

SLEEPWALKER

By
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An Original Screenplay

May 2007

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EXT. KING'S ROAD, LONDON. DAY

A spring day. VANESSA - attractive, about 33 years old - walks with a look-don't-touch confidence. She glances in the odd shop window, checks her reflection. Stalls at a window display. A couple of fashionable kids, a mad old woman and a corporate gent catch her eye.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

The room is elegant, simple. Stylishly attired, face freshly made-up, Vanessa stands at the dressing table unhurriedly picking up one after another jewel coloured item, brushing dust off each with a single wipe. She places the thing she's holding back down with unnecessary care. Looks up to coolly meet her eyes, brushed dark with eye shadow, in the mirror.

INT. DOORWAY OFF COMMUNAL HALLWAY. NIGHT

Carrying a bottle of red wine Vanessa knocks at the front door of a flat in a pleasant hallway. She shifts from leg to leg. Cocks her ear to Al Green's 'Let's stay together' wafting from inside. Waits several beats then knocks again.

INT. STYLISH KITCHEN. NIGHT

ANNE - delicate pretty in a hippy dress, mid-late thirties - scurries into the kitchen brandishing Vanessa's bottle of wine. Vanessa close behind.

ANNE

You look great, Vanessa.
(calling out)
Jake, get Vanessa a drink -

Anne puts the wine down, dashes to stir a pan of gravy. Sneaks a shy, admiring look at Vanessa standing there.

VANESSA

Smells good. Always smells best
when it's not your own cooking.
(delayed)
I don't mean -

ANNE

Absolutely, I totally agree. Hey, I
saw you in a TV drama the other
day, a classy crime one.

VANESSA

Oh yes. That one.

ANNE

(to doorway)
Jake, where are you!
(to Vanessa)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE (CONT'D)

I'm a slave to the gravy here, as you can see. Nothing exotic, just organic pheasant.

VANESSA

I'd say that's exotic. Look, I can get myself a drink. Uh, the opener -

Still stirring, Anne dives into a draw - daring another covetous look at Vanessa passes her the bottle opener.

ANNE

Red. Lovely. Gives me terrible sinus.

(intimately)

But I might have to risk it...

JAKE enters, dapper Fortyish. Anne gives him a reproachful smile. Vanessa advances towards him with a polished smile.

The doorbell sounds and Anne bolts off.

Jake and Vanessa take a step back from each other.

JAKE

(eyeing Vanessa closely)

Finally, we get further than the hallway hellos.

INT. ANNE AND JAKE'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Anne and Vanessa sit on the sofa. Jake and two slightly frumpy SISTERS are in non-matching brocade chairs. Colourful Abstract Expressionist art adorns the walls. The sisters chatter between themselves in low voices, the others looking on benignly.

ANNE

(to Vanessa)

They haven't seen each other since Angie got back from teaching in America. Imagine teaching there! Janet teaches too, at my school.

VANESSA

They're so much like sisters.

Jake looks at Vanessa, unable to conceal his animal attraction.

JAKE

Wouldn't know, never had any. Saved the terrorism and the quit trips, the stealing of the bikey mates - all that stuff.

The sisters remain oblivious, emitting the odd shared giggle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA
(disbelieving)
You had a motorbike?

JAKE
Yeah. Great for getting girls.

Vanessa scrutinizes Jake for the wild teenager in him.

Anne is staring at Vanessa like she's not paying attention to what is going on conversationally.

ANNE
(to Vanessa)
We'll have to do this again when Damien's free of the corporate chains. We've been sharing this house for so long, and for all we know one of us could be a psycho killer! I guess that still leaves Damien under suspicion.

Vanessa laughs appropriately.

VANESSA
Damien works too hard. Too much money to be marketed.

JAKE
(swirling his wine)
But I'm sure, Vanessa, you're not at a loss. Freedom to move a requisite in this business.

Vanessa nods philosophically, Anne close-studying her.

INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT

Anne swoops for the stove, pulls a hissing steamer off the top, grabs a carving knife and fork. Vanessa makes a gesture of uselessness - as Anne launches into the oven, drags out the roast.

INT. THE HALL. NIGHT

Vanessa holds up a framed photo of a Jack Russell.

VANESSA
Who's the happy doggy?

ANNE (O.S.)
That's Boxy. Miss him terribly.

INT. THE DINING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa, Jake, Anne and The Sisters are at table amidst empty wine glasses, full brAndy glasses, chocolate cake and coffee.

JAKE

Isn't it a Bavarian thing, brAndy
and chocolate cake?

The others look to be considering the matter. Anne watches Vanessa hoe into a large lump of cake.

ANNE

I wouldn't have thought, Vanessa,
you'd touch cake.

VANESSA

(laughing)
I don't very often, or I get fat.
You don't look like you'd have that
issue.

ANNE

(laughing back)
No. That's one I don't have, with
my skittish metabolism.

Anne leans in closer to Vanessa.

ANNE (CONT'D)

(whimsical)
All that pressure to look all-round
fabulous...don't know how you can
keep it up -

Vanessa nods wryly.

Jake turns onto The Sisters who are serenely observing Vanessa and Anne. Takes his attention smoothly back onto Vanessa.

ANNE (CONT'D)

(to Vanessa)
I mean, surely some days you must
feel you look total crap - even
though you never do.

Vanessa squirms under Anne and Jake's attention - Jake notices this and seems to like it. Anne traces her finger tips around her eyes as if feeling for wrinkles.

JAKE

You're in this play how many nights
a week, Vanessa?

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

(brightening)

Oh - four. It's going to be hard going, I'm prepared for that. But I like that feeling of being overwhelmed - you know, possessed by a production. I guess that's why I do it.

JAKE

I can appreciate that, certainly. And the part?

VANESSA

Firstly, this is no ground-breaking piece. I'm a misfit suburban housewife taunted by rampant ambition - for what, she has no idea, nor what to do with it.

JAKE

And she's a menace to society on the quiet, huh?

Vanessa laughs A little too much, tossing back her hair.

VANESSA

Very probably.

Anne takes her focus away from Vanessa like she's slapped herself to do so. Takes her hostess gaze onto The Sisters.

ANNE

(as to a child)

So, Janet, the curriculum holds your interest then?

Janet returns her look with one of earnest.

JANET

Engaging adolescents, Anne, in literature, when they'd rather be viewing commercial DVDs, is never going to be easy.

The others turn onto Janet and nod politely.

ANNE

I suppose as an art teacher, if nothing else I can encourage them to act out their primal longings via paint and paper.

Anne looks into space like she could do with acting out some primal longings herself (but, like Vanessa's suburban housewife, doesn't know it).

INT. AT THE FRONT DOOR. NIGHT

Jake, Anne and Vanessa loll in the doorway. Vanessa looks a bit drunk but in control.

VANESSA
Thanks for keeping me out of
trouble. When the cat's away...

JAKE
(flirting)
As I suggested...

Vanessa regards him suggestively back.

VANESSA
You did?

Anne gives Vanessa a look.

Then, as if her Vanessa trance is suddenly broken - Anne turns to Jake, pinches his middle so he jumps.

ANNE
I'm for bed. That brAndy got me.
Might mean a night off the pills.

VANESSA
(extra friendly)
Oh dear...you not sleeping well?

ANNE
Insomnia phase. Luckily for Jake
we've a second bedroom.

VANESSA
Poor you. That's no fun at all.

Vanessa AVOIDS Jake's keen eye.

ANNE
Oh, I expect I'll live.

Anne leans into Vanessa and the girls kiss-kiss.

Vanessa wobbles down the stairs, Jake watching alone from his doorway. Vanessa looks back up and sees him, and he waves quickly like he's been sprung, retreats inside.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa falls into a black leather lounge, drops her head back and kicks off her shoes. The room is modern expensive, sparsely furnished. B/W photo landscapes; a full bookcase. A large flat screen and a modest drinks cabinet.

INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT

Vanessa takes a big drink of bottled water from the fridge. She pulls out a carrot and munches on it, leaning against the fridge staring at nothing.

INT. THE SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa picks up, scans and discards a pile of business papers lying on a desk. A happy photo of her and a cute guy (Damien) holds her eyes for a few beats. She picks up a glass paperweight, turns it around losing herself to its bubbly interior.

VANESSA
(turning paperweight)
Sleep well lover...

INT. JAKE'S STUDY. NIGHT

Anne hovers in baby-doll pyjamas in the doorway. Jake looks up from his computer.

ANNE
Are you coming to bed, darling?

JAKE
...won't be long...

He grabs a pen and starts scribbling.

INT. CASTING AGENT'S WAITING ROOM. DAY

Glamorous in a short skirt, Vanessa sits between a model type and a jittery actress type, methodically taking them in. Half-reading a paperback she glances around, quickly bypassing the men who are pretending to ignore the girls.

The obvious model eyes Vanessa's page. Vanessa pulls away slightly.

CASTING AGENT
Vanessa and Matt, please go in.

Vanessa looks up, puts her book in her bag, adjusts her bra strap and moves to the call.

CASTING AGENT (CONT'D)
Sorry, my mistake - Amy and Greg
please.

Vanessa plops back down as the model type rises and swishes past her, Vanessa's eyes disdainfully following.

INT. TOILET. DAY

Vanessa studies her face, dabs at it with toilet paper. Sticks her tongue out and looks at it. Fusses with her hair and re-applies lip gloss.

INT. CASTING ROOM. DAY

A sofa is the object of the camera's attention. A male model stands at Vanessa's side. THE DIRECTOR hovers.

DIRECTOR

Now Vanessa - if you could recline on the couch - and Greg - you perch beside her, offering her this -

His ASSISTANT appears.

ASSISTANT

Matt.

The assistant hands the male model a gold wrapped chocolate.

DIRECTOR

Matt - so sorry. So Vanessa, you seductively unwrap and eat the chocolate like you love it, murmuring - to Matt - 'Mmmmmmm... Nothing comes this good, even in gold...'

Vanessa and MATT stare at the chocolate.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET, REGENTS PARK, CAMDEN. DAY

Slinky in leather pants, Vanessa approaches a BIG VICTORIAN SEMI. The front door gives way on her and she's face to face with a droopy Anne.

VANESSA

Fancy meeting you here.

ANNE

I know, last thing you'd expect.
(looking Vanessa over)
Cool leathers. A casting?

VANESSA

More a scene from Rocky Horror.
Definitely as archaic.

ANNE

Really?

CONTINUED:

VANESSA
 (perfunctorily)
 Thanks again for dinner. When I can
 pin down my absent partner I'll get
 you guys over.

ANNE
 Well, there might be something
 you'll want to do to him first.
 (slightly shy)
 Fancy going for a coffee?

Vanessa looks thrown.

VANESSA
 Uh...why not! I'll make some calls,
 see you Bar Gansa - in 45, yeah?

ANNE
 Fantastic.

VANESSA
 You not working then? Is the real
 world having a holiday today?

ANNE
 Oh no, just me skiving off. Haven't
 been so brilliant lately.

VANESSA
 Sorry to hear it. See you soon -

Vanessa proceeds inside as Anne comes out onto the steps,
 closes the door behind her and looks around blinking.

INT/EXT. LOCAL CAFE. DAY

Ambient music playing. Cute waitresses saunter amongst tables
 of largely bohemian styled customers. Anne and Vanessa sit
 outside in the window seat.

ANNE
 (kitten eyes a waitress)
 D'you think the waitresses are the
 reason Jake likes coming here?
 Inspiration, perhaps. Not sure if
 that's ten years of marriage for
 you, or just because he's a man.

VANESSA
 Just because he's a man, I expect.

Both of them fix their gaze on the neat behind of a waitress.
 Anne lights up a cigarette.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA (CONT'D)

These girls are evidently picked for a reason. I didn't know you smoked.

ANNE

(falters)

I don't really. Jake hates it.

Anne stares balefully at her cigarette. Vanessa stares at Anne.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I read it as a measure of my regression - my crystal ball. My ally in wretchedness.

(waving cigarette)

And when they start making me feel more crappy than the reason why I took them up again - lo and behold, I will pack it in again.

VANESSA

(amused)

So how long does that process take?

ANNE

Depends how far I've plummeted.

VANESSA

Sound reasoning. I could fall for that too.

They laugh in unison at Vanessa's pun.

ANNE

Oh, don't do that, I'll put it out -

Anne aggressively stubs out what's already a butt.

VANESSA

Its okay, I've a bit further to go yet -

The coffee shows. Anne nods admiringly at the waitress.

ANNE

(wide-eyed interest)

I got the impression things were going well. You have your play - and I saw you in another ad. Seems to me you're at the controls.

Vanessa looks challenged. Sips her coffee with a frown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA

Bit milky, should have got it on the side...

(meets Anne's gaze)

I'm sure my veneer's as good as anyone's.

Anne subsides in her chair.

ANNE

Well my veneer is cracking horribly. Today, it's being married to a self-professed genius whose genius is evading him.

A strange look passes across Vanessa's face, that she directs onto the origami shape she's making with her paper napkin.

VANESSA

I can imagine what that's like.

ANNE

He's struggling with this feature that's sending me crackers. All he's waiting for is an idea that works for him for more than a day. He's being too precious, of course.

VANESSA

But you don't tell him that. Didn't he make one a while ago?

ANNE

Yes - but you don't mention that.

VANESSA

(wry cast)

I know that feeling well.

ANNE

Though it did okay. It gave him perfectly good status. And got him off the commercials tread-mill.

Vanessa stirs her coffee into a minor cyclone. Anne watches, vaguely appalled.

ANNE (CONT'D)

(comforting tone)

But your play sounds fine, Vanessa.

VANESSA

(delayed)

...a few discords need working...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANNE

You said. Must be fun anyway.

Anne lights another cigarette, precariously. The spectacle causes Vanessa to look up from her coffee - like it's her turn to man the probe.

VANESSA

Those paintings in your flat, are they yours? They're good.

ANNE

Oh, right, thank you - yes, most are mine. I haven't done one for years - you know, school, overgrown child at home and the rest...

Vanessa looks at her like she's interested but not impressed - the youth on the next table distracting her by larking around with his girlfriend, crowding in on her until she shoots him a look that that sends him reeling.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Life gets in the way, when we let it...

VANESSA

(changing the subject)

So - how was Italy? You started telling me the other night.

ANNE

Oh yes. And Jake butted in. He's such a conversational bully.

(recalling fondly)

...Italy was months ago now. That's right, the day that Jehovah's Witness creep stuck his foot in the door and you walked past - that was when we first met, wasn't it?

VANESSA

Officially anyhow. You got me salivating with your month in Umbria plans.

Anne is leaning forward on her elbows, face dreamy.

ANNE

I'm remembering how lovely it was, how nice and relaxed Jake was.

(Sharpening)

But does their effect ever sustain - live up to its Platonic image?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

VANESSA
You mean holidays or husbands?

Anne laughs gregariously.

ANNE
So you two beautiful people - where
have you been that's gorgeous
lately?

Vanessa shrinks away from Anne's cloying effect.

VANESSA
Well, we had a successful romantic
weekend at a country manor. And we
went to Germany on his business,
but I'm not sure that counts. The
food was horrible and Dame was busy
and preoccupied.
(sighs...)
To slip off with a girlfriend would
be my best bet.

She retracts quickly in the face of Anne's wide-eyed
interest.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
But that's so - Southern Spain.

Anne looks deeply sad for her new friend.

ANNE
So no weekends in Paris or
anything?

VANESSA
We haven't done that one, no. I'm
not a terrific Paris fan.

ANNE
Really! How could anyone not like
Paris!

VANESSA
(delayed)
It's just a history thing.

ANNE
Must've been bad to put you off the
place. You miss Damien a lot then?

VANESSA
Not always. Sometimes I like the
space.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ANNE

There must be loads of men waiting
in the wings.

VANESSA

One or two. It's funny, I never
thought I'd shack up with a suit.
(smiling)
You having lunch?

An unshaven Jake hangs at the bar clutching a pad of paper. A
YOUNG CHEF, cropped bleached hair, pushes in front of him.

CHEF

(to waitress, French
accent)
Beer for the kitchen, darling.
We're thirsty in there.

The girl simpers. Jake aims The Chef a look he ignores as he
heads outside, cigarette behind white-tufted ear.

Eyes following the waitresses, Jake spots Anne and Vanessa.
He strides over to them with a winning grin.

JAKE

How did I get past you two lovely
ladies!

Anne looks nonplussed. Vanessa shifts in her seat, shoulders
hunching. Jake acknowledges Vanessa's uncharacteristic turn
with a simpleton's smile. He sits down and signals for a
coffee like he's part of the decor, pushing aside the girls'
empty lunch plates.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Great to see you again, Vanessa.
(to Anne)
How you feeling, love? Thought I'd
try do some scribbling here before
my meeting. Outside stimulation can
be sunshine for the old writer dog.

A pretty waitress collects up the plates, smiles at him.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(high on charm)
Sophie! How they treating you
today? My usual, thanks.
(turning the charm onto
Anne and Vanessa)
Girls! Can I get you anything?

Anne gives him a sour glance. Vanessa seems not to have
heard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

VANESSA
 (gathering up her things)
 Time to force my head around
 lighting rehearsal. It's always
 harder after a break.

JAKE
 (thrown)
 No more caffeine fuelling first?

VANESSA
 No, really. Quite sure.

She stands, fumbles for cash.

JAKE
 Hey, it's on me.

VANESSA
 (laying down money)
 No really. See you guys later.

She turns to leave - then spins around balletically to face Anne...

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Anne, I don't suppose I could use
 your washing machine this
 afternoon, mine's fucked. It's only
 two loads, I know it's really lazy -

ANNE
 (digging in bag)
 Of course. In case I'm not there -
 (taking out keys)
 you take the spare. And if you can
 bear the responsibility, keep it!

Beaming at her, Anne gives Vanessa a PINK HEART KEY RING with top and bottom lock keys. Jake observing detachedly.

Vanessa jumps the keys in her palm, puts them in a pocket.

VANESSA
 (oddly)
 Never know when you might need it.

Jake gazes after Vanessa's leather clad rear, Anne following his eyes. They sit there like they've lost a shared limb.

INT. SMALL THEATRE DRESSING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa slouches in a comfy chair in jeans, hair in big curls, face scrubbed. She is like a child in a wig.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The other side of the changing screen is a good-looking preppy boy, GILES, and MAURICE, in his fifties, shaved head. In underpants and socks, Giles hangs up a dinner jacket and pulls on a shirt. Maurice peels off grubby jeans and a black polo neck.

At the long mirror Maurice and Giles silently remove make-up. Vanessa watches Giles return to his proper bloom.

MAURICE

(examining cotton wool)

It's this shit from now on then.

(to Vanessa in mirror)

So love, is your sexy man coming for you, or do you travel the streets alone tonight?

VANESSA

Thanks Maurice, your services won't be required.

MAURICE

Pity, that.

He tweaks Giles' nose, and Giles flinches.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

Maybe it'll be Giles' tonight then.

GILES

(squirming)

Maurice, you're a loser, man.

With a camp touch, Maurice attacks his eyeliner with fresh cotton wool. Vanessa's eyes are nowhere in particular.

MAURICE

(to Vanessa)

So how you liking this jaunt, love?

VANESSA

I'm liking it okay. I prefer film though - easier to hide. And less strain on the memory, of course.

MAURICE

Film's great if you can get it, and if you're lucky enough to land a plum spot.

(melodramatic sigh)

Nowadays I accept my terminal role
As stage stoic.

GILES

Stage freak, more like.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Clutching the toner bottle Maurice runs at Giles with mock fury, and Giles ducks. Vanessa rolls her eyes at the two of them in the mirror.

VANESSA

Well I have some fight left in me.

MAURICE

You have, love. It glows.

Taking the toner bottle from him, Giles regards Maurice critically - Maurice too busy examining his eye bags to see.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

I am out-numbered here by young ambition. A wonderful thing!

Vanessa and Giles catch each other's eye in the mirror with bored expressions. Maurice stands back from the glass - the smudged eye pencil -making him look extra exhausted.

MAURICE (CONT'D)

(wearily)

Don't listen to an old queen. The camera's not stupid - it'll sniff both of you out eventually.

Majestically, Maurice pulls Vanessa up from her chair and into the middle of the room - starts swirling her around ballroom style, Giles looking on dispassionately. Maurice grinds to an almost halt still clutching a dizzy Vanessa - takes Giles in the other arm and swings the two of them around together...

MAURICE (CONT'D)

(compere voice)

Here we have, ladies and gentlemen, two fine, talented specimens -

Singing a (any) well-known music hall refrain, Maurice continues to lead this heady rotation with his two rag dolls, the three of them a surreal, slow motion spinning top...that looks about to lift upwards...

