The Confusion of Tongues (Draft 4)

By Ben Arntz and James Fair

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INT. DEREK’S BEDROOM – MORNING

A model railway. A train exits a tunnel and approaches the station. At the platform are two model people; one white man conservatively dressed in a suit, then a black man beside him.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
We’ve got Helen Quinn in the studio with us this morning. Helen is the landlady at the Spotted Pig Pub in the city centre. Helen, you’ve got a very special event tonight haven’t you?

HELEN (O/S)
Very much so. Special events every night, best pub in the city.

A toy pub. Outside it are three toy workers in fluorescent jackets.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
Right. So, tell us about tonight’s pub quiz.

HELEN (O/S)
Our pub quiz is the best. We have it every week. But if no one wins it, we keep the prize money. And once a year—that’s tonight, mind—that rollover is the quiz jackpot. It’s literally a suitcase of cash!

The train leaves the platform and passes a model of a young girl reading a book with a woman on a bicycle beside her.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
Would this jackpot put me into a new tax bracket, Helen?

HELEN (O/S)
It’s twelve thousand, four hundred and eighty pounds!

From the radio comes a CARTOONISH AWOOGA, the kind of thing that would accompany cartoon eyes bulging out of their sockets, followed by the CA-CHING of a CASH REGISTER.

Pulling back from the model, sits DEREK, a middle aged man in a wheelchair, playing on his trains whilst listening to the radio. On the bed is a suitcase.
EXT/INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE - MORNING CONTINUOUS

BARRY cleans a window, listening to a radio on the sill.

He peeks through the window to see Kelvin, stressed, at a desk in his lounge, reading a red letter from a bailiff.

The radio plays loud enough to be heard through the window.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
Wow, I’ll come down there myself and have a go at getting that!

HELEN (O/S)
You should. The more the merrier.

Barry watches through the window as ANGEL, a very fit woman dressed in a somewhat scandalous gym outfit, walks in and Kelvin quickly hides the envelope and kisses his wife.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
And what would I have to do to win that money? Just win the quiz?

HELEN (O/S)
No, you need to get every answer right.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
That’s winning the quiz isn’t it?

HELEN (O/S)
Not really, because you could still beat everyone else without getting all the answers. Then you don’t get the prize. It goes back into the pot for next year.

Kelvin and Angel talk about something Barry can’t hear, until reluctantly, Kelvin hands Angel a credit card. She kisses him on the cheek and hastily departs.

EXT. BOOKSHOP - MORNING CONTINUOUS

GEMMA is waiting outside with her headphones on, listening to the radio. She watches a BAG MAN who is struggling to pick up a piece of litter with a mechanical arm.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
Wow! So what kind of questions are we talking here? Can you give our listeners any tips?

(CONTINUED)
HELEN (O/S)
I’d call it general knowledge, but that’s a strange term isn’t it? There’s a lot of stupid people about.

Beside Gemma’s head is a poster in the window of the bookshop. It has a picture of a black man and the name ‘Ashley Franklin’. Below him it says ‘The Confusion of Tongues – BOOK SIGNING’.

DJ KIRSTY (O/S)
So what happens if two people or two teams win it? Can people even play in teams?

HELEN (O/S)
Yeah sure, teams are fine. If there’s a tie, they’ll have to split the prize. Like I said, if no one gets it, then we’ll hang on to the money until next year.

INT. RADIO STATION - MORNING CONTINUOUS

HELEN is sat opposite DJ KIRSTY in the booth.

DJ KIRSTY
So how much is it to take part in this quiz?

HELEN
Three pounds per person.

DJ KIRSTY
And if you’re in a team?

HELEN
It’s still three pounds per person.

DJ KIRSTY
Must be expecting some crowd with twelve thousand pounds plus?

Helen smiles.

HELEN
Last year it was a bloody circus. And we aim to top that tonight.
EXT. SPOTTED PIG - MORNING

TOM, DICK and HARRIET are waiting outside the pub, dressed in their hi-visibility work clothing, reading tabloid papers and texting.

MARY is walking along the street, looking like a punk. She clomps angrily down the sidewalk, her boots thumping out a quick but heavy rhythm. She clomps right up to them.

MARY
Could you good people spring for a cup of tea?

TOM
What do we look like, a cash machine? Don’t you have a job?

MARY
It’s dog-eat-dog in my field, dig?

DICK
What field would that be, exactly?

MARY
I’m a philosopher. (an afterthought) And a pugilist.

TOM
That’s quite a resume.

MARY
Nobody asked you.

HARRIET
What does a philosopher actually do?

MARY
Contemplate. I create paradoxes and questions of great moral and intellectual complexity. Questions which by their nature do not have a correct answer.

She pauses for a effect.

MARY
Then I come up with the answers.

(CONTINUED)
DIICK
Tell you what. Give us a taste. You
know, philosophize. Then we’ll see
about the tea. Deal?

MARY
You got a deal. He’s a witness.

Mary points at Tom.

TOM
Watch out, mate, she’s got you on
the hook!

Mary puts her fingers to her head, thinks.

DIICK
What’s she doing?

MARY
SHhh!

TOM
(whispering)
You shouldn’t encourage them, you
know.

DIICK
(whispering)
She said shhhh.

Mary points at Dick.

MARY
Does one trust the bald barber?

DIICK
Excuse me?

MARY
Barber?

She extends a palm in the classic ’pay up’ gesture.

TOM
You, dearie, are a delight and have
exceeded my greatest expectations.

Dick pulls a coin out of his pocket and puts it in Mary’s
hand. Mary makes a fist with her left hand.
MARY
You want a demonstration of my other skills, Scrooge?

DICK
No thank you.

He rummages into his pocket. Mary turns to Harriet, but speaks loud enough for both men to hear.

MARY
And tell your friend if he ever calls me 'dearie' again, I’ll have his balls for supper.

Dick puts another coin in her outstretched hand.

MARY
(Tiny Tim impression)
God bless us, everyone.

She clomps off.

Tom can’t contain himself and busts out laughing.

TOM
She really took you for a ride, didn’t she!

Dick is deep in thought.

HARRIET
You always attract the crazies, I’ll give you that.

MAGGIE opens the pub door from the inside, and Tom and Harriet enter. Dick is still left in thought and calls after them.

DICK
I suppose it depends on the barber, now doesn’t it?

INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE – MORNING

Angel is spread across a pilates ball whilst watching the SHOPPING NETWORK on TV.

Kelvin looks at whatever product is on the screen and does some mental math, using his fingers.

He sees Angel reaching for the phone.
A look of terror/dread comes over his face.

EXT. KELVIN’S HOUSE - MORNING

Barry is up a ladder cleaning windows when Kelvin exits the house.

Kelvin takes hold of the ladder.

KELVIN
Can we have a chat Barry?

BARRY
Sure thing, Kelvin.

KELVIN
How long have we known each other?

Barry looks confused.

BARRY
Cleaning your windows for six years now.

KELVIN
Six years? Wow. Time goes fast doesn’t it?

An uncomfortable silence. Barry continues working, whilst Kelvin looks at his feet.

BARRY
What did you want to talk about Kelvin?

Kelvin winces. He checks the door to see that Angel is not listening.

KELVIN
Well, you see, it’s difficult. It’s, um, difficult times.

Barry is quick to interject.

BARRY
You’re not happy with the windows?

Kelvin is equally quick to placate him.

KELVIN
Jesus no Barry, the windows are great.

(CONTINUED)
BARRY
You got a flyer from the Chinese guy, saying he’ll do it cheaper?

KELVIN
No not at all. The windows are great. Sparkling in fact.

Barry is relieved, as Kelvin cops on.

KELVIN
How much cheaper?

Barry is peeved. Kelvin corrects himself.

KELVIN
I’m messing. Just messing.

Kelvin looks at the door again to check Angel is nowhere near.

KELVIN
We’re mates right Barry?

BARRY
You are holding the ladder.

KELVIN
True. We can share a secret, right?

Barry gets down from the ladder.

BARRY
Probably, but my mother...she’s very nosy.

KELVIN
Looks, times have changed Barry. Money’s a lot tighter, and well, I love my wife, but she is sucking me dry.

BARRY
Sounds like a good problem to have!

KELVIN
Ha ha. Very good. No, seriously – the maths don’t add up. I am really badly in debt.

BARRY
Oh. Sorry. Look Kelvin, I can’t lend you any.

(CONTINUED)
Kelvin nervously laughs.

**KELVIN**
Oh God no. No. I wouldn’t ask that.

Barry says nothing, unsure of what to do in this situation.

**KELVIN**
But I am going to lose everything, unless I can make a payment. But here’s the thing. I have got a hell of a plan Barry. But I need your help.

**BARRY**
Go on.

Kelvin checks the door to make sure Angel can’t hear.

**KELVIN**
I need you to burgle my house.

Barry shakes his head, like he’s trying to get water out of his ears.

**BARRY**
Come again?

**KELVIN**
Take everything.

**BARRY**
What for?

Kelvin gives the sales pitch stance to Barry.

**KELVIN**
Insurance. You "rob" me while we’re out. Then I claim it all back.

Barry is trying to follow this.

**KELVIN**
Meanwhile, we sell everything on Ebay. We get paid twice! I settle my arrears, you pocket a helper’s fee.

Barry stares blankly at Kelvin. It is an uncomfortable pause. Kelvin raises his eyebrows to prompt a response from Barry.
KELVIN
Whaddya think?

BARRY
No Ebay.

KELVIN
What?

BARRY
No Ebay.

Kelvin is confused.

BARRY
You wanna get popped? I know... people. Same money, no electronic paper trail.

Kelvin is delighted.

KELVIN
Now that’s using the old bean, Barry! But I don’t ever want to know their names, nor can they ever know mine, got it?

BARRY
Got it. But why me?

Kelvin holds the enthusiastic face whilst the brain thinks of an answer.

KELVIN
’Cos we’re friends.
(pause)
And you have a van.

He points to the clapped out van on the driveway.

INT. SPOTTED PIG - MORNING

A corner table. Tom, Dick and Harriet sit with their pints, concentrating whilst playing an absurd CARD GAME, the rules of which will never be fully explained.

Dick licks a card and sticks it to his forehead, and the others GROAN in unison.

Maggie, the barmaid, is painting her nails. Derek is beside the bar in his Genesis t-shirt, scribbling furiously into a notepad. He has an encyclopedia-sized book open.

(CONTINUED)
DICK
C’mon, Del, put your homework away, we’ll deal you in!

DEREK
Don’t call me Del, you monster dunce.

TOM
(mocking)
Sorry, Quizmaster.

Harriet lays down a two.

HARRIET
Deuces up, drinks down!

All three race to pound the table four times with their fists then tug their earlobes. The slowest one has to fork over a card to the fastest.

Harriet nudges Tom, signals a glance towards Derek.

HARRIET
Hey Derek, how many questions are going to be about trains this year?

They laugh it up.

DEREK
Yeah yeah, have a chuckle. You halfwits know what Einstein used to say?

TOM
How could we not? You tell us like four times a day!

They all laugh, which Derek doesn’t seem to notice.

DEREK
He said, Zwei Dinge sind unendlich, das Universum und die menschliche Dummheit, aber bei dem Universum bin ich mir noch nicht ganz sicher.

The drinkers take it in.

DEREK
That’s German, you plebes.
CONTINUED:

DICK
What’s it mean?

Derek gets back to his books.

DEREK
Look it up, you halfwit.

Tom whispers to Harriet whilst Dick jealously watches.

TOM
Two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity...

Dick interjects.

DICK
But I’m not quite sure about the universe yet.

INT. BOOKSHOP - MORNING

Helen is rearranging some flyers for the quiz, trying to make them more prominent at the till. Gemma reads a book while talking to Helen.

GEMMA
You don’t know the author’s name?

HELEN
No.

GEMMA
Or the title?

Helen shakes her head.

GEMMA
Any idea what it’s about?

Helen thinks for a moment.

HELEN
No clue, but they mentioned it once on the telly.

GEMMA
At night or during the day?

HELEN
It was a man wrote it. And he was on...GOOD MORNING, DOUGLAS SMITH.

(CONTINUED)
GEMMA
How long ago?

HELEN
Two weeks maybe?

Gemma finally looks up from her book.

GEMMA
You’re probably thinking of Jeremy Buxton’s "Cotton-Ball Busters".

HELEN
That’s it! Could be, at least.
Sounds familiar.

GEMMA
Would you like to buy a copy? It’s over there.

HELEN
God no. But uh, do you know if it’s been made into a film yet?

Before Gemma can even sigh in exasperation, GARY a middle aged man in a mis-shapen suit, butts in.

GARY
Sorry to interrupt, but could you give us a hand with some chairs?

GEMMA
Yes, thank you!

Gemma jumps up, stranding Helen with Gary.

HELEN
What’s this about?

GARY
Oh, Ashley Franklin is here. The famous novelist. He’s doing a reading in just a bit. You should stick around!

HELEN
Will the book be made into a film?

Gary laughs.

GARY
Stick around and ask the author: we’ll do a Q&A.
Helen thinks about it, checks her wristwatch.

EXT. CANAL - MORNING

Kelvin and Barry wander alongside the canal.

KELVIN
So I take Angel to the pub. There’s a quiz going on tonight. It won’t be long like, Angel has the attention span of a flea. You reckon you can get it all out in three hours?

Barry shrugs.

BARRY
Shouldn’t be a problem if it’s all boxed up and ready to go.

Kelvin is amazed at Barry’s stupidity, and looks around before scornfully explaining.

KELVIN
It won’t be bleeding boxed up! You’re burgling the place. Not a removals man.

BARRY
But you can sell it for more in the original packaging.

Kelvin stops for a second.

KELVIN
True. (beat) I can bring the boxes later. I’ll just tell Angel I’m throwing them out. Taking them to the recycling, that kind of thing.

Barry seems confused.

BARRY
But wouldn’t it be easier for everyone if you just have it boxed up and ready? Then it’s easier to load the van.

KELVIN
No... Angel is... not in on the plan. She doesn’t even know we’re in debt.
BARRY
Oh!...You should tell her.

KELVIN
Out of the question. I couldn’t do that to her. I love her to bits, Barry.

BARRY
If you love her, just tell her. Easy! She’s smart, she’ll figure it out eventually, so it’s probably better to hear it from you.

After a moment, Kelvin laughs.

KELVIN
People say a lot of things about Angel, but smart! That’s a new one.

INT. BOOKSHOP - MORNING

There is a circle of chairs, most of which are empty.

In the background, Gemma pretends to be working, but her attention is on ASHLEY FRANKLIN, a black man with a hint of androgyny.

Ashley stands in front of a podium, reading from his latest novel, "Of the Confusion Tongues", which is displayed on a nearby table.

ASHLEY
Of the confusion tongues, oh! To power with the and no cartographic fliply.

He closes the book.

Gary attempts to start a SLOW CLAP, but the sparse crowd doesn’t pick up on it.

Gary stands up.

GARY
Let’s open the floor for some Q and A, shall we?

Bag man is in the back and stands up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  

BAG MAN  
Gibberish! Gobblydigook!  

ASHLEY  
Is that a question?  

BAG MAN  
OK smart-ass. Why doesn’t it make any sense?  

Ashley considers this for a moment.  

ASHLEY  
Solid question, but I’m afraid it’s not for me to answer.  

HELEN  
Where are you from?  

ASHLEY  
Birmingham.  

BAG MAN  
Are you implying I’m too dumb to ’get’ your book?  

ASHLEY  
Quite the contrary. Please devalue my intention in deference to your interpretation.  

BAG MAN  
Do you also speak English?  

HELEN  
And where are you from, sweetie?  

ASHLEY  
Birmingham.  

HELEN  
Do you like pub quizzes?  

GARY  
Are there any questions about the book?  


HELEN  
You a local boy?  

(CONTINUED)
GARY
Yes. Thirty five years at Landrover before packing it all in to do this.

HELEN
That’s nice.

GARY
Any questions about the book?

BAG MAN
Are you gonna make it into a film?

Helen nods as if it is a really interesting question. Ashley is deflated.

INT. SPOTTED PIG - AFTERNOON

Tom, Dick and Harriet are flagging a bit. Dick has got his lunchbox out and is trying to fit a satsuma into his mouth with the peel still on. They call over to Derek.

TOM
Quizzie!

DICK
Quiffmafster. Can ve get a coffee?

Derek doesn’t look up.

DEREK
Ask Maggie.

DICK
Shiz not ere.

Derek shouts.

DEREK
Maggie!

Tom, Dick and Harriet look on in shock.

TOM
Hey Del, we got an unanswerable question for you.

Derek calls back, uninterested.
DEREK
You do?

TOM
(snickering)
Does one trust the bald barber?

DEREK
...bald...barber. Got it. And...?
What’s the answer?

Dick pulls out the satsuma to speak.

DICK
That’s for each of us to decide, my friend.

TOM
Hey! Satsuma back in or it’s points to me!

Maggie enters.

MAGGIE
What?

DEREK
Coffees for these fools.

Maggie looks at the three.

MAGGIE
White?

Dick has the satsuma back in his mouth and nods, holds up four fingers.

DICK
Foor sughaz.

Maggie disappears.

TOM
Thought about that question Del?

DEREK
Worthless! I thought you had a quiz question for me.

Dick takes out the satsuma.

(CONTINUED)
DICK
It was rhetorical. Don’t worry about this tosser, he just doesn’t understand.

TOM
Lookit buddha over here, one with the goddamn universe after talking to a loon.

DICK
Not everything’s a joke, Tom.

Tom laughs.

TOM
Satsuma.

DICK
Take the points. You don’t understand the value of things.

DEREK
Like a 10 pound note. It is worth multiple cheeseburgers. Or 8 cokes.

TOM
Yeah, something like that, Del.

Dick plays a card, stands up, turns around several times.

DEREK
Where was Marie Curie from?

TOM
The magazine?

DICK
Dunno, sounds French.

DEREK
Polish, actually.

TOM
Nice one. That on the quiz?

Derek starts to wheel out.

DEREK
Nah, too easy. She’s some famous maths bird, I guess. Dunno. Won’t be on the quiz.

He’s gone.

(CONTINUED)
HARRIET
Marie Curie, born Maria Salomea Skłodowska, actually named an atomic element after her country.

TOM
Polonium?

HARRIET
You know it.

They high five. Dick looks away.

INT. BOOKSHOP - MORNING

Ashley is packing his book away. Gary leans over and whispers to him.

GARY
You wanna sign as many of these as possible so they can’t return them.

Ashley isn’t impressed. A nervous Gemma approaches.

GEMMA
Excuse me, Mr. Franklin! You’re my favorite writer. Your first book changed my life. I’m Gemma by the way.

GARY
Behold, the fan: a mythical creature in its natural habitat. You, young lady, are a unicorn!

Gemma is mortified by this enthusiasm.

Ashley silences Gary with a look.

ASHLEY
(to Gemma)
Much appreciated.

GEMMA
I’ve just finished the new novel.

Ashley just waits for her to continue.

GEMMA
(diplomatic)
I’m still thinking about it. Do you have any tips for someone starting out? I’d like to be a writer.

(CONTINUED)
ASHLEY
Do you want to write, or is it you can’t not?

GEMMA
That’s a double negative.

Gary spots an opportunity to join the conversation.

GARY
He’s a bit of a double negative!

ASHLEY
That’s quite racist, Gary.

GARY
(earnest)
Is it?

GEMMA
Mr. Franklin is probably making a joke at your expense, playing on the fact that you will never understand or experience latent racism the way he does.

ASHLEY
She is a rare one, Gary.

Gary pulls out a notepad, scribbles something down.

GARY
Double negative... latent... racism...

GEMMA
Do you have any advice for aspiring writers?

ASHLEY
Work hard. Write a lot. Rewrite more. Don’t be afraid to kill your babies.

GEMMA
Kill your babies?

ASHLEY
Lovely to make your acquaintance, Gemma.

He leaves.

(CONTINUED)
GARY
Don’t mind grumpy Gus. The reviews have been brutal, when anyone has actually bothered to review it.

Gary holds up the book.

GARY
This used to be coherent. He spent three and a half years toiling over a true masterpiece.

GEMMA
Then he killed his baby?

Gary makes a throat slitting gesture.

GARY
Wrote a computer program that chopped the whole book up into the smallest possible units and jumbled it all up. Then he destroyed every last copy of the original manuscript.

A pause.

GEMMA
Wouldn’t the smallest unit have been letters?

GARY
I’m not a maths person, but he mixed it all up, is the point.

Gemma considers this.

GEMMA
But why?

GARY
Because he’s a temperamental bastard who’s allergic to making a living, either for him, or me.

GEMMA
Maybe he just knows something we don’t.

Gary smiles. He hands Gemma a business card, showing her the e-mail address.

(CONTINUED)
GARY
If you want to send him an e-mail,
I’ll see he gets it.
(bowing)
M’lady.

Gary scuttles after his already departed author.

Gemma looks at the card and contemplates.

MARY
HEY!

Mary is right in her face. Gemma SHRIEKS.

MARY
Bit jumpy, aren’t we?

GEMMA
Christ mum, you scared the crap out of me!

Mary SNIFFS.

MARY
Figure of speech, thank God.

GEMMA
Why aren’t you at work?

MARY
They, um, won’t be requiring my services anymore.

GEMMA
What’d you do?

MARY
I’m wounded! What makes you think it’s my fault, and not the result of a deeper, you know, systemic failure to encourage individuality?

Gemma starts loading Ashley’s unsold books back into the box.

GEMMA
Because your "individuality" is always to blame. You can never keep your big mouth shut.
MARY
Sad really. No one appreciates honesty. Especially not proper dickheads.

GEMMA
Whatever, mum.

MARY
Anyway, I just came from the bank, and it’s grim. Really grim.

GEMMA
So we’ll have to be more parsimonious?

MARY
Should I pretend to know what that means?

GEMMA
It means we should quit wasting money on lottery tickets and donations to Amnesty International.

MARY
If you call that a waste of money, then I’m embarrassed to know you.

Mary pulls a book out of the stack.

MARY
You read this one, yet? Of course you did. You’ve read ’em all, you little egghead. Is it any good?

GEMMA
You won’t like it.

MARY
Too smart for me, huh?

GEMMA
That’s not what I said.

MARY
May as well address the elephant, hun. We all know who’s more clever, it’s not exactly a big secret.

Mary puts Ashley’s book back and grabs another.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
What about this one?

GEMMA
No, I don’t think you’ll like that because the author bases his whole argument on the fundamentally flawed assumption that a constantly-growing economy is not only sustainable, but also desirable.

Mary rifles the pages.

MARY
Sounds like a proper dickhead.

Mary looks at the back cover, skims over it.

MARY
Well I could use a laugh. I’ll bring it back before anyone even knows it’s gone.

GEMMA
This isn’t a library!

MARY
Knowledge should be free!

GEMMA
‘Should be’ being the operative words!

Gemma snatches the book back and returns it to the shelf. She then lifts the box of Ashley’s books and returns to the till whilst Mary follows. Mary notices the pub quiz flyers that Helen dropped off earlier.

MARY
Daughter, have you seen this? We should go.

GEMMA
I’m not going to a pub quiz.

MARY
Why not? You’re amazing at that kind of thing.

GEMMA
Because it will be full of beardy old men who play Trivial Pursuit all day.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Rubbish. How would you know? You’ve never been to a pub. I say we go. Get you out and about a bit. Loosen you up. Besides, we need the money.

GEMMA
Ah, there’s the ulterior motive!

MARY
Can you loan me forty pounds? They’re gonna shut off the lekky if we don’t make the minimum payment today. And my final paycheck won’t come through until Friday.

Gemma sighs and reluctantly pulls some money out of her childish, velcro wallet.

GEMMA
This isn’t normal, you know. Most girls my age don’t even have jobs.

Gemma hands Mary the money.

MARY
We both know you’re nothing like most kids your age.

Mary stuffs the money into her bag alongside the stolen book.

GEMMA
If I get home and the power’s been shut off, I swear I’m running away with the circus.

Mary starts to walk away.

MARY
Sounds fun! Can I come?

Gemma rolls her eyes.

MARY
I’ll pick you up after work. We’ll do a bit of girly bonding at the pub quiz. You’ll love it.

As Gemma starts to protest, Mary turns, locks eyes with Gemma, daring her to protest as she grabs the book off the shelf and walks briskly out the door.
INT. TAXI - AFTERNOON

Gary is pep talking Ashley, who isn’t too interested in listening.

ASHLEY
Do we have to do this?

GARY
That’s the deal. You write the books, then you help sell them.

ASHLEY
I loathe DJ Declan.

GARY
Just be pleasant, and when he asks about your next project, give him the elevator pitch. You know. High concept. 25 words or less.

ASHLEY
Short interview. I like that.

GARY
You know what I mean. Don’t get... ranty.

Ashley points at a magazine that Gary has beside him.

ASHLEY
Craic magazine?

Gary looks nervous as Ashley picks it up.

GARY
The first of the reviews.

Ashley pages through.

GARY
Are you sure you want to...

ASHLEY
I’m big enough.

GARY
If it’s bad, don’t say I didn’t try to warn you.

Ashley finds what he’s looking for, reads.

His brow furrows.

(CONTINUED)
He smiles.

GARY
Oh what a relief. I thought they were gonna... I mean, obviously the...

Ashley thruts the magazine toward Gary.

Gary takes it, reads. He pulls out his notepad, scribbles.

GARY
Who does this asshole think he is, anyway? You know what they say, those who can’t do, teach and those who can’t teach become critics!

ASHLEY
I like it.

GARY
What are you talking about? He literally called you a...
(skimming article)
"Pretentious, self-masturbatory pseudo-intellectual whose writing makes no sense"

ASHLEY
You’re right, I can’t quite support the redundancy inherent to the phrase ‘self-masturbatory’.

Gary scribbles on his notepad.

GARY
Redundancy... inherent.

He stashes his notepad away.

GARY
You know I’m your biggest fan.

ASHLEY
But...?

GARY
Sometimes, I wish you weren’t afraid to be a bit more... what’s the word, like doing it all the same way the other writers do?

(CONTINUED)
ASHLEY
Derivative.

GARY
Derivative! Would you mind being a bit more derivative?

ASHLEY
How about a three-part series: wizard vampires on the run from cyborg lizardmen?

GARY
(intrigued)
Actually...

ASHLEY
You’re an embarrassment, Gary.

INT. SPOTTED PIG - AFTERNOON

Derek is looking at a railway magazine when Helen enters the pub and he quickly shuts it as she walks behind the bar. She walks straight out to the back of the pub whilst taking off her coat.

DEREK
Alright sis.

HELEN (O/S)
You making all the questions about the West Coast Mainline timetable again Derek?

DEREK
No!

Derek scribbles out most of the workings on his pad.

Helen re-enters, coatless.

HELEN
We almost had a riot that night. Never got all the wine stains off the ceiling. Make it improbable, not impossible.

DEREK
I know.

Helen wipes down the bar.
HELEN
Try one out on me then.

Derek is uncomfortable. He stays silent and hints at Tom, Dick and Harriet in the corner, all three looking over eagerly.

HELEN
Ah! Spies! How are you inebriates?

DICK
Can’t complain Helen. Loved you on the radio this morning.

HELEN
Oh, that was nothing.

DICK
We caught every word.

HELEN
Did I sound okay? I can’t stand the sound of my own voice.

Derek wheels off taking his notepad and magazine with him.

DEREK
I’m gonna write this in my room.

Helen and the flourescent drinkers watch as he exits. Mary enters.

MARY
Usual please Helen.

HELEN
Everything good with you Mary?

MARY
Not great to be honest.

Helen puts a strange connocation in front of Mary, who hands a note over, much to the amazement of Tom, Dick and Harriet.

MARY
Lost my job.

MAGGIE
Again?

Mary winces.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Think it’s for real this time.

HELEN
What you going to do?

MARY
Beats me.

MAGGIE
My mate Dave needs help with his paper round.

MARY
That sounds awesome.

Helen is aghast.

HELEN
Do people still have papers delivered? I had no idea. I thought all that had stopped with that new interweb thingy.

MAGGIE
Old people still want it delivered.

MARY
And there’s a lot of old people about.

MAGGIE
Should be an easy few bob. Riding around shoving newspapers in letterboxes.

MARY
He doesn’t do it on foot?

MAGGIE
Don’t think so. Think the round is spread pretty thin across the city these days. Hence why Dave needs help. Why? Is that a problem?

MARY
Well, can you imagine me on a bike?

Dick shouts over.

DICK
I imagine you being ridden like a bike!
Mary flips a finger at Dick, takes a sip of her poison and retorts.

MARY
Me no. All that (gestures a helmet) and that (gestures peddling). No way. And a hi-visibility jacket, I’d look like a dick.

Tom, Dick and Harriet, sat in their fluorescent work clothes, look back at Mary in disgust.

MAGGIE
I can teach you to ride it like a proper boss.

MARY
Really? You’d do that?

MAGGIE
Sure. Helen, can I take my lunch break early to do a bit of charity work.

HELEN
Knock yourself out.

Dick shouts over from the table.

DICK
Literally.

Mary flips him another finger and Maggie gets her coat.

INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE – AFTERNOON

Angel sits on the sofa with her legs folded underneath her bum. She’s reading a text book on lizards, taking detailed notes in a small notepad. The book is well worn-in, totally marked-up with small stickies and highlighter.

A DOOR SHUTS off screen.

KELVIN (O.S)
I’m home!

Angel quickly shuts the book and notepad and shoves them under the couch and quickly turns on the TV.

Kelvin enters, and he watches it for a moment in dull indifference.
TELEVISION PRESENTER 1
It looks lovely with the curtains. The red goes with the beige walls.

TELEVISION PRESENTER 2
They’re rouge. And the walls are caramel.

ANGEL
Should we redecorate?

Kelvin shuts off the television.

ANGEL
You look lost.

Kelvin smiles.

KELVIN
I’m grand.

Angel smiles.

ANGEL
There’s lunch on the side.

KELVIN
Thanks.

ANGEL
Do you want me to reheat it?

KELVIN
You’re fine. I’ll do it.

Angel holds her arms open to him. He joins her on the sofa and places his head on her lap, and she starts to stroke his hair. It is a tender moment.

ANGEL
Are you okay?

KELVIN
I’m fine. You think we could–

ANGEL
You’re not fine.

He pauses, she continues to stroke his head.

ANGEL
You need a night out. It’s what you need.

(CONTINUED)
KELVIN
You read my mind.

ANGEL
We’ll go anywhere you want tonight. I’m paying.

KELVIN
That right?

ANGEL
Yeah, I got cash from the machine today. Used the VISA.

Kelvin sits upright.

ANGEL
Is that bad?

KELVIN
There’s like 20 percent...

He looks at her face.

KELVIN
No, it’s fine.

INT. BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON

Gemma is hard at work alphabetising books. Mary pokes her head inside the bookshop with Maggie just behind her.

MARY
Can I borrow your bike?

GEMMA
What??

MARY
Your bike. Can I borrow it?

GEMMA
You can’t sell my bike!

MARY
I don’t want to sell it. I want to borrow it. To ride.

GEMMA
Can you even ride a bike?

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Answer my question first.

GEMMA
Yes you can borrow it. Can you even ride a bike?

MARY
I’m going to learn. It’s called upskilling.

Mary and Maggie leave, Gemma shakes her head in bemusement.

INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON

Gary and Ashley are sat with DJ DECLAN, an over-enthusiastic disc jockey.

DJ DECLAN
One reviewer said that out of five stars, your book rates negative twenty. That’s gotta hurt, yes?

ASHLEY
Not really.

DJ DECLAN
Right on! So, I’ve got to admit. I had a flick through it this morning before coming into the studio and it was pretty rough seas! Verbally, I’m saying.

ASHLEY
Yes.

GARY
I think you’ll probably need more than a quick flick to unravel all the book’s layers.

DJ DECLAN
Right on! That’s Ashley Franklin’s agent, everyone. So, I’m not a great reader at the best of times. I do like that Dan Brown. Do you know Dan Brown? Da Vinci Code? Knights of the Templar and treasure, yes! Now that’s a book!

Ashley just stares at Declan.

(CONTINUED)
DJ DECLAN
But you’ve gotta find yourself wondering ‘how do I write a bestseller like that?’ though don’t you?

ASHLEY
No.

GARY
Ashley’s first novel sold very well, actually.

DJ DECLAN
Yeah but, movie deal with Tom Hanks and all that? Cash caaaaaaaaaash.

The same ANNOYING CASH REGISTER SFX FROM HELEN’S INTERVIEW

DJ DECLAN
We’re gonna go to the phones for some questions. Who’s on line one?

HELEN (O/S)
It’s Helen. I was on Kirsty’s show this morning.

DJ DECLAN
Twice in one day! You’re not after my job are you?

INT. SPOTTED PIG - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Helen is on the phone, reading from a handwritten script she wrote for herself. She reads in that robotic way little kids who are first learning do.

HELEN
So I was telling Kirsty about the pub quiz that we have on in the Spotted Pig tonight. It’s a bumper rollover with a lot of prize money.

INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gary puts his head in his hands, Ashley looks bemused and DJ Declan is trying to move the conversation on.

DJ DECLAN
That’s great! What’s your quest–
INT. SPOTTED PIG - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

HELEN
People should get down early because the place will be packed. We’ve got a drinks promotion, free pork scratchings with every five pints of lager, mild, bitter or stout, or every three glasses of wine, that’s large glasses not regular.

Tom, Dick and Harriet are sniggering in the background.

INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON

Bemused silence all round.

DJ DECLAN
Have you got a question for our guest?

HELEN (O/S)
Guest?

DJ DECLAN
Ashley Franklin, the author.

HELEN (O/S)
The coloured guy?

Silence.

DJ DECLAN
So have you got a question?

HELEN (O/S)
Um. What’s your favourite colour?

Gary still has his head in his hands. Ashley is in disbelief.

DJ DECLAN
Good one! So what’s your favourite colour Ashley?

Ashley looks pleadingly at Gary, Gary nods for him to answer the question.

ASHLEY
Onyx.

(CONTINUED)
DJ DECLAN
Onyx? Come on, that’s not a colour!
Sounds like a wild animal you’d
find in a Dan Brown book, yeah?

GARY
I like red.

DJ DECLAN
Thanks for that question Helen, and
good luck tonight. DJ Kirsty and I
will be there! We’ve got Gemma on
line two. Yo Gemma!

INT. BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gemma is by the till, with Ashley’s book open beside her.

GEMMA
Hi DJ Declan.

DJ DECLAN (O/S)
What’s your question for Ashley
Franklin?

Gemma looks nervous.

GEMMA (O/S)
It’s more of a theory than a
question. At first I couldn’t
figure out why all the words were
mixed up. Why the book doesn’t seem
to make any sense.

INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

DJ DECLAN
Doesn’t make cents cuz no one
bought it! Geddit? Cents, like
coins, yeah?

INT. BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gemma adjusts her giant glasses.

GEMMA
I mean, I think the entire
book--and maybe its very
existence--is a metaphor.
INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gary’s head comes out of his hands. DJ Declan’s eyebrows raise.

DJ DECLAN
Man I’m bored. So is this bird right or what?

ASHLEY
It’s not impossible.

Gary is excited.

GEMMA (O/S)
So my theory is that Mr. Franklin, like, when his last book got published, he felt misunderstood anyway. Misread. It’s like that beetle-

DJ DECLAN
(singing)
Paperback writer!

INT. BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gemma is getting frustrated.

GEMMA
The insect! In The Metamorphosis. No matter what he says, people just hear the, like, grunts and gnashing of jaws. No matter what, he’s always misunderstood, so now Mr. Franklin’s owning the misunderstanding.

INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

ASHLEY
Do you think that’s a bit obvious?

INT. BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gemma shrinks a little.

GEMMA
Is it? But, like... sometimes you have to state the obvious for the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
GEMMA (cont’d)
people who aren’t really paying attention.

INT. RADIO STATION - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS
Ashley and Gary listen intently.

GEMMA (O/S)
I mean, me for example, I’m this quiet, nerdy girl nobody ever really listens-

DJ DECLAN
Thanks for calling, Gemma! We’ve got some nice stickers for you, stay on the line.

ASHLEY
Thanks for reading, Gemma. And more imperatively, for thinking.

DJ DECLAN
Certainly not in it for the reviews, are ya? Critics are saying that the creative process means more to you than a readable book. Is that true?

ASHLEY
Yes, they are indeed saying that.

DJ DECLAN waits a moment, plays a CHIRPING CRICKET SOUND EFFECT.

DJ DECLAN
Tumbleweeds in the studio, I swear! So Ashley, tell us about your next book or something.

ASHLEY
(counting the number of words on his fingers)
My next novel, which I’m calling The Plagiarist, will be an entirely original, comprehensible story which will not contain a single word written by me.

He smiles at Gary, stands up.

(CONTINUED)
ASHLEY
Twenty-five Gary. Fulfills my obligation.

He stands and leaves.

GARY
Excuse us. Was a pleasure to be here.

Gary goes after him. DJ Declan is bemused.

DJ DECLAN
They’ve left! They’ve walked out! Praise be! Let’s have some music!

DJ Declan hits a button and the track starts.

MUSIC STARTS.

He pushes away the microphone and talks through the sound proof glass to his producer.

DJ DECLAN
That’ll blow up on twitter. Did you tweet that? Can we tweet that? I could tweet that.

INT. BOOKSHOP - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Gemma looks deflated as the music plays. She looks at Gary’s card with the e-mail address on it.

She turns to the computer and loads up her email. She starts to type.

INT. DEREK’S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Derek plays with his trains, glances down at the suitcase beside him. He looks uncomfortable.

INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Kelvin reads another red letter, and tears it up. It puts it in the bin, but then takes it out and deliberates where to put it.
EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON CONTINUOUS

Mary places one foot on the pedal of a bike. She looks down the pathway of the park nervously. Maggie is stood behind her, getting ready to push her off. The ride starts, and despite an initial wobbles, Mary keeps the bike upright, and lets gravity take its course.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Ashley is moving at a good clip, Gary nipping at his heels.

GARY
Don’t let that wanker get to you. It’s what he wants, you’re letting him win.

ASHLEY
I won’t pander to insufferable buffoons. I can’t do it, Gary.

GARY
Fine. Build yourself a fortress of your own smarts. But it’s gonna get lonely in there.

ASHLEY
So what? I need to cater to the lowest common denominator?

GARY
You say this like there’s no middle ground! Ashley, look... I put a lot into this...

Ashley suddenly stops walking.

ASHLEY
No, Gary. I know you put a lot into this. I have too.

GARY
But it’s my bloody retirement we’re playing with here. I need sales. I need Dan Brown. Harriet Potter. Colors that are actually colors! Look, you’re one of the best writers of our times, and nobody can take that from you. You don’t have to prove anything to anybody.

(Continued)
ASHLEY
Perfect, because I don’t care what anybody thinks!

Ashley starts walking again.

GARY
That’s not true.

Ashley looks at him, restates his opinion with his just a look.

GARY
Everybody does, at least a little.
Just, will you just, stop walking for a second? My legs can’t keep up.

Ashley stops again, whirls to face Gary.

GARY
I had this made up.

He holds up a flash drive.

ASHLEY
What is it?

GARY
It’s a pen drive. For the computer.

Ashley gives Gary the "I can see that I’m not blind you twat" look.

GARY
I took the computer code you made to jumble the book and had my nephew reverse it. You know, a decoder.

ASHLEY
That’s impossible, I used a random number generator.

GARY
Not random enough apparently. Kid’s a real computer whiz.

ASHLEY
What do you propose to do with it?

