ALL OF US STRANGERS

by

Andrew Haigh

Based on the novel "Strangers" by Taichi Yamada
INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - DUSK

A view of London stretches south past half-built tower blocks rising above the Victorian housing stock.

This is the view from inside an apartment, twenty-seven floors up. As twilight comes, our focus shifts to Adam gazng out the window.

Something on the horizon catches his attention. It looks like the glint from a shard of glass or the light from a distant star: a guide, maybe a warning.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - TWILIGHT

Adam wakes on the sofa, woozy from a dream. It is silent in the room; the sound of the city blocked by the triple-glazed glass.

His flat is comfortable and well-looked after. Furniture is all carefully selected and the shelves are lined with books, DVDs and records.

Adam lies still for a while, more than a while, watching light fade from the room. He sits up, switches on a lamp. His stomach grumbles.

He looks down at his hands resting on his belly and rubs his thumb gently against his finger. The room is quiet enough to hear the sound of skin stroking skin, such a strange, sensual sound.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adam opens the fridge door, the “buzz” of the appliance loud in the silence. There’s nothing to tempt him, just leftovers and soggy salad in bags.

He takes out his phone and orders from his ‘favourites’. Suddenly, the building’s fire alarm comes on, a howl in the silence. Adam contemplates whether to ignore it.
INT. TOWER CORRIDOR – NIGHT

The alarm is louder now. Adam walks the long corridor to the elevator knocking gently on each door that he passes. He doesn’t pause for an answer. He knows no-one is in.

INT. TOWER ELEVATOR – NIGHT

The alarm continues as Adam descends to the ground floor, his reflection thrown into infinity by the mirrors lining the walls.

INT. TOWER LOBBY – NIGHT

The lift doors open. Adam passes rarely-used sofas, the rolling news playing on a large TV. There’s no security guard at the desk.

Blue lights from a police car travel across the wall and onto Adam. He turns to look for the car through the large glass windows but it has already passed.

I/E. TOWER – CONTINUOUS

Adam heads through the doors into the landscaped gardens secured by a metal perimeter – the meeting point in case of a fire. He’s the only one to have left the building.

There are signs of construction everywhere, new towers going up, but the cranes are still. Hoardings on his own block promise community through mocked-up photos of friends gathering in apartments and drinking on a roof terrace.

Adam cranes his neck to look up at his building. There are few signs of life but Adam spots a faint glow on the sixth floor, the flickering light of a television. In that glow he sees the shape of a man. Watching him.

The alarm suddenly stops. Calm is restored. Adam’s phone pings. He checks the app: food is getting close. When he looks back at the window, the man is gone.
3.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sweet & sour pork balls lie half-eaten on the counter as Adam watches HELLRAISER by Clive Barker (1987), a classic (queer) horror with a soaring score.

He is loading his vape with weed when the doorbell rings; an ugly, glitchy sound as if rarely used. He pauses the DVD. Adam is not expecting anyone.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT / CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Adam opens the door to find a man in his twenties holding a half-empty bottle of whisky, shit-faced drunk, his eyes tired and heavy. This is HARRY (28).

He wears a green sweatshirt with stains on the front. The corridor is quiet but for an extractor fan somewhere in the building, humming, groaning.

HARRY
Hello.

ADAM
(cautiously)
Hi.

HARRY
I saw you looking at me from the street. I’ve seen you a bunch of times, coming and going with your head down. One day it will be for real, that alarm.

Harry looks down the corridor towards the elevator. They can hear it open and close but no-one get outs.

HARRY (CONT'D)
We’re basically the only ones here. Can you fucking believe it? They still haven’t got a security guard yet.

He turns back towards Adam, anxious in Harry’s presence, not wanting to engage.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I’m Harry.
He smiles, offers up his hand. Adam has no option but to shake it.

ADAM

Adam.

The extractor fan stops. Harry searches for the source of the missing sound.

HARRY

How do you cope?

ADAM

With what?

HARRY

Listen?

They both listen. Silence.

HARRY (CONT'D)

It’s so quiet. London’s out there but we can’t hear a fucking thing.

Harry edges closer, almost conspiratorially. Adam backs away.

HARRY (CONT'D)

I play music but it’s worse when it ends. I even bought one of those white-noise machines. It’s like someone’s in the corner of the room, whispering about me. We can’t even open the windows but I guess they don’t want us to jump. Bad for business, bodies broken on the concrete. Who’s gonna move in then? You want a drink? It’s Japanese.

Harry lifts up the bottle. He really does seem fucked. Adam wants him gone.

HARRY (CONT'D)

It’s meant to be the best in the world but I couldn’t tell you why.
CONTINUED: (2)

ADAM
No thanks.

Harry looks at him for longer than is comfortable.

HARRY
How about I come in anyway? If not for a drink then for whatever else you might want.

There is a desperation to Harry’s tone that is unnerving, his sexual intention clear.

ADAM
I don’t think that’s a good idea.

HARRY
Do I scare you?

ADAM
Excuse me?

HARRY
We don’t have to do anything if I’m not your type.
(leaning in)
There’s vampires at my door.

What a strange thing to say.

Adam closes the door in his face. Adam waits, uneasy. He puts his ear to the door. Harry’s still there.

HARRY (CONT’D)
Everyone is meant to be kinder nowadays but surprise fucking surprise, nothing has changed.

Adam feels a stab of guilt, Harry’s as alone as him, but he waits and waits until he is sure Harry is gone. When he finally opens the door, the corridor is empty. Adam closes and double locks the door.

EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

From the vantage point of a half-built tower, we zoom out as Adam walks to the window, taking a long drag on his vaporizer.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Pulling out further, we reveal Harry’s apartment on the sixth floor, the television still on. Harry is by the window finishing off his whisky.

He starts to scream at the top of his lungs. Only no one can hear him through the triple-glazed windows. Not Adam. Not even us.

EXT. TOWER - DAY

Harsh cut to a new day, the sun watery, a warm summer morning.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - DAY

Adam flicks through his eclectic LP collection ordered by the year of release. The sleeves become more battered and torn as he goes back through time.


The title track plays as Adam sits at his desk trying to write a script. His fingers rest on the keys but nothing comes. The flash of the cursor taunts him, hovering like a heartbeat over the start of a scene.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - DAY TO DUSK

Adam opens the top cupboard -- a place for comfort food. Devonshire Custard. Rice Pudding. He takes out a pack of Ginger Nuts and opens them.

He eats two in quick succession, wiping the crumbs from his sweatshirt which fall to the floor with a sprinkle.

As the sun sets, Adam stands by the window. He sees Harry sitting in the garden below. He looks forlorn, all alone down there.
INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A white noise machine plays the sound of the wind. Adam lies in bed, half-awake, half-asleep; that time of night when nothing feels entirely real.

With a remote control, he raises the blinds just enough to see the horizon of the city. There is that glint, that shard of light beckoning him.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

Adam takes a piss, a shower. He makes coffee. At his desk near the window he types on his laptop, looser and more curious. EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE. 1987.

He sits back, looks at the words, his cursor spiralling around the screen. He doesn’t know what to write next.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adam pulls out a plastic storage box from under his bed, the lid covered with a layer of dust. Inside are hundreds of old photos, random snapshots of a life.

Adam flicks back through time as he did with the record sleeves; back through drunken moments in the noughties, university in the nineties, school in the eighties, long-vanished enemies and friends.

There are other things in the box too: a few old birthday cards. Aged 10. Aged 11. Adam opens one, it says simply ‘Love from Mum and Dad’.

Some diaries, school exercise books, some of them backed with old wallpaper to stop them falling apart. Some sugar packets from an American themed Restaurant. And a chrome RONSON VARAFLAME lighter. Adam tries it. It doesn’t work.

Then he finds what he’s looking for: a photo of himself aged about two sitting in a red pedal car in the front garden of a semi-detached suburban house, his mother by his side. It looks like the late seventies.

Adam smiles softly but not sadly.
INT. ADAM’S BEDROOM - DAY

Adam stands at the window in his bedroom. There is no sign of Harry this time but his attention drifts to a train heading away from the half-built tower blocks. He can almost hear the soothing rhythm of the carriage on the tracks.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Adam is on the train. The carriage is quiet. The sunlight flashes through the window. He closes his eyes and feels the warmth on his face.

EXT. SANDERSTEAD STATION - DAY

Sanderstead is a suburb thirty minutes from London just south of Croydon. It is small and conservative but not particularly wealthy.

Adam stands on the platform as the train pulls away. The station is quiet, only a few people around. It all seems familiar to Adam yet only half-remembered.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Adam walks down a long ginnel flanked by wooden fences, taller than he remembered. There is a sweet melancholy that comes from being back. He hears voices behind him, some kids, but when he turns around, no one is there.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

Adam stands outside a small semi-detached house with a garage and a low-hedged front garden. He takes a photo from his pocket, the one with his mother and the little red car.

Is this even the same house? There is now white render on the brick walls, and the window frames, once green, are black. There is even a new tree reaching as high as the roof.
CONTINUED:

Adam notices a YOUNG BOY watching from a bedroom window. It is hard to see him clearly. A WOMAN appears behind the boy, raises her middle finger and shoos Adam away.

EXT. HIGH STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Adam walks along the high street: 1950’s architecture, mock-Tudor, mediocre shops on the street level. Adam is caught by a scent sparking a memory.

EXT. SANDERSTEAD PARK - AFTERNOON INTO DUSK

Adam eats his chips at a picnic table near a playground. He flicks through a handful of photos brought with him, mainly of him and his Mum.

In one photograph, Adam finds his 7-YEAR-OLD-SELF on a swing in the same playground where he sits now. Eating the same soggy chips.

Adam walks through the park as the sun falls. TEENAGERS sit on rugs drinking beer. Some LADS kick a ball around. Somewhere is a game of cricket.

He reaches a line of swaying trees, the wind picking up. Adam walks through the tree-line to find the landscape drop away with a distant view to London. Adam has no memory of this place.

He sits on the ground as the sun sets. He watches the grass blow in the breeze. Suddenly the wind stops. A stillness falls. Adam turns around, sensing he’s being watched.

At the tree-line, he finds a MAN, younger than Adam, watching him. It is hard for him to see his face, the light obscure, but Adam feels a rush of adrenaline, a tingle of fear.

With a subtle gesture, the man beckons Adam to follow as he walks back through the trees, the wind returning. Adam hesitates, then gets up.

As Adam follows him from a distance, the light continues to fade, turning bluer and darker. Adam can’t get a good look of his face. Before too long, the man arrives at the park gates.

(CONTINUED)
He stops. Turns back to Adam. Their eyes lock. The blood drains from Adam’s face. Surely it can’t be him? The man smiles, then crosses the road.

EXT. SANDERSTEAD HIGH STREET - TWILIGHT

Close to darkness now. The street-lights come on. Adam crosses the road as the man heads into an off-license.

