

Scene 1

A burial ground in the West Midlands. Midday. Mid-September – almost autumn but still warm enough not to wear a coat or carry an umbrella.

The site is young, the trees just a few years old and still spindly. There are no headstones – graves are marked by shrubs or trees with the occasional wooden plaque.

Myra stands looking around her. She is noticeably thin but surprisingly energetic. She is suffering from advanced secondary bone cancer, but today has little pain.

Jenna, her daughter, aged 27, stands a little way off, a large picnic basket beside her. She wears mostly black, with a long stripy scarf.

Myra Here.

Jenna Here?

Myra Yes, I think so. Don't you think so?

Jenna I'm not– I don't know.

Myra I think here is good. Flattest bit. Under a tree– I like that, nice and shady. Let's say here.

Myra indicates an area on the ground.

Jenna Fine.

Myra looks at **Jenna**. **Jenna** doesn't move.

Myra Yes?

Jenna Fine.

Jenna looks around.

Myra Bring the basket over.

Jenna You want to eat here?

Myra Yes.

Jenna You want to eat. Here.

Myra Yes, let's eat, you'll eat here lots. It's out of the sun, it's...

Jenna It's morbid.

Myra It's happening, Jen, come on.

Jenna brings the picnic basket over.

Myra opens the basket and pulls out a large blanket, which she starts to shake out. **Jenna** looks away.

Jenna Did you see the. Did you see the baby?

Myra No.

Jenna There's a baby. Under some holly, a holly bush.

Myra That's lovely. Never dies, that's lovely.

Myra is struggling with the blanket.

Could you, um?

Jenna Yeh.

They lay out the blanket together.

Myra Was there a marker?

Jenna Two months old.

Myra Can't say that's a good innings, can you?

Myra sits down and starts unpacking the picnic.

Now. Plates... Are you warm enough?

Jenna Fine.

Myra pulls out two plastic plates. She hands one to **Jenna**. **Jenna** holds it like it smells bad.

Myra Um, forks...

*Hands a plastic fork to **Jenna**.*

Napkins...

*Hands a napkin to **Jenna**.*

Jenna Mum, I don't need a-

Myra Have a napkin.

Jenna I don't want a / napkin

Myra Have a napkin.

Jenna *takes it.*

Jenna Serviette.

A look.

Basket smells funny.

Myra Found it in the cellar.

Jenna *looks at Myra.*

I wiped it, it's fine. Everything's in plastic it'll taste fine.

Myra *looks into the basket.*

I brought things you like.

Jenna I don't want anything.

Myra Sausage rolls, I've got sandwiches, posh crisps, Jaffa Cakes, quiche, you might turn your nose up at / that-

Jenna Bloody hell, mum, this lot don't eat anymore, you know.

Myra You're picky. Lots of / options.

Jenna You're not supposed to be cooking and-

Myra *starts to pull food out of the hamper.*

Myra I didn't. Marks. Jaffa Cakes might be a bit own-brand. Lots of sandwiches.

Jenna I don't like sandwiches.

Myra You don't- Since when?

Jenna I woke up one morning and realised I'd been living a lie all my life.

Myra Oh for God's / sake.

Jenna I'm bored of them. They're always soggy, people put too much stuff in them, they're impossible to eat.

Myra Sausage roll?

Jenna *raises her eyebrows.*

Vegetarian sausage roll.

Jenna Not a sausage roll, then, is it?

Jenna *takes a sausage roll and starts to pick at it.*

Myra Know what I hate about sandwiches? When people say the D. SANDwiches.

Jenna SANDwiches. Samwidge.

Myra Exactly. Not SANDwich.

Jenna *looks around her, eating her sausage roll.*

There isn't one.

Jenna One what?

Myra Toilet. You're looking for a toilet to go to after you eat that.

Jenna I'm not. (*A look.*) I don't. Mum, I don't.

Myra How would I know?

Jenna I don't do that anymore.

Myra *opens a sandwich and starts to eat it.*

There is one, anyway.

Myra Jen-

Jenna What? Just a point of information - there's one by the caretaker's house. I happened to see it on the way in.

Myra You were looking.

Jenna No, I just- we were driving in and I saw it and I thought 'oh, a toilet, you need a toilet, all the old biddies that come here'. It's not a toilet I want to yak into.

Myra *looks intently at Jenna.*

It's a habit, isn't it? You get used to all the little- things you do kindof around the main thing, even when you stop doing the thing you still have the little- Habits.

Myra So eat that properly.

Jenna *stuffs the whole sausage roll into her mouth and looks at Myra, challenging. Swallowing takes longer than she expects and she turns away, breaking the look.*

Jenna That was next-level disgusting.

Myra Another one? The sandwiches aren't bad, not soggy / really.

Jenna Every time I see you do I have to stuff my face just to / prove I'm-

Myra I got some houmous ones.

Jenna Fine.

Myra Do you like it?

Jenna Houmous?

Myra Here. Do you think we should bury me here.

Jenna I don't want to bury you anywhere.

Myra That was almost affectionate.

Jenna I don't like-

Myra It's just that we haven't got long.

Jenna How long?

Myra Six months or so. Up to about nine.

Jenna Jesus.

Beat.

Does it- Does it hurt?

Myra Just aches and pains. I've started to make a noise when I bend down to pick things up.

Jenna Like what?

Myra Kind of 'Uhh'. 'Uhh'. Like an old lady.

Beat. Jenna fumbles in her bag and takes out her cigarettes.

Mind you, your dad does that already, I might just have picked it up off- So you're smoking in front of your mother now?

Jenna Won't have a chance soon, will I?

Myra You giving up?

A look. Jenna puts the cigarettes away.

You learned to smoke in a graveyard, didn't you? You and that boy from the comprehensive-

Jenna *looks at her.*

What, you think we didn't- You came home covered in lichen, smelling of mints and Impulse. Of course we knew about it. Why I asked you to come, prior knowledge. Haven't told your dad yet. We always said cremation but now it- Think he might find it a bit odd. Cardboard coffin, no headstone or-

Jenna Cardboard?

Myra Or wicker, you can get wicker ones.

Jenna *looks at the picnic basket.*

Yes, alright. Cardboard ones come flatpack. Self-assembly. You could help.

Jenna You're kidding, right?

Myra No.

Jenna That's fucked up. Next-level fucked up, I'm not doing that.

Myra Have a think about it.

Jenna *(Under her breath.)* Fucked up.

Pause. Myra eats a sandwich.

Myra Maybe plant a holly bush.

Jenna Does Harriet know?

Myra No.

Jenna Sounds like one of hers.

Myra I read a book. You have to find things to do. When you're off work with dying. Leamington Library's got loads of death books, shelves and shelves of cancer. And then this one saying you can be buried somewhere pretty if you want to. Hadn't even thought about it...Harri had nothing to do with it. I wanted to tell you.

Jenna Tell her everything else first.

Beat.

Myra You had a lot to deal with / at the time.

Jenna Like what?

Myra You'd just got together with Mark. You were- Busy.

Jenna You'd been to three appointments before anyone said anything.

Myra We didn't want to worry you. You worry.

Jenna It was important and I missed it. 'Hello love, just had my thyroid gland whipped out, how's the new boyfriend?'

Myra Does it matter, Jen? Does it really matter. Now.

Pause.

Jenna Can I have a Jaffa Cake, please?

Myra *hands her the packet.* **Jenna** *stands up and walks around, the packet of Jaffa Cakes in her hand. She eats one.*

Myra Rowan tree, maybe?

Jenna Ugh, squishy berries.

Myra Cherry. Flowering cherry. Just blossom, nothing squishy.

Jenna Palm tree, get some fucking monkeys...

Myra How are they?

Jenna All right. Chocolate's a bit baggy.

Jenna *looks out at the traditional cemetery over the fence.*

Why do they have the lawny bit there and then this bit here?

Myra Give you a choice?

Jenna So ugly, all laid out in straight rows, shiny marble, plastic fucking buckets. Someone should go round and take the dead flowers off, looks a fucking mess.

Myra This bit's nicer.

Jenna Have to walk through the plastic buckets to get to you, though.

Myra Perhaps you could tell your dad about it, the burial thing. You could tell him for me.

Jenna Oh mum, I-

Myra I mean there may come a time when you two need to learn to talk to each other...

Jenna We talk.

Myra Not really.

Jenna We get on fine, we don't argue.

Myra No, it's a shame. Give you a reason to come round and see us. Haven't seen you properly in months, when did you last sit and chat to him?

Jenna *eats another Jaffa Cake.*

Jenna Dad doesn't like me.

Myra Of course he likes you, he loves you.

Jenna He doesn't like me.

Myra He doesn't like Mark very much.

Jenna Yeah, well. He didn't mean to be rude he's just- That's Mark, I don't know. Don't think I like him much right now.

Jenna *continues to eat Jaffa Cakes as she talks.*

Wants to quit work and do a university course 'cause he says it's too much of a strain working in the same shop every day 'cause we end up spending so much time together, which is stupid it's not like we live together is it, but if I won't leave then he'll have to or

we'll end up splitting up. Which I think is going to happen anyway 'cause he's flirting with the manager every day and when I question it he says I'm paranoid or possessive or— And he's just. Being a wanker. And—

Myra And?

Jenna Oh, you know. Love him. Twat.

Myra How's the sex?

Jenna What?

Myra How is it?

Jenna The / sex?

Myra Yes.

Jenna I don't— I'm not talking about that with you, we don't talk about that.

Myra Maybe we should.

Jenna Why?

Myra I've never managed to get to the bottom of this relationship you're so disastrously having, and we've. We've never had a talk. It's important / isn't it?

Jenna Mum, I don't want to—

Myra Isn't it?

Beat.

Jenna You and daddy don't have sex.

Myra How do you know?

Jenna You've slept in separate rooms for years.

Myra You've moved out, how do you know what goes on?

Jenna So what, you're at it all over the house usually, are you? Then when me and Harri come home you move back into separate bedrooms just to keep us feeling secure in the pair of you not fancying each other...

Beat. Myra looks at her watch.

Myra Tablet time. Would you pass the bottle?

Jenna *takes a bottle of water from the picnic basket and passes it to Myra. She watches Myra take a bottle of tablets out of her bag, put one in her mouth and swallow it down with a drink of water.*

Jenna Sorry.

Jenna *puts the Jaffa Cakes back in the basket.*

Myra While I'm still here I can help. After I kick it you're on your own.

Myra *coughs and drinks more water. Jenna watches her.*

Ugh, too big these ones. What?