DAMIEN has appeared in the doorway, handsome, early thirties. The top button of his shirt is undone, no tie.

DAMIEN

(London boy)

Shall I come back later then?

Vanessa wrenches herself free, winding down the others in the process. She makes a dizzy lunge for Damien.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

VANESSA
 (to Damien)
 Lets go -

She turns to Maurice and Giles, who are swaying on the spot to this abrupt outside influence.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 See you two next rehearsal.

She puts her arm around a slightly edgy Damien, as Maurice and Giles find their feet, blinking like newborns.

EXT/INT. DAMIEN'S CAR. NIGHT

Damien and Vanessa cross London in Damien's CONVERTIBLE MERCEDES. Damien fiddles with the radio tuner, settles on classical music. Almost straightaway Vanessa turns it off.

VANESSA
 I'm not into classical right now -

Damien gives her a sidelong look as she burrows into her seat.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 I feel it's all slipping through my fingers...it's just not working -

Damien turns his head to glance at her, expressionless.

DAMIEN
 Nothing new, huh. You know I always think you're great.

She caresses his thigh absent mindedly.

VANESSA
 I know. You're sweet.
 (inwardly)
 And you're right...it's a yen for unattainable perfection. The best we can do is circles, tumbles, climbs back up again -

Damien looks resigned.

DAMIEN
 Who wants a peaceful life anyway.

They go quiet for a few beats, outwardly taking in the road and the nightlife, both on a more profound plane.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

I don't get why you put yourself
through it all. I know that pisses
you off about me -

A pedestrian almost walks into the car and he curses -

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

But it doesn't stop me thinking
it's bad for you.

VANESSA

(impassioned)

Where, the hell, is the harm in
trying to stand out - you tell me!
Isn't that what you, too, are
trying to do? Aren't all of us?

DAMIEN

(calm)

I just don't like seeing you
suffering, sweetheart.

Vanessa stares darkly out of her side window.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. NIGHT

His convertible parked behind them, Damien's hand on
Vanessa's bum takes them to the front door.

VANESSA

We could've gone for a drink -

DAMIEN

We can have one here in private -

He wraps his hands around her neck as she turns her key in
the door. Feel her struggle to remain cool - like this is a
game they play.

INT. VANESSA & DAMIEN'S KITCHEN. NIGHT

Vanessa opens a bottle of red wine, pours two glasses. Damien
takes his, goes in for a snog.

DAMIEN

We haven't done this much lately...

Juggling him and her glass Vanessa pulls away, and he
registers wounded.

VANESSA

Honey, I know you don't like being
careful, and -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Damien puts down his glass heavily and strides head down, hands in pockets, into the SITTING ROOM.

He turns, looks at her square-on.

DAMIEN

Let's get dangerous then -

There is a heated silence. From the KITCHEN DOORWAY Vanessa takes a large swig of wine. Damien stands tense, looking at her.

VANESSA

I don't think that's a good idea.

DAMIEN

(delayed)

Will you ever..?

She closes her eyes like this is a well-worn topic.

VANESSA

We've been together only two years,
 Dame... And it's my body, and it
 will wait till my head's ready.

She goes back INTO THE KITCHEN for Damien's glass of wine, brings it swiftly over to him in THE SITTING ROOM.

Damien looks to be about to make an announcement into his glass.

DAMIEN

I know. Body and soul have to top
 the moon first. Or at least the
 silver screen.

Vanessa swishes out of the room. Damien doesn't move. A door shuts O.S.. 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof' overtones.

INT. THE BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa is demure in bra and jeans on the bed. Damien takes away her glass, flattens her with his weight.

DAMIEN

Don't worry, my shining light. I
 can wait. This bod's too good to
 muck round with just yet.

In a comic manoeuvre he removes his trousers, rises up her body so his crotch is near her face.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

See this as an investment -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vanessa turns her head to one side, considering the proposition. Yanks down his undies with a prostitute's detachment.

EXT. SOHO STREET. NIGHT

Vanessa and JEMIMA, classy pretty, Vanessa's age, are dolled up, waving busily at taken black cabs. The state of human degredation around them indicates it's late.

JEMIMA

In the old days a good-looking broad didn't have to work this hard for a ride home.

She grabs Vanessa's arm, tottering drunkenly.

VANESSA

Especially if there was two of her.

They laugh, wobbling, hanging from each other's arms. They miss a couple of empty cabs and curse-like hussies.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

So my smooth film-maker neighbour didn't lynch us. Must not have seen me.

JEMIMA

You could've introduced me, you bitch, if he's one of your rejects.

VANESSA

You can have him.

JEMIMA

Where's your competitive edge?

Vanessa lets go of her, gives her best Bette Davis look.

VANESSA

He's not one of my rejects, because I haven't even tried him out. Not my style.

Jemima scowls at two whooping guys. Vanessa follows suite.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Plus his wife's a bit too loopy.

JEMIMA

Steer clear then, baby. As if we show birds don't have enough tricky admirers already.

Vanessa hails a black cab and they tumble in.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY OF CAMDEN HOUSE. NIGHT

Anne knocks nervously on Vanessa's door. Vanessa opens, peers at her as if through a haze.

ANNE

Sorry, it's late, and you must be tired -

(looks her over)

- after your play...

VANESSA

I was at a party tonight with a girlfriend. You okay?

ANNE

Yeah, sure, I just heard you come in - and I was wondering, you fancy doing dinner, say Thursday, isn't that your night off? Maybe a movie?

Vanessa pretends (badly) to consider this like she hasn't already discarded it as a proposition.

VANESSA

Actually, Dame's back Thursday -

Anne visibly backs off - as the hall light dies, the girls almost lost to darkness.

ANNE

Another time then -

INT. VANESSA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT

Hair piled up messily, face scrubbed, Vanessa sits in a silk robe on the toilet reading a script. The bath fills up. Vanessa flicks through the pages, tuts and shakes her head.

VANESSA

Same old rubbish...

The phone rings. She drops the script, flies out of the room as the ringing stops.

VANESSA (O/S) (CONT'D)

Sod it -

Linger on the script as it slowly soaks up water on the floor.

Vanessa comes back in looking downcast. She grabs the wet script, tuts and lays it on the toilet seat. She pours luxurious looking oil into the bath. Stares dead-pan at herself in the mirror.

CONTINUED:

She takes off the silk robe, hangs it up, knocking a man's white towelling robe onto the floor. With a sigh she bends down, picks up the white robe and hangs it back up. She moves bluntly for her toothbrush, knocks male shaving gear into the basin with a crash and a skateboard dash up the side.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Fuck off -

JUMP TO:

Vanessa on the toilet seat in the silk robe, hair wet, ashing a cigarette into the draining out bath - hunched over the script. Her wet fingers smudge the type more than it is already.

She stands up shakily, drops the fag butt in the toilet - holding on to the script.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa lies foetal in bed, the duvet pulled up high, her hair unruly. She looks asleep - a tiny smile on her face.

Eyes shut, she uncurls luxuriously, sits up on the edge of the bed. She is still in the silk robe of before.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa goes over to a pretty box on the mantelpiece - takes out the PINK HEART KEY RING.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY. NIGHT

30 Vanessa fumbles at the lock on Jake and Anne's door, the pink heart dangling.

INT. JAKE AND ANNE'S SPARE BEDROOM. NIGHT

Anne tosses about in baby dolls, everything kicked aside but a sheet. She sits up, looks at the clock, flings herself down in distress. Grabs a pill bottle next to a glass of water

INT. MAIN BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa stands in the doorway of Jake and Anne's bedroom, silk robe carefully tied.

She goes to the bed, containing Jake asleep in a sea of pristine white, stands at the end. Mumbling, Jake kicks off the duvet, naked but for CALVIN KLEIN BOXERS. Vanessa kneels at the end of the bed, starts crawling up him till she has him pinned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE
 (flailing around
 uselessly)
 I'm asleep...

Vanessa snogs him, sits up straddling him, surveys him wide-eyed - as he gazes astonished at her through the almost dark. Her robe now doing very little.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Jesus Christ, Vanessa!

Pan over to a formidable abstract nude on the wall.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM. NIGHT

Anne groggily closes 'Doctor Zhivago' and switches off the light. Straightaway she is snoring. At the window two pigeons begin noisily copulating, Anne remaining oblivious.

INT. MAIN BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jake looks to the door nervously, enduring continued teasing foreplay under Vanessa's direction.

Vanessa rises from the bed, ties her robe properly and walks out with a geisha's composure. Jake jumps up staring after her, dashes - hands over his erection - from the room as the front door shuts softly O.S..

Jake breathes a sigh of part relief, part frustration - glances warily towards the closed spare bedroom door and slopes back to his room.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Vanessa approaches the front steps as Jake is leaving the house.

VANESSA
 Hi Jake.

Jake edges past her, practically pirouetting on the bottom step - steadying himself in order to look up at her.

JAKE
 Vanessa... Bit cooler today...

She catches his eye and smiles warmly, goes inside. Jake stands there stupefied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

35

WEEKS LATER. DAY

Vanessa and Damien in SUMMER CLOTHES (a few weeks have passed) climb into Damien's convertible, parked directly in front of the house. Damien joyfully throws back the soft top. They kiss briefly as they get settled.

The sunny, light atmosphere, and the way the other people on the street are dressed is another time-leap indicator.

As Damien starts the engine, Jake pulls up alongside them in a MERCEDES SUDAN, Anne next to him in the passenger seat.

DAMIEN

Good timing, if you want a park.

All around them cars are banked up. Jake leans across Anne who is smiling gaily. Unaware his elbow is jabbing into Anne's thigh, Jake doesn't notice as she protests - as he fixes a steadfast grin on Damien and Vanessa. Vanessa coolly assessing him from her OPPOSITE END of the line-up.

JAKE

Excellent. When is it this easy!

Jake glances overly casually across at Vanessa, who is all bare legs in a short skirt.

Jake moves forward a few metres, as Damien edges out and around the back of him. The two cars draw parallel again, this time taking up the whole road. Vanessa is now UP NEXT TO Jake, examining her nails - (deliberately?) not seeing him working sneakily to catch her eye.

ANNE

(leaning across Jake)

Come in for a drink later - go on!
Haven't seen you guys for weeks!

Anne registers Damien's dismissive nod, slightly put out. Both she and Jake watch as the convertible drives off.

Jake starts edging his way into the empty parking space.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Not often you catch them together.
Wonder how they're going, haven't
seen even Vanessa lately - have
you? Maybe she thinks we're too
boring.

Struggling to get into the parking space, Jake looks at Anne as if to say, 'speak for yourself'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE

No, I haven't seen either of them.

ANNE

I think Damien could be emotionally cold. He's a bit too functional. I'm not sure Vanessa's happy.

JAKE

So you've got them both figured out. Even though you hardly ever see them.

ANNE

I may be wrong -

JAKE

You may be wrong.

Jake checks his person for sunglasses, wallet, opens his door.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And what's wrong with functional anyway. Lucky we're not all of us head cases.

They get out simultaneously - shut their doors simultaneously.

ANNE

I suppose three out of the four of us is enough.

JAKE

(gruffly)
Leave me out of it!

Ahead of him up their steps, she turns and biffs him affectionately.

ANNE

Oh darling, I like head cases.

35 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THEATRE. NIGHT

Maurice and Giles are walking fast to the backstage door.

35

MAURICE

I wonder if Miss Vanessa is in a better mood tonight. Not that her performance ever suffers.

GILES

She hasn't much to perform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAURICE

Sadly true. She deserves better.
 (pushing open backstage
 door)
 And she'll see that she gets it.

The black door shuts behind them like a prison door.

INT. GENERIC DOCTOR'S ROOMS. DAY

Standing to leave Anne clutches a prescription, folds it up and stuffs it into her bag. The doctor watches her go.

INT. SWIMMING BATHS CHANGING ROOM. DAY

Anne stands dripping at the long mirror surveying her thin figure. Looking for other critical eyes, she finds none.

Two athletic girls in wet costumes walk by giggling as she starts to change, and she hides under her towel like she's the cause of their laughter (which she clearly isn't).

INT. SMALL CITY OFFICE. DAY

Jake and a younger, slicker and more dynamic-looking ANDY confer over storyboards. They are flanked by computers, two stained empty mugs and two mugs full of congealing tea.

JAKE

So we should get this one easy, as long as we don't get too creative.

ANDY

(Aussie accent)
 Just how revisionary can you get with floor cleaner, mate?

JAKE

Yeah, yeah... Money for shit's still money, huh.

Jake darkly observes Andy's perky countenance.

ANDY

How's the real script coming on?

JAKE

(twiddling pen)
 Nothing to report, Sir. Writer's effluence more than writer's block, I'm appalled to say.

ANDY

You know, the other day a feature script came in, looked okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

Not interested. This one's mine.

Jake gets up, shoves his chair under the table. Andy does the same. They exchange little-boy-in-the-big-bad-world glances.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Let's meet this floor cleaner dude.

EXT. REGENTS PARK. DAY

Jake is jogging vigorously in all the right gear. A pekinese runs at him and he jumps back with a scowl at its owner.

He peers at A GIRL on a bench who from behind could be Vanessa - squats under a tree right next to her examining her from behind.

The girl turns around like she knows she's being observed. She is cute, but not Vanessa. She stares at him, her face forming into one big smile

GIRL

Jake! - we met at Sam's party,
after that series he was filming -

Reluctantly Jake comes forward.

JAKE

Ah, yes. I'm afraid I don't - um -
you're an actress, right?

GIRL

That's right. Shirley Mascot.

JAKE

(jogging on the spot)
Shirley! I remember. Well Shirley,
I must get on, get it over with.
Good luck, now!

Jake grins boyishly and jogs off, Shirley Mascot staring after him like she's suddenly bereaved.

INT. ANNE'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Anne sits on the sofa gazing into space. Next to her, a loose pile of papers with a threatening aura. Anne's legs are wrapped up in a long skirt, its print alluding to any one of the abstracts on the walls.

A door slams O.S. and Anne jumps. Jake approaches from behind her clutching a briefcase and whistling. He fixes on her uneasily, kisses her on the back of her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

Why not have a bath before taking
that lot on. Melt out the day...

He comes around to face her, takes in her pinched expression.

ANNE

(depressed)

You know - I'm only doing the kids
a disservice. If I had pursued the
artist in me instead... I can't be
on pills for ever. Vanessa...has
got me thinking.

Jake pulls an 'I'm going mad here' face behind her, lets his
briefcase fall.

JAKE

They say it's never too late. Just
don't ever consider making ads.

Despondently he plops next to her, as she propels herself up -
SEE-SAW EFFECT.

ANNE

(victim)

Well that spells it out good and
clear. Certainly we don't need
another tortured artist in the
family.

Jake settles himself staunchly into the corner of the sofa.
Closes his eyes like he's blocking her out.

JAKE

If that's what you think, who am I
to argue.

Anne looks at him like he's the sole cause of her discontent.
Then she's back in defeatist mode, sinking passively into the
other corner of the sofa and closing her eyes.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I know I'm being a pain in
the arse with my film. I shouldn't
goad you. I should leave you alone
to work it out.

ANNE

Should, should, shouldn't at all
ever, always -

They sit broodily, arms folded - TWEEDLEDUM AND TWEEDLEDEE at
opposite ends of the sofa.

Anne stands resolutely, takes Jake's hand and yanks him up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANNE (CONT'D)

Come into the bedroom, sort me out -

Without visible enthusiasm Jake allows himself to be led.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. NIGHT

Vanessa is standing next to a parked car, laughing with an attractive actor type guy, MAL, in the driver's seat. She leans in, kisses him on the mouth.

VANESSA

Thanks Mal, for the lift and a fun night. Let's not leave it so long.

MAL

Always great to see you, Nes. I can't believe your man risks leaving you alone like he does.

VANESSA

Don't they say separation is the way to keep your partnership fresh and nicely dysfunctional?

MAL

I must say, the best ones I've had I was on the longest leash.

(cheeky grin)

So I'll come in for a Nescafe then -

He reaches for the door handle, Vanessa play punching him on the arm. He blows her a kiss, drives off slowly.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa stares at a dubious looking movie with a glass of red wine. The phone rings. Eyes not leaving the screen she gets it.

VANESSA (ON THE PHONE)

Hello... Yeah, I had a meal with Mal... No, I'm not drunk.

(eyes glass, in collusion)

Not very anyway. Uh? Oh, I haven't heard, the casting was yesterday.

She is distracted by a compellingly bad scene.

VANESSA (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)

Okay. Sleep well. Love you too.

She replaces the phone, downs her drink and kills the telly.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S HALLWAY. NIGHT

In her silk robe of before, Vanessa drops the heart key ring into the breast pocket - zombie walks towards the main bedroom.

INT. MAIN BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa stands in the doorway eyes ahead. Jake is reading, turned the other way. Vanessa glides towards him. He sees her, sits up with a start and freezes.

JAKE
(whispering)
Vanessa...just let me check -

Jake exits fast in his boxers, returns after a few beats, Vanessa still in the same the spot staring blankly at the bed. He sidles past her taking a good look - and another. He crawls onto the bed in a spidery fashion, not taking his eyes off her.

JAKE (CONT'D)
... Seven dirty stinky, lusty
bonobos are about to join us in
this bed...

Vanessa continues her waxwork demonstration. Jake lies down, every muscle controlled. Gazing in wonder.

JAKE (CONT'D)
This is quite, exceedingly bizarre.

Vanessa opens her robe, is on him like a sucker plant.

LATER.

Standing over a shagged Jake, Vanessa fixes her robe.

VANESSA
(leaving the room)
Violins and pink trombones,
sausages and featherstones.

Fish-faced, Jake props himself up in the dishevelled bed.

JAKE
A perfectly reasonable response...

As if something has occurred to him, he leaps out of bed.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jake stands over the empty bed in horror. He turns, eyes dancing, as Anne waddles in sleepily with a glass of water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

So you missed me then -

JAKE

Oh, just restless - are you alright, I mean -

ANNE

I'm only just not asleep.
Must get back there.

She edges past him and falls into bed with a contented sigh.

JAKE

You do that, darling...

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Jake is in a floppy pink T-shirt at the table, bent over an over-abundance of weekend papers, hugging a mug. Anne comes in. Looks disdainfully over his shoulder at the papers.

ANNE

If only you could gulp down that lot, absorb what you wanted of it while doing the housework. Like how a dog eats. You'd need their gut acid.

JAKE

(dead-pan)
There's always the Guardian Weekly
And the like.

ANNE

Hey, see if Vanessa wants a coffee!

JAKE

(thrown)
Uh, isn't it too early for that -

ANNE

It's gone ten. Check she's ok.
Damien's not around.

Jake folds the paper badly, noisily.

JAKE

I'm sure she's fine.

ANNE

Her friends all seem flaky actor types, I'm not sure she gets much from them. All too up their bums, probably.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake stares intently at the newsprint. Anne gives him a look like he's no better than the flaky actors.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Okay - then I'll go and get her -

Anne exits. Jake flies up, paces like a trapped animal. There are two cups on the table - one clean, the other Jake's half finished tea. He picks the cups up one handed, with the other hand shakily pours the dregs from the teapot into the empty cup, brings the cups to his mouth and drinks what he's just poured - what's in the other cup gushing down his front. He curses, slams the lot down messily.

INT. MAIN BEDROOM. DAY

Jake rummages frantically through his clothes, freezing to cock his ear. He grabs something black, as the front door shuts to girlish laughter.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Anne looks at Vanessa.

ANNE

He was here a moment ago.

Jake saunters in, in a tight black T-shirt. Vanessa throws him a smile, looks him over. Anne frowns at him like she's noticing something's different (the T-shirt).

JAKE

Vanessa! Great to see you. Coffee?

Vanessa indicates Yes and Jake sets about making coffee. The girls sit at the table and scan listlessly over the paper.

VANESSA

So what have you two got planned?

JAKE

Oh you know, spontaneous weekend possibilities. Maybe some work thrown in for good measure.

Anne rolls her eyes and looks to Vanessa for sympathy, Vanessa failing to acknowledge her. Jake looks between the two girls dumbly. Anne smiles indulgently at Vanessa - who again does not indulge her back.

JAKE (CONT'D)

So how about you, Vanessa? Damien away?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA
 (looking squarely at him)
 He is. Me - I've stuff to do.

Jake and Anne nod inanely.

INT. COSY (SOHO) BAR. NIGHT

Vanessa and Jemima are getting through a bottle of wine.