Adam approaches and cautiously peeks through the window, the dirty glass distorting the man’s face. A car alarm goes off and Adam turns to find the source.

When he looks back to the shop, the man is standing in front of him. He has a bottle of whisky (Bells, 1980’s label) and a packet of fags (purple Silk Cut, 1980’s label).

MAN

Hi.

The man offers Adam a cigarette. Adam shakes his head as if in a dream. The man lifts up the bottle.

MAN (CONT'D)

I thought something strong might be good for a night like this.

Adam tries to speak but no words come. The man smiles and lights a cigarette (with the lighter from Adam’s box under the bed). He exhales a smoke ring into the air. Adam follows it skyward.

MAN (CONT'D)

Shall we go?

ADAM

Where?

MAN

Home, of course.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - TWILIGHT

The man flicks the butt of his fag onto the ground. He stamps on it with his trainers, eighties in style.
They have arrived back at the house from the photograph, but the red pedal car from his childhood is now there. A wooziness builds.

MAN
She’s gonna be over the moon to see you.

The man knocks on the door. A car passes, an old Granada looking like new. The front door opens but from where Adam stands he can’t see who it is.

MAN (CONT’D)
Guess who I found loitering in the park?

WOMAN
Surprise me.

Adam recognizes the voice instantly. His eyes fill with tears. As the woman pops her head around the corner, we recognize her too.

She is the woman from the photo. His mother. Only younger than Adam. And if this is his mother, then this man must be his Dad. She looks at Adam, unsure it’s really him.

MUM
Is it him?

DAD
It’s definitely him. Look at the eyes.

Then suddenly, she sees.

MUM
Yes.
    (she smiles)
It is you.

ADAM
Hi.

MUM
Don’t just stand there. Get yourself inside.
Adam doesn’t even hesitate. He steps inside as if in a trance. His ‘mother’ shuts the door behind him as we pull out wide to reveal the house.

It looks different now (just for now), the white render gone, the window frames now green, and an orange Cortina parked in the drive.

INT. FAMILY KITCHEN – NIGHT

The room feels like it belongs in the mid-eighties. Adam sits at the kitchen table as his Mum gets a packet of KP dry roasted peanuts from the cupboard and puts them in a bowl. His Dad gets some glasses and opens the whisky. He pours the largest for Adam.

DAD
So where are you living now? Not round here that’s for sure.

ADAM
I’m in London.

MUM
How fancy.

DAD
Whereabouts?

MUM
Do you live by yourself?

Adam downs his whisky in one. His Dad pours him another. His mother joins them at the table with the peanuts but no-one touches them.

DAD
Do you own your own place?

ADAM
It’s just a flat.

DAD
I knew it!
(to his wife)
I told you he’d have done well.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
It can’t be cheap living up there in the smoke.

What do you do?

I’m a writer. I’m not particularly rich though, not really.

A writer?
    (to her husband)
    And what did I tell you?

His mother cannot control her excitement. She jumps up and kisses Adam over and over again on the top of his head like he was a child, her child. He can’t help but laugh, finally relaxing a little.

I always knew you’d be creative.
What kind of writer? You know how I love Stephen King. Carrie, Cujo, Different Seasons.

I’m not a proper writer. I write scripts, a few films. TV when I have to.

This is so bloody exciting. If I knew the neighbours I’d run over and tell them right now.

She sits back down.

I’ve always said that writers know less about the real world than almost anyone else.

He winks at his son to let him know he not serious; it’s to wind up his wife. She bashes her husband on the arm.

What the hell do you know? You can barely write joined-up.
Adam smiles at this gentle mocking. It brings him back. Her mum takes a cigarette and lights it, inhaling deeply.

MUM (CONT'D)
A writer. Our son.

That hits Adam squarely between the eyes. His Dad reaches over and places his hand on his.

DAD
We’re very bloody pleased to see you doing so well.

Adam looks down at his hand. It stays there long enough for Adam to experience his touch, his Dad’s thumb gently stroking his skin. Then he reaches for the whisky.

DAD (CONT'D)
But enough of that poofy stuff. Our boy is home so let’s get fucking drunk.

The ‘poofy’ remark lands on Adam but he ignores it. He swigs down his whisky and hands the glass back for more.

INT. FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Adam lets the night wash over him. They are all drinking more and more. Still no-one eats the peanuts. Adam stays quiet, enjoying their stories of him as a little boy.

We hear snippets. Like overlapping dreams. What about the time he wiped his poo on the anaglypta walls. Or that day he got hit by a Ford Granada when he tried to pedal his red car onto the main road.

EXT. FAMILY HOME DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

It is a little cold outside, a chill blown in. Adam’s mother hugs him tightly, kisses him on the lips. His father does the same thing, a kiss full on the lips.

DAD
It’s been so bloody nice to see you again. We weren’t sure we ever would but here you are.

(CONTINUED)
15.

CONTINUED:

ADAM
Here I am.

MUM
Come back soon. One of us will be in.

ADAM
I will.

But there is a sense from Adam that this can’t possibly be real, that it can’t happen again.

MUM
Please.

There is an insistence in her tone as if she needs this as much as him.

INT. MINICAB - NIGHT

Adam sits in the rear, his eyes heavy. A ‘traffic light’ air-freshener hangs from the rear view mirror. It rocks back and forth.

TAXI DRIVER
Best get you home before your missus sends out a search party.

Taxi drivers always assume you have a wife. Adam says nothing. He smells his sweatshirt for signs of the night: smoke, booze.

TAXI DRIVER (CONT'D)
Out with your mates?

ADAM
No.

Adam tries to wrestle with the ramifications of tonight.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I was with my parents.
Adam’s eyes start to close as he watches the approaching city sparkle through the window. New buildings going up but the streets are quiet. A smile, almost euphoric, comes over his face.

Adam, still a little drunk, heads through the lobby to the elevators. Harry is waiting at the lift with his back towards him. Adam considers and then decides to join him.

**ADAM**

Hello.

**HARRY**

Hi.

Harry looks burnt-out, exhausted. He avoids eye contact. But the lift opens and they both get inside. The mirrored walls mean they can’t ignore each other for long.

**HARRY** (CONT’D)

I’m sorry for the other night.

**ADAM**

Don’t worry about it.

But Harry seems deeply ashamed, with a vulnerability now that Adam finds attractive. The lift arrives on the sixth floor and Harry gets out. Adam feels emboldened.

**ADAM** (CONT’D)

I do like whisky if you want to come --

Harry turns back to Adam but the doors shut between them before anything else is said and Adam is left staring at his reflection in the textured steel doors. What a strange fucking night.

Adam looks at the photos again. He finds himself aged 11, a melancholy kid. He stands beside his parents who look exactly as they did tonight, right down to the clothes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He lies back on top of the bed clothes. He holds the photo to his chest, a look of blissed-out exhaustion on his face.

Delicate beads of sweat start to appear on his forehead but he doesn’t seem to notice. He coughs, once, the photo jumps in his hand. He coughs again...

INT. ADAM’S BEDROOM – DAY

The blinds are open, sunlight weak through the windows. Adam wakes slowly, hungover, undressed now. He sits up as if trying to remember a fading dream.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT – DAY

Adam puts on a record: 1987’s NOW THAT’S WHAT I CALL MUSIC 10. He chooses the track BUILD by THE HOUSEMARTINS.

He lays some photos over the kitchen counter including one of his YOUNGER SELF AGED 9 stirring flapjack mixture with his Mum in the same kitchen as last night.

Adam sits at this laptop, the music continuing. Writer’s block seems to have gone. His mind is alive. As he types, his eyes redden with tears, not with sadness but rather something sweeter.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT – DUSK

Music is gone. It is quiet now. Adam stands by the window as the sun drops behind a cloudy sky, lights coming on in distant towers. He sees Harry again sitting down below.

This time Adam uses a pair of binoculars to get a closer look. Sensing he’s being watched, Harry turns to look up. Adam is embarrassed but waves softly anyway. After a few tentative beats, Harry waves back.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT – DUSK

There is a knock at the door. No doorbell this time. Adam opens up to find Harry standing there.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
Hello.
ADAM
Hi.
HARRY
Hi.
ADAM
Do you want to come in?

A beat of doubt as Harry looks down the corridor and then back to Adam. He smiles, tentatively.

HARRY
Okay.

INT. ADAM'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Harry takes in the apartment: the records, the books on the shelving unit. Adam hovers behind.

ADAM
How long have you lived in the building?

HARRY
Long enough. I work for the company that owns it. They rent it to me for close to cheap. I work from home most of the time anyway.

ADAM
What do you do?

HARRY
I.T. I wanted to do something else but never worked out what that something was.

ADAM
Do you want a drink?

He turns around to face Adam.

HARRY
What have you got?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
Vodka. Some beer. Weed if you want that instead.

HARRY
Weed is better.
(with a small smile)
I’m off alcohol.

Harry’s got a nice smile, kind about the eyes. He walks to the window to look at the view. Adam sits on the sofa and loads up his vaporizer. They are silent for a few moments, both a little awkward.

HARRY (CONT’D)
All these towers going up but there is nothing to do. Do you like living here?

ADAM
I bought it off-plan. I read that was the smart thing to do. I’m hoping it’ll get better when people move in. If more people move in.

HARRY
You got friends nearby?

ADAM
Not really. You?

HARRY
Not really.

ADAM
Mine have all moved out of London. They want gardens for their kids. They want to be near grandparents so someone can look after their kids.

HARRY
I’m guessing you didn’t want to move too.

ADAM
What am I going to do in Dorking? It’s not for people like me.

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
You are queer, right?

Adam exhales slowly with a smile. The room is so silent. We can hear every breath.

ADAM
Yeah.

HARRY
(smiling)
That’s good.

ADAM
Well -- gay. I can’t get used to calling myself ‘queer’. It was always such an insult.

HARRY
(thinking on that)
It’s probably why we hate ‘gay’ so much now. Gay meant lame and shit. Those trainers are gay. That haircut’s gay. This sofa is gay. Your school bag’s gay.

Adam smiles. He takes another hit.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Queer does feel polite somehow though. Like all the dick sucking’s been taken out.

Adam laughs. Harry is happy he’s made Adam laugh. It relaxes him. Adam hands the vape to him. There is a silence again.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I’m assuming you’re not with anyone. I never see you with anyone.

ADAM
I’m not.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
Are you often single?

ADAM
Often?

HARRY
Uh-uh.

ADAM
I suppose so. What about you?

HARRY
Yeah. But not for want of trying.

In the silence that follows, Harry inhales on the vape. Adam watches him. The action feels incredibly sensual, bringing an erotic charge. After he’s exhaled, he puts the vape down and looks at Adam.

HARRY (CONT'D)
How about I kiss you?

ADAM
Okay.

Harry leans close enough to Adam to kiss him but not yet. They look at each other, both getting hard. Harry smiles.