Jenna Nothing. I. Sorry.

Jenna *looks around her.*

Myra So we're happy with here, yes?

Jenna Sure.

Beat.

Actually, no. I think it's a bit—

Myra Yes.

Jenna I think we could find somewhere. Better.

Myra *smiles.*

Fade.

Scene 2

The living room of Myra's family home. Mid-evening, late October.

A sofa and an armchair that have been in the same place for many years, newspapers and books in a pile by the armchair. Myra sits on the sofa, working at a laptop on the coffee table

in front of her. She wears warm clothes and has a large glass of white wine next to her. There is a half-finished bottle of wine and a couple more glasses.

Myra's daughter Harriet is standing behind the sofa taking her coat off.

Myra How was it?

Harriet Good. It was good. Dad got cross 'cause someone clapped after the second movement.

Myra Were they shot?

Harriet Social death. Exclusion from the Brahms fan club... (*Pointing at the wine glass.*) Should you be—

Myra Yes. Emphatically yes. (*A look.*) Shut up. Where's Dad?

Harriet Loo. What's this?

Myra PowerPoint. You going to stay for a drink?

Harriet Yes, short one, Josh'll be waiting up. Why you doing PowerPoint?

Myra *gets a glass and pours wine for Harriet. She uses both hands to lift the bottle.*

Myra Had it sat on the desktop for years, didn't even know what it was. Thought I'd give it a go now I'm never going to work again...I'm bored, Harri.

Myra *laughs.*

Feel like going back.

Harriet Get better first, yeah?

Myra *looks at Harriet. Harriet looks away.*

Myra I'm making a presentation.

Harriet Show me.

Alec *comes in, polishing his glasses with a lens cloth. He has already taken his coat off.*

Myra Next time. Not ready yet. (*To Alec.*) How was it?

Alec The cellist was awful.

Harriet Dad she wasn't / awful.

Alec She was awful.

Harriet Her dress was awful. (*To Myra.*) Big turquoise mermaid thing. Looked like a burglar's dog.

Myra Drink, Alec?

Alec *looks at the wine.*

Alec Yes. Just get some red.

Alec *goes into the kitchen to fetch red wine.*

Myra But nice father-daughter evening?

Harriet Yes. And we bought tickets for next time.

Myra *smiles.*

Mahler.

Myra That's brave.

Alec *comes back with a bottle of red wine and a glass.*

Harriet Now is it me or is it cold in here?

Myra Boiler's on the blink. What?

Harriet *is looking at Alec, smiling.*

Harriet We were playing 'phrases Dad hates'.

Alec 'Is it me or is it cold in here.' Completely moronic.

Harriet What was the other / one?

Alec Can't remember.

Harriet *thinks.*

Harriet 'À propos of'.

Alec Well that's just stupid, isn't it? – the 'of' is implied in the 'à propos', it's *there*. Some chump in the interval, shouting his mouth off...

Myra You shouldn't see people dear, it makes you cross.

Harriet What's wrong with the boiler?

Alec Not boiling anything.

Alec *picks up a newspaper and opens it, obscuring his face.*

Myra Sore point.

Harriet Any news on Baggins?

Myra Gone for good, I think.

Harriet Have you told her?

Myra *shakes her head, drinks some wine.*

Alec *(From behind the newspaper.)* Sore point.

Myra Speaking of sore, we've got another hot spot from the scan last week.

Harriet Where?

Myra *points to her left upper arm.*

Myra Humerus. Great name for a bone. So that's four places.

Harriet I'm sorry, mum.

Myra Alright, feeling quite sanguine today.

Alec Pff.

Harriet *looks at Alec, then at Myra.*

Myra I gave the boiler a good kick this morning...

Harriet Sorry I couldn't come with you. I wanted to come to all of them.

Myra Turns out you get extra cloying sympathy if you go on your own.

Harriet I hope you were nice. They're professionals.

Myra Anyway, a couple more places and we'll be able to say I'm riddled with it.

Harriet What are they going to do?

Myra More radio. Painkillers. Warm baths. Funeral planning.

Harriet Don't be- Mum-

Myra *raises her eyebrows. Drinks. Harriet looks over at Alec, who is immobile behind his newspaper.*

Dad.

Alec Yes.

Harriet Mum's dying and you're sitting there reading the paper.

Alec Watched pot never boils, love.

Myra *laughs, nearly chokes on her wine.*

Harriet Dad!

Myra I like that.

Harriet Honestly.

Myra It's easier if you find the / funny, believe me.

The front door opens, offstage.

Jenna *(off.)* Hello.

Myra, Alec and Harriet *look at each other.*

Jenna *comes into the living room, a large sports bag slung over her shoulder. She stands just inside the door, hesitant.*

Hi.

Myra, Alec and Harriet *all look at her. Jenna swings the bag onto the floor.*

What?

Myra Is everything alright?

Jenna I, um. Thought I might. Stay for a bit. If that's- If that's OK.

Myra Have you and Mark had an argument?

Jenna No. No more than usual. It's all fine, he's fine.

Myra, Alec and Harriet *continue to stare at Jenna.*

What? Is this. Is this not alright?

Myra Of course it's-

Jenna All looking at me like it's–

Myra It's lovely to see you.

Jenna *puts her hands in her pockets.*

Glass of wine?

Jenna If its not too much tr–

Myra White or red?

Jenna *looks at Alec's glass.*

Jenna Red.

Myra *goes to pick up the bottle and Harriet stops her.*

Harriet Here, let me.

Jenna *watches Harriet. Then Myra.*

Myra Harri and Dad went to the concert tonight.

Harriet *pours a glass of wine for Jenna and hands it to her. Alec goes back to his paper.*

Jenna Was it good?

Harriet/ Yeah.

Alec No.

Jenna What was it?

Harriet The Brahms double.

Jenna I like Brahms.

Harriet Since when?

Jenna Hungarian Dances – I like that. The one Dad likes.

Myra Brahms!

Myra *types something into the laptop.*

Alec What are you doing?

Myra Hungarian Dances, brilliant. Upbeat. You should take Jenna to a concert sometime.

Myra *continues to type.*

Jenna That would be– Um, yeah.

The others are watching Myra. Jenna pulls her sleeves over her wrists. She moves a little closer to Myra.

Fucking cold in here.

Harriet Boiler's packed up.

Jenna Oh.

Harriet Still want to stay?

Jenna Course. Yeah.

Jenna *drinks some wine. Harriet watches her from the sofa. Alec reads and Myra types.*

I'll go put my bag–

Jenna *goes to leave with her bag. She doubles back and hugs Myra over the back of the sofa, then leaves rapidly. The others look at each other.*

Harriet God knows. D'you think they've–

Myra What, split up?

Alec *takes his shoes off.*

Alec Entrance wasn't dramatic enough.

Harriet *(To Myra.)*She'll tell you.

Jenna *returns and stands by the door.*

Jenna Ummm...

Alec Ah, the ominous um.

Alec *takes his slippers from beside the chair and puts them on. He puts shoe-trees in the shoes he has taken off.*

Jenna Um, where's Baggins?

Alec Ah.

Alec *looks at Myra.*

Jenna What?

Myra Baggins isn't here.

Jenna God, he didn't get run over again, did he?

Myra *puts her hands together in her lap.*

Myra No.

Jenna What, is he- Has he gone on holiday?

Harriet Sort of.

Jenna What?

Myra *motions to Harriet to fill up her wine glass.*

Myra He's um. He's moved out.

Jenna How- How can he have- He's a cat.

Myra They're autonomous, love. It's up to them.

Jenna He's been here fifteen years, this is his home.

Alec Went off with another woman.

Jenna *looks at Myra.*

Myra Alec. He disappeared. Few weeks ago. So I. I put a card in the newsagents with his picture, the phone number and. And the next day a lady rang from Kenilworth Road and said she'd- Got him. She'd been looking after him, thought he was a stray.

Jenna He's got a collar.

Myra Lost it. She wasn't to know.

Jenna Fucking cat thief.

Alec Cat burglar.

Myra Alec. She'd only just moved here and her cat died. I felt sorry for her.

Jenna You left him there?

Alec Course she didn't.

Myra We went to get him, with the basket. Kept him inside a few days so he'd readjust and it was fine. Then, how long was it?

Alec A week. Thereabouts.

Myra Went off again.

Jenna But you went- You went and got him again?

Myra Yes. And the time after that. By the fourth time I thought. Well I thought maybe he, he likes it there. Maybe. So I said-

Jenna What?

Myra I said she could keep him.

Jenna He's my cat.

Myra *taps her fingernails on her wine glass. Jenna wraps her arms around herself.*

Harriet You weren't the one looking after him, Jen.

Jenna Fuck off being fucking reasonable. I'd have taken him if he'd- If I'd been allowed pets in my flat- we can't all afford to buy our own flat, it's not my fault.

Myra We had to let him go.

Alec Like the lion in *Born Free*.

Myra Alec. If he didn't want to be with us...

Jenna Did you change the brand of cat food?

Myra *looks at Alec.*

Did you?

Myra No. No.

Jenna *goes out to the kitchen.*

Alec My fault.

Myra It's not.

Harriet It's no-one's fault.

Jenna *returns, a can of cat food in her hand.*

Jenna He doesn't like this sort. He's never liked this sort. Last time we got this he tried to throw himself under a lorry.

Harriet That was completely / disconnected.

Jenna He doesn't like this.

Myra I'm sorry. Your Dad's been doing the shopping. I haven't been. Up to it...

Jenna *bites her lip.*

I should have told him which sort to get.

Pause.

He might be- Baggins might be better off there, anyway. He's used to having people around, and once I'm- There'll just be your dad here and...

Long pause.

Jenna *(Under her breath.)* Fuck.

Harriet *looks at Jenna.*

What?

Harriet *looks away, pours more wine. Another long pause. No eye contact: four people alone.*

Myra *drinks, then stands up.*

Myra OK, let's do it now.

Harriet What?

Myra Shall we look at my presentation?

Harriet You said it wasn't ready.

Myra It's not really, but since we're all together - doesn't happen much, does it? Family time.

Alec What's this?

Myra Can you come and sit over here between your daughters, please?

Alec Not taking a photograph, are you?

Harriet Mum's made a PowerPoint thing.

Jenna A what?

Myra Alec, come and sit over here.

Alec I'm reading the- *(A look.)* Alright.

Alec *stands up and sits down gingerly between the two daughters on the sofa.*

What are we looking at?

Myra The computer.

Alec Need my glasses.

He's left them on his armchair. He stands up and fetches them.

Myra Can't you just-

Alec Just a second...

Alec *sits back down on the sofa.*

Right.

Myra Jenna, you'll have to be my techno person, alright?

Jenna I don't usually use a-

Myra You just have to hit return when I say, OK?

Jenna OK.

Harriet D'you know which return is?

Jenna Not a fucking / clue.

Myra Oh, for God's sake, how can you not- / Even I know-

Harriet That one.

Jenna Thanks.

Myra OK, are we ready?

The others nod in assent.

So this is something I've made to. Talk to you about something that- Well, it speaks for itself really. But it's a first draft so- OK. Jenna?

Jenna Yes?

Myra OK?

Jenna Oh right.

Jenna *presses return. She turns to Myra.*

Is that what you're going to say? When I have to press it.

Myra I'll say 'Jenna'.

Jenna OK.

Jenna *turns back to the screen, which Alec and Harriet are looking at, aghast. The words 'MY FUNERAL, by MYRA BRADLEY' have appeared. The slides also appear on the back wall, behind the family.*

Alec *looks at Myra.*

Alec Myra–

Myra So I've been thinking about this and how I want to shuffle off. And. I think it's important for you to know. So you don't get it wrong. So we can plan. OK, Jenna.

Myra *smiles at Alec. Jenna hits return.*

Alec I don't–

Myra So if you could just listen. Watch.

Alec *looks back at the screen. The words 'No funeral director or mortician' slide onto the screen from the right. With a swooshing noise.*

You can make it do all sorts of things – moving and noises and–So I want us to arrange it. Not a man in a tailcoat.

A Clip Art picture has appeared beside the caption.

Jenna Is that a bridegroom?

Myra There isn't a funeral director, I told you it's a first draft.

Alec You can't do it without an undertaker, it's not legal / is it?

Myra It is. There's a guidebook, handbook thing. Death certificates, it's all there. Jenna.

Jenna *hits return. The caption 'Woodland burial' slides on from the left. A tree appears with a twinkling sound.*

I'd like to be buried in a–

Alec Buried?

Myra Yes.

Alec Not cremated.

Myra No.

Alec But we've always– I mean it's, it's in the wills–

Myra I'm rewriting mine.

Jenna It's, um. Cremation's bad. For the environment. It's a pollutant.

Alec *looks at Jenna.*

Myra So I want to be buried in a woodland or a nice field. Jenna and I went to see one last month. Jenna's going to be head of the burial site committee, help me find somewhere just right so–

Harriet Jenna is?

Myra Yes. We'll need suggestions for a tree to plant on top of me, that would be helpful. Most of these places you can't have a marker. Jenna.

Jenna *hits return. The caption 'Cardboard Coffin' appears on the screen with a fanfare. Beat.*

Alec Cardboard?

Myra They're very strong. Much cheaper.

Alec Not the point.

Myra They come flatpack – we could order it ahead of time. You can paint them. I'd like to paint it.

Alec *goes to speak, but can't.*

Jenna.

Jenna hits return. The caption 'I will paint. Pillows & plastic liner.' slides down from the top of the screen.

OK, we've talked about that already. Next one, Jen. I haven't put noises on this bit yet...

Jenna hits return. 'Bury me in warm clothes.' appears, sliding down from the top again, followed by 'Velvet scarf. My big red shawl.'

I'm thinking it might be cold down there. Jenna.

Jenna hits return. 'Coffin to be carried by family.' appears from the lower part of the screen.

Perhaps not you, Alec, not with your back.

Alec takes his glasses off and puts them on the table. He leans back. **Harriet** drinks her wine.

It's all a bit sketchy here – just ideas I threw down. Jenna, just page through them.

Jenna hits return at short intervals and we see the following appear: 'Springtime flowers – depends on how long I last.'

So I guess we won't know about that for a while...

The next caption: 'No throwing flowers'.

Looks a bit shoddy, doesn't it? Sounds funny, flowers thudding on the...

Then, next to 'no throwing flowers' appears '– throw something else.', then, a moment later 'Glitter?'

OK, so that's a bit silly. There should be something like confetti we could use.

Alec shifts in his seat.

The next caption: 'No Astroturf.' followed shortly by 'For god's sake.'

Harriet Astroturf?

Myra You know at funerals when they cover up the earth by the side of the grave with fake grass? Like being buried in a greengrocer's. Jenna, next one?

Jenna hits return. The caption 'Watch grave being filled.' appears.

Alec What the–

Myra I think you should all stay there and watch while they fill it up.

Alec Oh, this is– No, excuse me.

Alec stands up, moves away from the sofa.

Myra I don't want everybody strolling away, leaving me...

Jenna I feel sick. Feel a bit sick.

Harriet You knew about this?

Jenna Not all of it.

Alec We're not going to– This is too–

Myra What, love, what?

Alec We're not–

Myra It's my funeral.

Alec Funny.

Myra Why can't I make jokes about it, isn't that how we–
Pause.

Please, Alec, we have to–

Alec We're not. We're not burying you in a. Cardboard box.

Alec leaves.

Myra Alec. It doesn't go away if we don't–

The others are silent for a moment.

Jenna Left his glasses. Have to come back down.

They look at the glasses.

Harriet Could take them up. I can't believe you knew about this, why didn't you–

Jenna I don't know, I–

Harriet You just don't think, do you?

Harriet picks up **Alec's** glasses and follows him out. **Myra** stares at the coffee table. **Jenna** looks after **Harriet** and **Alec**.

Myra I want it decorated with the sky and the stars.

Fade.

Scene 3

Another burial ground near Leamington. This is a level meadow with wild flowers and long grasses during the summer, but now, on a wintry Saturday in mid-November, looks a little bleak.

Harriet and **Jenna** stand facing each other by a wooden stile. **Harriet** holds her lunch – couscous salad in a Tupperware box – which she will continue to eat in a moment.

Harriet What, she didn't tell you?

Jenna What?

Harriet She's feeling a bit– Um, yeah.

Jenna Bit what?

Harriet Bit cancerous. Asked if I'd come instead.

Jenna She was fine when I left this morning.

Harriet Maybe she–

Jenna Well that's a fat lot of bloody good, isn't it, we're not burying you.

Harriet She didn't want to leave you stranded. And your mobile's switched off.

Jenna forages for her phone in her handbag, and eventually pulls it out.

Jenna Fuck. Always forget to frigging– Forget to fucking lock it...

Harriet Anyway, nice to see you, thanks for coming.

Jenna Thanks.

They look out across the field.

Harriet Not up to much, is it?

Jenna No.

Harriet D'you pick this?

Jenna It's in the book.

Harriet Hmm.

Harriet eats.

God, my boyfriend's a good cook. We were just having lunch, put some in a box for me, bless him. D'you want some?

Jenna No thanks.

Harriet 'S really good.

Jenna Hate the smell of Tupperware. This family. Always eating in fucking cemeteries.

Harriet eats, **Jenna** surveys the field.

Did you hear it arrived yesterday?

Harriet Did it?

Jenna Great big flatpack thing. Postman made some funny about enormous packages, not being able to get it through the letter box...

Harriet Who answered the door?

Jenna Dad.

Harriet Great.

Jenna Then there's a hoo-haa about where to put it. Dad said it should go in the cellar then Mum says it'd get too damp. So then Dad wanders off muttering it'll get a lot damper once it's used...

Harriet Where is it now?

Jenna Behind the sofa. Wants to build it straight away, try it out for size. So we can all get used to it. Apparently if we see it around the place we won't be so upset when she's in it.

Harriet Just start sleeping in it, freak us out properly...

Beat. They look around.

Well, I'm glad we didn't drag her all this way, are you?

Jenna *goes to sit on the lower bench of the stile.*

I mean, how would we know where she was? You'll get a wet arse.

Jenna Don't care.

Harriet It's a bit damp.

Harriet *looks in her rucksack and pulls out a carrier bag.*

D'you want a bag?

Jenna No thanks.

Harriet *spreads out the plastic bag on the upper step of the stile and sits down.*

Harriet You wouldn't know, would you? You'd have to remember, there's no markers or anything. 'Less they buried her right by the wall. Can't say I like the idea of having to find my mother with a map and a compass.

Beat.

Jenna Do you miss her?

Harriet Do I miss her?

Jenna Like when people say 'missing you already' when they're saying goodbye. I miss her already.

Harriet Thought I'd wait till she's gone, myself.

Jenna *takes her cigarettes from her pocket and lights one.*

Oh please not here.

Jenna These places. Give me a death wish.

Harriet Do you have to?

Jenna Yes, I'm addicted. That's what addiction is.

Harriet Don't blow it on my lunch. How many have you had today?

Jenna Umpteen.

Beat.

I miss her. Like the other day, I got home from work and it was a shit day and— I. Wanted her there. And I got home and. Just gripped by it. Desperately wanted her. Lying in bed, crying my eyes out and there's no-one else, no-one else is good enough.

Harriet *stops eating. She looks across the field, away from Jenna, frowning.*

Kind of frightening, getting this 'I want my mummy'. Hadn't felt that for years, I mean when did you last feel that, your whole body?

Harriet I. I can't remember.

Jenna So *basic*, like the cord or something, being pulled out from— (*Mimes a cord coming out of her stomach.*) Yeah.

Harriet What did you do?

Jenna Can't cry all day, can you, you run out. Packed a bag and went round to mum's.

Harriet Have you told her?

Jenna Course not. But now I keep thinking about next time I feel like... You ever get days when just breathing too deeply makes you cry?

Beat.

Harriet How long are you planning to stay? At home.

Jenna Don't know.

Harriet Cause it seems you've pretty much moved back in.

Jenna Plenty of time for living in a shit flat on my own when she's—

Harriet Don't you think— Don't you think maybe they need some time. Just them?

Jenna *stands up.*

Jenna I have got a wet arse now.

Harriet Don't you think?

Jenna She'd ask.

Harriet Come on, she couldn't ask that.

Jenna Why not?

Harriet Because you'd react like you always do.

Jenna Like / what?

Harriet Like everything's your tragedy and no one / else's.

Jenna I don't– I don't always– I'm having a really shitty time right now in case you hadn't–

Harriet See? You see? This is– This is it exactly.

Jenna What?