JEMIMA
 You know that cute kid Toby?

Vanessa makes a show like Toby's one of hundreds.

VANESSA
 Can't say I do.

JEMIMA
 The young Marlon Brando look-alike.
 Style needed working on - then.

VANESSA
 So?

JEMIMA
 He's currently being heralded as
 the next Brad Pitt by everyone.

VANESSA
 You said he looked like Brando.

JEMIMA
 (looks at her oddly)
 What's the difference.

VANESSA
 Some might argue. So he did the
 dirty on you did he?

JEMIMA
 If you call swanning around the
 parties till he found more powerful
 girls to get him more powerful
 places the dirty.

VANESSA
 I don't remember any great love
 lost.

JEMIMA
 You're right. He wasn't that hot.
 Too busy picturing his chiselled
 thighs against Demi Moore's. Not a
 bad grasp of Martin Scorsese, mind
 you. And he cooked a mean pasta.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

Bit young for Bergman and coq au
vin...

Jemima ducks as a meek-looking man and a strident woman pass.

JEMIMA

I am not in the mood for those two!

VANESSA

(pouring wine)

There's no point getting bitter
about the Tobys. All part of the
bullshit. They go off with your
sister, that's another thing.

Vanessa'S face takes on an introverted cast.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I like to think I'll get there
minus all that, if the body holds.

JEMIMA

Good luck. Will Damien be back yet?

VANESSA

Yeah, probably. He knows he won't
find me feet up knitting bootees.

Jemima expresses exasperation.

JEMIMA

Look, he's a man, he can't help the
urge to reproduce himself, and he
is undoubtedly gorgeous. And honey,
at least you have one - I can't
seem to improve on two.

They laugh blithely, natural performers attracting looks.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa tosses her handbag onto the sofa. It lands next to
THE FINANCIAL TIMES and a shiny FOOTBALL MAG. She smiles at a
huge bunch of red and white roses already in a vase -
bringing a half-open red one up to her nose and fingering the
petals in child-like wonder.

INT. BATHROOM. DAY

Vanessa leans in the doorway in her silk robe, sleepily
watching Damien wet shave. Perfect in a white towelling robe,
he could be advertising shaving foam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMIEN

You're making me nervous. Go back to bed. You have to be looking daisy fresh for your audition.

VANESSA

I'm trying to grow little white petals, but it's not working. I probably need more sleep, you're right.

(yawning)

How long do I have you for?

DAMIEN

Till Friday, so make the most of me baby. Was it Mandy you were out so late with?

VANESSA

Jemima.

(eyes struggling)

Your face is giving me snow blindness -

DAMIEN

Go to bed, sexy, till you're ready to face the weather.

VANESSA

But it's summer...holiday time...

Damien splashes his face, looks approvingly at it in the mirror. Seemingly not phased by Vanessa's odd cast.

DAMIEN

Soon love, really soon. Right now, I don't perform, I don't sail. Simple.

He herds her out of the bathroom.

EXT. REGENT'S PARK. DAY

Vanessa walks by the zoo, eying the animals sympathetically.

VANESSA

(reciting to A BUFFALO)

This is not what I have been raised to expect, a nice home counties girl - predictable as it may have been I'd fall for a snake like you -

An ADULT AND CHILD walk past her trying not to stare. Vanessa halts, engages in eye contact with A HIPPO.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 (to hippo)
 Honestly, would you go and see it?

INT. JAKE'S CAR. DAY

Jake is driving in silence. Catch Anne mid-monologue:

ANNE
 ...and fancy that friend of Terry's
 living with a transsexual for five
 years - how could that not bother
 you on some level? To me he seemed
 a hundred per cent the lady's man.
 Jake! Did you hear any of that?

JAKE
 (delayed)
 Maybe around the time of 'The
 Crying Game' that was a newish
 thought, when everyone was
 tediously gender preoccupied.

ANNE
 Excuse me! I'm talking about the
 lives of real people - flesh people
 you have met, nothing to do with
 film images or ink on a page!
 (killer scathingly)
 I'd like to see you do it!

JAKE
 Do what? Be a transsexual?

ANNE
 No, tortoise brain - live with one.
 Have sex with one.

JAKE
 That's a person you refer to.

ANNE
 (delayed)
 Apparently she's nearly fifty. Some
 of the details are reverting back.

Jake is concentrating on the road.

ANNE (CONT'D)
 D'you reckon Jason should take that
 P.I.job? He has to darken his car
 windows and get a gun licence.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE (CONT'D)

And Sukie's getting all this not so subtle grief from his folks, about not feeding him properly - as if without red meat he's dropping cells! Can you imagine!?

JAKE

Your friend Sukie is fucking mental anyway.

ANNE

She's just sensitive. They were both virgins, remember. Actually I think Sukie quite likes the idea. Bit sexier than a public servant.

Anne is quiet for a few beats. Jake looks relieved.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Jake, I'm sick of sleeping pills. I'm going to try without them.

Jake takes the corner into their street really badly.

JAKE

Uh - you think you're ready for that, darling? You've not been on them long and sleep's fundamental to healing - nerves need time -

He parks terribly, half stuffs the hand brake.

ANNE

Since when were you the sleep guru? Anyone would think you like me drugged. Not that you ever take advantage of me when I am - or ever. You don't like me much any way, these days.

Jake avoids her eyes.

JAKE

(unconvincingly)

That's not true, baby doll...and I thought you wanted some space...

Anne looks away, her fragility there on her sleeve.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM. DAY

In her silk robe Vanessa assesses her wardrobe with disdain. At the dressing table mirror she twists up some hair, drops it. She puts on a natural lipstick that suits her eye make-up and scowls at herself, the action morphing into dead-pan self-assessment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a brisk movement she goes into a drawer, burrows through a rich array of underwear - comes up with an old folded press cutting from the rear of the drawer at the very bottom.

Gingerly she unfolds her find enough to reveal the head and shoulders of an interesting EASTERN EUROPEAN LOOKING MAN in his fifties, in formal black and whites, his sternly handsome face set off by a striking shock of white hair. She brings the photo up closer to her face as if trying to read more into it - her expression now become fearful...

In a compulsive movement she screws up the piece of paper, tosses it in the waste bin - where it lies with an empty stockings pack and a couple of lipstick-blot tissues.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR. DAY

Anne scurries along the corridor loaded up with books, kids running both ways. She looks to be fighting for breath, glancing at the kids like they're the enemy. A BOY stops in front of her, FRIEND in tow.

BOY

Miss, I can't finish my puppet head
'cause you said do someone you know
and I chose Mark -
(nudges friend)
- but he's that ugly the clay won't
work -

ANNE

(very scary voice)
Well Patrick, find another model or
make the clay work, or detention.

The boys stare like she's been transmogrified into a demon - mumble obeisance and scarper.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Vanessa side-steps a pile of puke, jumps as a BLACK CAT crosses her path, just misses a feral couple. A cute guy seems to not notice her and she registers a touch miffed.

INT. LOCAL CAFE OF BEFORE. DAY

Vanessa joins Anne, in an elfin hat, sitting with a pile of papers at the window. Kids in school uniform trail by.

VANESSA

You made your Friday escape early.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

I always say a weekend's like a
bookend - don't have one, you'll
fall flat. You're right, I ran for
it. Not that I got away scot-free.

She pats the paper pile - the tangible face of her
dissatisfaction.

VANESSA

Who ever does.

ANNE

I suppose you must find yourself
reciting lines all over the place.

Vanessa seems preoccupied.

VANESSA

That bit's okay. The omnipresent
audience, though, means no privacy.

ANNE

(stagey cringe)

I dread to think what it would say
about me.

VANESSA

I mean the audience in our heads.
We are all our own best and worst
critics.

The next instant Vanessa's attention is outside, on a PRETTY
SCHOOLGIRL standing alone on the pavement with a violin case.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Another tender prodigy primed for
the kill.

ANNE

I'm sorry?

VANESSA

That sweet girl with the violin.

ANNE

(looking closely)

I think I teach her brother - good
little artist. Maybe she's good at
the violin. She's pretty, too.

VANESSA

Poor kid.

Anne looks momentarily concerned for her friend.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. NIGHT

Vanessa and Anne are walking home, animated like they've been drinking. Jake drives up, toots and makes a lascivious gesture. They grin back at him.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY. NIGHT

Jake, Vanessa and Anne climb the stairs for Jake and Anne's flat, the girls a little unsteady on their feet. Jake is in full flow, expounding semi-drunkenly on something.

JAKE

So you've got them all off on different tangents, all trying for the same thing, all bringing their personal credentials to the table -

ANNE

(bumping into wall)
Nightmare!

VANESSA

Tricky one.

JAKE

(touch put out)
Well it's not that inconceivable.
(to Anne)
You look like one of the seven dwarfs in that hat.

ANNE

Which one?

JAKE

I'm not committing myself there.

The girls cackle as Jake ushers them into the flat.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

ANNE

Sit down, Vanessa.

JAKE

Sweetheart, she's not a dog.

VANESSA

(sitting poised)
A good sofa is welcomed by man and dog alike!

60

Anne exits. Jake and Vanessa sit observing each other. The phone rings O.S.. Jake exits. Vanessa sits blank-faced.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake comes back in. Vanessa brightens. Anne comes in with two glasses of water, hands one to Vanessa.

JAKE
Since you ladies are passed the
aperitif stage, how about I take
you straight to dinner.

ANNE
Ooooh...what's the occasion?

JAKE
Who needs one of those?

VANESSA
What is an occasion anyway?

Jake leans forward, gazes into Vanessa's open face.

JAKE
Quite - Vanessa.
(pregnant pause)
But it so happens, in this instance
there is one.

ANNE
Oh? What?

Jake shoots Anne a look, leans back deep into his chair.

JAKE
In case you hadn't realised, which
it seems you hadn't - I am finally
having a script breakthrough. As
yet, I prefer to stay in the
present tense. Let us just say, the
gods have honoured me with divine
inspiration...

ANNE
(exuberant)
Perfect reason to celebrate, I'd
say!

VANESSA
(intimately)
That's great, Jake. Stagnation's
the worst.

Encouraged, Jake holds Vanessa's eyes.

JAKE
It is...a very good development.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Vanessa's eyes wander and Jake works lamely to bring them back. Anne, busy organising her pile of papers on the desk, appears oblivious.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I was beginning to think, there, I was more autistic than artistic.

ANNE

(disapproving)

Jake!

JAKE

(with pomp)

So - are we in an Italian or a French mood?

Vanessa surprises both Jake and Anne by getting up as if she's going.

VANESSA

I won't come, thanks. Rehearsing all day tomorrow.

Jake lunges at her, sending her back down into the sofa.

JAKE

But you have to come - I have an excellent merlot so it ought to be French really -

Anne is taken aback by Jake's expressionism. Vanessa acts unphased.

ANNE

Vanessa, honestly - you can't seriously leave me alone with him!

Vanessa laughs appropriately, displaying confusion. Jake throws up his arms - back in the lap of the gods again.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S EN SUITE. NIGHT

In Calvin Klein boxers Jake replaces his toothbrush and rinses his mouth, catching his keen eye in the mirror like he's sharing with himself a secret. Checks out his biceps.

In her baby dolls, Anne lies on top of the duvet smiling at the wall. Jake looks her over apprehensively.

ANNE

That was fun. Vanessa can be charming.

She looks lovingly to Jake, who is still hovering over her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stretching up, she pulls him down to her. He lies quietly perturbed as she nuzzles in, reaching into his boxers.

JAKE

Uh - actually, I have an early meeting -

Anne hesitates a moment, then hurls herself off the bed.

ANNE

What am I doing wrong? I guess I'm not exciting enough, not a gorgeous model or actress - and too old!

She stands rigid, upset. She looks faded and vulnerable. Jake is trying hard not to show guilt.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Have your bed back to yourself -

JAKE

(not looking at her)
Don't be daft - stay here.

Anne stands there a few beats, fists clenched, otherwise softening. She crawls under the duvet, turns her back to him. Still on top of the duvet, Jake looks anxiously to the door. Lays his arm woodenly across Anne.

INT. CORNER SHOP. NIGHT

Damien and Jake meet at the till. Damien wears a suit, tie loose. Jake looks casual dapper. Damien hands the SHOPKEEPER cash for soda water, turns onto Jake a friendly smile.

DAMIEN

How's the film business?

JAKE

Yeah, not bad. And the, er -

DAMIEN

Money business.

JAKE

Happy, I hope.

Damien selects a large bar of chocolate.

DAMIEN

(disarming grin)
So happy it'll be the death of me.

JAKE

Glad to hear it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake slaps a magazine onto the counter.

JAKE (CONT'D)

For Anne. She says it's for her
PMT, but as far as I can see it
makes it worse.

DAMIEN

You headed back?

JAKE

Back to the computer, yes.

They sidle out like old buddies. The SHOPKEEPER slyly picks up a copy of Jake's mag, and the chocolate Damien bought.

INT. SMALL THEATRE STAGE. NIGHT

In dance casuals, face plaintive, Vanessa sits on the sidelines away from the congregating other actors.

Through her P.O.V. go in on the dynamic between the DIRECTOR and an ACTRESS, exaggerating his authority, her submissiveness...

INT/EXT. SILVER MERC CONVERTIBLE TRAVELLING COUNTRY ROAD. DAY

Sunset hour. Vanessa drives Damien's convertible, top open, through outer London countryside. She wears a gold dress, hair blowing loose, singing along to rock on the radio.

INT. STUNNING COUNTRY HOUSE. NIGHT

Vanessa is approved of by a glamorous older woman who ushers her into a large space characterised by a mix of styles: antique chaise-longues, Rococo chairs, gilded C 17th Italian paintings, huge vases of lillies, framed David Baileys, a corner hammock, tribal instruments. The dressy crowd is loud, high on everything. Lots of bared female parts and predatory men. Champagne glasses catch the light from chandeliers. Light soul/funk plays.

Vanessa flashes a last look of helplessness before giving herself over to the greater power.

INT/EXT. MERCEDES SEDAN TRAVELLING COUNTRY ROAD. NIGHT

Jake is driving happily. He is clean shaven and slick haired in an Armani suit and a white T-shirt.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE OF BEFORE. NIGHT

Jake flutters, flirting and laughing through the crowd. The names of directors, actors and films float above the general noise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A young man steps forward to shake Jake's hand and he smiles and nods, and resumes his conversation with an attractive young lady. Another girl grabs and kisses him, her male companion grinning stupidly.

Jake spots Vanessa - the only one in a small group who isn't playing for attention. He makes his excuses, goes after her.

JAKE

Vanessa! Had I thought, I'd have suggested we travel down together.

Vanessa disengages herself from her group.

VANESSA

Oh hi Jake. I didn't think, either.

JAKE

(confidentially)

You realise, neither of us could have afforded to miss this.

Vanessa looks at him as though uncertain as to whether or not he is a good development. Awkwardly, they move together out of the way of an over-vivacious couple.

Jake goes after a waiter with a drinks tray. Vanessa slow pivots like she's warding off approach from all sides, seeming to look through people rather than at them.

Jake returns with two champagnes, gives Vanessa one. He looks into her distracted eyes, something in them putting him off. He scans the room by way of diversion.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Personally, I like how these crazy gatherings inspire that Stanley Kubrick, slow-dance observation thing.

Through Jake's P.O.V. take in bits of bodies, contorted painted mouths, flaring nostrils and gleaming manes...imagine, with him, flies congregating thickly around the floating luxury nibbles...

JAKE (CONT'D)

Peter Greenaway even. Slightly more outdated, sure.

He takes his mouth close to Vanessa's ear, lips lingering on her shining hair.

JAKE (CONT'D)

That guy over there in the red shirt's a real prick. Don't ask.

Vanessa looks like she's got no intention of doing so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA
 (out of the blue)
 Is Anne okay lately, Jake?

Jake stares at her immaculately painted mouth.

JAKE
 Is what... Oh you know, as we all
 are - fighting disillusionment,
 age, the big city - all of that.

Vanessa steps back - regards him carefully from a safe distance.

VANESSA
 There is, of course, the country
 idyll option. And you don't seem
 that old.

Jake throws her a wary glance.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Maybe not quite time for the
 cottage in the South of France and
 the 'first editions' collection.

JAKE
 Hey - I'm saving my Green Shield
 stamps already.

Vanessa is pounced on by the 'PRICK' in the red shirt (last page) who sweeps her O.S. like he's known her for 20 years. Jake wanders disenchanted into the fray.

INT. VERY STYLISH KITCHEN. NIGHT

The guy in the RED SHIRT hangs over Vanessa as she downs tap water from a big glass, ignoring him.

INT. MAIN PARTY ROOM OF BEFORE. NIGHT

Vanessa takes position against the wall. Jake heads for her.

JAKE
 How does a beautiful girl like you
 wrestle free of the hoards?

Vanessa smiles coyly, presses herself further into the wall.

VANESSA
 I was searching out my friend.
 Seems she's abandoned me to these
 people for the night.

Jake steps in closer, his peacock feathers wilting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

I appologise for my inadequacies.

VANESSA

Oh look, you don't want me stopping
you being the butterfly.

JAKE

(playfully)

Is that an insult? I suspect you're
a girl who likes taking swipes at
the male ego.

(breathing in her face)

Your friend nicer?

VANESSA

(playfully back)

She spits men out before she takes
them in. And you're taken. And
you're drunk.

Jake takes on a sober cast.

JAKE

I am taken, it seems. By what, I
sometimes wonder.

VANESSA

Isn't that what its all about -
marriage - relationships.

(delayed)

I can't believe Jemima's stood me
up. We were staying overnight,
making a weekend of it.

Jake's eyes widen, his face on hold -

JAKE

That's okay - I'm, um, staying too,
and Anne's coming up for lunch
tomorrow - you can hang with us.
Where, um - are you staying?

VANESSA

The pub up the road. Jemima
arranged it. I hope she hasn't had
an accident.

Jake takes a gulp of wine and is seized by a coughing fit.
Vanessa pats him on the back, laughing.

JAKE

You realise it's haunted - known
fact.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA
 (enigmatic)
 I believe we are only haunted by
 ourselves in this life...

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE. NIGHT

Jake and Vanessa are assessing the night, a touch
 dishevelled, drunker. Sitting shoulder to shoulder.

JAKE
 Did you see fairies when you were a
 child, like little girls are meant
 to?

VANESSA
 Not that I can remember. I think I
 wanted to badly. My sister did...
 The good things always happened to
 her...

Jake is staring at the sky like he's about to burst into
 song.

Vanessa is looking at the ground, huddled into her jacket.

JAKE
 Did you know Uranus (he pronounces
 it 'your anus') is on it's side due
 to an early injury?

Become the introverted child, Vanessa says nothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 In America, it's pronounced Ur-in-
 us. They think that's less dirty,
 but to me it just says 'Urine'.

VANESSA
 I didn't know Uranus (she
 pronounces it 'your anus') had been
 injured.

Jake winces bawdily - getting off on her 'talking dirty'.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR/PUB ROOMS. NIGHT

Vanessa totters along the dour corridor trailing Jake who is
 meandering along in front of her.

Jake stops at a door, fumbles for a key, catches her eye and
 nods 'goodnight' - as Vanessa continues on.

INT. VANESSA'S ROOM. NIGHT

In her silk robe Vanessa sits knees bunched up on the bed. Taking in her tacky surroundings, she looks like a fearful youngster. She stares with muted horror at a terrible, cheaply framed print of a twee English landscape.

INT. JAKE'S ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa stands facing the door, hair tousled, meticulously arranging her robe. Jake is sat up in bed looking done-in. Above his head the traditional bad English heritage painting.

Hand on the door knob, Vanessa turns to him glassy-eyed.

VANESSA

One, two, three four five,
Once I caught a fish alive,
Six, seven, eight nine ten,
Then I let it go again...
Why did I let it go?
Because it bit my finger so...

She leaves, shutting the door behind her. Jake switches out the light and collapses.

INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR/PUB ROOMS. DAY

A bedraggled Jake lurks at Vanessa's door. He puts his hand out to knock, draws it away, goes to knock again - freezes. He shuffles off - goes back and knocks commandingly. Ear to the door he hears the shower - makes a self-conscious retreat.

EXT. COURTYARD/PARKING AREA OUTSIDE PUB. DAY

Worse for wear, Jake sits at a bench table nursing a black coffee. A FLOPPY DOG bumbles over and he pats it sparely, like he's in pain (hangover mainly).

