

# Pecking Order



**By Hilary Spiers**

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## CAST

Kate, late 20s, charity worker,

Lucy, late 20s/early 30s, political researcher, Kate's university friend

Audrey, 50s, northerner, currently working in a nursing home

Veronica, 50s, Home Counties, Kate's mother

Claire, late 20s, commercial lawyer, Kate's childhood friend

Maitre d', French with impeccable English\*

Józef, waiter, Polish (Some English)\*

Jakub, masseur, Polish (Józef's brother) (No English)\*

Benoît, sommelier, French, adequate English but heavily accented\*

*\*(All four men are played by the same actor)*

**SCENE 1 Friday afternoon. 5.30pm. The Hedonista Spa Hotel**

*A ladies' loo at the Hedonista Spa Hotel. Kate is in the loo, Lucy drying her hands. She is in jeans with a provocative political T-shirt. They are in mid-conversation.*

LUCY            Oh great! You might have warned me!  
 KATE (O/S)    How was I to know? Why didn't you say something at the time?  
 LUCY            Yeah, like I'm going to spend the weekend at yours and then start  
                       slagging off your mother -  
 KATE (O/S)    Was she rude to you? Really? I mean ...?

*The loo flushes. Kate emerges. She is dressed fairly conventionally in jeans etc. Her T-shirt is very slightly too tight*

LUCY            Rude! Hon, people like your mum are far too clever to actually be rude  
                       to your face.  
 KATE            *(Starting to wash her hands, looking at herself in the mirror)* Oh, God. I  
                       really don't need this at the moment. Not with everything else – Oh,  
                       look at me -  
 LUCY            Did you invite her or did she invite herself?  
 KATE            Is that a spot? ... I invited her. Well, Claire did. Give me some credit.  
 LUCY            Why? Your mother – for reasons that escape me - reduces you to a  
                       state of complete catatonia. Why is that?

*Lucy starts to move towards the door*

KATE            I don't know! Hang on a minute. *(She starts rummaging in her bag)*  
                       Mothers and daughters. Whatever.  
 LUCY            No, I don't know. What? *(Kate holds up lipgloss in triumph and starts*  
                       *applying it)* A gibbering bloody wreck. If you were like this in your work  
                       –  
 KATE            Don't start! Oh, this is going to be a great weekend, isn't it? You and  
                       my mother at each other's –  
 LUCY            No, we won't. I shall remain calm and serene –  
 KATE            Yeah, right –  
 LUCY            - however provoking she is. I'm only saying ... you've got to stand up  
                       to her for once –  
 KATE            Like how?  
 LUCY            You're 28, Kate! It's pathetic. God knows why we have to go through  
                       this whole bloody –  
 KATE            What?  
 LUCY            This weekend. I mean, why do you have to get married anyway?  
 KATE            How many times? Because we want to, OK?  
 LUCY            I just don't see the point – plus it costs a bloody fortune.

KATE Tell me about it. Anyway, she's in for a surprise too, Mummy. She knows about you but not Audrey.

LUCY What about her?

KATE She's coming too.

LUCY Audrey?

KATE Yeah.

LUCY You've invited ... to your hen do? You're kidding.

KATE No.

LUCY Kate Pargetter, I'm almost impressed.

KATE *(Now applying mascara)* See.

LUCY Does she know about your Mum?

KATE Audrey? Not exactly ...

LUCY Bloody hell. Kate! Audrey and Veronica!

KATE Yeah. Might take the pressure off a bit. Might even be a laugh. Don't you think? Is this top too -

LUCY No.*(The top)* A laugh? Bloodbath, more like. Margot Leadbetter and Catherine Cookson.

KATE It won't.

LUCY With your mother? Black belt in class warfare?

KATE *(laughing as they move through to the foyer. Hubbub of a busy hotel)* You are horrible. What about you? Look at that T-shirt – oh, she'll love that. Anyway, it was Cal's idea.

LUCY Oh. Might have guessed. What's wrong with it? *(The T-shirt)* Are we having a drink or what? Jesus, this is going to be one hell of a weekend –

KATE Can we get one here?

LUCY It's a hotel, dumbo. With a bar? Oh, and a word to the wise. Or in your case, the completely bloody stupid - don't rub her nose in it.

KATE What d'you mean? Who? Oh there she is! Audrey! Audrey! Over here –

*Audrey arrives. She is in her 50s, ordinary, friendly, in a mac. She's looking a bit dishevelled. She has a northern accent, which she plays up from time to time, especially when telling one of her stories*

AUDREY *(To the unseen maitre d')* No, it's OK, thanks. I've found them. Hello, loveys! Well, this is very nice!

KATE *(Kissing her)* You made it. Yeah, it's great, isn't it?

LUCY Audrey! This is a turn-up.

AUDREY *(Kissing her)* Did this one not say I was coming?

LUCY No she didn't. Full of surprises, our Kate.

KATE Come on, Audrey, let's sit you down. You look shattered.

AUDREY I am. *(As they sit)* Cup of tea, that's what I need. *(Looking at Lucy)* Look at you. Where did you find that? *(The T-shirt)* By, but you've lost weight! You'll blow away if you're not careful.

KATE Wish I would.  
 LUCY Oh, don't start! For God's sake shut her up, Audrey.  
 AUDREY No, you're bonny, love. Isn't she, Lucy? Just right.  
 KATE I know what bonny means. I don't want to be bonny! I want to be bony.  
 AUDREY No you don't. What's a lad to get hold of?  
 KATE Do you think this top's too tight, Audrey? Lucy won't -  
 LUCY Kate, once and for all, it is not too tight!  
 KATE (*Pulling at it*) You're just saying that. It is. It is, isn't it, Audrey?  
 LUCY Ignore her.

*Maitre d' appears at Audrey's side, looking affronted*

M d' May I help you, madam?  
 AUDREY I daresay. In a bit. This is very nice, this.  
 KATE This is one of our party.  
 M d' Ah. I see. Of course. Enjoy your stay, madam. (*He goes*)  
 AUDREY What's his problem, eh? Like a bulldog chewing a wasp. Ooh, tea, though, I could murder a cup.  
 LUCY (*Calling out*) Excuse me? Could we have some tea?  
 M d' (*Returning*) Certainly madam. For three?  
 KATE Yes, I'll have one as well. Luce?  
 LUCY Tea? Bloody Nora, Kate. Tea?!  
 KATE You have a drink if you want one. I just fancy a cup of tea all of a sudden.  
 LUCY I thought this was supposed to be ... oh, OK. Tea for three, please.  
 M d' What sort of tea, madam?  
 AUDREY Builder's for me, ta.  
 LUCY And me. (*M d' looks confused*) English Breakfast?  
 KATE (*To Lucy and Audrey*) Anything else? Something to eat?  
 M d' We have scones, fruit cake -  
 AUDREY No, no, I'm saving myself.  
 KATE (*Tempted*) Ooh ... scones ... you sure? (*They are*) Oh well. Just tea, then. Thanks.  
 M d' Very good. Tea for three. (*He goes*)  
 AUDREY (*Looking round*) Very posh. Ooh, I'm that hot. Am I late?  
 KATE No, no ...  
 AUDREY Held up at work, I was. Thought I'd miss my train. Plus it came on to rain just as I left. You'd never know, but I had my hair done yesterday. Now look at it. (*She struggles out of her coat. She is wearing a nylon tabard. As her story unfolds, the girls start laughing*) Ooh, it's good to get the weight off. I've been that busy today. Lost one of them this morning, would you believe it – someone left the side door open and old Ethel was off. Whipping round the gates, just as a bloody bus pulls up, so muggins here goes haring off after her. On she clambers and

starts ferreting around in her drawers, looking for her purse I suppose. She keeps saying 'I only want a half, I'm not 12 'til February'. There's a bit of an argy-bargy with her for a minute or two, couple of passengers shouting the odds and then all of a sudden she says, 'Are we going or what?', scuttles off onto the pavement and starts charging off towards town. Driver shuts the door quick to stop her changing her mind and off he zooms. So, any road up, I grab her arm, and manage to persuade her we've time for a cuppa back home before the next bus. 'Course I'm on tenterhooks, in case she bolts – I mean she's no lightweight, is Ethel, like a bloody tank once she gets going - but suddenly she links arms with me like we're best mates off on a jaunt. After that, she's as good as gold, rabbiting away about this and that and I get her back inside. Sighs of relief all round. Bless her heart, she's no trouble really, but one sniff of an open door and she's off like a greyhound, 16 stone and double hip replacements or not. So. How are you both?

*Maitre d' comes over with a tray of tea. Notices Audrey's tabard. Looks aghast. Audrey doesn't notice.*

KATE (Still laughing) Thank you.  
 M d' May I...? (He goes to pour)  
 AUDREY No, no, lad, let it stand. Give the bugger a chance. It'll be as weak as –  
 KATE Thanks, we'll sort ourselves out. (He leaves) We're really good, thanks, Audrey. Aren't we, Luce?  
 AUDREY Glad to hear it. What you been up to then, the pair of you?  
 LUCY Oh, nothing much.  
 AUDREY Oh, come on! At your age! Only six weeks to go -  
 KATE I know. Don't remind me. Anyway, never mind the wedding - Lucy's got some news.  
 AUDREY Oh, that's more like it. Come on, all the gossip.  
 LUCY Oh, it's nothing.  
 KATE She's got a new job.  
 AUDREY Have you? Not a partnership!  
 KATE Go on, Luce, tell her.  
 LUCY I've given it up.  
 AUDREY What?  
 LUCY The law. I've given it up.  
 AUDREY You never have!  
 LUCY I have. At last.  
 KATE Parliamentary researcher. Can you believe it?  
 LUCY Yeah. Oldest one in living memory.  
 AUDREY Well, I never.  
 LUCY I know.

