

A Brighter Shade of Grey

By

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1 EXT.SHAY'S VILLA.NIGHT

Andalucian landscape. An expensive villa in the hills above Estepona.

2 INT.SHAY'S VILLA.NIGHT

ARCHER, SHAY and PAT are playing cards. They are drinking whiskey and laughing. An unopened bottle of WHISKEY stands next to one which is nearly finished. Shay's wife, ROISIN, is in the background with a SEÑORITA. She walks to the table and tops up their glasses, then massages Shay's neck. They look at each other and she leaves. There is a lot of MONEY in the middle of the table. Archer wins the hand and takes the money. Pat leans in to Shay and whispers something (inaudible) in his ear.

SHAY

You've cleaned me out, right enough.

ARCHER

Double or quits?

Shay rubs the back of his head, stares at Archer.

SHAY

I'm not ready for my bed yet. I tell ye what - hows about we deal in commodities?

ARCHER

Whatcha got in mind?

Shay continues to look at Archer, weighing him up.

SHAY

I've about twenty grams of Colombian. That should buy me another hand, don't ye think?

Archer shows minimal signs of anxiety, barely noticeable, but present.

ARCHER

Why not. Pat, you in?

PAT

No, no - I'm done. I'll go and get the stuff, but.

3 EXT.SHAY'S VILLA.LATER

Archer leaves Shay's villa and gets into his car. He throws a PACKAGE of white powder onto the passenger seat. He wipes sweat from his forehead, relieved to be leaving. He drives off.

4 EXT.LONDON.EARLY MORNING

Colin LINCOLN makes his way into work. It is cloudy and raining; monotonous.

INTERCUT:

5 EXT.PONDEROSA.EARLY MORNING

Archer pulls up in the driveway of his own villa, the PONDEROSA. Like Shay's, it looks expensive.

INTERCUT:

6 EXT.LONDON.EARLY MORNING

Lincoln passes a bookmakers and a building society.

INTERCUT:

7 INT.PONDEROSA.EARLY MORNING

Archer quietly enters his house. He pauses, listening for signs of people being awake. Satisfied, he goes into the kitchen and snorts a couple of lines.

INTERCUT:

8 EXT.LONDON.EARLY MORNING

Lincoln, still walking. A bicycle messenger zips recklessly in and out of the traffic under the watchful eye of a (stationary) motorcycle policeman.

INTERCUT:

9 INT.PONDEROSA.MORNING

Archer changes into a fresh suit.

INTERCUT:

10 EXT.LONDON.EARLY MORNING

Lincoln's journey continues. A jogger runs past some pedestrians, all of whom are smoking and drinking take-out coffee.

INTERCUT:

11 INT.ARCHER'S CAR.MORNING

Archer's wife, JEAN, is driving a Range Rover. Archer is in the passenger seat. They arrive at Malaga airport. He gets out, carrying a distinctive BRIEFCASE and kisses Jean goodbye.

INTERCUT:

12 EXT.TOSTOCK & BEAUTICANT.EARLY MORNING

Lincoln arrives at work. He takes a deep breath and enters the building.

13 INT.AEROPLANE.MORNING

Archer is on an aeroplane. He settles into his first class seat. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT brings him a drink; he flirts with her.

14 INT.TOSTOCK & BEAUTICANT.DAY

Lincoln stands by the main doors. He looks smart in his security uniform, his face is expressionless. An average looking man, SALES REP, enters. He speaks to Lincoln, who leads him to the reception desk. He checks with the receptionist, VANESSA, fills in his log-book and issues a security pass. He returns to his post. His face remains impassive until he hears something.

MARIA

Pssst... Colin...

Lincoln looks over to MARIA, who has entered from a back room with three cups of coffee on a tray. She furtively indicates she has made him one and places the tray on a shelf beneath the desk. Lincoln acknowledges Maria and is about to retrieve the coffee when Nigel BEAUTICANT enters from a downstairs office.

BEAUTICANT

Get me some coffee, would you?

