

Mia Izzy, get off your arse and help me. Dad's gonna be here in like an hour. Look at this stain, he's going to kill me...

Izzy's mobile phone beeps.

Izzy Ah ha... It's from him... listen... 'To my darling cat' - we have nicknames - 'I can't stop thinking about you. Our night of passionate coupling -'

Mia Coupling?

Izzy So? He's old school. Listen: 'Our night of passionate coupling has blown me away and I'm lusting -'

Mia Ugh! Stop. It's wrong -

Izzy 'LUSTING after your bendy body' - 'bendy', eh? Knew the yoga was worth it. 'Your velvety skin...'

Mia interrupts her by jumping on her and beating her with a sofa cushion.

Mia Stop it stop it stop it. It's just wrong. Let me see that.

She tussles with Izzy for the mobile phone.

Izzy *(in mock sleazy Italian, waving the phone tauntingly at Mia)* What? You no like my velvety body? You no want to touch... to - how shall we say? - to penetrate -

Mia GROSS! I'm deleting that.

She grabs the phone and reads the text, then starts to laugh.

'Where are you, darling? We are so worried. Please call home.'

Mia starts giggling and hitting Izzy harder with the pillow.

Get. Up. You sad, dirty fiend. You have. To. Go.

Izzy *(still in mock sleazy Italian)* You no want my bendy body... Why? Is so good...

Henry enters, wild-eyed.

Izzy sits bolt upright, shoves Mia off her onto the floor, tosses her hair back and attempts to strike a sexy pose...

Mia You bitch, I thwacked my knee.

Izzy Hey you...

Mia Dad called. He's landed. He's on his way.

Izzy Well, I'm going to have a shower... Henry?

Henry How long will it take him to get here?

Mia I dunno. An hour maybe.

Izzy I'm going to have a shower... Honey?

Mia You don't have time, Izzy. You have to leave -

Izzy Don't you want to come in with me, baby...?

Henry Huh? Oh. No thanks. I have to talk to Mia.

Izzy You don't know what you're missing.

She flounces out.

Mia You must be some stallion, Hen, she's besotted.

(Mocks Izzy.) 'Come in the shower with me, baby.'

She starts scrubbing the stain on the floor.

Henry is wildly on edge. Mia doesn't notice.

Mia What is this stuff? It looks like wine, did we have wine? I can't -

Henry MIA!

She looks up and notices his wild eyes. She stops what she is doing.

Mia You went back, didn't you?

Henry nods.

Stupid...

Henry shakes his head softly. He looks as though he's about to cry or scream.

Hey. Henry. Hey.

Henry She's... gone.

Mia She left?

Henry No. She, Mum, real her, gone. She's gone.

Mia What do you -

Henry Eaten up. It's eaten her up. Like body-snatchers. Not her. That woman. It's not her...

Mia What did she say?

Henry *(to himself)* I don't know what to do. I just don't know what to do...

Mia Listen, Dad's on his way -

Izzy flounces back in, oblivious to Henry's state of mind and the nature of the conversation they've been having.

Izzy, you have to go.

Izzy *(to Henry)* I'm wearing your jumper, I hope you don't mind...

Mia NOW, Izzy.

Izzy It's all I could find. Henry, I was thinking, if you're free later -

Mia My dad is on his way back. Now. In a car, driving here. What part of that don't you understand? You have to go. NOW.

Izzy Well, you don't have to be so rude about it.

She gropes around the room for her clothes.

(Mutters.) Can't find my bra.

Mia finds it and chucks it at her.

Mia Go.

Izzy You don't have to be a moody cow about it. Respect your elders, sweetie.

Henry And you respect yours. Get the fuck out.

Heavy pause.

Izzy looks as if she's about to cry. She opens her mouth as if to say something but doesn't. She exits.

Mia Holy moly. I don't think she'll be angling for another round now. That was harsh, stud muffin.

Henry doesn't smile.

Oh Henry... Look, whatever she said, it doesn't matter now. Dad's on his way. He wants us to wait for him here. He said he's been doing a lot of thinking. He's says he's going to sort it out.

Henry *(to himself)* Daddio's on his way... to save the day...

Mia The school... everything. He had that determined voice, you know? He said it, and you know what? I believe him.

Henry shakes his head.

Mia He's different, Henry. He wants to help.

Henry How graceful of him -

Mia Don't. Just give him a chance.

Henry He had his chance

Mia He waited for you at those restaurants. All those meals. You never came. He wanted you to. He tried, Henry -

Henry You're taking his side now -

Mia I was there. (*Gentler.*) He's got a plan.

Henry (*quietly*) He's got a plan?

Mia A strategy.

Henry (*quieter still*) A strategy.

Mia (*oblivious to the dangerous edge in Henry's voice*) It's going to end. Don't you see? Soon as he's here, he's

going to take over, so you don't have to worry -

Henry I don't have to worry.

Mia He said . . . Look, I told him stuff, Henry. Not everything, but I will, I'm going to tell him tonight.

Henry (*quiet and dangerous*) You can't do that.

Mia You tried. You really tried, and I'll always love you for that. But she's worse. You can't handle it. Look at the state of you . . .

Henry Five years -

Mia - are over . . .

Henry That's easy for you to say. You didn't do anything. You didn't do anything for her.

Mia That's not fair.