AUDREY No, no, not that I'm surprised. Not really. Oh, but love, does that mean –

LUCY Yeah. London.

AUDREY There's trains, love. Oh, but London! Who you working for?

LUCY Need you ask?

AUDREY Well, about time too. All those years of volunteering. But that is good news! Pat'll be dead chuffed, I can tell you. Well done, lovey! See you elected yourself before very long.

LUCY Dream on.

AUDREY I will. A double celebration then, this weekend. Ooh, this is the life, eh! Been looking forward to this, I have. Told the girls at work: I'm going to a hen do. My daughter-in-law's. Thought I was joking. When they found out I wasn't, they thought you were barking. They said, what about the stripper –

KATE Audrey, there's not going to be a stripper!

AUDREY Last time I saw one – Vera Potter's leaving do – put me right off my dinner. Honest to God, you should have seen the size of it – shall I be mother? –

LUCY Audrey!

AUDREY Give over. Your mum'll be here as well, will she?

LUCY Oh yes. Lady Veronica. She'll be here.

KATE Stop it. Yes, my mother's coming.

AUDREY Now listen up, our Lucy. We'll have no politics this weekend. No arguments. You hear me?

LUCY Yes, ma'am.

AUDREY I'm serious. This is Kate's do, this weekend. So you just behave yourself. Mind, I'm a bit .... you know, myself.

LUCY A bit what?

AUDREY You know! Just tell me to shut up if I run on. Always do that when I'm nervous. Ask Pat. Ask Lucy, come to that. (*Pouring herself a cup of tea*) Oh! Why can't these places get a teapot that pours? Look at it, dribbling all over the shop. (*The girls laugh*) What?

LUCY You. You and teapots. Ever since I've known you –

AUDREY Well, it's hardly rocket science is it, designing a teapot with a working spout? I mean, this is a man's done this, I tell you that. (*She adds milk*) That's better. Least the jug pours. Now. Come on, Lucy. How's that fella of yours? Sam, is it?

KATE Sam? God, Audrey, you're months behind.

AUDREY Am I? So who is it now?

LUCY ... well, it was Neil.

KATE Was? What do you mean, was? Oh, Luce ...

LUCY Don't.

KATE When did this happen? You never said!

AUDREY Oh, Lucy. What was wrong with this one?



KATE You've broken up?

LUCY ... yes.

KATE So he's not coming to the wedding?

LUCY No. 'Fraid not.

KATE What was it this time? I thought he was nice!

LUCY Yeah, he was. Nothing, really. He was ... yeah, he was OK. I guess.

KATE Well, then?

LUCY That was it – he was just ... OK.

AUDREY But she doesn't want OK, do you, love? I know what she wants. Fireworks and razzle dazzle and –

LUCY Yeah. Well, something like that.

AUDREY Like Kate and Cal. See, you should have snapped him up while you had the chance –

KATE Thanks, Audrey!

AUDREY - when you were four and he tried to kiss you in the playground.

LUCY He wasn't trying to kiss me, Audrey, he was trying to pull my pants down.

AUDREY Was he, the dirty little tyke? I'll give him what for when I get back. Still, there's always our Aidan.

LUCY Aidan? Love him to bits but ... Aidan?!

AUDREY I know. You're too brainy for him by half, you'd eat him alive, the big softie. Still, you can't blame me for trying, eh?

LUCY (*Laughing*) No.

AUDREY I'd just like to see both my boys settled. Any mother would.

LUCY I don't know about any mother. But they don't stand a chance, do they, either of them?

AUDREY Here, what you saying? I'm possessive?

LUCY Wouldn't dare.

AUDREY Well, I am. They're my boys! Never mind, one day, eh? Oh, that's a shame about your fella. You know, I always hope every time –

LUCY I know you do.

AUDREY Still, London, who knows? ... I mean, you do get northern lads down there, don't you?

KATE Audrey!

AUDREY So, who else is coming? Apart from your mother. Ooh, we had a proper little chat. Did she say?

KATE She did.

AUDREY I thought to myself, it's not every day your lad gets wed. Right, let's make contact. So I rang her, your mum. There and then. I was that excited.

KATE She said.

AUDREY We had quite a natter. Any road, it's not as if she's a stranger really. Cal's told me all about her.

KATE Oh dear.

LUCY I bet.  
 AUDREY Now, now ...  
 KATE Audrey, she's really not –  
 LUCY Yes, she is.  
 AUDREY Listen, I take people as I find them and they have to do the same with me. Is it me, or is he gawping at me?  
 KATE Who?  
 AUDREY Him. Bloke in the penguin suit -  
 LUCY He just fancies you in that overall, Audrey ...  
 AUDREY What? ... Oh bloomin' 'eck, will you look at me. What am I like? Why ever didn't you say? Probably thinks I'm a cleaner or something.  
*(Raising her cup to the unseen maitre d')* Nice cuppa! Ta. *(Turning back to Kate)* So, there'll be your mother and ...  
 KATE Claire. My old school friend. Known her since I was four.  
 AUDREY Oh, that's nice. So, it'll just be the five of us, will it?  
 KATE 'Fraid so. All the others I wanted to invite couldn't make this weekend.  
 AUDREY Never mind. Oh, come on, I've had my fun, let me just get out of this thing.

*She starts to get up to take the tabard off as Kate leaps to her feet*

KATE Oh, there she is – Mummy! Mummy! Over here. Oh, and Claire's with her – Oh God – look at her, she's thinner than ever! Claire!

*They all get up. Veronica, immaculately dressed and coiffed and Claire pencil thin in an expensive suit come over and embrace Kate with extravagant delight.*

VERONICA Katherine! No need to shout the house down, darling!  
 KATE Hello, Mummy. Claire! You look fantastic! *(They embrace)*  
 CLAIRE Look at you! Look at you! Wow – you look –  
 KATE Fatter?  
 CLAIRE No! No ... for Heaven's sake. Blooming.  
 KATE I'm not pregnant!  
 VERONICA Pregnant! I should hope not! Darling, I'm not sure about that colour on you. ...  
 KATE And you remember Lucy.  
 VERONICA Of course. Lucy. Nice to see you again, dear. What an ... exciting top.  
 LUCY Thanks, Mrs Pargetter -  
 VERONICA Oh, Veronica, please! Yes, very striking.  
 LUCY I could get you one, if you like. *(Deliberately)* Veronica.  
 VERONICA Oh that's very ...  
 LUCY Claire, hi. I'm Lucy.  
 KATE Mummy, this is -

CLAIRE Of course. Lucy! Hi. Good to meet you. Heard a lot about you. Oh tea! Wonderful. We're both parched. You'll have a cup, won't you, Veronica? (*Turning to Audrey*) Tea for two please.

KATE Mummy –

AUDREY (*Realising immediately*) Right you are, miss. Will that be English Breakfast? Or Earl Grey?

CLAIRE Oh. Earl Grey for me – Veronica?

VERONICA Lapsang -

KATE No – no! Mummy! This is Audrey!

*Lucy laughs before she can stop herself*

CLAIRE Sorry?

KATE Mummy, Claire – this is Audrey, Cal's mum! Audrey, my mother, Claire.

VERONICA Callum's *mother*?

CLAIRE Oh my God! I'm terribly sorry, Audrey –

AUDREY (*Good humouredly*) It's all right.

VERONICA Oh my dear, oh ... Katherine, I didn't realise ...

AUDREY It's my work clobber, is this.

CLAIRE I'm so sorry, Audrey. I don't what to -

AUDREY (*Laughing*) Forget it, Claire. Really.

VERONICA Audrey ...

LUCY Look, guys, let's skip the tea, shall we? How about a bottle of fizz?

AUDREY Ah, that's the ticket. Now you're talking.

CLAIRE (*Gratefully*) Great idea, Lucy. Let's.

VERONICA Champagne? Oh, I don't know. Isn't a bit early?

CLAIRE For champagne? It's never too early for champagne.

KATE You haven't changed.

LUCY I like the woman's style.

VERONICA You don't think we should ... freshen up first?

AUDREY Freshen up? You look a picture already, Veronica.

VERONICA Oh. Well ... Thank you very much. But perhaps you might like to ... I mean, we all might -

AUDREY Oh take your point, p'raps I should at least get out of this –

KATE (*Furious with her mother*) No, Audrey –

AUDREY Your Mum's right, lovey. Let me get into something more respectable. Old Mardy Pants can show me to my room. (*She goes towards the desk*) 'Scuse me, lad ...

VERONICA ???

LUCY The maitre d'.

VERONICA Ah.

CLAIRE Actually, on second thoughts, I think I'll grab a quick shower first as well. Let's say champagne and cocktails at – what? - seven in the bar?

LUCY I might have a quick swim in that case. You coming, Kate?

KATE In a tick.  
 LUCY (To Kate) See you later then.

*Claire and Lucy leave*

VERONICA Yes. A bientot. (*Picking up her handbag*) I suppose I'd better check in too, Katherine. That top's a fraction tight, darling, if you don't mind me –

KATE Mummy!

VERONICA What?

KATE Just now. Audrey. How could you? You really embarrassed her.

VERONICA I'm sorry? I embarrassed *her*? For Heaven's sake, Katherine! I didn't see much sign of embarrassment. Anyway, darling, you might have warned me –

KATE Warned you? About what?

VERONICA That she was going to be here! Whatever was she thinking of – coming to a place like this dressed like that?

KATE She came straight from work –

VERONICA What about the other guests?

KATE What about them?

