

STOP

by

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INT. LIVERPOOL - BUNGALOW - NIGHT

A row of houses line a dusty street of cars and papery trees. A blank white house proud at the end.

A HAND engulfs it, scarred fingers fitting a bright red door to the front. We see the street's true nature-

A model village, lit by headlamps in a bare living room. Above it: MARK LYNE (40s), dark brow taut, grim form dwarfing the setpiece.

A TV BUZZES behind him: *Whistle Stop Way*, a 90s STOP-MOTION TV SHOW-

W.S.W. NARRATOR

It's another lovely day in *Whistle Stop Way*. And what do you think we'll find today? Maybe a story? Maybe a friend? And maybe a family too? Let's just wait and see.

Mark PAUSES the TV, staring longingly at a LAUGHING clay family: stout Mr. Man, pretty Lady Goldie, little Good Lad.

He snaps photos of his model, uploading them to a website: LYNE CARPENTRY & TOYS - COMING SOON.

EXT. LIVERPOOL - CUL DE SAC - LYNE HOME - DAY

A tall white house, balloons tied to the bright red door. Mark sets his model down, envelope on top. He RINGS the bell. He DASHES behind a shrub. The door OPENS-

LIAM (18) steps out, '18 TODAY' badge proud. A hearing aid in one scarred ear. He SAGS, carrying the model inside.

Mark watches on, relief mingled with fear.

INT. LIVERPOOL - WAREHOUSE - DAY - CONT.

Sunlight blares through a garage door. LADDISH WORKERS CHAT, overalls clean. Mark SANDS planks nearby, caked in sawdust.

PAUL (30s) saunters past, KNOCKING his arm. The lads LAUGH. Mark tenses. He takes a DEEP BREATH. And carries on.

Just as JULES (40s) trudges in, blonde hair kempt: 'no shit today' mode. She's clutching Mark's model.

Mark freezes. She marches on, THUDDING the model in his lap. A new letter on top.

(CONTINUED)

JULES

Stop. You hear me? Just stop.

She strides out. Mark opens the letter...he SAGS. Just as the burnt-out MANAGER (50s) approaches, beckoning him aside.

INT. SIDE OFFICE - DAY

Mark sits stunned, manager in guilty mid-flow-

MANAGER

I'm not singling you out. It's just you've got the most experience and, we just can't afford it now.

Mark can barely read the P45 before him.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Mark trudges out. He stops. Fear crosses his face. Paul has grabbed his model, LAUGHING with the lads. Mark DASHES over-

MARK

Stop. Please. Give it back, alright? I need it. Give it back, please!

PAUL

She weren't happy, were she? You fucking up again? Think your lad's a bit old for this now eh?

MARK

Just stop, alright?! I need it!

Paul shrugs. He holds it out. Mark reaches. And-

Paul lets go. SMACK! It cracks. The lads JEER. Mark's eyes water. His hands shake.

He SNATCHES a hammer, DIVES at Paul, and-

CUT TO BLACK

INT. LIVERPOOL - PROBATION OFFICE - DAY

Mark sits slumped in a meeting room, left eye bruised. Across a polished desk: CATHERINE (40s, black), tough but fair probation officer, painted nails neat.

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE

Try and see this as a good thing.

MARK

How is any of this a good thing?

CATHERINE

Well for one, the ladies love a black eye. Still, I would've worn goggles. All those horror stories of lads losing their sight. Letter?

Mark hands her Jules' letter: Child Maintenance Services.

CATHERINE (CONT.)

Yep. Said as much on the phone.

MARK

What's this mean for me?

CATHERINE

It means Jules doesn't want you contributing anymore. So CMS'll wipe the debt. Which means no more cuts out your wages.

MARK

Just the last one then?

CATHERINE

People lose their jobs everyday Mark. Doesn't mean you've failed. Or that you've lost control.

Mark bristles.

CATHERINE (CONT.)

You've still got options. Your website. Anyone reach out yet?

MARK

Oh yeah. They'd just rather I top myself than buy anything.

Catherine softens, leaning in.

CATHERINE

You've got a month left, Mark. And honestly, you've been great. Very easy to manage. You know what to do: forget idiots, stick to your conditions, and find a job ASAP. Because come final meeting, I'm

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE (cont'd)  
gunning for a good word for you.  
Trust me: you've got this.

Mark doesn't look convinced.

INT. PROBATION OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Mark peers at a noticeboard. A MISSING POSTER looms-

INSERT: 'ARON ZASLAWSKI (45, dark beard). Based in Anfield.  
Last known location: Leeds. If spotted, dial 999 and tell  
the police. Thank you.'

EXT. LIVERPOOL - STREET - DAY

Early evening. Mark treads alone, dwarfed by looming  
semi-detached houses, cracked model held close.

A black cat sprints across his path. He flinches from it.

INT. LIVERPOOL - BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Mark lies prone in the living room, a plate of tinned tuna  
and sad salad left untouched. CMS letters sit piled on the  
table. His model lies in the corner. The TV FLICKERS-

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)  
Another blow to families struggling  
with the weekly shop, as 11.5%  
interest rates force leading  
supermarkets to hike milk, bread  
and meat prices to record-high-

Mark's phone BLARES. He JOLTS, snatching it up-

INSERT: LIAM

and jabs ANSWER-

MARK  
Alright mate? You have a good day,  
yeah? Get loads of pressies?

LIAM (V.O.)  
Presents.

MARK  
Right right. All grown up now. You  
get anything special?

(CONTINUED)

LIAM (V.O.)

Yeah. Your model. It was nice.

MARK

Watched that all the time when you were little. Sat right in my lap and said all the words.

LIAM (V.O.)

I know Mum gave it back. You can't do this, Dad. She said Probation's said you lost your job?

MARK

I know mate. But I'll be fine. Really. You know I love you, right?

BEAT.

LIAM (V.O.)

I'm looking at unis. There's a proper arts course on my list.

Mark perks up.

MARK

Not footie?

LIAM (V.O.)

Changed my mind. It'll cost a bit but, Mum said she'd make it work.

MARK

I could help pay for it, like?

LIAM (V.O.)

No. She doesn't want that.

MARK

What about you? What do you want?

LIAM (V.O.)

Gotta go. Bye Dad.

Liam HANGS UP.

Mark FLIPS his plate, breathing bullish. He stalks to his model, raises a foot, and-

The phone RINGS in his hand: UNKNOWN NUMBER. Mark peers unsure...and answers.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Hello?

MALE CALLER (V.O.)

Mark Lyne? Of Lyne Carpentry?

MARK

Speaking.

MALE CALLER (V.O.)

Great! Got it right first time. Always the best time. Sorry to bother you so late Mr Lyne. My name's Tim. Tim Mouldin.

MARK

Right. What's this about?

TIM (V.O.)

I found your services just today. That set you put up? *Whistle Stop Way*? Lovely! Know it miles off. I'm hoping you can help me.

MARK

What, you want a model doing?

TIM (V.O.)

In a way. I get nostalgic y'see. All those old stop-motion shows years ago: *Chigley*, *Trumpton*, *Thomas the Tank*, you name it. But *Whistle Stop Way* was my go-to. Got me into my own little projects. But now I'm going bigger. So I need a good pair of hands.

MARK

Well I don't know mate. I really just do furniture and that. Sets take time. Plus the shipping's-

TIM (V.O.)

No shipping! I'd have you come up and make them here in Leeds. In return, I'd feed you, board you-

MARK

Hang on hang on, Leeds?! Mate I'm not really supposed to-

(CONTINUED)

TIM (V.O.)  
And five grand in it for you.

Mark sits up.

MARK  
Five grand?

TIM (V.O.)  
For a week's work. I'm generous  
like that. What do you reckon?

Mark dithers, glancing at a photo of Jules and Liam. BEAT.

INT. LANCASHIRE - COUNTRYSIDE - TRAIN - DAY

Mark sits alone, suitcase cramped between legs, watching a  
HAPPY FAMILY nearby. A PUNCH & JUDY poster looms behind him.

EXT. LEEDS - TRAIN STATION - DAY

Mark steps onto the empty platform. All alone.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - DAY

Mark treads the cobbled paths. All alone.

EXT. MODEL VILLAGE - DAY

Winding little streets and waterways. Thatched houses flank  
the paths, dotted with blank-faced dolls. A tad unnerving.

Mark peers over the tiny world, finally glimpsing-

TIM MOULDIN (late 30s): shirt tucked-in, glasses fogged,  
smile crooked as he shows FAMILIES a model clayworks.

TIM  
This is where the magic happens. He  
takes all the waste, molds it into  
shape. A little pressure to toughen  
it up, and it's ready for using.

The families stroll on. Just as MR. GAULT (50s) approaches,  
hands on hips.

GAULT  
How many times, Tim? You're here to  
clean up. Not make friends.

(CONTINUED)



TIM  
I'm sorry Mr. Gault. I just like-

GAULT  
You're overstepping your mark. From  
now on, just tow the line.

Gault trudges off. Tim stays frozen.

MARK  
Er, Tim?

Tim BEAMS. He ambles over, lending a powerful hand-shake.

TIM  
Mark! You made it! Oh it's a joy to  
see you my friend, an absolute joy!  
I see you've come prepared?

MARK  
Aye. Like my own stuff. That OK?

TIM  
Whatever works for you, my friend.

EXT. VILLAGE - ALLEY - DAY

Mark paces rapidly. Tim lumbers behind.

TIM  
Slow down! I'm showing you the way,  
remember?

Mark slows down embarrassed. Tim strides ahead.

EXT. VILLAGE - RURAL LANE - DAY

Halfway down the winding lane, Mark and Tim reach a wooden  
gate. Before it, upon a muddy embankment-

A faded red-brick house, shrouded by moss and shadow.  
Rustic, if foreboding.

INT. TIM'S HOME - DAY - CONT.

Tim leads Mark into a classic homely hallway.

TIM  
Welcome to my humble abode.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Wow. Thought it'd be er-

TIM

Smaller? Get it all the time. Well, not all the time. I don't get out enough for it to be all the time. Silly me. Fancy a tour?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tatty couches, spiral rug, citronella plants. A black box TV squats above an ancient VHS player. Mark inspects a stack of tapes. *Whistle Way Stop: The Complete Series* rests on top.

MARK

Didn't fancy updating it all?

TIM

Why bother? Works the way it is.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Red-brick walls, retrofit countertops. Tim hovers crooked in the middle, BOILING the kettle. Mark gazes at a familiar clay family on the windowsill: Mr. Man, Lady Goldie, and Good Lad. His left ear is bruised.

TIM

You've brought your set, right?

Mark opens his bag, setting his broken model down. Tim studies it like treasure.

TIM (CONT.)

Beautiful. But what happened here?

MARK

Got broke, like. Not my fault.

TIM

Oh dear. Ah well, can't be perfect can we? I should know. Show you?

INT. WORKROOM - DAY

Crumbled brickwork. A back-door faces the sloping garden. A vast deep-freeze HUMS, bulging canvas bags beside it. Tim hovers at a sturdy worktable, white cloth hiding something beneath. Mark SNIFFS intrigued.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Chocolate?

TIM

Cocoa butter. For stearic acid.  
Makes the dolls smell nice. And the  
figures aren't bad either.

He LAUGHS AWKWARDLY-

TIM (CONT.)

Only joking. I don't get girls.

Tim unfurls the cloth. A white clay head stares back, stoic  
male features uncanny in the dim light.

MARK

Christ. What's that for?

TIM

Wait and see. Hungry, young man?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark stares stunned at his plate: tender pink meat, perfect  
roast veg. Tim leans in hopeful. Mark risks a taste-

MARK

Oh my God.

TIM

That's a good sign. Look like you  
haven't had a proper meal in ages.  
You don't cook at home?

MARK

Not well. Your Mum teach you then?

TIM

Bits and bobs. Not much growing up,  
mind. Had to make her own keepsake  
just to pass on down. Hang on.

Tim ambles to and from a shelf, proudly placing down an old  
red mixing bowl, flittered with cracks. A true heirloom.

TIM (CONT.)

There you are. What do you think?

Mark inspects the speckled surface: 'this guy's a nutjob'.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Class that. Proper class. Your Dad  
give you anything?

Tim's chewing slows.

TIM

He was more of a taker. Yourself?

Mark's chewing slows.

MARK

Nothing special.

TIM

Oh. Well never mind. What got you  
into it? *Whistle Stop*, I mean?

MARK

Watched it yonks ago. Showed my lad  
when he was little.

TIM

Keeping it alive. Good man! I used  
to come home for lunch and park  
myself, waiting for the whistle-

Tim WHISTLES a jaunty tune: the *Whistle Stop Way* theme song.

TIM (CONT.)

Classic. Dad had to drag me away to  
get back in time. Strong hands he  
had. Very strong.

Tim rubs his neck, lost in thought. BEAT.

TIM (CONT.)

Shame they only made 13 episodes.  
Would've given an arm and a leg to  
keep it going. Got you into models,  
I bet. You make a lot?

MARK

Not much since...family stuff.

TIM

Missus getting in the way?

MARK

We're not together anymore.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Oh. I'm sorry. And your lad?

MARK

He chose her. Don't blame him, mind. It's kind of why I'm here.

TIM

Well, you're in the right place, young man. For the next week: no interfering, no interruptions. Just good old lads making good old art.

MARK

You said £5K. How you affordin' it?

TIM

Mum and Dad were scimpers.

MARK

Oh yeah? How much?

TIM

Enough to pay you back. Here, not touching your meat?

MARK

Just stuffed, like. Help yourself?

Tim WOLFS the meat down. He eyes Mark's cut fingers.

TIM

Those look sore. Can't have that.

MARK

I'm used to it. You don't have to-

LATER

Tim applies plasters to the cuts. Mark waits stoic.

TIM

There we go. Anyone would think you're not looking after yourself, young man.

He pats Mark's hands fondly, lingering. Mark twitches.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark sinks on the mattress, thick duvet engulfing him. A SIGH escapes. Tim smiles from the doorway-

TIM

Well, sleep tight. Goodnight. I know you're supposed to say 'Goodnight' first, but I like to end the day on a positive.

MARK

Huh. Right. Night then, mate.

Tim beams, SHUTTING the door. His FOOTSTEPS lumber away. Mark smirks, turning on his back-

A painted smiling sun stares back from the ceiling.

MARK (CONT.)

Fuck me.

He turns away, glancing up again. And again. And again...

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY - CONT.

SOFT CRYING. Mark stirs, well-rested but confused.

INT. LANDING - DAY

Mark peers out. Tim is hunched on the stairs, phone to ear-

TIM

I don't mean to. It just makes me happy. Please Mr. Gault, I need this job! Hello? Hello?!

BEAT. Tim HANGS UP. He spots Mark. He wipes his eyes-

TIM (CONT.)

Happy Monday my friend! Brekkie?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tim serves golden eggs, spinach, oozing toast, coffee. The same pink meat. Mark tucks in, dodging the meat again.

MARK

I found your Sun.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Mr. Early Sky. Mum painted him herself, so I'd always start the day with a friendly face. Did your Mum ever do anything like that?

Mark SCRAPES his knife. Tim flinches.

MARK

Everything alright before?

TIM

Just Mr. Gault. Trimming the fat. Never mind. Eat up, and I'll show you where the magic happens.

A letterbox CLATTERS. Tim ambles out for the post. BEAT. Mark creeps to the bin, SCRAPING his meat inside.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Tim leads Mark down a steep hill. A great worn workshed looms below. Tim unbolts a padlock...and stops.

TIM

I've not been honest with you. Promise you won't get mad?

INT. WORKSHED - DAY

Tim FLICKS a switch. Halogen strips FLICKER above a vast space. Doors, planks and paint lie stacked. A video camera sits flanked by stagelamps. A chalk road weaves the floor, chalk squares dotted beside it.

MARK

Why would I be mad at this?

TIM

I said I needed sets. Just not LIFE-SIZE sets. Is that a problem?

Mark turns his back, hands on hips.

TIM (CONT.)

It is, isn't it? Oh I'm sorry Mark. I'm an idiot. Are you upset?

MARK

Can't say I'm too happy. I didn't come geared for something this big.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Well you're in luck! My old Dad was a DIY man. You can have your pick!

Tim lugs over a box of old tools, dumping them to CLATTER.

MARK

I prefer my own.

TIM

These are just as good. No trouble for those nice strong hands.

Mark hides a grimace. Tim ambles to a worktable, unwrapping a box of intricate home-made *Whistle Stop Way* characters.

