

Shopping Mad

By

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EXT. HIGH STREET - PEDESTRIAN CROSSING - DAY

RICHARD, mid 30s, is one of several people waiting for the traffic lights to let him cross.

He's slightly wild-looking, tense, muttering - the sort you'd cross the street to avoid in case you accidentally established eye contact.

RICHARD
(under his breath)
Come on. Come on.
(too loud)
Come on!

A couple of people turn to look at him. He doesn't even notice. He stares intently at the red man that tells him not to cross. He fidgets impatiently, like a runner before a race.

The traffic stops, the beeping starts, and the green man appears. People begin to cross in an orderly fashion.

Richard barges through. No social graces here. People mutter and complain. He doesn't notice.

He looks up, a faint sense of awe and a greedy smile on his face. He is here. Stage one of his plan is complete.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

He's like a football fan before the big game, savouring the atmosphere.

He picks up a basket, and flexes his fingers experimentally around the handles, testing it out like a dueller selecting his weapon.

INT. SUPERMARKET - FRUIT AND VEG SECTION - DAY

Richard walks the aisles of the supermarket nervously, like a caged animal.

He picks up various vegetables and examines them minutely, puzzled. He puts them back. Sometimes he puts one in his basket, then returns and puts it back moments later.

He swaps the basket from hand to hand, flexing his red lined fingers absent-mindedly.

INT. SUPERMARKET - READY MEALS SECTION - DAY

Richard stands there, transfixed, confused, paralysed with indecision. His gaze flicks to different things as he tries to work out what to do.

RICHARD (V.O.)

None of these are what is needed.
None are 'Right' with a capital R.
Pasta? Everybody cooks pasta. A
joint of meat? What if she doesn't
like meat?

(beat)

It's too early to know what she
likes and what she doesn't. This is
a fucking minefield.

(beat)

Details. It all depends on the
details.

He picks up some soup then winces at his own stupidity.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)

Soup? What kind of a starter is
soup?

(beat)

This isn't the fucking seventies.

He throws it contemptuously back onto the shelf.

Striding down the aisle, he sees them, and grabs them.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)

Salmon steaks. That's more like it.
Classy, like James Fucking Bond.

He says the last three words aloud, grinning triumphantly.

He stops - what miracle is this? He picks up a packet of new potatoes that lie next to the salmon.

A sign above the shelf says "OFFER: Salmon AND New Potatoes: £5.99".

He checks the salmon price.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)

Wait a minute! The salmon's £4.99
anyway!

He looks at the potatoes.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
The potatoes are £1.79. So I'm
saving...

He tries to work it out.

He gives up, and throws the potatoes into his basket.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
I'm saving. That, Richard, is a
fucking triumph.

He carries on down the aisle.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
Means it's got to be white wine.
Fish equals white wine. She'll
know, then. She'll know I know.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MUSIC AND BOOKS AISLE - DAY

Richard is looking through the CDs.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
Come on. There's got to be
something.

He picks out a "Best of Eva Cassidy" CD. Looks at the front,
looks at the back. That's *it!*

INT. RICHARD'S FLAT - EVENING

Candlelight. Eva Cassidy is playing in the background. The
glint of candle on cutlery. Gentle laughter between a sexy
man and a sexy woman. Confident laughter. The sort of
laughter that ends up in sex.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MUSIC AND BOOKS AISLE - DAY

Into the basket goes Eva.

Richard chuckles, throatily.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
All you have to do is be there...

RICHARD
...and don't fuck it up.
(beat)
Like you Always. Fucking. Do.

(CONTINUED)

He punches his own forehead with the last three words. Other shoppers move away.

RICHARD

Now, what else? What goes with
salmon?

He studies the picture on the front of the salmon. There's some green vegetables on there.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Jesus, what's that?

INT. SUPERMARKET - FRUIT AND VEG SECTION - DAY

He's holding the packet up next to baskets of veg, to make sure he gets the right ones.

Green beans go in. He picks up some broccoli. He puts it in. Takes a step. Throws it back out with a grimace. Starts to walk away. Looks at the picture again. Shrugs. Goes back for the broccoli.

Richard fixes a passerby with a manic grin.

RICHARD

(chuckling)

Must be fucking love, eh?

He's met with a confused, frightened glance, but he doesn't notice.

He studies the basket. Something is wrong.

INT. SUPERMARKET - MUSIC AND BOOKS AISLE - DAY

Back goes the Eva Cassidy CD. He seizes a James Blunt CD and tosses it into the basket.

RICHARD (V.O.)

Pure shite, of course, but it's
bound to get her wet.

RICHARD

Now, where's the bread?

INT. SUPERMARKET - FRIDGE SECTION - DAY

RICHARD (V.O.)
Starter, starter, starter.

He grabs some paté.

INT. RICHARD'S FLAT - EVENING

James Blunt is the music now providing the atmosphere.

Richard's voice is trying to become Barry White's voice.

RICHARD
Oh, I'm glad you like the paté.
It's one of my favourites.