VERONICA There are standards, Katherine – and I'm not at all sure about what Lucy was wearing either. Hardly suitable for somewhere –

KATE Look. Please, Mummy –

VERONICA What?

KATE (*Trying to be firm*) This is my weekend. I want to enjoy it –

VERONICA Well, I'm sure we'll all try to –

KATE Good. So, please, Mummy. Please. It's just two days. Just ... go with it, that's all I ask. Just for once please try to be ... pleasant. (*She grabs her bag and rushes off towards the stairs*)

VERONICA Try to be ...? Katherine! Katherine! What may I ask is that supposed to mean?

*The maitre d' appears*

M d' Is everything all right, madam?

VERONICA (*Recovering immediately with a smile*) Of course. Everything is fine. Just fine, thank you.

*She sails off. The maitre d' watches her go. Fade*

**SCENE 2     7.00 pm Friday. The hotel bar.**

*Claire and Lucy are getting to know one another. Claire is in an expensive outfit and Lucy has changed into different jeans and casual top. Józef, the barman, is serving them glasses of champagne.*

JÓZEF        So. Two glasses for two beautiful ladies.  
 LUCY         Thanks.  
 CLAIRE       Thank you. Do you have any nibbles?  
 JÓZEF        Sorry?  
 CLAIRE       Any nibbles?  
 JÓZEF        Nibbles?  
 CLAIRE       Yes ... nuts? Crisps? Olives?  
 JÓZEF        Yes! Olives, yes! We have olives. Forgive me. I will fetch. (*He goes*)  
 CLAIRE       Well ... Cheers.  
 LUCY         Cheers.  
 (*Beat*)  
 CLAIRE       Good swim?  
 LUCY         Great. Had the pool to myself. D'you swim?  
 CLAIRE       Me? God, no.  
 LUCY         No.  
 (*Beat*)  
 CLAIRE       Look ... about earlier, when we arrived. Not a good start. Sorry.  
 LUCY         Oh, don't worry about it. Takes a lot to upset Audrey.  
 CLAIRE       Thanks. Hate to get the weekend off on the wrong footing. (*Beat*)  
                 Room OK?  
 LUCY         You kidding?  
 CLAIRE       Had to give old Kate a decent send-off. And I thought Veronica would approve.  
 LUCY         Ah, Veronica. Of course.  
 CLAIRE       You've met before?  
 LUCY         Weekend there .. ooh, four, five years ago.  
 CLAIRE       Gorgeous, isn't it?  
 LUCY         Big.  
 CLAIRE       Not impressed, then.  
 LUCY         It was a house. Bit Homes and Gardens for me.  
 CLAIRE       Veronica's life's work – keeping abreast of the latest home furnishing trends.  
 LUCY         Well – doesn't do it for me.  
 CLAIRE       No?  
 LUCY         Don't see the need.  
 CLAIRE       No? Oh, well ... Cheers. So. Tell me all about Kate's bloke.

*JÓZEF re-appears with a bowl of olives which he carefully places on the table*

JÓZEF           Lovely olives for lovely ladies.

CLAIRE        (*Curtly*) Thank you. (*He hesitates*) Thank you. That's fine. (*He goes*)  
God! They don't get it, do they?

LUCY           Barmen?

CLAIRE        Foreigners ... Anyway, about Cal.

LUCY           Thought you'd met him.

CLAIRE        Fleetingly. Seemed nice enough.

LUCY           Nice!

CLAIRE        Look, I met him for about 20 minutes in a pub, OK, with a million other  
people -

LUCY           Cal's ... brilliant. Yes, he's a really great bloke.

CLAIRE        Good. Do for her, will he? Ooh, these are scrummy. (*She holds the  
bowl out*)

LUCY           No thanks. Do?

CLAIRE        Yes. Will he make her happy, keep her in the style blah blah blah –

LUCY           Think so. Yeah. Yes, he will.

(*Beat. Claire keeps trying*)

CLAIRE        Remind me. You're a lawyer, right?

LUCY           Was. Like you.

CLAIRE        Oh? Was?

LUCY           Well, not like you, clearly. Commercial, right? (*Claire nods. Lucy points  
at herself*) Legal aid. Pro bono, you know.

CLAIRE        Oh, very worthy. (*A look from Lucy*) Look – Lucy, doesn't have to be  
such hard work. (*Lucy makes a slight gesture which is almost an  
apology*) And now?

LUCY           Politics. Just got a job as a researcher.

CLAIRE        For a –

LUCY           Our local MP, yeah.

CLAIRE        Oh. Right. (*Beat*) Aren't you a bit -

LUCY           Old? Yeah. Took me a while to take the plunge.

CLAIRE        Jesus. That must be some pay cut.

LUCY           Some. But I thought, instead of trying to unpick the law when it's a  
mess, why not help get it right from the start.

CLAIRE        Very idealistic.

LUCY           (*Drily*) Very necessary.

CLAIRE        So you'll have to move to London?

LUCY           I don't have to, but I will. Unfortunately.

CLAIRE        Come on. It's not that bad.

LUCY           'Spose not. If it weren't for the southerners.

CLAIRE        (*Laughing*) But Kate's an exception, is she?

LUCY           Oh, we've converted her, Cal and me. He used to call her Tory Girl  
when they first met.

CLAIRE        But now?

LUCY She thinks for herself.  
 CLAIRE (*Laughing*) Cow!  
 LUCY My pleasure. And her and Cal, they're going to be fine. OK? Whatever her mum and dad think.  
 CLAIRE Ah, well, no-one would ever be good enough for Veronica and Brian.  
 LUCY Honest to God, anyone would think they were bloody royalty! All he is is a sodding banker. Isn't he?  
 CLAIRE Veronica's not that bad, once you get to know her. It's just, Kate's changed. They don't like that.  
 LUCY Tough. People do. They grow up and they change.  
 CLAIRE The charity sector was never in their grand plan for Kate. Plus her bit of northern rough has been quite a shock to them. No offence.  
 LUCY I thought you'd met Cal.  
 CLAIRE It's the principle of the thing. And the vowels.  
 LUCY (*Letting it go, on a laugh*) Reet enough.

*They relax slightly*

CLAIRE So, you grew up with him, that right? Cal? Lived next door?  
 LUCY Originally. My dad used to work for Pat and Audrey  
 CLAIRE Oh, I thought Audrey worked in a –  
 LUCY Yeah. She does now. Just for something to do. She certainly doesn't need the money.  
 CLAIRE Oh?  
 LUCY They had a fitted kitchen business. You know, real craftsman bespoke stuff. Sold out to one of the big boys a year or so back.  
 CLAIRE Very nice. Good timing too. So now you're best mates with Kate too. How does that work?  
 LUCY What do you mean, how does it work?  
 CLAIRE Well, I just thought, you might feel a bit ...  
 LUCY What?  
 CLAIRE I don't know ... Left out. Sidelined. Whatever.  
 LUCY No. 'Course I don't. 'Course not. (*Beat*) It's fine.  
 CLAIRE Good.  
 LUCY It's not a problem. I don't know what you're getting at -  
 CLAIRE I didn't say it was a problem.  
 LUCY Well, it's not. OK?  
 CLAIRE OK.  
 LUCY I'm very pleased for both of them. Thrilled.  
 CLAIRE Thrilled ... Well, that's all right then, isn't it. So's this. (*The champagne*)  
 LUCY Yes, it's ... great. Great.  
 (*Beat*)

CLAIRE *(Looking round)* I think this'll do for our Kate Truth is, in her little heart of hearts, this is much more her bag.

LUCY Than what?

CLAIRE Oh, you know ...

LUCY What, pork scratchings in the Working Men's Club?

CLAIRE No ... I meant -

LUCY *(Good humouredly)* Bloody hell. You're worse than Veronica.

CLAIRE Sweetie, I'm an amateur in comparison ... *(Beat)* But you don't mind me being maid of honour or whatever I'm called. Do you? Organising all this?

LUCY No. 'Course not.

CLAIRE I was quite surprised when Kate asked me. I've seen so little of her over the past few years -

LUCY She said you had an agreement ... a pact or something ...?

CLAIRE Oh, God, did she? We were – what were we? – twelve or something. Trust her to remember that! Still, long as you're not pissed off or anything.

LUCY Nope.

CLAIRE Good. I thought the poor lamb needed something special before she disappears forever into the frozen wastes oop north.

LUCY *(Amused)* Leeds?

CLAIRE Whatever. One Harvey Nicks does not civilisation make.

LUCY You cheeky get!

*They laugh*

CLAIRE *(Looking round)* Where the hell are they?

LUCY Kate's always late. And Veronica'll be sharpening her talons. Deciding who to skewer first – me or Audrey.

CLAIRE Wouldn't fancy her chances with either of you.

LUCY *(Laughing)* Come on, you filthy capitalist, let's have another one before I go and check on my ferrets.

*They move towards the bar. The lights cross-fade to*



**SCENE 3 7.30pm Friday. The foyer**

*Veronica, in a new outfit, with a document case under her arm, is waiting for Kate to come down. The maitre d' appears*

M d'            Ah, madam. The two young ladies are in the bar if you were wondering  
 ...  
 VERONICA    (*starting to unpack files, notebooks, magazines*) Yes, thank you. I'm  
                  waiting for my daughter to come down.  
 M d'            Of course. Excuse me. Enjoy your evening.