(CONTINUED)

MARIA

Yes of course, Mr Beauticant.
Would you like sugar?

BEAUTICANT

Yes of course I want sugar - how
long have you worked here?

Lincoln is annoyed by this. Beauticant returns to his office and Maria exits to make coffee. Two well dressed men enter the main doors. Lincoln greets them courteously and escorts them to the front desk. One of the men glances at his watch. Both men appear irritated by the delay and treat Lincoln with contempt. Lincoln picks up his log book. Their attitude changes when they are recognized by Vanessa. George TOSTOCK arrives in the lift and greets them. The three men enter the lift and Lincoln replaces his log book without making an entry. Lincoln sighs and turns to Vanessa, who has picked up a glossy magazine.

LINCOLN

I'd better grab that coffee now,
while I've got the chance.

Vanessa shrugs, uninterested, and returns to her magazine.

15 EXT.LONDON.NIGHT

Lincoln exits the tube station. He starts to run for a bus, but it pulls away before he reaches it. He looks at his watch, then puts his hand in his pocket and pulls out some loose change. He looks at his watch again, replaces the coins and starts walking.

16 EXT.LINCOLN'S FLAT.LATER

Lincoln puts his key in the door to his flat, stops when he becomes aware of something. Archer steps out from behind some shrubbery, doing up his fly.

ARCHER

Sorry about that - I've been in
the boozier since lunchtime.
Anyway, where you been? I thought
you were gonna leave me standing
here all night, you slag.

LINCOLN

What the fuck are you doing here?

They are obviously pleased to see each other. The two men shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

ARCHER

Long story, Col. Let us in and whack the kettle on. I've got some bad news.

17 INT.LINCOLN'S FLAT.NIGHT

Lincoln makes coffee in the kitchen while Archer surveys the living room.

ARCHER

You training to be a tramp now?

LINCOLN

Sorry, dude - I would've tidied up if I'd known you were coming. A seventy-two hour week and no housekeeper doesn't sit well with a gaff this size.

ARCHER

You're telling me. I'm just glad you ain't got a cat, 'cause I reckon I'd have bust its neck trying to work out just how small this drum is.

Archer sits on the couch as Lincoln enters the living room with two mugs of coffee. He kicks some empty beer cans off the coffee table to make room for the drinks and removes an empty pizza box from the sofa. He sits down too.

LINCOLN

What's the score then, big boy?

ARCHER

Dan's dead.

LINCOLN

Oh...

ARCHER

Funeral's tomorrow - I assume you've still got a black tie in your wardrobe.

LINCOLN

Christ, Paul - I'm working tomorrow. I've got no chance of sorting anything out at this time of night.

ARCHER

Yeah, yeah, ne'mind all that. I belled Charlie Fraser - he's doin' it for you.

(CONTINUED)

LINCOLN

Charlie Fraser? That lazy git?
How the hell did you wangle that?
I haven't manage to get him to
swap a shift in twelve months,
let alone at the drop of a hat.

ARCHER

I just mentioned he might like to
do it to help the old widow out.

LINCOLN

Crafty...

18

INT.CREMATORIUM.DAY

The mourners are mostly men in their fifties and sixties.
They are all smartly dressed and look like ex-military
men. None of them show any emotion. Archer is making a
speech.

ARCHER

I knew Dan for a long, long time.
As most of you know, he and my
Old Man served together in the
navy. In fact he is the reason
everyone called my dad Skip - cos
he took Dan under his wing from
the word go. My Old Man didn't
rate that many people. Anyway,
Dan never forgot that, cos after
he left the navy and started his
security business with Watto and
the Fighting Marine over there...

Archer nods in the direction of WATTO and GEORGE.

ARCHER

...he gave me a job. He took me
under his wing. People like Skip
and Dan always worked on that
sort of principal - loyalty.

The mourners nod.

ARCHER

I hear people being interviewed,
and sometimes they're asked who
their heroes are. Don't matter
who gets asked, the answers are
usually the same - great names
from the field whoever it is
works in, actors, rock stars,
whatever. Sometimes you get a
real card who says Superman.