Behind him, Vanessa is leaving the pub. The DOG runs at her and she squats to pet it. She spots Jake - creeps over to her car like she doesn't want him to see her, eyes not leaving him. The dog follows her, squealing for attention. Alerted by the dog, Jake sees Vanessa and jumps up.

JAKE

(in hot pursuit)
Vanessa! Stay, have some lunch -
Anne's due -
(commandingly)
Sit down over there -
(points to where he was
sitting.)
I'll go and get you a coffee.

CONTINUED:

Vanessa wavers, an odd look on her face, more than confusion. She turns slowly to the table - and Jake practically runs off inside, as though if he falters she'll disappear in a puff.

INT. MALE PUB TOILETS. DAY

Jake brandishes his phone amongst the urinals.

JAKE
(speed rehearsal)
Darling, I've run into some people
from last night. We'll be talking
work, you won't like them -

He starts nervously pressing in numbers, stuffs it up, tries again, stuffs up again, curses - third time lucky.

EXT. COURTYARD/PARKING AREA. DAY

From her car seat Vanessa smiles at Jake, approaching hurriedly, precariously with two cups of coffee. He stands there meekly looking at her - quickly getting the shits with the FLOPPY DOG bouncing around at his feet.

VANESSA
(starting engine)
That was fun, last night...

Anne pulls up in her baby blue 2 CV, gets out all exuberant - as Jake looks dumbly on. Vanessa turns off her engine.

ANNE
Looks like you two have just seen
the ghost of the -
(looks up at sign)
Green Dragon (for example).
(to Jake)
You look terrible, darling. Good
night?

Vanessa is trying not to appear stressed.

JAKE
Thanks. And Vanessa doesn't believe
in ghosts. And she's just leaving.

ANNE
(to Vanessa)
Really, Vanessa! To me ghosts are
part of the riches of the unknown.
You're not really leaving are you?

Jake - still clutching the two coffees, the DOG still threatening to send them flying - looks acceptant that he is in fate's hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

Oh...sure...home can wait.

She gets out. The three of them trail off flanked by the DOG.

EXT. REGENTS PARK. DAY

Anne & Vanessa sit on a bench. People hurry, and mooch, by.

ANNE

(watching the birds)

When magpies swoop like they want to take you out, it's not because they're protecting their nests, you know. They're bored, apparently. Or in a belligerent mood.

Vanessa half smiles. Seems very relaxed.

VANESSA

Why should they be purer of motive than any other creature.

She becomes transfixed by the pendulum swing of a PONYTAIL.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I hope when I wear a ponytail it doesn't swing like that.

A forty odd woman with a baby passes by, Anne staring.

ANNE

I wonder if that'll be me, last minute job. She looks buggered. D'you reckon it's easier young or are you just buggered anyway?

VANESSA

I'd rather a dog, personally.

Anne sighs, fixating on a care-free young girl.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

In a fair world we'd get one life to procreate in and one where we don't have to think about it. We should at least get ten more years before our eggs run dry.

Without warning Anne bursts into tears. Exclaiming, Vanessa puts her arms around her, genuinely concerned for her friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

I'm sorry - it's just, I see
through you what I have to do for
myself. And that it's life or death
for my spirit -

She rises dramatically.

ANNE (CONT'D)

Let's go -

She takes off stridently for the park gates.

EXT. ROSE GARDEN REGENT'S PARK. DAY

Hazy dream feel. Alone in the hedged-in space, Vanessa sits on a bench reading aloud a plaque dedicated to a sick Victorian boy who loved this secret garden. She meditates on the ordered prettiness of the roses, gets up and wanders to the central pond with its statuette and lilies. A couple enter breaking the spell, and she leaves.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Vanessa and Anne are in collusion on the sofa.

ANNE

What about my hair? Is it boring?

VANESSA

Your hair's fine, maybe some more
layers. The bohemian look suits you
and it's still quite 'in'.

ANNE

But anything on my hips wants to
fall to my ankles. I wish I had
some shape, like you.

VANESSA

Anne, look - you're a pretty woman.
You may as well believe it. You're
the one to benefit.

ANNE

Jake would like me to change some
aspects...

VANESSA

(tersely)
Forget Jake. Do it for you.

INT. YOGA CLASS. NIGHT

Indian music. Jemima and Vanessa in half lotus at the back.
People spread their mats in silence, assume relaxation poses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

(low voice)

Do you ever wonder what it is to be mad...? I mean, not just off balance or neurotic.

JEMIMA

(circling neck)

Of course. Man, do I need yoga!

VANESSA

I've been having the strangest thoughts - some so Fellini I'm left with the oddest aftertaste.

A passing YOGA BABE brushes Vanessa, to which she squeezes her eyes shut and shakes her head. The meditation music battles through the busily settling class.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

They're like dreams, but I'm awake. Hallucinations... One, this dark, skinned man - I mean dark hair, no skin - was laid flat sprouting a dozen daffodils like yellow eyes. I had that one walking to the shop.

JEMIMA

Fantastic. Strong, simple, surreal. Like when you're delirious with the flu.

VANESSA

Well that one's as respectable as they get. And I haven't had flu.

The TEACHER lights candles, casts benevolent smiles. All eyes are on him - apart from Vanessa and Jemima.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(ethereal)

They drift in and out, usually when I'm going to sleep.

Jemima plays with her toes. Both girls stand to attention, taking position with the class.

JEMIMA

(leaning into Vanessa)

Everything is one big wierd Head Space to me anyway, honey. Chill...

INT. LOUNGE ROOM COUNTRY HOTEL. DAY

Vanessa and Damien loll on a swallow-up sofa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMIEN

I think I'm finally coming down.

VANESSA

That's because there's no Financial Times in sight.

(musing)

I just wish...I wasn't wishing my play away. I wish I loved it.

DAMIEN

You are a funny thing.

He puts his arms around her, kisses her tenderly.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Vanessa seems absorbed in her food. Damien studies her, looks a bit miffed.

DAMIEN

I was expecting you to have more to say. This not up to your standards?

She turns a passive, wounded face up to him.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

We seem to have lost the delicate art of lovers' conversation.

Vanessa looks at him like she is somewhere more important.

VANESSA

What does it mean, two peas in a pod?

(scoffs)

Is that, like, supposed to be romantic perfection?

DAMIEN

(sighs, resigned)

This is what I get for picking an actress. A lot of the time I might as well be a little green ball on someone's plate...not dismissing the possibility of random promotion to minted pea.

INT. HOTEL BEDROOM. NIGHT

Damien is on his back like a handsome sarcophagus, Vanessa cuddled up to his side. The feel is comfortably post-sex.

EXT. WOODS. DAY

Damien leads Vanessa through the trees, leaves crunching evocatively.

DAMIEN

...so he says, 'You know why the Bolshoi Ballet is the metaphor for Russia?' And I say, 'No, but I get the gist.' And he gives me a covert look and says, 'I'll tell you later' and walks off, me saying after him 'I thought Bond is dead!'

VANESSA

Okay. So what was it?

DAMIEN

(delayed)

He was being an idiot.

VANESSA

I mean the Bolshoi Ballet metaphor.

DAMIEN

That it's still supposedly the People's Theatre, but the mafia buys all the cheap tickets and flogs them with a massive mark up to the new rich.

VANESSA

(flatly)

How un-surprising.

Damien gives her a big bear hug that practically winds her.

DAMIEN

Unlike someone I know -

He just misses treading on a trap, exclaims furiously -

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Fucking arseholes should be shot!

Vanessa registers duly shocked. Damien Still flustered they continue side by side. A baby deer charges past and they remark enthusiastically on the event in a Disney tone.

As though the deer was a catalyst, Damien brings them to a stop, puts his arms lovingly around Vanessa.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

What you were saying earlier,
about those peas -

CONTINUED:

A mobile goes off and he dives into his pocket for it - with an apologetic glance at Vanessa falls against a tree, an expectant look on his face as he launches into animated money-market talk. Vanessa picks out her own large tree - for moral, not just spinal support.

INT. SCHOOL COMMON ROOM. DAY

A droopy Anne makes two instant coffees. A WAN LOOKING MAN in his late forties, with bad posture, takes a mug of pallid liquid from her with mournful acknowledgement. (The two of them caught up in their parallel lost dreams)

INT. CITY CLOTHES BOUTIQUE. DAY

Anne rifles through the racks, pulls out a low-slung skirt and holds it against herself in the mirror. A VOLUPTUOUS SHOP GIRL looks on dully from behind the counter.

SHOP GIRL

That'll look great with your hips.

ANNE

You mean none.

The girl emerges from behind the counter cupping her ample thighs, as Anne darts for the changing room with the skirt.

INT. SMALL THEATRE OF BEFORE. NIGHT

In a long black leather coat Jake skulks through the door of the darkened theatre. Through his P.O.V. the commenced performance is mumbled, incoherent words. He slips into a back seat, staring at the modern dressed actors on the stage - NO Vanessa - the same low, hectic sounds continuing to fill his ears as though he's hearing deficient.

Then THROUGH HIS P.O.V. these sounds morph into:-

VANESSA (V.O.)

I come for you but I do not know
it, I take you and only you feel
it...

The image of Vanessa's face - bloodless, red lipped and sunken eyed - obliterates through Jake's P.O.V. the entire stage.

EXT. OUTSIDE THEATRE. NIGHT

Jake scarpers as the crowd emerges.

Lurking alone outside the abandoned theatre, Anne sees Vanessa, dashes over to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

(gushes)

You were great - you were just so
- so not you, basically -

Vanessa laughs, eyes Anne fondly.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I wish Jake could have made it.

VANESSA

(face clouding)

Oh - he didn't?

ANNE

Post production on that beastly ad.
He will soon - he really wants to.

Anne proudly takes Vanessa's arm and leads her off.

INT. VANESSA & DAMIEN'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa is at the desk writing. Damien enters, drops his
briefcase and loosens his tie.

DAMIEN

What you doing there, Babe?

VANESSA

Writing to my sister.

INSERT - LETTER:

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

'I feel like a creeper with nothing
to wind my new growth around...'

She shields the letter from his scrutiny like a school kid.

DAMIEN

When do I get to meet this fancy
French sister of yours?

He leaves the room.

INSERT - LETTER:

VANESSA (V.O.)

'It's worse, several small roles up
the ladder than it is staring dewy-
eyed up from the very bottom...'

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Vanessa removes the steaming crackling steamer, wrinkles her
nose to burn smell, dumps the pan in the sink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tap drip hits the pan and sizzles with each drip, drip, drip - like a spitting geyser through her P.O.V., virtually hypnotising her.

INT. JAKE'S CITY OFFICE. DAY

Jake is on The Net. Over his shoulder read 'Sleep Disorders...'. Andy is bent over his desk surrounded by sheets of figures.

JAKE

Despite The Net's greater aspects, like black market opportunity and making obsolete the top shelf of the newsagent's - I do rather miss the library experience of old.

ANDY

Just what's so good about smelly plastic and old paper, and crazies exposing themselves behind shelves.

Jake turns to face Andy like he's the deranged faculty.

JAKE

I mean the grandiose version, stupid - full of civic pride, in wonderful old brickwork.

ANDY

You think you don't get perverts in those ones? And don't call me stupid.

Jake shuns his computer, shakes his head wryly and sighs.

JAKE

You read any Edgar Allen Poe? This fabulous short story came back to me the other day -

Andy looks at him with distilled interest.

JAKE (CONT'D)

There's this old fellow with some lung disease, and this experimental scientist dude mesmerises him - his thing messing with the sleep state. When the old boy dies he keeps him talking - Poe just goes on and on about his vibrating swollen tongue!

Andy watches like Jake's a performing seal.

CONTINUED:

JAKE (CONT'D)

There's this bit about rolling eyes doing this, quote, 'uneasy inward examination' only - according to our experimenter - seen in sleepwalking cases.

ANDY

(undisguised irony)

Excellent. You're using all this?

Jake twitches defensively - put on the spot.

JAKE

Bits. It *is* sleep phenomena, which is after all what I'm dealing with.

Jake swings back around to the Internet.

JAKE (CONT'D)

There's no harm making the odd fantastical allusion...subliminal desires...fetishistic carnal impulses - you know the sort of thing.

Andy looks at him with wary concern.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Need I say, Almadova rather than Hammer House of Horror.

Jake looks at Andy wide-eyed, vying for approval.

JAKE (CONT'D)

She has to be interesting, see.

ANDY

Sounds like a winner, truly.

91 Giving Jake a look of strained respect for his artistic sensibilities, Andy walks out - leaving Jake face-to-face with his fantasy image of VANESSA'S inward-looking hollow gaze...

INSERT - REPLAY
(PAGE 49):

VANESSA

(glassy eyed)

One, two, three four five,
Once I caught a fish alive -
Six, seven, eight nine ten,
Then I let it go again...
Why did I let it go?
Because it bit my finger so...

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Jake is pacing like an expectant tiger in his C.K. boxers. In the en suite he smooths back his hair, sucks in his middle, inspects his gums. Sticks out his tongue gruesomely.

JAKE
(to mirror)
Big, black, swollen tongue...

He listens like a preying animal to the penetrating silence.

INT. VANESSA'S FRONT DOOR. NIGHT

In her silk robe, Vanessa sleepily opens her front door to a panther alert Jake. Voices in the background.

JAKE
You alright? Could have sworn I
heard you call out, kind of
panicky. Damien's not here, right?

VANESSA
Right. I was watching television -
that must have been what you heard.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Jake chuckles at the telly from the sofa, Vanessa standing taking in his presence.

JAKE
Since I'm here -
(leans forward)
Vanessa, I'm worried about Anne.
Can you give me any pointers?

VANESSA
I could try you. Want a drink? I've
only got brandy.

She gets brandy and two glasses. They sit on the sofa, eyes on the telly like it's a safety mechanism.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
What it is, is frustration.

JAKE
Uh? You're, uh, frustrated...?

VANESSA
Not me - Anne. You said you were
worried about her.

Jake straightens up, trying not to act preoccupied by her proximity. Vanessa pours brandy.

CONTINUED:

JAKE

What makes you, ummm, think
she's frustrated?

Vanessa laughs - ambiguous whether at Jake or the situation
or both. She and Jake skull back the brandy in unison.

VANESSA

She does. Don't you two talk?

She assesses a 'concerned' Jake, a sparkle in her eyes.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I don't necessarily mean right now.

Jake's eyes flash opportunistically (in response to the
sparkle in hers?).

JAKE

Especially since she's knocked
herself out again - only way she
sleeps these days.

But Vanessa has drifted off like she's contemplating Anne's
fate - leaving Jake to generously refill their glasses.

VANESSA

She's scared she's misplaced her
spirit forever.

JAKE

Well, uh, that's a help. I'm sure
you women are the true shamans.

(itches his chin)

So how's it all going - with
Damien - with your play - ?

(itches his nose)

Anne was impressed - by you if not
The vehicle.

Vanessa swivels round so she sees him better, shifts
provocatively onto one bare leg - Jake moving in closer.

VANESSA

I'm getting reasonable feedback
anyway. Some auditions should come
out of it.

JAKE

So it could be your catapult to
stardom after all!

VANESSA

I don't know about that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She eyes him favourably as if for the first time. He feigns ignorance, looks at the TV. Vanessa downs the second brandy. Jake follows suite.

JAKE

I, for one, can say inspiration
is the better part of valour -

VANESSA

(tuning in)
You...mean your film..?

JAKE

Has received its vital injection.
No going back.

VANESSA

That's great. Obviously, then, it's
still going well.

Jake draws breath importantly, making sure to catch her eye -

JAKE

If you have an idea that turns
you on - the creative channels
channel themselves correctly
and out it comes -

Vanessa puts her hand in her hair, messes it up a little, staring absorbedly at Jake as he luxuriates in satisfaction.

JAKE (CONT'D)

...the pictures rule your head
until you give them proper vent.

He goes to stroke her leg and she inches away - Jake acting the innocent.

INT. VANESSA'S FRONT DOOR. NIGHT.

The two of them hover awkwardly in the doorway. Suddenly Jake throws up his arms -

JAKE

Shit! In my urgency to rescue you I
forgot my key - and there's no way
I'll be able to wake Anne up!

Vanessa goes to the hall table, picks up the heart key ring.

VANESSA

I have your spare set, remember.

Jake takes the key ring with exaggerated relief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

Ah - excellent. And, uh -
 (clears throat)
 You may just be interested in my
 female lead. We'll talk, huh? I've
 got a producer hot to trot.

He throws her a wink as he walks nonchalantly off - stopping
 in his tracks -

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'll bring these straight back.
 Much better you keep them -

Vanessa stands looking after him blankly.

INT. JAKE'S APARTMENT. DAY

A knackered and stressed Jake dials on the main phone. A
 muffled mobile rings and he runs around the flat like a
 headless chicken, eventually finding it down the back of the
 sofa. He gathers his briefcase, wallet, jacket and keys up
 off a chair - and flies out the door.

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE. DAY

Next to a MOTHER AND DAUGHTER DUO, Jake battles dozing off.

MOTHER

(to daughter)
 ...'e says 'e never knows what
 she'll get up to - the other night
 she was 'eaded out the front door
 before 'e got to 'er.
 (low voice)
 Reckon 'e should take 'er to a
 shrink meeself - before she does
 'erself or anyone else any 'arm -

Alerted, Jake cranes his neck to listen.

DAUGHTER

Reckon they should 'ave an 'art to
 'art.

MOTHER

They've tried all that, 'n she says
 she's never bin anywhere in 'er
 sleep but the bed.

DAUGHTER

Well, Mum, I dunno. Rarver 'im van
 me. She'll end up God knows where.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake surveys the other passengers for signs of mutual fascination, finds not the slightest indication. The train grinds to a halt and very self-consciously Jake alights.

INT. VERY ENGLISH STUDY. DAY

A PSYCHIATRIST in his fifties, with a strong professional presence, sits in full tweeds in a leather chair exuding a studied calm. A stately antique desk lies between him and Jake. Shelves of leather bound books adorn the room.

JAKE

You see, I haven't come to be analysed.

(nervous laugh)

Not today. What I need - is information.

The PSYCHIATRIST nods obliquely.

EXT. SOHO SOMEWHERE. DAY

Vanessa is bouncing along, girly ponytail swinging (humourous back ref. p.51). She eyes herself in a shop window with a small smile - disappears into a smart gym.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S ROOMS OF BEFORE. DAY

In conversation -

SHRINK

Well alcohol can, so to speak, help access the deeper unconscious, enabling it to act covertly under its own dictate.

JAKE

(intellectual frown)

I suppose the person would have to be fairly deranged to act in any extreme manner -

SHRINK

As with any behavioural problem, the hidden disorder can act out arbitrarily under whatever precept originally shaped it.

JAKE

(VERY REAL frown)

So...any given situation could exacerbate it...?

SHRINK

Of course, every case is peculiar to itself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

So - a person could have sex in their sleep and have no idea of it when they're awake?

SHRINK

(brightens)

Why not. Sex being fundamentally a primal function - throughout which, of course, we are able to remain essentially detached.

JAKE

That a lesson we boys learn early.

He assumes a matey, boys together kind of slouch.

SHRINK

Girls too for that matter. Much as they, and social convention, like to think otherwise.

Momentarily put out, Jake nods humble allegiance.

The shrink gets up, wanders to the window. Looks out wistfully.

SHRINK (CONT'D)

Hence metaphors like female vampirism...lunacy...

INT. 'GRANDIOSE' CITY REFERENCE LIBRARY. DAY

Jake manically photocopies pages from a large tome.

INT. JAKE'S CITY OFFICE. DAY

Jake enters in a flurry, slaps his photocopies on his desk. He flicks purposefully through them, hunching over a chosen one brandishing a fluro green highlighter pen, marking a particular paragraph profusely.

With a gathering sense of urgency, Jake reads aloud the following:-

JAKE

'Disorders Of Arousal... It is usually difficult to awaken a sleepwalker during an episode...more extreme cases may involve potentially injurious or violent behaviour, i.e. loading shotguns, turning on the stove ...emphasis upon lack of psychiatric significance...'

INT. TUBE CARRIAGE. DAY

Briefcase up to his chest, Jake sits beside a couple of STUDENT TYPES going through a PILE OF SNAPSHOTS. He eyes the photos with mild interest - becomes drawn in by this reverential series of elaborate deserts, every configuration of cream and chocolate available, that is clearly of deep significance to the pair.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY OF CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Jake and Vanessa lean casually against the wall.

VANESSA

I wouldn't mind knowing what you'll have me doing!

JAKE

Nothing harmful to your career, I hope.

(slightly smug)

We'll discuss it soon - so I know you're keen.