*Kate appears as the maitre d' leaves*

M d'            Madam.  
 VERONICA    At last. Katherine. There you are. I was hoping to –  
 KATE           You look nice, Mummy. Seen the others?  
 VERONICA    Thank you. And you. Is that new? Claire and Lucy are in the bar.  
                  You've lost a little weight, darling, haven't you?  
 KATE           (*It's an old ploy of her mother's*) No. I don't think so. Shall we –  
 VERONICA    I just thought, you know, about the face.  
 KATE           No, not that I've noticed.  
 VERONICA    People often do, of course. Before a wedding.  
 KATE           Oh. Do they.  
 VERONICA    Katherine, I hope you're not going to adopt that frosty tone with me all  
                  weekend.  
 KATE           I'm sorry. (*Beat*) Has Audrey come down yet?  
 VERONICA    I don't think so. Probably still on the phone.  
 KATE           Oh?  
 VERONICA    We're next door to each other. I could hear her. Obviously something  
                  was amusing her ...  
 KATE           Oh, probably talking to Pat. They're always laughing, the pair of them.  
 VERONICA    So it seems. (*At a look from Kate*) What?  
 KATE           Mummy, you're not going to –  
 VERONICA    What?  
 KATE           ... Look, I think Audrey's probably a bit nervous.  
 VERONICA    Really?  
 KATE           And sometimes you can be ...  
 VERONICA    What?  
 KATE           ... I just want you to get on. Be friendly. That's all. Try to get on.  
 VERONICA    Of course I shall be friendly!  
 KATE           (*her mobile rings*) ... oh, sorry ... just a tick –  
 VERONICA    For goodness sake! Can't you leave it?  
 KATE           Won't be a minute. It's Cal. (*Answering it*) Hello, hon. No, no, not yet.  
                  Just going to have a drink. Yeah, she's here. We're all here now ...

No, it's absolutely gorgeous. How about you? ... Really?! You're not! ... Oh my God! Sounds awful. ... No, I don't want to know ... just ... you know. Don't let them ... And tell Aidan I'll kill him if he ... OK, OK. You go. Love you. (*Finishes the call*) Sorry. That was –

VERONICA Yes.

KATE How's Dad?

VERONICA I've no idea.

KATE Oh. I just thought, you know ... you might have rung to say you'd got here safely. See how he is.

VERONICA Katherine, your father and I are not joined at the hip. Or at the wretched mobile phone, should I say. We are perfectly able to function apart for a couple of days. Anyway, he's in Paris this weekend. On business.

KATE At the weekend?

VERONICA Or Berlin. He did say. I simply do not understand this mania for keeping in touch all the time.

KATE No ... Anyway, what's all this? (*The things Veronica has unpacked*)

VERONICA Ah, yes. Well, I thought, seeing as we have a quiet moment to ourselves at last, we might just and go through a couple of things – just to make sure. There's one or two –

KATE Oh, no, Mummy! Not the wedding! Not this weekend. Please.

VERONICA But Katherine –

KATE Look, we've been through everything a hundred times! Everything's fine. And the others are waiting for us –

VERONICA Darling, I've spent months on this, cancelling God knows how many other things –

KATE I told you. You didn't have to –

VERONICA Well, thank you very much!

KATE No, I –

VERONICA I'm simply trying to ensure –

KATE I know. I know!

VERONICA All Daddy and I want to do is give our daughter a proper wedding. One to remember. For your guests to remember. It's supposed to be the happiest day of your life.

KATE Yes, exactly.

VERONICA What's that supposed to mean?

KATE Look, let's not quarrel –

VERONICA Quarrel? I'm not quarrelling. I'm endeavouring to make sure that everything is –

KATE I know.

VERONICA Well, then. Your big day should be just that.

KATE Yes. My big day. *My big day!*

VERONICA What do you mean by that?

KATE Oh ... nothing. Forget it.

VERONICA Oh! I see. I see exactly what the problem is.

KATE There isn't a problem!

VERONICA Yes, yes, yes.

KATE What do you mean, yes, yes, yes?

VERONICA I'm afraid you can't fool me, Katherine. You're getting cold feet, aren't you, young lady –

KATE I'm not getting cold feet!

VERONICA People do, girls – I mean, it's the biggest decision you ever make. Marriage. You don't want to go rushing into it –

KATE Mummy, for God's sake! We've been together for five years!

VERONICA Keep your voice down, please, Katherine. We're not in the fish market –

KATE Look, all I'm saying is - don't you think that maybe the whole thing has got a bit out of hand...

VERONICA In what way?

KATE All these flowers, the menus, these ... these bloody wedding favours –

VERONICA Katherine!

KATE Sorry - but we had a thirty minute conversation last week about how many sugared almonds there should be in a bit of net and what colour the ribbons should be!

VERONICA Lace.

KATE What?

VERONICA It was lace, not net.

KATE Lace, net, clingfilm – whatever. I don't care! Every conversation we have these days, seems to turn into a battleground.

VERONICA Well, whose fault is that? You're not remotely interested in the arrangements. I've tried every which way to accommodate your peculiar friends. Gluten free, dairy free, egg free, white meat but not red –

KATE Peculiar?

VERONICA What's wrong with a decent piece of beef, that's what I want to know?

KATE This has got nothing to do with pieces of beef!

VERONICA Katherine, people are looking!

KATE We asked for a quiet wedding, just close family and friends. Now we've got marquees at the golf club, people, relatives I've never even met flying in from Australia and God knows where else, enough flowers to carpet a cemetery –

VERONICA (*Trying a different tack*) All right. Katherine, Katherine, darling. Come and sit down. (*She pulls Kate into a quiet corner*) Now then. I know what this is.

KATE I've just told you what it is!

VERONICA I'm your mother, I know precisely what this is. Displacement.

KATE I'm sorry?

VERONICA It's very common. I've read all about it.

KATE What in, Good Housekeeping?

VERONICA I'm going to ignore that, Katherine. It was Radio 4 as a matter of fact. Jenni Murray. What it means –

KATE I know what displacement is, Mummy. I just don't see what point you're trying to make.

VERONICA You are fixated on the arrangements for the wedding –

KATE Me? I'm fixated!

VERONICA - when what you're really worried about is the marriage itself.

KATE I'm ...? I am not worried about getting married!

VERONICA You lie there in the middle of the night, thinking about the future. I know. You think, do I really want to wake up every morning with this person –

KATE Yes! Yes, I do, as it happens!

VERONICA Year after year –

KATE Mummy, I love him!

VERONICA Oh, love! For Heaven's sake. You're not a teenager any more, Katherine –

KATE Good Heavens! Really? Am I not?

VERONICA Don't be sarcastic, darling, it's most unattractive. Oh yes, there's so much to worry about. Where will we live?

KATE We live in Leeds!

VERONICA For now, yes –

KATE We've bought a flat. Together. We've settled there!

VERONICA Yes ... How will we manage? Don't think I don't know. Daddy hasn't always been at the top of the tree. We struggled, you know, in the early days. What if a baby comes along? Not to mention his family –

KATE Oh, here we go ...

VERONICA All these different people, different customs, different -

KATE Mummy, listen to me, I really like Cal's family. I *really* like them. Their attitude to life, their good humour, their generosity. They make me laugh –

VERONICA I can see why. Darling, you're very young –

KATE I'm 28! How old were you when you got married?

VERONICA That's irrelevant.

KATE How old?

VERONICA I was 22 as it happens –

KATE You see?

VERONICA - when 22 meant something.

KATE And what on earth does that mean?

VERONICA There's no need to talk to me in that tone of voice!

KATE Mummy, like it or not, I'm marrying Cal.

VERONICA Well, madam, don't think you can come running back to me if it all goes wrong.

KATE To you! You are the last person on earth ... I'm not a child any more -

VERONICA You'll always be a child to me.

KATE I've never been a child to you. You don't like children!

VERONICA I ... Look, Daddy and I just want you to be happy.

KATE Like you?

VERONICA That's beside the point.

KATE That's exactly the point!

VERONICA Daddy and I just feel –

KATE Why do you keep calling him Daddy? I've never called him Daddy. He's not a Daddy. He's not even a Dad.

VERONICA What do you mean, he's not even a Dad?

KATE Well, Dads are – I don't know – approachable. Cuddly. Dadish. Around.

VERONICA Dadish! Three years at university and –

KATE Oh, God! You know perfectly well what I'm trying to say.

VERONICA Do you know, I think your Callum – and his family - has had a very unfortunate influence on you, Katherine. You never used to be so ... difficult, so ... offensive -

KATE This has nothing to do with Cal! You think I'm being offensive?

VERONICA I think you're being very offensive, yes.

KATE (*Getting up*) So I've learnt at least one thing from you.

VERONICA Katherine!

KATE You always have to ... why do you always ...

VERONICA (*Grabbing her hand*) Darling, please. Please. I ... I'm sorry. I'm very ... things are a little difficult ... Look, Audrey's not the only one who's nervous. Please. Katherine, please. Darling. (*Kate hesitates, contrite*) I promise you ... It won't take a moment.

*She starts to unfold a large A2 piece of paper and lay it out on the coffee table*

KATE Oh, Mummy, no! Not here. Tomorrow. Leave it 'til tomorrow. Now's not the time.

VERONICA Well, when is the time? I can't discuss something like this with you on the phone. You have to see it.

KATE Can't you – I don't know – email it to me?

VERONICA Email! It's far too big.

KATE No it isn't. You could use –

VERONICA But I've written it all out now. I can't possibly –

*The maitre d' appears*

M d' Excuse me, madam.

VERONICA Yes?