MARK

You make 'em yourself?

TIM

Real ones cost too much. Mum gave me a hand. 'Clay play' she'd call it. It stuck. My lovely clay play.

He strokes the figures, lingering.

MARK

So why d'you need big sets?

TIM

It's the whole point of the film. The same little characters, only the world is suddenly bigger than them. So big, they can't even live in their homes. So they give up. And WHOOSH! Giving up makes them grow up. Then they can live inside again. My own special ending.

MARK

I don't get it.

TIM

Give it time. It'll grow on you.

LATER

MONTAGE:

- Mark and Tim pull on clean overalls, gloves and goggles.
- Mark SAWS and HAMMERS planks together. He PAINTS garish circles, making a dotty house: Choccy Boy's Choccy Shop.



- Tim POLISHES camera lenses, flanked by his clay figures. Through a microscoped lens, the shop looks tiny. Just like Mark's model.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

- Mark and Tim CHEW golden egg pies outside a bakery. Two teens stare nearby: TOMMY MYRES (17, broad, shifty) and BELLA DUFFY (17, short, mean eyes), chewing chocolate and pasty. Tim's grin wavers.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

- Mark SAWS. HAMMERS. PAINTS. A pinky-purple house joins the first: Betty Baker's Bakery.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

- Tim serves bubbling pie. Mark dodges the pink meat below.  
- Tim crosses SUNDAY and MONDAY off a calendar.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

- Mark SAWS. HAMMERS. PAINTS. A third house appears: the silvery Percy Pushy's Busy-Body Business.

EXT. MODEL VILLAGE - DAY

- Mark and Tim watch Mr. Gault lead a tour, FATHERS AND SONS peeking over tiny roofs. Pure sickening envy.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

- Tim serves steaming stew. Mark dodges the same pink meat.  
- Tim crosses off TUESDAY.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

- Mark BUILDS a fourth house: the rustic Farmer Grazer's Farm House.

- EXT. VILLAGE - RURAL LANE - DAY

- Tim leads Mark past a neighbouring farm. FARMER STONE (60s) peers up from digging. Tim WAVES. Stone GLOWERS. Tim quickens his pace. Mark follows bemused.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

- Tim CHEWS greasy steak. Mark slips his own in a napkin.

- Tim crosses off WEDNESDAY. Mark quietly BINS his meat.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

- Mark BUILDS a fifth house: Bobby Lobber's Police Station.

- EXT. VILLAGE - SECONDARY SCHOOL - DAY

- Mark follows Tim past a BUZZING playground. A police car passes. PS MYRES (40s; balding, bullish) leans out, fake smiling. Tim quickens his pace. Mark stares Myres down.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

- Tim CHEWS gristly sausage. Mark watches unnerved.

- Tim crosses off THURSDAY. Mark BINS his meat again.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

- Mark BUILDS a sixth house: Mrs. Matri & Mr. Mony's Wedding Shop. Tim stares longingly. His lip curls.

EXT. VILLAGE - BRIDGE - DAY

- Mark and Tim stare over, river RUSHING below. An ELDERLY COUPLE (70s) watch on in raincoats, faces blurred. Tim hurries off. Mark follows confused.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

- Tim serves a bubbling fish pie. Mark DEVOURS his plate. Tim's smile wavers.

- Tim clears up, crossing off FRIDAY. He opens the bin. He stops. He SNIFFS. He RUMMAGES inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

- Mark reclines proud, inspecting a black pad on the coffee table: fine sketches of Mr. Man, Lady Goldie and Good Lad.

Tim stares from the doorway. He raises his hand, soaked in rotting meat...and LICKS it clean.

END MONTAGE.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

The once-bare shed brims with colourful wooden sets, fences and Astroturf. Mark fits a blood-red door on a white house, completing the final set: Mr. Man's home.

He steps back pleased, as Tim treads in with coffees.

TIM

Wow. It's all coming back to life.

MARK

Why'd you like the show so much?

TIM

Because it's a good place. Everyone gets along. It's how it should be.

Tim runs a sticky hand down the blood-red door.

TIM (CONT.)

You've been binning your meat.

Mark freezes: 'Shit.'

MARK

Right. Yeah. I don't really eat it, like. Just makes me a bit ill.

TIM

I see. Why didn't you say?

MARK

Dunno. Didn't wanna be ungrateful, like. You're not miffed are ya?

TIM

No. Not at all. You're my guest. My handy man. I can adapt.

BEAT.

(CONTINUED)

TIM (CONT.)  
Need a new path here, I reckon.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - DAY

Mark and Tim pass dainty closed cafes, grocers and laundrettes, reaching a crafts shop.

TIM  
Don't go too far.

He disappears inside. Mark hovers bored. Across the road-

VERA SIMPSON (50s, blonde, homespun and stylish in one), arms laden with canvas bags. One suddenly SPLITS, SPILLING supplies everywhere. Her face screws. Mark crosses over-

VERA  
Oh no, please, I can manage.

MARK  
It's fine. Really.

VERA  
Thank you. Sorry, don't know why I'm crying. It's just...never mind.

Mark collects her supplies. Something slips out: a painting of a young blonde boy, hands in lap. He stares stunned.

MARK  
Wow. Who's the lad?

VERA  
Just someone very special to me.

Her smile vanishes. Tim is outside, staring at her.

VERA (CONT.)  
Thanks love. Take it easy.

She hurries off. Mark trudges back confused. Just as-

Two hooded youths SHOVE Tim down. He cowers, as a can SPLASHES his trousers. One youth FLICKS a lighter. And-

Mark DASHES over, SMACKING it away. It's Tommy and Bella.

MARK  
Stop! What are you playing at?!

(CONTINUED)

BELLA

What's it to you? D'you not know  
who he is? He's a fucking freak!

MARK

I don't care who he is. Both of you  
better fuck off right now.

Tommy and Bella suddenly CROW with laughter-

TOMMY

You actually thought it was real,  
Scouse lad? It's lemonade! Just a  
joke, Tim. Don't cry about it.

Mark's face twists. He GRABS Tommy by the scruff-

TOMMY (CONT.)

Go on then matey. Do it again.

Mark double-takes. Just as-

PS Myres slinks up. Tommy and Bella shrink. Mark lets go.

PS MYRES

Everything alright here?

MARK

Ask them. They emptied a can on  
Tim. Made him think it was petrol!

PS Myres glances blankly at Tim.

PS MYRES

That true Tommy?

TOMMY

Y-Yes Dad.

MARK

'Dad'?!

PS MYRES

Well, boys will be boys. Eh Tim?

MARK

Oh what, you're letting him off?!

PS MYRES

Don't worry. I'll have a word.

(CONTINUED)

BELLA

B-But it's not his fault. Tim said-

PS MYRES

Go home Bella.

Myres GRABS Tommy, DRAGGING him up the street. Bella hurries off worried. Mark watches on, oddly concerned.

TIM

Thank you.

MARK

Just get up.

Mark stalks on. Tim eases up to follow, tears gone.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

Mark lays a pebble path. Tim dusts his lenses, eyes down.

MARK

Why didn't you fight back?

TIM

It won't fix anything. I'm a freak to them. All slow and strange. Is it because I'm not a real man?

MARK

Course not! They're the problem. You just need to stand up to them.

TIM

Maybe they'll just stop? Now that you're here.

MARK

Not forever, mate. Once I'm done, I'm off home tomorrow. Look.

Tim surveys Mark's sets, oddly forlorn.

TIM

It's perfect. You're a good friend, Mark. Such a shame you're going. What would it cost you to stay?

MARK

An arm and an leg?

Tim stares at Mark's hands. He LICKS his teeth.

INT. TIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT.

Mark reclines, NEWS playing-

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)  
 Merseyside Police continue to appeal for information on the disappearance of Aron Zaslowski. CCTV shows the Anfield resident disembark at Leeds Station two months ago; his current whereabouts remain unknown. Police believe he was seeking employment opportun-

SLAM! Mark FLINCHES. A box rests on the table. Tim hovers, a bulging black bag in his hand.

TIM  
 Fudge. Homemade. Help yourself.

MARK  
 You heading out?

TIM  
 Just setting things right. Watch my films if you like? Bottom tape.

He ambles out. The front door SHUTS. Mark SNIFFS unsure. He sets the fudge aside. Thin gristly veins run through it.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

Mark TUGS at Tim's bedroom door. Locked. He sags, gazing at framed photos of Tim and his parents. None of them together.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark slots in a dusty VHS tape, pressing PLAY-

A crude *Whistle Stop Way* remake FLASHES: Good Lad CRYING at a burning gold dress, Mr. Man stern, Lady Goldie aloof.

MR. MAN (V.O.)  
 You'll learn your lesson, Lad.  
 You'll learn your lesson, Lad.

Mark stares unnerved. Good Lad CRIES HARDER. LOUDER. Until-  
 The front door SLAMS. Tim lumbers in.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Oh! One of my favourites.

MARK

Bit loud, like. With the crying?

TIM

It's meant to be. Mr. Man catches Good Lad with matches, so he burns Lady Goldie's dress. As a lesson.

MARK

Right. Sure. You get what you need?

TIM

Aye. All good now. Bedtime?

Mark hits STOP. STATIC fills the room.

INT./EXT. TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM/GARDEN - NIGHT

DISTANT VOICES. Mark stirs. A SING-SONG drifts from outside. He sits up, peering out at the dark garden. No-one there.

He lies back. Mr. Early Sky smiles down.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - CONT.

Mark strides in to...no-one. The back door lies open.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Mark treads to the shed. The padlock's broken.

INT. WORKSHED - DAY

Mark CREAKS the door open. He clearly wishes he hadn't.

Tim's camera lies dented. Black viscous matter drips from Mark's sets. Paint and tools strewn everywhere. A mess.

Tim kneels tearful, clay figures in his lap.

TIM

I saved them.

MARK

It was him, weren't it? That Tommy?

(CONTINUED)



TIM

I asked his Dad to make him stop.

MARK

Wait, THAT'S what you were doing last night? Are you fucking mad?!

TIM

It's not gonna stop, is it? Ever?

Tim lets the figures fall, CLACKING the ground.

TIM (CONT.)

I can't make it now. Not like this. Do them again.

MARK

Sorry? Y-You want me to start over?

TIM

It needs to be good, Mark. A good world with good people. Or there's no point to any of it!

MARK

No. No no no, it's not happening mate. You haven't even paid me for-

TIM

IS THAT ALL THAT MATTERS TO YOU?!

A bulb BURSTS above. Mark JUMPS in fright. BEAT.

TIM (CONT.)

Would you put the kettle on please?

Mark stumbles out stunned.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The kettle BOILS. Mark fills two mugs. Tim hovers ashamed.

TIM

I'm sorry. I know you're thinking of your missus. And your lad.

MARK

Am I still getting paid?

TIM

Mark...Have you ever wondered what it'd be like to make anyone stop

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TIM (cont'd)  
hating you? To have friends who  
won't run away? Friends who won't  
say 'no' because it's you? Because  
I've found a way. A secret way.

MARK  
Mate, what are you on about?

Tim RUMMAGES in a cabinet, setting a white box on the table.

TIM  
I always wondered if I'd use them.

Mark opens the box. A frowning male clay mask stares back.

TIM (CONT.)  
Recognise him? It's Mr. Man.

Tim tips the box, SPILLING a whole heap of masks: all  
*Whistle Stop Way* characters.

TIM (CONT.)  
All here. Choccy Boy; Betty Baker;  
Percy Pushy; Farmer Grazer; Bobby  
Lobber; Mrs. Matri and Mr. Mony.

Mark picks up two: a blonde lady and curly-haired boy.

TIM  
Lady Goldie and Good Lad. My  
favourites.

MARK  
What's it all for?

Tim pulls a list from the box.

TIM  
This is everyone who's hurt me. I  
need them to see how much this all  
means to me. A little lesson. So we  
can be friends. What do you think?

Mark stares stunned: 'Definitely a nutjob.'

MARK  
Nah. I'm sorry mate, I can't do  
this. Y'know what you're asking  
right? It's revenge. It's mad.

(CONTINUED)

TIM  
Is it revenge if they deserve it?

MARK  
Yes! You wanna go do whatever with  
this lot, fine. But I've got Liam  
to think about, so just pay me-

LATER

Tim CLUNKS a white tin on the table, stuffed with cash.

TIM  
Ten grand. Just one more week and  
it's yours.

MARK  
Bloody hell mate.

TIM  
It's your hard work gone too. What  
have you got to lose?

Mark dithers. Tim eyes his workroom.

TIM (CONT.)  
Tell you what: fix my village, I'll  
fix yours. For Liam. How's that?

MARK  
You'd do that?

TIM  
Of course. What are friends for?

BEAT.

MARK  
I don't have to hurt anyone?

TIM  
Oh no. You just do as I say. Though  
there's one rule you MUST follow:  
when I'm in my workroom, fixing  
away, DON'T come in. It's private.

MARK  
Right. OK. And the masks?

TIM  
Wait and see matey. Wait and see.

ON BLACK: MONDAY

EXT. MYRES HOME - NIGHT - CONT.

Tommy stalks out, eye and cheek bruised-

PS MYRES (O.S.)  
 Fuck off then, you piece of shit!  
 Don't think you'll get your phone  
 back!

Tommy SLAMS the front door. He lights a cig. CLICK. CLICK-

SNAP! He peers around. Just as something SMACKS his hood. He looks down. A piece of fudge.

SNAP! Tommy marches up the front path, SLAMMING the gate open to-

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

No-one. Just an empty road. More fudge trails the pavement. He follows it, reaching the corner, shrouded by shrubs. A BREATHING comes behind them.

Tommy GULPS. He steadies. And LUNGES, meeting-

A white box, tied with red ribbon. He RIPS it open. A note rests inside: 'YOU'LL LEARN YOUR LESSON'.

SNAP! Tommy turns. Just as-

Mark LEAPS out, KNOCKING him down and sprinting away. Tommy LEAPS up after him-

TOMMY  
 Hey! Come back you fucking coward!

EXT. TIM'S HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT

Tommy stops, peering downhill, as a figure slips into the workshed. He hurtles after them, STUMBLING inside-

INT. WORKSHED - NIGHT

Tommy stops. He's alone. Only Tim's camera rests nearby. It's RECORDING.

The lights go out. FOOTSTEPS. Tommy fumbles for the door-

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY (CONT.)

Shit!

He FLICKS his lighter. A tiny flame lights Choccy Boy's sweet-shop set.

Someone WHISTLES. The flame goes out. CLICK. CLICK-

The flame appears. Good Lad's clay face grins back. A knife FLASHES. Tommy SCREAMS, as-

INT./EXT. TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM/GARDEN - DAY

Mark stirs. WHISTLING drifts from outside. He peeks through the curtains at-

Tim, munching fudge, grinning through gristly teeth.

ON BLACK: TUESDAY

INT. TIM'S HOME - DAY

The doorbell CHIMES. Mark treads to the front door, opening to-

Tommy, garish apron tight around him, clay Choccy Boy mask down. In his hands: a white box tied with red ribbon.

TOMMY

Good morning. Lovely day for it.

MARK

What d'you want?

TOMMY

To apologise, for being a bad Choccy Boy. I've made some treats. Will you accept it for the better?

MARK

Oh. I get it. You smashed all our work up, so Tim's got you playing dress-up. Or he'll tell your dad. Must be desperate if you don't want him knowing. Eh scally lad?

Tommy shudders. As if fighting some unseen force.

TOMMY

I don't know what you mean Sir. Please accept it for the better.

(CONTINUED)

Tommy pushes over the sweets. His nails are grey, like plastic. His left ear is bandaged. Mark peers concerned-

TOMMY (CONT.)  
Cheerio Sir!

Tommy strides off stiffly up the lane. Like a doll.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark stares at the white box. He rubs his left ear-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - LYNE HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

YOUNG LIAM (13) slumps, holding his left ear. Blood seeps down his hand-

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

UNLOCKING. Tim ambles in, satchel over shoulder.

TIM  
There's my handy man. Everything alright? You look a bit lost.

MARK  
That lad Tommy was here. Should've seen him. He made you this?

Tim flicks the lid. Homemade fudge nestles inside. He BEAMS-

TIM (CONT.)  
It worked. It really worked Mark!  
Oh what a lovely Choccy Boy he is!

MARK  
Choccy Boy? From *Whistle Stop*?

TIM  
You remember? *The lovely little Choccy Boy cooks his choccy candy; his best is fudge, and he won't budge, because it drives him dandy!* Classic my friend, classic. Good thing I taught Tommy. Works better if they know the words.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

What were you doing last night?