Henry (*hisses*) Not fair? Not FAIR? You wouldn't know the meaning of unfair.

Mia Henry, please -

Henry Unfair is every other day, thinking maybe, just maybe, you're getting somewhere, that it's worth it -

Mia Henry, don't -

Henry (*quietly, almost to himself*) This has been my life. She has been my life.

Mia I know, and that's why we -

Henry (*livid*) YOU DON'T KNOW. NEITHER OF YOU KNOW. NEITHER OF YOU HAVE DONE SHIT.

Pause.

Mia If you left, Henry, it would settle, one way or another.

Henry What exactly do you mean?

Mia She'd top herself or get better.

Henry And let me guess which you'd prefer . . .

Mia (*riled now*) You made your choice to stay, Henry. I made mine to leave. It's not my fault she's worse.

Henry (*acid*) And I suppose it's mine.

Beat.

Mia Maybe.

Heavy pause.

Henry I will never forgive you for saying that.

Mia Henry, Jesus, I'm sorry. It's just . . . I've seen you together enough, you know?

Henry She was right about you. You are a little shit.

Pause. Henry makes to leave.

Mia Where are you going?

You're mad.

Henry No. You're mad. If you think he really cares. All he cares about it his peace of mind. He'll have her locked up. On his terms. I can't allow that to happen. I can't.

This won't have been for nothing. This *can't* have been for nothing.

Mia goes to touch him. He pushes her away roughly.

Mia (*hurt*) Henry –

He exits.

SCENE SIX

Early evening of the same day. Martha's flat. Henry's room. The strips of Henry's clothes have gone. Only a few stray ones remain on the floor.

Martha is sitting on the bed. She has had a few drinks. She has the phone and her address book next to her. She plays with the phone receiver. Picking it up and dropping it down. She dials a number, listens then slams the phone down. She flicks through her address book. Chooses another number, dials, waits, no answer, she slams the phone down. She stares into space. Dials again, the talking clock...

Martha On the third stroke, the time sponsored by Accurist will be – (*Listens.*) About bloody time... (*Laughs.*) Such a nice voice.

She curls up with the receiver in her ear and listens.

On the third stroke.

And forty seconds.

Tock.

Tick-tock.

You have a tremendously lovely voice, don't you know?

(*Extreme mock-posh.*) I was educated at only the finest schools. Played rugger all winter long and learnt to eat the most crumpled crumpets with a silver spoon.

(*Normal voice.*) It is the most tremendously lovely voice. I'm rather jealous.

(*Extreme mock-posh.*) Received pronunciation. Can only be bought. Rather unfashionable, however. Couldn't get a job at the Beeb. Had to become –

(*Normal voice.*) – a talking clock. Dreadful. How dreadful for you. Boy to girl...

(*Extreme mock-posh.*) Sir to madam.

(*Normal voice.*) Of course. Sorry. Sir to madam. Is it boring? Because I myself have been looking for work...

(*Extreme mock-posh.*) Not a chance, darling. I'm here to stay.

(*Normal voice.*) I sec. Thank you. For your... time.

She giggles. Hangs up.

Sound of the flat door opening.

Sonia. Not today. Cleaner lady, I told you, not today. I'm busy. Spring cleaning. NO NEED for you. GO AWAY. I am paying myself seven pounds an hour to clean my own hovel. No need for you.

She waits for the door to slam shut.

Lurches unsteadily out of bed.

I thought I told you on the phone. There is to be no more cleaning. I am servicing myself just fine... in fact I have got a job. A fantastic job. Part of the package includes a cleaner, life insurance, dental care and my own personal scrubber-upper, all on the company.

She has made it to the door.

SONIA! Do I have to tell you to your face?

She swings open the door.

FUCK OFF!

Henry is standing in the doorway. Holding flowers.

Beat.

(*Quieter.*) Fuck off.

She turns and lurches back to bed.

Henry You got a job?

Martha Yes.

Henry What job?

Martha It's in . . . time management.

Henry Seriously?

Martha Yes. I start Monday.

Pause.

Excuse me. Who are you?

Henry Your son, Henry.

He starts rapidly to tidy up the room.

Martha That's funny. I did have a son, called Harry, actually. Well, he died, about five hours ago. I'm a little upset. So if you would just –

Henry Henry. Son called Henry.

Martha Please go and leave me to my grief. You came at a bad time, I was about to have a little ceremony.

Henry puts the flowers in a vase.

Yes. A little ceremony. I was going to burn some of his clothes, you see. To sort of send them up there with him. He liked his clothes. I wouldn't want him to be there without them. (*To the ceiling.*) Can you hear me, Harry dear? He loved his old mum . . .

Do you love your old mum?

Henry I do.

Martha Very much? Because me and Harry – we were close. But you don't have each other for long, mothers and sons, sons and . . . (*Tails off.*) One of you always dies. Way before the other. Hear that, Harry?

You see. You don't have each other for long. So I figured, make the most of it. That's why me and Harry we were so . . . Just making the most of it.

Henry (*collecting glasses*) I see.

Martha Young man.

Henry Yes.

Martha I don't think you do.

Beat.

As it happened you came at a good time. Because. I was going to have this little ceremony, but the thing is, I can't find the clothes to burn. I'm starting to wonder if I didn't just invent little Harry. You see, the only clothes I could find were these.

She picks up some of the scraps of material from the floor.