M d' We do ask that guests refrain from holding business meetings in the lounge. We have a number of small rooms available –

VERONICA I beg your pardon?  
M d' Fully WiFi enabled –  
VERONICA Fully –  
M d' WiFi. We can arrange to serve coffee –  
VERONICA This is not a business meeting! I hardly think that running over the details of my daughter's wedding's seating plan qualifies as a business meeting!  
M d' Ah.  
VERONICA Well, does it?  
M d' No. Of course, madam. I see. My mistake. I do apologise. (*He leaves*)  
VERONICA Well, really!  
KATE It is taking up quite a bit of space, Mummy.  
VERONICA Of course it is. I had to get everybody on. I tell you, it's been a nightmare, Katherine. I've been hours swapping people hither and thither. And your father's been worse than useless –  
KATE Do we have to do this right now –  
VERONICA Well, when then? We've only six weeks left!  
KATE (*Looking at it properly for the first time*) Oh, you'll have to take Neil Lewis off anyway.  
VERONICA Who? Take him off? Why? Where?  
KATE Him. There. He's not coming. They've split up, him and Luce.  
VERONICA But I can't take him off. That leaves me with 13 at that table! Can't he and Lucy patch things up? Just for the day, for goodness sake?  
KATE ... And why are Cal's relatives all on these two tables at the back?  
VERONICA Well, I ... thought they might be more ... I mean, they won't know anyone, will they?  
KATE But isn't that the point? You mix people up, introduce them to each other?  
VERONICA Yes, but you're sitting there for a couple of hours. If not more. You want people you have something in common with. I mean, what on earth would you talk about?  
KATE And who are these people? Felicia Rogers? Lionel Partington-Brown? Eloise –  
VERONICA You remember Felicia! Little sparrow of a woman, dicky hip. Has a bit of a problem with facial hair – ovaries, or something –  
KATE I don't have the first idea who you're talking about! Is she a relative?  
VERONICA She used to live four doors down from us, when you were a toddler. Moved to Grinchcombe. You know – Regent House – that lovely double-fronted Georgian place by the green? She's always asking after you.  
KATE I don't know her from Adam! I don't know any of these people –  
VERONICA You'll recognise them when you see them –  
KATE Recognise them? This is my wedding!  
VERONICA Katherine ...

KATE Our family and friends. That's what it's supposed to be. How many guests are there?

VERONICA You don't need to worry about that –

KATE How many?

VERONICA I think it's ... about a hundred. There or thereabouts.

KATE There's more than a hundred here! Even I can see that.

VERONICA Oh I don't remember –

KATE How many exactly?

VERONICA ...

KATE Mummy!

VERONICA (*very quietly*) 164.

KATE What?

VERONICA Well, 163, without this Neil creature.

KATE 163! 163?

VERONICA Keep your voice down, Katherine. There's no need to get over-excited.

KATE We said, small, intimate -

VERONICA I know. I know.

KATE Then suddenly it's a marquee –

VERONICA I told you – I explained -

KATE Yes, yes. It wasn't what we wanted, but you insisted -

VERONICA Here we go. Your father said you'd be like this –

KATE Like what?

VERONICA Argumentative. Ungrateful.

KATE How d'you do it? How do you do it?

VERONICA Do what?

KATE Every time. Every time! We tell you what we'd like, we *agree* it with you, for God's sake, then you go off and do something completely different, invite crowds of total strangers to *our* wedding, and suddenly it's my fault!

VERONICA Now, Katherine –

KATE I mean ... four months ago, *four months* ago we sat down with you and went through the invitation list. We went through it name by name, all these Australian relatives, that weird uncle in Bangkok and I thought all right, they're family, I wouldn't invite them, but you both seemed so set on it but now we've got half the population of a small Hampshire town, most of whom I've never even heard of!

VERONICA Well, we had certain debts to repay –

KATE Debts? What do you mean, debts?

VERONICA Weddings we'd been invited to. It's not my fault that you moved away –

KATE Not again! What's that got to do with it?

VERONICA We know all these people! And their children. Of course they invite us to their weddings and so –

KATE You have to return the favour?



VERONICA Exactly! You see? Look, is there any chance Lucy could find another boyfriend before the 21<sup>st</sup>?

*Kate is speechless. She is about to leave when Claire appears, two glasses of champagne in hand*

CLAIRE Ah! Found you. We're in the bar. Wondered where you'd got to.

VERONICA Claire! *(Taking a glass)* How gorgeous. We were on our way to join you. We were just having a nice little –

KATE Argument. *(Taking her glass)* Thanks, Claire.

VERONICA Darling! You are naughty. We were just talking through the seating plan, Claire.

CLAIRE Now?

KATE *(With a look)* Yes.

VERONICA Would you like to see it, Claire?

CLAIRE Later perhaps? *(Reluctantly Veronica starts to fold the plan away)* Oh, about the spa. You need to book something tonight. It gets really busy at weekends.

VERONICA Oh. Goodness. I was hoping at least to have a facial. And a massage, Oh, Claire – I don't suppose you'd care to bring a partner? To the wedding?

KATE Mummy! Ignore her, Claire.

CLAIRE A part–

KATE Forget it. Have you booked anything yet?

CLAIRE Tomorrow afternoon. Hot stones massage, followed by a pedicure and a full Aroma-relax Envelopment with facial peel and rejuvenation.

VERONICA Gosh! That sounds marvellous!

CLAIRE Well, I thought I'd treat myself. It's a package. £200. *(At a look from Kate)* Yes, I'm sure that would pay for a million cataract operations in Angola or somewhere, but I earn it, I spend it.

VERONICA I'm sure Katherine wouldn't dream of –

CLAIRE I'm sure she would. *(Kate laughs in spite of herself)*

VERONICA Katherine, darling, shall I book the same for you?

KATE Thanks, Mummy, but I'll make my mind up tomorrow morning.

CLAIRE The book's pretty full, Katie.

KATE I'll risk it.

VERONICA Katherine, I do think you should listen to what Claire –

KATE I said I'll risk it. Thanks for the fizz, Claire. I'm going to find the others. Coming?

CLAIRE In a bit. They're in the bar. *(Waiting until Kate is out of earshot)* Is she all right, Veronica?

VERONICA No, I'm afraid not.

CLAIRE Oh dear. What's the matter?

VERONICA What do you think?



CLAIRE Not the hotel?

VERONICA No, of course not.

CLAIRE Then ...?

VERONICA Second thoughts.

CLAIRE Second thoughts?

VERONICA Call it a mother's instinct. I know her better than she knows herself.  
Claire – you have to stop this. Say something.

CLAIRE Stop it? Me?

VERONICA Well, yes, I can't do anything, can I? More than my life's worth. Haven't you noticed? Been snapping my head off since we arrived. You must see how ridiculous the whole thing is.

CLAIRE What?

VERONICA The wedding! I mean, look at them. The pair of them. Well, they're not a pair, are they? That's the whole point. Everything's against them. Education, Class. Background. Food.

CLAIRE Food?

VERONICA He's a vegetarian, for God's sake. And you know what they're like.

CLAIRE What do you mean?

VERONICA Special catering. You've no idea. Nightmare at dinner parties – and you the hoops I've had to jump through for the wedding breakfast –

CLAIRE Not these days, surely. I thought most places were –

VERONICA Finicky, picky, sickly. Turning their food over with their forks as if a rogue piece of meat will leap out and –

CLAIRE I'm not sure you can call Cal sickly, can you? He rows, doesn't he?

VERONICA Well, that's hardly demanding is it? They just sit down, don't they? Look, Claire, this the last chance, this weekend –

CLAIRE Veronica, they've been living together for –

VERONICA I know, I know but ... You've got to get her to see ... Make her face up to the truth. What she's throwing away. You're her oldest friend, Claire –

CLAIRE Veronica, you can't expect me to –

VERONICA Yes. Yes I do! It's crunch time.

CLAIRE But -

VERONICA Please, please, please, Claire! I think, you see, she's worried sick but ... obviously she's terrified of letting Brian and me down. As if that mattered! It's only money. But she's proud, Katherine, too proud to admit she's making a big mistake. You know what she's like.

CLAIRE I'm not sure I'm the right –

VERONICA Who better? Claire, you're my last hope -

CLAIRE Look, I've only met him the once but they seemed very happy together -

VERONICA Claire, dear! Anyone can put a happy face on.

CLAIRE And I quite liked him, Cal.

VERONICA Cal! Callum! What kind of a name is that? Almost certainly Irish. And the mother!

CLAIRE Oh, Veronica. Come on. She's quite sweet.

VERONICA Sweet? Sweet? Claire, she was wearing ... an apron in a five star hotel! A nylon tabard in a five star spa hotel!

CLAIRE I know but –

VERONICA You're very forgiving, Claire. Too nice for your own good. I've always thought so. I was mortified. She's quite out of her depth here, that's perfectly obvious. You know they offered to pay for the wine?

CLAIRE Sorry? What? Who did?

VERONICA Audrey and Pat.

CLAIRE Pat?

VERONICA The husband. Patrick, presumably. Some kind of joiner, I think he is.

CLAIRE No, Veronica, they had their own business –

VERONICA Their own business! Please! Katherine pretends to adore them. Can you imagine? The wine? What it would have been like? Probably come in those dreadful boxes from some ghastly cash point thing –

CLAIRE Cash and carry, you mean?

VERONICA I didn't dare mention it to Brian. Of course I was very careful. Very tactful. Said we wouldn't think of it, you know, it was our responsibility.

CLAIRE It was kind of them though. To offer.

VERONICA Kind ...? I suppose so, but ... I've been months planning this wedding, Claire. Like a campaign, it's been. Every last detail. It's all in here (*the case*). Well, you know what I'm like.

CLAIRE Yes.

VERONICA I can't help it. I'm a perfectionist. I want it to be ... I want people to think it's the best wedding they've ever been to. I don't want some stranger muscling in ... don't get me wrong. I'm not making any ... Look, all I'm saying is, it's got nothing to do with people's backgrounds, I mean I am the last person to be concerned about things like that ... it's just ... Claire, you do see what I mean?