Vanessa takes a step away from him, regards him coolly.

VANESSA

I'm an actor remember. I'm not that easily phased.

Jake shoots her a sly smile, makes a boyish dive for the stairs as she heads for outside.

INT. COSY (SOHO) BAR (SAME AS EARLIER). NIGHT

Vanessa and Jemima share a bottle of wine. Both are in jeans. Vanessa's hair is after-play curled.

VANESSA

So my neighbour - remember? - is offering me a role in his film.

JEMIMA

Yeah? What then, porno?

VANESSA

His feature. He hasn't shown me anything yet, but he thinks it's great.

JEMIMA

Bad sign. What's it about then?

VANESSA

Don't know...we're meeting to talk about it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Guess I'm open, blowing in the wind
as we have to.

(snaps out of it)

Anyway, I won't disregard it before
I know more.

JEMIMA

You sure he doesn't just want to
sleep with you? Isn't his wife kind
of a dud?

VANESSA

I never said that. She's just lost.

JEMIMA

Well darling, strikes me there's
pitfalls there big as the Grand
Canyon. Call me a cynic -

VANESSA

Hey, I'm only telling you about a
tentative possibility. I reckon
you're jealous!

JEMIMA

Bullshit. I've been there honey,
many times. If I'd believed all the
desperados who've come to me in the
last couple of years, I'd be
starring in three box office hits
by last Xmas.

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Vanessa gets up in an angry rush, stands over Jemima
threateningly. Jemima shrinks visibly.

VANESSA

You know exactly how I feel about
all that, don't paint me the dumb
broard -

She deflates, looks deeply disturbed and embarrassed. Starts
rubbing her temples.

INT. SAME LOCAL CAFE. DAY

Vanessa and Anne are in their window seat. Anne looks tired,
sips herbal tea.

ANNE

I'd kill for a coffee. But I've had
my three for the week. In Ayurvedic
my constitution is mainly Vata - in
short that means I'm a bundle of
nerves.

Vanessa looks at her as if to say 'You don't say...'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

So what am I then?

ANNE

I'd say you have Vata too, you're slim and creative. But you've enough Kapha to keep you steady. Only some though. You're hardly slug-like.

VANESSA

Slug-like?

ANNE

You know, sluggish metabolism. Kaphas need exercise - though they naturally have glowing skin like yours. They're the ones propagate The System, that their worst quality. Sort of social cart horses. Most likely 'O' types.

VANESSA

'O' types?

ANNE

That's a blood type.

VANESSA

Oh, yes.

(thinks)

I think I'd rather be part cart horse than part slug - if I had the choice -

Anne leans forward on her elbows, holds Vanessa's eyes.

ANNE

(earnest)

We predominantly Vata types are the force of real change. Nothing worth happening would happen without us.

VANESSA

So - we're kind of human reindeer. Fast, and in possession of a natural weapon.

Anne is staring with sudden gravity at the nearest cute waitress.

ANNE

I've decided - to assure myself that Jake is faithful. For my sense of self.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA

What?

ANNE

Perhaps, they are only discreet
flings with waitresses and
actresses - just an educated guess.
(apologetic smile)
Of course, I don't mean all
actresses.

Vanessa looks at her sympathetically.

ANNE (CONT'D)

I'm no fool. Germaine Greer may be
still kicking, but so is the
casting couch - even if it too has
had to adapt to age.

Vanessa assumes the role of passive confidante.

ANNE (CONT'D)

(tough whimsical)
I suppose men aren't the ones
grounded by periods and babies.
Maybe it's pathological.

VANESSA

You could, uh, be wrong about Jake.

ANNE

(softening)
I know. It's just that something's
not right. Maybe it's me.

Vanessa makes a 'from the heart' grimace - like it's all just too hard.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S DOORWAY. DAY

Anne clutches a travel bag, Jake hovering behind her. She looks tired. Gives Jake a chaste kiss.

ANNE

See you day after tomorrow, love.

JAKE

Send my regards to Sukie.

ANNE

I'll call tomorrow.

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She blows a kiss and is subsumed by the communal hallway. Jake closes the flat door slowly and softly behind her.

Vanessa pulls away from Jake, face down naked on the rug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA

(fixing robe)

Then I let him go again,
When will it snow again...
Then I let him go again,
When will it honey rain...

Cock-eyed, Jake strains to see her glide away.

JAKE

Sensible conversation no
requirement -

He sinks his face back down into the rug, lies inert.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa and Jake are on the sofa, Vanessa on top, her robe hanging over them - by now a mascot. She pulls away, and he holds her at arm's length, stares into her zombie eyes.

VANESSA

Jack Sprat could eat no fat,
His wife could eat no lean,
And so between the two of them
They licked the platter clean.

She starts to struggle in his hold. He fights back.

JAKE

Nothing beats pillow talk. But I do
question this aversion of Jack's to
fat - and what exactly did his wife
dislike about the lean, more
usually preferred cuts?

Vanessa freezes, stares into his eyes as if she perceives him on a new level where his input might in some way compute...

JAKE (CONT'D)

(transfixed)

What, I ask, is on this platter -
this one here? And our little fishy
alive, once swimming around merrily
when not taking the tops off
fingers - where have they all gone?

Vanessa collapses heavily as Jake's arms give out, winding him.

INT. SMALL THEATRE OF BEFORE. NIGHT

Jake is in the front row watching Vanessa laid out on a couch in an Ikea sitting room, the coffee table strewn with women's magazines.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA (ON THE PHONE)
 ...something has to give - and I'm
 afraid it will be me - and I'm
 afraid of that...

THE GUY next to Jake chuckles. Jake remains 'seriously' engrossed.

INT. THEATRE CROWD RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Vanessa, hair still curled, and Jake consume pasta and wine. Jake attends not so well to his pasta.

JAKE
 You'll be able to capitalise on
 your talents, like you can't in
 that crap play.

VANESSA
 (mock considers)
 Oh, okay, sounds acceptable.
 (pushes her chair back)
 Back in a minute -

Taking up her bag she rises and walks off - in a tight dress the effect of which is not lost on Jake.

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TIME LAPSE -

Through Jake's P.O.V. minutes become seconds, as he fast-motion tracks the dining configurations around him.

Vanessa slides back into her seat, not catching his over-stimulated eye. Jake sniffs the air ostentatiously.

JAKE
 You had a cigarette. For that, tell
 me the meaning of the word
 'panspermatism'.

VANESSA
 I really have no idea. Is my
 punishment that you are actually
 going to tell me?

JAKE
 Yes. It is the theory that life was
 brought to Earth by means of germs
 carried by meteorites.

VANESSA
 (snorts a laugh)
 You are quite the astronomer ,
 aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake responds with a hiccup of a laugh, thrown for a second by her 'intimate' back reference (the Uranus conversation). He pushes his pasta away - beyond minor things like food.

JAKE

So - for what you are about to receive, let me challenge you not to be truly grateful.

VANESSA

(delayed)

I'd like to know just how grateful I should be. I'm sure I've not had an audition like this before.

JAKE

(Bogart voice)

Honey, you don't know it, but you've already won.

Vanessa shakes her head despairingly, leans into him Bacall style.

VANESSA

What can a girl say to that, apart from, Give it to me Daddy-O, Give it to me clean...

Jake hoots and claps his hands, flinging himself back in his chair - a waiter, there in the nick of time, preventing him from crashing down flat on his back.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY OF CAMDEN HOUSE. NIGHT

Vanessa and Jake shake hands in complicity at Vanessa's door.

JAKE

Don't let the evil spirits warn you off it, they don't know what they're taking about.

VANESSA

(Teasing)

Well, what about the bit -

JAKE

Don't do it - sleep on it first -

The door opens to Damien. Jake registers a touch put out at the impressive sight of him bare chested in loose jeans.

DAMIEN

It is you two, thought so. Good evening Jake. You liked the play?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE
 (eyes on his torso)
 I very much liked Vanessa.

Damien looks at Vanessa with a small smile and cuffs her affectionately around the head, drawing her to him.

DAMIEN
 How could you not.

VANESSA
 Good night Jake. We'll talk more.

She shuts the door practically in his face.

INT. VANESSA & DAMIEN'S BEDROOM. DAY

Vanessa and Damien are waking, the sun casting a crisp clean take on their togetherness.

Damien pushes the duvet away, notices finger bruises on Vanessa's upper arms, inspects them.

DAMIEN
 Hey - I'll have to be less brutal.

Vanessa regards her arms with surprise, groaning sleepily.

INT. VANESSA & DAMIEN'S HALLWAY. DAY

Vanessa and Damien are heading out. Damien stops at the hall table, stops himself from picking up a glass vase webbed with cracks.

DAMIEN
 (taps the vase)
 It's still standing - amazing. Must have had a helluva knock. You been cart-wheeling in here, love?
 (heading back inside)
 Hang on a sec -

Alone, Vanessa brings the vase carelessly up to her face, scrutinises it bemusedly. Damien reappears with a plastic bag and she jumps, knocks the table with her hip so it judders. Damien gives her a 'steady on' look, takes the vase like he's taking something loved from a child - puts it in the plastic bag.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)
 (ushering her out)
 Come on. Let's get you out of here.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Vanessa and Damien unpack grocery shopping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMIEN

So how much do you and Jake, you budding film people, hang out?

VANESSA

Hardly. Considering our great shared experience.

DAMIEN

(lightly)
Should I feel threatened?

Arms hanging, Vanessa looks at him inanely, letting her head fall over on to one side. He pours coffee into a jar, spilling lots and cursing. Like he's snapped out of it, he leans his head over to mimmick her, holds a mini Mars to her mouth and makes a silly face. She winces away, and he stuffs the Mars bar in his own mouth.

INT. ANNE'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Carrying two cups of GREEN TEA Anne leads Vanessa towards a low droning voice with an American accent. She goes over to the DVD player, turns the voice off.

ANNE

Did you know 'Much Ado About Nothing' is written around an astutely Buddhist concept?

VANESSA

Makes sense.

Anne leads her to the sofa, puts the teas on the table and they sit.

ANNE

So how's your sad and desperate other self?

Vanessa cocks her head at her quizically.

VANESSA

Oh - my play. I guess the key is, it's about conveying truths - however horribly hackneyed.

Anne smiles intimately at her.

ANNE

You find it hard interpreting the world through Sally's eyes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA
 (poignant delay)
 Isn't it quite hard enough through
 your own?

Anne adopts a mannered philosophical attitude.

ANNE
 I agree, that's easily enough.

INT. THEATRE DRESSING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa laughs with Maurice, Giles looking on disdainfully. Other actors are changing and mucking around, on a post-performance high.

Jake appears in the doorway. Vanessa greets him warmly, leads him in - where he instantly gets treated by all like he's part of the scenery.

INT. (SOHO) BAR OF BEFORE. NIGHT

Jake and Vanessa are heads together in the smoky late night bar atmosphere.

VANESSA
 (intense)
 ...it's a means of both escaping
 the self and expressing it through
 another psyche - best way to shed
 old baggage that I've found.

Jake leans in to share her enthusiasm - and her breath.

JAKE
 Oh - like, what sort of baggage?

VANESSA
 Oh, you know. Life.

JAKE
 Taking on life via art makes it
 more palatable for you then?

Vanessa recedes, reaches for her glass of red wine.

VANESSA
 Perhaps it's a malfunction - the
 actor's desire to transcend and
 that way experience. Kind of
 cheating, I suppose. Like writing.

Jake stutter laughs, makes a pretence of wounded ego.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

Please don't let that put you off
having a go at my own pitiful
attempt.

VANESSA

Thankfully Pandora sounds
tantalizingly unwholesome, unlike
the dreadful Sally.

JAKE

(Hollywood tones)
Good - cos Baby, she's written for
you!

Jake clinks Vanessa's glass like that's settled.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S DINING ROOM. NIGHT

Jake is dressed particularly trendily, busy clearing up after
a dinner party.

He keeps looking to the front door like he has a nervous
twitch.

ANNE (O.S.)

Hurry up darling, I'll do that
tomorrow.

JAKE

Okay then.
(listening out)
I'm going to do an hour's work -

ANNE (O.S)

(disappointed)
Oh. D'you have to?

Jake goes to the main bedroom, glances diffidently through
the open door at Anne laid out on the bed not seeing him -
retreats quickly out of view.

Go in on Anne, pretty in a red negligee, inspecting her legs
as though for escaped hairs, her mouth pursed, face set hard.

Jake reappears in the doorway, lingers, looking at her like
he could be torn...instead takes a hold of the door knob in a
reverential fashion -

JAKE

So I don't disturb you...

ANNE

(angry sarcasm)
How were you thinking of doing that
from the computer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake braces himself, shuts her in.

INT. SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Jake is busy setting up his laptop within eye and ear shot of the FRONT DOOR.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa is in her silk robe on the sofa, speaking into the phone with a finger in one ear - the TV on a music show.

VANESSA (ON THE PHONE)

The funny thing is, I feel kind of disembodied these days when he's away, sort of spaced out. D'you think that's a bad sign...? Oh, that's your door bell...see you soon...have fun...bye...

Vanessa looks suddenly bereft. She flicks the channel changer, falls on a modern orchestral performance featuring shrieking violins. She stares, entranced.

In an unprecedented movement she flings herself bodily at the TV, switches it off like she's stabbing it dead...

INT. COSY INDIAN RESTAURANT. NIGHT

Anne and Vanessa are crunching poppadoms and drinking red wine. Anne looks more than usually fragile.

VANESSA

I'm pleased to hear that - I really am. When's your last day?

ANNE

(flat tone)
End of term, end of next week.

VANESSA

Excellent! How come you don't seem pleased? You must have had an inkling what you were up to last week - that's why you seemed in such good spirits!

ANNE

I was - then.
(theatrical pause)
Now, I'm pregnant.

VANESSA

(gawps dumbfounded)
You're - pregnant?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE

I found out yesterday. I'm still leaving school. It's just that the great artistic revival will have to take a back seat.

VANESSA

Uh - why? Why can't you paint anyway?

(not convinced)

Painters can be pregnant...

(more uncertain)

Though the fumes, I suppose...

ANNE

Sure - perhaps. Depends how I feel. Wouldn't want to be chucking up all over my next masterpiece.

VANESSA

Well, really - Congratulations! Jake excited?

Anne sinks down into her seat, Vanessa having obviously hit on something of significance.

ANNE

(delayed)

Jake doesn't know. I have to work out when that piece of information might best compete with his script.

(sags further)

Meaning I haven't plucked up the guts.

Vanessa seems not to realise she looks vaguely horrified.

VANESSA

(determined smile)

Jake will love the idea. It will be fantastic for you both.

A WAITER appears and the girls start ordering like everything's fantastic.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Anne stands at the door in baby dolls looking about 10 years old. She casts an indulgent - ironic - look at Jake sleeping like a baby.

ANNE

(soft cooing)

Sleeping like a baby...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She bends to kiss his forehead. He gurgles. She lies down beside him tentatively, like a cat.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Hey, I've something to tell you -

He flings an arm across her diaphragm, practically winding her, and murmurs comfortably. Anne stares at him, fingers his hair and sighs.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Okay baby sweet, you're saved this time.

She stands facing the bed, one hand holding up the top of her baby dolls, looking down at the other cupped around her tiny belly - her face fearful. Jake breathes heavily, sound asleep.

INT. VANESSA'S BATHROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa is in the shower - that familiar glazed look on her face.

Through the steam and water, through her P.O.V. see HER and JAKE, both NAKED, in a blank space, coming at each other in an intense, slow motion way...

She turns the shower on cold, writhing and gasping.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Anne and Jake appear to be sleeping. Then Anne starts tossing and turning. She sits bolt upright in her baby dolls - lets out an angry sigh. Jake starts flipping around like a disturbed seal. Anne puts a hand apologetically on his head.

JAKE
Urgh...Time to get up?...Where's that buzzing bluebottle bastard -

Anne gets out of bed. She picks up her glass of water like its part of the penance and heads out of the room.

ANNE (O.S.)
Off to the purgatory bed -

Jake grumbles, turns over and is sound asleep. Study his non-present peaceful aura a few beats...

O.S. a door shuts.

A few beats later - the heavier sound O.S. of the FRONT DOOR clicking closed...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake stirs, rumbled from the deep - seconds later a shadow falls over him...

INT. OUTSIDE SPARE BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The strip of light under the door becomes partly obscured by shadow - then the door opens and out stumbles a sleepy Anne.

She stumbles in a beeline for the main bedroom.

INT. Jake & Anne'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Anne stops dead in the open doorway and stares, aghast, at the spectacle of Vanessa and Jake in coitus. She gasps, sways, grabs at the door for support. The contorted shape of Vanessa and Jake remaining oblivious.

ANNE

(A La Nina Simone)

My mamma brought me up to always be true, though she knew round the corner there'd be someone like you...

INT. DAMIEN'S CAR. NIGHT

Vanessa is driving alone, an ARTS INTERVIEW SHOW on the radio. She has a preoccupied, faraway look on her face.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

As a world famous conductor, do you prefer to tour or to entertain on home ground?

CONDUCTOR (V.O.)

(Eastern European accent)

If I must answer, I can only say I love to do both.

(pompous tone))

And I must pull you up on the term 'entertain'. What I do is allow for people to feel...

She switches the conductor off mid-sentence, almost failing to pull up at the lights - scowling at the people crossing the road throwing her worried glances.

INT. JAKE'S CITY OFFICE. DAY

Jake bursts through the door like he's been hit by an iron bar. Phone to his ear, Andy raises his eyes to Jake.

ANDY (TO THE PHONE)

Ah, the man himself...

Jake makes 'send them away' signals, collapses at his desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDY (TO PHONE) (CONT'D)
I'll have to get him to call you
back.

(eying Jake)
Right, will do. Good afternoon.

ANDY (CONT'D)
Some meeting that must have been!
Looks like your Pandora's opened
her box of tricks all over you.

JAKE
Anne's pregnant.

ANDY
(pleased for him)
Mate! That's fabulous.
(second thought)
So why the theatrics? It's just
what you guys need, isn't it!?

JAKE
(blackly)
It's not going so well as a concept
- okay - so quit while you're
ahead, mate.

ANDY
It doesn't have to be a death
sentence. Many survive.

Jake looks at Andy like he's scum. Wipes a hand compulsively
across his chin.

ANDY (CONT'D)
The virgin birth - now that would
have been a shock. But Anne's a
nice girl. And hey, the hair may
not last forever.

JAKE
Watch it. I fucking mean it -

He goes to chuck a magazine at Andy, thinks better of it.

ANDY
Want a coffee?

JAKE
Yeah. Sorry. I'm in shock.

ANDY
Ah, that's what it is. Few extra
sugars then.

(appropriate delay)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDY (CONT'D)

That was your sexy actress friend
on the phone.

JAKE

What..?

ANDY

Vanessa. The one you won't leave
alone with my beach-boy charm.

Jake looks to the right of Andy's head with a pained, distant
expression.

JAKE

She lives with her boyfriend,
dickhead.

ANDY

(rises)

Why would that suddenly present
difficulty?

Andy leaves the room, shutting the door behind him. The door
opens and his head reappears.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I've heard there's a help-line for
fathers-to-be.

Andy exits fast, using the door as a shield as a heavy object
thuds onto it.

JAKE

(calling out)

You're practically a dead animal -
(dials a number)
Answer...answer would you...

He crumples in the chair, both hands clasping the receiver.
The phone rings in his hand and he jumps.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Anne - Anne - you're there - I'm
coming home, don't go anywhere -
Don't do anything -

He rises, whirls for the door, meets Andy and two coffees
coming in - flies back so Andy sloshes coffee all over the
carpet instead of all over him.

ANDY

(reeling)

Hey, can I take you anywhere?
Home - the pub - ?

But Jake is gone.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Jake flings himself out of the merc and up to the front door, a ridiculously HUGE bunch of tulips in his arms.

INT. CORNER SHOP (SAME AS BEFORE). DAY

Vanessa is perusing the pasta in the fridge section.

Anne enters the shop, sees Vanessa, stares at her with an appalled look on her pale tired face - darts unseen behind an aisle as Vanessa strolls pasta in hand to the counter.

Vanessa heads for outside, stopping and turning at the door with an annoyed expression, going briskly to exactly where Anne is still standing staring at her. Confronted by Anne's stunned mullet impression Vanessa registers surprise, breaks an awkward smile.

VANESSA

Anne! You looking for something?
You okay? The, um, pregnancy? Jake?

Anne starts quivering, opens and closes her mouth uselessly. She grabs the nearest item - a pack of moth balls.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Do you really use those? They smell awful. Not very Ayurvedic.

