

THE CURSE OF LUCK
(a comedy, of sorts)

"Pilot"
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THE CURSE OF LUCK

OVER BLACK:

SUPER: A QUOTE:

"Everything in life is luck."

-- Donald Trump

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON: THE FLAT FACE OF AN OVERWEIGHT PUG.

The pug (Mr. Peepers) stares directly at the camera -- panting in a steady series of asthmatic wheezes.

CUT TO:

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON: A MAN'S FACE THAT BARES A STRIKING SIMILARITY TO THAT OF THE PUG.

This is Joseph Gondal, late 40s, well groomed, if a bit doughy.

BACK TO:

THE DOG

From wider we reveal that the dog is sitting in a old English pram.

We hear a voice...

MRS. AUDLEY (O.S.)

Here it is...

MRS AUDLEY, a matronly woman in her late 60s enters carrying a rubber squeeze toy shaped like a rolled newspaper. As she enters, from wider we reveal that we are in:

INT. A QUAIN T STATIONARY STORE

Joseph, in a blazer and tie, is seated behind a desk bearing a laptop computer, calculator, and a stack of file folders.

Mrs. Audley sets the dog toy down inside the pram. The dog pays the toy no mind whatsoever.

MRS. AUDLEY

(to the dog)

There. Now, are you happy?

(to Joseph)

He's can be such a pain when he doesn't get his morning paper. And since Mr. Audley has passed, he's only gotten worse.

JOSEPH

Perhaps you should take him to see one
of those dog whisperers?

MRS. AUDLEY

Wouldn't help.
(whispering and covering
dog's ears)
He doesn't trust D-O-C-T.

JOSEPH

Doctors.

MRS. AUDLEY

(finger to mouth)
Shhh....

Then...

MRS. AUDLEY (CONT'D)

(cont'd)

Oooh... Mr. Peepers! I'm so sorry. I
believe he's changed the air.

Mrs. Audley waves a hand in front of her face.

JOSEPH

Unapologetically so. We'll. Getting on
with it. You've had a good year.

AUDLEY

Have I? I swear, Mr. Gondal. I don't
know how you do it. And you say, I've
been making money?

JOSEPH

Quite nicely. You're not printing it,
are you? This is a paper store.

AUDLEY

I wouldn't dream.

JOSEPH

Just having a giggle.

AUDLEY

Yes. Of course. It's just that some
days it seems as if hardly a soul
comes in.

JOSEPH

It's right here in black and white.
Money in. Money out.

Bit of a profit at the end. You're doing better than you think.

AUDLEY

Still, it was a lucky day when I found you. After burying my husband, I was afraid I was going to have to lock the doors.

JOSEPH

That's not going to be a worry. Not as long as we can continue doing these numbers.

AUDLEY

And you say I can afford the repairs for the roof and such.

JOSEPH

Absolutely. In fact, I'm doing the accounts for a construction firm. I could arrange it for you. If you'd like.

AUDLEY

Would you?

JOSEPH

That's what I'm here for.

AUDLEY

It's all so complicated. I wish there was a way to just put it all in your hands.

Almost imperceptibly, Joseph brightens.

JOSEPH

There is, actually. It's just a matter of setting up power of attorney.

AUDLEY

Would you?

JOSEPH

If that's what you want. I could easily draw up the papers. We could have it all done in a matter of days.

AUDLEY

Please. You're such a comfort. I just want to make sure that everything is in order.

If something should happen to me, that
Mr. Peepers is taken care of.

JOSEPH

Not a problem at all.

(then... to Mr. Peepers)

Just put your trust in me Mr. Peepers.

CLOSE ON MR. PEEPERS. On his rhythmic panting, we:

CUT TO:

INT: DARK SPACE - DAY

We hear the sounds of a woman panting, groaning; is this pain or
pleasure?

A HAND moves over the silk fabric of a blouse, the glint of light
catches a necklace with a small locket baring the embossed letter
'C'. The hand pulls its way through the blouse.

Reveal a black lace bra, delicate. The hand peels away the bra to
reveal a woman's breast. Pinching at the nipple. Movement from
the shadows into the slither of light that slices through a gap
in the door. The unseen man stands behind the woman, lifts her
skirt and tugs at her underwear. Pulling it to one side he enters
her from behind.

WOMAN

Oh my god, yes, put your hand there,
now rub it... Oh god that feels so
good.

We see the outline of the lover. A young man, MILES GONDAL, 17,
lean athletic build, dark hair frames his striking looks.

MILES

Like this...?

WOMAN

Yes.

The sex is raw and passionate. Together they climax and the
small cramped room becomes silent. Out of breath the woman
struggles to straighten her clothes. She seems nervous.

WOMAN (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I should go. I'll be late.

MILES

Can I see you later?

WOMAN

I don't know... Text me.