Finally, Harry leans in. It is slow at first, then more passionate. They kiss for a while until Adam pulls away, breathless.

HARRY
What is it?

ADAM
It’s been a while. I’ve forgotten how to breathe my way through it.

It is Adam who leans in this time. They kiss some more. Harry tugs off Adam’s top. He’s a little self-conscious.

HARRY
You don’t need to worry about that with me.

(CONTINUED)
Harry takes off his own top, more confident. He undoes his belt, unbuttons his flies. Adam reaches out to touch him.

Harry unbuttons Adam’s jeans and rubs Adam’s cock over his underwear. Adam tries to sit up, to feel Harry, but he pushes him back onto the sofa.

Harry pulls down Adam’s underwear and goes down on him. Adam closes his eyes, his lips falling apart.

**INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT – TWILIGHT**

There is barely any light left. Adam and Harry sit still on the sofa, breathing deeply. Adam has cum on his belly and his chest.

Harry leans over as if to kiss Adam but instead ducks to lick the cum off Adam’s chest. As he comes up, Harry grins before kissing him. Adam pulls back at first, but then let’s him.

**INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT – NIGHT**

Harry wanders around the apartment only half-dressed as Adam puts his clothes back on. Harry finds the photos on the kitchen counter.

**HARRY**

Is this you?

**ADAM**

Afraid so.

**HARRY**

You were cute. I hate my photos. I was a fat kid. If you’re a fat kid no-one asks why you don’t have a girlfriend.

He looks at the photo again and smiles.

**HARRY (CONT’D)**

We’d have been friends for sure. Bunked off football to spy on the boys.

(CONTINUED)
Adam likes the sound of that. Harry picks up a photo of his Dad smiling for the camera.

HARRY (CONT'D)
This your dad?

ADAM
Yeah.

HARRY
He’s handsome.

ADAM
I’m trying to write something about them.

HARRY
Is that what you do?

ADAM
Yeah.

HARRY
How’s it going?

ADAM
Strangely.

HARRY
What does that mean?

Adam looks at the photos.

ADAM
I’ve tried to not write about them for years but all people want now is the personal. It will probably be good for me. Or not. Depending if people like it.

Harry smiles, then looks back at the photo of Adam’s dad.

HARRY
I don’t see my Dad much. Do you see yours?

ADAM
They died just before I was twelve.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
Both of them?

ADAM
A car crash. Not the most original of deaths.

HARRY
That’s horrible.

ADAM
Yeah.

HARRY
Who looked after you?

ADAM
I went to Dublin. I lived with my Gran.

HARRY
Fuck. I’m sorry.

ADAM
It was a long time ago.

HARRY
I don’t think that matters.

Harry looks back at one of the photos. Adam is touched by the emotion on Harry’s face.

HARRY (CONT’D)
I’d like to see you again.

ADAM
Okay.

HARRY
I could stay the night if --

Harry really wants this but Adam’s reticence is clear. He smiles.

HARRY (CONT’D)
How about not tonight?

ADAM
I do want to see you again, honest, but maybe just not --

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
You don’t need to explain.

ADAM
Thanks.

Harry can wait. He puts the photo back on the kitchen counter. It is of Adam in his dressing gown sitting with his mum on the stairs, red tinsel around the bannister, the age he was when they died.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

A rumbling train ploughs through a dark tunnel and out into a blustery day. The trees billow as storm clouds build in the sky.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

The clouds break. Heavy rain soaks Adam as he runs down the alleyway. Without an umbrella, he’s soon drenched to the bone.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DAY

It’s still raining when Adam arrives. He hesitates before he knocks but his excitement at being back is clear. It’s not long before she answers.

MUM
Sweetheart!

ADAM
Hi. Mum.

MUM
You came back.

ADAM
Of course I came back.

INT. FAMILY HOME HALLWAY - DAY

Mum shuts the door. They stand in the hallway. The rain slows outside.

(CONTINUED)
Some of those photos from the box under Adam’s bed are now framed on the walls. He knows it makes no sense but he doesn’t care. He is just glad to be back.

MUM
You need to get those wet clothes off before you catch your death.

ADAM
I’ll dry.

She comes over to him, fussing like a mother would to a young child.

MUM
Don’t talk rubbish. You’re leaving a puddle on the floor.

Adam takes off his jacket but he’s soaked through. She starts pulling at his sweatshirt.

MUM (CONT’D)
Jesus, you’re sodden. Take them off.

ADAM
I’m not taking my clothes off!

MUM
Don’t be silly, it’s only me. Jeans too, they’re drenched. I’ll put them in the hot press.

Unable to resist, or not wanting to resist, Adam lets her help him take off his sweatshirt.

MUM (CONT’D)
It’s just me today. Is that okay?

She seems insecure all of a sudden. Worried she won’t be enough.

ADAM
Of course.
MUM
Good because there’s so much I
want to know. I want to hear
everything! C’mon, jeans!

Adam takes off his jeans. He stands there in his under-
pants and t-shirt, still damp from the rain.

MUM (CONT’D)
Now get upstairs and change.

ADAM
Upstairs?

MUM
To your bedroom!

She makes a face as if he’s being crazy and she heads off
to the utility room. Adam rubs dust from one of the
photos. We’ve seen it before, him stuffing his face with
chips.

Walking upstairs, Adam feels the bannister with his hand,
looks up at the sky through the window, down at his feet
on the thick carpet. Memories trickling back.

His bedroom is the first room at the top of the stairs
but he pauses before opening the door. A little afraid
somehow.

INT. ADAM’S OLD BEDROOM – DAY

The past hits him hard. There is his old single bed. The
walls plastered with posters from Smash Hits and Look-In.
Toys in a box in the corner.

His school books lie in a neat pile on his little desk. Adam
opens the drawers to see pens and pencils, a half-
eaten pack of ginger nuts.

Some of the LP’s from his apartment are here too. Adam
picks up FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD’S ‘WELCOME TO THE
PLEASUREDOME’.

He opens the wardrobe to find his old clothes. His school
uniform. He takes out the jacket and holds it up against
himself. It looks tiny.
MUM
I guess nothing’s gonna fit
anymore.

Mum stands in the doorway holding some dry clothes.

MUM (CONT'D)
I got some of your Dad’s things
instead.

She hands them over, feeling Adam’s T-shirt, still damp
from the rain.

MUM (CONT'D)
T-shirt too. I’ll dry it with the
rest.

Adam dithers, then takes it off. She watches him closely.

MUM (CONT'D)
God. Look at you.

ADAM
What?

MUM
You were just a boy and now you’re
not. You look totally different
and yet it’s still you.

She reaches out and touches his chest ever-so-gently. She
.touches him in the same place that Harry licked off the
cum.

MUM (CONT'D)
I thought you’d be hairier. Like
your Dad. I like a hairy chest if
I’m honest. Christ. You know who
you look like?

ADAM
Who?

MUM
Like my father. Or how I remember
him when I was a little girl.
Isn’t that mad? It’s like seeing
both of you at the exact same
time.

(CONTINUED)
She laughs away a few tears as Adam puts on his Dad’s clothes, ill-fitting but with a smell he remembers.

**MUM (CONT'D)**
I wish you’d got to meet him, my Dad. You’d have liked him, always with the stupid jokes and silly puns.

The oven suddenly pings repetitively downstairs, something ready.

**MUM (CONT'D)**
I’ve made your favorite. I hope it’s still your favorite. I’ll make some tea and then you can tell me everything.

**INT. FAMILY HOME / KITCHEN - DAY**

Adam eats a gooey flapjack, more golden syrup than oats, perfectly cooked and fucking delicious. Mum takes two mismatched mugs from a mug tree and brings them to the table where a teapot is waiting. Adam’s mug is from CHESSINGTON ZOO.

**MUM**
Your Dad told me not to ask, and I’m guessing you’re not married because I don’t see a ring, but have you got a girlfriend?

Adam smiles, awkwardly.

**MUM (CONT'D)**
I’m picturing her with brown hair, maybe curly, not too skinny. Smart obviously.

**ADAM**
You mean like you?

**MUM**
That’s nice you think I’m smart.

A long beat as Adam purposely chews on the flapjack, hoping to avoid the question. He hadn’t imagined he’d have to come out today.

**(CONTINUED)**
MUM (CONT’D)

Well?

ADAM

What?

MUM

Do you?

ADAM
I don’t have a girlfriend.

MUM
That’s a shame.

She seems disappointed. Adam considers taking another bite of the flapjack but puts it down. He struggles to find the words, amused at his own reticence.

ADAM
I don’t have a girlfriend because I’m not into girls, into women.

MUM
What do you mean?

ADAM
I mean I’m gay.

His voice cracks with unexpected nerves. It is clear Adam still needs her validation, or fears her rejection. This is a surprise even to him.

MUM
As in homosexual?

ADAM
Yes, as in -- that.

MUM
Really?

ADAM
Uh-huh.

MUM
Since when?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
Since a long time ago.

MUM
How long ago?

ADAM
Forever.

MUM
But you don’t look gay.

ADAM
I don’t know what that means.

MUM
It means what it means. You know what it means.

She seems a little irritated by his news. She picks up a flapjack but puts it back down. Adam tries to use humour to diffuse the situation (a defense mechanism every gay person knows only too well).

ADAM
I bet you’re glad you don’t know the neighbours now.

MUM
(ignoring him)
I must admit, I’m a bit surprised. I’m not sure how to feel about it.

ADAM
You never thought that it might be a possibility.

MUM
Of course not. What parent wants to think that about their child. No parent I know.

This makes Adam a touch defensive.

ADAM
I’m very okay with it. I have been for a long time.

(CONTINUED)
MUM
Are people nasty to you?

ADAM
Things are different now.

MUM
So they aren’t nasty?

ADAM
Not out loud.

MUM
Does everyone know? Are you open about it, I don’t know, on the high street, down WHSmiths?

Adam’s amused at the specificity of her fears, fears that somehow feel more about her than about him.

ADAM
It depends on the high street. And yes, everyone knows.

MUM
Don’t you want to get married and have kids?

ADAM
I can have kids. And men can get married. Women too.

MUM
(shocked)
To each other?

ADAM
Yes.

MUM
Why?

ADAM
What do you mean why?

MUM
Isn’t that like having your cake and eating it?

(CONTINUED)
Adam is not sure how to answer that.

MUM (CONT'D)
Do you want to get married and have kids?

The very idea seems alien to her.

ADAM
I don’t know. It wasn’t a possibility for such a long time. It didn’t seem worth the effort to want it.

There is a long beat. The sun goes behind a cloud, the room darkens. Neither were expecting this conversation today.

Mum gets up and walks to the sink. She pours away her tea and looks out towards the garden, clearly a little upset.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

MUM
I’m fine.

ADAM
Are you sure?

MUM
I suppose I never did know what was going on in your odd little head. You were always running away. Do you remember?

ADAM
Yes.