TIM

Just inviting him to fix things.  
And we did. Now he's Choccy Boy.

MARK

Well dress-up's a bit weak for me,  
mate. But you do you. How long you  
gonna make him do all that?

TIM

As long as I need. Besides, Choccy  
Boy needs his Betty Baker.

Tim chews fudge, staining his lips. Mark hides a grimace.

TIM (CONT.)

Gonna need some new colour for our  
houses. Meet you at the crafts  
shop? Got to see a man about a dog.

INT./INT. LANDING / TIM'S BEDROOM - DAY

WHISTLING. Mark creeps to Tim's bedroom door, peering in at  
Tim, counting cash from the white tin. He eyes his prize.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - DAY

Mark treads alone. A police car IDLES up beside him. It's PS  
Myres, fake smile stretching stained gums.

PS MYRES

Morning young man. What you up to?

MARK

Identify yourself please.

Myres' smile wavers. He holds out a photo of Tommy.

PS MYRES

Sergeant David Myres 3317. A lad  
didn't come home last night. My  
lad. Thomas Myres. Saw you with Tim  
the other day. What's that about?

MARK

Arts and crafts.

(CONTINUED)

PS MYRES

Oh aye? You seen Tommy since?

MARK

Think I'd remember. Given his type.

PS MYRES

You look familiar. What's your name, matey?

Mark stares him down.

PS MYRES (CONT.)

No? OK. Look after yourself.

Myres REVS too loud, speeding off. Mark flips him off. Just as clouds roll in, stealing his shadow.

INT. VILLAGE - CRAFT SHOP - DAY

HEAVY RAIN hammers against windows. Mark studies a painting: villagers rambling to a crooked white house in the distance.

A familiar figure steps beside him, canvasses under arm. It's Vera, smiling in her homespun-stylish combo.

VERA

Hello again! Don't worry, no tears today. Do you like it?

MARK

Oh, sure. Pretty. Bit eerie, like.

VERA

Liminal space. Step back, it's inviting. But step closer: you're walking into danger.

MARK

Huh. So it's yours: 'Vera Simpson'?

VERA

Certainly is. Not 100% happy with it but, can't be perfect can we?

MARK

Hmm. I do a bit myself. Models, like. Little houses and that.

VERA

Ah, you're a miniaturist? I see it in my magazines. Never met someone who does it for a living though.

(CONTINUED)



MARK

Well I don't really-

VERA

It must take so much control. Your poor fingers say as much.

Mark holds up his plastered fingers.

MARK

Try my best, like.

VERA

Oh don't be so modest. Us artists need to big each other up or we'll never get anywhere, eh? I do what I can with my lad around.

Mark peers at her.

MARK

Your lad?

VERA

Aye. Bit wet around the ears since he lost his toy. A gold owl with big black eyes. Seen one at all?

MARK

Oh, no. But I'll keep an eye out.

Someone HUFFS. They turn to a card-stand. Tim creeps out.

MARK

Bloody hell, you been there long?

TIM

Long enough.

VERA

Hi love. It's been a while.

TIM

I'm done Mark. See you outside.

Tim stalks out. Vera wilts.

MARK

What's all that about?

VERA

Long story. Best crack on. Lovely seeing you again Mark. Take care.

She pats him warmly, returning to her art. Mark gingerly rubs his arm, suddenly shy.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tim trudges the pavement. Mark eyes him knowingly.

MARK  
You fancy her, don't you?

TIM  
No.

MARK  
Hey, I'm not judging. Just thought you weren't good with 'dolls'.

TIM  
I don't want to talk about it.

BELLA (O.S.)  
Oi, Mouldin! Where is he?! Where's Tommy?!

Mark and Tim turn to see Bella marching right at them.

TIM  
I-I don't know. W-Why would I?

BELLA  
Bullshit! He was meant to meet me last night. You done something to him haven't ya, you freak?!

MARK  
Hey! He said he doesn't know. If Tommy wants to see you, he'll turn up. That or his Dad finds him.

Bella wilts.

BELLA  
You don't know what it's like for him.

She hurries off. Mark stares concerned. Tim casts a strange glance, eyeing him up and down.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

Mark paints Betty Baker's house with fresh coats of pink and purple. Tim dusts his clay Betty figure.

TIM  
What did Vera want?

MARK  
Just chatting. Told a white lie.  
Thinks I'm a professional now.

TIM  
I thought you were a professional?

MARK  
Leave off. Hey, if she likes art,  
why not show her some of yours? If  
she gives you a chance, like.

Tim SMACKS his brush down. Mark flinches away. BEAT.

TIM  
Betty Baker tonight. You should  
rest. Don't wanna lose your touch.

Tim stalks out. Mark stares stunned. Betty Baker grins back from the workbench.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - NIGHT - CONT.

Bella waits alone outside an off-licence. RUGBY LADS saunter past, CAT-CALLING as they go. She edges away, sticking a headphone in, TAPPING a message to Tommy-

INSERT: 'hope you're OK, just breathe. love you xxx'

She TAPS to someone else: 'GL'-

INSERT: 'waiting'

SMACK! She looks down. A chocolate pastry rests at her feet.

WHISTLING. She peers up. No-one there. Only shrubs across the street. She slowly crosses over. Steadies herself. And LUNGES at-

A white box, tied with red ribbon. She RIPS it open. A note rests inside 'YOU'LL LEARN YOUR LESSON'.

SNAP! Bella turns. Just as-

Mark LEAPS out, SNATCHING her phone and sprinting away.

(CONTINUED)

BELLA  
Oi! Give it back! Oi!

EXT. TIM'S HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT

Bella stops, peering downhill. A figure waits outside the workshed, Choccy Boy clay mask pulled tight.

BELLA (CONT.)  
Tommy? Is that you?

The figure WHISTLES. Drops something. Slips into the shed. Bella treads down after them, picking up...her phone.

INT. WORKSHED - NIGHT

Bella peers in. No-one there. Only Tim's camera RECORDING.

BELLA (CONT.)  
Tommy? Tommy, this isn't funny.

The lights go out. FOOTSTEPS. She fumbles for the door-

BELLA (CONT.)  
Fuck. Fuck fuck fuck!

Her phone FLICKERS, barely lighting Betty's bakery set. A door CREAKS. She peers back at...Tommy, Choccy Boy mask smiling from the sweet-shop set.

WHISTLING. A knife GLINTS. Bella turns. And SCREAMS, as-  
Good Lad's clay face LURCHES at her, SLASHING her left ear-

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Bella BURSTS out, DASHING up the hill. Just as-

Mark LEAPS out the shadows, tackling her. She SLAPS him hard, BEATING his head. Mark suddenly freezes-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - LYNE HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jules SLAPS Mark hard, BEATING his head-

PRESENT:

EXT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT

Mark SAGS on the grass. Bella's SLAPS rain down. Until-

Tim SHOVES his clay Betty mask on her. She stops. She rises. She follows him to the shed. Mark FAINTS.

LATER

Mark stirs. Tim looms, Good Lad mask down. He peers at Mark...and steps over him, trudging back to the house.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark scrubs his hands vigorously. Tim gazes on.

TIM  
You cowered.

MARK  
Y'what?!

TIM  
Y'know, curled up? Panicked?

MARK  
I didn't! I'm fine.

TIM  
Then why'd you hit her?

MARK  
Bella? She started it, like.

TIM  
You're not supposed to hurt them.

MARK  
Mate, you just cut her ear with-

TIM  
No excuses! We're teaching them a lesson. Please remember that.

Mark trembles. He scrubs harder. And harder. Until-

ON BLACK: WEDNESDAY

INT. TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Mark does push-ups, slow and poised, red-raw hands shaking.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark peers in. Tim is packing his satchel.

MARK

Morning. You sleep alri-

Bella steps out, clay Betty Baker mask tight, pink-purple dress dusty with flour.

MARK (CONT.)

Jesus Christ!

BELLA

Morning Sir. Lovely day for it.  
Some fresh buns for you. Will you  
accept them for the better?

She holds out a wicker basket, crammed with pastries. Her nails are grey, like plastic.

TIM

Not for him, Betty. He's a little  
heavy today.

BELLA

Oh. Alright then. Cheerio.

Bella strides out stiffly. Like a doll. The back door SHUTS.

MARK

Don't think I'll get used to that.

TIM

Breakfast's in the bowl. Something  
light after last night.

Mark grimaces at pinkish oats on the table, beside the clay Percy Pushy mask.

TIM (CONT.)

I'm sorry I snapped. You're doing  
me a favour. I should treat you  
better. So take the afternoon off.  
After you've fixed Percy Pushy's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TIM (CONT.) (cont'd)  
set of course. And if you could be  
a gent and wash up a few things?

Tim ambles out. The front door SHUTS. Mark peers at a stack of plates in the sink, greasy with pink gristle.

LATER - CONT.

Mark SCRAPES his oats down the sink, hiding his bowl under the stack. DING-DONG! He double-takes: 'Back already?'

INT. HALL - DAY

Mark opens the door. Farmer Stone waits rigid, brow taut.

STONE  
I heard screaming last night. Like  
a girl. Any girls with ya, lad?

MARK  
No.

STONE  
No SIR. I've warned Tim before.  
Still can't listen. Are you a loud  
lad? You look like a loud lad.

MARK  
I'll pass on a message, alright?

Stone BLOCKS the door with his foot-

STONE  
Don't I know you from somewhere?

MARK  
No, you don't. Now can you get out-

SLAP! Mark freezes, gripping his cheek. Stone's palm lowers.

STONE  
You should control yourself, lad.

Stone stalks out of sight.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark SMACKS himself, BREATHING HARD. Just as the front door SHUTS. Tim lumbers in.

TIM

Got what I needed! Hey, are you alright? Your cheek's all pink.

MARK

Your neighbour's got a hook on him.

TIM

Mr. Stone? Oh dear. He does like a spat. Must be the grudge.

MARK

Grudge?

TIM

He and Dad butted heads. 'Too loud and proud for his own good.'

Mark tenses.

TIM (CONT.)

Didn't like me either. 'Crying brat keeps my pigs awake.' Such a rude man. Not like Farmer Grazer.

MARK

We doing him tonight?

TIM

Not tonight. Percy Pushy needs to stop pushing so hard first.

Tim strolls to the table, stroking his Percy Pushy mask.

TIM (CONT.)

But our farmer friend can't hurt you like that. I'll have a word. Why don't you get some fresh air?

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - DAY

Mark treads alone, passing the quiet model village. He stops. He kneels, picking up-

A golden soft owl, abandoned in the drain. A name on the label: GIL SIMPSON.



Across the road, two elderly figures peer at him. He peers back. They move on quick, faces hidden.

INT. VILLAGE - CRAFT SHOP - DAY

Mark scans the aisles. Only an ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER hangs up black notepads.

MARK

Is Vera in today? It's important.

ELDERLY SHOPKEEPER

Sorry love, she's off. But I should have her number. Hang on.

She fishes out a pad. Mark DIALS the number-

VERA (V.O.)

Hello?

MARK

Vera? It's Mark. From the shop?

VERA (V.O.)

Ah, Mark the model man! Sal gave you my number I bet. You OK, love?

MARK

Yeah, just erm, I've got something for you? Think you'll be happy.

INT. VILLAGE - VERA'S HOME - DAY - CONT.

Vera lets Mark in. He eyes her thin gloves.

MARK

Still got your gloves on?

VERA

Keeps bits and bugs out my nails. You can never be too careful. So, you have something for me?

Mark hands over the owl. Vera BEAMS-

VERA (CONT.)

Oh Mark, you little treasure! My lad'll be happy come bedtime. Not that he sleeps. Not since we moved here. What with his Dad.

Mark twitches.

(CONTINUED)

VERA (CONT.)

He doesn't like things not going his way.

MARK

Right. And what does your lad think? Of his Dad?

VERA

I'd know if he opened his mouth.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Vera eases the door open. Mark peers in at GIL, a young blonde boy, sat facing the window.

VERA

There's our Gil. Gilly.

MARK

Y'alright there Gil?

The boy doesn't move.

VERA

Sorry. Like I said-

MARK

Non-verbal.

Mark gazes at Gil's bright clothes. They're oddly similar to Good Lad's clothes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vera serves tea and biscuits on fine china. Mark perches in a dainty armchair, Gil's portrait hanging over him.

VERA

Fascinated there, aren't you?

MARK

Sorry. It's just really good.

VERA

I do my best. Like Mum and Dad told me to. Nice to be encouraged.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - SIXTH FORM COLLEGE - DAY

WHITE NOISE. TEENAGE MARK perches before a beaming ART TEACHER, showing off essays and models, signed: MARK LYNE.

The teacher opens university leaflets. A TALL FIGURE beside Mark GRIPS his shoulder hard. The boy GRIPS his chair-

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - VILLAGE - VERA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mark GRIPS the armchair, GULPING his tea.

MARK

What about Gil? Does he like it?

VERA

Who knows? Won't even look unless I turn him around. I should be happy really, no noise and that. I just wish I knew what he's thinking.

MARK

You try being blunt with him?

VERA

Oh I couldn't. His Dad was blunt.

MARK

His Dad sounds nasty. You're just looking out for him.

VERA

Am I? Sometimes I wonder how much of it is his Dad, and how much of it is me. Did I do enough to stop it? And I know I shouldn't think that. It's just...lonely. And I hate it, I bloody hate it!

Mark softens.

MARK

I'm not surprised. All by yourself. But kids are tougher than you think. You'll figure it out.

VERA

Yes. You're right. I will. Thank you Mark. Most men run a mile if you open up like this. They just care about getting what they want.

(CONTINUED)

Mark GRIPS the armchair harder.

VERA (CONT.)

Sorry if this is forward but, are you free Friday lunchtime? Only the cafe on the corner's lovely for peace and quiet. You could show me your work? I'll buy the teas?

Mark tenses. He's stuck.

MARK

Be rude not to now, wouldn't it?

VERA

Great! It's a date.

MARK

Right. Can't promise I'll say much.

VERA

Wait and see. We'll soon crack that shell of yours, young man.

She flashes a warm smile. Mark manages a smirk.

EXT. VILLAGE - RURAL LANE - DAY

Mark paces past Stone's farm, peering bemused. In the distance, Tim hands Stone a bulging bag. They shake hands.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

Mark paints patterns on a grey door. Tim polishes lenses.

TIM

All ready for tonight? Time to push Mr. Gault in the right direction. You get it? Because, Percy Pushy?

MARK

Hmm. I saw Vera again.

TIM

Oh? In town was that?

MARK

Her house. Found something her lad lost, got a cuppa out of it. It was nice. Her lad Gil doesn't speak?

Tim stops polishing. His smile vanishes.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Aye. His Dad made him like that. So sad. I guess some men aren't meant to be fathers. If only the mothers did more to stop them.

Mark stops dead. He glowers at Tim's back...and FLICKS a lens off the worktop. CRACK! Tim WHIPS around-

MARK

Oh shit, you alright?

Tim kneels horrified, brushing the lens.

TIM

This was one of my best. Just right for looking. I'm an idiot. IDIOT!

He HURLS the lens at the wall. Mark smirks to himself.

EXT. MODEL VILLAGE - NIGHT - CONT.

Floodlights cast long shadows over the tiny walkways, little blank-faced figures stark and unsettling in the quiet.

INT. OFFICE HUT - NIGHT

Gault pours over paperwork, CHEWING something pink and meaty. Golden soft toy owls dot the shelves behind him.

A shadow SLIPS past. Gault pauses. He looks up. Just as-  
The floodlights GO OUT.

EXT. MODEL VILLAGE - NIGHT

Gault fiddles with a circuit box behind the office. The floodlights RETURN. He saunters back. And-

FLICK! A river feature WHIRS to life. Gault freezes.

GAULT

Hello? We're closed! It's not civil to enter without permission!

WHISTLING. He WHIPS around. Far off by the office: Tim in the Good Lad mask, TAPPING a drum around his neck.

The lights GO OUT. A camera FLASHES, blinding Gault-

(CONTINUED)

GAULT (CONT.)  
Hey! You can't take my photo! It's  
against GDPR! I think.

The lights return. Gault YELPS. Tim is right before him.

GAULT (CONT.)  
Tim?! What are you playing at?!

TIM  
What it looks like. Playing.

GAULT  
Well it's completely inappropriate.  
Not to mention unprof-

TIM  
Unprofessional? Odd? 'Playing  
around'? Heard it enough times.  
Must be nice, being the big boss.  
And me? I'm just the cleaner.