Having finished dressing, the woman fixes her tussled hair. Composed, she takes a deep breath. Cracking the door slightly, she slides out. Miles zips up his trousers and tucks in his shirt. A smirk across his face as he pushes open the door and exits into:

INT. A SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

An explosion of crowd noise. Teens and teachers move from classroom to classroom. Chaos.

Miles blends in with a small group of boys his own age. It's clear that he's very popular.

CUT TO:

INT: CLASSROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kids settle behind desks. Montage of "in-betweeners" shuffling books and backpacks as they prepare for class.

TEACHER (OS)

Good morning. Silence, please.

ANGLE ON: The back of ELIZABETH DOWELL, 30's, writing the morning assignments on the blackboard. The camera moves around her and we notice a small locket with the embossed letter "C" twisted on her neck. As she adjusts the locket we see that this is the same woman from the closet.

Miles sits in the back of the classroom and smiles at her. She consciously ignores him.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING -- A STREET IN THE EAST END OF LONDON -- DAY

Joseph in a fine Camelhair coat makes his way down the street, standing out in the otherwise working class neighborhood.

CONTINUOUS TO:

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY

Joseph steps out of a lift and approaches a reception desk below a block letter sign for STEPFORD CONSTRUCTION. The receptionist, a tall buxom woman is busy tapping on an I phone.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh, hi, Mr. Gondal. Go on in. Mr. Stepford is waiting for you.

CUT TO:

INT. A STATELY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Wood panels and deep red leather chairs. A contrast from the chrome and steel outside its doors.

Joseph enters the office of HARRY STEPFORD, 35, nice suit, high hair slicked back. He's less a thug than a second generation business owner. The east-end accent is the only thing that gives away his roots.

HARRY

Joseph... How are you? You're looking prosperous.

Harry puts his arm around Joseph's shoulders and ushers him in.

JOSEPH

Just busy. Tax season.

HARRY

How are the kids?

JOSEPH

They're a challenge. Teenagers...

HARRY

Fucking nightmare is what my dad used to call us.

JOSEPH

Well my daughter is a bit of a handful... But you love them...

A heavy hand comes down on Joseph's shoulder, startling him.

Joseph turns to see SMUTTY SMITH, 30s, well-dressed but imposing. Behind him stands his younger, but physically bigger brother, ARCHIE, who is filling out a lottery ticket.

SMUTTY (O.S.)

What's the matter, Joey. I thought you Paki's knew how to keep your women in line.

JOSEPH

I'm not a Paki. I'm as English as any of you.

SMUTTY

For now.

HARRY

Pay no attention to Smutty.
(scolding)
He's still reveling in Brexit.

Smutty playfully grabs the lotto ticket from his brother.

SMUTTY

Maybe you should let Gunga Din pick
your numbers for you.

Archie takes the ticket back.

ARCHIE

Piss off.

SMUTTY

Plays the same fucking numbers every
week. My birthday, his birthday, Mums
birthday. Live long enough and the law
of averages might just catch up with
him. Right genius?

JOSEPH

The law of averages is not a law at
all, actually. But a fallacy sported
by gamblers. No one is ever due to
win. It's just simple luck.

ARCHIE

(laughing at Smutty)
Piss off.

HARRY

You two ladies done?
(to Joseph)
So, seems another of our endeavours
has come into a bit of extra dosh.
Substantial, actually. And we need it
handled in the usual way.

JOSEPH

By substantial...? Are you meaning a
bit more than usual?

HARRY

The construction business is booming.

Harry hands Joseph a slip of paper.

JOSEPH

I see. Congratulations.

HARRY

Work your magic.

JOSEPH

Right. We might need to spread this around a bit. A few offshore accounts. The EU cross-border investment plan. That would be smart -- while it's still there. And, we've done quite well moving cash into local businesses. It would be imprudent not to pursue those opportunities.

HARRY

"Imprudent."
(for the brothers)
Foolish.

SMUTTY

Or impulsive. I'm not my brother. I read.

ARCHIE

Why don't you two poofs get a room.

JOSEPH

(staying on point)
The Caymans are also offering some extra incentives of late.

HARRY

(to Smutty)
That's what thinking global will get you.

JOSEPH

Considering the sum, though, it will be a bit more complex, more time consuming, and a bit more risky, as well.

HARRY

If I didn't know better, I'd say you were asking for a raise.

Joseph feels Smutty and Archie close in on him.

SMUTTY

They can't help but haggle.

BEAT.

The air feels as if it's been sucked out of the room. Then...

HARRY

I'll remind you, when you came to me,
we set a fixed rate.

JOSEPH

True. But I believe I've proved my
worth up to now. As I like to tell my
clients, there is not such thing as
safe, fast, and cheap. You can have
two, but not all three.

The stakes and the tension have been raised...

HARRY

(to the others)
He has balls, doesn't he?

SMUTTY

Big, hairy, Paki ones.

Smutty and Archie have a laugh. Harry sits on the edge of the
desk, staring intently down at Joseph, to make his point.