MUM
There was the time you got to the train station but you’d lost your money on the way and couldn’t buy a ticket.

ADAM
Five pounds from Grannie.

(CONTINUED)
MUM
Yes. That was it. Where were you hoping to go?

ADAM
I don’t know. London I guess.

MUM
Or the time you got as far as the bottom of the garden but cut your thumb on an old milk bottle. You came running back, all sheepish, blood all over your shirt, banging and banging on the window to be let back in.

She comes back over and gently takes his left hand. She finds the scar, just the palest of lines on his thumb.

MUM (CONT’D)
There it is. Just.

She sits down with a heavy sigh, remembering perhaps the sadness of her little boy. Adam rubs the scar with his forefinger (we’ve seen this gesture before).

MUM (CONT’D)
They say it’s a very lonely kind of life.

ADAM
They don’t say that anymore.

MUM
So you’re not lonely?

ADAM
If I am it’s not because I’m gay. Not really.

MUM
Not really?
   (a fear rising)
And what about this awful ghastly disease. I’ve seen the gravestones on the adverts. Should I be worried about it?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
Mum! Jesus. Please. It’s very different now. It’s all very different.

MUM
Well. I guess I wouldn’t know about that.

The strange reality of their situation fills the silence that follows. A mother, younger than her son, living in the present but from a time in Adam’s past.

She finally picks up a flapjack and takes a bite. It is burnt. They all are now.

MUM (CONT’D)
Not enough butter. Are you going to tell your Dad?

ADAM
I never thought I’d have to.

MUM
Maybe it’s for the best if I tell him. You know what men are like. He’s a lot less open-minded than me.

ADAM
If you think that’s --

MUM
I do.

A strained silence follows. She’s not angry with her son. Not at all. It is clear that she loves him but something hangs in the air that can’t be fixed right away.

MUM (CONT’D)
Your clothes should be dry by now. You can take the flapjacks if you want. I’ll not be eating them.
INT. TRAIN - AFTERNOON

Adam stares out of the window at passing graffiti, moving as if animated. He is pretty okay with his sexuality but his mother’s reaction has thrown him off-balance.

A group of teenage boys sit close by. Adam turns to see one of the lads unselfconsciously raising his t-shirt to show the other boys his stomach. He catches Adam staring.

Adam turns away quickly and looks out of the window. He is sure he can see the words poof queer faggot spray-painted onto the brickwork.

It’s there only a second before the train blasts into a tunnel with a violent shift of sound. His image appears in the dark reflection, his face stretched and contorted by the surface of the glass. It seems to express how he feels.

EXT. TOWER BLOCK - LATE AFTERNOON

Adam walks back to his apartment, the sun bright and hot in his face. It is making him sweat.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Adam closes the door and slumps slowly to the floor. An anxiety builds, a tension in the back of his throat. A nausea gathering strength.

INT. ADAM’S BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Adam takes off his top. He’s burning up, like he might puke in the sink. He tries to calm himself with short, shallow breaths.

Looking in the mirror, Adam feel his glands. They seem tender and sore. In the reflection he notices five small lesions appearing on his chest.

But when he looks down they are no longer lesions, just the outline of his mother’s fingertips where she touched him. Adam traces them with his own fingertips when the door bell rings.
INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT – DUSK

Adam, his t-shirt back on, opens the door to find Harry. He can see that something is up with Adam.

HARRY
What’s wrong?

ADAM
I’m okay.

Harry goes to feel Adam’s forehead but Adam pulls away; not used to being looked after. Harry smiles, then goes in again with the back of his hand. Both of them enjoy the tenderness of this exchange.

HARRY
You’re hot.

ADAM
It’s probably just a chill. I got wet in the rain.

HARRY
When did it rain?

Adam doesn’t answer. Harry looks at him.

HARRY (CONT’D)
Why don’t you have a hot bath? My nan said there was nothing a bath couldn’t solve. Literally fucking nothing.

ADAM
I don’t like baths.

HARRY
Fuck off. Who doesn’t like baths?

Harry pushes past Adam into the apartment and heads to the bathroom.

ADAM
(calling after him)
I don’t want you catching whatever I’ve got.

HARRY
You said it was a chill.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ADAM
It is. I’m sure.

HARRY
So there’s nothing to catch.

INT. ADAM’S BATHROOM – NIGHT

As the bath fills, the mirrors steam. Adam gets undressed still self-conscious getting naked in front of Harry.

HARRY
There’s no need to be shy.

ADAM
Easier said than done.

Harry comes close.

HARRY
I can close my eyes if that makes you feel better.

He pretends to close his eyes then takes a cheeky peak. It makes Adam laugh. He touches Adam’s chest, the same spot his mother did. When Harry’s hand leaves his skin, the red marks from Adam’s mother are gone.

INT. ADAM’S BATHROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Adam sinks into the bath, the water immediately bringing relief.

HARRY
Better?

ADAM
Yes.

(then)
I’m sorry.

HARRY
What for?

ADAM
This is not very sexy.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
Feels pretty fucking sexy to me.
Kneeling beside him, Harry puts his hand under the water and strokes his chest.

HARRY (CONT'D)
I’ve been thinking about you a whole heap today.

ADAM
Thinking what?

HARRY
When I saw you. Before. Coming and going. I always imagined you were smart. It was a relief to know you were.

ADAM
Why do you think I’m smart?

HARRY
Just a vibe. I like you’ve got ‘Walden’ on your shelf. I’ve always wanted to read it. Always liked the idea of living in the woods.

ADAM
(with a smile)
I haven’t read it yet. But yes, I’d like to live in the woods.

Harry likes even more that he hasn’t read it yet. Harry’s hand moves a little lower under the water. It’s taking a while for Adam to fully relax.

HARRY
I thought about watching crappy TV with you on a Friday night. Eating take away on your sofa watching old episodes of Top of Pops from before I was born.

Harry leaves a pause. His hand goes down to his crotch. Adam tenses at first, smiles, then relaxes.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY (CONT'D)
I thought about something else too.

ADAM
What?

HARRY
I thought about fucking you. Or you fucking me. I don’t care which. Are you into that?

ADAM
It depends.

HARRY
It’s okay if you’re not. We don’t all need to be into fucking.

ADAM
I wasn’t for the longest time. For obvious reasons. Now it depends on who’s asking.

HARRY
Obvious reasons?

Harry is wanking Adam off now.

ADAM
You know. Aids. Terrified out of my mind. That I’d get sick and die. Even a blow job could send me into three months of sweats and swollen glands. I bet that’s hard for you to imagine now, that fear.

HARRY
A little.

Harry leans in and kisses Adam as water slaps gently on the sides of the bath.
INT. ADAM’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

On the bed, they kiss. Harry undresses. Soon they are fucking, facing each other. Slow and soft. We ‘feel’ rather than observe. It is close, intimate. The walls seem to breathe, match their rhythm as they get close to cumming...

INT. ADAM’S BEDROOM – NIGHT


ADAM
You said the other day you don’t see you Dad so often.

HARRY
Yeah.

ADAM
And your mum too?

HARRY
Yeah.

ADAM
How come? They know you’re -- queer, right?

HARRY
Of course.

ADAM
And they’re okay with it?

HARRY
Yeah, they’re okay. But they’re pretty old-school. Less okay than everyone’s meant to be. They’ve got used to it, sort of. If I don’t say too much.

Adam shifts in the bed, up onto his elbow, inviting Harry to talk.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY (CONT'D)
You could say I’ve drifted to the edge, right up to the edge, almost over the edge.

ADAM
What do you mean?

Harry turns over to meet him.

HARRY
Edge of the family. My sister and her kids, my older brother who just got married, they’ve got that spot in the centre. But it’s okay.

ADAM
Why’s it okay?

HARRY
I don’t go home much.

ADAM
Doesn’t that make you sad?

HARRY
It’s inevitable really.

ADAM
Why?

HARRY
I always felt like a stranger in my own family anyway. Coming out just puts a name to the difference that had always been there.

They are silent a while. Adam deep in thought. Thinking about today, of course. His mother. Her reaction. How it made him feel.

HARRY (CONT'D)
You okay?

ADAM
Yeah. It’s funny though. It’s so much better now, of course it is.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
Most of the scabs have healed but it doesn’t take much to be back there again, does it? Skin all fucking raw, feeling how you used to feel.

Harry smiles with understanding. More than sex, it’s a mutual understanding of something shared that brings deepening intimacy. Harry leans in and kisses him. As they break away...

Am I still hot?

Harry feels his forehead again.

No.

Will you stay tonight?

Harry nods. Of course he will. They cuddle up and drift into a deeper silence. But neither fall asleep just yet. Adam’s eyes remain open, far too many thoughts in his head.

A breezy summer day. Fast moving clouds. Adam sits at his desk, writing. It feels a little harder for him to work today. He looks up and out of the window.

Passing clouds create moving shadows on the wall as Adam stares out of the window. In the reflection, a plane cuts a line across his neck.

Adam sits in the opposite direction of travel as if his childhood home is dragging him back. He sees a family at the end of the carriage.
CONTINUED:

A TUBBY BOY (9) with dusty blond hair sitting with his older brother and sister, looking out of the window like he might just cry.

A train suddenly passes with a roar. It makes Adam jump and in the reflection of the window, his image flickers in the light, untethered.

INT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Adam heads down the alleyway as the wind picks up. Fallen leaves blow across the ground as if Autumn has come.

Three BOYS, around 13 in age and dressed in 1980’s school uniform, pass in the opposite direction. Adam hears them laugh, whisper names.

He spots an old five-pound note, wedged under the bottom of a fence (from the story of running away). Adam goes to pick it up when...

INT. FAMILY LOUNGE - DAY

The lounge has comfy sofas and textured wallpaper. Dad flicks through some LP’s as Adam picks up an ornament on the mantlepiece, a figurine of a woman, a long-forgotten memory.

DAD
She’ll be back soon, I’m sure.

ADAM
I wanted to talk to her.

DAD
I know you did.
(picking a LP)
This was your Grandad’s favorite.
I never liked it at the time but the sentiment’s grown on me.

He puts the needle on the vinyl. It is the same record-player we saw in Adam’s apartment only now it looks new. The song is mournful and melancholy.

(CONTINUED)
DAD (CONT'D)
(re: the figurine)
If you want to see your mum really lose her shit go ahead and break that bloody thing. Sit yourself down.

Adam puts the figurine down but doesn’t sit down yet. The record crackles to life as Adam’s Dad sits on his chair. He lights a fag.

ADAM
She told you then.

DAD
Yep. I was scared you wouldn’t come back. I hope you’re not too disappointed in her.

Adam turns around to look at his Dad.

ADAM
I’m not.

DAD
She just needs to rearrange some things in her head. Stories she’d built up. She’ll soon realise it’s not actually about her.

Adam smiles. Waits a beat. Then sits down on the sofa beside his Dad. He might even take a drag of his fag.

ADAM
What about you?