CLAIRE Oh, Veronica ...

VERONICA Good. Good. I knew I could count on you. I've always thought .... It was a great shame you and Katherine didn't go on to university together. You were always such a marvellous influence on her.

CLAIRE I was?

VERONICA I mean, working for a charity! With her brains! And look at you, how well you've done! Brian and I, we've always thought of you as ... well ... so, will you please, please ... just *try*? Please. I would be so, so grateful -

CLAIRE The thing is, Veronica, honestly, I don't see Kate much these days – I mean, you know, Leeds, London – I think Lucy is much closer -

VERONICA Claire, I'm relying on you. I've done everything a mother can do. You're the only one who can save her now. And don't talk to me about that

wretched Lucy creature. Does the girl not own a skirt? And that relationship in itself is unhealthy, don't you think?

CLAIRE Unhealthy?

VERONICA Well, Callum is her friend first and now she's pally pally with Katherine. Don't tell me that's normal. She's clamped to Katherine's side like a ... parasite. Like a Russian vine. And I was going to ask you, do you think that she has a drink problem?

CLAIRE Lucy?

VERONICA Yes! Didn't you notice? Practically the first thing she said to us was let's have a drink. Couldn't wait to get on to the alcohol. Oh, look (*with a beaming smile*) here they come. Tell me those aren't jeans she's wearing! Chin up, Claire. Into battle. Let's get it over with.

*They move through to join the others. Fade*

**SCENE 4 Friday night. 8pm. The restaurant. The murmur of other diners and scrape of cutlery etc**

*The party are studying menus and chatting. Audrey is playing up her northern credentials largely for Veronica's benefit*

VERONICA And what are you wearing, Audrey?  
 AUDREY Oh – this old thing! Probably M&S years ago –  
 VERONICA I meant for the wedding.  
 AUDREY The wedding! Well, tell you the truth, Veronica, I'm in a right lather about it.  
 VERONICA A ... lather?  
 AUDREY That I am.  
 VERONICA Oh?  
 LUCY (*Translating for Veronica*) A bit of a state.  
 AUDREY That's what I said. A right lather.  
 VERONICA Oh dear.  
 AUDREY I drag Pat round the shops almost every weekend at the moment – he hates shopping – well, don't they all, men? I don't know about your Brian –  
 VERONICA Good God, I wouldn't take Brian shopping with me!  
 AUDREY No? Well. It's the not driving, see. Means I have to –  
 VERONICA You don't drive?  
 AUDREY Never felt the need what with Pat and the bus if he's not around.  
 VERONICA That's ... incredible. I can't imagine not driving.  
 CLAIRE Nor me. God!  
 AUDREY Take a taxi, he says, go on, treat yourself, but I don't know, seems such an extravagance. So I drag him round, he's chuntering away under his breath. We've only been to about five shops and he's already got a face on.  
 VERONICA A face?  
 LUCY She means he's in a bad mood.  
 AUDREY Veronica knows fine well what I mean, you cheeky miss. So. I give him the paper – some shops, they even have mags for the men to keep them happy these days, don't they? Some hope! What do you think of this? I say. 'Course by then he's missing the footie so he's got a right mardy on: he says, too tight –  
 VERONICA A what?  
 LUCY A mardy.  
 AUDREY You know, a strop. Too tight. Too loose. Too whatever. Right, that's it, I say, forget it. Then he's all, no, no, we're here now. Let's find something. Stop blethering and get on with it. Get on with it, I say, that's what I've been trying to do for the last half hour. Much help you've been with your nose stuck in What Car? or somesuch. And he's,

for your information, it's Auto Express. *(All except Veronica are now starting to laugh)* I say to him, I don't care if it's Horse and bloody Hound - all I want is to know if I look halfway decent in this chiffon get-up. Then he puts the magazine down, all deliberate like, and gets his distance specs out – which takes him about fifteen minutes 'cos he's being provoking - and he eyes me up and down like a prize cow. 'Course I've had it by now so I tear the ruddy thing off – but careful like, 'cos it costs an arm and a leg and I don't want to have to buy it just 'cos I've broken the zip or something - and I grab my bag – I mean, I'm ready to deck him. And the woman in the shop, she's a right snotty and scrawny as hell – have you noticed these women, must live on air, there's not an ounce on them. So she's looking me up and down, tottering around on her Manolo bloody Blahblahs –

VERONICA Blahniks.

AUDREY Just my little joke, love - and he's throwing a benny or near as, so I'm off, marching back to the car with sod-all. 'Course then I can't remember where he's parked the chuffing thing – or even what colour it is, come to that, they all look the bloody same - and he's taking his time, winding me up like, and the bugger won't give us a clue where it is, just strolls along looking like butter wouldn't melt, smiling to himself and I'm boiling, I mean you should hear me, I'm calling out all sorts to the dozy twonk, 'scuse my French, 'cept old cloth ears is pretending he can't hear me – he knows how to get me going – and then the bugger starts laughing and, I can't help myself – I'm laughing too, the pair of us stood in the middle of the car park howling like banshees and, I don't know, I can't keep it up, so I go over and clock him with me bag and we go home.

*Everyone except Veronica is laughing*

VERONICA I see. So ... you still don't have an outfit?

AUDREY No. Nor a hat. No shoes. No bag. Nothing. Oh. Except some silk panties he bought me last Christmas, still in the box. Thought they deserved an outing. And now he's sworn never to go shopping with me again. So, I'm thinking ... mail-order.

VERONICA *(Horried)* Mail order?

KATE That's an idea. Get something on-line –

CLAIRE Ooh, I know some really good websites. I mean, designer stuff –

VERONICA *(Faintly)* On-line ...

AUDREY It's a thought, though, isn't it? And I can always send it back if I don't like it -

CLAIRE You need to know where to look, though. Are you on broadband, Audrey?

AUDREY I am, love.

CLAIRE Give me your email address before we leave, and I'll ping you some sites when I get home.

AUDREY Oh, you're an angel, you are. I'll get cracking on Monday. Any road, what are you wearing, Veronica? Bet you're sorted already, aren't you?

VERONICA ... Yes. I've been ... sorted for months, as a matter of fact. I'm in fuchsia.

AUDREY Oh, that's nice. I like something bright.

VERONICA Well, it's a very subtle fuchsia, actually. Isn't it, Katherine?

KATE It's lovely. Really.

AUDREY I was thinking I'd probably go for something in my old favourite: blue. You can't go wrong with blue, can you? How about you, Lucy love?

KATE Oh, Lucy's is fabulous! We got it in Hampstead when we went down for the weekend. Show them, Luce.

VERONICA You've got it here?

LUCY No, it's on my phone.

KATE Honestly, Mummy!

AUDREY You girls and your phones!

LUCY Look. Here you go.

VERONICA (*Leaning over*) Oh, it's a dress!

LUCY Yes.

VERONICA Oh, how delightful. D'you see that, Claire? A dress.

AUDREY That's lovely, that. What do they call that colour?

LUCY Something poncey.... It's quite plain, really.

VERONICA Ecrû. That's what I'd call it.

AUDREY Would you? Looks beige to me.

KATE Well, she looks fantastic in it. Better than I do.

VERONICA I should very much hope not!

LUCY Oh, give over, will you, Kate.

AUDREY Oh, we'll all look grand on the day, won't we. And our Kate could wear a paper bag and she'd still look more beautiful than all of us put together. (*Benoît, the sommelier. appears with the wine list*) Oh, good man!

BENOÎT Bonsoir, mesdames, May I offer you ladies a drink?

CLAIRE You most certainly can. What shall we have –

VERONICA Oh yes, a drink. I think we could all do with one. Wine or ... Audrey?

AUDREY Oh, now, the wine. Please, Veronica. Let me.

VERONICA No, no ...

AUDREY Veronica please. I'd really like to.

VERONICA I wouldn't dream of it –

AUDREY Veronica –

KATE Mummy –

VERONICA Oh, well, if you insist, Audrey. If you're quite sure. That's most generous.

AUDREY No, no, no, it'd be my pleasure.

VERONICA Well, then ... thank you very much  
 AUDREY That's settled then. Good. Let's see the wine list, shall we?  
 BENOÎT Madam.  
 AUDREY Now, any preference? Do we all know what we're having?  
 LUCY Not yet. But I don't mind. Whatever.  
 KATE Nor me – red or white.  
 VERONICA I have to say I'm not a fan of Mateus Rose.  
 KATE Mummy!  
 AUDREY Mateus Rose? Good Lord, they never still make that stuff? I was thinking more something like –  
 BENOÎT Perhaps you would care for an aperitif, ladies? While you decide?  
 LUCY What about a bottle of champagne?  
 VERONICA Another?  
 CLAIRE You're on.  
 AUDREY Grand. Oh, I need my specs for this ... (*she starts rooting in her bag*)  
 VERONICA Really? More champagne?  
 LUCY Why not? We're celebrating.  
 VERONICA Oh .. well ... yes. But in that case ... Let me ...  
 AUDREY No ... no ... I said it's my shout. Once I've found my specs -  
 VERONICA Yes, but Audrey, a place like this ... it will be rather expensive.  
 KATE Mummy!  
 AUDREY What's your name, lad?  
 BENOÎT Benoît, madam. The house champagne?  
 AUDREY Well, Benoît ... Hang on. Can't find my specs, must have left them upstairs so I'm in your hands, lad. Right. Champagne. No, let's try something else. How about a Louis Roederer? Would you have a bottle of that?  
 BENOÎT Louis Roederer? Yes, madam. Of course.  
 AUDREY Fine – we'll start with that, then.  
 VERONICA Audrey – really the house champagne would be ...  
 AUDREY No, no, not on your life. Got that, Benoît? Now then, ladies. Red or white to follow?  
 CLAIRE I'd prefer red, myself. I'm having the beef.  
 LUCY I'm not fussed.  
 KATE Nor me.  
 AUDREY Veronica?  
 VERONICA Oh, yes, red is fine. I'm sure the house wine will be perfectly adequate.  
 AUDREY Veronica, it's a special occasion, is this! We need something a bit tidy. Now then, young fella, help us out. We'd like a red, please, with a bit of body. Nice drop of Burgundy p'raps. Everyone happy with that?  
 (*General assent, Veronica looking put out*)  
 BENOÎT A Burgundy ... May I recommend the Gevrey Chambertin, madam?  
 VERONICA Sounds marvellous.  
 AUDREY What year would that be, then?

BENOÎT 2000, madam. A very good year across the board.  
 AUDREY Indeed it was, but no, no, lad, I don't think so in this case. Do you not have a 2002?  
 BENOÎT A ...? No, madam, I regret ... but for certain we do have a very fine 2005.  
 AUDREY 2005! What are you thinking, Benoît? That'll not be ready for another ten years at least! Come on now. Let's have another look, eh? (*She takes the wine list from him*) Lend us your specs, there's a good lad.

*VERONICA and CLAIRE exchange looks, Benoît reluctantly relinquishes his glasses*

KATE Audrey, I'm sure whatever they have –  
 AUDREY Right. Let the dog see the rabbit. My, these are strong, aren't they? (*Going down the list, with difficulty*) No, no, no ... yes! The '98 Pommard Premier Cru Premiers. That'll do the job.  
 BENOÎT (*sotto voce*) The '98 ... You've seen the price, madam.  
 AUDREY Yes, lad, I can read. Even with these glasses. Two bottles, please. (*She hands him back the wine list and the glasses*) That and champagne on my tab. Room 54. Off you go now.  
 KATE Audrey – really, there's no need –  
 AUDREY There's every need, sweetheart. Like Lucy says, we're celebrating, aren't we? (*She looks after the sommelier*) Ooh, that makes my blood boil. Nice enough lad, but just because we're women, thinks we know nothing about wine. Thinks I don't know my arse from my elbow. Well I've got news for him. Right, let's have a gander at this here menu.  
 VERONICA Yes. Quite. Let's.

*Fade as the women bury themselves in the menus*



**SCENE 5**     ***11pm Friday. Kate and Claire standing at the bar, Claire signalling to Józef***

CLAIRE     What you having? More fizz? Yeah? Two glasses of fizz, please.  
 JÓZEF     Two glasses fizz?  
 CLAIRE     You do sell it by the glass?  
 JÓZEF     You want a glass?  
 CLAIRE     Two glasses.  
 JÓZEF     Two glasses.  
 CLAIRE     (*Explaining*) We don't want a whole bottle.  
 JÓZEF     No ... bottle ...  
 CLAIRE     So, two glasses of fizz, yes?  
 JÓZEF     Sorry. What is this fizz?  
 KATE     Champagne?  
 JÓZEF     Ah! Champagne, yes, of course. I am not ... sorry. Two glasses ... yes ... (*He goes*)  
 KATE     Sweet.  
 CLAIRE     Fit!  
 KATE     Sweet and fit.  
 CLAIRE     Kate Pargetter!  
 KATE     What? I'm only window-shopping.  
 CLAIRE     I should hope so.  
 KATE     Oh, it's really good to have some time with you.  
 CLAIRE     Tactful of Lucy to have an early night.  
 KATE     Yes.  
 CLAIRE     I like her. Not sure she likes me. I think she finds me a bit abrasive.  
 KATE     Well, you are. You both are, come to that. Like sandpaper. What have you been saying?  
 CLAIRE     I was just asking her about you and her and Cal.  
 KATE     What about us?

*Józef returns*

JÓZEF     Two glasses fizz for two lovely ladies. Thank you.  
 KATE     Thanks.  
 CLAIRE     You have a long day. What time do you finish?  
 JÓZEF     Finish? When bar closes.  
 CLAIRE     So we're keeping you up?  
 JÓZEF     Is no problem for beautiful ladies.  
 CLAIRE     Are you allowed to flirt?  
 JÓZEF     What is 'flirt'?

*CLAIRE makes a gesture*

JÓZEF            Ah! Of course. Is part of service.  
 CLAIRE        We're paying for this?  
 KATE           Where are you from?  
 JÓZEF        Konstantynow Lodzki.  
 KATE           ???  
 JÓZEF        Poland.  
 KATE           Ah.  
 JÓZEF        Is near Pabianice. Yes?  
 KATE           Afraid not.  
 JÓZEF        You know Lodz? (*pronounced Wooj. He spells it out*) L.O.D.Z?  
 CLAIRE       Oh, yes, I do. I've been there on business. Is that how it's pronounced?  
 JÓZEF        Lodz. Yes.  
 KATE           You've been there?  
 CLAIRE       Just a couple of nights.  
 JÓZEF        Yes? Lodz? Did you like?  
 CLAIRE       Well, I didn't see that much of it – I don't remember -  
 JÓZEF        Is shit-hole. I know. Still, one day ... you know, is called HollyLodz? Is  
                  joke – we have little film festival ... crazy people. Sorry, ladies, I forget,  
                  is very rude. Excuse. (*He goes*)  
 KATE           Bless him. Should have asked him his name. Do you think he's lonely?  
 CLAIRE       Doubt it. I bet he has a ball. All these single women.

*They sip their drinks*

CLAIRE       She doesn't change, your mum, does she?  
 KATE           No.  
 CLAIRE       You two still –  
 KATE           Yes.  
 CLAIRE       You OK, sweetie?  
 KATE           Yes. Yes, thanks. Why wouldn't I be?  
 CLAIRE       This is all right, isn't it? Knew you'd love it. (*Beat*) So come on, sweetie.  
                  Spill.  
 KATE           What?  
 CLAIRE       Beans. Spill beans.  
 KATE           What about?  
 CLAIRE       Oh, you are such a tease. The man of course. Cal. Sorry I couldn't  
                  manage dinner with you guys that time, but – you know, how it is –  
                  Tokyo called and I was on a plane a couple of hours later.  
 KATE           Ah, the glamour! London. Tokyo. Lodz!  
 CLAIRE       Ah, the identical hotel room no matter which city you're in!  
 KATE           I'm supposed to feel sorry for you?  
 CLAIRE       No. I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it.  
 KATE           Nor me.

CLAIRE You know working for a charity is what most people would really prefer to do?

KATE Yeah. Instead of earning shedloads of money.

CLAIRE Which in my case, despite what anyone tells you, *is* everything. (*She holds up an expensive shoe*)

KATE So I see. Nice. You got anyone?

CLAIRE The beans were supposed to be yours.

KATE Have you?

CLAIRE Sort of.

KATE Which means?

CLAIRE I sort of have and I sort of haven't.

KATE He's married.

CLAIRE You got it.

KATE You work with him.

CLAIRE Bingo. Cliché. Boring.

KATE Is he nice?

CLAIRE Nice? Nice? Hon, I don't do nice. When have you ever known me do nice? He's ... let's see ... charming, amusing, intermittently available, pretty amazing in bed, generous, discreet, and absolutely, totally, irrevocably and eternally committed to his wife and kids. Which suits me fine.

KATE If he's so committed to his family, how can he -

CLAIRE He's a lawyer, hon. So am I. Dancing on pin-heads is our bread and butter. OK? Now, your turn.

KATE What d'you want to know?

CLAIRE Oh, stop it! How he swept you off your soft southern feet, taught you to love mushy peas and pigeons -

KATE My mother's put you up to this, hasn't she?

CLAIRE Your mum?

KATE You're a crap liar, Claire. I knew this was going to happen.

CLAIRE She thinks you've gone over to the dark side. That you're only doing this to spite her.

KATE Oh, for goodness sake! What did she say? No, don't tell me. She's making the biggest mistake of her life. It won't last. They've nothing in common. Make her see the error of her ways?

CLAIRE Pretty much. I'm supposed to be the voice of reason.

KATE You! With your track record?

CLAIRE Ah, but your mother doesn't know anything about that, does she? To her, I'm still the perfect best friend, with clean knicks and a pony.

KATE Don't waste your breath, Claire. I'm marrying Cal.

CLAIRE Thought you probably were. Over her dead body then.

KATE Yup. If need be.

CLAIRE Ooh, Katie. The worm has turned good and proper.

KATE Well, it's trying to.

CLAIRE Hang in there, babe.  
KATE I thought you were supposed to be on her side. The emissary from HQ.  
CLAIRE I tried. I failed. You would not be moved. Job done. Now everybody's happy. Cheers.  
KATE Cheers. Yes, everybody's happy.  
CLAIRE Result.  
KATE Except my bloody mother.

*Fade*

## Scene 6. Saturday afternoon. The spa.

*A clock on the wall shows 3pm. Throughout this scene which spans an hour the action fades out and up, during which Veronica keeps talking but in the time shifts what she says is unintelligible to us. Veronica is lying face down on a massage couch, covered by a towel, as Jakub, the masseur, works. Soft 'spa' music*

VERONICA All right like this? Only I thought I'd booked the girl -

JAKUB *(He begins work on her feet and legs)* Yes?

VERONICA I've never had a man ... well, I'm sure you're ... yes. And just to say - I'm not keen on small talk. OK?

JAKUB Yes.

VERONICA I simply want to relax. You know, chill, as the young folk say.

JAKUB Yes?

VERONICA Oh, and I've got a bit of muscle spasm, well, tightness, just here ... there. *(Her shoulder)* Could do with a bit of attention. When you get to it. Here. OK?