HARRY

We'll take care of you, Joe. How 'bout
we start by throwing in a couple lap-
tops for the kids? And next time we
meet, maybe the envelope will be a bit
fatter.

SMUTTY

(squeezing Joseph's stomach)
Just like this little belly of yours!

On Joseph's face we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: SEMI DETACHED HOUSE - LATER

As Joseph crosses the threshold, his daughter ABBI, 17,
willful, intentionally disheveled. A storm cloud with an
attitude that's often as dark as her hair and eyes. She pushes
past him and stomps up the stairs.

JOSEPH

Abbi...?

Abbi doesn't respond.

JOSEPH (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I've brought you a new--

We hear a door slam.

CONTINUOUS TO:

INT. THE KITCHEN - SAME

LAYLA 40s, Joseph's wife, attractive, proud. She lifts a piece of soaked laundry from a washer. Handling the clothes like they were dead fish, she drops them into a basket.

JOSEPH

What's wrong now?

LAYLA

The machine is broken.

JOSEPH

I meant Abbi.

LAYLA

She's been suspended.

JOSEPH

What did she do?

LAYLA

She was called a name and struck some ignorant wanker. We're paying all kinds of money to keep these kids in a decent school, and she insists on acting like a hoodlum.

JOSEPH

She's not a hoodlum.

LAYLA

She is out of control.

Miles enters the kitchen through the back door.

LAYLA (CONT'D) (cont'd)

What happened this morning?

MILES

Where?

LAYLA

At school.

MILES

(guiltily)
Nothing.

LAYLA

That's not what I heard. And don't try to cover this up.

MILES

Cover what up? I'm not trying to cover anything up. What did you hear?

LAYLA

Your sister nearly caused a riot.

MILES

Oh that. Somebody looked at her wrong and she went off on them. She's mental.

Joseph smacks Miles lightly across the head.

MILES (cont'd)

I'm just saying--

LAYLA

(suspicious / to Miles)

What did you think I was talking about?

MILES

Me? Nothing. The thing with Abbi...

Miles exits to his room.

Layla notices the bag with lap-tops.

LAYLA

(sarcastic)

Oh. You bought them gifts. That'll help.

Layla starts wringing out clothes.

CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

Joseph sits alone in the brightly lit space. The sound of two dryers move in sync -- adding to the white buzzing of the fluorescent lights.

A man, (DENNIS EWING, 30s) enters, unnoticed by Joseph. Dennis walks over and sits a few seats away from Joseph in front of an active dryer.

DENNIS

Amazing industry. People always need clean clothes.

JOSEPH

Death, taxes and laundry. All very profitable.

DENNIS

The irony is, you're buried in a clean suit... Might be a nice investment.

JOSEPH

The margin must be upwards from 30 to 37 percent.

DENNIS

And all cash.

JOSEPH

Exactly.

DENNIS

If a quid or two were to fall between the cracks, who'd be the wiser?

JOSEPH

Mums the word.

DENNIS

I should be careful. For all I know you might be a member of Her Majesty's Revenue. Tell the truth.

During the following, Dennis sets his briefcase on his lap and snaps open the latches.

JOSEPH

(smiling)

Not to worry. But as it happens, I am in accounting. And you?

DENNIS

Public service.

JOSEPH

Of what sort?

Dennis takes a large manila envelope from the briefcase and hands it to Joseph.

JOSEPH (CONT'D) (cont'd)

What's this?

ANGLE ON the envelope.

DENNIS

Have a look and see, Joseph.

Reacting to the stranger calling him by name, Joseph takes the envelope and removes its contents.

JOSEPH'S POV: We see a series of pictures of Joseph and various people outside the Stepford construction office, and several typed transcripts of phone conversations.

BACK TO JOSEPH and DENNIS.

JOSEPH

Who are you?

DENNIS

Detective Inspector Dennis Ewing.
Public Servant.

Dennis hands Joseph his card.

A loud beeping relieves the tension. Drying cycle over.

DENNIS (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Ah. Looks like you're done.

Dennis lifts Joseph's laundry basket.

DENNIS (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Shall we?

As Joseph silently unloads dryer...

DENNIS (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Of course, like any situation, there are always options.

Holding up a pair of Joseph's jockey shorts.

DENNIS (cont'd)

Do you fold these, or...

Joseph grabs the jockeys.

JOSEPH

I'm just a freelance accountant.

DENNIS

And not the type of person who does well in prison.

Joseph reflects on that for a moment.

DENNIS (CONT'D) (cont'd)
So, if I were you, I would be thinking
about how I could help my family,
Joe... You know, besides doing the
laundry.

CUT TO:

EXT. LONDON STREET -- LATER THAT NIGHT

A steady rain falls as Joseph carries baskets of dry clothes home.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Joseph enters the darkened room. Layla appears to be asleep. He sees the outline of her body. A rush of emotion overcomes him. He sits on the edge of the bed and begins to slide his hand over her body. Gently at first, but as the passion and anger inside him collide, he moves with more purpose.