DAD
What about me?

ADAM
How do you feel about it?

DAD
It was hardly a shock. I always knew you were a bit tooty fruity.

Adam laughs.

(CONTINUED)
DAD (CONT'D)
You couldn’t throw a ball for shit however much I tried to teach you.

ADAM
You make me sound like a horrible cliche.

DAD
Can you throw a ball?

ADAM
Not at all.

They both laugh again. Softly, and perhaps with a little regret.

Adam pulls at a thread of material from the arm of the sofa. He wraps it around his ring finger. It makes the blood swell in his fingertip.

DAD
Would you have liked me to have known?

ADAM
I don’t know.

DAD
I would hear you cry in your room after school. Did the boys bully you?

ADAM
Not just the boys.

DAD
What would they do?

ADAM
(with a shrug)
They’d call me a girl. Refuse to play with me. Flick drawing pins at my face and flush my head down the loo.

DAD
Kids are such little cunts.

(CONTINUED)
Adam smiles but it is a painful memory. He’s silent a moment.

ADAM
Why didn’t you come into my room if you heard me crying?

DAD
Why didn’t you tell me what was happening at school?

ADAM
You answer first. You can be honest.

DAD
I didn’t want to think of you as the kind of boy that other lads picked on. I knew that if I was at your school, I’d have probably picked on you too. I can’t imagine that’s very nice to hear.

ADAM
I think I always knew that anyway. It’s probably why I never told you what was happening to me.

That makes his Dad sad, and a little ashamed. He looks over to the record playing...

DAD
You know my dad thought I was a big softy too. He thought I had too many feelings for a boy.

He stubs out the fag, gets up, and walks towards the record player. Adam snaps the piece of thread from around his finger, the blood coming back.

DAD (CONT’D)
I think that both of us, him back then and me with you, were just products of the time. Or is that letting us off the hook?

Dad takes the needle off the record, having enough of the song.

(CONTINUED)
When she told me, I did think of some of the jokes we’d make. How we used to do impressions of your English teacher mincing around with his limp wrists.

ADAM
You’d tell me over and over again not to cross my legs like a woman.

He turns around to face Adam.

DAD
Did I?

ADAM
I still think about it every time I cross my legs.

Adam’s Dad looks deflated -- the weight of his mistakes weighing heavy. Adam can’t help but want to soften.

ADAM (CONT’D)
I have good memories too.

DAD
I hope so.

His Dad needs to know he did something right. Adam makes a gesture to the corner of the room.

ADAM
I remember how much you loved to decorate the tree. You went crazy for it. Every year. And you’d always let me put the fairy on top.

His Dad remembers it well and his eyes bubble with tears. He comes over to his son.

DAD
I’m sorry I never came into your room when I heard you crying.

ADAM
Really. It’s okay.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (5)

DAD
It’s not okay though, is it?

ADAM
Dad. I get it. It was so long ago.

But all of a sudden, Adam feels like he’s back again, a young boy balling his eyes out in his bedroom not sure why everyone thinks he’s a freak.

DAD
Do you want a hug now?

ADAM
(voice cracking)
Yes, please.

Dad gets up and Adam follows. He lets his father hold him tight allowing his body to relax, collapse into his arms.

Adam catches sight of the two of them in the mirror above the fireplace. Adam can see himself as an ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOY being held by his dad.

INT. TRAIN - DAY
As he returns home, Adam feels a lightness of being. He doesn’t notice that some of the passengers are staring at him.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - DAY
Adam pushes Harry up against the wall and kisses him. It is playful and hot. He pulls off Harry’s top, hungry and passionate, laughing, taking control.

INT. ADAM’S BATHROOM - DAY
Adam dries himself off after a shower as Harry gets out to join him at the mirror. He looks at Adam’s reflection, pallid in this light.

HARRY
You okay? I hope I’ve not being tiring you out.

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
No. I feel great.

Harry comes up behind him, stroking his shoulder gently, kissing him on the back of the neck.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Let’s go out tonight.

HARRY
Really? Where to?

ADAM
‘OUT’ out.

HARRY
What do you mean?

ADAM
Have you been to Duckie? I think it’s still clinging on. I used to go all the fucking time, too many times.

Harry is still resistant.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Please?

INT. TUBE - NIGHT

Adam and Harry head out for the night, the tube is busy and boisterous. A straight couple that look queer make-out in front of them as if no-one is watching. Adam and Harry’s reflections distort behind them.

EXT. ROYAL VAUXHALL TAVERN - NIGHT

‘DUCKIE’ is a famous queer night, an institution, and the queue is surprisingly long. A passing car blasts its horn but it’s hard to tell if its condemnation or celebration.
INT. ROYAL VAUXHALL TAVERN - NIGHT

Inside, it is packed, like a flashback to another time. The club is a converted Victorian pub with black walls and sticky floors.

The music is loud: 80’s new-wave and 90’s indie. ‘I WANT A DOG’ by the PET SHOP BOYS plays as Adam and Harry push through the crowds towards the bar.

Both seem a little nervous but it doesn’t take too long for them to relax. People dancing. Making out. Getting drunk.

INT. ROYAL VAUXHALL TAVERN - LATER

The music has changed. GRACE JONES and ‘LA VIE ON ROSE’. A gentle euphoria in the air. We gaze through dancing bodies as Adam and Harry drink fizzy pints of lager at the bar.

Harry has nearly finished his pint already and is keen for another. He seems different in here, like something is being unlocked. Adam cups his hand to Harry’s ear who can’t really hear him.

ADAM
Fuck me. I’ve missed this feeling whatever that feeling is.

HARRY
I can’t hear you.

ADAM
Do you dance?

HARRY
Of course. If I’m wasted enough.

ADAM
Then let’s get wasted.

Harry downs his drink. Adam orders more. Adam talks about the old days, all the old clubs, all the guys he pulled.

They both watch the crowd as the song reaches a glorious mid-climax, hands in the air, people together, very gay.
INT. ROYAL VAUXHALL TAVERN - NIGHT

DEPECHE MODE and ‘SHAKE THE DISEASE’. Adam stands at the bar counter, struggling to get served. Harry is nowhere to be seen.

Adam notices someone staring at him, barely out of his teens but full of swagger and confidence. The YOUNG GUY looks at Adam with something like pity in his eyes.

Feeling a little paranoid, Adam checks his reflection in the mirror above the bar, rearranges his hair, the glass stretching his image. He is relieved to see Harry in that reflection coming back from the loos.

HARRY
Look what I found in my wallet.

He shows a baggy to Adam.

HARRY (CONT’D)
Fuck knows when I bought this.

ADAM
What is it?

HARRY
Coke, I think. Maybe.

Adam catches sight of that confident kid again. What’s he staring at? Adam looks back to Harry.

ADAM
Let’s do it.

INT. ROYAL VAUXHALL TAVERN TOILET - NIGHT

The bass of DEE-LIGHT’S ‘DEEP ENDING’ pulsates through the walls of the cubicle, blasting louder every time someone opens the door to the bathroom.

Two lines of powder are lined up on the cistern. It takes Adam a few goes to snort it and it catches the back of his throat. It’s been a while.

But Harry is clearly a pro. His line goes down with ease. Too much ease. He stands up, sniffs.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
Shit. Doesn’t taste like coke.
Think it’s K.

ADAM
Ketamine?

HARRY
Have you had it before?

ADAM
No. Will you look after me?

HARRY
I’ll do my best.

ADAM
Then fuck it.

They make out for a while, messily.

INT. ROYAL VAUXHALL TAVERN – NIGHT

The music is louder now, the dance floor rammed. ‘DEATH OF A PARTY’ by BLUR. A strange choice for a dance floor.
A sexual, slow-motion car crash of a song.

Glowing with sweat, Adam and Harry dance with lusty drug-fueled vigour. The young guy from the bar passes him with a few young handsome friends in tow. They all seem to be staring at Adam.

Adam follows them with his gaze as they head to the side of the dance-floor and he catches sight of himself in the mirror over their shoulders. Adam slows down. He stops dancing.

Only his reflection continues to dance, clothes damp with sweat, the mirror, the image, pulsating. Adam watches himself look up at the ceiling, arms aloft, letting go, grinning from ear to ear.

Suddenly we are high above, gazing down on Adam as if we have become his POV of his out-of-body experience. As he reaches for Harry, pulling him close, making out, we crash towards them...
We are back in the flat. The song continues, pulsating heavy over images of time passing, of a relationship building.

They stand naked in front of each other, still sweating, senses alive. We can literally see their hearts pulsating in time with the music.

They sleep entangled, and in the morning, they kiss in the soft light of a new day. They make eggs. They taste good. Time throbs onwards as the sun rises and falls.

Adam works, tired, skin clammy. Typing. Dreaming. They eat take-away on the sofa watching FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD on an old ‘Top of the Pops’. They drink and get stoned and dance around like they’re back in the club.

They watch HELLRAISER curled up in bed on a projector screen. Harry is grossed out, laughing, needing Adam to protect him.

Later, they lie opposite each other, a slight tension or fear as the lights of the club, blue strobes, start to flash through the windows.

Back in Duckie again -- or perhaps some other club night. The music continues, sweat and strobing lights, throwing us in and out of darkness. Harry seems off his head, his eyes rolling back.

Someone offers Adam poppers and he inhales deeply, the screen throbbing as he closes his eyes. When he opens them again, Harry has gone.

He’s somewhere off in the crowd. Adam sees him dancing with other guys. Is he kissing them? Are they kissing him? Does Adam even mind?

He catches his own reflection in the mirror again. A howl of pain flashing in the strobe, an existential howl like the figure in Francis Bacon’s ‘A Study after Velázquez’s Portrait of Pope Innocent X’.

(CONTINUED)
Adam pushes through the crowd, desperate to get a closer look. The strobe starts to flash blue and in one of those blasts of light he sees his mother drinking in one of the reflections. His father too, drunk.

Adam screams for his parents, screams for Harry but he’s vanished. The clubbers around him start to get out of his way, fear and horror on their faces.

Suddenly, Adam wretches into his hands. He stumbles and falls, through bodies and space until he hits the dirty floor...

INT. ADAM’S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM – NIGHT

Adam wakes in darkness trying to work out where he is. He feels the texture of his sheets -- multi-coloured candy stripped winceyette.

He reaches out to touch a patch of woodchip wallpaper on the wall that has been picked off.

INT. FAMILY HOME – NIGHT

Adam opens his door to the landing upstairs. He wears a terry-cloth dressing gown, the carpet thick under bare feet.

He walks down the stairs, he touches the banister again. There is red tinsel wrapped around this time like we have seen from old photos.

Adam can hear music quietly coming from the lounge. He stops at the door. Slowly, turns the door handle.

INT. FAMILY HOME – NIGHT

A fire crackles in the hearth. Mum and Dad unpack baubles that have been in storage. They’ve both had a few drinks. Adam breathes in the scent of the Christmas tree. ‘Top of the Pops’ is on the TV. 1987.