Anne looks at the moth balls, duly shamed - shoves them back.

ANNE

(weak smile)
You're right. Worse than getting holes in your silks...

Concerned, Vanessa takes in Anne's increasingly tremulous aspect.

VANESSA

Camphor blocks work for me.

ANNE

Oh, okay. Well I have to go now,
I'm in a hurry -

Anne turns on her heels and dashes out of the shop, leaving Vanessa standing.

INT. (SOHO) BAR (OF BEFORE). NIGHT

Jake in his leather coat Heathcliffe/Satan lands opposite Vanessa, the way he looks at her describing his infatuation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

So you may as well know - Anne's pregnant. Still early.

VANESSA

I knew already. I think it's great.

JAKE

Right. I'm sure it is...

He looks not sure at all - eyes Vanessa lustily as if he can't help himself.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It's just not great timing.

VANESSA

(pauses)

That's how I always feel about it.

JAKE

(startled)

But - you're far too young and ambitious -

Vanessa gives him a long critical look.

JAKE (CONT'D)

So back to that other developing foetus...

(leaning in closer)

What d'you think about this...

INT. JAKE'S HOME STUDY. NIGHT

A strained-looking Jake bashes at his laptop, shaking his head, tutting. He picks some dinky toy computer friend, pulls at its legs viciously. The phone rings and he ignores it.

ANDY (ANSWER MACHINE)

Pick up you bastard, I know you're there...

Jake's mobile rings and he pulls a face and ignores it.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Anne is wedged one end of the sofa, Jake the other. They are half watching some banal TV show, takeaway tubs strewn around. Jake tucks into a plate of Indian. Anne balances an untouched plateful on her lap.

JAKE

(Vindaloo cough)

Vanessa suggested we have dinner tomorrow, since Damien's away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anne visibly stiffens, staring at the TV. Jake doesn't look at her.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (to TV)
 Well? I thought you liked Vanessa.
 (unenthusiastically)
 You two seem the best of chums.

Anne looks wistfully over to a painting on the wall (one not seen before - a new one of hers?).

ANNE
 (dully)
 I can't say how I'll feel. The two
 of you arrange it without me.

JAKE
 Maybe you should see her on your
 own, for some girl talk. Seems you
 could do with it.

He puts his empty plate down on the coffee table. Anne follows suite with her untouched dinner with a repressed slamming effect, food jumping. Jake cringes out of the way.

Anne hurls herself up and out the room. Jake sighs bleakly at the TV, picks up Anne's dinner and hoes into it.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Jake enters rubbing his eyes. Anne is laid out eyes shut in a foamy bath.

JAKE
 That computer will be the end of
 me.
 (glances at Anne)
 Though it looks like you got there
 first, Orphelia fair.

Anne spits foam stropily off her face.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Right - just rehearsing then.
 (walking out)
 Hormones, I am told.

INT. JAKE'S CITY OFFICE. DAY

Jake is at his desk. Vanessa enters, a nervous air about her.

JAKE
 (rising)
 Just the person I need -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stops himself from kissing her, guides her into a chair - doesn't notice her eye him distrustfully.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I have a first draft ready for
feedback from the woman herself.

He watches her - comes in close and eyeballs her in a sinister fashion. Hands her a feature length manuscript.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Which one of us, I wonder, is
really the Svengali of the piece...

Slowly, strangely, Vanessa is batting her eyelids like she's battling some sort of trance effect -

VANESSA
I'll let you know what I think.

EXT. BEER GARDEN OF COUNTRY PUB. DAY

Anne in the passenger seat, Vanessa is driving Damien's sports car through BRIGHTON.

VANESSA
It's so good when a couple of
confirmed urbanites get to escape
for a few hours.
(throws Anne a smile)
I'm glad I could convince you to
come. Took some doing!

Anne barely acknowledges her, looking blandly out the window.

Vanessa parks right outside THE QUEEN'S HEAD pub, opens the door to get out, shrinks back inside rather than get immediately subsumed by a group of Freddie Mercury clones.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
I fancied some female company.
Damien's here for two weeks
unbroken - and frankly, I'm not
used to it.

Anne gives her a wan smile and they open their doors simultaneously, the way clear.

INT. VANESSA & DAMIEN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa and Damien lie in bed, Damien flicking through a football mag, Vanessa reading an orange penguin paperback.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMIEN

So what's up with Anne? I went looking for you the other day and she was more weird than usual. Gaped at me like I was a fucking bullock off to market.

Vanessa doesn't look up, just suppresses a smirk.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

Then she started going on about how great you are, and I felt like saying, yeah, I think so too - but she was that off the beam I was worried I'd set her on some trip -

Vanessa looks up, concern flickering across her face.

VANESSA

Oh, come on. She's not that bad. She's got stuff on her mind.

DAMIEN

Yeah, stuff like, when's her head gonna do it's next 360 degree turn.

VANESSA

Don't be nasty. She's pregnant, and she thinks Jake's having an affair.

DAMIEN

(considers)
He probably is.

He turns his back on her, blinks into his football mag. Vanessa turns to him like it's an after-thought.

VANESSA

You not old enough to read books yet?

EXT. OUTSIDE SMART VENUE. NIGHT

People in evening dress disappear inside. Anne and Jake, smartly dressed, stand anxiously to one side looking around. Vanessa rushes up to them in a flurry.

VANESSA

Happy Birthday, Anne! Jake said this was what you wanted, my treat, my apology for being such a bad friend - and almost very late!

She gives Anne a big hug - registers hurt at Anne's stiff response - Jake just hanging there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jake takes one girl on each arm, leads them to the door.

As they enter, Vanessa looks nervously over her shoulder like she's hoping to be rescued from an unpleasant fate...

INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT

Jake sits between Anne and Vanessa. SIBELIUS'S 'FINLANDIA' is playing. THE CONDUCTOR is a dashing archetype, all white hair swept back from a chiselled, impassioned face, WHITE GLOVES in command.

Jake looks at Vanessa's oddly rapt face, Anne pretending not to notice.

Vanessa turns rigid. See her through her own P.O.V., fixated by the YOUNG PRETTY GIRL IN FIRST VIOLIN.

She studies the conductor, goes to first violin - draws them both under her spotlight as if they're entangled in an exclusive web, the rest of the orchestra forgotten...

Jake tries to tune into Vanessa's P.O.V., tries to read what she sees, captivated. He stares up at the giant mushroom sound reflectors, working to translate - glancing just once at Anne's blank face, like there's some comfort in it.

INT. CONCERT HALL BAR. NIGHT

Vanessa chucks down a large vodka amongst bustling elbows and loud talk (echoing in her ears through her P.O.V.).

INT. CONCERT HALL. NIGHT

Vanessa sidles into her seat as the lights go off, as the instruments start to tune.

JAKE

(to Vanessa, low voice)

I put my money on you not coming
back. What's up?

Anne's eyes snap at him, glinting in the dark.

VANESSA

I'm fine.

ANNE

You don't look it.

Jake glowers at Anne.

VANESSA

I'm absolutely fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The music starts up dramatically. Three pairs of glinting eyes, they turn their attention onto the pit.

See through Jake's P.O.V. a YOUNG VANESSA in first violin, spellbound by the conductor - who has become more dashing still, his white gloves dancing even more wildly...

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY OF CAMDEN HOUSE. NIGHT

Anne and Jake go through the front door, Jake's hand in the small of Anne's back.

ANNE

(censorious)

Where did Vanessa say she was going? She seemed in no state to be going anywhere.

JAKE

Meeting a girlfriend.

ANNE

(delay)

Why didn't you go? I could have taken the car.

JAKE

As if I'd send you home alone on your birthday.

INT. JAKE'S STUDY. NIGHT

Jake scribbles fiendishly, still in evening dress. He yanks at his tie as if for air. Reaches for a glass of water and downs it voraciously.

INT. VANESSA & DAMIEN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Damien cuddles Vanessa, both prettily asleep.

INT. FLORID HOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

VANESSA'S
NIGHTMARE:

To a sound track of female panting, over the top of a cacophony of violins - see from knees down female legs slow motion running, caught in the folds of a LONG SKY BLUE GOWN, frequently nearly tripping up on WHITE HEELS.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa sits up in bed looking scary - and equally scared.

VANESSA

It's my ride...I have the power...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Damien wakes, tries to pull her to him but she resists.

DAMIEN
 (familiar ground)
 It's okay, relax now, it's just
 that one again -

Vanessa pulls herself away from him, gets up and stumbles
 across the room. Damien back asleep.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa clutches at the sink, staring at her terrified face.

EXT. QUAINT FIELD IN THE COUNTRY. DAY

Vanessa leads Jake through long grass, parting the waves for
 him. She pulls out and sucks on the odd blade. All idyllic
 fluffy clouds and blue. The countryside looks like
 Oxfordshire.

JAKE
 (musing)
 Jemima seems to have a good
 relationship with her folks. Nice
 of her to have brought us along.

VANESSA
 From what she tells me she's
 learned parent management skills,
 that's all. I think we are very
 welcome.

JAKE
 Suppose so. How d'you get on with
 yours?

VANESSA
 My mother's lost in fairyland, and
 my father wishes I was still
 prepubescent.

JAKE
 Oh. I didn't mean to...

VANESSA
 You didn't anything.

She plops down, gazes into all the green. Jake copying.

JAKE
 I imagine few fathers like the idea
 of their little girl becoming an
 actress, of all hideously
 corruptive things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA
I'm sure that's partly it.

JAKE
Not that I'm a father.
(grim face)
Yet.

Jake stares purposefully at nothing.

JAKE (CONT'D)
And your, um - your mother?

VANESSA
(delayed)
She's had every drug stuffed
down her neck, so at best she's a
zombie - no danger to herself or
anyone else.

Feigning disinterest, Jake shifts around re-arranging his legs.

JAKE
Oh...she been dangerous in the
past then?

VANESSA
I was being flippant. She's just
sad.

Jake nods slowly, meaningfully.

EXT. ANOTHER QUAIN T FIELD. DAY

Jake and Vanessa make acquaintance with two ponies over a gate. The ponies compete for handfuls of grass.

VANESSA
I must say, Pandora does have guts.

Through Jake's P.O.V., rest a few beats on the allure of Vanessa's lips - moving onto the quivering horse version.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
The writing is very personalised.
Or so it seems to me.

JAKE
(cooly)
Oh, d'you think so?

VANESSA
Why not have him ask her questions,
try to find out what she's got to
say to him in her sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She rips out grass for the ponies - with more energy than is required. Jake catches her eye deliberately - holds it.

JAKE
Yeah, well, I've tried that.
And it got me nowhere...

EXT. PRETTY RIVER BANK. DAY

Jake and Vanessa lie watching splashing ducks and the odd expanding ring from fish nosing at the river's surface.

Jake turns, eyes Vanessa closely.

JAKE
Incidentally - you feel like
talking about what was upsetting
you at the concert the other night?

VANESSA
(thrown)
I was...I guess I was just...

She sits up straight, crosses her legs. Jake copies and she shoots him a critical glance.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
It's just that orchestra recitals -
violins - bring back a bad memory.

Jake works hard to curtail his avid interest.

JAKE
Oh. Really.
(taking her hand)
Tell me only if you want to -

Vanessa looks at him like he's touched in the head.

VANESSA
It's an old wound now, and I like
to think it's healed. The concert -
was a reminder, that's all. I
generally avoid them. I told
myself it would be fine.

JAKE
And it wasn't - fine.

He lays the matter to rest for a tactical few moments.

JAKE (CONT'D)
So, um - what happened then, when
you were young and vulnerable?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks past him and the performing ducks, her attitude one of resistance - then relenting, her body softening.

VANESSA

Oh, I was twenty, all set to be a promising young violinist. They liked that I didn't look like a librarian - they really played on that.

JAKE

Excuse the pun.

Two majestic swans trail past commandingly, neither Jake nor Vanessa noticing.

VANESSA

Anyway, it wasn't long before it all went badly wrong.

Jake homes in on her pent-up emotion - tries to follow her eyes, caught up in the details of her past.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

I was having an affair with the conductor. Well, he was the one commanding the baton, naturally. So there's me - so young - thinking, this must be what it's all about! Green youth guided by the big and successful, and all that.

She falls silent. Appears to click back into the present.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

(pragmatic tone)

And then, we were playing in Paris - and it got messy. I chucked in my potential musical career and took up acting.

(ironic laugh)

And of course that's no different.

(pregnant pause)

Only I am.

JAKE

(overly casual)

Um, how exactly, did it get messy?
I'm just curious - character
building you for Pandora, huh!

He laughs rather too loudly, startling Vanessa who seems once again to be struggling with staying in the present.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA

On the Paris trip, the conductor was murdered. By his wife. While I was still the prodigy 'affair'.

JAKE

(taking a blow)
Heavy shit... That's why - that's why you don't like Paris then...

Jake checks himself, Vanessa looking at him disparagingly.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Just something Anne said -

VANESSA

(standing)
Yeah, well, we all have our crosses to bear.

Jake looks up at her in a biblical, blinded by the light fashion - rises up to her level.

EXT. FRONT PORCH, SMALL OXFORDSHIRE ESTATE. DAY

Jake, Vanessa and Jemima lounge in comfy chairs, too far away for their chatter to be distinct.

In closer see Jake is not at all comfortable, cannot take his eyes off Vanessa - Jemima finding it very interesting.

JEMIMA'S FATHER emerges from inside smoking a pipe, followed by HER MOTHER with coffee and homemade biscuits.

JEMIMA'S FATHER

So today -
(sucks on pipe)
is testament to the fact that English weather can pull itself together once in a while. Call it global warming If you must.

Jemima's mother starts laying out cups for coffee.

JEMIMA'S MOTHER

And how lovely that you busy people could give up some of your weekend to be here.

JEMIMA

Sometimes, Mum, even city people manage a bit of peace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEMIMA'S MOTHER

So Jake. What a shame we don't get to meet Anne. Pregnancy needs as much fresh air as it can get.

JAKE

I'm sure it does. But having a rest from me is probably preferable.

Jemima's mother bats her eyes sentimentally at him.

Jemima's father is intent on surveying the fields through binoculars.

JEMIMA'S FATHER

What's all this then?

Over the field is an assembling group of cars and country walker types, headed for the main gate to the property.

JEMIMA'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Good grief - what a motley bunch. Which one of you lot have they come for, then?

Vanessa squints across the paddock like she's slowly coming to life. Jemima's mother remains poised, like it will all be over in a minute. Jemima barely looks up from her magazine.

Jake stares mesmerised at the offending group.

Jemima's father puts down the binoculars and sets off, a bull-terrier bounding from nowhere to accompany him. The circling group, now on this side of the gate, exude a pagan quality (surrealist i.e. the Standing Stones).

Jake picks up the binoculars: through his P.O.V. see a tall grey-bearded man in a green Burbury strangely mutate into the white-haired CONCERT CONDUCTOR of before - the background group become a band of grey-uniformed prison wardens.

Jake lets the binoculars dangle. Through his P.O.V. turn the act of Jemima's mother going into the house, and Vanessa and Jemima drinking coffee and nibbling biscuits and fumbling through the papers, into a mechanistic, sinister collusion. Vanessa the darkly enigmatic RING LEADER.

JEMIMA'S FATHER (CONT'D)

(puffed)

They were looking for the Ascots.

He takes a gulp of cold coffee, pulls a face.

JEMIMA'S FATHER (CONT'D)

Nice crowd. Nearly invited them over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Everyone registers relief that he didn't.

INT. JAKE'S CITY OFFICE. DAY

Jake's desk is chaotic. He swirls manically in his chair.

JAKE (ON THE PHONE)

Oui, oui, that's the idea, ring me
and send a copy...great...fantastic
- 1995 roughly, conductor murdered
by his wife, anything illuminating
you can get on it. Oui, tres bien
Phillippe, I owe you one -

The phone shaking in his hand, Jake sits there like his excitement is recording for posterity. SARA, his pretty personal assistant, walks in with a BRIGHT COLOURED file.

SARA

Jake, they've been in there fifteen
minutes. Have you no respect for
toilet cleaner?

JAKE

Shit, Sars, I totally forgot.
(semi losing it)
Fuck! Where the fuck's Andy?

SARA

Andy can't make it, remember. He
told you half an hour ago.
(daring it)
You caught some of Anne's hormones?

JAKE

(repressed screaming)
Isn't a pregnant man allowed to be
washed over by anything of his own,
ever?

Sara raises her PERFECT EYEBROWS, shifts her weight (barely any of it) over onto her other hip.

SARA

Sure. Judging by how you've been
lately, you must be pretty soggy.

JAKE

Ha fucking ha! Fuck - where's the
fucking file - Sara!?

Jake melodramatically rifles through the mayhem of his desk. Sara pushes the coloured file she's holding at his middle with something like contempt. Jake takes it, brushes very close by her for the door. Glances back at her rear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE (CONT'D)
If it was the good old days, I'd
slap that smart little arse.

SARA
(Perfect delay)
You know, I'm still considering
that other job.

Jake rushes at her and falls to his knees in crazy self-parody (maybe not so).

JAKE
Don't do it Sars - I would be
useless without you -

Sara observes him wryly.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Did you know men suffer three
inverted menstruations every month,
meaning we deserve sympathy not
ridicule from you women.

Sara just smiles as Jake disappears through the door.

INT. BOARDROOM. DAY

Jake bursts into the boardroom. He sits, ALL EYES on his bad attempt at cool. Even his ad man grin falls flat.

JAKE
I'm afraid Andy my producer can't
be with us. I will attempt to step
clumsily into his thongs -

The group titters, fiddling with their laptops.

INT. VANESSA'S SITTING ROOM. NIGHT

Wearing heels and more make-up than usual, Vanessa paces the room. She sits, applies black nail polish with exaggerated concentration to her short fingernails.

INT. SAME (SOHO) BAR OF BEFORE. NIGHT

Vanessa and Jemima lean back in their chairs surveying each other guardedly. A cute young waiter brings them wine. They both play subtly for his (keen) attention.

The waiter goes away and they are left, slightly bereft, to each other - and themselves.

JEMIMA
Honey, it's quite obvious you don't
feel good about something.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEMIMA (CONT'D)

Why not tell me what it is? We're here to help each other, remember.

VANESSA

I don't know what it is...probably nothing.

JEMIMA

Maybe your guard's up in case this film doesn't work.

VANESSA

Maybe I'm depressed because the play's over and I don't have much to do. And I'm not getting on great with Dame.

Jemima scrutinizes her friend. Vanessa scrutinises her black nails.

JEMIMA

Jake couldn't keep his eyes off you at my folks' place.

Vanessa's look makes her shrink back.

JEMIMA (CONT'D)

(carefully)

Sweetheart. We all know the game. We all know it's a matter of rising to it - or above it.

Vanessa regards her obliquely.

VANESSA

You make it sound like an endurance test. If that's the case, I'd rather be a shop girl.

JEMIMA

I don't see evidence of that.

(delayed)

You may as well accept it's his gig. If you want to be in on it.

VANESSA

Some of us choose to not always take the cynical, should I say bitter approach.

Jemima does a sharp intake of breath. Eyes her friend warily.

JEMIMA

So are we having a cosy night on the town, or aren't we?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA

First sensible thing you've said
all night. There's an opening up
the road, some photographer,
eighties revisited apparently.

INT. VANESSA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

Vanessa is asleep, no Damien. She looks clean and pale and angelic.

Suddenly she is twisting and turning, arms making swimming motions. She sits up breathing hard, forcing her eyes open.

INT. CONCERT HALL OF BEFORE. NIGHT

VANESSA'S
NIGHTMARE:

The AUDIENCE are clapping madly. THE CONDUCTOR poses off at the head of the orchestra. He goes over to a BAREFOOT YOUNG VANESSA IN FIRST VIOLIN wearing a SKY BLUE GOWN and WHITE GLOVES (corridor nightmare sequence p.89). He takes her gloved hands and leads her (barefoot) over to join him at the head of the orchestra. Facing the wildly clapping audience he bows magnanimously, taking her with him, her face demure.

THE CONDUCTOR'S face morphs into the one in the PRESS CUTTING Vanessa took out of her bedroom drawer (p.38)...and he is pressing VANESSA to him, kissing her face and neck so she wilts in his embrace, tears coursing down her passive face. The bowing orchestra become TIN SOLDIERS before the captivated audience.

THE CONDUCTOR peels off Vanessa's gown - and she stands there in beautiful underwear, white gloves limp at her sides. The audience applauding rapturously.