Layla awakens to the touch of Joseph's hands, now groping at her body. He tugs at her night dress, hoisting it above her waist. His pants already at his feet, he climbs on top of her.

Layla moans, but underneath there lies some hostility. The sex is fast and aggressive, and over nearly as soon as it starts.

Joseph lays next to Layla as she stares at the ceiling processing what has just happened.

LAYLA
We should pull Abbi out of that
school.

Joseph is silent.

LAYLA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Every day I have to hear how much she
hates it there.

Still no response from Joseph.

LAYLA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I'm the one who has to deal with it.

Suddenly, Joseph rolls over onto Layla. They are face-to-face.

JOSEPH
The trouble isn't the school. The
bloody school is fine.

The girl has to learn how to play the cards she's dealt. That's life. Some are born with luck smiling on them. Some miss out. But you do what you have to do. Even if you're a short fat "Paki" who can't get a look from a single money-house on Throngmorton Street!

Nearly in tears, Joseph buries his face in her shoulder. Layla lays there for a moment, not sure what to say or do. Then...

LAYLA

Will you get off me. I can barely breathe.

Joseph rolls off.

There is a moment of quiet. Then...

JOSEPH

We have bigger problems than Abbi.

Joseph rolls over, turning his back to Layla.

After a moment... The camera settles on Joseph's face.

DISSOLVE TO:

A DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Joseph opens the door to reveal DCI MILLIE WATKINS, late 40s, tall and sturdy, holding up a bag of pastries. Standing behind her is Dennis Ewing.

MILLIE.

Good morning, Millie Watkins, your travel agent as it were.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Millie, Dennis, Joseph, and Layla sit around the kitchen table. Pastries and coffee have been laid out. Millie is already partaking. Layla appears shell-shocked.

MILLIE

There are no guarantees of course, but statistically speaking, it's definitely your best move. We will keep you safe.

DENNIS

Which will not happen if you don't cooperate. Plain and simple, you all become a piece of business Harry needs to eliminate.

LAYLA

Wait. Slow down. I am not just giving up my life.

MILLIE

Layla -- may I call you, Layla? We're offering your family an opportunity to stay together. And I hate to be so blunt, but for your husband, the alternative will almost certainly be prison.

LAYLA

We're good people.

MILLIE

Of course you are, dear. We see that. But the Crown, the press, the media... That's a different picture.

LAYLA

(to Joseph)

Jesus in heaven, what have you done?

MILLIE

(a mouthful of pastry)

He's made a bad choice, luv. And that's what we have to do now. Make a choice. The right one seems quite clear, don't you think.

DENNIS

But either way your husband will be coming with us. In protective custody -
- or under arrest.

MILLIE

Oh Dennis, must you be so solemn. He needs to work on his people skills. I think we are all in agreement. Joseph is a bright man.

DENNIS

I certainly hope so.

Joseph bangs the table hard in frustration

JOSEPH

Your attitude is not appreciated.

LAYLA

Oh, that's right, get angry over their fucking tone.

JOSEPH

And neither is yours.

LAYLA

Oh, well then, pardon me. Has my reaction to you ruining our lives put you off your Danish?

Silence...

MILLIE

I don't know about you, but this already feels like family to me. What say we push ahead, we'll start the process of moving you into the program today.

After a beat...

LAYLA

Now? The children are in school.

DENNIS

They're safe. We have eyes there. We're just waiting on your word to pick them up.

LAYLA

Family and friends? What do we tell them?

MILLIE

Absolutely nothing, dear. We are protecting you from cold-blooded murderers who, as Dennis indicated, would not hesitate to send you all, in pieces, to shallow graves.

Sobering silence, then...

MILLIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Right then. Pack a few things. Just what you would need if you were going on holiday. We're very good at this.

Millie reaches for another Danish and sips at her coffee.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCOTLAND YARD - LATER

Joseph sits at a large table being deposed by detectives. We pick up his statement in progress.

JOSEPH

My mission was to legitimize the funds
that flowed into the company through
various means.

As Joseph continues we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THAMES RIVER - NIGHT

A sleekly outfitted yacht glides down the river. Party lights illuminate the water around as the boat passes under Tower Bridge and slides toward its mooring spot at the exclusive St. Katherine's dock.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

By creating a number of offshore
accounts in the The Channel Islands
and less accessible havens like
Cyprus, we were able to filter large
sums away from Customs' attention...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRANSOM OF BOAT.

The party, hosted by HARRY STEPFORD is in full swing. A group of Harry's select friends engage in debauchery.

A dominatrix straddles Harry. His hair is gripped in her hand as she pulls his head back to pour a drink into his open mouth.

Smutty enters. Detached from everything, he steps to Harry and whispers in his ear.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

After funds had been filtered through
the corporation it was paid out as
legitimate corporate bonuses, used for
bribes, or cash incentives...

DISSOLVE TO:

OVERHEAD ANGLE.