(CONTINUED)
GARY
Nothing without you. I just wanted to read your book. The one you actually wrote, not the one we published. It’s brilliant. I wept like like a baby at the end. Now I know you’re a fancy artiste or whatever, but we should put this out there. If we sold e-books along with this decoder, we’d make a mint!

Ashley looks visibly disgusted at the mention of e-books.

ASHLEY
Who else has this?

Gary shrugs.

GARY
Just think it over.

INT. BOOKSHOP - EVENING

Mary enters on crutches as Gemma is closing up.

GEMMA
You’re kidding.

Mary holds up the book from earlier.

MARY
Ugh, absolute rubbish. Can’t believe you read the whole thing. I’ll just put it back where it belongs.

She drops the book into the trash can.

MARY
Sorted.

Gemma sighs, pulls the book out of the bin, removes a banana peel from the cover.

GEMMA
What happened?

MARY
Nothing. I owe you a new bike.

(CONTINUED)
GEMMA
Of course you do.

MARY
Ready for the quiz?

GEMMA
Are we really going to a pub quiz with you like that?

MARY
Daughter! Serious prize at stake here.

GEMMA
I don’t know, I should revise—

Mary prods her daughter with a crutch.

MARY
Oh please! They don’t have enough plusses to put on your A’s as it is.

GEMMA
Knock it off, mum!

MARY
Say you’ll go!

She continues to prod her daughter.

GEMMA
Stop it!

MARY
Come to the quiz!

GEMMA
Fine. We’ll go.

MARY
No takebacks!

GEMMA
(sighing)
No takebacks.

Mary stops the prodding.

MARY
Are you wearing that?
INT. DEREK’S BEDROOM – EVENING

Derek is laying on the bed with the suitcase on his chest.

    HELEN
    All ready for the quiz?

    DEREK
    (sighing)
    Full steam ahead whether I’m ready
    or not.

Helen walks to the bed and sits down beside the Derek.

    HELEN
    What bug crawled up your ass?

Derek taps at the suitcase.

    DEREK
    It’s the rollover. The money.

    HELEN
    What about it?

    DEREK
    (mumbles)
    It’s gone.

Helen stares. Then bursts out laughing.

    HELEN
    Ha ha, you got me good!

    DEREK
    I’ve spent it.

Helen’s smile decays into a shocked stare.

    HELEN
    What could you have possibly spent
    all that money on Derek?

It is his turn to stay silent. He looks around the room.
Helen looks around the room too. All the trains.

    HELEN
    My god... So you’re saying it is
    empty? Christ.

Derek looks at the suitcase.

(CONTINUED)
HELEN
On toy trains? You demented virgin loser!

DEREK
What are we going to do?

HELEN
We? This is your mountain of shit, you eat it!

DEREK
But-

HELEN
No buts. You’ve got yourself into this mess. You get yourself out.

DEREK
How?

Helen gets up and prepares to leave.

HELEN
Better make damn sure no one wins that quiz.

Helen storms out, Derek is left hugging the suitcase.

INT. ASHLEY’S APARTMENT – EVENING

Ashley sits at his computer, he pops the thumb drive into the USB slot. He opens it, the folder contains a file titled 'decryptor.txt'

He examines the code for a minute. He’s impressed.

ASHLEY
Wow.

A PING. He has a new email. It is from Gemma.

He reads intently. During the voice over, we see a time-lapse of Ashley, reading, having a drink, staring at a blank wall, etc.

GEMMA (V.O.)
Dear Mr. Franklin. It was such a pleasure to meet you in the bookstore. I am writing you this email mostly because you said I should, but also because I have

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
GEMMA (V.O.) (cont’d)
always wanted to send a letter to a famous person. My mum says that fame is a worthless social construct and that people aren’t supposed to be worshipped, but she is also a huge hypocrite with a giant Billy Idol poster in her bedroom.
Anyway, I’m sure you know the philosopher Nietsche, but did you also know he once said: "The best author will be the one who is ashamed to become a writer." I don’t know if he’s right and there’s something you’re ashamed of, or maybe you’re making some kind of meta-commentary on books as an art form? Maybe you want us to think about ourselves as readers and consumers of culture who celebrate the idiotic. Or are you saying modern communications are detrimentally influenced by technological advances?
One thing is for sure: it’s hard to draw any thematic conclusions without being able to read the book in its original state. Maybe that’s your intention? I’ll keep thinking about it! Is it okay if I write you another letter? Still your biggest fan, Gemma from the bookstore.

He thinks for a moment. He gets up, knocking his chair over, grabs his hat and coat. While doing this, he rings Gary.

ASHLEY
Where are you?

INT. SPOTTED PIG - EVENING
Tom, Dick, and Harriet are playing cards, eating pork scratchings.

HARRIET
It’s in the rules, you doughnut!

DICK
Never heard of it, not going to do it!
HARRIET
Impartial third party?

They look to Tom. He considers. Nods.

Dick grumbles.

DICK
Fartsniffers.

He stands.

DICK
(singing)
I’m a little tea-pot-

HARRIET
Do the dance you tit!

Dick starts to do the dance.

Derek approaches with Maggie and a tray of three fresh pints.

DEREK
Am I interrupting?

TOM
Not at all!

Maggie sets down the beers and leaves.

DEREK
This round’s on me.

HARRIET
Awfully generous! Is it my birthday already?

TOM
Watch out. No such thing as a free pint.

DEREK
Well now that you mention it...
We’re all friends here, right?

DICK
We’re friends, Del, but I can’t stand these assholes.
HARRIET
Love you too, Dick.

DEREK
Right. Ok. So... I need a big favour. And it has to stay a secret. You in?

DICK
Should we trust the bald barber fellas?

DEREK
Not that again! Look...I need you guys to... win the quiz.

TOM
But it’s hard, mate! Lord knows we been trying!

DEREK
Suppose you knew the questions. In advance. And the answers.

HARRIET
What’s the catch?

DEREK
Just... well... you can’t, you know...keep the prize.

Tom and Harriet bust out laughing.

DICK
What’s this all about, Derek?

DEREK
It’s tied up. Railroad speculations. Anyway, you guys win the quiz, and I’ll give you the suitcase. You give it back later, no one gets hurt.

TOM
One very minor detail: what’s in it for Tom, Dick and Harriet?

DEREK
Well, I thought maybe, seeing as we’re friends—
DICK
We want free drinks!

TOM
For life.

DEREK
That’s a... that’ll cost...

TOM
Thousands?

A moment.

DEREK
If you lot sabotage anyone else who looks like they might win, then it’s a deal.

TOM
Give us a second to convene.

The three stand to huddle in a circle.

DICK
Holy shit, he went for the free drinks!

TOM
Should we get it in writing?

HARRIET
You want to document our fraud?

TOM
...Yes?

Dick looks at the loved up pair.

DICK
Count me out.

TOM
I’m sorry?

HARRIET
Free. Drinks. Full stop!
Exclamation point! Question mark?

DICK
I’ve just always dreamed of winning the quiz. Legitimately.
Continued: 52.

Tom whips out a card, the KING OF CLUBS. Dick throws up his hands in defeat.

**TOM**
Sorry Dick. The king of pubs would like to make a decree.

He smiles mischievously. Dick sighs.

**TOM**
Count us in Derek.

Tom and Derek shake hands.

**DEREK**
I’ll just leave this here.

He takes out an envelope from the side of his chair and leaves it on the table.

Kelvin and Angel arrive at the bar and Maggie is back to serve.

**MAGGIE**
Yes love?

**KELVIN**
A pint of mild and...

Angel looks behind the bar for something she’d like.

**ANGEL**
Do you have any Castle Margaux? Either 95 or 86? I’ll take a 90 at a stretch.

Kelvin looks at Maggie in desperation.

**MAGGIE**
What are we talking about, princess?

**ANGEL**
Wine?

**MAGGIE**
Oh! I’ve got red or white. Pink if you’re feeling adventurous.

**ANGEL**
I do like to try new things. I’ll take the pink, please.

(Continued)
Maggie pours a little red and a little white into one glass. Angel and Kelvin’s eyes widen. In one booth Gary is pretty deep in his cups.

Ashley enters.

ASHLEY
Gary!

GARY
Listen Ashley, I’ve got to apologise.

ASHLEY
I want to do the e-book.

GARY
(not listening)
I don’t have the right to hold you responsible for my retirement fund. It was my choice. I spent it.

ASHLEY
Gary, I want to do the e-book.

GARY
You what?

ASHLEY
You were right. We owe it to the fans.

GARY
Really?

ASHLEY
Absolutely.

Gary sighs and looks into the bottom of his glass.

ASHLEY
What’s up?

GARY
I’m uh, not sure I can afford it Ashley.

Ashley looks at Gary but says nothing.

GARY
The print run. It’s cleared me out.

(CONTINUED)
ASHLEY
The print run? I thought you were starting small?

Gary finally looks Ashley in the eye.

GARY
So did I.

ASHLEY
How many did you print?

GARY
Fifty thousand copies.

Ashley is aghast.

ASHLEY
Fift...

Ashley sentence drifts off into ultrasound. He sits down.

GARY
I believe in you Ashley.

Ashley is stunned.

GARY
I really do.

Mary hobbles in and approaches the bar. Maggie winces in pain for Mary.

MAGGIE
You made it then.

MARY
Wouldn’t miss it for the world.

MAGGIE
Is it painful?

MARY
It will be when the painkillers wear off. Two cider and blacks please Maggie.

Maggie points at Gemma.

MAGGIE
C’mon Mary, I can’t serve Gemma.

Gemma is horrified.
MARY
It’s fine, she’s with me.

MAGGIE
I still can’t serve her.

MARY
You’re not serving her, you’re serving me. I want two cider and blacks, one for each of these.

She holds up her crutches.

MAGGIE
Fair enough (she looks at Gemma)
And what are you having?

MARY
Milk. Actually, lemme get two shots of vodka for my friends in the back, too.

Mary waves at somebody in the back. Maggie goes to get the drinks. Dick approaches the bar.

DICK
Not too classy, bringing a child to a place like this.