INT. SUPERMARKET - FRIDGE SECTION - DAY

The paté flies into the basket.

INT. SUPERMARKET - WINE AISLE - DAY

Richard scans the huge array of wine. He looks at some of the price labels.

RICHARD
Jesus Christ!

A bottle of incredibly cheap white wine goes in the basket.

INT. SUPERMARKET - BEER AISLE - DAY

A fourpack of stella is unceremoniously dumped in the basket on top of the potatoes.

RICHARD
(determined)
Now. Pudding.

INT. SUPERMARKET - FROZEN DESSERT AISLE - DAY

Richard has several desserts out on the floor and is looking desperately at the back of all the packets.

RICHARD
Two hours... Two hours... Two
hours...

(CONTINUED)

He looks at his watch. It's six o'clock.

He relaxes.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Eight o'clock. We'll still be
talking.

He throws one in the basket. Leaves the others desserts
lying on the floor.

INT. SUPERMARKET - WINE AISLE - DAY

Another bottle of the cheap white goes in, stashed into the
overflowing basket.

He walks quickly through the supermarket, towards the
checkout. His work here is done.

RICHARD (V.O.)
Six o'clock. In three hours, we
could be lying in my bed. We could
be...

He laughs out loud, an unexpected noise for those around
him, who stare at him nervously and edge away. He notices
this time, but it just makes him laugh more. They just don't
get it!

INT. SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUT - DAY

The tills are all busy. Richard wanders the aisles, until he
carefully selects and joins a queue.

At the front is an old lady.

He stands there, looking nervously at the items in his
basket. Has he forgotten anything?

He closes his eyes, hums, and then-

RICHARD
(loud)
Fuck!

-when he thinks of something that upsets him, but he calms
himself, and begins to hum again.

He looks at his watch again, and impatiently looks ahead to
the little old lady. Her card isn't working or something,
and the girl on the till is patiently trying it again.

(CONTINUED)

RICHARD

(quiet)

Come on, come on.

(louder)

Fucking come on!

Everyone looks round at him, and he looks at them, completely puzzled. Why are they looking at him?

The girl gets the card to work, and they all shuffle forwards...

LATER

RICHARD

(mutters)

Salmon, twenty minutes. No.

Potatoes, twenty minutes. Salmon,
ten minutes. Shit.

(nervous)

Toast for the paté, two minutes.

Dessert, two hours. No, that's from
now. Salmon, fifteen minutes.

Thirty minutes?

The customer in front of him gathers their bags and leaves, and the girl looks at the items he has arranged on the conveyor belt.

CHECKOUT GIRL

Hi there, do you need any help
packing today?

Richard gazes studiously at his food on the conveyor belt, blushing heavily, and shakes his head.

RICHARD

(quiet)

Nu-huh.

CHECKOUT GIRL

This is a nice looking meal.
Entertaining, are we?

He looks up, panicked. His eyes glow wild. She is smiling at the checkout girl at the next aisle. He sees the end of that glance. He looks over. That girl's grinning too. He looks back and forth between them. They're laughing at him.

RICHARD (V.O.)

(furious)

It's a joke to them. A big fucking
joke. They think I can't entertain.

(CONTINUED)

He looks at the items that the girl is packing into a bag.
He looks at the potatoes.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
Potatoes? Why am I buying fucking
potatoes?

He snatches the wine and bag out of her hands just as she is
about to put it in the bag. She's startled. He stashes it
into the bag, angrily.

RICHARD (V.O.) (CONT.)
This wine! Three pounds
ninety-nine. You can't entertain on
wine that costs three pounds ninety
fucking nine.

RICHARD
(mutters)
How much?

CHECKOUT GIRL
Sorry?

RICHARD
(shouts)
How much?

He sees the total on the till, and reels off three notes to
cover it. He gasps with impotent rage, and hangs his head as
he waits for his change, refusing to meet her eye.

When she hands him some coins, he spills them, as he turns
to leave.

CHECKOUT GIRL
Your change, Sir. Have a nice-

He's gone, coins rolling and rattling on the floor.

CHECKOUT GIRL (CONT.)
-day.

She shrugs at the girl who is laughing at the next till -
what can you do? - and then turns to the next customer.

CHECKOUT GIRL (CONT.)
Hi there, do you need any help
packing today?

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Richard, carrying his bag, is sweating and breathing heavily. He stands by a large window that looks into the supermarket, and he holds his hand up to shield the sun. He looks in at the checkout girl.

RICHARD

That bitch! That fucking bitch!

RICHARD (V.O.)

(gently, to the checkout girl)
Today was the day. I was going to
ask you today.

RICHARD

Jesus!

He turns and walks quickly down the street, brushing past people without noticing them.

INT. RICHARD'S FLAT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Richard sits at his kitchen table. It's a shabby kitchen, sparse and cheap. All the items are laid out in front of him. He is examining the dates on each item.

RICHARD

A week. Four days. Two weeks. Four
days...

RICHARD (V.O.)

Fuck it. They're all in date.
(steels himself)
I'll ask her tomorrow.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK