

HOT DOGS (Charlie Adams)

SCENE ONE. MORNING. CAFE.

THE CAFE IS BUSY, MORNING RUSH, LOT OF TAKE OUT ORDERS. PETE, THE OWNER, IS BEHIND THE COUNTER. NEW GIRL, GILL, IS MOVING BETWEEN THE COUNTER AND THE KITCHEN AT THE BACK. HARRIED, WHITES A BIT STAINED, A CURL OF HAIR HANGING OUT OF HER CAP. LOOKS FABULOUS. MARTIN ENTERS, NEWSPAPER IN HAND. STOPS IN THE DOORWAY THEN LEANS BACK OUT.

**MARTIN:** (YELLING) Well, that's charming. The famous one-fingered V-sign salute. You shouldn't be riding that on the pavement. Yeah, you, too. (BACK IN) Menace.

**PETE:** Bikes. A nuisance, aren't they, Martin?

**MARTIN:** Yes, bikes are. But not as bad as (CALLING OUTSIDE AGAIN) Wheelchairs! (BACK IN AGAIN) There ought to be a law.

**PETE:** There is. Trouble is it's for them.

**MARTIN:** Hey, Pete, how's the sale of this old lard palace going?

**PETE:** It's a cafe. And it's all done and dusted.

**MARTIN:** So when do we meet the new mug?

**GILL:** Gill Mug, how do you do?

**MARTIN:** (QUICKLY) Great place. (STUDIES BOARD)

**GILL:** I'll see you in a mo, I've just got to go and look for Marmaduke.

**SHE GOES, MARTIN LOOKS PUZZLED.**

**MARTIN:** Look for Marmaduke? Wha-?

**PETE:** She says that a lot, I think it means she's going to the little girls' room. What can I get for you, this morning?

**MARTIN:** The usual.

**PETE:** We don't do the usual anymore. **(TRYING TO CONTAIN HIMSELF)** Would you like to hear our specials?

**MARTIN:** Specials? What's going on here - Is that a **clean** shirt?

**PETE:** It was.  
**(READING FROM A CHALK BOARD HE'S HOLDING)** Today we have three delicious, gourmet breakfast dishes; scrumptious Eggs Benedict, flavoursome devilled kidneys and the chef's special French Toast...each comes with a free hot beverage of your choice, orange juice and a complimentary sausage.

**MARTIN: (HAS BEEN TRYING TO STOP HIM)**  
**(BEAT)** Complimentary? Like 'free'?

**PETE NODS.**

**MARTIN:** I'll try the French toast - whatever that is. **(TO THE PERSON NEXT TO HIM)** Probably comes out with its hands up. **(ENJOYS THAT)**

**A TRUCKER TYPE HAS LEFT HIS SEAT AND MARTIN SITS DOWN IN IT.**

**TRUCKER: (RETURNS WITH SAUCE BOTTLE)** Oi, I was sat there.

**MARTIN:** No you weren't.

**TRUCKER:** I was, I was sat right there.

**MARTIN:** No, you weren't. You weren't 'sat' anywhere. You may have been sitting here or you may have sat down here but once you sat you were sitting. It's not 'sat', never 'sat'...

**TRUCKER IS EASING HIM OUT OF THE CHAIR BY THE THROAT...**

**MARTIN:** Okay, okay. Jeez, you try to help people.

**HE'S BACK AT THE COUNTER**

**PETE:** Martin, what are you still doing here?

**MARTIN:** No, no! It's not still doing. You mean, what am I doing still here?

**PETE:** That's what I said, isn't it?

**MARTIN:** (SIGH) No, you said - oh, never mind; I'm still here waiting for my breakfast.

**PETE:** Right, only last time I looked you were sat over there.

**CUT TO:**

SCENE TWO. CAFE. MORNING (CONT'D)

FROM THE BACK GILL EMERGES SHE PUTS A PLATE IN FRONT OF MARTIN WHO IS WORKING ON THE CROSSWORD. HE'S REALLY RATTLING THROUGH IT, SELDOM PAUSING AS HE FILLS IT IN.

GILL: French toast?

MARTIN: Yeah, here. (LOOKS UP. SEES IT'S GILL AND A GOOFY GRIN APPEARS ON HIS FACE) That's me, er please, thank you. (GETS UP, KNOCKS OVER HIS CHAIR BANGS HEADS WITH HER) I'm sorry.

GILL: S'okay. I'll get -- (THUMB OVER SHOULDER TO SUGGEST SHE'S GOT THE REST OF HIS ORDER STANDING BY)

MARTIN STRAIGHTENS HIMSELF OUT. TO IMPRESS. GILL COMES BACK. PUTS DOWN COFFEE MUG AND GLASS OF OJ. SITS.

GILL: You're really getting on with that crossword. The Times? I've never got more than two or three words on that.

MARTIN: It's been a lot easier since Murdoch bought the paper.

GILL: I was listening to you. Is that correct about 'sat' and 'sitting'?

MARTIN: Yes. It's never 'sat' always sitting.

GILL: Or 'seated'

MARTIN: Well if you want to be pedantic about it.

GILL: I like a man who's educated. Articulate.