Then, not a hair out of place, he proceeds to devour her until she is a pile of bones, underwear and white gloves lying on top.

He floats Jesus-like into the adoring sea of the audience.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Jake tuts his way through one bill after another. He pauses on the last handwritten envelope - runs upstairs with it.

Stealthily he opens his flat door, pokes his head in.

JAKE

(calling)

Just going for a coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNE (O.S.)
 (sweetly)
 Okay darling...love you...

Jake falters - dashes down the stairs like he's seen a ghost.

INT. LOCAL CAFE (SAME). DAY

Jake explodes through the door brandishing THE ENVELOPE of before. At the window table, he aligns his keys, wallet, the salt, pepper, sugar - like it's a nervous twitch.

He tears open the envelope, rejects a handwritten note for french newspaper which he spreads in front of him - as a WAITRESS'S HAND appears with a coffee. Ignoring her, he stares at the french print, his scrunched-up fist tapping on a serviette. He stuffs the page back into its envelope, gulps down the coffee and noisily pushes back his chair.

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Jake fumbles around in the WELL-ENDOWED bookcase, pulls out a large English/French dictionary.

Anne silently approaches his back, wanly serene in a premature pregnancy smock. With a self-possessed smile she takes his hips, and he turns like he's being attacked.

ANNE
 (laughing, holding on)
 What are you after darling?

JAKE
 Doing a spot of translation -

He kisses her chastely on the forehead and pulls away. She looks sweetly after him as he makes off down the hall with the dictionary.

INT. LOCAL CAFE (SAME). DAY

Jake lands in his seat, slaps down the dictionary. A GORGEOUS WAITRESS appears with HIS WALLET - removes the 'reserved' sign.

JAKE
 (wired, taking wallet)
 Thanks Daphe, you're a gem. Coffee,
 please.

DAPHE
 Like you need another!

He steals the pen from her breast pocket as she walks off, shaking her head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Slyly he lays out the newsprint and the blank side of the handwritten page - starts avidly writing out his translation (without the aid of the dictionary!).

SMALL TIME LAPSE

Jake looks up, strained but satisfied, an empty coffee cup and a page of scribble in front of him, his translation covering the envelope as well.

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INSERT - JAKE'S
TRANSLATION

JAKE

(reading aloud his frantic scrawl)

'The case of Edward Montgomery of the Carnegie Symphony Orchestra, found dead three days ago in a Paris hotel, has been adjourned following yesterday's discovery of the body of his wife, together with an authenticated suicide note, at the couple's home in England's Wiltshire...'

Pushing his writing arm's length away Jake leans back in his seat, eyes darting wildly - blindly - about the cafe. He resumes reading with visible trepidation -

JAKE (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

'Pathologists state Mrs Montgomery had been dead several hours when uncovered by the gardener despite the heavy snowfall that had engulfed the estate. In her suicide note, Mirabelle Montgomery cites her reasons as 'ultimate desperation' on account of her husband's 'compulsive and irrevocable infidelities'...'

Jake coughs, looks quickly around him as though to check there are no other ears cocked -

JAKE (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

'...friends say Mrs Montgomery had been "unstable" for some time. Evidence states she travelled back from Paris the day her husband, world class conductor Edward Montgomery, was found dead of injuries to the head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jake flies up into a standing position, digs in his pocket for money which he presses into the nearby waitress's hand - gathers up his dubious bounty and is out the door.

JAKE'S CITY OFFICE. DAY.

Jake is bunched over his CLEAN TIDY desk cradling the envelope from before, eyes glued fast to it. His manner is reminiscent of someone bowing to a deserved prison sentence.

JAKE

(reading aloud, shaky)

'Inquiries initially pointed at several orchestra members staying in the boutique Paris hotel, some of whom, it has been revealed, had been in unorthodox relationship with the deceased - '

Reaching the end of the writing on the envelope, Jake stares motionless. He flips the envelope over.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

'...The nature of the crime indicates the killer was both intimate with the deceased and there by consent. The lack of fingerprints on the weapon of attack, a brass lamp, or anywhere else in the Paris hotel room, suggests that the deceased accused acted with presence of mind...'

Jake flips the envelope back over, eyes travelling feverishly, for the second time, over the writing.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(reading aloud)

'...had been in unorthodox relationship with the deceased...'

Andy flounces in, shining slick, Sara on his tail looking ultra efficient. They both stop in their tracks and stare at the sight of Jake and his pages of scribble.

ANDY

Mate! You alright? You look terrible.

(eying scribble)

Having a bad day of it?

Jake makes an absurd comic gesture of trying to look at himself. Sara walks out, amused by their double act.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDY (CONT'D)
A love tract perhaps?

Jake shields his writing from view like a schoolboy.

JAKE
Nothing of the sort...

Andy plops in his chair. Jake eyes him covertly.

ANDY
The lovely Daphne at your local
cafe said you'd left in a terrible
state.

JAKE
Oh did she now.
(uncomfortable)
What were you doing there, hardly
your stomping ground.

ANDY
We Australians like to sample new
turf. Full of Bohos, that place.

JAKE
(impatient)
So why were you there?

ANDY
Touchy!
(drawing it out)
I needed to see you. You haven't
been answering my calls lately, in
case you hadn't noticed.

Jake registers a flicker of shame.

ANDY (CONT'D)
I must say Anne seemed cheery. You
must be being good there, anyway.

Abruptly disengaged from Andy and Sara's influence, Jake's
eyes are strangely shining as if with grand inspiration -

JAKE
(grand benefactor)
So, Andrew, how would you like to
not rent in Chelsea, but buy
outright your chalky pillared
mansion - !

ANDY
(mock considers)
An attractive proposition. Could
get me a goat farm in Aus some day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He regards the BORN AGAIN Jake with new fascination - rather than great expectation.

JAKE

Well you're practically there,
handsome.

ANDY

(laughs)
Don't tell me, you've found the
definitive story line.

JAKE

Absolutely! The whole thing has
just frog-legged leaps and bounds -

ANDY

Don't tell me - Pandora - and I do
think that name's gotta go -
Pandora is now a sleepwalking
murderess, and our lust sick
antihero figures it out. But
his dick's in so deep he has to cut
a long and sticky path to get out.

Jake looks at Andy hard...his eyes seeming to float detached out of his phased, pallid countenance.

INT. ANNE & JAKE'S BEDROOM. DAY

Anne is sprawled on the bed buried in a paperback. She sits up, lays 'RECLAIMING YOUR LIFE' down face up. She sidles over to the mirror, looks herself square in the eyes.

ANNE

I love myself. I am as attractive
as I make myself...my old self has
taken leave of me and I take a new
and positive role in my destiny...

She assumes a standing yoga head to feet pose. Goes back to the bed and picks up her book - a Madonna smile creeping across her face as she gazes dreamily at nothing.

165 She leaps up suddenly, hand to mouth, dashes for the ensuite.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Anne, dressed gaily Bohemian, nears home with shopping bags. A NEIGHBOUR is leaving the house, a young kid on each arm.

NEIGHBOUR

How's the pregnancy?
(to restless kids)
Would you not do that! -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two kids tug on her arms. Anne smiles like they're angels.

ANNE

Oh, I'm feeling pretty good.

The neighbour scowls at her kids, tugging each other's hair.

NEIGHBOUR

I'm glad.

(face darkens)

Just make sure you're all sorted.

Don't think you can rely on him.

She shoots Anne the look of the co-conspirator.

NEIGHBOUR (CONT'D)

I heard on the radio, this girl's
waters broke - she was right out
the sticks, couldn't get onto her
husband - got in the car and drove
like a mad thing for the hospital -

(scoffs)

Wouldn't you say that's what
ambulances are for?

Anne shakes her head smiling conclusively, making for her door, her neighbour swiftly getting in between her and safe ground.

NEIGHBOUR (CONT'D)

And you'd never imagine - the
coppers pulled her over and gave
her a speeding ticket, then sent
her on her way - sweat,
contractions the lot!

ANNE

(horrified)

Did she have it in a lay-by!?

NEIGHBOUR

Nah, she got there okay in the end.
But it shows you doesn't it -
you're on your own in this life.

ANNE

(faltering)

Yeah, well, we don't need to be
pregnant to be aware of that -

Anne stares disenchanted at the misbehaving brats.

EXT. SHAFTESBURY AVENUE. DAY

Jemima and Vanessa appear from behind a scruffy door, looking like they've been to a 1960's party. They head off down Shaftesbury Ave.

JEMIMA

That was as you'd have guessed. How did you feel, us competing? Like back at school, huh?

VANESSA

Didn't occur to me.

JEMIMA

Even though we look like Marianne Faithfuls on a strung-out day?

VANESSA

(gaily)

Remember when we were space-age sex toys together, on that TV show - those purple hair extensions - !

Jemima laughs merrily. They continue down Shaftesbury Ave.

JEMIMA

To change the subject - any reason why you're being so weird lately? Got any clues for me?

They hang awkwardly at the entrance to the underground.

VANESSA

I - don't know what you mean...

JEMIMA

Remember, honey - if you want to talk, I'm there for any amount of listening.

Vanessa kisses Jemima and hares off down the steps.

INT. CAMDEN TRAIN PLATFORM. DAY

Vanessa alights. A MALE DROG lunges at the train and crashes into her, and she swings around at him.

VANESSA

(angry explosion)

Fucking stupid idiot!

The drog is taken aback, makes a rapid-fire finger gesture. Vanessa strides for the escalator, attracting some interested, some cowering looks.

INT. VANESSA'S HALLWAY. DAY.

Vanessa walks in on Damien arranging flowers in the new hall vase.

DAMIEN

Hi Sugar.
(face falls)
What's possessing you!?

VANESSA

(cooly)
If anyone else asks me that, I
really will give you all something
to think about.

Damien scrunches up the flower paper with frustrated vigour.

INT. ANDY'S CAR. DAY

Andy and Jake are in Andy's SPORTSCAR. Jake seems tensely preoccupied. The radio plays rock music. They crawl snail's pace alongside corporates in black cabs doing paperwork, making phone calls and having meetings.

ANDY

Freakin' traffic. Why anyone over
thirty bothers with this seized-up
monster pit, I have no idea.

JAKE

Cos we're all morons addicted to
pain and illusion - spellbound by
blind faith.

ANDY

Must be. We should all go feral.

The guys share a meditative moment.

Jake, come alive, starts moving to the beat of a DOORS SONG, head dancing etc, face lost to the music - Andy (The Doors not his era) giving him a 'you old fart' look.

JAKE

(newly inspired)
...Spokesman for the lost
generation...

ANDY

You!? Or you pitching a new film?

JAKE.

Jim Morrison, you pillock.

EXT. SLICK LONDON GOLF COURSE. DAY

Jake, in track pants and an old T-shirt, and HARRY, an older, flash professional type in Polo casuals, are well into a game of golf.

JAKE.
(stalling)
Whatever happened to tennis!?

HARRY
Golf, little brother, is today's sport. You can cut business deals, it's less sweaty, and low impact.

JAKE
I thought sweating's good for you.

Jake prepares half-heartedly for a hit.

HARRY
Swipe that ball like you mean it. This isn't croquet and cucumber sandwiches.

Jake does a massive hit that sends the ball flying and him reeling. He turns pointedly to Harry who is laughing like he's given up hope of having a decent game.

JAKE
In case you're interested, the film's coming along nicely.
(worldly/mysterious)
Always quite a process.

Harry leads them off across the turf for the wayward golf ball, squinting after the ball.

HARRY
I am very sure it is.

JAKE
Actually the whole thing's become quite surreal.

HARRY
You saying I'm putting my money into a dud length of celluloid?

Jake comes to a halt, quietly dramatic.

JAKE
Look, this can't go any further, it involves Anne and - uh - Vanessa's boyfriend -

CONTINUED:

Harry focuses on Jake's excited grip on his arm.

HARRY

Who's Vanessa? Go on then - Harry can handle it. Harry doesn't give away secrets.

Jake falters, wrinkles up his chin.

JAKE.

(reproachful)

What about the school toilet one -

Harry guffaws loudly.

HARRY

That! Hardly an original sin!

JAKE

Not the point. Show me any sin that is.

He paces them to a standstill.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I'm serious. This is a very delicate issue...

Harry looks at him, waiting.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It all started with this great looking girl next door -

Harry groans, like he's about to hear another unoriginal sin.

INT. CLUB BAR. DAY

Jake and Harry sit with beers at the bar, away from the other members, only the quiffed ex-serviceman type BARMAN hovering nearby. Jake dabs at a beer mark on his shirt with a hankie, wipes a wet patch off the Paris newspaper article of earlier laid out on the bar - which he then folds up and stuffs in his pocket.

JAKE

So you see, it's a crazy situation I can no more get myself away from than if it were a pot of gold. That she hasn't 'come visiting' since she read my script tears at me -
(lowering voice)
And isn't just a little freaky, don't you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Harry fiddles with his beer mat. His unspoken attitude is supercilious - not to mention green with envy.

HARRY

(pragmatic)

Well you don't want to end up like her conductor friend. The whole thing reminds me of that Tess of the whatever it was the school system considered a necessary part of our education.

JAKE

(dreamy)

Obsession...classic female oppression...

HARRY

Didn't she knock off some bloke who pissed her off?

JAKE.

(sharpens)

Anyway - I don't remember Thomas Hardy competing with your warships collection for attention? Actually, the last thing Vanessa intends to be is another Tess. That, is one thing I will endeavour to convey.

Harry shrugs, still partially muted by Jake's revelation.

JAKE

And shit - this is the nearest I've ever got to having an affair - an old aficionado like you should be patting me on the back!

HARRY

(cursory)

Always thought that Anne's had you licked into shape. Or so she thinks.

Harry perks up, eyes an attractive girl sitting with a man who is quite possibly her father. Jake fixes on his beer.

HARRY (CONT'D)

You said your Vanessa hasn't dropped by lately - maybe she's had enough.

(sniffs into beer)

Or maybe she doesn't like that Anne's pregnant. Women can be funny like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jake turns blankly onto Harry's face, like he's soaking up this last, clearly completely new consideration.

He looks furtively at THE BARMAN who is rather too close - who registers his look and quickly turns the other way.

JAKE

Look - I'm only telling you all this because you don't see Anne from one year to the next -

HARRY

(lyrical tone, eyes rolled up)

'Innocent bored husband, determined to screw up, becomes slavering male at the hands of the seductress - '

Jake sighs in resignation. THE BARMAN wipes glasses with an unabashedly cocked ear.

HARRY (CONT'D)

(pregnant pause)

Lawyers are men too you understand. Especially when they're married twenty years with four kids.

JAKE

Involuntary of course. So how are the little buggers?

HARRY

Ruggedly healthy, expensive and generally demanding.

Jake sags in his chair. Harry gets up, hand to his back like he's in pain. Jake follows and they amble towards the door.

HARRY (CONT'D)

May I suggest it is far more likely the wife did it. However, consider hiring a twenty-four hour minder, just in case.

JAKE

(wearily)

Meanwhile, I'm shopping and cooking dinner and giving massage till I drop. Marriage, like most of life's sneaky turns, proof -

(sing-song voice)

That nothing's sim sim simple -

HARRY

Unlike the average bear of the human male.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Jake's golf kit badly negotiates the doorway, nearly taking out an incoming guy's balls (the ones in his trousers).

INT. JAKE & ANNE'S SITTING ROOM. DAY

Linger over Jake sprawled on the sofa gazing up at the ceiling. Anne's shadow appears over the top of him and he jumps out of his skin.

ANNE
(chuckling))
What did you think I was?

She lands on him, snuggles his neck as he submits to her.

ANNE (CONT'D)
Mandy's meeting me at the station
at eight. I wish you could come,
but she wants me to herself. She
wants to hear about my painting.

Anne smiles, snuggles in further. Her bump now protruding, they look like picture perfect parents-to-be.

But look again - and Jake's contented expression is more tell-tale lost to faraway...

JAKE'S DREAM
SEQUENCE:-

EXT. OLD PARIS BACKSTREET. NIGHT

VANESSA, become the ULTIMATE SIREN BABE, floats surreally beside a smug JAKE. As they drift along, two sexually ethereal creatures, they stop repeatedly for prolonged kisses - Vanessa's red lips each time closer to Jake's throat...

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S ROOMS OF BEFORE. DAY

Like he's been snared, Jake sits opposite the penetrating look of the Shrink (p. 64) poised at his desk, the classic authority figure. A full cup of coffee in front of him.

JAKE
So, um - I was wondering if it is
possible for someone to
deliberately commit murder in
their sleep - there being, um, a
background to it.

Jake wriggles in his chair. The Shrink nods in recognition.

SHRINK
You being the man with the academic
interest in sleepwalking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE
That's correct.

Jake watches appalled as the man pleurably sips at coffee - as his fate looms in the air between them.

SHRINK
I hope you don't mind me grabbing this coffee. There often isn't a minute between patients.

JAKE
Oh, yes - I mean, no, I don't suppose there is -

SHRINK
I appreciate it. Sometimes it isn't safe for anything to come between me and caffeine.
(jovial grin)
The human condition can be very draining.

Jake makes a return stab at non-verbal, humourous empathy, crossing and uncrossing his legs.

SHRINK (CONT'D)
(taking his time)
Going back to your question...
(turning off mobile)
I expect sleep murder is rare. Although in the right circumstances there's nothing stopping it. I have heard of a few instances.

Jake nods and forces a wise smile - twisting his foot round and round like a propellor trying to take off.

The Shrink makes a big point of staring at his twitching foot and he makes a big point back of stopping twitching it.

The Shrink throws down the last of his coffee, folds his hands in his lap and adopts the eyeballing approach.

SHRINK (CONT'D)
Your area again? Film isn't it?
(nods slowly)
I would say there is room for fine turgid drama on the subject.
(thinks)
Haven't seen it done myself - but then I wouldn't have, unless Woody Allen has done it somewhere...

Jake looks to be searching the Woody Allen filmography in his head for examples of sleepwalking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE
(determined chirpy)
I think not. I must say I sincerely
hope no one's about to beat me to
the post with it.

SHRINK
(eyeballing him)
Do I get a sneak preview...?

Jake jumps up, slaps his thighs and heads for the door -
having to go back for his jacket, still on the chair.

JAKE
I really do have to be elsewhere -

SHRINK
But this hardly constitutes a
session -

Jake rifles in his pocket, pulls out a wad of cash. The
Shrink gives him a knowing look.

SHRINK (CONT'D)
Pay Andrea at the desk please,
thank you so much. And good luck...

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAMDEN HOUSE. DAY

Vanessa mooches homewards. Daylight is waning. A block
behind, Jake hurries to catch her up.

JAKE.
(breathless)
Vanessa! Been missing each other
lately!

They come to a stop, hang awkwardly taking up the pavement.

VANESSA
We have, haven't we. How's Anne
going along? She must be big now.

JAKE
She's well - much better. Gone to
stay with a friend in the country
for a few days. So what's
happening? Wanna come up for a
drink, I've got a nice red?

VANESSA
I've stuff to do. I'm going away
tomorrow for a few days.

JAKE
Oh - where?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA
Paris. My sister lives there.

JAKE.
(thrown)
Paris...?

VANESSA
Yes. About time I faced up to it. I
am told it's a beautiful city.

Vanessa starts walking towards home, Jake following her lead.
Her manner is aloof; she won't meet his eye.

JAKE
Lovely. lucky you.

VANESSA
(delayed)
When were you last there?

JAKE
Oh, far too long ago.

VANESSA
You can come if you like. Or if you
want to talk about the film, I'll
have time to meet for a coffee in
the morning, about eleven.

JAKE
Right, perfect then, eleven it is -

He makes an utterly preoccupied shuffle at the door of the
house, letting Vanessa in first.

INT. COMMUNAL HALLWAY OF HOUSE. DAY

Vanessa's door closes shut O.S. JAKE takes his stairs two at
a time like an excited kid.

INT. LOCAL CAFE. DAY

Vanessa and Jake are relaxed at the end of brunch. Jake sits
up straight, pushes out his chest in a preparatory fashion.

JAKE
So, Vanessa, if you still fancy a
Paris companion - I'm reasonably
well behaved, I don't insult
Frenchmen unless they insult me
first - which is of course likely -
and I'm skilled at ambience and
having a good time.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE (CONT'D)

And I've a couple of mates there,
so you don't have to get sick of
me.

Vanessa eyes him amused, demurely configured in her seat.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And being serious, Paris has just
become one of the locations for our
film - and as Anne is away, it's
actually perfect timing for me.