Henry He must have been small.

Martha Yes. He was. This was his towel.

Henry continues tidying, folding clothes into piles.

Henry I brought you some flowers.

Beat. Henry realises she will only communicate with him if he plays along.

For your loss.

He places them next to the bed.

Martha –

Martha You know, in Africa, when someone dies, they wear white.

Henry I did know that actually, Mummy –

Martha They wear white because they do not believe it to be sad. A death. Not sad at all. Merely part of the bigger . . . journey.

Henry You're wearing white.

She fingers a corner of her nightdress.

Martha This is cream actually.

Henry Mummy –

Still examining her nightdress.

Martha Or is it just dirty? I can't tell any more.

Henry MUMMY!

Pause.

Martha Young man.

Henry Henry. My name's Henry. Come on, please. Dad's landed. He wants to see you. To see us, to see how we are. Help me sort this place out.

Martha Young man.

Henry (*sighs*) At your service.

Gives a little salute.

Martha Hold that pose.

He does.

Has anyone ever told you, you look remarkably like –

Henry A soldier?

Martha Yes. A young soldier. So good.

Drops the salute.

No. Stay like that. It becomes you.

Henry Who am I saluting?

Martha Harry. You are paying your respects to Harry. (*To the ceiling.*) Hear that, boyo?

Henry To Harry. Wise son. (*Mutters.*) The one who got away.

Henry salutes the ceiling. Then snaps back into clearing up.

Did you really get a job?

Martha Let me check.

She dials 123, listens to the speaking clock for a split second.

No vacancies.

Henry You could. Get a job. It would be good for you. Get you out of the house. Get you out of this – (*Gestures at the bed.*)

Martha I don't need one. Other people need one more than me. If I took a job there would be one less for the proletariat. It would be against my principles.

Henry Of course. You've never had one.

Martha That's not true – when I was at art college I used to go fruit picking in the summer. It was nice for the first few days, the sun, all the apples you could eat, but after one month I hated it. I still won't drink apple juice.

Henry (*quietly*) Maybe it would have been better for all of us if you had worked in a vineyard.

What have you done today?

Have you got up since I left this morning?

She shrugs.

Say something.

Martha (*slurs*) Soldier.

Henry You're pissed.

Martha laughs.

You need food.

He exits to the kitchen.

While he is gone Martha takes the flowers and removes the petals. She sprinkles them over the bed.

Henry re-enters with tears in his eyes and an open can in his hand.

Have you been eating this?

Martha nods her head.

When. When did you eat this?

She laughs.

Mummy. Martha. (*Getting upset.*) This isn't funny.

Beat.

This is cat food.

She mock-miaows.

Martha Come here. Onto my bed of roses, soldier. Come here.

Henry This – (*Gestures around the room.*) This. This is over.

Martha Come here.

Henry No. Daddy is coming back. Do you not understand? He's coming back. And if I don't sort you –
Martha Come here.

Henry NO.

(*To himself.*) I'm a fool.

Martha You're a soldier –

Henry I thought there was maybe a sneaking chance, the tiniest chance that if I came back today, that you might, *just might*, have attempted to pull yourself together. So Dad won't realise what a mess you are. That you would be a little sad, maybe. A little rough around the edges as normal. But OK. Trying to be OK. That you would at least try to help me help us.

Beat.

I'm a fucking fool.

Martha Don't swear.

Pause.

Henry Were you really eating cat food? Or did you just want me to think so?

I'll never know.

Martha sits up on the bed. She shakes her head, looks as if she's visibly trying to pull herself together, trying to sober up.

I thought we could bluff this. Convince him I had it under control. Tidy up, sober you up. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid me.

Pause.

Will you go? With me? Will you go with me today, to a clinic? Will you check yourself in?

Martha (*trying hard to sound sober*) The cat food, it was –

Henry WILL YOU GO WITH ME TODAY?

Pause.

Martha The cat food. It was for the strays. I didn't –

Henry WILL YOU GO WITH ME TODAY?

Martha I DIDN'T EAT IT.

Henry Too late.

Beat.

You can come with me today. You can choose the place. It will be private. Comfortable. Or. You can wait for Dad who, if he sees you like this – if he believes Mia, if he believes you are a danger to us, to yourself – will have you taken away.

Beat.

Choose.

Martha (*quietly*) I didn't eat it.

Henry Will you go?

Martha No. Sorry. No.

Henry Do it for me.

Martha No.

Henry So I can go, and know you're safe. So I can look Dad in the eye when he comes. So I can know that I helped you somehow. Please. This one thing. (*Urgently.*) I don't want you to get sectioned. I won't be able to visit you. It'll be like before, remember? I don't know where they'll take you. I don't know if they'll let you out.

Beat.

If you volunteer yourself, if you come with me, then you can leave. Then you can choose. Please. Please.

I'm fucking begging you.

Martha I'll go. I'll go if –

Henry If what?

Martha If you have a drink with me.

SCENE SEVEN

Late that evening. A restaurant. Mia and Hugh are sitting together. There are a bottle of wine and a bottle of water on the table and two menus.

Mia is fiddling with her napkin. They sit in silence for some moments.

Hugh clears his throat. Mia looks up. He says nothing. She looks back down at her napkin.

Hugh It's a nice –

Mia Restaurant.