**MARTIN:** (GOOFY GRIN BACK)

Nyahhhhna?

**GILL:** Yep, I'm buying this.

(EXPANSIVE - SHE MEANS THE CAFE)

**MARTIN:** No, no. (HE MEANS THE  
BREAKFAST) It's mostly free stuff.  
(FROWNING, LOOKING) Did you see my  
free sausage anywhere?

**GILL:** (GETS IT OUT OF HER OVERALL  
POCKET) Have mine.

**MARTIN:** I didn't know you were  
thinking of buying it - I thought you  
were

**GILL:** ...What? Working here??  
Nope, it's all gone through. It's  
been a dream of mine.

**MARTIN:** Mine too.

**GILL:** Buying this place?

**MARTIN:** That someone who looks like  
you would buy this place. (SAID TOO  
MUCH) You've got a good business  
here. It's busy, regular customers,  
it's like an estuary of calm in the  
maelstrom. It's my shelter, my  
haven...It's a little goldmine.

**GILL:** It's 120k.

**MARTIN:** For this dump??

**GILL:** I've got big plans for it.

**MARTIN:** What, like cleaning it?

**GILL:** Well, I'm going to put in a  
longer counter with a shiny,  
stainless steel front and a black  
marble top...and stools. I'm taking  
out the middle tables and putting in  
booths...it'll be all bright red  
table tops and black leather seats...

**MARTIN:** (GRIMACING, PURSED LIPS)  
Sounds like an American Diner

**GILL:** Exactly.

**MARTIN:** Don't go changing it too much, we like this place. It's our comfort zone.

**GILL:** 'Comfort Zone.' The Comfort Zone, that's what I'll call it.

**MARTIN:** Aw, now, you can't go changing the name.

**GILL:** Why not? What is its name?

**MARTIN DOESN'T KNOW. HE LOOKS AROUND AND TRIES TO SNEAK A LOOK AT THE MENU.**

**MARTIN:** Anyway, big changes. That'll cost you.

**GILL:** I'm not doing it straight away.

**PETE:** (COMES OVER) That's what I like to see - my favourite customer and my favourite purchaser getting friendly.

**MARTIN:** So you'll be off to Tuscany soon?

**PETE:** Yep. Me and the wife will be flying out on the 10 o'clock tonight.

**MARTIN:** The wife? Has she been delivered already?

**PETE:** How many times, I did not buy her. She's from a well-respected Filipino family.

**GILL:** Where did you two meet?

**MARTIN:** I came in for lunch one day  
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**GILL:** Not you two. Pete and er...

**PETE:** The wife? The first time I saw her was in the library.

**GILL:** That's romantic.

**PETE:** Well, I haven't got the internet here.

**GILL:** Did you get married over there?

**PETE:** She was over there, I was here. It was all done by proxy. Internet, email. I was in the lawyer's office here.

**MARTIN AND GILL LOOK LIKE THEY DON'T BELIEVE IT.** I'll get her to bring the certificate when she picks me up later.

**MARTIN SMILE SAYS HE'S TEASING.**

**PETE:** Hey, Martin, did you know Gill used to work over at that big German Bank?

**MARTIN LOOKS BLANK.**

**PETE:** The one they call the millionaire factory ...

**PETE AND MARTIN: (TOGETHER)** On account of everyone who works there becomes a millionaire.

**GILL:** Well, not **everyone**. The most they ever paid me in a year was eighty thousand.

**MARTIN:** Bastards.

**OLLY, MARTIN'S PA ENTERS AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT AND REACTS TO THE CURSE.**

**OLLY:** Swine.

**MARTIN:** You're late.

**OLLY:** Why, what did I miss?

**MARTIN:** Just get the coffee and get to work.

**GILL:** Can't get the staff?

**MARTIN:** Oh, I can get the staff, all right, I just can't get them to do any work. This is - Olly er, my assistant.

**OLLY:** Olivia Peek . I'm actually his P.A.

**GILL:** What business are you in?

**MARTIN:** We do investigative work.

**GILL:** Oh, journalists? Gosh, I've always wanted to meet an investigative journalist. You do so much good -

**MARTIN:** No, that's not what we do. I'm a detective.

**GILL:** Oh. Well that's exciting, too, I bet.  
Do you catch many crooks?

**MARTIN:** Well, it's not so much crooks we catch, these days.

**OLLY:** Mostly it's pets.

**GILL:** Really?

**OLLY:** We're called Pet Finders, Gill. We find lost dogs.

**GILL:** Do you? Oh, I think my dog's gone missing.

**MARTIN PUSHES HIS PLATE AWAY.  
THINKS. TAKES THE SAUSAGE OFF, PUTS  
IT IN A DISCARDED COFFEE CUP AND  
PULLS THE PLATE BACK.**

**GILL:** Could you find him?

**MARTIN:** You **think** he's gone missing?

**GILL:** That must sound dreadful. When we got here last night he went out for a look about. I finally found him in the old storage shed out the back. He seems to have gone off again. But it's been a busy morning and I haven't given him much thought. I'm not a dog person really but you get used to them, don't you? My parents got him for me. They felt I needed company. Ha! When he's not sleeping he's eating. When he's not eating he's burping. When he's not burping he's barking. Some company.