The boat being tied up at the dock. Harry steps out. The camera moves down to reveal a group of uniformed police officers and Dennis Ewing, who waves to them as they pull in.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

Later, we would round-trip those funds through back door corporations or local small businesses -- "laundering" money, if you will...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A GARAGE - NIGHT

The following plays, as Joseph continues.

Joseph, Layla, Abbi, and Miles get into an unmarked car along with Millie and a Police Driver. The car pulls out onto a London street.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

On occasion we offered seniors with life policies a buyout for more money than they were worth. A simple way to clean up some funds.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTABLISHING - A MODEST LONDON HOTEL - NIGHT.

CONTINUOUS TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

Miles sits on the bed with a mobile in his lap -- typing out a text.

SUPER TEXTS ON SCREEN:

TEXT FROM ELIZABETH

What happened?

TEXT FROM MILES

It has nuthin 2 do with us.

TEXT FROM ELIZABETH

Where are you?

Abbi, just out of the shower and wearing a towel, appears from off screen and grabs the phone.

ABBI

What the fuck are you doing?

During the following, Abbi and Miles wrestle for the phone, but Miles isn't able to pry it from Abbi's hands.

MILES

Nothing. Give me that.

ABBI

Are you trying to get us all killed.
Where did you get a phone?

MILES

It's a burner.

ABBI

You're not as strong as me.

The tone of another text sounds. Abbi holds the phone away from Miles and looks.

SUPER TEXT:

TEXT FROM ELIZABETH

Call me.

ABBI

Who's "El"?

Miles grabs the phone away, as Joseph enters.

JOSEPH

What is that?

Joseph grabs for the mobile. Miles holds on, trying to delete at the same time.

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Who were you texting?

MILES

No one.

ABBI

He's lying.

JOSEPH

Who?

MILES

Nobody.

JOSEPH

Nobody is nobody anymore. This is your whole world for now. The four of us. Who was it?

MILES

My teacher.

ABBI

(putting it all together)
El... Elizabeth.

JOSEPH

Who?

ABBI

Ms. Dowell. He's her pet boy.

MILES

Fuck off.

ABBI

You're as dumb as you look.

JOSEPH

Does she know where we are?

MILES

No.

In a rare feat of strength, Joseph pulls apart the phone with his bare hands and crushes the pieces under his shoe.

JOSEPH

The four of us. That's it.

Layla comes to the door.

LAYLA

What's going on?

JOSEPH

Nothing.

Joseph pushes past her and exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HARRY STEPFORD'S OFFICE -- DAY

Harry is meeting with his barrister NICHOLAS BROADBENT, OBE.

NICHOLAS

Does not look good, Harold.

HARRY

That fucking Paki?

NICHOLAS

Technically I am not sure he is a Paki.

HARRY

I handed that wog a golden ticket when no one else would let him through the door. What do they have?

NICHOLAS

Enough.

HARRY

Enough to do what? Can they take it all? Can they put me away?

NICHOLAS

If he testifies in court.

HARRY

Well, that's fucked without a kiss. I paid for his half-caste urchins to be in the best school and he turns me out.

NICHOLAS

No good deed, Harry.

HARRY

And I pay you to keep me out of this kind of shit.

Nicholas sighs.

HARRY (cont'd)

What?

NICHOLAS

Your father would have never gone outside.

HARRY

Well, I did. Just fucking take care of it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COTTAGE -- PORTHCAWL, WALES - DAY

SUPER: PORTHCAWL, WALES

A long wide beach that fronts this small fogged-in coastal town on the Irish Sea. From a distance the camera tracks in to Joseph walking along with Millie, who snacks on a bag of fish and chips.

JOSEPH

I stick out like a sore thumb here.

MILLIE

On the contrary. I think you bring a little bit of much needed color.

JOSEPH

I thought the whole idea was not to be conspicuous.

MILLIE

You're a numbers man. What do you think are the actual odds of finding a needle in a haystack?

JOSEPH

There can be no odds, actually. For any probability algorithm, there is an infinite subclass of needles in haystack instances...

MILLIE

It's two million to one.

JOSEPH

These people don't play odds. They just burn down the whole barn.

MILLIE

Look at you driving a stake right through the heart of my security presentation...

(then)

You are one fascinating man. I'm guessing you've been underestimated most of your life.

JOSEPH

It's my curse.

CUT TO:

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

A trim semi-detached home in a middle-income neighborhood.

CONTINUOUS TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Layla is in a small, functional kitchen.

LAYLA
Abbi, I made lunch.

No response.

LAYLA (CONT'D) (cont'd)
I hope you're not online in any way.

Layla makes her way through a sparse living area.

She enters Abbi's bedroom without knocking.

CONTINUOUS TO:

INT. BEDROOM

Abbi, is wearing headphones while tapping away on her laptop. The music is almost audible. Layla pulls the headphones off.

LAYLA
Can you turn that racket off, please.
(then)
You're sure you're not chatting to anyone?