MUM

Adam?

(CONTINUED)
She looks at him, concerned.

MUM (CONT'D)
What’s wrong?

ADAM
I’m okay.

DAD
You look like you’ve been up to something.

Adam is pale and clammy, his eyes dark with shadows. His mother comes over and feels his forehead with the back of her hand. Just like Harry did.

MUM
You’re really hot.

She looks back at her husband.

MUM (CONT'D)
He’s very hot.

ADAM
I’m fine.

She looks at Adam as if wanting to say something, make an apology, but she can’t find the words. Adam’s Dad steps in. He holds up a brightly coloured bauble with a smile.

DAD
Get yourself over here.

Adam likes the idea of that and he goes to decorate the tree. Mum comes to join them as the PET SHOP BOYS hits the 1987 No 1 spot on ‘Top of the Pops’ with “ALWAYS ON MY MIND”.

After a few beats, she sings gently along with the song, almost to herself but loud enough for it feel like the apology she can’t find the words for.

(CONTINUED)
MUM
And maybe I didn’t hold you / All
those lonely, lonely times / And I
guess I never told you / I’m so
happy that your mine / If I made
you feel second best / I’m so
sorry I was blind...

Adam appreciates the gesture. She takes a few steps back and looks at the over-decorated tree.

MUM (CONT'D)
Too much?

DAD
No such thing.

He hands Adam a fairy for the tree with a knowing smile. It’s been a while since Adam’s seen it. He reaches up and puts it on the top.

DAD (CONT'D)
Okay, get together.

He has his camera on the side table, set on self-timer. The three of them gather around the tree and the flash goes off. They all smile. The Christmas lights flicker.

INT. ADAM’S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam is in bed now. His mum gives him two dissolvable painkillers that melt and fizz on his tongue. She looks at him still concerned but wants to reassure.

MUM
You’ll feel better in a jiffy.

ADAM
Mum?

MUM
Yes, sweetheart.

ADAM
Do you think any of this is real?

MUM
Does it feel real?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
Yes.

MUM
Then there you go.

A flicker of fear in Adam’s expression.

ADAM
For how long?

MUM
I can’t answer that. I suppose we don’t get to decide when it’s over.

She kisses him on the forehead.

ADAM
Will you promise me you’ll stay home tonight?

MUM
Where would we go?

ADAM
To the Walsh’s?

MUM
(a memory sparked)
The Walsh’s?

ADAM
Just promise you won’t go out. Please.

MUM
I promise. We’ll just be in the bedroom.

She leaves, closing the door. The room is thrown into darkness. Adam turns on to his side and tries to sleep, but he starts to feel sick.

Blue lights seem to flash through the curtains. And then something else: a subdued crying from the corner of the room.

(CONTINUED)
Adam peers into the shadows, sure he can see himself AGED 11, crying in the corner. Adam turns on the bedside light but there is no-one there.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Adam comes out onto the landing. He spies a crescent moon through the frosty window.

He taps gently on his parents door.

    MUM (O.S)
    What is it?

    ADAM
    I can’t sleep.

Adam pushes open the door against the thick carpet.

INT. MUM AND DAD’S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adam breathes in the smell of the room, familiar and comforting.

    MUM
    Do you want to get in?

    ADAM
    Can I?

    MUM
    Of course.

Adam’s Dad grunts and rolls over, leaving a space for Adam in-between.

    ADAM
    It smells the same in here. Aramis and Comfort fabric softener.

That makes her smile. As Dad falls back to sleep, Adam and his Mum talk in whispers, almost sensual.

    MUM
    You’d creep in here night after night saying you couldn’t sleep.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
You were scared of so many things: murderers breaking in, rabies, nuclear war. Do people still get rabies?

ADAM
Not so much.

MUM
I was desperate for you to grow up just so I could get a good night’s sleep.

ADAM
I’m sorry.

MUM
Why are you sorry? I’m the sorry one. I should have relished you driving me bananas.

Adam smiles. It softens his anxiety. Mum is silent a beat but she has a lot on her mind.

MUM (CONT'D)
After it happened, did Granny take you to Dublin?

ADAM
Yes.

MUM
That’s what we thought. Why did she want to move back to Ireland?

ADAM
She wanted nothing more to do with England. She was done with the place.

MUM
Why?

ADAM
She’d lost her daughter.

MUM
Oh. I see.

(a beat)
Is she still alive?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM

No.

MUM

Of course not. What about your Dad’s lot? I’m rather glad you didn’t go live with them.

ADAM

No.

MUM

Gosh. All gone. Were you okay over there with my mum? Did you fit in better? At school.

ADAM

I made sure I did.

She sighs heavy.

MUM

I hate that I wasn’t around for you at the time you must have needed us the most.

ADAM

That wasn’t your fault.

MUM

I hate even more that I wasn’t around for you even before. Not really.

ADAM

Why do you think that was?

MUM

Why? I don’t know. I was so anxious about it all. Restless too, for more. I’d like to think I’d have got better at it in time. Given time.

ADAM

You know when I was a teenager, even later, much later, I would plot it all out.

(CONTINUED)
MUM
What do you mean?

ADAM
All the things we might have done together. All in intricate detail. Birthdays meals at the Whitgift Centre. Alton Towers. Trips up to town. The Planetarium. London Dungeon.

MUM
I always wanted to go there.

ADAM
Holidays we might have gone on.

MUM
Disneyland?

ADAM
Yep. My 14th birthday. It rained non-stop and Space Mountain was shut for repairs. We fought the whole time.

MUM
Why did we have to fight?

ADAM
Because that’s what everyone did with their parents. They fought and bickered and pretended they were ruining each other’s lives.

MUM
Did we make up?

ADAM
We didn’t need to make up. It was enough to know that we got to come home together, back here.

His Mum smiles, sadly, the imagined memory feeling almost real. But it isn’t real. A fear creeps into the room. A knowledge that none of this can last.

She looks at Adam with growing concern as sweat appears on his forehead, his anxiety building.

(CONTINUED)
She touches his brow as Dad turns over in the bed, putting his arm around Adam, rubbing his chest. It becomes almost sensual.

Adam turns over to find it is no longer his Dad. It is Harry.

**ADAM (CONT'D)**

*What are you doing here?*

**HARRY**

*You’re okay.*

**ADAM**

*(whispering)*

*You shouldn’t be here.*

Harry kisses him. Adam resists at first but then softens his gaze, relishing the intimacy, sinking into it. Until he notices blue lights flashing through the window again, brighter this time.

**MUM**

*Adam? What’s happening? Who’s there? Someone’s here.*

She sounds increasingly panic-stricken. Adam turns over, but she’s gone. And when he turns back to Harry, he’s gone too.

Adam is alone, the blue flashing lights of a police car spiralling across the ceiling. Suddenly, he is an ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOY again. He gasps for air.

**INT. TRAIN AT VICTORIA STATION — DAY**

Adam wakes, exhaling. He is on the train at the station. Everyone is getting off. On the platform, walking away, he is sure he can see Harry.

**EXT. VICTORIA STATION — DAY**

The station is busy. Adam leaves the platform barrier and weaves through the rush-hour commuters, all ignoring him. He tries to keep his eye on Harry but loses him in the crowd.

*(CONTINUED)*
Adam pivots around to see his Mum in the distance, behind the barriers, urging him back to her. One of her eyes is missing, leaving nothing but a bloody hole.

INT. PLATFORM / TUBE - DAY

A tube roars onto the platform. Doors open. Passengers push in and out of the carriage without consideration. Adam gets in and stays standing.

As the train jerks into the tunnel, the lights flicker. Adam thinks he sees Harry in the next carriage down but when the lights come back on he is gone.

Adam is sweating now, unstable on his feet. He coughs, then again, more uncontrollable. People look up as a fear of contagion ripples down the carriage.

The train bursts onto a platform. Adam spies old posters through the windows as the tube slows: Chessington World of Adventures, Drunk Driving, AIDS Awareness. As people get off, Adam goes to sit down.

Hurtling forward through the tunnel now, Adam finds his reflection in the tube windows. He looks distorted, full of pain. It's as if his reflection is screaming, trapped in a circus mirror or a monstrous kaleidoscope. He tries to get up...

EXT. STREETS - DUSK

Adam stumbles back to his apartment, trying to avoid his reflection, like a barrage of pain made visible in the windows of passing buses and cars.

INT. TOWER ELEVATOR - DUSK

Adam staggers into the lift, his reflection bounced into infinity by the mirrored walls. He shuts his eyes and sinks to the floor.
INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The lift doors open and Adam stumbles to his flat. He calls out for help but no-one comes.

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Adam shuts the door and falls to the floor. He tries to control his breathing but he can’t. Someone is knocking at the door, louder and louder, calling his name, we don’t recognize the voice.

Adam ignores it. He staggers to the bedroom, gets himself in bed, curls himself up into a ball as a hand reaches out for him in the darkness...

INT. ADAM’S APARTMENT - DAWN

It is Harry reaching for him. He also seems shaken, as if he hasn’t slept. The dawn rises through the window behind him.

ADAM

Harry?

HARRY

It’s okay.

ADAM

What day is it?

HARRY

I wish I’d never found the baggy. I never could go anywhere without taking something.

ADAM

What day is it?

HARRY

Sunday.

ADAM

How can it still be Sunday?

Harry’s eyes redden.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
You kept screaming out for your parents in the club, over and over again. And I didn’t know what to do, so I took you back here and just lay with you until you fell asleep.

Adam is grateful for the care but is close to breaking. Tears build in his eyes but he tries to keep it in.

ADAM
I don’t think I’m very well.

HARRY
No. I don’t think you are.

ADAM
Am I sick?

Harry leaves a beat then...

HARRY
You look scared.

The emotion in Adam finally breaks.

ADAM
I am scared.

Harry pulls him close as Adam’s tears turn into sobs that sound like howls of pain.

EXT/INT. APARTMENT - MORNING INTO AFTERNOON

The sun drops lower in the sky as we push past half-built towers towards Adam’s apartment. Inside, he drifts in and out of a restless sleep. Even when awake, it feels closer to a dream.

He showers. He brushes his teeth. Studies his face in the mirror. He knows he looks worn out, consumed. He watches Harry try to make scrambled eggs in the kitchen. When he looks back to Adam, he gives him a gentle smile.

(CONTINUED)
ADAM (PRE-LAP)
I was sleeping in their bed the night they went out. I was meant to go with them, Christmas drinks at the Walsh’s house, but I didn’t want to go. Their son was always a dick to me at school so I pretended to be ill.

Adam and Harry, both exhausted and hungover, sit at the kitchen counter with the eggs barely touched by either. Maybe Harry is smoking now.

ADAM (CONT’D)
I tried to get my Mum and Dad to stay in, but they’d never miss a party.