**OLLY:(LOOKING AT MARTIN)**

I guess we all know people like that... **(TO GILL)** Here's an idea, if it's company you want -- why don't you two go out sometime?

**MARTIN IS PANIC STRUCK. HE STANDS UP.**

**GILL:** Well...this is supposed to be a 24 hour cafe, I haven't quite worked out when I'm off.

**SHE TURNS FROM OLLY TO LOOK AT MARTIN WHO HAS GONE.**

**GILL:** Busy man. I can tell he works hard.

**OLLY:** Martin?

**GILL:** It must be great to work for a nice person like that.

**OLLY:** Martin?

**GILL:** And he's so intelligent.

**OLLY:** Martin?

**GILL:** Yes, Martin. You should see how quickly he got through the Times' Crossword.

**OLLY:** He doesn't **do** the Times' Crossword. He just fills in any old words, leaves a few blanks then watches Pete go potty trying to finish it.

**GILL:** Masterly.

**CUT TO:**

**SCENE THREE. MARTIN'S OFFICE.**

**IT'S LIKE WE ALL THINK A DETECTIVE'S OFFICE LOOKS. WOODEN DESKS, HAT STAND, FILING CABINETS, CLOCKS SET TO DIFFERENT TIME ZONES BUT THERE ARE COMPUTERS ON THE THREE DESKS AND TV MONITORS ON THE WALLS.**

**MARTIN IS PACING, PICKING THINGS UP, PUTTING THEM DOWN. MAD.**

**PHONE RINGS.**

**MARTIN: (STILL ANGRY) Pet Finders? (PAUSE) Yes, we are Pet Finders, that's why when I answered the phone I said 'Pet Finders?' like that. (PAUSE) Yes, by some fortuitous stroke of happenchance we do find pets. (PAUSE) Is this dog your pet? (PAUSE) Yes, dogs are usually pets, although some people seem to consider their dogs to be children, in which case we can't help. (PAUSE) We use various methods to find lost dogs; observation of popular dog habitats; surveillance of known dog locales; information received. And sometimes we put a notice on a tree with a picture of your dog near your house. (PAUSE) Yes, I know your dog can't read but he'd recognise his picture wouldn't he? That's always assuming your dog is lost and hasn't just gone to a better place. (BEAT) What are you crying for??**

**OLLY STEPS IN AND TAKES THE PHONE**

**OLLY: What's the matter with you? Telling someone their dog's dead.**

**MARTIN: I didn't mean it was dead. I meant it really had gone to a better place. Anywhere away from that nutcase would be a better place.**

**OLLY:** (TO PHONE) Let me get some details. What's your doggy's name?

**MARTIN SITS DOWN AND PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS.**

**NORMAN ENTERS. HE'S A YOUNG BLACK MAN WEARING A DOUBLE-BREASTED SUIT AND A LURID TIE. HE'S CARRYING A BRAND NEW BROOM, STILL WITH THE PERSPEX PROTECTIVE COVER ROUND THE BRISTLES.**

**NORMAN:** (SETTLING IN TO RUN THROUGH AN IMPLAUSIBLE EXCUSE) Sorry I'm late, boss, I was -

**MARTIN:** Well, you're here now.

**NORMAN STOPS TALKING. WAITS FOR HIS LECTURE. NO LECTURE IS FORTHCOMING. HE GOES TO HIS DESK AND LEANS THE BROOM, HEAD UP AGAINST THE WALL. SITS AT HIS DESK. TAKES OUT HIS NOTEBOOK. HEAD DOWN.**

**MARTIN:** Norman?

**NORMAN WINCES, NEARLY GOT AWAY WITH IT.**

**NORMAN:** Yes, Boss?

**NOW MARTIN WINCES.**

**MARTIN:** What's that you've got there?

**NORMAN:** This? It's a broom.

**MARTIN:** I can see that. I **am** a detective, you know. What's it doing here?

**NORMAN:** I'm taking it back to the shop.

**MARTIN:** Why?

**NORMAN:** It doesn't work.

**MARTIN:** (OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SPEAK  
BUT CLOSES IT AGAIN. TAKES A PAUSE)  
Norman, do you like working here?

**NORMAN:** Yes, Boss. This is the  
best job I've ever had. I love it.  
I'm learning a lot of stuff from you,  
too. I think the reason my work is  
as good as it is because you are such  
a good teacher. You've taught me  
everything.

**OLLY:** (LOOKING OVER AT MARTIN)  
He's got you there.

**MARTIN:** The fact is, Norman, you  
haven't traced a subject in three  
weeks. What are you doing wrong?  
How come it's so easy for me to find  
dogs.

**OLLY:** Having a coat that smells  
like a lamp-post helps.

**MARTIN:** I'm telling you, Norm, I  
want some results out of you today,  
otherwise, you know what they say  
about a new broom.

**THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN AND NORM'S MUM  
IS THERE. BLACK, GLAMOROUS IN A  
BIGGISH SORT OF WAY. MARTIN PULLS  
BACK INVOLUNTARILY. MUM GOES OVER TO  
NORMAN WHO STANDS UP TO GREET HER**

**MUM:** Norman, I've left your father  
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**NORMAN RUSHES TO HER, ARMS ROUND HER  
HE SQUEEZES HER UNTIL HER EYES WIDEN.**

**NORMAN:** No, Mum. Not that. You  
can't. I'm about to lose my job -  
don't break up the family, too.

**MUM:** (**FIGHTS LOOSE**) I've left your father - downstairs. In the car. We're going shopping.

**NORMAN:** Oh.

**MUM:** Do you need any underwear?

**NORMAN:** No, not really.

**MUM:** Are you sure? Let me see.

**SHE REACHES FOR HIS BELT BUCKLE BUT SUDDENLY NOTICES THE BROOM.**

**MUM:** What's my new broom doing here? (**SUSPICIOUS**) Is that why you couldn't sweep my patio yesterday? (**TO MARTIN**) Or are you getting him to do some cleaning for the miserly wages you're paying him?

**MARTIN:** That's a good idea - shame he's taking it back to the shop - it doesn't work.

**MUM:** Don't be so ridiculous - whoever heard of a broom that doesn't work. What's he doing? Pulling instead of pushing?

**NORMAN STEERS HER TO THE DOOR.**

**NORMAN:** I'll walk you down, say hello to Dad.

**MUM:** Just a minute, I'm not finished. (**TO MARTIN**) Are you sacking my son?

**MARTIN:** (**KNOWS HE'S A COWARD**) No, of course not.

**MUM:** He seems to think so.

**MARTIN:** The lad jumps to conclusions, he's got a fine career in prospect with us. I'll probably sack Olly first.

**MUM:** (LOOKS OLLY UP AND DOWN)  
Good.

**NORMAN GETS A COAT FROM THE RACK AND PUTS IT ON BY THE OPEN DOOR. LEAVES WITH HIS MUM.**

**OLLY:** Man Management for beginners.  
(BEAT) Oh, what's wrong now?

**MARTIN:** I'm fed up. The only jobs we get nowadays involve lost pets.

**OLLY:** We're called Pet Finders - what sort of jobs did you expect?

**MARTIN:** Just once I'd like to be asked to investigate something bigger. Maybe someone cheating on their taxes or trying to fiddle the council or ripping off the NHS...

**OLLY:** I don't think they let you investigate yourself.

**MARTIN:** I have never... Ripped off the NHS. Anyway, while we're at it, why do you persist in doing that?

**OLLY:** What?

**MARTIN:** Undermining me.  
Embarrassing me. Embarrassing us.  
Me and Gill. (MIMICKING) 'Oh here's an idea, why don't you two go out sometime?'

**OLLY:** I saw the way you looked at her, Martin. It's the way Norman looks at the knicker adverts in my magazines. You'd love to go out with her

**MARTIN:** Well, that's a given, but Gill wouldn't want to go out with me.

**OLLY:** Why not?

**MARTIN:** Have you seen her? She's one of the most naturally beautiful people I've ever met. She's got an attractive personality and she's got presence. And then there's me. My nose is too big, my eyes are too small, I'm lanky, I can't do anything with my hair - you can stop me when you want.

**OLLY:** I was waiting for you to get to your ears. They're almost perfect...

**MARTIN:** You think?

**OLLY:** ...in a Disney sort of way. Martin, you're a good-you're hand-- A lot of women don't go by looks.

**MARTIN:** Yeah, well, I'm keeping a tight hold on that!

**OLLY:** I was talking about money, but whatever... I'm telling you, that woman fancies you.

**MARTIN:** Did she say that?

**OLLY:** She didn't have to...she thinks you're nice, she thinks you work hard and she loves the way you're so quick with the crossword.

**MARTIN:** **(Panic)** You didn't tell her, did you?

**OLLY:** Of course I didn't! **(SHE DID)** But that's not to say I won't. **(COVERED)** So now, if you don't mind, lunchtime's over.

**AS SHE GETS HER MAGAZINE OUT THE PHONE RINGS. SHE PRESSES A FEW BUTTONS ON THE PHONE PAD AND THE PHONE ON MARTIN'S DESK RINGS**

**MARTIN:** **(BEAT BEAT)** Pet Finders?  
**CUT TO:**

**SCENE FOUR. THE CAFE. LUNCHTIME.**

**IT'S CROWDED. MARTIN SLIPS INTO A VACANT CHAIR AT A TABLE. AS A BIG GUY TURNS FROM THE COUNTER MARTIN GETS UP AGAIN...BUT THE GUY HAS BEEN PAYING HIS BILL. MARTIN EASES BACK DOWN.**

