

THE C WORD

by

Nicole Taylor

Based on the book
"THE C WORD" by Lisa Lynch

1 **EXT. SPANISH VILLA. POOL AREA. (FLASH-FORWARD TO SC109).** 1

LIVE ACTION OVER TITLES:-

LISA, blonde, early thirties, lies on a lilo with one ear-phone in. She is in her own world, singing.

Angle on PETE, LISA's husband, coming out the villa doors. He's mid-to late-thirties, a cheeky, handsome Scouser. He comes over to the pool and dips his legs in up to the knees. LISA sees him, smiles at him.

PETE

Bloke from over the way there
popped his head in, reckons you've
got a cracking voice.

LISA

Really?

PETE's eyes twinkle with mischief.

PETE

No.

She laughs. He laughs. They like each other, these two.

Crank up music over: -

CUT TO:

MONTAGE of London life - TITLES.

1A **INT. LISA'S OFFICE - DAY 1.** 1A

A magazine office. Each individual page of a magazine issue is being pinned up onto one wall while LISA and two colleagues, JACK and SARA, are standing in front of it, pointing out things and discussing.

1B **INT. PETE'S OFFICE - DAY 1.** 1B

PETE is bantering away with TWO COLLEAGUES as they head from the open-plan workspace to the lift area, with football stuff over their shoulder.

1C **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT - NIGHT 1.** 1C

PETE gets home muddy and in football kit to find LISA on the phone, happy, obviously excited at some good news. She passes PETE the phone and goes over and writes 'Jamie's wedding' in big felt tip letters on the CALENDAR on the fridge, embellishing it with stars - Sat 11th Oct 2008.

[N.B. The fridge is covered in pics - a childhood snap of LISA and GABBY, her and JAMIE, one of her and PETE. These - along with various concert tickets and wedding invitations for forthcoming events - are all tucked around this calendar which is packed full of plans for the months to come].

LISA grabs her jacket and beckons to PETE. PETE - still talking on the phone - follows her out the house. The door closes behind them.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

2

EXT. PUB GARDEN. LONDON. NIGHT 1.

2

A pub garden, strung with fairy-lights. It's packed with a summer after-work crowd, people are sitting at picnic tables. At one sits LISA and PETE, along with GABBY, LISA's best friend from Derby, GABBY's nerdy but witty husband SAM and LISA's university friend ABIGAIL, who's posh and glam and deadpan, and who probably went to Rodean.

PETE

New York, Washington then through the Blue Ridge Mountains, to North Carolina, South Carolina, Savannah, Georgia then Miami.

LISA

1,000 miles of highway, 40 mixtapes, 8 skanky motels and 3 weeks off work. Woop!

She and PETE smack a high five.

GABBY

There's this restaurant in New York right where the food comes out in test tubes and you inhale one of the courses off a *cloth*.

The bell for last orders.

PETE

(standing up)

Right any more for any more?

SAM raises his empty glass, indicating he'd like another.

LISA

Better not. I've got to be in work early to leave early.

PETE heads inside to the bar.

ABIGAIL

Does it move around?

LISA

(looking down at her chest)

I'm not sure.

ABIGAIL

Well check.

LISA
What now?

SAM
(gesturing for her to go
ahead as he turns away)
Please.

A bit gingerly LISA massages her left tit.

LISA
It does. I think.

Impatient at the inconclusiveness, ABIGAIL leans over and feels LISA's tit. And feels it. And feels it.

GABBY
(shoving ABIGAIL off)
Right let me have a go.

GABBY is mid-massage as PETE returns to the table with a pint for SAM. PETE looks at SAM who shrugs, disclaiming any responsibility.

GABBY (CONT'D)
(to SAM, still massaging)
Remember that ovarian cyst I had?
It just went away on its own.

Finally SAM puts his pint down.

SAM
D'you want us to just...(go away)?

PETE
Tell you what let's stay but mate
if you just stand up I'll have a
quick rummage around your nutsack.

SAM starts unbuckling his belt. Laughter. PETE smiles at LISA who smiles back. The joke was directed at her - she is clearly his favourite audience.

CUT TO:

3

INT. LISA'S OFFICE. DAY 2.

3

LISA approaches her boss, SARA, late-40s, who's walking across a busy magazine office en route to a meeting. SARA is warm and melodramatic and American.

LISA
(intercepting her)
Sara I've got to shoot off a bit
early for a hospital appointment.

SARA leans in towards her.

SARA
(in a stage whisper)
So long as you're not pregnant.

Before LISA can react to this inappropriateness, SARA grabs her forearms.

SARA (CONT'D)
We cannot spare you.
(as an afterthought)
Don't take me to a tribunal for
that.

On LISA, smiling, shaking her head slightly, used to her boss's manner and realising it's a compliment. SARA hurries off to the meeting.

SARA (CONT'D)
(calling back)
Go when you need to. Ask Jack to
send out a couple more options for
the cover.

LISA goes over to her desk to pick up her bag. The guy at the desk across, JACK, holds up a piece of paper. Scribbled on it is 'TOP'. LISA glances down at her top, confused. Then JACK puts another piece of paper beneath it that says 'SHOP'. He thinks she's leaving early to go to Topshop. LISA gets it and laughs.

CUT TO:

4 **INT. HOSPITAL. WAITING ROOM. DAY 2.** 4

LISA has her head on PETE's shoulder in the waiting room. It should feel like they've been waiting quite a while.

PETE
There's a nun over there reading
Grazia.

LISA puts her head up.

PETE (CONT'D)
Every time.

CUT TO:

5 **INT. HOSPITAL. BREAST EXAM ROOM. DAY 2.** 5

On LISA having a mammogram.

CUT TO:

6 **INT. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR. DAY 2.** 6

LISA and PETE follow the NURSE down a long corridor. The NURSE strides quickly despite markedly short legs and muttony calves. They have to hurry to keep up.

PETE
What was it like?

LISA

Like shutting your tit in the
fridge door.

PETE winces, then they have to speed up to keep up with the nurse. Then from behind we see PETE nip LISA's arse. She thumps him then a second later pulls her pants out of her arse.

CUT TO:

7

INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENTS' ROOM. DAY 2.

LISA and PETE sit on two chairs across the desk from the CONSULTANT, middle-aged, handsome and reassuring, with a touch of the Gold Blend man about him. The NURSE pulls the door shut. LISA and PETE both note it strange that she stays in the room.

The CONSULTANT turns to the screen behind him and touches a switch. The screen lights up with a huge mammogrammed picture of LISA's breasts. The image looms over them.

CONSULTANT

Lisa the shadow on the film, that's
the lump you can feel.

He gestures with a pointer to a darker area on the photograph.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

It isn't a cyst. The signs are
consistent with breast cancer.

A two shot of LISA and PETE, reeling. Time seems to slow. The CONSULTANT continues talking -

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

Obviously we're hoping that it's
low grade. We'll do a needle biopsy
today and that will tell us more
about what we're dealing with,
whether it's invasive or non-
invasive. If the cancer is
invasive, you may need a course of
chemotherapy and radiotherapy, but
in either case, because of the size
of the lump we'll need to start by
operating to remove the breast.
It's a lot to take in, but if
there's one thing to retain from
what I'm telling you it's that the
treatment of cancer and in
particular breast cancer has come
on leaps and bounds and survival
rates have improved enormously.

- but from LISA and PETE's POV it's mostly just lips moving -
a high-pitched whine drowns out what he says.

When he's finished, the NURSE speaks - audibly, but to LISA and PETE's ears, as though she were speaking another language.

NURSE
Have you got any questions?

It's too much to take in yet. PETE looks at LISA who's not in a position to formulate any either.

NURSE (CONT'D)
(understanding they need
some time)
I'll get you both a cup of tea.

She and the CONSULTANT exit. PETE and LISA remain exactly as they were - almost a still life of 'shocked'.

LISA
The holiday.

PETE
I'll deal with that.

Another pause.

LISA
My parents.

PETE hesitates.

PETE
I'll give them a call.

CUT TO:

8

INT. HOSPITAL. BIOPSY ROOM. EVENING 2.

8

A boxy magnolia-painted room. A nondescript watercolour on the wall. LISA sits on the bed in a gown, her teeth chattering. A NURSE stands beside her, a hand on LISA's shoulder.

CONSULTANT
We'll get the biopsy results by
next week then we'll get you back
in on Friday to discuss the results
and the treatment plan.

The NURSE comes over and opens her gown, ready for the CONSULTANT to perform the procedure. LISA screws her eyes shut at the crunch of the biopsy gun.

CUT TO:

9

EXT. HOSPITAL. EVENING 2.

9

PETE is outside the front of the hospital. It's dusk on an early summer's evening. Everyone else is getting about their business, on their way somewhere.

15 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BATHROOM. NIGHT 2.** 15

The bath is running. LISA is too stunned to cry.

The doorbell rings.

She turns the tap off.

CUT TO:

16 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. HALL. NIGHT 2.** 16

PETE opens the door.

IAN and JANE, LISA's parents, and a mid-twenties guy, LISA's brother JAMIE, are standing there with an overnight case. PETE hangs back as with a wracking sob, LISA almost falls into IAN's arms.

CUT TO:

16A **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 2.** 16A

LISA, PETE, IAN, JANE and JAMIE sit around five untouched cups of tea in the living room. They all look knackered. JANE is being relentlessly positive, yet sounds frightened.

JANE
Kylie Minogue.

No-one says a word.

JANE (CONT'D)
Jennifer Saunders.

Still, nothing.

JANE (CONT'D)
And the other one. You know the one. Who used to be - . But turns out she's -. From -

LISA
Cynthia Nixon.

JANE
She's fine now. She's on Broadway.

CUT TO:

17 **INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENTS' ROOM. DAY 13.**

LISA, PETE, IAN and JANE are sitting on chairs across the desk from the CONSULTANT. The NURSE is also in the room.

CONSULTANT
Unfortunately the biopsy confirmed that the cancer is invasive.

PETE's head falls into his hands and LISA registers this with alarm.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

The tumour is around five centimeters in length, which means we're looking at a stage 2 or a stage 3 cancer, depending on whether or not there's been a spread to the lymph nodes.

LISA

How many stages are there?

CONSULTANT

Four.

IAN

Oh G-d.

PETE rocks back and forth, his head in his hands. JANE is stunned, white. LISA, horrified by the devastation around her, swallows back her own fright.

LISA

What do we do?

CONSULTANT

Don't Google. There's a lot of rubbish about and it'll only frighten you.

The NURSE hands her a stack of literature.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

(gently)

You'll have the operation first. I do a skin sparing mastectomy which means I remove the nipple and take out the breast tissue but the skin itself will be saved.

NURSE

An expandable implant goes in which will be gradually pumped up and then when it's time for the breast to be rebuilt, that expandable prosthesis will be replaced by a fixed volume one. It achieves really good cosmetic results. I'll show you some pictures in a moment.

LISA

(almost to herself)
Jamie.

NURSE

Who's Jamie?

LISA
(like it's the most
important thing in the
world)
My brother. My brother's getting
married in five months.
(disbelieving)
I won't be able to go.

NURSE
Of course you will. Of course you
will. You'll wear a wig or a
lovely headscarf and you will look
amazing.

On LISA, blinking with absolute disbelief that what the NURSE
is saying is going to become a reality. Suddenly, JANE, who
until now has been completely quiet, lets rip.

JANE
How? How can this possibly be?

She is vibrating with shock and rage.

JANE (CONT'D)
I'm 55, I'm screened every year,
you're 28 and they're telling me
you've got breast cancer? How?
How can that be? How can it be a
cyst one minute and a huge invasive
tumour the next?

LISA
(gently)
Mum stop.

JANE
(getting louder,
panicking)
I just think it's appalling that
nobody picked this up!

LISA
Please.

She's scared too. This is making it worse.

JANE
I have never heard of this, have
you Ian? Never. A girl of your
age getting breast cancer. Never.

LISA, desperate now, looks to PETE but he too is lost to her,
his forehead in his hands. At this most terrifying moment
for her, LISA is engulfed by her family's collective despair.
It's like a tide, rising and rising and threatening to
overwhelm her, until suddenly she can take it no longer.

LISA
(to her family)
STOP! Stop it. All of you. The
lot of you. I can't do this. I
cannot handle seeing you like this.

The CONSULTANT and the NURSE stay quiet and don't seem fazed.
They seem to know to just let LISA get on with it.

LISA (CONT'D)
Carry on as you are, carry on like
this and I'll deal with all of this
on my own, or you can just pack it
in now and do it with me. So
decide now.

She is as frightened as she is angry, but above all things,
she is determined. This devastation has to stop.

LISA (CONT'D)
What's it going to be?

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

17A **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. DAY 3.** 17A

JANE is violently ironing a pile of clothes.

17B **EXT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. DAY 3.** 17B

IAN is outside violently washing his car.

17C **EXT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. GARDEN. DAY 3.** 17C

PETE is clattering about in the shed at the end of the
garden.

17D **EXT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. GARDEN. DAY 3.** 17D

JAMIE is kicking a football against the side of the house,
again and again and again.

LISA walks through all of this, seeing each member of her
family in their own private pain and unable to help her.
It's frankly doing her head in. Needing to get away from it,
she heads for her bedroom -

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

18 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. DAY 3.** 18

- and shuts the door.

Coming to sit down on the bed, LISA looks like she's about to
explode.

Her hands are steepled against her face and she's breathing in and out as if she were willing herself not to cry or scream or have a panic attack.

A moment, then she sees her laptop - a white Macbook. She reaches for it then opens it - and as soon as the light glows on her face it already feels like a 'portal' into somewhere other than here.

LISA's desktop wallpaper is a handwritten list, headed "30 BEFORE I'M 30!" and we can pick out various things she wants to do: US road trip, own a pair of Louboutins, have a baby. LISA looks at the list til it blurs out of focus - then she blinks.

She clicks open Safari and we hear her in voice-over as she begins to type. Her voice is shaky at first but gets stronger as she writes.

LISA (V.O.)
On my list of "Things to Do Before I'm thirty" I hadn't factored in beating breast cancer. But them's the breaks.

Her writing 'voice' sounds various degrees more confident than she currently feels, but she perseveres.

LISA (V.O.)
I can't be the only 20 something in the world who's had a breast cancer diagnosis. But I am probably the one with the biggest gob. So I'm going to write my way through
(hesitates)
the Bullshit -

LISA types that tentatively, but it feels OK, so she continues.

LISA (V.O.)
- and come out standing tall in a pair of Louboutins on the other side.

LISA hits 'post' and the date 30.05.08 appears on-screen in an aston [she is using blogger.com]. How does that feel? That feels OK. Her breathing is steady now. Somehow the process was calming.

CUT TO:

19

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. HALL/KITCHEN. DAY 3.

