE (CONT'D)

Ring me if there's any problem at all.

HARRY

We'll be fine.

Pause.

JOE

Bye then.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE

Bye, daddy.

JOE holds out his arms.

JOE

Take good care of him.

HARRY

I will.

He hugs them both. He stands there.

ARTIE

Go daddy!

JOE walks out.

152 **INT. SUV. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

152

JOE pulls away. As he does so he picks up his mobile and calls.

It is answered.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Hello?

JOE

It's me . . .

ARTIE (V.O.)

(Protesting)

Daddy!

JOE

See you later Alligator.

ARTIE (V.O.)

Don't forget your toilet paper.

JOE

Love you.

JOE hangs up. He is very emotional. He puts his foot down.

153 **EXT. HOTEL. MELBOURNE - DAY**

153

JOE gets out of a taxi, bag over his shoulder, goes into the hotel.

154 **INT. HOTEL ROOM. MELBOURNE -DAY**

154

JOE enters the room and throws his bag down on the bed. He opens the mini-bar and gets out a beer. Unscrewing the top he crosses to the window. There's a view of the city. JOE drinks. This feels surprisingly good. He breathes deeply.

155 **EXT. CORPORATE AREA. MELBOURNE PARK -DAY**

155

JOE, wearing his media pass, helps himself to lunch from a delicious buffet.

WALKER is there, shaking hands with people: *Hi. Tim Walker.*

JOE approaches him.

JOE
You made it then.

WALKER
Yeah. You've filed some great stuff so far. Keep it up.

JOE
Thank you, Tim Walker.

WALKER moves on. *Hi. Tim Walker.*

156 **INT. PRESS BOX. MELBOURNE PARK -DAY**

156

The Press Box is crowded and noisy.

JOE takes his place.

FEMALE JOURNALIST
Hello stranger.

JOE
Only wheeled out for the Finals these days. Still a *galacticos* but too important to risk in the early stages of competition.

FEMALE JOURNALIST
Mmm.

JOE looks out onto the court where the crowd is filling up.

JOE
Sharapova versus Williams. S. Don't know who to root for: Long Legs or Big Breasts?

FEMALE JOURNALIST
I suppose you could make your decision based on the relative strengths of two extraordinary athletes.

JOE
It's breasts isn't it? Got to be.

Below the players warm up.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*In the Final today, Serena Williams - Ah,
 Serena, Serena . . .*

157 INT. HOTEL ROOM. MELBOURNE -EVENING

157

JOE is at his lap-top, typing.

JOE (V.O.)
*. . . was comprehensively out-yelped by
 the teenage Maria Sharapova who
 registered a new personal best on the
 'Gruntometer.'*

158 EXT. STREET. MELBOURNE -EVENING

158

The streets are crowded, lively. JOE walks along talking to HARRY.

JOE
 So, everything's fine?

HARRY (V.O.)
Everything is great . . .

159 INT. KITCHEN. HOUSE. QUEENSLAND - EVENING

159

HARRY dishes up food, the phone held between his shoulder and his ear. ARTIE looks on in keen anticipation. An appetizing mixture of stuff: bacon and sweetcorn and peas and fried bread with grated cheese and fried eggs on top.

JOE (V.O.)
Good.

HARRY
 Don't worry. Just enjoy yourself.

JOE (V.O.)
Lock up properly.

HARRY (V.O.)
I will.

160 EXT. STREET. MELBOURNE - EVENING

160

JOE
 Okay. Good night.

HARRY (V.O.)
Night.

JOE ends the call. He looks around. Palpable sense of relief. He can relax. It's good to be out on the town. He walks on.

161 EXT. BEACH -EVENING

161

HARRY plays soccer with some of the BEACH KIDS.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE sits wrapped up his dressing gown by a camp fire. He pokes in it with a stick.

One of the GIRLS approaches him.

GIRL
Shouldn't you be in bed?

ARTIE
My dad's away.

They sit together.

162 **EXT. BOURKE STREET. MELBOURNE -NIGHT**

162

JOE comes out of a bar. He wanders up the street. It's crowded with Saturday night revellers.

163 **INT. BAR. MELBOURNE -NIGHT**

163

It's a young, noisy clientele. But the BARMAID is looking after JOE. She's pretty, young and shapely with a T-shirt that says *My Face Is Up Here* across her breasts - complete with helpful arrows pointing upwards. She refills his glass.

JOE
So, what do you do apart from this?

BARMAID
In my time off?

JOE
No, I mean, are you at college,
or . . .?

BARMAID
Yeah. College.

JOE
What are you studying?

BARMAID
Nursery Nurse. And no, I don't wear a
uniform

JOE finishes his drink.

BARMAID (CONT'D)
Same again?

JOE nods. She fills his glass. She is very attractive.

JOE
So, do you have a name?

BARMAID
Sassy.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

I'm Joe.

JOE slips his jacket off onto the low back of his bar stool. He watches SASSY. But he is getting crowded out. He eases a GUY away with his forearm. The GUY looks at JOE, displeased.

164 **INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT**

164

ARTIE comes into HARRY's room, clutching HAROLD.

HARRY

You okay?

ARTIE

Can I get in your bed?

HARRY

If you want.

ARTIE does. He snuggles up to HARRY. HARRY puts his arm round ARTIE. ARTIE closes his eyes. HARRY smiles to himself.

165 **INT. BAR. MELBOURNE -NIGHT**

165

The GUY is now hitting on SASSY.

GUY

Heh, beautiful. Beautiful . . .

JOE watches.

GUY (CONT'D)

Do you know why you should masturbate with these two fingers?

She looks at him, beadily.