**HE TAKES A NAPKIN FROM THE DISPENSER AND IS WIPING HIS HANDS.**

**GILL:** Hello, nice to see you again. What've you got on your hand?

**MARTIN:** Nothing. **(PUTS HIS HANDS AWAY)**

**GILL:** **(LIFTS HIS HAND)** Is that chalk?

**PETE:** **(PASSING)** It's bound to be. He checks the blackboard for grammar and spelling before he comes in.

**GILL:** What?? Idiot.  
**(OBVIOUSLY ANNOYED SHE GOES OFF SHAKING HER HEAD)**

**MARTIN:** **(CALLING AFTER HER)** Well, you spell 'peas' P E A S not P E A Apostrophe S.

**PETE:** I'm with you, Mart. A misplaced apostrophe puts me off an establishment.

**MARTIN:** **(BEAT)** Have I upset her?

**PETE:** It's not an impossible task. Order something, she'll get her own back.

**MARTIN:** Oh,ho, the cooking not good?

**PETE:** Put it this way, the rats have gone.

**MARTIN:** Which most people would think was a good thing.

**PETE:** Yeah, but what am I going to put in the sausages now?

**MARTIN:** **(REACTS TO PETE'S LINE - THEN)** She's coming over - what am I going to order?

**PETE:** Soup. You can't go wrong with soup. **(BEAT) (ALMOST TO HIMSELF)** Unless that's where the rats went to kill themselves...I've got to go, I want to give some of her chilli to a dog outside.

**MARTIN:** What a good idea.

**PETE:** I thought you didn't like dogs.

**MARTIN:** I don't.

**PETE'S GONE, GILL'S BACK**

**GILL:** **(NOTEBOOK)** And for you, Mister Perfect...?

**MARTIN:** What's the soup of the day?

**GILL:** **(WRITING IT DOWN)** One soup of the day.

**MARTIN:** No, I'm not ordering, I'm asking what flavour it is.

**GILL:** **(DISCARDS THAT PAGE)** Does it really matter?

**MARTIN:** Yes, as a matter of fact, it does.

**GILL:** Only I suppose you're going to put salt in it followed by pepper then you'll mop it up with a huge chunk of bread plastered with butter.

**MARTIN:** Hard to resist.

**GILL:** (WRITING) One soup of the day.

**MARTIN:** No, no - what - (SHE'S GOT THAT CHIN DOWN, EYES LOOKING UP AT YOU IMPATIENT LOOK TAUGHT TO WOMEN FROM DAY ONE) What soup is it?

**GILL:** I can't remember...something tail. Do you want it or not?

**MARTIN:** (FACE-SAVING) Okay, but hurry up.

**TIME PASSES.**

**MARTIN IS SPOONING UP SOUP. OLLY ENTERS AND SITS OPPOSITE HIM.**

**OLLY:** Well?

**MARTIN:** As well as can be expected.

**OLLY:** Is that Oxtail soup?

**MARTIN:** Oh, I hope so.

**OLLY:** I think I fancy soup. (SHE CALLS TO GILL WHO IS NEARBY) Gill, I'll have what Martin's got.

**PETE:** (PASSING) If you have the soup you will.

**OLLY:** When is Pete off?

**MARTIN:** Tonight. His bride is picking him up outside at 8 and they're off to Heathrow for the 10 o'clock flight.

**OLLY:** I can't believe he got married?

**MARTIN:** He's got a certificate and everything. Pete's not silly.

**OLLY:** So? Have you asked her?

**MARTIN:** Not yet.

**OLLY:** Why not?

**MARTIN:** Olly, I told you, she doesn't want to go out with me.

**OLLY:** You big chump, of course she does. She's lost her dog, she needs cheering up. You're presentable, she'll probably think you're perfect.

**MARTIN:** Now you mention it...she called me that earlier.

**OLLY:** (PLEASED) Called you what?

**MARTIN:** Perfect.

**OLLY:** 'Perfect', that's good.

**MARTIN:** Well, Mr Perfect.

**OLLY:** (DARKENS) Aw, what've you ?

**MARTIN:** Nothing. She just seems to have formed a bad opinion of me.

**OLLY:** It's her second day. How did she actually say it?

**MARTIN:** She called me Mr Perfect in a derogatory manner.

**OLLY:** She's coming over. I'll pave the way.

**GILL DELIVERS THE SOUP**

**OLLY:** Oh good, it is oxtail.

**GILL:** Keep telling yourself that.  
(TO THEIR STARES) I'm kidding.

**OLLY:** Gill, have you got anything planned for this evening?

**GILL:** Well, not planned, as such.  
I was going to go and look for  
Marmaduke.

**MARTIN LOOKS AT OLLY AS IF 'WHA-?'**

**OLLY:** Look for Marmaduke?

**GILL:** My dog.

**MARTIN:** Her dog.

**OLLY:** (FLIPPING EYES AT MARTIN)  
How would you like some company?

**GILL:** (BIG SMILE TO MARTIN)  
Company? Really?

**MARTIN:** (GOOFY GRIN) Really.

**GILL:** Are you saying what I think  
you're saying?

**MARTIN:** Er...

**GILL:** You've found my dog  
already???!

**OLLY:** (CHANGE SUBJECT.) Needs salt.

**MARTIN:** It's empty.

**CUT TO:**

**SCENE FIVE. THE OFFICE. AFTER LUNCH.**

**NORMAN AND OLLY ARE THERE WITH MARTIN. NORMAN IS LIGHTLY SWEEPING THE BROOM OVER THE CARPET TILES BUT TO NO AVAIL.**

**OLLY:** Right, if Martin is ever going out with Gill we'll need a plan.

**NORMAN: (STILL BROOMING) Agreed. (LOOKS OVER AT MARTIN) A good plan.**

**MARTIN:** I'm here.

**OLLY:** He's got to take her somewhere special.

**NORMAN:** First date, it should be somewhere not too special but not somewhere very familiar or known only to you.

**OLLY:** Norm, I'm impressed. You obviously remember your first date.

**NORMAN:** It's the only kind I have. Also, the manner in which you make the invite is very important. It should be casual, not an after thought but not a big deal either.