Hugh Yes. Nice place. Good steak. Can't get a good steak in Hong Kong.

Mia Really?

Hugh Well. Some of the grander hotels. But it's very expensive. So. Not really. No.

Mia Oh.

Hugh Are you hungry?

Mia Yeah.

Hugh What's the school food like?

Mia Terrible.

Hugh Mine was awful. Blood sausage, suet pudding.

Mia Ugh.

Silence.

Hugh Do you want a glass of wine?

Mia No.

Hugh A beer?

Mia Water is fine.

Hugh OK. Sure.

Silence. He pours her a glass of water.

Well. I thought that went well. Considering.

Pause.

They'll take you back. That's the main thing. A few new digital cameras . . . Couldn't have managed a whole wing now, could we?

Mia nods.

I didn't like my boarding school much. You're not meant to like it much. It's a passport really. For your future –

Mia For my future.

Hugh You understand.

Beat.

So. Tomorrow –

Mia I think I will have some wine, actually.

Hugh OK.

He pours her a glass.

We'll go round there. Early. Henry will be at school, you can get your things. I can –

She is fiddling with her fork.

Mia Is this real silver?

Hugh examines it.

Hugh No. Heavy though. Listen, I –

Mia You look tanned.

Hugh Do I?

Mia Yeah.

Hugh You should come out and visit. See your baby sister.

Mia Are there beaches?

Hugh Some. I live on a hill.

Mia I thought –

Hugh We moved. Needed more room. For the baby.

Mia Oh.

Pause.

Is it hot there all the time?

Hugh More muggy, really. Sweaty weather.

Mia They say it's going to be a hot summer here.

Hugh That will be nice.

Mia Global warming.

Hugh At least you'll get tanned.

Mia Like you?

Hugh You could come out, you know. I'd like you to come out. We all would.

Mia Henry too?

Hugh Henry too.

Pause. Hugh examines the menu.

This place has changed. More expensive. Are you starving?

Mia It's only been a minute.

Hugh I'm starving.

Mia You asked me that.

Hugh I did.

Beat.

Listen, Mia –

Mia I think these *are* real silver, you know. They have a mark and everything.

Hugh Tomorrow. I want to avoid a scene.

Mia A tiny mark, look.

She hands the fork to him. He takes her hand in his and puts it down on the table.

Hugh Mia –

Mia You're sweating. Brought the sweaty weather with you?

He wipes his palm on his trousers.

Hugh Mia –

Mia What?

Hugh I need you to fill me in.

Mia Thought the school filled you in.

Hugh They told me what they thought.

Mia Super.

Hugh I need you to tell me about Martha.

Mia She was your wife. You know her better than I do.

Hugh Don't.

Mia Don't what?

Hugh Just co-operate. OK?

Mia OK.

Hugh You're not getting on. Is that it?

Mia You could say that.

Hugh She's drinking again.

Mia nods.

The pills?

Mia Are nothing new. Lots of people take them. Have you read *Prozac Nation*?

Hugh She's – misusing the pills? Is that it?

Mia shrugs.

Mia. I need to know as much as you can tell me before I see her.

Mia Why?

Hugh So I can be prepared.

Mia What do you actually do?

Hugh Excuse me?

Mia At work these days. I'm never sure.

Hugh That's not the point.

Mia I'm interested.

Hugh I'm a broker. You know that.

Mia You broker deals and things?

Hugh Yes. Deals and things.

Mia So you have skills?

Hugh I suppose so. Listen, this isn't what this is about. We can talk about my work another time. Let's get back on topic.

Mia Back on topic? (*Snorts.*) OK. Broker a deal tomorrow. I don't know – bribe her or something. You don't need my help. You don't need *preparation*. You're great at your job. You love it.

Hugh Mia, if you don't explain the situation I won't be able to solve it

Mia It's not Sudoku, Dad.

Hugh (*sighs*) I know, but what's the story?

Mia It's not mine to tell. It's Henry's.

Hugh How is he?

Mia What do you think?

Hugh I –

Mia Don't know, do you?

Hugh Jesus.

Mia Can I smoke?

Hugh No. You bloody can't.

Mia I'll go outside?

Hugh No.

Mia Fine.

Hugh Since when did you smoke?

Mia Since when did you care?

Hugh When did you start?

Mia I was considering starting tonight.

Hugh Is this all I get?

Mia Pardon?

Hugh This. You should be grateful.

Silence.

Mia?

Beat.

Mia. They were going to expel you. I got you out of it. Understand? You have no respect.

Mia Do you?

Pause.

Hugh What you did was unacceptable. I don't want to go on about it. But you are not in a position to be getting cheeky, young lady. Not in a position at all.

So would you please co-operate?

Beat.

OK?

Heavy pause.

Now, tell me what to expect. Properly.

Mia appears to be considering her options.

Mia They're fine, Dad. She just got a bit pissed that night. That's all.

Hugh That's all?

Mia Sure.

Hugh That's not what the school think.

Mia They're just tense about being sued, hyper-vigilant etcetera.

It'll be fine tomorrow. Henry will be at school. You can talk to her alone. Make up your own mind.

Hugh I think a clinic is best, don't you? Clean her up a bit. You might not think it's necessary. We can arrange it tonight. I think the school would appreciate that.

Mia Like I said. It was just a wobble. She's all right, really. In fact, I'd say she's practically better.