MARY
Better than her running wild on the streets, getting into trouble. She’s in a gang, you know.

Dick looks at Gemma, sees how mortified she is by her mother.

DICK
Oh yeah?

MARY
Very violent.

DICK
Really? Is that how you got done over?

MARY
No, I got done over whilst riding a bike.

Dick starts laughing at Mary whilst she looks over to Tom and Harriet getting cosy, looking at something in Tom’s crotch.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Looks like everyone is getting a ride today except you.

Dick stops laughing.

The pints and milk arrive. Mary looks at Gemma expectantly.

Out comes the velcro wallet.

Harriet and Tom are indeed looking at Tom’s crotch, where the answers are unfolded.

HARRIET
This is a work of genius.

TOM
Looks like we underestimated Del.

HARRIET
We never would’ve won this legit.

TOM
A round on herpetology.

Dick has returned.

DICK
Say what?

HARRIET
Del’s got a round on herpetology.

DICK
I thought he was a virgin.

Tom and Harriet look at one another.

DICK
He wants to get that checked out.

Mary and Gemma look for a place to sit. Gemma holds the tray full of drinks whilst her mother hobbles, but Gemma spots a place.

GEMMA
Hey, I know them! That’s the writer I was telling you about!

They hobble to Gary and Ashley’s table.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
It’s your lucky day. We’re joining you.

GARY
By all means. Go ahead.

Mary sits, places the crutches on the floor, checks to see if anyone’s watching, pours the vodka into Gemma’s milk.

GEMMA
What are you doing?

MARY
Bottoms up!

She hands the drink to Gemma, who sips. Sputters.

EXT. KELVIN’S GARDEN – EVENING

Barry’s van is parked at Kelvin’s house. He looks nervous.

He gets out of the van with a torch and crow bar in hand. He takes a cursory glance around. Across the street, a neighbour’s curtain twitches. Barry mutters to himself.

BARRY
Jesus Barry.

He goes down the side of the house and lights his torch.

INT. KELVIN’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

All is still and dark. A torch light approaches, and Barry looks against the window.

EXT. KELVIN’S GARDEN – NIGHT

Barry is peeking through the window. As he comes away from the glass, he wipes the breath fog clean with his sleeve.

He wanders around to the door, and lines the crow bar against the door frame.
INT. SPOTTED PIG - EVENING

There is a full crowd and it is getting restless. Derek is nervous. He is clutching the suitcase with white knuckles.

Kelvin and Angel approach Gary, Ashley, Mary and Gemma’s table.

KELVIN
These seats taken?

GARY
The more the merrier!

MARY
(quietly to Gary)
You sure about this? The more teammates we’ve got, the smaller we’ll have to slice the pie.

GARY
I didn’t know there was pie!

MARY
(loudly)
Well we’d have to split it six ways now. I’m okay with that if these two aren’t just freeloaders.

ANGEL
Oh, we’re not after the prize money! You guys can keep it if we win!

KELVIN
Well let’s not be hasty-

MARY
I like her!

Angel is already sliding into her seat, and tugging Kelvin’s hand.

Pints in hand, Tom, Dick and Harriet make a circuit of the room.

DICK
Keep your eye on these ones.

HARRIET
They’re hustlers for sure.

(CONTINUED)
TOM
This is a local quiz for local people!

GARY
Is that racist?

Ashley rolls his eyes.

Helen approaches Derek off to one side of the pub lounge.

HELEN
You all set?

Derek is nervous, clutching the briefcase.

DEREK
I think so.

HELEN
You better be! There’s some clever-looking assholes in here tonight.

Derek nods.

HELEN
You’ll be fine.

She gives him a hug.

DEREK
Thanks sis.

Helen leaves him and walks through the crowd towards the microphone.

HELEN
Pipe down, blockheads!

The crowd cheers back in good spirits.

HELEN
Acceptable turnout. And all for a chance of winning the big prize. Don’t get your hopes up too high: it’s been years since anyone beat the quizmaster.

Derek is still clutching the suitcase.
HELEN
So put your greasy hands together
for my brother, your quizmaster,
Derek Quinn!

A round of applause ripples around the pub. Maggie pushes Derek through the crowd as Helen lowers the microphone. His white knuckles clutch the briefcase. As he approaches the microphone he places the suitcase on a table beside him, in full view of the bar.

DEREK
Here we go! Maggie’s got yer pencils. Helen’s going to collect everyone’s fee and check all your gadgets and doodads. No help from Google tonight!

Maggie starts to hand out pencils and labels. Helen takes out a shoebox for everyone to place their mobile phones.

Kelvin quickly takes out his phone just before Helen takes it.

KELVIN
I’ve just got to make a quick call.

ANGEL
Just switch it off, Kelvin.

KELVIN
I will do, once I’ve done this. Back in a minute.

He quickly jumps up to make the call and wanders outside, away from Angel.

INT. KELVIN’S GARDEN - EVENING

Barry is busy loading the van. His phone rings.

BARRY
Yellow?

EXT. SPOTTED PIG SMOKING SECTION - EVENING

KELVIN
Barry? How’s it going?
INT. KELVIN’S GARDEN – EVENING
Barry heads back toward the house.

BARRY
Well, your house has been burgled.

EXT. SPOTTED PIG SMOKING SECTION – EVENING
Kelvin is amazed and excited.

KELVIN
That quick? You don’t fuck about, do you?

INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE – EVENING
Barry starts to squeeze a stereo under his arm.

BARRY
Got a few more trips upstairs to fill the van then I reckon we’re good.

EXT. SPOTTED PIG SMOKING SECTION – EVENING
Kelvin is trying to hide his excitement with small punches into the air.

KELVIN
Aces Barry. Good stuff. I gotta go. Let’s talk later.

INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE – EVENING
Barry is struggling to hold on to the stereo and talk at the same time.

BARRY
Sure thing.

INT. SPOTTED PIG – EVENING
Kelvin returns towards Angel, makes a BLAH BLAH gesture.

KELVIN
Yep. I get it. It’s tragic, really! Call you later!

(CONTINUED)
He hangs up and switches his phone off and giggles to himself in genuine excitement.

He flings the phone in Helen’s shoebox. He walks to the table.

ANGEL
Who was that?

KELVIN
Just closing a business deal. Let’s get this party started, shall we? Next round’s on me!

Cheers around the table.

INT. KELVIN’S LOUNGE – EVENING

Barry struggles to hang the phone up whilst holding the stereo and almost drops them both.

EXT. KELVIN’S GARDEN – EVENING

Barry exits the house with the stereo under his arm and realises that the van has gone. This time he really does drop the stereo.

INT. SPOTTED PIG – EVENING

The pub is primed. Derek is sweating with fear. Tom, Dick and Harriet are no longer joking. Mary, Gary and Ashley are all fiddling with beer mats whilst Gemma slugs vodka milk. Angel looks unimpressed, and Kelvin is desperately trying to be enthusiastic.

DEREK
Every answer sheet needs a team name. Let’s keep it clean, yes, I’m looking at you three!

Tom gives a thumbs-up, writes without even looking at the page. They are professional. Gemma cups her mouth to whisper to the rest of the table.

GEMMA
(whispering)
What are we going to call ourselves?

(CONTINUED)
GARY
(also whispering)
Why are we whispering? That wasn’t one of the quiz questions, was it?

Kelvin is trying to engage with Angel.

KELVIN
How about The Brainy Boys and Beautiful Birds?

Angel, Gemma and Mary cannot hide her look of distaste at this suggestion.

ANGEL
That sucks. What about Great Minds Drink Alike?

Mary has already filled it out.

MARY
The Philosphers Stoned.

Ashley and Gary like it.

DEREK
Right. The rules are simple. I’m going to ask twenty five questions tonight. Five categories, five questions each. In the rare event of any team getting all twenty five questions right, they take the prize. In the even rarer event of two or more teams cracking the quiz, the prize is shared. You got it?

DICK
Is that the first question?

DEREK
No that isn’t the first question smart arse. Is everyone ready?

The pub replies in unison.

EVERYONE
Yes!

DEREK
Then here we go! The first category is herpetology.

Angel is excited. Tom and Harriet note her enthusiasm.
EXT. KELVIN’S GARDEN – EVENING

Barry is stood in an empty garden with no van. He has his phone in his hand.

          KELVIN (O.S)
          You’re through to Kelvin Bailey but
          I can’t take your call right now,
          if you leave a message I’ll get
          right back to you.

          BARRY
          Kelvin. It’s urgent. Call me.

He hangs up.

INT. SPOTTED PIG – EVENING

People are concentrating hard, writing down an answer.

          DEREK
          Here comes the fifth and final
          question in the category: This
          one’s about the Mexican mole
          lizard.

At Tom, Dick and Harriet’s table. In the background, Derek is asking the question.

          HARRIET
          Like pigs in shit over there.

          TOM
          (writing down the answer)
          Mexican mole lizard. He must’ve
          made that up.

Tom finishes writing.

          TOM
          Well, they certainly seem to be
          acting like they know all the
          answers.

          DICK
          Reckon?

All nod. Clink glasses, drink up.

AT THEIR TABLE

Gemma finishes writing some answer on the paper.
GARY
You sure?

GEMMA
She’s right! Excuse me, I’ve got to race like a pisshorse.

She stands, a bit unsteady.

MARY
I better keep an eye on her.

ANGEL
I’ll go, I’ve got visit the ladies’ anyway.

MARY
Thanks, grab us another round on your way back?

Tom, Dick and Harriet appear, all speaking at once, sneaking peeks at the answer sheet.

DICK
How’s everybody doing? Fantastic. Tried the new bitters yet?

TOM
Tough quiz, ey. (To Mary) Look, I’ve been doing some thinking about the ol bald barber and all--not letting him anywhere near my dome, the jealous bastard!

HARRIET
(to Ashley and Gary)
Howdy folks, everybody’s pencil still nice and sharp? Got your erasers all situated. I’ve got extras and sharpeners and even a pen if you prefer the ol’ ink. Know what I mean.

They all excuse themselves at the same time.

TOM
Well, we’d better get back to our own answer sheet before the next round, just a few to go, eh!