He looks at Vanessa hard, diffidently. She stiffens only just perceptibly, otherwise registers nothing.

VANESSA

You've got Paris scenes - ?

JAKE

Yes, it's, uh, a recent change.

A distinct cloud falls over Vanessa's countenance, is as quickly passed.

JAKE.

(nervously)

I was going to tell you, I just
haven't seen you. You - you're not
upset about it?

VANESSA

I told you, I'm getting myself past
all that.

(brightens)

The only thing is, my sister has a
Paris shoe box apartment -

Jake gives her an overly enthusiastic, boyish grin - trying hard to conceal his nervousness.

JAKE

That's where my mates can come in!

Vanessa holds his dotting eyes. In a jerky movement he knocks over a glass of water - the water goes all over Vanessa's lap and she jumps back like she's been hit.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Shit! So sorry -

He reaches forward ineptly with his serviette, as Daphne appears with a cloth. Daphne gives Jake a funny look as Vanessa mops at her lap, not impressed.

JAKE.

(lamely)

At least it wasn't red wine.

EXT. MEDIUM CHIC PARIS BACKSTREET. DAY

Vanessa and Jake stand with bags outside a stylish old apartment block. Vanessa rings the bell - by their floppy attitude clearly not for the first time.

A group of PARIS TRENDY kids scream by on roller blades causing Jake to leap back just in time. Vanessa puts her bag down like it's killing her.

JAKE

Let's go to a cafe, give her half an hour.

VANESSA

Okay...she did say she'd be here...

JAKE

Maybe she's had to go out. She'll be back. Presumably she knows you're coming.

VANESSA

(pointing)

There's a good cafe down that way -

EXT. VERY PARIS CAFE. DAY

Jake and Vanessa partake of coffee and croissants, Jake unable to control his lovers' gaze, Vanessa seemingly oblivious.

JAKE.

(lightly)

So. Those demons letting you overthrow them yet?

VANESSA

(lightly back)

I'm fine, thanks. It's really not that hard. It was a long time ago.

She looks around the cafe sights as though for the first time - not including Jake one iota in her sphere of interest.

Jake leans into her, failing to get her to notice him.

JAKE.

(cloying)

I like to think my being here with you is helping...

Vanessa gives him one of her odd SCARED RABBIT looks.

CONTINUED:

JAKE. (CONT'D)
 (gushing)
 We - we are a break from each
 other's personal difficulties -
 (bows his head)
 We can help each other - we have
 a...an understanding.

He takes her hand, holds it limply in his.

JAKE
 I'm just so pleased we have avoided
 all that silly actress/director
 stuff, and are going to make a fab
 movie together!

He releases her hand, that just lays there like a dropped
 dead fish - sits back in his chair with aplomb. Vanessa
 regards him with an odd, kind of defensive look.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 (daring it)
 I believe we even have something
 quite unusual - quite unique -

She recoils - a threatened snake unsure whether or not to
 strike. Jake grabs her wrist, genuinely disconcerted.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 Vanessa! Obviously, what I'm saying
 is bothering you -

Recovering, she gives him a shaky smile. He looks relieved.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 So you forgive me, we're friends
 again. Nothing lost - something
 gained, huh?

He gives her a twinkle smile back, restraining himself
 admirably.

LATER.

It is getting dark outside. They have moved onto wine. There
 is a new, shared intensity between them - Vanessa seeming to
 have finally come to Jake's party.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 And...what happened after that? Did
 you feel you had to stop letting
 him see you this way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VANESSA

She came in one day during rehearsal, and she watched me - just me - all the way through.
(darkening))

I suppose I was the current one.

She sits back in her chair, taking a breather. Jake's eyes not moving from her.

JAKE

She must have had a nose for it by then. That time - I remember it well, it spooked me - she stared at me with no expression, but I knew it was hate she was masking. Hate for him. I believe what she really felt for me was pity.

Vanessa actually quivers with emotion (or something like it), Jake leaping in to give comfort - which she readily accepts.

VANESSA

She pitied me, I saw it in her -

She twists a section of her hair tightly. Jake stares dumbly - like he either can't or doesn't dare interrupt.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

After that I didn't see her again. But I was haunted by her pained face looking at me, so awful in its pity - and its sadness.

Jake is utterly rapt by what Vanessa is saying. Not that she seems to see or comprehend this.

JAKE

(clears throat)
And her husband, did he know all this? How was he with you around then?

VANESSA

From about then he was too weird with me, I didn't like it...

The lock of hair she is STILL TWISTING is now forming A BALL.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

He would twist me about when we were in bed - he'd make my back crack, my shoulders hurt... It was as if he didn't care if I snapped, he was so rough with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JAKE
(appalled)
Why didn't you stop seeing him? He
sounds like a nutter!

VANESSA
I was in his thrall. I did what he
wanted. And, oh yes, he wanted me
still. I was his property. As he
saw it, he had created what I was.
And I, of course, was too young to
know any better...

JAKE.
(going in gently)
Were you ever scared he'd really
hurt you? Or discard you as used
property - try and destroy your
talent?

Vanessa registers confusion. Twitches her head mutely. Jake
hangs there patiently - impatiently. She still doesn't speak,
just sits there displaying EMOTIONAL OVERWHELM.

JAKE
(intent)
Did you - did you ever feel the
need to seriously defend yourself?

Vanessa looks to be struggling to say something very
difficult. Jake takes a big breath - prepares himself.

Vanessa becomes unexpectedly, suddenly newly composed. Her
knotted up energy seems to diffuse into the air around her.

VANESSA
I didn't have any idea - that his
wife would do what she did.

EXT. BACKSTREET OF BEFORE. NIGHT

Jake and Vanessa stand arms hanging outside Vanessa's
sister's apartment, exchanging 'what now' looks.

VANESSA
Maybe she thought I meant Friday.

JAKE
Well, I have to find a hotel
anyway. What are you going to do...

Vanessa follows Jake up the street. He seems uncomfortable.

INT. FOYER OF SMART HOTEL. NIGHT

Vanessa strides over to reception through the plush foyer, Jake trailing dubiously after her.

VANESSA
This one's charming, cheaper than it looks.

JAKE
(masking horror)
You - you've stayed here then?

VANESSA
(laughing)
What's so odd about that?

She presses the bell at reception, is met by a scurrying male ATTENDANT. Jake stares at her, ignoring the attendant.

JAKE.
(squeaky voice)
Is this - the one - you know - where your conductor friend was - where you and some others of you stayed, on that orchestra trip?

Vanessa smiles serenely at the young attendant, who shyly, in awe of her looks, fusses with his bookings book.

VANESSA
That's right. How did you guess?

Jake, a touch pale, leans against the polished desk.

JAKE
And if your sister doesn't get back, and you were to stay here - wouldn't it really be too much like rubbing salt in the wound...?

Vanessa gives him a slightly belittling look.

VANESSA
I've told you, there's no gaping wound. I don't need to stare out any old ghosts.

Attempting nonchalance, Jake's elbow is too close to the edge of the desk and it slips off, so he has to recover himself.

JAKE
Especially since you don't believe in them.

CONTINUED:

The attendant looks at the two of them, trying to work out what's expected of him. Vanessa dials her mobile, and it rings out. Her countenance clouds - only momentarily.

VANESSA
(to attendant)
Better make it two rooms. Deux
chambres, s'il tu plait.

Jake dumbly hands over a plastic card. Vanessa thrusts hers forward, cutting him off. Jake backs off meekly.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
I'll pay for mine -

The seasoned attendant takes both cards, gives the shell-shocked looking Jake a man-to man glance.

ATTENDANT
We do not go against a lady's
wishes.

Jake smiles sheepishly.

Slowly, Vanessa takes in the decor all around her as if for the first time, only her head moving on the pivot of her neck...Jake studying her absorption. The attendant watching her admiringly.

INT. FLORID HOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT

JAKE trails behind VANESSA, the proverbial lamb off to the slaughter.

This the FLORID CORRIDOR of Vanessa's NIGHTMARE (p.89)

Vanessa stops, looks up at door number 21 - a hint of recognition in her eye that Jake does not miss.

VANESSA
The bar in an hour?

JAKE
(nervously)
Uh, right - sure. I might pretty
much go straight there -

VANESSA
You seem unsettled. You okay?
(amused)
Do French men really bother you
that much?

JAKE
Oh, of course not -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vanessa eyes him curiously, disappears inside.

INT. VANESSA'S SUITE. NIGHT

In a fashionable slinky black dress VANESSA sits studying herself dispassionately in the ROCOCO STYLE mirror. The room's 'antiquated lavish' furnishings feature classic reds and golds, plush velvets and brocades.

Face bare of make-up VANESSA is pale against the black dress. The effect is not just unfinished - more REPRESSED DRAMATIC. She focuses uncompromisingly on her image in the mirror, eyes searching out every detail of her raw, exposed face.

Her mirror image morphs through her P.O.V. into that of herself as a pretty TWENTY YEAR OLD wearing the SKY BLUE GOWN AND WHITE GLOVES of her NIGHTMARES (p.89 & 99). Her young face stares back at her - uncertain, disturbed...

She gets up from her seat - her mirror image younger self still sitting there watching her. She walks stridently for the door, not looking back - slinky in the sexy black dress and black spiky heels.

INT. FLORID HOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

A drugged look about her VANESSA cuts a striking, unusual figure in the black dress and heels, not a touch of make-up. A STYLISH COUPLE pass her unnoticed, regard her curiously.

INT. ROCOCO SUITE. NIGHT

Through VANESSA (the voyeur)'s P.O.V., track over to the king size bed adorned with GIRLS IN CLASSIC EVENING DRESS (with the odd mid 1990's touch). Shoes and lipstick strewn around them, the girls are relaxed, having fun, drinking champagne.

Go, through Vanessa's P.O.V., to a collection of STRING INSTRUMENTS IN THEIR CASES on the other side of the room. See Vanessa's WHITE GLOVED HANDS remove a BEAUTIFUL VIOLIN from its case, hold it up to her chin - finger mime a melody.

GIRL 1

(brandishing champagne)

Mr Big's gonna be on the loose
again soon, girls. Vanessa's
getting sick of him. She told me.

VANESSA puts the violin carefully back in its case. Her gloved arms withdraw from view.

GIRL 2

He won't like that. She'll be down
a peg or two, no longer the queen
in first violin just 'cause she's
screwing him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The others look at Girl 2 like she's got an axe to grind.

PRETTY GIRL 3

Just 'cause he's never given you
the eye!

Girl 2 snarls as the others laugh riotously, precariously waving their glasses of champagne.

INT. FLORID HOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT

VANESSA drags herself, practically staggering in her heels along the empty corridor. Her bare face has become paler still against the black dress, lips startlingly bloodless.

INT. DIFFERENT ROCOCO SUITE. NIGHT

Dressed in a different black dress and heels (more mid 1990's) THE YOUNG VANESSA stands in the middle of the room, a man's dress jacket and shirt laid out on the bed. Through Vanessa's P.O.V. see into the en suite - where THE CONDUCTOR is at the basin splashing his face with water, looking WIRY FIT in a white singlet and black dress pants.

The conductor dabs his sophisticated handsome face with a towel, runs it through his white hair - engaging his eye in the glass with a conceited expression.

Young Vanessa takes a couple of steps forward, as the conductor comes into the room, brushes past her and flops on the bed - where he lies prostrate staring up at the ceiling. Vanessa watching over him for an extended several beats.

INT. FLORID CORRIDOR. NIGHT

In her present day black dress and heels, VANESSA practically falls into her room.

FADE OUT.

INT. JAKE'S SUITE. NIGHT

Smartly dressed for dinner, Jake enters his room looking flushed, wired. He hesitates a moment in the open doorway.

VANESSA O.S.

Goodnight then Jake. That was fun.

Jake falters, almost calls out - CLEARLY TORN.

JAKE

Goodnight Vanessa. Sleep well...

He takes a deep breath, closes the door slowly behind him.

LATER. NIGHT

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bare chested, Jake sits up in bed with a bar fridge mini cognac, two empties on the bedside table. He is reading 'The Story of 'O''.

He shoots himself a glance in the wardrobe mirror - catches his eye again with a serious, lingering look.

He puts his glass on the bedside table, a CHINA VASE taking up most of the space. The vase is vulgar art deco, mismatching the room's Rococco flamboyance. He picks it up, examines it, puts it down. Goes back to 'The Story of 'O''.

He looks up to a knock, registering fear/excitement -

Vanessa comes over to him (door left deliberately unlocked...?) and he gazes into her darkly painted eyes, EMPTIER AND STRANGER THAN EVER. She takes off her black dress, tosses it across the room - stands there naked but for black underwear and the heels.

She takes his face, kisses him with freshly painted BLOOD RED LIPS. Her shadowed eyes bat unseeingly (?) Jake handles her like she's a precious, brittle substance. There is a new energy between them; less frenetic, more intense (intimate?).

Jake catches his cautionary eye in the mirror, looks away quickly. Vanessa positions herself on top. Jake is soon covered in red lipstick, consumed by ecstasy.

Vanessa takes the vase on the bedside table, lifts it high - holds it there a few extended moments (Jake's eyes closed), places it quietly back down on the table.

Suddenly she seems highly disturbed - her eyes dart about, her mouth twitching, head shaking (Jake oblivious)...

INT. FLORID HOTEL CORRIDOR. NIGHT

VANESSA'S DREAM
SEQUENCE.

To a cacophony of screeching violins, in the sky blue gown of before VANESSA glides effortlessly, composed, BLOODSTAINED white-gloved hands hanging at her sides - one glove badly torn, her hand underneath cut. Encountering no-one she opens a door, slides inside...

JUMP TO SECOND
(PREMONITION?)
DREAM SEQUENCE:

In the black dress and heels VANESSA stands in Jake's partially open doorway. Inside JAKE is motionless on the ravaged bed, blood on and around his head, bits of vase everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VANESSA steps into the empty corridor, quietly closing the door. She heads for her room, SEEMINGLY PERFECTLY AWAKE. Her physical appearance giving nothing away.

INT. JAKE'S SUITE. NIGHT

Vanessa still on top, she and Jake are still at what appears to be passionate lovemaking.

Vanessa takes the china vase, lifts it high - as Jake shudders and opens his eyes, grabs her extended arm, their two arms straining high as she fights him with her summoned strength - keeping this up for 8 - 10 long beats.

Their joined limbs fall (as if one of them has suddenly gone limp), smashing the vase onto the table, china flying everywhere.

JOLTED AWAKE by the smash - Vanessa stares bewildered at Jake lying flaccid beneath her. She gazes disbelievingly at herself, at the broken china everywhere. She jumps off Jake, pulls the sheet over her. Brings her bleeding hand up to her face - horrified.

Jake removes a chunk of vase from his armpit - leaps up like he's been injected with adrenaline.

He pulls off a pillow case, wraps it around Vanessa's wound. Then he addresses his immodesty with a section of sheeting.

Vanessa crumbles, holding the linen pathetically about her. Sobs rock her body. Jake watches her - takes her in his arms.

VANESSA

(spluttering)

What have I done - I must have got here in my sleep...I'm so embarrassed...I wasn't even very drunk. This is your room, isn't it?

Nursing her cut hand, Jake rises to the occasion -

JAKE

What kind of a gentleman do you take me for?

(emphatically)

Really Vanessa, it doesn't matter -

He gestures awkwardly.

JAKE (CONT'D)

It's a common enough thing. Doesn't warrant looking into for a moment.

They settle under the sheeting, heads on one pillow. Vanessa is faced away from Jake on the smashed vase side, lost to herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her bandaged wrist lies on the sheet like a war injury - as they assimilate mutely for a while from their separate places.

VANESSA

But Anne is your wife, and my friend. And she's pregnant -

JAKE

Sweetheart - do you mind me calling you that in the circumstances - you were asleep, remember.

(Not totally convincingly)
You had no idea.

Vanessa turns onto her back. Jake copies. They lie like any pair of lovers...almost.

JAKE (CONT'D)

And I do assume some responsibility -

Vanessa winces, turns right away from him. He scrutinises her tousled head.

JAKE (CONT'D)

There's no reason why Anne or Damien should know. It can be our secret. Is your wrist hurting bad?

He strokes her hair. She doesn't resist; A CO-CONSPIRATOR.

VANESSA

No-one's told me I've done it before...although...

She drifts off, staring at the scattered dead vase.

Linger through Jake's P.O.V. on the scenario in the mirror, one step removed...

Eyelids heavy, Vanessa lifts her resistant head.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

And I hurt my hand - and the vase -

JAKE

I suppose it fell victim to our passion. It was a crappy piece anyway.

VANESSA

(assertive)
I'll pay for it. I did it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Jake sits up and looks at her - simply agog. Falls back into his pillows.

TWO YEARS LATER.
DAY

The room is blacked out to simulate night. FILM CREW are busy at work. The camera is on Vanessa, kneeling barefoot on the blood-spotted bed in a black lacy one-piece and bloody, torn white gloves.

Next to Vanessa dozes her handsome, unclothed male co-star, a sheet over his private parts. A make-up girl brings him a robe which he waves off. Broken china is all around. The make-up girl treads on some in her thin strappy shoes and curses.

Jake walks into view, shoots the male actor a harsh (jealous?) look.

JAKE.
(to the Art Director)
I still maintain that naked but for
the gloves would be more effective -

Vanessa takes her heavy-lidded gaze onto Jake, draws him to her...

He looks away perturbed - the crew seemingly oblivious, or just accustomed to this actress/director interplay.

VANESSA
I've told you. I don't do naked.

JAKE
(meekly)
Okay Vanessa, you're the boss.
(assertively)
Next take, everyone!

The predominately male crew slowly takes its eyes off Vanessa - slowly gets ready. The male lead puts his arms around Vanessa who acts bored, unresponsive. Jake starts to get a bit het-up.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Rehearsal. Vanessa, concentrate
please.

Jake moves away from the camera, crunching china. Assessing the bed scene with a frown.

MAKE-UP GIRL
If on the spooky side, and a bit
too sexy - this scene has that
wonderful 1940's Sunday matinee
Feel.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MAKE-UP GIRL (CONT'D)

Eat your heart out Ms Bergman!
 (to general company)
 Don't you reckon?

JAKE

Very good Amy.
 (sharp)
 Come on, y'all -

Vanessa is looking dreamily at the make-up girl, blinking slowly like she's touched on some personal reference point...

INT. LARGE WHITEWASHED SPACE. NIGHT

TO END MUSIC (Al Green's 'Let's stay together'):

The Premiere Party - and the space brims with people, large paintings on the walls coming in on them.

From a removed P.O.V. observe a glamorous VANESSA, her MALE-CO STAR on her arm. Beside them JEMIMA and a CUTE BOY.

Vanessa and Jemima nudge each other in an exclusive exchange. Vanessa's male co-star kisses her sexily, says something that sets off a cascade of laughter and glittering glasses. Jemima looks him over approvingly.

Waiters offer nibbles and more champagne.

In the snazziest of suits, JAKE swoops on the group, kisses the girls - reserving a special look for Vanessa which she elegantly overlooks. He shakes her male co-star's hand with a big showy (jealous?) grin.

ANNE lands in the midst of them, glowing in an elfin dress, hair long and gypsy-like, A TWO YEAR OLD BOY in her arms.

Vanessa and Anne hug - the group attention transferring onto the wriggling child. Jake ruffles Anne's hair, relieves her of the child, grabs a glass from a passing tray and hands it to her - the perfect husband and father.

DAMIEN appears with a girl on his arm. He kisses Vanessa, nods in turn at her male co-star, Jemima, Anne, and Jake, who is too taken up with the child to notice. Damien's GIRLFRIEND looks like a model, sports a neat baby bump. Damien squeezes her proudly. Vanessa flashes her a warm smile. Jake gives her the twice over, as does Vanessa's male co-star.

ANDY jumps into the group, greets the girls with his brisk charm, admires Vanessa's outfit. Shakes hands with the boys.

A PHOTOGRAPHER starts flashing at Vanessa, going in for a couple of her male co-star, then the two of them together. He takes a couple of Jake, arm around Vanessa, then one arm around Anne, the other clasping the wriggling child.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Go to Vanessa in CLOSE-UP...THAT FAMILIAR ODD LOOK clouding her elected demeanour - caught for posterity in the instant of the camera flash...

END TITLES

Jake, Vanessa's male co-star and Damien are in meaningful conversation, presumably re the film -

Vanessa and Anne, the child back in her arms, are in meaningful conversation, presumably re the film -

Andy and Jemima are getting decidedly friendly. Damien's girlfriend is rescued by Jemima's cute boyfriend.