Hugh There are people you can pay to ensure that. Takes the pressure off.

He spots the food coming.

Ah, here it comes. Finally, proper streak.

SCENE EIGHT

Around nine in the morning, Henry's room.

Henry and Martha have been up all night. Henry has been drinking with Martha, trying to convince her to go. She has been playing games with him and seems to be ignoring his plans for departure. She has dressed him up in her nightdress and dressed herself in an evening gown. Henry is urgently trying to dress Martha more sensibly in preparation to leave.

Martha Jewels, I must have jewels. Where are my jewels?

She swigs from her nearly empty glass.

Under the bed. I hid them there. I hid them from thieves. Who wants my jewels? Everybody wants my jewels.

That, what's her name, Sonia. She wanted my jewels.

Henry takes the glass from her.

Oh don't be a bore.

Henry tries to put a cardigan on her. She shrugs it off.

Fetch my jewels, soldier.

Henry You need to change. Put this on.

Martha Fine. I'll fetch them.

Martha reaches under the bed and pulls out a large jewellery box.

Look at you. God. You should have been a girl. You would have been a beautiful girl. Look at you.

She starts rummaging around in the jewellery box, plucking out items and holding them against Henry's face. She starts trying to put a necklace on him.

Henry Don't. We need to leave.

Martha Just let me see.

She adjusts it around his neck.

So pretty. I'll wear matching.

She starts putting more jewellery on herself and Henry.

Henry Get dressed.

Henry tries to put shoes on her. She kicks him away playfully and giggles.

Martha Only a glass slipper will fit...

Henry keeps trying to put the shoes on her feet. While his head is at her waist level she hoops more necklaces over his neck.

War spoils for my soldier. He glitters. Look how he glitters.

She kisses his face.

He has managed to get the shoes on. He stands, finds the cardigan and holds it for her to put on.

Henry Put it on.

Martha You haven't touched your drink.

Henry I don't want it.

Martha Let's have a toast.

She raises her glass.

Henry Now. We need to leave now.

Martha A toast to. A toast to -

Henry tries to put the cardigan on her again. She shrugs him off and stands.

Let's have a toast. Come on.

Henry Just let me -

Martha With your old mum. Come on.

She kicks off the shoes.

Henry Jesus ...

Martha A toast, to my son, so good ...

Martha drains the glass and hands it to him.

Henry Now, you promised. Let's go.

Martha Finish yours. It's rude - there was a toast to you and you didn't drink.

Henry Then we'll go?

Martha These are ugly shoes. You can always tell the quality of a person by their shoes. Their shoes and their haircut ... and perhaps their jewellery. I have nice jewels, don't I ... Pretty things.

Beat.

Finish it.

He sits down on the edge of the bed and takes his glass. It is obvious he really doesn't want it, but he downs it. Martha giggles in delight. She kisses his face. While she's doing this he slings the cardigan round her shoulders. He tries unsuccessfully to pull her up.

Henry We'll get a taxi.

Martha (*giggling*) Look at you.

Henry I'll change on the way.

The door buzzes.

Martha continues kissing Henry's face.

Who is that?

Martha Sonia.

Henry It's not -

Martha Too early. Must be Sonia. Come to help you clean up.

Door buzzes again.

Hide the jewels. She always tries to steal from me. Hide them.

Martha heads to the exit to answer the door.

She exits.

Panicked, Henry clumsily picks up the jewellery box and shoves it under the bed. Some of the contents have spilled out onto the floor. He shovels them under the bed.

It is in this position, on his hands and knees that Hugh and Mia first see him, as they enter with Martha behind them.

Silence. Henry stands up.

Martha Daddy's here.

Henry You're early.

Hugh takes in the room.

Hugh Pyjamas in the wash?

Henry You're too early.

They all look at him for a moment.

I feel sick.

Martha Baby...

Henry Just looking at him. I feel sick.

Hugh Why don't you go and get dressed, Henry?

Henry Don't you like my new look?

Hugh Go and get some clothes on. Get your stuff for school. Mia, pack yourself a few things too.

Pause.

Henry You're amazing.

Mia Come on, Hen.

Henry Actually amazing.

Mia Come on, leave them to it.

Hugh I want a word with Martha alone.

Henry I don't think she wants to be alone with you, do you?

Hugh Come on, Henry. Just do what you're told.

Henry Amazing.

Mia Let's get our stuff together.

Henry Mummy?

Martha (*almost to herself*) Daddy's really here...

Mia And aren't you dressed for the occasion?

Martha Henry, baby, I need some coffee, will you go and make me some, darling?

Henry Mia can do it.

Martha You know just how I like it.

Mia I'll help you.

Henry walks over to Hugh and sniffs him.

Henry You reek of duty-free.

Henry exits. Mia follows.

Hugh He always gives me that look. Even when he was two. It's sinister.

Hugh bends down and picks up a stray necklace from the floor. He holds it in his hands as if weighing it.

Martha You gave me all of this. Remember. All of this -

Beat.

- tinsel.

Hugh gently rests the necklace he was holding on the side table.

Hugh This place is a mess.

Martha I sacked my cleaner.

How's slinky-eyes?

Hugh Why was Henry dressed like that? In your necklace?

Martha shrugs.

Hugh runs his finger over a surface.

This place is filthy.

He notices the bottles. He sighs.