ABBI
The house isn't wired, Mother and I'm not a sorceress.

Layla circles around Abbi in an attempt to see the screen.

LAYLA
What are you doing?

Abbi quickly closes it.

ABBI
Recording my last days on earth. After they find us I'd like someone to know what I stood for. And who's to blame.

LAYLA
We're safe, for godsake. You need to get out of this house. You need to join your brother in school.

ABBI
I'll learn more sitting here and I won't have to put up with the angry stares.

LAYLA

Please, not with this cultural bias thing again, Abbi. Miles is the same as you.

ABBI

Really, Mother? Miles is the same as me? He's a born player. He'll thrive anywhere. I'm not quite so fortunate.

Abbi stares at the sad cheese sandwich Layla has brought her before replacing her headphones.

ABBI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

And I'm not hungry.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PITCH - PORTHCRAWL - DAY

Two secondary school football teams (Porthcawl vs. Cornelly) are battling it out in front of a small but lively crowd.

Miles is playing for Porthcawl. He is a tiger, fast and agile. Taking a pass, and with a deft move, he fires a shot right past the diving goalkeeper. Goal!

Miles is swamped by teammates. Schoolgirls on the sidelines cheer him. Miles pays the teenaged adulation no mind. He has his eyes on an attractive MILF, sitting on the sidelines with a young tot on her lap.

As Miles trots back to midfield and stares directly at her. The woman can't help but notice his gaze.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PUB - DAY

CLOSE on a BACON BUTTY smothered in HP Brown Sauce.

PULL BACK to see Millie as she takes a bite of the sandwich. Joseph is at the table getting by on a cup of coffee. The Pub is typical with a fairly good crowd of drinkers for mid-day.

MILLIE

Just coffee? This is your chance to take advantage of me.

JOSEPH

No, thanks. Thought it best to lose a stone or two. Help the transformation.

MILLIE
(her mouth full)
Truth is -- you're just as safe
hanging on to the old you.

Millie reaches across the table and pats his hand. She leaves her hand resting on his a bit longer than feels comfortable.

MILLIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
The thing you should worry about is
keeping a very close eye on your
children. Kids have a much harder time
breaking ties. And your old associates
have long arms...

JOSEPH
They weren't my associates.

MILLIE
You took their money, luv.

Then...

MILLIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
The loneliness takes some getting used
to. But soon enough the past will be
the past...
(reminiscing)
I took a lover once. We were in
university. Sometimes we would --
(making air quotes)
"meet up" -- as often as three times a
day. And then just like that it was
over. It's not something to forget.
But you do move on.

A bit uneasy with the conversation, Joseph looks around the room and happens to catch someone's eye. He forces a cordial smile that isn't returned.

MILLIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)
The Bacon Butty is worth the trip
every time. Are you sure you don't
want any?

CUT TO:

EXT. FOOTBALL PITCH - DAY

The match is over. Porthcawl has won and Miles is being congratulated by his teammates. Eager girls move toward the new star in town, but he makes his way over to TARREN, the MILF he had his eye on during play.

Tarren, young child in hand, is consoling her son, RORY a player for Cornelly. Seemingly from nowhere, Miles appears and throws an arm around Rory.

MILES

You were solid out there, mate.

Rory is surprised, but a word from Miles immediately lightens his load.

TARREN

(to Miles)

You're sweet. I mean, that's a nice thing to say.

MILES

(smiling directly at Tarren)

Never hurts to have a little inspiration.

Tarren is flustered by his forwardness.

TARREN

I'm Tarren... Mrs. Jenkins. This is Rory and Michael.

Michael reaches out to Miles, who hoists him in the air.

MILES

(to Rory)

We should meet up some time. Maybe kick the ball around.

RORY

Sure.

MILES

(straight to Tarren)

Good, then. I'm about.

Miles pulls off his jersey, revealing his lean impressive torso. He starts off, and turns to Tarren, et al., calling out.

MILES (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I'm Miles!

Tarren eyes him as he runs off.

TARREN

He seems nice. You should get his number. Have him over.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUB - DAY

Joseph and Millie exit the Pub which is on a wide Strand fronting the beach. Millie lights a cigarette after her big meal.

MILLIE

Just be careful not to get close to people.

(pointing to people in pub)

Any of those out-a-work bastards could potentially sell you out.

JOSEPH

That probably won't be happening. The Welsh are a bit cold.

MILLIE

They'll take you in eventually. Then you have to put up with how "special" they are. As if there's something noble about descending from a race of blue-faced root-eaters.

Distracted, Joseph steps off the curb and is nearly hit by a speeding bus. Millie pulls him back at the very last moment.

MILLIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Damn National Express! They think they own the road! You okay?

JOSEPH

(shaken)

Yes.

MILLIE

That would have been one for the company party.

She straightens his collar.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - LONDON - AFTERNOON

STUDENT #1 (V.O.)

They're not here no more.