JAKUB Yes.

VERONICA Good. And you can really get stuck in. You know, plenty of pressure. Really go for it. You won't hurt me. Aaah! *(A tender spot)* No, no, carry one ... Mmm ... That's marvellous. *(Beat)* Very pleasant, the music. Whales, is it? It's very soothing, isn't it? There's a shop in Maidenhead that ...

*The lights fade down and up, the clock moves forward to 3.15. JAKUB is now working on her lower back*

VERONICA ... Oh this is very relaxing. Just the ticket. Oh, yes. *(Beat)* Could do with a bit of pampering, to be honest.

JAKUB Yes?

VERONICA That's it. Yes! Yes ... Just hits the spot. Nothing like someone who knows what they're doing. Like you. Nothing like it.

JAKUB Yes.

VERONICA Aah! *(He stops)* No, no, you go ahead. Really give it some ... yes. *(He continues)* ... Nice to get away, isn't it, sometimes? Not my husband's kind of place anyway. Be bored rigid. Likes to be doing, you know, golf, racing, that sort of thing. I mean, I go from time to time. Ascot, Henley, you know. But it's business mainly. For my husband. Clients, foreigners. You know the kind of thing.

JAKUB Yes.

VERONICA He's in M and A, my husband. Mergers and Acquisitions. He travels a lot. Away this weekend as it happens. Spends half his life in hotels so this would be a bit of a busman's holiday ...

*The lights fade down and up, the clock moves forward to 3.30. JAKUB is now working on her upper back*

VERONICA ... Here with my daughter. Hen party. Ghastly term. Conjures up all sorts of ... Well, you know the kind of thing that goes on. One reads about it in the Telegraph. Shocking ... *(Beat)* Supposed to be getting to know her fiancé's mother. That was rather a shock actually, finding her here. I don't see the necessity. To be frank with you ... I mean, confidentially ... I assume I speak with complete confidence? Yes?

JAKUB Yes.

VERONICA Well, we're hardly likely to keep in touch, are we? Afterwards? Apart from the fact that, to be brutally honest, the woman's a ... well, frankly, she's a nightmare. I mean, I get on with pretty much anyone, but she – Audrey – she takes the absolute biscuit. She could talk for England. You probably think I'm exaggerating? I only wish I were ... Ah! Yes, that's it. *(Beat)* Worst of it is, what's so unfair, she's ... she's completely pulled the wool over my daughter's eyes. Very ... chummy they are. I've barely seen her to talk to so far. My daughter. And if I dare to mention anything ... well! Of course she's backed up all the time by this dreadful Lucy, her new best friend. It's Claire I feel sorry for ...

*The lights fade down and up, the clock moves forward to 3.45. JAKUB is downstage holding up the towel to allow Veronica to roll over on to her back. He covers her up, leaving only head and arms uncovered. He works first on her arms then moves to the head of the couch to massage her head. Veronica has her eyes shut*

VERONICA ...on top of which, she has the most irritating laugh. The mother-in-law. Well, mother-in-law-to-be. Laughs at everything. *(Beat)* Full of herself. You should have seen her last night, in the restaurant. Showing off. ordering the most expensive wines. She'll be laughing on the other side of her face when she gets the bill. *(Beat)* Works in a nursing home, apparently. Can you imagine? As a *carer*. I wouldn't want her caring for me. I mean, my husband's mother's in a very nice place – not that she knows that much about it these days if I'm honest – but I'd be horrified if we were paying all this money for her to be looked after by someone like this woman. ... Virtually unintelligible with her 'by gums' and God knows what. Ridiculous. I'm sorry if that makes me sound ... I mean, people are as they are ... *(Beat)* ... I've had doubts about the boyfriend from the off, to be truthful. Oh, he's nice enough, tries, but I could see, the first time she brought him home, he hadn't a clue. Started challenging my husband about the ethics of his business. I mean, really! Brian was furious. And she's changed too – there's no doubt about that. That's down to him. Has to be. I was hoping Katherine ... our only daughter, only child – I was hoping she'd

find someone with a bit more – how shall I put this? – a bit more potential, to be frank. Ambition. Well, more like my husband. Oh, I know what people say. Money's not everything. Maybe not but ... she may think it's all very romantic now, you can put up with all sorts of things when you're young, but she likes nice things, Katherine! She's used to them. I'm afraid we've rather spoiled her – well, you do, don't you? Your children? When you can afford it.

JAKUB Yes.

VERONICA No oil on my head, thank you ... Just a dry massage, And I said to my husband – now you may think this is harsh, but I said to him: she needn't expect us to keep shelling out – I'm sorry if that sounds crude – once she's married. I mean ... that's his responsibility, isn't it? The husband? Callum. *(Beat)* Oh! That's good. That's very good. *(Beat)* Of course, I know what it is. Same with all these girls these days. It's the sex. You'd think they'd invented it. Sorry to be so blunt but that's the top and bottom of it. Sex. Never mind love. They have all these expectations these days. It's everywhere. Adverts, television, magazines. You can't open the paper without it being shoved down your throat. Oral sex. Orgasms. Sex into your 60s. It's ... not realistic.

*JAKUB finishes the massage, pulls the towel up to her neck, and silently leaves the room during the following*

VERONICA It doesn't last, does it? After all, how can it? You get older. Your body's not so ... well, that's life, isn't it? A fact of life. You have to face it. It's nobody's *fault*. You can't blame someone for ... well, can you? I mean, that's not fair ... Expecting things to ... not after all those years ... still expecting ... at our age. That's just unreasonable, isn't it? But men, some men, they don't understand ... things just ... they all just ... fall away ... Don't they? Just ... fall away ... eventually ... *(She opens her eyes, looks around, moving only her head)* ... Hello? Excuse me? Are you there? Is there anybody there? Hello?

*Fade*

**Scene 7 Saturday 4.15 pm: The spa lounge.**

*Audrey is on a step machine in aerobic gear. To one side, a lounge. She is on the phone as she exercises*

AUDREY I'm exercising, you daft happorth. What did you think I was doing? ... Steady! ... Steps. I'm doing steps. 'Course I'm out of breath ... No, that was this morning, the massage. ... How many more times? ... Ayurveda. Are you deaf? What's the point of spelling it? It'll mean the square root of bugger all to you, whatever it's called. ... listen, they use these essential oils ... ESSENTIAL ... look, turn the bloody telly off and then you'll be able to hear ... right, now. They use these oils ... that's right, oils ... to suit your dosha. Cheeky! Your *dosha* ... don't be filthy ... d'you want to know or don't you? ... Mind, my hair's ruined ... it's the oil ... I'm off for a sauna after this. With Kate. She's grand ... yes. Veronica? ... I'll tell you when I get back. It's exhausting, this is. ... yeah, yeah ... what? ... what do you think you wear in a sauna? ... you mucky bugger! ... Patrick Moloney, you should be ashamed ... (*she laughs*) all right, love ... yes, yes, ... I'll tell her ... you take care now ... see you tomorrow ... I will, I will. Love you too. 'Bye. Oh, and use the coasters or I'll have your guts for garters!

*Kate comes through in a white towelling robe*

KATE Look at you!  
 AUDREY Pat sends his love.  
 KATE Is he all right? All on his own.  
 AUDREY He's some mates coming round later for a barbie. Don't you worry about him. What have you had?  
 KATE Hot stones.  
 AUDREY Good?  
 KATE (*Flopping on to the lounge*) Hot. I don't know how you have the energy.  
 AUDREY Just been trying to explain that Ayurveda thingy to Pat. Hadn't a clue what I was on about. How's Cal?  
 KATE Feeling a bit sorry for himself. Sounds like they're all pretty hung over. Doesn't bode well for this evening.  
 AUDREY Oh! That buggy thing. They must be barmy. Their brains'll be scrambled.  
 KATE I said to him, just be careful. You know what Aidan and the others are like.  
 AUDREY Oh yes, Mr Clumsy. If there's anything to break or trip over, our Aidan will find it. Mind, he had a good talking to before I left. He's me to



answer to if he doesn't look after his brother. Right, I'm done for the day. (*Stepping off the machine and starting to stretch*)

KATE I thought we were going for a sauna.

AUDREY I meant exercise. Sauna's not exercise, is it?

KATE Isn't it? What a shame.

AUDREY Did you swim this morning?

KATE Meant to. Lucy did. Of course. I wish I had your willpower,

AUDREY It's not willpower, Katie love. Not at my age. It's desperation. I don't do this, I end up with my baps round my ankles.

*Kate laughs*

AUDREY You may laugh, young lady. Your time will come. Anno domini and gravity, they're right buggers.

KATE Pat's a lucky man.

AUDREY I don't put myself through all this for Pat! I do it for myself. You don't want to spend your life trying to please other people, love.

KATE You having fun?

AUDREY Fun? Well now, to tell the truth...

KATE Oh, Audrey ... if it's about Mummy -

AUDREY Massages, champagne, waited on hand and foot, it's terrible, is this. Wouldn't wish it on my worst enemy.

KATE Right.

AUDREY What about your Mum, though, love? Is she?

KATE Having fun? Who knows? As much as she ever does, I suppose. Anyway, we off for our sauna?

AUDREY Let me shower first or there'll be complaints. You just lie there for a bit. I'll not be long.

KATE Oooh, you really should try the stones. So relaxing ...

*Kate settles down and closes her eyes. Audrey looks her for a moment, deciding. Finally ...*

AUDREY Kate, love.

KATE Mmm...

AUDREY About your Mum ...

KATE Oh, no, what she been saying now?

**END OF SAMPLE SCRIPT, CONTACT NODA FOR FULL VERSION**