19

LISA emerges from her room, ready to re-engage with her family and tell them what she's been doing. What she encounters is IAN pouring an entire bottle of Sarsons malt vinegar into the kettle.

LISA
What are you doing?

IAN
Delimescaling the kettle.

For fuck's sake. Enough. Truly - enough.

LISA
We're going out.

CUT TO:

20

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT 3.

20

Five uncomfortable stools in a tapas restaurant. They're all sitting there just looking at each other. LISA's rousing words have failed to rouse anyone. Then suddenly the door smashes open and a couple sitting at a table right next to the door nearly jump out of their skin. Enter ABIGAIL.

ABIGAIL
Jesus.
(to the couple, like it's
their fault)
You shouldn't let them seat you so
near the door.

Classic ABIGAIL. LISA's family watch this whirlwind approach. ABIGAIL sits down next to LISA and there's the briefest moment where she looks at her friend with new eyes, perceiving her vulnerability, how scared she must be, and the prospect of losing her. We can see in that moment that ABIGAIL just wants to hug LISA and not let go, but she can read from LISA's expression and the general atmosphere that that isn't what she needs.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
(to LISA)
The blog. Yes.

She kisses her on the cheek. Immediate relief from LISA.

PETE
What blog?

ABIGAIL
Your wife has started a blog.

JAMIE
What about?

ABIGAIL
The Highland Clearances and their
relevance to contemporary British
life.

JAMIE
Eh?

LISA

Ignore her. It's about...the
Bullshit. That's where it's going.
Everything I feel. Everything I
want to say.

She looks at PETE as she says this, like she's explaining her
need and asking him to get onboard.

LISA (CONT'D)

I'm going to send the link round my
friends so people know what's going
on with me, which means that the
rest of the time we can talk about
other things.

Beat.

IAN

Can your Mum and I read it?

LISA hesitates.

LISA

Yeah. But no questions and no
comments. Cos it's all going up
there unvarnished.

ABIGAIL

Wait. This can't just be for your
friends. Have you Googled the word
'cancer'?

PETE

(stiffly, sounding a
warning)

The doctor told us not to.

Everyone looks at ABIGAIL, afraid of what she's going to say
next.

ABIGAIL

Google 'cancer' and a thousand
pages will come up trying to tell
you that it's a gift.

IAN

A what?

ABIGAIL

A gift. Merry Christmas. Happy
Birthday. You've got cancer. A
gift. So I cross-referenced. Is
lupus a gift? Is Multiple
Sclerosis a gift? Is a vaginal
prolapse a gift?

JANE
(as if speaking from
experience)
It certainly is not a gift.

JAMIE
Oh my G-d.

The mood is suddenly lighter. LISA looks hopeful.

ABIGAIL
So please. Make your blog public
and counteract some of the crap
that's out there.

Before LISA can answer, IAN leans towards her.

IAN
Having an array of wigs lets you
try out different identities in the
bedroom.

LISA looks at him, horrified.

IAN (CONT'D)
That's what we read, didn't we
Jane? Before the doctor said not
to look. Somebody had said that.

He shakes his head.

IAN (CONT'D)
As if the first thing that happens
to you when you get...

PETE
(getting on message,
making an effort)
The Bullshit.

IAN
The Bullshit is you turn into Ann
bloody Summers.

JAMIE
Urgh. Dad.

IAN
What? What have I said? I'm not
allowed to mention the name of a
perfectly respectable high street
retailer but your mother's talking
vaginal prolapses and this one's
starting a website about her bust.

He flags the waiter down so they can order.

IAN (CONT'D)
(playing to the gallery
now)
Give over.

He looks at LISA over the menu - it's a bit of an act but it's a good one and it does what it needs to - it tells LISA that he's onboard.

CUT TO:

21

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. NIGHT 3.

21

LISA is sitting on her bed, typing. Not tentative, but with gusto - really clattering away at the keys.

LISA (V.O.)
Being diagnosed with cancer is like being told you've got twenty minutes to revise for an A level in a language you've never learned. And if that weren't enough, consider the course materials - packed with pink girliness, cutesy prettiness and woeful attempts at just-us-girls hen night-style fun. Why is there so much Bullshit about the Bullshit? Where are the people telling it like it really is?

A knock and JAMIE comes into LISA's bedroom.

JAMIE
Alright Arsehat?

She shows him her computer and we see the blog.

LISA
I'm calling it "Alright Tit". What do you think?

JAMIE
(coming to sit on the bed)
Yeah. Good. Yeah.

JAMIE is clearly more upset than he's letting on. LISA closes her laptop.

LISA
How are the wedding plans?

On JAMIE, not really knowing how to answer - that's the last thing on his mind.

JAMIE
(deflecting)
It's ages away yet, in't it?

LISA

I'm sorry. About the timing. I don't want this to interfere.

On JAMIE, trying to gauge how to answer. He's devastated by the news but gets that LISA needs him to get onboard with the way she's handling it.

JAMIE

(slightly forced)
Well. You do have form.

LISA

What form?!

JAMIE

My 8th birthday she falls off her bike. Upstaged. No-one interested in my Moonwalk. Only interested in signing your cast.

LISA

Cos your moonwalk was shite!

JAMIE

Glandular fever.

LISA

Yeah - during my A levels!

JAMIE

Yeah but you were still playing the glanny card during mine.
"Jamie can you leave your physics coursework and come down and set the table, Lisa's got to rest in front of Home and Away".

LISA laughs - tantamount to an admission. The two of them are quiet for a bit. All the safety, all the comfort of their childhoods - gone.

LISA

I'm going to be bald, at the wedding.

JAMIE

That's alright.

LISA

And in all the photos. That'll be nice. I'll be bald, bloated and one titted.

JAMIE

OK.

LISA

But I'll still be there.

JAMIE

Course you'll be there. Cos I'll not be going down any aisle without you.

LISA

You'll not be going down the aisle at all, you muppet. You stand and wait at the end of it while Leanne comes down.

JAMIE

(grinning)
Right. Shit.

CUT TO:

22

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BATHROOM. NIGHT 3.

22

PETE is brushing his teeth. When he comes into the bedroom, he finds LISA standing in white pyjamas. She is taking a gorgeous cocktail dress out the wardrobe and hanging it up.

LISA

For Jamie's wedding. Just need the Louboutins and I'm set.

On PETE, pausing, considering how to proceed.

PETE

Babe.

He sits down on their bed.

PETE (CONT'D)

You know you don't have to...man up just cos I was crying like a baby.

LISA

I'm not 'manning up'. It's the end of my twenties, it's the start of our marriage and I'm not going to let this change me or take over our lives for any longer than necessary. We've got things to do, sex to have, babies to...freeze. Shoes to buy. This is not taking any more than my hair.

PETE looks at her. It's bravado, surely - she's as scared as he is - but she's determined to do this her way.

LISA (CONT'D)

I can't control anything about this shit-uation except for how I handle it and this is how I'm handling it.

On PETE realising she's not for turning. She needs him to get onboard. Making an effort to switch modes:

PETE

Anne Widdecombe rang. She couldn't find her pyjamas.

LISA looks down at the matronly pyjamas.

LISA

(looking down)

Mum bought them. For me going into hospital.

LISA smiles, concedes he's right. So she flings her arms up and pulls the top off. For a moment they are both a little daunted by the sight of her naked chest.

PETE

(brushing the thought away)

Better.

PETE pulls her to him and holds her in his arms. A moment, as they both privately let the mask slip a little - the enormity of what they're facing visible in their expressions. Then LISA giggles.

LISA

Pete.

PETE

What?

He has an erection.

PETE (CONT'D)

I can't help it! We're newly weds. Sorry. That's not polite. Appropriate. Sorry.

LISA

No! Don't be sorry. This is exactly what I want. This is all I want.

She kisses him. He kisses her back. They carry on snogging as we leave the scene.

CUT TO:

23

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. NIGHT 3.

23

It's dark and the house is quiet. It should feel like everyone has gone to bed. Then reveal LISA at the kitchen table, typing.

LISA (V.O.)

All that arse-kicking at dinner, but it didn't stop me from staring out of the window on the way home, seeking out other girls my age.

(MORE)

LISA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
'Why wasn't it you?' I thought as we passed a happy-looking twentysomething, arm in arm with her equally - and nauseatingly - happy-looking boyfriend. 'Why haven't you got this?'. I find myself actually looking forward to surgery next week.

After a moment, she gets up, untacks the old calendar - full of parties and dinners and holidays and festivals - and all the photos. Instead, she puts up a new calendar - which marks out all the stages of her treatment and her new life: MASTECTOMY, CHEMO STARTS, CHEMO 2, CHEMO 3, CHEMO 4, CHEMO 5, CHEMO 6, CHEMO ENDS. She stands in front of it, trying hard to adjust to this new reality.

Then she picks up a yellow felt tip and writes in 'JAMIE'S WEDDING' at the end of it all - and in exactly the same way - and with the same prominence - as it had before.

LISA picks up her iPhone and clicks -

CUT TO:

LISA'S BLOG

- and the new calendar automatically becomes the background to LISA's 'Alright Tit' blog - 30.05.08.

CUT TO:

24

INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENTS' ROOM. DAY 24.

Close on a black felt tip drawing lines and curves. Then we pull out and see that it's the CONSULTANT - drawing on LISA's boob, marking where to cut. On LISA, steeling herself.

LISA (V.O.)
I WANT THIS THING OUT OF ME. Cut me open, take my nipple, take the lot, scar me right up. Just get. it. out.

CONSULTANT

Ready?

LISA sits up, pulls her gown on. She looks at PETE, who's sitting at the other side of the room. He doesn't look ready. He stands up and goes over to her.

They hold onto each other until they both become aware of the CONSULTANT waiting. Reluctantly, they separate.

PETE

I'll be upstairs when you wake up.

LISA follows the CONSULTANT out the door, leaving PETE alone in the room, seeming vulnerable and a bit lost.

CUT TO:

25

INT. HOSPITAL. ANAESTHETIC ROOM. DAY 4.

25

LISA is lying on the trolley. An ANAESTHETIST is moving around preparing the anaesthetic.

ANAESTHETIST

Just like a couple of gin and tonics.

LISA

(scared but styling it out)

Well that's a worry. It takes more than a couple to do anything to me.

The ANAESTHETIST smiles.

ANAESTHETIST

Can you count down for me from 5.

LISA

5...4...3...

Then the numbers stop.

CUT TO:

26

INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT 4.

26

IAN, JANE and PETE, all exhausted and quite down - like it's all gone on longer than they thought. Then the CONSULTANT comes in. IAN stands up.

CONSULTANT

It's all out. It took longer than we expected because the cancer did make it into Lisa's lymph nodes. But the operation went well and it's all out.

On PETE, nodding, relieved.

CUT TO:

27

INT. HOSPITAL. WARD CORRIDOR. DAY 5.

27

The next day. JAMIE and GABBY are hanging around the corridor. PETE comes out of LISA's room.

JAMIE

How is she?

PETE

On morphine. And whizzed off her tits. Tit.

GABBY
(to JAMIE)
Go on. You go in first.

CUT TO:

28 INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.

28

JAMIE goes in. There she is. Bandages across her chest. She sounds weak when she speaks.

JAMIE
(shocked at the sight of
her but trying to hide
it)
Hi arsehole.

LISA
Hi bowel breath.

JAMIE
How you feeling?

LISA
(gesturing to under the
bed)
Amazing. Can you just check under
there?

Following her instruction, JAMIE lifts up the side of LISA's bed sheet and sees a gross bag of bloody fluids (it's attached by tube to LISA's armpit, which is being drained of blood and fluid). He grimaces. Looks at her. LISA is grinning - she just wanted to gross him out.

JAMIE
Urgh you bastard.

MONTAGE

28A INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.

28A

The date 07.06.08 appears on-screen as an array of friends and family visit, and we hear LISA in voice-over:

LISA (V.O.)
Lovely as it was to be so inundated with well-wishers, it was my first taste of feeling like a museum exhibit; a freak-show to be viewed in single-file. (Roll up, roll up, for the one-breasted woman!) But rather than play the part of the ill person or feel conscious about my new, wonky-looking chest, I gave the people what they wanted. It made me feel better. It made them feel better. And it was the best tactic I had in my cancer-beating arsenal.

During the above:

28B **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.** 28B

IAN rigging up an iPod dock

28C **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.** 28C

SARA from work popping her head around the door

28D **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.** 28D

JANE whacking two pillows together to make LISA more (and simultaneously less) comfortable (PETE watching this with alarm)

28E **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.** 28E

GABBY reading aloud from one of those shit "Take a Break" type magazines and the two of them laughing

28F **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 5.** 28F

ABIGAIL plucking LISA's eyebrows (Pete reading the paper in the background).

28G **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. NIGHT 5.** 28G

LISA gingerly typing with one hand on her mac at night when everyone has left.

The room fills up with balloons, chocolates, cards, grapes, magazines - gradually it gets choked by all of these things. By the end LISA is out of bed and sitting up in an armchair but she looks absolutely exhausted.

END MONTAGE

28H **INT. HOSPITAL. LISA'S ROOM. DAY 6.** 28H

A tap at the door and the CONSULTANT comes in.

LISA
So it did spread.

CONSULTANT
It did. To 24 out of 25 lymph nodes.

LISA
I bet that 25th was a cocky bastard.

The CONSULTANT smiles. He likes her, likes her irreverence.

CONSULTANT
It's all out now. And the chemotherapy will mop up any rogue cells too small to operate on. Well done you.

LISA can't resist.

LISA
Well done *you*.

Across the room, PETE shakes his head, looking at her with laughing eyes.

CONSULTANT
(on his way out)
I have to say I'm so impressed with how you're handling all of this.

LISA
(surprised, pleased but trying not to show it)
Well. Pfah. Hmmm. I don't. Crikey. I don't know about that.

The CONSULTANT exits with a smile. A few seconds of knitted brow later, LISA finally comes up with a satisfactory response.

LISA (CONT'D)
"I bet you say that to all your patients". That's what I should have said.

PETE
Too late babe. He'll have to go with your first answer.

He mimics all her cringey sounds. He's laughing and gets her laughing.

CUT TO:

29

INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENTS' ROOM. DAY 29.

A few days later. PETE and JANE are sitting in chairs in the CONSULTANT's office. They are both looking anxiously at a screen, behind which, there's the sound of dressings coming off.

NURSE
(finishing removing the dressing)
Now, remember there won't be a nipple, but that'll get rebuilt after chemotherapy and radiotherapy, when we finish your reconstruction.

The dressings are off. The CONSULTANT and NURSE stand expectantly, but LISA keeps her eyes screwed shut.

LISA
I can't. I can't look. Mum can you?

JANE hops off her seat and goes behind the curtain.

JANE
My G-d.

LISA
(panicky)
What? What is it?

JANE
That is amazing.