They shuffle away just as abruptly as they came.

(CONTINUED)
GARY
What the hell was that about?

ASHLEY
Peculiar.

MARY
Bumped into ‘em this morning. Sold ‘em a question. But now, I think they’ve come for the answers.

INT. LADIES ROOM - EVENING

Gemma is at the sink washing her hands thoroughly. Angel applies lipstick.

GEMMA
How would one know if she were drunk? Theoretically speaking.

ANGEL
(laughing)
You’re fine.

Gemma is staring at Angel.

GEMMA
You’re really beautiful. Everyone in here is looking at you.

ANGEL
Maybe, but what do they see?

GEMMA
What do you mean?

ANGEL
They don’t see me for who I am.

Gemma is confused.

GEMMA
Who are you?

ANGEL
I’m just a pair of tits for most people.

GEMMA
But you’re really clever.

(continued)
ANGEL
Aw, thank you.

GEMMA
You just aced that first round.

ANGEL
That’s luck. I’m studying to become
a herpetologist.

GEMMA
The study of lizards?

ANGEL
Exactly.

GEMMA
That’s really interesting.

Angel laughs to herself.

ANGEL
You know, I told my husband once
that I wanted to be herpetologist,
and he told me that he didn’t want
me touching other people’s
genitals.

Gemma is confused.

GEMMA
That doesn’t make sense.

ANGEL
So I’m having to study in secret.

GEMMA
Why?

ANGEL
Because he only wants to see these.

She holds her breasts.

ANGEL
And not who I really am.

It is a poignant moment, until Gemma punctuates it.

GEMMA
Can I try your lipstick?
INT. SPOTTED PIG - EVENING

Helen approaches Derek.

HELEN
So how is it going?

Derek is nervous.

DEREK
I dunno. We’ve got some strong groups in here tonight.

HELEN
I thought you really had them with those questions about lizards.

DEREK
Yeah. Well.

HELEN
You got a backup plan?

She looks around to make sure no one’s listening. Whispers.

HELEN
In case someone wins.

DEREK
The three amigos over there? They’re on our team.

HELEN
I don’t like the sound of that. What do they get out of it?

DEREK
I sort of promised them... free drinks.

HELEN
If you’re about to say ‘for life’, I will brain you.

He doesn’t have to say it, a guilty look does it for him.

HELEN
Like hell! Those shitstains practically live here as it is! They should be paying rent, not sucking ‘em down at our expense! They’ll bankrupt us in weeks! No deal.

(CONTINUED)
DEREK
But...I...

HELEN
That’s final.

Derek nods meekly. Tom calls from his seat.

TOM
Hey, let’s get this over with,
shall we?

Derek smiles meekly.

Helen stomps off to the bar. Angel and Gemma are returning
to the table.

DEREK
You asked for it. Round two:
Landrovers.

GROANS from the patrons.

Gary is excited.

GARY
(excited)
You guys you guys, I used to work
at Landrover!

KELVIN
Still got all those factoids?

Gary taps his head.

DEREK
Question one. Between what years
was the Series 3 in production?

Gary bites his lip and looks to the ceiling. Everyone waits,
looks at each other. He enjoys the attention.

GARY
Series 3. Hmm. That’s a good one.

He hams it up for dramatic effect.

GARY
Well, we stopped making them in 85.
And we hadn’t quite got through
fifteen years. So that would be 71.
That’s about right. 71 to 85. I’ve
recalled a pertinent fact! Write it
down. Why aren’t you writing?
He takes the paper. It’s already on there.

Mary smiles sheepishly.

GARY
Oh.

MARY
Used to have a Series Three. Don’t worry, there’s still four more questions.

Gemma is a bit woozy.

GEMMA
Can I have another one of these.

Before anyone can say something, she grabs Mary’s drink and takes a large gulp. Everyone watches.

MARY
Hey! Get yer own! Ewww... you’ve got lipstick all over it!

She wipes the rim of the glass.

MARY
Since when do you wear lipstick anyway?

GARY
It’s a good shade.

Barry enters the pub, breathless. He looks around for Kelvin. Kelvin spots him and quickly gets up to intercept him before Angel sees.

He leads Barry outside to the smoking section, but Angel is suspicious.

EXT. SPOTTED PIG SMOKING SECTION - EVENING

KELVIN
Jesus Barry, what you doing here?
This wasn’t part of the plan.

BARRY
There’s been a problem. You weren’t answering your phone.
KELVIN
Is that a problem?

BARRY
No, the it’s about the van.

KELVIN
I’m not sure I follow you. It’s about me not answering the phone about the van.

BARRY
No, the van. It’s been stolen.

Kelvin hasn’t fully understood.

KELVIN
Jesus Barry that’s terrible. I’m sorry to hear that. You’re insured though right?

BARRY
Yeah.

KELVIN
Well it’s obviously an inconvenience but you gotta look on the bright side Barry, you’ll get a new van.

Barry is relieved.

BARRY
You’re taking it much better than I expected.

Kelvin is confused.

KELVIN
I’m cut up about Barry, for your sake. But it’s not my van.

Barry realises Kelvin doesn’t understand.

BARRY
No but it had your stuff in it.

Now Kelvin understands.

KELVIN
You mean...

Angel arrives.

(CONTINUED)
ANGEL
Is everything alright?

Kelvin is visibly distressed.

KELVIN
Yes, everything’s fine. Go back inside darling and enjoy the quiz.

ANGEL
Are you alright Barry?

Barry nods sheepishly.

BARRY
I’m great thanks.

KELVIN
Go back inside petal and I’ll be in in a minute.

Angel doesn’t move.

BARRY
Tell you what, I’ll go inside and get a drink. I’m gasping.

ANGEL
Good idea Barry.

Barry leaves.

ANGEL
What’s going on?

KELVIN
It’s nothing Angel.

ANGEL
I’m sick of this Kelvin.

KELVIN
Sick of what?

ANGEL
The lies. The secrecy.

Kelvin is shocked.

ANGEL
I know all about the money Kelvin and the debts. I’ve known all along.

(CONTINUED)
Kelvin is speechless.

KELVIN
B..b..but?

ANGEL
You never want to talk to me like I’m a real person. I feel like a housepet, Kelvin. But instead of a hamster wheel, you got me a yoga ball.

KELVIN
That’s ridiculous!

ANGEL
Great, please tell me how my feelings are invalid!

KELVIN
I love you.

ANGEL
Little boys do love their pets.

KELVIN
What’s that supposed to... I just thought, if you knew about the money, you’d leave me.

ANGEL
I knew about it. And I wouldn’t leave you because of it.

KELVIN
That is such a relief!

ANGEL
I will be leaving you for other reasons though.

Kelvin is dumbstruck.

KELVIN
Wait, what?

ANGEL
I’m leaving you Kelvin.

KELVIN
But why?
ANGEL
I loved you Kelvin. I still do. But as years go by, it’s clearer and clearer that you’ve never really been interested in this. Or this.

She points to her brain. And makes a beating heart gesture.

ANGEL
Just this. And this.

Obscenely indicating her body.

KELVIN
That’s not true!

ANGEL
Come on. I bet you couldn’t even name the three members of my family.

KELVIN
Mum, dad......John?

She makes a buzzer sound.

KELVIN
Oh, it’s not like you know anything about my family, either!

ANGEL
Your dad is Frank, Mum is Emily. Sisters: Joanna, Dotty, Liz. You want the cousins alphabetically or in order by ascending age? Aaron, Albert, Brianne, Douglas--

KELVIN
But... I love you.

ANGEL
Then you’ve got to let me go. If you want me to truly be happy.

She kisses him.

Kelvin is distraught.

ANGEL
I’ll stay at my mum’s tonight. I’ll come by in a few days and collect my stuff.

She turns to leave.

(CONTINUED)
KELVIN
Wait.

Angel faces Kelvin.

KELVIN
About your stuff.

INT. SPOTTED PIG - EVENING
The general chatter in the pub is interrupted.

ANGEL (O/S)
You did what?

Barry is the only one to pretend he didn’t hear the shouting. Angel storms through the pub and out the door.

Derek wheels up to Tom, Dick and Harriet.

DEREK
Listen guys, the deal’s off.

All three look at one another.

TOM
What do you mean ‘the deal’s off’?

DEREK
Sis won’t stand for it. She doesn’t want any shenanigans, just a straight quiz.

HARRIET
We’ve done three bent rounds Derek.

DEREK
You’re on your own for the rest.

DICK
You gave us the answers!

Derek pulls out an envelope from the side of his chair. All three answer in unison.

TOM, DICK AND HARRIET
The emergency questions.

Kelvin and Barry approach the table to sit with Ashley, Gary, Gemma and Mary.
MARY
Jesus, Angel, you’ve changed.

BARRY
I’m not Angel.

KELVIN
Ha ha. Very funny.

MARY
Just kidding with ya. Is everything alright?

KELVIN
Everything’s fine. My wife’s left me, my house has been burgled and I’m about to be declared bankrupt.

Gary looks at Ashley in alarm. Mary nods.

MARY
Sounds good. Still got your health haven’t you?

Barry nudges Kelvin and points at his crotch.

BARRY
How is your...

KELVIN
Yep. Still got my health.

Derek is back at the microphone. Kelvin has a revelation. The suitcase. A suitcase stuffed with cash. The SOUND in the bar drifts away. There is the suitcase. And only the suitcase.

Derek nervously taps the mic and we’re back in the room.

DEREK
The penultimate round; etymology.

Everyone lets out a GROAN, except Gemma, who spews across the room.

EXT. SPOTTED PIG - EVENING

Mary and a bedraggled Gemma stand outside.

MARY
Fine mess you’ve gotten us into!
GEMMA
Me? Who gave me the booze?

MARY
Don’t pin this on me because you can’t hold your liquor!

GEMMA
I just...wanted it to be my turn.

MARY
Your turn?

GEMMA
To be the kid. And it’s your turn to be the mum. You can’t rely on me to solve your problems forever!

MARY
Solve my problems? SOLVE? Why do you think I’ve got so many??