(CONTINUED)

The mourners acknowledge Archer's sarcasm with nods and brief smiles.

ARCHER

I ain't got a lot of time for people like that. I'll tell you who my heroes are. My heroes are real people. Skip was my hero - he always will be. But there's a close second - someone who was a real man, even before he met my dad. That's why Skip liked him - Dan was always his own man. Daniel John Cooper. My hero.

The mourners respond with an appreciative murmur.

19

EXT.CREMATORIUM.DAY

The mourners file out, led by Archer. They assemble in the car park as if on a parade ground. Archer gives directions, allocates people without cars to those who can give them a lift. Watto and George climb into a big black Mercedes.

ARCHER

Right, Col - that leaves me and you at the mercy of Watto and the Fighting Marine.

They begin walking toward the Mercedes.

LINCOLN

You sorted all of this in one afternoon? From a pub?

They reach Watto's car and Archer opens the door.

ARCHER

Sound like you're starting to doubt my abilities, boy...

20

INT.WATTO'S CAR.DAY

ARCHER

How's life outside the confines of the security business then? Stressful?

WATTO

You should know - I heard you left the sinking ship too.

(CONTINUED)

ARCHER

Well, it's a heavy old cross to bear, but winning the lottery has its plus-points, I suppose. So anyway, how long you back in the UK for?

WATTO

I ain't decided yet. Probably a week or two - I've been here a month already.

George, in the passenger seat, turns to face Lincoln and Archer in the back.

GEORGE

I think her husband's back from Dubai next Thursday, if that's any help to ye.

WATTO

He's in Mumbai. What's that got to do with the price of fish?

GEORGE

Oh, nothing. Just wonder what he thinks about ye being tucked up wi' his missus while he's out grafting.

WATTO

I dunno.

GEORGE

He does know you're steysin' at his hoose, does he?

WATTO

Fuck off, George.

GEORGE

Aye - dinnae want him comin' haem early and finding you on top of one of his prize assets, eh?

WATTO

Yeah. He might hit me with his calculator.

The four men laugh at this. The car pulls up outside a pub.

21 INT.CHERRY TREE PUB.DAY

The pub is very crowded. Everyone is drinking. A buffet is served in a back room, but Lincoln cannot be bothered to fight his way through to get any food. As time passes, more and more people leave. Archer is on hand to say farewell. Finally, only Lincoln, Watto and George are left. Archer points at the table where they are sitting and makes a drinking motion. Everyone nods, despite having full glasses in front of them. Archer returns from the bar with four pints. He sits down to join the others. Watto raises his glass.

WATTO

Sad day.

The other men raise their glasses in a toast. They make themselves comfortable for a long night's drinking.

22 INT.LINCOLN'S FLAT.DAY

The alarm clock wakes Lincoln. He looks terrible. He applies deodorant, shaves, and brushes his teeth. He coughs and gags, grabbing on to the sink for support as he looks in the mirror.

LINCOLN

Ne'mind all that.

A look of recognition crosses his face. Opening the wash basket, he pulls out a crumpled uniform shirt and smells it. He applies more deodorant and puts the shirt on. Fully dressed, he goes into his kitchen and opens a cupboard. At the same time, he looks at the clock and shuts the cupboard again.

23 INT.T&B SECURITY OFFICE.DAY

Lincoln is sitting at a desk. He still looks awful. He alternates between poring over the document in front of him and drifting off to sleep. The door is opened and another security guard, Andy PRICE, enters.

PRICE

Is the new off-duty ready yet?

LINCOLN

Sorry, Andy - it won't be finished until tomorrow.

PRICE

I ain't in tomorrow. It's all right for you, kipping in the office all afternoon. I need to make plans too you know.

(CONTINUED)

LINCOLN

I appreciate you want to know what your shifts are, but if I didn't have to spend so long messing around trying to give everyone the days off they want, I'd have it done in half the time. Maybe I'll just knock up a rolling-rota and let you lot figure it out on your own time, eh?