Harriet You're *always* having a shitty time. You're this fragile little spiky tissue paper thing we're s'posed to all look after and if we have to cancel holidays 'cause you've got dumped or if we have to rush off to hospital in the night 'cause you've got too happy with the alcopops and. And 'cause it's you, you don't just get sick and go to sleep you get fucking convulsions, or we have to spend every family meal not talking about boyfriends 'cause you're always about to break up with one, and trying not to notice when you dash straight upstairs straight after pudding then–And now mum's disappearing and you're still fucking about like– Like it's your disaster. It's not about you now. You haven't been to the hospital once.

Jenna I'm scared of hospitals. Mum knows.

Harriet Maybe I'm scared of burial grounds. Well, here I fucking am.

Jenna When did you start swearing?

Harriet Only swear when I'm really fucked off.

Jenna *looks away. Pause.*

Jenna We going to come here and argue once we've buried her d'you think?

Harriet We're not burying her here. It's too bleak.

Jenna Yeah, it is.

Beat.

Isn't even a bloody loo.

Beat.

Sorry. It's hard, you know?

Harriet Yeah.

Jenna And I'm not. I'm not strong. You're strong.

Harriet Yeah.

Jenna *sniffs.*

Jenna Have you got a–

Harriet *pulls a tissue out of her bag and hands it to her.*

Thanks.

Jenna *blows her nose.* **Harriet** *puts the lid back on her Tupperware box and presses it down firmly at each corner.* **Jenna** *watches her.*

D'you and Josh ever fight?

Harriet *sighs.*

Harriet Is this leading into a Mark / discussion–

Jenna No.

Harriet Because you know I think you should / dump–

Jenna I just want to know if you guys ever–

Harriet Not everyone wants to be yelling all the time–

Jenna I don't want to we just seem to–

Harriet So dump him just do it.

Beat.

Jenna You never fight?

Harriet Sometimes. Rare occasions.

Jenna About what?

Harriet Stupid things. Little things. Just when we're both stressed and.

Jenna You start bitching at each other and it blows up–

Harriet Not like that, no. Just like, I don't know – I don't know why I'm having to justify my relationship here – like when we were buying the house and we both really wanted it and we were scared we wouldn't get it, so. I'd go off at him about things he should have done and he'd get cross at me 'cause I didn't understand how busy he is and how he was trying to earn lots of money so we could afford it...

Jenna How do they end?

Harriet I go all quiet, he hugs me and we both feel better and get on with it.

Jenna D'you have sex afterwards?

Harriet Jen.

Jenna Mum thinks we should talk about sex more.

Harriet Mum thinks we should spend time together.

Beat.

I think she switched your phone off deliberately.

Jenna She couldn't have–

Harriet You never check it. She could have done it this morning. When you were in the shower or something.

Jenna I don't–

Harriet I might be wrong.

Jenna Never.

Harriet Piss off.

Jenna How long after the fight d'you make up?

Harriet What?

Jenna How long afterwards?

Harriet Half an hour?

Jenna Same day.

Harriet Always.

Jenna *frowns and looks across the field.*

Jenna D'you think we've given it long enough now?

Harriet I think we've established this isn't it.

Jenna This is not it.

Harriet She wouldn't like it.

Jenna I think trees are the thing. Did you see the lady at the office?

Harriet Said hello.

Jenna Started telling me how long it takes to decompose. Unbelievable.

Harriet Mum'd love that.

Jenna Then she said 'That's probably not what you want to hear right now'. I mean God!

Harriet Come on.

They start to leave. Jenna sees Harriet's plastic bag on the stile.

Jenna Don't forget your arse-bag.

Harriet How long does it take? To decompose.

Jenna Six weeks or so.

Harriet Length of the school holidays.

Jenna Yeah.

Fade.

Scene 4

The living room. A sluggish Sunday afternoon, late November.

Alec brings a small fan heater into the room and sets it down on the coffee table. He picks up the plug attached to the heater and looks at it.

He exits briefly, and returns, purposeful, a screwdriver in his hand. He goes to start unscrewing the plug casing, then stops. He catches the record player out of the corner of his eye.

He goes over to the record player and takes out a record from beneath it. He gently slides it out of its sleeve and blows it to remove any dust. He places the record on the turntable, then bends down to position the needle. Brahms' Hungarian Dances plays loudly, then quieter as Alec turns down the volume, a little self-conscious.

He holds up the inner sleeve of the record, looking at the light through the translucent circle of plastic in the centre.

Alec looks at the fan heater again, then sits down in his armchair and closes his eyes.

Harriet enters, a cardboard box in her hand. **Alec** starts when she comes in and sits up.

Harriet Your fridge is where food goes to die.

Harriet brings the box into the room and puts it on the floor in front of the coffee table. She sits down next to the box with an air of efficiency.

You know there's things in there went off five years ago? I found a jar of mint jelly right at the back, expired December 1990.

Alec Probably still alright...

Harriet There's a whole new eco system starting in there.

Alec So not dying.

Harriet What?

Alec stands up to turn off the record.

Alec You said food goes there to die. Starting a new eco system isn't dying.

Harriet Regenerating, then. You don't have to (*turn the music off*)

He lifts the needle off the record anyway.

Well I've chucked it all so at least no-one's dying of botulism.

Beat.

Alec What's in the box?

Harriet Spices cupboard. It's like an archaeological dig.

Alec Does your mother know / about this?

Harriet No. Stealth cleaning.

Alec She still asleep?

Harriet Off and on. Least she's resting. I should head home once she's up.

Alec sits in his chair with the fan heater on the floor and the plug on his lap.

I used to worry about botulism every time we had spaghetti on toast, you know.

Alec Did you?

Harriet Dented tins. I really don't mind you having music on...

Alec Thought you were in the kitchen.

Harriet Felt like some company.

Alec grimaces.

Alec You were cold.

Harriet It's freezing in there, dad.

Alec I know.

Harriet The freezer's got more ice on the outside than— You should get a heater in there.

Alec points at the heater on the table.

Oh, OK.

Alec Can't get the bloody thing to work. Think it's the fuse. In the plug.

Harriet Chuck it out, get a new one. They don't cost much.

Alec Might as well try fixing it...

Harriet You're so post-war, Dad.

Alec Which one?

Harriet Crimean. When are they fixing the boiler?

Alec Last Thursday.

Harriet *looks at him.*

They have a very, um, *fluid* relationship with time, these heating people. Our weeks of freezing to death are like five minutes of sunshine on their planet. And it's a new model, which means no-one's learned how to fix it yet.

Harriet Why did you / buy it?

Alec Looked warm in the brochure.

Beat. **Alec** *struggles to undo one of the screws on the plug.*

Dammit. God dammit.

Harriet You alright?

Alec Marvellous. (*As he unscrews.*) It's all going terribly well.

Harriet Where's Jen?

Alec Out with the boyfriend. Some kind of crisis or other.

Harriet She showing any sign of moving back into her flat or is she staying here forever now?

Alec Daren't ask.

Myra *enters, wearing a dressing gown. She hovers by the door.*

Myra Hi.

Alec Sorry, did I wake you?

Myra Bloody pipes banging woke me. 'Marry a chartered surveyor', they said, 'least your house'll always be sound'.

Beat.

Have you seen upstairs?

Harriet Why?

Myra All the doors are open.

Alec and Harriet *look at Myra.*

We keep the doors shut up there, don't we? We keep them shut or Baggins gets in and drops hairs all over. On the beds and everything. We're behaving like a family without a cat. Like a non-cat family. He's only been gone a few weeks.

Harriet Must've been Jenna.

Myra It's not always Jenna.

Beat. **Myra** *tightens her dressing gown around her.*

Harriet How you feeling?

Myra Achy.

Harriet Can I get you / anything?

Myra No. Thanks. I'm OK.

Alec You warm enough?

Myra I'm fine. God's sake.

Myra *goes into the kitchen.* **Harriet** *watches her.* **Alec** *goes back to unscrewing the plug.*

Alec Always cross when she wakes up.

Harriet Did you do the doors?

Alec Can't remember.

Harriet I haven't been upstairs. Apart from seeing mum.

Myra *returns.*

Myra You've thrown away all the food.

Harriet Only the stuff that's gone out of date.

Myra It was fine, you don't have to religiously—

Harriet Mum, there was mint jelly from 1990.

Myra That was fine.

Harriet I'd have been fifteen. In 1990. Probably me picked it up in the supermarket. Probably picked up mint jelly instead of mint sauce and that's why it stayed there all this / time.

Myra Exactly. There were memories in there.

Harriet There was bacteria in there.

Myra Beautiful. Circle of Life.

Myra *sighs and sits on the sofa. She tucks her legs up under her, painfully.*

Ow ow ow ow ow.

The others look at her.

Fine.

Alec Permission to give you a blanket?

Myra Bugger off.

Myra *points to the box in front of Harriet.*

What's this?

Harriet Spice cupboard.

Myra Why?

Harriet You were asleep. Wanted to do something helpful.

Myra You could help me choose a reading for the funeral.

Harriet We can go through these together. If you like.

Alec *fumbles and drops part of the plug casing.*

Alec Dammit.

Myra What are you doing?

Alec *leans down the side of his seat to pick up the part he's dropped.*

Alec Fixing the heater, for the kitchen.

Myra Oh good, that's going to work.

Alec What's the matter with you?

Myra Cancer. Next question?

Alec *gets up and picks up the heater.*

Alec I did know that. Do this somewhere else.

Alec *goes out to the kitchen.*

Myra Careful, it's cold in there.

Myra *turns back to Harriet.*

Go on, then.

Harriet OK.

Harriet *takes out a jar of spice.*

OK. Turmeric. April 2002.

Myra Keep that.

Harriet Three years.

Myra I'll hardly have opened it, there's no air in there.

Harriet Right. Tell you what – we'll do a keeping pile and a throwing pile, and if the keeping pile looks too big at the end we'll thin it out, alright?

Myra Fine.

Harriet *puts the turmeric to one side.*

Harriet So this is the keeping pile. And rules: we chuck anything over three years old, OK?

Myra Great.

Harriet *takes out another jar.*

Harriet Cayenne pepper. August 1998.

Myra There was something I used to make with that, what was it?

Harriet We're chucking it. Throwing-out pile.

Harriet *puts the cayenne at a distance from the turmeric. Picks out another jar.*

Herbes De Provence.

Myra Oh, we should go to Provence again.

Harriet 1993.

Harriet *puts the jar with the cayenne on the throwing out pile. Myra looks at the pile, wistful. Harriet picks out another jar.*

Basil. My god, 2003.

Myra Oh goody I can keep it.

Harriet *puts the basil on the keeping pile and goes to pick out another jar.*

Harriet Dad was being nice. Cumin. 1989.