He sits down.

Hugh What's going on, Martha?

Martha You tell me, smarty pants. It's not often family number one merit a transpacific visit.

She starts frantically rummaging for a cigarette.

Hugh What are you looking for?

Martha A fag –

As she says this she knocks something over. It smashes.

Hugh You're drunk.

Martha Where are my fucking cigarettes?

She stands.

Hugh Martha. Sit down.

Martha (*mocking him*) Hugh, stand up.

Hugh We need to talk.

Hugh goes over to her and tries to guide her back down.

Down you go.

Martha curls up on the bed. She buries herself deeper in the bed. Hugh comes closer. He gently pulls her up off the bed.

Look at me.

She stares at him.

I'm going to take you to the Cromwell. I'll pay for it, I've arranged it . . .

Beat.

You're not well.

Martha reaches out and touches his face.

Don't.

She rests her head on his shoulder. He is uncomfortable with it, but allows her to.

They sit still like this for a moment. Martha then smells him.

Martha Duty-free . . . delicious.

Beat.

Did you bring me a present?

Hugh What?

Martha Always used to. Pockets full of presents. Cold lips from being outside. Warm mouth. The taxi door slamming.

Hugh I never slammed the door.

Martha Yes, you did. Slammed it and pounded up the stairs. You did. I remember.

Hugh I didn't –

Martha Bring me a present? Yes you did. You're hiding it.

Beat.

In one of your pockets. Something from the east. Something dinky.

Hugh Martha. I just didn't. I didn't even get the kids one.

Martha But you always do.

Hugh Did. Always did.

Beat.

Martha Tight bastard.

Hugh Don't.

Martha Bet you got her one.

Hugh Not now.

Martha Exotic toys for your exotic toy.

Hugh This is not about her.

Martha Is it true, what they say?

Hugh No.

Martha You don't know what I'm about to say.

Hugh I don't want to.

Henry reappears in the doorway. They don't see him.

Martha Worried I'm going to be rude?

Beat.

Worried I'm going to be vulgar . . .

Beat.

Because you don't like that, do you, Hugh? That's why you married a third-rate geisha. (*Sexily and slowly.*) Total obedience . . .

Martha leans forward as if to kiss him. He springs back.

Hugh Don't.

Martha (*smarts*) As if.

Henry Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh what fun it is to run . . .

Mia enters.

What? It must be Christmas time surely? All of us together in one room. Oh no. I forgot. We don't even do that at Christmas.

Hugh Mia, take Henry to get changed, then walk him to school. It's after nine.

Silence.

I'll pick you up after. We'll talk then. Right now I need to deal with Martha. Off you go. You'll be late.

Henry You didn't tell him?

Mia shakes her head.

You don't know the fucking half of it, do you, Dad? I don't go to school any more. I dropped out. About a year and a half ago, actually.

Henry laughs, a little giddy with his own outburst.

Hugh (*to Mia*) Did you know about this?

Mia nods.

Henry Thought you might have noticed when the fees stopped plopping out of your account every three months. Clearly not.

Hugh Why wasn't I told?

Martha You didn't ask.

Hugh I didn't ask because I take it on assumption that my children attend school like every other normal teenager in the country.

A year and a half ago?

Henry nods.

And what, may I ask, have you been doing since then?

Henry What do you think?

Hugh I don't know, Henry. I have no idea.

Martha He's been at home with me.

Hugh Here? In this fetid bedroom?

I've been teaching him art.

Henry Look.

He shoves a handful of drawings at Hugh.

Hugh Sketching?

Martha He's good at it.

Mia starts to laugh.

Hugh Why are you laughing?

Mia It's just funny, that's all. Your face.

Henry starts to laugh as well.

Henry You've gone red.

Hugh IT IS NOT FUCKING FUNNY.

Pause. Martha giggles.

You tell me, Martha, what the hell is going on, because this has a nightmarish quality I don't like.

Martha Nightmarish quality you don't like? I really am very very sorry about that, Hugh. That you don't like it. That it doesn't suit you. Because you see, darling, you relinquished parental responsibility when you fucked off with your little strumpet.

Hugh I had to go around to that school and beg them to the point of blackmail to keep her there. They tell me she never stays here, that there isn't enough room –

Martha THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM FOR THREE, THERE ISN'T ENOUGH MONEY FOR THREE.

Hugh Money? You want money?

Martha Look at how we live, while you – you shack up in some palace in the sun with that woman. Probably got servants. Look at this hole. This filthy little hole. There isn't enough room for your children.

Mia Hen. Let's go. Let's leave them to it.

Henry Gee, Daddy. You look tanned.

Martha Off you go, Missy. Of you go with your pa. Me and Henry. Staying right here.

Henry Climate must suit you.

Martha Come here, baby.

Hugh Go get yourself some breakfast, here –

He proffers some money.

Henry (*mocking him*) 'Money? You want money?'

Martha (*to Mia*) Off you trot, Missy.

She waves her hand in a dismissive gesture at Mia.

Mia Don't tell me what to do.

Martha Piss off now, thank you.

Mia Henry, come with me.

Henry I'm not leaving her with him.

Mia Please.

Martha Always interrupting.

Mia I'm going to get you – I'm going to fucking get you.

Hugh Mia –

Martha I want my son.

She stumbles towards Henry.

Mia shoves Martha back on the bed.