Andy is initially taken aback at this uncharacteristic behaviour, but quickly reverts to his offence.

PRICE

I want that off-duty done for when I come in on Thursday, or I'll make a complaint to head office.

LINCOLN

That'd be right - stick to what you know.

PRICE

What?

LINCOLN

Complaining, that's what. Why aren't you front-of-house anyway?

PRICE

Oh a break - Charlie's down there.

LINCOLN

A break, eh? All right for some. Well, jog on then. Enjoy your tea.

Andy leaves the office, slamming the door behind him. Lincoln looks at the DOCUMENT in front of him and writes "Night shift" next to Andy's name.

24

INT.RANDOM PUB.AFTERNOON

Archer and Lincoln sit at a bar. Lincoln appears lost in thought.

LINCOLN

What's the craic in Spain then?

ARCHER

All right really. Too hot for me most of the time, but Jean and the kids love it.

(CONTINUED)

LINCOLN

Don't see yourself moving back then?

ARCHER

Nah - well, I'd think about it, but I'm confident there's be a mutiny on the domestic front.

Lincoln nods and the pair lapse into silence again.

LINCOLN

No escapades then?

ARCHER

Do you mean fiscal, or bird-related?

LINCOLN

Either or, mate. I've done absolutely nothing for the last three years, so I might as well do a bit of vicarious living through one of your old yarns.

ARCHER

Financially, not much has been going on, but I've still got plenty left from my winnings. As for my extra-curricular lady wok, to be honest, it's been relegated to the pan rack alongside my deep-fat fish-fryer.

LINCOLN

Really? I would have thought a man of your calibre would be fighting them off with a wooden spatula.

ARCHER

Nah, not really...

(pause)

Spain's good though - you should come out.

LINCOLN

Cheers. I might. I'm a bit worried I mightn't want to come back though.

ARCHER

So? What's to stop you if you didn't?

(CONTINUED)

LINCOLN

Nothing much. I suppose. It ain't likely though - I'm proper skint.

A CITY GENT and his WIFE walk up to the bar and he casually throws a set of car keys on the bar. The KEY FOB bears the Bentley logo.

CITY GENT

Large G&T and a dry-white for the lady.

Archer and Lincoln look at each other. Lincoln nods towards the keyring which is in easy reach of him.

LINCOLN

How do you feel about those bacon sandwiches then?

Archer looks briefly at the keys and then at the gent, who he recognises.

ARCHER

Yeah, I've seen 'em before - pretty kosher, as it goes.

LINCOLN

How easy would it be?

ARCHER

Criminal, mate, criminal.

Archer snorts, finding the idea more humorous than anything else.

Watto enters and goes to the bar. Lincoln checks his wallet - he is running short of money.

WATTO

So, young Lincoln, what happened to your missus then?

LINCOLN

Fucked off. Not long after you lot retired and deserted me.

Watto and Archer look at each other as if they are pretending to feel sorry for Lincoln.

ARCHER

I think you've touched a nerve, Watto. Apparently she left him for one of her colleagues.

WATTO

Sorry to hear that, Col. If it's any consolation, I didn't like her much.

(CONTINUED)

LINCOLN

Don't worry about it. I heard she'd pretty much been through everyone else in her office before she found Mr Right.

WATTO

Ah well - at least you didn't have kids.

LINCOLN

Yeah. This new one ain't been so lucky though. I heard she was up the duff within a couple of months. One of those unplanned jobs. Funnily enough, the geezer's loaded.

WATTO

Never mind, Col. Plenty more...

LINCOLN

Fish in the sea - I know.

WATTO

I was going to say plenty more time to spend in the boozier with your mates.

LINCOLN

I think that may have caused the problem in the first place.

Archer and Watto laugh. Lincoln raises his pint glass, takes a drink and then joins in.

25 INT.RANDOM PUB.LATER

Watto returns from the bar with three pints and three whiskies.