GUY (CONT'D)

Because they're mine.

Laughter from his MATES. SASSY goes about her work. As she returns:

JOE

And they say the Age of Chivalry is dead.

SASSY smiles at JOE. Now the GUY is incensed.

GUY

What's your problem?

JOE

Procrastination.

GUY

What?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Forget it.

GUY
Who asked you anyway?

JOE
Now don't make me put my hand on my hip.

The GUY slams his forehead into JOE's nose.

JOE falls backwards off his stool onto the floor. The GUY goes for JOE. JOE fights him off with his feet.

JOE is up and ready to fight back but he is dragged off. People crowd round, shouting, pushing each other. JOE's nose is split open. He bends over. It pours blood.

166 INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

166

ARTIE snuggled up to HARRY who reads to him.

HARRY
All wanted blood except the boys, who liked it as a rule, but to-night were out to greet their captain. The boys on the island vary, of course, in numbers, according as they get killed and so on . . .

ARTIE
Don't stop.

167 INT. SASSY'S CAR -NIGHT

167

JOE is smothered in blood. He has a bar towel to soak it up. His nose is broken. SASSY is driving him to hospital.

168 INT. HOSPITAL E.R. MELBOURNE -NIGHT

168

JOE waits with SASSY amongst the other casualties of other drunken Saturday night brawls.

JOE
I left my jacket. I don't have my phone.
I don't have anything . . .

JOE checks his watch.

JOE (CONT'D)
Do you have a phone?

SASSY
No credit, I'm afraid.

She's looking at him.

(CONTINUED)

SASSY (CONT'D)
Does it hurt.

JOE
Yeah. It hurts.

A NURSE appears.

NURSE
Mister Wam . . . Wan . . . Wau?

169 **EXT. HOSPITAL -MORNING**

169

It is getting light as JOE comes out of the hospital. He has a dressing on his nose. SASSY is still with him. They walk to the car.

170 **EXT. BAR. MELBOURNE - MORNING**

170

SASSY comes out of the bar with JOE's jacket. She locks the door behind her. She runs back across the road. JOE watches her. She opens the door and hands him his jacket. She gets in.

171 **INT. SASSY'S CAR - MORNING**

171

JOE looks through the pockets.

JOE
No wallet, no phone. Keys are there.

SASSY
I'm sorry.

JOE troubled.

SASSY (CONT'D)
Breakfast?

JOE
Yeah.

She looks at JOE's shirt.

SASSY
You can't go anywhere like that.

She takes off her jacket and removes her T-shirt. She is in her bra. She hands the shirt to him then puts her denim jacket back on over her bra.

172 **EXT. RIVER. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

172

Dragonfly makes its way across the river. It makes a lovely bow wave. HARRY and ARTIE are in the water, their faces down at water level to better enjoy the tin boat's progress. ARTIE in his face mask and snorkel.

(CONTINUED)

The boat moves slower as the clockwork runs down.

It comes to a halt. Just as HARRY is about to reach for it to rewind it the surface of the water is breached by two SWIMMERS who appear from right underneath them. HARRY and ARTIE are both shocked and surprised, frightened even.

It's two of the BEACH KIDS. They are laughing.

BEACH KID

Hey. How you doing?

173 INT. CAFE. MELBOURNE -DAY

173

JOE is ringing home from the café payphone. He now wears the T-shirt that usefully has arrows pointing at his face - as if anyone could miss it.

The telephone rings. No answer. The machine kicks in. *There's no one here to take your call. You know what to do. Beep.*

JOE

(Into phone)

Hi. Morning you two. It's Daddy. Look, I've lost my phone. Try to call me back on this number. Or phone the hotel. Let me know everything's okay. I'll try you again soon.

JOE comes back to the table. His breakfast is waiting. SASSY is eating. JOE drinks his coffee. His eyes are blackening nicely. SASSY is looking at him.

JOE looks at her. She smiles at him.

174 INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

174

More and more BEACH KIDS have descended on HARRY now. They open the fridge, start taking stuff out, eating.

HARRY and ARTIE look on. HARRY doesn't know what to say. ARTIE looks uncomfortable.

Then one of them finds the booze.

ARTIE

I don't like them being here. Tell them to go.

HARRY doesn't know what to do or to say. The music is cranked up louder. Some of the KIDS are texting - spreading the word.

175 INT. SASSY'S APARTMENT. MELBOURNE -DAY

175

SASSY is riding JOE. She's not being gentle with him either. She flicks her hair, licks her lips, eyes closed. It's kind of wonderful and yet not quite sex as JOE remembers it.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
God, my head hurts.

SASSY getting where she wants to go.

JOE (CONT'D)
I think . . . this might . . . actually
be . . . life-threatening . . .

SASSY
Good. You can die a happy man . . .

176 INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY

176

BEACH KID
You know the Russian Roulette scene in
Deer Hunter?

HARRY
No.

The BEACH BOY shakes one can of strong lager violently.

BEACH KID
Well this is *Beer Hunter*.

It is placed with five other cans. Then they are shuffled.
The BEACH KID sits opposite HARRY. Other KIDS gather round.
The BEACH KID goes first. He selects a can, puts it up to his
head and pulls the ring top. A slight escape of gas. Now he
must drink it down in one to a chanted accompaniment.

HARRY's turn. His can also is okay. He struggles to drink it
down in one, unused to beer.

BEACH KID takes another can. Again he puts it up to his head
and pulls. It's okay. He drains it.

HARRY's turn. The can explodes smothering him in lager. Much
laughter.

HARRY can see ARTIE in the doorway, red-faced crying, as he
wipes lager from himself. ARTIE runs away.