Did you see that? Did you see that? She's gone wild. Hurting me. Lying to me. *Stealing* from me.

Mia (*seething*) You haven't seen wild.

Martha Your daughter, stealing from me. I want my son. HENRY, HENRY!

Mia Leave. Him. Alone.

They are fighting now.

Hugh STOP IT!

Pause.

Mia You heartless cunt.

Hugh MIA!

Mia Don't shout at me.

Hugh I know this is very emotional –

Mia How the fuck would you know how emotional it is? You weren't there, you didn't see –

Hugh Mia, please. That's hardly helping –

Martha Oooh, Daddio's in trouble now.

Mia SHUT UP!

Beat.

Go on then.

Beat.

Daddio.

Hugh Martha, I'm taking you to the clinic. If you won't go voluntarily, I'll . . . you know what I can do.

Beat.

Martha Are you threatening me? (*To Mia*) He's threatening me – he's flown all the way over to do what he likes best. Don't be under any illusions, sweetie, your daddy doesn't give a fuck about you. He's just a tidy man. Used to fold his own underwear. He's a tidy man trying to tidy me away and tidy you both up. Not for you. For him. Don't be fooled, little madam. Your daddy's no hero. Threatening me –

Henry stands up.

Hugh Henry. Sit down, you look ridiculous. Martha, I am not threatening you. I am making you aware of your options.

Martha You could have threatened me over the phone, Hughie. Saved yourself the – (*Spits the word*) air miles.

Hugh Then you leave me no choice.

Martha But that choice suits you, Hughie. Doesn't it? It's cheaper to have me sectioned, isn't it? It's not private. You want me in an NHS loony bin 'cause it won't cost you a pretty penny. Did he tell you that I called him? That I asked for his help? I couldn't afford a clinic without him. He just wanted it to come to this. I bet he didn't tell you that in your little heart-to-heart. Don't be fooled, sweetie. He's been waiting for this.

Mia Is this true?

Hugh Of course not.

Martha He sat in the sun and waited. Till he could polish me off at the expense of the taxpayer. Money's bound to be tight now, eh? With family number two. Bet young slinky-eyes is developing expensive tastes –

Mia Did she call you?

Martha Look at her. Tell her the truth.

Hugh Your mother is a very sick woman, Mia. But I promise you, I thought –

Mia What did you think?

Hugh I thought what you told me last night was true –

Martha Do you think he didn't know? Petal, we're just a mess to him. You're just a mess to him.

Hugh Of course not, Mia. We've talked about this –

Martha He knew.

Mia When you stopped hearing from us. When you stopped getting Henry's school reports. Why didn't you call? Why didn't you check?

Hugh I thought you were OK.

Mia You wanted to think we were OK.

Martha He didn't give a shit.

Hugh Why would I be here if I didn't?

Mia So you don't have your good name sullied because your daughter was taken into care.

Beat.

That's the real reason, isn't it?

Hugh Mia -

Mia Isn't it?

Martha See him properly. Go on. See what he is.

Mia stares at Hugh.

Mia You could have stopped all of this. But you left. And she was sick when you left. But you left us anyway.

Hugh When you're older -

Mia You won't know me when I'm older.

Martha Good girl.

Mother and daughter stare at each other for a second.

We don't need him, do we? It's too late for him.

Beat.

Come and sit next to me.

Mia does nothing. She looks as if she's about to cry.

Next to me and Henry. Come on.

Mia is clearly wavering.

Mia (*quietly*) Henry. I want to go.

Henry stands up.

Henry What do you reckon of me? Have I grown?

Mia (*sobbing*) Please, Henry.

Henry Practically your height now. Though you never were a tall bloke.

Mia (*crying now*) NOW!

Hugh Take her outside, Henry.

Henry Was that an order, sir?

Martha mock-salutes.

I'm not going anywhere. This is not your problem. It is not your house. This isn't even your fucking continent any more. I had things going just fine before you barged in.

Hugh I have flown halfway across the world to help you sort out this . . . Do you think this is my idea of a splendid morning? I thought you were at school. I thought you were better than this.

Henry Oh Daddy Bear, have we surprised you?

Hugh I know you're angry with me. I know I haven't been perfect. I know that. But right now I am trying to get this resolved. This is why I wanted you to go away to school. This is why. But you didn't want to. I should have made you. Look at you . . . Christ.

Mia (*under her breath*) Too late.

Hugh If you want to help her, we have to work together, as a team. OK?

Silence.

OK?

Silence.

Mia. I'll call a taxi. You shouldn't have to see this.

Mia (*sobbing*) Not. Without. Henry.

Hugh Leave me with Martha. I'll deal with her.

Henry You're not coming anywhere near her. I'm dealing with her.

Mia No.

Martha He's staying here with me. Aren't you, Henry?

Mia Be my big brother and take me out of this. Please.

Henry Go if you want. Go home with team Daddio.

Mia Henry, I didn't tell him. I didn't tell him anything. I did what you wanted, this isn't my fault. I'm sorry about what I said.

Henry I had it under control.

He goes to Martha on the bed. She smuggles up to him, Martha smiles to Mia and Hugh.

Hugh Get up, Henry.

Martha smuggles deeper into Henry. She whispers to him.

I'VE HAD ENOUGH.

Henry springs up.