Adam takes a sip of tea from an old mug. We recognize it from his parents’ house -- the one from CHESSINGTON ZOO. There is a knock on the door, the same knock we heard last night. Adam looks towards it.

ADAM (CONT’D)
Two police came to the door, a man and a woman. It was dark outside. Really cold too.

Flash to a memory. We open the door, back at the house. The POLICEMAN is there, it is only him we see. He looks like Harry. We stay in this memory only for a moment.

ADAM (CONT’D)
I don’t remember what she looked liked but he had kind eyes and a shadow of stubble like it was drawn on. When he told me what happened all I could think about was wanting to touch that stubble.

Adam shakes his head with a smile.

Adam takes another sip of tea. What follows is recalled without too much emotion. As if being told about someone else.

(CONTINUED)
ADAM (CONT’D)
The car crashed after skidding on black ice. Both of them had been drinking. Dad died right away but they took Mum to St Mary’s in Croydon. She died a few days later.

HARRY
Did you get to see her?

ADAM
You mean to say goodbye?

HARRY
Yeah.

Adam takes out a chip of porcelain from his mouth. It has snapped off the rim of the mug. He rubs it between thumb and finger.

ADAM
Granny thought it would scar me too much. My mum was pretty fucked up. She lost an eye when she went through the windscreen.

HARRY
Jesus.

ADAM
I went looking for that eye. I didn’t want anyone else to find it. I thought it would be by the side of the road staring up at me. I did find a tiny piece of windscreen glass. In my head it had blood on it but I’m not sure that’s true.

Harry smiles reassuringly but says nothing.

ADAM (CONT’D)
The nurse said Mum woke up once before she died. She must have been really confused waking up like that, having no-one around she knew. My dad not there. Me not there.
HARRY
I can’t even begin to imagine how you felt. How lonely you must have been.

ADAM
Truth is I’ve always felt lonely, even before. This was something else. A quiet terror. Like now I’ll always be alone. Then as I got older it kind of solidified into a knot or a ball of tangled Christmas lights.

Adam touches his solar plexus.

ADAM (CONT’D)
It’s not like I wanted to die or anything. I didn’t want to be in that car. It’s more like the future just didn’t matter so much now they weren’t around. Does that make sense?

Harry seems to understand that feeling only too well.

HARRY
Yes. I understand how easy it can be to stop caring about yourself.

He reaches out and gently strokes Adam’s arm. Adam lets that hang a moment in the air. It is reassuring for both of them to feel each other’s touch.

ADAM
It’s why these last weeks have been so extraordinary. To actually care about something. To feel that a future might be possible.

Harry can’t help but think Adam is talking about the two of them. And he feels the same way.

HARRY
Yeah.

But Adam’s expression darkens.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY (CONT'D)

In Adam we see something evolve; a decision to bring Harry further into the story. Harry shivers as if the window is letting in a draught.

ADAM
Will you come with me?

HARRY
Where to?

ADAM
Home. To where I used to live. So you can see for yourself.

HARRY
See what?

Adam doesn’t give an answer. Harry looks down at his forearm as all the hairs slowly rise.

EXT. TRAIN - DUSK

A train heads out of the city back to Sanderstead. We follow it from high above.

INT. TRAIN - DUSK

Adam is not alone this time. He holds Harry’s hand. The sunlight blasts through the window and it’s making Harry sweat.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - TWILIGHT INTO NIGHT

The once-decorated Christmas tree has been left in the driveway, brown and threadbare. Adam’s red pedal car is there too, all busted up. The wind rustles the large trees in front of the house.

HARRY
Should we be here?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
These were saplings when I was born. Can you believe that? They’re the same age as me.

Adam knocks on the front door but there is no answer. He looks through the glass. There are no lights on.

HARRY
Whose house is it?

ADAM
My parents.

HARRY
But who lives here now?

ADAM
It’s okay. You don’t need to worry.

But Harry is afraid. Adam knocks again, louder. The wind picks up; not a harsh winter wind but lighter. Delicate, more wistful. Stranger.

HARRY
Adam?

Harry’s voice sounds strained. Adam peers through into the lounge. It is dark. Nothing but shadows. He calls up to the front bedrooms.

ADAM
HELLO?

Nothing. What if they are gone? Adam passes Harry and moves towards the gate by the garage. Harry can do nothing but follow.

INT/EXT. BACK GARDEN – CONTINUOUS

Adam bangs on the textured glass door at the side of the kitchen. No answer. The lights are off. Then again on the french doors at the back of the house. Still nothing.

Adam takes some steps back into the garden for a view of the upstairs windows.

(CONTINUED)
No lights on anywhere, the curtains closed. Anxiety builds as the wind picks up. For both of them.

HARRY
We shouldn’t be here.

ADAM
(calling up)
WHERE ARE YOU?

HARRY
Adam?

Adam ignores him. He goes to the french doors. Bangs on the window again. Harder this time. Still nothing. Adam looks to Harry as if he holds the key.

ADAM
Where are they?

HARRY
Who?

Adam cups his hand over his face to look through the glass, more manic now.

ADAM
My parents. This is our house. You see the wallpaper? The table. We had fish and chips every Friday at that table so my mum could pretend we were still Catholic.

Harry is starting to freak out, his chest tight. Scared out of his mind. Terrified that Adam has lost his mind. He tries to be more forceful.

HARRY
I want to go home. Let me take you home.

ADAM
This is my home.

HARRY
It used to be. Not anymore.

ADAM
They have to be here.

(CONTINUED)
Adam desperately rattles the handle. Harry sees a flash of Adam in the reflection as a hysterical NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY tries to be let back in.

ADAM (CONT'D)
(desperate)
MUM? DAD?

Adam can feel his parents slipping away. Harry tries to pull him from the door, but Adam pushes him off, angry, afraid.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You can leave if you want. I’m not going.

It is Harry that spots them first. Then Adam. Standing through the windows, deep in the shadows of the house: Adam’s Mum and Dad. They look, for the first time, like apparitions.

ADAM (CONT'D)
MUM!
(to Harry)
Can you see them? Tell me you can see them.

In the reflection of the glass, Adam can see a terrified Harry stepping away from the doors into the darkness of the garden as his mum gets closer towards him.

The pull for his parents, his need to be with them, is too strong. He ignores Harry as he vanishes into the background. Adam bangs his fist on the window one more time.

ADAM (CONT'D)
(desperate)
Please. Let me in.

His fist shatters a pane of glass into thousands of tiny pieces, not like normal glass but like a shattered windscreen of a car.

INT. MUM AND DAD’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Adam wakes in his parents bed to find Mum and Dad looking out the window, whispering to each other, the light soft.

(CONTINUED)
They seem older, clothes more worn. There is a dust sheet over the dressing table.

Mum seems resistant to something that Dad is saying but Adam can’t hear the words.

ADAM
Why didn’t you let us in?

MUM
(turning around)
You’re awake.

ADAM
Is he here? Harry.

MUM
No.

Mum sits beside him and lifts up his hand. There are no cuts from the broken window, only a raised red scar on his thumb. As she rubs it gently, it fades.

MUM (CONT'D)
But we did see him.

ADAM
I really wanted you to meet him. Him to meet you.

MUM
I know. But I don’t think it works like that.

DAD
He seemed like a handsome fella mind you.

MUM
Is he a special friend?

ADAM
You mean boyfriend? You can say the word.

MUM
Is he your boyfriend?

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
I don’t know. I think so.

MUM
Are the two of you in love?

ADAM
In love?

Adam lets out a chuckle. As if the idea is preposterous. As if he doesn’t quite believe Harry could be in love with him. Dad comes over and sits on the bed alongside them.

MUM
Why’s that so strange?

ADAM
I don’t know. I don’t think I’ve been in love before. Not really. I’m not sure what it’s meant to feel like.

MUM
Oh sweetheart.

DAD
He certainly seems to care about you, a whole heap. In my not so humble opinion.

(a beat)
Do you think you’d like to be in love with him?

ADAM
Yes.

Saying it out-loud has a profound effect on Adam. That makes his parents happy. There is a long beat. Mum and Dad look at each other and smile sadly. They know what has to come next. Adam knows it too. It has drifted into the room like a ghost.

DAD
Son --

ADAM
Don’t say it.

(continues)
DAD
We have to.

ADAM
Please don’t.

DAD
We think it’s best you don’t come visit us anymore.

ADAM
Mum?

MUM
(reluctantly)
You’re going to keep coming and coming, I just know you are. We can see what it’s doing to you.

ADAM
I don’t care what it’s doing to me.

He pulls his parents towards him into the bed.

MUM
Yes you do.

ADAM
What if I come less? Just once in a while, now and then. Only at Christmas.

DAD
You have to have known this wouldn’t last forever.

ADAM
I’m not asking for forever but it’s not been long enough. It’s not been anywhere near close to long enough.

MUM
How could it ever be?

Dad gently takes control.

(CONTINUED)
DAD
Listen. I’ve got an idea. How about we go to your favorite place in the whole bloody world? I’m sure it’s still there.

MUM
Next best thing to Disneyland.

DAD
And a damn sight cheaper.

Adam laughs gently.

DAD (CONT'D)
What do you think?

MUM
Tiger?

Adam nods. He knows it is the right choice, the only and inevitable choice.

INT. MINICAB - LATE AFTERNOON
The three of them sit silently in the back of a taxi as they drive towards Croydon.

EXT/INT. WHITGIFT CENTRE - LATE AFTERNOON
The family arrive at the WHITGIFT CENTRE, a brutalist concrete shopping centre, faded, falling apart. Inside, it is virtually empty as they take the escalator to the ground floor.

INT. AMERICAN THEMED RESTAURANT - DUSK
The restaurant is adorned with American flags and cheap paraphernalia. Adam sits opposite his parents, who both try to be light and jovial. There is no-one else there.

The waitress comes over but her eye contact is only with Adam. He tries to summon the same spirit as his parents. To give this ‘last supper’ some joy.

ADAM
It’s not very busy.
WAITRESS
No-one comes anymore. I’m amazed we’re still open.

ADAM
It was one of my favorite places as a kid.

WAITRESS
Uh-huh.

He looks at the menu. His parents too. The waitress is silent. She doesn’t look in their direction.

ADAM
(to the waitress)
Can we get the family special?

WAITRESS
It’s a lot of food.

ADAM
That’s fine.

She smiles and leaves. A long beat.

DAD
I want to ask something.

MUM
Oh God. Don’t ask him.

DAD
I have to.
(to Adam)
Was it quick?

MUM
Jesus. I told you not to.

DAD
How can you not want to know?

MUM
What if it was slow and horribly painful?

DAD
What difference does it make?
MUM
It makes a big difference.

ADAM
It was quick.

MUM
It was?

ADAM
Yes.

MUM
For both of us?

ADAM
(lying)
Yes.

MUM
You don’t look like you’re sure.
Don’t be fibbing. No secrets now.

ADAM
It was quick.