CONTINUOUS TO:

EXT. THE FRONT STEPS OF THE SCHOOL -- SAME

Teams of kids are pouring out of the entrance. Smutty and Archie are talking to a group of upperclassmen.

SMUTTY

(impatient)

I know. That's why we're asking.

STUDENT #2

(re: Abbi)

Don't miss her. That slag.

The kids all agree on that.

SMUTTY

You know where they've gone?

STUDENT #2

Who's askin'?

SMUTTY

A bleedin' concerned citizen.

STUDENT #1

I was mates with Miles. He never said a word about leaving.

The others agree.

STUDENT #2

Maybe Abbi finally went full-out ISIS.

The others laugh, ad-libbing, "True there." "Probably in Kazakhstan by now."

ARCHIE

You think you're funny, do ya?

This puts a quick end to the jocularly.

STUDENT #1

You might talk to Miss Dowell. She helped Miles a lot.

STUDENT #2

More than most.

Archie stares at him and the kid skulks away.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - LATER

Smutty and Archie looking at names on doorways. Smutty finally finds "Dowell". The door is open. He enters without knocking.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Elizabeth Dowell is at her desk grading papers.

ELIZABETH

Can I help you?

SMUTTY

Looking for someone, luv.

ELIZABETH

A student? If so, you'll need to go to the front office.

SMUTTY

Used to be one of yours, I heard.
Miles Gondal.

The mention of the name shakes Elizabeth, but she maintains.

ELIZABETH

Miles, yes. He's left school.

SMUTTY

Know where he's gone?

She hesitates for a moment, then:

SMUTTY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

I'm told you were a fan of the boy.

ELIZABETH

He was my student... Excuse me, but what is this regarding?

Archie starts to look around her desk during the following.

ARCHIE

Dowell. Any relation to Bobby Dowell?

ELIZABETH

I have a cousin, Rob, but--

SMUTTY

He a jockey?

ELIZABETH

What? No...

SMUTTY

(to Archie)

Not surprised. That little creature is not born of woman.

ARCHIE

Rides like a bastard though.

ELIZABETH

Well, I don't know where they've gone.

ARCHIE

Just vanished, did they?

SMUTTY

He never told you he was dropping out?
Not a word about where he was going?

ARCHIE

Is that normal?

ELIZABETH

No. We were all a bit confused.

A female student appears at the open door and knocks.

GIRL

You asked me to come by?

ELIZABETH

Yes, just a moment.

(to Smutty)

I need to speak to this young lady.

SMUTTY

We'll wait.

ELIZABETH

No, I think we're quite finished.

ARCHIE

We'll wait.

Elizabeth crosses to the door.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(to girl)

In the hall...

They exit.

Archie continues to examine Elizabeth's desk. He spots her purse and casually starts going through it. He removes her wallet. Checks for cash and pockets the bills. He places the wallet back and something catches his eye. He pulls out a postcard and passes it to Smutty.

ARCHIE

Love these. Here's a funny one.
Reminds me of when we were kids.

INSERT - - A postcard featuring a suggestive sexual beach situation, typical of cards sold at English tourist towns. For instance, A cartoon of a man holding a woman in the ocean with the caption, "Ooh, will I really sink if you take your finger out, Mr. Horniman?"

Smutty smiles, but something bothers him.

SMUTTY

Who sends postcards?

Smutty flips it over. The only writing is "Miss you" It's not signed. In the corner is a postmark. Porthcawl, Wales.

Elizabeth reenters.

SMUTTY (CONT'D) (cont'd)

(holding up the card)
Have a friend in Wales?

On Dowell's look...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN - INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Joseph intently reading an instruction book while adding ingredients into an electric bread maker. Layla enters and stares at the mess.

JOSEPH

(re: the bread maker)
Never had one of these in London.

LAYLA

You haven't put any of that mess down
the sink have you? I've had to call
the landlord about the drains already.
And do clean up...

JOSEPH

Yes, Mum.

LAYLA

Please don't mock me.
(then)
Have you talked to your daughter?

JOSEPH

Thought I'd have a go at this first.

LAYLA

She needs to be in school.

JOSEPH

So I drag her off to town kicking and screaming? A bit conspicuous.

Miles enters, wearing an open-collared shirt, and singing the latest YouTube viral video.

MILES

I'm off.

He plants a kiss on Joseph.

LAYLA

(suspicious)

Where to?

MILES

Wouldn't you and the underworld like to know?

JOSEPH

Answer your mother.

MILES

Joking. I'm having dinner at a friend's up in Cornelly.

LAYLA

Where's that?

JOSEPH

Inland a bit.

LAYLA

Who do you know there?

MILES

Someone I met.

LAYLA

Name?

MILES

Rory Jenkins.

JOSEPH

Call us from there. Always checking in, remember.

MILES

I might be staying over.

LAYLA

No.

MILES

His mum insisted.

JOSEPH

Ring the minute you arrive.

Miles kisses Layla who brushes him off. He exits.

LAYLA

I've got one that won't leave the house and another that keeps my stomach in my mouth.