**OLLY:** Oh, yeah, like a flippant remark about something they have in common.

**BOTH FROWN.**

**MARTIN:** Norman, you may remember your job here is to find lost pets. Any luck?

**OLLY:** That's it.

**NORMAN:** Brilliant, boss!

**OLLY:** We'll find Gill's dog and you can return it to her.

**MARTIN:** We've been through this. I am not touching dog. I don't like dogs.

**NORMAN:** But, Boss, think of the brownie points you'd score.

**OLLY:** You saw her face.

**MARTIN:** But I don't like dogs. I don't see the point of them.

**OLLY:** We are a nation of dog-lovers, Martin.

**MARTIN:** Oh, that's right. We keep them indoors, in centrally heated houses, we feed them processed meats and no vegetables, we make them watch soap operas on television and buy them stupid clothes to wear. Tell them we're their Mummy and Daddy... Exactly how we treat our kids. I suppose next you'll be telling me people love their kids.

**NORMAN:** I've got a lead on Marmaduke.

**MARTIN:** What sort of a dog is it, anyway?

**OLLY:** It's a cross bred mongrel. Brown and white with a patch on its left side.

**MARTIN:** A smoker. It gets worse.

**NORMAN IS HAVING A SLAP YOUR FOREHEAD MOMENT AS HE UPTURNS THE BROOM, NOTICES THE PLASTIC PROTECTIVE COVER, REMOVES IT AND, THE BROOM WORKS**

**CUT TO:**

SCENE SIX. MARTIN'S FLAT. SAME DIMENSIONS AS THE OFFICE BUT ON THE NEXT FLOOR UP. WE SHOULD REGISTER THAT.

KITCHEN BEHIND COUNTER. TABLE IN FRONT.

SOFA HALFWAY DOWN THE ROOM COFFEE TABLE IN FRONT

BEDROOM OFF, BATHROOM THROUGH THERE.

WALLS FILLED WITH BOOKS ON MISMATCHED SHELVES.

DOORBELL

IT'S PETE.

MARTIN: Pete. I thought you'd be on your way to the airport.

PETE: (TRYING TO GET IN) I came to say one final goodbye.

MARTIN: Isn't that what last week's party was for? Okay, goodbye.

PETE: You know, I've never actually been to your place.

MARTIN: Well, I like to keep my private space private.

PETE FINALLY MANAGES TO DUCK UNDER AND IN.

PETE: I agree. There's nothing worse than an unwanted guest.

HE SLAMS DOWN INTO THE SOFA AND THROWS HIS FEET UP ON THE COFFEE TABLE.

PETE: Only if you're having one.

MARTIN: What?

**PETE:** Oh, sorry, I thought you said 'would you like a large brandy?' and I said 'only if you're having one.'

**MARTIN:** Oh. Well I'm not. What's up?

**PETE:** I wanted your opinion of Gill.

**MARTIN:** She's beautiful, very pleasant, has a lot of energy, she's good with the customers. I think she'll do well.

**PETE:** What did you think of the soup?

**MARTIN:** I'll live.

**PETE:** See when I'm at my apartment in Tuscany enjoying a well deserved retirement with my lovely new wife I don't want to be worrying.

**MARTIN:** Right. And?

**PETE:** Gill is only paying half the money now. I'm letting her owe me the rest. A thousand a month for five years. Am I doing the right thing?

**MARTIN:** Hard to tell. We've got so little to compare it to. How does that work for you tax wise?

**PETE:** No problem. It's all in the wife's name anyway.

**MARTIN:** Doesn't sound like something you can do that easily.

**PETE:** Her lawyer took care of it. Something to do with taking my pension early. I can't have any business interests, or something. All I have to do is relax and enjoy my leisure time. Gill's got big plans for the place.

**MARTIN:** I hope one of them's a cookery lesson.

**PETE:** It's dire, isn't it?

**MARTIN:** Yeah. As in diabolical.

**PETE:** Last time I tasted food like that I complained to the warden.  
**(SERIOUS NOW)** Keep an eye on her for me, Marty.

**MARTIN:** I will.

**PETE GETS UP TO GO.**

**PETE:** Listen, could you fancy her?

**MARTIN:** What are we - fourteen? I like her and I'd love a relationship to develop.

**PETE:** She likes you.

**MARTIN:** Did she say?

**PETE:** Now you mention it, no, but reading between the lines...

**MARTIN:** How do you do **that??**

**PETE:** I'm happy now and I guess I'd like my best friend to be happy, too.

**THERE'S AN AWKWARD TENDER MOMENT THAT NEITHER REALLY WANTS TO BE INVOLVED IN. THEY CAN'T EVEN SHAKE HANDS.**

**MARTIN:** Go on, your beautiful, obedient, young wife won't wait forever.

**PETE:** Don't worry, I've got a pill for that. But, laugh if you like, if I didn't know better I'd say it's love, Mart.