LISA opens her eyes and looks down. Then exhales.

LISA
Shit.

She looks up at the CONSULTANT.

LISA (CONT'D)
There's hardly any scarring.

From the other side of the screen:

PETE
Do I get a look?

On LISA, slightly nervous. JANE squeezes her hand. PETE pops his head around the curtain. On LISA, scanning his face for a reaction. After a long moment -

LISA
(vulnerable)
Say something. Better or worse than you were expecting?

PETE
I had been gearing up for some kind of heinous purple X shaped gash with bruising all around it and stitches poking out, surrounded by crusty blood. So I'm a bit disappointed.

He comes over and kisses LISA on the cheek with a smile, reassuring her that it's all OK.

PETE (CONT'D)
(to LISA, as if there were no-one else in the room)
Looks great.

She squeezes his hand. The NURSE hands LISA a gown.

CONSULTANT
There's an implant in there which will need to be pumped up slowly with saline.

NURSE

It'll be inflated gradually over
the next few weeks.

LISA

So I'll have two roughly equal
sized knockers for Jamie's wedding.

CONSULTANT

That's what we're aiming for.

NURSE

Meanwhile, this elegant garment
will hold the prosthetic.

She holds up a particularly horrible grannyish bra.

NURSE (CONT'D)

No matching pants you'll be
delighted to hear.

The CONSULTANT leads PETE and JANE back towards his desk as
the NURSE helps LISA put the bra on, with the spongy
prosthesis inside. LISA smiles, appreciative of the work
done, pulls her top on then comes and sits down next to PETE
and JANE. She takes PETE's hand, happy.

CONSULTANT

Now. We managed to have a closer
look at the nature of the tumour.
It's more hormone receptive than we
thought.

LISA

OK.

CONSULTANT

It's also more aggressive.

LISA doesn't say anything but the smile starts to fade.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

That means we have to move fast on
the chemo, so I've referred you to
an oncology colleague to discuss
the treatment plan.

What remains of the smiles freeze on their faces.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

Chemo can stop your ovaries working
for a while, so normally we'd refer
someone of your age to a fertility
specialist to explore the
possibility of freezing embryos.

LISA and PETE can see the bad news coming.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

In your case, that isn't something I would advise. A course of IVF relies on pumping you full of oestrogen and that might accelerate the cancer.

A blink. LISA is slow to adjust.

LISA

(shocked)

So I can't. I can't...

On JANE, looking down at her lap, obviously shocked and upset but trying to hide her feelings.

CONSULTANT

I'm afraid it could be dangerous for you to try.

CUT TO:

30 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. HALL / LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 7.** 30

LISA, PETE and JANE let themselves into the empty house. The two of them stand there, winded, as we catch sight of their wedding photograph in the background.

JANE

(jaunty)

Right I'll piss off and give you two some space but mind I'll be back out in time for Coronation Street.

She gives LISA a perky pat on the arm and heads for the spare room.

CUT TO:

31 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. SPARE ROOM. NIGHT 7.** 31

As soon as JANE closes the door, the facade drops. The awfulness of the news is written all over her face.

CUT TO:

32 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. NIGHT 7.** 32

Later, in bed that night, LISA and PETE are lying side by side, holding hands, still wearing the same expression. We stay on them as they lie there in silence.

CUT TO:

33 **INT. HAIRDRESSERS. DAY 8.** 33

The snip snip snip of the scissors. The hairdresser is cutting off LISA's hair. As he cuts, LISA is looking in the mirror, blank-faced, struggling to digest this latest news.

LISA (V.O.)
(glazed)
The no kids clause.

CUT TO:

34 **EXT. STREET. DAY 8.**

34

It's early in the morning and PETE is going to work. He strides past the odd PARENT walking his or her CHILD to school. Walking through London, they and all other pedestrians would usually be invisible to him, but today that isn't the case. PETE's face registers very little, but we can tell he is aware - and slightly pained by - walking through all of these people in school uniforms.

CUT TO:

35 **INT. HAIRDRESSERS. DAY 8.**

35

The hairdresser is cutting LISA's hair short. There's the sense that as all this is happening to her, she needs to keep fixed on her reflection, to try amidst all the changes to recognise herself.

LISA (V.O.)
I didn't see that one coming.

CUT TO:

36 **INT. PETE'S OFFICE. DAY 8.**

36

PETE gets into work. He drops his bag at his desk and then goes over to the kitchenette and turns on the kettle. He's in his own private world, a million miles away from here.

CUT TO:

37 **INT. HAIRDRESSERS. DAY 8.**

37

LISA is still looking in the mirror. The haircut is well underway now.

LISA (V.O.)
But dwelling any further on it
right now would be a bit like
crying over conceding a penalty
when you're already ten nil down.

Her hair is falling all about her. Suddenly we notice she's starting to cry. Silently at first - the hairdresser doesn't even notice. By the time we see GABBY's reflection in the mirror - she's coming back with two cups of coffee - LISA is in floods of tears.

GABBY
(to the HAIRDRESSER)
Can we just?

The HAIRDRESSER steps away - he hadn't even noticed.

HAIRDRESSER
(feeling bad, thinking
it's the hair)
It's not finished.

LISA gets up and GABBY hugs her, doesn't stop hugging her.

CUT TO:

38

EXT. HAIRDRESSERS. DAY 8.

38

LISA and GABBY are sitting on a bench outside the hairdressers, holding their coffees, in peaceful silence. LISA has stopped crying. GABBY remains quiet until LISA is ready to talk. Eventually -

LISA
Sorry.

GABBY
Can you stop saying sorry!

LISA shakes her head.

LISA
I don't know what's wrong with me.

GABBY
Well we do know what's wrong with you.

A small mirthful sound escapes from LISA - half sniff half sob half laugh.

GABBY (CONT'D)
Plenty of us won't have kids of our own you know. Not even plenty - probably half. Half of us won't. We'll end up leaving it too late to get off the starting blocks.

LISA
D'you ever think that if we'd stayed up in Derby we'd be onto our third?

GABBY
Yeah but why spend your twenties doing that when you could be getting shit-faced and staggering around London in high heels trying to find a taxi who'll go South of the river?

LISA smiles.

GABBY (CONT'D)
The only thing that matters is that you're here.

LISA nods, knowing she's right. Then something passes over her face.

LISA
It's just Pete.

She can't say anymore, just makes a gesture that indicates she means she's upset for him.

GABBY
I always thought he was a bit of a
cocky twat but you seemed to like
him.

It's well-intentioned but LISA doesn't smile. Eventually -

GABBY (CONT'D)
(softer)
You know the only kind of life he's
particular about is one with you.

CUT TO:

39 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. NIGHT 8.** 39

LISA comes back to the house with a new bob haircut. She enters gingerly, self-conscious as she looks at PETE. But from the way PETE looks at her, we can tell that everything GABBY said about the way he feels about her was right.

CUT TO:

40 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM / HALL. DAY 9.** 40

MONTAGE

- LISA is applying make-up in front of the mirror.

LISA (V.O.)
I've spent as long as I can
remember wishing I looked
different. As a kid, I loathed my
super-curly, strawberry-blonde
(okay, ginger) hair. I was hardly
blessed with a good set of gnashers
either. Best to use the words of my
Dad, who chose his father-of-the-
bride speech to announce that I had
'teeth like Ronaldinho'. And ever
since, it's been everything from my
enormous thighs and wobbly arms to
fat fingers and weird feet.

- LISA carefully moving aside Jamie's wedding cocktail dress and throwing open her wardrobe doors.

LISA (V.O.)

I wish I had the chance to go back
to my 13/14/15-year-old self, give
her a good shake and tell her
not to be so bloody self-conscious.

LISA emerges into the hall, finally ready to go. She looks amazing. Stunning. Like the most glamorous not-at-all-sick-looking sick person you've ever seen. PETE, who's been waiting for her, smiles a "you are hot" smile at her, then he holds the door open and they exit, closing the flat door behind them.

CUT TO:

41 **INT. HOSPITAL. RECEPTION. DAY 9.**

41

On LISA's elegant heels as she strides past the huge Oncology sign to the reception desk.

LISA

I'm Lisa Lynch. I'm here to start
chemo.

The woman behind the desk looks at her with not very well-hidden surprise, then lifts the phone.

PETE

(pretending to be the
woman)

Hello security to reception please.
We've got an impostor.

CUT TO:

42 **INT. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR. DAY 9.**

42

A set of automatic doors open, revealing LISA and PETE with a nurse. This is MARY the chemo nurse, early thirties, Northern Irish. LISA and PETE follow her down a corridor towards the chemo room. LISA's nerves are palpable.

MARY

It's not a day spa. But it's not
gonna be as bad as youse are
expecting.

A moment of trepidation on LISA and PETE's faces as MARY pushes open the door.

CUT TO:

43 **INT. HOSPITAL. CHEMO ROOM. DAY 9.**

43

The room is full of WOMEN, sitting at little chemo 'stations' - they're like business class plane chairs - from which the patients are wired up to an IV stand with the contents of various IV bags going into their veins.

All ages, all races, all classes, all states are represented here. ONE or TWO WOMEN are puffy-faced and steroid-bloated.

Others looks like they've got no reason to be there at all. WOMEN read magazines, some read novels, one does her knitting. LISA is the youngest, but there is one late-thirties GLAMOROUS PARISIAN, chattering away on a Blackberry in French - clearly a business call - and wearing a Hermes scarf. LISA stands on the threshold, trying to take it all in.

LISA
Is everyone...?

MARY
Monday's breast. Tuesday's
testicular. Thursday's ovarian.

MARY beckons them to a 'station'. LISA sits down.

MARY (CONT'D)
(reading her chart)
You've got six rounds.

LISA nods, apprehensive.

LISA
Is that a lot?

MARY
(reassuring)
No, that's normal. And you're
young and you can take it.

Something no-nonsense but reassuring about this woman. She starts hanging up the bag of red fluid to be administered.

MARY (CONT'D)
Chemo really does zap the bugger.
The trouble with it is it zaps
everything else as well.

CUT TO:

44 INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BATHROOM. DAY 9. 44

LISA throwing up. Eyes watering. Feeling horrendous. Not ordinary puking but scary, relentless puking.

PETE, JANE and IAN, all aware of LISA's suffering but totally helpless, hang around or pace outside the door.

CUT TO:

45 INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. DAY 9. 45

LISA in bed. Shivery. Frightened. This was not what she expected. Her skin is grey and she has dark smudges under her eyes. She looks like she's been poisoned. She can tell from the way her family are looking at her how bad she must look.

JANE

I'm wondering whether it might have been something you ate.

Everyone looks at JANE, speechless. And even through the hell that she's in, LISA's eyes register the absurdity of that comment.

CUT TO:

46

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BATHROOM. DAY 10.

46

On LISA, looking like she's had one hell of a week of side-effects.

LISA (V.O.)

The nausea they tell you about.
And the bone pain. The fatigue.
The shivers. They even give you
the heads up about the acne. But
no one warns you about the toll
that cancer treatment's going to
take on your arse.

Pull out to reveal that LISA is typing this blog entry on the toilet. She hits 'post' and the date 30.06.08 appears on-screen.

CUT TO:

47

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 10.

47

In the living room, PETE is watching Wimbledon. The thwack thwack of the tennis ball is interrupted by -

LISA (O.S.)

(calling out)

Pete.

PETE

(thinking she wants the
score)

It's 40/30 to Murray. 2 sets all.

LISA (O.S.)

Can you come here?

PETE

(standing)

Amazing. You've had all day to
move your bowels and now it's match-
point.

The click of the lock as LISA emerges, handing a slightly grossed out PETE the laptop.

PETE (CONT'D)

Are we not flushing now?

LISA
There's nothing to flush.

PETE
(almost impressed)
Unbelievable.

LISA
(excited)
Look. Someone's written to me.

CUT TO:

48

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 10.

48

LISA and PETE sit at either end of the couch as LISA reads aloud to PETE from her laptop.

LISA (V.O.)
Dear Lisa. I like your blog - it's funny and no shit. It's true - the steroids make your ass harder to crack than the Da Vinci code. I'm 25, I live in Brighton, though originally from Toronto. I'm a jazz pianist -

She turns the computer round to him and shows him a YouTube type video of a funky-looking girl - black hair, black glasses, Ghost World type - playing amazing jazz piano. This is Anya.

PETE
Cool.

LISA
(resumes reading)
And I have secondary breast cancer. Want to know the single best gift you can buy for a cancer patient? A giant sized tub of Sudocrem.

PETE
What's Sudocrem?

LISA Googles it.

LISA
(reading)
Sudocrem is a thick white barrier cream used for...nappy rash.

PETE
Nice.

LISA
Which helps keep your skin lubricated to prevent chafing.

PETE

Want me to go and/(pick some up)?

A strange look passes LISA's face. Before she can answer LISA bolts to the loo and slams the door.

CUT TO:

49

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. EVENING 10.

49

PETE is making a sandwich. A voice from the loo.

LISA (O.S.)

Pete?

PETE

Yeah?

LISA (O.S.)

Can you get me something from the kitchen?

Beat. She's in the toilet. What could she possibly...?

LISA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Can you get me the olive oil?

PETE looks at their various oils and vinegars. Equivocates between extra virgin and non. Then he grabs one and delivers it outside the bathroom door.

Beat.

LISA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Go away now.

PETE

I'm going.

LISA's hand appears and whips the bottle inside.

As PETE walks away we hear a flush.

He grins, picks up the TV remote and raises the volume on the tennis so that LISA emerges from the bathroom to the wild applause of a Wimbledon crowd.

CUT TO:

50

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. NIGHT 10.

50

LISA and PETE are in bed. The dress for JAMIE's wedding is visible, hanging up on the wardrobe as usual.

LISA

What should I say?

PETE lowers his book and looks at her.

LISA (CONT'D)

To that girl who wrote to me. I
want to write back.

PETE snuggles down next to her.

PETE

Dear...

LISA

Anya.

PETE

Dear Anya. At seven thirty three
pm British summertime I filled the
pan to the delight of the Wimbledon
crowd.

LISA

Pete.

PETE

Alright alright. Dear Anya.
Thanks for your message. It
lightened the load.

She rolls her eyes at him.

LISA

Never mind.

PETE

No wait. Dear Anya. Thank you for
the message. My husband says it's
the first time he's seen me smile
all week.

CUT TO:

51

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. HALL/KITCHEN. DAY 11.

51

A few weeks later. LISA is pale and tired but still has her
hair and her 'verve'.

PETE

I don't have to go.

LISA

You do. It's been weeks and
they've been amazing.

PETE is on their doorstep. LISA is inside. He's dressed for
work but is clearly reluctant to go.

PETE

I can get back here in twenty five
minutes.

LISA

Go.

PETE

Under twenty five minutes.