GEMMA
In case you didn’t notice, you’re MY parent. You’re supposed to be responsible, not trying to coerce your underage daughter into pub quizzes and vodka milk.

MARY
It’s not my fault if-

GEMMA
(mocking)
It’s not my fault, it’s not my fault. It’s never your fault! Take some responsibility for once and just...grow up!

Mary is silent for once. Gemma looks at her own feet. After a moment, Mary starts laughing.

It annoys Gemma.

GEMMA
What?

Mary keeps laughing.

MARY
I’ve never seen vomit like it!

Gemma is deflated.
MARY
Come here.

She gives her daughter a hug.

GEMMA
Chip of the ol’ block, eh mum?

MARY
Something like that. Let’s go back in, see if we’re still in with a shout for this money.

INT. SPOTTED PIG – EVENING

Tom, Dick and Harriet are in despair.

HARRIET
I swear the word jubilee is Jewish and has nothing to do with the word jubilant.

TOM
So where does ‘jubilant’ come from?

HARRIET
Latin I think. Jubilare, like singing and hollering.

DICK
I think it’s jubilee.

TOM
It is jubilee.

HARRIET
Then it’s two to one then isn’t it?

Tom writes down the answer.

HARRIET
If I lose my share of the money because you two melons are wrong, you’re clubbing together to pay me.

TOM
Yeah right.

DEREK
Ok. I’m coming round to collect the papers. Maggie will collect the pencils. Helen will return the phones.

(CONTINUED)
Mary and Gemma return to the serviette and puke encrusted table. Mary looks at the empties.

MARY
Shall we get more drinks in?

GARY
Yeah. Same again Ashley?

Ashley raises his empty glass. Gary suggests to Mary to sit down.

GARY
What you having? I’ll get them in.

MARY
You’re very kind. I’m on cider and black. I’ll come with you.

GARY
Gemma?

MARY
She’s had enough thanks Gary.

Gary looks to Kelvin and Barry.

GARY
Gents?

Barry shakes his head.

KELVIN
I’m fine thanks.

Gary and Mary head off to the bar. Ashley shuffles around to Gemma.

ASHLEY
How are you feeling?

GEMMA
Embarrassed.

ASHLEY
I meant about the quiz.

GEMMA
Oh. Quietly confident. How was the last round?
ASHLEY
Easy.

Gemma is impressed.

ASHLEY
I didn’t get a chance to thank you earlier.

GEMMA
What for?

ASHLEY
The email. It was very kind.

GEMMA
God, I was hoping you hadn’t seen that yet. I was going to ask you to ignore it when you got home!

ASHLEY
Ignore it? Why?

GEMMA
It was just a bit, I don’t know, clumsy.

ASHLEY
Not at all. I realised that I’m taking it all too seriously.

GEMMA
There’s nothing wrong with serious. I think it is highly undervalued. I don’t understand why we celebrate the stupid. It’s as if everything associated with intelligence is either devious or corrupted.

Kelvin is lost in thought at the sight of the unattended suitcase.

BARRY
Is everything okay Kelvin?

Kelvin is deep in thought.

BARRY
Kelvin?

KELVIN
What? Sorry.
BARRY
Is everything okay?

KELVIN
Yeah.

BARRY
I still haven’t heard back from the police.

Kelvin looks around nervously.

KELVIN
The police?

BARRY
About my van.

KELVIN
Oh yeah.

Kelvin goes back to focusing on the suitcase.

BARRY
You know, the van with all your stuff in it.

Kelvin looks at Barry.

KELVIN
Can we have a chat outside?

INT. DEREK’S BEDROOM – EVENING

Derek is hysterical. Helen is saying nothing.

DEREK
What am I going to do? What can I say? No-one’s won it in two years and now I’ve gotta go in there and tell them they haven’t actually won twelve grand, because I’ve spent it.

HELEN
Like I said. You’ve got to go in and face it. Tell them the truth.

DEREK
But—
HELEN
No buts Derek. Dad used to be into 'buts'.

Derek furrows his brow.

DEREK
I’m not sure-

HELEN
You’ve got to get in there and give it to them straight. You got into this mess and you’ve got to get yourself out of it. I’ve looked after you for too long now Derek. It’s time to grow up.

DEREK
I’m forty-five!

HELEN
And you’ve spent twelve thousand on toy trains.

EXT. SPOTTED PIG SMOKING SECTION - EVENING

Kelvin is with Barry.

KELVIN
I’ve got a plan.

BARRY
Oh Jesus.

KELVIN
This one is easy Barry. It’ll work.

BARRY
Go on.

KELVIN
The suitcase.

BARRY
What suitcase?

KELVIN
The one with all the prize money in it.
BARRY
What about it?

KELVIN
Let’s nick it.

Barry is confused.

KELVIN
We’ll go halves. You can get a new van, I can pay the mortgage, wait for the insurance to come through on the burglary.

BARRY
How are we going to nick it? It’s on a table at the front of the room!

KELVIN
That’s my plan.

Barry is still confused.

KELVIN
We create a distraction.

INT. SPOTTED PIG - EVENING

Derek is sweating and shaking profusely at the microphone stand. Helen is watching nervously from the bar.

DEREK
Finally; the word ’jubilant’ derives from the latin verb ’jubilare’, meaning ’to shout with joy’.

Harriet throws her hands up in despair at Tom and Dick.

HARRIET
You idiots!

Mary jumps up for joy.

MARY
Get in! We won the prize!

GARY
Congratulations everyone!

(CONTINUED)
MARY
Did you actually answer any of the questions?

Gary stops celebrating.

Derek is in pieces.

DEREK
Therefore, for the first time in two years, we have a team with full marks. That team is called ‘The Philosophers Stoned’.

The crowd claps as Gemma, Mary, Ashley and a rather sheepish Gary stand up. Barry and Kelvin re-enter. Kelvin signals Barry to wait by the bar whilst Kelvin returns to the table.

MARY
Oh here he comes! I hope you’re not looking to get a cut out of this when you’ve spent half the night outside with your ex wife and your best mate?

KELVIN
You spent the final round looking after her.

He points at Gemma.

KELVIN
Anyway. Forget it. I’m not interested in the money.

He takes a glance back to Barry, who raises his glass back in acknowledgement.

Derek folds away the quiz results and braces himself. He is sweating profusely. Helen looks at her brother with pity.

Derek taps the microphone to get everyones attention.

DEREK
Er... ok... hello everyone. So I have a con...

Everyone goes silent.

Helen suddenly intervenes.

(CONTINUED)
HELEN
Wait!
The pub turns to Helen.

DEREK
Sis, it’s okay, I’ve got to-

Helen marches up to Gemma.

HELEN
Have you got any ID?
The pub turns watches on in silence.

GEMMA
What?

HELEN
I asked if you’ve got any ID?

MARY
Oh Christ you’re joking.

HELEN
We all saw your vomit episode earlier.

Gemma is horrified by all the attention they are getting from the rest of the pub.

GEMMA
Mum don’t worry about it. Let’s just leave.

MARY
I’m not leaving twelve and a half thousand pounds in a pub.

Tom, Dick and Harriet have their mouths agape in surprise.

MARY
This is a bloody scam Helen. You just don’t want to give us the money!

HELEN
Call the police if you want Mary. They’re not going to side with an drunk underage pub quiz hustler.

Kelvin sheepishly leaves the table and edges towards the suitcase.

(CONTINUED)
GARY
I don’t think she was hustling. I’m not sure. Like Hustler magazine? Is that what you mean?

ASHLEY
No Gary. This is not our quarrel.

MARY
Hustler? I’ve got respect for you Helen but this is taking the piss. We won this fair and square.

HELEN
Fair and square? I don’t care about fair and square. Let’s get this right. There are only one set of rules here; my rules. This isn’t personal Mary. Its business. I run this pub, I make the rules. Now I run a family friendly pub but I don’t allow underage drinking or underage gambling.

Gemma is just staring at the ground with embarassment whilst Ashley decides to rejoin the conflict.

ASHLEY
This isn’t gambling. It’s a quiz. There’s little to do with chance here.

HELEN
Of course there’s chance. Did you know the questions before hand?

Tom, Dick and Harriet look down at their glasses.

ASHLEY
No.

HELEN
Then you’re lucky that your questions came up. Same as a lottery but with questions instead of numbers. Beside, if it isn’t gambling, you won’t be wanting the money then.

Kelvin in right beside the suitcase whilst the conflict goes on in the middle of the room.

(CONTINUED)
MARY
We very much will be wanting the money then.

HELEN
The case is closed.

MARY
What do you mean the case is closed?

HELEN
Are you stupid Mary? I’ve already said. I run the pub, I make the rules. I’ve given my response, now you can sit down and like it or you can leave. What’s it going to be?

Barry is sat at the bar preparing to collapse. He calls Maggie over.

BARRY
Excuse me? Can I have a glass of water? I’m feeling very sick.

MAGGIE
Sure.

She heads down the bar. Barry slides off his stool to the floor.

MAGGIE
Do you want ice with...

She heads back up to where Barry was sat. She notices him on the floor.

MAGGIE
Oh my God Helen.

Helen is still in mid flow.

HELEN
I could lose my license if the police were to come...

MAGGIE
Helen!

HELEN
What?
CONTINUED: 88.

MAGGIE
I need help, this guy has just collapsed.

HELEN
Then deal with it Maggie, call an ambulance or something. I’m dealing with this.

Derek taps the microphone.

DEREK
Sis.

HELEN
Not now Derek I’m dealing with this.

DEREK
No sis. It’s me. I need to deal with it.

Helen is silent. Everyone looks at Derek.

DEREK
I have a confession to make...

Tom stands and shouts.

TOM
Where’s the suitcase?

DEREK
Wha...

Helen and Mary look over in shock.

MARY
Where is the suitcase?

At the bar, Barry gets up and runs out.

EXT. STREET – EVENING

A frantic Kelvin runs along the street clutching the suitcase. He occasionally looks back, but barely looks forward.

He crosses the street.

We hear a SCREECH, followed by a dull THUD.

(CONTINUED)
Kelvin lays in the street, clasping a suitcase, hit by a van.

Barry’s van.