WATTO

Well, my friends, I'm gonna have to shoot off soon. But I've gotta say I've had a blinding time. When I get back home, I'm gonna buy a copy of that Marty Robbins tune we all sang at Dan's funeral.

ARCHER

Yeah - be useful if someone besides me knew the words. Anyway, whose funeral you planning to sing that at?

(CONTINUED)

WATTO

Both of yours probably. Pair of
bleedin' scoundrels.

The whiskies are washed down with the pints and Watto
leaves. Lincoln and Archer also get up to go.

ARCHER

Where's open still round here?

LINCOLN

Ah, I've gotta get home, mate.

ARCHER

What's the matter? You working
tomorrow?

LINCOLN

Nah - I'm off. Depleted my
arsenal of beer tokens, that's
all.

ARCHER

Well, there you go. I'll stand
you a pint - I can't come all
this way and not have a proper
drink with my old mate now, can
I?

26 INT.NIGHTCLUB.NIGHT

Archer returns from the bar with two plastic glasses
filled with weak-looking beer.

ARCHER

Eight quid. I could have a night
out on that in Spain.

Lincoln looks disappointed.

LINCOLN

Sorry, mate. I'll buy you a pint
before you go back again, I
promise.

ARCHER

Nah - I don't mean I'm bothered.
You're always due a drink with
me. I just think it's a rip-off -
that's all. Oh...

Archer is jogged by one of a group of lads standing behind
them. He turns to look at the culprit.

(CONTINUED)

BEER SPILLER

Sorry, mate.

ARCHER

S'all right. No drama.

Archer turns back to Lincoln and the group of lads appear to be having a laugh at their expense. Archer is jogged again. Nothing is said, but it becomes obvious Archer won't let it go so easily. Lincoln spots some people leaving a table and points in that direction. The pair move away and sit down. Archer looks back to where the lads are, they are looking back at him and Lincoln, continuing to laugh.

27 INT.NIGHTCLUB.LATER

The group of lads go to leave. Archer spots this and indicates to Lincoln it's time to go too. They follow the group out.

28 EXT.NIGHTCLUB.MOMENTS LATER

The lads are saying goodbye to each other and split up. Archer and Lincoln follow the beer spiller and his mate. The lads soon become aware they are being followed and turn round to confront Lincoln and Archer.

BEER SPILLER

All right? Sunshine coach forget to wait for you?

ARCHER

Nah.

Archer pauses to light a cigarette.

ARCHER

I'm off round your mum's house for another blow job.

The two lads look at each other.

BEER SPILLER

Oh, yeah? Well, I s'pect my old man'll save me a job then - cos he'll murder an old boy like you.

ARCHER

Oh, I ain't worried about your old man. He's usually far too busy fucking your sister.

Beer Spiller lunges at Archer, who side-steps and puts him on the floor with a couple of punches. Beer Spiller's mate

(CONTINUED)

smashes a bottle and goes for Archer too. Lincoln tackles him to the ground. There is a violent struggle, which Lincoln wins and repeatedly punches the lad until Archer drags him off. Archer and Lincoln run off into the night, leaving the two lads unconscious.

29

EXT.BACK ALLEY.MOMENTS LATER

Archer and Lincoln duck behind a fence and collapse onto a pile of refuse sacks, struggling to regain their breath. SIRENS can be heard in the distance.

ARCHER

I thought you were gonna kill him.

LINCOLN

He seemed to have some inclination to decorate your Barnet with a busted Budweiser bottle.

ARCHER

Dirty bastard.

LINCOLN

Yeah - you would've thought he'd have the decency to use a decent brand.

ARCHER

Very funny.

LINCOLN

Fancy a kebab?

ARCHER

I would, only the last time I looked at that geezer you were slapping, he didn't look too clever. You start wandering around covered in claret and even the thickest Old Bill might put two and two together.

LINCOLN

Good point - well made.

Lincoln gets to his feet, clearly energised by the event.

LINCOLN

It's good to have you back, bruv.

They both start laughing and Lincoln goes to help Archer to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

ARCHER

Five points for that. It's nice
to be back, as it goes...