Tim BANGS his drum. Gault flinches back.

GAULT (CONT.)  
T-Tim, if this is about the tours,  
it's not personal. I could let-?

TIM  
No. You've done enough. Now you'll  
learn your lesson.

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS. Gault turns. Just as-

Mark LEAPS at him. Gault YELPS, LURCHING back into the  
shadows. The lights GO OUT.

Gault flattens himself, peering over tiny roofs. No-one  
there. He scoots along...and DASHES up for the exit-

The lights FLASH on. SLASH! Gault YELPS, grasping his  
bleeding ear, as-

Tim SHOVES his Percy Pushy mask on him. Gault stops. His  
arms sag. Mark slips out, fishing a key from Gault's pocket.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - NIGHT

They lead Gault away, LOCKING the exit behind them.

EXT. TIM'S HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT

Tim beckons Gault into his workshed. Mark waits outside.

MARK  
How was I?

TIM  
Slow. There's a bag in the fridge.  
Pop it in a pan, would you?

Tim SHUTS the door in his face. Mark's fists clench.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark HEATS a pan, TIPPING a bag of thick fleshy pink mince into it. He stops. He SNIFFS. The bubbling meat suddenly looks wrong. Uninviting. Yet familiar...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - CHILDHOOD HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Young dark-haired Mark stares down a bowl of brown mush.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)  
Come on lad. Starving aren't ya?

The boy takes a spoonful...he tastes it...he LEAPS up. A chair SCRAPES. A hand SHOVES him back down.

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.) (CONT.)  
Didn't say 'get up', did I? Keep it  
in. Chew it. Fucking swallow it.

The boy holds back tears. He CHEWS...he GULPS...he GAGS-  
A hand SLAPS his nape. The mouth SHOOTs open. And-

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark VOMITS in the pan.

MARK  
Shit.

He TIPS the ruined meat down the sink, GURGLING as it goes.  
He scours the fridge and cupboards. Only veg and bread.

INT. WORKROOM - NIGHT

Mark OPENS the deep-freeze. Only ice lollies and bags of clay. He BANGS the side frustrated-

Something JUDDERS. He double-takes. He RUMMAGES, pulling out...a bag of frozen offal. Heart-like.

EXT. TIM'S HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT - CONT.

Mark creeps to the workshed door. WHISTLING inside. He EASES it open. And-

INT. WORKSHED - NIGHT

Gault poses in clay Percy Pushy mask and costume, moving fraction by fraction. Tim SNAPS frames on his camera.

TIM

Well done Mr. Pushy. Little treat?

Tim hands over a bulging black bag. Gault pulls something wet from inside-

Tim stops. He CLICKS his fingers. Gault freezes like a doll. Tim peers at the shed door...and RIPS it open to-

No-one. He peers around...and shuts the door.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

PING! Mark pulls the offal from the microwave, DUMPING it with a pan of veg. He grabs a knife, SLUSHING it into mince, trying not to GAG. Just as-

Tim traipses in.

TIM

Hello handy man. Ooh, smells good. Best get my chops 'round it. Can't convince you to join me?

MARK

I'm good. Gonna do some toast.

Mark serves up the steaming mix. Tim shrugs, taking a mouthful. He CHEWS. And stops.

(CONTINUED)



TIM  
What did you put in this?

MARK  
Just veg, like. Carrots. Potatoes.

TIM  
It tastes different.

MARK  
Yeah well, veg'll do that.

Mark fumbles for a plate. Tim stares at him. Unblinking.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONT.

SMACK! Mark stirs. SMACK! He sits up. SMACK!

EXT. LANDING - NIGHT

Mark peers down the stairs. SMACK! SMACK! SMACK! SILENCE.

The workroom door OPENS. FOOTSTEPS. Mark hurries back.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark listens at the wood. FOOTSTEPS brush outside. A soft THUNK. More FOOTSTEPS. Tim's bedroom door SHUTS.

Mark eases back into bed. Mr. Early Sky looms above.

INT. LANDING - NIGHT

A tiny shadow looms up Mark's door. Like a doll.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY - CONT.

Mark does slow push-ups, arms shaking. RINGING. He drops, GRABBING his phone. A familiar VOICE comes through-

JULES (V.O.)  
Finally.

MARK  
Jules? What's happened?

(CONTINUED)

JULES (V.O.)  
You tell me.

MARK  
Jules, I don't know what you-

JULES (V.O.)  
Liam wanted me to do it in person.  
For his sake. So I go to yours. Not  
there. I go back later, just in  
case. Still not there. Even though  
it's in your conditions to live  
there. So where the fuck are you?!

Mark stares straight ahead.

MARK  
What d'you need to tell me?

JULES (V.O.)  
I've got a new job. Pays more. But  
it means moving out of Liverpool.  
Cath's agreed I don't have to tell  
you where. Yet.

Mark's jaw tightens.

MARK  
I've said sorry enough times. Liam  
has forgiven me! You wanna know  
where I am? A job. Making money for  
him. For his uni. Because I love  
him and I wanna help!

Jules LAUGHS-

JULES (V.O.)  
And what'll that do? You bung him a  
few quid, he goes off and turns  
into you? Grow up Mark. Either you  
tell Cath what's going on, or I  
will. You've got til tomorrow.

Jules HANGS UP. Mark trembles. He BREATHES DEEPLY...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - PRISON - VISITORS ROOM - DAY

Mark sits alone, bright bib over plain tee. Around him:  
FAMILIES chat to INMATES, some LAUGHING, most stoic.

PRISON OFFICER (O.S.)

Time's up!

The families disperse. Inmates line up. Mark is last.

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - LANDING - DAY

Mark treads out. THUNK! He peers down. A tiny Mr. Man figure  
peers back. A pink slap mark on its cheek.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A sickly Tim CHEWS burnt pink meat on toast. Mark leaves his  
own. He holds out Mr. Man-

MARK

Think you dropped this?

TIM

Ah. Mr. Man. Can't lose you can we?

Tim SNATCHES the figure back, COUGHING HARD.

MARK

What's up with you?

TIM

I'm fine! Just worn out. Not like  
you. What's your secret?

MARK

No secret. Just keep fit, like.

TIM

Hmm. Lucky boy. You're not eating.

MARK

Mate, I've said I don't eat-

TIM

Can't you just TRY it?!

Mark stares stunned. Tim softens.

(CONTINUED)

TIM (CONT.)

I-I'm sorry. What am I like? It's your choice. Forgive me Mark. I'll make it up to you. More fish pie?

Mark glances at Mr. Man in Tim's hand. His lip curls. And-

MARK

I want your gift.

TIM

Pardon?

MARK

Your gift. Making 'em do what you want. I wanna know how.

TIM

I see. And why would you want that?

MARK

Look, back home, I'm a bit like you really. After Jules and Liam left, so did my mates. It's lonely. I'm sick of it. I thought you might-

TIM

No. I'm sorry Mark, but that's not how it works. Control isn't all willy-nilly. It takes planning. Boundaries. Not going too far. I can't trust you'd use it well.

MARK

Well I'm helping you out, aren't I?

TIM

I said NO! Now come on. Stone's next. Grazer's Farm needs sorting.

Tim trudges to the sink. Mark hides a scowl.

MARK

Why'd you shake his hand yesterday?

TIM

Because we're neighbours. Want to see a trick?

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

Mark stares down Gault, rigid in his clay Percy Pushy mask and costume. Tim WHISTLES-

TIM  
Stop holding on. Stop standing  
around. Stop being lazy!

Gault STRIDES around the sets. Like a doll.

MARK  
He's actually doing it, isn't he?  
Mad that.

TIM  
Seeing is believing, my friend.

Tim WHISTLES again. Gault stops. Mark dithers. Until-

MARK  
Why do they hate you?

TIM  
Apparently I'm 'too forward'. But  
it's just manners. People forget  
manners. Especially with lads like  
us. One look and they think we'll  
roll over. We won't bite. We won't  
cry. But we do. I should know: she  
made me. She's the root of it all.

MARK  
You mean Vera?

Tim takes his Lady Golide figure in hand.

TIM  
I was only being nice. Asking a  
kind, smart, lovely lady to dinner.

MARK  
And she said 'no'?

TIM  
Not just 'no'. She said 'I want you  
to stop.' Like I'm a burden. After  
all I made for her.

Tim strokes a sticky finger down Goldie's front.

LATER

Mark PAINTS on his knees, Mr. Man figure watching from the worktop. Tim ambles in, satchel bulging, face white.

TIM

Right handy man, I'm off out for a bit. Running low on raw materials.

MARK

What's in the bag?

TIM

Essentials. Lunch is on the stove!

Tim turns to leave. And stops. He peers at Mark.

TIM (CONT.)

My Dad hunched like that when he worked. You look so much like him.

MARK

Oh yeah?

TIM

Aye. Went a bit funny working in Cononley. Mum said he worked too hard. I think he wanted better than mining. Just didn't know what. Maybe that's why he hated my films. I knew myself better than him.

Tim cleans his glasses.

TIM (CONT.)

Though it could've been the lead. Never washed under his nails. You'd think a grown man would remember.

Tim COUGHS HARD, shuffling out. PLIP. Mark peers down at-

A train ticket receipt: LEEDS to CONONLEY. Today's date.

His brow tightens. Mr. Man's shadow climbs the wall.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - CONT.

Mark TIPS a pan of bloodied pink meat down the sink. He TUGS the workroom door. Locked.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

At the back-door, Mark spots a gold key under paving.

INT. WORKROOM - DAY

UNLOCKING. Mark creeps in. Cloth bags lie by the freezer, brimming with raw clay materials. Not running low at all.

His model rests on the table. But not Tim's white clay head.

EXT. VILLAGE - TRAIN STATION - DAY

Mark watches Tim from a distance, boarding a train.

INT. LEEDS - TRAIN - DAY

Mark perches, staring down the carriage at Tim up ahead.

EXT. CONONLEY - TRAIN STATION - DAY

Mark stalks Tim down the platform, shrouded by crowds.

EXT. CONONLEY - LEAD MINE - DAY

A red-grey brick house sits derelict, gravel sloping around grass, vast fields behind them. Tim slips into the ruins.

Mark creeps down a steep hill, reaching the doorway. Inside-

Tim kneels, face hidden by Good Lad mask. He pulls out his white clay head. He waves his fingers. He strokes it. And-

Flames SEEP out, LICKING to MELT the face. Red OOZES over eyes and jaw, BURNING to pulp. Only a bloody skull remains.

Tim pulls out a hammer...and SMASHES it to dust. He scatters it like ashes.

Mark can only gape, lost in the ritual before him.

EXT. LEEDS - STONE FARM - NIGHT - CONT.

A weary Stone pours feed in a trough: grain, bones, and thick pink-grey matter. His PIGS trot, SLOPPING their fill.

(CONTINUED)

STONE

Eat up dears. Waste not want not.

He stops. He points, counting to himself. Until-  
A SQUEALING ECHOES across the field. The farmer tenses.

EXT. FARM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Stone traipses to the fence, torch FLASHING. Just ahead, a light shines from Tim's workshed. More SQUEALING.

STONE (CONT.)

You little runt.

SNAP! Stone glances down. Just as-  
Mark LEAPS up, SLAPPING him hard, before SPRINTING away.

STONE (CONT.)

Oi! What you playing at?!

Stone charges out, STOMPING mud as he goes.

EXT. TIM'S HOME - GARDEN - NIGHT

Mark slips into the shrubs. Stone's torch FLASHES over him. And...he stalks past, slipping into Tim's shed.

RINGING. Mark flinches. He checks his phone: VERA.

INT. WORKSHED - NIGHT

Stone's torch FLASHES over Tim's RECORDING camera.

STONE (CONT.)

Mouldin?! This your doing lad?!

A door CREAKS open: Farmer Grazer's set. Where-

A pot-bellied PIG slops red from a tray. A note on its side:  
'YOU'LL LEARN YOUR LESSON'.

STONE (CONT.)

Charlotte? What you doing here eh?

Someone WHISTLES. Stone turns. And-

Tim's Good Lad mask LURCHES at him. SLASH! Stone YELPS, grabbing his ear. Tim pulls out his Farmer Grazer mask, wipes his bloody knife on it, and-



Stone **SHOVES** him back, **KNOCKING** the camera down-

EXT. GARDEN - NIGHT

Mark crouches, phone to ear-

VERA (V.O.)  
Sorry to call so late, love. Didn't  
interrupt anything did I?

MARK  
No no. Just helping out, like.

Stone **BURSTS** out the workshed, **LURCHING** up the hill-

VERA (V.O.)  
Mark? What was that?

Mark **HANGS UP**, **TRIPPING** out the shrubs after him.

EXT. FARM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Stone **DASHES** up the field. Mark **SKIDS**, **SLAMMING** into the  
fence, **HEAVING** over to stagger onto the farm.

EXT. STONE FARM - NIGHT

Stone slips past his pigs to a back-door, **FUMBLING** for a  
key. Mark catches up, **LEAPING** at him. Stone **SLAPS** him hard-

Mark **TRIPS** back, hands and knees **SMACKING** into pig-shit.  
Panic sears his brow. He **TUGS**, stuck fast, as-

Stone **SHOVES** his face down. Mark **GASPS**, struggling in the  
putrid puddles. He **TUGS**. Nothing. Harder! Nothing. Until-

Tim **SHOVES** his Farmer Grazer mask on Stone. He **WHISTLES**-

TIM  
Stop being a bully. Stop being an  
old man. Stop getting in the way!

Stone **SAGS** like a doll. Mark **LURCHES** up, **GASPING** for air,  
clothes ruined. Tim glowers at him-

TIM (CONT.)  
All you had to do was watch and  
wait. You're better than this!

He stalks out, **SQUELCHING** and **COUGHING** as he goes. Stone  
follows. Mark remains still. A frozen buck among beasts.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKROOM - NIGHT

Mark stumbles in. Tim is waiting.

TIM (CONT.)

Strip. Don't want your mess inside.

Mark stares stoic. He slowly pulls off his shoes. His shirt. His trousers.

TIM (CONT.)

Hmm. I'll get you some gloves.

Tim stalks out. Mark SHIVERS. The deep-freeze HUMS. Until- He FLICKS it off at the wall. The humming FADES away.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mark SHOWERS clean, fists gripping the tiles.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tim GNAWS a bloodied pink meat pie and gravy, sweating and sickly. Mark glares at his own, fresh pyjamas loose on him.

TIM

Come on. Eat up, young man.

MARK

You know I don't eat it.

TIM

My handy man still needs his strength. You're good help.

MARK

And yet you're chewing me out.

TIM

It's just the plan. I'm tired.

MARK

And I'm not?! I'm doing everything you ask. Least you can do is give me incentive.

Tim picks up the gravy pot. He pours on Mark's plate. And pours. And pours. Until the plate's a puddle.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Good food. Good work. Good shelter.  
That's your incentive.

Mark TREMBLES. Mr. Man mocks him from the windowsill.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark lies awake, staring up at Mr. Early Sky.

SMACK! He glares. SMACK! His jaw tightens. SMACK! He SHOVES the duvet off-

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONT.

Mark creeps to the workroom door. SMACK! He freezes. SMACK! Light glints through a crack. He peers through at-

INT. WORKROOM - NIGHT

Tim, crowded by sacks, vest stained as he mixes clay in his mother's mixing bowl. At least, it looks like clay.

He scoops up a blob...and SMEARS it down his throat, CHEWING viciously. Pink-grey matter DRIPS in putrid puddles.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark GAGS, treading back. A floorboard CREAKS, ECHOING through the house. And-

FOOTSTEPS. Mark DASHES away, feet HAMMERING back upstairs.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark leaps into bed, BREATHING HARD as he listens out.

The stairs CREAK. A shadow slips past. Mark HOLDS HIS BREATH...the shadow slips away. A door SHUTS nearby.

He SAGS trembling. He SLAPS himself hard.

MARK

Come on. Stop it. Fucking stop it!

ON BLACK: FRIDAY

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Mark struggles to do push-ups. His arms SHAKE. He COLLAPSES, face dark with shame. Mr. Early Sky mocks him from above.

RINGING. He checks his phone. He blanches. And ANSWERS-

MARK

Yes?

FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

Hi Mark, it's Catherine. Just thought I'd ring and check any updates on the job front?

MARK

I'm sorting it. You don't have to chase me.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

You know maintaining contact is one of your conditions. If I don't hear from you, I get worried. If I get worried, my mind jumps to 'breach'. And believe it or not, I don't want to breach you. So tell me now: is it under control?

Mark shuts his eyes. WHITE NOISE.

MARK

Yes. Loud and clear.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Good. Now another thing: a random check was done at your address. You weren't there. What's up?

MARK

Right. Look, I was gonna tell you. I got an offer. Making models. Outside Liverpool. So I've had to travel. But not miles, like. I-I thought it'd be OK. Getting proper work, like you said. Not hurting anyone. I'll be done soon. Then I'm coming straight back, alright? I'm sorry Cath, I know I've messed you around. Can you just say I was out and they missed me, like? Please?!

(CONTINUED)

CATHERINE (V.O.)

Mark, we know you tried to assault a colleague. Just before you were made redundant. And we know you're not staying at your registered address. There's a live warrant for your arrest.

Mark glowers.

MARK

They broke it. All of them. They wouldn't stop laughing at me and-

CATHERINE

I know! I know about the bullying. Wherever you are right now, if you come back to Liverpool, I'll put in a good word. Before it gets worse.

MARK

Oh trust me, it couldn't be much worse.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

What does that mean?...Mark?

Mark HANGS UP...and PUNCHES a wall.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONT.

Mark trudges in, knuckles bloodied. A greenish Tim stands waiting. Glaring.

MARK

What now?

TIM

Funny smell in the drain. Look what I found.

Tim opens a fist. Sticky pink mince SLOPS the floor. Mark stares frozen.

TIM (CONT.)

Wednesday. What did you feed me?

MARK

Look mate, that bag was off. I-I had to improvise-

(CONTINUED)

TIM  
Don't lie. What did you feed me?

MARK  
O-Offal I think. Livers. Or beef hearts. I was gonna ask, like.

Tim's hands shake. His eyes water.

TIM  
I was saving them. Special meat.

MARK  
Right. Sorry. I'll make it up to you. I can get you some more eggs or fish or-

TIM  
IT'S NOT THE SAME, YOU FUCKING PIG!

SLAP! Mark stumbles back stunned, gripping his stained cheek. He DASHES out. Tim stares blankly after him...and licks his fingers.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Mark SCRUBS his hands and face desperately. KNOCKING nearby-

TIM (CONT.) (O.S.)  
Mark? Matey? It was an accident. I can't help myself sometimes. You know how things are. All the costs going up and up. I can only afford so much. Water under the bridge?

The handle JUDDERS. SILENCE.

TIM (CONT.) (O.S.)  
Just running an errand. Go work on Bobby's set when you're ready eh?

FOOTSTEPS DOWNSTAIRS. The front door SLAMS.

INT. LANDING - DAY

Mark YANKS at Tim's bedroom door. Locked. He BANGS the frame. The handle JUDDERS loose. He peers at it.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY - CONT.

Mark TURNS ON the shower.

INT. LANDING - DAY

Mark TWISTS the bathroom lock to ENGAGED with a screwdriver. He FIDDLES with Tim's bedroom handle. Until-

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - DAY

The lock CLICKS. Mark slips into the sickly-white room. A shrivelled sheet adorns the bed. A cracked cabinet beckons, Good Lad figure on top.

Mark rifles through. In the bottom drawer: Tim's cash box. He GRABS for it. It catches. He TUGS hard, STRAINING. Until-

SNAP! Mark falls back. A bag THUDS in his lap, spilling...a pile of identical black notepads. He opens one, flicking to-

INSERT: A photo of Aron Zaslowski. Notes beneath: '45. Anfield. Labourer. DOLE CASE. NO CONVICTIONS.'

He opens another-

INSERT: A mugshot of a smug stranger - BRYAN YORK. More notes: '35. Barnsley. Decorator. 5 years served: GBH.'

Mark opens a third. A fourth. A fifth. Each like the last: Northern, handymen, some migrants, some ex-offenders.

He reaches the last book. He opens. And wishes he hadn't-

INSERT: Mark's mugshot - MARK LYNE. '42. Liverpool South. Modelist. 2 1/2 years served. GBH against minor. *Whistle Stop Way*. MY FAVOURITE.'

INT. HALL - DAY

The front door UNLOCKS.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mark SNAPS pics, SHOVING the bag and box away. Just as-

The landing CREAKS. A key TURNS in the lock. And-

Mark LURCHES up, SHOVING his weight on the door. It JUDDERS. The key TURNS again. And-

(CONTINUED)

Tim treads in, slogging queasily to the cabinet. And stops. Good Lad is facing away. He turns him back towards the door.

He YANKS the drawers open, checking inside.

He treads to the wardrobe...and RIPS it open-

Only clothes. He RIPS back the curtains-

Only the lane below. He stares at the bed. He kneels. He grips the sheet. And-

DING-DONG! Tim lets go, stalking out.

The duvet STIRS.

INT. HALL - DAY

Tim opens the door. PC FETCH (30s, well-built) peers back.

TIM

Well hello Constable. Can I help?

PC FETCH

PC Fetch 8537, Leeds Constabulary. We're helping Merseyside Police locate a missing person. Intel shows his mobile signal pinged off in this area two months ago.

TIM

Ooh, exciting! Not on the run is he? Like that film with what's his name? *Indiana Jones* bloke?

PC FETCH

Er, no. His name's Aron Zaslowski. Mid 40s, Polish descent. Seen him?

Fetch holds out a photo. Tim adjusts his thick glasses.

TIM

Can't say I have, matey.

RINGING upstairs. Tim freezes. Fetch cocks his head-

The ringing STOPS. Tim forces a smile-

TIM

Nuisance calls.

(CONTINUED)



PC FETCH

Right. Well sorry to bother you.  
I'll head off, see what I can find.

TIM

I'm sure he'll turn up. Some lads  
just have trouble going home.

PC FETCH

Sure. And er, keep to yourself Tim.  
No freaking people out.

Fetch strides off. Tim shuts the door. And HEAVES into his  
hand, QUIVERING with sick rage.

INT. LANDING - DAY

Tim KNOCKS on the bathroom. Mark opens, drying damp hair.

MARK

Alright mate?

Tim stares Mark down. Mark stares back.

LATER

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark and Tim perch at the table, teas in hand.

MARK

So who was at the door?

TIM

Friendly PC Fetch. 'Boy's missing  
in the wilderness, Sheriff!'  
Zaslowski was his name. Polish.  
Know any round your way?

MARK

Knew a few in work. They were  
alright. Nicer than some lads.

Tim leans in. Mark grips his mug.

MARK (CONT.)

A guy I worked with, Paul. He made  
me not wanna go in. But I had to,  
or it'd just get worse. So one day,  
I've got my model in. He grabs it

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT.) (cont'd)  
off me, showing off. Then he drops  
it. Cracked it. Could've killed  
him. Hammer was right there, like.

TIM  
Did you get in trouble?

MARK  
Nah. Manager stuck up for me. Not  
that it made a difference. I lost  
my job same day. And here I am.

TIM  
Ah well. Can't say I'm big on the  
law myself. 'Moral superiority'  
I'm sure I can trust you.

Mark keeps his eyes glued to Tim.

MARK (CONT.)  
You could've had anyone do all this  
for ya. Why me?

TIM  
Call it instinct. It's my gift.

Tim pats Mark's hands, lingering. Mark recoils-

MARK  
Vera wants to see my work. Today.

Tim's smile vanishes.

TIM  
I don't think that's a good idea.  
It still needs fixing.

MARK  
I promised her. I can't back out.  
Wouldn't be manners, would it?

TIM  
I know what manners are! Your place  
is here.

MARK  
You made me strip off last night.  
Whacked me one today. You owe me.

Mark wilts. Tim seems to soften.

(CONTINUED)

TIM (CONT.)  
I guess half an hour won't hurt?

MARK  
Course, course. Cheers mate.

Tim STIFLES a gag. Mark notices.

MARK (CONT.)  
Hope that missing lad's OK. Maybe things got on top of him and he ran off. Why d'you think lads do that?

Tim's fists clench.

TIM  
Autonomy. Lads like that don't have autonomy. 'Bad job, bad wife, bad kids', it's all excuses. It's why they push us around. Because they can't push themselves around.

MARK  
D'you think they can change?

TIM  
Yes. If they try hard enough.

INT. VILLAGE - CAFE - DAY

Mark sits shy and guilty, as Vera admires his cracked setpiece on the table.

MARK  
I should've said, I'm not really a miniaturist. More carpentry really.

VERA  
Oh Mark...it's lovely! A little toy town. Must've been for someone special to go to all this effort?

Mark double-takes: 'She likes it?'

MARK  
Yeah. My lad Liam. He loved all this. But I think Tim's my biggest fan now.

Mark glances out the window, suddenly on-edge.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT.)

Does he ever get lads doing stuff for him? Stuff that doesn't make sense?

VERA

Tim? Well he's a bit eccentric. But whatever he's got you doing, I wouldn't worry.

MARK

I know he likes you. Did he try it on or something?

Vera meets his eye. She sets her cup down.

VERA

He asked me to dinner. I thought he was being friendly.

MARK

OK. So what happened?

VERA

I turn up, smart-casual. But he's all done up in this tatty dapper coat. Doesn't suit him at all. He orders wine for the table. Shows me a photo of a clay family. From that show he likes, *Whistle Stop*?

Mark sits up.

VERA (CONT.)

He has this long white box with him. And inside is this gorgeous gold dress. And I realised what he wanted. So I'm honest: I tell him I don't like him like that.

MARK

And what did he say?

VERA

Nothing. I thought he'd start crying. But then he gives me this look. This pure, awful, hurting anger. Like he wanted to hurt me.

MARK

He wouldn't though. Would he?

Vera peels off her gloves. Crooked scars paint her hands.

(CONTINUED)

VERA

It's my fault. Should've left when I saw the matches. But you don't expect someone burning a dress right in front of you, do you?

Mark MUTTERS stunned-

MARK

His films.

VERA

What's that, love?

MARK

Why couldn't you just tell him before? He thinks he's a freak now!

VERA

He's a grown man, Mark! I'm not responsible for him.

MARK

So what, because you won't give him a chance-?

VERA

It's not just that. He's innocent. Maybe too innocent. Even if I did like him, would I just be waiting for him to flip? Would I be safe? Would Gilly? I can't bring a man like that into my life again. It wouldn't be fair on any of us.

BANG! Mark flinches. A BLONDE SERVER stacks cups nearby.

VERA (CONT.)

Funny what you hold onto, isn't it? Even when you know you shouldn't.

BANG! Mark grits his teeth. And-

VERA (CONT.)

We just can't help ourselves.

BANG! SKIDDING. Water SPLASHES over Mark's lap. A thick wet patch develops.

BLONDE SERVER

Oh my God, I am so sorry! I didn't get any on you, did I?

(CONTINUED)

VERA  
No no, I'm fine. It's just him.

BLONDE SERVER  
Hang on Sir, I've got a towel here.  
God I'm an idiot, I should've-

WHITE NOISE. Mark's face twists-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - CHILDHOOD HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Young Mark, weeping in wet trousers. A voice BOOMS-

UNSEEN MAN (O.S.)  
That'll learn ya. Next time you'll  
be more careful won't ya? Eh?!  
YOU'LL BE CAREFUL WON'T YA?!

END FLASHBACK:

INT. LEEDS - VILLAGE - CAFE - DAY

Mark SLAMS the table-

MARK  
Why can't you just be careful?!

Vera flinches. The server steps back scared.

BLONDE SERVER  
I'm sorry. I didn't mean to-

She runs out, tears spilling. Mark peers around. Everyone's staring. Only Vera can barely look at him.

MARK  
Vera. That's not me, yeah? I just-

VERA  
I think you should be alone, Mark.

Mark wilts. He stirs his tea.

MARK  
Well off you go then.

Vera opens her mouth...and shuts it. She leaves a generous tip, casting a pitying glance as she goes.

Through the window, two hooded figures watch on.

EXT. VILLAGE - RURAL LANE - DAY

Mark treads alone. A police car IDLES behind him. It stops. He glances back. Just as-

PS Myres DASHES up, DRAGGING Mark down, heel DIGGING in.

PS MYRES

I remember now. Face in the paper  
yonks ago. Mark Lyne. Got nerve  
coming up here. Must be desperate,  
hanging around freaks like Tim?

MARK

I'm nothing like him!

PS MYRES

Agree to disagree. Otherwise you'd  
still be down Liverpool-way. Wonder  
what Merseyside's gonna think.

MARK

Why don't you just slap the cuffs  
on now then? Get it over with?

PS MYRES

I'd rather let you make your own  
mistakes. Got enough of them.

Myres releases him. Mark's fists clench.

PS MYRES (CONT.)

Ooh, what now matey? Gonna lose  
your rag? Like with your lad?

Mark EXHALES HARD...and eases himself up.

MARK

I'm losing nothing. So off you  
trot.

PS MYRES

Enjoy the rest of your day.

Myres flashes that fake smile, WHISTLING as he goes. Mark double-takes. It's the *Whistle Stop Way* theme song.

INT. TIM'S HOME - HALL - DAY

Mark SLAMS the front door. Tim traipses in.

TIM  
Mind that door. If it breaks-

MARK  
He's next right?! Tell me he's  
fucking next!

TIM  
Woah, breathe! What's happened?

Mark sags on the stairs.

MARK  
You've seen Tommy's black eye? How  
jumpy he gets? His dad did that.

TIM  
Myres?! I...I never noticed.

MARK  
You didn't? He's getting in your  
face like it's nothing.

TIM  
It's what he does. You can't let it  
get to you. Just focus on-

MARK  
Dad grabbed me like he did. On my  
knees, arm around my back, foot in  
my ribs. Right where it hurts. Then  
he'd laugh. Like it was a joke. I  
was 'too sensitive'. Maybe I was.

Tim wilts. He sinks beside Mark.

TIM  
You never expect it, do you? Not  
feeling safe. Not around your Dad.  
Sometimes I'd worry I'd turn out  
like him. A great big bully. Then I  
remember my old Mum. Always there.  
Always proud. You could never turn  
out bad with a mum like that.

Mark stiffens. His fists clench on the stairs-

FLASHBACK TO:



INT. LIVERPOOL - CHILDHOOD HOME - HALL - DAY

Young Mark kneels, arm wrenched behind back. A blurry BLONDE FIGURE peers from upstairs. As if refusing rescue.

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

Mark stares down. Stone's prize pig Charlotte stares back. Tim sharpens a craft knife.

TIM

Told you she was worth keeping. Pig for a pig, eh?

MARK

But...it's an animal, mate.

TIM

We're all animals, my friend.

Tim steadies his knife. Mark looks away. And-

INT./EXT VILLAGE - POLICE CAR/RURAL LANE - NIGHT - CONT.

Myres slinks along the lane, rain POURING down. RINGING-

PS MYRES

Alright love?

MRS MYRES (V.O.)

Dave, it's Tommy. His eye's smarting.

PS MYRES

I've told you, use the wet wipes. Boil a teabag if he needs it.

MRS MYRES (V.O.)

You shouldn't put so much on him.

PS MYRES

It'll clear up! Always does.

SMACK! Myres BRAKES HARD. He HANGS UP. He GULPS.

EXT. RURAL LANE - NIGHT

Myres steps out, high-vis raincoat pulled close. He SHINES a torch at the front bumper, revealing-

A severed pig's head in a police helmet, slathered in clay. A note on its face: 'YOU'LL LEARN YOUR LESSON'.

WHISTLING. Myres flinches, shining right ahead at-

Tim, Good Lad mask down, BANGING the drum around his neck.

PS MYRES (CONT.)

Tim? Always trouble when you're around. You're like a bad smell.

Tim props up his mask, drizzle seeping down specs.

TIM

And you're a bad bobby. Not good enough for a lovely little town.

PS MYRES

I'll give you a chance to apologise for that.

TIM

I don't apologise to bullies. Especially ones who smack their lads about. Like little dolls.

PS MYRES

Got something you shouldn't have?

TIM

Why don't you come and see?

The sergeant smirks. He pulls out his cuffs-

PS MYRES

Tim Mouldin, I'm detaining you for a search under Section 1 of PACE. You don't have to say-

Mark LEAPS from the shadows, KICKING Myres to the ground. Tim LUNGES. SLASH! Myres YELPS, blood seeping down ear, as Mark YANKS and slips his cuffs on-

MARK

How's that feel? Comfy enough?

(CONTINUED)

PS MYRES  
Lyne! Get the fuck off me or I'll-!