**MARTIN:** I know, Pete. It feels like indigestion, though, doesn't it? Get out.

**PETE:** Okay but first I want to give you this.

**BROWN A4 ENVELOPE, PRETTY FULL.  
MARTIN OPENS IT AND TAKES OUT A THICK FOLD OF FIFTIES. MARTIN LOOKS.**

**PETE:** I couldn't've wished for a better best friend. It's the five grand you gave me when I couldn't pay my VAT a few years ago.

**MARTIN:** I'd forgotten all about that.

**PETE:** You could've said!

**DOORBELL.**

**MARTIN:** (ANNOYED) Who's this.

**HE PUTS THE ENVELOPE ON THE COFFEE TABLE ON HIS WAY TO OPEN THE DOOR. IT'S NORMAN WITH THE DOG.**

**MARTIN:** Norman?

**NORMAN:** Meet Marmaduke.

**MARTIN NOTICES THE DOG AND TRIES TO CLOSE THE DOOR. THE DOG IS TOO STRONG FOR HIM.**

**MARTIN:** Get it out of here.

**NORMAN:** It's Gill's dog.

**PETE:** Gill's dog? That explains why it ate the chilli.

**THE DOG IS LICKING PETE**

**MARTIN:** Where did you find it?

**NORMAN:** It was tied up outside.

**PETE:** I put it there. It's been rummaging round the dustbins all day.

**OLLY COMES IN THE OPEN DOOR WITH A BLANKET AND OTHER TREATS.**

**OLLY:** This will work a treat, Martin. When you take Marmaduke back in the morning Gill will be all over you.

**MARTIN:** In the morning? Why don't you take it back now?

**OLLY:** No, it will be a bigger surprise in the morning, plus it'll look like you've been up all night, searching.

**MARTIN:** I get it, nice. Okay. I'll do it.

**NORMAN:** Excellent.

**MARTIN:** Bring it back at half-past seven in the morning.

**OLLY:** He'll have to stay here.

**MARTIN:** Why??

**NORMAN:** I'm not allowed pets.

**OLLY:** I'm not allowed pets.

**PETE:** **(LEAVING)** I can't take him - he'd hate airline food.

**OLLY:** Look, I'll put it in the spare bedroom. He's been walked and he's exhausted. You won't know he's there.

**MARTIN:** Fine. Now will you all just go. And do me a favour. Forget this address.

**OLLY LOCKS THE DOG IN THE ROOM AND  
MARTIN PUTS THE KEY ON THE COFFEE  
TABLE**

**TIME PASSES.**

**MARTIN IS ON THE SOFA READING. IT'S  
VERY LATE**

**DOORBELL.**

**MARTIN:** What am I on some sort of  
list now?

**HE CLOSES THE BOOK AND ON HIS WAY TO  
THE DOOR REPLACES THAT BOOK ON THE  
SHELF.**

**MARTIN:** (OPENING DOOR) What???

**IT'S GILL. SHE'S GOT A TAKE-OUT BAG  
WHICH SHE HOLDS OUT.**

**GILL:** I thought you might be hungry.  
(**MARTIN WON'T TAKE IT.**) I can't  
eat, I'm worried sick about  
Marmaduke. (**STILL WON'T TAKE IT**)  
It's from the Chinese.

**MARTIN:** (**TAKES IT**) Oh. Sorry, that  
was rude of me. Thank you.

**HE TAKES THE BAG AND GOES TO SHUT THE  
DOOR ON HER.**

**GILL:** Okay, I'll come in just for a  
minute. But I've really got to go  
and look for Marms. **SHE ENTERS  
UNDER HIS ARM.** Any word?

**MARTIN:** Word?

**GILL:** About Marmaduke?

**MARTIN:** Oh. Our inquiries are  
ongoing.

**GILL TAKES IN THE ROOM.**

**GILL:** Lotta books. Have you read them all?

**MARTIN:** I've nearly finished that one. **(POINTS TO ONE)**

**GILL:** 'Sat', 'Sitting' - you've read a few books.

**SHE SITS. MARTIN DIGS IN.**

**GILL:** **(POINTING TO SPARE ROOM DOOR)**  
What's through there?

**MARTIN:** **(LOOKING, EATING)** A bedroom.

**GILL:** I thought so. I'd like to have a look at that later.

**MARTIN STOPS WITH FORK ON ITS WAY TO HIS MOUTH. TURNS AND STARES.**  
**GILL'S LOOK IS OPEN AND INNOCENT.**

**MARTIN TAKES A SLOW FORKFUL. CHEWS AND SWALLOWS.**

**MARTIN:** Are you asking for sex?

**GILL:** What? No. NO! No, what are you thinking? No! God, no!

**MARTIN:** I don't know what made me say that. Forget it. Have some food.

**GILL TAKES SOME.**  
**THEY SETTLE DOWN.**

**MARTIN:** You know, one 'No' would've done.

**GILL:** I do tend to over-react. So do you. We've got a lot in common. We're neighbours. We're both in business. We're both single. I'm sure there are times you need to go somewhere with a partner.