Henry Had enough, have you? Had e-fucking-nough? Of what, Hugh? Had enough of what? Papa Bear is in a tizz now, ain't he? Look at him. You've gone red, sir.

Martha giggles.

Hugh You don't have a choice. She's going.

Henry No. You can't just do that. You can't just. Come. Here. In your chinos. With. Your. Solution. You can't do that. It's. Just. Not. Right.

Pause.

'Cause, you see - (*Spits the word.*) Daddy, you left me here all by myself. So I did what I thought you should have done. Taken care of her. Taken very good care of her. Like she was broken. 'Cept I thought I could fix her. Thought I'd do anything to fix her. Used to wish it on eyelashes.

Hugh Henry -

Henry You're. Not. Right. You can't just do that. It pisses on me. You're pissing on me.

He stands on the bed, swaying slightly.

Martha Sit down. Come down. Baby boy. Come here.

He kicks her away.

Henry None of you understand. Do you? None of you. Five years. I've tried. And tried. None of you fucking understand. Anything. About it. All the blood she's kicked. From. My. Heart. And now you piss on me too. You piss on all I've done. I might as well piss on me.

Looks down at himself.

Would that scare you, Hugh? Would that scare you away? You don't like things to crazy, do you, Daddy? DO YOU? They make you run away.

He pisses himself. They are stunned.

Hugh Jesus.

Martha Sit down. Next to me. Henry. Baby.

Henry Stupid me.

He is standing on the bed. Martha tries to pull him down. Henry turns on her.

You. You promised I would be the one to have got you to go. One thing. One thing for me. So I could know that I helped you, so I could know it wasn't a terrible mistake, all that trying and crying and trying for you. And you wouldn't. After one drink. After another drink. And you wouldn't, all night you wouldn't. Of course you wouldn't. Should have known. Trapped us here so he could see how bad we'd got. News flash. He doesn't fucking care. I care. Setting a trap for your beautiful boy. Your beautiful baby. Well, how's your soldier boy now, Mummy? HOW'S YOUR SOLDIER BOY NOW?

Stunned silence.

Martha stands and lifts her arms to Henry as if to help him down.

Mia They're going to come and take her. You don't want to see that.

Henry Belong here. I belong here. Leave us be -

Mia I won't leave you here.

Hugh You did what you could, Henry. You're a good boy - (Sighs.) to bad parents. But it's over now. It really is over now.

Henry shakes his head again and again and again.

Henry's outburst and the state of him has shocked Martha. It seems as though only now has she realised the destruction she has caused.

Martha says nothing but stares at Henry, who is shaking his head over and over.

Martha.

Martha continues staring at Henry.
Look at me.

She does.
He fishes his mobile out of his pocket.

I am calling them now.

He dials.

Martha No.

Hugh You have no choice.

Martha No.

Beat.

I'll go.

On this Henry lurches up.

Henry No. No. No. You can't go. You can't go. No.

He crawls to her and wraps his arms around her legs.

Can't leave me. Stay with me. Belong together. Here, we belong here. You're lying - you're lying to make them go away. Fit for you. We fit together. Please, Mummy. Mummy, please. Stay. Stay with me. I'll lie to the doctors, I'll say she made it up. If you stay, things will be OK. I'm yours I'm yours I'm yours . . . what you wanted. Me. Yours.

She tries to gently disentangle herself from him.

Henry is groping up her body with his arms, burying his face in her tummy, clinging to her, shaking his head over and over.

Gave you what you wanted. This is what you wanted. I chose you. Choose me back, choose me back.

Martha is still, staring down at Henry.

Hugh I'm calling now.

Henry Choose me back.

Martha Don't.

Beat.

I don't want him to see me taken.

Mia Then fucking leave.

Martha runs her hands through Henry's hair, soothing him.

Martha (*murmurs softly*) Baby boy, baby boy, don't cry.

He is soothed and starts just to cling to her. She lifts his face up with her hand. They are now looking at each other.

Am I a lady?

Henry nods.

Your lady?

Henry nods.

A lady can't be taken away. A lady must have dignity.

A lady must go . . . herself. If I don't go, they'll take me. To a bad place. I won't be able to see you. And I want to see you. I want to see that face. My baby's face.

Beat.

I was so happy when I was pregnant with you. It was the happiest time of my life. I felt clear. Everything felt clear. With you inside me. Everything fell away.

Beat.

(Very softly.) This way we have each other for ever. This way, I'll always have you in here – *(She touches her lower stomach.)* We own each other. No one can take it away, Henry. No one.

Beat.

But I have to go now. I have to go away.

Beat.

Let go.

He clings harder.

Always here – *(Touches her belly.)*

Mia Let go.

She gently disentangles herself from him.

Are you my soldier? My own soldier?

He nods.

Then be brave.

He lets go of her.

She takes her handbag, looks around the room, at Hugh, at Mia. She opens her mouth as if to say something, but doesn't.

Slowly, with twisted dignity, she exits.

The door is heard shutting behind her.

Henry has his head in his hands on the floor. Mia is standing, stunned. Hugh follows Martha offstage.

They say nothing for some moments.

Mia turns to Henry.

Henry looks up and meets her eyes, yet says nothing.

Mia It's OK. I promise. It's OK. We're OK.

The scene stays like this for a moment, the only sound being Henry's jagged breaths.

Lights fade to black.

The End.