Tim SHOVES his bloodied clay Bobby Lobber mask on Myres.

TIM  
Stop resisting.

The sergeant stops. He sags. Mark DIGS his knee in. Myres CHOKES, GASPING.

TIM (CONT.)  
Mark, stop. Stop! STOP IT!

Mark LURCHES up, BREATHING RAGGED-

MARK  
Why?! He deserves it!

TIM  
It's not ALLOWED!

Tim grips Myres' arms, dragging him away. Mark glowers after them, drizzle soaking in.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - NIGHT

Myres crouches frozen in Bobby Lobber's set. Tim SNAPS his camera. Mark watches on, TWITCHING at each SNAP. Until-

MARK  
Vera told me about the dress. And  
the fire. Bit like your episode.  
Teaching Good Lad a lesson?

Tim stops. His smile wavers. The camera RATTLES.

TIM  
I shouldn't have let you go.

MARK  
It was only a cup of tea.

TIM  
That's what they do. Let you get  
close. Give you attention. Then run  
away. Women like her always do.

MARK  
'Women like her'?! Sorry mate, but  
you sound like the lads in-!

Mark STOPS SHORT.

(CONTINUED)

TIM  
The lads in-?

MARK  
Work. Lads in work. Forget it.

Tim treads over. Inches from Mark's face.

TIM  
Am I a pervert, Mark?

MARK  
Sorry?

TIM  
Am I a pervert? Do you think I'm  
like 'the lads in work'? That I'll  
suck your fingers in the night?

MARK  
N-No.

TIM  
Would you let me? To taste the  
skill inside them?

Mark stares unnerved. Tim stares back. Until-  
He EXPLODES with laughter.

TIM (CONT.)  
Only joking! Like I'd ever do that.  
What d'you think I am, my friend?!

Mark remains stoic. Tim stops laughing.

MARK  
Why does she have to be part of it?

TIM  
Because she's the starting point.  
I'm her finish line.

MARK  
I dunno. Seems a bit...seedy.

TIM  
Well you would say that. You lost  
Jules and Liam. It's only natural  
you'd latch onto any nice lady with  
a lad who shows an interest.

Mark stares astonished.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

I can't help it if she likes me.

TIM

She's meant to like ME.

MARK

Oh mate, you need to get over-

Tim GRIPS Mark's wrist, CLENCHING-

TIM

Don't interrupt! You upset me.  
Again. You can't help yourself.

MARK

Tim, let go.

TIM

Think you know better than me eh,  
don't you? Don't you?!

MARK

I said let go! Now!

TIM

DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

Tim WRENCHES Mark's wrist, STRIKING him hard. Mark collapses dazed. Tim trembles, rage gone.

TIM (CONT.)

This is my story. My friends. My  
Lady. Don't forget that, young man.

Tim stalks out. Mark holds his wrist, cheek bleeding. His eyes water.

INT. TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

DREAM SEQUENCE:

- Mark lies sleeping. FOOTSTEPS. Tim looms over him...he takes a hand...he SUCKS his fingers...and BITES them-

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Mark JOLTS awake. The room is empty. His hand is dry.

ON BLACK:           SATURDAY

INT. TIM'S HOME - BATHROOM - DAY - CONT.

Fresh drizzle SPATTERS the window. Mark DRAWS a house in the fogged glass. His bruised face stares back. A right sight.

INT. HALL - DAY

Mark peers downstairs. Tim hovers, gnawing a raw thumb.

TIM

Sleep well matey? No brekkie I'm  
afraid. But I'm sure you'll manage.  
Prep the last sets will you?

Mark can only nod. Tim grins, breezing out the front door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark RUMMAGES. The cupboards are bare. Only bloodied pink meat in the fridge. He reaches for it...and stops himself.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - DAY

Mark REPAINTS set #6: Matri & Mony's Wedding Shop.

White paint splashes his blue-black wrist. He drags a finger, hiding the bruises. As if guilty to have them.

He glances out at the rain.

EXT. VILLAGE - BRIDGE - DAY

Mark peers at the RUSHING river below. He shuts his eyes, drizzle drifting over him-

FLASHBACK:

EXT. LIVERPOOL - CHILDHOOD HOME - GARDEN - DAY

Young Mark crouches behind shrubs, eyes shut, rain drizzling through vast branches above. It's bliss.

SMACK! He flinches, peering up the garden. A TALL FIGURE treads down, barely visible through leaves. He HOLDS HIS BREATH...they tread back inside. He shuts his eyes again...

PRESENT:

EXT. LEEDS - VILLAGE - RURAL LANE - DAY

Mark paces back up to Tim's house. And stops.

Tommy and Bella wait up ahead, grinning masks down, wicker baskets filled with sweets and buns.

TOMMY

Hello Mr. Man. Lovely day for it.

MARK

What are you doing?

BELLA

We saw you coming. You look ill. We thought you might like a treat.

Mark tries to slip past. They block his path.

MARK

Look, if this is Tim trying to freak me out, I'm not falling for it. Now move, or I'll make you!

TOMMY

'Make us'? Whatever do you mean?

BELLA

You can't make us. We're already made.

Mark eyes their grey nails. A flash of epiphany.

MARK

Tim's dad worked in Cononley. Lead mining. He said it changed him.

The pair take a step back.

MARK (CONT.)

Is that how he does it? Is he poisoning you? Tell me!

They turn to run. Mark grabs Bella's hand-

It SCHLUCKS from her sleeve, bloodied clay SPLATTERING out.

Mark staggers back shocked. Bella grabs her sleeve, DASHING after Tommy. Mark SAGS. The hand starts to melt.

In the distance, Gault and Stone watch from the farmland.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - CONT.

Mark studies the hand, scraping dirty clay to SCHLUCK from solid white mass. Like blood and bone.

MARK

Tim, you fucking psycho.

DOORBELL. Mark LEAPS up, SHOVING the hand in the bin.

INT. HALL - DAY

Mark peers through the peephole. He double-takes. He opens the door, staring stunned at-

The elderly couple in the photos: Tim's Mum and Dad.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Mark? We're sorry if this is a shock. But we can't hide anymore.

ELDERLY MAN

May we come in?

LATER

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mark and the couple sit, mugs steaming. A photo frame lies in the middle: their wedding day. Written in black-

INSERT: 'JOHN & MARIE DINNING, 1984'.

MARK

I don't get it. He said you were dead. It's mad.

MARIE

You've been helping Tim with his work? His 'little projects'?

MARK

Just the film.

JOHN

'Film'. Always the film. He'll never finish it y'know.

(CONTINUED)



MARIE

You've only known Tim a few weeks.  
We've known him a lifetime. His mum  
and dad struggled with him.

MARK

'Struggled'? His dad hit him.

JOHN

I'll admit he was a rough sort. But  
his mum was a saint. Did her best.  
With his 'gift'. Poor lot.

MARIE

Hmm. Could barely pay the mortgage  
on that bungalow. We tried to help  
but, his dad was too proud to ask-

MARK

Wait, sorry. 'Bungalow'?

JOHN

Their home. Small thing. Too little  
for a family. Maybe that's why Tim  
wanted this place. 'A proper home.'

Mark freezes. A rare true fear in his eyes.

MARK

This isn't his house?

MARIE

No love. It's ours.

MARK

But he's got all your photos up.  
Why would he risk me finding out?

JOHN

Because it's Tim. He loves risks.  
And stories. Especially about him.

MARIE

We promised we'd look out for him.  
But his 'gift' got too intense.  
Until we stopped feeling safe.  
That's how he threw us out.

MARK

The clay thing. Controlling people.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

It's that *Whistle Stop* that sets him off. He'd do anything to bring it to life.

MARK

Y'mean...he's done this before?!

MARIE

Different names, different stories. Does 'Aron Zaslowski' ring a bell?

MARK

Y-Yeah. He's in a book upstairs. And me. His 'favourite'.

JOHN

What do you think that means, Mark?

MARK

How should I know?! Even if I did, I can't say anything.

MARIE

It's how abusers work. They make you doubt yourself.

MARK

Tim's not an abuser.

JOHN

Oh aye. Does he put you down then laugh about it? Has he hit you yet?

Mark blanches. He rubs his blue-black wrist.

MARK

Maybe I can reason with him. Make him stop.

JOHN

You can't just stop with Tim. Not until the plan's done.

MARK

Y-You know about the plan?

MARIE

You've seen how they walk? Blood and clay all as one? It's his own special story. Bullies and bores remade. The past come to life.

(CONTINUED)

SNAP! They glance up. PS Myres stares through the window, Bobby Lobber mask grinning back. He LURCHES out of sight.

JOHN

We have to go. Now! Do the right thing Mark and go home.

MARK

Hey wait, h-how do I stop-

MARIE

Just go! While you still can!

UNLOCKING. The front door CREAKS open-

The couple hurry out the kitchen door. Mark SHOVES their mugs in the sink, BOILS the kettle, and-

Tim treads in, even paler and sicklier than before.

TIM

Hello handy man. All quiet?

Mark nods nonchalant. Tim fishes for the kettle. And stops.

TIM (CONT.)

Did we have guests?

MARK

Oh. No. I used them earlier.

TIM

Stick to one. I don't like waste.

Tim makes tea, perching at the table. BEAT.

MARK

All set for tonight?

TIM

Aye. Matri and Mony. With their little dress shop. And the bells. 'Ring out for the gentleman! Ring him out!'. Mum loved that.

Mark SMIRKS. Tim's smile fades.

TIM (CONT.)

You're quiet. Still peeved are we?

MARK

No. Just thinking how grateful I am. Being here. Looking out for me.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

What are friends for, young man?

Tim STRETCHES. CLINK! He stops. He reaches down, lifting-  
A white silk purse. Mark freezes.

TIM

And who's might this be?

MARK

Vera's!

TIM

She came here? For tea? With you?

MARK

I-I'm sorry. She must've left it  
behind. I know I promised-

TIM

Mark! Mark. Matey. You got Vera up  
here? In my home? I'm proud of you!  
At this rate, tomorrow's a doddle!  
Well done. Very well done.

MARK

Yeah! Just proving myself, like.  
Though she might need it, so-?

TIM

Oh of course! Best take it back.  
I'll grab my coat-

MARK

No! I mean, you're still not 100%.  
Let me make it up to ya?

Tim dithers...and hands the purse over.

TIM

No bother. I'll sort a few things.

Tim HUGS him tight. Mark blanches: 'Oh fuck me.'

INT. VILLAGE - VERA'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vera serves tea in plain mugs. No biscuits this time.

MARK

I'm sorry, alright? You're not  
still mad, are ya?

(CONTINUED)

VERA

You frightened me, Mark. I don't think you realise how much.

MARK

I know. I just get wound up. Like I'm waiting for things to go wrong.

VERA

That's not an excuse. You need to learn to cope. I know without my art I'd go doo-lally. That's why you make models. It helps you.

MARK

Not always. Maybe I'm just bad.

VERA

There's no 'bad'. Just choices. You chose to lose your rag. How can I trust you won't do it again?

Mark reaches for his tea...and stops.

MARK

I did learn to cope. In a place you can't just leave when you feel like it. Because of bad choices.

Vera sits up. She fiddles with her cardigan.

VERA

How long?

MARK

Five years. Served half. Only had a month left on licence.

VERA

Can I ask why?

Mark plays with sugar cubes.

MARK

My lad Liam? He's smart. Talented. An artist. I made sure he knew it. But he wouldn't put the work in. He'd rather go out with his footie mates. Being a lad. I hated it. Wouldn't think it, would ya? Jules always joked I was trapped with the other dads. 'Who d'you support?'. If you can't answer, you're fucked.

(CONTINUED)

Mark crushes the cubes.

MARK (CONT.)

I didn't want that for him. So I bent the rules a bit. He wanted to try out for the school team. I said no. Thought I'd got him sat down doing his art. I trusted him. So I went out, got some treats for when he's done. I get back. He's gone. Jules is gone. Can't have gone shopping, the cupboards are full. So where's she gone with him?

Mark builds a sugar cube house.

MARK (CONT.)

They come back later. I'm doing a model, so I hear them in the hall first. 'Thanks Mum. Can I tell him now?'. 'Maybe later, love. Don't wind him up when he's working.' What's she saying that for? So I come out. Liam's got his footie stuff on. He's happy. She's happy.

Mark rolls a cube between his fingers.

MARK (CONT.)

I see red. He's done it again. He won't listen. Jules is trying to calm me down. He's upset, saying he can do both. Then he swears at me. So I grab for him. And he bites me.

He rolls up a sleeve, showing faint teeth scars.

MARK (CONT.)

It hurts. More than you think. But not as much what he said next.

VERA

What?

MARK

I tell him to stop being a thug. Like Grandad. He says 'stop being a fucking victim'. So I hit him.

BEAT.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT.)

He doesn't get up for a sec. I see his ear bleeding. He's holding it, sort of confused. I think 'Why's he bleeding? It was just a slap.'

He places the final cube on top of the house-

MARK (CONT.)

Then I see the clay pot in my hand.

-it topples over.

MARK (CONT.)

I don't remember Jules locking me in the living room. Just when the ambulance came. And the police. Y'know the worst part? His art was done. I just said it wasn't so I could put my stamp on it. Because it's always gotta be about me.

Vera leans back pained.

VERA

Oh Mark. Why'd you do it, love?

MARK

I swore I'd never be like my Dad. Swore it so much, I made it happen. I just wanted a kid who'd do what I couldn't, like.

VERA

But you are doing it. You're still making things.

Mark wipes his eyes.

MARK

When I make little sets, I can feel it: passion. But furniture? It's just a skill. And when you've got the skill, you're expected to use it. Even if it means putting off your passion. And even if you're good, no-one trusts you anymore. That's why I came here. It's not just the money, or Jules, or Liam. It's someone giving me a chance again. Like Tim did.

Mark GULPS his tea-

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT.)

Even working in his grotty shed.

VERA

Shed? Didn't think he had one.  
Living in that little bungalow.

Mark grips his mug: 'It's true.'

MARK

Do you know John and Marie Dinning?

EXT. VILLAGE - RESIDENTIAL AREA - DAY - CONT.

A squat grey bungalow. Untrimmed lawn. A creeper's home.

Mark stalks to the front door, JABBING the bell. SILENCE. He tries the handle...it OPENS.

INT. GREY BUNGALOW - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Flaking flock wallpaper. A plasticity couch. Plasticity table. Box TV. Fruit bowl. Rotary phone. All oddly fake.

Mark eases inside, wading through piles of old newspapers. One has his face on the front. He doesn't notice.

CREAKING. Mark flinches, glancing across at an open doorway.

INT. HALL - DAY

Mark creeps down a narrow passage. A red door greets him. He steadies himself. A sweaty palm GRIPS the handle. And-

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

The door SMACKS open. Mark stalks in, peering around the grim white room. Clay dolls stare blankly from makeshift shelves. Upon the bed-

Two bodies lie shrouded under cloth. Mark GULPS. He treads over. A shaking hand reaches out...and YANKS the cloth from-

Two blank mannequins. Mark HURLS the cloth down, sagging frustrated on the bed. CLUNK. He sits up. Just as-

Two shapes BURST SCREAMING from the wardrobe. Mark LURCHES back, as filthy hands PIN him down-

(CONTINUED)



Marie and John, in manic Matri and Mony clay masks, wedding gown and suit ragged, brass bells in hand-

MARIE	JOHN
Ring out for the gentleman!	Ring out for the gentleman!
Ring him out!	Ring him out!

They SMACK Mark, DEAFENING CHIMES ringing out. Mark covers his head, CRYING OUT in sheer panic, until-

The couple suddenly HURTLE from the room.

MARK  
Hey?! HEY?! STOP!

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mark TRIPS in, grabbing at the fleeing figures-

Marie's hand SCHLUCKS away, spilling bloodied clay. Mark SKIDS, collapsing on the fruit bowl. The couple LURCH out the front door.

Mark staggers up, fruit crushed into sticky red, caking his front. He reaches for the rotary phone-

It sags, corded globs staining his palms. So does the table. The TV. Even the couch. It's all fake. It's all clay.

EXT. VILLAGE - RESIDENTIAL AREA - DAY

Mark treads out, a lost stumbling mess in the sunset. He looks at himself. He wipes away tears, staining his face.

INT. TIM'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - CONT.

Mark creeps in. And stops. The house is dark. He FLICKS the light. Nothing. He turns on his PHONE LIGHT, FLASHING over-

A VHS tape on the table: 'MARK - MY FAVOURITE.'