The telephone is ringing. It goes unanswered.

177 INT. HOTEL ROOM. MELBOURNE - DAY

177

JOE has changed. He sits on the bed with the phone to his
ear. The answer machine kicks in again. JOE worried now.

178 EXT. STREET. MELBOURNE -DAY

178

JOE leaves the hotel and hails a cab.

179 **INT. PRESS BOX. ROD LAVER ARENA -DAY** 179

FEDERER and NADAL are warming up for the Men's Final on the court below. The Press Box is filling up. WALKER in the stands.

180 **INT. CAB. MELBOURNE - DAY** 180

JOE is nearing the stadium. Suddenly he changes his mind.

JOE
Actually, take me to the airport please.

The DRIVER checks his rear view mirror.

JOE (CONT'D)
Quick as you can.

181 **EXT. DRIVE. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 181

JOE drives up to the house fast. He jumps out, runs up to the front door. He goes to unlock it. Unnecessary: it isn't locked. Worried, JOE goes inside.

182 **INT. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 182

JOE drops his bag, looks around. Empty bottles and cans everywhere.

JOE
Harry? Artie?

JOE goes to the foot of the stairs.

JOE (CONT'D)
Harry . . .

JOE makes for the answer machine. The light blinks. He presses play.

ANSWER MACHINE
Hi. Morning you two. It's Daddy. Look, I've lost my phone. Try to call me back on this number. Or phone the hotel. Let me know everything's okay. I'll try you again soon.

He presses for the previous message.

BARBARA (V.O.)
Joe. It's Barbara. I've tried your mobile several times. Why aren't you answering it? Arthur is here with me. Hope to hear from you soon.

183 **EXT. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY** 183

JOE pulls away in the SUV fast.

184 **EXT. TOM AND BARBARA'S VINEYARD -EVENING**

184

The dogs come running up as JOE's SUV pulls up outside the house. He jumps down and starts towards the house.

BARBARA comes out to meet him.

JOE

Oh my god, Barbara. What's going on?

BARBARA

Where have you been?

JOE

Where are they?

BARBARA

What's happened to your face?

JOE

Are they safe? Are they all right. What the hell happened?

BARBARA

I don't think Artie should see you like that.

JOE moving past her.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

Where were you all morning?

JOE

Where's Harry? I need to speak to him

BARBARA

Harry's not here.

JOE

Where is he?

BARBARA

He's gone to the airport.

JOE stops.

JOE

What?

BARBARA

He wanted to go home. He wanted to go back to England. He was very upset.

JOE

What do you mean, go back to England?

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA

He had a return ticket. He insisted. I spoke to his mother. Tom's taken him.

JOE taken aback.

JOE

Oh, my god . . .

BARBARA

What the hell were you thinking of? Leaving them alone in the house . . . whatever possessed you? Goodness knows what would have happened if Harry hadn't called me. Those kids from the beach had overrun the place. I had to turn them out. Thank god Tom was there.

JOE

Fetch Artie for me, please . . .

BARBARA

I think he should stay here with us.

JOE

Fetch him please.

JOE moves past her, heading for the house.

BARBARA

I could have called the police, Joe. I could have called Child Welfare.

JOE

I want my son.

BARBARA

Do you think they'd let you keep him if I had?

They are at the door to the house now.

JOE

I want my son.

185 INT. HALL. TOM AND BARBARA'S VINEYARD -EVENING

185

JOE

Artie!

ARTIE

(O.S. Pleased)
Dada!

He's upstairs.

BARBARA

I want you to leave.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Not without Artie.

JOE starts up the stairs. BARBARA tries to block his way.

BARBARA
How can you behave like this in front of him?

JOE
You leave me no choice, Barbara.

He calls upstairs.

JOE (CONT'D)
Arthur!

BARBARA
Just get out! Get out of my house.

JOE
Arthur, come here. Bring your bag.

BARBARA is trying to block JOE's way.

BARBARA
You're not fit to be his father!

All her grief is emerging now. JOE holds her, looks at her.

JOE
(Quietly)
Bee you can't replace your daughter with my son. You just can't.

ARTIE is there on the stairs with his bag. JOE picks him up.

JOE carries ARTIE out of the house. BARBARA sinks down onto the stairs crying bitterly.

186 **EXT. TOM AND BARBARA'S VINEYARD - DAY**

186

JOE straps ARTIE into the SUV. As he does so TOM returns in his 4 x 4.

JOE crosses to him. TOM gets out.

TOM
Jesus, what happened to you?

JOE
I walked into a door.

TOM
Quite a heavy one by the looks of things.

JOE nods.

(CONTINUED)

TOM (CONT'D)
Your boy got off safely. It's what he
wanted.

JOE looks at TOM. TOM is so simple and straight.

JOE
How was he?

TOM
Quiet. He told me to tell you he's sorry
he let you down.

JOE upset.

JOE
(Quietly)
Life is so hard without her, Tom.

TOM
I know.

Beat.

JOE
Thanks for sorting things out over there.

TOM
It was largely *Her Indoors* . . .

He nods in the direction of the house.

TOM (CONT'D)
I just stood by the Jeep with a shotgun.

JOE smiles.

JOE
Tell Bee I'm sorry. I never meant to hurt
her.

JOE turns back to the SUV.

187 **INT. SUV -EVENING**

187

JOE drives. At first they don't talk, then ARTIE looks at
JOE.

ARTIE
Granny was very upset.

JOE
She misses mummy. We all do.

ARTIE
Did you hurt yourself?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
Little bit.

JOE drives. Silence.

ARTIE
When I grow up I'm going to be gay.

JOE
Excuse me?

ARTIE
I'm going to be gay.

JOE
Do you know what a gay is?

ARTIE
Nope.

JOE
Don't you think you should find out
before you make it your life's ambition?

ARTIE
Nope. I'm going to be a gay.

JOE
Okay.

188 INT. STUDY. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT

188

JOE sits at his desk. He is looking at the newspaper coverage
of the Men's Final. It is by *Tim Walker*.

JOE
Oh, Christ.

ARTIE comes in with HARRY's BEAR.

ARTIE
Harry left his Bear.

He stands the TEDDY on JOE's arm. He stands it on JOE's
shoulder, on his head as he reads.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
Is this bothering you, Daddy?

JOE
No, darling.

ARTIE
Is this bothering you, Daddy?

JOE
No, darling.

189 **INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

189

JOE checks his watch. He has been waiting to make a call. He dials. The telephone rings.

FLICK (V.O.)
Hello?

JOE
It's Joe.

FLICK (V.O.)
You are unbelievable.

JOE
Is Harry there?

FLICK (V.O.)
He doesn't want to talk to you, Joe.

She hangs up.

190 **INT. ARTIE'S BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

190

ARTIE lying on his bed. He plays with his clay dinosaur. The storm rages outside. JOE comes in holding his keys.

JOE
Come on. It's pouring.

ARTIE lies there.

JOE (CONT'D)
There are floods. Huge puddles, you simpleton!

ARTIE doesn't move.

JOE (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

ARTIE suddenly attacks him. He flails his fists hitting JOE as hard as he can.

ARTIE
I miss Harry. And it's all your fault!
Your fault! I miss him!

JOE covers his face but stays there and let's ARTIE take his feelings out on him.

ARTIE keeps hitting JOE till he runs out of steam.

ARTIE sinks back onto the bed.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Me too.

The rain falls heavily outside.

191 **EXT. SCHOOL - DAY**

191

LAURA is with a group of MUMS in the playground. LUCY's with her. JOE comes out of the school. He sees LAURA there.

He watches as LUCY runs to a MAN who has come into the playground. LUCY jumps into his arms. This is PATRICK, LAURA's ex. JOE watches as LAURA and PATRICK exchange a few words. PATRICK leaves with LUCY. LAURA is standing alone. JOE approaches her.

JOE

Hi.

LAURA turns.

LAURA

Hey.

She looks at his nose.

LAURA (CONT'D)

What happened to your face?

JOE's hand goes to it for a moment.

JOE

You know what they say. The bigger they come the harder they hit.

LAURA

Poor you.

Beat.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I hear from Artie that he's going away.

JOE

Yes. Seems the right thing to do. Maybe.

LAURA

You know something, Joe. You're all man. And I don't mean that in a good way.

JOE nods.

JOE

Good point, well made. I'm sorry . . .
you know . . .

LAURA lets it hang.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (CONT'D)

Oh well. Places to go. People to annoy.

JOE walks off. LAURA rejoins the MUMS.

192 **INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -NIGHT**

192

The rain has passed. It's a hot night. JOE packs his bags.
ARTIE is asleep in JOE'S bed.

KATY

(O.S.)

You're not really going are you?

KATY is there.

JOE

Yes.

KATY

Why? This is Artie's home.

JOE

I know . . . It's just that . . . for a while with Harry here we were a family again. Not just a stray widower and a lost little son. The boys were back in town.

KATY

You can't leave me.

JOE

We're not leaving you. You'll come with us.

KATY

You don't know that.

JOE looks at ARTIE. When he looks back, KATY has gone.

193 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY**

193

The SUV is packed. ARTIE is with his cats.

JOE

They'll be fine here. Shirley's going to come in and put some food down.

ARTIE

They'll be hungry.

JOE

This place has every convenience. Hot and cold running mice.

ARTIE strokes his favorite.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE

(Sad)

Goodbye, Uncle Charles.

JOE

So, shall we do it?

ARTIE stands. He takes JOE's hand. All around them, the tangled garden. They walk to the SUV.

JOE (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Do you know the first thing we did in London?

194 **EXT. ROAD. ENGLAND -DAY**

194

A dismal, dark and dank February day. The traffic is dreadful. It streams into London. They are dwarfed by TRUCKS belching fumes. JOE drives a hire car.

JOE

(V.O.)

Started to miss Australia.

195 **INT. HIRE CAR. LONDON -DAY**

195

JOE wants to change lanes at the lights. Fatal.

The other DRIVER mouths off at JOE. JOE gives him the finger.

The DRIVER drops his passenger window.

DRIVER

I've got my muvver in the car, you poxy piece of shit!

Indeed he has. He's had to lean across her to scream at JOE, his face a mask of aggression.

ARTIE

I don't like England. It's old. The houses are old. The streets are too small. And they're dirty and the cars are too small. And there aren't any water slides and there isn't any jungle.

196 **EXT. STREET. QUEEN'S PARK - DAY**

196

ARTIE sits in the double parked car. JOE approaches a house. The sounds of a violin being played. JOE can see in the front window - a STUDENT and her TEACHER both with violins and a music stand.

JOE rings the bell as the TEACHER plays it more proficiently.

The playing stops. The door is opened. It is FLICK.

(CONTINUED)

FLICK
Oh, Joe . . .

JOE
Hi.

She is heavily pregnant.

FLICK
What are you doing here?

JOE
I've come to see Harry.

FLICK
Why do you do things like this?

JOE
Things like what?

FLICK
Why do you do things with no regard for
the consequences? Who just turns up at
the door?

JOE
Is he in?

FLICK
He's back at school.

JOE gestures at her distended belly.