LISA

Go! Someone's got to keep me in handbags and iTunes while I'm sat here on my arse.

PETE

(guilty, worried)

Right. See you later.

He kisses her. They kiss a bit more. They're incredibly close, having spent so much time together, it's difficult to part.

LISA

Seriously piss off now.

He puts a hand up to wave goodbye.

When LISA closes the door, we can see her real feelings - nervous and weirded out to be on her own. She doesn't know what to do with herself, at home in the middle of the day. As she paces in the kitchen, we can see the mostly empty fridge calendar behind her.

LISA (V.O.)

Well it's all go around these parts. I'm on a break between chemo and Pete's gone back to work. So today I plan to make a sandwich and put on some mascara. These, ladies and gentlemen, are big moves in my world.

CUT TO:

52 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 11.**

52

LISA is curled up on the couch with her computer, typing.

LISA (V.O.)

My Dad has taken to watching the blog in real time and ringing me any time somebody writes.

CUT TO:

53 **INT. IAN'S OFFICE. EVENING 11.**

53

It's the end of the day and the lights are going out elsewhere in the building, but IAN is still in his office, absorbed by the comments on LISA's blog.

CUT TO:

54

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING 11.

54

LISA (V.O.)

I might try to act cool with him,
but the truth is that his
excitement when a new comment
appears is nothing on mine. Today
I failed to eat the sandwich and
wasn't arsed with mascara, but I
loved reading everything you wrote.

The sound of the door opening and PETE getting home. LISA waves from her perch on the couch and carries on typing. PETE looks utterly relieved to find her happy and occupied.

LISA (V.O.)

So, whatever it is you've said, or
if you're just reading and not
saying anything at all - thank you.
You've made an under-employed woman
with swollen joints and one missing
nipple very happy.

Satisfied, she hits 'post' and the date 07.07.08 appears on the screen.

CUT TO:

55

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY 12.

55

It's the weekend. PETE is cooking bacon and eggs, quite content in the kitchen. That is, til LISA comes in and hands him a hair-ball (from her head). He doesn't know how to react. He turns the hob off.

PETE

We knew this was going to happen.

LISA

Thanks that's helpful.

PETE

It's going to come out and then
it's going to grow back again.

LISA

(determined, in denial)
It might not. If I don't do
anything to dislodge it.

On PETE, not believing that this is going to be the case but not saying anything to contradict it. Understanding that this is what she needs to believe.

CUT TO:

56

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM / LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 12. 56

LISA is in bed, brooding. Reveal PETE, in the living room, discretely scraping LISA's fallen-out hair from the couch so it won't upset her.

He exits the room, and a moment later we hear the flush of the hair going down the loo. He's trying to be discrete. On LISA, knowing what he's doing.

LISA (V.O.)

My first reaction to diagnosis
Bullshit was about my hair. 'I'm
going to lose my hair'. Turns out
the pubes go first, but losing hair
you don't want doesn't make you any
more prepared to lose hair you do.
You get that it happens. But you
kind of don't really believe it's
going to happen to you.

CUT TO:

57

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. NIGHT 13.

57

A week later. LISA is in bed in a foetal position. She is clearly in a lot of pain and is markedly more ill-looking. Her hair is thin, her face is grey. She has dark smudges under her eyes. PETE comes in in his pyjamas and gets into bed. It's hard for him to see her in such pain. He looks at her for a moment then reaches out to her, putting a light hand on her waist.

LISA

(sounding frail)

I can't. I definitely can't. My
bones ache.

On Pete, horrified at being misunderstood.

PETE

I wasn't. I wasn't trying... I
was just...

He takes his hand away, feels helpless. LISA seems to intuit this. After a moment, she raises one agony hand. Puts it on him. It's what he wanted - it's of so much comfort. He misses her. He turns towards her and presses his face against her hair. Closes his eyes. The opens them again. Moves away.

LISA

What's wrong?

PETE

Nothing.

LISA

You're being weird. Just tell me.

PETE

Babe.

Beat.

PETE (CONT'D)

How long since you...?

LISA

Since I what?

PETE

Had a shower?

Beat.

LISA

A few weeks.

PETE

Right.

LISA

But I've been having baths.

She touches her head.

LISA (CONT'D)

Do you think I should wash it?

PETE

...Maybe. You might feel better.

On LISA, conflicted.

LISA

Does it smell?

PETE

(meaning 'yes')

No.

SHOWER sound, which continues over the next scene.

CUT TO:

58

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. NIGHT 13.

58

PETE has made the bedroom romantic, boudoir-like - by lowering the lights and lighting tea-lights around the room. He puts music on and seems excited for her to come out the bathroom and see how nice he's made it.

The shower sound stops. A moment, then LISA appears. She takes the towel off her head - to reveal hardly any hair left. There's hair all over her towel which she lets drop to the floor. On PETE, a flare of shock on his face which he tries to cover up.

PETE

Shit.

He springs off the bed and goes over and puts his arms around her.

PETE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

He feels terrible for telling her to have a shower. LISA just stands there, vulnerable and forlorn and stunned.

LISA
(rigid)
I couldn't take it out. It's all
in the/(drain)

PETE
/Shh. I'll get it. It's OK. It's
OK.

CUT TO:

59

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY 14.

59

LISA is sitting at the kitchen table in a hoodie, hunched, hood up, glowering. She looks markedly worse - the chemo is really changing her appearance.

LISA (V.O.)
In chemo 3 on Monday, Mary, my
favourite nurse, commented that I
looked 'very glam'. She should see
me now: I look like a smack-head.

The front door goes and PETE goes to answer it. Clearly this is all taking its toll on him cos he's knackered-looking. It's ABIGAIL. She comes in, takes one look at her pissed off, sickly-looking friend and drops a "Jimmy wig" - a tartan hat with ginger hair attached - onto the table. LISA looks up at ABIGAIL.

ABIGAIL
Why not? Everyone knows you're not
a natural blonde.

CUT TO:

60

INT. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR. DAY 14.

60

LISA and ABIGAIL are on a long corridor. LISA is still wearing the hoodie.

ABIGAIL
If only you had thought to complete
your new look with a skateboard.

Outside the unmarked door of what looks like a stationery cupboard, ABIGAIL knocks sharply. LISA - arms crossed, teenagerish and sulky - looks reluctant to proceed.

WIG MAN (O.S.)
Come in.

Too late. On LISA, nervous, as they open the door.

CUT TO:

61 INT. HOSPITAL. WIG ROOM. DAY 14.

61

The room is the size of a cupboard and has the air of a particularly poorly stocked and poorly ventilated public library. Except it's not books on the white plastic stands. It's wigs. Old-lady type acrylic wigs.

Suddenly, from behind the counter, a man pops up. He is bald. Not a hair on his head. A pair of thick black glasses seem only to accentuate his baldness.

On ABIGAIL, taking this in. She addresses him with some hostility or suspicion, like he can't be real, like he must be taking the piss.

ABIGAIL

Hello.

WIG MAN

Hello.

LISA

(sulky, adolescent, arms
crossed)

I need a wig.

She reaches into her bag and tosses something on the counter.

LISA (CONT'D)

I've got some vouchers.

WIG MAN

Well why don't you have a browse,
or if you'd like me to I can
recommend something that might suit
you.

The fact of his baldness injects a ridiculousness into the offer. LISA is starting to cheer up. She and ABIGAIL share a discrete smile.

WIG MAN (CONT'D)

(oblivious)

There's Annabel over there. She's
popular.

He gestures to a wig on a stand. ABIGAIL emits what sounds like a cough but LISA recognises it as a stifled laugh. WIG MAN carries on, oblivious.

WIG MAN (CONT'D)

Heather, she's also pretty. Or you
could have a bash with Jacqueline.
Unless you think she might be a bit
too severe.

It's too much for ABIGAIL who honks with laughter. LISA grabs her arm -

LISA
Sorry. Sorry.

- and pulls her out the door.

CUT TO:

62

INT. HOSPITAL. CORRIDOR. EVENING 14.

62

As soon as they're in the corridor again, ABIGAIL explodes.

ABIGAIL
The baldness. The Annabel.

LISA
(happier)
Let's go.

LISA links her arm through ABIGAIL's and they move along the corridor as fast as LISA's legs will go.

CUT TO:

63

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. EVENING 14.

63

The sound of PETE getting home.

LISA
You're cheerful.

PETE
Am I? No I'm not.

LISA
(moody)
How was work?

PETE
(lying)
...Dull.

He's trying to tell her what she wants to hear.

PETE (CONT'D)
How was it?

LISA
Great.

She's sitting at the kitchen table, still in the hoodie, grumpy again.

PETE
Let's see it then.

LISA
I didn't get one.

PETE

Why not?

LISA

Cos the 65 quid NHS wig budget gets you a number in acrylic that might just about do for a dressing up box but that's it. I got some headscarves.

PETE

(brightly)

OK.

LISA

From the Mystic Meg Spring Collection. But there's obviously no way I am going to Jamie's wedding looking like they've hired me to do a spot of palmistry.

LISA's mobile rings. PETE answers it, pleased for the break from a frustrating conversation.

PETE

(to LISA)

It's your Dad.

We intercut as necessary between LISA at the kitchen table and IAN and JANE outside their house in Derby.

64

EXT. LISA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. DERBY. EVENING 14.

64

IAN

(into his mobile)

How many are you up to now?

They're coming down to London so IAN is loading the car and JANE is locking up the house.

LISA (V.O.)

How many what?

IAN

Comments. I checked before I left work and you had six.

LISA (V.O.)

(smiling, finding him sweet)

Still six.

JANE takes the phone as IAN hoists the suitcase into the boot.

JANE

Who's Planktonite, Lis?

LISA (V.O.)

I don't know Mum.

So this was what he meant by 'taking her out'. PETE pushes the door, accompanied by an old-fashioned tinkle which pisses LISA off. LISA, reluctantly, follows.

CUT TO:

66

INT. POSH WIG SHOP. EVENING 14.

66

A super stunning shop assistant - that's helpful - emerges from the back. Wigs everywhere. Much nicer ones than the ones we've seen.

PRETTY WIG SHOP GIRL
How can I help you?

LISA
(deadpan)
Can I have a pot of cottage cheese
and a large jar of olives.

PRETTY WIG SHOP GIRL flounders.

PETE
(having none)
She's joking. Could we just have a
look around?

PRETTY WIG SHOP GIRL
Right. Of course. All our wigs
are made with human hair. For a
more natural look.

LISA
(quietly)
Til you put them on your head.

Gingerly LISA approaches the wig that looks most like her original hair. Just as she's starting to acclimatise -

PRETTY WIG SHOP GIRL
No need to worry about getting your
roots done.

LISA turns around. She wants to stab her.

PETE
We'll just...

PETE leads LISA to the other side of the shop.

LISA
(looking at wig labels)
Caroline. Harriet. Suzanne.

PETE
(looking at the price
tags)
Bloody hell.

The wigs are £500, £600 each.

LISA
Endeavour. Excalibur.

PETE
Is there one called Extortionate?

LISA
There's one called Ominous.
Amazing.

PRETTY WIG SHOP GIRL
Ominous is pretty directional.

LISA has a 'are you fucking kidding me?' look on her face. Another shop assistant - a young gay guy - swoops in to avert disaster.

WIG GUY
(to his colleague)
Thanks Erin.

She disappears. He takes over.

WIG GUY (CONT'D)
It's good to start by looking for something that's most like your real hair. You've got a great face so most of them will suit you. Try on whatever you like. There's a fitting room just behind me.

LISA, still uncertain, but with slightly more confidence, returns to the wig that looks most like her real hair. She picks it up and with no great enthusiasm, takes it over to the fitting room.

PETE is browsing other wigs, poking them with a finger, adjusting to their strangeness, when LISA steps out of the fitting room with the wig on.

LISA
(to PETE)
What do you think?

PETE turns around. She looks different. Very different. She looks like someone with a wig on - and she can read that immediately on PETE's face.

LISA touches the wig self-consciously, avoids any more eye-contact with PETE then returns to the dressing room. On PETE, who realises immediately that he's fucked up.

WIG GUY
(trying to help)
It'll feel a bit strange to begin with but if you take it to your hairdresser you can have it trimmed into your own cut.

LISA gets ready hurriedly, pissed offedly.

PETE
(trying to pull it back)
Babe. Did you want to try
something else?

CUT TO:

67 **EXT. WIG SHOP. EVENING 14.**

67

Outside the shop, PETE is trying to flag down a cab. LISA stands holding two boxes like she's being weighed down by them. She watches 'normal' GIRLS her age pass her in the street, girls who are free and getting about their business, girls who don't have to spend their evenings like this.

LISA (V.O.)
(angry)
Yes. I do want to try something
else. A pair of Louboutins. Size
5. Black. Pigalle Patent. That's
what I want. That's what I saved
up for. Only now I'm having to
spunk the money on something that
makes me look like a member of
Spinal Tap.

CUT TO:

68 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. NIGHT 14.**

68

LISA is back at the kitchen table with computer and hoodie, pounding on the keys, taking her frustrations out on the laptop.

LISA (V.O.)
But I don't have a choice. I'm not
being a sideshow. I want Jamie to
have the best wedding ever and I'm
not rocking up looking like Uncle
Fester and ruining it all.

She hits 'post' and the date 08.08.08 appears on-screen. When she looks up she sees her parents outside the window - newly arrived from Derby - heading towards the house. JANE and IAN looked tired and strained but as soon as they see LISA looking at them, their expressions change - they paste up smiles and wave vigorously. It's an act - all an act - and they all know it.

CUT TO:

69 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. SPARE ROOM. NIGHT 14.**

69

In the spare room, two wigs are on wig holders. LISA, PETE, IAN and JANE stand on the threshold.

IAN
Don't feed them after midnight.

LISA
(sulky)
We can't feed them. We've got no
money left.

JANE
I'm transferring that money
straight into your account.

LISA
Mum.

IAN
Put it on then.

LISA
No.

IAN
You paid all that money to display
a syrup on a stand? You daft
bugger. Let's see it on.

LISA
No. You'll see it at Jamie's
wedding.

IAN
(putting his arm around
LISA)
You're a stubborn so-and-so do you
know that?

LISA
I have been told that, yes.

IAN
Luckily I wouldn't have you any
other way. Night Erika. Night
Colette. Don't fight.

He flicks the light off.

CUT TO:

69A

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 14.

69A

LISA is curled up on the couch under a blanket. IAN is there too. It's just the two of them. They're watching TV but LISA is pre-occupied and IAN knows it.

IAN
(trying to boost her)
You've nearly broken the back of
the chemo now. Halfway through.

He puts an affectionate hand on her ankle. Lisa broods.
It's like she hasn't even heard him. Eventually -

LISA

Dad. Did you get a fright when you saw me?

IAN

(it's obviously true)
What makes you say that?

LISA

We've not seen each other for a couple of weeks and I just thought, y'know I look different -

IAN

(moving closer to her)
Don't be daft. Course I didn't get a fright. You're you. I just saw you.

He takes her hand and huddles up next to her on the couch. Tears shine in his eyes but he's determined not to show her. LISA tries to concentrate on the TV but in her peripheral vision, we see the wedding photograph - her and PETE, on that amazing day, looking very in love and very attracted to each other. The seeds of doubt...

CUT TO:

70 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 15.** 70

The house is empty but in the living room, there's a "LAST DAY OF CHEMO" banner hanging across one wall. Flowers everywhere. On the floor, some balloons.

CUT TO:

71 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BATHROOM. NIGHT 15.** 71

LISA, wig-less, in the bath, looking worse than she's ever looked.

A cursor appears on-screen, as though LISA was about to compose a blog post. The cursor flashes for a moment and then disappears. She's just not up to it.

CUT TO:

72 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 15.** 72

PETE sitting on the couch among the banner, balloons and flowers. It's a beautiful summer evening outside. He looks knackered and miserable. Suddenly -

LISA (O.S.)
(shouting, distressed)
Pete. Pete.

PETE springs up, runs to the bathroom. The door's locked so he kicks it open, busts the lock.

In the bath, LISA is slumped to one side, with no strength.

LISA (CONT'D)
(sobbing with exhaustion)
I can't get out.

PETE
(kneeling down to comfort
her)
It's OK. It's OK.

Then he gets up and pulls her out of the bath. He carries her to their bedroom, covered in a towel. She can't make eye-contact with him. Distressed, and ashamed, at being this vulnerable.

LISA lies on the bed, dead-eyed while PETE looks through some drawers.

Then he comes over to the bed and hands her the sick person's pyjamas. On LISA, quietly devastated as she registers what this symbolises.

CUT TO:

73

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM / KITCHEN. DAY 16. 73

A few days later. The banner is still there but the balloons are deflating and the flowers have mostly died and been removed. LISA is lying on the couch with her laptop on her knee. Sweatpants and hoodie. She looks horrendous.

LISA (V.O.)
Cancer is an attention-seeking,
party-pooing bitch. It takes over.
It takes your hair, your
confidence, your social life, your
immune system, your figure (the
least it could do is make you
thin), your energy, your tastebuds,
your sense of smell, your sex life.
And just when you think it's done
as much as it possibly can, it
takes away your chance to celebrate
cos after six hideous rounds of
chemo, you just don't feel like
bouncing back into life as it was
before. I want to pick myself up,
dust myself down and write
something uplifting. G-d knows
that's probably what everyone
around me expected, and definitely
deserved. But more than wanting
what I write here to be uplifting,
I want it to be honest. And the
honest truth is, at the end of
treatment it feels like there's as
much to mourn as there is to
celebrate.

The date 08.10.08 appears on-screen as PETE comes in in a wedding suit.

PETE
Is this alright still? I thought
it might need altering before the
weekend.

He's a bit self-conscious in it - tucking himself in,
thinking it's gotten a bit tight round the waist etc. LISA
doesn't look up.

PETE (CONT'D)
Lis.

LISA glances up at him and all she can see is her gorgeous
husband looking gorgeous in his wedding suit.

LISA
You look like Ron Burgundy.

PETE
Shit. Do I?

He glances in the mirror unhappily then spins back around to
her, trying to cheer her up.

PETE (CONT'D)
"You stay classy, San Diego".

Zero impact. He comes and sits down.

PETE (CONT'D)
Let's see your outfit.

LISA
You've seen it. It's been on a
hanger in the bedroom for four
months.

PETE
Have you got tights?

LISA
(arsey)
Why are you asking me about tights?

PETE
Cos your mum called, she says
she'll get them for you if you let
her know what 'denier'/(it is you
want)

LISA
(snapping)
/I don't need tights.

She's goading him and he's pissed. Is he going to snap? He
goes to the kettle. Puts it on.

PETE

Babe. I just think you should try the dress on, check you've got what you need before we go.

LISA

Why? Why would I want to do that? If you - if either of you - think having the right denier tight is going to make the slightest difference to how I look on the day... I know what I'm going to look like. I'm going to look like a cancer patient!

She gets up, exits and slams the door, taking her laptop with her.

CUT TO:

74

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. DAY 16.

74

The dress for JAMIE'S wedding hangs from the wardrobe. Pull out to reveal a bloated, bald, exhausted LISA lying on the bed, looking at the dress like it was her shiny gold nemesis.

LISA (V.O.)

I used to be chirpy and have manners. Now I'm some tetchy bitch who shouts at her husband. Of all the cancer side effects I'd expected, what I hadn't bargained for was it turning me into a horrible person.

CUT TO:

75

INT. PETE'S OFFICE. DAY 16.

75

PETE is at his desk, looking deflated, as a COLLEAGUE passes.

COLLEAGUE

Massive one?

PETE

What makes you say that?

COLLEAGUE

You look knackered mate.

On PETE, registering that he just doesn't have a clue.

PETE

Lisa's not really up to going out at the minute so.

A flare of embarrassment on the guy's face.

COLLEAGUE

Sorry. That was a bit...of me.

PETE
(weary)
No no not at all.

A long awkward pause as the COLLEAGUE lingers, trying to transcend his earlier mistake and connect with him.

COLLEAGUE
I've been having a look at the blog
you know rather than ask you all
the time cos that gets a bit...you
know.

The guy is insanely awkward but well-meaning. PETE nods, smiles anaemically.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)
She's a brilliant writer. It's
good that she's got an outlet.

On PETE, nodding, but the COLLEAGUE seems to pick something up.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)
What are you doing to let off
steam?

On PETE, exhaling heavily, thinking about it but not knowing how to answer. Maybe it's the first time he's been asked. Eventually -

PETE
I boil the kettle.

COLLEAGUE 1
(thinks he's joking)
What?

PETE
No that's what I do. I boil the
kettle. I put the kettle on about
twenty times a day. And there's
probably a ten to one ratio - of
boiling it to pouring it out - and
then the same again for pouring it
out to actually drinking it. So
basically every time I put the
kettle on there's only like a one
in a hundred chance someone will
actually have a cup of tea.

The COLLEAGUE realises that PETE's going quietly mad.

CUT TO:

76

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM / BATHROOM. DAY 16.

76

On LISA, the outfit complete, the make-up complete, the wig on, stands in front of the mirror. She looks at herself. Not bad.

This is the best it's going to get and it's taken ages but she's satisfied. She picks up her iPhone and snaps a picture which she then publishes to her blog.

Relieved, even slightly pleased, LISA pulls the wig off, puts it on the stand and splashes her face with cold water. She rubs her eye - an eyelash. Then rubs again - a couple more fall out in her hand.

LISA lets out a squall of pure frustration, kicks something and dissolves into tears.

CUT TO:

77

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT 16.

77

The sound of the key in the lock. PETE comes in and sees LISA, asleep under a blanket on the couch, tired out. He looks at her tenderly, hating seeing her so unwell.

Then he notices the television. On mute, his and LISA's wedding video is playing.

On the screen: LISA, standing in her wedding dress, with IAN. She looks beautiful and so happy and excited, waving her arms around, laughing one moment and serene the next. IAN is looking proud, bantering with someone. Then the doors open and we see PETE, turning round and seeing her, grinning at the very bottom of the aisle.

PETE just stands there, totally absorbed by what's on the screen.

Then a sound, a kind of snuffle, as LISA wakes up. She turns around - and her face is covered in black mascara like she's been crying.

PETE

What's wrong? What's happened?

LISA

(starting to cry)

I can't do this. I can't.

PETE

What? What can't you do?

LISA

(in a whisper)

Anything. Any of it.

PETE holds her and shhhses her.

PETE

Let's wait til tomorrow. You might feel differently.

LISA

I'm not going to feel any different. Every day's the same. It doesn't matter what I do.

LISA is crying again.

LISA (CONT'D)
It's so ugly Pete. I don't
recognise myself. Some mornings.
I don't want to wake up.

This is hard for PETE to hear.

LISA (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
And I'm jealous. Of everyone in a
park or in a pub or at work; I'm
jealous of Gabby, of Abigail, of
anyone who's out there getting on
with their lives while mine's on
hold.

LISA is quieter now, ashamed.

LISA (CONT'D)
But most of all I'm jealous of
Jamie. Cos him and Leanne get to
have the happiest day of their
lives while you and me we get less
than two years of being normal, of
being happy; of me being remotely
desirable to you before you have to
become my carer.

PETE
Where d'you get the idea that I
stopped finding you desirable?

LISA
It's obvious.

PETE
It can't be obvious cos it isn't
true.

Eventually -

LISA
The pyjamas.

PETE
What pyjamas?

LISA
That night you had to carry me out
of the bath. You gave me the sick
person pyjamas. That's how you see
me.

PETE
I gave you those pyjamas cos they
were the only one's that were
clean!

(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)

Cos your good for nothing husband
got behind with the laundry.

This should feel like an acknowledgment of how tough the last
few weeks have been for him too.

PETE (CONT'D)

Any other evidence?

He climbs onto the couch beside her, and for a moment their
attention is caught by the wedding video. Eventually -

LISA

(small voiced, off the
wedding video)
Why would you?

PETE

That was one day. It was awesome.
It was a party. People got drunk.
They danced. It was brilliant.
And it was one day. It didn't make
me feel like we were going to have
a fairytale life.

LISA snorts at the understatement of the year.

PETE (CONT'D)

OK I didn't expect this either but
that's what the vows are for and I
never would have stood there saying
them if I wasn't up for it. And
for the record I fancy the arse off
of you - wig on, wig off, hood up,
hood down, makes no difference -
but the way you're feeling I
haven't imagined you've been in the
mood for sex.

LISA

(small voice)
I'm not.

PETE

Right. So I'll wait. Cos you and
me, we're getting old together.
That's what I took from that day.
And that's happening. That's the
only thing I'm holding you to.

She puts her arms around him, sobbing again.

LISA

(muffled)
I don't want people to look at me.

PETE

Babe. Slightly embarrassing to have to point this out but they won't be looking at you. They'll be looking at Leanne.

LISA's tear-stained, slightly amused face looks up at him. Eventually -

LISA

Pete.

PETE

What is it darling?

LISA

My eyelashes are coming out.

PETE makes a mirthful sound. LISA looks at him.

PETE

(by way of explanation)

Of course they are! That's the Bullshit for you! They couldn't hang on another few days til after the wedding. What does that tell you?

On LISA, blank.

PETE (CONT'D)

That you are not the boss of this.

On LISA, pale and exhausted and frightened - that she isn't in charge, that she can't take control of this. PETE takes her hand then heads into territory that's usually out of bounds between them.

PETE (CONT'D)

(gently)

It's cancer. It's not going to bend to your iron will.

LISA

(devastated, like she's really taking it in for the first time)

I can't believe it.

PETE

I know.

He puts his arms around her.

PETE (CONT'D)

I know.

He can't believe it either. They sit there, arms around each other, neither believing it. When the hug ends, PETE looks at her and grins.

LISA

What?

PETE

(looking at her eye)
You've got one really cute one
clinging on at the side there.

LISA

(touches her face self-
consciously)
What d'you mean?

He holds her face. Her eyelashes are clumped together (through crying) which makes them look sparse in places. In one of those sparse places, there's one eyelash that seems to stand out.

PETE

He's proud is that one, he's lost
his mates but he's hanging in
there, on a solo mission.

Lisa can't help but cheer up a bit at how silly and cute he's being.

PETE (CONT'D)

I would kiss it. But I better not.
In case I dislodge it.

His taking the piss makes her laugh and it restores her. They lie side by side on the couch, clinging on, in this together, turned towards each other, ignoring the TV like it was screening the wedding video of two other people, two irrelevant strangers. LISA cuddles into PETE. Somehow acknowledging the seriousness of what is happening has helped.

CUT TO:

78

INT. TANNING SALON. DAY 17.

78

TANNING SALON WOMAN

Right young lady. Get those baps
out.

LISA is in Derby, pre-spray tan, reluctant to take off her dressing gown. Reveal JANE in the next booth along.

JANE

C'mon Lisa. Those two have seen
more tits than you've had hot
dinners.

TANNING SALON WOMAN

Tits? That's a first from you
Jane.

JANE

That's the Bullshit for you.

LISA is still reluctant to disrobe.

JANE (CONT'D)

Look at my raisins. You've got nothing to hide.

LISA removes the dressing gown. We see the breast - there's no nipple, just breast. LISA looks so vulnerable with it exposed.

TANNING SALON WOMAN

Bloody hell. Agnes come and look at this.

Another woman peeks over.

TANNING SALON WOMAN (CONT'D)

That is the best falsie I've ever seen. Thing of beauty.

LISA looks at her mum who smiles. The tanning salon women lift up their spray guns and fire.

CUT TO:

79

EXT. WEDDING. DAY 18.

79

LISA looks nervous but she and PETE are holding hands tightly. PETE looks a bit nervous too. PETE leads her inside.

LISA (V.O.)

It takes a gargantuan effort not to let the dark stuff surface. Cos it's there all the time. The joking and the smiling and the saying you're fine. It's acting. But soon the acting becomes the reality, cos you're so bloody determined to put out the right signals and come across a certain way.

The prospect of walking down the aisle to their seats feels a bit like running the gauntlet for LISA and we see her baulk. People already seated are looking at her. But then she catches sight of JAMIE at the altar. She holds on tightly to PETE'S hand and they start walking, shaky but steady. LISA keeps focused on JAMIE, and is determined to get to him. They reach their seats at the front. JAMIE comes over.

JAMIE

(tears in his eyes)
Hi fanny face.

LISA

Hi rent boy.

He knows what it's taken to get there. He hugs her for a moment too long, then goes and resumes his place. LISA and PETE sit down. Relieved to have kept her promise, and to have got there, LISA exhales. On her hand tightly entwined with PETE's. LEANNE starts to come down the aisle, and all eyes are on her. PETE smiles a "what did I tell you?" smile.

CUT TO:

80

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION. NIGHT 18.

80

IAN and JANE are dancing, to cheers and whistles.

On LISA and PETE, at their table. LISA is laughing at the sight of her parents showing off. JAMIE and LEANNE join IAN and JANE, doing rubbish but cute dancing as the dance-floor fills up. LISA watches, smiling, enjoying it, feeling under no pressure to join in. Then as the final chorus swells, without warning, LISA grabs PETE's hand and pulls him onto the floor.

PETE takes LISA in his arms and they dance among IAN and JANE and JAMIE and LEANNE - but it's like there's no-one else in the room. LISA isn't self-conscious - she's just totally focused on her husband. He twirls her around. JAMIE is sweaty and bouncing off the walls and mouthing the power ballad and the whole room is going off. But LISA is happy, serene, in this moment with PETE. They have that magical 'thing' that couples sometimes have that makes them stand out. Not because LISA has cancer or because she's wearing a wig or false eyelashes - they just have it, so people's eyes are drawn to them.

LISA

I did it.

JAMIE moonwalks past them as they carry on dancing.

LISA (V.O.)

I pulled it out of the bag for the sake of my brilliant brilliant brother.

CUT TO:

81

INT. HOTEL. CORRIDOR. NIGHT 18.

81

LISA is completely spent, having given it her all. PETE unlocks their hotel room. Then he turns to her, hoists her up into his arms, and carries her over the threshold.

PETE looks at her. Proud of her and in love with her. He whips the wig off her head and the door closes behind them.

LISA (V.O.)

I don't think I could have done it for anyone else.

CUT TO:

The next morning. The dining room is full of wedding guests from the day before, milling around chatting and going to the buffet. Among them, JANE, IAN, JAMIE and PETE.

LISA sits alone in a quiet corner. She is pale and exhausted and wears a head-scarf. She gave it absolutely everything at the wedding, and is now in the market for a quiet family breakfast, hence the choice of a tucked-away table.

As she waits for PETE to join her, LISA catches someone staring at her from another table. A woman, DIANE, in her mid-sixties, who is not just staring, but also now whispering something to her husband.

LISA touches her head-scarf and lowers her eyes. She glances over to the buffet but PETE is chatting to JAMIE and doesn't see her. She looks down at her plate and feels horrible.

DIANE

Excuse me.

LISA looks up and there's the staring woman, her husband beside her.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Are you Lisa Lynch?

Beat.

LISA

(worried)

Yeah?

DIANE

(elbows her husband)

Thank you.

LISA looks from the woman to her husband. She has no idea what's going on.

PETE is en route back from the buffet table with two plates, when JAMIE stops him.

JAMIE

Mate. Who are those two?

JAMIE gestures to LISA's table where the couple is now sitting on either side of her, the woman chatting away.

PETE

No idea. Were they not at the wedding?

IAN has come up behind them. Clearly this is a talking point at his table as well.

IAN

They're not ours and Leanne's not claiming them.

JAMIE, PETE and IAN look back at the scene that's unfolding at the table. The woman exuberant, LISA bemused but smiling. PETE goes over.

PETE

Alright.

LISA

This is my husband, Peter.

DIANE

(standing up)

Pete!

She shakes his hand then gives him a kiss. PETE reacts with polite surprise, shooting a look to LISA. LISA laughs.

LISA

Diane reads the blog.

DIANE

I recognised her.

(to her silent husband)

Didn't I?

There being no show without Punch, along comes JANE.

JANE

(protective, professional)

I'm Jane McFarlane, Lisa's mum.

DIANE

Of course you are. I recognised you and all, from the wedding photo you put up. That were a stunning hat you had on.

JANE

(struggling to get her head around these strangers having seen JAMIE's wedding pic, but pleased)

Thank you.

Now IAN has arrived and so have JAMIE and LEANNE. Easy conversation continues (tbw) between DIANE and the McFarlanes.

While all this is going on above their heads (only LISA and DIANE's husband are sitting), the previously silent husband talks to LISA.

HOTEL MAN

(deeply felt)

Our grandson's had it a year now. In his kidneys. I'm not on the computer but Scott's printed off some of it for me.

(MORE)

HOTEL MAN (CONT'D)

You think folk just use the internet for mucky pictures and booking holidays and remembering the name of some actor you've forgotten. Then suddenly you find something like this.

LISA is so moved by this quiet man sharing this with her. It never crossed her mind that what she's doing might have an impact on anyone else. Unusually, LISA is lost for words.

Suddenly IAN has joined in their conversation.

IAN

She's always been a writer hasn't she? I've always said you should write a book.

DIANE

Absolutely she should. Absolutely.

LISA looks up to see JAMIE, his eyes dancing with amusement.

JAMIE

Unbelievable.

LISA throws her hands up in the air, laughing. Because it is - unbelievable.

JAMIE keeps looking at his sister. He doesn't have the words and he doesn't need them - he manages to convey the depth of feeling to LISA without them. He is amazed by her, proud of her.

Meanwhile, DIANE has given her phone to a waitress for a group shot. Everyone huddles around LISA.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

(into Lisa's ear)

Twatclacker.

He kisses her cheek as the picture's taken.

CUT TO:

82AA

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. DAY 20.

82AA

Months later, as denoted by the calendar on the fridge and the length of her hair, which is now a short crop. Instead of chemotherapy appointments, as we're used to seeing, the boxes are full of references to radiotherapy (which have been crossed out as complete) and there's a box saying 'reconstruction #1' which has also been scored through.

LISA sits blogging at the kitchen table.

LISA (V.O.)

I've seen off six sessions of chemo, 28 sessions of radio and the first stage of a successful reconstruction. I might still be one nipple short of the pair, but I'm edging ever closer to leading a more normal life.

She hits post and the date comes up - 15.04.09. Then she looks over at the calendar at a box that says 'END OF TREATMENT' with a little finishing line drawn underneath.

CUT TO:

82AB **INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENT' ROOM. DAY 20.** 82AB

LISA and PETE sit nervously in front of the CONSULTANT.

CONSULTANT

There's no sign of cancer.

LISA exhales with exhausted relief. Hold on her and PETE, not talking, so relieved but also a bit traumatised by everything that has gone before.

CUT TO:

82AC **INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. DAY 20.**

82AC

LISA and PETE emerge from the CONSULTANT's office, a bit shell-shocked.

LISA (V.O.)

There's no sign of cancer. The most beautiful words in the English language.

They start to walk towards the door.

LISA (V.O.)

It doesn't mean I'm cured. I've got five years of pills to take before I can say I'm in remission. But it's enough to let us give the finger to the Bullshit in the best way we know how.

CUT TO:

82AD **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. DAY 20.**

82AD

The sound of the key turning in the lock, and back they come to their flat.

LISA (V.O.)

By pressing play on our lovely life again.

PETE shuts the front door and puts his arms around her. Part happy, part traumatised by everything that has gone on. It will take time to find normality again.

Hold on them as we fade up MUSIC.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

82A **INT. LISA'S OFFICE. DAY 21.** 82A

LISA returns to work, her hair a short crop . SARA hugs her for a long time. The odd person stares at her from the sidelines. Then LISA notices JACK, across the office talking to someone. He dodges eye-contact, carries on talking and avoids her.

82B **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY 21.** 82B

LISA stationed at the kitchen table, blogging away furiously (about this), while PETE makes dinner. She hits send (11.05.09) then COMMENTS from the blog 'erupt' onto the screen about LISA's treatment at work. The comments continue to scroll over the following scenes on a variety of topics, telling us that the blog now has a life of its own and is a forum to which all kinds of people come to air their views.

82C **INT. MEDICAL OFFICE. DAY 22.** 82C

LISA is sitting on a medical trolley, flipping through a 'catalogue' of nipple colours. There's a colour chart that is compared to the colour of the existing nipple (opposite side) to make sure there's a match. A COSMETIC ARTIST stands by with a tattoo gun and latex gloves on - exactly as you'd see in a real tattoo parlour. LISA is clearly finding the whole thing weird and amusing.

INSERT: a message from ANYA who inserts a Dulux paint chart into her comment and informs LISA that her own nipple shade is 'Raspberry Salsa - Matt'. CARRIE pops up (in photo form alongside her message) to declare 'Dusky Pink' followed by LAURA who reckons hers is 'Fawn'.

82D **INT. LISA'S OFFICE. DAY 23.** 82D

LISA gets a call on her mobile. Hears some exciting news. Stays on the phone as she goes onto Twitter - where we see she has over 5,000 followers. She clicks on the '@' tab - and sees that STEPHEN FRY has tweeted a link to her blog and called her 'funny and brilliant'. She looks stunned. [Cut to ABIGAIL here on the other end of the phone?]

82E **INT. LISA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. NIGHT 23.** 82E

IAN, JANE, JAMIE and LEANNE are all standing round the computer which is open to Stephen Fry's tweet.

Stunned and proud. Jamie shaking his head and laughing, cos this is typical LISA.

82F **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. DAY 24.** 82F

LISA continues blogging. Different day, different part of the house. She has a professional air about her now when she's writing. The blog has obviously become a huge part of her life, part of her "flow".

82G **INT. LITERARY AGENCY. DAY 25.** 82G

An amazed Lisa (in the Louboutins) signs up with a literary agency.

82H **OMITTED**MOVED TO POSITION 82IB. 82H

82I **INT. PUB. NIGHT 26.** 82I

Out with GABBY, SAM and ABIGAIL for LISA's 30th. LISA blows out the candles on her cake. PETE goes around pouring champagne into glasses for a toast. When he gets to Gabby, she covers her glass. On LISA, catching this moment and understanding what it means. A look passes between them that instantly confirms it. GABBY looks guilty. She's pregnant.

82IA **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. DAY 27.** 82IA

LISA blogging away at the kitchen table, totally absorbed, getting it all out.

82IB **INT. LISA'S FLAT. DAY 28.** 82IB

The first box arrives with The C Word books. LISA rips it open and picks up one of the copies. It has the 'funny and brilliant' Stephen Fry blurb on the front. Ecstatic. Incredulous. PETE is so so proud of her.

82J **OMITTED**MOVED TO POSITION 82IA 82J

82JA **INT. BOOKSHOP. DAY 29.** 82JA

Two sets of hands are busily replacing books in the 'Recommended' section with copies of The C Word. Reveal that it's LISA and JAMIE who are responsible for this. Soon their work is done - the entire bookshelf is full of LISA's book - and they leg it out the shop.

82K **INT. LISA'S OFFICE. DAY 30.** 82K

LISA presses out two Nurofen before the working day starts. Her computer isn't even on yet. She swallows with a glass of water. In the reflection on the blank computer screen, she looks worried, pre-occupied.

82L **INT. DERBY MATERNITY HOSPITAL. DAY 31.** 82L

JAMIE's a dad. He passes his baby COREY to his sister. She holds him, ecstatic, totally in love. One of the greatest moments of her life. (Nb. Her hair is now a short bob).

82M **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. NIGHT 32.** 82M

At home, PETE cooking. LISA pressing out another two Nurofen with her back to him, the slow beginnings of dread taking root.

82N **INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENTS' ROOM. DAY 32N.**

Another appointment with the familiar CONSULTANT who shakes both of their hands. LISA and PETE sit across the desk from him. We don't see him or hear what he says. Instead we hold on LISA and PETE, listening, and understand everything from their reaction. Unutterable devastation.

END OF MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

83 **INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE. WAITING ROOM. DAY 34.** 83

A month later. LISA and PETE sit in silence for a long time. They wait, not touching any of the magazines on the coffee table. LISA looks very different from any previous appointment. For the first time there's no make-up, no heels. A door opens and a small female THERAPIST, dark hair, smiles at them.

THERAPIST

Come in.

CUT TO:

84 **INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 34.** 84

The room has a desk, three chairs, lots of bookshelves.

LISA

This is my husband Pete.

The THERAPIST shakes PETE's hand. PETE and LISA sit down on two straight-backed chairs while the THERAPIST takes a seat behind her desk.

THERAPIST

How long have you been married?

LISA

5 years.

The THERAPIST nods.

THERAPIST

When were you diagnosed?

LISA

I found out I had breast cancer about a year and a half into our marriage. Then recently they told us it had come back.

She looks at PETE.

LISA (CONT'D)

It's in my bones and my brain. I'm having ongoing treatment to keep me alive as long as possible but there's nothing they can really do. That all happened about a month ago now, so I should really have had time to get used to the situation.

She sounds angry, bitter even in this self-reproach.

THERAPIST

Is it a situation anyone gets used to?

LISA looks at her. Promising for the first time. PETE starts to relax. Hopeful.

LISA

The pain is under control, but...it's everything else.

LISA is opening herself up here. Asking for help. PETE takes LISA's hand. They look at the THERAPIST. They NEED her to come up with something. The THERAPIST takes her time before replying.

THERAPIST

There are strategies for coping. For doing more than coping. One in particular, a technique called mindfulness, has been found to be particularly helpful.

LISA and PETE are gaining in confidence. Encouraged, they exchange a look. It definitely isn't as bad as they thought it'd be.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

We can talk about a few different approaches. But before that there's a book that I think that you'd both really benefit from reading.

She reaches into a drawer and places a book in front of them.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

It's called The C Word.

A beat.

The atmosphere changes immediately.

LISA looks at the THERAPIST. Is she being serious? On PETE, who can't quite believe this is happening. Suddenly all hope for the session seems to have evaporated.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

...What's wrong? What have I said?

She sees that neither of them are touching the book. LISA looks at PETE. PETE looks at LISA. He seems too stupefied to say a word. Eventually -

LISA
...I wrote it.

A long and excruciating moment as this registers on the THERAPIST's face.

THERAPIST
Oh. Lisa. Lisa Lynch.

She clearly feels horrendous.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. It really didn't occur to me.

Flustered, she takes the book back. As far as LISA and PETE are concerned, the appointment is already over.

CUT TO:

85 INT. CAR. DAY 34.

85

Windscreen wipers, even though the car is static. Each in their own world. Eventually -

PETE
(croaky, like he hasn't spoken for a while)
You have to laugh.

He doesn't sound like he finds it funny. LISA looks out the window, glazed. She feels totally alone.

CUT TO:

86 INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DUSK 34.

86

LISA stands by a bookcase. On a shelf, there are scores of copies of her book, The C Word, some of them in Dutch.

PETE comes in from parking the car. He catches LISA standing there, frozen. Her hands are trembling.

LISA
I can't be the flag-waver this time.

Her voice shakes in despair and anguish.

PETE
(voice muddy with grief)
You don't have to be. You don't have to be anything.

LISA
I can't be leader of the brigade.

PETE
There's help.

LISA emits a scornful sound.

PETE (CONT'D)
There's other stuff, not just her.
There's other things.

LISA shakes her head.

LISA
How can I be helped to 'come to
terms with it' when I can't even
believe it?

All the despair, the incredulity, the anguish is audible in
her voice.

LISA (CONT'D)
(crying, furious)
I can't accept it. I can't.

She's sobbing now.

LISA (CONT'D)
It's so unfair. It's just not
fair.

PETE, ashen-faced, can't even say the words. They've said
them before to each other but this time. He looks utterly
sickened. He holds LISA while she cries, too devastated and
punch-drunk yet himself to really respond.

CUT TO:

87

INT. PETE'S OFFICE. BOSS'S OFFICE. DAY 35.

87

PETE, dressed smartly in a tie, is addressing his BOSS. Hold
on him throughout the speech as he gets his words out. He
maintains eye-contact and gives an impeccable account of
himself.