JOSEPH

Not really built for laying low, that one.

LAYLA

What have we bought ourselves here?

JOSEPH

We just have to hold on until the trial.

LAYLA

That cheers me up.

JOSEPH

We're together, that's our fortune.

Layla rolls her eyes, and exits without a goodbye.

JOSEPH (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Mine at least.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Abbi lays on the bed, writing away on her laptop, wearing headphones as before.

Joseph knocks and enters carrying a newly baked loaf of bread. Abbi senses him, looks up and removes the headphones.

JOSEPH

(inhaling deeply)

I made Bahama Bread. The flavor of the Tropics. Right here in Wales.

ABBI

I'm ecstatic.

JOSEPH

(re: the music)

Who are you listening to?

ABBI

Souad Massi.

JOSEPH

(no idea)

Ah.

ABBI

She's an Algerian who had to flee her home because of death threats from people who didn't like what she had to say.

JOSEPH

And yet she keeps up with her music.

Abbi takes a piece of the Bahama bread and bites into it.

ABBI

I'm not going to school.

She replaces the headphones.

JOSEPH

That's been made clear.

Joseph watches her for a moment, then gently removes the headphones.

JOSEPH (CONT'D) (cont'd)

This would be less painful if I felt you didn't resent me.

He heads for the door, then turns back and hugs Abbi from behind. She lets him hold her for a moment, until he lets go and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. - NEWSAGENT - PORTHCAWL - DAY

Layla enters and walks to the counter.

LAYLA

Twenty Silk Cut, please.

As the CLERK gets the cigarettes and glances toward a man at the back of the shop.

Layla follows the Clerk's look.

ANGLE ON: THE BACK OF A TALL, WELL-DRESSED, MAN WITH SHAVED HEAD. It's Archie. His presence sets Layla ill at ease.

BACK TO: THE CLERK setting down the Silk Cuts.

CLERK

Here you are, mum.

(imitates VO from Silk Cuts

"Two Weeks" ad)

These last couple of weeks, it's been one disaster after another.

LAYLA

Sorry?

CLERK

(doing the accent)

How I've survived, I'll never know.

(drops accent)

The old telly ad. No? Ah, you're probably too young.

Layla hands the man a £10 note.

CLERK (CONT'D) (cont'd)

On holiday?

LAYLA

No.

Layla can feel Archie's eyes on her, but resists the urge to turn and look.

CLERK

Well I haven't seen you before. Never forget a pretty face, if you don't mind me saying. But no threat.

(shows wedding band)

Sorry girls, he's married.

LAYLA

Delightful. Would you have a light?

The Clerk takes a disposable lighter from the counter and makes a grand show of lighting Layla's cigarette.

CLERK

Allow me, M'Lady... That's me speaking, not the lighter.

Layla turns her head as she exhales and steals another look at Archie, who is staring directly at her. She quickly exits the shop.

Archie steps to the counter and hands the Clerk some money along with a marked lotto card.

CLERK (CONT'D) (cont'd)

Fat prize this time. Odds are the same, though. At least that's what they say. I've never hit more than two numbers. Maybe you'll do better.

ARCHIE

Yeah, I'm feeling lucky.

CLERK

You dress like your are. Look lucky, feel lucky, I always say.

ARCHIE

Chatty, aren't you.

The Clerk hands Archie his Lotto ticket. Archie takes it and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tracking shots of Layla are intercut with her POV.

She hurries, fighting the urge to look over her shoulder. The street feels as if it's congested with strangers. All eyes seem to be on her.

ANGLE ON: Archie gaining on Layla with every step.

Layla glances over her shoulder, and spots Archie staring at her -- his eyes are like gun sites.

She arrives at an intersection, takes a quick check of traffic, and dashes out between cars.

Cars hit brakes and beep their horns as Layla crosses the intersection.

Archie, having closed the distance, approaches the curb opposite Layla.

CLOSE ON Archie's jacket. He slides a long butterfly knife from his pocket, flips it open, and holds it to his side.

BACK TO LAYLA. She reaches into her purse.

CLOSE ON LAYLA'S HAND gripping a cannister of mace. She takes a deep breath, plants her feet, and turns.

Archie's stare is fixed on Layla.

Layla spots the knife.

Archie steps off the curb. Layla is about to scream. But before a sound can come out of her mouth...

BAM! Archie is broad-sided by the National Express bus.

THE SOUND DROPS OUT and the action begins to move in SLOW MOTION as people on the street react.

SPEED RAMPS UP as the camera pushes rapidly in toward Layla staring in stunned silence.

CUTTING BACK TO SLOW MOTION we see a CLOSE UP of a small colored SQUARE OF PAPER tumbling over the pavement -- rolling its way steadily toward Layla like a leaf blown by a breeze.

From WIDER we see Layla staring at the paper.

The paper (Archie's Lotto Ticket) settles against her shoe.

FADE OUT:

END OF EPISODE