Myra *holds out her hand for the jar.*

Myra Let me see.

Harriet *hands it to her.*

Never used these.

Myra *hands the jar back.*

I know he was being nice.

Harriet Chuck?

Myra Yes.

Harriet *takes out another.*

Harriet 1991.

She puts it straight on the throwing-away pile. She will look at several and consign them immediately to the throwing-away pile before she next consults Myra.

Ask him back in?

Myra Harriet, you can't / keep—

Harriet I just think—

Myra I'm grumpy and tired. And sick. Let me be grumpy today.

Harriet *turns back to the box.*

Jenna lets me be grumpy.

Harriet Jenna wouldn't notice if you lost a limb.

Beat. Harriet takes out another jar.

Paprika. '95.

Myra Mum used to use that. Used to sprinkle it on top of macaroni cheese. She always said paprika was great 'cause it was colourful but didn't really taste of anything. Course the answer was it didn't taste of anything in our house 'cause she'd had the jar so long.

Harriet You never told me that.

Myra Just dust now, isn't it. Chuck it. Chuck all of them, I'm not doing any more cooking.

Harriet Don't say that.

Myra It's true.

Harriet We'll do this another time.

Harriet *starts to hurriedly put all the jars back in the box. Even the throwing-out pile.*

Myra You could just put a sticker or something on all the bad ones and get rid of them when I'm—

Harriet We'll do it another time, I've got to get home.

Harriet *finishes putting the jars in the box.*

Do it later.

Harriet *picks up the box, and without looking at Myra, exits to the kitchen.*

Myra *sighs and stands up.*

Myra Ow ow ow ow ow.

*She looks around her, not sure what to do. She sees that **Alec**'s record is still spinning on the turntable and goes over to look at it. She looks at the label in the centre, recognises it and exhales. She stops the record spinning and closes the lid of the player.*

Alec comes to the doorway with the heater in his arms. He is hesitant.

Alec I can't find anywhere I'm not snapped at...

Myra smiles at him gently.

Is it safe to come out again?

Myra Yes, it's safe.

Alec comes into the room.

Alec Got it mended, I think.

Myra Well done.

Alec sets the heater down on the table.

Alec Just plug it in...

Alec goes over to the socket and inserts the plug. He looks at **Myra**.

Cross your fingers.

Myra holds up her fingers, already crossed, to show him. He moves closer to her and the heater.

Myra Am I horrible?

Alec You're ill.

Myra squeezes **Alec**'s arm, just above the elbow.

Here goes.

Alec reaches out to switch the heater on. They wait for a moment. Nothing happens.

Little light's supposed to... Check the plug's in properly.

*He goes over to the plug and pushes it harder into the socket. He turns back to **Myra** who puts her hand out to feel if anything's coming out of the heater.*

Hot or cold?

Myra Nothing.

She's not sure for a second.

Hang on...No, nothing.

Fade

Scene 5

A civil cemetery in Coventry, a dry but cold day in early December.

The cemetery has cordoned off a small corner of its land as a vague gesture to the natural burial movement. No-one has yet been buried here and it's not difficult to see why – the cemetery is run-down and grim, surrounded by industrial buildings. The natural burial site is little more than a patch of earth.

Alec sits on a park bench, the Independent crossword on his lap. **Jenna** stands facing him, a tissue in her hand.

Alec Didn't you get the message?

Jenna What message?

Alec Sorry, I left a message on your mobile phone.

Jenna rummages in her handbag and pulls out her mobile.

Jenna God. Sorry. Don't always hear it in here.

She sees a message on the phone.

Um. What did it say?

Alec That it'd be me and not your mother.

Alec rubs his eyes under his glasses.

She's not brilliant today.

Jenna twists the tissue in her hands.

Jenna Worse than this morning?

Alec Went back to bed about ten. Shouldn't stay out too long.

Jenna *sits down at the other end of the bench from Alec.*

Jenna Hello Dad.

Alec Hello.

Alec *stands up to take off his coat. He folds it and carefully places it beside him on the bench.*

Jenna You hot?

Alec No, just a bit—

Jenna Could they do better for her in the hospital? Maybe if we bullied her together...

Alec I don't know, love. It's up to her, isn't it?

Jenna *looks around her.*

Jenna This is horrible. This is the worst—

Alec Why are we looking at it?

Jenna It's the closest. On the map – my flat, your house, Harri's house. Nearest there is to equidistant. Mum thinks we'll visit more if we're close by.

Alec Shall we go, then?

Jenna Can we just— I promised we'd give each place a chance, give it a few minutes at least, not dismiss anything. Out of hand. She said you can't always tell just by looking.

Alec Well it's warmer than the house. Everywhere's warmer than the house.

Alec *goes back to his crossword. Jenna looks around at the burial ground.*

Jenna Is it funereal or funereal? (*fun-er-real or funereal*)

Alec (*Without looking up.*) Funereal. (*Funereal*)

Jenna Always say that wrong. Like ethereal. (*eth-er-real*)

Alec Ethereal. (*Ethereal*)

Jenna Yeah.

Beat.

We'll go in a minute.

Alec Alright.

Pause. Alec looks up from his paper, has a vague idea he should say something.

Jenna I saw five separate people fall over in the street today.

Alec Did you?

Jenna Three of them just walking down the street, not massive arse over whatsit falling, just like when your ankle turns and you feel really stupid and you have to do a face... Then another two on the bus. I was on the bus, they were on the pavement. Started to wonder if it was me making them fall just by looking at them, like the tree falling down in a wood thing, but I tried it on lots of other people and they didn't fall over and then I got here. Do you miss her?

Alec Miss her?

Jenna Like when people say 'missing you already'. I miss her already sometimes. It—

Alec *frowns.*

Have you got anything to eat?

Alec No.

Jenna Haven't had any lunch.

Alec Oh, hang on.

Alec *feels in his pocket and pulls out a Fry's Peppermint Cream chocolate bar. He hands it to Jenna.*

Jenna Ooh, your favourite!

Alec Don't tell your mother.

Jenna I hide chocolate too.

Jenna *opens the packet. She takes a piece and eats it.*

Had these when you were little, didn't you? What was the other one?

Alec Five boys. Fry's Five Boys chocolate.

Jenna What was that like?

Alec Chocolate with a picture of five boys on the top.

Jenna *eats another piece of chocolate.*

Jenna D'you want some?

Alec No thanks love, you have it.

Jenna Got some more in the car?

Alec No.

Alec *goes back to his crossword. Jenna finishes the bar of chocolate in silence.*

Jenna Can I put your coat on?

Alec If you want.

Jenna *stands up and puts the coat on over the top of her jacket. She sits down, her arms hugging the coat around her.*

Jenna It's really cold here.

Alec We can go.

Jenna In a minute.

Alec *looks up. Tries to make conversation.*

Alec Where's Martin today?

Jenna Mark.

Alec Mark.

Jenna Think he wants to split up.

Beat. Alec looks away, tired.

Alec Does he?

Jenna Think you were right not liking him.

Pause. Alec rubs his eyes.

Alec I'm sorry, I—

Jenna No, dads aren't supposed to like the boyfriend, are they? Just isn't nice to me anymore. Since he started this stupid course. Just— just wants to be with his stupid college friends. Some of them are like, barely twenty and he's over thirty— it's pathetic. Tells me he doesn't have enough money when I suggest we go out to eat, or go out or whatever, but he's got enough money to go to the pub after every class and—

Alec Maybe you just... you've just... Hmm.

Jenna *frowns. Alec looks at the sky.*

Jenna Like last week I finally persuaded him to let me meet his stupid new friends, this is after weeks of saying 'why don't I come and meet you after college' and him saying 'no, you're alright' and changing the subject and me thinking 'oh for fuck's sake!'. Sorry.

Alec It's all / right.

Jenna So, I go to meet him after a seminar and talk to his friends and I thought I'd been OK, just myself, thought I made quite a good impression, you know? And then we got back to his, and he said I'd *embarrassed* him and I'd *monopolised* the conversation...

Alec You can get a bit...

Jenna I feel like we're already splitting up, like I can feel it beginning to end. Sometimes I can hear the end of it in his voice. And I get so worried about mum and stuff, you know? I need someone *there*. And then he says I'm clingy, I'm too needy. And I'm like 'what d'you expect, my mum's got cancer...'

Pause. Alec searches for something to say.

Alec He's probably just... Hmm.

Jenna We don't even have sex anymore...

Alec You don't have to / tell me about that.

Jenna Sorry.

Beat.

Alec I can't really do...problems.

Jenna No, sorry.

Beat. She puts her head on his shoulder. He flinches, almost imperceptibly.

Alec I've got to get back.

Alec *stands up.*

D'you want a lift?

Jenna *looks at him, then down at the ground.*

Jenna Yes please.

Alec I'll bring the car round.

Alec *walks off to the car park. Jenna is left watching him go. She pulls the coat around her, tightly, and looks at the cemetery, twisting her tissue.*

Fade.

Scene 6

The living room, Friday evening, late January.

Jenna and **Harriet** *sit on the sofa, their hands on their laps, silent, preoccupied, their faces disordered. Both have the slightly inflated look of wearing several layers of clothing and each has more than one scarf around her neck.*

They are both staring at a white cardboard coffin, on the carpet in front of them.

Long pause.

Jenna So that's it, then.

Harriet Yes.

Pause.

Jenna That's it.

Harriet Yes.

Pause.

Jenna That's what it looks like.

Harriet Yes.

Pause.

Jenna Looks big.

Harriet Sometimes fat people die.

Jenna *laughs, then stops herself.*

Jenna Wasn't very hard, was it?

Harriet Like IKEA.

Jenna Funny they haven't changed the shape. Hundreds of years and they still look like that. Still looks like a coffin.

Jenna *stands up and goes to the coffin. She takes the lid off.*

Need some cushions, make it nice in there.

She touches the plastic lining of the coffin. It crackles.

Know what this is?

Harriet What?

Jenna Cremfilm.

Harriet Nice.

Jenna Fluids.

Harriet Yeah.

She crackles it again.

Jenna Think we'll get something else. Feels a bit freezer bag.

Jenna *runs her fingers along the side of the coffin.*

Harriet Does it feel strong?

Jenna Yeah. We should start painting.

Harriet Should draw it on first. With pencil.

Jenna Shall I fetch her, show it to her?

Harriet D'you want to?

They consider it.

Show her later. Once we've done some drawing.

Jenna OK.