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mark treads in. Only the dim TV BUZZES with static. He SLOTS his tape in the player. He hits PLAY. And-

A 2018 NEWS REPORT appears-

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

This is North West Tonight. A 43 year-old labourer from Kirkby has been sentenced to 5 years in prison at Liverpool Crown Court after pleading guilty to GBH against a minor. Mark Lyne's history of controlling behaviour against ex-wife Jules Lyne and their son Liam culminated last year when he struck the boy with a clay pot, causing permanent hearing damage. Please note the following audio may be upsetting to some viewers.

A 999 AUDIO FILE plays-

JULES (V.O.)

Hello? Yes it's my husband. He's hurt our son. He's only 12.

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)

OK, is the victim conscious?

JULES (V.O.)

He's bleeding. Right down his ear-

LIAM (V.O.)

Mum, it hurts.

JULES (V.O.)

It's OK, just keep pressure on it.

999 OPERATOR (V.O.)

So your son's bleeding? Did your husband hit him with something?

JULES (V.O.)

I-I don't think he meant to. It was a little clay thing in his hand-

Mark sags, head in hands. The footage GLITCHES. Lady Goldie and Good Lad appear. Only cruder. Duller. Home-made.

LADY GOLDIE (V.O.)

Don'y cry Good Lad. Daddy didn't mean it. He'll do better.

(CONTINUED)

GOOD LAD (V.O.)  
 It's too late. He can't do better.  
 Can't can't can't can't can't-

A GLITCH. Tim's workshed. A stack of bloodied limbs. And-  
 The tape ENDS. Mark clutches the couch tight. Just as the  
 light FLICKERS on. He WHIPS around, facing...no-one.

MARK  
 Oh fuck that.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark DASHES in, TUGGING at the back door. And stops. He  
 peers at the open workroom door.

INT. WORKROOM - NIGHT

Mark treads in, phone FLASHING. A white sheet covers the  
 worktable. He GRIPS...and RIPS it from-

His model. Now adorned with a mob of clay villagers,  
 marching to a white house. Just like Vera's painting.

Mark stares stricken, backing up to the freezer. He stops.  
 Blood stains the edge. He LIFTS the lid. And-

Bags of rotting flesh greet him. One brims with greenish  
 hearts. Mark GAGS, LURCHING back-

Right into Tim. Mark YELPS. A fist SLAMS in his stomach. He  
 SAGS winded. A damp cloth is SHOVED over his mouth. And-

ON BLACK: SUNDAY

INT. TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Mark stirs on the bed, clothed in pyjamas. Mr. Early Sky  
 beams down. Tim peers from the doorway, ghostly white.

TIM  
 You were messy again. Had to change  
 you. Don't worry about me seeing  
 anything. A gentleman never peeks-

MARK  
 Stop. Alright? Just stop. I know  
 you don't live here. And I know

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARK (cont'd)  
Aron was your last 'handy man',  
right? So where is he?!

A strange sad anger flickers over Tim's face.

TIM  
Where? You've already met! Shame  
you never tried him. Turning the  
freezer off didn't help the taste.

Mark blanches. Pure seething disgust sinks in.

MARK  
You sick fuck.

TIM  
Get some rest, young man. Big night  
tonight. Our grand finale.

Tim SLAMS the door. Mark LURCHES up pained, TUGGING hard-

MARK  
Tim?! I can't be locked in like  
this, I don't like it!

TIM (O.S.)  
Then adapt. Not like you've never  
had it. Small rooms and big doors?

KNOCK. KNOCK. BANG! KNOCK. KNOCK. BANG!

MARK  
No. Stop. Stop it! STOP!

Mark CRAWLS under the bed, hands over ears, BREATHING HARD-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - CHILDHOOD HOME - CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Young Mark cowers under his bed, hands over ears. Fists  
HAMMER the bedroom door. Until-

It BURSTS OPEN, revealing...Mark. He stares at himself.

MARK  
I'm sorry I'm like this now.

The boy becomes Mark. Mark becomes the boy. A pair of hands  
RIP the boy out the door, SLAMMING it shut.

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Mark stirs. He crawls out, peeking beneath his shirt.  
Bluish-yellow bruising stains his stomach.

A little black pot and note greet him: 'MAKE YOURSELF  
SOMETHING.' Mark opens the lid. Fresh white clay spills out.  
He begins shaping...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - PRISON - CELL - DAY

In the dim cramped room, Mark hunches at a thin desk,  
plastic spoon CARVING...a little white clay house.

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - TIM'S HOME - GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Mark stares at his creation: the same little house.

LATER

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

UNLOCKING. Mark stirs once more. It's Tim, dark clothes in  
hand. He glances down at Mark's clay house...and CRUSHES it.

TIM

Showtime.

INT. WORKROOM - NIGHT

Tim holds up his and Mark's phones.

TIM

Leave the line open. If you warn  
her, she's done. If you run, she's  
done. If you hang up, I call the  
police, and you're both done.

He nods to Mark's wallet and suitcase on the table.

TIM (CONT.)

I'll keep those safe for you.

Mark SNATCHES his phone, flicking through.

(CONTINUED)

TIM (CONT.)

Don't bother. Piccies are gone.  
Helps if the code isn't your lad's  
birth year.

MARK

How d'you know I won't give up?

TIM

Because this means too much to you  
now.

Mark glowers, pocketing the phone.

MARK

How'd you figure me out?

TIM

Easy: you went in my room. Locked  
the bathroom from outside, then hid  
under the bed. Bit like a horror  
story eh? When the hero has to hold  
their breath?

Mark's face is blank. His trembling hands betray him.

TIM (CONT.)

When you tell her I'm sorry, make  
sure she knows I REALLY mean it.

Mark treads out, Tim staring silently after him.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - NIGHT

Mark LIMPS along, clutching his gut, brow sodden.

INT. VILLAGE - VERA'S HOME - NIGHT - CONT.

Mark holds an ice-pack under his shirt. Vera hovers anxious.

VERA

I don't understand. They hit you  
and just drove off? It's criminal!

MARK

It's fine. I asked for it. Anyway,  
it's not why I'm here. It's Tim.

VERA

Right. What about him?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Well er, he wants to apologise. For hurting you. He's just shy, like. Thought I could say it better. And if you could, come see him?

VERA

Oh. No. That's not on me. If Tim's really sorry, he can come say it himself. Be responsible for once.

Mark blanches, glancing at his pocket.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mark HEAVES over the toilet. The phone CRACKLES-

TIM (V.O.)

You can do better than that.

MARK

Alright! Just gimme a sec.

Mark SCRUBS in the sink. And stops. He eyes his phone. He carefully places it by the WHOOSHING tap. And slips out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mark limps in. Vera peers confused.

VERA

Have you left the tap on?

MARK

I haven't got long. You said Tim likes things a certain way? You were right. Just worse than you think. Promise you won't get mad?

VERA

Tell me what it is first.

MARK

He...He's made a list. Of people he hates. He brings them to his house. He puts masks on them. And they stop being themselves. You're the last one.

(CONTINUED)

VERA

Mark, you can't be serious-

MARK

I wish I wasn't! But I've seen it Vee. When our work got wrecked, he screamed at me and a bulb burst. I followed him to Cononley and he was doing some fucking magic clay shit down the mine. He's controlling them and I can't figure it out!

VERA

Mark, why are you saying all this? What's this got to do with me?

MARK

Because he blames you for all of it! Having no mates, not getting all the *Whistle Stop* crap he loves. He's paying you back. I'm supposed to come get you. And Gilly. So I'll get £10K. For Liam. I don't wanna hurt ya. You don't deserve it. But I can't just go home with nothing. So I'm getting us out. OK?

Vera treads over...and SLAPS Mark hard. Then HUGS him tight.

VERA

You silly silly man. Why on Earth would you think that was a good idea?! Right. OK. You say this is real? Fine, it's real. So what happens if you don't do this?

MARK

He tells the police where I am. Then he comes for you.

VERA

Jesus Christ. And say you help us get away: where would we go?

MARK

Anywhere. As long as you're happy. Doing what you love for once.

Vera dithers, gazing around her quaint home.

VERA

Alright. Alright! Never liked this place anyway. I'll sort Gil. How are you gonna trick Tim?

(CONTINUED)



MARK

I know where his cash is, I'll get the jump on him. Just get my phone-

VERA

Mark? Be careful.

Mark flashes a smirk, slipping out.

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKROOM - NIGHT

Mark slips in. Tim leans by his renovated model, SCOFFING red matter from his mother's mixing bowl.

TIM

When I was little, I'd pretend to climb in the telly. So I could go live there. In a good place.

MARK

Why's it like that?

TIM

Doesn't it remind you of anything? A golden lady's art, perhaps?

Mark scans the setpiece. A flicker of remembrance-

MARK

Vera. Her art.

TIM

My inspiration. Now where is she?

MARK

She's not coming. Never was.

Tim stares stoic. His fists tremble.

TIM

We've got to do this right. It's MY show. MY gift!

MARK

'Gift'? You couldn't even use it til I got here. It's pathetic!

TIM

You told me to stand up for myself! Well now I'm standing up to YOU!

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Me?! What did I ever do to you?!

TIM

What didn't you do? You lied.  
Cheated. Stole. Smacked. RUINED.  
Just like all the lads I've had.

MARK

So you fucking ATE them?!

TIM

I was hungry. They were too. Think  
of it like a cycle: abusers eating  
abusers. Keeps your kind together.

MARK

Aron wasn't an abuser. He just  
wanted work.

TIM

We've already got enough people  
being left behind. Quiet jobs and  
loud guts. All doing our bit to get  
by. Mine is sharing. I take your  
lot; I cut you down; and I share  
you around. It's only fair. Not  
like you ever made a diff-

Mark HURLS his phone. Tim DUCKS, SLIPPING over as-

Mark RIPS a craft knife off a shelf. SLASH! Tim YELPS,  
releasing the bowl. Mark YANKS it away.

MARK

This is how it works, right? Well  
let's see how you like it.

TIM

NO! It's MY GIFT!

Mark GAGS, TIPPING the bowl down his throat. He YANKS down  
Tim's mask, SMEARS Tim's blood over it, and-

MARK

Stop breathing.

Tim freezes. He GAGS. He CLUTCHES his throat, GASPING for  
air. Mark stares in disbelief: 'It worked!' Until-

Tim stops. He pulls down his mask. He pops a piece of fudge  
in his mouth, smile calm on sugary lips.

(CONTINUED)

TIM

The best thing about little towns?  
No-one expects anything from us.  
It's perfect for stories.

Mark sags. A thin bitter CHUCKLE escapes him.

MARK

There's no gift.

Tim CLAPS. Over and over. Right in Mark's face.

MARK (CONT.)

And your 'characters'?

Tim fishes out a pair of earphones.

TIM

Only stop when they need to.

MARK

Unbelievable. Fucking unbelievable.

TIM

What did you expect, magic? That it  
was a coincidence everyone started  
being nice to us just like THAT? I  
mean how deluded can you be?!

Mark fixes Tim with a steely glare.

MARK

There's lads out there much worse  
than me. So why me?

TIM

Because you love the show. You're  
perfect. A perfect man. At least,  
that's what you tell yourself. The  
truth is, you just want control. So  
much so, you'll fall for any little  
fantasy that gives you an ounce.  
You didn't come here to help me, or  
your family. You came because it's  
all you've got. Like I said: some  
lads just don't have autonomy.

MARK

Fuck. You.

TIM

Oh dear. Are we going to scream?  
Will that get us back home?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

No. Because I'm not going back. I'm going away. Somewhere quiet. Where no-one can treat me like shit.

TIM

And what do you think you'll find? Maybe a story? Maybe a friend? And maybe a family too? We'll just have to wait and see.

MARK

You are fucking mad, you know that?

TIM

Mad enough to care. Not mad enough to think I could magic people back into my life. Like I deserved them.

Mark DIVES at Tim, sending them CRASHING to the ground. Tim SHOVES him into a shelf. He snatches his knife. And-

Mark KICKS out. SMACK! Tim stumbles back, CRASHING on the table to CRUSH Mark's model. He crumples off. Unmoving.

Mark eases up, retrieving his belongings from the corner.

INT. TIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark WRENCHES open Tim's white box, stashing his £10K in a bag. He stops. He eyes the chest of drawers.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - NIGHT

Mark limps alone, suitcase CLACKING. His phone RINGS-

MARK

Y'alright mate? Mum not giving you a hard time, is she?

A familiar voice CRACKLES-

LIAM (V.O.)

You know she doesn't. But I didn't feel right not telling you. We're going away.

MARK

She said. New job. Whereabouts?

(CONTINUED)

LIAM (V.O.)  
No. She doesn't want you following.

MARK  
And what about you eh? Suppose you  
don't want £10K either?

LIAM (V.O.)  
Y'what?

MARK  
I've gone and done a job. To help  
you out. Just let me know where to  
send it, to go with your student  
loan. Get some good art books for  
uni eh? New laptop if you fancy it.  
Whatever you want mate, it's all-

LIAM (V.O.)  
I'm doing Sports Science.

BEAT.

LIAM (V.O.) (CONT.)  
I got enough UCAS points for it.  
It's a good uni. Got its own gym.  
The footie team play away a lot.

Mark CLENCHES the phone.

MARK  
Why didn't you just tell me?

LIAM (V.O.)  
Because I know what you're like.  
You'd make it all about you.

MARK  
What? No I wouldn't! I-I'm doing  
better now. I did this to help-

LIAM (V.O.)  
No, you did it for YOU! I know the  
police are looking for you. You've  
fucked up Dad. Again. You wanna  
help? Do the right thing and STOP.

Liam HANGS UP. Mark's arm sags. Blood seeps from his nose.  
He wipes it, staring at his red fingers. A flash of guilt-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVERPOOL - LYNE HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Young Liam lies against a wall, hand to bloodied ear. Mark looms stunned. Jules LEAPS up, SHOVING him away. A cracked clay pot slips from his hand. And-

PRESENT:

INT. LEEDS - VILLAGE - VERA'S HOME - NIGHT - CONT.

Vera SMACKS her suitcase down. Mark hovers sullen, lips red.

VERA

Is that your blood?

MARK

I honestly don't know. But I know this'll help.

Mark flashes cash from his pocket.

VERA

Blimey. New start for us both, eh?

MARK

Yeah. Right. Where's Gilly?

VERA

Waiting in his room. You go clean yourself up, I'll bring the car-

Mark pushes the cash into her hands. She gazes stunned.

VERA

What are you doing? What's wrong?

MARK

Me. Something's wrong with me. And if we go together, you'll know it too. So you're going without me. And I'm going home. I'm sorry.

Vera TWITCHES.

VERA

It's fine. I'm used to this. Take care, love. Now go on. Clean up.

She turns away. Mark limps down the hall.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mark stares in the mirror, eyes red. A silver key GLINTS by the window.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mark treads in. Gil perches on the bed, facing away.

MARK

Hey mate. Remember me? It's Mark.  
Your mum's friend. You're going  
away, yeah? Same. Wish I could come  
too. But it's not for the best. So  
just erm...just look after her, eh?

Mark pats him. The boy teeters off, SMACKING the floor.  
SCHLUCK! Mark blanches. He turns the boy over, revealing-

A crushed face, papery clothes, plastic limbs oozing clay.

He's a puppet.

Mark LURCHES back, KNOCKING a photo on the bedside table. He  
pulls it out: a sketch of Gil - 'MY LOVELY BOY.' He slowly  
turns it over. And GAPES in horror at a grinning duo-

Tim and Vera.

INT./INT. HALLWAY / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A voice BUZZES. Mark peers down the hall at Vera, corded  
phone to ear. The £10K lies on the sofa.

VERA

Are you sure this is right? Only  
the rule was...No I understand.  
It's just, I think he means it.  
Surely giving me-?...He told me to  
go! That means he's changed! That's  
what you wanted isn't it?

Mark HOLDS HIS BREATH, creeping to grip the bag of cash-

VERA (CONT.)

I swear to God it's always 'too  
late' with you!...N-no, of course  
I'm on your side. Silly me. I love  
you too Tim...Hello? Hello?!

Vera SHOVES the receiver down. FOOTSTEPS. She WHIPS around,  
meeting...no-one. She treads down the hall.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Vera treads in. The window is wide open, silver key missing.