MUM
Okay. Phew. That’s a relief of sorts. It’s been playing on my mind.

The waitress arrives quicker than expected with the ‘family special’, a large tray of burgers, shakes and fries.

WAITRESS
Enjoy.

ADAM
Thank you.

She leaves them staring at the mountain of food.

DAD
You know I’m not really very hungry.

MUM
Me neither. Can we even eat?

(CONTINUED)
They start to laugh. It’s contagious, the three of them together. After a while, the laughs fade. Mum and Dad seem tired, eyes watery and distant as if whatever exists inside is fading.

DAD
What do you think we should say to each other? I’m not sure I’ve much wisdom to share. Maybe Adam, being older, should be sharing some with us!

ADAM
Maybe we don’t need to say anything.

DAD
Maybe. Although I will say that getting to know you has made us very proud.

ADAM
I’m not sure I’ve done much to be proud of. I’ve muddled through at best.

DAD
But you’ve got through it, some very tough times, I’m sure. And you’re still here. That’s what we’re proud of.

Adam throat tightens. Dad’s voice gets quiet. His eyes cloud over. He seems a little drunk.

DAD (CONT’D)
Wow. Fuck. I’m feeling, I don’t know what I’m feeling...

ADAM
Dad?

DAD
Yes, son.

(CONTINUED)
ADAM
(his voice cracking)
Stay a bit longer.

DAD
I don’t think so.

Adam’s Mum takes her husband’s hand.

MUM
I love you, darling.

DAD
You sure? Sometimes I was never so sure.

MUM
Whatever problems we had, I’m glad
I get to be with you at the end.

DAD
Me too. You always did feel a
little bit like my lifeboat.

She reaches out and strokes his face, gently. Kisses him.
Dad likes that. He looks back at Adam.

DAD (CONT'D)
I know I was never good at saying
it -- I couldn’t get the words
out, but I do love you, very much.
Somehow even more now that I know
you.

That is almost too much for Adam, his eyes filling with
tears, his face crumpling. His Dad takes his hand and
holds it tight.

DAD (CONT'D)
It’s important you believe me.

ADAM
I do. And I love you too Dad.

Suddenly his Dad exhales heavy and slumps in his chair,
life draining from his eyes.

ADAM (CONT'D)
(voice breaking)
Did you hear me? Dad?

(CONTINUED)
Mum gasps, reaches for her eye, inhaling sharply, her eyes tightly closed, terrified.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Mum?

Her eyes open wide in a panic.

MUM
Adam? Are you there?
ADAM
Yes.

MUM
I can’t see you. Why can’t I see you? Are you there?

Adam reaches out and takes the hand that covers her eye. He brings it back to the table.

ADAM
I’m here, Mum.

MUM
Oh yes. There you are. I can feel you. Your skin is warm.

ADAM
It’s okay. I’m here.

Adam looks down at her hand now in his own, her skin almost transparent like she is now eighty years old, as if they have had a full life together.

MUM
Promise me you’ll try with this Harry boy. I’d have liked him, I just know it.
(a beat)
He might need a bit of looking after mind you. Such a sad face.

Adam doesn’t answer.

MUM (CONT'D)
You hear me?
ADAM
Yes.

(CONTINUED)
MUM
Good. That’s good. I hope you can make each other a little happier.

She starts to sway a little as if she is seeing a song in her head, drifting away, but with a slight smile.

ADAM
Mum?

MUM
(her voice faint)
Are you still there?

ADAM
Yes.

MUM
You’re such a kind and gentle boy.

And then she is gone. They are both gone. Adam sits alone in the restaurant surrounded by burgers and fries, tears streaming down his face.

INT. TRAIN - TWILIGHT

Adam returns on a busy train, surrounded by people who know nothing of what he’s been through, laughing, talking, life carrying on.

EXT.INT. TOWER - NIGHT

Adam returns to his block to find the alarm going off, just like on the first night. No-one seems to have left the building.

Adam cranes his neck and looks up at the tower, only a few lights on. He hesitates but decides to enter anyway. He has someone he wants to see.

As Adam heads into the lobby, we stay outside. We look up to catch the flicker of a TV coming from the sixth floor. The alarm suddenly stops.
INT. TOWER ELEVATOR - NIGHT

As the lift rises through the floors, Adam's reflection seems normal. He looks into that image and gives himself a timid smile.

He takes a photograph from his pocket: the one his Dad took of the three of them around the tree. Only now the photo is old and faded and Adam is eleven-years old.

Adam feels a sense of calm looking at the photo, a sense of something having changed, and rather than put it back in his pocket, he finds a place for it in his wallet.

The lift reaches Adam's floor. As the door opens, he makes a decision. He presses the button for the sixth floor.

At first as he descends, he smiles. He checks his hair in the many mirrors. But slowly -- the closer he gets to the sixth floor, his mood changes. He can feel something.

INT. SIXTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A strange reality hits Adam. He has never been to Harry's apartment. He doesn't know which flat is his. But he can hear a television playing.

Adam follows the sound down the long corridor, louder and louder until he's finally outside a door. He knocks -- no answer.

He knocks again. Nothing. Adam can feel in his gut that something is wrong. He tries the handle. It is unlocked and the door opens.

INT. HARRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The smell hits Adam first, stale and fetid. Dirty dishes and take-away boxes festering with mould. An old horror film plays on the TV. Adam finds empty baggies on the kitchen counter.

He turns off the TV with the remote control. Silence now. He looks towards the bedroom, door closed. Every muscle stiffens.
ADAM
(a near whisper)
Harry?

Adam walks towards the door, fear building with each slow step. His fingers hover over the handle. Sliding the door open, Adam is hit by a sickening stench.

He looks away. His heart racing. Adam tries to catch his breath. Then something dawns on him, a truth perhaps he has always known.

He looks back to find Harry curled up on the bed, turned away, foetal position. He wears the very same clothes he wore on that first night. And there is the same bottle of Japanese whisky by his side -- empty. It’s clear from the state of his body that he’s been there some time.

Adam edges towards Harry and sits by the side of the bed. By the man he has fallen in love with. He reaches out to touch the body but before he finds contact...

A noise. The front door opening and closing. Adam gets up from the bed and walks out of the bedroom. He finds Harry standing there, wearing the same clothes as the body in the bed and is confused, agitated.

HARRY
I came to see you but you didn’t answer the door. Why are you down here?

ADAM
(barely a whisper)
I came to find you.

Harry notices the half-empty bottle of whisky now held in his hand as if he had no idea it was there. It sparks some kind of painful memory.

HARRY
I don’t want you down here. You shouldn’t be here.

Adam edges closer, keeping Harry from the bedroom door.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY (CONT'D)
I don’t want you to see my place
like this. Not like this. I don’t
understand why you’re here.

ADAM
I said goodbye to them and came to
find you.

But Harry isn’t listening. It’s as if Harry is piecing
together what happened to him. The truth bubbling up. An
agitation grows in him, a quiet terror. He spots the
empty baggies on the kitchen counter. He picks one up.

ADAM (CONT'D)
It’s okay, Harry.

HARRY
But it’s not okay.

Harry rubs his chest with his fist as if he has a knot of
pain stopping him breathe. We have seen Adam do this same
action.

Adam comes closer as Harry thumps his chest harder and
harder. In the window’s reflection, and only there, Harry
sees himself scream. Adam grabs Harry’s fist in his own
hand. Holds it tight. Harry’s grip softens.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Adam?

ADAM
I’m here.

Harry’s eyes fill with tears, drowsier all of a sudden,
drugs and drink through his veins.

HARRY
I was so frightened. That night. I
just needed to not be by myself.

ADAM
And I’m sorry I was so scared. To
let you in.

But Harry’s focus is now on the bedroom behind. As if he
remembers what happened to him, as if somehow he’s always
known.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
I’m in there, aren’t I?

ADAM
Let’s just go upstairs.

HARRY
I can smell it, taste it in the
back of my throat.

He looks at Adam not in shock, nor anger, but terrible
sadness. His face collapses on the brink of tears.

HARRY (CONT’D)
How come no-one found me? Where
are my friends? My brother and
sister. Where are my mum and dad?

ADAM
I found you.

HARRY
But I don’t want you to see me
like that. Not like that. In
there.

Harry seems so ashamed with himself, disgusted almost --
with the very idea of himself. Adam knows what to say. He
has never been so sure of anything.

ADAM
You are not in there. This is you,
here. With me.

Adam grabs hold of Harry as he breaks into sobs. Letting
out the pain he has stored for so long. Adam knows that
all that matters in this moment is that he eases Harry’s
pain. That is what love means. We push in close as they
kiss through Harry’s tears.

INT. ADAM’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

It is dark, floating free from the confines of the tower.
We are back in Adam’s bed now. He has let him in. They
lie together facing each other at first.

(CONTINUED)
Harry is grateful. They are silent a moment. Harry is getting sleepier and sleepier.

HARRY
I saw her. Your mum. Your dad too. At the house.

ADAM
They saw you too.

HARRY
They did?

ADAM
My dad said you looked like a handsome fella. They’d have liked you. They both would.

HARRY
That’s good to know. Did you get to say everything you wanted to say?

ADAM
I don’t know. I got to be with them

HARRY
It’s good that you were all together.

ADAM
Yeah.

A long beat. Harry looks at Adam, glad he is not alone. Both of them glad to not be alone.

HARRY
I’m scared.

ADAM
I know.

HARRY
What do you think happens now?

ADAM
I don’t know.

(CONTINUED)
HARRY
How long will this last?

A beat. A memory of something Adam’s Mum said to him.

ADAM
I can’t answer that. I suppose we don’t get to decide when it’s over.

(then)
For now, why don’t I just hold you a bit longer.

Harry looks as if he may be about to say something but decides against it. They don’t need to declare their love. Actions are enough.

Harry turns over and lets Adam hold him from behind. The same position Harry was in downstairs. But now he is no longer by himself.

HARRY
(barely a whisper)
It’s so quiet in here. I never could stand how quiet this place was. Will you put a record on?

ADAM
What would you like?

HARRY
You choose.

The piano introduction to THE POWER OF LOVE by FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD starts to play. We don’t need to know how. Adam whispers with the opening words.

ADAM
I’ll protect you from the hooded claw / Keep the vampires from your door.

Harry smiles.

As the song builds, Adam holds Harry tighter, comforted at last, cared for at last, no longer strangers. Harry’s breathing slows.

“Love is the light, scaring darkness away”.

(CONTINUED)
As the music soars, we pull away from them. It seems like they are almost dancing, swaying together, for how long we won't ever know.

Further and further we come. Out of the room. Spiralling. Into the night. Adam and Harry fall away as we rise into the stars.

Finally, as the music crescendos, Adam and Harry are no more than a glint in the dark sky.

A guide not a warning.

“Make love your goal”.

“THE POWER OF LOVE” CONTINUES AS THE END CREDITS ROLL