PETE
You were eh really kind about
giving me time off and letting me
work from home, ahem, when Lisa was
ill but unfortunately-
(swallowing)
we're back where we were, cos it's
come back. And obviously I want to
spend as much time with her as
possible, while still being able to
support our family. I can't afford
not to work. So if I could be a bit
uh flexible again, that would be,
it would be hugely appreciated.

With a heroic effort, and absolute dignity, PETE makes his way to the end.

CUT TO:

88 INT. PETE'S OFFICE. CORRIDOR. DAY 35.

88

The lifts. The 'call' button is red. By the floor length window at the end of the corridor, PETE stands looking out over London. He can't believe it. He cannot fucking believe it. Suddenly he is sobbing, howling in absolute devastation. His BOSS emerges into the lift area and sees him. He goes to him and puts a hand on his shoulder, allowing him just to stand there without apology, without anything, and let himself cry.

CUT TO:

89 INT. HOSPITAL. CHEMO ROOM. DAY 36.

89

LISA is sitting in a chemo chair, but this chemo treatment is very different from the first time around. For one thing, the room is incredibly plush - LISA is sitting by a window in what looks like a Business Class plane chair, complete with personal video screen. [N.B. The liquid in the bag that's being administered is clear, not red].

But more noticeably different than the change in her surroundings is the change in LISA. No more going to chemo all done up and full of banter for the nurses. Today LISA is wan and visibly turned into herself. It looks like the fight has gone out of her. Not even fight - the very 'spark' that makes her her is missing. PETE sits beside her, also depleted. They look far apart, not being able to help each other.

Angle on IAN and JANE, who have just walked in the door. It is painful to see LISA and PETE like this, but they clearly resolve to approach them cheerfully.

IAN

First class in here. It'll be
bucks fizz and mixed nuts going
round in a minute.

LISA opens her eyes and looks at him, can hear the forced cheer in his voice.

LISA

They refurbished it since last
time. In case you were thinking my
shituation had got me an upgrade.

IAN sits down. A fleeting look between IAN and PETE communicates the mood that LISA is in. Bloody. Angry. Hopeless.

PETE takes his opportunity. There's something difficult to discuss and the presence of JANE and IAN might make it a bit easier.

PETE

I brought some of this stuff in today. Some of the stuff they give you. About what help there is.

PETE digs out a folder of papers and glances at IAN and JANE for encouragement.

PETE (CONT'D)

Support and stuff. Thought we could go through it.

No response from LISA, who carries on looking out the window, in her own world.

PETE (CONT'D)

(persisting)

There's so much we're entitled to. Some of it might be good. Physio, acupuncture and complementary therapies - whatever they are. Then there's Trinity.

LISA

(defensive)

Trinity? The hospice?

PETE

They've got art therapy and meditation and all sorts.

LISA

I don't want to talk about that now.

IAN

I don't think art therapy's for you, is it Lis? They'd be lucky to get a stick man out of you. Many talents but art's not one of them/

LISA

/I don't want to talk about going into a hospice.

JANE

No-one's talking about going in anywhere love. These are things you can do as a day patient. They're there if you want them.

LISA

Stop it. I'm not ready for this. Just stop it. Please.

LISA turns back to look out the window. It's unbearably painful for all of them. The overwhelming feeling is helplessness.

CUT TO:

90

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 37.

90

LISA and PETE are lying on separate couches. No communication between them. They may as well each be in a room on their own. They are turned away from each other, can't reach each other. They simply have no idea what to do. After a moment, PETE gets up and leaves the room, trudging, barely lifting his feet off the ground. Hold on LISA, knowing they can't go on like this, frightened to go on like this, and knowing that if anything is going to change, it's up to her.

CUT TO:

91

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE. CONSULTING ROOM. DAY 38.

91

Close on LISA, glowering.

THERAPIST (O.S.)
I'm glad you came back.

Reveal that LISA is back in the THERAPIST'S office. This time PETE isn't with her. LISA seems deeply, DEEPLY ambivalent to be there. It's an ambivalence that shades into resentment.

LISA
It was you or art therapy.

A very long time before the THERAPIST speaks. When she does, it's with an admirable warmth and candour.

THERAPIST
I recommend your book to pretty much everyone who comes in here. Almost on reflex.

LISA registers that this is her acknowledging the fuck up.

THERAPIST (CONT'D)
Because it's brilliant and funny and honest and I've seen it really help people.

It's bittersweet for LISA to hear this.

LISA
It's no use to me now though, is it? I wrote, for me, when I was going to get better. When I thought that all I had to do was just get through the treatment and I'd come out the other side. Cos so many people do. So many people survive.

She sounds like she still can't believe that she's one of the unlucky ones.

LISA (CONT'D)

Treatment's indefinite, now. It's not to change anything, that's not happening, it's just to keep me alive. I didn't have to have it. When they said it's come back, I could have just sacked the whole thing off. But I wanted to live. Obviously. Only at the moment it's not, it's not obvious. Cos I'm sitting there thinking why am I doing this? I would never say that to my family. Never. But I have to say it to someone so I'm saying it to you.

THERAPIST

You're angry.

No shit. But it helps LISA to have that acknowledged, and lets her 'uncork'.

LISA

I can't even go round the corner to get a can of Coke cos half way there it'll hit me and I'll panic. Just - the enormity of it.

She brushes away a tear.

LISA (CONT'D)

This thing has taken my independence and it's taken our optimism and our hopes and our tentative plans for the future and whatever it hasn't already taken, it one day will.

She wipes her eyes.

LISA (CONT'D)

But bloody hell, the grief has got to end somewhere.

CUT TO:

92

EXT. BATTERSEA PARK. DAY 39.

92

LISA and GABBY are going for a slow walk around the park. Their arms are linked and LISA is using a stick.

GABBY

You went back?

LISA nods.

GABBY (CONT'D)

And what happened?

LISA
I shouted and screamed and swore.

GABBY
(seeing a bench)
D'you want to sit down?

LISA
No I'm OK to keep going.

They carry on.

LISA (CONT'D)
She talked about mindfulness. This technique where you imagine that you're standing in the middle of a stream. And you see leaves floating down the stream away from you.

GABBY
Right.

LISA
And as a negative thought comes into your mind, you mentally place it on a leaf and you watch it float away.

GABBY
OK. Did you do it?

LISA
Yeah. I tried it.

GABBY
And?

LISA
I felt like shit. Apparently it takes practise. I ordered a book as well, that's meant to be quite good.
(sardonic)
The Art of Happiness by the Dalai frigging Lama.

LISA sits down now at the next bench. GABBY sits down next to her then smiles.

LISA (CONT'D)
What?

GABBY
Fair play to that woman for styling it out after the first appointment.

LISA smiles faintly but is deep in thought.

LISA

I just keep thinking there must be a way to do this. So when I look at things, at that branch, at that boat, I'm dazzled by how beautiful it is, instead of everything reminding me of what I've lost or what I'm going to lose.

GABBY

Are you seriously giving yourself a hard time because you're not reacting to terminal illness in the right way?

LISA

No. I'm not. But I so badly want to get past this part. And get to the stage where I'm making the most of my time. Flying kites across Hampstead Heath. Whatever.

GABBY shoots her friend a look.

GABBY

First of all. Cock off. Kites. Shall I tell you what terminally ill people fly kites?

LISA

I think you're going to.

GABBY

Pretend terminally ill people. Terminally ill people in films. And let me tell you something else. Unlike you, they've got plenty of time on their hands to do whimsical shite like that because they don't have to spend most of their days sitting on their arses in hospital.

LISA looks like she's thinking about this.

LISA

So you're saying I'm not really in a position?

GABBY

(rant over, gentle)
I'm saying there is no right way to do this.

GABBY takes LISA's face in her two gloved hands.

GABBY (CONT'D)

You're going to find your way. OK?

LISA

OK.

Suddenly LISA is crying. GABBY hugs her and holds onto her.

LISA (CONT'D)
(crying)
The crying's got to stop though.
I'm going to dissolve.

GABBY
It will. But not today.

CUT TO:

93

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE. CONSULTING OFFICE. DAY 40.

93

LISA is back in the therapist's office. She seems less reluctant to be there than the last time and more confident, as if determined to use these appointments for whatever she needs. We come into the scene mid-session.

LISA
I've started writing down passwords
for things. For paying the bills
online. And my email.

She avoids eye-contact and speaks as though talking to herself.

LISA (CONT'D)
But I keep imagining a scenario in
which our wireless router needed
resetting and I hadn't left Pete
with instructions of how to do it.

THERAPIST
Are you blogging about it?

LISA
The router?

Beat.

THERAPIST
Your fears of death.

LISA
No. I'm British. And we just
don't talk about death, do we?

CUT TO:

94

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY 40.

94

JANE is ironing. IAN is painting the skirting. PETE - grey-faced, stuck in the pain, and somehow separate from the others, in his own world, is making cups of tea. No-one is saying anything to each other.

LISA (V.O.)
I miss the blog.

CUT TO:

95

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE. DAY 40.

95

LISA

Not cos I feel like writing. I don't. It was for me, it was for making sense of things, but you can't make sense of this, can you?

A note of anger and even the edge of bitterness in her voice.

LISA (CONT'D)

But I miss it. Cos whatever was happening, before, even when my life was on hold, *especially* when my life was on hold, it gave me a purpose.

Suddenly, with that realisation, she's crying.

LISA (CONT'D)

And the thing is, I still need a purpose. I'm waiting for that morning where I open my eyes and I don't feel it all rushing up towards me. Or I do feel that, but there's still something I want to get out of bed for. That's how I'll know I've turned a corner.

CUT TO:

96

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. DAY 40.

96

IAN and JANE have paused in their activities in response to something LISA has said.

IAN

Like...a big project?

LISA

Yeah. I thought I'd swim the channel.

IAN

Sarky sod. Though knowing you, I wouldn't put it past you.

PETE comes over with the cups of tea.

LISA

No. No big projects.
(glances at Pete)
I just want to do what it is I do.
What I've always done.

She seems to be trying to communicate something to him.

LISA (CONT'D)

Like...watch Coronation Street.
Like...paint my nails.

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

Like...talk about what we're having for tea or argue about what box set we're watching.

JANE

(getting it)
Normal stuff.

LISA's iPhone buzzes. She looks at it. Then she puts it back face down.

LISA

(unenthusiastic)
Like reply to people's emails.

IAN

I can see you're raring to go with that one.

LISA

Well it's just that there isn't a single email or call or text that doesn't ask how I am or say that they're thinking of me. Sounds ungrateful but it's suffocating.

JANE

I bet there's a fair few grief trolls among them.

LISA laughs in surprise.

LISA

How do you know that phrase?

JANE

The internet, obviously. But you know there always were grief trolls. You only have to go to the shopping centre and certain people, if they've heard something's wrong, they'll make a bee-line for you.

LISA

D'you know what? The people I can chat to without answering any questions, without mentioning a thing about my health - it's Cassie, Anya, Laura - people I've met online who've got secondaries too.

She picks up her iPhone again.

LISA (CONT'D)

Meanwhile, randoms are writing me eulogies. This is from someone I used to work with who I haven't seen in years. Who never even liked me.

JANE

Well don't answer.

LISA

But if I don't she'll think I've carked it.

IAN

Here. I'll tell you what to reply.

He takes her iPhone out of her hand.

LISA

Oi!

IAN

(typing shortsightedly)
Dear such and such. B-a-c-o-n.

LISA

Bacon?

The 'whoosh' of an email being sent.

IAN

That's what they're getting.

LISA

(grabbing the phone back,
laughing but a bit
shocked)
Dad! Why did you send that?

IAN

Cos it's an answer. It says I'm
still here but I can't be chatting
to you.

LISA looks at JANE for some response, only to find her totally in agreement.

JANE

Only bother with people who are helpful. You've things to do and they have to let you get on with it. If they can't understand that, then excuse me, bugger them.

IAN

(chuckles, pleased with himself)
Bacon.

He winks at her and gets back on with his painting. Then suddenly, across the room, PETE is clapping his hands together and on his feet.

PETE

Right, who's for the hottest curry South London has to offer?

A beat, as LISA registers the change in his tone.

LISA
(without missing a beat)
Balti Kashmiri Chicken, vegetable
biryani, naan bread and some
sagaloo.

PETE
(to Lisa)
And to follow?

IAN
(touches his stomach)
I know what would follow if I ate
all that.

LISA
(ignoring him, not taking
her eyes off Pete)
...the entire first season of The
West Wing.

IAN
Oh give over.

JANE
Again? For goodness sake.

PETE and LISA ignore them. It's a private moment between the two of them - they're entering a tacit agreement to be themselves again; to resume their normal.

PETE
I'm in.

For the first time in a long time, there's hope.

CUT TO:

97

INT. HOSPITAL. CONSULTANT'S OFFICE/OUT-PATIENTS' ROOM. DAY 47.

LISA and PETE are back in the consultant's office. LISA's stick is beside her chair. The CONSULTANT knows LISA very well by now and clearly likes her very much.

CONSULTANT
How are you doing?

LISA looks at PETE. Where to begin on that question?

LISA
Some days are OK. Some days
aren't. It sort of changes by the
minute more than the day. I'm
trying.

PETE shoots her a discrete smile. She's still a geek in front of the CONSULTANT, even after all this time.

LISA (CONT'D)
How do you think I'm doing?

The CONSULTANT crosses his arms and fixes his eyes on her face.

CONSULTANT

According to my colleagues in oncology, you're doing very well. How would you feel about stopping treatment for a bit?

LISA and PETE looked scared.

LISA

Why?
(dry-mouthed)
Is it not working?

CONSULTANT

On the contrary. It is working. It's working very well.

He flips on a light box to show two brain scans, side by side.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

The cancer has done what the cancer has done and there's no way to reverse that. But we put you on this course of treatment to stabilise you, and that's exactly what's happened.

He extends a pointer to the shadowy areas on each scan.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

You've gone from this-
(indicating a large shadow)

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)

- to this.

He points to a smaller one.

PETE

(hardly daring to hope that this could be good news)
So...what does that mean?

CONSULTANT

It means you deserve a break. Take a couple of months off, and then we'll see where we are.

LISA

A couple of months? No chemo?

CONSULTANT

No chemo. No coming in here.

He smiles at her.

CONSULTANT (CONT'D)
Go on holiday. Do whatever you
like.

CUT TO:

98

INT. PUB. EVENING 41.

98

LISA and PETE are in their local pub. It's the same one as
in the beginning. They both still seem in shock at the news.

LISA
What do you want to do?

PETE
I don't care as long as it's with
you.

LISA
Chatter upper.

He smiles. They are both - slowly - acclimatising to the
news. LISA looks around. It's not too crowded but there's a
nice after-work buzz.

LISA (CONT'D)
It feels sort of normal to be in
here.

PETE
I know. It's weird.