**MARTIN:** Such as?

**GILL:** I don't know...wedding,  
funeral, mucking out the kennels...

**MARTIN:** No.

**GILL:** I worked long hours when I was  
in banking and the cafe looks like  
it'll be more of the same. I just  
don't have time to go out on dates  
with people.

**MARTIN:** I find that, too.

**GILL:** No time for dates?

**MARTIN:** Dates have no time for me.

**GILL:** (BEAT) This is a very nice  
apartment, do you live here alone?

**MARTIN:** Usually. I didn't know  
anyone knew where I lived.

**GILL:** It's one floor up from your  
office - it's not exactly Brigadoon,  
is it? Anyway, I'm off to  
look for Marmaduke - thanks for the  
food -

**MARTIN:** No, wait. A glass of wine?

**THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER JUST A LITTLE  
TOO LONG. SOMETHING'S HAPPENING.**

**GILL:** (SWAYING, THEN...) Later.  
My dog. I'd better...(THUMB TOWARDS  
OUTSIDE)

**MARTIN:** I'm sure he's fine. He's  
probably curled up in a cosy er alley  
somewhere, snoring his head off.  
(DOESN'T WANT TO GO) Do you want me  
to come with you?

**WE THINK WE HEAR A SOFT SNORING**

**GILL:** What was that?  
Have you got a girl in there. Oh,  
I'm sorry - I should never have come.  
I won't, again..

**MARTIN DOESN'T KNOW WHETHER HE SHOULD  
TELL THE TRUTH OR LET HER THINK HE'S  
GOT A GIRL.**

**GILL:** I'll go.

**MARTIN:** (WHISPERING) It's Pete.  
Napping before he goes to the  
airport.

**DOORBELL**

**GILL IS CLOSEST.**

**GILL:** (WHISPERING) I'll get it.

**DOORBELL AGAIN.**

**DOG BARKS.**

**GILL:** (OPENS DOOR - WHISPERING))  
Oh, hi, Pete.

**PETE:** (WHISPERING) Why are we  
whispering?

**GILL'S ON HER WAY TO THE BEDROOM.**

**GILL:** (LOUD) Because you're asleep  
in the bedroom.  
(TO MARTIN) So that's how it's done,  
is it? You kidnap a person's dog,  
pretend to look for it then return it  
for a fat fee.

**MARTIN:** No, of course not.  
(HE STOPS, THINKING.)  
It's not a bad idea, though.

**GILL TRIES THE DOOR. SHE MARCHES  
BACK TO THE COFFEE TABLE FOR THE KEY.  
RAISES AN EYEBROW AT THE ENVELOPE -  
SHE CAN SEE IT'S CASH.**

**MARTIN:** (**BACK TO SENSES**) It's a misunderstanding. Pete had your dog all the time, he brought it round here for safe-keeping.

**GILL:** So you locked him away in a grubby old bedroom and ignored him. How would you like someone to do that to you?

**PETE:** That's how we'll all end up, you watch.

**THE DOG BOUNDS OUT OF THE BEDROOM, LEAPING ON AND LICKING THE HELL OUT OF GILL.**

**MARTIN:** I've dreamt of doing that all day.

**GILL:** Not with MY dog, you're not. Sheez, to think for a minute I was ready to give us a chance. You're nothing to look at and you dress badly but I could've worked on that. Instead you turn out to be a conman preying on lonely people at their most vulnerable.

**MARTIN:** But it was Pete who took your dog. He tied it up and it was Olly who locked it in the bedroom. I never touched your dog. I don't even like...(**HE'S GOT NOWHERE ELSE TO GO WITH THIS**)...dogs.

**GILL:** Well, the truth at last. Come on, Marms, bed time.

**AS GILL AND MARMADUKE LEAVE MARTIN TURNS ON PETE.**

**MARTIN:** Well thanks a lot, Pete You've been my best friend for an hour and a half and look at the mess you've got me in. Thanks a heap.

**PETE IS STRANGELY SILENT.**

**MARTIN:** What are you doing still here, anyway? I thought you'd be flying off with Mrs...er...Mrs Pete, for the adventure of a lifetime...

**PETE:** She wasn't there.

**MARTIN:** Wasn't there, ha.  
**(SERIOUS)** She wasn't there?

**PETE:** Wasn't there. I've been taken, Marty. I'm an idiot. I've lost everything.

**MARTIN'S SHOULDERS DROP.**

**PETE:** I'm just a dozy old clown with women.

**MARTIN:** Welcome to my circus.

**HE GOES TO THE TABLE FOR THE ENVELOPE WHICH HE HANDS TO PETE.**

**NOW THEY TOUCH. MANLY HUGS.**

**TO BLACK**

**ENDS.**

**POST CREDITS. OUT OF THE BLACK.**

**MARTIN:** You can let go now, Pete. Pete, you're hurting me.

**DONE**