JOE
I didn't know. Congratulations.

FLICK
Harry didn't mention it?

JOE
No.

FLICK
Is that your car?

JOE
Yes.

FLICK
Is that Arthur?

JOE
Yeah.

FLICK
You're about to get a ticket.

(CONTINUED)

JOE turns to see a WARDEN hovering. ARTIE is in the driver's seat playing with the steering wheel. JOE dashes back. FLICK closes the door.

197 **INT. CAR. ST. BEDE'S -DAY**

197

JOE knows exactly where he is going. He turns towards a grand entrance, past a lodge house.

ARTIE

Is this it?

JOE

Oh, yes.

The car pulls up the long drive, past the rugby and hockey pitches. ARTIE can see the imposing school building ahead.

ARTIE

It's like *Hogwarts!*

JOE

Only weirder.

198 **EXT. ST. BEDE'S -DAY**

198

JOE pulls up outside. He and ARTIE get out of the car. They go in through the huge front door.

199 **INT. CORRIDOR. ST. BEDE'S -DAY**

199

JOE waits in the corridor with ARTIE. He looks at the list of Old Boys who died in the war.

He looks at the trophy cabinets.

The school motto: *Veritas Omnia Vincit*

J.C.WARR was the winner of the Junior Victor Ludorum Cup in 197-

J.C. WARR - Captain of the Rugby 1st XV.

J.C.WARR - Captain of Cricket 1st XI.

JOE lifts ARTIE up to see a photograph of the whole school.

JOE

Can you see which one's me?

ARTIE looks. Points.

JOE (CONT'D)

God no, that's Christopher Moss. That's me.

ARTIE looks.

(CONTINUED)

ARTIE
No, it isn't.

JOE
It is.

ARTIE
No, it's not.

HARRY's Housemaster, KEDGE, comes back to them, apologetic.

KEDGE
Mister Warr . . . I've spoken to Harry.
I'm really sorry. This is really rather
awkward. He doesn't want to see you.

JOE
Ah. I see.

KEDGE
He has games . . .

JOE
Right . . .

KEDGE
We can certainly talk . . . I have a few
minutes . . . If you want to discuss his
progress . . .

JOE
No. Thank you. Not just at the moment.

200 **EXT. ST. BEDE'S -DAY** 200

JOE and ARTIE return to the car.

201 **INT. CAR. ST. BEDE'S -DAY** 201

JOE drives back down the drive away from the school. BOYS are
assembled on the rugby pitch.

ARTIE
Stop, daddy, stop!

JOE pulls up.

JOE
What is it?

ARTIE opens the door.

JOE (CONT'D)
Come here, what are you doing . . .?

ARTIE is running off.

202 **EXT. ST. BEDE'S -DAY** 202

JOE gets out of the car. ARTIE is running towards the rugby pitch. JOE sees why. HARRY is playing.

203 **EXT. PITCH. ST. BEDE'S -DAY** 203

The game is in full flow when ARTIE comes running across the pitch heading for HARRY.

ARTIE
Harry! Harry!

HARRY turns to see. ARTIE is running towards him. And there's a good chance ARTIE will get run down by the pack.

HARRY runs to him, picks him up. The REFEREE blows.

HARRY
What are you doing here?

ARTIE
We've come to see you.

HARRY carries ARTIE back to the sideline. He sets him down.

ARTIE (CONT'D)
We want you to be with us again.

JOE runs up.

HARRY
I don't want to see you, Dad.

JOE
I'm really sorry, I . . .

HARRY turns and runs back onto the pitch.

JOE (CONT'D)
We can't do without you . . . You're indispensable . . .

HARRY
I don't want to see you.

HARRY takes up his position as the game restarts with a scrum down.

JOE takes ARTIE's hand.

JOE watches HARRY. He plays scrum half - a nice spin pass and turn. He looks a useful player.

204 **INT. BEDROOM. HOTEL. COUNTRY TOWN - NIGHT** 204

A big, rather empty and definitely draughty hotel room. ARTIE is in bed with his book. JOE is in the bathroom, washing.

(CONTINUED)

JOE checks his mobile phone again. No calls or texts.

205 **EXT. COUNTRYSIDE -DAY**

205

JOE and ARTIE walk together in the woods - English woods in winter - skeletal nettles, brown brambles, leaf mould, mud. The trees are dripping.

Suddenly the sounds of someone - or something - approaching.

ARTIE

What is it?

Something is running, coming towards them along the path below. ARTIE can hear the heavy breathing.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Daddy?

A BOY in shorts and vest comes into view - the LEADER in a cross-country run. He goes past without noticing JOE and ARTIE.

JOE

Come on . . .

They get closer. Some more BOYS pass. Then JOE sees HARRY.

JOE (CONT'D)

Wait here.

JOE starts to run. He slips and slides down the bank towards the path. He manages to get alongside HARRY.

HARRY

For God's sake, Dad!

JOE

I have to talk to you.

HARRY keeps running.

HARRY

No.

JOE matches him stride for stride. He tries to look at HARRY as he runs. Not easy.

JOE

I'm really sorry about what happened. I was a shit. I want to make it up to you.

HARRY

Leave me alone. It's not funny. It's just embarrassing . . .

JOE

You couldn't slow down a bit could you?

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, JOE's lost it. The track has narrowed, JOE hits the mud. His footwear isn't up to the task. He slips, falls, slides away from the track in the mud. He slides down the bank.

HARRY stops running and looks. BOYS pass him, staring. JOE is all right. HARRY runs on before JOE can get up.

JOE drags himself back up the bank. Artie appears above him. It starts to rain.

206 **INT. SNUG. PUB -EVENING**

206

It's dark outside. JOE settles ARTIE down to dry by the fire in the snug with a colouring book, a drink and some crayons.

JOE
Stay here.

JOE takes his beer into the other bar.

207 **INT. SALOON BAR. PUB -EVENING**

207

JOE sits in the corner where he can watch the bar and not be seen. He picks some dried mud off his trousers.

208 **INT. SALOON BAR. PUB -LATER**

208

JOE is about to get himself another pint when a group of BOYS come in, with wet hair, back in uniform, carrying their sports bags. HARRY's there.

They go to the bar and order various soft drinks and crisps.

JOE approaches at the right time.

JOE
Same again, please. And I'll get these.

HARRY looks round.

JOE (CONT'D)
I used to come in here after cross-country too.

HARRY stands there.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm persistent, you have to admit.
Can we talk?

HARRY picks up his drink and follows JOE, with his fresh pint, back to the table in the corner. HARRY's friends go off.

HARRY
Where's Artie?

(CONTINUED)

JOE
He's in there.

They sit.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm really sorry about what happened. I'm
really sorry that I didn't . . .
couldn't . . . that you didn't enjoy it
in Australia . . .

HARRY
I loved Australia.

JOE
Well . . . that it wasn't better for you
there . . .

HARRY
I want to ask you something.

JOE
Sure.

HARRY
I want you to listen to me.

JOE
Of course.

HARRY
I mean really listen to me.

JOE
I do.

HARRY
No, you don't.

Beat.

JOE
Okay. I'm listening now.

HARRY
Why did you leave me?

JOE doesn't get it immediately.

HARRY (CONT'D)
When you went with Katy?

JOE
She was pregnant. I loved her. She left
England. I panicked. Your mother and I
fought all the time . . .

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
No. Why did you leave me?

JOE
I had to be with Katy . . .

HARRY
Why did you leave *me*?

JOE gets it.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I mean - why didn't you take me with you?

Pause.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I wanted you to take me with you. I
wanted to be with you.

JOE
Christ.

JOE genuinely taken aback.

JOE (CONT'D)
I can honestly say . . . it didn't even
cross my mind.

HARRY
I see.

JOE
I thought a child should be with his
mother.

Pause.

JOE (CONT'D)
You wanted to come with me?

HARRY
Yes. I wanted to come with you.

JOE
Christ.

HARRY
Didn't you miss me?

JOE
God, yes. In fact the less I saw you the
more I missed you. But there was a new
baby. And I wanted to try to get it
right.

HARRY
So you just left me with her.

(CONTINUED)

JOE
With your mother . . .

HARRY
With my mother. Who can't stand me.

JOE
Don't be ridiculous . . .

HARRY
Don't tell me I'm ridiculous! I try to
say how I feel and you tell me I'm
ridiculous!

JOE
You're right I'm sorry.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
I had no idea.

HARRY
How could you? You were playing happy
families on the other side of the world.
You left me on my own with her. Left me
to cope alone. You never wanted me.

JOE
That's not . . .

HARRY silences him with a look.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry you feel like that.

HARRY
Yeah, well, deal with it.

HARRY gets up and walks away. JOE does not follow.

209 **INT. SNUG. PUB -EVENING**

209

JOE stands by the door.

JOE
(Quietly)
Come on.

ARTIE
Where's Harry?

JOE
Come on.

ARTIE collects up his things, finishes his drink.

210 **EXT. CAR PARK. PUB -NIGHT**

210

JOE opens the doors. ARTIE gets in. He has HARRY's BEAR.

ARTIE
Harry's Bear!

JOE
We'll send it to him.

ARTIE
I want to give it to him.

JOE
He's with his friends, it'll embarrass
him . . .

But ARTIE's getting out of the car. He runs back into the
pub.

JOE follows. He can see in through the window.

He watches ARTIE take the BEAR to HARRY.

He watches HARRY cuddle ARTIE, take his BEAR back. He sees
ARTIE turn away to return.

211 **INT. BATHROOM. COUNTRY HOTEL - NIGHT**

211

JOE is at the sink in his vest. He brushes his teeth, spits
into the sink.

KATY (O.S.)
What a dump.

JOE looks up into the mirror. He can see KATY behind him.

JOE
You made it then?

KATY
I never say *I told you so* do I?

JOE
No, darling, you never do.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
I must have been awful to live with
sometimes.

KATY
Awful.

JOE
It's too hard for one person to do all
this.

(CONTINUED)

He looks at her in the mirror.

JOE (CONT'D)
Maybe it's all too late.

He hangs his head.

JOE (CONT'D)
Too much pain. Too much that's wrong. God
knows what this is doing to Arthur.

He looks up. She's gone.

212 **INT. CORRIDOR. ST. BEDE'S -DAY**

212

JOE walks along with ARTIE.

213 **INT. HOUSEMASTER'S ROOM. ST. BEDE'S -DAY**

213

KEDGE is there. A tea has been laid out.

KEDGE
Why don't I take Arthur off?

JOE
Right.

KEDGE
Grab some sandwiches. That's it. Take a
few more. What you don't eat we can feed
to the ducks.

ARTIE goes off with KEDGE quite happily. JOE waits.

After a while, HARRY comes in.

JOE
Thanks for agreeing to see me.

Pause.

JOE (CONT'D)
Would you like some tea?

HARRY
No, thanks.

JOE
This takes me back.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
God, I hated this school.

HARRY
Really?

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Speech Day, Founder's Day. The House Cup.
The snobbery, the casual brutality. A boy
came back after his father had died. He
got a new nickname: *Dad's-Dead*.

HARRY

I never knew. Your name's on every board.

JOE

I only attended this place because
Grandpa taught here and the fees were
paid. It was awful here then.

HARRY

It's awful here now.

JOE

Really?

HARRY picks up a sandwich and eats. JOE pours him tea.

JOE (CONT'D)

God, I'm sorry.

HARRY takes it.

JOE (CONT'D)

Your mother's pregnant.

HARRY

Yes.

JOE

You didn't say anything.

HARRY

I thought you two could sort it out
between you.

JOE laughs.

HARRY (CONT'D)

It's going to be a girl.

JOE

That's nice. Be cool to have a sister.

HARRY looks less than enthusiastic.

JOE (CONT'D)

Where do you fit in, do you think?

Beat.

HARRY

Not sure I do.

(CONTINUED)

JOE looks at HARRY.

JOE
I'm going to take Arthur back to
Australia.

HARRY nods.

JOE (CONT'D)
But what we want, both of us, is for you
to come and live with us there.

HARRY stops eating.

JOE (CONT'D)
We've thought about it a lot. That's what
we want.

HARRY looks down.

JOE (CONT'D)
I have a ticket booked. It's yours if you
want it.

HARRY
I didn't feel safe there.

JOE
What the ten most poisonous snakes?

HARRY
No, Dad. You.

Beat.

HARRY (CONT'D)
You scared me.

Beat.

JOE
That won't happen again.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)
I had a long chat with your mother on the
phone.

HARRY
What did she say?

JOE
She wants what's best for you. If you
want to come she'll support that. She's
had the last seven years, I can have the
next however many.

(CONTINUED)

213 CONTINUED: (3)

213

HARRY very still.

JOE (CONT'D)

Whatever you decide, I promise I'll be a better father to you from now on.

214 INT. BEDROOM. COUNTRY HOTEL - NIGHT

214

JOE and ARTIE pack the bags. ARTIE sits on top of one to help JOE close it.

JOE's mobile phone rings. It says *FLICK*.

JOE

Hello.

HARRY (V.O.)

It's me. It's Harry.

JOE

Hi.

HARRY (V.O.)

Um . . . I don't think . . . I don't think I can come with you . . .

JOE silent.

215 INT. SITTING-ROOM. QUEEN'S PARK - NIGHT

215

HARRY stands by the telephone.

HARRY

I . . . I don't think it's fair on mum.
I'm sorry.

HARRY hangs up. *FLICK* is sitting at the table watching him. She watches as HARRY leaves the room, defeated, despondent. *FLICK* moved by the sight.

216 INT. BEDROOM. COUNTRY HOTEL - NIGHT

216

JOE puts down his phone, devastated.

217 INT. PADDINGTON STATION. LONDON -DAY

217

ARTIE sits on the bags and takes it all in while JOE gets tickets for the *Heathrow Express* from the machine. ARTIE looks up at the wrought and cast iron ceiling. He looks at the big window at the far end that glows with light. The station is filling with people ready to travel.

JOE is at the machine. He looks round at ARTIE for time to time.

He puts in his card. He gets his tickets. He turns back. There are the bags but ARTIE has gone.

(CONTINUED)

He looks around.

He looks back. He can't see him.

JOE
Oh, God . . .

JOE goes to the bags. He starts to accost other TRAVELLERS.

JOE (CONT'D)
Arthur? Arthur!

JOE grabs the bags and starts to move through the crowds looking for ARTIE.

JOE (CONT'D)
Excuse me. Have you seen a small boy?

JOE looking here and there.

JOE (CONT'D)
Artie? Artie!

Rising tide of panic.

JOE (CONT'D)
Oh, God . . .

JOE looking all around. Then suddenly, he looks towards the top of the stairs leading from the Underground station. People stepping off the up escalator.

A gap in the traffic and we see HARRY's head appear. The escalator is delivering him to us and to JOE. Gradually we see he is holding ARTIE's hand.

HARRY
Look who I found.

JOE
What are you doing here?

HARRY
What do you think?

JOE
You've come to see us off.

HARRY
Yeah, that's why mum's at the bottom of the escalator guarding a bloody great bag.

JOE looks down. There's FLICK.

JOE leaps on the down escalator. He trips down it to join FLICK.

218 **INT. UNDERGROUND. PADDINGTON - DAY** 218

JOE grabs the bag, takes FLICK's arm and steps onto the up escalator.

219 **INT. PADDINGTON STATION. LONDON -DAY** 219

They are reunited at the top of the stairs.

JOE
Are you really coming?

HARRY
Yeah, I'm really coming.

FLICK
Nice to meet you at long last. I've heard
a lot about you. I'm Harry's mum.

Beat.

ARTIE
(Lightly)
My mummy's dead.

FLICK
Yes, I know . . .

Her hand on his head. JOE turns back.

JOE
There's just about time to get the next
train if we run.

FLICK
Okay.

JOE picks up HARRY's bag.

FLICK (CONT'D)
Bye.

HARRY
Bye mum.

FLICK and HARRY embrace emotionally. JOE watches.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I'll write to you every day.

FLICK
Don't be daft.

HARRY
Every week then.

JOE embraces FLICK. He whispers in her ear.

(CONTINUED)

JOE

Don't worry. You won't lose him. The saving on school fees alone is like four air fares back here a year . . .

FLICK

Thank you for saying that.

JOE breaks away.

JOE

Good luck with the baby. Keep us posted.

FLICK

I will.

JOE

Right. Let's run.

FLICK watches the three of them run off towards the platform, JOE manfully carrying both bags, HARRY holding ARTIE's hand.

They reach the ticket barrier and struggle through. They run on towards the train.