They look just like any other couple, having a drink in a pub
after work.

LISA
Do you think we'll be OK?

PETE
Yeah. They're really happy with
you.

LISA
No I mean. It's going to be new,
isn't it? We've had our routine.
Hospital days, recovery days.

PETE
Are you nervous?

LISA
Yeah.

PETE
Me too.

A quiet moment. LISA inhales.

LISA
It's so nice to be out.

PETE
I know.

It's tentative, but they're actually having quite a nice time.

LISA
You look different.

PETE
How?

LISA
More like a boyfriend person. Less like a carer person.

PETE likes that. He leans over and kisses her on the lips. There's a nice atmosphere. Like they're on a date. They're almost shy with each other, smiling at each other a bit, adjusting to being out.

LISA (CONT'D)
D'you want a beer?

PETE
Nuh.
(standing up)
We're having champagne.

Off her look -

PETE (CONT'D)
I'm taking good news where I can get it.

The noise of the pub - the noise of regular life going on all around them - as they just smile into each other's faces, a part of it but also in their own wee world, just like any other couple.

CUT TO:

99

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BEDROOM. NIGHT 41.

99

LISA and PETE are in bed, tucking into a cheese plate, music on. PETE's arms are behind his head and he looks happy. LISA is looking at him, loving his contentedness.

LISA
Do you wish you'd known?

He answers honestly, without hesitation.

PETE
No.

LISA
I've turned you grey.

PETE

Cheers for that. Suits me though
doesn't it?

LISA

Yeah.

She touches his hair and he tilts his head until it's resting
on her hand.

LISA (CONT'D)

What shall we do?

PETE

(peaceful, relaxed, in
love)

This. I want to carry on doing
this.

CUT TO:

100

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 42.

100

A few days later. We pan across a carpet COVERED with
guidebooks to New York, Conde Nast magazines open to pages on
great hotels - all of them splayed open so the covers face
out. We follow this Hansel & Gretel-like trail until we see
GABBY on the phone.

GABBY

How does the queen-size room
compare to the king-size?

(pause)

Could you find out for me please?

Elsewhere in the room, JANE, hyper-efficient as usual, is
doing the same thing, pen in hand.

JANE

(into the phone)

I wonder if you can help me. I'm
looking to price two first class
tickets to JFK.

GABBY

Oh they've both got a bath?
Excellent we need a bath.

She shoots a smile to LISA, who smiles back. ABIGAIL comes
in from outside with a cardboard tray of four coffees that
she distributes around. She puts one on the table in front
of LISA. LISA is on the phone as well. It should gradually
become clear that LISA is talking to a travel insurance
company.

LISA

Lisa Jane Lynch.

Pause.

LISA (CONT'D)
30 August 1979.

Pause.

LISA (CONT'D)
...Eh yeah. Cancer.

JANE glances over.

LISA (CONT'D)
In my bones. And in my brain. But
it's under control at the moment
so/

Pause.

LISA (CONT'D)
/no of course. Carry on.

Pause.

LISA (CONT'D)
My last hospital admission was...
Quite a few months ago now. I
don't know the exact date but I can
find out.

Pause.

By this time, GABBY and JANE are both quiet, listening into
the conversation, and the fun production-line type atmosphere
has gone.

A longer pause, before LISA speaks again.

LISA (CONT'D)
(disappointment in her
voice)
Oh right. OK. OK. No I
understand.

CUT TO:

101 INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. HALL. NIGHT 42.

101

PETE gets in.

PETE
(calling out)
Lisa?

No answer.

PETE (CONT'D)
Lis?

CUT TO:

102 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. BATHROOM. NIGHT 42.** 102

LISA is in a bubble bath. Her iPad is propped up to one side and we can see she's talking to COREY (held up by JAMIE) in Derby.

CUT TO:

103 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. KITCHEN. NIGHT 42.** 103

PETE gets into the kitchen and sees a pile of guidebooks and magazines in a plastic bag by the window, alongside a little snow-globe of the Statue of Liberty.

LISA (O.S.)

Denied.

PETE turns around to see LISA standing in a dressing gown, leaning on her stick.

LISA (CONT'D)

America doesn't want us. Well they'd take you but they're not having any of me. I'm uninsurable, apparently.

PETE

Shit.

LISA

Though some kind soul told me that she might be able to pull some strings and get me cover for 36,000.

PETE

Pounds? For the week?

LISA

For four days. But it's a long-shot, she said. I think she was just being nice.

On PETE, taking that in.

PETE

I wasn't even that bothered. D'you know that? Maybe we just felt under pressure to go and do something amazing.

LISA is sanguine.

LISA

No I did want to go. But I don't anymore.

She slides a window open, picks up the snow-globe and lobs it out into the garden where it disappears into a bush.

LISA (CONT'D)
We're going to Spain.

PETE laughs and looks at her with admiration bordering on disbelief. This is her. This is LISA. Who will not be defeated.

CUT TO:

104 **EXT. SPANISH VILLA. DAY 43.** 104

Early morning. Bird-song. GVs of a private pool, terracotta roof tiles, bougainvillea etc. It's perfectly private, perfectly serene. No-one is awake yet.

CUT TO:

105 **INT. SPANISH VILLA. BEDROOM. DAY 43.** 105

Next to PETE, LISA opens her eyes. There's the moment of acclimatising to where she is, and then there's that other moment, the moment she discussed with the therapist. The remembering.

A moment, then LISA gets up, with the help of her stick. She walks slowly and a bit uncertainly through this brilliant, beautiful light-filled villa to the patio doors, pulls them open -

CUT TO:

106 **EXT. SPANISH VILLA. POOL AREA. DAY 43.** 106

- and steps outside.

We should be able to feel that moment - her taking in the new smells, the still-cold tiles underfoot, the wood pigeon coo, the flowers threading everywhere.

LISA goes over to the pool, rolls up her pyjama bottoms and sits down on the edge.

LISA
(putting her feet in)
Bloody hell.

She looks at her feet moving back and forth in the water, then tilts her face up and into the sunlight. Squinting. Inhaling. Smiling.

This is LISA finally getting a 'blossomiest blossom' moment and she sits there, taking it all in.

CUT TO:

107 **EXT. SPANISH VILLA. POOL AREA. DAY 43.** 107

A few hours later. PETE emerges, half-asleep and in pyjamas.

From his POV: LISA in the pool in her swimming costume holding COREY, in his baby life-jacket, under his arms, and whirling him around. He giggles. She does it again. He pisses himself laughing. She laughs then does it again. She carries on chatting away to him and making him laugh delightedly. PETE watches them for a minute, no pathos, just so happy to see her happy.

LISA
(spotting him)
Afternoon.

PETE
Hello. Me and your Dad are going
to the supermarket.

LISA
Good. Cos I need a lilo. With a
drinks holder. And some of those
funny-shaped crisps.

CUT TO:

108

INT. SPANISH VILLA. POOL AREA. DAY 44.

108

A few days later.

PETE wanders into the kitchen from outside to get a bottle of water, and catches IAN in a moment of solitude. IAN is looking out a window at LISA, who's floating on a lilo in the pool, reading the Dalai Lama book.

PETE watches IAN watching his daughter, wanting not to interrupt. The scene should be engulfed in that kind of bruised light that comes when you've stepped inside from the sun.

PETE watches the expression on IAN's face. It's of drinking it all in. Of loving this girl so much.

IAN
(noticing Pete)
She likes that Lama.

PETE
She really does. But in small
doses. She'll have the ipad out in
a minute and be onto the Daily Mail
sidebar.

IAN gives PETE a look - of love, of respect. Of everything that they share that doesn't need to be spoken. IAN heads outside and gives PETE a pat on the shoulder as he passes. It's not a sympathy pat. It's a 'we're doing this' pat, and it's going all right.

CUT TO:

109

EXT. SPANISH VILLA. POOL AREA. DAY 44.

109

LISA lies on the lilo with one ear-phone in. She is in her own world, singing. We will recognise this as the same Scene as Scene 1 - and realise that what we were seeing then was not in fact a 'carefree day' before diagnosis but a day now, post-terminal diagnosis, which LISA is enjoying and making the most of.

PETE comes outside then heads over to the pool, submerging his legs up to the knees.

PETE

Bloke from over the way there
popped his head in, reckons you've
got a cracking voice.

LISA

Really?

PETE's eyes twinkle with mischief.

PETE

No.

She laughs. He laughs. As we know by now, they like each other, these two.

PETE slides into the pool, briefly shocked by the cold, then strides through the water towards LISA.

PETE (CONT'D)

(perfectly serious)

I was quite enjoying it though.

PETE and LISA stay hanging out in the pool, while a wide shot shows JANE, LEANNE and JAMIE all coming out onto the terrace with crockery, cutlery and platters of food, ready for lunch.

CUT TO:

110

INT. PETE'S OFFICE. DAY 45.

110

PETE is at his desk. He is brown, seems refreshed after the holiday. His mobile rings and we see it's LISA.

PETE

(into the phone)

Hi babe.

Whatever he hears on the other end causes him to get out of his chair and move into the corridor.

PETE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

INTERCUT WITH:

111

INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 45.

111

LISA is huddled on the couch.

LISA
I'm sorry to call you at work.

PETE (V.O.)
It doesn't matter what is it?

She sounds upset.

LISA
Remember Anya?

PETE (V.O.)
Course. Jazz pianist in Brighton
who recommended the cream for your
arse.

LISA
She died.

LISA is crying.

LISA (CONT'D)
It was me and her and Cassie and
Laura. All bloggers, all with
secondaries, all of us in the same
leaky boat. She's the first.

PETE (V.O.)
(understanding perfectly)
I'm coming home.

CUT TO:

112 **INT. LISA & PETE'S FLAT. LIVING ROOM. DAY 45.** 112

PETE and LISA are sitting on the couch, his coat still on,
his arms around her.

LISA
(terrified, sobbing)
What did it feel like? Was she in
pain? Was it how she wanted it?
Did she even know what was going
on?

The above is muffled as PETE takes her in his arms.

PETE
I don't know darling. I don't
know.

CUT TO:

113 **EXT. BRIGHTON SEA FRONT. DAY 46.** 113

The sound of seagulls.

On LISA, standing on the promenade with her walking stick,
contemplative. It feels like an achievement, making it
there.

CASSIE (O.S.)

Lisa?

LISA turns around and sees a pretty girl in a wheelchair, CASSIE, and another girl, LAURA.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

You made it.

The three of them hug.

CUT TO:

114

EXT. BRIGHTON SEA FRONT. DAY 46.

114

The three are eating chips on a picnic table. Perhaps not eating, but it's in front of them - more of a ritual than a meal. Chips between three. They're mid-conversation.

CASSIE

"You've got to turn a negative into a positive".

LAURA

That one's a bastard because it's true.

CASSIE

"You don't look ill".

All three laugh.

LISA

"Everything happens for a reason".

A pause as a more sombre mood descends, the three of them contemplating this most heinous and problematic of platitudes.

CASSIE

(digging into her bag)
Right.

She produces a small bottle of whiskey and three shot glasses.

LISA

Bloody hell.

CASSIE

What?! This was the plan, was it not?

She pours a shot glass of whiskey for each of them then holds hers aloft.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

To Anya.

ALL

To Anya.

It's a serious moment, each having their own moment of reflection. It should feel like they're toasting themselves. Shortly after -

LAURA
Shall we go to the pier?

LISA
Definitely.

CASSIE
I need to go to the loo though so
it'll be sunset by the time we get
there. Might need a torch.

Laughter. 'Play' pressed on life again. LISA looks like she's happy in this company, and genuinely having a good time.

CUT TO:

115 **INT. BRIGHTON CAFE. DUSK 46.**

115

LISA, CASSIE and LAURA are hugging. It's the end of the day and they're sitting around with coffees behind a large bay window of a sea-front cafe. A cab is out front, ready to pick up CASSIE and LAURA. It's clear that it was a good day, a day well spent. Improvised goodbyes.

CASSIE
(to Lisa)
Are you going to be OK love?

LISA
Course. Pete's on his way.

CUT TO:

116 **INT. BRIGHTON CAFE. DUSK 46.**

116

Shortly after.

LISA sits alone at the table, looking out the window, her stick resting against the chair. Then on impulse, she reaches into her bag and gets out her iPad. Then she clicks a button to give her a fresh blank page on her blog.

LISA (V.O.)
I started this blog for me, cos I'm
a selfish sod and writing's how I
sort out how I feel about things.

CUT TO:

117 **INT. LISA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. DUSK 46.**

117

JANE is sitting in front of her laptop, reading the blog entry.

JANE
(calling out)
Ian!

LISA (V.O.)
But I haven't half met some amazing
people in the process. One of
them, Anya, died last week and
today, I've been toasting her life.

CUT TO:

118 **INT. JAMIE & LEANNE'S HOUSE. DUSK 46.** 118

COREY is in his high-chair, being fed by LEANNE 'aeroplane style', while elsewhere in the room, JAMIE is lying on the couch, holding his iPhone up and reading LISA's blog, completely absorbed.

LISA (V.O.)
Trust me. A cup of tea just
wouldn't cut it. But holding up a
snifter of whiskey felt right.

CUT TO:

119 **INT. LISA'S PARENTS' HOUSE. DUSK 46.** 119

LISA (V.O.)
Like we were recognising what we'd
had as well as what we'd lost.

We see this text on the computer in the distinctive 'Alright Tit' font, then pull out to see JANE sitting in front of it and IAN standing behind her, both of them reading. IAN puts a hand on JANE's shoulder.

CUT TO:

120 **INT. CAR. DUSK 46.** 120

PETE in the car, driving along the sea-front, driving to get her.

LISA (V.O.)
I don't want you to go reading too
much into this post. Heck, grief is
hardly something you can rehearse.

It's the end of a summer's day, people are swarming about after a day of activity, lights are starting to go on. Hold on PETE as we hear LISA's voice-over.

LISA (V.O.)
I'm just saying...

CUT TO:

121

INT. BRIGHTON CAFE. DUSK 46.

121

LISA looks up from the blog and sees PETE, in white work shirt and smart trousers. He's trying to find her through the hordes of after-work drinkers who now crowd the entrance.

LISA (O.S.)
...there's a lot to celebrate.

Then PETE sees her, and his look of concentration is replaced with one of delight. They hold each other's gaze. What's between them is perennial. Entirely outside space and time. It contains everything. All that will be lost. And all that will endure.

THE END.

CODA:

Lisa and Pete had 4 more holidays in Spain during her treatment break.

She died peacefully on 11th March 2013, surrounded by her family.

INSERT:

A photo of the real Lisa and her nephew Corey.

The C Word is in its 3rd printing.

Lisa's blog is still visited by [X] visitors every [X], and continues to inspire people living with cancer and their families and friends, all over the world.

END TITLES: Just Looking by The Stereophonics.