INT./EXT. CHILD'S BEDROOM / SIDE OF HOUSE - NIGHT

Mark UNLOCKS the window, SLIPPING out into the bushes. He stops. He pats his pockets. He peers back at-

His phone on the carpet. He eyes the door. His hand slips in. He GRASPS the phone. And-

The door BURSTS open, sending Vera FLYING right at him-

She TRIPS on Gil's smashed body, SMACKING the floor.

Mark LURCHES back, LEAPING up and DASHING to safety.

EXT. VILLAGE - STREET - NIGHT - CONT.

Mark lurches on, suitcase CLATTERING, glancing everywhere and nowhere. Like a boy waiting for a smack.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - NIGHT

Mark waits. And waits. And waits. It's too quiet.

He flicks through his phone. All evidence gone. Too late. He stops on old photos of Jules and Liam...and DELETES them.

The last train to Liverpool approaches.

FOOTSTEPS. Mark looks up. A Choccy Boy-masked figure hovers on the platform. Mark slips back to the foyer-

A Betty Baker-masked figure blocks him. Mark stumbles back-

MARK

Wait! I know your Dad hurts you. I know what it's like. But you don't have to go along with it, OK? Just give us a chance. Please?!

The figures peer at each other. Familiar voices emerge-

TOMMY

You still think that was real?

(CONTINUED)



BELLA

It was a joke. Don't cry about it.

Mark blanches. Grits his teeth. Steadies his fists. And-  
A famous mixing bowl CRACKS him on the head-

INT. TIM'S HOME - WORKSHED - NIGHT

SHUFFLING. SLOSHING. DRIPPING. BEEPING.

Mark stirs, pale and sick. Tim's camera RECORDS nearby. He GAPES, a weak SCREAM echoing out.

He's strapped to a pole. His right hand and foot are gone. In their place: clay limbs, sculpted over bloody stumps.

In the dim light, the cast linger, shedding their masks-

Tommy. Bella. Gault. Stone. Myres. John. Marie. And-

Vera, clay mask and golden dress garish. Lady Goldie.

Tim steps up front, Good Lad mask down, drum around neck, shirt and shorts garish. A man-child.

TIM

Like it? It's what you always  
wanted. To be Mr. Man. With his  
Lady Goldie and his Good Lad.

The cast replace their masks. Tim steadies his camera. In the viewfinder, everything is a tiny stop-motion set.

Tim STABS a button, DASHES to crouch beside Vera, and-

SNAP! A frame. He moves Mark's limbs a fraction. STABS a button. Returns to Vera. SNAP! Another frame.

TIM

You get it now? The clay? The play?  
It's all about cutting down. Making  
things smaller than they are. To  
fit in one lovely little picture.

Mark's gape twists to pure, desperate rage-

MARK

Fuck you! You freak! FUCK YOU!

(CONTINUED)

TIM

Don't worry. You'll get there in the end. We won't waste you.

Mark SOBS, tears seeping. He can only stand. A horrific parody of himself...SNAP!

LATER

INT. TIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONT.

Tim SIPS tea, ear bandaged. Vera hovers by his side. The cast wait stoic, mugs and stale biscuits in hand.

TIM

Well done all. Definitely my favourite. Don't get me wrong, a few slip-ups here and there.

BELLA

And who's fault's that?

Tim peers at Bella. She tenses, looking away.

TIM

Not hungry tonight, Bella lass?

BELLA

N-No. I am. Sorry.

TIM

Well I'm sorry. But it's a fatty piece for you now. I'm sure Tommy can help. Boy's got the gut for it.

PS MYRES

Hey, come on! They're only kids. They did their best. We all did.

TIM

Now now David, you should be used to scrutiny. Given your position.

Myres bristles, fists clenching.

VERA

Love? Please.

TIM

Very well. You'll all get your cut tomorrow. That's a wrap folks!

(CONTINUED)

The cast drift out. The workroom door SHUTS. Tim rises. Vera freezes. He grips her shoulders...and smiles.

TIM (CONT.)

Well done Mum. Might be your best work. Rough ending, mind. Poor Gilly. Boys take molding y'know.

VERA

I-I know. I should've kept an eye-

TIM

Hey now. None of that. He played the part he needed to. Not unlike our good friends, all heading home.

VERA

They're not friends. They're just hungry.

TIM

And yet they come back. You could join them this time. Just a taste?

Tim kisses her cheek. His teeth flash. Vera SHRUGS him off-

VERA

We've been through this. You can't convince me. Especially not him.

TIM

'Especially'? What's got into you?

VERA

He wanted me to get away. He'd changed. You promised if they changed, they'd have a chance.

TIM

Oh my Lady Goldie. Silly as always-

VERA

I'm not silly Tim! This was meant to be about fault. Facing up. Not costumes and clay and 'meat'.

Tim glowers. He SHOVES her down, PINNING her to the carpet-

TIM

They don't change. They just put on a mask and pretend we're worth something to them. They're ABUSERS.

(CONTINUED)

VERA

Yeah? And what are you, love?

BEAT. Tim lets go, looming over her, blinking back tears.

TIM

I never have the heart y'know. I save them all for you. And you're never FUCKING GRATEFUL! You know your way out.

VERA

I-I can't sleep here tonight?

Tim stalks out, limbs swinging. A false stride.

INT. WORKROOM - DAY

Vera trembles in, eyes red. The deep-freeze HUMS in the corner. She treads to the back-door-

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. She stops. She gazes back at the tomb. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. A flash of resolve. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK-

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - DAY

Tim stirs. Mr. Early Sky greets him above. He waves hello.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CONT.

Tim BOILS the kettle, rolling his clay figures proud in his hands, WHISTLING the *Whistle Stop Way* theme song.

INT. WORKROOM - DAY

UNLOCKING. Tim treads in. He LIFTS the deep-freeze open-

Mark's bare body lies inside, cold and still, bloody clay-smearred stumps clotted. Tim strokes them fondly-

TIM

You really were my favourite. My handy Mr. Man.

He TASTES it. He stops. He peers down. A pool of lukewarm water rests beneath.

Tim crouches, peering at the plug socket. It's off.

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP. He looks up. Just as-

(CONTINUED)

The red mixing bowl CRACKS his forehead. He LURCHES back, TUMBLING over the table, SCATTERING tools everywhere.

The bowl THUDS the floor. FOOTSTEPS SQUELCH out.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Tim limps in shocked. Mark leans weak by the lit stove.

TIM

How-?

MARK

I told ya. She likes me.

He lifts Tim's clay figures...and HURLS them on the stove.

TIM

NO!

Tim LUNGES for them. Just as Mark VOMITS, SPLATTERING his face. Tim CRIES OUT, GRABBING desperate, hands BURNING, as-

Mark LURCHES to the hall. The front door SLAMS.

EXT. VILLAGE - RURAL LANE - DAY

BIRDSONG. Dawn breaks, sun fighting through dim white sky.

Mark LIMPS naked down the empty lane, SHIVERING with sickness, bloodied ankle SCRAPING the ground. All alone.

Tim STAGGERS after him, knife in clay-scorched hand. Mark limps harder. Tim's too quick. He closes in. And-

SMACK! Tyres SCREECH. Tim SLAPS the road. Unmoving.

Mark SLUMPS stunned. FOOTSTEPS. Gloved hands HOIST him onto a backseat. An engine REVS, peeling off down the lane.

Tim twitches. His fist clenches.

INT. LEEDS - HOSPITAL - SIDE ROOM - DAY

A heart monitor BEEPS softly. Blankets RUSTLE on a bed, as-

Mark stirs, pale and drained. An IV line runs to a blood bag. His right wrist and ankle are bandaged, pink stains faint beneath. His face crumples.

LATER

Mark stares at nothing, as a DOCTOR checks his vitals-

DOCTOR

When we found you outside, you were in the early stages of hypothermia. Given the blood loss, I'm amazed you didn't go into shock.

MARK

I'm used to the cold. My Dad made sure of it.

DOCTOR

Right. Well our surgeon will need to discuss options. Physiotherapy need to assess your mobility. And someone from the Mental Health team will need to do a psych evaluation.

Two suited officers stride in: DI MOORE (40s, male) and DS GRACE (20s, female).

DOCTOR

Er excuse me, you can't be in here, he's in a vulnerable state.

DS GRACE

We understand. It's just vital we get an interview while he's-

DOCTOR

And like I've said, if he's not well enough, you can't force-

MARK

Doc? It's fine. I'll manage.

DOCTOR

Hmmm. Right. OK. But if it gets too much, ring the buzzer.

She reluctantly treads out. The officers flank the bed.

DI MOORE

My name's DI Moore of Leeds Constabulary. This is DS Grace. We have a few questions we'd like to ask you. Nothing too strenuous.

(CONTINUED)

MARK

A 'please' would be nice.

DS GRACE

What my superior means is, we can see you've been through something incredibly traumatic. So we'll do our best to respect that, Mark.

MARK

'Mark'?

DI MOORE

That is your name? Mark Lyne?

The DS pulls out an evidence bag. Mark blinks stunned. It's one of Tim's black notebooks.

DS GRACE

You were wrapped in a blanket. This was all you had on you.

DI MOORE

We've read the contents. Whoever wrote it seems to know you very well. Certain things in your past?

MARK

I'm not like that anymore.

DI MOORE

They also wrote 'MY FAVOURITE'. What do they mean by that?

MARK

It means I'm not the first.

DS GRACE

As in victim? Tim Mouldin's victim?

Mark sits up.

DS GRACE (CONT.)

We know Mark. He kidnapped you, right? But you escaped. You wrote his name and address at the back?

Mark peers at the notebook. His brow twitches.

MARK

Yeah. So you'd find him.

(CONTINUED)

DI MOORE

Do you remember how you got here?

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A figure perches Mark on a bench, blanket around him. They push Tim's pad in his lap, SCRIBBLING. He reaches out-

The figure squeezes his hand. They hurry off. An engine REVS. Mark watches a familiar car peel off...and SLUMPS-

PRESENT:

INT. HOSPITAL - SIDE ROOM - DAY

MARK

No. So did you find him?

DS GRACE

We had to force entry. There were more books like this. Forensics found organs in his freezer. He's been doing this a long time.

Mark sags relieved on the pillows.

MARK

Has he cried yet? Bet he has.

The officers share a glance. BEAT.

DI MOORE

We found him in front of the telly, watching an old kids show. He'd swallowed a load of clay. Lead poisoning. I guess he realised it was all over.

INT. TIM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A flash of Tim's grey corpse, eyes fixed on the TV.



INT. HOSPITAL - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Mark's smirk vanishes. He stares at the ceiling.

DS GRACE

Mark, a background check shows you  
were on licence in Liverpool. Is  
your OM aware you're here?...Mark?

Mark picks at his bandaged wrist.

DS GRACE (CONT.)

Mark, what are you-? Wait!

Mark RIPS the bandage off, fingers CLAWING at clots,  
SCRAPING at stitches-

DI MOORE

Mark, stop. Don't! Stop!

DS GRACE

Can we get some help  
please?!

Mark ROARS. The officers LURCH back helpless. Just as the  
doctor RUSHES in, NURSES in tow, pulling Mark's arms away-

DOCTOR

Both of you outside. Now please!  
Mark, it's alright, they're gone.  
You need to stop, OK? Mark, stop.  
Stop! Right now! Stop! Stop.

Mark's rage fades. He stops. He sags. He SOBS.

MONTAGE

INT. LEEDS - MODEL VILLAGE - OFFICE - DAY

- Police RAID the room. Gault lies slumped, clay in his  
throat. Dead.

EXT. LEEDS - STONE FARM - PIG PEN - NIGHT

- Police RAID the farm. Stone lies slumped, clay in his  
throat. Dead.

INT. LEEDS - GREY BUNGALOW - BEDROOM - DAY

- Police RAID the room. John and Marie lie hand in hand, clay in their throats. Dead.

INT. LEEDS - MYRES HOME - HALL - DAY

- Police RAID the house. PS Myres and Mrs Myres lie slumped, clay in their throats. Dead.

- A tearful Tommy and Bella are cuffed, clay and vomit round their mouths.

END MONTAGE.

INT. LIVERPOOL - PROBATION OFFICE - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

A figure with familiar blue nails FLICKS through notes. It's Catherine, smiling sadly.

CATHERINE

Ready?

Across the room: Jules, suit pressed, face stern but open. Beside her: Liam, nerves hidden behind tired eyes. A grey MEDIATOR waits behind a table. They all nod assured.

Catherine opens the door, WHISPERING. A figure shuffles in, perching anxiously across from the group-

Mark. Shirt and jeans smart, less pale, more humble.

MEDIATOR

Mr. Lyne. Good to have you join us. Catherine has kindly agreed to help supervise these restorative justice sessions. Before we begin, I'll stress that meeting like this can rouse unpleasant feelings across both parties; offender and victim; so please do keep this as civil as we can. That said, if we need a break, just say 'stop', and we can. Would anyone like to start?

Liam leans in. Mark leans back.

LIAM

Welcome back. How have you been?

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Better. As much as I can be anyway.

JULES

You're lucky y'know.

MARK

Oh I know. Trust me.

JULES

Suspended sentence. And only because you helped the police so much. Any less, they'd throw away the key. You keeping up with the care team?

MARK

Haven't told them everything yet. But I'm getting there. Just hurts like. Talking about what he did.

LIAM

Tim?

MARK

Tim. Dad. We go back and forth. It's like telly. You watch a bit of one then flick over when it gets boring. Or uncomfortable.

CATHERINE

Small steps. What about the course? Lads behaving themselves?

MARK

Few scraps, but that's expected. Too much testosterone. They're bright though. Really bright. It's just giving them a chance to show it, like. Maybe that's why they listen. Because I've been there.

LIAM

Sounds like you're a good influence.

MARK

The Iron Man hand helps.

He flexes his right hand: a new prosthetic.

(CONTINUED)

MARK (CONT.)

I really am sorry. For what I did to you. Letting you both down.

Liam tenses, suddenly stern. A little more confident.

LIAM

I wanna say I understand why you ran off. But I'm struggling. You had a month left! Why go ruin it? Why'd you think it would work?!

Mark grips his hands. Forces his head up.

MARK

I thought he liked me. But all he wanted was to make me do things I'd never think of doing. And I went along with it. Because I'm deluded. And desperate. And...I thought I was too different to hurt anyone. Just like he did.

Liam and Jules soften a little.

MARK (CONT.)

So how's uni?

LIAM

Great. More coursework than you'd think. Nutrition and that. But my tutor says I'd make a good personal trainer. If the footie doesn't work out, like. Giving myself options.

Mark manages a sad smile.

MARK

As long as you're happy mate. I'm proud of you.

Liam rises. He treads over...and HUGS him.

INT. LIVERPOOL - REC CENTRE - DAY

Rough TEENAGE BOYS mill around worktops, BUILDING wooden clocks. Mark drifts between them, admiring their work.

One FRUSTRATED STUDENT struggles with a mechanism. He grips his screwdriver hard. And-

(CONTINUED)

MARK

Stop. Breathe. Try again.

The boy stops. He BREATHES DEEPLY. He TWISTS the tool. And...his clock TICKS to life. He leans back proud.

MARK (CONT.)

See? Just needed a good turn.

EXT. LIVERPOOL - STREET - DAY - CONT.

Mark limps alone, dwarfed by semi-detached houses. A black cat crosses his path. He stops...and STROKES it.

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY - CONT.

Mark pours through post. He stops on a pink envelope. He RIPS it open, pulling out-

A pencil sketch of Whistle Stop Village. A Manchester address below. A letter on the back.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mark treads in, reading-

VERA (V.O.)

Mark: if you're reading this, then it means I'm still free. As much as I can be anyway. I can't ask you to forgive what I did to you. All I can ask is to understand Tim had a hold on me. Just like you had a hold on your family. And just as you didn't deny it to me, I won't deny it to you: Tim was an abuser. He made me think we were making a difference. Removing 'bad men' from the world. But all we did was steal their second chance. And for that, I am truly sorry. If you wish to tell the police where I am, my new address is the shelter above. But if you believe in second chances, please write back. So I can know for sure. All the best: V.

Mark SAGS. He pulls out his phone. Dials 999. And...stops. He glances down at-

(CONTINUED)

Papery models of Tim's house and workshed below. A slick lane leads past matchstick fences to a familiar car. Vera's.

Mark looms over the models. He gently pushes the car down the lane, out of sight. He STRIKES a match. He LIGHTS the letter. He tosses it down. Flames LICK the house, wood burning black, smoke climbing higher.

Mark smiles. He raises his hammer. He SWINGS it down. And-

CUT TO BLACK

SMASH!

END