220 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY**

220

The garden is a jungle, untidy and overgrown.

The taxi delivers JOE, HARRY and ARTIE. They get out of the car and stand there, looking at the house.

There's a mewling from the undergrowth. ARTIE looks around. CATS are converging from all over the place - even more of them, new kittens. ARTIE is overjoyed.

JOE looks towards the house. We feel he might be about to see KATY. BARBARA appears in the doorway. JOE goes to her.

BARBARA

I've done what I can to make the place habitable.

JOE

Thanks.

BARBARA

It's good to have you back.

They embrace.

JOE

I'm sorry.

BARBARA

So am I.

221 **EXT. GARDEN. JOE'S HOUSE -DAY** 221

Some MEN remove the freezer. JOE, dressed for work, carrying a briefcase, watches as they load it into the back of a van.

222 **INT. KITCHEN. JOE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 222

Loud music. The dishes being done. HARRY washes, JOE wipes, ARTIE puts away. They spice this up by tossing the crockery to one another. They can even dance since there's no one there to see.

JOE (V.O.)

And so here we are - a father and two sons living in a household without women. Like an experiment in a satellite, free from earthly influences - like guilt, and bleach, and sock drawers.

223 **INT. UTILITY ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - DAY** 223

ARTIE undresses. He puts his clothes directly into the washing machine.

JOE (V.O.)

Given its inadequacies as a child-rearing unit, I like it. It's home alone except there are three of us . . .

224 **INT. BEDROOM. JOE'S HOUSE - EVENING** 224

JOE stands at the open wardrobe. He is emptying it of KATY's things, the dresses, the shirts, the shoes. He places them into some black bin liners.

Finally, he comes across the little black number they argued about the night her illness became apparent. He looks at it.

KATY (O.S.)

How is he?

JOE holds the dress. He looks in the mirror. He can see KATY reflected there.

KATY (CONT'D)

Is he happy?

JOE

I'd say he is, usually. He misses you.

KATY

He still remembers me?

JOE

God, yes. He keeps the picture of you by his bed.

(CONTINUED)

KATY

What's he like?

JOE

He looks more like you as he gets older. He's very funny. He's got your beauty so he'll do well. And I'll look after him for as long as he needs.

KATY

I don't think he brushes his teeth enough.

JOE

I agree with you about that.

KATY

Can't you get him to do it twice a day?

JOE

Once a week would be an advance. I can't understand why they're so white though. Is he brushing them in secret? I doubt it.

KATY

What about his hair? When did he last wash his hair?

JOE

They wash it when he gets it cut. And I'm rigid about that. He gets it cut twice a year *whether he needs it or not*.

KATY

One other thing.

JOE

What's that?

KATY

Will you do one other thing for me?

JOE

Anything. What would you like?

KATY

Buy that convertible. And if anyone asks, tell them why.

JOE puts the black dress back into the wardrobe. He will keep that one. As he closes the door KATY's reflection in the mirror goes. JOE turns round in the bedroom. It is empty.

JOE is dressed ready to go out. A lot of noise is coming from the sitting room.

ARTIE

(O.S.)

That was out!

JOE

I'm going. Bye.

ARTIE

(O.S.)

That was totally out!

226 INT. SITTING-ROOM. JOE'S HOUSE -EVENING

226

JOE looks in. BARBARA and ARTIE are playing a violent game of hand tennis with a ball of socks over a coffee table tipped on its side. HARRY is in school uniform. He umpires.

HARRY

Five all.

ARTIE

No!

BARBARA

Come on, serve, Beedle Bop.

JOE

Bye.

ARTIE serves. BARBARA hits it back but out.

BARBARA

Take that, Chuckles.

ARTIE

Out!

BARBARA

That was in.

ARTIE

Out!

BARBARA

Referee?

HARRY

Six - Five to Artie.

BARBARA

No!

ARTIE cheers. JOE leaves them.

227 EXT. SCHOOL - EVENING

227

JOE stands outside. He decides. He goes in.

228 **INT. CORRIDOR. SCHOOL - EVENING** 228

PARENTS coming and going. JOE moves on into the hall.

229 **INT. HALL. SCHOOL - EVENING** 229

LAURA sitting at the side of the hall, waiting. JOE sits down next to her. He is sitting on a child's chair.

She looks at him, cannot completely contain a smile.

JOE

I was wondering whether he might be able
to come back here . . .

LAURA waits.

JOE (CONT'D)

Whether he might be taken back. He's
changed. I promise. He's not so angry.
Not so grief-stricken. He's less selfish,
less opinionated . . . He's sorry for
being crass and boorish and over-bearing.

LAURA confused.

LAURA

Um?

JOE

He drinks less.

LAURA

Ah . . .

JOE

Maybe with a firm hand, you know. Your
guidance and help. He may not be a
complete write-off.

Beat.

JOE (CONT'D)

Do you think he stands a chance?

LAURA

Not all the time he stays sitting on that
chair.

230 **EXT. BEACH ROAD - DAY** 230

A convertible car speeds along. JOE is sunglasses driving.
Next to him is LAURA. Crammed into the back are HARRY, ARTIE
and LUCY.

231 **EXT. BEACH - DAY**

231

Long stretch of deserted sand with the sun beginning to set.
ARTIE trying to out run his shadow. HARRY kicking a ball,
LUCY dashing here and there.

JOE and LAURA walk side by side.

JOE

You know . . . I think I could fall madly
in bed with you.

LAURA looks at him.

LAURA

Just for a moment, I thought you were
going to say something serious . . .

JOE looks at her, smiles. She takes his arm, moves close to
him. They walk on as the children play.

END