Harriet Sky and stars.

Jenna I'm shit at art.

Harriet Me too.

Jenna You're not shit at anything.

Harriet I'll get pencils.

Harriet *goes to the kitchen. Jenna looks at the coffin, biting her thumbnail.*

Alec *enters, holding a telephone and a piece of paper. He stops and looks at the coffin.*

Jenna *holds her hands out towards it, presenting it, an awkward magician.*

Jenna Ta-dah!

Pause.

Alec That's it then.

Jenna Yeah.

Pause.

Alec Good. Good Lord.

Alec *looks around the room, anywhere but the coffin.*

I'm looking for my— Ah.

He sees his pullover on his armchair.

There we are.

He picks up the pullover to wear over the top of the one he's wearing already. He pulls it on sleeves first, then head.

He looks at the phone.

Right.

He starts to tap in a number, from the piece of paper in his hand.

Jenna Who you ringing?

Alec Boiler people. Give them a piece of my mind.

Jenna Good luck.

Alec *finishes tapping in the number and listens to it ringing.*

Harriet *returns with two pencils.*

Harriet Sorry, lots of crap in the pencil drawer.

She hands one to Jenna and looks enquiringly at Alec.

Alec On hold.

Jenna Boiler firm.

Alec Vivaldi. Spring.

Harriet Brilliant.

Alec *tries to stay turned away from the coffin but keeps catching it out of the corner of his eye. Jenna watches him.*

So what we doing?

Jenna *(Points to the feet end of the coffin.)*Sky. *(And to the head end.)*Stars.

Harriet That way round?

Jenna Don't want stars round her feet, do we?

Harriet So she's what, standing on a cloud? Just get her a harp and be done with it...

Jenna What she asked for.

Harriet So clouds down here, stars up here...

Alec Is that what she wants on it, clouds and stars?

Jenna Something like that.

Alec *stares at the coffin. He starts as someone answers the phone.*

Alec Oh, um, sorry— Sorry, can I—Can I call you back?

He hangs up, quickly. Sees the others watching him.

Do it later. Have to be in the right mood.

Harriet and Jenna *turn back to the coffin. Alec edges towards it.*

So how much did it– How much did it cost, this?

Jenna 'Bout seventy pounds.

Alec Well. Bargain.

Harriet I'll start on the sky, yeah? Think I can do clouds.

Jenna I'll do stars.

Harriet and Jenna *tentatively start to draw on the coffin.*

Alec Is that what they– Do they all cost that?

Jenna Approximately. Not a very competitive market.

Alec Does a more. Expensive one look. Look less like a cardboard box?

Jenna Won't look like a box when it's painted.

Alec Doesn't look strong enough.

Jenna We're not the first people to ever use one.

Alec No.

Jenna We could test it.

Alec No, I don't think so.

Alec *paces around the coffin.*

What's that inside it?

Jenna Cremfilm.

Alec For the, um–

Jenna Fluids.

Alec Right.

Alec *looks out of the window.*

Right.

Harriet and Jenna *look at each other. An awkward pause.*

Harriet I've got a new game, Dad.

Alec Have you, love?

Harriet Josh thought of it. We were talking about cocoa farmers.

Jenna *sniggers.*

Shut up. About what a shitty time they have and stuff, and then Josh says he's never seen a cocoa bean. Which is stupid because he's been everywhere. Like he doesn't know what one looks like, he just knows the word, knows what they are. So we started a game of thinking of things you've never seen.

Alec Hmm.

Harriet D'you know what I mean? Not like an elephant because you might not actually have *seen* an elephant but you know what it looks like 'cause you've seen pictures – something you have no idea what it looks like but you know the word for.

Alec A competent boiler engineer. D'you see the one they sent last week? Must've been about fourteen. Promise they're sending round someone decent, someone with half a whatsit, then you open the door and you can tell straight off. Different monkey, same zoo... Good game.

Short pause.

Jenna Don't think I've ever seen a carburettor.

Alec You must / have.

Jenna No, I haven't, I'm sure I haven't.

Harriet Isn't that the bit, the bit attached to the / exhaust pipe?

Alec Exhaust pipe. The wider bit.

Jenna Is it? Oh, I've seen that, is that what it is?

Alec Yes.

Jenna OK.

Pause. They think.

I've never seen a slide rule.

Harriet Oh, good one.

Jenna No mental picture.

Alec It's like a— I've got one, actually.

Jenna See, I didn't even know it was small enough to go in a house.

Alec Upstairs somewhere. I could dig it out. I'll go and—

Jenna Dad, it's / OK.

Alec In the study I think.

Alec *leaves.*

Harriet Go and have a look.

Jenna We're doing this.

Harriet Make him happy, he likes showing things.

Jenna He'll bring it down if he finds it.

They continue to draw.

Is this how it'll be d'you think? The three of us.

Harriet Don't know.

Beat.

Jenna What was your thing?

Harriet What?

Jenna Thing you'd never seen.

Harriet Oh. Big one. Never seen a dead body.

Pause. Jenna thinks.

Jenna Yeah, but that doesn't fit, does it? With the game. You know what that's going to look like. It'll look like mum.

Harriet *puts down her pencil.*

Harriet These clouds look like turds.

Jenna *looks.*

I'd have learned to draw properly, you know, if I'd known...

They examine their work so far.

Jenna You know what Baggins'd do? He'd get in there, curl up and have a sleep. Loved boxes.

Harriet 'My cat likes to hide in boxes'.

Jenna Wouldn't even be bothered what it's for.

They look at the coffin, then at each other.

Harriet You.

Jenna No, you.

Harriet You.

Jenna You're the oldest.

Harriet You're the naughtiest.

Jenna You won't be cross?

Harriet Why would I be cross?

Jenna You know, all self-righteous like 'ooh, you shouldn't have done that'.

Harriet No.

Jenna OK.

Jenna *steps gingerly into the coffin. She sits down, pulling her knees up under her chin. Harriet watches her, intently.*

Harriet Lie down.

Jenna Might snag the Cremfilm.

Harriet Go on.

Jenna *looks at Harriet, then lies down slowly.*

How is it?

Jenna Twenty years ago you'd have put the lid on and sat on it.

Beat.

Never looked at this ceiling before, looks fucking awful. Look at that crack.

Jenna *'s hand comes up out of the coffin, pointing.*

Place is falling to bits.

Harriet *hears a noise, off. Jenna sits up and looks around.*

Harriet Coming downstairs.

Jenna *climbers hastily out of the coffin. They look at each other.*

Jenna This didn't happen. We didn't do this.

Harriet No, that'd be—

Jenna Wrong. Morbid.

Alec *returns, shaking his head.*

Alec Couldn't find it. Buried under years of crap.

Harriet Another time.

Alec Your mother's coming down, she's woken up.

Harriet Right. Great.

Alec *paces, rattling the change in his pockets. Jenna shivers.*

Alec You're not going to do anything—

Jenna What?

Alec Alarming.

Jenna Not about me, is it?

Myra *comes in, rubbing sleep from her eyes, slightly dopey. The others all look at her.*

Myra Let me see it.

The others move away so that Myra has a clear view of the coffin. Myra looks at it. She wakes up. Looks at it for a long time.

That's it, then.

Pause.

Was it difficult?

Harriet Instructions were good, very clear.

Jenna You need them clear, don't you, I mean it's a difficult time, you don't want to be...

Myra *continues to look at the coffin without moving towards it.*

It'll look better once it's painted. Once Harriet learns to draw clouds.

Myra Thought I was painting it.

Jenna Well, if that's what you— I just thought—

Myra I'll paint it.

Myra *frowns.*

Doesn't look how I thought.

Jenna It's good and strong.

Alec What did you expect, a Wendy house?

Myra Doesn't look very wide.

Jenna It's wider than you, we measured when we ordered it.

Pause.

Myra I think I'd like to be buried on my side.

Harriet On your side?

Myra Like the way I sleep. On my side. With my legs tucked up. My hands under my / face

Myra *mimes where her hands would go.*

Alec Oh for God's / sake!

Myra So it's like going to sleep. What?

Alec Just rewrite the whole bloody—

Myra I just think I'd be less. Less scared of the earth.

Alec You won't be conscious.

Myra All that earth coming down. On top of me.

Alec It doesn't make any / difference...

Myra Wouldn't you be scared?

Beat. She looks at the three of them.

D'you know what I read today? Something I never knew. Never knew before. When you die, if you've eaten, if you've got any food in in your system, in your *bowels*, horrible word— When you

die, all your muscles relax. Including your, your rectum. So if there's. If there's anything *there* when you die, next thing you do is um is shit. After you die, you can shit. I might die while you're all out of the house and you might come home and find me covered in— Your last picture of me. I won't, you're right Alec, I won't know about it. Still can't bear it.

The others watch her, paralysed. Myra looks at her family.

Look at you. Will one of you please for a bloody change know what to do?

Pause.

Harriet goes to **Myra** and puts her arms around her. **Myra** looks at **Alec** over **Harriet's** shoulder.

Fade

Scene 7

A burial ground in Coventry. Wednesday afternoon, the kind of surprisingly warm mid-March day that provokes premature summer behaviour. This is a mature woodland which has only recently been converted into a burial site. Graves are placed between the trees, with no markers except for a small plaque on a tree close to each grave. The ground under the trees is carpeted with moss and there are daffodils and crocuses.

Jenna sits under a tree, looking around her, smoking.

Harriet enters, a little dishevelled. **Jenna** looks up and sees her.

Jenna Oh, for fuck's sake.

Harriet What?

Jenna It's supposed to be mum. Does she have to keep sending proxies? I know what she's doing, I'm not a fucking social cripple and my phone's been on all morning 'cause I checked it, before you start.

Harriet looks at the back of her hands.

Harriet Said she's fed up of us coming home saying they're not right. Says she doesn't need to see them if they're all going to be not right.

Jenna But I think this one might be.

Harriet Really?

Jenna Yeah.

Harriet looks around her.

Harriet Yeah. Proper wood.

Jenna Be gorgeous in summer. The crocuses are nice.

Harriet Croci. (*Croaky*)

Jenna (*In a croaky voice.*) The crocuses are nice.

Harriet Oh, funny.

Jenna has to cough to clear her throat.

Jenna 'Scuse me. I bet there's bluebells. I bet it's all covered in bluebells in the summer.

Beat.

Harriet I don't want it to be summer.

Jenna How d'you mean?

Harriet When she dies. Winter's easier, everyone's all bundled up, rushing around busy and no one has to ask you, you don't get *asked*... Summer you're supposed to be happy, aren't you? People being happy all over the place, it's all warm, you. Can't wear your scarf anymore. Couples all over the place, all being new with each other, all happy and *new*...

Jenna You alright?

Harriet looks at **Jenna**, then away.

Harriet No. No, I'm losing it. Quite successfully.

Harriet looks at **Jenna**, smiles weakly.

Doesn't matter. It's not about me.

Jenna How losing it?

Harriet *scratches the backs of her hands as she speaks.*

Harriet Just– Not being able to– Feels like– I don't know, you know how sometimes you're doing laundry and you'll– You take it all out the machine and for some reason you've left the basket somewhere else so you have to carry it all up the stairs in your arms and–

Jenna I haven't got stairs.

Harriet What?

Jenna Moved out of mum's yesterday.

Harriet Oh. Really? Wow. Really?

Jenna Back in my flat now.

Harriet OK.

Jenna Laundry.

Harriet Yeah. So I'm trying to carry it all up the stairs. And. And it's quite a big pile and I can't see where my feet are on the steps 'cause it's so big so I'm slow... But then one sock falls off the top of the pile and I bend down to pick it up but while I'm doing that something else falls and I can't pick each thing up without dropping something else and then. Before I know it I've tripped up a step and there's washing all over the floor. Except it's not washing, it's me all over the floor. But hey ho.

Harriet *smiles sadly and shakes her head.*

And I've got this stupid eczema or something– never had eczema– backs of my hands keep itching all the time... Are the graves under the trees?

Jenna Spaces between. Trees are too old, aren't they?

Harriet Oh yeah.

Jenna Little marker on each one to say who's there, look. (*She twists round to look at the tree behind her.*)... Dorothy Hutchins. Must have been old, don't get kids called Dorothy, do you? Hope there's no babies... E45 cream. Stop it itching.

Harriet *paces, animated, slightly off-balance.*

Harriet You know, I went to mum's the other day, just to check up on her and stuff. Walked in and she's sat in the coffin. Middle of the living room floor and she's– She's watching 'Have I Got News For You' and she's laughing. Sitting in it, laughing. And I just thought God, I can't cope with this I can't do this. I was looking at her and I missed her. Don't know what I'm going to do. It hurts behind my eyes. Got this stupid eczema. My mouth keeps tasting of blood and it's not bleeding gums 'cause I thought it must be and I went to the dentist.

Harriet *stares into the distance, her hand to her mouth.*

Jenna I've got Tic-Tacs.

Harriet Yeah?

Jenna Want one?

Harriet Please.

Jenna *pulls a box of Tic-Tacs out of her bag and holds them out.* **Harriet** *goes to her and takes the box.*

Jenna Have two if you like. Should carry Tic-Tacs. Or gum. Minty stuff's good, it makes you concentrate on it, you stop thinking about whatever you're thinking about and start thinking of. Mint.

Harriet *takes two and hands the box back.*

Harriet Thanks.

Jenna Better?

Harriet *paces again.*

Harriet Yeah. I keep– I can't– Can't stop *feeling*. Can't get on with my life because I'm *feeling* all the time. Can't do anything. Keep crying. Or thinking I'm going to cry and

then not being able to do anything in case I do. Josh thinks I need to (*imitating his voice.*) ‘go and talk to someone’. Which just makes me think ‘What the fuck are you there for, then?’.

Jenna Are you going to? Talk to someone.

Harriet Don’t know. Usually I’d talk to / mum.

Jenna Mum. Yeah.

Beat.

Harriet Think I’ll sit down now.

Jenna You’ll get a wet arse.

Harriet *sits next to Jenna.*

You could talk to me. If you want to. I mean, I won’t be upset if you– Know I’m less use than a snot rag in most. Situations. But. You know...

Harriet Yeah.

Jenna Everyone thinks I’m mad as a bucket, complete liability but– Not always.

Harriet Thanks.

Beat.

Jenna I finished with Mark.

Harriet You?

Jenna Yup.

Harriet Why?

Jenna Just– It’s really boring. Just I realised I didn’t want him at the funeral. Then I thought about it some more and I realised I didn’t want *him*.

Harriet God. How are you?

Jenna Oh, you know. Miss him.

Harriet When was this?

Jenna Last week. Week ago.

Harriet What’s mum think?

Jenna Haven’t told her. Didn’t tell anyone.

Harriet *looks at her.*

Thought I should have a practice.

Jenna *takes out her Tic-Tacs and eats one.*

Pause.

Harriet *stands up.*

Harriet I’ve got a wet arse.

Jenna That’s awful, isn’t it? Practising.

Harriet No, it–

Pause.

Jenna *looks at the floor.*

Jenna The moss is nice. I like the moss.

Harriet Yeah. Furry.

Jenna Warm. Like a blanket.

Beat.

Harriet I need to go.

Jenna OK.

Beat. **Harriet** *looks around.*

Harriet Yeah.

Jenna OK.

Jenna *stands up for the first time, revealing the plastic bag she’s been sitting on. She folds it up carefully and puts it into her handbag. Harriet watches her, surprised. Jenna looks up and sees Harriet watching.*

What?

Harriet *laughs.*

What?

Fade.

Scene 8

The living room, early evening, mid-March. Myra's cardboard coffin, now half-painted with sky and stars, is at the side of the sofa, its lid lying beside it.

Alec *has the phone in his hand and is pacing up and down. He holds a letter, which he refers to occasionally.*

Alec The reference number at the *bottom* of the page? ...LS23161701... Mr A. Bradley, 26 Morris Avenue, look you know who I am we've been on the phone all bloody week...Right. I've got a letter in my hand saying you were going to come round today and sort it out... Oh yes, someone came, someone came and scratched his head at it, had a cup of tea, said he couldn't fix it and toddled off again. Which to be honest isn't what I had in mind.Listen, mate- I'm sorry, do you mind if I call you mate, it's not a word I'd normally use, but I feel we've spent a lot of time together now... Richard. Right. Richard. Richard, when are you going to fix my boiler?... Alright, try again: when- *specifically*, in *time* - are you going to fix my boiler?... Mmm, uh huh... Do you know I have never encountered incompetence on this level before? My daughter has this thing she says (she's twenty-seven she talks like a teenager) the thing she keeps saying is 'next-level', everything's next-level wrong, next-level horrid, next-level stupid. Well this is next-level farcical if that's not a tautology....*Tautology*. It means- It doesn't matter... Could you just- Could you *let* me complain at you, I'm afraid I won't feel complete until I've ruined your day too. I mean what is the *point*, what is the blasted point of making a boiler so high-tech there's only two chaps in the country can fix it? What is the bloody point?... So if you agree why can't you do something about it? Somebody somewhere in your company has to take responsibility- How many people where you're working, Richard? ...How many can you see? ...Where are you?... Good God, no wonder you don't care about my problems if you're in *Glasgow*.Right, so I'm imagining, if the world's a fair place, that the others are spending a good portion of their time being screamed at by someone like me I mean I can't believe I'm completely alone in this... So what if you get everyone together and count up the amount of time you've spent listening to complaints about the CH 2010, which incidentally isn't the year you're going to fix my boiler in, and then you might work out there's a health and safety issue, something about stress and eardrums and you can all take your headpieces off and go over and tell the supervisor and maybe if you all club together and do something about it you might have the-Hmm.

Alec *stops. He takes his glasses off and rubs his eyes.*

No, that's crap. Don't have the power to do anything, do you?

Alec *paces around the coffin, looking at it.*

We've been cold for four months. You know how cold a house gets after that long? Nothing residual left. Tell you something else - my wife is dying... No- no, it's not your fault. ...Cancer. Bone cancer... No, she's going to die.So you can imagine how this is making me weary. I am spending precious hours of her dwindling life talking to you. She wants to stay at home, she doesn't want to die in hospital, she wants to die at home, which between you and me I think is a drastically bad idea, but that's what she wants and by Christ I'll get it for her if I have to come to Glasgow and do the bloody training course myself...No, I'm a. I'm a chartered surveyor... No, we don't do heating systems...Look, what it boils down to, excuse the pun, in essence what I'm saying here is the least you can do is let her die in the *warm*. It's bafflingly little to ask.

Alec *stands in the coffin.*

...When? ...DID YOU NOT HEAR A WORD I SAID? I want someone out here tomorrow, Richard. Tomorrow morning.

Myra *enters carrying a pot of silver paint, which she stirs with a small paintbrush. She is wearing her dressing gown.*

...Yes, Thursday should be fine. Yes, two o'clock.

Alec *hangs up the phone. He takes a breath.*

Thursday.

Myra I heard.

Alec House is falling apart.

Myra You could move.

Alec *steps out of the coffin and moves away.*

Alec The walls are bowing.

Myra *laughs.*

Myra It's aching. Heaving, like when you cry. Like when a person who cries, cries.

Alec Just years of neglect, love.

Alec *rubs his eyes under his glasses. He sits down in his chair.*

Nice bath?

Myra *eases herself down by the coffin. Alec watches the pain in her movements.*

Myra Alright. Didn't stay in long, too much Radox, got a bit gritty. Going off baths, too much thinking time.

She starts to add another coat of paint to the silver stars on the coffin.

Alec You think I should move house?

Myra Up to you.

She paints. Pause.

Alec, when I'm gone—

Alec I don't want to talk about— / I shouldn't have—

Myra Something really important I—

Alec Sleep on your side, fine, I don't care, do whatever—

Myra Not that something else.

Alec *looks at her, confused.*

I have to— Something I have to— You might meet someone else.

Alec What?

Myra Once I've gone. You might meet someone, you might want to—

Alec *goes to speak.*

(Stopping him.) No please don't please don't. *(Continuing.)* You might find you— There might be some part of you that, that *can't*, because you feel I wouldn't— That it'd be... You might hold back from it, you might not even— and I— I want you to *know* that's not what I want for you.

Beat.

Alec Christ, Myra.

Myra You just don't know, do you? I mean, she might just turn up one day, just like that, out of the blue. And if she does, when she does, I don't want you to feel you can't— can't say hello.

Alec *shifts in his chair.*

You're not expecting it now, but—Alec, you could fall in love! You could fall so much in love, you could feel something *violent*. And you've got to be brave and and um *go for it* because that's what I want you to do. In that situation. Or even. Even if it's not violent I mean. There's no reason to be alone you're too young to—

Alec *stands up. He goes over to the window and takes his handkerchief out of his pocket. He wipes his eyes, facing away from Myra. A long pause.*

Alec When did— When did we— When did we stop fighting this and just accept it?

Myra *goes back to painting.*

Myra You know, you should switch to paper hankies. Women don't like those.

Beat.

Alec When did we decide you weren't ever—

Myra *continues painting.*

I can't remember that talk, I don't remember us deciding...

Myra You could just say thank you.

Beat.

Thank you for arranging everything. Thank you for making sure everything's covered, not— Not forgetting anything, forgetting to say anything.

Long pause. Alec looks out of the window, composes himself, softens.

Alec Thank you.

He tries to find words.

You know the funeral isn't. Isn't for you. It's for us. Maybe if you could leave us, maybe something to do. To be— To be occupied with. After you— People need something to do.

Myra *sits still. She puts the paintbrush down.*

Something to do.

Alec *goes to his chair and picks up a book from beside it. He is about to sit down, then changes his mind and goes to sit down on one end of the sofa, closer to where Myra is. He opens his book and starts to read.*

Myra I'm sorry.

Alec *looks over the top of his glasses at Myra.*

Thank you for sorting out the boiler. That was—

Alec Least I could do.

Alec *looks back at his book. A sad smile breaks Myra's face. She comes closer to Alec and sits next to him. Hesitant, she takes his arm and puts it around her shoulder, leaning her back against his side and pulling her feet up so that she is sitting lengthways on the sofa. She almost daren't breathe in case he notices and shrugs her away. Alec tenses, then relaxes. He continues to read, trying to turn the pages with one hand.*

Myra Look after the girls, won't you?

Alec *looks up.*

Alec Are you—

Myra What?

Alec All this talk, are you thinking it's tonight or—

Myra Oh no. No, weeks left. Lots more awkward talks.

Pause. Alec goes back to his book.

When my dad died, mum said she'd woken up sometimes afterwards and felt him in the room. Felt him sit down. On the edge of the bed, an actual weight. A presence. She was awake, she wasn't even—But then I haven't sat on your bed for years, so...

Alec *gives up and closes the book, placing it on the arm of the sofa beside him. He takes off his glasses and places them on top of the book.*

Maybe tonight?

She leans her head back on his shoulder. Alec plants a gentle kiss on top of Myra's head.

Pause.

Alec You know I— I do um. Cry. I will, when you—You mustn't think I I won't.

Pause.

Myra OK.

Pause.

Alec Help you upstairs...

Myra No, stay here a minute. Liking this.

Alec *puts his other arm around her and holds her tight.*

Alec My room or your room?

Myra *laughs.*

Myra Yours is tidier.

Fade.

Scene 9

The same burial ground as in scene 7, but now, in late March, the crocuses and daffodils are in full bloom and the morning sunlight is partially obscured by new leaves on the trees. The site has increased in beauty since we last saw it.

Myra and Jenna stand surveying the site. **Myra** is wearing a coat, **Jenna** isn't. **Jenna** carries a blanket under her arm.

Jenna Here?

Myra Here.

Jenna I think so. I think it's—

Myra Yes. Yes it is.

Pause. Jenna looks off.

Jenna Is Harri coming?

Myra Said she wanted to stay in the car.

Jenna OK.

Jenna takes the blanket and spreads it out on the ground.

Get you sat down.

Myra Can I sit on the moss?

Jenna Um, I gue— *(She touches the moss with the palm of her hand.)* Yes, it's dry.

Jenna helps **Myra** to sit down on the floor. **Jenna** stands up again and looks at **Myra**, curious.

Myra What?

Jenna You didn't make a noise. When you sat down.

Myra Full to my earlobes with painkillers, love.

Jenna Right.

Myra I'm not getting / better—

Jenna No, I know.

Pause.

Myra Should have died last Thursday. If it was six months.

Jenna But you didn't.

Myra Bit busy that day. Postponed it.

Myra laughs.

I haven't been counting or anything. Not really, I just. I looked at the dates when they first told me. It's not like they say 'you've got until the twenty second of March' or something, I just looked at the dates, so—Yes. Think we'll know about it before it happens – all that standing round my bed bit to get through yet... Need to buy a big nightie.

Jenna I'll get you a big nightie. M&S.

Myra Thanks. Anyhow, all of this is extra. All of this is better than expected.

Jenna Yeah.

Myra Except I've been having headaches.

Jenna Right. Which means—

Myra Skull.

They think.

Jenna Should've brought some sandwiches.

Myra I'm sorry, I didn't / think—

Jenna No, I mean, I should have. Not your job anymore. I mean, I don't mean— I mean I should've thought of it.

Myra Should've brought champagne. Celebrate finding this place, it's gorgeous.

Jenna Yeah.

Myra I could be really happy here. Could really be beautiful.

Beat. Jenna thinks.

Jenna What food d'you want? At the funeral, you know, we haven't talked about— What?

Myra is laughing.

Myra I hadn't— I hadn't even thought about— *(Stops herself laughing.)* You choose. I won't have to eat it. Choose something you like.

Jenna OK. I mean, I might not eat anything, I might not feel like it...

Myra I brought something for you...

Myra *looks in her handbag and pulls out a business card. She hands it to Jenna.*

Jenna Who's this?

Myra She was at the hospital. Does green funerals. No, I know we're all sorted out but if there's anything we've forgotten. Or you want to talk to someone or—I wouldn't mind if you called her.

Jenna Mum, we can manage it...

Myra But you might feel. I don't know. Alone with it. Like the old bitch has died and now you've got to deal with all this paperwork or whatever... You might need someone.

Jenna I know we've made it look really difficult, but—

Myra It's not a criticism.

Jenna *turns away, putting the business card in the back pocket of her trousers.*

Jenna I thought of something we could throw in.

Myra Oh yes?

Jenna Instead of flowers or your stupid glitter idea.

Myra What?

Jenna Leaf skeletons. That could be beautiful.

Myra Yes.

Jenna Might kind of. Float.

Jenna *paces. She smiles.*

Myra What is it?

Jenna Nothing. You warm enough?

Myra Toasty. Lovely day. Glad I didn't die in winter. Less chance of the funeral getting rained on now. Couldn't bear it if you all had to carry umbrellas, want you to see each others' faces. Easier to be *open* in summer, isn't it?

Pause.

Jenna I don't know how open we're going to be, mum. It doesn't feel— Easy. To learn. I think you want the three of us to have this fully-functioning— Talking thing. And I don't know if we will. 'Cause we never have. I used to notice, going to the loo in the middle of the night, I'd be walking down a corridor of closed doors. Like a hotel. Four separate people. That time I moved back in, before Christmas, I tried leaving all the doors open, see if it'd help. I'd go upstairs and open all the doors. And someone else would always go round and close them all again. So I don't know if— If we never had that even with you here, I don't know if we'll do it without you.

Myra *strokes the moss on the ground beside her.*

Sorry.

Jenna *sits down beside Myra. She bites her thumbnail. Then she catches sight of something on Myra's skirt.*

Look.

Myra What?

Jenna Cat hair.

Myra *peers at it. Jenna carefully picks it off.*

That's Baggins.

Myra Is it?

Jenna Ginger at the tip and white at the bottom. Definitely him.

Myra Shows how long ago I washed it. Miss that cat.

Beat. They look at the cat hair.

Jenna I'm really sorry.

Myra Blow it. Make a wish.

Jenna That's eyelashes, isn't it?

Myra Blow it anyway.

Jenna *does.*

Don't tell me. Hope you get it.

Myra *brushes down her skirt, removing any other hairs.*

I know it's not going to be perfect the three of you but— I know that. God, if you turn into the Waltons the second I'm gone I'll be really cross 'cause I'll just think why couldn't you do that years ago, why couldn't we all enjoy that together? But— You don't know what you can do. Look at you — you left him all by yourself and you survived it and now look at you, you're smiling all over the place...

Jenna Yeah.

Myra I mean I. I think you might be able to manage without me.

Jenna Oh mum, I.

Myra Which is OK.

Jenna *looks away.*

Tell you something. When I first met your dad, he wouldn't— He wouldn't listen to music if there was anyone else there. Hated it, had to leave the room, wouldn't go to the opera or anything. Get up and turn the record off if you walked in. Hated it if you came in quietly and caught him. Used to drive me up the wall. All this going to concerts business, it's all quite new. Only the last what, fifteen years or so. When Harriet started playing the silly cello, that's when it started. Knew I'd never sit through a whole concerto so he had to do it. But before that, only if he was on his own.

Beat.

You'd never have known that.

Jenna No.

Myra So he's come on, you see. Since then. You know, there's always room for— Things are possible. People can— Maybe we shouldn't have Brahms at the funeral. Might be too much.

Jenna How is he? Is he OK?

Myra He's got the boiler fixed. Which is a relief, you know, now the weather's warmer anyway...

They laugh.

Now he can get on with worrying about the walls bowing and the roof leaking and the pipes banging and all the rest... And he's going to be fine. Harri's going to be fine in a bit. You're all going to be fine, it's exciting and I won't bloody well be here to see it.

Beat.

Time is it?

Jenna Twelve.

Myra Tablet time.

Myra *looks in her handbag.*

Left them in the car.

Jenna I'll get them. Then we don't have to leave yet.

Myra Could you bring the water as well?

Jenna Sure.

Myra And Harri, maybe?

Jenna Give it a go.

Jenna *is about to go. She sees the blanket.*

Take this thing back if we're not sitting on it.

She bends down to fold up the blanket. Myra catches her smiling as she does it.

Myra Is it something specific you're smiling about?

Jenna Not smiling.

Myra It's OK to smile.

Jenna *stands up, the blanket clutched to her.*

Jenna OK. New man.

Myra *looks at her, surprised.*

Yeah.

Myra Who is he?

Jenna He's not a wanker.

Myra Good lord.

Jenna He's— God, there's too much to—

Myra How's the sex?

Jenna Amazing. He's so, um— We didn't do it till the fourth night. I've got this— this pulse in my bottom lip all the time. He's just— You need your tablets.

Jenna *goes to leave.*

I'll be quick. Don't go anywhere.

Myra Make pretty slow progress if I did.

Jenna Stay there. Try not to die.

Myra *laughs.*

I mean it, I haven't finished telling you.

Jenna *leaves.*

Myra *looks around her, smiling quietly. She slowly lies down on her side, and strokes the moss with her hand. She tucks her feet up and places her hands under her face, as if she were asleep. After a few moments, Myra changes her mind. She rolls over slowly and lies on her back, looking up at the sky.*

Fade.

The End.